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Articoli

Giorgio Damistra (1650-?), Theodoro Poulakis (1620-1692?) e il Barocco Levantino

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Abstract This paper reports the recent discovery of the autograph of Giorgio da Mistrà, an apprentice of the famous Greek icon painter Theodoro Poulakis, on an icon of Saint Demetrius. In order to check its authenticity and give a plausible dating, the Author compares the biography, pictorial technique and aesthetic orientation of both post-Byzantine painters. She further introduces little-known notices about the Russian acquisitions during the 19th century on the Italian antiquarian market that could have intercepted other Da Mistrà's works and, in general, are of potential interest for the study of the post-Byzantine painting.

Keywords Giorgio Damistra. Theodoro Poulakis. Icon painting. Levantine baroque. Art market.

Sommario 1 Introduzione. – 2 La vita di Theodoro Poulakis tra Venezia e il Mediterraneo orientale. – 3 L'eredità iconografica di Poulakis. Un aggiornamento. – 4 Lo stile del maestro e del Da Mistrà. Un confronto. – 5 I connotati principali del Barocco Levantino. – 6 Il mercato dell'arte post-bizantina in Italia nell'Ottocento.



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1 Introduzione

Il presente lavoro approfondisce alcune ricerche riguardanti opere sconosciute di Theodoro Poulakis pubblicate nelle Edizioni Ca' Foscari (Stoyanova 2006, 2016).¹

L'enorme eredità artistica attribuita a Poulakis da Chatzidakis, Drakopoulou (1997, 304-17), Perdikis (2000), Sisiou (2004), Tsigaridas (2014) è sparsa in tutto il Mediterraneo e in molti musei dell'Europa Occidentale. Il suo eccezionale volume fa pensare che, almeno nella realizzazione dei più grandi dipinti, abbiano partecipato dei collaboratori (Vokotopoulos 2008) e che il pittore facilitasse la creazione di nuove composizioni iconografiche ricombinando una serie di disegni-modelli.² Purtroppo, per la mancanza di approfonditi studi tecnico-scientifici, di notizie concrete sui collaboratori e di opere di riferimento, finora non è stato possibile accertare l'autenticità e l'effettiva appartenenza alla mano di Poulakis di tutte le opere che gli sono state attribuite nella letteratura.³

Un recente acquisto ad asta a Roma di un'icona raffigurante san Demetrio con scene della vita firmata da Giorgio da Mistra, il giovane corfiota con il cui padre, Marino da Mistra, nel 1664 Poulakis aveva stipulato contratto per insegnare al figlio «l'arte dell'agiografia», aggiunge un importante tassello alle nostre conoscenze riguardanti la bottega di Poulakis, di cui Da Mistra è l'unico membro finora concretamente noto.⁴ Il cognome del pittore in caratteri greci sarebbe «Δαμιστράς» e probabilmente indica la provenienza della sua famiglia dalla località di Mistra in Peloponneso in un periodo anteriore al loro spostamento a Kerkyra (Corfù).⁵ Drakopoulou (2010, 242) riferisce di un'icona (non più reperibile) firmata da un pittore Δαμιστράς

1 Una di queste fu un'icona conservata nel Museo di Cultura a Tirana, erroneamente attribuita al pittore Onufri nel catalogo della mostra *Percorsi del sacro* (Pirovano 2002, 148) tenutasi a Vicenza tra la fine del 2001 e l'inizio del 2002. Le altre (un ciclo di sedici tavole) apparvero in occasione di una vendita d'asta da Semenzato nel 1999.

2 Prove concrete in questo senso danno i due testamenti di Poulakis, pubblicati di recente da Karydis (2015). Da essi veniamo a sapere, oltre i nomi di alcuni di questi allievi, anche il fatto che Poulakis aveva dato in prestito alcuni suoi disegni al padre di un altro noto pittore cretese dell'epoca, Filotheos Skoufos.

3 Sull'incertezza di queste attribuzioni si veda §2. Un esempio - per iniziare - è l'attribuzione a Poulakis della «Sinamite al bagno» (Museo Correr, olio su tavola; inv. Cl. I n. 600) da parte di Mariacher (1957, 195), nonostante la sorprendente estraneità del lessico immaginario, della tecnica pittorica e dello stile manieristico di questo dipinto alla tempera mista di Poulakis, contraddistinta dal suo stile barocco e dal costante utilizzo di prototipi, tratti da incisioni fiamminghe.

4 L'opera è stata presentata al pubblico per la prima volta il 26 ottobre 2019 in una conferenza tenutasi alla Pinacoteca Manfrediana a Venezia, organizzata da dott. A. Donati.

5 Quest'isola (dal 1386 sotto dominio veneziano) già nella seconda metà del Cinquecento era divenuta rifugio temporaneo o seconda patria per i cristiani in fuga dall'Anatolia verso Venezia (Stavropoulou-Makri 1988-90).



Figura 1 La tavola centrale: Giorgio da Mistra. *San Demetrio con scene della vita*. 1670 circa. Collezione privata. Tempera mista (scrittura su oro) su supporto ligneo, cm 36,2 × 47,2 × 2 cm. La cornice lignea figurata: anonimo di fine XVII-inizio XVIII secolo, 74 × 67 × 3 cm. Fonte: <http://art-con.ru/node/7198>

(Da Mistra), di cui non si conosce il nome. Essa sarebbe stata vista dal conservatore Ioannis Gerekou nel monastero di Ermione, ad Argolida. Da una più recente pubblicazione di Karydis (2012-15, 50) si apprende che Giorgio da Mistra aveva un fratello di nome Theodoros, il quale dal 1666 per sei anni studiò agiografia da Ioanis Moshos.

Lo scopo principale del presente articolo è di analizzare i rapporti tra i due pittori post-bizantini a livello biografico, della tecnica pittorica e dell'orientamento estetico per dare una datazione plausibile all'icona del Da Mistra. Il secondo obiettivo è di indirizzare le future ricerche sull'attività di questo sconosciuto iconografo⁶ verso le collezioni, soprattutto quelle russe, che potrebbero aver intercettato sul mercato italiano del passato altre sue opere.⁷

6 I tratti fisionomici nell'icona di san Demetrio e il caratteristico modo di firmare sul retro, a fianco di una croce, fanno pensare che sempre alla mano di Giorgio da Mistra potrebbe appartenere anche *L'Annunciazione* del Museo Correr, C.n.533, attribuita da Mariacher (1957, 196-7) alla bottega di Poulakis.

7 Ringrazio vivamente il proprietario dell'icona per avermi consentito di postarla sul sito Art-Con.ru in modo da consentire le ricerche di eventuali altre opere del pittore conservate in Russia o altrove. I miei più sentiti ringraziamenti anche al dott. A. Donati e alla dott.ssa E. Knight per aver condiviso con me le loro osservazioni su quest'opera.

2 La vita di Theodoro Poulakis tra Venezia e il Mediterraneo orientale

Le scarse notizie sulla vita e l'attività di Giorgio da Mistra danno per certo soltanto che egli si era formato sotto la diretta influenza di Theodoro Poulakis, uno dei più prolifici e caratteristici rappresentanti del Barocco Levantino. Di Poulakis sappiamo che è nato a Kydonia (Canea), Creta, intorno al 1620, e nel 1644 (Rigopoulos 1979;⁸ Chatzidakis 1962, 143), all'età di ventiquattro anni circa - in ogni caso prima della caduta di Canea (o Chanià) sotto i Turchi nel 1645 - si trovava a Venezia, dove rimase per circa tredici anni, fino al 1657. Il suo nome appare nel Libro dei battesimi della Confraternita greca a Venezia nel 1646 e nel 1648 (Mertsios 1939, 243).⁹ Negli anni 1649, 1650 e 1651 il pittore presentò la sua candidatura per diventare membro del Consiglio dei Quaranta e Gionta della Confraternita greco-ortodossa a Venezia, ma ottenne successo solo nel luglio del 1653 e conservò l'incarico fino al 1655. Nel 1654 è documentato come membro della Confraternita greca a Venezia. Da altre fonti scritte si apprende che il 25 settembre 1655, il 14 ottobre dello stesso anno e il 25 settembre 1656 egli era presente nella città lagunare. Secondo testimonianze riportate da Rigopoulos, Theodoro Poulakis autorizzò con atto notarile del 2 marzo 1657 il saroto veneziano Vincenzo Magiota, noto membro della Confraternita greca a Venezia, di esigere «denaro, beni e qualsiasi altra cosa» dai suoi debitori (Rigopoulos 1979, xiii). Da alcune precedenti dichiarazioni del Poulakis (Mertsios 1939, 243) e anche dalle sue opere contemporanee risulta che dopo il 1657 egli si trasferì a Corfù (Kerkyra), dove era intensamente impegnato (Karydis 2015). Quanto al suo allievo Giorgio da Mistra, l'unica fonte è un documento del notaio Papa Petro Bacco di Corfù, analizzato da Stavropoulou-Makri (1988-90, 222). Esso rivela difatti che Marino da Mistra, padre del futuro pittore Giorgio, il quale all'epoca aveva solo quattordici anni, stipulò un contratto con il quarantaquattrenne pittore Teodoro Poulakis il 6 luglio 1664. Secondo questo, «il signor Theodoro Poulakis, agiografo da Chanià» s'impegnava a insegnare al giovane Zorzi «la scienza dell'agiografia» (Stavropoulou-Makri 1988-90, 213) e l'apprendista - di assistere il suo maestro in ogni opera ed esigenza. L'apprendista doveva seguire il maestro oltre che a Corfù anche fuori, nelle isole vicine, a Venezia, nel Levante e in qualsiasi altro luogo in cui il maestro doveva trasferirsi. Nello stesso contratto erano stabiliti anche gli onorari di Poulakis: non in denaro, ma in regali. L'insegnamento doveva durare cinque anni e mezzo - se solo a Corfù, sei anni - se fosse necessario viaggiare fuori dell'isola.

⁸ Per le pubblicazioni successive alla monografia di Rigopoulos, relative alla biografia del pittore, si vedano Stavropoulou-Makri 1988-90 e Karydis 2015.

⁹ Per la corretta interpretazione di questa fonte si rimanda a Karydis 2015.

Non è noto se questo progetto ebbe la durata prevista e se andò a buon fine: alcune clausole del contratto prevedono la possibilità di un eventuale scioglimento. Difficilmente si possono ricostruire gli spostamenti del Poulakis e di Giorgio da Mistra nel periodo 1664-70 giacché non esistono prove scritte relative a eventuali altri viaggi per le isole dove sono conservate molte delle opere di Theodoro Poulakis. Tuttavia, in un atto notarile firmato a Venezia il 22 ottobre 1666, in assenza di Poulakis, il già noto sarto veneziano di nome Vincenzo Magiota alla presenza di due testimoni, uno dei quali l'iconografo Filotheos Skoufos, originario anch'egli da Chanià a Creta, afferma di aver incassato tutti i debiti di Poulakis (Chatzidakis, Drakopoulou 1997, 305). Questo indica che il pittore aveva lasciato Venezia in modo duraturo.¹⁰ Quanto ai viaggi verso altre isole, l'unica notizia in proposito si deduce da un'icona conservata a Kassiopi (Stavropoulou-Makri 2001, 161), dedicata da Poulakis alla Vergine Kassiopitra in memoria del suo miracoloso salvataggio nel corso di una grossa tempesta mentre, nell'estate del 1670, viaggiava alla volta di Venezia.

Nel 1671, in pratica immediatamente dopo la scadenza del contratto con i Da Mistra, Poulakis era di nuovo a Venezia, e il 22 luglio 1672, dopo quattordici anni, egli per la seconda volta fu eletto membro del Consiglio dei Quaranta e Gionta della Confraternita Greca. Fino al 1673 vi sono numerose prove della sua continua presenza a Venezia. Dopo il 1675, secondo una nota scritta nel registro della Chiesa di Agios Spyridonas a Corfù, conservata nell'archivio notarile di Kerkyra, dovrebbe essere tornato su quest'isola, dove sarebbe rimasto fino alla sua morte, il 16 novembre 1692, all'età di settantacinque anni, settanta secondo altre fonti (Rigopoulos 1979; Chatzidakis, Drakopoulou 1997; Karydis 2015).

3 L'eredità iconografica di Poulakis. Un aggiornamento

Tra le opere attribuite a Poulakis, ce ne sono di firmate e datate, firmate e non datate, icone che seguono il suo stile (da imitatori o allievi?). Per quanto riferito da Rigopoulos (1979) e da Chatzidakis-Drakopoulou (1997), la maggior parte si trova ad Atene (nel Museo Bizantino e nel Benaki, in collezioni private), al Museo Bizantino di Salonico, al Museo Antivouniotissa a Corfù, nel Museo Correr e nel Museo d'icone bizantine e post-bizantine dell'Istituto Ellenico a Venezia, ma anche a Cefalonia, Larissa, Egina, Arta, Zakinto, Ioanina, Kastoria, Cipro, Livorno, Metsobo, Mistra, Esztergom, Kiev, Patmos,

¹⁰ Per una dettagliata analisi del soggiorno di Poulakis a Corfù e per la relativa bibliografia si vedano sempre Stavropoulou-Makri 1988-90 e Karydis 2015.

Salamina, Samos, Siatista, Split, Beirut. Purtroppo l'articolo su Theodoro Poulakis nell'antologia degli agiografi greci (Chatzidakis, Drakopoulou 1997) non è ancora stato aggiornato con le scoperte compiute negli ultimi due decenni.¹¹ Tra le nuove opere assegnate a questo maestro o alla sua cerchia, venute alla luce dopo la pubblicazione di Chatzidakis e Drakopoulou, si dovrebbero annoverare anche le nuove entrate del Museo Bizantino di Salonico acquistate sul mercato antiquario; le due icone della collezione Campana ora a Caen in Francia; una tavola della collezione olandese del Castello De Wijenburgh (Stoyanova 2016, 356); il ciclo con le storie di Giuseppe dell'ex collezione Sterbini pubblicato da Economopoulos (1997); due icone della collezione Brivio Radlinsky, ora nella Pinacoteca di Pavia, ritenute dalla Laskaris (2000, 16-17) di pittore anonimo e secondo noi, invece, della bottega del Poulakis per le strette somiglianze stilistiche e tecnico-tecnologiche con un'icona nel Museo Nazionale di Stoccolma attribuita a Poulakis (Abel, Moore 2002).

La più grande sorpresa però è stata il ciclo di sedici tavole (figg. 2 e 3) custodite a Mantova nella residenza della contessa Anna Maria Losanna e di sua figlia Marina Cicogna Mozzoni, rispettivamente figlia e nipote del famoso statista italiano, Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata, e della sua prima moglie, Nerina Pisani. I nobili e ricchi ma ovviamente occasionali collezionisti, consideravano la serie «icone copte», e, pur avendole avute in famiglia per quasi duecento anni, non avevano mai intrapreso indagini per chiarire cosa effettivamente possedessero. Senza riserva attribuite da me a Poulakis, queste tavole furono battute all'asta da Semenzato il 27 marzo e il 27 giugno del 1999 (Semenzato 1999a, 242-3; 1999b, 182-94) per circa tre miliardi di lire.¹² Originariamente esse formavano, assieme ad altre tavole ora disperse, una superficie di oltre 16 m² con raffinate pitture di soggetto biblico su ampie campiture d'oro. Probabilmente questo insieme di scene del Vecchio e Nuovo Testamento, raffigurate su uno o più grandi pannelli come quello del monaco Neilos nella chiesa di Chanià, Creta (Gallas, Wessel, Borboudakis 1983, 158-9) era collocato nel narcece di qualche chiesa. Timbri doganali che ho notato sul retro di due dei pannelli testimoniano che le pitture erano trasportate a Roma via il porto di Napoli. Quattordici delle tavole battute ad asta da Semenzato furono acquistate dall'armatore cipriota

11 Si veda Perdakis 2000, Sisiou 2004, Stoyanova 2006, Tsigaridas 2014. Per approfondimenti sull'operato di Poulakis, purtroppo limitati solamente agli aspetti iconografici, si veda Rigopoulos 1995, 2006 e 2016; per aggiornamenti sulla collezione d'icone della Confraternita Greca a Venezia si rimanda a Tselendi-Papadopoulou 2002; per quella del Museo Correr a Venezia a Scmazzon 2019.

12 La cifra rappresenta un record per i prezzi realizzati nella vendita di arte ortodossa in Italia: i maggiori collezionisti italiani preferiscono piazzare le loro raccolte sui mercati di Londra, Parigi o degli USA.



Figura 2 T. Poulakis. *Il Peccato Originale*. Non datata. Collezione privata.
Tempera mista su tavola, 62,5 × 79 cm. Fonte: Semenzato 1999b, 185

Demetrio Kontominà (Δ. Κουτομηνά) e nel 2008 esibite in una mostra a Bucarest, in occasione dell'apertura dell'Istituto di Cultura Ellenica (Staikos 2008).

Molti aspetti di questo eccezionale ritrovamento non sono ancora del tutto chiari: la committenza, l'esatta costituzione originale, la destinazione, l'ubicazione e la provenienza, le vicissitudini che portarono le tavole a Roma. Ad esempio, lo stemma della famiglia Cicogna su due delle tavole nel ciclo con le storie di Giuseppe pubblicato da Economopoulos (1997, 289) fa pensare che anch'esse fossero parte del carico importato dall'Albania; quindi già nella prima metà dell'Ottocento, l'insieme, unito da una certa logica iconografica e compositiva, ha iniziato a disgregarsi.

Inoltre, considerando le particolari preferenze di Poulakis per le incisioni fiamminghe e le storie del Vecchio Testamento nella scelta dei suoi prototipi (Rigopoulos 1979, 1995, 2006, 2016), una certa rilevanza assume la questione se tra i suoi numerosi clienti, oltre a ortodossi e occidentali che apprezzavano l'arte dell'icona, non vi fossero anche degli ebrei, ovvero 'nuovi cristiani' delle numerose comunità di Venezia, Corfù, Salonicco o del Sud dei Balcani (Sarajevo, ad esempio).

L'unico dettaglio noto riguardo all'origine delle pitture è l'affermazione dei proprietari che esse sarebbero state importate in Italia



Figura 3 T. Poulakis. *La morte di Mosé e gli arcangeli che scacciano il demonio*. Non data. Collezione privata. Tempera mista su tavola, 65 × 79 cm. Fonte: Semenzato 1999b, 193

dall'Albania, dove la famiglia avrebbe avuto affari nel passato. La precisione e convinzione con cui fu comunicata questa notizia era notevole, anche se difficilmente credibile a quell'epoca, quando la guerra dei Balcani era al suo culmine e i mass media di continuo trasmettevano sconcertanti documentari sulla distruzione del patrimonio ortodosso dei Balcani da parte dei combattenti albanesi UÇK. L'imponente serie di scene bibliche, splendidamente dipinte e riccamente dorate, era tutt'altro che consona alle idee degli intenditori, sia dell'Europa Occidentale che dell'Europa Orientale, riguardo al patrimonio artistico albanese come era conosciuto fino a quel momento.

La ricostruzione dell'insieme di queste tavole a soggetto biblico probabilmente provenienti dall'Albania, dall'area tra Vlōre e Sarajevo, ancora non è conclusa: un'insormontabile difficoltà in questo senso è rappresentata dal fatto che nel corso del tempo esse hanno iniziato a disperdersi in varie altre collezioni. Tuttavia il loro recupero e l'attribuzione a Poulakis costituirono un vero avvenimento, poiché hanno rivelato quanto sono ancora incomplete le nostre idee sull'attività di questo pittore, rappresentativo per l'occidentalizzazione della tradizionale arte ortodossa. Inoltre, sono stati aperti nuovi orizzonti di ricerca, insospettati fino ad allora, nonostante gli specialisti, in particolare in Russia, Ucraina e Serbia, avessero già discusso am-



Figura 4 Theodoro Poulakis. *La Presentazione di Maria al Tempio, La Dormizione della Vergine e i Santi Cavalieri Giorgio, Demetrio ed Eustatio*. Seconda metà del XVII secolo, 45 × 33 cm, tempera mista. Tirana, Museo Nazionale di Storia, n. inv. 78. Fonte: Stoyanova 2006, 291

pie illustrazioni della Bibbia a fresco e delineato, in linee generali, i connotati principali del fenomeno.¹³ In effetti, questo fu uno dei primi, insoliti per la tradizionale pittura ortodossa, cicli ispirati alle incisioni occidentali che apparvero quasi contemporaneamente nelle chiese di Tol'ćkoe e del Profeta Elia a Jaroslavl' (Grabar 1966), a Kiev e a Bogiani (Mikhajlović 1966, 1967), ma anche a Creta, Corfù, nella Santa Trinità greca a Trieste, e al monastero Vatopedi di Monte Athos, introducendo nella pittura su tela, tavola e parete nuovi temi, composizioni, impostazioni e tecniche.

Questo importantissimo ritrovamento fu seguito dall'individuazione di altre opere di Poulakis da Perdikis (2000), Sisiou (2004), Stoyanova (2006, 289). L'ultima, un'icona conservata a Tirana (fig. 4), erroneamente attribuita al pittore Onufri nel catalogo della mostra di icone albanesi tenutasi a Vicenza, richiama da vicino l'icona di san Demetrio del Da Mistra per le figure dei santi guerrieri Giorgio, Demetrio ed Eustatio nel registro inferiore.

13 Per una discussione più dettagliata si veda Stoyanova 2016, 356.

4 Lo stile del maestro e del Da Mistra. Un confronto

Le figure rappresentate sull'icona di san Demetrio (fig. 5) seguono i canoni della tradizione iconografica ortodossa: nel campo centrale è raffigurato il santo, in scala ingrandita, mentre colpisce il nemico prostrato a terra. Impressiona la vicinanza dei modelli utilizzati per il cavallo con quelli del Poulakis e con le incisioni fiamminghe di cui dettagliatamente si è occupato Rigopoulos (1979) mentre la figura del nemico in terra ricorda molto *La Decollazione del Battista* nel cimitero di Corfù, opera di Michele Damasceno. Tra l'altro questa variante della *Decollazione* fu copiata in una serie di repliche sei e settecentesche di Franghias Kavertzas, Emmanuele Skordilis, Viktor, Filotheos Skoufos, Theodoro Poulakis, Stavrianos, del prete Spyridon, Andrea Kallanas, Giorgio Castrophylacas, Ioannis Saratzinos e altri (Vokotopoulos 1983, 45-7).

Le scene della vita, del tutto tradizionali, sono disposte su due registri, in alto e in basso. Dall'angolo sinistro in alto seguono: san Demetrio davanti all'imperatore Massimiliano; san Demetrio condotto in prigione; Nestore ricevente la benedizione da san Demetrio. In basso, sempre partendo da sinistra sono rappresentate le seguenti scene: Nestore nell'atto di uccidere Lio; san Demetrio ucciso dai soldati; il servo Lupo mentre seppellisce la salma del santo.

Il supporto è costituito da una tavola singola di taglio tangenziale, con fibre ad andamento verticale (di specie latifolia, a giudicare dalla forte infestazione di tarli). Sul retro, da lato a lato, è rinforzato con due traverse simmetriche (probabilmente di altra specie di latifolia, pure infestata da tarli) che non sono intagliate, ma inchiodate sulla tavola in precedenza rivestita di uno strato protettivo allo scopo di diminuire lo scambio di umidità coll'ambiente.¹⁴ Tale preparazione del supporto è tipica della scuola dell'Eptaneso, ma si riscontra anche nelle icone del Banat, in quelle ucraine e in quelle armene. Un'analisi microscopica potrebbe chiarire l'esatto tipo di legno usato per il supporto e aiutare a risolvere il problema della provenienza, poiché in ogni regione gli iconografi avevano le loro specie preferite.

Ora la tavola è divisa in due da una crepa verticale, vicina all'asse centrale. Questa spaccatura dovrebbe essere riconducibile a essiccamento (la tavola non poteva contrarsi su se stessa per i chiodi che la tenevano fissa sulle traverse) e probabilmente anche all'indebolimento del legno, lungo le cui fibre i tarli hanno scavato dei canali. Non è possibile verificare la tesi della restauratrice Knight presentata all'inaugurazione della mostra secondo la quale un tentativo di raddrizzamento forzato della tavola ne ha determinato la frattura

¹⁴ Il suo colore fa pensare che contenga realgar o risigallo (As_4S_4), pigmento dalle proprietà antisettiche.



Figura 5 Gioiorgio da Mistra. *San Demetrio con scene della vita*. 1670 circa. Collezione privata. Tempera mista su supporto ligneo, 36,2 x 47,2 x 2 cm. Fonte: <http://art-con.ru/node/7198>



Figura 6 Gioiorgio da Mistra. *Retro dell'icona di San Demetrio con scene della vita*. Particolare. Fonte: <http://art-con.ru/node/7198>

centrale (Comunicati stampa del Patriarcato di Venezia): si vedono segni di restauro della fessura, ma non di rigonfiamento nel centro. Inoltre, un raddrizzamento forzato avrebbe provocato diversi danni alla pellicola pittorica e non è chiaro chi, quando e con quali mezzi avrebbe fatto questo. La questione merita approfondimenti ai raggi X per stabilire se le traverse siano state fissate in occasione di un restauro o prima di dipingere la tavola, per contrastare il suo incurvamento, com'era solito nella tradizione ortodossa dell'epoca.

Dallo studio ravvicinato a luce radente, si nota che la tavola è stata incisa a rombi, come quelle di Poulakis (Stoyanova 2006, 294), per favorire l'adesione del *levkas*. Anche se dalle parti scoperte non si nota la presenza di 'incamottatura', non è escluso che questa fosse applicata sulle aree corrispondenti alle punte dei chiodi, come nelle icone di Poulakis a Caen. L'acceso colorito dei drappi rossi e la trasparenza dei colori freddi ombreggiati, ad esempio degli ambienti nelle scene della vita in alto, fanno sospettare che su tutta la superficie sia stata data un'imprimatura di color giallo; purtroppo gli interventi di restauro non lasciano capire di più sulla sua natura chimica. La pittura con colori freddi o scuri su sottofondi chiari o di tonalità calde, è un metodo tipico per la maniera occidentale dell'epoca, mentre nella tradizionale arte ortodossa la costruzione plastica delle forme avviene attraverso graduale schiarimento del colore base.

Come ben noto, in Italia già dal XV secolo la tempera era rimpiazzata dalla pittura ad olio; invece la maggior parte delle icone post-bizantine della seconda metà del Seicento sono in tempera mista, par-

ticolarmente cara a Poulakis e alla sua cerchia, che era sotto la forte influenza della pittura occidentale. Il fatto che sull'icona di san Demetrio non vi sia una rete di craclé ramificata come di solito su icone in tempera classica, assieme all'esame della fluorescenza a raggi UV dell'icona, rinforzano la convinzione che sul *levkas* sia stata data un'imprimatura a base di olio e pigmento giallo di proprietà siccative (ocra, giallo di Napoli, realgar o orpimento?). Non è da escludere che anche il legante della tempera non sia solo uovo ma emulsione uovo-olio, almeno in alcune aree: sono necessari tuttavia esami di laboratorio per stabilirlo. Rispettivamente, anche la doratura è eseguita su questa preparazione gialla offuscata (un'ocra, probabilmente mescolata con caolino) e non sul bollo rosso, tipico per l'area veneta: un segno che l'icona del Da Mistra potrebbe essere stata dipinta in un centro non molto provvisto di materiali per la pittura.

La superficie è abbastanza ruvida e gran parte della doratura è caduta. Questo suggerisce che si tratti di doratura ad olio e non su missione come pensa la Knight, perché la doratura su missione è una delle più solide (Comunicati stampa del Patriarcato di Venezia).¹⁵ Come si vede nelle figg. 2 e 3, le dorature di Poulakis, eseguite su vernici, si sono conservate perfettamente.

Altro interessante particolare dell'icona del Da Mistra è l'utilizzo di coloranti naturali per ottenere il colore rosa (biacca mista a robbia), come nei calzoni del nemico prostrato a terra, e per la 'meccatura', ovvero la copertura con lacca trasparente colorata,¹⁶ dell'oro della corazza del santo e del nemico. Sulle numerose varietà di coloranti naturali troviamo abbondanti notizie nei manuali tecnici italiani e ortodossi dell'epoca e sappiamo che Poulakis le conosceva bene e le impiegava spesso, almeno nei suoi lavori maturi (Stoyanova 2006, 295).

L'esame ravvicinato dimostra inoltre che le scene della vita del santo (tranne quelle a sinistra) sono state ritoccate e che l'icona del Da Mistra è stata inserita in un'altra cornice di legno di conifera, dipinta con scene mariologiche¹⁷ in epoca poco posteriore, a giudicare dallo stile e dalle particolarità tecniche delle figure - attorno alla fine del XVII e gli inizi del XVIII secolo.

Molte sono le particolarità dell'icona di san Demetrio che richiama le opere del Poulakis, sia per quanto riguarda la tecnica pit-

15 Il termine missione ovvero *miksion* appare nei trattati tecnici dei pittori ortodossi solo nel Novecento, ma la doratura su vernice si praticava molto prima. Si veda in proposito il fondamentale e sistematico studio sulla tecnica pittorica e la tecnologia dei materiali utilizzati nell'iconografia rinascimentale bulgara di Šarenkov (1988-94, 1992). Per una bibliografia più aggiornata si veda Bentchev 2004.

16 Chimicamente questa è una vernice monofasica lipidica.

17 Di questa cornice esterna non ci occupiamo qui, è utile però segnalare che è analoga a quelle in cui sono inserite le due icone attribuibili alla cerchia di Poulakis a Pavia (Laskaris 2000, 16-17).

torica che i materiali utilizzati: l'incisione del supporto a rombi; la superficie del tutto piana, senza incasso; la strutturazione della composizione a registri orizzontali e la sua incorniciatura con un bordo color cinabro; l'utilizzo d'imprimatura; la tecnica della tempera mista; i pigmenti e i coloranti preferiti;¹⁸ i prestiti da schemi e modelli iconografici di Michele Damasceno (per quanto riguarda la figura prostrata a terra) e degli incisori fiamminghi (per il cavallo). Del tutto identica alla maniera di Poulakis e della scuola dell'Eptaneso in generale è anche la costruzione del supporto, stabilizzato sul retro con due traverse non incavate ma inchiodate, e la sua copertura con uno strato di *levcas* colorato per ridurre gli scambi di umidità con l'ambiente (Stoyanova 2006, 298). Tuttavia, il confronto tra l'icona del Da Mistra con le opere di Poulakis è abbastanza sproporzionato. L'icona di san Demetrio, pur di buon disegno e di discrete qualità pittoriche, è molto lontana dall'impressione che lasciano le opere del Poulakis per le approfondite conoscenze sui materiali reperibili all'epoca nel ben fornito mercato di Venezia e sulle loro proprietà, come pure per gli accorgimenti nel loro utilizzo che hanno assicurato la perfezione tecnica e l'eccellente conservazione dei suoi dipinti finora.

Nessun elemento dei giudizi esposti fin qui sull'icona del Da Mistra mette in qualche modo in dubbio la sua autenticità, quindi essa si dovrebbe datare attorno o poco dopo il 1670, quando il pittore aveva appena acquisito autonomia da 'maestro'. Che si tratti di una delle sue prime opere si capisce soprattutto dal rifacimento della fascia centrale del sottofondo, che doveva rappresentare una fitta vegetazione su fondo oro, come nelle pitture di Poulakis, e invece è stata mascherata in montagne per l'ovvio fallimento del suo tentativo di 'scrivere sull'oro' come sapeva fare il suo maestro e altri rappresentanti del Barocco Levantino. La 'scrittura' a colori sul fondo d'oro o d'argento era una delle novità più affascinanti dell'icona barocca, resa possibile grazie all'utilizzo di speciali vernici che aderiscono in modo duraturo sul foglio metallico e a siccativi, come lo smaltino utilizzato per le chiome degli alberi visibili nelle figg. 2 e 3 e altrove (Stoyanova 2006, 298).

Ad ogni modo, a prescindere dall'esito dell'apprendistato nella bottega di Poulakis, lo stile dell'icona fornisce un'inequivocabile prova dell'autonomia raggiunta dal pittore. Essa svela l'orientamento estetico del Da Mistra verso quella versione del Barocco che caratterizza in modo inconfondibile la produzione iconografica dei pittori post-bizantini più esposti all'influsso della contemporanea arte occidentale: delle isole Ionie (Corfù, Cefalonia, Zante)¹⁹ e dei centri sotto dominio veneziano lungo la costa adriatica dei Balcani.

¹⁸ Sui pigmenti utilizzati nell'icona di Poulakis a Tirana si veda Stoyanova 2006, 295.

¹⁹ Molti di essi erano esuli di Creta o di altre aree della Grecia sotto il dominio turco.

5 I connotati principali del Barocco Levantino

Poiché per la forza della diversa sorte storica lo sviluppo politico, economico e culturale dei territori sotto dominio turco e delle aree di contatto tra l'Europa e l'Impero Ottomano è stato molto differente da quello Occidentale,²⁰ ci permettiamo una piccola parentesi per chiarire i connotati principali del Barocco Levantino che contraddistinguono in maniera inconfondibile le opere dei due pittori in esame.

Va subito premesso che si tratta di un fenomeno parallelo, tuttavia indipendente dal Barocco occidentale, sintomatico per la formazione di chiese nazionali nel seno dell'ortodossia orientale. A livello estetico, esso si sviluppò come risposta alle sfide della civiltà occidentale verso realismo e laicità. La sua evoluzione è stata accompagnata dalla comparsa di caratteristiche stilistiche e tecniche più individuali nella produzione artistica locale rispetto al periodo bizantino.²¹

La maggior parte degli storici dell'arte condivide l'opinione che - per quanto riguarda le aree di contatto tra l'Europa e l'Impero Ottomano - i primi sintomi della simbiosi tra l'arte occidentale e la tradizionale iconografia ortodossa si siano manifestati già nella seconda metà del XV-inizi del XVI secolo, quando sulle iconostasi ortodosse iniziarono ad apparire innovazioni sotto forma di composizioni e modi stilistici presi in prestito dalla contemporanea arte italiana.²² A questo periodo appartengono le botteghe iconografiche

20 Nel mondo ortodosso soggiogato, i fenomeni estetici ebbero una cronologia diversa da quella occidentale. Ad esempio già nei secoli XIII e XIV, molto prima del Barocco occidentale, i Balcani meridionali vissero una propria rinascita, in cui molti specialisti vedono i primi sintomi di occidentalizzazione della tradizionale pittura ortodossa. La caduta sotto il dominio turco interruppe bruscamente questa 'primavera' e così per la Grecia, la Bulgaria e la Macedonia, rimaste per cinque secoli sotto schiavitù, ora con Rinascimento s'intende la mobilitazione nazionale che portò alla liberazione dal giogo ottomano nel XIX secolo, quindi questo fenomeno segue il Barocco e non viceversa, come in Italia.

21 La cronologia di questi processi nelle singole aree balcaniche non è ancora ben stabilita e il suo studio è abbastanza asimmetrico: prevale l'interesse verso la letteratura, l'architettura e l'intaglio del legno, mentre le analisi, riguardanti la pittura monumentale e l'icona, sono ancora troppo sporadiche e discordanti. I serbi chiamano il periodo di transito dall'arte post-bizantina (dalla fine Quattrocento fino a 1725 circa) *prelazni* e collocano il loro Barocco tra il 1725 e il 1800 circa; i russi parlano di stile *Naryshkin* o Barocco di Mosca, mentre nei Paesi balcanici questi sono indicati sotto il nome Barocco Meridionale, Levantino o Slavo (Angyal 1961; Mikhajlović 1966). Per una bibliografia generale si veda Paščenko 1991. Per quanto riguarda i Balcani centrali e l'Ucraina si veda inoltre Medaković 1958, 1971, 1976, 1979, 1980; Mikhajlović 1966, Pavluzkij 1910; Petković 1961; Jovanović 1963; Logvin 1963; Davidov 1968; Paščenko 1977; per la Grecia: Proestaki 2010; Dialektopoulos 2012; per la Bulgaria: Šarenkov 1992. Ringrazio sentitamente la dott.ssa Dragojla Živanov, curatore della Galerija Matice Srpska, per le sue preziose indicazioni riguardo all'attuale stato dell'arte degli studi concernenti il territorio del Banat.

22 Il primo a rilevare l'intensa interazione tra la cultura Bizantina, il primo Rinascimento italiano e l'antica arte russa sul territorio degli stati balcanici medievali, è sta-

fondate in Italia che servivano le terre ortodosse sotto dominio ottomano e quelle del tutto penetrate dallo «stile italiano» (Zalesskaja, Pyatnitsky 1991), la cui abbondanza sull'isola di Creta permise di forgiare il termine «scuola d'iconografia italo-cretese». ²³ Nelle aree più a nord, che comprendono centri oggi in Serbia, Montenegro, Croazia, Bosnia, Slovenia, Ungheria e Romania, queste simbiosi tra mondo latino e ortodosso prendono invece forme fortemente influenzate da impulsi provenienti dall'Europa nord-occidentale, mediate attraverso maestri russi e ucraini, per questo denominate Barocco Ucraino (Mikhajlović 1966). ²⁴

L'ultima e più specifica versione, che rappresenta un complesso compromesso di più stili, è l'arte della rinascita nazionale nei Paesi balcanici sotto il giogo ottomano: Bulgaria, Macedonia e Grecia continentale. Qui la cristallizzazione dei nuovi concetti plastici avvenne nel seno della mobilitazione per l'affermazione dell'identità culturale nazionale e culminò con la liberazione dal dominio turco, alla fine del XIX secolo (Šarenkov 1992).

Il Barocco, nelle sue variazioni levantina e serbo-ucraina, e il Rinascimento dei Paesi sotto dominio turco portò a revisioni e a riavvicinamenti della tradizionale iconografia bizantina ai gusti del tempo.

to Kondakov (1910). Secondo la sua teoria, condivisa da Likhacev (1906), il primo Rinascimento italiano esercitò un rilevante impatto sull'arte degli slavi meridionali, e la Bulgaria, la Macedonia e la Serbia d'allora ebbero un ruolo cruciale per la trasmissione delle influenze italiane verso il *koiné* bizantino e russo. Quanto al Rinascimento Paleologo del XIV secolo, esso sarebbe parallelo, tuttora indipendente dallo sviluppo dell'arte contemporanea in Toscana poiché i confronti visivi tra i loro prodotti dedicati allo stesso soggetto mostrano mondi diversi, diverse tecniche e diversi sistemi di rappresentazione. Casi ambigui invece, come gli affreschi di Mistra, che fecero dubitare Millet (1910) se fosse davvero il Rinascimento italiano a dare qualcosa ai Paleologi o che, viceversa, l'Italia del XV secolo (e prima) avesse ottenuto qualcosa da Bisanzio, fino ai giorni nostri restano irrisolti per la mancanza di studi tecnici. Per Kondakov e Likhacev, gli stretti rapporti artistici tra Bisanzio e l'Italia nel periodo tra il XIII e il XV secolo sono al di fuori di ogni dubbio, così come il fatto che, inizialmente, il ruolo dominante in questo scambio culturale appartenesse alla tradizione bizantina, mentre con il tempo la dipendenza fu invertita, portando alla formazione delle cosiddette botteghe di pittura «italo-greche» e «italo-cretese». Secondo Lazarev (1960, 1971, 1986) invece, i prestiti italiani, visibili soprattutto nei paesaggi e nei drappaggi di questi maestri greci, risalirebbero non al XIV ma al XV-inizio del XVI secolo. Per un aggiornato riassunto delle numerose pubblicazioni successive in materia si veda Proestaki 2010.

23 Le analisi tecnico-scientifiche evidenziano che i pittori cretesi già a quest'epoca facevano uso di lacche colorate: una condizione *sine qua non* per la caratteristica del Barocco Levantino «scrittura su oro o su argento» (Zalesskaja, Pyatnitsky 1991). L'ampio impiego di queste vernici lipidiche è documentato nella stessa epoca anche nella decorazione dei cosiddetti 'cuoi d'oro veneziani', per la cui realizzazione si sospetta che le maestranze orientali a Venezia avessero avuto un ruolo decisivo (Stoyanova 2010, 2011).

24 Alcuni studi basati su analisi stilistiche e iconografiche tendono tuttavia a spiegarli con l'arte manierista dell'Europa settentrionale e centrale dalla fine del XVI e la prima metà del XVII secolo, in particolare con le sue manifestazioni in Svezia, Olanda, Germania e Polonia.



Figura 7 Konstantinos. *San Demetrio uccide il nemico*. 1725 circa. Tempera mista su tavola. Chiesa di san Nicola, Voskopojë (Albania). 108 × 70 × 7 cm, Inv. no. IN 7610. Fonte: Tourta 2006, 131

Le nuove impostazioni adottate per la composizione, la resa plastica e la prospettiva riflettono le maniere dell'arte figurativa europea contemporanea e, in particolare, gli impulsi ricevuti dalla diffusione della pittura ad olio, della stampa e dell'incisione.²⁵

La classica tempera all'uovo, con il suo limitato arsenale di regole tecniche ed estetiche, non era più in condizione di esprimere le nuove tendenze. Influenzata dal ruolo crescente delle idee laiche rispetto a quelle religiose e dalla tendenza verso il realismo, l'iconografia doveva modificare gradualmente il suo sistema espressivo a favore

25 Un interessante studio sull'iconostasi di Krušedol (Ridolfi 2012) aiuta a capire che impatto avessero questi processi a livello tecnico nelle aree centrali dei Balcani.



Figura 8 Konstantinos. *San Demetrio uccide il nemico*. 1725 circa. Tempera mista su tavola. Chiesa di san Nicola, Voskopojë (Albania). 108 × 70 × 7 cm, Inv. no. IN 7610. Particolare con doratura a rilievo e scrittura su oro. Fonte: Tourta 2006, 131

di tecniche miste e pittura ad olio. I formati aumentati delle icone barocche e rinascimentali nei Paesi balcanici, la necessità di incorporare nelle loro composizioni l'illusione tridimensionale con elementi spaziali e cognitivi, hanno portato all'introduzione di leganti insoliti per la classica tempera d'uovo, che alterarono significativamente l'aspetto dei nuovi dipinti. Questo processo è stato accompagnato anche dall'introduzione di nuovi pigmenti, coloranti e resine per le vernici.²⁶

A modifiche è stato sottoposto pure il processo iconografico nel suo complesso e nelle sue singole fasi. Alcune di queste, come il progetto, ovvero il disegno preliminare, che in passato avevano solo funzione laterale, ora hanno cominciato a svilupparsi in un'operazione indipendente. Anche la tecnica dei rivestimenti metallici e della lavorazione dei metalli è stata notevolmente arricchita e migliorata, insieme ai componenti impiegati per le vernici protettive (Šarenkov 1992).

Purtroppo le nostre idee sugli aspetti tecnico-tecnologici di queste trasformazioni sono ancora abbastanza generiche, in particolare per quanto riguarda le premesse tecniche e le peculiarità delle icone barocche rispetto alla tradizione artistica dell'Europa occidentale: cosa

26 Sulla storia, tecnica e conservazione delle lacche colorate impiegate per l'addobbo delle chiese ortodosse serbe si veda Korolija-Zrkvenjakov 2013.

ha determinato la dinamica del materiale e l'aggiornamento tecnico, se esista qualche rapporto tra la loro scelta e il luogo di produzione, che significato si desiderava dare all'immagine; com'è avvenuto il passaggio dalla tradizionale tempera all'uovo attraverso tecniche miste verso la pittura ad olio e come questo ha influenzato la costruzione plastica delle immagini; com'è stata impiegata la conoscenza tecnica che risale a fonti antiche; da dove e come precisamente sono state assorbite le innovazioni e dove e come sono stati formati professionalmente i pittori di icone nel periodo tra la fine del XV e la fine del XIX secolo.

Tutte le nuove attribuzioni a Poulakis e bottega, di cui sopra, rendono dunque sempre più probabile l'ipotesi del suo impegno per la decorazione di chiese in Albania o contatti a Venezia con pittori dei Paesi ortodossi dei Balcani: una possibilità che le fonti bibliografiche di cui si dispone finora non indicano direttamente, ma neppure escludono. Successive ricerche negli archivi russi e dei Paesi balcanici riassunte da Stoyanova (2016) hanno arricchito tale ipotesi con nuovi dati riguardanti l'impegno dei pittori greci di Venezia nella mobilitazione antiturca dei Balcani. Questi dati rendono la probabilità che alla bottega di Poulakis fossero stati commissionati lavori in Albania o nell'odierna Bosnia ancora più plausibile (Stoyanova 2006, 2016).

Il rilevante volume delle opere attribuite a Poulakis, l'ecletticità del loro stile e dei loro schemi iconografici, unanimemente riconosciuta da tutti gli studiosi occupatisi del suo patrimonio, indicano chiaramente che esse sono state eseguite sotto la supervisione e responsabilità del Poulakis ma con l'aiuto di assistenti, secondo un principio di divisione del lavoro che tiene conto del livello di preparazione e dell'eventuale specializzazione di ciascuno. Nel Seicento-Settecento, con la diffusione dei rapporti capitalistici ovunque, tale divisione dei compiti nelle botteghe iconografiche divenne una regola, che non poté essere ammorbidita nemmeno dai rigidi canoni dell'arte sacra. Un eloquente esempio di 'imprese' d'arte sacra che funzionavano come società internazionali di produzione e vendita con un proprio capitale condiviso tra i soci, ciascuno strettamente specializzato in un settore, è rappresentato dall'organizzazione dei Vecchi Credenti russi di Paleh, Mstera e Cholui.

Ovviamente un eventuale coinvolgimento del Da Mistra nei lavori del maestro sui grandi cicli biblici dovrebbe essere tenuto in conto nelle future ricerche riguardanti i suoi lavori. La scoperta dell'icona del Da Mistra offre una chiave per individuare altri suoi lavori,²⁷ e un'attenta rilettura dell'eredità attribuita a Poulakis potrebbe aiutare a discernere meglio tra i lavori del maestro e di questo suo allievo.

La mancanza di altre opere firmate del Da Mistra e la scomparsa della sua unica icona nota (Drakopoulou 2010) potrebbe significare

²⁷ Si veda quanto riportato alla nota 4.

inoltre che i suoi lavori sono stati acquistati nel passato da collezionisti oppure che abbia lavorato all'estero. Importanti punti di riflessione in questo senso offrono le vicende antiquarie delle opere del Poulakis e del mercato dell'arte post-bizantina in Italia, particolarmente per quanto riguarda quello veneto e quello romano, dove è stata acquisita l'icona di san Demetrio.

6 Il mercato dell'arte post-bizantina in Italia nell'Ottocento

Nel XIX secolo vari oggetti d'arte bizantina appartenevano a collezioni private romane, come i Borghese, i Pallavicini, i Campana, i Marsarenti, i Castellani, gli Stroganoff e così via (Moretti 2014). Per le scarse e distorte idee su quest'arte all'epoca, gli inventari delle collezioni pervenutici non offrono descrizioni precise ed esaurienti. Ad esempio le icone di Poulakis della collezione Sterbini non sono state notate nel catalogo di Venturi, ma figurano in quello del Muñoz dedicato alla mostra d'arte bizantina a Grottaferrata (Muñoz 1905). Le due icone attribuite a Poulakis ora a Caen derivano dalla collezione del marchese Campana a Roma, dal 1838 famosa in tutta Europa come la più ricca collezione privata. Costruita a Roma nella prima metà del XIX secolo e nel 1846 visitata dallo stesso Papa Pio IX, già nel 1857 fu sequestrata, messa in vendita e nel giro di quattro anni dispersa tra Russia, Gran Bretagna e Francia.

Il fatto che negli inventari di queste due raccolte (le più grandi per l'arte dell'icona a Roma), non si trova il nome del Da Mistra, non significa che la sua icona di san Demetrio non potesse aver fatto parte di una di esse: un'ipotesi che allo stato attuale delle nostre conoscenze resta la più credibile. Ad ogni modo, la consistenza delle collezioni italiane di arte post-bizantina non è paragonabile al volume delle icone post-bizantine, portate dall'Italia in Russia.²⁸

Opere di maestri post-bizantini greci e dei Paesi balcanici sono documentate nel palazzo e nelle chiese del Patriarca di tutta la Russia, Nikon (Uspenskij 1902): ad es. nella chiesa dedicata all'apostolo Filippo, consacrata nel 1656, tutta l'iconostasi era addobbata con icone alla «maniera greca» (Pyatnitsky 1993, 159). Icone post-bizantine esistevano non solo nella capitale, ma anche in diverse chiese provinciali e presso privati come A.N. Murav'ev, il quale durante i suoi viaggi in Oriente nel 1838, 1849-50 e 1874 raccolse icone del-

²⁸ Esse ancora non sono sufficientemente esplorate dai bizantinisti occidentali nonostante l'interesse che rappresentano, per cui ci permettiamo una breve rassegna sugli acquisti dei collezionisti russi d'icone post-bizantine sui mercati italiani, non da ultimo in considerazione dell'interesse dei russi per Corfù già attorno alla fine del Settecento in occasione alle manovre antiturche della flotta russa.

le chiese della Palestina, della Georgia, del Monte Athos, dell'Italia, della Bulgaria, della Grecia, della Russia e dell'Asia Minore. Dal 1859 si trasferì a Kiev e donò la sua collezione al Museo dell'Accademia Teologica (Petrov 1878; Vsdornov 1986, vii). Purtroppo, la sua raccolta non fu catalogata e si ritiene che sia andata distrutta durante la seconda guerra mondiale (Vsdornov 1986, vii, 81). Fama ancor maggiore ebbe la collezione d'icone post-bizantine di un altro grande orientalista, l'archimandrita Porfirij Uspenskij (1804-35) il quale, come Murav'ev, destinò quarantadue delle sue icone al Museo Teologico di Kiev (Petrov 1897, 1912-15) ma purtroppo esse non si sottrassero alla sorte della raccolta Murav'ev e sparirono durante la seconda guerra mondiale (Vsdornov 1986, vii, 81; Pyatnitsky 1993, 162-3).

Tra le collezioni russe d'icone post-bizantine del XIX secolo degna di nota è anche la collezione del conte A.S. Uvarov. Essa comprende, a giudicare dal catalogo pubblicato (Uvarov 1907, 4, 114-17), non più di quindici opere, per lo più del XVII secolo, la maggior parte delle quali sono state acquistate in Italia: a Roma, Milano, Napoli. Tra esse un lavoro eccellente è il *San Giorgio e il drago* della metà del XVI secolo. Paralleli iconografici e tecnici avvicinano questa icona alle opere di Donato Bizamani, e - come propone Pyatnitsky (1995, 251) - potrebbero indicare che

l'icona della raccolta di A.S. Uvarov molto probabilmente è quell'opera di Bizamani che nel XIX secolo era custodita nel Museo Nazionale di Napoli, ma in seguito è scomparsa dal Museo e dal campo visivo degli scienziati.

A metà del XIX secolo in Russia furono fondati i primi musei pubblici dell'antica arte russa, dove le opere bizantine e post-bizantine trovarono la dovuta attenzione. L'inizio fu posto con l'imperiale Accademia delle Arti di San Pietroburgo, dove nel 1856 presso la 'classe d'iconografia ortodossa' si formò una piccola collezione di monumenti cristiani. Grazie all'energia e all'instancabile attività del vicepresidente dell'Accademia, il principe G.G. Gagarin, e dei curatori A.M. Gornostaev e V.A. Prokhorov, che si erano specializzati in Italia, e di numerosi amanti dell'antichità nazionale russa, essa in breve tempo si trasformò in un museo di prima classe. Una delle sue acquisizioni più significative era la raccolta dei primitivi italiani dell'architetto accademico Karl-August Bein alla fine del 1858 (Pyatnitsky 1996a). Tra questi c'erano diverse opere post-bizantine, in particolare la *Santa Caterina* della seconda metà del XVII secolo, opera del famoso maestro cretese Filotheos Skufos, amico del Poulakis e probabilmente noto al Da Mistra.

Icone greche e dei Balcani sono menzionate anche tra le opere d'arte trasferite negli anni Sessanta dell'Ottocento all'Accademia dal Cremlino di Mosca, dalle chiese di Pskov, Novgorod, della Vec-

chia Ladoga. Lo stesso avvenne con le icone sequestrate agli scismatici (ovvero Vecchi Credenti) e conservate al Ministero degli Interni.²⁹ Tutti questi preziosi acquisti, che vennero a completare la collezione dell'Accademia delle arti, erano esibiti nella 'sala greca'. Il suo nucleo principale era formato dalla raccolta di P.I. Sevast'ianov, lasciata nel museo dalla direzione dell'Accademia dopo la mostra nel 1861. Così, a metà degli anni Settanta dell'Ottocento, Pietroburgo divenne la sede di una delle più grandi collezioni d'arte bizantina e post-bizantina in Russia. Nel 1898, con la decisione del Consiglio dell'Accademia, tutto il Museo d'arte dell'antica Russia fu trasferito al Museo Russo appena inaugurato dall'imperatore Alessandro III (Pivovarova 2012). Gran parte delle opere post-bizantine nelle sue collezioni è stata inviata dalla Grecia o creata da maestri greci in Russia.

Nel 1910 il Museo Russo acquisì la raccolta di N.F. Selivanov che aveva acquistato icone post-bizantine in Italia, soprattutto dagli antiquari veneziani. Nello stesso anno diverse icone italo-greche, compresa una meravigliosa *Natività* del XVII secolo, furono donate dal più grande bizantinista russo all'epoca, l'eccellente conoscitore dei monumenti bizantini in Italia, l'accademico N.P. Kondakov. Nello stesso anno i collezionisti ucraini V.N. e B.I. Hanenko comprarono dall'antiquario romano Tironi due pitture firmate di Poulakis: *In te giosisce* e un *Giudizio Universale*.

L'ampliamento più importante dei tesori del Museo Russo è stato indiscutibilmente l'acquisto nel 1913 di una collezione unica di icone bizantine e post-bizantine russe e italiane, da parte dell'eccezionale scienziato russo N.P. Likhachev. L'enorme collezione, che comprendeva circa 1.500 opere, fu acquistata per 300 mila rubli per ordine personale di Nicola II (Pyatnitsky 1995, 256). Likhachev intraprese diversi viaggi in Europa Occidentale e nell'Oriente (in Grecia, Costantinopoli e a Monte Athos) per studiare il rapporto delle icone russe con i dipinti di Bisanzio, con i primitivi italiani e le tardive icone greche, italo-greche e slave. L'ottimo gusto artistico, l'occhio esperto e l'intuizione di Likhachev suscitavano rispetto tra gli antiquari europei, che spesso mettevano da parte cose interessanti per lo scienziato russo, sapendo che avrebbe apprezzato il loro valore. Particolarmente stretti e spesso quasi amichevoli contatti furono stabiliti da Likhachev con gli antiquari veneziani. Fu da loro che egli acquisì un numero rilevante di opere per la sua collezione. Già a metà del XIX secolo Venezia divenne il centro del commercio antiquario di antiche icone. Le opere furono portate dagli antiquari e dai loro agenti da quasi tutti gli angoli del Mediterraneo. In alcune occasioni furono acquistate icone dalle chiese della stessa Venezia.

²⁹ Per una dettagliata bibliografia sulle opere confiscate ai Vecchi Credenti si veda Vsdornov 1986.

Likhachev fece numerosi acquisti di icone anche dagli antiquari di Roma, Firenze, Napoli, Milano, Bari. Egli era aiutato nella raccolta della collezione da colleghi scienziati italiani come il direttore del Museo Civico di Treviso, Luigi Bailo, grazie al quale la collezione fu arricchita di diversi eccellenti esempi di primitivi italiani. Likhachev comprava alcune opere personalmente, senza la mediazione di antiquari, durante i suoi ripetuti viaggi attraverso il Mediterraneo. Si ritiene che N.P. Likhachev sia riuscito a raccogliere il meglio di ciò che esisteva sul mercato dell'antiquariato poiché attorno alla fine del XIX-inizio del XX secolo, i collezionisti e gli studiosi europei erano poco interessati alle opere post-bizantine. Con la raccolta dello scienziato russo all'inizio del XX secolo nessun museo o collezione privata al mondo poteva competere. Ancora oggi, grazie a questi monumenti, l'Ermitage, dove è conservata la sezione post-bizantina della raccolta di N.P. Likhachev (Bol'sciiakov, Zalesskaja, Pyatnitsky 1993) rimane una delle più grandi esposizioni di pittura post-bizantina nel mondo che rende idea di tutte le sue direzioni principali dei secoli XV-XIX (*Guida all'esposizione* 1991; Pyatnitsky 2004). Il valore speciale della collezione di icone post-bizantine è dato dalle opere datate e firmate da Angelo Bizamani, Nicola Zafuri, Emmanuele Lampardos, Emmanuele Tzanes, Marco, Jacob Daron, Ilya Moshos, Viktor e altri maestri (Pyatnitsky 1996b).

