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Annali di Ca' Foscari
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Vol. 57 – Giugno 2021

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Sommario

The Mind-Made Body and Levitation: A Brief Clarification
Letter to the Editor
Bhikkhu Anālayo 7

Rejoinder to Ven. Anālayo and a Short List of Corrigenda
Bryan De Notariis 9

ARTICOLI

Definiteness Marking in Earlier Stages of Arabic
Areal Evidence from Classical Arabic Idols' Names
Francesco Grande 19

Polysemy as Hermeneutic Key in Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*
Federico Salvaggio 53

Pharaohs and Playwrights between Fiction and Reality:
Controversies in the Egyptian Cultural Field
Daniela Potenza 69

Poetry in the Era of Social Networks:
The Case of Faraḥ Šammā
Emanuela De Blasio 91

Beyond the 20FM: The Revitalization
of the New Moroccan Left Following the 2011 Protests
Daniele Paolini 119

Sull'imperfetto indicativo e gli altri tempi in *-eɾ*
del dialetto armeno di Urmia
Aspetti storici e tipologici di un'innovazione morfologica
Andrea Scala 141

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Notes on Musical Imagery in the Poetry of Jāmi
Alessia Dal Bianco 171

Monumental Entrance to Gandharan Buddhist Architecture
Stairs and Gates from Swat
Luca Maria Olivieri, Elisa Iori 197

Prolegomeni alla religione bon e ai principi soteriologici del tantra materno (*Ma rgyud*) nella tradizione bonpo attraverso l'opera di Yongdzin Tendzin Namdak
Francesco Maniscalco 241

Sociolinguistics of Hindī
An Analysis of TV-Mediated Spoken Hindī Features Through TV Programs' Language
Giulia Ferro 283

Due indianisti e una Commissione
Carlo Formichi, Oreste Nazari e il progresso degli studi sanscritici in Italia
Alice Crisanti 313

North of Dai: Armed Communities and Military Resources in Late Medieval China (880-936)
Maddalena Barenghi 373

La nozione di *bianxing* 變形 nei racconti sulle scimmie contenute nei tre capitoli «Chushou» 畜獸 del *Taiping Guangji* 太平廣記
Giovanni Ruscica 397

L'introduzione del Naturalismo in Cina, il ruolo di Mao Dun e il dibattito sulla stampa
Rosa Lombardi 421

Between Rigor and Reverence. Yu Dafu and His Views on Translation
Paolo Magagnin 443

Aspects of the Christian Missionary in Nationalist China: Mrs Jiang Jieshi and the Missions
Vincenza Cinzia Capristo 457

China's 'CivilOlympic' Performances and (Re)Gained Global Visibility
Fantasising about a New Brand China through Olympic Public Service Announcements
Giovanna Puppin 475

Sinitic Poetry in Early Heian Japan: Kidendō Literacy, Banquet Culture, and the Sugawara House
Dario Minguzzi 503

Il tempo e la gloria nell'*Ise monogatari*
Considerazioni sui risvolti politici dei canti del «vecchio»
Francesca Fraccaro 533

Bodies in Japanese Language
An Introduction to the Polysemous Character of Corporeality
Katja Centonze 575

The Polyhedral and Elusive Nature of Geyao
Sabrina Rastelli 605

Negotiating 'Asianness' at the Tokyo International Film Festival
Local, Regional and International Dynamics Through Programming Practices and Film Markets
Eugenio De Angelis 627

Learning Japanese through VR Technology. The Case of *Altspace VR*
Alessandro Mantelli 663

REPORT

The AJE Summit 2020 Report: The Past, Present and Future of Japanese Language Education in Europe
Takuya Kojima, Marcella Mariotti 687

RECENSIONI

Veronica Ghirardi
Postmodern Traces and Recent Hindi Novels
Thomas Dähnhardt 713

Nicoletta Pesaro, Melinda Pirazzoli
La narrativa cinese del Novecento. Autori, opere e correnti
Marco Fumian 717

e-ISSN 2385-3042

Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie orientale
Vol. 57 – Giugno 2021

The Mind-Made Body and Levitation: A Brief Clarification
Letter to the Editor

Bhikkhu Anālayo
Universität Hamburg, Deutschland

In a previous issue of the present journal (vol. 55, 227-64), published in 2019, Bryan De Notariis offered a very interesting study of "The Vedic Background of the Buddhist Notions of *iddhi* and *abhiññā*. Three Case Studies with Particular Reference to the Pāli Literature." The abstract of the article announces, among other things, a discussion of "the speculative idea sustained by some scholars that would see the body made of mind (*manomaya-kāya*) as the base and tool to perform *iddhi*s and *abhiññā*s." In the main article, the author then states that

> Since in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* the performance of *iddhis* is preceded by the creation of the body made of mind (*manomaya-kāya*), some scholars argue that the performance of extraordinary capacities is realised through this mental body. However, the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* does not specifically state it, and this assumption seems to be based on the fact that the body made of mind is created before attainment of the ability to perform *iddhi*s. (240)

The author then references to my study "Levitation in Early Buddhist Discourse" (published 2016 in the *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies*, 10, 11-26) as being one instance of the argument cited above.

This assessment appears to be based on a less than careful reading of my study. On the page referred to by the author (p. 16), I merely

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state that this part of the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* "gives the impression that the ability to create a mind-made body may have been considered a precondition for feats like levitation", with a footnote reference to a scholar who made such a suggestion. My statement only reports a suggestion made by someone else and the use of "may" clearly expresses a lack of certainty regarding the conclusiveness of this proposal.

On the same page of my article, I translate a passage from the *Mahāvastu*, which describes the Buddha-to-be in one of his former existences accomplishing the feat of touching the orb of the moon and the orb of the sun with his hand, standard elements in descriptions of the performance of supernormal feats. His physical body, however, remained seated cross-legged in his hermitage (*svayam āśrame paryaṃkena niṣaṇṇo candramaṇḍalaṃ ca sūryamaṇḍalaṃ ca pāṇinā parāmṛṣati*, locations of quotes as in my article). I also referenced a passage from the **Vimuttimagga*, which investigates whether yogis who lose the absorbed condition of the mind while being up in space and performing supernormal feats will fall to the ground. The reply is that this will not happen, as the yogis will simply return to find themselves on the meditation seat taken earlier (退者還至先坐處). The idea appears to be that the physical body remains seated in meditation during the performance of supernormal feats. This in turn makes it fair to assume that tradition envisaged the mind-made body to enable the performance of such feats.

On the next page of the same article, I take up a description of a visit paid by the Buddha to his disciple Anuruddha. In several versions of this episode, the Buddha's visit involved a supernormal feat by way of flying over to the distant place where Anuruddha was living. According to a verse found at the end of the relevant *Aṅguttaranikāya* discourse (AN 8.30), with parallels in the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* extant in Chinese and Tibetan, Anuruddha explicitly reported that the Buddha approached him through a supernormal feat performed with the help of the mind-made body (*manomayena kāyena iddhiyā*, *yid las byung ba'i sku yis … rju [= rdzu] 'phrul gyis*, 意身神通; the sequence of the first two Chinese characters has been emended). This passage provides clear-cut textual evidence for the idea that the mind-made body was considered as offering a way to perform the supernormal feat of levitation.

Pointing this out is only meant to correct the mistaken assertion that previous scholarship has relied merely on speculation for suggesting such a role for the mind-made body. Apart from that, however, the contribution offered by Bryan De Notariis is a very welcome addition to our knowledge of this fascinating aspect of Buddhist thought.

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Vol. 57 – Giugno 2021

Rejoinder to Ven. Anālayo and a Short List of Corrigenda

Bryan De Notariis
Università degli Studi di Torino, Italia

In the first instance, I want to apologise to Ven. Bhikkhu Anālayo if I have excessively levelled out and/or trivialised his position concerning the role of the *manomaya-kāya* and its relationship with the *iddhi*s (and in particular with the act of levitating) in a way that led him to write me a reply. I am glad he wanted to reply and clarify his position. It is also gratifying to read that, despite the misunderstanding, he has appreciated my contribution, and an appreciation is even more welcomed when it comes from a scholar that I esteem and from whose articles I have learnt a great deal, and am indeed still learning. Of course, I cannot claim to know the author's thoughts better than the author himself, and thus I will limit myself to discussing the significant points that led me to quote Ven. Anālayo as a relevant example of the point I was making. This is also an opportunity to elaborate on some topics and textual passages to which Ven. Anālayo drew attention.

In my contribution (De Notariis 2019), I noted that some scholars assumed that the mind-made body (*manomaya-kāya*) was the body through which the *iddhi*s were performed (240 fn. 35). However, the reasons for this kind of assumption were not always made explicit. Thus, in considering the rationality behind this assumption, I found clear statements concerning the sequentiality of the stages of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s Buddhist path of liberation made by Radich and Anālayo (240 fn. 36). This was, indeed, my point, namely the fact that this sequentiality might had been regarded as a proof to establish

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a strong connection between *manomaya-kāya* and *iddhi*s. In quoting Ven. Anālayo, I had in mind the following passage:

> The creation of such a mind-made body features in the same *Sāmaññaphala-sutta* and its parallels just before their description of the supernormal ability to levitate, etc., corresponding to the section translated above from the *Dīrgha-āgama* parallel to the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*. This gives the impression that the ability to create a mind-made body may have been considered a pre-condition for feats like levitation, just as the earlier mentioned four absorptions clearly serve as a pre-condition for the creation of the mind-made body, as well as for the other supernormal feats described subsequently. (Anālayo 2016, 16)

In his reply to me, Ven. Anālayo specifies that in this passage there is also a footnote referring to a scholar who made this suggestion,[1] and thus he was merely quoting a suggestion made by someone else, introducing it with 'may' to indicate the lack of certainty regarding the statement. It seemed to my mind that Ven. Anālayo was endorsing this view, or at least he was regarding it as a quite likely interpretation, considering that he was seemingly making a point, not just quoting it in an anecdotal way. In fact, I think that my main error was to not acknowledge that he was supporting his interpretation of the relationship between *manomaya-kāya* and *iddhi*s with other evidence, and the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*'s Buddhist path of liberation was just one of the many (although the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* was actually relevant for its stages' sequentiality). Here, I would like to provide some notes on the other textual accounts quoted by Ven. Anālayo. This, I hope, will enrich our discussion concerning the relationship between *manomaya-kāya* and *iddhi*s. I want to specify that I am doing so in a non-polemical manner; simply for the sake of adding some more flesh to the bones.

Ven. Anālayo quotes two interesting passages from the *Mahāvastu* and **Vimuttimagga* which seem to imply that many miraculous feats were performed by the meditator by remaining seated in the meditative position and, thus, as an example of how the mind-made body is involved in actions, such as touching the moon and sun (*Mahāvastu*)[2]

1 "This has already been suggested by Franke" (Anālayo 2016, 16 fn. 21).

2 "When he was seated cross-legged in his hermitage, touched with the hand the orbs of both the moon and sun" (*svayam āśrame paryaṃkena niṣaṇṇo candramaṇḍalaṃ ca sūryamaṇḍalaṃ ca pāṇinā parāmṛśati*; Mvu, I, 284). See also Vism, 401 in which many monks affect and influence the moon and the sun, but these latter remain unaffected in the reality. If not otherwise stated, all translations are by the Author.

or levitating (**Vimuttimagga*).[3] However, we should note that, strictly speaking, neither passage mentions any Sanskrit or Chinese term that denotes the mind-made body. Ergo, it seems to me that the involvement of a mind-made body is inferred by the fact that both actions occur in a sort of mental dimension and, apparently, do not produce effects in reality. This would suggest the assumption that we know quite well what the mind-made body is and its significance in Buddhism, otherwise we would not be able to detect it in contexts in which it is implied and not mentioned. However, personally, I would be more cautious in assuming a clear-cut interpretation for the *manomaya-kāya* given the present state of our knowledge. Therewith, I do not exclude the implication of the mind-made body in the aforementioned passages, but nonetheless it seems to me that hitherto, the *manomaya-kāya* has been treated as a quite intuitive and self-explanatory concept. The reason behind it could be that the *manomaya-kāya* can be translated as 'mind-made body' or 'body made of mind' and this recalls in our culture an idea of what this means. As a matter of fact, many cultures around the world hold this idea concerning the existence of a subtle body, including ours.[4] This indicates that we might already have an opinion, albeit vague, of what a subtle body could be. Although the existence of a subtle body is a transcultural phenomenon which assumes different nuances of meanings in each culture, it is arguably somehow naturalised in our conception of the world. This is also sustained by the fact that even though the *manomaya-kāya* (or *manomaya* in general) sporadically occurs in Buddhist texts, even in key passages, it has received few systematic treatments in academic literature.[5] Hence, I analysed the idea sustained by some scholars that would see the body made of mind (*manomaya-kāya*) as the base and tool to perform *iddhi*s and *abhiññā*s through the lens of the Vedic evidence. Incidentally, my study partially corroborates a connection between *manomaya-kāya* and *iddhi*s as assumed by the previous scholarship, although I highlight that we also have evidence that the mind-made body is not always mandatory to perform *iddhi*s (De Notariis 2019, 256-7). My aim was not to belittle previous scholarship, but to just check whether we can have stronger presuppositions for some claims that were made mostly on

3 "Is it possible that the meditator in the empty sky would lose the meditative state and from the empty sky he would fall down to the earth? Not at all! He arises from the meditation seat and if he travels far and lose [the meditative state] he returns to the meditation seat" (問彼坐禪人於虛空或從禪退。彼從虛空轉當落地耶。答不然。是從其先坐處起若遠行。退者還至先坐處; T1648_.32.0442a20-22).

4 E.g. Greek, Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, Islamic, and European cultures, in both ancient and modern times. In this regard, see the contributions in the volume edited by Samuel and Johnston (2013).

5 See De Notariis 2019a, 51.

the basis of conjectures, without any definitive proof, and sometimes based on deductions which were not entirely compelling. In the case of the *Mahāvastu* and **Vimuttimagga* it seems to me that even if the accounts would really involve a body made of mind, we cannot be certain that it is safe to read their interpretation into the old account of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*. Concerning the Theravāda tradition, it is worth noting that the *manomaya-kāya* has almost no place within the Abhidhamma, thus it seems to have escaped the first exegetical systematisation.[6] We must wait till the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* to find an exegetical elaboration on the topic. This latter text introduces some developments when compared with the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* and, unsurprisingly, we can assume a relatively huge gap of time between the two texts.[7] To my mind, it is possible that the *manomaya-kāya* in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* is closer to the Vedic lore than the Buddhist exegetical texts,[8] although I cannot exclude that Buddhism may have developed its own early interpretation and that the latter was faithfully transmitted and came down to us in the exegetical texts. In essence, the *manomaya-kāya* is not a straightforward concept as it might seem *prima facie*, and some other different interpretative lines should be taken into account.

Much more compelling is the example of *manomayena kāyena iddhiyā* (e.g. A, IV, 229), in which an *iddhi* (the act of going up to the Brahmā world, a sort of levitation) is actually performed through a *manomaya-kāya*. I think it could be relevant and beneficial to also read this passage in light of *cātumahābhūtikena kāyena iddhiyā* (S, V, 282), which, similarly, suggests that the same act of levitation could be performed through the physical and material body.[9] Indeed, there is enough evidence in Buddhist texts to suppose that the *iddhi*s were regarded as real phenomena and not only as mere imaginative and mental acts. For instance, the Buddha is said to be able to prolong his lifespan through the mastery of the *iddhi-pāda*s (D, II, 103; see Kv, 456-8 which uses *iddhi-bala* in the context of the prolongation of life). Let alone that these powers were subjected to legislative regulation and occur in many accounts as visible feats, just as when a

6 The only reference to the concept of '*manomaya*' is within the *Vibhaṅga*, in a passage which does not mention it directly (Vibh, 384) but quotes D, I, 34 (which involves a mind-made self), replacing *dibbo rūpī manomayo* with *dibbo rūpimayo* (however, *dibbo rūpī manomayo* is actually the reading in Be).

7 Here, these ideas are mostly based on my still unpublished work on the diachronic development of the *manomaya-kāya* in Theravāda tradition. In this short reply to Ven. Anālayo, I have not the space to develop a full argument. However, I wanted to provide some hints on the data that drive my reasoning.

8 I am especially referring to my previous work, De Notariis 2019a.

9 I am aware that Ven. Anālayo (2016, 18 fn. 29) highlighted that this latter passage may have no parallels.

monk levitates in order to take a sandalwood bowl, an act that led to the regulation of these kinds of miraculous displays (Vin, II, 110-112). This position finds evidence in a clear statement within the later *Nettipakaraṇa*, which reports:

> And what things, monks, should be experienced by the body (*kāya*) and understanding (*paññā*)? The variety of the psychophysical power (*iddhividhā*) and cessation (*nirodha*) should be experienced by the body and understanding.[10]

Here, cessation (*nirodha*) seems to be the cessation of consciousness and feelings (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*), which is the result of a meditative practice and involves both mind and physical body.[11] Thus, we can similarly consider that the *iddhi*s involve both body and mind as a unity, and can therefore be translated as 'psychophysical power'.[12]

In summary, I am glad that Ven. Anālayo wanted to reply to me, as this has provided the opportunity to further discuss some topics. Whilst I still believe he was a relevant example for what I was arguing, I should admit that he in fact has a point in highlighting that his position is more sophisticated than what can be inferred by what I wrote. Therefore, I cannot but apologise once again. I hope that the few notes I have written concerning the other textual accounts reported by Ven. Anālayo may result to be interesting and could be useful in stimulating further reflections on these topics which are so dear to me.

With mettā
Bryan De Notariis

10 *katame ca bhikkhave dhammā kāyena paññāya ca sacchikātabbā? iddhividhā nirodho kāyena paññāya ca sacchikātabbā* (Nett, 149). The forerunner of this passage occurs in some old strata of the Pāli canon, such as at A, II, 182: *katame ca bhikkhave dhamma kāyena sacchikaraṇīyā? aṭṭha vimokkhā bhikkhave kāyena sacchikaraṇīyā*.

11 While the involvement of the mind is evident, that of the body occurs, for instance, at M, I, 296. If we considered the fact that *Nettipakaraṇa* resembles A, II, 182, we should admit that according to the commentary on the latter, in this passage the term *kāya* means the mental *corpus* (*kāyenā ti nāmakāyena*; Mp, III, 167). However, we should also consider that the *Nettipakaraṇa* is quite aware that the term *kāya* as a unity includes both the mental *corpus* (*nāmakāya*) and the physical one (*rūpakāya*) (see Nett, 77) and, therefore, I regard significant the fact that *Nettipakaraṇa* uses *kāya* and not *nāmakāya*.

12 In De Notariis 2019, 235-9, I opted for 'psychic power' to translate *iddhi*. I think that 'psychophysical power' can be more accurate and there are some other reasons to sustain it whose exposition, however, would exceed the limits of this short rejoinder.

A short list of Corrigenda

Here, I would like to provide some corrections on some parts of my previous publications (2018; 2019). I should acknowledge that most of them were highlighted to me by Rupert Gethin. In what follows, I will not address typos or minor points but only conceptual errors.

- In De Notariis 2018, 190, concerning the simile of the *isīkā* extracted from a *muñja*, I supposed that the translation made by Rupert Gethin of the term *muñja* as 'reed grass' implied that he had interpreted *muñja* as a group or multiplicity of reeds, assuming that this term implies a collectivity, and then the *isīkā* was a 'reed extracted from a group of reeds'. Gethin informed me that he understood the simile as "a single reed is extracted from a single blade of reed grass".[13] Therefore, I want to inform my readers of Gethin's real understanding, although his translation could, to some extent, allow the interpretation I presented.
- In De Notariis 2019, 233-4, there occurs my translation of the pericope on the *cutūpapātañāṇa*, which is worthy of some remarks. First, many scholars suggested to me that the translation of this *abhiññā* as 'knowledge of degeneration and ascent of beings' does not sound very good in natural English, therefore I wish to note that an alternative translation as 'knowledge of the fall and rise [of beings]' – which seems to 'sound' better – would convey the same metaphorical language that I wanted to stress. Second, the passage *ime vata bhonto sattā…*, which I translated as "Oh venerables, Alas! These beings", could be translated in another way, assuming that *bhonto* is a nominative in apposition with *sattā*, and not a vocative as I translated. Therefore, another translation could be "These venerable beings…"; this, of course, is a minor point. A more interesting point that I did not address was my tentative and speculative translation of part of the pericope. I should highlight that the passage *so dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkanta-mānusakena satte passati cavamāne upapajjamāne, hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate yathā-kammūpage satte pajānāti*, which I translated as "He sees beings with the divine eye which is purified and far beyond the human one; he knows beings degenerating and ascending, reaching according to their *kamma* low [existences], excellent [existences], good conditions, bad conditions, good destinies, bad destinies", can have a different translation (which is more in line with the ones commonly adopted): "With the divine eye which is purified and beyond the human one,

13 Private communication.

he sees beings passing away and arising; he knows how beings are inferior, excellent, of beautiful appearance, disagreeable, fortunate, unfortunate, according to their *kamma*". My translation was an attempt to bring out a new interpretation of some elements. I assume a more metaphorical interpretation for *cavamāne upapajjamāne* than the commonly accepted 'dying and being born', which affects the interpretation of the series of adjectives *hīne paṇīte suvaṇṇe dubbaṇṇe sugate duggate*. My translation is, therefore, tentative and aims to present the passage in a new light.

- In De Notariis 2019, 235 fn. 22, I quoted an article attributing the authorship to both Alexander Wynne and Richard Gombrich, although the real author is only the first one.
- In De Notariis 2019, 254, I wrote: "The suffix *-māna* used to create the present passive participle of the verbs *cavati* and *upapajjati* might indicate that the action occurs automatically, and the beings involved are just passive subjects of the action". I was wrong: the two words are inflected in the present middle participle and not in the passive.

Abbreviations

All Pāli citations are from Pali Text Society Editions, unless otherwise noted.

A	*Aṅguttaranikāya*
Be	Burmese Edition. Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka 4.0. Vipassana Research Institute 1995, Version 4.0.0.15
D	*Dīghanikāya*
Kv	*Kathāvatthu*
M	*Majjhimanikāya*
Mp	*Manorathapūraṇī* (*Aṅguttaranikāya-aṭṭhakathā*)
Mvu	*Mahāvastu*. Senart, É. (1882-97). *Le Mahāvastu: Texte sanscrit publié pour la premiére fois et accompagné d'introductions et d'un commentaire*. 3 vols. Paris: Imprimerie nationale
Nett	*Nettipakaraṇa*
S	*Saṃyuttanikāya*
T	*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (大正新修大藏經). Digital Edition. `http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/`. Database version 2015
Vibh	*Vibhaṅga*
Vin	*Vinaya*
Vism	*Visuddhimagga*

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Articoli

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Definiteness Marking in Earlier Stages of Arabic
Areal Evidence from Classical Arabic Idols' Names

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Abstract This study investigates definiteness marking in earlier stages of Arabic, based on a corpus of Classical Arabic idols' names attested in technical prose. The latter mentions not only Arabic idols, the names of which bear definite markers, but also the tribal units that worshipped them. Relying upon attestations of this sort, the present study investigates the areal distribution of definiteness marking in earlier stages of Arabic. Finally, it compares the results of such an investigation with the current knowledge on the areal distribution of definiteness marking in earlier stages of Arabic, based on epigraphic and dialectological evidence.

Keywords Arabic article. Idols. Pre-Islamic. Definiteness. Areal distribution. Diptotism.

Summary 1 Topic and Aim. – 2 Scope and Limits. – 3 Methodology. – 3.1 Definition of descriptive units. – 3.2 Selection of descriptive units. – 3.3 Collection of descriptive units. – 3.4 Classification of descriptive units. – 4 Results and discussion. – 4.1 The 'static' scenario. – 4.2 The 'dynamic' scenario. – 4.3 An integrated approach. – 5 Conclusions

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1 Topic and Aim

This paper investigates definiteness marking as attested in some Classical Arabic idols' names that plausibly reflect earlier stages of the language. The investigation concentrates on the areal distribution of these idols' names, and in particular of the definite markers they bear. The idols' names that are the object of this investigation are attested in literary primary sources, a category broadly understood here as including any kind of non-epigraphic written source, technical prose included (e.g. lexicography). In particular, the paper considers literary primary sources that associate Classical Arabic idols' names with tribal units, which allows for a better understanding of their areal distribution. Although the main focus of this paper is on literary primary sources, the importance of the results achieved by Semitic linguistics and Arabic dialectology in the study of definiteness marking in earlier stages of Arabic, and therefore the advantages of an integrated approach, will also appear in due course.

2 Scope and Limits

Some philological caution is needed in dealing with the onomastic corpus selected for this study, on the levels of both methodology and data.

On the level of methodology, an investigation of Classical Arabic idols' names in terms of areal distribution implies a resort to basic descriptive units of linguistic geography, such as 'dialect' and 'locality', that are anachronistic with respect to the literary primary sources. Rabin (1951, 15) suggests that this difficulty may be partially overcome by considering the terms *luġa* and *qabīla* (or whatever tribal unit), found in technical prose, as approximate equivalents of 'dialect' and 'locality' respectively.[1] But only rarely in technical prose is a *luġa* defined along the lines of a modern dialect, in terms of some core or distinctive linguistic features. A case in point is the phonological feature that literary primary sources (cited by Rabin 1951, 10; al-Sharkawi 2017, 48) ascribe to the dialect of Tamīm and label *ʿanʿana* 'pharyngealization of *hamza*' (that is, a shift from ʾ to ʿ). Likewise, when literary primary sources ascribe a linguistic feature to a *qabīla*, or other tribal unit, they rarely locate it in a well-defined place using a toponym. Al-Hamdānī's (d. 334/946) mention of the toponym Tihāma in connection with the Ḥakam and their usage of the definite marker *(a)m-* is a quite isolated case (Rabin 1951, 44). Typically, the primary sources simply ascribe a linguistic feature to a tribal unit, as is shown in the following example (in which the linguistic feature is

1 See also Iványi 2008 and al-Sharkawi 2017, 51-89.

a lexeme): *wa-l-ʿuḍaybu māʾun li-banī Tamīm* (*ʿuḍayb* is a water-source belonging to Tamīm; *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, 2: 102). This habit of literary primary sources, especially technical prose (referred to hereafter as 'sources'), probably finds its *raison d'être* in the seminomadic *Lebensform* of many tribal units, which cannot be associated with a single locality.

However, in the wake of Rabin (1951), it is to a certain extent possible to infer the locality of a tribal unit by integrating the sources that record dialectal data from Arabic tribal units with sources that provide scattered notices about their historical vicissitudes, genealogy, and manners[2] (the latter include the religious practice of *sidāna* 'shrine-keeping', as will be discussed in due course in this study).

Although Rabin does not spell out such an integrated approach, he illustrates its results in the useful form of a map of ancient Arabic tribal units, notwithstanding the difficulty of dating such groups (the very term 'ancient' used by him seemingly indicates a broad chronological range, from pre-Islamic times to the beginnings of traditional linguistic description, between the eighth and the ninth century CE). This map is reproduced below as Map 1.[3]

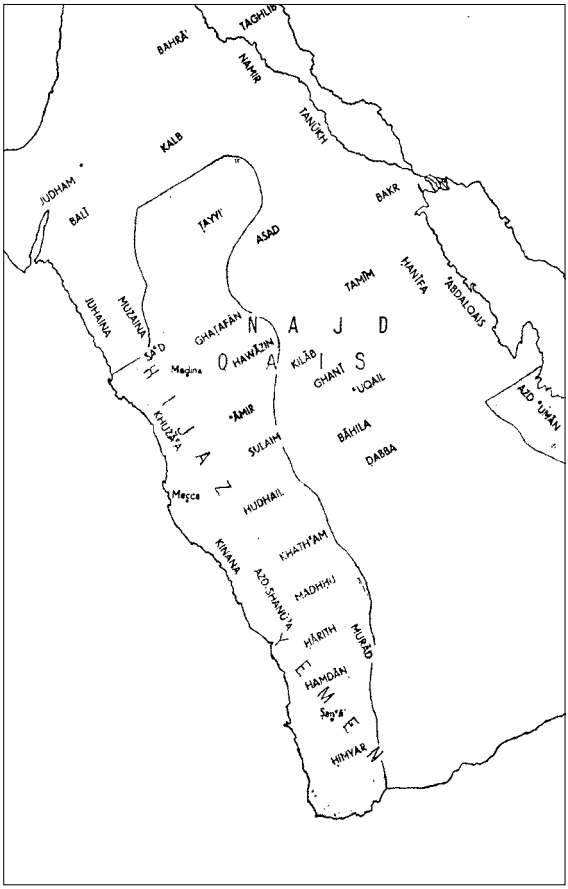
The equation of *luġa* and *qabīla* with 'dialect' and 'locality' for practical purposes is therefore quite approximate.

Turning to the data itself, the sources incorporate linguistic materials, including idols' names, that they describe as pre-Islamic. This textual fact raises the possibility that such linguistic materials reflect earlier stages of Arabic. However, it has long been noted that copyists or authors themselves (e.g. lexicographers and grammarians) may have interpolated the linguistic materials they described as pre-Islamic. The interpolation practised by lexicographers, grammarians, and copyists consisted in reshaping linguistic forms that originated in non-prestigious pre-Islamic dialects on the model of linguistic forms originating in the prestigious pre-Islamic dialects through which the Koran and Bedouin poetry were conveyed. Therefore, this kind of interpolation is basically a standardisation, and it is consistent with the aim of codifying a uniform language, the Arabic *koine* or *ʿarabiyya* (Cohen 1962; Corriente 1976).

The risk that linguistic materials described by the sources as pre-Islamic are actually interpolations diminishes when the focus is narrowed to a particular kind of lexical material. This material constitutes a bundle of lexical variants in which each prestigious and codified form can be paired with at least one non-prestigious and non-codified form. This kind of data is usually referred to as 'linguistic heterogeneity'. Precisely because they differ from standard

2 Cf. Rabin 1951, 25, 42, 54, 64, 79, 193.

3 Rabin (1951, ii) designates this map as "The West-Arabian Dialect Area". Actually, it also describes some East-Arabian dialects located in Najd, such as the dialect of Tamīm.



Map 1
The West-Arabian Dialect Area. Rabin 1951, ii.
© Taylor's Foreign Press

forms, the non-prestigious and non-codified variants occurring in a bundle of this sort are not likely to have been interpolated.[4] For instance, heterogeneous data has been transmitted by lexicographical sources when they describe the legendary Yemenite ancestor Saba'. In Ibn Sīda's (d. 458/1066) dictionary *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*,[5] a passage including a 'nunated' form of the nominal stem *šams-* 'sun' reads: '*abdu šamsin wa-huwa saba'u bnu yasǧub* ('Abd Šams, that is Saba', the son of Yasǧub; *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104).[6] In Našwān al-Ḥimyarī's (d.

4 Cf. also the philological principle of *lectio difficilior potior* and Corriente 1976, 66-9.

5 This work and its author will be introduced later.

6 All the diacritics in this text, case-markers included, are found in the critical edition of *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ* consulted here. This topic will be discussed in greater detail in due course.

573/1178) dictionary *Šams al-ʿUlūm*, a passage including an 'articled' form of the same stem reads: *sabaʾu l-akbaru bnu yasğuba bni yaʿruba bni qaḥṭāna bni hūdin al-nabiyyi ʿalay-hi l-salāmu li-anna-hu awwalu man ʿabada l-šamsa* (Sabaʾ the Elder, the son of Yasğub, the son of Qaḥṭān, the son of Yaʿrub, the son of Qaḥṭān, the son of the prophet Hūd (peace be upon him!), because he was the first to worship the sun; *Šams al-ʿUlūm*, 6: 3534).[7] Outside of lexicographical sources, the Koranic text, which linguistically tends to retain prestigious pre-Islamic features,[8] attests to the 'articled' form *l-šamsu/a/i* about thirty times, whereas the 'nunated' form *šams-an* is a *hapax legomenon*.[9] Evaluated against the Koranic linguistic background, the 'articled' form *l-šamsa* used by al-Ḥimyarī to describe Sabaʾ is prestigious, or codified, while the 'nunated' form *šamsin* reported by Ibn Sīda as a part of the theophoric name *ʿabdu šamsin* is not.

It is worth observing that the two sources describe the same referent, namely the ancestor Sabaʾ who worships a given god, with different words: one uses the noun phrase *ʿabdu šamsin*[10] and the other uses the sentence *man ʿabada l-šamsa*.[11] The two sources express this referent, which consists of the god worshipped by Sabaʾ, as *šamsin* and as *l-šamsa* – a 'nunated' and an 'articled' form, respectively. Thus, technically speaking, *šamsin* and *l-šamsa* (and, broadly speaking, the noun phrase and sentence that contain them) may be assumed to be semantically equivalent.[12] Hence, the semantic equivalence between the 'nunated' form *šamsin* and the 'articled' form *l-šamsa* implies that the former form bears the same definite meaning ('the sun') as the latter.

In conjunction with the non-codified nature of *šamsin*, which has been pointed out immediately above, the semantic equivalence between *šamsin* and *l-šamsa*[13] corroborates an interpretation of the

7 In the critical edition of *Šams al-ʿUlūm* consulted here, this text includes no diacritics.

8 The question of whether the Koran includes linguistic features from non-prestigious dialects is disputed; see Rippin 1981.

9 The relevant Koranic passage is *lā yarawna fī-hā šamsan wa-lā zamharīran* (therein they shall see neither sun nor bitter cold; Koran LXXVI, 13). The English translation is Arberry's.

10 The case-markers *u*, *i* in *ʿabdu šamsin* are found in the critical edition of *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ* consulted here.

11 The case-marker *a* in *l-šamsa* is inferred from the verb *ʿabada* that precedes (and governs) it in the original text.

12 Note that the semantic equivalence between *šamsin* and *l-šamsa* holds for their case-markers as well, to the extent that the case-marker *i* in *šamsin* is an instance of *genitivus obiectivus* (an underlying object), because of its governing noun *ʿabdu*, which is semantically equivalent to the sequence *man ʿabada*, and therefore partially has a verbal nature (not unlike a participle).

13 The formal difference between case-markers that is observed in the 'articled' and 'nunated' forms *šamsin* and *l-šamsa* should not obscure their semantic equivalence in

'articled' and 'nunated' forms related to *šams-*, as a whole, as an authentic instance of heterogeneity. From a diachronic perspective, this instance of heterogeneity in all likelihood dates back to pre-Islamic times, as evidenced by the fact that the Arabic lexicographers, among them Ibn Sīda, trace the 'nunated' form *šamsin* back to a remote Yemenite past (represented by the ancestor Saba').

Accordingly, this study will mainly take into account, among the pre-Islamic idols' names transmitted in the sources, those characterised by heterogeneity. Another instance of heterogeneity discussed in the literature is the definite article *(a)m-*, a Yemeni variant of *l-*, which Rabin (1951, 34-7) also illustrates using lexicographical sources. However, because none of the Classical Arabic idols' names that have been thoroughly studied in the literature bears a definite article *(a)m-*, this potential pre-Islamic variant of *l-* will not be dealt with here.

3 Methodology

This study investigates definiteness marking in the earlier (pre-Islamic) stages of Arabic, with particular reference to its areal distribution, through an onomastic corpus that results from the usual stages of lexicographical work: the definition, selection, collection, and classification of descriptive units. These stages are illustrated in what follows.

3.1 Definition of Descriptive Units

This stage of lexicographical work establishes a pre-Islamic idol's name as the basic descriptive unit, based on two criteria.

3.1.1 Unambiguous Pre-Islamic Referent

The first criterion is a semantically oriented or, more precisely, a referent-oriented, criterion of dating: a Classical Arabic name is regarded here as genuinely pre-Islamic if it unambiguously denotes a pre-Islamic referent. Names of idols indeed satisfy this criterion. A word of caution, however, is in order. Since this criterion is seman-

terms of objecthood: see the previous footnote. Also, their semantic equivalence in terms of definiteness requires an additional consideration: the definite meaning shared by *šamsin* and *l-šamsa* has a dedicated locus of realisation on the level of form, as will be clarified in the course of this study.

tic, it can only be used to confirm the pre-Islamic dating of an idol's name on the level of meaning (i.e. names of idols are, by definition, pre-Islamic). It says nothing about the authenticity of an idol's name on the level of form, which should be assessed on the grounds of heterogeneity, as discussed above.

3.1.2 Speaking Name

The second criterion is the semantic category of 'speaking name'. The sources record idols' names that are not only proper names, but also clearly denote animals, plants, or stars. In this respect, a pre-Islamic idol's name is often more than a theonym – it is also a zoonym, a phytonym, or a star name.[14] A pre-Islamic idol's name that exhibits a double semantic nature of this sort in synchrony is a speaking name. For instance, the pre-Islamic instance of heterogeneity *l-šamsa*, *šamsin*, discussed at the outset of this study, consists of lexical variants of a speaking name, to the extent that their reference to a star ('the sun') clearly co-exists with their reference to a deity ('the Sun'); this may be inferred from the semantic context in which they occur (the noun *ʿabdu* and the verb *ʿabada*, both denoting the act of worshipping).

The criterion of the speaking name is particularly relevant from a linguistic perspective for two reasons. First, this criterion highlights the concrete physical referent of a pre-Islamic idol's name, such as a zoomorphic idol (cf. *al-nasr* 'the vulture'), and so automatically locates it in a space, such as a shrine, thereby facilitating the description of a given idol's name in terms of areal distribution. Second, in an idol's name that has the form of a speaking name, definiteness marking appears to be overt and easily observable. In fact, on the one hand, in its function as a proper name (theonym), a pre-Islamic idol's name unambiguously conveys definiteness, as is exemplified, again, by the aforesaid pair of lexical variants *l-šamsa*, *šamsin* in the sense of 'the Sun'.[15] On the other hand, in its function as a common name (zoonym, phytonym, star-name), the same idol's name may exhibit a form that marks definiteness through an overt element that is usually observed in the pre-Islamic prestigious forms attested in the Koran: through the dedicated definite marker (or 'definite article') *l-*. Thus, since the lexical variant *l-šamsa* is still semantically transparent in the sense of 'the sun', it clearly shows that the well-known

14 Since the nineteenth century, this data has nourished a totemic approach to pre-Islamic religion; see Robertson Smith 1885 and, *contra*, Zaydān 1906. A recent study on this question is Dirbas 2019.

15 For simplicity's sake, in this paper the English translation of idols' names does not include any attempt to represent the case-marker.

strategy of definiteness marking through *l-* may also apply to a pre-Islamic idol's name.

Similarly, in its function as a common name, an idol's name corresponding to a speaking name may mark definiteness through another overt element that is perhaps less known: a definite marker *-n*. This is shown by the application of the commutation test to the aforesaid pair *l-šamsa*, *šamsin*, again in the sense of 'the sun'. This test reveals that, *ceteris paribus*, with respect to a constant surrounding context that consists of the lexical stem *šams* and an object case-marker, it is possible to replace the sound *l-* with the sound *-n*, with no change in the meaning of definiteness. It follows that in the pair *l-šamsa*, *šamsin*, definiteness is associated with, or marked by, *l-* in one case and *-n* in the other. The first result is in line with the traditional interpretation of *l-* as a definite marker for Arabic nouns in general, while the second result prompts an extension of this interpretation to *-n* as well. However, the interpretation of *-n* as a definite marker cannot be generalised, as it rests upon a definite reading of the nouns that exhibit this element. In the pre-structuralist era, Brockelmann (1908-13, 1: 466-74) must be credited as the first scholar to have provided a definite interpretation of *-n* along these restrictive lines.

3.1.3 Residual Issues

Overall, the criteria of the unambiguous pre-Islamic referent and of the speaking name define the descriptive unit of this study as a class of proper names of Arabic idols whose original concrete meaning (animal, plant, star) is still palpable, and whose intrinsic definiteness is conveyed by means of the markers *l-* or *-n*. For the sake of completeness, the corpus of this study will also include idols' names that comply with the first criterion only and whose pre-Islamic authenticity is thus less secure. The proper names of idols falling into this class do not necessarily denote animals, plants, or stars, nor do they exhibit a definite marker. An interesting fact concerning such idols' names is that their intrinsic definiteness may co-occur with diptotism. The idol's name *manātu*, attested as an hapax in the Koranic text, exemplifies the weak class of idols' names thus defined: *wa-manāta l-ṯālitata l-uḫrā* (and Manat the third, the other; Koran LIII, 20).[16] In particular, in this class, the intrinsic definiteness of an idol's name correlates with the lack of a definite marker attached to it. For practical purposes, this phenomenon will be referred to here as a 'zero definite marker'.[17]

16 Arberry's translation. This idol is traditionally said to have the form of a stone.

17 It is important to bear in mind that this kind of marker co-occurs with a diptotic case-marker (*manātu*, *manāta*).

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To put it briefly, the descriptive unit of this study is an idol's name that is genuinely pre-Islamic semantically and that tends to convey definiteness heterogeneously, through *l-*, *-n*, or a zero marker.

This descriptive unit is graphically rendered here in vocalised transcription, in order to clearly signal the instances of definiteness marking consisting of *-n* and zero (with the latter covert marker being inferred from the overt diptotic case-marker).

3.2 Selection of Descriptive Units

The selection of the descriptive units is mainly based on two criteria illustrated in the previous sections: the philological criterion of heterogeneity and an approximate version of the dialectological criterion of locality, in which a tribal unit may signify a locality (or, more precisely, the area semi-nomadically inhabited by the tribal unit). Accordingly, this study considers only those idols' names that in the sources appear to be heterogeneous on the level of form and that are mentioned in connection with tribal units (and possibly toponyms). A third selection criterion is practical: the idols' names of this sort should be attested in the sources in the form of lists. This criterion eases the retrieval of data.

3.3 Collection of Descriptive Units

The descriptive units are mainly drawn from two sources, which each present a list of idols' names. One source is the thematic dictionary *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ* (The Categorised [Lexicon]) by the Andalusi lexicographer Ibn Sīda (d. 458/1066),[18] the other is the genealogical work *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab* (The Extensive Genealogies of the Arabs) by the Andalusi polymath Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064).[19]

Ibn Sīda offers a list of thirty-two idols' names, including their lexical variants, which are indicative of dialectal heterogeneity, in compliance with the first selection criterion (*al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104-5); whereas Ibn Ḥazm offers a list of twenty-five idols' names, often mentioning the tribal units that worshipped the idols these names refer to, in compliance with the second selection criterion (*Ǧamharat*

18 Baalbaki (2014, 47-8) clarifies the nature of a thematic dictionary (*mubawwab*) in Arabic lexicography, with particular reference to *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*. Unless otherwise stated, the critical edition of this work is that of ʿAbdah and Al-Šanqiṭī.

19 Puerta Vílchez (2013, 752-3) offers a brief and updated survey of this work.

Ansāb al-ʿArab, 2: 491-4).[20] Sometimes, Ibn Ḥazm also mentions a toponym in connection with the idol worshipped by a given tribal unit, again in compliance with the second selection criterion. To a certain extent, the idols' names and related tribal units or toponyms included in Ibn Ḥazm's list are also attested in the antiquarian work *al-Muḥabbar* (The Adorned [Treatise]) by Ibn al-Kalbī's pupil Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245/859),[21] but the exact nature of this intertextual link has not yet been assessed with certainty (Tritton 1964, 472).[22]

In one case, notably the idol's name *l-filsu*/*l-falsu*, heterogeneity is not recorded by Ibn Sīda, but can be indirectly observed by comparing Ibn Sīda's and Ibn Ḥazm's lists, which record the forms *l-filsu* and *l-falsu*, respectively.[23] In another case, namely the idol's name *ʿabʿabun*/*ġabġabun*, the indication of the tribal unit is provided by Ibn Sīda rather than by Ibn Ḥazm. Similarly, while Ibn Sīda's list includes the idol's name *l-šāriqu*/*šarīqun*, probably meaning 'the dawn',[24] Ibn Ḥazm makes no mention of it, so this source cannot be used to locate the name geographically. However, the name of the pre-Islamic Qurayšite leader (and relative of Muḥammad) Al-Aḫnas b. Šarīq provides a cue for locating this idol's name, at least in the variant *šarīq*, in the neighbourhood of Mecca.

Two of the idols' names studied here must be singled out for comment.

In the first case, data has been collected from another source besides Ibn Sīda or Ibn Ḥazm. For the idol's name *bāğaru*/*bāğiru*, data concerning both heterogeneity and tribal units have been taken from the *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* (The Book of Idols) by Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 204/819), since the critical edition of *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ* consulted here proposes a double vocalisation for this idol's name with no principled explanation (whereas Ibn Ḥazm's list does not mention it at all).[25]

In the second case, the treatment of the idol's name *naṣrun*/*naṣṣaru* (?) is partly conjectural, since it relies upon the etymological identification of the form *naṣṣaru*, drawn from Ibn Sīda's list, with the form *naṣrun*, which Ibn Ḥabīb mentions in connection with the toponym

20 However, the distinction between the two lists is not so clear-cut, as Ibn Sīda also indicates the tribal units and/or toponyms related to some idols' names, as will become apparent shortly.

21 Cf. *al-Muḥabbar*, 315-19.

22 This topic falls beyond the scope of this paper. On the work *al-Muḥabbar*, see in particular Lichtenstädter 1939.

23 Generally speaking, the case-markers of the idols' names are drawn from the critical editions of *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ* and *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* consulted here. This topic is addressed in depth immediately below, in connection with the classification of idols' names.

24 According to Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933), who mentions both forms of this idol's name (*al-Ištiqāq*, 1: 305).

25 Cf. *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 63. Actually, this idol's name occurs in the copyist's additions to this work, included in the critical edition.

al-Ḥīra in his work *al-Muḥabbar*. Semantic and historical evidence provides some support for this etymological identification.

Semantically, the two forms have a common referent, to the extent that they both denote the name of a king (who would have been later deified and worshipped). Concerning the form *naṣrun*, in fact, Ibn Ḥabīb describes the tribal unit that bears this name as kings: *banī naṣrin mulūki l-ḥīra* (the Banū Naṣr, the kings of al-Ḥīra; *al-Muḥabbar*, 369). Turning to the form *naṣṣaru*, Fahd (1968, 134) remarks that it is usually attested as a part of the king's name *buḫt naṣṣar* (or *nuṣṣur*), the Arabic version of Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar. Historical sources report *buḫt naṣṣar* (or *nuṣṣur*) to be the founder of an Iraqi settlement of Arabs, called *ḥayr* (Retsö 2003, 157):

> The presence of Arabs in lower Mesopotamia as early as 700 BC may be remembered even by much later historians. In al-Ṭabarī's account of the earliest history of the *ʿarab* he says that 'Buḫt Nuṣṣur' settled some tradesmen of the *ʿarab* in a *ḥayr*, a fenced-in camp near al-Naǧaf in Iraq.[26]

Retsö (2003, 477) also remarks that the sources identify the *ḥayr* founded by the king *buḫt naṣṣar* (or *nuṣṣur*) with al-Ḥīra, which, it should be added here, Ibn Ḥabīb reports to have been later ruled by the aforesaid Banū Naṣr:

> [The purpose of the sources is] to tell about the origins of al-Ḥīra. The tendency is evident in the parallel between Nebuchadnezzar's *ḥayr*, the earliest Arab settlement in Iraq, and the name al-Ḥīra, and there is no doubt that the storyteller wants us to accept the identity between the two names.

If correct, the etymological identification of *naṣrun* with *naṣṣaru* satisfies the selection criteria adopted here, to the extent that it brings to light a certain heterogeneity for this king's and, later on, idol's name, as well as an accurate indication of the locality in which it was worshipped.

3.4 Classification of Descriptive Units

The classification of the idols' names reported in Ibn Sīda's and Ibn Ḥazm's lists rests on two parameters: the tribal unit or, whenever available, the toponym that is related to a given idol's name; and the kind of definite marker the idol's name bears, namely *l-*, *-n*, or zero.

26 Retsö's transliteration has been adapted to match the conventions of this paper.

The latter marker co-occurs with a diptotic case-marker. What makes this kind of classification possible is an intertextual fact: Ibn Sīda's and Ibn Ḥazm's lists share seventeen idols' names, so in principle, for each of the names in this subset a definite marker can be paired with geographical information.[27] These seventeen idols' names form the onomastic corpus of this study, which will yield only provisional results because of its limited size.[28] The seventeen idols' names shared by the two lists can be compiled in a separate list, which uses the following abbreviations concerning heterogeneity and their sources:

A: lexical variant originally occurring in Ibn Sīda's list
B: lexical variant originally occurring in Ibn Ḥazm's list
C: lexical variant also occurring in Ibn al-Kalbī's *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*
D: lexical variant originally occurring in Ibn Ḥabīb's *al-Muḥabbar*

The idols' names are itemised accordingly as numbers 1 through 17 in the new list; their order of mention (and itemisation) follows Ibn Sīda's list in *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*. In the critical edition of this work consulted here, the idols' names under scrutiny often exhibit case-markers, and so do the corresponding idols' names occurring in the critical editions of *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* and *al-Muḥabbar*. By contrast, in the critical edition of *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab* consulted here, Ibn Ḥazm's list of idols names never includes case-markers.

The critical editions of *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, and *al-Muḥabbar* differ as to the case marking of two idols' names: the critical edition of *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ* reads *bāǧaru* or *bāǧiru*, whereas the critical edition of *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* reads *bāǧarun*, *bāǧirun* instead. Similarly, while the critical edition of *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ* reads *suwāʿun* (the form at-

27 Ibn Sīda and Ibn Ḥazm were coevals and each spent part of his scholarly life at the court of Denia. These biographical facts suggest that a personal exchange of knowledge between them may explain the intertextual commonalities between the two lists of idols' names they drew up. However, neither Andalusi scholar explicitly mentions the other when spelling out the sources of his list. This topic warrants further investigation, which lies beyond the scope of this paper.

28 A recent study by Bellino (2018) suggests that the corpus of idols' names under investigation may be expanded. When dealing with the idol Hubal, Bellino (2018, 118) observes that in the *maġāzī* literature, "The style of naming is generally al-Hubal (with article)". In pre-Islamic times, this variant probably co-existed with the diptotic variant *hubalu*, attested in *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104 and other sources. If so, the resulting pair *l-hubal(u)*/*hubalu* would be an instance of heterogeneity. This state of affairs raises the possibility of an areal description of the idol's name *l-hubal(u)*/*hubalu*, provided that the tribal units associated with its variants in the sources are better understood. For instance, Ibn Ḥazm mentions several tribal units in connection with the variant *hubalu* (cf. *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 492) and, broadly speaking, the *maġāzī* literature includes references not only to idols' names, but also to the tribal units worshipping them: "Some of the *ġazawāt* narrate expeditions against tribes that own or worship specific idols" (Bellino 2018, 120).

tested in the Koran), the critical edition of *al-Muḥabbar* reads *suwāʿu* instead.[29] In both cases, differences in case-marking amount to an alternation between, on the one hand, a triptotic case-marker that co-occurs with the definite marker *-n* (*bāǧa/irun*, *suwāʿun*) and, on the other hand, a diptotic case-marker that co-occurs with a zero definite marker (*bāǧa/iru*, *suwāʿu*). Precisely the non-prestigious nature of this alternation is good evidence in favour of interpreting it as an instance of authentic heterogeneity rather than of interpolation. Had the author or copyist interpolated the original text, he would have introduced the prestigious definite marker *l-*, which is, however, lacking in this alternation. It should be added here that the critical editions of *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, and *al-Muḥabbar* are not dependent on each other, at least with respect to the two idols' names under scrutiny.

As regards *al-Muḥabbar*, its editor Lichtenstädter explicitly states, in connection with the idol's name *suwāʿu*, that the established text reflects the original manuscript.[30] Turning to *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, its editors ʿAbdah and al-Šanqiṭī were unable to consult the manuscript of *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* later discovered by Zaki Pasha. The latter, in turn, did not avail himself of the critical edition of *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ* by ʿAbdah and al-Šanqiṭī when establishing the text of *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, since he never mentions Ibn Sīda among his Arabic sources.[31]

On these grounds, the following itemisation of the seventeen idols' names under scrutiny incorporates all the case-markers observable in the critical editions of *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, and *al-Muḥabbar* and records the source of each:

1 ḏū l-ḫalaṣati (A, C), ḏū l-ḫalaṣah (B)
A *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104 (l-ḫalaṣati)
B *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 493
C *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 34-5

29 See the list below for detailed references. These differences in case-marking do not seem to be typographical errors. In 2006 Hindāwī issued a new edition of *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ* that is based on the same Cairo manuscript as the critical edition consulted here, by ʿAbdah and Al-Šanqiṭī (the Cairo manuscript is the only integral manuscript of this work). Although Hindāwī's edition is not critical, it nonetheless avowedly aims at correcting typographical errors and, generally speaking, at improving the quality of ʿAbdah and Al-Šanqiṭī's critical edition (*al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, 1: 7, ed. Hindāwī). As in ʿAbdah and Al-Šanqiṭī's edition, Hindāwī's edition reads *bāǧiru* and *suwāʿun* (*al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, 6: 145, ed. Hindāwī).

30 See *al-Muḥabbar*, 369. In this passage, the manuscript and the critical edition read *ʾn swāʿ* in *scriptio defectiva*. It is evident that this passage attests the name of the idol in question without a case-marker. Still, it is equally evident that a diptotic case-marker is easily inferred from the particle *ʾn* (*inna*) that precedes the form *swāʿ*, as the consonantal *ductus* of the latter only allows for the *scriptio plena suwāʿa*.

31 Zaki Pasha mentions the Andalusi lexicographer only cursorily and indirectly when quoting an extract from another work, the late dictionary *Tāǧ al-ʿArūs*. See *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 108.

2 l-filsu (A), l-fals (B)
A *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104 (l-filsu)
B *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 493

3 ʿabʿabun (A), ġabġabun (A), l-ġabġabu (C)
A *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104 (ʿabʿabun, ġabġabun)
C *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 20 (l-ġabġabu)

4 bāğaru, bāğiru (A), bāğarun, bāğirun (C)
A *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104 (bāğaru, bāğiru)
C *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 63 (bāğarun, bāğirun)

5 šamsun (A), šums (B)
A *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104 (šamsun)
B *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 493

6 l-ʿuzzā (A, B, C)
A *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104
B *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 491
C *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 18

7 naṣṣaru (A), naṣr (D) ?
A *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104 (naṣṣaru)
D *al-Muḥabbar*, 369

8 hubalu (C), hubal (B, C)
A *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104
B *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 492
C *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 27 (hubalu)

9 l-šāriqu, šarīqun (A)
A *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104 (l-šāriqu, šarīqun)

10 isāfun (A, B, C)
A *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 105 (isāfun)
B *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 492
C *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 29 (isāfun)

11 nāʾila (A, B), nāʾilatu (C)
A *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 105
B *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 492
C *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 29 (nāʾilatu)

12 saʿdun (A), saʿd (B)
A *al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 105 (saʿdun)
B *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 492

13 yaġūṯu (A, C), yaġūṯu (B)
A *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 105 (yaġūṯu)
B *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 492
C *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 10, 57 (yaġūṯu)

14 yaʿūqu (A, C), yaʿūq (B)
A *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 105 (yaʿūqu)
B *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 492
C *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 10, 57 (yaʿūqu)

15 suwāʿun (A, C), suwāʿ (B), suwāʿu (D)
A *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 105 (suwāʿun)
B *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 492
C *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 10, 57 (suwāʿun)
D *al-Muḥabbar*, 312 (suwāʿu)

16 nuhmun (A, C)
A *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 105 (nuhmun)
C *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, 39-40 (nuhmun)

17 nasrun (A, B), l-nasr (B)
A *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 105 (nasrun, l-nasru)
B *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 492

A classification of the idols' names attested in Ibn Sīda's and Ibn Ḥazm's lists, which is carried out according to the two parameters of tribal unit or toponym and form of definiteness marking, results not only in a reduced list of seventeen items, but also in three major categories that basically represent three different facets of one and the same phenomenon – namely, the areal distribution of a given kind of pre-Islamic definite marker. The first, second, and third categories illustrate the areal distribution of *l-*, *-n* and zero, respectively. Each category consists of entries that generally have the form of a pair: idol's name; tribal unit(s). In addition, the entry may include, whenever available, a toponym, enclosed in brackets.

A different manner of classifying these lexical materials concentrates on the tribal unit or, sporadically, the toponym, and presents all the attested kinds of pre-Islamic definite markers within the area represented by a given tribal unit or toponym. This category consists of entries having the form of a pair: tribal unit (or toponym); idol's name (or idols' names). Such entries are arranged in geographical order from north to south. The four categories are illustrated in detail in what follows. An asterisk indicates a tribal unit that is not included on Rabin's (1951, ii) map. Capital letters, as explained above, indicate the sources attesting to a given idol's name. For simplicity's sake, the idols' names included in the four categories are present-

ed in full vocalization with no indication of the critical editions that exhibit their case markers. For this aspect, the reader is referred to the full list of seventeen idols' names presented above.

3.4.1 Areal Distribution of the Definite Marker l-

The first category includes the following entries:
1 ḏū l-ḫalaṣati (A, B, C); Baǧīla* + Ḫaṯʿam + Ḥāriṯ b. Kaʿb* + Ǧarm* + Zubayd* + ġawṯ* + Banū Hilāl*[32]
2 l-filsu (A), l-falsu (B); Ṭayyiʾ + Banū Bawlān[33] (Fayd, Naǧd)
3 l-ġabġabu; Quḍāʿa*
6 l-ʿuzzā (A, B, C); Ġaṭafān + Banū Ṣirma* + Qurayš + Ġanī + Bāhila (Naḫla)
9 l-šāriqu (A); none[34]
17 l-nasru (A); none[35]

3.4.2 Areal Distribution of the Definite Marker n-

The second category includes the following entries:
3 ʿabʿabun (A), ġabġabun (A, C); Quḍāʿa*
4 bāǧarun, bāǧirun (A, C); Azd + Quḍāʿa* + Ṭayyiʾ[36]
5 šamsun (A), šumsun (B); Banū Tamīm + Ḍabba + Taym* + ʿUkl* + Udd* + Banū Usayyid + Qurayš + Sabaʾ
7 naṣrun (D); Banū Naṣr (al-Ḥīra)?
9 šarīqun (A); Qurayš
10 isāfun (A, B, C); Qurayš (Ṣafā)
12 saʿdun (A, B); Huḏayl + Banū Kināna (Falāt)
15 suwāʿun (A, B, C, D); Banū Kināna (Naʿmān) + Huḏayl + Muzayna + Qays ʿAylān*
16 nuhmun (A, B, C); Muzayna
17 nasrun (A, B); Ḥimyar (Naǧrān)

32 In Ibn Ḥazm's list, all the tribes worshipping this idol are associated with both Mecca and the quite broad toponym Yaman.

33 This tribal unit is a subdivision of the previous one, located in the same area, as will be discussed later.

34 Only the lexical variant *šarīqun* is associated with a tribal unit. It is likely that the worship of *l-šāriqu* was widespread among all Arabs, as may be inferred from the following statement by Ibn Durayd: *wa-qad sammat al-ʿarabu ʿabda l-šāriq* (the Arab used the proper name *ʿabdu l-šāriq*; *al-Ištiqāq*, 1: 305).

35 Only the lexical variant *nasrun* is associated with a tribal unit.

36 Ibn al-Kalbī, the source mentioning these tribal units, reports that each of them used both lexical variants (*bāǧarun*, *bāǧirun*).

3.4.3 Areal Distribution of the Zero Definite Marker

The third category includes the following entries:
4 bāğaru, bāğiru (A, C); Azd + Quḍāʿa* + Ṭayyiʾ[37]
7 naṣṣaru (A); none?[38]
8 hubalu (A, B, C); Qurayš + Banū Kināna (Kaʿba, Makka)
11 naʾilatu (A, B, C); Qurayš (Marwa)
13 yaġūṯu (A, B, C); Madḥiğ + Ḍibāb (Nağrān)
14 yaʿūqu (A, B, C); Arḥab* + Hamdān + Ḫawlān*
15 suwāʿu (A, B, C); Banū Kināna (Naʿmān) + Huḍayl + Muzayna + Qays ʿAylān*

3.4.4 Definiteness Marking by Locality

The fourth category includes the following entries:
I? Banū Naṣr (al-Ḥīra); naṣrun? (D) + naṣṣaru (A)
II Quḍāʿa; ġabġabun (A, C) + bāğaru, bāğiru (A, C)
III Ṭayyiʾ; l-filsu (A), l-falsu (B) + bāğaru, bāğiru (A, C)
IV Muzayna; suwāʿu (A, B, C) + nuhmun (A, B, C)
V Mecca; l-ʿuzzā (A, B, C)[39] + hubalu, naʾilatu (A, B, C) + šarīqun (A), isāfun (A, B, C)[40]
VI Huḍayl; saʿdun (A, B), suwāʿun (A, B, C, D) + suwāʿu (A, B, C)
VII Banū Kināna; hubalu (A, B, C) + saʿdun (A, B), suwāʿun (A, B, C, D) + suwāʿu (A, B, C)
VIII Nağrān; yaġūṯu (A, B, C) + nasrun (A, B)

4 Results and Discussion

From the observation of the previously defined categories (which basically consist of sets of pairs), and especially of the fourth one, some patterns of areal distribution emerge. They remain tentative because of the limited size of the corpus.

37 Ibn al-Kalbī, the source mentioning these tribal units, reports that each of them used both lexical variants (*bāğaru*, *bāğiru*).

38 Only the form *naṣrun*, which is regarded here as a probable lexical variant of *naṣṣaru*, is associated with a tribal unit and a toponym.

39 In their lists of idols' names, neither Ibn Sīda nor Ibn Ḥazm mentions the form *l-ʿuzzā* in connection with Mecca. Nonetheless, the idol's name *l-ʿuzzā* can be associated with this toponym on the basis of the tribal unit mentioned by Ibn Ḥazm, the Qurayš, as well as on the basis of the toponym Naḫla (i.e. Naḫlat al-Šāmiyya), which Ibn Ḥazm reports to be the place of worship of this idol: Naḫlat al-Šāmiyya is a location near Mecca.

40 More accurately, Ibn Ḥazm mentions the toponym Ṣafā in connection with the form *isāfun*.

Another factor that renders these patterns tentative is the availability of geographical information. In fact, not all of the tribal units that Ibn Sīda's and Ibn Ḥazm's lists associate with idols' names, and the related definite markers, are among the tribal units that Rabin (1951) placed on his tribal map of the Arabian peninsula (see Map 1). The location of some tribal units named in the lists thus remains uncertain. However, this drawback is partly compensated by the ancient toponyms that the same lists associate with some idols' names, since the position of these toponyms on the map of the Arabian peninsula is generally well known.

Likewise, the location of some tribal units mentioned in Ibn Ḥazm's (or Ibn Sīda's) list has been the object of careful investigation, as exemplified by Kister's (2002, 21-2) description of the Banū Usayyid's settlement in Yamamah (Najd).

The tentative patterns resulting from the examination of the categorised corpus of idols' names can be explicated according to two different viewpoints, which are referred to here as the 'static' and the 'dynamic' scenarios.

4.1 The 'Static' Scenario

The areal distribution of the different kinds of definite markers, as they are attested in the idols' names, may be analysed without considering the communication structure[41] of the Arabian peninsula at their time. The resulting picture is static, and the analysis can pay particular attention to the criterion of locality, in which case three main patterns of areal distribution seem to emerge. They are quantitatively sizeable enough to qualify as plausible, as they involve six, five, and four tribal units, or toponyms. In order of quantitative importance, these patterns are the clustering of the zero definite marker (co-occurring with diptotism) in Southern Hijaz; the coexistence (or competition) between the definite marker *-n* and the zero definite marker, with apparently no areal clustering; and the clustering of the definite marker *l-* on the border between Northern/Central Hijaz and Northern/Central Najd. Turning the focus of analysis to the criterion of heterogeneity, an interesting phenomenon appears to manifest itself only in Mecca. This is the clustering of all three kinds of definite markers that are attested in the corpus of idols' names. Such a unique and concomitant attestation of the three definite markers is likely to be a pattern in and of itself. A fourth pattern of areal distribution, therefore, emerges in Mecca.

41 By 'communication structure', the sum of the centres of radiation and of their diffusion areas is meant. Ingham (1982) offers a survey of the communication structure of the modern North East Arabian dialects.

The four tentative patterns sketched out so far are discussed in detail in what follows, and illustrated in Map 2. Idols' names are represented on the map as numbers according to the above itemisation. Other symbols include L and *N*, for an idol's name bearing, respectively, the definite marker *l-* or *-n*, as well as a box, for an idol's name bearing the zero definite marker that co-occurs with the diptotic marker.

4.1.1 Southern Hijaz

The clustering of the zero definite marker (co-occurring with diptotism) is presumably located in Southern Hijaz. This pattern involves six localities, all but one corresponding to tribal units (the only exception being Naǧrān):

Huḏayl	+ Banū Kināna	+ Azd	+ Madḥiǧ	+ Hamdān	+ Naǧrān
suwāʿu	+ hubalu, suwāʿu	+ bāǧaru, bāǧiru	+ yaġūṯu	+ yaʿūqu	+ yaġūṯu

4.1.2 Areal Coexistence

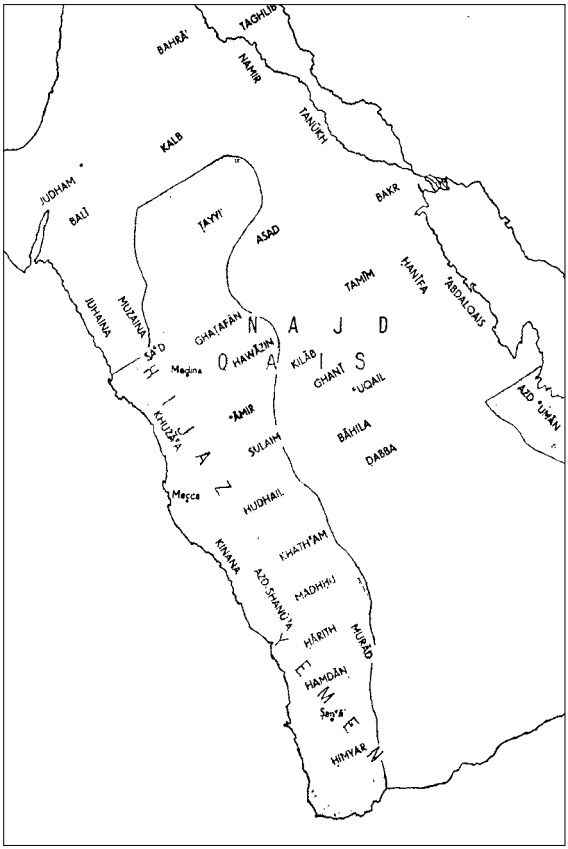
The coexistence of (or competition between) the definite marker *-n* and the zero definite marker (co-occurring with diptotism) is presumably observed in five localities, all but one corresponding to tribal units (the only exception being Naǧrān). Perhaps this pattern can be expanded to include the additional locality of al-Ḥīra (or Banū Naṣr), if the etymological identification of *naṣrun* and *naṣṣaru* is correct. In any case, at the present stage of research, this pattern correlates with no areal clustering:

Quḍāʿa*	+ Muzayna	+ Huḏayl	+ Banū Kināna	+ Naǧrān	(+ al-Ḥīra)
bāǧaru, bāǧiru	+ suwāʿu	+ suwāʿu	+ hubalu, suwāʿu	+ yaġūṯu	(+ naṣṣaru)
ġabġabun	+ suwāʿun	+ suwāʿun	+ suwāʿun	+ nasrun	(+ naṣrun?)
	+ nuhmun	+ saʿdun	+ saʿdun		

4.1.3 Northern/Central Hijaz - Northern/Central Najd Border

The clustering of the definite marker *l-* is presumably located on the border between Northern/Central Hijaz and Northern/Central Najd. This pattern involves four localities, all corresponding to tribal units:

Ṭayyiʾ	+ Ġaṭafān	+ Ġanī	+ Bāhila
l-filsu, l-falsu	+ l-ʿuzzā	+ l-ʿuzzā	+ l-ʿuzzā



Map 2
Areal distribution of definiteness marking. Based on Rabin 1951, ii. © Taylor's Foreign Press

4.1.4 Mecca

The clustering of all three definite markers – *l-*, *-n*, and zero (the latter co-occurring with diptotism) – is located in Mecca:

Qurayš	+ Makka, Marwa	+ Qurayš, Qurayš, Ṣafā
l-ʿuzzā	+ hubalu, nāʾilatu	+ šamsun, šarīqun, isāfun

4.2 The 'Dynamic' Scenario

The communication structure of a major geographical region consists of all the observable centres of radiation, as well as their diffusion areas. The areal distribution of the different kinds of definite markers, as they are attested in the idols' names, may be investigated by taking into consideration the communication structure of the pre-

Islamic Arabian peninsula at their time. A survey of this sort would yield a dynamic picture of their areal distribution. In practice, however, in the sources consulted here, direct clues to a communication structure that might have facilitated the lexical transfer of pre-Islamic idols' names are, perhaps expectedly, very scanty. A case in point is Ibn Ḥazm's brief description of a battle and a migration, in consequence of which a tribal unit carried with it an idol and, as it were, the latter's name. In fact, after stating that *yaġūṯu kāna li-madḥiǧ* (the Madḥiǧ had an idol named Yaġūṯ; *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 492), Ibn Ḥazm adds: *fa-qātalat-hum ʿalay-hi banū ʿuẓayfin ḥattā harabū bi-hi ilā naǧrān* (the Banū ʿUẓayf struggled with them for [the custody of] that idol, so that they [*scil*. the Madḥiǧ] fled to Naǧrān bearing it with them; *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 492).

Given the scarcity of similar accounts, the only alternative left for attaining some knowledge of the communication structure of pre-Islamic Arabia is to gather indirect clues. In particular, it is proposed here to glean them from the pre-Islamic religious practice of *sidāna*, which literally means 'shrine-keeping'. In basic terms, a *sādin* was at once the minister of an idol's shrine and an older inhabitant of the area in which that idol was located. By contrast, the idol's worshippers may represent subsequent ethnic strata, especially when they belong to a tribal unit other than the *sādin*'s.

Interestingly, Robertson Smith ([1890-91] 1995), 47) illustrates this practice by citing the Madḥiǧ and their dramatic historical vicissitudes involving the idol Yaġūṯ, as reported above:

> In Arabia we do not find priests at every sacred spot, but only where there is a temple with treasure and equipments and especially an idol (*waṯan*, *ṣanam*). The names used for priests show this (*sādin*, *ḥāǧib*). The priesthood was hereditary in certain families, whose property the sanctuary was, and this was often a noble family, for it was noble families, we are told, who had idols of their own. In some cases, it was a family foreign to the tribe that held the land, a relic of older inhabitants. Such families had difficulties in maintaining their privilege. For the idol Yaġūṯ there was a battle.[42]

On these grounds, the toponym or tribal unit that the sources describe as the milieu or the ministers of a particular practice of *sidāna* roughly corresponds, from a linguistic perspective, to the place of origin of a given idol's name, and especially of the definite marker carried by it. That is, technically speaking, the milieu or the ministers of a particular practice of *sidāna* corresponds to a centre of radia-

42 The transliteration system used by Robertson Smith ([1890-91] 1995) and by the modern editor of his *Lectures*, Day, has been adapted to match the conventions of this paper.

tion of the definite marker carried by an idol's name. Conversely, all the remaining toponyms and tribal units that the sources associate with the same idol's name with no mention of the practice of *sidāna* can be tentatively regarded as points along a line of communication, such as a trade route or a seasonal migration route, or as localities in a diffusion area through which that idol's name and the definite marker carried by it spread because of mutually related social factors that were typical of the pre-Islamic *Lebensform*: semi-nomadism, trade, religion, and so on.

Therefore, some fragments of the communication structure of pre-Islamic Arabia, which revolve around its definite markers, may in principle emerge if the researcher introduces the following simple distinction within the tribal units, or toponyms, attested in Ibn Ḥazm's and, sporadically, Ibn Sīda's list: tribal units or toponyms that textually co-occur with the root *s-d-n*, versus those that co-occur with other roots, such as *ʿ-b-d* 'to worship' or *k-w-n* followed by *li-*, in the sense of 'to have', and the like.

In practice, the researcher fine-tunes the already existing classification of descriptive units in two steps. First, he focuses on any entry in the first three categories that includes more than one tribal unit (or toponym). Then, within an entry of this kind, he isolates the tribal unit (or toponym) that is associated with the root *s-d-n* from those that are not.

This simple distinction reshapes the pair of which such an entry originally consists into a triad: idol's name; tribal unit(s) associated with *s-d-n*; and tribal unit(s) associated with *ʿ-b-d*, *k-w-n* or similar roots.[43] Besides this triad, the entry may include, whenever available, a toponym enclosed in brackets.

Table 1 illustrates the reformulation of the first three categories according to the criterion of *sidāna*.

43 In the sources consulted here, the root *k-w-n* may be followed by the prepositions *bi*, *fī*, which are in turn followed by a toponym or a tribal unit, in the usual sense of 'to be at'. While this instance of *k-w-n* is useful for locating idols' names in the Arabian peninsula in the study of the 'static' scenario, as discussed above, it is not relevant to the 'dynamic' scenario under scrutiny, as it may ambiguously refer to a centre of radiation as well as to a diffusion area. Accordingly, in what follows only the root *k-w-n* followed by *li* ('have') will be taken into account. For simplicity's sake, the construction '*k-w-n* followed by *li*' will be referred to hereafter as *k-w-n*.

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Table 1 Conjectural communication structure involving pre-Islamic idols' names

Definiteness marking			**Centre of radiation**	**Diffusion area**		
Marker	**Item**	**Idol's name**	**s-d-n**	**k-w-n**	**ʿ-b-d**	**Other roots**
l-	2	*l-filsu*, *l-falsu*	Banū Bawlān (Fayd, Naǧd)		Ṭayyiʾ	
	6	*l-ʿuzzā*	Banū Ṣirma (Naḫla)		Ġaṭafān	Qurayš*
						Ġanī
						Bāhila
-n	5	*šumsun*, *šamsun*	Banū Usayyid	Banū Tamīm	Qurayš	
				Ḍabba	Saba'**	
				Taym*		
				ʿUkl*		
				Udd*		
zero	13	*yaġūṯu*	Madḥiǧ			Ḍibāb (Naǧrān)***
zero, -n	15	*suwāʿu*, *suwāʿu n*	Huḏayl (Naʿmān)	Banū Kināna		
				Muzayna		
				Qays ʿAylān*		

* The root is ʿ-ẓ-m: *tuʿaẓẓimu-hā* (they worship [*scil.* al-ʿUzzā]; *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 491).

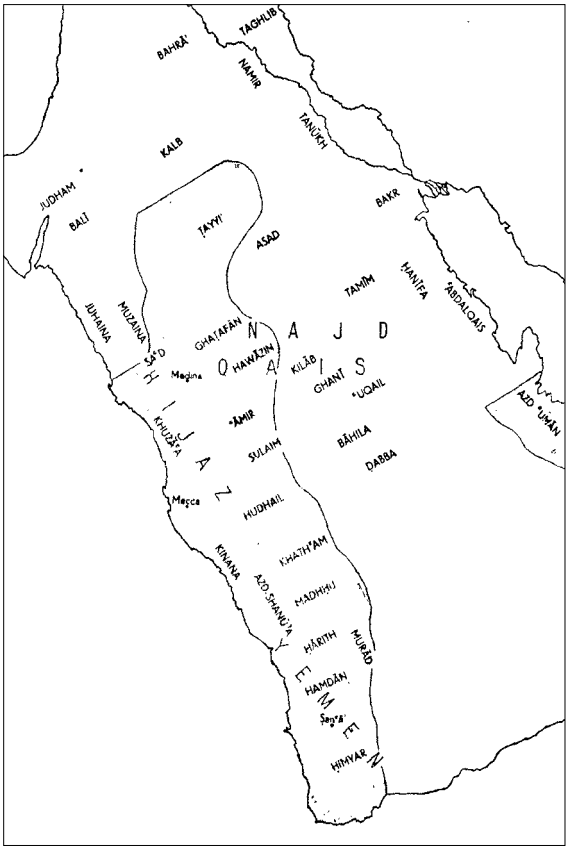
** In this case, the act of worship is expressed through the noun *ʿabd* rather than through a verb derived from the same root, and it is implied in the personal name *ʿabd šams* (*al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104).

*** The root is q-r-r: *aqarru-hu* (they installed [*scil.* Yaġūṯ]; *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 492).

Under the 'dynamic' scenario, two major tentative patterns of areal distribution seemingly emerge, each consisting of a centre of radiation and a related diffusion area. They can be inferred from the geographical information gathered from the sources consulted here. In both of these patterns the centre of radiation is, as discussed above, a place related to a given idol's *sidāna*, whereas its diffusion area corresponds to the areal clustering of tribal units and/or toponyms. One tentative pattern consists of a centre of radiation of the zero definite marker that co-occurs with diptotism and is clustered in Southern Hijaz. Another tentative pattern consists of a centre of radiation of the definite marker *l-* in Northern Hijaz that is clustered at the border between Northern/Central Hijaz and Northern/Central Najd. Actually, from the geographical information available, another centre of radiation of the definite marker *l-* also seems to emerge, which is perhaps located in Central Hijaz, notably in Mecca, but its diffusion area, if any, is hard to discern.

If not only geographical but also genealogical information is considered, a third pattern seems to show up, which is more tentative than the previous ones. Such a pattern consists of a centre of radiation of the definite marker *-n*, perhaps located in Yemen, with its diffusion area in Najd.

The three tentative patterns sketched out so far are discussed in detail in what follows, and illustrated in Map 3.



Map 3
Centres of radiation of definiteness marking. Based on Rabin 1951, ii.
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4.2.1 Centre of Radiation of the Zero Definite Marker Plus Diptotism

In Southern Hijaz, a centre of radiation of the zero definite marker, co-occurring with diptotism, corresponds to the tribal unit Madḥiǧ, whereas the clustering of the same co-occurring markers is observed in its neighbourhoods and specifically in four localities. All but one of these localities is a tribal unit (the only exception being Naǧrān), and all four correspond to the diffusion area of the centre of radiation under scrutiny. Another possible centre of radiation of these co-occurring markers corresponds to the tribal unit Huḏayl, although it is not entirely clear whether it is located in Central or Southern Hijaz. Nor is it clear whether the Huḏayl are also a centre of radiation of *-n*:

(Huḏayl)	+ Banū Kināna	+ Azd	+ Madḥiǧ	+ Hamdān	+ Nağrān
suwāʿu	+ suwāʿu	+ bāğaru, bāğiru	+ yaġūṯu	+ yaʿūqu	+ yaġūṯu
(suwāʿun)					
(Centre)			Centre		

4.2.2 Centre of Radiation of the Definite Marker l-

In Northern Hijaz, a centre of radiation of the definite marker *l-* corresponds to the tribal unit Banū Bawlān, a tribal subdivision of the Ṭayyiʾ, whereas the clustering of the same marker is observed in its neighbouring regions, and specifically in three localities at the border between Northern/Central Hijaz and Northern/Central Najd. These localities actually are all tribal units, and they correspond to the diffusion area of the centre of radiation under scrutiny. For simplicity's sake, in what follows the Banū Bawlān are represented as Ṭayyiʾ:

Ṭayyiʾ	+ Ġaṭafān	+ Ġanī	+ Bāhila
l-filsu, l-falsu	+ l-ʿuzzā	+ l-ʿuzzā	+ l-ʿuzzā
Centre			

The relation between the centre of radiation under scrutiny and the other conjectural centre of radiation of the same marker, which is associated with the idol's name *l-ʿuzzā* and is perhaps located in Naḫla, in the proximity of Mecca, is not clear. Nor is it clear whether the tribal units of Ḫaṯʿam and Ḥāriṯ (which are both associated with the idol's name *ḏū l-ḫalaṣati*) represent the diffusion area of the latter centre of radiation.

4.2.3 Centre of Radiation of the Definite Marker n-

According to Ibn Ḥazm, the tribal unit responsible for the *sidāna* of the idol Šams (*šumsun*) was the Banū Usayyid, whose genealogy he reports as follows: *sadanatu-hā min banī usayyidin bni ʿamrin bni tamīm* (the ministers of Šams were [chosen] among the Banū Usayyid, the son of ʿAmr, the son of Tamīm; *Ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 493).[44]

In the genealogical tradition, two brothers sharing the eponym Tamīm, namely Arāšah and Ġawṯ, are said to have migrated to Yemen, and Ġawṯ is also said to be of Yemenite descent through his moth-

44 That the Banū Usayyid worshipped Šams in the form of an idol is apparent from Ibn Ḥabīb's description: *kāna la-hu bayt* (it was a betyle; *al-Muḥabbar*, 317).

er, a woman of the Ǧurhum.[45] According to Kister (1965, 156), the genealogical details concerning the Yemenite migration or origin of Arāšah and Ġawṯ "point clearly to their connection with South Arabia". The question, therefore, arises whether similar information is available concerning the Tamīm and his descent: the eponym ʿAmr and especially the eponym Usayyid. Ibn al-Kalbī provides an affirmative answer to this question, reporting that Tamīm married Sulmā, a Yemenite woman; and that their son ʿAmr in turn married ʿAmra, a Yemenite woman as well, who gave birth to Usayyid:

Tamīm,
Sulmā (Yemen) > ʿAmr,
ʿAmra (Yemen) > Usayyid

In greater detail, Ibn al-Kalbī assigns Tamīm, ʿAmr, and Usayyid a paternal lineage that he traces back to the Arab's Ismailite, or Northern, ancestor ʿAdnān (*Ǧamharat al-Nasab*, 1: 15-20, 189, 191, 251-2):[46]

ʿAdnān > Maʿadd > Nizār > Muḍar > Ilyās > Ṭābiḫah > Udd > Murr > ʿAmr > Usayyid

Ibn al-Kalbī also reports that Tamīm's wife, and ʿAmr's mother (as well as Usayyid's grand-mother), was Sulmā bint Kaʿb bin ʿAmr,[47] the sister of al-Ḥāriṯ bin Kaʿb bin ʿAmr (*Ǧamharat al-Nasab*, 1: 191). Moreover, Ibn al-Kalbī traces back al-Ḥāriṯ bin Kaʿb bin ʿAmr, and hence, indirectly, her sister Sulmā, to the Yemenite, or Southern, ancestor Qaḥṭān (*Nasab Maʿadd wa-l-Yaman al-Kabīr*, 1: 131-3, 267-8):

Qaḥṭān > Yaʿrub > Yašǧub > Sabaʾ > Kahlān > Zayd > ʿArīb > Yašǧub > Zayd > Udad > Mālik (Madḥiǧ)[48] > Ḫālid[49] > ʾUla > ʿAmr > Kaʿb > al-Ḥāriṯ, Sulmā

45 See also Kister (1965, 154). Among the primary sources quoted by him is *al-Maʿārif* (75-6) by Ibn Qutayba (276/889).

46 Although this issue cannot be satisfactorily explored here, Ibn Ḥabīb and Ibn Ḥazm seem to follow the genealogical account of Ibn al-Kalbī. An intertextual link between Ibn Ḥabīb's and Ibn al-Kalbī's work is very likely, one being the pupil of the other. An intertextual link between Ibn Ḥamz's and Ibn al-Kalbī's work is very likely as well; cf. Molina 2013, 665-6, and see also Kennedy 1997. Fundamental reference works for the study of ancient Arabic genealogies are Wüstenfeld 1852 and 1853, and Caskel 1966.

47 In the lineage under scrutiny, the name ʿAmr occurs twice. It refers to two different historical or mythical figures.

48 Mālik was surnamed Madḥiǧ: cf. *Nasab Maʿadd wa-l-Yaman al-Kabīr*, 1: 267.

49 An alternative account features the name Ǧald instead of Ḫālid; cf. *Nasab Maʿadd wa-l-Yaman al-Kabīr*, 1: 300. The two forms are phonetically and graphically similar.

Likewise, Ibn al-Kalbī reports that ʿAmr's wife, and Usayyid's mother, was ʿAmra, a woman of the Bağīla surnamed Umm Ḫāriğa (*Ğamharat al-Nasab*, 1: 135, 251-2, 471):

Bağīla > Ġawṭ > Zayd > Muʿāwiya > Ṯaʿlaba > Qaḍāḍ[50] > ʿAbdallāh > Saʿd > ʿAmra (Umm Ḫāriğa)

Interestingly, Ibn al-Kalbī traces back ʿAmra's tribal unit, the Bağīla, to the Yemenite, or Southern, ancestor Qaḥṭān (*Nasab Maʿadd wa-l-Yaman al-Kabīr*, 1: 131-3):

Qaḥṭān > Yaʿrub > Yašğub > Sabaʾ > Kahlān > Anmār > Bağīla

The genealogical reference to Qaḥṭān implies a location in Yemen, since Ibn al-Kalbī explicitly states that some of Qaḥṭān's descendants, among which he counts the Bağīla, *tayāmanū* (settled in Yemen; *Nasab Maʿadd wa-l-Yaman al-Kabīr*, 1: 133).

In light of Kister's (1965) historicist interpretation of genealogical sources, the Yemenite grand-maternal and maternal lineage of the Banū Usayyid amounts to saying that they have a 'double', so to speak, South Arabian origin. This historicist interpretation is plausibly grounded on some epigraphical evidence: the Yemenite matrilineality of the Banū Usayyid reported by genealogists finds a historical parallel in one ancient South Arabian inscription (third century CE) that describes a maternal lineage of descent (Korotayev 1995, 91-2).

Finally, in Ibn Sīda's list, the idol's name *šams* is associated with the Sabaʾ (*al-Muḫaṣṣaṣ*, 13: 104-5), whose paternal lineage Ibn al-Kalbī traces back to the Yemenite, or Southern, ancestor Qaḥṭān, as is illustrated immediately above.

Therefore, while the *sādin* status of the Banū Usayyid is likely to indicate that their settlement in Yamamah (which has been briefly discussed above) is particularly old, their genealogically grounded South Arabian origin strongly suggests that such a settlement is the consequence of a migration from Yemen to Najd. In turn, a migration scenario of this sort may be indicative of a radiation of linguistic features, among them *-n*, from Yemen, and a diffusion area including Najd – and perhaps Southern Hijaz, to judge from Map 3.

The existence of other centres of radiation of *-n* besides Yemen is not clear. Ibn Ḥazm's description of the idol named *suwāʿu*, *suwāʿun* suggests that the tribal unit Huḏayl, in their quality of *sadanatu-hu* (its

50 The form *qaḍāḍ* occurs in *Ğamharat Nasab al-ʿArab*, 1: 135, whereas the alternative form *qudād* occurs in *Ğamharat Nasab al-ʿArab*, 1: 251-2. Perhaps the form *qaḍāḍ* originated as a spirantized variant of the form *qudād*. On the relics of spirantization in the Classical Arabic lexicon, see Corriente 1969.

ministers; *ǧamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab*, 2: 493) may constitute a centre of radiation not only of *-n* but also of the zero definite marker (co-occurring with diptotism). Moreover, while the centre of radiation in question may be said to be located somewhere between Central and Southern Hijaz, its exact location is unknown at the present stage of research.

4.3 An Integrated Approach

So far, this study has investigated the areal distribution of definiteness marking in earlier stages of Arabic by examining a limited corpus of pre-Islamic idols' names drawn from primary literary sources, especially technical prose. This section places the main results of this investigation within a broader perspective by comparing them with results concerning the areal distribution of definiteness marking in earlier stages of Arabic that derive from Semitic linguistics and Arabic dialectology.[51]

51 One reviewer has raised some philological issues on the levels of both methodology and data, and because of their broad epistemological scope it seems useful to consider them here. While these issues are valuable in principle, they are not central to the heuristic and interdisciplinary approach pursued in this paper. They can be summarised as follows:
(I) The only opposition in terms of definiteness marking observed in the consonantal *ductus* of the idols' names is the presence or absence of the *l*-marker. The *n*- and diptotic markers are not found at all in the consonantal *ductus*.
(II) The presence of the *n*-marker in the idols' names is also questionable, because it implies a case-marker (*un*/*an*/*in*) that was already lost or decaying in pre-Islamic times.
(III) A study of manuscripts is required to assess the real form of the idols' names bearing no *l*-marker, i.e. to assess whether they end in an *n*-marker or a diptotic marker.
(IV) The theoretical background of definiteness marking in Arabic and Semitic is not mentioned in the paper.
The following is a critical discussion of these issues:
(I) The reviewer assumes that the only opposition in terms of definiteness marking observed in the consonantal *ductus* of the idols' names is the presence or absence of the *l*-marker, i.e. A *vs* statement of non-A. But what is really observed in the consonantal *ductus* is the opposition of the *l*-marker *vs* some unknown marker, i.e. A *vs non*-statement of A. The consonantal *ductus* does not record the absence of the *n*-marker or of the diptotic marker, or any other marker. It is simply underspecified in this respect. What is opposed to the *l*-marker is not lack of *l*-, but some unknown marker.
The question, therefore, arises how to determine the unknown marker(s). The most straightforward and honest answer, which is consistent with the heuristic approach of this paper, is cautious conjecturing. Convergence between the data recorded by Arabic linguistic tradition and the epigraphic and dialectal data is itself proof that data from the linguistic tradition has a certain degree of authenticity, as will become clear throughout this section. A second answer is heterogeneity, as illustrated at the outset of this paper.
The conception of a member of an opposition as either negative (statement of non-A) or underspecified (non-statement of A), as illustrated immediately above, owes much to Jakobson's original formulation of markedness theory.
(II) The loss of a case-marker, or of its functional yield, is sensitive to sociolinguistic contexts. Pre-islamic idols' names may have retained their case-markers, whether dip-

The first main result of the present investigation is the identification of a clustering of the definite marker *l-* at the border between Northern/Central Hijaz and Northern/Central Najd, which indicates that this marker diffused from a centre of radiation located in Northern Hijaz.[52] Briefly, it confirms the origin of *l-* in Northern Hijaz. Such a result is to a good extent consistent with the results independently arrived at through the study of definiteness marking in North Arabian inscriptions, which no doubt attest to pre-Islamic stages of Arabic. Al-Jallad (2018, 3) affirms that "Pre-Islamic *ʾl*-dialects attested in various scripts", by which he refers to epigraphical dialects,[53] are "attested in various places, but concentrated in North Arabia and southern Levant". In the same vein, he adds (12):

> the *ʾl-* and *ʾ-* articles are concentrated in the north and northwest, in the Ḥigāz (Dadanitic), the southern Levant (Nabataean).

The second result of the present investigation is the identification of a centre of radiation of the definite marker *-n* in Yemen, whose diffusion area includes Najd. Briefly, it confirms the Yemenite origin of *-n*. Such a result is to a good extent consistent with the results independently arrived at in Semitic linguistics through comparison of the Epigraphic South Arabian definite marker *-n* with peripheral in-

totic or co-occurring with the *n*-marker, for religious reasons, such as the formulaic usage of ritual language, at a moment when case-markers, generally speaking, were already lost or decaying.
(III) Copyists may have adjusted manuscripts to conform to the rules of Classical Arabic, just as grammarians and lexicographers had done before them when collecting data, and as modern scholars do when preparing a critical edition. Thus, a particular linguistic feature directly observed in a manuscript, such as an *n*-marker, does not necessarily reflect a genuine fact of language. Moreover, the collation and comparison of several manuscripts to determine the original reading itself involves external human intervention. It follows that resorting to manuscripts is not necessarily a conclusive method when assessing whether the idols' names that bear no *l*-marker end in an *n*-marker or in a diptotic marker.
(IV) The avowed aim of the paper is descriptive. The rich debate and wide range of definitions concerning definite markers and case-markers in Classical Arabic and Semitic languages are the product of several theoretical orientations, in both historical and general linguistics, that one may be interested in validating or falsifying. However, this paper positions itself in an (ideally) pre-theoretical stage of research, which consists in bringing to light data so far unknown: the linguistic dimension of the pre-Islamic idols, which have been investigated so far mostly in their religious and cultural dimensions. The linguistic dimension crucially includes their areal distribution.

52 The hypothesis that Mecca (more accurately, Naḫlat al-Šāmiyya) is part of this area as (another) centre of radiation has been touched upon above. This hypothesis does not seem to have much effect on this result, Mecca (or Naḫlat al-Šāmiyya) being located in Central Hijaz.

53 The relationship between such epigraphical dialects and the ancient Arabic dialects described in Arabic linguistic tradition, and attested centuries later, is not clear at the present stage of research.

stances of the definite marker *-n*, or definite nunation, in Classical Arabic (which is exemplified by the aforementioned form *šamsan* 'the sun'). In this field of study, the Epigraphic South Arabian definite *-n* is usually regarded as the ancestor of Classical Arabic definite (and indefinite) nunation, based on chronological and distributional reasons – primarily the productivity of Epigraphic South Arabian definite *-n*, as opposed to the peripherality of the same marker in Classical Arabic. For instance, Zaborski (2000, 32-3) remarks:

> in other Epigraphic South Arabian languages it is *-n*, for example *hgr-n* 'the city', and this *-n* is normally interpreted as nunation which was originally used for determination

The third result of the present investigation is the identification of a clustering in Southern Hijaz of a particular instance of the diptotic marker, one that correlates with definite meaning or, according to a different formulation, that co-occurs with a zero definite marker. Southern Hijaz thus corresponds to the diffusion area of a centre of radiation of the diptotic marker plus the zero definite marker, which at the present stage of research can be approximately identified at least with the Madḥiǧ, a tribal unit (also) settled in Southern Hijaz. The fourth result of the present investigation clarifies the dialectal status of the diptotic marker plus the zero definite marker: this is the coexistence (or competition) between this kind of marker and the definite marker *-n* within a broad area which is not limited to, but also includes Southern Hijaz, as shown by the tribal unit Banū Kināna and by the toponym Naǧrān. Briefly, the third and fourth results confirm the Southern Hijazi origin of Classical Arabic diptotism, and its coexistence (or competition) with *-n* in the same area (as well as in others).

These results are rather consistent with what is currently known of the modern dialects spoken in that region. Greenman (1979) offers a description of the present-day Arabic dialect of Central Yamani Tihamah, which is spoken in the Al-Hudaydah governorate, in the coastal part of Southern Hijaz. In particular, Greenman (1979, 60-1) reports that in this dialect indefinite masculine nouns, or noun-like items, such as participles, exhibit the indeclinable ending *-u*, also in pause: e.g. *ana nāširu msōq* (I am leaving the market), *štuktub kitābu* (will you write a book?) (in pause).[54] He also reports that a sub-dialect, spoken in the Wadi Mawr area, which is situated about one hundred kilometres north-northeast of the city of Al-Hudaydah, exhibits the indeclinable ending *-un* instead of *u* in the same distributional contexts: e.g. *ana nāširun əmsōq* (I am leaving the market). Before Greenman's (1979) study, scholars had partially observed these phe-

54 Greenman's transliteration has been adapted to match the conventions of this paper.

nomena, as pointed out by Rabin (1951, 57), who mentions previous research on the field by Rossi and Landberg:

> The present-day colloquial of the old ʿAzd country, in Hodeida and part of the Tihāma, still pronounces nouns in the indeterminate state with a final *-u*: they say *burru* 'wheat', but *al-burr* 'the wheat'.

According to Blau (2006, 27, 29), the phonological realisation of this dialectal ending as *-u*, as well as its syntactic inability to co-occur with the article,[55] constitutes an argument strong enough to identify it, notwithstanding its indeclinability, with the Classical Arabic diptotic marker. Blau (29) even considers such a dialectal ending as the ancestor of Classical Arabic diptotism:[56]

> It seems not unreasonable to assume that Yemenite dialects reflect the original situation and that in Classical Arabic its use was limited to proper nouns, in which diptosy is especially frequent.

Blau's (29) assumption that the diptotic-like ending *-u* of this dialect, which is ultimately attested in Southern Hijaz, may "reflect the original situation" of Classical Arabic diptotism, is to a good extent consistent with the third result of the present investigation – the Southern Hijazi origin of Classical Arabic diptotism. Moreover, "The *u*/*un* alternation which may be observed", according to Greenman (1979, 54), "in the masculine form of this [*scil*. indefinite nominal] paradigm" (cf. the aforementioned pair *nāširu*/*nāširun*) is to a good extent consistent with the fourth result of the present investigation – the coexistence of (or competition between) the definite diptotic marker and the definite marker *-n*.

However, as far as the Southern Hijazi origin of Classical Arabic diptotism and its coexistence (or competition) with *-n* are concerned, the correspondence between the results of the present investigation and those already existing in the literature is less straightforward than the previous correspondences concerning the origin of *l-* in Northern Hijaz and the Yemenite origin of *-n*. The reason for this is that the correspondence requires more theoretical elaboration than the previous ones, especially on a diachronic level. In Blau's (2006) study, the developmental pattern from (the ancestor of) a modern Yemenite dialect to Classical Arabic diptotism is based on external linguistic evidence, coming from Nabatean Arabic. Thus, it comes as no surprise that Greenman (1979, 60) assumes the reverse developmental pattern, considering the dia-

55 In Blau's (27) own words: "when lacking the definite article" diptotic nouns "behave as if they were indefinite."

56 Blau (28-9) also adduces a comparative argument, based on a phonological parallel with Nabatean Arabic, that is not relevant here.

lectal ending *-u* to be "a residue" of the Classical Arabic case system. Furthermore, while in the idols' names investigated here the diptotic marker correlates with definite meaning, in the Yemenite data recorded by Greenman (1979) and his predecessors, the diptotic-like ending *-u* (that is, a marker having the same syntactic distribution as the Classical Arabic diptotic marker) correlates with indefinite meaning.

Finally, a fifth result of the present investigation is the concomitant attestation, in Mecca, of *l-*, *-n* along with the zero-marker that co-occurs with diptotism. This result is to a good extent consistent with the well-known koineization theory relative to the beginnings of Classical Arabic, according to which Mecca is the main core of this process.[57]

5 Conclusions

This study provides additional evidence, drawn from primary literary sources, that the definite markers *l-*, *-n* and the zero-marker that co-occurs with diptotism originated in well-defined areas of the pre-Islamic Arabian peninsula. It also provides a unified areal view of their origin, seemingly bringing to light a quadripartite division of the pre-Islamic Arabian peninsula with regard to the rise of definiteness marking: *l-* in Northern Hijaz, *-n* in Southern Hijaz, the zero-marker plus diptotism in Yemen, and a murky picture of the original definite marker, if any, in Najd. In fact, from an areal perspective, the 'birthplace', as it were, of a definite marker is its centre of radiation, but Najd does not qualify as such at the present stage of research and is treated exclusively as a diffusion area. Nor can the origin and areal distribution of the definite marker *(a)m-* be clarified here, as noted at the beginning of this paper.

The results summarised so far pertain to the linguistic materials themselves. A final result of this study pertains to methodology, specifically the value of the reappraisal of Classical technical prose, even though it raises the philological problem of the authenticity of its data. In particular, the results of this study encourage a reappraisal not only of lexicographical sources, but also of sources showing a direct or indirect antiquarian interest in pre-Islamic times, among which are *al-Muḥabbar* and genealogical works. The linguistic materials investigated here highlight that a reappraisal of technical prose is warranted by its valuable attestation of heterogeneity (linguistic variation), a fundamental aspect of any realistic language description.

57 The koineization theory is partly rooted in Arabic linguistic tradition. Diachronically, it considers the cultural, religious, and commercial centre of Mecca as the final incubator of a koineization process in which Bedouins had earlier played a significant role. See, among many others, Cohen 1962 and Corriente 1976.

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Polysemy as Hermeneutic Key in Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*

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Abstract The present contribution discusses the role of polysemy within Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutic approach in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. It argues that the Andalusian master's conception of polysemy bears implications that stretch far beyond the field of Arabic linguistics, strictly understood, and that are tightly related to his vision of the polysemous and pansemiotic nature of existence. Thus, when investigated in the light of his metaphysical views, Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutic use of word polysemy, as arbitrary as it might appear at first sight, results perfectly consistent with his conception of the descent of language through multiple states of being and of the conjunction of form and meaning in the world of imagination. These metaphysical premises provide the epistemological foundations for Ibn ʿArabī's linguistic and hermeneutic practices and build up one the finest and most complete metaphysical conceptions of language elaborated within the broader context of what might be defined the domain of 'Islamic linguistics'.

Keywords Arabic linguistic tradition. Islamic linguistic thought. Koranic Hermeneutics. Akbarian studies. Semantics.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Polysemy and Hermeneutics. – 3 Polysemy and Linguistic Form. – 4 Word Polysemy in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. – 5 Conclusions.

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1 Introduction

Scholars have often remarked on the copiousness in the works of Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240) of Koranic quotations accompanied by the author's own interpretations (Chodkiewicz 1992, 40-1). Thus, the whole production of the Andalusian master has been depicted as "essentially Koranic hermeneutics" and "nothing if not commentary upon the Holy Book" (Chittick 1989, XV-XVI). Not an ordinary commentary though, but one that in many cases advances rather peculiar, unconventional, and thought-provoking linguistic explanations. This idiosyncratic approach to hermeneutics (and semantics) has not escaped the attention of scholars who, in their own turn, have interpreted it from divergent perspectives.

Some academics have described Ibn ʿArabī's exegetical method as an attempt to overcome the rigidity of the Koranic letter to seek the true spirit of the sacred text that lies behind it (Chodkiewicz 1992, 40). Among them Corbin argues that, in order to discover new meanings, Ibn ʿArabī moves beyond the linguistic form of the revelation and concerns himself with the *bāṭin* of the Koran, the inner dimension of the sacred text where inextinguishable meanings are hidden beneath the surface (1998, 242).

On the other hand, scholars like Chittick have questioned this interpretation and remarked that Ibn ʿArabī "displays tremendous reverence for the literary text" and that in his hermeneutic approach "the linguistic form of the text takes precedence over all else" (1989, XVI). Consequently, according to Chittick one cannot affirm that the bewildering Koranic interpretations frequently found in Ibn ʿArabī's works are reached at the expense of the deference to the letter.

To solve the paradox of how a strict adherence to the letter can coexist with the alternative and unconventional interpretations proposed by the Andalusian master throughout his works, Chodkiewicz calls our attention to the role played by polysemy as exegetical principle within Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutics:

> Compte tenu de la très riche polysémie du vocabulaire arabe, la rigoureuse fidélité à la lettre de la Révélation n'exclut donc pas mais implique nécessairement, au contraire, la multiplicité des interprétations. (1992, 51)

In other words, within Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutic approach, new meanings are not discovered despite the linguistic form of the revelation but within it and as a consequence of the possibility of multiple interpretations offered by the polysemous nature of the linguistic medium of revelation. This disclosure of a plurality of meanings, embedded in the letter of the Koranic text, bears, within Ibn ʿArabī's thought, implications that stretch far beyond the domain of Arabic linguistics,

strictly understood. Since the entire manifestation is existentiated through an act of divine speech, and consequently the whole world is considered as a cosmic Koran (*Qur'ān takwīnī*), polysemy becomes a hermeneutic key not only for the interpretation of the word but also for that of the world. In Ibn ʿArabī's conception, both the word and the world, in their coming into being, proceed through multiple ontological and cosmological levels of existence (*marātib al-wuǧūd*) (Chittick 1989, 14). These multiple levels of existence are thus related to the multiple levels of the meanings that can be discovered behind both linguistic and cosmological phenomena. In order to better understand the epistemological framework behind those ideas, we will examine Ibn ʿArabī's explicit position on the matter as expressed in the "Chapter of Noah" of his *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and in comparison with relevant passages from the *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah*. This will lead us to a discussion about Ibn ʿArabī's notion of the world of imagination (*ʿālam ḫayāl*); a world that is described by the Andalusian master as the intermediate state of being, between the spiritual and corporeal worlds, where meanings are associated with forms. Eventually, through examples excerpted from the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, we will try to elucidate how, according to the *šayḫ al-'akbar* (the Greatest Master), every meaning of a single term, if admitted by the Arabic language and its rules, can virtually represent an acceptable explanation even when this leads to paradoxical conclusions contradicting the common understanding and challenging the agreed upon interpretation of the scriptures. In addition to that, we will attempt to show how such linguistic and semantic explanations are regularly tightly related to the broader context of the metaphysical doctrines developed by the Sufi master. This way, without engaging in a thorough exploration of such doctrines per se (that would lie beyond the purposes of the present article), we aim at clarifying the metaphysical foundations of Ibn ʿArabī's linguistic and hermeneutic thought. A linguistic and hermeneutic thought that fits into the wider framework of what might be referred to as 'Islamic linguistics'; that is to say the complex of the linguistic conceptions elaborated within the Islamic civilisation by confronting the sacred text and the linguistic structure of revelation. Such conceptions, grounded in the Koranic passages that explicitly deal with the nature of language in general and with that of the language of revelation in particular, are not severed from metaphysical concerns and include, among others, speculations about the origin of language, its hidden structure and ultimate purpose.

2 Polysemy and Hermeneutics

The concept of polysemy in technical terms applies to "a single word-form with semantically overlapping meanings" (Frisson, Pickering 2016, 511) and is distinguished from homonymy that refers to "a single word-form with separate, semantically non-overlapping meanings" (Frisson, Pickering 2016, 510) and with "no connected semantic relations" (Pottier 2008, 95). Therefore, while in the case of polysemous words a single original word acquires multiple and often related meanings (usually referred to as 'senses'), in the case of homonyms different words with different etymological origins and unrelated meanings accidentally share the same auditory (homophones) or visual (homographs) linguistic form. The discrimination between the two categories is not always straightforward, and often requires a careful reconstruction of the origin of the word and the resort to the methods of diachronic, comparative, and historical linguistics. Needles to say, this approach to polysemy, which is based on the founding methodology of modern linguistics, is not the one endorsed within the Arabic linguistic tradition. Traditional Arabic linguistic thought favours a synchronic perspective, rather than a diachronic one (Versteegh 1984, 45), and usually confines itself to the boundaries of a single language: the Arabic language (*al-ʿarabiyyah*). In addition to that, in the traditional approach to semantic explanations, roots play a key role. Thus, more often than not, to elucidate the meaning of a given word the meanings of other words sharing the same radical letters are also taken into account.

This leads us to the quite intricate problem of roots' polysemy since, as noted by Rosenthal, when dealing with roots that exhibit a great variety of seemingly unrelated meanings, we should always suspect the existence of "different origins and mergers of roots" (Rosenthal 2000, 7). Again, the traditional Arabic linguistic approach does not normally concern itself with this historical and comparative perspective, nor does Ibn ʿArabī who frequently takes a rather liberal stance on establishing semantic connection between words. In fact, for him two or more words might be considered semantically related even when they share only some of their radical letters (and not necessarily all of them)[1] or on the simple basis of pure homography/homophony. As arbitrary and even "devious and tortuous" (Austin 1980, 20) as his approach might seem, Ibn ʿArabī's interpretative methods directly stem from his metaphysical speculations on the nature of the sacred text and on the linguistic structure of revelation.

1 On Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutic use of *ištiqāq kabīr*/*ʾakbar* 'great/greater etymology' and its relation with the linguistic theories of Ibn Ǧinnī (d. 1002), see Salvaggio 2020; Versteegh 1997, 76; Baalbaki 2014, 281.

In the "Chapter of Noah", in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Ibn ʿArabī explicitly touches upon his conception of the polysemous nature of the linguistic medium of revelation and presents us with a concise account of his hermeneutic approach. After arguing that considering the divine under its transcendent aspect (*tanzīh*) means to limit and restrict its reality, he compares the one that holds that position to the one who only believes in part of the revelation and disbelieves in other parts (*ka-man āmana bi-baʿḍ wa-kafara bi-baʿḍin*).[2] He then elucidates his point by mentioning an example related to the exegesis of sacred scriptures. He maintains that every divine book can be interpreted at various levels. In fact, while on the common level (*fī l-ʿumūm*) divine books may only convey the primary and apparent meaning (*al-mafhūm al-ʾawwal*) of the letter, on a more specific level (*ʿalà l-ḫuṣūṣ*), they imply every meaning (*kull mafhūm*) that might be ascribed to a particular linguistic form (*lafẓ*) of a given language (*bi-ʾayy lisān kān*) according to the rules of that specific language (*fī waḍʿ ḏālika al-lisān*) (*Fuṣūṣ*, 68).[3] Thus, in Ibn ʿArabī's perspective the possibility of multiple interpretation of the sacred text directly derives from a thorough knowledge of the linguistic structure of the language of revelation. It is noteworthy that this, in his view, does not exclusively apply to the Arabic language but to every language (*bi-ʾayy lisān kān*) that functions as a vehicle of divine revelation. As noted by Chodkiewicz (1992, 51) a similar position is also found in his monumental work *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah* where he states:

> As far as the word of God [*kalām Allāh*] is concerned, when it descends in the language of a given people [*bi-lisān qawm*], and the speakers of that language disagree as to what was meant by God by a particular word [*al-kalimah*] or group of words [*al-kalimāt*] because of the different possible meanings of those words [*maʿa iḫtilāf madlūlāti-hā*], each speaker, despite all the divergent interpretations, properly understands what God meant [...] provided that his interpretation does not deviate from the rules of that specific language [*mā lam yaḫruǧ min al-lisān*]. (*Futūḥāt*, IV: 31)[4]

Thus, the relation between form and meaning, respectively called in the passages above *lafẓ* and *mafhūm* (and *kalimah* and *madlūl*), can

2 A reference to Koranic verses "We believe in part, and disbelieve in part" (Koran V, 150). All Koranic quotations refer to Arberry's translation (see references).

3 Page numbers of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* refer to Affifi's edition (see Bibliography). We would like to express our gratitude to Dr. Marco Aurelio Golfetto, University of Milan (IT) who kindly made available to us, for comparison purposes, a copy of his forthcoming critical edition of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* based on a different and autograph manuscript (see Bibliography).

4 Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the Author.

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be looked at as an asymmetric one since to a single form is opposed an indefinite multitude of possible meanings.

3 Polysemy And Linguistic Form

The above considerations on the unbalanced relation between form and meaning, in Ibn ʿArabī's thought, could misguide us to the hasty conclusion that meaning is regarded by the *šayḫ al-ʾakbar* as more important than form. We should be reminded though, that, as already mentioned, from the specific standpoint of his hermeneutic approach, one could rightfully affirm quite the opposite: within Ibn ʿArabī's exegetical practices form has a clear pre-eminence over meaning (Chittick 1989, XVI). The rationale behind that is that a meaning attributed to a form, however elevated, and regardless of the degree and the nature of its inspiration, inevitably remains just one single conceivable meaning among an indefinite multitude of others. Conversely, the form of a word is precisely what encompasses and preserves all possible meanings by including them within its letter.

When one gives priority to meaning, one only confines himself to his own understanding of a linguistic form in a particular moment, while the entirety of the message, that is embedded in the form, unavoidably escapes him. Ibn ʿArabī compares this case to that of somebody who, in relating a *ḥaḏīṯ*, reports it according to its meaning (*ʿalà al-maʿnà*) and not to its actual words (Chodkiewicz 1992, 45). In doing so, what that person does in reality is not recounting the *ḥaḏīṯ* but only what he has made of it (*ʾinnamā yanqulu ʾilay-nā fahma-hu*). Had he stuck to a faithful reproduction of the letter of the *ḥaḏīṯ*, adds Ibn ʿArabī, he would have enabled others to find in it not only similar (*miṯla mā fahima*), but also different (*ʾakṯar ʾaw ʾaqall*) and even opposite (*ʿaksa mā fahima*) meanings to those found by him (*Futūḥāt*, I: 442). In the case of the revelation, since God knew all the meanings of a particular linguistic form, when he chose that specific form he expressly intended all the meanings related to it:

> *fa-ʾinna-hu ʿālimu bi-ǧamīʿi al-wuǧūhi taʿālà wa-mā min waǧhin ʾillā wa-huwa maqṣūdun li-Llāhi taʿālà min tilka al-kalimati*
>
> He [God] knows all the meanings [of a particular word or expression] and there is none of those meanings that was not meant by God the Most High by that word. (*Futūḥāt*, IV: 31)

Consequently as none of those meanings can include in itself all the others, it is only through form that a plurality of possible meanings can be simultaneously and synthetically contemplated. Thus since

form represents what God actually meant, under this specific perspective, form is meaning:

> la *forme* de la Parole de Dieu […] étant divine, n'est pas seulement l'expression la plus adéquate de la Vérité : elle *est* la Vérité ; elle n'est pas seulement porteuse de sens, elle est le sens. (Chodkiewicz 1992, 45; italics in the text)

In the continuation of the above-mentioned passage in the "Chapter of Noah", Ibn ʿArabī further elaborates on this relation between form and meaning:

> *fa-ʾinna li-l-ḥaqqi fī kulli ḫalqin ẓuhūran, fa-huwa al-ẓāhiru fī kulli mafhūmin, wa-huwa al-bāṭinu ʿan kulli fahmin,ʾillā ʿan fahmi man qāla ʾinna al-ʿālama ṣūratu-hu wa-huwiyyatu-hu: wa-huwa al-ismu al-ẓāhiru, kamā ʾanna-hu bi-l-maʿnà rūḥu mā ẓahara, fa-huwa al-bāṭinu.*
>
> The Real has a manifestation in every created reality. He is the Manifest in every concept and the Hidden from all understanding, except from the understanding of those who affirm that the world is His image and ipseity. He is the name the Manifest, as well as He is, through the meaning, the spirit of what is manifested, and thus the Hidden. (*Fuṣūṣ*, 68)

The expression *al-ism al-ẓāhir* in the excerpt above implies an immediate reference to name the Manifest, *al-ẓāhir*, one of God's divine names (cf. Austin 1980, 73). At the same time since the term *ism* is used in the Arabic grammatical tradition to indicate 'name' (and 'noun') in linguistic contexts, the expression could also be interpreted as meaning that the Real is *the name that is evident*, i.e. the external linguistic form, the letter that can be perceived. This reading would thus directly relate to what Ibn ʿArabī states immediately after that, when he adds that the Real is also the spirit of that letter, the meaning (*al-maʿnà*) that is hidden (*al-bāṭin*) from the view. Hence, in the same way as it is present in the cosmological manifestation (*al-ʿālam*) with its *ṣūrah* and *huwiyyah*, the Real is present within the revelation as both *ism* and *maʿnà*: "the book manifests the divine realities in both its form and meaning" (Chittick 1989, XV). Furthermore, on the basis of this last remark, one can more clearly see why Ibn ʿArabī's considerations on the nature of the relation between form and meaning are embedded in a chapter where he mostly deals with the opposition between the transcendent (*tanzīh*) and immanent (*tašbīh*) conceptions of God, and with the necessity of integrating both perspectives in one's representation of the divine reality:

fa-ʾin qulta bi-l-tanzīhi kunta muqayyidan
wa-ʾin qulta bi-l-tašbīhi kunta muḥaddidan
wa-ʾin qulta bi-l-ʾamrayni kunta musaddidan

If you affirm transcendence you restrict Him
and if you affirm immanence you limit Him
and if you affirm both aspects you are pointing to the right path.
(*Fuṣūṣ*, 70)

The implicit parallel suggested by these verses is that as one should contemplate the Real in both its transcendent and immanent aspects, one should likewise be aware that *ism* and *maʿnà*, *lafẓ* and *mafhūm*, *kalimah* and *madlūl*, only represent different facets of the same reality. The extent of this intrinsic interrelation of form and meaning is such that for Ibn ʿArabī not only, as already mentioned, form can be conceived of as meaning, but meaning in order to be communicated necessarily needs to acquire a form.

> Meanings [in God's knowledge are] 'disengaged' (*mujarrad*), which is to say that they have no necessary connection to any locus of manifestation. They are essentially nonmanifest in relation to the external world or human knowledge […]. These meanings are present in God's knowledge, then enter the suprasensory or spiritual world, then become embodied through imagination in auditory or visual form. (Chittick 1994, 74)

Thus meanings, originally present in God's knowledge and not manifested at that stage, enter the cosmological realm and are first manifested at the level of the spiritual world (*ʿālam al-ʾarwāḥ*), but still deprived of form. At the level of the world of imagination (*ʿālam al-ḫayāl*), "the intermediate world between the two fundamental created worlds, the spiritual and corporeal worlds" (Chittick 1994, 70), those meanings "without any outward form" are given a "sensory form (*ṣūrah maḥsūsah*)" (Chittick 1989, 115). Hence language, understood as union of meaning and form, originates in the "imaginal domain" (Chittick 1994, 75-6), the domain where the union of *maʿnà* and *ṣūrah* takes place within a process by which meanings are made thicker (*kaṯṯafa al-maʿnà*) and sensory objects softer (*laṭṭafa al-maḥsūs*) (*Futūḥāt*, III: 588). The very nature of language, in Ibn ʿArabī's view, is therefore an imaginal (*ḫayālī*) one (Chittick 1994, 75). Eventually, at the level of the physical world (*ʿālam al-ʾağsām*), language assumes the form that we encounter in the language of revelation.

Since "revelation has to do with the imaginal embodiment of meanings in language" and since "these embodiments are not haphazard" (Chittick 1994, 77) and "no word is accidental" (Chittick 1989, XVI), for Ibn ʿArabī, nothing in the language of revelation is arbitrary and

everything is endowed with a providential nature. With respect to the providential nature of revelation and its Arabic medium, discussing the order and the shape in which the letters of the Arabic script have been transmitted, he affirms:

> *wa-naḥnu ʾinnamā nanẓuru fī l-ʾašyāʾi min ḥayṯu ʾanna l-bāriya wāḍiʿu-hā, lā min ḥayṯu yadi man ẓaharat min-hu, fa-lā budda min al-qaṣdi fī ḏālika wa-l- taḫṣīṣi*
>
> we only look at things from the perspective of their having been set down by the Creator and not from the point of view of the human hand from which they came into sight and therefore [in the appearance of things] there must be a purpose and a specification. (*Futūḥāt*, II: 162)

Thus, for him, whatever secondary causes intervene in the production of language, and regardless of the extent of human intervention in the process, the first and ultimate cause must always be sought in the divine decree that established that specific sequence of providential events. In addition to that, as already seen, for Ibn ʿArabī the language of the sacred book is not only the language of revelation, but is regarded as *revelation in language*. With reference to the Jewish tradition, Scholem describes this tendency as a shift from the concept of language of revelation, *die Sprache der Offenbarung*, to the concept of language as revelation, *die Sprache als Offenbarung* (Scholem 1987, 9). Thus the language of revelation is conceived of as an epiphanic reality perpetually revealed, and constantly renewed:

> Le Coran perpétuellement révélé est à la fois rigoureusement identique à lui-même [...] et à chaque instant *inouï* : aux cœurs préparés à le recevoir il apporte sans cesse des significations nouvelles, dont aucune n'annule les précédentes et qui toutes étaient dès l'origine inscrites dans la plénitude de sa lettre. (Chodkiewicz 1992, 47; italics in the text)

In connection with this idea that in approaching the sacred text one should regard it as "perpetual revelation" (*al-waḥī al-dāʾim*) always "new and never old" (*ǧadīd lā yablà*) (*Futūḥāt*, III: 143), Ibn ʿArabī insists on the point that one should not just try to understand the words of the divine book but rather the intentions of the divine speaker behind those words. This is because, he argues, understanding the real meaning of a word does not simply consist in knowing and enumerating all the senses encompassed by that particular word (*mā tataḍammanu-hu tilka al-kalimah bi-ṭarīq al-ḥaṣr*), but entails comprehending what the speaker actually meant by his speech (*mā qaṣada-hu al-mutakallim bi-ḏālika al-kalām*) (*Futūḥāt*, III: 170). Embracing the

divine speaker's perspective implies accepting the idea that, having a flawless and thorough knowledge of the linguistic medium used, he is aware of all the meanings, explicit or implicit references, assonances, puns, and allusions conveyed by the words and expressions he chooses. As a result of that, if the human interpreter can see a particular implication in a word of the revelation, the divine speaker must, *a fortiori*, have been perfectly conscious of that implication when picking out that specific word. Therefore none of the interpretations based on that implication can be a priori discarded. At the same time, the ultimate confirmation of the correctness of any of such interpretations, Ibn ʿArabī specifies, lies with the divine speaker himself who takes charge of the instruction of his servant and, if the latter is endowed with a prepared heart, explains and interprets for him what he really meant (*ʾanā llaḏī ʾašraḥu la-hu kalāmī wa-ʾutarǧimu la-hu*) (*Futūḥāt*, I, 267).

4 Word Polysemy in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*

In several passages of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, polysemy plays a key role within the linguistic explanations offered by Ibn ʿArabī. In the first chapter, the "Chapter of Adam", Ibn ʿArabī explains that man is called *ʾinsān* because he is the pupil (another meaning for the word *ʾinsān*)[5] "through which the Real looks at his creation and has mercy on them" (*fa-ʾinna-hu bi-hi yanẓuru al-ḥaqq ʾilà ḫalqi-hi fa-yarḥamu-hum*) (*Fuṣūṣ*, 70). The polysemy of the term *ʾinsān* thus provides an explanation of the original motivation behind man's name (*fa-li-hāḏā summiya ʾinsānan*) and establishes a connection between that name and the metaphysical function within the creation of its owner.

In the "Chapter of Jacob", Ibn ʿArabī profusely dwells upon the polysemy of the term *dīn* 'religion'. This highly polysemous term has been the object of several academic studies that have extensively debated its etymological derivation (from one or more, Semitic or non-Semitic, roots) and explored the multiple nuances of its Koranic usage (cf. Glei, Reichmuth 2012; Reichmuth 2016). In the chapter, Ibn ʿArabī discusses three of *dīn*'s fundamental meanings: *inqiyād* 'obedience' (*fa-l-dīn ʿibārah ʿan inqiyādi-ka*) (*Fuṣūṣ*, 94), *ǧazā'* 'recompense' (*fa-ṣaḥḥa ʾanna al-dīn huwa al-ǧazā'*) (*Fuṣūṣ*, 96), and *ʿādah* 'custom'. This last interpretation occurs in a passage that appears particularly relevant to our topic and in which Ibn ʿArabī points to the meaning of *ʿādah* as the most closely related one to the inner and secret reality (*sirru-hu wa-bāṭinu-hu*) of the concept of *dīn* (*Fuṣūṣ*, 96). Af-

5 This is a case of proper polysemy since the pupil is so called because of the human figure that is reflected in the eye of the other (cf. Latin *pupilla*, Greek *korē*, and Sanskrit *puruṣa*).

ter stating that "nothing is received [*yaʿūdu ʿalà*] by the possible beings [al-*mumkināt*] from the Real save what their essences (*ḏawātu-hum*) give them in their states [*fī ʾaḥwāli-hā*]" (*Fuṣūṣ*, 96), the *šayḫ al-ʾakbar* argues that it is for this reason that *dīn* "is referred to and explained as 'custom'"[6] (*summiya ʾaw šuriḥa al-dīn bi-l-ʿādah*) since, under this metaphysical perspective, *dīn* is what "returns to the servant because of what is required and demanded by his state" (*li-ʾannahu ʿāda ʿalay-hi mā yaqtaḍī-hi wa-yaṭlubu-hu ḥālu-hu*) (*Fuṣūṣ*, 96). *ʿādah* 'custom' is thus explained by associating it to the verb *ʿāda*, from the same root (*ʿwd*), carrying the fundamental meaning of 'to come back, return' and the attribution of this semantic connection[7] to the term helps Ibn ʿArabī reinforce his metaphysical point. Through this series of semantic shifts, *dīn* 'religion' is firstly conceived as *ʿādah* 'custom' that, in its own turn, is then interpreted as *ʿawdah* 'return' and this last semantic nuance is used to illustrate Ibn ʿArabī's interpretation of *dīn* as a reality that entails much more than just obedience and recompense for good or evil deeds and that in its inner and hidden dimension is directly connected to the very essence of beings.

As in the just-mentioned case of *ʿādah*, in the following examples semantic explanations are not based on the polysemy of a single term but on the polysemy (or supposed so) of their roots. In the "Chapter of Šuʿayb", commenting the Koranic verses "Surely in that there is a reminder to him who has a heart [*li-man kāna la-hu qalb*]" (Koran L, 37), Ibn ʿArabī explains that the verses refer to the one who is able "to change himself [*li-taqallubi-hi*] in various forms and attributes" (*Fuṣūṣ*, 122) and in so doing "he knows the transformation [*taqallub*] of the Real in various forms by adapting himself [*bi-taqlībi-hi*] to the different shapes" (*Fuṣūṣ*, 122). The high rank of these specific category of knowers of the divine reality, able to recognise the Real behind and through its multifarious manifestations, is thus illustrated by relating the noun *qalb* 'heart' to the verbal nouns *taqallub* 'transformation' (form V) and *taqlīb* 'reshaping' (form II) all from the same root (*qlb*).

In the "Chapter of Ṣāliḥ", Ibn ʿArabī discusses the use of the verb *baššara*, that is normally employed with the sense of 'to give good news', in two different Koranic passages where that verb is utilised to announce both mercy and punishment: "their Lord gives them good tidings [*yubašširu-hum*) of mercy from Him and good pleasure" (*Koran* IX, 21) and "give them the good tidings [*fa-baššir-hum*]of a painful chastisement (*bi-ʿaḏāb ʾalīm*)" (*Koran* III, 21). The Andalusian master

6 In the same passage, to demonstrate the actual existence and usage of this sense in the language, Ibn ʿArabī adds a quotation from a poem of the famous pre-Islamic poet ʾImruʾ al-Qays (Austin 1980, 116) where the word *dīn* is used with the meaning of 'custom'.

7 The semantic connection of *ʿādah* 'custom' to the verb *ʿāda* 'to come back' is based on the conception of a custom as a 'recurrent and repetitive habit or action'.

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explains that the idea of *bušrà* 'glad tidings' is applied to both groups because the tidings mentioned in the verses changed the colour of the skin (*bašarah*) of those who received them as a consequence of the joy or pain they experienced after hearing the news (*Fuṣūṣ*, 118). Although this could be one of those cases discussed above where roots with different etymological origins might have merged into one, from the synchronic (and providential) perspective endorsed by Ibn ʿArabī (see above) the fact that the form II verb *baššara* and the nouns *bušrà* and *bašarah* share the same three radical letters (*bšr*) is enough a reason to see (or not to exclude) a semantic connection.

The oxymoron created by the juxtaposition, in excerpt above, of the concepts of *bušrà* 'glad tidings' and *ʿaḏāb* 'punishment' can be further explored in the light of Ibn ʿArabī's own interpretation of the term *ʿaḏāb* in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. In the "Chapter of Hūd", analysing the Koranic verses "a wind, wherein is a painful chastisement (*ʿaḏāb*)" (Koran XLVI, 24), to illustrate the ambivalent nature of God's chastisement, which is at the same time an act of punishment and of mercy, Ibn ʿArabī gives a positive connotation to the word *ʿaḏāb* 'punishment' by clarifying that those who are punished, after tasting their punishment, will find it sweet (*yastaʿḏibūna-hu ʾiḏā ḏāqū-hu*) (*Fuṣūṣ*, 109). He thus interpret the word *ʿaḏāb* through its association to the form X verb *istaʿḏaba* 'to find sweet or pleasant' from the same root (*ʿaḏb*). A similar connection is established in the "Chapter of Ishmael" where Ibn ʿArabī remarks that *ʿaḏāb* is so called for the "sweetness of its taste" (*min ʿuḏūbati ṭaʿmi-hi*) (*Fuṣūṣ*, 94) hence relating *ʿaḏāb* to the noun *ʿuḏūbah* 'sweetness' from the same root.

These last examples concerning the root *ʿaḏb* can be regarded as a case of enantionymy, a particular type of polysemy where the meanings associated to a certain linguistic form are not just different but opposite to each other. The existence in the Arabic lexicon of words and roots exhibiting this peculiar property did not go unnoticed within the Arabic linguistic tradition and long lists were compiled to gather all the terms that fell (or seemed to fall) into what was since referred to as the category of *ʾaḍdād* 'contraries'. The great interest observed in classical Arabic lexicographical studies for this phenomenon has attracted the attention of contemporary scholarship that has analysed (and sometimes criticized) the principles applied for the identification of *ʾaḍdād* (Cohen 1961; Grigore 2004), discussed the significance of *ʾaḍdād* in relation to the general notion of ambivalence within the Arab thought (Reig 1971), and explored the heated debate that arose inside the Arabic linguistic tradition as a reaction to the positions of those who argued that the presence of the *ʾaḍdād* in the Arabic language was responsible for the ambiguity and lack of clarity of the language (Baalbaki 2014, 188-98).

Within Ibn ʿArabī's vision of language the ambivalence and ambiguity conveyed by the *ʾaḍdād* bears extremely important symbol-

ic implications. Throughout the *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah* on several occasions (Chittick 1989, 67) he mentions the episode of the question "Through what did you know Allāh?" addressed to Abū Saʿīd al-Ḫarrāz (d. ca. 899) to which al-Ḫarrāz gave his famous answer "By his bringing opposites together" (*bi-ǧamʿi-hi bayna al-ḍiddayni*) and then added the recitation of the Koranic verses "He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward" (Koran LVII, 3) (*Futūḥāt*, IV, 418). Since "Allāh is the totality of opposite names" (*Allāh maǧmūʿ al-ʾasmāʾ al-mutaqābilah*) (*Futūḥāt*, II, 208), Ibn ʿArabī explains, it is only through this process of *coincidentia oppositorum* that his reality may be known. The relevance of these remarks to the language issue is that such a *coincidentia oppositorum* can only take place at the level of the world of imagination, that is the world precisely created "in order to manifest the union of opposites" (*li-yaẓhara fī-hi alǧamʿ bayna al-ʾaḍdād*) (*Futūḥāt*, IV, 418) and which, as already seen, is the level where disengaged meaning (*maʿnà muǧarrad*) assumes a sensory form (*ṣūrah maḥsūsah*) (Chittick 1989, 115). Thus, the presence of *ʾaḍdād* in the language, from Ibn ʿArabī's perspective, has to be looked at as a reflection of the ontological ambiguity of language and of its *ḫayālī* nature.

5 Conclusions

Founded on the belief in the linguistic miracle of the revelation and in the sacredness of its linguistic medium, the Islamic civilisation has been defined as "clearly logocentric" (Chittick 1989, XV) and the role played by language within Islam as "complètement axial" (Lory 2004, 8). This vertical vision of language represents one of the fundamental principles of Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutic approach. Looked at from the perspective of his conception of the descent of language through multiple states of being, the language of the revelation is no longer simply conceived as the means of the revelation but rather as revelation under the form of language. The ascription of this epiphanic nature to the language of the sacred text brings radical implications, not only at the theoretical level, but also at the level of applied exegetical practice. As illustrated in the present study, Ibn ʿArabī's hermeneutic approach to word polysemy, as fanciful and arbitrary as it might appear at first sight, when investigated in the light of his metaphysical views, appears perfectly consistent with his vision of the origin of language and of the conjunction of form and meaning in the world of imagination. This last represents one the finest and most complete metaphysical conceptions of language elaborated within the broader context of what has been above defined as the domain of 'Islamic linguistics'. Lastly, we hope that the reflections offered, from the perspective of Islamic linguistics in the present contribution, will add to

the varieties of approaches that distinguish the current state of the discipline and that are clearly reflected in the theoretical divide between Arabic linguistics and Arab linguistics (Carter 1988; Owens 2013, 11; Giolfo 2014).

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Pharaohs and Playwrights between Fiction and Reality: Controversies in the Egyptian Cultural Field

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Abstract Going through the controversies involving pharaohs as fictive characters, this article focuses on the life and works of four Egyptian playwrights (Yaʿqūb Ṣanūʿ, ʿAlī Aḥmad Bākaṯīr, Alfred Faraǧ and Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm). Deeply engaged in the politics of their time, playwrights' experiences with 'pharaohs' are studied here with the aim of highlighting the different perceptions of the character of the pharaoh in Egypt and in the West, retracing the implications of the common pairing of pharaohs with presidents, as well as showing how literature can affect politics and how the collocation of pharaohs in the Egyptian cultural field remains problematic, but is changing.

Keywords Pharaohs. Egyptian playwrights. Yaʿqūb Ṣanūʿ. ʿAlī Aḥmad Bākaṯīr. Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm. Alfred Faraǧ. Pharaonism.

Summary 1 Pharaohs and Pharaonism. – 2 Ṣanūʿ and *le pharaon* – Pharaohs and/in the West. – 3 Bākaṯīr's Drama – Pharaohs as Antagonists. – 4 Faraǧ – Pharaohs Fall, a Playwright Arises. – 5 Al-Ḥakīm and Nasser – Pharaohs in and Outside Fiction. – 6 Conclusion.

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1 Pharaohs and Pharaonism

In the Qur'an and in early Muslim traditions, the Pharaoh is the epitome of tyranny and disbelief (Tottoli 1996).[1] Such a resolutely negative attitude is only partially mirrored in Arabic literature: even if some works show the marvel and wonder surrounding the monuments Ancient Egyptian civilisation was able to build, literature generally did not focus on them (Haarmann 1980).[2] The great discoveries and study of Ancient Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century revived interest in Ancient Egypt; as a response to Western colonisation, Ancient Egypt began to be referenced as constituting the source of an authentically Egyptian corpus of modern art and literature. Chief among the proponents of this idea was Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal (1888-1956), an eminent writer, journalist, politician and Minister of Education, a field he reformed, making a contribution towards the creation of a national identity.[3] Elliott Colla sums up the cultural implications of Ancient Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century in Egypt (2007, 163):

> In memoirs and *Bildungsroman* novels from the 1920s and 1930s, the themes of shame and ignorance, knowledge and resurrection, the ancient Egyptian past and the emerging Egyptian modernity came together to form a new literary culture, commonly referred to by its Arabic name, *al-Fir'awniyya* (Pharaonism). Much of this body of work forms the foundation for the canon of modern Egyptian Arabic literature for the period of the *Nahda* (renaissance).

Proudly nationalistic Pharaonism was central to Egyptian responses to growing European power in the Middle East even before direct colonial rule, in the work of Rifā'a al-Tahṭāwī (1801-1873) and 'Alī Mubārak (1824-1893). During the British occupation of Egypt (1882-1956), a new generation of intellectuals conceived that the integration of ancient Egypt in their own culture was crucial to national liberation (Colla 2007, 163). Through his poetry about Ancient Egypt, the poet and playwright Aḥmad Šawqī (1869-1932) clearly alludes to the present and articulates the despotism of the British viceroys while also insisting upon the superiority of Egypt's ancient past over

1 I wish to express my gratitude to Professors Casini and Ruocco, who provided me with remarks and notes that improved the quality of this paper.

2 Tottoli 1996 maintains that early reports showing little respect for the Pharaoh were circulated as part of a polemic which aimed to counter opposing positive conceptions of the Pharaoh.

3 Casini 2019 shows that Haykal's Pharaonism, especially in his articles, responds to a coherent project of anti-Enlightenment highlighting the social function of religion and the limits of rationalism.

its colonial present (Colla 2007, 220). And so, Pharaonic themes proliferated throughout the arts and literature of this period. In addition to Haykal and Šawqī, "most of the leading lights of Egyptian letters, at one point or another, wrote in the pharaonic idiom: Aḥmad Ḥusayn, Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm, Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ, Salāma Mūsā, ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād, and Tāhā Ḥusayn" (Selim 2001,12).

Based on a pre-Islamic past, Egyptian nationalism grounded on Pharaonism transcended and reconciled existing class, regional, and, especially, sectarian difference (Colla 2007, 164). In the late twenties, a group of liberal Muslim Egyptian intellectuals that had pioneered Pharaonism started to have doubts about it and, after 1930, intellectuals like Tāhā Ḥusayn repudiated it (Walker 2005). At any rate, even in the good days of Pharaonism, it was difficult for intellectuals to harmonise and synthesise the splendid findings of modern European Egyptology with the negative Qur'anic stereotype of the rulers of Egypt in pre-Islamic times (Haarmann 1980, 56); and so, this trend left little space to Pharaohs themselves, who have remained controversial characters. Proof of this is attested in the Arabic language, where from the noun *firʿawn* (pharaoh) derived the verb *tafarʿana*, meaning 'act arrogantly/act as a despot' (see *Muʿǧam al-maʿānī al-ǧāmiʿ*).

At the same time,

> in exalting Pharaonic institutions, spirituality and aesthetic achievements, [Pharaonism] denied the title of Westerners to color the intimate psyches of Egyptians: this did help prepare the way for the Islam-tinged pan-Arab anti-imperialism voiced under Nasser. (Walker 2005, 228)

In this article, by Pharaonism I mean both the intellectual trend that was hegemonic in the twenties of the nineteenth century and a more generic trend of employing elements coming from the Pharaonic past that occurred also later on. Indeed, a new wave of Pharaonism invested Egypt after the crisis in nationalist thought that followed Egypt's defeat in the 1967 war:

> the revived symbols and trappings of a putative pharaonic splendor [are] appropriated and recast as part of a continuing counternarrative that seeks to pry open the discursive cleavages between state, nation, and people and to interrogate, in the process, the ideologically and politically loaded project of writing national history and identity. (Selim 2001, 22)

Since Sadat's death in 1981, political discourse has remained hostile to a glorification of a Pharaonic past. Although Sadat tried to distance himself from the Pharaonic past, his assassins were still able

to identify him as a non-Islamic tyrant, and at their trial they were crying out "We have killed the Pharaoh" (Wood 1998, 186). Interestingly, in 1985, the late Nağīb Maḥfūẓ wrote *al-ʿĀʾiš fī-l-ḥaqīqa* (Akhenaten, Dweller in Truth, literally: 'he who lives in reality/truth'), a novel about the Pharaoh Akhenaton in which Miri-Mon, a young scribe intrigued by the ruins of Akhenaton's palace, investigates the story of this controversial pharaoh. Seeking truth, Miri-Mon encounters different people who met Akhenaton in life, he listens to their stories and reports them, giving space to polyphony, so that the reader can build his own opinion on the collected data. The word (*imbrāṭūriyya*) that Maḥfūẓ employs to define the pharaoh's reign (2007, 19) creates dissonances with the Ancient time of the pharaohs. Likewise, the sentence *Amūn, al-ʿarš, Miṣr wa-l-imbrāṭūriyya* (Amon, the throne, Egypt and the Empire, 2007, 19) recalls the Modern motto *Allāh, al-malik, al-waṭan* (God, the King and the Country) and sounds very contemporary. Indeed, with his enigmatic life and death, the character Akhenaton clearly conceals President Sadat, who Maḥfūẓ supported.[4] Maḥfūẓ, whose first novels showed a true interest in Pharaohs, but who did not follow the Pharaonist movement and who did not write about pharaohs for more than forty years,[5] decided to defend his beloved President depicting him as a pharaoh, using the same metaphor as his enemies, a pairing that Sadat himself had tried to discard. At the same time Maḥfūẓ was questioning the metaphor itself: is 'a pharaoh' always negative?

In light of the complex phenomenon of Pharaonism, examining intricate debates involving pharaohs as fictive characters often corresponding to real persons, this article will focus on the life and works of four eminent Egyptian playwrights who dealt with the con-

4 Maḥfūẓ wrote also *Yawm maqtal al-zaʿīm* (The Day the Leader was Killed, 1985) about President Sadat.

5 Maḥfūẓ's first book-length work was a translation of a children's book on ancient Egypt by the Egyptologist James Baikie (*Peeps at Many Lands: Ancient Egypt*, 1912), and his first novel experiments were historical romances set in Pharaonic times: *ʿAbaṭ al-aqdār* (Mockery of the Fates, 1939), *Rādūbīs* (Rhadopis of Nubia, 1943), and *Kifāḥ Ṭība* (The Struggle of Thebes, 1944).

Maḥfūẓ dealt with Pharaonic subjects in an original way: he did not depict the Pharaonic period as a Golden Age or an idealised model. Instead, he represented it as a faraway time where internal and external political issues could be paired to Egyptian contemporary history (Amaldi 1988, 416). Despite the efforts of King Farouq's supporters to construct an image of him as a young Pharaoh who would free his people from foreign oppression, *Rādūbīs* shows a king interested in his own pleasure and expresses the sentiments of the Egyptian people in the early forties in their disillusionment with their youthful king (Moussa-Mahmoud 1989, 157). Similarly, *Kifāḥ Ṭība* is about the conflict between ancient Egyptian kings and the invading Hyksos of the north. Represented as "fair and blue-eyed" the Hyksos symbolise the modern British forces (Moussa 1989, 157). From this period, worthy of note is only one other novel that centres on a pharaoh: ʿĀdil Kāmil's *Malik min šuʿāʿ* (1945), on the life and beliefs of the Pharaoh Akhenaton, which won a prize for historical fiction.

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troversial characters of pharaohs: Yaʿqūb Ṣanūʿ, ʿAlī Aḥmad Bākaṯīr, Alfred Faraǧ and Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm. Deeply involved in the politics of their time and strictly dependent on the cultural politics of their presidents, both in terms of benefits and censorship,[6] Egyptian playwrights' experiences with 'pharaohs' are studied in this article within their context of production and later developments to highlight the different perceptions of the character of the pharaoh in Egypt and the West, to retrace the heritage of Pharaonism and the implications of the common pairing of the pharaoh with the president, as well as to show how literature can affect politics and how these aspects let us rethink the difficult relationship of the Egyptian cultural field with pharaohs in modern and contemporary times.

2 Ṣanūʿ and *le pharaon* – Pharaohs and/in the West

In the formation of the first Egyptian troupe of players, the political satirist and playwright Yaʿqūb Ṣanūʿ (known also as James Sanua, 1839-1912), "the Father of Modern Egyptian drama" (Badawi 1985), benefitted from Ismāʿīl Bāšā's favour, who appreciated his theatre. Ṣanūʿ believed that the theatre could have a social role in Egypt's nationalism, and he was keenly aware of the need to arouse the interest of the average non-westernised Egyptian who came to see his works. Inspired by the French and the Italian theatre, at the beginning of his career he cleverly adapted some of Molière's masterpieces, appropriating their characters, formal techniques and plots (see Ruocco 2010, 43). Acting as a 'fortunate heir' (*héritier heureux*, Bencheneb 1970, 13), Ṣanūʿ also selected Molière's plays so that their subjects could be relevant to the Egyptian context and, most of all, so that they would not disturb or offend his public. For instance, he avoided translating *Dom Juan*, *Tartuffe* and *Le misanthrope* (The Misanthrope). It is reported that Ismāʿīl Bāšā himself appreciated his work, nicknaming him "The Egyptian Molière" (Badawi 1985, 134).[7]

The reason that brought Ismāʿīl Bāšā's patronage of Ṣanūʿ to an abrupt end in 1872 and the closure of Ṣanūʿs theatre is not clear. The dramatist's political criticism was certainly more explicit in his journal than in his plays (Badawi 1985, 134-5). Indeed, in 1877 Ṣanūʿ created *Abū naẓẓāra zarqāʾ* (The Man with the Blue Glasses, 1877 to at least 1882), the first magazine produced by an Egyptian, where he satirised the Khedive. Only fifteen issues of the journal were print-

6 On censorship and culture in Egypt, see for example Stagh 1993; Jacquemond 2006; Mehrez 2010.

7 On Molière's adaptation in Arabic theatre, see Fertat 2014; on Ṣanūʿs idea of theatre, see Ruocco 2010, 46-7; ʿĀnūs compares Ṣanūʿ's plays with Goldoni's (1984, 164-90).

ed in Egypt before the Khedive expelled Ṣanūʿ from the country and the journal was banned. Ṣanūʿ moved to Paris, where the journal was printed for decades and, despite the ban, was smuggled into Egypt.

Through his journal, Ṣanūʿ continued his theatrical activity, publishing short and sardonic social comedies in which he used metaphorical language and nicknames to disguise criticism. For instance, *al-Qirdātī. Luʿba tiātriyya ḥaṣalat fī ayyām al-Ġuzz sanat 1204 H.* (The Monkey Showman. A Playlet that Took Place in the Time of the Ġuzz, in the Year 1204 H/1789 AD; 1878) seeks to portray the oppression of the poor people in Egypt and the Khedive's disrespect for people's life and property, but takes as his setting Egypt a century before, under the Ġuzz, who were notorious for their ruthless and unjust rule (Moosa 1974, 419). Likewise, the dramatic sketch *Šayḫ al-ḥāra* (Chief Man of the Quarter, s.d.) also depicts the Khedive, but using a nickname (Moosa 1974, 419-20). Sarcastically, Ṣanūʿ referred to Ismāʿīl Bāšā as *šayḫ al-ḥāra* especially in his caricatures.

In the issues of the journal printed in Paris, French was added as a translation of colloquial Arabic comments of the caricatures. A master of translation and adaptation, Ṣanūʿ did not literally translate from Arabic into French. Particularly, the French 'pharaon' of the translation rarely corresponds to the Arabic *firʿawn*. For instance, "le jeune pharaon" (the young pharaoh, referring to Tawfīq Bāšā) or "le pharaon" corresponds to *al-wād al-ahbal* (the foolish lad; Ṣanūʿ 1974, 17 and 40); "le vieux pharaon" (the old pharaoh, referring to Ibrāhīm Bāšā) corresponds to *šayḫ al-ḥāra* (49). Conversely, in another caricature, Ismāʿīl Bāšā is depicted on a throne with a crown in modern clothes. While the Arabic describes him as *firʿawn*, the French translation simply calls him by name, "Ismaïl" (129).

Employing in his journal the word 'pharaon' more often than its equivalent in Arabic, Ṣanūʿ must have considered that, for a Western reader, it was a metaphor for the Khedive clearer than the many others an Egyptian could understand. Extensive use of the metaphor of the pharaoh to depict the nation's leader in Pharaonic garb both for a local public and European readers ironically reflect on the impact of Egyptology on Egyptians. Such an impact would become more widespread a few years later, especially at the beginning of the twentieth century, when it also took a nationalist turn, leading to Pharaonism.

3 Bākaṯīr's Drama – Pharaohs as Antagonists

ʿAlī Aḥmad Bākaṯīr's "first attempt at writing drama proper" (Badawi 1987, 112) dealt with pharaohs, in the play *Iḫnātūn wa-Nifirtītī* (Akhenaton and Nefertiti, 1940, reprinted in 1967). The famous writer, who was born in Indonesia from Yemeni parents, grew up in Hadramawt, and then moved to Egypt (in 1934), experimented in this play with

al-naẓm al-mursal al-munṭaliq (the running blank verse), that he had already used in a translation into Arabic of *Romeo and Juliet* (1967b, 6-7; 1964, 11-17) and of which he was particularly proud (1964, 12).

The play opens with the priests of Amon commenting on the government of the Pharaoh (Amenhotep III)[8] and especially the treacherous behaviour of his wife, Queen Tiy. They express their fear regarding the little prince (*al-amīr al-ṣaġīr*, 1967b, 23), who will later become Akhenaton. After the death of his wife Tādū,[9] the prince thinks often about the afterlife (*ḫawāṭiru-hu fī-l-samā'*, 23). Priests know that, with his new religion, centring on Aton instead of the traditional polytheism, Akhenaton may be their enemy (27) and so, they conspire against him. In the meanwhile, Queen Tiy comforts her son who is enraged with Aton for the loss of his beloved wife. Amenhotep III disapproves of his son's melancholic behaviour and the two do not talk to each other. To soothe her son, Queen Tiy has a plan: she has found that a beautiful girl called Nefertiti looks just like Tādū. Dressed up like her, the girl is shown sleeping during a ceremony where a priest of Aton awakes her. The prince believes it is a miracle that Nefertiti looks like Tādū and welcomes her as his wife. However, over time, Nefertiti does not accept the fact that the prince always mentions Tādū when he is with her. When Amenhotep III dies, the prince becomes Pharaoh Akhenaton. Believing strongly in Aton, he builds a new town in his name, Akhetaton, and is proud of it. However, the city will not survive for long. When the Hittites are about to invade Egypt, Akhenaton does not prepare for the war as his commitment to his new religion of love and peace forbids him from hating. Broken and weak, before dying he swears eternal love to Nefertiti.

Revolutionary and idealist, Akhenaton does not govern by his *fir'awniyya*, but with his religion (*dīn*), as he explains to a priest of Amon during a discussion about egalitarianism:

> High Priest of Amon: […] You excel us because of your sublime *fir'awniyya*.
> Akhenaton: Your brother does not excel you because of his *fir'awniyya*, but his religion. (115)

The neologism *fir'awniyya* in this extract is used as an equivalent of *malikiyya* (majesty, monarchy), coined upon the word *fir'awn* through a *nisba* (adjective of relation) in the female form. This singular use of the word *fir'awniyya* remarks the specificity of ruling as a pharaoh, not as any other king, and maybe also wants to highlight the negative

8 Bākaṯīr uses the Hellenized name "Amenophis".

9 In the original: z*awǧu-hu al-mitanniyya* (lit.: 'his wife from the Kingdom of Mitanni') (23).

connotation that its stem, *firʿawn*, bears in religious traditions. This explanation makes sense if we consider that in the dialogue Akhenaton opposes the idea of *firʿawniyya* to the idea of *dīn* (religion).

As a matter of fact, Akhenaton is an atypical Pharaoh. Between the two Pharaohs who appear in the play – Amenhotep III and Akhenaton – the father is the Pharaoh *par excellence*. Indeed, the title *firʿawn* is used by the priests who speak of Amenhotep III in his absence (69) and in official salutations (114), while other characters of the play generally address Akhenaton as *mawlāya* (my lord, 110, 112, 115, 117) and in the *dramatis personae* he is defined as *al-amīr* (the prince). According to Bākaṯīr, the main feature of Akhenaton is that he is a poet (*šāʿir*): "he is a poet in his words, in his actions, in his manners and in his vision of life" (150). His father, the Pharaoh, is less depicted, and there are no hints about his government, but it is clear that he cannot understand Akhenaton's love for one woman, as he appreciates many women, each for her different (skin) colour (44-5). Such misogynist features attributed to the character of the Pharaoh serve to depict him as an anti-hero. But there might be more. As Nağīb Maḥfūẓ criticised through his historical novels the love affairs of King Farouk (Fārūq al-Awwal, r. 1936-1952; Amaldi 1988, 416), Bākaṯīr might be doing the same thing through his Pharaoh.

Apart from the depiction of the Pharaoh and the anti-Pharaoh, what is interesting in *Iḫnātūn wa-Nifirtītī* is that some years after Bākaṯīr wrote it, as an affirmed author and a professed apologist for Islam and Arab nationalism, he felt the need to defend his position towards the Pharaonic topic of his play. In *Fann al-masraḥiyya min ḫilāl taǧāribī al-šaḫṣiyya* (The Art of Drama through my Own Experiments, 1958), the author admits that he was interested in Arab nationalism and, according to this, he chose the subjects for his plays. He explains that, when he arrived in Egypt, in 1934, many Egyptian writers enthusiastic with Arab nationalism were blaming Egypt's pride on its ancient Pharaonic history. However, he considers that Ancient Egypt is well known all over the world and it is certainly a part of the history of the Middle East (*al-šarq al-ʿarabī*), and so, "every Arab should be proud of it" (*yanbaġī an yaʿtazza bi-hi kullu ʿarabī*) (1964, 42). Moreover, in the preface to his play, Bākaṯīr had quoted the following verse from the Qur'an: "There are messengers whose stories we have told you already and others we have not" (IV, 164) followed by a verse from al-Mutanabbī inciting the Egyptians to recognise the pharaohs as their ancestors (1967, 11). Together, the two quotes sound like an invitation to see Akhenaton's story not only as a part of Arab heritage, but as a part of the Islamic tradition.

A few years later, referring to Bākaṯīr's apologies for Arab nationalism, Badawi states that Bākaṯīr defended his choice of a theme from ancient Egyptian history "on the naive grounds that the history of a region inhabited by modern Arabs must be regarded as part of Ar-

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ab history" (1988, 112). And if in the preface to the second edition of the play, in January 1967, Bākaṯīr no longer felt the need to justify his choice and focused instead on the fortune the running blank verse he used for his play has had with time in the Arab poetry, I presume that the play was reprinted not only for its aesthetics, but also because the revolutionary idealist who is the hero of the play perhaps recalls the utopian projects of President Nasser (Ğamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir, p. 1956-1970).

Another play by Bākaṯīr written at the beginning of his career focuses on the character of the Pharaoh: *al-Firʿawn al-mawʿūd* (The Promised Pharaoh, 1945). Bākaṯīr introduces his play with a quote from the Qur'an (XCI, 7-10), mentioning also the source he took for his play, *Adab al-farāʿina* by Muḥammad Ṣābir, and even provides the plot of the famous "story of the two brothers", Anbū (Anubis) and Bātā, in which the two of hem fight because of Anubis's wife's jealousy, but eventually reconcile and Anbū helps his brother come back to life and fight the pharaoh who had tried to kill him.[10]

Magic from the legend is kept in the play in Bātā's rebirth from a tree and in his rebirth as Sīrūnā's son, but Bākaṯīr reduces the gods' influence in the story and substitutes it with men's action. Less attention is given to "the story of the two brothers", Anubis and Bātā, who were separated by Anubi's wife as the play focuses instead on Bātā's love story with the beautiful Sīrūnā. In the hypotext, Sīrūnā becomes the pharaoh's wife against her will, while in the play, she deliberately lets ambition prevail over the sentiments of love and fidelity. Her sister-in-law influences her in developing the ambition to become *malikat Miṣr* (the Queen of Egypt) and leaving her husband to marry the Pharaoh. The promised pharaoh indicated in the title is Bātā. However, he becomes pharaoh only at the end of the play, after he kills the former pharaoh. Indeed, in the *dramatis personae*, the pharaoh (*firʿawn*) is the former pharaoh, while Bātā is *baṭal al-masraḥiyya* (the hero of the play). In the text, the word *firʿawn* is used without any positive or negative connotation, as it simply designates the person by his political function (Bākaṯīr 1945, 37, 42-4, 49, 50-2).

As a drama, this play may be considered "of indifferent quality" (Badawi 1987, 114), but the subject of fair governance is finely developed throughout the work. The absolute power of the pharaoh is reflected in his arrogant behaviour and his fear of being dethroned. Sīrūnā's ambition grows with time and particularly after the couple moves from the country to the city, to the point that it becomes an obsession, when she repeatedly asserts, like a refrain, that she wants to be *malikat Miṣr* (Bākaṯīr 1945, 81). The hero, Bātā, acts with respect for his wife and his brother, and even when they contrast his will, he

10 The papyrus is kept at The British Museum.

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accepts their decisions. His return to life is the sign that he deserves his position, and this was his fate, like the prophecy had announced, *al-firʿawn al-mawʿūd lā yuqtalu* (the promised pharaoh is not killed, Bākaṯīr 1945, 105-6). His vengeance is owed to him.

Mirroring its hypotext, the end of the play does not merge with the former events, where Sīrūnā has killed Bātā to follow her ambition to become queen. In the last scene, when Bātā resurrects and kills the pharaoh, Sīrūnā is looking for her son, whom she cannot find. She finds Bātā instead; she recognises him as her son and the play closes with Bātā and Sīrūnā hugging each other. Despite this confusing end, the play is a clear hymn to the rightful governor, who will eventually triumph. At the same time, it points out the (former) pharaoh's corruption, which is an innovation from the hypotext and could be a reference to the corruption of King Farouk, who would be dethroned a few years later. Two other plays that Bākaṯīr wrote in the same period have clearer references to the present: *Šaylūk al-ǧadīd* (The New Shylock, 1945) discusses the Zionist danger to Palestine, predicting the rise of the Israeli State; while *ʿAwdat al-Firdaws* (Paradise Regained, 1946) was inspired by Indonesia's struggle for independence (Badawi 1987, 113).

Both *Iḫnātūn wa-Nifirtītī* and *al-Firʿawn al-mawʿūd* show how unjust pharaohs are substituted by new, rightful pharaohs, who are also the heroes of the play and, for this reason too, they are called more by name than by their title. Direct references to the actual king of Egypt confirm the trend initiated by Ṣanūʿ to use the pharaoh as a metaphor for a despicable ruler, but, through his pharaohs, Bākaṯīr seems more interested in showing a tragic conflict between the new good and the old bad systems rather than practicing satire. Likewise, he does not manifest an interest in exalting a Pharaonic past.

4 Farağ – Pharaohs Fall, a Playwright Arises

In 1955, Akhenaton was the protagonist of another Egyptian play, Alfred Farağ's (1929-2005) *Suqūṭ firʿawn*, performed two years later and for twelve nights by the National Theatre Troupe in Cairo (Farağ 2009, 98).[11] This time, dealing with the fall of a pharaoh could have put a young author's career at risk. First, a play on a pharaoh did not fit with Nasser's syncretic Egyptian Arabism and was viewed with scepticism, as with Bākaṯīr's apologies for his play *Iḫnātūn wa-*

11 Apart from sharing the same subject, *Suqūṭ firʿawn* and *Iḫnātūn wa-Nifirtītī* have little in common. Bākaṯīr's Akhenaton never doubts his religion, moving towards mysticism despite the criticism from his father and the priests of Amon. Farağ's source too is different than Bākaṯīr's source for *al-Firʿawn al-mawʿūd* as Farağ consulted *al-Adab al-miṣrī al-qadīm*, by Salīm Ḥasan Faḍl (Farağ 1989, 163).

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Nifirtītī in its 1958 production. At that time, above all else, the word 'pharaoh' had started to acquire precise political implications and the young Farağ still had to learn how to deal with the state's censorship.

Considered now one of the most eminent Egyptian playwrights, when *Suqūṭ fir'awn* was performed, Farağ had written only one other play, *Ṣawt Miṣr* (The Voice of Egypt, 1956), a patriotic one-act piece designed for the masses celebrating the struggle of the people of Port Said during the 1956 Anglo-French invasion and performed at the old Opera House. Since at that time Israel referred to Nasser as the pharaoh of Egypt, the censors took the play as a critique of Nasser's leadership, while critics disapproved of its eight-scene structure and declared its theme obscure.

To defend himself from negative criticism, in December 1957, after the critics had calmed down, Farağ wrote an article published in *al-Ǧumhūriyya*: "Tağribat *Suqūṭ Fir'awn*" ("The Experience of *The Fall of a pharaoh*", 14 December 1957), where he expressed his point of view on the matter. In the previous three weeks, Farağ had counted almost forty articles on *Suqūṭ Fir'awn*, most of them berating him (2009a, 64-5). He declared that many of his friends criticised his play, while people in the streets were asking him the reason behind all that noise about his play, and he was not able to answer. He could not understand why his effort in making experimental theatre was not appreciated, but then he felt he was not alone as there were others engaged in experimentation in the arts and in their writings struggling like him. Ultimately, he stated that he would continue to write and that he had come out of this event stronger than before as he started to welcome the words of his friends, the writers who understood 'the pharaoh' (69).

So little used by Bākaṯīr, the word 'pharaoh' (*fir'awn*) appears already in the title of Farağ's play. However, in the text of the play the word *fir'awn* is not recurrent. Indeed, the title of the play in a first instance was *Ma'sāt Iḫnātūn* (Akhenaton's Tragedy). It was only after the journalist Rušdī Ṣāliḥ, who was Farağ's friend, suggested that the title *Suqūṭ fir'awn* could be more appealing for a potential audience, that Farağ changed it (2009b, 33). In the *dramatis personae*, Akhenaton is described as *al-malik* (the king, 1989, 167). And the few times it appears, the word *fir'awn* is used with a neutral meaning, as a synonym of 'king of Egypt' (205, 217, 236, supposing a certain esteem). Akhenaton is commonly called by his name or *ṣāḥib al-ǧalāla* (your Majesty, more than 25 occurrences). More rarely, he is called *malik al-arḍayn* (king of the two lands, 217, 218).

In Farağ's play, Akhenaton is shown facing a moral dilemma: being a good king or being consistent with his pacifist religion. Eventually, he decides to abdicate in favour of his son-in-law to devote himself to the task of teaching the new religion. Central to the development of the drama, the topic of religion is nonetheless diluted

with other issues, like external conflicts compromising the safety of the realm, familiar love and support, and the importance of the intellectuals in the transmission of knowledge. Bik, the king's painter, is one of the protagonists of the play. His role is fundamental in the developments of the story: he comforts and advises Nefertiti (205), dissipates the rumours about the king (220), benefits from Akhenaton's trust (231), and reassures him (234, 256-60). Bik is a friend of Akhenaton and calls him by name, besides appreciating him as his king (236). Akhenaton needs Bik since he needs "a story that History can keep alive" (263) and cares about his *kalimat al-salām* (a word of peace) enduring through time (306). Bik's words addressed to the fallen pharaoh close the play:

> your word will be in every heart, my friend… like the seed in the earth of Thebes, like the flood that always comes. (310)

A focus on the role of art in shaping and keeping the memory of a story could also be intended as a self-referential element, most of all if we consider that Akhenaton is haunted by the idea of having his story depicted in his tomb to be spread through time and that Nasser was promoting the arts to act as a mouthpiece of the regime. Akhenaton's idealism, which is harshly compared with a different reality (see especially Farağ 1989, 306-7) could also be considered similar to Nasser's utopia. In conclusion, the struggle between the high priests of Amon and Akhenaton is used to discuss the question of peace (Allen 1979, 109) and the main point of the play seems to be the need for action in the running of affairs in human society (Badawi 1987, 172).[12] As Farağ himself declared in the preface to his play, dating from 1989, *Suqūṭ fir'awn* is an historical play as it takes from History its story, its main events, and its artistic influences.[13] He adds:

> And it is [also] contemporary, as it looks at that very ancient epoch from history through a modern eye and a modern mind involving contemporary intellectual contents [*maḍmūn fikrī 'aṣrī*]. (1989, 153)

Farağ overtly admits that the play reflects upon contemporary matters. As transpires from the play and as he affirms, those matters are "the ideas of positive neutrality [*fikrat al-ḥiyād al-ījābī*] and of armed peace" (*al-salām al-musallaḥ*, 153 and Mandūr 2020, 122-3). Akhena-

12 On the play, see also Mandūr 2020, 125-33 and al-'Inānī 1990.

13 Farağ defines his play a *masraḥiyya ġinā'iyya bi-l-naṯr* (a play set to music in prose), meaning that it could be accompanied by a background music (*musīqà ḫafiyya*) inspired by Ancient Egyptian literature (1989, 159).

ton's choice of absolute peace will bring him and his reign to a fall. No matter how much Akhenaton's characterisation could recall Nasser. Being constantly called "Pharaoh" by the Israeli press, the parallel with the President of Egypt was too clear to be ignored by censors. But what could have irritated them more is certainly the explicit title, focusing precisely on the Pharaoh's defeat. Ironically, the controversy *Suqūṭ Firʿawn* stirred amongst critics brought Farağ fame overnight and in the same year he was awarded the Art Medal from the Egyptian Arts Council.[14] As Farağ suggests in the few lines about the pharaoh quoted above, the negative campaign against *Suqūṭ firʿawn* was motivated by political reasons. Indeed, when in 1958 Farağ denounced the harsh treatment of local communists by the Egyptian government, his position, together with the controversy surrounding *Suqūṭ firʿawn*, made him a victim of one of those periodic campaigns traditionally inflicted on the so-called 'communists'. Together with other members of the *intelligentsias*, Farağ was thrown into prison for four years, without trial, subjected to physical and moral inhumanities involving bodily torture, hunger, and hard labour (Amin 2008, 9).

This time too, Farağ came out stronger than before and his engagement in the politics of his time continued both through his theatre and his work as a journalist and for the Ministry of Culture, as the first director of the Mass Culture Division (*al-Ṯaqāfa al-Ğamāhiriyya*). Despite the success of his several plays, in February 1973, together with sixty-two other prominent writers, Farağ found himself again out of favour with the State, whose president at the time was Sadat (Anwar al-Sādāt, p. 1970-1981). He left Egypt and started returning to the country only under Mubarak's presidency (Ḥusnī Mubārak, p. 1981-2011), when his works first began to be printed in collections. Only then, in 1989, could *Suqūṭ Firʿawn* be printed. In 1998, in an article entitled "Riḥlat al-qalam" (The Pen's Journey, 2009b), Farağ would explain that he remembered that his play was bitterly criticised by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Šarqāwī, Fatḥī Ġānim, Ṣalāḥ ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr, Idwār al-Ḫarrāṭ. The prominent critiques would alert the censors who returned to their study of the play (which had posed no problems for them before its production) and found hidden meanings in it, interrupting the show not even two weeks after it started (Farağ 2009b, 34).[15]

This article, written in 1998, and the article Farağ had written in 1957 have been included in a small collection of Farağ's writings edited by his brother, the scholar and critic Nabīl Farağ in 2009. In 2010,

14 Years after, in his book about Arabic theatre, al-Raʿī quotes the play only in terms of the polemics surrounding it (1999, 92).

15 See Mandūr's critique on the play, which he considers unfinished and dramatically weak (2020, 122-3).

an article by Nabīl Faraǧ was dedicated to the play and the unjustified controversy it had stirred. Such a high level of interest on the matter, which endured over time, signals that the fact left its mark in the author's life. In his article, Nabīl Faraǧ (2010) clarifies that *Suqūṭ fir'awn* is not about a specific time or event, but it is a reflection about a matter.[16] He reminds us that the play is almost unknown to the new generation as it was reprinted only in 1989 and was never subsequently represented on stage. And so, he invited readers to look for the play and read it. Maybe it is not by coincidence that the article is dated 30 November 2010, a couple of months before Mubarak's fall, when the president was ironically called 'pharaoh'. Interestingly, the play was reprinted in 2016 by the state-owned publishing house al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya al-'āmma li-l-kitāb. Was this a message to confirm the fall of a 'pharaoh'?

5 Al-Ḥakīm and Nasser – Pharaohs in and Outside Fiction

Known as 'the giant of Arabic theatre', Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm (1898-1987) wrote more than fifty plays, only two of which are set in Pharaonic Egypt: *Amīnūsā* (1922), an adaptation of Alfred de Musset's *Carmosine*, and, more than thirty years later, *Īzīs* (Isis, 1955), a reinterpretation of the myth of Isis. *Īzīs*, in particular, caused a considerable controversy amongst his critics: as al-Ḥakīm introduced several significant changes to the myth, some critics, like Luwīs 'Awaḍ accused him of distorting the myth and destroying its deeper religious or metaphysical meaning, while others, like Muḥammad Mandūr and 'Alī al-Rā'ī, defended him (Badawi 1988, 63). According to Badawi the accusations were unjustified because the author declared that he wanted to reinterpret the myth (63).

In al-Ḥakīm's reinterpretation, no gods or goddesses appear but Osiris, the virtuous King (*malik*, in the play) of Egypt, and his wife, Isis. Reflecting upon problems peculiar to human society, such as the relation of politics to ethics; the relation of power and government to knowledge; the extent to which the end justifies the means; and the question of the writer's commitment in an unjust society (Badawi 1988, 63), unlike many other plays by al-Ḥakīm, *Īzīs* was a big stage success. History, (Greek) myth and legends were major sources for his theatre but, even if he was "a die-hard Pharaonist" (Walker 2005, 8), there is little trace of the Pharaonic heritage in his theatrical production.

On the other side, al-Ḥakīm's novel *'Awdat al-rūḥ* (The Return of the Spirit, 1933) has been considered "the most emblematic text of

16 Faraǧ wrote many plays on specific political matters, in which the audience could identify Nasser himself in the protagonists (Potenza 2020a).

the Pharaonist movement" (Colla 2007, 159). Al-Ḥakīm quotes from the Ancient Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, and the resurrection of Osiris, also mentioned in the play, is a metaphor of the protagonist's identification with the peasant nation of Egypt, the recovery of his authentic self and the nation's uprising against colonial rule (161). In the novel, set during the 1919 Revolution, not only does al-Ḥakīm express his philosophy of life in which instinct and the heart are set above reason and intellect, but he also expounds his own view of the unity of Egyptian history and the permanence of Egyptian identity, from the times of the Pharaohs to the present day (Badawi 1988, 953). More specifically,

> according to the novel's conservative understanding of nationalism, the social behaviour of the citizens and the very spirit of the nation are determined by the environment. Al-Ḥakīm focuses only on the social behaviour of the Egyptian peasants who are regarded as the heirs of the Pharaonic spirit of Egypt. He describes them as willing to sacrifice themselves for their leaders just as the ancient Egyptians did for their Pharaohs when they built the pyramids. (Casini 2008, 5)[17]

Inspired by Ancient history and nurtured by the contemporary spirit of Pharaonism, al-Ḥakīm's novel may well have in its turn encouraged a watershed moment in Egyptian (future) history: the 1952 Egyptian revolution. Al-Ḥakīm wrote that ʿAbd al-Nāṣir presented him with a copy of his *Philosophy of the Revolution* when it first appeared, alluding in the dedication to al-Ḥakīm's book *ʿAwdat al-rūḥ*, "calling for the return of another spirit [*ʿawda li-rūḥ uḫrà*] in the age of the revolution" (al-Ḥakīm 1974, 109). The intensity of nationalist feelings struck a chord with many Egyptians, including President Nasser, who in his youth was profoundly moved by *The Return of the Spirit*, to the extent that al-Ḥakīm later believed his novel to have been an inspiration to him (Badawi 1988, 953).

Following Nasser's death in 1970, al-Ḥakīm expressed his misgivings about Nasser's presidency and the course of the Egyptian revolution in *ʿAwdat al-waʿī* (Return of Consciousness, 1974), a collection of memoir and political reflections the title of which closely recalls his earlier book *ʿAwdat al-rūḥ*. Published in Beirut, not in Cairo, this book marks "the first public, published repudiation of 'Nasirism' to emerge from the upper-class, liberal, intelligentsian, Westernized sectors of Egyptian society" (Windler 1985, vii). According to Windler (vii), who translated *ʿAwdat al-waʿī* into English,

17 On *ʿAwdat al-rūḥ* and his young protagonist's *Bildung*, see Paniconi 2012.

> [i]ts message is simple: We Egyptians were taken in by the promise of the revolution of 1952, and Jamal ʿAbd al-Nasir, for all his personal charisma, imposed on us a police state which pursued failing policies in all directions. We, the intellectuals of Egypt, are to be rebuked for having accepted it all so passively at the time, but Egypt has now regained consciousness and can begin to move forward again.

The reaction in Egypt was tremendous for a volume of some seventy-five pages, to the point that in the second edition of the book (later, the same year) al-Ḥakīm included some samples of this outcry and his answers. The reasons for the harsh reactions, particularly loud from the left, can be retraced both to the still vibrant cult of Nasser in the Seventies and to what was felt to be a turncoat reaction towards the dead President from a writer who had publicly acclaimed him and who had largely benefitted from his admiration (xiii).

6 Conclusion

The experiences of playwrights with pharaohs all prove to be controversial, one of the reasons being (existing or presumed) references to presidents of the time, especially in the case of Faraǧ, whose career was ironically boosted by the controversy his play *Suqūṭ firʿawn* stirred in 1957. The play, almost unknown to the new generation, was reprinted only in 1989 and then, again, in 2016, by the state-owned publishing house al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿāmma li-l-kitāb, a few years after the fall of the 'pharaoh' Mubarak. While the author and his brother insisted on writing that the play is not about a specific time or event, but it is a reflection about a matter, the parallel with the President of Egypt (any president of Egypt) seems too obvious to be ignored.

This immediate pairing with presidents could also be responsible for the absence of pharaohs in the production of many other Egyptian playwrights, such as al-Ḥakīm, who manifested his interest in ancient history and myth throughout his career in his interpretations of legends and the Greek myths, and defended Pharaonism even when this trend was in decline, but who dealt with ancient Egyptian history in only two plays at the beginning of his career. On the other hand, al-Ḥakīm's interest in Pharaonism and in pharaohs elaborated in his novel *ʿAwdat al-rūḥ* established a dialogue with President Nasser that continued in another of his books – *ʿAwdat al-waʿī* – leaving the writer in the midst of a veritable polemic.

Similarly, Bākaṯīr's plays about pharaohs, disguising some light criticism of the King and focusing on the classic tragic conflicts old/new and bad/good, still needed to be justified with an adherence to

Pharaonism for dealing with the controversial subject of the pharaoh. Both *Iḫnātūn wa-Nifirtītī* and *al-Firʿawn al-mawʿūd* show how unjust pharaohs are substituted by new, rightful pharaohs. Indeed, despite he set his plays in a Pharaonic past, Bākaṯīr does not manifest an interest in exalting it as he seems more interested in showing a tragic conflict between the new good and the old bad systems. Bākaṯīr's view of Akhenaton as the anti-Pharaoh, who does not govern by his *firʿawniyya*, also sheds some light on the presence of this particular pharaoh, rather than others, in the Egyptian literary field. In Bākaṯīr's plays, direct references to the actual king of Egypt confirm the trend initiated by Ṣanūʿ to use the pharaoh as a metaphor for a despicable ruler.

Even before the interest on the Pharaonic past took a nationalist turn, at the end of the nineteenth century, in his satirical journal *Abū naẓẓāra zarqāʾ*, Ṣanūʿ started to employ the metaphor of the pharaoh to depict the Egyptian leader both for a local public and European readers. Seen that in the French translations of his caricatures the word 'pharaon' appears more often than its equivalent in Arabic, we can deduce that Ṣanūʿ must have considered that, for a Western reader, the Pharaoh was a clear metaphor for the Khedive. It might be interesting to note that the trend of adding the word 'pharaoh' in Western translations of Egyptian texts continues until today. Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ's novel *al-ʿĀʾiš fī-l-ḥaqīqa* is an example. In contrast with the original title, translations into the main languages spoken in Europe add to it the name of the pharaoh.[18] It is evident that translations sought to specify the Ancient Egyptian topic of the novel already in the title, while Maḥfūẓ did not. However, the writer has no problems in using the word *firʿawn* in the text and does not attach to it connotations of any sort. Another example is the English translation of Zaynab al-Ġazālī's *Ayyām min Ḥayātī* (literally: Days from my Life, 1977), which introduces the word 'pharaoh' in the title (Return of the Pharaoh: Memoir in Nasir's Prison, 1994).

Likewise, Western media today are in the habit of depicting Egyptian presidents in the shape of pharaohs,[19] more so than in Egypt, where many more are the instances of references to pharaonic past involving pharaonic iconography and symbols, such as pyramids,

18 The title of the English translation is: *Akhenaten, Dweller in Truth*, while in French: *Akhénaton le Renégat*. In Italian: *Akhenaton. Il faraone eretico*. In German: *Akhenaton, el rey hereje*.

19 See Avni 2010; Tisdall 2011; Hamad 2018 and Clausi 2021. Sisi rejected the accusations of being defined a pharaoh (Diab 2016). See also the Israeli press: Podeh, Giladi 2015 and ʿAmūn 2012. The Egyptian press employs images of pharaohs created in the West (ʿArafah 2011; Tawakkul 2019).

mummies and lotus flowers in cartoons, poems, and graffiti as well.[20] For instance, in the 2011 Revolution, Nefertiti's bust was more iconic than pharaohs.[21] On the contrary, depiction of pharaohs by Egyptian artists might be included in a process of deconstruction of hegemonic national imaginaries that has started in the Fifties and continues until now, boosted by the recent Revolution.[22] When, in October 2013, the cartoonist Andeel left *al-Maṣrī al-Yawm* out of frustration with having had so many of his cartoons rejected, he posted a cartoon depicting al-Sīsī (Sisi, President since 2014) in the shape of a pharaoh to his nearly 40,000 Facebook fans, who also include foreign followers (see Andeel 2013).[23] Depicting the President as a pharaoh was certainly a way of venting frustration after having been oppressed for years by the self-censorship imposed by the newspapers.

20 See, for instance, the archive of songs, literature, plays, cartoons and visual art influenced by the 2011 Egyptian Revolution drawing on research by Nicola Pratt (University of Warwick), Dalia Mostafa (University of Manchester), Dina Rezk (University of Reading) and Sara Salem (previously, University of Warwick) available at `https://egyptrevolution2011.ac.uk/`. Under the tag #pharaonism, no pharaohs appear, but graffiti and cartoons showing Nefertiti (famous Zeft's Nefertiti, wearing a gas mask), mummies and Ancient Egyptian iconography. In 2012, pharaonic iconography accompanied poems written on walls in Cairo, where the Pyramids and the Sphynx are symbols of Egypt's greatness (see Canova 2012, 261-2). Lotus flowers have also been a common symbol in Egyptian graffiti since 2011 (ʿAbd al-Laṭīf 2012, 42). Moreover, scarabs, together with the Buraqs and angels, in the Revolution's graffiti attempt to recall the collective identity that the Egyptians created in opposition to the oppressive regimes all over their history (Hamdy 2014).

21 On 10 January 2021, Nicholas R. Brown held a Zoom lecture hosted by The American Research Center in Egypt, Northern California Chapter, and the Near Eastern Studies Department, University of California, Berkeley on "The Beautiful One Returns: Nefertiti and the Altered Identities of an Icon" discussing the use of Nefertiti as a symbol of Egypt, where she has been utilised to represent the country, people, and history of ancient Egypt to the modern state. Brown maintains that, though the Nefertiti bust is housed in Berlin, Modern Egyptians re-appropriate her identity for their political, social, and economic use.

22 On May 1, 2011, Egyptian people placed a banner depicting ousted President Mubārak as a pharaoh and calling for his trial in Tahrir Square in Cairo (News Desk 2011). In 2011 protest slogans – tantalizingly in hieroglyphics – were addressed to 'the pharaoh' (ʿAbd al-Laṭīf 2012, 38). ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Abnūdī's poem *al-Midān* (The Square) as well as *Ya Maṣr hānit* (Egypt, Hang in There) by Tamīm al-Barġūṭī, which were recited on television on 27 January and 4 February 2011 respectively, were then diffused online, using the metaphor of the Pharaoh to (negatively) depict Mubārak's rule (Casini 2014, 251). Anonymous graffiti in Cairo carried the visage of 'V' (from the famous film *V for Vendetta*) surrounded by Tutankhamun's mask (see CVA 2013).

Only one famous recent Egyptian novel deals with Pharaohs: *Firʿawn* (The Pharaoh, 2000, published by Dār al-Ǧamal, Cologne). The novel – where 'pharaoh' is the nickname of a young teacher who lives as a fugitive – was published in Germany after the author, Samīr Ġarīb ʿAlī, fled Egypt because his previous novel was banned there.

23 The cartoon can be seen in TheWorld 2013. Albaih 2018 presents another example of a cartoon depicting Sisi in the shape of a pharaoh published on Facebook and then spread by the Western online media. A few cartoons reported in Guyer 2015 show Tutankhamun: in this case the reference is clearly not the president.

Thus, the cartoonist chose one of the most controversial metaphors that exist in Egypt, that same metaphor that al-Ḥakīm had used in a serious spirit eighty years before, showing how Pharaonism is taking yet another turn.

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Poetry in the Era of Social Networks: The Case of Faraḥ Šammā

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Abstract The research focuses on the linguistic and content analysis of the poems of the young poetess of Palestinian origin Faraḥ Šammā. The peculiarity of this artist consists in using the Internet and in particular videos on YouTube to recite her poems orally. As a Spoken Word artist, Faraḥ Šammā has grasped in the tool of video channels the way to transmit her compositions as she does in the course of her live performances. Starting from a reflection on the role of orality and poetry in the Arab cultural tradition and on how this literary form is inserted in the context of the new digital communication media, the work focuses on examining the thematic and linguistic aspects of the selected corpus. The goal is to extend the analysis to other forms of poetry, less conventional but which can help to open a wider glimpse into the knowledge of new literary phenomena in the Arab world.

Keywords Faraḥ Šammā. Poetry. Spoken word. Social networks. Arabic language.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Orality and Arabic poetry. – 3 Social Media and Forms of Poetry in the Arab World: A Preliminary Study. – 4 The Case of Faraḥ Šammā: Analysis of the Poems. – 4.1 Notes to the *corpus*. – 4.2 Topics. – 4.3 Language and Style. – 5 Conclusion.

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1 Introduction

Poetry, linked from its origins to orality, is the literary genre par excellence of the Arab tradition and has always occupied an important role among the artistic forms of the Arab world (Allen 2006).

Today this literary genre has acclimatised in the context of the new digital media. Literature is not expressed only in written form and YouTube can be a tool for the transmission of literary content.[1] In the Arab world, Internet, among its various functions, also becomes a tool aimed at sharing literature (Pepe 2015). There are numerous sites that aim to allow the dissemination of Arabic literature in the digital reality,[2] some of these operate internationally, others aim to explore the artistic reality of a specific place. The Poetrysoup[3] site gathers an international community of more than thirty thousand poets, while the Dubai Poetics site[4] brings together poets residing in the Emirates only, in order to celebrate the artistic production of the place. The web site Ğihat aš-Šiʿr[5] (founded in 2003) devotes its energies to the Modern Arabic poetry in its rich manifestations and transformations.

YouTube channels are increasingly becoming a popular tool for oral artistic expression: poets use them to declaim their verses through poetry performances. On YouTube it is possible to come across the performances of Slam Poetry[6] or Spoken Word[7] artists as the Syrian ʾĀmāl Kassīr, the Maroccan Muṣṭafā Ṣlāmūr and the poetess of Palestinian origin Faraḥ Šammā.

This work focuses on the peculiarities of the language and style of the latter artist and on the analysis of the themes of her compositions. The *corpus* analysed here is composed of the following poems by Faraḥ Šammā: *Kayfa ʾŪminu?* (How Must I Believe?), *Aš-Šīša* (The

1 The power of the Internet in Saudi Arabia is evident, which has given rise to new forms of private communication, from which the world best-seller of the Saudi writer Raǧāʾ Aṣ-Ṣāniʿ, entitled *Banāt ar-Riyāḍ* (The Girls of Riyadh, 2007), came out.

2 They will be cited in more detail below.

3 Poetrysoup: `https://www.poetrysoup.com`.

4 Dubaipoetics: `https://www.dubaipoetics.com` (2020-12-18).

5 `http://www.jehat.com`.

6 It is a poetic, declamatory form practiced in public places, which uses fast-paced acting and combines elements of performance, competition and audience participation. It is performed at events called 'Poetry Slams' or simply 'Slams'. In 1973, the Nuyorican Poets Café was founded in New York, one of the longest-running venues dedicated to Spoken Word poetry. In the same place, in 1989, the first Poetry Slam documented so far took place.

7 Form of poetry expressed orally and centred on dialogue or monologue. Generally recited according to a narrative scheme, the Spoken Word is sometimes improvised and expressed through multimedia performances that include music and dance. For further information, Eleveld, Smith 2003; Anglesey 2008.

Shisha), *Al-Maʿḏira* (Apologies), *Al-Ǧinsiyya* (The Nationality), *Table Rase* (Tabula Rasa), *On Censorship*.

The aim of the work is to broaden the field of investigation to other forms of literature such as the Spoken Word or Slam Poetry in relation to the new means of communication, focusing attention on the examination of the language of the selected poems.

The young poetess sees a particular strength in the oral form: that of carrying a message through a true, living and immediate language. In fact, in the traditional Arab heritage, in addition to a poetic structure based on meter and verse, sound has always played a fundamental role. Today the Spoken Word and the Slam Poetry, which originated in the United States context, can find fertile ground in the Arab world, whose literary tradition has its roots precisely in the use of orality.

The poet Faraḥ Šammā has chosen as a means to disseminate her poems both videos on YouTube and live shows, recorded and then reported on social networks.

While there are several studies on oral poetry in the Arab world, as will be further explored in the next chapter, a critical literature on Arab poetry and social networks remains rather small, probably because this phenomenon is quite recent.

Social media have provided users with the opportunity to tell their stories. Therefore, this people of storytellers found the opportunity thanks to the vast virtual space to express themselves through prose or poetry with different, very rich and varied forms. Khatib, Fathy and Sweilem (2020), who analyse the impact of social media on reshaping the system of Arab literary genres, highlight that literary works circulating on social media are not limited to the works of well-known writers, but anyone who owns a computer or a mobile phone and an account on any of the social media sites, can produce a literary text and publish it.

Furthermore, Internet has made many more people interested in poetry: social media users have read literary works, or at least some quotes from them, without much effort on their part, and have reused and circulated them to express themselves, their feelings and their visions.[8]

As for the young poets who use YouTube channels to spread their poems, their language is often much simpler than that used in traditional poetry and it is also much more visual. In general, on the texts and the interaction with the media and on how the different semiotic codes transform the texts, there is a good bibliography of reference.[9]

8 Among the most famous Arabic texts circulated on social networks is the poem *ʾAḥinnu ʾilā ḫubz ʾummi-ī* (I Want My Mother's Bread) by the Palestinian poet Maḥmūd Darwīš (Khatib, Fathy, Sweilem 2020, 1233).

9 Among the works we can include: Thomas 2020; Foley 2005; Siemens, Schreibman 2013; Morris, Ballantine 2015.

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Also the author examined here mainly uses YouTube as a channel for the diffusion of her performances; her videos have been viewed from all over the world, allowing citizens of distant countries to understand her struggles, identify with her sufferings and feel empathy for this young artist who lives in the particular condition of a Palestinian exile. The political situation inevitably affects Palestinian artists who, after exiles and diasporas, pour anguish, fears and frustrations into their writings. Faraḥ Šammā in her texts, as will later be highlighted, refers to the great Palestinian poets and writers of the *ʾĀdāb al-Muqāwama* 'Resistance Literature' including Mahmūd Darwīš, Fadwā Ṭūqān and Samiḥ al-Qāsim.[10]

2 Orality and Arabic Poetry

Since Faraḥ Šammā expresses herself through the art of Spoken Word, it is appropriate to examine some of the forms of oral poetry inherent in the tradition of the Arab world and then go on to mention some examples of contemporary authors of Spoken Word performances.

Poetry has always been considered by the Arabs to be the greatest form of literary expression and an instrument of manifestation of ideals and aspirations. The poetry, the first traces of which can be found in the *Ǧāhiliyya* period (V-VI century), was originally transmitted orally. The pre-Islamic society was a society with an oral tradition and considered the poet with esteem and profound respect, as the latter, inspired by the *ǧinn* ('supernatural creature, spirit), composed verses not only through the acquisition of a technique, but through the gift of speech and language that enabled him to manipulate reality and arouse images and feelings in the listener (Amaldi 2004, 15).

In the VIII century a large amount of poetic material was put into writing by *rāwiya* 'the tellers' and by Arab philologists who, in addition to transcribing, also undertook to examine and analyse the *corpus* with a critical sense.

Over time other forms of oral poetry continued to exist, an example is the *məlḥūn*: a form of poetry of Moroccan origin spread in the Middle Ages, expressed in dialect Arabic and often accompanied by music. In their verses the artists of this poetic genre deal with political issues and social injustices and tell about society in its various facets (Durand 2009).

If we analyse the poetic tradition following the *Nahḍa*, the tendency to transmit the compositions in written form would seem to predominate, a fact that suggests that orality has lost, with the literary

10 For further information on the authors of the resistance literature: Camera D'Afflitto 1998.

evolution, the traditional role it played in ancient Arab society. In fact, there are numerous cases in which orality is still the favoured means; an example of oral poetry that still survives today is *nabati* poetry: a type of vernacular poem widespread among the Bedouin communities of the Gulf. Al-Ghadeer (2009) studied this little known phenomenon, analysing oral poems previously collected by the poet ʿAbd Allāh ʾIbn Raddās who, in the fifties, spent ten years travelling in the desert. This type of compositions constitutes a thread capable of connecting the modern era and ancient tribal poetry; the funeral elegies and themes such as those of the trip and the camp recall the *qaṣā'id* (poems) of the poets of *Ğāhiliyya*.

Another example of oral poetry still practiced is that which takes place during ceremonies and special occasions. Yaqub (2007) in her study collected testifies to the poetic duels that took place in the nineties during the celebrations of the wedding eve between Galilee and the West Bank. The compositions in question constitute a predominantly male type of poetry that has the function of celebrating the groom on the evening of the wedding. These are real duels in which the participants improvise on the theme of the event, brag about their skills and mock the opponent. They make use of quotations from religious sources, proverbs, vocabulary linked to rural life and classical references such as anecdotes about the poet ʿAntara and the Banū Hilāl tribe.

We also find other types of contemporary oral poems in Yemen, such as *bālah* used as a form of entertainment and performed by artists who compete with each other, or *zamīl* usually composed in the imprint to convey a particular message, often also used to mediate conflicts between the tribes (Caton 1993).

Orality is historically inscribed in the history of Arab literature and poetic recitations are an intrinsic part of the Arab heritage (Herzog 2012). It is not surprising, therefore, that the American Slam Poetry movement,[11] after having landed in Europe, has also found widespread support in the Arab world. It is a format created in the United States and spread over the last fifteen years also in many European countries. This poetic form is expressed during the so-called Poetry Slam, a contest of words, in which the performers are judged by juries drawn from the audience; a situation that brings to mind the typical verbal duels that were held in the Arab world already in pre-Islamic times. The genre proposed during a Poetry Slam cannot be inscribed solely in the wording 'poetry', but more generically in that of Spoken Word.

11 Among the previous studies on spoken word it is worthwhile to renew Fisher 2003: in this article the scholar explores the spoken word in the black community and its importance for the development of cultural identity.