Molte icone rimangono ancora anonime e il loro studio in relazione al qui discusso san Demetrio del Da Mistra potrebbe portare a nuove scoperte.

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Alla Mecca e oltre Una selezione di contratti di viaggio registrati presso il tribunale ottomano di Aleppo (secoli XVI-XVIII)

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Abstract This short essay presents a number of unpublished 16th to 18th-century documents from the qāḍī-court records of Aleppo related to contracts and arrangements of travel and transport. These documents mirror the importance of Aleppo as a centre of regional and international trade and as a chief halting place on the Anatolian-Syrian pilgrimage route in the classic Ottoman era. The bustling urban and rural world of travelling pilgrims, merchants, high dignitaries, travel agents, camel breeders, camel drivers, and porters returns the image of a society where mobility, despite its hardships, dangers and costs, was a constant and essential feature.

Keywords Travel. Aleppo. Court-records. Ottoman Empire.

Sommario 1 Le vie di comunicazione. – 2 La strada per Mecca. – 3 Il viaggio come business. – 4 Sui mezzi di trasporto e costi.



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Voyager c'est recourir aux services d'autrui
(Braudel 1979, 1, 468)

Le dialogue des villes et des routes reste permanent, et autant la décadence des agglomérations influe sur la prospérité des routes, autant l'abandon des axes de transport porte de sévères coups aux villes. (Abdel Nour 1983, 170)

In un articolo pubblicato nell'ormai lontano 1982, la famosa ottomanista Suraiya Faroqhi richiamava l'attenzione sul fatto che «the history of Ottoman transportation as a whole remains to be written» (Faroqhi 1982, 523). Un'affermazione che potrebbe suonare singolare se pensiamo da un lato al gran numero di resoconti di viaggio ad opera di viaggiatori europei e musulmani tra il Cinquecento e la fine del Settecento, e, dall'altro, alla presenza di una gran mole di dati e informazioni contenuti nei documenti d'archivio dell'amministrazione ottomana, sia a livello centrale che locale; senza dimenticare due fondamentali studi pubblicati pochi anni prima (Bulliet 1975; Braudel 1979) che in qualche modo affrontavano alcune importanti tematiche relative al trasporto nell'area del Mediterraneo orientale e del Vicino Oriente.

Tuttavia, sempre secondo Faroqhi, la natura stessa del materiale disponibile - da intendersi qui quello rappresentato dalle fonti 'interne' all'Impero - sarebbe responsabile del persistere di una certa frammentarietà riguardo agli aspetti più concreti dell'organizzazione e dei tratti istituzionali del trasporto. Da un lato, «camel transportation is known to us mainly where the Ottoman state was involved»; dall'altro, «private agreements between merchants on one side and wagoners or camel drivers on the other were rarely recorded in writing» (Faroqhi 1982, 523). La combinazione di questi due fattori avrebbe prodotto una strutturale difficoltà di approccio allo studio delle modalità del trasporto, in particolare quello privato. Faroqhi stessa ha in qualche modo, da altre prospettive, perseguito questo filone di ricerca, dapprima portando a compimento un'importante monografia sul commercio e le corporazioni di realtà urbane in Anatolia (Faroqhi 1984), un dettagliato studio degli aspetti sociali ed economici del pellegrinaggio (Faroqhi 1994) e riunendo poi in un unico volume una serie di articoli dedicati all'affascinante tema della mobilità interna al mondo ottomano (Faroqhi 2014).

Se è vero che il tema risulta ancora privo di un'analisi sistematica che abbracci la società ottomana nel suo insieme, tuttavia per quanto riguarda la Siria ottomana numerosi studi apparsi nel corso degli ultimi decenni - a partire dal pionieristico Rafeq 1966 - hanno contribuito, da diverse angolazioni e secondo diversi gradi di interesse e finalità, a dare un quadro più articolato e informato (Barbir 1980; Abdel Nour 1983; Rafeq 1987; Masters 1988; Marcus 1989; Establet, Pascual 1998; Grehan 2007).

Come nel caso di un precedente breve studio (Salati 2010), e senza naturalmente la pretesa di esaustività, queste note vogliono essere un contributo che, si spera, possa offrire spunti e chiarimenti su alcuni aspetti legali e organizzativi relativi al trasporto e al viaggio nel contesto della Aleppo ottomana. A questo scopo si è fatto uso di documentazione conservata nei registri dei tribunali sciaraitici della città (*sijillāt al-maḥākīm al-shar‘iyya*).¹ In merito al tema qui trattato, si tratta di una fonte non esauriente e complessa da utilizzare. C'è da tener presente, infatti, che, come nel caso di altri tipi di contratti e accordi commerciali, le parti coinvolte non erano obbligate a registrare l'avvenuto patto in tribunale. Se non altro per evitare le spese di registrazione imposte dai *qāḍī*,² un accordo privato al di fuori del tribunale era preferibile, come rilevato dalla stessa Faroqhi (1982).

Ciò nonostante, per quanto limitati nel numero e nella loro portata, e tenendo presente che essi sono solo un campione di un materiale più ampio presente nei registri, i documenti presentati vogliono essere di aiuto e di supporto per eventuali più esaustive ricerche volte ad acquisire un panorama abbastanza affidabile delle dinamiche relative ad un aspetto – l'organizzazione del viaggio e il trasporto – così vitale per Aleppo, data la centralità della città nel contesto commerciale regionale e interregionale.³

Prima di passare alla trattazione dei documenti e per dare un contesto di riferimento agli stessi, alcune osservazioni ci sembrano opportune.

1 Le vie di comunicazione

Come considerazione generale, è stato rilevato che l'epoca ottomana fu caratterizzata da un grande sforzo al fine di

¹ Sui registri dei tribunali ottomani si vedano Faroqhi 1997; Akgündüz 2009; Ze'evi 1998. Per la Siria si vedano Rafeq 1976; Marino 2000.

² Sul funzionamento dei tribunali ottomani si veda Jennings 1978; su quello di Aleppo Marcus 1989, 103-19.

³ Faroqhi nota che due sono le tipologie di documenti di archivio che contengono informazioni relative al trasporto con cammelli. La prima ha per oggetto il numero e la disponibilità, in termini di acquisto o noleggio, di cammelli in una data località per il trasporto di generi alimentari e materiale bellico. La seconda, vale a dire i registri dei tribunali, costituirebbe una fonte per così dire 'accidentale' in quanto contenente materiale relativo a «theft of or accidental damage to camels and with the claims of merchants whose goods had been lost or damaged while in the care of camel drivers» (Faroqhi 1982, 524-5). I documenti oggetto di questo studio confermano solo in parte questo assunto in quanto effettivamente presentano dati, ancorché scomposti e non uniformi, sulle attività di trasporto e noleggio e i relativi costi. Gli importanti studi di Marcus (1989) e Masters (1988) e, soprattutto, di Establet e Pascual (1998) contengono interessanti riflessioni su questi temi proprio sulla base di tale documentazione.

maintain street and road paving, establish ferryboat services, control river navigation, and ensure the safety of public roads. [...] The Ottoman state not only tried to guarantee the safety of official couriers and convoys, but also to create conditions that permitted the safe passage of merchant caravans. (Faroqhi 1982, 523)

Tale compito, prosegue Faroqhi, si dimostrò sempre più difficile, a tal punto che la garanzia di una tranquilla traversata di territori e distretti amministrativi dipendeva dalle abilità individuali dei singoli mercanti nell'assicurarsi del salva-condotto. Sempre secondo la studiosa ottomanista, a partire dal XVIII secolo, si assiste ad un nuovo sforzo da parte delle autorità ottomane volto a ripristinare le comunicazioni via terra, grazie al recupero e restauro di caravanserragli e all'impiego di corpi di guardi in punti strategici di passaggio (Faroqhi 1982).

Tuttavia, per quanto riguarda almeno il *Bilād al-Shām*, dalle osservazioni di viaggiatori, dalle cronache locali e dalle fonti dell'amministrazione ottomana, risulta evidente la persistenza, proprio nel corso del Settecento, di un alto grado di instabilità e insicurezza generale, con le inevitabili conseguenze anche sul sistema dei trasporti.⁴ A dispetto di ciò resta il dato fondamentale - confermato dai documenti oggetto di questo studio - di una società ottomano-siriana caratterizzata da un alto tasso di mobilità regionale e interregionale, che fa giustizia della troppa a lungo persistente e certamente non sostenibile visione di un mondo chiuso e immobile che ha caratterizzato, per così dire, l'occhio dell'orientalismo occidentale (Faroqhi 2014).

2 La strada per Mecca

La maggior parte dei documenti presentati sono collegati direttamente o indirettamente all'evento e alla stagione del pellegrinaggio (*ḥajj*) o a luoghi e località lungo le rotte delle carovane del *ḥajj*.

L'importanza del pellegrinaggio a Mecca, e la visita alla tomba del Profeta ad esso collegata,⁵ quale evento dal forte impatto religioso, politico ed economico, non ha certo bisogno di essere qui sottolineata. Vale la pena evidenziare come, storicamente e concettualmente, il *ḥajj* abbia svolto un ruolo significativo nel dare a molti la possibilità e la motivazione al viaggio e alla scoperta delle diverse realtà e

⁴ Si vedano, tra gli altri, Abdel Nour 1983; Marcus 1989; Rafeq 1990; Grehan 2007; Salati 2010.

⁵ Le due cose sono notoriamente collegate, pur non costituendo la visita (*ziyāra*) alla tomba del Profeta un obbligo *stricto sensu*. Si veda di seguito il documento n. 8, dove si certifica la richiesta da parte di un funzionario della contabilità di Aleppo di recarsi nelle 'Due Città Sante' (al-Ḥaramān al-Sharifayn).

del retaggio del ‘mondo dell’Islam’. Questo spiega il perché le carovane del *hajj* che attraversavano il Crescente Fertile e le regioni più remote del *Dār al-Islām* comprendessero un variegato e diversificato mondo di pellegrini, studiosi, commercianti e uomini d'affari, alti funzionari e dignitari, scorte armate, cercatori di avventura – di diverso background etnico e sociale – tutti bisognosi di usufruire dei servizi forniti da agenti di viaggio, cammellieri, portatori d'acqua, facchini, cuccinieri, un sistema occupazionale generalmente organizzato e condotto da comunità beduine parzialmente sedentarizzate. La ‘strada per Mecca’ era sì la risposta ad un preciso comandamento divino, ma costituiva anche una formidabile impresa commerciale, dove le necessità e le richieste individuali o di gruppo trovavano la loro sintesi in un quadro comunitario regolato da principi ben radicati di praticità e giustizia.⁶

Se la carovana del *hajj*, nelle sue varie articolazioni,⁷ era, in termini di dimensioni e organizzazione, un evento sicuramente impressionante e memorabile anche dal punto di vista visivo, le lunghe file di cammelli adibite al trasporto di privati e merci a scopi esclusivamente secolari non erano una vista inusuale nelle città, nei villaggi o nelle aree desertiche che attraversavano. La documentazione qui presentata registra così accordi di trasporto e viaggio lungo le grandi rotte del traffico carovaniero che, inevitabilmente, passavano per il grosso emporio del commercio medio-orientale, la città di Aleppo.

3 Il viaggio come business

Se, come è stato osservato, il viaggiare era considerato da molti un'opzione evitabile visti i pericoli, i costi e il dispendio fisico⁸ – a tal punto che le ragioni a favore o contro il viaggio erano assunte a

⁶ A questo proposito si veda in particolare Faroqhi 1994, 2014; Peters 1996; Rafeq 1966, 1987; Barbir 1980; Marcus 1989; Grehan 2007.

⁷ Le carovane del pellegrinaggio erano essenzialmente quattro: l'egiziana dal Cairo, la siriana da Damasco, l'irachena da Baghdad o Bassora, la yemenita da Aden.

⁸ Marcus, osserva infatti che «travel was not deemed a pleasurable and entertaining pastime. Too many difficulties, perils, and expenses [...]. A trip within the region qualified as an adventure of sorts; it was a slow, strenuous, costly, and occasionally dangerous affair. Hours spent on the back of a horse, mule, or camel [...], no paved roads but rather tracks [...] brigands and hostile tribesmen rendered some routes unsafe, distances seemed immense. Even a visit to Damascus was a major enterprise, requiring about seven days on the road, and two or three extra days for rest» (Marcus 1989, 247-8). Guerre, distruttive razzie beduine, epidemie, scarsità o cattiva qualità dell'acqua nelle aree desertiche, avverse condizioni climatiche non potevano che rendere gli spostamenti ancora più difficoltosi (si vedano a questo proposito anche Establet, Pascual 1998, 13-14; Grehan 2007, 37-40).

livello di topos letterario⁹ - è altrettanto vero che il traffico carovani-ero ci presenta, di nuovo, un mondo in costante movimento. In questo contest le numerose e popolose città della Siria rappresentavano e agivano da snodo centrale per il traffico, sia commerciale che religioso, regionale e interregionale (Abdel Nour 1983).

Anche se Damasco serviva da luogo ufficiale di organizzazione e partenza della carovana siriana per Mecca (*al-rakb al-shāmi*),¹⁰ Aleppo nondimeno svolgeva un ruolo chiave grazie alla sua posizione strategica all'incrocio di una complessa rete di vie commerciali regionali e internazionali che permetteva di collegare tra loro i principali centri e questi a loro volta con il Cairo, la Penisola Araba (Mecca e Medina), l'Iraq (Baghdad e Basra) e l'Anatolia fino a Istanbul e di qui in Europa. Per questo, la città attraeva e ospitava un flusso regolare di viaggiatori dalle diverse motivazioni e destinazioni di viaggio.

L'attivo business dei servizi di viaggio per pellegrini, viaggiatori e mercanti era gestito e condotto da un folto numero di cammellieri e agenti di viaggio provenienti dal mondo rurale e di diversa origine etnica (Curdi, Turcomanni, Beduini arabi) parzialmente sedentarizzati in quartieri di recente e improvvisata formazione fuori le mura della città (Marcus 1989, 55).¹¹ Nei documenti, questo tratto essenziale dell'economia urbana e della sua estesa provincia, è chiaramente riflesso nei riferimenti a comunità tribali, di probabile nuova immigrazione, il cui sostentamento dipendeva non solo dalla locazione di bestie da soma ma anche dalla vendita di carne e di ciò che Masters definisce «secondary animal products such as wool, cheese, and rugs» (1988, 117).¹² È grazie al traffico carovani-ero e alle attività ad

⁹ Si vedano ad esempio Salati 1995, 1999, 2007.

¹⁰ Rispetto alla 'via egiziana', la 'via siriana' fu oggetto di cure particolari da parte degli ottomani. Già all'indomani della conquista Selim I (r. 1512-20) ordinò la costruzione di tre fortezze per garantire la sicurezza e l'approvvigionamento dei pellegrini. La rete di fortini e punti di sosta protetti da guarnigioni permanenti si ampliò nelle epoche successive fino a raggiungere nel XVIII secolo il ragguardevole numero di venticinque. Ciò non fu sufficiente, tuttavia, a rimuovere il costante pericolo di incursioni e razzie beduine (Barbir 1980; Establet, Pascual 1998; Petersen 1989, 2012).

¹¹ Un dato già segnalato da Masters: «La maggior parte dell'attività generata dalle carovane - locazione di animali, fabbricazione e messa in commercio di tende, selle ecc. - era condotta lungo il margine orientale della città [...]. Turcomanni e beduini, in particolare, sembra avessero il monopolio sulla locazione ai viaggiatori di bestie da soma, con i turcomanni che controllavano il commercio a nord e i beduini che dominavano a est e a sud» (1988, 111; traduzione dell'Autore). Faroqhi, riferendosi all'Anatolia, rileva che «alcuni cammellieri che offrivano i loro servizi a mercanti erano membri di organizzazioni tribali, vivevano in villaggi vicini ed erano nel processo di sedentarizzazione» (1982, 525-6; traduzione dell'Autore).

¹² D'altro canto egli si affrettò ad osservare giustamente che «the Bedouins were not only the mainstay of the caravan trade, they were also the chief threat to its security» (Masters 1988, 114). Faroqhi traccia un quadro simile per l'Anatolia, dove «nomads, semi-nomads, or villagers who had camels for hire usually established themselves in

esso associate che una larga parte delle comunità nomadi e semi-nomadi della Siria ottomana fu gradualmente urbanizzata.

Anche se questo settore così vitale non sembra aver sviluppato figure imprenditoriali di spessore,¹³ tuttavia esso richiedeva una complessa e ben roduta struttura organizzativa che coinvolgeva varie tipologie di personale, per così dire, specializzato. Dai documenti presentati si ha la conferma di quanto emerso in vari importanti studi (Faroqhi 1982; Rafeq 1987; Masters 1988; Marcus 1989; Establet, Pascual 1998; Grehan 2007) e che possiamo così riassumere:

Per intraprendere un viaggio con un certo grado di comfort, pellegrini, mercanti e altri si affidavano ad organizzatori (*muqawwimūn*) che disponevano dell'autorità e delle conoscenze necessarie per reclutare un folto personale di cammellieri (*jammāla*), facchini e uomini di fatica (*akkām*), cuccinieri, portatori d'acqua, installatori di tende - ognuna di queste categorie organizzate in corporazione¹⁴ - oltre naturalmente a procurare il numero di cammelli richiesto. La stesura di un vero e proprio contratto, orale o registrato in forma scritta presso il tribunale, fissava i termini di pagamento, le scadenze, il risarcimento per eventuali danni, sulla base di una consolidata pratica (*al-'āda al-jāriya* o *al-qadīma*) sostanzialmente invariata nell'arco di tempo circoscritto dai documenti presi in esame.

4 Sui mezzi di trasporto e costi

Una prima osservazione da fare è che nei documenti non vi è alcuna menzione di carri o trasporto su ruote. Pur se non scomparsa del tutto, la ruota - e di conseguenza la strada lastricata - aveva da secoli lasciato il posto, in particolare per le lunghe distanze, alla pista battuta, al sentiero, alle mulattiere, dando il via ad una conseguente riconfigurazione, anche in termini socioeconomici, del territorio e dello spazio.¹⁵ Anche in epoca ottomana dunque lo spazio «si caratterizza per l'onnipresenza di carovane di cammelli» (Braudel 1979, 3, 409). Non sorprende allora che nei documenti il cammello, ancor più

the vicinity of the business centers known as *khan*, where negotiation leading to the formation of a caravan were usually conducted» (1982, 525).

13 Un fatto rilevato da Faroqhi che parla di un settore «wide open to small operators» (1982, 531) dove «camel drivers and wagoners were modest townsmen or even villagers» (1982, 534) per i quali tale attività non era una occupazione a tempo pieno ma solo periodica e stagionale.

14 Si veda in particolare Rafeq 1987, 131-2 ss.

15 Si vedano Bulliet 1975; Grehan 2007, 38-40. Faroqhi (1982) osserva che, a differenza di Siria ed Egitto, in Anatolia il trasporto su ruota non scomparve mai e che si poteva arrivare da Erzurum a Damasco con un mezzo di trasporto su ruote.

del cavallo (*hiṣān, ikdīsh*),¹⁶ dell'asino (*himār*) e del mulo (*baghl*),¹⁷ sia l'indiscusso, quasi assoluto protagonista per il trasporto di uomini e merci. Va da sé che l'allevamento, il commercio e il rifornimento di cammelli fossero al centro di una considerevole attività economica che coinvolgeva città e aree rurali, sedentari e beduini, funzionari governativi, mediatori e comunità tribali.

In merito ai costi del trasporto e del noleggio di animali, il numero limitato dei documenti presentati, pur aggiungendo informazioni utili, impedisce di trarre conclusioni definitive. D'altro canto anche studi più esaustivi e rilevanti (Rafeq 1987; Masters 1988; Faroqhi 1994; Establet, Pascual 1998; Grehan 2007) sottolineano che, data la natura frammentaria e disomogenea delle prove documentarie, risulta difficile arrivare a cifre e dati consolidati e sistematici: la situazione rilevata da Faroqhi sulla non esistenza di «comprehensive accounts permitting the evaluation of camel and wagon transportation in terms of relative cost» (1982, 524), è sostanzialmente immutata.

Il risultato, ad esempio, è che mentre Masters (1988) parla di un costo relativamente basso per il trasporto e di un sistema di prezzi tutto sommato stabile nel corso del Seicento,¹⁸ Establet e Pascual (1998) sottolineano a più riprese che, almeno per quanto riguarda il viaggio di andata e ritorno Damasco-Mecca, i costi erano elevati e i pellegrini meno abbienti, la grande maggioranza, dovevano ingegnarsi con operazioni di piccolo commercio per arrivare a destinazione.¹⁹ Secondo Faroqhi (1994) nel corso del tardo Cinquecento e per gran parte del Seicento, i pellegrini pagavano tra i cinquanta e i cinquantacinque pezzi d'oro per il viaggio da Damasco a Mecca. Alla metà del Settecento, per lo stesso viaggio, il costo del noleggio di animali da trasporto, l'approvvigionamento di acqua e viveri, come da contratto con un 'agente di viaggio' (*muqawwim*), variava tra le settantacinque e le centoventi piastre, mentre il costo complessivo del viaggio, alla metà del XVIII secolo, arrivava a duecento pia-

¹⁶ Il primo termine indica il cavallo di razza, mentre il secondo quello 'ibrido', da lesse e o trasporto (Establet, Pascual 1998, 103).

¹⁷ Sugli animali da trasporto si vedano Establet, Pascual 1998, 102-3 ss.; Grehan 2007, 41-3.

¹⁸ Si vedano le tabelle da lui redatte (Masters 1988, 113-14) con i costi di noleggio di bestie da soma per il trasporto da Aleppo a varie destinazioni nel Vicino Oriente tra il Seicento e la prima metà del Settecento. Egli aggiunge, tuttavia, che per le merci voluminose ma di poco valore, come cereali, i costi di trasporto erano proibitivi.

¹⁹ Citando il celebre viaggiatore e archeologo svizzero Burkhardt (1784-1817), Establet, Pascual (1998, 141, 143-5) annotano che quasi tutti i pellegrini arrivavano a Mecca con qualche mercanzia del loro paese di provenienza nella speranza di venderla e ridurre così le spese di viaggio. Allo stesso scopo servivano i tessuti, le spezie e altro per affrontare la via del ritorno. Si deve tenere presente anche il fatto che lungo le varie tappe della carovana era possibile acquistare derrate alimentari fornite dalle comunità dei villaggi circostanti (si veda, tra gli altri, Establet, Pascual 1998, 108 ss.)

stre (Rafeq 1987). Una cifra elevata, se rapportata al costo di una casa di medie dimensioni a Damasco nello stesso periodo, circa centosettantacinque piastre, sempre secondo Rafeq. Infine, Grehan osserva che «la prima caratteristica del trasporto nel diciottesimo secolo [...] è il suo costo elevato. La mobilità era un lusso» (2007, 40; traduzione dell'Autore).

L'instabilità dei prezzi, soggetti a numerosi fattori e condizioni, e la loro variabilità a seconda del periodo e del luogo, unitamente al confuso sistema monetario ottomano, rendono ancora più difficile il compito di valutare i dati.²⁰

Questo insieme un po' confuso di cifre relativamente ai prezzi di viaggio e di noleggio di animali rivela tuttavia - e i documenti ne danno chiara conferma - che a partire dalla seconda metà del Seicento l'uso delle monete d'oro cede lentamente ma gradualmente il passo alle monete d'argento nelle transazioni (Establet, Pascual 1998, 56).

20 A titolo di esempio, Faroqi (1982, 528-9), citando fonti dell'amministrazione centrale ottomana, informa che nella seconda metà del Seicento il prezzo di un cammello variava tra i cinquanta e i cinquantacinque *ghirsh* (piastre) e che il costo mensile di un cammello era compreso tra i ventiquattro e i trentotto *ghirsh*, a seconda della fluttuazione nel valore del *ghirsh*.

REGISTRI DEI TRIBUNALI DI ALEPPO (RTA). I documenti

1) RTA, vol. 2, 471

Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad, il rappresentante legale del Vanto dei suoi simili, Shāh ‘Alī bey b. Shāh Qulī bey²¹ – certificato il suo mandato in merito a quanto segue – ha riconosciuto al portatore di questo documento scritto, ḥājj Yaghmūr b. ‘Alī al-Ruhāwī²² il conducente dei suoi ventuno cammelli – i quali si trovano in suo possesso e a sua disposizione e sono adatti e idonei al trasporto e al viaggio²³ – che secondo la pratica stabilita e comune tra coloro che esercitano tale professione ognuno dei suoi cammelli porterà un carico (*himl*)²⁴ e lo trasporterà dalla città di Aleppo la ben protetta a Damasco di Siria, e da lì a Medina la luminosa, e da lì alla nobile Mecca, al monte ‘Arafāt e a Minā, accompagnandosi alla carovana siriana del pellegrinaggio di quest’anno.²⁵ Tale accordo riguarda solo il viaggio di andata e non il ritorno, per un compenso di quattrocentoventi *dīnār* in oro.²⁶

Il secondo contraente ha riconosciuto secondo le modalità legali tale accordo nei confronti del primo contraente, il suddetto Shāh ‘Alī. Si tratta di un contratto valido e legale.

Il giudice legalmente in carica e operativo a quel tempo ha emesso una sentenza in favore della validità del contratto, conformemen-

21 Il titolo onorifico *bīk/bek/bey* era riservato in origine a membri della classe militare, ma divenne col tempo trasmissibile anche ai discendenti.

22 Cioè originario della cittadina di Ruhā, nome arabo di Urfa, nel sud-est dell’Anatolia, a ridosso dell’attuale confine turco-siriano. Essa faceva parte del network socio-economico di Aleppo, a volte inclusa nella sua provincia (Faroqhi 1995).

23 Faroqhi solleva un’importante questione quando rileva che «the camel offered for hire [...] belonged to the tribal community of which the camel drivers were members, but there is no way of knowing whether the animals were the personal property of the drivers or by what arrangements the latter were entrusted with the camels owned by their relatives and fellow tribesmen» (1982, 526).

24 Intorno alla metà del Cinquecento un *himl* equivaleva a circa duecento kg (Faroqhi 1982, 531).

25 Il cosiddetto ‘stazionamento’ (*wuqūf*) nella vallata di ‘Arafat nel nono giorno del mese di Dhū l-Ḥijja è uno dei pilastri delle cerimonie del pellegrinaggio. A Minā, a pochi chilometri a est di Mecca, i pellegrini si accampano durante gli ultimi giorni del periodo rituale.

26 Con *dīnār*, l’antico e venerato conio d’oro islamico, si intende probabilmente il *sulṭānī*, la moneta d’oro ottomana modellata sul ducato/zecchino veneziano che entrò in uso durante il regno di Mehmed II (r. 1451-81). Gradualmente, nel corso del Seicento, il termine *sharīfī* – a sua volta derivato dal mamelucco *ashrafī* – rimpiazzò il *sulṭānī* come nuovo nome della moneta d’oro, perlomeno nella parte centrale e orientale dell’Impero. Sul complicato e alquanto confuso sistema monetario ottomano si vedano Pamuk 2000; Johnson 1999 (in particolare 121-30).

te alla Legge.²⁷ Ciò è stato effettuato e registrato il giorno ventuno del mese benedetto di Ramaḍān, uno dei mesi dell'anno 972 [22 aprile 1565].

أقر إبراهيم بن أحمد بالوكالة من قبل فخر الأمائل شاه علي بك بن شاه قلي بك الثابت وكتابه عنه فيما يأتي ذكره فيه شرعاً لحامل هذا الكتاب الحاج يغمور بن علي الزهاوي الجمال على جماله التي بيده و تحت تصرفه المعدة للشيل و السير و قدرها واحد و عشرون جملاً على أن يحمل كل جمل منها على العادة الجارية بين المعلمين من مدينة حلب المحمية إلى الشام ثم إلى المدينة المنورة ثم إلى مكة المكرمة ثم إلى جبل عرفات ثم إلى منى صحبة الركب الشامي في سنة تأريخه إلى الحجاز ذهباً لا مجيناً بأجرة قدرها أربعمانه ديناراً و عشرون ديناراً ذهباً اعترف المعاهد الثاني للمعاهد الأول شاه علي المذكور أعلاه اعترافاً شرعياً معاهدة صحيحة شرعية حكم مولانا الحاكم النافذ الحكم يومئذ بصحة هذه المعاهدة حكماً شرعياً جرى ذلك و حرر في اليوم الحادي و العشرين من شهر رمضان المبارك من شهور سنة اثنين و سبعين و تسعمائة

Commento

In questo documento, come nei seguenti, si nota che molti di questi 'operatori di viaggio' (*muqawwimūn*), trasportatori e cammellieri sono designati con il titolo onorifico *ḥājj*, termine che indica la persona che ha compiuto il pellegrinaggio a Mecca, forse più di una volta, eventualmente per procura a favore di qualcun altro tramite un pagamento denominato *badal ḥajj*, un costume tutt'altro che infrequente (Establet, Pascual 1998, 42-3, 46-58).

I documenti connessi direttamente con il pellegrinaggio recano la data del mese di Ramaḍān, il nono mese del calendario islamico. Ciò si raccorda con una tempistica che prevedeva che i vari gruppi di pellegrini si trovassero a Damasco nella prima metà del mese successivo, Shawwāl, quando la carovana avrebbe iniziato il suo viaggio verso Mecca. Secondo Establet e Pascual (1998, 10), svariati gruppi di pellegrini provenienti da Anatolia e Persia arrivavano a Damasco via Aleppo già nel mese di Ramaḍān, ma una carovana detta 'aleppina', riservata ai pellegrini della regione di Aleppo, arrivava verso la metà di Shawwāl. Imperativo per tutti era trovarsi a Muzayrīb, località a sud di Damasco, il giorno prestabilito per la partenza definitiva, il primo giorno di Dhū l-Qa'da, l'undicesimo mese islamico (Establet, Pascual 1998, 11; Salati 2007, 17).

²⁷ Secondo la lista dei giudici ottomani di Aleppo fornita dallo storico della città al-Ghazzī nel suo *Nahr al-dhahab fī ta'rīkh Ḥalab*, il giudice per l'anno del documento risulta essere Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Samsūnī (al-Ghazzī 1999, 1, 236).

2) RTA, vol. 2, 198

Al Consesso della nobile Legge,²⁸

Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd, Nāṣir b. Ḥajjāj, ḥājj Muḥammad b. ḥājj 'Alī, and Muṣṭafā b. ḥājj 'Alī [...], hanno riconosciuto di aver preso e ricevuto da ḥājj Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad il damasceno la somma di trentasei *sultānī* d'oro. In cambio essi porteranno e accompagneranno il più erudito dei dotti studiosi, sua Eccellenza e nostro signore, Zayn al-Dīn *afandī*, già giudice della nobile città di Mecca, dalla città di Üsküdar²⁹ [ad Aleppo], e assicureranno i servizi di carico e scarico dei cammelli (*akāma*) e di guida e provvederanno a fornire gli utensili necessari alla cottura di cibi.³⁰

[La somma suddetta] è parte di quanto concordato come loro compenso, vale a dire sessanta *sultani* d'oro. Il resto di questa somma sarà pagato di volta in volta. Questo è quanto concordato secondo il documento in suo possesso.

Ḥājj [Muḥammad b.] Maḥmūd ha preso sei *sultānī* della suddetta somma, il suddetto Nāṣir ha preso sette *sultānī*, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr tre, Maṣṣūr b. ḥājj Faṭḥ al-Dīn otto, 'Āmir b. 'Abd al-Nabī tre, Aḥmad b. Maṣṣūr quattro, Salāma b. Aḥmad tre, secondo il conteggio (*'alā l-ḥisāba*).

Il latore [del documento] suddetto ha convalidato e confermato quando detto.

L'intera procedura è stata registrata il giorno venticinque del mese di Jumādā I dell'anno 1007 dalla *hijra*. Profetica [/24 dicembre 1598].³¹

أقر في مجلس الشرع الشريف محمد بن محمود و ناصر بن حجاج و الحاج محمد بن الحاج علي و مصطفى بن الحاج علي (...) بأنهم قبضوا و تسلموا من الحاج أبي بكر بن محمد الدمشقي في مقابلة أخذهم و التوجه مع أعلم العلماء المتبحرين حضرة مولانا زين الدين أفندي القاضي بمكة المشرفة سابقاً من مدينة أسكدار في خدمة العكامة و السيادة و الصوبة مبلغاً قدره ستة و ثلاثين سلطانياً ذهباً من أجل ما عين لهم من الأجرة و هو ستين سلطانياً ذهباً و الباقي شيئاً فشيئاً بموجب الحجة التي بيده فالذي قبضه الحاج محمود من ذلك ستة سلطانيات و الذي قبضه ناصر المرقوم سبعة سلطانيات و الذي قبضه محمد بن أبي بكر ثلاثة سلطانيات و الذي قبضه منصور بن الحاج فتح الدين ثمانية سلطانيات و الذي قبضه عامر بن عبد النبي ثلاثة سلطانيات

²⁸ *Majlis al-shar' al-sharīf* è l'usuale denominazione del tribunale della Shari'a di Aleppo. La città contava cinque tribunali: il Gran Tribunale (*al-mahkama al-kubrā*), sede del giudice ḥanafita; Ṣalāḥiyya; Ṣhāfi'iyya; Banqūsā e Jabal Sam'ān (Marino 2000, 44; Marcus 1989, 106-20).

²⁹ Su questo famoso distretto di Istanbul sulla sponda asiatica del Bosforo, noto tra gli europei come Scutari si veda Yerasimos 2000.

³⁰ Con *'akkām*, letteralmente «one who binds the burdens upon the camels that are to bear them» (Lane 1968, 5, 2122, "'-k-m"), si intendeva la persona che di professione si prendeva carico dei bagagli e di condurre i cammelli.

³¹ Nell'anno indicato nel documento il giudice risulta essere un non meglio specificato Muṣṭafā nella lista dello storico al-Ghazzī (1999, 1, 237).

و الذي قبضه أحمد بن منصور أربعة سلطانيات و الذي قبضه سلامة بن أحمد ثلاثة سلطانيات على الحسابة فصدقهم الرافع المذكور على ذلك و على ما جرى وقع التحرير في اليوم الخامس و العشرين من جمادى الأولى لسنة سبع و ألف من الهجرة النبوية

3) RTA, 2, 198

Il capomastro (*muqaddam*) *ḥājj* Abū Bakr b. Maṣṣūr, capomastro dei facchini, cammellieri e cuccinieri i cui nomi sono registrati di seguito, ha preso e ricevuto da nostro Signore Muṣṭafā *afandī* b. Ibrāhīm, già *qassām 'askarī* di Damasco e Aleppo³² il quale agisce da rappresentante legale per conto del più erudito dei dotti studiosi, sua Eccellenza e nostro signore Zayn al-Dīn *afandī*, già giudice nella nobile città di Mecca, la somma di trenta *sulṭānī* d'oro.

Tale somma costituisce il pagamento di dieci persone - essi sono Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd, Nāṣir b. Ḥajjāj, *ḥājj* Muḥammad b. *ḥājj* 'Alī, Muṣṭafā b. *ḥājj* 'Alī [...] - al servizio del suddetto nostro signore [Zayn al-Dīn] dalla città di Aleppo alla città di Üsküdar.

Di questi dieci, due sono cuccinieri, uno è portatore d'acqua, mentre gli altri sono facchini e cammellieri. Ciò è stato fatto secondo la consuetudine e le loro norme. Resta a loro credito nei confronti del suddetto [Zayn al-Dīn] il rimanente della suddetta somma, vale a dire trenta *sulṭānī* d'oro. Essi avranno ciò di volta in volta lungo il percorso.

Essi hanno riconosciuto ciò e, tramite autorizzazione legale, si sono dichiarati mutualmente responsabili e garanti, in danaro e in persona.

Registrato il giorno venticinque del mese di Jumādā I dell'anno 1007 dalla *hijra* profetica [/24 dicembre 1598].

قبض و تسلم المقدم الحاج أبو بكر بن محمد المقدم على من سيأتي ذكرهم فيه من العكام و السفائين و الصوية من مولانا مصطفى أفندي بن إبراهيم القسام العسكري بدمشق الشام و حلب سابقاً الوكيل الشرعي عن قبل أعلم العلماء المتبحرين حضرة مولانا زين الدين أفندي القاضي بمكة المشرفة سابقاً مبلغاً قدره ثلاثين سلطانياً ذهباً والمبلغ المقبوض المذكور هو نصف أجرة عشرة أنفار و هم محمد بن محمود و ناصر بن حجاج و الحاج محمد بن الحاج علي و مصطفى بن الحاج علي (...) لينوجه في خدمة مولانا المشار إليه من مدينة حلب إلي مدينة أسكدار فمنهم صوبان و واحد سقا و الباقي عكام على ما جرت به العادة و استقرت عليها القاعدة و تأخر لهم عند مولانا المشار إليه الباقي و هو ثلاثين سلطانياً ذهباً يأخذها منه في الطريق شيئاً فشيئاً بعد... و اعترفهم بذلك و هم متضامنون و متكافلون في ذلك مالاً و ذمة بالإذن الشرعي ، تحريراً في اليوم الخامس و العشرين من جمادى الأولى لسنة سبع و ألف من الهجرة النبوية

³² La carica alquanto remunerativa di *qassām 'askarī*, il funzionario incaricato di procedere alla divisione delle eredità dei membri della classe militare, era praticamente un monopolio dei funzionari ottomani della città (Masters 1988, 135-6). Letteralmente 'signore, capo', il titolo di *afandī* era riservato agli alti gradi della classe religiosa e ai grandi dignitari (Lewis, Pellat, Schacht 1991a; Bayerle 1997, 44).

Commento

Questi due documenti collegati registrano la presenza di un alto dignitario della gerarchia religiosa, un ex-giudice di Mecca, purtroppo non identificato ma abbastanza importante da giustificare la serie di epiteti laudativi che precedono il suo nome.³³ Il suo viaggio di andata e ritorno ad Aleppo potrebbe essere stata motivato dal desiderio di recarsi nella capitale dell'Impero al fine di riottenere l'incarico o conseguirne un altro analogo altrove, una pratica abituale di cui abbiamo una larga eco anche nelle fonti letterarie (si vedano ad esempio Salati 2007 e al-Khiyārī 1969-80).

4) RTA, vol. 11, 148

Al Consesso della Nobile Legge,

i capomastri *ḥājj* Sharaf b. Nāṣir e *ḥājj* 'Abd al-Qādir b. *ḥājj* Taqī, entrambi cammellieri e facchini ed entrambi di Damasco, hanno insieme riconosciuto di aver ricevuto e preso dal Vanto delle nobili autorità, il più eminente dei gloriosi eccellenti, il possessore di innumerevoli virtù e argomentazioni illuminanti, nostro Signore e maestro, sua Eccellenza 'Abd al-Raḥīm *afandī* famoso come Sha'rāwizāda, il quale si è ritirato dalla carica di giudice di Medina,³⁴ la somma di quarantacinque *ghirsh asadī* che egli diede loro nella città di Damasco e la somma di cinque *dīnār sharīfī* d'oro che egli diede loro in questa città.³⁵

³³ Le fonti consultate non hanno permesso di identificare questo personaggio. Egli non compare neppure nella esaustiva lista di giudici di Mecca in al-Mu'allimī (2000) nel periodo 1582-98. Nell'anno del documento, il 1007/1598-99, il giudice di Mecca è Muṣṭafā b. Muṣṭafā Ibn Bustān (m. +1601-02, fratello del Gran Mufti dell'Impero ottomano Muḥammad Ibn Bustān (m. 1597) (al-Mu'allimī 2000, 214; al-Muḥibbī s.d., 4, 393).

³⁴ Anche se nel documento è il personaggio è chiamato al-Sha'rāwī, crediamo sia possibile identificarlo con 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Miṣrī al-Sha'rānī, citato dal biografo damasceno al-Muḥibbī (m. 1699) nel suo repertorio biografico dal titolo *Khulāṣa al-athar*. Nato al Cairo e allievo del famoso mistico 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī (m. 1565), 'Abd al-Raḥīm fu giudice delle «Due Città Sante» (al-Ḥaramān) per poi ritirarsi in una delle *madrasa* imperiali di Istanbul, dove morì nel 1638 (al-Muḥibbī s.d., 2, 410). L'aggiunta al nome di famiglia del suffisso *zāda* (figlio di), di origine persiana ma entrato nell'uso ottomano, indicava l'appartenenza di diritto alle gerarchie sociali più alte.

³⁵ Sembra trattarsi di una precoce attestazione (forse la più antica in un documento dei registri aleppini?) del termine *sharīfī*, pur se in connessione con *dīnār* (Johnson 1999, 129-31). Il *ghirsh riyālī* e il *ghirsh asadī*, le due monete d'argento più usate nel corso del Seicento e il cui valore variava frequentemente, erano modellati rispettivamente sullo spagnolo *real* e sull'olandese *leeuwenthaler*. La moneta d'argento ufficiale dell'Impero ottomano era l'*aqçe*, noto come '*uthmānī* nelle province arabe dell'Impero ottomano. Ad Aleppo, all'inizio del Seicento, il *riyālī* era equivalente a 110 '*uthmānī*, l'*asadī* a 99 '*uthmānī* (RTA, 10, 582).

Il totale, conteggiando in *ghirsh*, è allora di cinquantaquattro *ghirsh* meno un quarto. Tale somma è da distribuire tra loro due e altre cinque persone che come loro appartengono alla corporazione dei facchini. Secondo l'antica e usuale pratica, tutti loro dovranno fornirgli i servizi collegati al facchinaggio, il trasporto di acqua, la preparazione di cibi, l'uso di pentole e padelle e la biancheria da letto (*firāsha*) da Damasco a Costantinopoli, la protetta Sede del Sultanato.

Tramite autorizzazione legale, essi hanno riconosciuto di essere mutualmente responsabili e garanti di quanto sopra, in danaro e in persona.³⁶

Tale riconoscimento è stato ritenuto veritiero e certificato da *mullā* 'Abd al-Mu'min b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān per conto di sua Eccellenza ['Abd al-Raḥīm] *afandi* nella sua funzione di rappresentante legale, in presenza e oralmente.

Registrato il giorno ventinove del mese di Rabī' I dell'anno 1027 [/26 marzo 1618].³⁷

أقر بمجلس الشرع الشريف المقدم الحاج شرف بن ناصر الشامي العكام و المقدم الحاج عبد القادر بن الحاج تقي الشامي العكام بأنهما قد قبضا و تسلما من فخر الموالي الكرام صدر الأعلي الفخام ذو الفضائل الكثيرة و البراهين المنيرة مولانا و سيدنا حضرة عبد الرحيم أفندي الشهير بشعراوي زاده المنفصل عن قضاء المدينة المنورة ، و هو دفع إليهما في دمشق الشام مبلغا قدره خمسة و أربعين غروشا أسديا و دفع إليهما في هذه المدينة خمسة دنانير ذهبية شريفية فالجملة بحساب الغروش أربعة و خمسون غروشا إلا ربع غرش ليوزعها عليهما و على خمسة أنفار غيرهما عكامة من جماعتهما و يقوموا جميعاً في خدمته من الأمور المتعلقة بالعكامة و السقاوية و الطباخة و الصوبية و الفرائشة على العادة القديمة من دمشق إلى دار السلطنة قسطنطينية المحمية و تضامنا و تكافلا في ذلك مالا و ذمة بالأمر الشرعي إقراراً مصدقاً من منلا عبد المؤمن بن عبد الرحمان من جانب حضرة الأفندي المشار إليه وكالة عنه في ذلك تصديقاً و جاهاً و شفاهاً تحريراً في اليوم التاسع و العشرين من ربيع الأول لسنة سبع و عشرين و ألف

Commento

Anche in questo caso, come nei due documenti precedenti, troviamo un personaggio di fama – questa volta quasi certamente identificato – diretto a Istanbul/Costantinopoli. A giudicare dalla sua biografia, come ricordato in nota, le fatiche del lungo viaggio furono ripagate da un prestigioso impiego nella capitale ottomana.

³⁶ Abbiamo qui un esempio di *kafāla*, un istituto che, pur ricordando la fideiussione dei sistemi giuridici occidentali, presenta tuttavia due tipologie. La prima prevede che il garante si obblighi a far comparire in tribunale la persona del debitore (*kafāla bi l-nafs* o *dhimma*). La seconda prevede invece che il garante si impegni con il creditore a garantire con i propri mezzi il pagamento del debito, qualora il debitore manchi o non sia in grado di farlo (*kafāla bi l-māl*). A questo proposito si veda Linant de Bellefonds 1997.

³⁷ Nell'anno del documento il giudice risulta essere Nawāl Sa'd al-Dīn (al-Ghazzi 1999, 1, 237).

5) RTA, vol. 15, 346

Il capo-carovana (*kārwan bāshī*)³⁸ Mārdūs figlio di³⁹ Sultān, il cristiano di Julfa, suo fratello Makardīh figlio del suddetto Sultān, Yāghūb figlio di Mārītūs e Mīrū figlio di Awānīs, hanno concluso un contratto con *shaykh* ‘Alī b. Badr il capo-cammeliere (*jammāl bāshī*), ḥājī Muḥammad b. Sabāh e *shaykh* Muḥammad b. Badr.

Il contratto riguarda i loro cammelli, sedici in tutto, abili al trasporto e al viaggio di sola andata dalla città di Aleppo la Grigia alla città di Baghdād, in compagnia della carovana diretta a Baghdād. Ogni cammello trasporterà per loro un carico di centodiciassette *ratl* di Aleppo,⁴⁰ per un compenso di diciotto *ghirsh riyālī* per cammello.

Il contratto è stato legalmente stipulato secondo la procedura concordata. Essi sono anche d'accordo sul fatto che qualsiasi eccedenza rispetto ai suddetti centodiciassette *ratl* sia a sua spese e che quattro cammelli trasportino per loro tende, arnesi di cucina, coperte per la notte..., acqua e orzo, lungo tutto il tragitto. Tale accordo è stato da loro pienamente accettato ed è stato registrato il giorno cinque del mese di Muḥarrām al-Ḥarām dell'anno 1038 [4 settembre 1628].⁴¹

عاقده مارديوس ولد سلتان النصراني الجلفاي كاروان باشي و أخوه مكرديح ولد سلتان المرقوم و ياغوب ولد ماريتوس و ميرو ولد اوانيس للشيخ علي بن بدر جمال باشي و الحاج محمد بن سباح و الشيخ محمد بن بدر علي جمالهم التي قدرها ستة عشر جملاً المعدين للشيل و السير من مدينة حلب الشهباء إلى مدينة بغداد ذهاباً صحبة القفل الموجه إلى بغداد على أن يحملوا لهم على كل جمل مائة و سبعة عشر رطلاً حلبياً بأجرة قدرها عن كل جمل ثمانية عشر عروشاً ريالياً معاقدة شرعية جرت بينهم على الوجه المرضي ثم وقع الاتفاق بينهم على أن مهما زاد على المائة و السبعة عشر رطلاً المزبورة تكون بحسابه و على أن تحمل لهم على كل أربعة جمال خيمة و مطبخية و مفرش و... و الماء و الشعير في الطريق اتفاقاً مقبولاً منهم القبول التام و على ما جرى وقع التحرير في اليوم الخامس من محرم الحرام لسنة ثمان و ثلاثين و ألف

³⁸ Come osservato da Masters (1988, 114), il capo carovana regolava il numero di ore di viaggio e di sosta e agiva da giudice in caso di dispute legali, ad eccezione dei casi penali. Era in genere scelto all'interno del gruppo di mercanti in viaggio in virtù della sua esperienza e delle sue connessioni e legami con le varie comunità presenti lungo il percorso.

³⁹ Nell'onomastica araba, il termine *walad*, in contrasto con *ibn*, era usato per distinguere cristiani ed ebrei dai musulmani. Si veda anche la diversa grafia per i nomi propri seguenti: Sultān per l'islamico Sultān e Yāghūb per l'islamico Ya'qūb.

⁴⁰ Il *ratl* di Aleppo misurava circa 2,28 kg (Hinz 1955, 30) ed era utilizzato principalmente per le merci solide e per l'olio.

⁴¹ Nell'anno del documento il giudice risulta essere (ancora?) Muṣṭafā (al-Ghazzī 1999, 1, 237).

Commento

Abbiamo qui menzione di un contratto di viaggio e trasporto lungo uno degli assi principali del commercio carovaniero via terra che permetteva di collegare l'area mediterranea orientale con la Mesopotamia e da lì verso l'Iran e l'Oriente centroasiatico.

Secondo Masters (1988) i forti cambiamenti climatici stagionali dettavano il ritmo delle partenze da Aleppo verso Baghdād, con i mesi di dicembre, aprile e maggio considerati particolarmente propizi. La data del documento, corrispondente al mese di settembre, non sembra rientrare in questo schema, come anche nel caso del documento seguente, a meno di non ipotizzare la volontà da parte dei contraenti di organizzare per tempo un viaggio che mediamente durava quarantacinque giorni.

I mercanti sono indicati come cristiani di Julfa, cioè Armeni appartenenti a una comunità mercantile nota per il suo importante ruolo nel commercio asiatico, sia regionale che interregionale. Il testo non chiarisce di quale Julfa si tratti. Infatti, il nome potrebbe riferirsi alla Julfa dell'Azerbaigian - poi nota come 'Vecchia' Julfa, oggi parte della Repubblica dell'Azerbaigian e divisa dal fiume Arasse dall'omonima Julfa in territorio iraniano - o alla 'Nuova' Julfa voluta da Shāh 'Abbās (r. 1587-1629) all'inizio del Seicento nei pressi di Işfahān e poi inglobata nella capitale safavide, dove una grossa percentuale della popolazione armena fu costretta a risiedere. In ogni caso, gli Armeni continuarono ad avere un ruolo rilevante nel commercio della seta tra l'Iran e l'Impero ottomano, stabilendo anche una numerosa rappresentanza proprio in Aleppo (Carlswell 1991; Masters 1988, 81-5; Aslanian 2011).

Ricordiamo che alla data del documento, il 1628, l'Iraq e la sua capitale Baghdād erano sotto il controllo safavide grazie alla campagna vittoriosa di Shāh 'Abbās del 1624. È probabile che i mercanti armeni, anche in quanto cristiani, avessero più agio a muoversi tra territori contesi e in stato di guerra più o meno aperta.

6) RTA, vol. 22, 21

Al Consesso della nobile Legge,

[sono comparsi] *ḥājj* Farāj b. Sulaymān di Tadmur,⁴² residente del quartiere Sakhanīn in Aleppo⁴³ e di professione noleggiatore di [animali da trasporto];⁴⁴ 'Alī b. *ḥājj* Aḥmad di Tadmur, residente del suddetto quartiere e anch'egli noleggiatore; Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad di Tadmur; Darwīsh b. Aḥmad di Tadmur, residente del suddetto quartiere e anch'egli noleggiatore.

Tutti costoro hanno riconosciuto di aver preso e ricevuto dal Modello dei serenissimi, il Pilastro dei gloriosi, sua Eccellenza Murād *afandī* di Aleppo⁴⁵ [...] la somma di trecentoquarantadue *ghirsh asadī* a loro data quale compenso per diciannove muli abili al trasporto e al viaggio. Questi muli devono trasportare il denaro della Tesoreria di Aleppo da Aleppo alla Dimora della Pace, la ben protetta città di Baghdād. [Le suddette persone] dovranno fornire il servizio necessario ai muli lungo il tragitto secondo la pratica consueta.

Tale riconoscimento è stato considerato valido e confermato da Yūsuf *beshe* b. Muḥammad, il rappresentante legale per conto del suddetto *daftarī*, in presenza e oralmente.⁴⁶

Ḥājj Ismā'īl b. *ḥājj* Sulaymān di Tadmur, residente dello stesso quartiere, ha garantito per i loro beni e le loro persone riguardo a quanto detto. La garanzia è stata accettata sulla base di un ordine legale.

Registrato il giorno cinque del mese di Rajab dell'anno 1050 [/21 ottobre 1640].⁴⁷

أقر بمجلس الشرع الشريف الحاج فراج بن سليمان التدمري المكارى من محلة السخنين بحلب و علي بن الحاج أحمد التدمري المكارى من المحلة المذكورة و محمد علي بن محمد

⁴² Il nome arabo di Palmira, la celebre località nabatea ai tempi della presenza romana in Oriente. Da sempre luogo di collegamento tra la Mesopotamia e la Siria, in epoca ottomana è descritto, tuttavia, come un «miserable village» (Bosworth 2000, 79).

⁴³ Grafia alternativa di al-Sakhhāna, un'area in gran parte rurale fuori Bāb al-Nayrab. Prendeva nome da al-Sakhna, una tappa carovaniere nel deserto vicino Tadmur/Palmira, da cui proveniva la maggior parte dei suoi abitanti, perlopiù membri di clan beduini. Come nel caso di altri immigrati di umili origini, questi trovavano impieghi di basso rango come «camel drivers and guides in the caravan service, manual laborers in industry and agriculture, and domestics» (Marcus 1989, 55). Si vedano anche al-Qal'ājī 1989, 186; al-Ghazzī 1999, 2, 273).

⁴⁴ Il termine *mukārī* indicava il noleggiatore di cavalcature, in particolare di muli e asini.

⁴⁵ Il *daftarī*, o *daftardār*, era il tesoriere capo di una provincia.

⁴⁶ Il termine *beshe* era usato per ufficiali di grado inferiore (Marino 1997, 150 nn. 50-1).

⁴⁷ Nell'anno del documento il giudice risulta essere Ḥusām 'Abd al-Raḥmān Kāmī (al-Ghazzī 1999, 1, 237).

التدمري و درويش بن أحمد التدمري المكارى من المحلة المذكورة بأنهم قد قبضوا و تسلّموا من قدوة أرباب الإقبال عمدة أصحاب الإجلال حضرة مراد أفندي الدفتري بحلب و هو دفع إليهم مبلغاً قدره ثلاثمائة و اثنين و أربعين غروشاً أسدياً أجرة تسعة عشر بغلاً معتاد للحمل و السير يحمل عليها مال خزانة حلب من حلب إلى دار السلام بغداد المحروسة و يقوموا بالخدمة اللازمة عليها في الطريق على العادة المعتادة إقراراً مصدقاً من يوسف بشه بن محمد وكالة من جانب الدفتري المشار إليه وجاهاً و شفاهاً و كفلهم الحاج إسماعيل بن الحاج سليمان التدمري من المحلة المذكورة بهذا الخصوص نفساً و مالاً كفالة مقبولة بالأمر الشرعي تحريراً في اليوم الخامس من رجب لسنة خمسين و ألف

Commento

Che le entrate della tesoreria di Aleppo fossero recapitate a Baghdād, probabilmente con una scorta militare di cui nel testo non si parla, da un lato corrisponde ad una pratica usuale dell'amministrazione ottomana, vale a dire reperire fondi dovunque fossero e utilizzarli dove necessario; dall'altro, in questo caso, il trasferimento potrebbe essere collegato alla riconquista di Baghdād e dell'Iraq da parte degli ottomani (1638) e alle spese della campagna militare condotta personalmente dal sultano Murād IV, il quale, alla data del documento era deceduto da alcuni mesi.

7) RTA, vol. 22, 117

Al Consesso della nobile Legge,

ḥājj Jum'a b. 'Umar il turkmeno del clan Qara Qoyūnlū,⁴⁸ residente nel quartiere al-Hujjāj nella protetta città di Aleppo,⁴⁹ ha riconosciuto di aver dato a nolo a *darwish* Faḥallāh b. Badrkhān il persiano, a *ḥājj* Rajab b. Sahānqulī il persiano e a *darwish* Amīn b. 'Abdallāh il persiano, tutti i suoi tre cammelli che essi hanno preso a nolo da lui con proprio denaro e per se stessi.