The Iraqi poet Muẓaffar an-Nawwāb fits perfectly into this tradition and his case demonstrates how much the oral poetic performances are still current and gain approval in the Arab world. During his performances in the streets, an-Nawwāb sometimes declaims verses in the dialectal variant of southern Iraq, accompanying them with a personal recitative style made up of screams, tears and the use of foul language. The artist is also becoming very famous in other Arab countries, where other authors quote him and take up stanzas from his poems, for example the following verses of Nawwāb were also taken up by the Syrian rapper singer ʾAbū Hažar in his song entitled *Zhəᵠna* (We are Fed Up):

> *ʿāriḍ ʾin šiʾta malāʾikat al-ʾamn tuḥīṭu-ka | maṭlūb ḫams daqāʾiq wa tadḫulu ʾinsān-an | taḫruǧu lā šayʾ min al-ʾinsāniyya fī-ka sawā l-ṣamt | wa tasʾalu ʾayna Allāh*
>
> Oppose if you want, the angels of the secret services surround you | and you are required for only five minutes, you enter as a human being | and you leave that there is nothing left of your humanity but silence | and you wonder where God is. (translation by the Author)

The link between poetry and revolutions in the Arab world is strong and there are several studies on this topic.[12] Mahmoud (2014) shows how, after a long interlude, during which the oppressive censorship of dictatorial regimes meant that the square was no longer the main meeting place between poets and their public, the so-called Arab Spring forcefully brought political and revolutionary poetry back to the streets as an instrument of struggle. Precisely during the Arab revolutions, in some cases the poems are used in an oral form and recited aloud. During the riots in Yemen, the verses of poets were used in the streets by protesters who recited politically engaged poems and, despite tribal divisions, emphasised a Yemeni identity. In Tunisia, poem *ʾIrādat al-ḥayā* (Will to Live) by ʾAbū Al-Qāsim Aš-Šābbī (1909-1934) was the soundtrack of many Tunisian protests, in fact some verses of this poem were sung in the streets and written on banners.

As in the past, even today the protest is often expressed through poetry in dialect Arabic, an example is the poet Hišām Al-Gaḫḫ.[13] He gained popularity across the Arab world through his appearances on televised poetry contests. Being from southern Egypt, the dialect that Al-Gaḫḫ speaks is considerably different from the mainstream (Cairene variety). The poet has produced some very powerful poetry

12 For further information, Athamneh 2017; Younis 2016.

13 Al-Gaḫḫ (1978-) is a very popular poet from southern Egypt.

in the few years following the rise of the Arab Spring; *At-Taʾšīra* (The Visa) which he presented in 2011 is one of his most famous poems.

Within the slogans repeated during the demonstrations in Taḥrīr Square there were some verses of the Egyptian poet ʾAḥmad Fuʾād Naǧm (1929-2013), known as El-Fagommi:

> *iš-šaʿb yurīd isqāṭ in-niẓām! Ḥusni Mubārak fēn fēn? Humma byaklu ḥamām wi frāḫ w-iḥna l-fūl dawwaḫna w-dāḫ*
>
> The people want the government to fall! Ḥusnī Mubārak where are you? You eat doves and chicks, we beans and our heads spin. (translation by the Author).[14]

El-Fagommi writes most of his works in dialectal Arabic and is known for his collaboration with the Egyptian musician Šayḫ ʾImām and for his revolutionary and patriotic poetry.

The performances of these artists can be found on the web and on social networks. YouTube is becoming more and more a popular tool even for poets, who use it to declaim their verses through poetry performances, which, in the Arab world, from the times of the *Ǧāhiliyya* poets to today, has often represented also a tool of struggle and personal expression to convey messages of criticism. In particular, the reality of Spoken Word and Slam Poetry finds space on YouTube; Poetry Slams competitions are often recorded via video and published online on YouTube channels[15] in order to significantly increase the audience.

14 The verses are taken from the poem entitled *Humma mīn iḥna mīn?* (Who They Are, Who We Are?).

15 Some YouTube channels for the publication of Slam Poetry: Poetry Slam Inc, YouTube, `https://www.youtube.com/user/thisispoetryslaminc`; Button Poetry, YouTube `https://www.youtube.com/user/ButtonPoetry/featured`; BankstownPoetrySlam, YouTube, `https://www.youtube.com/user/BankstownPoetrySlam/featured`.

3 Social Media and Forms of Poetry in the Arab World: A Preliminary Study

Advances in information and communication technologies in the Arab world are proceeding apace, generating important socio-cultural changes. From 2006 to 2011, the number of Internet users in Arab countries grew steadily by 23% annually; by comparison, the percentage of Internet users globally grew by only 14% (Sabbagh et al. 2012, 8).

A report by the Cairo organisation The Arab Network for Human Rights Information,[16] drawn up in 2015, estimated the presence of 157 million users in the region from Mauritania to Yemen. The same document showed that about half of them had a Facebook account, while Twitter was growing rapidly, with seven million users in Saudi Arabia and four million in Egypt.

Social networks offer contents of all kinds: tutorials, music, blogs, television series. The use of these contents therefore becomes much freer: viewers no longer have to adapt to the offer of television programming, being able to enjoy the contents where and when they prefer.[17]

New media have the ability to reproduce and contain old media. The Internet is a chameleonic and flexible medium capable of re-presenting the typical elements of traditional media (voice, text, images and sound) but is endowed with a more participatory and immersive nature. Consequently, the web can also be a useful tool for carrying out various literary activities.[18]

16 https://www.anhri.info/?lang=en.

17 In the Arab world, as in other countries, we are witnessing a real revolution in storytelling, linked to the production of web series, mini-fictions that can only be enjoyed online. The web series inherit some peculiarities of the TV series but exploiting the enormous possibilities of the web, where viewers can autonomously organise their viewing and, above all, interact with each other and with the creators. ʾAmīn Dura is the director of *Šankabūt* (Motorbike) produced in 2010 and the first tv series in the Arab world of Lebanese production. The series, broadcast via YouTube, Facebook and other social networks, consists of five-minute episodes and is aimed at young people. Acted in the Lebanese dialect, a factor that guarantees realism and authenticity, the series deals with social and taboo topics of the Arab world and opens the doors to an exchange of views among young web users. *Šankabūt* in fact offers interactive functions in English and Arabic: games and linked sites where users can even come up with ideas for future episodes. In this new narrative technique, called digital interactive storytelling, the interaction between narrator and audience is central. A merit that is due to this series is the fact that it has stimulated the debate on sometimes burning issues that find little space on institutional channels such as radio and TV.

The creation of a free space – in which taboo issues, such as the use of drugs, political corruption, racism, violence against women, can circulate – allows different opinions to emerge and is the mirror of a constantly evolving society.

18 Today, more than 20,000 teenagers post their work on the Canadian social reading site Wattpad (https://www.wattpad.com/) and around thirty poems are uploaded daily to the Movellas website (https://www.movellas.com/).

According to Pepe (2015), a scholar of the Egyptian blogosphere, blogs make it possible to transform *ʾadab* 'literature' into an interactive game between authors and readers, far from traditional literary institutions.

Donohue (2006) conducted a research aimed at evaluating the literary activity of the Arab world on the web, taking into consideration different categories: periodicals, online magazines, libraries, personal pages, groups of poets (from the Gulf, the Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Palestine and Algeria), women's poetry, Nabati poetry, classical poetry etc. The analysis conducted on some promising online sites demonstrates, in fact, that even in the Arab world the Internet fulfils, among its various functions, that of a tool aimed at sharing literature. There are numerous sites of interest with the aim of allowing the dissemination of literature in the digital reality. Among these we can mention the Arab Union for Internet Writers, The Encyclopedia of Arabic Poetry, the Arabic Short Story, with contributions coming mainly from Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, al-Warraq, site repository of classical Arabic works; the sites of the unions of writers from different Arab countries, such as the Arab Writers Union in Damascus or The Emirates Writers Union,[19] or other sites like the ones already mentioned, such as Poetrysoup and Dubai Poetics.

These examples, which little represent the richness of digital poet communities, demonstrate that poetry finds ample space on the web. Poetry is one of the literary forms that is most able to acclimate to the new digital publication format, so much so that a composition can be shared in different forms: text (blog, PDF), video (YouTube) or images (Tumblr).

Writing plays a primary role on the web, but orality also occupies a considerable position. On YouTube it is possible to come across the performances of numerous spoken word artists including the Palestinian Tirīz Slīmān, the Egyptian ʿAlī Ṭālibāb, the Lebanese rapper known as El Rass, and the Syrian Hānī as-Sawāḥ. Particularly interesting is the contribution of the Palestinian journalist and writer Dīma al-Ḥaṭīb who, in addition to being the executive director of Al-Jazeera and one of the very few female leaders of the Arab media sphere, also stands out for her poems.

Although her poems are only in English, it is also necessary to mention the spoken word artist ʾĀmāl Kassīr, whose performances are visible online. This young American girl, of Syrian origins, has gained a lot of visibility in the English-speaking world, performing in numerous events and bringing many issues such as the war in Syr-

19 Arab Union for Internet Writers http://www.arab-ewriters.com; Arabic Poems http://www.arabicpoems.com; Arabic story http://www.arabicstory.net; al-Waraq http://www.alwaraq.net.

ia, intolerance, machismo, interreligious dialogue, to public attention.

Sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, are extremely popular in the Arab world and have often been used as tools to fight for democracy, social respect and basic freedoms.

In the wake of the so-called Arab Springs, many young people have resorted to blogging as a means of expressing their literary creativity or, simply, their opinions. The contents of the blogs allow us to glimpse the daily life, feelings and aspirations of youth and are indicative of the significant social and political developments in the Arab world. The relationship between online blogging activism and Middle Eastern political mobilisation is crucial. Numerous Egyptian bloggers spoke out about the demonstrations in Taḥrīr square, while Tunisians made blogs a political tool in the years of the Jasmine Revolution.

During the Arab revolutions, some oral artistic expressions spread through the web played a fundamental role in mobilising people and gathering support for protests against governments. A striking example is the musical genre of rap. One of the fuses that sparked the revolution in Tunisia is represented by a song by the well-known rapper Hamada Ben Amor, better known by the stage name of El Général: the artist with the lyric *Rayes lebled* (The President of the Country) denounced the harsh reality of unemployed youth. The Egyptian rapper Rāmī Donžewān through the web denounced the government in his famous song *Ḍidd il-ḥukūma* that has become an anthem for the demonstrators in Egypt: *ḍidd il ḥukūma ḍidd il-balṭaga w-ẓ-ẓulm ḍidd il-ḥukūma ḍidd il-ḥākim w-l-ḥukm* (Against the government, against the use of violence and injustice, against the government, against the ruler and the authority).[20]

Even in Syria, young people have resorted to a commitment at both a political and cultural level through various forms, especially through the production of videos and songs. Several Syrian rappers, some anonymously, have disseminated songs in favour of the revolution through social networks, denouncing the political-social conditions in which their country lived and manifesting a desire for renewal: first of all ʾIbrahīm Qāšūš of Hama, author of the song *Yalla ərḥal, ya Baššār* (Go away, Bashar). In 2011 the singer was later found dead with his throat and vocal cords cut because of this song.

Palestinian rap also manifests itself almost completely through web channels and in particular YouTube. This genre continues the tradition of artistic protest developed by Palestinian communities since the early years after the Arab-Israeli war of 1948; the current poetic and musical performances of Palestinian rappers recall the efforts of previous generations of artists who expressed a political critique of their condition, experimenting with new artistic forms.

20 For further information, see Fischione 2013; Swedenburg 2012.

McDonald (2006) notes that a tradition of songs about resistance developed in Palestine during the British Mandate period and then focuses attention on the analysis of the Palestinian rap group DAM.[21] Massad (2005), in investigating the support given by nationalistic songs to the Palestinian liberation struggle, argues that the Palestinian folk song is not a phenomenon subservient to politics, but a stimulus to generate political sentiment in many areas. Palestinian rap is grafted into this traditional context, through the use of a new language that often resorts to poetry and draws on a traditional artistic repertoire, adapting these components to the musical style that distinguishes rap and using the Palestinian dialect.

Oral communication has some strengths that sometimes make it more effective than written communication. With this in mind, video can be a form of communication that, using different semiotic resources, is able to create a multi-sensory experience, much more engaging for the user.

4 The Case of Faraḥ Šammā: Analysis of the Poems

Faraḥ Šammā[22] was born in 1994 in the United Arab Emirates. Her father, born in Damascus, after his studies in Egypt settled in Dubai, as did her mother, of Palestinian origin. Faraḥ begins to devote herself to writing around the age of thirteen and, although Arabic is her mother tongue, she composes verses in English, a language used in various sectors in Dubai. After a few years, Faraḥ publishes her compositions on the aforementioned Poetrysoup website.

However, her real experience in the literary field begins in 2008, following an encounter with the well-known Palestinian poetess Hind Šūfānī, founder of the Dubai group The Poeticians.[23]

At that time, a sense of frustration emerges in the young poetess for having composed only poems in English and she begins to use Arabic language. So she composes *Kayfa ʾŪminu?* (How Must I Believe?) (2013), her first poem in Arabic which, once published on YouTube quickly travels around the world, gaining millions of views.

21 The DAM (acronym for 'Da Arabian MCs', but in Arabic *damm* also means 'blood'), from Lidda, are the first Palestinian rap group (founded in 1999) and among the most famous rap groups both in Arab countries and abroad.

22 Information on the life and artistic production of the author is taken from the following sites: `https://www.dubaipoetics.com` (2020-12-18), `https://www.soundcloud.com`, `https://www.arabnews.com`. Her Facebook page is no longer available.

23 Founded by Palestinian director and writer Hind Šūfānī, The Poeticians group has been active since 2007 and performs in Beirut, Amman and Dubai. Poets of different nationalities share poems in English, Arabic and French in front of an audience of listeners. The Poeticians: `https://www.poeticians.com`.

After realising that the Emirates poetic community is expanding rapidly, Šammā begins to undertake personal projects and organise poetry evenings, using social networks. During her college years, Šammā comes into contact with Paul D[24] (real name Dorian Rogers), award-winning poet and hip hop artist, considered a pioneer for introducing the reality of the Spoken Word to the UAE capital; when Paul D moves to Abu Dhabi in late 2011, he finds a huge void there in the Open Mic Nights field.[25] Paul D introduces Faraḥ to the evening poetry events organised by him. In recent years, Faraḥ Šammā's interest in promoting the art of Spoken Word among university students has grown and she herself encourages poetic performances through various initiatives in universities. Today Faraḥ is an active member of the Dubai Poetics community, founded by Ǧamīl ʾAdās in January 2016, with the aim of creating a free sharing space for aspiring poets. This community ensures visibility to artists: at the end of each month it prints their poems, publishes them regularly on social networks, organises Spoken Word evenings and hosts workshops on poetry and writing.

The author recites her poems by heart, charging them with energy and motivating them through recitation; her performances are sometimes accompanied by music, but usually it is only the sound of her voice that gives power to her compositions. Her lyrics are made to be recited, pronounced and unread, she does not carry sheets of paper on stage and prefers to perform poems in a spontaneous, improvised way.

Faraḥ Šammā understood that the enormous potential of the YouTube platform also makes it suitable for sharing literary production. She joined YouTube in September 2013; to date her official channel has about 12,500 subscribers, has obtained more than 700,000 views, but offers only about twenty videos. However, if we type her name on YouTube, the results are much more numerous: the videos of her poems, in fact, were also published by fans who attended the spoken word performances and by several other channels. Among these, we can mention "How we flex", a channel that offers a direct look at the music and entertainment industry of the Emirates. The latter was responsible for the online publication of the video *Kayfa ʾŪminu*?, which obtained more than 280,000 views when it came out in 2013. Šammā's videos were also uploaded by the Samarmedia channel which deals

24 Dorian Rogers is considered one of the best performance poets in America. In 2007 winner at the National Poetry Slam in the 'groups' category with the Slam Charlotte team and in 2005 individual winner at the Southern Fried Poetry Slam.

25 Derived Open Mic Night (from the expression 'open microphone') is a live show (at a coffeehouse, nightclub or pub) at which audience members who are amateur or professional may perform on stage, often for the first time or to promote an upcoming performance.

with the publication of videos in Arabic, English and French and by Dan Malak, the director who shot the *aš-Šīšā* video.[26]

4.1 Notes to the *corpus*

The *corpus* under examination is composed of six poems: *Kayfa ʾŪminu?*[27] (How must I believe?, 2013), *Aš-Šīša*[28] (The shisha, 2014), *Al-Maʿḏira*[29] (Apologies, 2014), *Al-Ǧinsiyya*[30] (The nationality, 2014), *Table Rase*[31] (Tabula rasa, 2014), *On Censorship* (2015).[32]

The poems have been transcribed and translated in their entirety, however only the verses under analysis are reported here. The entire performances of the author's poems can be listened on the sites indicated in the notes.

In the analysis of the topics, the quotations of the verses of the poems are reported directly in translation as the goal is to focus attention on the issues addressed by the author, in the part concerning the analysis of language and style the verses are reported in transcription with the translation between parentheses.[33]

4.2 Topics

Faraḥ Šammā's poetics are mainly introspective and the boundary between political and personal themes is often blurred. The intention of the poetess is to write on any subject she has at heart, in such a way as to convey her emotions. Probably, the fact that she has dedicated herself to philosophy studies leads her to reflect on many topics, digging deeply.

26 https://www.youtube.com/user/SamarMediaTv; https://www.youtube.com/user/DanMalak.

27 Farah Chamma, *How Must I Believe?* / فيكـ ؟نمؤأ. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-RXWy1zcbU.

28 Farah Chamma, *The Sheesha* | امشـ حرفـ - ةشيشلا. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=582st3X949U.

29 Farah Chamma, *Apologies* | امشـ حرفـ- ةرذعملا. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOjJ54yAGFQ.

30 Farah Chamma, *The Nationality* | امشـ حرفـ - ةيسنجلا. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_bF7FNoJfGs.

31 Farah Chamma, *Table Rase*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOzJBl_AyjI.

32 Farah Chamma, *On Censorship* | امشـ حرفـ - ةباقرلا نع (Live Performance). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIOjN0IhVnk.

33 Regarding the transcription in this work the short vowel of the cases and the suffixed pronouns are placed after the word with a dash.

While not focusing on a single topic, her poems seem to be united by the desire to explore all existing forms of injustice and, in particular, the deep cracks that run through the Arab world. Her compositions focus on dictatorships, corruption, fundamentalism, the Palestinian cause, political frustration and the hope of young people for a better future.

In *Kayfa ʾŪminu?* Faraḥ Šammā is the spokesperson for the disillusioned and tired Arabs of dictatorships and hypocrisy practiced in the name of religion. In this song of disappointment for the current condition of the Arab world, the poetess throws stinging questions at those who have exploited religion and destroyed the fundamental freedoms of people in the name of the ancient Islamic *ʾumma*. In this poem she writes:

> How must I believe if you have made faith more like atheism | you have separated countries, spread corruption, killed men | and all this in the name of religion and devotion?

With eloquence, Faraḥ highlights the evils suffered by the Arab peoples and accuses those who preferred the madness of extremism to wisdom and reason. The author has been severely criticised for this poem, in which some have grasped a controversial relationship with religion. In the same poem the frustration of the poetess finds echo, in fact she feels she has been abandoned by her Arab identity: "My Arabicity is my enemy" or "I sat between myself but I couldn't find myself | I too have been colonized". Arabicity, which wanders the streets looking for a foreign government to protect it, wanders from one officer to another, from one embassy to another, symbolises the condition of those refugees forced to wander relentlessly and without finding refuge. The feeling of bewilderment, alienation, estrangement and isolation (*ġurba* in Arabic) has always been felt by the Palestinian intellectuals both when they are away from their homeland and when they remain in their own land.

This topic constitutes the central theme of the poem *Al-Ǧinsiyya* in which, once again, the dramatic situation of the Palestinian refugees, who are prevented from returning to Palestine, is represented. The history of this tormented land has become part of the memory of the world thanks to the verses of the poets who express the feelings of what was perceived by the Arab world as a catastrophe, the *Nakba*.[34] Faraḥ does not want to fall into the trap of dealing solely with the Palestinian cause in her poems, but, inevitably, the attempt to investigate

34 *Nakba* (Catastrophe): this term refers to the foundation of the State of Israel (1948) which marks the loss of Palestine for the entire Arab world with the consequent exodus of Palestinian refugees (Camera d'Afflitto 1998, 260).

what it really means to be a Palestinian in a diaspora is the centre of her life and her art. It is precisely the distance from the country of origin that, according to her, gives the Palestinians a form of attachment to the homeland that is even stronger than traditional patriotism.

In *Al-Ǧinsiyya* she describes the physical and spiritual uprooting of an exile far from her homeland, forced to emigrate to a foreign land, Brazil in this case, that accepts her and provides her with documents:

> They welcomed me into their country, like a Palestinian woman | exiled from her own country | who have been promised a false right of return.

Despite the warm welcome that the Brazilian government offers to Faraḥ, the young woman suffers from the indifference of the Arab countries in the face of the unfortunate fate of the Palestinians. We review this attitude in various authors such as the poet Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān[35] who several times in his compositions denounced the ambiguous behaviour of the Arab world. Even his sister, the famous poetess Fadwā Ṭūqān,[36] in the poem *ʾIlā sayyid al-Masīḥ fī ʿīd-i-hi* (To Christ on His Birthday) stresses that the world is numb to the tragedy of the Palestinians:

> The world is adamant to the tragedy | The light has departed from that lost ruthless master | Who did not light one candle | Who did not shed one tear | To wash the sorrows of Jerusalem.[37]

Similarly in Faraḥ's poem, the Arab world, which preaches pan-Arabism and unity, is deaf to the plea for help from exiled Palestinians; the poetess writes:

> I found refuge in the country of exile | and was not accepted by the Arab countries | they denied me a stamp, they deprived me of my documents | and today I am in an exile that has become my home and my identity.

35 Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān (1905-1941), Palestinian poet, was born in Nablus where he studied and then moved to the American University of Beirut. Brother of Fadwā Ṭūqān, he is known as the first spokesman for the Palestinian cause in the twenties and thirties. Most of his poetry, which ranges from nationalistic to personal poetry, was published in Arab newspapers and assembled after his death in a single volume *Diwān* (1988) (Meisami, Starkey 1998, 786).

36 Fadwa Ṭūqān (Nablus 1923-Nablus 2003), Palestinian poetess, was initiated into literature by her brother Ibrāhīm, also a poet. Her artistic production, initially focused on individual themes, such as love, hope, loneliness and affections, after 1967 took on tones of serious social and political commitment to the Palestinian question. For further information see Canova 1971; 1973; Colombo 2007.

37 Translation by Sulāfa Hiǧāwī (Hijjawi 1968, 18).

Although gratified to have obtained a passport, the poetess feels alienated, does not identify with her new Brazilian nationality and experiences a deep sense of loneliness. The passport constitutes for the Palestinian exiles an emblem of identity and the symbol of a denied belonging.

The poem ends with the declaration of one's Arab identity:

> And even if I obtained hundreds of citizenships | in my heart there would be only one nationality | whether I want it or not | Arab.

This affirmation of belonging to the Arab world brings to mind the well-known poem *Bitāqat huwiyya*[38] (Identity Card) of the famous Palestinian poet Maḥmūd Darwīš,[39] in which the author underlines his link with all the Arabs. Through her political commitment to the Palestinian cause, the young Faraḥ is inscribed, in fact, in that type of literary production called *ʾĀdāb al-Muqāwama* 'Resistance literature' which has had, in various ways, feedback in all the literatures of Arab countries and which has prompted writers to opt for a politically and socially engaged literature and poetry.

The theme of nationality also finds space in Šammā's compositions which are coloured with more intimate and personal tones such as *Table Rase*, in which the poetess claims:

> Don't ask me where I come from | where I was born | do not try to know what is written on my documents. | I am nobody, a nomad, a lost soul, a simple wandering spirit.

And "No homeland for me on earth | I found a homeland in the sky | a free and pure cloud". Given her particular condition as a Palestinian exile, the poetess feels she has to reinvent the traditional concept of nationality, that is, belonging to a nation as an ethnic, political and cultural entity, making cultural hybridisation the constituent element of her being.

The Palestinian question is also the central theme of *Al-Maʿḏira* in which the poem itself becomes a metaphor for the harassed country of origin of Faraḥ Šammā. The poem is described as a victim of a siege, forced to live in tunnels, to rhyme with bombs, forced to evacuate the house and suffocated by chemical gases. The metric of the poem becomes a commodity sold on the slave market, in exchange for an imported poem. The nature of the poem, like that of her country, is altered to the point of making it unrecognisable:

38 https://www.aldiwan.net/poem2290.html.

39 For further information on the concept of national identity in the poem by Maḥmūd Darwīš, see Nofal 2017.

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> Excuse me | if they have circumcised your parts | they killed your little letters […]. Excuse me | if they have destroyed your verses | they turned you away from them | and deleted the letters from your words […]. Excuse me, poetry | if they sold you cheap | for an imported poem.

As in the Palestinian lands, the soldiers take sides among the hemistiches of poetry, take control of it and establish the metre that the composition must follow. Poetry, like Palestine, is transformed by foreign hands, so much so that the author herself loses the rights to the verses she composed, just as the Palestinians have lost the rights to their land.

In *On Censorship* the author describes the control and limitation of freedoms of expression, thought and speech by the authorities of Arab countries:

> They want to cover my lines with cloth | and cut off the tips of my pens | they want me to praise the kingdom of their thoughts | and declaim tasteless verses, again and again.

Faraḥ Šammā represents the condition of the poet as the one to whom the vocal cords have been tied: "am I allowed to speak these words? | Or have my vocal cords been tied?"; likewise the poet Samīḥ al-Qāsim[40] in his poem *Aš-šafāh al-maqṣūṣa* (Slit Lips) wrote: "I would have liked to tell you the story of a dead nightingale | I would have liked to tell you a story | if they hadn't cut my lips!".[41]

Intellectual repression is particularly harsh when writers try to deal with issues such as politics, religion and sex; within the poem Faraḥ she wonders ironically: "Maybe I should consider writing poetry about seahorses or T-Rex!". The poetess reflects on the limiting condition of Arab countries: "In my country we fear ideas like tanks | crusades against words are being waged in my country"; the world has transformed into what she bitterly defines "a silent apartheid".

In a context of repression and censorship, the younger generations often show an attitude of indifference and detachment, become careless and impassive, do not express their opinions and do not act to change the situation. This is the theme of *Aš-Šīša*, a poem in which Faraḥ Šammā reproaches her generation for the inertia that causes them to sit in cafes, to smoke *šīša*, staring at cell phone screens, without talking about anything except frivolous topics like football:

40 Samīḥ al-Qāsim (Palestine 1939-Galilee 2014), Palestinian poet who lived under Israeli occupation. After dedicating himself to teaching, he worked as a journalist for numerous political newspapers. His vast poetic production focuses mostly on the theme of the Palestinian question.

41 Al-Qāsim 1958 (translation by the Author).

> They are not interested in wars, oppression, invasion | they are waiting for a slim and slender bride, with her head held high […]. At the café, we see the guys at their best | they do nothing else except what relaxes the mind. […]. The *šīša* instead gurgles | the screens of the telephones light up their faces […]. Maybe they are tired of talking about unemployment | of the increase in prices, of money | are tired of politics and revolutions | in which they have lost all hope | and of course they prefer to talk about Barcelona or Real.

4.3 Language and Style

The experiences abroad that Faraḥ makes in the course of her life converge today in a type of poetry that breaks down linguistic boundaries. This recourse to multilingualism in compositions is not just a specific stylistic choice, but an expressive necessity. At a young age, Faraḥ chose the English language for her compositions, used in various fields of Emirates in daily life. Before dedicating herself to academic studies, the young artist moves to Brazil and quickly learns Portuguese. After her experience in Brazil, she travels to France where she studies philosophy and sociology, also learning French. In addition to Portuguese, French and English, she attends German and Spanish courses. Today the young poetess writes and speaks six languages, but for her compositions she favours Arabic, English and French. The transglossia[42] is a factor that unites most of Faraḥ's performances; in the poems reported in this work clear examples of this linguistic phenomenon can be seen in *Table Rase*, in which the author passes from a strophe in French to one in Arabic and *On Censorship* in which there is an alternation between stanzas in English and Arabic.

Faraḥ Šammā, in her poems, chooses to express herself in standard Arabic (*al-fuṣḥā*), paying attention also to *ʾiʿrāb* albeit not in a systematic way; nevertheless the language sometimes slips towards the dialect variant only in one case, in the poem *On Censorship* which will be analysed later.[43]

42 In transglossia, speakers switch from one language to another without specialising roles or areas and without it being possible to identify particular contexts for the use of one or the other language (Durand 2009, 95).

43 In two texts, however not analysed here, the author uses Palestinian Arabic: in *I am no Palestinian*, in which she recites *ʾanā miš falasṭiniyye* (I am not Palestinian), we observe the negation *miš*, typical of the Palestinian variety; the poem *Saḥar* (from the name of her mother to whom the poem is dedicated), in which the poetic performance is accompanied by the musician Marwān Betāwī, is entirely in Palestinian Arabic. The performances can be viewed on: Farah Chamma, *I Am No Palestinian*, `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_djdVQfFVU`; Farah Chamma and Maruan Betawi, `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u72I32EERRQ`.

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In general, in Faraḥ's poems there is an intertextuality that often links her poems to passages by other poets or writers through allusions, quotations or similar expressions, as in the cases already seen in which the author makes more or less direct references to the works of Samīḥ al-Qāsim, Maḥmūd Darwīš, Fadwā Ṭūqān and ʾIbrahīm Ṭūqān.

From a stylistic point of view, the poetess is not limited to the use of free verse and, in most of her poems, attempts to recreate rhymes and assonances.

Faraḥ Šammā's poems are real performances that flow into the art of the show: the Spoken Word combines theatre and the word. As with theatre, even in the context of the Spoken Word, the artists are motivated by the desire to engage in an authentic exchange with the public. Faraḥ Šammā is aware of having the innate ability to feel at ease on stage, even though she has not studied the theatrical arts directly. When she speaks, she is moved and amused, while she excites the spectators and gives life to a unique, sometimes interactive show. The intervention of the public is often explicitly requested, as viewers are sometimes invited to answer questions or repeat verses, for example in *On Censorship*: "I want you all to repeat the word 'abide' | one, two, three… | 'abide'!".

In *Kayfa ʾŪminu?* we can find a refined vocabulary suitable also for the solemnity of the treated theme. The author recites this poem entirely in classical Arabic, also paying attention to *ʾiʿrāb*. From a stylistic point of view, the suffix rhyme *-ād-a* recurs with the final vowel of the *ʾiʿrāb*:

> *fa-faraqtum bi-hi l-bilād-a wa našartum bi-hi l-fasād-a wa qataltum bi-hi l-ʿibād-a | wa kull-u hāḏa bi-ʾism-i d-dīn-i wa l-ʿibādat-a*
>
> You have separated countries, spread corruption, killed human beings | and all this in the name of religion and devotion.

In the same poem, the sense of tiredness and frustration of the Arabs is expressed by the anaphora: we observe repetitions in several verses of the verb *saʾimnā* 'we are tired' and the expressions *fī dāḫil-ī* 'inside me', *tuʿādī-nī ʿurūbat-ī* 'my arabicity is my enemy'.

The poetess frequently employs rhetorical questions: *kayfa ʾuʾminu*[44] *wa qad ǧaʿltum al-ʾimān ʾašbah bi-l-kufr*? (How must I believe if you have made faith more like atheism?); *kayfa ʾuʾminu wa qad ʾaṣbaḥa fī dāḫil-ī ʿuduww lā yafzaʿ*? (How must I believe if there is an enemy inside me who is not afraid?); *kayfa ʾuʾminu mā dumtu ʾaṭmaḥu bi-ʾan*

44 In standard Arabic the correct rendering is *ʾūminu*, here the poetess pronounces clearly *ʾuʾminu*.

ʾaʿīša fī bilād-i laysat hiyya bilād-a-nā? (How must I believe as long as I want to live in a country that is not ours?).

The poetess also uses the allocution to attract the attention of the listener: *ya man bi-sm-i llāhi saraqtum wa kaḏabtum, wa hadamtum bayt man ʾašāda* (You who in the name of God have stolen, lied and demolished the house of those who built); *fa-hal sa-tagību-nā iyya-hā l-munādā?* (Are you going to answer us, you who are invoked?).

In this poem there are numerous rhetorical figures; similes as in the following cases: *ʿurūbat-ī tuʿādī-nī | taḏūbu fī ṣadr-ī ka-ṯ-ṯalǧ ka-ḥarb bāridat-in ṯānya* (My arabicity is my enemy | it melts in my chest like ice, like a second cold war), *kayfa ʿuʾminu wa qad ʾaṣbaḥat ʿurūbat-ī ka-ʾimrʾamaqṭūʿa fī š-šawārʿ-i zānya?* (How must I believe if my arabicity has become like a desperate prostitute on the streets?); personification as in the following verses:

> *tuʿādī-nī ʿurūbat-ī tamnaʿu-nī min at-taǧawwul | lā tasmaḥu l-ī bi-l-ʿubūr, lā taḫtimu l-ī ʿalā ǧawāz as-safar | tuʿādī-nī ʿurūbat-ī, tilka ʾallatī tadūru fī aš-šawārʿ-i | bāḥiṯa ʿan ḥukūma ʾaǧnabiyya taʾwī-ha | tadūru bāḥiṯa min ḍābiṭ ʾilā ḍābiṭ, min safāra ʾilā safāra | wa lā ʾaḥad mulāqī-ha*
>
> My arabicity is my enemy, it does not allow me to move | blocks my passage, does not print my passport | my arabicity is my enemy, it who wanders the streets | looking for a foreign government to protect it | it wanders from one officer to another, from one embassy to another | and no one goes to meet it.

Finally we also observe metaphors: *fī dāḫil-ī ṭāʾirāt-u wa tafǧirāt-u* (Inside me there are planes and explosions), *hadamtum al-bayt man ʾašāda | li-taʿīšū fī quṣūr ʾušīdat min ṭūb aẓ-ẓulm wa l-istiʿbāt* (You demolished the house of the one who built | to live in buildings built with bricks of injustice and slavery).

In *Aš-šīša* the final *climax* is built on the rhyme of the ending of the masculine plural *-īn*:

> *fa-yā šabāb al-yawm | fal-nušayyiš maʿa-an | mā dumnā ǧālisīn | fal-nušayyiš li-l-waṭan | fal-nušayyiš li-l- maẓlūmīn fal-nušayyiš li-ṭ-ṭuġāt-i | wal-nušayyiš li-l-mustaʾmirīn | wal-nušayyiš li-l-ʿilm wa ṭ-ṭaqāfa wa-d-dīn | wal-nušayyiš | wa nabqā fī-l-maqhā ǧālisīn | laʿalla-nā fī yawm nušayyiš | fī Falasṭīn*
>
> Come on guys today | we smoke together as long as we are sitting here | we smoke for the homeland | we smoke for the oppressed | we smoke for the oppressors | we smoke for the settlers | we smoke for science, culture and religion | we smoke and sit here at the cafe | maybe one day we will smoke | in Palestine).

We observe the verb *šayyaša* (built directly from the noun *šīša*) rather than the more classical expression *šariba š-šīša* or *daḫḫana š-šīša* 'smoke the hookah'. In these verses we find the repetition at the beginning of the verse of *wal-nušayyiš* ('let's smoke', with exhortative function) to reiterate the sarcastic invitation to the Arab brothers to persevere in their attitude of idleness.

From the point of view of the figures of speech, in this poem we observe the simile, for example in the verse *ʾammā ruʾūs-u-hum fa-ka-l-ǧalīd-i* (their faces are like ice), and the alliteration, as in the following case with the repetition of the syllable *la* and the phoneme /l/: *lā mawḍūʿ yuṭraḥu wa lā suʾāl, tuqarqiru š-šīšat-u badal-an ʿan-hum* (No arguments, no questions come from them, the *šīša* gurgles instead). The quadriconsonantic verb *qarqara, yuqarqiru* ('mutter, grumble, gurgle') is also used here in an onomatopoeic function to remember the noise of the bubbles that the smoke generates when passing through the water of the *šīša*; in this verse, irony arises from the juxtaposition of the silence of the young and the noise of the *šīša* alone.

The poem *Al-Maʿḏira* (Apologies) is characterised by a freer line, consisting of short phrases that give the composition a tight rhythm. While there is no systematic rhyme, the ending *-ār* returns every two or three lines throughout the poem: *damār, ḥiṣār, nār, dūlār, ʾinḏār* etc. We observe the rhetorical figure of the anaphora, in fact the verb *katabtu-ki* (I wrote you) is repeated at the beginning of three consecutive verses and *maʿḏirat-an* (excuse me) returns systematically in the course of the composition; repetition, as well as being a formal figure of speech widely used in various oral productions and in poetry, can also represent a means to detach oneself from physical and real suffering, through an almost cathartic procedure (Corrao 2007, 24). The entire poem is built on the personification of poetry, to which the artist addresses, invoking forgiveness: *maʿḏirat-an qaṣīdat-ī | lam ʾašaʾ la-ki l-wilāda | fī hāḏa d-damār* (Sorry poem | I didn't want you to be born | in this destruction), *maʿḏirat-an ʾin quṭiʿat ʿan-ki l-kahrabāʾ wa ṭalabū min-ki ʾiḫlāʾ ad-dār* (Excuse me | if they have disconnected your electricity | if they asked you to evacuate your home), *maʿḏirat-an qaṣīdat-ī | lam ʾašaʾ | ʾan yuǧʿala min-ki ʿarḍat-an li-l-ʿār* (Sorry poem | I did not want | that you were the target of shame), *Maʾḏirat-an | ʾin ḫatamū ʾaṭrāf-a-ki | wa qatalū ḥurūf-a-ki ṣ-ṣaġīra* (Excuse me | if they have circumcised your parts | and they killed your little letters) etc. The language of this poem is full of expressive power and the use of metaphors allows the poetess to carry on her invective, in a more veiled way: *katabtu-ki | bi-dam wa nār | katabtu-ki | bi-yūrānīyūm | wa bi-ḥibr ḫām yubāʿu bi-dūlār* (I wrote you | with blood and fire | I wrote to you with uranium | and with raw ink sold in dollars), *maʿḏirat-an qaṣīdat-ī |ʾin ḥuširat kalimāt-i-ki fī qiṭāʿ | lā maǧāl fī-hi li-l-istiʿārāt | qāfīyyat-u-hu ṣawt midfaʿ wa ʾinḏār* (Excuse me poem | if your words have been piled up | in a sector | with no place for

metaphors | rhyming between the sound of shots and the alarms), *lam ʾašaʾ li-ʿarūḍ-i-ki | ʾan tuṣbiḥa ʿarḍ-a-ki | ʾan tabāʿiya fī sūq ar-riqq* (I didn't want your metric | became a commodity | to sell at the slave market), *maʿḏirat-an | ʾin lawanū-ki | bi-l-ʾazraq wa l-ʾabyaḍ* (Excuse me | if they colored you | of blue and white). In all verses the poetess refers to the difficult socio-political situation in Palestine, with the clear final reference to the colours of the Israeli flag.

In *Al-Ǧinsiyya*, as the title anticipates, the rhyme is built on the feminine ending *-iyya*:

> *muniḥat ǧinsiyya brāzīliyya | muniḥat ǧawāz safar-in wa biṭāqat huwiyya | muniḥat ʾiqāma dāʾima wa biṭāqa ṣaḥiyya | wa-biḍʾat awrāq ʿalay-ha ṣūwar-ī š-šaḫṣiyya*
>
> I was granted Brazilian citizenship | I was granted a passport and an identity card | I was granted a permanent residence and a health card | and a few documents with my personal photos on them.

In the previous verses we also find the rhetorical figure of the anaphora with the repetition of the verb (*muniḥat*) at the beginning of the verse.

The poem is coloured with a particular emotional charge thanks to the simile of the bird, used to describe the sad condition of the exile:

> *fa-ʾanā l-ġarība bi-hāḏihi l-ġurba l-ʾazaliyya | ka-ṭayr-in qad quṭiʿa ʿan sirb-i-hi | fa-bāta yuḥāwilu l-luǧūʾ ʾilā ʾayy sirb-i yuqābilu-hu | fī samāʾ baʿīda mansiyya*
>
> In fact I am a stranger in this eternal exile | like a bird cut out of her flock | that continues to seek asylum in any flock that accepts it | in a distant and forgotten sky.

The poem *al-Ǧinsiyya* closes with the allocution of the poetess to the Arab brothers in exile:

> *ʾayyā ʿArab-an fī š-šatāt-i | ʾa sa-narǧiʿu yawm-an ʾam taḥkumu-nā l-ʾabadiyya?| ʾAyyā ʿArab-an fī s-Suwīd-i wa fī d-Danimārk-i wa fī n-Nurwīǧ-i wa fī Faransā | ʾa sa-narǧiʿu yawm-an ʾam taḥkumu-nā al-ʾabadiyya*
>
> Oh Arabs in Diaspora | will we come back someday or have you condemned us forever? | Oh Arabs of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, France | will we come back someday or have you condemned us forever?

In the poem *Table Rase* the author passes from French to Arabic through an interphrastic transglossia, altering sentences in Arabic and French. As in an attempt to define her own identity, Faraḥ uses, at the beginning of the verse, the repetition of words *je suis* ('I am'):

> *je suis la langue sans mètre, sans rime | je suis l'arabe, le persian, le latin, le germanique | je suis la langue non-maîtrisée* […]. *Je suis la neige | le désert | je suis la terre, l'univers | je suis le calme des océans, des mers | je suis les mots qui se suivent dans un vers*.
>
> I am the language, without meter, without rhyme | I am Arabic, Persian, Latin and German | I am the uncontrolled language […]. I am the snow, the desert, I am the earth, the universe | I am the calm of the oceans, of the seas | I am the words that follow each other in a verse.

In this poem, Faraḥ Šammā addresses the listeners directly:

> *prenez tout ce que je sais | et jetez-le dans le Nil | comme la mère de Moïse a fait | ne me demandez pas d'où je viens | ni où je suis née | ne cherchez pas à savoir qu'est-ce qui est écrit sur mes papiers*.
>
> Take all I know | and throw it into the Nile | as did the mother of Moses | don't ask me where I come from | where I was born | do not try to know what is written on my documents.

In order to describe her own nature, Faraḥ resorts to the use of similes based on free associations of thought, with a strong evocative power:

> *lā waṭan l-ī ʿalā l-ʾarḍ | ʾağidu l-waṭan fī s-samāʾ | ġaymat-un ṣūfiyyat-un ʿaḏrāʾ | tamtaddu ka-l-baḥr ʿalā ʾarğā'| al-ʾazraq-i l-lānihāʾī*
>
> no homeland for me on earth | I find my homeland in the sky | a soft and pure cloud | that extends like the sea | towards the vastness of the infinite blue
>
> *ʾanā ʾIbrāhīm yuḥaṭṭimu ğahl al-ʾaṣnām | ʾanā kawkab durriyy-un yūqadu min ḥibr-i l-ʾaqlām*
>
> I am Abraham who destroys the ignorance of idols | I am a shining planet that is lit by the ink of the pens.

The linguistic aspect of poetry characterised by multilingualism and its content perfectly bring out the fracture of the poet's identity; in the poem she declares: *ʾanā Darwīš, I am Poe, je suis Baudelaire*[45] (I am Darwish, I am Poe, I am Baudelaire). Here we see an example of code-mixing through the passage from Arabic to English and to French within the same sentence. Regarding the rhymes, as also emerges from the examples above, in this poem the author uses final rhymes even if not in a systematic way.

In *On Censorship* there are stanzas in Arabic and stanzas in English (the two languages, however, are never found in the same verse) and we observe the presence of the rhyme in the verses in English as in those in Arabic:

> *or have my vocal cords been tied? | I have been condemned only because I have nothing to hide.| They want the world to be a silent apartheid,* [...] *you can't speak about neither politics nor religion nor sex | maybe I should consider writing poetry about seahorses or T-Rex! | Like this, I'd have bigger chances of becoming the next Mandela or Malcolm X; fī bilād-ī naḫāfu l-fikra ka-ḫawf-i-na min ad-dabābāt | fī bilād-ī tušannu ḥurūb ṣalībiyya ḍidda l-kalimāt | fī bilād-ī naḥfażu suwar kāmila | wa lā natafakkaru šayʾ-an fī l-ʾayyāt*
>
> In my country we fear ideas as we fear tanks | crusades against words are being conducted in | in my country we remember suras complete | and we don't think about the verses at all.

We also find cases of consonant metathesis (*kalimāt* and *kāmilat*) in which the order of phonemes /l/ and /m/ is reversed.

This is the only poem among those analysed in which we find some verses in Palestinian Arabic: the author plays with the levels of the Arabic language, the register used moves away from the standard and tends to the dialectal variant, *mā bidd-hom yānī əḥkī | lā ǧins w-lā siyāsa wa lā dīn | huwwe ḍall išī ḥkī fī-h? | bass bāqī yiḥkū-lī* (They don't want me to talk | neither sex, nor politics nor religion | but what is left for me to say? | but they keep telling me).

We observe the rhetorical question both in Arabic *huwwe ḍall išī ḥkī fī-h?* and in English: *Am I allowed to write this poem? | Or has my ink been replaced with cement? | Am I allowed to speak these words? | Or have my vocal cords been tied?*

Moreover, the poetess repeatedly reproduces the direct speech in the course of the composition: *bass bāqī yiḥkū-lī | mamnūʿ tiḥkī ʿan ayy ʾišī bi-ḫaṣṣ l-banī ʾādamīn* (But they keep telling me | 'It is forbid-

45 The poetess is clearly referring here to Maḥmūd Darwīsh (1921-2008), Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) and Charles Pierre Baudelaire (1821-1867).

den to talk about anything relating to human beings'), *'Sir, why was there a tree of knowledge in the story of Adam and Eve?'* | *'Sir, why did Abraham ask to see God in order to believe?'*.

In general in the poems, about the lexicon we find various references to historical, cultural and religious elements: the author recalls in her verses characters from history such as Malcom X and Nelson Mandela, she remembers the apartheid policy of racial segregation, mentions famous poets from different countries and periods such as Maḥmūd Darwīš, Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Baudelaire, cites biblical characters such as Abraham, Adam and Eve and refers to the Koran citing the the *suwar* ('suras').

5 Conclusion

In the frenetic era of digital communication, the connection with other web users would seem to annihilate the moments of personal reflection necessary for the creation of literary content. However, behind the apparent superficiality of the new media, a complex reality hides, in which poetry, with its slow times, its pauses, its weighted words, still finds space. In the Arab world, poetry has always played a role of great importance, starting from the pre-Islamic era when poets challenged each other with strokes of verse in the square to contemporary literature.

The analysed artist Faraḥ Šammā has chosen to express herself through poetry, grasping all the potential of this sublime artistic form and perceiving the strong link with all the Arab cultural heritage. The young artist from Spoken Word, employing the emotional force of the *kalima manṭūqa* (the spoken word), has used the tool of the web and above all YouTube to transmit her compositions in a more immediate and lively way, just as she does during her live performance.

Faraḥ Šammā's videos have gained views all over the world: citizens of countries far from her have been able to understand the struggles and sufferings of a young girl who lives the particular condition of a Palestinian exile. Her poems convey the feeling of loss and bewilderment of the birthplace, the abuses and contradictions that Arabs live in their countries.

In general, in addition to multilingualism, the role that diglossia plays in the course of the creative process is a factor not to be underestimated. In the process of literary creation, the subjective choice of the register to use is linked to the communicative purpose; a minority of poets opts for the *lahǧa* or *'āmmiyya*, spoken variety of the language, closer to the reality of the reader/listener, others prefer standard Arabic as a 'high', cultured variant of the language. The author examined here prefers standard Arabic for her poems, probably to emphasise a sense of belonging to all Arabs and to resume the tra-

dition of poetic production generally rendered in the high register of the language, even if in one case she slips towards the spoken Palestinian Arabic (in a few lines of the poem *On Censorship*).

In *Table Rase* and *On Censorship* we observe phenomena of transglossia from Arabic to French (and vice versa) and from Arabic to English (and vice versa).

As for the syntax, she prefers simple phrases, consisting of a single sentence or paratactic structures.

Overall, Faraḥ Šammā's style is clear and direct, rich in images and rhetorical figures such as metaphors, similes, alliterations, anaphoras, allocutions. The poetess often uses the rhyme, even if not in a systematic way, focusing on the sound plot, also through expedients such as repetitions and pauses.

Faraḥ Šammā has found a way to ensure that her message is received directly and immediately by as many listeners as possible, understanding that this is the potential of the web and transforming her personal experience from a simple expression of herself to a common heritage.

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Beyond the 20FM: The Revitalization of the New Moroccan Left Following the 2011 Protests

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Abstract Since the late eighties, the Moroccan Left has been experiencing a profound ideological and political crisis exacerbated by the co-optation of the traditional socialist parties of the country. Starting from the nineties, numerous new forces tried to emerge as the new leading leftist front, although with little success. However, the events of 2011 in the Arab region played a crucial role in the revitalisation of the new Moroccan Left, today mostly represented by the Fédération de la Gauche Démocratique (FGD) and Annahj Addimocrati. The article investigates the interplay between the 20 February Movement (20FM) and these new socialist forces and it strengthens the idea that behind the 20FM and the establishment of a new non-governmental left lie the very same political and socio-economic reasons. Indeed, in 2011 the leftists attempted to emerge as leading forces side by side the 20FM, but due to their balkanization and internal divisions they were not able to form a united front and seize the opportunity to carry out their fight against the regime. Nevertheless, the political engagement of the 20FM stressed the importance of a new strong leftist-opposition front in the country and the 2011 protests eventually prompted the socialists to start a process of rapprochement aimed at overcoming the divisions of the past years.

Keywords Morocco. 2011 protests. 20FM. Leftist parties. Socialism.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Political Developments and the Rising of a New Leftist Front. – 3 The 2011 Protests and the Revitalization of the New Moroccan Left. – 4 Conclusions.

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1 Introduction

In 2011, the Arab region witnessed a unique wave of protests that spoke out against socio-economic disparities and corruption while calling for a political change. The uprisings were initially sparked off by a first wave of protests taking place in Tunisia after Muḥammad al-Būʿazīzī's self-immolation on December 18, 2010 in sign of protests against police acts of abuse and violence (Aleya-Sghaier 2012). Throughout 2011, major demonstrations arose in the country as well as in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, Oman, and Iraq. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan also witnessed a series of protests but on a smaller scale. However widespread the protests became throughout the Arab region, generalisations might be misleading, as each country effectively shows its own peculiarities as regards the causes, strategies, and the outcomes of the demonstrations (Allinson 2014; Barany 2011; Hinnebusch 2014). While political authoritarianism, rooted in all countries in question, is commonly regarded as one of the main reasons behind the outbreak of the uprisings[1] the economic and social dimension of the protests should not be underestimated either. Demands for greater social and economic justice alongside the discontent brought on by growing inequalities and poor job opportunities seem to suggest that the Arab Spring also mirrored a more structural crisis of the neoliberal system (Bogaert 2013). "Poverty, inequality, and precarity" are indeed the three words chosen by Achcar (2013) to sum up the social situation faced by the majority of Arab countries at the dawn of 2011, emphasising the severity of high unemployment rates in the region, especially among young graduates and women. Indeed, regardless of their actual outcomes, the 2011 protests brought to the fore a large section of the civil society whose demands are, at least in part, aligned with the traditional stances of the Left (Resta 2018; Achcar 2013).

The history of the leftist parties in the Arab countries dates back to the early 1900s. During the colonial era, the leftist forces in the region were often at the forefront in the fight for independence against the colonial powers (Bustani 2014; Gelvin 2004) while they later set as the main opponents to the authoritarian rules that came to power in the post-colonial era. Often outlawed and persecuted, these parties would establish close relations with trade unions, professional associations, and human rights associations, often carrying out their activities illegally (Majid 1987; Hendriks 1983). Nevertheless, as Resta (2018) recalls, starting from the eighties up until 2011, the Arab Left went through a period of significant decline, with an increasing number of parties being banned, co-opted, or marginalised.

1 Gelvin 2015; Heydemann, Leenders 2011; Teti, Gervasio 2011; Droz-Vincent 2011.

This was, for instance, the case of leftist-opposition forces in Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco.[2] While it is true that in the post-2011 elections the leftist forces in the region were largely marginalised to the advantage of the Islamist parties (Al-Anani 2012), it is equally true that the role of the Left during the uprisings, its evolution over the following years, as well as its present role in politics, have been widely understudied in the international literature. Indeed, the purpose of this contribution is to provide an overview of the major leftist parties in Morocco, shedding light on the interplay between the rising of a new Left and the events of 2011.

Morocco has always been characterised by an exceedingly varied political plurality. While this outward pluralism has partly reflected a specific strategy of the regime aimed at weakening the competing parties (Democracy Reporting International 2007), over the decades several leftist forces emerged as the main opponents to the domineering monarchical power. Specifically, after the post-independence period, two main parties set apart and stood against the regime and its political allies: the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) and the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS) (Willis 2002). The USFP was officially founded in 1975 at the Extraordinary party convention of the National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP), the first Moroccan socialist party founded in 1959 by a splinter group of the Ḥizb al-Istiqlāl (Independence party, IP) headed by the leftist leader al-Mahdī bin Barka (Khatibi 2000; Ben Barka 1999). The PPS was instead established in 1974 by former militants of the Moroccan Communist Party (PCM), founded by ʿAlī Yaʿtah in 1945 and outlawed by the King several times between the end of the protectorate and the first years of independence (Majid 1987). Nevertheless, throughout the nineties, these forces experienced a long-lasting process of cooptation and ideological metamorphosis and the local political landscape was emptied of strong leftist-opposition parties. At the same time, between the end of the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s, new leftist and dissenting voices arose, attempting to carve out an ever-wider space of visibility and to pave the way for a genuine democratization of the country. At the time, this new emerging Moroccan Left was mainly represented by the Parti de la Gauche Unifié (PSU), the Parti de l'Avant-Guarde Démocratique et Socialiste (PADS), the Congrès National Ittihadi (CNI), and Annahj Addimocrati.[3] Moreover, the establishment of new leftist and opposition parties between the 1900s and the 2000s was not confined to Morocco, as evidenced by the foundation of the Congrès pour la République (CPR) in Tuni-

2 Penner Angrist 1999; Maghraoui 2002; Lust-Okar 2005; Ryan 2011; Albrecht 2012

3 For "Annahj Addimocrati" I decided to use a simplified transliteration, as it is commonly used in Morocco as well.

sia, the Ḥizb al-Karāma (Dignity Party) in Egypt, and the Democratic Left Party in Lebanon (Resta 2018).

Even if Morocco was not as affected as other countries by the 2011 protests, the political vacuum left by the USFP, now governmental left, and the absence of any strong leftist force capable of catalysing the widespread popular discontent played a significant role in the emergence of a new social movement, the 20 February Movement (20FM), which dominated the local political scene throughout 2011. On February 20, thousands of demonstrators gathered in the capital and other cities such as Casablanca, Marrakesh, Al Hoceima, Fez, and Tétouane, receiving the full support of the PSU, PADS, CNI, and Annahj Addimocrati. The 20FM, in which activists with different political backgrounds converged, indeed voiced a number of demands traditionally assumed by the left, such as the restriction of the powers of the King, social and civil rights, the recognition of the Amazigh language and culture, and the fight against censorship. Furthermore, the outbreak of the protests, the rising of the 20FM, and, in particular, the disappointing response of the King to the demands of the population played a major role in the revitalisation of the new Moroccan Left, that intensified significantly its political and social action from 2011 onwards. Moreover, while the socialist parties decided to join the demonstrations forthwith, they also attempted to catalyse this rising wave of protests in an attempt to carry on their struggle against the regime. While Annahj Addimocrati was accused of manipulating the leadership of the 20FM for its own agenda, the 2011 protests are one of the main reasons that prompted the PSU, PADS, and CNI to initiate a process of rapprochement which eventually translated in the establishment of a stronger leftist alliance, the Fédération de la Gauche Démocratique (FGD).

The arguments that follow have been carried out through the use of the scholarship on the political and economic history of Morocco in the last decades as well as on the evolution of the local parties since the post-independence period. However, previous published studies have rarely included comprehensive analysis of the FGD and Annahj Addimocrati. Hence, in order to better appreciate the new Moroccan Left, I relied on primary sources such as the political documents, the official statutes, and the official political programs of the parties in Arabic language. A more detailed investigation of the post-2011 events was also made possible by the reading of Moroccan newspaper articles both in Arabic and French language.

2 Political Developments and the Rising of a New Leftist Front

Starting from the 1970s, Morocco entered a phase of a severe economic crisis that led the country to initiate a long phase of structural reforms aimed at reducing the role of the state in the economy while strengthening the free market and the private sector (Bogaert 2013). These measures were further supported by King Muḥammad VI who announced the beginning of a new era of political and socio-economic change (Daadaoui 2010). However, research investigating the implications of neoliberal policies in the Middle East has shown the negative impact of these measures on the socio-economic condition of the population, especially regarding the rural-urban relationship, youth unemployment, and job insecurity (Zemni, Bogaert 2011; El-Said, Harrigan 2014; Kreitmeyr 2018; Cohen 2004). Over the decades, such changes brought wide resentment among the population and they eventually laid the groundwork of a series of popular protest movements and organisations, such as the Association Nationale des Diplômés chômeurs du Maroc (ANDCM) (Montserrat 2007), founded in 1991, and more recently, the 20FM, inspired by the demonstrations in the Arab region in 2011 (Paciello 2019).

By the end of the 1980s, following the fall of the Soviet bloc and similarly to other leftist parties in other countries, the two major socialist forces of Morocco began to experience an ideological and leadership crisis. In order to adapt to the new global economic and political order, the former leftists had to accept the neoliberal system thereby shifting towards socio-liberal positions: the parties gave up their main revolutionary, anti-imperialist, and reformist stances, and they eventually started a process of rapprochement with the King who was able to co-opt an increasing number of socialist militants (El Maslouhi 2009; Storm 2007). This situation translated into an ideological crisis of the left that turned the USFP and the PPS into loyalist and governmental parties without any real intention of changing the political and economic system (A'boushi 2010; Vermeren 2002; Khatibi 2000). In the aftermath of the 1997 elections, after four decades of political opposition, the USFP and the PPS decided to cooperate with the King and to head the new government with ʿAbd al-Rāḥmān al-Yūsūfi, USFP leader, as Prime Minister. Even though the parties claimed their desire of bringing about a real changing of the system within the institutions, the King managed to ensure a substantial continuity of the political practices and the socialists were not able to improve the socio-economic conditions of the country nor to establish a truly democratic parliamentary monarchy (Joffé 1998; Storm 2007). The co-optation of the former leftist opposition parties, their alignment with the monarchy, and their full acceptance of the liberal economic system had two main effects: on one side, other po-

litical forces started to dominate the local political scenario, among them the monarchical parties and the Islamists.[4] On the other side, the crisis of the Moroccan Left cleared the way to the rising of new leftist parties that today set themselves as the most progressive and democratic front of the country.

In 1994, in response to intense international pressures of human rights associations, King Ḥassan II granted an amnesty to more than 420 political prisoners jailed between the 1970s and the 1980s (Rollinde 2002). Most of them were leftist militants, especially members of Ilā al-Amām (Forward) movement, a Marxist-Leninist organisation founded in 1970 by Abrahām Serfātī and other communist militants (al-Wajāni 2011; Vairel 2014). Indeed, it was precisely during their time in prison that a group of Ilā al-Amām activists headed by Muṣṭafā al-Barahmīh and ʿAbdallah al-Ḥarīf agreed on founding a new radical-left force that was eventually established under the name of Annahj Addimocrati (Democratic Way) on April 15, 1995 (Laḥaḍar 2018). Since its foundation, the party embraced a radical Marxist ideology and made its first priority the establishment of a socialist society. The fight against neo-colonialism, the Arab and African solidarity, and the Third Worldist ideology also emerged as a central part of the agenda of the party. Furthermore, Annahj Addimocrati is today the only political force in the country that support the self-determination and total autonomy of the Sahrawi people from the domination of the Moroccan State ("al-intiḥabāt al-barlamāniyya" 2002). Nevertheless, probably due to its radical positions, Annahj Addimocrati was not recognised by the government until 2004 and it was forced to carry out its political activity illegally (El-Hassouni 2004).

By the end of the 1990s, the Organisation de l'Action Démocratique Populaire (OADP), a leftist party founded at the end of the 1960s as the political persecution of the far-left 23 March movement (Vermeren 2002), went through a phase of internal conflicts that divided the uncompromising militants from those who were progressively accepting a warmer collaborative relationship with the monarchy (Vairel 2014). On the contrary, the party members who refused to cooperate with the regime decided to merge with other minor leftist movements, namely the Mouvement pour la Démocratie, the Mouvement des Démocrates Indépendants, and the Potentialités Démocratiques de Gauche, with which they founded the Parti Socialiste de la Gauche Unifié (PSGU) ("La gauche se rassemble, l'USFP fait cavalier seul", 2004). In 2005, the Fidélité à la Démocratie movement, a splinter group of the USFP headed by Muḥammad al-Sāssī, joined the PSGU and together they founded the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU). Since its foundation, the PSU was conceived as a new and independent social-

4 Sater 2003; Hamzawy 2007; Garcìa, De Larramendi 2017; Szmolka 2015.

ist party whose political action was mainly marked by the promotion of democracy and the fight against socio-economic inequalities. Soon, the PSU established dialogue with few other democratic, socialist, and opposition forces, among them the Parti de l'Avant-Guarde Démocratique et Socialiste (PADS) and the Congrès National Ittihadi (CNI) ("8 Māi 1983" 2007; El Bouzdaini 2018; al-Rāmī 2006). The former was established in 1983, but formally legalised only in 1993, and its militants have been always close to the local human rights associations, the Association Marocaine des Droits Humains (AMDH) in particular. On the contrary, the CNI was only founded in 2001 and it has, since the very beginning, developed a close relation with the Confédération Démocratique du Travail (CDT), one of the major local trade union. Despite some minor differences, both parties were established in response to an internal split among the USFP and their leaderships have consequently tried to stand out as much as possible from their former party, thereby defining an uncompromising and uncooperative approach towards the governmental left.

Between the 1960s and the 1980s, several militants of the PADS, CNI, and PSU fell victim of the political persecution against the political opponents, while many of them were forced to leave Morocco seeking asylum abroad. For these reasons, the parties developed great care and interest on questions such as the democratic transition, human rights respect, and the fight against the oppressive power of the regime (Bentahar 2020; Vermeren 2002; 2006; "8 Māi 198" 2007; "Maroc: Scission" 2001).

At the beginning of the new millennium, Annahj Addimocrati approached these other socialist forces as they were all attempting to establish a united leftist bloc capable of challenging the other monarchical and Islamist forces, the Rassemblement National des Indépendants (RNI) and the Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD) in particular. Indeed, on December 1, 2001, the leaders of the OADP met ʿAbdallah al-Ḥarīf, first secretary general of Annahj Addimocrati and Aḥmad Binjallūn, leader of the PADS, leaving the impression that the parties would have merged together (B 2011). Few months later, in February 2002, Muḥammad bin Saʿīd Ayt Īddar, former leader of the PSU, and other leftist leaders sent a message to Aḥmad Binjallūn and ʿAbdallah al-Ḥarīf, pushing for the formation of a new democratic and socialist bloc, with the ultimate goal of taking part in the 2002 elections (A 2002).

In other words, in the early 2000s, the groundwork for the rising of a new Moroccan Left was certainly laid. Nevertheless, these emerging socialist parties kept experiencing a process of fragmentation and a double political crisis: on one side, they lacked a deep-rooted popular support and they struggled to win back the trust of the leftist voters disappointed by the bad performances of the governmental left. On the other side, the leaderships of the parties were

not able to overcome their differences and they eventually decided not to participate in the 2002 elections as a single and united front.

A certain improvement was brought by the 2007 elections. On the occasion, the PADS, the PSU, and the CNI decided to take part in the electoral process with a shared political programme, common status and electoral rolls. Indeed, on April 22, in Casablanca, the parties announced their intention to run for the elections as a single alliance, the Alliance de la Gauche Démocratique (AGD) (Herradi 2007). Their joint political programme stressed the necessity to adopt a new constitution, to fight against unemployment and poverty, and to control the economy in order to overcome the 'favours-and-privileges' system and to best handle the negative effects of globalisation while preserving the domestic economic balance (Hamrouch 2007).

Nevertheless, Annahj Addimocrati did not join the other leftists in the run for the elections since few critical differences kept the parties apart. In particular, the major discrepancies between Annahj Addimocrati and the other leftists concerned the Sahara question and the rejection of the elections as a protest against the regime (B.H. 2011). In fact, for the Marxist militants the choice of boycotting the electoral processes has always been a matter of principle and a specific political strategy, as they believe that no real changing can be achieved while participating in the institutional life before a full restriction of the powers of the monarchy.

Therefore, one can understand why, in the first decade of the 2000s, due to the failure of the USFP-led government and to the inability of overcoming their strategic and ideological divisions, the new Moroccan Left kept experiencing a profound crisis that condemned the socialists to an absolute marginalisation and to political irrelevance.

3 The 2011 Protests and the Revitalization of the New Moroccan Left

Starting from the 2000s, growing social inequalities and an uneven access to local resources and other basic amenities triggered off occasional and long-lasting protests that were organised all across the country, both among urban populations and rural communities. Moreover, the demonstrations were supported by various sections of the population, such as political activists, young people, journalists, students, militant and associative circles, who started to express a sever aversion and dissatisfaction towards the political power (Bennafla, Seniguer 2011).

Few years later, on the heels of the wave of protest movements across the Arab World, on February 20, 2011, tens of thousands of Moroccans took to the streets both in urban contexts and rural ar-

eas joining the rising 20FM (Bergh, Rossi-Doria 2015). The 20FM emerged as a decentralized and cross-class protest movement that, since the very beginning, gathered a variety of independent activists and a number of different political organisations. Desrues (2013) suggests that the 20FM displayed a dualistic nature as for the complexity of its alliances, internal structures, and strategies. In particular, he distinguishes two different groups of members within the Movement, according to their different role before and during the protests: a first group of activists made up of young people with no political experience and no direct affiliation to political parties who organised the first demonstrations on February 20, 2011 through an extensive use of internet and social medias such as Facebook and Twitter (Desrues 2012); and a second section of the members that was instead formed by a wide range of people, political parties, and organisations that joined the protests right after and that was later going to establish the National Support Council of the 20FM, connected with the rest of the members around the country through local councils (Desrues 2013; 2012).

Indeed, while the leftists played a crucial role among the Movement, the 20FM was capable of uniting "previous ideological enemies" (Badran 2020, 620), as the individuals that joined the protests were more often than not characterised by different when not contrasting political backgrounds: socialist militants from the AGD and Annahj Addimocrati, activists of the AMDH, Islamists from al-ʿAdl wa al-Iḥsān and from Ḥizb al-'Umma (The Party of the Nation), and Amazigh militants from various Amazigh groups (Badran 2020; Rossi-Doria 2016). The first wave of protests took place on February 20 and within one month, the uprisings involved more than 300,000 people in more than 50 cities. As never before, the demonstrators were not driven only by economic or strictly material needs, but they started to question the overwhelming privileges of the monarchy asking for substantial political changes and calling for the abolition of the 19th and 23rd articles of the Moroccan constitution, which grant the sacredness and the unlimited powers of the King. Moreover, some protesters even called for the full establishment of a truly democratic parliamentary monarchy, a decision that would have inevitably threaten the privileges of the monarch himself (Arieff 2011). However, the ideological divergences of its members alongside a series of internal disagreements concerning strategies and goals eventually weakened the 20FM, which gradually lost its mobilisation capacities (Hoffmann, König 2013). Several leftist militants, for instance, had expressed their concerns over an excessive media coverage of the Islamists as well as on the latter's role among the Movement itself. After the withdrawal of al-ʿAdl wa al-Iḥsān from the 20FM on December 18, 2011, a number of Islamist militants indeed confirmed the presence of internal disputes within the Movement (Badran 2020).

Moreover, the presence of the non-governmental left alongside the Islamists of al-ʿAdl wa al-Iḥsān among the 20FM was repeatedly used by the regime in order to discredit the Movement and to create divisions among its militants (Desres 2012).

However, as the popular uprisings were spreading across the country, the militants of both the AGD and Annahj Addimocrati took the streets with the demonstrators and attempted to catalyse such emerging social force. Nevertheless, any attempt to head the 20FM or even to stand as leading forces in the protests eventually failed. Regarding Annahj Addimocrati, for the leadership of the party the 2011 protests represented the unavoidable result of the "separation between the existing regimes and the people desiring freedom, democracy and a decent life".[5] Indeed, the party offered a Marxist interpretation of the protests led by the 20FM: "The profound crisis of the capitalist system…", ʿAbdallah al-Ḥarīf claimed, "was a fundamental factor in the outbreak of these revolutionary processes while the rising of a multi-polar world offers better chances for the fight of the people who suffer from western imperialism, Zionism and reactionary Arabs in our region".[6] Furthermore, the secretary general of the party identified few main reasons behind the spread of the 2011 protests in the Middle East. First and foremost, the reciprocal influence of the neighbouring Arab countries played a decisive role as the spark that ignited the popular uprisings. According to al-Ḥarīf, the common struggle against Western imperialism, Zionism, and reactionary Arab regimes seems to be the main factor that laid the foundation for the outbreak of the popular outcry. In the second place, according to the leadership of Annahj Addimocrati, the global crisis of capitalism brought to the fore the most adverse effects of our economic system, that translated in social inequalities, overpoverty, social exclusion, welfare cuts, and high levels of unemployment. Indeed, the authoritarian local rules have always managed to repress any real democratic threat with the only goal to ensure their own political and economic interests at the expense of the most vulnerable sectors of the population.[7]

For their radical stances and for their political engagement side by side the protesters, ʿAbdallah al-Ḥarīf and ʿAbd al-Salām Yāssīn, leaders of Annahj Addimocrati and al-ʿAdl wa al-Iḥsān, were accused of manoeuvring the young members of the 20FM; indeed, according to some local newspapers, the leadership of Annahj and the Islamist militants were able to exploit the popularity of the Movement with their own agenda, putting aside the original goals of the demonstrators

5 Translated from Arabic: "ʿAbdallah al-Ḥarīf, Manāḍil taqaddumī wiḥdawī" 2017.

6 "ʿAbdallah al-Ḥarīf, Manāḍil taqaddumī wiḥdawī" 2017.

7 "ʿAbdallah al-Ḥarīf, Manāḍil taqaddumī wiḥdawī" 2017.

("Les liaisons dangereuses" 2011; "Annahj manipule-t-il les jeunes" 2011a; "Houcine Abenkcer: Il y a plusieurs" 2011b).

Such accuses were not limited to local media attacks and they did not remain confined to the Moroccan borders. For instance, another clamourous episode took place at the European Parliament on March 22, 2011. There, ʿAbdallah al-Ḥarīf and Ḫadīja al-Riyādī, ex-president of the AMDH and now member of Annahj, expressed their outspoken support for the total independence of the Western Sahara. But their claims caused the harsh reaction of the Association Marocain en Europe (AME), an organisation that represents the Moroccan diaspora in Europe, which made an official release arguing that: "Sans aucune forme de respect ni d'égard pour les valeurs sacrées de leurs concitoyens, Annahj Addimocrati et l'AMDH vendent leurs âmes et bradent l'idéal des jeunes du mouvement du 20 février aux rebelles du Polisario et à leurs mentors algériens" ("Réformes: Comment le Mouvement" 2011c).

However, such accuses were rejected by the members of the 20FM. Interviewed by *Aujourd'hui Le Maroc*, one of them stated that "Annahj Addimocrati et l'Association marocaine des droits humains (AMDH) n'ont jamais été les guides spirituels du Mouvement du 20 février. Je crois que ces personnes représentent leurs propres structures politiques, parlent en leur nom et ont été invitées à Bruxelles en tant que telles" (Aswab 2011c). With respect to the Sahrawi people and the issue of their independence, he also argued that the 20FM never addressed the question of the Southern provinces, stating that no real solution can be accomplished without a genuine democratization and separation of powers (Aswab 2011c).

Over the weeks following the uprisings, the regime put in place a twofold counterthrust: on one side, the King enacted a media smear campaign against the 20FM, which was accused of being an enemy of the Moroccan territorial integrity (Fernandez Molina 2011). On the other side, on March 9, 2011, the King publicly addressed the nation revealing his decision to introduce a number of political reforms: beside the commitment to tackle the issue of corruption and to ensure greater freedom of expression, the most significant innovations announced by Muḥammad VI were a constitutional revision (*al-murāja'a al-dustūriyya*) and a constitutional referendum to approve the amendments set for July 1, 2011 (Arieff 2011).

While the royal speech was warmly welcomed by the international press, as well as by the loyalist parties (including the governmental left), the 20FM and the new Moroccan Left were the only forces that rejected the constitutional amendments, as they did not meet the expectations of both the protesters and the leftists (Arieff 2011). Moreover, even though the PSU was officially invited by the King to take part in the consultative commission charged with the revision of the constitution, the leadership of the party refused any form of

collaboration with the regime (Ait Akdim 2016). Furthermore, while the AGD participated in the 2007 elections, due to the limited prerogatives guaranteed to the parliament by the new constitution, the leadership of the party decided to not run the 2011 elections. The decision of the boycott was commented on by Nabīla Munīb, newly elected leader of the PSU, who stated firmly that: "La seule façon de concilier monarchie et démocratie est d'adopter une monarchie parlementaire. C'était la revendication centrale du mouvement du 20-Février, qui a été étouffé dans l'œuf" (Ait Akdim 2016).

Indeed, today the general consensus is that the 2011 constitutional amendments did not pave the way for a genuine democratization of the political structures but has, on the contrary, ensured the stability and longevity of the central power. According to the text, the monarch is inviolable and it is stated that respect is due to him (2011 Moroccan Constitution art. 46). Moreover, and this is even more crucial, the new constitution did not guarantee a real separation of powers while the activities and positions of the competing parties are always subdued to the will of the monarch himself. Indeed, even though the Prime Minister chairs the Government Council without the monarch being directly involved, the King presided the Council of Ministers, which plays a way more decisive role, since it controls the strategic guidelines of state policy, it deliberates the bills of organic laws, it approves the constitutional revisions, and it makes decisions regarding the army, the declaration of war, the martial law or amnesty (2011 Moroccan Constitution art. 49). In the end, the monarch was able to give the protesters and the observers the illusion of a democratic change while, as a matter of fact, he knew how to preserve its privileges and powers in the real decision-making bodies (Madani, Maghraoui, Zerbouni 2011; Desrues 2013).

In the following years, the new Moroccan Left continued opposing to the local regime and to the increasingly strong Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD), the Islamist party.[8] Indeed, the widespread support enjoyed by the Islamist militants led the PJD to emerge as the major political force in the country, as the party won both the 2011 and 2016 elections (Szmolka 2015). Moreover, a similar scenario also occurred in Tunisia and Egypt. Indeed, while both countries witnessed the foundation of new leftist forces following the 2011 protests, such as the Voie Démocratique et Sociale in Tunisia, the Socialist Party, and the Socialist Popular Alliance in Egypt,

8 The history of the party is usually traced back to the Chabiba Islamiya, an islamist and illegal organisation founded in 1969. However, the PJD was officially founded only in 1996 and, over the years, it became a modern and legal party that openly accepted the monarchy and the institutional framework of the country. The PJD won consecutively the 2011 and 2016 elections and to date it represents the major ruling party of Morocco (Vermeren 2002).

they also registered a substantial increase in votes for the Islamists parties in the elections that followed the uprisings (Al-Anani 2012).

In Morocco, the relations among the leftists improved after 2011, both within the AGD and between the alliance and Annahj Addimocrati. In 2012, for instance, there was an attempt to merge between Annahj Addimocrati and the PSU: at the end of August, Nabīla Munīb and the Muṣṭafā al-Barahmīh succeeded to al-Ḥarīf as secretary general of Annahj Addimocrati (El-Farah 2012), discussed the possibility to establish a joint new leftist force that would have brought their two parties together. Nevertheless, to date Annahj Addimocrati is still a single and independent force and its unwillingness to run for the elections and its radical positions towards the independence of the Sahara still pose a major obstacle for the unification with the other leftist parties ("Vers une Gauche Unifiée?" 2012).

Nevertheless, in 2014, the PSU, PADS, and CNI decided to go one step further and to reshape the AGD, until then a mere electoral alliance, as a proper political union with the ultimate goal of leading the ensemble of the progressive and democratic leftist parties in Morocco. Indeed, on January 30, 2014, the announcement of the foundation of the Faydrāliyya al-yasār al-dimuqrāṭī (Fédération de la Gauche Démocratique, FGD) was officially made (Faydrāliyya al-yasār al-dimūqrāṭī, official website, n.d.).

Interestingly enough, the worsening of the socio-economic conditions of Morocco, the 20FM and the King's response to the crisis are openly addressed in the first pages of the political document of the FGD:

> It is beyond any doubt that the 20 February Movement have represented the major socio-political movement in Morocco in the beginning of the 21st century. The 20 February Movement constitutes the extension of the historic struggle of our people against oppression, corruption, and authoritarianism over the decades. The Movement took off with the courageous initiative of young Moroccans in reaction with and response to the popular movements witnessed in the Arab region and the Maghreb […]. An objective assessment of the socio-political movement triggered off and headed by the 20 February Movement, in which the democratic leftists contributed significantly, indicates that yet again the regime succeeded in getting around the largest part of the demands of the Moroccan people in terms of freedom, democracy, and social justice. There are, indeed, several internal and external causes behind the inability of the 2 February Movement to achieve its goals. (Translated from Arabic by the Author: *Faydrāliyya al-yasār al-dimūqrāṭī, al-waraqa al-siyāsiyya* n.d, 3-4)

Thereafter, the FGD identifies few major motives behind the failure of the 20FM. First and foremost, there is the strategy of the re-

gime, its experience in dealing with social movements and its ability to get around the demands of the population while mobilising its allied conservatory forces (*Faydrāliyya al-yasār al-dimūqrāṭī, al-waraqa al-siyāsiyya*, n.d, 3-4). Furthermore, the FGD identifies some weaknesses in the 20FM itself: the absence of a unique leadership carrying a clear and single message capable of combining the interests of all popular classes surely affected the strategy and the impact of the protests. Nevertheless, the political document of the FGD pays a great deal of attention to the role played by the new socialist parties in 2011 and it severely criticises the political action of the leftists during the demonstrations. In fact, neither the AGD or Annahj Addimocrati had been able to offer a strong and cooperative leftist front that would have backed the demonstrators in order to pursue the struggle for democracy against the regime and its allies. Once again, the failure of the democratic forces prevented a real political change, since the 2011 constitutional eventually turned into the perfect mean to ensure the stability and longevity of the Moroccan monarchy. For these reasons, according to the political document of the FGD, it was imperative for the new Moroccan Left to learn some lessons from the 2011 experience and to work very hard in order to offer the political conditions for the revitalisation of a new socialist bloc with a clear and leftist political project (*Faydrāliyya al-yasār al-dimūqrāṭī, al-waraqa al-siyāsiyya*, n.d, 6).

Indeed, it is beyond any doubt that the foundation of the FGD itself represents a first and fundamental step towards the establishment of a new leftist front whose foundation was certainly affected and accelerated by the outbreak of the 2011 protests in the Arab countries and by the formation of a local socio-political movement in Morocco.

Few years later, despite the harsh boycott of the 2011 elections, the FGD decided to run for the 2016 legislative elections. On September 2016, in Marrakesh, the leftist alliance launched its official electoral campaign under the slogan "With us, another Morocco is possible" (*maʿnā maġrib ʾaḫar mumkin*) ("La Fédération de la gauche démocratique" 2016). From the very beginning, the FGD set as its top priority the switchover from constitutional to parliamentary monarchy. Furthermore, Nabīla Munīb emerged as the main leader of the newly established alliance (El Ghouari 2016).

The official electoral program for the 2016 elections, submitted on September 22 in Casablanca, addressed all the principal issues of the country in matters of socio-economic inequalities, constitutional and political reforms, human rights respect and individual freedoms ("La Fédération de la gauche démocratique lance sa campagne électorale depuis Marrakech", 2016). In particular, the FGD planned to halt the neoliberal policies of the previous government aiming at fighting privatization policies and free trade agreements while maximising the role of the state as the main actor in the economic plan-

ning. Indeed, the ultimate goal of the alliance is the subordination of the macroeconomic dynamics to the local ones, in order to enhance the internal market and to reduce socio-economic disparities. Furthermore, the FGD aims at adopting a new constitution that guarantees a real separation of powers, the empowerment of the Parliament and its legislative authority, and the preservation of the national territorial integrity. Moreover, according to the alliance, the country must align with international standards of human rights respect, it must reform the financial system while fighting against unemployment and increasing funding for public education and the healthcare system (*Faydrāliyya al-yasār al-dimūqrāṭī: al-barnāmij al-ʿam li-l-ʾintiḵabāt al-tašrīʿiyya*, 2016).

Throughout the months before the elections, the FGD was able to carry out an intense campaign on social media platforms, attracting a substantial media coverage and the support among intellectual and academics ("Cent intellectuels" 2016). Nevertheless, on October 7, 2015, the PJD won again the majority of the votes, getting 125 seats in the Parliament. In second place, the Parti Authenticité et Modernité (PAM), a monarchical party, won 102 places (Badrane 2016). At the same time, the FGD only got the 2.83% of the votes, winning two seats in the Parliament, the first in the constituency of Rabat-Océan, gained by ʿUmar Balāfrīǧ, and the other in Casablanca-Anfa, won by Muṣṭafā al-Šannāwī (Oudrhiri 2016).

While the election results cannot be considered a great success, the new leftist alliance won more votes than the USFP, in several cities such as Casablanca, Tangiers, and Oujda. Therefore, political observers in the country have argued that the FGD has indeed emerged as the new principal left-wing force capable of leading the front of the new Moroccan Left (Oudrhiri 2016).

As for Annahj Addimocrati, in the following years the party always remained loyal to its traditional stances, as it kept rejecting any form of political participation or collaboration with the regime. Concurrently with the local and legislative elections, such refusal translated into a number of tactics of boycott and sabotage both in urban context and rural areas.[9] As one can expect, more than once the expression of political dissent was harshly repressed by the regime. In August 2015, during the pre-election period, several militants of the party were arrested (few of them were badly beaten) for demonstrat-

9 For the most part, members of Annahj Addimocrati would organise peaceful rallies in urban centres while handing out flyers stating their positions; in other contexts, such as al-Hoceima, Beni Mellal-Khénifra, or Marrakech-Safi, the Marxist militants would carry out more targeted protests against local authorities that more than once prevented the party to hold its regional congresses ("Manʾ al-Nahj al-Dīmuqrātī" 2020; "Al Hoceima: Le parti de la Voie démocratique dénonce l'interdiction de son congrès régional", 2020).

ing against the scheduled elections in Bouyzakarne, Bijaad, Sefour, Salé, and Rabat (Bennamate 2015).

However, it is indeed possible that the party might review its more radical positions in the foreseeable future. In September 2019, the members of Annahj Addimocrati held a conference entitled "al-yasār wa al-taḥālufāt al-mumkina" (the left and the possible alliances) in which they addressed the future evolution of the party and its relations with the other leftist forces in the country, the FGD in particular. On the occasion, ʿAbd al-Hamīd anticipated that the leadership of the party intends to establish a new political project, the Working-Class party (Ḥizb al-tabqa al-ʿāmila) with the ultimate goal of reaching out to all Moroccan Marxists and to engage in dialogue with all other leftist forces ("ʿAbd al-Hamīd… al-yasār wa al-ʿamal al-wiḥdawī", 2019). In sum, it seems that the unification of the FGD prompted the Marxist militants to form a new political entity, the Working-Class party, through which they might be able to cooperate with the other leftist and democratic forces, forming a unique and solid alliance headed by Annahj Addimocrati and the Fédération de la Gauche Démocratique, the new Moroccan left.

4 Conclusions

In 2011, the socio-economic demands and the call for a political change of the 20FM spread as a surge of energy for the new Moroccan Left, which was still struggling to emerge after the co-optation of the USFP and PPS, the traditional socialist parties by the 1980s. In fact, while the rising of the 20FM surely reflects the absence of strong democratic and opposition forces capable of leading the popular discontent, the social movements arose in 2011 in the Arab region played a pivotal role in revitalising both the FGD and Annahj Addimocrati. Moreover, the manipulative strategy implemented by the King, aimed at giving the illusion of a political change through the emanation of a new constitution, surely gave the leftists further reasons to continue their struggle against an oppressive and domineering regime. The reluctance of the King to reach out the demands of the population eventually stressed the need of a new democratic front willing to oppose the overpowering influence of the monarchy in the institutional affairs and public life.

Due to their internal divisions and weak external relations, the leftists did not succeed in catalysing the popular discontent in 2011 and they were not able to emerge as leading actors in the protests in order to gain a wider and more rooted popular support. Nevertheless, their political action and their future evolution were eventually deeply affected by the 20FM. In particular, the foundation of the FGD in 2014 represents the intent to overcome the fragmentation of the lo-

cal leftist forces and the numerous attempts to reach compromises with the leaders of Annahj Addimocrati also constitute a crucial step in the revitalisation of a new leftist-opposition front in the country. Therefore, even though the 2011 protests eventually turned out to be another lost opportunity to bring about a real democratic change, it seems that the new Moroccan Left is willing to play a greater role in the years to come, standing at the forefront of all progressive forces engaged in the fight for democracy and freedom.

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Sull'imperfetto indicativo e gli altri tempi in *-eɾ* del dialetto armeno di Urmia
Aspetti storici e tipologici di un'innovazione morfologica

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Abstract In the Armenian dialect of Urmia (Northern Iran), the indicative imperfect displays a very innovating inflection, based on the addition of the morpheme '-eɾ' (properly the imperfect 3s of the verb 'to be') to the indicative present. This morpheme of 'remoteness' creates opposition between other tenses as well, such as perfect and pluperfect, future and past future. The article deals with the reconstruction of the origin and diffusion of this innovating morpheme in the verbal system of the Armenian dialect of Urmia, focusing both on endogenous morphological dynamics and on the role of language contact with Turkic varieties as a trigger of this morphological change.

Keywords Armenian. Armenian dialects. Urmia. Morphological change. Imperfect. Morphemes order. Language contact.

Sommario 1 Introduzione. – 2 Indicativo presente e imperfetto nel diasistema armeno. – 3 La flessione dell'imperfetto indicativo e di altri tempi con tratto [+remoteness] nel dialetto armeno di Urmia. – 4 Ampliando lo sguardo oltre Urmia. – 5 Origine dell'indicativo imperfetto nella flessione del dialetto di Urmia: dimensioni endogene. – 6 Il ruolo della 3s nei processi di innovazione strutturale della flessione. – 7 Origine dell'indicativo imperfetto e degli altri tempi in *-eɾ* nel dialetto di Urmia: dimensioni esogene. – 8 Dimensioni esogene e dimensioni endogene: un bilancio. – 9 La posizione di *-eɾ* nella catena morfica: questioni di ordine dei morfemi tra tipologia e storia.

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1 Introduzione[1]

Il presente lavoro vuole attirare l'attenzione sugli aspetti storici e tipologici di un fenomeno di innovazione morfologica che si può osservare nel dialetto armeno di Urmia (Iran settentrionale, provincia dell'Azerbaigian Occidentale). L'innovazione riguarda tutti i tempi verbali caratterizzati dal tratto [+ remoteness], da intendersi qui come un tratto che sposta nel passato un'azione, ma soprattutto che esclude ogni sovrapposizione tra il tempo di riferimento dell'azione e il momento dell'enunciazione (Matras 2001, 165-6), evidenziando l'assenza di conseguenze, rispetto al momento dell'enunciazione, di un'azione temporalmente anteriore. Per contenuti simili è stata proposta anche l'etichetta di *temporal discontinuity* (cf. Plungian, van der Auwera 2006); in questo articolo si manterrà la denominazione di *remoteness* in un senso alquanto ampio, che include anche quello di *temporal discontinuity*. Il contenuto [+ remoteness] risulta espresso nel dialetto di Urmia tramite un morfema dedicato *-er* la cui origine etimologica è da ricercarsi nella 3s dell'imperfetto del verbo 'essere'. Il fatto che l'etimo di questo morfema abbia una chiara connessione con la 3s dell'imperfetto assegna a questo tempo un ruolo rilevante nell'indagine. Per certi aspetti esso potrebbe essere il punto di partenza dell'innovazione, ma per altri potrebbe anche rappresentare il punto estremo di un'espansione nata in altri tempi come il piuccheperfetto e il futuro anteriore. Il fenomeno di innovazione morfologica che verrà analizzato non è stato finora debitamente tematizzato nella ricerca sui dialetti armeni, né da un punto di vista storico, né sotto il profilo tipologico. Eppure nel caso in analisi tutte e due le dimensioni paiono particolarmente rilevanti, confermando ancora una volta l'interesse dei dialetti armeni, con la loro notevole variazione morfologica, sia per la comprensione di meccanismi di mutamento strutturale, sia per la documentazione di organizzazioni morfologiche che, allo stato attuale delle conoscenze, appaiono complessivamente poco frequenti nelle lingue del mondo. Dal momento che la trattazione dovrà giovarsi di dati provenienti da varie fasi cronologiche del diasistema armeno, può essere utile chiarire i criteri con cui verranno rappresentate le forme linguistiche citate: per quanto riguarda l'armeno classico, si userà il sistema di traslitterazione Hübschmann-Meillet-Schmitt con l'eccezione della notazione <u> in luogo di <ow> per il digramma <ու>, lo stesso si farà per i toponimi, gli antroponimi e i titoli armeni in bibliografia, mentre le forme linguistiche moderne oggetto di analisi, sia standard che dia-

1 L'Autore desidera ringraziare Mark Janse, Elisabetta Ragagnin e Mario Squartini per gli utili suggerimenti e le importanti segnalazioni bibliografiche. La responsabilità di quanto è scritto in questo articolo è naturalmente da imputarsi solo a chi lo firma.

lettali, verranno date in trascrizione fonetica. Sempre in trascrizione fonetica sarà rappresentato anche il dialetto greco di Aksó, mentre le varietà turciche saranno date secondo le rispettive grafie standard.

Nella sua classificazione dei dialetti armeni, basata sulla morfologica del presente indicativo, Ararat Łaribyan (1953, 280-92 e 342-58) attribuiva il dialetto di Urmia al cosiddetto 'ramo in *-s*', sulla base della forma participiale impiegata per la formazione del presente indicativo (*si're-s em* 'io amo'). Nel quadro dei dialetti armeni dell'Iran settentrionale Łaribyan (1953, 359-80) annoverava anche un altro gruppo di dialetti definiti 'ramo in *-l*' a cui veniva riportato il dialetto armeno di Marała (*sə're-l im* 'io amo'). La ricerca successiva ha mostrato come questi gruppi siano con ogni probabilità da ricondurre a un unico gruppo caratterizzato da un'isoglossa strutturale comune e cioè la formazione del presente indicativo mediante un participio in *-a*/*elis* (Grigoryan 1957, 70-4; Asatryan 1962, 14). Una volta compresa l'origine etimologica comune dei cosiddetti 'rami in *-s* e *-l*', si può affermare che tutti i dialetti armeni dell'Iran settentrionale, insieme a vari altri dialetti, soprattutto del Siwnik' e del Łarabał, condividono nella morfologia del presente indicativo un'importante innovazione comune rispetto all'armeno classico; il carattere fortemente distintivo di questa innovazione si può chiaramente apprezzare rilevando che essa non si ritrova in altre aree del *continuum* dialettale armeno.

L'innovazione strutturale di cui si tratterà nelle pagine seguenti costituisce anch'essa un tratto alquanto condiviso nell'area, ma la convergenza di diversi dialetti verso una nuova modalità di esprimere il tratto [+ remoteness] sarà in molti casi solo strutturale, senza la condivisione di basi etimologiche comuni.

2 Indicativo presente e imperfetto nel diasistema armeno

Come accennato nell'introduzione, lo studio della nuova espressione del tratto [+ remoteness] nel dialetto armeno di Urmia, non può prescindere da un'analisi della struttura dell'imperfetto indicativo, soprattutto in relazione a quella del presente, due tempi che si oppongono solo per il tratto [± remoteness]. Un inquadramento generale di questi due tempi nel diasistema armeno pare pertanto necessario.

Nella complessa storia evolutiva del sistema verbale armeno l'indicativo imperfetto ha sempre mostrato un forte legame morfologico con l'indicativo presente, ma l'espressione di questo legame paradigmatico di modo [+ indicativo] e di aspetto [+ imperfettivo] è caratterizzato da un alto indice di variazione diatopica e diacronica. In diverse epoche e aree dialettali troviamo infatti diverse strategie morfologiche per marcare questi tratti e una ricca messe di innovazioni strutturali (Łaribyan 1953, 177-81). Uno sguardo sinottico alle tre varietà armene standard (tab. 1) può essere utile ad avvicinare l'argomento.

Tabella 1 Indicativo presente e imperfetto del verbo *kapel* 'legare' nelle varietà armene standard

vb. *kapel* 'legare'						
	arm. classico		arm. orientale		arm. occidentale	
	indic. pres.	indic. impf.	indic. pres.	indic. impf.	indic. pres.	indic. impf.
1s	*kapem*	kapei/kapēi	ka'pum em	ka'pum e'i	gəga'bem	gəgabe'i
2s	*kapes*	kapeir/kapēir	ka'pum es	ka'pum e'iɾ	gəga'bes	gəgabe'iɾ
3s	*kapē*	kapēr	ka'pum e	ka'pum eɾ	gəga'be	gəga'beɾ
1p	*kapemkʿ*	kapeakʿ/ kapēakʿ	ka'pum eŋkʰ	ka'pum e'iŋkʰ	gəga'beŋkʰ	gəgabe'iŋkʰ
2p	*kapēkʿ*	kapeikʿ/ kapēikʿ	ka'pum ekʰ	ka'pum e'ikʰ	gəga'bekʰ	gəgabe'ikʰ
3p	*kapen*	kapein/kapēin	ka'pum en	ka'pum e'in	gəga'ben	gəgabe'in

In armeno classico la relazione tra presente e imperfetto era assicurata dalla condivisione del tema del presente, che si opponeva generalmente a quello dell'aoristo (*kap-* vs *kapecʿ-* nel caso del verbo *kapel*), tranne nel caso degli aoristi atematici (detti anche forti), cf. ad esempio il verbo *ber-em* 'porto' che alla 1s dell'aoristo ha *ber-i* (cf. Jensen 1959, 95); naturalmente, anche le desinenze erano diverse e concorrevano a questa distinzione.[2] Negli standard moderni i rapporti paradigmatici tra l'indicativo presente e imperfetto appaiono morfematicamente ridisegnati e i due tempi condividono anche un morfema innovativo con contenuti di modo, tempo e aspetto, cf. armeno orientale *-um/-alis*, o armeno occidentale *gə-/gu-/g-*. Questi morfemi oppongono ad esempio l'indicativo presente al congiuntivo (modo) o al futuro (tempo) – nell'armeno orientale poi non mancano valori aspettuali (Dum-Tragut 2009, 196) – e possono essere ricondotti rispettivamente a una marca participiale progressiva *-um* o *-(V)lis*, cf. armeno orientale *ka'p**um** em*, *ka'p**um** e'i* 'lego, legavo', *g**a'lis** em*, *g**a'lis** e'i* 'vengo, venivo', con due allomorfi a distribuzione prosodica (*-alis* con temi verbali monoconsonantici, quindi sub-sillabici, e *-um* in tutti gli altri casi), e alla grammaticalizzazione di un'antica sequenza *kay u* 'sta e', cf. armeno occidentale ***gə**ga'bem*/***gə**gabe'i* 'lego, legavo', ***gu**'kʰam*/***gu**kʰa'ji* 'vengo, venivo', ***g**a'dem*/***g**ade'i* 'odio, odiavo' con tre allomorfi a distribuzione fono-prosodica (*gu-* con basi verbali monoconsonantiche, *gə-* con le basi verbali non monoconsonantiche inizianti per consonante e *g-* con le basi verbali inizianti per vocale, cf. Bardakjian, Thomson 1977, 23).

2 Per una trattazione dettagliata cf. Schmitt 1981, 136-41 e 144-50; Klingenschmitt 1982, 12-31; per i problemi, ancora insoluti, dell'origine della flessione dell'imperfetto in armeno classico, cf. la sintesi di Olsen 2017 e i relativi rinvii bibliografici.

In riferimento alla grammaticalizzazione dell'antico *kay u* 'sta e' in *gə-* (e sue varianti) è opportuno notare come tale prefisso in armeno occidentale non si applichi ad alcuni verbi, cf. *kʰi'dem*, *kʰide'i* 'so, sapevo', *ga*, *gar* 'c'è, c'era', *gar'dzem*, *gardze'i* 'ritengo, ritenevo', *gər'nam*, *gərna'ji* 'posso, potevo' e non **gəkʰi'dem*, **gəkʰide'i*, **gu'ga*, **gu'gar* **gəgar'dzem*, **gəgardze'i*, **gəgər'nam*, **gəgərna'ji* (Vaux 1995, 137). Questa restrizione nella distribuzione del morfema *gə-* appare significativa, soprattutto perché non può essere spiegata con motivazioni inerenti alla dimensione della modalità; di conseguenza il fatto che oggi la presenza di *gə-* distingua ad esempio l'indicativo presente (*gəga'bem* 'lego') e imperfetto (*gəgabe'i* 'legavo') dal congiuntivo presente (*ga'bem* 'che io leghi') e passato (*gabe'i* 'che io legassi') non può rappresentare la funzione originaria del prefisso. L'osservazione che il prefisso *gə-* risulta incompatibile con verbi stativi, quali sono quelli elencati poco sopra, spinge a credere che questa restrizione nasca da un valore categoriale che era attivo in una fase diacronica precedente. Solitamente i verbi stativi si mostrano poco o nulla compatibili con l'aspetto progressivo ed è questo il valore che il morfema *gə-* doveva veicolare in origine. A proposito dell'inaccettabilità dell'applicazione di perifrasi progressive a verbi stativi si prenda il verbo 'sapere' e si confronti l'inglese *I know Paul's telephone number* vs **I am knowing Paul's telephone number* o italiano *so il numero di telefono di Paolo* vs **sto sapendo il numero di telefono di Paolo*; quest'ultimo esempio peraltro contiene una perifrasi progressiva di analoga motivazione etimologica rispetto all'armeno occidentale, cioè con grammaticalizzazione del verbo 'stare' (sul tema cf. Squartini 1988, 127-51). L'originario valore aspettuale progressivo di *gə-* in armeno occidentale è andato indebolendosi in diacronia e in molte varietà risulta del tutto perduto, come è dimostrato dalla nascita nei dialetti occidentali di nuove formazioni di progressivo (Łaribyan 1953, 181-7; Ačaŕyan 1961, 97-9). Un esempio per tutti può essere costituito dal morfema *-gor* posposto al verbo nel dialetto armeno di Costantinopoli, cf. *gəga'bemgoɾ*, *gəgabe'igor* 'sto legando, stavo legando'.

Dunque i morfemi che marcano oggi l'indicativo, sia nell'armeno orientale standard che in quello occidentale standard, avevano in origine contenuti più che altro di natura aspettuale ed esprimevano il tratto [+ progressivo]. I dialetti armeni presentano altri morfemi ancora per indicare il legame tra presente e imperfetto (per una rassegna cf. Łaribyan 1953, 170-81; Vaux 1995, 136-7), qui ci si può limitare a richiamare la forma participiale in *-(V)lis* (*-alis*/*-elis*), molto diffusa nell'area più orientale dei dialetti armeni (Ardvin, Dzmar, K'eyvan, Karčevan, Mełri, Hadrut', area del Łaradał, Marała ecc., cf. Łaribyan 1953, 281-2). Questa forma participiale è nota anche all'armeno orientale standard come participio progressivo, ma nella formazione di forme flesse il suo uso è limitato alle tre basi verbali monoconsonantiche *l-* 'piangere' (*la'lis em*, *la'lis e'i* 'piango, piangevo'),

g- 'venire' (*ga'lis em*, *ga'lis e'i* 'vengo, venivo'), *d-* 'dare' (*da'lis em*, *da'lis e'i* 'dò, davo').

3 La flessione dell'imperfetto indicativo e di altri tempi con tratto [+remoteness] nel dialetto armeno di Urmia

Tra i dialetti armeni che presentano nell'indicativo presente e imperfetto un participio in *-(V)lis* (*-alis*/*-elis*) seguito dal verbo 'essere' rientra anche il dialetto di Urmia, insieme a quelli vicini di Xoy e Salmast. Tutti questi centri, fortemente collegati tra loro, si trovano a ovest del lago di Urmia, in una terra in cui la presenza armena è sicuramente plurisecolare, sebbene da vari decenni in forte diminuzione. La tabella 2 mostra la flessione del presente e dell'imperfetto indicativo nel dialetto di Urmia come data da Asatryan (1962, 104), con integrazioni di chi scrive:

Tabella 2 Indicativo presente e imperfetto a Urmia (forma normale, forma inversa, forma negativa)

vb. *ka'pel* 'legare'						
	Indicativo presente			Indicativo imperfetto		
	forma normale	forma inversa	forma negativa	forma normale	forma inversa	forma negativa
1s	ka'pes em	em kape'li	ʧʰem kape'li	ka'pes em**eɾ**	em**eɾ** kape'li	ʧʰem**eɾ** kape'li
2s	ka'pes es	es kape'li	ʧʰes kape'li	ka'pes es**eɾ**	es**eɾ** kape'li	ʧʰes**eɾ** kape'li
3s	kape'li	i kape'li	ʧʰi kape'li	ka'pes **eɾ**	**eɾ** kape'li	ʧʰ**eɾ** kape'li
1pl	ka'pes eŋkʲʰ	eŋkʲʰ kape'li	ʧʰeŋkʲʰ kape'li	ka'pes eŋkʲʰ**eɾ**	eŋkʲʰ**eɾ** kape'li	ʧʰeŋkʲʰ**eɾ** kape'li
2pl	ka'pes ekʲʰ	ekʲʰ kape'li	ʧʰekʲʰ kape'li	ka'pes ekʲʰ**eɾ**	ekʲʰ**eɾ**kape'li	ʧʰekʲʰ**eɾ** kape'li
3pl	ka'pes en	en kape'li	ʧʰen kape'li	ka'pes en**eɾ**	en**eɾ**kape'li	ʧʰen**eɾ** kape'li

In questo dialetto la marca di imperfetto è rappresentato da un morfema non cumulativo *-er* agglutinato all'ausiliare, cioè al *marker* di persona e numero, dell'indicativo presente. Tale configurazione riguarda sia la forma detta normale, con la successione nell'ordine non marcato del participio (*ka'pes*) e dell'ausiliare 'essere', sia la forma inversa, tipicamente innescata dal focus preverbale e da oggetti diretti indefiniti preposti (Dum-Tragut 2009, 395, 562), in cui l'ausiliare è posto prima del participio (*kape'li*), sia infine la forma negativa in cui l'ausiliare addizionato della negazione prefissa *ʧʰ-* precede sistematicamente il participio. Nelle persone diverse dalla 3s l'esponente *-er* è da considerare un morfema legato, nulla infatti si può inserire tra esso e la forma del verbo 'essere' a cui è suffisso; per questa ragione la grafia <*kaphs hm hr*> *ka'pes em er* 'legavo', usata in alcu-

ne grammatiche (cf. Łaribyan 1953, 348-9; Ačaŕyan 1961, 194; Asatryan 1962, 104, etc.), appare pensata eminentemente per sottolineare la natura clitica della sequenza *em*+*eɾ*, ma risulta fuorviante in riferimento al grado di indipendenza dei morfemi che sarebbe forse meglio rappresentato mediante <կապէս էմ էր> *ka'pes emeɾ*.

Nella flessione dell'indicativo del dialetto di Urmia la parte lessicale del verbo è rappresentata da una forma participiale che ha due allomorfi posizionali. La distribuzione di questi due allomorfi, che sono rispettivamente [base + vocale tematica (*e*/*a*) + *s*] (cf. *ka'pes*) e [base + vocale tematica (*e*/*a*) + *li*] (cf. *kape'li*, che conosce anche la variante *kape'lə*, cf. Asatryan 1962, 102), è determinata dal fatto che essi siano seguiti o no dall'ausiliare. Nel caso di un verbo in *-a-* come *mə'nal* 'stare' avremo *mə'nas* e *məna'li*. La storia dei due allomorfi in *-s* e *-li* del participio non è chiara in tutti i suoi dettagli, tuttavia essi possono essere senz'altro ricondotti a participi attivi e durativi in *-elis*/*-alis*, identici a quelli che troviamo nel dialetto di Ardvin (*ləse'lis im* 'sento', *məna'lis im* 'sto'; cf. Łaribyan 1953, 282) e in quello del Łaradał (*gjiɾi'lis əm* 'scrivo', *məna'lis əm* 'sto'; cf. Łaribyan 1953, 282, 299). Asatryan (1962, 13), seguendo Ačaŕyan (1926, 268-70), propone per il dialetto di Urmia un processo di sincope del tipo *kape'lis* > **ka'pels* > *ka'pes*. Questa ricostruzione presenta il difetto di supporre uno spostamento dell'accento sulla penultima sillaba (come avviene sistematicamente ad esempio nei dialetti di Karčevan e Mełri, cf. Muradyan 1960, 167-8 e Ałayan 1954, 243-4). Tale anticipazione dell'accento sarebbe in contrasto con quanto si trova in tutte le altre parole del dialetto di Urmia, regolarmente ossitone, compresa la variante allomorfica del participio *kape'li*. Benché l'isoglossa della ritrazione dell'accento sulla penultima sillaba sia giudicata molto antica, essa non trova riscontro nei dialetti dell'area tra Van e l'Iran settentrionale (Martirosyan 2018, 64).

A titolo di pura ipotesi si potrebbe forse pensare che forme come *ka'pes* e *mə'nas* derivino da un altro percorso evolutivo del tipo *kape'lis em*, *məna'lis em* (come si trova ancora ad Ardvin) > **kape'jis em*, **məna'jis em* (cf. *gʸiɾi'jis əm* 'scrivo' *kartʰa'jis əm* 'leggo' nel dialetto di Kʿeyvan/Shānejān) > **kape'is em*, **məna'is em* > **ka'peis em*, **mə'nais em* > *ka'pes em*, *mə'nas em*, con spostamento dell'accento sul primo elemento del dittongo per la generale preferenza per i dittonghi (discendenti) rispetto allo iato e quindi senza supporre una ritrazione dell'accento generalizzata in qualche fase storica del dialetto di Urmia. L'esito *e* e *a*, al posto dei dittonghi *ei* e *ai*, potrebbe inoltre essere analogico sull'infinito *ka'pel*, *mə'nal* e su altri tempi e modi come il futuro e il futuro anteriore, l'aoristo, il congiuntivo presente e imperfetto, che conservano le antiche vocali tematiche *e* e *a* (cf. le tavole della flessione in Asatryan 1962, 105-11). Si tratta di una vicenda storica piuttosto difficile da ricostruire; in ogni caso, nell'aspetto assunto dalla flessione dell'indicativo presente e im-

perfetto nel dialetto di Urmia, quello che più conta è la distribuzione dei due allomorfi participiali: le forme con *-s* (*ka'pes*, *mə'nas*) appaiono prima dell'ausiliare, quelle in *-li* (come *kape'li*, *məna'li* con perdita di *-s* finale) nelle altre posizioni. Una situazione che potrebbe essere così schematizzata:

*[base verbale]-V_{tem}*lis* + aus (i.e. ≠ 3s) > [base verbale]-V_{tem}*s* + aus (es. *ka'pes/mə'nas em*)

*[base verbale]-V_{tem}*lis* + Ø (i.e. 3s) > [base verbale]-V_{tem}*li* + Ø (es. *kape'li/məna'li*)

(neg-)aus + *[base verbale]-V_{tem}*lis* > (neg-)aus + [base verbale]-V_{tem}*li* (es. (ʧ^{h}-)*em kape'li/məna'li*)

Dal momento che l'ausiliare è una forma clitica e che la vocale tematica non è ovviamente coinvolta nell'allomorfia, si potrebbe riassumere il tutto nella seguente distribuzione:

1. l'allomorfo *-s* (*-es*/*-as*) appare all'interno della parola fonologica;
2. l'allomorfo *-li* (*-eli*/*-ali*) appare alla fine della parola fonologica.

Tornando ora all'imperfetto, recuperiamo la struttura della sua espressione morfologica, che è sintetizzabile come [indicativo presente + *-er*]. In altre parole l'affisso *-er* è sufficiente per mutare il presente in imperfetto e, dal momento che presente e imperfetto differiscono essenzialmente nel tempo, *-er* può essere considerato un morfema di tempo, più precisamente un morfema di *remoteness*. È da notare come il medesimo morfema *-er* nel dialetto di Urmia abbia la funzione di differenziare non solo il presente indicativo dall'imperfetto indicativo, ma anche altri tempi (Asatryan 1962, 108-11), ad esempio il piuccheperfetto indicativo dal perfetto indicativo, il futuro anteriore dal futuro, il condizionale passato da quello presente e altri ancora. Si confronti al proposito la tabella 3:

Tabella 3 Indicativo perfetto e piuccheperfetto, futuro e futuro anteriore, condizionale presente e passato nel dialetto di Urmia

	Indicativo				**Condizionale**	
	Perfetto	**Piuccheperfetto**	**Futuro**	**Futuro anteriore**	**Presente**	**Passato**
1s	ka'pir em	ka'pir em**er**	kape'ly jem	kape'ly jem**er**	kəka'pem	*kəka'pem***er**
2s	ka'pir es	ka'pir es**er**	kape'ly jes	kape'ly jes**er**	kəka'pes	kəka'pes**er**
3s	ka'pir i	ka'pir **er**	kape'ly ji	kape'ly **jer**	kəka'pi	kəka'p**er**
1pl	ka'pir eŋk^{jh}	ka'pir eŋk^{jh}**er**	kape'ly jeŋk^{jh}	kape'ly jeŋk^{jh}**er**	kəka'peŋk^{jh}	kəka'peŋk^{jh}**er**

2pl	ka'pir ek^{jh}	ka'pir ek^{jh}**er**	kape'ly jek^{jh}	kape'ly jek^{jh}**er**	kəka'pek^{jh}	kəka'pek^{jh}**er**
3pl	ka'pir en	ka'pir en**er**	kape'ly jen	kape'ly jen**er**	kəka'pen	kəka'pen**er**

4 Ampliando lo sguardo oltre Urmia

Come accennato nell'introduzione, il modello di codifica dell'imperfetto come [presente + morfema di *remoteness*] che si rinviene a Urmia trova paralleli strutturali perfetti in vari dialetti armeni, in particolare del Siwnikʻ (Karčevan, Meɫri) e dell'Iran settentrionale (Marała, area del Łaradał), ma anche del Naxiǰevan (Agulis) e del Łarabał (Hadrutʻ). Anche in questi dialetti peraltro il morfema di *remoteness*, che oppone presente e imperfetto, si ritrova in altri tempi e modi. Si confronti a titolo di esempio l'organizzazione della flessione di presente e imperfetto, perfetto e piuccheperfetto, futuro e futuro anteriore nei dialetti di Marała (secondo Ačaṙyan 1926, 271 e 278-80, mentre per Davtʻyan 1966, 157 l'ausiliare flesso sarebbe ormai univerbato con il participio), Agulis (Greppin, Khachaturian 1986, 6-7, basato su Ačaṙyan 1935) e Karčevan (Muradyan 1960, 131-3), qui esemplificati nelle tabelle 4, 5 e 6 con le forme assunte nei diversi dialetti dal verbo *sirel* 'amare':

Tabella 4 Flessione di presente/imperfetto, perfetto/piuccheperfetto, futuro/futuro anteriore nel dialetto di Marała

Marała	Presente	Imperfetto	Perfetto	Piuccheperfetto	Futuro	Futuro anteriore
1s	səre'li im	səre'li im**er**	sə'rir im	sə'rir im**er**	səro'lu jim	səro'lu jim**er**
2s	səre'li is	səre'li is**er**	sə'rir is	sə'rir is**er**	səro'lu jis	səro'lu jis**er**
3s	səre'li i	səre'li **er**	sə'rir i	sə'rir **er**	səro'lu ji	səro'lu j**er**
1pl	səre'li iŋk^{jh}	səre'li iŋk^{jh}**er**	sə'rir iŋk^{jh}	sə'rir iŋk^{jh}**er**	səro'lu jiŋk^{jh}	səro'lu jiŋk^{jh}**er**
2pl	səre'li ek^{jh}	səre'li ek^{jh}**er**	sə'rir ek^{jh}	sə'rir ek^{jh}**er**	səro'lu jek^{jh}	səro'lu jek^{jh}**er**
3pl	səre'li in	səre'li in**er**	sə'rir in	sə'rir in**er**	səro'lu jin	səro'lu jin**er**

Tabella 5 Flessione di presente/imperfetto, perfetto/piuccheperfetto, futuro/futuro anteriore nel dialetto di Agulis

Agulis	Presente	Imperfetto	Perfetto	Piuccheperfetto	Futuro	Futuro anteriore
1s	'sairæm əm	'sairæm əm**nel**	'sairæl əm	'sairæl əm**nel**	'sairil əm	'sairil əm**nel**
2s	'sairæm əs	'sairæm əs**nel**	'sairæl əs	'sairæl əs**nel**	'sairil əs	'sairil əs**nel**
3s	'sairæm æ	'sairæm æ**nel**	'sairæl æ	'sairæl æ**nel**	'sairil æ	'sairil æ**nel**
1pl	'sairæm ək^{h}	'sairæm ək^{h}**nel**	'sairæl ək^{h}	'sairæl ək^{h}**nel**	'sairil ək^{h}	'sairil ək^{h}**nel**
2pl	'sairæm ək^{h}	'sairæm ək^{h}**nel**	'sairæl ək^{h}	'sairæl ək^{h}**nel**	'sairil ək^{h}	'sairil ək^{h}**nel**
3pl	'sairæm ən	'sairæm ən**nel**	'sairæl ən	'sairæl ən**nel**	'sairil ən	'sairil ən**nel**

Tabella 6 Flessione di presente/imperfetto, perfetto/piuccheperfetto, futuro/futuro anteriore nel dialetto di Karčevan

Karčevan	Presente	Imperfetto	Perfetto	Piuccheperfetto	Futuro	Futuro anteriore
1s	si'rij im	si'rij im**le**	'siræts əm	'siræts əm**le**	'siril im	'siril im**le**
2s	si'rij is	si'rij is**le**	'siræts əs	'siræts əs**le**	'siril is	'siril is**le**
3s	si'ris a	si'ris a**le**	'siræts a	'siræts a**le**	'siril a	'siril a**le**
1pl	si'rij ik^{jh}	si'rij ik^{jh}**le**	'siræts ək^{h}	'siræts ək^{h}**le**	'siril ik^{jh}	'siril ik^{jh}**le**
2pl	si'rij ik^{jh}	si'rij ik^{jh}**le**	'siræts ək^{h}	'siræts ək^{h}**le**	'siril ik^{jh}	'siril ik^{jh}**le**
3pl	si'rij in	si'rij in**le**	'siræts ən	'siræts ən**le**	'siril in	'siril in**le**

Appare evidente come il tratto [+ remoteness] in questi dialetti, come nel dialetto di Urmia, sia stato trasferito dai morfemi di carattere tendenzialmente più fusivo che lo esprimevano in armeno classico a un morfema dedicato (*-er*, *-nel*, *-le*), che veicola esclusivamente questo contenuto temporale, dando luogo così a un incremento di trasparenza morfotattica e morfosemantica e quindi a una organizzazione morfologica dell'imperfetto che potremmo definire più naturale (cf. Dressler 1985, 315-25; Kilani, Schoch 1988, 118-21). In tutti questi dialetti e in altri ancora dell'armenofonia sud-orientale lo schema innovativo della flessione dell'imperfetto (e di altri tempi) appare strutturalmente identico, ma viene riempito con morfi diversi, sovente di etimologia non pienamente chiarita. In questa sorta di convergenza strutturale dei dialetti armeni sud-orientali nell'espressione della *remoteness* si potrebbero forse intuire dinamiche da area linguistica, il tutto con riferimento a una situazione in cui una serie di dialetti di comune origine genealogica presentano innovazioni morfologiche identiche, realizzate però con morfi etimologicamente irrelati tra loro.

5 Origine dell'indicativo imperfetto nella flessione del dialetto di Urmia: dimensioni endogene

Può essere interessante tentare di ricostruire, sebbene in maniera assolutamente ipotetica, il percorso che ha portato alla nascita del morfema *-er* di *remoteness* nel dialetto di Urmia. Come spesso accade per molti fenomeni dei dialetti armeni, anche in questo caso specifico si aprono due possibilità esplicative, che potremo per brevità chiamare pista endogena e pista esogena. La pista endogena sarebbe basata su percorsi di innovazione nati da rapporti interni ai paradigmi, quella esogena invece assume il contatto con altre lingue come *trigger* fondamentale di mutamenti anche strutturali. Ovviamente le due dimensioni possono in una certa misura cooperare e spesso lo

fanno (Thomason, Kaufman 1988, 61); d'altra parte la storia di una lingua parlata in comunità diffusamente bilingui vede all'opera sia spinte innovative di sistema, quindi endogene, sia spinte innovative innescate dal continuo utilizzo di due lingue, con possibili fenomeni di convergenza e unificazione di alcuni schemi grammaticali. Non di rado l'intrecciarsi di queste due dimensioni dà luogo a concause complesse, difficili da districare.

Un primo possibile percorso ricostruttivo, per quanto riguarda la genesi dell'imperfetto di Urmia e del morfema di *remoteness -er*, potrebbe prendere come punto di partenza dell'innovazione una rianalisi della 3s del presente come forma a marca zero e una sua assunzione come nuova base per le altre persone; si tratta di una pista di per sé endogena, ma non priva di possibili rapporti con la dimensione del contatto linguistico. Come accennato precedentemente, le forme participiali *kape'li* e *ka'pes* possono essere considerate due varianti posizionali nate da un originario participio **kape'lis* (Łaribyan 1953, 351-2; Asatryan 1962, 7-14). Nella serie flessiva del presente indicativo di Urmia la 3s del presente *kape'li* 'egli lega' è di fatto un participio senza ausiliare, cioè una forma in cui mancano morfi foneticamente realizzati per i contenuti di persona e numero. L'imperfetto appare inoltre completamente rinnovato mediante l'agglutinazione del morfema *-er* all'ausiliare del presente. Tuttavia, in armonia con il *pattern* fondamentale [participio + ausiliare 'essere' flesso per tempo, numero e persona] che si ritrova nel presente, una forma più antica dell'imperfetto nel dialetto di Urmia, storicamente intermedia tra l'armeno classico e gli esiti odierni, potrebbe essere ricostruita come nella tabella 7:

Tabella 7 L'imperfetto a Urmia, ricostruzione di uno stato diacronico immediatamente anteriore a quello odierno

1s	*ka'pes e'i 'legavo'
2s	*ka'pes e'ir
3s	ka'pes **er**
1pl	*ka'pes e'iŋkʲʰ
2pl	*ka'pes e'ikʲʰ
3pl	*ka'pes e'in

Si tratta di uno schema flessivo che si ritrova ad esempio nel dialetto di Hadrutʿ (Łaribyan 1953, 180; cf. tabella 8, variante 1), i cui parlanti – è bene ricordarlo – si sono spostati dall'Iran settentrionale al Łarabał alla fine della seconda guerra russo-persiana (1826-28). In questo dialetto la forma più conservativa di imperfetto convive con due varianti innovative (2 e 3), che presentano uno schema identico a quanto si trova ora a Urmia; inoltre la variante 1 di Hadrutʿ cono-

sce un parallelo ancora più arcaico nel dialetto di Ardvin (Łaribyan 1953, 337), sulla cui provenienza da altre regioni ci sono pochi dubbi (Łaribyan 1953, 330).

Tabella 8 La flessione dell'imperfetto nel dialetto di Hadrutʿ e di Ardvin

Imperfetto del verbo *kʲi'rel* 'scrivere' a Hadrutʿ e Ardvin			
Hadrutʿ			Ardvin
variante 1	**variante 2**	**variante 3**	
kʲi'ɾis i (< ēi) 'scrivevo'	kʲə'res əmnis	kʲə'res əmlæl	gəre'lis e'ji
kʲi'ris ir (< *ēir*)	kʲə'res əsnis	kʲə'res əslæl	gəre'lis e'jir
kʲi'ris aɾ (< *ēr*)	kʲə'res ænis	kʲə'res ælæl	gəre'lis er
kʲi'ris iŋkʰ (< *ēink'*)	kʲə'res əŋkʰnis	kʲə'res əŋkʰlæl	gəre'lis e'jiŋkʰ
kʲi'ris ikʰ (< *ēik'*)	kʲə'res əkʰnis	kʲə'res əkʰlæl	gəre'lis e'jikʰ
kʲi'ris in (< *ēin*)	kʲə'res ənnis	kʲə'res ənlæl	gəre'lis e'jin

Le forme conservative dell'ausiliare (Hadrutʿ, variante 1; Ardvin) sono in continuità storica con l'imperfetto dell'armeno classico, mentre le forme innovative (varianti 2 e 3) presentano un morfema *-nis* o *-læl*, con valore di *remoteness*, unito alla forma del presente (cioè uno schema identico a quello di Urmia, realizzato però con morfi diversi). Rispetto alla situazione di Urmia rimane da notare come nelle varianti 2 e 3 alla 3s il presente abbia solitamente l'ausiliare *æ* e non una forma participiale priva di imperfetto e come, di conseguenza, la 3s dell'imperfetto presenti l'ausiliare nella forma *ænis*, *ælæl*.

In passato, per quanto riguarda la flessione dell'imperfetto, la situazione del dialetto di Urmia era probabilmente analoga a quanto si trova nella variante 1 del dialetto di Hadrutʿ, ma poi qualcosa è cambiato e l'antico imperfetto ha subito una radicale innovazione. Il processo che ha rinnovato l'imperfetto del dialetto di Urmia potrebbe trovare il suo fulcro nel fatto che la 3s del presente è costituita dal solo participio, senza ausiliare. Dal momento che l'imperfetto è più marcato del presente, la sua flessione originaria doveva presentare l'ausiliare nella 3s, come accade a Hadrutʿ; il presente invece poteva esserne privo, come di fatto lo è oggi. Questa relazione paradigmatica tra il presente 3s *kape'li* (participio senza ausiliare) e l'imperfetto 3s *ka'pes eɾ* (participio + ausiliare) può aver innescato l'interpretazione dell'originario ausiliare *eɾ* come morfema di *remoteness* e, successivamente, la sua diffusione a tutte le persone dell'imperfetto. La differenza superficiale tra un participio del tipo *ka'pes* e un participio del tipo *kape'li* non costituisce un ostacolo insormontabile a questa reinterpretazione, in quanto le due forme superficiali del participio sono esito di distribuzione allomorfica posizionale. Si veda lo schema della tabella 9:

Tabella 9 Una possibile pista endogena per la genesi della nuova flessione dell'imperfetto nel dialetto di Urmia

Flessione antica dell'imperfetto indicativo a Urmia (= Hadrut')	Presente indicativo			Flessione innovativa dell'imperfetto indicativo
1s *kape'lis e'i > *ka'pes e'i	*kape'lis em > ka'pes em			ka'pes em**er**
2s *kape'lis e'iɾ > *ka'pes e'iɾ	*kape'lis es > ka'pes es			ka'pes es**er**
3s *kape'lis eɾ > ka'pes **er** (i. e. participio. + **er**)	*kape'lis > kape'li (i.e. participio + Ø)	Rianalisi dell'imperfetto come participio + Ø + *eɾ* cioè **presente + *eɾ*** ed estensione di ***eɾ*** a tutte le persone	▶	ka'pes **er**
1pl *kape'lis e'iŋkʲʰ > *ka'pes e'iŋkʲʰ	*kape'lis eŋkʰ > ka'pes eŋkʲʰ			ka'pes eŋkʲʰ**er**
2pl *kape'lis e'ikʲʰ > *ka'pes e'ikʲʰ	*kape'lis ekʲʰ > ka'pes ekʲʰ			ka'pes ekʲʰ**er**
3pl *kape'lis e'in > *ka'pes e'in	*kape'lis en > ka'pes en			ka'pes en**er**

6 Il ruolo della 3s nei processi di innovazione strutturale della flessione

In § 5 si è affermato che le forme a marca zero possono avere un ruolo nei processi di rifacimento della flessione. Un fatto con abbondanti riscontri interlinguistici è che la 3s sembra essere rappresentata, molto più spesso delle altre persone, da una forma a marca zero (Benveniste 1946, 4-5) e non di rado essa tende a essere interpretata come tale anche quando non la è. Processi innovativi in cui una 3s a marca zero è il punto di partenza per la ristrutturazione della flessione sono ben documentati e sono stati etichettati come casi di legge di Watkins. Si confronti il caso del verbo 'essere' nella storia del persiano: in medio persiano la serie flessiva del presente indicativo 1s *ham*, 2s *hē*, 3s *ast*, 1pl *hēm*, 2pl *hēd*, 3pl *hēnd* (Skjærvø 2009, 216) mostra alla 3s una forma *ast* che è continuazione di antico persiano *astiy* (proto-ir. **as-ti*) e che si pone come suppletiva rispetto a tutte le altre persone che hanno una base *h-* (Maggi, Orsatti 2018, 24). Uno sguardo alla serie flessiva del persiano moderno 1s *hastam*, 2s *hasti*, 3s *hast*, 1pl *hastim*, 2pl *hastid*, 3pl *hastand* permette di comprendere che la 3s *hast* (da medio persiano *ast* con *h-* analogico sulle altre persone) è divenuta la nuova base dell'intera serie flessiva e ad essa vengono aggiunte le marche di persona e numero (Watkins 1962, 93-6). Le forme proto-iraniche come 1s **as-mi* (antico persiano *aʰmiy*), 2s **as-i* non possono infatti essere antecedenti diretti di 1s *hast-am*, 2s *hast-i* che troviamo in persiano moderno (e non lo erano nemmeno di medio persiano 1s *ham*, 2s *hē*). La rianalisi della 3s come forma a marca zero (*as-t* > *ast-Ø*) e il suo successivo passaggio a base del verbo 'essere' si trovano già nelle fasi più antiche del neopersiano, quan-

do la forma era ancora *ast*, cf. 1s. *astam*, 2s *astē* (Lazard 1963, 346). Percorsi analoghi si possono ricostruire per altre lingue: in polacco moderno troviamo che, con l'eccezione della 3pl, la base del presente del verbo 'essere' di tutte le altre persone è stata rifatta a partire dalla 3s, cf. 1s *jestem*, 2s *jesteś*, 3s *jest*, 1pl *jesteśmy*, 2pl *jesteście*, 3pl *są*. Il polacco antico (prima del XVI secolo) aveva una flessione diversa, che si presentava come segue: 1s *jeśm*/*jesm*, 2s *jeś*, 3s *jest*, 1pl *jesmy*, 2pl *jeście*, 3pl *są* (Vaillant 1966, 443), dunque in una forma piuttosto vicina a quanto testimoniato ad esempio dal paleoslavo, cf. 1s (*j*)*esmĭ*, 2s (*j*)*esi*, 3s (*j*)*estŭ*, 1pl (*j*)*esmŭ*, 2pl (*j*)*este*, 3pl *sǫtŭ* e sicuramente più vicina alle premesse morfologiche indeuropee supposte da tutte le lingue slave (cf. sul tema la sintesi di Enrietti 2000). Qualcosa di analogo, come illustra Watkins (1962, 95), si osserva anche in medio-gallese: qui, nella flessione dell'imperfetto 'essere', la 3s del verbo essere *oed* 'era' continua regolarmente una forma preistorica **esāt* e si pone quindi come un corrispondente perfetto di lat. *erat*. Le altre persone però non continuano formazioni del tipo **esām*, **esās* ecc., come in latino, ma risultano costruite mediante l'aggiunta delle desinenza di persona alla 3s *oed* la cui articolazione morfemica *oe-d* è stata rianalizzata come una forma a marca zero, cf. 1s *oedwn*, 2s *oed-ut*, 1pl *oed-em*, 2pl *oed-ewch*, 3pl *oed-ynt*. In questi casi tratti dal persiano, dal polacco e dal medio gallese il contatto linguistico come *trigger* del mutamento non è una spiegazione cogente, e forse neppure probabile, non sono infatti evidenti le premesse sociolinguistiche che valorizzerebbero una spiegazione basata sul bilinguismo. In queste lingue il processo di estensione della 3s a marca zero alle altre persone in funzione di base cui aggiungere i *marker* di persona e numero è stato un percorso endogeno. In altri casi però appare fondato il sospetto che processi di ristrutturazione basati sulla reinterpretazione della 3s come forma a marca zero possano essere stati in qualche modo innescati dal contatto.

7 Origine dell'indicativo imperfetto e degli altri tempi in *-eɾ* nel dialetto di Urmia: dimensioni esogene

Secondo l'ipotesi proposta in § 5 nel dialetto di Urmia la 3s avrebbe avuto un ruolo essenziale nei processi di rianalisi ed estensione di *-er* a tutta la flessione dell'imperfetto. Viene ora da chiedersi quale possa essere l'origine del presente 3s senza ausiliare. Un percorso interpretativo che appare inevitabile e forse anche promettente è quello di inquadrare questa innovazione in dinamiche legate al contatto linguistico. Chiare tracce dell'uso del participio presente nel presente e nell'imperfetto sono attestate in alcune varietà iraniche occidentali (Henning 1954, 171-3 sul dialetto tati di Gälin-qaya; cf. anche Lecoq 1989, 258-9 per il talish e altri dialetti occidentali) e se l'innova-

zione in armeno fosse antica (1° millennio) il contatto con le lingue iraniche nord-occidentali potrebbe aver avuto un ruolo. Tuttavia in queste lingue l'uso del solo participio, senza ausiliare, per la 3s del presente non sembra diffuso, e ciò rende poco produttiva una pista iranica per la genesi della 3s senza ausiliare; quanto poi alla cronologia di questa innovazione, essa non deve essere molto antica, tanto che il dialetto di Hadrut', trapiantato nel Łarabał dall'Iran settentrionale circa 200 anni fa, non sembra recarne traccia. Per queste ragioni credo sia preferibile esplorare dinamiche di contatto più recenti.

Ora, dopo un lungo bilinguismo con le lingue iraniche nord-occidentali, le varietà armene parlate nel nord dell'Iran e nel sud-est dell'Armenia hanno conosciuto dall'inizio del secondo millennio un lungo periodo di profondo bilinguismo con varietà turciche, specialmente con il turco azeri. In questa e in altre varietà turciche, la 3s è sempre una forma a marca zero, mentre le altre persone presentano desinenze chiaramente connesse con il verbo 'essere' (cf. tab. 10).

Tabella 10 Flessione del verbo *düyмək* 'legare' e del verbo 'essere' in turco azeri (<y> = /j/, <ü> = /y/, <ə> = /æ/)

Presente indicativo		
	düyмək 'legare'	verbo 'essere' dopo <ü>
1s	*düy-ür-əm* 'lego'	*əm* 'sono'
2s	*düy-ür-sən*	*sən*
3s	*düy-ür-Ø*	*dür*
1pl	*düy-ür-ük*	*ük*
2pl	*düy-ür-sünüz*	*sünüz*
3pl	*düy-ür-lər*	*dür(lər)*

Anche se si ammette il percorso illustrato nella tabella 9, la nuova flessione dell'imperfetto nel dialetto armeno di Urmia necessiterebbe di un innesco che porti a rianalizzare la 3s come una forma a marca zero, tale innesco potrebbe ragionevolmente essere costituito dal contatto con il turco azeri. Il profondo e diffuso bilinguismo con varietà turciche potrebbe aver semplicemente incrementato presso i parlanti armeni l'uso di una forma participiale con marca zero nella 3s dell'indicativo presente e aver così creato le condizioni del mutamento; è da prendere in considerazione anche l'ipotesi che il bilinguismo con varietà turciche possa aver favorito un'interpretazione univerbata *kapeˈli* 'lega' di un antico allotropo del tipo *kapeˈli i* (< **kapelis ē*), in maniera identica a quanto si trova nel dialetto di Marała (per l'univerbazione non solo della 3s, ma anche di tutte le altre persone del presente in questo dialetto cf. Davtʿyan 1966, 157 che aggiorna i dati di Ačaŕyan 1926); tuttavia questa possibilità spinge verso scenari difficili da ricostruire, in quanto a Urmia da **kapelis e* ci

aspetteremmo **ka'pes i* per la distribuzione degli allomorfi esposta più sopra, mentre l'ipotesi di un mutamento **kapei'lis ē* > **kapei'lis i* > **kapei'li i* > *kape'li* implicherebbe il dileguo di *-s* tra vocali uguali, un mutamento che non trova riscontri indipendenti. In attesa di eventuali nuovi percorsi euristici, il confronto con il dialetto di Marała rimane interessante, ma non sembra offrire elementi decisivi per l'interpretazione della flessione verbale di Urmia.

Un caso studiato qualche anno fa da Mark Janse tratta in dettaglio un esempio di generalizzazione della 3s come tema verbale della flessione (Janse 2009) in una varietà linguistica da secoli in contatto con il turco. Nel greco di Cappadocia alcuni dialetti mostrano nell'imperfetto del verbo 'essere' e, più in generale, nell'imperfetto del medio-passivo, una flessione fortemente innovativa, che può essere spiegata con la legge di Watkins. Si confronti ad esempio il dialetto greco di Aksó (Dawkins 1916, 140-2 e Janse 2009, 101-2 che propone paradigmi aggiornati sui dati di Mavrochalyvídis, Kesísoglu 1960), in cui le diverse persone (enclitiche) del verbo 'essere' e del verbo *'erume* 'venire' (gr. ant. e gr. mod. ἔρχομαι) sono flesse come nella tabella 11:

Tabella 11 Flessione del verbo 'essere' e del verbo 'venire' nel dialetto greco di Aksó

Aksó	**'essere' (enclitico)**		**'venire'**	
	Presente	**Imperfetto**	**Presente**	**Imperfetto**
1s	-me	-çton-me	'eru-me	e'ru-ton-me
2s	-se	-çton-se	'ere-se	e'ru-ton-se
3s	-n(e)	-çton	'ere-te	e'ru-ton
1pl	-meste	-çton-meste	e'ru-meste	e'ru-ton-meste
2pl	-ste	-çton-ste	'ere-ste	e'ru-ton-ste
3pl	-nde	-çtan	'eru-nde	e'ru-tan

In questo dialetto le prime e seconde persone singolari e plurali dell'imperfetto sono chiaramente rimodellate a partire dalla 3s *-çton*/*e'ruton* rianalizzata come una forma a marca zero. Il fatto risulta particolarmente evidente se si opera un confronto con dialetti greci d'Anatolia più conservativi, come quello di Araván, che nell'imperfetto per le forme enclitiche del verbo 'essere' ha *-mun*, *-sun*, *-tun*, *-meste*, *-ste*, *-san* (Dawkins 1916, 148) e per la flessione medio-passiva *-omun*, *-osun*, *-otun*, *-omeste*, *-oste*, *-osan* (142). Nel dialetto di Aksó alle forme di 3s, rianalizzate come forme a marca zero, sono state aggiunte le desinenze del presente, reinterpretate come morfemi solo di persona e numero, ormai svuotati di ogni contenuto di tempo. Secondo Janse (2009, 100-3), il bilinguismo col turco, che come le altre lingue turciche, ha la 3s a marca zero (cf. tab. 12), può aver rappresentato l'innesco di questa innovazione morfologica nell'imperfetto del greco di Aksó.

Tabella 12 Flessione dei verbi 'essere' e 'venire' in turco di Turchia (<y> = /j/, <I> = [i, ɯ, y, u] a seconda dell'armonia vocalica, <E> = [e, a] a seconda dell'armonia vocalica)

	'essere'		'venire'	
	Presente	**Imperfetto**	**Presente**	**Imperfetto**
1s	*-Im*	*(i)-dI-m*	*gel-iyor-um*	*gel-iyor-du-m*
2s	*-sIn*	*(i)-dI-n*	*gel-iyor-sun*	*gel-iyor-du-n*
3s	*-Ø*	*(i)-dI-Ø*	*gel-iyor-Ø*	*gel-iyor-du-Ø*
1p	*-Iz*	*(i)-dI-k*	*gel-iyor-uz*	*gel-iyor-du-k*
2pl	*-sInIz*	*(i)-dI-nIz*	*gel-iyor-sunuz*	*gel-iyor-du-nuz*
3pl	*-lEr*	*(i)-dI-lEr*	*gel-iyor-lar*	*gel-iyor-du-lar*

La flessione verbale del dialetto greco di Aksó offre però in altri tempi del verbo uno spunto di confronto con gli esiti di Urmia che è ancora più notevole, in quanto strutturalmente più specifico, e che rende ancora più plausibile una spiegazione esogena per le forme armene esaminate. Si confronti nella tabella 13 la flessione medio-passiva (vb. *'lino* 'sciogliere', gr. mod. λύνω, gr. ant. λύω) di presente, imperfetto, aoristo, piuccheperfetto, futuro e potenziale passato (in origine un futuro anteriore) quale è documentata da Mavrochalyvídis e Kesísoglu (1960, 75):

Tabella 13 Flessione medio-passiva del verbo *'lino* 'sciogliere' nel dialetto greco di Aksó

Aksó	**Presente**	**Imperfetto**	**Aoristo**	**Piuccheperfetto**	**Futuro**	**Potenziale passato**
1s	'linume	li'notonme	'lixa	'lixa **çton**	na li'xo	na li'xo **çton**
2s	'linuse	li'notonse	'lixes	'lixes **ton**	na li'xis	na li'xis **ton**
3s	'linete	li'noton	'lixe	'lixen **don**	na li'xi	na li'xi **çton**
1pl	'linumeste	li'notonmeste	'lixam	'lixam **don**	na li'xum	na li'xum **don**
2pl	'lineste	li'notonste	'lixet	'lixet **ton**	na li'xit	na li'xit **ton**
3pl	'linunde	li'notan	'lixan	'lixan **don**	na li'xun	na li'xun **don**

Anche qui si nota come un'interpretazione della 3s dell'imperfetto (*li'noton*) come forma a marca zero abbia probabilmente favorito la promozione di tale forma a base per le altre persone dell'imperfetto, e ciò è avvenuto parallelamente e forse in sinergia con l'analogo fenomeno osservato nel verbo 'essere'. Ma l'analogia strutturale più interessante con il dialetto di Urmia si osserva nel piuccheperfetto e nel potenziale passato. Questi due tempi infatti sono formati a partire rispettivamente dall'aoristo e dal futuro mediante un clitico che, al di là della superficiale variazione allomorfica tra *çton*, *ton e don*, corrisponde alla 3s clitica dell'imperfetto del verbo 'essere'. Te-

nuto conto che il cosiddetto 'potenziale passato' (δυνητική οριστική) procede da una formazione di futuro anteriore, si può affermare che anche nel dialetto greco di Aksó il verbo 'essere' all'imperfetto 3s va a costituire un morfema di *remoteness* che muta l'aoristo in piuccheperfetto e il futuro in futuro anteriore (> potenziale passato). Lo schema risente fortemente del modello flessivo del turco, con cui il dialetto di Aksó è in contatto da secoli. Se consideriamo infatti il piuccheperfetto del turco standard e letterario (tabella 14, varianti 1 e 2) si può osservare come esso sia formato da una forma nominale del verbo al passato definito addizionata della forma piena o clitica dell'imperfetto del verbo 'essere', flessa per persona e numero (*idim*/*-ydim*, *idin*/*-ydin*, *idi*/*-ydi*, *idik*/*-ydik*, *idiniz*/*-ydiniz*, *idiler*/*-ydiler*). In varietà non standard tuttavia è ammesso anche un diverso ordine dei morfemi di persona e di tempo (tab. 14, variante 3, cf. Wells 1880, 48; Kissling 1960, 71; Adamović 1985, 222-4; Göksel, Kerslake 2005, §§ 8.4 e 21.2.1; Laszakovits 2018, 138).

Tabella 14 Flessione del passato definito e del piuccheperfetto del verbo *gelmek* 'venire' nel turco di Turchia

	Passato definito	**Piuccheperfetto**		
		variante 1	**variante 2**	**variante 3**
1s	*gel-di-m 'venni'*	*gel-di i-di-m* 'ero, fui venuto'	*gel-di-ydi-m*	*gel-di-m (i)-di*
2s	*gel-di-n*	*gel-di i-di-n*	*gel-di-ydi-n*	*gel-di-n (i)-di*
3s	*gel-di-Ø*	*gel-di i-di-Ø*	*gel-di-ydi-Ø*	*gel-di-Ø (i)-di*
1p	*gel-di-k*	*gel-di i-di-k*	*gel-di-ydi-k*	*gel-di-k (i)-di*
2pl	*gel-di-niz*	*gel-di i-di-niz*	*gel-di-ydi-niz*	*gel-di-niz (i)-di*
3pl	*gel-di-ler*	*gel-di i-di-ler*	*gel-di-ydi-ler*	*gel-di-ler (i)-di*

Nella variante 1 del piuccheperfetto una forma di 3s a marca zero fa da forma nominale del verbo al passato e a essa vengono aggiunte le forme piene flesse dell'imperfetto di 'essere'; nella variante 2 lo schema è analogo, ma le forme flesse del verbo 'essere' sono agglutinate. Nella variante 3 le forme flesse del passato definito sono tutte seguite dalla 3s piena dell'imperfetto del verbo 'essere' (*idi*) o dalla sua forma ridotta e legata (*-di*). Nel piuccheperfetto del dialetto di Aksó troviamo dunque un calco perfetto della variante 3 dello schema flessivo turco. La situazione è del tutto analoga per il cosiddetto 'potenziale passato' di Aksó, la cui formazione è basata sul futuro addizionato dell'imperfetto 3s del verbo 'essere' e assume valore di condizionale passato. Anche in questo caso si trova un parallelo perfetto nel turco, che forma un condizionale passato strutturalmente analogo, anteriorizzando il futuro mediante le stesse strategie viste per il piuccheperfetto rispetto al passato definito (Kissling 1960, 78-9). Per quanto riguarda l'imperfetto invece, il greco di Aksó non presenta il

morfema di *remoteness* in coda alla flessione, ma il medesimo morfema, nella variante (legata) *-ton(-)*, precede il morfema di persona e numero. In effetti nelle descrizioni del turco di Turchia una formazione completa dell'imperfetto con *idi* posto dopo i morfemi di persona e numero non viene registrata, tuttavia si può ricordare come almeno la 3s *geliyor idi* 'veniva' e la 3pl *geliyorlar idi* 'venivano' siano ben documentate, soprattutto per l'epoca ottomana (Kissling 1960, 80; Adamović 1985, 227). La somiglianza tra le innovazioni strutturali nel sistema verbale di Aksó e quello di Urmia sono veramente notevoli. Allo stesso tempo però si deve rilevare che a Urmia l'uso di un morfema di *remoteness* dopo il morfema di persona e numero appare ancora più pervasivo e coinvolge anche l'imperfetto. La notevole somiglianza tra i due sistemi verbali porta a chiedersi se anche nel caso del dialetto armeno di Urmia il contatto con varietà turciche non possa aver innescato qualcosa di più del semplice favorire un'interpretazione della 3s dell'imperfetto come forma a marca zero.

Come nel turco di Turchia, anche in turco azeri c'è la possibilità di collocare alcuni ausiliari (eventualmente cliticizzati) in forma invariabile dopo i morfemi di persona-numero (cf. von Gabain 1963b, 198 per il condizionale *(i)-sə*; Zaslansky 2019, 42-4 per l'evidenziale *(i)-miş* che può anche avere letture anteriorizzanti). Il fenomeno non è generalmente oggetto di attenzione nelle descrizioni del turco azeri, forse più orientate a rappresentare varietà prestigiose e standard, e senz'altro meriterebbe ulteriori ricerche sul campo. Dal momento che forme con ausiliari invariabili postposti alle forme flesse occorrono sia in turco di Turchia, sia in turco azeri, si potrebbe pensare che questa opzione rappresenti un tratto di ampia diffusione nel ramo oghuz occidentale. Non ne mancano tuttavia evidenze anche in varietà turciche antiche (ante XI sec., cf. von Gabain 1963a, 23, con qualche ipotesi sulle eventuali sfumature semantiche delle due possibilità) e in varietà periferiche come il noghay (Karakoç 2005), il che configurerebbe il tratto come un'opzione di lunga persistenza cronologica e probabilmente di non trascurabile diffusione geografica nel *continuum* turcico.

Di fronte a questi fatti non pare dunque peregrino pensare che il sistema verbale innovativo del dialetto armeno di Urmia, come quello di Aksó, possa essersi originato per calco strutturale della flessione turcica, che può esprimere con forme ausiliarie posposte del tipo *idi* e *imiş* le opposizioni di anteriorità (cf. Schönig 1998, 256). In altre parole, nel dialetto di Urmia la formazione dell'imperfetto, del piuccheperfetto e del futuro anteriore e di altri tempi caratterizzati da un morfema di *remoteness* sarebbe stata esemplata su un modello turcico in cui una forma a marca zero dell'imperfetto del verbo 'essere' poteva essere collocata alla fine di una forma flessa per anteriorizzarla. Il morfema *-eɾ* di *remoteness* di Urmia è anch'esso in origine – è bene ricordarlo – una 3s dell'imperfetto di 'essere' e po-

trebbe dunque rappresentare la replica armena di una forma turcica del tipo *idi*, *imiş*, anch'esse 3s dell'imperfetto del verbo 'essere'. L'espansione di questa strategia ad altri tempi e modi armeni (tra cui probabilmente anche l'imperfetto quale un modello turcico con *idi* o *imiş* posposto a tutte le persone non è documentato dalle descrizioni grammaticali disponibili se non alla 3s e 3pl) potrebbe essere anche frutto di una generalizzazione interna. In tal senso appare interessante il confronto con il dialetto armeno parlato a Kʿesab (Siria nord-occidentale, cf. Čʿolakʿean 2009): in questo dialetto il piuccheperfetto presenta la formazione innovativa [aoristo (cioè passato definito) + morfema di *remoteness* posposto] con chiara riproduzione della struttura turca con *idi* posposto, mentre nell'imperfetto il morfema di *remoteness*, che è anche qui *-eɾ(-)* con l'allomorfo *jeɾ*, è posto prima delle desinenza di persona e numero, esattamente come accade per turco *(i)-di*, cf. aoristo *dzari*ˈ*ts*^{h}*a* 'curai' vs piuccheperfetto *dzari*ˈ*ts*^{h}*a* ***jeɾ*** 'avevo, ebbi curato', ma presente *hadza*ˈ*rim* 'curo' vs imperfetto *hadzar****e***ˈ***ɾ****em* 'curavo' (Scala in stampa). A Kʿesab il calco è stato totalmente coerente col modello turco. Altri dialetti armeni ancora presentano innovazioni concernenti l'espressione della *remoteness* che può essere utile richiamare per la loro notevole adesione al modello turco: nel dialetto armeno di Beylan (Turchia, nell'entroterra di Alessandretta), il morfema di *remoteness* è *di* (Łaribyan 1953, 421-3) e in quello di Haǰən (Turchia, provincia di Adana) troviamo *idi* (Greppin, Khachaturian 1986, 57-8). In questi casi si è avuto addirittura il prestito di quel morfema di *remoteness* che probabilmente ha fatto da modello per l'innovativo morfema *-eɾ(-)*/*jeɾ* di Kʿesab e *-eɾ* di Urmia.

8 Dimensioni esogene e dimensioni endogene: un bilancio

Le evidenze provenienti da altri dialetti armeni, nonché dal greco di Aksó, spingono a considerare il contatto come un fattore molto importante nel sorgere del morfema *-eɾ* a Urmia. In tutte queste varietà citate infatti la presenza di un morfema dedicato all'espressione della sola *remoteness* appare in dipendenza da un modello turcico, come sembrano indicare chiaramente la distribuzione di tale morfema ad Aksó e Kʿesab (in posizione finale nel piuccheperfetto, prima delle desinenze di persone e numero nell'imperfetto) e il prestito del morfema *(i)-di* a Beylan e Haǰən. La pista esogena dunque pare adeguata per spiegare ad esempio anche il nuovo piuccheperfetto di Urmia. Nell'imperfetto invece, in mancanza di modelli turcici persuasivi se non per la 3s e 3pl, è forse più prudente pensare a fenomeni di espansione nelle varie persone del morfema *-eɾ*. Se si segue questa pista esogena, proposta in § 7, attribuendo un ruolo forte al contatto, la reinterpretazione della 3s come forma a marca zero non costituisce più il cardine unico del processo di rifacimento del sistema

verbale del dialetto armeno di Urmia e l'imperfetto non sarebbe più il punto di partenza assoluto dell'innovazione.

La pista endogena ricostruita in § 5 rimane complessivamente possibile, ma, come spiegazione unica, appare forse poco economica, in quanto supporrebbe un processo che si troverebbe isolato nella lunga storia di contatto tra armeno e turco, mentre percorsi quasi identici in altri dialetti armeni (e greci) mostrano chiaramente di dipendere dal lungo bilinguismo con varietà turciche, che tanti segni ha lasciato anche sul lessico e la fonologia di molti dialetti armeni. In ogni caso anche il mutamento ipotizzato in § 5 avrebbe bisogno di un innesco che giustifichi l'uso della 3s del presente indicativo senza ausiliare, cioè come forma a marca zero. Solo così il processo illustrato nella tabella 9 può aver preso avvio. E anche in questo caso il ruolo del bilinguismo con lingue turciche appare molto probabile, in quanto le forme della 3s nelle lingue turciche sono sempre a marca zero. A questo punto la pressione del modello turcico deve essere considerata la forza fondamentale che, agendo eventualmente anche in punti diversi del sistema, ha portato alla nascita del nuovo morfema *-eɾ* di *remoteness* nel dialetto di Urmia. Eventuali processi endogeni, quali quelli prospettati in § 5, possono aver solo coagito o cospirato, in una sorta di causalità multipla (Thomason, Kaufamn 1988, 57), verso la nuova forma di codifica di questo tratto di tempo.

Guardando all'esito finale, ciò che si osserva oggi a Urmia è una struttura della flessione verbale più trasparente sia dal punto di vista morfotattico che morfosemantico, in cui il tratto di *remoteness* appare espresso sempre con una strategia agglutinante. Tutto ciò rappresenta un'evidente convergenza con la tipologia morfologica delle equivalenti forme verbali turciche, di cui viene anche in parte riprodotta la catena morfica specifica di alcuni tempi. Si potrebbe dunque assumere anche per la morfologia ciò che è stato rilevato altrove per il livello fonologico (Scala 2018): qualunque analisi diacronica che riguardi innovazioni strutturali nei dialetti armeni moderni difficilmente può prescindere dalla considerazione del secolare bilinguismo turcico-armeno, probabile input, co-input o catalizzatore di numerosi mutamenti.

9 La posizione di *-eɾ* nella catena morfica: questioni di ordine dei morfemi tra tipologia e storia

Al termine di questo percorso, chi voglia riflettere sulle strutture linguistiche come prodotto complesso della storia e della mente dei parlanti non può esimersi dal notare come lo schema flessivo innovativo dell'imperfetto e negli altri tempi contenenti un morfema di *remoteness* del dialetto di Urmia presenti aspetti interessanti anche dal punto di vista tipologico. Esso infatti può essere considerato tipologicamente alquanto inusuale, in quanto colloca un morfema di flessione inerente (tempo) più lontano dalla base lessicale rispetto ai morfemi di flessione contestuale (persona e numero). Naturalmente la stessa osservazione si potrebbe proporre anche per i dialetti armeni di Karčevan, Agulis, Marała e altri ancora, nonché, limitatamente ad alcuni tempi, per il dialetto greco di Aksó, che mostrano organizzazioni strutturali simili a quelle viste a Urmia.

Già Joseph Greenberg aveva toccato il problema dell'ordine dei morfemi inerenti e contestuali per la flessione nominale e nel suo universale 39 affermava che:

> Where morphemes of both number and case are present and both follow or both precede the noun base, the expression of number almost always comes between the noun base and the expression of case. (Greenberg 1963, 95)

Pur con grande prudenza («almost always») Greenberg ipotizzava dunque che nel nome un morfema di valore contestuale, come il caso, sia generalmente più lontano dalla base lessicale del morfema che esprime un valore inerente, come il numero. Ovviamente categorie inerenti e categorie contestuali sono diversi nel nome e nel verbo, in quanto classi lessicali con proprietà sintattiche molto diverse (Thornton 2005, 51-4).

Joan Bybee, che ha dedicato la sua attenzione specificamente all'ordine dei morfemi nella morfologia verbale, afferma che nel verbo le categorie flessive contestuali come numero e persona, governate dalla sintassi dell'accordo e sostanzialmente determinate nei loro valori dai tratti del soggetto, sono meno rilevanti per la base lessicale del verbo, ovverossia ne modificano meno la dimensione semantica. Il parametro della *rilevanza*, posto dalla Bybee al centro della propria analisi sull'espressione dei contenuti flessivi (Bybee 1985, 13-19), può essere sintetizzato come la ricaduta che il contenuto semantico di un elemento ha sul contenuto semantico di un altro elemento con cui intrattiene una relazione. In riferimento alla flessione verbale la rilevanza riguarda la misura in cui un certo contenuto flessivo va a modificare il contenuto espresso dalla base lessicale di un verbo. Secondo la Bybee categorie flessive come l'aspetto, il modo

e il tempo sono molto più rilevanti nel verbo di quanto non lo siano numero e persona. Questi ultimi infatti non si riferiscono alla situazione descritta dal verbo, ma a un argomento del verbo e rimandano quindi ai partecipanti al processo descritto dal verbo e non allo svolgersi del processo stesso. Partendo dall'osservazione che i morfemi derivazionali, di altissima rilevanza per il morfema lessicale di cui modificano la semantica in modo assai evidente, tanto da creare una nuova base lessicale, sono generalmente più vicini al morfema lessicale dei morfemi flessivi, la Bybee propone che la rilevanza sia un parametro capace di predire l'ordine dei morfemi anche quando questi siano tutti di natura flessiva (Bybee 1985, 33-4). Nel verbo dunque i morfemi che esprimono categorie estroverse ed eterodeterminate, come numero e persona, saranno normalmente collocati in posizione più periferica nella catena morfica. Mentre le categorie che esprimono valori inerenti, cioè indipendenti, almeno nelle proposizioni principali, dalla sintassi, come valenza, diatesi, aspetto, tempo e modo, vanno a incidere in maniera più significativa sulla semantica del processo verbale e ci si aspetta perciò che siano posizionate più vicine alla base del verbo. Con riferimento specificamente alla categoria del tempo, la Bybee, esplorando un campione di 50 lingue, cita solo il navaho come esempio di lingua in cui i morfemi di tempo sono più lontani dalla base lessicale di quelli di persona (Bybee 1985, 35).

Anche la cosiddetta teoria della Split-Morphology affronta il tema dell'ordine dei morfemi. Secondo questo modello i morfemi derivazionali devono sempre esse più vicini al morfema lessicale di quelli flessivi, essendo i primi pertinenti al lessico e i secondi alla sintassi (Perlmutter 1988; Anderson 1982; 1988; 1992); in altre parole, secondo questa ipotesi derivazione e flessione sono assegnati a moduli diversi della grammatica. Non mancano tuttavia nelle lingue del mondo controesempi a questa assunzione forte (Booij 1994, 36-9; Thornton 2005, 103-8). Una versione debole della teoria potrebbe distinguere tra morfemi flessivi inerenti (più simili alla derivazione) e morfemi flessivi contestuali governati dalla sintassi (Booij 1994, 28-31 e 2002, 19-20; Thornton 2005, 108). In questa prospettiva i morfemi inerenti sarebbero scelti dal parlante e sarebbero più vicini alla base verbale di quelli contestuali imposti dall'accordo. Secondo poi il cosiddetto 'mirror principle', l'ordine dei morfemi in una parola sarebbe parallelo all'ordine in cui essi sono aggiunti nella derivazione sintattica (Baker 1985, 375) e nella derivazione sintattica gli ultimi morfemi aggiunti sarebbero proprio i morfemi di flessione contestuale.

Controesempi a queste generalizzazioni riguardanti l'ordine dei morfemi flessivi sono stati ben evidenziati per la flessione del nome; si confrontino a titolo di esempio i *marker* di possesso, sicuramente inerenti, collocati dopo morfemi di flessione contestuale, come il caso, in finlandese cf. '*koulu-j-a-mme* ['scuola' - plurale - caso partitivo - possessivo 1pl] '(delle) nostre scuole' e in armeno occidentale

zinvoɾ-ne'ɾ-e-s ['soldato' - plurale - caso ablativo - possessivo 1s] 'dai miei soldati'. Tuttavia, stando all'esplorazione interlinguistica della Bybee (1985, 33-5), i controesempi nella flessione verbale sembrerebbero essere piuttosto rari. In questo senso il dialetto di Urmia, insieme con gli altri dialetti armeni citati sopra, sembra fornire evidenze empiriche interessanti. In verità, allargando un po' la prospettiva, si possono aggiungere ai casi armeni altri esempi di ordine dei morfemi in cui categorie inerenti, e quindi in teoria più rilevanti, come tempo e aspetto, si trovano più lontane dalla base verbale rispetto ai morfemi di numero e persona. Limitandoci alle lingue dell'oriente indeuropeo si potrebbero citare i seguenti esempi:

a. rājasthānī: cf. in malvī *mar-ū̃-gā* ['colpire' - 1s - futuro] con *-gā* da ai. *gata* participio passato di *gam-* 'andare'; in marwaṛī *mar-ū̃-lā* ['colpire' - 1s - futuro] con *-lā* da ai. *lāta*, participio passato di *lā-* 'prendere' (cf. LSI IX,2, 58 e 27; Bloch 1920, § 240; 1965, 287-8; Masica 1991, 288-91).
b. romaní (gli esempi qui dati sono dal dialetto kalderašitska, ma si tratta di una situazione ubiquitaria): cf. *phen-av* ['dire' - presente 1s] > 'dico' vs *phen-av-as* ['dire'- presente 1s - *remoteness*] > 'dicevo' (Matras 2002, 152-3). Il morfema *-as* è generalmente etimologizzato come un continuatore dell'antico indoario *āsīt* 'era' (Bloch 1932, 49; Matras 2002, 154; una ricostruzione più dettagliata in Scala 2020).
c. sogdiano (VI-VIII secolo): *šaw-ām-skun* 'sto andando' ['andare'+ 1s + asp. progressivo]; *βaxš-ām-kām* 'darò' ['dare'+ 1s + futuro] (Yoshida 2009, 300)
d. corasmio (XIII-XIV secolo): *aβ-i-kām* 'diventerai' ['diventare'+ 2s + futuro] (Durkin-Meisterernst 2009, 355-6)
e. curdo kurmanji: *ket-im* 'io caddi' ['cadere' passato -1s] vs *ket-im-e* 'io sono caduto, sono per terra' ['cadere' passato -1s - aspetto perfettivo] (Bedir Khan, Lescot 1970, 136-7)

Altri casi ancora si potrebbero aggiungere attingendo ad altre tradizioni linguistiche.[3]

Alla luce delle evidenze armene discusse nelle pagine precedenti e dei casi indo-arii e iranici qui sopra elencati, si potrebbe osservare come eventuali teorie o approcci che non prevedano che un morfema inerente possa essere più periferico di un morfema contestuale, appaiano poco sensibili alla dimensione storica delle lingue. Di fatto processi di innovazione morfologica mediante grammaticalizzazione, che allungano la catena morfica, possono aggiungere nuovi morfemi solo alla periferia della parola morfosintattica. Allo stes-

3 Cf. ad es. le riflessioni di Benincà 1999 e Baglioni, Abete 2018 sull'ordine dei morfemi in alcuni dialetti italo-romanzi settentrionali

so modo anche fenomeni di rianalisi e diffusione nel paradigma di morfemi possono dare luogo a incrementi nella periferia della catena morfica. Per questo, in una lingua con flessione di numero e persona nel verbo, l'agglutinazione di un elemento che reca informazioni di tempo come nell'armeno di Urmia (e nella rājasthānī, nel sogdiano, nel corasmio e nella romaní) porterà a un incremento morfico in una posizione necessariamente più periferica rispetto ai morfemi di flessione contestuale. Processi di questo tipo sono empiricamente ben documentabili e i percorsi con cui si può arrivare a tali esiti di agglutinazione sono sicuramente più di uno. Il caso del morfema di *remoteness* nel dialetto armeno di Urmia rappresenterà dunque solo una delle possibili dinamiche morfogene che danno luogo a ordini dei morfemi meno comuni.

Come è noto però, nei sistemi morfologici la dialettica tra storia e esigenze strutturali a base cognitiva costituisce una linea di tensione che costantemente opera nella trasformazione della grammatica. Se l'agglutinazione di forme un tempo libere costituisce un processo fortemente storico nella sua linearità, l'iconicità morfologica di porre vicino alla base lessicale ciò che è per essa più rilevante è un'istanza di tipo cognitivo da non trascurare. In rari casi questa seconda spinta innesca ulteriori mutamenti, che rimodellano l'ordine dei morfemi, ristabilendo una maggiore perifericità della flessione contestuale rispetto a quella inerente. Un esempio storicamente sicuro di questo processo, che possiamo chiamare di esternalizzazione della flessione, si può trovare nel georgiano moderno *rame* 'qualcosa' che conosce tre forme di dativo *ra-s-me* (cf. georgiano antico *ra-sa-me*, *ra-s-me*, Marr, Brière 1931, 295-6; Fähnrich 2012, 123-4), *ra-s-me-s* e *ra-me-s* con progressiva esternalizzazione del morfema di caso *-s*(-) rispetto a quello di indefinitezza *-me* (Haspelmath 1993, 280). Attraverso una fase di duplicazione del morfema di caso (*ra-s-me-s*), con segnalazione multipla del contenuto di 'dativo', si è poi giunti a un ordine dei morfemi *ra-me-s* in cui il dativo (*-s*) si trova a occupare una posizione più periferica rispetto al *marker* di indefinitezza (*-me-*), che un tempo lo seguiva.

Dunque ordini dei morfemi ritenuti statisticamente poco comuni nascono senza grandi ostacoli nelle lingue del mondo, e questo è successo anche a Urmia, verosimilmente con il contributo del contatto con varietà turciche, che già presentavano sequenze morfematiche rare. Talora poi a tali ordini può essere applicata una sorta di 'terapia morfologica' che li modifica secondo principi evidentemente rilevanti nell'organizzazione cognitiva dei parlanti, e un esempio di tale processo lo si è osservato nel georgiano moderno. In tutto ciò però non c'è nulla di necessario: sia l'ordine dei morfemi nell'imperfetto di Urmia, sia l'evoluzione della flessione di *ra-me* in georgiano moderno non sono altro che frutti giunti a maturazione di una delle infinite possibili interazioni tra mente, sistema e storia nella vicenda delle

lingue. In questi processi di segno opposto si manifesta ancora una volta in modo chiaro la complessità delle spinte cognitive, sistemiche e socio-storiche che agitano i sistemi linguistici (Lazzeroni 2018, 151) e che sanciscono la sostanziale impredicibilità dei mutamenti.

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Notes on Musical Imagery in the Poetry of Jāmi

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Abstract The poet Nur-al-Din ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān Jāmi (1414-92) is known to have been proficient in music theory; he also wrote a *Resāla-ye musiqi* (Treatise on Music Theory). In his poems he displayed an extensive and precise use of musical terms. To probe further into the elements of musical imagery, I scanned through his *maṯnavis Haft awrang* (The Seven Thrones) in search of lines dedicated to musical modes, instruments, and performers. Considering that musical imagery had a long-established tradition before his time, I pursued a comparative investigation and commented on some lines by way of examples. Finally, I argue that literary conventions shaped Jāmi's poetry more than his expertise in music theory did.

Keywords Nur-al-Din ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān Jāmi. Persian poetry. Resāla-ye musiqi. Musical instruments. Poetic imagery.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Method. – 2.1 Musical Modes. – 2.2 Musical Instruments. – 2.3 Performers. – 3 Conclusion.

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1 Introduction[1]

Music is commonly perceived as one of the main sources of imagery in poetry. We may recall many Persian lines where events, persons, or things appear to be in some way related to music. Performances, singers, musical instruments, musical patterns are all part of the rich Persian poetic imagery. Although it is generally acknowledged that some pre-modern Persian poets made a wider use of musical imagery than others, only a limited number of studies have hitherto considered the importance of music in the works of single poets and a comprehensive picture of musical imagery from a comparative point of view has not yet been outlined.

In this paper, I provide some notes on musical imagery in the poetry of Nur-al-Din ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān Ebn Aḥmad Jāmi (1414-92). Jāmi wrote a vast number of poems. He composed three *divān*s (collected poems) and seven long poems in the form of *maṯnavi* (poem with rhyming couplets) collectively known as *Haft awrang* (The Seven Thrones, or The Constellation of the Great Bear). He is known to have been proficient in music theory (*ʿelm-e musiqi*), and he displays an extensive and precise use of musical terms. Considering that Jāmi used musical technical terms to convey poetic imagery, and that musical imagery had a long-established tradition before his time, it seemed promising to pursue a comparative investigation of his poetical works.

As well as a poet, Jāmi was also a polymath well versed in the study of most disciplines of his time. He authored numerous prose works covering a wide range of topics. In this context it is worth mentioning his *Resāla-ye musiqi* (Treatise on Music Theory) (Jāmi 2000, 171-220). The book deals with music theory according to the principles of the traditional discipline called *ʿelm-e musiqi* (science of music). It covers both the modal (*ta'lif*) and the rhythmic (*iqāʿ*) systems of Persian music. It has been described as a summary of earlier works drawing from the Systematist tradition of musical theory with strong connections to the works of Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Urmawī (1216-94) and ʿAbd-al-Qādir al-Marāġī (d. 1435) (Baily 1988, 14).

His treatise should be understood in the context of the cultural policy of the Timurid court of Solṭān Ḥosayn Bāyqarā (1438-1506). The famous vizier ʿAli-Šir Navā'i (1441-1501) promoted the writing of several works on the science of music. As he reported in his own writings, he had enrolled in the task four music masters of the time

1 I am very grateful to Mohsen Ashtiany for his helpful suggestions and comments on this paper. Thanks also go to the reviewers for their feedback. I thank Giovanni De Zorzi for inviting me to speak on the subject of Jāmi and music at the symposium on *Music and Culture from Herat to Istanbul*, which he convened at the University of Venice Ca' Foscari on 21 March 2017, where a first draft of this research was presented.

before turning to his close friend Jāmi (see the passage quoted by Sumits 2016, 132). In the introduction to *Resāla-ye musiqi*, Jāmi states that the study of music theory was part of his early education. He had, however, neglected the topic for many years until he received a request to write a treatise on it (Jāmi 2000, 182). He completed *Resāla-ye musiqi* on the first of Rajab 890/July 1485 (Dānešpažuh 1970, 14) when he was over seventy years old. To Navā'i's satisfaction, the treatise turned out to be a valuable work written in a simple, straightforward prose. Whether it was due to the lucidity of the contents, or the patronage of Navā'i, and the prestige of Jāmi himself, the *Resāla-ye musiqi* maintained its favourable reputation among scholars for centuries.

Since theory and practice are not necessarily two sides of the same coin, whether Jāmi actually played music remains unknown, although ethnomusicologists have posed the question on several occasions. In the absence of biographical data, scholars have offered different answers according to their different evaluation of the gap between theory and practice (Baily 1988, 15). Yad-ollāh Bahmani Moṭlaq and Moḥammad Reżā Sām Ḵānyāni (2015) investigated the use of a selection of technical musical terms in the three *divān*s of Jāmi. They demonstrated that Jāmi had an advanced knowledge in various subfields connected to music and, above all, he was acquainted with the technical aspects of how a suite should develop. Assuming that the accurate choice of terms adopted by Jāmi must also imply practical skills, they claimed Jāmi to be a poet connoisseur of music theory (*musiqidān*), composer (*āhangsāz*), performer and instrumentalist (*navāzanda*), organologist (*sāzšenās*), singer (*ḵᵛānanda*), or, at least, acquainted with the art of singing (Bahmani Moṭlaq, Sām Ḵānyāni 2015, 66).

Evaluating Jāmi's subtle use of musical imagery exclusively in the light of expertise in music theory or practice has its limitations, as it does not take into consideration the literary heritage and the cultural milieu of Jāmi's poetry. The legacy of poets such as Neẓāmi (1141-1209), Jalāl-al-Din Rumi (1207-73), and Ḥāfeẓ (1315-90) is palpable in Jāmi's poetry. It is partly due to the rewriting of images and themes used by his predecessors that Jāmi's works appears to provide at times a "comprehensive digest of literary convention" (Losensky 2008, 474).

It is also worth noting that Jāmi contributed to the Sufi poetry canon by adopting the finest poetical motifs from the past. He is also noted for being the most significant poet to convey the thoughts of Ibn ʿArabi (1165-1240) in his poetry. At a certain stage in his life, Jāmi entered the Naqšbandi order and joined Sufi circles. The Naqšbandis as a rule did not encourage the practice of *samāʿ*, the Sufi meditative audition. They rather recommended a silent *ḏekr* meditation. As for Jāmi, Hamid Algar remarked that:

> [a] sign of individual preference at variance with Naqšbandi norms was his occasional indulgence in *samāʿ*, ecstatic circular motion to the accompaniment of music and song. (2008, 475)

Jāmi followed, in this respect, the practice of other Sufi orders who advocated the use of music and motion for contemplative purposes, such as the Mevlevi order (Mawlawiya) established by Rumi.

2 Method

To probe further into the elements of musical imagery in Jāmi's poetry, I selected a number of keywords and scanned through Jāmi's *maṯnavi*s in search of lines dedicated to music. My choice of keywords was limited to three areas of investigation: musical modes, instruments, and performers. Occasionally, I widened the research to include noteworthy lines selected from the *divān*s. In this paper I present the results of this preliminary survey on musical imagery and offer a selection of lines by way of examples. Where an appropriate English translation of Jāmi's lines is available, I quote the published translation (with slight editorial adaptations for consistency's sake) with due acknowledgment; otherwise translations are my own.

2.1 Musical Modes

The melodic material of Persian musical tradition passed down from master to pupil for centuries. The core part of music apprenticeship consisted in the memorization of particular arrangements of notes which created the structure of musical modes and their modulations. The term *maqām*, literally 'place, station (of the fingers on the instrument)', conveys the idea of a mode. Words such as *rāh*/*rah* (path), *āhang* (melodic line), and *parda* (key, fret) may convey the same meaning, or almost the same meaning, of the term *maqām*. In *Resāla-ye musiqi*, Jāmi described twelve *maqām* (musical modes), six *āvāza* (secondary scales, secondary melodic modes), and twenty-four *šoʿba* (tertiary scales, subsidiary modes). Jāmi reported the twelve modes names as follows: *ʿoššāq*, *navā*, *bu-salik*, *rāst*, *ḥosayni*, *ḥejāz*, *rāhavi*, *zangula*, *ʿerāq*, *eṣfahān*, *zir-afkand*, and *bozorg* (Jāmi 2000, 193-8). Modes bear meaningful names. They were named after place names, adjectives, or nouns. This feature opened a variety of possible combinations in the frame of a line of poetry as the use to pun on words with multiple meanings is a common rhetorical device in Persian poetry.

In the use of musicians, one mode may follow another in a sort of modulation. Music taste and specific restraints govern whether

one mode harmonises with another. A modulation from *navā* (melody [mode]) to *rāst* (right, straight [mode]) was regarded as outmoded in the Ottoman era, but was fashionable in earlier times (Wright 2019, 82-5). Jāmi mentioned the mode *navā* in combination with the mode *rāst* in the following line, which probably suggests a *navā* to *rāst* trajectory:

بیا مطربا زانکه وقت نواست
بزن این نوا را در آهنگ راست
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 455)

Come O minstrel as it's time for music [*navā*],
select the right mode of playing this melody.

or:

Come O minstrel as it's time for music [*navā*],
play this *navā* in the mode *rāst* [*āhang-e rāst*].

Elsewhere Jāmi combines the names of two musical modes *ʿoššāq* (lovers [mode]) and *rāst* with the word *āvāza*, which means 'song' or, in a technical sense, a 'secondary scale'. As the mode *ʿoššāq* is found to be a modulation of the mode *rāst* (Miller 1999, 103), the following line contains a double meaning:

نمودم ره راست عشّاق را
ز آوازه پر کردم آفاق را
(Jāmi 1999b, vol. 2, 433)

To the lovers (*ʿoššāq*), I've shown the straight path [*rah-e rāst*],
and filled all the horizons with famous songs [*āvāza*].
(Transl. Lewis 2018, 493)

or:

I've shown how the mode of *rāst* modulates to the mode of *ʿoššāq*
and filled all the horizons with a secondary scale [*āvāza*].

Punning on words may result in extremely elaborate lines. In a frequently mentioned couple of lines of a *qaṣida* (long mono-rhyme ode) in praise of Solṭān Ḥosayn Bāyqarā, Jāmi combined the names of six musical modes. In one line he mentioned the modes *ḥosayni*, *ʿoššāq*, and *navā* in addition to the word *maqām*. The line offers three layers of interpretation. The first layer consists in adopting the literal value of the words *maqām* (place), *ḥosayni* (related to Ḥosayn), *ʿoššāq* (lovers), and *navā* (melody). The second layer pertains to musical modes.

The third layer is context-derived and points to the patronage, as the words *ḥosayni* and *navā* were chosen to recall the names of Solṭān Ḥosayn Bāyqarā and his vizier ʿAli-Šir Navāʾi:

هری مقام حسینی لقب شهنشاهیست
که می زنند نوای محبّتش عشّاق
(Jāmi 1999a, 2: 605)

For me the *maqām* (melody; or, place) Ḥosayni deserves the epithet 'royal',
for lovers [*ʿošš̄āq*] constantly sing the melody [*navā*] of his love.
(Transl. Schimmel 1992, 274)

The line that immediately follows makes puns on musical modes *rāst*, *ʿerāq* (Iraq), and *ḥejāz* (Hijaz) to allude to some troubles which Jāmi had experienced in Baghdad:

ازان مقام مکن راست جامیا آهنگ
سوی حجاز که از ساز رفت راه عراق
(Jāmi 1999a, vol. 2, 605)

O Jāmi don't leave that place [*maqām*] [i.e. the court of Solṭān Ḥosayn Bāyqarā] to go straight [*rāst*]
towards Hijaz [*ḥejāz*], as it turned to be the wrong way [when you pursued] the path to Iraq [*rāh-e ʿerāq*].

The same line could be read in a technical sense as:

O Jāmi don't play *rāst* moving from that *maqām* [i.e. mode *ḥosayni*]
to *ḥejāz*, likewise it turned to be out of tune ending it with the mode *ʿerāq*.

Puns on names of the *maqām*s are attested before Jāmi's time. Rumi, whose appreciation for music is well known, frequently punned on the names of musical modes (Schimmel 1980, 215-16). Images connected to modes whose names resemble places, such as *ʿerāq*, *ḥejāz*, or *eṣfahān*, were particularly in vogue among poets. For example, Saʿdi (ca. 1210-1291 or 1292) says: "Apart from Iraq, I do not like any other place. | Oh minstrel, play a melody from the Iraqi musical mode [*parda-ye ʿerāqi*]!"; a couplet from one of Ḥāfeẓ's poems reads: "O minstrel, change your tune [*parda*] and play the melody of Hijaz [*rāh-e ḥejāz*], | as the Friend has gone along this way, without remembering us" (Orsatti 2015, 614). Commenting on some puns on the musical modes *ʿerāq* and *eṣfahān* written by Ḥāfeẓ and Kamāl Ḵojandi (ca. 1320-1401), Dominic P. Brookshaw has noted that:

> Hafiz alludes to the Injuids' control over the city of Isfahan and their ambition to conquer the entirety of ʿIraq-i ʿAjam through punning on the same musical modes […] Kamal Khujandi makes similar use of the dual meaning of these toponyms to suggest the superiority of his Tabrizi poetry over that of ʿIraq-i ʿAjam, while also alluding to its performance to musical accompaniment. (2019, 60)

As for frequency, Jāmi mainly mentions the modes *ʿoššāq*, *navā*, *rāst*, *ḥosayni*, *ḥejāz*, and *ʿerāq* in his poetry. He also seems particularly familiar with modulations. Bahmani Moṭlaq and Sām Ḵānyāni (2015, 58-9) listed further examples of modulations in the three *divān*s by Jāmi and reported that Jāmi mainly referred to modulations across the modes *navā*, *rāst*, and *ḥejāz*. Apparently, of the twelve *maqām*s only those whose names offered him the potential to create a pun found their way into his poetry.

2.2 Musical Instruments

Jāmi mentioned the names of several musical instruments in his poetry: *arḡanun* (pipe organ), *barbaṭ* (short neck lute), *buq* (horn), *čaḡāna* (either a percussion instrument [a castanet or a rattle] or a stringed instrument bowed or plucked), *čang* (harp), *darāy* (bell [appended to the neck of a camel]), *daf* (tambourine, hand-held drum), *dohol* (drum), *jalājel* (jingles), *jaras* (bell [appended to the neck of a camel]), *kamānča* (fiddle spike), *kus* (kettle-drum), *musiqār* (pan flute), *nāqus* (bell [of a monastery]), *nay* (reed flute), *qānun* (plucked psaltery, zither), *rabāb* (rebec), *ṣur* (trumpet [of the angel Esrāfil]), and *ʿud* (lute). The above inventory of musical instruments closely resembles the list of instruments mentioned by Ḥāfeẓ (see the list provided by Lewis 2003). Instruments with a poetical value seem analogous, although slight differences in frequency can be found. Ḥāfeẓ mentioned eight times the word *rud* in his *Divān* (Collected Poems) to denote a lute (or a string instrument in general), whereas Jāmi preferred the word *ʿud*. Ḥāfeẓ did not mention *buq*, *dohol* and *musiqār*, although they had appeared elsewhere in Persian poems. For example, *buq* is attested in the *Šāh-nāma* (The Book of Kings) by Ferdawsi (940-1019 or 1025), and *dohol* and *musiqār* are attested in the poetry by Rumi (Schimmel 1980, 215). Despite the occurrence of a range of different instrument names, Jāmi showed a marked preference for a selected few, with a special preference for harp, lute, and flute.

The word *čang* has multiple meanings in Persian as it applies to almost everything that is crooked or bent. Meaning 'harp', 'clutches', 'grasp', or 'claw', *čang* offered various meaningful combinations in connection to music. In addition, it supplied a good rhyme-word for *āhang*.

Harp's sound may be either joyful or plaintive. As a consequence, harp appears in connection to different states of the soul. Persian language offers the possibility to describe people seized by an emotion as being in the *čang* of that feeling. The word *čang* appears in combinations such as *čang-e ṭarab* (the clutches/harp of *ṭarab*), where *ṭarab* refers to the strong feelings of joy and rapture induced by music. Harp appears in *be čang-e ḡam* (in the clutches/harp of grief)' as in:

رامشگر این ترانهٔ خوش
دستان زن این سرود دلکش
بر عود سخن چنین کشد تار
کان مانده به چنگ غم گرفتار
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 379)

The singer [*rāmešgar*] of this good melody [*tarāna*] and the performer [*dastānzan*] of this lovely song [*sorud*]
plucks the string [*tār*] on the lute of speech such that he is imprisoned in the clutches [or harp] of grief.

The bent shape of the harp is a source of imagery. Commenting on some lines by Ḵāqāni Šervāni (d. 1190), Anna Livia Beelaert has noted that:

> in both places where the harp, or *čang*, is mentioned [...] it is described as being bent. This curve is given negative interpretations. The instrument is described as old [...], lovesick or otherwise ill. (2000, 186)

According to Franklin Lewis:

> [harp] apparently retained its trigonal shape through the time of Ḥāfeẓ, who compares it to a person bent with age. (2003, 494)

To complain about the malady of aging, Jāmi compares his own back to the harp as well:

پشت من چون چنگ خم گشت و هنوز
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 398)

My back has become like the crooked harp.
(Transl. Lingwood 2013, 175)

In the same way a back bent by grief and sorrow may be compared to a harp:

به زاری پشت خود چون چنگ خم کرد
ز تار اشک بست اَوتار بر چنگ

به دل پردازی خود ساخت آهنگ
(Jāmi 1999b, vol. 2, 51)

Her back with weeping like a harp was bent.
Her tears upon the harp as strings [*tār*] she laid,
to her own heart attuned its chords [*awtār*] she played
(Transl. Rogers in Jámí 1892, 39)

In Persian poetry harp appears in association with planet Venus. Lewis noted that:

> in the *Šāh-nāma*, as apparently in Sasanian times, the harp was mostly played by women, which perhaps in part explains its association with Venus. (2003, 494)

The iconography of Venus with a harp has a long astrological background. Venus appears in handbooks of astrology as a seated woman playing various musical instruments, mostly stringed ones. Such a representation of Venus as a female player became highly popular in Islamic art, and it was later carried into Western astrology through the translators of Arab astrologers (Twycross 1972, 50-70. I owe this reference to Mohsen Ashtiany). Jāmi referred to *čang-e Zohra* (the harp of Venus) and *čang-e Nāhid* (the harp of Venus). Venus is portrayed in the standard way as a harpist holding the harp to her chest and playing it with her fingers on the strings:

چون گرفتی چو زهره در بر چنگ
چنگ زهره فتادی از آهنگ
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 294)

When she held the harp to the chest as Venus [*Zohra*]
the fingers of Venus [*čang-e Zohra*] renounced to play.

In *Resāla-ye musiqi*, Jāmi called the lute *ʿud* 'the most noble string instrument' (Jāmi 2000, 192) and described the various *maqām*s with notations related to finger positions on the lute. This was a method often used by music theorists writing in Arabic. As for poetry, lute provided a wealth of imagery related to scent, sound, and tuning aspects. Moreover, the word *ʿud* offers a convenient rhyme-word for *sorud* (song).

Apparently lute derived its name from the wood from which its sound-box was made. The word *ʿud* refers to the scented wood of a tree (black aloes or agarwood) used as incense. As a fragrance, the word *ʿud* appeared in Persian poetry from the time of Ferdawsi and Manučehri (d. 1040 or 1041). In the fourteenth century, poets including Ḥāfeẓ also used the word *ʿud* in the sense of either incense or lu-

te. Jahān (d. after 1391) employed the word *ʿud* twice in the same poem, once in the meaning of aloes and once in the meaning of lute: "In his absence, he placed me on fire, like aloes [*ʿud*] | He strikes me like a harp, although his strokes are less intense | He hits me hard at every moment with separation, like a lute [*ʿud*]" (Transl. Brookshaw 2019, 94). Jāmi as well punned on the word *ʿud*. The precious wood called *ʿud* was widely commercialised either fresh or ripened. On this basis, Jāmi further punned on the adjective *ḵām*, whose two meanings are 'unmelodious' and 'fresh, crude', in connection to lute in a long excerpt in the *maṯnavi Salāmān o Absāl* which is worth reporting here in full:

عمرها شد تا درین دیر کهن
تار نظمم بسته بر عود سخن
هر زمان از نو نوایی می زنم
دم ز دیرین ماجرایی می زنم
رفت عمر و این نوا آخر نشد
کاست جان وین ماجرا آخر نشد
پشت من چون چنگ خم گشت و هنوز
هر شبی در ساز عودم تا به روز
عود ناساز است و کرده روزگار
دست مطرب را ز پیری رعشه دار
نغمهٔ این عود موزون چون بود
لحن این مطرب به قانون چون بود
وقت شد کین عود را خوش بشکنم
بهر بوی خوش در آتش افکنم
خام باشد عود را ناخوش زدن
خوش بود در عود خام آتش زدن
بو که عطر افشان شود این عود خام
عقل و دین را زان شود خوشبو مشام
عقل و دین را تقویت دادن بِه است
زانکه این تن روی در سستی نِه است
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 398)

It has been many ages that, in this ancient abode,
the strings [*tār*] of my verses were tied onto the lute of speech [*ʿud-e soḵon*].
Every time I strike a new melody [*navā*],
I speak about ancient happenings.
My life has passed, and this melody [*navā*] has not ended,
so too my soul is reduced, but this happening has not finished.
My back has become like the crooked [*ḵam*] harp, and yet,
each night, I am engaged in the tuning [*dar sāz*] of my lute, till daylight.
The lute is discordant [*nāsāz*], and time has made
the hands of the musician [*moṭreb*] tremulous with old age.

How can the melody [*nāgma*] of the lute be harmonious [*mawzun*],
how can the intonation [*laḥn*] of the musician [*moṭreb*] be as fine as the zither [*qānun*]?
The time has come for me to gently break this lute,
and cast it into fire, so that I might smell its sweet fragrance.
It would be crude [*ḵām*] to play the lute badly,
it is pleasing to set the unmelodious lute [*'ud-e ḵām*] on fire.
May it be so that the fragrance of the unmelodious lute [*'ud-e ḵām*] is dispersed,
and that from it comes the perfume of Reason and Faith.
It is good to fortify Reason and Faith,
for this body [*tan*] of mine is pointed in the direction of weakness.
(Transl. Lingwood 2013, 175-6)

The reference to *'ud-e ḵām* may be also intended as follows:

it is pleasing to set the fresh wood [*'ud-e ḵām*] on fire.
May it be so that the fragrance of the fresh wood [*'ud-e ḵām*] is dispersed.

It was uncommon to associate lute and poetic speech. Nonetheless Jāmi identified some common features of the two. They both provide pleasant sounds. Lute is equipped with double courses of strings to be tuned in pairs in the same way as Persian lines of poetry consist of two hemistiches composed in the same meter. Lute and poetic speech may be both qualified by the adjective *mawzun* when they adhere to the rules of balance. A lute may be defined *mawzun* when it provides harmonious sounds. A verse may be defined *mawzun* when it is well-measured.

Tuning a lute is an arduous activity that requires constant attention. The strings of the lute have to be tightened frequently. It is due to this peculiarity that, as Annemarie Schimmel (1992, 275) points out, Persian poets described their condition of grief as being twisted as the lute. Tuning pegs, which are called *guš* (ear), enter in the imagery associated to lute:

عودِ خاموش ز یک مالش گوش
کودک آساست برآورده خروش
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 675)

The silent [*ḵāmuš*] lute started to cry [*ḵoruš*] at the touch of the fingers on its pegs [*ze yak māleš-e guš*]
just like children start to cry [*ḵoruš*] when someone rubs their ears.

Tuning is described as 'boxing the ear' (*guš mālidan*) of a stringed instrument. This image is also found in several poets, including Manučehri, Neẓāmi, Rumi, Saʿdi, and Ḥāfeẓ (Beelaert 2000, 190).

Plectrum and strings take part in the creation of images connected to suffering. While Ḥāfeẓ possibly alluded to a technical usage of the word *zaḵma* (plectrum) or *meżrāb* (plectrum) in his poetry (Mallāḥ 1972, 130-1, 189-90), Jāmi made clear references to both in association with the action of plucking the strings of lute or harp. Jāmi used several terms to refer to strings: *tār*/pl. *awtār* (string), *bam o zir* (lower and higher strings), *abrišam* (silk string), *rag* (animal-derived string), and *rešta* (string). He used the word *rag* either in the general sense of 'vein' or in a technical way such as in *rag-e čang* (string of the harp) and *rag-e ʿud* (string of the lute). The association of the 'soul's vein', that is, of the jugular vein, and the strings of musical instruments offers an image of physical suffering. Poets as ʿAṭṭār (1145 or 1146-1221) and Rumi compared veins to the strings of the *rabāb* (Schimmel 1980, 213). Besides Jahān's verses quoted above, Brookshaw reported that:

> a feature common to a number of Jahan's *ghazal*s is the portrayal of the poet-lover as a stringed instrument which is struck mercilessly by the hand of a harsh beloved. Similar depictions of complaining musical instruments are also found in the poetry of Khaqani Shirvani [Ḵāqāni Šervāni]. (2019, 94)

Jāmi connected veins to the strings of the lute:

به سرهنگی اشارت کرد تا زود
زند بر جان یوسف زخمه چون عود
به زخم غم رگ جانش خراشد
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 140)

He gave an officer a sign, a blow
to strike on Joseph's soul, as lute with bow [*zaḵma*]:
to tear his soul's vein [*rag-e jān*] with the wound [*zaḵm*] of grief
(Transl. Rogers in Jámí 1892, 152)

Apparently the production of sound is achieved through an act of violence:

نادیده خراش رشتهٔ چنگ
از چنگ کجا برآید آهنگ
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 271)

If the string [*rešta*] of the harp had never been [painfully] struck
how could the song [*āhang*] resound from the harp?

In pre-modern Persian poetry "there is a marked tendency to interpret the sound of most instruments as a lament" (Zipoli 2009, 208). Several words may identify the sound of musical instruments in the poetry by Jāmi, such as *bāng* (loud sound), *naġma* (melody), *ṣawt* (voice), *zamzama* (timbre of voice or instrument). Nonetheless, *nāla* (lament) and *ḵoruš* (cry) seem the most evocative. In addition, the word *ḵoruš* provided a good rhyme-word for *ḵamuš* (silent) as in:

راست چون چنگی بی زخمه خموش
چون رسد زخمه درآیی به خروش
زخمه بر چنگ برای طرب است
تو به آن غمزده ای این عجب است
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 628)

Truely [*rāst*] you are like the harp: silent [*ḵamuš*] when not
touched by the plectrum,
when it comes the pick you start to cry [*ḵoruš*].
Strumming the harp with a pick is made for joy [*ṭarab*].
As for you, it makes you feel woe... This is strange!

Jāmi highlighted that lament is somehow hidden in the instruments:

بر رگ عود که در دامن مطرب خفته ست
منه انگشت که صد نالهٔ زار است در او
(Jāmi 1999a, 1: 165)

Do not pick up the sleeping lute [*dar dāman-e moṭreb ḵofta st*]
and playfully strum it [*bar rag-e ʿud ma-neh angošt*]
unless you are ready for a hundred sorrowful tunes [*nāla*] hiding
in it. (Transl. Vraje 2006, part 7, no. 2)

Lament comes frequently in association with the reed flute. Reed flute derived its name from the material from which it was made, that is *nay* (reed). The plaintive sound of the reed flute is said to represent the voice of the reed, pining to return to its origins. In a Sufi interpretation, the reed flute represents the soul that seeks union with the original roots from which it has been sundered. Ever since Jalāl-al-Din Rumi began his *Maṯnavi-e maʿnavi* (Spiritual Couplets) with the famous lament of the reed, it has become the most evocative instrument in Persian poetic imagery.

Jāmi was deeply immersed in the theme. He composed the short commentary *Resāla-ye nāʾiya* also known as *Šarḥ-e baytayn-e Maṯnavi* (Commentary on Two Verses of the *Maṯnavi*) (Jāmi 2000, 325-36) to clarify the sense of the first two lines of *Maṯnavi-ye maʿnavi* by Rumi, that is: "Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of separations | Saying, 'Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, my la-

ment hath caused man and woman to moan'" (Transl. Nicholson in Rúmí 1926, 5). Jāmi interpreted Rumi's speech as an allusion to God's divine breath. The core of the message is expressed by the image of the flute whose voice resounds only when someone blows in it, an idea expressed before Rumi by the poet Sanā'i (d. ca. 1130) (Schimmel 1980, 211). According to this interpretation, every note and melody depend on the action of the flute player and, in the same way, all actions performed by human beings are due to God. Based on this assumption, Rumi and Jāmi consistently adopted the image of the flute player or musician in their poetry with reference to God. For example:

یاد آن مطرب که ما را هرچه بود از یاد بُرد
بادی اندر نی دمید اندیشه ها را باد برد
(Jāmi 1999a, 1: 434)

Glory to the Musician [*moṭreb*] whose Melody
erases everything that burdens the heart,
the One whose breath [*bād-i*] blowing in the flute [*nay*]
releases us [*bād bord*] from all that burdens our mind.
(Transl. Vraje 2006, part 4, no. 1)

It has been noted that in pre-modern Persian poetry "musical instruments may also be depicted as silent" (Brookshaw 2019, 94). In many examples available from Jāmi's works, musical instruments appear to be soundless. Most of the time, some external intervention is required in order to hear their sound. Reed flute needs someone to blow in it. Tuning is necessary before any attempt to play a lute. Strings should be painfully struck. Otherwise, instruments remain *ḵamuš* (silent) (Jāmi 1999b, 1: 628). They rest *dar dāman-e moṭreb* (in the lap of the musician) (165). They may be *ḵofta* (asleep) (165). In light of these considerations, a spiritual interpretation should be considered in order the understand the dichotomy sound/silence and Jāmi's usage of this motif in poetry.

Further examples of images involving different musical instruments may focus on sound, lament, material, or shape. In the following line Jāmi recalled the sound of the pipe organ:

آن را که به شب ز ره برون است
بانگ تو نوای ارغنون است
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 368)

To the one who lost his way in the night
your shout [*bāng*] sounds as the melody [*navā*] of the pipe organ [*arḡanun*].

In another line a reed fence is compared to a pan flute. They are both made of a set of reeds of different length. The sound of the pan flute resembles cries and laments of grief:

بدو کردند نی بستی حواله
چو موسیقار پر فریاد و ناله
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 175)

The house was fenced around with reeds [*nay*]
like a pan flute [*musiqār*] engaged in plaintive laments [*faryād o nāla*].

The following image focuses on the round and floral shape of the frame of the tambourine to which jingles are mounted:

بر دف گل برگ جلاجل شده
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 495)

Petals became jingles [*jalājel*] on the tambourine [*daf*] of the rose.

The following line plays on the double meaning of the word *kāsa* (goblet and sound-box). The single round sound-box of the rebec resembles a goblet of intoxicating wine:

به یکی کاسه شده مست رباب
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 675)

The rebec got intoxicated with only one *kāsa* [goblet; or sound-box].

2.3 Performers

Professional music performers are mainly designated by the words *moṭreb* and *moǧanni* (singer). Jāmi employed both terms indifferently in connection to singers, instrumentalists, and singers accompanying themselves on an instrument. In several lines, Jāmi presented minstrels in association with lute, harp, flute, rebec, jingles, or plectrum, at times performing as solo, as duo, or as a group. For example:

شکرلب مطربان نکته پرداز
به رسم تهنیت خوش کرده آواز
مغنّی چنگ عشرت ساز کرده
نوای خرمی آغاز کرده
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 70)

Singers [*moṭrebān*], sweet-lipped, conceits repeating choice,
congratulating all with pleasing voice [*āvāz*],

> musicians [*moğanni*], tuned of pleasure's harp the string,
> commenced the song [*navā*] of merriment sing.
> (Transl. Rogers in Jámí 1892, 63)

The word *moṭreb* shares the same root and semantic field with *ṭarab*. This implies that the distinctive feature of a minstrel's performance is the ability to evoke a strong sense of joy and rapture in the audience. Further words seldom appear in Jāmi's poetry to define singers and musicians, such as *rāmešgar*, *dastānzan*, *dastānsarā*, *ḵonyāgar*, *nağmapardāz*, *nağmasarāy*, and *nağmasāz*. The word *qavvāl* (cantor, professional reciter) recurs in pious contexts such as a Sufi gathering:

> لحن قوّال شده صومعه گیر
> نه مرید از دَم او جسته نه پیر
> (Jāmi 1999b, 1: 675)
>
> The chant [*laḥn*] of the Cantor [*qavvāl*] seized the monastery;
> nor novice nor old master escaped from his breath.

Lines of poetry where a pair or a group of musical instruments are mentioned suggest the presence of duo or other ensemble performances. Bahmani Moṭlaq and Sām Ḵānyāni (2015, 48-9) detected three kinds of duo in the *divān*s by Jāmi: *nay*/*čang*, *čang*/*daf*, and *daf*/*nay*. Further examples of duo to be found in Jāmi's lines include *čang*/*rabāb*, *čang*/*ʿud*, and *čang*/*čağāna*. Apparently *čağāna* occurs only in the compound *čang o čağāna*. The latter seems valid also in the poetry of Ḥāfeẓ where *čağāna* is:

> closely associated in both occurrences in the *Divān* with *čang*, probably in part because of its phonetic similarity. (Lewis 2003, 495)

In the stylised environment described by pre-modern Persian poets, the function of musical performances may vary in accordance with the context. Music may celebrate joy in a festivity context, dispel grief in the context of a convivial gathering, awaken spiritual awareness in the context of a Sufi audition. In addition to these settings, Jāmi combined further standard pictures commonly depicted in poetry in connection with music: the song of birds in the context of a rose garden or green field gathering; the non-Muslim environment of the monastery; the wine-house and travel lodging whose space offers the set where performers play music. As was customary in poetry, Jāmi at times portrayed performers in settings characterised by a significant degree of religious and social reproach:

مطرب از مصطبهٔ دُردکشان
داده از منزل مقصود نشان
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 675)

The Minstrel [*moṭreb*] at the tavern of tipplers
showed the inn of the Beloved.

When it comes to defining to what extent musical performances were acceptable in the time of Jāmi, there is a risk of becoming lost or enmeshed in the debate among Islamic theologians, jurists, Sufis, and philosophers. Although generally prohibited by the orthodoxy, music has been tolerated within certain boundaries. According to the eminent theologian Abu Ḥamid al-Ḡazāli (1058-1111), the *samāʿ* of the Sufis was licit and the use of both music and poetry was even considered praiseworthy on occasions of joy such as weddings (Lewisohn 1997, 16; Klein 2014, 221). Jāmi followed the teachings of Ibn ʿArabi and had a specific vision of what music was intended for. As William C. Chittick remarked:

> Sufi thought of the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī – of which both ʿIrāqī and Jāmī are representatives – holds that the things of this world are not just things, rather they are created by God, derived from God, and ultimately Self-Manifestations of God. […] The Sufis usually take the stand that as long as it [i.e. music] acts as a reminder of its Source and not as a veil, it is permissible. (1981, 193-4, 199)

In the *maṯnavi Yusof o Zolayḵā* (Joseph and Zolayḵā) Jāmi portrayed a wedding scene where music brings joy. In the imminence of the arrival of the bride's caravan to Egypt, the groom organises a welcoming party where pages, maids, and a full band of musicians appear. Jāmi mentioned a group of singers, performers, and six musical instruments. Although the scene is supposed to take place in ancient Egypt, it displays a Persian musical ensemble:

شکرلب مطربان نکته پرداز
به رسم تهنیت خوش کرده آواز
مغنّی چنگ عشرت ساز کرده
نوای خرمی آغاز کرده
به مالش داده گوش عود را تاب
طرب را ساخته اَوتارش اسباب
نوای نی نوید وصل داده
به جان از وی امید وصل زاده
رَباب از تاب غم جان را امان دِه
برآورده کمانچه نعرهٔ زه
در افکنده دف این آوازه از دوست
کزو در دست ره کوبان بود پوست
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 70-1)

> Singers [*moṭrebān*], sweet-lipped, conceits repeating choice,
> congratulating all with pleasing voice [*āvāz*],
> musicians [*moğanni*], tuned of pleasure's harp the string,
> commenced the song [*navā*] of merriment sing.
> When to attune it the lute's ear is wrung,
> its sweet chords [*awtār*] echo to the cheerful song [*ṭarab*].
> Good news of meeting brings the flute's [*nay*] sweet sound [*navā*],
> and for the soul the hope of union's found.
> Freed by rebeck [*rabāb*] the soul from string [*tāb*] of woe,
> its dulcet [*kamānča*] tones evokes the sounding bow.
> The drum [*daf*] awakens too the friendly sound [*āvāza*],
> that in the travellers' hand the skin is found.
> (Transl. Rogers in Jámí 1892, 63)

Pre-modern Persian poetry widely referred to music and drinking as having the power to dispel grief. This assumption developed into the aesthetics of the genre called *sāqi-nāma* (book of the cupbearer). It consisted of:

> a poetic genre in which the speaker, seeking relief from his hardships, losses, and disappointments, repeatedly summons the *sāqi* or cupbearer to bring him wine and the *moğanni* or singer to provide a song. (Losensky 2009)

This suggests the idea of a solo performance in the context of a drinking symposium. Poetical imagery mirrored the private space of courtly feasting as an ideal setting to a musical performance. The poet Neẓāmi used the summoning of the cupbearer and the minstrel as a structural device to confer unity to various narrative parts of his own *maṯnavi Eskandar-nāma* (The Book of Alexander). Jāmi modelled his own *maṯnavi*s after Neẓāmi's long poems, and closed the main episodes of his own *maṯnavi Ḵerad-nāma-ye Sekandari* (The Alexandrian Book of Wisdom) with the invocations *beyā sāqi-ā* (O cupbearer come!) and *beyā moṭreb-ā* (O minstrel come!):

> بیا ساقیا ساغر می بیار
> فلک وار دور پیاپی بدار
> ازان می که آسایش دل دهد
> خلاصی ز آلایش گِل دهد
> بیا مطربا عود بنهاده گوش
> به یک گوشمال آورش در خروش
> خروشی که دل را به هوش آورد
> به دانا پیام سروش آورد
> (Jāmi 1999b, 2: 436)

O cupbearer, come, pass the bowl, I entreat,
and like heaven, I pray thee, the cycle repeat!
That wine I desire which to peace giveth birth,
and frees us from all the defilements of earth.
O minstrel, approach, that the listening [*be-nhāda guš*] lute
at the touch of thy fingers [*gušmāl*] may cease to be mute [*dar ḵoruš*].
The heart of the heedless shall wake at its cry [*ḵoruš*],
and the message of angels descend from the sky.
(Transl. Browne 1920, 538)

The use of themes such as wine and music in expounding spiritual thoughts is a common feature in Persian poetry under the influence of Sufism. Apparently recalling a mundane milieu, Jāmi's lines convey a spiritual message where, again, a reference to God is implied in the allusion to the Minstrel. Jāmi used the summoning of the minstrel also in connection to the key concept of silence. Silence may involve instruments, as the above-mentioned lute, or audience as below:

بیا ساقیا جام دلکش بیار
می گرم و روشن چو آتش بیار
که تا لب بر آن جام دلکش نهیم
همه کلک و دفتر بر آتش نهیم
بیا مطربا تیز کن چنگ را
بلندی دِه از زخمه آهنگ را
که تا پنبه از گوش دل بر کشیم
همه گوش گردیم و دم در کشیم
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 529)

Come O cupbearer bring heart alluring cup,
bring bright and warm wine like the Fire;
so that I may put my lips on that cup,
and put all pen and paper on fire.
Come O minstrel prepare to play loudly [*tiz kon*] on your harp
so that we may remove cotton from the heart's ear,
become all ear, and be silent.
(Transl. Dalal 1995, 299)

On this same topic, Jāmi wrote a line where the interaction between two polarities, the minstrel and the poet, provides the cornerstone of his imagery. The minstrel is invited to obtain the poet's silence in a way that leaves us speechless:

بیا مطربا و عود را ساز دِه
ز تار ویَم بر زبان بند نِه
چو او پرده سازد شوم جمله گوش

نشینم ز بیهوده گویی خموش
(Jāmi 1999b, 2: 429)

O Minstrel come and tune the lute,
tie my tongue with one of its strings [*tār*].
As when he plays music [*parda sāzad*] I become all ears,
I stop talking in vain and sit in silence.

Jāmi devoted various pieces of poetry to the *samā*ʿ. He intended *samā*ʿ as a way to attain knowledge and wisdom, in modalities that went far beyond the mere act of performing motion or listening to music. In an ecstatic *ḡazal* he paired the sound coming from musical instruments with a form of prayer. In the setting of a *samā*ʿ audition, he evoked two levels of understanding: the worldly setting of a Sufi gathering where only the few well-trained Sufis may benefit from the ecstasy evoked by musical performance; and the celestial level where the divine Minstrel leads the universe into a dance:

چیست می دانی صدای چنگ و عود
اَنتَ حَسبِی اَنتَ کافِی یا ودود
نیست در افسردگان ذوق سماع
ور نه عالم را گرفته ست این سرود
آه ازین مطرب که از یک نغمه اش
آمده در رقص ذرّات وجود
(Jāmi 1999a, 1: 356)

Do you know what it is – the sound [*ṣedā*] of lute and rebec [*čang o ʿud*]?
'You are my sufficiency, You are my all, O loving God!'
The dry and dismal have no taste of *samā*ʿ –
otherwise that song [*sorud*] has seized the world.
Oh that Minstrel [*moṭreb*]! One tune [*nāḡma*]
and every atom of being began to dance.
(Transl. Chittick 2000, 79-80)

Schimmel (1992, 276) states that one of the functions of music in Persian poetry is to "induce listeners into whirling dance". As for Jāmi, he supported the idea that it is not music to induce into whirling dance, rather it is the underlying cosmic motion that finds physical expression in a dance. When earthly music leads auditors to ecstatic states, it is because it resounds of a superior kind of music:

چرخ در گرد ازین بانگ و نوا
کوه در رقص ازین صوت و صدا
(Jāmi 1999b, 1: 675)

The celestial globe revolves thanks to this sound and melody,
the mountain starts to dance thanks to this tune and voice.

Jāmi admitted, and probably expected, his poetry to be recited and eventually sung during Sufi sessions. This point is expressed in the following lines where Jāmi refers to a musician and a singer who interpret the poet's verses in the context of a *samā*ʿ:

چنان به شعر شدم شهره در بسیط جهان
که شد محیط فلک زین ترانه مالامال
عروس دهر پی زیب گوش و گردن خویش
ز سلک گوهر نظمم گرفت عِقد لآل
سرود عیش ز گفتار من کند مطرب
ره سماع ز اشعار من زند قوّال
(Jāmi 1999a, 2: 37)

My poems brought me such fame in the world,
that the space of heavens is filled with their melody [*tarāna*].
The bride of age, to adorn her ears and neck,
took out a string of rubies from the jewel necklace of my poetry.
With my speech the musician [*moṭreb*] composes delightful songs [*sorud*],
the singer [*qavvāl*] treads the path of music [*rah-e samā*ʿ] with my verses.
(Transl. D'Hubert, Papas 2018, 12)

According to Jāmi's thought, musical performances are a medium to convey the meaning of the words sung. In the following lines of a *qeṭʿa* (fragment) Jāmi advised performers against playing music for music's sake, and offers a witty image by combining the double meaning of the word *tan* (body) and '*tan*' (that is, the onomatopoeia for a rhythmic item):

دست در تن تن بسیار مزن ای مطرب
رونقی می دهش از شعر نکو گفتاری
جان این تن تن بیهودهٔ تو شعر خوش است
هست هر تن که در او جان نبود مرداری
(Jāmi 1999a, 2: 404)

O minstrel don't play so much *tan tan*:
make it always shine with a well-written poem!
The soul of your vain *tan tan* is the good poem;
every soulless *tan* is a dead body.

Despite the fact that Jāmi shows awareness of the contribution of performers in the spread of his poems and their message, he sometimes expresses a somewhat lofty attitude toward them:

حاجت صوت مغنّی نبود جامی را
جاودان بانگ سماع از دل خود می شنود
(Jāmi 1999a, 2: 174)

Jāmi needs no singer's voice [*ṣawt-e moḡanni*],
for eternally he listens with his own heart the loud sound [*bāng*]
of *samāʿ*.

3 Conclusion

In conclusion, although more elements should be taken into account to gain a full evaluation of musical imagery in the poetry by Jāmi, I wish to express four final remarks.

First of all, most of musical imagery in the poetry of Jāmi shows strong resemblance to musical imagery in the works by earlier poets. Jāmi was indebted to an already established poetical canon where objects, landscapes, and themes assumed the form of highly standardized clichés. Jāmi, who was deeply immersed in this poetic corpus, rearranged already established elements in order to express Sufi teachings in the most eloquent manner. It seems that literary conventions and spiritual concerns shaped his poetry more than his expertise in music theory did.

What is impressive in Jāmi's use of musical imagery is not solely due to the accuracy and consistency of his musical terminology, but also includes the way in which he was able to develop traditional images into extremely elaborate lines. In comparison to fourteenth-century poets, Jāmi used to combine a higher number of musical modes in the same line. He did not limit himself to composing a wordplay on one or two words with a double meaning. He created complex puns on the musical modes and, at the same time, he made references to modulations across them. He used words with multiple meanings to express up to three different concepts in the same line. As Maria Eva Subtelny (1986) has noted, the Timurid period was marked by a "taste for the intricate" that resulted in a deep appreciation for elaborated images and riddles. It would be interesting to widen the research on musical imagery to include Jāmi's contemporaries in order to clarify whether complex punning on musical modes was an idiosyncratic feature of the poet Jāmi or rather the product of a shared taste.

Although Jāmi sometimes includes biographical data in his poetry, I have not to date identified any verse in which the poet presented himself as a musician. Musical imagery does not tell us much with respect to Jāmi's level of music proficiency. The very idea of musical modes imagery, which seems to imply a high level of competence, has been inherited from previous poets whose level of expertise in music theory or practice is less known or totally unknown. The use of

music terminology is not by itself enough of a clue to ascertain professional expertise.

Further research should be devoted to arrive at an appropriate understanding of the average level of musical instruction in the age of Jāmi. Although we do not know whether Jāmi's audience had any musical training, it seems reasonable to think that the more educated in Jāmi's circle would understand references to the main modes, modulations, instruments, and related elements. The activity of making or finding the image implies an intellectual interaction between poet and addressed audience, where the poet invites the audience to find out the relation of judgment he had established. That is, the image, complex as it might be, should be understood on the basis of a common ground. I believe Jāmi was conversing with an élite capable of enjoying most of his poetical refinements. It would be anachronistic to judge his poetry through the lens of our contemporary hyper-specialised canons of knowledge which may not apply to the Timurid era.

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Monumental Entrance to Gandharan Buddhist Architecture
Stairs and Gates from Swat

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Abstract The article presents a series of pieces excavated by the ISMEO Italian Archaeological Mission in two Buddhist sacred areas in Swat (Pakistan). The pieces are chosen for their connection to the theme of monumental entrances of cultic buildings. In the first case (Gumbat), the building is a shrine. In the second, (Amluk-dara) it is a Main Stupa. The pieces belong to three different entrance parts: lower sides of the stairs, decorated steps or stair-riser friezes, and decorated frames of doors. Pieces like these, which belong to specific architecture, can be hypothetically positioned in their places, allowing thus a more vivid reconstruction of the original appearance of the monuments. The decorative apparatus of the entrances to Buddhist monuments, although apparently extraneous to the religious language, is not less rich than the Buddhist iconographic programme illustrated on the stupas or inside the shrines. The second part of the article deals with the interpretation of the language of the entrance as 'symbolic capital' of the political élites, who were the donors of the great Buddhist architecture in Swat.

Keywords Gandhara. Swat. Stupa. Stair-risers. Buddhist architecture. Oḍi-rajas. Symbolic capital.

Summary 1 Preamble. – 2 Stair-Risers and Stairways. – 2.1 Measurements. – 2.2 Finds Associated to Architecture. – 3 Building Doors or Gates. – 4 Staging Power in Threshold Space: The Ambiguity of Access. – 4.1 A Preamble to the World of the Buddha: Gandharan Stairway. – 4.2 The Hellenistic Motifs on the Stairs of Amluk-dara. – 4.3 The Socio-Economic Context of Amluk-dara: The Rural Landscape as Source of Empowerment. – 4.4 Technologies of Power.

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1 Preamble

A certain number of things are well-established in the Buddhist architecture of Gandhara. Amongst these can certainly be counted the existence of figured and decorated 'stair-risers' (or better: stair-riser friezes).[1] These pieces are also amongst the most 'talkative' pieces of Gandharan art, as they contain not only a heterogeneous repertoire of motifs, which include classical motifs, mythological bestiary, 'Dionysiac scenes', but also some of the most expressive *Jātaka* and didactic religious stories.

These elements are associated to tall stairways, which are amongst the most typical features of Buddhist architecture in Gandhara, as they are structurally linked to the innovative position of the stupa on top of a raised podium (Kuwayama 2002).

The best documented and visually richest example of decorated flight of steps we know from the region belongs to the area of Nangarhar, in Western Gandhara (now Afghanistan), from the Stupa C1 of Chakhil-i Gundhi, near Hadda. The reconstruction of that magnificent flamboyant visual production can be admired in the Musée Guimet, Paris. The structure is generally dated to the 2nd-3rd century CE. From this reconstructed example, we learn that the decoration of a stairway is formed basically of three elements: the stair-riser friezes, the string element, and the railing (with its newel and the typical bases, see below). At the Stupa C of Chakhil-i Gundhi, the stair-risers are formed by a series of square panels mounted upon a thick base formed by an elaborate moulding (with three superimposed bands). The string elements are triangular panels (right angled) mounted upon a short stretch of the same base, and positioned at the sides of each step, as part of the railing. The railing here is basically a flat large and slightly inclined slip structure decorated on its top (or coping) with large slabs adorned with a central band (lattice and rosettes) flanked by two side-bands with scrolls.

But let us start with the physical description, i.e. from what makes an ordinary Gandharan piece a proper stair-riser frieze. The characteristics of the other parts of the stairs, as well as of the other elements associated, will follow. The last part of the study will be dedicated to an analysis of the figurative repertoire.

Elisa Iori and Luca Maria Olivieri

This article is dedicated to the memory of our friend the architect Vivek S. Khadpekar (1946-2021) consulting editor of many of our works including the present one. Vivek passed away in Ahmedabad on 28 April of this tragic year 2021.

1 For the terminology adopted in this study, we refer to Faccenna, Filigenzi 2007.

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2 Stair-Risers and Stairways

Stair-riser friezes are preserved in various museums of Europe, the USA and South Asia. In the context of the present study, it is enough to take into account just some of them, including those of the so-called 'Buner series'.[2]

A famous series of stair-riser friezes known under the label of 'Buner' are preserved in various museums. Three of them are preserved at the Cleveland Museum of Art (total accession no. 1930.328), which all belong to the stairway of the same stupa. These friezes are formed of single elongated flat panels with central figured field flanked by two dividing panels with framed Gandharan-Corinthian half-column. The friezes have a thick single base formed by a flat rebated fillet with smooth torus and cavetto, with no cornice. On the upper face are long rectilinear tenons (two), which are meant to join the tread behind the nosing. The latter was possibly decorated or at least had an inverted cyma section. The friezes can have two or one dividing panels.

Very similar to these are the much-celebrated series of the MMA (see accession nos. 13.96.19-23).[3] The series includes 15 stair-risers and six triangular panels (strings or stringers).[4] The MMA friezes belong to different stupas (some feature half-column, others pilasters with short flutes with concave bevelled ends), but their general structure is the same as those at CMA.

2.1 Measurements

Stair-Risers

If we compare the data from the CMA and the MMA with the wonderful pieces from Jamal-garhi and other sites on display at the BM,[5] we

2 According to the *vulgata*, the district of Buner (immediately to the south of Swat) is the supposed area of provenance of many of these friezes. In general, the best collections of stair-riser friezes are those preserved in the British Museum (BM), the Victoria and Albert Museum (VAM), the Cleveland Museum of Art (Cleveland), the Royal Ontario Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA), and the Peshawar Museum (Peshawar) (Marshall 1960, 33-9, figs 40-57).

3 These pieces are tentatively associated to the Buddhist sites of Dir (Behrendt 2007, fn. 24).

4 For the reconstruction of the sequence of the parts within the stairs see Behrendt 2007, fig. 11.

5 In the recently published proceedings of the international conference on *The Global Connections of Gandhāran Art* (Rienjang, Stewart 2020), P. Stewart has published a photograph of the Warburg Institute with four almost complete stair-risers from Jamal-garhi (now at Peshawar) "showing the punctuation of narratives with trees and portals" (Stewart 2020, fig. 36).

can conclude that the recurrent height of a stair-riser without the upper step is in the range of 0.17 m.[6] Such a height is consistent with the average height of the strings. The height of the original risers where these pieces were placed, including the upper slab, was > 0.20 m.

We can consider a flat rectilinear relief to be a portion of a stair-riser frieze when we have the following four elements: a height consistent with the risers' average dimensions, the presence of a base with flat rebated fillet generally with smooth torus and cavetto, the absence of the upper cornice, the presence of longitudinal tenons.

The frontal length, or rather the width of the steps will vary in keeping with the majesty and dimension of the stairway *vis-à-vis* the related building (stupa or shrine), while the height (the rise) – as we have seen – is regular. In general, the risers are formed of several pieces (also wide steps, as we will see below), although in certain cases the frieze can be considerably long. I have in mind two examples, an impressive one from VAM (IM.196-1913; Ackermann 1975, 61, pl. X), which is longer than 1.5 m, and two adjoining (?) pieces from the BM (BM 1880.38 and 1880.35: 1.02 m + 1.04). Interestingly, the latter two do not complete the width of the step, since the ends are not preserved. The most distinctive feature of these kinds of pieces is in fact the presence of a rough flat field left at the ends, where the rear parts of the strings abut. These flat parts left at the ends are evident in the tree pieces from CMA (twice at the left end, once at the right). This makes a major case against their interpretation as part of the same frieze. Clearly, they belong to two if not three different steps.[7] If we add to the height of the stair-riser frieze the thickness of the step slab, the total height of the rise should have thus been around > 0.20 m.[8]

Stairways

We note that, in general, the height of a 'Gandharan' stair-riser is slightly more than the architectural ideal height of steps, which is c.

6 Some of these were interpreted as part of the stairway of the main stupa at the site (Zwalf 1996, 318). To that range also pertains the famous 'Trojan Horse' relief, which has finally been recognised for what it must have been – a stair-riser frieze rather than a generic 'panel' (Stewart 2016).

7 Nonetheless, in an ideal reconstruction of the CMA pieces, each step should have been formed by four figured fields (approx. 0.17 × 2 m) with five dividing elements regularly spaced.

8 Leaving aside the museum collections and approaching the sites, we found another important set of information at Aziz-dheri in Swabi (belonging to the Saka-Parthian period). Here a set of stair-risers were found in situ on the steps of a small stupa; the height of the steps here is quite consistent, in the range of 0.20 m (Nasim Khan 2020).

0.17 m, and always within the rise/run ratio 17/29 (r/R; expressed in cm). In Gandhara the rise/run ratio is always between 20/30 (Gumbat), 24/28 (Amluk-dara) and 25/30 (Saidu Sharif I) (data from Olivieri et al. 2014c). The ratio is confirmed by the h/l (= r/R) ratio of the Gandharan strings, which is always in the same range. Consequentely, the bodies of the stairways in Gandhara are shorter, the number of steps is lower, and the inclination is steeper. The inclination of stairways in Gandharan architecture is always ~ 45° (see Faccenna, Spagnesi 2014), while the ideal architectural angle of inclination is below 37°. In ideal stairs though, decoration will not be appreciable. Higher risers (i.e. steeper inclination) offer more visual space. Such visual space is appreciable as a whole, in perspective from the bottom level, and as single stair-riser during the climb.[9]

Interestingly, at the site of Amluk-dara, which will be analysed in details in a following paragraph, the inclination and length of the lower flight of stairs was modified at a certain stage. The main stupa had two flights. The lower, the bigger one, led to a landing at the podium. From here, a second, smaller flight, rose up to an upper landing just in front of a frontal niche, of which only the lower pediment survives. In period III, which is dated to the end of the 3rd century CE, after a destructive event, probably one of the earthquakes that hit the nearby ancient city of Barikot, the entire decorative material was made anew with imported limestone heavily coated with lime plaster (see Olivieri, Filigenzi 2018). The original blue-schist flamboyant materials were removed and reused as construction material, only few fragments were found (see Olivieri et al. 2014c; Olivieri, Filigenzi 2018; Olivieri 2018).

It was in this (late Gandharan) phase of the monument that the lower flight was massively reshaped, and the entire body of the stairway was elongated. The original 'Gandharan' lower flight (the one which will be analysed below) had 21 steps (r/R 24/28), was 6 m long, and had an inclination of approx. 45°. The new flight was longer (c. 11 m), less inclined (c. 38°). Its 32 steps with a r/R ratio of 17/28 make it closer to the architectural ideal. That interfered with the symmetrical prospect of the original Main Stupa, and the final appearance was weird, with two successive flights of steps at strikingly different inclinations. The new stairway, though, was plain with no 'visual fringes' attached.

9 If the standard measurement unit was the so-called 'Gandharan foot' or Gft, which is equivalent to 0.324 m (see Ioppolo in Faccenna 1995, 168), the run was always ~ 0.9 Gft, and the rise ~ 0.65 Gft.

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2.2 Finds Associated to Architecture

New information on the features of the stair-riser friezes is provided by two sites excavated in 2011 and 2012 by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Swat, namely Gumbat/Balo Kale (GBK) (Olivieri et al. 2014b) and Amluk-dara (AKD) (Olivieri et al. 2014c), two sites located respectively 5 km south-west and south-east of Barikot/ Birkot-ghwandhai, the major archaeological urban site of Swat. The two Buddhist sacred areas were both founded towards the end of the 1st century/ beginning of the 2nd century CE. Both are marked by a major architectural landmark. Gumbat's signature is represented by a still standing double-domed shrine, flanked by two same-size stupas, unfortunately almost razed down. The shrine (or the Great Shrine) is square in plan and is surrounded by a square ambulacrum, with the entrance facing east **[figs 1-2]**. The shrine stands on a square podium 3.3. m high, reachable through a frontal stairway 5.1 m long, provided with 16 steps (r: 0.21 m; t: 0.30 m; w: 2.5 m).

The Buddhist sacred area of Amluk-dara is marked by a colossal stupa (the Main Stupa: total height including the *chattrāvali*: 32.8 m **[figs 3-4]**) is built upon a massive podium marked by pilasters surmounted by modillions (height: 4.7 m), reachable from the north side through a massive stairway 7.20 m long, with 25 steps (r: 0.25 m; t: 0.30 m; w: 6 m).

The chronology of both monuments, which is based on the analysis of C14 data, is consistent with the earliest phases of the respective sacred areas (end-1st century CE).[10]

2.2.1 The Series from the Main Shrine of Gumbat

A series of five pieces were excavated next to the stair of the Great Shrine of Gumbat **[figs 5-9]**.[11] They belong to the earliest sculptural production of the site, and are certainly associated with the main

10 The Great Shrine of Gumbat (GBK) was built in period III of the site, the Main Stupa of Amluk-dara in period I of the site. The excavation was carried out in 2011 by the ISMEO Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan. From 2020 the Mission is co-managed by ISMEO and Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

11 The pieces are inventoried as: Inventory nos. GBK 50 (riser: 0.18 m; broken at the right side), GBK 52 (riser: 0.187 m; broken at both sides), GBK 54 (riser: 0.187 m; broken at both sides), GBK 61 (riser: 0.182 m; broken at the left side), and excavation register no. 409 (riser: 0.178 m; badly preserved, incomplete, broken at the right side; not inventoried). The inventoried pieces are in the repository of the Swat Museum (Saidu Sharif); the registered piece no. 409 is deposited in the Italian Archaeological Mission House in Saidu Sharif. A revised excavation report is in press in *Pakistan Archaeology*, vol. 33 (Olivieri, forthcoming).

monument.[12] All the five pieces were found in the same layer 4 in the space between the southern (left) side of the stairs and the side stupas 3. We cannot consider the location of discovery as a primary deposition, for example after a collapse, since it was a nothing but the refilling of a modern pit (pit <109>) dug most probably in 1938 by E. Barger and Ph. Wright. The two (or rather Wright)[13] largely plundered the site and after their dig left several dozens of pieces buried in pits, after earmarking the best ones for the VAM and University of Bristol who sponsored their trip to Swat.[14] In fact many of the pieces belonging to the figured friezes of the minor stupas found as leftovers of the 1938 dig match those which are preserved in the VAM (Ackermann 1975).[15] In the collection brought to the United Kingdom by the Barger and Wright there are no other pieces such as the five we recovered in pit 109. Probably the reason for their being discarded was the apparent crudeness of the carving compared to the visually rich and crowded vivacity of the genre scenes of the minor stupas, with their meddling ladies at the balconies, quarrelling actors (we will soon come back to them), flying amorini etc., which attracted the interest of the two Britons.[16] By the way, the isolated metopes of Gumbat somehow recall the upper frames of the merlons of Surkh Kotal (Tissot 2006, 59-62). The associations between the artistic school and ateliers active in this important site and those active in Swat, especially in the Barikot area, should be carefully studied in future.[17]

12 Some of them were briefly re-examined in the framework of a contribution presented at the second international workshop of the Gandhāra Connection Project at the University of Oxford in 2018 (Brancaccio, Olivieri 2019, 130, figs 16-17). The reader can find there the previous reference to the site, architectural studies, excavation reports.

13 E. Barger left for Kabul in mid-Summer as soon the permission arrived, leaving to Ph. Wright the task of conducting the excavations in Swat (Barger, Wright 1941, 12).

14 The 1938 expedition to Swat and Afghanistan of the two was sponsored also by the Royal Geographic Society, the Royal Society of Arts and the University of Cincinnati (Barger, Wright 1941, iv). The two researchers were not exactly archaeologists. In fact, they dug random pits rather than conducting regular excavations at the sites where they halted during their journey. Nevertheless, their mind-set was innovative. For example, they were amongst the first to stress the need of paleoclimatic studies and settlement excavations, and they had quite an eye for the then so-called 'minor finds', e.g. the terracotta figurines, as potential markers for a more reliable reconstruction of the chronological sequence.

15 On this topic see Brancaccio, Olivieri 2019.

16 This is how they describe these genre scenes: "Several small friezes are carved with figures grouped in pairs between Indo-Corinthian pilasters [...]. With their toga-like dress and declamatory attitudes, these figures smack strongly [of] the Roman forum. Such friezes bear more than a superficial likeness to the carvings on early Christian sarcophagi, with their rows of saints grouped in pairs beneath the arches of a colonnade" (Barger, Wright 1941, 17).

17 Chronologically Surkh Kotal is slightly later than the sites considered here.

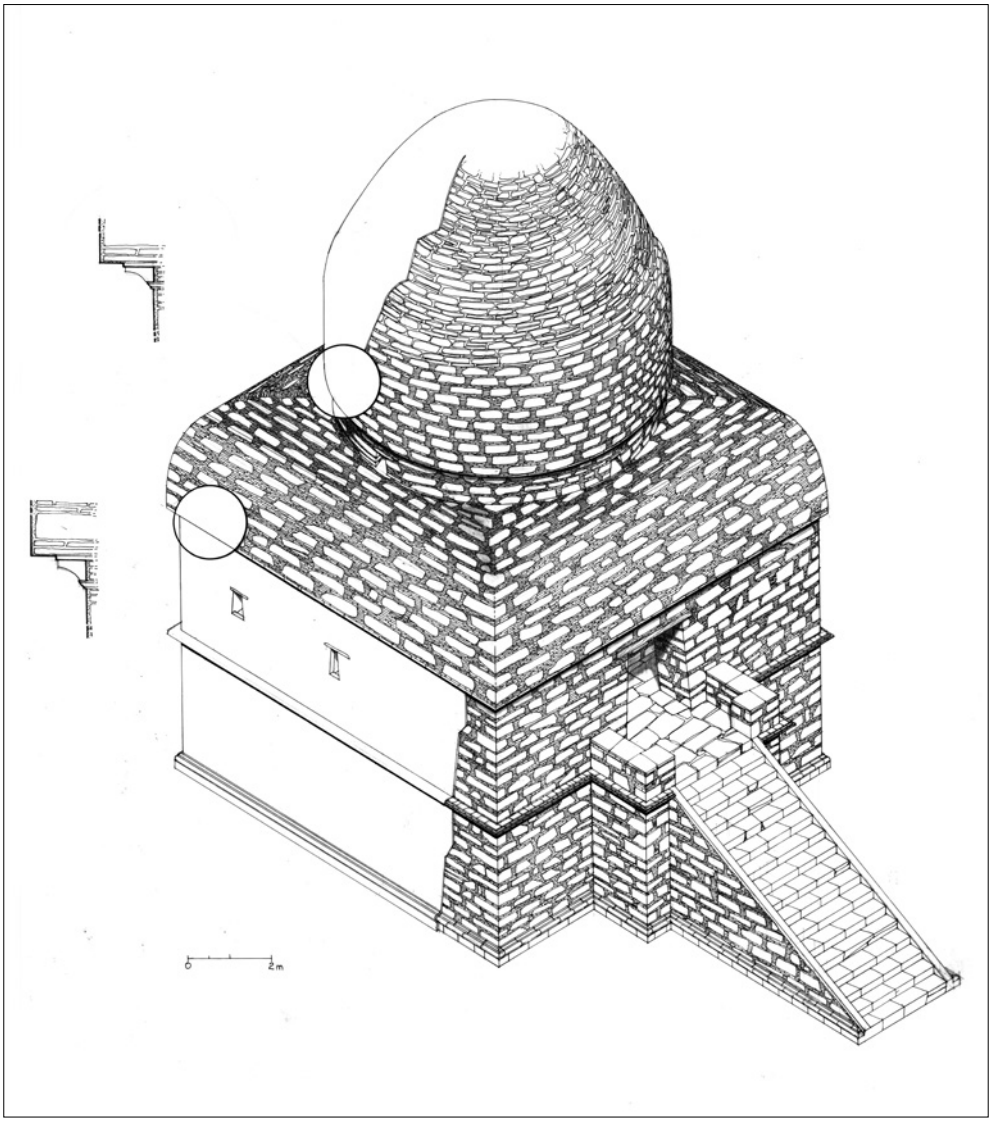

Figure 1 Main Shrine of Gumbat, axonometry (SSE). Drawings by Francesco Martore

Credits All the figures, unless otherwise indicated, are courtesy of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan (ISMEO and Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

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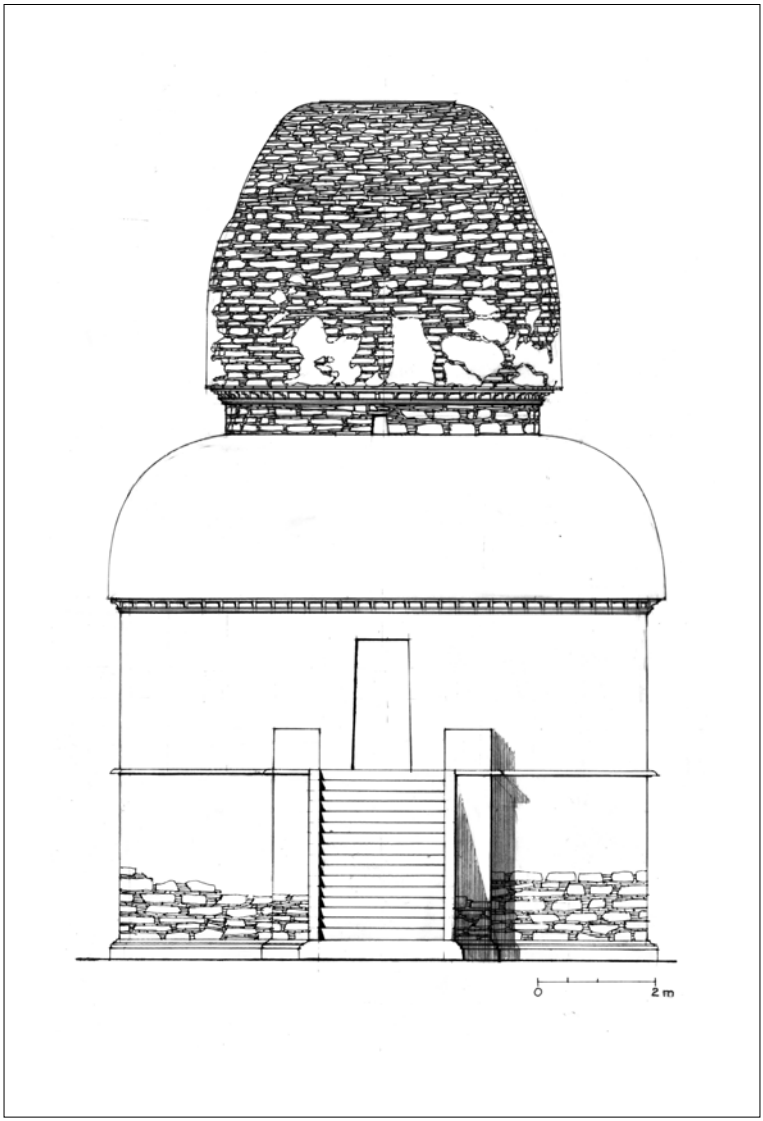


Figure 2 Main Shrine of Gumbat, prospect (E). Drawings by Francesco Martore

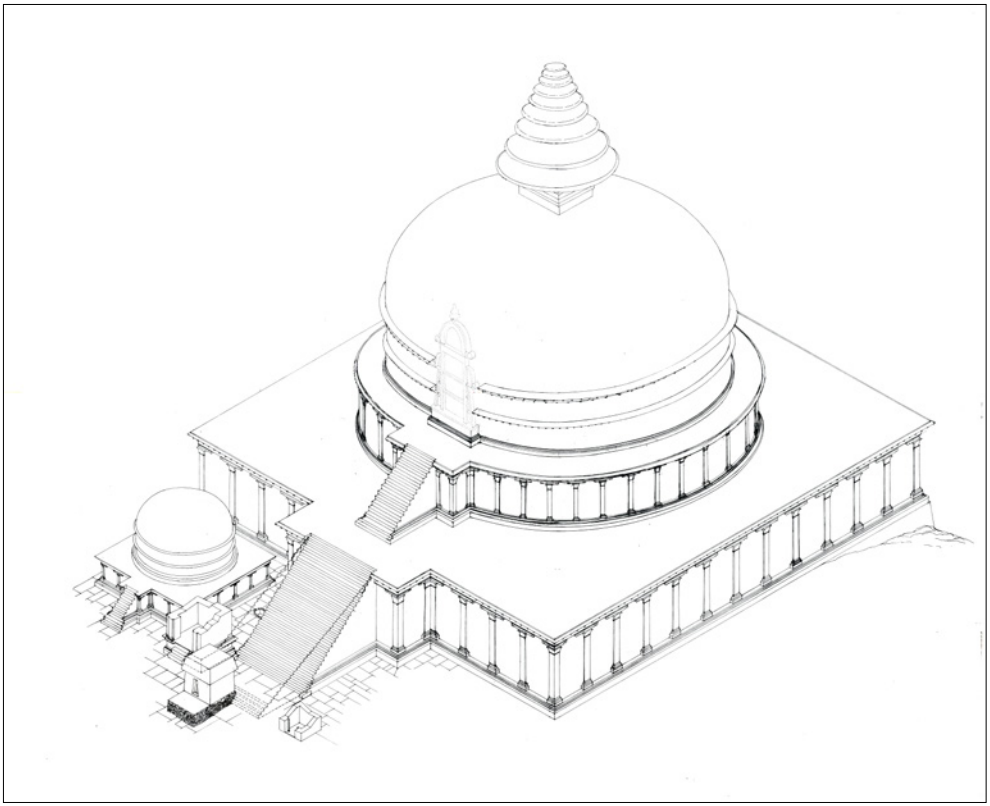


Figure 3 AKD, Main Stupa, axonometry (view from WNW). Drawings by Francesco Martore

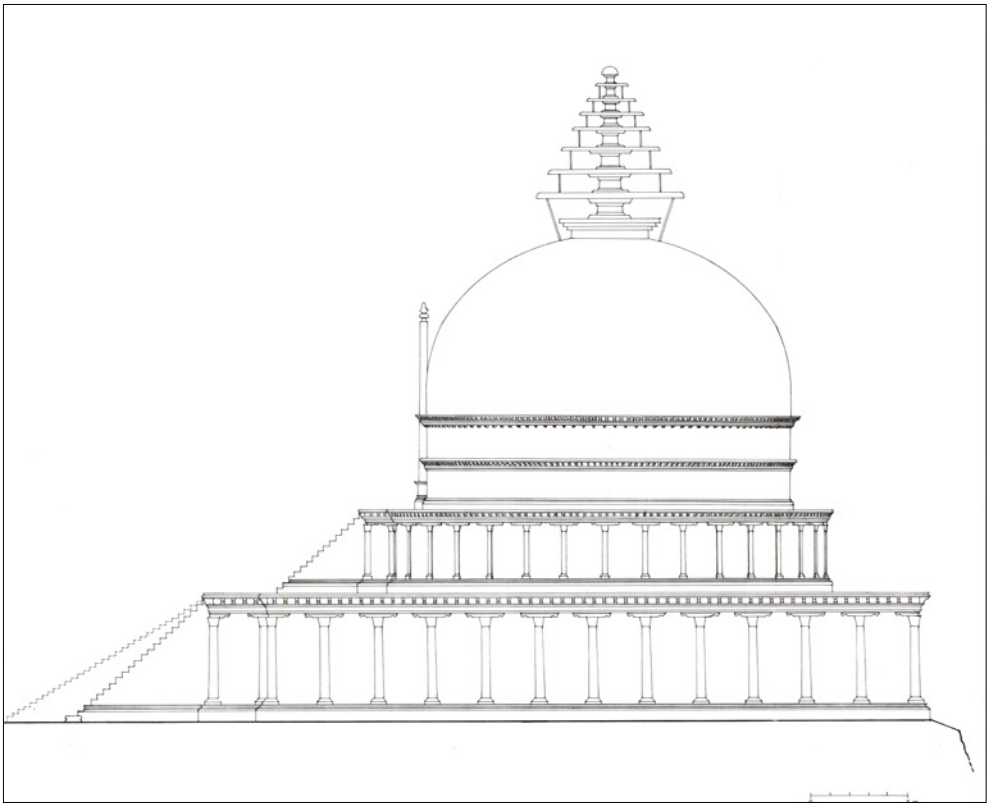
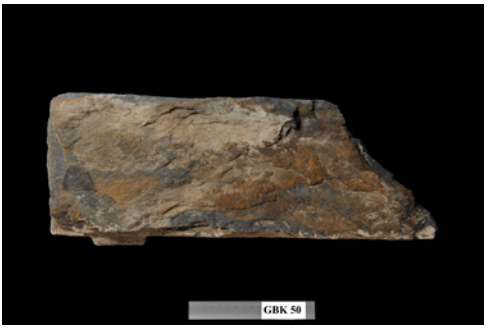


Figure 4 AKD, Main Stupa, prospect side W. Drawings by Francesco Martore

a



b

a

b

a

b

Figure 5 GBK 50, stair-riser. Photo by Edoardo Loliva

Figure 6 GBK 52, central piece of a stair-riser. Photo by Edoardo Loliva

Figure 7 GBK 54, stair-riser. Photo by Edoardo Loliva

a

b

a

b

Figure 8 GBK 61, left side of a stair-riser. Photo by Edoardo Loliva

Figure 9 GBK reg. 409, left side of a stair-riser. Photo by Edoardo Loliva

The five pieces recovered in pit 109, despite the lack of a proper context, can be attributed to the stairs of the Great Shrine for two reasons: proximity and measurements. To that one should add also the absence of a real alternative. Of both the stupas flanking the Shrine only the layout is preserved; they were almost razed in ancient times, and the stones re-employed elsewhere; the Shrine was amazingly preserved.[18] The measurements are consistent with the reconstructed height of the steps (c. 0.20 m), but of course they could have also matched the risers of the two side stupas if their stairs had been preserved.

Interestingly, both at Gumbat and at Amluk-dara, the stair-risers have the tenons on the lower side, not on the upper side, as in most of the published cases. Evidently, the assemblage system in use in these two sites was different from the one commonly followed in Gandhara.

At this stage, it is possible that the decorated patterns may reveal something more interesting. As a matter of fact, the stone and the decoration of four of the pieces from Gumbat/Balo Kale (namely GBK 54, 52, 61 and reg. 409, see fn. 9) is identical: same grey/greenish schist, same lower moulding formed by two flat rebated fillets, same decoration of isolated metopes, and same treatment of the flat surfaces left uncarved. GBK 54 **[fig. 5]** presents a framed closed tuft of acanthus quite in the centre; GBK 52 **[fig. 6]** features a framed tuft with three mid-ribbed lanceolate water-leaves with tight anthers (this decoration too is almost central). GBK 61 **[fig. 7]** and reg. 409 **[fig. 8]** are both part of the left side of a stair-riser: the framed metope in both sides presents a half, closed tuft of acanthus, and, to the left, a flat partly dressed zone, which was meant to be inserted either behind the string, or under the body of the railing.

GBK 50 **[fig. 5]** differs slightly in the quality and tone of the stone, but it is still a grey schist. It has the same height of the others and the same flat-moulded base with two rebated fillets. The decoration differs: a framed left-handed ivy scroll. Normally one would have determined it as a scroll of pipal branches (*Ficus religiosa*, L.). As rightly pointed out by Tanabe (2017-18), in some cases the 'cordiform' vegetal pattern of these scrolls and decorative patterns with cordiform leaves should be interpreted as ivy scrolls or parts of them (see also Brancaccio 2018, 165).[19] So far GBK 50 is probably the best evidence recovered to support Tanabe's interpretation: here the presence of the corymbi definitely points to the representation of ivy. The Dionysiac

18 It was found used as a shelter and shed (Stein 1930, 13; Barger, Wright 1941, 16). Later it was occasionally used as a mosque, especially in periods of drought (local informant: personal communication).

19 Ivy grows forming scrolls, with spiral-shaped sprouts (from which the Latin term *Hedera helix*, L.), while pipal branches hang laterally. Ivy (*Hedera nepalensis*, L.) is common in the mountains of Chitral and Swat as reported also by Curtius Rufus, VIII, 10, 13: "*Multa hedera vitisque toto gignitur monte* [...]".

Figure 10 SSI 217, stair-riser (with indication of the Kharoṣṭhī *akṣara* 'ga'; from the second stairway of Saidu Sharif I). Photo by Edoardo Loliva

value of ivy in general and of corymbi in particular is too well-known to be worth of further elaboration in this context.[20] The importance of this motif either with pipal or ivy is also stressed by its presence of the decorated band on the kaftan of Kanishka (?) in the celebrated statue II from Surkh Kotal (Schlumberger, Le Berre, Fussman 1983, pl. 60).

Moreover, almost all the Gandharan pieces with ivy scrolls illustrated by Tanabe – on the basis of their shapes, features and measurements – are actually part of the decorative apparatus of the stairs: e.g. the stair-risers from Butkara I (Swat), and other sites of Gandhara (Tanabe 2017-18, figs 1, 9-11), a stair-side element (fig. 8, from Gandhara, Peshawar). A further interesting piece of comparison comes from the Main Stupa of Saidu Sharif I. This monument is extremely important since it is possibly the earliest amongst the 'Gandharan' stupas with podium and frontal stairs (Faccenna, Callieri, Filigenzi 2003).[21] Certainly, it was a stupa celebrated from Gandhara "to Miran" (Filigenzi 2006; see also Provenzali 2016). We do not have much preserved from the monumental stairway, if we exclude the railing and part of the first steps of the first flight, leading up to the podium (see Faccenna 2001). However, one single fragment **[fig. 10]** in green schist is preserved, pertaining probably to a stair-riser of the second flight leading up to the *pradakṣiṇāpatha*. This piece (SSI 21) shows a beautiful left-handed ivy scroll, with spiral-shaped sprouts. In this case also the tenon is on lower side as demonstrated by a mason-mark, the Kharoṣṭhī *akṣara* 'ga' carved on the lower fillet (personal communication by Stefan Baums).

To conclude this section, we should briefly consider the hypothesis that four GBK pieces were part of the same stair, which possibly was the one of the Great Shrine; if the fifth piece with the ivy scroll (GBK 50) was part of the same structure, it should be positioned ei-

20 *Bacchus corymbifer*. Again, see Tanabe 2017-18, 101-2.

21 This and other themes will be further elaborated in a forthcoming study recently financed at Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Research Project: *Tecnologie della pietra e dei cantieri nel Gandhara: Saidu Sharif I*).

ther at the bottom or at the top of the flight; most probably at the top, on the last step. The first step as usual, and because of its higher moulding, is a bit higher than the others.

2.2.2 Side-Elements and the Stair-Riser Series from the Main Stupa of Amluk-dara[22]

We have already mentioned how rich and frequent is the repertoire of Classic patterns in the step-rise friezes, and especially in the strings (or stringers).[23] We should here introduce another element, which is part of the architectural structure of the monumental stairway: the stair side-element (AKD 97 and AKD 98 **[figs 11-13]**). Pia Brancaccio in a masterly study (2014; 2018) has clearly demonstrated that many pieces mistakenly interpreted as 'bases' or 'stools' or 'pedestals', were actually the typical bases for the newel of the railing of the monumental stairs in Buddhist monuments: the so-called side-elements (Faccenna, Filigenzi 2007, 93, pl. 58.2). It is possible that these Gandharan stairs' side-elements derive from specific antecedents in Mathura.[24] However, these bases, became a typical Gandharan production. It looks as the latter was an elaboration, a kind of projections at ground level (as schematized in **[fig. 14]**), of the *toraṇa* arches, the monumental gateways of the earlier Andhra and North Indian Buddhist architecture. The metamorphosis can be explained by the fact that the typical Gandharan stupa, being on a podium, requires a stairway. These side-elements, carved in rare blue schist (see below), have often the same dimensions: the height is in the range of 0.20 m, and the length in the range of 0.80 m.[25] In some pieces, while the height remains the same,

22 The excavation at Amluk-dara (AKD) was carried out in 2014-16 by the ISMEO Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan.

23 Almost in all cases strings represent anguiform beasts or similar fantastic animals, which fit perfectly in the otherwise coercive shape of the triangular element.

24 Similar pieces of the same size, but flatter, and visually elaborated, have been documented at Mathura. Some of them might have been interpreted as *toranas*' finials. It is possible that these pieces, after carefully checking the rear and lateral sides, can be interpreted as stair side-elements. During a recent visit to the Museo d'Arte Orientale (MAO) in Turin, I was shown a Mathura piece with round end in red in sandstone from Mathura whose height is consistent with the rise of a step (Inv. N. Inp/6; h. 0.218, l. 0.555, th. 0.058). The piece is decorated on the front, roughly worked on the rear and on the lateral sides, excluding the round one, with no traces of sockets or rebates. The rounded side is properly finished. This type of pieces was worked to show only two sides, and – in the absence of an assemblage component – cannot but be installed on a floor against a wall. It is certainly a right-hand stair side-element. The later fortune of these side-elements was extremely great, as they were extensively used in Brahmanical temples, e.g in mediaeval Karnataka and Maharashtra, and around the same time in Tang architecture.

25 The inventoried pieces are in the repository of the Swat Museum (Saidu Sharif); for a revised excavation report of Amluk-dara, see Olivieri 2018.

Figure 11 Sketch drawings of AKD 97 and 98. Drawings by Francesco Martore

Figure 12 AKD 98 and 97: front view. Photo by LMO

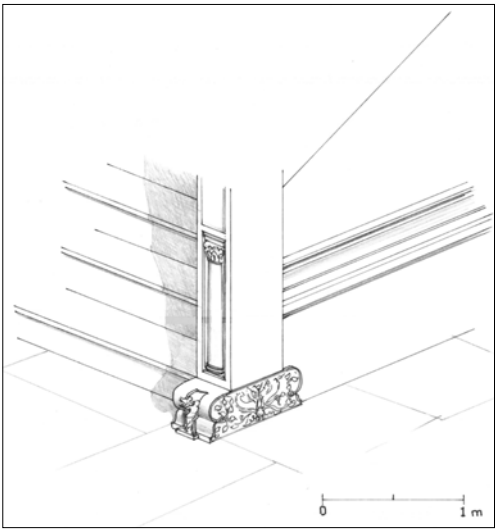


Figure 13 Side element AKD 97 on place (reconstruction). Drawings by Francesco Martore

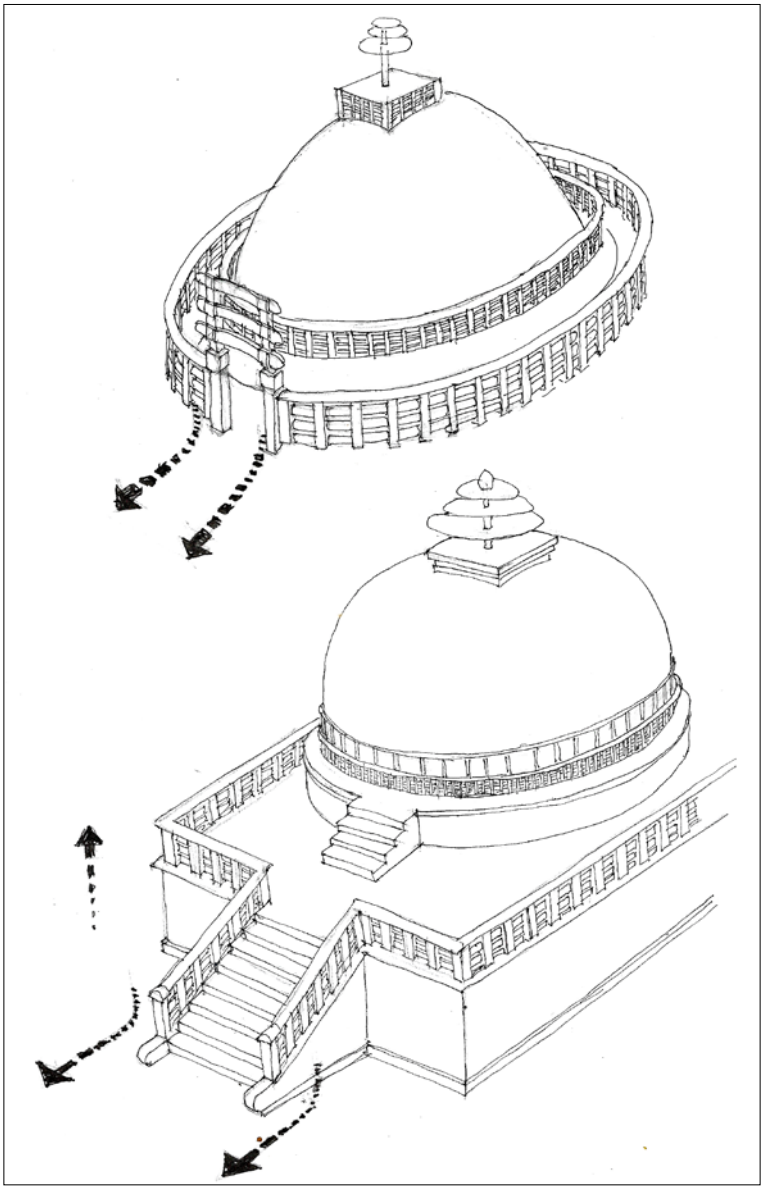


Figure 14 Indian *toranas* (top) and Gandharan podia (bottom). Sketch drawings by Francesco Martore

the length can be shorter. They are typically heavy massive parallelepipeds with rounded ends, one of which is carved, the other being left plain with the inner part undressed. The long sides of these pieces are treated differently: one is beautifully carved (external), the other is left undressed (internal) except for the frontal (or visible) portion, which is carved. On the top, which is treated differently, we often find sockets or hollow depressions dug to house vertical parts. The scheme is always the same; the only difference is that we have pieces carved on the right or left sides. From the analysis of these elements one can immediately conclude that these are pieces that were meant to be placed at the bottom, directly on the floor, either to the left or to the right of a structure, and that they were meant to support a vertical piece, like a newel or a front pilaster of the railing. One more element is presented by a beautiful side-element, confiscated and preserved in the Kabul Museum (Nettl 1991, fig. 5; Tissot 2006, 529, figs 1a-b).[26] 'Persian dancers' and musicians (along with beautiful men and women drinking and making merry) are often represented on stair-risers. Other exquisite examples with scenes associable to sea *thiasoi* come from Shotorak (Tissot 2006, 327, 858.64; 328, 863.67, 863.69).[27]

If the *toraṇa* gates are the marker and the signature of the Indian architectural schools, the new stairs and the podia are the signature of the Gandharan religious architecture (Kuwayama 2002). The architects of Gandhara, with the revolutionary introduction of monumental stairs and podia, offered a privileged space to express the visual imagery the 'Graeco-Iranic' culture of the local courts (the Oḍi, the Apraca etc.), who was patronising the construction of the great stupas and shrines, as it happened certainly at Amluk-dara. The relationship between the flamboyant imagery of the stairs and the 'Graeco-Iranic' local culture will be elaborated in the second part of this article.[28]

Let me detail a bit more on the problematics presented by the stair of the Main Stupa of Amluk-dara (AKD). This Stupa had two stairs: the

26 On this see the seminal contribution by Lo Muzio (2019, 80). Lo Muzio, though, still follows the identification of these pieces as pedestals. Tissot describes it as if the piece were sculpted on both sides: "Dionysiac scene on the pedestal of a Buddhist image. On either side of the pedestal, between lion-paws, three men and a woman playing musical instruments" (2006, 529). A closer analysis of the scene and of the fractured and chipped parts shows that the two images reproduce the same side, which means that the back was most probably not sculpted. Therefore, the piece can be legitimately included in the list of the side-elements of monumental stairs.

27 At the Asian Art Week 2020 in New York stair side-element was presented as "a gray schist relief with lotiform motif" (no. 604: 0.23 h.; 0.438 l.). It is decorated with a flamboyant palmette enriched by ivy scrolls, and corymbi or pomegranates. Unfortunately, the front face, where one guesses the presence of a standing figure, is not reproduced. That is typical, since this class of materials is generally misunderstood, and labelled as 'stools', 'footstools, 'thrones', or generic 'reliefs'.

28 We use the term 'Graeco-Iranic' in the sense established by D. Faccenna in his article on Kuh-e Khwaja (Faccenna 1981, 94-5).

lower, or first, and the upper. The lower one – as we have seen – was reconstructed and elongated in period III of the structural phasing of the monument and stupa terrace. Traces of the older stair (both architectural and sculptural) were documented *in situ*. In fact, amongst the few original schist pieces found almost *in situ*, we recovered in 2012 the two massive stair side-elements we briefly introduced above **[figs 11-13]**. The decoration of these pieces shows on the external sides a richly elaborated open flame palmette with tuft (which is partly replicated on the short visible part of the inner side). The front sides differ: on the right element there is a flexuous standing Aphrodite, while on the left element there is a standing Herakles leaning on his club. We recall these pieces because they are part of the elaboration on the evidence provided by the stair-riser friezes from this monument (and here we are absolutely sure that the pieces belong to the Main Stupa).

Three stair-riser pieces were recovered (notwithstanding the site having been heavily plundered for ages): AKD 61 **[fig. 15]**, AKD 60 **[fig. 16]** and AKD 64 **[fig. 17]**. They were carved in the same kind of stone of the two side-elements, a pretty rare variety of compact blue schist, a kind of stone which was evidently the 'signature' chosen by the architects of Amluk-dara, exactly as green schist was the 'signature' chosen by the Maestro of Saidu Sharif for the Main Stupa at the latter site.[29] All the three pieces show the same height (0.24 m). Their stratigraphic provenance is absolutely unreliable since they were found in the refilling of a modern pit dug by treasure hunters. The position of this pit is interesting though, as it was located to the left of the stair, and it possibly included leftovers thrown out by the diggers while they were working on the stair's body.

The scheme is again the same as observed in Gumbat, marked by deeply carved framed metopes; the only difference is that here the space between the metopes was filled with figurative, iconic representations. AKD 61 **[fig. 15]** is the right side of a stair-riser: to the right a framed metope with a schematic full-blown open lotus with one corolla, stamen in evidence, and framed round rosetta-like pistil. The scene on the left shows traces of vegetal elements, a tree, maybe a standing figure. AKD 60 **[fig. 16]** is again the right side of a stair-riser: to the right a framed metope with a heraldic animal, a prey-bird or a gryphon represented in profile. The scene on the left shows again traces of vegetal elements, a tree, followed by a round element, maybe related to a figure. AKD 64 **[figs 17, 18]** is the most interesting of the three pieces. It is part of a stair-riser, but not the final one. In fact, the study of the back side of right end of the piece reveals behind the metope the presence of a vertical rebate where the following portion

29 On the challenges of building the colossal Main Stupa in Amluk-dara, on the skill of its architects, and the techniques utilised, see Olivieri 2018; 2019.

a b

a b

a b

Figures 15-17 AKD 61, AKD 60, AKD 64, right side of a stair-riser (number on the back side = excavation register no.). Photo by Edoardo Loliva

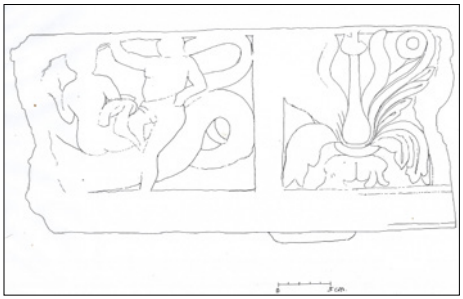


Figure 18
Sketch drawings of AKD 64
by Francesco Martore

of the stair-riser joined. Therefore, we can infer that the piece was one of the central pieces of the stair-riser. Another proof of this is the presence on the upper side of a dovetail socket, which is meant to fix the piece to the masonry of the step with a cramp or joint hidden below the tread. The framed metope is decorated with a majestic open flame palmette with flowered tuft. The scene on the left is badly damaged, but it shows what looks like a scene of a sea *thiasos*. In the scene we clearly see a male figure facing left, with head and shoulder enveloped by an ample *velificatio*, sitting or riding a triton or an anguiform dragon. To her left is barely visible a sitting female seen from behind. The figure represented on the back holds an elongated object in her/his right arm (a helm of the drapery? A fish?). The analysis of this and other associated images (e.g. a male god *velificatio* with 'Persian dancer' from our excavations at Gumbat, GBK 34) will be elaborated in the second part of this article.

3 Building Doors or Gates

Before concluding my part, I would like also to present a serendipitous discovery, which is somehow connected to these architectonic parts associated to monumental entrance and gates of Buddhist buildings in Gandhara.

In May 2013, during a survey in the valley of Kandak, I took a halt in the mansion of an old acquaintance of mine, Mr Muqam, an affluent *khan*, one of the few Pashtun landlords of that valley, a gentleman and exquisite host. It was after a pretty heavy 'chicken party' that Mr Muqam led me to a backyard of his house where he showed me an extremely beautiful Gandharan frieze. Honestly, my reaction was slow. I did not understand immediately its importance. To partly excuse myself, it may be worth saying that when I find myself in similar situations, I am always in doubt whether to show or not my interest. In circumstances like these, I am always afraid of giving

Figure 19 A door's architrave. Photo by LMO

the impression that I am interested in buying the piece (which for a professional archaeologist is not exactly the best impression to give). So, I took some photographs, the measurements, and then I left the courtyard with a dismissive smile.[30] Only after some years did I realise that in that hot afternoon I had seen a very beautiful example of Gandharan architrave of a building gate, or an architraved door of 'Western type' (Faccenna, Filigenzi 2007, pl. 57.2-3) **[fig. 19]**.

The object is c. 0.90 max. long, c. 0.22 high, and c. 0.10 thick. It is broken to the left, while to the right it presents an inclined side, where it is meant to join to a jamb. The stone is a pretty refined, a very compact variety of chloritoschist, grey to deep grey in colour. The markedly concave upper cornice is decorated with a $ABAB_1$ scheme of vegetal motifs: row of acanthus tuft (A), open palmette (B), and open palmette with trumpet-shaped central shoot (B_1) (Kökdemir 2004). Below, on a rebated band, is a row of reversed border petals; this is followed by an empty rebated high band marked below by a sunken half-round, a horizontal flute, and a projecting fillet. Below is a band with a right-handed ivy or grapevine scroll marked by a projecting fillet, a half-round. The lower band is decorated with a eight-petal rosette (type) within filletted lozenges and half-rosettes in the resulting triangles.

The object is clearly the architrave of a tapered door, the typical conventional door reproduced in architectural representations in Gandhāra. We do not know where the object was found. The area surrounding the village of Kandak is full of majestic ruins, the best preserved being those in Dur-bandai on the eastern mountain uphill the village. Here were documented the ruins of "a building with a false domed roof, probably a *vihāra*" (Olivieri et al. 2006, 111-12, fig. 65). This type of buildings (*vihāra* or shrines) are accessible build-

30 However, I forgot to take a picture of the back side and to note down the presence of sockets or tenons.

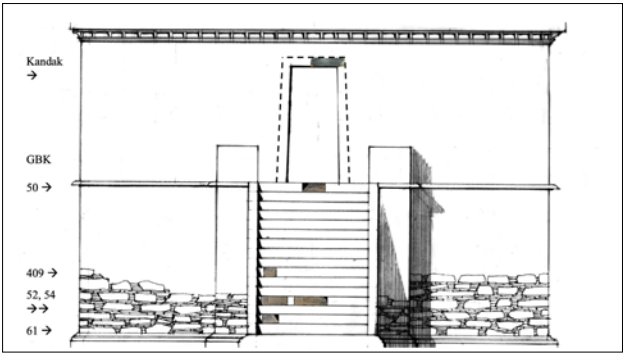


Figure 20
Ideal location of the architrave on the door of Main Shrine of Gumbat. (Elaborated by the Authors on Fig. 3)

ings with one monumental door. The best example of this typology in Gandhāra is definitely Gumbat (GBK, see above), which is located exactly opposite Dur-bandai, on the western side of the Kandak valley. If, for example, the architrave was from Gumbat, it would have perfectly fit the reconstructed shape and dimension of the central gate: the surviving length of the piece would have corresponded to half the upper width of the door (c. 2.00) **[fig. 20]**.[31]

Postcript 1

When this article was in its final stages I saw an interesting contribution by Tanabe to Rienjang and Stewart 2020, where it was presented as a 'vertical relief' (Tanabe 2020, 88) whose caption read "Gandhāran Dionysiac relief with peopled vine-scroll. H. 124 cm, c. second to third century AD. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Charles Amos Cummings Fund 39.36" (Tanabe 2020, fig. 5). The article is online: I invite the reader to see that beautiful piece, which is nothing but a jamb of a door, exactly how the piece described above is a door's architrave.[32] The presence of an angular rebate shows clearly that it is a left jamb.

LMO

31 From this, we may assume that door architraves were typically composed of two pieces fixed to each other and to the wall, and supported by the jambs.

32 See `https://www.carc.ox.ac.uk/GandharaConnections/publications.htm`. These pieces are frequently misunderstood and described as "relief[s] with foliate scroll". At the Asian Art Week 2020 (New York) was shown a wonderful piece, the lower segment of a door's left jamb, features a lower metope decorated with ivy or grape scroll, and a continuous vertical scroll with palmettes and pomegranates. The vertical decoration is framed by fillets, and on the left (closer to the wall) by a thicker set formed by two projecting fillets.

4 Staging Power in Threshold Space: The Ambiguity of Access

4.1 A Preamble to the World of the Buddha: Gandharan Stairway

The enquiry into the correlation between Gandharan Buddhist monuments and their figurative programme have yielded – with the exception of Saidu Sharif main stupa (see Faccenna 2001) and the stupa of Sikri (Foucher 1903) – quite inconclusive results, and this situation is unlikely to change. Indeed rearrangements, substitutions and removals of the figurative apparatus from the bodies of stupas and shrines, both in antiquity and in modern times, have prevented comprehensive understanding of the overall visual communication of such structures beyond their monumentality. Moreover, even though general guidelines for figurative programme in sacred places might have existed, the selection, disposition and combination of specific elements, subjects and narratives on the body of religious monuments had to cope with several interrelated factors such as local repertoires, personal preferences of the patrons commissioning the work, religious features of the place, and craftsmen's skills, besides more practical matters.[33] In this sense, every complex had a micro-programme, so to speak, and the mobility and networks of craftsmen must have played a key role in the diffusion of motifs and development of inter- and intra-valley schools (see Faccenna 2001, 197-8; see also Brancaccio, Olivieri 2019).

Despite this, the almost coherent figurative repertoire appearing on stair-risers invites reflection on the internal logic of theme selections at specific sectors of Buddhist monuments and to look for possible social or religious dynamics associated to this phenomenon.

Significantly, from the general repertoire of stair-risers, it seems that almost all the subjects on display depict narratives that lie outside the temporal domain of Buddha Śākyamuni's historical life: mainly *jātaka*s, unidentified narratives and scenes displaying music, dance and drinking iconography or marine figures. Although *jātaka*s are not a common subject in Gandharan art, their location on stair-risers seems to be quite popular, as suggested by the friezes found *in situ* in Jamal Garhi in the Mardan district and in Chakhil-i Ghundi near Hadda (Zwalf 1996, 56). As highlighted by Zwalf, most of the *jātaka*s "are traditionally situated by Chinese pilgrims in or near Gandhāra" where several stupas are said to have been erected to mark and commemorate a sacrifice of the Bodhisattva (Zwalf

33 Although the type of sequential narration for the life of the Buddha on the body of main stupas was probably the rule (Taddei 1993).

1996, 55). Thus, the presence of *jātaka*s on stair-risers may have been meant to evoke narratives attached to the place or favoured by the patron(s).[34]

A larger number of stair-risers, however, follows another pattern, depicting 'non-Buddhist' motifs. This is so in the case of the widely debated 'Dionysian scenes' variously read as bacchanalia, religious events or urban rituals (e.g. see Carter 1968, 1992; Brancaccio, Liu 2009; Galli 2011; Filigenzi 2019). While processions of *nāga*s and *nāgi*s and figures in Indian attire are not unusual (see for instance Jamalgarhi, BM 1880.36, 40), a large number of stair-risers yield a distinctive Hellenistic-Central Asian/Iranian (hereafter 'Graeco-Iranic', see above) blueprint in both iconography and composition of the scene (Soper 1951; Rowland 1956; Goldman 1978).[35] Drinking scenes are animated by satyrs and richly-dressed women, dancers and musicians, often performing an Iranian dance and mostly playing instruments of western origin while wearing Hellenistic, Scythian and Central Asian dresses (Lo Muzio 2019). Interestingly, most such stair-risers seem to come from northern Gandhara, in particular from Swat, Buner and Dir, which is also the area from where reliefs with dancers performing the 'Persian snap' apparently come (Lo Muzio 2019, 77).

Another, less celebrated but recurring subject, which recalls a Hellenistic prototype, is that of marine deities and sea-monsters. The most famous example is from the series of bearded and moustached men holding paddles, probably coming from Swat or Buner (Marshall 1960, 37, fig. 47; MMA access no 13.96.21),[36] but also images of triton-like figures are frequent (e.g. BM access no. 1880, 57). Finally, an unmistakable recall of western repertoire is offered by the myth of the wooden horse attested, for which a possible 'Buddhist translation' has been suggested (Foucher 1950; Stewart 2016).

This Hellenistic imagery is not restricted to the stair-risers but encompasses the whole stairway's sector including side-elements and triangular strings. The formers are mostly decorated with vegetal scrolls, drinking scenes, marine figures and classical deities (Brancaccio 2018, 165-7), while the latter can feature a variety of marine beings, such as triton-like figures or ichthyocentaurs and hippocampi whose anguiform bodies easily fits into the triangular field of the architectural piece (e.g. MMA access no. 13.96.19).[37]

34 On the re-localization of *jātaka*s in Gandhara see Neelis 2019.

35 For a recent re-evaluation of the Roman component in Gandharan art see Stewart 2020 and Stoye 2020.

36 One piece is at the BM (access no. 1889,1016.1), the other at the MMA (access no 13.96.21). In the former, one of the men holds what is usually defined as a dolphin seen frontally, while in the latter, the animal held by the man seems to be a snake.

37 Triton-like figures also appear as space-fillers in lunettes in false niches.

Indeed, on the Gandharan stairways, the so-called 'Graeco-Iranic' lexicon and syntax is striking when compared to the other sectors of the monuments. The direct relation between marginality with regard to Buddhist narrative and marginal space may seem evident.[38] Indeed, as noted by several scholars, foreign and 'non-Buddhist' motifs, though not uncommon, are "set aside from the main and most sacred narrative" (Lo Muzio 2019, 72) and are often accommodated in small continuous friezes or on pedestals of statues with an ancillary role. In the case of stair-riser, instead, such repertoire steps into the foreground.

Though properly outside (or better, on the approach to) the religious focus, from the point of view of the visitor or devotee approaching the main monument from the court of the stupa, the monumental Gandharan stairway actually represented a sort of visual axis converging attention on the symbolic vanishing point of the sanctuary, the dome (see also Brancaccio, Liu 2009, 229). Yet, the particularly steep inclination of Gandharan stairways (~ 45°) guaranteed visibility to the stair-riser friezes from a lower perspective and the eyes were inevitably focused on them while approaching the monument. I argue that the classification as 'marginal' here is almost certainly misplaced. Rather it seems that monumentality and architectural centrality make the stairway a real stage. Therefore, motifs of foreign and 'non-Buddhist' origin – not necessarily classified as such by contemporary users – illustrated on it would have actually introduced, not only the main frieze on the body of the dome, but also any ritual activity and event taking place at the monument.

These observations raise the questions: why were 'non-Buddhist' themes with a rather Hellenistic prototype put on stage? Was the figurative apparatus on the stairway and that on the rest of the stupa – displaying more interest in Buddha Śākyamuni's historical life – always serving the same message and the same master? Have urban phenomena influenced the Buddhist figurative programme and architecture?

In the following pages the few motifs known from the main stupa of Amluk-dara will be contextualised within the socio-economic scenario of the middle Swat valley. By arguing that in northern Gandhara, Buddhist spaces offered to urban élites both logistic support for the utilitarian exploitation of rural territories and an arena to permanently materialise local authority, I suggest that: (a) Buddhist monumental stairway were often used by the urban actors for staging their power, marking and solidifying their role as patrons and their

38 But not 'polluted' in the sense of Behrendt (2007, 27): "That this sculpture was placed in a polluted context – where devotees, presumably barefoot, would have walked – perhaps explains why the panels were carved with non-devotional subject matter."

social position by using Hellenistic imagery as 'symbolic capital'; (b) the introduction of a monumental steep stairway in Gandharan Buddhist monuments was an architectural response to new urban aspirations and necessities.

The site of Amluk-dara will be used as case study to test the hypothesis that interplays between Buddhism and the urban in the first centuries of the Common Era influenced the spread of specific artistic models in Buddhist monuments as well as their architectural layout.

4.2 The Hellenistic Motifs on the Stairs of Amluk-dara

The starting point for our reflection is offered by a rather badly preserved piece of stair-riser from Amluk-dara, AKD 64 **[figs 17, 18]**. Despite its fragmentary state, the piece is quite interesting when considered together with the stair side-elements and the subsequent rearrangement of the stairway.

The piece shows a Nereid and a male figure, seen from three-quarter back (left) and three-quarter face (right), riding an anguiform monster while looking at each other. The figure on the right is actually hard to identify, but seems to be a male wearing a *dhotī* and partially framed by an ample *velificatio*, which usually characterises gods or Nereids (see Postscript 3). The details of the Nereid are also hard to define with any degree of certainty (see above). The scene evidently derived from the Hellenistic iconographic model of the marine *thiasos* so often represented in Western art. A reference to the marriage of Poseidon and Amphitrite would be rather a wild guess but the more general motif of Nereids on a *ketos* is unmistakable. Although, as mentioned above, references to figures connected to water are frequent on stair-risers, the representation of the marine *thiasos* is quite exceptional in Buddhist complexes.

While comparisons for such iconography are unknown on Buddhist monuments, the same iconographic model – though in different formula and more clumsy style – seems to have been quite popular in the urban context. Nereids or male riders on sea-monsters (sometimes represented alone) with anguiform tail and the front part in the shape of a dragon, horse, lion or ram were depicted on the so-called toilet-trays found in a variety of sites in Gandhara and beyond (for an updated bibliography see Falk 2010). These are small round stone dishes with a decorated field on the inner side, apparently only found in cities. Although the exact function of toilet-trays remains a controversial matter, there is a general consensus on the ritual use of this artefacts as liturgical or libation vessel in urban contexts. Most of the toilet-trays found in archaeological excavations come from the city of Sirkap at Taxila (Marshall 1951), where toilet-trays, as highlighted by Coningham and Edwards (1997-98, 58) and Michon (2015,

171-83), were found in connection with 'domestic' sacralised spaces along with other artefacts (stele of local goddesses, 'votive tanks' and oblong dices) hinting at a rituality related to worldly matters, such as fertility, prosperity and protection of children.

In general, the motif of marine monster derived from western iconography (*ketos*) seems to have met a certain success in Central Asian regions where water, and especially rivers, played an important role in both economic and religious matters,[39] however, the motif of the marine *thiasos* does not appear to be attested there. In the north-west of South Asia, where life largely depends on the good management of water (Olivieri et al. 2006, 131-5), the iconographic repertoire for water semi-divine beings (*nāga*s) and water monsters (*makara*s) has always been quite rich.[40] It is therefore peculiar that in some specific context Gandharan craftsmen gleaned the marine motif from the Hellenistic models – probably diffused in Central Asia through small luxury artefacts (e.g. metal objects, textiles etc.) and through travelling craftsmen – rather than from the well-known Indian iconography. The intentionality of this selection certainly had some specific reasons, suggesting that the meanings and values these figures were conveying went beyond meanings that could have been expressed by the figures of *nāga*s or *makara*s.[41]

To complete the picture, it is worth remembering that the two stair side-elements of the same stairway also present a Hellenistic decorative and figurative pattern. Brancaccio's reconstruction demonstrates that at the base of the first pillars of the railing, in fron-

39 Amongst the earliest examples, I mention the *ketos* from the clay high-relief of the Zoroastrian fire altar at Akchakhan-kala in Chorasmia (1st century BCE-1st century CE, Minardi 2015; 2016), the ornaments from Takht-i Sangin (e.g. the ivory ornament of a sword sheath in the form of female ichthyocentaur) and the decorative armed triton from the clay sculptures of Old Nisa. For a full bibliography on the topic see Minardi 2015.

40 Representations of *nāga*s are diffused both in Indian and Gandharan art. *Makara*s, the mythical composite creatures with a propitious and apotropaic function, are represented in the volutes of *toraṇa* lintels (like in Bharhut), within the medallions on *vedikā* (like in Bharhut, Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda), and later in the form of '*makara*-arch' above the entrance of monuments and niches in several Buddhist sites of South Asia (5th to 7th century), and Ajanta, Ellora etc. For further bibliography see Bautze-Picron 2010. The Indian *makara* was probably at the origin of the volutes with 'monster heads' that characterise the arches and semi-arches of the so-called 'false-niches' (Iori 2018, 115). A *makara* also decorates the terminal part of Kanishka's club in the statue from Mathura (Rosenfield 1967, pl. 2b).

41 On the toilet-tray, the image of Nereid or male rider on *ketos* often lacks a coherent narrative feature that enables any reference to specific (or known) mythical narratives. At the same time, we cannot ignore the possibility that these isolated figures on *ketos* could have evoked, to the ancient users, well-known tales and narratives. Anyway, the connection to the feminine and erotic component is likely, especially if we consider both the assemblage in which toilet-trays were found and the general figurative repertoire displayed on these set of objects, often recalling mythological subjects, related to the feminine sphere and drinking couples.

tal position, are two figures sculpted almost in the round following "the classical type of Herakles and Aphrodite known in Gandhara through coins and precious objects" accompanied by the use of decorative scrolls that "evokes the ivy branches often found in contexts associated with images of the god Dionysos" (Brancaccio 2018, 165; **[figs 11-13]**).

The pair Herakles-Aphrodite and the marine *thiasos* from the stairway at Amluk-dara confirm the Hellenistic pattern attested in several other pieces known from museum collections, yet adding new interesting elements. Although data on the figurative apparatus are sparse, the stupa of Amluk-dara, located in the well-explored area of the middle Swat valley, offer us the opportunity to refocus the orientation of studies on step-risers by broadening their perspective beyond the 'art historian' approach.

4.3 The Socio-Economic Context of Amluk-dara: The Rural Landscape as Source of Empowerment

The main stupa of Amluk-dara **[figs 3-4]** was constructed at the end of the 1st century CE (Olivieri 2018, 60-7) when Swat was already under Kushan control. The site, located along the main track leading up to the sacred Mt. Ilam, is the largest stupa ever excavated in Swat and its construction, together with those of the coeval complexes of Tokar-dara (Faccenna, Spagnesi 2014, 331-7) and Gumbat (**[figs 1-2]**; Olivieri et al. 2014b, 255-319) was most probably patronised by families ruling the area.

From several epigraphic sources (see Baums, Glass 2002; Baums 2012) we know that between the mid-1st century BCE and the 1st century CE, the territories of Swat included within the kingdom of the Sakas and then the Kushans, were locally controlled by clients known as Oḍi-*raja*.[42]

Their role as clients of foreign kings is made clear in the inscription of the Oḍi king Senavarma (ca. mid-1st century CE) who mentions his political brotherhood with the scion of the Kushan king Kujula Kadphises, thus referring to a political pact with the new ruling entity. Although Senavarma is the last Oḍi-*raja* known from inscriptions, we can assume that this successful strategy of 'feudatory' alliance continued until the political upheaval of the Kushans (mid-3rd century CE) since no particular social changes seem to occur in the area by that time.

The alliance matrix interwoven by Oḍi-*raja* in the first centuries of the common era ran not only on a vertical level (clients-foreign kings), it also included horizontal partnerships with local agents.

42 On the possible ethnic identity of the Oḍi-*raja* see Salomon, Baums 2007, 218.

Archaeological evidence, dedicatory inscriptions and textual sources attest that the progressive religious dominance assumed by the Buddhist communities (or *saṃgha*) in Gandhara was strongly associated with the patronage activity pursued by the local urban élites. In particular, between the 1st-3rd centuries CE, the rural landscape of Swat – before used as graveyards and by marginalised communities – radically changed under the increasing pressure of the Buddhist communities that progressively intruded into the ecological space of the mountain people by acquiring both their vital and ritual spaces (on the 'Dardic' communities, see Olivieri 2015). However, this is only one part of the story.

The fertile territories of the countryside in fact, while becoming Buddhist land, were at the same time transformed into the economic pool of the valley. The foundation of hundreds of Buddhist establishments in the proximity of strategic locations (mountain passes, surveillance points, springs) and fertile lands along with the construction of hydraulic infrastructure (dams, aqueducts, pit-wells, tanks) was an intensive phenomenon in Swat and the hypothesis that Buddhist communities managed the agricultural lands and controlled trade routes through mountain passes on the behalf of local élites in exchange for direct commitment seems to be substantiated by archaeological evidence (Olivieri et al. 2006). Indeed, one might reasonably claim that, in Swat, 'domestication' of the *saṃgha* and 'domestication' and exploitation of the landscapes by urban community went hand in hand.[43] Over this process the Buddhist community assumed the role of an essential 'human infrastructure'.

As we move through the interaction between the urban and religion,[44] we find ourselves in a tangle of triggered phenomena that cannot be exhaustively discussed in this paper. However, what directly concerns us here is that Buddhist religion became, from the 1st century onward, the main sources of empowerment for urban élites. Buddhist space and rural landscape (exploited under the supervision of the Buddhist community) were transformed into a competitive ground where both economic power and social prestige were built. In other words, religion created for the urban agents a market where both economic and symbolic capitals could be invested.

43 On the concept of 'landscape domestication' see Clement 2014.

44 For a cross-disciplinary and temporal approach to the reciprocal formation of religion and urbanity see Rau, Rüpke 2020.

4.4 Technologies of Power

As it has been pointed out by DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle (1996, 19) in their reappraisal of power strategies "Monument and ordered landscapes domesticate unused territories and symbolize the appropriation of space (Kus 1982), organizing and materializing social relationship and boundaries".

Materialisation of power, however, is not only about monumental architecture. In fact, monumental buildings as "public material embodiment of the power" (Trigger 1990, 126) were embedded into a constellation of practices and material culture instrumental to social and political strategies. Among others, dedicatory inscriptions, artistic and craft productions, written and oral narratives (sometimes regardless of their adherence to fact)[45] were used as tools to materialise and permanently fix discourses on power, vertical social relations and boundaries. Buddhist art and architecture, as urban phenomena, were probably not excluded from this process.

My basic argument here is that the recall of a Hellenistic imagery[46] on step-risers and the new architectural vision of the stairway in Gandharan monuments were an integral part of a wider process of political and social strategies which took the form of both spatial practices and targeted building interventions.

As for the first argument, one should say that the use of the Hellenistic models in Gandharan art as objectified mark of social distinction by the bourgeois is a sociological reading which, launched by Taddei (1969, 156),[47] did not receive due follow-up in Gandharan studies, much more concerned (of course with some exceptions) with stylistic and iconographic analysis sometimes trickling into obsessive mannerism. This is not to say that an art historian approach is not fundamental to this field of research, which it is indeed. Howev-

45 In this regard, we may also mention the attempt by the Oḍi kings to artificially draw through inscriptions and art a direct connection with the Buddha himself. Senavarma's family claims a genealogical connection between the Oḍi-*raja* and the Ismaho royal family, the lineage of the Buddha Śākyamuni (Salomon, Baums 2007). It is probably not by chance that king Utarasena, mentioned in the Senavarma inscription as ancestor of the Oḍi kings, was included in the panels of the frieze of the main stupa of Saidu Sharif while bringing back his share of the Buddha's relics on the elephant (S 241; Faccenna 2001, 73). The construction of religious memories and identities was instrumental in solidifying the relation between élites and Buddhist communities by also fixing the privileged role of the former in the symmetric alliance.

46 On the complexity of discussion on Hellenism in Gandhāra see Filigenzi 2012.

47 "We cannot of course content ourselves with a bare description of convergency or derivation phenomena in iconography and style. Nor can we accept facts as mere links of a chain of stylistic evolution under the impact of a foreign artistic culture [...] Gandhāran sculpture is to be considered as the art of few social groups that needed a foreign model enabling them to distinguish themselves from the majority of the population" (Taddei 1969, 156).

er, if we want to gain any insights into the social and religious world of ancient Gandhara we should shift our approach to a different level of magnitudes and scales.

In an article adopting new approaches, Galli (2011, 281-4) sharpens Taddei's argument on the social function of the Hellenistic imagery in Gandharan art by introducing the concept of 'court imagery' and 'symbolic capital' borrowed from sociology and widely applied in studies of Antiquity in the Mediterranean area.[48]

His approach has had more or less similar success as Taddei's. The main challenge to widening the perspective of Gandharan studies is due to an objective (and frustrating) lack of archaeological contexts for artefacts, and a general apathy to cities where people conceiving, transforming, using and visiting religious buildings temporarily or permanently lived.[49]

As briefly sketched above, in the Swat valley studies of Buddhist art and architecture, landscape archaeology and urban archaeology have been conducted side by side.[50] This offers us solid ground on which enquiries into the complexity of historical phenomena can be conducted without stumbling into free-floating arguments.

Without pretending to take any step forward in this direction, I would simply like to raise again the perspective indicated by Taddei and Galli in order to attempt, on the basis of the evidence and considerations reported above, answering the following question: to what extent and how did Buddhist monuments give urban élites the space to manifest their authority into physical reality? In particular, were figurative programmes and the architecture of Buddhist monuments shaped by urban aspirations?

Practices here had certainly played a crucial role in temporary appropriation or materialisation of power, as Buddhist monuments must have also been the setting of processions, festivals, civic and religious events (e.g. see Schopen 2014).

Nonetheless, one may also suggest that the process of selecting iconographies on Buddhist monuments was also partially shaped by the urban aspirations (Goh, van der Veer 2016) of patrons who wanted to fix and reinforce their distinctive position within the vertical

48 The first concept is drawn from Norbert Elias' work *Die höfische Gesellschaft*/*The Court society* (1969-83) and the second from Pierre Bourdieu's approach to social classes' distinctions (see references in Galli 2011).

49 Lack of context, however, does not seem to be perceived as a big issue by most scholars, since new inscriptions, manuscripts, statues and friezes from the black market are often enthusiastically welcomed, announced and published.

50 Archaeological fieldwork is carried out by the ISMEO (now with Ca' Foscari) Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan since the second half of the fifties. Besides the excavations of cities such as Udegram and Barikot, see the landscape approach by Filigenzi 2015, Olivieri 2015 and Olivieri et al. 2006.

social system by self-representing their lifestyle or what they pretended it was.

In his article on the Hellenistic court imagery Galli (2011, 296-302) suggested that the use of aulic references to Greek mythology and Hellenistic iconography on toilet-trays (which also includes the marine *thiasos*) has to be interpreted as the results of the *paideia* of the owners, the urban élites, who wanted to demonstrate their high social status in a domestic context.[51] If we follow this line of interpretation, we might speculate that displaying an image from the classical marine *thiasos* on the threshold of a stupa could have aimed at publicly flaunting the 'learning' and the distinctive social position of the patrons commissioning the work, though maintaining the reference to elements of fertility, prosperity and auspiciousness, as appeared at the entrances of the Indian stupas. Notwithstanding the architectural innovations, the Gandharan repertoire at its threshold is in fact still deeply rooted in the Indian tradition (see also Iori 2018). In fact, Gandharan craftsmen continued to refer to the same values but translated them into a Hellenistic imaginary: both Dionysian scenes of drinking and dancing (Brancaccio, Liu 2009, 231) and marine deities and monsters could indeed fit in the same set of values.[52] What is of interest here is the reason behind this iconographical translation of Indian values.

What was put on stage, through this process, was indeed the 'symbolic capital' of the patrons, namely those practices, narratives and symbols that, by referring to the court imagery, marked their social position.

As first highlighted by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, power was culturally and symbolically created and constantly re-negotiated and re-legitimised through practices and interplays between social agents and social structures. In particular, Bourdieu, who distinguished different types of capital in the social world, says that:

> Social groups, and especially social classes, exist twice, so to speak, […]: they exist in the objectivity of the first order, that which is recorded by distributions of material properties; and they exist in the objectivity of the second order, that of the contrasted classifications and representations produced by agents on the basis of a practical knowledge of these distributions such as they are expressed in lifestyles. These two modes of existence are not independent, even as representations enjoy a definite autonomy with respect to distributions: the representation that agents form

51 He considers the 'Dionysian scenes' on the stair-risers a representation of the aristocratic social praxis (habitus) of a court society (Galli 2011, 302-21).

52 Drinking and dancing scenes of *nāga*s represented on stair-risers from Jamal-garhi (south of Swat) also would fit in the same set of values.

> of their position in social space (as well as the representation of it that they perform – in the theatrical sense, as with Goffman) is the product of a system of schemata of perception and appreciation (habitus) which is itself the embodied product of a condition defined by a definite position in distributions of material properties (objectivity I) and of symbolic capital (objectivity II), and which takes into account, not only the representations (which obey the same laws) that others have of this position and whose aggregation defines symbolic capital (commonly designated as prestige, authority, and so on), but also the position in distributions symbolically retranslated as lifestyle. (2013, 296-7)

He goes on to claim that:

> objective differences, inscribed in material properties and in the differential profits these provide, are converted into *recognized distinctions* in and through the representations that agents form and perform of them. Any difference that is recognized, accepted as legitimate, functions by that very fact as a symbolic capital providing a profit of distinction. (2013, 297)

Urban élites patronising the construction of the Buddhist foundation, as was certainly the case at Amluk-dara, probably felt the necessity to self-represent their social status and their closeness to knowledge and 'habitus' of the ruling court (Galli 2011, 324) through an artistic production that in itself was already a manifesto of their position in the 'distribution of material properties' through its exclusivity. One should reflect on the fact that craftsmen producing the Hellenistic court imagery were, if not a rare commodity, an exclusive class of specialists (in terms of skills, knowledge, technical devices and tools)[53] probably travelling from valley to valley through Gandhara. The very fact of having the resource for employing such (certainly expensive) craftsmen might in itself have represented some exclusivity.

Moreover, the advantage to appeal to artistic production as communicative strategy is the fact that this medium strategically cuts across differences of language and religious affiliation, survives the temporality of public events or rituals and could have a wider audience than foundation inscriptions often hidden in inaccessible reliquaries. That held the possibility to amplify the receptivity of the message, making it comprehensible to the whole multi-ethnic society (from lowest to highest classes) of the north-west territories accustomed, since almost three centuries, to the Hellenistic imagery and the use of Hellenistic material culture as status symbol.

53 For reference to the use of drill, see Brancaccio, Olivieri 2019, 139.

The selection of a sector highly visible and meaningful (threshold/accessibility), at the same time not spatially in conflict with the religious domain and Indian tradition (see above), is certainly not random. It is intentional.

The allocation of these marks of social distinction on a rather innovative element of the stupa, the steep stairway, is in my opinion particularly interesting. In fact, I wonder whether the determination by patrons to showcase their 'symbolic capital' and thus commemorate their social status in a religious context had a role in reshaping the architectural features of Buddhist monuments in Gandhara. Indeed, architecture is much about communication of power (for a review of 'architectural communication theory' see Smith 2011, 174-5).

Before going ahead, one must know that the introduction of a steep stairway is, together with the removal of the *toraṇa* and *vedikā*, a revolutionary feature of Gandhara stupas compared to early Indian stupas **[fig. 14]**. New, less-known religious ideas and practices were certainly at the base of the emerging architectural vision of Gandharan stupas in the 1st century CE. However, looking from the perspective of the 'symbolic capital' display programme, one may suggest that the advent of this singularly uncomfortable stairway was actually influenced by urban élites' requirements.

In order to better illustrate this point, it might be useful to start from another consideration.

I find it significant that when, after the end of the 3rd century CE, the schist apparatus of the stairs was replaced by a plain one, simply made of layers of stucco, the inclination of the lower flight of steps was reduced from 45° to 38°, against the predictably odd asymmetry and the tight space in front of the stupa.[54]

This architectural rearrangement occurred during a crucial historical phase. The late 3rd century was indeed a period of great instability which, as richly documented in the nearby city of Barikot, marked the crisis of the urban system in Swat and in Gandhara in general.

The political upheaval of the Kushan empire seems to have changed the social equilibrium which led to a shift in the power dynamics and the alliance matrix (Olivieri et al. 2014a). The Buddhist sites too were involved in this phase of contraction of the urban system (if not of the 'de-urbanisation' process).

Pushing a bit further, I do hypothesise that in the absence of a solid ruling élite pretending to be represented by the stairway or, alternatively, in the presence of a new ruling class who used other means for power display strategies, there was no longer the need for a steep, uncomfortable stairway. The change in the urban setting and policy then might be read as the origin of this architectural change. If this

54 Meanwhile the stupa court was occupied by several small stupas.

hypothesis is accepted, then one may actually speculate that the introduction itself of the steep stairway in the Gandharan stupa was the best architectural response to manifest the social and economic power of the emerging urban élites.

To conclude, I argue that the aspirations and social strategies of the urban élites actually played a role in shaping the figurative programme as well as the architecture of access to the Gandharan stupas.

Indeed, the Gandharan stairway seems to be the physical threshold where Buddhism, local traditions, and the urban met and compromised.

Postcript 2

In Gandhara art the Graeco-Roman iconography of *velificatio*, the billowing drapery above the head, is usually applied to female figures like Nereids on toilet-trays, Maenads (MMA access no. 2000.284.15) and to the goddess Selene (Mevissen 2011; Tanabe 1998; see also the male figure on sea-monster in AKD 64). To this group of figures, one should now add a male deity represented on a fragmentary frieze from Gumbat (GBK 34; **[figs 21-22]**) that we publish here with the aim of drawing to it the interest of more expert eyes. I hence limit myself to a plain description of the piece. This is a fragment of a small frieze (0.125 l., 0.10 h. [thickness not indicated in the inventory book]), broken on three sides and heavily corroded and defaced, found in the refilling of a recent pit dug to the east of stupa 3. From the data available we are not able to infer the provenance of the piece which however, in terms of dimensions and physical features, does not seem to be a stair-riser.

Despite its fragmentary state of preservation, a few observations can be made on the figurative group here illustrated. The central figure of the group is a standing male deity, as indicated by the halo, wearing a short tunic with trousers and holding with both hands a billowing drapery that covers his head. The figure looks towards another standing male figure, wearing horseman (?) trousers with a belt, almost completely defaced, that seems to offer something to the deity. At the back of the deity is a third male figure wearing trousers and shorts with a frontally hanging pointed hem. Although his upper part is completely lost, we can still note the joined hands of the figure, which has its right leg slightly bent with the heel raised upward.

The comparison for the central figure comes from the numismatic repertoire. In fact, the deity in Iranian dress holding a drapery over his head immediately brings to mind the iconography of the wind-god represented on the reverse of Kushan coins bearing the Bactrian legend OAΔO. On these coins he is usually represented running left (in one case, right) and holding up a billowing drape to represent the wind. While we cannot say much about the figure on the left, re-

Figure 21
GBK 34, relief.
Photo by Edoardo Loliva

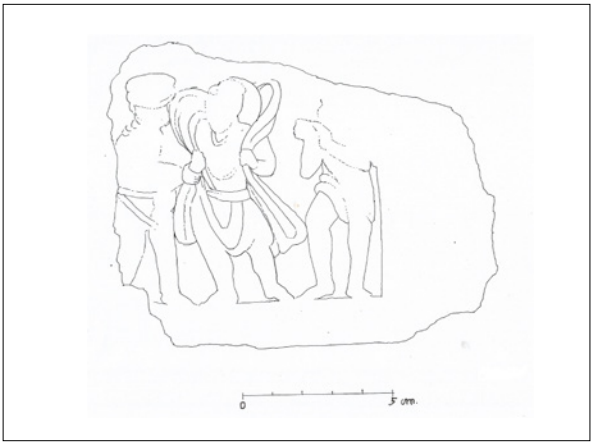


Figure 22
GBK 34, sketch drawing
by Francesco Martore

garding the figure on the right we cannot refrain from noting that both gestures and dress are reminiscent of the dancer from Butkara performing the 'Persian snap' (Lo Muzio 2019, fig. 4.3). The arms of the figure are unfortunately heavily corroded but the impression that the man is actually performing the 'Persian snap' rather than an *añjalimudrā* is solid, especially if we consider both dress and position of the legs.

If this interpretation is confirmed, we may have here a composition where the Iranian wind-god, celebrated by a dancer performing the 'Persian snap', is receiving something (an offer?) from a male figure (wearing the horseman trousers). A strong Iranian component then, which counterbalances the 'Western' imagery discussed above, and illustrates, better than anything else, the cultural complexity behind the Gandharan artistic phenomenon in Swat.

EI

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Prolegomeni alla religione bon e ai principi soteriologici del tantra materno (*Ma rgyud*) nella tradizione bonpo attraverso l'opera di Yongdzin Tendzin Namdak

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Abstract The soteriological principles of the Mother tantra (*Ma rgyud*) in the religious tradition of the Tibetan bon are founded on a different basis from that of the other tantras and consequently are considered inherent to the metaphysical matrix and the eschatology of the philosophical doctrines of Total Perfection (*rDzogs chen*). Lopon Tendzin Namdak (1926-), the highest spiritual authority of the current bon, illustrates the precepts of the Mother tantra explaining the analogy with those of Total Perfection in the *Commentary and Notes to the Essence of the Wisdom of the Mother Tantra* (*Ma rgyud ye shes thig le'i mchan 'grel*), which is part of the vast corpus, still almost unpublished of his vast exegetical production, and of which we intend to present an introduction based on the translation of relevant sections. This is preceded by a general synthesis on bon and the most salient hypotheses on its mysterious origin, identity and formation.

Keywords Tibetan Bon religion. Mother Tantra. rDzogs chen. Lopon Tendzin Namdak.

Sommario 1 Prologo. – 2 Introduzione al bon. – 3 Il tantra materno nella tradizione del bon. – Introduzione alla soteriologia del *Ma rgyud ye shes thig le'i mchan grel, Commento e note al tantra materno, essenza della saggezza primordiale*.

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1 Prologo

Riflettendo sulla dottrina della filosofia tibetana della Totale Perfezione (*rdzogs chen*) nel lignaggio dei bonpo rispetto a quella dei rnying ma pa, la scuola buddhista degli Antichi, Per Kværne (1973, 22) sottolinea l'importanza degli studi comparativi delle due tradizioni i quali:

> may hold the clue to a fuller understanding of the troubled centuries following the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet (eight to eleventh centuries) which is precisely the period in which the bonpo as well the Nyingmapa sects were formed.

Sia nel buddhismo sia nel bon le dottrine tantriche sono state custodite dalla reticenza dei loro detentori, poiché per la natura arcana e simbolica possono essere fraintese e vilipese, come avviene con le mistificazioni orientate al profitto della New Age. Dan Martin (1994) se ne è occupato con l'indagine sul mitico re dello Zhang zhung,[1] Mi

1 La reale storicità dello Zhang zhung come luogo e come entità statale, sebbene scarsamente nota, è solida al di là di ogni ragionevole dubbio (Beckwith 2009; Aldenderfer, Zhang 2004; Aldenderfer, Moyes 2005; 2007; 2008; Aldenderfer 2018), ma la sua lingua, l'etimologia del nome, le strutture e pratiche della società in generale rimangono misteriose (per un inquadramento generale e le differenti prospettive in merito si vedano e.g. Beckwith 1993; 2006; 2009; Martin 1995; 2010; Bellezza 2008; Blezer 2009); possiamo solo accennare qui che, pur appartenendo al medesimo gruppo linguistico tibeto-birmano (Benedict 1972), mentre il tibetano si avvicina all'antico linguaggio di Burma detto 'pyu' (Beckwith 2002), la lingua zhang zhung è molto più connessa ai dialetti cosiddetti 'dharma' dell'Himalaya occidentale (Martin 2010). I confini dello Zhang zhung sarebbero approssimativamente: ad est la valle dello Yar klungs, nucleo originario del regno tibetano, e la Cina; a sud il nordovest indiano; ad ovest il bordo orientale dell'altopiano iranico, il sTag gzig, e l'Oḍḍiyāna (O rgyan, la valle dello Svāt in Pakistan); a nordovest Gilgit (Bru sha); a nord Khotan (Li). Il monte Ti se (Kailāsa) sarebbe il monte g.Yung drung dGu brtsegs, fulcro dello Zhang zhung (Karmay 1975), e centro della regione di 'Ol mo Lung ring da cui proverrebbe nella narrativa tradizionale del bon la leggendaria figura di sTon pa gShen rab Mi bo (d'ora in avanti abbreviato in gShen rab) ritenuto maestro (*ston pa*) dell'attuale eone cosmico, riformatore e sistematizzatore del bon arcaico (Namkhai 1996; 2009; 2013; Bellezza 2010). La collocazione di 'Ol mo Lung ring è molto dibattuta (e.g. Martin 1995): la tradizione bonpo associa l'influenza dello Zhang zhung sui territori delimitati ad ovest e nordovest dalla Persia e dal Karakorum rispettivamente, che costituirebbero lo 'Ol mo Lung ring, al centro dello Zhang zhung, e non parte del sTag gzig/Persia (questione anch'essa variamente dibattuta, e.g. Namkhai 2009, 110-14; Beckwith 1993; 2006; 2009). Lo sTag gzig a ovest del Pamir potrebbe combaciare con le satrapie achemenidi di Battriana e Sogdiana (Snellgrove 1987, 390-1) connesse alla genesi dello zoroastrismo. Per Broneslav Ivanovic Kuznetsov (1931-1985) e Lev Nicolaevič Gumilëv (1912-1992) (1970, 565-79; Schwartzberg 1994, 639-42) nell'opera del geografo Nyi ma Grags pa (1616-1670) furono incorporati elementi dal precursore di una mappa dello Zhang zhung, al cui centro è Bar po So br-Gyad (tradizionalmente ritenuto il luogo di nascita di gShen rab) che forse coinciderebbe con Parsogard / Παρσαργαδής capitale di Ciro II il Grande (559-530 a.C.) e Cambise II (530-522) dalla fondazione nel 546. Chögyal Namkhai (1938-2018) riassume la visione autoctona degli attuali seguaci del bon: «Traditionally speaking the origin of Bon teachings known as the Everlasting Bon [*g.Yung drung Bon*] coincides with the birth

lus bSam legs, che avrebbe diffuso al genere umano i tantra del bon, seguendo la tradizionale visione leggendaria. Nel presente scritto la sezione sulle origini del bon precede l'introduzione dei principi soteriologici del tantra materno, analoghi a quelli della Totale Perfezione, per comprendere come le dottrine bonpo si organizzarono e in parte si assimilarono alle buddhiste al fine di garantire l'autorevolezza testuale e di lignaggio alla tradizione autoctona, dopo la seconda diffusione del buddhismo in Tibet dall'XI secolo. Dopo essere scampati alla Rivoluzione Culturale e alla tendenza modernizzante delle scuole, è possibile attingere agli insegnamenti degli esperti tuttora viventi.[2] Uno dei risultati è la pubblicazione, che rimane quasi inedita, di Sman ri Yongs 'dzin Slob dpon bsTan 'dzin rNam dag (pr. Menri Yongdzin Lopon Tendzin Namdak),[3] il massimo esponente vivente

of gShen-rab Mi-bo-che in 'Ol-mo Lung-ring Zhang Zhung, about 3908 years ago. The teaching of gShen-rab became the essence of all the different forms of Bon, or one of the most sophisticated of all the traditions that had been called Bon up to that time. The majority of those who indulged in bloody rituals converted and adapted their views and practices to the teachings of gShen-rab, so that the terms Bon and Bon-po eventually became a standard way of designating the teachings of the Everlasting Bon expounded by gShen-rab Mi-bo-che» (Namkhay 2009, 91-2). Si fa presente che è stata qui adottata la traslitterazione Wylie (1959, 261-7), ponendo la lettera radicale maiuscola solo per i nomi propri di persona, dei testi e geografici. Si fa presente che viene qui utilizzato il termine 'bonpo', in quanto aggettivo riferibile alla cultura, alla religione e alla tradizione del bon in generale, e in quanto sostantivo denominante i seguaci del bon.

2 La vera cesura nella ricerca sul bon, come nel destino del Tibet, è nel 1959. Nel 1950-51, l'esercito cinese entrò in Tibet; la mediazione del Dalai Lama, che nel settembre 1954 si recò in Cina per incontrare Mao, fallì. Nel 1956 iniziò la confisca di derrate alimentari e armi da fuoco e l'attacco alla religione nel Kham, area cinese adiacente al Tibet orientale, abitata da circa mezzo milione di tibetani. Tra 1958 e 1962, con la politica del 'Grande balzo' e la requisizione dei beni alimentari, il Tibet subì uno stato di penuria mai vissuto prima. La resistenza fu tenace anche nelle quattro vaste province della Cina occidentale in cui è più diffusa la componente tibetana: Gansu, Qinghai, Yunnan e Sichuan. L'insurrezione di Lhasa (10 marzo 1959) fu sgominata dal massacro (marzo-ottobre) di circa novantamila civili nel solo Tibet centrale. Si istituirono i *thamzing*, 'sessioni di lotta' (linciaggi pubblici di denuncia e autodenuncia) cui era obbligo partecipare, rinnegando la propria cultura. Monasteri e templi vennero chiusi e distrutti, le più minute espressioni critiche perseguitate come qualsiasi manifestazione di fede religiosa; i dissidenti vennero deportati nei campi di lavoro forzato che sorsero ovunque sul territorio tibetano. Dal 1966-67 si verificò l'annientamento della Rivoluzione Culturale con sterilizzazioni forzate per le donne, ridicolizzazione, umiliazione e uccisioni. Dei quasi seimila delubri e monasteri solo tredici scamparono alla distruzione delle Guardie Rosse. Dal 1959 oltre centomila tibetani fuggirono dal Tibet e raggiunsero l'India. I rifugiati vennero insediati in campi profughi, dalla regione himalayana allo stato indiano del Karnataka. Di oltre centomila esiliati circa l'un per cento erano i tibetani professanti il bon: dopo l'esodo si avviarono le prime relazioni dirette tra i bonpo e gli studiosi europei. Da quel momento lo studio sul bon mutò sino all'ampia diffusione attuale grazie al contatto con i testi della tradizione e con i suoi rappresentanti costretti all'esilio e sovente ospiti dell'accademia occidentale.

3 Tendzin Namdak nacque nel 1926 a Khyung po dKar ru nel Khams (provincia orientale del Tibet). Nel 1933 entrò nel monastero di sTeng chen e nel 1941 si spostò in quello di g.Yung drung ling. Dal 1945 al 1950 condusse una vita anacoretica con il suo consigliere e maestro sGang ru Tshul khrims rGyal mtshan, su cui consiglio si recò nel 1950

del bon attuale e tutore capo (*slob dpon*) del monastero di sMan ri.[4] Il *Commento e note al tantra materno, essenza della saggezza primordiale* (*Ma rgyud ye shes thig le'i mchan 'grel*) è il primo scritto contenuto nel *Commento al tantra materno* (*Ma rgyud kyi 'grel ba'i skor*), undicesimo dei diciassette volumi degli *opera omnia* di ermeneutica dei testi sapienziali del bon, intitolata *The Collected Works of Menri Yongdzin Lopon Tendzin Namdak* (Triten Norbutse, Kāṭh'māṇḍū, 2006). La traduzione delle sezioni qui esposte iniziò durante la ricerca del dottorato in Culture e società dell'Asia e dell'Africa, svolto presso il Dipartimento Istituto Italiano di Studi Orientali di Lettere e Filosofia della Sapienza, Università di Roma (2012-16).

2 Introduzione al bon

La genesi del fenomeno religioso denominato 'bon', ascrivibile al Tibet pre-buddhista e tuttora vivente, resta misteriosa anche per l'inesistenza di una lingua scritta prima del VII secolo e la conseguente ardua ricostruzione in assenza di fonti oggettivamente attendibili, pur nella considerazione che molti fatti culturali non attestati in forma scritta prima di una certa epoca possono in qualche modo essere ricostruiti grazie alle testimonianze derivanti dal patrimonio mitico della tradizione. Intorno al bon si è condensato negli ultimi decenni un interesse crescente: Alex Mckay (2003, 1-16) delinea tre distinte sensibilità nello studio della cultura tibetana (chiamate *buddhist*, *shamanist*, *nativist*), e credo che nella ricerca sul bon sia decisivo che esse entrino in contatto, invece di negarsi l'un l'altra. L'approccio buddhista, il più accreditato accademicamente, pone la tibeto-

al monastero di sMan ri ove nel 1953 conseguì il grado di *dge bshes*, l'equivalente del *Doctor Philosophiae*, e del quale fu sino al 1957 l'insegnante principale. Nel 1960 tentò la fuga in India ma, catturato e ferito dai soldati cinesi, fu imprigionato per dieci mesi. Successivamente alla prima permanenza in Europa, a Londra (1961-64), tornò come *visiting professor* all'università di Monaco nel 1969 su invito del professor Helmut Hoffmann (1912-1992). Nel 1961 la Rockfeller Foundation di New York con l'organizzazione di David Llewellyn Snellgrove (1920-2016) finanziò il soggiorno alla School of Oriental and African Studies di Londra di Sangs rgyas bsTan 'dzin (1912-1978), l'allora abate del monastero di sMan ri e di Tendzin Namdak la cui collaborazione con Snellgrove portò nel 1967 alla pubblicazione di *The Nine Ways of Bon*, con traduzioni dallo *gZi brjid*, biografia di gShen rab.

4 Il monastero di Sman ri nello gTsang venne fondato nel 1405 da mNyam med Shes rab rGyal mtshan (1356-1415; Arguillère 2006; Cech 1986), ove sorse il più importante monastero bonpo di g.Yas ru dBen sa kha nel 1072, ad opera di 'Bru g.Yung drung bla ma, discepolo dello 'scopritore di tesori nascosti' (*gter ston*), gShen chen Klu dga' (996-1035; Kværne 1970; Karmay 1972, 140-5). Esso fu spazzato via da un'inondazione nel 1386; sMan ri fu completamente distrutto durante la Rivoluzione Culturale nel 1966, e rifondato in India settentrionale a Solan, nell'Himachal Pradesh, all'inizio degli anni Sessanta del secolo scorso.

logia nell'ambito degli studi religiosi e linguistici, in esso il bon è una versione eterodossa del buddhismo tibetano (Snellgrove 1967; 1984); il modello sciamanico, cui si riconosce di rimarcare l'importanza dello sciamanesimo, è espresso nei lavori del Samuel sull'interazione tra il monachesimo buddhista e lo sciamanesimo dell'Asia centrale; quello nativista (dall'opera di Namkhai e Karmay, e in generale di studiosi originari del Tibet), la cui visione nel presente scritto è significata dall'avverbio *tradizionalmente* (sottolineato dalla mia scelta del corsivo), è rivolto al primo periodo della storia tibetana e al rapporto (tuttora di incerta verificabilità storica) tra i regni dello Zhang zhung e di Yar klungs. La sua lettura del bon quale tradizione indigena evidenzia l'identità tibetana, recuperando le voci regionali sommerse un tempo dall'egemonia buddhista e ora dalle costruzioni della New Age.

Le maggiori ipotesi sull'origine dell'etimo *bon* preludono una serie di supposizioni e controversie che riguardano il fenomeno del bon nel suo complesso:

1. per Namkhai[5] esso deriva da *bzlas pa* (recitazione) e dal predicato *bon pa* che, come *bzla ba* (recitare/ripetere) significa «recitare *mantra*, preghiere o formule prestabilite» (1996, 19);
2. per Hoffmann (1958, 871; 1961, 14) *bon* è l'evocazione degli dèi con formule magiche, da cui 'mormorare/mormorare recitando' (*murmeln*, *murmelnd rezitieren*; 1950, 137);
3. Walter Simon (1893-1981) ricorda l'equivalente mongolo di *bon pa*: *uriqu*, cioè 'invocare mormorando' (1955, 8);
4. mentre Marcelle Lalou (1890-1967) segnala l'alternanza bon / Bod (Tibet) ancora attestata a Dunhuang nel XV secolo (1953, 275-6);
5. secondo Géza Uray (1921-1991) e Giuseppe Tucci (1894-1984), *bon* è connesso a *gsol* (chiedere/offrire/dare a un dio o a un sovrano) e anche 'un dio o un sovrano riceve/prende/ottiene' e sarebbe probabile la relazione con *zlo* (mormorare/recitare incantesimi/invocare/chiamare) (Tucci 1973, 271; Tucci, Heissig 1973);
6. Snellgrove distingue *bon* come tarda religione, connesso con *Bod* seguendo Lalou, e il senso sarebbe 'autoctono' onde ac-

5 Namkhai (2013, 42) rammenta che il termine arcaico *gyer* (salmodiare) fu impiegato come il verbo *'don pa* (scandire o ripetere ritmicamente e/o continuamente) e attualmente *bon pa* e *gyer ba* significano *bzla ba* (recitare/ripetere) e *'don pa* rispettivamente. Mediante la risonanza vibrativa della recitazione dei *mantra*, cioè suoni o sillabe che possono condizionare determinate sfere energetiche – intendendo per energia «la dimensione vitale, strettamente legata alla respirazione, alla voce e alla funzione dei cinque elementi interni ed esterni che in ogni essere collega il corpo alla mente» (1996, 15) – anticamente i bonpo si ponevano in ascolto e in contatto con le energie invisibili e le forze che regolano la natura allo scopo di controllarle, equilibrarle e consentire l'interazione armoniosa con la sfera d'esistenza umana.

centuare il distacco (per lui fittizio) dal buddhismo (1967, 20), e *bon* da *'bod pa* (chiamare) e il *bon po* sarebbe l'invocatore, un sacerdozio dell'antica religione indigena privo di legame con il sistema religioso organizzato tra la fine del IX e l'inizio dell'XI secolo, visto come una forma eretica di buddhismo (1987, 390);

7. Rolf Alfred Stein (1911-1999) è incline alla soluzione di Uray (Stein 1961, 11 nota 28; 1971) e critica Snellgrove ritenendo che

> les caractéristiques des *bon-po* et des *gçen* des manuscrits de Touen-houang ont donc été conservées dans les textes du Bon postérieur. Il n'y a pas eu de coupure. (1988, 43)

Le due accezioni andrebbero viste in una prospettiva di continuità, sebbene Stein creda che «la religion ancienne n'avait sans doute pas de nom particulier» (1988, 30; 1985, 88).

Mentre Erik Haarh (1929-1993; 1969, *passim*) e Snellgrove (1987, 356, 389, 399, 441) nominano la religione ancestrale con il termine *chos*, utilizzato per tradurre *dharma*, la fede buddhista, Stein (1988, 30) conclude che

> on doit sans doute renoncer à l'appeler bon-po comme le fait la tradition lamaïque postérieure, mais on ne peut pas davantage l'appeler *čhos*. Il y a bien ce mot, mais il né désigne pas nécessairement, toujours et partout, dans les documents anciens, la religion pré-bouddique.

8. Van Schaik osserva che la critica buddhista delle credenze non buddhiste, sorta intorno al nono secolo, finisce con l'ascrivere al termine *bon* tutte le forme rituali, pratiche e di pensiero alternative al *dharma*, in particolare la fede negli spiriti, i riti di prosperità, i rituali funerari, l'uso delle effigi, le libazioni, la guida della coscienza del defunto, ma come dicevamo, il punto centrale della questione riguarda tutta la ricostruzione della storia e del significato del bon, non solo l'etimo:

> The ritual narratives are *diverse* in that they represent a variety of traditions without an over-arching interpretative scheme. It is Buddhism, an imported metanarrative, that brings together this variety of Tibetan rituals and beliefs as an entity that can be identified, named and discussed. (Van Schaik 2013, 254)

Il bon è stato sempre associato dai suoi adepti all'antica religione del Tibet, la formazione della sua aura di vetustà emerge in una autorappresentazione che si avvale di elementi originali e arcaici. Ciò

non coincide però con i dati storici della religione dotata di una regola monastica e della sua tradizione testuale, entrambe denominate 'bon eterno' (*g.yung drung bon*), che appaiono dopo il X-XI secolo (i cui rituali e precetti sono influenzati dal buddhismo) e sono legate alla tradizione dei 'tesori rivelati o dissepolti' (*gter ma*)[6] di origini antichissime e non storicamente verificabili (Karmay 1975; Stein 1985).

Nel *Mahāvyutpatti* (n. 3458), il dizionario sanscrito-tibetano fatto compilare da Khri gtsug lDe brtsan (815-838) per unificare le traduzioni filosofiche buddhiste indiane, *g.yung drung* è reso con *sanātanaḥ* (eterno/indistruttibile/tradizionale/immutabile):

6 I testi canonici del bon sono catalogati in inventari (*dkar chag*) e ricadono in due categorie: *bka' 'gyur* e *brten 'gyur*. Il primo è considerato emanazione diretta della parola (*bka'*) di gShen rab codificata dai suoi discepoli subito dopo la morte del maestro (Martin, Kværne, Nagano 2003). Tradizionalmente la maggior parte del canone non godette di una trasmissione ininterrotta, ma fu celata in tempi nefasti e in tempi propizi ritrovata come 'tesoro' (*gter*). L'occultamento dei testi sacri per preservare i preziosi tesori spirituali in essi racchiusi accomuna la tradizione bonpo a quella dei rnying ma pa; ma mentre per questi ultimi si ritiene che Padmasaṃbhava (VIII d.C.) e i suoi discepoli avessero celato i testi religiosi perché i seguaci non erano ancora spiritualmente maturi, affinché essi ricomparissero in momenti più propizi alla loro trasmissione, nel caso dei bonpo ciò accadde per le persecuzioni seguite alla diffusione del buddhismo. La comparsa dei *gter ma* nella visione tradizionale è associata alla prima e alla seconda diffusione del bon in Tibet. La prima diffusione (*snga dar*), scaturita dagli insegnamenti di gShen rab nello Zhang zhung (Karmay 1972, 15-71), leggendariamente va dall'epoca del primo re tibetano gNya' khri bTsan po (non databile, ma forse prima del III secolo a.C., nell'ipotesi attualmente non verificabile storicamente di Namkhai 1996, 22 nota 11) sino alla persecuzione di Gri gum bTsan po (stesso discorso del mitico predecessore, forse tra III e II secolo a.C.). La seconda diffusione va dal regno del figlio di Gri gum bTsan po, 'Od lde sPu rgyal, restauratore del bon ('Od lde sPu rgyal potrebbe essere coevo dell'imperatore Wu di degli Han, 140-87, secondo Namkhai 1996, 22 nota 10; Ricca, Vogliotti 2018, 9 nota 7; Karmay 1992, ma vigono le stesse obiezioni mosse per la collocazione cronologica paterna), alla storica persecuzione di Khri srong lDe'u btsan (755-797), sul finire dell'VIII secolo (Karmay 1972, 72-104). La terza propagazione della dottrina (*phyi dar*) è strettamente connessa alla formazione del canone *bonpo* e si ritiene inizi nel 913 con la scoperta di alcuni *gter ma*, presso bSam yas, da parte di tre monaci erranti dal Nepal (Kværne 1974, 30-4; Karmay 1972, 105-92). La preponderanza dei testi rivelati distingue il canone bon da quello buddhista. Si ignora quando il canone venisse definitivamente assemblato, ma probabilmente non prima della fine del XIV secolo, dal momento che il testo più recente è datato al 1386 (Kværne 1974, 38). Per Karmay il periodo oscuro del bon (come per la storia tibetana *tout court* dalla fine della monarchia nell'842 al X-XI secolo) va dalla persecuzione di Khri srong lDe'u btsan alla scoperta dei *gter ma* di gShen chen Klu dga' nel 1017; la codificazione dei testi e la costituzione del canone datano a gShen chen Klu dga' (Karmay 1975, 183-7). Snellgrove le ascrive al X secolo (1967, 16). Kværne (1974, 30) dal IX all'XI secolo. La partizione del canone è *tradizionalmente* attribuita a gShen rab sul volgere della sua esistenza terrena e annovera gli insegnamenti e i rituali raccolti ne 'Le Quattro serie più la Quinta detta il Tesoro' (*sgo bzhi mdzod lnga*) e nei 'Nove Veicoli' (*theg pa dgu*) del bon: essi sono analoghi nel buddhismo rnying ma pa, essendosi bon e buddhismo pervasi, sebbene neghino il debito contratto l'una con l'altra (Snellgrove 1967, 19). Il *brten 'gyur* contiene opere non ascritte a gShen rab, ma 'fermamente basate' (*brten*) sulla sua parola (*bka'*), note come *bka' brten* (Karmay, Nagano 2001). Non si può stabilire il *terminus ad quem* per la sua formazione, ma gli ultimi testi inclusi in esso sono i commentari redatti dal grande organizzatore del bon monastico su ricordato Shes rab rGyal mtshan.

> The identity of Bon as we know it now epitomised by the phrase *g-yung drung bon*, a term that has been in use since the earliest self consciously Bon literature. (Blezer 2008, 435)

Nelle antiche iscrizioni, *g.yung drung* ha spesso funzione avverbiale, accompagnato dalla particella *du*, ad esempio *g.yung drung du* 'sempre/permanentemente'; esso fa parte della formula *'phrul ngag g.yung drung bon* 'la parola magica, il bon eterno', ma come epiteto del bon non sembra essere stato usato prima del X secolo (Karmay 1975, 172), e si ritrova nello *mDzod phug*, un *gter ma* riscoperto nel 1017 da gShen chen Klu dga' (Mimaki, Karmay 2009): qui *g.yung drung* è correlato alla proclamazione della verità (*bden*), parola chiave del bon, mentre la mendacità (*rdzun*) caratterizza gli insegnamenti e i fatti demonici, implicando falsità, errore, assenza di etica e inefficacia degli stessi; inoltre *g.yung drung* sembra alludere a una condizione o a un reame trascendente ed eterno e se n'è postulata una derivazione dal cinese (Stein 1983, 169; Blezer 2008, 458-65). Qualcosa di simile si ritrova a Dunhuang in *g.yung drung lha'i bon* (l'elevato bon degli dèi) analogo alla formula *lha'i chos* (la legge/religione degli dèi). Quest'ultima locuzione secondo Karmay (1983) avrebbe potuto indicare anche la fede nel bon, come nel *PT 1284*, prima che i buddhisti la adottassero per il buddhismo (come nel *PT 972*; i manoscritti di Dunhuang nella collezione Pelliot della Bibliothèque nationale de France hanno il prefisso *Pelliot tibétain*, qui abbreviato in *PT*; Tucci 1949, 720; Stein 1983, 144, 168, 204). Il g.yung drung bon si differenzia nella sua autorappresentazione dalle cosiddette tradizioni 'non riformate' del bon prima della mitica sistematizzazione di gShen rab e la sua interrelazione con la dottrina buddhista induce Blezer (2008, 438) a definirlo

> a reformed and nirvanic variety of Bon, which instead strives toward (a state of) release or liberation, here apparently characterised as *g-yung drung*. Needless to say, these are goals that accord well with *phyi dar* Buddhist sensibilities, but it is interesting that *phyi dar* bon po-s elected a term so obviously associated with 'vile' eternalism. When it appears in an old context, we therefore may have to translate g-Yung drung bon as 'Nirvanic Bon' rather than as 'Eternal Bon'. Thus an old (i.e., older than Bon) Tibetan translation term for the Buddhist *summum bonum* was elected as the Bon shibboleth.

Il bon si reputa erede della religione indigena (la religione 'senza nome' teorizzata da Stein 1986, 202-3),[7] non solo per quanto riguarda il

[7] L'insieme di queste pratiche rientra nella definizione (Stein 1986) di 'religione senza nome'; per la denominazione – che riguarda anche gli studi antropologici sulle tradizio-

periodo della monarchia tibetana (dal 650 all'850 d.C. circa), ma anche *tradizionalmente* per migliaia di anni indietro. In molti testi databili al periodo monarchico (da Dunhuang e da dGa' thang 'bum pa nel Tibet meridionale, Karmay 2009) e ascrivibili alla religione non buddhista e pre-buddhista, compaiono due figure di officianti: *bon po*/*bon mo* (maschile e femminile rispettivamente) e *gshen* (*gshen po*/*gshen mo*), ma i loro culti non ricevono alcuna denominazione, ed è problematico collegarli alla religione bon contemporanea (*g.yung drung bon*) che invece a essi si richiama.[8] Inoltre i testi di epoca re-

ni himalayane e tibetane non buddhiste – Charles Ramble (1998, 124) ritiene più adeguata la qualificazione di 'pagana' per i culti antichi: «'Pre-Buddhist' and 'non-Buddhist' are inadequate for a number of reasons: the first not least because it begs important questions about the relative antiquity of the two traditions in the region, while the second fails to distinguish other forms of 'non-Buddhism' – such as Hinduism – that exist in Mustang. 'Popular,' another handy evasion, is perhaps even more misleading because of its implication that the cults of place-gods lie within the sphere of public activity, whereas they are in fact quite specialised fields. Whatever its shortcomings, 'pagan' at least expresses the essentially local character of these cults (the Latin *pagus* could be very acceptably rendered by the Tibetan word *yul*), and also suggests an ethos that is at odds with the tenets of high religion, whether Buddhism or Bon».

8 *Tradizionalmente*, dal mitico avvento della dinastia di Yar klungs per trentatré generazioni di re sino a Srong btsan sGam po (r. 627-649), che gettò le fondamenta per l'introduzione buddhista (Demiéville 1952), il bon fu la religione ufficiale e l'autorità del sovrano (*chab srid*) fu affiancata dai sacerdoti reali, gli *gshen* del corpo [sacro], *sku gshen*, i quali assolvevano anche alla funzione di protettori regali (Stein 1986, 201-2). Per Snellgrove e Richardson i sacerdoti erano «i *Bon* ('invocatori') e gli *gShen* ('sacrificatori') che presiedettero a tali riti per tutto il periodo monarchico» (1998, 67-8). Frederick William Thomas (1867-1956) traduce *gshen* 'sacrificatore/carnefice', pur sostenendo che i documenti non forniscono prove certe (1957, 16). Lalou (1958) traduce *sku gshen* 'sacrificatore', basandosi su una lista dei bonpo analizzata da Tucci (1949, 716), perché gli *gshen* sono lì ricordati con il ruolo di tenere fermi per le corna gli animali da sacrificare e di tagliar loro la gola. Stein evidenzia invece l'eccezionalità del caso, supponendo un legame etimologico con *gshed* (macellaio/carnefice) (1970, 176 nota 3), ma generalmente gli *gshen* nei documenti di Dunhuang sono sacerdoti per la diagnostica (*dpyad*), i riti funebri (*shid*), scacciare e sottomettere i demoni (*gsas drag*), richiamare la buona fortuna (*phya klags*) e la mantica (*mo btab*), come ricorda Lalou (1958), a proposito del *PT 1285* ove sono menzionati cento *gshen po* e cento *gshen mo* che praticano la divinazione; in questi testi non compare il sacrificio di esseri viventi (Stein 1988, 41-3). Stein critica la traduzione di *gShen* 'sciamano' (basata sulla relazione con la lingua dei Keto o Ostiachi, popolo siberiano, suggerita da Hoffmann 1944, 341; 1950, *passim*) e seguita da Haarh (1969) e da Tucci (1955-56, 199). *Bon po* e *gshen* non sono mai presentati come 'invocatore' e 'sacrificatore' a Dunhuang e anzi il *PT 1194* attesta uno *gshen* che espone un racconto; il loro ruolo sarebbe analogo. Parallelamente Stein considera assai prossimi i canti, le recite (*smrang*) e i riti di guarigione e funebri, che presentano i medesimi elementi, l'eliminazione dei demoni attraverso un sacrificio di riscatto (*glud*), la purificazione dalle contaminazioni e così via (1970, 177 nota 12). Il nome di gShen rab è collegato allo Zhang zhung e compare in più occorrenze a Dunhuang (Pha gShen rab(s) kyi myi bo che, anche se non è tra gli *gshen* nominati più frequentemente), non per il riformatore della tradizione posteriore, ma come un bonpo che comunica tra il mondo dei vivi e il mondo dei morti (Thomas 1957, 16; Karmay 1975, 178; Macdonald-Spanien, Imaeda 1978, 19; Stein 1985, 89), uno specialista in rituali di cura e funebri (*gshen rab*), o un uomo (*myi bo*) esperto nei riti, proveniente dal clan degli gShen (*gshen rabs*). La questione cruciale è che gShen rab viene utilizzato nella narra-

ale contengono rituali e miti distinti da quelli della tradizione monastica bonpo attuale. Bisogna tener presente che la narrativa bonpo sopravvive e si (ri-)costruisce dall'XI secolo, su una dialettica di competizione e mimesi al contempo con quella buddhista. La coscienza di una propria identità si forma contrastando e assimilando quella buddhista, e sfocia in una pletora di informazioni per la conoscenza diacronica delle cosiddette 'origini narrative' del bon (Blezer 2008; 2013). Parlando in linea generale esiste una cospicua differenza in merito a tali temi tra la prospettiva tradizionale degli studiosi tibetani e quella dell'accademia occidentale. L'affermazione che le pratiche religiose di epoca monarchica dei *bon po* e degli *gshen* chiamate *bon* «presero questo nome nella tradizione storiografica successiva prevalentemente buddhista» (Kværne 2007, 59) è revocata in dubbio da studiosi ascrivibili alla corrente *nativist*: considerato che le opinioni divergono molto è opportuno sintetizzare le ipotesi più rilevanti:

1) Ipotesi Spanien-Macdonald/Snellgrove: Ariane Spanien-Macdonald analizza i *PT 1286*, *1287* (che costituiscono la *Cronaca* di Dunhuang; Bacot, Thomas, Toussaint 1940-46; mentre il *PT 1288* corrisponde agli *Annali*), il *PT 1038* che espone varie teorie sull'origine del primo re, il *1290*, collazione di testi per un 'canto di gloria', e il *PT 1047*, testo oracolare. Il *PT 1047* è datato al 640 (*contra* Stein, 74, 1985, 85), durante il regno di Srong btsan sGam po (627-649), poiché inizia con un oracolo celebrativo del potente ministro tibetano Khyung po sPung sad Zu tse, implicato nella conquista dello Zhang zhung (Beckwith 1987, 20), di cui, secondo l'oracolo, era originario, negli ultimi anni di regno di Srong btsan sGam po. Per Macdonald-Spanien che, come ricorda Stein (1985, 83),

> bouleversait totalement les idées des tibétologues sur la religion préboudique du Tibet et, du coup, la tradition tibétaine elle-même que ces savants avaient adoptée jusque là,

la religione antica chiamata *gtsug* o *gtsug lag* fu la sola praticata in epoca monarchica (Macdonald 1971, 289-91, 309, 356) e si fondò su *gTsug* inteso quale 'Ordine dell'Universo' (353-4) analogo al principio cinese del *Dao* (384), con i suoi precipui aspetti politici e ammi-

tiva storica del g.yung drung bon, dalla seconda diffusione buddhista (*phyi dar*) in poi per elaborare una costruzione storica soddisfacente della figura del supremo maestro illuminato che riforma il culto, ma è considerato «a literary construction, not a historical person» (Kværne 2019, 339). Ciò deriverebbe dall'autolegittimazione che il g.Yung drung bon cercherà nelle narrative di epoca imperiale nei documenti di Dunhuang, riguardanti l'ufficio religioso dei *bon po* e degli *gShen*; gShen rab non è una mera ricostruzione di narrativa letteraria, e Henk Blezer (2008; 2013) lega l'utilizzo della figura del fondatore e dei suoi lignaggi familiari alla promozione di una narrazione polemica formativa per la coscienza bonpo di gruppi di interesse non buddhista dal X secolo, riconoscendone un seppur incerto fondamento storico.

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nistrativi (346) e una propria visione del mondo, dello spazio e del tempo (378). Lo *gtsug lag* non fu

> un amalgame de notions magico-religieuses, anarchiques et dispersées, (384)

ma ebbe una struttura prima dell'introduzione buddhista e fu codificato come *religion royale*, base teorica di Srong btsan sGam po per la monarchia ispirata a nozioni comuni alle due culture. Nello gtsug, i re sono considerati figli degli dèi (lHa o Phywa) e il loro antenato (gNya' khri bTsan po) discese dal cielo, fondò lo *gtsug* e regnò in sua funzione; nell'età felice, gli dèi e gli esseri umani non erano separati e i re, pur essendo umani, ascendevano al cielo. Gli dèi lHa e Phywa stabilirono lo *gtsug* e furono associati alle montagne sacre a loro volta divinità protettrici del monarca (cioè gli *sku bla*; Macdonald-Spanien 1971, 352-3).

> Le mot *bon* ne s'applique pas à une religion ni à un ensemble de croyances, mais à des techniques magico-religieuses et aux éxécutants de ces techniques, (292 nota 375)

ma *bon* e *bonpo* sarebbero componenti della religione dello *gTsug lag* (376). I rituali funerari e le idee sull'aldilà sarebbero legate allo *gtsug*, non al bon (357). Anche per Anne Marie Blondeau (1988, 265-71), Hugh Richardson (1978, 147) e Uray (1979, 298), l'antica religione prebuddhista diverge dal bon, sebbene Uray riconosca che «a considerable part of the latter originated from the old religion». Per Snellgrove, i bonpo dei manoscritti di Dunhuang sono semplici sacerdoti funzionari, mentre i più tardi bonpo sono seguaci della scuola o setta con questo nome dal X-XI secolo (1967, 20-1):

> the nature of Bon was in fact a heterodox form of Buddhism with nothing in its practical teachings that need conflict with the more orthodox religion. (Snellgrove 1987, 503)

2) Ipotesi Stein/Tucci: Stein muove due critiche alla Macdonald: la prima è che i documenti di Dunhuang sovente citano l'opposizione tra sacerdoti *bonpo* e monaci buddhisti, come, parallelamente, i testi posteriori all'XI secolo parlano di opposizione tra bon e buddhismo. In occasione del trattato di pace sino-tibetano dell'821-823 (tra Khri gTsug lDe brtsan detto Ral pa can, 815-838, e l'imperatore Mu zong, 821-824, dei Tang; Richardson 1978, 137-62; 1985, 106-43), gli Annali cinesi nominano i bonpo associati alla recita dei rituali di giuramento, i quali chiamano a testimone le divinità del cielo e della terra, dei fiumi, del sole, della luna e delle stelle (Stein 1985, 88-9). Un dizionario sinotibetano da Dunhuang traduce il termine *bon-*

po in *shigong* (mago). Nei manoscritti utilizzati da Macdonald, *bon po*, *bon mo* e *gshen* compaiono abbondantemente nelle recite arcaiche (Stein 1985, 89), a riprova che il bon dell'XI secolo

> n'a pas surgi *ex nihilo*. Il avait un passé. (88)

I bonpo di Dunhuang equivalsero agli 'stregoni' o medium cinesi (*wu*) della religione 'popolare' per i riti mantici, matrimoniali e funebri (1985, 88 nota 15; 1983, 171-4; Pelliot 1961, 2-3, 81-2). L'analogia tra *bonpo* e *wu* è ampiamente condivisibile e nella fattispecie è corroborata dalle descrizioni del trattato. La seconda obiezione di Stein è che, dopo i testi di Dunhuang, nessuna traccia è serbata del termine *gtsug* (Stein 1985, 87), ma conscia dell'assenza, Macdonald (1971, 388) spiega che essa

> est le résultat d'un travail systématique et concerté tendant à supprimer le plus radicalement possible tout souvenir de la religion officielle de la monarchie, pour détourner au profit du bouddhisme les éléments de prestige qui y sont restés attachés;

Per Stein, *gtsug* non indicò un principio religioso, ma nell'accezione di 'sincipite, sommità' fu connesso agli dei ancestrali (Phywa), alle montagne sacre e

> semble relever d'un ensemble sémantique cohérent servant à exalter, à glorifier, la puissance et la pérennité notamment du pouvoir royale. Il comprend des images de hauteur ou de sommet élevé s'attachant à la tête et au casque des rois qui les reliaient au ciel [...] il désigne une sagesse, un art, une science, un *savoir-faire* (et les écrits qui en parlent). Pour les rois, notamment pour Srong btsan sGam po, il s'agit clairement de l'art de gouverner et d'une sagesse politique. (Stein 1985, 133)

Allora il nome della religione antica fu *bon* o *gtsug*?

> La religion indigène n'avait sans doute pas de nom. Mais dans le textes archaïques, le Bon et les bon-po jouent déjà un rôle important. (132)

Il bon (adattatosi al buddhismo dal X secolo) andrebbe distinto (Tucci 1973; Stein 1986) dal *substratum* della tradizione popolare non buddhista (*mi chos*, 'la religione/legge degli uomini'), che ancora impronta la visione religiosa tibeto-himalayana, cioè 'la tradizione/la religione senza nome'.

3) Ipotesi Karmay/Namkhai: per Karmay, in contrasto con Macdonald, il bon è già radicato al tempo dei re, ma ciò non esclude che esi-

stessero altre credenze indigene all'epoca (1983, 94; 1987, 130; 2009, 57). Il nucleo originario dell'antica religione bon è formato dalla natura numinosa dei re e dalle loro divinità, specialmente quelle delle montagne (*sku bla*), e i rituali *bon*, eseguiti da sacerdoti *gshen* e *bonpo*, ne furono parte essenziale (Karmay, 1975, 182; 1996; Kirkland 1982; Hill, 2015, *passim*). Per Namkhai il bon è l'insieme dei culti e delle tradizioni magiche, rituali e religiose

> basate molto probabilmente su elementi comuni al patrimonio dello sciamanismo pan-asiatico. Sicuramente alcuni tipi di Bön erano basati su principi e pratiche simili a quelle dello sciamanismo: ciò è provato da numerosi elementi che ancora sopravvivono nei riti Bön e nei riti buddhisti derivati dal Bön. Ad esempio il tema dell'anima (*bla*) rapita dagli spiriti e riconquistata grazie al potere dello sciamano (del *bon po* in questo caso) è comune a molte tradizioni sciamaniche non solo asiatiche. (Namkhai 1996, 19)

Elementi delle tradizioni sciamaniche eurasiatiche nel bon sono osservati da Tucci (1946; 1949; 1970; 1973), De Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1923-59; 1975), Haarh (1969), Ermakov (2008; 2011) e Hoffmann (1950; 1961; 1975) per cui la soggiogazione all'ambiente nativo spiega l'adorazione tibetana degli spiriti naturali e il ricorso a magia e divinazione. Al riguardo vorrei ricordare un'affermazione di Paolo Daffinà (1929-2004) su questi temi:

> l'esistenza di pratiche sciamaniche avvicina l'antica religione degli Indoeuropei a quella dei popoli dell'Asia centrale e settentrionale, molto più che non a quella dei popoli dell'Oriente anteriore antico. (Daffinà 1975, 16; 1982)[9]

4) Ipotesi Samuel: dall'epoca monarchica al trionfo buddhista, la religione è sciamanica e suddivisa nei due stadi di una società priva di stato e del proto-stato (1993, 438; 1990). La religione di Yar klungs fu influenzata dalla *shamanic religion* e della *court religion* dello Zhang zhung e caratterizzata da bonpo e gshen che erano parte della religione di corte a Lhasa, e rappresentavano una tra le varie tipologie di sacerdozio a quel tempo (Samuel 1993; 1990).

Alcune tradizioni mitiche e rituali sono continuate nella religione popolare tibetana e dell'area himalayana e diversi testi in tibetano preclassico descrivono miti e riti connessi al sacerdozio bonpo

9 Harva 1927; 1933; 1938; 1949; Roux 1963; 1966; Delaby 1976; Diószegi, Hoppal 1978; Lot-Falck 1978; 2018; Paulson 1978; Bäckman, Hultkrantz 1978; Marazzi 1984; 1989; Diószegi 1998; Lambert 2003; Mastromattei et al. 1995; Capacchi 1993; Mastromattei, Rigopoulos 1999; Eliade 1999; Stépanoff, Zarcone 2012; Hamayon 2015; Mandelstam Balzer 2015a; 2015b.

anteriore alla religione dell'XI secolo (Lalou 1952; 1957; Stein 1970; 1971). Dopo la frattura nel IX secolo con la disintegrazione dell'impero (Bogoslovskij 1972; Beckwith 1987; Ricca, Vogliotti 2018) e la forte battuta d'arresto con il patrocinio regale per il buddhismo nell'VIII e nel IX secolo, secondo Kværne[10] nell'XI secolo comparirà una religione strutturata e monastica definita *bon* la cui continuità sostenuta dai bonpo con la prima religione

> indipendentemente dalla sua validità storica, è significativa in se stessa. (Kværne 2007, 59)

Se il sistema del bon è organico dall'epoca reale, una netta divisione tra gli antichi culti e la religione 'organizzata' non è verosimile (Stein 1988, 43), ma la religione resistita sinora assorbì pratiche e dottrine del buddhismo dominante, adattandole alle proprie necessità, in

> una strategia dinamica e flessibile che ha assicurato la sopravvivenza e la vitalità di una minoranza religiosa. (Kværne 2007, 61)

Molti buddhisti ritengono un inganno l'affermazione dei bonpo che le sacre scritture del bon furono tradotte in tibetano dalla lingua dello Zhang zhung, prima dell'arrivo dei testi buddhisti in Tibet, e ciò non

10 Kværne (1994, 17) postula quattro fasi per l'antica religione tibetana, dall'avvento della dinastia di Yar klungs sino al trionfo buddhista: 1) una religione autoctona prebuddhista corrispondente alla *original shamanic religion* (Samuel 1993, 438), la quale all'epoca poteva o meno essere nota come 'bon'. 2) Un culto dinastico – influenzato dalle religioni liminali, quali il buddhismo (India), lo zoroastrismo, il manicheismo (Iran) e lo Zhang zhung – cioè la *court religion* di Zhang Zhung e Tibet; avrebbe potuto denominarsi bon e vi aggiungerei l'ipotesi di influenza del mitraismo (Hoffmann 1975, 108). All'influsso gnostico-manicheo assocerei quello 'siriaco' del cristianesimo nestoriano che Tucci (1946; 1981, 7-9; Hambis 1982, 903-7) riconosceva nella *religiös Weltanschauung* tibetana in seno al *zentralasiatische Synkretismus* (Tardieu 1988; Tremblay 2001; Uray 1983; Klimkeit 1987; Sárközi 1987; Hoffmann 1975; Gnoli 2003; 2006; 2008). Il primate nestoriano di Bagdad Timoteo I (780-823) nominò un vescovo metropolita per il Tibet e la pressione imperiale tibetana sulla Cina (Gansu) e sull'Asia centrale (bacino del Tarim, del 790 è la conquista di Bishbalik, presso Turfān, uno dei centri maggiori degli Uighuri; Bogoslovskij 1972, 49-66; Tiso 2016, 123-99) favorì l'incontro con le religioni nestoriana e manichea, diffuse nell'impero uighuro e alla corte dei Tang ove l'eresia di Nestorio era penetrata già nel 633 sotto Taizong (626-649). La convergenza sino-iranica ebbe esiti potenti nella storia culturale dell'Asia centrale, dove la potenza tibetana verrà arginata solo con il trattato sino-tibetano dell'822 e definitivamente con il crollo della monarchia tibetana venti anni dopo (Bussagli 1970, 214; Uray 1983; Klimkeit 1994). 3) Una *folk religion*, la 'religione popolare' (Tucci 1973) e 'religione senza nome, ovvero la tradizione' (Stein 1986) i cui culti ancestrali dedicati alle montagne e ai numi identificati con quelle, attestati sin dall'epoca di Yar klungs (Karmay 1996, 59-75), testimoniano una continuità spesso non riconosciuta. 4) Dall'XI secolo il *g.yung drung bon*, organizzato, monastico, in rapporto con il buddhismo. Condivido la visione di Kværne che nell'attuale *supermercato globale* delle religioni, il bon è sfruttato ideologicamente ed economicamente dalla *New Age* (1994, 18).

sembra verificabile storicamente come ricorda Beckwith (2009), ma è importante tener presente che Blondeau (1971) ha dimostrato la derivazione di uno scritto buddhista tibetano dall'adattamento di uno del bon: ciò aiuterebbe a non considerare unidirezionale il processo di adattamento, assimilazione e riconversione per garantirsi un'autorappresentazione di totale autonomia, screditando e accusando di plagio l'altra tradizione religiosa. La suddivisione e la denominazione del bon coniate dalla tradizione buddhista non sono mai state usate dai bonpo, perché ritengono che esse non corrispondano precisamente alle loro dottrine e soffrano la negatività della prospettiva buddhista, secondo cui il bon andrebbe 'storicamente' ripartito in tre periodi di sviluppo (Namkhai 1996, 86-94): il bon rivelato (*rdol bon* o *'jol bon*) che si sarebbe diffuso ad opera di gShen rab, al tempo del sesto re di Yar Klungs, Khri lde bTsan po; il bon derivato (*'khyar bon*) che sarebbe stato introdotto alla morte di Gri gum per officiare i riti funebri (*bshid*) per i morti assassinati che gShen rab non avrebbe conosciuto e potuto eseguire, come quelli per liberare i defunti dagli impedimenti (*gshin po 'dur ba* cioè il *'dur bon*), per placare lo spirito degli assassinati (*gri 'dul ba*) e soggiogare gli spiriti selvaggi (*rgod 'dur*); questo bon avrebbe risentito di influenze śivaite indiane e prima del suo arrivo i buddhisti non attribuiscono al bon alcuna teoria filosofica; il bon trasformato (*bsgyur bon*), infine, sarebbe sorto in tre fasi accomunate dall'emulazione delle dottrine buddhiste: la prima del maestro Sham sngon can (letteralmente 'Gonna blu') con cui inizierebbe il plagio delle opere e il loro occultamento (la tradizione dei *gter ma*); la seconda di rGyal ba Byang chub all'epoca di Khri srong lDe'u btsan e Padmasaṃbhava; la terza, per mano degli scopritori di testi (*gter ston*) gShen chen Klu dga' e Bon zhig Khyung nag (1103-1183).

L'attuale *demarche* dei bonpo si preoccupa di distinguere la tradizione del g.yung drung bon sia da quella del 'bon antico', inteso come la religione precedente alla leggendaria riforma di gShen rab,[11] sia da quella del *bon gsar*, letteralmente 'nuovo bon', sebbene ne ri-

11 Secondo Ermakov (2008; 2011) che segue i precetti 'nativisti' dei grandi maestri bonpo del ventesimo secolo – Dpal ldan Tshul khrim (1902-1973), Shar rdza bKra shis rGyal mtshan (1859-1934), Chögyal Namkhai Norbu e lo stesso Lopon Tendzin Namdak – questo tipo sarebbe il *gdod ma'i bon*, il 'bon primordiale', un ancestrale sistema di credenze e pratiche dello Zhang Zhung e del Tibet preistorici (Namkhai 2010, 21), in buona parte estinto, comparabile allo sciamanesimo siberiano, e connesso a un primitivo culto pan-eurasiatico del cervo celeste le cui tracce si rifletterebbe tuttora nei Quattro Veicoli della Causa (*rGyu'i bon bzhi*, vedi nota 24) del g.Yung drung bon, e in particolare in tre delle dodici Scienze – *Shes pa bcu gnyis* (Namkhai 1996, 104-344), che costituiscono tradizionalmente il *substratum* culturale tibetano più arcaico e autentico e i cui precetti sono contenuti anche nella classificazione dei veicoli causali – in particolare la seconda scienza (*shes*) che officia i riti per la prosperità (*g.yang*) (Karmay, Nagano 2002, 35-53), la quarta scienza dello *gshen* dell'esistenza (*srid pa*) che svolge i riti funebri (*'dur*) e la decima scienza del cervo (*sha ba*) che vola (*lding*).

conosca *au fond* l'essere anch'esse forme di bon.[12] Sebbene non si possa parlare di un *Bon organisé* fino all'XI secolo, lo *bsgyur bon* dei buddhisti, è qui favorevolmente accolta l'ipotesi di Karmay (1983, 95):

> le 'Bon transformé' serait le 'Bon éternel' (*g.yuṅ druṅ bon*), mais les Bon po appliquent ce dernier nom rétrospectivement au Bon du temps des rois. Le 'Bon organisé' ne peut être entièrement dissocié du Bon du temps des rois, car on ne peut pas ignorer les nombreuses relations entre le 'Bon organisé' et la tradition ancienne.

Anche Stein (1988, 43) riconosce:

> Il y a donc continuité entre les manuscrits de Touen-huang et les textes du Bon tardif. D'une façon ou d'une autre – tradition orale ou connaissance des manuscrits – les bon-po postérieurs ont connu et ont utilisé des thèmes et des termes techniques qui se trouvent déjà dans les manuscrits anciens.

La recente scoperta dei manoscritti provenienti da dGa' thang nel Tibet meridionale:

12 Tra XIII e XIV secolo nel bon sorse una tendenza legata alla rivelazione dei *gter ma*, analoga al sistema rnying ma pa incentrato sulla figura di Padmasaṃbhava. Nella seconda metà del XIV secolo compare un gruppo di visionari, il cui esponente principale fu Khyung po Blo ldan sNying po (1360-1384, autore di molti testi tra cui lo *gZi brjid*). Mentre le loro visioni originariamente derivavano da esseri soprannaturali che dettavano all'adepto, in seguito sono associate ai maestri della prima propagazione del bon come Dran pa Nam mkha' (Kværne 1974). Nel XIV secolo si diffondono i *dgongs gter* (tesori mentali) che mediante le 'benedizioni' (*byin rlabs*) di entità numinose sorgono spontanei nella mente dell'adepto. L'ideologia del *bon gsar* si fonda su un tema leggendario secondo cui il saggio Dran pa Nam mkha' e sua moglie 'Od ldan 'Bar ma diedero alla luce due figli, Tshe dbang Rig 'dzin e g.Yung drung mThong grol, i cui insegnamenti divennero il fulcro della dottrina. Il gruppo divenne noto come 'Chi med yab sras bzhi 'i Quattro Immortali, Padre [Madre e] Figli'; g.Yung drung mThong grol fu identificato con Padmasaṃbhava. Si ritiene vivessero tutti nell'VIII secolo. In questo senso non c'è contraddizione nel fatto che i bonpo accettano i precetti di Padmasaṃbhava; gli stessi rNying ma pa considerano santi i Quattro. Questa disposizione divenne nota più tardi come *bon gsar ma* 'il nuovo bon' (Karmay, Nagano 2001, viii). La divergenza di percezione rispetto alle altre figurazioni delle varie tradizioni restituisce al g.yung drung bon una prospettiva illimpidita per il senso della sua autodefinizione: «in reference to the distinction of contemporary Bon from 'unreformed' varieties of Bon, such as may still be preserved in its lower vehicles, bon po-s seem to have retained memories of developments of early *phyi dar* Bon identity discourse. There is a fair chance that the term *g-yung drung bon* in early Bon discourse was originally coined precisely to set it apart from this worldly goals and apotropaic rites of 'unreformed' Bon, such as that mentioned nebulous (and probably (re)invented) pre-imperial entity *'dur bon*, which, even though it is referred to in Dunhuang sources, we mainly know from later historiography on earlier periods and from later *gter ma* literature» (Blezer 2008, 438).

enhances the antiquity of the Bon tradition. It unambiguously reinforces its later historical tradition, which has always maintained that Bon was the religion of the Tibetans prior to the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet in the 7th century. This therefore once again demystifies the assertion according to which there was no religion called Bon before the 11th century A.D. (Karmay 2009, 57)

3 Il tantra materno nella tradizione del bon

Concordemente alla visione tradizionale la capillare diffusione del bon in Tibet avvenne all'epoca del secondo monarca della dinastia di Yar klungs Mu khri bTsan po,[13] figlio di Gnya' khri bTsan po.[14] Questa mitica età dell'oro per la propagazione del bon e l'equilibrio tra le creature durerà nella sua prima fase sino alla recisione della corda dMu e al conseguente abbandono in terra delle exùvie dell'ottavo sovrano Gri gum bTsan po.[15] Durante il regno dei primi due sovrani si propa-

13 Nel nome dei primi sovrani di Yar klungs, i così detti 'Sette Khri del Cielo' (gNam gyi Khri bdun), oltre la componente fissa – ovvero il titolo di Khri bTsan po, 'potente Khri' – «une variable entre dans la composition du nom; elle représente le nom personnel du souverain et c'est toujours le nom de la mère» (Bogoslovskij 1972, 29-30; Cutler 1991), ad esempio il nome della sposa di gNya' khri bTsan po, gNam mug mug, e quello del figlio Mu khri bTsan po. I composti con *Khri* nel lessico dello Zhang Zhung sovente alludono al principio vitale, come indica il corrispettivo in tibetano: per esempio *khri tsan* = *thugs nyid* (condizione assoluta, natura primordiale della mente); *khri seg* = *srog gi dbang po* (principio, essenza/forza vitale) (Namkhai 1996, 63-6; Karmay, Nagano 2008, 26-7). Khri compare in svariati nomi dello Zhang Zhung come Khri wer La rje Gu lang gSer gyi Bya ru can, cioè Khri wer La rje Detentore dell'Aurea Corona di Corno, il primo dei 'diciotto re dello Zhang Zhung dalla corona ornata di corna' (*zhang zhung gi rgyal po bya ru can bco brgyad*), leggendario discepolo di gShen rab ed eccezionale patrono del bon (Namkhai 1989; 2009, 130).

14 gNya' khri bTsan po «according to the tradition marks the introduction of Bon and the introduction of an all-Tibetan ruler» (Haarh 1969, 18).

15 La recisione della corda dMu e l'omicidio di Gri gum tradizionalmente marcano un'irreversibile frattura nella preistoria religiosa del Tibet, a esse seguì la leggendaria restaurazione del prestigio monarchico e del bon grazie a 'Od lde spu rgyal da cui dipese l'arrivo in Tibet dallo Zhang Zhung e dal Gilgit di sacerdoti bonpo che potessero officiare i riti funebri per il padre Gri gum (Haarh 1969, 108-10; Karmay 1972, 66 ss.; Stein 1986, 202-3; Namkhai 2013, 158-62; Tucci 1949, 714-16). Il regno di Od' lde segna il ritorno per i bonpo di un «integral royal power of the ancient Tibetan monarchy exercised by a trinity, The Three Great Ones, constituted by the king, the head shaman or gShen gnyan, and the minister» (Haarh 1969, 108). La tradizione gli ascrive fondamentali innovazioni: l'installazione dei primi canali irrigativi nella valle del Yar klung, l'inizio dell'estrazione di metalli, la costruzione dei primi ponti (Bogoslovskji 1972, 28-9; Francke, Thomas 1914, 79). La corda dMu è simbolo dell'immortalità dei primi Sette Sovrani di Yar klungs. La diafana apoteosi degli antichi re corrisponde alle tecniche yogiche e tantriche del processo di compimento (*rDzogs rim*). Il ricongiungimento della mente (*sems*) alla base primordiale (*gdod ma'i gzhi*), sempre esistita in uno stato perfetto e completo (*rdzogs pa*), è chiamato *mas ldog* 'ritorno dal di sotto' e allude alla sua purezza originale, il corpo di arcobaleno (*'ja' lus*) culmine della pratica rDzogs chen. Esaurite le funzioni terrene i sovrani non morivano come gli altri esseri ma si dissolve-

garono gli insegnamenti tantrici del *sPyi spungs*,[16] uno dei cicli più importanti dello rDzogs chen e fiorirono i precetti legati allo 'stadio di emanazione o creazione' – *bskyed rim*[17] – dei tantra paterni (*pha rgyud*), e allo 'stadio di perfezione o compimento' – *rdzogs rim*[18] – dei tantra materni (*ma rgyud*); allo stesso tempo vennero introdotte le dottrine dello rDzogs chen.[19] Karmay (1972, 39 nota 2) nel commen-

vano unendosi alla corda dMu (che collega la sommità del capo del re e la sua dimora celeste), detta anche 'ponte degli dèi' (*lHa zam*), come in un arcobaleno. Il 'vento', o la luce, che si innalza a cominciare dai piedi consegue il corpo d'arcobaleno e il trasferimento (*'pho ba*) dell'anima (principio cosciente) in un cielo. Il riconoscimento di un nucleo di immortalità si ritrova in tutta l'Asia settentrionale e centrale (un'apertura nel tetto da cui l'anima fugge sull'arcobaleno) e in Cina, con il soffio (*qi*) che si propaga a partire dai piedi e ricorda le tecniche di respirazione taoista dai talloni descritte nel *Zhuangzi* (Stein 1986, 202-3; Reynolds 1990; Karmay 1988, 190). Non è possibile chiarire se e quanto gli esperti di yoga giunti in Tibet si siano serviti di immagini e concetti indigeni, o se siano stati i tibetani a interpretare le loro antiche concezioni mitologiche alla luce delle tecniche meditative e yogiche.

16 Karmay 1972, 39. I tre cicli dello *spyi spungs* si ritiene venissero proclamati nel mondo dei lHa (gli dèi superi), dei Klu (corrispondenti ai nāga indiani, geni ofidici e ctoni, detentori di sapienza) e degli uomini rispettivamente dal lHa'i gshen po, Yongs su Dag pa, dal Klu'i gshen po, Ye shes sNying po, e dal Rgyal rigs kyi gshen po, cioè Mi lus bSam legs.

17 Il *bsKyed rim* (*utpattikrama*) è la fase meditativa di sviluppo della visualizzazione della deità e del suo *maṇḍala*, caratterizzata dalla regolarità verso ogni direzione: «the first thing it must express is emanation from a centre into space. As the divinities in whose forms the process of emanation (*utpattikrama*) is expressed, have the value of pure symbol, their forms and their number are relevant only to the categories in terms of which the meditator conceives of his own personality, for it is these two things, the divine forms (*nirvāṇa*) and the components of his own self (*saṃsāra*), which are to be identified» (Snellgrove 1959, 31). I suoi metodi soteriologici (*sgrub thabs*/*sādhana*) attengono alla purificazione e trasformazione delle percezioni esterne, culminando nell'esperienza dell'inseparabilità dell'apparenza fenomenica e della vacuità (*snang stong zung 'jug*), Namkhai 1994, 19-20. Nella fattispecie il *bsKyed rim* prevede cinque tipi di *Pha rgyud* del settimo e ottavo veicolo bonpo, *A dkar theg pa* e *Ye gshen theg pa*, Karmay 1972, 39 nota 2, 45 nota 2; Snellgrove 1969, 10-11.

18 Lo *rDzogs rim* (*saṃpannakrama*) è la seconda fase dei *sādhana* dei tantra superiori in cui l'adepto medita la struttura del *maṇḍala* interno composta dai canali (*rtsa*/*nāḍi*), dai venti sottili interni (*rlung*/*vāyu*) e dalle gocce dell'essenza dell'energia (*thig le*/*bindu*). La trasformazione dell'energia vitale giunge all'esperienza della chiara luce (*'od gsal*/*prabhāsvara*), la natura vacua e luminosa della mente, coalescente a quella della realtà ultima. Lo scopo ultimo delle fasi materna e paterna «consists in learning to conceive of existence in knowledge of its non-existence, and one will then automatically realize its true nature which is innate (*sahaja*) and a matter for self-experience (*svasaṃvedya*). But this can only be done by using existence itself as the means (*upāya*) for there is no other possible. One creates mentally (*bhāvayati*) an idealized representation of the process of emanation of existence (*utpattikrama*) which is the *saṃsāra*, and by realizing the dream-like nature of its apparent diversity, one realizes its unity in this process of realization (*saṃpannakrama*), which is *nirvāṇa*» (Snellgrove 1959, 22).

19 Il nono e supremo veicolo (*Shin tu rnal 'byor*/*atiyoga*) non enfatizza le elaborate visioni di deità e *maṇḍala* (tantra paterni), né lo yoga esoterico dei canali e dell'energia interni (tantra materni), ma è senza sforzo rispetto ad entrambi; il metodo non è né la rinuncia, né la purificazione o la trasformazione come nei *sūtra* e nei tantra, ma il cammino dell'auto-liberazione (*rang grol lam*) attraverso la visione (*lta ba*) dell'indissolubi-

to al *Legs bshad rin po che'i mdzod dpyod ldan dga' ba'i char* (Il prezioso tesoro dei buoni detti, amabile pioggia per il saggio)[20] iniziato nel 1922 dal maestro bonpo Grub dbang bKra shis rGyal mtshan Dri med sNying po (1859-1934), rimarca che i principi del *Ma rgyud* sin dalla tradizionale diffusione in Tibet sono assimilabili a quelli dello rDzogs chen; difatti entrambi sono considerati parte del nono veicolo.[21] Lo stesso Mu khri btsan po, definito rGyal gshen, 'Sacerdo-

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lità di consapevolezza e vacuità (*rig stong zung 'jug*), stato naturale della saggezza primordiale (*ye shes*) senza creazione né cessazione sin dall'origine (Namkhai 1984, 20-1). «The Father tantras of Mahāyoga are the natural expression of the skilfull means of the appearance, intended on behalf of those requiring training who are mostly hostile and possessed by many ideas; the Mother tantras of Anuyoga are the discriminative awareness of the perfection stage which is the reality of emptiness, intended for the benefit of those who are mostly desirous and delight in the tranquillity of the mind; and the Atiyoga is revealed as the natural expression of their non-duality, intended for the benefit of those who are mostly deluded and who are energetic. For one who would transcend the mind there is the creative phase, for one who would possess the essence of the mind there is the perfecting phase, and for those who are supreme and most secret there is the Great Perfection» (Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, 359). Dalla base (*gzhi*) derivano l'illusione e la liberazione (Achard 2012; 2016). La via (*lam*) è l'insieme delle pratiche volte all'ottenimento del frutto (*'bras bu*), realizzazione definitiva delle qualità della base: *gZhi* è la perfezione assoluta, il modo d'essere primordiale (*ye nas gnas lugs*) di tutte le cose, la natura ultima (*rang bzhin*), l'illuminazione intrinseca (*de bzhin gshegs pa*). Lo stato naturale di *gzhi* è la purezza primordiale (*ka dag*) ove tutti i fenomeni esprimono la sua luminosità intrinseca (*'od gsal*) e si manifestano spontaneamente perfetti (*lhun gyis grub pa*) *per se*. Il nono veicolo è l'unico a non fondarsi su *sems*, la coscienza ordinaria, discorsiva e concettuale, bensì su *sems nyid*, la natura della mente che è la vacuità (*stong pa nyid*) luminosa degli esseri, la consapevolezza istantanea, il riconoscimento dello stato primevo (*rig pa*), la base primordiale (*ye gzhi*) senza caratteristiche sottesa ai fenomeni. La condizione primordiale (*ngang*) e la natura della mente (*sems nyid*) risiedono nel *Thig le nyag gcig*, l'unica essenza, corrispondente al frutto (*'bras bu*), cioè la pratica della saggezza primordiale (*ye shes*) della natura della mente (Namdak 2006; Maniscalco 2016; 2018b).

20 «Strettamente basato sulle fonti arcaiche, lo scritto, per la prima volta, obbligò l'accademia occidentale a osservare l'esistenza nel bon di una strutturata visione del proprio passato» (Maniscalco 2018a, 117). Si veda Karmay 1972; Achard 2008.

21 La classificazione in nove veicoli (*theg pa dgu*) sembra non essere sorta prima del X o XI secolo (come nel sistema rNying ma pa): metodi predittivi; la pacificazione e il controllo sulle divinità locali e sul mondo degli spiriti; la sottomissione o distruzione degli avversari, attraverso i riti tantrici; la guida del principio cosciente attraverso uno stato intermedio (*bar do*); la disciplina morale dei devoti e della regola monastica; la teoria e i rituali tantrici (Snellgrove 1967, 11-12). Nei *rGyu'i bon bzhi*, I Quattro Veicoli della Causa, i più fedeli all'antica tradizione, i bonpo intrecciarono l'antico sentiero del rituale magico con il nuovo della moralità e della meditazione normato nei *'Bras bu'i bon lnga*, I Cinque Veicoli del Frutto, di influenza buddhista. I Quattro Veicoli della causa sono: 1) *Phywa gshen theg pa*, il veicolo dello *gShen* del *Phywa*, che descrive quattro metodi di predizione: *mo*, sortilegi e divinazione; *rtsis*, calcoli astrologici; i riti *gTo*; *dpyad*, la diagnosi medica. Per la divinazione (*mo* o *mo pra*) vale la definizione di Namkhai (2009, 192): «Generally speaking, *mo* is any kind of method for identifying and examining positive or negative conditions, while *pra* refers to the signs that arise to indicate them. Specifically, however, within the renowned category of the Clairvoyance of the sGra-bla of Primordial Knowledge [*ye mkhyen sgra bla'i mngon shes*], which pertains to the tradition of the Phya gShen, mo refers to several types of divination, performed after an invocation to the hosts of

te Reale', ricevette, come anche il padre, gli insegnamenti del *Spyi spungs* da dMu gshen sNang ba'i mdog can.[22] Questi aveva a sua vol-

Guardias, Deities, or to the assembly of the sGra-bla Wer-ma. These divinations are carried out through different supports, such as the Magical Divination [*rde'u 'phrul gyi mo*], done with forty-two pebbles; Symbolic Image Divination [*brda mo*]; Scapulimancy [*sog mo*], which uses as its means sheep shoulder blades; Dice Divination [*shwo mo*]; Divination with Beads [*phreng mo*]; and Cho lo Divination, which is performed using five wooden dominoes. These kinds of divination are still practiced and widespread today, in both Bonpos and Buddhist circles». 2) *sNang gshen theg pa*, il veicolo dello *gshen* dell'Universo fenomenico contiene: i riti di esorcismo, connessi all'esposizione (*smrang*) dell'esistenza (*srid pa*); i riti di protezione da demoni ('Dre) e vampiri (Sri); i riti di riscatto (*glud*); i riti apotropaici verso gli gNyan, spiriti furiosi e Sa bdag, lHa, dBal, gTod ecc., divinità locali, telluriche e ctonie. 3) *'Phrul gshen theg pa*, il veicolo dello *gShen* del potere magico con i riti di distruzione (*bsgral*) delle provocazioni (*gdon*) delle entità malvagie e dei nemici. 4) *Srid gshen theg pa*, il veicolo dello *gShen* dell'esistenza per i riti funerari e lo stato intermedio (*bar do*). I Cinque Veicoli del Frutto sono: 5) *dGe bsnyen theg pa*, il veicolo dei virtuosi, – *dge bsnyen* traduce *upāsaka*, riferito in India al laicato buddhista – con le regole di condotta per i laici. 6) *Drang srong theg pa*, il veicolo degli asceti – *drang srong* traduce l'indiano *ṛṣi*, i grandi profeti ancestrali, utilizzato per i monaci esperti, come *dge slong* traduce il buddhista *bhikṣu* – la via della più stretta regola ascetica e monastica. 7) *A dkar theg pa*, il veicolo della A bianca illustra la teoria tantrica con attenzione al processo di trasformazione attraverso il *maṇḍala*, preludendo agli insegnamenti tantrici del successivo veicolo. 8) *Ye gshen theg pa*, il veicolo dello *gShen* primordiale. La preparazione del *maṇḍala* con il monito a rammentare i numi locali (Sa bdag) prelude al processo meditativo di emanazione (*bskyed rim*) e a quello di realizzazione (*rdzogs rim*) del saggio perfetto. 9) *Yang rtse bla med theg pa*, il veicolo supremo dello rDzogs chen. Infine i dettami (*bon*) delle dodici scienze (*Shes pa bcu gnyis*), l'antico patrimonio sapienziale del Tibet, sono contenuti nella classificazione dei Quattro Veicoli della Causa e sono esposti nelle proclamazioni (*smrang*) dei racconti mitologici, garanzia d'efficacia rituale per la conoscenza dei poliedrici aspetti dell'energia degli esseri nella loro dimensione di esistenza (Namkhai 1996, 104-344). Il termine *smrang* designa una declamazione solenne caratterizzata da 'ululati' (*gchong*) e dall'epiteto di 'verità' (*bden pa*) (Stein 1970, 179-80 nota 23) ed è legato a *smra* (parlare) e a *smre* (espressione di dolore/enigmatica/imprecazione). La sua nozione è parallela a quella di *gzhung* (testo sacro) e di *rabs* (racconto dell'origine) ed è connessa alle offerte di riscatto (*glud*, *yas*). L'esatta narrazione dei miti delle origini «riattualizzava la continuità con il tempo mitico degli inizi e, quindi, assicurava il successo dell'operazione in corso» (Eliade 2006, 290); *smrang* è alla base dei riti funerari ed esorcistici delle Acque Nere (*Chab nag*), come *sngags* (mantra) è alla base della categoria delle Acque Bianche (*Chab dkar*) (Stein 1970). Questi racconti erano narrati nelle competizioni rituali, dalle corse di cavalli ai giochi atletici, in occasione dei matrimoni e soprattutto nelle celebrazioni dell'anno nuovo (*lo gsar*) il cui tema essenziale era la lotta tra gli dèi celesti e i demoni. «Gli dèi assistono allo spettacolo e ridono insieme agli esseri umani. La prova della risoluzione degli enigmi e la recitazione dei racconti, come quella delle saghe, si ripercuotono sul raccolto e sulla salute del bestiame. Dato che in occasione delle grandi feste si trovano riuniti sia gli dèi sia gli esseri umani, le opposizioni sociali al tempo stesso si affermano e si appianano, e il gruppo, ricollegandosi al proprio passato (origine del mondo e degli antenati) e al suo *habitat* (antenati-montagne sacre), si sente ritemprato» (Stein 1959, 440-1).

22 Egli sviluppò il potere magico di sottomettere ai suoi voti demoni e dèi. Anche Mu khri detenne prodigiose facoltà (Karmay 1972; Eliade 1999, 458): librarsi in volo, camminare sulle acque, metamorfosi in drago, aquila, leone e ospitò centootto esperti dal sTag gzig, onde tradurne gli insegnamenti (di cui anche egli divenne traduttore; Namkhai 2013, 54). Il dominio sugli spiriti, il volo, la corda/scala/ponte e la sua recisione, il teriomorfismo, l'uso del tamburo veicolo del volo (Mu khri è tra i tredici 'Detentori del tamburo turchese' G.yu rnga, come la sacerdotessa Stag wer Li Wer, la cui asce-

ta ricevuto il *Spyi spungs* dal leggendario rGyal gshen Mi lus bSam legs.[23] Questi nacque in Rgyal mkhar Ba chod. Quando il sovrano fu in procinto di morire, i re vicini si dichiararono pronti ad annetterne il regno, così il popolo riunito supplicò la dea Byams ma. Dopo un anno, la regina diede i natali a un bimbo molto intelligente che apprese subito le dottrine, in special modo quelle del *Ma rgyud*, dal maestro Yongs su Dag pa. Mentre ne praticava i precetti, le Sei Madri Custodi dell'insegnamento lo visitarono interrogandolo sulla profondità della sua conoscenza; egli replicò che essa era molto profonda poiché aveva incontrato sei grandi maestri. Sicché le Madri gli mostrarono un cranio riempito dell'acqua dell'oceano, vi immersero una canna e gliela porsero, spiegando che il bon del *Ma rgyud* è l'oceano, la sapienza del *Ma rgyud* dei sei maestri come l'acqua contenuta nel cranio, la sua, infine, come le gocce trattenute dalla canna. Così Mi lus bSam legs, scoraggiato, chiese in che modo realizzare una piena conoscenza e le Sei Madri lo invitarono a recarsi dalla *mkha' 'gro* lHa mo bZang za Ring btsun (la Compassionevole Emanazione della dea

sa celeste non lasciò spoglie, il volo di Gshen rab e dei suoi discepoli su di una ruota a otto raggi, con un'assimilazione e sostituzione di valore buddhista, quello del maestro Na ro Bon chung nell'ascesa del Ti se durante il duello con Mi la Ras pa; de Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975, 542; Namkhai 1996, 299-300) sono indizi sciamanici nel bon (Eliade 1999, 457; Nicoletti in Mastromattei et al. 1995). Kværne (2009) ricorda l'opera – criticata per la prospettiva buddhista – di Hoffmann (1950) e la *comparative morphology* adottata da Carlo Ginzburg (1989) nel rintracciare, partendo dalla caccia alle streghe del Medio Evo europeo, «a shamanistic pattern of beliefs and practices stretching back several millennia and encompassing large parts of the Eurasian continent» e auspica «an approach which can encompass and make sense of the ethnographic data of Tibetan popular religion *and* the literary and historical data of the textual sources» (2009, 23) e non releghi il tema entro «the limits imposed by Tibetology, and even less as a specific problem for 'Bonology', but in the context of broad regional studies and in the light of an open-end *Religiongeschichte*» (24). Credo che la *comparative morphology* possa aiutare a ricostruire la fenomenologia anche sciamanica della religione originale del Tibet; la riflessione, che facciamo nostra, si avvale delle ricerche morfologiche di Goethe e Wittgenstein esemplificate da una riflessione di quest'ultimo (1975, 28-9; Rhees 1967) in margine al *The Golden Bough* di Frazer (1922; Douglas 1978; Eldridge 1987; Zengotita 1989) e rammentata dal Ginzburg (1989, xxx): «La spiegazione storica, la spiegazione come ipotesi di sviluppo è solo un modo di raccogliere i dati – la loro sinossi. È ugualmente possibile vedere i dati nella loro relazione reciproca e riassumerli in una immagine generale che non abbia la forma di uno sviluppo cronologico. Questa rappresentazione perspicua (*übersichtliche Darstellung*) media la comprensione, che consiste per l'appunto nel 'vedere le connessioni'. Da qui l'importanza di trovare *anelli intermedi*».

23 La storia di Mi lus bSam legs si fonda su alcuni *gter ma* in particolare sul *Ma rgyud Thugs rje nyi ma*, riscoperto da Gu ru rNon rtse (1136-); sul *Gzhi ye sangs rgyas pa'i rgyud*, sempre appartenente al *Ma rgyud* e ritrovato dallo stesso maestro; e sul *Bsen thub*, riscoperto da gShen chen Klu dga' (996-1035) nel 1017. I *gter ma* di Gu ru rNon rtse furono da questi trasmessi al monaco Gzhon nu nel Khams, Tibet orientale; Karmay 1972, xx-xxv, 129 nota 1; Martin 1994, 33-4.

Byams ma)[24] ed egli, ricevutane la conoscenza, iniziò a praticare i tre cicli del *Ma rgyud*.[25]

4 Introduzione alla soteriologia del *Ma rgyud ye shes thig le'i mchan grel, Commento e note al tantra materno, essenza della saggezza primordiale*

I principi soteriologici, escatologici, e metafisici del *Ma rgyud* esposti nell'opera di Namdak si rivelano inerenti alla matrice metafisica degli insegnamenti della Totale Perfezione.

Andrea Loseries-Leick (1994, 504-5), studiando il simbolismo rituale e artistico del *Ma rgyud* nel bon sulla scia dei precetti dello Yongdzin, osserva che il *Ma rgyud* si fonda su un tipo di base (*gzhi*), differente rispetto a quella degli altri tantra, cioè *kun gzhi*. Nel *Ma rgyud*, *kun gzhi* non corrisponde all'uso del medesimo termine nella scuola dello Yogācāra, bensì a quello utilizzato nello rDzogs chen. Nella scuola filosofica indiana, la denominazione *kun gzhi* (*ālaya*) è attribuita a uno degli otto tipi di coscienza posseduti dagli esseri senzienti, *rnam par shes pa* (*vijñāna*); ove l'*ālayavijñāna* (*kun gzhi rnam par shes pa*) o coscienza di base è considerato il contenitore di tutte le tracce e impronte karmiche (*bag chags*/*vāsanā*) e per tale ragione ritenuto impuro; inoltre purificati gli impedimenti karmici, si stima che esso scompaia del tutto (Rossi 1999, 53).

Nella visione bonpo della Totale Perfezione, *kun gzhi* è ricettacolo e fonte di ogni fenomeno del ciclo di trasmigrazione e al contempo la base dello stato che supera la sofferenza, ovvero base sia del *saṃsāra* sia del *nirvāṇa*. Essa rappresenta la condizione primordiale, da sempre pura (*ka dag*) e spontaneamente realizzata (*lhun grub*).

24 bZang za Ring btsun è legata alla trasmissione dello rDzogs chen. 'Chi med Gtsug phud, maestro dello rDzogs chen, che diverrà in una successiva esistenza gShen rab, nasce da Bzang za e 'Phrul gshen sNang ldan il quale, sceso dal cielo come cuculo, atterra sulla sua spalla destra, mentre ella riposa sulla riva di un lago (Karmay 1972, xx-xxv). Nel tantra materno, bZang za Ring btsun si manifesta come la *mkha' 'gro ma* (pr. Kandröma, letteralmente 'colei che va per il cielo'/*ḍākinī*, guardiane degli insegnamenti, messaggere dello spazio, pacifiche o terrifiche – a seconda del merito di chi le avvicini – emanazioni della potenza della Saggezza) Kye ma 'Od mtsho, e insieme con Gsang mchog Rgyal po, ella rappresenta il cuore della deità meditazionale (*yi dam*) del ciclo stesso, e trasmette le rivelazioni del tantra materno a Mi lus bSam legs. Kye ma 'Od mtsho è anche la principale figura connessa alle liturgie e alle pratiche del *gcod* (Rossi 2016b, 156 nota 13).

25 Il ciclo esterno, *Phyi skor*, il ciclo interno, *Nang skor*, il ciclo segreto, *Gsang skor*, predicati in risposta alle domande poste da schiere di *ḍākiṇī* dal Buddha Primordiale Kun tu bZang po, cui sono qui attribuiti i nomi di Gsang mchog Rgyal po e di Gsang mchog Mthar thug: «Le Révélateur Samantabhadra est l'Eveillé Primordial (*thog ma'i sangs rgyas*) à la source de la révélation des Tantras de la Grande Perfection et est considéré comme l'archi-ancêtre (*yang mes*) de tous les Buddhas» (Achard 2016, 13 nota 5).

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Donatella Rossi nel commento al *rGyud bu chung bcu gnyis*, *I dodici piccoli tantra*, e al *gter ma* dello rDzogs chen, riscoperto nel 1088 da Gzhod ston dNgos grub, *Lta ba seng ge sgra bsgrags*, *La visione che è come il ruggito del leone*, osserva (1999, 54):

> it is important to note that the qualifications of the Basis are actually those of the quintessential state of the individual, taken from a macrocosmic perspective.

La base ha una capacità perfetta e spontanea di dispiegarsi in ogni sorta di manifestazione (*'byung rang ma 'gag pa*); dall'intendimento della propria natura ultima dipende la percezione delle apparenze (*snang ba*), vale a dire come stato di trasmigrazione o trascendente la sofferenza. L'illuminazione primordiale (*ye sangs rgyas pa*), ovvero la condizione di Kun tu bZang po (*kun tu bzang po'i ngang*), è il riconoscimento della propria natura nella sua essenza, che è pura e autorealizzata sin dall'origine. L'illusione (*'khrul pa*) e la trasmigrazione derivano dalla mancanza di riconoscimento; dall'ignoranza in cui la mente inferiore (*dman pa'i sems*) concepisce se e il proprio contesto.

Namdak spiega la relazione che intercorre tra la base (*gzhi*), la saggezza primordiale (*ye shes*) e la coscienza (*shes pa*). Trattando *ye shes* come un concetto, sorgono tre designazioni (*ltar btags pa*) (*Ma rgyud*, 5, ll. 10-11, d'ora in poi s'intende tradotto e citato da Maniscalco 2016, 130 ss.; 2018):

1. *rang gi yul*: il soggetto, la coscienza (letteralmente luogo/soggetto, *yul* – della consapevolezza o coscienza, *rig*);
2. *rang rig ye shes*: la saggezza primordiale (*ye shes*) intrinsecamente consapevole di sé (*rang rig*);
3. *ngo bo*: l'essenza.