Ognuno di questi tre cammelli dovrà portare sessanta *raṭl* damasceni di mercanzie,⁵⁰ tranne farina, acqua e utensili per cucina e ten-

⁴⁸ Con questo nome si fa riferimento alla nota confederazione turcomanna del 'Montone Nero' che tra la fine del XIV e buona parte del XV secolo dominò un vasto territorio compreso tra l'Anatolia orientale, l'Azerbaigian, l'estremo nord-est della Siria, l'Iraq centro-settentrionale e l'Iran occidentale. Comunità tribali con questo nome continuarono evidentemente a risiedere in quelle zone, eventualmente migrando periodicamente verso la Siria settentrionale, anche dopo la fine della dinastia.

⁴⁹ Anche noto come Jubb Qaramān e al-Bakrajī, al-Hujjāj era un quartiere relativamente povero all'esterno di Bāb al-Ahmar a ovest della Cittadella (Marcus 1989, 280; al-Ghazzī 1999, 2, 267; al-Qal'ajī 1989, 121, 137-8, 155).

⁵⁰ Il *raṭl* di Damasco equivaleva a circa 1,85 kg (Hinz 1955, 30).

da che sarà trasportata insieme alla mercanzia. Ognuno di loro tre monterà uno dei cammelli per andare da Aleppo alla nobile Mecca, quindi al monte 'Arafa, e di nuovo alla nobile Mecca. Il noleggio per ciascun cammello ammonta a quarantadue *ghirsh riyālī*, il che fa un totale di centoventisei *ghirsh riyālī*. Di questa somma [*hājj Jum'a*] ha già in precedenza preso ottanta *ghirsh riyālī* quale anticipo; il resto, vale a dire, trentasei [*sic*] *ghirsh riyālī*, gli sarà pagato da loro nella località di Muzayrīb.⁵¹

Il noleggio e la richiesta di noleggio sono legali e comprendono offerta e accettazione delle due parti conformemente alla Legge. Il riconoscimento è stato considerato valido e confermato dai summenzionati per i quali tale riconoscimento è stato fatto, in presenza e oralmente.

Hājj Aḥmad b. 'Aī il turkmeno del clan *Ūj*⁵² è comparso [al cospetto del giudice] e ha garantito per la responsabilità di *hājj Jum'a* con i suoi beni e con la sua persona a questo riguardo, tramite ordine legale. La garanzia è stata accettata.⁵³

Registrato il giorno ventitré del mese di Ramaḍān dell'anno 1050 [6 gennaio 1641].

أقر بمجلس الشرع الشريف الحاج جمعة بن عمر التركماني من طائفة قره قيونلو الساكنين بمحلة الحجاج بحلب المحروسة بأنه قد أجر من درويش فتح الله بن بدرخان العجمي و الحاج رجب بن سحانقلي العجمي و درويش أمين بن عبد الله العجمي فاستأجروا منه بمالهم لنفسهم جميع جماله الثلاثة ليحمل على كل جمل سبتين رطلاً شامياً من الأمتعة ما عدا الدقية و الماء و المطبخ و الخيمة أنه يحملها مع الأمتعة المزبورة و يركب كل واحد على جمل منها و يذهب من حلب إلى مكة المكرمة ثم إلى جبل عرفات ثم إلى مكة المكرمة المزبورة بأجرة قدرها عن كل جمل اثنين و أربعين غروشاً ريالياً فالجملة ستة و عشرين و مائة غروش ريالياً منها ثمانون غروشاً

51 Oggi nella Siria meridionale, al confine con la Giordania, questa località a circa centoventi chilometri da Damasco, doveva la sua importanza al fatto che la carovana siriana del pellegrinaggio trovava qui la sua composizione definitiva. Subito dopo la conquista ottomana, il sultano Selim I (r. 1512-20) fece costruire un forte che ospitava una grossa guarnigione di truppe imperiali e locali (al-Khiyārī 1969-80, 1, 91-4; *Seyahatnāmesi* 2008, 9, 288-9; Salati 2007, 131, n. 10). Era prassi comune saldare eventuali conti e debiti in una delle varie tappe indicate nelle guide ad uso dei pellegrini (Establat, Pascual 1998, 83).

52 Secondo lo studioso Enver Çakar, all'inizio del periodo ottomano comunità semi-nomadi di Turcomanni del ramo *Ūç-ok* degli *Oğuz*, attestate in Siria già dal XIII secolo, risiedevano in numero consistente nei distretti di Damasco, Aleppo, Hama, Homs e Tripoli e come tali appaiono nei registri catastali. La loro sussistenza si basava sull'allevamento di animali (capre e pecore in particolare), il che spiega le loro migrazioni stagionali (Çakar 2002, 325, 328). Sui turcomanni in Aleppo si veda anche Marcus 1989, 20, 30, 140-1.

53 L'intervento di un garante dell'accordo, anche se appartenente ad altro ramo turkmeno, collima con quanto osservato da Faroqhi riguardo al fatto che «each group of nomad and semi-nomad camel drivers was represented by a group leader who possessed some authority over his men. It was the main responsibility of the leader to make sure that camel drivers against whom a court case was initiated appeared before the *kadi*» (1982, 525-6).

ريالياً مقبوضة بيده منهم سلفاً و تعجلاً و الباقي و هي ستة و ثلاثون غروشاً ريالياً يدفعوها إليه في المزاريب إيجاراً و استئجاراً شرعيين مشتملين على إيجاب و قبول من الطرفين شرعاً إقراراً مصدقاً من المقر لهم المذكورين وجاهاً و شفاهاً و حضر الحاج أحمد بن علي التركماني من طائفة اوج و كفل عن ذمة الحاج جمعة المزبور بهذا الخصوص نفساً و مالا بالأمر الشرعي كفالة مقبولة شرعاً تحريراً في اليوم الثالث و العشرين من رمضان لسنة خمسين و ألف

Commento

A dispetto delle relazioni tese e dei periodi di scontro militare tra le due grandi potenze del mondo islamico del tempo, l'Impero ottomano campione del sunnismo e l'Iran safavide sciita, la presenza di pellegrini e/o mercanti persiani nel cosmopolita mondo mercantile di Aleppo è un dato di fatto. Masters (1988, 74) osserva a ragion veduta che le difficoltà generate dalle tensioni settarie per i mercanti sunniti in terra d'Iran e per quelli persiani sciiti in terra ottomana andarono a tutto vantaggio delle comunità mercantili cristiane, tuttavia, sempre Masters (1988, 80-1) rileva che benché scarsa in termini numerici e di attività commerciale la comunità persiana di Aleppo non fu oggetto di particolari discriminazioni e rimase costante nel tempo.

Le carovane di pellegrini e/o mercanti persiani in arrivo ad Aleppo durante la stagione del *hajj* si univano poi al convoglio aleppino in direzione di Damasco. La presenza di pellegrini persiani a Mecca e Medina era a volte occasione per tumulti e incidenti (Faroqhi 1994; Salati 2001), un fenomeno, tra l'altro, che perdura ai nostri giorni. Così si spiegano, in parte, i temporanei editti che vietavano a costoro di recarsi nelle Città Sante, dei quali il più famoso è quello promulgato da Murad IV nel 1047/1638, un atto probabilmente connesso alla guerra ottomano-safavide che avrebbe portato alla riconquista ottomana di Baghdād e del 'Irāq. Anche se, come si evince indirettamente dal nostro documento, tale divieto non ebbe durature conseguenze, è pur vero che a ciascun pellegrino persiano era chiesto un usuale tributo di entrata nelle Città Sante, oltre ad altre forme di esazioni e richieste di denaro.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Si veda al-'Ayyāshī 2006, 431-3. Lo stesso al-'Ayyāshī (2006) riferisce che lo stesso tributo, circa diciannove *dīnār* in oro nel 1073/1663, era richiesto ai pellegrini provenienti dal Marocco e dall'India, cioè da paesi non soggetti all'autorità ottomana.

8) RTA, vol. 10, 520

Al Consesso della nobile Legge,

al cospetto di nostro signore e maestro, lo studioso di grande erudizione, il più sapiente pilastro [dei dotti], la guida delle illustri autorità, la crema degli eccellenti, il benefattore dei giorni e delle notti, il giudice della legge del [profeta] Muḥammad, il servitore del tappeto di preghiera di Muḥammad, l'abolitore delle odiose e ripugnanti innovazioni, il protettore della comunità musulmana, il giudice in carica nella città di Aleppo.⁵⁵

È comparso il vanto dei perfetti insegnanti e degli eccellenti studiosi, nostro signore Yāsīn *afandī* figlio del defunto *mullā* Maḥmūd, il segretario dell'ufficio della contabilità (*muḥāsaba*) in Aleppo.⁵⁶ Davanti al giudice egli ha dichiarato di aver deciso di compiere in questo anno benedetto il pellegrinaggio alla sacra Casa di Dio e di visitare la tomba del Prescelto, il signore dell'umanità - possa Dio pregare la migliore delle preghiere per lui e di concedergli la salvezza più completa.

Egli ha fatto in modo che suo fratello *sīdī* Bakr *jalabī*⁵⁷ prenda il suo posto nell'esecuzione dei compiti connessi con il segretariato dell'ufficio della contabilità e nell'esecuzione delle mansioni a lui assegnate, vale a dire la supervisione del *waqf* a favore dell'ospedale fondato dal defunto Arghūn al-Kāmil,⁵⁸ il segretariato del *waqf* del defunto al-Nishānjī⁵⁹ e la recitazione di preghiere per il *waqf* della moschea 'Adliyya.⁶⁰

Egli ha richiesto al giudice l'autorizzazione per partire e l'autorizzazione per suo fratello affinché lo sostituisca e si occupi degli affari del segretariato dell'ufficio della contabilità e delle altre suddette mansioni a lui assegnate e di altro.

Il suddetto giudice ha dato loro l'autorizzazione riguardo a quanto detto. Tale autorizzazione è stata pienamente accettata da entrambi e di buon grado.

⁵⁵ Nell'anno del documento il giudice risulta essere 'Abd al-Bāqī (al-Ghazzī 1999, 1, 238).

⁵⁶ Nell'uso ottomano, il termine *muḥāsaba* si riferisce al dipartimento della contabilità finanziaria con a capo il *daftardār* (Findley 1993a).

⁵⁷ Sia *sīdī* che *jalabī* (grafia araba per il turco *çelebi*) erano titoli onorifici di personaggi di medio rango.

⁵⁸ Fondato da un governatore mamelucco nel 1354, a poca distanza da Bāb Qinnasrīn, il Bīmāristān Arghūn al-Kāmilī era uno dei due ospedali di Aleppo. L'altro era il Nūrī (al-Ghazzī 1999, 2, 82-3; al-Qal'ajī 1989, 98).

⁵⁹ Con il nome al-Nishānjī è noto un governatore di Aleppo nel tardo XVI secolo, poi nominato vizir nel 1580. Egli finanziò la costruzione di numerosi *khān* e botteghe che poi convertì in *waqf* a favore di scuole e moschee (Watenpauh 2004, 114-15).

⁶⁰ Costruita intorno alla metà del Cinquecento dal governatore ottomano Muḥammad Pasha Dukākīn nell'area di Sāḥa Bizza, la moschea doveva il suo nome alla vicinanza con il Gran Tribunale, in arabo *Dār al-Adl* (al-Ghazzī 1999, 2, 89-92).

Quanto avvenuto è stato scritto e registrato su richiesta il giorno venti del benedetto mese di Ramaḍān dell'anno 1065 [/24 luglio 1655]

لما حضر بمجلس الشرع الشريف لدى مولانا و سيدنا العالم العلامة العمدة الفهامة عمدة
الموالي الكرام زبدة الاعالي الفخام حسنة الليالي و الأيام حاكم الشريعة المحمدية خادم السجادة
الأحمدية ماحي البدع الردية حامى الملة الإسلامية المولى المولى بمدينة حلب (...) فخر
المدرسين و الفضلاء الكاملين مولانا ياسين أفندي بن المرحوم مثلاً محمود كاتب المحاسبة
بحلب و قرر لدى المولى بأنه في هذه السنة المباركة قد عزم على الحج الى بيت الله الحرام و
زيارة ضريح المصطفى سيد الأنام ، عليه من الله أفضل الصلاة و أتم السلام ، و أنه قد أقام
مكانه أخاه سيدي بكر جليبي في رؤية أمور كتابة المحاسبة الى حين عوده و في رؤية أمور
وظائفه و هي أمور النظارة على وقف مارستان المرحوم ارغون الكامل و الكتابة بوقف المرحوم
النشانجي و الدعاجية بوقف العادلية و التمس من الحاكم الإذن بالذهاب و الإذن لأخيه بالقيام
مقامه في رؤية أمور كتابة المحاسبة و رؤية أمور وظائفه المرفومة و غيرها فأذن لهما المولى
المومى اليه بذلك كله ، إنذا مرضياً مقبولاً منهما قبولاً تاماً ، و كتب ما وقع و حرر بالطلب في
اليوم العاشرين من شهر رمضان المبارك لسنة خمس و ستين و ألف

Commento

Anche se questo documento non presenta alcun tipo di accordo di viaggio e trasporto, si è deciso di inserirlo in questa selezione in quanto spiega le modalità di autorizzazione al pellegrinaggio per i funzionari dell'amministrazione ottomana. In questo caso, tale permesso viene concesso dal giudice sciaraitico in quanto competente, come stabilito dalla Legge, nelle questioni riguardanti la gestione e la nomina del personale addetto all'amministrazione dei *waqf* pubblici.

9) RTA, vol. 27, 280

Al Consesso della nobile Legge,

ḥājj Yaḥyā b. Barakāt al-Sakhkhīnī, posto di fronte a *ḥājj* 'Abdal-lāh b. 'Aṭā' Allāh al-'Alī, ha iniziato un'azione legale dicendo nella sua dichiarazione che quattro anni prima il suddetto convenuto aveva noleggiato da lui due cammelli [per il viaggio] di andata e ritorno dalla nobile Mecca - che Dio la esalti - al santuario del nostro signore 'Alī⁶¹ - che Dio sia soddisfatto di lui e di tutti i Compagni⁶² - per una somma di trentotto *sharīfī* d'oro. Per conto del convenuto e agen-

⁶¹ Da intendersi il santuario di 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, il cugino e genero del Profeta, nella città di Najaf in 'Irāq, rientrata in possesso ottomano dopo la guerra ottomano-safavide del 1638.

⁶² Tipica formula sunnita di rispetto nei confronti dei Compagni (*Ṣaḥāba*) del Profeta.

do su suo ordine, egli diede alla guida altre tre monete d'oro per le spese. Di questo ammontare il suddetto convenuto gli diede ventitré monete d'oro cosicché diciotto monete d'oro rimangono ancora a suo [dell'attore] credito.

[L'attore] ha quindi richiesto che il convenuto fosse interrogato e desse una risposta. Interrogato a proposito della veridicità di quest'affermazione, [il convenuto] ha replicato e detto che egli prese a nolo dall'attore i due cammelli succitati per una somma di ventidue *sharīfī* d'oro e non di più. Ha quindi negato tutto il resto tranne questo.

All'attore è stato richiesto di produrre una chiara prova a sostegno della sua rivendicazione ma non essendo in grado di farlo ha allora chiesto al suddetto convenuto di prestare giuramento. [Il convenuto] ha quindi prestato giuramento secondo la Legge e ha giurato in nome di Dio, il Clemente e Misericordioso, di non aver preso a nolo i due cammelli suddetti per una somma di trentadue [sic] monete d'oro, di non avergli ordinato di pagare alcunché per suo conto e che la tariffa ammontava a ventidue monete d'oro e non di più.

Quanto avvenuto è stato scritto e registrato su richiesta il giorno ventinove del mese di Rabī' I dell'anno 1070 [14 dicembre 1659].⁶³

ادعى بمجلس الشرع الشريف الحاج يحيى بن بركات الشخيني بمواجهة الحاج عبد الله بن عطاء الله العالي قانلاً في دعواه أن المدعى عليه المزبور من مدة تزيد على أربع سنين (ماضية) استأجر منه جملين من مكة المشرفة ، شرفها الله ، إلى مشهد سيدنا علي ، رضي الله عنه و عن الصحابة أجمعين ، إياباً بأجرة قدرها ثمانية و ثلاثين ذهباً شريفاً (...) و دفع عنه بأمره للدليل خرجاً ثلاثة أخرى من الذهب المسطور و أن المدعى عليه المسطور دفع له من ذلك ثلاثة و عشرين ذهباً و بقي له عليه ثمانية عشر ذهباً و سئل سؤاله و رد الجواب عن ذلك فسدل المدعى عليه المزبور عن حقيقة هذه الدعوى فأجاب أنه استأجر من المدعى الجملين المذكورين باثني و عشرين (ذهباً) شريفاً و لا غير و أنكر ما عدا ذلك ، ثم لما طلب من المدعي بينة تشهد له بطبق دعواه و أظهر العجز عنها و التمس يمين المدعى عليه المزبور و حلف بالله العظيم الرحمن الرحيم على أنه لم استأجر الجملين المرقومين بثمانية و ثلاثين ذهباً و لم يأمره بدفع شيئاً عنه بل أن الأجرة اثنان و عشرين ذهباً لا غير اليمين الشرعي ، و كتب ما وقع و حرر بالطلب في اليوم التاسع و العشرين من ربيع الأول لسنة سبعين و ألف

Commento

Non è dato di sapere con certezza se il viaggiatore sia sciita o meno, come potrebbe suggerire la sua destinazione - il santuario di 'Alī a Najaf. Da tener presente, comunque, che la devozione nei suoi confronti coinvolgeva, con gradi diversi di intensità, tutto il mondo islamico.

Nella sua procedura il documento segue fedelmente i dettami della Shari'a che prevedono che l'attore, non riuscendo a presentare una

⁶³ Nell'anno del documento il giudice risulta essere Khayr al-Dīn Muṣṭafā (al-Ghazī 1999, 1, 238).

prova evidente (*bayyina*), cioè la testimonianza di almeno due musulmani giusti (*ʿadl*), sia costretto a chiedere il giuramento del convenuto. Tale giuramento, se pronunciato, fa volgere il procedimento in favore di quest'ultimo.

10) RTA, vol. 45, 225

Il Consesso della nobile Legge è stato riunito nel *Dīwān* della ben protetta città di Aleppo,⁶⁴ alla presenza dell'onorevole Visir,⁶⁵ l'illustrissimo consulente (*al-mushīr al-mufakkkham*),⁶⁶ il coordinatore del mondo, il prudente amministratore degli affari dei popoli grazie al suo penetrante ragionamento, il realizzatore delle importanti questioni dell'umanità grazie al suo corretto giudizio, l'architetto dell'edificio della fortuna e della prosperità, l'edificatore dei pilastri della felicità e della gloria, sua Eccellenza, il consideratissimo Visir e governatore della provincia di Aleppo in carica *ḥājī* 'Alī Pasha,⁶⁷

al Consesso della nobile Legge così riunito e davanti a nostro signore e autorità, il modello di paragone dei gloriosi studiosi e insegnanti, il giudice [di Aleppo],⁶⁸ il cammelliere di nome *ḥājī* Ibrāhīm b. *ḥājī* Rustam ha iniziato un'azione legale nei confronti dei due fratelli 'Abd al-Nabī e Muḥammad figli di Muḥammad Husayn; i due fratelli Muḥammad Mahdī e Muḥammad Hādī figli di Sa'īd; Sādiq b. Faṭḥī; 'Alī Akbar b. Muḥammad, e *shaykh* 'Alī b. Majnūn, tutti persiani. Nella sua dichiarazione egli ha detto:

64 Con *Dīwān* (Consiglio) è da intendersi qui l'organo amministrativo presieduto dal governatore della città, che, in riunione periodiche, esaminava e prendeva decisioni su questioni di ordine locale e provinciale, quali «insecurity on the countryside, food supply to the city, fiscal and budgetary problems, local appointments and popular unrest and complaints» (Marcus 1989, 82). Oltre al governatore/Pasha, ne facevano parte il *qāḍī*, il *mufti*, il *naqīb al-ashraf*, il comandante dei giannizzeri. In virtù del fatto che i governatori erano considerati dei giudici amministrativi indipendenti dal sistema dei tribunali della Shari'a, essi avevano la facoltà di «try offenders who violated public order and security [...] Theft, assault, fraud, violation of public morals, cursing, and disputes over inheritance, debts and property rights all reached the governor's court. Some individuals who lost in the shari'a court took their cases to the governors» (Marcus 1989, 105, 107-8).

65 Nell'uso ottomano il termine *dustūr*, 'persona di autorità', era impiegato nella frase *Dustūr-i mūkerrem* quale titolo onorifico del Gran Visir (Lewis, Pellat, Schacht 1991a, 658; Bayerle 1997, 51).

66 In Bayerle 1997, 58, l'espressione è resa con «field-marshal».

67 Probabilmente il Moralī 'Alī Pasha citato in al-Ṭabbākh (1988, 3, 252).

68 Nell'anno del documento il giudice risulta essere Manṣūr Muṣṭafā (al-Ghazzi 1999, 1, 239).

A mio credito e a carico di ‘Abd al-Nabī e di suo fratello Muḥammad, di Muḥammad Maḥdī e di suo fratello Muḥammad Hādī, di Ṣādiq – tutti menzionati sopra – di Zayn al-‘Ābidīn b. Muḥammad, il quale è assente dal tribunale, e del defunto Safar il persiano, vi è una somma di centoundici pezzi d’oro.

Di questa somma, settantadue pezzi d’oro erano un prestito che essi hanno preso e ricevuto da me l’anno scorso lungo la strada del nobile pellegrinaggio, nel luogo di sosta di Dār al-Ḥamrā’,⁶⁹ mentre trentasette pezzi d’oro sono la tariffa per i miei cammelli che il suddetto Safar montava lungo la strada del ḥajj.

Essi hanno riconosciuto tutto questo in merito alla somma suddetta nel luogo di sosta di al-Dār al-Ḥamrā’, hanno garantito l’uno per l’altro e hanno dichiarato di essere tutti insieme responsabili in termini di garanzia finanziaria e obbligazione personale. Riguardo a questo mi hanno dato un documento scritto in mio possesso. Inoltre, il suddetto ‘Alī Akbar e *shaykh* ‘Alī hanno dichiarato di essere legalmente responsabili verso di me, finanziariamente e personalmente, per il suddetto gruppo di persone riguardo alla suddetta somma di centoundici pezzi d’oro. Ho accettato la garanzia e ora richiedo la suddetta somma dai convenuti sopra menzionati e chiedo che vengano interrogati.

I convenuti sono stati interrogati a proposito della veridicità della sua pretesa ed essi hanno risposto negando quanto da lui sostenuto.

All’attore è stato quindi richiesto di produrre una giusta prova che certificasse la conformità della sua pretesa come da lui sostenuta. Egli ha fatto comparire a testimoniare a questo proposito i due uomini di nome ḥājj Ramaḍān b. ḥājj Muḥammad del quartiere Juqūrjuq,⁷⁰ e ḥājj Muḥammad b. Rustam del quartiere Tātārlar. La loro testimonianza è stata accettata legalmente.⁷¹

A seguito della richiesta legale di testimoniare e posti di fronte ai suddetti due fratelli ‘Abd al-Nabī e Muḥammad figli di Muḥammad Ḥusayn, ai due fratelli Muḥammad Maḥdī e Muḥammad Hādī figli di Sa’īd, a Ṣādiq b. Fathī, a ‘Alī Akbar b. Muḥammad e a *shaykh* ‘Alī b.

⁶⁹ Una delle tappe di sosta lungo il percorso del ḥajj siriano tra Medina e Tabūk. Il luogo è anche chiamato al-‘Uqayri’, Mafārīsh al-Ruzz, Shaqq al-‘Ajūz, al-Zallāqāt e Qawāyir al-Tīn. Queste numerose denominazioni si riferiscono a diversi punti della stessa area. (al-Khiyārī 1969-80, 1, 46; Blackburn 2005, 18, nota 56; Salati 2007, 141 nota 32). Nel corso del Settecento vi furono costruiti un forte con mura e una cisterna d’acqua. Da notare l’esistenza di due luoghi con lo stesso nome lungo il percorso del ḥajj egiziano (Blackburn 2005, 238-9, nota 659, 256, nota 713; Salati 2007, 46, nota 49).

⁷⁰ Su questo quartiere relativamente povero nell’area nord-orientale della città si veda al-Ghazzī 1999, 2, 341.

⁷¹ Come si è detto in precedenza, Tātārlar era uno dei quartieri a nord-est della città dove il grosso del commercio carovaniero aveva luogo (si veda anche al-Ghazzī 1999, 2, 250).

Majnūn, i due testimoni hanno testimoniato che l'anno precedente, nel luogo di sosta di Dār al-Ḥamrā' lungo la via del *ḥājj*, i suddetti individui, Zayn al-'Ābidīn b. Muḥammad e il defunto Ṣafar il persiano avevano riconosciuto di essere debitori nei confronti del suddetto attore *ḥājj* Ibrāhīm di centoundici pezzi d'oro... [*m-sh-n-ḥ-q?*],⁷² di cui settantadue pezzi d'oro quale prestito da loro contratto e preso da lui e trentasette pezzi d'oro quale tariffa per i suoi cammelli.

[Essi avevano riconosciuto] di essere vicendevolmente garanti e responsabili riguardo ai centoundici pezzi d'oro nei confronti del suddetto *ḥājj* Ibrāhīm tramite garanzia finanziaria e obbligazione personale. Questo riconoscimento era stato da lui confermato.

Tutto ciò avvenne in nostra presenza. Inoltre, 'Alī Akbar e *shaykh* 'Alī ci hanno chiamati quali testimoni del fatto che nel luogo di sosta di Dār al-Ḥamrā' e in nostra presenza loro due avevano dichiarato di essere legalmente responsabili e garanti nei confronti di *ḥājj* Ibrāhīm per il suddetto gruppo di persone riguardo alla suddetta somma di centoundici pezzi d'oro tramite garanzia finanziaria e obbligazione personale. Tale garanzia era stata da lui accettata.

La loro testimonianza è stata considerata valida e pienamente accettata, a seguito dell'accertamento legale della onorabilità dei testimoni (*tazkiya*).⁷³ A questo punto il giudice della Legge islamica ha sentenziato che i suddetti convenuti paghino i centoundici pezzi d'oro all'attore, il suddetto *ḥājj* Ibrāhīm, come da lui richiesto.

Ḥājj Ibrāhīm ha quindi proceduto ad una rivendicazione legale alla presenza dei summenzionati due fratelli 'Abd al-Nabī e Muḥammad figli di Muḥammad Ḥusayn, sostenendo che a suo credito e a loro debito restano ventidue pezzi d'oro. Questi sono stati stabiliti a suo credito e a loro debito per la tariffa dei suoi cammelli che loro due hanno montato lungo la strada del pellegrinaggio.

Essi hanno replicato dicendo di avergli pagato i ventidue pezzi d'oro ma egli non ha confermato la loro affermazione come veritiera. Non disponendo della prova che dimostri tale pagamento, essi hanno richiesto che egli presti giuramento. *Ḥājj* Ibrāhīm ha quindi giurato in nome di Dio, l'Onnipotente, il Clemente e Misericordioso, di non aver preso da loro i ventidue pezzi d'oro. Il giuramento è stato compiuto secondo la Legge.

Il giudice summenzionato, tramite un ordine legale del quale gli era stata fatta richiesta, ha ordinato ai due fratelli di cui sopra di pagare i restanti ventidue pezzi d'oro al suddetto *ḥājj* Ibrāhīm.

⁷² Termine non chiaro.

⁷³ Il termine denota la procedura di accertamento della onorabilità e incensurabilità dei testimoni, un elemento chiave del processo.

Quanto avvenuto è stato scritto e registrato su richiesta il giorno ventinove del mese di Şafar al-Khayr dell'anno 1131 [/21 gennaio 1719].

لما عقد المجلس الشرع بديوان حنب المحروسة بحضور الدستور المكرم المشير المفخم نظام العالم مدبر أمور الجمهور بالفكر الثاقب متمم مهام الأنام بالرأي الصائب مؤسس بنيان الدولة والإقبال مشيد أركان السعادة والإجلال حضرة الوزير المحترم الحاج علي باشا والي ولاية حلب حالاً... ادعى بالمجلس المعفود لدى مولانا و سيدنا قدوة العلماء و المدرسين الفخام الحاكم الشرعي الرجل المدعو الحاج إبراهيم بن الحاج رستم الجمال بمواجهة الأخوين عبد النبي و محمد ابني محمد حسين و الأخوين محمد مهدي و محمد هادي ابني سعيد و صادق بن فتحي و علي أكبر بن محمد و الشيخ علي بن مجنون الجميع من طائفة العجم و قال في دعواه إن لي في ذمة عبد النبي و أخيه محمد و ذمة محمد مهدي و أخيه محمد هادي و في ذمة صادق ... المزبورين و ذمة زين العابدين بن محمد الغائب عن المجلس و في ذمة المتوفى سفر العجمي مبلغاً قدره مائة و أحد عشر ذهباً... فمن ذلك اثنان و سبعون ذهباً بطريق القرض اقترضوها و تسلموها مني في العام الماضي في طريق الحج الشريف بمنزل دار الحمراء و سبعة و ثلاثون ذهباً أجرة جمالي التي ركبها سفر المزبور في طريق الحج الشريف و إنهم قد أقروا لي بالمبلغ المذكور بمنزلة دار الحمراء و تضامنوا و تكافلوا لي فيه مالا و ذمة و أعطوني بذلك تمسكاً بيدي و أن علي أكبر و الشيخ علي المزبورين قد كافلا عندي الجماعة المذكورين بالمائة و أحد عشر ذهباً المزبورة مالا و ذمة ضماناً شرعياً و قد قبلت الكفالة و اني الآن أطالب المدعى عليهم المزبورين بالمبلغ المزبور و التمس سؤلهم عن ذلك فسئل المدعى عليهم المزبورين عن حقيقة هذه الدعوى فأجابوا بالإكثار لدعواه المزبورة فطلب من المدعى الحاج إبراهيم المزبور بيعة عادلة تشهد له بدعواه المزبورة على الوجه المحرر فأحضر للشهادة بذلك الرجلين المدعويين الحاج رمضان بن الحاج محمد من محلة جقورجق و الحاج محمد بن رستم من محلة تاتارلر المقبولين الشهادة شرعاً فشهدا بعد الاستشهاد الشرعي بمواجهة الأخوين عبد النبي و محمد ابني محمد حسين و الأخوين محمد مهدي و محمد هادي ابني سعيد و صادق بن فتحي و علي أكبر بن محمد و الشيخ علي بن مجنون المزبورين بأنهم و زين العابدين بن محمد و المتوفى سفر العجمي في العام الماضي في منزلة دار الحمراء في طريق الحج الشريف قد أقروا بأن في ذمتهم للمدعي الحاج إبراهيم المزبور مائة و أحد عشر ذهباً مشنحاً منها اثنان و سبعون ذهباً بطريق القرض اقترضوها و تسلموها منه و سبعة و ثلاثون ذهباً أجرة جماله و أنهم في المائة و أحد عشر ذهباً المزبورة متضامنون و متكافلون للحاج إبراهيم المرقوم مالا و ذمة إقراراً مصدقاً منه جرى ذلك كله في حضورنا و أشهدنا أيضاً علي أكبر و الشيخ علي المزبورين بأنهما في منزلة دار الحمراء قد كافلا بحضورنا الجماعة المذكورين بالمائة و أحد عشر ذهباً المذكورة عند الحاج إبراهيم المذكور كفالة مالية مقبولة منه شهادة شرعية مقبولة منهما بعد التزكية الشرعية قبولاً تاماً فحينئذ حكم الحاكم المشار إليه على المدعى عليهم المزبورين بدفع المائة و أحد عشر ذهباً مشنحاً للمدعي الحاج إبراهيم المزبور بطلبه لذلك حكماً شرعياً ثم ادعى الحاج إبراهيم المرقوم بمواجهة الأخوين عبد النبي و محمد ابني محمد حسين المزبورين بأن له و في ذمتها اثني و عشرين ذهباً مشنحاً استقرت له في ذمتها من أجرة جماله التي ركبها في طريق الحج الشريف و أجابا بأنهما دفعا إليه الاثني و عشرين ذهباً المزبورة و لم يصدقهما على ذلك منهما و لم يكن لهما بيعة على دفعها إليه فطلبها يمينه فحلف الحاج إبراهيم المزبور بالله العظيم الرحمن الرحيم على أنه ما أخذ منهما الاثني و عشرين ذهباً التلحيف الشرعي ثم أمر الحاكم المشار إليه الأخوين المزبورين بدفع الاثني و عشرين ذهباً مشنحاً للحاج إبراهيم المزبور أمراً شرعياً مسؤولاً فيه و كتب ما وقع و حرر بالطلب في اليوم التاسع و العشرين من صفر الخير لسنة إحدى و ثلاثين و مائة و ألف

Commento

Ancora una volta troviamo coinvolti dei pellegrini persiani, impegnati in un laborioso contenzioso a proposito di un debito non saldato. Il caso sembra essere di una certa importanza dato che l'udienza si svolge nel *Dīwān* (Consiglio) del governatore di Aleppo. Non abbiamo sufficienti elementi per stabilire i motivi di questo intervento del governatore, se non la conferma che egli presiedeva una sorta di tribunale 'alternativo' come spiegato in nota.

11) RTA, vol. 62, 142

Quando si è formato il Consesso legale nel *Dīwān* di Aleppo la Ben Difesa, alla presenza dell'onorevole Visir, l'illustrissimo consigliere, l'ordinatore del mondo, colui che sistema le questioni dei popoli con la giusta visione, colui che completa gli affari degli uomini con il penetrante pensiero, l'edificatore dell'edificio della fortuna e del successo, colui che erige i pilastri della felicità e dell'onore, il rispettabile Visir, sua Eccellenza 'Uthmān Pasha, l'attuale Governatore di Aleppo,⁷⁴

al Consesso colà formato, al cospetto di nostro Signore e Autorità, il Vanto dei nobili '*ulamā*', la crema dei gloriosi insegnanti, il giudice della *Sharī'a*, l'uomo di nome *ḥājj* 'Abd al-Fattāḥ b. *ḥājj* Abī Bakr il tintore, mandatario legale per conto del figlio di suo fratello *sayyid*⁷⁵ Ṭaha b. *ḥājj* Aḥmad b. *ḥājj* Abī Bakr, residente del quartiere Suwayqa 'Alī nella città di Aleppo la ben difesa,⁷⁶ ha sporto reclamo di fronte a Jum'a b. *ḥājj* 'Alī, 'Īsā b. Gharīb, Aḥmad b. Kan'ān, tutti residenti del quartiere *Muḥammad bey*, all'esterno di Bāb al-Nayrab in Aleppo.⁷⁷

Nel suo reclamo egli ha detto:

Il mio mandante, *sayyid* Ṭaha, aveva noleggiato [i servizi] di Jum'a, il convenuto suddetto, affinché questi trasportasse i suoi bagagli sulle sue bestie da soma e viaggiasse con lui fino alla città di al-

⁷⁴ Il famoso 'Uthmān Pasha Dūrakī, governatore di Aleppo nel periodo 1737-40 e fondatore della *madrasa* 'Uthmāniyya, nota anche come Riḍā'iyya (al-Ṭabbākh 1988, 3, 258-65; al-Ghazzī 1999, 2, 156-65).

⁷⁵ Titolo spettante a chi poteva vantare la discendenza genealogica da 'Alī e Fātima, quindi dal Profeta. La comunità dei discendenti del Profeta era particolarmente numerosa in Aleppo (Salati 1992, 21-47).

⁷⁶ Su questo quartiere, uno dei più antichi e importanti di Aleppo, si veda al-Ghazzī 1999, 2, 138-51 e soprattutto David 1998.

⁷⁷ Su questo quartiere, situato nella zona sud-est della città, si veda al-Ghazzī (1999, 2, 274-8).

Lādhīqiyya.⁷⁸ Il suddetto Jum'a, il giorno di cui sotto [?], si mise in viaggio con il mio mandante e giunse con lui di notte al luogo chiamato Marja Khashhān, fuori Aleppo.⁷⁹ In accordo con Jum'a, i suddetti 'Īsā e Aḥmad li incontrarono in quel luogo e tutti [e tre] vollero uccidere il mio mandante. Il suddetto 'Isa infilò un coltello nel collo del mio mandante con l'intenzione di sgozzarlo e lo ferì; poi tutti insieme lo gettarono nella cisterna che si trova nel vigneto situato nelle vicinanze del suddetto luogo ritenendo che fosse morto e presero i suoi beni, il cui valore è noto e ammonta a cento *ghirsh*. Il mio mandante uscì vivo dalla cisterna e si riappropriò dei suoi beni prendendoli da loro in modo legale. In virtù del mandato, richiedo l'applicazione di quanto previsto dalla nobile Legge al proposito e chiedo che siano interrogati.

Interrogati sulla veridicità di questo reclamo, i suddetti convenuti hanno risposto riconoscendo tutto ciò nelle modalità in cui quanto affermato è stato enunciato. Tale riconoscimento è legale.

A quel punto, il giudice di cui sopra ha informato il suddetto attore che la ferita nel collo del suo mandante *sayyid* Ṭaha, qualora conduca alla morte, comporta legalmente il taglione nei confronti del feritore, il suddetto 'Īsā. Ciò che incombe ai suddetti convenuti è la pena discrezionale appropriata quale freno a loro e ai loro pari.⁸⁰ Notifica legale.

Quanto avvenuto è stato scritto e registrato su richiesta il giorno quattordici del mese di Rajab al-Fard dell'anno 11151 [/28 ottobre 1738].

لما عقد المجلس الشرعي بديوان حلب المحروسة بحضور الدستور المكرم المشير المفخم نظام العالم مدير أمور الجمهور بالفكر الثاقب متمم مهام الأتنام بالرأي الصائب مجدد بنیان الدولة والإقبال مشيد أركان السعادة والإجلال (...) الوزير الخطير حضرة عثمان باشا (...) والي ولاية حلب حالاً (...) ادعى بالمجلس المعقود المذكور لدى مولانا و سيدنا فخر العلماء الكرام زبدة المدرسين الفخام الحاكم الشرعي (...) الرجل المدعو الحاج عبد الفتاح بن الحاج أبي بكر الصباغ الوكيل عن قبل ابن أخيه السيد طه بن الحاج أحمد بن الحاج أبي بكر المزبور من أهالي محلة سوقة علي بمدينة حلب المحروسة (...) بمواجهة جمعة بن الحاج علي و عيسى بن غريب و أحمد بن كنعان من أهالي محلة محمد بيك خارج باب النيرب بحلب و قال في دعواه أن " موكلي السيد طه المرقوم كان استأجر جمعة المدعى عليه المزبور ليحمل له أثقاله على دابته و يسافر معه إلى مدينة اللاذقية و أن جمعة المذكور يوم تأريخه بذيله قد سافر بموكلي و أتى به ليلاً إلى مكان يعرف بمرجة خشهان ظاهر حلب و لحقهما عيسى و أحمد المرقومان باتفاقهما مع جمعة المزبور إلى المكان المذكور و أرادوا جميعهم قتل موكلي و أن عيسى المزبور... ؟ ، أمر (سكين على رقبة موكلي المذكور قاصداً ذبحه فجرحه و ألغوه جميعاً في الجب الكائن

78 La famosa città portuale Latakia/Laodicea (Elisséeff 1986).

79 Toponimo non identificato.

80 Sulla pena a discrezione del giudice (*ta'zīr*) per reati che non comportano l'applicazione delle pene coraniche si veda Izzi Dien 2000.

بالكرم الواقع بالقرب من المكان المذكور ظانين أنه مات وأخذوا الأمتعة المعلومة التي قيمتها مائة غرش و أن موكلني خرج من الجب حياً و ظفر بعد الخروج من الجب بالأمّعة و أخذها منهم بالوجه الشرعي و أني أطلب بالوكالة إجراء ما يقتضيه الشرع الشريف في ذلك و التمس سؤالهم ” ، فسئل المدعى عليهم المرقومون عن حقيقة هذه الدعوى فأجابوا بالإقرار بذلك كله على الوجه المدعى به المحرر أعلاه الإقرار الشرعي ، فحينئذ أعلم الحاكم المشار إليه المدعي المرقوم بأن الجرح الذي في رقبة موكله السيد طه المزبور إن أفضى به إلى الموت يقتص من جارحه عيسى المزبور شرعاً و أن اللازم الآن للمدعى عليهم المرقومين التعزير اللائق بهم... (٩) لهم و لامثاله شرعاً ، إعلماً شرعياً ، و كتب ما وقع و حرر بالطلب في اليوم الرابع عشر من شهر رجب الفرد لسنة 1151

Commento

Questo documento, come il seguente, segnala la presenza di uno dei più importanti governatori della Aleppo del Settecento, 'Uthmān Pasha, qui in veste di massima autorità all'interno del *Dīwān* della città. Come osservato precedentemente, questo 'Consiglio' funzionava anche da tribunale penale, pur senza escludere la presenza e il ruolo del *qādī*.

Dal testo si evince la componente di rischio che il viaggiare comportava, non solo per le variabili condizioni climatiche ma anche, in questo caso, per la slealtà di coloro che dovevano garantire il trasporto in tutta sicurezza lungo il percorso.

Il giudice, in linea con i dettami della Sharī'a, applica la pena discrezionale visto che la vittima non è morta, che la sua ferita è difficilmente reciprocabile e che, di conseguenza, si rende impossibile l'applicazione del taglione nei confronti di colui che ha inferto la ferita non mortale.

12) RTA, vol. 62, 179

Al Consesso della nobile Legge,
al cospetto del giudice in carica,⁸¹

sono comparsi *ḥājj* Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, noto come al-Mikhhlājī,⁸²
Ibrāhīm b. *ḥājj* Murtaqā, *ḥājj* Sulaymān b. *ḥājj* 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *ḥājj*
'Alī b. Muḥammad, Muḥammad b. *ḥājj* Khalīl al-Jizzjī,⁸³ Aḥmad b.

⁸¹ Nell'anno del documento il giudice risulta essere Jarāhī Muḥammad 'Ālim (al-Ghazī 1999, 1, 239).

⁸² Questo appellativo è forse collegabile con *mikhla* (foraggio) e potrebbe indicare quindi, con l'aggiunta del suffisso *-jī* (forma arabizzata del turco *-ci*) una professione.

⁸³ Il testo non è chiaro. Nella Jazira esiste un territorio di nome Jaz, ma il termine potrebbe essere collegato a *jizz* (grasso di pecora) e indicare, anche qui, una professione.

ḥājj Ḥusayn al-M-d-ā'ili,⁸⁴ *ḥājj* Walī b. Abī Dardā, *munlā* Šālīḥ b. *ḥājj* Bayrām, Qara Sulaymān b. Ḥusayn *bey*, Bīkzāda b. Bashīr, Kuslā Muṣṭafā b. Ibrāhīm [...], tutti cammellieri residenti nella ben protetta città di Aleppo.

Alla presenza del vanto dei più illustri e dei più nobili, colui che riunisce l'eccellenza e la generosità, *darwīsh* Muḥammad *āghā* figlio di Ibrāhīm *āghā*, il rappresentante legale autorizzato dell'onorevole Visir, l'illustrissimo consigliere, il regolatore del mondo, il prudente gestore degli affari della comunità grazie al suo penetrante pensiero, colui che porta a compimento le questioni importanti dell'umanità grazie al suo giudizio appropriato, il rinnovatore dell'edificio della prosperità e della felicità, l'edificatore dei pilastri della buona sorte della magnificenza, l'eminentissimo e rispettabilissimo Visir, sua Eccellenza 'Uthmān Pasha, l'attuale governatore della provincia di Aleppo, essi hanno riconosciuto spontaneamente e di propria volontà [quanto segue] nella loro dichiarazione di riconoscimento:

Noi abbiamo ceduto a nolo a sua Eccellenza il suddetto mandante ed egli ha da noi preso a nolo i nostri cammelli... [*al-mayāt* ?], trecento di questi, per il trasporto dei bagagli della *jarda*⁸⁵ dalla città di Damasco alla stazione di sosta [lungo la strada del pellegrinaggio] del forte di Ḥadiyya e da lì di nuovo a Damasco, andata e ritorno.⁸⁶ La tariffa per il noleggio dei suddetti cammelli è di dodicimila *ghirsh*. Ora noi chiediamo che sua Eccellenza il suddetto rappresentante legale paghi la suddetta tariffa, la quale è stata inviata insieme a lui dalle proprietà del suddetto mandante sua Eccellenza il rispettabile Visir.

In virtù della sua rappresentanza legale, [il mandatario] ha pagato e dato loro dalle proprietà di sua Eccellenza il suddetto mandante, l'ammontare totale della tariffa, dodicimila *ghirsh*, in presenza e osservazione di entrambe le parti.

84 Testo non chiaro.

85 Il termine *jarda* (*cerde* in turco) si riferiva a una scorta di cavalleria che aveva il compito di incontrare i pellegrini di ritorno da Mecca proprio al forte di Hadiyya, rifornirli di viveri (riso, olio, orzo, gallette, oltre a indumenti e anche foraggio per gli animali) e scortarli in sicurezza fino a Damasco. Fonti del XVIII secolo indicano che la *jarda* partiva da Damasco nella seconda metà del mese di Dhū l-Ḥijja per giungere a Hadiyya dopo poco più di venti giorni viaggio (al-Budayrī al-Ḥallāq 1959, 11-12).

86 Hadiyya era un'importante tappa lungo la via della carovana siriana del pellegrinaggio, a circa un centinaio di chilometri a nord di Medina, tra il *wādī* al-Qurā e l'insediamento di al-'Ulā. Il forte fu costruito intorno all'anno del documento, il 1738-9, da Sulaymān Pasha al-'Azm, governatore e responsabile della carovana del pellegrinaggio (*amīr al-ḥajj*) di Damasco. Le sue acque erano in genere evitate dai pellegrini in quanto causavano la diarrea (al-Khiyārī 1969-80, 1, 39; Salati 2007, 145 n. 42; *Seyahatnāmesi* 2008, 9, 305).

Questo noleggio è comprensivo di offerta e accettazione da entrambe le parti, secondo la Legge. In seguito, i suddetti cammellieri locatori hanno anche riconosciuto che ognuno di essi è legalmente responsabile e garante finanziariamente per gli altri in merito a quanto da essi preso e ricevuto. Se qualcosa del carico trasportato sui loro cammelli dovesse andare perduto a causa di trasgressione o negligenza da parte di uno di loro, quella persona ne sarà ritenuta garante. Essi hanno dichiarato di essere reciprocamente responsabili di tutto ciò secondo la Legge. Se uno dei cammelli noleggiati si ferisse o morisse per qualsiasi motivo, essi si sono anche impegnati a sostituirlo con un altro.⁸⁷

Quanto avvenuto è stato scritto e registrato il giorno venticinque del mese benedetto di Ramaḍān dell'anno 1151 [/6 gennaio 1739].

Testimoni (*shuhūd al-ḥāl*):

- il vanto degli operosi studiosi, la selezione dei coscienziosi e precisi eruditi *sayyid Yūsuf afandī*, il *muftī* della città di Aleppo;⁸⁸
- il vanto degli eruditi e degli insegnanti *sayyid Aḥmad afandī Ṭahazāda*;⁸⁹
- il vanto degli *'ulamā'* e degli insegnanti *sayyid Abū l-Jūd afandī*, il *naqīb* di Aleppo attualmente;⁹⁰
- il vanto dei nobili discendenti del Profeta e degli insegnanti *sayyid Abū Bakr afandī Fanṣazāda*.⁹¹

حضر بمجلس الشرع الشريف لدى المولى الحاج إبراهيم بن محمد المعروف بالمخلجي و
إبراهيم بن مرتضى و الحاج سليمان بن الحاج عبد الرحمن و الحاج علي بن محمد و محمد بن
الحاج خليل الجزجي و أحمد بن الحاج حسين المضائلي و الحاج ولي بن أبي دردا و منلا صالح
بن الحاج بيرام و قره سليمان بن حسين بيك و بيك زاده بن بشير و كوسلا مصطفى بن إبراهيم
الجميع من طائفة الجمالة الساكنين بحلب المحروسة و أقروا بالطوع و الرضا التامين بمحضر
من فخر الأمجاد و الأكارم جامع المحامد و المكارم درويش محمد آغا بن المرحوم إبراهيم آغا
الوكيل عن قبايل الدستور المكرم المشير المفخم نظام العالم مدير أمور الجمهور بالفكر الثاقب
متمم مهام الأنام بالرأي الصائب مجدد بنيان الدولة و الإقبال مشيد أركان السعادة و الإجلال
الوزير الخطير المحترم حضرة عثمان باشا والي ولاية حلب حالاً و قالوا في إقرارهم إننا قد

⁸⁷ Su questa clausola contrattuale si veda anche Establet, Pascual 1998, 82.

⁸⁸ Yāsin b. Muṣṭafā Ṭahazāda al-Ḥalabī (m. ca. 1747-8), della potente famiglia Ṭahazāda, fu *naqīb al-ashraf* - capo della comunità locale di discendenti del Profeta - e *muftī* ḥanafita di Aleppo (al-Ṭabbākh 1988, 6, 487-8).

⁸⁹ Una delle grandi figure della Aleppo del XVIII secolo, anch'egli della famiglia Ṭahazāda, Aḥmad afandī (m. 1773) ricoprì numerose cariche nell'amministrazione ottomana: *naqīb al-ashraf* di Aleppo, giudice di Gerusalemme e di Baghdād. Fondò una nota *madrassa*, la Aḥmadiyya, a favore della quale costituì importanti *waqf* (al-Ṭabbākh 1988, 7, 69-78; Wilkins 2014).

⁹⁰ Probabilmente un membro della famiglia Kawākibī, i principali rivali dei Ṭahazāda nel XVIII secolo, questo Abū l-Jūd afandī non è menzionato nei dizionari bibliografici ma il suo nome ricorre spesso nei registri del periodo.

⁹¹ Si tratta di Abū Bakr b. Maṣṣūr Ibn Fanṣa al-Ḥanafī (m. 1763), in al-Ṭabbākh (1988, 7, 35) è descritto quale insegnante di *madrassa*.

أجرنا من حضرة الموكل المشار إليه و هو استأجر منا جمالنا المايات اللاء عدتها ثلاثمائة
 جمل ليحمل عليها أثقال الجردة من مدينة دمشق الشام إلى منزلة قلعة هدية ذهاباً و منها إلى
 مدينة دمشق الشام المزبورة إياباً بأجرة قدرها عن الجمال المؤجرة المذكورة اثنا عشرة ألف
 غرش و إننا الآن نطالب حضرة الوكيل المومى إليه بأن يدفع إلينا الأجرة المذكورة المرسلة
 معه من مال جناب موكله الوزير المحترم المشار إليه فحينئذ دفع و سلم إليهم بوكالته من مال
 حضرة موكلهم المشار إليه جميع الأجرة الذي هي اثنا عشرة ألف غرش في الحضرة و المعاينة
 إجارة مشتملة على إيجاب و قبول من الطرفين شرعاً ثم أقر المؤجرون المرقومون ثانياً بأن كل
 واحد منهم كفل الآخر فيما قبضه كفالة مالية و بأنه إن فقد من الأحمال التي علي جمالهم شيء
 بتعدٍ أو بتقصير من أحدهم يكن ضامناً له و تضامنوا بجميع ذلك ضامناً شرعياً و تعهدوا بأنه
 مهما عطب من الجمال المؤجرة أو مات فيأتوا بجمل مكانه ، تعهداً تاماً و كتب ما وقع و حرر
 بالطلب في اليوم الخامس و العاشرين من شهر رمضان لسنة إحدى و خمسين و مائة و ألف

، فخر المحققين مختار الفضلاء المدققين السيد يوسف أفندي المفتي بمدينة حلب

، فخر العلماء و المدرسين السيد أحمد أفندي طه زاده

، فخر العلماء و المدرسين السيد أبو الجود أفندي نقيب حلب حالاً

فخر السادات و المدرسين الكرام السيد أبو بكر أفندي فنصه زاده

Commento

Può sembrare curioso che il governatore di Aleppo, di nuovo il famoso 'Uthmān Pasha, sia coinvolto in un contratto di trasporto di «carichi/bagagli» (da intendersi vettovaglie e generi alimentari) diretti a un forte nella penisola arabica sotto la giurisdizione del governatore di Damasco. In realtà, la macchina organizzativa ottomana, sempre attenta ad una sorta di 'solidale' distribuzione di incarichi e oneri, prevedeva che la *jarda* e il suo carico ricadessero sotto la responsabilità di uno tra i governatori di Aleppo o Tripoli o Sidone. In effetti, per l'anno 1151/1739, una cronaca locale del XVIII secolo, ad opera del damasceno Muḥammad Ibn Kannān, conferma la posizione di 'Uthmān Pasha quale comandante della *jarda*:

'Uthmān Pasha il *muḥaṣṣil*⁹² arrivò [a Damasco] il giovedì [della metà del mese] di Shawwāl, pregò il venerdì in moschea e montò il suo campo nella zona di al-Marja, per poi entrare in città a metà del mese di Dhū l-Qa'da. Il giorno del Sacrificio, il dieci di Dhū l-Hijja, il comandante della *jarda*, 'Uthmān Pasha di Aleppo, si mise in viaggio [...]. La carovana dei pellegrini arrivò a Damasco [dai Luoghi Santi] il quarto giorno del mese di Saḡar. (Ibn Kannān 1994, 504-6, traduzione dell'Autore)

⁹² Un termine che indica il funzionario incaricato riscuotere determinati tipi di tasse (Findley 1993b).

Abbiamo qui un'ulteriore dimostrazione che l'amministrazione ottomana cercava di essere all'altezza di uno dei suoi compiti principali, vale a dire garantire la sicurezza delle carovane dirette ai e provenienti dai Luoghi Santi al fine di assicurare il regolare svolgimento del pellegrinaggio.

Il documento menziona, a sottolineare l'importanza dell'evento, la presenza di «testimoni del caso» (*shuhūd al-ḥāl*). Con questo termine ci si riferiva a dei testimoni notarili nominati e impiegati dal giudice allo scopo di vigilare e assicurare la regolarità delle udienze. Marcus osserva che ad Aleppo

the witnesses usually included one or two court officers, but the majority of them were Muslim men not in the court's employ: people with an interest in the case, neighbors and associates of the parties, and respectable residents who happened to be in court that day for other business. (1989, 113)⁹³

In questo caso è evidente che si tratta di «respectable residents» facenti parte della classe di notabili della città.

13) RTA, vol. 62, 181

Al Consesso della nobile Legge,

al cospetto del giudice in carica

sono comparsi Aḥmad b. *shaykh* Ibrāhīm, 'Abdallāh b. ḥājj 'Ashūr, *sayyid* Muḥnī b. *sayyid* Sa'd al-Dīn, *sayyid* Sa'd al-Dīn b. *sayyid* Khālid, tutti membri della corporazione dei venditori e fabbricatori di otri d'acqua in pelle (*qirabiyya*) nella ben protetta città di Aleppo.

Alla presenza del vanto dei nobili, Ḥasan *bey* figlio del defunto Islām Pasha, che è il rappresentante legalmente autorizzato dell'onorevole Visir, l'illustrissimo consigliere, il regolatore del mondo, il prudente gestore degli affari della comunità grazie al suo penetrante pensiero, colui che porta a compimento le questioni importanti dell'umanità grazie al suo giudizio appropriato, il rinnovatore dell'edificio della prosperità e della felicità, l'edificatore dei pilastri della buona sorte della magnificenza, l'eminentissimo e rispettabilissimo Visir sua Eccellenza 'Uthmān Pasha, l'attuale governatore della provincia di Aleppo, essi hanno riconosciuto spontaneamente e di propria volontà e detto nella loro dichiarazione di riconoscimento:

⁹³ Sul loro ruolo e composizione si veda anche Jennings 1978, 142-7.

Abbiamo venduto a sua Eccellenza di cui sopra, in una singola transazione e in una sola volta,⁹⁴ millecinquecento ghirbe (*qirba*). Trecento di queste sono grandi e... (*m-kh-l*) [a sacco ?] della varietà orientale, mentre le altre milleduecento sono di grandezza media e note con il nome *jabalī* [di montagna?].