L'oggetto dell'autoconsapevolezza straordinaria non può essere che l'oggetto diretto (*dngos yul*) di nessun'altra forma di intelletto o stato mentale ordinario (*blo*) che non sia *rang rig ye shes*, ovvero 'la saggezza primordiale della autoconsapevolezza', l'istantaneità della presenza (*Ma rgyud*, 5, ll. 13-15). Se l'autoconsapevolezza straordinaria di sé è l'oggetto diretto di *rang rig ye shes*, in conseguenza di ciò (*tshul gyis*), la coscienza è realizzata (*rtogs pa*) essere concretamente (*dngos su*) un'unica essenza (*ngo bo gcig*) con la saggezza primordiale (*Ma rgyud*, 5, ll. 17-18). Poiché la base è la saggezza primordiale, la base deve essere (*yin dgos pa*) anche la coscienza (*Ma rgyud*, 5, l. 19). Essendo la coscienza un'entità sostanziale (*dngos po*), Namdak sottolinea che la maggior parte delle scritture (i.e. le scritture non rDzogs chen o del *Ma rgyud*) confuta il fatto che la base corrisponde alla vacuità (*stong nyid*), alla natura della mente (*sems nyid*), oppure alla realtà assoluta (*bon nyid*, *Ma rgyud*, 6, l. 1). Namdak ricorda a questo punto il significato di saggezza primordiale/*ye shes*: *ye*

allude alla dimensione del *bon nyid*, la realtà assoluta o ultima; *shes* è il modo d'essere della totale saggezza primordiale (*ye shes chen po*) non appena si attribuisca un senso (*don*) alla natura della mente con *rig pa*, cioè la coscienza (*rig pa*) della natura della mente (*sems nyid*, *Ma rgyud*, 6, l. 3). La totale saggezza primordiale spontaneamente realizzata (*lhun grub*) della base è esaminata nella terza sezione (*Ma rgyud*, 2 ss.) dopo l'invocazione preliminare (*sngon 'gro klad don bstan pa*), che assume il duplice valore di introduzione metafisica al testo e di omaggio alle divinità, affinché esse concedano la realizzazione dell'unica essenza (*thig le*) della saggezza primordiale (*Ma rgyud*, 1).[26] La saggezza primordiale presenta sette caratteristiche:

1. La saggezza primordiale autoriginata (*rang 'byung*). La totale (*chen po*) saggezza primordiale della base (*gzhi yi ye shes*) non dipende (*ma ltos pa*) da alcun tipo di causa (*rgyu dang rkyen*), e costituisce la vera natura (*rang bzhin*) dei fenomeni, poiché la sua naturale e costante condizione è intrinseca (*rang chas su gnas pa*) a essi. Da ciò deriva l'epiteto 'autoriginata', *rang 'byung*; l'origine intrinseca della sua manifestazione si dispiega incondizionatamente rispetto alla concettualità e alla sfera dei desideri (*Ma rgyud*, 3).
2. La saggezza primordiale immacolata dalle impurità (*dri ma med pa*). Essa è anche definita con l'epiteto *ka dag*, 'purezza primordiale'. Non può essere afflitta dall'ignoranza dell'oscuramento delle afflizioni fenomeniche in quanto natura del *thig le chen po*, lo stato unico, indivisibile e totale che caratterizza la base della natura della mente (*sems nyid kyi gzhi*) (*Ma rgyud*, 3).
3. La saggezza primordiale non contaminata dalle circostanze avventizie (*glo bur gyi rnam pas ma gos pa*). Si sottolinea qui la natura della saggezza primordiale della base la quale non può, non potrà, e dall'origine mai poté essere contaminata (*ma gos pa*) dai due tipi di contaminazioni: ciò che è provvisorio (*glo bur*), conoscibile per la mente ordinaria (*sems*) e le cause primarie e secondarie. Nella natura non duale della

26 «Leone della parola, il tesoro degli insegnamenti custoditi nelle scritture, spalanca la porta dell'autoliberazione (*rang grol*, la libertà naturale nell'eidetica dello rDzogs chen), recidendo la rete dell'ignoranza con la danza della spada della Saggezza Primordiale (*ye shes*). Rendo omaggio ai supremi Tre Corpi della Base primordiale: Kun tu bZang po (*Dharmakāya*), la reale natura dell'esistenza, inalterata e indifferenziata; *long spyod rdzogs* (*Saṃbhogakāya*), l'apparizione delle qualità perfezionate; *sprul pa'i sku* (*Nirmāṇakāya*), l'inesauribile energia manifesta. Che l'oceano delle mKha' 'gro ma consenta di scrivere note di commento (agli insegnamenti) del vittorioso gShen (il riferimento è a gShen rab Mi bo che), cosicché io e tutti coloro che come me sono ispirati dalle scritture del veicolo adamantino (Vajrayāna) possiamo realizzare la condizione dell'unica saggezza primordiale» (Maniscalco 2016, 130).

base non v'è una derivazione dalle leggi di causa ed effetto; la base è senza nascita e senza cessazione (*Ma rgyud*, 3-4).

4. La totale saggezza primordiale che esiste sin dall'origine (*thog ma nyid nas gnas pa*). Si fa ricorso all'epiteto *thog ma* di *ye shes* per denotare che non si tratta di qualcosa che sorge, cessa, e risorge dopo l'interruzione; esso indica che *ye shes* è *per se* al di là di ciò che è conoscibile, al di là dei fenomeni per come essi appaiono all'intelletto ordinario (*Ma rgyud*, 4).
5. La saggezza primordiale che neanche la profondità dei buddha può creare (*sangs rgyas sgam ste ma mdzad pa*). L'investigazione della saggezza primordiale della base non può essere compiuta attraverso i mezzi della mente ordinaria (*sems*). Infatti, neanche ai buddha è consentita la spiegazione (*bstan du med*) di *ye shes* ad altre forme di intelletto: non è verbalizzabile (*Ma rgyud*, 4, l. 9-13).

Come recita lo *Sgra dbyangs tshangs pa'i mdo*, *Il sūtra del puro suono di Brahmā*, citato dall'autore (*Ma rgyud*, 4, ll. 13-15):

> il senso (*don*) totale e definitivo consiste nell'assenza di un soggetto e di un oggetto (*yul dang yul can med*). Sin dall'origine (*ye nas*) non v'è nulla da investigare. Poiché la reale natura della mente (*sems nyid*) non cade (*ma lhung ba*) in parzialità e in distinzioni (*phyogs su*), l'intendimento di questa dimensione assoluta è intrinseco all'autoconsapevolezza (*rang rig*), la quale è insostanziale (*dngos med*) e risiede, immobile (*ma yengs*) nello stato naturale (*gnas lugs*) della mente.

6. La saggezza primordiale che, anche se giudicata dagli esseri, resta inalterata (*sems can sgrin te ma bcos pa*). Il vaglio, la concettualità, la discorsività di qualunque essere non intacca, non altera, e non può descrivere *ye shes* (*Ma rgyud*, 4).
7. La saggezza primordiale la cui natura è la vera essenza (*don dam pa'i rang bzhin*). Si giunge con ciò al senso/essenza (*don*) di *ye shes*.

In merito alla definizione di *ye shes* (*Ma rgyud*, 4, ll. 2 ss.), *ye* (primordiale) rappresenta la dimensione (*dbyings*) della realtà assoluta (*bon sku*), ovvero la condizione primordiale (*ngang*), mentre *shes* è la saggezza in quanto consapevolezza (*rig pa*) della natura della mente, della natura ultima (*rang bzhin*); *ngang* e il *sems nyid* risiedono nel *thig le nyag gcig*, l'unica essenza, al di là di unione e separazione (*'bral med*), dunque la natura della mente è coalescente allo stato primordiale. La natura ultima del *thig le* è la 'buddhità', il risveglio (*sangs rgyas*), che corrisponde al cosiddetto frutto (*'bras bu*), cioè la pratica della saggezza primordiale della natura della mente.

Per illustrare il senso del *thig le*, Namdak si avvale della metafisica rDzogs chen e cita dal testo base, lo *rDzogs chen yang rtse'i klong chen*[27] e dal *Sems nyid rdzogs chen gyis tshad ma gtan tshigs sgra don gtan la dbab pa*[28] (*Ma rgyud*, 4, ll. 7-9):

> nello rDzogs chen si fa esperienza (*nyams su myong ba*) del senso che consiste nella luminosità (*'od gsal*), l'autoconsapevolezza (*rang rig*) dell'unica grande essenza (*thig le chen po*), la totale perfezione, non corrotta (*ma 'dres pa*), e lo stato di equanimità (*mnyam*) di ogni fenomeno (*bon*). Il senso emerge senza sforzo (*rtsol bral*), e senza concetti (*mi rtog*).
>
> La chiarezza (*gsal ba*) riverbera la primordiale saggezza dell'autoconsapevolezza (*rang rig pa'i ye shes*); mentre la vacuità (*stong pa*) rappresenta il modo d'essere, lo stato (o condizione) naturale e costante (*gnas lugs*) di *rang 'byung ye shes*. (*Ma rgyud*, 10, l. 17: *gsal cha ste rang rig pa'i ye shes dang/ stong cha ste gnas lugs rang 'byung ye shes*)

27 Correlato alla prima propagazione della dottrina (*snga dar*), vale a dire tradizionalmente quella delle Tre Proclamazioni *bsGrags pa skor gsum*, eseguite nei regni celeste (*lha*), ctonio (*klu*), e umano (*mi*) da 'Chi med gTsug phud, un'emanazione della divinità gShen lHa 'Od dkar. Le tre sezioni – *rgyud*, insegnamenti tantrici; *lung*, precetti; *man ngag*, istruzioni essenziali – furono introdotte nello Zhang Zhung dal sTag gzig dal maestro sNya chen Li shu sTag ring, il quale nell'VIII secolo le diffuse in Tibet, occultandole durante la prima persecuzione del bon storicamente attestata, decisa da Khri srong lDe'u btsan (755-797). Gli insegnamenti furono riesumati da gZhod ston dNgos grub Grags pa, ritenuto un'emanazione di sNya chen Li shu sTag ring, sotto la statua di rNam par sNang mdzad (Vairocana), nel tempio di Khoms mthing nel distretto (*rdzong*) di lHo brag nella regione (*sa khul*) di lHo ka, nel 1088 (Rossi 2016a; 2016b). La persecuzione avvenne alla fine della grande sfida di poteri magici indetta da Khri srong lDe'u btsan tra maestri bonpo e buddhisti. Figure chiave di tale fase di transizione furono Khod spungs Dran pa Nam mkha' e il *gyer spungs* (grande maestro) sNang bzher Lod po. Il primo, riconoscendo la sostanziale uguaglianza contenuta nell'essenza delle diverse dottrine, si convertì (Karmay 1972, xxxii-xxxiii). Probabilmente la persecuzione principiò nell'anno del maiale d'acqua (783) perdurando sino all'anno del bue di legno (785), corrispondente al quarantacinquesimo genetliaco del re (Karmay 1975, 183; 1972, 94 nota 2). Sul volgere dell'VIII secolo a Brag dmar 'grin bzang, ove nacque (Tucci 1950, 84), fu indetto dal sovrano Khri srong lDe'u btsan un agone di abilità e magia (*mthu*) tra maestri bonpo e buddhisti per stabilire quale delle due dottrine fosse vera e quale mendace; la gara si rivelerà una meravigliosa competizione nell'esibire da ambo le parti le facoltà magiche più miracolose per aggiudicarsi la vittoria (Stein 1988, 32-3). Come avvocati furono scelti Bodhi Sattva per i buddhisti, che lanciò nel cielo una folgore, e Dran pa Nam mkha' per i bonpo, che in volo battè il sole e la luna l'una contro l'altro come fossero un paio di cimbali. Il bonpo Se Sha ri dbu chen, giunto al lago Ma phang, cavalcò un destriero acquatico e ascese al cielo; sNya Li shu sTag ring trasformatosi in avvoltoio si librò in cielo (Karmay 1972, 88-9).

28 Classificato nella categoria di 'Philosophy and Logic', in Karmay 1977, 102; Klein, Wangyal 2006.

> Chiarezza e vacuità formano l'unica essenza. (*Ma rgyud*, 11, ll. 4-5: *de gnyis ngo bo gcig tu gnas pa la thig le nyag gcig ces bya'o//*)

Nello rDzogs chen la Primordiale Saggezza Autoriginata (*rang 'byung ye shes*) è detta anche 'la chiara luce che è il senso' (*don gyi 'od gsal*) ed è designata come 'madre' (*ma*), mentre il riconoscimento della propria natura ultima è detto 'la chiara luce che è l'esempio' (*dpe'i 'od gsal*) ed è definita 'figlio' (*bu*) (Rossi 1999, 61). L'espressione *Thig le nyag gcig* allude allo stato di non dualità della base (*kun gzhi*). *Thig* indica l'assenza di nascita (*skye ba med pa*) della primordiale saggezza della vacuità; *le* la chiarezza, ininterrotta (*'gag pa med pa*); *nyag gcig* la loro unificazione (*gzung du 'jug pa*), l'assenza di nascita e cessazione (*skye 'gag gnyis med*). Questo è il corpo non duale della realtà (*gnyis med bon sku*), puro (*ka dag*) sin dall'origine (Rossi 1999, 60 nota 80). Ne *La Visione che è come il Ruggito del Leone* si legge (Rossi 1999, 217):

> If one wishes to realize the state of That, the Mind-itself,
> (one) does not pursue conceptuality;
> (one) does not follow the delusion (of) characterization.
> With respect to the Mind, no effort is to be undertaken.
> With respect to the contemplation which is not conceived,
> (one) remains without concepts (and without following) feelings.
> The unimagined great *Thig le*
> is to be clearly hit by the unaltered state.

Nella contemplazione (*dgongs pa*), la natura ultima dell'individuo si palesa spontaneamente nello spazio esterno sotto forma di sfere (*thig le*). Riguardo la trasmissione dei lignaggi bonpo, Rossi (2016a, 202) rammenta la riflessione di Kværne (1973, 22) sulla relazione tra la dottrina rDzogs chen del bon e quella rNying ma pa. Herbert Günther (1994, 2-3, 18 nota 10), in accordo con *Byang chub tu sems skyod pa*, attribuito a 'Jam dpal bShen gnyen (VIII-IX secolo), nota come in *thig le nyag gcig*, il *le* significhi totalità derivante da qualsiasi cosa; *nyag* alluda alla profondità e sottigliezza; e *gcig* si riferisca alla continuità tra soggetto e oggetto. Karmay (1988, 118 nota 55) osserva che nella tradizione rNying ma pa dello rDzogs chen, *thig le* è 'senza amplificazioni', esso allude alla base primordiale, e le espressioni *thig le nyag gcig* (unica sfera) e *thig le chen po* (totale sfera) si equivalgono. Il *thig le nyag gcig* è *chos sku*, cioè il Corpo del Dharma (Klein, Wangyal 2006, 69 nota 38). Nel *Bsam gtan mig sgron*, *La luce degli occhi per la contemplazione*,

> il primo testo sullo *rDzogs chen* scritto da un maestro tibetano e l'unico a trattare esaurientemente e senza pregiudizi l'antica tradizione sTon mun, una diramazione del ch'an cinese molto diffusa in Tibet a quell'epoca, (Namkhai, Clemente 2010, 66 nota 7)

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gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes (832-942),[29] introducendo l'insegnamento dell'atiyoga, «l'apice di tutti gli yoga e la madre di tutti i Buddha», scrive (Namkhai, Clemente 2010, 66):

> l'essenza di questo eccelso tesoro, progenitore universale di tutte le vie, è uno stato spontaneo e naturale che bisogna percepire o riconoscere direttamente, in una pura presenza, senza l'intervento della mente concettuale: deve rivelarsi chiaramente alla propria pura presenza istantanea. Ma qual è il modo di accedere a questa conoscenza? Nella via dello yoga supremo non esiste un oggetto di conoscenza basato sulle scritture da dover analizzare con le proprie facoltà intellettive. Perché mai? Sin dall'origine la totalità dell'esistenza, senza mai mutare il pelo né cambiare colore, è lo stato naturale dell'illuminazione nella dimensione dell'unica (*gcig*) sfera (*thig le*) della saggezza autoriginata (*rang 'byung ye shes*). Chi potrebbe mai individuarvi qualcosa di concreto da esaminare? Chi potrebbe addurre ragioni? A quale conclusione filosofica si potrebbe arrivare? E in base a quali mezzi conoscitivi? La verità è che l'essenza di tutto, essendo inscindibile, non può proprio essere concepita dalla mente.

Namdak, preliminarmente all'identificazione (*ngos bzung ba*) del *thig le nyag gcig*, nota che la luce della chiarezza (*gsal*) è la saggezza primordiale dell'autoconsapevolezza (*rang rig pa'i ye shes*) la quale, nel suo aspetto di vacuità (*stong*), è la condizione naturale della base, ovvero *rang 'byung ye shes* (*Ma rgyud*, 10, l. 17). *Gsal* e *stong* costituiscono un'unica essenza (*ngo bo gcig*) dalle quattro caratteristiche (*Ma rgyud*, 12, ll. 10-17):

> Il *thig le nyag gcig* è incondizionato, perché è permanente.
> Non muta, perché non è prodotto da cause e condizioni.
> È una dimensione eterna, poiché è la base e la sorgente di molte eccellenti qualità che su di esso si fondano; e perché la sua stessa essenza è immutabile.

29 gNubs chen è una figura centrale nella caotica situazione dell''epoca nera': alla metà del IX secolo con il collasso dell'impero (Petech 1994) scompare qualsiasi autorità in campo sia politico sia religioso; durante i secoli VIII e IX, il Tibet aveva assimilato l'apporto della vastissima letteratura buddhista dall'India, dalla Cina e dall'Asia centrale, ma dalla metà del IX secolo questa messe eterogenea di insegnamenti resta una congerie magmatica e complessa su cui nessuna autorità dirime e definisce un'ortodossia; gNubs chen nel *Bsam tan mig sgron* espone tutti i metodi filosofici buddhisti giunti inTibet, sebbene la sua opera capitale sia stata a lungo parzialmente eclissata dalla tradizione dei *gter ma* (Dalton, Van Schaik 2003).

> È totale beatitudine, dal momento che la sua essenza non è intaccata dalla accumulazione del dolore; e [anche] perché è il modo assoluto dell'essere.
> Inoltre, poiché il *thig le nyag gcig* è libero da ogni estremo, è lo stato d'essere fondamentale di tutti i fenomeni conoscibili.

Il primo epiteto ascritto all'unica essenza è *'dus ma byas*, 'incondizionata'; ciò indica la sua dimensione non composita, non creata, non causata; difatti essa è *bskyed pa med*, cioè non creata da alcuna causa e condizione (*rgyu dang rkyen*). Semmai esso è *rten gzhi*, supporto e fonte di qualità supreme, positive (*yon tan*), grande gioia (*bde ba chen po*) poiché la concentrazione (*bsdus pa*) della sofferenza (*sdug*) non ne corrompe (*bslad pa med*) l'essenza. Libero (*bral ba*) da qualsiasi limitazione legata all'elaborazione concettuale (*spros pa'i mtha'*), il *thig le nyag gcig* è la natura fondamentale di qualsiasi fenomeno che sia oggetto di conoscenza (*shes bya thams chad*). La comprensione di consapevolezza (*rig pa*) prelude a quella del *thig le nyag gcig*. Namdak elabora una tripartizione di *rig pa*, del tutto peculiare al *Ma rgyud* (8, ll. 2-7):

> La consapevolezza onnipervadente, così definita in quanto è il modo d'essere che pervade ovunque, è l'unione di chiarezza e vacuità, che è la base.
>
> La consapevolezza contemplativa, avverte il modo d'essere fondamentale qualora si mediti; ma nel momento in cui ciò non accade è consapevolezza che non vede.
>
> La consapevolezza primordiale la quale, che si mediti o non si mediti, è l'inseparabile unità della saggezza primordiale intrinsecamente consapevole di sé e del modo d'essere della base; Essa è definita consapevolezza e chiarezza.

La presenza istantanea (*rig pa*) è analizzata nella sua triplice accezione e a tal proposito si osservi che (Klein, Wangyal 2006, 105)

> though these three are not, strictly speaking, a Dzogchen set of categories insofar they derive from the Mother Tantra, they are used in Paṇḍita-style Bon Dzogchen instruction to clarify the question of what newly arises in the course of Dzogchen practice.

La distinzione di *rig pa* operata da Namdak (*Ma rgyud*, 6) è formulata in

1. onnipervadente (*khyab*). Essa riverbera lo stato fondamentale della base che è unione di chiarezza e vacuità (*gzhi gsal stong zung 'jug*), natura intrinseca di ogni manifestazione che si irradia ovunque (*kun la*).

2. Contemplativa (*bsam*). Unicamente durante la fase meditativa (*sgom byed pa*), tale tipo di *rig pa* può afferrare lo stato basilare dell'essere; altrimenti non vede (*mi mthong pa*).

Essa è «actually a consciousness, not an open awareness» (Klein, Wangyal 2006, 106).

3. Primordiale (*ye*), descritta quale consapevolezza e chiarezza (*rig pa dang gsal ba*), è la saggezza primordiale dell'autoconsapevolezza consustanziale (lett. al di là di unione e separazione/*'du bral med pa*) al modo d'essere della base (*gzhi'i gnas lugs dang rang rig pa'i ye shes*). Nulla può essere aggiunto, e nulla sottratto allo stato di unione indissolubile della base. Il *thig le nyag gcig* non ha dicotomia fra la mente ordinaria concettuale (*sems*) e la pura natura della mente (*sems nyid*), e trascende la credenza egoica di esistenza e non esistenza analoga a quella che pone distinzioni tra lo stadio di meditazione e quello post-meditativo.

Il senso finale è che, nel tantra materno bonpo come nello rDzogs chen, quello che percepiamo, oscurati dall'obnubilamento della nescienza, è una apparizione perenne dipendente dal predominio egoico del mentale, mentre la natura della mente (*sems nyid*) è la primordiale saggezza autoriginata (*rang 'byung ye shes*/*svayambhūjñāna*), base (*gzhi*) incondizionata della visione (*lta ba*) di ogni fenomeno. *Ye shes* è 'autoriginata' perché è *per se* condizione naturale, completa e perfetta non cessazione dell'origine primordiale e la sua profondità è ineffabile anche per i Buddha, non penetrabile da alcuna azione deliberata, imperscrutabile per la mente ordinaria. La realizzazione del suo significato è la reale dimensione dell'esistenza (*bon sku*). Namdak sintetizza (*Ma rgyud*, 13-14):

> Le differenze si annullano in identità, la condizione dell'autoconsapevolezza non è materiale; gli aspetti diversi non sono frammentati. La condizione della luminosa autoconsapevolezza è priva di pensieri. Nell'unica dimensione non c'è dicotomia (*gnyis su dbyer med*). Essa non va cercata esternamente all'esperienza del sé: la doppia distinzione (sé/altro da sé) è coesione, essendo l'unica dimensione fondamentale (*ye nas*), autoriginata (*rang 'byung*), primordialmente autoliberata dalla contaminazione (del dualismo, cioè libera sin dall'origine, *skyon las ye nas grol*). Nel grande Veicolo dello rDzogs chen, lo stato della realtà assoluta (*bon*) di *saṃsāra* e *nirvāṇa* è nella realizzazione della natura ultima che è il grande, unico *Thig le* sin dall'origine (l'unica sfera, coalescenza di vacuità e luce): parlando in senso assoluto per la mente non c'è necessità della meditazione (*ched du sgom*, cioè meditazione deliberata), poiché la meditazione e la post meditazione (*mnyam bzhag dang rjes*

> *thob*) sono nell'essenza indistinguibili. Per questa ragione, ogni cosa manifesta l'equanimità (un'assoluta uguaglianza, *mnyam pa nyid du*) eterna (*g.yung drung*), primordialmente perfetta, e l'intero corpo della realtà, cioè il totale *Thig le* senza tempo (la natura primeva dello stato originale, *ye yin*). Dal momento che meditazione e post meditazione sono inseparabili, c'è identità perfetta in ogni caso. Perciò nelle istruzioni per la mente della Totale Perfezione (cioè la filosofia dello rDzogs chen) e per la realizzazione completa della natura non v'è necessità di un luogo per la meditazione, infatti *la sua condizione è libera da attaccamento e avversione*, in una contemplazione permanente che mai declina: Tale visione è detta nei testi splendente come una fiamma, il cuore di Kun tu bZang po (*bon sku*/*Dharmakāya*, il buddha Samantabhadra, il sovrano cosmico che incarna lo stato primordiale dell'esistenza): l'errore dell'esperienza è credere nell'esistenza e nella non esistenza, la verità suprema è l'assenza di conflitto e dicotomia. Essa è chiarezza (*gsal*/*vyakta*) e vacuità (*stong*) senza sforzo (*rtsol med*), senza ego (*nga med*), senza pensiero (*rtog med*/*avikalpa*), il sublime stato della pura equanimità (*mnyam pa'i ngang*).

Nulla va realmente superato o liberato, ogni fenomeno è perfetto (*rDzogs*). A livello relativo la natura della mente va distinta dalla mente concettuale (*sems*/*citta*) che dicotomizza. La natura della mente è uguaglianza di soggetto e oggetto e non c'è un oggetto del conoscere che non sia la primordiale saggezza dell'autoconsapevolezza (*rig pa'i rang 'byung ye shes*). In quanto al principio dell'esperienza, Namdak spiega (Maniscalco 2016, 140):

> non v'è nulla che si osservi in accordo allo sguardo della mente, che non sia sostanziale sin dall'origine.

Nel *Kun byed rgyal po* (Il re che tutto crea, pr. Kunje gyalpo), tantra fondamentale dello rDzogs chen, tradotto in tibetano da Vairocana (VII secolo), di ritorno dall'Oḍḍiyāna (O rgyan), la valle del fiume Svāt tra Pakistan e Afghanistan (terra sapienziale degli insegnamenti custoditi e impartiti dalle Ḍākinī), Kun tu bZang po, cioè il Buddha Samantabhadra, sovrano cosmico, rivela i suoi 'nomi' (Namkhai, Clemente 2010, 239):

> Ascolta! Siccome nella natura ultima increata ed esistente sin dai primordi, l'essenza che trascende cause e condizioni e che non può essere cercata risplende equanimemente in tutte le direzioni senza impedimenti, sono detto 'la saggezza autoriginata' (*rang 'byung ye shes*). Siccome la vera essenza della condizione autentica e non modificata (cioè al di là della visione dualistica) contiene globalmente il ciclo di *saṃsāra* e *nirvāṇa* grazie a me tutto si libera dalla

rete di accettazione e rifiuto, dell'afferrarsi e dell'attaccarsi: perciò sono detto il veicolo del senso fondamentale.[30]

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30 Namkhai (Namkhai, Clemente 2010, 239-40) sintetizza l'essenza del riconoscimento del nome, cioè del sé, rispondendo alle domande di Adriano Clemente su Samantabhadra: «Nel leggere il *Kunje gyalpo* trovate spesso la parola 'io': 'io sono la natura di tutti i fenomeni, 'io sono la radice dell'esistenza' e così via. Questo 'io' è il vostro vero stato: il buddha primordiale, la suprema sorgente della manifestazione. Cercate di comprendere il significato del *Kunje gyalpo* leggendolo da questo punto di vista. Esiste un essere che non è mai entrato nel dualismo, nel *saṃsāra*? Leggendo alcuni tantra sembrerebbe che all'origine, attraverso la magia della conoscenza e dell'ignoranza, siano sorti Samantabhadra o il primo buddha, da un lato, e gli esseri che trasmigrano dall'altro. Ma questo è solo un esempio per far capire la nostra condizione reale. Se consideriamo Samantabhadra come un essere individuale ci allontaniamo dal vero senso. In realtà significa la nostra potenzialità che, anche se adesso ci troviamo nel *saṃsāra*, non ha mai conosciuto il condizionamento del dualismo. Lo stato dell'individuo dall'origine è puro e per sempre rimane puro: questo è ciò che Samantabhadra rappresenta. Quando cadiamo nel condizionamento, però, è come se non fossimo più Samantabhadra perché ignoriamo la nostra natura. Ciò che si dice il 'buddha primordiale' o 'ādibuddha', dunque, è solo un esempio della vera condizione. Che cosa vuol dire allora che Samantabhadra è il primo illuminato e che non ha mai trasmigrato? Non si può parlare di un 'prima' e di un 'dopo' riguardo la vera condizione dello stato primordiale, come se ci fosse stato qualcosa prima e poi sia sorto qualcos'altro. Questi sono tutti concetti limitati, ma bisogna andare al di là del tempo. Samantabhadra significa il nostro stato e non deve essere interpretato nel senso di un Dio unico e creatore».

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Sociolinguistics of Hindī
An Analysis of TV-Mediated Spoken Hindī Features Through TV Programmes' Language

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Abstract This paper analyses varieties of Hindī language differentiated on the social ground, namely standard Hindī (the sanskritised language) and non-standard Hindī. The latter, which includes different varieties of spoken Hindī, was studied listening to two TV programmes: *Delhi Crime* and *Satyamev Jayate*. Several features were observed on every level, but here the focus is on syntax (Hindī word order) and lexicon (code-switching). Information structure theory and pragmatics are used to analyse TV-mediated spoken Hindī word order. The comprehension of these special features can be helpful to predict the changes towards which Hindī tends to move and to give examples of the spoken language.

Keywords Spoken Hindī. Hindī varieties. Standard Hindī. Word order. Code-switching.

Summary 1 Variability and Variety. – 2 Hindī Varieties. – 2.1 Standard Hindī Variety. – 2.2 Non-Standard Varieties of Hindī. – 3 Conclusions.

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1 Variability and Variety

One of the main (and most visible) ways through which the language change happens surely is the aerial-phonic medium or spoken language. The relations humans have with their counterparts are extremely complicated and several factors can influence the communicative events they experience with each other at the linguistic level. The utterances change according to factors like the languages which the interlocutors know, the situation in which they speak, their age, and so on. These assumptions are based on the linguistic work sketched with Bloomfield (1933) and carried out with the research of Labov[1] (1966) and Gumperz[2] (1971), who started analysing languages through the social point of view. Through the following decades, the knowledge of the discipline now known as sociolinguistics made us more and more conscious about how and in which ranges and dimensions changes in a language take place.

Here, some crucial concepts in sociolinguistics need to be mentioned, the nature of which has been discussed over the decades: 'variability' and 'variety'. The former can be described as the dynamic process of linguistic differentiation (Berruto 1980, 20-1; Meyerhoff 2006, 10) and the latter the result of this process. Since the nature and the direction of the processes of differentiation are heterogeneous, there are different criteria that can define what a variety implies: geographical difference (dialect),[3] social use (sociolect), situational use (register) (Biber, Finegan 1994, 4; Bussmann 1996, 1261). Despite the origin of this differentiation process, a variety is:

1 In 1963 Labov firstly observed that there were some phonetic peculiarities in the English of the island of Martha's Vineyard, off the coast of New England, USA. These distinctive features were consequences of social changes that happened in the island, which during the years became a holiday destination after being fairly isolated. More precisely, Labov has shown that the vowel sound of words like *house*, *loud* had two different pronunciations, one low-prestige, old-fashioned and one more recent, found in a prestigious American accent, the former becoming exaggerated as a reaction of the native of the island towards the mass touristic invasion (Trudgill [1974] 2000, 11-12). Later, Labov (1966) increased the knowledge of the social stratification of the language of New York through his pioneering research.

2 Gumperz's work (1971) was focused especially on how language and social factors are related in India. For this reason, in this paper there will be references to his research.

3 The term 'dialect' is actually polysemic. In realities such as the Italian or the French one 'dialect' is used as a popular term with a pejorative undertone, defining a geographically and socially subordinated language/variety which does not have the status of national language (namely Venetian, Neapolitan, Sicilian etc.) (Berruto 1980, 27-8; Maiden, Mair 1997) or more simply a language different from the one we speak (Wolfram, Schilling 2015, 2-3). The technical use of the term 'dialect' is mostly a synonym for 'variety', since its meaning refers to every kind of 'variety' of language, whether the variation is due to geographical/regional reasons or social factors (Wolfram, Schilling 2015, 2).

> every set of different and specific ways to use a language, recognizable by a specific series of traits from all the levels of analysis or [from] some [of the levels of analysis] (phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, textuality) which qualify it and differentiate it from other sets of usage [of the language] and is provided with a certain degree of homogeneity of recurrence in conjunction with social traits and/or different classes of situation. (Berruto 1980, 25; translation of the Author)[4]

As this assumption points out, the concepts of community and socially shared features are crucial to circumscribe the concept of variety.

What are, thus, the criteria used to delimit a specific variety? The material on this issue is huge, but there is little disagreement on the taxonomy of the factors triggering variation. In addition to the 'time' factor (the diachronic varieties or *états de langue*), the second class of factors concerns geographical diversification, namely the origin and the distribution of the speakers, which create peculiarities (at the regional or local level as well as national). The third class gathers factors about the speaker, their social and cultural background (level of education, job etc.). The last one, instead, concerns the different communicational situations in which the speaker might be. More precisely, the situational-contextual factors may be analysed through the relation of the speakers which can change 'register', see above, the topic of the conversation (technical language etc.), the medium (written/spoken language, e-mails etc.) (Berruto 1980, 27-9; Pistolesi 2016).

Nonetheless, one can argue that there is no easy way to delimit a variety. As for other concepts regarding language and linguistics – for example, the ones coined by Saussure at the beginning of the study of general linguistics ([1916] 1971) – it can be said that they are a simplification of more difficultly understandable phenomena. Let us take the concept of 'synchronic' approach as an example: since the language is constantly moving forward, one *état de langue* combines features from a past *état de langue* that are still used among the speakers as well as new features that are still not accepted by all the community of speaker (see Saussure [1916] 1971, 142). A synchronic approach thus takes a 'photograph' of a single moment of the history of a language and makes it static, regardless of the prior or successive changes. It can be said that this approach is a useful abstraction for the study of a language, of its feature and of the ones which are

4 The original quote in Italian is the following: "ogni insieme di modi diversi e determinati di usare una lingua, riconoscibile per una certa serie di tratti di tutti o di alcuni livelli di analisi (fonologia, morfologia, sintassi, lessico, testualità) che lo qualificano e differenziano da altri insiemi di modi, e dotati una certa omogeneità di ricorrenza in concomitanza con certi tratti sociali e/o diverse classi di situazioni" (Berruto 1980, 25).

universally shared. As for *états de langue*, the difference from a variety to another is not as distinguishable as black from white, since there is a *continuum* in which the features of a single variety blend softly into another variety[5] (Berruto 2013, 22-30).

2 Hindī Varieties

Once these preliminary issues are taken into consideration, the main topic of this paper can be introduced. For the field of Indo-Aryan languages, the variability among the languages – the totality of varieties – is particularly visible. Whether socially (distinguishing 'sociolects') or geographically (distinguishing 'dialects'), India and Pakistan are extremely dense as far as language richness is concerned. In this sense, we cannot avoid mentioning the work carried out by George Abraham Grierson with the *Linguistic Survey of India*, who collected information and described 179 languages and 544 dialects of the Indian Subcontinent, whether about the genetics of these languages or the peculiarities of every single language.[6] Despite Grierson's research and other scholars' work in the field of Indo-Aryan languages, there are few works on Hindī sociolinguistics, varieties and registers and how these are intertwined in their contemporary forms – whereas there are several works concerning the English, the Italian or more in general on the situation of the European languages.[7]

The main goal of this paper thus is to give an outline to the social varieties of contemporary Hindī and then to focus on the TV-mediated spoken variety of language. Since it was impossible to be in

5 The linguistic *continuum* can have different shapes, depending on the distribution of the varieties in the analysed community. For example, Mioni, Trumper (1977, 330) assumed that, based on the Italian situation, there are two easily identifiable poles and between them there are all the other varieties that blend into another. Given the real nature of the *continua*, it is difficult to incorporate in the analysis more than one dimension of variation (temporal, geographical, social, situational) (Berruto 1998, 24-5). Since it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the real nature of linguistic continua, whether in general or applied to the Indian context, we will simply assume that there is not a sharp division between the varieties, but the traits blend from one into another.

6 The journal named *Linguistic Survey of India* was published to present a summary of the results of the Linguistic Survey of India, a research conducted from 1894 to 1928 by Grierson. It has been the "culmination of the machinery for data collection" (Pandit 1975, 76).

7 For the sake of information, some scholars need to be mentioned as well as their works: Nespital (1990), Masica (1991) focused on the relations between Indo-Aryan languages and dialects; Cardona and Jain (2003) gave attention to the sociolinguistics of the Indo-Aryan languages; Shapiro (2003) focused on the general information about the history of Hindī language; Montaut, then, in her several works about Hindī language, gave attention to grammatical issues as well as sociolinguistic ones, like bilingualism and linguistic diaspora (1991; 2001; 2004; 2014).

the Hindī-speaking area, the approach to collect linguistic information, traits and features of Hindī – namely of spoken Hindī – was different from the classical in-field research. Thus, a Hindī Netflix series, *Delhi Crime*, and some episodes of *Satyamev Jayate*, a famous Indian TV programme that uses Hindī/Urdū as medium were used to gather linguistic material. Listening to these episodes, some peculiar traits did not match with the standard language, namely the prescriptive language of the grammars and the language that is taught (at the University, in Hindī teaching schools etc.). For this reason, the Hindī variety analysed here shows the features of a TV-mediated language – and it is just *one* of the spoken Hindī varieties. From this starting point, then, the whole work was built: the first variety that the foreigners run into is surely the standard one.

2.1 Standard Hindī Variety

Some have the misconception that the standard variety[8] is the purest and closest to the original speech of native speakers, but this is not necessarily true. Every national and linguistic situation is surely different, but there are some features that the standard language varieties have in common:

> a standard language variety is a variety that has been designated as such and for which a set of forms has been identified and codified in dictionaries and grammars. (Finegan, Besnier 1989, 496)

and:

> a standard language is a code in which the separating, solidarity and prestige functions of language are optimally operative, and purism […] is one of the possible rational responses to these three functional criteria. (Thomas 1991, 115-16)

There are some concepts that thus need to be discussed here: these definitions of 'standard' highlight that a standard variety is the result of

> the process of standardization […] one of the main agents of inequality. […] Standard languages do not arise via a 'natural' course of linguistic evolution. (Romaine 1994, 84)

8 The term 'standard language variety' or 'standard variety' is more correct as compared to 'common language' (Berruto 1980, 34) as is clear from the very process of creation of the standard that will be displayed in the following lines.

There are thus some criteria which operates in the creation of the standard variety. In general, scholars listed some properties that standard varieties have, such as:

- being codified through grammars and/or institutions,
- being stable/stabilised,
- being unifying (for different varieties) and dividing (a national state from another),
- being the model of language that can be referred to;
- having prestige (Garvin, Mathiot 1956; Ammon 1986; Joseph 1987).

The codifying process is what makes a variety of language *the* standard variety. Nevertheless, there must be a need for a prestigious variety which can identify a precise and delimited community, conscious of its existence: there needs to be an 'Other' (Brass [1974] 2005, 8-13). In the Indian situation, an 'Other' appeared when the Muslim community started being considered dangerous for the sprouting Hindū identity in the middle of 19th century due to the British policy-making. In fact, in 1832 (in Bombay and Madras) and in 1837 (in Bengal) the British substituted the official language, Persian, with Urdū, which was used by both Hindū and Muslim and at the same time was used for Islam-related literary purposes[9] (King 1994, 54; Consolaro 2003, 12). This event culminated in the creation of a conscious community and (religious) identity, which required also two 'national' purified languages in the event of Partition of 1947: Hindī and Urdū.[10]

9 Since this event is just the visible end of a longer process, to examine in depth the common origin of Hindī and Urdū, the uses of the languages during the centuries and then the standardisation and nationalisation of the two languages, see Rai 1984; Shackle, Snell 1990; King 1994; Dalmia 1997.

10 Since the process of codification and nationalisation of the language is not the main topic of this paper – even if I agree on the extreme importance of its objective analysis – some of the main points this issue raises will be rough out here. First, the legitimation and codification process of Hindī (and Urdū) was made through different channels and in a considerable amount of time. One of the most visible ways was the choice of the script, the *devanāgarī*, while for Urdū the *nastaʿlīq* script was chosen. The discourse through which this change was made is carefully analysed by Ahmad (2012). Other channels were the academies and organisations which promoted a Sanskritisation of Hindī, mostly by means of the lexicon, like *Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Sabhā* – founded in 1893 – and the *Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan* – founded in 1910. Through these organisations a choice was made to create and/or use words originated from Sanskrit rather than from Persian or Arabic ('Urdū' words), or considered 'regional', 'dialectal' or 'wrong' (Bhatia 1987, 178-9). This whole process did not last just a couple of decades, but it continued during all the first part of the 20th century, culminating in the Partition of 1947 and continuing after it with several politics. In 1965, with the *Official Languages Act*, Hindī became the official language of India with English. Through time, and with several (violent) protests, other languages became official, since the plurality of languages, cultures and histories in India makes it impossible and unjust to have just Hindī and English as official languages. The *Eight Schedule* thus lists 22 official languages recognised by the Constitution. To analyse in depth this topic see: for the

Through the process of Sanskritisation, standardisation and purification of Hindī, *śuddh hindī* ('pure Hindī') was outlined. Even if it is impossible to describe every feature of this variety, some assumptions are necessary. As mentioned before, *śuddh hindī*, or Hindī standard variety, has a highly Sanskritised lexicon and several neologisms – developed by the *Board of Scientific and Technical Terminology* (founded in 1951) on the basis of existing words of Sanskrit. It is an improvised language from a 'mixed' basis, whose regional words were eliminated, being considered 'vulgar' by the leaders and founders of the organisations for the standardisation of the language (namely, *Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Sabhā* and *Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan*, see note 10). Also, among the different forms that existed in the spoken language, only some of those were chosen for the standard: the least 'regional', 'dialectal', 'Urdū'.[11] All the processes of using this variety in education, newspapers, media, by the Government, in the politics, in the grammars, led to the effects described by Shapiro:

> at the beginning of the twentieth century, and even as late as the 1950s and 1960s […] most so-called Hindi speakers were actually native speakers of one or another regional dialects of Hindi, but with some degree of competence in the standard language learned through formal education. At present the effects of a half century of effort by the Government of India have clearly been felt. There are now tens of millions of people, including many living in geographical areas which would have been thought of as the heartlands of Braj, Avadhi, Bhojpuri etc. whose native language is some variety of MSH [Modern Standard Hindi]. In addition, the massive spread of modern technologies of communication […] have had a standardizing effect, and brought heavy exposure of MSH to significant portions of the population in north India. (Shapiro 2003, 282)

theory of the creation of the 'Other' and the process of nationalisation of language: Brass ([1974] 2005); for the dynamics of the construction of Hindū consciousness: King (1994, chs. 2-3), Dalmia (1997); for the academies and organisations for the Sanskritisation of Hindī: Kachru (1989), King (1994), King (2001), Shapiro (2003); for the post-Partition issues in India: King (2001); and in Pakistan: Schmidt (2003), Rahman (2006).

11 An example of these 'vulgar' or 'regional' forms from which *śuddh hindī* was purified is narrated by Barannikov (1936). In 1804-1810 Lallūjī Lāl wrote the *Prem Sagar*, considered the first literary work in Hindī. Literary critic Jagannāth Prasād Śarmā (born in 1905) assumed, as well as other scholars: "his grammar is not stable and has no standard; for instance, he uses several variations for the same form; in order to express the Conjunctive Participle he uses such forms as: *kari*, *karke*, *bulāy*, *bulāykari*, *bulāykar*, *bulāykarike*" (Barannikov 1936, 386). This example serves to highlight how the standardisation process worked, and how the importance of personalities such as Śarmā had a visible impact on the language.

The politics used by the Government to standardise the language produced also changes in the registers or styles of Hindī used in different contexts and functions, dictating which form of Hindī must be used throughout the country, namely a Sanskritised variety. Even if in formal situations the Sanskritised variety is used, in various public spheres there has been the tendency towards "a less Sanskritic and more heterogeneous register" (Shapiro 2003, 282).

All the features of this language are, as one might think, several and rather complicated to explain in just few pages. As Caracchi states:

> one of the main difficulties one can encounter while writing a Hindī grammar is due to the proteiform nature of this language, [which is] spoken in a really extended area and which, not only in the lexicon and in the pronunciation, but also, even if in a lesser extent, in grammatical structure, experiences variations determined by the place, by the social and religious context, by the proximity with other linguistic areas. Thus[,] sometimes [the language] some [people] consider acchī hindī can be considered by other a colloquial, local, obsolete or even wrong form [of the language]. (1992, 7; translation of the author)[12]

For this reason, I will recommend the most commonly used books to the ones who are not familiar with the grammar rules of Hindī, namely *Teach Yourself Hindi: Complete Course* by Snell and Weightman (2003), *Hindi* by Kachru (2006) and the Italian *Grammatica hindī* by Caracchi (1992). Also, the standard variety form of the sentence or of a word will be displayed above the non-standard forms when needed. Thus, in the following paragraphs, some of the features of the non-standard varieties that were analysed through the means of the TV series/programme will be described.

2.2 Non-Standard Varieties of Hindī

As quoted from Caracchi (1992), there are different features of the same language – Hindī – which coexist under the same 'label' of

12 The original Italian quote is the following: "una delle difficoltà principali che si incontrano nella stesura di una grammatica hindī è dovuta al carattere proteiforme di questa lingua, parlata su una superficie vastissima e che, non solo nel lessico e nella pronuncia, ma anche, sebbene in misura assai minore, nella struttura grammaticale, subisce variazioni determinate dal luogo, dal contesto sociale e religioso, dalla vicinanza con altre aree linguistiche. Così talvolta quella che alcuni considerano acchī hindī può esser ritenuta da altri una forma colloquiale, locale, desueta o addirittura scorretta" (Caracchi 1992, 7).

Hindī. The spoken form is the main way in which humans communicate with each other, which also include the peculiarities of the varieties of the same language (in this case, Hindī along with its standard and non-standard varieties).

Even if space-related change cannot be considered purely a 'social' variation of the language – as mentioned in the first paragraph – the first change that stood out for the scholars was related to geography. Grierson firstly dealt with Hindī dialects: in the 6th volume of the *Linguistic Survey of India* he divided Eastern Hindī in three varieties (Avadhī, Baghelī and Chattīsgaṛhī), while in the 9th he lists the Western Hindī varieties (Hindostānī, Bāngarū, Brāj Bhāṣā, Kanaujī and Bundelī). More recent distinctions and additions among the varieties of Hindī are made by Nespital (1990, 5-6), Masica (1991, 9-12) and Kachru (2006). Nespital makes a clearer and wider list:

1. regional dialects in a narrower sense, divided in a) Western (Hariyāṇī, Dehātī Khāṛī Bolī or Kauravī, Brāj Bhāṣā, Kanaujī, Bundelī), b) Eastern (Avadhī, Baghelī, Chattīsgaṛhī);
2. regional dialects in a broader sense, divided in a) Pahāṛī with Gaṛhvālī and Kumāonī, b) Rājasthānī
3. with a number of dialects, and c) Bihārī, used as a cover term for Bhojpurī, Maithilī and Magahī);
4. urban dialects or forms of town speech within the Hindī region, a) old ones, such as the dialect of Old Delhi, and the forms of town speech of cities, like Varanasi or Allahabad, and b) new ones, like the spoken variety of Hindī resulted from the 1947 afflux of Pañjābī people to Delhi.

Kachru adds a Southern dialect, the Dakhinī (which is mentioned also by Nespital but only as a dialect outside the Hindī 'belt', or Hindī-speaking area; see Nespital 1990, 5). As one can expect, these varieties differ from each other in some features even if they are mutually intelligible: for example, Dakhinī Hindī does not show the ergative construction, while the other varieties do (Kachru 2006, 5).

An important feature of the dialectal variation is the interference and the presence of loan words or loan grammatical features from other languages cohabiting in the area or spoken in the contiguous area. For example, in Dakhinī Hindī – centred in Āndhra Pradeś but spoken also in other urban areas of the Deccan Plateau with a significant number of Muslim people – there are traces of the influence of Telugu (the Dravidian language spoken in Āndhra) in the present tense, in which the participle and the auxiliary verb are blended: *ātūṃ* is the Dakhinī form for *ātā* (M.SG. present participle of *ānā* 'to come') + *hūṃ* (1st SG. present of *honā* 'to be') (Masica 1991, 426; Montaut 2004, 102). There are also other possibilities concerning different levels of language analysis, like the nouns or the pronouns. Nespital maintains, for example, that in Eastern dialects of Hindī (such

as Hariyāṇī or Kauravī/Khāṛī Bolī but also in the speech of Old Delhi) the genders of many nouns deviate from the one they have in standard Hindī (Nespital 1990, 9).

As seen before, there are fewer works that deal with the social dimension of variation, which creates styles and registers, formal and informal ones, with prestigious influences or more rural ones. Gumperz, talking about the languages of India, assumes that

> all […] have two styles, the colloquial and the literary. The latter is used in formal speech-making and in writing, and is taught in schools. It is often quite different from the colloquial. Only educated people are familiar with it. (1971, 4-5)

This "literary" variety thus has the role of standard variety of the previous paragraph. Gumperz indicated then conversational styles for Hindī, like Hindustānī, Khaṛī Bolī, Dakkhinī Hindī, Dakkhinī Urdū, Bāzār Hindustānī,[13] as well as the already signalled Hindī and Urdū with their peculiar, standardised features and their respective dialects (Gumperz 1971, 48). Another classification of Hindī varieties is made by Nespital:

1. standard Hindī a) in its written form and b) in its spoken form;
2. regional or local dialects in the Hindī 'belt';
3. dialects outside the Hindī 'belt' but genetically and historically related to Hindī (as is already mentioned Dakhīnī);
4. pidgin-like speech varieties of Hindī, as the one spoken in Bombay or Calcutta (Nespital 1990, 5).

In another interesting classification made by Nespital, instead of grouping geographical or conversational features of Hindī, he grouped Hindī speakers:

1. speakers of standard Hindī as their mother-tongue, limited in number;
2. speakers of Hindī whose primary language is a certain Hindī dialect, the majority of Hindī speakers;
3. speakers of Hindī whose primary language is another Neo-Indo-Aryan language (Pañjābī, Gujarātī etc.), a very large number;

13 For what concerns Hindustānī (as British called their era's *lingua franca*; Schmidt 2003, 318), it is a variety with a native lexical core and several words originating both from Sanskrit and Perso-Arabic and it is written in both *devanāgarī* and *nasta'līq* scripts. Lahiri assumes that Hindustānī is more "a distinctive set of words, phrases and stylistic conventions" than "a set of grammatical rules and lexical definitions" (Lahiri 2015, 73). All the features of the language are *pracalit*, 'in use', mostly for the formative years of "work of Progressive writers, and Urdu writers more generally" (Lahiri 2015, 76) but it is very far from Hindī and spoken Hindī.

4. speakers of Hindī whose primary language is a Dravidian language (Tamil, Telugu etc.), a very large number, as for the previous group;
5. native speakers of Urdū;
6. speakers of Hindī whose primary language is English (a variety of standard English or of Indian English), relatively few (Nespital 1990, 3-4).

An important point Nespital adds in this classification – in addition to the geographical or circumstantial variations – lies in the knowledge of the speakers. Most of the speakers in the groups classified by Nespital are bilingual, and this surely has an impact on their linguistic production and in the spoken Hindī varieties (see § 2.2.4). He maintains that the impact of the languages spoken by Hindī speakers – other than Hindī – have a massive interference on the lexical, morphological and syntactic level of language (Nespital 1990).

This paper aimed to collect information about characteristics of the spoken language and the social, dialectal or circumstantial reasons which make them possible. Since the classifications above do not consider the medium used to communicate, there needs to be an addition to further the analysis. As already mentioned, the collection of linguistic traits and features was made through TV programmes and thus the variety then delineated, and this will be presented in the following paragraphs which can be labelled as TV-mediated, spoken and non-standard Hindī. If these features are common to the more generally labelled 'spoken Hindī variety', it will be discussed at the end of this paper.

2.2.1 Phonetic Features of Spoken Hindī

Starting with order with the phonetic level of analysis, one phenomenon that has to be mentioned concerns the pronunciation of sounds which derive from the phonetic system of Urdū (and indirectly from Persian), namely /f/ and /z/. In written Hindī, in *devanāgarī* script, 'autochthone' syllabic bases are used, namely फ /ph/ and ज /ʤ/, to which usually a dot is added, resulting in फ़ /f/ and ज़ /z/. Pronunciations for Urdū, and even English, words are thus sometimes: /'ʤa:datər/ (mostly), /'ʤa:da/ (more), /te:ʤ/ (fast), /ʤa'ru:ri/ (important), /dərva:ʤa/ (door), /p^{h}aiv/ (five).[14] The presence of these sounds shows research for a structural homologation at the phonic level. In the analysed TV programmes, the change /f/ > /ph/ and /z/ > /ʤ/ were present when

14 The standard pronunciations of these words are: /'zja:da/, /te:z/, /za'ru:ri/, /dərva:za/, /faiv/.

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the speakers (or the fictitious speakers) had little knowledge of Urdū/English and the sounds of these languages, and/or when they were not educated.

If, on one hand, the use of such sounds may be due to the education of the people, on the other hand it has to be noticed that the *Hindī Śabdasāgara* by Śyāmasundara Dāsa of *Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Sabhā* (1965-1975 and updated in December 2020) consider the use of /ʤ/ in the previous examples as the correct orthography. The nationalistic ideas of this institution must be kept in consideration, since in other dictionaries (Caturvedi's *A Practical Hindi-English Dictionary* and Bahri's *Learner's Hindi-English Dictionary*) the original /z/ is quoted. Since the government of India has had nationalistic leanings for several decades, the theory that this kind of phonic change can be a push from outside forces cannot be rejected without further analysis. Let us now switch to morphological features of spoken Hindī, which along with the syntactic ones – which were analysed more deeply than the phonetic ones.

2.2.2 Morphological Features of Spoken Hindī

Some interesting features observed at the morphological level of analysis mainly concerns agreements. In standard language, honorific pronoun *āp* is followed by the third person plural of verb 'to be', *haiṃ*. An example follows:

1. *sahī kah rahe ho āp*
   sahī *kah* *rah-e* *ho* *āp*
   right to tell.R to stay.R-M.PL AUX.2PL HON
   'You are saying right' (from *Delhi Crime*, ep. 2)[15]

The standard form of this sentence would be *āp sahī kah rahe haiṃ*, with subject in first position (see § 2.2.3) and the agreement between the honorific pronoun and the auxiliary verb 'to be'. The phenomenon which concerns the pronoun *āp* followed by the second person plural of 'to be' (*ho*) is observed also by Singh (2016, 290-2) like a new unofficial configuration of honorific, in the middle between a formal and an informal expression. The reasons this is happening are explained by Singh:

> regional language influence, popularization through mass media and ongoing linguistic and cultural change in Hindi speaking communities. It is also possible […] a combination of these factors. The

15 The episodes of *Delhi Crime* cited in this paper can be seen on Netflix.

> dynamics of media penetration by cinema, TV and radio into rural culture creates a mixing of urban elite language usages with rural language usages. (2016, 292)

The penetration of cinema into rural culture and language thus explains this peculiar linguistic trait, as well as it can help understanding the phenomenon of code-switching (see paragraph 2.2.4).

Other peculiarities of the pronouns concern the pro-drop possibility of Hindī language. If in standard Hindī the pronoun should always be cited, in spoken language, where the context makes it understandable who/which is the subject of the sentence, the pronoun can be tacit:

2. *to kyā kahā?*
   to *kyā* *kah-ā?*
   so what to say-PERF.M.SG
   'So what did you/she/he[16] say?' (from *Satyamev Jayate*, season 2, ep. 2, *Police*)[17]

There are other grammatical traits of Hindī which are described in grammars, but which are treated as 'rarely possible' in standard language. In spoken language, these traits are more present and can thus be observed. One of these concerns the genitive particles, namely *kā* (M.SG.DIR), *kī* (F.SG/PL) and *ke* (M.SG.OBL/M.PL/HON), which agree with the possessed object. As Caracchi highlights, possess can be expressed – rarely – with the oblique particle *ke* (1992, 94). Nevertheless, in spoken language this can happen more frequently, especially since the speakers pay less attention to the accuracy and grammatical precision of what they say. It is the same happening with the verb 'to be' *honā* conjugated at the third person singular and at the third person plural, which in prescriptive grammar would be respectively *hai* and *haiṃ* (the latter with nasalisation). In spoken language the verb *hai* (third person singular) is used indiscriminately for singular or plural. This can be due to the influence of Hindustānī, which does not differentiate the verb *honā* in its singular and plural form.

From these few examples from the morphology field (to which surely more examples can be added) it is clear that the spoken language shows some difference from the prescriptive one – the grammar and the standard language. This is due to the fact that spoken

16 In the translation of this sentence, it is necessary to highlight that the verb agrees with the object, which is not present here and the verb thus appears as masculine singular. This is due to the fact that this kind of sentence (with past participle) requires the ergative form of the subject (see Caracchi 1992, 80-2).

17 The episodes of *Satyamev Jayate* cited in this paper can be seen on YouTube.

language – in this case spoken Hindī – is the real actualisation of the language, it is used by the speakers and thus put in different context where there are different communicative circumstances and different interlocutors. In the following paragraph, concerning the syntactic features of spoken Hindī – the one the Author was more focused on – this tangled relation between speaker and language will be analysed even more deeply.

2.2.3 Syntactic Features of Spoken Hindī

For what concerns the syntax, namely the order of constituents, a premise must be visited about word order and the information that peculiar word order can convey. Hindī standard word order is SOV (subject/object/verb) and as in other languages it is flexible (such as Italian, French, English). All the patterns which differ from this one, though, convey a slightly different sense from the standard one. These non-standard syntactic orders are mostly used and 'fixed' in the spoken language. In the spoken situations, in fact, the speaker uses the language in the most 'pragmatic' way with all the means they possess to convey the highest amount of information during the event of communication. Let us, thus, introduce the theory of information structure, developed in the domain of pragmatics,[18] to explain this topic in a more precise way.

2.2.3.1 Information Structure

As quoted above, there is a standard word order – in Hindī and in every other language. Nevertheless, 97% of the world languages presents a SOV-SVO pattern. Nevertheless, other patterns are possible, such as VOS, OVS, OSV – at least theoretically.[19] The predominance

18 'Pragmatics' is the discipline that relates signs (specifically linguistic signs) and speakers. It thinks of the language and its products as actions, thus inescapable from the 'doers' and their context. The first contributions to pragmatics are Austin's speech act theory (1962) and Grice's implications (1975). Through pragmatics, the cognitive processes which make the communication possible are analysed through what is *said* (discourse particles, like deixis) and on what is *not said* (word order etc.). Here, information structure will be analysed, which is an important field of pragmatics. For a detailed study of pragmatics, see Morris 1938; Carnap 1942; Austin 1962; Grice 1975; Levinson 1983; Neale 1992; Bublitz, Norrick 2011; Ehrhardt, Heringer 2017.

19 The third most used standard word order, VSO (verb, subject, object), is adopted by less than 10% of the languages of the world (for example by Arabic, Hebrew, Celtic languages). VOS accounts for only 3% of the world's languages, OVS for 1% and OSV for just one known language, Warao, spoken in Venezuela, Guyana and Suriname (Grandi 2003, 24-6).

of SOV/SVO order is due to the information every member of the sentence conveys (namely subject, object and verb).

To help understand how and why this happens, information structure theory is useful. According to Roberts, information structure is:

> generally characterized as a variation of sentential structure along certain parameters to modulate the presentation of the information imparted by the sentence in such a way as to relate that information to prior context. (Roberts 2012, 2)

Here, 'information' is understood as the result of the relation between what comes from outside the listener (people participating in the communicative event, context) and what is inside them (linguistic expressions and their meanings, but also linguistic representations created during the communication). In this place, information is created in the minds of the interlocutors, which can be different from the *real* meaning of the utterance – every interlocutor's information differs one from the other since it is created from different starting points (Lambrecht 1994, 37-43). At this point the concepts of given/new, topic/comment and focus/background can be added to infer the way information structure works.[20]

Firstly, one interlocutor can possess some information, namely the 'given', but not the others, for whom it is the 'new'. For this reason, what is considered as a 'given' information is presented to the listener during the communicative event to help them understand the 'new' information better (Lambrecht 1994, 51). Another way the speaker introduces the issue they are talking about is the 'topic':

> the thing which the proposition expressed by the sentence is about (Lambrecht 1994, 118);

> what is spoken of in the sentence, the psychological subject, the element around which the predication is built (Berretta 1995, 127, translation of the author);[21]

> the entity that a speaker identifies about which then information, the comment, is given. (Krifka 2008, 40)

20 There are many ways through which the "presentation of the information" is "modulated", such as prosody, grammar particles etc. (Lambrecht 1994, 12; Roberts 2012, 2). In this paper only the syntactic constituents order will be presented through the use of topic/comment, given/new and focus/background concepts.

21 The original Italian quote is the following: "ciò di cui si parla nella frase, il soggetto psicologico, l'elemento attorno al quale è costruita la predicazione" (Berretta 1995, 127).

The 'comment' is thus what is added to the topic, a piece of 'new' information. In most of the languages of the world there is not a formal/grammatical indication of the topic – as in Chinese, where the topic is always at the beginning of the sentence. In a standard sentence such as *Mary ate an apple* it is impossible to understand which member is the topic unless the context in which the sentence is uttered is also known. This sentence can be the answer to different questions, and each answer to these questions would present a different topic (which is italic in the following examples):

i. What did Mary do? *Mary* ate an apple.
ii. Who ate an apple? Mary *ate an apple*.
iii. What happened? Mary ate an apple.[22]

Lastly, the 'focus' is parallel to the topic:

> that portion of a proposition which cannot be taken for granted at the time of the speech. It is the unpredictable or […] non-recoverable element in an utterance. The focus is what makes an utterance into an assertion. (Lambrecht 1994, 207)

Thus the 'background' is what is taken for granted and is predictable: the 'given' information.

All these parts of information – 'given'/'new', 'topic'/'comment', 'focus'/'background' – have their own standard position in the sentence. The topic (which corresponds to the 'given' information) is usually in the first position, since it introduces the sentences and gives the interlocutor an idea of what they are talking about – in a standard basic sentence it is represented by the subject. The newest information and the focus are in the central or final position (depending on the structure of the language – OV or VO), corresponding usually to the object or other complements. The position fulfilled by the verb (second in VO and third in OV) is of background: the intonation of the sentence as well gives less emphasis to this element (see Patil et al. 2008, 64). The position of all these parts of the information structure of a sentence conveys different information depending on the position they have in the utterance. These positions and, thus, the word order depend on which information the interlocutor(s) already possess(es) and which one the speaker wants to convey. The information structure of the sentence can thus change the word order. With the following paragraph some spoken Hindī word order and the information structure they display will be examined.

22 This last sentence, where there seems to lack a topic, can be considered thetic. In this kind of sentences all the information conveyed are new and thus a topic cannot be identified by the interlocutor (Lambrecht 1994, 222).

2.2.3.2 Word Orders in Spoken Hindī

To see how the order of the elements changes in spoken language, an example of the standard language is useful.

1. *maiṃ āj keval bhāt aur dahī khāūṃgī*
   maiṃ (S, 1SG)
   āj (ADV, today)
   keval (ADV, only)
   bhāt aur dahī (O, boiled rice and yogurt)
   khāūṃgī (V, to eat, FUT, 1SG)
   'Today I will eat just boiled rice and yogurt' (from Caracchi 1992, 28, translation of the Author)

In example 1, the subject corresponds to the topic, opens the sentence and the object is the focus. The verb closes the sentence. One of the most observed non-standard word order in the TV programmes was the post-verbal subject (thus with VS order).[23] Here, just some examples will be considered:

2. *kal phone kartā hūṃ maiṃ*

kal	*phone*	*kar-t-ā*	*hūṃ*	*maiṃ*
ADV.tomorrow	call	to do-PRES-M.SG	AUX	S.1SG

'*Tomorrow*[24] I will call' (literally 'tomorrow call I'll do') (from *Delhi Crime*, ep. 3)

In example 2, the subject has the least importance in the sentence, and is thus positioned at the end, where there is usually the verb. All the elements to whom the speaker gives more importance in the context are in first and second position, in this case 'tomorrow' and 'will call'.[25]

23 The topic of post-verbal subject has huge relevance in recent studies, mostly for helping understand the real nature of 'subject', for centuries considered a static and monolithic category of grammar. See for the notion of subject: Keenan 1976; Cole et al. 1980; Van Valin, LaPolla 1997; Drocco 2008; Montaut 2014; see for post-verbal subject: Masica 1991; Cardinaletti 1997; Pinto 1997; Leonetti 2018.

24 The words in italics in some of the examples are from the Author. The intention and the reason to use this written device – italic – is to translate in English the communicative intention and emphasis of the sentence. Since in English some kinds of dislocation and word order cannot be represented merely by the syntactic structure of the sentence (because of syntactic restrictions of the English language), the use of other devices is made (such as emphasis, intonation, periphrasis etc.). Thus, the strategies English-speaking people would use to convey the same meaning of the Hindī examples are mainly based on intonation and emphasis, which cannot be written down and will be displayed using italics.

25 Differently from English, Hindī is a pro-drop language, that means that the verb can be separated from the subject and the latter can also be implied. A sentence like example 2 cannot exist in English.

Other members of the sentence as well can be 'dislocated' to left, in other words put in first position. The followings are some examples of different kinds of elements moved to the first position of the sentence:

3. *kuch nahīṃ kiyā hai maiṃne*
   kuch *nahīṃ* *k-iy-ā* *hai* *maiṃ-ne*
   IND NEG to do-PERF-M.SG AUX.3SG 1SG.DIR-ERG
   'I didn't do *anything*' (literally 'anything did I') (from *Delhi Crime*, ep. 7)

4. *paṛhnā likhnā ātā hai tere ko?*
   paṛ-nā *likh-nā* *ā-t-ā* *hai* *t-er-e*
   to read-INF to write-INF to come-PRES-M.SG AUX.3SG 2SG-GEN-M.OB
   ko?
   DAT
   'Reading and writing, can you do it?' (from *Delhi Crime*, ep. 5)

5. *enter exam nahīṃ pass kar pāī vo*
   enter exam *nahīṃ* *pass* *kar* *pā-ī* *vo*
   enter exam NEG to pass to do.R to manage-PERF.F. 3SG.DIR.
   'The enter exam, she couldn't pass it' (from *Delhi Crime*, ep. 6)

6. *pulīs ke sāth sab se baṛī samasyā kyā hai?*
   pulīs *ke sāth* *sab* *se* *baṛ-ī* *samasyā* *kyā* *hai?*
   police with ADV POST big-F problem INT to be.3SG
   'With the police, which is the biggest problem?' (literally 'with the police, the biggest problem what is?') (from *Satyamev Jayate*, season 2, ep. 2, *Police*).

7. *milte haiṃ ham apne agle mehman se*
   mil-t-e *haiṃ* *ham* *apn-e* *agl-e* *mehman*
   to meet-PRES-PL AUX.2PL 2PL.DIR GEN-OBL next-OBL guest
   se
   POST
   'We are meeting our next guest' (from *Satyamev Jayate*, season 2, ep. 2, *Police*)

In these examples, different elements re dislocated in the first part of the sentence. In example 3, it is the subject of an ergative sentence which is in first position, while in sentence 4 it is the subject of a dative-constructed sentence.[26] In example 5, it is the object, 'enter ex-

26 These two kinds of sentences, namely the ergative one (example 3) and the one constructed with the dative (example 4), are very peculiar in Hindī. The first one concerns the sentences with the past participle. Hindī is generally a nominative/accusative lan-

am', which is put in first position, and in 6 there is an entire syntagm, *pulīs ke sāth*. Lastly, in example 7, it is the verb that is uttered first.

All these elements which are positioned at the very beginning of the sentences have peculiar meanings, which can be different from one example to another. In sentences 4, 5 and 6 (with *paṛhnā likhnā*, *enter exam* and *pulīs ke sāth*) the element in first positions are topics. Being topics, they are in subject-position to create a 'Common Ground', a 'scene-setting' (see Krifka 2008). For this reason, the subject of the sentence is shifted in another position that does not have the prominence the first one has.

For what concerns examples 2 and 3, instead, it is important to highlight that those first uttered elements (*kal* and *kuch nahīṃ*) have special emphasis. The peculiar communicative context of sentences 2 and 3 concerns the interrogatory of two different people in two different moments, but both were investigated by the police for a crime. Both the answers to the police's questions have as first element something that can save them from the pressing interrogatory: '*Tomorrow* I will call!' and 'I did *nothing*!'. In a real-life context the use of such a device – putting in focus the important element that can save someone from the police – can be understood better.

As for a more 'television' language, example 7 can help understand another reason for a word order change. In this sentence, in fact, the verb – which is usually the last element in Hindī – is in first position, turning upside-down the syntax of the entire utterance. The focus of the sentence, in other words the new information given to the listeners, is kept as the last element *apne agle mehman se*. With this formulation of the utterance, the attention of the interlocutor – in this case the public – is maintained high until the end.

From the analysis of these first examples, it is clear that putting an important element of the sentence in first position – and at the same time putting the one which should be in first position at the end – gives prominence to that same element. In other cases, when the prominent element of the sentence is put at the end of the sentence the attention of the listeners is kept high. In addition to this, it is clear that every kind of element – whether it is an object, an ad-

guage, but in past participle sentences the subject is followed by the *ne* postposition, which highlights the agent of the action described by the verb – and is thus ergative. The object thus becomes the grammatical subject and agrees with the verb. The ergative subject is considered a 'non-canonical subject' since the subject is traditionally believed to have some properties, like being in first position, agreeing with the verb etc. In ergative sentences the object, and not the subject, agrees with the verb. The sentences with dative subject as well are considered 'non-canonical' since also here the object agrees with the verb, as the subject is followed by the dative postposition *ko*. Usually, these sentences are used to convey the meaning of preference ('I like…', 'I do not like…' etc.) and of ability ('I can do…', 'I cannot do…' etc.). For a further examination of the topic of non-canonical subjects see Keenan 1976; Drocco 2008; Montaut 2014.

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verb, a verb or a complement – can thus be dislocated in first position, or, on the contrary, uttered at the end. While there are some restrictions to word order in some languages (like English, as can be seen from the translations of the examples above), there are no syntactic restrictions to word order in Hindī.

Here, an addition shall be done about all those elements (as in the previous examples) that are confined at the end of the sentence without a particular emphasis or prominence. Other examples can be useful:

8. *jī, dost hūṃ uska*
   jī *dost* *hūṃ* *us-ka*
   yes friend to be.PRES.1SG 3SG.OBL-GEN
   'Yes, I am his friend' (literally: 'yes, I am friend, of him') (from *Delhi Crime*, ep. 2)

9. *ronī lagī bahut, aisā kyoṃ mujhe hotā hai hameśā aisā?*
   ron-ī *lag-ī* *bahut,* *aisā* *kyoṃ* *m-ujh-e*
   to cry-F to start-F a lot like INT 1SG-OBL-DAT
   ho-t-ā *hai* *hameśā* *aisā?*
   to be-PRES-M. AUX always like this?
   'I started crying a lot, like… why to me it is always like this?' (from *Satyamev Jayate*, season 3, ep. 5, Nurturing Mental Health)

10. *darvāzā kholne ke lie jāgnā paṛegā kya?*
    darvāz-ā *khol-n-e* *ke lie* *jāg-nā* *paṛ-eg-ā* *kyā?*
    door-DIR open-R-OBL to get up-R to have to-FUT-M.3SG INT
    'Do I have to get up to open the door?' (literally: 'to open the door, will (I) have to get up?') (from *Delhi Crime*, ep. 1)

11. *so rahā thā kyā?*
    so *rah-ā* *th-ā* *kyā?*
    to sleep.R to stay-PERF.M.SG AUX.PERF-M.SG INT
    'Were you sleeping?' (from *Delhi Crime*, ep. 5)

12. *kyā response āyā is cīz kā?*
    kyā *response* *ā-y-ā* *is* *cīz* *k-ā*
    INT response to come-PERF-M.SG 3SG.OBL matter GEN-M
    'What response arrived, to this?' (from *Satyamev Jayate*, season 3, ep. 5, *Nurturing Mental Health*)

These above-mentioned examples have a word order which is definitely similar to the previous examples, but they highlight a topic that still needs to be examined. The last elements of the sentence ('*uska*', '*hameśā aisā*', the interrogative '*kyā*' and the syntagm '*is cīz kā*') are added even though what the sentence wanted to convey was already clear from the context – in other words, that same element had

already been presented in the conversation and was implied in the sentence. For the examples 10 and 11, the element examined is *kyā*, which is an interrogation mark (not a pronoun, as in example 12). *Kyā* as interrogation mark (which does not have a translation in English) is usually at the beginning of a sentence, even if it has great mobility within the sentence.[27] For these utterances, specifically, the fact that it was a question would have been clear from the intonation of the utterance even if the interrogative mark were missing. For Montaut, this dislocation

> gives it the communicative status of an afterthought after the complex utterance […] a delayed topic […] a 'post-rhème'. (2004, 276)

The elements in this position can have the meaning, thus, of a later addition, of a reiterated information added to give more precision to something which is presumed to be already understood by the interlocutor.

These last elements are thus in this position for two reasons, and one does not exclude the other: firstly, it is the position they get when an element considered more prominent (the topic or the focus) is shifted to first position. The other ones consequently shift in the other direction (and become background). Secondly, those elements could have been tacit, but they are mentioned to make the sentence clearer and more understandable for the interlocutor.

From this brief excursus just some of the possible dislocations were examined: there are other examples of other elements of the sentence which can be dislocated at the beginning or at the end of the clause – different adverbs, different syntagm, different kinds of objects etc. Here just some of the main ones were brought to light. One issue shall be, nevertheless, clear: there is a great possibility of movement for the different elements of the sentence in Hindī. In the following paragraph, the level of analysis of the lexicon will be examined through examples from the same corpus.

27 Differently, *kyā* as a pronoun (as in example 12) is always in the position of the element it is referring to. If it is referring to a subject it would thus be at the beginning of the question, while if it is referring to an object in the second position. As well as *kyā* as interrogation mark, other interrogative particles (like *kaisā* 'how' and *kyoṃ* 'why') have great mobility within the sentence. The reason why these elements can be in different positions in the sentence is due – as for other kinds of elements – to the emphasis they have and to their role in the information structure.

2.2.4 Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in Hindī

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Hindī from the TV programmes that were listened, and more in general in the spoken Hindī (see Nespital 1990), was the use of English words and sentences. This widely spread phenomenon of code commutation is usually divided in two main actualisations: 'code-switching' is when there is an entire part of the sentence in another language; 'code-mixing', instead, is when there is a juxtaposition of two languages words and syntagms. Usually, a code-mixed sentence is entirely constructed in a language's grammar and morphology (with pronouns, prepositions/postpositions) but the nominal parts, such as nouns, adverbs, or the nominal parts of the verbs, are in the other language. The diffusion of code-switching and code-mixing is due to the central position of English in India for what concerns politics, but also for economic and social reasons (Si 2010, 390; Abbi, Sharma 2014, 107-10). Moreover, the prestige of English for medium-high classes (Si 2010, 390) and the wider distribution of the language through Bollywood (Dey, Fung 2014, 2410) increased the general use of English also through the phenomenon of code commutation.[28] An example from the analysed corpus for code-mixing is the following:

1. *sir, maiṃ pulīs kī high court meṃ represent kar rahā hūṃ is inquiry meṃ*
   Sir maiṃ pulīs k-ī high court meṃ represent kar
   Sir 1.SG. police GEN.-F. high court LOC. represent fare
   rah-ā hūṃ is inquiry meṃ
   to stay-PERF.M.SG. to be.AUX-PRES.3.SG. OBL.3.SG. inquiry LOC.
   'Sir, I am representing the police in the high court in this inquiry' (from *Delhi Crime*, ep. 5)

As can be seen from this short example, the English words are nouns (which usually are 'head'[29] or adjectives) and the first part of a verb (as in *represent karnā* where *karnā* is the general verb 'to do' usually used to create compound verbs),[30] while the core grammar (pronouns, postpositions) of the sentence is Hindī (*meṃ*, *is*, *kī*).

28 In Hindī also the contrary phenomenon in which English is switched to Hindī exists, as well as code-switching with other Neo-Indo-Aryan languages (see Kachru 1978, 108).

29 The term 'head' concerns the syntactic role a linguistic element can have in a complex structure which either "(a) is in a morphologically marked relationship of coreference with the preceding or following coreferential elements or (b) is modified semantically by these coreferential elements as attributes" (Bussmann 1996, 502).

30 These kinds of verbal compounds exist because of the limited number of simple verb lexemes in Hindī (as well as in other Neo-Indo-Aryan languages), around 1200. Differently from Sanskrit, but also from other Indo-European languages (such as Neo-Latin, Slavonic languages or German) Hindī and the Neo-Indo-Aryan languages do not use prefixes to create new verbs with new meanings. The linguistic strategy used to do this lies in these verbo-nominal expressions, namely syntagms created with the jux-

An example of code-switching is the following:

2. *ye pūrā case barbād ho jāegā and those guys will walk free*
   ye *pūr-ā* *case* *barbād* *ho* *jā-eg-ā*
   DEM.3.SG. entire-M.SG. case wasted to be to go-FUT-3.SG.M.
   'This entire case will be wasted and those guys will walk free' (from *Delhi Crime*, ep. 6)

Given the nature of the English words used in the phenomenon of code commutation, Dey and Fung (2014, 2412) suppose that the main triggering reason is the simplicity of use of English words as compared to the Hindī ones.[31] Moreover, also social factors as prestige and identification with a certain community can trigger code-switching:[32] it is a

> socially accepted marker of education and what may be termed 'westernization' in India. It also identifies membership in a particular social class. (Kachru 1978, 109)

The crucial factor in this phenomenon – thus triggering it – is the prestige English language has in the subcontinent at least for a part of the population, namely people living in metropolitan areas or in big cities like Delhi. The role English has for Hindī speakers needs to be analysed in relation to the social factors, namely education level, social status, job etc., which would put the population in contact with this language.

3 Conclusions

From this brief analysis, it should be evident in the first place that the common idea of "language" – mainly of official languages like Hindī or of the national language – as fixed and without variation is too rigid and does not cover all the possibilities in the general do-

taposition of an existing noun, verb or adverb + a verb (such as *karnā* 'to do', *denā*, 'to give', *honā* 'to be') which is a functional verb (Nespital 1990, 7).

31 Since the reasons triggering code-switching (to extend the range of the speaker, to use a more suitable word in a given context, to make the communication with another bilingual simpler and faster etc.) are beyond the scope of this paper, I refer the readers to Si 2010 and Dey, Fung 2014 for a more extended analysis.

32 An example of this identification with a prestigious class can be seen in some advertisement with heavy code-switching, with no Hindī nouns: "it is clear that the use of non-English words in the given text would not speak in the same manner to the target readership as it does, and not create similar images in their minds" (Kuczkiwicz-Fraś, Gil 2014, 184).

main of language. This is true even for the same variety a particular language, in this case of modern spoken Hindī. Even within the study of language at the scholarly level, it should be taught that the peculiarities of the language itself make it less rigid and fixed than what is expected.

Secondarily, the study of the features of these "derivative" varieties, which indeed represent the real actuation of language in a dynamic social context, gives us material to grasp what is happening inside a language. In fact, there are different phenomena that can develop from the spoken variety of a language to become, then, a feature of the standard variety of language (see Berruto 2013 for the situation of Italian varieties). Moreover, these same phenomena are greatly useful for the study of the real nature of language and the cognition which makes it possible to communicate, as for the post-verbal subject phenomenon (which was one domain of analysis of the dissertation of the Author), for different peculiarities of spoken language, for the use of some grammatical elements such as the interrogative mark *kyā* and the ergative postposition *ne* and, last but not least, for word order and information structure. Concerning this domain, from this initial corpus (which can be expanded further) it seems that Hindī language does not have restrictions as English or French, and emphasis and given/new information are reasons which modify the order of the members of a sentence.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, from these data, it can be understood which kind of variety is used in the TV programme-mediated spoken variety of language as well as the information the characters display with their use of the language which could be about their social environment and education. As the results of this analysis show, some characters use the code commutation with English, which highlights a stretch towards a citizen model (maybe Westernised?) – given, also, that the TV series *Delhi Crime* is shot in Delhi. The characters who used this variety of language are certainly of a high degree of education and belong to the middle or high class: the inspectors, their family, and in the TV programme *Satyamev Jayate* the host and his guests, such as doctors, psychologists etc. Moreover, they comply more with the standard language than the characters that belong to lower classes/castes. For what concerns the syntax presented in the second part of this paper, the more the conversation is spontaneous the more the utterances do not abide by the standard word order, whether the speakers are displayed as belonging to the middle/high-class or to the lower class – or whether they are doctors or psychologists or the public of *Satyamev Jayate*.

This is certainly not new. The 'fathers' of Sociolinguistics (Labov, Gumperz) gathered enough information to arrive at this same conclusion. What should be highlighted here is that all the features of this spoken variety of Hindī agree in displaying a city variety, with some

social differences concerning the social strata of the speakers cohabiting the city – with more or less attention to the standard language. There are reasons to presume that these same features would characterise also the other spoken varieties of Hindī, these reasons being the performative nature of TV series in general (abiding by the 'realness' of interactions between speakers) and the participation of non-actor/actress hosts in the TV programme who are not following a script. Certainly, this last statement should be considered with further analysis of the spoken varieties of Hindī, which should be the topic of more intense research in the future.

List of abbreviations

The analysis of the sentences in this paper (with the exception of some sentences concerning the word order) is presented with the transcription of the sentence, followed by a division in the meaningful morphemes which carry grammatical information. This was made to make the literal translation of every part of the sentence clearer to the readers, even for those who are not acquainted in Hindī language. Finally, the translation/transposition in comprehensible English is presented, with specific attention in conveying the sentence meaning as a whole.

ACC	accusative
ADV	adverb
AUX	auxiliar
DAT	dative
DEM	demonstrative
DIR	direct case
ERG	ergative
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
HON	honorific
IND	indefinite
INF	infinite
LOC	locative
M	masculine
NEG	negation
O	object
OBL	oblique case
PERF	perfective
PRES	present
R	root

S	subject
SG	singular
V	verb

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Due indianisti e una Commissione
Carlo Formichi, Oreste Nazari e il progresso degli studi sanscritici in Italia

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Abstract This paper aims to retrace a piece of the history of Indian studies in Italy between the 19th and 20th centuries. Specifically, it builds on the unpublished documents from the works of the October 1905 Examination Commission – consisting of Michele Kerbaker, Emilio Teza, Fausto Gherardo Fumi, Paolo Emilio Pavolini, and Ernesto Giacomo Parodi – tasked with assessing the scientific and academics titles of Carlo Formichi and Oreste Nazari, who had held temporary Sanskrit chairs in Pisa and Palermo since 1901, in view of promoting them to tenured positions. This is a valuable case-study to understand the dynamics of the development of Indian studies in post-unification Italy, as well as the reciprocal influences between scholars and the reception of contemporary publications in the Orientalistic field.

Keywords History of Indian Studies in Italy. Carlo Formichi. Oreste Nazari. History of Oriental Studies. Sanskrit Studies in Italy.

Sommario 1 Introduzione. Materiali per una ricostruzione della storia dell'indianistica in Italia. – 2 L'insediamento della Commissione (ottobre 1905). – 3 Le «buone speranze» del giovane studioso divenute «belle e sicure realtà». I giudizi su Carlo Formichi. – 4 Il «valente filologo e glottologo» che «promette […] di progredire sempre più nel campo dell'Indologia». I giudizi su Oreste Nazàri. – 5 Conclusioni. – 6 Appendice documentaria. – 6.1 «Giudizi dati dai Commissari (per il prof. Formichi)». – 6.2 «Giudizi dati dai Commissari (per il prof. Nazari)». – 6.3 Relazione conclusiva della Commissione.

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1 Introduzione. Materiali per una ricostruzione della storia dell'indianistica in Italia

Ricostruire la storia e la geografia dell'indianistica nell'Italia dell'Otto/Novecento, segnatamente negli sviluppi e nelle acquisizioni che tali studi ebbero – sovente in maniera repentina – nel periodo successivo all'unificazione dello Stato italiano mediante l'interessamento della nuova classe dirigente e l'avallo istituzionale che ne conseguì e ne permise una più ampia e sistematica apertura alla ricezione di quanto si andava pubblicando nel resto dell'Europa, comporta in diversi casi imbattersi in una serie di carte di carattere amministrativo e burocratico che, di primo acchito, potrebbero apparire prive di qualsiasi interesse per chi si occupi di tracciare una mappa culturale che renda ragione delle vicende e degli intrecci fra testi e autori che contraddistinsero le discipline indianistiche a partire per l'appunto dalla seconda metà del XIX secolo.[1] Di norma questo genere di documentazione emerge nel corso delle ricerche sui materiali archivistici conservati presso le istituzioni che promossero l'avanzamento degli studi orientali e nelle quali gli indianisti svolsero le proprie attività scientifiche, ne sono un esempio gli archivi delle Università e i connessi fascicoli personali custoditi nell'Archivio Centrale dello Stato, così come quelli rinvenibili nei fondi di istituti quali l'Accademia dei Lincei o l'Accademia d'Italia. Sebbene tali carte, a volte anche di una certa consistenza, siano nella gran parte dei casi utili a meglio precisare aspetti per lo più secondari nella ricostruzione complessiva del più generale panorama culturale all'interno del quale si svilupparono l'indianistica e gli itinerari biografici e intellettuali dei suoi protagonisti, pur tuttavia, se esaminati con la dovuta attenzione, alcuni di questi documenti possono per converso rivelarsi – talora anche soltanto in filigrana – di fondamentale importanza per addentrarsi nelle vicende che caratterizzarono alcuni momenti della storia della disciplina e per intendere i percorsi dei singoli studiosi.

A questo proposito, un ruolo senza dubbio essenziale è svolto dai documenti più strettamente legati alla vita accademica e, in particolare, alle questioni concernenti la carriera scientifica di coloro i quali, in maniera più o meno lineare, intrapresero il tragitto che dal-

1 Lo scritto che qui si presenta è parte di un lavoro più ampio, in corso da alcuni anni, dedicato alla ricostruzione, nel suo complesso e attraverso alcune delle figure più significative, della storia dell'indianistica in Italia a partire dalla seconda metà dell'Ottocento e sino ai primi decenni del Novecento. Mi sia permesso rimandare al saggio di prossima pubblicazione dedicato a Michele Kerbaker e all'indianistica dell'Otto/Novecento (Crisanti c.d.s. a) che anticipa un volume sulla figura dell'indianista e sulla ricezione degli studi indologici nella cultura italiana postunitaria. Nella trascrizione dei documenti si è scelto di mantenere il dettato dell'originale segnalando, ove presenti, refusi o imprecisioni dello scrivente (non si segnalano l'assenza di diacritici negli originali e le traslitterazioni dal sanscrito non del tutto coerenti).

la libera docenza li avrebbe condotti alla cattedra universitaria di Sanscrito o, in diversi casi, di materie affini. Tra i fascicoli personali di costoro capita di ritrovare le carte relative alla loro partecipazione ai concorsi universitari o ai passaggi di grado nei ruoli accademici e per quanto sia più frequente – data la natura prettamente amministrativa degli archivi istituzionali – avere a che fare con i documenti che genericamente informano dell'avvenuto espletamento delle pratiche concorsuali e degli avanzamenti di carriera, alle volte si incorre nella documentazione pressoché completa prodotta dalle Commissioni chiamate a esaminare il curriculum scientifico dei candidati, su cui si conservano in qualche caso anche i giudizi espressi dai singoli commissari.

L'analisi delle carte elaborate durante i lavori delle Commissioni d'esame e di concorso rappresenta in tal senso un valido strumento – e talvolta una via d'accesso privilegiata – per poter attingere non soltanto ai pareri che i massimi studiosi dell'epoca andavano formulando sugli indianisti emergenti, ma altresì per cogliere, attraverso le loro valutazioni, alcuni aspetti del dibattito scientifico e, per certi versi, dello stato degli studi di indianistica in Italia. Pur nell'indiscutibile parzialità e nell'altrettanto evidente retorica che caratterizza questo genere di scritture, la presenza, nelle Commissioni, dei massimi esponenti degli studi indianistici e linguistici del tempo consente difatti di indagare le direzioni e le tendenze che tali studi andavano assumendo in date epoche, come pure di comprendere l'insistenza su certi temi e certe opere in alcuni momenti della storia di tali discipline. A volte è possibile, inoltre, scorgere in nuce le tracce di future collaborazioni o prese di posizione in merito a singoli lavori poi esplicatesi per esempio nelle recensioni date alle stampe, mentre talvolta si possono invece ravvisare sia i parteggiamenti per l'uno o per l'altro dei candidati – in alcuni casi allievi diretti dei commissari – sia le tensioni e le rivalità esistenti tra scuole diverse. Da un primo esame delle carte degli indianisti attivi tra la seconda metà dell'Ottocento e i primi decenni del Novecento non sembra a ogni modo emergere che i lavori delle Commissioni d'esame e di concorso di ambito indologico abbiano avuto strascichi polemici o siano stati l'occasione per esacerbare conflitti e tensioni già in atto, a differenza di quanto invece accadde a discipline pure limitrofe, è il caso per esempio del concorso per la cattedra di Greco all'Università di Palermo del 1899 del quale fu Presidente di Commissione il sanscritista Michele Kerbaker.[2]

2 Su tale concorso, ampiamente studiato a causa della risonanza che le polemiche tra Girolamo Vitelli e Giuseppe Fraccaroli assunsero nel dibattito dell'epoca, si vedano i più recenti studi di Francesco Pagnotta, in gran parte costruiti su materiali inediti, cf. Pagnotta 2020 e Pagnotta 2019 (si veda inoltre la bibliografia riportata in quest'ultimo articolo); cf. anche Minutoli 2017. Della Commissione di concorso, oltre a Kerbaker

In questa sede, è parso opportuno soffermare l'attenzione sulle carte concernenti i lavori della Commissione chiamata a esprimersi, nell'ottobre del 1905, sulle domande di promozione a professore ordinario presentate da Carlo Formichi (1871-1943) e Oreste Nazari (1866-1923), straordinari di Sanscrito, rispettivamente nelle Università di Pisa e Palermo, a seguito del concorso a cattedra del 1901. La scelta di approfondire questo episodio a prima vista non così rilevante per la ricostruzione nel suo complesso della storia dell'indianistica italiana è dettata non solo dall'autorevolezza dei professori incaricati di giudicare i due studiosi e dall'interesse che i pareri da loro espressi hanno per comprendere la ricezione dei lavori di Formichi e Nazari da parte dei contemporanei, ma altresì per la parte che entrambi ebbero, seppure in gradi diversi e con spessore senz'altro differente, negli sviluppi delle discipline indianistiche. L'uno del 1871 (Formichi), l'altro del 1866 (Nazari), ambedue appartengono inoltre alla generazione di indianisti successiva a quella dei primi esponenti di quello che è possibile definire, con Giuseppe Gabrieli, «orientalismo propriamente detto, cioè filologico e scientifico» (1935, VIII), per intenderci quella di tre dei cinque membri della Commissione d'esame – Michele Kerbaker (1835-1914), Emilio Teza (1831-1912) e Fausto Gherardo Fumi (1840-1915) – a loro volta seguiti alla generazione di Gaspare Gorresio (1807-1891), Giovanni Flechia (1811-1892), Giuseppe Bardelli (1815-1965) e Pietro Giuseppe Maggi (1817-1873); in tal senso l'approfondimento del caso particolare rappresentato dalla loro promozione all'ordinariato può essere funzionale all'allargamento dello sguardo su quella soglia rappresentata dal volgere del secolo e su quegli studiosi che pur avendo già raggiunto a quell'altezza una certa maturità scientifica possono definirsi, per metodi e atteggiamento, pienamente novecenteschi.

Come si tenterà di far emergere nel corso della trattazione, il lavoro svolto dalle Commissioni – in questo come in altri casi analoghi – rappresenta in maniera talvolta emblematica una lente attraverso la quale è possibile leggere non soltanto lo stato degli studi indianistici ma anche avere alcuni indizi sul più ampio panorama culturale coevo.

che fu in quell'occasione eletto Presidente, facevano parte Fraccaroli (relatore), Francesco Zambaldi, Vigilio Inama e Vittorio Puntoni; va notato che gli strali di Vitelli non coinvolsero Kerbaker da lui anzi giudicato non responsabile della stroncatura che Fraccaroli aveva dato del *Bacchilide* di Nicola Festa, come avrebbe scritto in una lettera al *Marzocco* sostenendo fosse «impossibile» che «non ne [… avesse] giudicato rettamente Michele Kerbaker» (la lettera è riportata in Pagnotta 2017, 41; cf. a questo proposito anche l'epistola di Giulio Emanuele Rizzo a Fraccaroli a pagina 152).

2 L'insediamento della Commissione (ottobre 1905)

L'incartamento inerente i lavori della Commissione designata per giudicare le domande di promozione all'ordinariato presentate da Nazari e Formichi è conservato, pressoché integralmente, nel fascicolo personale di quest'ultimo custodito presso l'Archivio centrale dello Stato.[3] L'esame di tali carte, a differenza di altri momenti del percorso accademico dei due studiosi su cui non si serba altrettanta abbondanza di documenti, permette di ricostruire con una certa precisione l'*iter* che condusse i due studiosi a ottenere i pieni ruoli universitari.

L'avvio delle procedure di nomina dei membri della Commissione da parte del Ministero dell'Istruzione Pubblica risale alla fine dell'agosto 1905 e segue il «Risultato delle votazioni fatte dalle Facoltà e Scuole universitarie […] per la classificazione delle Commissioni giudicatrici dei concorsi e delle promozioni» del giugno precedente (Bollettino 1905a, 1799). Secondo quanto emerso dalle consultazioni interne alle Facoltà di Filosofia e Lettere, l'elenco dei professori tra i quali eleggere i commissari che avrebbero dovuto decidere delle promozioni per la cattedra di «Sanscrito» comprendeva: «1. Kerbaker Michele, Napoli; 2. Fumi Fausto Gherardo, Genova; 3. Pavolini P.E., Firenze; 4. Teza Emilio, Padova; 5. De Gubernatis Angelo, Roma; 6. Pizzi Italo, Torino; 7. Guidi Ignazio, Roma; 8. Salvioni Carlo, Milano» (Bollettino 1905a, 1807). Unitamente a questa rosa di nomi, formata da alcuni tra i maggiori orientalisti che, all'epoca, erano titolari delle cattedre di Sanscrito o che, come nel caso di Kerbaker, ne insegnavano la lingua e la letteratura per incarico o ne erano profondi conoscitori come Guidi pur non avendolo mai insegnato ufficialmente, le Facoltà indicavano inoltre, per le «Materie affini», i seguenti docenti: «1. Ascoli Graziadio, Milano; 2. Parodi Giacomo Ernesto, Firenze; 3. Trombetti Alfredo, Bologna» (Bollettino 1905a, 1807).

Da una minuta del Ministro dell'Istruzione Leonardo Bianchi datata 21 agosto 1905 si apprende la composizione della Commissio-

3 Cf. Archivio centrale dello Stato, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione Generale Istruzione Superiore, Miscellanea di divisioni diverse I-II-III (1929-1945), b. 48, fasc. Formichi Carlo (d'ora in avanti ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi). Su Formichi si veda inoltre Archivio centrale dello Stato, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione Generale Istruzione Superiore 1897-1910, b. 23, fasc. Formichi Carlo (d'ora in poi ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi); Archivio storico della Sapienza Università di Roma, fasc. personale del professor Carlo Formichi, AS 485 (d'ora in poi ASUR, AS 485). Su Oreste Nazari cf. Archivio centrale dello Stato, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione Generale Istruzione Superiore, Divisione prima, Fascicoli personali dei professori ordinari e del personale amministrativo, II versamento, serie I, b. 105, fasc. Nazari Oreste; Archivio centrale dello Stato, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione Generale Istruzione Superiore, Biblioteche e Affari generali, Archivio generale 1896-1910, categoria: Pos. 11 Liberi docenti, b. 31, fasc. Nazari Oreste (si tratta del fascicolo relativo alla libera docenza di Sanscrito a Torino); Archivio storico dell'Università degli Studi di Palermo, Docenti 1843-1966, UA 5161 Lettere e Filosofia-Docenti 1874-1935, fasc. 3 Nazari, Oreste.

ne designata dal Ministero, della quale veniva data notizia ai singoli professori: accanto ai già menzionati Kerbaker, Fumi e Teza, era nominato l'allievo di quest'ultimo, Paolo Emilio Pavolini (1864-1942), e per le materie «affini» il glottologo Graziadio Isaia Ascoli (1829-1907).[4] Non v'è traccia della comunicazione con cui Ascoli declinava l'incarico, né è possibile ricostruirne le ragioni, nondimeno il 16 settembre il Ministero provvedeva alla sostituzione di quest'ultimo chiedendo a un altro docente di materie contigue, Ernesto Giacomo Parodi (1862-1923), di accettare l'ufficio di commissario.[5] Pur con qualche difficoltà dovuta all'impegno di Parodi negli esami di licenza della Scuola Normale femminile di Nizza Monferrato e al suo procrastinare una risposta risolutiva, la Commissione si sarebbe costituita in via definitiva soltanto dopo l'accettazione dell'incarico da parte di quest'ultimo, il 2 ottobre, pochi giorni prima dell'insediamento previsto a Roma per il 9 ottobre.[6]

Come notato sopra discutendo di Formichi e Nazari, similmente all'interno della Commissione è possibile ravvisare una analoga differenza generazionale tra Pavolini e Parodi da una parte e gli altri tre commissari dall'altra; più vicini per età agli esaminati, entrambi avevano conseguito la cattedra universitaria più di recente e non senza incrociare, nel loro percorso, sia gli uni che gli altri (in maniera, a dir la verità, alquanto scontata se si considera il ristretto numero di cattedre universitarie e di studiosi di tali materie all'epoca).

4 Cf. ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Minuta della comunicazione del Ministro della Istruzione Pubblica L. Bianchi ai professori M. Kerbaker, F.G. Fumi, P.E. Pavolini, E. Teza, G. Ascoli, Oggetto: Nomina a Commissario, Roma, 21 ago. 1905.

5 Cf. ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Minuta della comunicazione del Ministro della Istruzione Pubblica L. Bianchi al professore E.G. Parodi, Oggetto: Nomina a Commissario, Roma, 16 set. 1905.

6 Nelle minute di nomina dei commissari poc'anzi menzionate il Ministero comunicava che la prima riunione era fissata a Roma per il 9 ottobre 1905. Gli altri membri della Commissione avevano accettato l'incarico pochi giorni dopo la comunicazione del 21 agosto: Pavolini il 24 (cf. ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Lettera di P.E. Pavolini al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione L. Bianchi, Firenze, 24 ago. 1905); Teza il 22 agosto (cf. ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Lettera di E. Teza al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione L. Bianchi, Padova, 22 ago. 1905), Fumi il 28 agosto (ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Lettera di F.G. Fumi al Direttore del Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Genova, 28 ago. 1905); di Kerbaker è conservata unicamente una lettera del 9 settembre nella quale si mostra preoccupato che la sua prima risposta di accettazione non sia stata notificata al Ministero (cf. ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Lettera di M. Kerbaker al Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Napoli, 9 set. 1905). Nella lettera Kerbaker comunicava l'accettazione dell'«incarico di far parte della Commissione giudicatrice per le promozioni Formichi, Nazàri e Goidanich»: quest'ultimo, professore straordinario di Storia comparata delle lingue classiche e neolatine, non sarebbe stato valutato dalla stessa Commissione di Formichi e Nazari e avrebbe avuto la promozione a ordinario con decreto del 19 novembre 1905 (cf. Bollettino 1905b, 2725).

Allievo di Pio Rajna (1847-1930) durante gli anni di perfezionamento presso l'Istituto di Studi Superiori di Firenze, Parodi aveva ottenuto lo straordinariato in Grammatica comparata nel 1894 ed era poi stato promosso all'ordinariato sulla cattedra di Storia comparata delle lingue classiche e neolatine del medesimo istituto fiorentino da una Commissione presieduta da Ascoli e formata, oltre che da Francesco D'Ovidio (1849-1925) e Carlo Salvioni (1858-1920), proprio da Kerbaker e Fumi (Lucchini 2014).[7] All'altezza della partecipazione alla Commissione, Parodi, che aveva dedicato i primi studi alla linguistica, si era già volto più convintamente verso la filologia e la critica letteraria – ne è un esempio il suo primo importante saggio dantesco del 1896 sulla rima nella *Commedia* (Parodi 1896)[8] – e tale differenza di interessi scientifici è in parte ravvisabile nei giudizi compilati su Formichi e Nazari nei quali si avverte la sua minore competenza rispetto agli altri membri della Commissione, fatta eccezione per l'accenno ai non impeccabili lavori sui dialetti italici di Nazari di cui pure si era occupato.[9]

Studioso dai molteplici interessi e traduttore raffinato da parecchie lingue, anche europee, come il suo maestro degli anni pisani Teza, Pavolini era stato nominato straordinario di Sanscrito nel 1895 presso l'Istituto di Studi Superiori di Firenze dopo il trasferimento di Angelo De Gubernatis (1840-1913) a Roma (1891) e nel 1901 era stato promosso a ordinario.[10] Negli anni precedenti i lavori della Commissione, oltre a una copiosa quantità di recensioni, Pavolini aveva dato alle stampe la gran parte dei suoi lavori più importanti nel campo indianistico, tra cui si possono menzionare gli studi e le raccolte sull'epica indiana del *Mahābhārata* e del *Rāmāyaṇa* e le ricerche sul buddhismo e il jainismo (cf. Mastrangelo 2014; Ballini 1913).

Merita di essere approfondito, seppur brevemente, il concorso del 1897 al quale, assieme a Pavolini, si presentò come candidato anche Nazari e che può essere utile a meglio comprendere il «diverso grado di merito» (Relazione 1897, 1833) esistente tra i due, seppure qua-

7 Si veda inoltre il discorso del suo maestro, Rajna, che gli sopravvivrà di qualche anno (Rajna 1921); cf. anche Folena 1962.

8 Cf. anche Lucchini 2014 (si veda inoltre la bibliografia qui riportata e la bibliografia pubblicata in Ciardi-Dupré 1913, 198-9).

9 È del resto lo stesso Parodi ad affermare, nel giudizio su Formichi, di non essere uno «specialista della materia»; per i due giudizi di Parodi cf. Appendice 6.1.V; Appendice 6.2.V.

10 Per un profilo di Pavolini cf. Mastrangelo 2014 (si veda inoltre la bibliografia quivi riportata); cf. anche il necrologio scritto da Ballini (1942) e dallo stesso Formichi (1920b). Per un elenco delle molte recensioni e dei numerosi scritti pubblicati da Pavolini prima dei lavori della Commissione cf. Ballini 1913, 247-58. Sugli insegnamenti di orientalistica dell'Istituto di Studi Superiori di Firenze cf. Rosi 1984; Lelli 2016 (quest'ultimo ricostruisce inoltre il periodo nel quale la cattedra rimase vacante dopo il trasferimento di De Gubernatis e sino alla decisione di affidare l'incarico a Pavolini).

si coetanei.[11] La Commissione, presieduta da Kerbaker e composta da Fumi, Guidi, De Gubernatis e Francesco Lorenzo Pullé (1850-1934), dopo aver esaminato i lavori di entrambi e di un terzo concorrente, Giovanni Colizza, ritenuto «non sufficientemente maturo», aveva difatti dichiarato «eleggibili» alla cattedra entrambi sebbene con una notevole differenza di punti (44/50 Pavolini; 35/50 Nazari). Pavolini si presentava invero con un elenco complessivo di «diciotto» titoli riguardanti «in modo speciale la lingua e la letteratura del sanscrito e dei dialetti pràcritici» e un insieme di altri lavori di «volgarizzazione da più lingue all'infuori dell'indiano antico» che testimoniavano la «felice disposizione poliglotta» e la sua «larga erudizione» (Relazione 1897, 1832-3);[12] gli unici titoli conformi alla materia di concorso presentati da Nazari erano invece gli *Elementi di grammatica sanscrita* (Nazari 1892) e la versione italiana dello *Hitopadeśa* (Nazari 1896a), su cui i commissari non si esimevano dal muovere qualche rilievo – nella fattispecie sulla «mancanza di note illustrative» e di introduzione di quest'ultimo lavoro e in merito a «qualche difetto» della grammatica tale da renderla utile per lo più ai principianti nel sanscrito – pur non mancando di esprimersi sulla «buona preparazione filologica e insieme glottologica» dello studioso (Relazione 1897, 1832).[13]

La differente 'gerarchia' accademica esistente tra Pavolini e Parodi e gli altri membri della Commissione si può del resto cogliere, in maniera sottile, nel diverso tenore dei loro giudizi sui due studiosi che tendono a essere nel primo caso più cauti e, nel secondo, a ricalcare quelli dei colleghi più anziani seppure con qualche spregiudicatezza in più nel giudizio di quest'ultimo su Nazari, favorita anche dall'afferenza di Parodi a un altro settore disciplinare. Quanto agli altri commissari, al momento di esaminare le domande di promozione di Formichi e Nazari, tutti e tre avevano oramai raggiunto da tempo l'apice della carriera accademica e scientifica e pur essendo ciascuno di loro un sanscritista è altresì da notare la larghezza degli interessi che li aveva condotti, in diversi gradi, a spaziare non soltanto nel campo dell'indoeuropeistica e della glottologia ma anche a occuparsi delle lingue romanze e di altre lingue europee allora poco studiate come per esempio quelle finniche (decisiva sarebbe stata in questo ambito l'influenza di Teza su Pavolini).

Di origini toscane, Fumi aveva studiato a Pisa con Bardelli e dopo alcuni anni di insegnamento liceale a Reggio Calabria aveva ottenuto lo straordinariato della cattedra di Storia comparata delle lingue clas-

11 Fu Pavolini a chiedere e a ottenere che venisse bandito un concorso per lo straordinariato di Sanscrito sebbene fosse stato chiamato nel 1895 proprio per quel ruolo, cf. Lelli 2016, 261 nota 32.

12 Per l'elenco delle pubblicazioni di Pavolini, cf. Ballini 1913, 247-58.

13 Si entrerà nel merito dei giudizi sulle opere di Nazari più avanti, nel § 4.

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siche e neolatine all'Università di Palermo nell'anno accademico 1877-78 e l'ordinariato a partire dall'anno accademico 1883-84 (dal 1887 al 1890 era stato inoltre Preside della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia),[14] per poi essere trasferito all'Università di Genova nel 1896.[15] Più glottologo che indianista, tra i lavori indologici di Fumi sono da menzionare il commento a dieci inni vedici, la traduzione di alcuni episodi epici tratti dal *Rāmāyaṇa* e dal *Mahābhārata* e del lamento di Damayantī, nonché la traduzione di cinque novelle del *Vetāla* e la pubblicazione del *Limen Indicum*, un manualetto di avviamento allo studio del sanscrito dato alle stampe in prima battuta nel 1887 e ripubblicato da Hoepli in due successive edizioni (1892 e 1905);[16] entrambi questi scritti sono di particolare interesse per quanto riguarda l'analisi dei lavori della Commissione dal momento che tra i titoli presentati da Formichi vi era proprio la lettura di alcune novelle del *Vetāla* e Nazari era stato anch'egli autore di una grammatica sanscrita alla quale Fumi accenna nel suo giudizio pur non essendo tra le pubblicazioni oggetto d'esame poiché già presentata nel precedente concorso a cattedra (del quale Fumi era stato a ogni modo commissario).

Della formazione di Teza, membro più anziano della Commissione, oltre agli studi a Padova va senza dubbio sottolineato il suo lungo alunnato in Germania che gli aveva dato modo di entrare in contatto, tra gli altri, con Christian Lassen e Franz Bopp, e di essere tra i primi a divulgare in Italia la nuova scienza linguistica, come testimoniano del resto i ricchi carteggi, «di apertura e di statura europea» (Brambilla 1983, 464), che intrattenne nel corso della sua vita.[17]

14 Tali notizie si ricavano dagli *Annuari dell'Università degli Studi di Palermo*: Fumi compare come professore straordinario di Storia comparata delle lingue classiche e neolatine a partire dall'anno accademico 1877-78, cf. Annuario UniPA 1877-78, VIII (l'anno precedente l'*Annuario* riporta che non si era «ancora provveduta la Cattedra di Storia comparata delle lingue classiche e neo-latine» e che pertanto l'insegnamento non avrebbe avuto luogo, cf. Annuario UniPa 1876-77, 124); dall'anno accademico 1883-84 lo studioso risulta professore ordinario, cf. Annuario UniPa 1883-84, 8. Sulla presidenza della Facoltà cf. Annuario UniPa 1910-11, 25. Su Fumi poche sono le notizie biografiche (qualche informazione, ma con alcuni errori, è riportata in Pappacena 1935, 505-6); per la bibliografia al 1905, cf. Ciardi-Dupré 1913, 193-4; Ballini 1913, 236-7.

15 Si veda a questo proposito il discorso di inaugurazione dell'anno accademico 1896-97 del Rettore Arturo Marcucci: «Un vuoto si fece solo nelle nostre file per il passaggio del professore Fausto Gherardo Fumi, di Storia Comparata delle Lingue classiche e neolatine, all'Università di Genova, dove lo chiamò unanime quella Facoltà di lettere. Possa il professore Fumi trovare nella nuova sede l'affetto e la stima dei Colleghi, l'ammirazione degli allievi, come l'ebbe nell'Università nostra» (Annuario UniPa 1896-97, 3). Negli anni successivi Fumi sarà annoverato tra i professori onorari della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia.

16 Cf. Ballini 1913, 236-7.

17 Per un profilo biografico di Teza cf. Mastrangelo (c.d.s. b); Mazzoni 1937; Crescini 1913-14; Pavolini 1913; Goidanich 1913; si veda inoltre la bibliografia menzionata in Brambilla 1983, 465 nota 4. La bibliografia degli scritti di Teza è stata pubblicata in Frati 1913-14.

Dopo alcuni incarichi come addetto alla Biblioteca Marciana di Venezia e a quella Laurenziana di Firenze, nel 1860 Teza aveva ottenuto la cattedra di Filologia indoeuropea all'Università di Bologna, per poi spostarsi a Pisa nel 1866 su quella di Sanscrito e infine, nel 1889, a Padova per insegnare sia il Sanscrito che la Storia comparata delle lingue classiche. La «sterminata erudizione» e l'ampiezza di interessi – su cui Croce non mancò di muovere alcune riserve, nonostante il carteggio che intrattenne con Teza (cf. Brambilla 1982, 539 nota 37) – che contraddistinsero la «complessa e poliedrica figura di questo eccezionale studioso» e poliglotta in grado di trascorrere dall'indoeuropeistica alle lingue romanze, dalle lingue indigene americane a quelle estremo-orientali, anziché consolidarsi in grandi sintesi complessive diede piuttosto vita a «centinaia di opuscoli e di brevi articoli» la cui dispersione lo avrebbe portato a essere, nei decenni successivi alla sua morte, «quasi ignorato anche tra gli specialisti» (Brambilla 1983, 464-5).[18] Nelle sue considerazioni sui lavori di Formichi e Nazari, come si avrà modo di osservare, largo spazio avrebbero avuto proprio i giudizi sulla qualità delle traduzioni che lasciano intravedere non soltanto la ricercatezza del Teza traduttore ma anche la sua profonda competenza nel sanscrito.

Più di trent'anni prima, il parere di Teza era stato decisivo pure per la nomina a professore straordinario di Kerbaker e anche in quel caso egli insisteva sulle scelte di traduzione di quest'ultimo, del quale apprezzava la «via del mezzo» adottata, non troppo aderente né all'originale né al contrario eccessivamente distante da quello.[19] Di poco più giovane, Kerbaker aveva compiuto gli studi universitari a Torino e non avendo potuto ottenere una borsa di perfezionamento all'estero, si era dedicato all'insegnamento liceale sino al trasfe-

18 Per avere un'idea dell'immensa produzione scientifica di Teza nei diversi ambiti degli studi orientali basti vedere l'elenco dei suoi scritti pubblicato nelle differenti sezioni del volume bibliografico della *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* (RSO 1913): *Lingue dell'India* (Ballini 1913, 265-9); *Affrica* (13); *Armeno* (211-13); *Asia Orientale* (313-14); *Lingue semitiche* (174); *Studi bizantini* (355); *Turco* (274). Si veda inoltre quanto scrive Apostolo (2016) che approfondisce gli interessi per la lingua e la cultura tedesca di Teza e le sue traduzioni di Goethe, oltre al legame fondamentale con Giosue Carducci.

19 Cf. Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero dell'Istruzione Pubblica, Personale (1860-1880), b. 1118, fasc. Kerbaker, Michele, Lettera di E. Teza al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione A. Scialoja, Pisa, 24 lug. 1873; nel 1872 il Consiglio Superiore della Pubblica Istruzione aveva interpellato Teza, assieme a Gorresio e a Giacomo Lignana, per meglio valutare la richiesta di Kerbaker di essere nominato professore straordinario di Lingue e letterature comparate, cf. Crisanti c.d.s. b (il giudizio di Teza è quivi riportato integralmente in appendice). Per un profilo di Kerbaker cf. Boccali 2004; Pugliese Carratelli 1985 e i più recenti Sferra, Boccali 2016; si vedano inoltre, tra le commemorazioni, quelle degli allievi Formichi (1914b e 1914-15) e Cimmino (1916). Mi sia consentito inoltre rimandare a Crisanti 2016 e ai due saggi in corso di stampa (Crisanti c.d.s. a; Crisanti c.d.s. b), entrambi parte di una monografia più ampia di prossima pubblicazione dedicata a Kerbaker e alla storia dell'indianistica italiana dell'Otto/Novecento.

rimento a Napoli nel 1867, dove la frequenza alle lezioni di Giacomo Lignana (1827-1891) gli avrebbe consentito di farsi notare tra i sanscritisti più promettenti e di essere incaricato, dopo il passaggio di quest'ultimo a Roma nel 1871, di sostituirlo sulla cattedra di Lingue e letterature comparate. Nel 1872 la Facoltà di Filosofia e Lettere napoletana lo proponeva come professore straordinario, nomina che avrebbe ottenuto l'anno successivo anche mediante i giudizi positivi, oltre che di Teza, di Gorresio e di Flechia che ne lodavano per giunta la profonda conoscenza della lingua sanscrita appresa da autodidatta soltanto pochi anni prima;[20] nel 1879 Kerbaker era infine nominato ordinario sulla cattedra nel frattempo ridenominata di Storia comparata delle lingue classiche e neolatine, a cui si sarebbe aggiunto per incarico l'insegnamento del Sanscrito e che avrebbe accompagnato ad alcuni ruoli, per lunghi periodi anche direttivi, presso il Collegio Asiatico, poi Istituto Orientale.[21] Dei tre membri della Commissione più anziani, Kerbaker si può senza dubbio ritenere l'indianista in senso più stretto dal momento che la sua attività scientifica fu più di quella degli altri imperniata sullo studio della letteratura e della mitologia indiana, sebbene non fossero rare le sue incursioni nella letteratura italiana e straniera con saggi su opere e autori fondamentali per la cultura europea, a testimonianza dell'ampio orizzonte letterario e per certi versi anche della sua appartenenza a una generazione di studiosi la cui apertura intellettuale non era peraltro dimentica delle questioni più prettamente politiche e dell'attualità cui pure dedicò alcuni saggi, in particolare sul riordinamento scolastico e universitario. I suoi lavori indologici si indirizzarono per la gran parte allo studio dei *Veda*, in particolare all'esame, in chiave comparatistica e sulla scorta dei metodi di Adalbert Kuhn e Max Müller, di alcuni gruppi di divinità, e del *Mahābhārata*, del quale tradusse in ottava rima moltissimi episodi; più marginalmente ma non con minore competenza, Kerbaker si soffermò inoltre su altri aspetti della letteratura indiana, tra cui i testi teatrali, la gnomica e la letteratura classica d'arte.[22] Una delle caratteristiche precipue del magistero di Kerbaker, di notevole importanza per quel che riguarda questo studio, fu la sua capacità, senza pari per l'epoca, di creare una vera e propria scuola di indianistica che attraverso gli allievi poté rami-

20 Sugli studi di sanscrito di Kerbaker si veda quanto ricostruito, attraverso documenti inediti, in Crisanti c.d.s. b.

21 Sull'insegnamento di Kerbaker all'Università di Napoli e sui suoi ruoli nel Collegio Asiatico, poi Istituto Orientale, cf. Crisanti c.d.s. a.

22 Per la bibliografia di Kerbaker cf. Ballini 1913, 239-44; Ciardi-Dupré 1913, 195; Gabrieli 1935; Porru 1940; si veda anche, per quanto non completa e non priva di errori, la bibliografia di Pappacena 1916.

ficarsi e svilupparsi nel resto dell'Italia:[23] Formichi fu per l'appunto uno dei numerosi allievi dello studioso torinese, forse quello che avrà più influenza nella storia degli studi indianistici successivi anche per il legame che intratterrà con il mondo politico, e sarà proprio grazie al suo interessamento se molti dei lavori rimasti inediti alla morte del maestro potranno vedere la luce.[24]

I lavori della Commissione avrebbero preso avvio il 9 ottobre 1905 e, come riportano i verbali, si sarebbero conclusi l'11 ottobre, con un'ultima riunione più informale suggerita per il giorno successivo all'ultima adunanza da Kerbaker, che auspicava potesse intervenire su quanto deliberato anche Parodi, che non aveva presenziato alle riunioni precedenti.[25] Nel corso della prima seduta, unitamente alla «lettura delle disposizioni regolamentari», la Commissione nominava Presidente Teza, il più anziano in ruolo, e contestualmente affidava a Fumi e a Pavolini gli incarichi rispettivi di Relatore e Segretario, rimandando la discussione dei titoli di Formichi e Nazari alle adunanze dei giorni seguenti.[26] Le domande di promozione all'ordinariato dei due studiosi seguivano di un «quadriennio» (cf. Appendice 6.3) il concorso per la cattedra di Sanscrito bandito dall'Università di Pisa e svoltosi nel maggio 1901 che aveva consentito a entrambi di ottenere la chiamata in qualità di professori straordinari: Formichi a Pisa come vincitore di concorso, Nazari a Palermo in quanto primo fra gli altri candidati dichiarati tutti «eleggibili» ma con votazioni differenti (cf. Relazione 1901a, 1741).[27]

Sul concorso del 1901 è necessario spendere qualche parola poiché ben rappresenta quanto si è sostenuto nell'introduzione circa l'im-

23 Sull'importanza e l'ampiezza della scuola kerbakeriana cf. Pugliese Carratelli 1985; Crisanti 2016.

24 Cf. Kerbaker 1933-39; Pisani 1946; Pugliese Carratelli 1981.

25 Cf. ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Verbali delle adunanze della Commissione (9-11 ottobre 1905), verbale dell'adunanza dell'11 ottobre 1905. Dai verbali emerge che Parodi non partecipò ad alcuna delle quattro riunioni ufficiali, sebbene avesse garantito al Ministero e ai colleghi commissari la propria partecipazione ai lavori della Commissione; il verbale dell'ultima adunanza registra: «Il prof. Parodi non si è presentato nemmeno alla adunanza odierna, nonostante avesse preavvisato il suo arrivo. Credono i Commissari, per informazioni avute al Ministero, che questa mancanza non possa nuocere agli effetti della Commissione». Nel fascicolo sono presenti i giudizi di Parodi su Formichi e Nazari, conformi a quelli degli altri commissari per cui si può supporre con una certa ragionevolezza che il 12 lo studioso si sia effettivamente riunito a Roma con il resto della Commissione. L'11 ottobre Teza, dovendo partire la sera, avrebbe delegato l'incarico della Presidenza della Commissione a Kerbaker.

26 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Verbali delle adunanze della Commissione (9-11 ottobre 1905), verbale dell'adunanza del 9 ottobre 1905.

27 L'avviso di concorso, datato 30 ottobre 1900, era stato pubblicato sulla *Gazzetta Ufficiale* il 15 novembre e prevedeva l'inoltro dei titoli entro il 15 marzo 1901 (Gazzetta 1900, 4476). Nei fascicoli personali di Formichi non sono conservati i documenti relativi alla sua partecipazione a questo concorso.

portanza dei documenti elaborati durante i lavori delle Commissioni di concorso o d'esame ai fini di cogliere alcuni aspetti del dibattito scientifico in corso e, più in generale, per comprendere lo stato degli studi di indianistica; in questo caso è la stessa Commissione a notare, in apertura alla Relazione conclusiva, in quale misura l'esame dei titoli dei «quattro concorrenti» presentatisi al concorso, «notevolmente diversi nel merito fra di loro», nondimeno «nel complesso offr[a] confortevole indizio del movimento di codesti studi in Italia» (Relazione 1901a, 1738). La Commissione non mancava per giunta di rilevare positivamente, criticando per converso in maniera piuttosto esplicita la tendenza che si era andata sempre più consolidando negli ultimi decenni del secolo, il «caso, omai insolito nella più parte delle nostre facoltà letterarie, che l'insegnamento del sanscrito sia impartito nella R. Università di Pisa da un docente che non sia ad un tempo quello di glottologia» (Relazione 1901a, 1738), come accadeva invece per la gran parte degli stessi membri della Commissione.[28] Ancora una volta, quest'ultima era composta, pur con qualche differenza, dai medesimi studiosi già più volte menzionati: Ascoli (Presidente), Kerbaker, Fumi, De Gubernatis e Pullé. Tra gli aspetti più interessanti della Relazione conclusiva stilata dalla Commissione non vi sono soltanto le valutazioni sull'attività scientifica dei quattro candidati ma altresì quanto emerge su un'intera generazione di indianisti e glottologi e, in particolare, sulla scuola napoletana di Kerbaker: fatta eccezione per il torinese Nazari, accanto a Formichi si presentano difatti al concorso altri due allievi dello studioso, Francesco Cimmino (1862-1939) ed Ermenegildo La Terza (1864-1939), entrambi di qualche anno più vecchi del vincitore ma superati di gran lunga nei risultati da quest'ultimo, giudicato senza dubbio più preparato e promettente, anzitutto dal suo maestro.[29] Se in questa sede non

28 Sulla progressiva diminuzione delle cattedre di Sanscrito e sulla tendenza ad accorparle come incarico ad altri insegnamenti, tra tutti quelli per l'appunto glottologici, si veda quanto l'allievo di Formichi, Giuseppe Tucci, scriverà a Benedetto Croce sul finire del 1922, lamentando lo scarso interesse per questo genere di studi da parte ministeriale: «in novembre la Facoltà di Roma proponeva la mia nomina ad incaricato nella cattedra di Lingue e letterature dell'Estremo Oriente ma il Consiglio Superiore ha creduto bene di sopprimere questa cattedra come ha soppresso quella di sanscrito a Milano dove insegnò l'Ascoli e a Napoli dove insegnò il Kerbacker [*sic*]!» (Fondazione Biblioteca Benedetto Croce, Archivio di Benedetto Croce, Carteggio, per anno e corrispondente, 1922, nr. 1402, lettera di G. Tucci a B. Croce, Roma, 26 dic. 1922). Lo scarso numero di cattedre di discipline orientali esistenti, nonostante la nuova politica culturale unitaria che aveva legittimato tali studi consentendo l'istituzionalizzazione di insegnamenti, come quelli linguistici, prima non esistenti, era notato da De Gubernatis già nel 1868 (le cattedre di Lingue e letterature comparate e Sanscrito erano all'epoca 7), cf. De Gubernatis 1868, 1349.

29 Questo concorso rappresenta non soltanto un interessante spaccato sulla scuola napoletana di Kerbaker al volgere del secolo ma consente per giunta, una volta di più, di entrare nel merito della partecipazione dello studioso a una delle numerose commis-

è possibile soffermarsi sui pareri espressi dalla Commissione a proposito dei titoli di Cimmino e La Terza – si entrerà viceversa nel merito dei giudizi su Formichi e Nazari nei prossimi paragrafi – vale la pena, in conclusione, segnalare la distanza che intercorre nei punteggi ottenuti da ciascuno di loro: Nazari, a «notevole distanza» da Formichi (47 punti su 50) ma «pur sempre degno di un grado elevato» (41/50), è difatti seguito da Cimmino «al quale si giudicò dovesse assegnarsi, al di là del minimo richiesto per la eleggibilità, un certo numero di punti di merito (35/50)», a differenza di La Terza ritenuto «supera[re] di poco il limite de' voti» per essere dichiarato eleggibile (33/50) (cf. Relazione 1901a, 741).[30]

sioni d'esame e di concorso alle quali prese parte – analoghi incarichi di esaminatore tenne per diversi decenni nelle scuole secondarie – e di apprezzarne l'onestà scientifica e lo scrupolo con cui esaminava i titoli e le prove dei candidati, dando prova di imparzialità anche nei confronti dei suoi stessi allievi (su questo aspetto della biografia di Kerbaker cf. Crisanti c.d.s. a). Per quanto concerne i rapporti di Kerbaker con Cimmino, pure allievo affezionatissimo e con cui intrattenne un vasto carteggio ancora parzialmente inedito (cf. Cimmino Gibellini 2004 e Crisanti 2016, 54-5 nota 115), è significativo il giudizio espresso dallo studioso qualche anno dopo in una lettera a Francesco D'Ovidio nella quale discuteva il progetto di Ascoli, rimasto incompiuto alla sua morte, di studiare le glosse dialettali del sanscrito: «Se il Cimmino fosse rimasto a Milano, certamente l'Ascoli avrebbe affidato pure a lui il compito di eseguire e proseguire le indagini da lui indicate in questa parte così interessante della glottologia sanscrita. Al Cimmino non sarebbe mancato l'ingegno, ma venne meno la fermezza dei propositi, in lui attutita dalla Napolitanite. Ciò fu a grande scapito della sua carriera: avendo rinunziato ai vantaggi segnalati che avrebbe ritratti dalla Scuola di tanto Maestro!» (Centro archivistico Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Fondo Francesco D'Ovidio, Carteggio, fasc. Kerbaker, lettera di M. Kerbaker a F. D'Ovidio, s.l., 16 mar. 1907). Nella medesima epistola Kerbaker indugiava inoltre anche su La Terza – entrambi gli studiosi avevano svolto un anno di perfezionamento all'Accademia scientifico-letteraria di Milano sotto la guida di Ascoli, Cimmino nell'anno accademico 1886-87, La Terza nel 1890-91 – che viene menzionato tra gli «scolari» di Ascoli «che mostravano di aver studiato piuttosto bene il Sanscrito» e che quest'ultimo esortò a dedicarsi a tale studio: «tra gli altri il La Terza nostro alunno […], giovane studiosissimo, ma non ingegno da ciò». Va ricordato che Cimmino fu uno dei protagonisti della vita culturale, artistica e anche mondana napoletana dell'Otto/Novecento – fu per esempio tra gli animatori del Circolo Filologico e acclamatissimo conferenziere (cf. Ruggiero 2020, 145-6) – e tenne per incarico la cattedra di Sanscrito dalla morte di Kerbaker nel 1914 fino al 1935; sul suo insegnamento universitario si legga il commosso ricordo dell'allievo Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli (1985, 9-10). Quest'ultimo si sofferma brevemente anche su La Terza e i suoi studi glottologici (11), ma va sottolineato che sull'opera scientifica di entrambi gli studiosi non esistono a tutt'oggi studi approfonditi (per la bibliografia degli scritti di Cimmino e La Terza si vedano gli elenchi, pur non completi, pubblicati in Ballini 1913; Ciardi-Dupré 1913; Gabrieli 1935; Porru 1940).

30 Sull'eleggibilità «a stento» di La Terza si veda la minuta del telegramma inviato da Ascoli verosimilmente a quest'ultimo: «Sentiti confidenzialmente altri colleghi, credo che Le convenga ritirarsi dal Concorso, riserbandosi ad altra occasione» (Accademia dei Lincei, Archivio Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, Pacco nr. 81 (1898, 1900-1901), doc. nr. 61, minuta di telegramma inviato da G.I. Ascoli, s.d. [1901]). Nella seconda pagina del telegramma Ascoli annotava i voti che ciascun commissario attribuiva ai singoli candidati. Ringrazio la dott.ssa Susanna Panetta per la scansione del documento.

3 Le «buone speranze» del giovane studioso divenute «belle e sicure realtà». I giudizi su Carlo Formichi

Il 10 ottobre 1905, all'indomani dell'insediamento, la Commissione si riuniva per discutere la domanda di promozione all'ordinariato presentata da Formichi nell'estate del 1904, a conclusione del «triennio d'insegnamento prescritto dalla legge» per i professori straordinari.[31] Il Rettore dell'Università di Pisa aveva difatti inoltrato la richiesta al Ministero dell'Istruzione Pubblica già l'11 luglio 1904, corredandola della delibera della Facoltà di Filosofia e Lettere che, all'unanimità, aveva votato per la promozione, «in considerazione della diligenza e dello zelo» con cui lo studioso aveva adempiuto al proprio incarico e in virtù dell'«efficacia del suo insegnamento».[32]

La formazione e i primi passi della carriera scientifica di Formichi[33] possono essere utilmente ripercorsi ancora una volta attraverso alcuni documenti inediti e, in particolare, mediante l'ampia e dettagliata relazione che il suo maestro Kerbaker aveva stilato

31 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Istanza per la promozione a professore ordinario presentata da C. Formichi al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione V.E. Orlando comprensiva dell'elenco dei titoli scientifici e didattici, Pisa, 27 giu. 1904. Sulla riunione del 10 ottobre 1905, cf. ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Verbali delle adunanze della Commissione (9-11 ottobre 1905), verbale dell'adunanza del 10 ottobre 1905 (mattina).

32 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Verbale della adunanza della Facoltà di Filosofia e Lettere dell'Università di Pisa del 30 giugno 1904. Assieme alla domanda di promozione di Formichi, la Facoltà appoggiava quella di Pier Gabriele Goidanich; alla riunione erano «presenti i Professori Paoli, facente funzione di Preside, Zambaldi, Tartara, Jaja, Pascoli e Tarantino». La decisione della Facoltà era acclusa alla richiesta del Rettore, cf. ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Comunicazione del Rettore dell'Università di Pisa D. Supino al Ministero dell'Istruzione Pubblica, Oggetto: Prof. Carlo Formichi. Domanda di promozione ad ordinario, Pisa, 11 lug. 1904. Formichi aveva inviato al Ministero i propri titoli scientifici e didattici il 27 giugno 1904, cf. la sopra menzionata istanza per la promozione a professore ordinario da lui al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione V.E. Orlando. Nel novembre 1904 Formichi scriveva al Rettore chiedendo di premurarsi di inviare al Ministero i registri delle lezioni da lui svolte nel triennio di straordinariato, libretti che Supino aveva già mandato in duplicato un paio di mesi prima, cf. ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Comunicazione del Rettore dell'Università di Pisa D. Supino al Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Oggetto: Prof. Carlo Formichi per promozione all'Ordinariato – Invio di titoli, Pisa, 6 set. 1904; lettera di C. Formichi al Rettore D. Supino, Pisa, 19 nov. 1904; si veda inoltre l'invio di titoli aggiuntivi nella comunicazione del Rettore dell'Università di Pisa D. Supino al Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Oggetto: Invio di titoli da unirsi alla domanda di promozione ad Ordinario presentata dal Prof. Carlo Formichi, Pisa, 21 apr. 1905.

33 Sulla figura di Formichi – complici forse il coinvolgimento nella politica culturale del fascismo, la morte avvenuta in pieno conflitto mondiale e non ultima l'influenza esercitata sugli studi indianistici dall'allievo Tucci, tale da mettere in ombra la figura del maestro – sembra essere calata una coltre di silenzio anche da parte degli stessi studiosi di discipline indianistiche; a tutt'oggi non esistono studi complessivi né sulla sua opera scientifica né sulla sua biografia. Per un profilo biografico di Formichi cf. Taviani 1997; Ballini 1945; si veda inoltre, per quanto non esente da limiti, il ritratto datone da Enrico Pappacena mentre ancora era in vita (1935, 525-9). Per la bibliografia degli scritti di Formichi si vedano gli elenchi, non completi, pubblicati in Ballini 1913, 235-6; Gabrieli 1935, 28-9; Porru 1940, *ad indicem*.

nel 1897 esprimendo parere favorevole per il conferimento al giovane studioso, da parte dell'Università di Napoli, della libera docenza in Filologia sanscrita.[34] Dopo la laurea in Giurisprudenza «ottenuta col massimo dei punti e con lode» il 9 luglio 1891 (si era iscritto nel 1887), Formichi aveva proseguito gli studi nell'Università napoletana laureandosi a pieni voti e con lode in Lettere il 5 dicembre 1893, con una tesi intitolata *Saggio di una critica del Testo e Traduzione del Nîti-mayûkha di Nīlakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa*.[35] L'esperienza di insegnamento ginnasiale di Formichi, a Reggio Calabria, si sarebbe conclusa presto poiché nel settembre del 1895 il giovane studioso risultava vincitore della prestigiosa borsa di perfezionamento per

34 Cf. ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Copia della relazione sui titoli presentati dal dott. Carlo Formichi per conseguire la privata docenza in filologia sanscrita stilata da M. Kerbaker, [27 lug. 1897]; la relazione è acclusa al verbale della riunione nella quale la Facoltà approvava all'unanimità le conclusioni di Kerbaker, consentendo dunque la nomina alla privata docenza, cf. verbale dell'adunanza della Facoltà di Filosofia e Lettere dell'Università di Napoli, 27 lug. 1897 (erano presenti, oltre al Preside Flores, i professori Kerbaker, De Petra, Porena, De Blasiis, D'Ovidio e Cocchia). Tra i vari documenti relativi alla richiesta e al conferimento della libera docenza, e alle correlate comunicazioni tra Università, Ministero e Consiglio Superiore della Istruzione Pubblica, si vedano in particolare: ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Istanza per il conferimento della libera docenza in Filologia Sanscrita nella R. Università di Napoli presentata da C. Formichi al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione E. Gianturco, Napoli, 31 mar. 1897; comunicazione del Consiglio Superiore della Istruzione Pubblica al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione G. Codronchi Argeli, Oggetto: Formichi D^{r} Carlo per libera docenza, Roma, 11 dic. 1897; decreto di abilitazione del Sig. Dott. C. Formichi alla privata docenza in Filologia sanscrita presso la R. Università di Napoli firmato dal Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione N. Gallo, Roma, 21 dic. 1897.

35 Tali notizie sono tratte dall'elenco dei titoli presentati da Formichi che corredano la relazione di Kerbaker, cf. ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Elenco dei titoli scientifici e dei certificati presentati dal D^{r} Formichi per la libera docenza in Filologia Sanscrita nella R. Università di Napoli (il documento è scritto da Formichi, vergato nella sua inconfondibile grafia). Dal documento risulta inoltre che il 16 dicembre 1893 Formichi ottenne anche il Diploma di Magistero. A causa del tristemente noto incendio che il 12 settembre 1943 distrusse un'ala dell'Università di Napoli non si conservano né i registri della carriera dello studente Formichi né la sua tesi di laurea. Il contenuto della tesi è ampiamente descritto nella relazione di Kerbaker: «lavoro manoscritto presentato come tesi di laurea e di poi alquanto ritoccato e ampliato. Quest'opera di Nilakanta, che è un florilegio o piuttosto centone di massime e prescrizioni politiche, racimolate da scrittori diversi più o meno antichi, parse occasione al Formichi di un profittevole esercizio critico paleografico trascrivendone il codice manoscritto dell'India office, che collazionò con due altri codici, l'uno litografato, l'altro di proprietà del Professore Bühler, che allora appunto conobbe a Londra nella ricorrenza del Congresso degli Orientalisti. Il ragguaglio dei tre codici gli servì a scoprirvi, oltre gli errori più grossi materiali dell'amanuense quelli più sottili e dissimulati, onde risultano le varie lezioni, e quindi a fissare talune varianti, le quali potrebbero giovare alla rettificazione ed aspurgazione del testo corrottissimo del Nītisāra di Kamandaki, l'autore classico più citato e di maggior importanza nel centone di Nilakanta. La traduzione s'accompagna naturalmente passo passo al testo trascritto dal Formichi e corredato di un commento continuo. Testo, traduzione e commento comprendono meno di due terzi o più della metà dell'opera di Nilakanta». Da alcune lettere di Formichi alla moglie di Kerbaker, Assunta Bucci, emerge che i due si conobbero verosimilmente ai tempi della frequentazione del Liceo da parte del primo ed è probabile che Kerbaker lo aiutò a superare l'esame di licenza mediante alcune lezioni private, cf. Crisanti 2016, 39 nota 46.

le lingue orientali Gori-Feroni che gli avrebbe permesso, come scriveva Kerbaker, di «dedicarsi intieramente allo studio del Sanscrito, che già da molto tempo aveva seriamente intrapreso e con grande alacrità continuato».[36] Dal marzo 1896 all'aprile 1897 Formichi si trasferì pertanto all'Università di Kiel dove poté seguire i corsi di due dei massimi indologi dell'epoca, Paul Deussen (1845-1919) e Hermann Oldenberg (1854-1920), rispettivamente dedicati alla letteratura vedica e buddhista, e alla letteratura filosofica.[37] Nella relazione, Kerbaker insisteva sull'alunnato in Germania di Formichi, sul quale si sarebbe soffermata abbondantemente anche la Commissione del concorso del 1901 – nessuno degli altri candidati aveva difatti un profilo scientifico internazionale – che avrebbe sottolineato l'influenza di quegli «insigni maestri» sul giovane studioso che, mediante i loro corsi, «fu portato molto innanzi nei diversi rami della filologia sanscrita e segnatamente vedica» (Relazione 1901a, 1740). Kerbaker non mancava inoltre di notare in quale misura la scuola del Deussen e dell'Oldenberg aveva reso «più sicuro» il metodo filologico dello studioso, evidente fin dai lavori giovanili presentati per la libera docenza nei quali, pur essendo lavori «di apparecchio e di saggio» emergeva, a detta sua, una certa «ἀκρίβεια filologica»[38] tale

36 ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Copia della relazione sui titoli presentati dal dott. Carlo Formichi per conseguire la privata docenza in filologia sanscrita stilata da M. Kerbaker, [27 lug. 1897]. Kerbaker proseguiva: «Il Formichi infatti si trovava già da ben sette anni avviato ed esercitato in tale studio ed aveva oltrepassato di così lungo tratto i termini angusti in cui si rimane ristretto nel solito corso universitario; sicché poté facilmente vincere la prova contro i sette concorrenti che in quell'anno si presentarono al concorso Senese».

37 Nella relazione Kerbaker prosegue descrivendo il contenuto dei corsi frequentati da Formichi: «[A Kiel] rimase il Formichi […] seguendo il corso pubblico ed il privato dell'uno e dell'altro professore, per due semestri consecutivi; ciò fu pel primo semestre: interpretazione del Satapata Bràhmana – sposizione storica critica del rituale e dell'ordinamento gerarchico Brahmanico – e interpretazione del Sàhitya-Darpana (trattato di Retorica) coll'Oldenberg – e sposizione ed esercitazioni ermeneutiche sulla filosofia del Vedanta nonché sposizione del Timeo di Platone col Deussen. Pel secondo semestre: lettura del testo del Rigveda col commento di Sàyana e corso generale riassuntivo di storia comparata delle antiche lingue indogermaniche coll'Oldenberg e lettura e interpretazione della Kanopanishad, ed in corso privatissimo lettura del Raghuvamsa e della Bhagavadgita col Deussen» (ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Copia della relazione sui titoli presentati dal dott. Carlo Formichi per conseguire la privata docenza in filologia sanscrita stilata da M. Kerbaker, [27 lug. 1897]). Qualche anno dopo Formichi sarebbe tornato sul *Raghuvaṃśa* di Kālidāsa che avrebbe tradotto per la prima volta in italiano in una pregevole edizione (Formichi 1917; nell'introduzione Formichi si sofferma inoltre sui precedenti cenni al poema dati da Silvio Trovanelli e sul tentativo di versione di Giuseppe Turrini).

38 ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Copia della relazione sui titoli presentati dal dott. Carlo Formichi per conseguire la privata docenza in filologia sanscrita stilata da M. Kerbaker, [27 lug. 1897]. Nel prosieguo della relazione Kerbaker si soffermava ampiamente sulle pubblicazioni di Formichi discutendone, come aveva fatto per la tesi di laurea, i punti di forza e il valore, e occupandosi anche dei titoli che il giovane studioso non aveva riportato nell'elenco da lui stilato all'atto della domanda per la libera docenza; Kerbaker discuteva nella fattispecie Formichi 1897a; 1897b; 1897c; 1897d; 1897e.

da renderlo senz'altro meritorio della privata docenza del Sanscrito:

> Tali studii, tal tirocinio, tali lavori – concludeva – rivelano nel Formichi uno studioso veramente serio, che accoppia alla virtù dell'ingegno l'energia del volere, ci additano in lui un sanscritista autentico, il quale un giorno potrà onorare il nome italiano come maestro come l'ha già onorato e l'onora all'estero come scolaro.[39]

Conseguita, nel dicembre 1897, la libera docenza a Napoli,[40] nel settembre successivo Formichi chiedeva – «per ragioni di famiglia»[41] – e otteneva il trasferimento all'Università di Bologna[42] dove sarebbe rimasto soltanto per pochi anni prima del trasferimento a Pisa, non senza lasciare traccia di sé nei suoi corsi di Sanscrito, al cui studio indirizzò uno dei primi allievi, Ambrogio Ballini (1879-1950).[43]

Il concorso del 1901 si presentava per Formichi come l'occasione per ottenere la cattedra universitaria e far valere le pubblicazioni alle quali si era dedicato fin dai tempi dell'alunnato a Kiel e su cui lo stesso Kerbaker si era intrattenuto nella relazione stilata per la libera docenza: a questo proposito, non si può fare a meno di notare come il giudizio della Commissione – della quale Kerbaker si è visto far

Nel corso della trattazione, data la rilevanza del giudizio di Kerbaker su tali opere, si darà conto di quanto egli scrive nella relazione per la libera docenza.

39 ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Copia della relazione sui titoli presentati dal dott. Carlo Formichi per conseguire la privata docenza in filologia sanscrita stilata da M. Kerbaker, [27 lug. 1897].

40 Cf. ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Decreto di abilitazione del Sig. Dott. C. Formichi alla privata docenza in Filologia sanscrita presso la R. Università di Napoli firmato dal Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione N. Gallo, Roma, 21 dic. 1897.

41 ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Istanza per il trasferimento della libera docenza all'Università di Bologna presentata da C. Formichi al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione G. Baccelli, Napoli, 1 set. 1898. Nel fascicolo sono conservate inoltre le varie comunicazioni tra il Rettore Vittorio Puntoni e la Facoltà bolognese, e tra il primo e il Ministero, a proposito del trasferimento di Formichi.

42 Cf. ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Minuta del decreto di trasferimento della libera docenza in Filologia sanscrita di C. Formichi alla R. Università di Bologna firmata dal Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione G. Baccelli, Roma, 20 gen. 1899; Annuario UniBo 1898-99, 367. Si vedano inoltre gli *Annuari* degli anni successivi: Annuario UniBo 1899-900, 129; Annuario UniBo 1900-01, 265; nonostante il trasferimento a Pisa come straordinario, Formichi risulterà nell'elenco dei liberi docenti sino all'Annuario del 1905-06, 122.

43 Ballini avrebbe discusso la tesi di laurea nel 1901 – dopo il trasferimento di Formichi a Pisa – con Pullé, professore ordinario di Filologia indoeuropea a Bologna dall'anno accademico 1899-1900 (cf. Bolognesi 2000, 889; Annuario UniBo 1899-900, 129). Ottenuta la libera docenza, Ballini avrebbe insegnato Sanscrito a Roma, dove avrebbe fatto parte della Scuola Orientale, fino al 1913 quando vinse il concorso a cattedra di Padova; lo stesso anno Formichi ottenne di essere trasferito sulla cattedra di Sanscrito romana, dove rimase fino al collocamento a riposo nel 1941. Al suo posto venne chiamato proprio Ballini che nel 1924 era passato all'Università Cattolica di Milano. Per un profilo generale di Ballini, cf. anche Scarcia 1963 e Tucci 1950.

parte –, oltre a basarsi su quanto dato alle stampe dopo il 1897, si soffermi lungamente sui saggi presi in esame già dallo studioso torinese, a volte con pareri simili a quelli espressi da quest'ultimo. Nella relazione conclusiva, la Commissione elogiava difatti il metodo con cui Formichi aveva approntato i lavori di critica storico-ermeneutica del 1897, i primi da lui pubblicati, incentrati sullo studio di alcune questioni vediche – «Il Brahmán nel Ṛgveda» (1897d)[44] e «Le dieu Brihaspati dans le Rigveda» (1897e)[45] –, delle *Upaniṣad – Il primo Capitolo della Brahma-Upanishad* (1897b)[46] e «Le Upanishad e il loro più recente interprete» (1897c)[47] – e sulla traduzione e commento del pas-

44 Su questo lavoro si legga quanto scriveva Kerbaker nel 1897: «Dei suoi studii di filologia vedica il Formichi ci ha pur dato un saggio colla monografia intitolata 'Il Brahmān nel Rigveda'. Si tratta qui la questione non per anco bene risoluta se nei tempi vedici l'ufficio di Brahman, come prete sovrastante, direttore e sopravveditore del sacrificio, fosse già costituito o in tutto o in parte, come vorrebbero alcuni vedisti ad es. il Geldner; o per contro il Brahman non importasse altro che la designazione generica e comune di prete. Il Formichi, raccolti i luoghi molteplici in cui il nome Brahman ricorre nella Samhita del R.V. dimostra che in ogni caso il significato di capogerarchico ne va escluso» (ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Copia della relazione sui titoli presentati dal dott. Carlo Formichi per conseguire la privata docenza in filologia sanscrita stilata da M. Kerbaker, [27 lug. 1897]).

45 Si confronti la relazione di Kerbaker: «Fa seguito allo studio vedico sul Brahmàn quello sul Dio Brihaspati nel qual personaggio la personificazione divina oscillante tra il concetto mitico naturalistico ed il concetto astratto del Dio della preghiera non è stata ancora bene spiegata. Il lavoro è in corso di stampa, essendo preparato dal Formichi come contributo al congresso degli Orientalisti che si adunerà nelle prossime ferie a Parigi» (ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Copia della relazione sui titoli presentati dal dott. Carlo Formichi per conseguire la privata docenza in filologia sanscrita stilata da M. Kerbaker, [27 lug. 1897]).

46 «L'Autore» scriveva Kerbaker su questo saggio «dichiara nell'Introduzione le ragioni che l'hanno indotto a studiare particolarmente questa Upanishad dell'Atharvaveda, cioè: lo stato frammentario del medesimo; l'incertezza della tradizione nell'assegnare al detto capitolo il suo posto; le notevoli divergenze sostanziali e formali che questo primo capitolo presenta cogli altri tre che costituiscono la Brahma-Upanishad. Il testo è giunto sì pervertito e intralciato che la traduzione può dar luogo a molte diverse e pur legittime congetture e porge occasione ad esercitarsi tutti gli accorgimenti della critica. Poté pertanto il Formichi, pur dopo la traduzione del suo insigne maestro il Deussen (di cui vide il manoscritto prima della recente pubblicazione Sechzig Upanishads des Veda) dare opera faticosa e profittevole ad una nuova e in più punti diversa traduzione, consultando più da presso il commento di Nārāyana collazionando i diversi codici di Calcutta, di Poona, Bombay e quello di Oxford in carattere Telugu indicatogli dallo stesso Deussen, e raffrontando passi analoghi di altre Upanishadi, e in tal modo recare un nuovo contributo all'interpretazione e spiegazione di quel difficile testo» (ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Copia della relazione sui titoli presentati dal dott. Carlo Formichi per conseguire la privata docenza in filologia sanscrita stilata da M. Kerbaker, [27 lug. 1897]).

47 Nella sua relazione Kerbaker commentava anche tale memoria, letta non molto tempo prima all'Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti di Napoli, e incentrata sul recente volume di Deussen: «premesse alcune considerazioni storiche e filosofiche sulla dottrina fondamentale delle Upanishadi, [Formichi] ne dà una informazione sommaria, sulla poi anzi menzionata, importante e poderosa opera del Deussen (Sessanta Upanishadi tradotte e commentate), la quale riassume tutti gli studii fatti precedente-

so del *Sāhityadarpaṇa* di Viśvanātha Kavirāja nel quale viene trattato l'artificio poetico dell'allusione (1897a).[48] Al pari di Kerbaker, la Commissione si diffondeva poi a descrivere il contenuto della tesi di laurea di Formichi dedicata al *Nītimayūkha* di Nīlakaṇṭha, una raccolta di massime e sentenze politiche da vari autori, che consentì al giovane studioso non soltanto di condurre un «profittevole esercizio paleografico»[49] collazionando due codici manoscritti e uno in copia litografata, ma che gli permise altresì di approfondire la scienza politica indiana e «allargare il campo delle sue indagini alle fonti» (Relazione 1901a, 1740) adoperate da Nīlakaṇṭha e di emendarne alcuni passi corrotti nei testi tramandati, come avrebbe fatto nei lavori successivi all'ottenimento della libera docenza e oggetto dell'esame della Commissione (Formichi 1899b; 1899c; 1900 e, seppure la Commissione non vi si soffermi, 1899a)[50], in particolare per il *Nītisāra* di Kāmandaki che avrebbe dato alle stampe in più parti nel *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana*.[51] Queste prime pubblicazioni – e la possibilità di ricostruire il contenuto della tesi di laurea, offerta dalle re-

mente su tale argomento e sarà d'ora innanzi libro indispensabile per tutti gli studiosi della filosofia indiana» (ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Copia della relazione sui titoli presentati dal dott. Carlo Formichi per conseguire la privata docenza in filologia sanscrita stilata da M. Kerbaker, [27 lug. 1897]).

48 Di questo lavoro Kerbaker scriveva: «Non va dimenticato il saggio 'Alcuni cenni sul Sāhitya Darpana' (Specchio della composizione) dove il Formichi ci da tradotto e commentato un passo notevole che tratta del particolare artificio detto allusione che ha luogo quando la parola riceve un significato particolare; diverso dal solito e determinato da certi termini concomitanti. La traduzione si attiene scrupolosamente al testo, rilevando i luoghi dove al traduttore pare che troppo se ne discostino il traduttore inglese Paramada Dasa Mitra, continuatore del Ballantyne, ed il francese Regnaud, nella sua opera 'La Rhétorique sanskrite, exposéè dans son développement' [historique] Paris 1888» (ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Copia della relazione sui titoli presentati dal dott. Carlo Formichi per conseguire la privata docenza in filologia sanscrita stilata da M. Kerbaker, [27 lug. 1897]).

49 ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Copia della relazione sui titoli presentati dal dott. Carlo Formichi per conseguire la privata docenza in filologia sanscrita stilata da M. Kerbaker, [27 lug. 1897].

50 È possibile supporre che la Commissione, della quale Kerbaker era membro, non si soffermi esplicitamente su questa pubblicazione, pure fondamentale nell'opera complessiva di Formichi, poiché nel volume figurava la dedica «Al mio maestro Michele Kerbaker».

51 Sul *Nītisāra* di Kāmandaki, opera in versi tra manuale e poema didascalico dell'VIII secolo, si veda quanto scrive la Commissione: «Lungo codesta opera [il *Nītimayūkha*] Formichi fu condotto ad allargare il campo delle sue indagini alle fonti onde derivò materia al testo studiato, come fa, ad esempio, pel *Nītisāra* di Kāmandaki, libro originalmente antico e classico, reso notorio pella edizione di Rājendralāla Mitra; la quale essendo scorretta, richiese nel Formichi molta diligenza e abilità per le emendazioni dei passi; alle quali egli riesce felicemente ora valendosi di collazioni di testi, ora di confronti col commentario [...]; e dove altro sussidio manchi, adoperando con giusta cautela la critica congetturale; di ogni cosa dando ragione nelle note apposte alla versione che si vien pubblicando, nel Giornale della Società asiatica italiana del *Nītisāra*, e che è ad un tempo la prima versione europea» (Relazione 1901a, 1740-1).

lazioni di Kerbaker e della Commissione del 1901 – sono di notevole importanza per ricostruire l'itinerario scientifico di Formichi poiché testimoniano la genesi del suo interesse per la scienza politica indiana che caratterizzò tutta quanta la sua opera successiva e che rappresenterà una delle principali novità apportate dai suoi studi all'indianistica novecentesca, la cui apertura alla trattatistica politica può essere fatta risalire proprio allo studioso napoletano.[52]

Le conclusioni della Commissione, che è opportuno riportare per esteso, ben lasciano intendere le ragioni sulle quali si fondava la vittoria di Formichi e la fiducia che i commissari riponevano nel giovane studioso:

> A dir vero tra le scritture del Formichi non v'ha alcun saggio che concerne direttamente la critica grammaticale e la speculazione intorno alle diverse fasi della lingua; ma l'apparato filologico delle memorie in esame non lascia scorgere alcun difetto pure in quest'ordine di cognizioni. La natura poi de' testi […] sta a provare come egli possieda la secura conoscenza dell'idioma vedico e del sanscrito classico; e gli effetti bene attestati del suo insegnamento […] affermano la sua valentia nel magistero della grammatica.
>
> Larghezza e sodezza di cognizioni, tanto in ordine alla lingua quanto alla letteratura dell'India, acume nel penetrare il senso dei libri studiati, e attitudine felice ad allargare le vedute intorno a' soggetti di storia e di filosofia, pur serbando una giusta misura ed il criterio pratico, assicurano che nel Formichi gli studi dell'indologia hanno acquistato un valente campione (Relazione 1901a, 1741).

Con decreto ministeriale datato 8 agosto 1901 Formichi era dunque nominato professore straordinario di Sanscrito all'Università di Pisa a partire dall'anno accademico 1901-1902 (Bollettino 1901a, 1509).

Alla vigilia della riunione della Commissione convocata nel 1905 per decidere della promozione all'ordinariato, accanto ai registri delle lezioni tenute nel triennio di straordinariato Formichi poteva far valere i lavori che era andato pubblicando dopo il concorso del 1901, a dir la verità non particolarmente numerosi come non avrebbero del resto mancato di far notare, pur insistendo sulla loro pregevolezza, sia Pa-

52 Ne *I primi principî della politica secondo Kâmandaki* pubblicati nel 1925 Formichi non mancherà del resto di far notare come «i primissimi studi sull'esistenza d'una vera e propria scienza politica indiana, siano provenuti dall'Italia» e, nella fattispecie, dalle sue opere del 1899 (1925, 7-9). Sulla scienza politica indiana si vedano inoltre gli altri importanti contributi di Formichi: Formichi 1908, nel quale istituiva un raffronto con Machiavelli e Hobbes, e Formichi 1914a (sugli interessi di Formichi per la trattatistica politica indiana, cf. inoltre Ballini 1945, 119). Non va dimenticato che, durante il ventennio fascista, alcune interpretazioni di Formichi non saranno prive di alcune forzature ideologiche, cf. Piretti Santangelo 1985 (questo aspetto della biografia di Formichi non è stato tuttavia ancora sufficientemente approfondito).

volini che Kerbaker. Assieme alla versione italiana e alla nota critica del *Nītisāra* di Kāmandaki – di cui al momento della domanda mancava unicamente l'ultima parte, data alle stampe di lì a breve nello stesso 1904 (Formichi 1904a)[53] – Formichi presentava la sopra menzionata lettura di alcune novelle tratte dal *Vetāla* di Somadeva (1901b), una lunga recensione del volume di Emmanuel Cosquin dedicato alla leggenda del paggio di santa Elisabetta che offriva allo studioso l'occasione di esplorare la forma indiana di tale leggenda (1903b), la prolusione tenuta all'Università di Pisa su *Il Sanscrito considerato dal punto di vista della lingua e della letteratura* (1904b) e infine l'annunciata pubblicazione della seconda parte de *Gl'indiani e la loro Scienza Politica*, della quale nell'elenco dei titoli inviato al Ministero si dichiarava «sicuro di far pervenire alla commissione l'opera stampata»,[54] che tuttavia non vedrà mai la luce e di cui, come si evince dal giudizio di Kerbaker, non avrebbe mandato alcun manoscritto alla Commissione.

Per entrare nel merito dei giudizi dei commissari – che è possibile leggere nella loro interezza in appendice – va sottolineato che ciascuno di loro, Kerbaker compreso che pure si dilunga molto più degli altri, non indugia più di tanto sulla materia dei singoli lavori di Formichi se non quando gli aspetti specifici di questi siano funzionali a meglio illustrare l'opera complessiva dello studioso, anche quella precedente al concorso del 1901 alla quale sovente si accenna.

Il giudizio di Fumi si apriva molto positivamente con la considerazione che nel tempo intercorso dalla nomina a straordinario Formichi aveva «largamente mantenuto le speranze che sin d'allora aveva fatto concepire» mostrandosi «sagace e cauto interprete dei testi indiani», in particolare di quelli etico-politici (Appendice 6.1.I). Sebbene non mancasse di evidenziare la propria diversa interpretazione di singoli punti del *Nītisāra*, Fumi mostrava in quale misura l'insieme del lavoro del più giovane studioso rivelasse una «profonda conoscenza della lingua e della cultura indiana» e come i suoi scritti posteriori al 1901 nulla aggiungessero al merito del sanscritista, confermando anzi «le buone qualità dell'uomo colto» (Appendice 6.1.I). Il glottologo concludeva insistendo sullo «zelo mirabile» che Formichi aveva mostrato nell'insegnamento, testimoniato dall'«ottima riuscita dei suoi scolari, già noti per alcune buone pubblicazioni»,[55] che non nominava esplicitamente come faceva Kerbaker ma dietro i quali si possono facilmente ravvisare oltre al bolognese Ballini, gli allie-

53 Le altre parti erano state pubblicate in Formichi 1899c; Formichi 1900; Formichi 1901a; Formichi 1902; Formichi 1903a.

54 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Istanza per la promozione a professore ordinario presentata da C. Formichi al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione V.E. Orlando comprensiva dell'elenco dei titoli scientifici e didattici, Pisa, 27 giu. 1904.

55 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Giudizio sul Prof. C. Formichi stilato dal commissario F.G. Fumi, Roma, 10 ott. 1905.

vi dei primi anni pisani Ferdinando Belloni-Filippi (1877-1960), Gregorio Franzò (1879-?) e Vittorio Rocca (1862-?).[56]

Anche Pavolini, all'unisono con gli altri commissari, elogiava ampiamente l'attività didattica dello studioso, «veramente cospicua e feconda» non solo per gli «ottimi risultati» degli allievi ma altresì per l'attenzione da lui rivolta «costantemente ai differenti domini dell'indologia» (Appendice 6.1.II). Di particolare interesse è quanto Pavolini scriveva sulla traduzione del *Nītisāra* sottolineando come Formichi fosse «un interprete quasi sempre chiaro e fedele» soprattutto dei «termini tecnici» e del «linguaggio giuridico» – forse in virtù degli studi di legge precedenti – capace inoltre di tener conto «delle varianti e della esegesi del principale commentatore» e di ricorrere a «giudiziose e sagaci emendazioni proprie» (Appendice 6.1.II).

Di diverso spessore è quanto il raffinato traduttore Teza scriveva a proposito della versione formichiana del *Nītisāra* che lascia spazio ad alcune significative e personali considerazioni sul margine di intraducibilità delle lingue che non consente di annullare la distanza tra l'originale e la traduzione, tanto più se quest'ultima è condotta dall'europeo che nella propria lingua «non può vedere tutto quello che nella sua vede e sente l'indiano» (Appendice 6.1.IV). Nel suo giudizio, Teza notava difatti che la traduzione dello studioso napoletano non poteva dirsi perfetta «per le difficoltà intrinseche di aforismi che, nella brevità danno luogo ad interpretazioni svariate» ma ciononostante la sua interpretazione era «sempre ragionata» e il lavoro complessivamente «pregevole» (Appendice 6.1.IV) tanto da reggere il paragone con versioni differenti: i limiti della traduzione, che pure sussistevano, potevano essere addotti al traduttore solo fino a un certo punto poiché – aggiungeva Teza lasciando intendere di essere persuaso più che della incomunicabilità tra le differenti civiltà, convinzione alquanto diffusa all'epoca, dell'esistenza viceversa di diverse *formae mentis*, esito forse del suo poliglottismo – «non si può farne colpa a chi è costretto ad allargare e restringere quello che non è frutto dei nostri ingegni, delle nostre abitudini, delle nostre istituzioni» (Appendice 6.1.IV). Nel lodare la versione del giovane studioso Teza menzionava inoltre Otto Böhtlingk – che definiva «interprete potente» – e i suoi fondamentali *Indische Sprüche*, che pure si soffermavano sul *Nītisāra* di Kāmandaki, i quali tuttavia avrebbero potuto a suo parere «aiutare il Formichi» soltanto «per una piccola parte», e ricordava la versione inglese dell'opera curata da Manmatha Nath Dutt (1896) (Appendice 6.1.IV).

Un discorso a parte, come si è accennato, merita il giudizio di Kerbaker che, a differenza degli altri membri della Commissione, si

56 Per le loro pubblicazioni precedenti l'ottobre 1905 si veda la rassegna bibliografica di Ballini 1913, 219-20 (Ballini); 222 (Belloni-Filippi); 236 (Franzò); 262 (Rocca).

diffondeva ampiamente nella descrizione dei titoli, scientifici e didattici, di entrambi gli studiosi, dando prova dell'attenzione e dello scrupolo con cui esaminava l'attività scientifica dei candidati e del rigore con cui svolgeva i propri incarichi, del resto abbondantemente noti finanche ai suoi contemporanei. Per quanto attiene ai titoli scientifici di Formichi posteriori al concorso del 1901, lo studioso non mancava di sottolineare la «maturità del suo ingegno e la serietà dei suoi studî, continuati con zelo e costanza esemplari», dilungandosi a sua volta sul difficile lavoro di traduzione e di commento critico del *Nītisāra* il cui esito era, a suo dire, una versione «fedele ad un tempo ed accuratissima quanto alla forma» oltre che un «prezioso contributo alla storia della scienza politica degli antichi Indiani» a cui l'allievo, aggiungeva, «da qualche tempo attende[va]» (Appendice 6.1.III); le altre pubblicazioni presentate per la promozione erano descritte da Kerbaker come scritti d'occasione «di più lieve fatica» sulla letteratura dell'India e su tematiche affini, nei quali a ogni modo Formichi mostrava la propria «larga cultura storica e filosofica» riuscendo ad «accoppiare l'acume del ricercatore storico e l'esattezza del filologo» (Appendice 6.1.III).[57] In maniera analoga a quanto aveva fatto nella relazione per la libera docenza, Kerbaker richiamava inoltre i legami di Formichi con la comunità scientifica internazionale menzionando l'invito a collaborare all'edizione critica del *Mahābhārata* rivoltogli da Hermann Jacobi.[58] Di notevole interesse è la parte del giudizio di Kerbaker dedicata ai titoli didattici di Formichi che consente di ricostruire, attraverso l'esame dei registri delle lezioni da lui tenute nel

57 L'ampia ed eterogenea cultura di Formichi è evidente anche dall'altra prolusione del 1904, da lui non inserita nell'elenco dei titoli per l'ordinariato ma menzionata dai commissari: si tratta della prolusione alla cattedra di Lingua inglese – intitolata *Il popolo inglese, la sua lingua, la sua letteratura* – che lo studioso tenne per incarico durante tutto il corso della sua attività didattica, sia a Pisa che successivamente al trasferimento a Roma (Formichi 1904c). Formichi manterrà un rapporto privilegiato con il mondo anglosassone fino almeno a tutti gli anni Venti, come attesta per esempio la sua inaugurazione della cattedra di Cultura italiana a Berkeley nel 1928, su cui si tornerà in un prossimo lavoro. Gli interessi per la cultura inglese lo avvicinarono alla moglie di Kerbaker, Assunta, traduttrice dall'inglese (sua è la prima versione italiana di *Vanity Fair* del 1911 per i F.lli Treves), come testimoniano alcune lettere tra i due, tra cui un'epistola del 21 novembre 1910 nella quale lo studioso afferma di non essersi «ancora messo al lavoro di revisione della sua traduzione dall'Inglese» (con tutta probabilità si tratta proprio della traduzione della *Fiera delle vanità*); in un'altra lettera del 6 novembre 1912, significativa per quanto riguarda i rapporti tra Kerbaker e Formichi, quest'ultimo inviava la traduzione di un passo per il quale Assunta aveva chiesto suggerimenti (per maggiori notizie sul carteggio cf. Crisanti 2016, 39 nota 46).

58 Su questo punto si veda tuttavia quanto Moritz Winternitz avrebbe scritto qualche anno più tardi descrivendo lo scetticismo di Jacobi in merito alla realizzabilità dell'edizione critica del *Mahābhārata* (Winternitz 1922-23, 145); il progetto menzionato da Kerbaker non fu difatti mai realizzato (l'edizione critica del poema sarebbe stata pubblicata soltanto diversi anni dopo). Va ricordato che alcuni fra gli allievi di Formichi, Ballini e Belloni-Filippi tra tutti, attesero al perfezionamento all'estero proprio alla scuola dello Jacobi.

triennio di straordinariato, l'articolazione e le tematiche alle quali lo studioso dedicava i propri corsi. Si apprende così che egli teneva ogni anno due corsi, uno «grammaticale e preparatorio» e l'altro «superiore per l'interpretazione dei testi» (Appendice 6.1.III); durante il primo anno, nel corso avanzato, Formichi si era occupato di tracciare un quadro della letteratura indiana approfondendo in particolare il *Meghadūta* di Kālidāsa e il commento a questo di Mallinātha, per poi esporre il pensiero filosofico del sistema Sāṃkhya. Mostrando fin dai primissimi anni di insegnamento la sua peculiare inclinazione per lo studio del pensiero filosofico indiano[59] – sarà proprio lui a indirizzare, tra gli altri, gli allievi Belloni-Filippi e Giuseppe Tucci (1894-1984) a tale genere di studi – le lezioni dell'anno successivo avrebbero affrontato l'interpretazione della *Sāṃkhyakārikā* e i commentari di Vācaspati Miśra e di Gauḍapāda, per poi essere dedicate, nell'anno accademico 1903-1904, alla *Bhagavadgītā* – sulla quale tornerà alcuni anni dopo (Formichi 1921) – e ai sistemi filosofici utili a meglio comprenderne il significato, ovvero il Sāṃkhya, lo Yoga e il Vedānta. Il giudizio di Kerbaker proseguiva evidenziando in quale misura le numerose lezioni di Formichi, a cui andavano aggiunte le ore da lui dedicate agli allievi fuori dalle aule universitarie (una consuetudine, questa, comune a entrambi), avessero posto «solide basi» per il «largo sviluppo della filologia sanscrita» consentendo il formarsi a Pisa di una vera e propria scuola lodata dallo stesso Deussen durante una visita in Italia nel 1903 (Appendice 6.1.III).[60]

Il parere espresso da Parodi, per finire, poco aggiunge a quelli degli altri commissari che anzi, come si è anticipato sopra, in gran parte ricalca; si può tuttavia notare come egli riservi spazio ad alcune considerazioni sulla forma degli «accurati e scientifici» lavori di Formichi che descrive «piacevole ed elegante», tale cioè da renderli «accessibili ad ogni persona colta», aspetto questo non indifferente e che largo peso avrà, di lì a pochi anni, nella diffusione di testi e opere indianistiche anche presso un pubblico più ampio (Appendice 6.1.V).[61]

Raccolti i lusinghieri giudizi dei cinque professori, la Commissione non poteva che proporre all'unanimità e «a pieni voti» la promozione di Formichi all'ordinariato, a differenza di quanto sarebbe ac-

59 Si veda, a questo proposito, Ballini 1945, 118-19.

60 Alla morte di Deussen Formichi ne avrebbe tratteggiato un ampio profilo sulla rivista *Bilychnis*, cf. Formichi 1920a.

61 Lo stesso Formichi avrà un ruolo non indifferente nella diffusione dei saperi indianistici a un pubblico non specialistico, ad esempio mediante alcuni cicli di conferenze tenute presso la Biblioteca Filosofica di Firenze, si veda per esempio il volume pubblicato in collaborazione con l'allievo Belloni-Filippi su *Il pensiero religioso e filosofico dell'India* (Formichi, Belloni-Filippi 1910); sui corsi tenuti da alcuni orientalisti presso la Biblioteca Filosofica e sulla «forte accentuazione dei temi orientali, soprattutto indiani» di quest'ultima, cf. Garin 1962, 4.

caduto per Nazari il cui avanzamento di grado sembra viceversa dato quasi 'per negazione': la relazione conclusiva – che sintetizza i pareri e può essere letta integralmente in appendice – appare difatti come l'esito naturale del meritorio percorso scientifico di Formichi, dapprima «giovane studioso» che sin dai primi studi di sanscrito aveva fatto concepire «buone speranze» sul proprio conto, poi maturo professore capace di dar prova del mutarsi di queste in «belle e sicure realtà» (Appendice 6.3). I commissari sottolineavano inoltre la «severa dottrina e la coltura geniale» dello studioso, «vivificate da una passione profonda per l'oggetto dei suoi studj e da uno zelo esemplare per la sua scuola e pei suoi alunni», tanto da concludere la relazione sostenendo di non esagerare ravvisando nel Formichi «un vero modello di maestro» (Appendice 6.3).

Al termine dei lavori della Commissione e trascorso il tempo necessario per l'espletamento delle pratiche burocratiche, la promozione all'ordinariato di Formichi poteva essere decretata il 19 novembre 1905 e avere corso a partire dal 1° dicembre seguente (Bollettino 1906, 9).

4 Il «valente filologo e glottologo» che «promette [...] di progredire sempre più nel campo dell'Indologia». I giudizi su Oreste Nazari

Nel pomeriggio del 10 ottobre 1905, dopo aver discusso in mattinata i titoli presentati da Formichi, la Commissione si riuniva per valutare la domanda di promozione all'ordinariato presentata da Nazari a conclusione del triennio di straordinariato.[62]

Se Formichi sembra per molti versi far parte della schiera dei protagonisti dell'indianistica italiana del secolo scorso di cui si è persa memoria, per ragioni in parte legate alla sua prossimità al fascismo, l'oblio calato sulla figura di Nazari, senz'altro dovuto alla minore incisività dei suoi lavori indologici e all'assenza di una scuola come quella formata dallo studioso napoletano, è pressoché totale.[63] Il ri-

62 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Verbali delle adunanze della Commissione (9-11 ottobre 1905), verbale dell'adunanza del 10 ottobre 1905 (pomeriggio).

63 Su Nazari e la sua opera non esistono studi e poche sono le notizie sul suo itinerario biografico (a differenza della gran parte degli altri orientalisti, allo studioso non è stata dedicata alcuna voce da parte della Treccani, né nel *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* né tanto meno nell'*Enciclopedia*). Un breve ritratto di Nazari, non esente da alcuni limiti, è quello di Pappacena 1935, 523-5. Per un elenco dei suoi scritti glottologici e indologici si vedano gli elenchi, non completi, in Ballini 1913, 247; Ciardi-Dupré 1913, 198; Gabrieli 1935, 33; Porru 1940, 38. Come nel caso di Formichi, non è nota l'esistenza di un archivio privato dello studioso. Si legga inoltre il profilo di Nazari tratteggiato dal Rettore dell'Università di Palermo Francesco Ercole durante l'inaugurazione dell'anno accademico 1923-24, quando commemorò i colleghi scomparsi: «Oreste Nazzari [*sic*], sceso qui nei suoi giovani anni, fu così preso dalla lusinga del cielo e

trovamento di alcuni documenti inediti conservati presso l'Archivio storico dell'Università di Torino consente, almeno in parte, di ripercorrere gli anni della formazione e i primi passi della carriera accademica di Nazari nella città che, più di tutte, può essere considerata la culla della moderna indologia scientifica italiana[64] non soltanto perché annovera tra i suoi studiosi veri e propri pionieri come Gorresio e Flechia, ma altresì poiché nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento sono per la gran parte indianisti e linguisti di origine piemontese a muoversi verso il resto dell'Italia e a imporsi nel mondo accademico nazionale (oltre a Kerbaker si possono menzionare Lignana, Pietro Merlo, 1850-1888, e lo stesso De Gubernatis che consentirà a Firenze di ottenere il primato negli studi indologici e di conservarlo per un discreto numero di anni).[65]

Dal registro che attesta il *cursus studiorum* all'Università torinese si apprende che, dopo gli studi al Liceo D'Azeglio, Nazari si era immatricolato a Lettere nel 1886:[66] sin dal primo anno il giovane studente aveva potuto seguire le lezioni di alcuni tra i massimi studiosi dell'epoca – fra gli altri Domenico Pezzi, Ettore Stampini,[67] Luigi Schiaparelli, Carlo Cipolla, Giuseppe Müller, Arturo Graf e Pasquale D'Ercole –, con un'evidente inclinazione per gli studi indianistici e glottologici che lo aveva portato a reiterare, tra i corsi liberi, quelli linguistici e in particolare proprio le lezioni di Storia comparata delle lingue classiche e di Sanscrito di Flechia, del quale si può considerare uno degli ultimi allievi.[68] Conseguita la laurea in Lettere l'11

degli uomini di questa ammaliatrice Palermo, che non seppe poi più staccarsene. Maestro acclamato e venerato di questa Facoltà di Lettere, di cui fu a lungo Preside, vide più generazioni di giovani passare dalla sua scuola, che usciron migliori. In tutti gli angoli d'Italia insegnano oggi ai nostri figliuoli gli antichi scolari di Oreste Nazzari [*sic*]. Ed io ne rivedo ora commosso la figura nervosa, e ne riodo la voce, il cui tono marziale non valeva a nascondere l'interiore dolcezza. E mi piace ricordare ai giovani che mi ascoltano l'impeto di passione patriottica e civile, con cui io l'udii tante volte, pochi mesi prima della sua scomparsa, quando già lo minava il morbo che lo condusse alla tomba, esprimere con me i proprii sdegni e dar sfogo alle proprie speranze, durante il triste periodo – or finito, e Dio voglia per sempre! –, in cui la Nazione parve scordarsi dei suoi morti e della sua vittoria» (Annuario UniPa 1923-24, 7).

64 In *Italia e Oriente* Tucci definirà quello che comincia con Gorresio «orientalismo italiano vero e proprio» (Tucci 1949, 243).

65 Sulla storia degli studi indianistici a Torino cf. Pelissero, Piano 2000; Piano 2010; Botto 1998.

66 Archivio storico dell'Università degli Studi di Torino, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Registro della carriera scolastica 1886-88, Nazari Oreste (d'ora in poi, ASUT, Registro). Ringrazio la dott.ssa Paola Novaria per l'invio in formato digitale dei documenti.

67 Nazari avrebbe dedicato a Stampini *I dialetti italici*: «A Ettore Stampini per dottrina Maestro, per bontà d'animo Amico» (Nazari 1900a).

68 Alla memoria di Flechia, morto nel 1892, Nazari avrebbe dedicato la versione dello *Hitopadeśa*: «Alla memoria del maestro Giuseppe Flechia, il traduttore» (Nazari 1896a). Flechia sarebbe stato collocato a riposo proprio l'anno della laurea di Nazari.

luglio 1890 con «punti 110/110 e lode»,[69] non senza aver prima vinto il premio Bricco e Martini come studente del quarto anno (Annuario UniTo 1890-91, 11), il nome di Nazari compare di nuovo tra quelli degli studenti iscritti a Giurisprudenza nel 1893, che poté frequentare direttamente dal terzo anno in virtù della laurea precedente;[70] come risulta dalle carte conservate nell'Archivio torinese, Nazari non avrebbe concluso il percorso universitario, non è chiaro per quali ragioni (l'anno successivo all'iscrizione non compare più tra gli studenti di Legge), e appare altrettanto difficile ricostruire gli anni successivi alla laurea in Lettere dei quali le uniche testimonianze sembrano essere le pubblicazioni da lui nel frattempo intraprese.

Le notizie sull'itinerario accademico e biografico di Nazari sono più particolareggiate a partire dal 1898 quando lo studioso avrebbe ottenuto la libera docenza in Sanscrito: assieme agli *Annuari* dell'Università che informano del conseguimento della privata docenza il 30 maggio,[71] si conserva difatti il programma, tuttora inedito, del corso libero di Sanscrito che Nazari avrebbe redatto pochi giorni dopo, il 14 giugno 1898, e che si proponeva di svolgere per l'anno accademico 1898-99.[72] Delle tre ore settimanali, lo studioso intendeva dedicare un'ora allo «studio elementare della grammatica sanscrita» accompagnando «lo studio teorico con esercizi pratici di versione» – con tutta probabilità utilizzando gli *Elementi di grammatica sanscrita* da lui pubblicati pochi anni prima (Nazari 1892)[73] – e integrando l'esposizione con cenni alle grammatiche latina e greca di modo da risultare utile agli studenti di Lettere; la seconda ora doveva invece essere dedicata allo «studio di testi indiani seguendo l'antologia sanscrita del Böhtlingk, la più economica ed insieme la più copiosa» per poi soffermarsi, a partire da marzo, sulla lettura degli inni vedici e la contestuale grammatica vedica; infine, l'ultima ora di lezione, sarebbe

69 ASUT, Registro.

70 Si veda il database degli studenti pubblicato sul sito dell'Archivio storico dell'Università di Torino: `https://www.asut.unito.it/studenti/web/`.

71 La data precisa di conseguimento del titolo di libero docente è riportata in Annuario UniTo 1901-02, 6. Si vedano inoltre gli Annuari nei quali Nazari risulta annoverato tra i liberi docenti: Annuario UniTo 1898-99, 5; Annuario UniTo 1899-900, 85; Annuario UniTo 1900-01, 66.

72 Archivio storico dell'Università degli Studi di Torino, Carteggio 1897-98, fasc. 1.5 Liberi docenti, programmi dei corsi liberi, Programma del corso libero di Sanscrito per l'anno accademico 1898-99 stilato da O. Nazari, 14 giu. 1898 (d'ora in poi ASUT, Programma Sanscrito a.a. 1898-99). L'Archivio storico non conserva i programmi degli anni accademici successivi ma con tutta probabilità Nazari tenne il corso privato di Sanscrito almeno fino al 1901.

73 È interessante notare, come sottolineano Stefano Piano e Alberto Pelissero, che la grammatica sanscrita di Nazari, più volte ristampata a partire dal 1948, venne utilizzata come sussidio didattico sino a tutti gli anni Ottanta del Novecento, cf. Pelissero, Piano 2000, 355.

stata riservata all'«esposizione della storia letteraria, e più precisamente [...] della letteratura vedica, per proseguire oltre collo stesso metodo nei venturi anni accademici».[74] Nel prosieguo Nazari si diffondeva a descrivere il contenuto soprattutto dell'ultima parte del corso durante la quale avrebbe mostrato come «lo studio della lingua indiana possa interessare i cultori della glottologia in genere, e lo studio della letteratura indiana possa più specialmente interessare quelli che si occupano della storia dello sviluppo delle civiltà».[75]

Contestualmente alla libera docenza all'Università, Nazari insegnava inoltre Letteratura greca e latina al Liceo Gioberti di Torino, come emerge dai *Bollettini ufficiali del Ministero dell'Istruzione Pubblica* che attestano la docenza nel 1899 come incaricato e come reggente nel 1900 e nel 1901.[76]

A differenza di Formichi che si era presentato unicamente al concorso per la cattedra di Sanscrito dell'Università di Pisa del 1901 da cui sarebbe uscito vincitore, Nazari – che pure non aveva molti titoli da far valere – si era invece candidato al concorso bandito dall'Istituto di Studi Superiori di Firenze e vinto, come si è visto, nel 1897 da Pavolini; forse per avere qualche opportunità in più e non precludersi la carriera accademica, nel 1901, in concomitanza a quello di Sanscrito, Nazari aveva inoltre preso parte all'altro concorso indetto dall'Università pisana, quello per la cattedra di Storia comparata delle lingue classiche e neolatine, presentando le proprie pubblicazioni di stampo glottologico (cf. Relazione 1901b).[77]

È necessario soffermarsi di nuovo sul concorso fiorentino del 1897, nella fattispecie sui giudizi forniti dalla Commissione in merito alle opere indianistiche presentate da Nazari sulle quali i commissari sarebbero tornati nel 1901, dimenticando tra l'altro che la traduzione dello *Hitopadeśa* pubblicata da Nazari nel 1896 era stata già esaminata nel precedente concorso, le cui valutazioni è utile raffrontare per meglio comprendere i modi e le forme della ricezione dei lavori dello studioso da parte dei suoi contemporanei. Se è vero che nel 1897 Nazari si trovava a competere senza alcuna possibilità di vin-

74 ASUT, Programma Sanscrito a.a. 1898-99.

75 ASUT, Programma Sanscrito a.a. 1898-99.

76 Si vedano gli *Elenchi dei Capi d'Istituto, insegnanti e personale non docente del Liceo-Ginnasio 'Vincenzo Gioberti di Torino'* pubblicati sul sito: https://www.liceogioberti.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/CorpoDocente_1867-1900.pdf. Si può ragionevolmente supporre che negli anni dalla laurea in Lettere al concorso del 1901 Nazari abbia insegnato nelle scuole secondarie, si veda a questo proposito la relazione conclusiva della Commissione del concorso di Sanscrito nella quale è riportata la sua docenza da «oltre due lustri» (Relazione 1901a, 1740).

77 Come per il concorso di Sanscrito, l'avviso di concorso, datato 30 ottobre 1900, era stato pubblicato sulla *Gazzetta Ufficiale* il 15 novembre e prevedeva l'inoltro dei titoli entro il 15 marzo 1901 (Gazzetta 1900, 4476).

cere con un candidato come Pavolini, nettamente superiore per titoli scientifici e didattici, va tuttavia notato che i giudizi non del tutto lusinghieri sulle sue opere non mancavano di metterne in luce qualche aspetto positivo, se non altro per la «diligenza» da lui impiegata nel fornire «due utili strumenti per lo studio elementare del sanscrito» (Relazione 1897, 1832): da una parte gli *Elementi di grammatica sanscrita* (Nazari 1892) che secondo i commissari mostravano diversi difetti ma «non […] tali da inceppare i principianti per i quali fu composto il compendio, ed ai quali riesce sempre utile colla scelta appropriata dei paradigmi grammaticali»;[78] dall'altra la versione dello *Hitopadeśa* (Nazari 1896a) «condotta con molta diligenza e con molta fedeltà» in maniera «letterale» ma della quale veniva notata la mancanza di un inquadramento introduttivo e di note illustrative, attribuibile secondo i commissari all'essersi «fidato troppo» del fatto che il libro stesso «sia per se abbastanza noto al pubblico degli studiosi; e che una buona traduzione tenga luogo d'ogni commento» (Relazione 1897, 1832).[79] La Commissione si soffermava poi molto rapidamente su altri due lavori di stampo glottologico di Nazari, il manuale sul dialetto omerico (Nazari 1893) e la nota sul suffisso locativo *-n* (Nazari 1896b), entrambi con qualche lacuna e difetto ma a ogni modo attestanti la «buona preparazione» (Relazione 1897, 1832) filologica e glottologica dello studioso al quale era concessa l'eleggibilità.

Nello stringato giudizio sui titoli di Nazari formulato nella relazione conclusiva dalla Commissione di concorso per la cattedra di Straordinario dell'Università di Pisa del 1901 può forse aver avuto un peso l'eleggibilità ottenuta per il medesimo ruolo nel concorso fiorentino, menzionata dai commissari assieme alla libera docenza nel frattempo conseguita dallo studioso. A differenza di Formichi, sui cui lavori la relazione si dilungava ampiamente, sulle pubblicazioni scientifiche di Nazari la Commissione – formata dai medesimi studiosi di quella per il concorso precedente fatta eccezione per Guidi (Kerbaker, Fumi, De Gubernatis, Pullé) al cui posto vi era Ascoli – accennava difatti soltanto per riportare che alla grammatica sanscrita e alle disser-

78 Sui difetti della grammatica di Nazari la Commissione scriveva: «Il compendio mostra qualche difetto nell'ordine con cui sono esposte le regole e nella proporzione assegnata a ciascuna; nel manco di rilievo delle regole principali sopra le necessarie; nella brevità che qua e là degenera in insufficienza della parte fonetica; e infine nella poca corrispondenza fra la parte teorica della grammatica ed il manuale degli esercizi graduali, tradotti dal *Leitfaden* del Bühler» (Relazione 1897, 1832).

79 Sulla traduzione dell'opera la Commissione scriveva: «La rispondenza periodo per periodo, frase per frase, del sanscrito con l'italiano mostra l'intendimento di far servire questa versione, che è la prima nostra del libro, non solo come lettura piacevole, ma eziandio come aiuto agli studiosi del sanscrito. Essa è letterale e nel tempo stesso scorrevole e chiara» (Relazione 1897, 1832). Va notato che Nazari stesso aveva sottolineato nell'«Avvertenza» che la sua traduzione, «anche a scapito talvolta dell'eleganza, è pressochè letterale» (Nazari 1896a, s.p.)

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tazioni presentate per il concorso fiorentino si erano nel frattempo aggiunte «una diligente versione del *Hitopadeça* fatta letteralmente sulla edizione bombayana, che torna di uso utilissimo ai principianti», come si è visto già presentata in precedenza e discussa dai commissari con parole simili, e «una serie nuova di dissertazioni d'indole comparativa» (Relazione 1901a, 1740). Poco oltre la Commissione non mancava di notare che i titoli scientifici di Nazari non erano del tutto sufficienti ad attestare «molta larghezza di studi» nei campi della letteratura indiana e dell'analisi e storia della lingua, il che non significava negare – proseguivano i commissari – che «taluni dei lavori glottologici, in ispecie il manuale sulle lingue paleo-italiche» (Nazari 1900a) non fossero «prova di singolare destrezza e acutezza d'ingegno», come del resto mostrava, secondo loro, l'«elegante [...] illustrazione di una formula sacrificale ed oscura del rituale indiano» (Relazione 1901a, 1740) da lui condotta nel saggio *Bhûr bhuvaḥ svaḥ* (1897). Il non entusiastico giudizio sul profilo scientifico di Nazari non pregiudicava tuttavia l'ottenimento di una nuova eleggibilità per lo straordinariato di Sanscrito, questa volta in una posizione in graduatoria tale da consentirgli la chiamata sulla cattedra universitaria; è significativo che la relazione si concludesse evidenziando le «strettezze e le difficoltà» contro le quali un «insegnante ligio e diligente al suo ufficio» nella scuola secondaria come Nazari aveva dovuto combattere da «oltre due lustri» per «persegu[ire] l'intento de' suoi studi» e che era dunque «degn[o] di lode e di incoraggiamento» (Relazione 1901a, 1740), ed è forse indicativo della decisione della Commissione di dar esito positivo alla sua partecipazione al concorso.

La buona riuscita nell'eleggibilità alla cattedra di Sanscrito può utilmente essere messa a confronto con lo scarso risultato ottenuto nel concorso per professore straordinario di Storia comparata delle lingue classiche e neolatine nell'Università di Pisa degli stessi giorni: il 5 maggio 1901, in concomitanza con la chiusura dei lavori per il concorso di Sanscrito, la Commissione – composta dagli stessi professori fatta eccezione per De Gubernatis (Ascoli Presidente, Kerbaker, Fumi, Pullé) al cui posto vi era Parodi – stilava difatti la relazione finale dalla quale Nazari risultava aver sì ottenuto l'eleggibilità, come gli altri quattro candidati, ma con un punteggio di poco superiore al minimo e tale da collocarlo in ultima posizione nella graduatoria (cf. Relazione 1901b).[80] Nel giudizio i commissari riconoscevano nel candidato «una conoscenza delle lingue antiche, quale si deside-

80 Al concorso, assieme a Nazari che ottenne 32 punti su 50, parteciparono Goidanich, risultato vincitore con 47/50, Claudio Giacomino (46/50), Pier Enea Guarnerio (42/50) e Silvio Pieri (35/50). Per i giudizi su costoro si veda la relazione. Di notevole interesse è la lettera che Parodi scrisse a Michele Barbi pochi giorni dopo la chiusura dei lavori della Commissione: oltre a fornire un quadro di quelle che furono le discussioni tra i commissari, Parodi esprime difatti un giudizio poco lusinghiero nei confron-

rerebbe in tutti i comparatori», attestata dai suoi «titoli accademici» e dalle «pubblicazioni filologiche intorno al sanscrito e al greco», ma passando a esaminare i lavori propriamente glottologici osservavano ch'egli era sprovvisto di titoli relativi alle lingue romanze[81] e che quelli relativi alla comparazione delle lingue classiche risultavano «inferiori all'aspettazione, sia perché non sempre abbastanza meditati e maturi, sia perché troppo frammentari» (Relazione 1901b, 1710). L'eleggibilità, sia pure come ultimo tra i concorrenti, era nondimeno concessa per la «buona preparazione filologica», come era stato per il concorso del 1897, a cui si aggiungeva qui la conoscenza degli antichi dialetti italici, da lui mostrata nei suoi lavori «più felici e più abbondanti», nella fattispecie gli scritti *Vatuva ferine* (Nazari 1900d), *Umbrica* (Nazari 1901b) e il manuale Hoepli dedicato per l'appunto ai *Dialetti Italici* (Nazari 1900a).

Soltanto pochi mesi dopo la conclusione dei due concorsi, Nazari era chiamato in qualità di professore straordinario sulla cattedra di Sanscrito dell'Università di Palermo – in virtù del secondo posto ottenuto nel concorso pisano – a partire dall'anno accademico 1901-02, come attesta il decreto ministeriale del 26 ottobre 1901 (Bollettino 1901b, 1874).[82] Dagli *Annuari* dell'Università di Palermo risulta che fino all'anno accademico 1903-04 Nazari tenne inoltre, come corso libero, la docenza della Letteratura tedesca, a cui avrebbe affiancato a partire dall'anno accademico 1902-03 e per il resto della propria attività accademica, l'incarico del corso di Glottologia.[83]

Con tutta probabilità è proprio questo duplice indirizzo della sua attività scientifica, indianistico e glottologico, unito al progressivo volgersi più convintamente verso quest'ultimo genere di studi e forse alla volontà di avvicinarsi alle terre natali, che avrebbe indotto Nazari a partecipare a un altro concorso, quello per professore straordinario di Storia comparata delle lingue classiche bandito dall'Università di Pavia e svoltosi nell'ottobre del 1903 (cf. Relazione 1903). Presidente della Commissione era ancora una volta Kerbaker, affiancato da alcuni tra i massimi studiosi nelle materie del concorso: Francesco Novati

ti di Nazari che, a suo dire, «forse meritava anche meno» dei 32 punti assegnatigli, cf. Lettera di E.G. Parodi a M. Barbi, Alatri, 17 mag. 1901, riportata in Siano 2021, 156-7.