Il prezzo di vendita è di duemilacinquecento *ghirsh*, vale a dire un *ghirsh* e due terzi di *ghirsh* per ciascuna ghirba. Questo a condizione che noi consegniamo, alla data specificata alla fine del documento, millesettanta delle suddette ghirbe alla persona incaricata di prenderle. In quanto alle restanti ghirbe oggetto della vendita, vale a dire quattrocentotrenta ghirbe di media grandezza della varietà *jabalī*, dobbiamo consegnarle a Muṣṭafā āghā,⁹⁵ il mandatario legalmente autorizzato per le spese dell'onorevole suddetto Visir nella città di Damasco.

I suddetti venditori hanno richiesto che il suddetto mandatario Ḥasan bey paghi il prezzo delle ghirbe. [Il denaro] è stato inviato insieme a lui dalle finanze del suo mandante, sua Eccellenza di cui sopra, ed egli lo ha pagato e lo ha consegnato loro dalle finanze del suo mandante al Consesso della nobile Legge, in presenza e con osservazione di entrambe le parti. Essi hanno preso e riscosso da lui tutta la somma *in toto*.

Tutti i suddetti venditori hanno garantito che le ghirbe devono essere esenti da difetti quando si farà la prova con l'acqua dopo aver inciso l'apertura. Quella che risulterà difettosa sarà sostituita con un'altra intatta e senza difetti e dello stesso genere.

Ognuno di loro è legalmente responsabile per il suo socio tramite la garanzia finanziaria in merito a quanto da loro preso e ricevuto e a quanto si sono impegnati a garantire. Essi hanno dichiarato di essere reciprocamente responsabili per tutto questo in virtù del riconoscimento legale [da loro fatto].

Quanto avvenuto è stato scritto e registrato il giorno venticinque del mese benedetto di Ramaḍān dell'anno 1151 [6 gennaio 1739].

حضر بمجلس الشرع الشريف لدى المولى أحمد بن الشيخ إبراهيم و عبد الله بن الحاج عاشر و السيد مهني بن السيد سعد الدين و السيد سعد الدين بن السد خالد الجميع من طائفة القرابية بحلب المحمية و أقروا بالطوع و الرضا التامين بمحضر من فخر الأمجاد حسن بيك بن المرحوم إسلام باشا الوكيل عن قبل جناب الدستور المكرم المشير المفخم نظام العالم مدبر أمور الجمهور بالفكر الثاقب متمم مهام الأنام بالرأي الصائب مجدد بنيان الدولة و الإقبال مشيد أركان السعادة و الإجلال الوزير الخطير المحترم حضرة عثمان باشا والي ولاية حلب حالاً و قالوا

⁹⁴ Letteralmente «con una sola stretta di mano» (*ṣafqa wāhida*).

⁹⁵ Il titolo *āghā* (capo, signore) era in genere riservato a ufficiali e comandanti della classe militare ottomana. Nel corso del XVIII secolo fu impiegato quale titolo onorifico di personaggi di spicco della classe mercantile (si veda ad esempio Wilkins 2010, 173-5, 185-92).

في إقرارهم إننا قد بعنا في صفقة واحدة من حضرة الموكل المشار إليه ألف و خمسمائة قريبة منها ثلاثمائة قريبة من القرب الكبار المخلة الشرقيات و ألف و مائتان قريبة من القرب المتوسط المعروفة بالجلليات بثمن قدره عن جميع القرب المذكورة ألفين و خمسمائة غرشاً حساباً عن كل قريبة منها غرش واحد و اثنا ثلث غرش بنأ على أن نسلم من القرب المذكورة للمأمور بقبضها يوم تاريخه بذيله ألف و سبعين قريبة و الباقي من القرب المبيعة المزبورة و هو أربعمائة و ثلاثون قريبة الوسيط الجبلي نسلمه إلى مصطفى أغا وكيلى خرج الدستور المكرم المشار إليه في مدينة دمشق الشام ثم أن البائعين المذكورين طلبوا من حسن بيك الوكيل المذكور بثمن القرب المرسل معه من مال حضرة مركله المشار إليه فدفع و سلم إليهم بمجلس الشرح الشريف من مال حضرة الموكل المشار إليه في الحضرة و المعاينة و هم قبضوه و تسلموه منه بتمامه قبضاً تاماً و تعهدوا البائعون المذكورون جميعهم بأن تكون القرب المذكورة سالمة من العيب عند التجربة بالماء بعد تحزيز أفواهاها و مهما وجد منها معيباً يأتوا ببدهه سالماً من نوعه و كفل كل واحد منه صاحبه بما قبضه من الثمن و بما تعهد به كفالة مالية و تضامنوا جميعاً بذلك إقراراً شرعياً و كتب ما وقع و حرر بالطلب في اليوم الخامس و العشرين من شهر رمضان المبارك لسنة إحدى و خمسين و ألف

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Al Consesso della Nobile Legge,
al cospetto del giudice in carica,⁹⁶

è comparso *shaykh* Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh, il quale è stato onorato con la religione dell’Islam e risiede nel quartiere Aqyūl nella città di Aleppo.⁹⁷ Alla presenza del latore di questo documento scritto, Ilyās figlio di⁹⁸ Mikhā’il noto come Ibn Ḥaddād il cristiano della comunità Rūm, residente nel vicolo (*zuqāq*) Tumā Bishāra nel quartiere Khārij Bāb al-Naṣr in Aleppo la ben protetta⁹⁹ e agente di se stesso e rappresentante legale di Yūṣuf¹⁰⁰ figlio di Qasīs il prete e di Sam’ān figlio di Yūṣuf il cristiano della detta comunità, egli [*shaykh* Muḥammad] ha fatto una dichiarazione riconoscimento dicendo:

Tre giorni prima della data indicata sotto ho iniziato una causa legale presso sua Eccellenza il suddetto giudice in carica, sostenen-

⁹⁶ Per l’anno indicato nel documento il giudice risulta essere ‘Abbās b. Muṣṭafā (si veda al-Ghazzī 1999, 1, 239).

⁹⁷ Su questo quartiere si veda al-Ghazzī 1999, 2, 324-7 e Marcus 1989.

⁹⁸ Si noti la grafia di Ilyās con *sād* al posto della usuale *sīn*, una modalità, come abbiamo visto sopra, atta a distinguere l’onomastica cristiana ed ebraica da quella musulmana.

⁹⁹ Con il termine ‘Rūm’ si indicava la comunità cristiano-ortodossa della città (Marcus 1989, 40-2; Masters 1988, 91-4). Le aree di Bāb al-Naṣr e Khārij Bāb al-Naṣr, nel quadrante nord-occidentale della città, raggruppavano la maggior parte della popolazione non-musulmana.

¹⁰⁰ Come visto in precedenza, anche qui la grafia inusuale è intesa quale indice della diversità religiosa.

do che quindici anni prima della data sotto indicata i suddetti Ilyās e il suo mandante Yūṣuf il prete e un gruppo di persone della suddetta comunità avevano ingaggiato i miei servizi per tre anni per andare da Aleppo alla città di Roma (*Rūmiyā*), una delle città degli Europei (*Franjī*),¹⁰¹ allo scopo di curare alcuni loro interessi laggiù dietro un compenso di millecinquecento *ghirsh*, cioè cinquecento *ghirsh* per ciascuno anno.

Io partii alla volta della città di Roma, dove mi presi cura dei loro interessi lungo tutto quel periodo di tempo ma essi non mi hanno mai dato assolutamente nulla del compenso suddetto di millecinquecento *ghirsh*. Io ho richiesto il pagamento del suddetto compenso da parte di Ilyās e il suo delegante suddetto ma Ilyās ha rigettato la mia rivendicazione e ha contestato quanto da me detto affermando che la mia rivendicazione è infondata e non ha validità.

Ora il fatto è che io ho mentito in merito alla mia rivendicazione in quanto in realtà è completamente infondata e priva di qualsiasi validità legale in modo assoluto.

Quando avvenuto è stato scritto e registrato il giorno ventitré del mese di Jumādā II dell'anno 1159 [/13 luglio 1746].

حضر بمجلس الشرع الشريف لدى المولى الشيخ محمد بن عبد الله المتشرف بدين الإسلام الساكن بمحلة اقبول بمدينة حلب و أقر بمحضر من رافع هذا الكتاب الياص ولد ميخائيل النصراني المعروف بابن حداد من كائفة الروم المتوطنين بزقاق توما بشارة خارج باب النصر بحلب المحروسة الأصيل عن نفسه و الوكيل عن قبل خوري يوصف ولد قسيس و سمعان ولد يوصف النصراني من الطائفة المرقومة قائلاً في إقراره إنني من ثلاثة أيام ماضية قبل تاريخه بذيله كنت ادعيت لدى حضرة المولى المشار إليه أن الياص و موكله خوري يوصف المزبورين و جماعة من الطائفة المرقومة من مدة اثنتي عشر سنة ماضية قبل تاريخه بذيله كانوا قد استأجروني مدة ثلاث سنين لأذهب من مدينة حلب لبلدة روميا إحدى بلاد الإفرنج لأجل قضاء مصالحهم بأجرة قدرها ألف و خمسمائة غرش حساباً عن أجرة كل سنة خمسمائة غرش فأبني ذهبت إلى بلدة روميا المرقومة و قمت بقضاء مصالحهم في المدة المذكورة و لم يدفعوا إلي من الأجرة المرقومة التي هي ألف و خمسمائة غرش شيئاً أصلاً و قطعاً و أطالب الياص المرقوم و موكله المسفور بالأجرة المرسومة فأذكر الياص المرقوم دعواي المذكورة و نازعني بأن لا أصل و لا صحة لدعواي المذكورة أصلاً و الحال فأبني مبطل في دعواي المرقومة و أنه في الحقيقة لا أصل و لا صحة لها بوجه من الوجوه أصلاً و قطعاً و كتب ما وقع و حرر بالطلب في اليوم الثالث و العشرين من شهر جمادى الآخرة لسنة تسع و خمسين و مائة و ألف

Commento

Questo documento è abbastanza singolare, non tanto per il fatto di registrare la confessione di aver dato luogo ad un procedimento privo di fondamento e falso - di queste dichiarazioni, sui motivi dei qua-

¹⁰¹ Si veda Traini 1995.

li i documenti non danno spiegazioni, i registri di Aleppo danno ampia documentazione – quanto per il fatto di lasciar intendere che un viaggio alla volta di Roma, sebbene decisamente infrequente e dispendioso, poteva essere contemplato e portato a termine (Marcus 1989, 45, 246).

Non è dato di sapere, inoltre, se la conversione del dichiarante abbia preceduto o sia successiva al presunto accordo con il gruppo di cristiano-ortodossi citato nel testo. Verrebbe da dire che, essendo passati quindici anni, la conversione sia venuta dopo, anche perché riesce difficile pensare che la comunità ortodossa potesse affidarsi ai servizi di un convertito per sbrigare affari interni alla comunità stessa.

Il titolo di *shaykh* che qualifica il convertito rivela che egli era divenuto nel frattempo una personalità di una certa autorità. Il termine connotava infatti un membro della gerarchia religiosa, il capo di una corporazione di mestiere o un responsabile di quartiere. La ricerca di avanzamento sociale sta probabilmente alla base di questa conversione.¹⁰²

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Literary Trajectories of Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, a Hero Who Was Born a Criminal

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Abstract On 14 June 1800, Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, a Syrian student, stabbed to death General Kléber, leader of the French occupation forces in Egypt. A few days later, the first account of the event – the trial documents – was written, translated into the main languages spoken in Cairo and distributed by the French military. Since then, accounts of this fact have multiplied, each presenting Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī in a different manner, ranging from fanatic, to victim, hero, then back to the fanatic and the hero. Comparing the different stories about Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī and relating them to their context of production, this paper explores their possible motives and effects, showing how the character's literary trajectories depend more on the circumstances in which the stories were written, rather than on a search for truth. Until now, three main tendencies have decided Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī's destiny: legitimation, mirroring reality and responding to the regime's propaganda.

Keywords Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ġabartī. Zakariyyā Tāmir. Alfred Faraġ. Ṣun'allāh Ibrāhīm. Historiography. Narrativity.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 From the First Accounts. Sulaymān the Infamous Assassin. – 3 Sulaymān in the Sixties Speaks to the Present. – 4 Two Recently Rediscovered Manuscripts and Two New Sulaymāns. – 5 Conclusions.



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1 Introduction

When we approach literature and history, we commonly relate to them as two distinct writing practices. However, they have many points of contact, as Hayden White observes explaining that suppression and subordination of certain events, as well as characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view are techniques that we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of a novel or a play, but we also find them in historical writing (White 1978, 84). Likewise, there is no clear limit between literature and history in terms of reception as a historical event described in a work of fiction can equally impact collective memory. The specificity of the literary text is that it remains permanently available for many readers and many generations of readers (Baudorre 2006, 36). Since the literary text does not gather images, but creates them (41), any fictionalization of history might contribute to create a certain perspective that continues to develop in today's vision of this portion of history. On the other hand, if we consider that no literature can exist in a vacuum but is influenced by history, as well as by the present, so that one needs to understand the historical time period in order to understand that literature, the rewriting of historical events becomes an even more complex issue, as it must be seen through the lens of the time when it was rewritten. Furthermore, not only is literature influenced by the present and the past, but can in itself influence the present and the future, which is the aim of cultural propaganda.

The many stories recounting Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī - the student from Aleppo who killed General Kléber in 1800 - are an excellent example of how narratives can develop in time, pursuing different purposes and overlapping historiography. From the first account by the French military translated into Turkish and Arabic (beyond the French original version) and distributed amongst people in Cairo only a few days after the event, Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī has been described in several historical writings of that time; he is the protagonist of two short stories by Zakariyyā Tāmīr: "al-Ġarīma" (The Crime, 1963) and "Man qatal al-ġinirāl Klēbir" (He Who Killed General Kléber),¹ and of a historical drama by Alfred (Alfrīd) Faraġ (*Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī*, 1964); more recently, he has been included in Ṣun'allāh Ibrāhīm's novel *al-ʿImāma wa-l-qubba'a* (The Turban and the Hat, 2008) and is again the protagonist of a novel by a scarcely known Syrian writer called Dāwūd Abū Ṣuqra: *Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, al-miḥraz wa-l'ayn* (Sulaymān from Aleppo, the Awl and the Eye, 2016), both novels using the literary *topos* of the rediscovered manuscript.

¹ This short story was written recently (maybe in 2011) and published by the Syrian magazine *Al-Taḍāmūn* but I could not find its whole text. It is mentioned in al-Ḥayr 2011.

The political aspects involving the story of Sulaymān make him an especially intricate character. Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī's literary trajectories represent both new paths the story takes and the reflection of existent ideas in the changing collective memory. And so, those stories are first analyzed here in chronological order, within their context of production, and are then compared to one another. Specificities of the literary genres are taken into account. When intertextuality evidently links two or more texts, this fact is detected and commented upon.² The main point of this analysis is certainly not to understand how the facts *really* went, nor to give a judgment on them or on the way they were recounted. Instead, this study will try to reflect on the role of literature in shaping history and on the role of history in shaping literature and, particularly, on the possible reasons why a character underwent so many different depictions, going from the infamous criminal, to the fanatic, the victim, the rational hero, back to the fool and eventually back to the hero, but this time in a nationalistic tint.

2 From the First Accounts. Sulaymān the Infamous Assassin

General Kléber had been designated as commander of the French forces in Egypt by Napoleon upon his departure. When in June 1800 he was killed by Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, a student from Aleppo, the singular fact generated a great curiosity. The very first account of General Kléber's murder was available just after his trial, as the French printed many copies of the *Recueil des pièces relatives à la procédure et au jugement de Soleyman El-Hhaleby, assassin du général en chef Kléber* (Collection of pieces concerning the proceedings and judgment of Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, murderer of General in chief Kléber) at the National Press in Cairo and distributed then among the population. The leaflets were in three parts, one for each language: French, Arabic and Turkish,³ the main languages spoken in Egypt, and each part is about fifty-pages long.

The account opens with the report of the visit of General Kléber's corps (*Recueil* 1800, 3-4), citizen Protain's injuries (4) and then follows the interrogations of Sulaymān, who was recognized by Protain. Dialogues are reported in the third person. Sulaymān is asked about his origin, his religion, how long he had been in Cairo, why he was there and if he had connections with the Ottomans. As Sulaymān denies having killed General Kléber and justifies the injuries to his head

² I mean here what Genette calls a "massif" and "declared" hypertextuality (1982, 18-9).

³ I have looked for eventual discrepancies between the French and the Arabic version, but there are none.

as being caused during his arrest and not inflicted by Protain, General Menou orders that he is beaten “according to the local custom”: “l’accusé persistant dans ses dénégations, le Général a ordonné qu’il reçût la bastonnade suivant l’usage du pays” (*Recueil* 1800, 7). After that, the version changes: Sulaymān declares that he had come to Cairo to kill General Kléber, that he was promised money by the Janissaries’ Aga and that he, alone, planned and executed the murder.

Sulaymān also mentions the names of the three sheikhs he informed about his plan. Despite the fact that he says that they did not agree with his plan and tried to dissuade him, they are suspected accomplices and they are interrogated (*Recueil* 1800, 9-14). At this point, General Menou instructs a commission for the judgment of Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī and these instructions are included as an exact copy (*copie conforme*) in the leaflet (15). Then follow witnesses’ statements (17-19), the interrogations of the accused and cross interrogations (21-33).

The final report with the judgement comes as a touching conclusion to the story, since commissary Sartelon’s reconstruction of the facts include appreciation for General Kléber’s bravery (especially, *Recueil* 1800, 41) and French justice and clemency (36), in contrast to the Ottoman’s cowardice and cruelty (34). Sulaymān is described as an assassin (34, 35, 39), one who was already “sullied by crime” (36) and then became “excited by this crime” (37). Religion encourages him (39) and his firmness is taken as a sign of his fanaticism (39).

To the Egyptian audience of the time, the romantic note, exaggeration, climax and reticence added by Sartelon was certainly not as impactful as its officiality, granted by the formality of the narration. Every interrogation presents the date and the time and is signed by the accused and the French generals. The leaflets’ length, quotation of laws and signatures must have acted as rhetorical devices impressing the Egyptian people. At least this is the impression “the most illustrious historian of the time”, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ġabartī (Moreh, Tignor 1993, 11), wants to give to his reader:

The French distributed leaflets on the case in which they discussed the event and its particulars. They printed many copies in three languages: French, Turkish, and Arabic. I was going to ignore the leaflets because of their length and poor style due to the Frenchmen’s defective knowledge of Arabic, but then I observed that many people were eager to peruse the leaflets because they contained an account of the event and of the trial; which was indicative of the legal investigation and court procedure of the French who hold reason supreme, and do not profess any religion.

For, indeed, a reckless stranger treacherously attacked their leader and chief; they seized him, interrogated him; yet did not proceed to

kill either him or those named by him, on the mere basis of his confession, despite the fact that when they caught him they found on him the deadly weapon spattered with the blood of his commander and leader. Nay, they instituted a court procedure, summoned the assassin, and repeatedly questioned him orally, and under duress; then summed those named by the assassin, interrogated them individually and collectively, and only then, did they institute the court procedure in accordance with what the law prescribed. (al-Ġabartī [1880] 1994, 181-2)

Born in Ottoman Egypt in 1753-4, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ġabartī came from a long line of important scholars and prominent members of Cairo's religious elite. Son of an important *'ālim* (scholar of Islamic sciences), al-Ġabartī was the only one of many brothers to reach maturity. Like his father, he was cultured, received a good education, and became a famous scholar. He directly witnessed many of the facts he described in his texts and was famous for his three main works he wrote while he was still alive (Moreh, Tignor 1993, 7). al-Ġabartī was close to the French administration's activity, but had also strong links with the caste of the Mamelukes who were governing the country.

His first book, *Tārīḥ muddat al-Faransī bi-Miṣr* (Chronicle of the French Period in Egypt) depicts the first seven months of the French occupation of Egypt. It was written in 1798 "under the immediate impression of the events of the French occupation" (Moreh, Tignor 1993, 183), namely, "à chaud" (Raymond 1998, 4). *Maḏhar al-taqdīs bi-zawāl dawlat al-Faransī* (The Demonstration of Piety in the Demise of the French State), which was written in December 1801 after the liberation of the Grand Vizier Yūsuf, aims at exonerating the sheikh from the accusation of cooperation with the French (Raymond 1998, 4).

The story of Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī is included in the third volume of his last book, *Aġā'ib al-āṭār fī l-tarāġim wa-l-aḥbār* (The Marvelous Chronicles. Biographies and Events, called *History* hereafter), a comprehensive work written in two versions dealing with the history of Egypt from 1517 to 1806. In it, the historian included information he could verify from older witnesses, registers, tombstones and other chronicles (Moreh, Tignor 1993, 11). The book was a long-forbidden publication because of its criticism of Muḥammad 'Alī, the Viceroy of Egypt from 1805 until 1849. Only in 1880 was the entire work published and, for a long time, it was the only developed Egyptian point of view regarding the occupation (Delanoue 1982, 3).

al-Ġabartī wrote his *History* in a Cairo where the idea of history was changing. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Western reason brought by Napoleon clashed with a world dominated by a history seen through the glasses of the Koranic revelation (Chevallier et al. 1995, 16). For his closeness to the French social, religious and political background, al-Ġabartī can be considered an Occidental

(‘Abdallahī Aḥmad 2017), since the historian’s narration expresses the ideas he had assimilated during his formation, with judgments about men and events, and reveals what he thinks about the French expedition (Delanoue 1982, 3). Especially the account of Kléber’s murder shows al-Ġabartī’s admiration of the French administration (Delanoue 1982, 81). Leaving the place to the French narration, al-Ġabartī’s own account of Kléber’s murder occupies a couple of pages, in which Sulaymān is described as “a person from Aleppo and a reckless stranger” (al-Ġabartī [1880] 1994, 149-51).

A story more detached from the facts than al-Ġabartī’s comes from Niqūlā al-Turkī (known as Nakoula el-Turk, 1763-1828), a Syrian⁴ Christian historian from that time whose *Aḥbār al-mašyaḥa al-fransiyya fī Miṣr* (News of the French Chieftom in Egypt, 1798-1804) was translated and published in French in 1839.⁵ Like al-Ġabartī, al-Turkī expresses admiration for the leaflets the French printed (al-Turkī 1839, 190), but he enriches his account with details that are not mentioned in the French leaflet and differ from it at several points. Al-Turkī describes Sulaymān as “a poor guy in ragged clothes” (al-Turkī 1839, 188), notes that Sulaymān spoke with effrontery during the French trial (190), and his only judgement comes when he depicts Sulaymān as “a heinous killer” (*al-qātil al-ṣanī’*) (190).

A more romanced version of the story insisting on religious zeal comes from Sir Sydney Smith, the British naval commander in the eastern Mediterranean, with whom Kléber was negotiating when he died, according to which Sulaymān was “an obscure fanatic” inspired by Allah and further pushed to act by the Aga of Janissaries at Gaza (Parsons 2009, 65). Of course, many accounts of the facts are written from the Western stance. The point of view of the occupier is expressed already within al-Ġabartī’s account in the trial documents. Then, for instance, in an introduction to *Napoleon in Egypt* – the English translation by Shmuel Moreh and Robert L. Tignor of al-Ġabartī’s *Tārīḥ muddat al-Faransīs bi-Miṣr* – Tignor describes Sulaymān as “a religious enthusiast from Aleppo” (Moreh, Tignor 1993, 11).

3 Sulaymān in the Sixties Speaks to the Present

The first writer to make Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī a protagonist of an intentional fictive tale is Zakariyyā Tāmir (born in 1931) with “al-Ġarīma” (The Crime), a surreal story included in the collection *Rabī’*

⁴ He was born in Dayr al-Qamar, in modern-day Lebanon.

⁵ M. Desgranges Ainé, secretary and interpreter of the King of France, translated and edited the book in a bilingual version (French and Arabic) to give students of Arabic a tool for their learning and to spread knowledge of French glory (al-Turkī 1839, vi).

fī l-rammād (Spring in the Ashes, 1963), the second of the eleven short story collections by the Syrian-born author and journalist. The first collection, *Ṣahīl al-ḡawād al-abyaḍ* (The Neighing of the White Horse, 1960), had brought him success and a job as a government official in the Writers and Publishing Department of the Syrian Ministry of Culture (1960-3). At that time, Zakariyyā Tāmīr had already developed his typical style, where the economy of the text and surreal sarcasm reflect on the reality of oppressive regimes.

“Al-Ġarīma” is told by an omniscient narrator and starts with Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī walking in the streets, when two tall men stop him, ask for his ID and force him to follow them. In the room they enter there is a metal desk and a man with black moustache, who Sulaymān names “the black man”. Acting like a policeman, the black man reads from some papers that during the night of 6 June, Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī dreamt of killing General Kléber (Tāmīr [1963] (1994), 32), and asks Sulaymān if that is true. Sulaymān denies the statement, saying that he does not know General Kléber. The black man calls the witnesses and three persons enter. He recognizes them straight away and, when they talk, he addresses them as his father, mother and sister. The three witnesses each have a different version of the murder. This fact makes it clear that they have been forced to accuse him. Anyway, their testimony is taken as reliable and they are dismissed.

Sulaymān reaffirms his innocence, but the black man replies that they do not need his confession to prove his guilt. He continues reading from the papers:

On the third of April, at three minutes past eleven, Sulaymān stares at the moon, and says to himself, “The moon is happy as it does not live in a city ruled by General Kléber” (Tāmīr [1963] (1994), 35)⁶

The black man reads other private actions and thoughts from Sulaymān, then he smiles and announces to him that he will disappear at six o'clock. Sulaymān panics as it is almost six and he hardly believes that this is happening for real. He thinks that perhaps it is a dream. At six o'clock, Sulaymān is undressed, then he is slowly cut, one piece after another while some music is played, which the black man enjoys. First the fingers of one hand, then his whole arm and the other arm are cut. The black man orders the two men to hurry up as he has an appointment; while he thinks of his beloved wife, the two men talk about what they are going to do after work, and then one of them sinks a knife in Sulaymān's neck, killing him. Sulaymān's head separates from his body, while his eyes remain open. Before going

⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the Author.

out, the black man orders the two men to clean the room. The story ends with the two men complaining about that loudly.

In Tāmīr's tale, violence is perpetrated as a common action. Carelessness and cruelty prevail over humanity and compassion. Visions, memories from Sulaymān's childhood, comments and scenes from the city, together with the pain and anger Sulaymān feels, intersect with the events happening in the room, dilatating the time and the space of the action, as if the whole scene was a movie or a nightmare. The story is set in a contemporary city, any contemporary city in a country ruled by a police state. Traces of a faraway past are noted by Sulaymān in the three witnesses' faces, which are yellow and their clothes are covered with dust, "as if they slept hundreds of years in a tomb" (Tāmīr [1963] (1994), 33) and in the hand of the black man, strangely crackled by wrinkles (34).

The papers the black man reads recall the trial proceedings and prove that testers can lie. Moreover, the process is like a judgment on intentions and the black man acts as an authoritative judge with full powers. As in al-Ġabartī's narrative, documents are meant to contain the truth, and upon them, and against Sulaymān's declaration, the judgment is based. Set in present time, the historical event presents analogies with the despotic regime's military violence against the smallest sign of rebellion. In this story, Sulaymān is far from being a criminal. Instead, he is a boy imagining a better world. Kléber's homicide being barely evoked, Sulaymān appears as the victim of "the crime" mentioned in the title, a victim recalling the present situation and whose act of rebellion is eliminated on its possible start.

Only one year after "al-Ġarīma", in 1964, the Egyptian playwright Alfred Faraġ (1939-2005) wrote *Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī*, a play inspired by al-Ġabartī's partial account of Kléber's murder. The author's attention does not only turn to the event itself, but also to the narration. In a letter, Alfred Faraġ asked his brother Nabīl to suggest a reliable edition of all the four books of al-Ġabartī's *History*, that had been kept in good condition and would be available as soon as possible (Faraġ [1963?] 2009, 89). In Egypt, in 1962, Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī had already been the protagonist of the 27th volume of the *Silsilat al-qiṣaṣ al-tarbiyya* (Series of Educational Stories), edited by the Maktabat Naḥḍat Miṣr (The Library for Egypt's Renaissance). The 32-page-long version for children of the story was in line with the Nationalist programme and its control history (see Di-Capua 2009, ch. 9).

In a foreword to his play, Alfred Faraġ expresses his play's intentions. After recalling Kléber's murder, the author proceeds with a veritable essay about the suspicious truthfulness of the story that has been propelled by historiography. First, he draws the wider context of previous and succeeding events showing al-Azhar's power. Interestingly, he begins his argument by quoting a description that *al-miṭāq* (the charter) provides of the institution. "The charter" is The

National Charter that President Nasser had presented a few years earlier, on 21 May 1962, at Cairo University (Nāṣir 1962). What follows is the extract Faraĝ quoted in his text:

It was not the French campaign in Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century that awoke Egypt in that time, as some historians say. Instead, the French campaign, when it arrived in Egypt, found al-Azhar in ferment with new trends crossing its walls to the life of the entire Egypt. (Faraĝ [1964] 1988, 9)

In the words of his President, Faraĝ must have found it crucial to read, re-read and re-write Sulaymān's story. Indeed, the continuity between past and present is a central assertion in historical plays of all times and styles (Lindenberger 1975, 6). More than a theatre of the historical fact, historical drama is a theatre of reflection upon history where the authentication of facts is not the main concern, but rather the main issue is a debate on what history does. Then, the playwright can even invent, working history as a literary mouldable material and not as a proven immobile fact (Fix 2010, 13-4).

Keeping as a key-concept his argument that al-Azhar was a central institution, Faraĝ argues that Sulaymān's declaration could be fake and he undertakes research to support his reflections. He recollects facts previous to Kléber's murder (Faraĝ [1964] 1988, 9-11) showing al-Azhar's prominent position on many questions, particularly concerning justice (10). To support his view, Faraĝ quotes sources other than al-Ġabartī and reports an extract from another famous history, *Tārīḥ al-ḥaraka al-qawmiyya fī Miṣr wa-taṭawwūr niẓām al-ḥukūm fī Miṣr* (The History of the National Movement and the Development of the Administration in Egypt) by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Rāfi'ī (1889-1966), who wrote his books beginning in 1926. Faraĝ quotes a text - without mentioning its sources - maintaining that, after Kléber's murder, harsher measures were taken against al-Azhar (Faraĝ [1964] 1988, 11).

A study on al-Rāfi'ī's works reveals that a "national epic" constitutes a uniform topic of his sixteen-volume history (Di-Capua 2004). In January 1952, al-Rāfi'ī's *Tārīḥ al-ḥaraka al-qawmiyya* was the second history book banned by the Egyptian monarchy, while the first was al-Ġabartī's *History*. Several months later, in the wake of the July Revolution, al-Rāfi'ī's status had changed dramatically. His books were reprinted and widely distributed, and the president quoted him in his speeches. By the early 1960s, al-Rāfi'ī had become Egypt's most recognized and celebrated historian of the twentieth century and was selected as Egypt's candidate for the Nobel Prize (Di-Capua 2004, 429). The historian al-Rāfi'ī presented the French domination as a detailed account of an uncompromising popular struggle. "The various skirmishes, incidents, and clashes were treated as the outcome of this inherent nationalist consciousness" (Di-Capua 2004,

437). Everything is depicted as the outcome of nationalist revolutionary consciousness, popular forces, and heroic leaders of the nationalist factor and its agents are the central thread that runs through his Egypt's modern history (Di-Capua 2004, 437). Faraḡ's rewriting, then, must be considered impregnated with such ideology that permeated the reading of history during his time. As a matter of fact, Nasser's words might be inspired by the *History* of al-Rāfi'ī.

Faraḡ then maintains that history might have recorded a fake testimony and provides evidence for his theories presenting a polemic view on the torture Sulaymān went through and claiming that his confession, which occurred during the second interrogation, might be a lie resulting from a moment of reflection. He might have wanted to avoid the involvement of dozens of sheikhs from al-Azhar who must have been acquainted with his intentions. Then, it could be convenient for the French to believe Sulaymān for several reasons. First, if Sulaymān was paid by the Aga, as he admitted, the Ottomans would be responsible for the murder. On the one hand, this could provide a strategic position for the French to continue their long cold war with the Ottomans and would also prevent another rebellion from al-Azhar if the latter was responsible instead.

Faraḡ also complains about the scarcity of information it provides on Sulaymān. The point of departure of his play will be the one history has not provided answers to:

Who was that mysterious daring boy?

Which blood flowed into his veins, which feverish and rational ideas possessed him all the way from Giza to al-Azbakiyya on that memorable day... step by step behind the General of the French?

Which motive filled his heart when his hand was grasping the handle of the dangerous knife? (Faraḡ [1964] 1988, 8)

Nevertheless, the playwright goes further as he also warns the reader that he wants to explore the context of the fact, as history has reported it (Faraḡ [1964] 1988, 9). Indeed, Faraḡ considered al-Ġabartī both as a historian and as a writer, "a sarcastic social writer, who dips humour in bitterness" (Faraḡ 1989, 28). Equally, as we have seen with al-Rāfi'ī's *History*, the reading of past facts and their consequent perception differs on the basis of the context of reception.⁷

A detail that shocked Faraḡ was that Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī has been preserved in history by means of his decapitated head being dis-

⁷ To have a wider perspective on the matter, Faraḡ must have consulted other sources as well, since in the play Sulaymān presents a paper to Kléber to attract his attention (Faraḡ [1964] 1988, 153) and this detail does not exist in al-Ġabartī, while it appears in al-Turkī's version of facts (1839, 189).

played in a museum in Paris, identified as belonging to the assassin of General Kléber. Faraĝ recalls that in the foreword:

And then his head. The very head of Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī! Embalmed and dried, can be seen today by visitors from inside a showcase in the Museum of the Criminals in Paris. A tag on it says: "A murderer's head. The name: Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī"! (Faraĝ [1964] 1988, 8)⁸

Sulaymān's depiction in the play overturns this view, so that, throughout the play, Sulaymān emerges as a tragic hero, motivated by a rational sense of justice. He follows his full honesty in a world ruled by tyranny and corruption and - within his Hamletic doubt - he alone fights the tyrant. To make this aspect more meaningful, Faraĝ compares Sulaymān to Saladin, another real character deeply shaped by literature and cinema. The first time he appears in the play, alone in his room, Sulaymān impersonates him:

Sulaymān If your name was Richard and you had a lion-heart, as you are called, be aware that I would be Saladin. Don't think, oh king of the English people, that the earth of the Messiah, peace be upon him, blessed you or provided you with immunity. You're greedy on the harvest that we sow from green olives. Stay in your place! Woe unto you! If you were bringing us something, as you claim, then throw your weapons away and advance in peace. But if you were approaching to invade, as it seems from your mounts, advance alone towards Saladin and come to me man to man, sword to sword and stop bloodshed of your men and servants... (Faraĝ [1964] 1988, 31-2)

Behind the rational justification of the political assassination of a tyrant, there is a specific allusion to Faraĝ's times. Indeed, some scenes from the play are reminiscent of Egypt during the sixties and particularly, the impact of the government's secret service on life under despotic rule. When Sulaymān says that the only person "the ruler of the colony" has to be scared of is the writer or the artist, the reference is not Kléber for sure, but is more likely to be Nasser instead, as some critics have noticed (Badawi 1987, 175). The play even disrupts the logics of time by inserting anachronisms in it, such as references to Bertolt Brecht's theatre, Thomas Paine and Luigi Pirandello, which are aimed to create a *V-Effekt* and stimulate a reflection on history writing (Potenza 2018, 92, 110-11).

⁸ According to Faraĝ and other journalists, Sulaymān's head was and is still an exhibit at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris.

Interestingly, all critics of the play *Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī* refer to the hypotext before focusing on its text. For instance, Luwīs ‘Awaḍ, who analyzes the play to show that it is a “beautiful failure”, summarizes a part of al-Ġabartī’s account (Awaḍ 1967, 366). As one of the first pieces of information offered, Laila Debs defines Faraġ’s text as “a tamed version of the historical material found in al-Ġabartī’s chronicle” (Debs 1993, 216). Amīr Iskandar begins his article on the play by claiming that history says a few words on a matter and then it passes over in silence (Iskandar [1965] 2002). Maḥmūd Amīn al-‘Ālim insists on the role as historian Faraġ takes in this play, contesting the sources (al-‘Ālim 2002, 69-70). Commenting on the play, Rasheed El-Enany remarks that in contemporary Arab history books Sulaymān is portrayed as a hero (El-Enany 2000, 184).⁹ These reactions to the play show that the work leads inevitably to a reflection on its sources and on the narration of history.

Moreover, the critics who studied Faraġ’s play, who are mostly from the Arab world, but also Western scholars, all speak of the historical Sulaymān in either neutral or positive appreciation. Critics contemporary with Faraġ were more inclined to define Sulaymān as a hero and take Faraġ’s version as more truthful than history itself.¹⁰ And so, al-‘Ālim exalts the logic of Sulaymān (al-‘Ālim 2002, 69) and Iskandar appreciates the tragic character’s desire for freedom, which opposes the silence of history on him ([1965] 2002). These comments, like the play itself, are in line with Nasserist Egypt, where the revolutionary movement resulted in a control of history, “above all, Nasserism was a quest for a kind of dignity that formed the inner meaning of the word *independence*” (Di-Capua 2009, 282; italics in the original). The perception of Sulaymān’s story and of Faraġ’s play, is clearly modulated by the circumstances in which those comments were written, so that later critics tend to be more neutral.

And so, El-Enany tries to be as objective as possible, referring to Sulaymān only by name (2000, 182), Laila Debs advances some positive judgment by speaking of the French army’s invasion: “a young Azharite Syrian scholar who assassinates the invading French army commander-in-chief in Egypt” (1993, 215) as does Dina Amin, who describes him as the historical figure Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, who assassinated the French military commander Kléber in order to free

⁹ Today school history books in Egypt speak about a Syrian student from al-Azhar who killed Kléber without providing any further detail or judgment (Nawār et al. s.d., 8; Maḥsūb et al. s.d. 51).

¹⁰ An exception is Luwīs ‘Awaḍ, who believes that history has already been even too clear with regard to the murder. He accuses Faraġ of having invented the religious motive, which according to him is superfluous to the tragic hero (‘Awaḍ 1967). However, as we have seen, the religious delirium mentioned in the French trial quoted by Ġabartī and Faraġ moderates it.

Egypt of the French occupation at the turn of the nineteenth century (2008, 88); Atef Ahmed El-Sayyid provides a neutral description: “the Azharite Syrian scholar who murdered General Kléber” (1995, 168); and Nehad Selaiha describes the facts without judgment (2004). Singularly, the meagre article on the French *Wikipedia* page about Sulaymān even quotes Faraġ’s play as a historical reference (*Wikipedia.fr* s.d.).

A journalist has recently claimed that if Faraġ had not written his play, Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī today would just be “the man who killed General Kléber”, meaning that the perception of his act changed thanks to Faraġ’s play (‘Azzām 2018). From 1965 until today, that story has been rewritten many times and many other pictures of Sulaymān have been depicted.

4 Two Recently Rediscovered Manuscripts and Two New Sulaymāns

From the sixties on, many streets have been named after Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī both in Egypt and in Syria: one is in Cairo, in the al-Azbakiyya district, where Sulaymān killed Kléber, one in Rhoda Island, one in New Cairo, but there is also a small alley in Alexandria; in Damascus, where also a school is named after Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, and in Aleppo a whole district carries his name; many streets exist everywhere in Syria and also in Riyad and in Jeddah there is a Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī Street.¹¹

Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī is shown as a brave man in an Egyptian television series entitled *Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī* dating from 1976 written by Maḥfūz ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, and in an Egyptian film.¹² *Adieu Bonaparte* (in Arabic *Widā’an Būnābart*), the famous Egyptian-French historical drama film written and directed in 1985 by Yūsuf Šāhīn (Youssef Chahine), was an entry in the Cannes Film Festival and offered to the world the Egyptian people’s perspective of Napoleon’s campaign in Egypt.

In 2005, in Syria, a petition from intellectuals, journalists, politicians and students asked for Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī’s skull to be returned to his homeland (al-Ḥayr 2011). In 2007, the Syrian journalist Biyānkā Māḍiyya wrote *Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, Awwal muntaqim li-l-‘arab min al-‘udwān al-ġarbī al-ḥadīṯ* (Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī. The first Avenger of the Arabs against the Modern Occidental Tyranny) in support of

¹¹ This information is based on the present: I do not know precisely when those places were named after Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī.

¹² This was directed by Muḥammad al-Sa’id Yūsuf and it was shown recently (2013) in a national cinema chain.

this campaign. In an article dating from the same year, she announced the Egyptian intellectuals' solidarity (*al-taqāmun*) with the Syrian national campaign and defined Sulaymān as a martyr hero (*al-šahīd al-baṭal*) of the [Muslim] community (Māḍiyya 2007). Her book aims at giving a complete and truthful portrait of the hero, collecting all the available sources about him (Yūnis 2011). In July 2011 another petition was raised in Cairo's Tahrir Square to ask for Sulaymān's skull from the Musée de l'Homme (al-Ḥayr 2011). It seems that 50,000 signatures were collected on that occasion alone (Ismā'īl 2011).

And so, in the first ten years of the twenty-first century, especially in Syria, but also in Egypt, TV programmes and articles about Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī have multiplied, most of them spreading the narrative of the martyr hero. Many programmes have had tens of thousands of views on YouTube (*DreamsTV channel* 2011; *al-Tārīḥ al-Islāmī* (Abū al-Zubayr) 2015; Mekameleen TV 2016; *Qanāt al-šarq* 2018; *Mixture Canal* 2018), but there are many more private videos with fewer views in recent years. Some articles firmly support the idea of Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī being a hero (Māḍiyya 2007; Yūnis 2007, 2011; Ismā'īl 2011; Ġamīl 2017), but a few others are neutral (Ġamāl al-Dīn 2018). Perhaps as a result of renewed interest in Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī's story, *al-Ġarīma* was republished online in 2016 (*al-Anṭūlūgīā* 2016).

In 2005, the Egyptian novelist Muḥammad Ġibrīl (b. 1938) wrote *al-Ġūdariyya*. 'An *tārīḥ al-Ġabartī bi-tašarruf* (*al-Ġūdariyya*. A free adaptation of Ġabartī's *History*) (Ġibrīl 2005), in which the historian's narration of the French campaign is deliberately questioned and reversed and where the protagonists of the novel are the sheikh al-Bakrī and his daughter Zaynab. From the same generation as Alfred Faraġ, with *al-Ġūdariyya*, Ġibrīl examines the sources, then "moves to the past to write about the present" (Šam'ūn 2017). In this novel, little space is given to Sulaymān, who is described as "a student from Aleppo" (*ṭālib 'ilm min Ḥalab*) (Ġibrīl 2005, 201), and whose trial is commented on considering the partiality that ruled it. If *al-Ġūdariyya* is in line with the sixties' way of reviving the past, other novels are more involved with today's debate around Sulaymān.

As Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī has now been explicitly appropriated by the rhetoric of the Syrian regime, appreciation or contrast in regard to this character can be linked to corresponding feelings felt for this controversial government. Two novels, instead, are more involved with the recent facts regarding Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī. It might be no coincidence then if two recent novels on the Napoleonic campaign both use the *topos* of the rediscovered unpublished manuscript, a narratological device that is commonly used to legitimate one's work and demonstrate its authenticity. *Al-Imāma wa-l-qubba'a* (The Turban and the Hat, 2008) is a fictional memoir of an unnamed apprentice of al-Ġabartī's by the acclaimed Egyptian writer Šun'allāh Ibrāhīm and *Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, al-miḥraz wa-l'ayn* (Sulaymān from

Aleppo. The Awl and the Eye, 2016), by a scarcely known Syrian writer called Dāwūd Abū Šuqra, is based upon a fictional manuscript on Sulaymān's story that a Syrian family had been handing down for generations. Apart from sharing the rediscovered manuscript device, the two novels are different in the style, in their message and in their author's experience.

Şun'allāh Ibrāhīm's *al-'Imāma wa-l-qubba'a* seems detached from the recent issues involving Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī. From the same generation as Alfred Faraĝ and like the playwright, Şun'allāh Ibrāhīm was a journalist when he was arrested, in 1959, during political purges ordered by President Ğamāl 'Abd al-Nāşir (Gamal Abdel Nasser).¹³ Like Faraĝ, in prison, Ibrāhīm too smuggled his notes on cigarette paper (Starkey 2016, 22). Ibrāhīm's first novel, *Tilka al-rā'iḥa* (The Smell of It and Other Stories, 1966), was politically subversive and challenged Arabic literary orthodoxy. As a matter of fact, the book was banned from being published in Egypt in its uncensored version only twenty years later. The writer left Egypt from 1968 until 1974.

All of Ibrāhīm's novels are directly affected by their literary, social, historical and political context, both in their production and in their reception, displaying their commitment in contemporary society. President Anwar al-Sādāt's censorship criticized in *al-Laġna* (The Committee, 1981) led to this book being published in Lebanon. *Ḍāt* (Zaat, 1992), coming after seven years silence from *Bayrūt, Bayrūt* (Beirut, Beirut, 1984) – centred on the Lebanese civil war – conceptualizes an ahistorical form of subjectivity that suits its context of production, the 1980s, when Arab and Egyptian historians, and cultural commentators widely debated the so-called crisis of historical consciousness novel (Di-Capua 2012).

Al-'Imāma wa-l-qubba'a presents al-Ğabartī's apprentice proletarian view of the French occupation of Egypt which opposes his master's bourgeois version. Through his diary, the reader is introduced to the events, but also to his deepest thoughts, his friends and his relationships involving even the French occupiers, as he has an affair with no less than Pauline Fourès, who served as Napoleon's mistress. The diary starts in July 1798 and ends in August 1801, with al-Ğabartī dictating to his apprentice a revised account of the French occupation that will clear him "of the charge of collaboration with the French" (Ibrāhīm 2008, 328). The structure of the novel is reminiscent of the annals structure of al-Ğabartī's *History* with the student deciding to imitate the master, recording his diaries as well. Having the same structure and recounting the same events, the different perspective on the facts appears clearly, while the closing note on the "new book, which will be the same as the old one" (Ibrāhīm 2008, 328) under-

13 On censorship and freedom of speech in Egypt during the sixties, see Stagh 1993.

lines how the historian is ready to change his version of the facts according to the benefit he draws from it.

Al-ʿImāma wa-l-qubbaʿa is linked to another of Ibrāhīm’s novels dating from the same year, *al-Qānūn al-Farānsī* (French Law, 2008), which focuses on the same topic, namely the French occupation of Egypt. This time the perspective is from a contemporary Egyptian professor who travels from Cairo to France to participate in a conference about the French occupation of Egypt. The professor presents a recently discovered manuscript by one of al-Jabarti’s pupils. The context is 2005 France, shocked by a period of intense civil unrest following the recent promulgation of a law dealing with aspects of the French colonial legacy. Commenting on the topic of *al-ʿImāma wa-l-qubbaʿa*, *al-Qānūn al-Farānsī* considers how another manuscript could give new insights on history and historiography and complicates the fictional intertextual weave that lies behind *al-ʿImāma wa-l-qubbaʿa*. Links to current affairs are to be found in the American invasion of Iraq and the *good* principles that accompany it, as well as the local forces’ complicity, making it a “a real fake historical novel” (*Lelitteraire.com* 2012).

In Ibrāhīm’s novel, the apprentice meets Sulaymān a few days before the murder and immediately sympathises with him and his idea of *ḡihād* (Ibrāhīm 2008, 275). The day after, the apprentice looks for Sulaymān to know about him, his studies in al-Azhar, his trip to Jerusalem and his will to be a martyr fighting the French, because he heard that “every hundred years, God sends somebody to renovate the religion” (Ibrāhīm 2008, 276). The day after, a Friday, the apprentice goes to al-Azhar for prayers and Sulaymān tells him that the angels are preparing to meet him in Paradise.

Rumours about Kléber’s murder reach the apprentice. The day after Kléber’s death, once he knows the news about the interrogations, the apprentice notes his fear that Sulaymān could mention his name. He is so scared that he cannot sleep. Reading the copies of the trial his master has brought home, the apprentice does not doubt their truthfulness nor does he comment on the punishment’s cruelty. He also reports his master’s appreciation of the trial organized by the French with neither positive nor negative comment.

On the day of Kléber’s funeral and Sulaymān’s impalement, he witnesses both spectacular shows of power that he describes in detail (Ibrāhīm 2008, 280-1). The day after he takes only one note:

Thursday, 19 June

I didn’t sleep yesterday. The nightmares assaulted me and I saw myself more than once next to Sulaymān bound on the pole. (Ibrāhīm 2008, 281)

Ibrāhīm decides not to give his character a critical view on Sulaymān’s sentencing. However, he makes this episode central to the narration

as the protagonist personally meets Sulaymān and is affected with contrasting feelings. An initial fascination is followed by an interest in his project and then detachment and fear – when the French discover Sulaymān (manifested in a sleepless night) – that transforms into terror (manifested through the nightmares) showing the effects of Sulaymān’s act used by the French as a deterrent to possible revolts. In this sense, Ibrāhīm’s point of view is similar to Faraġ’s play. With Faraġ, Ibrāhīm, shares also a despotic view upon General Kléber, who says that Egypt must be squeezed like a lemon to establish a durable colony (Ibrāhīm 2008, 269). However, Sulaymān’s depiction is different.

Justified by a sense of duty fighting the usurper that comes from a religious background and is propelled by indirect incitements from al-Azhar and a fanatic attitude, Sulaymān’s murder is not for sure the deed of a hero, nor the action of a criminal. Moreover, in Ibrāhīm’s novel, it is clear that Sulaymān did nothing useful for his people. On the contrary, his actions allowed the French to be more repressive. If we consider the ongoing debate about Sulaymān, it seems that Ibrāhīm’s description wants to oppose it. Indirectly, he opposes the Syrian regime’s narrative exalting (and creating the image of) the hero.

On the contrary, published by the Syrian Ministry of Culture in 2016, *Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, al-miḥraz wa al-‘ayn* is directly linked to recent developments in the perception of Sulaymān and sustains them.

The novel departs from the petition in Tahrir Square, of which a man reads from a piece of a newspaper put under his dish (presumably in a popular restaurant). While the man reads the newspaper, he sees himself as a child looking at a picture of Kléber’s murder in his brother’s history book. The child is still too young to read well, but is curious about the strange picture, where a poor guy is stabbing a man dressed like a military leader (Abū Šuqra 2016, 9). The day after, he asks his father about the fact and, to let him know the real story about Sulaymān “the hero”, his father takes another book from a wooden box. Forty years have passed, but the memory is clear and the man still keeps the book as a precious thing. The author of the book is anonymous, but there are traces suggesting he was in contact with Sa’īd ‘Abd al-Qādir, a student from al-Azhar. The genealogy of the book and how it arrived from Egypt to the family and then to father’s hands is recounted in detail, as the man recalls his father telling him when he was a child.

Then there follows the account from the manuscript, a detailed third-person account of salient facts from the last years of the French campaign in Egypt. The first time, Sulaymān appears as the guy with the green eyes, a feature that distinguishes him from the Egyptians, in a conversation with other people from al-Azhar commenting on the cruelty of the French mandate. His thinking is extremely pure and

his speech is sentimental, perhaps excessively so, as he even declares that in his heart there is an immense love for all the people he has met in Egypt (Abū Šuqra 2016, 21).

As in *al-ʿImāma wa-l-qubbaʿa*, in this novel too the protagonist is involved in a love story and Sulaymān's desire to come back to Cairo is linked to the unconditioned will of marrying a friend's sister. However, the father of the girl will promise her to a boy who will prove to be an opportunist because when the French are approaching, he steals all of her possessions and leaves her in Cairo, while he departs to al-Minya (Abū Šuqra 2016, 131). Eventually, she tragically dies. Studying as a foreigner in al-Azhar, Sulaymān finds himself hosted and in contact with the most important personalities, the closest being sheikh al-Ġawsqī. His knowledge of Cairo and of the most eminent persons, will allow him to be proposed by Aga Yassin the assassination of General Kléber in return for his father's release (201), who had been incarcerated because he could not afford to pay his taxes to the Ottomans (177). During the negotiation, he even meets Ibrahim Pasha (176).

Sulaymān lives through the two Cairo revolts (Abū Šuqra 2016, 63, 222) and knows the violence of the French, which is carefully depicted by the writer (73, 180, 223). Napoleon has lost his human qualities (182), while Kléber is obsessed by victory (227). He is no less aware of the Ottomans' cruelty. However, the writer of the manuscript underlines that the French were the first to conquer Cairo, the Ottomans not counting because they did it in the name of God (165). Sulaymān considers Egypt as his country (*waṭan*, 76 and *balād*, 86) and a motive for his murderous act is the *ġihād* to free it (86). Kléber's murder is shown as a rational killing,¹⁴ while the trial is considered a setup (251) where three innocents are found guilty along with Sulaymān. The manuscript ends with the image of Kléber's corpse being given a burial while Sulaymān's corpse is left for days on the pole to be eaten by birds (255).

The last chapter returns to the present, so to the restaurant and to the newspaper piece about the petition, which the man continues reading and then comments on, wishing that Sulaymān could come back to his country (*waṭan*) for which he sacrificed himself and be honoured there (Abū Šuqra 2016, 260).

Using the expedient of an existing book serving as an archive, like the newspaper quoted at the beginning, which is an extract from a real document, this story of Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī displays itself as true. However, one is brought to consider that such a manuscript with detailed descriptions of intimate dialogues, reflections and facts involv-

¹⁴ The French trial documents mention that Sulaymān killed Kléber with a dagger, while in this novel Sulaymān uses an awl (*miḥraz*), from which the novel's title comes.

ing both Sulaymān, Bonaparte, Kléber and some sheikhs, namely all the characters involved in the story, narrated by an external omniscient narrator is unrealistic, beyond being tedious for the unneeded quantity of details. In these regards, this novel deeply differs from *al-ʿImāma wa-l-qubbaʿa*, where the intertextual weave generates a sort of game sustaining the plausible existence of the manuscript.

Compared to chronicles of the time, and particularly to al-Ġabartī, many anachronisms emerge. Considerations on the facts that Ottomans were Muslim and so they did not count as invaders certainly compromise the truthful perception of Islam in the past. The use of *waṭan* intended as 'country' did not exist in al-Ġabartī, where it is used as 'homeland'.¹⁵ The exaltation of sheikh Sulaymān al-Ġawsqī seems more animated by a will to restore the image of this character and make a hero out of him – as Syrian propaganda is doing with programmes and articles – more than respecting the historical sources. And of course, Sulaymān too emerges as a hero. He is brave, respectful and determined, motivated both by the *ǧihād* and his father's release. The man's reflections concluding the book could not more clearly manifest the adherence to the cause of the return of the body of the national hero.

5 Conclusions

The controversial image of Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī – the criminal, the victim, the hero – leads us to reflect on the role of history in shaping literature and, *vice versa*, on the role of literature in shaping history. From the first account, which was created within a few days after the fact, the events regarding Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī were narrativized, namely, they were ordered and composed in a way that, more than describing a past action, their emplotment aims at a purpose in the present (White 1980), the story of Kléber (and Sulaymān) becoming a direct tool for the French militaries to legitimize their violence, including Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī's punishment, and to increase their authority in Egypt. Likewise, al-Ġabartī has used Sulaymān's story to exalt the French authorities.

In the sixties, two singular stories appear. On the one hand, in "al-Ġarīma", Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī becomes a symbol of the victim, while in Faraġ's play, he symbolizes the hero. On the surface, the two descriptions seem opposed to each other. However, in both cases the narration about Sulaymān comes as a response to the present and

¹⁵ In his *History*, al-Ġabartī uses the noun "*waṭan*" twenty times, every time it opposes one's "*waṭan*" to another Arabic country, where the person is at that moment (al-Ġabartī [1880] 1966).

serves to comment and criticize especially the present, but it can also apply to any autocratic regime. Faraġ's play, while criticizing Nasser's despotism, was entirely steeped in the regime's propaganda and for the first time created the idea of Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, the Pan-Arabic hero. Zakariyyā Tāmīr sets his story in the present and uses an absurdist style. Faraġ's play, instead, is set in the past, but contains references to the present, conveying also a general contestation about the making of history and substituting Sulaymān's motives with new plausible ones. That message was so well delivered that some consider the play as a historical source and for others it is considered to be the cause of today's revival of Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī.

The two twentieth-century novels use the same strategy of the rediscovered manuscript, but they pursue different purposes. On the one hand, Ṣun'allāh Ibrāhīm inserts the story of Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī within a wider narration on Napoleon's campaign in Egypt, giving him enough space to deconstruct the narrative Syrian and Egyptian media have recently developed and taking instead the old colonialist story written by the French and al-Ġabartī, wherein Sulaymān is a fool. That move goes clearly against the present cultural politics of the Syrian regime. Moreover, like Faraġ, Ibrāhīm defies al-Ġabartī's narration, opposing another point of view, his apprentice's, and contests the idea of an absolute history, especially at the end, when he exposes the narrativization of past events. On the other hand, Dāwūd Abū Ṣuqra writes a novel entirely dedicated to Sulaymān. Published by the Syrian Ministry of Culture, *Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī, al-miḥraz wa al-'ayn* not only affirms the idea of Sulaymān as the national hero, but it also advocates for another historical character (Sulaymān al-Ġawsqī) as a new hero. In both novels, the response to the present propaganda could not be more direct.

If we are supposed to learn the lessons from the past - *historia magistra vitae* - from the story of Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī we can learn that consciously deleting and reconstructing the past according to today's need is a dangerous practice, simply because this has nothing to do with the past. In 2019, the rhetoric about Sulaymān the hero seems to be working, since a Syrian journalist defines Jules (Ġūl) Ġammāl - a Syrian military officer who was killed during the Suez crisis - a Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī of the twentieth century (Qadrī 2019). Who Sulaymān *really* was might be of little interest now. Studying who Sulaymān *is* today could help us in better understanding present-day society through the myths it needs.

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Raccontarsi con le macerie: voce e autorialità in *Fihris* di Sinan Antoon

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Abstract The great expansion of post-occupation Iraqi fiction, with its overall departure from social realism and its exploration of new genres, has brought along a new conceptualization of the Author. This paper aims to study how a peculiar figure of authoriality is both invoked and projected through narrative voices in Sinan Antoon's *Fihris* (2016). A complex and multi-layered text, Antoon's novel is narrated by human and non-human voices. Yet, despite the scattered and fragmented surface of narration, a hierarchical, almost concentric organizational principle is provided by the relations between the main narrators in a context of metalepsis. The analysis will focus on the strategies of authentication employed by narrators of different diegetic levels in the novel, from the short stories embedded, to the further level of authority provided by the autobiographical elements in the narrative frame.

Keywords Iraqi Novel. Sinan Antoon. Voice. Authoriality. Testimoniality.

Sommario 1 Introduzione. – 2 Metodologia e ambito dell'analisi. – 3 *Muṣārakhat al-'ashyā'*: il «*Fihris*» di Wadūd. – 4 Namir, Sinan Antoon: la testimonialità oltre l'archivio. – 5 Conclusioni.



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1 Introduzione

La narrativa irachena pubblicata dopo il 2003 presenta un doppio legame, storico e tematico, con gli avvenimenti del passato più recente del paese. Nella prefazione al numero di aprile 2013 di *Words Without Borders* Yasmeen Hannoosh sottolinea come molte delle narrazioni nell'Iraq post-occupazione derivino la propria forza «from their author's acute awareness of the subtext of Iraq's Ba'athist authoritative cultural discourses» (Hannoosh 2013). Secondo Hannoosh, la gran parte dei lavori più originali tra i molti composti negli ultimi due decenni in Iraq sono accomunati dalla volontà di rendere accessibili le voci periferiche del paese, escluse tanto dal potere baathista quanto dai discorsi egemoni dell'opposizione tradizionale. Se da un lato la scomparsa della censura baathista ha rappresentato un fattore cruciale in questo sviluppo, la rapidità e la profondità degli sconvolgimenti operati dall'occupazione e dalla guerra civile – quella che Husain Alsagaaf chiama «agony of Iraq» – ha radicalmente ri-orientato lo spazio pubblico della letteratura e ri-definito il concetto stesso di scrittura (Alsagaaf 2018, 23). A essere in gioco è il recupero stesso di una storia riscritta dalla retorica della dittatura, e di un'identità nazionale più aperta e libera dal settarismo (Hannoosh 2013). In questo contesto, la letteratura tende ad assumere, e spesso a rivendicare apertamente, il ruolo di *ta'rīkh muwāzin* 'controstoria' dei conflitti che, dagli anni Ottanta del secolo scorso, sconvolgono il paese.

La negoziazione di una memoria condivisa e dello sguardo dai margini sul conflitto civile post-2003 è senz'altro un motivo centrale nell'opera di Sinan Antoon (Sinān Anṭūn). Romanzi come *Wahdahā shajarat al-rummān* وحدها شجرة الرمان (Solo il melograno, 2010) e *Yā Maryam* يا مريم (Ave Maria, 2012) si muovono in profondità all'interno delle tematiche della guerra civile, del terrorismo e del settarismo. Tale sguardo sul presente emerge anche nell'intensa attività culturale dell'autore. Emigrato negli Stati Uniti negli anni Novanta, Antoon si è affermato come una delle figure intellettuali più dinamiche della diaspora irachena nel paese, rimanendo presente nel dibattito culturale e letterario tanto a livello accademico che politico, elementi che restano contemporaneamente evidenti in una rivista ibrida come *Jadaliyya*, fondata dall'autore.¹

¹ Emblematico della capacità di Antoon di coniugare più scritture può essere un articolo come «Itlāl al-mushtāq 'alā atlāl al-'irāq» (Uno sguardo nostalgico sulle rovine dell'Iraq, Anṭūn 2012b), in cui il reportage di un viaggio in Iraq nell'immediato dopoguerra del 2003 si intreccia con digressioni letterarie sulla poesia medievale (ambito di ricerca dell'autore) e riflessioni decisamente più militanti di carattere postcoloniale.

In *Fihris* فهرس (Indice, 2016),² il quarto romanzo dell'autore, la preoccupazione per la scrittura di una storia di conflitti e le lacerazioni della memoria assumono un carattere ben più esplicito, sia a livello poetico che della forma testuale. L'opera vira verso una struttura più sperimentale, in cui testi di generi e provenienze differenti (e non necessariamente finzionali) si trovano giustapposti in una raccolta di brevi frammenti.³ A emergere rispetto al passato è soprattutto la struttura più ibrida del discorso, l'impiego di forme saggistiche o comunque non-letterarie in lunghi brani del romanzo.

Come si può scrivere ciò che è accaduto? [...] Come può ciò che meto per iscritto [*udawwinu-hu* أدونته] evitare di cadere nel fittizio [*zayf* زاييف] o nella morsa della storiografia ufficiale? (Anṭūn 2016a, 32)⁴

Così si apre la *Prefazione* dell'opera intradiegetica a cui sta lavorando uno dei due narratori, il libraio baghdadino Wadūd. Il progetto, echeggiando il *Kitāb al-Fihrist* di Ibn al-Nadīm (m. 990), s'intitola, appunto *Fihris*, 'Indice'.⁵ Le biografie che Wadūd intende raccogliere (e qui è significativo l'uso del verbo *dawwana* دَوَّنَ, che sembra andare in una direzione decisamente oggettiva e non-finzionale) non sono, come nel caso del suo illustre predecessore abbaside, quelle di *muṣannifūn* مصنفون (compilatori) e *mu'allifūn* مؤلفون (autori) quanto piuttosto quelle, non necessariamente umane, delle 'rovine lasciate dalla guerra' (*kharā'ib al-ḥarb* خرابان الحرب) (Anṭūn 2016a, 49).

I primi venti frammenti del progetto di Wadūd vengono consegnati al narratore principale del romanzo, l'accademico iracheno espatriato Namīr al-Baghdādī, che si è offerto di tradurla durante una visita a Baghdad. Quando quest'ultimo torna negli Stati Uniti, si scopre sempre più ossessionato dalle memorie del viaggio in patria e dalla sofferenza che trapela dai testi del «*Fihris*» di Wadūd. Le storie 'dai margini' che il libraio raccoglie assumono, a New York, un carattere *unheimlich*, 'perturbante', a contrasto con la vita nel paese 'vincitore' della guerra. Il testo, di fatto, giustappone senza una precisa

² Una traduzione inglese, ad opera dello stesso Antoon, con il titolo di *The Book of Collateral Damage* è in uscita per Yale University Press al momento della stesura del presente articolo.

³ Un'anticipazione di questa tendenza alla giustapposizione, attraverso il citazionismo, di una varietà di testi è presente nelle parti di *Yā Maryam* narrate dal personaggio di Yūsif, che gioca con una memoria anche testuale di un Iraq meno settario, facendo riferimento a frammenti che vanno dal poeta al-Jawāhirī alle *maqāmāt* popolari ai saggi di botanica (Anṭūn 2012a).

⁴ Tutte le traduzioni, salvo ove diversamente indicato, sono dell'Autore.

⁵ Il richiamo è suggerito nella scena della presentazione del progetto, in cui Namīr capisce male e pensa che il testo s'intitoli «*Fihrist*» come l'opera di al-Nadīm, venendo corretto dal libraio (Anṭūn 2016a, 48)

gerarchia i frammenti dell'opera incompiuta, le lettere che il libraio invia dall'Iraq, e brevi aneddoti sulla vita americana di Namīr, che contribuiscono sempre a mettere in parallelo e a contrapporre i percorsi di crisi dei due autori: Wadūd, internato in un ospedale psichiatrico, distrugge la sua copia del «Fihris», mentre Namīr, in psicanalisi, si mostra sempre più disinteressato alla propria vita accademica e sentimentale e sempre più immerso in un collezionismo compulsivo di documenti e storie della Baghdad di *Desert Storm*. Incapace di distaccarsi da quello che considera il suo alter ego rimasto in patria, il protagonista giunge verso la fine a suggerire una completa fusione con l'altro personaggio:

Non so come classificarlo: sogno o incubo? Eravamo un'unica persona. Uniti in un solo io. Quando mi guardavo allo specchio, vedevo lui che mi guardava. La nostra memoria era una. La voce, il corpo erano gli stessi. Non ci chiamavamo né Namīr né Wadūd. (Antūn 2016a, 214)

Al di là della compresenza di più narratori (a Namīr e Wadūd si unisce, come si vedrà, la varietà di voci narranti del «Fihris» intradiegetico), questa convergenza ha l'effetto di mettere in risalto il lato speculativo e quasi saggistico del romanzo rispetto al dialogismo interno e alla polifonia in senso bachtiniano (Bachtin 2001). La predominanza di questa funzione argomentativa è ulteriormente sottolineata dalla presenza, al fianco del testo, di una serie di brani citati da opere di Walter Benjamin, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī e Amiri Baraka a commento delle riflessioni di Namīr.⁶

Se dunque esiste all'interno della letteratura irachena contemporanea una volontà generale di ri-narrare in maniera decentrata e attenta alle individualità spezzate dai conflitti che, ininterrotti, attraversano il paese (almeno) dal 1980, in *Fihris* il progetto stesso di scrittura delle storie delle rovine di Baghdad è oggetto di un meta-romanzo, che gioca anche in qualche modo sul limite tra *fiction*, *non-fiction* e scrittura saggistica. In una delle prime recensioni del romanzo, il critico Ṣubḥī Mūsà metteva già l'accento su questo carattere ibrido:

[*Fihris*] ci porta ad assumere la logica di un archivio che contiene ogni cosa, umana o inanimata. Eppure, questo proliferare di oggetti e uomini, di luoghi e avvenimenti, unita all'assenza di un elemento centrale, ci mette di fronte a connessioni aperte, lasciando il testo privo di punti di riferimento che lo rendano ascrivibile a un genere artistico definito. (Mūsà 2016)

⁶ Precise indicazioni bibliografiche sono peraltro fornite in una *Nota* finale.

Il presente contributo intende studiare se e come le premesse teoriche e poetiche di tale progetto si riflettano ‘in superficie’ nella struttura narrativa del testo e in particolare nella funzione delle voci narranti del «Fihris» intradiegetico.

2 Metodologia e ambito dell’analisi

Quella che si presenterà in questo contributo è una lettura di carattere narratologico dei venti racconti brevi che compongono il «Fihris» di Wadūd, e che rappresentano il livello narrativo più interno del *Fihris*-romanzo. L’analisi sarà in particolare dedicata al piano dell’enunciazione narrativa, alla categoria cioè che Genette chiama «voce» (Genette 1972). Ciò che interesserà maggiormente sarà il piano retorico della narrazione, considerata come «performance that simultaneously invokes and projects a historically specific figure of authorship», mettendo in relazione «the narrative voice of a work of fiction [...] to its author’s nonfictional commentary in the public sphere» (Dawson 2013, 247). Le voci della varietà di narratori, umani e non-umani, omodiegetici o eterodiegetici, saranno dunque studiate tanto con riguardo alle tecniche impiegate (rapporto tra narrazione e percezione/conoscenza, distanza dal narrato), quanto in rapporto alla costruzione – testuale ma che si appella a elementi extratestuali – degli autori-narratori del livello narrativo esterno. In questo modo si intende far emergere il filo che lega il livello della superficie narrativa a quella che Susan Lanser chiama «autorialità»:

I will be using the term *overt authoriality* or simply *authoriality* [corsivi nell’originale], to refer to practices by which heterodiegetic, public, self-referential narrators perform these “extra-representational” functions not strictly required for telling a tale. (Lanser 1992, 17)

Trattandosi di testi in cornice, tuttavia, tali enunciati «extra-rappresentazionali» saranno nel nostro caso quelli dei narratori-autori del livello narrativo superiore. Alcune ipotesi su come il rapporto tra autorialità e narrazione si articoli al livello diegetico più esterno saranno in ogni caso formulate in un paragrafo conclusivo.

L’impiego di un simile approccio permette di interrogarsi sull’autorità narrativa – intesa come *authority* ma anche come *authorship*, considerando la narrazione all’interno di un processo di comunicazione letteraria. Tale indagine sembra rilevante per garantire una comprensione non esclusivamente tematica della «new and distinctive identity» (Alsagaaf 2018, 22) della narrativa irachena contem-

poranea. Nonostante un innegabile incremento numerico,⁷ il romanzo iracheno post-2003 non è certo apparso in un vuoto narrativo: si evolve, anzi, rielaborando e talora contrastando una tradizione novecentesca che, sebbene spesso ai margini del dibattito letterario arabo, ha visto affermarsi autori del calibro di Ghā'ib Ṭu'ma Farmān, Mahdī 'Isā al-Ṣaqr e Fu'ād al-Takarlī. Fabio Caiani e Catherine Cobham, al termine del loro fondamentale studio di alcune tra le più importanti opere in prosa irachene del Novecento, accennavano brevemente alle trasformazioni della letteratura del decennio seguito all'occupazione USA come a trasformazioni a livello di spazio pubblico del discorso letterario:

These writers [gli scrittori iracheni di più recente affermazione] [...] have drawn more systematically on the Arabic literature heritage, both oral and written, and on the work of later novelists from the West and elsewhere, have re-conceptualized the roles of both reader and writer, and have generally faced the dangers of moving away from realist fiction. (Caiani, Cobham 2013, 244)

Da un punto di vista narratologico, il cardine della «realist fiction» di cui parlano i due studiosi è la prevalenza di situazioni narrative di tipo figurale o, nei termini di Genette, eterodiegetica con focalizzazione interna. Le opere di Fu'ād al-Takarlī, in particolare, risaltano per l'impiego decisamente raffinato del discorso indiretto libero e in una generale impostazione polifonica che, secondo Caiani, rende un romanzo come *al-Raj' al-Ba'id* الرجوع البعيد (Il lungo ritorno, 1980) tra i massimi esempi di narrativa modernista in ambito arabo (Caiani 2004, 52). Un'analisi di tipo narratologico-retorico della narrativa più recente permette dunque di approfondire il confronto e meglio comprendere gli sviluppi del romanzo iracheno. Un'opera come *Fihris*, in particolare, si situa, per quanto riguarda la narrazione, in una posizione antitetica a quella del narratore invisibile del romanzo modernista, mettendo continuamente in primo piano la funzione di mediazione degli io-narranti e spesso privilegiando, come si è accennato, le funzioni extra-rappresentazionali allo *showing* delle narrazioni figurali.

A venire in primo piano nella nuova narrativa, assieme alla funzione di mediazione della voce, è in generale la funzione dell'autore all'interno della comunicazione narrativa, come notano Caiani e Cobham nel passo citato. Mettendo in scena due narratori che sono anche autori di un testo, e che si interrogano continuamente sulla propria scrittura, *Fihris* si rivela forse particolarmente indicativo di

⁷ Secondo l'editoriale del n. 61 di *Banipal* i romanzi pubblicati dal 2003 sarebbero circa seicento, più del totale delle pubblicazioni di narrativa dell'intero Novecento (*Banipal* 2018, 6).

questa distanza. Il fatto che questi autori-personaggi *mostrino* le fonti e i problemi della loro attività narrativa mette comunque in discussione la funzione tradizionale dell'autore come osservatore e «compositore» (*mu'allif*) privilegiato della realtà. Riflettendo sul «ritorno all'onniscienza» nella narrativa «post-postmoderna», Paul Dawson riassume così questo cambio di paradigma:

the narrative voices of contemporary fiction demonstrate an agnostic awareness of the diminished “universality” of authorial narration, drawing authority not from the novelist as observer of human nature and guide to ethical conduct, but from the writer as public intellectual both competing with and deploying other non-literary discourses of “knowledge”: journalistic, historical, scientific, critical and so on. (Dawson 2013, 248)

Quali siano le strategie impiegate dai narratori di *Fihris* per ottenere un'autorità narrativa non-più-implicita rappresenterà la questione fondamentale dei paragrafi seguenti. Il passo di Dawson che si è citato mette inoltre in evidenza un altro nodo fondamentale della narrazione del romanzo di Sinan Antoon rispetto a quella di al-Takarli: la co-occorrenza di discorsi non-letterari (ma anche la concorrenza di questi ultimi con il carattere finzionale dell'opera).

Facendo riferimento al lavoro di Dawson e ad altri di respiro generale sulla narrativa contemporanea, ci si domanderà qui sotto quali aspetti l'autorità narrativa in *Fihris* si distanzi dalla narrativa novecentesca. In generale, l'ipotesi è che il romanzo muova dal modernissimo realista in direzione di quella che le analisi sulla letteratura globale chiamano «poetiche di verità» (Donnarumma 2014, 125) o «new sincerity» (Kelly 2016). *Al-Raj' al-Ba'id*, ad esempio, si chiude con una «Nota» dell'autore in cui al-Takarli «appears to mock his readers for believing in the emotions evoked in the novel» (Caiani, Cobham 2013, 195):

Questi fogli affastellati non contengono in sé i sospiri e i discorsi, i lamenti e i sorrisi che ad essi vengono ascritti: né le elevatezze, le sofferenze, gli orrori, i desideri; né gli occhi, le labbra, il sangue le lacrime. A gettarli lontano, non ne verrebbe alcuna protesta, nessun rimprovero. Pagine mute, innocue ma anche inutili. Meglio per esse, e per tutti, ignorarle in silenzio, dimenticarle. (al-Takarli [1980] 2015, 479)

Nella sua preoccupazione per «come scrivere di ciò che è accaduto», per parte sua, *Fihris* mostra una ben maggiore preoccupazione per una scrittura che ri-legga la realtà senza rinunciare a una funzione storica:

Il mio compito è esattamente l'opposto di quello della levatrice o dell'ostetrico che taglia il cordone ombelicale dopo la nascita. Io riannodo i cordoni ombelicali [u'īdu naṣj al-ḥibāl al-surriyya أعيد نسج الحبال السرية] tra le cose e le loro madri. Torno a incordare gli *oud* bruciati. Riporto la lacrima all'occhio. È un lavoro spossante e senza fine. E i nemici sono molti. (Anṭūn 2016a, 242-3)

In gioco c'è dunque, come si vedrà, anche una volontà di 'dire la verità' del tutto distante dallo scetticismo di al-Takarlī. In questo senso, la scrittura di Antoon è attraversata da una tensione retorica radicalmente diversa, e per certi versi antagonista, al modernismo di cui *al-Raj' al-Ba'īd* è esempio. Tale tensione inserisce il romanzo nella dimensione paradossale che Linda Hutcheon ha definito «historiographic metafiction» (Hutcheon 1989): con la sua poetica frammentaria, *Fihris* denuncia insieme l'impossibilità di una storia dotata di un'unica trama coerente e la necessità di una scrittura che vada oltre le «pagine mute» di al-Takarlī. Tracce testuali limitate e incoerenti, le lettere di Wadūd rappresentano il confine di un *ta'rīkh muwāzin*, di una storia parallela di una guerra che, come quella del 1992 secondo Baudrillard (1991), «non ha avuto luogo». Al contempo, il romanzo rivendica a tali frammenti di testimonianza un «wordly grounding» (Hutcheon 1989, 5) e un valore epistemologico.

L'analisi che segue partirà da una concezione retorica della narrazione - «somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose(s) that something happened», secondo la definizione di Phelan (2005, 18) - per cercare un legame tra le tecniche narrative e una simile poetica. In particolare, l'attenzione sarà rivolta alle tecniche e alle strutture con cui la narrazione costruisce una dimensione testimoniale e meta-storica. Si tratta di una dimensione che invita a riflessioni ben più ampie di quelle di carattere strettamente testuale e narratologico, su tutte quelle di ordine psicoanalitico e post-coloniale legate ai concetti di testimonialità e di trauma.⁸ Rimandando ad altra sede tali letture di *Fihris*, il presente articolo spera comunque di fornire loro una più solida base testuale.

⁸ Gli aspetti psicanalitici del romanzo, in particolare, paiono richiedere una lettura particolarmente approfondita, anche in ragione della loro presenza esplicita a livello tematico. Una simile lettura richiederebbe un'analisi approfondita dei rapporti tra la cornice narrativa ambientata negli Stati Uniti e gli inserti epistolari, attraverso i quali il passato iracheno torna a perseguire il narratore in esilio (il quale peraltro narra alcuni dei suoi colloqui con una psicoterapeuta). Un'analisi simile, che si sviluppa a partire dal pensiero di teorici come Dominick La Capra e Cathy Caruth, è stata condotta nell'ambito della letteratura irachena contemporanea da Stephan Milich (2015), il quale tuttavia si concentra sulla poesia.

3 *Muṣārakhat al-’ashyā’*: il «*Fihris*» di Wadūd

La presentazione più generale del progetto del «*Fihris*» di Wadūd è fornita nella narrazione dell’incontro tra quest’ultimo e Namīr. Interrogato sui fogli impilati nel magazzino, il libraio parla immediatamente di un «progetto di documentazione» (*mashrū’ tawthīqī* مشروع توثيقي), di carattere storiografico ma basato su una concezione «circolare» della storia (*tārīkh dā’irī* تاريخه دائري):

- È [...] [u]n archivio [*arshīf*] delle perdite causate dalla guerra e dalla devastazione. Niente eserciti né battaglie però. Le perdite dimenticate, invisibili. Non solo esseri umani: animali, piante, oggetti inanimati. Tutto ciò che si può distruggere. Minuto per minuto. Questo è il tomo dedicato al primo minuto.
- Di quest’ultima guerra, dici?
- Certo.
- E su quali fonti ti basi?

I suoi occhi brillavano: – Di tutto. Notizie, storia orale, testimonianze personali [*mu’āyanāt shakhṣiyya* معاينات شخصية]. (Anṭūn 2016a, 48)

Si tratta dunque, nelle intenzioni, di un’opera di carattere in qualche modo accademico, tanto che Namīr, ricercatore negli Stati Uniti, si offre subito di tradurla in inglese. La malattia mentale e la morte di Wadūd, tuttavia, mettono fine al lavoro ben prima che il progetto sia concluso. Ciò che giunge nelle mani di Namīr, e del lettore, è una raccolta di venti testi che, pur in una varietà di forme e stili, fanno piuttosto uso di tecniche che, almeno in prima istanza, si possono ascrivere al genere della *fiction*. Ciascuno di questi racconti è dedicato a un singolo oggetto, di cui presenta il *manṭiq* منطق, il ‘discorso’ – con un termine che riecheggia apertamente la tradizione mistica.⁹ In una prima approssimazione, si considererà la volontà di dare una voce e una soggettività agli oggetti della propria ricerca come un segno di funzionalità del progetto.

Alla frammentarietà delle tracce che compongono l’archivio si contrappone dunque la compiutezza di una serie di racconti organizzati in una trama, con un punto di arrivo prestabilito – la distruzione operata dall’invasione statunitense. Come autore – *mu’allif* ‘compositore’ – Wadūd non si limita a raccogliere tracce, ma sottopone queste ultime a una rielaborazione profonda. Di fatto, la sua narrazione chiede di essere autenticata più sulla base di un accesso diretto a

⁹ *Manṭiq al-Tayr*, (Il Verbo degli uccelli) è il titolo dell’opera del mistico persiano Farīd al-Dīn al-’Aṭṭār (1145-1221), titolo che peraltro viene citato alla lettera dal titolo del primo racconto di *Fihris*. Il termine *manṭiq* indica anche la logica come scienza.

una verità di cui è testimone che sulla presentazione e sull'analisi di fonti. In questo senso il termine-chiave del passo citato sembra essere *mu'āyana*, che si riferisce a una 'conoscenza oculare': il «Fihris» non si comporrà tanto di resoconti verbali della catastrofe del 2003, quanto di brevi tentativi di ocularizzare questa catastrofe dal punto di vista delle sue vittime. Vittime che, scomparse per definizione, non possono più direttamente testimoniare.

L'autorità narrativa di Wadūd narratore, in parziale contrasto con quella rivendicata dal personaggio, è quella che gli deriva dal proprio essere 'testimone' (*mu'āyin*) dei fatti. Raffaele Donnarumma ha parlato di una generale ascesa, nella narrativa post-postmoderna, di un «realismo testimoniale», che ricerca «non [...] tanto la sua fedeltà alle cose come sono andate, quanto la necessità di dire un vero che esorbita dai limiti dell'empiricamente accaduto» (Donnarumma 2014, 126). Se di storia si può parlare, la storia circolare di Wadūd non mette al centro né la cronologia né il dato empirico, ma cerca di 'dire la verità' restituendo una parola finzionale agli oggetti/obiettivi della campagna militare USA.

Le cose [...] parlano. A volte parlano come gli esseri umani, lentamente, e fanno discorsi [*manṭiq* بمنطق] comprensibili. A volte però gemono, o urlano. [...] Non le capisco. O meglio, le capisco troppo bene: soffrono di quello di cui io soffro. [...] Cosa posso fare, quando le sento urlare così, senza fermarsi? All'inizio mi coprivo le orecchie: non bastava a zittirle. [...] Poi però cominciai a rimproverarmi quel mio narcisismo. Meglio sarebbe stato unirmi a loro, urlare il loro urlo [*an uṣārikha-hā* إن أصارخها]. (Anṭūn 2016a, 101)

La presentazione dell'autore del «Fihris» come testimone privilegiato della realtà avviene in maniera esplicita all'interno delle lettere scritte a Namīr. In almeno tre frammenti, ad esempio, il libraio sostiene che *innī arā mā la tarawna* إني أرى ما لا ترون 'vedo ciò che non vedete' (Anṭūn 2016a, 25, 106, 178). La facoltà che il narratore si riserva non è semplicemente quella di *vedere* ciò che era quello che adesso è in macerie, ma soprattutto quella di vedere ciò che le macerie hanno visto, di 'parlare per' esse. Centrale nel passo citato è l'espressione *uṣārikhu al-ashyā* أصارخ الأشياء, un neologismo dichiarato che si potrebbe tradurre come 'urlo lo stesso urlo delle cose'.¹⁰ Si tratta, com'era il caso per il sostantivo verbale *mu'āyana*, di una terza forma del verbo, usata qui per conferire un senso di reciprocità al verbo 'gridare': Wadūd '(si) urla con gli oggetti' lasciati in pezzi dalla guerra. La testimonianza di Wadūd è, per usare i termini di Giorgio Agamben, la testimonianza di un «*superstes*»:

¹⁰ Il gioco di parole è con il verbo *uṣāriḥ* 'mi confido (con)'.

I “veri” testimoni, i “testimoni integrali” sono coloro che non hanno testimoniato né avrebbero potuto farlo. Sono coloro che “hanno toccato il fondo”, i musulmani, i sommersi. I superstiti, come pseudotestimoni, parlano in vece loro, per delega: testimoniano di una testimonianza mancante. (Agamben 1998, 32)¹¹

Il «Fihris» intradiegetico si potrebbe considerare in questo senso come un’opera scritta interamente ‘in terza forma’, basandosi sulla compresenza delle voci del narratore e delle vittime, in vece delle quali egli racconta. Questo particolare dialogismo si mantiene a prescindere dalla situazione narrativa del singolo racconto. Da un lato, sia che il racconto sia narrato da un io omodiegetico (spesso ‘impossibile’, come si vedrà a breve) sia che a raccontare sia una voce esterna al mondo narrato, l’interpretazione si carica delle indicazioni metaletterarie contenute nelle lettere di Wadūd. D’altro canto, il lettore si trova davanti un *manṭiq* di una pianta, un animale, una cosa, un discorso che fin dal titolo lascia pensare che la voce (da *naṭq* نطق, ‘articolazione’) appartenga al soggetto del racconto: anche se la narrazione è rigorosamente eterodiegetica, si suppone che l’autore presti in qualche modo la propria voce, focalizzando sul proprio oggetto.¹²

3.1 Gli ‘io’ testimoniali e i narratori impossibili

Nove dei *manṭiq* di Wadūd sono narrati da narratori omodiegetici. La scelta della prima persona rende questi capitoli quelli che più nettamente si allontanano dalla *non-fiction* rivendicata nella presentazione che Namir dà del proprio progetto. A sottolineare questo scarto c’è inoltre lo statuto paradossale di queste narrazioni. Come possono raccontarsi le tracce raccolte in un archivio che per definizione raccoglie «ciò che è andato perduto» (*al-khasā’ir* الخسائر)? Di questi nove, inoltre, solo un racconto («al-Tū’ām» التوام, Le gemelle) ha per protagonista-narratore un essere umano (comunque, come si vedrà, scomparso in un incidente): tutti gli altri sono narrati da oggetti inanimati («al-Zawrā» الزوراء – incentrato su un manoscritto nell’omonimo quartiere di Baghdad; «al-Jidār» الجدار, Il muro; «al-‘ūd» العود, L’oud; «al-‘Ayn» العين, L’occhio; «al-Tannūr» التَّنُور, Il forno, da piante («al-Sidra» السدرية, Il biancospino) o da animali («al-Ṭayr» الطير, L’uccello; «Abū Ġineeh» أبو جنيه, nome del cavallo protagonista). C’è dun-

¹¹ L’opera di Giorgio Agamben, e in particolare *Homo sacer* (2005), è stata usata come chiave di lettura per la narrativa irachena contemporanea dedicata alla guerra da Ikram Masmoudi (2015).

¹² In quanto ‘punto di articolazione, si potrebbe tradurre ‘genettianamente’ il *manṭiq* dei titoli con ‘Voce di...’ (ad es. «Voce dell’uccello» ecc.). In alternativa, si propone qui la traduzione ‘Canto di...’.

que una doppia impossibilità di parlare dietro questi narratori non-umani e non più esistenti se non in forma di tracce.

Descrivendo il proprio lavoro di 'collezione di tracce' Wadūd dichiara che «*al-ashyā' lā taḥduth, lakinnahā tataḥaddath*» الأشياء لا تحدث لكنها تتحدث, 'le cose non accadono, parlano' (Anṭūn 2016a, 224). Questo parlare avviene immediatamente in una lingua che, per quanto varia, è del tutto coerente con la logica narrativa di narratori umani. Ad esempio il protagonista-narratore eponimo del racconto «Il biancospino»:

Zizyphus [il nome scientifico della pianta], questo è il mio nome. O meglio, solo uno dei miei nomi: il denominato cambia a seconda della lingua di chi nomina. Vi chiederete: come faccio a saperlo, visto che sono una pianta, immobile al mio posto da quando ero un seme? Non sapete che le piante hanno una logica [*la-hā mantiq* لها منطق], come gli uccelli e gli uomini? (Anṭūn 2016a, 58)

La lingua dell'autore del testo e quella del narratore sono dello stesso genere: non c'è un tentativo di mostrare uno scarto a livello di articolazione tra l'autonarrazione dell'arbusto e quella del libraio. Tale scarto può rimanere implicito perché il lettore ha accesso alle dichiarazioni di poetica dell'autore, la cui presenza rimane fondante nel testo. Inoltre, tutti i racconti si inseriscono all'interno di un genere noto, quello della scrittura autobiografica. David Herman, uno dei narratologi che più si sono interessati, in tempi recenti, alla narrativa del cosiddetto 'postumano', studia il genere che egli definisce «animal autobiography» come un atto di «speaking for»:

From this perspective, the structure of the animal autobiography not only mirrors the practice of collaborative (inter-human) autobiography, with the difference that the writer projects himself or herself into the position of a nonhuman model; what is more, animal-autobiographical acts also root themselves in the necessity for ghostwriting, or self-displacement [...]. (Herman 2016, 7)

Due racconti in particolare («al-Zawrā'» e «al-'Ayn») si fondano su questa componente di autobiografia bi-focale, creando una deliberata ambiguità, o addirittura giocano a trarre in inganno il lettore riguardo all'umanità del narratore. In particolare, si riprende la struttura dell'indovinello, secondo Herman una delle forme prototipiche della «animal autobiography» (Herman 2016, 8). Così ad esempio nel «Canto di al-Zawrā'»:

Non so molto delle mie origini. Forse vengo dalla Cina, o dall'India, o dalla Persia. Non ho memoria di come arrivai, o di come fui portata qui. Nuda, come Iddio mi aveva creata, come mi avevano

distesa i suoi servi. Ricordo bene però i suoi occhi, che mi fissarono per lunghe notti.

Rimasi così per mesi, finché lui sciolse con dolcezza i miei legacci e mi scosse di dosso la polvere e lo sporco del viaggio. Passò dolcemente le sue dita su ogni punto, come volesse sciogliermi dalla fatica del viaggio, rassicurarmi che non correvo più alcun rischio con lui. Mi fece indossare una pelle di gazzella che aveva comprato apposta per me. [...]

Non me ne resi conto, la prima volta che fece quello che desiderava fare con me. Mi tolse di dosso la pelle di gazzella, e rimase seduto a guardarmi senza far nulla. Alcuni giorni dopo sentii una fitta. La prima volta che lo fece con me, mi fissava e ripeteva “bismillah”. Alla fine disse: – Ricorderai la miglior poesia che si recita in questa città, e vivrai a lungo dopo di me. [...]

In seguito, molti altri esseri umani [*min banī al-bashar* من بني البشر] mi avrebbero guardata, mi avrebbero sfiorata con dolcezza. Ovviamente ne provai piacere. Ma non ne ho mai più ricevuto quel brivido. [...]

Quando non rimase nessun punto del mio corpo su cui non avesse fatto scorrere le sue dita, rimase pensieroso. [...] L'ultima cosa che mi tatuò addosso fu: “Fatta a Baghdad il sei del mese di Rajab” [...]. (Antūn 2016a, 36-7)

Il paragone tra il libro e una donna percorre tutto il racconto senza mai essere abbandonato completamente, indugiando in un'ambiguità dissipata solo a tratti e gradualmente. L'espedito retorico struttura la narrazione a un livello profondo: l'esperienza temporale del manoscritto assume i tratti del racconto retrospettivo di una sorta di concubina medievale. Così umanizzata, la storia può assumere un punto di inizio (le «mie origini») e una fine, e organizzare così una trama finzionale, trasformando la vicenda del rogo dei manoscritti conservati nella biblioteca di al-Zawrā' in una singola *storia*, narrata peraltro dal suo stesso protagonista. Questo processo di umanizzazione, dunque, anche al di là dell'aperto parallelo di quest'ultimo caso, riproduce in maniera esplicita quello che secondo Frank Kermode rappresenta il principio generale di strutturazione temporale dei racconti:

Let us take a very simple example, the ticking of a clock. We ask what it says: and we agree that it says *tick-tock*. By this fiction we humanize it, make it talk our language. [...] The clock's *tick-tock* I take to be a model of what we call a plot, an organization that humanizes time by giving it form [...]. (Kermode 2000, 44-5)

A chi tuttavia va attribuita la responsabilità di configurare in una trama i racconti del «*Fihris*» di Wadūd? La distinzione tra la voce narrante e l'autore (fittizio) dell'opera tende a rendere del tutto eviden-

te la mano di quest'ultimo. Tutta la varietà retorica dei *manṭiq* viene percepita come prodotto dell'attività di un autore finzionale che, a differenza dell'autore reale, il lettore testualmente conosce. Sono le affermazioni di vicinanza al mondo inanimato a costituire la vera origine retorica del racconto. Wadūd sfida il narratorio giocando con l'ambiguità tra umano e non umano, come nel caso del «Manṭiq al-'Ayn», in cui al lettore (specie se non nativo di Baghdad) è richiesto un notevole sforzo di interpretazione e di documentazione per identificare la voce con una figura umana del bassorilievo che copre il Monumento alla Libertà (*Manṣab al-ḥurriyya* المنصب الحرية) di piazza Ṭayarān. A conti fatti, la voce non è identificata dal lettore con il solo soggetto-oggetto, ma con lo stesso eccentrico autore del «Fihris».

Questa osservazione assume un rilievo maggiore se si considera il «tock», la conclusione di molti dei racconti in cornice. Il *manṭiq* narrato dal manoscritto si conclude, ad esempio, con una paradossale autonarrazione della scomparsa:

Gli anni passarono senza rumore né sofferenza finché venne il giorno che la terra tremò come se stesse per far affiorare le proprie viscere. Era inverno, eppure sentii la mia pelle che si rinseccava per il caldo. Era il sole, da cui finora mi avevano tenuto lontana? Sentii il crepitio del fuoco che consumava le mie vicine, correndo verso di me. Lingue lambirono i miei margini. Mi accartocciai dal terrore, e prima di far scorrere una lacrima lasciai andare un sospiro trattenuto mille anni. Mi vidi salire [*ra'aytunī ataṣā'ad*], una nuvola di fumo nel cielo di Baghdad. (Anṭūn 2016a, 38)

La trama costruita umanizzando l'oggetto giunge alla sua conclusione con la 'morte' del libro-donna, della scomparsa della quale è il narratore stesso a rendere conto. Allo stesso modo, la narratrice del «Manṭiq al-Tū'ām» racconta l'incidente che le costa la vita:

Tutto questo sarebbe accaduto [...]. Ma non lasciai mai Baghdad. Non entrai all'Accademia di Musica e Danza. [...] Qualche mese prima, in quell'inverno infuocato, eravamo tutti in auto. Mio padre guidava veloce per portarci dalla nonna, che aveva insistito perché la raggiungessimo: la sua casa era più sicura, lontana dagli edifici militari a rischio di bombardamento. I semafori non funzionavano, papà rallentava un po' ad ogni incrocio. Una volta però non rallentò abbastanza, come non rallentò il conducente che correva da destra, anche lui in fuga. Da allora [*ba'dahā* بعدها] non ho più suonato [...]. (Anṭūn 2016a, 184)

Come possono questi narratori vedersi nel momento della scomparsa? Da dove raccontano? Si tratta evidentemente di «violations of mimetic epistemology» (Heinze 2008). Da un lato, si ha a che fare con

un'infrazione del patto narrativo del tipo di quella che Genette (1972, 213) chiama «parallessi»: il narratore dice più di quanto per statuto potrebbe conoscere. Quello delle narrazioni parallettiche è un fenomeno che ha assunto dimensioni sempre più rilevanti tanto all'interno delle stesse opere quanto all'attenzione della critica e della naratologia. Come afferma Filippo Pennacchio:

nella letteratura degli ultimi anni capita spesso d'imbattersi in narratori che nonostante la loro natura *character-bound* [corsivo nell'originale] agiscono come narratori autoriali; che cioè esibiscono qualità o si fanno portavoce di istanze tradizionalmente appannaggio di quel narratore, di quasi ottocentesca memoria, collocato al di fuori del mondo della storia, e proprio perciò legittimato a comportarsi come più ritiene opportuno. (Pennacchio 2014, 96)

D'altro canto, più che da una conoscenza sovrumana della storia, tale violazione sembra derivare da uno sdoppiamento del punto di enunciazione, del *manṭiq*, della narrazione. La locuzione *ba'dahā*, 'da allora, dopo quel momento' nell'ultimo passo citato, ad esempio, proviene da un centro deittico diverso da quello della prima persona della gemella che sta scomparendo. Henrik Skov Nielsen ha sostenuto in un saggio dedicato a *The Impersonal Voice in First-Person Narrative* (2004) che simili casi di parallessi in narrazioni alla prima persona – decisamente frequenti nella narrativa contemporanea – si lascino spiegare postulando la presenza di una «voice that is different from that of any single character or narrator, which can talk about the protagonist in the first person» (Nielsen 2004, 139). Sarebbe questa voce ad essere responsabile per affermazioni quasi-paradossali del tipo «I walked into that frame not noticing the black limousine parked across the street» (Easton Ellis, *Glamorama*, cit. in Nielsen 2004, 140).

In situazioni di metalessi come quella di *Fihris*, nel quale l'opera di Wadūd è intradiegetica e dove numerosi sono i passi di riflessione metaletteraria su di essa, la voce impersonale, lungi dal rimanere 'dietro le quinte', è ben evidente. È l'autorità quasi-onnisciente dell'autore, basata sulla rivendicazione in base alla quale «io vedo ciò che non vedete», a dare un senso alla narrazione da parte dei protagonisti della loro stessa morte. Wadūd presta la propria voce a narratori impossibili senza che questi abbandonino la prima persona e il ruolo di narratori. È questo, sembra, il senso dell'espressione *uṣāriḫ[u] al-ashyā'*, e in questo senso si è definita la narrazione di questi racconti brevi omodiegetici una narrazione 'in terza forma'. Da un lato Wadūd racconta la (propria) storia *attraverso* la voce degli oggetti, dall'altro questi ultimi ricevono la voce (e una sorta di antropomorfismo) dalla voce dell'autore, che rimane un contrappunto costantemente presente.

3.2 Focalizzazione nei racconti eterodiegetici

Negli undici *manṭiq* narrati alla terza persona, il contrappunto tra autore e io-testimoniale prende la forma di un meno spiazzante rapporto tra narratore eterodiegetico e personaggio-focalizzatore. Alcuni di questi racconti si attengono alla prospettiva di un oggetto-testimone. Il racconto «*al-Kashān*» الكشان (Il tappeto di Kashan), ad esempio, segue la storia di un tappeto persiano, dando notizie sulle persone negli ambienti circostanti, sempre filtrate da quello che il protagonista può ‘vedere’:

La stragrande maggioranza dei kashaniti nasce a Kashān, ovviamente. Invece, la kashanita di cui parlo io è baghdadina anima e corpo. Nata a Baghdad in una prigione femminile, alla fine degli anni Quaranta. Il parto non fu tanto difficile, quanto lungo: sua madre rimase inginocchiata davanti a lei ogni mattina, con la pazienza di chi si prepara per una preghiera senza fine. [...] lavorava per lo più in un silenzio di tomba, senza un sorriso. I primi giorni, la piccola kashanita non vedeva e non comprendeva nulla. Non fu in grado di individuare i lineamenti di sua madre finché non si formarono i suoi propri. (Antūn 2016a, 49-50)

Sebbene il punto di vista a livello di informazione si mantenga fisso sul tappeto, un narratore onnisciente è ben presente a dirigere la narrazione, intervenendo direttamente («la kashanita di cui parlo io»), o regolando la quantità di informazioni sul mondo circostante all’oggetto, ma anche informando il testo al proprio punto di vista linguistico (ad esempio con similitudini come «con la pazienza di chi si prepara per una preghiera senza fine»). Anche qui dunque, una voce autoriale dà un volto umano al protagonista inanimato e ne assume il punto di vista. È qui proprio la limitatezza di questo punto di vista, unita alla reticenza del narratore, a creare la struttura della ‘biografia a indovinello’: l’analogia strutturale con il Canto di al-Zawra’ dedicato al manoscritto è un ulteriore indizio che in quest’ultimo la prima persona del protagonista sia in gran parte una sorta di *proxy* per l’autore, la cui voce emerge direttamente nei passi più ‘inenarrabili’.

Altri racconti ci mostrano un narratore più prettamente onnisciente. In alcuni casi l’autorità di cui si ammanta è un’autorialità di tipo saggistico: il racconto intitolato «al-Asīr» الأسير (Il prigioniero), è un vero e proprio testo biografico dedicato a un cantante di *maqāmāt* celebre negli anni Trenta, le cui uniche registrazioni sono andate perdute durante un bombardamento del 2003. Altrove la narrazione assume direttamente i tratti di quella «uncanny knowledge» che Culler (2004, 26) attribuisce all’onniscienza ‘classica’, e in special modo alla terza delle forme individuate dal narratologo inglese: la narrazione autoriale in cui «the narrator flaunts her godlike ability to deter-

mine how things turn out» (Culler 2004, 26). Nel racconto «al-Jinīn» الجنين (L'embrione), la prerogativa dell'autore è quella di asserire come le cose sarebbero andate in assenza di *Desert Storm*:

Gli sarebbe mancato quel rombo, ne avrebbe avuto nostalgia, se fosse nato. Avrebbe potuto provare ad esprimerlo, ad esprimere quello che lo circondava, nella lingua che avrebbe appreso nei suoi primi anni. [...]

Questo se fosse nato! Ma non è nato, e non nascerà [*lam wa-lan yūlad* لم ولن يولد]. (Antūn 2016a, 150)

Nel penultimo *manṭiq*, «al-Munaḍḍab» المنضَب (L'Impoverito) il commento narratorio è talmente pervasivo da mettere completamente in secondo piano l'elemento narrativo, lasciando il lettore davanti a un testo difficilmente classificabile ma forse più prossimo a un saggio che a un racconto. Il testo si apre citando la definizione del verbo *naḍaba* نَضَب, 'far inaridire, impoverire', da cui deriva l'aggettivo per l'uranio usato a scopi militari nella guerra del 2003:

Respiriamo per vivere?

O respiriamo per morire?

Non c'è nascita senza fertilità.

Ma la nascita, la nascita di ogni cosa, è come una ferita - una ferita temporanea, che si cicatrizza. Non c'è nascita senza sangue versato dalla madre, senza placenta. La placenta che il corpo rigetta, ormai inutile.

Non c'è nascita senza fertilità.

Anche gli oggetti hanno uteri e placente, che possono sanguinare durante il parto. Quando l'uranio arricchito [*al-mukhaṣṣab*, 'infertilito'] nasce, nelle centrali nucleari, per svolgere il suo compito producendo energia elettrica, lascia dietro di sé una placenta, un suo altro, l'uranio impoverito [*al-munaḍḍab*, 'inaridito'], che non ha più radiazioni sufficienti. Come una farfalla che si lascia indietro il bozzolo. Ma questo Impoverito non si accontenta più di rimanere nascosto nelle discariche, sotterrato. L'uomo gli ha trovato un ruolo nel ciclo vitale. La sua densità è alta, più del doppio di quella del piombo.

DU, *Depleted Uranium*.

Un solo dardo metallico, coperto di uranio impoverito, un dardo addestrato a perforare le corazze, deviò dal suo percorso cadendo da un AC-10, non penetrò nessuna barriera: si sdraiò sul terreno dell'Iraq come un soldato sfinite in terra nemica. Un soldato che non morirà, però. Non sarà catturato. Continuerà a respirare. Il suo soffio colonizzerà un polmone, un utero. O un fegato, un osso, in un corpo qualunque. Continuerà a vivere nell'acqua o nell'aria, per quattro milioni di anni. Avvelenerà ogni corpo con cui entre-

rà in contatto, e vivrà.

E dunque: respiriamo per vivere?

O respiriamo per morire? (Anṭūn 2016a, 254)

Anche laddove il testo di Wadūd sembra svoltare più decisamente verso una scrittura saggistica o comunque argomentativa, un filo narrativo viene tuttavia mantenuto dal lettore grazie alla conoscenza del dato extratestuale (ossia esterno ai racconti in cornice, non al *Fihris* romanzo di Sinan Antoon): nonostante il racconto non lo dica esplicitamente, chi legge sa che il proiettile di uranio impoverito è caduto durante il *primo minuto* dell'invasione statunitense. È solo la storia del progetto a rendere possibile l'interpretazione di questi frammenti come parte di un romanzo unitario. A raccontare questa storia non potrà essere lo stesso Wadūd, lui stesso vittima del conflitto e incapace stavolta di narrare la sua propria morte.

4 Namīr, Sinan Antoon: la testimonialità oltre l'archivio

L'analisi delle tecniche impiegate nei racconti del «*Fihris*» intradiegetico è partita dalla premessa che si trattasse, appunto, di racconti, di testi eminentemente finzionali. In questo senso si è posta l'enfasi sull'attività di ri-configurazione (temporale, percettiva, strutturale) operata dal narratore (o dall'autore come 'narratore in terza forma' nel caso dei racconti alla prima persona). In questo modo, l'esecuzione del progetto di Wadūd andrebbe in direzione almeno parzialmente contraria a quella rivendicata nelle dichiarazioni che egli fa *sull'opera*. Anche nei racconti in prima persona condotti da oggetti inanimati, tuttavia, la questione della finzionalità rimane in ogni caso complessa. Nel già citato saggio sulla «animal autobiography», David Herman mette in dubbio il fatto che la presenza (forzata, nel caso di autobiografie di soggetti non-umani) di un'istanza di mediazione («speaking-for») implichi di per sé uno status di non-finzionalità:

For texts situated at the other end of the spectrum of nonhuman self-narratives, a key question is the following: to what extent does the voicing of animal subjectivity, despite the participation of autobiography (as a generic category) in the domain of nonfictional discourse, necessarily remain a fictional enterprise? (Herman 2016, 3)

Si è studiato sopra come a sfumare il confine tra *fiction* e *non-fiction* nel testo sia il ricorso a una strategia di autenticazione per natura ibrida come il discorso testimoniale: pur compiendo necessariamente un atto di 'parlare per' una testimonianza mancante, il testimone rivendica comunque, come si è visto nella definizione di Donnarumma (2014), «una verità che esorbita» dai limiti dell'empirico. A garan-

zia di tale verità sta lo stesso resoconto della scrittura del «*Fihris*», l'auto-narrazione dell'autore che scopre le proprie difficoltà e al contempo rivendica un accesso diretto alla verità della guerra del 2003.

Questo intreccio di 'autobiografia altrui', *self-narration* e testimonianza è riproposto e rielaborato al livello narrativo immediatamente superiore. La malattia mentale e la morte di Wadūd interrompono la stesura del «*Fihris*» e rendono lo stesso Wadūd un 'testimone impossibile', incapace di portare la testimonianza più radicale della propria morte (che peraltro avviene in un'esplosione, in modo del tutto analogo a quella delle voci dei racconti). È per testimoniare della scomparsa di Wadūd che Namīr, in conclusione al romanzo, dichiara di scrivere:

Mi asciugai le lacrime, stampai l'articolo [quello dal quale ha appreso della morte di Wadūd]. A mano lo intitolai «Canto di Wadūd» e lo aggiunsi all'Indice. Allora mi decisi a scrivere questo romanzo. (Antūn 2016a, 283)

Lungi dall'aver un ruolo meramente di raccolta e commento, tuttavia, la parte della narrazione condotta direttamente da Namīr si allontana dallo stile e dai temi del «*Fihris*», in direzione di una narrazione diaristica basata su una serie di aneddoti quotidiani. Nonostante l'idea, più volte ribadita nei passi di Namīr, di scrivere un romanzo su Wadūd «usando il suo nome reale, i dettagli della sua vita» (Antūn 2016a, 118), sono queste *yawmiyyāt* يوميات a fornire la cronologia del romanzo. Eppure, è il progressivo avvicinamento alla 'verità' della storia di Wadūd e la progressiva identificazione di Namīr con il libraio a fornire una *tellability*, un senso narrativo a queste sezioni:

Esiste un "morbo del *Fihris*"? È possibile che si trasmetta per contatto, addirittura per lettura? Sono anni che ritaglio immagini e trafiletti di notizie dai giornali, conservandoli in modo disordinato. Questa ossessione archivistica si è intensificata da quando ho conosciuto Wadūd e il suo progetto, di pari passo con la violenza e della distruzione in Iraq. (Antūn 2016a, 258)

Namīr può 'parlare per' Wadūd e al contempo *di se stesso* solo mantenendosi su questa soglia tra la funzione di autore - come *mu'allif* che 'ricompono l'infranto', secondo la frase di Walter Benjamin citata nel romanzo¹³ - e quella di mediatore, di voce 'per procura' che consegna al

13 L'espressione è tratta dalla nona «Tesi di filosofia della storia», che il testo cita per esteso al termine della prima sezione: «L'angelo della storia deve avere questo aspetto. Ha il viso rivolto al passato. Dove ci appare una catena di eventi, egli vede una sola catastrofe, che accumula senza tregua rovine su rovine e le rovescia ai suoi piedi.

narratario il progetto incompiuto del libraio. In questo senso la funzione principale di molti aneddoti di Namīr è quella di rendersi autorevole come testimone.¹⁴ C'è però un aspetto di questa narrazione diaristica che si rivolge in direzione opposta, non verso il centro del testo ma verso l'esterno, verso quello che Genette chiama «epitesto pubblico» (Genette 1987, 197). Di fatto, l'autonarrazione di Namīr getta un ponte tra il narratore-autore del romanzo su Wadūd (a sua volta narratore-autore del suo «Fihris») e Sinan Antoon come autore reale di *Fihris*. Il lettore sa (o può facilmente scoprire), ad esempio, che Namīr è espatriato lo stesso anno dell'autore reale e che insegna nella stessa New York University. Può inoltre conoscere il titolo del documentario che il narratore si trova a girare a Baghdad nel 2003 (*About Baghdad*, 2003) e del romanzo dedicato a un 'preparatore di cadaveri' che Namīr dichiara di voler scrivere (il citato *Waḥdahā shajarat al-rummān*).¹⁵

Da un lato, questo carattere scopertamente autobiografico dell'opera sfuma ulteriormente il carattere finzionale dell'opera: molti passaggi aneddotici – specie quelli relativi alla vita accademica di Namīr – sono inevitabilmente presi come narrazioni di episodi 'reali' della vita dell'autore. Al tempo stesso, portando la ri-configurazione narrativa al di fuori dei limiti del romanzo, la vena autobiografica introduce un ulteriore livello di testimonialità alla materia narrata. Si tratta di un carattere della narrazione autobiografica che Lejeune ha definito «patto fantasmatico»:

c'est en tant qu'autobiographie que le roman est decreté plus vrai. Le lecteur est ainsi invité à lire les romans [quelli in cui l'autobiografia è inserita in un contesto finzionale: l'esempio è quello di Gide] non seulement comme des *fictions* renvoyant à une vérité de la "nature humaine", mais aussi comme de *fantasmes* révélateurs d'un individu. J'appellerai cette forme indirecte du pacte autobiographique le *pacte fantasmatique*. (Lejeune 1996, 42; corsivi nell'originale)

Al tempo stesso in cui mostra lo scarto di realtà tra il *dentro* e il *fuori* del testo, l'inserimento di un simile piano di lettura ha dunque l'effetto di portare in superficie una verità pienamente e letteralmente 'ulteriore'.

Egli vorrebbe ben trattenerci, destare i morti e ricomporre l'infranto. Ma una tempesta spira dal paradiso [...]» (Benjamin 2006, 80).

14 La relazione tra i brevi frammenti di carattere aneddotico e i brani del «Fihris» intradiegetico potrebbe essere studiata sulla base di quello tra testi poetici e *khābar* nelle raccolte biobibliografiche medievali. In questo risiede probabilmente il richiamo più forte di *Fihris* al *Kitāb al-Fihrist* di al-Nadīm.

15 Lo stesso Antoon ha dichiarato di considerare l'inserimento di dettagli autobiografici un «gioco narrativo», e che il lato positivo di questo gioco sia rivelato dal numero di lettori che gli ha chiesto informazioni su Wadūd come se si trattasse di una persona reale (Anṭūn 2016b).

5 Conclusioni

La riflessione che si è proposta, partendo dalla questione di Caiani e Cobham (2013) sulla «nuova concettualizzazione» di autori e lettori nella letteratura irachena contemporanea, ha cercato di mettere in luce alcuni aspetti della comunicazione letteraria in *Fihris*. A rendere il romanzo rilevante rispetto alla questione è, come si è visto, il fatto di costruire ‘all’interno del testo’ tale spazio comunicativo. In particolare, Sinan Antoon mette in scena due narratori che si presentano come autori delle narrazioni dei livelli narrativi più interni, in un proliferare di enunciati metanarrativi che spesso mettono in ombra il piano strettamente diegetico dell’opera.