81 La cattedra di Lingue e letterature comparate, com'è noto, era stata ridenominata Storia comparata delle lingue classiche e neolatine con il Regolamento Bonghi dell'ottobre 1875 e ciò non aveva mancato di creare alcuni attriti e diverse opposizioni per l'accorpamento della romanistica alle lingue classiche, cf. Lucchini 2008; Dovetto 1991.

82 Cf. inoltre Annuario UniTO 1901-02, 6.

83 Cf. Annuario UniPa 1901-02, 67; Annuario UniPa 1902-03, 63-4; Annuario UniPa 1903-04, 18. A partire dall'anno accademico 1904-05 il corso libero di Letteratura tedesca sarà tenuto da Nicola Zingarelli che era stato chiamato sulla cattedra di Storia comparata delle letterature neolatine (cf. Annuario UniPa 1904-05, 22).

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(1859-1915),[84] Vincenzo Crescini (1857-1932), Cesare De Lollis (1863-1928) e Salvioni; i candidati, oltre a Nazari, erano Attilio Levi (1863-?) e due studiosi che già avevano partecipato al concorso pisano del 1901, Silvio Pieri (1856-1936) e Pier Enea Guarnerio (1854-1919), che sarebbe risultato vincitore. Al termine dei lavori della Commissione Nazari otteneva una ulteriore eleggibilità ma di nuovo, come già accaduto nel 1901, risultava ultimo fra i tre eleggibili con un punteggio di diversi punti inferiore e un giudizio sulla propria attività scientifica non del tutto lusinghiero.[85] Nella relazione conclusiva, i commissari muovevano difatti dai titoli non attinenti alle discipline oggetto di concorso e sebbene venisse ribadito che la versione dello *Hitopadeśa* fosse «degna di lode» e da sola provasse «quella conoscenza del sanscrito ch'è necessario sussidio all'indagine comparativa delle lingue classiche», diverso era tuttavia il giudizio su altri lavori come gli *Elementi di grammatica sanscrita* (Nazari 1892) e il saggio sul *Dialetto omerico* (Nazari 1893) che, aggiungevano, «per il loro carattere didattico non dimostrano alcuna preoccupazione d'originalità», così come il «manualetto» sui *Dialetti Italici* (Nazari 1900a) che «non offre prova sufficiente delle attitudini del Nazari all'indagine originale» al pari delle note «riferentisi al dominio paleoitalico» come *Umbrica* (Nazari 1901b) che venivano qui giudicate, diversamente dal 1901, «ingegnose congetture» senza «alcuna risultanza certa» (Relazione 1903, 1000). Prima di passare agli scritti di carattere comparativo i commissari si soffermavano inoltre sul saggio *Bhûr bhuvaḥ svaḥ* (1897) che, se nel 1901 era definito un'«elegante […] illustrazione» della formula sacrificale indiana, qui era menzionato semplicemente come ulteriore prova della «conoscenza pratica» (Relazione 1903, 1000) del sanscrito da parte di Nazari. Non meno critici erano i giudizi sugli scritti più propriamente glottologici (Nazari 1896b; 1900e; 1900f) nei quali, a detta della Commissione, «non riesce il Nazari a mostrarsi sufficientemente dotato di quella robusta agilità di mente da cui la virtù comparativa emana» e di «quel naturale senso di discrezione che l'uso degli spedienti dichiarativi richiede per non riuscir fallace o degenerare in abuso» (Relazione 1903, 1000-1). Le conclusioni dei commissari, che pure lo dichiaravano eleggibile a differenza di Pieri,[86] suonavano tuttavia al limite della stroncatura e assieme ai giudizi dei precedenti concorsi dovranno essere tenute in considerazione per comprendere i non entusiastici pareri che Nazari avrebbe ottenuto nella promozione all'ordinariato:

84 Sulla partecipazione di Novati a questo concorso, cf. Brambilla 1999, 94-95.

85 Guarnerio vincerà il concorso con punti 45/50; Levi 42/50; Nazari 36/50 (Relazione 1903, 1002).

86 Va notato che nel concorso del 1901 Pieri era invece arrivato prima di Nazari nella graduatoria stilata dalla Commissione (Relazione 1901b, 1711).

> E quanto al fascio ch'egli allega di recensioni, esso sta a provare come all'occhio suo nulla sfugga di quanto si viene producendo da altri nel campo degli studi ch'egli professa, ma anche conferma quella rozzezza formale che colpisce in tutti i lavori del Nazari e che difficilmente va insieme con quella finezza di mente che questi studi richiedono. (Relazione 1903, 1001)

Il 27 settembre 1905, trascorsi quattro anni dalla nomina a straordinario, Nazari inviava al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione i lavori «da presentare alla Commissione esaminatrice»[87] che si sarebbe riunita pochi giorni dopo per decidere della promozione all'ordinariato: delle cinque pubblicazioni, «scarse di numero» come non avrebbe mancato di far notare Pavolini (Appendice 6.2.III), soltanto tre sarebbero state prese in considerazione dai commissari che ritenevano le altre, lo *Spizzico di etimologie greche e latine* (1904c) e la seconda edizione «rifatta e aumentata» de *Il dialetto omerico* (1904b), un «utile corredo degli studi, ma non gli studi che si domandano» (Appendice 6.3.IV) per la cattedra di Sanscrito. La prima delle «pubblicazioni indologiche posteriori al concorso» (Appendice 6.3) del 1901 presentate da Nazari era una sintesi della dottrina filosofica della *Bhagavadgītā* («La concezione del Mondo secondo il Bhagavadgîta», 1903) data alla stampe nel novembre-dicembre del 1903 in quel fondamentale spazio di discussione rappresentato dalla *Rivista Filosofica* di Carlo Cantoni, che al volgere del secolo oltre alle questioni di carattere filosofico e pedagogico e ai dibattiti sul riordinamento dell'istruzione che coinvolsero anche Kerbaker si apriva al dibattito storico-religioso e a forme di riflessione non esclusivamente occidentali.[88] Alla *Bhagavadgītā* era dedicata anche la seconda pubblicazione di Nazari di poco successiva – l'«Avvertenza» è datata gennaio 1904 (1904a, VIII) – consistente nella traduzione e nel commento dell'opera, data alle stampe nella prestigiosa Biblioteca dei popoli diretta per l'editore Sandron da Giovanni Pascoli e inaugurata nel 1902 dal *Mahâbhârata* di Pavolini (Pavolini 1902) a cui era seguito, l'anno successivo, il *Nâgânanda* di Cimmino (Cimmino 1903).[89] Da ultimo

87 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Comunicazione al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione L. Bianchi dei titoli scientifici per la promozione a professore ordinario di O. Nazari, Palermo, 27 set. 1905.

88 A proposito dei dibattiti sul riordinamento dell'istruzione secondaria si veda l'articolo ivi pubblicato da Giovanni Gentile che prendeva in esame, criticandole, le riflessioni di Kerbaker, Alfredo Piazzi e dello stesso Cantoni (Gentile 1902). Tra gli articoli dedicati alle discussioni storico-religiose si vedano gli scritti di Baldassarre Labanca (1899) e Raffaele Mariano (1900). Sulla Rivista filosofica cf. Guarnieri 1981.

89 Nel dicembre 1900 Pascoli propose anche a Kerbaker di pubblicare una nuova traduzione della *Mṛcchakaṭikā* di Śūdraka, cf. Crisanti 2016, 38-9 nota 46 (la nuova versione non sarebbe tuttavia stata pubblicata nella Biblioteca dei popoli ma avrebbe visto la luce nel 1908 nelle edizioni dell'editore Fraioli di Arpino). Sui testi indiani dati

lo studioso presentava una nota ermeneutica sui distici 8-9 dell'inno 41, I, del *Ṛgveda* (Nazari 1904d) e accennava a un «altro titolo in corso di stampa» che se vi fosse stato tempo sarebbe stato presentato da Pullé che si era «assun[to] l'incarico della sua pubblicazione»[90] ma del quale non è possibile ricostruire né il titolo né il contenuto.

Per entrare nel merito dei giudizi dei commissari – al pari di quelli su Formichi riportati in appendice – è da notare che in tutti e cinque, pur con alcune sfumature, erano più i rilievi critici che le considerazioni positive sui titoli e, più in generale, sull'opera complessiva dello studioso, e in tal senso non sono troppo distanti da alcune delle conclusioni delle Commissioni dei concorsi precedenti.

Il parere di Fumi si apriva rimandando all'eleggibilità ottenuta da Nazari nei due concorsi del 1901 dei quali era stato commissario, a cui avevano contribuito non poco, a detta sua, gli «svariati lavori filologici e in ispecie quelli di glottologia e d'etimologia, i contributi ermeneutici umbri e l'utile manuale degli antichi linguaggi italiani» ma che non sarebbe stata conseguita – aggiungeva confermando le perplessità di cui si è dato conto sopra – se fossero stati considerati «da sé soli» i lavori di «vera indologia» (Appendice 6.2.I) ossia la grammatica sanscrita (1892), la versione dello *Hitopadeśa* (1896a) e la nota sulla formula sacrificale indiana (1897). Quanto alle tre pubblicazioni oggetto dell'esame della Commissione, se a proposito della nota vedica Fumi riteneva fosse «ben condotta» dal punto di vista critico e tale da offrire un'interpretazione «plausibile, benché forse non definitiva» (Appendice 6.2.I), diverso e più articolato era invece il giudizio sui lavori concernenti la *Bhagavadgītā*, che assieme a quelli degli altri commissari è di indubbio valore per comprendere il peso che alcuni tra i massimi indianisti dell'epoca attribuivano alla ricezione delle opere indologiche da parte di un pubblico più ampio e non strettamente specialistico. Di notevole interesse è quanto Fumi scriveva a proposito del saggio dato alle stampe nella *Rivista Filosofica* del quale, pur riconoscendo la «fedeltà» con cui era riportata la «dottrina filosofica» della *Bhagavadgītā*, metteva in evidenza un limite sostanziale, vale a dire la scarsa comprensibilità da parte dei «filosofi» a cui il periodico si rivolgeva, «profani al particolar concetto indiano della vita e del mondo» e pertanto «ben difficilmente» in grado di «capire esattamente le dottrine metafisiche ed etiche» (Appendice 6.2.I) sulle quali il testo è imperniato. Nella fattispecie, a rendere inafferrabile il senso dell'opera indiana erano per Fumi due difetti del sunto

alle stampe nella Biblioteca dei popoli si tornerà in un prossimo lavoro; sugli interessi indianistici di Pascoli cf. Baroncini 2013.

90 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Comunicazione al Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione L. Bianchi dei titoli scientifici per la promozione a professore ordinario di O. Nazari, Palermo, 27 set. 1905.

di Nazari: da una parte l'impostazione «troppo minuzios[a]», dall'altra l'essere «troppo poco penetrativo e non sempre adatto ai cultori della filosofia che non hanno attinto direttam[ente] alle fonti originali indiane» (Appendice 6.2.I).[91] Dello stesso avviso era il giudizio sulla traduzione e il commento della *Bhagavadgītā* della quale Nazari aveva sì dato un'interpretazione «corretta», sebbene «troppo letterale sin nei nomi proprj ed epiteti», ma ancora una volta in una «veste più adatta agli esordienti di sanscrito» che ai «cultori di filosofia non esperti nelle dottrine speciali dell'India antica» e come tale incapace di far «capi[re] e gust[are]» ai lettori «la profondità geniale e originale del famoso episodio» (Appendice 6.2.I). Con tutta probabilità in virtù dei propri rapporti con i colleghi palermitani che dopo il trasferimento lo annoveravano tra i professori «onorari» della Facoltà di Filosofia e Lettere, Fumi poteva dar conto, a ragion veduta, dei buoni risultati didattici di Nazari – quest'ultimo non aveva difatti inviato i registri delle lezioni – e dei nuovi lavori in preparazione che, a suo dire, attestavano «continuità e progresso di studj» (Appendice 6.2.I). Nella chiusa, Fumi riteneva pertanto si potesse concedere l'ordinariato dal momento che sia i titoli didattici che quelli scientifici in preparazione, consentivano di nutrire «migliori speranze» (Appendice 6.2.I) circa il futuro scientifico dello studioso, una conclusione questa di segno diametralmente opposto a quanto aveva scritto nel giudizio su Formichi, che aveva viceversa dato prova di aver «mantenuto le speranze» (Appendice 6.1.I) concepite su di lui.

Sulla stessa lunghezza d'onda per quanto concerne i due lavori sulla *Bhagavadgītā* era il giudizio di Kerbaker che riservava ampio spazio, in particolare, a discutere le scelte di traduzione adottate da Nazari nella sua versione, accostandosi a Fumi per quanto riguarda il giudizio sul saggio pubblicato nella *Rivista Filosofica*. Di quest'ultimo Kerbaker asseriva a sua volta l'incapacità di «far comprendere allo studioso la vastità e l'importanza» delle questioni filosofiche trattate nell'opera indiana, affrontate da Nazari in maniera «insufficiente» a chiarire sia la genesi del poema che lo «svolgimento organico del pensiero speculativo nel medesimo» (Appendice 6.2.II); secondo lo studioso la sintesi della *Gītā* poteva tutt'al più servire come «primo orientamento» per il lettore che si accingesse alla lettura del testo anche per via della mancanza di un'introduzione generale, supplita soltanto in parte dalle note che attestano invece la «varia» e «ben fondata» (Appendice 6.2.II) conoscenza di Nazari, un apprezzamento, questo, a ogni modo ben lontano dalle lodi della larga cultura filosofica di Formichi ch'egli tes-

91 Le considerazioni di Fumi ricordano la critica che l'allievo di Formichi, Tucci, farà qualche anno dopo agli stessi orientalisti considerandoli responsabili del bando del pensiero orientale dalla storia della filosofia per la loro incapacità di andare oltre la mera filologia e tentare un'esposizione più ampia e articolata delle indagini filosofiche dei popoli asiatici, cf. Tucci 1922, IX.

seva nel parere sopra citato. Quanto alla versione della *Bhagavadgītā* data alle stampe nella Biblioteca dei popoli, Kerbaker – che, non va dimenticato, tradusse magistralmente a più riprese il poema, così come il *Mahābhārata* – sottolineava come anche in questo caso mancasse un'introduzione atta a illustrare il pensiero filosofico e le relazioni con i diversi sistemi speculativi dell'India, tanto più che la traduzione aveva lo scopo di «divulgarne la conoscenza tra le persone colte» alle quali invece il libro risultava di lettura «assai difficile e poco o punto attraente» (Appendice 6.2.II). Nel merito della forma della traduzione, lo studioso riconosceva la «diligenza» di Nazari nel dare «una traduzione fedele e possibilmente letterale del celebre carme filosofico» – quest'ultimo ne aveva peraltro fatta dichiarazione esplicita nell'«Avvertenza» che apriva il volume –[92] ma è evidente che per un fine ed elegante traduttore come Kerbaker ciò non poteva essere un pregio poiché, ribadiva, non faceva che rendere poco interessante il componimento a un pubblico di «persone colte», come era quello della collana, ma «profane alla filologia sanscrita» (Appendice 6.2.II). Più precisamente, lo studioso criticava la traduzione «troppo letterale» condotta da Nazari definendola «scolastica» e proprio per questo sovente fonte di «dubbi ed equivoci in chi la legge», ma l'aspetto ancor più grave dal punto di vista del traduttore era quanto Kerbaker notava poco oltre a proposito dell'assenza di carattere letterario di tale versione, incapace di essere «a un tempo» traduzione e interpretazione e come tale di rispecchiare «chiaro, limpido, colorito e vigorosamente disegnato» l'originale del quale finiva per essere per converso un «calco» le cui «asprezze inevitabili» non potevano che «offende[re] talvolta il lettore» (Appendice 6.2.II). Per comprendere il giudizio di Kerbaker è sufficiente menzionare la traduzione del passo celeberrimo (lettura II, 16) nel quale è condensato l'intero senso, o quasi, del poema:

> Di ciò che non è non si dà l'esistenza, né si dà l'inesistenza di ciò ch'è, d'ambe queste cose veduta è la differenza dai conoscitori della verità. (Nazari 1904a, 20)

Se si confronta questa versione di Nazari con quella in ottava rima dello stesso Kerbaker è evidente la prospettiva radicalmente differente con la quale quest'ultimo concepiva la traduzione:

> Nulla non è che nasca dal nïente, | Né d'esser cessa quello ch'è in natura; | Dei due stati in che stia la differenza | Bene i saggi lo san d'alta scïenza. (Kerbaker 1936, 18 strofe 29)

92 Così scriveva difatti Nazari: «Nella versione mi sono studiato di esser fedele ricalcando sull'originale parola per parola il periodo italiano e per essere più oggettivo ho tradotto in prosa» (1904a, VII).

Per rimanere alle versioni in prosa, si può citare inoltre la traduzione di Formichi di qualche anno dopo, più semplice e immediata, ma di spessore ben diverso da quella di Nazari, e non è un caso che Kerbaker nel parere per l'ordinariato giudicasse accurate sotto il rispetto della forma le traduzioni dell'allievo:

> Non si conosce creazione di ciò che già non esiste, non si conosce distruzione di ciò che esiste: di entrambi questi due (falsi concetti: creazione del non esistente e distruzione dell'esistente) la fine è stata intravveduta da coloro che vedono nel fondo delle cose. (Formichi 1921, 32)[93]

Studioso dei *Veda* lui stesso, Kerbaker si soffermava poi meno ampiamente sulla nota vedica di Nazari dedicata agli ultimi versi dell'inno agli Āditya riportato nella crestomazia di Böhtlingk,[94] e come Fumi riteneva che, per quanto si potessero fare alcune osservazioni, l'interpretazione datane dallo studioso fosse «congetturale» ma «pur sempre plausibile, e certo ingegnos[a]» (Appendice 6.2.II). Non potendo valutare l'attività didattica, Kerbaker richiamava i due concorsi del 1901 di cui era stato commissario per concludere che la preparazione di Nazari nel campo della «filologia indo-greco-italica», che aveva avuto modo di giudicare in quell'occasione, non rendeva possibile dubitare ch'egli fosse in grado di «sussidiare validamente» l'insegnamento della lingua sanscrita con la sua «larga ed eletta erudizione glottologica» (Appendice 6.2.II).

In maniera analoga, anche Pavolini richiamava le «estese cognizioni» glottologiche di Nazari per concludere positivamente il proprio giudizio, a sua volta incentrato sulla versione del poema indiano ch'egli riteneva da lodare per la «fedeltà scrupolosa» del traduttore, tale tuttavia da «sopprimere intieramente quel colorito artistico che […] sarebbe stato desiderabile conservare» (Appendice 6.2.III) per un testo come la *Bhagavadgītā*; al pari di Kerbaker, lo studioso sot-

93 Formichi chiosava inoltre, in una nota a piè pagina: «L'importanza di questo distico non è mai abbastanza segnalata. Che agli Indi sia concesso di ripetere nelle loro meditazioni religiose assiomi fatti propri dalla scienza, non è forse un grande privilegio? E non siamo da compiangere noi che dal maestro laico sentiamo parlare della indistruttibilità della materia e della sua eternità e poi dal prete della creazione dal nulla? E non è possibile da noi far andare un po' più d'accordo scienza e fede? L'India insegni!». Si confrontino anche le traduzioni contemporanee di Raniero Gnoli (basata sulla recensione del Kaśmīr) e di Stefano Piano: «Né di ciò che è inesistente si dà essere né di ciò che è esistente si dà non essere. I savi che vedon le cose secondo realtà hanno ben visto il termine (*anta*) di esse due» (Gnoli 1976, 53); «Non può venire in essere ciò che non è, | né può cessare di essere ciò che è: | coloro che vedono la verità sanno | che fra questi due c'è un limite invalicabile» (Piano 1994, 102).

94 È da notare che lo stesso Kerbaker aveva dedicato agli Āditya una memoria letta presso l'Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti di Napoli (cf. Kerbaker 1887).

tolineava la mancanza di un'introduzione utile a inquadrarne il contesto filosofico e religioso ma più benevolmente degli altri due studiosi riteneva potessero in gran parte supplire le note, «accurate ed esaurienti», e l'articolo pubblicato nella rivista di Cantoni (Appendice 6.2.III).[95]

Più originale era il giudizio di Teza, anch'esso dedicato alla versione della *Gītā*, che si apriva con alcune considerazioni sul fatto che l'abbondanza di traduzioni e commenti del poema rendesse più semplice il compito del traduttore di «ripensare i vecchi pensieri degli indiani», il quale tuttavia mostrava nella «durezza dello stile» di aver svolto «un attento esame delle parole e dell'anima che è in loro» (Appendice 6.3.IV) pur avendo sacrificato alla fedeltà l'«agilità» della traduzione. Teza non nascondeva che avrebbe preferito esaminare l'edizione di nuovi trattati o un saggio di versioni da testi poco noti ma concludeva a ogni modo rilevando nelle note del volume di Nazari una «bene ordinata scelta» e una serie di osservazioni sulla mitologia e sulle dottrine ariane che, scriveva, «fanno sperare un maestro efficace» (Appendice 6.3.IV).

Il parere di Parodi, infine, pur aggiungendo poco a quelli degli altri commissari mostrava, come si è accennato, qualche spregiudicatezza in più: pur riconoscendo l'«acume» e alcuni «buoni risultati» degli studi glottologici di Nazari, sebbene con qualche riserva per quelli sui dialetti italici, lo studioso non mancava di evidenziare che uno soltanto tra i titoli presentati per la promozione era un nuovo lavoro sulla lingua e la letteratura sanscrita e che questo tuttavia non era esente da «difetti, anche gravi» a cominciare dalla forma «poco felice» (Appendice 6.2.V). Nondimeno, Parodi concludeva ammettendo che la versione della *Bhagavadgītā* era a ogni buon conto una prova delle cognizioni di Nazari sulla lingua e la mitologia indiana e che, «tutto sommato» (Appendice 6.2.V), si poteva appoggiare la promozione all'ordinariato.

Malgrado i giudizi non privi di rilievi, anche significativi, dei cinque professori, la Commissione concludeva il proprio lavoro ritenendo che non si dovesse negare la promozione di Nazari all'ordinariato, ricalcando di fatto le conclusioni dei singoli commissari che nei loro pareri anziché appoggiare senza esitazione il passaggio di grado nei ruoli accademici accoglievano la domanda, come si è visto, 'per negazione', come qualcosa «tutto considerato» (Appendice 6.2.II),[96] di

95 Nel proprio conciso giudizio Pavolini, pur riprendendone alcuni punti, stemperava i toni della critica rivolta alla versione della *Bhagavadgītā* di Nazari (1904a) da lui pubblicata sulle pagine del *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana* (Pavolini 1904) a cui era seguita la risposta, alquanto stizzita, di Nazari datata 1° agosto 1905 (Nazari 1905).

96 Se si confrontano le chiuse dei cinque giudizi si può notare il ricorrere di espressioni molto simili: se Kerbaker scrive che «tutto considerato» Nazari merita la promozione, Parodi chiude con «tutto sommato»; Pavolini e Teza ritengono invece che «non

inevitabile per non stroncare la carriera accademica del «diligente»[97] studioso. La relazione conclusiva – che sintetizza i giudizi e può essere letta in forma integrale in appendice – appare difatti, diversamente da quella di Formichi, non tanto come l'esito del percorso scientifico di Nazari quanto piuttosto come l'ultima delle non entusiastiche relazioni accumulate al termine dei concorsi precedenti, che pure avevano deciso la sua eleggibilità, di volta in volta, alle cattedre di Sanscrito o di Storia comparata delle lingue classiche, seppure con punteggi di poco oltre la sufficienza. I commissari non mancavano a ogni modo di sottolineare lo «zelo e l'efficacia» del suo insegnamento, noti «in via privata» mediante l'interessamento di Fumi, e l'importanza della versione della *Bhagavadgītā* non soltanto «per la mole e il contenuto» del lavoro ma anche per la fedeltà della traduzione e le «ricche e sane annotazioni» (Appendice 6.3); nondimeno, se l'«esperto sanscritista appare in tutto il suo lavoro», la relazione insisteva ancora una volta sui limiti della traduzione che sostituiva al «colorito artistico aleggiante» nel poema un «travestimento incolore e spesso sgraziato», poco allettante per i «profani» al pari del sunto dato alle stampe nella rivista di Cantoni, non in grado di trasmettere l'ampiezza delle questioni affrontate nel testo (Appendice 6.3).[98] Il «difetto di gusto e d'arte» tuttavia non toglieva nulla all'«esperto conoscitore» della lingua e della letteratura indiana, del quale veniva lodata anche la nota vedica (Appendice 6.3). La commissione concludeva, in maniera eloquente, ritenendo che il «valente filologo e glottologo» nel campo greco-italico «promette[sse] senza dubbio di progredire sempre più nel campo dell'indologia, alla quale intende ormai dedicarsi»: ancora una volta, e nello stesso giudizio mediante il quale veniva promosso all'ordinariato, Nazari era considerato una «promessa» degli studi indologici e non già, come Formichi, uno studioso che aveva trasformato in realtà le speranze nutrite su di lui.

Al termine dei lavori della Commissione, dopo l'espletamento delle pratiche burocratiche necessarie, la promozione di Nazari all'ordinariato poteva essere decretata il 19 novembre 1905 e avere corso dal 1° dicembre successivo (Bollettino 1906, 7; Annuario UniPa 1905-06, 18).

si debba negare» la promozione. L'unico parere espresso non 'per negazione' è quello di Fumi che tuttavia accenna alle «migliori speranze» promesse da Nazari per la sua attività scientifica futura.

97 Nei giudizi dei commissari, così come nella relazione finale della Commissione, torna più volte l'aggettivo «diligente» per descrivere i lavori di Nazari che appaiono pertanto privi di quell'originalità attesa dallo studioso.

98 A proposito della *Bhagavadgītā* veniva inoltre notata l'errata declinazione al maschile del titolo del saggio pubblicato nella *Rivista filosofica*: su questo si veda quanto Nazari avrebbe scritto nell'«Avvertenza» alla traduzione successiva: «Benché comunemente si dica 'Il Bhagavadgîta', tuttavia per maggiore esattezza qui scriviamo 'La Bhagavadgîta', perché mai un Indiano, pensando ad Upanisad femminile, disse il titolo del sacro dialogo al maschile» (1904a, VIII).

5 Conclusioni

La ricostruzione delle vicende legate ai lavori della Commissione che si trovò a esaminare le domande di promozione all'ordinariato di Formichi e Nazari consente non soltanto di gettare luce, in maniera inedita, su un particolare momento dell'itinerario biografico e intellettuale dei due studiosi ma altresì, come si è tentato di mostrare, di ampliare lo sguardo al percorso complessivo che entrambi dovettero affrontare prima di ottenere la cattedra universitaria, aggiungendo nuovi elementi e materiali non noti per intenderne le biografie complessive. Il diverso spessore scientifico dei due studiosi permette inoltre di confrontare i differenti giudizi stilati da alcuni tra i massimi indianisti e glottologi dell'epoca e in parte di comprendere, seppure con tutte le cautele dovute alle circostanze nelle quali i pareri vennero redatti e la conseguente parzialità, la ricezione che venne riservata ai loro lavori indologici e linguistici, così come di entrare nel vivo del dibattito scientifico coevo e di coglierne alcune tendenze, per esempio quelle in materia di traduzione. Di fatto, il percorso scientifico successivo dei due studiosi rappresenta l'inveramento delle conclusioni a cui erano giunti i commissari: alla brillante carriera scientifica di Formichi, non disgiunta da ruoli accademici di prestigio ottenuti anche, ma non soltanto, in virtù della propria adesione al fascismo[99] e da numerosi legami con la comunità scientifica internazionale,[100] fa da contraltare quella di Nazari che non sarebbe andata oltre le «promesse di progredire» nel campo indologico dal momento che i suoi studi, fatta forse eccezione per due brevi note ermeneutiche sul *Ṛgveda* date alle stampe nel 1913 nella *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* (Nazari 1913a; 1913b), non si sarebbero punto dedicati più convintamente all'indianistica, come invece auspicava la relazione conclusiva del 1905, e la sua attività sarebbe rimasta relegata a quella della cattedra palermitana. La differente incisività dei due studiosi nella storia dell'indianistica successiva è del resto testimoniata, nel caso di Nazari, dallo scarso numero di allievi che diventeranno a loro volta noti accademici – fa eccezione Antonino Pagliaro che seguì i suoi corsi di sanscrito e glottologia a Palermo prima di trasferirsi a studiare a Firenze (De

99 Da alcuni documenti conservati nel fascicolo personale di Formichi risulta per esempio che nel 1917 lo studioso venne «chiamato a far parte dell'Ufficio Notizie» del Sottosegretariato di Stato per la propaganda all'estero e per la stampa, cf. ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Decreto del Sottosegretariato di Stato per la propaganda all'estero e per la stampa per l'incarico a C. Formichi, Roma, 3 nov. 1917. Tra gli incarichi di Formichi durante il fascismo va menzionata la vicepresidenza della Classe di Lettere della R. Accademia d'Italia.

100 Si possono menzionare, tra gli altri, i rapporti con l'*intelligencija* bengalese e con Tagore in particolare, da cui fu invitato a Śāntiniketan, come pure i legami con il mondo anglosassone testimoniati dal già citato invito a inaugurare la cattedra di Cultura italiana di Berkeley.

Mauro 2014) – contrapposto alla vera e propria scuola a cui Formichi, similmente al proprio maestro Kerbaker, sarebbe stato in grado di dar vita; oltre agli allievi degli anni bolognesi e pisani, su cui si è avuto modo di soffermarsi, non sono difatti da dimenticare quelli successivi al trasferimento a Roma del 1913 (Formichi sarebbe rimasto sulla cattedra di Sanscrito fino al collocamento a riposo nel 1941, tenendo per incarico quella di Lingua inglese)[101] e, tra questi, due importanti studiosi del Novecento, Tucci e Vittore Pisani (1899-1990), a loro volta maestri di numerosi allievi rispettivamente a Roma e a Milano.

Più in generale, la ricostruzione di quel particolare momento rappresentato dai lavori della Commissione incaricata di valutare le richieste di promozione all'ordinariato di Formichi e Nazari rende possibile muovere oltre i singoli itinerari biografici e scientifici dei due studiosi per addentrarsi nelle vicende che caratterizzarono la storia dell'indianistica al volgere del secolo. In questo senso, come si è scritto nell'introduzione e si è cercato di mostrare nei paragrafi successivi, gli atti concorsuali legati alla promozione dei due professori straordinari costituiscono una spia emblematica in grado di segnalare non soltanto aspetti specifici della storia della disciplina e, più complessivamente, dello stato di tali studi in quel particolare momento, ma altresì di cogliere alcune delle dinamiche dello sviluppo successivo dell'indianistica italiana.

6 Appendice documentaria

6.1 «Giudizi dati dai Commissari (per il prof. Formichi)»

I. *Giudizio stilato da Fausto Gherardo Fumi*[102]

Giudizio sul Prof. Formichi

Il dr. Carlo Formichi, nominato prof. straordinario di Sanscrito nell'Università di Pisa nel concorso del 1901, ha largamente mantenuto le speranze che sin d'allora aveva fatto concepire. L'opera sua di sagace e cauto interprete dei testi indiani, dei quali ha fatto particolare oggetto di studii i politici e gli etici, è manifesta nella continuazione della versione commentata del Nītisāra di Kāmandaki. In qualche punto può dissentirsi dalla sua interpretazione; ma l'insieme del

101 Sul trasferimento a Roma di Formichi, non privo di alcune difficoltà, cf. ACS, MPI, b. 23, fasc. Formichi, Estratto del verbale della seduta della Facoltà di Filosofia e Lettere della R. Università degli Studi di Roma del 13 nov. 1913.

102 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Giudizio sul Prof. Formichi stilato dal commissario F.G. Fumi, Roma, 10 ott. 1905.

lavoro compiuto rivela una profonda conoscenza della lingua e della cultura indiane. Altri suoi scritti posteriori al concorso del '901 ('Somadeva e la novella del Vetāla' e le due prolusioni 'Il sanscrito' e 'Il popolo inglese ecc.') non aggiungono nulla al merito del sanscritista, ma confermano le buone qualità dell'uomo colto. Ciò che costituisce un gran merito del Formichi è lo zelo mirabile che ha mostrato nel suo insegnamento e l'ottima riuscita dei suoi scolari, già noti per buone pubblicazioni. Credo quindi che il prof. dott. Carlo Formichi meriti per ogni riguardo la promozione a Prof. Ordinario di Sanscrito.
Roma, 10 ottobre 1901 Fausto Gherardo Fumi

II. *Giudizio stilato da Paolo Emilio Pavolini*[103]

I titoli presentati dal prof. Carlo Formichi sono scarsi di numero: la continuazione e la fine della versione del Nītisāra di Kāmandaki (dal IX al XX capitolo), brevi indagini sulla forma indiana della "Leggenda di S. Elisabetta", una elegante lettura sulle "Novelle del Vetāla", una prolusione sul "Sanscrito considerato dal punto di vista della lingua e della letteratura". Nel tradurre il Nītisāra, tien conto delle varianti e della esegesi del principale commentatore, ricorrendo anche a giudiziose e sagaci emendazioni proprie: i termini tecnici, e le particolarità del linguaggio giuridico, hanno in lui un interprete quasi sempre chiaro e fedele. Ma accanto alla produzione scientifica, sta, veramente cospicua e feconda di ottimi resultati, la sua attività didattica. Tanto i lavori pubblicati da' suoi alunni in questi ultimi anni, quanto il numero delle ore da lui consacrate all'insegnamento, attestano il molto zelo suo e l'attenzione rivolta costantemente ai differenti domini dell'indologia.

Considerando l'insieme dell'opera di lui, il sottoscritto non può che ritenerlo degnissimo della promozione a professore ordinario.
P.E. Pavolini

III. *Giudizio stilato da Michele Kerbaker*[104]

Giudizio del Commissario Prof. M. Kerbaker sul concorrente Dott. Carlo Formichi.

Titoli scientifici.

I titoli scientifici del Dott. Formichi, posteriori alla sua nomina a straordinario, non sono molti, ma tali da attestare pienamente la ma-

103 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Giudizio sul Prof. C. Formichi stilato dal commissario P.E. Pavolini, [Roma, 10 ott. 1905].

104 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Giudizio sul Prof. C. Formichi stilato dal commissario M. Kerbaker, Roma, 11 ott. 1905.

turità del suo ingegno e la serietà dei suoi studî, continuati con zelo e costanza esemplari.

Fu da lui proseguita e condotta a termine la traduzione e il commento critico del Nītisāra di Kāmandaki, mediante la collazione dei diversi codici, nella quale molte e non lievi difficoltà erano a superate, stante le non poche varianti e i parecchi errori del testo.

Siffatta traduzione, fedele ad un tempo ed accuratissima quanto alla forma, offre un prezioso contributo alla storia della scienza politica degli antichi Indiani, alla quale il Formichi da qualche tempo attende.

Egli, infatti, si dichiara pronto ad esibire alla commissione il manoscritto della 2ª parte del lavoro, di cui la 1ª parte fu da lui pubblicata pochi anni addietro, col titolo «Gli Indiani e la loro scienza politica».

E si fece pur vivo con diversi scritti di occasione riguardanti la letteratura dell'India e argomenti relativi alla medesima, quali: Il poeta Somadeva e le novelle del Vetāla, Il paggio di S. Elisabetta. Contributo allo studio delle tradizioni popolari. "Prolusioni lette nella R. Università di Pisa"

Il Formichi, nutrito com'è di larga cultura storica e filosofica, anche in questi lavori di più lieve fatica sa accoppiare l'acume del ricercatore storico e l'esattezza del filologo.

Fu invitato dal Prof. H. Jacobi a collaborare alla edizione critica del Mahābhārata.

Titoli didattici

Molta e special lode merita il Formichi per l'operosità spiegata nei quattro anni del suo straordinariato, il quale seguì ai tre anni d'insegnamento del sanscrito nell'Università di Bologna come privato docente e in quella di Pisa come incaricato.

Egli fece sempre due corsi uno grammaticale e preparatorio e l'altro superiore per l'interpretazione dei testi; ciascuno di 3 ore alla settimana.

Dell'importanza e utilità di questi corsi è facile formarsi un'idea leggendo l'indice particolareggiato delle lezioni, che va unito ai suoi titoli.

Così, a parlare soltanto del corso superiore, troviamo che nell'anno 1901-02 attese ad interpretare il Meghadūta, in una col commento di Mallinâtha, facendo inoltre un quadro storico della letteratura dell'India ed una larga esposizione del sistema Sānkhya. Nell'anno 1902-03 fece argomento del suo 2° Corso l'interpretazione della Sānkhya Kārikā, col commento di Vāc'aspati Miçra, confrontato passo a passo con quello di Gauḍapâda. Nell'anno 1903-04 interpretò la Bhagavadgitā, accompagnando l'interpretazione con opportuni excursus nel campo della filosofia indiana Sānkhya, Yoga e Vedānta.

Il numero delle lezioni di ogni suo corso scolastico sorpassa il cento.

Non è maraviglia se il Formichi ponendo così solide basi e dando così largo sviluppo all'insegnamento della filologia sanscrita abbia

potuto formare a Pisa una vera scuola, secondo che è attestato dai bravi alunni che ha prodotti. Si sono infatti segnalati con pregevoli pubblicazioni, tra gli scolari del Formichi il Dott. F. Belloni-Filippi, il Dott. V. Rocca e il Dott. Franzò; e i primi due hanno già conseguita la libera docenza in sanscrito.

Il Prof. Deussen che nell'a. 1903 visitò la scuola del Formichi ebbe a dichiarare la sua più viva soddisfazione pei risultati da essa ottenuti, non punto inferiori a quelli delle scuole tedesche.

Né vuolsi dimenticare che il Formichi, oltre al corso universitario, fece quello che si suole chiamare in Germania corso privatissimo, accogliendo in casa i suoi alunni e lavorando con essi, ogni volta che occorresse, parecchie ore al giorno.

In considerazione dei fatti sovra esposti io credo che il Dott. Carlo Formichi sia degnissimo della promozione all'Ordinariato nell'insegnamento del Sanscrito.
Roma – 11 ottobre 1905

M. Kerbaker

IV. *Giudizio stilato da Emilio Teza*[105]

Più facile è il giudizio sugli scritti del Formichi a chi lo conosca, vedendo subito l'ingegno vivo dell'uomo, la prudenza nelle ricerche e la nobiltà dell'animo; ma mi ristringerò a quello che ho sotto gli occhi.

La versiòne del Nîtisâra non può dirsi perfetta, per le difficoltà intrinseche di aforismi che, nella brevità, danno luogo ad interpretazioni svariate; ma la maniera dell'intenderli, secondo il Formichi, è sempre ragionata, e tale da reggere anche a paragone di versioni che se ne scostino. Se l'europeo ad ogni parola nostrana non può vedere tutto quello che nella sua vede e sente l'indiano, non si può farne colpa a chi è costretto ad allargare e restringere quello che non è frutto dei nostri ingegni, delle nostre abitudini, delle nostre istituzioni. Conchiudo dicendo che è pregevole il lavoro; che per una piccola parte soltanto poteva aiutare il F. un interprete potente come è il raccoglitore degli Indische Sprüche: e che troppo tardi venne a luce l'altra versione di tutto il trattatello, quella inglese del Dutt, così che il F. andò più libero per conto suo.

Quanto a tener conto, secondo la legge, anche dell'attività didattica, questa è dimostrata nel nostro indologo dall'esser prodigo suo ad educare giovani che gareggiano felicemente col loro maestro.

Pare a me che meriti il F. di essere promosso al grado di professore ordinario.

E. Teza

105 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Giudizio sul Prof. C. Formichi stilato dal commissario E. Teza, [Roma, 10 ott. 1905].

V. *Giudizio stilato da Ernesto Giacomo Parodi*[106]

I titoli presentati dal prof. Formichi in appoggio della sua domanda di promozione ad ordinario sono tali da apparire anche ad uno non specialista della materia più che sufficienti ad un giudizio favorevole, sia per la loro varietà sia pel merito intrinseco di ciascuno. Si aggiunga che a studii accurati e scientifici egli sa dare, quando sia opportuno, forma piacevole ed elegante, così da renderli accessibili ad ogni persona colta; come può riconoscersi nella sua Prolusione sul "Sanscrito considerato dal punto di vista della lingua e della letteratura", e nella bella conferenza sulle "Novelle del Vetāla". Anche del suo insegnamento, a giudicare dai frutti che ha dato, non si può pensare che un gran bene; e d'altra parte sono concordi le testimonianze che lo affermano pieno di zelo e veramente proficuo.

Per questi motivi, ritengo il Prof. Formichi ben degno della promozione ad ordinario.
Roma 12 ottobre 1905

Prof. E.G. Parodi

6.2 «Giudizi dati dai Commissari (per il prof. Nazari)»

I. *Giudizio stilato da Fausto Gherardo Fumi*[107]

Roma, 10 ott. 1905

Il prof. Nazari, che s'era presentato nel 1901 a due concorsi per la Glottologia classica e pel Sanscrito, ottenne la eleggibilità in quest'ultimo con voti 41 su 50, e per questo ottenne la nomina di straordinario nella R. Università di Palermo. Alla predetta votaz. contribuirono non poco i suoi svariati lavori filologici e in ispecie quelli di glottologia e d'etimologia, i contributi ermeneutici umbri e l'utile manuale degli antichi linguaggi italiani; ma i lavori di vera indologia da sé soli non avrebbero consentito quei punti di merito (erano la Gramm. Cogli esercizj tradotti dal noto Leitfaden di Georg Bühler, un'acuta noticina sulla formula bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ e la versione dalle favole dello Hitopadeça). Dopo quattro anni presenta un sunto della dottrina filosofica della B.G. pubblicata nella Rivista di Filos. e la versione con note di questo episodio del Mahābhārata. E perciò solo su tal lavoro e sulla nota ermeneutica del Ṛgveda ai distici 8-9 dell'inno 41 I la Commissione è chiamata a giudicare.

106 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Giudizio sul Prof. C. Formichi stilato dal commissario E.G. Parodi, Roma, 12 ott. 1905.

107 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Giudizio sul Prof. O. Nazari stilato dal commissario F.G. Fumi, [Roma], 10 ott. 1905.

Il sunto su accennato ritrae con fedeltà la dottrina dell'episodio noto col nome Bhagavadgītā, secondo l'interpretazione che il N. ha poi pubblicato. Riservando a più sotto il mio parere su quest'ultima pubblicaz. credo poter dire del riassunto, che ben difficilm. i filosofi, profani al particolar concetto indiano della vita e del mondo, riusciranno a capire esattamente le dottrine metafisiche ed etiche che un ṛṣi pone in bocca a Kṛṣṇa per indurre Arjuna a liberarsi da vani scrupoli e a combattere. Il sunto è per un verso troppo minuzioso, per un altro verso troppo poco penetrativo e non sempre adatto ai cultori della filosofia, che non hanno attinto direttam. alle fonti originali indiane, nel caso nostro alla Bhagavadgitā.

Ma l'A. rinvia appunto alla sua versione di questa. Anzitutto riconosco che quasi sempre l'interpretaz. è corretta, anzi troppo letterale sin nei nomi proprj ed epiteti; ma ad un tempo io dubito che i lettori capiscano e gustino, in quella veste più adatta agli esordienti di sanscrito, la profondità geniale e originale del famoso episodio. Anche le note son più rivolte agli iniziati, che ai cultori di filosofia non esperti delle dottrine speciali dell'India antica.

La nota vedica è ben condotta sotto l'aspetto critico degli esegeti anteriori e offre un'interpretaz. plausibile, benché forse non definitiva.

In conclusione, tenuto conto dei buoni risultati didattici a me noti e dei nuovi lavori, che attestano continuità e progresso di studj e permettono migliori speranze, opino che si possa concedere al Prof. Nazari la promozione.

Fausto Gherardo Fumi

II. *Giudizio stilato da Michele Kerbaker*[108]

Giudizio del Commissario Prof. M. Kerbaker sul concorrente Dott. Oreste Nazari

Titoli scientifici.

Il Dott. Oreste Nazàri presenta come titoli scientifici pel pareggiamento: la traduzione della Bhagavadgitā che intitola Il canto divino. 2°. La concezione del Mondo secondo il Bhagavadgita (art. pubbl. nella Rivista filosofica del Prof. Cantoni). 3° Commento ai versi 8-9 dell'Inno I.41 del Rigveda.

Vuolsi lodare la diligenza posta dal Nazàri nel dare una traduzione fedele e possibilmente letterale del celebre carme filosofico. Non può però dirsi che colla sua pubblicazione abbia conseguito il fine d'interessare alla lettura del poetico e filosofico componimento le persone colte e profane alla filologia sanscrita. Egli non ha posta molta cura

108 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Giudizio sul Prof. O. Nazari stilato dal commissario M. Kerbaker, Roma, 11 ott. 1905.

a rendere il pensiero originale del poeta e filosofo indiano con quei termini più adatti ed efficaci della lingua italiana, che rispecchiassero chiaro, limpido, colorito e vigorosamente disegnato, come esso affaccia nel testo; a darci insomma una traduzione che fosse a un tempo interpretazione. La sua versione troppo letterale e direi scolastica non di rado ingenera dubbi ed equivoci in chi la legge, senza raffrontarla col testo. Qualche maggior accuratezza anche si sarebbe richiesta nel traduttore perché la forma assumesse un carattere più letterario e non offendesse talvolta il lettore colle asprezze inevitabili quando chi traduce mira a fare come un calco delle frasi testuali.

Una traduzione della Bhagavadgītā, fatta allo scopo di divulgarne la conoscenza tra le persone colte, richiedeva una introduzione la quale spiegasse il pensiero filosofico intorno a cui volge tutto il Carme e ne accennasse le attinenze con diversi sistemi speculativi dell'India. La mancanza di tale introduzione rende la lettura del libro assai difficile e poco o punto attraente. Il sopra mentovato articolo "La concezione del mondo secondo il Bhagavadgītā" è insufficiente a chiarire la genesi del nostro poema filosofico e lo svolgimento organico del pensiero speculativo nel medesimo. Può bene servire a un primo orientamento a chi si accinga a leggere la Bhagavadgītā, ma non già a far comprendere allo studioso la vastità e l'importanza delle questioni in essa trattate. Suppliscono in parte al difetto di una Introduzione le numerose note le quali mentre servono a chiarirne i luoghi più ardui ed oscuri attestano la varia e ben fondata dottrina del traduttore.

Titoli didattici

Duole di non trovare tra i titoli del Dott. Nazàri alcuna informazione intorno ai corsi da lui fatti nell'Università di Palermo. Però a chi conosce dai titoli, già da lui precedentemente presentati, pel Concorso alla cattedra di Storia comparata delle lingue classiche e di Sanscrito, quanto sia la sua preparazione e il suo sapere nella filologia indo-greco-italica non può dubitare che egli non sia in grado di sussidiare validamente il suo insegnamento della lingua sanscrita colla sua larga ed eletta erudizione glottologica.

Un breve saggio di ermeneutica vedica ci ha pure dato il Nazàri coll'interpretazione dei sopraccennati versi del Rigveda, che sono gli ultimi del primo Inno (agli Aditya), riportato dal Boehtlingk nella sua Crestomazia. Si tratta di una interpretazione congetturale (legittimata dalla difficoltà del passo, variamente inteso e interpretato dai Vedologi) sulla quale si potrebbero fare delle osservazioni, ma che è pur sempre plausibile, e certo ingegnoso.

Tutto considerato, credo che il Dott. Oreste Nazàri meriti la promozione all'ordinariato nell'insegnamento del Sanscrito.
Roma, 11 Ottobre 1905

M. Kerbaker

III. *Giudizio stilato da Paolo Emilio Pavolini*[109]

Scarse di numero sono le pubblicazioni presentate dal prof. Nazari: la traduzione annotata della Bhagavadgîtâ, un articolo intorno alla "Concezione del mondo" in questo medesimo poema, e una nota sopra un luogo vedico d'incerta interpretazione (RV I, 41, 8-9).

Nel primo di questi lavori, che è anche il più importante per la mole e per il contenuto, è da lodare la fedeltà scrupolosa del traduttore, tanto scrupolosa da sopprimere intieramente quel colorito artistico che, nel rendere un testo come la Bhagavadgītā, sarebbe stato desiderabile conservare almeno in parte. Un'introduzione, che desse ragione del carattere particolare del poema e delle varie dottrine religiose e filosofiche che in esso confluiscono; al che suppliscono, è vero, in gran parte le note, generalmente accurate ed esaurienti; e, nel pensiero del traduttore, anche l'opuscolo suddetto, che del poema illustra una delle concezioni fondamentali.

Considerando anche le pubblicazioni glottologiche che, in un campo affine, mostrano estese cognizioni di antichi dialetti greci e italici, non sembra al sottoscritto doversi negare al prof Nazari la promozione ad Ordinario.

P.E. Pavolini

IV. *Giudizio stilato da Emilio Teza*[110]

Per il D^{r}. Nazari devo tener conto, poi che si tratta di insegnamento del sànscrito, della nuova traduzione della Bh.Gîtâ. Vero è che, abbondando le traduzioni e i commenti, è più agevole il ripensare i vecchi pensieri degli indiani, ma appunto la durezza dello stile dimostra nell'autore un attento esame delle parole e dell'anima che è in loro. Pare a me che la fedeltà non dovesse togliere agilità, contemperando le due forme, del pensiero nazionale e di quello che è, da secoli, nostro, di gente europea. Un saggio di versioni da testi non da altri tentati, o la edizione di nuovi trattati, avrebbe avvalorata in me giudice la fede nelle conoscenze che ha il N. dell'indiano; ma veggo nelle note una bene ordinata scelta, e una somma di osservazioni sulla mitologia e sulle dottrine ariane, che fanno sperare un maestro efficace. Delle ricerche comparative sulle lingue non parlo, essendo esse, in questo caso utile corredo degli studi, ma non gli studi che si domandano.

Credo che non si debba negare al Nazari la promozione.

E. Teza

109 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Giudizio sul Prof. O. Nazari stilato dal commissario P.E. Pavolini, [Roma, 10 ott. 1905].

110 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Giudizio sul Prof. O. Nazari stilato dal commissario E. Teza, [Roma, 10 ott. 1905].

V. *Giudizio stilato da Ernesto Giacomo Parodi*[111]

Il prof. Nazari, che domanda la promozione ad ordinario, ha senza dubbio buona cognizione della lingua sanscrita, e d'altra parte gli deve esser tenuto conto dell'amore che dimostra per gli studii glottologici, ottimo e quasi necessario compimento della preparazione d'un sanscritista. Benché sui suoi lavori di questo genere, che riguardano specialmente i dialetti italici, si possa trovar da ridire, nondimeno non se ne potrebbe disconoscere l'acume né, talvolta, i buoni risultati. Di lavori nuovi sulla lingua o la letteratura sanscrita non ne presenta veramente che uno, e in questo non mancano i difetti, anche gravi, a cominciare dalla forma medesima, poco felice. Ma neppur si può negare che questo lavoro sia una prova delle sue cognizioni della lingua e della mitologia indiana.

Tutto sommato, pare che si possa dare voto favorevole alla domanda del prof. Oreste Nazari.
Roma, 12 ottobre 1905

E.G. Parodi

6.3 Relazione conclusiva della Commissione

Relazione[112]

La Commissione eletta a giudicare i titoli scientifici e i meriti didattici dei due professori straordinarj di Sanscrito, D.r Carlo Formichi dell'Università di Pisa e D.re Oreste Nazari dell'Università di Palermo, i quali chiesero la promozione, compiuto il quadriennio, al grado di ordinarj, si costituì nel pomeriggio del 9 ottobre eleggendo Presidente il Prof. E. Teza e Relatore il Prof. F.G. Fumi. Dopo un esame minuzioso dei titoli e larghe discussioni in 4 sedute successive pervenne unanime al giudizio che qui brevemente si riassume.

1) Pel D.re Prof. C. Formichi.

Le buone speranze, che questo giovane studioso aveva fatto concepire sin dai primi studj di Sanscrito e sin dalla sua vittoria nel concorso pel premio senese Gori-Feroni, si son mutate nel quadriennio d'insegnamento universitario in belle e sicure realtà. Nel Formichi s'accoppiano e gareggiano la severa dottrina e la coltura geniale, e l'una e l'altra son vivificate da una passione potente per l'oggetto dei suoi studj e da uno zelo esemplare per la sua scuola e pei suoi

111 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Giudizio sul Prof. O. Nazari stilato dal commissario E.G. Parodi, Roma, 12 ott. 1905.

112 ACS, MPI, b. 48, fasc. Formichi, Relazione conclusiva della Commissione, Roma, [11-12 ottobre 1905].

alunni. Nuovi frutti della dottrina sono la versione del Nītisāra di Kāmandaki, nella quale è tenuto conto delle variae sectiones, e del principale commentatore indiano, pur con giudiziose emendazioni proprie e con un intuito interpretativo quasi sempre felice. Confermano la varia e severa attitudine scientifica i nuovi scritti minori sulla forma indiana della 'leggenda di S.ta Elisabetta', una bella lettura 'sulle novelle della Vetālapañcavĩmçatikā' e due ben nutrite prolusioni 'sul Sanscrito' e sull''Inglese'. Dello zelo didattico e della passione pei suoi studj che il Formichi riesce a comunicare altrui son prova le numerose lezioni debitamente notate nei registri universitarj e la salda preparazione dei suoi alunni già conosciuti favorevolmente dagl'indianisti. Se a questi meriti di studio e d'insegnamento s'aggiungono la modestia della vita e la nobiltà dell'animo, non sarà esagerazione giudicare il Formichi un vero modello di maestro. La Commissione pertanto propone a pieni voti unanimi che il D.re Carlo Formichi sia promosso Prof. Ordinario di Sànscrito nella R. Università di Pisa.

2) Pel D.re Prof. O. Nazári

Il Prof. Nazári, dopo un lungo tirocinio nelle scuole classiche medie e non poche diligenti pubblicazioni filologiche e glottologiche nel terreno greco-italico, si presentò nel '901 ai due concorsi per la Glottologia classica e pel Sanscrito ottenendo la eleggibilità in entrambi e segnatamente pel Sanscrito con punti 41 su 50; e per tal votazione fu nominato Prof. straordinario di Sanscrito e incaricato di Glottologia nell'Università di Palermo. Lo zelo e l'efficacia del suo insegnamento, in ispecie pel Sanscrito, non sono attestati da documenti ufficiali, ma sono favorevolmente noti in via privata. Le pubblicazioni indologiche posteriori al concorso su accennato sono: La concezione del mondo secondo il (sic) Bhagavadgītā (nella Rivista Filosofica); la traduzione con un sunto del Mahābhārata e con note del predetto episodio; e una nota ermeneutica al Ṛgveda I 41 distici 8 e 9. Il secondo lavoro è naturalmente il più importante per la mole e il contenuto non solo, ma più ancora per la fedeltà anche troppo letterale della traduzione e per le ricche e sane annotazioni. L'esperto sanscritista appare in tutto il lavoro; ma lo scrupoloso traduttore ha soppresso quasi intieramente l'interprete e in cambio del colorito artistico aleggiante in quell'episodio offre allo studioso della filosofia antica un travestimento incolore e spesso sgraziato, che non è fatto per allettare i profani. Cosicché anche il sunto che illustra una delle concezioni fondamentali della Bhagavadgītā non sarà ben capito dai filosofi né farà loro comprendere l'originale vastità delle questioni in essa trattate. Ma questo difetto di gusto e d'arte nulla toglie al valore oggettivo dell'esperto conoscitore della lingua e della letteratura indiane. La noticina ermeneutica ai due distici del Ṛgveda è ben motivata e conduce ad un senso plausibile, se non definitivo. Il Prof. Nazari, valente filologo e glottologo nel campo greco-italico, promette senza dubbio di progredire sempre più nel campo dell'Indologia, al-

la quale intende ormai dedicarsi.

Per tali considerazioni la Commissione è d'avviso che non si debba negare la promozione a Prof. Ordinario di Sanscrito nell'Università di Palermo chiesta dal Prof. straord. D.re Oreste Nazari.

M. Kerbaker E. Teza, presidente
P.E. Pavolini F.G. Fumi relatore
E.G. Parodi

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North of Dai: Armed Communities and Military Resources in Late Medieval China (880-936)

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Abstract This article discusses various aspects of the formation of the Shatuo as a complex constitutional process from armed mercenary community to state founders in the waning years of Tang rule and the early tenth century period (880-936). The work focuses on the territorial, economic, and military aspects of the process, such as the strategies to secure control over resources and the constitution of elite privileges through symbolic kinship ties. Even as the region north of the Yanmen Pass (Daibei) remained an important pool of recruits for the Shatuo well into the tenth century, the Shatuo leaders struggled to secure control of their core manpower, progressively moving away from their military base of support, or losing it to their competitors.

Keywords Shatuo. Tang-Song transition. Frontier clients. Daibei. Khitan-led Liao.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Geography of the Borderland and Migrant Forces. – 3 Feeding the Troops: Authority and the Control of Military Resources. – 4 Li Keyong's Client Army: Daibei in the Aftermath of the Datong Military Insurrection (883-936). – 5 Concluding Remarks.

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1 Introduction

For most of the second half of the ninth and early tenth century, the borderland north of the Yanmen Pass 雁門 known as Daibei 代北 ('north of Dai', present-day Inner Mongolia and northern Shanxi), was dominated by armed communities that depended on the Tang 唐 (618-907) military system and rose through its ranks. The core of these groups were heterogeneous migrant military forces, mostly of Central Asian extraction, that had settled in Daibei at the turn of the ninth century and came to compete for control over the military resources and transportation routes of the sparsely populated northern border zone. The weakness and corruption endemic to the Tang military and administrative system exacerbated this competition and favoured the Shatuo 沙陀 leadership's growth into a territorially rooted power, successful enough to aspire to founding a state.[1] This paper discusses some of the constitutional aspects of this growth, with a focus on the events that followed a major military mutiny at the border in 878 intended to gain control of the transportation of goods to the northern garrisons. Amid the unrest, the Shatuo leader Li Keyong 李克用 (856-908) emerged as an authoritative commander, and his military retinue expanded into a new and larger army. I describe in detail the events leading to the unrest in another article (2020). In the present work I limit myself to discussing the consequences that unfolded in the aftermath of the unrest, leading to the growth of an enlarged and heterogeneous client army under the leadership of Li Keyong. This powerful new armed community identified as Shatuo after its chief commander. The term Shatuo has long been treated as a fully-fledged ethnic term designating a Turkic group characterised by defined biological and cultural ties. While the leading members of the Shatuo were identified as being Turkic, a considerable part of the group consisted in a highly heterogeneous elements from different Inner Asian extraction. Moving beyond the traditional definition, in the research work that I am currently carrying out I seek alternatives that can account for the social, economic, and political dynamics of group formation, and I argue that the term Shatuo might have functioned as reward for service for meritorious military men.[2]

1 For a discussion on the early migration and origin narratives of the Shatuo see Atwood 2010; Barenghi 2019.

2 This article is part of a broader research project that will result in a monographic study on the formation of the Shatuo from mercenaries to state founders as a constitutional process, and on the more general process of social mobility and identity formation in military communities throughout the Tang-Song transition. The project is financially supported by a two-year starting grant awarded by Ca' Foscari University. The theoretical framework is inspired by Herwig Wolfram's notion of the formation of medieval European migrant "people in arms" as a constitutional process that "meant pri-

In the aftermath of the 878-border unrest, Li Keyong's growing authority intensified a competition with Sogdian and Tuyuhun 吐谷渾 military leaders.[3] The latter both enjoyed only weak support from the Tang court and found stronger patrons in the governors of the eastern provinces. This paper argues that even though the region north of the Yanmen Pass remained an important reservoir of recruits and military support for Li Keyong and the Shatuo regimes well into the tenth century,[4] the Shatuo leaders struggled to secure control of their core armed followers, progressively alienating their military base of support, or losing it to their competitors. When the Khitan (Qidan 契丹) emerged on the political stage, the Shatuo's stronger competitors from the northeast, and Li Keyong's rival Yelü Abaoji 耶律阿保機 (posthumously known as Taizu 太祖, r. 907-926) proved his authority through success in battle, many of the border soldiers who followed Li Keyong were lured away by the prospect of greater reward. The newly established Khitan-led Liao empire 遼 (907-1125) would go on to take possession not only of manpower, but also of land and entire administrative units,[5] taking hold of the territory north of the Yanmen Pass and transforming it into a metropolitan region of the new empire that will become the Western Capital 西京 (Datong 大同) in the mid-eleventh century. The Liao can be said to have succeeded where the Shatuo leaders failed: in transforming armed communities into an integrated part of a new bureaucratic state.

In the eleventh century, the loss of northern Hebei and the land north of the Yanmen Pass to the Liao became the subject of heated debates among Song policymakers, as well as the cause of several military and diplomatic disputes between the Song and the Liao courts over the definition of the border line.[6] To the Song, the lost land also became a symbol of the Shatuo rulers' wrongdoing and weaknesses, the latter tendentially intrinsic to their 'barbarian' origins. This standpoint reflects the political culture of the eleventh century, but it tells us little about the real historical context of the events. This

marily the assembling of highly diverse groups under the leadership of 'known' families", and thus the understanding of the formation of a "people" as a complex political, military, and social constitutional process (1997, 8).

3 On the Tuyuhun see Molè 1970.

4 In the last decades of the ninth century, Li Keyong ruled Hedong as military governor and prince of Jin 晉王. Subsequently Li Keyong's son and adopted son ruled as first and second sovereign of the Later Tang 後唐 (923-937), a regional regime that extended over the Central Plain. The ruling clans of the Later Jin 後晉 (936-947) and Later Han 後漢 (947-951), the two short-lived regional regimes that followed the Later Tang, also originated from the same Daibei military hub identified as Shatuo.

5 These administrative units are the well-known sixteen northern prefectures of Hedong and Hebei ('the sixteen prefectures between Yan and Yun' 燕雲十六州) that the Later Jin emperor Gaozu 高祖 (r. 936-42) ceded to the Khitan-led Liao in 936.

6 See Tackett 2008, 2017.

article endeavour to shed some light upon less studied aspects of the history of this region and of its military community in the late ninth and first decades of the tenth century.

Figure 1 Dabei, loosely based on Tan 1996

2 Geography of the Borderland and Migrant Forces

For centuries, the territory north of the Yanmen Pass had constituted a borderland between the Chinese central provinces and the nomadic polities of the steppe belt, characterised by a weak imperial presence and fluid alliances among heterogeneous groups in power. The Sanggan River 桑乾河 basin, delimited to the south by the Hengshan mountain range 橫山, had seen the growth of important urban centres over the centuries, first and foremost the capital of the Northern Wei 北魏 (386-534) dynasty, Pingcheng 平城.[7] North of Pingcheng, the Wei built a defensive line of garrisons (*beizhen* 北鎮) that extended from present-day Bayannur city in Inner Mongolia to present-day Zhangbei prefecture in Hebei.[8] In the late fourth century, the Northern Wei forcibly settled half a million people in the new capital and the surrounding garrisons, including a large number of seminomadic people from the western frontiers and the steppe region. Members of this seminomadic group were called 'new commoners' (*xinmin* 新

7 On Pingcheng as the capital of the Northern Wei see Lewis 2011, 114 ff., 281 fn. 59.

8 Wei 2019, 151.

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民)[9] and were likely to be subject to some form of levy. Local authorities struggled to control their movements and to limit their seasonal migration to the pastures beyond the desert. Indeed, the relationship between the local officials and the new settlers was far from peaceful, and on several occasions armed groups rebelled against the Tabghach (Tuoba 拓跋) authority, only to be separated from their fellows and relocated to other provinces as a punishment (Barenghi 2018, 30 ff.).

After the capital was moved further south to Luoyang 洛陽 in 493, the garrisons became dominated by armed groups of heterogeneous extraction formed of Tabghach leaders, local officials, convicts and Central Asian chieftains.[10] A series of mutinies and military rebellions, most notably the rebellion of 523, enlarged the numbers in these military groups and eventually caused the Tabghach empire to split into two short-lived regimes, the Eastern Wei 東魏 (534-550) and Western Wei 西魏 (535-557).[11]

From the end of the sixth through the beginning of the seventh century, the region of Daibei formed a frontier buffer zone between the First Türk Empire (552-630) and the short-lived northern regime of the Northern Qi 北齊 (550-577). Fluid allegiances and short-lived patronage relations characterised the area during this time (Dien 2019).

The Sui 隋 (581-618) rulers continued the Northern Wei practice of building walled towns for seminomadic settlers, in this case for Turkic settlers (Skaff 2004, 117-53; *Suishu* 1973, 84.1873). About three hundred *li* north of Shuozhou 朔州, northeast of the Yellow River northern loop in what was then Dingxiang commandery 定襄郡,[12] the Sui court built the fortified cities of Dali 大利 and Jinhe 金河 for the Türks (*ZZTJ* 179.5572; Skaff 2004, 122). Several Sui officials sought the support of the Eastern Türks between 618 and 631 and were rewarded with the title of *qaghan*. It was indeed not unusual, as in the case of the local leader Liu Wuzhou 劉武周 (d. 620?), to claim both the position of Sui official and the title of *qaghan* (Drompp 2007, 189). Three years later, Chuluo 處羅 Qaghan (r. 619-20) installed in Dingxiang an heir to the Sui throne, Yang Zhengdao 楊政道, as Prince of Sui. With a retinue of several hundred thousand of armed men, Yang established an independent albeit short-lived government.[13]

9 *Weishu* 4.75.

10 For a look at the composition of these frontier gangs see the biography of Gao Huan 高歡 (496-547) in *Bei Qi shu*, 1.2; see also Dien 2019.

11 Pearce 2019, 178ff; Dien 1990.

12 The Dingxiang prefectural seat was subsequently moved farther south and renamed Yunzhong 雲中, while a Dingxiang county was created farther south, in Xinzhou 忻州 (*Zizhi tongjian* [1956], hereafter *ZZTJ* 193.6073).

13 These events are thoroughly discussed in Skaff 2004, 122.

Several permanent military garrisons were established in Daibei well into the Tang period, following the decay of the 'regimental headquarters' (*fu bing* 府兵) system of universal military service (Graff 2002, 189; see also Lewis 2009, 44 ff.) and its gradual replacement by regular standing armies (Twitchett 1963, 84 ff.; Graff 2002, 210 ff.). Long-term professional stationary troops were lured by the prospect of a series of advantages including high wages, exemption from tax, housing for their entourage, and allocations of arable land (Graff 2002, 205 ff.). Beginning in the Kaiyuan era 開元 (713-741), the garrisons fell under the supervision of a regional military governor who had his administrative headquarters in Taiyuan 太原 (renamed Beidu 北都 'northern capital' during Empress Wu Zetian's reign).[14] The governor had direct command over all the military jurisdictions and garrisons that stood in Hedong 河東, and according to the official figures controlled one of the largest armies in the Tang empire (Graff 2002, 210 ff.).

Daibei became impoverished and scarcely populated in the aftermath of the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion (755-763). Complete population figures for the three prefectures of Daibei, Yunzhou 雲州, Yuzhou 蔚州 and Shuozhou, date back to the census of 742, and no updated data are available for the ninth century; however, scattered references in the sources hint that the population decreased dramatically, a trend common to all of Northern China (see von Glahn 2015, 2010-11). In the Tianbao 天寶 era (742-756), the two counties of Shuozhou, Mayi 馬邑 and Shanyang 鄯陽, had boasted a combined population of slightly over twenty thousand people;[15] Shanyang was located about eighty *li* west of Mount Juzhu 句注. Some thirty *li* east of Shanyang county and 30 *li* west of the Sanggan River stood the fortifications of the Datong garrison 大同軍, the largest military garrison in northern Hedong; the county seat of Mayi was located inside the fortified city.[16] In the years 780 and 781, the military governor of Hezhong 河中, general Ma Sui 馬燧 (726-795), forced the Shuozhou prefectural seat to be moved to Mayi. In the census of 742 Mayi had registered more than six thousand households, whereas in the first two decades of the ninth century Mayi registered roughly seven hundred.[17]

Also known by its old name, Xingtang 興唐, Yuzhou was a prefectural seat situated south of the Sanggan River watershed and north-

14 *Yuanhe junxian tuzhi* 13.3a.

15 *Jiu Tang shu* (1975, hereafter *JTS*) 39.1487. The exact figures for the three prefectures reported by the dynastic histories are Yunzhou, 7,930; Yuzhou, 20,958; and Shuozhou, 24,533. See Skaff 2012, 315 ff.

16 *Yuanhe junxian tuzhi* 1933, 14.12a.

17 *Yuanhe junxian tuzhi* 14.10.

east of Yanmen Pass.[18] The New History of the Tang Dynasty (*Xin Tang shu* 新唐書, comp. 1060) reports that in 742 some thirty thousand people inhabited the three Yuzhou counties of Lingqiu 靈丘, Xingtang 興唐, and Feihu 飛狐. Several military garrisons surrounded Yuzhou: the Hengye garrison 橫野軍 to the northeast was moved to the Tiancheng garrison 天成軍in 758.[19] As for Yunzhou, it became a prefectural seat sometime in the first half of the Tang dynasty. Yunzhou stood on the old site of Pingcheng, the old capital of the Northern Wei. The Northern Wei and their successors the Northern Qi built segments of wall north of Pingcheng and fortifications all around the area. Wall remains were still visible in the late Tang period and were likely useful as territorial markers and defences.[20] The Turkic occupation caused Yunzhou to be abandoned as a prefectural seat for a time, its population forcibly moved to Shuozhou until the seat was restored in the Kaiyuan era.[21]

The Shatuo military units were not the first or only Central Asian military group to relocate from Guanzhong 關中 and the Hexi 河西 region to Daibei. By the end of the eighth century, migrant military groups agreed to resettlement that included prospects of finding employment as auxiliary units in the Tang provincial garrisons. According to the Old History of the Tang Dynasty (*Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書, comp. 945), units of Tibetan armed men that had helped the court to suppress Zhu Ci's 朱泚military rebellion (783-784) on the western frontier invaded the territories of Ling-Yan 靈鹽 in retaliation because they had not received the expected rewards for their military services.[22] Pressed by the Tibetan incursions, several Turkic (Qibi 契苾), Sogdian and Tuyuhun migrant military groups resettled in Daibei.[23]

Most of the groups resettled in the region of the upper Sanggan River, southwest of Yunzhou and north of Shuozhou. Around 809 the newly established military governor of Hedong, Fan Xichao 范希朝 (d. 814), resettled groups of Shatuo from the fortifications in Yanzhou 鹽州, south of the Ordos, into the upper Sanggan River basin. Shatuo mercenaries had a reputation as fierce but somewhat unreliable, warriors: initially recruited into Tang expeditionary troops against the rebellious An Lushan, they subsequently joined the Tibetan troops on the western frontier for a short period of time before being lured

18 *JTS* 39.1007.

19 *Xin Tang shu* 1975 (hereafter *XTS*) 39.1007.

20 On the Qi northern wall see Tackett 2008, 109.

21 *XTS* 39.1487.

22 This rebellion is also known as the Jing-Yuan 涇原 army mutiny (*JTS* 150.5249-50; Graff 2002; Nishimura 2016a).

23 The movement of migrant military forces to northern Hedong has been discussed in Barenghi 2020.

back into the Tang military. Fan Xichao selected the finest horsemen among them to create a Shatuo garrison on the upper Sanggan River. He also allocated settlement land north of Shuozhou for the rest of the Shatuo followers (Barenghi 2020).

The new settlers came to constitute a ready source of military recruits for the provincial armies and border garrisons in a period of a general shortage of manpower and a sparsely populated region where revenue collection yielded little. Units of armed men who had settled on Tang soil were broken up into small groups and recruited as auxiliary troops of the several provincial armies and garrisons. Units of Tuyuhun and Qibi are mentioned alongside the Shatuo units, to whose commander the former were probably subordinated.[24] Indeed, beginning in the 830s the Shatuo leaders came to exercise a certain degree of control over the Sogdian settlements on behalf of the Tang court, and plausibly over all of the Central Asian armed communities resettled in the region. When Zhuxie Zhiyi 朱邪執宜 (d. ca. 830s?) was appointed as commander of the Daibei expeditionary troops 代北行營招撫使, this Shatuo leader commanded a rather small but very efficient expeditionary troop of three thousand soldiers (Moribe 2005, 243-54; Barenghi 2020).

In the late sixties of the ninth century, the Daibei expeditionary army composed of Tuyuhun, Shatuo, and Qibi units helped the Sogdian general Kang Chengxun 康承訓 (809-74) to suppress the military mutiny led by Pang Xun 龐勛 (d. 869) in the region of Xuzhou 徐州 (present-day Jiangsu). The disruption generated by the mutineers and their unbridled suppression by the Tang expeditionary troops caused severe problems and blocked the system of transporting goods on the Grand Canal (Twitchett 1963, 96).

The suppression of the mutiny was an absolute triumph for the subordinate commanders of the expeditionary army. The Tuyuhun leader Helian Duo 赫連鐸 (d. 894) would emerge from this military campaign as a successful commander and would be rewarded with an important military position in the Zhenwu 振武 garrison.[25] In a similar manner, his future rival, the Shatuo commander Zhuxie Chixin 朱邪赤心 (d. 887), would be named military governor of Datong 大同. Helian Duo would then resurface at the end of the seventies in support of the Tang court against the military rebellion led by Zhuxie Chixin, now Li Guochang 李國昌 (d. 887), and his son Li Keyong.[26] I have discussed the dynamics of this rebellion in detail in another article (Barenghi 2020). In this paper I analyse some aspects of the context in which the rebellion took place, as well as its long-term conse-

24 *XTS* 177.5284-85.

25 *Wudai huiyao* 28.10b; *ZZTJ* 251.8131.

26 *JTS* 19b.700; *Jiu Wudai shi* (hereafter JWDS) 74.910.

quences for the collapse of the northern frontier and the transfer of Daibei to the administrative jurisdiction of the Khitan-led Liao. The next section demonstrates how Li Keyong's military retinue grew into a new enlarged army of heterogeneous composition in the aftermath of the unrest at the border. His growing power intensified a competition with Sogdian and Tuyuhun leaders to control transportation routes and resources so to secure loyal military followers. The Tuyuhun leaders, weakly supported by the Tang court, found stronger patrons in the governors of the eastern provinces. The region north of the Yanmen Pass remained an important reservoir of recruits and military support for Li Keyong and the Shatuo regimes well into the tenth century; however, the Shatuo leaders struggled to secure control of their core armed followers, progressively moving away from their base of support or losing soldiers to their competitors.

3 Feeding the Troops: Authority and the Control of Military Resources

As mentioned above, the sources provide only approximate figures and almost no detail concerning the composition of the new settlements. Indeed, the relocation of large numbers of people would presumably have required a considerable logistical effort. It is likely that the transfer was entrusted entirely to the local administration and that the reports on these operations did not survive.

The new Daibei settlers constituted a large pool of fighting men for the Hedong provincial armies. Su Hang distinguishes different periods of development in the use of foreign (*fan* 蕃) armed units: in the early Tang period, chieftains of Central Asian seminomadic polities or confederations were enlisted by the Tang armies as troop commanders, yet their followers or family units did not constitute the core of their armies, and most importantly were not organised into long-term standing troops on the frontier. Even when groups of armed followers were enrolled as part of the army, Su notes, they were strictly framed within the army system and separated from their leader. Through the second half of the Tang dynasty, Central Asian chieftains not only became commanders of frontier armies, but they also had direct command of their own armed followers and clans, to whom they were tied through kinship. As highlighted by Su, the leaders of these new migrant forces were not only offered the possibility of a military career in the ranks of the Tang armies, but their armed followers became the core force of those armies. These commanders were subordinated to the Tang provincial governors, and the terms of the patron-client relationship between the two parties entailed military obligations rewarded with military titles and honours as well as compensation paid to individual soldiers (Su 2010, 268). These terms

were constantly renegotiated under the ever-present threat of mutiny or desertion to armed competitors.[27]

The military retinues and their respective Tuyuhun, Sogdian, and Shatuo leaders not only guarded the frontier garrisons, but for decades made up the core force of the expeditionary troops (*xingying* 行營), special army corps that could intervene militarily outside the jurisdiction of the province where they served as standing armies.[28] The frequent unrests caused severe backups in the river- and canal-based transport of goods to the capital region and the northern garrisons, as in the case of Pang Xun's mutiny. Indeed, putting down such rebellions was a chance for the commanders to extend their control over goods transport, as well as to reinforce the loyalty of their military followers by rewarding them with the spoils of combat.

After the An Lushan rebellion, and for most of the ninth century, the Tang court failed to extract enough tax revenue from the sparse population in Daibei and most of Hedong to cover the costs of the standing armies in this area (von Glahn 2015, 215). The maintenance of the large northern military garrisons thus depended almost exclusively on the transport of grain and commodities from the southern provinces through the system of canals that connected the Yellow River to the Yangzi valley. During the eighth century, special plenipotentiary commissioners for land and water transport 水路轉運使 named by the Tang court supervised the transport and administration of goods in transit from the southern provinces to the corridor between the two capitals, Luoyang 洛陽 and Chang'an. They also supervised goods going through Liangzhou 涼州 that were headed to the military jurisdictions of the north-western territories.[29] The system of canals facilitated south-north communication, and yet the transport of bulk commodities was problematic for many reasons, including geography. Major problems included frequent military unrest near transport hubs, which blocked the flow of goods, and widespread corruption among the commissioners in charge of supervising the transport of goods and the collection of tax revenues.[30] By the end of the eighth century, the court had appointed a Daibei plenipotentiary commissioner to supervise water and land transport as well as the military colonies 代北營田水運使. The few references to goods transport and tax revenues in the sources are cases of mal-

27 On military followers and leaders see also Standen 2018.

28 On the function and history of expeditionary troops in the second half of the Tang dynasty see Graff 2002, 191 ff. and Hu 2019.

29 Arakawa, Hansen 2013, 245-61; von Glahn 2015, 211. On the system of transport see also Twitchett 1963.

30 On the widespread problem of corruption among officials in charge of transport see Twitchett 1963, 95-6.

function and corruption: the first mention of a Daibei commissioner dates to the beginning of Xianzong's 憲宗 reign (r. 806-820) and refers to a possible case of bribery. Around 811, the Revenue Department opened an investigation concerning a violation of fiscal law, conducted by the vice director of the Revenue Department at the time, Lu Tan 盧坦 (748-817). The case allegedly occurred in the last years of Dezong's 德宗 reign (r. 780-805), when Xue Jian 薛謇, a former Daibei commissioner and experienced horse breeder with several hundred horses on his farm, allegedly bribed the powerful eunuch Xue Yingzhen 薛盈珍 with a number of fine unregistered horses. According to the investigation, the bribery would have brought Xue Jian and his kin privileges and career advancement. The sources speak of an attempt by the court to interfere with the case, but do not report the outcome of the investigation.[31]

The Tang court subsequently named Han Chonghua 韓重華 as the new Daibei commissioner. On behalf of the court, Han supervised an area that extended from Daibei to the land north of the Yellow River northern loop, including the frontier garrisons and fortifications of the Central Fortress for Receiving Surrenders 中受降城 (see map), at the old fortification of Tiande 天德 and Zhenwu 振武. Han was responsible for overseeing agriculture for the sustenance of the garrisons, the purchase of grain at fair market prices, and water and land transportation 振武、京西營田、和糴、水運使.[32] The court's appointment of a commissioner to supervise the new military colonies was an attempt to exert direct control over the market for military supplies and deter speculation.

To overcome the problems of inefficiency and the malfunctioning of the military supply system, moreover, the court began endorsing plans to seize abandoned or untilled agricultural land and transform it into farmland to sustain the garrisons in the region between Zhenwu and Yunzhou. As an example, when severe famines hit the military garrison in Zhenwu in 815, Chancellor Li Jiang 李絳 (764-830) requested that farmlands be opened to sustain the garrisons, in order to "conserve expenditures on the tax bureau's transportation of grain by water and avoid fraud on purchase of the grain [for troop provisioning] through the equitable marketing system".[33] It is unlikely that the plan extended further west, since the westernmost fortification at the border with the Tibetan territory (the Western Fortress for Receiving Surrenders 西受降城), had been destroyed by flooding

31 The case is narrated in Lu Tan's epitaph composed by Li Ao 李翱 (772-841) (*Quan Tang wen* 792.4188) and reported in several sources (*ZZTJ* 283.7683; *XTS* 159.4960; *Cefu yuangui* 510.6119a/b, 669.7991).

32 *XTS* 53.1373.

33 可省度支漕運及絕和糴欺隱 (*XTS* 53.1373; *Quan Tang wen* 640.6464b).

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from the Yellow River, which in that area bends eastwards forming several branches. As consequence of the flood, the standing troops were moved east to Tiande.[34]

Under commissioner Han's administration, abandoned farmland of several hundred hectares was made arable again, stretching for more than six hundred miles from Yunzhou up to Zhenwu and the Central Fortress. More than nine hundred officials convicted of various bribery and robbery-related crimes were provided with ploughing tools and oxen and employed to till the land and grow grain as a way to repay their debts, generating an abundant harvest for two consecutive years. Commissioner Han ordered the construction of fortified camps and palisades to protect the new farmland. Units of up to three thousand soldiers were recruited to guard the forts. Strengthened by the success of this project, Han requested the court open up more new farmland. His plan was to employ up to seven thousand men to provide for five fortified cities in all. Chancellor Li had already been dismissed when Han submitted his request, however, and the new chancellor put an end to the plan.[35] Despite the considerable efforts undertaken to create new land suitable for agriculture, the project was never fully implemented. The scarcity of farmland and short growing season made the task even more difficult.

In the 840s, the Daibei plenipotentiary commissioner responsible for farmland and transport on land and water added military duties to his repertoire. The newly established Datong Militia Commissioner 大同都團練使, renamed Datong Defense Commissioner 大同防禦使 one year later and given a seat in Yunzhou, administered the civil, fiscal, and military affairs of the three prefectures of Daibei (Yunzhou, Shuozhou, and Yuzhou). This shift was another attempt by the court to exert control and to drastically limit the Hedong provincial military governor's authority over the stationary troops to the north.[36] In keeping with this attempt, in the late 850s the court appointed a son of emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r. 840-46), Li Yi 李嶧, as Datong Defense Commissioner.[37]

In the 870s, the commissioners sent by the court became the target of a series of military mutinies led by secondary frontier commanders in the Datong army. The sources say that the commissioners were accused of greed and corruption, yet it is not implausible for these military rebellions to have been triggered by power struggles between court commissioners and the leaders of the local armed communities over the control of resources. The Shatuo commanders took advantage

34 *Quan Tang wen* 640.6464b.

35 *XTS* 53.1373-74.

36 *XTS* 65.1819.

37 *XTS* 193.5560.

of the situation to emerge as authoritative leaders of the mutinies. One after another, Lu Jianfang 盧簡方 (793-874 or 878), Duan Wenchu 段文楚, and Zhi Mo 支謨 (829-879) were either brutally murdered or killed in dubious circumstances, along with their civil retinues.[38]

The celebrated leader of the mutiny, Li Keyong, claimed the position of Datong defense commissioner for himself. When the Tang court refused, Li Keyong and his father, Li Guochang, initiated a military uprising that spread like wildfire across the northern garrisons and south to the rest of Hedong as far as Jinyang 晉陽 (Taiyuan). Li Keyong attempted to seize control of the transport routes on water and land amid the chaos, exacerbating the competition with other militia leaders stationed at the border garrisons. Helian Duo and several Sogdian generals came forward in support of the court's attempt to suppress the military rebellion, as well as to defend their interests in Daibei. The sources show that Sogdian Anqing 安慶 and Sage 薩葛units led by Shi Jingcun 史敬存and Mi Haiwan 米海萬 emerged as particular competitors of Li Keyong in these years.[39] The successful military campaign led by the military governor Li Zhuo 李琢 in the summer of 880 forced Li Keyong and his family to flee into Tatar territory and led to official appointments at the prefectural level for Tuyuhun and Sogdian military leaders. Helian Duo was appointed Yunzhou prefect and Datong defense commissioner, with command over the Datong garrison. His Tuyuhun affiliate, Bo Yicheng 白義誠, similarly became Yuzhou prefect and the Sogdian Mi Haiwan Shuozhou prefect.[40]

Supported by the neighbouring Lulong 盧龍 army, led first by the Uyghur Li Keju 李可舉 (d. 885) and then by Li Kuangwei 李匡威 (d. 893), Helian Duo effectively controlled the Datong military garrison for a decade. After he died in battle in 894,[41] the position of Daibei defence commissioner was given only to men affiliated with Li Keyong: the Sogdian general Shi Shanyou 石善友was first,[42] followed by Li Keyong's military fellows and affiliates Xue Zhiqin 薛志勤[43] and Li Cunzhang 李存璋.[44]

At beginning of the tenth century, the duties of the Daibei commissioner were taken up by the commissioner of water and land transpor-

38 The entombed epitaphs of Duan Wenchu and Zhi Mo are important testimonies of these events. See Nishimura 2009. Zhi Mo's cause of death is not clear, and the epitaph seems to hint at the fact that he committed suicide (see my translation in Barenghi 2020, 51).

39 On these Sogdian units see Pulleyblank 1952; Barenghi 2020.

40 *ZZTJ* 253.8224.

41 *ZZTJ* 259.8456.

42 *ZZTJ* 258.8416.

43 *ZZTJ* 259.8456-57.

44 *ZZTJ* 269.8805; *JWDS* 53.720.

tation in the north 北面水陸轉運使, a position held most of the time by Li Keyong's closest military entourage. The position continued to be key to controlling, supplying, and rewarding Daibei's pool of military resources. Upon Li Keyong's death in 908, one of his adopted sons and close affiliate, Li Siyuan 李嗣源 (867-933) took up the position until 926, the year in which, following a military mutiny, he overthrew his brother by adoption and became the second emperor of the Later Tang 後唐 (923-937) regime, posthumously known as Mingzong 明宗 (r. 926-933).[45] Li Siyuan's position presumably allowed him to control and sustain the large reservoir of Daibei recruits, even more so after his brother Li Cunxu 李存勖 (r. 923-26, posthumously known as Zhuangzong 莊宗) moved the capital from Jinyang to Luoyang, shifting the centre of economic and political power of the Later Tang regime farther away from Daibei.[46]

4 Li Keyong's Client Army: Daibei in the Aftermath of the Datong Military Insurrection (883-936)

As I have stated elsewhere, the Datong military mutiny in the late 870s triggered the auxiliary units of the former Daibei expeditionary troops that remained loyal to Li Keyong to develop into an enlarged heterogeneous military base composed of former experienced soldiers, supplemented with battalions of local people and later with new manpower enlisted on the march, such as the Tatars recruited from the northern steppe. This new group of armed followers was dubbed the Shatuo after its leaders. Worthy subordinate commanders of different extraction were tied to Li Keyong through fictive kinship bonds[47] and formed a powerful elite army. This army is called 'Army of Adopted Sons' (*yi'er jun* 義兒軍) in the tenth-century Old History of the Five Dynasties (*Jiu Wudai shi* 舊五代史) and in the 1150s by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-72) in the homonymous chapter "Collected Biographies of the Army of Adopted Sons" ("Yi'er zhuan" 義兒傳) in his New History of the Five Dynasties (*Xin Wudai shiji* 新五代史, originally called *Wudai shiji* 五代史記).[48] The 'Army of Adopted Sons' was composed by subordinate commanders of heterogeneous extraction (mostly Central Asian Uyghur, Khitan, Sogdian, and Turkic soldiers, but also Chinese) [49] from the Daibei armed communi-

45 *JWDS* 32.448.

46 *ZZTJ* 67.8707-08.

47 *ZZTJ* 255.8308.

48 Note that Sima Guang never uses this term.

49 The use of fictive kinship ties as a political strategy of affiliation was very widespread in medieval Inner Asia. The most renown example is An Lushan, who adopted

ties. As a reward for service and clientship Li Keyong bestowed upon them the surname Li 李, the imperial surname that once the emperor had bestowed upon Li Keyong's father. Thereby doing, Li Keyong was usurping an exclusive prerogative of the Tang ruling house. Most of the *yi'er* were career military professionals, and their identification as 'Army of Adopted Sons' remained an unofficial affiliation that did not preclude them from holding official military positions in the Tang system. Ouyang Xiu's "Collected Biography of the Army of Adopted Sons" is the first and only attempt to provide a clear-cut definition; the chapter collects short biographies of eight such 'adopted sons', though the *yi'er* numbered over one hundred.[50]

Below the rank of the 'adopted sons' elite was a large army of mercenary manpower that did not enjoy similar privileges and was likely to follow whoever emerged as an authoritative leader and offered the best patron-client conditions. Li Keyong's flight into Tatar[51] territory left these former clients on the frontier in disarray.[52] Some of Li Keyong's affiliate commanders who were quartered at various garrisons in Hedong and still held official positions in the Tang provincial system attempted to maintain ties with these armed men by enrolling them once again into the Tang expeditionary troops. When the rebel army led by Huang Chao 黃巢 reached the capital region and entered Chang'an, the Hedong army supervisor Chen Jingsi 陳景思 was commissioned by the court to move the Daibei expeditionary troops to the capital. On his way south, Chen was persuaded by his subordinate commanders Li Youjin 李友金 (quartered with the troops in Yuzhou), and Qu Zhen 瞿稹 (the prefect of Jiangzhou 絳州), both of whom were associates of Li Keyong, of the necessity of recruiting more troops in order to be able to confront the rebellion.[53] Chen subsequently headed back to Daizhou and enlisted thirty thousand armed men, "all mixed Hu from the north" 北方雜胡 (Shatuo and

more than eight thousand Central Asian warriors as his sons and used them as his elite private guard. See Skaff 2012, 224 ff.

50 These are Li Sizhao 李嗣昭, Li Siben 李嗣本, Li Sien 李嗣恩, Li Cunxin 李存信, Li Cunxiao 李存孝, Li Cunjin 李存進, Li Cunzhang 李存璋, Li Cunxian 李存賢 (original surname Wang 王, a former member of Huang Chao's rebellious army; *XWDS* 36.385-396); see Davis' translation (2004, 296-308). See also *JWDS* 53.713-723. The Old History of the Five Dynasties also includes Li Jianji 李建及 (original surname Wang 王, *JWDS* 63.863) and Li Cunshen 李存審 (original surname Fu 符, *JWDS* 56.755). For a discussion of the meaning of the bestowal of surnames in medieval China see Xin 2016.

51 The Tatars (Dada 達靼) were a small confederation originating in southern Manchuria, northeast of the imperial border. At the beginning of the ninth century, Tatar settlements were also present in the territories beyond the north-western frontier, as far as Beshbalïk, in present-day eastern Xinjiang (*ZZTJ* 246.7968, 253.8231-32).

52 *ZZTJ* 218.6158.

53 *ZZTJ* 254.8246.

Sogdians from the Anqing and Sage clans, and Tuyuhun recruits).[54] While the expeditionary army were quartered in Jiangzhou, the Shatuo commander Di Ji 翟稽 pillaged the prefecture, mutinied against his superiors, and threatened to head back north.[55] Li Keyong's fellow commanders then persuaded Chen Jingsi that only the Shatuo leader himself had the military authority necessary to lead such an unruly and violent army.[56] The court then allowed Li Keyong to return from the north, condoning his mutiny, and summoned him to Yuzhou. He used the trip as an opportunity to plunder the northern garrisons and recruit new manpower.[57] Moving south towards to the capital Chang'an, Li Keyong reached Taiyuan and requested that the governor Zheng Congdang 鄭從讜supply food, provisions, and rewards for his troops. When Zheng Congdang refused, Li Keyong let his troops "run unrestrained" (*zong* 縱) to attack and loot the city.[58]

Despite or perhaps because of his unorthodox and disruptive methods, Li Keyong was put in charge of a large and powerful new army that enabled him to march on Chang'an and launch a deadly assault on Huang Chao's troops, even recruiting some of Huang Chao's former affiliates. When the command of the military garrison of the Yanmen Pass also came under his control, as well as authority over most of Hedong's garrisons, Li Keyong was proclaimed Hedong military governor and Prince of Jin 晉王.[59]

Li Keyong now controlled most of the military force of northern Hedong: all but Yunzhou, which was still Helian Duo's stronghold. He formally petitioned the court to return the three Daibei prefectures to his command and abolish the position of Datong military commissioner.[60] This last request was probably not fulfilled, as Helian Duo continued in office until at least 891, if not his death in 894. In 890, Li Keyong moved against Helian Duo in a series of attacks on the city of Yunzhou. Helian Duo's powerful eastern neighbour and new patron, the Lulong military governor Li Kuangwei, allegedly sent in an army of thirty thousand soldiers to rescue his client. These successfully defeated the commanders under Li Keyong, some of whom surrendered to Helian Duo.[61]

In retaliation, Li Kuangwei attacked Yuzhou and took its prefect Xing Shanyi 邢善益 as hostage, even as Helian Duo led an army of

54 *JTS* 19b.710; *ZZTJ* 254.8248.

55 *JTS* 19b.710.

56 *ZZTJ* 254.8248-49; *XTS* 218.6158.

57 *JTS* 19b.710.

58 On the military strategy of letting troops loose see Yang 2017; *JTS* 19b.710; *XTS* 218.6158, 165.5063; *ZZTJ* 254.8251.

59 *ZZTJ* 256.8313.

60 *XTS* 65.1825; *ZZTJ* 256.831.

61 *ZZTJ* 8394.

several hundred thousand Tibetan and Kyrgyz (Xiajiasi 黠戛斯 in the Chinese sources)[62] troops in an assault on the Zhelu garrison 遮虜軍, killing area army commander Liu Huzi 劉胡子. Li Keyong sent his commander and foster son Li Cunxin 李存信 to respond to the attack, but the attempt failed. The winning card for Li Keyong, at least in Sima Guang's telling, was to send another commander from his 'Army of Adopted Sons': Li Siyuan. The military campaign was successful: Helian Duo and Li Kuangwei were forced to leave, and Li Kuangwei's son, Li Renzong 李仁宗, and Helian Duo's son-in-law were captured. Thousands of soldiers were killed, including one thousand households (tents, *zhang* 帳) of Helian Duo's followers.[63]

One year later, Li Keyong put Yunzhou under siege. When food supplies were exhausted and the population began to starve, Helian Duo was forced to flee east with his followers and again seek the protection of Li Kuangwei. Li Keyong took over Yunzhou and named one of his commanders, the Sogdian Shi Shanyou 石善友, as defence commissioner of Datong 大同防禦使.[64]

In 892, Helian Duo and Li Kuangwei returned with an army of eighty thousand soldiers to take back Yunzhou. Li Keyong ordered Li Junqing 李君慶 to move his troops from Jinyang in response. Meanwhile, Li Keyong secretly entered Xincheng 新城 in the Shenwu Plain 神武川, ambushed Li Kuangwei's troops, and captured three hundred Tuyuhun horsemen.[65] Li Kuangwei was subsequently defeated by Li Junqing in Yunzhou, after which he set fire to the Shatuo headquarters in Yunzhou and headed east to the Tiancheng garrison. As Sima Guang reports, the number of decapitated and captured was uncountable.[66] Li Keyong launched a final attack against Helian Duo in 894, killing him and capturing his fellow commander Bo Yicheng.[67]

Despite having eliminated his main competitors, Li Keyong's control over Daibei was far from stable, and the three prefectures north of the Yanmen Pass remained a disputed territory for the following

62 As suggested by one of the anonymous reviewers, these were probably not troops under Helian Duo's command but allies whom he invited to join in the attack; it is, however, unlikely that Tibetan and Kyrgyz military groups could have reached northern Hedong so quickly, as the closest Tibetans were probably located in Shaanxi while the Kyrgyz were in Mongolia or even further north.

63 *ZZTJ* 258.8404-05.

64 *ZZTJ* 258.8416.

65 This was the land where the Shatuo had originally been settled at the beginning of the ninth century.

66 *ZZTJ* 8435.

67 In his critical commentary *Kaoyi* 考異, Sima Guang reports that in light of the variants provided by some tenth-century sources that portray Helian Duo as a fugitive, he follows the version in the New History of the Tang that reports the military leader as having been killed (*ZZTJ* 252.8456).

three decades. Helian Duo's base of militiamen was now without a commander, searching for new employment, and was presumably recruited by other commanders. Some units were recruited by Qibi Rang 契苾讓, a general from the powerful Tiele 鐵勒 family clan who had led a troop mutiny northwest of Yunzhou, the territory north of the Yellow River loop. More than two thousand Tuyuhun soldiers had died while trying to suppress the rebellion.[68]

In 903, Wang Jinghui 王敬暉, a general of Li Keyong's contingent in Yunzhou, killed the court-appointed prefect of Yunzhou at the time, Liu Zaili 劉再立, and turned to the neighbouring warlord and newly established Lulong military governor Liu Rengong 劉仁恭 (d. 914) for protection. The warlord acquiesced and sent over an army of fifty thousand armed men to protect his new client from attacks by Li Keyong and his affiliates. In a familiar pattern, Liu Rengong's army was defeated despite their numbers, and Li Keyong's commanders regained control of Yunzhou. Li Keyong lost Wang Jinghui to his rivals, however, as the general was abducted and recruited by Liu Rengong. This loss allegedly infuriated the Shatuo leader, and it shows how Li Keyong struggled to maintain control of the heterogeneous group that constituted his personal retinue.[69] In another example of this struggle, the Old History of the Five Dynasties reports:

> the ten thousand armed men of his [Li Keyong's] personal army were all people from frontier [military] units and frequently violated the military laws. The commoners suffered extremely from this. Someone of his entourage spoke [to Li Keyong] about this, and the Warrior Emperor [Li Keyong's posthumous title] said: "These folks' courage and resourcefulness exceeds that of ordinary men. For over ten years they have followed me in military campaigns. In recent years the state's stores have been empty. The families [of the soldiers] of all the troops have sold their horses to survive. Today all the [regional] lords have increased the rewards on offer to recruit valiant soldiers. If I restrain them now by means of laws, I am afraid they will abandon me in a crisis. How then would I be able to protect this [enterprise] by myself? Let us wait for our fortunes to improve, and I will then certainly be able to discipline them".
>
> 親軍萬眾皆邊部人, 動違紀律, 人甚苦之, 左右或以為言, 武皇曰:「此輩膽略過人, 數十年從吾征伐, 比年以來, 國藏空竭, 諸軍之家賣馬自給。今四方諸侯皆懸重賞以募勇士, 吾若束之以法, 急則棄吾, 吾安能獨保此乎! 俟時開運泰, 吾固自能處置矣。」[70]

68 *ZZTJ* 264.8608.

69 *ZZTJ* 264.8608; *XTS* 218.6165.

70 *JWDS* 26.359.

In another instance, the Old History states that after Li Keyong's army helped to suppress Huang Chao's rebellion, many of the soldiers did not abide by the rules, in some cases humiliating and insulting officials, robbing commoners, and looting and plundering in broad daylight, after which they would loiter in wine taverns and get into brawls. Despite their behaviour Li Keyong tended toward appeasement and was reluctant to restrain them.[71]

The sources say that before he died in 908, Li Keyong expressed a wish to pass on his position as Prince of Jin to Li Cunxu, one of his biological sons born from a concubine, Consort Cao 曹. This decision triggered bloody struggles among Li Keyong's brothers and numerous adopted sons, valiant client soldiers who enjoyed the same privileges as his real offspring. Amid the discord, Li Keyong's younger brother Li Kening 李克寧 (d. 908) attempted to take control of Daibei by requesting to become the Datong military governor.[72]

For all these reasons, Li Keyong's control over the territory and manpower north of the Yanmen Pass was far from secure in the autumn of 907, when the Liao founder Abaoji, posthumously known as Taizu, reached Yunzhou from the north-eastern steppe belt leading an army that official figures put at three hundred thousand armed men.[73]

Several references in the sources mention the periodic movement south of Khitan groups in search of pastureland in early autumn, when the grasslands of the steppe had already begun to freeze over. These movements to the south, as was the case with the Uyghurs decades before, were profiteering opportunities for the border officials. The aforementioned governor of Lulong Liu Rengong, to name one example, is said to have instructed his soldiers to burn the grass outside the border fortification to force the Khitan to bribe them with fine horses in exchange for pastureland.[74]

The first instance in which Abaoji shows signs of interest in the Daibei region is in early autumn 907, when he brings three hundred thousand armed men armed men with him to Yunzhou for a meeting with Li Keyong, a number a bit too high for a civil exchange or a brotherhood oath, as some of the sources labeled it. The figures are likely inflated in the sources, but Abaoji's visit indeed had the potential to become something more disruptive than a 'diplomatic' appearance.[75] The sources closest to the cause of the Shatuo, namely those drawn

71 *JWDS* 27.366.

72 *ZZTJ* 266.8690.

73 The sources provide different dates for this event. The variants are discussed at length by Sima Guang in his critical commentary, and he provides reasonable evidence for choosing 907 (*ZZTJ* 266.8679).

74 *ZZTJ* 264.8623.

75 *ZZTJ* 266.8678-79.

up at the court of the Shatuo Later Tang regime, describe the events that followed as a betrayal by Abaoji of the agreement made with Li Keyong at Yunzhou. In fact, Abaoji was one of Li Keyong's competitors in the northern territories, if not his most powerful rival. His agreement with the ruler of the newly established Later Liang 後梁 regime (907-923) to destroy the Shatuo is thus an understandable strategy.[76]

In early winter 916, Abaoji, now proclaimed 'Heavenly imperial sovereign' 天皇王 of the Liao empire,[77] led a large army in a siege on Yuzhou and captured Li Siben 李嗣本 (d. 916), the military governor of Zhenwu and 'adopted son' of Li Keyong. The Liao emperor may also have attempted to secure control over resources, as the *ZZTJ* reports that he "sent an envoy with a document written on wood to ask for goods" 遣使以木書求貨 to the Datong defence commissioner in Yunzhou, Li Cunzhang. Li Cunzhang replied by beheading the envoy. Abaoji raided Yunzhou yet again in retaliation.[78] In 925 Yunzhou officials reported that the Khitan armies had returned to the north of the desert the year before and that a group of Tatar that had fought against them had fled south from the desert and reached the northern frontier. Thirty thousand people allied with the Later Tang crossed the southern border.[79]

History repeated itself one more time in late summer 936, when the Hedong military governor of Sogdian origin, Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭 (892-942), sought the support of the Khitan-led Liao army in a military mutiny against the last ruler of the Later Tang regime, Li Congke 李從珂 (r. 934-37). Their new patron-client relationship acquired pronounced significance this time and is represented in the sources with a whole other level of symbolic language: Shi Jingtang, now ruler of the newly established Later Jin 後晉 (936-947), officially recognised the Liao emperor Yelü Deguang 耶律德光 (r. 927-947, posthumous title Taizong 太宗) as superior and subordinated himself to the emperor's authority. This new agreement of clientship is different from the patron-client relations seen so far between military leaders because it was sanctioned by the transfer of land to the new patron.[80] The prefectures north of the Yanmen Pass in Hedong, together with the territories of the Lulong circuit in Hebei, collectively

76 *ZZTJ* 266.8700.

77 *ZZTJ* 269.8808-09.

78 *ZZTJ* 269.8805; *JWDS* 52.709-710.

79 *JWDS* 32.448.

80 Recently scholars have been discussing how the early tenth-century diplomatic relations developed between the Shatuo-led north China regimes and the Khitan-led Liao might have created the ground for the eleventh-century interstate diplomacy of the Liao-Song Treaty of Shanyuan (1005). See for instance Xue 2020 and Soojung Han's forthcoming PhD dissertation thesis (Princeton University).

known to history as the "sixteen prefectures between Yan and Yun" 燕雲十六州, became an integral part of the Liao empire as a consequence of this relationship, and would remain so for the rest of the dynasty's history.[81]

5 Concluding Remarks

The present article has endeavoured to shed some light upon less studied aspects of the history of Daibei in the late ninth and first decades of the tenth century, before it became Liao territory, a history woven into a severely weakened Tang military system. The paper showed how migrant mercenaries who resettled in Daibei at the turn of the ninth century grew into garrison communities dependent on Tang military resources for sustenance. The state-induced resettlement of military groups to Daibei was part of an attempt to reappropriate state space in the sparsely populated territories of the north. The military groups also served as a counter to the autonomous provinces of Hebei and to the Uyghurs. Securing control over foodways and transportation routes thus became key to securing control over troops, and exacerbated competition among different agents. By appointing plenipotentiary commissioners to supervise water and land transport as well as the military colonies, the Tang court sought to centralise its control over human and natural resources, and this centralizing drive clashed with the growing decentralizing ambitions of the military groups. The Shatuo leaders successfully enacted military and identity strategies that won them the loyalty of an enlarged army, led by an elite leadership of commanders who recognised themselves as Shatuo. Their strategies enabled them to aspire to transform their efforts as military authorities into a chance at becoming rulers of a bureaucratic state, even at the cost of losing their former military hub in Daibei, which by then had become difficult to control. Faced with the challenges of founding a state, the Shatuo rulers were unable to transform their loyal armed communities into civil and administrative units and ultimately fell to the same armies that brought them to power.

81 Together with Daibei, the administrative units of northern Hebei (corresponding to the region of present-day Beijing) were annexed by the Liao empire and transformed into the metropolitan area of the Liao Southern Capital (*ZZTJ* 280.9146).

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La nozione di *bianxing* 變形 nei racconti sulle scimmie contenute nei tre capitoli «Chushou» 畜獸 del *Taiping Guangji* 太平廣記

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Abstract The 10th-century *leishu* 類書 (encyclopaedia) by Li Fang entitled *Taiping Guangji* 太平廣記 (Extensive Records of the Taiping Era) is a Song period collection of miscellanea of strange persons and events divided into 500 *juan* 卷. The classifications of the entries about animals in this collection are from *juan* 418 to 479. This study examines twenty-five anomaly accounts of shape-changes within the last three *juan* of "Chushou" 畜獸 (Domesticated and Wild Beasts) dedicated to apes and monkeys, i.e. *juan* 444, 445, and 446. This paper also analyses the concept of *bianxing* 變形 (transmutation) related to the physique and spiritual forms of these apes and monkeys, after their clashes and contaminations with human beings. The research considers four categories of changes considering extracts from all the entries. When possible, further information on apes and monkeys is given.

Keywords Monkey. Ape. Transformation. Ancient Chinese literature. Taiping Guangji. Chushou.

Sommario 1 Introduzione. – 2 La trasmutazione della forma fisica. – 3 Lo spirito scimmia. – 4 Antropomorfizzazione e bestializzazione. – 5 La trasmutazione della forma espressiva. – 6 Conclusioni.

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鸚鵡能言,不離飛鳥;猩猩能言,不離禽獸。今人而無禮,雖能言,不亦禽獸之心乎?夫唯禽獸無禮,故父子聚麀。是故聖人作,為禮以教人。使人以有禮,知自別於禽獸。

I pappagalli riescono a parlare, ma restano comunque uccelli; gli oranghi riescono a parlare, ma restano comunque belve. Colui che è inosservante delle norme di giustezza, sebbene riesca a parlare, non presenta forse un animo bestiale? Ma se l'uomo fosse semplicemente una bestia inottemperante delle norme, padri e figli condividerebbero la stessa amante. Pertanto, quando i saggi concepirono le cose, posero tali norme come principio d'istruzione umano. L'uomo che rispetta tali norme riesce a distinguersi dalle brute belve.

(*Liji* 禮記, 1.9)

1 Introduzione

La scimmia è sempre stato un animale che ha subito profonde e diverse evoluzioni nel corso dei millenni. Nella letteratura cinese è doveroso ricordare il Re Scimmia Sun Wukong 孫悟空, protagonista del romanzo Ming (1368-1644) *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (Viaggio in Occidente) pubblicato anonimo nel XVI secolo e in seguito attribuito al letterato Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (c. 1500-1582). Tra le abilità annoverate nel romanzo, Sun Wukong è capace di eseguire ben settantadue trasformazioni.[1] Attuando un'indagine sulla letteratura pre-Ming è possibile rintracciare non poche storie, la maggior parte delle quali sono resoconti anomali (*zhiguai* 志怪) e racconti di strani eventi (*chuanqi* 傳奇), che girano attorno a scimmie e a creature simili capaci di compiere trasformazioni e che, pertanto, avrebbero potuto influenzare la formazione dell'eroe Sun Wukong. Questi due generi, frutti rispettivamente della dinastia Han (206 a.C.-220) e Tang (618-907), verranno raccolti e inglobati in epoche posteriori in varie raccolte: qui citeremo il *Taiping Guangji* 太平廣記 (Vasti ricordi dell'era Taiping, d'ora in poi abbreviato in TPGJ).

Il TPGJ è un *leishu* 類書, genere enciclopedico, di epoca Song (960-1279) compilato tra il 977 e 978, secondo e terzo anno dell'era Taiping Xingguo 太平興國 (976-983), da un gruppo di lavoro con a capo Li Fang 李昉 (925-996), un funzionario del periodo delle Cinque Dinastie e Dieci Regni (907-960) divenuto in seguito ministro, sot-

La presente indagine riprende e approfondisce la ricerca condotta per la tesi di laurea magistrale in cui avevo analizzato soltanto uno dei tre capitoli qui esaminati.

1 Per una discussione sulle abilità di Sun Wukong, si consiglia Feng 2012.

to la direzione imperiale di Song Taizong 宋太宗 (939-997).[2] La raccolta venne tuttavia ritirata dalla circolazione poiché il contenuto fu ritenuto futile per la formazione degli eruditi e ne fu sospesa la pubblicazione (Idema, Haft 2011, 67). La compilazione di queste tre antologie sarebbe stata motivata dal fatto che Taizong, mosso dalla consapevolezza di una conoscenza parziale dei fatti storici narrati, avrebbe desiderato colmare tale lacuna attraverso la lettura di tutti i libri destinati agli imperatori,[3] visto che le loro sezioni e categorie erano numerose e di conseguenza difficili da sottoporre a un'attenta lettura (Zurndorfer 2013, 510). Contenutisticamente parlando, il TPGJ è una raccolta in 500 *juan* 卷(capitoli) divisi in 92 categorie che vengono ulteriormente divise in 150 sottocategorie[4] e fu pensata per contenere l'intera produzione di *chuanqi* assieme ai più 'vecchi' *zhiguai*. Proprio per questo la lingua del TPGJ è da considerarsi una mescolanza di cinese antico e cinese classico. La classificazione sugli animali è contenuta maggiormente dal *juan* 418 (*Long*, *yi* 龍一) al 479 (*Kunchong*, *qi* 昆蟲七); di questi, i *juan* dal 434 (*Chushou*, *yi* 畜獸一) al 446 (*Chushou*, *shisan* 畜獸十三) compongono la sezione «Chushou» 畜獸 (Animali domestici e selvatici),[5] i *juan* relativi alle scimmie risultano tre: 444 (*Chushou*, *shiyi* 畜獸十一), 445 (*Chushou*, *shi'er* 畜獸十二) e 446. A livello tematico, il *juan* 446 differisce dai due precedenti: *juan* 444 e 445 contengono rispettivamente otto e quattro storie e raccontano esclusivamente di una specie, mentre il *juan* 446 offre al lettore tredici storie e mostra una maggiore abbondanza di primati. Il TPGJ menziona diverse altre storie i cui personaggi sono scimmie o creature simili.[6]

2 La produzione dei *leishu* ebbe inizio con la dinastia Wei (534-557) e si protrasse fino alla dinastia Qing (1644-1911). Si stimano ad oggi circa 600 *leishu* di cui ne sono pervenuti solamente 200. La redazione del TPGJ accompagnò quella di due altri *leishu*, il *Taiping yulan* 太平禦覽 (Enciclopedia imperiale del periodo Taiping) e il *Wenyuan Yinghua* 文苑英華 (Fiori più eleganti del giardino letterario). A queste tre enciclopedie ne fu associata un'altra ancora recante il titolo di *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 (Tartaruga primordiale della libreria imperiale) e compilata nel 1013. I quattro *leishu* formarono i *Song si da shu* 宋四大書 (Quattro grandi libri dei Song). Sul genere e sui lavori di compilazione di Li Fang, si vedano Wilkinson 1998, 555-8 e Zurndorfer 2013, 505-11.

3 Ovvero il genere *yulan* 禦覽.

4 Per una tabella dei contenuti, si veda Schafer 1980.

5 I *juan* che compongono la sezione «Chushou» differiscono per argomenti. In ordine di apparizione riscontriamo soprattutto buoi (*niu* 牛), cavalli (*ma* 馬), cammelli (*luotuo* 駱駝), asini (*lü* 驢), cani (*quan* 犬), pecore (*yang* 羊), maiali (*shi* 豕); gatti (*mao* 貓), ratti (*shu* 鼠), leoni (*shi* 獅), rinoceronti (*xi* 犀), elefanti (*xiang* 象), lupi (*lang* 狼), orsi (*xiong* 熊), cani procione (*li* 狸), ricci (*wei* 蝟), cervi maschi (*zhu* 麈), caprioli (*zhang* 麞), cervi (*lu* 鹿), conigli (*tu* 兔), gibboni (*yuan* 猿), macachi (*mihou* 獼猴) e oranghi (*xingxing* 猩猩).

6 Secondo una mia ricerca preliminare, il TPGJ contiene poco più di un centinaio di racconti su scimmie e creature simili. Tra le più importanti, vale la pena citare la storia 467.3 (太平廣記卷第467水族四水怪李湯), presumibilmente scritta dall'erudito Tang Li Gongzuo 李公佐 (c. 778-c. 848) che menziona una creatura scimmiesca chiamata

Durante la traduzione integrale delle venticinque storie contenute in questi tre capitoli abbiamo notato una certa eterogeneità stilistica (dal momento che queste storie provengono da 19 fonti diverse) e una rilevante omogeneità tematica, ovvero quello di *bianxing* 變形 (trasmutazione) delle scimmie. Il *bianxing zhiguai* 變形志怪 (cronache di anomalie sulla trasmutazione) si configura come sottocategoria del genere *zhiguai* e designa un tipo di racconti riguardanti demoni animali che assumono sembianze umane e interagiscono con diverse persone, mantenendo talvolta qualche caratteristica tipica animale (ad esempio, la coda per lo spirito-volpe), giungendo a un tipo di rapporto (spesso, ma non sempre, sessuale). In senso lato, i *bianxing zhiguai* si fondano sulle relazioni tra gli umani e gli animali (Berry 2002, 16-18). Oltre a subire un vero e proprio cambiamento fisico, le scimmie di cui si leggerà subiscono anche un processo di 'rottura del guscio' (*po ke* 破殼), qui inteso come la rottura delle loro consuete forme che occasionalmente le porterà a mostrarsi persino superiori agli esseri umani.

I paragrafi a seguire descriveranno quattro categorie di trasmutazione. Per una migliore comprensione e fruizione dei dati relativi agli esemplari di primati citati,[7] ogni categoria elencherà prima le occorrenze in lingua originale cinese pertinenti attraverso una citazione finalizzata a fornire ai lettori informazioni relative al numero e al titolo del *juan* cui si fa riferimento, nonché alla denominazione del brano esaminato. Seguirà la traduzione degli estratti[8] accompagnata dal rimando indicante il numero del *juan*, la collocazione numerica del brano al suo interno e la pagina nell'edizione di riferimento (1961). L'approccio traduttologico utilizzato nel seguente studio vedrà la resa in *pinyin* 拼音 per tutti quegli esemplari che non troveranno una corrispondenza nella classificazione scientifica.[9]

Wuzhiqi 無支祁. La notorietà di questa storia si deve maggiormente a un'osservazione di Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936) che nel 1922 postulò la derivazione di Sun Wukong proprio da questo spirito cinese fluviale presente nel *Gu Yuedu jing* 古岳瀆經 (Antico classico delle vette e dei fiumi). Per un approfondimento in merito, si veda Andersen 2001. In questa ricerca, ci soffermeremo unicamente sui tre *juan* 444, 445 e 446.

7 Verranno forniti dei commenti per l'identificazione di un corrispettivo in italiano di alcuni generi di appartenenza dei primati qui citati con la consultazione dei tre volumi dell'enciclopedia *Zhongguo da baike quanshu* 中國大百科全書, *Shengwuxue* 生物學 (d'ora in poi abbreviato in ZDBQ, seguirà un punto con il numero indicante il volume di riferimento) e si tenterà inoltre di definire esemplari di difficile comprensione con l'aiuto del *Kangxi Zidian* 康熙字典(d'ora in poi abbreviato in KZ, seguirà il numero del carattere e la pagina di riferimento).

8 Ogni traduzione dai testi originali cinesi è dell'Autore.

9 Si ricordi che alcuni esemplari di primati sono del tutto fittizi e ritrovabili unicamente nei testi letterari antichi.

2 La trasmutazione della forma fisica

Nella prima categoria riscontriamo la trasformazione più comune, quella fisica, che permetterà ai primati il raggiungimento della forma umana. A questa sezione sono riconducibili nove racconti: 1, 2, 5 e 8 del *juan* 444; 1, 2 e 3 del *juan* 445; 1 e 11 del *juan* 446.

女因舉杖擊之。袁公飛上樹。化為白猿。[10] (太平廣記卷第444 畜獸十一白猿)
Ma non appena la donna sollevò la verga per colpirlo, Yuan Gong balzò su un albero e prese le sembianze di un gibbone bianco. (TPGJ 444.1, 3628)

群抽所佩之刀,以投白猿。猿化為一老翁,手中有玉板,長八寸,以授群。(太平廣記卷第444 畜獸十一周群)
Qun sguainò la lama dal suo cinto e si preparò a scagliarsi contro il gibbone bianco. Quest'ultimo prese le sembianze di un anziano e teneva in mano una tavoletta di giada lunga otto *cun*[11] che consegnò a Qun. (TPGJ 444.2, 3628)

居士又出丹符擲之,婦人遂委身於地,化為猿而死。岩既悟其妖異。心頗怪悸。(太平廣記卷第 444 畜獸十一 陳巖)
L'eremita tirò fuori un talismano di inchiostro vermiglio e lo gettò in cielo facendo cadere a terra la donna. Questa prese le sembianze di un gibbone e morì. Fu allora che Yan realizzò la natura anomala di quella donna, sentì un senso di turbamento e palpitazione. (TPGJ 444.5, 3633)

歲秋。長史召工人重修馬廐。因發重舍,內得一死猿。有矢貫脇。驗其矢,果長史弟之矢也。方悞黑衣者乃猿爾。(太平廣記卷第 444 畜獸十一 王長史)
Arrivò l'autunno e Changshi fece chiamare qualcuno per ripulire la stalla. Per pura coincidenza vi rinvenirono un gibbone morto con una freccia conficcata nella gabbia toracica. Esaminarono la freccia, si trattava proprio della freccia scoccata dal fratello di

10 Il carattere *yuan* 猿(o *yuan* 猨 o ancora *yuan* 蝯) fa riferimento a un primate del genere *Hylobatidae* e si riferisce a un gibbone (Van Gulik 1967, 1), nel cinese moderno *changbiyuan* 長臂猿. Per un minuzioso studio comprensivo sulla figura del gibbone in Cina si consiglia Van Gulik 1967, una ricerca pionieristica in cui si esaminano diversi tipi di dipinti di gibbone, si discute sul ruolo dell'animale nella tradizione cinese partendo dalla dinastia Shang (1675-1046 a.C.) arrivando sino all'inizio della dinastia Qing e si pone una differenziazione tra alcuni esemplari di primati. Tale discriminazione porterà alla tradizionale opinione del 'good gibbons and evil macaques'. L'indagine verrà poi riesaminata con Zhang 2015.

11 Misura di lunghezza che corrispondeva a 2,45 cm durante la dinastia Jin orientale (317-420), periodo di stesura della raccolta di riferimento *Wang Zinian shiyi ji* 王子年拾遺記 (Raccolta di storie recuperate di Wang Zinian) dell'erudito Wang Jia 王嘉 (?-390) da cui riceviamo il brano.

Changshi. Si resero conto che quel tale con il vestito da monaco altri non era che un gibbone. (TPGJ 444.8, 3634)

其中設繡帷,旁列珠璣犀象,有一巨猿狀如人,醉臥於地,蓋所謂巴西侯也。[...] 鋋既見,大驚,即出山逕,馳告裡中人。(太平廣記卷第 445 畜獸十二 張鋋)
L'interno era abbellito da tende ricamate, ai lati erano disposti rari tesori, a terra giaceva avvinazzato fradicio un enorme gibbone dalle sembianze umane. Si trattava di Ba Xihou. [...] Nel vederlo, Chan impallidì dalla paura e se la diede a gambe levate scappando dalla strada di montagna. Arrivò presto al villaggio e riferì tutto l'accaduto agli abitanti. (TPGJ 445.1, 3636-3637)

言已,忽跳躍大呼,化為一猿而去。宗素驚異,惶駭而歸。(太平廣記卷第445 畜獸十二楊叟)
Finì di parlare e spiccò un salto emettendo un forte urlo. Infine, prese le sembianze di un gibbone e scappò via. Zong Su si sbalordì e in preda al panico rimboccò la strada. (TPGJ 445.2, 3638)

撫二子咽泣數聲,語恪曰: «好住好住。吾當永訣矣。» 遂裂衣化為老猿,追嘯者躍樹而去。將抵深山而復返視。恪乃驚懼,若魂飛神喪。(太平廣記卷第445 畜獸十二孫恪)
[La donna] accarezzò i due pargoli e mormorò loro qualcosa singhiozzando, poi si rivolse a Ke: «Sposo mio, abbi cura di te. È giunta l'ora di separarci per sempre». Si strappò i vestiti di dosso e prese le sembianze di un vecchio gibbone e si precipitò, risalendo gli alberi, verso i compagni che frignavano. Ma prima di giungere nella parte più fitta della montagna, l'animale si volse per lanciare un'ultima occhiata ai cari. Ke si sconvolse, era come se la sua anima fosse volata via e il suo spirito fosse svanito. (TPGJ 445.3, 3640-3641)

遂跳躍化為一老猿。攜其小猿奔走。不知所之。(太平廣記卷第 446 畜獸十三楚江漁者)
Dunque fece un balzo assumendo le sembianze di un vecchio gibbone, prese poi con sé il piccolo gibbone e corse via verso un luogo sconosciuto. (TPGJ 446.1, 3643)

言訖,化為一猩猩,[12]與同伴相逐而走,不知所之。(太平廣記卷第 446 畜獸十三焦封)
Non appena finì di parlare la donna si tramutò in un orangotango e corse verso i suoi simili e si allontanarono verso un luogo sconosciuto. (TPGJ 446.11, 3650)

Nelle storie sopracitate abbiamo letto sette episodi in cui un essere umano si trasforma in una scimmia (i racconti 444.1, 444.5, 445.1, 445.2, 445.3, 446.1 e 446.11), e solo due in cui una scimmia si trasforma in un essere umano (i racconti 444.2 e 444.8). Queste trasformazioni destabilizzano la quiete umana solo quattro volte (i racconti 444.5, 445.1, 445.2 e 445.3), mentre nelle altre cinque storie non leggiamo alcun carattere che veicoli i sensi di sorpresa e stupore. Il processo di trasformazione in scimmie avviene indipendentemente dal tipo di sesso: distinguiamo quattro casi maschili e tre casi femminili. Infine, non ci è dato sapere se il loro cambiamento sia o meno un processo reversibile, in quanto queste trasformazioni avvengono solo unidirezionalmente.

3 Lo spirito scimmia

In questa categoria, verranno presentati gli estratti dai racconti 3, 4, 5 e 7 del *juan* 444; 3 e 4 del *juan* 445; 2, 4, 5, 6 e 8 del *juan* 446. Queste storie espongono scimmie con una forma contorta capaci di esercitare cambiamenti catastrofici nella stabilità umana.

蜀中西南高山之上,有物與猴相類,長七尺,能作人行,善走逐人,名曰猳國,一名馬化,[13]或曰玃。[14] (太平廣記卷第 444 畜獸十一 猳國)

12 Questo esemplare apparterrebbe al genere *Pongo pygmaeus*. Pertanto, *xingxing* 猩猩 si identifica con un orangotango (ZDBQ.3 1991, 1927). Il nome *xingxing* (che appare anche con i caratteri *shengsheng* 狌狌) potrebbe inoltre essere un gioco di parole con il significato di *xingxing* 行行per indicare la loro abilità nel camminare o comportarsi come un essere umano (Sterckx 2002, 37). Si noti infine che la menzione di tale creatura è riscontrabile già nello *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Libro dei monti e dei mari) dove si sostiene che «C'è un animale simile alla scimmia, ma con orecchi bianchi; si sposta piegato in avanti e cammina come un uomo. Il suo nome è *xingxing* (*shengsheng*) 狌狌, e mangiandone si diventa abili corridori» (Fracasso 1996, 9). Seguono altre due menzioni sulla creatura, si legge: «I *xingxing* conoscono i nomi degli uomini; sono animali di aspetto suino, ma con volto umano» (160-1) e «[c]'è un animale verdastro e con volto umano. È chiamato *xingxing* 猩猩» (238).

13 Zhang considera il termine una voce chiave indicante un macaco (2015, 16).

14 Sul carattere *jue*, il dizionario Han *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Spiegazione dei caratteri semplici e analisi dei caratteri composti) annota: «*Jue* è un grande macaco»; il dizionario Song *Guangyun* 廣韻 (Rime estese) dice: «*Jue* è un grande gibbone»; l'antologia Qin (221-206 a.C.) *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Annali delle primavere e autunni del si-

Alla sommità di un alto monte nell'area sudoccidentale del Shuzhong[15] esiste un essere con sembianze scimmiesche. Ha un'altezza di sette *chi*,[16] è capace di emulare l'andatura degli esseri umani e dà loro la caccia. Il suo nome è Jiaguo. È conosciuto anche con i nomi di Mahua e Jue. (TPGJ 444.3,3629)

又捕採唯止其身,更無黨類。[…] 晴晝或舞雙劒。環身電飛,光圓若月。其飲食無常。喜啗果栗。尤嗜犬,咀而飲其血。(太平廣記卷第 444 畜獸十一 歐陽紇)[17]
[Il gibbone] era solito rapire e adunare le donne solo per sé e nessun altro. […] Nei giorni di sole brandiva le sue spade: i movimenti delle lame sembravano fulmini che circondavano il suo corpo formando un cerchio di luce simile a una luna. Il suo regime alimentare era alquanto vario: si nutriva di frutti e castagne. Prediligeva i cani, di cui ne rosicchiava le carni e ne succhiava il sangue. (TPGJ 444.4, 3631)

岩因詬而責之,婦人忽發怒,毀岩之衣襟佩帶,殆無完縷。又爪其面,嚙其肌,一身盡傷,血沾於地。已而嗥叫者移時。岩患之,不可制。[…] 時有郝居士者在裡中,善視鬼。有符籙呵禁之術。聞婦人哭音,顧謂裡中民曰。此婦人非人,乃山獸也,寓形以惑於世耳。
Yan allora le diede una strigliata. Come risposta, d'improvviso la donna si infuriò e gli lacerò la cinta e le vesti lasciandolo quasi spoglio. Gli sfigurò poi il viso e iniziò a morderlo, finché non riportò ferite su tutto il corpo da cui ne sgorgò sangue che coprì il pavimento. Al termine dell'offensiva si mise a ululare come una belva. Yan era inquietato e non aveva idea di come controllarla. […] Viveva nel villaggio l'eremita Hao, costui vantava un grande talento nel riconoscere i demoni e padroneggiava l'arte dei talismani per contenerli. Quand'egli udì i guaiti della donna informò gli abitanti del villaggio: «Questa donna non è un essere umano, ma si tratta di una belva delle montagne che ha mutato forma per confondere gli esseri umani». (TPGJ 444.5, 3633)

gnor Lü) registra: «Ponendo che il cane assomigli al *jue* e che il *jue* assomigli al macaco, allora il macaco assomiglia a un uomo» (KZ nr. 4, 722).

15 Molti racconti collocano gli habitat di scimmie-demoni nelle montagne meridionali o nel sud-ovest. Ciò fu comprovato dalla scoperta di quattro rilievi che ruotavano attorno alla storia di una scimmia cacciatrice di donna nella zona del Sichuan, si veda Wu 1987.

16 La fonte di riferimento del brano è la raccolta *Soushen Ji* 搜神記 (Alla ricerca del soprannaturale) compilata dallo scrittore e storiografo della dinastia Jin orientale Gan Bao 干寶 (286-336?), pertanto tale misura di lunghezza si aggirava attorno ai 24 cm.

17 Questo *chuanqi* Tang viene anche ricordato col titolo di *Bu Jiang Zong baiyuan zhuan* 補江總白猿傳 (Integrazione al racconto di Jiang Zong sul gibbone bianco) spesso abbreviato in *Baiyuan zhuan* 白猿傳 (Racconto sul gibbone bianco). Per un saggio sulle origini del mito si veda Wu 1987.

韋子叫呼,但繞一空井而走。迫之轉急。遂投於井中。其物因據井而坐,韋仰觀之,乃變為一猿。良久,家人至,猿即不見。視井旁有足跡奔蹂之狀,怪之,窺井中,乃見韋在焉。懸縋出之,恍惚不能言,三日方能說。月餘乃卒。(太平廣記卷第444 畜獸十一韋虛己子)
Il figlio di Wei iniziò a strillare e a correre intorno a un pozzo vuoto finché, in preda al panico più totale, non vi cadde dentro. La strana creatura raggiunse il bordo del pozzo e quando Wei alzò lo sguardo quell'essere prese le sembianze di un gibbone. Dopo un bel po' di tempo, sopraggiunse un servo e il gibbone sparì in un baleno. Il servo notò le orme attorno al pozzo e si insospettì, così si avvicinò al pozzo e si sporse per guardarvi, fu allora che vide il piccolo Wei. Si calò con una fune e lo recuperò. Il bambino si trovava in uno stato di trance e non riusciva a parlare. Riprese a parlare dopo tre giorni, ma morì dopo poco più di un mese. (TPGJ 444.7, 3634)

張生握恪手,密謂之曰。«愚兄於道門曾有所授,適觀弟詞色,妖氣頗濃,未審別有何所遇。事之鉅細,必願見陳。不然者,當受禍耳。»
Zhang prese per mano Ke e gli confidò: «L'umil uomo che sono è stato introdotto ai culti taoisti. Poc'anzi ho prestato attenzione alle vostre parole e alle vostre espressioni, posso asserire che su di voi c'è una densa energia sinistra, caro cugino. Non riesco capire come voi vi siate incappati. Vi prego di riferirmi ogni cosa nei minimi dettagli, altrimenti la sfortuna potrebbe abbattersi su di voi». (TPGJ 445.3, 3639)

商謂其深山窮穀,非能居焉,疑為妖異,忽遽而返。眾尼援引留連。詞意甚懇。商既登舟,訪於舟子,皆曰, «此猿猱[18]耳。前後遇者非一,賴悟速返。不爾,幾為所殘。» (太平廣記卷第 445 畜獸十二崔商)
Shang pensò che un villaggio nei pressi di una remota montagna non potesse mai e poi mai essere tanto fertile. Gli venne il sospetto che le monache che lo abitavano altre non fossero che spiriti maligni, pertanto tornò in dietro a gambe levate nonostante il loro invito a rimanere. L'uomo salì a bordo di una barca e fece delle domande al barcaiolo. Costui rispose: «Non sono altro che scimmie. Chiunque si inoltri in quel posto non fa più ritorno. È stata una fortuna che siate riuscito a percepire il pericolo e ad allontanarvi. In caso contrario, avreste potuto soccombere come tutti gli altri prima di voi». (TPGJ 445.4, 3641)

18 Riguardo al carattere *nao* 猱, Gulik (1967) e Zhang (2015) mostrano pareri contrastanti. Per il primo si riferirebbe a un gibbone, mentre per il secondo sarebbe un macaco. Secondo il dizionario *Guangyun*: «È una scimmia», mentre nel dizionario pre-Han *Erya* 爾雅 (Approccio all'eleganza) si legge: «*Nao* è un gibbone abile ad arrampicarsi» (KZ nr. 8, 715). Si è preferito rendere il binomio *yuan-nao* 猿猱 con il nome comune di 'scimmia'.

飛趠於樹稍[19]之間。遂入漢高廟。破鳥巢。擲其雛卵於地。[...] 入主帥廚中。應動用食器之屬。並遭掀撲穢汙。而後登屋。擲瓦拆塼。主帥大怒。(太平廣記卷第 446 畜獸十三 王仁裕)
[La scimmia Yebin] con uno slancio si inoltrò nella boscaglia e muovendosi di cima in cima entrò nel tempio Hangao. Una volta entrato distrusse tutti i nidi facendo cadere in terra le uova. [...] Si intrufolò quindi nella cucina del comandante in capo, gettò in aria utensili da cucina, ruppe e sporcò piatti e scodelle. Poi si arrampicò sul tetto, staccò tegole e mattoni e li gettò a terra. Il comandante in capo andò su tutte le furie. (TPGJ 446.2, 3643-3644)

見一女子操荷。舉手麾寂之。寂之悅而延住。此後來往如舊。寂之便患瘦瘠。寂之便患瘦瘠。[...] 忽復共言雲。«簣中有人。»睥之即發看。有一牝猴。遂殺之。寂病漸瘳。(太平廣記卷第 446 畜獸十三徐寂之)
[Jizhi] un giorno vide una donna con in mano un fiore di loto che lo salutò. A Jizhi piacque così tanto che la portò a casa con sé e vissero insieme. Da allora il suo andirivieni si fece più frequente, finché l'uomo non contrasse una malattia che lo rese sempre più magro. [...] [Il fratello Zuizhi] di colpo rispose: «Qualcuno si nasconde dentro il paniere». Zuizhi si precipitò a dare un'occhiata e vi trovò una scimmia femmina. La ammazzò. Jizhi si riprese lentamente. (TPGJ 446.4, 3645)

時夜昏黑。乃有引其架上書者。寓言自暗窺之。乃鬼也。集於書架之旁。先叱之。鬼稱革。寓言毆之。而踏其喉就地。又擊之。因絕聲大叫雲: «吾擒得鬼。»守者遂以火至。乃一獼猴[20]也。被擊已死。[...] 先是一沐猴[21]不知何來。每夜入人家偷竊。及寓言以為鬼而殺之。一裡無患矣。(太平廣記卷第 446 畜獸十三張寓言)
Era notte fonda e qualcuno si era diretto tra gli scaffali a prendere un libro. Yuyan intravide qualcosa nell'oscurità: si trattava di un demone! La creatura aveva ammucchiato alcuni libri di fianco allo scaffale. L'uomo gli urlò contro e il demone lo attaccò fisicamente. I due se le diedero finché Yuyan lo scagliò contro il pavimento e gli calpestò il collo più e più volte. Calò il silenzio e l'uomo gridò a squarcia gola: «Ho acciuffato il demone!» Un guardiano accor-

19 Il termine *shushao* 樹稍 è probabilmente un errore redazionale. Si propone di correggerlo con l'omofono *shushao* 樹梢 (cima dell'albero).

20 Questa specie di primate sarebbe riconducibile al genere *Macaca*, quindi *mihou* 獼猴si riferisce a un macaco (ZDBQ.2 1991, 976).

21 Nell'estratto viene citato il termine *muhou* 沐猴. Assieme al termine *muhou* 母猴, *muhou* 沐猴è un antico sinonimo di *muhou* 獼猴, macaco. Van Gulik tradusse *muhou* 母猴 in '*mother monkey*'. L'ideogramma *mu* 母, madre, vanta tre varianti: *mu* 沐 (nei testi di epoca Zhou, 1045 a.C.-256 a.C.), *mi* 米e *mi* 獼 (usato dagli Han in poi). Van Gulik sostenne che il binomio *muhou* si trattasse di una resa fonetica di un termine di origine straniera (1967, 35).

> se con una torcia, videro che si trattava di un macaco già morto per le ferite riportate. [...] Era soltanto un macaco di cui si ignorava la provenienza che soleva intrufolarsi ogni notte nelle abitazioni della gente per sgraffignare qualcosa. Poi arrivò Yuyan che lo scambiò per un demone e lo uccise. Non si presentarono più sciagure nel raggio di un isolato.[22] (TPGJ 446.5, 3645)

> 乃命妻子僮僕觀之。皆莫測。[...] 遂具喪服。以櫝招魂而葬焉。(太平廣記卷第 446 畜獸十三薛放曾祖)
> Ordinò a moglie, figlio e servi di cercare la scimmia, ma nessuno di loro riuscì a rilevare la sua presenza.[23] [...] Predisposero tutto il necessario per il funerale e celebrarono la cerimonia del richiamo delle anime *hun* di fronte allo stipo [con all'interno la scimmia] e lo seppellirono. (TPGJ 446.6,3646-3647)

> 又被人以其害稼。(太平廣記卷第 446 畜獸十三獼猴)
> I macachi danneggiavano i raccolti della gente. (TPGJ 446.8,3648)

A differenza delle scimmie classificate nella prima categoria, le scimmie sono qui presentate con una forma demoniaca di *gui* 鬼 o, in ogni caso, assumono una forma capace di confondere gli esseri umani. D'altra parte, si assiste a un inevitabile indebolimento umano dovuto alla presenza di una creatura non comune, incontrollabile e, solo apparentemente ingenua (dopo tutto, stiamo parlando di scimmie).

Più in dettaglio, gli estratti 446.2 e 446.8 riportano solo alcuni disastri causati da scimmie dispettose: qui possiamo denotare un minore disorientamento tra gli esseri umani. Nella prima, la scimmia Yebin è descritta come un primate selvatico e, oltre a qualche usuale disagio provocato al padrone Wang Renyu, non mostra alcun aspetto demoniaco, almeno non apparente; nella seconda, le scimmie sono accusate di danneggiare i raccolti e nella prossima categoria verrà approfondito il rimedio escogitato dall'essere umano. Le storie 3 e 4 nel *juan* 444 condividono un tipo di creatura comune che sarà approfondito meglio nell'ultima categoria.

I racconti 5 e 7 del *juan* 444, 3 e 4 del *juan* 445, 4, 5, 6, 8 del *juan* 446 mostrano creature viziose che portano gli esseri umani ad affrontare disastri, contrarre malattie e, nel peggiore dei casi, a un passo dalla morte. Il più delle volte la religione e la superstizione di-

22 *Li* 裡 è un'unità di misura di lunghezza che corrispondeva a circa 454 m nell'epoca Tang, periodo di redazione della raccolta *Jiwen* 紀聞 (Racconti e storie) attribuita a Niu Su 牛肅 (metà dell'VIII secolo) da cui proviene l'aneddoto. Tale misura è inoltre traducibile in 'vicinato'.

23 La frase *jie mo ce* 皆莫測 veicola un senso di timore e ansia dovuto all'impercettibilità del demone e alla natura imprevedibile dell'animale. Ciò enfatizza la natura spettrale e sovrannaturale dell'entità.

ventano una *conditio sine qua non* gli esseri umani non possono controllare lo spirito-scimmia. Nella storia 446.4 la malattia dell'uomo scompare solo dopo l'assassinio di una scimmia femmina che aveva trovato riparo all'interno di un cesto. Con lo stesso principio, dopo la morte del cosiddetto 'fantasma'[24] nel *zhiguai* 446.5 nessuno incorrerà in disastri all'interno di un *li*. Nel 445.3, il cugino di Ke veste i panni di un taoista capace di percepire un *qi* malvagio sul cugino. Lo sgomento e la perdizione avvertiti nel racconto 446.6 portano alla misura risolutiva di rinchiudere lo spirito in uno stipo e di seppellirlo, rivelando così il sempre attuale tema della superstizione, per sopprimere quel male sconosciuto. Il racconto 445.4 mostra un gruppo di suore che mirano a sedurre e intrattenere l'esploratore Shang. Non siamo a conoscenza del motivo per cui i viaggiatori di passaggio non facciano più ritorno a casa ma, da quanto apprendiamo dalle parole del barcaiolo, «[n]on sono altro che scimmie». Questa volta, non ci è dato sapere se le scimmie si siano trasformate in suore o si siano semplicemente camuffate.

4 Antropomorfizzazione e bestializzazione

In questa sezione è possibile approfondire solo i racconti 446.8, 446.12 e 446.13. Le scimmie sono qui ridotte in uno stato pietoso dalla brutalità degli uomini che contravvengono alla loro natura razionale ignorando i più elementari principi di rispetto della vita. In questi estratti si riscontra una 'trasmutazione dell'anima': la scimmia acquisisce alti valori morali, mentre l'uomo diventa brutale.

> 有如坐禪。則必相悅而來。馴擾之。逡巡衆去。唯留一箇。伴假僧偶坐。僧以斧擊。將歸充食。他日更要。亦如前法擊之。然眾竟不之發覺。[...]乃致酒糟盆盛。措於野逕。仍削木棒可長一二尺者三五十條。於側邊。其猴啗糟醉後。拈棒相擊。腳手損折。由此併獲。(太平廣記卷第 446 畜獸十三獼猴)
> [L'uomo] si sedette in posizione di meditazione e le scimmie non poterono che correre verso di lui gioiosamente per stuzzicarlo per poi scappare via e rimanerne solamente una ad accompagnare la falsa meditazione dell'uomo. Il falso monaco afferrò un'ascia e lo uccise, poi lo portò via con sé e saziò la sua fame. Giorni dopo, nuovamente in preda alla fame, continuò alla stessa maniera a trucidarne altri. Le scimmie non sembravano capire cosa stesse accadendo. [...] La gente riempì catini di feccia e li dispose lun-

24 Il definire un qualcosa di sconosciuto, come appunto un demone, era considerata una pratica non solo in grado di controllare creature oscure ma anche una tecnica curativa e apotropaica per scacciare le malattie, possibilmente causate da un '*qi* angosciato e irritato', curabili appunto solamente dalla risoluzione dell'identità sconosciuta (Sterckx 2002, 19, 220).

go i sentieri dei campi aperti. Poi ricavò alcune clave lunghe uno o due *chi*,[25] tenendole pronte per l'uso. Non appena le scimmie venivano adescate dall'alcool e si ubriacavano, gli uomini uscivano allo scoperto per attaccarle. Fracassavano i loro arti e solo così riuscivano ad acchiapparle. (TPGJ 446.8, 3648)

雖殺之[26]不去。此禽獸之狀而人心也。樂羊、張仁願、史牟,則人之狀而禽獸心也。(太平廣記卷第446 畜獸十三果然)
Anche quando un surili veniva ucciso gli altri esemplari non scappavano via. L'animo di queste bestiole è simile all'animo umano. Al contrario, l'animo di persone come Yue Yang, Zhang Renyuan, Shi Mou[27] è bestiale. (TPGJ 446.12, 3650)

獵師採取者,多以桑弧檑矢射之。[28]其雄而有毫者,聞人犬之聲,則捨群而竄。[...] 其雄有中箭者,則拔其矢嗅之,覺有藥氣,則折而擲之。噸眉愁沮,攀枝蹲於樹巔。於時藥作抽掣,手足俱散。臨墮而卻攬其枝,攬 是者數十度。前後嘔噦,呻吟之聲,與人無別。每口中涎出,則悶絕手散。墮在半樹,接得一細枝稍,懸身移時,力所不濟,乃墮於地。則人犬齊到,斷其命焉。[...] 若使仁人

25 In questo caso la misura era pari a 33 cm, considerando che il brano proviene dalla raccolta datata al periodo delle Cinque Dinastie e Dieci Regni *Beimeng suoyan* 北夢瑣言 (Sogni del nord e parole insignificanti) attribuita all'ufficiale Sun Guangxian 孫光憲 (900-968).

26 *Zhi* 之 è qui impiegato come *guoran* 果然. *Guoran*, scritto anche *guoran* 猓然, indica uno gibbone con una lunga coda citato nei testi antichi. Questo esemplare di primate apparterebbe al genere *Presbytis*, quindi è possibile identificarlo con un surili (*Zhongguo jingji dongwu zhi* 中國經濟動物誌 1964, 64).

27 Per quanto riguarda Shi Mou 史牟 (?-?) non siamo a conoscenza di fonti storiche che menzionino questo personaggio. Riguardo a Zhang Renyuan 張仁願 (?-714) sappiamo che raggiunse la carica di censore imperiale. A quel tempo, il censore Guo Ba 郭霸 (?-?) aveva presentato un memoriale per l'imperatrice Wu Zetian 武則天 (624-705) in cui sosteneva che lei fosse la reincarnazione di Maitreya, mentre l'ufficiale Zhang Jiafu 張嘉福 (?-710) aveva istigato Wang Qingzhi 王慶之 (?-?) a presentare una petizione per riconoscere Wu Chengsi 武承嗣 (?-698) come sua nipote. Zhang Renyuan aveva il compito di consegnare entrambi i documenti, ma rifiutò di farlo (*Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 1975, 2981). Quanto a Yue Yang 樂羊 (?-?), egli fu un generale dello stato di Wei 魏. Durante la spedizione di conquista dello Zhongshan, a Yue Yang fu mostrato il figlio, catturato per indebolire il morale del padre, poi fatto uccidere dal sovrano di Zhongshan. La sua carne divenne ingrediente per lo stufato offerto al padre. Quest'ultimo lo bevve senza problemi proprio per affermare la propria risolutezza (Wu 2017, 50).

28 *Zhi* 之 è qui un pronome che sostituisce il carattere *rong* 狨. Questa specie di primate apparterrebbe al genere *Callithrichinae* o *Hapalinae*, pertanto è possibile identificarlo con un uistitì o un tamarino (ZDBQ.2 1991, 1222). Secondo Van Gulik il carattere *rong* potrebbe persino trattarsi di un nome desueto per il genere *Rhinopithecus Roxellana*, identificando ulteriormente l'animale con un rinopiteco dorato (Van Gulik 1967, 36). Nel dizionario Song *Piya* 埤雅 (Aggiunta all'eleganza) si legge: «Rong appartiene probabilmente alla famiglia dei primati. È capace di risalire con agilità gli alberi. La sua taglia è simile a quella di un gibbone e possiede una lunga coda dorata. Viene comunemente soprannominato 'rong dal manto dorato' e vive nei pressi di aree fluviali, valli e remote montagne [...]. Viene anche chiamato col nome di *nao* 猱» (KZ nr. 27, 710). Nel presente studio viene scelta la resa in uistitì.

> 觀之,則不忍寢其皮,食其肉。若無憫惻之心者,其肝是鐵石,其人為禽獸。(太平廣記卷第446 畜獸十三狨)
> Un giorno arrivarono abili cacciatori per dar loro la caccia. Portavano con loro archi e frecce ricavati da alberi di gelso. Non appena udirono gli uomini e il latrato dei cani, gli esemplari maschi e quelli dal pelo lungo si allontanarono subito dal gruppo a gambe levate. […] Ogni volta che un maschio veniva centrato da una freccia, la estraeva per annusarla. Quando percepiva il puzzo di veleno, la spezzava per poi gettarla via. Poi aggrottava le sopracciglia e, terrorizzato, scalava i rami sino a giungere alla cima dell'albero. Quando il veleno iniziava a fare effetto, l'animale avvertiva gli spasmi e con le zampe si grattava tutto il corpo. Iniziava così a precipitare dall'albero, seppur aggrappandosi ai rami tentando di non mollare la presa e strappando un ramo, poi un altro, fino a strapparne una decina. Prima o poi vomitava ogni cosa gemendo proprio come un essere umano. Ogni volta che la bava veniva fuori dalla bocca, per il soffocamento allentava la presa continuando a cadere dall'albero, cercando ancora di afferrare un ramoscello di qua e là e non lasciandolo andare. Giungeva al suolo e cacciatori e cani, congiuntamente, mettevano fine alla sua vita. […] Se quegli uomini avessero nutrito compassione, non avrebbero di certo dormito su cuscini ricavati dalle pelli degli uistitì sterminati, né avrebbe potuto mangiare le loro carni. Detto ciò, coloro i quali non possiedono un animo orientato alla compassione presentano un cuore di pietra e, pertanto, si identificano con una belva. (TPGJ 446.13, 3651)

Ripercorrendo gli eventi nelle due storie 446.12 e 446.13 analizzate possiamo osservare un atteggiamento diverso tra surili e uistitì durante gli attacchi umani. Mentre i primi si adeguano non reagendo alla ferocia dell'uomo, gli uistitì sono costretti a soccombere uno dopo l'altro a seguito di una lunga agonia. L'estratto descrive la lenta agonia patita dal maschio uistitì che, dopo innumerevoli sofferenze viene, quasi ironicamente, freddato dai cani e dai cacciatori.[29] Nel primo episodio i macachi vengono fatti a brandelli senza alcuna descrizione della loro reazione. Mentre nel brano 446.12 l'uomo trucida le indifese bestiole senza un apparente motivo, nell'episodio 446.8 il falso monaco buddista si abbandona ai piaceri di gola.

29 Il carattere *duan* 斷 nell'espressione *duan qi ming yan* 斷其命焉, traducibile con 'spezzare', 'interrompere' o 'metter fine', oltre alla sua funzione semantica potrebbe averne una di cesura ritmica. Infatti, *duan* metterebbe fine a una climax ascendente che ha come oggetto la tribolazione dell'uistitì.

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Nel racconto 446.13 viene proposto il tema della caccia,[30] qui i cacciatori mancano visibilmente di compassione (qualità che viene invece riscontrata nei docili surili), venendo identificati alla pari di bestie brute. Una storia difficilmente approfondibile è la 446.2. Qui, nonostante la profonda vicinanza tra la scimmia Yebin e il benevolo padrone Wang Renyu, non si ha una percettibile contaminazione tra la natura dei due personaggi. Il loro rapporto, nonostante gli incomodi causati dall'animale, risulta comunque rispettoso identificandosi con un legame di reciprocità esprimibile con il valore confuciano *xiao* 孝, pietà filiale.[31]

5 La trasmutazione della forma espressiva

Nel paragrafo precedente si è parlato di come l'animale, scontrandosi con la ferocia umana, tenda a esternare il suo animo benigno. L'incontro-scontro con l'uomo non trasforma la scimmia solo spiritualmente. Infatti, nei testi seguenti si mette in risalto la trasformazione che coinvolge anche la loro forma espressiva. Questa sezione racchiude i brani 2, 3, 7, 9 e 10 del *juan* 446 ed esamina un tipo di antropomorfizzazione fondata sulle consuetudini umane.

> 群問曰: «公是何年生。»答曰: «今已衰邁,忘其生之年月。憶從軒轅之時,始學歷數。[…] 至顓頊,更考定日月星辰之運,多差異。»
> Qun chiese: «Venerando, in che anno siete nato?» L'anziano rispose: «Sono imbarbogito, non riesco a ricordare il momento esatto in cui son venuto al mondo. Ricordo solo che ai tempi di Xuanyuan[32] intrapresi gli studi del ciclo lunare. […] Ai tempi di Zhuanxu,[33] ap-

30 Questa attività, giudicata come trasgressione del codice morale, fu la causa principale che avrebbe portato non solo alla discordia e all'antagonismo tra uomini e animali, ma anche alla ferocia di questi ultimi. Tale pratica venne consolidata dalla necessità della consumazione della carne, dalla conservazione della natura e per ragioni rituali. Le descrizioni circa le tecniche di caccia la giudicavano sia una pratica per abbattere gli animali, che un'azione morale atta alla preservazione della natura. La relazione tra questi due concetti sarebbe dimostrata dall'omofonia dei caratteri *shou* 狩 (caccia invernale) e *shou* 守 (preservare) (Sterckx 2002, 142-3).

31 Mentre con la scimmia è possibile identificare un rapporto di continua sottomissione al volere del padrone, nei riguardi del padrone il rapporto sembra giungere a un livello paritario: oltre a dargli un nome, Wang Renyu scriverà per lui due poemi e auspicherà che l'animale non dimentichi mai il suo vecchio padrone. Il culmine del rapporto di amicizia tra i due potrebbe essere descritto dal nastro rosso che il signor Wang decide di allacciare al collo dell'animale. È proprio grazie a quel particolare che anche distanza di anni gli permetterà di riconoscere Yebin. Con i dovuti collegamenti, l'episodio pare rievocare l'antica leggenda del filo rosso del destino, *yinyuan hongxian* 姻緣紅線.

32 Il nome Xuanyuan 軒轅 si riferisce alla figura mitologica di Huangdi 黃帝 (?-?), l'Imperatore Giallo, uno dei Cinque Imperatori vissuti nel periodo tra il 2850 e il 2205 a.C.

33 Zhuanxu 顓頊 (?-?) fu nipote di Huangdi e uno dei Cinque Imperatori.

profondì l'errare dei corpi celesti e tutte le loro differenze». (TPGJ 444.2, 3628-3629)

婦人競以玉杯進酒,諧笑甚歡。既飲數鬥,則扶之而去。[…] 旦盥洗,著帽,加白袷。被素羅衣,不知寒暑。[…] 所居常讀木簡,字若符篆,了不可識。[…] 夜就諸牀嬲戲。一夕皆週,未嘗寐。[…] 言語淹詳,華音會利。然其狀即猳[34]玃類也。
Le donne facevano a gara a chi doveva passargli la coppa in giada di vino, tutte ridevano al massimo della loro felicità. Dopo aver ripulito diverse giare di vino, le ragazze sollevarono [il gibbone bianco] e lo trasportarono fuori dal palazzo. […] [L'animale] era solito sciacquarsi all'alba per poi indossare un copricapo, un abito bianco e avvolgersi in una veste di seta, indifferentemente dal caldo o dal freddo. […] Nella sua dimora leggeva spesso iscrizioni su tavolette in legno, i caratteri incisi erano gli stessi di quelli sui talismani, erano del tutto indecifrabili. […] Di notte si divertiva a importunare le ragazze nelle stanze da letto. In una nottata riusciva a divertirsi con tutte senza mai riposare. […] I suoi discorsi erano profondi e distinti, il suo tono di voce era piacevole. Pur tuttavia, aveva un aspetto scimmiesco. (TPGJ 444.4, 3631)

僧曰: «《金剛經》雲: '過去心不可得,現在心不可得,未來心不可得,'檀越若要取吾心,亦不可得矣。»
Il monaco si apprestò a recitare il *Sutra del diamante*: «La mente del passato è inconseguibile, la mente del presente è inconseguibile, la mente del futuro è inconseguibile», poi riprese: «Se è il mio cuore ciò che desideri, anche quello ti è inconseguibile!». (TPGJ 445.2, 3638)

其未達時,家貧,獨有一婢,廚中方爨,出汲水還,乃見老猿為其看火,婢驚白之。(太平廣記卷第 444 畜獸十一 魏元忠)
Ancor prima di ottenere fama e fortuna la sua famiglia versava in condizioni di miseria, vantavano soltanto una serva. Un giorno che ella doveva cucinare, uscì per attingere dell'acqua. Fece ritorno e fu allora che sorprese un vecchio gibbone a sorvegliare la fiamma. La serva si allarmò e andò a informare il padrone. (TPGJ 444.6, 3633)

34 Il carattere *jia* 猳 viene spesso usato per un tipo di scimmia rintracciabile nelle fonti cinesi antiche. Come si può notare da questa e da altre occorrenze in questa ricerca, il carattere viene spesso abbinato a quello di jue 玃, anche questo assoggettato a un primate.

有使院老將馬元章曰: «市上有一人。善弄胡猻。»[35]乃使召至。指示之曰:«速擒來。» 於是大胡猻躍上衙屋趕之。
L'ufficiale veterano Ma Yuanzhang informò: «In città c'è un tale che sa mettere in riga gli *husun*». L'uomo fu fatto convocare. Una volta giunto gli indicarono Yebin e gli diedero la direttiva: «Andate a prenderlo e portatemelo qui». E fu così che un grande *husun* si arrampicò sul tetto dello *yamen* e rincorse Yebin. (TPGJ 446.2, 3644)

昭問之雲: «初見一年少。著黃練單衣。白紗帢。甚可愛。語笑如人。»(太平廣記卷第 446 畜獸十一翟昭)
Di Zhao interrogò le concubine e queste risposero: «Appariva nelle vesti di un giovane estremamente affascinante che vestiva un abito sfoderato di seta gialla con un copricapo di cotone bianco. Rideva e parlava come un uomo». (TPGJ 446.3, 3645)

對曰: «胡猻乃獸。實不會人語。»於度緣飼之靈砂。«變其獸心。然後可教。» (太平廣記卷第 446 畜獸十一楊於度)
Lui rispose: «Gli *husun* sono belve e pertanto non dovrebbero essere in grado di parlare la lingua umana». Yudu proseguì spiegando gli effetti causati dall'assunzione del cinabro divino. «Tuttavia, grazie a questo è possibile mutare il loro animo selvaggio. Solo allora gli *husun* possono essere istruiti». (TPGJ 446.7, 3647)

猩猩好酒與屐。人欲取者,置二物以誘之。猩猩始見,必大詈雲: «誘我也。» 乃絕走而去之。(太平廣記卷第 446 畜獸十一 好酒)
Gli orangotanghi amano il vino e gli zoccoli di legno. Quando gli esseri umani vogliono catturarli, basta preparare queste due cose per attirarli. Quando gli orangotanghi li trovano s'infuriano e danno l'allarme: «Vogliono adescarci!», quindi sgomberano subito l'area. (TPGJ 446.9, 3648)

安南武平縣封溪中,有猩猩焉。如美人,解人語,知往事。以嗜酒故,以屐得之。(太平廣記卷第 446 畜獸十一能言)
Nel Fengxi, nella contea di Wuping dello Annan, abita una specie di orangotanghi di bell'aspetto capaci di comprendere la lingua degli esseri umani e di conoscere gli eventi passati. Sono adescabili a causa del loro amore per il vino e per gli zoccoli di legno. (TPGJ 446.10, 3648)

Si individuano tre sottocategorie prominenti: quella relativa alla capacità di parlare la lingua umana: quel mezzo che teoricamente do-

35 Zhang (2015) considera il termine *husun* 猢猻, o *husun* 胡孫, una voce per riferirsi in senso generale al macaco.

vrebbe contraddistinguere l'uomo dagli animali è qui il sistema di comunicazione usato e/o compreso anche dai primati; quella concernente le abitudini umane e il modo di vestire delle scimmie; quella legata al rapporto sessuale con gli esseri umani.

Per il caso del linguaggio umano, se negli estratti 446.3 e 446.10 questa abilità è citata per due esemplari di primati, nelle storie 446.2, 446.7 e 446.9 tale capacità è soltanto allusa. Nel racconto 446.2 il grande *husun* dimostra di intendere il messaggio del padrone. Si noti tuttavia che nel racconto non è specificato il codice usato dall'uomo per farsi comprendere. Qualcosa di analogo accade nell'estratto 446.9, quando gli orangotanghi urlano la frase «Vogliono adescarci!». Per il resto, si sottintende una particolare 'glossolalia' già nel titolo del racconto 446.10, *neng yan* 能言 (capacità di parlare). In particolare, nella storia 446.7 non abbiamo alcun discorso formulato da un *husun*, si accenna però che l'acquisizione del linguaggio umano è possibile solo dopo aver consumo il cinabro divino. Nel racconto 444.2 dopo la trasformazione di una scimmia in un anziano, quest'ultimo spiegherà fluentemente la propria sorprendente longevità e si presenterà nelle vesti di astronomo. Nel racconto 444.6 l'animale è intento a sorvegliare la fiamma delle cucine mentre la serva si allontana. Il cambiamento della forma espressiva che avviene nel portamento di questi animali in seguito alla loro contaminazione con l'uomo si desume anche dalla dipendenza per il vino e per gli zoccoli di legno da parte degli orangotanghi riconducile nelle storie 446.9 e 446.10.

Come si è letto nell'occorrenza 445.2 della prima categoria, Zong Su decide di darsela a gambe. Il motivo sta nel fatto che, prima della trasformazione, l'uomo che ha di fronte appare come un semplice eremita disposto a donare al ragazzo ciò che più cerca, vale a dire un cuore umano per curare quello malato del padre. L'astuta creatura che ben presto si palesa come scimmia demone, col pretesto di recitare un sutra riesce a mettere in atto un vero e proprio ladrocinio. Il giovane non riceverà quel cuore.[36] Le tematiche dell'erudizione e dell'inganno qui constatate sono riconducibili anche in altri brani spiegati di seguito. La storia 444.4 presenta un gibbone unico nel suo genere, in grado di essere inserito in tutte e tre le sottocategorie: questa scimmia può comunicare con le signore nella sua dimora ed è in grado di leggere caratteri indecifrabili, veste abiti umani e si disseta con l'alcol.[37] Il tema dell'antropofilia è registrato anche

36 Nel brano la creatura si prende gioco del ragazzo ricorrendo a un gioco di parole che vede la sostituzione di 'mente', *xin* 心 per 'cuore', anch'esso *xin*. Per un approfondimento tematico si veda Zhang 2012, in cui espone un paragone tra l'essere di questo brano e Sun Wukong.

37 Secondo Dudbridge (1970) anche questo tipo di primate avrebbe avuto una certa influenza su Sun Wukong, identificando quest'ultimo come un personaggio mostruoso. Tuttavia, Lai (1994) confuta questa idea: il gibbone bianco è un cacciatore di donne,

in 444.3 e 446.3, con la presentazione di scimmie demoniache che in maniera del tutto inosservata riescono a catturare e ad assoggettare donne al loro volere sessuale.[38] Nella storia 444.3 la scimmia mantiene la sua forma animale, mentre la routine del gibbone nella storia 444.4 rappresenta assai similmente quella di un essere umano.[39] Nel racconto 446.3 Di Zhao decide di crescere un macaco nel suo harem e inaspettatamente tutte le concubine mettono al mondo dei bastardi[40] capaci di saltare con agilità, da cui ne risultò la drastica azione di sterminare i bambini e il macaco. La natura demoniaca di questa scimmia è qui evidenziata dal suo camuffarsi per apparire nelle vesti di un uomo virtuoso.

I primati sono ricondotti a creature lussuriose e a comuni predatori sessuali. In relazione all'antropofilia da parte dei primati, è possibile tracciare un legame con l'adorazione dei Qiang 羌, popolo stanziato nella regione occidentale della Cina tra il Sichuan e le province dello Yunnan, ipotetici discendenti risultanti da una scimmia maschio e una figlia di un essere divino (Xue 2012, 20).[41] Tale prole ibrida si confonderebbe facilmente tra gli esseri umani, come abbiamo potuto leggere in molti estratti finora analizzati.[42]

mentre Sun Wukong si atteggia come un 'diavoletto'. La connessione tra le due creature sarebbe quindi più tenue di quanto appaia.

38 Si noti che nelle fonti letterarie cinesi è anche possibile riscontrare l'esatto fenomeno opposto, la teratofilia. Alcuni esempi qui citati sono i brani 444.5 e 445.3. Per un saggio sulla tematica si veda Gatti 2014.

39 Il racconto si conclude con la nascita di una creatura prodotta dall'amore tra il gibbone e una fanciulla. Nella descrizione del discendente si legge *jue zhuang xiao yan* 厥狀肖焉 (aveva l'aspetto del padre). Nello specifico, si fa allusione a Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641), uomo di talento spesso ridicolizzato proprio per la sua bruttezza scimmiesca. Sul personaggio di Ouyang Xun, si veda per esempio TPG 249.9 (太平廣記卷第249 詼諧四長孫無忌).

40 Nel racconto si legge *ge chan zi san tou* 各產子三頭 (ogni concubina diede alla luce tre figli). Il classificatore *tou* 頭 qui è normalmente usato per indicare capi di bestiame e specifici animali domestici (Xue 2012, 25). Quest'uso potrebbe rimarcare una maggiore percentuale animalesca dei neonati.

41 Tra questi aneddoti, si propone di seguito una brevissima storia contenuta nel *juan* 480 (*Manyi, yi* 蠻夷一) che pone ancora una volta l'accento sui rapporti tra primati ed esseri umani. 帝女子澤性妒。有從婢散逐四山,無所依託。東偶狐狸,生子曰殃;南交猴,有子曰溪;北通玃猳,所育為傖。(太平廣記卷第480 蠻夷一帝女子澤) 'Huangdi aveva una figlia di nome Zize che presentava un'indole alquanto gelosa. Così un giorno decise di far disperdere le sue serve per i quattro lati della montagna. Tutte loro non avevano nessuno a cui affidarsi. La serva che s'inoltrò verso est si accoppiò con le volpi, i nascituri presero il nome di Yang; quella che si spostò verso sud si congiunse con le scimmie, la prole prese il nome di Xi; quella che si diresse a nord si unì con creature scimmiesche, la discendenza prese il nome di Cang' (TPGJ 480.3, 3951).

42 In particolare, con l'espressione presente nel racconto 444.3 *yu ren wuyi* 與人無異 (non diverso dagli uomini).

6 Conclusioni

La ricerca ha avuto lo scopo di analizzare le storie sulle scimmie contenute nei *juan* 444, 445 e 446 del TPGJ. Tali resoconti anomali ci permettono di capire meglio come diversi esemplari di primati fossero percepiti nella letteratura cinese antica. Attraverso uno studio comparativo e l'utilizzo della nozione di *bianxing*, è stato possibile notare come l'oggetto di discussione delle venticinque storie rivela primati capaci di mutare forma. Questi cambiamenti interessano quattro distinte categorie: la trasmutazione della forma fisica, la trasformazione in forma demoniaca, l'antropomorfizzazione causata dalla bestializzazione dell'uomo e la trasformazione della forma espressiva. Si è cercato inoltre di limitare la confusione terminologica, sussistente tutt'oggi,[43] nel definire creature citate nelle fonti cinesi antiche.

Accanto alla comune trasformazione fisica ritroviamo quella spirituale, che consiste in un indebolimento dell'essere umano. L'uccisione dei primati da parte dell'uomo può essere considerata talvolta una cura, come nel caso dell'episodio in 446.4, talvolta una sovversione naturale che comporta una pena.[44] La terza categoria presenta un capovolgimento naturale: a seguito di una 'contaminazione' ritroviamo 'animali umanizzati' e 'uomini brutali',[45] l'oggetto centrale è il processo di moralizzazione animale, la caccia.[46] Nell'ultima categoria i primati hanno dimostrato di possedere forme espressive ri-

43 Si noti per esempio la nota esplicativa sul carattere *jue* 玃, delle volte definito un macaco altre volte un gibbone. Van Gulik (1967) prima e Zhang (2015) dopo spiegano come la differenziazione tra macachi e gibboni iniziò a delinearsi durante le dinastie Zhou e Qin, per mancanza di descrizioni. Si dovette aspettare il periodo Han per avere delle prime trattazioni che sembravano preferire i gibboni, visti come misteriose creature dalle lunghe zampe capaci di vivere più a lungo dei macachi, venendo associati alla figura dei preti taoisti. Invece, i macachi furono frequentemente usati per gli spettacoli di acrobazia venendo considerati volgari e inutili. In seguito, sempre più commentari evidenziarono la predilezione per i gibboni. La vera difficoltà di distinzione tra i due termini avvenne durante la dinastia Yuan (1279-1368) a causa della crescita demografia che comportò la diminuzione dei primati con continue deforestazioni e cambiamenti climatici.

44 Come quella a seguito dell'uccisione prematura del gibbone da parte di Deng Zhi 鄧芝 (178-251). Nel seguente estratto viene fatta sua menzione: 昔鄧芝射猿,其子拔其矢,以木葉塞瘡。芝曰:«吾違物性,必將死焉。«Una volta Deng Zhi scoccò una freccia contro un gibbone, poi suo figlio la estrasse e applicò sulla ferita le foglie di una pianta. Zhi rifletté: «Ho contravvenuto alle regole naturali e non mi spetta che morire» (TPGJ 446.13, 3651).

45 Tuttavia, è opportuno sottolineare che nel racconto 446.2 si arguisce una 'umanizzazione marginale' della scimmia e una 'animalizzazione marginale' dell'uomo. All'osservanza della pietà filiale segue quella di umanità, *ren* 仁, da parte del padrone.

46 Oltre a esser percepita come una soluzione per soddisfare i bisogni umani, questa può anche esser vista come un tentativo dell'uomo di imporsi politicamente e religiosamente in un territorio che non gli appartiene e come una maniera per descrivere le specie di animali che abitavano l'impero. L'armonia primordiale si interruppe con l'avvento delle armi che sostituirono il governo attraverso la virtù e il desiderio di caccia ridefinì il rapporto uomo-animale (Sterckx 2002, 109, 139-40).

conducibili a quelle umane e di non mancare sicuramente di *savoir-faire*: si denotano la comprensione del linguaggio umano, l'amore per l'alcol e l'attenzione per l'abbigliamento e un'antropofilia che li porta a ingravidare le donne per ereditare un particolare lignaggio.

L'analisi delle quattro categorie di trasmutazione ci porta in ultima analisi alla conclusione che le scimmie dei racconti nei tre capitoli «Chushou» contenuti del TPGJ si mostrano in svariate forme. La consueta forma di animale subisce processi di trasformazione nel momento in cui vengono calati nello spaccato sociale degli esseri umani. Proprio come premesso prima, dalla traduzione integrale dei brani, che comprendono *zhiguai* Han e *chuanqi* del medioevo cinese, si ricava una determinata eterogeneità stilistica e una rilevante omogeneità tematica. Tuttavia, questo lavoro ha analizzato soltanto una porzione relativa ai racconti sulle scimmie all'interno del TPGJ e ci sarebbe ancora molto da approfondire; la presente ricerca ci ha permesso comunque di percorrere in modo preliminare un periodo di circa mille anni.[47] Per un'analisi più approfondita delle creature scimmiesche registrare in questo *leishu* sembrerebbe più che pertinente concentrarsi anche, e soprattutto, su quelle al di fuori dei tre capitoli qui discussi.

Riepilogo e glossario dei nomi

Di seguito un breve riepilogo su alcuni esemplari di primati, citati e non, rintracciabili nei testi antichi, classificabili per genere e quindi traducibili in italiano.

Tabella 1 Breve glossario sui primati rintracciabili nei testi antichi e classificabili per genere

Carattere cinese	Nomenclatura del genere	Resa italiana
Fei 狒 (o *feifei* 狒狒)*	*Papio* (ZDBQ.1 1991, 339)	Babbuino della savana
Guoran 果然 (o *guoran* 猓然)	*Presbytis*	Surili
Mihou 獼猴 (o *muhou* 母猴o ancora *muhou* 沐猴)	*Macaca*	Macaco
Rong 狨	*Callithrichinae* o *Hapalinae*; *Rhinopithecus Roxellana*	Uistitì o tamarino; rinopiteco dorato
Shanxiao 山魈**	*Mandrillus* (ZDBQ.2 1991, 1280)	Mandrillo

47 Di questi venticinque brani la fonte più antica si identifica con lo *Wu Yue chunqiu* 吳越春秋 (Annali delle primavere e degli autunni degli stati Wu e di Yue) dello storico Zhao Ye 趙曄 (inizio del I secolo) risalente al periodo Han orientale (25-220), mentre quella più recente è lo *Jishen lu* 稽神錄 (Annotazioni di indagini sugli spiriti) del letterato Xuan Xu 徐鉉 (916-991) datata al periodo Song Settentrionale (960-1127).

Xingxing 猩猩 (o *shengsheng* 狌狌)	*Pongo pygmaeus*	Orangotango
Yuan 猿 (o *yuan* 猨o ancora *yuan* 蝯)	*Hylobatidae*	Gibbone

* Sul carattere *fei* 狒, o *feifei* 狒狒, nel dizionario *Erya* si legge: «Tutti gli esemplari di babbuini assomigliano all'uomo. Sono ricoperti di peluria, vanno sempre di fretta e sono mangiauomini» (KZ nr. 5, 709).

** Relativamente al carattere *xiao* 魈, l'opera esoterica di epoca Jin orientale *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (Il maestro che abbraccia la semplicità) registra: «Esiste uno spirito delle montagne che ha sembianze di un bambino; è monopede e la notte si diverte ad attaccare gli uomini. Il suo nome è *xiao*, e pronunciando il suo nome esso non potrà aggredirti» (KZ nr. 15, 1462).

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L'introduzione del Naturalismo in Cina, il ruolo di Mao Dun e il dibattito sulla stampa

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Abstract This article presents the introduction of Naturalism in China and its first mentions since the end of the nineteenth century. It examines the main terms of the debate on Naturalism (1920-21), after Mao Dun proposed his translation project of Naturalist and Realist works (1920), and the reflections and notes by some writers-translators on this issue. It is argued that Mao Dun's translation proposal constitutes the first model of planned literary translation to carry out specific political-cultural projects. It is also argued that Naturalism underwent a process of localisation in China to serve as a tool for making the transition toward a modern Chinese literature.

Keywords Naturalism. Literary theory. Mao Dun. Realism. Literary translation. Translation policy. Zola. Localisation.

Sommario 1 Introduzione. – 2 L'interesse per la letteratura francese, i primi riferimenti al Naturalismo. – 3 1920-1922: Il progetto di traduzione proposto da Mao Dun e il dibattito sulla stampa. – 4 Riflessioni di traduttori-scrittori sulle opere di Zola.

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1 Introduzione

Con l'introduzione e la diffusione del Naturalismo, per la prima volta tra gli intellettuali cinesi si fa strada l'idea dell'attuazione di una strategia culturale complessiva che, attraverso una attenta programmazione dell'attività di traduzione di testi, mirava a sostenere un preciso progetto politico-culturale volto ad ammodernare la cultura cinese, allargandone i confini e aprendola alle novità provenienti dall'estero. Un progetto che vede la letteratura – soprattutto la narrativa – come strumento di conoscenza, di critica e cambiamento sociale, in grado di influenzare profondamente la coscienza e le scelte dei lettori. È su questa strada che, nei decenni successivi, si assisterà all'affermazione del Realismo Socialista.

Sulle modalità di diffusione del Naturalismo in altri paesi orientali (Giappone e Corea) e del Nuovo Mondo (Argentina e Brasile), e sulle similitudini dei processi del suo adattamento alle peculiarità e alle esigenze locali abbiamo già interessanti saggi di Christopher Hill (2009; 2011). Sulla storia dell'introduzione, in tempi moderni, di correnti letterarie straniere in Cina, o sulle implicazioni teoriche e politiche della promozione del Naturalismo da parte di scrittori come Mao Dun (1896-1981) sono già apparsi studi importanti, come quelli di Bonnie McDougall (1971), Marian Galik (1966) e David Der-wei Wang (1986).

In questo studio mi concentrerò sui primi riferimenti al Naturalismo e a Zola presenti nei testi di noti intellettuali cinesi, ancor prima che Mao Dun proponesse nel 1920 il suo programma di traduzione di opere naturaliste e realiste, e riporterò i principali argomenti del dibattito scaturito dalla proposta di traduzione di Mao Dun, che si protrasse sulla stampa per quasi un anno. Riporterò infine le riflessioni di alcuni scrittori-traduttori che accompagnano le traduzioni delle opere che furono pubblicate a partire dal 1927,[1] quando il progetto di traduzione cominciò a realizzarsi.

2 L'interesse per la letteratura francese, i primi riferimenti al Naturalismo

Un primo segnale del nascente interesse per la cultura francese si può far risalire al 1871, quando Wang Tao 王韬 (1828-1897), intellettuale, scrittore e riformatore illuminato di epoca Qing, tradusse *La Marsigliese* (*Masaiqu* 马赛曲 o *masai jinxingqu* 马赛进行曲).[2] Wang ave-

1 La prima traduzione dal francese, *L'Inondazione*, apparve però nel 1917, come si dirà in seguito.

2 Le traduzioni dei titoli e le citazioni dal cinese, ove non altrimenti specificato, sono a cura dell'autrice.

va soggiornato in Scozia per oltre due anni (1867-70), viaggiando a lungo in Europa, e probabilmente tradusse il testo dall'inglese. La sua scelta non fu affatto casuale. *La Marsigliese*, originalmente scritta nel 1792 in occasione della dichiarazione di guerra della Francia all'Austria, era diventata inno nazionale prima nel 1795 e poi di nuovo nel 1876. Nato come inno alla lotta contro lo straniero, era poi stato il canto dei repubblicani anti-monarchici e dei rivoluzionari sulle barricate di Parigi. Fu probabilmente il carattere fortemente patriottico del testo, l'incitazione a ribellarsi e combattere fino alla vittoria, che suggerì a Wang Tao l'idea di tradurlo, convinto che il suo messaggio sarebbe stato di ispirazione e incoraggiamento al popolo cinese, spronandolo a liberare il Paese dalla umiliante presenza delle potenze straniere (Xie, Cha 2004).

La vera e propria diffusione della letteratura francese sarebbe però iniziata venti anni più tardi, con la traduzione di Lin Shu (1852-1924) de *La Signora delle Camelie* di A. Dumas figlio, comparsa nel 1898. Lo straordinario successo incontrato dal libro[3] incoraggiò la traduzione di testi di altri famosi scrittori francesi tra cui Hugo, Balzac, Maupassant, Verne (Pollard 1998).

Ciò che esercitava una grande forza di attrazione per la letteratura moderna straniera, soprattutto europea, sugli intellettuali e i riformatori cinesi di fine Ottocento, era il presunto ruolo di motore del cambiamento che essa aveva esercitato in quelle nazioni. Questa tesi idealizzante era già stata avanzata dal noto riformatore Liang Qichao (1873-1929), che era giunto a sostenere che le opere della nuova letteratura potevano addirittura riuscire a «cambiare il pensiero di un'intera nazione» (Wong 1998, 196).

Troviamo riferimenti al Naturalismo, e per la prima volta a Emile Zola,[4] in un saggio del 1915 di Chen Duxiu 陈独秀 (1879-1941), intellettuale progressista e figura centrale del Movimento per la Nuova Cultura. L'autore tracciava la storia dell'evoluzione della letteratura europea moderna, spiegando come dal Classicismo si fosse passati al Romanticismo, quindi al Realismo e infine al Naturalismo, nato e sviluppatosi di pari passo con la diffusione delle nuove teorie scientifiche. Chen sosteneva che le teorie naturaliste erano il prodotto più alto di una nuova epoca consacrata alla Scienza (*Sai xiansheng* 赛先生), che il Naturalismo era superiore al Classicismo e al Romanticismo proprio in quanto emanazione e incarnazione dello spirito scientifico e democratico dell'epoca. Definiva inoltre Zola come il «Napole-

3 Simon Leys racconta che della traduzione curata da Lin Shu anche Mao Zedong serbava un indelebile ricordo, tanto che durante un incontro con una delegazione di senatori francesi arrivò a lodare il romanzo come «massima espressione del genio letterario francese» (2005, 151).

4 Il nome di Zola fu tradotto come Zuola 左喇, Zaola 曹拉, Chala 差啦, 查拉 e, infine, Zuola 左拉.

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one del Naturalismo», auspicando la comparsa di «molti Zola» anche in Cina, perché in quel particolare momento storico il Paese aveva estremo bisogno di una letteratura naturalista.

In un altro intervento del dicembre dello stesso anno (1915), rispondendo a un lettore sulla necessità di promuovere il Naturalismo, Chen ribadiva che la letteratura cinese si trovava ancora nella fase del Classicismo e del Romanticismo, e che si doveva perciò «tendere verso il Realismo» (Chow 1960, 273). Un anno dopo, in una lettera del febbraio 1916, Chen affermava che «Realismo e Naturalismo procedono di pari passo con Scienza e Positivismo», di cui riteneva fossero le massime espressioni artistiche. La scienza, secondo Chen, avrebbe condotto al progresso sociale e liberato il pensiero, l'arte e la letteratura cinesi dalle vuote fantasticherie (*xu* 虚) della superstizione, calando l'individuo nella realtà concreta (*shi* 实). Aggiungeva inoltre che la crudezza e volgarità del Naturalismo, tanto criticate dai moralisti, miravano a mettere a nudo la realtà dell'esistenza umana, per questo il Naturalismo «è più avanti del Realismo» (Chen 1917, 202-3).

Un anno dopo, in un'altra lettera di risposta a un lettore, ribadiva le sue posizioni e affermava che «gli scrittori naturalisti hanno lo sguardo puntato sui fenomeni reali, le opposizioni bello-brutto, buono-cattivo, giusto-sbagliato non sono di loro interesse, perché essi descrivono solo realtà concrete […] Sono a favore dei Naturalisti […]» (Chen 1916, 110-11).

Come è stato già osservato, i termini Naturalismo (*Ziranzhuyi* 自然主义) e Realismo (*Xieshizhuyi* 写实主义) furono spesso confusi e usati in modo interscambiabile in Cina, fatto già avvenuto anche in Giappone (Sibley 1968; McDougall 1971), dove il Naturalismo aveva iniziato a diffondersi anni prima (Watanabe 2013).

È probabile che durante i ripetuti soggiorni in Giappone, Chen Duxiu avesse letto le opere dei naturalisti giapponesi, i saggi di Hogetsu Shimamura (1871-1918), *Il Naturalismo nella letteratura e nell'arte* del 1908, e di Shinzaburo Miyajima, *Il Naturalismo nell'arte*, che solo nei primi anni Venti sarebbero stati pubblicati in cinese, e avrebbero avuto ampia circolazione negli ambienti letterari (Liu 2006).

Una delle prime opere di Zola tradotte in cinese, a cura dello scrittore e sceneggiatore Zhou Shoujuan 周瘦鹃 (1895-1968), fu *L'Inondazione* (*Hongshui* 洪水), pubblicata nel 1917 in una antologia in tre volumi di racconti di noti scrittori europei e statunitensi (*Ouzhou mingjia duanpian xiaoshuo congkan* 欧洲名家短篇小说丛刊 1917) **[fig. 1]** e preceduta da una breve nota introduttiva sull'autore **[fig. 2]**.[5]

5 «Hongshui – yiming *The Inundation*, yuanzhuzhe Aimiye Chala, Chala xiaozhuan» 洪水-英名: «The Inundation», 原著者艾米也差啦,差啦小传 (1840-1902) (*L'Inondazione*, titolo inglese: *The Inundation*, di Emile Zola, Breve biografia di Zola [1840-1902]). *Ouzhou mingjia duanpian xiaoshuo congkan*, vol. 2, 1917, 92-3.

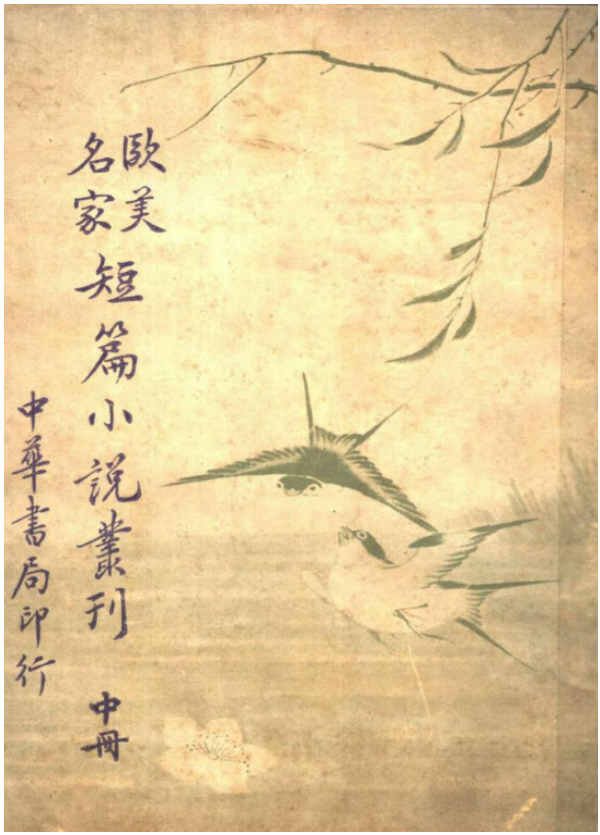
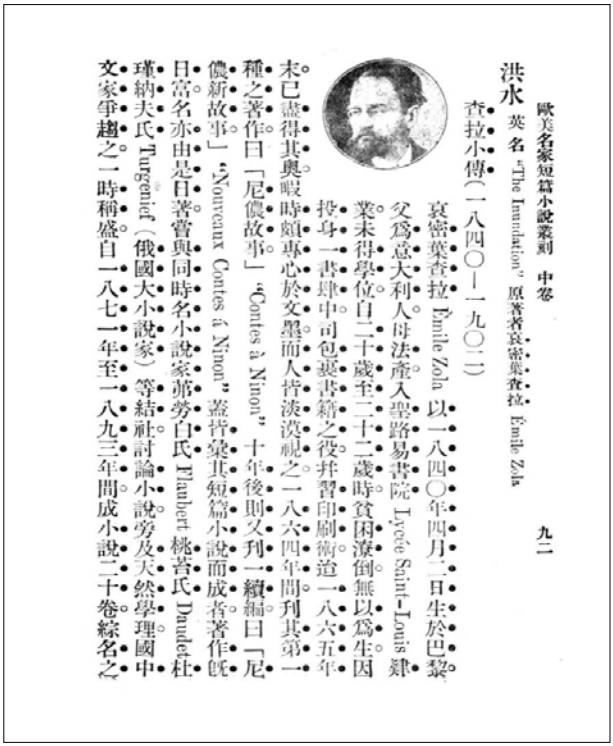


Figura 1
Oumei mingjia duanpian xiaoshuo congkan 歐美名家短篇小說叢刊 (Collana di Racconti di noti scrittori europei e statunitensi). Trad. dall'inglese di Zhou Shoujuan 周瘦鵑, vol. 2. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1917

Troviamo altri riferimenti al Naturalismo e a Zola nel resoconto di viaggio in Europa di Liang Qichao, pubblicato nel 1918 (cf. Dai 2009, 64-6), in cui Liang scrive che i naturalisti consideravano la società come «un laboratorio scientifico o una sala di anatomia, e analizzano con freddezza e rigore scientifici i moti dell'animo umano» (1918, 7-8). Liang esprimeva tuttavia alcune riserve, che ritroveremo anche in altri intellettuali, in particolare sulla centralità attribuita dai naturalisti all'oggettività delle descrizioni e alla rappresentazione degli istinti umani più bassi, aspetto a suo avviso negativo, perché offriva una visione pessimistica del genere umano, schiavo delle proprie pulsioni e delle condizioni materiali dell'esistenza.

A differenza di Chen Duxiu, le cui posizioni di sinistra erano ben note, le osservazioni di Liang Qichao, un intellettuale che aveva avuto un ruolo centrale nel movimento di rinnovamento di fine Ottocento, richiamarono maggiormente l'attenzione di scrittori e intellettuali sulla corrente che inizialmente si diffuse, come già accennato,


歐美名家短篇小說叢刻　中卷　九二

洪水　英名"The Inundation"　原著者哀密葉查拉 Émile Zola

查拉小傳（一八四〇—一九〇二）

哀密葉查拉 Émile Zola 以一八四〇年四月二日生於巴黎。父爲意大利人母法產入聖路易書院 Lycée Saint-Louis 肄業未得學位。自二十歲至二十二歲時貧困潦倒無以爲生。因投身一書肆中司包裹書籍之役。并習印刷術。迨一八六五年未已盡得其奧。暇時頗專心於文墨。而人皆淡漠視之。一八六四年間刊其第一種之著作曰「尼儂故事」"Contes à Ninon" 十年後則又刊一續編曰「尼儂新故事」"Nouveaux Contes á Ninon" 蓋皆彙其短篇小說而成者。著作既日富。名亦由是日著。嘗與同時名小說家莫勞白氏 Flaubert 桃若氏 Daudet 杜瑾納夫氏 Turgenief（俄國大小說家）等結社討論小說。旁及天然學理。國中文家爭趨之。二時稱盛。自一八七一年至一八九三年間成小說二十卷。綜名之

Figura 2
Oumei mingjia duanpian xiaoshuo congkan 歐美名家短篇小說叢刊 (Collana di Racconti di noti scrittori europei e statunitensi). Vol. 2, *Hongshui yingming* 洪水英名 *The Inundation* (*Inondazione* titolo inglese: *The Inundation*). Opera di Emile Zola, *Chala xiaozhuan* 查拉小傳 (1840-1902) (Breve biografia di Zola), p. 92

attraverso la mediazione di saggi teorici e traduzioni giapponesi di opere francesi ritradotti in cinese e, solo dagli anni Venti in poi, con la traduzione diretta dal francese di opere narrative e testi critici.