La lettura qui presentata ha mirato a mettere in rapporto la postura teorica sul romanzo per come emerge nelle sezioni più argomentative del romanzo e quella narrativa dei racconti del «*Fihris*» intradiegetico. Ad emergere da tale confronto è soprattutto l’interdipendenza tra i due discorsi nella costruzione dell’autorità narrativa. Da un lato, le lettere e le riflessioni di Wadūd e di Namīr forniscono una struttura retorica di fondo ai racconti brevi, legittimando il passaggio da un *archivio delle perdite* alle storie individuali e temporaneamente concluse di oggetti, animali, esseri umani. In questo modo la cornice fornisce alle storie una *tellability*, intesa come «noteworthiness» di quanto narrato (Baroni 2016), ma anche talora letteralmente come ‘possibilità di articolazione’ in situazioni narrative che presentano paradossi sul piano mimetico. Sotto la superficie del catalogo di tracce liberamente associate si trova, in altre parole, la spinta unificante data dall’insistenza degli enunciati autoriali su quanto viene, o è stato, narrato.

Si è parlato così, per i racconti in prima persona, di una voce autoriale compresente a quella del narratore principale, una voce che si fa garante dell’unità e della dicibilità di una narrazione condotta da non-umani che narrano retrospettivamente la propria scomparsa. La strategia di autenticazione di questa seconda voce (che si è definita ‘narrazione in terza forma’) coincide con la rivendicazione da parte di Wadūd di un’autorità di tipo testimoniale, intesa come autorità di chi ‘parla per’ le vittime della guerra. Tale articolazione di voce e autorità è ancor più evidente nei racconti che presentano una struttura ‘a indovino’ in cui l’identificazione del narratore non è immediata e richiede al lettore l’identificazione di una seconda istanza responsabile del racconto.

Pur mantenendo strutture narrative simili, nei racconti in terza persona il discorso autoriale è per sua natura più evidente e assume talora i tratti dell’onniscienza. In questo contesto trovano più spazio discorsi di carattere extraletterario, e in particolare quello storiografico, che nelle dichiarazioni di Wadūd rappresenta il genere discorsivo cui il suo «*Fihris*» appartiene. Si è visto così come anche te-

sti in cui il piano diegetico è decisamente messo in secondo piano, il riferimento ad uno sfondo cronologico comune ai racconti permetta al lettore di situarli senza sforzi nel romanzo.

L'unione di un discorso che si vuole storiografico e di una strategia di autenticazione basata sulla testimonianza contribuisce a dare una natura ibrida al progetto di *i'adat takwīn* إعادة تكوين 'ri-costruzione' (Antūn 2016a, 268) di Wadūd, la cui funzione di rielaborazione finzionale della storia non esclude una certa referenzialità dei testi. Tale dimensione referenziale è ricreata, al livello più esterno della narrazione, dalla vena autobiografica della *self-narration* di Namīr, che introduce un «patto fantasmatico», tra la *fiction* e l'autobiografia, con il lettore. Le strategie di autenticazione degli autori fittizi del romanzo vengono così in qualche modo proiettate oltre, nella comunicazione tra autore (reale) e lettore. Se dunque il carattere sperimentale di *Fihris* lo rende un romanzo-laboratorio sull'autorialità in un Iraq che si sgretola, e sul legame (tutt'altro che diretto o ingenuo) tra la letteratura e la storia irachene post-2003, l'elaborazione che il romanzo fa di tali questioni non si risolve nel testo, ma viene proiettata pragmaticamente al di fuori di esso. In contrasto con l'atteggiamento distaccato e la narrazione 'invisibile' del modernismo, il rilievo della mediazione narrativa in *Fihris* pare invocare, nello spazio pubblico, quella di un autotestimone che 'parli per' le vittime.

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Written *Dārīja*: “māšī məʿqūl təkṭəb-ha bi-ḥurūf al-luġa al-ʿarabiyya!” *It Is not Logical to Write It with the Arabic Letters!* Media Reception of the *Zakoura Dictionary Project*

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Abstract This study investigates written linguistic practices emerging from public debate in Morocco. Although *Dārīja* is increasingly used in writing, especially in online platforms, most of its users still stigmatize it. In 2017 the Zakoura Foundation edited the first monolingual dictionary of *Dārīja*, a fervently debated initiative. So, this analysis aims to show the limits of such codification initiative, and factors which affect language ideology in Morocco. Therefore, a corpus of articles and readers' comments on the *Zakoura Dictionary* of two Moroccan digital newspapers, *Goud* and *Hespress*, has been analyzed, quantitatively and qualitatively, in order to compare the opinions about language and the language varieties in which they were expressed.

Keywords Standardization. Written *Dārīja*. Conventionalization. Orthographic Norms. Language Ideologies. Moroccan Digital Newspapers.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Theoretical Framework and Contextualization. – 2.1 (Informal) Standardization. *Dārīja* as a Written Language. – 2.2 The Centre for the Promotion of *Dārīja* and the *Zakoura Dictionary*. – 3 Corpus and Methodology. – 4 Analysis and Interpretations. – 4.1 Articles and Comments. 'For' and 'Against' Opinions. – 4.2 Articles and Comments. Linguistic Choices. – 5 Conclusions.



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1 Introduction

Briouate, *baghrir* and *ghriba*, three Moroccan Arabic names for traditional sweets, generated a fierce debate at the start of the Moroccan school year in 2018. The three terms in Moroccan Arabic (henceforth *Dārīja*), were written in Arabic script and published in school textbooks. This incident fuelled a long-standing controversy as the public opinion still rejects the use of *Dārīja* as a formalized and legitimized didactic and pedagogical tool in the school system.

Despite recent studies, such as the Fafo Report 2016 (Kebede, Kindt 2016), which proves that the written production in *Dārīja* occupies increasingly more public space (advertising, social networks, online newspapers), standardization and conventionalization of written *Dārīja* orthography remains a sensitive topic. So much so that the publication of the *Qāmūs ad-dārīġa al-maġrebiyya* (Dictionary of Moroccan *Dārīja*, henceforth *Zakoura Dictionary*, the first monolingual dictionary of *Dārīja* in Arabic script published by the Zakoura Foundation in 2017, has reopened the traditional and lengthy diatribe between promoters of *Dārīja* and defenders of *Fuṣṣḥā* (Standard Arabic).¹

Within the wider context of the sociocultural and economic changes caused by the digital revolution, this study aims to investigate the language ideologies that Moroccans (both journalists and common users) express in their written practices.

More precisely, this analysis focuses on comments and articles published online and aims, on the one hand, to observe the limits of the Zakoura Foundation initiative concerning the question of the orthographic codification of the *Dārīja* variety; on the other hand, to show how linguistic practices reflect contrasting uses and ideologies with respect to the standardization process proposed by the *Zakoura Dictionary*. This comparative analysis makes it possible to observe discrepancies between actual written practice and ideological behaviour on language attitudes.

Drawing material from the two Moroccan online newspapers, *Goud* and *Hespress*, a linguistic and ideological analysis of the media debate announcing the publication of the *Zakoura Dictionary* will be carried out. From a methodological point of view, a corpus of 10 articles and 301 readers' comments will be analyzed. The quantitative analysis will outline 'for' and 'against' opinions on the matter, and the most frequent linguistic (see syntactic and morphological) traits used by journalists and readers when writing (also) in *Dārīja*

¹ The present study represents a more comprehensive and detailed version of the contribution presented during the last conference of the Association Internationale de Dialectologie Arabe (Kutaisi, Georgia, 10-13 June 2019). The topics discussed in this paper are also part of the ongoing PhD research by the Author, which began in 2016, on the syntactic and stylistic variation of the Arabic language in Moroccan digital newspapers.

in Arabic script; while the qualitative analysis will focus on investigating the gap between attitudes (ideologies) and practices (written languages used) that rises from the public debate regarding the standardization and the conventionalization of *Dārīja*.

Therefore, the first part of this study concerns the theoretical framework concerning the formal versus informal standardization process of languages focusing on Arabic and on the conventionalization of written *Dārīja*, in particular. Greater attention will be paid to the presentation of *Zakoura Dictionary* and to the codification initiatives of the Zakoura Foundation. The second part of this study will be dedicated to the linguistic and ideological analysis of the selected corpus. Finally, the third part will focus on results and conclusions.

2 Theoretical Framework and Contextualization

2.1 (Informal) Standardization. *Dārīja* as a Written Language

Standardization, i.e. “the imposition of uniformity upon a class of object [...], such as language” (Milroy 2001, 531), is a phenomenon closely linked not only to the field of linguistics (with respect to the internal structure of language systems), but also to sociolinguistics (with respect to extralinguistic factors, such as the relationship between norm(s) and prestige). The standardization process as shown by Haugen (1966) involves at least four stages: “selection, codification, acceptance, and elaboration of a linguistic norm” (Haugen 1966, 922). Therefore, whereas “codification” and “elaboration of a linguistic norm” are strictly related to linguistic mechanisms, “selection” and “acceptance” are purely ideological and political choices. In other words, a (formal/official) standard variety ‘rises up’ from the status of dialect to the rank of language as a result of a language planning process promoted by actors who “select” a language variety and whose ‘authority’ is “accepted” by the language community. Hence, this claim inevitably implies that the standardization process is not ideologically neutral and is strictly related to political issues as, for instance, the development of nationalism,² as also argued by Haugen (1966).

In this perspective, Haugen’s standardization outline represents the formal standardization process – ‘standardization from above’ – a

² In the Arab-speaking countries and in other linguistic realities, the Arabic language (in both its standard and colloquial varieties) plays a symbolic role in the diffusion of nationalist ideologies, whether pan-Arab, regional or national-state nationalism(s) (Kallas 2011). This was also highlighted by Suleiman ([1996] 2013) concerning the Egyptianized form of Standard Arabic as a key tool for national identity formation among Egyptian nationalists in the perspective of nation-state construction.

linguistic codification process promoted by authoritative actors, in opposition to the ‘standardization from below’ – informal standardization or “conventionalization” of common shared language practices informally accepted by the members of a language community as outlined by Caubet (2017a) for the informal standardization of *Dārīja*.

Related issues associated to the formal standardization and conventionalization processes concern the differentiation between oral and written languages. In fact, as stated in Haugen “[whether written languages] establish models across time and space, [spoken languages] are subject to [...] linguistic change” (1966, 929). This statement confirms that the concept of ‘uniformity’, in opposition to ‘variation’, is central to the process of standardization, as confirmed by Auer on European languages, when he defines a standard variety as:

a common language, i.e. one which (ideally) shows no geographical variation in the territory in which it is used; [...] an H variety, i.e. it has overt prestige and is used in situations which require a formal way of speaking (if a spoken standard exists at all), as well as in writing; and [...] codified [variety], i.e. “right” or “wrong” plays an important role in the way in which speakers orient towards it. (Auer 2011, 486)

In addition, in a typological perspective, Auer (2011) also describes five emergence models of European national standard languages from the evolution of their dialectal varieties. In particular, the model he calls “Type A” (endoglossic), or “medial diglossia”, reflects the model of diglossia existing in Arabic-speaking contexts, such as the Moroccan one. More precisely, he states:

the standard variety is perceived to be related to the vernaculars for which it provides a roof, and which we can now call dialects. [...] [A]lthough the relationship between standard and dialect remains diglossic, this diglossia assigns the varieties to different media: the endoglossic standard is used in the written medium, the dialects in the spoken medium. (Auer 2011, 489)

Auer’s definition effectively reflects Ferguson’s concept of diglossia (Ferguson 1959), and the functional and strictly dichotomous distinction between the varieties H (‘high’, written, official, and prestigious languages) and L (‘low’, spoken, unofficial, and less prestigious languages). Therefore, in the diglossic context of the Arabic language,³

3 It must be borne in mind that linguistic practices, both through oral and written medium, reflect a more flexible and stratified situation between the two H and L poles of the diglossic continuum, rather than this strictly dichotomous schematization. For a

the Arabic *Fuṣḥā*, considered in this study the formal standard variety of Arabic language, represents the ‘standard norm’ – the product of an institutionally and socially accepted process of selection and codification (Mejdell 2017) – for written production.

As a matter of fact, in Morocco, as well as in other Arab countries, colloquial and/or informal varieties are becoming commoner in the written production, and as a consequence of this phenomenon a development has been shown to occur in these linguistic communities. From this perspective, Mejdell (2017) refers to “destandardisation” as

a development [...] where the validity of the standard is significantly challenged, in practice, as the sole variety for (public) written purposes. (Mejdell 2017, 70)

Nowadays, such development is becoming more and more current in the Moroccan language community, where middle⁴ and spoken varieties migrate from being purely oral to serving several written purposes.

Therefore, as briefly mentioned above, the process of informal standardization, or ‘standardization from below’, clearly emerges in the passage of *Dārīja* from a strictly colloquial variety to a written language. Precisely, Caubet (2017a) refers to this passage as conventionalization from a sociological perspective, claiming that

collective behavior and repeated usage [let] youth read and copy from each other, so that separate actions have an impact on the community. (Caubet 2017a, 137)

Analyzing the contemporary written practices of Moroccan artists (bloggers, journalists and slam poets), she pointed out that writing *Dārīja* in Arabic script⁵ implies two correlated dynamics: the promo-

more detailed literature about Arabic variation and its diglossic continuum see Ferguson (1959, [1991] 1996), Blanc (1960), Badawi (1973), Meiseles (1980), Hudson (2002), Boussofara Omar (2011). See also Bassiouney (2009, 2018) on diglossia in the perspective of code switching, and Mejdell (2018) for a typological perspective.

4 The narrow definition of Middle Arabic consists of “the language of numerous Arabic texts, distinguished by its linguistically (and therefore stylistically) mixed nature, as it combines standard and colloquial features with others of a third type, neither standard nor colloquial” (Lentin 2011). On Middle/Mixed Arabic see Lentin 1997, 2008; Larher 2001; Mejdell 2006; Doss 2008. As for Moroccan dialectology, Youssi (1992) described the common features of a middle spoken variety of *Dārīja* he called “Arabe Moderne Marocain” (AMM), that is “Modern Moroccan Arabic”, namely, the educated variety of spoken *Dārīja*.

5 Moroccans first used *Dārīja* in written digital communication in 1999 in SMS, chats and online forums using a mix of Latin letters and numbers in order to reproduce a written form of spoken Arabic varieties. This written realization was called *Ṣaransiya*, from the term used by Zaidane (1980) indicating the *Dārīja*-French code switching, or

tion of *Darija* as a language ideologically belonging to a common cultural identity in all domains, and the diffusion of common writing practices (Caubet 2018). So, if ideologically the use of written *Darija* in cultural production is relevant for belonging to “Moroccanness” (Caubet 2017b), this common practice – more frequently visible and shared among digital platforms and social media –, lead to the development of an informal ‘codification’ of *Darija* norms (orthographically, lexically and syntactically). In other words, the spreading of common practices among users facilitated the process of conventionalization of a non-institutionalized *Darija* norm for writing, as well as a mutual acceptance of these norms among their users, i.e. standardization from below.

However, it is important to bear in mind that *Darija*, even if it is spreading in written productions, is far from becoming an ‘official standard language’, and most of its users still consider it a stigmatized variety. Nevertheless, several studies already investigated the processes involved in the passage from oral to written *Darija* both in formal and informal productions (Caubet 2004; Benítez-Fernández 2006; Hoogland 2013), as well as in literature and in the press (Miller 2012, 2015, 2017; Caubet 2017a, 2017b, 2018; Brigui 2016; Hoogland 2018). Indeed, most written *Darija* productions show that *Darija* is increasingly used in combination with *Fuṣṣḥā*, the standard variety traditionally used in the domain of written productions.

So, if on the one hand *Darija* spread across the public space (advertising, social networks and digital platforms) through its written form and evolved from being the oral variety expressing traditional and popular culture to the language of modernity (Miller 2017), on the other hand its users show contrasting views with respect to its legitimation in all domains and media.

In particular, the following analysis will outline the reactions and the criticisms of public opinion to the *Zakoura Dictionary* (Mgharf-aoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017), representing a semi-institutionalized attempt of codification of written *Darija*. As it will emerge from the analyzed data, the *Zakoura Dictionary* project represents an attempt of ‘standardization from above’ whose authority does not seem to have been recognized by the Moroccan language community.

more recently *e-darija*, since 2006, according to Caubet (2018, 389). Whereas until 2008-10 new technologies did not allow people to use Arabic script, after the digital revolution (2010) technological devices were implemented to use Arabic alphabet, so people started to switch to Arabic script and use *Darija* as a modern living language in writing and creative productions. For more details see Caubet 2004, 2017a, 2017b, 2018.

2.2 The Centre for the Promotion of *Darija* and the Zakoura Dictionary

The *Zakoura Dictionary* was published by the Centre for the Promotion of *Darija* of the Zakoura Foundation,⁶ a Moroccan association created in 1997 by Nouredine Ayouch, well-known publicist and member of the Higher Council for Education in Morocco. The main aim of the Foundation is to promote the human development and the education of children, youth, and women in the marginalized areas of Morocco. The Foundation’s activities mainly concern the opening of educational centers in rural areas of the country where the teaching staff develops informal pre-schooling educational programs through the valorization of the mother tongues *Amazigh* and *Darija*. The annual reports published by the Foundation highlight their long-term successes,⁷ underlining the positive impact their teaching methods, including the promotion of mother tongues in their programs, have on the learning process and on the individual development of their students.

Nouredine Ayouch, a controversial public figure belonging to the Moroccan economic elite, has always played a leading role in the promotion of mother tongues, and of *Darija* in particular, especially through the academic side of Zakoura Foundation. He organized several international conferences giving scientific legitimation to the Zakoura pro-*Darija* projects, including the *Zakoura Dictionary*. In this respect, three academic events deserve to be mentioned in order to underline Nouredine Ayouch’s role as one of the actors in the promotion of *Darija* development. In 2010 he organized an international conference, *Language, Languages* (Zakoura Education 2010) – with the participation of experts and international scholars, such as Ahmed Boukous, Claude Hagège, Zakia Iraqui Sinaceur, Chérif El Shoubashy, Djamel Eddin Kouloughli, Abderrahim Youssi, Francisco García Moscoso, Ahmed Benchemsi – to underline the importance of language planning policies. This conference highlighted common linguistic issues in several multilingual contexts, where national language policies led to language reforms, as the case for example of Turkey and Greece (Miller 2017, 107). The second conference, *Le chemin de la réussite* (Zakoura Education 2013) pointed out weaknesses affecting the educational system in Morocco. Its goal was to submit legislative proposals to the Parliament, underlining the importance of the institutionalized introduction of mother tongues in the educational system. This conference was attended by leading personalities in the

⁶ <https://www.fondationzakoura.org>.

⁷ Projects and annual reports on their activities can be found on their website: for the annual report of 2018 see <https://www.fondationzakoura.org/assets/publications/c2294-rapport-annuel-2018-web.pdf>.

economic and political fields, including ministers of education of the Moroccan government as well as royal advisers (Miller 2017, 107-8). The conference had an impressive impact in the media and echoed through the public opinion from 2013 to 2015.⁸ In this media storm, Ayouch was hailed as the destroyer of the Arabic language. Despite having presented the promotion of *Dārīja* as a scientific tool to improve Arabic literacy creating a bridge between *Dārīja* and standard Arabic, Ayouch’s commitment was interpreted as “a Trojan horse that will reinforce the prestige of the foreign languages” (Miller 2017, 108), a serious accusation, the more so, on reason of Ayouch’s belonging to the economic (and francophone) elite.

Despite the aforementioned criticisms, in 2014, the Zakoura Centre for the Promotion of *Dārīja* organized a workshop on Arabic lexicography, *Journée d’étude sur la lexicographie arabe* (Casablanca, 12th April 2014),⁹ the third scientific event attended by international scholars, including Zakia Iraqui Sinaceur, Jordi Aguadé, Peter Behnstedt, Mohamed El Madlaoui, Khalil Mgharfaoui, Abdellah Chekayri, Abdelouhad Mabrouh. The workshop focused on the creation of a theoretical and methodological support to produce the first *Dārīja* monolingual dictionary, finally published in 2017.

The *Dictionary* project was coordinated by Prof. Khalil Mgharfaoui (University of Chouaib Dukkali in El Jadida), Prof. Abdelouhad Mabrouh (Chouaib Dukkali University), and Prof. Abdellah Chekayri (Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane). They presented the language of *Zakoura Dictionary* as the “modern Moroccan Arabic language”; as Mgharfaoui himself states:

De langue basse, unique expression des analphabètes, l’arabe marocain est aujourd’hui une revendication portée par des intellectuels, artistes, écrivains, linguistes, qui le considèrent comme la langue de l’identité et de la créativité. La langue qui pourrait réconcilier le Marocain avec lui-même et avec la modernité. [...] C’est dans la dynamique entre ces deux forces, le conservatisme d’un côté et l’évolution de l’autre, que se trouve un espace pour bâtir une langue arabe marocaine moderne. (Mgharfaoui 2018)

The importance of *al-luġa al-wuṣṭā*, ‘middle language’, i.e. the middle Arabic language emerging from actual linguistic practices, is under-

⁸ As pointed out by Miller (2017, 107-8) the public debate/duel between Nouredine Ayouch and the Moroccan historian Abdallah Laroui, aired on the TV channel 2M, reached a very high share, but despite the wide resonance the criticisms did not seriously discuss the kind of *Dārīja* proposed, neither any insights about their methodological approaches.

⁹ See the detailed program in <http://www.zakoura-education.org/uploads/articles/e768b6bd1d068c1954b35f95b31caef6f6e8f1c4.pdf>.

lined in the *Dictionary*'s introduction. According to the authors, the literacy of this middle language will implement a deeper mastery of Arabic *Fuṣṣḥā*, and in general will improve language skills in all domains (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 19). For this reason, they clearly and repeatedly specify that the language in the *Dictionary* represents a bridge linking *Dārīja* and Arabic *Fuṣṣḥā* and that the *Zakoura Dictionary* is not an ideological tool to destroy the Arabic language.

Furthermore, as Mgharfaoui clarifies, the *Zakoura Dictionary* was conceived as a pedagogical tool for all Moroccans to learn Moroccan Arabic. Therefore, they “elaborated” (Haugen 1966) a set of orthographic norms to write (‘proper’) *Dārīja*:

En effet, le dictionnaire décrit la langue et délimite en même temps les contours de ce qui relève de l’usage acceptable, pour ne pas dire “le bon usage”. Nous sommes là devant une des premières spécificités de ce dictionnaire. Il ne s’agit pas d’un dictionnaire qui consigne les occurrences telles qu’elles sont attestées. C’est plutôt un outil pédagogique aidant à l’apprentissage de la langue arabe marocaine. Il fallait donc faire des choix pour rester dans un parler marocain médian largement partagé et compréhensible de tous. (Mgharfaoui 2018)

Therefore, the first challenge they had to face in order to “elaborate” (Haugen 1966) a *Dārīja* orthographic norm, was the problem of the “selection” (Haugen 1966) of the variety to be introduced in the *Dictionary*. In order to define “un parler marocain médian” widely shared and mutually understandable, they relied on the results of the Fafo Report (Kebede, Kindt 2016) which showed that *Dārīja* is the first written language in the region of Rabat, followed by French, Arabic *Fuṣṣḥā* and *Amazigh* (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 8). Thus, the major problem they encountered concerned the wide regional linguistic variation of *Dārīja*.¹⁰ For this reason, they decided to only include in the *Dictionary* the variety of the central regions of the country (Rabat-Salé-Kenitra and Casablanca-Settat). These areas are, in fact, the regions which gather about a third of the Moroccan inhabitants¹¹ whose *Dārīja* is understood by most Moroccans (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 10).

Moreover, a second challenge they had to face concerned, on the one hand, the ‘selection’ of lexical entries, and, on the other, their

¹⁰ For contributions on Moroccan dialectology see Colin 1938; Marçais 1961; Durand 1994; Aguadé 2003.

¹¹ According to the Higher Planning Commission’s survey (2014), *Dārīja* is the most used language in urban areas (96.3%) as well as in rural areas (82.7%); on the other hand, the three varieties of *Amazigh* are used by the 20.4% of the population in urban areas and by the 34.8% in rural areas; *Hassaniyya* keeps a very low frequency of use (1.2% in urban areas and 0.3% in rural areas); see Higher Planning Commission 2014..

orthographical reproduction. The entries were based on the list of about 8,000 words of the *Diccionario español-árabe marroquí* (Spanish-Arabic Moroccan Dictionary) by Prof. Francisco García Moscoso (2005). The team adapted and updated this list by deleting the words they considered too regional and adding the neologisms currently circulating and attested in the press and in audio recordings¹² (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 8). When choosing the orthographic norm, they decided to adapt the *Darija* spelling to the orthography of Arabic *Fuṣḥā*. Mgharfaoui explains that they compared the different occurrences attested in their sources and then they chose to include in the *Dictionary* the occurrences orthographically closest to Arabic *Fuṣḥā*. For instance, between أرط *arṭ* (variant 1) and أرض *arḍ* (variant 2) ‘earth’, they chose the second variant (Mgharfaoui 2018).

Further orthographic choices, exemplified in the paragraph الإملاء في قاموس زكورة *al-‘imlā’ fī qāmūs zakūra*, ‘Spelling in *Zakoura Dictionary*’ (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 11), follow the principle of adaptation of *Darija* to *Fuṣḥā*, as outlined below.

The orthographic choices adopted in the *Dictionary* concern phonetics and morphosyntax issues related to Arabic *Fuṣḥā* and *Darija* language. In terms of phonetics the choices include:

1. The addition of three consonants corresponding to specific *Darija* phonemes that do not exist in Arabic *Fuṣḥā*, i.e., /g/, /v/, /p/ (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 12). However, words which present phonetic variations, such as قال /qāla/ ‘to say’, pronounced in *Darija* both /qāla/ or /gāla/, follow the Arabic *Fuṣḥā* norms (Mgharfaoui 2018).
2. The retention of interdental letters such as ث /t/ and ذ /d/ despite being respectively pronounced in *Darija* as /t/ and /d/ (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 13).
3. The addition of vowel signs to disambiguate words that have the same spelling, but different pronunciations (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 11).

Whereas on morphosyntax the choices include:

1. Prepositions: simple prepositions, as *bi- ‘in’*, pronounced /bə/ in *Darija*, are directly affixed on the lemma, as it is in Arabic *Fuṣḥā*. However, the preposition في *fī* ‘in’, whose *Darija* pronunciation is /fə/, is orthographically spelled in the *Dictionary* as it is in *Fuṣḥā* (في *fī*) in order to adapt its pronunciation to the morphological coherence of the Arabic language system when adding suffix pronouns (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 12).

¹² They do not specify the data they used (which newspapers, magazines, or other written production) neither which audio recordings they refer to.

2. Suffix pronouns: the third-person masculine singular suffix pronoun which in *Darija* has a greater phonetic variation (i.e. *-/o/*, or not pronounced), is orthographically spelled in the *Dictionary* as it is in Arabic *Fuṣṣḥā*, i.e. *-/h/*. As previously mentioned, this choice reflects the principle of coherence with the Arabic language, since in Arabic *Fuṣṣḥā* both the masculine and the feminine suffix pronouns are realized with the same letter, i.e. *-/hu/* (masculine) and *-/hā/* (feminine), and consequently, their choice reflects the adaptation and coherence to the Arabic *Fuṣṣḥā* system (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 13).
3. Morphemes: the authors decided to separate single lemmas from *Darija* verbal morphemes, for example the separation of the preverbal morpheme *kā* of prefixal conjugations from its conjugated verb as in “*كا ينمشي بجنب البحر*” *kā yētəmšī biġānēb əl-baḥr* ‘you are walking near the sea’ (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 12), as well as the separation of negative morphemes. For instance, double negative verbal morphemes *ما mā* and *شي šī* are orthographically separated from the verb, as in this sample “*ما قرا شي*” *mā qerā šī*, ‘He did not study’ (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 12). Negative nominal morphemes follow the same orthographic choice, as in this sample “*ما شي شي حجة كبيرة*” *mā šī šī ḥaġġa kēbira*, ‘it’s not a big thing’ (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 12). Despite the different pronunciation of the morpheme *šī* according to the nominal or verbal negation, they decided to retain only the orthographical *شي šī* realization.¹³

It becomes clear from these points that the authors aimed at the codification of *Darija* orthography, and especially focused on exemplifying the characteristics of *al-luġa al-wuṣṭā*, a ‘middle language’ in the Moroccan language community. In other words, to them this ‘middle language’ is a sort of Middle Moroccan (educated) Arabic, whose characteristics, according to the authors, are the wide use of *Fuṣṣḥā* lexicon, adapted to *Darija* pronunciations and morphosyntactic structures, as well as the elimination of regional/local peculiarities, thus remaining accessible to anyone from different geographical areas (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 15).

However, at the end of the introduction of the *Zakoura Dictionary*, the authors state:

¹³ This last choice is probably due to the need to disambiguate the tens digits from negative morphemes. They underline that for example the number ‘thirteen’ can be written in *Darija* as “*ش.انلاد*” *š.əlātāš*, i.e. with the tens digit abbreviation *š* (where *š* means ‘ašra’, ‘ten’) suffixed to the units (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 12-13).

فباللغة الدارجة لغة في طور التشكيل وفي حاجة لوضع معايير لكتابتها وتقنينها قاموس زكورة خطوة أولى في هذا الاتجاه وفق معايير إملائية مضبوطة. وهو خطوة في الاتجاه الصحيح باش يتجمع جزء من تراثنا الشفوي وباش نحافظو على هذا الكنز من الكلام الموروث. (Mgharfaoui, Mabrou, Chekayri 2017, 16-17)

Darija is a language that is being shaped and it is necessary to establish standards for its writing and codification.

Zakoura Dictionary has established accurate spelling standards. It is a step in the right direction in order to group a part of our oral heritage and to preserve this inherited treasure.¹⁴

Hence, their aim to standardize *Darija* becomes evident. Bearing in mind the prescriptive dimension of the standardization process, i.e. the enforcement of categories of “correctness” and “incorrectness”,¹⁵ and the consequent elaborated standard norm, the *Zakoura Dictionary* would become the only prescriptive ‘authority’ in matters concerning the appropriateness of *Darija* orthography.

In brief, the *Dictionary* represents the tension between formal/informal standardization, standardization from above/below, formal standardization versus conventionalization. The following analysis of media reaction to the *Zakoura Dictionary* project will try to illustrate this tension in order to observe to what extent the ‘Zakoura authority’ earned the ‘acceptance’ of the Moroccan language community.

3 Corpus and Methodology

In order to observe actual linguistic written practices and language ideologies concerning *Darija* conventionalization, a corpus of articles and readers’ comments has been selected. The corpus includes 6 articles from *Goud*,¹⁶ and 4 articles from *Hespress*.¹⁷ They are quoted as follows, according to author, column, and date of publication:

Goud:

- G1, Anonymous, أش واقع, *āš wāq*, ‘What is happening’, 2016-12-07;
 G2, Zaid Hamid, آراء, *ārā*, ‘Opinions’, 2016-12-08;
 G3, Elbaroudi Siham, آراء, *ārā*, ‘Opinions’, 2016-12-09;
 G4, Socrate Mohamed, آراء, *ārā*, ‘Opinions’, 2016-12-16;
 G5, Ouchoun Omar, آراء, *ārā*, ‘Opinions’, 2016-12-17;
 G6, Akannouch Abdellatif, آراء, *ārā*, ‘Opinions’ 2016-12-18.

¹⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are made by the Author.

¹⁵ See for example the aforementioned description of Auer (2011) for a standard variety.

¹⁶ *Goud* website www.goud.ma.

¹⁷ *Hespress* website www.hespress.com.

Hespress:

H1, Chabil Abdellah, مجتمع, *muġtama*’, ‘Society’, 2016-12-07;

H2 Allali Ismail, منبر هسبريس, *minbar hespress*, ‘Hespress Tribune’, 2016-12-20;

H3 Abdellaoui Naima, كتاب وآراء, *kuttāb wa-ārā*’, ‘Writers and Opinions’, 2016-12-23;

H4 Charqaoui Abderrahim, مدارات, *mudārāt*, ‘Orbits’, 2016-12-29.

All articles were published in December 2016, after the press conference organized by the Zakoura Foundation on 6 December 2016¹⁸ for the promotion of its *Dictionary*. Although the *Zakoura Dictionary* official date of publication was 2017, it is possible that it was already available in late December 2016.¹⁹

Goud is a digital newspaper created by Ahmed Najim, its current editorial director. In 2011, after the definitive closure of the weekly *Nichane*,²⁰ Ahmed Najim decided to start with *Goud* his new editorial project. Both *Goud* and *Nichane* mean ‘direct’ in *Darija*. *Goud*’s editorial line is in fact in favor to the use of *Darija*; it is an independent and generalist newspaper targeting all genre of audiences, and it pays great attention to the news which most interest Moroccan society.²¹

Hespress was created in 2006 by Hassan and Amine Guennouni, chief and editor directors. It is a generalist newspaper and it collects a heterogeneous range of contents, international and national news, focusing on the Moroccan youth and on contemporary society. The newspaper leaves abundant space to readers,²² not only through comments on articles, but also on a column dedicated to the readers’ opinions.²³

In total, 301 readers’ comments were collected from the above-mentioned newspapers (respectively, 27 from *Goud*²⁴ and 274 from

18 On 1st December 2016 the Moroccan TV channel 2M announced the Zakoura press conference, see <https://bit.ly/3dyuqE8>.

19 For instance, H2 article quotes examples from *Zakoura Dictionary*, whereas G1 article published within the text also a picture of *Zakoura Dictionary* cover illustrating the 2017 as the date of publication. Both articles were published in December 2016.

20 See Miller 2012, 2015, 2017; Brigui 2016; Hoogland 2018.

21 Information collected during an interview with Ahmed Najim in Casablanca on 30 April 2018.

22 *Hespress* is the fourth most visited website in Morocco, according to ALEXA 2015.

23 The two “against” articles were published in the two opinion columns of *Hespress*: *minbar hasbriss* (Hespress Tribune) is the opinion column where readers submit their articles, which, if accepted by the editors, are then published, and *آراء بائكة* *kuttāb wa-ārā*’ (Writers and Opinions) is the opinion column where journalists, intellectuals and well-known personalities collaborate regularly with *Hespress*. Information provided during an interview with Mohamed Belkacem, *Hespress*’ journalist, held in Rabat on 23 March 2018.

24 As a matter of fact, *Goud* readers write comments on the official Facebook page of the newspaper, whereas *Hespress* comments were collected directly from the news-

Hespress). The articles were selected by searching for news on the *Zakoura Dictionary* in the online archives of the two newspapers.

From a quantitative point of view, ‘for’ and ‘against’ opinions were initially identified, both in articles and comments; results were organized into three categories: ‘for’, ‘against’ and ‘other’.²⁵ Then, the categories ‘*Fuṣṣḥā*’ (F), ‘*Dārija*’ (D), and ‘Mixed’ (M) were created to assess the general distribution of the different language varieties in the data. It should be noted that, due to the phenomenon of bivalence, data were interpreted in their whole syntactical context as it is not always possible to clearly define whether a single word belongs to the *Fuṣṣḥā* or to the *Dārija* variety.

The overview on the distribution of varieties allowed to qualitatively compare which language variety was used when expressing ‘for’ or ‘against’ opinions on using *Dārija* expressions or other varieties.

4 Analysis and Interpretations

4.1 Articles and Comments. ‘For’ and ‘Against’ Opinions

The 4 *Hespress* articles express mostly negative opinions: 2 ‘against’ (H2 and H3), 1 ‘for’ (H4), and 1 ‘other’ (H1) – an expository article. Instead, across the 6 *Goud* articles, the opinions are evenly distributed: 2 ‘for’ (G1, G3), 2 ‘against’ (G4, G6), and 2 ‘other’ (G2, G5).

Arguments in favor of *Zakoura Dictionary* in *Hespress* articles concern the aims of the initiative, as Professor Mgharfaoui claimed in the following example from H4 article:

(1) علينا بناء جسور وليس حصون، والعمل من منطلق تنمية اللغة وليس الخشية عليها،
قبل أن يشدد على القول بأن لغتنا هي هويتنا؛

(H4, 2016-12-29)

We must build bridges, not fortresses, and work to develop the language, instead of being afraid of it before he stressed that our language is our identity.²⁶

Similarly, the *Goud* ‘for’ articles underline the importance of this initiative since it helps to reconsider *Dārija* as the language belonging to all Moroccans (example 2); likewise, article G3 considers that the *Zakoura Dictionary* is an important initiative to promote *Dārija* (example 3), nevertheless it asks for more information about its fund-

paper’s webpage.

²⁵ The category “other” includes off-topic and ambiguous opinions.

²⁶ All quotations are henceforth translated by the Author.

ing and clarification on any “secondary” goal behind this project, as stated in the examples below:

(2) خطوة كبيرة ومهمة فإطار النهوض بالدارجة المغربية لي هي اللغة الأم ديال نسبة كبيرة (2) ديال المغاربة [...] ولكن مازال خاص الخدمة حيث بزاف ديال الناس المؤدلجين كايعتابرو الدارجة لغة الزنقة و كايحتاقروها بزاف ديال الناس كايعتابروها حرب على اللغة العربية [...] الدارجة ديال المغاربة كاملين! واش ماشي من حقنا نديبها فيها و نرضو ليها الاعتراب؟ (G1, 2016-12-07)

A big and important step **in** the context of promoting Moroccan *Darija* **which** is the mother tongue **of** a big portion of Moroccans. [...] Nevertheless, more **has to be done, since a lot of ideologized** people consider *Darija* a street language and **they despise it!** **Many people consider it** a war on Arabic language. [...] *Darija belongs* to all Moroccans! **Isn't it our right to take an interest in it and to keep it in the right consideration?**²⁷

(3) هاد الخطوة خطوة مايمكن اعتبارها إلا خطوة إيجابية. السيد جاي من مجال الاقتصاد و عارف بلي فاش كانقدمو شي مشروع للناس ديما كانهضرو على الكرمومة (G3, 2016-12-09)

This step cannot be considered other than a positive step!

Mr. [Ayouch] comes from an economic field and **he knows that when we present some** projects to people **we always speak about cash!**²⁸

'Against' opinions in the *Hespress* criticize the contradiction of using extensively Arabic *Fuṣḥā* rather than (only) *Darija*, as claimed in the following example from H2 article:

(4) فدعوى صعوبة اللغة العربية التي ادعاها عيوش، تدحض/ تسقط عند أول نظرة في معجم (4) الدارجة المغربية، حيث عمد واضعو معجمه على شرح الألفاظ الدارجة العربية الفصحى، مما يعني - منطقيا- أن اللغة العربية الفصحى أبسط من الدارجة (H2, 2016-12-20)

The Ayouch's assertion, on the difficulty of the Arabic language, is refutable / falls at first glance to the Moroccan *Darija Dictionary*, in which the authors of the *Dictionary* explain the terms of *Darija* on the basis of the Arabic *Fuṣḥā*, which means - logically - that the Arabic *Fuṣḥā* is simpler than the *Darija*.

²⁷ Emphasis added here and henceforth: bold items highlight *Darija* variety.

²⁸ The word *l-garmūma* 'money' belongs to informal/slang lexicon.

H2 does not seem to consider the definition of 'middle language', repeatedly evoked in the introduction to the *Zakoura Dictionary*, however H3 expresses a more interesting criticism concerning the 'standardization from above', when she claims:

كنت، ولا أظنني الوحيدة، أشعر بها دارجة مفروضة علينا، أفهماها كأى دارجة أخرى (5) ولكنني لا أتبناه
...قاموس الدارجة...
يحمل من الفقر والسطحية ما يجعلنا نتساءل عن المنهجية التي صيغ بها وعن التكوين
المعرفي والنوايا الحقيقية للقائمين عليه
(H3, 2016-12-23)

I feel, and I think I am not the only one, that a *Darija* is imposed on us, I understand it like any other *Darija*, but I don't adopt it!
[...] The *Darija Dictionary* [...] displays poverty and superficiality, which leads us to question the methodology with which it was formulated, as well as the cognitive training and the real intentions of its proponents.

Contrarily, the 'against' opinions in *Goud* openly accuse Ayouch and his legitimation as 'authoritative' actor of *Darija* promotion. Specifically, G4 emphasizes that money should be invested in initiatives which already acknowledge cultural productions in *Darija*, rather than initiatives such as the *Zakoura Dictionary* which, indeed, did not really use *Darija*, as stated in (6) below:

كإمتداد لتجربة نيشان واصل موقع كود اغناء محتوى الدارجة فالويب المغربي، و (6) ماشي غي بطريقة كتابة الخبر والعناوين، بل أنه تبني شباب لي مالقاو فين ينشروا ويكتبوا بالدارجة، ونشر ليهم الإبداع ديالهم بدون رقابة، فحرية تامة تامة، على عكس أي منبر آخر [...] بينما كود أغنت ساحة الكتابة بالدارجة بروائع لحد الآن تعتبر من أحسن ما تكتب بالدارجة [...] الفكرة زوينة أه قاموس بالدارجة، ولكن كيفاش تدارت وعلاش تدارت هذا هو الموشكيل حيث من خلال مايقوم به عيوش كيبان أن آخر همه هو الدارجة، حيث بصح كون بغاها كان استثمر فمواقع وصفحات كاينين مغاربة ناطقين بالدارجة ومحتواهم زوين، أو كان تبني النشر للمغاربة لي كيتبوا بالدارجة باش بصح ديك الساعة يمكن تدير قاموس للدارجة المغربية.
(G4, 2016-12-16)

As an extension of *Nichane's* experience, *Goud* website has continued to enrich the Moroccan web with content in *Darija*, **not only** with news and headlines [in *Darija*], but also because it was chosen by the young people **who did not have any other place** to write and publish in *Darija*, it helped in spreading their creations without any censorship, **in** complete freedom, unlike any other platform. [...] While *Goud* enriches the scene of writing in *Darija* through masterpieces until now considered the best written *Darija* productions [...].

A nice idea, **yes**, the *Darija Dictionary*, but **how they did it and why they did it**, this is the **problem**, since through what Ayouch does, **it comes to mind** that his interest is other than *Darija*; because, **if he really wanted it**, he would have invested in websites and web pages **where** Moroccans speak in *Darija* and whose contents are **niche**, or he should have taken into consideration the publications of Moroccans **who write in *Darija* in order to write** his dictionary.

Socrate is G4 author, as well as one of the young pioneers in promoting written *Darija* through his literary production as a blogger. In 2014, having just spent a year and a half in prison for drug trafficking – an accusation for which many other young people and militants in the 20 February Movement, such as Socrate, were convicted (Caubet 2018) – Socrate was invited by Hamid Zaid, *Goud's* satirical journalist, to write his memories.²⁹ In 2014 his collaboration with *Goud* began with the publication of a serial novel in *Darija*, titled مذكرات محمد سقراط فالسجن *muḏakkirāt muḥammed soqrāt fə-səġən*, 'Memories of Mohammed Socrates from Prison'. He has been writing in the Opinions' column of *Goud* using *Darija* since 2014, and undoubtedly his opinions reflect the point of view of a pro-*Darija* activist, who certainly enriched the written production in *Darija*. Thus, the open accusations he moves to Ayouch, addressing the commercial interest of his projects, could be read quite clearly.

Similarly, G6 article's criticism of the *Zakoura Dictionary* initiative derives from the impression that Ayouch imposed himself, ideologically and politically, as a national language planner of a hypothetical *Darija* standardization process (that should be instead a state responsibility) as shown in (7) below:

عيوش] دار من راسو الشخص الوحيد اللي يمكن ليه "يمأسس" الدارجة، ويرجعها] (7)
 "لغة رسمية" بغا للي بغا، وكره للي كره... لأنه مللي كاتوصل لدرجة تدير "ديكسيونير" للغة
 ما، كيف ماكانت، معناه أنك رجعتيها "رسمية"، والقموس للي وضعتيه ليها، صبح المرجع
 ... "الإجباري" للحديث بها وللكتابة بها

(G6, 2016-12-18).

[Ayouch] **considered himself** the only person **who could "institutionalize" *Darija*, making it an "official language", like it or**

²⁹ Information that Mohammed Socrates gave to the Author in an e-mail interview on 27 May 2018. In the same interview, he underlined the value and the importance of the free space that *Goud* offered him by allowing him to express himself freely, when he said: *al-ḥurriyya llī fī-h w-llī makāynš f-mawāqī' ḥrā, wa-ḥāliyan 'anā kanantamī li-gūd ka-fīkr wa ka-namat 'ayš* 'the freedom that exists [in *Goud*] is not found in other websites, I actually belong to *Goud* as an idea and as a lifestyle'.

not,...because **when you decide to create a dictionary** of any kind of language, it means that **it is you who make** the language official, and the dictionary **in which you place it becomes** the forced reference for anyone who wants to speak it and write it...

These examples show that in *Hespress* and *Goud* different kinds of criticism are expressed towards the *Zakoura Dictionary* initiative, and this divergence reflects the peculiarities and the editorial lines of the two newspapers. Where *Hespress* has a more expository approach, even in the Opinions' column articles, *Goud* reacts more directly. *Goud* represents one of the various public spaces in which the *Darija* 'standardization from below' has developed and expanded. Hence, the tension between formal and informal standardization becomes evident.

The comments, on the other hand, present more varied arguments although, in most cases were found to be off topic. Readers' comments clearly show 'against' opinions on the *Zakoura Dictionary* in both newspapers. In the small sample of comments in *Goud*, most appear to be off topic and no 'for' comments were found. The arguments against the *Dictionary* clearly reject the project and perceive it as a tool that would favor the legitimation of *Darija* as an official language. Differently, in the *Hespress* readers' comments focus on several arguments: the negative impact that *Darija* can have on the educational system, the impossibility to choose a *Darija* (standard) variety, as well as direct and satirical criticisms against Ayouch. The examples below show the above-mentioned views:

(8) السبي عيوش أنا بغيت ولادي يتمكنوا من اللغات الإنجليزية والفرنسية أما الداريجة راني خليتها ليك أنت واللغة العربية الفصحى خليتها للفقهاء والشيوخ والمشعورين
يجب إصلاح التعليم أما ما نراه اليوم فهو مجرد تعمية وضبابية وتعتي
(in H1)

Mr Ayouch I would like my sons to master English and French, instead, **I leave the *Darija* to you and** the Arabic *Fusha* to the scholars, Sheikhs, and the **charlatans**.

We must reform the teaching, certainly what we see today is blindness, ambiguity and murkiness.

(9) المشكل ماشي مفعمچ انما اش من دريجة غادي يدبر هد السيد واش ديال الغرب ولا شرق ولا ديال الشمال اولاً الجنوب هذا اولاً ثانياً خصو يصنع الحروف ديالها مشي معقول تكتبها بحروف اللغة العربية
(in H1)

The problem **isn't the *Dictionary*** but **which *Darija* will this gentleman introduce?** The one **of** the West, of the East, **of** the North or of the South? **This** is the first issue, and secondly, he **should** elaborate **its** letters, **it is not** logical to write it with the Arabic letters!

ما هي حدود الدارجة إذا علمنا أنها خليط هجين من ألفاظ من عدة لغات و لهجات و (10) ابتكارات لفظية لا تخضع لقواعد ثابتة: تكرفييص،...، عيق،...، قسر، طروطوار، تشرميط، قابور
بمعنى آخر، ما هي المقاييس التي تجعلنا نقبل كلمة ما في هذا القاموس أو نرفضها؟
(in H4)

What are the limits of *Dārīja*? If we learn that it is a hybrid mixture of words from several languages and dialects and verbal innovations that are not subject to fixed rules: **sacrifice/distress, [...] to pose, [...] coercion, trottoir, to behave as a whore, free...**

In other words, according to which criteria do we accept or reject a word in this dictionary?

الابن أظهر الزين اللي ف السينما و الأب سيظهر الزين اللي ف الدارجة (11)
(in H1)

The son honored the [Moroccan] cinema, his father will take over with the *Dārīja*.

These comments show interesting issues concerning *Dārīja* and the ‘standardization from below’. Precisely, in (9) and (10) the problem of “selection” (Haugen 1966) of a variety, clearly emerges especially when questioning the criterion to use in order to accept or reject words in the *Dictionary* (10). Similarly, the problem of the orthographic norm emerges when the author of comment (9) paradoxically claims that writing in *Dārīja* with the Arabic script does not make sense, and yet, that is exactly what he does.³⁰ Finally, the author of comment (11) ironically accuses Ayouch of vulgarity. In his comment, he refers to the film *الزين اللي فيك ez-zīn lī fīk*, ‘Much Loved’, by Nabil Ayouch, Nouredine Ayouch’s son, that was censored in Morocco because it was considered an offence to the moral values of the country. This explains the irony of the comment and the negative connotation attributed to *Dārīja*. In comment (11) *Dārīja* is stigmatized as a vulgar language, the same criticism addressed to the film directed by Ayouch’s son, and consequently the project of Mr. Ayouch (senior) is considered vulgar as well.

Unlike the articles, the comments show not only the rejection of the *Zakoura Dictionary* project, but also a greater wariness towards

³⁰ The choice of scripts in writing Arabic dialects is a sensitive issue. For instance, when the Lebanese Said Aql in the 1970s proposed to codify spoken Lebanese Arabic using Latin script his proposition was rejected because it implied sensitive factors, such as the separation from his own culture (moral and religious values, for instance), and a convergence towards ‘other’ cultures (i.e. European culture, the culture of French colonizers, for instance). For more details on Lebanese linguistic issues see Bizri 2013.

Dārīja, since many common readers continue to stigmatize it by associating it with ignorance and vulgarity. However, as the comments reveal, those who stigmatize *Dārīja* still use it. Common linguistic features of the *Dārīja*, used both in articles and in readers’ comments, as well as divergences with *Zakoura* orthographic choices, will be outlined below.

4.2 Articles and Comments. Linguistic Choices

From the examples shown in the previous paragraph it is possible to claim that *Fuṣṣḥā* (F) is the most used variety in *Hespress* articles, unlike *Goud*, where it is possible to find many constructions in *Dārīja* (D) and in Mixed varieties (M). However, it is interesting to note that although many of the comments from *Hespress* are written in F, most ‘against’ opinions are expressed using D items, i.e. most people writing in/with D and M are against a *Dārīja* dictionary.³¹

The main characteristics of written *Dārīja*, collected in the corpus, concern an extended use of morphosyntactic structures of *Dārīja* adapted to a lexical base in *Fuṣṣḥā*. Specifically, the characteristics of D in the data concern the use of the particle ديال *dyāl*, ‘of’ – see examples (2), (6), and (9) for the annexation; the invariable relative nouns لي *llī*, ‘which’ – see examples (2), (6), (7), and (11); the use of ماشي *māšī* for the nominal negative constructions – see examples (2), (6), and (9); the preverbal morpheme كا *kā* in prefixal conjugations – see examples (2), (3), (6), and (7); the affixation of the preposition ف /f/ ‘in’, such as in في إطار *f’itār*, ‘in the context’ (2), or في الويب *f-l-wīb*, ‘in the web’ (6), and في المعجم *fə-mu‘ġam* ‘in the dictionary’ (9). However, the heterogeneity of *Dārīja* orthography is the most evident peculiarity, see for example the personal spelling choices of G6 author (7) regarding the repetition of letters when they are geminated, or the realization of the invariable relative noun *llī* spelled as اللي instead of لي.

At the same time, these variable orthographic realizations show that actual writing practices diverge from the proposals in the *Zakoura Dictionary*, especially concerning the nominal negation, the use of /o/ instead of /h/ for the suffix pronoun – see in (9) خصو *ḥəṣṣo* ‘he should’ – as well as the affixation of preverbal morphemes or prepositions. While in *Zakoura Dictionary* it has been chosen to separate the individual lexical base in *Fuṣṣḥā* from morphosyntactic *Dārīja* items, in common linguistic practices (or at least from the data analyzed in the present study) this principle is not taken into consideration, on the contrary it is noted that the same authors can re-

³¹ In *Hespress*, out of a total number of 60 comments with *Dārīja* items, 25 express an ‘against’ opinion, and 14 a ‘for’ opinion (21 comments are off topic).

produce the same elements in different ways in the same text – see for example in (9) the variation between *had* هاد and *hada* هذا ‘this’.

Another important feature of the use of written *Dārīja* concerns the stylistic variation emerging from the different lexical or morpho-syntactic choices. See for example in (3) the lexical slang choice for ‘money’: *al-ḡarmūma* الـڠرمومة ‘cash’; or the use of *bəllī* بلي ‘that’, as complementizer introducing a declarative sentence. These linguistic choices mark the switch to a register closer to full colloquial *Dārīja*, in opposition to the “*Arabe Moderne Marocain*” (AMM) or “Modern Moroccan Arabic” according to Youssi (1992), who stated for instance that in AMM declarative clauses are introduced by the complementizer *ənnu*, whereas *bəllī* is used in Moroccan Arabic (Youssi 1992, 279).

Furthermore, stylistic variation also emerges according to the different choices of linguistic varieties and/or their combination producing mixed styles, using code switching. In particular, the code switching strategy is extensively used in order to emphasize specific topics. For instance, Socrate generally uses this strategy in his Opinions’ articles, where *Fuṣṣḥā* and *Dārīja* are functionally combined. Contrary to his literary production, where his language is characterized by “authentic *Dārīja*, with rare terms [...] or a humoristic youth language expression” (Caubet 2018, 394), in Opinions’ articles he usually switches from *Fuṣṣḥā* to *Dārīja* as a device to catch the reader’s attention. See for example that in (6) the bold items highlighting the switch to *Dārīja* underline important passages of his message, such as “no other places” than *Goud* to freely write in *Dārīja*. Finally, the code switching strategy is also connotatively used. In (8) for instance, the writer uses *Dārīja* items when addressing and criticizing Ayouch directly, and switches to *Fuṣṣḥā* when expressing ‘serious’ ideas (i.e. about the school system). This kind of strategy shows that other users still consider *Dārīja* as a medium that is not ‘serious’ enough to express important issues, as well as a ‘vulgar’ language, as expressed in (11). This combination of *Fuṣṣḥā* and *Dārīja* offers examples of mixed styles; hence, this syntactical/lexical alternation produces different (more or less) formal registers.

Although Moroccans increasingly use *Dārīja* also in written production; the semi-institutionalized/private standardization of *Dārīja* promoted by the Zakoura Centre for the Promotion of *Dārīja* does not seemingly take into account the relevance of the ‘authoritativeness’ in the standardization process, and the concrete challenges that their attempt to a semi-formal standardization poses.

5 Conclusions

Despite the increasing written production in *Dārīja*, *Fuṣṣḥā* still remains the dominant variety in writing, both in articles and readers’

comments. However, expressions containing elements in *Dārīja* occur in articles (specifically in *Goud*, a newspaper that ideologically promotes the use of *Dārīja*, defining itself as a free public space dedicated to *Dārīja* production) as well as in comments.

In the analyzed corpus, the texts that present *Dārīja* elements show the characteristics of a ‘Modern Middle (educated) Moroccan Arabic’, i.e. the use of morphosyntactic elements typical of Moroccan *Dārīja* applied to a lexical base in *Fuṣṣḥā*.

Stylistic variations affect the syntactic structures and lexical choices, marking the switch to the strictly Moroccan variety (i.e. the “*Arabe Marocain*” (AM) according to Youssi (1992). This communication strategy, as well as code switching (Arabic>*Dārīja* and vice versa) is adopted by journalists (from *Goud*) when their communicative intention aims to openly criticize Ayouch and the *Zakoura Dictionary* project. Journalists who generally use *Dārīja* in *Goud*, like Socrate, still criticize the *Zakoura Dictionary* initiative, because they do not accept the imposition of rules that the Foundation has arbitrarily decided, as well as Ayouch’s role in the standardization process. Their orthographic norms make the “*parler marocain median*” (as defined in Mgharfaoui 2018) an abstract and artificial language, since it is already conventionalized in common users’ practices (standardization from below).

Furthermore, many readers still perceive *Dārīja* as vulgar, even if they use it in their written production. This stigmatization reflects the perception that (non-linguists) Arabs hold towards their language, based on Eisele’s theory of the four cultural tropes - unity, purity, continuity and competition (Eisele 2003). This means that, ideologically, the Arabic *Fuṣṣḥā* continues to be considered the only variety that guarantees the unity of the Arab-Muslim community.

Another factor related to the tension between formal/informal standardization concerns the process of informal conventionalization which, as stated by Caubet (2017a), allowed the development of the written production in *Dārīja* in a natural way. Consequently, as a result of this freedom, anyone who wishes to express oneself in *Dārīja* “naturally understands the others without raising any issue” (Caubet 2017a, 121-2).

The spread of (written) ‘educated *Dārīja*’ is certainly an interesting phenomenon that needs closer observation. The latest *Zakoura* publication, (emblematically) titled *al-‘arabiyya ad-dārīġa* (*Dārīja* Arabic, i.e. a *Dārīja* grammar manual), coordinated by El Medlaoui, and presented in Casablanca on 22 November 2019, may raise more complex questions about standardization.

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Al-mihna wa'l-huwiyya. Motivational Dimensions of Arabic Heritage Learners in a Professionally-Oriented Education Setting

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Abstract This study investigates motivational and professional orientations and identity issues of students of Arab descent majoring in Arabic in a teaching setting oriented to develop vocational and professional language skills. Their motivations for learning the target language were investigated and compared with those of their colleagues of non-Arab descent through a questionnaire that explored motivational factors, job expectations and education history. Apparently, students were prompted to take Arabic classes because of employment concerns and they proved keen on undertaking most of the proposed professions, providing that they were connected with the Arab world. It is also possible to highlight how the study of the language of origin was determined by thoroughly intrinsic motives. Cultural interests and especially identity needs provided the strongest push for the respondents, even in the surveyed education setting, where instrumental motivation was clearly expected to play a major role. Implications can be drawn as regards curriculum design and classroom practice.

Keywords Teaching of Arabic. Heritage Learners. Motivation. Professional Orientations. Identity. Classroom Practice.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Background. – 3 Method. – 3.1 Participants. – 3.2 Instruments. – 3.3 Procedure. – 4 Results. – 4.1 Professional Orientations. – 4.2 Motivational Orientations. – 5 Discussion. – 6 Conclusion.



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1 Introduction

Patterns of immigration and globalisation, as well as social and political developments, have long been recognised to have an impact on language learning trends (Van Deusen-Scholl 2003; Temples 2010). This was also the case for Italy, that, since the 1990s, has started to shift from being a country with a low rate of foreign immigrants to becoming a society exposed to increasing migration flows. One of the most representative cities in this regard is possibly Milan, with its vast outskirts: being considered the most relevant area for business and industry in Italy, it has attracted a large number of immigrants that officially accounted for 18.8% of the populace at the end of 2016. Among them, the subjects coming from Arab countries were quite high in number: Egypt, for example, was the second most represented foreign country of origin (Comuni italiani 2019). As a consequence, over the past two decades, first or second generation immigrant students have started to attend Arabic courses at the highest education level, so both the composition of the classes and the reasons for studying the language have undergone relative change.

Recognition of the heritage learners' (HLs) motivational inputs is fundamental in order to help devise language teaching policies consistent with their actual needs and requirements. Existing literature has often scrutinised motivations of students of Arabic in the US. It has more rarely examined the Arabic heritage learners' professional orientations, the distribution of their motivation, and the way this is peculiar to them rather than other groups of learners, especially in contexts different from North America. This study surveys a group of 40 heritage learners studying Arabic at a major university in Milan in a professionally-oriented education setting. It is aimed at casting light on their motivational and professional dimensions and the way they potentially differentiate themselves from non-heritage learners (NHLs) of Arabic. The role identity plays in their academic choice is also attentively considered.

2 Background

The concept of heritage learners has been debated especially as regards the subject's ethnic, cultural or linguistic identity and the minimum language level he/she should possess to be considered a heritage learner. A widespread opinion is that a heritage learner is a subject who perceives him/herself having a cultural connection to a specific language (Van Deusen-Scholl 2003), despite his/her actual fluency, or sometimes even despite the absence of any fluency.

More specifically, the debate has also attained the concept of heritage learners of Arabic. Contrasting positions are not completely im-

mune from ideology (Leeman 2015). Temples's (2010) opinion in this regard stands quite in isolation. Her survey compares learners of Arabic of different types: language heritage learners (HLLs), religious heritage learners (RHLs) and NHLs) aged from 10 to 14 at a public American school. According to the researcher's findings, although the religious values are a powerful motivator for the parents of both the subgroups of language and religious HLs, the religious HLs' proficiency does not resemble that of language HLs:

In the RHL group, 90% had some proficiency in Arabic prior to studying it at this public school, but nevertheless they do not have exposure to communicative Arabic at home, as do traditional HLLs. (Temples 2010, 115)

Her conclusion is that the three groups of students should have three different kinds of tracks according to their different levels of proficiency, prior language exposure and motivations.

Arabic and Muslim heritage learners are more frequently hardly disjunct in literature, thus following the general definition given above. It is Husseinali's (2006) opinion, for example, that all religious HLs of Arabic (i.e. Muslim students), due to their identity, can safely fall into one and the same group, regardless of their Arab or non-Arab descent. In other words, from his perspective, all heritage students of Islamic religion and those of Arab descent are comparable – at least from a motivational point of view – provided they display convergent “cultural and historical ties to Arabic” (Husseinali 2006, 396) and independently of their different initial level of Arabic proficiency.

Engman's (2015) conclusions proceed in the same direction. In line with the sensibility and positions also expressed in other previous studies (e.g. Sehlaoui 2008; Shah 2006; Suleiman 2003), Engman

analyzes the role of religion in Arabic language learning for young Muslim learners in the United States in their enactment, resistance, and co-construction of myriad identities for themselves [...]. Their language (both content and form) suggests that exposure to Islamic religious discourses permits access to salient cultural resources for Muslim students as language learners. (2015, 223)

Although this refers to the concept of identity more than to wide language achievements, some learning objectives are also concerned, such as linking the language to (the promotion of expected Islamic) behaviours and the use in class of reading skills and strategies learned in an external religious context. The researcher's explicit conclusion is that

the benefits of an ideologically inclusive classroom must not be ignored and educators should be free to resist the total separation of Arabic from Islam. Even in mixed classes, at public institutions, I advocate not only 'allowing' heritage language learners to draw on their religious-cultural resources, but also encouraging them to do so. The ideological space for this sort of expanded repertoire already exists within the language itself, but teachers need dispensation to create spaces for these heritage learners in the classroom. (Engman 2015, 237)

Other studies face motivation, identity or peculiarities of the Arabic HLs from different points of view and according to various methodologies. Bale (2010) offers a wide picture of heritage Arabic in an objective social and educational perspective drawing on archival research and statistics analysis. He sheds light on the history of the Arab immigration to the US, the socio-economic composition of the local Arab communities, and the language effort dispended in order to teach and maintain this heritage language alive within these communities, in the form of schools, courses and programs that are supported by private or public funding. Provided this great variety of conditions, he gets to the conclusion that "there can not be a single approach to Arabic heritage language instruction" and stresses the importance of designing programs that "are sensitive to the immense amount of linguistic diversity within the community" (Bale 2010, 148).

Contrarily to Bale, Seymour-Jorn (2004) bases her survey on questionnaires or interviews and focuses on a specific local community, that of the Arab-American students taking courses of Arabic at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. The researcher enquires about their reasons for studying Arabic and the way this relates to their sense of cultural identity, belonging to the community, and need to stay in contact with the enlarged family of origin.

Another more 'personal' contribution to the subject matter is Sehlouï's (2008), that relies on the author's own experience as a heritage learner, father and teacher. His article is mainly aimed at offering advice for (parents and) teachers at lower education levels. It highlights the importance of native language literacy also for L2 acquisition and the value of the affective dimension in heritage language teaching starting from home. The role played by families in children's acquisition of Arabic was especially investigated in the form of narrative research (Gomaa 2011; Al-Sahafi 2015; Turjoman 2013, 2017, among others). Exposing kids to language in a natural way, setting explicit family language policy, establishing co-ethnic contacts, and providing materials to enhance Arabic literacy are among the most relevant actions taken in this context. Parents' language ideologies and ethno-linguistic aspirations have an important impact on language policies of families of Arabic descent, in the per-

spective of both developing bilingualism and resist cultural colonisation (Yazan, Ali 2018). In general, parents do hold expectations for their children's acquisition of the heritage language since Arabic is perceived as an important identity marker: it operates as a base for networking and provides an aspect of communality beyond the different countries of origin (Alsaifi 2018).

The HLs' specificity has also been focused more recently in Zarah (2016). The author enquires into the relevant issue of whether HLs should better stay in separate classrooms or share the same classes with NHLs. In doing so, she examines the expectations, language exposure and proficiency levels of a group of incoming college-level heritage students and concludes that HLs' needs should be given attention in order to reduce the attrition rates. Finally, Kamel Hasan (2018) also participates in the debate by examining aspects of the HLs' learning experience at American University in Cairo (AUC) in order to understand what could help sustain and stimulate their motivation.

3 Method

3.1 Participants

The total participants to this survey consisted of 205 students who were majoring in Arabic in late 2018 and included both heritage and non-heritage learners. All the students were enrolled in BA or MA degree courses in Language and Cultural Mediation at the Università degli Studi di Milan. Besides Arabic, the participants were learning another language, either a European or non-European one, as a requirement and in parallel with the former throughout their entire career. They also were studying the cultures related to the two target languages and a number of other subjects relevant for developing professional skills, in fields of geography, economics, law, sociology, history, professional translation, and so forth.

Out of the overall surveyed population, the HLs were 19.5% (40). The remaining 80.5% (165) were NHLs of different provenance and mostly Italians. Heritage learners are meant here as language HLs, i.e. respondents who chose the option "Arabic" or "both Arabic and Italian" as a language/s spoken in their family (Q41¹). The remaining participants (i.e. those who responded "Italian" or "another language") were counted as NHLs.

¹ The letter "Q" followed by digits refers to the number of the item in the administered questionnaire.

More in detail, the HLs who revealed that they only spoke Arabic in their family were 45% (18), whereas those who declared “both Arabic and Italian” as family languages were 55% (22). Only rarely (3 cases) did students point out that they spoke an “Arabic dialect” (or another variant) instead of “Arabic”. Students who spoke Arabic in their family did not indicate any other language other than Italian as a second family language. As concerns the students’ birthplace (Q42), 50% of the subjects (20) were born in an Arab country: 8 in Morocco, 7 in Egypt, 2 in Tunisia and Kuwait, 1 in Lebanon. One more student was born in Chad. The other HLs were all born in Italy.

As for the participants’ gender (Q38), 85% (34) were female and 15% (6) were male. 33 participants were enrolled at BA level, and 7 at MA level (none of the respondents was a 1st-year MA HL). The ages of the subjects ranged from 19 to 44 (Q39). As can be seen in **[table 1]**, at BA level the medians of the HLs’ age were higher than those of NHLs for all years.

Table 1 Age According to Student Academic Standing (Medians and Means)

	Medians		Means		SD	
	HLs	NHLs	HLs	NHLs	HLs	NHLs
BA1	20.5	19	24.1	21.4	8.6	6.6
BA2	21	20	22.6	20.9	6.1	2.4
BA3	22	21	22.7	24.2	2.1	9.4
MA1	0	23	0	23.2	0	1.7
MA2	24	24	24.7	24.4	3.0	1.3

3.2 Instruments

The materials that were used in this survey consisted in a questionnaire worded in Italian and composed of three sections for a total of 51 items. In the first part of the questionnaire, 19 items related to the reasons for studying Arabic were to be answered based on a 7-point Likert scale, in which 1 expressed total disagreement and 7 expressed total agreement. The battery of items was selected based on literature on language learning and psychology studies on motivation (see in particular Husseinali 2006; see also Dörnyei, Taguchi 2010; Noels et al. 2000). The batteries of items that had been used in previous questionnaires were made less redundant and modified in order to be applicable to students who were majoring in Arabic. The following scales and subscales were included: extrinsic (7 items in all, divided into circumstantial and instrumental), intrinsic (7 items, related to the stimulation of the language and perception of self-efficacy, desire of knowledge and understanding), and integrative (5 items,

pertaining to relation, affiliation or identity). All items were preceded by the opening phrase "I am presently studying Arabic because...".

Another section of the questionnaire investigated the learners' professional orientations. The 15 options proposed were selected according to previous informal interviews with students and stakeholders. All items were preceded by the opening phrase "As a student of Arabic, I would choose to work...", followed by a professional field or specific job. The items were given in random order but they can be grouped in five broader sectors. Answers were graded according to the same scale as the previous section. The Crombach's α test confirmed that both section 1 and 2 of the questionnaire were acceptable (0.767 and 0.749 respectively).

Section 3 elicited information on personal background such as gender, age, class, language/s spoken in the family, country of birth. Another array of questions in this section enquired about the participants' learning experience: attended high school, curricular study of other foreign languages (FLs), second FL studied at university, attained FL certifications, (estimated or objective) achieved levels of proficiency, and so forth, in order to sketch out the HLs' history of language learning. This was studied separately (Golfetto 2020).

3.3 Procedure

Students participating in this survey answered the questionnaire at the beginning of the academic year 2018-19. The widest audience possible was reached through repeated sessions during regular Arabic classes. Students were asked to indicate their immediate reactions and be as truthful as possible. They were also informed of the voluntary basis of their participation in the survey, the confidential nature of their answers and their right to refrain from answering at any time should they find any item objectionable.

After the answers were encoded, descriptive statistics were used to describe the group of HLs that were a part of the largest population of university students taking Arabic. As for inferential statistics, Mann Whitney tests were used to evaluate the difference in the results between HLs and NHLs, while Fisher's exact tests were used to investigate the relation between the heritage students and categorical variables. In this regard, non-parametrical tests seemed more appropriate than the parametrical ones (such as T test).

4 Results

4.1 Professional Orientations

As the main reason for students to enroll in degree courses in Mediation is to pursue appropriate employment and to develop specific language skills in order to be able to face future professional challenges,² the first part of this study is dedicated to detecting the HLs' most desired professions and highlighting in which way these were peculiar to their own rather than to their non-heritage peers. This will be helpful in two ways: having initial insights into the learners expectations about the target language and highlighting future directions for developing policies in the teaching of Arabic for Specific Purposes.

Professional motivation of the heritage students (especially those of Arabic) is a topic that has hardly received attention in literature so far. As previous studies are defective, the items of the present section (whether types of jobs or professional fields) were pre-selected according to interviews with different stakeholders. They can be broadly grouped into the following sectors: mediation at international and local level, business, tourism, translation, and others. However, professional orientations must be considered as independent from each other: each career requires a different and specific variety of Arabic; knowledge of specialised vocabulary, language functions, and textual types; higher proficiency in oral/written or receptive/productive skills, and so forth.

Within the group of jobs related to mediation, all the professions at either international or local level were highly rated by the surveyed subjects. Orientation towards working in the field of information for the press, television, or the Internet (Q22) was good at 4.78 out of the maximum score of 7.0. Work in the field of international politics and diplomacy (Q23) was even more appealing, at 4.9. However, HLs showed the greatest interest in professions related to migration and humanitarian support. Being employed in "national/international institutions or organisations that operate in Arab countries" (Q26), indeed, scored very high at 5.84. The standard deviation (SD) of this item was also the lowest (1.38) of the entire set, meaning that there was very little discrepancy in the respondents' enthusiasm in this regard.

At the local level, mediation "for State institutions (municipalities, settlement visa offices, and so forth)" (Q28) was the most appealing profession, with the highest rate (5.87). It is noteworthy that this kind of institutions is a regular venue for migrants throughout their stay in the country; thus, working in this context is perceived as some-

² See Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) on instrumental motivation.

thing familiar and being useful for their community of origin. Employment “as a cultural mediator in schools, refugee centers, and charities” (Q29) in the local context scored only a little lower (5.3). Finally, working in the field of healthcare mediation in hospitals (Q27) was rated at 4.95. All these are greatly needed jobs that have particularly flourished over recent years with the so-called ‘migrant crisis’ that has involved Italy (and Greece) since 2013, but are now suffering a severe setback due to the current changes in government policies and to closed borders. Nevertheless, awareness of restriction in related funding does not seem to have an excessively negative impact in the rating of this specific professional sector.

A position in commerce was also desired by the respondents. In fact, a job “in companies trading with Arab countries (as a sales man/woman or representative abroad)” (Q30) was rated at 5.63. The result of the item related to “the promotion of *halāl* goods or goods for families of Arab origin living in Italy” (Q31) was a bit lower (4.34). Being something that affects the daily life of many individuals within local Arab and Islamic communities, one might expect the score to be higher. However, it could have been hindered because the sector of *halāl* certification, although on the rise, has not been thoroughly developed in the Italian food industry yet.

HLs were also highly motivated towards the two professions related to tourism. Working as a “tour guide for visitors from and to Arab countries” (Q25) received a rather good score (4.95). This is clearly connected with high appreciation for both travelling to Middle-East and North Africa (MENA) (Q7) and meeting new and different people (Q14) in the next session. A position in the sector of “promotion of tourism” (Q24) was also well evaluated, with a rate of 4.9.

Among the remaining professions, there was a good general agreement rate for working “as an interpreter, translator, or for a publishing house” (Q32), as the mean recorded in this case was 5.42, with a relatively low SD at 1.6. Other options were less interesting for HLs, and were evaluated below the medium. A role as financial consultant or similar (Q35) scored 3.29, but opinions were divergent and the distribution of the responses for this item was the widest of the section, with a SD of 2.29. That is, in fact, the highest SD of the entire questionnaire. A job “in the armed forces or security” (Q34) was very little agreed upon (2.95), although the responses were quite heterogeneous again, with a relevant SD of 2.2. Finally, it was a position “in the field of energy and oil” (Q33) that very strikingly revealed to be the least appealing job among all (2.86) and was better appraised by the NHLs than the HLs. See [\[table 2\]](#) for details.

Table 2 Means, Medians and Standard Deviations for the Professional Orientations

		Mean	Median	SD
International mediation	Press, information (Q22)	4.78	5	1.941
	International politics and diplomacy (Q23)	4.90	5	1.795
	International organisations (Q26)	5.84	6	1.386
Local mediation	Healthcare mediation (Q27)	4.95	6	1.986
	Mediation for State institutions (Q28)	5.87	7	1.679
	Mediation in schools, refugee centers (Q29)	5.30	5	1.714
Tourism	Promotion of tourism (Q24)	4.90	5	1.878
	Tour guide (Q25)	4.95	5.5	2.148
Trading	Trading with Arab countries (Q30)	5.63	7	1.715
	Promotion of goods (Q31)	4.34	4	1.949
Other	Interpreter, translator (Q32)	5.42	6	1.605
	Energy and oil (Q33)	2.86	3	1.903
	Armed forces, security (Q34)	2.95	2	2.205
	Financial consultant (Q35)	3.29	3	2.289

When it comes to statistically significant differences among the groups, according to the Mann Whitney test, these were found in 9 items out of 14. This means that HLs’ and NHLs’ perspectives and expectations on employment are potentially quite divergent. In particular, the “promotion of *halāl* goods” was the job for which the fork between the two groups was the widest (4.34 vs 2.68), and the difference was, at the same time, the most statistically significant ($p < .0001$). Similarly, the related “trading with Arab countries” also presented a rather relevant divergence (5.63 vs 4.53), with a significant statistic difference between the two groups ($p .0006$). Another relevant divergence concerned working in the “promotion of tourism”, with HLs being clearly more motivated to find employment in this field (4.9 vs 3.57) and a statistically significant difference of $p .0001$. The same difference was found for the other related profession, i.e. that as a tour guide, for which the variation between the two groups (4.95 vs 4.01) was statistically significant again ($p .0045$). See [fig. 1] and [table 3] for professional orientations grouped by type and the statistic difference between HLs and NHLs.

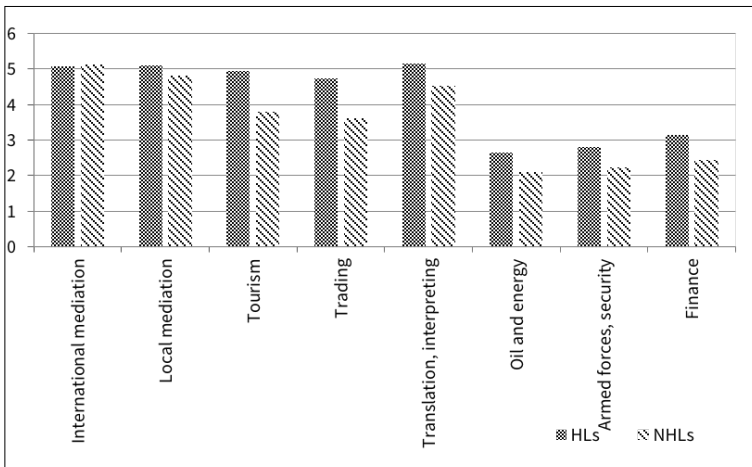


Figure 1 Broadly grouped professional orientation for HLs and NHLs (means)

Table 3 Means of Broadly Grouped Professional Orientations: Differences between HLs and NHLs (* = statistically significant difference using the Mann Whitney test)

	Means		Difference P
	HLs	NHLs	
International mediation (Q22,23,26)	5.22	5.13	.6098
Local mediation (Q27,28,29)	5.44	4.84	.0285*
Tourism (Q24,25)	4.93	3.79	.0005*
Business (Q30,31)	4.99	3.61	<.0001*
Translation, interpreting (Q32)	5.42	4.53	.0095*
Oil and energy (Q33)	2.86	2.12	.0214*
Armed forces, security (Q34)	2.95	2.24	.0826
Finance (Q35)	3.29	2.43	.0491*

4.2 Motivational Orientations

This other session of the study examines a broader set of motives at the base of the participants’ decision to major in Arabic at university. Studies on motivation and orientations - mainly developing from the field of psychology - have put forward different theoretical constructs, from which different scales of motivation were advanced. The present survey focused on three main scales: extrinsic, intrinsic and integrative. A total of 19 items were selected to cover the three scales.

4.2.1 Extrinsic Motivation

The first group of items pertained to extrinsic motivation. Within it, the first subscale was related to circumstantial motivation. Two items were proposed: “I had to study a (second) FL as a degree requirement and had no choice [other than Arabic]” (Q1) and “Arabic is easy for me, as I am already familiar with it” (Q3). The two options had completely different agreement rates: 1.58 out of 7 for the former one, and 5.55 for the latter. In addition to this, the first item also recorded the lowest SD (1.44) of the section.

Five other items of this set were connected to instrumental motivation. The answers to this subscale ranged high (from 4.98 to 5.53). The participants demonstrated being very motivated to study Arabic in order to benefit from both more job opportunities (Q5, score 5.5) and higher wages (Q6, score 4.98; in this case the SD was very low, at 1.49). When it came to items pertaining to the specific fields in which they reputed Arabic to be most useful, HLs stated that they decided to learn Arabic because they thought it was relevant in the fields of international politics (Q10, score 5.53) and world economy (Q11, score 4.97). The only item that scored lower was related to migration and terrorism (Q9, rated at 3.83). However, upon comparing this result with those of other items (especially Q27, 28, 29), it becomes clear that this result was due to the way the statement was phrased: “[so that] I can be considered an expert in migration or terrorism” (Q9). In fact, HLs did not deny being interested in working in the field of migration; rather, they were less interested in participating in theoretical debates on this subject.

4.2.2 Intrinsic Motivation

The 7 items pertaining to the intrinsic motivation scale were also highly rated. In this case the range was wider, between 4.51 and 5.8. One of the most common justifications for studying Arabic resulted being “I think this language is fascinating, exotic and less banal than others” (Q2), which scored as high as 5.73. It is clear that Arabic exerts a strong attraction within Arabic-speaking communities (Bale 2010) and, upon rating this reason, heritage students clearly put more stress on their fascination for the language rather than its exoticism. Only slightly less convincing, with a good rate of 4.8, was “because I like learning a challenging language and being effective” (Q4).

As for the motives related to the second subscale, i.e. desire of knowledge, the respondents were quite convinced of studying Arabic because they thought it was useful “to understand our time’s events” (Q12, score 5.43). Awareness that Arabic “is useful to understand other people’s perspective of the world” (Q13) had an even higher impact on their choice (rated at 5.8). Such a high rating might appear sur-

prising, especially because the item was mainly phrased for NHLs, inasmuch the word 'other people' implies separateness between the respondents and Arabic-speaking people.

Three other items explored the desire for knowledge. Among them, it was interest in news, newspapers and other sources of information (Q17) that scored the highest (5.38). Literature (Q15), philosophy and religion (Q16) were just slightly less motivating factors for the HLs to major in Arabic (4.8 and 4.51 respectively). When comparing the two groups of respondents, HLs were also more motivated to learn about Arabic literature and (Islamic) philosophy/religion than NHLs, and this difference was statistically significant (p .016 and .001 respectively).

4.2.3 Integrative Motivation

The third and last scale was that of integrative motivation and explored the respondents' willingness to learn about the target culture and immerse into the related human environment. The item that rated highest in this context was connected to religion and culture: "It is useful in order to know my family cultural or religious background" (Q19). The item was clearly aimed at learners of Arabic descent, and was somehow opposed, or complementary, to Q13, for, if the latter referred to the idea of 'otherness', the former activated the engine of self-identification. The item scored as high as 6.28, recording a moderate SD (1.53) and a statistically very significant difference compared to the NHL subgroup ($p < .0001$).

More in general, all the statements of the scale of integrative motivation were highly evaluated (above 5 out of 7). HLs were very open to interaction with both their geographical area and human environment of origin, although they were not oriented to leave the country in which they presently lived. In particular, respondents agreed on their appreciation for "travelling to North Africa and the Middle East" (Q7), with a rate of 5.08. Also in this case, there was a statistically significant difference with the other group (p . 0059), although the values were not very discordant in absolute terms (5.08 vs 4.45). HLs were also very positive towards "talking to Arabic-speaking friends or relatives" (Q18) and "meeting and confronting new and different people" (Q14), which both scored 5.83. The statistic difference from the NHL group was significant in this case (p . 006 and .0459 respectively). The only motive that did not spark outstanding enthusiasm was "[because] I want to settle in an Arabic country" (Q8), which scored a lower rate, at 4.18. The responses to this item were quite divergent anyway, as the SD was the highest for this set of items (2.27). The country of origin played a relevant role in this regard. In general terms, however, the HLs proved to be more open towards this op-

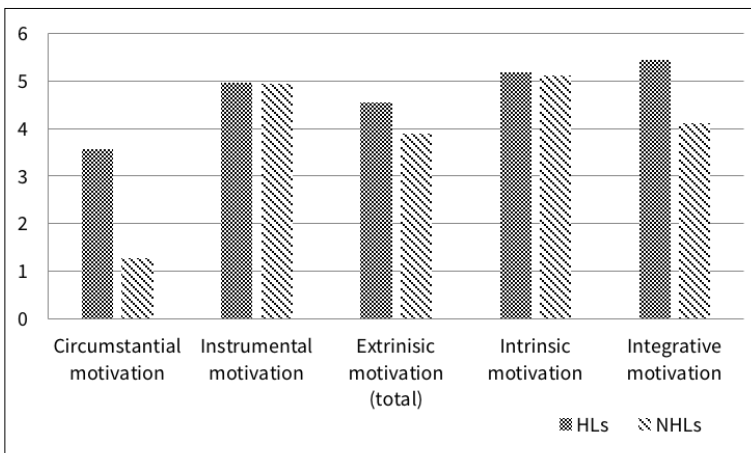


Figure 2 Broadly grouped motivational orientations for HLs and NHLs (means)

portunity than the NHLs, with a statistically significant difference of $p = .0426$. Table 4 shows the details of the items that relates to motivational orientations. See [fig. 2] and [table 5] for motivational orientations grouped by type and a comparison between the two groups.

Table 4 Means, Medians and Standard Deviations for the Motivational Orientations

		Mean	Median	SD
Circumstantial motivation	Academic requirement, no alternatives (Q1)	1.58	1	1.448
	Easiness, familiarity (Q3)	5.55	6.5	1.709
Extrinsic motivation	Work opportunities (Q5)	5.50	6	1.601
	Better-paid job (Q6)	4.98	5	1.493
	Expertise in migrations/terrorism (Q9)	3.83	4	1.960
	Relevant for world politics (Q10)	5.53	6	1.633
	Relevant for world economy (Q11)	4.98	5	1.641
Intrinsic motivation	Fascination for the language (Q2)	5.73	7	1.783
	Challenge, self-efficacy (Q4)	4.80	5	2.066
	Understanding contemporary events (Q12)	5.43	6	1.599
	Understanding others' perspectives (Q13)	5.83	6.5	1.615
	Reading Arabic literature (Q15)	4.80	5	1.924
	Reading Arabic philosophy, religion (Q16)	4.51	5	2.076
	Reading Arabic press (Q17)	5.38	6	2.009

		Mean	Median	SD
Integrative motivation	Travelling to MENA (Q7)	5.08	6	2.055
	Settling in MENA (Q8)	4.18	4	2.275
	Establishing relationships with different people (Q14)	5.83	6	1.567
	Talking to friends/relatives (Q18)	5.83	6.5	1.662
	Family cultural/religious background (Q19)	6.28	7	1.536

Table 5 Means of Broadly Grouped Motivational Orientations: Difference between HLs and NHLs (* = statistically significant difference using the Mann Whitney test)

	Means Difference		
	HLs	NHLs	P
Circumstantial motivation (Q1,3)	3.56	1.27	<.001*
Instrumental motivation (Q5,6,9,10,11)	4.96	4.97	.9361
Extrinsic motivation (total; Q1,3,5,6,9,10,11)	4.56	3.91	<.001*
Intrinsic motivation (Q2,4,12,13,15,16,17)	5.18	5.12	.3282
Integrative motivation (Q7,8,14,18,19)	5.44	4.1	<.001*

In the end, the respondents were also provided with a list of items enquiring after the reasons for choosing a BA or MA degree in Language and Cultural Mediation rather than other degrees offering Arabic as a FL (Q51). They were now requested to select the three strongest motives that led them to make their decision and discard the others. Once again, the distribution of the HLs' motives was quite broad but the responses were consistent with those collected in the previous session. The relevancy of professional aims was confirmed by: 1. the interest in studying specific subjects such as law, economics, and so forth (selected by 50% of the students) and 2. the type of academic curriculum explicitly oriented to professions (32.5%). The opportunity to learn about the heritage culture was the second incentive in absolute terms for majoring in Arabic, and was selected by 47.5% of the respondents. Studying specific subjects connected with the traditional Arabic heritage, such as linguistics and literature, were selected less frequently, but in both cases they resulted stronger motivations for HLs than for NHLs (35% vs 20%). Finally, the chance of simultaneously studying two languages (one European and the other non-European) was the least motivating factor (23% vs 31% for the NHLs). See [fig. 3].

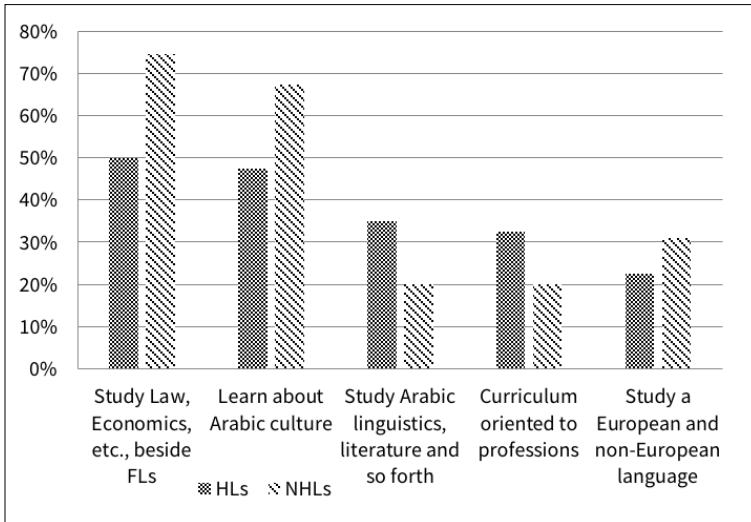


Figure 3 Reasons for choosing a degree in Language and Cultural Mediation for HLs and NHLs (means)

5 Discussion

In the surveyed education setting, when choosing their degree courses, the HLs of Arabic gave priority to their professional goals, seeking acquisition of theoretical knowledge and language skills (especially varieties of Arabic for Specific Purposes necessary for the desired job). Their instrumental motivation appeared very strong, as most of the proposed professional options scored highly. Upon comparison, their motivational rate was even higher than that of the NHLs in all options, with the only exception of working in international politics and diplomacy. In short, HLs appeared to be very motivated to find a job, rather than a specific job, providing that this was linked in any way to the Arabic language.

The students' decision to major in Arabic was partially connected to circumstantial motivations. Familiarity with Arabic (and thus higher expectations of easiness and 'comfort') admittedly played a role in the choice. However, given the means and SDs recorded, it also appears that they were not forced into their language decision by the circumstances or by their relatives (as found in other research), but rather led to it by a conscious, real and personal involvement. When it comes to the intrinsic motivational scale, one can safely assume that the HLs' motivation was as strong as that of the NHLs in quantitative terms: with *p* value .6 there was no statistically signifi-

cant difference between the two groups. Nevertheless, this type of motivation was different in qualitative terms: Arabic was actually not studied because it was perceived as a learning challenge, as might be the case for NHLs, but rather because of the feeling of effectiveness that stems from studying an already familiar language within a formal education context. Consequences may be drawn in terms of different expectations about the task and workload to face in the study program: HLs usually feel they already know 'Arabic' and expect to easily succeed in this regard. Therefore, instructors should pay attention to use appropriate tools to prevent motivation loss, frustration, and attrition by focusing on their actual needs, rights and duties and organizing class activities accordingly.

Besides the desire for achieving professional competence for a future career, the questionnaire results have highlighted the relevancy of cultural and identity issues at the base of the HLs' motivation. Three figures prove it: the HLs rated highly most of the items connected to the integrative motivation scale; the statistic differences between the HLs and NHLs were ubiquitous; the single items of the integrative subscale scored the highest of the entire questionnaire in absolute terms. To put it simply, when identity was singled out, the heritage students' reaction appeared heartfelt. As in another, less specific situation (for example Seymour-Jorn 2004), the HLs were strongly oriented to study and use Arabic in order to foster communication with peer native speakers and family, learn about their perspectives on the world, and re-appropriate their own cultural and religious heritage. Provided the collected data, it can be safely assumed that, however disguised, the major set of motivating factors that led HLs to learn Arabic was connected to identity, even in the present context where one would expect professional education to play the most powerful motivating role, as it is in fact for NHLs.

Identity and affective factors should thus be distinctively focused in language planning and teaching for HLs. As a general rule, and especially under specific circumstances (such as conditions of social or educational disadvantage, see Engman 2015), the teaching personnel should wisely value and care for the HLs' status in class, keeping in mind the implications that studying Arabic has on their selves (Seymour-Jorn 2004). Due recognition should be given to the HLs' cultural identity, by presenting and discussing their personal cultural values and worldviews (Engman 2015). It was noticed that the heritage students' resistance and negative attitude towards the teacher can be rooted in the latter's failure to acknowledge their perceived 'true' identities (Helmer 2013). Furthermore, their language identity, as self-perceiving users of Arabic (Bale 2010), should also be given relevance, by allowing the native language variants to be used in class. Since identity implies recognition, the HLs should feel free to express their linguistic foreknowledge, rework it correctly and con-

siously, and evolve naturally towards proficiency in MSA. At an early stage, specific attention should be paid to HLs' affective dimension, which is frequently connected to their home and family's memories. As also Carreira puts it,

pedagogical practices must focus on [...] validating the learner's prerogative to define him/herself in terms of their language and culture of ancestry no matter how remote or insignificant the connection to this ancestry may seem to native speakers of the HL or to anyone else. (2004, 8)

Attention to such an affective dimension might mean initially giving HLs tasks that are aimed at collecting or recalling vocabulary related to their childhood, home environment and family history, also by presenting them in personal autobiographies or family/community tales. This seems to be appropriate especially in the initial part of the track for many reasons. Firstly, it immerses "the learner into a world that is personal in a very profound sense" (Sehlaoui 2008, 288). Secondly, this respects the principle of proximity in the initial phases of language learning in formal instruction, according to the CEFR guidelines (as for their specific application to the teaching of Arabic as a L2, see Giolfo, Salvaggio 2017; Soliman 2018). Thirdly, it enhances and fosters a communicative approach to language by promoting its use in natural communication and real dialogic contexts within the HLs' closest social network, which is made up of family members and friends. Finally, in classes where different local variants are represented, it facilitates a contrastive approach to language, in both a diatopic and pluri-linguistic perspective. In doing so, positive repercussions will be perceivable not only in the earliest stages of formal learning, but also in the long term, helping students to get ready to face real-world challenges.

6 Conclusion

To conclude, in the enthusiasm displayed by the surveyed students for most of the professional options proposed in the questionnaire, two main directions can be identified. The first one is the international dimension. Heritage students of Arabic are naturally projected beyond any geographical borders and would be keen on being employed in international organisations and supranational institutions. They feel at ease in the role of bridging across different worlds, cultures and languages and consider that their privileged position can also be positively capitalised in specific sectors, such as business and tourism, provided that they imply connections with the Arab countries. Additionally – and this is the second direction –, they feel close-

ly linked to their 'original' identity, something that implies loyalty to the group of provenance. Indeed, their very positive inclination touches also those professions that allow them to play a helpful role for their own community in the local area. Being useful in the mediation process between individuals and State institutions is somehow perceived as a call of duty to which they favourably respond.

Consequently, this study confirms that a double motivation leads learners of Arabic descent to study Arabic. On the one hand, they admittedly have professional expectations, which are linked to the need of developing specific language varieties and skills. On the other hand, the strongest incentive to majoring in Arabic is connected to intrinsic factors, among which identity plays the most vital role. HLs undeniably perceive studying Arabic as a way to re-appropriate what they feel as their own heritage culture and an opportunity to foster their relations with the community of origin, real or perceived as it might be. Therefore, identity issues at the base of Arabic HLs' education choice must be held as relevant and recognition of their identity and foreknowledge is recommended in any teaching settings, with no exception for formal professionally-oriented instruction contexts.

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Whole-Part-Whole Reading Instruction in the Teaching and Learning of Arabic as a Foreign Language at Beginner Level

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Abstract The neurological bimodality theory, espousing the principles of directionality and cerebral hemisphericity, has led to a series of expedients in the field of foreign language teaching, like the use of inductive strategies. Accordingly, this contribution focuses on a methodological proposal stemming from the aforementioned theoretical perspectives and tackles the question of reading in the early phase of Arabic as Foreign Language learning. In doing so it questions how to teach Modern Standard Arabic at beginner level and proposes solutions to it through the use of new technological tools in the service of languages. Specifically, the focus is set on Pre-A1 and A1 levels of the recently issued *Companion Volume* to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. As a result of theoretical reasoning, the 'Whole-Part-Whole' method teaching philosophy is presented, theorized and verified in relation to the study of Arabic by non-Arab beginner learners.

Keywords Teaching Arabic as a foreign language. Whole-part-whole method. Reading. Phonological awareness. Morphological structure awareness. Vocabulary.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Theoretical Framework. – 3 The Teaching Practice. A Balanced Interplay Between the Two Sides of the Brain. – 4 Methodological Proposal. – 5 Conclusions.



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1 Introduction

The neurological bimodality theory has been rarely put in connection with the teaching and learning of Arabic as a Foreign Language (henceforth AFL). Such investigations have been documented in non-Arab research environments for several years (Froud, Khamis-Dakwar 2017; Della Puppa 2018; Brichese, Facchin 2019), while Arab AFL scholars have remained faithful to the method notion, albeit defined by Danesi (1988, 14) as a fundamentally flawed approach, since it seeks out a single factor to devise a finite set of instructional operations. In fact, as in the case of other foreign languages, the Teaching of Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) philosophies that succeeded one another over time were not based on any bimodal awareness, but were instead unimodal, favoring either the Right or Left-Hemisphere Mode of learning (Danesi 1988). As already demonstrated, even the communicative approach – representing a turning point in the history of TAFL – has proven to be inefficient in regards to bimodality theory classroom applications for it focuses on Right-Hemisphere teaching techniques to the detriment of Left-Hemisphere ones (Danesi 1988, 25; Della Puppa 2018, 431).

The purpose of this contribution is to link the TAFL field to the neurological bimodality theory and provide useful examples that might empirically substantiate the convenience of this view. With this in mind, the research tackles the question of reading in the early phase of AFL learning. In doing so, the focus is set on Pre-A1 and A1 levels of the recently issued *Companion Volume to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CoE 2018), henceforth shortened to CEFR-CV. On the basis of field tests, the study shows how receptive development activities like global and analytic reading, as well as word processing are stimulated from the early phases of language learning by creating vocabulary lists and using innovative technological tools for language learning. The ‘alphabetic method’ (*al-qā’ida al-baġdādiyya*) – widely used today in AFL beginner courses and textbooks – is forgone in favor of the ‘Whole-Part-Whole method’, a teaching philosophy currently applied to other languages and learning environments (e.g. Trupke-Bastidas, Poulos 2007; Evans 2008; Hokeness 2010) hence, presented, implemented, theorized and verified in relation to applied linguistics foundations and the study of Arabic by non-Arab beginner learners.

Last but not least, another point to be clarified before proceeding is the variety of Arabic taken into account for the research. Since the study focuses on reading abilities, the Modern Standard variety (abbreviated MSA, SA or simply Arabic), namely *al-‘arabiyya al-fuṣḥā*, is the choice dictated by the sociolinguistic realities of the Arabic lan-

guage.¹ The discussion on colloquial varieties and oral skills is therefore deferred to a further study.

2 Theoretical Framework

Since research in TAFL has been rarely connected to applied neuro-linguistics, it is necessary to provide definitions of selected important concepts that would help to clearly understand research and the methodological proposal put forth below.

First and foremost, since the present study is devoted to receptive language activities like global and analytic reading, one should specify that Arabic uses a Semitic alphabetic writing system characterized by connectivity between letters combining linearly, full mode of writing (*scriptio plena*), where both consonants and vowels are represented by characters, and its opposite (*scriptio defectiva*), where only consonants are annotated. The coexistence of these two systems has led scholars to consider Arabic orthography shallow or transparent when written words are vowelized, by contrast deep or non-transparent when these are non-vowelized (Abu-Rabia 2001; Taha, Ibrahim, Khateb 2013).

As explained in Chen et al. (2009, 161-2), for transparent orthographies, phonological access is achieved by way of “assembled phonology”, in which regular mapping exists between letters and phonemes, thus visual words are transformed into phonology through the grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences rules; while for non-transparent orthographies, phonological access typically relies on “addressed phonology” (Chen et al. 2009, 161-2), namely the elicitation of word sounds that are stored in memory, as in the case of Chinese logographs or non-vowelized words in Arabic. Although scholars generally describe Arabic orthography shallow and deep at the same time, we incline towards the terminological choice made by Chen et al. (2009, 162) in relation to English language orthography specification; according to them, “quasi-transparent”. In the case of English, in fact, assembled and addressed phonologies are used to read regular and irregular words, respectively (Chen et al. 2009, 162). As

1 In their seminal work, Giolfo and Salvaggio (2018b, 103-4) affirm that in lower levels - besides the use of Standard Arabic (SA) - the resort to Colloquial Arabic for writing purposes, i.e. short messages exchanged via SMS, Facebook, Twitter or WhatsApp, has not to be regarded as exceptional as it represents the most common linguistic practice adopted by native speakers when dealing with these specific means of communication. Although we totally agree with this viewpoint, this article instead considers SA in association with written skills, thus specific activities like global and analytic reading, in line with the final choice made by the same authors in their explanatory “Written socio-communicative tasks at CEFR level A1” grid (Giolfo, Salvaggio 2018b, 104).

a whole, Arabic orthography could be termed ‘quasi-transparent’ as well, by cause of the coexistence of two writing modes.²

Beyond the sign, when dealing with receptive abilities like reading, one has to consider an array of lower-level rapid, automatic identification skills as well as a range of higher-level comprehension skills (Grabe 1991, 383). Among the first group, an important element is represented by phonological awareness, namely learners’ knowledge of the phonological, or sound, structure of words predicting reading itself. While with transparent orthographic systems phonological awareness allows the detection and manipulation of sounds by virtue of the grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences rules, this is not the case with non-transparent ones. In fact, according to McBride-Chang et al.’s (2005) findings, due to the absence of these rules, Chinese children reading logographs tend to rely on morphological structure rather than on phonological awareness. As for visual word processing in Arabic, significance of morphological structure has also been established, bearing in mind that this is anchored in the lexical root as a discrete morphological unit and that Arabic is largely a non-concatenative language where morphemes are interwoven rather than linearly clustered (Idrissi, Kehayia 2004). According to Gwilliams and Marantz, comprehending a visual word³

entails decomposition into constituent morphemes, which are linked to abstract representations in the [mental] lexicon for processing. (Gwilliams, Marantz 2015, 1)

Therefore, as a hypothesis to be verified, knowledge of morphological patterns could underpin good reading of non-vowelized Arabic texts. Such reasoning implies that in a certain stage, AFL learners – as well as L1 ones – are subjected to a ‘programmed transition’ where they start relying on morphological awareness useful in codifying non-vowelized texts, while abandoning vowelized ones, thus partly phonological awareness.

Scholars dealing with literacy acquisition have pointed out that awareness of phonemes needs to be explicitly taught (Kruidenier 2002; McShane 2005), mostly when L1 and L2 writing systems differ and letter-sound knowledge is not easily transferred, as in the case

2 Alternatively, al-Mannai (2006, 72-3) terms Arabic and Hebrew “quasi-transparent” languages, since they basically use transparent orthographies, which however are characterized differently.

3 From the auditory point of view, findings suggest that the Arabic language roots form a principal unit through which spoken words are recognized (Gwilliams, Marantz 2015, 1).

of AFL learners whose mother tongues use non-Semitic scripts.⁴ In this sense, Vinogradov (2001) affirms that teachers tend to assume that such learners are able to read in their native language, and, therefore, do not need to be taught phonological awareness and decoding skills (Hokeness 2010, 4). Research has demonstrated that phonological awareness and decoding instruction, like the Whole-Part-Whole method (see below), have had positive results on both L1-literate and L1-illiterate students, who have improved their abilities to read (Trupke-Bastidas, Poulos 2007; Evans 2008; Hokeness 2010).

In addition to that, it should be pointed out that in the Arabic written language, different types of written words exist, since an orthographic rule implies that 6 out of 29 letters connect only with preceding and not subsequent letters. For this reason, Taha, Ibrahim and Khateb (2013) grouped them in three categories: fully connected, partially connected and non-connected words, to be considered in greater detail subsequently.

For a full comprehension of this study, Arabic language script and orthography should be paired with essential concepts and theories relating to the field of applied neurolinguistics, particularly neurological bimodality. As explained by Danesi, this concept posits that

the two sides of the brain work in a complementary fashion in higher cognitive functioning, each possessing clearly distinct modes of perception that interact in a cooperative fashion. (Danesi 1988, 15-16)

These differentiated modes of knowing are the Right and Left Hemisphere Modes of learning, respectively R-Mode and L-Mode. Their functions were schematized by Danesi (1988) as follows:

Table 1 Left- and Right-Hemisphere functions (Danesi 1988, 17)

Left-Hemisphere Functions	Right-Hemisphere Functions
most language functions	comprehension of metaphor and prosodic features
verbal memory	visual memory
intellectual activity	intuitive activity
convergent thought	divergent thought
abstraction	concretization
analysis	synthesis

⁴ Like illiterates, AFL beginner students need to decode a new writing system by learning a different manual skill in the blank page, eye movements from right to left and a new phonological awareness.

In this instance, it must be stressed that neurological bimodality has been contested as a concept by hemispheric dominance, as it has weighed conflicting substantiation, namely the specialization of some neural functions or cognitive processes to one hemisphere or the other would be in contrast to bimodality. As neuroscience nowadays confirms,⁵ brain lateralization – allegedly the result of hemispheric dominance processes –, is a fundamental aspect of brain organization, to which one should add directionality, a fundamental brain feature postulating that information is processed from right to left. It could therefore be assumed that such neurological findings confound the teaching practice within the foreign language classroom, AFL included. In this regard, Balboni (2008, 30) affirms that the choice of teaching techniques ought not to privilege certain kinds of learners, expressly selected combinations of hemispheric dominance, cognitive styles, or intelligence types, to the detriment of others.⁶ By far and large, as demonstrated by Danesi (1988, 23-4), the traditional inductive and deductive language teaching approaches (e.g. grammar-translation, direct method, communicative approach, etc.) have been focusing implicitly on Left-Hemisphere functions, thus developing an instructional philosophy that is basically a unimodal, L-Mode one; simply put, training half a brain. Nonetheless, research evidence has empirically documented that global language processing is bimodal in nature (Danesi 1988, 18), as it makes the two hemispheres work in a complementary fashion.

3 The Teaching Practice. A Balanced Interplay Between the Two Sides of the Brain

The fact that the traditional language teaching approaches were neurologically ineffective led scholars to adopt eclectic attitudes, also in TAFL. According to its proponents (al-Qāsimī 1979; al-Nāqa 1985b), the eclectic method (*ṭarīqa intiqā'iyya*) in practice had to combine motley approaches in consonance with training needs and language specific particularities and, since each way of teaching had its pros and cons, no best method existed; a stance in line with Danesi's (1988, 15) vision of “the complex nature of classroom language learning”, where a versatile pedagogical response is required. As reported by the same scholar, a number of teaching techniques ascribing to traditional methods have survived because they involve both Right and Left-Mode of learning; adding that

⁵ See e.g. the publication dedicated to Cerebral Lateralization and Cognition by Forrester et al. (2018).

⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the Author.

it can be claimed tentatively that the survivability of a specific technique would seem to be proportional to the degree of its bimodality. (Danesi 1988, 24)

In this light, another solution precluding unimodal learning is provided by the affective humanistic approach – generally called in Arabic *madhal insānī* –, originating from the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers (1902-87), through which learners are put at the center stage of the teaching/learning process as individuals, and to which the methodology proposed in this article is ascribed. In this sense, attention is definitively shifted from any cognitive learning machine to the learner (cf. Danesi 1988). Humanistic teaching practices such as the Silent Way of Caleb Gattegno (1911-88), Total Physical Response by James Asher, Community Counseling and Learner-Centred Orientation – all discussed in TAFL (cf. Tu'ayma 1982; al-Nāqa 1985a; Šīnī, 'Abd al-'Azīz, Ḥusayn 1985) – emphasize the affective-based, and therefore R-Mode, techniques, which get students

physically involved in the learning process, letting [...] [them] feel comfortable and at ease in the classroom, and [allowing them] [...] to acquire skills much more easily. (Danesi 1988, 25-6)

Embracing this approach, however, does not disregard the centrality of the neurological concepts discussed above, notably bimodality, essential in the teaching practice of modern foreign languages, and further examined below.

Balboni describes the teaching unit formulated in the 1960s by the illustrious Italian educator Giovanni Freddi (1930-2012), who drew inspiration from the Gestalt theory, as a “balanced interplay between the two sides of the brain” (Balboni 2015, 68), shifting from globalization (R-Mode) to synthesis, passing through analytic activities (L-Mode). Theory postulates in fact that communicative events, thus texts, are perceived globally, involving initially the R-Mode of learning. As already known in applied linguistics, a profound acquisition of language has to be pursued by way of a learning process that goes from global to specific in accordance with the principles of bimodality and directionality outlined above. Operationally, language needs to be read, listened or observed to the extent that learners shift from superficial comprehension to in-depth understanding (Balboni 2015, 104). To the detriment of deductive schemes, the use of inductive strategies is also preferred. Despite the high regard of Lado's (1964, 35) viewpoint that language learning cannot be understood only through such theories, as it requires a more comprehensive explanation involving the widest range of human activity, bimodality and directionality continue to be cornerstones of language acquisition.

For this reason, the said cognitive theoretical aspects have been integrated in the affective-humanistic approach harmoniously and presented here as one possible procedural realization, namely Whole-Part-Whole reading instruction, a method applied to other languages and learning environments (e.g. Trupke-Bastidas, Poulos 2007; Evans 2008; Hokeness 2010), which is used to teach words in context, break them down into their smaller parts like phonemes or letters, and then re-read the words in context (cf. Trupke 2007), therefore going from global to analytic and back again. In Arabic the method could be translated as *ṭarīqa kulliyya-ḡuz'iyya-kulliyya* (Whole-Part-Whole method) taking inspiration from two well-known methods, widely diffused in Arabic L1 education environments, expressly the global (*kulliyya*)⁷ and analytical methods (*ḡuz'iyya*),⁸ which are based on similar theoretical foundations. Nonetheless, the Whole-Part-Whole method applied to the teaching of Arabic as a Foreign Language merges them in a single operative model integrating neurological knowledge and modern developments in the field of applied linguistics and TAFL, i.e. the pre-elementary level discussion and the use of new technologies in the AFL classroom (Alhawary 2001; Ditters 2006; Facchin 2016; El Essawi 2018; Giolfo, Salvaggio 2018a). Like the global method, Whole-Part-Whole reading instruction takes the word as the smallest chunk of meaning in the language acquisition process rather than the isolated sounds or letters, favoring global, R-Mode of learning, then it shifts to analytic reading of single sounds or letters focusing on L-Mode activities, and ends with a final synthesis. Accordingly, it moves in the opposite direction from the 'alphabetic method', known in Arabic with the expression *ṭarīqa* or *qā'ida baḡdādiyya*, the 'Baghdad method', which goes from analytic to global, ideally first reading the smallest unit, the letter (*ḥarf*), then words, small sentences, paragraphs and finally texts, thus ignoring the neurological principle of directionality.

⁷ The use of this method was reported by scholars such as Muḥammad Fāḡil al-Ġamāli, Mattā 'Aqrāwī, Sumaya Fahmī and Muḥammad Sa'īd Qadrī, who dealt with the teaching of Arabic as L1 either in Iraq or Egypt. The method also influenced the early developments of TAFL in Egypt, where the Egyptian Broadcasting Corporation programme for the propagation of the Arabic language on air used this particular teaching orientation. See Bakr 1975 (Facchin 2019, 70, 254).

⁸ As in the case of the global method, the analytical one was reported as well by scholars who dealt with the teaching of Arabic as L1, e.g. the Syrian writer and educator Sāṭi' al-Ḥuṣri (1882-1968) in Iraq until the late 1930s (Facchin 2019, 254).

4 Methodological Proposal

The methodology put forth in this article is the result of the considerations outlined above and stemming from various scientific areas, principally neurological applied linguistics, which has rarely been linked with the teaching and learning of Arabic as a Foreign Language. Furthermore, as it is strongly held that learners play a key role in the learning process, the proposal is ascribed to the affective-humanistic teaching philosophy,⁹ which integrates neurological and AFL modern teaching advancement through a possible realization, Whole-Part-Whole reading instruction in the class of Arabic as a Foreign Language to beginner learners. Notably, this methodological proposal is inspired by an experimental project conducted in 2017, and already accounted¹⁰ (Bricchese, Facchin 2019), in which Italian AFL absolute beginners aimed at reaching level A1 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) (CoE 2001), in Modern Standard Arabic within a total of 80 hours of lessons, partly fulfilled. However, instead of merely describing it, the project is now further analyzed and elaborated with important implementations and corrections concerning the teaching practice. Given this, the Whole-Part-Whole method is presented to demonstrate how valuable it is as effective teaching practice within the AFL classroom.

Before discussing technicalities specifically regarding reading instructions, it is essential to stress that vocabulary selection is always to be incorporated in the planning phase of each language course. Vocabulary is to be introduced primarily through authentic texts consistent with language learning objectives and the expected attainment level. As suggested by Chamsine during a recent conference held at the Université du Québec à Montréal,¹¹ the lexical choice in this preliminary planning phase can be thematic, thus represent a specific word selection, like the slogans of the revolution. This proposal is to be read above all in connection to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) environments, where the learning purpose is to obtain a specific knowledge of the language. That being said, as per the project focus, mastering reading ability at elementary level in Standard Arabic, the suggested selection can be that of

9 For application of this teaching philosophy, see the dedicated activities created for the experimental project described below.