3 1920-1922: Il progetto di traduzione proposto da Mao Dun e il dibattito sulla stampa

Nel gennaio del 1920 Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之 (1896-1986), noto intellettuale, giornalista e redattore del *Dongfang Zazhi* 东方杂志, pubblicava un lungo saggio introduttivo sul realismo-naturalismo, ancora una volta usando in modo interscambiabile i termini. Nel saggio l'autore citava le opere di alcuni famosi scrittori tra cui Zola, Maupassant, Ibsen, Hauptmann, Strindberg, Hardy, Bjørnson, Tolstoy, Turgenev, ponendo l'accento sulla modernità dell'approccio e dei temi trattati, legati alle condizioni di vita e alle problematiche sociali del periodo. Affermava che le opere realistiche (naturaliste) erano il «prodotto della

Scienza» per l'approccio oggettivo nell'osservazione e nella descrizione della vita umana, e rappresentavano una *nuova* forma di arte che ricercava la *verità* (*zhen* 真), un'*arte sulla vita* (*wei rensheng zhi yishu* 为人生之艺术) (Hu 1920), slogan adottato un anno dopo dall'Associazione per gli Studi letterari. Hu notava che nelle opere contemporanee di altri paesi venivano affrontati temi e problematiche sociali d'attualità come la morale, l'uguaglianza sociale, la condizione della donna, e che *solo l'arte sulla vita è vera arte*. Hu auspicava infine una maggiore consapevolezza critica nelle scelte dei traduttori letterari, che avrebbero dovuto privilegiare le opere realistiche, le uniche in grado di liberare la Cina dalle vuote fantasie (*kongxiang* 空想) della letteratura del passato.

L'intellettuale più attivo e più convinto della necessità di diffondere il Naturalismo in Cina fu lo scrittore Mao Dun (1896-1981), che tra il 1920 e il 1937 pubblicò numerosi saggi sull'argomento, oltre a riflessioni più tecniche sul processo di traduzione letteraria. In un saggio sulla letteratura occidentale, pubblicato nel gennaio del 1920, lamentava la disorganicità, casualità e inadeguatezza che avevano contraddistinto fino a quel momento la scelta delle opere letterarie tradotte in cinese. Mao Dun era un sostenitore delle teorie evoluzioniste, e della visione evolutiva della letteratura esposta da Chen Duxiu. Era convinto anche che la letteratura seguisse ovunque la stessa naturale evoluzione, passando dal Classicismo al Romanticismo e dal Realismo al Naturalismo. La letteratura cinese del tempo poteva collocarsi, a suo parere, tra Classicismo e Romanticismo, situazione che rendeva necessario far conoscere i capolavori del Realismo, ancora del tutto ignoti in Cina. Romanzi classici quali la *Rulin waishi* (Storia ufficale del mondo dei letterati 儒林外史) di Wu Jingzhi 敬梓吴 (1701-1754), o *Guanchang xianxing ji* (Burocrazia senza maschera 官场现形记) di Li Boyuan 李伯元 (1867-1906), secondo Mao Dun non potevano essere considerate ispirate a un Realismo cinese, perché anche se affrontavano problematiche sociali, narravano la vita e le storie di una sola classe e non dell'intera società, oltre a impiegare una lingua di difficile comprensione per il lettore medio. Nello stesso saggio, Mao Dun proponeva un progetto di traduzione, da realizzarsi nel breve arco di un anno, consistente in 37 opere di 15 autori naturalisti e realisti (francesi, inglesi, tedeschi, russi, norvegesi, polacchi) articolato in due fasi. La prima, mirata all'acquisizione delle nuove tecniche artistiche e del metodo naturalista di osservazione scientifica e descrizione oggettiva, avrebbe privilegiato la traduzione di opere di alto valore artistico, che sarebbero diventate un modello di riferimento per gli scrittori cinesi, mentre la seconda fase avrebbe riguardato opere in cui venivano trattati più esaustivamente temi di impegno sociale (Mao 1920e).

Mao Dun giustificò l'assenza di molti autori e testi di valore, tra cui Rousseau (*Nouvelle Heloise*), Mme de Stael (*Delphine*, *Corinne*),

Goethe (*Faust*) e altri, perché già apparsi in traduzione cinese. Indicò anche che sarebbe stato necessario tradurre testi di storia della letteratura straniera, e soprattutto di poesia moderna, delegando però ad altri il compito.

Tavola 1 Prima Fase[6]

Autore	Titolo opera	Genere
Bjørnson B.	*Newly Married Couple*	dramma
	A Gauntlet	dramma
Strindberg A.	*At the Edge of the sea*	[prosa e poesia]
	Miss Julia	dramma
	The Father	dramma
Ibsen H.	*League of the Youth*	dramma
Zola E.	*La Debacle*	[romanzo]
	Joy of Life	[romanzo]
	L'attaque de Moulin	[romanzo]
Maupassant Guy de	*Une vie*	[romanzo]
	Pierre et Jean	[romanzo]
Brieux E.	*Escape*	[dramma]
	Red Robe	[dramma]
Hauptmann G.	*The Weavers*	[dramma]
	Drayman Henschel	[dramma]
Galsworthy J.	*Strife*	dramma
	The Mob	[dramma]
Gogol N.V.	*Dead Souls*	[romanzo]
	Cloak	[racconto]
	The Terrible Cossak	[romanzo]
Chekhov A.	*The Duel*	[romanzo]
	The Cherry Orchard	dramma
	The Sea Gull	dramma
	Ivanoff	dramma
	The Three Sisters	dramma
	Old Wives of Russia	[racconto]
	The Chestnut Tree	[racconto]
Turgenev I.S.	*Sportsman's Note Book*	[racconto]
	Fathers and Sons	[romanzo]
	Virgin Soil	[romanzo]
Dostoyevsky F.	*A Little Hero*	[racconto]

6 Nella tabella ho riportato la lista di Mao Dun, con nomi di autori e titoli di opere, così come fu da lui redatta. Ho solo aggiunto tra parentesi quadre il genere dell'opera, dove non indicato nell'originale.

	Notes from Underground	[romanzo]
	The Idiot	[romanzo]
Gorky M.	*Creatures That Once Were Men*	[romanzo]
	Lower Depths	dramma
Henryk Sienkiewicz	*Bartek the Conqueror*	[romanzo]
Adam Szymanski	*Maciej the Mazur*	[memorie]

Tavola 2 Seconda Fase

Autore	**Titolo opera**	**Genere**
Tolstoy	*War and Peace*	[romanzo]
Dostoevsky	*Crime and Punishment*	[romanzo]
Herzen	*Whose Crime*	
Bernard Shaw G.	*Three Plays for Puritans*	[dramma]
Wells H.G.	*Joan and Peter*	[romanzo]

I titoli delle opere da tradurre erano riportati da Mao Dun in inglese, lingua da cui principalmente traduceva (Wilf Chen 1988) e, solo in nota, in traduzione cinese. Possiamo osservare che l'elenco comprende principalmente opere di media lunghezza di autori realisti e naturalisti, con una prevalenza di autori russi, numerosi testi teatrali, e solo tre romanzi di Zola, ma non il suo fondamentale testo teorico, *Il Romanzo sperimentale*. Notiamo inoltre che alcuni degli autori da lui proposti per la traduzione erano stati citati anche da Hu Yuzhi nel suo saggio apparso nello stesso mese.

In un articolo pubblicato pochi giorni dopo (1920b), Mao Dun tornava a parlare di traduzione, citando opere caratterizzate da una forte sensibilità sociale, occasione per affrontare la questione delle responsabilità dell'uomo di cultura moderno, che egli sintetizzava nella necessità di una *visione corretta* (*zhengque* 正确) della vita, nel comprendere a fondo cosa fosse e cosa rappresentasse la letteratura e, soprattutto, la letteratura *rivolta alla società* (*shehuihua* 社会化). Le opere future avrebbero dovuto descrivere la vita reale di uomini e donne appartenenti a tutti gli strati della società, senza esclusione alcuna, e non di una sola classe sociale privilegiata, come avveniva nella letteratura classica cinese, e per questo era necessario che all'interno dei circoli letterari si diffondesse lo spirito democratico. Mao Dun ribadiva la necessità di tradurre fedelmente le opere senza interventi o modifiche (*haowu biandong jieshaoguolai* 毫无变动介绍过来) e di approfondire, prima di tradurre, la conoscenza delle correnti artistiche straniere e della loro storia, della produzione dell'autore e del contesto in cui viveva.

Nell'editoriale del primo numero del *Mensile di Narrativa* (*Xiaoshuo yuebao* 小说月报) del 25 gennaio 1920, Mao Dun riproponeva con

lievi modifiche il suo programma di traduzione,[7] ripetendo che l'evoluzione della letteratura cinese si era fermata alla fase che precede il Realismo, ma qui motivava l'assenza di opere simboliste e tardo romantiche, ossia di correnti artistiche più recenti, affermando che «le cose più nuove non sono necessariamente le migliori e le più belle» (*Zuixin de bu jiu shi zuihao de* 最新的不就是最美最好的). Aggiungeva inoltre che la nuova letteratura avrebbe trovato stimolo e ispirazione non solo nelle letterature straniere moderne, ma anche nella letteratura cinese classica, la cui eredità non poteva essere ignorata (1920c).

Nel febbraio del 1920 Mao Dun pubblicò un saggio sulla diffusione delle letterature straniere nel quale dava indicazioni su come le future traduzioni avrebbero dovuto presentare opere e autori (1920a), e in cui criticava ancora una volta la poca sistematicità nella scelta delle opere da tradurre, sottolineando la necessità di procedere per tappe, considerando l'esigenza di approfondire la conoscenza di correnti artistiche e autori stranieri. Raccomandava di far precedere la traduzione da una breve nota introduttiva all'autore e alle sue opere, perché ciò avrebbe favorito la fruizione del testo a una fascia più ampia di lettori, e garantito una maggiore diffusione. Proseguiva sostenendo che il contenuto delle opere doveva poter essere recepito dalla società e dalla cultura cinese, e la scelta doveva quindi ricadere su testi che affrontavano problemi sociali particolarmente sentiti in quel periodo in Cina come, ad esempio, il rapporto genitori-figli, i matrimoni combinati e la condizione della donna. Già nel titolo del saggio, Mao Dun chiariva che la futura attività di traduzione avrebbe dovuto essere *sistematica ed economica* (*xitong de jingji jieshao* 系统的经济介绍), intendendo con *economico* (*jingji* 经济) proprio una scelta di opere basata sui contenuti e sulla possibilità di ricezione delle opere nel paese. Ad esempio, consigliava di tradurre *Widower's Houses* di G.B. Shaw, anziché *La professione della signora Warren*, perché l'idea di una tenutaria di bordello che manda la figlia all'università era praticamente inconcepibile in Cina.

Passava poi a illustrare le sue idee sulla nuova letteratura e la creazione letteraria, sottolineando ancora l'importanza dell'osservazione attenta e distaccata della realtà basata sulla metodologia delle scienze moderne e su una descrizione oggettiva, aspetti assenti nella narrativa cinese, che dovevano essere studiati e appresi. Questi stessi criteri avrebbero dovuto essere applicati anche alla valutazione delle future opere.

Qualche mese più tardi, però, esprimeva alcuni dubbi su un'adesione rigida a queste teorie (Shen 1920). Pur continuando ad apprez-

7 Nel progetto finale Mao Dun inserì le opere di Hauptmann, Galsworthy e Brieux, la cui traduzione era stata inizialmente prevista nella prima fase di attuazione del progetto, in una fase successiva.

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zare il metodo di osservazione analitica e rappresentazione oggettiva del Naturalismo, ne riconosceva il pessimismo di fondo, il senso di desolazione e disperazione che pervadeva molte delle opere, e concludeva che «la scienza non può però risolvere le questioni sociali». L'introduzione del Naturalismo in Russia aveva fatto emergere grandi scrittori come Cechov, Gorkji, Andreyev, Artsybashev, Kuprin e Mao Dun si chiedeva se anche in Cina avrebbe prodotto simili risultati. Mao Dun mostrava di ammirare anche lo spirito ribelle e anti-tradizionalista di Romain Rolland, esponente del Nuovo romanticismo, tanto che arrivò a sostenere che solo il Nuovo romanticismo (*Xin langmanpai* 新浪漫派), ossia il tardo romanticismo, e non il Naturalismo, avrebbe potuto orientare la letteratura cinese verso una visione corretta della vita umana.

Nel 1920 Mao Dun subentrava alla direzione del *Mensile di Narrativa*, rivoluzionandone la linea editoriale. Nel gennaio dell'anno seguente era tra i membri fondatori dell'Associazione per gli Studi letterari, e pochi mesi dopo entrava a far parte del Partito comunista. Nel 1922 il *Xiaoshuo Yuebao* avrebbe ospitato nelle sue pagine un dibattito sul Naturalismo che si protrasse per quasi un anno.

In un breve scritto del 10 maggio (Shen Yanbing 1922b), rispondendo a un lettore che esprimeva le sue perplessità sulle descrizioni scabrose, sulla rappresentazione del male, delle debolezze e dei lati oscuri dell'uomo tanto ricorrenti nel Naturalismo, Mao Dun ricordava che debolezze e lati oscuri erano parte della natura umana, e piuttosto che essere negati o nascosti dovevano essere studiati e portati alla luce, perché solo in questo modo sarebbe stato possibile cambiare l'uomo e la società. Un mese dopo, interveniva nuovamente per rispondere a quanti criticavano la visione meccanicistica del Naturalismo, l'idea di un destino ineluttabile determinato dall'ambiente di provenienza e dell'impotenza dell'uomo a modificare tali circostanze, esprimendo il proprio timore sulle conseguenze negative che la lettura di queste opere poteva avere sui giovani cinesi. Mao Dun argomentava che gli scrittori cinesi non erano tenuti a imitare pedissequamente il Naturalismo in ogni suo aspetto (*wo yao de Ziranzhuyi, bing bu yiding shi chuchu zhao ta* 我要的自然主义,并不一定是处处照他), ribadendo che l'importante era acquisirne il metodo scientifico di osservazione (*bing bu shi renshengguan de Ziranzhuyi, er shi wenxue de Ziranzhuyi* 并不是人生观的自然主义，而是文学的自然主义) (1922a) e gli strumenti espressivi, non necessariamente di accettarne la visione del mondo.

Nel lungo saggio *Naturalismo e narrativa contemporanea cinese*, Mao Dun criticava la letteratura classica e contemporanea nazionale per il suo tradizionalismo, l'abuso di cliché, i contenuti superati, l'assenza di creatività e di finalità, e si diceva convinto che il Naturalismo – il cui scopo principale era la ricerca del vero (真 *zhen*) – avrebbe contribuito a colmarne le principali lacune, soprat-

tutto la mancanza di oggettività e di obiettivi. La nuova letteratura avrebbe dovuto affrontare temi attuali di interesse sociale, etico e culturale, concludeva Mao Dun, segnalando *I Rougon Macquart* di Zola, *Una Vita* di Maupassant e *Cuore infermo* di Matilde Serao come modelli da seguire (Shen 1922c).

Tra le principali obiezioni mosse al Naturalismo dagli oppositori troviamo il rifiuto dell'idea di trattazione oggettiva e distacco «scientifico» dell'autore, poiché questa escludeva o limitava l'espressione della sensibilità individuale dell'artista, per il quale osservazione e creatività non erano fattori separati, privi di relazione, bensì complementari come *le ruote di una bicicletta* (Shen 1922c, 239). I detrattori argomentavano che il metodo di analisi oggettiva dei naturalisti, fondato su una visione profondamente pessimistica della vita, veniva però applicato a temi e vicende che erano il prodotto di scelte personali degli autori, e dunque anche la visione naturalista della letteratura aveva carattere soggettivo. Altri ancora obiettavano che, in un'epoca caratterizzata da una così gran varietà di tendenze e correnti artistiche, proporre come unico modello valido il Naturalismo significava limitare, anziché stimolare, la rinascita della letteratura e dell'arte.

Mao Dun ribadì che lo studio delle letterature moderne straniere in Cina si trovava ancora in una fase iniziale e che il mercato editoriale era stato invaso da opere di puro intrattenimento e di scarso valore, ma era ormai giunto il momento di un cambiamento radicale nell'atteggiamento degli scrittori e dei lettori.

Pur accogliendo parte delle critiche mosse al Naturalismo, soprattutto quelle riguardo al suo 'pessimismo' di fondo, Mao Dun ricordò che questa visione era il risultato di precise condizioni storico-sociali createsi nell'Europa del XIX secolo, dove le masse popolari, specie nelle grandi città, conducevano un'esistenza disperata e miserabile, una vita in cui la speranza di riscatto era quasi del tutto assente. La situazione in Cina era molto diversa, pertanto l'osservazione e la descrizione naturalista della realtà avrebbe dato risultati diversi (Mao 1922). Pur avendo manifestato in varie occasioni la sua ammirazione per autori e tendenze non riconducibili al Naturalismo, come ad esempio per Romain Rolland o il Simbolismo (1920d), Mao Dun continuò a essere convinto che il Realismo rappresentasse l'arma migliore per muovere un attacco diretto ed efficace al cuore del vecchio sistema di pensiero, e a considerarlo come una necessaria fase di transizione verso una nuova letteratura, cosa che però non escludeva la possibilità di seguire contemporaneamente altre strade.

4 Riflessioni di traduttori-scrittori sulle opere di Zola[8]

Il progetto di traduzione delle opere di Zola prese avvio alla fine degli anni Venti e continuò sino agli anni Quaranta. La prima antologia di racconti dell'autore in lingua vernacolare (*Zuola xiaoshuoji* 左拉小说选集) **[fig. 3]**, curata da due francesisti che avevano studiato a lungo in Francia, Bi Xiushao 毕修勺 (1902-1992) e Chen Zhaifu 陈宅枎 (?-?), fu pubblicata nel 1927 a Shanghai, all'epoca uno dei centri più fiorenti dell'industria editoriale. L'antologia riuniva quattro testi: «I quattro giorni di Jean Goudon», «Per una notte d'amore», «La morte di Olivier Bacaille» e «La Disoccupazione» (Bi, Chen 1927). Il grande interesse per Zola in questi anni è testimoniato dalle numerose traduzioni condotte sugli originali francesi curate da noti scrittori.

Nel 1927 Bi Xiushao tradusse *Il Romanzo sperimentale* (*Shiyan xiaoshuo lun* 实验小说论) **[fig. 4]**. Nella breve prefazione, Bi annunciava che avrebbe presentato altre opere di Zola, e a proposito del Naturalismo notava:

> Ho l'impressione che negli ultimi anni il Naturalismo di Zola sia stato mal compreso dagli scrittori; alcuni ritengono che consista in descrizioni licenziose, altri che Zola si limiti a una rappresentazione fotografica [della realtà]. Ma cos'è la letteratura naturalista? Sono in pochi a saperlo, e in questo non c'è niente di strano perché le sue opere non sono state tradotte, e nemmeno i suoi scritti sulla letteratura. Ritengo che non sia sufficiente riportare le critiche che gli sono state mosse negli altri Paesi [...] per questo tradurrò i suoi libri [...] Ora mi accingo a presentare *Il Romanzo Sperimentale* che riassume le sue posizioni. (1927, 1-2)

In una prefazione alla traduzione di *Contes a Ninon*, pubblicata nel 1948, a proposito di Zola Bi Xiushao scriveva che a diciotto anni, quando studiava in Francia, lo scrittore era diventato per lui un modello da imitare, per «il suo amore per la verità a cui avrebbe sacrificato anche la sua stessa vita, come dimostrò nell'affare Dreyfus», e «per l'impegno verso la letteratura, che a suo parere aveva molto più valore della politica» (III).

Nello stesso anno Liu Bannong 刘半农 (1891-1934), un noto scrittore, linguista e poeta, pubblicava un'antologia di racconti francesi che comprendeva «Il paradiso dei gatti», «La disoccupazione», «La storia della mantella blu dell'amore» di Zola e opere di Voltaire, Diderot, Hugo, Flaubert e altri scrittori meno noti (1927) **[fig. 5]**.

8 Vengono presentate solo alcune delle più importanti opere in volume pubblicate in quegli anni, uno studio più completo richiederebbe anche l'esame delle traduzioni comparse sulle numerose riviste dell'epoca.

Nel 1928 lo scrittore Xu Xiacun 徐霞村 (1907-1986), pubblicò l'antologia *Il bagno* (*Xizao* 洗澡) **[fig. 6]** che comprendeva dodici racconti di Zola, tra cui: «Il Bagno», «Le fragole», «Il digiuno», «Le spalle della Marchesa», «Il paradiso dei gatti», «Il fabbro». Nella postfazione scriveva: «Zola non è certo lo scrittore che preferisco, ho letto i suoi romanzi e mi sono sempre sembrati rigidi e poco vivaci, ma quando lo scorso anno ho letto *Il bagno* ne sono rimasto folgorato, è molto diverso dalle altre opere». Nello stesso anno lo scrittore Zeng Pu 曾樸 (1817-1934) tradusse con il nome di penna Dongya Bingfu 东亚病夫 (Il malato dell'Asia)[9] l'antologia *Nandan e Madame Neigeon* **[fig. 7]** (*Nandan ji Nainong furen* 南丹及奈侬夫人, 1928). Nel 1934 il noto linguista Wang Liaoyi 王了一 (1900-1986) traduceva *Nana* **[fig. 8]** e *L'Assommoir* con il titolo *L'ammazzatoio* (*Tuchui* 屠槌) **[fig. 9]**, poi ripubblicato nel 1936 con il titolo *La bettola* (*Jiuku* 酒窝) **[fig. 10]**. Nel 1936 Lin Ruji 林如稷 (1902-1976) traduceva il ciclo *Rougon-Macquart* (*Lugong jiazu de jiayun* 卢贡家族的家运) e Shen Qiyu 沈起予 (1903-1970) proponeva una nuova traduzione de *L'Assommoir* (*Jiuchang - L'Osteria* 酒场) **[fig. 11]**.

La traduzione di *Nanà* curata da Wang Liaoyi 王了一 (1900-1986), il noto linguista Wang Li, era preceduta da una lunga prefazione intitolata «Zuola yu Ziranzhuyi» 左拉与自然主义 (Zola e il Naturalismo) nella quale, introducendo l'opera e il pensiero di Zola, lo studioso mostrava di apprezzare l'impianto delle storie con un finale aperto e, soprattutto, la maestria nella descrizione delle condizioni di vita delle classi più umili. In un'epoca in cui la pressione politica sull'arte si faceva sempre più incalzante, Wang sosteneva però che «la letteratura non deve essere il luogo per propagandare idee politiche, e le storie non devono contenere una morale» (Wang 1934c, 7). E in risposta a quanti criticavano il Naturalismo per le descrizioni scabrose scriveva:

> Anche in Francia quelli che criticano Zola affermano che i suoi racconti sono negativi, volgari, abietti e danno all'estero una cattiva immagine della società francese. Essi non si lamentano dell'abiezione della società, ma della narrativa dell'autore che considerano scabrosa, proprio come coloro che non sanno di essere sporchi e, guardandosi allo specchio, si lamentano e dicono che lo specchio è sporco. (17)

In questo periodo i termini Naturalismo e Realismo continuano a essere impiegati in modo equivalente, come era avvenuto all'inizio degli anni Venti. Chen Qiyu, ad esempio, nella lunga prefazione alla sua traduzione de *L'Assommoir* pubblicata nel 1936, scrive: «Zola è un esponente del Realismo, descrive nelle sue opere gli aspetti positivi

9 Dispregiativo usato nel periodo coloniale dagli stranieri per rivolgersi ai cinesi.

Figura 3 *Zuola xiaoshuoji* 左拉小說集 (Antologia di narrativa di Zola). Trad. di Xiushao 修勺 e Zhaifu 宅桴. Shanghai: Jianwan hezuo, 1927

Figura 4 *Shiyan xiaoshuo lun* 實驗小說論 (Il romanzo sperimentale). A cura di Xiushao 修勺. Shanghai: Meide shudian, 1927

Figura 5 *Liu Bannong yi Faguo duanpian xiaoshuoji diyice* 劉半農譯法國短篇小說集第一冊 (Liu Bannong traduce un'antologia di racconti francesi), vol. 1. Beijing: Xin Shuju, 1927

Figura 6 Zuola 左拉. *Xizao* 洗澡 (Il bagno). A cura di Xu X. 徐霞村. Shanghai: Kaiming shudian, 1929

Figura 7 Zuola 左拉 (1936). *Jiuchang* 酒場 (L'osteria). Trad. di Shen Qiyu 沈起予. Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju

Figura 8 Zuola 左拉 (1928). Zuola xiaoshuoji 左拉小集 – *Nandan ji Nainong furen* 南丹及奈麩夫人 (Antologia di Racconti di Zola - Nandan e Madame Neigeon). Trad. di Dongya Bingfu 東亞病夫 [Zeng Pu 曾樸]. Shanghai: Zhenmeishan shudian

Figura 9 Zuola 左拉 (1934). *Nana* 娜娜, vol. 2. Trad. di Wang Liaoyi 王了一. Shanghai: Santong shuju

Figura 10 Zuola 左拉 (1934). *Tuchui* 屠槌 (L'ammazzatoio). Trad. di Wang Liaoyi 王了一. Trad. di *L'Assommoir* by Emile Zola, transl. by Wang Liao I. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan

Figura 11
Zuola 左拉 (1936). Jiuku 酒窟 (La bettola). Trad. di Wang Liaoyi 王了一. Trad. di *L'Assommoir* by Emile Zola, transl. by Wang Liao I, vol. 1. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan

e negativi della vita secondo i dettami del realismo…» (5). E a proposito del romanzo aggiunge:

> *L'assommoir* è il nono romanzo del ciclo *Rougon-Macquart* e, dal punto di vista artistico, è la migliore opera di Zola. Le descrizioni della vita della classe operaia, l'uso di una lingua di massa e di una forma popolare ci hanno lasciato un'eredità inesauribile. Sono convinto che questa grande opera potrà fornire molti spunti al mondo dell'arte e della letteratura cinese… (11)

La traduzione delle opere di Zola continuò negli anni Quaranta. Uno dei traduttori più attivi fu Bi Xiushao, che aveva trascorso dieci anni in Francia e, a partire dal 1945, si era dedicato esclusivamente alla traduzione delle opere dell'autore, pubblicando in soli due anni un gran numero di racconti e romanzi – tra cui il ciclo di *Rougon-Macquart*, la *Trilogia delle tre città* – oltre a *Il Romanzo sperimentale* e altri saggi. Prima del 1949 erano già stati tradotti in cinese gli otto romanzi più importanti di Zola, oltre a quaranta racconti e un volume di saggi (Xie, Cha 2004, 421).

La diffusione del Naturalismo in Cina avvenne in un momento particolarmente complesso e vivace della storia del paese, un periodo di crisi e di apertura, di ricerca di nuove soluzioni e di «modernità». Sono gli anni in cui comincia ad affermarsi l'idea della necessità di una narrativa di impegno sociale, idea che prepara per molti versi il terreno alla successiva adesione, da parte di tanti scrittori e intellettuali, al Realismo socialista.

L'uso intercambiabile dei termini *naturalismo* e *realismo* che si riscontra nella letteratura critica degli anni Venti, sembra indicare so-

prattutto un interesse per l'approccio scientifico del naturalismo alla rappresentazione della vita e in generale per la trattazione realistica delle problematiche sociali del tempo.

Nella sua ricerca di un nuovo modello letterario Mao Dun, pur privilegiando il Naturalismo, almeno negli anni fin qui presi in esame non fece mai riferimento, come abbiamo già accennato, al testo teorico di Zola *Il Romanzo sperimentale*.[10] I nodi centrali della questione restavano per lui le problematiche di ordine espressivo e morale più che quelle di una teoria generale: il corretto atteggiamento dello scrittore verso la vita e gli uomini, la rappresentazione veridica e non censurata di situazioni reali, l'obbligo per lo scrittore di scrivere «solo di ciò che ha visto o sperimentato di persona senza aggiungere nulla» (Mao 1922),[11] ma senza negare all'autore il diritto e la possibilità di integrare questa rappresentazione con osservazioni personali.[12]

Le convinzioni e le scelte politiche che Mao Dun stava allora maturando, sempre più influenzate dall'adesione al marxismo e a una visione storico-dialettica che si proponeva di «cambiare il mondo», lo ponevano in contrasto con il meccanico determinismo sociale di Zola che sembrava postulare l'impossibilità per l'uomo di modificare il proprio destino. Sotto molti aspetti la sua visione del Naturalismo e di una letteratura naturalista che potesse incidere sugli eventi storici e rappresentare una nuova forma di conoscenza, contribuendo all'evoluzione e al progresso della società, trovava un riscontro nella visione cinese tradizionale della letteratura come strumento di ammaestramento morale, e rappresentava quindi un tentativo di fusione del metodo di analisi scientifica della condizione umana *à la* Zola con la sensibilità e le finalità didattiche caratteristiche del pensiero letterario cinese, una visione della letteratura che fu più tardi condivisa, con altri metodi e finalità, anche dall'ortodossia marxista.

10 Nel suo saggio Wang Dewei sostiene che Mao Dun non aveva letto *Il Romanzo Sperimentale* di Zola, e che non chiarì mai se fosse interessato a Zola scrittore o teorico (Wang Dewei 1986, 172). Sappiamo che l'opera fu tradotta in inglese nel 1894 (*The Experimental Novel, and other Essays*, The Cassell Publishing), lingua che Mao Dun leggeva, e in cinese nel 1927.

11 Mao Dun 茅盾 (1922). «Zuolazhuyi de weixianxing» 左拉的危险性 (Il pericolo del Zolanismo). *Shishi xinbao - Wenxue xunkan*, 50, 21 settembre; `http://www.kanunu8.com/book3/8330/185062.html`.

12 *Mao Dun Quanji* 茅盾全集 (Opere complete), 225-43.

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Between Rigor and Reverence. Yu Dafu and His Views on Translation

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Abstract Despite his prominence in modern Chinese literature and the significant role played by translation in his literary career, Yu Dafu's (1896-1945) activity as a translation theorist and practitioner remains largely unexplored. Yu translated into Chinese a number of short stories, treatises, and poems by such authors as Wilde, Twain, Sinclair, Nietzsche, and Rousseau; he also devoted several essays to the issue of translation and its practice. Through an analysis of Yu's theoretical writings, I aim to provide a brief account of his reflections on the subjectivity of the translator, the principles of a desirable translating practice, the relation between translation and original writing, and the cultural significance of translation. By doing so, I wish to highlight the seminal role played by such a reflection in Yu's artistic career, as well as the specificity of his contribution within the intellectual debate on translation in his time.

Keywords Yu Dafu. Translation. Theory of translation. Literary creation. Cultural innovation.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Yu Dafu's Translating Career. – 3 Yu Dafu's Views on Translation. – 3.1 The Translator's Subjectivity. – 3.2 The Principles and Ethics of Translation. – 3.3 Translation and Original Writing. – 3.4 Translation, cultural agency, and intellectual critique. – 4 Conclusion.

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1 Introduction

Yu Dafu 郁達夫 (1896-1945), a leading figure of the Creation Society (*Chuangzaoshe* 創造社), holds a special position in the variegated literature linked to the so-called May Fourth Movement (*Wusi yundong* 五四運動) of 1919. He first came to prominence thanks to *Sinking* (*Chenlun* 沈淪, 1921), the earliest short story collection in modern Chinese literature.[1] The three stories featured therein reveal the influence of imported models – the Japanese 'I-novel' (*shishōsetsu* 私小說) and European Romanticism, the philosophy of Nietzsche and Rousseau, the Biblical tradition etc. – and, most notably, incorporate passages from foreign texts, both in their original language and in Chinese translation. Indeed, such a feature emerges throughout Yu Dafu's artistic production, and the scholarship on the writer unsurprisingly stresses the central role of foreign sources – mostly absorbed while he was studying in Japan (1913-1922) – in the shaping of his literary universe.

Yu Dafu also devoted himself to translation in the strict sense of the term throughout his artistic career.[2] His reflections on translation, however sparse, reveal a theoretical framework characterised by a certain degree of consistency. The role of translated and foreign texts in Yu's fiction has been scrutinised by some scholars (Levan 2012; Chen 2012; Liu 2017). A specific analysis of his views on, and practice of, translation is the object of several Chinese-language studies,[3] some carried out from a comparative perspective (Li 2004; Su, Jie 2012). However, research on this facet of his career remains peripheral and, to my knowledge, no Western-language study has been explicitly devoted to it. By setting out from these studies and drawing on primary sources – namely, Yu's essays on translation-related topics, as well as a selection of significant paratexts supplementing his translations – I aim to provide a brief account of his activity as a translator, followed by some remarks on his theoretical vision.

I wish to express my gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers for their extremely detailed and helpful comments on an earlier draft of the manuscript, which have helped me fine-tune the present article.

1 For an English translation of "Sinking", one of the three short stories included in the collection of the same name, see Yu 1995.

2 An exhaustive collection of Yu Dafu's translated poetry, fiction, and essays can be found in voll. 11 and 12 of *Yu Dafu wenji* 郁達夫文集 (Collected Works of Yu Dafu) (Yu 1984). Due to space limits, a detailed list of Yu's translations, including such information as the original titles of the foreign works, the specific edition used by Yu, the date of first publication of the translations etc. is not included here. However, it could be incorporated in further research focusing more specifically on Yu's practice of translation.

3 Chen 1984; Pan 1984; Shen 1988; Hu, Zhang 2004; Chen 2010; Liu 2010; Xian 2010, 187-95; Zhang 2010; 2011; Zhang, Ma 2013; Wang, Kou 2014.

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2 Yu Dafu's Translating Career

According to Shen (1988), Yu Dafu's activity as a translator can be divided into three phases, namely the periods 1921-27, 1927-33, and 1933-45. Yu published his first efforts in *Creation Quarterly* (*Chuangzao jikan* 創造季刊, 1922-24), one of the Creation Society journals. The very first issue, published in March 1922, tellingly featured Yu's translation of the "Introduction" to Wilde's *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, both an homage to a much-admired writer and a manifesto of the Creation Society itself, which at the time had adopted the tenets of Aestheticism wholeheartedly. This was Yu's most prolific period as a writer of short fiction: ever since *Sinking*, he began to insert translated excerpts of (mainly poetic) foreign works into his own stories, diaries, and essays, a feature that would characterise his style in the years to come. Indeed, at the beginning of the story that gives its name to *Sinking*, the protagonist is memorably introduced as he struggles with the Chinese translation of Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper*. Although at the time translation did not play a conspicuous role in Yu Dafu's writing, at least as an autonomous activity, it is in this early period that a strong connection between translation and original creation began to emerge.

The second phase in Yu's translating career is intimately linked to his parting from the Creation Society, in August 1927, and his involvement in other prominent literary journals. Shortly after leaving Creation, he became a close collaborator of Lu Xun's 魯迅 (1881-1936): he had met him in Beijing in 1923, and had already contributed some short essays to his journal *Threads of Words* (*Yusi* 語絲, 1924-30). In late 1927, Yu started working as co-editor of the journal *Torrent* (*Benliu* 奔流, 1928), also directed by Lu Xun in Shanghai. After *Torrent* was shut down by the Kuomintang, Yu became editor-in-chief of *Mass Literature and Art* (*Dazhong wenyi* 大眾文藝, 1928-30). In 1930 the journal became the voice of the League of Left-Wing Writers of China (*Zhongguo zuoyi zuojia lianmeng* 中國左翼作家聯盟, 1930-36) – co-founded by Lu Xun in the spring of 1930 and initially counting Yu among its members – and was consequently outlawed a few months later. The years 1927-33 marked an unmatched peak in Yu's translation efforts, which by then had become an essential part of his work. A striking number of short novels, poems and essays translated in this period appeared in journals or were published shortly afterwards in the collections *Five Minor Writers* (*Xiao jia zhi wu* 小家之伍) (Yu 1930), *A Few Great Writers* (*Jige weida de zuojia* 幾個偉大的作家 (Yu 1934), and *Dafu's Collected Translations*

of Short Stories (*Dafu suo yi duanpian ji* 達夫所譯短篇集 (Yu 1935).[4]

After ending his collaboration with the League, disillusioned with his own political engagement in the proletarian cause, Yu retired to Hangzhou in April 1933. In 1936 he began a collaboration with Lin Yutang 林語堂's (1896-1976) satirical journal *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語, 1932-49). His fiction writing had already come to a stop by 1935 but he continued to translate, although at a considerably reduced pace. Some translation projects were only envisaged, while others were never completed, as in the case of Lin's English-language memoir *A Moment in Peking*, first published in 1939. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45), Yu fled to Hong Kong, Singapore and then Sumatra, where he took on a new identity to escape arrest by the Japanese occupiers. There he also acted as a linguistic mediator between the Chinese-speaking community and the Japanese, while allegedly cooperating with the local resistance. Ironically, his role as an undercover translator and interpreter may have proven fatal to him: although the actual circumstances of his death remain unclear to date, he was most likely exposed and 'disappeared' by the Kempeitai, the Japanese military police, in the August of 1945.[5]

3 Yu Dafu's Views on Translation

3.1 The Translator's Subjectivity

The late 1910s mark a time of unparalleled cultural receptiveness in the history of China. The translation of foreign works is naturally seen as a channel for introducing new theories and ideas that could help rejuvenate the country and shape a new 'national character'. The selection of the works to be translated is largely instrumental and driven by the enlightening effect that such works are expected to exert on the Chinese readership. This is certainly the primary preoccupation for a number of prominent May Fourth intellectuals engaging in the practice of translation, such as Lu Xun himself – who, in selecting the candidates for translation, favours not only texts that are of interest to him, but also those that could "prove useful to China" (Gu 2009, 28).

Yu Dafu somehow deviates from this general tendency. He certainly does not disregard the cultural significance of the transla-

4 The three collections were all published in Shanghai. *Five Minor Writers* (Yu 1930) contains the translation of five short stories by Friedrich Gerstäcker, Rudolf Lindau, Juhani Aho, Mary E. Wilkins, and Liam O'Flaherty. *A Few Great Writers* (Yu 1934) includes four translated essays by Maksim Gorky, Ivan Turgenev, Havelock Ellis, and Felix Poppenberg. Finally, *Dafu's Collected Translations of Short Stories* (Yu 1935), contains three texts by Theodor Storm, George Moore, and – again – Liam O' Flaherty.

5 For further details on Yu Dafu's biography, see Fang 2012.

tor's agency (see below), and the desire to give voice to progressive authors whose social concerns Yu shares at a certain point of his career. Indeed, his translation of George Moore's and Liam O' Flaherty's short stories may be driven by such considerations (Hu, Zhang 2004). However, his interest seems to be primarily artistic and sentimental in nature, and his criteria for the selection of works eligible for translation are primarily based on personal taste, as shown by the oft-cited quote "I only translate the things I love"[6] (Yu 2007j, 155). His choices are largely influenced by his predilection for fin-de-siècle Euro-American literature, as well as for works characterised by the same lyrical and melancholic sensibility that inspire his original writing. While he does not neglect such masters of literature and philosophy as Wilde or Nietzsche, he also turns his attention to authors like Friedrich Gerstäcker or Mary E. Wilkins. By giving a voice to 'minor writers' (*xiaojia* 小家), he resists the general prescription to focus on famous names and discard less celebrated ones, thus enriching the spectrum of foreign literature available in Chinese at the time (Zhang 2011, 43).

Yu's candidates for translation are typically authors with whom he feels a degree of affinity and shares an emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual sensibility, or even a similar life experience. He also seems to express his preference for works and authors showing a connection between East and West. This is the case with Rudolf Lindau, whose *Das Glückspendel* (The Philosopher's Pendulum) he translates in 1928: in an essay, it is suggested that the writer

> was influenced by the East; the Buddhist notion of 'calm and extinction' was deep-rooted in his mind. (Yu 2007k, 170)

Yu even states that

> when we read his stories, we do not feel that he is a foreign author at all. (170)

Finally, Yu repeatedly stresses the crucial role of the translator in the process, affirming that

> the author should be credited for the flavor of the original text, but the flavor of the translation must be the translator's work. (2007l, 402)

6 All translations from the Chinese originals are by the Author.

3.2 The Principles and Ethics of Translation

Right from his early reflections on translation, Yu Dafu constantly praises the time-honoured principles of *fidelity* (*xin* 信), *fluency* (*da* 達), and *elegance* (*ya* 雅), first articulated by Yan Fu 嚴復 (1854-1921) in the late nineteenth century. Yu sees them as largely relevant even in his time (Yu 2007l, 401) and as a prerequisite for an excellent translation (Yu 2007g, 487); moreover, he devotes special attention to *elegance*, stressing its importance in ensuring the pleasure of reading for his contemporaries (Yu 2007l, 402). However, he considers these tenets to be mere "external conditions of the translation" (*fanyi de wai de tiaojian* 翻譯的外的條件): he therefore proposes an additional triad that would embrace the "internal conditions of the translator" (*fanyizhe de nei de tiaojian* 翻譯者的內的條件), namely *knowledge* (*xue* 學), *mentality* (*si* 思) and *understanding* (*de* 得) (Yu 2007c, 111). By stressing the role of *knowledge*, Yu emphasises the fact that a translator must become familiar not only with the foreign work and its language, but also with the life experience of the author and the socio-cultural background that has fostered said work. To do so, the translator is required to read extensively not only the author's work as a whole, but also his/her diaries and letters, as well as the remarks made by his/her contemporaries (117). *Mentality* refers to the translator's ability to make the original author's mindset his/her own, an intimate operation that proves crucial if one wishes to effectively convey the ideas and sensibility of a foreign writer to a target readership (118). Finally, *understanding* can only be achieved through an in-depth grasp of the author's and the work's spirit, as well as through an awareness of the spatial and temporal distance that separate the latter from the sensibility of the intended target audience (118).

When it comes to translation, Yu Dafu is, by his own account, a perfectionist who firmly adheres to the principle of *rigorism* (*yangezhuyi* 嚴格主義) (117). He purportedly expects so much of himself that he hardly dares to publish the fruit of his efforts (119) and, even when he does, he engages in constant proofreading to correct any mistakes or unsatisfying phrasings (2007j, 155). Yu's meticulousness can be best seen in the extensive paratexts that complement his translations. These include, of course, the prefaces and postfaces expressing his views on literature and translation, some of which are self-standing essays in their own right, abounding with observations on the process of translation and revision (see Yu 2007f). Other paratexts contain profiles of authors and works, notes on the publishing history of the original, lexical annotations, and explanations of cultural phenomena and references.

Examples of this praxis are legion, but the translation of Upton Sinclair's essay "Mammon Art", carried out between 1928 and 1929, may be the most representative one (Yu 2007e). The text is preced-

ed by an extremely detailed introduction covering a broad array of issues: the fact that Yu has borrowed the Chinese title (*Baijin yishu* 拜金藝術, literally "Money-worshipping Art") from a Japanese translation by Kimura Shōji (1908-?); the motivation behind his choice to translate this treatise in particular; the acknowledgment of the help provided by Lin Yutang, Lin's wife, and Kimura; the quotation of a recent scholarly work on the author that helped him in the process; an extensive, year-by-year biography of the author and his output; Yu's personal remarks and his reasons for admiring Sinclair; and, finally, a list of Sinclair's works not cited above (200-12). However, it is in the notes following each chapter that Yu best reveals his philological approach. He comments upon the difficulties encountered in the process, as in the case of the short poems included in the essay, rendered by drawing inspiration from classical Chinese poetry with a few adjustments and additions of his own (228). He also describes the thought processes that led him to select a specific Chinese lexical item (228, 254), asks for the readers' help (220, 239-40), and thanks one of them for suggesting certain improvements (258) (this being possible because the essay was originally published in instalments). Yu defends his choice to skip some lines and even entire chapters of the original, based on the assumption that his readers would have no interest in matters that were too distant from their own experience (257-8, 266); the same applies to his omissions of references to Latin literature, "perhaps an unforgivable crime of infidelity in translation", committed for the lack of other options (278).

A strong critic of retranslation, Yu admittedly resorts to it only on rare occasions, by relying on German versions – which he deems more accurate than English, French or Japanese ones – whenever possible (Yu 2007j, 155). Another indicator of his meticulousness is the frequent choice to quote the original text along with the translation, be it a short poem (as was always the case in his early poetic translations and even in some passages of his own early fiction), a word or a phrase: by doing so, he wishes to provide reference material for readers to reflect autonomously on his translation choices, verify their accuracy, and suggest improvements. Indeed, Yu stresses the significance of what today we would call 'translation criticism'. He often offers comments on the work of others, as he does in great detail with Wang Tongzhao's 王統照 (1897-1957) translations of Ernest Dowson's poems (Yu 2007c). In another essay, after criticising the ignorance that dominates the world of newspapers and journals, he goes on to dissect the Chinese rendition of Rudolf C. Eucken's *Der Sinn und Wert des Lebens* (The Meaning and Value of Life) by an unspecified translator who relied on an English retranslation (Yu 2007a). By lamenting the sloppiness of these versions and pointing out the translators' mistakes, he does not wish to hold them up to derision. By his own account,

> my purpose is not at all to mock them; I just wish everybody would be a little more careful, so as to avoid being ridiculed by foreigners. (4)

He is particularly harsh in his denunciation of improvised translators: in the China of his time, he writes,

> people who do not know a word of a foreign language dabble in translation by using archaisms, [while] those who know but a little bit […] are praised as translation experts. (2007h, 43)

Such pseudo-translators, Yu continues, translate word-by-word by merely relying on dictionaries (43). Yu's passionate defence of his own translation choices are also memorable, especially when he responds to the criticism levelled by Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962) (Yu 2007b) and Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋 (1903-1987) (Yu 2007d).

3.3 Translation and Original Writing

One of the constant preoccupations that emerge from Yu's reflections is the consistency between original writing and translation, not only in terms of sensibility, but also in terms of literary style. The concept of an expressive continuum between the two poles of Yu's output is exemplified by his claim:

> to the fullest possible extent, [my translations] should resemble my own writings; of course, the message of the author has to be kept in mind, too, but the translation must be phrased as if I had written it myself. (2007j, 155-6)

The influence of Yu's translations on his original writing is not surprising, as shown by the resonances that can be observed in some of his own short stories (Shen 1988, 126-7). Indeed, the aesthetic consistency between the two practices has been noticed at the level of character psychology, sentimentalism, and Yu's predilection for the lyrical over plot-building (Zhang, Ma 2013). Interestingly enough, the genuineness of Yu's claim is corroborated by the fact that, upon its publication, Yu's translation of Lindau's *Das Glückspendel* was believed by the prominent contemporary author Shen Congwen 沈從文 (1902-1988) to be an original story of his, written under a foreign alias (Xian 2010, 188).

The challenging nature of translation, which Yu considers to be more arduous a process than writing itself, is also often emphasised: "translating is not a simple thing indeed" (Yu 2007j, 155), he states, adding that "translating requires a greater effort than doing some dull writing of my own" (156); "as for translation, I have

always thought it to be an even harder job than creation" (2007m, 449). Whereas, in writing, one can produce a final manuscript after a couple rounds of revision, Yu believes this is impossible to achieve in a translation, even after it has been reviewed ten or twenty times (449). He also professes to feel a sort of *reverence* (*wei* 畏) (Wang, Kou 2014, 135) that makes it hard for him to engage in the translation of classical or 'pure' literature, as if he were "fettered by the original author whenever [he] put pen to paper", a process that he finds "countless times more laborious than casually scribbling a few poetry lines of [his] own" (Yu 2007l, 402). Despite all these difficulties, in Yu's artistic vision, translation proves an excellent exercise for the writer: it is helpful even when it is done for entertainment, because it "is indeed the perfect way to experience a change of flavor", and is beneficial in that

> firstly, you can practice your technique; secondly, it cultivates the brain; thirdly, you can preserve your writing skills. (2007i, 54)

3.4 Translation, Cultural Agency, and Intellectual Critique

From the aspects we have discussed so far it is manifest that a strong connection exists, for Yu Dafu, between writing, translation, the dissemination of foreign knowledge, and theoretical reflection.

By relying on his strong subjectivity, Yu remains faithful to an all-round intellectual agenda. A true agent of translation, he "[goes] against the grain, challeng[ing] commonplaces and contemporary assumptions", "selecting new works to be translated and introducing new styles of translation for works entering [his] own society" (Milton, Bandia 2009, 1-2). Although his concerns are primarily aesthetic, he also sees translation as a tool for nurturing national culture, and the increasing number of translations made available in China as a very positive phenomenon (Yu 2007j, 156). The influence of imported models, however, should not be overstated, and caution should be exercised when faced with so-called intellectuals who

> pick up a few superficial speeches made by some foreigners, patch together a translation, and then pass themselves off as new thinkers. (2007a, 3)

By Yu's own account,

> foreign works are only a point of reference for us, not an inheritance handed down by our ancestors; but once I have revised and compiled these translations, I do hope my fellow countrymen will strive further. (2007j, 156)

For such a virulent polemist as Yu, translation is also an ideal outlet to convey his intellectual critique, condemning what he considers to be 'scandals of translation' and their perpetrators. As shown above, cutting remarks against uneducated and sloppy translators are ubiquitous in his essays. Even more interestingly, however, the paratexts of his translations are brimming with personal, apparently casual commentaries that transcend both the text at hand and translation matters, touching upon the society, politics, and cultural circles of his time. For instance, in the translation of "Mammon Art" mentioned above, Yu uses his notes as a pretext to denounce those opportunistic Chinese intellectuals who, unlike his beloved Sinclair, are only concerned about securing their status (Yu 2007e, 211). He criticises those writers who once endorsed revolutionary ideals but now sympathise with the ruling class, the tyrannical government or the Japanese, like his fellow Creation Society member Cheng Fangwu 成仿吾 (1897-1984) (246-7), and attacks the narrow-mindedness and sectarianism of literary critics (262).

4 Conclusion

Yu Dafu's practice and critique of translation cannot compete with his original output, in terms of quantity or intellectual impact. In this field, Yu hardly achieved the degree of systematicity we find among other influential May Fourth writers-cum-translators. Yet, these aspects still play a central role in his artistic life: significantly enough, the reflection on translation-related matters proved a constant preoccupation, one that did not cease even after he put an end to his career as short fiction writer and drastically reduced his output as a translator. Yu's thoughts and remarks may not have been developed into a well-structured *theory* of translation – at least not in the sense we think of this term today – but they still show a high degree of coherence and critical insight. In this brief overview, I have attempted to pinpoint the features of Yu's activity as a translator and the basic principles around which his theoretical views revolve, focusing on the subjectivity of the translator, the principles of a desirable translating practice, the correlation between translation and original writing, and the role of translation and its theorisation as a channel for cultural innovation and intellectual critique. In doing so, I have sought to highlight the prominence of translation as both a practice and critical object in Yu's intellectual endeavour, as well as to emphasise his distinctive contribution at a time of unparalleled cultural ebullience in the history of modern China.

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Aspects of the Christian Missionary in Nationalist China: Mrs Jiang Jieshi and the Missions

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Abstract The present essay, beginning with Catholic press and various authors known in the sector of Missiology, underlines a connection between Song Meiling and Mission in general, particularly the Catholic ones. This work aims at adding a further piece to complete the already well-known Song Meiling's career, after her marriage to Chiang Kai-shek. Further on, it will be clearly underlined the way she managed to established relationships with representatives of Missions, both Catholic and Protestant, thanks to the reform movement "New Life", which brought Chinese people closer to Christian values. All this was possible by starting from the family dimension, thus enhancing the link between civil and religious society. Song Meiling's strong point was the way she promoted social inclusion of the religious confessions, especially of the Catholic Missions, through solidarity initiatives, considering the religious community on the same level as the social community. This was a factor of potential development for the Church in China.

Keywords Song Meiling. Catholic Missions. The "New Life" Movement. The feminism debate. Reforms and cooperation.

Summary 1 Premise. – 2 Song Meiling: Mrs Jiang Jieshi. – 3 Commission of Inquiry on the Missions and Solkosky's Point of View. – 4 An Evolving Society. – 5 The "New Life" Movement and Song Meiling's Contribution. – 6 Chinese Representatives of the Government and the Missions. – 7 Song Meiling and the Feminism Debate. – 8 New Social Ideas. – 9 The Qing Empire *vs* Japan: The Mission Works During the War. – 10 Conclusions.

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1 Premise

Dealing with Catholic Missions and more generally with Christianity in China, means to face all the problems the Church encountered in conveying the message of the Gospel and the ever-limited religious freedom. Behind the Missions, the Governments of European Powers repeatedly tried to carve out a living space in the Far East. Each power had its own areas of influence, leading to conflicts of interest among these powers.

Protestants aimed at the social life of the country influencing the educated Chinese classes, while for Catholics the priority was the "Plantatio Ecclesia" and only later did they deal with the social question. However, if these were the critical issues raised against the Catholic Church, there was no lack of support from representatives of the Chinese elite towards Christianity. Christian values such as solidarity and hospitality were, in any case, found among exponents of Chinese political and social class as well. This short essay focuses on the Chinese personality of Mrs Jiang Jieshi, linked to both Catholic and Protestant Missions.

This *modus operandi*, which was clearly evident among Protestants, could certainly favour that process of social integration between missions and civil society, with solidarity relations, craved by the Catholic Church in the process of evangelization of China.

The critical issue advanced to Catholics, was precisely the lack of dialogue with the intellectuals and political authorities of this country as opposed to Protestants, however, several representatives of the Chinese elite supported Christianity in general.

Despite the presence of several essays about Song Meiling in Chinese language, many more can be found in English, written by Chinese authors as well. However, nothing has ever emerged in these texts about the relation between Song Meiling and Catholic Missions. Therefore, it was necessary to start from the Catholic press and from newspapers of that time to give evidence of the bond between Song Meiling and Catholic Missions.

2 Song Meiling: Mrs Jiang Jieshi

Song Meiling (宋美齡, 1898-2003) born on March 5, 1897 in China, in Shanghai, was the youngest daughter of a wealthy Chinese merchant Charles Jones Song (Song Jiashu 宋嘉樹 1863-1918) (Furuya 1981, 222-3), who moved to the United States at a young age; with the advent of the Republic he returned to China as a Methodist missionary and was editor of the Bible, and collaborated with Sun Yat-sen (Sun Yixian, Sun Zhongshan 孙中山 1866-1925). Sun Yat-sen lately married Charles Song's first daughter Song Ching-ling (Qingling 宋庆龄 1893-1981) in his third marriage (Ladany 1988, 122-3).

The two Song sisters were not the only members of their family to play a leading role in Chinese political life: in fact their eldest brother T.V. Song (Song Ziwen 宋子文 1894-1971) became Foreign Minister in nationalist China. Meiling studied in the United States and assimilated its culture; Christian by training, she returned to China on December 1, 1927 and married General Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi 蒋介石 1887-1975) with a private religious ceremony (Furuya 1981, 227), nourishing in him appreciation for Western ideas without denying Chinese values.

When the Generalissimo married Meiling he was not a Christian yet. His conversion on October 23, 1930 in a Methodist church in Shanghai, would further seal their union by finding in these values the cornerstones of the Chinese tradition. Jiang Jieshi had taken this step following the promise he had made a year earlier to Methodist missionaries, when the uprising of the Northern Generals was underway, however, as Bays reports: "Mother Ni Guizeng (Ni Guizhen 倪桂珍) refused to agree to a marriage unless Chiang had seriously promised to investigate Christianity and consider being baptized" (Bays 2012, 125).

Song Meiling's contribution to China and her ability to mediate, especially during the release of the Generalissimo during the *coup d'etat* of Xian in 1936 when he was taken prisoner by his own men, earned her the cover of Time in 1937 along with her husband, of woman and man of the year (Hoffman 1995, 32).[1]

3 Commission of Inquiry on the Missions and Solkosky's Point of View

In September 1932, a Commission of Inquiry made up of 15 members, all secular members of 7 Protestant churches in America, following a visit to the Missions of India, China and Japan, had drawn up a report in which criticisms were addressed to Protestant missionaries and their Works. Georges Ephraim Sokolsky (1893-1962), a personality among Far Eastern publicists, and close to Song family having married Song Meiling's best friend Rosalind Phang, had published a copious article in the Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury[2] dated May 4, 1933, in which he debated, the conclusions reached by the inquiry. Herein, he praised all the Christian Missions present in China, not only those mentioned in the report, namely the Protestant ones, but

1 The following texts should also be taken into account: Furuya 1981, 516-21; Tyson 2007; Hoffman 1995, 32.

2 Sokolsky 1933. Chinese edition, Damei Wanbao, was first published in 1933. Messmer 2012, 35-80.

above all the Catholic Missions. The latter boasted a long tradition: though they had settled, in China since the thirteenth century, they suffered a setback at the end of the sixteenth century and finally experienced a radical growth until the twentieth century. On the contrary, the Protestant Missions counted only a century of existence.

According to Sokolsky, China was dominated in these years by six powerful revolutionary forces: the intellectual renaissance, Christianity, the social revolution, the industrial revolution, nationalism and communism. The tangle of these forces had, in his opinion, created an implosive situation in the Chinese society, even if the population had been catalysed in particular by Christianity. However, this was nothing more than a transformation of a nation during the process of being rebuilt.

Sokolsky agreed with a passage from the report of the Commission of Inquiry:

> nobody will study religious life in these countries of the East without being struck by the fact that Christianity has a resonance that far exceeds the number of its followers. (Agenzia Fides 1933b, 406-8)

If this assumption was true, Christianity had not failed in its goal. Its success was not to be found neither in the number of converts nor in the construction of churches, but in the Chinese people having their attention focused on Christian values. This was the strength and success of the Missions, while the criticisms that could be made to the missionaries were mere details rather than substance.

China claimed a new season *construens* with men who represented guides and Christianity acted as an antagonist and orientation for future ruling classes directing them towards a social conscience. It is no coincidence that many personalities of modern China starting from Sun Yixian had been 'stained' with Christianity, obviously not doctrinal, but practical, fuelled by the example of the righteous life of the missionaries, which contrasted with the opulent one of the officers *in loco*. The missionary worked hard in the social sector, providing medicines, interposing with the local magistrate in favour of his followers, challenging banditry; from this perspective, it was favourable for China to have Christian missionaries. The missionary played a primary, active and effective role in Chinese society even though this was often limited, confined to the silent apostolate. Sokolsky was convinced that the foreign missionary presence in this country had been fundamental for two orders of qualitative factors: schools and health organizations.

Sokolsky (Brown 1997, 236-47) while disapproving the report of the Commission of Inquiry which judged schools a failure from a numerical point of view, also argued that schools were to be assessed on the basis of quality. In the years from 1920 to 1927 the Christian

schools, despite a dark period of civil war and revolution, had worked facing many obstacles allowing many young people to have an education; therefore, it would have been imprudent to shut them or put them back in the hands of Chinese Christians; among other things, the latter solution would have been awkward due to the challenging financial burden required to maintain them. The Mission schools, a crucial element for the formation of future ruling classes, were beyond the control of the Chinese authorities, for this reason it was appropriate to entrust the education of young minds to local teachers; this solution would surely have met the approval of the bourgeoisie. The second important factor for Sokolsky was represented by the Health Organizations, which had achieved results far superior to the educational sector, where much had been legislated with the promulgation of several circulars besides the establishment of a Ministry of Hygiene (Wang 1947, 38-41).

The attention was paid to what had been done by the missionaries for the hospital service starting from the care of the destitute at the Hospital of S. Maria in Shanghai connected to the Aurora University (Agenzia Fides 1936d, 318-19), followed by the service of the Daughters of Charity of S. Vincenzo of Paolo, Franco-Chinese schools with the Marist brothers and the contribution of women's religious institutes such as the missionary nuns of the Immaculate Conception of Montreal. However, on a practical level, the results were disappointing. The Commission of Inquiry Report claimed the absence of qualified doctors, as well as a small number of hospitals for such a large population. Missionary activity regarding public health did not reach adequate standards; however, the construction of schools, universities and hospitals by both Protestants and Catholics endorsed Sokolsky's view about their quality. He had always lived in China and therefore was a connoisseur of this reality. Sokolsky highlighted how Christianity had introduced itself in China, that is, as a strong presence that claimed its own space. In line with Meiling's thought, Sokolsky's opinion had a strong influence on Chinese public opinion, especially among intellectuals (O'Connor 2010, 136-9).

On April 6, 1938, Mrs Jiang Jieshi, while attending a conference, praised the behaviour of missionaries during the war and announced the decision of the Generalissimo to revoke the pre-existing 1931 law which forbade compulsory religious teaching in private schools. This law had in the past greatly hindered the Catholic apostolate. She expressed herself in this way:

> General Chiang Kai-shek instructs me to tell you that he greatly appreciated your works in favour of the people. We both feel that the words are not enough to express our gratitude to all the Missions of China which have been of loyalty to all the trials, whenever their help has been evoked from all countries. Those who have

> criticized you for the past have surrendered to the evidence and recognize now your works. Thanks to your work and your charitable attitude, you made them understand what Christianity really is. The results of your efforts are so appreciated by the Government and the people that the Generalissimo has been able to revoke the law that prohibited compulsory teaching in Christian schools; these schools are now free to teach religious matters. This decision is proof that We recognize the real value of Christianity and the vital contribution that led to the spiritual elevation of the Chinese people. (Agenzia Fides 1938, 292)[3]

This passage is a clear sign that schools and education in general were one of the cornerstones of Chinese government policy at that time (Lutz 1971).

4 An Evolving Society

Despite a millenary civilisation, China remained within itself a nation of uneducated people based on a rural society (Bays 2012, 126-34) struggling between problems of subsistence and political confusion. Many government leaders were corrupt and young people had no future prospects. People lacked directives, although Sun Yixian had indicated, with his principles, a way to safeguard Chinese society and the integrity of citizens. The failure of authority, at the expense of discipline and social order, due to a lack of political and school education had thrown China into the abyss, which had to find a remedy not only to its endogenous but also to its exogenous problems. To reform, it was necessary to start from politics and education, important factors to temper the character of a nation, starting from reforming customs by establishing new customary rules. To do this, a good government was needed. A healthy politics is intimately linked to the uses, customs and habits of a population that change in times of political transition when it comes to moving from the old state of affairs to a new social order. However, the "New Life" Movement could not solve all evils in Chinese society and in the nation too.[4]

This change was required from above, from public institutions such as the Party Bureau, the Hygiene Committee, the League of Social Welfare, which were to lead the movement and establish a dialogue with the groups of the various social categories: from the trade unions of workers, school representatives, women's groups, rural associations,

3 See also Capristo 2000, 79-83.

4 The following texts should also be taken into account: Charbonnier 2007, cap. 24; Xi 2004, 870-4; Clark 1943.

as this movement embraced all human activities. In order to succeed, it was necessary to identify the real needs of a work in progress society and then find the right remedies and strategies. His leaders should have attracted the ruling classes first and then the popular ones. The principles of the movement had to involve not only the individual but also embrace the family up to the whole society. In its aim, the movement should have worked internally without foreign financial help. The means of disclosure, in addition to the oral transmission, were represented by traditional information channels and the distribution of brochures. If the fundamental aim was to eradicate from the people the habits that no longer adapted to modern life, the challenge was to accept the heavy responsibility of reviving the Chinese nation.

5 The "New Life" Movement and Song Meiling's Contribution

Song Meiling[5] with the "New Life" (新 生活) movement, promoted by the Generalissimo and originated, *sic simpliciter*, from the analysis of the disorder, dominated by corruption, both political and moral that reigned in those years, encouraged the idea of a renewed nation. Mrs Jiang Jieshi accompanied the Generalissimo on representative trips and, while he was dealing with political and military affairs, she contacted and assembled Protestant missionaries, to join the *novus ordus*. In the impervious places where only Catholic missionaries arrived, she invited them to collaborate for the cause of new China. Working alongside the missionaries, she began a fruitful collaboration with the various Catholic Action Centers which felt the need to take root in civil society, longing to give in addition a well-defined path to the committees scattered throughout China. Both movements consisted of a juvenile force. All this in full harmony with Pope Pius XI's intentions (1857-1939), who in his message to China in 1928, recommended to help and propagate faith and religion to promote the social well-being of the whole nation starting right from the young. In this sense, the Catholic Church could instil a new life. All this should have been followed by an *ubi consistam*, in fact there is no moral foundation *nisi dominus aedificaverit, nisi dominus custodierit civitatem, in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam*.[6]

Even if China had made significant steps in the areas of civil life inspired by Western models, it was necessary to focus on individu-

5 The following texts should also be taken into account: General and Madame Chiang Kai-Shek 1937; Donovan 2007, 67 cap. 7; Tyson 2007.

6 If the Lord doesn't build His home, if the Lord doesn't look after it, in vain others will succeed in doing it.

als and their morality, referring to the founding father Sun Yixian's doctrine, Confucius' dictates and the four cardinal virtues: Prudence (谨慎), Justice (正义), Temperance (有 节制) and Fortitude (坚强), pillars, as the philosopher Zhuangzi said (7th century BC), of the state as well as factors of stability for the progress of a nation.

The driving force of this movement was Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi, where the Generalissimo usually resided; hence the movement mentioned in 1934 had its birthright in the presence of many government officials as well as the Guomintang leaders (国民党) and the entire army (from soldiers to generals) (Agenzia Fides 1934, 397).

On November 7, 1934 Jiang Jieshi questioned and invited the members of Catholic Mission of Beijing to a meeting. The European missionaries were therefore received first by Mrs Jiang and then by the Generalissimo who praised the Mission Works urging them to cooperate, with all their strength for the recovery of China. This meeting aimed to elaborate the Catholic point of view on the reforms to be undertaken. In addition, Mrs Jiang encouraged the women of the provincial government of the city to take a position at the head of the "New Life" movement and to establish a Hygiene Bureau for the renewal of the city. The help of foreign missionaries was particularly requested as valid propagators, since they lived among the people. According to Mrs Jiang, if they wanted an effective change, compromises and corruption could no longer be tolerated, only in this way in a few years could an era of prosperity, peace and well-being be opened for China (Gasperment 1935, 207-11).

The first prohibitions soon arrived in the various provinces; in Shaanxi the ban on smoking opium; in Gansu that of bandaging women's feet, and so on. The spirit of the "New Life" aimed to withdraw China from its age-old traditionalism by instilling a modern civilisation to improve the living conditions of citizens by making them more aware of their duties towards their homeland. In Nanjing in May 1934, the first prohibitions were applied too; in the same period in Tianjin a Congress took place to inaugurate the new era. In the province of Hubei precise guidelines were given to instil feelings of brotherhood and solidarity among the people. In Beijing, under the direction of the Bureau of Social Welfare, a *vademecum* was established for all women who exercised public employment: Chinese women could dress in the European style, but they were not allowed to emphasise their breast and wearing suits. The propriety of clothes also concerned men. What established by the Bureau of Social Welfare appeared to be in contrast with Song Meiling's open mind, but let's not forget that she remained a Chinese woman despite her Western influences.

However, the statutes of the various provinces had to be conformed and the promoters of this movement had to support it effectively. In fact, an executive committee had unanimously approved a decalogue and decrees. The statutes were: order and respectability;

simplicity and decency, that is, being simple from dressing to nourishing, facing the harshness of life with virile strength and being frugal; be witty and sincere; know and act in accordance with the rules of probity, economics and conscience, in other words, observe the laws being faithful, with honesty and modesty; good use of household goods; exercise to maintain health; consistency and patience in decisions and difficulties; use the spare time to study the system, striving to have an adequate culture and moral integrity as citizens, that is, a sense of responsibility: be ready to sacrifice for the homeland. The decrees, eight in total, were nothing more than the prohibitions already in force in many provinces such as the interdiction to play, to make use of opium and other narcotics, to drink alcohol etc (Gasperment 1935, 207-11).

6 Chinese Representatives of the Government and the Missions

In 1933 H.H. Kung (Kong Xianxi 孔祥熙 1881-1967), a senior official of the Chinese government, Minister of Industry and representative of Guomintang, and husband of the first Song sister, Ailing (宋霭龄1890-1973), planned a trip to Europe with the intentions not only of studying the industry abroad and examine the best methods to adopt to advance the Chinese industry, but also of evaluating the best organisational social system in the various European countries, in order to be able to achieve the harmonious union of social classes in China and avoid future conflicts (Agenzia Fides 1933a, 511-12, 519; J.L. 1933).

Until now, the agricultural sector had prevailed in this country, therefore the rebirth of the new China had to start again from the development of the agricultural industry. Many Chinese intellectuals supported the Catholic religion because it came from realities, such as Europe and America, where the industrial experience was well established, therefore China could open up to what good was coming from outside: the keyword was industrialisation. The machines had to replace an agriculture which was fundamentally based on human labour. A new modernisation was planned for China while maintaining its own cultural traditions. Progress demanded infrastructural works, the construction of a road network with new and wide routes which would have facilitated trade and made ties between provinces closer. Cooperation became more necessary than ever.

Kong arrived in Rome and after official visits with the representatives of the Italian Government, he was received on February 7, 1933 by the Pope accompanied by Paul Yu Pin (Yu Bin 于斌, 1901-1978) professor of Chinese literature at the College of Propaganda Fide and by the *Chargé d'affaires* of China to the Italian State, Rai-

mondo H. Wang.[7] During the visit he did not fail to praise the work of Celso Costantini (1876-1958) who had been able to combine the work of evangelization with the Chinese cause contributing to the social well-being of this people (Agenzia Fides 1933a, 511-12, 519; J.L. 1933). This meeting served to strengthen the ties between the Holy See and the Chinese government with the moral and spiritual renewal of China as its fulcrum.

The Minister of Communications Chu Chia-hua (Zhu Jiahua 朱家驊 1893-1963) thus defined the situation in the country:

> Political incapacities and social unrest have undermined the vitality of the nation, our Eastern Provinces are under the occupation of the armed forces of a foreign nation. The communists have destroyed lives and goods and our cultural and spiritual heritage in the regions they hold. What is worse is that our compatriots try to destroy the base on which we have built our civilization, resulting in destruction, confusion, the inanity of everything and disdain for common morality. (Tregella 1935, 81-5; Zhu Jiahua 1934, 500)[8]

During a commemoration in honour of Sun Yixian the Generalissimo reaffirmed and denounced the bad ownership, indolence and neglect of the Chinese masses, indicating the ancient virtues as a remedy: Justice (正义), Integrity (正直) and Honesty (诚实) (Tregella 1935, 81). In addition, he appealed to the military to set an example to refrain from using opium, gambling and malpractice. In the course of the Conference of Generals of the South West and North West in Nanchang, while discussing the anti-communist military campaign, much emphasis was placed on this reform movement, which has become a key strength of the government program. In fact, there was no official government demonstration that did not pay attention to it. Jiang Jieshi argued that, in order to face the enemy, represented by the communists, in addition to taking military and economic measures, the people had to be directed towards moral norms that, alongside the sense of discipline and national solidarity, could have saved the nation. The director of the Shanghai municipality and public education office, Ban Gongzhang reported:

> Today the President of the Military Committee Chiang Kai-shek promotes the movement in favour of "new life", however the aim of this movement is very extensive, it is above all a question of en-

7 Ministero degli Affari Esteri Servizio storico e documentazione, Inventario della serie Affari Politici 1931-1945, Archivio storico diplomatico, Busta n. 92 (1944) 1/1, S.T.E., Roma, 1976, 141-2.

8 If not otherwise stated, all translations are by the Author.

> couraging the people to virtue. That's why Chiang insists mainly on rites, justice, moderation, modesty. Now if we examine the doctrine of the Catholic religion, we see that it rests mainly on these four virtues. It creates schools, founds hospitals, does charitable works: all this corresponds perfectly with charity, the ancient virtue of China. (Tregella 1935, 85)

Propaganda movements arose from above and the press promoted these new ideas. However, there was no shortage of opponents among these Hu Han-min (Hu Hanmin 胡漢民 1879-1936), head of the Southern resistance, Feng Yu-hsiang (Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥 1882-1948), the Christian General and Yen His-shan (Yan Xishan 閻錫山 1883-1960), Governor of Shanxi himself, all three in open contrast with the Central Government.

On the Catholic side, the *Commissio Synodalis*, at the Chinese Apostolic Delegation in Beijing, had expressed in favour of the movement since it had focused, like the Catholic Action, on young people. Kong, Minister of Finance in Taiyuanfu, during a Conference of representatives of Catholic and Protestant Missions, presented Song Meiling who, speaking to the broad audience, argued that a movement for the renewal of the country was to be founded and what mattered was not the economic side, but the spiritual one, urging everyone to cooperate (Tregella 1935, 84).

In practice, this propaganda was promoted to have the same principles as Christian morality, although some Chinese intellectuals had criticised foreign missionaries about their doctrinal teaching, as there was a feeling that their way of teaching was not uniform (Wieger 1932, 79-275). However, in Fangcheng, in the diocese of Nanyang, during a meeting between a Catholic missionary and a Protestant catechist, albeit with striking differences, it was pointed that a dialogue between the different religions could be put into effect.

In 1934 in Shanghai ten associations, including seven secular ones, welcomed the new Apostolic Delegate Mario Zanin (1890-1958), opening themselves to collaboration both with the Missions and with the Catholic Action. The Ming Bao (明報) published an article supporting the theory according to which the Catholic religion ensured peace and sowed the seed of fraternity that rises above nations, races and social classes; it argued that Catholicism alone could bring about universal peace. All this, invoking the cooperation of Catholic Action Associations scattered throughout China (Tregella 1935, 85).

7 Song Meiling and the Feminism Debate

Wherever Mrs Jiang passed, she would leave 'her perfumed trail', conquering the hearts of Chinese and foreigners. Not only did she get in touch with the missionaries and collaborate with them, but she emphasised the women of religious orders by releasing them out of that anonymity that forced them into the background, compared to their male religious counterparts. She also sought the support of Chinese women from all social statuses, with the conviction that women could contribute to the change that was taking place. The ideas of "New Life" were being promoted among Chinese women (Liang 1946, 38-43), focusing on their primary needs. Therefore, institutes for maternity arose where Catholic nuns in possession of a midwifery diploma also joined. Even the Protestant missionaries, who had penetrated the upper strata of Chinese society, made impression on the Chinese ladies too. Government leaders were convinced that a profound transformation in other sectors could also be drawn from this collaboration between the Chinese Government and the Catholic Church, so that religions were not only a pretext for conflict. During a visit by the Generalissimo to Suiyuan (Moreal 1934, 627-30), Song Meiling founded a committee where a woman presided over it, Governor Fu Tso-I's wife (Fu Zuoyi 傅作义 1895-1975).

Long before this, the Church in Europe had already begun to deal with social issues since the times of Leo XIII (1810-1903) in 1891 with the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. In 1935 Catholic France, in an international conference, addressed the issue of underground work with great attention to women's work; the Catholic Union of International Studies was established, which, alongside other national and international Catholic organisations such as the International Organization for Work, pointed out a study of the working conditions of women in colonised countries (Beaupin 1935, 446-50). All this in line with the Song Meiling's idea, who had started talking about women's work and the role of women in Chinese society. At the general meeting of Catholic Action held in Shanghai in 1935, two Chinese secular women were awarded an honour and one of them carried a report with an emblematic title: "the role of women in Catholic Action" (Agenzia Fides 1936c, 110).

In 1939 in Rome, during a Congress, the Catholic Female Youth gave precise guidelines for the countries of Mission. Lu Zenghzuo, Joseph Lo Pa-hong's daughter (Lu Bohong 陸伯鴻 1875-1937), first President of the Chinese Catholic Action and active in this movement, stated that it was women in recent years to have given new impetus to this association. This was also perceived in Japan through the news supported by the same Japanese representative, Miss Minami, who had stated that Catholic Action in Japan was formed not only by male leaders, but above all by non-Catholic women conquered by the faith (Agenzia Fides 1939, 329-30).

Representatives of foreign Catholic and Protestant Missions worked in unison alongside laics and young Chinese women *vis unita fortior*, but the union movement needed modern times to get Christian principles accepted by the elite (Legrand 1944, 621-4; Legrand 1945, 22-65).

This also was the missionary dynamism, made up of a spirit of adaptation, courageous charity and cooperation. New social ideas inevitably brought new problems; the strong commercial and then ideological tension of the new democratic and material ideas in China responded to the needs of the new Chinese leadership.

8 New Social Ideas

This evolution could not be achieved without a social transformation based on the equality of the natives; some ancestral customs could be maintained, but these had to be compatible with the dignity of the free responsible man, aware of his rights and duties. To prepare for social transformation and to train capable citizens (Lesourd 1933, 438-9) it was necessary to have an education and it was the school system that had to keep up with this task. In fact, in 1936 in the social weeks of Versailles, the emphasis was placed on the Missions and on the task of the missionary Church with regard to the civilizations of peoples, setting limits and hoping for an intelligent collaboration between the Church and the colonizing State. It was claimed that civilization was a temporal function, which did not belong to the functions proper to the Church, it was a prerogative of the State. The President of the Social Weeks of France Prof. Eugène Duthoit (1869-1945) of the Catholic University of Lille, after emphasizing the conflicts between the different civilizations of the world, stressed the peaceful exchanges made possible by Christianity through the work of charity (Agenzia Fides 1936a, 252-3). New ways and methods of evangelization were envisaged for the changing times. The direct apostolate-built relations of good agreements, the so-called "friendship policy", which the missionaries could get with the entourage of the country. These ordinary relationships of good understanding, of civilization, were an effective way of preaching which had brought achievements in many areas of the world. The difficulty was to make this relationship practical, that is, how the missionary had to relate to this type of relationship. Cooperators were needed for the ever more pressing needs, to confront the country's entourage and these could only be the laics of the different social classes: catechists, teachers, doctors, capable and influential men and women to rely on; while the missionary was required to act according to the circumstances. All of this generally represented the Church's social action work in mission countries, even though large-scale social action had not yet been implemented in China (Costantini 1933, 907-24).

9 The Qing Empire *vs* Japan: The Mission Works During the War

The many and various works of charity and relief engaged during the war were a clear example of how many forces could come together for a noble purpose. The International Red Cross Committee, clearly of Christian inspiration, under the high patronage of the Anglican and Catholic bishops, had worked for the many victims. Charity cooperatives were created all over the country, such as the Emergency Work of the Catholic University of Fu Jen, the Social Service Department and the Peking International Women's Relief Committee, which had provided considerable financial assistance: women had been protagonists in this circumstance too (Agenzia Lumen 1941, 195).

In Shanghai, the International Relief Committee and the American Advisory Committee worked together for relief efforts, the synergy between Catholics and Protestants worked well. On the battlefield the various religious Institutes joined together: Benedictines, fathers of the Foreign Missions of Milan, Communities of Italian and American nuns, Protestant missionaries, all together contributed to the work of assistance and charity, and the cooperation among the various Vicariates was desirable as well, though they had been fighting with each other significantly in China. In fact, during the war the Holy See demanded the Superiors of the Missions through Propaganda and through intermediation of the Nunciatures and Apostolic Legations, to avoid difficulties, to remain united and extended these directives to Vicariates and Apostolic Prefectures (Bouquin 1944, 3-5).[9]

In 1940 Pope Pius XII (1876-1958), during the mission days, addressed James Edward Walsh (1891-1981), elected in 1936 as the new Superior of the Missionaries of the Society of American Catholic Foreign Missions better known as the Maryknoll missionaries, asking help to US Catholics:

> To you in particular, generous citizens of the great Confederation of the United States of America, where nature was so generous with its gifts and where the sky stands above such an industrious and powerful people and Our word, from this Vatican hill, on the wing of a powerful human genius, it flies and crosses the Atlantic to satisfy your desire to listen to it, bearer of your missionary ardor. Your Society of Foreign Missions of Maryknoll, competing in the east of Asia with the Institutes of European religious families, to which many of your heroes and heroines also give their name, in the propagation of the faith. ("Notizie Missionarie" 1940)

9 See also Coenen 1944, 441-50.

This plea came when most of the countries of Europe were at war. The pope, no longer able to rely on the European support, during the missionary days of 1940, but also in October 1941 sought help from the Catholics of the United States, even if many care centres in China were funded by Protestant and secular organisations. The needs were so different that the missionaries' help was requested in different sectors.

In recent years the war had been one of the causes that had led to a social reconstruction programme. To understand the extent of the social work that the Church put in place, it was necessary to start from the problems that the Chinese population had to face in the post-war period; firstly that of refugees, then the destruction of homes and productive properties, and not least the overcrowding of cities that are now unhealthy and sources of disease since during the conflict many had left the countryside because of the crops destroyed by the bombing fire.

10 Conclusions

Meiling tried in every way to raise awareness of China's problems in the West, shaking public opinion. On April 23, 1942, in an article in the New York Times, she commented on how extraterritorial jurisdiction still existed in China, a matter involving the Legal Institute of the Protectorate that had allowed Western Powers to enter China and to remove protection from Chinese jurisdiction, both foreign and Chinese natural persons and their property; The United States responded to this declaration on October 9 of the same year when the American Government informed the Chinese ambassador that the United States were ready to negotiate the immediate renunciation of extraterritorial rights and to shortly draft a treaty for its end in 1943. This was followed by renunciations from other nations.

If much is known about Meiling for her diplomatic activity especially with the United States, little is known of her activity in the Catholic Missions, therefore this contribution wants to be a piece to be added to the many merits of this woman. She sought and eventually managed to have Catholic and Protestant missions working together, both engaged in the "New Life" movement, for a political and moral rebirth of China.

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China's 'CivilOlympic' Performances and (Re)Gained Global Visibility
Fantasising about a New Brand China through Olympic Public Service Announcements

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Abstract This article investigates how China fantasised about itself and the Beijing 2008 Olympics through the award-winning TV public service announcements (PSAs) of the *Beijing Opera Series*, with a focus on visibility. By drawing on theories of the spectacle, I perform a semiotic analysis of the most recurrent signs, organising them according to the main themes that emerge. The theatre stage – which represents the Olympic stage – is closely linked to China's dream of owning the Games and its desire for global visibility. The performance includes the theatrical performance of the Beijing Opera and the performance of civilisation, which semiotically over-determines the Games. The protagonists include famous actors and roles of Beijing Opera (i.e. Dan, who is an anthropomorphic metaphor for China), as well as ordinary people, who are *extra*ordinary for their high degree of civilisation. The spectators, especially through the intradiegetic presence of a Western male Other, validate the country's performative success and confirm its achieved global visibility.

Keywords Beijing 2008. Brand China. China's national image. Civilisation. Public service advertising. Olympic spectacle. Global visibility.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Beijing 2008 Olympics, Brand China and Televised Public Service Advertising. – 3 A PSA Campaign to Serve the Beijing 2008 Olympics. – 4 Theoretical and Methodological Approach. – 4.1 Synopses. – 4.2 Analysis. – 5 Conclusions.

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1 Introduction

The Olympic Games are increasingly understood as an indispensable vehicle for country branding (Panagiotopoulou 2011; Sun, Paswan 2012), defined as "a way to help a nation articulate a more coherent and cohesive national identity, to animate the spirit of its citizens in the service of national priorities, and to maintain loyalty to the territory within its borders" (Aronczyk 2013, 3). Hosting the Olympics, therefore, is of crucial importance for every country wishing to promote its brand on the international stage.

China was no exception. Compared to the previous iterations of the Games, the Beijing 2008 Olympics had even heavier economic and political connotations and implications (Brownell 2008; Price, Dayan 2008; Xu 2008). As the country was increasingly coming under the spotlight of global attention, the domestic media were responsible for producing the official Olympic narrative, which had to portray China as prosperous and powerful, but also as politically stable, capable of obtaining international respectability and globalised (DeLisle 2008).

Ultimately, the worldwide live broadcast of the Beijing 2008 Olympics was a success: with 4.7 billion TV viewers, it attracted the largest global audience ever (Nielsen.com 2008). In academic terms, this led to a considerable body of work that studied the Olympic Games as a 'spectacle', which was originally theorised by the French Situationist Debord to refer to the "social relationship between people that is mediated by images" ([1967] 1977, 12). This concept was further extended to include all the "media constructs that are out of the ordinary and outside habitual daily routine", which "involve an aesthetic dimension and are often dramatic" (Kellner 2010, 76). These scholarly contributions considered the Chinese Olympics as a spectacle aimed at enhancing the country's national image worldwide (Caffrey 2011; Luo, Richeri 2012), and focused on the most significant televised moment in China's Olympic story to the world: the opening ceremony (Barmé 2009; Chen, Colapinto, Luo 2012). Nonetheless, although the Olympics are unanimously considered to be "a spectacle par excellence" and "irreducibly visual" (MacAloon 1984, 245), the performative and (audio)visual nature of the media representations related to China's national image – or "Brand China" (Ramo 2007) – in the pre-Olympic period is barely addressed in the existing literature, especially when it comes to a critical in-depth reading of the media texts targeting the domestic audience.

This article posits that, as it was precisely the approach of the 2008 Olympics that rendered the improvement of China's brand image on the global stage more urgent than ever, the country intended to exploit this opportunity to attract the world's attention. I argue that this priority influenced the way the country imagined its national identity and represented itself in media texts – first and foremost

in terms of visibility. This paper innovatively contributes to our understanding of China's self-representation in the (pre)Olympic period, by investigating how China fantasised about its national image by looking at one of the key tools through which the country narrated the 'China story' to itself, and focusing on the scarcely considered yet privileged site for the manufacture of State-sanctioned media texts: Olympic public service announcements or PSAs (*Aoyun gongyi guanggao* 奥运公益广告).

Firstly, this article illustrates the PSA campaign *Welcome the Olympics, Be Civilised, Set New Trends* (*Ying Aoyun, jiang wenming, shu xinfeng* 迎奥运, 讲文明, 树新风), and explains its rationale and implementation in the context of China's Olympic internal propaganda. Secondly, it provides an overview of the themes and styles of the TV PSAs of the aforementioned campaign and national competition and introduces the theoretical and methodological approach. I then undertake a semiotic analysis of the three TV PSAs of the *Beijing Opera Series* (*Jingju xilie* 京剧系列), which is organised around the main themes emerging from the most significant words, images and sounds, unveiling their sociocultural meanings and connotations, as well as explaining their significance in the light of the official representational priorities of Beijing 2008. Lastly, I discuss the findings and present my conclusions.

2 Beijing 2008 Olympics, Brand China and Televised Public Service Advertising

As insightfully predicted by Wang (2008), the Beijing 2008 Olympics constituted a "defining moment for 'Brand China'" (239), and not only in commercial terms. The Games were also characterised by internal propaganda and mobilisation on a scale unseen in China since the beginning of Deng's reform era (DeLisle 2008). As a result, a number of studies explored the vast Olympic education campaign that targeted the domestic audience in order to create and promote positive narratives of a 'new' China.

Brady (2009) revealed that the Olympic internal propaganda was aimed at gaining consensus for the Party and building national pride, and also had the objective of educating on Chinese values, showcasing the government's achievements and focusing on inclusiveness and participation. Brownell (2009) examined the Olympic education programme in schools and argued that the Olympics helped China to imagine a future where the country would be more integrated into the international community. De Kloet, Chong and Landsberger (2010) analysed the propaganda posters and training manuals for the Olympic volunteers. They identified three discourses linked to China's imagined national identity: a civilised China; a safe Chi-

na; and a harmonious society. Chong (2017) examined the creation of new model citizens by analysing the posters of the Olympic volunteer programme, which used emotional slogans and positive images of China. Broudehoux (2012) investigated the Olympic civilisation discourse that merged Beijing's official propaganda with notions of a harmonious society and spiritual civilisation.

Surprisingly, although public service announcements (hereafter PSAs, *gongyi guanggao* 公益广告) played a crucial role in promoting both the Olympic civilisation campaign and the volunteering programme, as it will be revealed below, the studies above did not even mention them. This omission seems to reflect the scant attention that has been dedicated to PSAs in Olympic Studies more generally. By focusing on selected textbooks, volunteer posters and manuals, the scholarly contributions above seem to suggest that the Olympic campaigning was just another example of blunt, old-fashioned propaganda. This is due to the fact that they failed to take into account previous academic findings that demonstrate how China's new propaganda actually started to employ language and styles that are less artificial, in addition to adopting modern techniques typical of commercial advertising precisely through PSAs (Barmé 1999; Brady 2008; Cheng, Chan 2009).

In the last decade, PSAs have started to play an unprecedented role in the discursive construction of China's national image (Liu, He 2014). In particular, the subgenre of Olympic PSAs became so ubiquitous that it was even praised for having initiated a new decade in the history of Chinese PSAs (Luo 2008). As a result, a number of scholars investigated specific case studies of Olympic PSAs, most of which were televised (Shi 2008; Chen 2008; Puppin 2011).

Only a few English-language academic investigations acknowledged the specific role played by TV PSAs in Olympic campaigning. Landsberger (2009) observed the extensive use of celebrity endorsements, which was aimed at portraying China in a favourable way, as well as showing people the desired behaviour to adopt. His study illustrates a number of strategies employed by Chinese PSAs but does not provide a close reading of selected case studies. Yu (2011) investigated an educational commercial by China Central Television (CCTV) and performed a cognitive semantic analysis of the central multimodal metaphor: "Hosting the Beijing Olympics is performing Beijing Opera on an international stage" (597). His study is the closest to this article, insofar as he focuses on a PSA that I also examine; nonetheless, it is very different in terms of methodology and scope, as it fails to address the (self)representational strategies and the increasing visibility of Brand China, which are actually intrinsic to this PSA.

The original contribution of this article is at least threefold: firstly, it looks at Olympic PSAs, which so far have been neglected both in Chinese Studies and Olympic Studies, as significant tools for repre-

senting and promoting a country's image; secondly, it offers a close reading of selected Chinese-language PSAs, of which only one has been explored in the existing English-language literature, after contextualising them within the Olympic campaign; finally, it investigates the performative and (audio)visual nature of these media texts with a focus on visibility and the relationship with country branding, which is a significant yet still under-investigated area.

3 A PSA Campaign to Serve the Beijing 2008 Olympics

The best example of PSAs used in the Beijing 2008 Olympics is the PSA campaign *Welcome the Olympics, Be Civilised, Set New Trends* (*Ying Aoyun, jiang wenming, shu xinfeng* 迎奥运, 讲文明, 树新风, hereafter WBS), which was promoted with the 500-day countdown to the opening ceremony, on 27 March 2007 (Wenming.cn 2009a). WBS was homonymous with a big internal propaganda campaign launched in 2006 by the Central Guidance Committee on Socialist Spiritual Civilisation Construction (CGCSSCC), of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CCCPC) and the Beijing Organising Committee of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG), whose aim was to improve the 'quality' (*suzhi* 素质) and degree of civilisation of the population, in order to establish a positive and harmonious social environment. Together with the volunteering programme and the etiquette competition, WBS was one of the main initiatives that ensured the success of the internal propaganda campaign (Gov.cn 2008).

WBS was preceded by the emission of the "Notice on the Launch of the National PSA Competition 'Welcome the Olympics, Be Civilised, Set New Trends'" (hereafter Notice), which was issued jointly on 22 March 2007 by the Publicity Department, the CGCSSCC, the State Administration of Industry and Commerce (SAIC), the State Administration for Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP), and the BOCOG. The Notice was directed to the authorities at different administrative levels and specified that WBS had to "promote the crucial role of PSAs in the diffusion of the Olympic spirit and in the guidance of new social trends" (Wenming.cn 2007).

On 3 September 2008, all the PSA entries were broadcast by domestic media, appeared on public transport, and were voted online. A jury of experts selected 88 best adworks (23 audiovisual, 45 radio, 20 print), and honoured them with awards (gold, silver and bronze); moreover, 21 advanced work units and 5 advanced media – CCTV, Guangming Daily, People's Radio, People's Daily, Economic Daily – were given honorary mentions (Wenming.cn 2009b). WBS was highly eulogised by the Chinese media and advertising magazines, as it hit historical records for number of PSAs submitted to the com-

petition (1,174 adworks received) (Wenming.cn 2009a) but also for professionals involved, economic investment, media participation, length and frequency of broadcast and advertising value (Luo 2008).

Attentive and repeated viewing of all 23 award-winning PSAs for the audiovisual category revealed that most of them addressed some 'etiquette' problems, which could potentially undermine the image of China as a good host country, but also promoted anti-smoking behaviour, helping the disabled, maintaining harmony and safety, welcoming foreigners, etc. As established by the Notice, the participating PSAs had to be creative, original and easily understood by the Chinese audience. Consequently, some PSAs were produced in cartoon-style animation, others were documentary style; some were overtly political, others were highly symbolic; some engaged celebrities, while others featured ordinary people; some were characterised by humour, others by sentimentalism, and so on.

Despite the rich variety of themes, strategies and styles, three PSAs were so similar in terms of creative idea and artistic expression that, after their broadcast, they became known as the *Beijing Opera Series* (*Jingju xilie* 京剧系列, hereafter BOS). By embedding the most recurrent words, images and sounds in the WBS competition, the BOS appeared representative of the official imagery of a new Brand China that was shaped and promoted to the Chinese population in the pre-Olympic period and became the instrumental case study for this article.

4 Theoretical and Methodological Approach

The three PSAs of the BOS were produced and subtitled in Chinese. As entries for the WBS competition, they were submitted under the name of the CCTV and its Advertising Office, but their production was actually commissioned to two Beijing-based advertising agencies.[1]

As suggested by the name itself, the BOS is centred around the theatrical performance of the Beijing Opera. Its creative idea and artistic expression were based on the recommendations of the CGCSSCC, as the Beijing Opera is one of the most representative forms of China's cultural heritage and part of the 'national essence' (*guocui* 国粹). As a result, the BOS shares the same distinctive features of the spectacle: it gives "primacy to visual sensory and symbolic

1 *Beijing Opera Celebrities – Interview* and *From Small Look Big* were produced by Finesse Studio (*Beijing dianjingfang guanggao sheji gongzuoshi* 北京点睛坊广告设计工作室), and *You Are the Protagonist* by Mass Media International Advertising (MMIA, *Guang'ergaozhi hezhong guoji guanggao youxian gongsi* 广而告之合众国际广告有限公司). Thanks to Li Huyue 李虎跃 (Finesse) and Wang Dequan 王德全 (MMIA) for sharing this information.

codes", has the necessity "to be seen", and reaches "a certain size and grandeur" (MacAloon 1984, 243-5). More importantly, BOS relies on the *conditio sine qua non* of the spectacle: the binary roles of actors/performers and audience/spectators (243). It is precisely this inherent visibility that deserves to be acknowledged and investigated, as it constitutes an important turning point in the self-representation of Brand China.

In the analysis below, I will examine these PSAs as texts that compose what Hall referred to as "the narrative of the nation", or "a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols and rituals which stand for or represent the shared experiences, sorrows, and triumphs and disasters which give meaning to the nation" (1992, 293). First, I provide their synopses, which take into account the verbal and the audiovisual elements and include a translation into English,[2] and also highlight the main camera work. In doing so, I follow the order of the prizes awarded in the WBS competition, from highest to lowest. Then I offer a critical interpretive analysis inspired by semiotics (Barthes 1977; Williamson 1979; Beasley, Danesi 2002), which examines the most recurrent verbal, visual and aural signs of the BOS – namely: stage, performance, actors and spectators – and the main emerging themes. The analysis will focus on the meanings of these texts at a denotational, connotational and ideological level and will reveal their social, cultural and political significance (Baym 2012).

4.1 Synopses

1. *Beijing Opera Celebrities: Interview* (*Jingju mingjia – Caifang pian* 京剧名家 – 采访篇, hereafter PSA1),[3] was honoured with the silver prize at the WBS competition (placed 4th out of 8). This 2-minute PSA opens to the sound of wooden clappers and the image of a floating red theatre curtain. As the pace of the rhythm increases, a series of fast alternated scenes shows the imminent start of a performance of the Beijing Opera and the Beijing 2008 Olympics. The first climax is reached when the theatre curtain opens to reveal the stage, which lights up: however, both the stage and seats are empty. A professional male actor from the Beijing Opera appears, with his name and company shown on the screen, accompanied by a shift to more solemn music. He is filmed using a medium shot, while he speaks towards the camera, wearing formal dress in an indoor setting. Another nine

2 Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the Author.

3 http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMzQ1NjcyOTI=.html; https://advertisingchina.blogspot.com/2021/06/beijing-opera-celebrities-interview.html.

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actors and actresses are then presented in the same way, in the following order of appearance, while they proclaim:

> Yu Kuizhi (China National Peking Opera Company, hereafter CNPOC): "When the minute hand pointed that moment/the whole world shouted in one voice/2008 Beijing Olympics" (*Dang shizhen zhixiang nayi ke/putianzhixia huhuanzhe tong yige shengyin/2008 Beijing Aoyun* 当时针指向那一刻/普天之下呼唤着同一个声音/2008北京奥运)
>
> Yuan Huiqin (CNPOC): "The Beijing Olympics showed the Chinese people's longing for harmony/showed China as a land of propriety" (*Beijing Aoyun zhanshi le Zhongguoren dui hexie de qidai/zhanshi le Zhongguo shi liyizhibang* 北京奥运展示了中国人对和谐的期待/展示了中国是礼仪之邦)
>
> Zhang Jianguo (CNPOC): "Olympics, the Chinese are waiting for you/the Chinese welcome you/the Chinese bless you" (*Aoyun, Zhongguoren qipan ni/Zhongguoren huanying ni/Zhongguoren zhufu ni* 奥运, 中国人期盼你/中国人欢迎你/中国人祝福你)
>
> Zhang Huoding (CNPOC): "Beijing Olympics, China's big stage/is bursting with endless splendour" (*Beijing Aoyun, Zhongguo dawutai/zhanfangzhe wuxian de jingcai* 北京奥运会, 中国大舞台/绽放着无限的精彩)
>
> Yang Chi (Dalian Peking Opera Troupe): "One World, One Dream/One Stage/this stage shows the uprightness and integrity of Chinese civilisation/ancient Cathay is entering a splendid era" (*Tong yige shijie, tong yige mengxiang/tong yige wutai/zhege wutai zhanshizhe Zhonghua wenming de fengcai/youjiu Huaxia haomai shidai* 同一个世界, 同一个梦想/同一个舞台/这个舞台展示着中华文明的风采/悠久华夏豪迈时代)
>
> Wang Rongrong (Beijing Peking Opera Company, hereafter BPOC): "Singing, reciting, acting, acrobatic fighting/we draw on every vivid detail of the arts/spring, summer, autumn, winter/we display each wonderful season in front of the Five Rings" (*Chang nian zuo da/women xiang yishu jiqu mei yige shengdong de xijie/chun xia qiu dong/women xiang wuhuan chengxian mei yige canlan de jijie* 唱念做打/我们向艺术汲取每一个生动的细节/春夏秋冬/我们向五环呈现每一个灿烂的季节)
>
> Li Shengsu (CNPOC): "Every single detail of the Olympics/is a beautiful memory for every Chinese person" (*Beijing Aoyun de diandian didi/dou shi mei yige Zhongguoren de meihao jiyi* 北京奥运的点点滴滴/都是每一个中国人的美好记忆)

> Chi Xiaoqiu (Beijing Peking Opera Company, BPOC): "Welcome the Olympics, Be Civilised, Set New Trends/is the honour of each of us/the responsibility of each of us" (*Ying Aoyun, jiang wenming, shu xinfeng/shi mei yige ren de guangrong/mei yige ren de zeren* 迎奥运, 讲文明, 树新风/是每一个人的光荣/每一个人的责任)
>
> Wang Yan (Tianjin Peking Opera Company): "The Olympics are a new start/our pursuit for civilisation never ends" (*Aoyun shi xin de qidian/women dui wenming de zhuiqiu yongyuan mei you zhongdian* 奥运是新的起点/我们对文明的追求永远没有终点)
>
> Meng Guanglu (Tianjin Youth Peking Opera Troupe): "Transmit civilisation, contribute to the Olympics/light up the torch, sing China loud and proud" (*Chuanzai wenming, fengxian Aoyun/dianliang shenghuo, changxiang Zhongguo* 转载文明, 奉献奥运/点亮圣火, 唱响中国)

In terms of visual language, there are shots of the actors' performances in make-up and costume, both on the theatre stage and in outdoor settings, and on the official Olympic countdown.

The second climax is reached when a two-string spike fiddle starts to play frantically, and a Beijing Opera female role – *Dan* 丹 – appears on the screen. The camera zooms in on her eyes and hand movements, with alternating close-ups on the musical instrument. As the rhythm reaches its peak, she strikes a pose: in the final shot, she is shown standing on the stage with her back to the camera, while the curtains open to show modern buildings and skyscrapers. The pay-off "Step onto the World stage, sing China's opera" (*Deng shijie de tai, chang Zhongguo de xi* 登世界的台, 唱中国的戏) appears on the screen, also read by a male voice-over.

2. *From Small Look Big* (*Yixiao jianda pian* 以小见大篇, hereafter PSA2)[4] was awarded the bronze prize (placed 9th out of 10). This 1-minute 30-second PSA opens to percussion music with a long shot of a theatre stage, where four roles of the Beijing Opera are standing. We then see a series of acrobatics and ancient flags are waved on the stage. One of these transforms into the Olympic flag, which is waved by an athlete with a modern cityscape in the background. Next, four of the Beijing Opera actors who starred in PSA1 appear on the screen. Each of them talks straight to the camera, and every verbal narrative is followed by a parallel visual narrative, as follows:

4 https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMzg1NDkzMTY=.html?spm=a2h0c.8166622.PhoneSokuUgc_12.dtitle; https://advertisingchina.blogspot.com/2021/06/from-small-look-big.html.

Meng Guanglu: "A performance of the Beijing Opera/can narrate a splendid history/an edition of the Olympic Games/can interpret the spirit of sport/a proper manner/can express the uprightness and integrity of a land of ceremony" (*Yi tai Jingju/keyi yanyi jingcai lishi/yi jie Aoyunhui/keyi quanshi tiyu jingshen/yige youya juzhi/keyi zhanxian liyizhibang de fengcai* 一台京剧/可以演绎精彩历史/一届奥运会/可以诠释体育精神/一个优雅举止/可以展现礼仪之邦的风采)

> Inside a modern building, a man sees a girl who is carrying a heavy pile of books. He helps her by calling the elevator, and by letting her enter first.

Chi Xiaoqiu: "A gesture/can express the artistic pursuit of a Beijing Opera actor/a civilised behaviour/can reflect the quality and self-cultivation of a nation" (*Yige zhaoshi/neng tixian Jingju yanyuan de yishu zhuiqiu/yige wenming xingwei/neng fanying guoming de suzhi xiuyang* 一个招式/能体现京剧演员的艺术追求/一个文明行为/能反映国民的素质修养)

> In a supermarket, a teenage boy, as soon as he realises he is jumping the queue, self-consciously joins the queue and bows to apologise.

Yuan Huiqin: "A graceful movement/can arouse the fans' deep admiration/a friendly smile/can make the entire world eulogise this city" (*Yige youmei shenduan/neng rang ximi pai'an jiaohao/yige youshan weixiao/neng rang quan shijie dou zanmei zhezuo chengshi* 一个优美身段/能让戏迷拍案叫好/一个友善微笑/能让全世界都赞美这座城市)

> In a modern city, a waiter notices a forgotten camera. He dashes outside the restaurant, runs into the street and looks for the owner – who turns out to be a foreign girl. When he returns the camera to her, she looks extremely surprised and grateful.

Zhang Jianguo: "A tuneful melody/can cause the fans to remember an actor/the good image of a host/can cause the entire world to remember this country" (*Yiduan didao de changqiang/neng rang ximi jizhu yige yanyuan/yige dongdaozhu de lianghao xingxiang/neng rang quan shijie dou jizhu zhege guojia* 一段地道的唱腔/能让戏迷记住一个演员/一个东道主的良好形象/能让全世界都记住这个国家)

> Inside a theatre, the audience is leaving after a performance. A little girl sees some rubbish left on the empty seats; she picks it up and throws it into the nearest bin. She then smiles towards the camera.

The PSA closes on a series of shots depicting the four characters from the initial scene getting ready to perform, accompanied by a rhythmic escalation of melodic music, ending with the lights coming on and lighting up their faces. The pay-off "2008 Olympics, World's Grand Meeting, China's Elegant Demeanour" (2008 *Aoyunhui, shijie shenghui, Zhongguo fengcai* 2008奥运会, 世界盛会, 中国风采) appears on the screen.

3. *You Are the Protagonist* (*Zhujiao shi ni pian* 主角是你篇, hereafter PSA3)[5] was awarded the bronze prize (placed 10th out of 10). This 1-minute PSA opens with long-shots of a red theatre curtain and an empty stage. One by one, different roles of the Beijing Opera appear and perform: their moves are cadenced with intermittent flashing lights. Close-ups first show the details of a female character's hand movements and facial expression, then the clapping hands of the audience.

As the music becomes more melodic, the theatrical performance is superimposed with footage of the Olympic torch journey. When a female voice starts to sing, a Dan role turns her head 180 degrees, so that the shot shifts from a frontal shot to a shot from behind, from which the viewer sees a totally different scene. Three main visual narratives accompany what is stated by the male voice-over, as follows:

> Voice-over: "Beijing 2008 is attracting the world's gaze…" (*Beijing 2008 huijuzhe quanqiu de muguang* 北京2008汇聚着全球的目光)
>
> > Ten Chinese people are standing in an orderly fashion on a new theatre stage, with the Bird's Nest and fireworks behind them. There are close-ups of their faces, alternated with shots of Beijing Opera actors performing and an audience of foreigners, who are clapping enthusiastically.
>
> (continued) "… every word and every action of 1.3 billion Chinese/ every move and action on the stage of China…" (*shisan yi Zhongguoren de yiyanyixing/Shenzhou da wutai de jushoutuozu* 十三亿中国人的一眼一行/神州大舞台的举手投足)
>
> > Shots of the Imperial Palace, modern buildings lit up by the sun and dragon dances.
>
> (continued) "… is a performance by China in front of the entire world/ a big show displaying Chinese civilisation" (*jiu shi Zhong-*

5 http://archive.wenming.cn/gygg/2008-07/31/content_14275793.htm; https://advertisingchina.blogspot.com/2021/06/you-are-protagonist.html.

guo chengxian zai quan shijie mianqian de yanchu/jiu shi zhanxian Huaxia wenming de da xi 就是中国呈现在全世界面前的演出/就是展现华夏文明的大戏)

> Shots of a group of Chinese people chatting, zoom-out and gradual lateral/angle shot of the stage, from which we can see fireworks and modern buildings lit up in colours.

4.2 Analysis

4.2.1 From the China Stage to the World Stage: China's Quest for Visibility

On the denotational level, the sign 'stage' refers to the physical space in which a theatrical performance takes place. The stage is what exists between the actors and the spectators, what connects them: not surprisingly, it is the multimodal signifier from which the three PSAs start, and where they all end.

The stage portrayed in these PSAs is a dynamic sign, as it changes and evolves as the plot unfolds, taking up different connotations. In PSA1 and PSA3, the stage gradually transforms from a dark stage to a lit-up stage: this lighting strategy creates an atmosphere of increasing exposure. The stage also evolves from an empty and still stage to a stage full of actors and animated by performances. The feeling of imminency and excitement towards what is about to happen is amplified not only visually, but also aurally, through the growing pace of the rhythm of the background music.

Moreover, the stage extends from a theatre stage in the traditional sense to a set of outdoor alternative stages, such as ancient historical sites, modern buildings and urban settings. The latter feature skyscrapers, which represent successful economic development (Pramod 2008). It is precisely the juxtaposition of skyscrapers with the Beijing Opera that serves to promote "Beijing's 'otherness'", which is "often presented visually through the traditional forms of culture that position China as simultaneously unchanging and modern" (Collins 2008, 201). In PSA2, the alternative stages are rendered visually as scenes of daily life, such as the entrance to an elevator, a supermarket, a restaurant, and the seats in a theatre. Interestingly, in PSA3, the stage on which the leading actors are standing is transformed into a stage from which they become spectators, which will be discussed later.

On the connotational level, the 'stage' refers to the Olympic stage. Ultimately, its most important evolution is the one emphasised, either verbally, visually or both, in each PSA: from the China stage to the World stage. PSA1 conveys this explicitly in the body copy, in which

the emphasis falls on the dual character of the stage: in its first occurrence – as 'China's big stage' – it conveys the idea that the Olympics belong to China and re-affirms the fact that the country has a legacy of entitlement to host the Games; in its last occurrence – as 'the World stage' – it highlights the global dimension of the Olympics, and celebrates China's successful step onto this international platform **[fig. 1]**.

Figure 1
China steps onto the World stage (PSA1)

It is worth remembering here that hosting the Olympics was part of a long process, interwoven with nationalism and cultural pride. The possibility of owning the Olympic stage – or "Olympic platform" (Price 2008, 86) – was constructed and promoted in the official discourse as an opportunity to break free from the ancient denigratory labels linked to bodily weakness and poor sporting performances (Brownell 2008; Xu 2008). The unexpected complication of losing the bid for the 2000 Olympics further fuelled the need to host the 2008 Olympics:

> to 'cleanse' this national humiliation, China needed a stage where the country could perform, displaying a strong nation to the world and being 'recognised' by the international community for its recent achievements. (Chong 2017, 82)

In the BOS, China's tortuous Olympic path and the national sentiments it aroused are conveyed as fragmented memories, which are thick with heavy ideological significance. The incipit of PSA1, for example, refers to the historical moment in 2001 when Samaranch, the former President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), announced that Beijing was going to be the next Olympic host city. This event marked a defining milestone for Brand China: once the Olympic stage was awarded, hosting the Games was constructed in the official Chinese-language sources as the fulfilment of a 'one-hundred-year-old dream' (*bainian Aoyun mengxiang* 百年奥运梦想) (Puppin 2008; 2011). This further demonstrates that the 2008 Summer Games were exploited by the Chinese government to erect a new cultural identity, through different uses and reconstructions of domestic and international collective memory (Gong 2012).

Olympic PSAs were not overtly concerned with representing "the dominant sense of reality" (Fiske 1987, 21), but rather representing how the country ought to be during the imminent Games: a desired, imagined China, which first and foremost had to be visible. The "paradigm of visibility" articulated by Dayan (2013, 139) is particularly useful in understanding this crucial aspect. With specific reference to the role of media in coordinating collective attention, he proposes a paradigmatic shift from a narrative of victimisation to a narrative of deprivation: in the latter, the story narrates the successful conquest of visibility that was previously lacking. In the light of this, China can be understood as a "visibility seeker" (Dayan 2013, 139): for the country, owning the Olympic stage was directly linked to a conquest of visibility and, hence, power.

4.2.2 Beyond Sport: China's 'CivilOlympic' Performances

The use of the Beijing Opera was a recurrent strategy in Olympic promotional materials, as it proved to be "a resilient marker of contemporary Chinese-ness able to negotiate the complex, often conflicting impulses Brand China conveys" (Evans 2012, 114). The Beijing Opera constitutes one of the most localised Olympic elements, that is to say, those elements involving the particular features of a specific place, also known as "a city's 'place' image" (Roche 2006, 10).

It is worth highlighting that the Beijing 2008 constituted a challenge for Brand China, as the country had to embrace a global event, but still retain its own specificity, by embedding it in narratives that had to (re)negotiate tradition and modernity, blend East and West elements, as well as go beyond the local/global binary opposition.

As it is evident from the synopses, beyond the Beijing Opera there is also another performance being staged: that of 'civilisation' (*wenming* 文明). Anagnost (1997) describes *wenming* as

> a potent signifier […] a densely figured site that articulates statist projects of national pedagogy, intellectual critiques of Chinese national character, and popular concerns about social order. (75)

As Chinese PSAs are used as State-sanctioned tools for the construction of a 'socialist spiritual civilisation' (*shehuizhuyi jingshen wenming* 社会主义精神文明) (Lewis 2002; Stockmann 2011; Puppin 2018) it is hardly surprising that their contents were aligned with one of the priorities of the Chinese authorities: to ensure that China stepped onto the Olympic stage as a civilised nation. Indeed, the Mayor of Beijing at that time, Mr Wang Qishan, had already expressed his biggest concern in 2004: the 'quality' of Beijingers, intended both as civilised Olympic hosts and civilised members of the sport audience (Xu 2006).

In PSA1, the only visible performance is the Beijing Opera, whilst the performance of civilisation is discursively constructed in the verbal language. This is achieved through the repeated use of the word 'civilisation', but also through historical poetic expressions used to identify China, such as 'land of propriety', and 'ancient Cathay', which perpetuate the myth of the country's five-thousand-year-old civilisation.

In PSA2, the two performances of the Beijing Opera and Chinese civilisation coexist in the visual language in the form of parallel narratives. In the same way as the Beijing Opera actors pay attention to every 'gesture', 'posture' and 'melody' if they want to be appreciated by the audience, in the Beijing Olympics every Chinese citizen has to display 'civilised behaviour, a 'friendly smile', as well as the 'good image of a host', if he/she wants China to be remembered positively. The correlation between the professional skills of the actors and the civilised behaviour of the Chinese citizens becomes explicit, and the qualities of both are validated by external parties: the theatre audience and the citizens of China and the whole world, respectively **[fig. 2]**.

Figure 2
An example of civilised behaviour (PSA2)

PSA3 visually portrays only the performance of civilisation, which is conveyed through the smiling faces and orderly postures of the protagonists standing on the stage. Another performance is then visualised through colourful fireworks, which connote an atmosphere of festive celebration, thus maximising the impact of the verbal message. This 'big show' and 'performance' by China can be interpreted as the country's own representation of the Olympic spectacle, of which civilisation is an indistinguishable component.

In this context, the concept of "semiotic over-determination" (Sun 2002, 116) is particularly useful. In her study on the Chinese media's coverage and reception of the Sydney 2000 Olympics, Sun (2002) explains how this over-determination consists of associating "the achievement of individual Chinese athletes with that of the nation", in which sports events are interpreted as both "metaphors and metonyms of China's greatness in an international context" (123). In the BOS, however, sporting performance is never mentioned nor represented: here, the over-determination lies in the directly proportional link between the degree of civilisation of every Chinese citizen with the overall performance of the nation in this global mega event. In the light of this, my neologism 'CivilOlympics' seems particularly appropriate to describe the indissoluble relationship between the Beijing 2008 Olympics and Chinese civilisation: whilst the two performances coexist, it is civilisation that over-determines Brand China, and the success of the country in the Games. More importantly, the civilisation performance has to be seen: this is exemplified by the use of verbs semantically related to visibility and exposure, such as 'show', 'burst', and 'display'.

4.2.3 Professional Actors, *Extra*ordinary Citizens, and an Anthropomorphised China

The main protagonists of the three PSAs are all Han Chinese. Interestingly, there are no representatives of any ethnic minority, who instead featured in the official Olympic narratives intended for viewing outside of China, such as the flag-raising ceremony (Barmé 2009). The protagonists of the BOS also share another characteristic: they are all examples of an idealised civility. This finding demonstrates that the tradition of setting exemplary 'models' (*bangyang* 榜样) for the masses to emulate and internalise is still alive and well in contemporary China, and is enhanced precisely via PSAs (Landsberger 2009; Puppin 2018).

Despite the subtle and symbolic visual imagery, the pedagogical intent of the BOS emerges in the prescriptive tone. This is conveyed through the use of either celebrities' direct speech (PSA1 and PSA2) or of an authoritative male voice-over (PSA3), which equally assist the viewers in the construction of the preferred meaning and guarantee the dominant-hegemonic decoding (Hall [1973] 1980).

It was not the creative decision of the advertising agencies to feature the most famous actors of the Beijing Opera: for the first time in the history of Chinese PSAs, it was the Notice that explicitly required the local authorities and advertising agencies to recruit Chinese celebrities. In the Party-State's intentions, their involvement served to drive the compelling need to mobilise "practical support

for the Olympics, reflecting the national spirit and setting a good example for the entire population" (Wenming.cn 2007).

Interestingly, the BOS is characterised by a gradual shift of focus from celebrities to ordinary people: first the protagonists are only celebrities (PSA1), then also ordinary people (PSA2), and, finally, just ordinary people (PSA3). Even in PSA1 alone, this trend is perceptible: the ten famous actors not only appear under the guise of the fictional roles they play in the Beijing Opera, but also that of real people behind masks and costumes, and even off-stage – in their changing rooms. This strategy provides a sense of nonfictionality, as well as intimacy, which is also conveyed through the use of a true-seeming conversation between the actors and the viewers at home. Whilst there is no visual portrayal of ordinary Chinese people, these are referred to in the verbal language through expressions such as 'us' and 'Chinese people', which intend to create inclusiveness and strengthen a common national identity.

In PSA2, the appearance of ordinary Chinese people – a young man, a boy, a waiter and a little girl – as protagonists becomes manifest in the parallel visual narratives, which depict them while they are performing small, civilised gestures in episodes of real life, in perfect alignment with the PSA title. In his study on the presentation of the self in everyday life, Goffman pointed out the idealised nature of social performances: "when the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society" ([1959] 1990, 45). In the light of this, it becomes evident that the good deeds of these protagonists, which are constructed as ordinary and spontaneous, are the results of the internalisation of the standards of civilisation and moral values officially set by the Party-State.

PSA3 is the only one that does not feature celebrities: it first portrays four roles from the Beijing Opera, and, later, ten ordinary Chinese people. These ordinary people share the following characteristics: they are smiling; they are young; they are standing in an orderly manner; they have a modern and appropriate attitude whether they are casually dressed (t-shirt), or formally dressed (business suit). The recruitment of Olympic volunteers and the creation of model citizens gave preference to "young, healthy, law-abiding, and educated citizens who had mastered at least one foreign language", that is to say, "the young and educated subjects who embody the best of China" (Chong 2017, 75). Evidently, the ten Chinese people standing on the stage have been selected for their high degree of civilisation, which renders them *extra*ordinary. Compared to the protagonists of PSA2, here they play a bigger role, as they occupy the main stage and narrative, but they are not portrayed as performing any good deeds: they are simply exposed as exemplary models of civilisation **[fig. 3]**.

Figure 3
Ten *extra*ordinary citizens (PSA3)

Interestingly, towards the end of the PSA, the ten protagonists end up lost within a larger crowd of people and, therefore, become indistinguishable. This visual strategy is aligned with the title, which emphasises that 'you' are the protagonist, and aims at creating a sense of identification and inclusion for the audience at home: anybody – even you – can be *extra*ordinary. At the same time, from actors they become spectators, and this activates a dynamic of being seen/seeing: as 'civilised bodies', they can fully enjoy the great spectacle of the Beijing 2008 Olympics.

Whilst it is true that, in general, the "wenming discourse is a discourse of lack, referring to the failure of the Chinese people to embody international standards of modernity, civility, and discipline" (Anagnost 1997, 75), it is also true that in the BOS it becomes one of imagined presence, abundance, profusion, inclusion. Civilisation, here, is finally owned and displayed.

Taking a closer look, there is also another protagonist: the female leading role Dan, who becomes prominent in PSA3 as the anthropomorphic metaphor of China. In PSA3, when Dan dances and strikes her poses in traditional makeup and costume, she appears self-aware, confident and proud of her exoticism, which visibly pleases the international audience. This is an example of "strategic self-orientalism" – an evolution of Said's (1978) seminal theory of Orientalism – according to which "those who cannot avoid being racialized as 'oriental' embrace rather than reject their stereotyping as … inscrutable exotics" (Cheng 2013, 153). Here, Dan is constructed in a self-ethnicised way that deliberately triggers the orientalistic imagination of the international audience and challenges the dominant representations that hold the East as passive and the West as active.

Another significant notion here is the "to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey 1975, 11), which was applied by Chow (1995) in her study on contemporary Chinese cinema and explained as being

> built into the way non-Western cultures are viewed by Western ones; more significantly it is part of the active manner in which such cultures represent-ethnographize-themselves. (180)

Dan, whose face is lit up by camera flashes, is offering herself to the audience's gaze, in a sensual, narcissistic and exhibitionist way: she is on display, as a gendered and sexualised object, and gains pleasure in being looked at, in a way that plays with the audience's voyeuristic fantasy and goes beyond the active/looking, passive/looked-at dichotomy **[fig. 4]**.

Figure 4
Dan under the spotlights (PSA3)

As a result, the BOS embeds the representational strategies typical of China's transnational visuality that render the country a "cultural object" that is "exoticized, eroticized, or politicized", reducing the country to "a set of internationally recognizable and consumable symbols" (Lu 2001, 20).

5 (In)visible Western Spectators and China's (Re)gained Global Visibility

Another significant feature of the BOS, which is aligned with the theory of the spectacle, is the actual or implied presence of spectactors, which is conveyed through the intradiegetic depiction of an (in)visible audience. Ultimately, it is the spectator who is responsible for judging the performance, not the performer (Carlson 2004). The role of spectators is therefore crucial in evaluating China's performance in the Olympic context.

PSA1 does not visually portray an audience of the Beijing Opera theatrical performance: the few shots on the theatre seats show them empty. This is because the BOS was created and broadcast in the pre-Olympic period: the empty seats reinforce the need to prepare for the upcoming Games (as if it were a theatre rehearsal) and create a feeling of excitement in the audience at home. Nonetheless, in the last frame, an imagined audience appears under the guise of a modern urban landscape, which is a metonym for the entire world:

this climax in China's exposure is to be understood as the imagined start of the Olympics.

Similarly, in PSA2 the theatrical performance takes place without a visible audience, whilst the civilisation performance has some visible intra-diegetic spectators. These include ordinary Chinese people (the girl holding the books in front of the elevator, and the people queuing in the supermarket), but also foreigners (the girl who forgot the camera). In particular, the foreign girl was chosen on a paradigmatic level as a metonym for 'the entire world' and is associated with the achievement of civilisation that will lead people 'to eulogise this city', as explained by the verbal language. This strategy promotes in every Chinese person the responsibility for the successful hosting of the Beijing 2008 Olympics, under the scrutiny of the Western Other. As explained by Chong, in the Olympic volunteer programme "the imagined responses from the invisible, yet omnipresent, 'Westerners' operated as disciplinary tools" (2017, 95). Drawing on Foucault, she illustrated how visibility was crucial in governing and disciplining Chinese citizens, who were supposed to internalise this gaze and behave according to the civilisation ideals set by the Party-State. There is a similar dynamic at work in the BOS, but here the disciplinary gaze of the Western Other is actually visible.

PSA3 is characterised by the intra-diegetic portrayal of a visible audience, which is first shown sitting in the theatre by zooming out with the image slightly blurred, and then zooming in sharply and clearly: it is evidently an audience of foreign spectators. Among them, the main viewing subject is both ethnicised and gendered in a conventional way: as a Western male Other **[fig. 5]**.

It is significant that the casting preference of portraying the Western Other dates back precisely to the pre-Olympic period. PSAs were born and developed in China as a form of internal communication addressing the domestic audience, which portrayed almost exclusively the Chinese Self. The protagonists have historically been Chinese people (be they Han or ethnic minorities, famous testimonials or ordinary people); the themes touch upon their everyday lives and the narratives and styles adopted their perspective (Zhang 2004; Yu 2007).

The portrayal of an enthusiastic international audience symbolises the scopophilic desire and pleasure the world derives from watching China's performance. This representational strategy meets China's need for acknowledgement and approval of its performative success beyond national borders. At the same time, it is indicative of China's imagination and desire for 'global visibility', defined as

> the ongoing, late capitalist phenomenon of mediatized spectacularization in which the endeavour to seek social recognition amounts to an incessant production and consumption of oneself and one's group as images on display. (Chow 2007, 22)

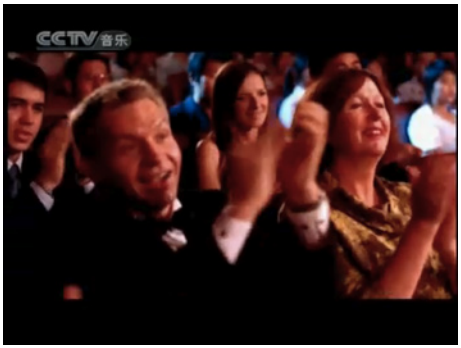

Figure 5
An audience composed of Western Others (PSA3

From being a "visibility seeker" (Dayan 2013, 139), China becomes here 'globally visible': the country's raising status on the global scale, and its newly (re)gained visibility are represented as being finally sought in the happy end that characterises the BOS, portraying China in different symbolic forms, under the spotlight and attracting the world's attention.

6 Conclusions

The starting point of this article is that, with the approach of the Beijing 2008 Olympics, China's need to improve its image on the global stage became more urgent than ever, and this priority also influenced the way the country imagined its national identity and represented itself in media texts targeting the domestic audience – first and foremost in terms of visibility. In order to fill in a gap in the existing literature, this article investigates how a 'new' Brand China was promoted in the pre-Olympic period, by identifying the most recurrent representational strategies that appeared in Olympic PSAs and by offering a semiotic analysis of a representative case study – the BOS.

The findings of the critical interpretive analysis show that the most recurrent words, images and sounds in the BOS are strictly aligned with the distinctive features attributed to the spectacle, in particular, the emphasis on the visual and symbolic codes, as well as the binary roles of performers and spectators.

The theatre stage – which symbolically stands for the Olympic stage – is closely linked to China's long-standing dream of owning the Games and ongoing desire to achieve global visibility. These features are illustrative of China's status as a "visibility seeker" (Dayan 2013, 139). The most important evolution of the stage is from the China stage to the World stage: this strategy re-affirms the coun-

try's legacy to host the Games and celebrates its stepping onto the international Olympic platform.

In terms of performance, China and the imminent Beijing 2008 Olympics are here imagined through the metaphor of the theatrical performance of the Beijing Opera. Interestingly, there is no explicit reference to the Olympic/sport performance; instead, it is the civilisation performance that plays a central role. The latter over-determines the successful hosting of the Games: through a variety of narrative strategies, it links the degree of civilisation of Chinese citizens with the country's performance in the Olympic context, thus over-determining the successful hosting of the Games. My suggested neologism 'CivilOlympics' fully conveys the indissoluble relationship between the Beijing 2008 Olympics and China's civilisation, which has first and foremost to be seen, as it is stressed in the visual and verbal language.

The performers include some famous actors of the most important Beijing Opera theatre companies and the roles they play. Within the latter, it is worth mentioning the Dan role, who stands as a self-orientalist, gendered and sexualised anthropomorphic metaphor for China. The self-portrayal of China as an exotic, sensual and confident female who is exhibiting herself and directing the audience's attention can be interpreted, on the ideological level, as China's acquisition of visibility and power on the global scene. In the BOS, the real main protagonists are ordinary Chinese people, who are constructed as *extra*ordinary for their high degree of civilisation, which is exemplified through a variety of good deeds that they carry out in their everyday life. The BOS is also characterised by audiovisual strategies that create a sense of inclusivity in the viewers at home, and this confirms that PSAs in contemporary China play a crucial role in setting and promoting exemplary models to the masses. Another peculiar characteristic of the BOS is the intradiegetic presence of some (in)visible spectators. The portrayal of an imagined audience validates China's performative success and transition from its status of "visibility seeker" (Dayan 2013, 139) to its being 'globally visible'. It is significant that, for the first time in the history of Chinese PSAs, in the BOS there was space for the imaginative portrayal of a Western Other. The unconventional representation of the West as the passive spectator of China's active performance, this way, becomes a new way of fantasising about an alternative world order – in which China is the protagonist and the rest of the world is watching – in the 21st century.

This article demonstrates that a close examination of Olympic TV PSAs as a tool for national branding provides original and useful insights to understand how China visualised itself and the imminent global media event of the Beijing 2008 Olympics. It contributes to broader theoretical debates and empirical findings on the Olympic spectacle and a new Brand China, by identifying PSAs as sites of identity performance, which are intrinsically related to issues of self-

identity, tensions of local/global dualism and national ethnocentrism. More importantly, this article reveals that the Beijing 2008 Olympics influenced and redefined the ways China represented itself and the world through 'fantasies' aimed at arousing national sentiment in a historical moment of increased (trans)national visibility.

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Sinitic Poetry in Early Heian Japan: Kidendō Literacy, Banquet Culture, and the Sugawara House

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Abstract In this paper, I explore the intimate connection between the Sugawara House and the composition of Sinitic poetry for institutionalised poetry banquets in early Heian Japan. While poetry remained a marginal occupation for the Confucian scholars trained at the Bureau of Education, its performance at banquets constituted a prestigious niche that could be occupied by those who sought to exploit it as an autonomous form of cultural capital. Here I sketch the contours of this connection and analyse a number of anthologizing strategies at work in the personal collection of the renowned early Heian scholar and poet Sugawara no Michizane (845-903) known as *Kanke bunsō* (Literary Drafts of the Sugawara House).

Keywords Heian Japan. Sinitic Poetry. Poetry Banquet. Kidendō. Sugawara no Michizane. Kanke bunsō.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Sinitic Poetry, Social Status, and Expertise. – 3 Sinitic Poetry and *kidendō* Literacy. – 4 Sinitic Poetry and the Sugawara House. – 5 The Architecture of Sugawara no Michizane's *Kanke bunsō*. – 6 Conclusions.

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1 Introduction

On the 21st day of the first month of 874 (Jōgan 貞観16), the Confucian scholar and poet Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845-903) participated in the Palace Banquet (*naien* 内宴) at the presence of Emperor Seiwa 清和 (850-881, r. 858-876) and contributed with the following poem on the topic *Spring Snow Reflects the Early Plums* (春雪映早梅):[1]

雪片花顔時一般	Snowflakes and flower petals: at times they are the same.
上番梅援待追歡	First-to-bloom plum branches await their pursuit of pleasure.
氷紈寸截輕粧混	Icy silk is cut in inches, lightly blending with their make-up.
玉屑添來軟色寬	Powdered jade settles on, gently softening their colour.
鶏舌纔因風力散	The 'cockerel-tongue' scent faintly scatters along the gusts of wind.
鶴毛獨向夕陽寒	The crane feathers shine cold as they lonely face the evening sun.
明王若可分真僞	If the wise ruler wants to distinguish between true and false.
願使宮人子細看	I suggest that he send the palace ladies to look more closely.

(*Kanke bunsō*, *Kanke kōshū* 66)

Poems composed for the Palace Banquet normally celebrated the beginning of the new year and the arrival of spring by comparing the germinating beauty of the natural scenery to the sovereign's virtuous supervision of the well-being of his realm. The image of plums amidst the snow, in particular, hints at the potential of the coming of spring. In this poem, Michizane begins by confusing snowflakes with white blossoms and, in the final couplet, suggests that the emperor's female attendants be sent to resolve this confusion. The progression of the thought carries bureaucratic undertones, inasmuch as it suggests playfully that the sovereign controls the natural order of the realm by dispatching emissaries to ascertain its true nature. As I will argue in this paper, banquet poems in literary Sinitic (*shi* 詩) such as the one quoted above were at the core of early Heian culture. This poetry was intimately tied to the representation of political and ritual authority, and its composition was commonly entrusted to individuals with literary training. In this paper, I explore the place of Sinitic poetry in the literary environment of early Heian Japan with particular attention to the figure of Sugawara no Michizane and the early involvement of the Sugawara House. I first trace the emergence of a class of specialized poets known as *monnin* in early ninth-century Japan. Next, I discuss the significance of poetry within the broader scope of Confucian scholarship as well as within the

1 Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the Author.

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system of erudition of the Sugawara House. I conclude by considering the structure of Michizane's personal collection *Kanke bunsō* 菅家文草 (Literary Drafts of the Sugawara House, 900) and the prominence of banquet poetry therein.

The nexus of ritual, literary expertise, and performance seems to have been well-established in ninth-century Japan. By the early Nara period (710-784) and throughout the Heian period (794-1185) poetry in literary Sinitic was composed on the occasion of formal gatherings and outings sponsored by the sovereign and politically prominent members of aristocratic clans. The preface to *Kaifūsō* 懐風藻 (Verses Recollecting the Past, 751), the earliest surviving anthology of poetry in literary Sinitic, retrospectively credits Emperor Tenji 天智 (ca 626-672, r. 668-672) with the creation of a state academy and the dissemination of the technology of writing throughout the realm. The preface further describes that the resulting glory of his reign was celebrated with lavish banquets at which talented poets were summoned to compose exquisite poetry (*Kaifūsō*, 60). Moreover, the Bureau of Education (*daigakuryō* 大学寮) was already operating in the early eighth century, though its connection with skilled poets and sovereign-sponsored banquets was not fully institutionalised until much later.[2]

By the mid-ninth century, two poetry banquets were being held as state rituals, meaning that they were included on the calendar of the Heian court's annual ceremonies: the aforementioned 'Palace Banquet' (*naien*), normally held on either the 20th, 21st, or 22nd day of the first month, and the 'Double Nine Banquet' (*chōyōen* 重陽宴), also known as the Chrysanthemum Festival, so called because it was held on the ninth day of the ninth month. Beginning with the *Kōnin shiki* 弘仁式 (Procedures of the Kōnin era, ca 820), the ceremonial procedures for these banquets included performances by specialized poets, called *monnin* 文人 (literally 'men of letters'), stipulating that they be selected from the graduates of the *kidendō* 紀伝道 (the Way of Annals and Biographies) – the *belles lettres* curriculum at the Bureau of Education. The participation of *kidendō* graduates in institutionalised banquets was therefore specifically contingent on their formal literary training. Further, the provision of an official stipend specifically to poets of *monnin* status in effect inscribed their performances within the bureaucracy of the state in a quasi-institutional manner.[3] The Palace Banquet and the Double Nine Banquet were staged reg-

2 On the formation of the Bureau of Education during the late seventh and early eighth centuries, see Momo 1947, 7-24; Hisaki 1990, 22-74.

3 In referring to those who received training at the Bureau of Education and passed the *kidendō* examinations as '*kidendō* graduates', I follow Steininger 2010. Western scholarship tends to describe the recipients of this training as 'Confucian scholars' (*jusha* 儒者). Historically, this term was one way to refer to those *kidendō* graduates who

ularly as official annual state ceremonies from the beginning of the ninth century until the early tenth century and then they were held sporadically for a time before being discontinued entirely sometime after 950 (Takigawa 2007, 54-144). For roughly one-and-a-half centuries, then, this efficient poetic machinery produced and perpetuated an institutionally sanctioned socio-political configuration of literary activity. In this article, I explore the effects of this machinery on the specialized poets whose work was produced for the banquets at imperial command.

These poets' responses to and development along with the institutionalised configuration of poetic practice during the early Heian period paralleled the gradual conceptualization of poetry in literary Sinitic as a distinct form of cultural capital. Already in the late eighth century, the composition of poetry had been integrated into the Winding Stream Banquet (*kyokusui no en* 曲水宴), which Emperor Kanmu 桓武 (737-806, r. 781-806) held on the third day of the third month both before and after moving the capital to the new city of Heian in 794.[4] Perhaps in response to the regularity with which poets were now being summoned to perform at state rituals, and following the precedents of the Tang civil service examinations, the Bureau of Education included poetic composition on assigned topics as a test subject for the selection of literature students (*monjōshō* 文章生) for the *kidendō* curriculum, thereby institutionalizing poetry within the array of literary skills that *kidendō* graduates were expected to master.[5] As a matter of fact, a glimpse at the literary collections of the early Heian period reveals that poetry in literary Sinitic was mainly the domain of the *kidendō* elite. In contrast with other genres of Sinitic writings that *kidendō* graduates produced for administrative and bureaucratic purposes, however, the composition of poetry was never associated with a specific court office. The institutionalised banquets provided a venue in which the poetic ability of *kidendō*

had passed the highest-level test, the *taisaku* 対策 examination, for which candidates drafted a piece in parallel prose on a selected topic.

4 Due to temporal contiguity to the death of Emperor Kanmu, this banquet ceased to be held as a state ceremony soon after the latter's reign. On the Winding Stream Banquet as an institutionalised ritual at the early Heian court and its iterations in subsequent periods, see Takigawa 2007, 269-304.

5 The exact date for the introduction of poetry as a test subject is not known, but the first indication of the *monjōshō* examination is found in the biography of the *kidendō* graduate Sugawara no Kiyotomo 菅原清公 (770-842), who seems to have passed the selection in 789 (Enryaku 延暦 8). The entry is in *Shoku nihon kōki* 続日本後紀 (Later Annals of Japan Continued, 869) on 842 (Jōwa 承和 9 [842]/10/17). Following standard academic convention, dates are expressed in a hybrid system where years are given according to their equivalent in the Western calendar followed by the name of the era (*nengō*) while months and days are given according to the pre-modern lunar calendar. See Momo 1947, 86-7. Vedal (2015) provides an overview of the institution of poetry composition in the Tang civil service examination.

e-ISSN 2385-3042

graduates was officially recognized and remunerated as a form of bureaucratic service, but this configuration of poetic activity was never a stable occupation. Outside the networks of private patronage, by the mid-ninth century, *kidendō* graduates were called on to present poetry in literary Sinitic only at the Palace Banquet, at the Double Nine Banquet, and in the case of extraordinary official banquets. A study of the configuration of the activity of these specialized poets in the early Heian period thus needs to take into account the inherently unstable and marginal position of poetry within the broader context of institutional *kidendō* literary production.

Efforts to establish poetry as a self-sustaining locus of *kidendō* literary activity and an eagerness to define the boundaries of poetic expertise in socio-political terms are prominent in Sugawara no Michizane's twelve-volume personal collection *Kanke bunsō*. *Kanke bunsō* is one of the few and best-preserved literary collections from the period, making it a precious source for the investigation of the early Heian literary field. A critical reading of a number of Michizane's pieces makes clear his view of poetry as a legitimate and independent domain of *kidendō* literary production. Further, an analysis of the carefully structured architecture of certain sections of the collection reveals his strategies for forging a connection between his poetic expertise and the performative arena that the institutionalised banquets provided. As will be seen, these banquets played a fundamental role in shaping the structure of the literary world revealed in Michizane's *Kanke bunsō*. Insofar as they placed the poetic activity of *kidendō* graduates in a quasi-institutionalised context, the banquets also constituted a source of legitimacy that could extend to other forms of literary production, such as the unofficial or private gatherings sponsored by private patronage networks to which *kidendō* graduates were summoned to compose poetry. For example, Michizane's strategies of representation are particularly at play in the fifth volume of the collection, in which he depicts the household banquets sponsored by Emperor Uda 宇多 (867-931, r. 887-897) – the modalities of which were in many ways distinct from those of the institutionalised banquet regime – as a natural extension of it.

The present paper, then, explores the dynamics of the intimate connection between institutionalised banquet poetry in literary Sinitic and the Sugawara House in the early Heian period through an analysis of the anthologizing strategies at work in Sugawara no Michizane's collection *Kanke bunsō*. In what follows, I first establish the relative position of poetic practice within the realm of *kidendō* literary expertise and the way in which it was regulated at the institutionalised banquets of the time. Next, I sketch the contours of the connection between banquet poetry and the Sugawara House. Lastly, I analyse in depth a number of passages in Michizane's collection that exemplify his strategies for aligning his poetic activity with the

institutionalised practices of the *monnin* and for establishing poetry as a self-sustaining occupation over which the Sugawara House could claim authority. These strategies that inform the compilation and structure of *Kanke bunsō*, I argue, together constitute Michizane's effort to fashion the Sugawara House into the site for a particular mode of literacy and performance and its members into reliable specialized providers of poetry whose activity was predicated on, and coincidental with, their quasi-bureaucratic service as *monnin* at institutionalised banquets.

2 Sinitic Poetry, Social Status, and Expertise

Because of its connection to other forms of literary writings, the composition of poetry in literary Sinitic in early Heian Japan was fundamentally tied to literary expertise and to a particular professional class, namely the graduates of the *kidendō* curriculum of the Bureau of Education. The promulgation of a set of administrative and legal codes (*ritsuryō* 律令) at the beginning of the eighth century ushered in an era that was characterised by the spread of literacy and the performance of various genres of Sinitic writings. For the most part possessed by a group of specialized, low-ranking bureaucrats, literary skills were crucial for the production and circulation of the written documents that sustained the state machinery of the Nara and Heian periods.[6] The Bureau of Education generally functioned as a training institution that produced literate officials who could enter the bureaucracy of the centralized state.[7] Among the Bureau's curricula, the *monjōdō* 文章道 (letters curriculum, which later merged with the newly established *kidendō*) specifically focused on belletristic writing.[8] This curriculum produced individuals who were highly skilled in the composition of types of writings categorized as 'literary', that is, as a category of language separated and distinct from the realm of everyday speech and script. Writings composed, circulated, and performed in bureaucratic and ritual contexts, such as edicts, memorials, and petitions, were drafted in the formally codified style of parallel prose and typically referred to as 'patterned writing' (*bunshō*, or *monjō* 文章), an ornate language characterised

6 On the expansion of literacy in the late seventh and early eighth centuries see Lurie 2011, 115-66.

7 The earliest extant regulations concerning the Bureau of Education were recorded in the administrative codes compiled prior to the Nara period in 701 (Taihō 大宝 1).

8 In the early ninth century, this curriculum, originally named *monjōdō* (The Way of Patterned Writing), was merged with the *kidendō* track, which focused on the study of the continental histories, and retained the latter name along with the focus on writing proficiency. See Momo 1947, 132-52.

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by a high degree of formal constructedness and elaborate vocabulary and diction deemed appropriate for political and ritualistic contexts (Steininger 2017, 79-83).[9]

Poetry, in particular, fell within the scope of *bunshō*. By the early Heian period, poetry in the Tang regulated-verse style (*lüshi*, jp. *risshi* 律詩) was well-established as a domain of expertise for graduates of the *kidendō* track at the Bureau of Education, though the specific modalities of teaching and practice are often unclear.[10] As mentioned, by the end of the eighth century, poetic composition had entered the bureau as a test subject for the *kidendō* curriculum. The Ministry of Ceremonial Affairs administered the test twice annually (*Engi shiki*, 487). Successful candidates advanced to the status of literature students (*monjōshō*) and usually obtained positions in the court bureaucracy within a few years.[11] *Kidendō* graduates thus filled the bureaucratic positions that required some level of literacy, including writing skills, working as clerks or scribes in the various governmental bureaus or at provincial headquarters. By the early Heian period, *kidendō* graduates could expect career advancement and, to some extent, a raise in court rank; originally, however, the function of the Bureau of Education was to provide human capital for the work required by the bureaucratic machine of the centralized state (Kishino 1998). The Inner Scribe Office (*naiki* 内記), which was attached to the Ministry of Central Affairs (*nakatsukasa-shō* 中務省), maintained this connection by employing *kidendō* graduates for the production of edicts, memorials, and other types of documents issued by the sovereign. The personal collection of the *kidendō* graduate Miyako no Yoshika 都良香 (834-879), *Toshi bunshū* 都氏文集 (Collected Works of the Miyako Clan), only part of which survives, contains a number of edicts, promulgations, and memorials – all in parallel prose – that dated to the period when he was serving in the capacity of Inner Scribe in the late Jōgan (859-877) and early Gangyō 元慶 (877-885) eras (*Toshi bunshū zenshaku*, 73-148).

While the ability to compose poetry was considered essential for *kidendō* students entering a bureaucratic career, again, in contrast

9 The formal qualities of Heian parallel prose are described in Ōsone 1994, 288-312. For a discussion on the category of 'pattern' (*wen* 文) in ancient China and the historical transfer of the meaning to ornate writing, see Kern 2001.

10 The poems written in preparation for the *monjōshō* examination by Sugawara no Michizane under the scrutiny of his father, Professor of Letters (*monjō hakase* 文章博士) Sugawara no Koreyoshi 菅原是善, which are recorded in Michizane's personal collection *Kanke bunsō*, suggest that the transmission of poetic knowledge took place within relationships of private tutoring and apart from the formal lectures at the Bureau of Education.

11 On the *monjōshō* examination, also known as 'Ministry Test' (*shōshi* 省試), see Momo 1947, 260-74; Steininger 2017, 134-5.

to other genres of Sinitic writings, there was no consistent performative environment for poetry at court, and poetry was never associated with a specific bureaucratic office. This fact explains in considerable part the unstable position of poetry in relation to *kidendō* literacy and performance in the early Heian period. To be sure, the inclusion of poetry as a test subject in the *kidendō* curriculum took place at a moment of tremendous expansion in sovereign-sponsored poetic activity, especially during the reign of Emperor Saga 嵯峨 (786-842, r. 809-823). After the Winding Stream Banquet ceased to be held owing to its temporal proximity to the date on which Emperor Kanmu died in 806, poetic events shifted to other auspicious dates on the Confucian lunar calendar, such as the Double Seven (the *tanabata* 七夕 festival) and the aforementioned Double Nine, as well as to dates associated with the progress of the seasons, such as the Blossom-viewing Banquet at the end of the second month (Takigawa 2007, 36-42). Though only the Double Nine Banquet was fully institutionalised as an annual state ceremony, all of these events were conducted as state rituals insofar as they were held in the Shinsen'en 神泉苑, an imperial park that functioned as a *de facto* extension of the official public spaces of the imperial court.[12]

As a type of court ritual, poetic banquets were an arena both for literary activity and for reaffirming symbolically the bureaucratic structure of the court assembled around its ruler. The spatial disposition of the participants and the sequences in which actions were performed thus served to reproduce and confirm social hierarchies.[13] In this context, the composition of poetry on a topic chosen by the sovereign enacted socio-political harmony among the participants and echoed the daily scribal and bureaucratic activities of court officials over which the sovereign ostensibly presided (Heldt 2008, 55). Participation in such forms of ritual was strictly conditional on court office, with the fifth rank normally serving as the threshold. In early iterations of poetic banquets, participants with recognized literary skills would be asked to present a poem. Significantly, during the

12 The Shinsen'en park, which occupied a large space south-east of the Imperial Palace, was formally created by Emperor Kanmu at the time of the construction of the new capital city of Heian at the end of the eighth century. However, the park seems to have originated as a gradual reorganisation of a portion of the imperial palace where the quarters of the Crown Prince were located by the late Nara period, when this space was already used for banquets and public events. With the transfer of the capital city from Heijō to Nagaoka and then to Heian, this space was eventually detached from the palace and transformed into a park; see Yoshino 2005. The similarities in the architecture of the structures in Shinsen'en with those in the public spaces of the imperial court, such as the Buraku-in 豊楽院, a hall originally conceived to host entertainment, ceremonies, and banquets, further reinforce the connection between the park and the imperial palace; see Yamada 2015.

13 For an analysis of early Heian poetic banquets as state rituals, see Heldt 2008, 51-9.

early ninth century, in conjunction with the expansion of sovereign-sponsored poetic activity and the new position of poetry within the Bureau of Education, the summoning of *kidendō* graduates to participate began to be predicated on their assumed literary prowess and irrespective of their court rank. Historiographical works can offer a glimpse of this development, for example through a comparison of the following two passages from *Nihon kōki* 日本後紀 (Later Records of Japan, 840):

> 宴次侍從以上。命文人賦詩。賜物有差。
> A banquet was offered for assistant chamberlains and those of higher rank. *Monnin* were commanded to compose poetry. Presents were bestowed on the attendants according to their rank. (*Nihon kōki*, Enryaku 23 [804]/3/3)

> 幸神泉苑宴侍從已上。奏妓樂。命文人賦詩。五位已上及文人賜祿有差。
> Royal excursion to the Shinsen'en park. A banquet was offered for chamberlains and above. Music and
> dance were provided, and *monnin* were commanded to compose poetry. Stipends were distributed to
> those above the fifth rank and the *monnin* according to rank. (*Nihon kōki*, Kōnin 3 [812]/9/9)

The first passage describes the Winding Stream Banquet held in 804 (Enryaku 23) and it is representative of the description of poetic banquets in the late Nara period and the first decade of the Heian period. It is the source of the detail just cited that the banquets were open to courtiers above the fifth rank.[14] The *monnin* who provided poetry are represented as belonging to this body of officialdom. The second entry exemplifies the descriptions of banquets during the early Heian period beginning with the reign of Emperor Saga in 809. Now, the *monnin* appear instead to constitute a distinct social class that is not explicitly connected to court office and rank and that receives emoluments specifically for literary service. Kudō Shigenori sees here a shift in the nuance of the meaning of *monnin*. As has been seen, this term, literally meaning 'men of letters', originally denoted individuals skilled in writing or, more broadly, Confucian scholars. With the rapid expansion of the culture of poetry banquets in the early ninth century and with the subsequent institutionalization of the Palace Banquet and the Double Nine Banquet, the meaning of *monnin* shift-

14 Chamberlains (*jijū* 侍従) and assistant chamberlains (*ji-jijū* 次侍従) were ancillary officials assigned to individuals of the fifth rank or above. According to the Taihō code, the duties of chamberlains involved assisting the sovereigns in a number of matters by 'compensating for deficiencies'. See the entry in *Kanshoku yōkai* (Wada 1983, 71-2).

ed to indicate the status – akin to court rank and office and therefore sufficient to guarantee a material stipend – that was assigned temporarily to those summoned for the specific service of providing poetry, as opposed to the attending officials who might have the option to offer a poem (and receive extra compensation) but whose access was based on status and bureaucratic office rather than credentials as a trained poet (Kudō 1993, 78-83). In other words, the two entries above document a shift in the conception of the social group that provided poetry at early Heian banquets from court official defined by rank to literary professionals defined by expertise.

The uneasy relationship between status and expertise and the tension brought about by the changes in it during the early Heian period among the elite of *kidendō* graduates is clearly visible in the literary works of the time. The significance of poetic composition during Emperor Saga's reign manifested in the appearance of two poetry anthologies compiled at royal behest: *Ryōunshū* 凌雲集 (Collection Soaring Above the Clouds, 814), and *Bunka shūreishū* 文華秀麗集 (Collection of Masterpieces of Literary Talent, 818). A third anthology, *Keikokushū* 経国集 (Collection for Binding the Realm), was compiled in 827 (Tenchō 天長 4) during the reign of Saga's successor, Emperor Junna 淳和 (786-840, r. 823-833). Notably, the compilers of all three collections were *kidendō* graduates, and, apart from the poetry composed by members of the imperial household, nearly all of the poems included in the collections were also composed by *kidendō* graduates, symbolizing the unmistakable connection between *kidendō* poetic practice and the imperial household from the early Heian period. The compilation of these literary anthologies has been interpreted as a symbolical means of naturalizing the socio-political order and affirming the sovereign's political and ritual authority through his oversight of literary activity (Webb 2005, 159-231). One aspect of the anthologies that has largely been overlooked, however, relates to the compilers' strategies for conceptualizing social differentiation within the community of *kidendō* graduates in the anthologies. *Ryōunshū*, for example, includes ninety-one poems by twenty-four authors ordered hierarchically by court rank with the works of the higher-ranking authors first. Poets of the fifth rank are the best represented in the collection, accounting for ten of the twenty-four, and their poems are positioned symbolically at the centre between the seven poets above the fifth rank and seven poets below that rank. The fifth rank is further distinguished in that poems from sovereign-sponsored official banquets are only represented by poets of that rank and above. Poets below the fifth rank, by contrast, are only represented by compositions performed outside the official spaces of the court, specifically, poems written at the sovereign's request for unofficial gatherings, poems exchanged among *kidendō* graduates, poems composed on continental historical subjects, poems written for

the envoys of the Korean kingdom of Balhae 渤海, and poems composed on personal matters.

In *Ryōunshū*, the differentiation between poets above and below the fifth rank mirrors the distribution of academic status among the members of the *kidendō* graduate community within the collection. As a matter of fact, those below the fifth rank are most closely associated with the Bureau of Education and bureaucratic posts traditionally requiring academic status and literary expertise, such as the Inner Scribe Office. Examples include the poets Ōtomo no Ujikami 大伴氏上 (dates unknown) and Shigeno no Sadanushi 滋野貞主 (785-852), who were respectively grand and junior inner scribe at the time *Ryōunshū* was compiled. Significantly, the last poet to appear in *Ryōunshū*, as well as the lowest-ranked, Kose no Shikihito 巨勢識人 (dates unknown), is also one of the few identifiable as *shūsai* 秀才 (Flourishing Talent) in the collection. This designation means that he had passed the highest *kidendō* examination – known as *shūsai* or, later, as the Policy Test (*hōryakushi* 方略試) – and was therefore considered a Confucian scholar.[15] All in all, *kidendō* academic status (with its associated literary expertise and authority) seems to have been inversely proportional to court rank in *Ryōunshū*. By mirroring the early socio-political significance of the fifth rank for the participation in sovereign-sponsored banquets, the compilers of *Ryōunshū* – all of at least the fifth rank by the time the collection was completed (ca 814) – apparently sought to demarcate the socio-political possibilities and limitations of *kidendō* graduates strategically at a time when court rank was being replaced by recognition of expertise and academic status in coordinating the social determinants of poetic activity. In the conservative *Ryōunshū*, poetry in literary Sinitic is thus represented as an unbalanced and contested space within the realm of the officially recognized literary production of the early Heian *kidendō* graduates. Alongside the specific strategies that inform the structure of *Ryōunshū*, the marginalization of poetic practice within the literary activities of hyper-educated *kidendō* graduates (i.e., those who passed the *hōryaku* examination) appears to have been a constant feature of the early and mid-Heian period. In what follows, I explore the position of poetry within the broader scope of Confucian scholarship as one specific service among the many requested of the graduates of the *kidendō* curriculum as well as an acknowledged occupational niche.

15 I follow Steininger (2017, 136) for the translation of *hōryakushi* as 'Policy Test.'

3 Sinitic Poetry and *kidendō* Literacy

The compilation of the *Kōnin shiki* (Procedures of the Kōnin era) in 820 (Kōnin 弘仁 11) strengthened the connections among institutionalised banquets, literary expertise, and *kidendō* graduates. According to these procedures, the Ministry of Ceremonial Affairs selected those who would serve as *monnin* and provide the poetry for the Double Nine Banquet or the extraordinary institutional events that were modelled on it by releasing, two days before the event, a list of individuals that might include "literature students (*monjōshō*) and regular students (*gakushō* 学生) as well as officials versed in poetic composition serving in various bureaucratic posts" (*Kōnin shiki*, 2). In principle, then, any regular student at the Bureau of Education who was sufficiently advanced to sit for the *monjōshō* examination, or any *monjōshō* graduate, was eligible for selection as *monnin*.[16] In practice, it seems that established Confucian scholars were often selected.[17] Academic status within the *kidendō* curriculum meant that any student and *kidendō* graduate was expected to be able to provide poetry upon request. However, later collections that include early Heian material tend to focus on a few *kidendō* graduates who are heavily anthologized while many others appear only in passing. A representative example is the section of *Ruijū kudaishō* 類聚句題抄 (Collection of Classified Verse-topic Poems, 11th century) in which are found four fragmentary poems on the topic "*Cold geese are recognized in the autumn sky*" (寒雁識秋天) performed at the Double Nine Banquet held on 916 (Engi 延喜 16).[18] This section includes excerpts from the poems of the *kidendō* graduates Ōe no Asatsuna 大江朝綱 (886-958), Mononobe no Yasuoki 物部安興 (fl. 889-916), Ōe no Chifuru 大江千古 (?-924), and Mimune no Masahira 三統理平 (853-926). Asatsuna was a literature student (*monjōshō*) at the time of the banquet, and the other three were Confucian scholars, having passed the Policy Test (Masahira was likely a professor of literature at the Bureau of Education).[19] These four poets thus represent a selection of *mon-*

16 In fact, it appears that selection to serve as *monnin* attracted the necessary attention to regular students who needed a recommendation from a Professor of Literature (*monjō hakase*) in order to take the *monjōshō* test, and, by the mid-Heian period, selection was apparently a necessary step in a student's career. See Kudō 1993, 83-9.

17 Manuals such as *Gishiki* (Ritual Procedures, mid-9th century) prescribed that *monnin* above the fifth rank be summoned by default to provide topics for poetry composition (*Gishiki*, 231). Other manuals replace "*monnin* above the fifth rank" with "professors of literature", the professorship having been a post at the Bureau of Education that was reserved for Confucian scholars of that rank; see Takigawa 2007 203.

18 It is not known who compiled *Ruijū kudaishō*, a collection of poetic excerpts (typically the central couplets from an eight-line regulated verse) arranged by topic.

19 I take as reference the biographies provided by the scholar Honma Yōichi in his critical edition of *Ruijū kudaishō*. See *Ruijū kudaishō zenchūshaku* (918-19, 920-1, 972-

nin for a Double Nine Banquet according to the procedures. There is, however, a fundamental difference among these poets. Ōe no Asatsuna's literary talent was widely recognized in his lifetime, and his work continued to be anthologized by later Confucian scholars who produced literary anthologies. As such, he is the second-best represented author in Fujiwara no Akihira's 藤原明衡 *Honchō monzui* 本朝文粋 (Literary Essence of Our Court, 11th century), which presents works showing the broad range of his literary activity.[20] By contrast, only a handful of excerpts remain for the other three. Thus, *Ruijū kudaishō* includes eleven fragments by Asatsuna, five by Masahira, and one each by Yasuoki and Chifuru.

The editorial standards of the anthologies aside, then, a broader trend is apparent in the Heian period: some *kidendō* graduates and Confucian scholars – such as Ōe no Asatsuna and Sugawara no Michizane – were widely referenced as experts of Sinitic poetry and prose, whereas other Confucian scholars of some distinction – such as Ōe no Koretoki 大江維時 (888-963) and Tachibana no Naomoto 橘直幹 (fl. 935-967) – left a surprisingly small impression on the literary record.[21] The implication is that, at this time, the highest status within the field of *kidendō* education by no means rested on sustained literary performance. By the late Heian period, a persistent discourse differentiating literary talent (*bunshō*) from erudition (*saigaku* 才学) in *kidendō* graduates' expertise can be found in such textual sources as diaries and anecdotal literature (Satō 2013). In an anecdote in Ōe no Masafusa's 大江匡房 (1041-1111) *Gōdanshō* 江談抄 (The Ōe Conversations), for example, the *kidendō* graduates Ōe no Asatsuna and Ōe no Koretoki showcase their respective talents on the occasion of a palace poetry banquet, with the former crafting a difficult poem in order to challenge the latter's erudition and recitation ability (*Gōdanshō* 4, 68). The strategies that went into the compilation of mid- and late-Heian literary anthologies such as *Ruijū kudaishō* and *Honchō monzui* thus mirror and reinforce this discourse of differentiation, representing poetry in literary Sinitic as a service that might be demanded of any *kidendō* graduates but, in practice, was regular-

73, 975). There is virtually no historical information on Mononobe no Yasuoki, but the fact that he provided the preface for the Double Nine Banquet in 889 (Kanpyō 寛平 1) suggests that he was already a Confucian scholar by that time. As a matter of fact, even a rapid skim of early Heian sources makes clear that the prefaces for institutionalised banquets were normally composed by either Confucian scholars or by candidates for the Policy Test; see further Steininger 2017, 65.

20 For an overview of Ōe no Asatsuna's bureaucratic career and literary activity, see Ono 2008, 22-46.

21 In *Honchō monzui*, for example, both Koretoki and Naomoto are included, with two pieces each; by comparison, forty-five pieces by Asatsuna are included and thirty-six by Michizane.

ly associated with specific individuals who were in particular recognized for their compositional abilities.

Earlier in the Heian period, by contrast, poetry in literary Sinitic seems not yet to have a clearly identifiable place within *kidendō* literacy. As a matter of fact, at this time, the discourse about the distinction between Confucian erudition and compositional abilities appears only in texts connected with the Sugawara House. This connection is key evidence of this clan's early claim to this domain of *kidendō* activity. In the memorial (*hyō* 表) that he offered on the occasion of the presentation of his personal collection, for example, Sugawara no Michizane depicts his clan as being traditionally associated with both Confucian scholarship in the broadest sense and the art of literary composition specifically, thereby presenting the latter as an autonomous field of action upon which the clan could claim authority.[22]

4 Sinitic Poetry and the Sugawara House

The strengthening of the connection between poetic composition and the *kidendō* curriculum following the inclusion of poetry as a test subject for the civil service examinations and the integration of poetry into the system of *kidendō* literary activity in the early Heian period created both tensions and possibilities. The anthologizing principles of *Ryōunshū* – which, as has been seen, reflected the social distribution of the performance of poetry in literary Sinitic among *kidendō* graduates (as did, later, such mid- and late-Heian collections as the above-mentioned *Ruijū kudaishō*) – suggest that poetry served as a form of cultural capital that had value in certain arenas, such as official poetry banquets, and could be appropriated strategically. Texts from late ninth and early tenth centuries provide evidence of banquet poetry as a terrain open for appropriation. Early Heian institutional banquets such as the Palace Banquet and the Double Nine Banquet represented a particularly prominent arena in which *kidendō* graduates who pursued poetry composition as a specific and self-sustaining form of cultural capital could achieve official recognition. In texts of the period associated with the Sugawara House, the interconnection of these two aspects of poetry – as an independent domain of activity and as a performance in the context of institutionalised poetry banquets – is explicit.

One such text is the preface to a collection of poetry no longer extant by the *kidendō* graduate and friend of Sugawara no Michizane

22 The passage reads as follows: "Prostrate on the ground, this subject recalls his house long dwelling in the garden of writing amid the Confucian forest" 臣伏惟臣家為儒林文苑尚矣 (*Kanke bunsō, Kanke kōshū* 674).

named Ki no Haseo 紀長谷雄 (845-912), *Engi igo shijo* 延喜以後詩序 (Preface to the Poems Composed in the Engi Era). The preface begins,

> 予十有五始志学、十八頗知属文。時無援助、未遇提奨。先師都大夫、為當時秀才。予雖列門徒、未及知名。于時北堂諸生群飲、同賦幽人釣春水之詩。先師独擢予詩曰、綴韻之間、甚得風骨。依此一言、漸増声価。其後信譖、遂被疎遠。淪翳積年、研精永倦。貞觀之末、纔登進士之科。故菅丞相在儒官之日、復党同門、未有相許。適見予大極殿始成宴集詩云、不意伊人詞藻至此。自後属意、数相寄和。及予出仕、丞相執政。每有文会、必先視草。予昔侍内宴、賦草木共逢春詩曰、庭増気色晴沙緑、林変容輝宿雪紅。又九日賦菊散一叢金詩曰、廉士路中疑不拾、道家煙裏誤応焼。丞相常吟賞、以為口実。乘酔執予手曰、元白再生、何以加焉。予雖知過実、猶感一顧。

At the age of fifteen I set my heart to learning, and by the age of eighteen I was well-versed in composing [poetry]. At the time, however, I lacked proper support and guidance. My late teacher, Miyako [no Yoshika], was the flourishing talent [*shūsai*] of the time. Though I took my place in line among his disciples, my name remained unknown. One day a banquet was held at the Northern Hall for all of the students, and everyone composed a poem on the topic *The Hermit Fishes in the Spring Waters*. My late teacher selected my poem and said, "With these rhymes, you have achieved an exceptional mastery of style". Because of these words, my reputation gradually increased. After that, however, he believed slanders against me, and I was eventually estranged from him. I fell into obscurity for many years, but I continued to devote myself to learning so that, at the end of the Jōgan era [859-877], I finally rose to the status of advanced scholar [*shinshi*]. At the time when the former Minister Sugawara [no Michizane] held the office of professor of letters, I was affiliated with his school, but he did not yet acknowledge me. Once, he looked at my poem for the banquet held to inaugurate the Great Hall of State [Daigokuden] and said, "I did not expect this person to possess such literary talent!" From that moment he showed interest in me and we began to exchange a large number of poems. Eventually, I entered official service and the Minister [Sugawara] rose to a high governmental position. Every time a literary gathering was held, I always showed him my drafts. Once I attended the Palace Banquet and composed a poem on the topic *Plants and Trees Together Meet Spring*. Among the verses I recited were "The garden enhances its appearance as the bright sand shades green. The woods mold their radiance as the residual snow glows red". Again, at the banquet on the ninth day, I composed a poem on the topic *The Chrysanthemums Scatter One Bush of Gold* in which were the lines "The honest man, in the middle of the road, suspiciously refuses to grab it. The man

> of the Way, amidst the smoke, would probably mistakenly burn it". The Minister [Sugawara] frequently recited them in admiration, to the point that they became a common expression. Riding the intoxication, he once grabbed my hand and said: "Even if Yuan [Zhen] and Bai [Juyi] were to live again, how could they possibly surpass this?" Although I knew this was an exaggeration, still I was moved by such esteem. (*Honchō monzui* 201)

Haseo's preface sheds light on the conceptualization of poetic skills as a legitimate and independent form of cultural capital for *kidendō* graduates. In the first place, he presents poetic composition as one category of 'learning' and, in the text, his educational trajectory involves primarily his poetic training. Second, he situates poetic training within the context of a process leading to participation in institutionalised banquets. Third, he emphasises private routes of knowledge transmission, making Sugawara no Michizane and the Sugawara House the primary locus of poetic legitimacy. By selecting moments from the institutional formation of *kidendō* graduates and their participation as *monnin* in the events and rituals of the court and framing them as consecutive steps in a teleological narrative, Haseo represents their poetic services as a self-sustaining and consistent career path over which he can claim legitimacy and authority. Thus, his choice to include the couplets from the Palace Banquet held in 898 and the Double Nine Banquet of 899 may itself be relevant.[23] As a matter of fact, Haseo served simultaneously as a professor of literature (*monjō hakase*) and Senior Assistant to the Minister of Ceremonial Affairs (*shikibu no taifu* 式部大輔) at that time.[24] On the one hand, the Ministry of Ceremonial Affairs was in charge of organising the Double Nine Banquet and compiling the list of *monnin* who would perform.[25] On the other hand, professors of letters were usually expected to appear at institutionalised banquets since they provided the topics for composition and one of them normally composed the banquet prefatory piece (*jo* 序).[26] The two couplets quoted in the text may thus point to a historical moment when Haseo was preeminent among the *kidendō* graduates who performed at institutionalised banquets.

23 *Nihon kiryaku*, Kanpyō 10 [898]/1/20; Shōtai 昌泰 2 [899]/9/9.

24 A chronology of Ki no Haseo's official posts is in Miki 1992, 5-12.

25 The Palace Banquet was instead administered by the sovereign's Chamberlain Office (*kurōdo-dokoro* 蔵人所). See Takigawa 2007, 171-4.

26 In *Kyūreki* 九暦 (Calendrical Diary of the Ninth Avenue), the diary of courtier Fujiwara no Morosuke 藤原師輔 (908-960), there is a passage illustrating the norms pertaining to the selection of the banquet preface composer. For the Double Nine Banquet, it was normally the professor of letters who had first passed the Policy Test (*hōryakushi*). *Kyūreki*, Tenryaku 4 [950]/10/8. Quoted from Steininger 2017, 73.

At the same time, Haseo's ad hoc poetic career as a poet and its legitimacy were predicated on his connections with personal tutors such as Miyako no Yoshika and Sugawara no Michizane. The training of court poets, therefore, occupied an ambiguous position within the Bureau of Education, while poetic knowledge circulated mainly outside institutional lines of transmission. Particularly instructive in this regard is the importance in Haseo's preface of the intimate connection with Michizane for his recognition as a poet at the Palace Banquet and at the Double Nine Banquet, with Michizane both supervising his poetic production and legitimizing it by singling out the couplets quoted in the text. The preface to his collection thus illustrates the two major aspects of early Heian poetic activity that are the focus of the present study, the centrality of institutionalised poetry banquets and the role of the Sugawara House in training and legitimizing poets. The *Engi igo shijo* thus exemplifies one of the ways in which poetry in literary Sinitic could be configured as a field of action for *kidendō* graduates, namely as a practice that depended for its legitimacy on participation as one of the *monnin* at institutionalised banquets and on connections with the Sugawara House.

5 The Architecture of Sugawara no Michizane's *Kanke bunsō*

Sugawara no Michizane's support for Ki no Haseo and legitimation of his reputation in the composition of poetry at institutional banquets in *Engi igo shijo* goes in tandem with the depiction of banquet poetry as a form of cultural capital intimately associated with the Sugawara House in Michizane's own literary collection. In the remainder of the paper, I discuss the connection between poetry in literary Sinitic and the Sugawara House in greater depth by analysing passages in Michizane's *Kanke bunsō* (Literary Drafts of the Sugawara House) in which strategic associations with institutionalised poetry banquets and the paradigm of *monnin* served to lend legitimacy and authority for his poetic activity at large.

While the poetry in *Kanke bunsō* is organized in chronological order, its basic structure involves the distribution of the poetic material into six volumes. This segmentation ostensibly follows moments of Michizane's bureaucratic career. Michizane places descriptions of his career's shifts and advancement throughout the collection. Specifically, at the beginning of five of six volumes, he describes one of these moments. Schematically,

> Vol. 1) "I was eleven at the time. The rigorous lord [i.e. Michizane's father Koreyoshi] ordered the advanced scholar Shimada to test

me. This was the first poem I ever composed: this is why I put it at the beginning of my collection".

Vol. 2) "From here, the next 106 poems were written when I was holding the office of Assistant to the Ministry of Ceremonial Affairs".

Vol. 3) "From here on are poems written when I was governor of Sanuki Province. The next five poems were written before I left the capital".

Vol. 4) "While going back to Sanuki, I stopped at the Akashi post station in Harima. The next eighty poems were written after returning to the province".

Vol. 5) [no annotation]

Vol. 6) "The next eleven poems were written when I was Middle Counselor (*chūnagon* 中納言)".

Further, another kind of synchronisation seems to exist that runs parallel to the series of key moments and relates to the choice of poems with which each volume opens. Careful consideration of these poems, I argue, reveals the Palace Banquet as another of the collection's fundamental organizing principles. Specifically, the second, third, and sixth volumes begin with a poem composed for the Palace Banquets held in 877 (Jōgan 19), 886 (Ninna 仁和 2) and 896 (Kanpyō 8), respectively, and the first and fourth volumes begin with poems that are strongly suggestive of that event, as I demonstrate in the following analysis. The topics of the opening poems of the six volumes are as follows:

Vol. 1 月夜見梅花
Moonlight night, looking at the plum flowers.
(*Kanke bunsō, Kanke kōshū* 1)

Vol. 2 早春、侍宴仁壽殿、同賦認春、應製
Early spring, attending a banquet at Jijūden, composing along on the topic "Recognizing spring" in response to a command by the sovereign.
(*Kanke bunsō, Kanke kōshū* 77)

Vol. 3 早春內宴、聽宮妓奏柳花怨曲、應製
Early spring, Palace Banquet. Listening to the palace entertainers performing the tune "The Garden of Willows and Flowers". [A poem] composed in response to a command by the sovereign.
(*Kanke bunsō, Kanke kōshū* 183)

Vol. 4　題驛樓壁
[A poem] inscribed on the wall of the post station [in Harima].
(*Kanke bunsō, Kanke kōshū* 243)

Vol. 5　閏九月盡、燈下即事、應製
End of the intercalary ninth month, impromptu composition under the lanterns, [a
poem] composed in response to a command by the sovereign.
(*Kanke bunsō, Kanke kōshū* 336)

Vol. 6　早春內宴、侍清涼殿同賦春先梅柳知、應製
Early spring, Palace Banquet, attending at Seiryōden, composing along on the topic
"Plums and willows know spring first" in response to a command by the sovereign.
(*Kanke bunsō, Kanke kōshū* 430)

The fifth volume is revealed as an exception to this organizing principle. As can be seen here, the poem that opens this volume differs from those that open the other volumes in that its context is a non-institutionalised banquet, specifically one put on by Emperor Uda late in the autumn of 890 (Kanpyō 2).[27] The remaining two poems, at first glance, seem disconnected from institutional poetic practice, but a closer look reveals connections with the Palace Banquet of a different sort. According to the annotation attached to it, the poem that opens the first volume was, appropriately, Michizane's first poetic utterance, written when he was eleven under the supervision of his poetic tutor, Shimada no Tadaomi 島田忠臣 (828-892):

月夜見梅花
Moonlight night, looking at the plum flowers.

月耀如晴雪　The moon shines like snow under a clear sky;
梅花似照星　Plum flowers resemble gleaming stars.
可憐金鏡轉　How splendid! As the golden mirror moves,
庭上玉房馨　Upon the garden, the jade clusters spread their fragrance.
(*Kanke bunsō, Kanke kōshū* 1)

27 Emperor Uda established new poetic banquets that were held in addition to the institutionalised Palace Banquet and Double Nine Banquet. These new banquets, however, seem to have been more private in nature since the participants were members of Uda's personal entourage together with recognised *kidendō* graduates in the capacity of poets; see Takigawa 2007, 65-82. On Uda's late-autumn banquets see Kitayama 2003.

As a quatrain of five-character verses, this poem is Heian Sinitic poetry at its most basic in terms of form. Despite its simplicity, however, it engages with the broader practice of poetry in performance at institutionalised banquets. First, the topic of the poem, with the imagery of plum flowers, is similar to the topics that were regularly chosen for the Palace Banquet. The thematic development of the poem, for example, with the comparison of white plum blossoms in the moonlight to stars, anticipates the imagery of plums amidst the snow in the poem that Michizane composed for the Palace Banquet of 874 that was quoted at the beginning of this paper. Thematically and rhetorically, then, this poem shares much of the seasonal framework for Palace Banquet poems. Second, the poem opens a sequence of compositions written as practice for the *monjōshō* examination, a passage of which qualified an individual to be selected as a literature student in the *kidendō* curriculum. The topics of the poems thus mirrored those for the actual test, such as "composing on blue-green" (詠青) (*Kanke bunsō, Kanke kōshū* 5), which usually entailed the exegetical practise of extrapolating from the continental classics a series of erudite allusions to the poetic subject in question.[28] By contrast, the poem that opens the collection is on the sort of topic selected for the banquet poems. The annotation to the poem states that Michizane's father had instructed Michizane's tutor, the literature student Shimada no Tadaomi, to test him on such a topic. Thus, this poem is embedded in a social hierarchy in a manner reminiscent of the institutionalised banquets at which the sovereign commanded Confucian scholars to choose the topic on which the summoned *monnin* would present their compositions. In general, this poem seems to have been conceived as a way to test the young Michizane's ability in a specific aspect of poetic practice, namely banquet poetry. Accordingly, the poem connects directly with institutionalised banquet poetry – and with the Palace Banquet in particular – again evincing the tight connection between this domain of poetic activity and the Sugawara House.

The poem that opens the fourth volume was ostensibly composed by Michizane in 888 (Ninna 4) at a post station on his way back to Sanuki 讃岐 province from the capital midway through his four-year assignment as provincial governor:

題驛樓壁
[A poem] inscribed on the wall of a post station.

離家四日自傷春　Four days since I left home, and I am naturally moved by spring;

28 On the examination poetry in early Heian Japan see Li 2011.

梅柳何因觸處新　As I gaze at them, plums and willows are, for some reason, new to me.
爲問去來行客報　Therefore I ask to the passing travelers for a response:
讚州刺史本詩人　"The Governor of Sanuki is, in fact, a poet".
(*Kanke bunsō, Kanke kōshū* 243)

Much like the poem that opens the first volume, this poem is thematically related to the Palace Banquet through the imagery of plums and willows as emblems of spring. Owing to their association with the first lunar month and early spring, these trees featured prominently in the topics and poems for the Palace Banquet, individually and together. The topic of the poem opening the sixth volume, "Plums and willows know spring first," is but one of many examples. Michizane's invocation of these natural objects that elicit his poetic inspiration can be seen as a means to demonstrate spontaneously the kind of response that might have been requested from a poet at the Palace Banquet. The underlying connection between a seemingly spontaneous poetic act and a poetic performance at institutionalised banquets is revealed in the last verse. Rather than contrasting an innate poetic attitude with a bureaucratic service, the structure of the verse suggests that provincial governorship and poetic composition are in fact two equal but mutually exclusive offices. It is, therefore, preferable to understand 'poet' (*shijin* 詩人) here more as a literary equivalent of *monnin* (again, the specific term used to describe the trained poets summoned to perform at institutional banquets) than as an expression of one's personal poetic disposition.[29] I suggest, accordingly, that Michizane's poem accentuates his physical and bureaucratic distance from the Palace Banquet while at the same time claiming a inherent proximity to it, as well as to the bureaucratic position of *monnin*. Temporally, this poem is situated between the tenth day of the first month – a date that appears in the title of the second-to-last poem of the third volume – and the spring months in which are set the poems that follow it at the beginning of the fourth volume. The implication in the poem is that Michizane was travelling back to the province just at the same time when the Palace Banquet (held between the twentieth and twenty-second days of the first month) was about to take place.

29 The term *monnin* appears in manual and procedures but never in actual compositions, where it is usually substituted by such words as *shikyaku* 詩客 (poetic guests), *bokkyaku* 墨客 (ink guests) and *shijin* (poets). On the use of the term *shijin* to refer to *monnin* in the context of early Heian Sinitic poetry, see Takigawa 1997. By contrast, other scholars have interpreted the term *shijin* as indicating a personal poetic disposition towards the natural environment surrounding the poet and an innate inclination to express one's feelings; see for example Fujiwara 2001, 236-8.

This poem is thus not only a lamentation for Michizane's inability to attend the Palace Banquet, for, within the economy of *Kanke bunsō*, it joins the poem at the beginning of the first volume as substitutes of Palace Banquet poems that can parallel those that open the second, third, and sixth volumes, thereby balancing the temporal and cosmological structure of the entire collection. In this way, the overall structure of *Kanke bunsō* – and of Michizane's poetic activity as a whole – is governed by a complete synchronisation with the state-sponsored annual poetic annual regimen. This relationship serves as a kind of testimony to Michizane's broader claim about the poetic activity generated by institutionalised banquets. Thus, the fact that both the poems composed for the Palace Banquet and the poems composed for other contexts are integrated together to build such structure reinforces, I suggest, the inherent continuity between institutional poetic activity and the claim to poetic authority of Michizane and the Sugawara House.

The apparent disruption in the alignment of *Kanke bunsō* with the Palace Banquet and the institutional banquet regime of the Heian state that the late-autumn poem at the beginning of the fifth volume causes necessarily requires explanation. As a matter of fact, consideration of the position of this particular poem at the opening of the fifth volume can provide further insight into the literary activities sponsored by Emperor Uda and Michizane's role in them. As already discussed, Uda's household banquets constituted a regime separate from the institutionalised banquets in terms of both the place in which they were held and in terms of the social organization of the participants. In contrast with the Palace Banquet and the Double Nine Banquet, Uda's household banquets were held at his new private quarters in the Seiryōden 清涼殿 complex within the Imperial Palace.[30] Furthermore, members of Uda's personal entourage participated in his household banquets, thereby testifying to their non-institutional nature (Takigawa 2007, 80-2). As discussed presently, the fifth volume of Michizane's *Kanke bunsō* represents Uda's household banquets as the natural extension of the institutionalised poetic regime of the Palace Banquet and the Double Nine Banquet, thereby testifying to the gravitational pull of the institutionalised banquet system during the early Heian period. The poem in question, which is accompanied by a preface (*jo*) describing the context of the banquet, reads as follows:

30 Uda shifted the sovereign's residence from the traditional site of Jijūden 仁寿殿 to the Seiryōden in 891 (Kanpyō 3). Although the Palace Banquet was to be held at the sovereign's private quarters, Uda maintained Jijūden as the site for it, thereby keeping his household banquets and institutionalised banquets separate. See the entry in *Daigo tennō gyoki* 醍醐天皇御記 on Engi 2 (902)/1/20.

閏九月盡、燈下即事、應製　並序。
End of the intercalary ninth month; a poem composed upon the scenery before us under the light of the lanterns, in response to a command by the Sovereign. With preface attached.

年有三秋、秋有九月。九月之有此閏、閏亦盡於今宵矣。夫得而易失者時也。感而難堪者情
也。宜哉。瑞情、惜而又惜。于時蘭燈屢挑、桂醑頻酌。近習者侍臣五六、外來者詩人二三而
已。請各即事著于形言云爾。謹序。
There are three autumn months in one year, among which is the ninth month. This year, an intercalary month was attached to the ninth month and this ends tonight. Now, time is something that is obtained and yet easily lost, and the heart feels emotions that it can hardly bear. Such is the way things are! The sovereign's splendid heart laments this time and again. At this time, the orchid lanterns blaze incessantly while fine cassia wine is repeatedly poured. Five or six attendants among the private courtiers together with two or three poets especially summoned from outside – each of them will compose extemporaneously, expressing the scenery before them into form and words. I humbly present this preface.

天惜凋年閏九月　Heaven laments this year's fading along with the intercalary ninth month;
今宵偏感急如流　This night one feels deeply that time is flowing as fast as a stream.
霜鞭近警衣寒冒　The whip of frost warns that it is drawing near, as the robes are threatened by the cold;
漏箭頻飛老暗投 The arrow of the water-clock flies fast announcing that old age inevitably comes.
菊為花芳衰又愛　Because of their fragrance, the chrysanthemums retain their beauty even while fading;
人因道貴去猶留　Thanks to his veneration of the Way, the man now attends although he was gone. (臣自外吏入侍重闈　From my position as provincial governor I was granted the permission to attend at the sovereign's quarters.)
明朝縱戴初冬日　Even if tomorrow I were to receive the first rays of winter's sun,
豈勝蕭蕭夢裡遊　It could hardly compare to such peaceful and quiet pleasures, as if within a dream.
(*Kanke bunsō, Kanke kōshū* 336)

The fifth and sixth volumes collect the poems that Michizane composed after returning to the capital from Sanuki in the last decade of the ninth century. In particular, the first half of the fifth volume

includes almost exclusively poems for Uda's household banquets, to which, as discussed, Michizane was regularly summoned.[31] Some poems for these banquets are already included at the end of the previous volume, reinforcing the impression that the choice of this particular poem to open the volume was not random. Regarding his motivation, on the one hand, Michizane may have chosen this poem for its closing couplet, which is clearly meant to celebrate his participation at Uda's poetic banquet rather than his return to his bureaucratic office.[32] On the other hand, Michizane may have selected this poem to celebrate the newly established affiliation, founded on poetic activity, between Uda's household and the Sugawara House. Michizane began holding a late-autumn household banquet at the end of the ninth month (the last of the autumn months on the lunar calendar) as soon as he assumed leadership of the Sugawara House following the death of his father Koreyoshi in 880 (Gangyō 4).[33] Significantly, this specific banquet was then incorporated into Uda's household banquet regime shortly after the sovereign's coronation in 887 (Ninna 3).[34]

Of particular interest is Michizane's description of the social space of Uda's banquet in the preface. By invoking a clear distinction between "five, six attendants among the retainers" and "two, three poets especially summoned", Michizane mimics the separation enforced at institutionalised banquets between *monnin*, as specialised poets normally selected from *kidendō* graduates, on the one hand, and, on the other, occasional poets who had the option of offering a poem but whose attendance at a banquet was not dependent on literary service. Michizane's way of defining Uda's poetic community, therefore, mirrors closely the social separation characteristic of the institutionalised banquets. Indeed, it might be said that Michizane produces *textually* a social separation that was likely not implemented in reality.[35] Thus, I argue, Michizane claims a kind of '*monnin*-based' position,

31 On the literary and political partnership between Michizane and Uda during the last decade of the ninth century, see Borgen 1994, 197-216; Taniguchi 2006, 153-62.

32 To "receive the rays of the winter's sun" meant being awarded an official bureaucratic appointment.

33 Regrettably, there is only one example of a poem from such a banquet in *Kanke bunsō* (*Kanke bunsō, Kanke kōshū* 126)

34 The first of such banquets is recorded in *Nihon kiryaku* in Kanpyō 1 (889)/9/25. The topic of composition was *Cherishing Autumn, We Admire the Lingering Chrysanthemums* (惜秋翫殘菊). On the transformation of Michizane's late-autumn household banquet into a court banquet, see Kitayama 2002.

35 A rigid spatial separation was maintained at institutionalised banquets between *monnin* and high-ranking courtiers on the one hand and officials, even those who composed poetry, on the other. Thus, normally, *monnin* would be summoned only for the part of the banquet during which poetry was to be composed; moreover, they would sit in the courtyard, relatively distant from the sovereign and other dignitaries. For this reason, modern scholarship sometimes refers to the former as *jige monnin* 地下文

one modelled on the institutionalised banquets, within a poetic regime that did not specifically dictate such a position.

Michizane's casting of *kidendō* poets as *monnin* in the preface to Uda's late-autumn banquet at the beginning of the fifth volume of *Kanke bunsō* complements his depiction of Uda's household banquets as a natural extension of the institutionalised banquet system in the following sequence of poems. The first half of the fifth volume, then, can be considered as a condensed repository of poems from Uda's household banquets, in which every type of banquet established by Uda – the late-autumn banquet, the Double Third Banquet (on the third day of the third month), the cherry blossom banquet, the *tanabata* banquet (on the seventh day of the seventh month), and so on – appears only once. Together, these poems suggest a consistent annual sequence representing the ideal banquet calendar for Uda's literary regime. Tellingly, this sequence is inconsistent with the historical record in that Uda's household banquets were not necessarily held regularly every year and were not institutionalised.[36] *Nihon kiryaku* 日本紀略 (Abridged Chronicle of Japan, late 11th century), for example, records no one year in which all of Uda's household banquets were held. Instead, Michizane's *Kanke bunsō* represents Uda's banquets as if they formed part of a *de facto* institutionalised regime. His structuring of the collection in this respect reveals the influence of the institutionalised banquet system in conceptualising forms of literary activity, an influence that extended even to activity outside that system such as Uda's household banquets, depended as they were on the sovereign's patronage networks rather than institutionalised socio-political relationships. Michizane's strategies for legitimizing his position within such private networks of literary activity were predicated on associating the private banquets with the institutionalised banquets, which remained the official venue for the recognition of *kidendō* graduates' poetic activity.

Thus, from the synchronisation with the Palace Banquet to the organization of an ideal calendar of Emperor Uda's household banquets, Sugawara no Michizane seems to have organized his *Kanke bunsō* using the framework of institutionalised banquet practice. This structure, in turn, ensured that Michizane's literary activity was predicated within the same framework and on the same model. In this way, he testifies to the significance of such practices for the view of poetic composition and performance as a cultural asset for *kidendō* graduates in the early Heian period.

人 (lower-ground *monnin*) and to the courtiers who offered poems as *tenjō monnin* 殿上文人 (courtier *monnin*); see Kudō 1993, 81-3.

36 Recovering the dates of the assembled banquets from *Nihon kiryaku* reveals that these were held between 890 (Kanpyō 2) and 892 (Kanpyō 4). Significantly, in *Kanke bunsō*, a poem from the Palace Banquet of 893 (Kanpyō 5) comes after the sequence that comprises the ideal assemblage of Uda's household banquets.

6 Conclusions

In this paper, I have explored the dynamic practice of Sinitic poetry composition in early Heian Japan. From the expansion of poetic culture at the beginning of the ninth century to the presentation of Sugawara no Michizane's personal collection *Kanke bunsō*, sovereign-sponsored poetry banquets played a vital role in shaping the contours of literary activity. Sinitic poetry was primarily the domain of the social class of the graduates of the *kidendō* curriculum at the Bureau of Education, and literary collections of the time represent their poetry as part of the performative environment provided by institutionalised banquets. On one level, therefore, the significance of Sinitic poetry was dependent on the ritualistic efficacy of its banquet-based configuration: at sovereign-sponsored banquets, poetry was deployed as a symbolic good, the exchange of which negotiated and confirmed the socio-political relationship between the ruler and his assembled vassals. On another level, however, and conversely, the socio-political organization of institutionalised poetry banquet served as the arena within which poetry developed as a self-sustaining activity for *kidendō* graduates.

Ivo Smits (2007) has aptly suggested thinking of the *kidendō* curriculum at the Bureau of Education as the context in which the composition of Sinitic poetry gradually became a profession. Poetry was acknowledged as an autonomous sphere of action for *kidendō* graduates by the mid-Heian period, but during the early Heian period it was still one marginal activity among the many that members of this social class were obliged to perform in their bureaucratic capacity. It was at this time that Sinitic poetry assumed a prominent place in discourses associated with the Sugawara House. Thus, works such as Ki no Haseo's *Engi igo shijo* make clear the role of the Sugawara House in supplying poetic training and legitimacy. An appreciation of the relationship between poetry and the Sugawara House in the early Heian period, therefore, offers insights into the place of poetry in the *kidendō* literacy of the time. As Steininger (2017) observes, training at *daigakuryō* focused mainly on exegesis, memorization, and recitation of passages from the continental texts that formed the curriculum, even in the case of more literary oriented works such as *Wen Xuan* 文選 (Selections of *Wen*). In fact, the dynamics of the poetic teaching and training of *kidendō* students is still not well understood. The stance that Michizane assumes regarding poetic practice suggests that, during the early Heian period, poetry could be claimed as a cultural asset by a single household, and that poetic literacy was transmitted primarily outside the Bureau of Education. The complex relationship among the Sugawara House, the *kidendō* curriculum, and institutional practice thus appears to have influenced the articulation of the early Heian literary field. The association of Sinitic poet-

ry with the Sugawara House in the early Heian period remained tied to the cultural relevance of the institutionalised poetry banquets. So it was that the Sugawara House exploited the context of institutionalised poetry banquets to establish its position within the economy of *kidendō* cultural practices. The specific poetic authority claimed by Sugawara no Michizane was based on the model of *monnin*, the providers of poetry at official banquets. Perceiving the institutionalised banquets to be the primary source of poetic authority and legitimacy, Michizane sought during the early Heian period to articulate a direct connection with them.

Institutionalised poetry banquets constituted a major feature of the early Heian period. The rise and fall of the Palace Banquet and the Double Nine Banquet, then, help to define the temporal boundaries of the early Heian period (ca 800-950). This investigation of Sugawara no Michizane's claims to authority over and legitimacy within the field of poetry composition based on his proximity to the institutionalised banquets and the *monnin* model brings to light aspects of early Heian literary culture that are uniquely tied to the cultural paradigms of the period. At the same time, the centrality of institutionalised poetic practice at the early Heian court was inconsistent with the inherently peripheral position of poetry within the various forms of *kidendō* literacy. Michizane's *Kanke bunsō* can, therefore, be seen as, in part, a strategic means to smooth over this inconsistency by laying claim to a marginal field of action – poetry in literary Sinitic – that also lay within the *kidendō* graduates' sphere of officially recognized literary production.

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Il tempo e la gloria nell'*Ise monogatari* Considerazioni sui risvolti politici dei canti del «vecchio»

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Abstract Centred as they are on historical figures and public events, the six chapters (76, 77, 79, 81, 83, 97) that refer to Narihira as an "old man" (*okina*) have long been the object of scholarly debate as important keys to the understanding of the *Ise monogatari*. This article explores their political overtones, showing how, through the symbolic use of seasonal motifs, the old man's poems obliquely signal – and covertly denounce as an illegitimate assumption of power – specific stages of Fujiwara no Yoshifusa's political ascent, *vis-à-vis* the consequent decline of other clans (the Ariwaras) and royal personages (Prince Koretaka).

Keywords Okina. Fujiwara no Yoshifusa. Bai Juyi. Last day of spring. Flower. Wisteria. Time. Political power. Political dissent. Ambiguity.

Sommario 1 Introduzione. – 2 Il cantore dell'età dell'oro. – 3 Il trascorrere dell'età del fiore: valori simbolici dell'ultimo giorno di primavera in Bai Juyi e nell'*Ise monogatari*. – 4 Il cantore anziano e la celebrazione equivoca: i risvolti politici delle poesie del vecchio. – 5 Stagioni astronomiche e stagioni politiche nei canti del vecchio: il commiato di primavera della sezione 77. – 6 Una prosperità illusoria: le sezioni 79-80. – 7 Una breve stagione di gloria: le sezioni 82-83. – 8 L'anomalo fiore d'uno splendore senza fine: le sezioni 97-98 e 101. – 5. Conclusioni. Le ambiguità del vecchio, le strategie dell'autore

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1 Introduzione

Come è noto, l'*Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語 (Racconti d'Ise, seconda metà del X secolo) si configura come la biografia di un «uomo» (*otoko* 男) identificabile con Ariwara no Narihira 在原業平 (825-880). Nella versione corrente di 125 sezioni, esso inizia infatti con l'entrata nella maggiore età del protagonista e si chiude con una poesia da lui composta in punto di morte. In accordo con questa impostazione, e a dispetto della struttura episodica che sembra caratterizzare il testo, l'*otoko* non conserva sino alla fine la stessa impetuosa trasgressività della giovinezza, bensì cambia nel tempo e tra un'avventura amorosa e l'altra avanza negli anni, tanto che il narratore a un certo punto comincia a definirlo «un vecchio», «il vecchio» (*okina* 翁). I *dan* in cui l'eroe viene designato con questo appellativo sono sei in tutto (76, 77, 79, 81, 83, 97). Tuttavia, come vedremo, le poesie dello *okina* proiettano spesso i propri contenuti oltre i singoli episodi, implicando nella propria lettura anche i *dan* adiacenti. Esse coinvolgono così una parte ben più estesa dell'*Ise* e interessano nel complesso le sezioni che vanno dalla 76 – quando l'*otoko* viene presentato per la prima volta con tale epiteto – alla 114 dove il protagonista stesso si definisce come un «vecchio» (*okina*).[1] Anche in assenza di questa specifica designazione, inoltre, il gruppo di sezioni 76-114, presenta in generale vari riferimenti al declino dell'età. Nella breve sezione 88, per esempio, l'uomo viene definito insieme ai suoi amici *ito wakaki ni ha aranu* いと若きにはあらぬ (Fukui 1994, 193), «non più giovanissimo». Ancora, sembra incentrarsi sullo scorrere del tempo e sulla perdita della gioventù, simboleggiata dalla fine della primavera, anche la vicina sezione 91, che riporto qui sotto:

> Una volta un uomo, rattristato anche dallo scorrere del tempo, verso la fine del terzo mese compose i versi:
> をしめども
> 春のかぎりの
> 今日の日
> 夕暮にさへ
> なりにけるかな[2]
> (Fukui 1994, 194)

1 In una poesia composta durante una battuta di caccia al seguito dell'imperatore Kōkō. Di fatto si tratta di un *waka* ripreso dal *Gosen wakashū* 後撰和歌集 (Antologia di *waka*, scelta posteriore, 951 ca., d'ora in poi *Gosenshū*), XV,1076 e composto dal fratellastro di Narihira, Yukihira (818-893).

2 *Oshimedomo | haru no kagiri no | kyō no hi no | yūgure ni sae | narinikeru kana*.

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57, 2021, 533-574
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Per quanto possa dispiacermene
anche per questo giorno,
l'ultimo della primavera,
è ormai sopraggiunto
il crepuscolo.[3]
(trad. Maurizi 2018, 119)

Tornando alle sei sezioni sopramenzionate, l'epiteto *okina* si accompagna in più casi a cariche effettivamente rivestite in vita da Narihira. Nelle sezioni 77 e 83, l'eroe viene rispettivamente designato come «il vecchio che era Direttore delle scuderie imperiali, sezione di destra» (*migi no uma no kami narikeru okina* 右の馬の頭なりけるおきな), e come «il vecchio che è Direttore delle Scuderie imperiali» (*uma no kami naru okina* 馬の頭なるおきな), titolo di cui Narihira fu insignito nell'865, all'età di 41 anni. Nella sezione 76, troviamo invece «un vecchio in servizio presso l'Ufficio della Guardia imperiale», così come nella sezione 97, che lo presenta come «il vecchio che era Secondo Comandante [della Guardia imperiale]» (*chūjō narikeru okina* 中将なりけるおきな): si tratta anche qui di una carica veramente ricoperta da Narihira, il quale fu nominato Secondo Comandante aggiunto della Guardia imperiale (*Gon no chūjō* 権中将) nell'875, all'età di 51 anni (o, secondo altre fonti, nell'877, a cinquantatré anni). Tenendo conto che al tempo la vecchiaia veniva fatta iniziare a 40 anni circa, l'appellativo di 'vecchio' riflette quindi la realtà biografica del personaggio storico Narihira, il quale all'epoca in cui rivestiva le suddette cariche poteva essere definito, secondo gli standard del tempo, anziano. Dunque i *dan* del «vecchio» sembrano rimandare in certa misura alla vita reale di Narihira e, collocandosi nella seconda parte del testo, contribuiscono alla costruzione di una 'biografia' del poeta. Tuttavia il loro interesse non risiede solo in questo dato. È stato infatti osservato che A) lo *okina* compare unicamente in sezioni contrassegnate dalla presenza di figure storiche identificate per nome o per titolo, i cosiddetti «*dan* con nomi veri»,[4] e che B) l'uso dell'appellativo *okina* sembra limitato a specifiche situazioni compositive, perlopiù di carattere pubblico, come conviti (81), celebrazioni (76, 79, 97) o commemorazioni (77), in cui vengono recitati versi in onore di, o su comando di altolocate figure di volta in volta al centro

3 Anche questa poesia è tratta dal *Gosenshū*, III,141, Anonimo, «soggetto sconosciuto». Per quanto concerne l'interpretazione che ne fa un lamento sulla perdita del tempo più bello, ossia la giovinezza, mi attengo a Katagiri (2013, 714-15). Sulla base di «sospirava per giunta [*sae*] il passare del tempo», Fukui (1994, 194) e altri commentatori leggono invece questi versi in chiave amorosa: l'uomo starebbe lamentando il fatto di non poter incontrare l'amata, mentre il tempo «per di più» passa senza che i suoi desideri si avverino.

4 Sui «*dan* con nomi veri» si veda Fraccaro 2016.

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della scena (Hanai 1985, 40-1; Okabe 1997, 84). Questi due aspetti, combinati con altri, enigmatici connotati del personaggio – i tratti leggermente buffoneschi con cui talvolta si presenta o viene presentato (77, 79, 83), la sua apparizione addirittura in vesti di mendico (*katai okina* かたゐおきな [乞丐翁]) nella sezione 81 – hanno dato adito a interpretazioni contrastanti. Per non citare che due giudizi tra i più articolati, allo *okina* spetterebbe il ruolo di nostalgico cantore di un'epoca di splendori ormai perduti (Katagiri, Tanaka 2016, 142-3); o, alternativamente, dietro la copertura di una senile goffaggine (i.e. ambiguità) poetica, il vecchio darebbe voce a velate critiche al sistema politico vigente (Kamio 2003a). Si tratta, come si vede, di letture del tutto divergenti, ma solidali su un punto: il vecchio sembra farsi portatore di istanze centrali nell'*Ise monogatari*, configurandosi come la maschera attraverso cui uno degli autori, o l'autore tout court, esprime la propria posizione ideologica circa gli eventi e i personaggi storici narrati. Partendo dai precedenti studi, e analizzando nel dettaglio alcune delle sezioni incentrate sullo *okina*, questo contributo si propone di mettere ulteriormente a fuoco quale sia l'effettivo ruolo da esso rivestito nel testo, approfondendo in particolare i seguenti aspetti: a) il suo legame con il tempo; b) la complessa rappresentazione di questa dimensione in chiave politica attraverso l'uso simbolico di motivi stagionali; c) la programmatica ambiguità che caratterizza le sue performance poetiche. Attraverso l'esame di questi molteplici aspetti, e cercando di integrare tra loro le opposte letture di Katagiri e Kamio, si tenterà di dimostrare come l'autore si serva della figura del vecchio per proiettare nel testo, attraverso il racconto apparentemente nostalgico dei tempi passati, la propria visione critica dell'assetto politico presente.

2 Il cantore dell'età dell'oro

Sulla base della sua partecipazione a eventi pubblici celebrativi, la designazione del protagonista come *okina* sembra trascendere la funzione di semplice riferimento all'invecchiamento di Narihira, accostandone i tratti a figure felicitanti e augurali di anziani già presenti in letteratura e destinate nei secoli a evolversi all'interno del teatro *nō* nel ruolo dello *okina* e nella danza che ne porta il nome (Hanai 1985, 41; Katagiri 2013, 608-9; MacMillan 2016, xxxi e 308).[5] Uno dei prototipi di simili figure viene solitamente indicato, sulla scia di un importante saggio di Orikuchi Shinobu ([1926] 1997, 371-415), nell'ultracentenario musico di corte Owari no Hamanushi 尾張浜主,

5 Per la danza *Okina* nel *nō*, la sua struttura di «Cerimonia in tre turni» (*Shikisanban* 式三番), e i ruoli (entrambi di vecchi) di Okina e Sanbasō 三番叟 si veda Ruperti 2015, 53-4.

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che nello *Shoku Nihon kōki* 続日本後紀 (Seguito degli annali posteriori del Giappone, 869) esegue una danza su «musica della longevità» (*chōjuraku* 長寿楽) in stile giapponese al cospetto dell'imperatore Ninmyō 仁明 (r. 833-850), recitando poi dei versi propiziatori.[6] Ruoli ugualmente augurali sono quelli degli *hokahibito* 乞食者, 'mendichi',[7] ovvero artisti itineranti che recitavano versi di buon auspicio e felicitazioni in cambio di una ricompensa, inclusi tra gli autori del *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (Raccolta delle diecimila foglie, ca. 759, XV,885-6).[8] Possono ugualmente essere letti in senso augurale, ma anche di ammaestramento per i giovani, alcuni *waka* anonimi sulla vecchiaia (XVII,887-904) del primo libro di «poesie varie» (*zō* 雑) del *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (d'ora in avanti *Kokinshū*, Raccolta di poesie antiche e moderne, 905). Pur configurandosi come lamenti sulla tarda età, essi dovevano essere infatti intonati in occasioni conviviali quali auguri di longevità, oppure potevano essere recitati durante riti di iniziazione alla maggiore età di giovani uomini e donne (Sata 2016, 256-9). Secondo alcuni studiosi (Hasegawa 1983, 105-7), lo *okina* dell'*Ise* potrebbe modellarsi in particolare sul vecchio che nel *waka* XVII,889 contrappone la propria trascorsa gagliardia giovanile all'attuale decadenza senile.[9] Tale opinione è tra gli altri condivisa da uno dei massimi esperti dell'*Ise*, Katagiri Yōichi, secondo il quale, attraverso i rimaneggiamenti della «seconda fase»,[10] il testo

6 «Solo perché son vecchio | dovrò restare nello sconforto? | Quando le erbe e gli alberi | saranno nel pieno del rigoglio | uscirò a danzare» (*Okina tote* | *wabi ya wa oramu* | *kusa mo ki mo* | *sakayuru toki ni* | *idete maitemu* 翁とて 侘びやはおらむ 草も木も 栄ゆる時に 出て舞てむ) (Morita 2010, 165). Stando allo *Shoku Nihon kōki*, la danza fu eseguita una prima volta da Hamanushi come se fosse un giovinetto davanti a mille persone l'ottavo giorno del primo mese dell'845 (Jōwa 承和 12) e venne ripetuta poi due giorni dopo al cospetto del sovrano (Morita 2010, 164-5). Per un'analisi dei relativi passi si veda Drott 2016, 121-2.

7 Se non diversamente specificato, tutte le traduzioni sono dell'Autrice.

8 Per una traduzione delle poesie con testo a fronte cf. Migliore 2019, 111-17.

9 *Ima koso are* | *ware mo mukashi wa* | *otokoyama* | *sakayuku toki mo* | *arikoshi mono o* 今こそあれ 我も昔は おとこ山 さかゆく時も ありこしものを (Kojima, Arai 1989, 268): «Ora sono ridotto così, | ma una volta fui anch'io nel rigoglio, | come il Monte Uomo: in ascesa gagliarda | mi videro in quei tempi» (trad. Sagiyama 2000, 535).

10 Come è noto, Katagiri (1975, 11-14) ha ipotizzato una stesura dell'*Ise* condotta in tre fasi successive e per mano di autori diversi: a una prima redazione riconducibile a Narihira e antecedente la compilazione del *Kokinshū* (905), ne sarebbe seguita una seconda, collocabile in anni successivi alla compilazione del *Gosenshū* (951-958 ca.) e caratterizzata dall'aggiunta di vari episodi elaborati su poesie di Narihira incluse nel *Kokinshū* ma non facenti parte del «primo *Ise*»; la terza sarebbe databile nella seconda metà del X secolo, assumendo come *terminus ante quem* la poesia della sezione 11 (*Wasuru na yo* 忘るなよ, di Tachibana no Tadamoto 橘忠基, inclusa nello *Shūi wakashū* 拾遺和歌集 [Raccolta poetica di spigolature, 1005-1007 ca.], VIII,470). Nello specifico, la seconda fase o il «secondo *Ise*» comprenderebbe una trentina di *dan*: 1, 10, 16, 39, 40, 42-48, 51, 52, 66-8; 76-81, 85-8, 93-4, 100-3; 123, 125 (Katagiri 1975, 15-16). È importante osservare che in uno dei suoi contributi più recenti Katagiri (2013, 1012-16) insi-

glorificherebbe Narihira e i personaggi a lui vicini come rappresentanti di un'epoca di splendori ormai perduti, affidando proprio allo *okina* il ruolo privilegiato di rappresentare, sia in veste di cantore sia in veste di narratore, la mitica età dell'oro incarnata dal poeta e dalla sua cerchia.[11]

Seguendo la nota teoria delle tre fasi di redazione dell'*Ise* proposta dallo studioso, le sezioni aventi per protagonista lo *okina* – tutte contrassegnate dalla presenza di personaggi storici chiaramente identificati – andrebbero ascritte alla seconda fase proprio perché essa, abbandonando la vaghezza del «primo *Ise*», si caratterizza per la comparsa di nomi veri, menzionati al fine di ricondurre esplicitamente a Narihira gli poetici eventi narrati (Katagiri 1975, 17; Katagiri, Tanaka 2016, 141). Nella rappresentazione di questo passato la figura del vecchio avrebbe in particolare la funzione di instaurare un'ottica nostalgica verso i fatti vissuti in gioventù dall'eroe del racconto, e, nel contempo, verso l'epoca incarnata dal vero Narihira, anche se in più casi non si tratta affatto di vicende reali, bensì di finzioni liriche originariamente create dallo stesso poeta o su queste basate.[12] Così il vecchio che esalta la visita di Fujiwara no Takaiko 藤原高子 (842-910) a Ōharano 大原野 (sezione 76) celebra il potere dei Fujiwara, sì, ma sotto sotto starebbe glorificando l'antico amore vissuto in gioventù con la futura Imperatrice del Secondo Rione (sezz. 3-6) e, con esso, una lontana e idealizzata epoca galante contraddistinta da sentimenti puri e appassionati attribuiti al Narihira storico. Ancora, il «vecchio mendico» che nella sezione 81 magnifica la riproduzione della Baia di Shiogama nel favoloso giardino della residenza di Minamoto no Tōru 源融 (822-895), il Kawaranoin 河原院, starebbe ricordando il proprio autoesilio nelle province dell'Est (segnatamente le sezioni 14-15, ambientate nel Michinoku 陸奥), additando però ai lettori contemporanei anche l'incomparabile, perduta eleganza di Tōru e della sua cerchia. Inoltre, stando sempre a Katagiri, il vecchio non è solo il protagonista di alcuni episodi del testo, ma, in modo esplicito o implicito, è anche identificabile come il narratore di tutto il «secondo *Ise*». In tale veste lo vediamo fare capolino nella chiosa finale della sezione 40, incentrata sul contrastato amore del giovane protagonista per una fanciulla al suo servizio. Quando la fanciulla viene cacciata di casa dai genitori di lui, contrari a questo legame per la disparità di rango tra i due, il giovane perde i sensi e,

ste sul fatto che il «secondo *Ise*» riorganizza inglobandoli in sé anche i *dan* del «primo *Ise*»: ciò avvicina non poco la sua posizione a quanti ascrivono la versione in 125 *dan* dei *Teikabon* 定家本 a un unico autore. Per la questione autoriale e le tesi a favore di una redazione unica dello *Ise monogatari*, cf. Fraccaro 2016, 38-43.

11 Per queste tesi e quanto riassumerò nel paragrafo successivo cf. Katagiri 1975, 17-19; 2013, 1012-18; Katagiri, Tanaka 2016, 141-3.

12 Su questo punto si veda Fraccaro 2016, 34-6.

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con tremendo spavento dei suoi, rimane come morto per lunghissimo tempo. In calce al racconto il narratore commenta: «Ecco vedete, i giovani di un tempo provavano simili affanni dettati da passioni assolute. Questo vecchio d'oggi potrebbe farlo mai?».[13] Il passo si presta a più interpretazioni,[14] ma secondo Katagiri (2013, 310-11, 1014-15) dovremmo identificare il «vecchio di adesso» (*ima no okina* 今の翁) con il narratore medesimo, ovvero con un ormai attempato 'Narihira'. Rimembrando la propria romantica gioventù, l'anziano Narihira deplorerebbe così la propria attuale incapacità di provare i sentimenti appassionati e puri che erano sua prerogativa da giovane, rimpiangendoli come parte di una ideale dimensione spirituale ormai perduta. Per lo studioso, il commento finale alla sezione 40 è dunque essenziale per comprendere l'impianto di fondo dell'*Ise*, che si configurerebbe nel suo insieme come il «racconto di un vecchio che ricorda [nostalgicamente] il passato» (*okina no mukashigatari* 翁の昔語り) (Katagiri 2013, 311, 1012). Se da un lato, insomma, per Katagiri l'invecchiamento dell'eroe è funzionale alla costruzione di una biografia romanzata di Narihira, dall'altro, la presenza dello *okina*, sia in veste di protagonista sia in veste di narratore, sarebbe anche lo strumento di cui l'anonimo autore della seconda fase[15] si serve per veicolare il significato ideologico del testo, affidando a questa maschera il compito di evocare una dimensione di eleganza e purezza d'animo – il *miyabi* みやび [雅] – consegnata ormai per sempre al passato, ossia al «buon tempo antico» (*mukashi yokarishi toki* むかしよかりし時)[16] che ebbe in personaggi storici come Narihira, Ki no Aritsune 紀有常 (815-877),[17] il Principe Koretaka 惟喬 (844-897), Minamoto no Tōru i suoi più nobili protagonisti. Inutile dire che nell'ottica di Katagiri, il «vecchio d'oggi» è poi quello stesso narratore che alla fine del primo *dan* addita l'«eleganza impetuosa» (*ichihayaki miyabi* いちはやきみやび) delle «persone di un tempo» (*mukashibito* 昔人) (Fukui 1994, 114), quale ideale comportamentale di un'epoca d'oro da tempo tramontata.

13 La traduzione, così come i commenti che seguono, si basa su Katagiri (1975, 117; 2013, 302).

14 Alcuni interpretano *ima no okina* nel senso di «i giovani [d'oggi] che sembrano dei vecchi [saggi]» (Ishida 1979, 127 nota 68, 198; Fukui 1994, 149).

15 Identificabile per Katagiri in un discendente di Narihira, o comunque un Ariwara appartenente alle generazioni successive (Katagiri, Tanaka 2016, 143).

16 Sezione 16 (Fukui 1994, 128).

17 Fratello di Ki no Shizuko 紀静子, concubina di Montoku e madre del principe Koretaka; alcune fonti lo danno anche come suocero di Narihira. Nella sezione 16 dell'*Ise* viene dipinto come figura avulsa dagli ordinari compromessi del mondo, impoverita ma disinteressata e nobile. Compare inoltre al seguito del principe Koretaka nella sezione 82.

3 Il trascorrere dell'età del fiore: valori simbolici dell'ultimo giorno di primavera in Bai Juyi e nell'*Ise monogatari*

È sempre Katagiri a osservare come il tema del passare della gioventù quale simbolo di una favolosa età dell'oro ormai perduta, si intrecci nell'*Ise* a ripetuti riferimenti alla primavera e al suo ineluttabile trascorrere.[18] Benché non vi siano notazioni esplicite, i motivi contenuti nel *waka* composto di getto dall'eroe nella stessa sezione iniziale – la piana di Kasuga e le giovani piante di *murasaki* – collocano l'episodio in primavera, ed è primaverile lo scenario della celebre sezione 4, in cui l'eroe visita dopo un anno la casa ormai deserta dell'amata. Se già qui, nello smarrimento del protagonista per l'assenza di colei che ama, si avverte il dolore di una perdita, questo sentimento diventerà dominante, sempre secondo Katagiri, nelle sezioni 82-83, dedicate al Principe Koretaka e ambientate interamente (sez. 82) e in parte (sez. 83) in primavera. Al di là della collocazione primaverile di sezioni famosissime, l'*Ise* presenta in più punti, come rileva Katagiri (1987, 16-21), versi incentrati su un motivo desunto da Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846), la fine del terzo mese (nel lessico autoctono, *yayoi no tsugomori* 弥生の晦), ovvero l'ultimo giorno di primavera. Come abbiamo visto, nel citato *waka* della sezione 91 l'invecchiamento dell'eroe viene appunto contrassegnato da una poesia contestualizzata proprio al termine del terzo mese. Non solo. Questo motivo sembra intrattenere uno speciale legame con la figura del vecchio, e, più in generale, con i *dan* a essa connessi. Due *waka* da lui recitati sono infatti contestualizzati a fine primavera (sezz. 77 e 83), mentre è dedicata allo stesso momento stagionale anche la sezione 80, la quale, pur non avendo per protagonista lo *okina*, è strettamente connessa al *dan* precedente (sez. 79), dov'è di scena il vecchio. Poiché si tratta di un episodio importante nell'economia dell'*Ise monogatari*, e i versi su cui si impernia sono ritenuti essenziali anche per l'affermarsi del motivo dello *yayoi no tsugomori* nell'evoluzione del *waka*, la riporto qui per intero.

> Un tempo, in una casa in decadenza, vi era un uomo che aveva piantato dei fiori di glicine. Alla fine del terzo mese, a dispetto della pioggerella che cadeva in quel giorno, pensando di reciderli per farne omaggio a una persona, compose:
>
> ぬれつつぞ
> しひて折りつる

18 Per quanto segue mi baso su Katagiri (1987, 13-30). Alcune osservazioni su questo argomento anche in Sekine 2005, 177-84.

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57, 2021, 533-574
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年のうちに
春はいくかも
あらじと思へば[19]
(Fukui 1994, 182)

Sia pur bagnandomi,
mi sono costretto a coglierli.
Per quest'anno infatti so
che della primavera ormai
sono contati i giorni.

L'episodio, che tornerò ad analizzare in dettaglio più avanti, è la versione rimaneggiata di una poesia di Narihira inclusa nel *Kokinshū* (II,133) dove è preceduta dal seguente *kotobagaki* 詞書: «Inviata a una persona recidendo, nonostante la pioggia, dei fiori di glicine in un giorno alla fine del terzo mese».[20] Basandosi su una prima indicazione di Kaneko Hikojirō,[21] gli studiosi (Katagiri 1987, 16-21; Kitayama 2018, 210; Morimoto 2001, 104) sono oggi concordi nel leggere i versi di Narihira come una delle prime riprese in lingua autoctona di una poesia contenuta nel *Baishi wenji* 白氏文集 (sino-giapp., *Hakushi bunshū* o *Hakushi monjū*, Raccolta dei testi letterari del maestro Bai [Juyi], XIII,631) col titolo: «Iscritta il trentesimo giorno del terzo mese al monastero di Cien» 三月三十日題慈恩寺:

慈恩春色今朝盡　盡日徘徊倚寺門　惆悵春歸留不得　紫藤花下漸黃昏
(Okamura 1988, 41-2).

Lo scenario primaverile al monastero di Cien finisce oggi;
Dopo aver vagabondato tutto il giorno, mi appoggio al portale del tempio.
Pur rammaricato nel profondo, non posso trattenere la primavera che se ne va:
sotto [la pergola d]i glicini purpurei, gradualmente, il crepuscolo.[22]

19 *Nuretsutsu zo | shiite oritsuru | toshi no uchi ni | haru ha ikuka mo | araji to omoeba*.

20 *Yayoi no tsugomori no hi, ame no furikeru ni, orite hito ni tsukawashikeru* 弥生の晦日の日、雨の降りけるに、藤の花を折りて人に遣はしける (Kojima, Arai 1989, 55).

21 *Heian jidai bungaku to Hakushi monjū – Kudai waka Senzai kaku kenkyū hen* 平安時代文学と白氏文集—句題和歌・千載佳句研究篇— (La letteratura del periodo Heian e lo *Hakushi monjū* – Ricerche sul *Kudai waka* [Poesie su versi cinesi] e il *Senzai kaku* [Bei distici per i millenni]), citato, tra gli altri, in Kitayama 2018, 210, 224 nota 6).

22 Il distico finale di questa poesia venne incluso nel primo libro del *Wakan rōeishū* 和漢朗詠集 (Raccolta di poesie cinesi e giapponesi da intonare, inizi XI secolo) sotto il soggetto «Fine del terzo mese» (*Sangatsujin* 三月尽; cf. Maurizi, Sagiyama 2016, 19).

Accanto a soggetti consimili, come l'«addio alla primavera» (*songchun*, sino-giapp., *sōshun* 送春) e il «rimpianto per la primavera che passa» (*xichun*, sino-giapp., *sekishun* 惜春), l'«ultimo giorno del terzo mese» (*sanyuejinri*, sino-giapp., *sangatsujinjitsu* 三月盡日, abbreviato di norma in *sangatsujin*) fu senz'altro un tema poetico molto caro a Bai Juyi, che lo cantò in molte occasioni. Esso fu inoltre una sua peculiarità, perché non solo il motivo non compare in antologie d'epoche precedenti, come per esempio il *Wenxuan* 文選 (Scelta letteraria, 526-528 ca.), ma non risulta nemmeno trattato dalla maggior parte dei poeti Tang, da Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770) a Li Bai 李白 (701-762), sino a Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779-831), grande amico di Bai Juyi (Morimoto 2001, 100). Occorre inoltre sottolineare che per Bai Juyi il rimpianto per la primavera che passa non è quasi mai soltanto un sentimento di carattere estetico, ma si associa spessissimo al dolore per la perdita del 'fiore' della vita umana, ossia della propria gioventù.[23] Da qui il dispiacere profondo (*chouchang*, sino-giapp., *chūchō* 惆悵) che la fine del terzo mese provoca nel poeta. Si tratta un motivo ricorrente in molte sue composizioni, e non di rado la connessione tra l'ultimo giorno di primavera e l'ineluttabile arrivo della vecchiaia viene in esse posta esplicitamente, come nel seguente «Rimpianto per la fine della primavera» (惜春, *Baishi wenji* X,487):

三月三十日 春歸日復暮 惆悵問春風 明朝應不住 送春曲江上 眷眷東西顧 但見撲水花 粉粉不知數 人生似行客 両足無停歩 日日進前程 前程幾多路 兵刃與水火 盡可違之去 唯有老到來 人閒無避處 感時良爲已 獨倚池南樹 今日送春心 心如別親故. (Okamura 2007, 594-5)

Trentesimo giorno del terzo mese:
la primavera se ne va e anche il giorno tramonta.
Afflitto nel profondo chiedo al vento primaverile:
«domani mattina tu non sarai più qui?».
In riva al laghetto di Qujiang,[24] do l'addio alla primavera,
mi guardo attorno pieno di rimpianto.
Non vedo che acque ricoperte di fiori,
innumerevoli petali in vorticosa caduta.
La vita umana somiglia al cammino di un viandante,
non c'è attimo in cui i passi si fermino.
I giorni proseguono avanzando:
quant'è lunga la strada che resta?
Le sciagure recate dall'armi, dall'acqua e dal fuoco

23 Concordano su questo punto Hiraoka (1998, 495-501); Morimoto (2001, 100-1); Katagiri (1987, 21-4).

24 Bacino artificiale situato all'estremità sud-orientale di Chang'an. Nei dintorni si trovavano vari parchi e il monastero di Cien, tutti famosi per i loro fiori.

si possono tutte evitare.
Solo l'arrivo della vecchiaia
non dà via di scampo agli umani.
Scosso dal passare del tempo capisco che davvero anche per me è la fine:
mi appoggio ad un albero sulla sponda meridionale del lago.
Il sentimento con cui oggi do l'addio alla primavera
è il sentimento di chi si separa da un parente stretto o un amico fraterno. [Corsivo aggiunto]

Ora, se il motivo della fine della primavera restò in Cina una peculiarità di Bai Juyi, l'immediata fortuna del poeta in Giappone fece invece sì che il soggetto ricevesse presto non solo l'attenzione dei poeti di *kanshi* 漢詩, a partire da Shimada Tadaomi 島田忠臣 (828-892) e Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845-903), ma venisse recepito anche da poeti di *waka* sin dall'età dei *rokkasen* 六歌仙, come testimonia il già citato *Nuretsutsu zo* di Narihira, che è la penultima poesia (II,133) dei libri primaverili del *Kokinshū*. Dopo Narihira, l'«ultimo giorno del terzo mese» (*yaoyoi no tsugomori*) si sarebbe consolidato come soggetto poetico con i compilatori del *Kokinshū*, in particolare Tsurayuki (m. 945 ca.) e Mitsune (?-?), che dominano con *waka* a esso dedicati l'ultima parte delle poesie primaverili del *Gosenshū*.[25] Tuttavia mentre i poeti di *kanshi* recepirono e ripresero anche il vero tema delle poesie di addio alla primavera di Bai Juyi, ossia il dispiacere per la perdita della giovinezza, i poeti di *waka*, almeno nel primo periodo, mutuarono da lui solo il motivo del rimpianto per il passare della stagione più bella, tralasciando invece ogni accenno all'avanzare della vecchiaia (Morimoto 2001, 101-5). In effetti nel *Kokinshū Nuretsutsu zo* esprime solo un elegante commiato alla primavera, impreziosito dal riferimento a uno dei poeti cinesi più popolari del momento.

Ora, se l'assenza di valenze simboliche sembra aver caratterizzato lo svolgimento del soggetto in Narihira, diverso è il caso dell'*Ise monogatari*, dove l'autore mostra di avere chiara consapevolezza del significato profondo degli addii alla primavera di Bai Juyi. Attraverso i ripetuti riferimenti alla vecchiaia presenti nella seconda parte del testo, il già citato *waka* di fine terzo mese (*Oshimedomo*, sez. 91) pare infatti avere assorbito anche il tema del rimpianto per la gioventù che passa, tanto caro al poeta cinese. Quanto a *Nuretsutsu zo*, nela sez. 80 l'autore dell'*Ise* sembra persino sopravanzare il modello, ampliando i significati simbolici già attribuiti alla fine della primavera da Bai Juyi. Ricontestualizzati nello scenario di «una casa in decadenza», i versi di fine primavera composti da Narihira si trasforme-

25 Più o meno da *Gosenshū* III,137 in poi (Katagiri 1990, 45-7).

rebbero infatti, secondo alcuni, in un rimando a tempi migliori, adattando così il paradigma di Bai Juyi al rimpianto per un irripetibile «buon tempo antico» (Katagiri, Tanaka 2016, 143). Tale prospettiva ispirata al poeta cinese, scriveva Katagiri in un articolo dei tardi anni Ottanta, si estenderebbe un po' a tutto il «secondo *Ise*», che diventerebbe così memoria e glorificazione di un mondo ormai tramontato, fissando l'essenza del testo nel rimpianto del vecchio narratore (e autore) per la bellezza di tutto ciò che passa (Katagiri 1987, 27).

4 Il cantore anziano e la celebrazione equivoca: i risvolti politici delle poesie del vecchio

Allo stato dell'arte le tesi di Katagiri possono considerarsi forse la spiegazione più coerente della figura dello *okina* nell'*Ise* e, in associazione con il motivo dello *yayoi no tsugomori*, del ruolo che essa gioca nella rappresentazione di un'epoca ormai tramontata. Esse illustrano infatti in forma integrata i diversi modi in cui lo *okina* si lega alla temporalità del testo, marcando, da un lato, l'avanzare negli anni di 'Narihira' all'interno del racconto, e, dall'altro, rappresentando simbolicamente, attraverso l'enfasi posta sull'opposizione vecchiaia/gioventù, presente/passato, l'insanabile frattura tra il declino del mondo attuale, in cui si colloca l'anonimo autore della seconda fase, e la mitica età del fiore che ebbe per protagonista il personaggio storico Narihira. Tuttavia, se la superba analisi di Katagiri rappresenta un contributo imprescindibile per qualsiasi studio dedicato all'argomento '*okina*' nell'*Ise*, occorre sottolineare che essa non rende conto di alcuni importanti aspetti legati a questa figura. Lo studioso ha infatti volutamente scelto di minimizzarli, o di trattarli solo in chiave nostalgica, al fine di supportare la propria lettura dell'*Ise* come racconto di un idealizzato 'tempo che fu'. L'omissione più evidente riguarda l'analisi del contesto storico-politico, cui rimandano tutti i *dan* con nomi veri, e, più che mai, quelli in cui compare lo *okina*. Lo *okina* entra infatti in scena inaugurando un gruppo di *dan* (76-97, e, più estesamente 76-101) chiaramente legati agli sviluppi storici che segnarono l'ascesa al potere di Fujiwara no Yoshifusa 藤原良房 (804-872). Nell'*Ise* le sezioni in questione non sono sequenziate cronologicamente, ma, se le rimettiamo in ordine, possiamo leggervi in filigrana una serie di eventi cruciali per la sua affermazione politica e quella del suo successore, Mototsune 基経 (836-891). In sintesi esse rimandano ai seguenti fatti, accaduti tra l'850 e l'884:

- la presunta lotta per la successione imperiale tra il primogenito e favorito di Montoku 文徳 (827-858; r. 850-858), principe Koretaka, e il quartogenito principe Korehito 惟仁, futuro imperatore Seiwa 清和 (850-880; r. 858-886), nato dalla figlia di

Yoshifusa, Akirakeiko 明子, e nominato erede al trono ancora in fasce, nell'850[26] (sezz. 82-83).

- L'ascesa politica del fratello minore di Yoshifusa, Fujiwara no Yoshimi 藤原良相 (o Yoshisuke, 813-867), alla Corte di Seiwa, e il successivo irreversibile declino della sua famiglia a seguito dell'«incidente del Portale Ōten» (*Ōtenmon no hen* 応天門の変, 866)[27] (sezz. 77-8).
- La riconferma di Yoshifusa alla carica di *sesshō* nell'866, voluta dal giovane imperatore, ormai maggiorenne, a causa della propria incapacità di gestire la lotta tra le fazioni politiche coinvolte nell'Incidente Ōtenmon. La conseguente introduzione a Corte (866) della nipote di Yoshifusa, Fujiwara no Takaiko 藤原高子 (842-910), divenuta poi madre dell'erede al trono, il principe Sadaakira 貞明 (futuro imperatore Yōzei 陽成, 868-949; r. 876-884)[28] (sez. 76).
- Il consolidamento del potere di Yoshifusa (sez. 98).
- La carriera politica del fratellastro di Narihira, Ariwara no Yukihira 在原行平 (818-893), fiancheggiatore di Yoshifusa e del suo successore, il figlio adottivo Mototsune, durante gli anni in cui Takaiko fu conosciuta come «Dama dell'Augusta Camera, Madre del Principe Ereditario» (869-876).[29] Ricompensato con la carica di Secondo Consigliere nell'870, Yukihira poté introdurre la propria figlia nell'harem di Seiwa, diventando nonno del principe Sadakazu 貞数 nell'875 (sez. 79).
- L'ascesa politica di Mototsune (sez. 97).
- Il contrasto tra il carismatico figlio dell'imperatore Saga 嵯峨 (786-842; r. 809-823), Minamoto no Tōru (divenuto Ministro della sinistra nell'872), e Mototsune (*kanpaku* 関白, Cancelliere, e

26 Nonostante, stando a alcune fonti storiche, Montoku fosse propenso a nominare erede al trono Koretaka, su pressione di Yoshifusa venne prescelto Korehito, designato erede al trono a soli nove mesi nell'850. Grazie a ciò Yoshifusa divenne Ministro degli affari supremi (*dajōdaijin* 太政大臣) nell'857 e reggente (*sesshō* 摂政) nell'858, anno dell'intronizzazione di Seiwa.

27 L'incidente vide l'esautorazione politica del braccio destro di Yoshimi, Tomo no Yoshio 伴善男 (809-868), accusato al posto del probabile autore del misfatto, Minamoto no Makoto 源信 (810-868), di aver appiccato il fuoco alla porta sud (Ōtenmon) del Palazzo imperiale. Per una analisi dettagliata dei personaggi coinvolti nell'Incidente Ōtenmon e dei mutamenti che esso comportò nell'assetto politico di quegli anni, rimando a Matsuda 2002, 106-19. Cf. anche Morita 2006, 219-20 e McCullough 1980, 338.

28 La nomina di Sadaakira a erede al trono segnò la concomitante ascesa politica del fratello di Takaiko e figlio adottivo di Yoshifusa, Mototsune, nominato Secondo Consigliere (*chūnagon* 中納言) nell'866 e, nell'872, Ministro della destra (*udaijin* 右大臣) e *sesshō* di Yōzei.

29 Sui legami tra Yukihira e Yoshifusa e i benefici di carriera che ne derivarono per lui e Narihira si veda in particolare Amagai 1991, 128-36.

dajōdaijin, Ministro degli affari supremi, dall'880) per la nomina del successore del deposto imperatore Yōzei (884)[30] (sez. 81).

Dietro gli eventi narrati nel gruppo dei *dan* del vecchio si dispiegano i destini di personaggi e casate implicati nei rivolgimenti politici che portarono all'affermazione della linea di discendenza di Yoshifusa e, con essa, di un nuovo sistema di potere (la reggenza) basato sulle alleanze matrimoniali con il trono. Come è noto, l'ascesa di Yoshifusa e del suo erede designato (il figlio adottivo Mototsune) avrebbero determinato nel giro di una generazione o poco più il declino di casate illustri, a cominciare da alcuni membri dello stesso clan dei Fujiwara, quali ad esempio i discendenti del fratello di Yoshifusa, il potente Ministro della destra Yoshimi. Tale evoluzione storica era ben nota ai lettori dell'*Ise*, i quali si trovarono ad accostare la seconda redazione dell'opera, o, forse, la sua versione corrente in 125 *dan*, circa un'ottantina di anni dopo i fatti in essa raccontati. Il pubblico insomma non solo conosceva i risvolti storico-politici dei singoli episodi, ma era anche informato sugli sviluppi che, pur tra alterne vicende, avrebbero visto il successivo consolidarsi del potere dei Fujiwara a scapito di tutti gli altri clan, comprese famiglie molto influenti ai tempi di Narihira, quali la casata di Minamoto Tōru, e gli stessi Ariwara, che nella figura di Yukihira arrivarono a vantare la presenza in famiglia di un Secondo Consigliere (Fraccaro 2016, 29). Ora, nelle pagine che seguono cercherò di mostrare come la duplice prospettiva passato/presente di cui si fa portatore lo *okina* sia improntata non solo all'esaltazione di un mitico passato, ma volga nel contempo uno sguardo critico al presente, rendendo percepibile al pubblico come le fortune di una famiglia (la linea di Yoshifusa) poterono realizzarsi solo al prezzo del declino di tutte le altre casate e personaggi menzionati nell'opera. Evidenzierò come tale punto di vista trovi modo di esprimersi attraverso un'altra peculiarità del vecchio, posta in risalto da Kamio Nobuko (2003a, 102-6): lo *okina* esibisce infatti in più occasioni non solo la fisionomia di figura propiziatoria e omaggiante, bensì i tratti negativi di un anziano un po' svanito e indiscreto. Da questa duplicità di tratti (venerabili e beneauguranti ma anche senili e disavveduti) scaturiscono formulazioni sempre equivoche: auguri, ossequi, saluti, cioè, che hanno la pericolosa tendenza a trasformarsi in gaffe, in discorsi fuori luogo, vuoi perché eccessivi e esagerati, vuoi perché

30 Il vincitore sarebbe stato ancora una volta Mototsune, il quale, nonostante Tōru avesse proposto addirittura sé stesso come prossimo sovrano, impose l'anziano principe Tokiyasu 時康 (futuro imperatore Kōkō 光孝, 830-887; r. 884-887). L'episodio dell'autocandidatura al trono di Tōru è ricordato nello *Ōkagami*, biografia di Mototsune: «Se cercate un discendente imperiale diretto, c'è qui Tōru!» (*Chikaki kōin o tazuneba, Tōrura mo haberu wa* 近き皇胤をたづねば、融らもはべるは; Tachibana, Katō 1996, 70; in inglese, McCullough 1980, 93-4).

Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie orientale
57, 2021, 533-574
e-ISSN 2385-3042

inavvertitamente portatori di messaggi infausti o patetici. Addossabile in prima istanza alla sua tarda età, la negatività degli omaggi dello *okina* è implicata nella possibilità concessa ai lettori di rivisitare a posteriori ogni suo discorso ricontestualizzandolo in una più ampia prospettiva storica, ma non solo: l'autore si premura di rendere percepibili i risvolti infelici delle sue composizioni anche mediante un espediente utilizzato più volte in concomitanza con episodi che vedono protagonista il vecchio. Tipico di questi *dan* è infatti il loro presentarsi in abbinamento con le sezioni adiacenti, dando luogo a microsequenze narrative in cui gli episodi seguenti alle esibizioni dello *okina* mostrano velatamente fatti che ne smentiscono i pronostici o ne scoprono le vere implicazioni. Infine, su uno sfondo storico che non resta confinato agli anni Sessanta-Settanta del IX secolo, ma si proietta implicitamente oltre la metà di quello successivo, l'uso simbolico di motivi stagionali da parte dello *okina* si complica, intrecciandosi con la rappresentazione degli sviluppi delineati poc'anzi: in sostanza, motivi come la fine del terzo mese vengono usati anche al fine di marcare alcuni cruciali passaggi di potere, sino al definitivo assestarsi del «tempo» (e della gloria) di Yoshifusa e Mototsune.

Per comprendere meglio tali aspetti e il modo in cui l'autore insinua per questi tramiti un punto di vista avverso all'assetto politico vigente esaminerò ora in dettaglio alcune coppie di sezioni relazionate alla figura dello *okina*.

5 Stagioni astronomiche e stagioni politiche nei canti del vecchio: il commiato di primavera della sezione 77

> Un tempo, vi era un imperatore noto come il sovrano di Tamura. Tra le sue consorti ve ne era una chiamata Takakiko e quando ella scomparve si tenne una cerimonia funebre presso il monastero di Anjō. La gente recò in suo onore delle offerte: tutte insieme erano qualcosa come un migliaio. Poiché erano appese in massa a dei rami piantati davanti alla sala del tempio, ecco, pareva proprio che i monti si fossero spostati fin lì. Era presente un nobile chiamato Fujiwara no Tsuneyuki, Comandante in capo della Sezione di Destra della Guardia imperiale. Allorché l'esposizione dei sūtra fu terminata, egli chiamò al suo cospetto dei poeti e *ordinò loro di presentare delle poesie che prendessero a soggetto l'odierna cerimonia e fossero di tenore primaverile*. Scambiando la massa di offerte per montagne, il vecchio che era direttore della Sezione destra delle scuderie imperiali, compose:
>
> 山のみな
> 移りて今日に

Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie orientale
57, 2021, 533-574
e-ISSN 2385-3042

あふことは
春の別れを
とふとなるべし[31]

Che i monti
spostandosi assistano
all'odierna onoranza
dev'essere perché si condolgono
per l'addio di questa primavera.

Visti oggi, non erano poi dei versi riusciti. All'epoca – chissà, saranno stati forse superiori agli altri – la gente ne rimase colpita. (Fukui 1994, 179; corsivi aggiunti)

I protagonisti di questa sezione sono già stati nominati in precedenza: Takakiko 多賀幾子 (m. 858), introdotta alla Corte di Montoku (l'imperatore di Tamura, dal luogo dove si trovava la sua tomba) nell'850, era figlia di Fujiwara no Yoshimi e sorella di Tsuneyuki 常行 (836-875). Morì il quattordicesimo giorno dell'undicesimo mese dell'858 e la cerimonia funebre qui menzionata potrebbe essersi tenuta 49 giorni dopo la sua dipartita,[32] il che permetterebbe almeno di collocare l'evento in primavera, ma all'inizio, non alla fine, come recitano i versi del vecchio. Oltre a questa differenza rispetto alle possibili date della commemorazione storica, sono state rilevate anche altre discrepanze, relative alle cariche rivestite dai protagonisti. In effetti, Narihira e Tsuneyuki sarebbero diventati Direttore delle scuderie imperiali e Comandante in capo della Guardia imperiale solo molti anni dopo la morte di Takakiko, rispettivamente, nell'865 e 866. Ciò non intacca tuttavia il fondamento storico dell'episodio, ossia il fatto che le cerimonie a commemorazione di Takakiko dovettero essere un evento pubblico di grande rilievo, in cui, come suggerisce la descrizione dell'*Ise*, poté essere misurata la crescente influenza politica di Yoshimi e della sua famiglia. Benché il fratello Yoshifusa fosse stato nominato reggente di Seiwa proprio nell'858, infatti, Yoshimi avrebbe successivamente guadagnato terreno alla Corte di Seiwa anche grazie al sostegno della sorella, la Grande Imperatrice Madre (*taikōtaigō* 太皇太后) Fujiwara no Nobuko 順子 (Junshi, 809-871), già sposa di Ninmyō e madre di Montoku.[33] Nell'864 Yoshimi introdusse

31 *Yama no mina | utsurite kyō ni | au koto wa | haru no wakare o | tou to narubeshi.*

32 Si tratterebbe della cerimonia buddhista del quarantanovesimo giorno (*nananuka no miwaza* 七七日みわざ), menzionata all'inizio del *dan* successivo. Tenuta al termine di una serie di riti cadenzati ogni sette giorni, doveva aiutare lo spirito del defunto a rinascere nel Paradiso di Amida.

33 Sull'influenza di Nobuko alla corte di Seiwa (suo nipote) e sulla sua vicinanza a Yoshimi, si veda Matsuda 2002, 129-31.

Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie orientale
57, 2021, 533-574
e-ISSN 2385-3042

sua figlia Tamiko 多美子nell'harem del giovane imperatore, garantendo nel contempo a suo figlio Tsuneyuki avanzamenti di carriera ancor più rapidi di quelli riservati a Mototsune. Avrebbe potuto presto soppiantare Yoshifusa al potere, ma, come si è già accennato, venne coinvolto nell'Incidente Ōtenmon, e ciò segnò la fine delle speranze di ascesa per lui e per il figlio (Matsuda 2002, 116-19).[34] Pur con le imprecisioni (volute o inconsapevoli che fossero) rilevate sopra, la sezione 77 mette dunque bene in rilievo l'importanza politica di Tsuneyuki, riflessa nell'enorme quantità delle offerte tributate alla sorella Takakiko e nella sua imposizione ai verseggiatori (*uta yomu hitobito* 歌よむ人々) presenti di comporre poesie su soggetto assegnato (un atto riservato a nobili di altissimo rango). L'altro elemento che permette di valutare la portata dell'evento è la stessa poesia del vecchio, il quale, anziano com'è, scambia le offerte ammassate davanti al tempio per una montagna franata sino a lì, e ne usa l'immagine come possibile rimando alla scena della morte del Buddha storico[35] descritta nel *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* (Sūtra del Nirvana, sino-giapp., *Nehangyō* 涅槃経), nel quale si dice che al momento del trapasso gli oceani e le montagne tremarono (si spostarono, nell'interpretazione del vecchio). Data la sproporzione tra i due termini di paragone (il Buddha e Takakiko), lo *okina* sta forse esagerando, ma nel complesso se la cava bene. Escogita infatti un modo per combinare i due motivi di cui si compone il soggetto impartito da Tsuneyuki, giocando sui possibili significati del sintagma *haru no wakare* 春の別れ (distacco dalla primavera). Come spiega Yamamoto Tokurō (2017a, 244-7), nella tradizione poetica giapponese esso rimanda di norma all'ultimo giorno del terzo mese (*yayoi no tsugomori*), e quindi alla fine (distacco) della primavera, ma l'espressione evoca nel contempo anche il composto cinese *chunbie* 春別 (sino-giapp., *shunbetsu*), che nella poesia continentale indica invece il «separarsi [da qualcuno] a primavera». Trasformando l'espressione *haru no wakare* in una sorta di *kakekotoba* 掛詞 (Yamamoto 2017a, 253), lo *okina* ha avuto un'idea ingegnosa, perfettamente conforme ai dettami di Tsuneyuki, il quale ha appunto ordinato di comporre *waka* di tenore primaverile e aventi per soggetto la cerimonia funebre. Perché allora il narratore esprime un giudizio negativo nei confronti di *Yama no mina*? Katagiri (2013, 574) risponde, come sempre fa nel caso di simili commenti, interpretando il commento come un'affettazione di modestia: per lo studioso il narratore è infatti lo stesso vecchio della sezione 40, il quale, nell'atto di riportare le proprie passate imprese poetiche si sminuisce educata-

34 Dettagli sulle fazioni coinvolte nell'Incidente Ōtenmon (che vide Nobuko, Yoshimi e Tomo no Yoshio tra loro alleati) in vengono forniti in sempre Matsuda 2002, 114 e 131-4.

35 Avvenuta il quindicesimo giorno del secondo mese, ossia in primavera (Fukui 1994, 179 nota 21).

mente davanti ai lettori. Secondo Yamamoto (2017a, 252-3), di contro, il motivo delle critiche risiederebbe nell'indebita sovrapposizione, i.e. confusione, tra i due motivi poetici ben distinti (*haru no wakare* vs. *shunbetsu*), e il vecchio verrebbe così censurato per ragioni squisitamente letterarie. Tuttavia il rilievo critico mosso dal narratore potrebbe avere anche altre motivazioni. Il significato di *haru no wakare* si può infatti sdoppiare in più modi, rimandando non solo alla dipartita di Takakiko, ma prefigurando anche, sulla base degli usi simbolici del motivo mutuati da Bai Juyi, l'imminente declino delle fortune della casata. Mentre paragona iperbolicamente le onoranze funebri al cordoglio per la morte del Buddha storico, il vecchio sta di fatto preannunciando – sullo sfondo di sviluppi storici noti al lettore – la fine di un'altra primavera, ossia la fine della prosperità della linea di Yoshimi, destinata a una rapida decadenza pochi anni dopo (Matsuda 2002, 155; Kamio 2003a, 101). «Visti oggi», ossia considerati col senno di poi, i versi del vecchio assumono, nonostante la loro bravura, imprevisti connotati negativi, trasformandosi in una «predizione infausta» (Kamio 2003a, 101). È su questo aspetto che il commento conclusivo del narratore, pur senza parere, attira l'attenzione, e, come si vede, la prospettiva finale su cui il lettore è costretto a soffermarsi e meditare non è tanto il passato, quanto l'*oggi*, il presente dal quale il funerale di Takakiko appare come l'ultimo evento legato al trono nella breve fioritura politica della linea di Yoshimi, ora del tutto oscurata dalla discendenza di Yoshifusa. Che la commemorazione poetica del vecchio sia suo malgrado di cattivo auspicio ci viene poi suggerito dalla sezione successiva (78), che, alla maniera tipica dei *dan* politici, ci mostra implicitamente il futuro destino di Tsuneyuki. In essa il nobile si dirige «a Yamashina per visitare un certo principe monaco» (trad. Maurizi 2018, 106). Sull'identità del Principe sono state formulate varie ipotesi, ma essa rimane incerta. Dall'episodio sappiamo solo che è uomo raffinato, perché Tsuneyuki vuol vedere gli eleganti giochi d'acqua del suo giardino e fargli dono d'una preziosa pietra regalata al padre in occasione della visita dell'imperatore alla propria residenza. Ancora una volta Katagiri (2013, 586) addita nella dimensione del *miyabi*, ovvero negli squisiti sentimenti espressi da Tsuneyuki, il fulcro dell'episodio, ma è evidente che esso presenta anche risvolti di carattere politico.[36] Il Principe, di chiunque si tratti, è infatti un membro della famiglia imperiale ormai tagliato fuori dalla linea di successione, e il suo palazzo è ai margini della ca-

36 Trattati per la verità, ma in modo secondario, anche da Katagiri (2013, 583-4), che riassume perlomeno lo sfondo storico della sezione e le vicende relative alla discendenza di Fujiwara no Yoshimi.

pitale, ovvero lontano dal centro del potere:[37] il fatto che Tsuneyuki si rechi a visitarlo e gli offra i suoi servigi, sia pure per una sola notte, suggerisce che anche per lui ogni associazione diretta con il trono è ormai preclusa, così come preannunciato obliquamente nell'addio alla primavera del vecchio.

6 Una prosperità illusoria: le sezioni 79-80

Ho analizzato in dettaglio la sezione 77 perché essa ci fornisce una chiave interpretativa dello *okina* diversa rispetto a quella proposta da Katagiri. Come emerge da questa e dalle altre sezioni che esamineremo, lo *okina* non è infatti soltanto il cantore di momenti a loro modo splendidi, né, tanto meno, il *laudator temporis acti* su cui tanto insiste lo studioso. Piuttosto, riunendo in sé i duplici tratti di figura augurale e senile, talora buffonesca, egli formula spesso encomi dalle implicazioni infelici, inopportune o semplicemente patetiche, soprattutto qualora le glorie da lui esaltate o auspicate vengano considerate alla luce dei successivi rivolgimenti politici. È il caso, ben noto, della sezione 79, in cui il vecchio celebra con i seguenti versi la nascita del Principe Sadakazu, nipote del fratellastro Yukihira:

わが門に
千ひろあるかげを
植ゑつれば
夏冬たれか
かくれざるべき[38]
(Fukui 1994, 181)

Avendo piantato
presso il portale della nostra dimora
un'imponente ombra
chi mai, in estate come in inverno
non vi si riparerà?
(trad. Maurizi 2018, 108)

37 Sul significato politico degli episodi ambientati in località fuori dalla capitale (contesti in cui si muovono in genere solo i personaggi perdenti) e con particolare riguardo alla sezione 78, si veda Kamio 2003c, 187-91.

38 *Waga kado ni | chihiro aru kage o | uetsureba | natsu fuyu tare ka | kakurezarubeki*. Come è noto (cf. Maurizi 2018, 166 nota 265), si ritiene che *kage* かげ (ombra) sia un errore per *take* たけ [竹] (bambù), ragione per cui il testo viene emendato con questo termine in molte edizioni dell'*Ise*. Yamamoto (2017b, 258-9) ha tuttavia argomentato a favore di *kage*, leggendovi una citazione da una poesia di Bai Juyi, in cui l'ombra di un folto bambù proiettata sullo stagno di casa sua viene definita «profondissima». *Kage* si adatterebbe inoltre meglio al senso generale della poesia, combinando i due significati di 'ombra' 影 e 'riparo'/'protezione' 蔭.

Lo *okina* formula qui mirabolanti auspici di gloria che appaiono subito esageratamente enfatici. Per quanto alta, la posizione a Corte di Yukihira non era certo tale da poter sopravanzare l'influenza dei Fujiwara – da cui del resto la sua carriera dipendeva –, e quindi il vecchio, spinto forse dall'entusiasmo e esibendo una mancanza di discrezione tipicamente senile (Kamio 2003a, 104), sta di fatto sproloquiando. I lettori, dal canto loro, sapevano bene che le fortune degli Ariwara si sarebbero presto appannate, ma è l'*Ise* stesso ad adombrare questi sviluppi nella già citata sezione successiva (80), dove *Nuretsutsu zo*, originariamente un gesto di eleganza basato sul riferimento a Bai Juyi, viene riscritto sullo sfondo di una «casa in decadenza» evocando il futuro declino degli Ariwara. La presenza di un onorifico (*tatematsuru* 奉る, 'offrire umilmente') legato al motivo del glicine ha indotto vari studiosi a leggere questi versi come una richiesta di avanzamento di carriera ai Fujiwara.[39] Anche senza accettare tale ipotesi,[40] risulta comunque evidente che, dopo l'esaltazione del clan cantata nella sezione 79, il rimaneggiamento del *kotobagaki* del *Kokinshū* fa slittare *Nuretsutsu zo* da una poesia di tenore occasionale al simbolico addio alle speranze di ascesa degli Ariwara, cantate dallo *okina* appena prima. Di contro all'originale, insomma, *Nuretsutsu zo* configura nell'*Ise* non già un vero «addio alla primavera» reso mediante riferimenti colti, bensì un'allusione al prossimo tramonto della casata, avvenuto nel giro di appena una-due generazioni rispetto agli eventi narrati. Come accade per la sezione 78 in relazione alla 77, l'affiancamento a *Waga kado ni* di *Nuretsutsu zo* nel *dan* successivo rivisita l'augurio trionfale del vecchio mostrandolo per quello che è: il vaniloquio di un anziano un po' bacucco, una patetica esibizione su cui riverbera lo sguardo ironico dell'autore.

7 Una breve stagione di gloria: le sezioni 82-83

Spesso associata a messaggi velatamente anti-Fujiwara, l'ambiguità degli enunciati del vecchio contrassegna anche la sequenza dei *dan* 81-83, che mettono in scena due personaggi di sangue imperiale, i già citati Minamoto no Tōru, figlio di Saga, e il principe Koretaka, primogenito di Montoku e mancato erede al trono. Si tratta di sezioni da sempre al centro delle letture in chiave politica dell'*Ise* (Watanabe 1976, 203-26; Marra 1991). Tralascerò qui, per ragioni di spazio, la

39 Per questa ipotesi si veda tra gli altri il commento di Watanabe 1976, 95 e, con qualche dubbio, Ishida 1979, 75. In traduzione cf. Marra 1985, 103 nota 1; Maurizi 2018, 166 nota 267.

40 È questo il caso di Nihei Michiaki (2008, 73-4), da cui sono in parte riprese le successive osservazioni.

Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie orientale
57, 2021, 533-574
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sezione 81, che richiederebbe un esame troppo lungo. Mi soffermerò invece brevemente sulla sezione 82 e sull'inizio della sezione 83.

Della sezione 82 sono state date, com'è noto, svariate letture politiche in chiave anti-Fujiwara.[41] Qui ricorderò solo che quanto viene in essa descritto (la caccia, così come la composizione di poesie da parte di tutti gli uomini del seguito) sembra rimandare alla cerchia di Saga – le tenute di caccia imperiali a Minase 水無瀬 e Katano 交野 erano state in passato teatro di escursioni venatorie da lui guidate (Katagiri 2013, 635-6) –, evocando l'ideale del «governo attraverso le lettere» (*monjō keikoku* 文章経国) e del «piacere condiviso tra sovrano e sudditi» (*kunshin waraku* 君臣和楽) sostenuto sotto il suo regno. Quale discendente di Saga, il principe viene quindi rappresentato come detentore di prerogative regali, rinviando implicitamente alla realtà storica (o presunta tale), che l'avrebbe visto competere per la successione a Montoku.[42] È stato tuttavia osservato che, a dispetto dello splendore delle scene, la sezione può essere letta come una prefigurazione del fallimento delle speranze imperiali del Principe. Egli si dedica infatti alla caccia, pratica in cui si manifesta il dominio del sovrano sul territorio, ma «senza zelo» (*nengoro ni mo sede* ねむごろにもせで); il suo gruppo compone *waka* e non *kanshi*, come si converrebbe a dei conviti sponsorizzati da un sovrano; infine il principe non recita di suo alcuna poesia, ma viene sostituito dallo zio materno, Ki no Aritsune: un silenzio leggibile ancora una volta come un mancato esercizio del potere (Nemoto 2010, 131-4). Pur riallacciandosi alle glorie di Saga, dunque, Koretaka si presenta come un monarca dimidiato, ovvero come un personaggio destinato a vedere ben presto tramontare le proprie attese circa una concreta investitura al trono. Questo è ciò che suggerisce del resto lo scambio di poesie tra Narihira e Ki no Aritsune,[43] posto a conclusione dell'episodio, dove il motivo centrale – il precoce calare della luna metaforicamente associato al prematuro ritiro del Principe nelle proprie stanze – allude simbolicamente all'ormai prossimo eclissamento politico del personaggio (Kamio 2003b, 141-2). Alla luce di tutto ciò, la sezione 82 non è circoscrivibile alla sola descrizione luminosa di un glorioso passato: essa si offre invece come una rappresentazione in chiaroscuro del destino di Koretaka, di cui viene adombrata la futura emarginazione dal centro del potere. Nella successiva sezione 83, il Principe prenderà improvvisamente la tonsura, ritirandosi a vivere a Ono: un gesto inaspettato, da sempre interpretato come reazio-

41 Cf. tra gli altri Kamio 2003b, 140-2, 182-4; Nemoto 2010, 133-9; Marra 1991, 49-50; Mostow, Tyler 2010, 177-8.

42 Per una sintesi degli eventi storici cf. Mostow, Tyler 2010, 177-8.

43 I versi attribuiti a Aritsune sono in realtà di Kamutsuke no Mineo 上野岑雄, *Gosenshū* XVII,1249 (Katagiri 1990, 377).

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ne alla nomina di Korehito quale erede al trono.[44] Ora, a raccordo tra le brillanti attività della sezione 82 e lo *shukke* 出家 narrato nella sezione 83, l'anonimo autore dell'*Ise* inserisce una scena di cui è protagonista ancora una volta lo *okina*, qui designato anche col titolo di Direttore delle scuderie imperiali. Dopo aver seguito il Principe in una delle sue usuali battute di caccia a Minase, il vecchio lo scorta nel rientro alla capitale sino alla sua residenza. Eseguito il suo compito, vorrebbe andarsene via subito, ma il Principe lo trattiene promettendo del saké e una ricompensa. Al che, «impaziente» (*kokoromotonagarite* 心もとながりて), il vecchio recita:

> 枕とて
> 草ひきむすぶ
> こともせじ
> 秋の夜とだに
> たのまれなくに[45]
> (Fukui 1994, 186)
>
> Non ho certo intenzione
> di strappare dell'erba
> per farne un guanciale.
> Diversamente dalle notti d'autunno
> questa troppo presto terminerà.
>
> Il terzo mese era al termine. Il Principe, quella notte, non si ritirò nelle proprie stanze e rimase sveglio sino all'alba. (trad. Maurizi 2018, 112)

In prima battuta, e assegnando a *kokoromotonagarite* il significato di 'impaziente',[46] lo *okina* confeziona una scusa elegante, dicendo: 'non mi fermerò qui, visto che una notte di tarda primavera è breve e non permette di conversare con agio quanto una lunga notte autun-

44 Cf. tra gli altri Maurizi 2018, 167 nota 284; Mostow, Tyler 2010, 182. Di fatto, come riportano i curatori di queste edizioni, Koretaka prese la tonsura a seguito di una malattia nell'872, ossia molti anni dopo la nomina Korehito.

45 *Makura tote* | *kusa hikimusubu* | *koto mo seji* | *aki no yo to dani* | *tanomarenaku ni*.

46 Sulla base di alcuni commentari antichi, Katagiri (2013, 645-6) interpreta *kokoromotonagarite* come 'preoccupato'. Nella sua lettura, lo *okina* vorrebbe quindi andar via, ma poi, impensierendosi per il Principe, non ha cuore di lasciarlo solo. In base a queste premesse, *Makura tote* potrebbe allora essere inteso così: «mi fermerò qui, restando sveglio insieme a Voi. Non si può contare di dormire nemmeno quando si tratti di una lunga notte d'autunno: tanto più, essendo questa una breve notte di primavera, la passerò conversando con Voi senza nemmeno coricarmi» (Katagiri 2013, 644 e 646; Katagiri, Tanaka 2016, 82 nota 6).

nale'.[47] Il vecchio insomma ha fretta di andarsene, forse ha sonno[48] e vorrebbe tornare presto a casa. Poi però, dal finale dell'episodio, capiamo che il Principe ha inteso diversamente il suo messaggio, e, prendendolo per il consenso a passare lì la nottata, lo ha trattenuto.[49] Per qualche ragione Koretaka sembra insomma aver letto nei versi dell'anziano 'Narihira' non l'intento di andarsene, bensì di aspettare l'arrivo del nuovo giorno con lui. Un indizio prezioso circa le ragioni di tale comportamento ci viene dato dalla puntigliosa notazione temporale in calce alla poesia: prima di dirci che il Principe non si è coricato, infatti, il narratore specifica: «si era alla fine del terzo mese» (*toki ha yayoi no tsugomori narikeri* 時は三月のつごもりなりけり) (Fukui 1994, 187). La scena si colloca insomma ancora una volta nell'ultimo giorno di primavera. Il risalto così dato al contesto temporale, permette di leggere *Makura tote* come un possibile rimando alla seguente poesia composta da Jia Dao 賈島 (779-843):[50]

> 三月晦日贈劉評事
> Inviata al giudice Liu l'ultimo giorno del terzo mese
>
> 三月正當三十日　風光別我苦吟身　共君今夜不須睡　未到曉鐘猶是春
> (Matsuura 1999, 738-9)
>
> Il terzo mese oggi giunge davvero a termine:
> nel travaglio poetico, da me si separano il vento e la luminosità
> di primavera.
> *Almeno stanotte la passerò insonne con te:*
> *Finché non giunge il tocco dell'alba, è pur sempre ancora primavera.* [Corsivo aggiunto]

Si tratta di una poesia sul tema del «travaglio poetico» (*kuyin* 苦吟), in cui lo sforzo creativo, l'infinito lavoro di lima necessario alla composizione, viene descritto come perdita di energie vitali e paragonato alla fine della primavera. Il tema del *kuyin* è frequente in Jia Dao, ma ciò che qui interessa è la presenza nei suoi versi di motivi analo-

47 Quasi tutte le moderne edizioni dell'*Ise* seguono questa interpretazione: cf. tra gli altri Fukui 1994, 186; Watanabe 1976, 99 nota 14; Ishida 1979, 230.

48 Secondo Kamio (2003a, 104), il vecchio sarebbe preda di uno *yoimadoi* 宵惑 (o *yūmadoi* 夕惑), una sonnolenza tipicamente senile che si manifesta a inizio sera.

49 Fukui (1994, 187) lo esplicita nella traduzione in giapponese moderno.

50 Questo possibile rimando intertestuale, già segnalato nei commentari antichi, è stato evidenziato da Ueno (1979, 74) e ripreso da Takeoka (1987, 1211); nel far proprio il riferimento, Kamio (2003a, 104, 113) ammette che non ci sono prove conclusive circa la diffusione di questi versi nella società Heian, anche se una citazione da Jia Dao nel *Tosa nikki* 土佐日記 (Diario di Tosa, 935; 17° giorno del primo mese) fa propendere per tale possibilità.

ghi agli addii alla primavera tipici di Bai Juyi, come ad esempio l'associazione tra la fine del terzo mese e il declino delle forze vitali. Altro elemento importante (e presente anche in Bai Juyi) è l'idea di assaporare questa stagione sino all'ultimo istante («finché non giunge il tocco dell'alba, è pur sempre ancora primavera»). Ecco allora spiegato il motivo del comportamento del Principe: ravvisandovi una sorta di allusione ai versi di Jia Dao, egli interpreta *Makura tote* come espressione non già della volontà di *non* restare lì per la notte, bensì di restare senza dormire affatto, godendo sino all'ultimo della stagione del fiore. Nella situazione specifica i versi marcano semplicemente un elegante modo di accomiatarsi dalla primavera. Se li leggiamo invece sullo sfondo del *dan* precedente e di quanto viene successivamente narrato all'interno della stessa sezione 83 (la monacazione del Principe), essi si colorano di significati politici. Come già per *Nuretsutsu zo* (sez. 80), nel celebrare l'ultimo giorno di primavera *Makura tote* segna anche simbolicamente il passaggio da un'epoca di splendore (le battute di caccia a Minase, le prerogative sovrane di Koretaka) al suo successivo oscurarsi, reso manifesto nella seconda parte della sezione, dove apprendiamo che il Principe ha inaspettatamente preso la tonsura, ritirandosi a Ono. Malaccorto come sempre, il vecchio si è impelagato in un esercizio verbale che, volendo dire una cosa, ha finito per esprimerne un'altra, di senso contrario: intendeva prendere presto congedo, e ha invece 'acconsentito' a trascorrere la notte in compagnia del principe, marcando con i suoi versi non il proprio commiato, bensì il definitivo addio alle speranze politiche di Koretaka. La maldestra scusa dell'anziano impaziente e «sonnolento» ha certo qualcosa di comico, e nella sua comicità risulta inoffensiva. Tra le righe, tuttavia, compare anche il vero messaggio, sostenuto dai versi di Jia Dao: un requiem colmo di rimpianto per l'imminente tramonto politico del Principe.

8 L'anomalo fiore d'uno splendore senza fine: le sezioni 97-98 e 101

Dai *dan* analizzati sin qui capiamo come nell'*Ise* lo *okina* non rifletta soltanto l'invecchiamento dell'eroe, né svolga il semplice ruolo di celebrare le fortune o i fasti di personaggi altolocati. Quand'è lui a comporre, i versi rivelano sempre a un secondo esame qualche significato riposto, spesso di natura infelice, trasformandosi in malaugurate celebrazioni di poteri illusori (sez. 79) o destinati presto a tramontare (sez. 77), presentandosi comunque come formulazioni che proiettano sulla situazione contingente il fantasma di altri tempi, a

volte futuri (sez. 83), a volte passati (sez. 76),[51] adombrando in negativo le sorti e i ruoli politici dei personaggi al centro della scena. Si può obiettare che sinora sono stati esaminati solo tre *dan*, e che almeno nella sezione 97 gli auspici formulati dallo *okina* non sembrano configurare nulla che vada oltre l'augurio di lunga vita rivolto a Fujiwara no Mototsune in occasione del suo quarantesimo compleanno. Esamineremo quindi la sezione in questione, e, tenendo presente il modo in cui le sezioni che coinvolgono lo *okina* vengono spesso abbinate a quella successiva per renderne leggibili le implicazioni, analizzeremo di seguito anche la sezione 98.

> C'era una volta un nobile conosciuto da tutti come il Gran Ministro di Horikawa. Nel giorno dei festeggiamenti tenuti nella residenza di Kujō per il suo quarantesimo compleanno, l'anziano Secondo Comandante della Guardia Imperiale lo omaggiò con i versi:
>
> 桜花
> 散りかひ曇れ
> 老いらくの
> 来むといふなる
> 道まがふがに[52]
> (Fukui 1994, 199)
>
> O petali di ciliegio!
> Che le nuvole prodotte
> dal vostro vorticoso turbinio
> occultino la strada
> da cui si dice arrivi la vecchiaia!
> (trad. Maurizi 2018, 123).

Questi versi compaiono già tra le poesie di Felicitazioni (*ga no uta* 賀歌) del *Kokinshū* (VII,349), preceduti da un *kotobagaki* che riporta le stesse circostanze di composizione narrate nell'*Ise*. Si tratta di un *waka* per la cerimonia – di origine continentale – delle «celebrazioni di lunga vita» (*sanga* 算賀, poi *ga no iwai* 賀の祝), che si soleva tenere sin dal periodo Nara al compimento del quarantesimo genetliaco dell'imperatore o di personaggi della famiglia imperiale, e che divenne poi comune anche tra i membri dell'alta aristocrazia.[53] Co-

51 Per una analisi di questa sezione e dei suoi significati anti-Fujiwara cf. Fraccaro 2016, 47-50.

52 *Sakurabana | chirikai kumore | oiraku no| komu to iu naru | michi magau ga ni*.

53 Per le origini, il modo in cui si svolgevano, e la funzione celebrativa e al tempo stesso magico-incantatoria rivestita dalla poesia nei *ga no iwai* rimando a Drott 2015, 288-92.

me spiega Drott (2015, 284), la vocalizzazione di preghiere/felicitazioni poetiche per il proprio signore durante i *ga no iwai* era un mezzo per invocare, attraverso il potere magico-incantatorio della parola poetica, un aiuto soprannaturale al prolungamento della sua esistenza, e, al tempo stesso, un modo di dimostrargli la propria lealtà. Così è per l'auspicio preso in esame, che viene tuttavia formulato in modo spericolatamente innovativo. *Sakurabana* porge infatti i suoi voti di longevità nel tipico stile di Narihira,[54] improntato all'originalità, al paradosso, all'effetto sorpresa: sono assenti i motivi augurali tipici di un *ga no uta*, come il bambù e il pino, i mille anni (*chiyo* 千代), mentre compaiono parole tabù quali *chiru* (cadere 散る), *kumoru* (annuvolarsi 曇る) e *oiraku* (l'invecchiare 老いらく, di solito riferito solo a se stessi), teatralmente rovesciate poi dal poeta in un augurio di lunga vita (Nakano 2011, 80).[55] A giudicare dalla stretta somiglianza tra le due introduzioni in prosa, l'autore dell'*Ise* sembrerebbe avere optato nella sezione 97 per una ripresa fedele del testo incluso nel *Kokinshū*, apportando un'unica variazione significativa, ossia la designazione di Narihira come «il vecchio che era Secondo Comandante della Guardia Imperiale» (*chūjō narikeru okina* 中将なりける). Dal momento che l'eroe invecchia e considerando che Narihira aveva all'epoca del compleanno di Mototsune 50 anni, l'appellativo di *okina* potrebbe spiegarsi come una semplice notazione anagrafica, enfatizzando al tempo stesso l'aspetto augurale dell'evento.[56] Tuttavia, come abbiamo visto, la presenza di questa figura sembrerebbe comportare sempre un qualche significato inappropriato o contrario a ciò che viene detto in superficie. Stando a Kamio Nobuko (2003a, 106-7), anche questo *dan* non fa eccezione: la menzione di Narihira come «il vecchio» si connetterebbe infatti al carattere scopertamente adulatorio di *Sakurabana*, che nell'invocare un turbinio di petali di ciliegio[57] capace di arrestare persino la vecchiaia, si configurereb-

54 Come osservano vari studiosi (per tutti si veda Katagiri 2013, 745-6), molte copie manoscritte del *Kokinshū* ascrivono *Sakurabana* a Ariwara no Yukihira: con ogni probabilità fu lui il vero autore di questi versi, anche se nell'edizione standard del *Kokinshū* essi vengono attribuiti a Narihira. Come rileva Katagiri (2013, 745-6), i due fratelli avevano stili compositivi assai simili, motivo che giustificherebbe comunque un'attribuzione allo stesso Narihira.

55 Watanabe (1976, 115) legge nella presenza dei termini sopraccitato un voluto malaugurio, seppur coperto dal finale beneaugurante.

56 *Sakurabana* potrebbe infatti ricondursi a una poesia facente parte del già menzionato gruppo di *waka* sulla vecchiaia del XVII libro del *Kokinshū*, e inclusa in una serie di tre *waka* (XVII,893-5) tramandati come composizioni di «tre vegliardi vissuti nei tempi antichi» (*mukashi arikeru mitari no okina* 昔ありける三人の翁). Si tratta dell'ultima poesia della serie (895): *Oiraku no | komu to shiriseba | kado sashite | nashi to kotaete | awazaramashi o* 老いらくの 来むと知りせば 門さして なしと答へて 逢わざらましを (Kojima, Arai 1989, 270): «Avessi saputo che veniva | a cercarmi la vecchiaia, | chiudendo la porta | e rispondendo 'non c'è', | avrei evitato di incontrarla!» (trad. Sagiyama 2000, 538).

57 Con il glicine, emblema dei Fujiwara.

e-ISSN 2385-3042

be come un omaggio a Mototsune eccessivo e sopra le righe. Insomma, chiamando «vecchio» il protagonista, l'autore sottintenderebbe che solo un 'Narihira' ormai svanito e dimentico del proprio passato al servizio di Koretaka, nonché delle proprie origini imperiali, poteva manifestare un servilismo così sfacciato verso i nuovi detentori del potere. È una spiegazione plausibile: come è noto, nell'ultima parte della sua vita Narihira, mise il proprio talento poetico al servizio dei Fujiwara (Fraccaro 2016, 29-33), ed è quindi possibile che, dopo aver descritto la sua attiva presenza al seguito di Koretaka, l'anonimo autore volesse in qualche modo segnalare il voltafaccia marcato da *Sakurabana*, trasformando Narihira in un vecchio ormai privo di discernimento. Proseguendo sulla scia di Kamio, tuttavia, si schiudono anche altre prospettive. Se leggiamo questo episodio in sequenza con quello successivo, emergono ulteriori significativi aspetti. La sezione 98 è infatti anch'essa di tenore augurale e mette in scena «un uomo alle dipendenze»[58] di un Gran Ministro degli Affari Supremi identificabile con Fujiwara no Yoshifusa. Intorno al nono mese l'uomo gli invia un ramo ornato con fiori di susino artificiali cui ha unito un fagiano e i seguenti versi:

わが頼む
君がためにと
折る花は
ときしもわかぬ
ものにぞありける[59]
(Fukui 1994, 199)

I fiori che ho colto
per il signore
a cui mi affido
sono tali
da non distinguere le stagioni.
(trad. Maurizi, 2018, 123)

Per capire appieno il significato della poesia, bisogna ricordare che siamo nel nono mese (fine autunno), mentre il dono combina un ramo di susino artificiale (inizio primavera) e un fagiano (la cui caccia si teneva in inverno).[60] Grazie al sistema ortografico dell'epoca, che non prevedeva segni diacritici (*dakuten* 濁点) per la differenziazione tra consonanti sorde e sonore, 'fagiano' (*kiji* きじ [雉]) è inoltre incas-

58 Storicamente Narihira non fu mai alle dirette dipendenze di Yoshifusa.

59 *Wa ga tanomu | kimi ga tame ni to | oru hana wa | toki shimo wa kanu | mono ni zo arikeru*.

60 Per queste osservazioni e quanto segue mi attengo a Katagiri 2013, 752.

sato nel penultimo verso (*to**ki shi**mo wakanu*) come 'soggetto nascosto' (*kakushidai* 隠題 o 'nome di cosa', *mono no na* 物名). Attraverso la presentazione del dono, il dono stesso e le circostanze dell'invio vengono così evocate tutte le stagioni, rendendo indifferenziato e quindi eterno il tempo (*toki* 時) cantato dall'«uomo». Quale sia il referente dell'enunciato «fiori [...] tali da non distinguere le stagioni» non è tuttavia chiaro. Sulla scorta di Katagiri (2013, 753), praticamente tutte le traduzioni in lingue occidentali da me consultate esplicano i settenari come una professione di eterna fedeltà rivolta a Yoshifusa.[61] Si tratta di un'interpretazione del tutto valida, ma è bene sottolineare che i curatori delle varie edizioni dell'*Ise* offrono anche letture divergenti, ravvisando nei versi un riferimento all'immutabile e salda virtù di Yoshifusa (Fukui 1994, 199-200 nota 15), oppure un augurio di lunga vita e prosperità rivolto sempre a Yoshifusa (Abe 1979, 111-12; Ishida 1979, 244; Takeoka 1987, 1370).[62] Quest'ultimo significato viene conferito in particolare sulla base del *waka* su cui è ricalcato *Wa ga tanomu*, un *waka* anonimo e di soggetto sconosciuto incluso nel *Kokinshū* (XVII,866). Poiché la versione del *Kokinshū*, pur quasi identica, contiene particolari molto importanti, la riporto per intero, insieme al *sachū* (nota in calce) che l'accompagna:

限なき
きみがためにと
おる花は
時しもわかぬ
物にぞありける[63]
(Kojima, Arai 1989, 262)

Per onorarVi
in eterna prosperità,
il degno fiore che colgo,
ecco, è un incanto
che non conosce stagioni.
Secondo qualcuno è una poesia del precedente Ministro.
(trad. Sagiyama 2000, 523; corsivi aggiunti)

Al posto dell'espressione *wa ga tanomu* («[signore] in cui confido»), il primo verso riporta *kagiri naki* 限りなき, 'supremo', 'altissimo' se ri-

61 McCullough, 1978, 137; Marra 1985, 126 nota 3; Maurizi, 2018, 170 nota 324; Tyler, Mostow 2010, 206-7; MacMillan 2016.

62 Takeoka Masao (1987, 1370) spiega la fioritura fuori stagione come riferimento all'autorità costante nel tempo di Yoshifusa, aggiungendo poi questo ulteriore significato.

63 ***Kagiri naki*** | *kimi ga tame ni to* | *oru hana wa* | *toki shimo wakanu* | *mono ni zo arikeru*.

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ferito a «signore» (*kimi* 君), ma anche 'senza fine', 'illimitato', se relazionato a *toki shimo wakanu* («che non conosce stagioni»): tenendo presente il nesso, è possibile quindi tradurre *kagiri naki* | *kimi* con «Voi [la cui vita] non vedrà fine».[64] Chi sia poi il «Voi» (*kimi*) cui il Gran Ministro si rivolge non è specificato, ma, vista la presenza di *kagiri naki* e stante l'alta carica rivestita dal presunto autore menzionato nella nota in calce, potrebbe trattarsi dell'imperatore stesso (Sekine 2005, 187). Quanto al «precedente Gran Ministro» (*saki no ōimōchigimi* 前大臣), esso viene tradizionalmente identificato con Fujiwara no Yoshifusa (Kojima, Arai 1989, 262 nota). In sintesi: *Kagiri naki* si configura come un augurio di eterna longevità e prosperità rivolto al sovrano proprio da Yoshifusa. Ne consegue che, attraverso la diversa contestualizzazione e la variante apportata al primo verso, la sezione 98 inscena un omaggio *a* Yoshifusa formulato mediante versi indirizzati a suo tempo *da* Yoshifusa all'imperatore. Possiamo ben capire la reazione oltremodo ammirata e «intrigata»[65] del Gran Ministro degli Affari Supremi, riverito come un monarca attraverso l'abile rimaneggiamento di una sua stessa poesia. Tenendo conto che il *waka* può essere letto anche come professione di eterna fedeltà, *Wa ga tanomu* va ben oltre il semplice omaggio, profilandosi come un atto di sottomissione al nuovo, vero signore del Paese, Yoshifusa, appunto. C'è poi un altro aspetto da sottolineare. Nella lettura di alcuni studiosi (Takeoka 1987, 1370), i versi di 'Narihira' investono di valenze spiccatamente politiche l'auspicio di eterna longevità e vigoria già formulato nella versione del *Kokinshū*: l'uomo starebbe infatti cantando – augurando e celebrando al tempo stesso – per il suo signore un tempo di immutabile «prosperità», ovvero una perenne autorità e fortuna politica.[66] Benché, guardando ai personaggi storici (Mototsune e Yoshifusa), i due episodi si debbano invertire, la sezione 98 costituisce dunque il seguito naturale del voto formulato dallo *okina* nella sezione 97: lì si esprimeva il desiderio che il turbinio dei fiori di ciliegio annientasse la vecchiaia (il declino anagrafico, ma anche politico) di Mototsune, qui, mescolando le stagioni attraverso vari riferimenti contestuali (il momento e il carattere dei

64 In Katagiri (1980, 343) i primi due versi vengono interpretati con «Per Voi, la cui vita non vedrà fine» (*Gojumyō no kagirinai anata sama no tame ni* 御寿命の限りないあなた様のために).

65 *okashigaritamaite* をかしがりたまひて (Fukui 1994, 199).

66 *Toki* può indicare anche 'influenza', 'potere' o 'prosperità' goduti grazie al favore del momento. Takeoka (1987, 1370) osserva come in *Wa ga tanomu* il significato di *toki* possa intendersi anche allo stesso modo che nel *kotobagaki* di *Kokinshū* XVIII,967 (Kiyohara no Fukayabu): *Toki narikeru hito no, niwaka ni toki naku narite nageku o mite* 時なりける人の、俄に時なくなりて嘆くをみて (Kojima, Arai 1989, 290): «[Composto] quando vide una persona, una volta influente, lamentarsi dopo l'improvvisa perdita della sua autorità» (trad. Sagiyama 2000, 575).

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doni) e annullandole mediante l'uso di espedienti retorici e materiali (i fiori di susino finti), si auspica e celebra il sempiterno potere dei Fujiwara. In una delle poche interpretazioni reperibili circa queste due sezioni, Marra annotava sulla scia di Watanabe Minoru che i messaggi, contrassegnati come sono da parole di malaugurio (sez. 97) e da motivi artificiali (il susino della sez. 98),[67] smentirebbero implicitamente gli auspici formulati in superficie, pronosticando la fine dei Fujiwara (Marra 1991, 180-1).[68] Alla luce di quanto appena esposto, è però possibile formulare anche un'altra ipotesi: ciò che rende infelice l'augurio del vecchio nella sezione 97 è, al contrario, proprio il fatto che esso si avvererà. In modo del tutto innaturale (e indebito), l'influenza di Yoshifusa e della sua discendenza non conoscerà declino, fiorirà e prospererà crescendo nel tempo, trovando riflesso nell'uso politico del *waka* da parte dei Fujiwara,[69] e nel supporto letterario loro dato anche da parte di poeti-cortigiani come Narihira e Yukihira. Tutto questo ci viene suggerito abbastanza scopertamente nella sezione 101.

Due episodi più avanti, la prosperità politica dei Fujiwara sarà infatti nuovamente celebrata in occasione del convito offerto da Ariwara no Yukihira in onore di Fujiwara no Masachika 藤原良近 (823-875). Il *waka* con cui il fratello dell'anfitrione esalta lo stupendo ramo fiorito di glicine esposto in omaggio all'ospite[70] è già stato oggetto di varie analisi in chiave politica.[71] Mi limiterò qui a evidenziare quattro aspetti dell'episodio: A) la parola 'vecchio' non compare, ma 'Narihira' viene definito poeticamente inetto,[72] preparandoci a una performance equivocabile, su modello di quelle interpretate dallo *okina*; B) in relazione al glicine, il testo reca: *ayashiki fuji no hana* あやしき藤の花, ossia «uno straordinario grappolo di fiori di glicine», dove «straordinario» (*ayashi*) si riferisce alla portentosa lunghezza del tralcio; C) nella poesia di 'Narihira' ci viene detto che «l'ombra del glicine [è] più estesa che in passato» (*arishi ni masaru fuji no kage* あり

67 In realtà l'uso di fiori artificiali era piuttosto diffuso per diversi scopi e in varie cerimonie, tra le quali, come simbolo di longevità, anche i *ga no iwai* (Drott 2015, 289).

68 Lo studioso segue e in parte rielabora tesi già proposte da Watanabe (1976, 115, 180-1).

69 Per questo punto rimando al paragrafo «Springtime for the Fujiwara» in Heldt 2008, 64-74.

70 «Data la moltitudine | di gente che ripara | sotto i suoi grappoli fioriti, | è oggi estesa più che mai, | l'ombra del glicine!» (*Saku hana no* | *shita ni kakururu* | *hito o ōmi* | *arishi ni masaru* | *fuji no kage kamo* 咲く花の | 下にかくるる | 人を多み | ありしにまさる | 藤のかげかも; Fukui 1994, 202). Per un'analisi di questi versi si veda Fraccaro 2016, 20-1.

71 Watanabe 1976, 118-19, 182-3; Marra 1991, 45; Mostow, Tyler 2010, 212-13; Fraccaro 2016, 19-21.

72 «Poiché non sapeva di poesia» (*Uta no koto wa shirazarikereba* 歌のことはしらざりければ; Fukui 1994, 202).

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しにまさる藤のかげ). D) Interrogato sul significato dei suoi versi il poeta afferma di averli composti pensando «alla gloria inarrivabile del Gran Ministro [Yoshifusa] e allo splendore della famiglia Fujiwara»[73] (trad. Maurizi 2018, 125). In superficie, dunque, l'eroe esalta la gloria e la prosperità di Yoshifusa e della sua discendenza attraverso l'immagine di un mirifico ramo di glicine che estende ora la sua ombra (e protezione) più rigoglioso che mai. Tuttavia, come abbiamo già visto accadere per le ambigue celebrazioni dello *okina*, proprio nel loro magnificare l'estrema vigoria della pianta i versi si prestano anche a interpretazioni negative. Come indicato a suo tempo da Ueno Osamu (1969, 56-7),[74] nel suo incredibile rigoglio il glicine celebrato nella sezione 101 evoca un *fengyushi* 諷諭詩 (poesia di ammonizione e insegnamento) di Bai Juyi, *Ziteng* 紫藤 (sino-giapp., *Shitō*, Il glicine), in cui il poeta descrive il carattere opportunistico e parassitario di questo rampicante quale metafora dei rovinosi effetti che ministri adulatori e falsi possono avere sui loro sovrani. I versi invitano anche a prevedere per tempo il potere distruttivo della pianta, che una volta cresciuta diventerà fortissima e inestirpabile.[75] Rimando ad altra occasione l'analisi approfondita che il *fengyushi* di Bai Juyi meriterebbe in rapporto all'episodio 101 e all'*Ise monogatari* in generale, ma anche fermandosi a questi scarsi cenni, è innegabile che sullo sfondo di *Ziteng* il glicine magnificato da 'Narihira' si presta a essere letto come l'immagine di un potere che cresce e prospera disgregando il corretto assetto politico esistente. È inoltre importante ricordare con Tanaka Norisada (1985, 91) che il tralcio di glicine sotto cui tutti riparano nella sezione 101 è speculare al grande bambù cantato dal vecchio a futura gloria degli Ariwara nella sezione 79: rivisti alla luce di questa scena e un ottantennio dopo i fatti narrati (all'epoca cioè dei lettori dell'*Ise*), gli auspici formulati dallo *okina* attraverso l'immagine della «imponente ombra» che il bambù avrebbe dovuto estendere a universale signoria e protezione si rivelano doppiamente patetici: nulla più che un miraggio illusorio (un'«ombra» appunto), e questo proprio a causa dell'inarrestabile e soffocante ascesa dei Fujiwara, ai quali gli stessi Ariwara si sono volontariamente assoggettati e dai quali verranno in breve sospinti ai margini del sistema. Tornando all'argomento di questo contributo, ossia il ruolo dello *okina*, preme sottolineare che la scena della sezione 101 trova la sua anticipazione e premessa essenziale nel canto augurale formulato dal

73 *Ōki otodo no eiga no sakari ni mimasogarite, Tōshi no, koto ni sakayuru o omohite* おほきおとどの栄花のさかりにみまそがりて、藤氏の、ことに栄ゆるを思ひて (Fukui 1994, 202).

74 Accenni anche in Marra 1991, 45-6.

75 «Se non se ne indovina [la natura] quand'è ancora un nonnulla, | sarà davvero arduo prevenire [gli effetti nefasti del suo] pieno rigoglio» 毫末不早辯 滋蔓信難圖 (Okamura 2017, 258-61).

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vecchio per il quarantesimo compleanno di Mototsune (sezione 97): un inchino servile accompagnato da un auspicio di vita perenne e di imperituro potere reiterato poi nello sperticato omaggio reso a Yoshifusa nella sezione 98. La realizzazione nefasta dei voti del vecchio si manifesterà appunto nella scena della sezione 101 e nell'ambiguo canto sullo stupefacente rigoglio del tralcio di glicine: celebrazione del dominio ormai incontrastato di Yoshifusa ma anche rievocazione di un testo politico (*Ziteng*) che proprio usando questa pianta a metafora mostra i processi attraverso i quali forme di potere illegittimo prendono piede, si radicano e si perpetuano.

La sezione 101 costituisce il logico coronamento degli episodi che vedono protagonista lo *okina*. Nel corso dell'*Ise* questa figura non si limita dunque a glorificare momenti di perduto splendore, ma rappresenta obliquamente, attraverso motivi stagionali e metafore vegetali, i destini politici di personaggi storici che in passato furono antagonisti o alleati di Yoshifusa, alludendo di volta in volta al loro declino (sez. 77), caduta (sez. 82), illusorie speranze (sez. 79), e marcando all'opposto l'incontenibile vitalità politica di Yoshifusa e dei suoi eredi, l'eterno splendore di una casata il cui potere non invecchia mai (sezz. 97-8), crescendo a dismisura a danno di tutti gli altri clan. Ambiguo ed equivoco, il vecchio celebra (o commemora) in superficie specifici momenti di tempi ormai lontani, ma, nell'uso simbolico dei riferimenti stagionali, disegna in filigrana i rivolgimenti che hanno portato all'attuale sistema di potere, adombrando forse, proprio nella scelta dei motivi, anche una visione 'morale' delle umane fortune che nel tempo fioriscono e nel tempo decadono. Nei *dan* esaminati si contrappongono infatti destini politici sottomessi alla naturale precarietà dell'esistente (la fine della primavera), e fortune che appaiono come sovvertimenti abnormi di questa legge: petali di ciliegio che nello spargersi non manifestano, com'è la regola, la caducità del reale, bensì impediscono il sopraggiungere della vecchiaia (sez. 97); fiori artificiali che «non conoscono stagioni», perdurando in eterno (sez. 98). Certo, come già osservato, auspicare eterna vita al sovrano o ai potenti di turno ricorrendo a formulazioni di ispirazione taoista era la norma sia dei *ga no iwai* sia, più in generale, di occasioni conviviali della vita di Corte. Tuttavia anche nei confronti di simili pratiche sembra di poter cogliere, velatamente, il pensiero critico dell'autore. E non solo perché, nella sua ricostruzione, la 'vita' di Narihira finisce con una sorta di monito relativo alla «strada che tutti percorreremo alla fine»[76] (trad. Maurizi, 2018, 137) – ovvero la morte che attende ognuno di noi – ma anche perché nella sezione 82, là dove si rappresenta in tutto il suo nobile splendore la primaverile battuta di caccia del principe Koretaka, a uno dei personaggi

76 *Tsui ni yuku* | *michi* つひにゆく道 (Fukui 1994, 216).

più idealizzati dell'*Ise monogatari*, Ki no Aritsune, viene fatta recitare questa poesia:

> 散ればこそ
> いとど桜は
> めでたけれ
> 憂き世にはなにか
> 久しかるべき[77]
> (Fukui 1994, 184-5)

> Proprio perché caduchi
> sono per noi tanto più splendidi,
> i fiori di ciliegio:
> che cosa mai perdura
> a questo mondo amaro?

Prefigurazione dell'imminente caduta politica del Principe, indirettamente narrata nella sezione 83, i versi fatti recitare ad Aritsune dall'autore sembrano privilegiare una visione del tempo che discopre il vero valore delle cose proprio nella loro ineluttabile transitorietà, e questo non solo nel rimpianto per la bellezza di tutto ciò che passa (Katagiri 1987, 27), ma anche nella consapevole accettazione dell'ordine naturale di tutto l'esistente.

9 Conclusioni. Le ambiguità del vecchio, le strategie dell'autore

Come abbiamo visto, lo *okina* è stato interpretato in modi tra loro opposti: cantore di splendori confinati a un mitico passato irrimediabilmente perduto (Katagiri, Tanaka 2016, 142-3); personaggio senile poeticamente maldestro e fraintendibile, portavoce di velate critiche al sistema (Kamio 2003a). Qualunque sia la lettura adottata, possiamo considerare questa figura una proiezione dell'anonimo autore e della sua visione dei tempi, si tratti dell'autore della seconda fase ipotizzato da Katagiri, o, con qualche cautela, l'autore dell'intera versione in 125 *dan*, come la conosciamo attraverso il testo base dell'*Ise* stabilito da Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241).[78] Ora, avendo nelle pagine precedenti sostenuto l'ipotesi di uno *okina* copertamente dissenziente, vorrei qui concludere – pur consapevole dei rischi che una simile operazione comporta – rispolverando una antica lettura confuciana

77 *Chireba koso* | *itodo sakura wa* | *medetakere* | *ukiyo ni nani ka* | *hisashikarubeki*.

78 Per una breve disamina della tradizione testuale relativa all'*Ise* si veda Maurizi 2016, 41-3.

dell'*Ise*, per contrapporla alle ipotesi di Katagiri, che, come si è detto, identifica il vecchio con il nostalgico narratore della sezione 40 e, dietro di lui, con l'altrettanto nostalgico autore del 'secondo *Ise*'.

Le letture in chiave politica dell'*Ise monogatari* risalgono com'è noto al periodo Edo,[79] in particolare allo studioso confuciano Goi Ranshū 五井蘭州 (1697-1762), che individuò all'interno del testo un nucleo centrale di sezioni politiche prudentemente nascoste nel loro messaggio anti-Fujiwara dalla presenza degli episodi di carattere amoroso.[80] Tali letture continuarono ad avere credito anche in epoca Meiji per poi essere accantonate, soprattutto a partire dagli anni Quaranta e nel dopoguerra, a favore di interpretazioni del testo incentrate sul concetto di *miyabi* (Mostow 2000, 102-3, 109-16). Nonostante l'oblio in cui sono cadute, e gli aspetti ideologici – estranei alle metodologie critiche moderne – che le hanno alimentate, credo tuttavia che le tesi di Ranshū meritino una qualche attenzione almeno in relazione alla sezione 124. I versi, si ricorderà, precedono l'episodio finale e recitano:

思ふこと
いはでぞただに
やみぬべき
われとひとしき
人しなけれ[81]
(Fukui 1994, 215)

Sarà bene ch'io lasci inespresso
ciò che ho in cuore,
e finisca lì.
Non esiste infatti tra gli altri
un mio pari.

Nelle odierne edizioni annotate dell'*Ise* questo *waka* viene in genere letto come espressione della solitudine esistenziale e dell'incomunicabilità dei sentimenti del protagonista, a cominciare da Katagiri (2013, 919), che chiosa i due settenari finali con: «non c'è possibilità di farmi capire» (*wakatte moraeru hazu ga nai* わかってもらえるはずがない).[82] Diversa l'interpretazione di Ranshū, secondo il quale *Omou*

79 Sull'argomento si veda Newhard 2013, 204-17.

80 Questa interpretazione figura nel suo commentario all'*Ise monogatari*, il *Seigo tsū* 勢語通 (Conoscere a fondo l'*Ise monogatari*, 1751). In esso Ranshū attribuisce l'*Ise* in parte a Narihira e in parte alla poetessa Ise (870 ca.-940 ca.) (Newhard 2013, 206).

81 *Omou koto* | *iwade zo tada ni* | *yaminubeki* | *ware to hitoshiki* | *hito shi nakereba*.

82 Così anche Fukui (1994, 215 nota), il quale oltre a rendere con «non c'è nessuno che provi ciò che provo io!», interpreta i pensieri dell'*otoko* come ricordi del passato e par-

koto wa sarebbe una professione di reticenza formulata da Narihira nel sottintendere la pericolosità di un aperto dissenso nei confronti dei Fujiwara. Accogliendo in parte questa lettura, ne ripropongo qui la più sofisticata versione offerta da Ueda Akinari 上田秋成 (1734-1809), che attribuendo i versi non a Narihira bensì all'anonimo autore dell'*Ise*,[83] riprese le tesi di Ranshū nel suo breve commentario all'*Ise monogatari*, *Yoshi ya ashi ya* 豫之也安志夜 (Giusto, o no?, 1793).[84] Ma lasciamo la parola a Akinari, che nel passo finale commenta la sezione 124 come segue:

> *L'aver collocato proprio questa sezione davanti a quella finale è dovuto al fatto che in verità vi si mostra il pensiero dell'autore*. Quando le persone rese sapienti dai loro studi non hanno incontrato il favore dei tempi, esse hanno detto: «io ho una spada preziosa», o hanno composto versi come: «Bene, se anche gli altri non sanno della bianca perla, basterà lo sappia io»,[85] oppure hanno detto anche: «i libri riflettono indignazione».[86] In Giappone come in Cina, il cuore delle persone non differisce in questo. Là li chiamano «romanzi storici» [*engi shōsetsu* 演義小説, cin. *yanyi xiaoshuo*], qui li chiamano «racconti» [*monogatari* 物がたり]. Il cuore di chi li crea, nell'indignarsi per questo mondo piangendo la propria sfortuna, ricorda con nostalgia il passato; o nel vedere la società presente prosperare sempre più come i ciliegi nel loro splendore, immagina

la di «figura solennemente sola». Di analogo tenore la traduzione inglese e il commento di MacMillan (2016, 199-200), così come la traduzione di Mostow e Tyler (2010, 245).

83 L'attribuzione a un autore distinto da Narihira è una importante modifica alle tesi di Ranshū. Ricordo che, nel riprendere in parte, e senza riferimenti alle fonti, l'interpretazione 'reticente', anche Marra attribuisce erroneamente i versi della sezione 124 a Narihira (1991, 47-8).

84 Si tratta di poche pagine contenenti le sue osservazioni personali sull'*Ise monogatari*, aggiunte in calce al commentario di Kamo no Mabuchi 賀茂真淵 (1697-1769), lo *Ise monogatari koi* 伊勢物語古意 (L'antico significato dell'*Ise monogatari*, 1758), quando Akinari ne curò la pubblicazione nel 1793.

85 Riferimento al seguente *sedōka* 旋頭歌 attribuito nel *Man'yōshū* (VI,1018) a un monaco del Gangōji, che pur illuminato e dotato di molta sapienza veniva disprezzato da tutti: *Shiratama wa* | *hito ni shiraezu* | *shirazu tomo yoshi* | *shirazu tomo* | *ware shi shireraba* | *shirazu tomo yoshi* 白珠者　人尓不所知　不知友縦　雖不知　吾之知有者　不知友任意 (La candida perla | è da tutti ignorata. | Non importa se la ignorano. | Pur ignorata, | basterà lo sappia io: | non importa se la ignorano) (Kojima, Kinoshita, Tōno 1995, 155).

86 Riferimento al passo della «Postfazione» (太史公自序 *Taishigong zixu*) dello *Shiji* 史記 (Memorie di uno storico, ca. 94 a.C.) in cui Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145-86 a.C.) espone l'idea che le grandi opere del passato siano spesso il prodotto delle ingiustizie patite dai loro autori (ossia che i libri siano frutto di indignazione, 発憤著書 *fafen zhushu*): «In passato [...] Confucio scrisse il *Chunqiu* dopo essere stato colpito da sventura a Chen e Cai. Qu Yuan pubblicò il *Li Sao* essendo stato cacciato [...]. È perché Han Feizi fu incarcerato dai Qin che oggi abbiamo lo *Shuo nan* e il *Gu fen* [Indignazione solitaria] [...]. In generale le trecento poesie [dello *Shijing*] sono state composte a causa dell'indignazione di sapienti e di saggi [詩三百篇、大抵賢聖發憤之所爲作也]» (Aoki 2014, 120).

> il suo graduale declino; oppure nascostamente schernisce chi è in auge, [immaginando] come sarà il suo futuro. Ancora, anche per chi voglia raggiungere un'età mai vista, [tali autori] ci fanno capire la vacuità ultima della preziosa scatola [di Urashima]. Mettono alla berlina le vite degli sciocchi che vanno alla ricerca di tesori inarrivabili, e in ciò, *temendo il giudizio dei contemporanei, scrivono lunghi racconti dall'aria assolutamente innocente, storie infondate di tempi remoti. È questa, vedete, la precauzione [che caratterizza] simili libri. Anche questo testo racconta di un Quinto degli Ariwara che non è il Secondo Comandante Quinto degli Ariwara, [Narihira, ma] prendendo lui a pretesto ha condannato lo stato soverchiamente corrotto della società. Non potendo per timore dire apertamente neanche parte dei propri pensieri, alla fine [l'autore] ha espresso il fiero lamento: «non esiste tra gli altri un mio pari».* Proprio questo credo sia il fare di un uomo di studi che consola il proprio cuore e coltiva la propria vita. [Ho detto] bene o [ho detto] male? Se queste rozze considerazioni avessero senso, vogliano Lorsignori degnarsi di accoglierle. (Ueda [1793] 1992, 510-11; corsivi aggiunti)

Benché, come evidenzia Mostow (2000, 103; Mostow, Tyler 2013, 247), l'enfasi posta sulla penultima sezione caratterizzi le letture premoderne dell'*Ise* – mentre nel dibattito critico attuale la chiave interpretativa del testo viene individuata nel primo episodio –, non credo che il commento di Akinari debba considerarsi del tutto obsoleto. Nell'includere dei riferimenti concreti a un periodo di grandi rivolgimenti politici, l'*Ise monogatari* non può prescindere da una componente ideologica implicante un giudizio – la lode o il biasimo – di quegli stessi sviluppi. Solo perché si tratta di vecchie interpretazioni premoderne, non si può escludere a priori che le tesi di *Yoshi ya ashi ya* siano valide e che le riconosciute ambiguità dell'*Ise monogatari*[87] rispondano alla effettiva necessità di dissimulare cautamente una condanna aperta del nuovo regime. Credo che Akinari veda «giusto»: per motivi prudenziali l'anonimo autore (colui che si rivolgerebbe velatamente al pubblico nei versi della sezione 124) non si espone, indossando la maschera di un famoso poeta e amatore, storicamente coinvolto in età matura con la cerchia dei Fujiwara. Se è così, lo *okina* potrebbe allora ritenersi la sua più diretta emanazione nel testo, il tramite mediante il quale attraverso il continuo, ambiguo oscillare dei canti del vecchio tra piani temporali diversi – l'esaltazione di momenti passati e la prefigurazione di inquietanti sviluppi futuri insita nei motivi simbolici cui spesso ricorre – l'autore offre ai lettori dell'*Ise* uno specchio deforme ma pur sempre rivelatore del-

87 Per letture dell'*Ise monogatari* in questa chiave si vedano Okada 1991, 142-5 e Sekine 2005.

lo stato presente, mostrando loro la genesi (sezz. 76, 77), affermazione (sez. 83) e radicamento (sez. 97) del vigente sistema di potere. Come appare evidente nella duplice immagine del glicine (sez. 101) generata dall'allusione a *Ziteng* (il fiore in straordinario rigoglio del convito *vs* la pianta rovinosamente distruttiva di Bai Juyi) il vecchio 'Narihira' è sempre portatore nel testo di più punti di vista: quello apparentemente encomiastico/nostalgico del protagonista (e narratore) ormai anziano, e quello dissimulatamente critico («indignato», direbbe Akinari) dell'anonimo autore. Un letterato prudente. E un maestro di ironia, se pensiamo che la condanna del sistema avviene proprio per il tramite di una figura celebrativa e felicitante qual è in superficie lo *okina*.

Resta infine da chiedersi se nel riprendere i versi enfaticamente augurali rivolti dal vero Narihira a Mototsune (sez. 97) e nell'amplificarli con contraffazioni di tenore ancor più esagerato (sez. 98), l'autore non riversi un po' della sua ironia e del suo nascosto biasimo anche sul personaggio reale, il poeta storicamente affiliato alla cerchia dei Fujiwara negli ultimi anni della sua vita. Data la pressocché unanime idealizzazione del protagonista dell'*Ise monogatari* nel dibattito critico corrente, formulare una simile ipotesi può apparire un vero azzardo. Sembra tuttavia lecito dire con Kamio Nobuko (2003a, 106-7) che sullo sfondo del precedente rapporto di amicizia con il principe Koretaka, descritto nel testo pochi capitoli prima, *Sakurabana* mostra con particolare evidenza il proprio carattere adulatorio e servile, suggerendo ironicamente, stante il successivo declino del clan, anche l'inutilità finale di simili inchini ai nuovi signori del Paese. Degne di interesse appaiono inoltre le argomentazioni di Hanai Shigeharu (1985, 46, 41-2), secondo il quale la comparsa dello *okina* a partire dalla sezione 76 – un evento pubblico e celebrativo – segnerebbe il rientro nei ranghi del sistema dell'antico *otoko*, trasformando il trasgressivo e appassionato eroe della prima parte dell'*Ise monogatari* in una sorta di poeta professionista (*shokugyō kajin* 職業歌人) ormai sottomesso alle restrizioni sociali, sino a diventare proprio nella sezione 97 un aperto adulatore dei nuovi detentori del potere. Una rappresentazione nemmeno troppo velata, visto l'esplicito rimando delle sezioni del vecchio a eventi reali occorsi nella vita di Narihira dopo i quarant'anni (Hanai 1985, 40), della svolta pro-Fujiwara che caratterizzò l'ultima parte dell'esistenza del poeta. Benché al presente le letture predominanti dell'*Ise* rimandino a un mondo di sentimenti puri, di eleganza e libertà spirituale (la sfera del *miyabi* come definita in Katagiri 1975, 45), non tutto nell'*Ise* è rappresentazione di questa dimensione ideale e glorificazione del perduto passato che la incarnò. Allo stesso modo, forse, non tutto nell'*Ise* è incondizionata celebrazione del grande poeta-amatore Narihira. Figura ambigua – solo apparentemente confinabile all'identità positiva di

«venerabile vecchio» celebratore dei tempi andati –[88] nei suoi tratti senili, vaniloqui ed esagerazioni, nel suo finale elogio del potere, lo *okina*, quale obliquo ritratto dell'ultimo Narihira, potrebbe svolgere per conto dell'anonimo autore il paradossale ruolo di smitizzare almeno in parte l'eroe che rappresenta.

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88 «Venerable old man» è la traduzione fornita per *okina* da MacMillan, che identificando in toto il «vecchio» dell'*Ise monogatari* con le figure augurali di cui si è parlato all'inizio dell'articolo, gli attribuisce ruoli in linea con le tesi di Katagiri: «to deliver blessings […], celebrate long life, pray for longevity, tell tales and recall with longing the lost elegance the lost elegance of former great families and times» (MacMillan 2016, 308).

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Bodies in Japanese Language
An Introduction to the Polysemous Character of Corporeality

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Abstract This article presents an inspection into the vast arena occupied by terms and signs in Japanese language that designate the word 'body'. The study is centred around etymons and semantic descriptions offered in selected monolingual lexical sources, thereby revealing slight divergencies that surface when confronting these entries in order to underscore the ambiguity and hybridity that characterise corporeality itself. In addition, part of this study is dedicated to Ichikawa Hiroshi's semantic analysis of the Japanese word *mi* (body), to Uno Kuniichi's discourse on the *shintai* (body) and to insights on corporeality offered by Kan Takayuki. The purpose of illustrating this diversified lexical treasure that surrounds, sustains and recreates bodies is to draw attention to the central position occupied by corporeality itself in Japanese culture, where the body/bodies emerge as a catalyst of cultural production.

Keywords Body. Words. Corporeality and language. Shintai. Nikutai. Mi. Karada. Ichikawa Hiroshi. Uno Kuniichi. Kan Takayuki.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 1.1 Some Notes on Japanese Language. – 2 An Etymological and Semantic Comparison of Terms Indicating the Body. – 3.1 Ichikawa Hiroshi's Analysis of *mi*: An Alternative to Phenomenology. – 3.2 Translating Corporeality (?). – 4 *Shintairon* and the Questions Generated by Corporeality. – 5 An Open Conclusion.

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> Bodies do not only pass meaning along, or pass it along in their uniquely responsive way. They develop choreographies of signs through which they discourse: they run (or lurch, or bound, or feint, or meander…) from premise to conclusion; they turn (or pivot, or twist…) through the process of reasoning; they confer with (or rub up against, or bump into…) one another in narrating their own physical fate. (Foster [1996] (2005), xi)

1 Introduction

This article[1] offers an overview of the kaleidoscopic landscape and broad array of terminologies and written signs defining the word 'body' in Japanese language. The survey focuses in particular on the etymological and semantic explanations provided in selected monolingual dictionaries to display discrepancies among the same vocabularies seen as a reflection of the ambiguity and hybridity that affect corporeality itself, and on the correspondent translations edited in Japanese-English dictionaries.

The aim of this article is to highlight the complex lexical system and its multi-layered readings, in which corporeality is embedded, a phenomenon that I interpret as an inverted tip of the iceberg that shows the centrality of corporeality in cultural production.

It should be considered that the words for 'body' given here are only a part of the rich vocabulary. In addition, each word has a sort of own life and its nuances and meanings may change throughout history, from context to context, from author to author, and even from sentence to sentence of a single writer, as I try to demonstrate in my research on texts written by Hijikata Tatsumi, the founder of the avant-garde dance called *butō* (see, for instance, Centonze 2018a; 2018b; 2020).[2]

Thus, the suggestions provided should be considered as a sort of propaedeutic approach to a wider problem that involves critical issues of academic investigation on corporeality and methodology itself.

In order to observe how these terms surrounding the body are ap-

1 What is presented here is an earlier survey I deepened some years ago at the Waseda University Library. This research has been made possible thanks to the scholarship by Canon Foundations in Europe Fellowship which offered me the opportunity in 2007 to deepen my research on corporeality and performing arts in Japan, where I continued to investigate on the body in performance and writings until the beginning of 2019. Hence, the study presented in this article precedes great part of my publications (see, for instance, Centonze 2018a; 2018b; 2020) and is one of their hidden backbones. As a consequence, my publications should be read in light of the suggestions provided here, and the questions pertaining to language, raised in this article.

2 My concern is to investigate corporeality and the different terms for 'body' in performance and literature.

plied in a certain context, I give three examples of discourses by theorists who deal with the question of corporeality and present their insights on some Japanese word definitions for 'body'. Part of this study is dedicated to Ichikawa Hiroshi's ([1993] 2007) semantic analysis of the Japanese word *mi* (body), to Uno Kuniichi's (2000) discourse on the *shintai* (body) and to insights on corporeality offered by Kan Takayuki (1983).

From a linguistic point of view, this study is only an embryonal elaboration that may be further developed in different directions. Many issues that came to the fore when consulting the definitions for 'body' in different dictionaries presented here require a further systematisation. Thus, with this article, rather than providing answers, I would like to raise questions and open up spaces for scholars of diverse areas for reflections upon this linguistic mosaic (and sometimes labyrinth).

This study also requires a further transcultural investigation into Asian realities, in a wider perspective extending the discourse to a transversal study on the terms for 'body' and on corporeality in Asian cultures, historically based on dynamics of embodiment of culture, which stands out as an *implicit* and *intrinsic* aspect.

Although my specialisation is not in language studies, the study of texts and primary sources is a fundamental approach, on which my research is based in order to provide a philological investigation on corporeal phenomena. I also consider the high value intrinsic to the oral tradition and transmission, the way artists express their thought, the words they choose when talking about the body.

I hope that it can be useful for performance and dance scholars who are concerned with corporeality and that it may contribute to a further widening of the concept of corporeality.

At the same time, my hope is to implicitly suggest the high potentiality of and importance played by dance or performance studies, seen as a discipline that sheds an interdisciplinary light on questions concerning corporeality, and furnish further frames of understanding cultural practices, such as language, by focusing their rapport with the corporeal phenomenon, due to the fact that dance studies depart from the necessary practice of focusing the attention on the body.

1.1 Some Notes on Japanese Language

A brief introduction to notions of Japanese linguistics is also necessary in order to approach this investigation on morphemes concerning the body.

The Japanese writing system is a texture of four different scripts, and permits, as Shibatani ([1990] 2005, 92) outlines, a "multiplicity of coding possibilities": *kanji* (lit. 'Chinese characters'), the two sylla-

baries *katakana* and *hiragana*, and the Latin script known as *rōmaji*. Previous to the introduction of the Chinese script started in the 5th century and progressively conveyed through Chinese Classics and Chinese translations of Sanskrit Buddhist works, Japan did not have a writing of its own. Therefore, Japan, alongside with Korea and Vietnam, is considered part of the so-called Sinosphere, i.e. the cultural area influenced by Chinese writing that included China itself (Whitman et al. 2010, 74). Thus, practices of vernacular readings, called *kundoku* 訓読 in Japanese, of classical Chinese texts, and annotations with reading glosses are considered a "linguistic habitus" in non-Sinitic cultures existing since the premodern age (Whitman et al. 2010, 74).

As Shibatani ([1990] 2005, 120) outlines, the systematic borrowing of Chinese words took place in three waves, which generated a layering of pronunciations and readings of the same Chinese characters according to their cultural origin.

Pollack (1986, 3-54) focuses on the transition from orality to literacy in Japan and considers this process as the beginning of a "fracture of meaning". In his seminal study, Pollack (1986, 3-54) discusses how the adoption of a foreign writing system made of signs loaded with powerful semantics, brought to a nearly constant process of manipulation of the script and literate representation throughout Japan's history in order to adapt it to and combine it with the native oral "matter".[3] This process has been accentuated by the structural differences that characterise Chinese and Japanese language: the former is monosyllabic, isolating, uninflected, and the latter is polysyllabic, agglutinating and highly inflected (Pollack 1986, 19).

In regard to the Chinese script introduced into Japan and its adoption, Pollack considers that:

> [T]hese signs were *full* of meaning when they arrived in Japan as the medium for Confucian and Buddhist ideas that were entirely new in Japan; they were not simply an alphabet, whose sounds could easily be abstracted from the cultural complex they had once represented. Before these signs could be made to represent sound alone, they had first to be emptied of their alien significance by a mental act that attributed only a sound value to each sign and com-

3 Pollack reads this tension between oral and literate representation from the 8th to the 18th century under the register of the *wakan* 和漢 (Japanese/Chinese) dialectic. For further insights on the 'problems' in the history of Japanese script, as for instance, during the Meiji Period (1868-1912), see Sato Habein 1984, 99-103.

The debate on the fundamental role played by spoken and written language in constructing a national, international and personal identity is an outstanding issue in Japanese modern history (Gottlieb 2005, 1). In his seminal study, Miller (1982) provides a historical discourse on the myth and self-referentiality of nationhood in modern Japanese society, where life and language are inextricably linked. Language is seen as a "way of life" and not as a social convention (Miller 1982, 4-5).

> pletely ignored its powerful semantic burden. (Pollack 1986, 35)

Shibatani ([1990] 2005, 142-53), who also considers myths created around Japanese language outside the country (89-93), underlines the common practice in Japan of borrowing words from other languages, including Ainu and Korean language:

> In the domain of lexicon, successive waves of loan words resulted in a large number of doublets and sometimes triplets composed of native word, a Sino-Japanese word, and a Western word. […] [T]hese near-synonyms are often associated with different shades of meaning or stylistic values, and the correct use of them is delicate both linguistically and *politically*. Linguistically, often the meanings of the foreign loan words are altered from the original meanings, and many expressions have been newly created in Japan by combining existing foreign words. (92; italics added)

Traditionally, the Japanese lexicon is considered in terms of its etymological strata: the native vocabulary, defined as *wago* (和語) or *yamato kotoba* (大和言葉), the loan words of Chinese origin, defined as *kango* (漢語), and words borrowed from other languages, defined as *gairaigo* (外来語) (142).

As will be illustrated in the following sections, sometimes it can be a considered a political choice, when choosing one word, or one writing, in respect to the other.

2 An Etymological and Semantic Comparison of Terms Indicating the Body

The concern in this section is to display, although partially, because of its huge extent and interdisciplinary characteristics, the intricateness and complexity a scholar might encounter, if approaching a general study of terminologies that refer to the word 'body' in Japanese language.

What happens when we investigate a context where the word 'body' displays a multiplicity of definitions and an ambiguous variety of usage throughout its etymological history and coinage?

A first glance at the Japanese lexical panorama pertaining to the word 'body' is enough to provoke a reaction in whoever wants to approach the linguistics surrounding corporeality. If we compare the respective entries edited in Japanese monolingual dictionaries, slightly different interplays of semantics, characterised by a subtly interchangeable configuration of synonyms, do appear.

The *Kadokawa ruigo shinjiten* 角川類語新辞典 (Kadokawa New Dictionary of Synonyms, 1981; hereafter *KRS*) edited by Ōno Susumu and

Hamanishi Masando indicates under the corporeal category *taikaku* 体格 (physical constitution, physical status, physic, build) the first word group related to the headword 身体/人のからだ (body/the human body). In Japanese, the compound 身体 can be read *shintai* or *karada*, and the reading of the headword 身体 is not specified, whereas its semantic description is provided with a wide definition: 'human body' (人のからだ *hito no karada*). A series of terms pertaining to the 'human body' are correlated with this compound, to be precise, 29 + 16 + 20 definitions, i.e. 65 terms in total are listed under this category.

The first *kanji* that is classified is 体 (body) displaying the *furigana*[4] "*karada*", and alternative *kanji* given for this word are 躰 and 身体. The idiomatic paradigms following the *kanji* 体 are:

> 強い体。元来体が弱い。体を鍛える。体ばかり大きくてもからきし子供だ。お体を大切に ○頭・手足・胸などのすべてを漠然と含めた呼び方〈躰・身体〉 (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504)

> A strong *karada*. Have a weak constitution [*karada*] by nature. Build up one's body [*karada*].[5] Although he/she is big-bodied [*karada bakari ōkikute mo*], he/she is a child. Take good care of yourself/your health [*karada*]. [Meaning:] Designation that vaguely includes the head, limbs, chest, etc. as a whole.[6]

In the same dictionary the synonym *shintai* 身体 (body) is introduced by these usage paradigms:

> 健全な身体。身体を清潔にする。身体検査［髪膚］ (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504)

> A healthy *shintai*. Cleanse one's *shintai*. Physical examination [lit. a medical inspection of the *shintai*]. (*Shintai*) *happu* [the whole body, lit. "body, hair and skin"].

As illustrated above, in *KRS* it is added that a substitutive word for *shintai* is *happu* 髪膚 (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504), and that *happu* forms a compound with *shintai*. *Happu* is a compound word formed by *kami* 髪 (hair) and *hifu* 膚 (skin), and, although it is not often indexed in Japanese-English dictionaries, it is listed in *The New Nelson Japanese-English Character Dictionary* (Nelson 1997; hereafter *Nelson*),

4 Syllabic phonetic scripts (*kana*) written next to or above *kanji* (lit. Chinese characters) to indicate the pronunciation. On Japanese writing system see Shibatani [1990] (2005); Sato Habein (1984); Pollack (1986).

5 *Karada o kitaeru* can also be translated as 'to get oneself into shape', 'to train one's body'.

6 Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the Author.

wherein is displayed the English translation "body", "hair and skin".

When combined with *shintai*, the word *shintai happu* means "entire human body", "every inch of one's body", as indicated in the online dictionary *Weblio*.[7]

A further synonym for 'body' listed in *KRS* within the word group 身体/人のからだ is *nikutai* 肉体 (body). The entry *nikutai* 肉体 is illustrated by these following paradigms:

> りっぱな肉体の持ち主。肉体をさいなむ。肉体美。［労働］〇生身のからだ. (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504)

> A person who has an admirable *nikutai*. Torture the *nikutai*. The beauty of the *nikutai*. Manual/physical labour [lit. the work of the *nikutai*]. [Meaning:] The body [からだ *karada*] of the living/raw body [生身 *namami*].

It is interesting to note that among the synonyms for 'body' cited in *KRS* only the term *nikutai* is opposed to the antonyms "spirit" (*seishin* 精神) and "soul" (*reikon* 霊魂), alongside a further synonym provided by *KRS* for 'body', *niku* 肉, which is considered in its meaning of *nikutai* in *KRS* (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504).

In addition, it is important to underline that in reference to the entry *nikutai* it is also explained that "[the terms] *karada* [からだ] and *shintai* [身体] may also indicate the condition of a dressed body, whereas the [term] *nikutai* has no such usage" (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504).

In reference to the morpheme *mi* 身 (body), the following examples are provided:

> 衣類を身に着ける［まとう］。身を粉にして働く。身を任せる　〇身体 (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504)

> Wear clothes [lit.: put clothes on the *mi*] (put on, wear [*mi ni matō*]). Work oneself [*mi*] to the bone.[8] Give oneself [*mi*] up (to someone or something). [Meaning:] *Shintai* [身体].

It may be said that *karada*, *shintai*, *nikutai* and *mi* are the most generic designations for 'body' within the rich vocabulary of synonyms, and are the most used verbal expressions in contemporary written and spoken language.

Further nouns are compiled in *KRS* under the subcategory 身体, which are indexed as the human body (*hito no karada*): *jintai* 人体 (hu-

7 https://ejje.weblio.jp/content/%E8%BA%AB%E4%BD%93%E9%AB%AA%E8%86%9A.

8 The idiomatic expression *mi o ko ni shite hataraku* means literally 'work reducing the body to dust'.

man body), *jinshin* or *hitomi* 人身 (the human body, one's person); gendered definitions of the body such as *nyotai* 女体 (a woman's body),[9] *botai* 母体 (mother's body; parent organisation);[10] aged bodies such as *rōtai* 老体 (old body, an aged person), *rōku* 老躯 (old age; enfeebled body), *rōkotsu* 老骨 (old bones, old man), *rōshin* 老身 (aged body; an old person [polite]).

I dare to say that the definition par excellence, or figuratively established in its semantics for "human body" is 人体 *jintai*, literally the body (体) of a human being (人). 人体 is classified in *KRS* as a term from the literary language, i.e. as a *bunshōgo* 文章語 (word used mainly in writing). Another possible reading of 人体 furnished in *Nelson* is "*nintei*", and "*nintei*" is translated as "personal appearance". The *Kenkyūsha's New Japanese English Dictionary* (fifth edition, 2003; hereafter *Kenkyūsha*) indicates for *jintai* 人体 the following translations: "a [the] human body; the system; flesh".[11] 人体 (*jintai*) is used, for example, to compound the terms such as *jintai kaibōgaku* 人体解剖学 (human anatomy), or *jintai jikken* 人体実験 (experiment on a human body).

Also 人身 *jinshin* covers the semantic area of 'human body', but it has a much more reflexive nuance, pointing at the personal, individual body, as is evidenced in *KRS* (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504).

In reference to the body expressed by the word *jinshin*, it is interesting to underline that the Japanese rendering of *Habeas Corpus Act* (1679) is *Jinshin hogohō* 人身保護法.

Further words for 'body' listed in *KRS* under the subcategory 身体/人のからだ are: *tai* 体 (the body), *taiku* 体躯 (the body, stature, physique, constitution), the above-mentioned *niku* 肉 (body, flesh, meat),[12] *nikkai* 肉塊 (piece of flesh; the flesh, the body),[13] *keigai* 形骸 (framework, wreck), *hadami* 肌身 (the body), *onmi* or *omi* 御身 (you [familiar]), *migara* 身柄 (one's person).

Also *bodī* ボディー, a loan word (or *gairaigo*) from the English language, therefore written in the phonetic syllabary *katakana*, is listed among the synonyms for 'body' in *KRS*. As indicated in this dictionary, it is used for example in compounds derived from the English such as *bodībiru* ボディービル (bodybuilding), or *bodīgādo* ボディーガード (bodyguard), and also for designating the 'body' of a car, a ma-

9 As indicated in the *Nelson* dictionary, the compound 女体 can also be read *jotai*.

10 As indicated in the *Nelson* dictionary, *botai* 母体 can also be read *motai*.

11 The *Kenkyūsha* dictionary provides for *nintei* 人体 the English meanings of "personal appearance; look".

12 Further translations for *niku* are given below.

13 The *Nelson* dictionary has both readings: *nikukai* and *nikkai*. In the *Kenkyūsha* dictionary appears only the word *nikukai* translated as "a lump of meat; the human body".

chine, a ship etc. (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504).[14] The *Kenkyūsha* dictionary gives the translation "a body" for ボディー.

I would like to add here the current expression *naisu bodī* ナイスボデイー (nice-looking body, attractive body) often used in everyday language or in commercials for diet goods, and I dare to categorise it as a typical product of the global consuming society.

In *KRS* the semantic field of "whole body" (*zenshin* 全身) is occupied by sign-definitions such as *honemi* 骨身 (flesh and bones, marrow), *gotai* 五体 (the five component parts of the body, the whole body; the five styles of calligraphy), *zenshin* 全身 (the whole body, full-length [portrait]), *manshin* 満身 (the whole body), the above-mentioned *shintai happu* 身体髪膚, *kamishimo* 上下 (the upper and lower parts of the body; samurai garb; old ceremonial garb; the government and the people).

Zentai 全体 (the whole), often used in spoken language for indicating the whole body, is not mentioned in the section 身体/人のからだ in *KRS*.

The definitions that explicitly stress the meaning of a "living body" (*ikite iru karada* 生きているからだ) classified in *KRS* are: *seitai* 生体, *namami* 生身 and *ikimi* 生き身.

For 生体 *seitai* given examples are: "Vivisect the [living] body [*seitai*] of an animal. The experiments on the *seitai* [生体実験 *seitai jikken*]. [Meaning:] The body [からだ *karada*] of a living creature/living thing [生物 *ikimono/seibutsu*]. The living body [*ikite iru karada* 生きているからだ]" (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504). The *KRS* dictionary opposes *seitai* 生体 to the antonym *shitai* 死体, the dead body. *Seitai* 生体 is translated in *Nelson* as "living body", and in the *Kenkyūsha* dictionary as "a living body; an organism". Here I would like to add that the rendering in Japanese of 'somatology' is *seitaigaku* 生体学.

In reference to *ikimi* 生き身 the *KRS* cites the proverb *ikimi wa shi ni mi* 生き身は死に身 (all that lives must eventually die) (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504). The *Kenkyūsha* dictionary offers for *ikimi* 生き身 the translations "flesh and blood; a mortal man".

Paradigms for the entry 生身 in *KRS* are: "We flesh and blood are liable to injury. A flesh-and-blood person.[15] [Meaning:] A living *karada* [からだ]" (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504).

At the entry 生身 *Nelson* offers a unified translation for both readings *i(ki)mi* and *namami*: "living flesh, flesh and blood, the quick; raw meat, raw fish". According to the *Kenkyūsha* dictionary *namami* 生身 corresponds to "a living body, flesh and blood" in English, and *ikimi* 生身 corresponds to "flesh and blood; raw flesh".

14 Here we have examples of loan words altered from the original meanings or phonetics such as *bodībiru* ボディービル, as illustrated by Shibatani [1990] 2005, 92.

15 The translations for these two paradigms are taken from the *Kenkyūsha* dictionary.

On the other hand, the words cited in the *KRS* dictionary for the dead body considered within the subcategory 身体/人のからだ are: *shitai* 死体 (corpse, remains), *itai* 遺体 (corpse, remains), *shigai* 死骸 (corpse, remains), *nakigara* 亡骸 (remains, corpse), *mukuro* 骸 (body, corpse),[16] *shikabane* 屍 (corpse, remains), *kabane* 屍,[17] *shishi* 死屍 (corpse), *igai* 遺骸 [remains, corpse, (dead) body],[18] *zangai* 残骸 (corpse, carcass; ruins, debris, wreck, remains of), *shirō* 屍蠟 (adipocere), *miira* 木乃伊 (mummy) (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504).

The *Ruigo daijiten* 類語大辞典 (The Great Dictionary of Synonyms; hereafter *RD*), edited by Shibata Takeshi and Yamada Susumu, cites synonyms for 'body' and its word group under the category of *karada* からだ (Shibata, Yamada 2002, 1486-7). In reference to the entry 体 (からだ *karada*) it is explained that 体 (からだ *karada*) "supports the activity of human beings and animals", and that it is "the entirety (全体 *zentai*) covered by the skin, and made of parts such as head, chest and limbs" (1486). At the end of the definition is annotated that the correspondent *kanji* for *karada* can also be 軀 or 身体. The same *kanji* 体 is classified next as the word *tai* タイ, employed for instance in sports jargon for designating the human body (*karada* からだ) when it is about to move (1486).

In the *Kurashi no kotoba: Shingogen jiten* 暮らしのことば 新語源辞典 (The Words of Life: New Dictionary of Etymology, 2008; hereafter *KKSJ*), edited by Yamaguchi Yoshinori, the entry for 体 (*karada* からだ) is compiled by Kubota Atsushi. Here the etymology of 体 (*karada* からだ) is first introduced as "the whole (*zentai* 全体) from the head to the tips of the feet. The whole *nikutai*" (Yamaguchi 2008, 196). It is explained that in ancient times this term was employed in order to designate, in respect to the soul (*tamashii* 魂), the body (*shintai* 身体), which hosts/contains the soul, or to address the body (*nikutai* 肉体) without life.

> 魂を宿した肉体はミ（身）という。つまり、カラダはミの外形の部分であった。「カラ（殻・軀）」＋ダ（接尾語）」からなる語といわれる。カラは、水分・生命がすっかりなくなって抜け殻となったものの意。平安時代には、

16 In *KRS*, *mukuro* 骸 is indicated as a word from the literary language (*bungo* 文語). The *kanji* 骸 is interchangeable with its further written form 軀 (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504). *Mukuro* is the Japanese reading (*kun'yomi*) of 骸, therefore designating the native term. The *kanji* 骸 can also be pronounced in its Chinese-derived reading (*on'yomi*) *gai*, not mentioned in *KRS*, but provided in *Nelson* and translated as "bone, body".

17 This reading is not contemplated by the *Nelson* dictionary. In regard to *kabane* 屍 the *Kenkyūsha* dictionary indicates a cross reference to *shikabane* 屍 for its English translation. For *shikabane* 屍 we find a further cross reference in the *Kenkyūsha* dictionary, which is *shitai* 死体. *Shitai* 死体 is translated in the *Kenkyūsha* dictionary as "a dead body; a corpse; one's remains; a stiff; a carcass."

18 *Nelson* furnishes the further reading *yugai* for 遺骸, which is not mentioned in the entry of *KRS*.

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蝉などが脱皮した後の抜け殻や死体などに用いられている。ナキガラ（亡骸）のカラである。(Yamaguchi 2008, 196)

The *nikutai*, in which the soul dwells, is called *mi* [ミ（身）].[19] In brief, *karada* [カラダ] was the part of the outward form [*gaikei* 外形] of the *mi* [ミ]. It is said that the word stems from "*kara* [カラ (殻, 軀)] + *da* [ダ] (suffix)".[20] *Kara* [カラ] meant something that had become the exuviae [*nukegara* 抜け殻] completely deprived of its liquids and life. It has been used during the Heian period in order to designate, for instance, the cast-off skin of the cicada after its ecdysis or the dead body [*shitai* 死体]. It is the *kara* [カラ] of *nakigara* [亡骸].

It is further explained by Kubota (Yamaguchi 2008, 196) that *karada* is thought to share the same etymon of カラ (幹, 柄), implied in the meanings of *kareeda* 枯れ枝 (stem, trunk, withered branch), as well as the same etymon of カラ(枯, 涸), which appears in *karayama* 枯山[21] or *karatsuyu* から梅雨,[22] and is linked to expressions used to define something without liquid, something dry, without substance (*jisshitsu* 実質). *Karada* also shares the same etymon of カラ (空)[23] linked to the meaning of 'empty' (*karappo* からっぽ) (Yamaguchi 2008, 196).

According to this entry in KKSJ, it seems that *karada* カラダ taken as a generic term has started to be used from the medieval period onwards, and that in the Japanese texts (*wabun* 和文) of the Heian period (794-1185) it has not been employed, because it is a *kanbun kundokugo* 漢文訓読 (a word of the *kanbun kundoku*)[24] (Yamaguchi 2008, 196). Therefore, in the *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji, early 11th century), the *hiragana* word *kara* から appears instead of the *kanbun kundoku* word *karada* カラダ (Yamaguchi 2008, 196). In addition, Kubota (Yamaguchi 2008, 196) cites the *Nippo jisho* 日葡

19 In this sentence of the *KKSJ* dictionary *mi* is written in *katakana* (ミ) and then followed by the *kanji* 身 put in brackets. Here *mi* is a *kundoku*, a Japanese semantic reading of a Chinese character. For the origin of the Japanese syllabic system of *katakana* and its use in premodern practices of reading, writing and glossing 'foreign language texts' see Whitman et al. 2010; Sato Habein 1984, 21-4;

20 It is specified that *da* ダ is a suffix (*setsubigo* 接尾語) (Yamaguchi 2008, 196).

21 Kubota glossed the compound word 柄山 with the *furigana* "*karayama* からやま". Other possible readings of 柄山 are *kareyama* かれやま or *kozan* こざん. The *Nelson* dictionary categorises 柄山 with the following transliteration in *rōmaji*: *ka(re)yama*. The English translation offered by *Nelson* of 柄山 is "a hill covered with dead vegetation".

22 *Karatsuyu* is translated in *Nelson* as "dry rainy season".

23 *Kara* 空 bears the meaning of "emptiness".

24 *Kanbun kundoku* is, in short, the Japanese reading (*kundoku*) of a classical Chinese passage (*kanbun*) (*Kenkyūsha* dictionary 2003). On *kanbun kundoku* see Whitman et al. 2010; Sato Habein 1984, 7-24.

辞書 (Japanese-Portuguese Dictionary, 1603),[25] and underlines that the *Nippo jisho* offers the following explanation for *karada* 体: "sometimes also used for denoting a living body (*ikite iru karada* 生きている体)". It is argued in the *KKSJ* that this is "probably because the separation between the soul (*tamashii* 魂) and the body (体) had been progressively reduced" (Yamaguchi 2008, 196).

The *KKSJ* dictionary presents only the entry *karada* for designating the body, whereas the *kanji* "肉 *niku*" (Yamaguchi 2008, 500) is categorised as a word that addresses the meat, the flesh of an animal. In contrast, as shown before, the *KRS* registers *niku* 肉 within the word group 身体/人のからだ, i.e. the *shintai*/*karada* (身体), considered as a *hito no karada* 人のからだ (the body of a person, human body) (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504). The meaning of *niku* 肉 displayed in *KRS* is "the *nikutai* (in contrast to the soul)" (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504).[26]

The *Nippo jisho*, published by the Jesuit Mission Press in Nagasaki in 1603, is mentioned in many lexicographic sources.[27] A supplement of this dictionary has been brought out in 1604. The *Nippo jisho* and its supplement list together more than 32,000 entries. As Michael Cooper (1980, 513) underlines, its Japanese translation *Hōyaku Nippo jisho* 邦訳日葡辞書 (1980), which includes the supplement and is edited by Doi Tadao, Morita Takeshi and Chōnan Minoru, has turned into a precious linguistic document even for Japanese scholars.

In the *Hōyaku Nippo jisho* (Doi, Morita, Chōnan 1980; hereafter *HNJ*), the entry *carada* is explained first by its phonetics カラダ followed by brackets with its sinoxenic writing 体 and then by the compound *shitai* 死体. A definition is added: "Sometimes also interpreted with the meaning of living body. Vulgar word" (時としては生きた身体の意味にも取られる。卑語)[28] (Doi et al. 1980, 100). If we compare this entry with its Portuguese compilation offered in the *Nippo jisho: Paribon*. *Vocabulario da lingoa de Iapam* 日葡辞書: パリ本= (1976; hereafter *Paribon*) edited by Ishizuka Harumichi, we find the following definition: "Corpo morto. Algũas uezes se toma por corpo vius. B." (Ishizuka 1976, s.p.).

Consulting the *HNJ*, we read in reference to *shintai* the following entry:

> Xintai. シンタイ (身体) Mi, catachi. (身, かたち). 肉体. (Doi et al. 1980, 773)[29]

25 The *Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam com adeclaração em Portugues, feito por alguns Padres, e Irmãos da Companhia de Iesu* is commonly known as *Nippo jisho*. For a study on the *Nippo jisho* see Cooper 1976.

26 (精神に対する) 肉体 (Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504).

27 See, for instance, Sugimoto (2005, 215) and other dictionaries mentioned below.

28 *Toki toshite wa ikita shintai no imi ni mo torareru. Higo.*

29 *Xintai. Shintai* (*shintai*) *Mi, catachi* (*mi, katachi*). *Nikutai.*

The synonym added to *shintai* here is more than interesting, because *katachi* means 'form', 'shape'.

It is worth to point out that the entry for *shintai* 身体, in this case *xintai*, is registered in the Japanese translation, but is not indexed in the *Paribon*, where we find only the homophone *xintai* indicating the Japanese word *shintai* 神体 (Ishizuka 1976), the divine body, or god-body in a Shintō shrine, as *Nelson* has it. This means that the word has been added later in the supplement.

The word *nikutai* appears under the following register in the Portuguese edition: "*Nicutai*. Corpo" (Ishizuka 1976). On the other hand, the Japanese translation of the dictionary reads: "Nicutai. ニクタイ(肉体) 身体" (Doi et al. 1980, 463).[30]

It is noteworthy that also the term *nikushin* is classified: in the *Vocabulario da lingoa de Iapam* the corresponding entry is "Nicuxin. Corpo. S." (Ishizuka 1976), and the dictionary translated into Japanese reads: "Nicuxin. ニクシン （肉身） 肉体. 文書語" (Doi et al. 1980, 463).[31]

The *Gogenkai* 語源海 (Ocean of the Origin of Words, 2005), dictionary edited by Sugimoto Tsutomu, reserves to the entry semantically embracing 'body' one headword: *karada* (からだ [体, 躰]). In reference to its modern usage, the term is paralleled to the compounds *nikutai* 肉体, *taishitsu* 体質,[32] *taiku* 体格. The characters of the Chinese lexicon are also cited: *shēntǐ* 身体, *shēncái* 身材 (Sugimoto 2005, 215).

It is explained that *da* ダ is a type of suffix that adds the meaning of "hosting a soul (*tamashii* 魂)". *Mi* 身 is indicated as a general expression in ancient language and it is added that *karada* 體 does not appear in classical literature such as *Genji monogatari*. As a consequence, *kara* (空, 虚) was used to signify the outer form (*gaikei*) such as the word *nakigara* 亡骸 (remains, corpse) (Sugimoto 2005, 215).

A precious information given by this dictionary is the cross reference for *mukuro* ムクロ indicated in the etymological explanation for *karada* (Sugimoto 2005, 215-16). *Mukuro* is prevailingly provided as a word standing for the dead body, as we have seen in *KRS*,[33] but it is also a word employed generically for 'body'.[34] In the *Gogenkai* it is specifically argued that it may be that in ancient times the word *mukuro* ムクロ indicated the body of a living person (Sugimoto 2005, 215).

The *Karada kotoba jiten* からだことば辞典 (Dictionary of Body-Words, 2003; hereafter *KKJ*) edited by Tōgō Yoshio, explains that *mi* 身 is used frequently for compound words corresponding to body

30 *Nicutai*. *Nikutai* (*nikutai*) *shintai*.

31 *Nicuxin*. *Nikushin* (*nikushin*) *nikutai*. *Bunshōgo*. 'Bunshōgo' means 'literary word'.

32 *Taishitsu* is translated in *Nelson* as "physical constitution".

33 Ōno, Hamanishi 1981, 504.

34 Cf. *Nihon kokugo daijiten* (2001).

(*mi* 身) and body (*karada* 体), to body (身) and mind (*kokoro* 心). However, it cannot be said that *mi* and *karada* are synonyms (*dōgi* 同義), and that *mi* and *kokoro* are counterparts (Tōgō 2003, 260). *Mi* (身) is characterised by the meaning of *karada* (体) taken as a *nikutai*, and also signifies the body entailing social responsibilities as an individual (Tōgō 2003, 260). The first semantic definition provided by *KKJ* for *mi* み/身 is "hito no karada 人のからだ" (human body), followed by the definition "身体 *shintai*" (Tōgō 2003, 260).

Shintai 身体, listed in *KKJ* as a compound of *mi* (身), is defined as the "human body" (Tōgō 2003, 265).

In reference to the entry *karada* (からだ/体), the first definition provided in *KKJ* is "the *nikutai* of a human being and an animal" (Tōgō 2003, 276).

The *Kōjien* 広辞苑 (Wide Garden of Words; sixth edition [1955] 2007) edited by Shinmura Izuru classifies *karada* からだ (体) as a word (*go* 語) for the body taken in its unity from the head to the feet (Shinmura [1955] 2007, 597). It is also defined with the synonyms 身体 (*shintai*) and 体躯 (*taiku*; the body, stature, physique, constitution).

In the same dictionary *shintai* しんたい (身体) is explained as *karada* からだ and 体躯 *taiku* (Shinmura [1955] 2007, 1456).

The *Kōjien* defines the word *nikutai* にくたい (肉体) as "[t]he *shintai* made of flesh [*niku* 肉]. The *karada* [体] of a living human being. The *karada* [からだ] of a living body [なまみ]. A *nikushin* [肉身]" (Shinmura [1955] 2007, 2124).[35] The same dictionary gives for the word *nikushin* にくしん (肉身) the definition "the same as *nikutai*" (2123).

I noticed that the entry *nikushin* does not appear, for instance, as a synonym in the list compiled in *KRS*. Also the *Kenkyūsha* dictionary does not contemplate it, whereas in *Nelson* the word *nikushin* is translated as "the flesh, the body; kindred, blood relationship".

The *Nihon kokugo daijiten* 日本国語大辞典 (Great Dictionary of Japanese National Language; second edition [1972] 2001; hereafter *NKDJ*),[36] the largest monolingual dictionary of Japanese language, defines the word *karada* からだ (体・躰・身体) as "the *nikutai* of a human being and of an animal" (*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 1081). Following explanations concerning *karada* are given: 1a) "The *nikutai* taken as something that hosts the 'soul'. The body (*nikutai*) including all parts such as head, chest and limbs" (*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 1081).

35 肉から成った身体。生きている人間の体。なまみのからだ。肉身 (*Niku kara natta shintai. Ikite iru ningen no karada. Namami no karada. Nikushin*).

36 Gottlieb (2005, 15) points at the two ways of defining Japanese language: the term *kokugo* (language of our country, our language) and *nihongo* (language of Japan). The former is used by native speakers and designates in the school system the Japanese language classes and textbooks destined for the Japanese. The language taught to foreigners or outside Japan is called *nihongo*, as promoted by Japan Foundation since the 1970s (Gottlieb 2005, 15).

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An explanation that is added in this dictionary is that *karada* can be defined as the *nikutai* that for instance has temporarily lost consciousness or is sleeping (*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 1081).

In reference to the acceptation 1a), the dictionary presents paradigmatic literary excerpts from *Ishiyamadera hon hokekyō gensan Heian chūki ten* 石山寺本法華経玄賛平安中期点 (Buddhist Scripture of Ishiyama Temple Mid-Heian period, ca. 950), *Shiga nikkai* 四河入海 (Four Rivers Flowing into the Sea) (1534), *Zōhyō monogatari* 雑浜物語 (The Tale of Miscellaneous Footmen, 1683), *Aguranabe* 安愚楽鍋 (Idle Talks in the Sukiyaki House, 1871) by Kanagaki Robun 仮名垣魯文 (1829-1894), *Seinen* 青年 (Young Men, 1911-1912) by Mōri Ogai 森鷗外 (1862-1922) (*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 1081).

Furter given acceptations for *karada* are: 1b) "the *nikutai* that is left (behind) after death and the loss of the soul" (*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 1081); 2) the *dōtai* 胴体;[37] 3) the physical condition, health (*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 1081).

One of its etymological explanations is that *karada* is an abbreviation of *karadachi* 躯立 (*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 1081).

The *NKDJ* cites in reference to *shintai* しんたい (身体), pointing out that its ancient reading was also *shindai* しんだい, the following explanation:

> 人間のからだ。肉体。体軀（たいく）。身（み）しんてい。(*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 658)
>
> The *karada* of a human being. The *nikutai*. The *taiku*. The *mi*. The *shintei*.

Literary examples are offered from the *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (Collection of a Myriad Leaves, VIII century), *Kanchi'inbon sanbōe* 観智院本三宝絵 (Illustration of the Three Jewels Kanchi'in Manuscript, 984) by Minamoto Tamenori 源為憲 (?-1011), *Nippo jisho*, *Tōsei shosei katagi* 当世書生気質 (The Character of Today's Students, 1885-1886) by Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遙 (1859-1935), *Yōgaku dokuhon* 幼学読本 (A Reader for Young Science, 1887) by Nishimura Tei 西邨貞 (1854-1904) (*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 658).

In *NKDJ* the entry *nikutai* にくたい (肉体) is introduced by the following definitions:

> なま身のからだ。肉によってできている身体。からだ。肉身。うつしみ。また、性的欲望の対象としてのからだ。 (*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 403)

37 *Dōtai* means the trunk, the torso (of an animal), but can also be used for indicating the body.

> The *karada* of the *namami*. The *shintai* made of flesh [*niku* 肉]. The *karada* [からだ]. The *nikushin*. The *utsushimi*. In addition, the body (*karada*) considered as an object of sexual desire.

Utsushimi is defined in the *NKDJ* as "the same as *utsusemi*". The *Kenkyūsha* dictionary translates *utsushimi* as "this present body, this (*one*'s) present existence; this mortal frame; this world (life); temporal things. A cicada; the cast-off skin of a cicada".

The first literary paradigm for *nikutai* cited in *NKDJ* is the Japanese abridged translation of Thomas à Kempis' *De imitatione Christi et contemptu omnium vanitatum mundi*, entitled *Shayoroku* 捨世録 (1596), wherein the word *nicutaiuo* (ニクタイヲ) appears.

The following example is taken from *Saikoku risshi hen* 西国立志編 (1877),[38] the translation by Nakamura Masanao 中村正直 (1832-1891) of Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help* (1859). Other paradigms for *nikutai* are sentences from Fukuzawa Yukichi's 福澤諭吉 (1835-1901) *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* 文明之概略 (An Outline of a Theory of Civilisation, 1875), Natsume Sōseki's 夏目漱石 (1867-1916) *Kusamakura* 草枕 (The Three Cornered World, 1906), Dazai Osamu's 太宰治 (1909-1948) *Hashire merosu* 走れメロス (Run, Melos!, 1940) (*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 403).

Mi み (身) is defined by the *NKDJ* as the "*karada* of a human being and of other animals. The *shintai*. The *nikutai*" (*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 594).

2.1 Ichikawa Hiroshi's Analysis of *mi*: An Alternative to Phenomenology

As mentioned in the introduction, alongside the etymons provided by the monolingual dictionaries, the illustrated terms related to 'body' may gain further singular nuances that change from author to author, artist to artist, when these words are inserted in a certain discussion.

Therefore, in order to highlight the complex lexical system and its multi-layered readings, in the following sections are presented examples of discourses concerning corporeality offered by Ichikawa Hiroshi and Uno Kuniichi. Rather than investigating philosophical insights in the strict sense, the aim in these sections is to illustrate the ways these terms are sensed, perceived and employed by the single authors, and the hybrid dimension intrinsic to the polysemous character of corporeality.

In his *'Mi' no kōzō: Shintairon o koete* 〈身〉の構造:身体論を超えて (The Structure of '*mi*': Beyond the Theory on the *shintai* [1993] 2007), Ichikawa Hiroshi presents a further panorama of analysis and lexi-

38 The publishing year of the *Saikoku risshi hen* indicated in *NKDJ* is 1870-71 (*NKDJ* [1972] 2001, 403).

cal diversification that helps to understand how in Japanese philosophy the discourse on the body unfolds as an alternative possibility of methodology.

First of all, it is important to underline that the gravitational point in Ichikawa's thought shifts from the *shintairon* 身体論, the theory/theories on the corporeality called *shintai* 身体, to the *miron* 身論, the theory on the corporeality called *mi* 身. The *shintairon* includes a vast range of theories on the body or discourses on the body developed in the last century. Especially during the 1970s, these theories have been widely influenced by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology,[39] when the term *shintai* definitely emerged as a protagonist among its synonyms to denote the 'body' in philosophical and sociological terms.[40]

It appears evident that Ichikawa signals the necessity of also rethinking phenomenology by suggesting a path for remapping the thought that addresses the body, and its constitutional elements of hermeneutics and epistemology.

In introducing his discussion on the structure of *mi* 身, Ichikawa explains the reason he chose this word instead of *shintai* 身体, which, according to the philosopher, is loaded with the history of the body-mind dualism:

> ここで「身体」でなくて「身(み)」という言葉を使いましたのは、「身体」という言葉はどうしても「精神」という言葉と対立するものとして考えられるし、英語のボディとマインドを連想させます。そうすると、ヨーロッパ流のマインド-ボディという二分法に拘束(こうそく)されたものの考え方と、それにもとづいた理論の歴史をひきずってしまう。. (Ichikawa [1993] 2007, 78)

> I used the word *mi* [身(み)] and not *shintai* [身体] here because the word *shintai* is inevitably considered in opposition to the word *seishin* [精神, mind], and because it leads us towards an association with the English words body [ボディ] and mind [マインド].

In doing so, one ends up by dragging a way of thinking restrained by the European-style mind-body dichotomy, and the history of theories based on this dichotomy.

39 Important philosophers who exerted their influence on Japanese *shintairon* are, among others, Edmund Husserl and Henri Bergson. In contemporary thought the prevailing influence is exerted by Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Giorgio Agamben.

40 One of the principal concerns in my research (see, for instance, Centonze 2018a) is the passage in cultural, artistic, aesthetic, critical and literary discourses from the 1960s' "age of the *nikutai*", as defined, for instance, by Ueno Kōshi (1989), to the 1970s' 'age of the *shintai*'. Some problems of the phenomenological theory in relation to the vast domain of corporealities in Hijikata's writing and dancing practice are discussed in Centonze 2018b.

Noteworthy in this passage is the use of the term *bodi* ボディ (body)[41] in order to designate the 'body' displayed in "European-style" thought. The same might be said of the term *maindo* マインド (mind).

A further detail I would like to stress is that, according to Ichikawa, the word *shintai* may stand in opposition to *seishin*, whereas we have seen above that, according to some dictionaries, such as *KRS*, the antonym for *seishin* is *nikutai*.

Ichikawa ([1993] 2007, 79) affirms that the *yamato kotoba* 大和言葉[42] み (*mi*; in this case written in *hiragana*) is endowed with a broad meaning and, when connected with the *kango* 漢語[43] 身 (*mi*), it eventually spreads its semantic area further.

Ichikawa (79) proposes that *mi* 身

1. expresses very well the dynamics of our concrete living *shintai*;
2. carries within it the possibility of a categorisation that differs from the binomial schematisation between spirit (*seishin* 精神) and body (*buttai* 物体), or spirit (*seishin*) and body (*shintai* 身体).

Here we encounter a further term that may be used to indicate the body, not included in the aforementioned list of synonyms for the human body registered by *KRS* or in the other dictionaries of synonyms: *buttai* 物体, which means "a body; a physical solid; an object; a substance; a material object", as *Kenkyūsha* has it.

Ichikawa (79) explicitly stresses that it is not his intention to force the spread of a nativist spirit of Japan (*nihonshugifū* 日本主義風) by addressing a special category linked to a special national language (*kokugo* 国語) called 'Japanese language', but that he senses *mi* み as a universal category. In Ichikawa's view (79), the category of *mi* expresses our concrete being in a better way, if compared to the word *bodi* ボディ and other similar words. As a consequence, the philosopher's (79) aim is to explore the possibility of systemising the body in an order that does not pertain to dualism.

Ichikawa (80) lists several ways of usage and acceptations in Japanese of the word *mi* 身.

1. み and 身 probably share the same root with *mi* 実, which means 'fruit', 'seed', 'berry', and therefore indicate a natural existence filled with content (*nakami* 中身, i.e. lit. 'the body inside') and substance (*naiyō* 内容).
2. The second acceptation of み is 'the flesh (*niku* 肉) without life', as in the expression *sakana no kirimi* (魚の切身), which means 'slices of fish' (*kirimi*, lit. 'cut, chopped body/fish'), or *su de sa-*

41 Both phonetics, *bodī* ボディー and *bodi* ボディ, are used in Japanese.

42 A word of Japanese origin, thus not written in *kanji*.

43 A Japanese word originally derived from Chinese, thus written in *kanji*.

kana no mi o shimeru (酢で魚の身をしめる), which means "marinate with vinegar the 'flesh/meat' of the fish".

3. The third semantic area occupied by *mi* 身 is the carnal body (*nikutai* 肉体) endowed with natural life (*tōzen seimei* 当然生命). Ichikawa (80) mentions the example of the expressions *mibushi ga itamu* (身節が痛む, the joints ache) and *oshiri no mi* (お臀の肉, the flesh/body of the backside).

Here it is important to note that in this latter example we are confronted with a further characteristic of Japanese written language, the *ateji* (lit. 'assigned character'),[44] which is produced when *kanji* are arbitrarily associated with completely different pronunciations, thus changing semantic nuance in different contexts: the *kanji* of 肉, which normally reads *niku*, appears in this case with the attributed reading *mi*.

4. *Mi* 身 may reflect slightly more than *niku* 肉 the sense of a living body, the *ikimi* 生き身, therefore its meaning may coincide with the living body (*ikite iru karada* 生きているからだ) as a whole. In this acceptation, Ichikawa offers the paradigm "being pregnant, and as a result give birth to a child" (*mimochi ni natte, sono kekka mi futatsu ni naru* 身もちになって、その結果身二つになる)[45] (80).
5. Since the living body (*ikimi* 生き身) manifests different modes of being, *mi* may be associated with the pluralistic modes of being of the body (*karada* からだ) as, for example, in the expression 'writhe' (*mimodaesuru* 身もだえする) and "take an oblique stance; assume a diagonal stance against one's opponent" (*hanmi ni kamaeru* 半身にかまえる). Ichikawa (80-1) explains that in this case *mi* displays the *mizama* 身様, a word that designates the state of being, the conditions, aspect, situation, circumstance of the body.
6. Here Ichikawa (81) argues that "since people (*ningen*) are not naked, and put on their body (*mi ni tsukeru* 身につける)[46] several items, *mi* indicates the clothes one wears or something one wears on one's body as an accessory".[47]
7. *Mi* is linked to the concrete living of a person, and its meaning is correlated to life (*seimei* 生命) and its incomparable value.

44 The *Kenkyūsha* dictionary defines *ateji* as a *kanji* "used as a phonetic symbol rather than for its meaning; an arbitrarily used substitute character".

45 *Mi futatsu ni naru* means lit. 'become two bodies'.

46 *Mi ni tsukeru* means literally 'to apply (something) onto one's body'. A further meaning of *mi ni tsukeru* is 'to learn', 'to acquire knowledge'. See also other expressions below that denote the strict link between knowledge and the body.

47 Given examples are *mitake* 身丈 (the length of a kimono minus the collar), or *migurumi* 身ぐるみ (all one has; all one's possessions) (81).

8. Ichikawa (81) argues that in this sense *mi* is strictly linked to society, because the living existence is achieved concretely within society. Therefore, he states, *mi* signifies the social living existence, thus the existence linked to quotidian life and work (as in case of the expression *miuri* 身売り, used for 'prostitute oneself').
9. The following passage in Ichikawa's (81) speculation is related to the self within a social system, thus *mi* leads to linguistic constructions such as *mitsukara*/*mizukara* 身つから (自ら), i.e. 'oneself'. Therefore, we may find it in relation to personal thoughts, to one's own advantage and to a sort of individual freedom in respect to others, such as in the expression *mi no tame* 身のため, which means 'for oneself; for one's own good'
10. Ichikawa (81-2) considers that, since the grammatical category of person (*ninshō* 人称) displays a variety of selves, *mi* also takes the rank of various persons. In brief, *mi* signifies the self which is multi-layered in its grammatical person. For example, *midomo* 身ども means 'I', *migara* 身が等 is used to indicate the personal pronoun 'we'. This self is certainly considered to be inserted into a social system, and Ichikawa suggests the 11th typology of *mi* as the socialised self, giving the example of *miuchi* 身内 (relative, family), an expression that displays blood relationship (*ketsuen* 血縁) or a shared territorial bond (*chien* 地縁). The 12th aspect of *mi*, viewed as a socialised self, is the social role or position such as in the expression *mi no hodo* 身のほど (one's social position; one's place), or *mi o tateru* 身をたてる, which means to 'establish oneself in life' (82).

The 13th aspect proposed by the philosopher (82-3) is that *mi* can be in a synonymic relation with *kokoro* 心, as for example in the locution *mi ni shimiru* 身にしみる, used when something soaks into the body or into the heart/inside, when someone is moved by something, or perceives a piercing cold; indeed, in these cases one can use as well the expression *kokoro ni shimiru* 心にしみる. Nevertheless, Ichikawa (83) lays emphasis on the former expression, which has a stronger impact, because it works on the conscious as well as on the unconscious level. The same is if we compare the expression *kokoro o awasu* 心をあわす (to be in harmony, to be connected) to *mi o awasu* 身をあわす, which expresses a broader experience, because it carries the nuance of becoming a unit that includes the whole body and the whole spirit (*zenshin zenrei* 全身全霊).[48] As a consequence, and this is suggested as the 14th meaning, *mi* is understood as the existence in its totality (*zentaisonzai* 全体存在), an entirety which embraces the corporeal

48 On the connection between *mi* and *ki* see Ichikawa (83-8).

sphere without excluding the spiritual/mental one, as in the expression *mi o motte shiru* 身をもって知る (know first-hand) (83).[49]

In conclusion, Ichikawa (84) states that the English word 'body' (ボディ) and the Japanese word *karada* からだ are *monostratum*-words, which implies that, for Ichikawa, *mi* 身 is endowed with a multi-layered character. It is stressed that the English word 'body' (ボディ) has the meaning of *buttai* 物体, and also of *buttaitekina shintai* 物体的な身体 (a solid/material/physical human body), and that the Japanese term *karada* からだ is strictly linked to the *kara* 殻 (a hull, a shell, a pod)[50] in *momigara* 籾殻 (hull rice),[51] to something dry like the stem, to the body without life, to the corpse, and to the emptiness (84).

2.2 Translating Corporeality (?)

As Ichikawa has introduced, it seems not easy to find the proper correspondences in foreign languages for the diverse definitions of corporeality coined in Japanese.

The ambiguity pertaining to the usage of body-terms in Japanese culture is all the more evident when we try to translate aesthetic or philosophical texts centred on corporeality.

Since it is not my intention to specifically address in this article the complex translational problems implied when approaching writings dealing with several terms for 'body',[52] I would like to simply list here and confront the translations offered in the Japanese-English dictionaries *Nelson* and *Kenkyūsha*.

For the compound 身体, the *Nelson* dictionary offers the two readings *shintai* and *karada*, followed by the translation "the body".

The translation given by the *Kenkyūsha* dictionary for *shintai* 身体 is "the body; the person; the system", and for *shintai no* 身体の, "bodily; physical; corporal".

The compound 肉体 *nikutai* is rendered in English by the *Nelson* dictionary as "the flesh, the body".

49 *Mi o motte shiru* indicates the knowledge based on personal/corporeal experience. It should be underlined that many expressions of knowledge and memory are composed with the terms *mi*, *karada* and *shintai*.

50 The online dictionary *Weblio* provides for the same *kanji* also the reading *gara*, translated as "chicken (stock) bones; a chicken carcass; 2) poor-quality coke; 3) leftovers; remnants; remains".

51 The *Kenkyūsha* dictionary provides for *momigara* the translations "chaff; rice hulls, rice husks".

52 For the rendering of some definitions for 'body', see my discussions and translations, for instance, in Centonze 2018a; 2020.

According to the *Kenkyūsha* dictionary, *nikutai* 肉体 means "the flesh; the body; the outer man; *one*'s physique", and *nikutai no* 肉体の means "corporal; carnal; fleshly; bodily; physical; sensual".

A further analysis of the English translations for the single sign-components that constitute the words *shintai* and *nikutai* gives us information also about the rendering and semantic area of *mi* and *karada*:

体

The *Nelson* dictionary lists in reference to this sign the *on'yomi* (the Chinese style reading of a character) "*tai*" translated as "the body; substance; object; reality; style, form; image counter".

The *kanji* 体 can also be pronounced *tei*, and symbolises "appearance, air; condition, state, form". The verb *taisuru* means "obey, comply with; keep in mind". The substantive *karada*, that is to say its *kun'yomi* (the Japanese style reading of a character), is translated as "body; health".

The *Kenkyūsha* dictionary offers for *karada* the translations "a body; the [*one*'s] (whole) body; the [*one*'s] trunk [torso]; the body".

身

The *Nelson* dictionary classifies this sign with the *on'yomi* "*shin*", and the *kun'yomi* "*mi*" and "*karada*". The translations presented are: "body; person; the quick; one's station in life; self; heart, soul, mind; ability; flesh, meat; life; blade; container; garment width". The verb *mijirogu* is rendered in its English translation as "stir (oneself) slightly" and the substantive *migonashi* "deportment".

Mi is rendered in the *Kenkyūsha's New Japanese-English Dictionary* as "1) *one*'s body [person]; 2) (*one's*) self, *one*self; 3) status, position; 4) feeling, heart; 5) meat; 6) the body (of a container)".

肉

The sign 肉, also written 宍, is categorised in the *Nelson* dictionary (1997, 893) under the *on'yomi* "*niku*" and is translated as "flesh, muscles; meat; the flesh; seal pad, ink pad; thickness, succulence". A further reading is the *kun'yomi* "*shishi*", translated as "muscles; meat". It is specified, that today the sign 宍 is only read *shishi*.

According to the *Kenkyūsha* dictionary, *niku*, means "flesh; muscles; (superfluous) flesh; flab; 2) meat; fish; game; 3) flesh; pulp; 4) the flesh; 5) thickness; 6) (wealth of) content; 7) sealing ink; an ink pad".

3 *Shintairon* and the Questions Generated by Corporeality

In his study "2001 nen no shintai 2001", Uno Kuniichi (2000), disciple and translator of Gilles Deleuze, suggests the problems that *shintairon* generates, and the complexity hidden behind the translation into foreign language of the words *shintai*, *karada* and *nikutai*.

The scholar begins his interrogation on the body from his own body. Uno (2000, 17-18) first observes what he has in front of his eyes, thus starting from a visual perspective. While sitting in front of his desk, he sees his hands on the keyboard typing the essay on the body, i.e. on the *shintai* 身体.[53] These hands seem to be his own hands and to belong to his *shintai*. He also acknowledges the body-parts, such as the thighs and abdomen, which are not concealed under the desk and are visible to him (18). The philosopher states that "[h]ere is my *shintai* and this *shintai* is writing" (18), and adds that his body (*shintai*) is urged by his consciousness (*ishiki* 意識) to write. This consciousness is melted into the *shintai*. He knows that he cannot separate himself from the body, but at the same time it is dismembered, because he abruptly feels the typing hands as if detached from his body, in other words he grasps his body as the object of investigation (*taishō* 対象) (18). Uno affirms that he is the body, and he is not the body.[54]

> I am the body [*shintai* 身体], and I am not. When I say "my" body, it is as if the body that 'belongs' to me is distinguished from myself. Though, I cannot think that I can exist only as a soul/spirit [*tamashii* 魂] without my body. I am neither more nor less than this body. However, I am by no means this body itself, and between me and the body there is always a sort of chasm.
>
> I wonder if this chasm is the spirit/mind [*seishin* 精神] or the consciousness. (18)

Uno (18) further assumes that it is also impossible that the mind and the consciousness are the same, and suggests that the distance in between may be called the body (*shintai*).

It is evident that the personal pronoun 'I' (*watashi* 私) becomes fundamental to Uno's discourse, although projected into a perspective of *Verfremdung*.

53 Observing and sensing one's body, while writing on the body, is a common issue also in dance studies related to the concept of "bodily writing". As Foster (2010, 291) highlights, "[a] body, whether sitting writing or standing thinking or walking talking or running screaming, is a bodily writing. Its habits and stances, gestures, and demonstrations, every action of its various regions, areas, and parts – all these emerge out of cultural practices, verbal or not, that construct corporeal meaning."

54 I intentionally respect here the Japanese sentence-construction, where the possessive pronoun is not used.

At the same time Uno (18-19) creates a sort of distance between him and the theory on the body stating that he is interested in and surprised by it, but that he also has a suspicion about the "so-called *shintairon*" and its specialists. What he tries to investigate is the reason why the *shintai* becomes such a problem. A series of questions follow:

> Why on earth does the body [*shintai* 身体] become such a problem? And, what on earth *is* the *shintai* that becomes a problem? What kind of body [*shintai*] is it? Is it an object of investigation to this degree? Or, if we consider that the *shintai* is not a simple object, then how should we define what its substance/reality [*jittai* 実体] is? (18-19; italics added)

According to Uno (19), the only one who knows his/her *shintai* is oneself, who coexists with the *shintai*. Nevertheless, without scientific knowledge, we do not know our body as a doctor or a biologist does. At the same time, it is impossible to know exhaustively the *shintai* both from the outside and from the inside (19). He states that "the *shintai* is neither inside of me, nor outside of me".

At this point the philosopher mentions three denominations of the body, that "nearly anyone might sense": *shintai* 身体, *nikutai* 肉体 and *karada* からだ. He argues that, depending on the point of view, the *shintai* is our "everything". As maintained by Uno (19), while it is in a "unity" (*ittai* 一体) with the soul (*tamashii* 魂), spirit (*seishin* 精神), mind (*kokoro* 心) and emotions (*kanjō* 感情), it is also independent. This makes it that the living *shintai* (*ikita shintai* 生きた身体), ours and that of the others (*tasha* 他者), cannot be a mere object of investigation or "object" (*kyakutai* 客体) for us and for others. There is the other (alter) called "my *shintai*" (*watashi no shintai* 私の身体), and this other has further others (19).

Consulting the etymon for *corps* in a French dictionary, i.e. "la partie matérielle des êtres animés",[55] the Japanese philosopher expresses his enthusiastic admiration, because, as he puts it, this definition fits the material part of the *shintai* (19). However, Uno also adds that the burdensome point is "that the *shintai* is an animated being/lived existence (*'ikita' sonzai*「生きた」存在) (19). Since it is a living/animated material (*ikita busshitsu* 生きた物質), and a lived one (*ikirarete iru* 生きられている), it refuses to be captured as a part and resists being made an object of investigation.

Uno individuates the problems in verbally designating the *shintai*, which is actually lacking, or lost, or lost from sight. It is not ap-

55 The definition is translated by Uno (19) in Japanese in the following way: "*ikita sonzai no busshitsuteki bubun* 生きた存在の物質的部分".

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propriately thought (20). In brief, Uno argues, that it is cursed. As he writes, "[t]hen, it is made roaming in the chain of consumption and exchange, after being dressed with the values of pleasure, health and beauty" (20). Actually, we do not know what we are questioning, when we talk about the *shintai*, and the reason why we are investigating it is not understood as well (20).

In order to demonstrate that the unity between the mind and the body has also been affirmed in European philosophical tradition, Uno (20) quotes from Kudō Kisaku's and Saitō Hiroshi's translation (Etika エティカ, 1980) the *propositio* 2 included in the third part "De origine et natura affectuum" of Baruch Spinoza's *Ethica* (1677)[56] and other statements concerning the body that appear in this section. It is interesting to note here that the Latin word *corpus* employed in Spinoza's treatise is translated as *shintai* 身体 in Japanese, and that *mens* is rendered in Japanese *seishin* 精神. By shifting then the attention to Friedrich Nietzsche's *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882; 1887) (*Yorokobashiki chishiki* 悦ばしき知識, translated by Shida Shōzō and published in 1993), in the wake of the re-reading of philosophical tradition by his mentor Gilles Deleuze, Uno introduces Nietzsche's thought as a "more direct way of talking about the *nikutai*". The quoted passage regards the misunderstanding produced by philosophical history concerning the 'body' denounced by Nietzsche, who in this case refers to the particular German term *Leib*.[57] In relation to this specific context and thought, the Japanese translation by Shida presents the word *nikutai* 肉体 for *Leib*.

It is here that Uno (2000, 22) affirms that also in European philosophy, interrogations about the *shintai* or *nikutai* have been developed. Nevertheless, he encloses in parentheses the question of whether the translation of *shintai* and *nikutai*, or the Japanese translations of the foreign terms, might generate a difference of nuance and further problems. Some reflections on the contraposition between *shintai* and *seishin* follow.

In any case, it is clear to Uno (22) that neither Spinoza nor Nietzsche try to understand the body from a materialistic perspective.

56 The *propositio 2* by Spinoza cites: "Nec corpus mentem ad cogitandum nec mens corpus ad motum neque ad quietem nec ad aliquid (si quid est) aliud determinare potest" (http://www.ethicadb.org/pars.php?parid=3&lanid=3&lg=en&PHPSESSID=dc63f91c0daf8a05f843f4fbd30d3c0c).

57 "[…] und oft genug habe ich mich gefragt, ob nicht, im Grossen gerechnet, Philosophie bisher überhaupt nur eine Auslegung des Leibes und ein Missverständniss des Leibes gewesen ist. Hinter den höchsten Werthurteilen, von denen bisher die Geschichte des Gedankens geleitet wurde, liegen Missverständnisse der leiblichen Beschaffenheit verborgen, sei es von Einzelnen, sei es von Ständen oder ganzen Rassen" (Friedrich Nietzsche, "Vorrede zur zweiten Ausgabe", Punkt 2) http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/FW).

Some general considerations on *shintai*, *nikutai* and *karada* are given by Uno (23).

The first clarification made, is that, in reference to *karada*, the word *shintai* is preferred over *nikutai* when the discourse concerns the philosophical realm (23). I would like to argue that this enunciation implies that the word *karada* may indicate the term 'body' in a broader sense with respect to the other two words.

In brief, Uno (23) tries to categorise these three corporealities in the following way (cf. Centonze 2018a, 24-5):

> 1) *Nikutai* 肉体:
> is on the organic side and adjacent to flesh. Uno (23-4) suggests that it corresponds to the French etymon *chair*, which also refers to *niku*.
>
> 2) *Shintai* 身体:
> belongs, according to Uno (24), rather to the category of object/solid (*buttai* 物体) and assumes, in a certain sense, a neutral and inorganic aspect. The scholar mentions the possible French translation *corps*.

Uno (24) states that it is certain that *shintai* and *nikutai* are basically employed as synonyms, therefore, by no means are these words rigorously distinguished or separated. He further states that, when we question the *shintai*, we inquire after the *nikutai* at the same time. In any case, he concludes, it is not self-evident what *shintai* means or is.

> 3) *Karada* からだ:
> might correspond to both *nikutai* as well as to *shintai*.

Uno (24) suggests that *karada* moves in an oscillating way between the former and the latter, while embracing more *shintai* rather than the *nikutai*. The term *karada* is always written in *hiragana* in Uno's text. As a consequence, he implicitly employs the *wago* からだ (term of Japanese origin) in this essay and not its corresponding *kanji* 体.

> In addition, it seems that we think that by means of the term *shintai*, rather than by means of the word nikutai, we are able to consider the "*karada*" within a slightly wider amplitude and context, but, after all, the swaying of our thought concerning the *karada* is contained in the difference between these two words. (Uno 2000, 24)

Furthermore, Uno stresses that at the very least we cannot avoid the intricateness of the question, because even if we try to look for the exact and precise meaning, the Japanese term からだ originally signifies the *shitai* 死体 (the dead body).

From the philosopher's statement emerges a thin frontier that divides *karada*, *shintai* and *nikutai* and makes their meaning and use ambiguously differentiated and diversified. This is further an intrinsic characteristic of the Japanese language that tends to be more connotative and contextual than denotative.

Thus, paradoxically, we can say that there is a difference, and at the same time there is not.

4 An Open Conclusion

The more one deepens the discourse on the body in Japan, the more one discovers the paradoxical nexus between the hypertrophic differentiation operated in its cultural system and the ambiguity intrinsically preserved. On one side this system unfolds a highly potentiated specialisation and specification in productions of signs and words in reference to corporeality, while on the other side it invigorates and fosters the actual impossibility of distinction of something that seems to be culturally ungraspable and not fixable by language. We may say that the reduction of complexity operated within the Japanese cultural system is at the same time an augmentation and amplification of the ambiguity, vagueness, equivocalness and obliqueness by which it is characterised.

Nevertheless, this diversified lexical treasure that surrounds, sustains and recreates bodies should draw attention to the central position occupied by corporeality itself in Japanese culture, where the body/bodies emerge as a catalyst of cultural production.

This is all the more evident when we approach the body in performance practices, as well as in aesthetic texts.

With regard to this, an enlightening example is Hijikata Tatsumi's construction of diverse corporealities in performance, his exploration and challenge of the notion of bodies and knowledge that are enhanced by the diversification of corporealities in his performative and corporeal writing practice (Centonze 2020).

I would like to conclude by opening a further space of reflection and introduce here some insights offered by critic and playwright Kan Takayuki.

Kan (1983) defines the theory on the body, i.e. *shintairon*, as follows:

> *Shintairon* is the theory [*ron* 論] 'of' the *karada* [からだ] 'about' the *karada* [からだ] [made] 'by' the *karada* [からだ]. *Shintairon* should be a theory in which the *karada* [からだ] is the subject of theory, and in which the *karada* [からだ] is also the object of theory. (Kan 1983, 11)

In Kan's view, it is relevant to give with one's own body (*mi o motte* 身を以て) a clear philosophical meaning to knowledge and percep-

tion, as well as to the act (*kōi* 行為), and at the same time, to clarify the states of existence based on bodily cognisance and acts. With regard to this, he adds, it does not make much sense to choose between ontology (*sonzairon* 存在論) and epistemology (*ninshikiron* 認識論). Epistemology is besieged by ontology and ontology is entangled with epistemology.

Thus, as Kan (12) claims, the contemporary *shintairon* has to be the circuit that restores the unity among perception, thought and existence by means of the body.

Abbreviations

HNJ = Doi T. 土井忠生; Morita T. 森田武; Chōnan M. 長南実 (eds) (1980). *Hōyaku Nippo jisho* 邦訳日葡辞書 (A Japanese Translation of the Japanese-Portuguese Dictionary). Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten.

KKJ = Tōgō Y. 東郷吉男 (ed.) (2003). *Karada kotoba jiten* からだことば辞典 (Dictionary of Body-Words). Tōkyō: Tōkyōdō shuppan.

KKSJ = Yamaguchi Y. 山口佳紀 (ed.) (2008). *Kurashi no kotoba: Shingogen jiten* 暮らしのことば 新語源辞典 (The Words of Life: New Dictionary of Etymology). Tōkyō: Kōdansha.

KRS = Ōno S. 大野晋; Hamanishi M. 浜西正人(eds) (1981). *Kadokawa ruigo shinjiten* 角川類語新辞典 (Kadokawa new dictionary of synonyms). Tōkyō: Kadokawa shoten.

NKDJ = Nihon kokugo daijiten dainihan henshūiinkai 日本国語大辞典第二版編集委員会; Shōgakukan kokugo jiten henshūbu 小学館国語辞典編集部 (eds) (2001). *Nihon kokugo daijiten* 日本国語大辞典 (Great Dictionary of Japanese National Language), vol. 12. Tōkyō: Shōgakukan.

RD = Shibata T. 柴田武; Yamada S. 山田進 (eds) (2002). *Ruigo daijiten* 類語大辞典 (The Great Dictionary of Synonyms). Tōkyō: Kōdansha.

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The Polyhedral and Elusive Nature of Geyao

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Abstract For the last six and a half centuries, a lot has been written about Ge ware, but mostly in a fragmentary way that has made the understanding of this ceramic ware complex and confusing. Major archaeological excavations of the past 30 years have provided scholars with an unprecedented and unexpected wealth of material that has allowed them to piece together a much more detailed history of Chinese ceramics from the 10th to the fourteenth century (and beyond). However, the identification of Ge ware and its production place still elude the academic community. After analysing ancient literary records on Ge ware and related archaeological excavations, this paper suggests a new approach to the subject in the attempt to break the deadlock in which experts have got entangled.

Keywords Ge ware. Longquan kilns. Laohudong kilns. Chinese ceramics. Guan ware.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Textual Evidence. – 3 Archaeological Evidence. – 4 Conclusion.

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1 Introduction[1]

For the last six and a half centuries, a lot has been written about Ge ware, but mostly in a fragmentary way that has made the understanding of this ceramic ware complex and confusing. Major archaeological excavations of the past 30 years have provided scholars with an unprecedented and unexpected wealth of material that has allowed to piece together a much more detailed history of Chinese ceramics from the 10th to the fourteenth century (and beyond). The kiln site producing the mysterious Ru ware has been positively identified at Qingliangsi, Baofeng (Wang 1991; Henansheng 2008, 2009); the official kilns run by the Xiuneisi have been located in Hangzhou just outside the Southern Song imperial palace (Du 2002b; Qin, Du 2004; Du 2004); excavations undergoing at Zhanggongxiang, Ruzhou, at the time of writing may reveal the site manufacturing Northern Guan ware, the first kiln set up by the court; so-called 'numbered Jun', believed to be an official ware of the Northern Song court has been redated to the Yuan-Ming period (Qin, Zhao, Li 2003; Li 2008; Rastelli 2011); we have a very precise chronology for the Ding complex (Beijing yishu bowuguan 2012), as well as for Yaozhou (Rastelli 2008), where explorations have recently resumed; the Longquan area and Jingdezhen kiln complex have been thoroughly excavated. The list could be easily extended, except for Ge ware, which continues to elude the academic community.

The real conundrum is that, unlike Ru ware, which was identified by Sir Percival David in 1936 (David 1936-37), we cannot define with certainty the outer look of Ge ware, thus making the search for its manufacturing place tentative and so far inconclusive. Our sources of information are ancient literary records and archaeological material, but as they do not tally, experts continue to disagree on the basic cornerstones, that is, its physical features, where and when it was fired.

2 Textual Evidence

The earliest text describing Ge ware is the *Zhizheng zhi ji* 至正直记 (Faithful records of the Zhizheng reign [1341-1368]) where the author Kong Qi 孔齊 calls it "Gegedong 哥哥洞" and then "Gege 哥哥":

> In winter 1355 I bought a *ding* [shaped] incense burner of Gegedong ware in Hangzhou. It has a fine body, and although new, its colour is lustrous like that of old vessels. Knowledgeable people still doubt about it, but when I met Wang Deweng, he said that recent Gege

1 It is the Author's choice to use both classical and modern simplified Chinese characters, respectively for classical and modern sources.

Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie orientale
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> ware was exactly like old Guan ware and that they can be distinguished only by very careful examination. (Kong [1363] 1991, *juan* 4)

Kong Qi does not specify the location of the kiln site, he only discloses that he bought his incense burner in Hangzhou and that recent Gege ware is exactly like Guan ware; the character *dong* 洞in "Gegedong" is the same as in "Laohudong 老虎洞", the place in Hangzhou where Southern Song Guan ware was fired, but this is too insignificant a factor to link the two. Kong Qi connects Gegedong/Gege with Hangzhou, but in a very loose way that prevents us from concluding that at the end of the Yuan dynasty Ge ware was manufactured in Hangzhou.

In order of time, the next literary source discussing Ge ware is the *Ge gu yao lun* 格古要論 (Essential Theories on Antiquities), published in 1387 by Cao Zhao 曹昭 (1387; David 1971), who under the paragraph dedicated to Ge ware reports:

> Old Ge ware is blue/green (*qing* 青) in colour, the shading is uneven and it has iron foot and purple mouth.[2] Pieces with good colour are like Dong ware, nowadays they are rare. Those made in groups are late Yuan, those newly fired have coarse body and unpleasant colour.[3] (Cao 1387, lower *juan* 卷, f. 2a)

Cao Zhao seems to distinguish three phases of Ge ware: old, late Yuan and early Ming; the old ones, fired sometime before the late Mongol period, are characterised by dark footrim and mouthrim and the glaze colour is blue/green like Dong ware. Dong ware is described by Cao Zhao in the previous paragraph as: "Light blue/green with many fine lines, purple mouth and iron foot. In comparison with Guan ware, it has no red colour, the quality is coarse and unrefined, not as smooth and glossy as Guan ware. Nowadays it is rarely seen" (Cao 1387, lower *juan* 卷, ff. 1b-2a). Like Kong Qi twenty-five years earlier, Cao Zhao compares early Ge to Guan ware, but he does it indirectly through a genre – Dong – that has never been positively identified; according to him, Dong is similar, although inferior, to Guan ware, and the best-coloured Ge is equivalent to Dong ceramics. The 'iron foot and purple mouth' feature first mentioned in the *Ge gu yao lun* will become a constant factor repeated in many texts. It is worth noticing that the character for Dong ware in the *Ge gu yao lun* is 董 which does not correspond to *dong* 洞 in Kong Qi's "Gegedong".

2 *Tiezu zikou* 鐵足紫口 literally means 'iron foot and purple mouth', but it refers to specific effects: the unglazed footrim turned dark, reddish brown when reoxidizing at the end of the firing cycle, while the mouthrim, where the glaze ran very thin, assumed an ochre-brown tinge.

3 Ove non diversamente specificato le traduzioni sono dell'Autrice.

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The *Xuande dingyi pu* 宣德鼎彝谱 (Manual of Sacrificial Vessels of the Xuande Reign [1426-1435]), dated 1428 (Lü 1428), but circulating at the earliest from the end of the fifteenth century,[4] is the first text to link Ge ware to the Song dynasty in *juan* 卷 6 and 8, where two different types of incense burners are discussed and both are said to imitate the elegance of Song Ge ware.

In 1539, Lu Shen 陸深 (1477-1544) in his *Chunyu tang suibi* 春雨堂隨筆 (Jottings from the Hall of Spring Rain) supplies new pieces of information on the aspect and kiln location of Ge ware: it is characterised by shallow/light white broken veins called *baijisui* 百圾碎 (hundred fragments) and was produced in the Song dynasty at Liutianyao in Longquan by the elder of two brothers, whose surname is Zhang, and this is why it was named 'Ge' (Lu [1539] 1936, 6). Kong Qi and Cao Zhao had compared Ge with Guan ware, but they did not reveal the production place of Ge ware; we may be induced to infer that it was Hangzhou because the city is mentioned and we know that the Guan kilns were located there, but the two fourteenth century authors do not suggest it.[5] What casts doubt on the reliability of Lu Shen's statement is that the story of the two Zhang brothers is suddenly brought up roughly 250 years after the Southern Song dynasty had ended, and no previous literary record on the Longquan kilns mentions them.[6]

Subsequent texts, written from the mid-sixteenth century,[7] report the story of the two Zhang brothers to explain the origin of the

4 The *Xuande dingyi pu* 宣德鼎彝谱 (Manual of Sacrificial Vessels of the Xuande Reign [1426-1435]), attributed to Lü Zhen 吕振 (1365-1426) and Wu Zhong 吳中(unknown dates), among others, often quotes from the *Da Ming hui dian* 大明會典 (Collected Statutes of the Great Ming Dynasty) planned in 1372 with the title *Huang Ming hui dian* 皇明會典 (Collected Statutes of the Magnificent Ming Dynasty), changed to *Da Ming hui dian* by imperial edict in 1496, published in 1508 and revised during the Longqing (1567-1573) reign period (Qin 2002, 17).

5 As a matter of fact, Kong Qi refers to Qingyuan 庆元, one of the counties in Chu prefecture 處州 producing Longquan ware, but he does in rather disparaging terms: although coarse, blue/green wares from Qingyuan look exquisite in comparison with pieces ordinarily sold on the streets (Kong [1363] 1991).

6 The main pre-fourteenth century sources discussing Longquan kilns are: the *Jilei bian* 雞肋編 (Compilation of Things of Little Value) by Zhuang Chuo 莊綽, published in 1133 (Zhuang [1133] 1983); the *Yun lu man chao* 雲麓漫鈔 (Casual Writings by the Foot of Cloud Mountain) by Zhao Yanwei 趙彦衛, appeared in 1206 (Zhao [1206] 1996); the *Tan zhai bi heng* 坦斋笔衡 (Notes from the Tranquil Study) by Ye Zhi 叶寘, compiled in 1211 (Ye 1211). Texts on the Longquan kilns are listed by Huang, Luo, Zhou (2011, 64-9).

7 The most notable are the 1561 edition of the *Zhejiang tongzhi* 浙江通志 (Zhejiang Gazetteer) (*juan* 8, *Dili zhi* 地理志 Geography section) revised by Hu Zongxian 胡宗宪 (1512-1565) and written by Xue Yingqi 薛應旂 (1500-1574) (Xue, Hu [1561] 1983, 444); the *Qi xiu lei gao* 七修類稿 (Manuscript Arranged in Seven Categories) (*juan* 6, *Shiwu lei* 事物類 Things) by Lang Ying 郎瑛 (1487-1566), published in 1566 (Lang Ying [1566] 1959, 833); the *Shuo lüe* 說略 (Small Talk) by Gu Qiyuan 顧起元 (1565-1628) in 30 *juan* printed in 1613 (Gu 1613, *juan* 23); the *Tiangong kaiwu* 天工開物 (The Exploitation of the Works of Nature) by Song Yingxing 宋應星 (1587-1666), published in 1637 (Song [1637] 1936, middle *juan*).

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name 'Ge' and consequently place Ge kilns in Chuzhou, more precisely at Liutian in Longquan. Except for the 1561 edition of the *Zhejiang tongzhi* 浙江通志, which explicitly states that it is unknown when the Zhang brothers were active, the other sources link them to the Song dynasty.

The only two authors out of the chorus are Gao Lian 高濂(1573-1620) and Wang Shixing 王士性 (1547-1598)[8] who relate Ge to Guan ware, rather than Longquan, and declare that it was made at Fenghuangshan – the site of the Jiaotanxia kilns, first discovered in 1930. According to Gao Lian, so-called Guan ware was fired by the Xiuneisi for the emperor, the kilns being in Hangzhou at Fenghuangshan, while Ge ware was fired by private potters. Wang Shixing is more concise: he simply affirms that Guan and Ge wares were made at Fenghuangshan, but he specifies that this happened in the Song dynasty, while Gao Lian does not mention the period when Guan and Ge were manufactured.

Qing dynasty authors do not provide any new insight on Ge ware,[9] they simply re-propose what their Ming predecessors had written, at times generating even more confusion.[10] The prevailing notion was that Ge ware was produced in the Song dynasty by the elder of two brothers in Longquan. Its distinguishing features were the so-called 'purple mouth and iron foot' apparently denoting a dark body, a pale glaze varying from bean green to millet beige, and crackles.

In modern research crackles are a crucial feature in the identification of Ge ware, however in ancient literature up to the end of the sixteenth century, when they are described, they are referred to as *duanwen* 斷紋, literally 'broken lines', usually pale in colour, called *baijisui*, that is, 'one hundred fragments' alluding to their density and

8 Gao Lian 高濂 (1573-1620) is the author of the *Zun sheng ba jian* 遵生八箋 (Eight Discourses on the Art of Living), published in 1591 (Gao 1591, *juan* 14, ff. 44a-46a), while Wang Shixing 王士性 (1547-1598) wrote the *Guang zhi yi* 广志绎 (Further Elucidations on my Extensive Record of Travels) in 1597; the relevant section is in *juan* 4, *Jiangnan zhu sheng* 江南诸省 (Provinces in the Jiangnan region) (Wang [1597] 1981, 70).

9 The most influential Qing texts mentioning Ge ware are the 1655 (Shunzhi reign, 1644-1661) and 1761 (Qianlong reign, 1735-1796) editions of the *Longquanxian zhi* 龍泉縣志 (Longquan County Annals) (Longquan 1655; 1762); *Yanshan zhai zaji* 硯山齋雜記 (Jottings from the Inkstone Mountain Studio) by Sun Chengze 孫承澤 (1592-1676), *juan* 4 (Sun Seventeenth Century); the *Wuli xiao shi* 物理小識 (Little Understanding of the Laws of Nature), by Fang Yizhe 方以智 (1611-1671), *juan* 8 (Fang Seventeenth Century); the *Nanyao biji* 南窯筆記 (Notes on the Southern Kiln) published in the 1730s or 1740s by an anonymous writer (AA [eighteenth century] 1936); the *Taoshuo* 陶說 (Description of Pottery) by Zhu Yan 朱琰, printed in 1774 (Zhu [1774] 1947); the *Wenfang sikao tushuo* 文房肆考圖說 by Tang Bingjun 唐秉鈞 (unknown dates), published in 1778 (Tang 1778); the *Jingdezhen taolu* 景德鎮陶錄 (Record of Jingdezhen Ceramics) by Lan Pu 藍浦 (unknown dates), appeared in 1815 (Lan [1815] 1947).

10 Lan Pu, for example, in his *Jingdezhen tao lu* interprets the *Ge gu yao lun* as saying that the clay used to make Gegeyao came from Hangzhou (Lan [1815] 1947, *juan* 6, f. 3b).

to the appearance of the surface of the vessel which looks as if made of many fragments pieced together.[11]

The first to elaborate on crackles is Gao Lian in 1591: he classifies the ice-cracks type in eel-blood colour as the best, followed by those similar to plum blossom petals stained with ink, and in third position small fragmented lines (*xi suiwen* 細碎紋). Gao then introduces the concept of 'concealed lines' (*yinwen* 隱紋) and likens the pattern on Guan ware to crab's claws and that on Ge ware to fish roe.[12] A few years later Zhang Yingwen 張應文 (Zhang 1595, upper *juan*, ff. 9b-10a) proposes the exact same classification as Gao Lian's, and in the 1620s Gu Yingtai 谷應泰adopts Gao Lian's 'crab's claws' and 'fish roe' definitions to distinguish between Guan and Ge wares (Gu 1621-1627, *juan* 5, ff. 2b-3a). One hundred and fifty years later Zhu Yan 朱琰reports the same expression when quoting Gu Yingtai's *Bo wu yao lan* 博物要覽 (Essential Survey of All Things of Interest) (Zhu [1774] 1947, *juan* 2, f. 7b), and so does Tang Bingjun 唐秉鈞 in 1778 (Tang 1778, *juan* 3, ff. 31b-32b). In his influential *Jingdezhen taolu* 景德鎮陶錄 (Record of Jingdezhen Ceramics) of 1815, Lan Pu 藍浦 attributes the distinction to the *Tang shi si kao* 唐氏肆考, which apparently also adds that on crazed pieces the crackles are big and small:[13] this is the first time that an author hints at the presence of a double network of crackles. A century later, Xu Zhiheng 許 之衡 (d. 1925) explains that Ge ware is characterised by large and small *suikuaiwen* 碎塊紋 or 'fragmented lines' called *kaipian* 開片 (Xu [1915] 1936, *juan* 1), literally 'divided sections (of a larger piece)',[14] an account shared by Chen Wanli 陈万里 in 1928 ([1928] 1989). In modern research the double mesh of crackles is regarded as a distinguishing feature unique to Ge ware and it is commonly referred to as *jinsi tiexian* 金絲鐵線 or 'golden thread and iron wire', a term hinted at as inherited from old texts, although

11 In his *Ge gu yao lun*, Cao Zhao notices that Dong ware is characterised by many fine lines and as he compares Ge to Dong, we can assume that Ge ware also has many fine lines (Cao 1387, lower *juan* 卷, ff. 1b-2a). Lu Shen ([1539] 1936, 6), Wang Shizhen ([1597] 1981, 70) and Lang Ying ([1566] 1959, *juan* 6, Shiwu lei 事物類 Things) all define as "one hundred fragments" the many crackles on Ge ware.

12 The "crab's claws" definition to describe crackles on Guan ware had already been applied by Cao Zhao in his *Ge gu yao lun*; the difference in terminology is that Cao Zhao uses the term *wen* 紋 (Cao 1387, lower *juan* 卷, f. 1b), while Gao Lian uses *yinwen* 隱紋 or "concealed lines" (Gao 1591, *juan* 14, f. 42b).

13 Lan Pu (Lan [1815] 1947, *juan* 6, f. 3b) says to be quoting the *si kao* 肆考of the Tang family (Tang shi 唐氏), that is, the *Wenfang sikao tushuo* 文房肆考圖說 (Illustrated notes from the study room) by Tang Bingjun (Tang 1778), which however does not report anything about a double set of crackles on Ge ware. Given the short chronological distance between the publication of the *Wenfang sikao tushuo* (1778) and the *Jingdezhen taolu* (1815), this discrepancy does not invalidate the conclusion that the double mesh of crackles on Ge ware was noticed very late in time.

14 In modern research, *kaipian* has become the technical term for 'crackles' on glazed wares.

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this is not the case.[15] This definition appears for the first time in an eighteenth century anonymous text, the *Nanyao biji* 南窑笔记 (Notes on the Southern Kiln), in relation to Guanyao (spelt with the character *guan* 觀, rather than the usual *guan* 官), but not when discussing Ge ware (AA [eighteenth century] 1936). For its first use in relation to Ge ware, we need to wait for two hundred years, when Sun Yingzhou 孙瀛洲 lists the many different colours of Ge crackles (Sun 1958, 62). In 1962 Chen Wanli, elaborating on his previous statement, affirms that the double mesh of crackles is the main characteristic of handed down Ge ware (distinguishing it from Ru and Guan), and because the big ones are usually black and the small ones soy brown, they are called "golden thread and iron wire" (Chen 1963, 31). This is how the double crazing and its descriptive name become a constant attribute in the description of Ge ware, but as the concept of "the five famous wares of the Song dynasty", this is a modern formula (Rastelli 2016). The *jinsi tiexian* is indeed a characteristic of 'handed down' objects, that is, specimens now in the collections of the National Palace Museum in Taipei, the Palace Museum in Beijing, the Shanghai Museum, the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Freer Gallery of Art – for this reason in this paper they will be referred to as 'museum Ge' **[fig. 1]**. In time, this category has virtually come to coincide with Ge ware, mainly because it was recognised as such by the Qianlong emperor who had his poems inscribed on some of the pieces in his possession. In recent years, some of these specimens have been re-dated to the Ming and Qing periods, thus showing that the attributions made by the Qianlong emperor, and later by the compilers of the catalogues of the imperial collection when it became of public dominion, were based on what at the time was believed to be Ge ware (Qingshi [1925] 2004; Lundun 1935; Qin 2017, 96).

At the 1992 symposium on Ge ware organised by the Shanghai Museum, Wang Qingzheng confirmed the singling out of two types of Ge ware: the so-called handed down Ge from imperial deposits, characterised by cream colour (*mihuang* 米黄) glaze (only a minority has dark body and *huiqing* 灰青 [greyish green] glaze), a double network of crackles of the type 'golden thread and iron wire', mostly fired standing on the vessel footring supported on pads (rather than on spurs), shapes popular in the Yuan dynasty; the manufacturing kiln of these pieces, which all share imperial qualities, is still unknown. The second group, consisting of specimens excavated from Yuan and early Ming tombs and hoards, is characterised by a dark body, 'purple mouth and iron foot', *huiqing* glaze (although rarely it can be *yuebai*

15 In an essay dedicated to Ge ware in Yuan and Ming literature, Li Baoping (2004, 260) noted that this characteristic did not appear in Ming records and suggested that maybe the colouring effect was artificially obtained after the Ming dynasty.

Figure 1 Brush washer. "Museum Ge" ware. Stoneware with blue/green glaze. Dated by the Museum's label to the Song dynasty. H. 3.5 cm. National Museum of China. Photograph by the Author

月白 [pale bluish-white]), one net of crackles and shapes similar, but not identical to those of Song Guanyao; this type of Ge could correspond to that described in the *Zhizheng zhi ji* and the *Ge gu yao lun*, dating to the Yuan and early Ming dynasties.[16]

It thus appears that, besides 'golden thread and iron wire' crackles, another distinguishing feature of 'museum Ge' singled out by modern scholars is the cream colour of its glaze.[17] This hue is mentioned in the literature, but only in late sources: in 1815 Lan Pu affirmed that Ge ware came in either *mise* 米色 (cream colour) or *fenqing* 粉青 (light greenish-blue) (Lan Pu [1815] 1947, *juan* 6, f. 3a), and a century later Xu Zhiheng distinguished between cream and pea green (*doulü* 豆綠) ([1915] 1936, *juan* 1).[18] A different term suggesting a yellowish hue was used at the end of the sixteenth century by Gao Lian who listed three different colours, the best being *fenqing* 粉青 (light greenish-blue), followed by *danbai* 淡白 (whitish) and finally by *youhui* 油灰 or 'putty', that is, greyish-yellow: this seems to be the first time that a yellowish tinge was acknowledged. If we look at Guan specimens excavated from the Laohudong kiln site, we notice several examples coated with a yellowish glaze, which was not intentional but was rather the result of misfiring: the coating was meant to be *fenqing* 粉青 (light greenish-blue), but accidental oxidisation caused it to turn yellow. The same happened when firing Ge ware, but it was not the best colour and in fact Gao Lian classified it as the last preferable hue.

16 The symposium proceedings were never published; for a summary of the main presentations see Chen 1994; Vainker 1993. The identification of these two types of Ge ware had been presented by Wang Qingzheng in a paper for *The Oriental Ceramic Society* (Wang 1989-90).

17 In the concluding remarks at the end of the Geyao conference in Shanghai in 1992, Wang Qingzheng affirmed that the two main characteristics of Ge ware are the *mihuang* glaze and the "golden thread and iron wire" crackles. Wang also noted that early sources do not mention this glaze colour and that literature from the middle Ming period is not reliable (Chen 1994, 82).

18 In an earlier text (eighteenth century), the *Nanyao biji* 南窯筆記 (Notes on the Southern Kiln), had appeared the term *mise* 米色 when describing a lowly valued subcategory related to Di ware (AA [eighteenth century] 1936).

In written records, Ge ware was often compared with Guan and its colour was usually described as *qing* (blue/green) in various shades, however, there are also frequent references to the pale tone of Ge ware described as *dan* 淡 (light), *danbai* 淡白 (whitish), *shaobai* 稍白 (slightly white), *yuebai* 月白 (pale bluish-white) and *danya* 淡牙 (pale ivory).[19] This can be intended as paler than Guan ware or whitish as some 'museum Ge' specimens (fig. cat 50). The first interpretation favours a Ge ware similar to Guan, that is, Wang Qingzheng's second category, while the second reading suggests so-called 'handed down' or 'museum Ge'. The pale tone does not depend on a different glaze recipe, but rather on firing conditions, which in this case did not reach the already low maturing temperature of 1220-1240° C typical for Guan ware (Kerr, Wood 2004, 583).

Looking at 'museum Ge' specimens in the Taipei Gugong and Beijing Gugong collections, it appears that the majority is coated with a pale, cold tone glaze rather than a cream colour one and, as a matter of fact, in recent years the prominence of cream colour 'museum Ge' has been de-emphasised: Qin Dashu, for example, states that in the vast majority of cases, the glaze is either graphite grey (*qinghui* 青灰) or pale bluish-white (*yuebai* 月白), while only a few pieces are light greenish-blue (*fenqing* 粉青) or cream colour (*mihuang* 米黃) (Qin 2017, 96-7). Lü Chenglong describes most 'museum Ge' glazes as *huiqing*, and only a few as *mihuang* or *fenqing* (Lü 2017a, 338; Lü 2017b, 28-31). This lack of consistency in the description of the glaze hue by contemporary scholars reveals how subjective (and therefore slippery) the issue of colour is. On one point modern experts seem to agree: no kiln site so far excavated matches 'museum Ge' specimens.

3 Archaeological Evidence

In the nineties, scholars recognised two types of Ge ware (Chen 1994; Wang 1989-90):[20] the first and most important was 'museum Ge' which, not fully complying with descriptions in literary documents, left a little space for a second type consisting of pieces excavated from tombs and caches **[fig. 2]** which was too different from 'museum Ge' to be grouped together.

19 These terms appear respectively in Lu Shen's *Chunyu tang* ([1539] 1936, 6), Gao Lian's *Zun sheng ba jian* ([1591] 1988) and Gu Qiyuan's *Shuo lüe* (1613, *juan* 23); the last two are both from the *Nanyao biji* (AA [eighteenth century] 1936).

20 This does not mean that the academic circle agreed on this classification: as a matter of fact, different (and sometime wild) interpretations were put forward. See for example, Li Huibing (1994) who stated that "handed down Ge ware" was in fact Xiuneisi Guan ware, while Ge kilns, which were private enterprises, were Longquan kilns producing black-bodied blue/green ware.

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Figure 2
Bottle. Stoneware with blue/green glaze. Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). H. 22 cm. Excavated from the Laohudong kiln site, Hangzhou. Southern Song Guan kiln Museum, Hangzhou. Photograph by the Author

With new millennium archaeological discoveries in Hangzhou and Longquan, we now tend to distinguish three types of Ge ware: two related to the above-mentioned kiln sites **[figs 3, 6]**, in addition to 'museum Ge'. When the Laohudong site was discovered and excavated between 1998 and 2001, it was identified as the Xiuneisi kiln mentioned in literary sources (Wang 2000; Du, Ma 2000; Hangzhoushi 2002; Du 2002a; Du 2002b; Qin, Du 2004). The upper layers were safely dated to the Yuan dynasty as they included kiln setters with inscriptions in 'Phags-pa ('square script'), the writing system devised during the reign of Kublai Khan (r. 1260-1294) to unify all the languages spoken in his empire (Ragagnin, Jantsan forthcoming). Shards from these layers, in particular from the second (that is, the older one), are generally coated with either *qinglu* 青绿 (dark green), *qinghui* or *qinghuang* 青黄 (greenish yellow) glaze, rather thickly applied on a greyish black or yellowish-brown body. Their similarity with objects unearthed from Yuan and early Ming tombs and hoards[21] is undeniable, as their connection with Guan ware, which seems logical, as the specimens were made at the same kiln site during the following dynasty. What is less straightforward is the nature of the wares manufactured under Mongol rule: Guan was the official ware made for imperial use by the government-controlled Laohudong factory, but was Laohudong still an imperial kiln during the Yuan dynasty? Judging from the inscription *guanyao* 官窯 (official ware) painted in brown under the glaze on the base of a few bowls, it would seem so, but the absence of a pit containing pieces that had not met the imperial quality standards and had been consequently smashed points to the contra-

21 For some of the most interesting tombs and hoards see Li 1972; Shen, Xu 1982; Hu 1986; Wang, Wu 2005; Gao 2011; Lin, Zheng 2015.

Figure 3 Fragment of an incense burner. Stoneware with blue/green glaze. Yuan dynasty (1279-1368). H. 7.5 cm. Excavated from the upper layer of the Laohudong kiln site, Hangzhou. Hangzhou Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology. Photograph by the Author

Figure 4 Fragment of a brush washer. Stoneware with blue/green glaze. Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). Excavated from the Wayaolu kiln site, Xiaomei town, Longquan city. Zhejiang Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology. Photograph by the Author

Figure 5 Sherds. Stoneware with blue/green glaze. Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). Excavated from the Wayaolu kiln site, Xiaomei town, Longquan city. Longquan Museum. Photograph by the Author

Figure 6 Fragment of a dish. Stoneware with blue/green glaze. Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). Excavated from the Wayaolu kiln site, Xiaomei town, Longquan city. Longquan Museum. Photograph by the Author

ry (Du 2002a, 13). It is possible that the manufacture was controlled by Yuan officials, but the objects were no longer destined for the imperial court. Another question is whether the products were called Ge ware. This is difficult to ascertain, but their outer aspect seems to tally with the Gegedong and Gege ware described in Yuan and early Ming written records. If this assumption is correct, the production of this kind of Ge ware (admitting that it can be so named) stopped not long after the Yuan dynasty was vanquished, as archaeological evidence shows that the Laohudong kiln was shut down.

As scholars could not fully agree on the identification of the specimens retrieved from the upper layers of the Laohudong kiln site, they opted to call them by the fuzzy name of "Ge type" (Qin 2017, 100). In time other definitions have been adopted: Qin Dashu (2017) uses "imitation Guan", while Lü Chenglong (2017a; 2017b) prefers "Ge (Guan)".

The situation at the Longquan kilns is much more intricate, given the enormous scope of the manufacturing area: 187 kiln sites have

been counted in the southern section, comprising the four townships of Xiaomeizhen, Zhatianzhen, Lanjuxiang and Jianchi, while the eastern zone includes 216 kilns distributed over Longyuan, Anren, Daotai and Yunhe counties (Qin 2015, 43). In the Southern Song and early Yuan periods, the best objects came from the kilns in Dayao, Jincun (both in Xiaomeizhen) and Xikou (in Zhatianzhen), some pieces from Dayao and Xikou closely imitating Guan ware made at the Laohudong imperial factory. Guan-inspired Longquan pieces can either have the typical pale grey Longquan body or a very dark one. The latter was achieved by using high-iron red clays (*zijintu* 紫金土), rather than the typical Longquan blend of white porcelain stone and ferruginous clays (Kerr, Wood 2004, 249-65). Until the discovery of the Wayaolu kiln site in the Dayao cluster (Xiaomeizhen) in 2011-12,[22] it was believed that the production of black-bodied blue/green ware (*hei tai qingci* 黑胎青瓷) had started in the middle Southern Song dynasty at the Dayao and Xikou centres, where it was made together with typical pale body Longquan ware from the early thirteenth century (Zhu 1989, 18). The excavations at Wayaolu unearthed a kiln dating to the early-to-middle Southern Song dynasty, active for a very short period of time, producing blue/green ware mainly with black body and a small percentage with a pale grey one. The former tends to be very thin and usually covered with a rather dark, glassy and densely crackled glaze **[fig. 4]**, while a minority of pieces shows a thick, lustrous, light greenish-blue (*fenqing* 粉青) coat **[fig. 5]**. A new excavation campaign at the Wayaoyang kiln site, Xikou cluster, in 2010-11 confirmed it as the main site for the production of high-quality black-bodied blue/green ware.[23] Among the sherds unearthed from the Wayaolu and Wayaoyang kilns, a specific sub-type characterised by

22 The archaeological report has not been published yet. I had the rare opportunity to collect information and handle the excavated material as a participant in the specialists' meeting discussing Longquan black-bodied blue/green ware and Ge ware held in November 2012 in Longquan city. Some details are published by Qin Dashu (2017, 104; 2015, 48), Shen Yueming and Zheng Jianming (2018, 67-9). Among the scholars antedating the beginning of Longquan black-bodied blue/green ware, there is Shen Yueming (2020, 17-18). This antedating would subvert the accepted chronological relationship between Guan ware made at the Laohudong kiln site and Wayaolu black-bodied blue/green ware which would be earlier than Guan ware (Yu 2011-12, 26).

23 Samples of black-bodied Longquan ware were discovered at the Dayao cluster already in the 1950s (Zhu, Ren 1963, 27-35), igniting the debate on the nature of these pieces as imitation Guan or Guan ware themselves, which would include the Longquan centre in the imperial kiln system. The Wayaoyang kiln site was one of those yielding black-bodied sherds, as reported by Zhu Boqian (1989, 17-18). The archaeological report of the 2010-2011 excavation has not been published yet. I had the rare opportunity to collect information and handle the excavated material as a participant in the specialists' meeting discussing Longquan black-bodied blue/green ware and Ge ware held in November 2012 in Longquan city. Some details of the excavations are published by Qin Dashu (2017, 104; 2015, 50-1), Shen Yueming and Zheng Jianming (2018, 67-9).

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Figure 7 Fragment of a dish. Stoneware with blue/green glaze. Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). Excavated from the Wayaoyang kiln site, Xikou town, Longquan city. Longquan Museum. Photograph by the Author

Figure 8 Fragment of a bowl. Stoneware with blue/green glaze. Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). Excavated from the Wayaoyang kiln site. Xikou town, Longquan city. Longquan Museum. Photograph by the Author

Figure 9 Sherds. Stoneware with blue/green glaze. Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). Excavated from the Wayaolu kiln site, Xiaomei town, Longquan city. Longquan Museum. Photograph by the Author

evident whitish crackles stands out **[figs 6-7]**. Its visual aspect evokes the 'one hundred cracks' (*baijisui*) effect mentioned in 1539 by Lu Shen and succeeding writers, arousing the interest of Chinese experts and turning on the spotlights on the quest for Ge kilns. Shen Yueming (2020 and Shen, Zheng 2018) is firmly convinced that Longquan black-bodied blue/green ware is Ge ware; Qin Dashu (2017, 104-8) accords a special position to the Wayaolu kiln site and calls Longquan black-bodied blue/green ware 'Longquan Ge', while Lü Chenglong (2017a, 337; 2017b, 26) believes this sub-type to be the Ge ware described in late Ming sources. If it is true that the distinct crackles on some of the specimens from the Wayaolu and Wayaoyang kilns recall the *baijisui* effect, their visual appearance needs further investigation and not all black-bodied blue/green wares fall in this category. The sherd in figure 8 from the Wayaoyang kiln site is an imitation of Guan ware **[fig. 8]**, as are the sherds in figure 9 from the Wayaolu kiln site **[fig. 9]**. The effort is evident in the thick, translucent, bluish, unc-

Figure 10 Ding-shaped incense burner. Excavated in 2001 from the Laohudong kiln site. H. 12.5; ⌀ 14.5 cm. Hangzhou City Museum. Image by the Author

Figure 11 Deep washer. Excavated in 2001 from the Laohudong kiln site. Hangzhou City Museum. Image by the Author

Figure 12 "Longquan Ge" ware with whitish crackles; the glaze is slightly overfired, but overall successful. Excavated from the Wayaoyang kiln site during the 2010-2011 campaign. Longquan Museum. Photograph by the Author

Figure 13 "Longquan Ge" ware with whitish crackles; the glaze is slightly overfired, but overall successful. Excavated from the Wayaolu kiln site during the 2011-2012 campaign. Longquan Museum. Photograph by the Author

tuous, jade-like, crackled glaze and in the thin, black body. The latter in particular was alien to the Longquan area which, on the contrary, abounded with light-firing porcelain stone or grey-firing stoneware clays, thus suggesting that black-bodied wares were exceptional and made with a very specific intent – or under explicit request. This is confirmed by the fact that the black body was employed for less than one hundred years between the very end of the 12th century and the demise of the Southern Song dynasty.

It is common knowledge that crackles are technically a fault occurring during the cooling stages, although on Ru and Guan wares not only they were not considered a defect, on the contrary, they were appreciated as an enhancement. Crazing ensues especially if the amount of silica in the body is low, the glaze is thinner and of the lime-type, and the temperature increases.[24] Recent analysis on

24 I am very grateful to Professor Nigel Wood for the explanation.

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sherds from the Wayaolu, Wayaoyang and Jiaotanxia kiln sites shows that the percentage of silica in the body is lower than 70% (Huang Y. et al. 2018), thus making crazing virtually inevitable. Crackles behave very randomly and it is difficult to distinguish ceramic types produced at the same kiln site on the basis of the kind of network they develop. The objects illustrated in figures 10 and 11 were both excavated from the Southern Song levels at the Laohudong kiln site: they show different types of crackles, but they are classified as Guan ware **[figs 10-11]**. The kind of specimens that have attracted the attention of Chinese scholars are similar to that illustrated in figure 4: the dark olive green glaze is rather unappealing and, as a matter of fact, such objects were overfired and semi-oxidised (hence discarded). Better results were achieved with samples such as those in figures 12 and 13 **[figs 12-13]**.

As to the whitish tinge of the crackles, most likely it is a discolouring effect due to long burial in the ground.[25] Therefore, we should picture these samples as intentionally crazed, but the crackles looking not so deeply marked – but rather as they appear in figure 8, which looks like a close imitation of Guan ware, or figure 12, characterised by light white broken veins called *baijisui* or one hundred fragments. Most specimens unearthed from the Wayaolu and Wayaoyang kilns sites present the whitish crackles – the main difference between the two locations being that, on the whole, a higher percentage of sherds from Wayaoyang shows an unctuous, bluish-green glaze, some with dark crackles, very similar to those characteristic of Hangzhou Guan ware.

Overall, black-bodied Longquan specimens seem imitations of Hangzhou Guan ware and to set aside those with a denser mesh of whitish crackles does not seem fully justifiable, as most samples are misfired and the crackles' tinge is affected by seeping water during long burial. One good motive to call black-bodied Longquan specimens 'Ge ware' would be to differentiate them from the only true Guan ware made at the Laohudong and Jiaotanxia manufactures. The same reasoning can be applied to Yuan dynasty Laohudong pieces: very similar to the Southern Song production, only slightly lesser quality and most likely not used at court, they were distinguished by a different name: Ge.

Without resolutive archaeological evidence, it is difficult to untie the knot of Ge ware, unless we try to pursue a different line of inquiry. Rather than insisting on making written sources, 'museum' and 'archaeological' Ge to fit together, we hypothesise the existence of different types of Ge, depending on the interpretation given in time. Judging from the descriptions, it is possible that fourteenth- and six-

25 I am very grateful to Professor Nigel Wood for sharing this theory with me.

teenth-century writers referred to two different kinds of blue/green ceramics when discussing Ge ware. More specifically, according to modern scholars' understanding of written records and archaeological finds, it seems that Yuan dynasty Laohudong wares relate to early texts, while the Longquan black-bodied blue/green type evokes late Ming literature (except for Gao Lian's *Zun sheng ba jian* and Wang Shixing's *Guang zhi yi*). The third kind, 'museum Ge', still orphan of its original birthplace, was identified by the Qianlong emperor and its definition was further refined in the twentieth century with the addition of the *jinsi tiexian* double network of crackles as a distinguishing feature. Is it possible that Ge ware was manufactured at more than one kiln and at different times? At this point, only new archaeological discoveries can offer a clue.

4 Conclusion

Despite the huge research efforts made over the past fifty years, the positive identification of Ge ware still eludes us. At present we are faced with three different groups of ceramics, only one of which is labelled as "Ge". This is what is by now commonly known as "handed down" or "museum Ge", which consists of specimens in the Qing imperial collection and recognised as Ge ware in the eighteenth century by the Qianlong emperor. On this basis, objects were catalogued when the Forbidden City was opened to the public in 1925 and since then the label has been applied to specimens with similar characteristics. As "museum Ge" was until recently the only materially extant type, in the twentieth century it came to coincide with Ge ware. Its manufacturing site has not been located yet. On the contrary, the other two groups come from archaeologically excavated kilns – Laohudong in Hangzhou and Wayaoyang and Wayaolu in Longquan, but neither has been positively identified as Ge ware by the academic community because they do not satisfy the modern interpretation of records written since the fourteenth century. Literary sources have been minutely scrutinised by many scholars with inconclusive results, as they do not provide precise-enough descriptions of Ge ware. Old records are valuable in ceramic research, but to interpret archaeological results in accordance with literary sources written many centuries ago in order to confirm their veracity can lead to distorted and sterile conclusions. One way to avert this is to consider the possibility that, by Ge ware, Kong Qi and Cao Zhao intended pieces manufactured at the Laohudong kiln site in the Yuan dynasty, while Lu Shen and his followers applied the same name to objects produced during the Southern Song period by some kilns in the Longquan area, characterised by a close mesh of whitish crackles. Another way is to disengage archaeological work from preconceived ideas and ana-

lyse the material evidence from the many Longquan kiln sites from the "horizontal perspective", that is, to compare unearthed material datable to the same period, but excavated from different sites. This requires reliable stratigraphic studies of the sites and a well-knit group of scholars working patiently together for several years, but in the end it will provide a safe chronology for the manufacturing activities in the vast Longquan ceramic district. It will also reveal the connections among individual sites and clusters and the mechanics of production. This dynamic approach might offer new and unexpected insights into the history of Chinese ceramics without necessarily obliging to written records.

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Negotiating 'Asianness' at the Tokyo International Film Festival
Local, Regional and International Dynamics Through Programming Practices and Film Markets

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Abstract In this paper I will trace a brief history of major Asian film festivals to understand how the notion of 'Asianness' evolved over time and how it is expressed nowadays through programming practices and film markets. Then I will focus on the case study of the Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) as a problematic site where cultural and economic dynamics converge. As an A-category festival, TIFF has to balance its international status with regional relevance, negotiating 'Asianness' in a complex relationship involving the local film industry, since questions on 'Asian cinema' are deeply linked to the national. Finally, I will draw some conclusions, discussing how TIFF relates to other major film festivals in Asia, where 'Asianness' has been used as a shared effort to distinguish themselves from the paradigm set by European film festivals. However, this is an ongoing process, TIFF struggles to use 'Asianness' as a unifying element and the specific interests of each festival obstruct the possibility to create a more systematic trans-Asian model.

Keywords Tokyo International Film Festival. Asian Film Festivals. Asianness. Festival Programming. Film Festival Network.

Summary 1 Film Festival Studies and Programming Practices. – 2 'Asian' Film Festival. – 2.1 The First Asian Film Festival. – 2.2 The Discovery of 'Asian' Cinema at the HKIFF. – 2.3 An International Festival for Local Audience: The SIFF. – 2.4 BIFF Setting a Model for Asian Film Festivals. – 3 Tokyo 'International' Film Festival. – 3.1 TIFF's Origins and Structure. – 3.2 A Matter of Relevance. – 3.3 Towards a More Inclusive Asian Programming. – 3.4 TIFFCOM and its Joint Strategies. – 4 TIFF's 'Asianness' and Asian 'Asianness'.

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1 Film Festival Studies and Programming Practices

Film festival studies are an emerging research field that has flourished over the last couple of decades.[1] This field has drawn wide academic attention for its intrinsic multidisciplinarity, which permits to approach film studies from a wide range of perspectives, as they are "transnational in scope, transmedia in articulation and interdisciplinary in conception" (Stevens 2018, 51).[2] Nowadays film festivals are a ubiquitous phenomenon, with more than 8,000 events[3] spread across the year and constituting the so-called "film festival circuit" (Elsaesser 2005) or "film festival network" (de Valck 2007). To systematically approach this subject, several theories have been developed, drawing their basis from a variety of disciplines, and discourses borrowed from cultural sociology such as Latour's 'Actor-Network theory' (de Valck 2007) or Bourdieu's 'cultural capital' have been already convincingly deployed (Czach 2004; de Valck 2016). Film festivals are a useful tool for approaching film studies, detaching them from pure text analysis and combining social sciences with cultural studies; this is because, as Cindy Wong pointed out, film festivals are composite entities:

> First, festivals showcase a complex world of films, international, historical, and especially contemporary [...] Second, film festivals actively cultivate new talents and works from all over the world through their scouting and selection, their film funds, and programs to train emerging filmmakers on a global scale [...] Third, festivals intersect with other discourses and institutions in the wider construction of film as a field of knowledge [...] Finally, all these roles raise important questions of who defines what is good for whom and how, where art and value are never defined by undisputed or neutral criteria. (Wong 2011, 14-15)

1 Even if film festivals started in the fifties to play a major role in shaping film culture, academic research in the field – outside of festival reports and personal memories – started only in the nineties. It grew substantially at the beginning of the New Millennium with the work of scholars such as Elsaesser (2005), de Valck (2007) and Loist (2016). With the appearance of the *Film Festival Yearbook* series (2009-14, directed by Dina Iordanova) and the offshoots that developed from the field, nowadays film festival studies can be considered an accomplished field of research, shedding new light on film studies and social sciences.

2 For a comprehensive overview of this study field and its interdisciplinary approach, see de Valck, Loist 2009.

3 The popular film festivals website `FilmFreeway.com` counts 8,946 registered film festivals to this day, not counting online film festivals (currently 697), which grew substantially in the past year (2021-01-10).

Film festivals as events are defined by a specific time and place, and they can be considered as independent worlds with their inherent dynamics. A film festival is supposed to screen the very best or the finest films produced world-wide (or locally, or by genre), but the 'immaterial' quality of the art is not always given priority. Thematic film festivals, like those centred on civil rights, represent a notorious example of a situation where the political or social message often prevails over artistic quality. At A-category festivals, like Cannes or Venice, the same thing can happen, as geopolitical choices are made to comply with certain expectations (i.e. geographical variety, equality between male and female filmmakers, etc…). This allows a kind of analysis that is unrelated to the films screened, but is useful to understand and contextualize the film world.

Therefore, in this paper I would like to focus on programming practices (i.e. the choice of which films to present in a festival, as selected by programmers, counsellors advisors etc… coordinated by the manager/artistic director) as they are revelatory of specific cultural policies. Programming can be used to shape a film festival's identity, promote certain kind of films or national industries, 'discover' New Waves,[4] or even to achieve a political agenda. As Ma puts it,

> programming can also be understood as the dynamic, networked process through which a specific film festival articulates its politics of participation, agenda-setting, and positioning within the film festival circuit. (2017a, 238)

This statement is as clear today as it would have been at the inception of film festivals. The first one took place in Venice in 1932, becoming an annual event associated with La Biennale in 1936. Film festivals are usually regarded as a European invention (Elsaesser 2005, 71), a model created with the twofold objective of responding to specific geopolitical dynamics. From a cultural perspective it was the European reply to the market-driven Hollywood spectacle, an alternative exhibition space to show 'artistic' and avant-garde films, soon developing into a sort of "Olympics of films" (de Valck 2007, 24), where each country submitted their finest works (and, therefore, their her-

4 From the Brazilian 'Cinema Novo' in the sixties to the Chinese 'Fifth Generation' in the late eighties-early nineties, film festivals have always tried to be the first in line in 'discovering' previously unknown directors or 'new waves' – new movements emerging in a national cinema, usually led by a group of filmmakers – and make them available to a wider public. Even if the term was introduced to address the French *nouvelle vague* in the sixties, film festivals are mostly interested in 'New Waves' from Third World and Asian countries. Nowadays these 'discoveries' concern primarily matters of prestige, but when this process started in the seventies – as it will be discussed below – it had strong political meanings and it was supported by European left-wing intellectuals and artists.

itage) to be shown internationally. At the same time, film festivals in Post-War Europe became tools of diplomacy (Corless, Drake 2007, 145), places where press attachés and diplomats could meet on 'neutral' ground to develop cultural and economic relationships. That is the reason why festivals like Venice, Cannes (1939-46) or Edinburgh (1947) were not founded by artists or curators, but by politicians. Berlin, established in 1951, is of particular relevance as it was used

> as an outpost of postwar culture sanctioned by the occupying Allied forces in West Berlin, who were rebuilding it as a new cultural center. (Ahn 2011, 7)

This is characteristic of the first of the three phases that Marijke de Valck (2007, 19-20) elaborated in framing film festival history; the turning points of these phases are always related to major shifts in the cinema industry. The first phase runs from the first Venice film festival in 1932 to 1968 and the above-mentioned model of national submission and competitions characterizes it. The social movements in 1968 and the infamous protests at the Cannes film festival that year prompted the second phase. This brought a new model to the fore, less characterized by politicians and national cinemas and more focused on festival programmers and cinephilia. As a result, the organisational structure of all the major film festivals greatly changed, encouraging a growing diversification among them, as they became means to achieve social empowerment. The third phase began in the eighties, when the ever-growing number of film festivals meant that they had to professionalize themselves to survive, especially with the emergence of new festivals strongly supported by government funding.[5] This third phase was influenced by globalization and neoliberalism, transforming major film festivals into business enterprises operating in the cultural field, where the manager/artistic director emerged as a commanding figure to carefully balance artistic choices with economic and political interests.

In this phase, the film and project markets attached to a given festival began to appear, and these soon became an almost indispensable tool to start playing an active role in the cinema world. Film markets are places where industry people can meet to pitch new projects, buy and sell film rights, finalize co-production deals etc., and they are usually held during film festivals, when all the players are gathered in the same place. When film festivals started to organise their own project markets and launch production plans, they entered a new phase, intending to promote art, and, at the same time, to discov-

5 On the other hand, Ruling (2009, 60-1) considers three passages in the development of film festivals: from community event to film showcase to industry player (and event).

er and build the loyalty of emerging filmmakers, thus shaping their set of aesthetics. These "festival films" (de Valck 2007) are usually funded by major film festivals and developed a new dynamic where film festivals became an alternative distribution route, as their main source of revenue is to travel in smaller festivals. Hence the distinction between "business festivals" (acting as producer) and "audience festivals" (acting as exhibitor), proposed by Peranson (2008). However, film markets and funds are not the only weapons film festivals deploy to affirm their status; awards and ceremonies play a similar role in raising the cultural capital in the value-adding process at festivals, thus creating a win-win system.[6]

Film festivals emerged in Asia during the third phase (earlier examples will be documented in the next chapter) and their boom in the nineties was certainly helped by several factors. Globalization and the growing importance of some national economies (especially China and South Korea) were instrumental to funding new events. At the same time, the emergence of more stable cinema industries and a renovated interest towards East Asia cinema(s) by European film festivals[7] made these events possible. Entering the second phase, film festivals have constantly tried to find 'New Waves' from Third World or non-Western countries, and Asia has always been considered a Saidian 'Other' in terms of (cinematographic) identity since the Golden Lion awarded to Kurosawa in 1951. Cinema industries from the 'periphery' have been greatly affected by trends set by film festivals, as they can provide the key to accessing distribution in richer countries, as happened with the Fifth Generation of filmmakers from China (de Valck 2012, 33). Awards at a major film festival and the growing importance of festival funds could even lead national industries to exploit these trends. In this case, an issue of (self-imposed) Orientalism arise, as festivals foster a neo-colonial gaze on 'minor' cinema industries while taking a "'grandfatherly' role" (Falicov 2017, 96).

6 A clear example would be that of a Palm d'Or recipient at Cannes that would increase what Czach calls "critical capital" (2004, 82) and be therefore distributed widely thanks to the award and the status of the festival. At the same time, Cannes would increase its status, as its logo will appear on the poster and in the opening credits of the movie, thus enriching its influence in the (art-house) cinema world.

7 I include in this term first-tier film festivals (Cannes, Venice, Berlin) and other influential and long-established ones (Locarno, Rotterdam, San Sebastian, Karlovy Vary, etc.), which are – along with North American events like Toronto, Sundance and Tribeca – the most sought-after screening spaces in terms of prestige and recognition. European film festivals became a point of reference for the whole network since their inception, especially due to the extent of their hegemony when compared with the Asian, Latin America or African film festivals, thus shaping the configuration of the events that followed. The features of the European film festivals were widely analysed by the pioneering works of Turan (2002), Elsaesser (2005) and de Valck (2007).

When Asian film festivals started to have more relevance in the festival network, they had to challenge a model already established by European film festivals in a highly competitive cultural economy. Differentiation and regionalization proved to be the keys, as every major player in Asia focused on regional cinema, trying to promote a different vision of 'Asianness' which could appeal to a local and international audience. This process took place through film programmes dedicated to Asian movies (film programming),[8] and funding and co-production programmes to support them (film markets). It also conceals huge socio-political implications as film festival provide "an important institutional framework for the study of issues of [...] post-colonial global relations" (Wong 2011, 18). Programming has a major role in this regard, as every film selected by a festival has to be considered "a cultural statement" (de Valck 2012, 30).

Therefore, in this paper I will trace a brief history of major Asian film festivals, focusing on few notable examples, to understand how notion of 'Asianness' (or Pan-Asianism) evolved over time and how it is performed today. Then I will address one particular case study, the Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF), one of the only two Asian film festivals accredited to the 'Competitive Feature Film Festivals' (the so-called 'A' festivals) of the FIAPF accreditation system.[9] I will explore the notion of 'Asianness' and its relationship to the national film industry as expressed through TIFF programming and the related film market, the TIFFCOM. In fact, questions on 'Asian cinema' are deeply linked to the national, as festivals "strove to promote the

8 The Hong Kong International Film Festival was an early example and takes pride in its programming and subsequent developments: "the global reputation of the HKIFF was built on the pioneering work of programming Asian films and its retrospectives when Asian and Hong Kong cinema were not well known to the international community. Built on a solid reputation for programming, the HKIFF became the model for many subsequent film festivals around the region" (HKIFF Official Website, `http://www.hkiff.org.hk/society/#/AboutUs/historyCulture?lang=en`).

9 The Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films (FIAPF) is a French institution founded in 1933. In accordance with the Venice and Cannes film festivals, it created an accreditation system in 1951 to prevent award inflation and to preserve the prestige of older film festivals (de Valck 2007, 41). It is still used today to categorise film festivals and it is divided in four sections, the most prestigious being Competitive Feature Film Festivals, which nowadays comprise only fifteen film festivals. They must comply to a rigid set of parameters: "an A-festival must run for at least nine days; it should not specialize but should cover all aspects of filmmaking; [and] a feature competition with at least fourteen films without genre limitations is a requirement" (Iordanova 2006, 28). The only Asian film festivals accredited to the Competitive Feature Film Festivals section are the TIFF and the Shanghai International Film Festival (SIFF). Even if the accreditation should be a sort of 'quality mark,' it is often related to political and economic decisions, as in the case of SIFF (Ma 2012), Moscow (de Valck 2007, 57), and Karlovy Vary (Iordanova 2006, 32). Emerging film festivals with global ambition try to get the accreditation to empower their prestige, but at the same time, some of the globally relevant film festivals like Toronto and Rotterdam decided not to apply for it to move freely outside its limitation.

national film industry by acting as a gateway to the global film market" (Ahn 2011, 24). Finally, I will draw some conclusions, discussing how TIFF relates to other major players in Asia, what its role in the Asian film festivals network is (business or audience festival?) and if a shared vision of 'Asianness' could effectively change their liminal position within the paradigm set by European film festivals.

2 'Asian' Film Festival

2.1 The First Asian Film Festival

As briefly noted above, film festivals have been traditionally seen as a strictly European (and, most recently, North American) affair since their inception in Venice. Scholars have challenged this notion at length, and East Asia is no exception, as the first film festival in the region traces back to the fifties. Lee Sangjong (2012; 2014; 2017) extensively researched the story of the pioneering Asian Film Festival (AFF), which started in 1954. As was typical of the first phase of film festivals history, there were specific socio-political reasons and (trans)national agendas at stake in the establishment of this event, as this was the first attempt to create a regional network between cinema industries that had only occasionally communicated with each other until then. The promoter of the initiative was a Japanese film executive, Nagata Masaichi, president of Daiei, one of Japan's cinema studios.

In the early fifties, Japanese cinema was starting to be recognised internationally (i.e. by European film festivals)[10] and the studio system reached its peak later in the decade with an average annual output of 500 feature-length movies, with double and triple bills becoming common practice.[11] In order to consolidate the power of Japanese cinema in Asian markets and to avoid saturation of the national production, diversification and expansion seemed to be necessary. Nagata thus turned his gaze to Japan's neighbouring countries and, along with other major Asian players – like Hong Kong's Shaw Brothers – initiated the Federation of Motion Picture Producers Association in Asia (FPA) in 1953.[12] Nagata and FPA were financially and

10 *Rashōmon* (1950) by Kurosawa Akira won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 1951, an award that prompted the 'discovery' of Japanese cinema in Europe.

11 This kind of production proved not to be sustainable and it soon became one of the factors contributing to the crisis of the studio system in the sixties, leading to the following emergence of the Japanese New Wave and independent producers.

12 The FPA was established during a convention in Manila in 1953 and initially included seven members: Japan, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Taiwan, Malaya and Thailand. South Korea joined the FPA in 1957.

administratively supported by The Asian Foundation (TAF), a "camouflaged association shaped and carried by the CIA" (Lee 2017, 517), whose intention was to

> construct the alliance of anti-Communist film producers in Asia by supporting some of the ideologically 'correct' motion picture executives in Japan, Hong Kong, and Korea. (531)

TAF vanished in 1964 and its influence became more nuanced once the FPA was established, but its support was instrumental in the revival of the Korean cinema industry in the fifties, providing equipment and financial support to the Korean Motion Picture Producers Association.

Starting from 1954, the FPA organised an annual event – the Southeast Asian Film Festival (renamed the Asian Film Festival in 1957) – which was not a traditional, nation-bound film festival, as it was conceived to change location every year among the countries reunited under the umbrella of the Association. The first edition was held in May 1954 in Tokyo – the first international event hosted by Post-War Japan – and movies from seven countries were presented. The AFF was conceived as an event for industry people, since film screenings were ancillary and the public was not even involved. In fact, the participants' main concern was to discover new filming technology from other countries and to finalize business contracts.

This first politics-driven attempt to a Pan-Asian cinema network between East and Southeast Asian countries was relevant for roughly twenty years, rapidly declining in the seventies, as it reflected the ever-changing dynamics between these industries. AFF proved to be a very profitable commercial vehicle to the Shaw Brothers, which established themselves as the most powerful production studio in the region through the sixties. At the same time, the festival witnessed the emergence of Korean cinema and its early masterpieces,[13] as well as a Hong Kong-South Korea alliance in co-production, the crisis of the Japanese studio system and a clear drop of entries from the Southeast.[14] In fact, Japan withdrew from the FPA committee in 1972 and the Association changed its constitution to include the Pacific region in 1982, becoming the organising body for the rebrand-

13 The first Korean entry to the festival, *Shijibganeun nal* (The Wedding Day, 1957) by Lee Byung-il, was made possible by the equipment provided by the TAF. The award for best comedy won that year was the first one for a Korean movie at an international film festival (Lee 2017, 530).

14 Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand thus created an ASEAN subcommittee on film in 1967, detaching themselves from the AFP and inaugurating the first Southeast Asian Film Festival in 1972. Two years later, Indonesia led the establishment of the ASEAN Motion Picture Producers Association.

ed Asia-Pacific Film Festival, still running today.

The experience of AFF reveals a series of characteristics that, even in a completely different environment, still hold true today. As Li Han-hsiang, President of the Taiwanese production company Guolian, admitted in an interview:

> many awards at the festival were dished out under the special maneuverings of producers, who were doing a lot of PR, taking people for meals, etc. The ulterior motive for organizing a festival was to cement connections and help each other sell films. That was exactly how this particular festival was formed. (Li in Lee 2017, 532)

Even if the prime mission of a film festival is supposed to be that of spreading knowledge about film culture – making new or unknown films available – and even if it is supposed to be purely driven by cinephilia, this understanding certainly leaves out too many aspects, not necessarily related to movies. As the experience of AFF reveals, the agendas behind the constitution of a film festival hide a wide range of interests. The behind-the-scenes support of TAF represents the most telling aspect of this kind of events, one where the political agenda is on full display (but the role of TAF has not been thoroughly examined until recently), as a case of cultural capital used to influence political thinking in a subtle form of propaganda-like soft power. The other players involved, namely film executives across East and Southeast Asia, were not interested in the latest trends in a certain country's cinema, as they were trying to create a network that would have allowed them to sell more films and expand their market. The 'Asian' part of the film festival must not be understood as a well-defined space, because the members of the Association changed over the years following their respective shifts in interests. Therefore, AFF cannot be used to define a larger sphere of transnational cultural influence, nor can it be considered an attempt to create an 'Asian' cinema as opposed to Hollywood or Europe.

2.2 The Discovery of 'Asian' Cinema at the HKIFF

In recent decades, national cinemas' struggles and the ubiquity of Hollywood movies in theatres across these countries have produced an urgency to find different strategies to develop the cinema industry. The screen quota system was a partial solution in South Korea and China, but film festivals were particularly instrumental in the attempt to build this alternative model. As the pioneering Asian Film Festival rapidly declined, Eastern Asia would have to wait until 1977 to see a recognisable film festival take shape, when the first edition

of the Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) took place.[15] Despite its modest dimensions, by the mid-seventies Hong Kong was the most relevant cinema industry in East Asia, the only one capable of exporting its movies all across the region. As the first Asian film festival of modern times, it soon became the main gateway to Asian art-house cinema through the eighties, especially valuable for foreign observers:

> Europeans came to the festival and not only brought Hong Kong cinema into the international arena, but also started seeing the festival as a fertile ground to discover Asian cinema, especially Chinese cinema. (Wong 2011, 221-2)

It was the HKIFF to present for the first time the Fifth Generation of Chinese filmmakers to an international audience, drawing a lot of interest from European film festivals. This festival therefore represented

> an important process in the growth of an 'alternative' artistic and more innovative strand of filmmaking in a community traditionally attuned to making money. (Teo 2009, 110)

Major film festivals are quite similar in structure and organisation, as they become more and more professionalized. At the same time, they need to find a way to differentiate themselves, since it is virtually impossible to match the likes of Venice and Cannes, where the most anticipated world premieres are screened. That is why the model chosen by HKIFF to showcase 'Asian' cinema – past and present – and support its own domestic films and independent filmmakers blazed a path for Asian film festivals to come. Retrospectives played an extremely important role in this regard, as well as the (usually bilingual) catalogues published by the festival. They helped to systematize Hong Kong cinema history into a coherent canon that drew interests from foreign audiences, and contributed to the subsequent inclusion into global film knowledge, making HKIFF "a treasure trove for the excavation of Asian cinema" (Wong 2011, 222).

Even if its role diminished in the nineties due to a lack of government funding, the changing policies of the post-handover and the contemporary emergence of new film festivals (Busan was founded in 1996), HKIFF was important for (re)discovering and promoting local and Asian cinema, along with several directors regarded as mere 'artisans' at that point. As a typical 'audience festival' it did not plan a competition (nor a market) until 1999, and its

15 A previous notable example of film event is the Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival (originally Golden Horse Awards), established in Taiwan in 1962.

> programming during the foundational period emphasized Asian cinema, while also introducing world cinema and international auteurs to Hong Kong audiences (Ma 2017a, 240)

The HKIFF vision of 'Asianness' did not evolve until it was forced to compete with other film festivals in the region at the turning of the 21st century, when it also had to become independent (i.e. a private institution). It then reconceptualized itself as a hub for pan-Chinese cinema, screening movies from Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. It also tried to remain relevant in the region by becoming "a bigger and more glamorous event" (Wong 2011, 220) through the use of a red carpet, the creation of the Asian Film Awards in 2007 and the addition of the Asian Film Financing Forum (HAF) in 2000. HAF is a co-production market dedicated to Asian filmmakers, ranging from the Middle East to the Southeast, whose collaborations extend to other similar markets like Rotterdam and Busan. Although direct government funding vanished after 2004, the Hong Kong Trade and Development Council still provides important support in organising the content market called Hong Kong International Film and TV Market (Filmart), which was conceived in 1997 as a separate event. Ever since it was integrated into the festival in 2007, Filmart, along with HAF, represents an essential instrument in the film festival, as it allows reuniting public audiences and industry people in the same place and time.[16]

2.3 An International Festival for Local Audience: The SIFF

The handover of Hong Kong with its political consequences, the growing Chinese film market and the emergence of new festivals in Mainland China all contributed to HKIFF decline. Originally, though, China was without a proper film festival or cinema event. This came to pass after the Huabiao Film Awards – founded in the late fifties – were dismissed due to the Cultural Revolution, and it held true until recent times. Film festivals started to reappear in China only in the early nineties, but there are now three 'official' film festivals with strong government support. The Changchun Film Festival (CFF), established in 1992 (biannual since 2005 and rotating with the Huabiao Awards), is characterised by a regional focus on Chinese language films. The Beijing International Film Festival (BIFF) is the most recent (2011) and glamorous one, frequently attended by Hollywood celebrities as it tries to attract national or Asian premieres of Hollywood blockbusters and big-budget movies. Finally, the Shanghai In-

16 For a comprehensive overview of HKIFF see Wong 2011, 190-222.

ternational Film Festival (SIFF), established in 1993 (biannual until 2004), is China's only film festival accredited by FIAPF. It is more focused on cultural capital, which means balancing film programming with opportunities for industry people, while maintaining regional and international relevance. As Nakajima puts it,

> all the [three] international film festivals are internationally-oriented in some sense, but their identity within the field and relational reference groups vary substantially. (2019, 13)

China also had a very vivid independent film festival scene which grew constantly from the nineties, but such festivals faded away in the last decade, as they "have faced increased governmental scrutiny since 2011" (Neves 2013, 37). Given the aim of this paper, the festival that deserves the better part of our attention is certainly SIFF, as it clearly is the Chinese festival sharing the most similarities with (and aims to become like) the most prestigious European festivals. It is also the only one able to compete with other major players in the region, shaping its own vision of 'Asianness.' Government support aside, it was created at the behest of the city government, whose "main purpose has been to boost Shanghai itself as a world city" (Berry 2017, 28) and a cultural capital, although nowadays the cinema industry is mainly located in Beijing. However, as all 'official' film festivals in China, SIFF has its own limitations, even if it has benefited from more autonomy since 2006. In fact, it still has to submit to Chinese regulations, including the quota system and the need for censorship approval. This is something that clearly limits programming choices and "compromise[s] the quality of their programs" (Tan 2019, 212). It has been already indicated how accreditation by the FIAPF has often been used with a political agenda in mind. SIFF is a prime example, as shadows on the sought-after A-category status are cast by

> the negligible number of foreign press, the disappointing number of screened Chinese films, the bleak scene of empty seats during screenings, and recurring problems with English subtitles. (Ma 2012, 151)

To comply with the rules of the most prestigious category of the FIAPF accreditation system, SIFF had to set as its centrepiece the competition, called the 'Golden Goblet Awards', which is usually composed of European and American movies, with few Asian entries.[17] As Ma points out (2012, 156), this seems to be a clear programming

17 This trend was slightly inverted in the last few years, when usually half of the twenty films in Competition are from Asian countries (and half of them from Mainland China).

choice to highlight its international status, presenting it as a 'world festival' rather than an 'Asian' one. However, SIFF's motto – "Focusing on Asia, Promoting Chinese Films, and Supporting New Talents" – does not seem to share this vision.[18] Actually, this change of perspective took place recently in order to respond to the evolving Asian festival scene (and the emergence of Busan). A new section was created in 2004, the 'Asian New Talent Award,' featuring debut or second films from young Asian filmmakers, and this, it seems, "accommodates legitimized Chinese independent titles" (Ma 2017a, 251). Another recently created section is 'Focus China' (divided into three parallel categories), where the majority of the Chinese-language films are screened, although Hong Kong and Taiwan are clearly under-represented in comparison to Mainland China, underlining an "underdeveloped vision of 'pan-Chinese cinema'" (Ma 2017a, 251). Furthermore, most of the Chinese filmmakers presented in the 'Asian New Talent Award' programme are 'raised' inside the SIFF itself. In fact, a recurring practice for professionalized film festivals nowadays is to use their project and co-production markets to support emerging filmmakers, in order to tie them to the festival. In this way, the festival secures the world premiere of a potential breakout talent, favouring future collaboration with him/her and becoming the film's launchpad into the film festival network, which ultimately results in a value-adding process to the prestige of the festival producer. Shanghai's project market is 'SIFF Project,' which was created in 2007 and has been recently divided into four sub-categories to encompass co-production and post-production funding. It contributed to the completion of 75 projects so far, with a prevalent inclination towards Chinese filmmakers. Concurrently with the project market, the festival has since 2,000 hosted a regular film market as well, called the 'SIFF Market'.

From an 'international' perspective, SIFF seems to focus on what is expected from an A-category and 'business' festival: prioritizing industry exchanges, co-productions deals and project markets, handing out prizes to big-budget movies in competition and organising forums aimed at professionals (Berry 2017, 24). However, since it would be unfair to compare it with other European A-category festivals, it is probably more interesting to analyse its strategy on the regional front. In order to compete with its Asian competitors, SIFF has created new programmes and new project markets, shaping a vision of 'Asianness' that seems to point in two directions at once. In past years, SIFF programming favoured countries from Central Asia, India and Middle East, while underrepresenting other Chinese-lan-

18 This motto can be read in several festival's press releases, such as: `http://www.siff.com/a/2018-08-01/2988.html` and `http://www.siff.com/a/2019-03-29/3223.html`.

guage territories and East Asia with its two most powerful cinematography (and direct competitors): South Korea and Japan. In fact, the real focus of this programming strategy is on the relevance of (Mainland) Chinese cinema in the notion of 'Asianness,' since it is much less transnational in its conception.[19] Promoting national cinema is a long-standing practice in film festivals, but the case of SIFF seems more reminiscent of the primary example of the 'business festival' in Asia, Busan. At the same time, unlike its competitors, the SIFF Market does not appear to be particularly concerned with regional cinema, so much as in attracting big (mainly Hollywood) studios for co-production opportunities and launching China as a shooting location (Wong 2011, 140). These factors contribute to the general perception of SIFF "as lacking prestige and authority" (Ma 2012, 156) and, along with the scarce number of foreign press and foreign industry people attending the event,[20] indicates that its relevancy is limited to Chinese-speaking territories, either as an exhibitor or as an active player in the industry.

2.4 BIFF Setting a Model for Asian Film Festivals

The appearance of the Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF, 1985) and the Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF, 1987) was instrumental in cementing HKIFF's vision of 'Asian' cinema in the 1980s. However, without doubt, the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF, 1996) perfected this model, becoming the most successful and influential Asian film festival at the beginning of the new century. A thoughtfully planned event, aided by strong governmental, cultural and metropolitan funding, it quickly drew ahead of less officially supported events like HKIFF and SGIFF. Busan is located on the Southeastern coast of South Korea and it was renowned for its ports and heavy industries, far removed from the cultural capital of the country, Seoul. Although this setting seemed odd for the establishment of a new international film festival at that time, BIFF became a model also for the strong bond it was able to create with the host city, which in the contemporary festival scene "act as the nodal points on this circuit" (Stringer 2001, 128). The festival quickly drew appreciation from the Asian and international community thanks to a clear vision in its programming and a strong focus on its project

19 For example, in the 2020 Asian New Talent Award programme, six films (and one co-production) out of fourteen were Chinese. Other represented countries are: Iran and India (two films), Japan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Taiwan, Kyrgyzstan (one film).

20 Between 2013 and 2017, less than 5% of the attending press was from abroad. In the same time-span, Chinese exhibitors at SIFF Market accounted for 75% or more of the total amount (FIAPF 2018, 43).

market, the Pusan Promotion Plan (PPP, renamed Asian Project Market – APM – in 2011).

Aware that it would have been impossible to win the battle for world premieres over festivals like Cannes and Venice, BIFF chose not to apply for FIAPF accreditation, unwilling to be bound by its regulations about competitions and genre limitations. Since its inception, Busan advocated for a 'Pan-Asian' cinema establishing a competitive section called 'New Currents' dedicated to first and second feature-length films from Asian directors. Focusing on Asian cinema and young talents, BIFF avoided the main problems that festivals like SIFF and TIFF have to face in their competitive programmes: an overall generalisation of programming choices and the never-ending (and usually unfruitful) quest for world premieres of European and American movies. BIFF instead aimed to become an attractive hub for young Asian filmmakers, pursuing the vision of 'Asian' cinema and modelling its programming around it, as the other main section is 'A Window on Asian Cinema,' a showcase for the 'best' Asian movies of the year.

BIFF also benefited from the spectacular achievements reached by its national cinema around the same time, when the Korean Wave was enjoying international success, and several Korean directors were acclaimed in the most prestigious film festivals (Kim Ki-duk, Park Chan-wook, Lee Chang-dong etc.). The close relationship between the Korean cinema industry and BIFF has already been largely discussed (Ahn 2011; Bossa 2013), because the festival vision of 'Asian' cinema was bolstered since the beginning by a strong focus on its national cinema. Two recurring programmes have been useful in this regard: Korean Panorama – an overview of the latest trends in Korean cinema – and Korean Cinema Retrospective, which was instrumental in re-discovering Korean masters from the past and making them available to an international audience in a particularly receptive time. The above-mentioned programmes dedicated to Asian and Korean cinema have shaped BIFF's identity, while the 'rest' is a more conventional selection of international movies mixing art-house cinema, entertainment and genre films in sections called Word Cinema, Open Cinema, Wide Angle. Close ties with the local industry constituted a win-win relationship as BIFF helped to promote its national cinema to the world, while the international success of Korean directors made BIFF even more relevant as the primary platform to discover new talents from a now-trendy cinema industry. The two parallel processes proved to be successful, as South Korean cinema took over the market shares once retained by Hong Kong films in (South) East Asia, in the same way that BIFF leapfrogged HKIFF in regional influence around the same time. Finally, the soft power exercised by the popularity of Korean pop-culture, especially in Asia, generated an "immense goodwill" towards the festival, even if these trends are "highly malleable and unpredictable" by nature (Teo 2009, 119).

However, programming practices and ties with local cinema alone cannot explain BIFF's success, as it was its industry-oriented approach that really transformed it into "The Hub of Asian Cinema" (Ma 2012, 153). The festival launched its project market PPP in 1998, modelling it after the oldest such project, CineMart, from the International Film Festival Rotterdam. Its successful implementation helped to shape the vision of a 'Pan-Asian' cinema through cooperation and film funding, quickly becoming "the largest coproduction event in Asia" (Falicov 2010, 17). It provides co-production opportunities to selected projects submitted by Asian directors and producers (including countries from Central and Southeast Asia) that are already in place but lack sufficient funding to be completed. In more than twenty years, it has successfully produced over 250 projects. APM further strengthened its central role in the region by establishing collaborations with several other project markets in Europe and Asia (Rotterdam, Hong Kong, Cannes, Berlin), building on the growing interest in 'Asian' cinema in Western film festivals in the past two decades. BIFF further extended its relevance to the Asian film industry by forging a stronger vision of 'Pan-Asian' cinema through the Asian Film Industry Network (AFIN) in 2005 and the Asian Film Market (AFM) in 2006. The latter is a canonical film market where industry people can meet to sell and buy film rights, but its spatial (Busan) and temporal (October) position made it extremely successful, since Western distributors and programmers can 'discover' new products without waiting for the European festival season, starting in February. The AFIN, on the other hand, seems to update the FPA from the fifties, as it is

> an annual summit for film-makers, executives and industry personnel in the region to examine ways to promote increased cooperation and exchange among Asian film industries. (Lee 2012, 102)

This gathering of the most influential players in the region (TIFF's promoter UniJapan is one of the members) takes place mostly for economic and technological reasons. AFIN's aims to promote joint activities between these countries' film industries – and between film festivals – and to create a transnational film industry of some sort. However, what has changed since the experience of FPA is the prominent role assumed by film festivals. The first Asian Film Festival was conceived as an annual event for industry people, where film screening was only marginally involved, but it is clear that a power shift occurred in the meantime. BIFF became the quintessential 'business festival,' complementing its rich film programming with relevant film markets in order "to position South Korea and BIFF as a hub of the Asian film industry" (Ahn 2011, 103). 'Business festivals' like BIFF can also enhance collaborations between film industries

through programming itself, as it happened with China. When BIFF screened the Chinese movie *Jí jié hào* (Assembly, 2007) by Feng Xiaogang as its opening film in 2007, this marked the beginning of a decade of co-productions between the two countries. BIFF's support of Chinese cinema certainly encouraged Korean involvement in the Chinese film market, where the revenues are potentially much higher. However, as Yecies noted, this is not to be understood as a manifestation of "the nation's 'ultimate soft power' [...] but in a distinctly Korean contributory way" (Yecies 2014, 17).

It is clear that a complementary use of programming and film market is beneficial to both, as they are useful tools for major (Asian) film festivals to strengthen their position in the region, allowing them to play an active role in the film industry. BIFF's vision of 'Asianness' is certainly centred around the present success of Korean cinema in the world and its own status as the reference festival in Asia, but it also contributed to stimulating active dialogue between different film industries, to revive transnational cooperation and to attract major non-Asian players eager to watch, buy or select the latest Asian success. Busan, and on a different level Shanghai, Tokyo and Hong Kong,

> are important hubs for the region and gain importance in the global market place as they offer platforms to break into new markets and have a supporting role for larger markets. (Loist 2011, 396)

Certainly, there is no unified vision of what constitutes 'Asianness,' as it changes both spatially and conceptually from festival to festival, based on economical and geopolitical interests. However, there seems to be a collective effort to focus on Asian cinema in all the film festivals analysed. Thus, the notion of a "loosely-integrated network" (Chua 2012, 10)[21] might best be applied in this case. As the Asian presence in major European and North American film festivals is limited to a few renowned authors, Asian film festivals have focused on regional cinema to promote and develop stronger cinema industries, which can reflexively boost the prestige of these festivals. At the same time, specialization allowed them to emerge amid thousands of 'generic' film festivals. A collective focus on 'Asian' cinema is also commercially important as it can mutually help cinema industries and independent filmmakers to enter new markets, find commercial partners, develop artistic collaborations and make local audience accustomed to different aesthetics, opposing the hegemony of Hollywood movies and national cinema at the local box office.

21 Chua is here referring to East Asian 'popular culture' and its soft power dynamics, but the same can be applied to the (East) Asian cinema industry.

3 Tokyo 'International' Film Festival

3.1 TIFF's Origins and Structure

After the HKIFF established itself as the reference point for film festivals in Asia, and before the BIFF took its place, the Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) tried to assert itself as the main Asian film festival after its inception in 1985. It is the only Japanese film festival accredited to the most prestigious category of the FIAPF, thus obtaining A-category status, since "TIFF aspires to be recognized as one of the four major film festivals in the world and in the same league as Cannes, Venice and Berlin".[22] It ran biannually until 1992, when it became an annual event taking place in October (one month after Venice and right after BIFF). In the beginning, it took place at the Bunkamura in Shibuya (and other locations); in 2004 Roppongi was added and it is now the main venue, although the festival remains scattered across the city.[23] TIFF is hosted by the Japanese Association for International Promotion of the Moving Image (UniJapan), a non-profit organisation founded in 1957 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). It is also strongly supported by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, the Agency for Cultural Affairs and the METI itself.

Even if it is not a government-controlled organisation, UniJapan has always had a direct link with the state cultural authorities and, at the same time, with the Japanese film industry. It does not limit itself to organising the festival, but, since its main purpose is to promote Japanese cinema abroad, it is involved in several initiatives taking place in other festivals or in Japanese cultural centres around the world. It was the METI to organise TIFF for the first time in 1985, handing the reins of the festival's committee to industry people from the major players in Japanese cinema. Although this has changed over the years, it is in a way still valid today, as its current director, Hisamatsu Takeo, had a long career at Shōchiku and the festival features among its 'corporate partners' all the Japanese studios: Shōchiku, Tōhō, Tōei, Nikkatsu and even Kadokawa.[24] Furthermore, in 2007 it entered the larger governmental project Japan International Con-

22 As stated in the "History" section of its official website: `http://history.tiff-jp.net/en/outline/index.html`.

23 A notable exception was the 7th edition (1994), when it was held in Kyoto to commemorate the 1200th anniversary of the city's founding.

24 The Festival Chairman, Andō Hiroyasu, on the other end, represents the government 'arm' of the festival, as he is the President of the Japan Foundation and had a long history in foreign politics.

tents Festival (CoFesta);[25] this transformed TIFF into a sort of "contents market" (Gerow 2013, 193) more than a film fair for cinephiles.

As an A-category film festival, TIFF's main programme is the International Competition, which features 14 films from around the world with an international jury awarding the top prize, the Tokyo Grand Prix. As the festival focus began to shift to 'Asian' cinema, it implemented two other competitions. The first is Asian Future, which features movies from the entire Asian region and is now dedicated to filmmakers who have directed no more than three films. This section was implemented in 1998 as the Asian Film Award, replacing the broader programme Young Cinema Competition and it was later renamed Winds of Asia (2002-12). The last competition is Japanese Cinema Splash – created in 2004 as Japanese Eyes – and it is dedicated to Japanese independent filmmakers regardless of the stage of their careers. Its 'showcase' sections are varied as well, featuring a selection of international, Asian and Japanese films that tries to successfully mix entertainment and art-house cinema. Japan Now is a 'best of' list of what the local industry produced in the previous year, and it usually features a focus on a renowned Japanese director, under the rubric Director in Focus (in 2020 it was Fukuda Kōji). World Focus is a selection of films handpicked from festivals around the world without Japanese distribution, while Special Screening is the typical 'out of competition' programme, screening the more star-packed and glamorous movies. This section allows TIFF to retain its 'international' allure and invite American and European movie stars onto its red carpet. Finally, it is worth mentioning Crosscut Asia, a thematic section featuring movies from Southeast Asia, created in 2014 in collaboration with the Japan Foundation Asia Center.[26]

3.2 A Matter of Relevance

It is surprising to note how little academic attention TIFF has had as compared to other Asian or even Japanese film festivals. Japan has a very lively independent festival scene, which grew exponentially in the nineties. Some of them are also internationally relevant in their niche, as they are usually genre festivals, like the Yamagata Interna-

25 It is a project designed to enhance the promotional capabilities of events related to Japan's distinctive gaming, anime, manga, characters, broadcasting, music, movies, and other content industries (from CoFesta website, https://www.cofesta.go.jp/pc/).

26 As any film festivals showing hundreds of films (the peak was in 2016 with 584), TIFF also has several collateral sections: Japanese Animation was created in 2019 to exploit the success of this national genre in the world. Youth is dedicated to movies for children, while Japanese Classics is a retrospective section focused on past directors or actors.

tional Documentary Film Festival (YIDFF, 1989) or the Yubari International Fantastic Film Festival (YIFFF, 1990). There are events successfully addressing 'Asian' cinema as well, like the Tokyo FILMeX (founded in 2000 by Office Kitano)[27] and Focus on Asia Fukuoka International Film Festival (1991). One might wonder why an 'official', government-backed and heavily-funded film festival is not able to attract the same analysis as similar or smaller events. There are several possible answers, but it seems appropriate to address this matter starting from TIFF's A-category status. As briefly mentioned before, this accreditation essentially means both 'prestige' and 'limitations' for an Asian film festival. The latter soon hindered the former, as TIFF's main section, the Competition, cannot show films that have already been screened in other A-festival competitions. Since Asian festivals are hardly competitive in the film festival circuit, these regulations enormously limit the possibility of attracting renowned directors (Japanese included), who will rather choose for their world premieres venues like Cannes, Venice and Berlin above any other. Therefore, TIFF's Competition will always be composed of a number of films that did not 'make the cut' in other prestigious festivals or were screened 'out of competition' before, or are less recognized, but aspire to be the next 'discovery.' This burden should not be put entirely on the festival programmers' shoulders though, as this was a cultural dynamic already in place long before TIFF even appeared on the scene. As elegantly noted by Nornes (2014, 247), it is "as if "A" means something different in countries that don't write with Roman letters." That is to say, that the film festival network is a product of European hegemony and festivals outside Europe and North America will never have a chance to compete on the same level. Therefore, diversification, specialisation and co-operation could all be viable ways to become relevant, detaching from the established system, just like BIFF did at the beginning of the 2000s. As we have previously analysed, one of the most pursued paths for non-European film festivals was to turn to genre productions and to focus on young filmmakers. For an Asian film festival, this usually means to focus on 'Asian' cinema and to forge its own vision of 'Asianness'.

This leads us to the second possible answer to the question of why TIFF has scarce relevance in academic analysis. Since the first edition and throughout the nineties, its 'international' – rather than its 'Asian' – dimension was stressed, as the festival wanted to challenge the likes of Venice and Cannes. A prime example is the Asian Film Week programme, a showcase of 'Asian' cinema that in 1997 was renamed Cinema Prism to encompass films from all over the world.

27 For the first time, in 2020 Tokyo FILMeX joined forces with TIFF due to the pandemic, and the two events took place at the same time (but in different venues).

Limited by A-category regulations, TIFF chose not to invest in diversification, largely neglecting Asian and Japanese independent cinema until the early 2000s. Instead, it focused on the glamorous side of the event, trying to draw media attention through its stars and paillettes more than films, as

> the energy put into red carpet affairs and exclusive parties drew attention to the preponderance of Hollywood films weeks or months away from their Japanese bows. (Nornes 2014, 255)

The delay characterising foreign film distribution in Japan has always been successfully exploited by TIFF in order to screen, as a national (or East Asian) premiere, several Hollywood movies. Carefully planned media campaigns allowed the festival to invite American stars, screening these products in its most disengaged and entertainment-centred section, Special Screening. This turned out to be a win-win strategy for the TIFF and for distributors as well, as their premiere at TIFF usually precedes their national release by a few months (or weeks). It should come as no surprise, then, if one of the priorities of the programmers in a festival like Busan was to select movies "without turning the festival into an exhibition fair or showcase for predominantly Hollywood films" (Ahn 2011, 52), something that ominously recalls TIFF's choices at that point. Consequently, TIFF was never able to achieve the status of prime Asian film festival that it strove to attain, and with the emergence of BIFF (and, secondarily, SIFF and SGIFF) in the early 2000s, its relevance faded away, as it ultimately "failed to brand itself as 'prestigious' and 'world class'". (Lee 2014, 239). The attendance of press, guests and industry people from abroad has generally been higher than most of its competitors, but even its 'international' status has been challenged at times, particularly regarding the retrospective section. The technical apparatus was not always at the highest standard, as translation was seldom provided (Nornes 2014, 255) and for a long time it pursued the Japanese 'tradition' not to publish catalogues, even when these materials were fundamental to foreign audiences – something that Gerow (2013, 194) thinks is endemic to Japanese film culture.

However, as Stringer (2001) persuasively theorised, the bond between a film festival and its host city nowadays is often stronger than the one with the national cinema industry. Festivals are now able to attract capital investments and have become a form of tourism as well. Most of all, they are useful tools for city branding and cultural promotion. Therefore, their success in programming is not as valuable as their ability to attract a large number of visitors and media attention. The glamorous side of the event (movie stars on red carpets, award ceremonies, exclusive parties etc.) is what encapsulates prestige in the eyes of general public and represents therefore the

shortcut to retaining 'international' allure – a boost of cultural capital for the festival and the host city altogether. In the case of Tokyo, TIFF was instrumental in

> adding a competitive edge to Tokyo as a world-class media capital, for it has always been a site of intersecting global cultural flows onto which Japan could register itself as a crucial player in regional and even international cultural industries. (Ma 2017b, 64)

Thus, considering the strong bond the festival has with the city management (and its national counterparts), TIFF's role within national cultural policies is probably best served as a value-adding event more than as a cultural one. This could be one possible answer to programming choices and the general direction the event took until the beginning of the new century. However, a film festival can hardly survive without its 'raw material' – movies – and if its programming is not attractive enough compared to its competitors, glamour alone cannot save it.

3.3 Towards a More Inclusive Asian Programming

Therefore, it is noteworthy that a major shift at TIFF took place in the early 2000s, when it was clear that the vision of 'Pan-Asian' cinema created by BIFF through a well-planned coordination between programming and project market marked a successful path to differentiation from European festivals. However, this major shift also has geopolitical reasons, as from the mid-nineties Japan became "popularly conscious of itself as part of the region in the face of the rising significance of its neighbors" (DeBoer 2014, 117). Since the Post-War era, relationships with China and South Korea and with the countries once included in the 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' were tense, but in the nineties the time came to reconnect with the neighbours for political, economic and cultural reasons. Japanese influence was growing in the region with the boom of the 'Cool Japan' campaign, and the saturation of the internal market caused industry people to look outside national borders to find new markets. China and South Korea were considered especially valuable, as can be seen in TIFF's subsequent programming choices for Opening and Closing Film of the festival, the ones with more media exposure, as in the 2005 edition they were: *Qian li zou dan ji* (Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles, 2005) by Zhang Yimou and *Yeokdosan* (Rikido-

zan, 2004) by Song Heu-sung.[28] Furthermore, in 2001, Hong Sang-soo won the first prize and TIFF organised a 'Korean Cinema Week' to recognize the growing importance of the Korean cinema industry (and celebrate the 2002 World Cup). In 2002 the 'Cinema Prism' programme was renamed 'Winds of Asia' to focus exclusively on Asian movies. In 2003 *Nuǎn* (2003) by Huo Jianqi won the first prize with Chinese actress Gong Li acting as Jury President. Two years later, director Zhang Yimou was appointed for the same role, as Asian personalities in the Competition's jury generally increased in number.[29]

With this shift towards a more conscious (and Asia-oriented) programming, the organisational structure of the festival changed as well, as in 2003 programming directors were appointed for the main sections: 'Competition,' 'Winds of Asia,' 'Special Screening' and, starting from the following year, 'Japanese Eyes.' The creation of a programme dedicated to the national film industry was an attempt to expand TIFF interests not only to films produced by Japanese studios, but to the independent scene as well.[30] By the end of the nineties, Japanese cinema was experiencing a 'new wave' of directors drawing attention in the European film festival circuit (Kitano Takeshi, Kawase Naomi, Kurosawa Kiyoshi etc.) and TIFF tried to build on that momentum to promote the local industry. Programmes focusing on national cinema are usually viewed with suspicion by film critics and are considered less 'prestigious' than their 'international' counterparts, as explained in the research of Czach regarding Canadian movies at the Toronto International Film Festival:

> Films in a national spotlight program are often seen as conforming to a political or national agenda and thus as being judged not solely on the merits of quality. (Czach 2004, 84)

In fact, festivals like Venice and Cannes do not feature similar programmes (retrospectives are notable exceptions), even if their relationship with the local industry is expressed in other forms. However,

28 Further examples from this period include: *Tian di ying xiong* (Warriors of Heaven and Earth, 2003) by He Ping was the Opening Night Film in 2003. The following year, Wong Kar-wai's *2046* (2004) was the Opening Eve Film. Again, in 2006 *Wang-ui namja* (The King and the Clown, 2005) by Lee Joon-ik was the Opening Night Film.

29 Curiously enough, in 32 editions, Asian countries took the first prize only six times, while Japanese movies won twice. The last time this happened was in 2005, although the Asian presence increased in the last decade. In 2020 the three recurring competitions exceptionally converged in a competitive section called Tokyo Premiere 2020 and prizes were awarded by the audience.

30 In the past, TIFF had already tried to implement independent Japanese cinema as a sidebar programme in Japan Cinema Now, running from 1989 to 1993, and from 1999 to 2001. Other now-dismissed sections focusing on Japan cinema include Japan Film Week (1994), Nippon Cinema Masters (1999) and Nippon Cinema Classics (1995-98, 2000-08).

this quotation is especially true for 'First Cinema' countries, but national programmes take another role when programmed in non-Western countries, as has already been explained in the case of HKIFF and BIFF. Chances to select the latest film of a renowned Japanese director were scarce for TIFF, but once 'Japanese cinema' started to be recognized again, international interest in it grew, and programmers from film festivals around the world were eager to discover the next Japanese talent to introduce to (Western) audiences. Securing films from the Japanese independent scene – usually composed of young or emerging directors – represented for TIFF the opportunity to become the place to be in order to find such talents. At the same time, national programmes help the local industry as a guaranteed venue, even when it struggles on the international film festival network. Country-centred programmes can also set up trends or define aesthetics that can prove inspirational for fellow local directors.

3.4 TIFFCOM and its Joint Strategies

The programming of Asian and Japanese independent movies in the early 2000s also had another important cause, this time an economical one. The successful implementation of PPP at BIFF, along with the growing number of content markets as a strategy for 'peripheral' festivals to become relevant players in their niche, brought TIFF to set up its own market in 1999 as the Tokyo Film Creators' Forum, then evolving in its present form, TIFFCOM, in 2004. TIFFCOM is formally organised by METI and UniJapan, but it is naturally attached to the festival, as they take place at the same time (the 2019 edition was an exception due to the celebration of the new Emperor).[31] TIFFCOM was then rearranged in 2015 as the Japan Contents Showcase to include TIFFCOM, the Tokyo International Music Market, and the Tokyo International Anime Festival, and it was launched as "the biggest multi-content market in Asia".[32] TIFFCOM has changed as well, as it now includes the MPA / DHU / TIFFCOM Masterclass Seminar and Pitching Contest, and the newly created VIPO Japanese Movie & Animation Pitching (JMAP) and Tokyo Gap-Financing Market (TGFM), under the umbrella of the Tokyo Project and Pitching Forum.

As markets became essential to competing in the film festival network, TIFF launched its own co-production market in 2005: the Tokyo

31 However, they are usually set in different locations (three years in Ikebukuro, formerly in Odaiba), causing logistical troubles to industry people wishing to attend the market and the festival altogether. In 2020 TIFFCOM was finally set to be held in Roppongi, near the main venue of the festival, but the pandemic forced the organisation to move entirely online.

32 Japan Content Showcase - Homepage: `http://archive.jcs.tokyo/en/`.

Project Gathering (TPG, later renamed TIFFCOM Co-Pro Connection), whose aim was to provide co-production opportunities to projects (movies, TV, animation) at any stage of their development. Although it was open to international players, it proved to be especially valuable to Asian projects, with Japan accounting for the largest number. In fact, TIFFCOM intended to "capitalize on Japan's achievements in animation and other content creation" (Niskanen 2010, 33). The central role of the Japanese film industry at TIFFCOM is something that has been recently stressed by TIFFCOM CEO Shiina Yasushi himself:

> TIFFCOM's mission is not only the buying and selling of completed films, but also to provide a platform for collaboration between the Japanese and international film and TV industries in the early stages of production. (Screen 2020, 14)

When TIFFCOM was created in the early 2000s, the Japanese cinema industry was in a deep crisis, as its share in the domestic market was under 30%, but the number of produced films continued to grow notwithstanding. To avoid the saturation of the internal market, the historically inward-looking Japanese cinema – further damaged by the economic bubble of the nineties – needed a way to tap the foreign market. As mentioned before, there was also another ongoing trend, that of 'Cool Japan,' which represented growing interest in Japanese visual contents (anime, *dorama*, movies, videogames etc.). Therefore, TIFFCOM proved to be a viable tool for embedding in a coherent and internally-controlled framework

> the internationalization of exported Japanese contents overseas, and the globalization of the relatively isolated Japanese domestic film industry. (Saluveer 2014, 91)

As the number of Japanese productions looking for external support grew, TIFF started to promote cinema industries in the region using its programming to further establish exchanges of people and ideas among countries. A clear indication of the effort towards a more inclusive 'Asian' cinema through coordination between programming and market can be seen in the already mentioned Opening and Closing Film of the 2005 edition. Two films, both born from the collaboration between Japan and other Asian countries, were chosen: *Qian li zou dan ji*, featuring Japanese legend Takakura Ken in the leading role and *Yeokdosan*, the story of a famous Korean-born wrestler in Japan. Furthermore, in recent years TIFFCOM has tried to strengthen its ties to the Chinese film industry after the latter became the second-largest market in the world. The limitations due to the Chinese quota system made co-production the safest way in; therefore symposia, focus and special events were arranged at TIFFCOM in order

to promote it, as in the case of 'China Day' in the past two editions.[33] Joint activities between festivals are another way to strengthen ties between cinema industries, as in 2015 a 'Memorandum of Cooperation' was signed between TIFF and SIFF to promote films across Asia.

The hegemony of Japanese studios in production has diminished since the second half of the 20th century, but their role as distributors and exhibitors is still dominant. Furthermore, film production in Japan relies heavily on the production committee (*seisaku iinkai*) system that severely limits independent production possibilities to find funding and screening spaces, although mini-theatres have partially solved this problem. Therefore, independent films struggle to find their way to the internal market, and their reference audience naturally becomes the film festival network and, possibly, foreign markets. However, several structural problems in the Japanese system – such as the lack of foreign language speaking professionals – hinders their possibilities to find international connections. As TIFFCOM turned to support local cinema, it played an instrumental role in operating as a 'safe net' for independent Japanese productions, providing co-production opportunities and potential funding by international and Asian players. After all, it is UniJapan's mission to 'internationalise' the national cinema and its efforts can be inserted into the wider contexts of co-production markets. This process has important ramifications, as it is slowly transforming the national cinema into a transnational industry, where the nationality of a movie can no longer be determined by its country of production. It is therefore "increasingly challenging to identify the country of origin for a film" (Ma 2017b, 56), although Japanese bureaucracy does not seem willing to favour these practices yet (Saluveer 2014, 104).

4 TIFF's 'Asianness' and Asian 'Asianness'

From 2013 onwards, TIFF has further focused on Asian and Japanese cinema, a shift that began with the rebranding of two dedicated competitions, as Winds of Asia became Asian Future and Japanese Eyes was renamed Japanese Cinema Splash.[34] This renaming was not a mere formal change, as these competitions have since then be-

33 China had the second-highest number of buyers (104) and exhibitors (89) at TIFFCOM 2019, trailing only Japan (JCS 2020, 4-6).

34 Meanwhile, between 2008 and 2012, TIFF experienced its 'green period' focusing on environmental issues. For five straight editions TIFF's poster had an 'Action for Earth' slogan on it and it was mostly green-coloured. It also implemented a special green carpet made by recycled bottles in place of the usual red one, and created the Toyota Earth Grand Prix programme for films related to ecology. Furthermore, in 2011 TIFF launched the Arigato Project to support film screenings in the area hit by

come more focused on programming emerging or independent filmmakers, moving more popular Asian movies in the World Focus programme. The Japan Now section was then added in 2015, providing a non-competitive space for renowned local directors (which would hardly accept the idea of premiering their films in Competition), box office hits, fan favourite movies and retrospectives on contemporary auteurs. Thus, following the model perfected by Busan on the support of Asian and national independent cinema, it seems that TIFF is trying to avoid the risk of having "left the impression of a major government subsidy to the Hollywood industry and its domestic distributors" (Nornes 2014, 255) as in the past, in order to become "the international gateway of Japanese films"[35] instead.

However, TIFF did not give up on its glamorous side, as Hollywood premieres and foreign movie stars on the red carpet are still necessary for retaining the international allure of the festival. Nonetheless, the second shift brought a more balanced programming even in the most 'popular' sections, as the Opening and Closing Film of the festival are usually equally divided between foreign productions and Japanese movies. Starting in 2012 with Maeda Atsuko, TIFF also each year appoints a Japanese movie star as 'TIFF Ambassador' (terms like 'Muse' or 'Supporter' have also been used) in order to attract a younger audience and boost the festival's prestige. Although Japanese stars and films do not retain the same international status as American ones, they are being employed by TIFF as symbols of the local industry, thus enforcing TIFF's relationship with it. This also operates on a more subtle level, as this strategy ideally elevates Japanese cinema to the same level as Hollywood. The relevance of Japanese cinema to TIFF in the last few years is something that has also been 'officially' recognised by the special issue of *Screen International* published for the 33rd edition, where we read:[36]

> Recent editions of TIFF have seen the festival increase its focus on Japanese and other Asian cinema, rather than acting as a launchpad for Hollywood releases as it did in the past. (*Screen* 2020, 4)

As a result, it seems that TIFF moved into BIFF 'territory' regarding its vision of 'Asianness,' as a (non-) geographically limited region, equally encompassing 'major' and 'minor' cinema in order to

the Great East Japan Heartquake, and it screened *Japan in a Day* by Ridley Scott as a Special Opening Film the following year.

35 TIFF History: `http://history.tiff-jp.net/en/overviews?no=28`.

36 Festival-centred issues are usually concerted with the festival itself through partnership; therefore, although *Screen* is an independent magazine, the special issue can be considered a promotional material of sort.

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propose a model different to the one dominated by Hollywood and European movies. This is more evident in the Crosscut Asia parallel programme, which is dedicated to the Southeast. This is probably the section where programming practices shape the most recognisable 'vision,' as it acknowledges industries that are usually invisible, arranging them in country-centred or theme-based programmes. It does not matter if it actually deals with cinema industries at different stages of evolution, or tied to one another by weak connections, as it is the role of programming to find aesthetic similarities and cultural links in order to line them up into a coherent selection. Thus, as national industries with supposed shared traditions and common concerns, TIFF contributes to altering the established canon and shaping an original vision of what 'Southeast' cinema is supposed to be.[37]

However, unlike Busan, TIFF has to retain its A-category status and conform to a set of rules to be international in scope. Therefore, the recent shift towards Asian and Japanese cinema has to be paired with a careful balance between international aspirations and regional-local specialisation, between mainstream and independent, at the same time finding a way to remain unique among other Asia competitors. International Competition, World Focus and Special Screenings are the programmes through which TIFF has earned its 'international' status, and they could be found in similar form in all major film festivals, helping to establish their position in the film festival circuit. However, its programming and the film market pointing to Asian and local cinema are what really differentiates TIFF from other A-category festivals, even if the same model has been drawn from BIFF by several regional festivals and then adapted to local contingencies.

TIFF was often criticised in the past, even from within; renowned Japanese directors Kore-eda Hirokazu voiced what many thought about it when he said that the festival "has been distracted by a national or political agenda, rather than focusing solely on the films or international cinema" (*Screen* 2020, 8). TIFF replied in 2020 by further strengthening the above-mentioned shift, embracing Kore-eda's own idea to create Asia Lounge, a 'conversation series' aiming to provide a shared space of trans-Asian dialogue by pairing a Japanese cinema personality (director or actor) with an Asian one. The panels were held online as international guests were not able to fly to Japan, thus constraining the deeper value of the new section. However, it is something clearly pointing to a transnational aspiration, in order to create a cinematic community beyond national borders,

37 In six editions, Crosscut Asia dedicated country-based programmes to Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand and thematic explorations of the Southeast focused on supernatural traditions, music and new trends. In 2020, the programme was suspended, but a commemorative booklet was published, aiming to reflect on 'Asian' cinema.

even if TIFF still firmly places Japan at its centre. The idea of establishing an 'Asian network' to promote the emergence of 'Asian' cinema can also be observed in collaborations between festivals, as they could become the prototype for all non-European events. Alliances among project markets issuing specific prizes, or funding addressed to emerging regional talents, have been an effective strategy in this regard. More eye-catching collaborations are proving to be less effective on an industry level, but they are much needed to attract media attention to 'Asian' cinema. The more glamorous is probably the Asian Film Awards Academy, jointly created in 2013 by TIFF, HKIFF and BIFF in order "to highlight, publicize and connect the achievements of Asian cinema to the world".[38] Based on the AFA – originally organised by HKIFF in 2007 – the Academy has been modelled after the American one. It comprises former nominees and winners of the AFA and a Board of Director composed of directors of the three festivals chairs it. Since its establishment, it has expanded its activities, as the AFA gala night has been matched with yearlong events such as masterclasses and screenings.

In Gerow's opinion (2013, 197), cinema in Japan has never been evaluated in its creation of cultural capital, except when it interested foreigners as a matter of cultural diplomacy. As previously observed, film festivals started for this very reason, and even today, geopolitical dynamics play an important role in positioning an event within the film festival network. Thus, the matter of 'Japaneseness' must be addressed, as its relation to the foreign gaze, either international (European) or regional (Asian), is fundamental to understand how to place TIFF's vision within the local culture:

> [Japanese cinema] was shaped through an often contradictory relationship with the national and the transnational, one frequently manifested in the approach towards [European] film festivals. At home, Japanese cinema's relation to film festivals reveals a double bind. It must be seen, organised and labelled by foreign spectators and festivals, in order to confirm both that it is cinema and that it is Japanese. But since the domestic gaze does not enter into this equation, screenings at home in festivals, schools or museums are rarely intended to interrogate Japanese film's cinematicity or its Japaneseness. Those are taken as a given, in part because the lack of interrogation itself has become the condition for Japaneseness [as] it ironically depends on the foreign gaze for its constitution. (Gerow 2013, 197)

38 Asian Film Awards Academy Website – Vision and Mission: `https://www.afa-academy.com/page?mid=16`.

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TIFF's current balance between the international and the local has to be continuously renegotiated, along with its vision of 'Asianness' and 'Japaneseness.' The Japanese "lack of interrogation" has been a criticism directed at TIFF for a long time now (by Gerow included). Since then, however, the festival seemed to have more systematically confronted issues of 'Japaneseness,' mostly in relation to the international and the 'Asian.' As an A-category film festival, TIFF still requires validation by the "foreign gaze" (i.e. FIAPF), and so must be subjected to the (post-)colonialist dynamics inherent to the film festival network. At the same time, it is increasingly detaching from these dynamics, moving towards the 'Asian' through programming, film markets and collaborations with other regional players. However, the relationship between 'Asianness' and 'Japaneseness' is still problematic, as TIFF's Asian-oriented sections do not include any Japanese film, which already has two dedicated programmes. That is to say that visions of 'Asianness' and 'Japaneseness' do not belong to the same level and direct confrontation is avoided. The two dimensions are further drifting apart and the expression coined by Iwabuchi can be used in this context to clarify the relationship between Japan and Asia, as "'in but above' or 'similar but superior'" (2002, 199). Programming fails to link the local with the regional, as support to 'Asian' and Japanese cinema takes different routes that can converge only through the co-production market, but this platform is still struggling in its early phases in Japan, which is something that often goes beyond TIFF's control. Therefore, 'Asianness' cannot be used as a unifying element for the local, the regional and the international, as it is not comprehensibly integrated, although TIFF has evolved its strategies in the last decade. On the other end, balance on the internal front has been accomplished by promoting studio movies for their glamorous appeal (in order, among other things, to satisfy the producers that back up the festival), using their exposition on national media to support the local independent scene through programming and the film market. In this regard, TIFF is filling the gap Gerow addressed in the above quotation, and is trying to become a vector for Japanese film culture.

On a regional level, we can draw from Neves' notion of "archipelago" (2012) to address the cluster of major Asian film festivals analysed in this paper, here intended as a regional network developing along the margin of the European film festival circuit. The main feature of the archipelago is to be a site of continuity and rupture at the same time. Project markets, collaborations like the AFA Academy, and a joint effort in promoting 'Asianness' are the bridges (partially) connecting these islands in "inter-Asian exchanges […] on which to build new social, economic, and political formations" (Neves 2012, 231). The attempt to realise a transnational "imagined (film) community" (Anderson 1983) shaped by Asian festivals has been prompted

by growing globalisation and festival professionalisation as a counter-strategy to European and North American hegemony in the festival network. In addition, content creation addressed to a supposedly homogeneous Asian (or East Asian) audience is a key factor for local industries in order to expand towards new markets in the region. Therefore, the notion of 'national cinema' has been increasingly de-emphasised in favour of a shared 'Asian' identity. With the dissemination of co-production markets it is ever more difficult to define a film's country of origin and its supposed 'national' inherent qualities (Czach 2004, 86). Nowadays a film by a Chinese director could potentially win a script competition at BIFF, then a co-production grant at TIFF and finalise its completion with a post-production award at HKIFF, as these festival's markets have specific sections reserved to Asian filmmakers. However, can the finished work be defined as a proper 'Asian' film?

In recent years, film festivals have increasingly expanded their role: from exhibitors to facilitators for industry people, finally becoming active players in (co-)production. These independent films are therefore produced for and by film festivals, thus self-providing sought-after premieres. If European film markets usually support projects from Third World or 'peripheral' cinema in order to discover new talents to promote – reiterating post-colonialist dynamics in a mutually beneficial relationship – the situation is different in the case of the 'Asian archipelago.' As a regional network, Asian film festivals belong to a self-referential system where an allegedly shared vision of 'Asianness' shapes movies that "tend to embody certain aesthetic characteristics which better facilitate border-crossing" (Falicov 2017, 87). Once these movies have travelled through the Asian festival network and reached local markets in the region, they can then try to extend their route to the European festival circuit in order to increase festival-producer and 'Asian' cinema prestige.

However, since the archipelago is also a site of rupture, we should take into account those dynamics observed above in relation to TIFF that are similar for all the other major players. Even if they "rely on and facilitate inter-Asian connections" (Tan 2019, 207), they still have to confront a constant tension between regional aspiration and national interests. Furthermore, each festival has to define its own unique identity in order to stand out amidst its competitors, in a delicate balance between homogenization and diversification. Therefore, while BIFF soon affirmed itself as the promoter of 'Pan-Asianism,' other players developed their vision of 'Asianness' along similar but independent lines. Busan can be credited for the creation of new co-production channels for Asian films, although its strong focus on the project market can potentially overshadow its programming (Nornes 2014, 250). SIFF, as an A-category film festival, struggles to retain its international status partly due to national regulations, but it is

meanwhile championing Chinese-language films mostly endorsing Mainland China, which is the strongest cinema market in the entire region. HKIFF had to reinvent itself after being the most influential player through the eighties. Starting as a pure 'audience festival' for cinephiles, it slowly turned into a more glamorous (AFA) and market-oriented (HAF) event, while envisioning a more open-minded vision of Pan-Chinese cinema than SIFF, operating "as cultural interface between mainland and its native film culture" (Saluveer 2014, 99). Finally, TIFF, as the only other A-category festival in the region, has progressively tried to define its identity by balancing the international allure of its Hollywood (and Japan's studios) premieres with an Asian-centred programming, strongly supported by the film market. At the same time, a common feature of the aforementioned festivals is the particular attention they show in various ways to the local cinema industry, in an attempt to establish themselves as promoters and active players in shaping the national cinema culture.

Therefore, even if major Asian film festivals have developed in the same direction, following BIFF's model, and joined forces through several initiatives during the last decade, the analysis in this paper has highlighted that a shared vision of 'Asianness' is hardly found among them, since

> what is being translated in this process is not a monolithic or essentialist notion of 'Asia' for Western consumption, but rather a diversity of lived and mediated experiences within Asia for its many inhabitants. (Yeo 2017, 303)

The notion of 'Asia' – and East Asia in particular – as a homogeneous cultural space has been developed responding to particular interests, varying from festival to festival. National and economic constraints proved to be too powerful not to affect the problematic relationship between the local and the regional, thus obstructing the possibilities to create a more systematic trans-Asian model. However, if Iwabuchi (2014, 44) famously advocated for a "de-westernisation academic production of knowledge" through inter-Asian referencing, it could be argued that the network of major Asian film festivals is currently attempting a similar 'de-westernisation production of film culture' which could potentially result in their freedom from the 'foreign gaze.'

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Learning Japanese through VR Technology. The Case of *Altspace VR*

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Abstract Through this paper, I intend to analyse the state of Japanese learning through virtual reality technologies, avoiding as much as possible the analysis of prototypes and laboratory experiments, focusing instead on a case study that implements software and hardware already present on the consumer market. After analysing the VR technology currently available to end-users and its hardware, which has lately increased in popularity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the specificities of virtual reality compared to other communication technologies, I will proceed to the analysis of the case study *Altspace VR*, a social VR software used also by an active Japanese learning community, to try to identify the characteristics that could make this technology particularly suitable for language learning.

Keywords Virtual reality. Japanese language. Digital humanities. Virtual worlds. Learning through technology. Informal language learning.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 What is VR?. – 3 The Second Era of VR. – 4 VR as a Medium. – 5 Japanese Learning through Altspace VR. – 6 Informal Learning and Sense of Belonging. – 7 Conclusions.

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1 Introduction

In the present work, I will try to analyse the opportunities offered by Virtual Reality (VR) for Japanese learning. The basic assumption is that the VR actual landscape is mature enough to provide affordable and reliable hardware and software to allow end-users to gain a substantial positive experience; it would therefore be useful to understand how it is already used for language learning purposes. In particular, this work will focus on Japanese learning.

The VR industry as a whole is growing at a fast pace. In the US, the market size of consumer virtual reality hardware and software has been projected to increase from 6.2 billion US dollars in 2019 to more than 16 billion US dollars by 2022 (Alsop 2020). Several types of software and hardware are already available on the market, mostly purchasable from the manufacturers' online stores. Thus, this present work will move beyond the analysis of VR for language learning from an experimental perspective (prototype hardware, software, lab testing) to focus instead on what currently exists on the market and how it is actually used.

Before anything, this paper will introduce what is meant by Virtual Reality, through a brief excursus of the development of this technology. Then, by analysing the process of communication through VR as a medium, I will identify what typology of software best allows language exchange and communication between users, and I will present my experience of one particular software (*Altspace VR*) with an already established community of Japanese learners. I will then try to identify reasons why this software and in general learning through VR can motivate learners and allow them to focus, more effectively than traditional technologies.

2 What is VR?

Burdea and Coffet (2003, 25) define Virtual Reality as

> a simulation in which computer graphics is used to create a realistic-looking world. Moreover, the synthetic world is not static, but responds to the user's input gesture, verbal command, etc.

One of the main aspects of VR is therefore real-time interactivity. But VR is not just telepresence in which a user shares the same virtualized space with others; the virtual world must be immersive. It must, in other words, surround the user and respond to his actions, for example his movements or his interaction with the objects present in the virtual world. VR also provides the opportunity of imagining and realizing answers to real human needs and desires, from language learn-

ing to video games. "Virtual reality is therefore an integrated trio of immersion-interaction-imagination" (Burdea, Coiffet 2003, 27). Also, Sherman and Craig (2018, 8, 10) stress the importance of the 'immersive' element for a VR experience. They define 'immersion' as "the possibility to perceive something besides the world you are current living [...] the term immersion can be used in two ways: mental immersion and physical or sensory immersion". While the mental immersion is the state of being deeply engaged and involved and can be somehow related to the concept of *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi 2009), a mental state in which a person performing an activity is naturally immersed and focused, and can also be created outside the VR realm,[1] sensory immersion is a unique feature of VR technology where specific human senses, mainly hearing, sight and tact, are synthetically stimulated so to create the sensation of being physically present in a different world. The sensorial factor is thus an important key feature of all VR experiences that must provide real-time feedback to users according to their position in the physical space, as well as their head and hand movements. From a hardware point of view, there have been two main ways to realise this sense of immersion and interaction: stationary VR and headset-based VR. Stationary VR was introduced in 1992 at the SYGGRAPH '92, a computer graphic conference in Chicago, with the projects *The Cave* (DeFanti et al. 1992) from the Electronic Visualization Lab of Chicago and *The Virtual Portal* from Sun Microsystem. Stationary VR aims to realise a VR experience by creating dedicated spaces/rooms with 3D projectors that display the virtual space, generated in real-time by a computer and cameras that capture the movement of the user and change the virtual world according to his movements. By contrast, headset VR aims to recreate the entire virtual space inside a headset worn by the user. This approach to VR, which emerged in the sixties, became more economically viable than the alternative, especially for end-users, as it does not require dedicated rooms with sensors for its use. Therefore, many technologies were developed in the nineties around the concept of the headset, to recognize the movements of his head, hands and legs. However, the expensive hardware needed to create the VR experience and the lack of a global network connection have prevented these technologies from reaching a large number of users, and so it remains relegated to experimental studies or implementations in large-scale theme-park events.

One important current VR application, on the other hand, is the realisation of collaborative virtual environments, systems where mul-

1 A well-designed user experience, for example, can generate a flow state in the user of a software ensuring a concentrated and relaxed use of the digital artefact. For details on User Experience and its psychological principles, see Garrett 2011 and Triberti, Brivio 2016.

tiple users connected through the internet may interact in the same virtual space. This feature transforms the VR artefact from a single-user simulation system to a medium allowing different people to communicate and share ideas while deeply immersed in a virtual environment. This VR + Internet combination provides new business opportunities and new possible applications in the fields of social communication and language teaching.

It is precisely thanks to the evolution of the Internet in terms of diffusion and speed, as well as the development of increasingly powerful and affordable hardware, that the birth of the second era of VR was made possible.

3 The Second Era of VR

The second era of VR began when information technology became mature enough to allow the production of affordable, non-obtrusive VR hardware available to the masses, and when internet connections became sufficiently stable, widespread and fast. The type of VR hardware representing this second era is the headset, in that it has proven to be less invasive and more affordable than the alternative. This era began roughly around 2004-05, with the development of smartphones powerful enough to be used with *Google Cardboard*[2] and other virtual reality viewers, created for next-generation smartphones. There are essentially three hardware approaches used by companies to deliver the VR experience. The first regards the use of a device small enough to be paired to a wearable visor. The viewer can be made with common cardboards like *Google Carboard* and appropriate lenses or plastic and other materials. In this case, the price is usually quite low, starting from a minimum of 15 euro for a cardboard-made viewer, up to about 90 euro for the *Samsung VR* designed for the Korean company's smartphones. The price difference depends largely on the construction materials and quality of the lenses, while all the technology related to image quality and head position detection is determined by the smartphone. While offering an acceptable VR experience, especially with the latest smartphones, this approach to VR does not allow motion detection for hands and other body parts in space. The difference in performance of the smartphones presently on the market also makes it impossible to provide a homogeneous experience. In 2019, an article of *The Verge* (Robertson 2019) declared that this technology has reached a dead end. The great merit of this inexpensive approach, however, was to make VR known to a very large number of users; in fact, *Samsung Gear* alone

2 For further information refer to the project page: `https://arvr.google.com/cardboard/`.

produced and shipped at least 5 million units (Robertson 2019). The second approach to VR (from 2016 with *Oculus Rift*) is to use high-tech high-specs VR dedicated headsets connected to a high-performance PC or to a latest generation gaming console. In this case, the hardware of the PC or console together with the hardware of the headset allows not only the recognition of the head but also the hands (or feet with special devices) and movements in space. The quality of the headset is usually very high, offering a resolution of up to 2,160 × 2,160 pixels per eye[3] (*Reverb V2*). High-end hardware also allows for a very high-quality immersive experience. The problem with this technology, however, is twofold. On the one hand, the bulky cables are connecting the headset to the hardware, and on the other the cost is prohibitive. The gaming hardware may cost from about 300 euro for a PS4 (Sony PlayStation 4) up to over 1,000 euro for a decent gaming PC. The viewer itself also has a cost ranging from 350 to 800 euro. In addition to the prohibitive price, this solution mostly requires the use of a fixed location. Transporting it around the house or outside would involve moving cables, computer and headset as well. Therefore, despite its high specs, it has never become mainstream, but is designed for fans of the industry who have fairly high budget resources at their disposal.

The last approach, the so-called 'stand-alone', saw its first practical realisation with the market release of the *Oculus Go*, launched in 2017 by Facebook after it acquired the Oculus company. *Oculus Go* does not have particularly advanced hardware, but has one great advantage: it is a stand-alone wireless headset, with no need for external hardware such as smartphones, PCs or consoles. It does not have motion sensors yet, but in addition to the recognition of head movements, it recognizes the movements of the controller and of two fingers of the hand that grasps it. The price is about 200 euros for the basic 32Gb version. Two years later, in May 2019, Facebook released *Oculus Quest*. This time the hardware consisted of an OLED[4] screen with higher resolution than *Oculus Go*; moreover, it included four built-in cameras allow the recognition of both hands and spatial movements, granting a much more complete stand-alone VR experience than *Go*, and with a starting cost of about 450 euro for the 64Gb version.

Just after one year and a half, in October 2020, Facebook releases *Oculus Quest 2*, lighter, cheaper (350 euro), and with higher resolution and refresh rate. In the period between the release of the *Oculus Go* and the *Quest 2*, the market changed drastically. The release of a second headset in so short time after the release of the first *Quest* implies that the favour of the mainstream audience is starting to em-

3 At the time of writing this article (2020), the VR viewer with the highest resolution is the *HP Reverb 2* (`https://www8.hp.com/us/en/vr/reverb-g2-vr-headset.html`).

4 Acronym for Organic Light-Emitting Diode. Cf. Morrison 2019.

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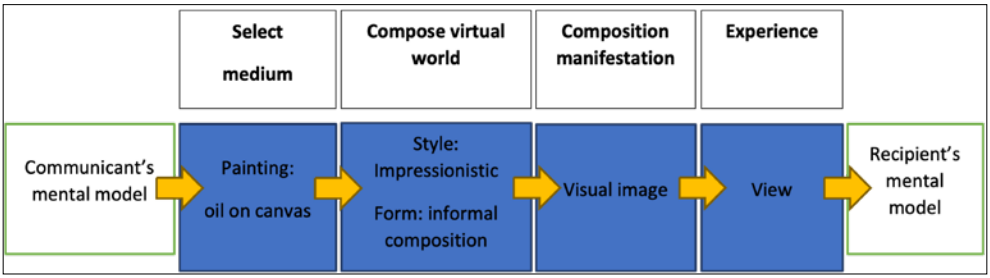
brace VR. Accomplice is certainly the period of pandemic caused by the threat of COVID-19, which has forced a large number of users to stay at home, not only in Italy, but also worldwide, has certainly aided his process. As Skandalis reports, "Virtual reality has been boosted by coronavirus […]. There appears to have been a significant rise in such VR offerings this year, aiming to deliver safe, accessible experiences during the pandemic" (Skandalis 2020).

4 VR as a Medium

As Sherman and Craig state, VR is a medium, in other words, an intermediary between two entities, the human and the virtual world.

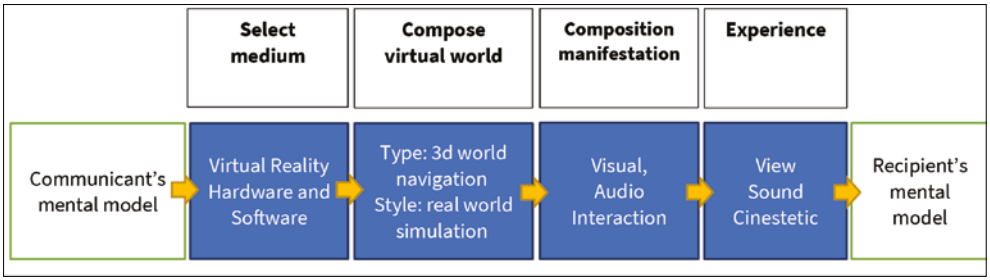
> A virtual world can be thought of as a simulation of a domain manifested in some medium where the simulation is driven by rules of behaviour programmed or imagined, simple or complex. (2018, 89)

These rules can be implemented not only as a computer programme, but also as the rules of board games, colours in an image, the imagination of a child. "The domain is the extent of the space, participants, objects and rules of the virtual world" (89). In short, the content conveyed by a medium is a virtual world. The communication process between the Communicator's mental model and the Recipient's mental model is normally structured in several steps as: 1) selecting the medium, 2) composing the virtual world, 3) the manifestation of the composition, and 4) the experience. For example, in the case of a painting, the medium might be 'oil on canvas' and the composition of the virtual word may be 'impressionistic' with a particular technique and genre. The manifestation of the composition is a visual image, and the final experience is a visual one. Indeed, Communicator and Recipient may also be the same person.



Scheme 1 An excerpt of mediated communication according to the Sherman & Craig's mediation scheme (2018, 66)

If we use the same scheme to describe a VR experience, the content of each step may depend on which type of content or software the Communicator intends to provide, and the Recipient to use. For example, a previous study on Japanese learning using VR considered the interaction of several human players with non-human entities in basic Japanese communication and social gestures, such as bowing. The software used in this study is a VR version of *Crystallize*, a 3D world where players can freely move around (Cheng et al. 2017). It is possible to represent the communication between the Communicator and Recipient mental model by using the following scheme.



Scheme 2 Mediated communication with Crystallize VR (Author's scheme)

In this scheme, the Communicator, through various steps, creates an experience that should reach the Recipient's mental model. The scheme has almost the same steps as the first scheme, and it is centred on the Communicator's intention to transfer information to the Recipient.

However, compared to traditional art, digital and online products deal with different user expectations in terms of time and performance. These expectations represent the difference between art and craft.

As Becker (1978, 862) states:

> Art and craft are two contrasting kinds of aesthetic, work organization and ideology [...] craft can and does exist independent of art words [...] consists of a body of knowledge and skill which can be used to produce useful objects.

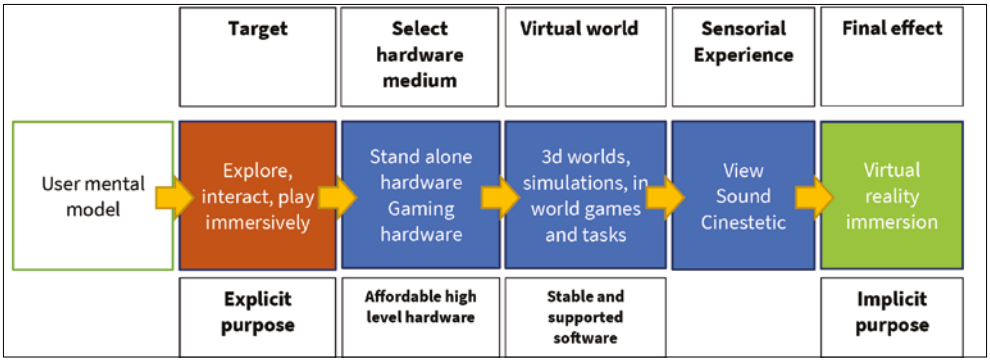
Even if we agree that VR virtual worlds may be a work of art in the aesthetic sense, the process is different. Art has value in the experiencing of creating, the craft (the product) in its final result. If the Communicator has good intentions with his communication, but certain pitfalls not only in his intent to communicate or in his skill but also in the underlying technology environment prevent his message from reaching the user, the Communicator's intention itself cannot be satisfied.

The participants of the *Crystallize* project, for example, experienced difficulties with the virtual reality experience ('compose virtual world' level), which suffered from some technological defects. In fact, according to the user experience feedback, 27.9% of the comments revealed user interface problems, such as a difficulty in reading words in the inventory. Moreover, another 23.5% experienced dizziness and sickness caused by the headset (virtual reality hardware, 'select medium level'). Even despite such problems, the overall result of the study showed "a statistically significant increase in the participants' sense of cultural involvement". However, "there is no obvious evidence that the language learning outcomes improved thus far" (Cheng et al. 2017, 550). The test, furthermore, was carried out with particularly expensive hardware within the reach of only a few users: *Oculus Rift* together with external hardware. The software used was a prototype (Culbertson et al. 2016) not normally available to end-users and forcedly adapted to VR, which caused bugs and interface problems.

However, in the last three years (2018-20), the VR landscape has evolved considerably. Not only has hardware improved, as discussed in the previous section, but also software has. *Oculus Quest* sold around 633,653 units in the period May 2019-March 2020 (Boland 2020), surpassing the *Rift*'s previous year sales and the expectations of the producer (Matney 2020). It has also been estimated that around 800,000 software units have been sold in the same period from the Oculus Store alone. These figures indicate that VR software has increased in number and quality as well (only professional software is sold through the store), and that along with the demo, experiments and unsupported prototypes, a considerable amount of well-tested and dedicated free and paid VR software, purchasable through dedicated online stores, is already present on the market. Given that the VR market has evolved so much, it makes sense to design a scheme **[scheme 3]** centred around the user and his needs, presuming that the Communicator's intent is fully realised thanks to well-tested software and stable technology.

Scheme 3, as applied to a social VR software, reveals two purposes, one explicit and one implicit. The explicit purpose is the purpose for which the user uses the VR, and this can vary: e.g. playing games, exploring worlds, watching 3D movies or working out through training simulations. The implicit purpose, which is also the last step of the diagram, is the optimal immersion in virtual reality. There is intentionally no reference to the Communicator, because the Communicator is not normally in the thoughts of the user. This is also corroborated by the three fundamental corollaries of the Platt user experience (2016), as exemplified in Platt's summary: "users don't care about your program or you either. Never have, never will" (Platt 2016, 28). In other words, to achieve a fully working virtual reality immersion, the hardware medium, the software and the sensorial ex-

perience must work so well that the user is naturally embedded with the hardware and the software, and enters into a dimension of *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi 2009) with the new virtual reality.



Scheme 3 Mediated communication through a Social VR software. This scheme focuses on the user's mental model

In the next section, I will examine the status of Japanese learning through VR by using a Social VR software called *AltspaceVR* (`altvr.com`) that respects the elements of the above scheme. It is a mature social VR software recently acquired and supported by Microsoft, it can be used with latest generation stand-alone hardware, and it allows a remarkable virtual sensorial experience. The reason I have focused on this software among others (*VRChat*, *RecRoom*, *VTime*) is that this software is more stable and has better graphic quality, and hosts existing Japanese learning groups.

5 Japanese Learning through Altspace VR

Social VR software is often present in the form of an online 3D world, a place where different internet users can access the same meeting area and socially interact by exchanging messages and multimedia contents. Voice chat is frequently supported too. Users portray themselves as avatars, a customizable graphical representation of each user. The first online virtual world that received considerable media attention was *Second Life* (SL), launched in 2003; in its heyday (2007), it reached seven million virtual inhabitants (Crudele et al. 2017). The same multidimensional world idea employed in SL has been applied to *Altspace*, with the addition of VR implementation.

Altspace VR started as a private company in 2013 and was acquired by Microsoft in 2017. The software is downloadable free of charge directly from the Oculus products store.

Figure 1 Screenshot of the Altspace VR home and the event menu

I have been using *Altspace VR* since 2019 with *Oculus Go*, then with *Oculus Quest* and recently with *Oculus Quest II*. The overall experience is similar, and it is possible to use three fingers of both hands, as well as to move in the room to a certain extent (the system first requires the user to delineate the area he can walk in, using the controller). It is also possible to move in the virtual space with the micro-stick of the controller, without the need of physically walking through it.

By entering the application, the user appears in his personal area, a house and a terrace where he can move freely. It is also possible for him to change the environment around him by adding elements like furniture or trees and plants.

From the main menu, it is possible to select one of the events of the day or a different world to move to. *Altspace VR* hosts various events for language learning, especially English and Spanish. Until October 2020, there were also two Japanese language learning events, but presently only one of the two still exists and is actually maintained: *Free Conversations in Japanese and English*, created and maintained by a Japanese native user with the nickname of Kii.

Kii is not a language teacher; he created the group in July 2020 for the purpose of English and Japanese language exchange. The event is held twice weekly, and there are about 15-20 participants at a time, but this may vary.

By accessing *Altspace VR*, the user can select the events of the day the from the list. As shown in the image below, the conversation event is present in the list and can be selected **[fig. 1]**.

Figure 2 Screenshot ofa classroom of the school building

Figure 3 Screenshot of the school hall. Communication is casual both in English and Japanese, according to the needs of the participants and their level of Japanese

Figure 4 On the left, a screenshot of posters used by the host to give a brief explanation of colours nature elements and Japanese writing. On the right a classroom with meals on the desks

Figure 5 Talking about how to speak of family members in Japanese, and writing their relative roles on pictures of families (real or from the cartoon world) taken from the Internet

By selecting the event, the user is transported to the event location, a two-floor Japanese school building with two classrooms per floor. It is possible to move freely from one classroom to another using the corridor or the stairs to the second floor. Every avatar present in *Altspace VR* represents a real user and not a computer-generated bot. Communication can be made by moving the hands and head or by speaking (a hidden mic is normally present in the VR headset) **[figs 2-3]**.

Sometimes the host gives brief Japanese Lessons by pointing with his virtual hands at the posters in the hall and teaching the names of its elements or of the colours present there. In other cases, he takes the users to a classroom with lunches on the desk. By pointing at the meals on the desk and saying their names in Japanese, the host encourages discussions on the components of the meal, which often depend on the culinary habits of the users (like miso soup or a bowl of rice) **[fig. 4]**.

After about half an hour, the host opens a portal to a new world (a sushi restaurant). The idea of going to another world after a while stems from the fact that users start to get tired of being in the same place all the time. In the sushi restaurant, they are introduced to the cultural aspects of *kaiten zushi* (conveyor belt sushi). The conveyor belt transports various types of sushi around the restaurant. It is also possible to visit the back of the restaurant with the kitchen and the food in preparation, as well as the bathroom.

Inside the restaurant, the host focuses more on Japanese learning topics. In one of the latest events (10 November 2020), for example, Kii took some random family photos from *Google Images* and wrote, with a virtual pen, the Japanese names for father, mother, brothers and sisters, as well as for daughter and son. Participants actively participate, as they are the first to ask, for example, how to say 'daughter' or 'sister' in Japanese and to ask questions in a relaxed

and familiar environment. However, participants are not forced to stay there and listen to the 'lesson'. They are free to move around the restaurant and to explore it or to engage in conversation in Japanese with other speakers. There is no fixed end to the event. After a couple of hours participants usually start to get tired and disconnect. The event generally ends when everyone leaves the area **[fig. 5]**.

6 Informal Learning and Sense of Belonging

Virtual spaces are not necessarily only those mediated by virtual reality technology; even through normal technologies such as computers and monitors it is possible to create virtual environments intended for language learning. For example, according to a study by Koyama, English learners may learn the spatial meaning of English prepositions more effectively if they visualise and manipulate them in a particular virtual space generated by a special 3D software (Koyama et al. 2007). In this case, then, the interaction with the grammatical elements in the virtual 3D world, even through a 2D device such as a monitor, foster the learner's ability to contextualize and memorise.

Moreover, adding to a 3D virtual world the ability to interact with users through avatars and participation in cooperative activities, as in *Second Life*, allows learners to refine their linguistic actions through attention to others. Free interaction between learners may encourage them to share their interests or aspirations through a sense-making process, i.e. a process whereby learners build a narrative about their experiences and whereby their interaction helps them to make sense and form long-term memories. Human experiences are in fact stored in the episodic memory, a category of long-term memory (Anderson 2015). Making learners solve pre-made quests in *Second Life*, for example, proved to be effective for beginning Chinese language learners in the process of sense-making through communication and problem-solving, and thus in forming experiences that foster long-term memorization: "the learners expressed their emotions and developed a bonding relationship on their questing journey by way of expressing humorous and caring statements" (Zheng 2012, 549).

Other advantages in the use of 3D virtual words with learner interaction features is the fact that learners may practice language in a stressless environment. The results of the study conducted by Boellstorff (2008, 155) on SL, for example, suggest that "some non-native speakers of English enjoyed its ubiquity because it allowed them to practice English in an environment where grammatical and typographic errors were the norm". Vickers (2009) also suggests that SL allows learners to improve their language skills, since they can communicate without fear of losing face.

Figure 6 Spontaneous creation of discussion groups in an *Altspace VR* world

Therefore, virtual worlds may foster language learning in different ways (contextualization, memorization), especially if they have certain characteristics that encourage communication among learners (experience creation, sense-making).

This concept applies to *Altspace VR* as well, as it is a virtual 3D world where the communication dynamics between characters and navigation concepts are very close to SL. Moreover, thanks to VR technology *Altspace VR* may offer a greater immersivity that could enhance the experiential process of the learner.

In fact, while in SL, apart from basic movements in three-dimensional space, it is only possible to communicate with the body through predetermined animations such as dances or patterns of hand, head and body animations, in *Altspace VR* it is possible to communicate directly through free body movements, as VR headsets such as *Oculus Quest* and *Rift* allow not only the recognition of body movements in space, but also the movement of the head and hands.

It is therefore possible to use a large number of non-verbal messages that enrich the communication process. In addition, since it is possible to move within the environments both physically and through the movement features that can be activated through trackpads (very useful, especially in the case of small rooms or when you do not want to walk physically), it is easy to move away from a group of users who are communicating and start another communication with other users. The audio in VR worlds is spatialized by default, i.e. as in the real world, it is influenced by the distance and position of the speakers.

Figure 7 Writing kanji in the air

It often happens that some avatars move away from a discussion group to start a new communication not far away, while maintaining a spatial and auditory connection with the original group. In other words, VR technology permits free action, interaction and communication in a virtual space, allowing the users to perceive the sense of the common space they share and of the objects that surround them **[fig. 6]**.

In *Altspace VR*, it is also possible to grab certain objects present in the world and to play with them by moving and tossing them around. Normally, it is possible to interact with objects like fireworks or balls, if present, but it is also possible to create new extensions through certain programming languages. One member of *Free Conversations in Japanese and English* created a system for entering Japanese *kana* and *kanji*[5] characters into the 3D space. By selecting a *kanji*, the shapes appear in the 'air' and can be moved and resized. All shapes are three-dimensional and thus have a sense of solid presence. The display of kanji characters that can be rotated, enlarged, and almost touched, and at the same are shared with other learners in the same space, was for me a new and original experience. Although there are no studies suggesting whether this technology can help Japanese students to learn

5 *Kana* refers to 2 phonetic syllabaries while *kanji* refers to logographic characters originally imported from China used both for the phonetic and semantic meaning. Both *kana* and *kanji* are part of the Japanese writing system.

kanji better and faster, the sensation of the immersion I had by moving the characters around gave me the impression of playing with something physical, a sensation impossible to obtain through other media.

Kii used this function in the November 28, 2020 event. He explained some basic *kanji* like 夏 *natsu* (summer), 村 *mura* (village), 月 *tsuki* (moon) to some newcomers who were attracted by the Japanese writing. He enlarged the characters so that they were clearly visible in the space, and then started to explain their origin and readings. The explanation occurred while other groups in the same space were discussing convenience stores in Japanese, and a third group was talking half in English and half in Japanese about the differences between Chinese and Japanese. No discussion theme had been decided beforehand: group gatherings and the topics of discussion arose spontaneously **[fig. 7]**.

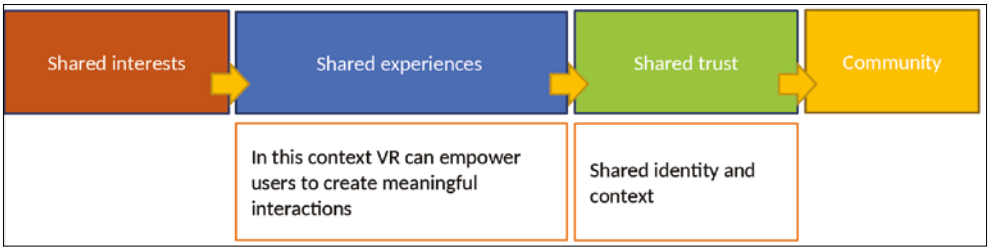
The above examples are meant to indicate how *Altspace VR* is currently being used in spontaneous Japanese communication groups with native and non-native speakers, and to show that the current state of consumer VR has already seen the creation of spontaneous language-learning communities, including for Japanese. Since the meetings are open to everyone, each time a new event takes place, some new first-time users enter, often out of curiosity. However, it was possible to identify six regular attendees for questioning. Respondents ranged in age from 19 to 39. Three of them live in Japan, where they work in the IT field and are married to a Japanese citizen.

Table 1 Results of the survey to six regular attendees to the Free Conversations in Japanese and English group

	Question	Res. Num.	Answer
1	What do you expect from these meetings?	3	Casual talk
		1	To make friends with Japanese native
		2	To learn Japanese
2	How long have you been attending these meetings?	1	About 1 month
		2	About 3 months
		2	About 4 months
		1	About 5 months
3	Do you feel that your level of Japanese has increased as a result of these meetings?	1	Can't say
		1	Not in terms of grammar, but I feel more confident
		2	Yes, a little
		2	Yes, definitively
4	What is the advantage of VR over regular language-learning technologies?	2	It is easier to get acquainted with people
		1	I feel a deeper connection with the participants
		1	The feeling of immersion in the world
		2	I see the world around me and feel like I'm in a place with real people

The data so far collected is not sufficient to confirm that language learning actually takes place through VR (question 3). However, the answers to question 4 are noteworthy because they communicate the idea that through VR-mediated virtual worlds there is a feeling of being more connected to others. Discussion about the potential of VR technology to connect with others and being part of a community has become prevalent in recent years (De la Peña et al. 2010; Jones 2017; Nash 2018). Also, software developers and producers have realised that Communities are the key to the success of a Social VR product. In the *Oculus Connect 6* convention, Tyler Hopf, product designer manager at Facebook, postulated the following four statements: "Virtual Communities are real, Communities are essential to VR, VR has the power to create a sense of place, Design can catalyze communities" (Hopf 2019).

The following diagram summarises Hopf's view of how user communities are created through the use of VR:



Scheme 4 Scheme of community creation through VR based on Hopf's theory

Sharing interests is empowered by the peculiarity of the VR technology thanks to the immersive experience that this technology can provide, regardless of the distance that separates users. Eventually, strong shared experiences result in the development of shared trust. Shared trust means that:

> we have shared identity, we can relate to each other. It means that we have shared context which means that when we are picking up a conversation we are not starting from scratch. It means we have shared social norms so interacting becomes easier. All of a sudden, if I don't know you personally but I know you are in my community, it is much easier to interact and pick up conversation and dive deeper into what we want to talk about. (Hopf 2019)

Facebook Oculus hardware and software also allow "Capture and Share", i.e. capturing the best moments within the community by taking pictures and recording video. It is also possible to engage out-

side of VR, by chatting on *Messages* or posting on Facebook or other social media.

Shared trust is gained from shared experiences through VR, as these experiences are not decontextualized from the environment in which they occur. While traditional text chat, audio, and video only share certain channels (text, audio, and video), the VR experience shares the users' very environment. In other words, this experience allows the sharing of a sense of place. Places have a location (how you get there), a landscape (the characteristics of a space) and a personal investment (you care about the place and you want to contribute to the community).

Every week in *Altspace VR* more than 70 different events are held, each driven by a distinct community.[6] The reason for such a high number of different communities is the perception of having a place in the virtual world you have built together. This is precisely the reason why VR can foster communication and consequentially language exchange as well. Another reason why it is easy to catalyse communities in VR virtual worlds is that virtual places are designed to encourage communication (Design can catalyse communities, Hopf 2019). *Altspace VR*, in fact, provides areas in the world for playing basketball or setting off fireworks and throwing snowballs. Users can grab objects (balls, fireworks etc.) and play with them. These micro games work as icebreakers and encourage users to interact and start a conversation. This is the beginning for the formation of many meaningful relationships, especially when users try to speak in a foreign language. Other important elements are walls and space: if I feel overwhelmed by the conversation, I can move outside the group into a different area or go behind a wall for a while. I can thus modulate the level of my participation in the conversation through the use of these spatial elements based on my state of mind at a specific time.

In *Altspace VR*, every user can also create a world and hold events, and in this way be an active part of an existent community or the creator of a new one. The power to design can catalyse communities. The creation of the world can be made using the same *Altspace* 'create world' functionalities through the editor control panel, where complex worlds with urban and natural elements can be created. Moreover, by accessing the *Altspace VR* home page, it is possible to program one or more events to be held in the personally created world, or to select one of the pre-created events that suit several types of different events. In this way, even an educator with no coding skills can create and manage events in the *Altspace VR* community. Events, if public, are automatically presented in the event menu, but it is also possible to create private events accessible only by invitation.

6 Data gathered by counting the distinct community events in the *AltSpace VR* home page (`altvr.com`).

Altspace VR however is still lacking important features like the perception of the physicality of spaces; the ability to interact with all surrounding objects is also still limited. It is possible to handle and move some objects, but these manipulatable objects are still very few in number. Embedding words in Japanese into objects in the virtual world and associating them with an action that could be performed with that object represents an example of a concrete way to create a kinesthetic-based system for language learning, a method that has been proven effective for increasing learner vocabulary (Machado 2018). Moreover, the user can sometimes walk through people and walls, and in these moments the sense of perceived reality falters and the technology becomes manifest.

Other VR virtual world simulations such as *Rec Room* are more oriented towards kinetic experiences, but some bugs and a less detailed world simulation do not enable an optimal immersion in the virtual world. Facebook is particularly interested in this kind of simulation, so much so that it has developed its own social VR software, called *Horizon*, which is currently in beta and not testable. However, the first public videos released show worlds with high resolution and many opportunities of interacting with surrounding objects.

7 Conclusions

In this article, after outlining the state of current VR technology and its diffusion in the consumer market, I have identified hardware and software through which to verify the existence of VR in Japanese-learning communities. The goal was to choose a relatively inexpensive and easy-to-use hardware, as well as a supported software, while avoiding demos or prototypes. I have chosen a relatively inexpensive stand-alone headset (350 euros) and free VR software (*Altspace VR*) currently supported by Microsoft, and verified that, in addition to events for other languages such as English and Spanish, there is an event related to Japanese learning that is presently actively maintained. I have reported my personal experiences within this Japanese language exchange community, in which I have participated for about six months, and through the analysis of the peculiar qualities of the virtual world, I have speculated on the reasons that this technology might facilitate language learning. *Altspace VR* also has advanced features that allow anyone without computer skills to create dedicated worlds and events, and this should help instructors and educators to easily build new spaces for language exchange and education.

As stated in the present paper's introduction, the VR industry as a whole is growing at a fast pace; however, in Italy there are still little knowledge and little experimentation with it.

According to Retail Transformation 2.0 research conducted in 2019 by the Digital Transformation Institute, "75 out of 100 citizens are familiar with Virtual and Augmented Reality technologies, but only 37% have tried them at least once" (Cotec Fondazione per l'innovazione 2019).

To check the perception of VR of the students of Japanese of the Department of Asian and North African Studies (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), I delivered a survey to 54 students of Japanese, and the results show a worse outcome than the Digital Transformation Institute's research. According to these survey results, 61.1% of respondents have never used a VR visor, and 30.4% are not familiar with the concept of VR at all. Furthermore, of the 61.1 % who do know about VR, only 30% own a headset. None of the respondents has ever used a visor for Japanese learning. Regarding the cost of the technology, 50% of respondents suggest that, in order for it to be affordable, the cost of the viewer should be between 100 and 200 euro, and 30% between 200 and 300 euro. Therefore, it is to be assumed that the cost of current viewers would have to drop further if a greater proportion of users are to purchase it. But most striking is the fact that no student has ever considered using VR for language learning. However, this type of technology and its relative favour among people is developing so fast (remember that stand-alone viewers are only two years old) that the VR landscape will likely undergo more changes by 2022, granting projected growth of about $16 billion by that year (Alsop 2020).

Therefore, through the results of this research, I intend on the one hand to raise awareness among scholars and educators, especially those interested in learning through technologies, about the current state of VR technologies and the potential of social VR worlds as learning environments, and on the other to establish a foundation on which to continue further studies on learning through these technologies. In particular, my future studies will deal with the implementation of virtual environments dedicated to Japanese learning and the realisation of learning sessions in a group of learners, to verify the validity of the instructional design strategies that have been implemented.

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Report

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The AJE Summit 2020 Report: The Past, Present and Future of Japanese Language Education in Europe

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Abstract Associations of teachers of Japanese play an indispensable role in assisting not only teachers but also learners and impacting society by offering resources and opportunities for the growth of in-service teachers and pre-service teachers such as postgraduate students. Enhancing the quality of the resources and opportunities is expected to become effective when they know each other, learn from each other and work together. For this purpose, the Association of Japanese Language Teachers in Europe hosted a summit where the representatives of 22 European countries gathered to discuss the current and the future of Japanese language education in Europe. The aim of the current report is to present general but up-to-date information about the teachers, learners, institutions, associations, and features and challenges of each country. Furthermore, this report will illustrate the key discussions of the summit on the challenges and the possible actions for the viable future of Japanese language education in Europe. The Authors hope to contribute to creating the reference points for larger future studies on such associations while reflecting on the impact the summit possibly had.

Keywords Japanese Language Education. Associations of Japanese Language Teachers in Europe (AJE). Advocacy by Teachers' Associations. Teacher's Cooperation among and beyond Europe. No-Level Brick Language Education (NoLBrick).

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Summary of Information Shared by Each Country. – 3 Summary of Discussions. – 4 Concluding Remarks.

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1 Introduction

This report will summarise data and discussions shared during the 2020 Summit of the Japanese Language Teacher Associations in Europe (hereafter, the Summit). The Summit was held on 15 February 2020 in Venice, Italy. The Summit is the first since 1990. That is, the associations have had no opportunity to come together for over 20 years. The official information of the Summit can be viewed on this website of Ca' Foscari University of Venice (https://www.unive.it/data/agenda/4/37793). Funding from the Japan Foundation, the Association of Japanese Language Teachers in Europe (hereafter, AJE), and Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Supporting Principal Investigators fund for *NoLBrick - No Level-Brick Language Learning: Transformative Language Education*) have supported the Summit. The committee members of AJE, as well as one assistant, administered the Summit. Several student assistants have supported the Summit onsite. We Authors, as two of the organising members, would like to show our gratitude to the funding institutions and the assistants who made this event come true.

The purpose of the Summit was to facilitate the mutual understanding of the current state of Japanese language education (hereafter, JLE) in Europe and to enter into the discussions to consider the future vision of JLE in Europe. Representatives from the 22 countries listed below, took part in the Summit to achieve the aim together. Guests from three countries and two observers from the Japan Foundation also attended and observed the Summit. Twenty-two representatives have authorised us to share the data presented on the day of the Summit. The data provided in February 2020 were drawn on to compose this report. Then, some follow-up adjustment of the details has been made by April 2021. At the Summit, representatives also engaged with networking, which was certainly encouraged through attending the Summit (see Fujimitsu, Shinozaki 2020). The Summit was successful and offered multiple insights that could better be shared with a wider range of stakeholders. The Summit has become an annual event. In 2021, it is scheduled for April.

This report primarily aims to offer reference points for future larger-scale surveys and more academic investigations, using the information mentioned by the representatives of each country. It does not provide all detailed information as it is accessible via resources shared online publicly on the website of AJE (2020, https://www.eaje.org/ja/symposium/64). Still, some resources are restricted to private access. Thus, this report has its value in sharing such information. All critical comments on each association were raised by the representatives. They represent the enthusiasm of each association to move forward. This report also presents major discussions during the Summit. The discussions, generated on the basis of shared

information, suggest several issues that JLE in Europe may need to concern for its viable future. Associations of teachers can or should play one of the central roles in enhancing and promoting JLE in Europe. Therefore, this report has been written with the hope of contributing to adding diverse perspectives to each association for it to engage in fruitful dialogue both within and beyond each association. Furthermore, comprehensive reports in English on the associations of Japanese language teachers in Europe are limited. By providing the information below in English, this current report may contribute to beginning a conversation with the members of associations of other foreign languages. Then, such conversation might result in our joint endeavour towards multilingual and socially just Europe. This report is part of a research fellowship under *NoLBRick Project: Investigating Japanese Language Education in Europe in Relation to the Adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference* (supervised by Mariotti).

2 Summary of Information Shared by Each Country

2.1 Austria

The association of Japanese Language Teachers in Austria was established in 2001, while its origin dates back to the late eighties when several teachers came together to have a study group irregularly at first and then twice a year at some point. The association does not have a general meeting, articles of incorporation, or a budget. As long as the members pay an annual membership fee, they can be part of the association while they can leave any time without penalty. The number of its members ranges from twenty to twenty-five, which includes the teachers at universities, university language centres, private language schools, adult (life-long) educational institutions and private lessons. The current activities include a study group meeting twice a year and issuing a newsletter twice a year—these are expected to continue.

As one of the examples among the institutions above, at the University of Vienna, two full-time teachers and three part-time lecturers, natives of Japan, teach practical Japanese while a non-native teacher of Japanese teaches the theory (i.e. grammar) of the Japanese language. The purpose of language education is, in general, for students to acquire Japanese skills necessary for research in the field of Japanese Studies. There are about 180 students in the first year, 100 students in the second year and 50 students in the third year. There are about 10 to 20 students in the Master programme.

One of the issues is the high dropout rate of the students who are only interested in learning the language, i.e. little interested in en-

gaging with Japanese Studies. The association seeks a way to facilitate optimal learning opportunities for those students. Now, universities are seemingly the only places where the students interested in language learning can move up to an advanced level of Japanese courses.

2.2 Belgium

The Belgian Association of Japanese Language Teachers v.z.w/a.s.b.l. (BNK) was founded in 1997. It started with about 20 members and now has about 50 members. The association holds workshops five to six times a year to support teachers, including seminars with invited lecturers two to three times a year. In addition, to support learners of Japanese, the association has held monthly *Let's Talk Japanese* meetings since 1997. BNK also cooperates in speech contests and has a booth at language festivals every year.

At BNK, teachers from various backgrounds collaborate with each other. For example, there are native and non-native Japanese speakers, university lecturers, adult-school teachers, teachers working in private tutoring, and teachers working not only in Belgium, but also in the Netherlands, Germany, France and Finland.

BNK is concerned with the precarious employment of teachers and the lack of the presence of supporting institutions, such as the Japan Foundation. In order to develop JLE in Belgium further, BNK would like to cooperate with Japanese language teacher associations in other European countries.

2.3 Croatia

The Association of Japanese Language Teachers in Croatia was established in 2008. The number of members was nineteen at the time of the Summit. The association includes teachers at language school, non-profit organization and secondary school teachers from various cities as well as higher education institutions. The purpose of the Association of Japanese Language Teachers in Croatia is, generally speaking, set to exchange information regarding JLE. The association organises seminars, for instance, by inviting speakers from neighbouring countries. The association welcomes participation in the seminars through an online platform. The resources that belong to the association are shared with teachers at language schools. It also supports researcher and teacher participation in the Japan Foundation seminars in Budapest, Hungary. Moreover, the association cohosts the annual Japanese Speech Contest with the Japanese embassy in Croatia and the University of Zagreb. In Croatia, three higher edu-

cational institutions are offering Japanese Studies and Japanese language programmes. Among them, the University of Zagreb and Pula prepare a Master of Arts (hereafter, MA) course (February 2020) due to the reason described below.

One of the primary concerns regarding JLE in Croatia is the shortage of Japanese language teachers. Some universities run their programmes relying on students from universities in Japan taking part in a teaching position as part of their work experience programme. Therefore, the University of Zagreb, for instance, has set up a plan to focus on Japanese language teacher education in the near future. However, providing professional training opportunities and facilitating programmes to grant MA or Doctor of Philosophy (hereafter, PhD) degree courses specialised in Japanese Studies may not help prospective teachers secure stable employment. As a result, graduates are still reluctant to pursue their career path as Japanese language teachers due to the poor economic and social status of such teachers. In the current circumstances, it is likely to be the case that some teachers will choose to leave Croatia to seek better employment opportunities elsewhere.

2.4 The Czech Republic

The association of the Czech Republic originally started as a study group in 2001 and then officially set up its status as an association in 2006. It aimed at surveying who teaches and how they teach in the Czech Republic and identify their needs if there were any. It also started to host a mock examination of Japanese language proficiency test (hereafter, JLPT; the official worldwide Japanese language proficiency test held twice a year). Now, it is recognised by the Czech government and therefore receives several benefits with regard to the association administration, e.g. taxation. While maintaining weekly study group meetings over a year, the activities of the association have expanded to creating teaching resources and materials shared among the members, administrating a speech contest and JLPT, sharing presentations by its members who attend external seminars, symposiums and conferences, and organising workshops and seminars by guest speakers coming to the Czech Republic.

In the Czech Republic, there are approximately 3000 Japanese learners according to the number of test-takers of JLPT. Three higher education institutions have a Japanese language department. Every year, about 40 students graduate. There are about ten institutions where Japanese is taught. Now, an increasing number of learners take up the learning opportunities of Japanese as the Japanese language is closely linked with their occupation in the IT industry. There are also pensioners studying Japanese across the country. These are

all related to the improvement of the economy. More and more people are able to travel to Japan, which also prompts them to study Japanese in some way. As the economy improves in the Czech Republic, in turn, fewer students are needing financial assistance to study in Japan. The association is now concerned that there will be a risk of losing resources and opportunities, i.e. scholarship, for Japanese language teachers and learners due to this situation.

2.5 Denmark

There is no Japanese language teacher association in Denmark. Therefore, the absence of teacher networks is found concerning. Two higher education institutions are offering Japanese language courses. The purpose of JLE at one of the universities is not only to improve the capability to communicate in Japanese but also to develop the skills to translate Japanese, read academic writings and exchange opinions on the writings. The Common European Framework of Reference (hereafter, CEFR; Council of Europe 2001) generally guides JLE in Denmark. JLPT is also one of the main interests of learners, and therefore institutions allocate a certain amount of time to prepare for the test. Whereas the higher education institutions have an MA course for the students majoring in Japanese Studies, the dropout rate is high (twenty to forty per cent). Students graduating from the Japanese Studies programme often take up jobs that are not relevant to Japanese or using Japanese.

It might not be adequate or necessary to establish an association for teachers of Japanese at this stage, yet they are eager to learn how to establish one for future needs. Moreover, teachers in Denmark are seeking an alliance with the teachers in north European countries.

2.6 United Kingdom

The British Association for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language was established in 1998. It was emphasised that the association is not for teachers but is rather for research-oriented academics. The association publishes its journal annually and hold an annual conference. It actively organises workshops and seminars for teachers. Publishing a newsletter twice a year is also one of the primary activities for the association. It also offers opportunities like a speech contest for the learners of Japanese at higher educational institutions. The number of members is about 140.

The objectives that the association aims to achieve now is to enhance the networks among the teachers at universities and, more importantly involving the teachers at secondary and primary schools.

It also aims to enhance the status of Japanese language teachers in the UK. The association has now expanded its networks outside the UK using ICT tools in order to invigorate JLE in Europe.

At eight universities, MA and PhD courses are offered for students majoring in Japanese Studies. Bachelor of Arts (hereafter, BA) courses are offered at eleven universities. Additionally, ten universities offer Japanese as one of the majors or minors for joint degree programmes. Japanese subjects are offered at 42 universities, given that optional subjects are concerned. It is also popular that the language centres of universities make Japanese courses available. While the number of students at universities is increasing, the number of students at secondary and primary schools is decreasing. The number of teachers is on a downward trend. Besides, there is an increasing number of part-time teachers. It seems that the socio-economic status of teachers is becoming low.

When specialising in Japanese Studies, studying abroad for a year or half a year is compulsory at universities in the UK. BA graduates either choose to progress to an MA, or to work in the UK or in Japan. Recently, it has been noticeable that the organisers of job fairs actively invite students studying Japanese.

While the association actively utilises teleconferencing software and other ICT tools to broaden its network across Europe and beyond, it is worrisome that insufficient legal knowledge, e.g. privacy, has been provided. They are seeking support with regard to such legal information.

2.7 Finland

The Finnish Teachers' Association of Japanese Language and Culture was established in 1993. The number of members is fifty. Members range from teachers at universities, secondary, primary and language schools. In addition to scholars of Japanese Studies, teachers of Japanese flower arrangement, tea ceremony and material arts are also part of the association. The purpose of the association is to protect the rights of Japanese language teachers in Finland. To do so, it has provided opportunities for the members to share information and network with each other. It also contributes to a speech contest, helps JLPT and presents some resources and schools at Japan-related events. There are at least two seminars hosted by the association in a year.

In Finland, the Japanese language will become one of the official subjects at upper secondary schools. Yet it will not happen soon among lower secondary or primary schools. Two universities are offering Japanese language courses. Other universities only offer Japanese as an optional subject, which adds up to 8 universities. At the

University of Helsinki, a Japanese language teacher education programme is offered.

CEFR has been used to guide the teaching and the design of the programmes of Japanese language. Occasionally, the resources for JLPT are used to teach Japanese. For the future, the JLE in Finland, in general, needs to consider how to balance between educating the future teachers of Japanese and educating the practitioners using Japanese for their careers.

The association now questions its own value for members. The active members are limited to only around ten among fifty. This appears to suggest that the events that satisfy the needs of most members may not be organised on a regular basis. Besides, many members are not able to be actively involved in the activities due to their status as part-time teachers.

2.8 France

The association in France was established in 1997. It involves about 160 members, of which fifteen committee members administer the activities of the association. Seventy-nine are from higher education institutions, eleven are from secondary schools, and thirty are from institutions such as language schools and Saturday Schools often called Doyōkō or Hoshūkō in Japanese. The rest of the members are those who do not reside in France. The activities include organising a symposium or workshop, four seminars as well as issuing two newsletters a year. They concern that the number of teachers from secondary schools as well as French teachers of Japanese is small.

Eleven universities are offering Japanese programmes for BA, MA and PhD students in France. The Japanese programmes are usually guided by CEFR at their fundamental levels. Especially at secondary schools, CEFR is influential. While some courses are focusing on JLPT, the attention to JLPT is not necessarily given to a significant extent.

One of the primary concerns of the association is its visibility in France. The low degree of visibility might reflect the low significance of the association and thus JLE in the country. The association hopes to strengthen the ties among teachers at universities, secondary schools and primary schools to face the challenge more effectively. To attract the attention of teachers at secondary and primary schools, the association will explore the potential of the different types of activities that meet the needs of a more diverse population like the ones mentioned. The association has already started events addressing secondary school students and thus secondary school teachers, such as Japan Bowl. Additionally, the association participated in the conference of Japanese Studies of France to expand its

networks with other academic specialisations in Japanese Studies. This may fill the existing gap between JLE and Japanese Studies in the country. Then, it might lead to higher visibility of the association and JLE in the future.

2.9 Germany

There are three types of Japanese language teacher associations in Germany. One is for the teachers at universities in German-speaking countries. The second is for the teachers at a life-long education institution. The last is for the teachers at secondary schools. Some teachers belong to two or more types of institutions and, therefore, to two or all three associations. Taking the association for the teachers at universities as an example, the association organises an annual symposium, workshops, and research presentation seminars over a year. The association publishes its journal twice a year.

In Germany, the number of students at secondary schools is less than the number of students at universities as well as the life-long education institutions. Yet the universities offering Japanese courses both for the students majoring and not specialising in Japanese Studies offer courses up to PhD. Japanese courses are the most popular courses at many universities. Once Japanese courses open, they are quickly filled by students. Although most universities have their own course structure and the teachers can design their curriculums flexibly, some universities follow the UNIcert, an international system of certification and accreditation for languages, which language level scale is based on CEFR.

2.10 Hungary

The association of Japanese language teachers in Hungary was established in 2001. The number of members is 50, comprising 30 Hungarian and 20 Japanese. Members range from students, private teachers, teachers at language schools and teachers at primary, secondary and higher education institutions. The main activities include creating materials, organising symposiums and seminars, contributing to a speech contest, publishing a newsletter and maintaining the homepage of the association.

One university offers BA and MA courses in Hungary. Another university offers BA, MA and PhD courses. As optional subjects, 11 universities have Japanese language courses. Graduates studying Japanese have started finding jobs at Japan-related companies. A recent trend is that students often go to Japan using a holiday work visa. They often spend a year in Japan while working.

Now, the association problematises that the resources and materials that they created have become old. Besides, perhaps for that reason, they are not actively used. There is a need to update such resources and materials in order for them to meet the educational demands in the 21st century. Another need is to promote Japanese language learning at a secondary level. The value of Japanese learning is not well recognised at the educational level, and therefore the number of learners is decreasing. Now, it is becoming difficult to organise competitions like speech contests due to the decreased number of learners. The association has been aware that it may need to work towards these concerns. Yet the association has not found an effective way to contribute to such areas of concerns. More crucially, the association may not show its value in the JLE community in Hungary and thus might not be appealing to the teachers in Hungary.

2.11 Ireland

The association of Japanese language teachers in Ireland was established in 2000. Currently, 28 members are part of the association. Of these 28 members, 6 are Irish. Some members do not teach yet have an interest in JLE. The association hosts a speech contest, introducing teachers to potential learners and learners to potential teachers. The concern of the association is the low number of members. Furthermore, the level of interest is diverse among the members. Thus, the same members perform the committee roles for a lengthy period of time. As a result, the activities are not enriched. The number of members would not increase in such a circumstance. To address these problems, the association plans to seek connections with the associations of other European countries and learn how the associations with a relatively smaller number of members remain active and offer their values.

In Ireland, more learners study Japanese at secondary schools than at any other educational levels. Seventy per cent of learners are at secondary schools. This may be prompted due to its educational system where the first-year high school students take up subjects, e.g. Japanese, that are not relevant to their examination required at the time of their graduation. Also, it is important to note that Japanese is one of the subjects used for the graduate certificate examination for high school students.

Two universities are offering a Japanese BA course in Ireland, yet this is a joint degree with another major. One of the issues identified at the time of the Summit is the students of Japanese not continuing to advanced levels. This is perhaps relevant to the lack of adequate resources for those learners needing facilitation from learning resources suited for advanced learners. The bright side is that the grad-

uates can find a job at Japan-related companies where they continue to perform their duties using Japanese.

2.12 Italy

The association of Japanese language teacher in Italy was established in 1988. Approximately 100 members are registered, yet activities appear to be inactive. The association hosts only one workshop a year. There is an increasing need for more workshops. This has not been actualised until today.

Eighty per cent of the members belong to universities. One of the most remarkable moves of JLE in Italy in recent years is the introduction of Japanese as one of the official subjects at secondary schools. However, students often enter universities with little previous Japanese study experience. Thus, they spend most of their time learning Japanese language. There are increasing concerns among teachers about the students who possess only Japanese language skills at the time of their graduation. In addition, it is notable that the number of JLPT takers is more than that of the UK. This may suggest the strong test-taking mentality of learners in Italy.

2.13 Latvia

In Latvia, there is no association of Japanese language teachers, although it once existed (in 2003). Even though the establishment of the official teacher association was occasionally suggested, such suggestions did not prompt any concrete actions, yet teachers of Japanese are involved in administrating a speech contest together.

Currently, there is one university and one secondary school offering a Japanese language course in Latvia. There is one language school offering Japanese courses. At the university, an MA course is also offered. Yet the students often continue onto the MA course as they simply want to graduate at MA. They may not be interested in doing research. Eighty per cent of graduates find jobs not directly related to Japanese. CEFR is not concerned by teachers and students of Japanese. To take JLPT, students have to travel to either Finland or Poland, and therefore, it is not common to take one or have it in their mind while studying Japanese. Yet, BA graduates are said to achieve the N3 level of JLPT, which is said to be equivalent to the point between A2 and B1 of CEFR when graduating. They may achieve the N2 level given that they study in Japan.

The primary concern for the JLE in Latvia relates to how to educate Latvian teachers of Japanese. To promote JLE and activate the association's activities, the growth of Latvian teacher numbers

appears indispensable. When it comes to a more education-related concern, it is the high dropout rate of the students who do not study abroad. Thus, a more viable approach to those students remaining in Latvia needs to be considered.

2.14 Lithuania

The association of Japanese language teachers does not exist in Lithuania. It has always been so even in the past. Japanese language courses are offered at three universities. In the past, secondary schools facilitated Japanese courses, but they are no longer available. Four private language schools have Japanese courses. Also, private language lessons of Japanese are conducted. An MA degree is required for non-native speakers of Japanese to teach at universities. A BA degree is sufficient for native speakers of Japanese to do so. One concern is that teachers may not have any teaching experiences or training when they start teaching. There is one lecturer at a university specialising in Japanese language teacher education in Lithuania.

In recent years, more students can study in Japan as the universities have more destinations for their exchange programmes. This means that students with lower academic achievement can also study abroad. In Lithuania, JLPT is not a primary concern.

In Lithuania, communications between teachers are limited to the ones inside each institution. Even though three universities offer Japanese courses, their inter-institutional interactions seldom occur. These teachers are certainly interested in attending seminars, yet not in organising them. The relative lack of enthusiasm in Japanese language teaching among in-service teachers may derive from the assumption that teaching Japanese is an entry job to teach content courses related to Japanese Studies in the future.

As Lithuania alone may not address the current situation, the teachers of Japanese may need to seek support from neighbouring countries, as they have said.

2.15 The Netherlands

The association of Japanese language teachers in the Netherlands was established in 2016. The number of members is thirty-five. Its activities include organising lectures, workshop and seminars, and administrating JLPT.

In the Netherlands, only one university offers a Japanese programme for BA, MA and PhD degrees. Some universities are offering Japanese courses in relation to a business degree, a translation and interpretation degree and an international relations degree. There

is no JLE at secondary schools. Yet community colleges, international schools, and private language schools offer opportunities for learning Japanese. Across the types of institutions, CEFR is actively used to describe the levels of the courses.

The association problematises that the professional development opportunities for the teachers of Japanese are scarce. Besides, the current workshop for teachers may not satisfy the needs of many teachers. Therefore, there is a need for developing a more suitable workshop for the members. At the same time, the increase of the non-native members should be sought.

2.16 Portugal

The association of Japanese language teachers in Portugal was established in 2019. Currently, 23 members are part of the association. The purpose of the association is to contribute to JLE in Portugal. Although there has been an informal group of Japanese language teachers in Portugal, it has become necessary to establish an official one due to expense management requirements for public events, such as a speech contest.

Four universities offer Japanese language courses. The vision for Japanese teaching varies, yet often focuses not only on language and communication skills but also translation skills, cultural awareness, and business communication. Teachers and learners in Portugal apparently pay attention to JLPT. Yet JLPT is not directly relevant to their educational activities.

One of the current concerns of the association is the evaluation criteria for the speech contest. The association seeks information-sharing with the Japanese language teachers in different countries in Europe regarding concrete actions toward the issues identified during the discussions at the Summit.

2.17 Romania

The association of Japanese language teachers in Romania was established in 2007. Twenty-five members consist of ninety per cent of Romanian and ten per cent of Japanese. However, the active members are about four to five. The association organises seminars, symposiums and supports JLPT.

Six universities offer Japanese language courses in Romania. At 4 universities, the courses can be compulsory or optional. One concern about students is their high dropout rate, partly due to the demanding study workload at universities. Students can enrol on MA courses, yet they are overarching a few areas. There is a small number of PhD students specialising in JLE or Japanese Studies.

In the future, more varieties of resources and materials will be needed, especially for young learners of Japanese. Increasing demand for more learning resources also applies to examinations such as JLPT. Thus, more attention will need to be given to such materials and examinations in Romania.

2.18 Serbia

In Serbia, there is no association of Japanese language teachers. Yet there is a Japanese Studies Association of Serbia established in 2013 for those who graduated from the University of Belgrade with their study focus on Japanese Studies. The association appears to constitute the large body of the population involved in JLE in the country.

At a higher education level, only the University of Belgrade provides a JLE programme, in which students can graduate to BA, MA or PhD. The association organises conferences and develops cooperation with the government and corporates for a project such as JLE at primary and secondary schools.

The future direction in Serbia will be the institutionalization of the association to involve more members with the established procedures.

2.19 Slovenia

The association of Japanese language teachers in Slovenia was founded in 2016. It consists of ten members. Eight are Slovenian, and two are Japanese. Activities range from supporting JLPT, hosting a seminar, and maintaining its webpage.

In Slovenia, one primary school, one secondary school and one university offer Japanese a language course. In addition, two adult education institutions and four language schools are offering Japanese courses. The university offers both BA and MA courses. The MA course deals with JLE together with pragmatics and translation.

In relation to JLE, the university offers two courses. One is teaching practice, and another is Slovenia short-term workshop.

Teacher training is limited in the country. It is not easy to organise such a training opportunity for the association as the number of members is small. Thus, the association seeks network development with the associations in other European countries. Furthermore, the association plans to develop the curriculum for lower-secondary education. Thus, the information in the countries with such curriculum is sought.

2.20 Spain

The association of Japanese language teachers in Spain was established in 2010. When it was established, the number of members was 40. Now, 150 members are registered. Activities include a general meeting, workshops, symposium, Japanese language contest, online study group, and networking with teachers in Central and South America. One of the features of the association is to provide financial support for those travelling a long distance to attend the events of the association.

The association identifies its vision. It is described as facilitating opportunities for the members to keep learning and growing. In so doing, the members seek more practical resources and techniques than concepts and theories.

One of the issues that they face is the unwillingness of members to become committee members. Besides, the number of non-native speakers is still limited to 30 out of 150. To make the association more sustainable and enriched, addressing these two areas are thought of as indispensable.

2.21 Sweden

There is no association of Japanese language teachers in Sweden. Yet, teachers of Japanese in Sweden are part of a mailing list shared also with teachers in the neighbouring countries such as Norway and Finland. The mailing list was started in 2008. Members share information regarding the workshop and events relevant to the members. Now members consider whether it is necessary to establish Japanese language teacher education-related events.

Five universities are providing Japanese language courses in Sweden. They are geographically close to each other, located in the South of Sweden. Among them, a BA degree with a major in Japanese can be obtained at only one university. The purpose of JLE is often placed on developing intercultural communication.

2.22 Switzerland

The association of Japanese language teachers in Switzerland began in 1993. There are 101 members. Most of them engage with Japanese teaching at private language institutions and private lessons. It is also worth mentioning that 22% of the members are involved in teaching heritage language learners of Japanese. The association organises two seminars a year, and occasional bottom-up workshops, applying for obtaining teaching resources from the Japan Founda-

tion, managing more than a thousand resources that members can borrow, and publishing a report and a newsletter. It has the role of a contact point for the Japanese as a heritage language education.

In Switzerland, two universities offer Japanese language courses. At five universities, their language centres provide Japanese language courses.

The association is exploring what kind of workshops is more meaningful for the members. It also questions the strong focus on Japanese education at higher education institutions as the main concern of the association is rather on JLE for learners at language schools and heritage language education institutions.

3 Summary of Discussions

3.1 Concerns About Students

The increasing number of dropouts is one of the primary concerns for learners in many countries. Concerning this trend, university teachers are likely to pass students rather than fail them. There can be a governmental regulation that funding is not provided to students who exceed the expected duration of their study. This further pushes teachers to allow more students who might miss the standard set for the particular course or programme to keep progressing in their studies. Yet, it was argued that this kind of strategy, which is rather passive for teachers, may not help students who can keep up with the study pace but hinders their motivation. In their study paths, some students strategically change the language of their major from Japanese to European languages, seemingly easier for native speakers of European languages, to keep their major within the study of a language or languages. That is, they stop studying Japanese. One of the representatives stated that leaving the study path that they once started in midway is not problematic as studying Japanese is not the only choice for them. Some others yet argued that the students spend a significant amount of time and often money for their university study and therefore, admitting their leave without encouraging their critical reflection on their choice may not be an ideal approach for JLE whole. This series of discussions illustrates the difficulty in having a consensus to approach the similar condition in each country or perhaps in each institution.

The status of students studying abroad was problematised. Often, they are not allowed to take up courses other than Japanese language courses at universities in Japan. Then, it becomes difficult for them to transfer the credit to their home universities especially if they are MA students. As a result, those who study abroad while being on an MA course often cannot graduate within two years, a common dura-

tion of MA programmes across Europe. Therefore, students in France are encouraged to study abroad in their first MA year, for instance. However, this means that the students are not able to undertake the courses for thesis writing. This might result in the lack of academic writing skills necessary for MA thesis writing. Unless more contents courses and academic skill courses are open to international students, studying abroad may become harder and harder especially for MA students who have less time compared to students taking other types of degrees.

3.2 Japanese Language Education at All Levels

Interest in the curriculum for secondary education was noticeable. In all countries, JLE is recognised as an academic discipline. Yet, the Japanese may not be seen as one of the official subjects at secondary schools. In the worst case, no Japanese courses, at least officially, may be offered at secondary schools. In Ireland, Germany, Italy, and France, JLE has already started officially. Teachers who see the need to begin Japanese teaching at secondary school have sought more information about the situation in the countries where such education has already begun.

Similarly, interest in heritage language education in Switzerland was unmissable. Japanese language supplementary schools or Saturday Schools in Switzerland are officially recognised by the government. Study at schools is considered in their academic record in an official manner at their home schools like their sports club activities. Becoming familiar with such institutions, that might have not been well known in more than some countries, may have been one of the most significant outcomes during the Summit.

3.3 The Role of Associations

One of the discussions evolved around the contribution of Japanese language teacher associations to their countries. The meaning of the contribution was eventually understood as the visibility of the association in the country and the power to raise voices in political contexts. In the case of France, the association was not selected or was even eliminated from the list of organizations and institutions that decide the national curriculum for foreign language education at secondary schools. This suggests that the role of the association was not known and not valued. Therefore they, not only the association in France, increasingly feel the need to make their contribution to society visible, when there are any. Such an action is likely to result in more funding opportunities and bigger-scale activities to promote

JLE and support teachers and learners in each country. There are several suggestions to increase the visibility of the associations e.g. more advertising, active participation in Japan-related or language- and culture-related events and contacting Senators of the Japanese government. Equally importantly, the associations were suggested to produce more and more tangible contributions to their immediate communities and beyond. Yet, they concluded that what just one association can do might not be many.

In relation to the concern mentioned above, more actively communicating with the Japanese government by uniting countries in Europe was discussed. However, what needs to be communicated remained vague. One suggestion regarded CEFR. CEFR is one of the primary reference points when the Japanese government discusses its framework for JLE in Japan. Therefore, there might be the possibility that the teachers in Europe can more proactively report the understanding and the use of CEFR in Europe for universities and secondary educations. Such reports may need to be in English so that the message can reach not only Japan but also the US, and other countries. The teachers in Europe may be able to learn from the members of The Society for Teaching Japanese as Foreign Language (Nihongo Kyōiku Gakkai) in Japan as they already engage with the communication with the government at the round table regarding JLE in Japan.

3.4 Concerns About Members in the Associations

Gradually, participants started to share that the active members among the registered members of each association are quite limited. Only a few, such as Switzerland, have more active members than inactive members. The association in Switzerland sees the annual fee as registration fee for events. Therefore, many are willing to participate yet it is also important to note that the events of the association in Switzerland are closely relevant to the members' shared interest. It was suggested that having more inactive members is not rare as the associations reflect how society works. That is, assuming that all or the majority of members in one group remain active is too idealistic. After all, all have different interests, which results in different degree of involvement and contribution. Perhaps, the number of registered members may have limited significance for the associations. Looking at the number of active members among registered members may lead to more fruitful discussions to decide the future direction of the associations.

Many associations are concerned about the absence of the next generation. Not many are willing to become committee members. Those in their twenties and thirties have their own network. Thus, they do not even become members of any associations. The reason

for this circumstance remained unclear. Then, it was concluded that, after all, whether one joins an association depends on whether it appears worthwhile or not from the viewpoint of the next generations. This again suggests carefully considering the value that each association can offer to the members of the current and the future.

Furthermore, the lesser degree of involvement of non-native speakers of Japanese was concerned for most of the associations. With regard to this concern, using the local language more was suggested. At least, advertisement in two languages, as the association in the UK also does, may create a more inclusive atmosphere for the non-native teachers of Japanese. They also suggested involving non-native teachers of Japanese in the organising process of events and seminars. Spain did show some improvement by employing such strategies.

Discussions about the annual fee of each association opened up. It was first argued whether a certain amount of fee is expensive or not. Yet, it was suggested that whether it is expensive or not is based on a subjective judgement of each individual. If the activities, resources and information that the members can access and receive benefit from are worthwhile for the fee, they would not think that the fee is expensive. It appeared important that the association disclose the information regarding its budgeting to gain the understanding of the members about the membership fee. Furthermore, scrutinising whether the activity is needed ought to be carefully considered to ensure the appropriate uses of the budget. Besides, the economic circumstances that are distinctive in each country require attention. For example, AJE sets its annual fee at €40. The teachers in Lithuania, for instance, may not be able to afford it, as mentioned during the Summit. This may call for further consideration of the annual fee settings by investigating the activities that might not be necessary or can switch to online. (The practice of Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée (AILA) or International Association of Applied Linguistics can be of some help to consider an alternative approach. AILA offers a reduced registration rate for the members of regional applied linguistics associations when it holds a triannual conference. In this way, interested scholars benefit from the international association while avoiding paying a membership fee for both regional and international associations. The international association does not have to change its annual fee settings while opening its door for a wider population).

3.5 Others

Speech contests attracted attention. It was clear that almost all countries hold a speech contest. However, the targets and methods seemed to be different from one country to another. In the UK, there

are speech contests for university students, secondary school students and business Japanese, for instance. In eastern Europe, a few countries hold a speech contest together. It is simply because sufficient participants may not gather when one country holds it. However, from the authors' point of views, communicating and connecting with learners in different countries because they learn Japanese appear positive. A few countries that just started their speech contest asked questions around evaluation criteria. Overall, these suggest the importance of a speech contest for JLE in Europe yet also its room for further improvement.

Referring to the information and the resources shared outside Europe to enhance JLE in Europe was suggested. One of the examples raised was the abundant resources for secondary school Japanese education in Australia. It is well known that Australia has strengths in the area as more than ninety per cent of learners study Japanese at either primary or secondary level while it holds the fourth- to the fifth-largest number of learners in the world (The Japan Foundation 2018). This suggests that limiting the view only within the ones in Europe may overlook some useful information outside Europe.

4 Concluding Remarks

The Summit highlighted two key areas that need further discussions to pursue the viable future of JLE in Europe. This report concludes by considering the two areas and suggesting a possible action for the future.

Firstly, developing programmes and resources for young learners will be more indispensable in Europe. In general, the younger learners study Japanese, perhaps at primary and secondary schools, the more adult learners are likely to study Japanese at higher levels of education such as universities. Then, actualising such a circumstance might contribute to opening up more career opportunities for university graduates with a Japanese Studies degree. They may enter career paths not only in JLE increasingly available at primary and secondary schools but also in media and merchandise industries dealing with Japan-related products for young generations interested in Japan. For this future, having a curriculum for primary and secondary schools appears inevitable if there is none yet, like Slovenia. European countries can certainly cooperate with each other in this respect. Additionally, heritage learners, often young learners of Japanese, can be simultaneously considered in curriculum development. Switzerland may take the initiative to explore how JLE for heritage learners inform curriculum development for primary and secondary school students.

Second, increasing the visibility of the associations of Japanese language teachers in each country will be a must-do for the next dec-

ades. Tohsaku (2014), based in the US, emphasises the importance of advocacy by teachers for JLE. Teachers can advocate JLE by making it more visible through 6Cs-communication, culture, connections, collaboration, credibility and communities. These 6Cs are what teachers utilise or engage with for all stakeholders such as learners, parents of children, those in business, and policymakers. Events such as Japanese speech contexts and Japan Bowl may play an important role in the advocacy. They often provide opportunities for close communication between teachers, learners, governmental institutions. Recently, Japanese industries seem to be paying increasing attention to university graduates specialising in Japanese Studies or speaking Japanese, according to the situation in the UK. Considering this, involving those at corporates may not be challenging even if it has yet been attempted. Associations of Japanese language teachers can lead such communication among stakeholders as it has already been done in some European countries. This asks the associations to look at not only the inside but also the outside of themselves. Furthermore, educating and placing those specialising in researching language policy in the associations or at least AJE may be valuable.

A shared vision of JLE for the associations in Europe may be needed to increase the visibility altogether, although not all do not have to agree with it fully. Tohsaku (2014) states that having a vision can add more values to JLE. In turn, "education without vision is powerless. Likewise, advocacy without vision is powerless" (5). In Europe, a shared vision is likely to shape what the curriculum for primary and secondary schools as well as the act of advocacy look like. Most importantly, it gives consistency to the curriculum and the act. CEFR can be considered one of the influential sources of such a vision in Europe. Yet, the understanding of and the engagement with CEFR are still varied, and thus it hardly provides a shared vision anytime soon (Okumura, Sakurai, Suzuki 2016). Suzuki, Sakurai, Takahashi (2018) and Suzuki et al. (2020) discuss what the Japanese language teacher associations can do by surveying three countries (2018) and four countries (2020). These reports are valuable in clarifying one of the indispensable roles of the associations in Europe as providing professional training and networking opportunities for teachers and suggesting offering more and more cross-nation-boundaries opportunities. These are and will be of critical importance in enhancing the quality of JLE in Europe. Yet, they do not mention where such opportunities and enhancement take teachers and learners. Their attention to advocacy is limited. Starting discussions on a shared vision and advocacy of JLE in Europe will be fruitful for all stakeholders.

How to identify the vision that drives the actions of the associations will be a remaining question to increase the visibility of JLE in Europe. For instance, it needs to be noted that representatives of 22 countries attended the Summit. There are even more countries with

teachers of Japanese in Europe. Deciding on a vision may be feasible with fewer challenges if one country, like the US, is involved in the decision-making process. It is expected that the process will be complex and exhausting in Europe. The AJE, which considers the larger picture, can be in the position to propose a viable approach to the discussion and the decision-making process. However, we can see nothing but hope. The Summit marked the very first step towards tackling the challenge altogether. The Summit, although the name might be different, will continue to facilitate a meaningful discussion among the associations of Japanese language teachers in Europe because it has now become an annual event. The format will become better each time according to needs and purposes.

Acknowledgments

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Recensioni

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Veronica Ghirardi *Postmodern Traces and Recent Hindi Novels*

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Review of Ghirardi, V. (2021). *Postmodern Traces and Recent Hindi Novels*. Wilmington: Vernon Press, 234 pp.

Modern, or rather, post-modern Hindi literature (whatever one intends with this term) surely does not figure among those areas of research that are commonly addressed even by specialist scholars in Indian studies. And even those few who have chosen Hindi literature as their field of specialisation have focused their attention predominantly on earlier literary currents, such as the neo-romantic *Chāyāvāda* poetry or the post-independence *Nayī kahānī* that flourished during the late 1950s and the early 1960s of the past century. If anything, the attention of scholars is drawn on a kind of literature produced by minority or marginalised groups within South Asian society, such as Dalits and aboriginals, or Muslim writers adopting Hindi as their medium of expression, all concerned with addressing specific identities on the margins. Hence, because of the relative neglect of literary novels in Hindi in the domain of academic production, the present work by the young Italian scholar Veronica Ghirardi from the outset strikes an innovative note not only because it fills

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a gap in Hindi literature scholarship, but also because it deliberately takes on a complex issue such as exploring elements (or traces, as the title suggests) of post-modernism in contemporary Hindi novels.

The book, the published version of Ghirardi's recently awarded PhD thesis by the Università degli Studi di Torino, is the final outcome of a research that has taken the author several years exploring the influence of post-modernism as a category relying on Western thought patterns on Indian literature or, more specifically, Hindi novels published in the decade between 1991 and 2001. This is in itself a formidable challenge, for Hindi although being declared by the country's Constitution adopted in 1950 India's official language (*rājbhāṣā*) alongside English, it is by no means the one Indian language that has adopted without reluctance and difficulties of various kinds the literary genres imported from the Western, viz. British cultural sphere. As a result, the competition with literary productions in English did and still does present a formidable challenge to the emergence of Hindi as a truly national language, a status it does not hold until the present day. All these complicating circumstances notwithstanding, Ghirardi has ventured into this relatively unexplored territory, arguing that postmodernism, characterised by a growing disillusionment with established institutions and social structures, became an influential factor on the Hindi literary sphere after the adoption in the early 1990s of economic policies aimed at liberalising India's hitherto state-controlled economy and open its markets in an unprecedented manner to global corporations and trade. The changed conditions of the country's economy significantly contributed to the transformation of the cultural and literary sphere inducing Hindi as well as authors of other Indian vernaculars to produce narratives reflecting the characteristics of postmodernism in a more self-conscious manner (foreword, p. xxiii). Although recognising the limits of writing in Hindi in a more and more globalised world and Indian cultural sphere, Ghirardi bases her approach on the presumption that the literary novel in general remains a powerful medium for addressing and describing the challenges faced by different social groups around the globe and that this, as far as South Asia is concerned, applies also to the Hindi literary novel during the period under investigation. In order to provide substance to this claim, Ghirardi has singled out altogether twelve contemporary Hindi novels written in the course of the last decade of the 20th century in which she detects post-modern elements liable to an analysis of what this may present and of what its characteristic features may tell us about this particular cultural and literary sphere. So, which are the peculiarities that insert the Hindi novel into the larger context of postmodernism and to what extent do they enhance or enrich the conventional definitions of postmodernism as defined by Western models of thought? These are the central themes addressed by Ghirardi in her book.

The starting point of Ghiradi's explorations is *Hariyā Harkyūlīz kī hairānī*, the fourth novel by the author Manohar Śyām Jośī (1933-2006), best known in India for being the author of the country's first soap opera series *Ham log* (1984), but recognised as one of the most innovative recent Hindi writers who in his early days had been an assistant of the famous poet Ajñeya (1911-1987), the pioneer of experimentalism (*prayogvād*) in Hindi literature. This work figures as a sample exemplifying the whole thought of Ghirardi, for in it she distinguishes the principal characterising features of the postmodernist cultural phenomenon: the centrifugal force, i.e. an implicit tendency towards deconstruction of the story as it develops, of its characters and of the places where it is really or ideally located. The initial linear account that reverts around the local narrative of the Kumaoni community in the capital Delhi and its identity (the community to which both the author and the protagonist of the story belong) gradually dissolves in a sequence of ambiguous and multifaceted identities, with no certain outcomes or the definition of an unassailable truth or solution. The story of the protagonist, Hariyā Harkyūlīz, is transformed into multiple single elements, similar to a cubist painting (3), in which one is left with contemplating innumerable elements in manifold perspectives, but with no definite truth emerging from them. The underlying technique to achieve this effect is that of an accompanying intertextuality with references to India's ancient devotional and spiritual traditions as well as more modern ideologies, such as communism and feminism. Ghirardi interconnects this specifically Indian context with similar notions present in other corners of the world, such as Murakama Haruki's works in Japanese literature, as well as, obviously, Anglo-Indian literature, such as the novels by Salman Rushdie who, in a sense, triggered off the whole discussion on postmodernism in literature. To prove that the thought line developed by Ghirardi is not an entirely self-conscious intellectual exercise is the precedent emergence by Indian literary critics concerning the emergence of post-modern elements in Indian vernaculars. Central to Ghirardi's argument in this sense is an article by Sudhish Pachauri, a proficient writer and literary theorist and professor in the Hindi Department and former Vice Chancellor of Delhi University, who in 1996 published the ground-breaking work *Uttar-ādhunik sāhityik vimarś* (Postmodern Literary Discourse) which proposes a genuine even if derivate Indian interpretation of postmodernism; this was followed more recently by Sanjay Chauhan's *Uttar-ādhuniktā air hindī upanyās* (Postmodernism and Hindi Novels), to testify to an ongoing debate among India's intellectuals on postmodernism and its applications in the Indian cultural environment in the Hindi language.

Drawing on both Western and Hindi literary ṣcriticism, *Postmodern Traces and Recent Hindi Novels* aims at helping the specialist reader to understand some of the reflections of postmodernism in

contemporary Hindi fiction, including ways the latter might challenge the traditional parameters of postmodern literature. This book provides stimulating reading for scholars and students specialising in South Asian studies and both postcolonial and comparative literature. It will also interest the general reader curious to know more about one of the less explored areas of world literature.

On the whole, the book is thoroughly researched, fuelled by the author's genuine interest in and passion for the subject under investigation. Her good command of the Hindi language allows her to quote, which developed in the course of her research for her PhD thesis. Although the title somewhat blurs the issues at stake (personally, I had rather chosen: *Post-Modern Traces in Recent Hindi Novels*), the author's quality of scholarship becomes evident in the wide range of works analysed for the purpose of making her point. The many quotations from the original Hindi texts not only betray her sound knowledge of the Hindi language but bear witness to Dr. Ghirardi's capacity to 'read' the Indian mind structure and decode it while inserting it into a western academic discourse. Although not alone in tracing the path (cf., for instance, the Phd thesis by Wattenberger 2012),[1] the book addresses an interesting and (I imagine) widely appreciated field of investigation, both in South Asia and in the West, and suggests new lines of reading and interpreting a so far somewhat marginal literature which deserves more attention. For those interested in and already familiar with Indian literature, it provides a stimulating and in many ways original way of looking at a kind of literature that too often remains at the margins of attention of the larger public. The merit of the way the book is organized is not only that of addressing the specialised academic scholar familiar with Indian literary traditions, but also the way the topic is addressed and contextualised in attempting to insert the Hindi novel first into the wider context of Indian literature in general and then, even more ambitiously, into world literature in an increasingly globalised society. Though Ghirardi's attempt cannot be but a small however thought-provoking contribution set in a huge ocean, it has the unquestionable merit of taking into account and analysing most relevant Hindi novels published in the past thirty years or so, scrutinising their style and content against the parameters of postmodern literature, something the author achieves in both an original and captivating fashion. This recent publication by the American Vernon Press makes a precious addition to all the scholars or passionate readers of Hindi literature.

1 Wattenberger, M. (2012). *Reading Postcolonialism and Postmodernism in Contemporary Indian* [PhD dissertation]. Columbus: Ohio Dominican University.

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Nicoletta Pesaro, Melinda Pirazzoli *La narrativa cinese del Novecento. Autori, opere e correnti*

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Recensione di Pesaro, N.; Pirazzoli, M. (2019). *La narrativa cinese del Novecento. Autori, opere e correnti*. Roma: Carocci, 443 pp.

Mentre negli ultimi anni sono usciti in lingua inglese svariati manuali di storia della letteratura cinese moderna,[1] in italiano, a dispetto dei numerosissimi studenti di cinese che ogni anno sono alle prese, in numerose università italiane, con l'esame di letteratura cinese moderna, stranamente non esisteva ancora nulla.

Non è facile, in un ambito di ricerca così vasto e in costante espansione, articolare con competenza in un unico volume le nozioni necessarie per approcciarsi alla modernità letteraria cinese in modo sintetico e approfondito assieme; prova ne è che i volumi in inglese a cui si fa cenno sono in genere o dei tomi voluminosi e ponderosi, volti a riaggiornare e rielaborare, per gli specialisti più che per i neofiti, le precedenti ricerche accumulatesi nel campo, o, se più snelli, tendo-

1 Vedi per esempio Bachner, A.; Rojas, C. (eds) (2016). *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Chinese Literatures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Denton, K.A. (ed.) (2016). *The Columbia Companion to Modern Chinese Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press; Gu, M.D. (2018). *Routledge Handbook of Modern Chinese Literature*. London and New York: Routledge; Wang, D.D. (ed.) (2017). *New Literary History of Modern China*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press; Yingjin Zhang (ed.) (2016). *A Companion to Modern Chinese Literature*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

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no a ridursi a caroselli di date, nomi di autori e titoli di opere senza addentrarsi a fondo in ciò che davvero costituisce il cuore e il nerbo degli studi letterari: la critica dei testi.

Per questo la recente uscita del volume *La Narrativa cinese del Novecento*, a opera di Nicoletta Pesaro (Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia) e Melinda Pirazzoli (Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna), è doppiamente importante: da un lato perché il libro, in assoluto, è la prima storia della letteratura cinese moderna mai scritta finora in italiano, dall'altro perché le autrici, grazie alle loro ampie conoscenze e alla loro feconda sensibilità interpretativa, riescono a tracciare una mappa comprensiva e insieme dettagliata dei principali movimenti storici della letteratura cinese moderna, offrendo sia allo studente che abbia un po' di infarinatura di storia della Cina e delle ideologie cinesi moderne, sia allo specialista che opera in questo campo, dei percorsi di lettura articolati e stimolanti in grado di offrire conoscenze puntuali, riflessioni acute e interpretazioni complesse e originali dei testi letterari.

Peculiarità del volume è la sua focalizzazione sullo studio della narrativa (*xiaoshuo*, comprendente con eguale significatività sia la novella che il romanzo), una forma sottovalutata se non disprezzata dalle élites culturali della Cina tradizionale, ma divenuta prepotentemente centrale nel Novecento cinese non solo nella costruzione del canone della 'nuova' letteratura affiorante dal terreno tormentato dell'esperienza semi-coloniale, ma anche nella formazione di un complesso di nuove mentalità e sensibilità *moderne*, e dunque veicolo e vettore della stessa modernità culturale cinese nel suo evolversi, sia come mezzo per costruirla che come strumento per criticarla, tanto attraverso le sue facoltà ideologico-intellettuali quanto attraverso le sue qualità estetico-poetiche. La scelta delle autrici è vincente: mentre nel volume non mancano i riferimenti irrinunciabili relativi agli influssi fondamentali della poesia nelle trasformazioni delle strutture del sentire letterario e non solo, la concentrazione sulle proprietà specifiche della narrativa consente di predisporre un filo conduttore agile e robusto che, snodandosi fra i temi e gli stili principali sviluppatisi storicamente in seno alla prosa narrativa, riesce a trattare con proficua padronanza un corpus ampio ma compatto di espressioni letterarie.

Il volume mira a dare risalto, come precisa il sottotitolo, agli autori, alle opere e alle correnti, privilegiando nella propria disamina storica il periodo che va dalla cosiddetta 'rivoluzione letteraria' del 1917 (prendendo il celebre *Diario di un pazzo* di Lu Xun come una sorta di *big bang* che fa esplodere l'universo letterario della Cina moderna irradiando per così dire le proprie particelle elementari in ogni insorgenza letteraria successiva) alla 'post-nuova era' degli anni Novanta, in cui la scrittura letteraria perde la centralità intellettuale e culturale di cui aveva fin lì goduto lungo tutto il corso del 'se-

colo breve' per subire una certa 'marginalizzazione' sociale. Come scrivono le autrici nella premessa:

> In questo volume abbiamo cercato di costruire due percorsi, uno nella storia letteraria del secolo, evincendo le ragioni e le aspirazioni della narrativa – che assumeva il ruolo di genere centrale nella gerarchia letteraria – e uno di indagine umana, scavando nelle personalità e nelle istanze degli autori, nelle maglie di collaborazione con cui tendono a operare in una rete di idee e sentimenti condivisi. (12)

Tale indagine umana, vale la pena di sottolinearlo, procede tanto attraverso la delucidazione del dettaglio biografico quanto attraverso l'analisi delle teorie letterarie che danno alla luce e informano le concrete manifestazioni artistiche, ma scaturisce, principalmente, dal confronto diretto e metodico con i testi specifici, analizzati sia per *quello* che dicono che per *come* lo dicono, evidenziando in modo brillante le indissociabili interazioni di forma e contenuto nella produzione dei significati letterari. Così facendo, le autrici ci consegnano un lavoro di critica accorto e costruttivo, che riesce a illustrare sia le influenze storiche generali che operano nella genesi delle diverse tendenze letterarie, sia gli elementi poetici (anche se sarebbe meglio dire poietici), psicologici e tematici particolari che caratterizzano gli specifici atti di creazione artistica. Particolarmente fruttuosa, inoltre, è la distribuzione dell'analisi testuale per nuclei tematici, che ordinano i percorsi di lettura rendendo più immediatamente evidente e fruibile il nesso fra tendenza generale e manifestazione particolare nella dialettica fra testi e contesti. Fra i principali temi di indagine troviamo perciò i grandi leitmotiv della modernità cinese, con i suoi immensi sforzi di trasformazione, riformista o rivoluzionaria, attraverso intenti di critica o di propaganda, della cultura e della società cinese, ma anche, e forse ancor più, i molti aspetti più intimi e reconditi dell'esperienza umana, personale, interiore e privata (sia nel senso di ciò che si sottrae ai condizionamenti della sfera pubblica sia nel senso della 'privazione' variamente provocata dai molteplici sacrifici imposti all'individuo dai dettami della modernizzazione), svelati attraverso la parola letteraria. Interessante, in particolare, la trattazione della tematica del corpo, metafora ricorrente dei molteplici travagli storici tanto dell'individuo quanto della nazione. L'indagine è condotta sia dedicando ampio spazio ai grandi monumenti della modernità letteraria cinese (rimarchevole la prima parte dedicata allo sviluppo della letteratura del Quattro Maggio, in cui come già si è notato torreggia la figura di Lu Xun, esaminato non solo come autore, teorico e intellettuale ma anche come uomo afflitto e tormentato), sia ad autori e opere meno conosciuti che però riescono a interpretare e declinare determinate tematiche in modo peculiare e

originale. Nella sua attenzione per la forma intesa come 'corpo' che dà vita ai contenuti, infine, il volume non solo affronta con grande minuzia quelli che per buona parte del Novecento sono i due modi letterari dominanti, ovvero il 'realismo' e il 'romanticismo', nelle loro distinte manifestazioni 'borghese' e 'rivoluzionaria', ma esamina attentamente anche le 'suggestioni avanguardistiche e reminiscenze tradizionali' che percorrono tutta la storia della letteratura cinese moderna, pur diventando maggiormente evidenti soltanto nel periodo post-maoista, meno affetto dal pedagogismo del periodo precedente e più interessato al valore dell'espressione artistica e all'esplorazione dell'identità culturale.

Tutte queste qualità, in sintesi, rendono il volume qui recensito non solo uno strumento ideale per gli studenti che vogliano formare e consolidare le loro conoscenze sulla letteratura cinese moderna, ma anche un'utile fonte per lo specialista che voglia cercare un punto di partenza per approfondire attraverso ulteriori indagini le varie diramazioni storico-letterarie tracciate nel volume.

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