10 The experimental project grouped 12 Italian AFL absolute beginner learners, all adults (age range 24-70), both males and females. The group aimed at reaching level A1 of the CEFR in Modern Standard Arabic within a total of 80 lesson hours, partly fulfilled. Among their training needs were to learn Arabic for cultural interests (75%), but also for travel (50%) and work purposes (25%). Lessons were inserted in a non-academic, non-formal education context and were delivered on a weekly basis.

11 Chamsine (unpublished).

CEFR-CV descriptors: simple, familiar short texts on subjects of personal interest or information on a letter, card, e-mail or flyer and restaurant menu, as well as everyday signs such as 'Parking,' 'Station,' 'Dining room,' 'No smoking,' etc. (CoE 2018, 60-5).

Through inductive strategies, the project employed Whole-Part-Whole reading instructions and presented selected words as semantic units, taken as wholes, thus favoring globalization (R-Mode). Ideally, the process started with global reading, then shifted to analytic activities (L-Mode) and went back to global. The alphabet was not presented as a first single topic or split into sections as language courses generally tend to do, but instead introduced in the context of analytic reading activities. In this way we tried to abandon the traditional alphabetic method, which conducts AFL learners to proceed from analytic to global, in contrast to brain functioning, namely the directionality principle. In essence, this uncommon didactic choice was affected both by neurolinguistic awareness and by a fundamental question: is the Whole-Part-Whole method more efficient and effective than the alphabetic one in the productivity of the AFL learning process?

To respond to this question, dedicated activities were created and used in class.¹² As explained in Bricchese and Facchin (2019) the project started from oral texts, since the course aimed to instruct learners on language abilities, all-round.¹³ Then, key vocabulary was obtained through brainstorming activities and the written-word forms were provided for learners to copy, thus linked to their sound presented orally. However, in order to develop reading ability – at least in the earliest phase of AFL learning – utilizing authentic written texts¹⁴ [figs. 1-2] may represent the most valuable choice, which therefore should be implemented. In keeping with the experimental project, specific words are also selected and used as wholes in activities

12 Beyond specific activities, among those ascribed to the affective-humanistic teaching philosophy, one should point out that at the beginning of the Standard Arabic language course participants were requested to fill in an aptitude test, which aimed at investigating their disposition towards foreign language learning. The test based on the multiple intelligences theory by Howard Gardner (2006); its results were discussed in class, and then merged to create working groups. For instance, those learners with visual-spatial intelligence type were paired and contended with the verbal-linguistic intelligence group during classroom activities.

13 As Giolfo and Salvaggio (2018b, 105) later stressed “an initial period exclusively dedicated to oral skills not only fosters the development of implicit competence [...] but also provides learners with the initial vocabulary they need for the acquisition of writing skills. Many studies emphasize the importance of lexical competence as a prerequisite for the development of writing skills”. In this sense Cardona (2008, 10) adds that a great number of studies in the fields of psycholinguistics and language teaching highlight the critical relation between lexical competence and reading ability.

14 I thank my colleague Patrizia Zanelli for allowing me to use photos from her archive in this article [figs. 2, 8 and 9].



Figures 1-2 Examples of an authentic written text

where learners try to separate and reassemble them. The study of letters is gradually introduced by working either on the grapheme-to-phoneme or phoneme-to-grapheme correspondences rules so that learners can progressively acquire phonological awareness. Clearly, in this first phase, analytic reading is to be conducted through the use of short vowels, without which phonological awareness cannot be acquired simply by virtue of the orthographic transparency principle previously described. Moreover, as already specified, the word selection can regard simple texts such as everyday signs.

Since AFL learners involved in the experimental project were all Italian absolute beginners unfamiliar with the Semitic writing system, it was decided to present non-connected words (e.g. Figure 1,

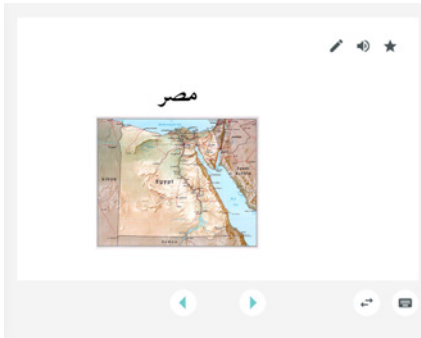


Figure 3 Global reading through Quizlet.com flashcards (word *Miṣr*, 'Egypt')

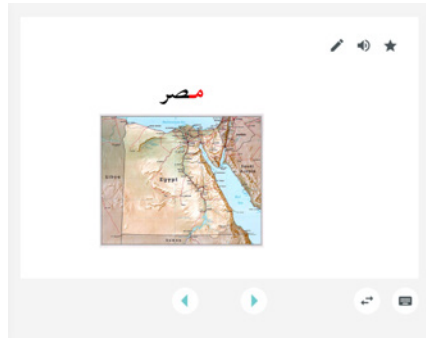


Figure 4 Analytic reading of a single letter (*m* in *Miṣr*, 'Egypt')

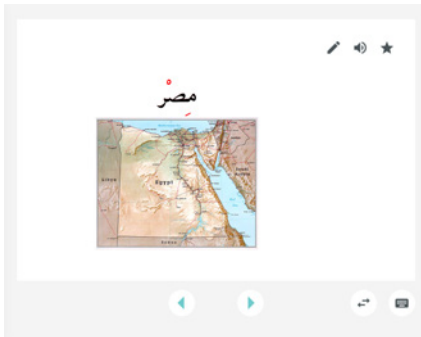


Figure 5 Analytic reading of short vowels (*kasra* and *sukūn* in *Miṣr*, 'Egypt')

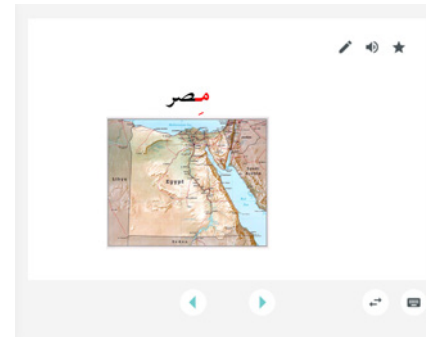


Figure 6 Analytic reading combined (*mi* in *Miṣr*, 'Egypt')

dār) first, followed by partially connected vocabulary, and lastly fully connected words (fig. 1, *Miṣr*), in line with the reflections made by Taha, Ibrahim and Khateb (2013). Although the scholars refuted the Arabic orthographic complexity assumption (Ibrahim, Eviatar, Aharon-Peretz 2002) in relation to Arab adult skilled readers, they also affirmed that in the very first stages of literacy acquisition, Arab children - who are more used and exposed to the basic forms of the letter - perform more accurately with non-connected than with fully connected words, contrarily to the adult counterpart (Taha, Ibrahim, Khateb 2013, 300). Analogously, as a hypothesis to be verified empirically, AFL learners whose mother tongues use non-Semitic scripts are expected to perform in similar ways, provided that the writing systems of their mother tongues prevalently display non-connective use.

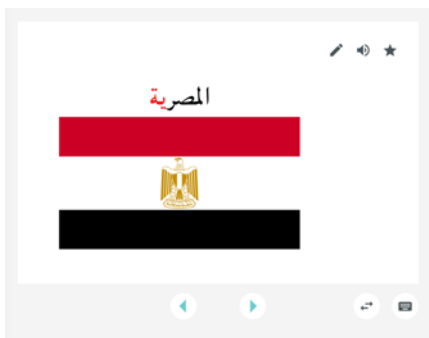


Figure 7 Analytic reading of morphological constituents
(feminine *nisba* form *-iyya* in *miṣriyya*, 'Egyptian')

As previously indicated, the first step of the Whole-Part-Whole method was therefore to carry out global reading activities through words selected from authentic texts presented [fig. 2]. To this end, there was extensive use of new technological tools in the service of foreign language learning like Quizlet.com, e.g. its flashcards, in order to introduce word recognition through global reading [fig. 3]. The word-image combination was also an essential criterion, which aimed at facilitating learners to link the sign to its semantic meaning. Redundancy activating the R-Mode of learning was strategic as well, for instance through successive occurrence of studied vocabulary, words repetition or focus on oral texts, when considered as pre-reading activities followed by words reiteration in written tasks. Once the word recognition exercise was carried out, analytic reading (L-Mode) was focused on by highlighting single letters in different positions [fig. 4] in concomitance with short vowels [figs. 5-6], thus stressing the reading of syllables, e.g. *Sū-ri-yā*, *Lub-nān*, etc. Letter recognition exercises made it possible to gradually introduce the alphabet, fulfilling the neurological principles of directionality and bimodality. Furthermore, in light of Gwilliams and Marantz's (2015) findings, which posit that complex words are read by cutting them into morphological constituents, analytic reading activities may represent the right didactic moment to prepare AFL learners for the 'programmed transition' mentioned above, where students start relying on morphological structure awareness useful in codifying non-vowelized texts, rather than depending on phonological awareness, which is eventually left



Figures 8-9 Global reading activity of styles/typefaces

out.¹⁵ If such reasoning were deemed correct, analytic reading exercises could also concentrate on simple morphological constituent recognition, e.g. masculine and feminine *nisba* forms, *-iyy* and *-iyya* [fig. 7], sound plurals, etc., expressly concatenative morphemes linearly clustered (e.g. *Miṣr*, *miṣr-iyy*, *miṣr-iyya*) rather than non-concatenative ones. Analogously, during the analytic reading phase, syllable recognition can be carried out through tailored classroom exercises

¹⁵ By referring to Arab school grades, Bourisly et al. - citing Abu-Rabia (1997, 2006) - state that “the use of diacritics is limited to educational materials for primary grade levels, and for whatever length of time deemed sufficient to learn to read without them. Typically, around [the] third grade, students are expected to be able to read texts without diacritics. Once diacritics are dropped, readers must employ vocabulary, syntax, and sometimes world knowledge to recognize words and to attribute correct semantic meaning to devowelized text” (2013, 196).

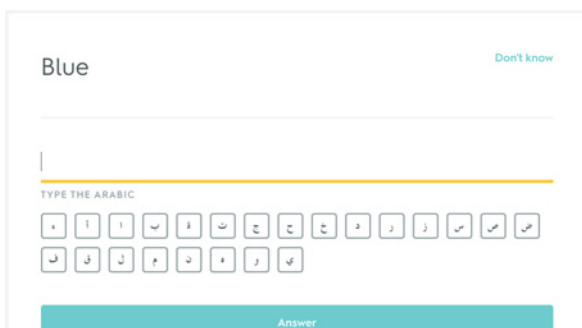


Figure 10 Example of typewriting function on

displaying learned syllables in new vocabulary, which students have to trace back, for instance *sū* in *sū-riyy* and *mu-dar-ri-sū-na*. In line with inductive strategies, analytic reading was followed by grammar explanations and fixation. Subsequently, the word was read globally again (R-Mode) in the phase of synthesis [fig. 3].

Even though the project activities came to an end with this last phase; as an implementation to be introduced soon after, recognition of different script styles (e.g. *nash*, *riq'a*, etc.) or modern typefaces [figs. 8-9] is to be considered of paramount importance, in order to train learners to read different text types. Last but not least, it is worth noting that Quizlet.com flashcards did represent a valuable teaching and learning tool in the productiveness of the aforementioned project, which is the result of the change in traditional training settings, already predicted by Freddi (1994). In fact, while Whole-Part-Whole reading instruction deconstructs the traditional alphabetic method largely diffused in early AFL teaching, it introduces the use of new technological tools in the service of languages. As already stressed in Brichese and Facchin (2019), Quizlet.com - if wisely introduced by teachers - gives learners opportunities: to enrich their lexical knowledge through global reading activities; to acquire both phonological and morphological structure awareness through analytic reading; to annotate and memorize new vocabulary by way of computers, tablets or smartphones, besides training how to typewrite moving from receptive to productive activities [fig. 10]. The evidence of its success, combined with Whole-Part-Whole reading instruction and the focus on oral texts, lies in the level of vocabulary retention among Italian absolute beginners participating in the experimental project, reaching more than 350 terms by the end of 40 lesson hours.

5 Conclusions

By drawing upon an experimental project conducted in 2017 (Bri-chese, Facchin 2019), the present contribution concretely evinces how Whole-Part-Whole reading instruction – namely a possible neurological theory procedural realization – can train both sides of the brain (R- and L-Mode) through receptive activities development during early AFL learning, moving in the opposite direction from the alphabetic method. In this context, the research investigated whether Whole-Part-Whole reading instruction was more efficient than the alphabetic method in the regards to the productiveness of the AFL learning progress.

Throughout the study, elements of applied neurolinguistics, explicitly the concepts of neurological bimodality and directionality, were oriented with the practice of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language. Recent neurolinguistic findings were connected to Arabic language specificity, expressly its ‘quasi-transparent’ orthography, phonology – both assembled and addressed – and morphology, which all pose numerous challenges to AFL instructors. From this perspective, the study elucidated how awareness of phonological and morphological structures is fundamental to early AFL learning and teaching. Although this area, particularly early reading and writing, has been notably examined by Arab TAFI (Ḥassān 1983; al-Duḥayl 1992; al-‘Uṣaylī 2002) and other scholars (Abu-Rabia 1997, 2006) over the last thirty years, further attention needs to be drawn to such aspects. This issue becomes even more central if we consider the particular status of AFL absolute beginner learners, who – like illiterates – need to be guided in the study of a new writing system, different manual skills and eye movement from right to left, in addition to phonological and morphological structure awareness. Accordingly, an issue that needs to be addressed in the very near future is to what extent these aspects can effectively be included in the AFL syllabus alongside general reading ability, and at what level.

Thus far, theories along with concrete results have evidenced that Whole-Part-Whole reading instruction, based on neurolinguistic knowledge and the affective-humanistic approach, ensures both learners and their teacher favorable achievements in the learning progress within the classroom of Arabic as a Foreign Language. Even though the experimental project, and its derived methodological proposal presented above, substantiated the convenience of the reading instruction, its impact on the teaching and learning process still needs to be further discussed and analyzed by means of tailored research. Hence, further probing should include testing – from a psycholinguistic stance – the validity of the Whole-Part-Whole method in early AFL learning through control groups, where the first learns to read in Arabic using reading instruction, while the second with the

traditional alphabetic method. Suitably, the objective of the study is to be the initial theoretical groundwork encouraging scholars to further discuss the virtues and limits of the aforementioned Whole-Part-Whole reading instruction as compared to the traditional alphabetic method, while also promoting empirical studies to verify the efficacy of one over the other.

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'Aishī's 'Ishrat-nāma A Dah-nāma with Unexpected Messengers

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Abstract In the first part of this article I presented an edition with a short introduction of 'Aishī Shīrāzī's 'Ishrat-nāma, a poem belonging to the *dah-nāma* genre. In this second part I discuss the messengers who convey the messages between the two lovers. At the request of his patron, 'Ināyat, an amir of the Aq-Quyūnlū Khalīl b. Uzun Ḥasan, instead of the usual messenger, the wind, 'Aishī chose for ten musical instruments. I argue that the choice of these instruments, and the way they are described, are not accidental but subtly convey the evolution of the protagonists' feelings.

Keywords 'Aishī Shīrāzī. 'Ishrat-nāma. Dah-nāma. Mathnawī. Musical Instruments. Messenger Motif.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Origin of the *Dah-nāma* Genre: *Wīs u Rāmīn* and *Khusrau u Shīrīn*. – 3 The Other Sources of Inspiration of the 'Ishrat-nāma. – 4 Structure of the Poem. – 5 The Instruments as Messengers. – 6 Conclusion.



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For Jan Schmidt

1 Introduction

'Aishī's *Ishrat-nāma* (Book of Enjoyment [or Pleasure]) is a little-known poem, belonging to the genre *dah-nāma*, which, as it seems, has come down to us in a single manuscript at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Suppl. Persan 1142).¹ In this genre the evolution of the relationship of two lovers up to their union is described through their exchange of ten letters or, as also the case here, ten verbal messages.² In the first part of this article, I offered an edition with a short introduction. I argued that it was written some seventy years later than Blochet's estimate, that is, between 874/1470 and 882/1478, namely, at the time of the Aq-Quyūnlū Khalīl b. Uzun Ḥasan during his governorship of Fārs and I gave the scant information we have on the poet. Here I shall give a brief discussion of the *dah-nāma* genre and the poems from which the *Ishrat-nāma* took its inspiration; then I shall go into the unexpected choice of the messengers who convey the lover's messages, namely ten musical instruments. I shall argue that the choice of these instruments, and the way they are described, are not accidental but subtly convey the evolution of the protagonists' feelings.

2 The Origin of the *dah-nāma* Genre: *Wīs u Rāmīn* and *Khusrau u Shīrīn*

It is generally agreed that the *dah-nāma* genre originated in Fakhr al-Dīn Gurgānī's mid-eleventh-century *mathnawī Wīs u Rāmīn*. Its roots lie in both the ten letters full of complaint and reproach that Wīs writes to an unfaithful Rāmīn and the later "dialogue" between the lovers – actually eight long monologues delivered by each of them, Wīs at her palace window, Rāmīn outside having been refused entry.³ The more direct inspiration of the genre, however, is Niẓāmī's

1 Blochet, *Catalogue*, 3: 247, no. 1642.

2 For a general bibliography on the genre see part 1 of this article, Beelaert, "A Little-Known *Dah-nāma*", fn. 4.

3 In response to a letter by Rāmīn, Wīs writes – or rather dictates – all ten letters herself, one after the other, and gives them to her messenger Āzīn to give to Rāmīn, who responds with a single letter he sends back with her messenger. An "exchange of ten letters" (De Bruijn, s.v. "Mathnawī, 2. In Persian", *EP*, 6: 834a) is therefore not exact. Letters and messages play an important part in this *mathnawī* – in addition to these ten, there are other letters as well as verbal messages the messenger is asked to deliver.

Khusrau u Shīrin, which was itself influenced by Gurgānī's *mathnawī*. This is also the poem 'Aishī explicitly mentions as source of inspiration of his own (v. 83). In *Khusrau u Shīrin* the lovers have a dialogue consisting of five monologues each, and, more importantly, they also communicate by way of eight love poems (called *ghazal*, despite not having the proper *ghazal* form), the inclusion of which in the *mathnawī* is a usual feature of the genre.⁴ These are delivered by court minstrels – as in the *'Ishrat-nāma*, each in a different musical mode: by Nakīsā (accompanying himself on the harp, *chang*) interpreting Shīrīn's feelings and by Bārbad (accompanying himself on the lute, *'ūd*) those of Khusrau.⁵ In addition to not having the form of a *ghazal*, the eight poems in *Khusrau u Shīrin* contain many more than the maximum of twelve verses⁶ – some have twenty-five or more. In most *dah-nāmas*, as it is in 'Aishī's case, the *ghazals* have monorhyme, a first line (*maṭla'*) with internal rhyme, and the same metre as the rest of the poem;⁷ some, as those in the *'Ishrat-nāma*, have a *takhalluṣ*. They always have a length characteristic of the *ghazal* – in 'Aishī's case, the minimum of five verses. Nearly all *dah-nāmas*, in-

⁴ 'Ayyūqī also included ten in his *Warqa u Gulshāh*, which must date from after 400/1009-10 when the *Shāh-nāma* was finished, as it shows its influence, but from before 421/1030 when the Ghaznavid Maḥmud died, see Khaleghi-Motlagh s.v. "Ayyūqī", *Elr*, 3: 167b; they are in the same *mutaqārib* metre as the rest of the poem, do not have a signature (*takhalluṣ*), but are in monorhyme. Along with the *dah-nāma* genre being a narrative, in which is an exchange of letters or messages of an amorous nature, the inclusion of a *ghazal* is seen by Khurāsānī and Dāwudī Muqaddam ("Taḥlīl-i dah-nāmāhā", 20) to be essential, such that without it, a poem would not qualify as belonging to this genre. Dankoff ("The Lyric in the Romance", 10), does not discuss the *dah-nāma*, but refers to Gandjei's article "Genesis"; he is under the impression that in the genre the *ghazal* is always in *mathnawī* form and does not have a signature, which is contradicted by the *dah-nāma* of Auḥādī and 'Aishī in which the *ghazals* have monorhyme, and in 'Aishī's poem have a *makhṣaṣ*.

⁵ The two poems have only two modes in common, *naurūz* and *rāst*. In the order of the *ghazals*, the modes in the *'Ishrat-nāma* are *naurūz*, *ḥusainī*, *nūrīz*, *shahnāz*, *'uzzāl*, *bū salīk*, *zabūl*, *rāst*, *panj-gāh*, and *īkiyāt* (I owe the emendation of "*abkiyāt*" to Eckhard Neubauer, who gave me as source of this mode, *shu'ba*, inter alia Nasīmī's early tenth/sixteenth-century treatise *Nasīm-i ṭarab*, 75, 84). In *Khusrau u Shīrin*, according to Tharwatīyān's critical edition they are *rāst*, *'ushshāq*, *ḥisārī*, *'Irāq*, *naurūz*, *Sipāhān*, *rāhawī*, *zīr-afkand(a)* (§§ 78-85); in Dastgirdī's non-critical one the order is *rāst*, *'Irāq*, *naurūz*, *Sipāhān*, *ḥisārī*, *'ushshāq*, *rāhawī*, *zīr-afkan* (359-79). There are also differences between the editions as to which *ghazal* follows each mode. I am not aware of any study that addresses the modes used in Niẓāmī's poem or differences in the manuscript tradition in this respect and Tharwatīyān gives no comment on this in his otherwise extensive annotations. Each mode can correspond to a certain "modal sentiment" (Chabrier, s.v. "Maḳām", *EP*, 6: 102b); however, this seems not to be relevant in Niẓāmī or 'Aishī (Neubauer, personal communication).

⁶ Bausani, s.v. "Ghazal, II. In Persian Literature", *EP*, 2: 1033b.

⁷ For those included in a *mathnawī* not belonging to the *dah-nāma* genre and having a different metre than the rest of the poem, see Dankoff ("Lyric in the Romance", 8 and fn. 1), who gives as example the *ghazal* at the end of each section in Amīr Khusrau's *Nuḥ sipīhr* (701/1302) and all those in Salmān Sāwajī's *Jamshīd u Khurshīd* (763/1362).

cluding the 'Ishrat-nāma, are written in the same *hazaj* metre of *Wīs u Rāmīn* and *Khusrau u Shīrīn*.⁸

3 The Other Sources of Inspiration of the 'Ishrat-nāma

The second source of inspiration that 'Aishī mentions is Auḥādī (= Auḥādī Marāghā'ī, v. 84a), referring to his *Manṭiq al-'ushshāq* ("The speech of the lovers"), which is, in fact, the oldest known actual *dah-nāma*, having all the defining characteristics of the genre.⁹ It was written in 706/1306, more than a century and a half before 'Aishī's poem. It was nevertheless not the first *dah-nāma*, as the poem's dedicatee, a vizir of the Mongols, Wajīh al-Dīn Shāh Yūsuf, asked Auḥādī to write a new *dah-nāma*, being "tired of the old ones".¹⁰

⁸ *Hazaj-i musaddas-i maḥzūf*. Exceptions are Ibn 'Imād, *Rauzat al-muḥibbīn* (794/1392), written in *hazaj-i musaddas-i akhrab-i maqbūz-i maḥzūf* (the metre of Nizāmī's *Lailā u Majnūn*: Gandjei, "Genesis", 62; Syed Hasan, "Dahnamehs in Persian", 17-19; 'Abbāsīya Kuhan, "Dah-nāma-sarā'ī", 74-5; Khurāsāni and Dāwudī Muqaddam, "Taḥlīl-i dah-nāmahā", 26); 'Azīz al-Dīn Zāhidī Bukhārī "Azīz", *Rauzat al-'āshiqīn* (810/1407-71), written in a slight variant – with overlong last syllable – of *khafīf-i musaddas-i makhbūn-i maḥzūf* (the metre of Sanā'ī's *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*: 'Aiważī, "Dah-nāma-gū'ī", 542-3; 'Abbāsīya Kuhan, "Dah-nāma-sarā'ī", 75-6); and *Muḥibb u Maḥbūb* from the eighth/fourteenth century (by an otherwise unknown poet calling himself "Ikhtiyār", preserved in a single manuscript), written in *mutaqārib-i muthamman-i maḥzūf* (the metre of the *Shāh-nāma*: *Muḥibb u Maḥbūb*, ed. Yalmahā).

⁹ There exist also a number of *mathnawīs* with an amorous theme entitled *sī-nāma* ("thirty letters"), which in theory would differ from *dah-nāmas* in the number of letters only. However, this is not always the case. Whereas the *sī-nāma*, also known as *Muḥibb u Maḥbūb*, written by Kātibī Turshīzī (d. 839/1435-36) as one of the poems of his *Khamasa*, is indeed a poem of the same kind as *Ṣafā* (*TA*, 4: 238) writes (I have been unable to locate it in print, but it is included in a 9th/15th-10th/16th-century manuscript of Kātibī's *Kulliyāt* in the Majlis Library in Tehran which can be consulted on this library's website lib.ical.ir (shelf number 2615, pages 169-255). (The poem is also briefly mentioned by Rypka, *HIL*, 284). On the other hand, the *sī-nāma* by Amīr Ḥusainī Harawī (presumably 671/1273-74-719/1319-20), which might be the oldest poem thus called and more or less contemporary with the *Manṭiq al-'ushshāq*, should be regarded as belonging to a different, although related genre. (The exact date of its composition is unknown; the editor of this poem, Turābī, argues against the claim 9th/15th-century biographer Daulatshāh had made that the poet wrote it "in his youth" (*Mathnawihā-yi 'irfānī*, 11-12). As Khurāsāni and Dāwudī Muqaddam ("Taḥlīl-i dah-nāmahā", 29) already noted, contrary to *Ṣafā* (*TA*, 3/2: 756) and 'Abbāsīya Kuhan ("Dah-nāma-sarā'ī", 74b), the poem does not contain an exchange of letters between the lovers. Instead, it is a love story ending in an unresolved way and told by way of succession of unsent letters, all of them the lover's.

¹⁰ *Dīwān-i kāmīl*, 438, v. 11. Gandjei argues that because of "the absence of any evidence concerning the existence of a *Dah-nāma* as an independent poem" before *Manṭiq al-'ushshāq*, there was none, and suggests that the term may also have indicated more generally "a short love poem in *mathnawī* form", "as distinct from full-length romantic epics" ("Genesis", 66), offering as an example a verse in the *Firāq-nāma* (written in 769/1367 or shortly thereafter) in which its author, Salmān-i Sāwajī, allegedly describes his poem as such. (Gandjei quotes British Museum, Or. 2815, fol. 290v = *Dīwān*, 617, v. 7) However, when the poet asks God to grant him sufficient time to compose "*dah*

Mantiq al-'ushshāq has nearly the same length as the *Ishrat-nāma*. In it, a lover and a beloved exchange ten messages (written and verbal), which include a *ghazal* and also a short narrative (*ḥikāyat*). At first, the beloved does not respond to the lover's feelings and resists contact, but gradually the lover wins over the beloved and they are united at the end.

Finally, there is a third work of which 'Aishī says that it gave "grace" (*būy*) to his own, namely, *Mihr u Mushtarī* (v. 84b), the romantic *mathnawī* by 'Aṣṣār Tabrīzī, composed, in the same *hazaj* metre, a century before, in 778/1377.¹¹ It is, however, not a *dah-nāma*, although the lovers exchange some letters. The eponymous lovers are two young men, the sons of a king and his vizir, who have known each other since infancy and are united by what the poet calls a "love free of lust" (*mihri zi har shahwat mubarrā*, v. 216). The *Ishrat-nāma* shares this characteristic of featuring a male beloved – for most of the poem, the beloved's gender is unspecified; the epithets, such as *māh-paikar* ("with a face as the moon") or *sahī-raftār* ("walking upright") suit both genders, but it becomes clear that the beloved is male with mention of his *kākul* ("forelock"), a typical male hairdo (v. 140).¹²

Of the poets who inspired him, 'Aishī does not mention Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273), although he clearly did so. In the evocation at the beginning of the poem of how the participants in the *majlis* listen to, recite, and discuss different kinds of poems, *ghazals*, *qaṣīdas* (v. 64) and also *mathnawīs*, the phrasing evidently alludes to Rūmī's *Mathnawī-yi ma'nawī* (v. 63):

Of one, his soul's ear was listening to a *mathnawī*

of another, his heart was intent on a lesson full of meaning (*dars-i ma'nawī*)

Moreover, Rūmī's influence is also apparent in the ten *ghazals*.¹³ For nearly every *ghazal* in the *Ishrat-nāma*, there is a likely pendant in

nāma", this should be read as "ten [such] books". Up to the most recent publication of Khurāsānī and Dāwūdī Muqaddam ("Taḥlīl-i dah-nāmahā", 23 and 27), one also consistently finds 'Irāqī's *'Ushshāq-nāma* mentioned as a predecessor – although circulating under his name since the eighth/fourteenth century, the author is 'Izz al-Dīn 'Atā'ī who wrote it ca. 719/1319–20, some thirty years after 'Irāqī's death in 688/1289: Feuillet-Bois-Pierunek, *À la croisée des voies célestes*, 292–5 (with bibliography on this issue).

11 *Mihr u Mushtarī* (*Ishq-nāma*), 'Aṣṣār's poem is ten times as long as 'Aishī's (in Muṣṭafawī Sabzawāri's edition, 5095 verses).

12 Mentioned also by Ḥāfīz, *Dīwān*, 1: *ghazal* no. 271, v. 6. De Fouchécour translates it as "la houppe de cheveux en forme de crête au sommet du crâne et descendant en boucle sur le front, le reste du crâne étant rasé. C'est la façon dont les Mongols traitaient leur chevelure" (Hāfez de Chiraz, *Le Divān*, 718). It resembles the Ukrainian Cossack *chupryna*.

13 None can be seen as a response (*naẓīra*) to a *ghazal* of 'Aishī's illustrious compatriots Ḥāfīz (d. ca. 792/1390) or Sa'dī (d. 691/1291).

Rūmī's *Dīwān-i Shams*, and in two cases they share a rhyme and refrain (*radīf*) that are too infrequently used to be accidental.¹⁴

Where there are letters or messages, there are messengers, and here the *Ishrat-nāma* shows originality: 'Aishī does not call on the usual messenger, the wind (*bād*), but, at the request of his patron, amir 'Ināyat, he chooses musical instruments (vv. 76-7). The first instrument is the reed flute, *nay*, which is again a reminiscence of Rūmī as it immediately brings to mind the wonderful complaint of the *nay* opening Rūmī's *Mathnawī-yi ma'nawī*. In the course of the poem, ten different musical instruments are cast in the role of messenger¹⁵ and I shall argue that the choice of these specific instruments and the way they are described are not accidental but subtly convey the evolution of the protagonists' feelings.

With the exception of Nizāmī, 'Aishī was inspired by poets we know to have been mystics.¹⁶ The short notice on him in Qazwīnī's addition to *Majālis al-nafā'is*¹⁷ which I discussed in the first part of this article, does not mention a Sufi affiliation, although, of course, this does not prove that there was none. Indeed, at first sight the *Ishrat-nāma* is a mystical poem.¹⁸ 'Aishī presents amir 'Ināyat as a learned person, knowledgeable in mysticism (*fann-i 'irfān*, v. 50) and many of the terms with which the musical instruments are described are Sufi in inspiration; in the final section (v. 491) there is even a clear allusion to the Sufi concept of *fanā fī llāh*, "annihilation in God". Nevertheless, the poem, with its telling title "Book of Enjoyment", comes across as lighthearted and playful, rich in witticisms and puns, and

¹⁴ Viz., the seventh and the ninth *ghazal*, with, respectively, rhyme and refrain *ār-magzār* (a *naẓīra* of Rūmī, *Kullīyāt-i Shams, ghazal* no. 1041, which also has the same metre) and *ār-i 'āshiq* (*ghazal* no. 1307).

¹⁵ Though not messengers, personified musical instruments, speaking in *zabān-i hāl* ("the state of speaking by itself", or prosopopeia), are found in other poems from the ninth/fifteenth century, such as Fattāhī Nishāpūrī's *Husn u dil* (finished in 840/1437-38) which has a tambourine (*daf*), a *nay*, and a *chang* facing off in a boasting contest (*munāzara*) with the rose, the palm, and the violet respectively (288-301). Another example, also shaping the whole poem, is the *Contest of String Instruments*, a *munāzara* by the Chagatai poet Aḥmadi, in which "seven instruments, representing seven nations and religions (...) and at the same time, seven ranks and social standings, argue with the troublemaker, the *tanbura*, about their musical (and social) value and importance" (Neubauer, "Music in the Islamic Environment", 4/2: 599-601; online version, 606-7); see also Bodrogligeti, "A Masterpiece of Central Asian Turkic Satire".

¹⁶ Syed Hasan describes Auḥādī's *Manṭiq al-'ushshāq* correctly as a "mystical allegory" ("Dahnamehs in Persian", 5). Auḥādī was one of the followers of the renowned mystic Auḥād al-Dīn Kirmānī, who died ca. 634/1237 and from whom he took his *takhallus* (Khaleghi-Motlagh, s.v. "Awḥādī Marāḡa'ī", *Elr*, 3: 119). 'Aṣṣār was a disciple of Shaikh Majd al-Dīn Sīsī (d. 760/1359) (Ṣafā, s.v. "'Aṣṣār Tabrīzī", *Elr*, 2: 803).

¹⁷ For this addition to the work of Mīr 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī, see Beelaert, "A Little-Known *Dah-nāma*", 123-4.

¹⁸ Cf. Blochet, *Catalogue*, 247: "poème mystique".

the cheerful *majlis* 'Aishī describes, during which 'Ināyat asked him to write this poem, seems to have been a literary gathering of poets and poetry lovers (*arbāb-i sukhan*, v. 61) rather than Sufis. Without knowing more about the poet and of the specific social context, an in-depth interpretation of the poem is difficult to make, however.¹⁹

4 Structure of the Poem

The poem is structured as follows. After the introductory sections with praise of God (vv. 1-17) and of the Prophet (*na't*) (vv. 18-26), and prayers (*munājāt*) (vv. 27-31), the poem continues with a section entitled *dar sabab-i naẓm-i kitāb*, which contains the praise of Sulṭān Khalīl (vv. 32-40), his amirs (v. 41), and, in particular, the above-mentioned 'Ināyat (vv. 42-60). Then follows a description of the *majlis* (vv. 61-9) in which 'Ināyat commissions the poem, and the poet accepts the task (vv. 70-91). Then abruptly, without title, the story about an unnamed youth (*jawānī*) becoming lovestruck by the "glance of a bloodthirsty one" (*ghamza-yi khūn-khwāra'ī*) begins at v. 92. It is followed by ten chapters – titled as the first letter, the second letter (*nāma-yi awwal, duwwum*), etc. – although the exchanged messages are delivered verbally rather than by letter. The poem ends with a description of the garden in which the festivities of the lovers' union is celebrated and of their joy at being united (vv. 501-16) and an address to a *khudāwand*, which must be 'Ināyat (vv. 517-21).

In each of the chapters, the lover or the beloved looks for a messenger and describes it, sometimes extensively; he then gives it the exact message it must deliver, including the *ghazal*. The messenger answers, goes to the addressee, and delivers the message, always adding a comment of its own as well; this is not a feature in every *dah-nāma*. Here, the instruments are not only messengers, but also go-betweens. The addressee then addresses the messenger, and sends a messenger of his own, and we have come full circle. In addition to being messengers and go-betweens, the instruments are gifts (they are not sent back, as the messengers in this genre normally are) and invested, as gifts often are, with a meaning the giver hopes the receiver will understand.²⁰

¹⁹ Qazwīnī's description of 'Aishī as "*shakhṣī hazzāl wa maskhara wa pur ḥāl*" ("a jester, facetious and witty"; see Beelaert, "A little-Known *Dah-nāma*", 204) could be used to argue in favor of a lighthearted interpretation of his poem. Although I acknowledge its mystical tones, I do not go so far as one of the anonymous readers, who pressed for a fully Sufi interpretation of the poem.

²⁰ In Persian literature, the quintessential example of the motif of an exchange of gifts between lovers that need to be decoded is found in the story of the Russian princess, the fourth story in Niẓāmī's *Haft paikar* (593/1197), a retelling of which was translated

5 The Instruments as Messengers

As mentioned, the first messenger is the *nay*, the reed flute, and in twelve verses (vv. 105-16) it is cast as the ideal alter ego of a lover far from his beloved, as is the *nay* in Rūmī. The lover addresses the flute as follows:

O you who are aware of the secrets of love" (*zi sirr-i 'ishq āgāh*),
 [...]

Anyone among those who suffer (*ahl-i dard*), knows you,
 your yellow face (*rūy-i zard*) testifies to it.
 Not a moment are you without complaint (*nāla*) or lamentation (*afghān*),
 not a moment are you without the grief of being separated (*gham-i hijrān*).
 You have a heart empty of everything except the friend,
 you are burning (*sūz*) and in ecstasy (*hāl, wajd*) from head to foot.
 [...]

Therefore, you cannot complain less than you do
 because you have so many holes in your heart (*dar dil hama sūrākh dārī*).²¹
 My pains are too numerous to count
 and you know how hard the pain of love is.
 How could a lover stay silent?
 One who is in ecstasy (*hāl*) wails continually!
 (vv. 105a, 106-8, 110-12)

‘Aishī continues, enumerating only positive qualities, such as not knowing any “self-conceit” (*khwud-parastī*, v. 114a), not being in the “fetters of existence” (*band-i hastī*, v. 114b), the *nay* having a “talking breath” (*dam-i gūyā*) and an “intelligent heart” (*dil-i āgāh*) (v. 116a). When the beloved receives the *nay*, he addresses it with the same qualities, which are then given negative connotations:²²

O *nay*, all your talk is wind;
 I remember hearing many of these tales!
 Save your breath, leave these tales;
 keep such messages at home!

by François Pétis de la Croix in *Mille et un jours* (1710-1712), the basis of Carlo Gozzi's play *Turandot* (1777), which became, in its turn, the inspiration of the libretto of Puccini's opera of the same title. On the history of the motif, see Meier, “Turandot in Persian”; Rossi, “La leggenda di Turandot”.

²¹ Though not in the proem of *Mathnawī-yi ma'nawī*, Rūmī too refers to the “emptiness” of the *nay* and compares its holes to eyes (see Schimmel, *Triumphal Sun*, 211).

²² The alternating of praise and blame is characteristic of the Arabic literary genre *al-maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī* (“qualities and defects”, see Gériès s.v. “al-Maḥāsin wa'l Masāwī”, *EP*), whose influence can be seen in many Persian and Chagatai poems (as that of Aḥmadi, fn. 15 above). See Beelaert, *Cure for the Grieving*, 72, fn. 177.

Why do you complain all the time?²³
 because your inside is always hollow (*khālī*)!
 You became fettered (*dar band*)²⁴ because of your complaints about your own
 being (*faryād-i khwudī*),
 therefore, unlike the sugar cane, you are not sweet!
 Leave these stories without head or tail
 or I shall annihilate (*nay kardan*) you with my nails!
 You have no name (*bī-nām-i*)²⁵ and no sorrow of your own,
 you have nothing but a yellow face!
 (vv. 141-6)

It would be better, the beloved continues, if “one sewed its eyes together”, and “beat it with a stone and burned it” (v. 147); it is only fit “to be bound together for a reed mat” (*būriyā*, v. 148). In fact, the beloved does tie it up and puts it in the corner (vv. 149-50).

The beloved’s messenger is the *kamāncha*, a viol or vielle, a string instrument with a long neck, which is played with a bow, not plucked.²⁶ The beloved addresses it only briefly (vv. 151-3):

You are a libertine (*rind*), you have no honour (*āzarm*),
 nor, like [my] other friends, do you have any shame (*sharm*).
 (v. 152)

Indeed, it is an apt messenger for one who does not himself experience pangs of love.

The lover does not address the *kamāncha* but responds immediately by sending the *daf*, the frame drum or tambourine, which in six verses is portrayed, in contrast to the lover, as self-sufficient and carefree:

You have no need of anyone,
 in this world, for you, your own voice is enough.
 I am one who lost his heart (*bī-dil*) in the grip of sorrow,
 who in this grief lost sleep and appetite.
 (vv. 188-9)

²³ I read *bimū’ī* and *binālī* for the manuscript reading of *na mū’ī u na nālī* (v. 143a).

²⁴ Because of their nodes (*band*), reeds are said to be “in fetters” (*dar band*).

²⁵ A pun, the homograph *nay* also meaning “no, not”, its name being thus “a negation”, in a sense, “it has no name”. In the previous verses ‘Aishī also plays thus with the word *nay*, writing *nay* for *na’ī* (“you are not”) and *nay kardan* for *nīst kardan* (“annihilate”).

²⁶ Farmer: “the hemispheric viol” (s.v. “Rabāb”, *Elr*, 5: 348a); Blum: “spike fiddle with a small, often spherical, resonating chamber” (s.v. “Kamānča”, *Elr*, 15: 434a).

If it does utter any complaints, these have an exhilarating effect:

With you the *majlis* is lit up (*munawwar*),
with your cries (*faryād*) the heavens (*charkh u chanbar*) become cheerful
(*khurram*)!

[...]

Without you no [other] instrument (*sāz*) has any luster (*raunaq*),
listen to me so that I can tell you my needs!

(vv. 185, 187)

It seems as if the lover hopes that the beloved will see the *daf* as an invitation to join him in a carefree love. The beloved, however, still reacts negatively, and again sees all the features of this instrument only in a negative light. He begins his address of eleven verses (vv. 218-28):

Stop this chattering (*harza-gū'ī*)

because, as long as you exist, you are a hypocrite (*du-rū*, lit. double-faced)!²⁷

(v. 218)

Because it has few aspirations (*kam-himmatī*), he continues, it is always drunk (*mast*)” (v. 219). This negative view derives from the *daf* being struck (v. 221b) and its cries (*faryād*) making the hypocritical deceivers (*sālūsān-i shayyād*) dance (*ba charkh ārī*) (v. 222); from which part of the body people strike it with, and from what kind of people do it – lower-class people (*kasān*, v. 228), for instance, or prostitutes (*qaḥbaqān*), who hit it with their face and back (v. 224), or others who even put it in their armpits (*baghal*) and on their shoulders (*dūsh*) (v. 220). Other negative comments refer to the metal rings in its frame, as when the beloved says they put a ring in its ear (*ḥalqa bar gūsh*), that is, they treat it like a slave (v. 221). After they finish, they put it in a sack (*kīsa*) like a snake (v. 223). With the circle of the heavens it shares only its outward appearance (*rang*), therefore it has a bad reputation (*bad-nangī*) (v. 225).²⁸ The beloved threatens “to pull its skin from its body” (v. 226) and “to cut its ears, even if there are ten of them” (v. 227), again a reference to the metal rings. At the end of this invective, he slaps the *daf* on its neck, puts it in the corner next to the *nay*, and responds by sending a *qānūn*, a zither (or psaltery).²⁹ His response is an instrument that he apparently considers to be above any of the possible allegations of “lowness” he made against the *daf*. He addresses it thus (vv. 230-7):

²⁷ A reference to the *daf* having two sides.

²⁸ That is, the *daf* is curved in the same way as the dome of heaven, the fickle and unreliable celestial sphere (*falak*).

²⁹ Farmer, s.v. “Mi’zaf”, *EP*².

O melodious confidant (*ham-rāz-i khwash-khwān*),
 you are wise (*khiradmand*) and have been invented by wise men (*zi taṣnīf-i ḥakīmān*).
 Your cries (*faryād*) are not without wisdom (*bīḥikmatī nīst*)
 as there is no associate (*ham-ṣuḥbat*) like you in the world!
 They sprinkle gold and silver on you,
 out of reverence people put you on their lap (*kinār*)!
 You have the marks of every perfect person (*ṣāḥib-kamāl*);
 you have been tuned by every master!³⁰
 Due to you, many instruments are burning and melting (*dar sūz u gudāz*)
 because the mighty (*ṣāḥib-daulatān*) play you!
 There is no one as capable (*qābil*) and rhythmical (*mauzūn*)³¹ as you
 [...]
 Wherever you go, as a sign of respect (*ta'zīm*)
 they fill the edge of your skirt (*kinār-i dāman*) with silver!
 There is no better messenger than you
 to bring my message to the lover.³²

Although the message that follows is still not very positive, the choice of messenger indicates that the beloved is beginning to take the lover seriously, although his feelings have not yet changed. When the lover receives the *qānūn*, he does not further characterize it in his own address, but only unburdens his own heart to it.

30 *Zi har ustād didī gūshmālī. Gūsh mālīdan*, “boxing the ears”, is an image used at least since the eleventh-century Manūchihri for “tuning a string instrument”, the “ears” being the pegs; see Beelaert, *Cure for the Grieving*, 190 and fn. 35.

31 In manuscript, *mauzun*.

32 I omitted translating v. 235b, *kasī hargiz bad qānūn nadīdam*, which lacks one mora between *hargiz* and *bad*; since the poet is obviously punning on *qānūn*, a possible emendation – with *qānūn* in the sense of *rasm*, *rawish* – might be: *kasī hargiz ba-d-īn qānūn nadīdam*, “I never saw anyone in this way”.

The lover then sends the *rubāb*, a kind of lute,³³ which is associated with love and enjoyment, and also with libertinism (*rindī*), as was the *kamāncha* the beloved had sent him; however, in contrast to the latter, which “knew no sorrow” (v. 152), as befits an alter ego of the lover, the *rubāb* is associated with grief:

You who are a token (*yādgār*) of scholars [or mystics] (*ahl-i 'irfān*),
 you who are a boon companion of restless lovers (*nadīm-i 'āshiqān-i bī-qārār*),
 Because you are, according to ranking (*az rūy-i marātib*),
 night and day in the company of libertines (*rindān*),
 You are beyond every beauty or ugliness
 since you are continually making a paradise in this world!
 [...]
 You have no pride (*'ujb*) or haughtiness (*takabbur*)!
 There is no freer (*wā-rasta*) mystic (*'arif*) than you,
 there is no lover more grieving than me!
 You are the companion (*mu'nis*) of grieving libertines (*rindān-i ghamnāk*);
 you have no fear of evil and good of the world (*bad u nīk-i jahān*)!³⁴
 (vv. 275-7, 278b-80)

The lover goes on to describe the *rubāb* as someone who engages in galantry (*'ishqbāzī*, v. 281a) and who holds his head high among the people of enjoyment (*ahl-i 'ishrat*, v. 281b),³⁵ it has no dwelling except the winehouse (*maykhāna*, v. 282a) and it may complain all the time

33 It can be vocalised as *rabāb* and *rubāb*. As *rabāb*, it is “the generic name in Arabic for the viol”, in a Persian context, however, the reference is mostly to the *rubāb*, a lute. “The *rubāb* with the Persians has ever been a plucked and not a bowed instrument”, Farmer writes (s.v. “*Rabāb*”, *EP*, 8: 346b-347a), one with “a vaulted sound-chest and incurvations at the waist. It has been described at length in the “*Kanz al-tuḥaf*” [which is a Persian musical treatise of the 8th/14th century]. “The lower part of the belly was of skin, and three double strings were mounted on it” (Farmer, s.v. “*ūd*”, *EP*², 10: 770a). Still, there is evidence that in a Persian context, for instance in Rūmī, the reference could be to a bowed instrument: “Quant au *rabāb*, il ne s’agit pas du *rabāb[siç]*-luth (que l’on trouve de nos jours dans l’Iran extérieur) mais d’un instrument à cordes frottées, de la famille des vièles” (During, *Musique et extase: L’audition mystique*, 181). But to which instrument would a Shirazi poet refer? None of the examples in Ḥāfīz’s *Dīwān*, for example, is conclusive (Mallāḥ’s unquestioning identification with a bowed instrument, unsupported by any proof, carries no weight, *Ḥāfīz wa mūsīqī*, 122-3). There is a clear reference to a plucked instrument, however, in the *Dīwān* of Ḥāfīz’s older contemporary and compatriot Khwājū Kirmāni (d. 753/1352), who writes that “minstrels struck their hand on the *rubāb*” (*chu muṭribān-i sahar chang dar rubāb zanand: Dīwān-i ash’ār*, 440, *ghazal* no. 140, v. 1a) so arguably the instrument to which ‘Aishī refers a century later was also plucked.

34 An address of ten verses (275-84).

35 This is the first verse, halfway the poem, in which ‘ishrat is used. It occurs six more times: in vv. 434, 436, 439 (these three in the ninth *nāma*, where the messenger is the *chang*), 496, 500 (in the tenth *nāma*, where the messenger is the ‘ūd), and 515 (in the finale).

(*hamī nālī*) but has no fear (*parwā'ī nadārī*, v. 282b); it is not like people thinking about their honour or reputation (*nang u nām*, v. 283a); it is a complete pauper (*darwīsh-i tamām*, v. 283b). The lover says he puts his hopes in this messenger's magnanimity (*muruwwat*) to convey his message to his beloved (v. 284). The implicit message that this instrument conveys to the beloved, whom he addresses as *ay bī muruwwat*, "O you who have no generosity" (v. 285a), is thus: "Do not be haughty, enjoy life, and show some magnanimity".

This is the fifth message, only halfway the poem, and the beloved still says of himself that he was created with "tyranny and cruelty" (*jaur u jafā*, v. 313b), that is, he is not yet persuaded. However, he does *not* put the *rubāb* in the corner with the two other instruments (although the *rubāb* had expected that he would, v. 301) and the message he sends back is for the first time more responsive. He may press the lover to stay away (v. 322a), and to be content to see him from a distance (v. 323a), but he also lets him know that if his advice is not followed, he will ask his guardians, otherwise hot-tempered (*tund-khū*), not to harm him (v. 325). He conveys this message with the *mughnī*,³⁶ an instrument Farmer translates as "arch-lute",³⁷ a kind of zither, or maybe a dulcimer.³⁸ The beloved's address to this *mughnī* is brief, but kind:

O friend with a melodious voice (*yār-i khwash-āwāz*),
sincere (*yak-rūy*) associate (*ham-ṣuḥbat*) and confidant (*yak-rāz*)!
Go near that grieving (*ghamgīn*) and friendless one (*bī-kas*),
hasten to assist his desperate heart (*dil-i bī-chāra-ash*)!³⁹
(vv. 320-1)

The *mughnī* calls the message it delivers a "message of happiness" (*paighām-i shādī*, v. 343), and the lover faints from joy (v. 350), but at the same time his anguish increases as he realizes that a union with the beloved comes closer (v. 352).

³⁶ The vocalization *mughannī* (for metrical reasons impossible in the 'Ishrat-nāma), as given in Dihkhudā, *Lughat-nāma* and Mu'in, *Farhang-i fārsī*, is incorrect (Neubauer, personal communication).

³⁷ Farmer, s.v. "Ūd", *EP*, 10: 770a; Farmer, *Musikgeschichte in Bildern*, 3/2, *Islam*, 100: "Erzlaute" (page 101 reproduces an illustration taken from a fourteenth-century manuscript of *Kanz al-tuḥaf*, in which the instrument is described as a combination of the *rubāb*, the *qānūn*, and the *nuzha*, itself related to the *qānūn* but larger [on the *nuzha*, see Farmer, s.v. "Mi'zaf", *EP*, 7: 191a] and invented by Ṣafī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Mu'min Urmawī (d. 693/1294). Mu'in, *Farhang-i fārsī*, s.v., gives a similar description, taken from Ibn Ghaibī's *Maqāṣid al-alḥān* (completed in 821/1418).

³⁸ The difference would be that the former is plucked, while the latter is struck by hammers.

³⁹ This is the entire address; a lacuna follows, for the *mughnī*'s message begins at v. 322 without being announced.

The lover responds by sending a **ṭanbūr** (or **ṭunbūr**), a pandore, a string instrument related to the lute.⁴⁰ He addresses this instrument elaborately, for sixteen verses (355-70):

O companion of the soul (*mu'nis-i rūḥ*)
 who gives a remedy to the wounded heart of the lovesick (*dāwā-bakhsh-i dil-i afgār-i majrūḥ*)!
 You wail and complain like the 'ūd,
 as it were, you sing David's songs (*naghma-yi Dāwūd*)!
 Because your voice is unique (*ghair-i mukarrar*),
 you refresh (*tar mīkunī*) the minds of the people of the *majlis*!
 Like the *bulbul* you have a hundred thousand melodies (*ṣad hazār āwāz*),
 you boast of being superior to every other instrument (*tafākhur bā har sāz dārī*)!
 The heart of kings is turned to your fresh face,
 wherever I come there is your sound (*āwāza*)!⁴¹
 By your plectrum (*mizrāb*) Venus (*zuhra*) begins to dance in heaven (*dar charkh ast*);⁴²
 what a vigour (*zahra*)⁴³ the *arghanūn*⁴⁴ gets from your sounds!
 Every difficult task becomes easy by you,
 you are the associate of dispirited lovers ('*ushshāq-i bī-dil*)!
 By you, every helpless one (*bī-nawā*) gets a voice (*nawā*);
 by you, there is an echo (*ṣadā*) in every corner!
 Now you sit in the company of sultans,
 then you are an intimate of poor lovers ('*ushshāq-i miskīn*).
 Because of your knowledge of subtleties (*nukta-dānī*)
 with an effective strike (*ba zarb-i rāst*) you receive silver and gold from kings!
 Night and day, you were active on all sides
 to take away the burning (*sūz*) of a lover like me.
 (vv. 355-65)

The lover asks the *ṭanbūr* to make fragrant (*mu'aṭṭar*) by his message the beloved's soul's brain (*dimāgh-i jān*) (v. 366), to relay to him his complaints, and tell him the story of his pain (v. 367). In other words, the lover's troubles are still ongoing; the beloved may not be as ill-disposed toward his love as before, yet there is still cause to

⁴⁰ "It is generally to be distinguished from the lute by its smaller sound-chest and longer neck" (Farmer, s.v. "Ṭunbūr", *EP*, 10: 634b).

⁴¹ Wrongly written as *āwāza*.

⁴² A pun on *charkh*, which means both "heaven" and "circle". In Islamic iconography, the planet Venus is traditionally represented as a woman playing the lute; see, e.g., Denny, "Music and Musicians in Islamic Art", 64 and pl. 26.

⁴³ A pun on *zahra* and *zuhra* is common in Persian poetry.

⁴⁴ *Argghanūn* (or *urghanūn*) mostly refers to a pipe organ. When the instruments' strings (*autār*) are referred to explicitly, however, as, for instance, in Nizāmī's *'Iqbāl-nāma* (§ 70, v. 2), then a string instrument is meant. For both uses, see Farmer, s.v. "Urghan", *EP*, 10: 893-94.

complain. But the *ṭanbūr*, which is associated with both grief and joy and for whom “every difficult task becomes easy”, will be conveying a message of hope.

The beloved receives the lover’s message with approval and does not banish the *ṭanbūr* to the corner; as his next messenger he calls the *rūḥ-afzā* (lit. “increasing the spirits”, or “vivifying”), a string instrument related to the pandore.⁴⁵ The beloved addresses the *rūḥ-afzā* only briefly (vv. 399-400), showing some empathy for what the lover is going through:

O companion of every poor miserable one (*mu'nis-i har dardmandī*),
you who give a remedy to the heart of every wretched one (*dawā-bakhsh-i dil-i har mustmandī*)! (v. 399)

He admits to having been cruel and praises the lover for nonetheless having been so faithful (*yak-rang*, v. 404); with his *ghazal* he hopes to remove the lover’s affliction (*dil-girānī*, v. 407). The message is called a happy one (*payāmī inḥunīn khwash*, v. 417), and the lover is indeed gladdened by it.

We have now reached the last exchange of instruments – it is likely not fortuitous that these are the same with which Niẓāmī’s Nakisā and Bārbad accompany their “*ghazals*” when they convey Shīrīn’s and Khusrau’s feelings.

The last instrument the lover sends is the **chang**, the harp, in the hope that he will once be able to kiss his beloved’s hands and forearms (*dast u sā'id*) as the harp will do when it arrives (v. 425). The lover characterizes the harp as the leader of the instruments (*bar hama sāzī muqaddam*), always honoured (*mu'azzam*) in the company of kings (v. 428) and he goes on:

I haven’t seen any old man (*pīr*) as experienced (*kār-dīda*) as you,
your bent figure (*qadd-i khamīda*) is enough proof of that!
You have more value⁴⁶ (*andāza*) than any other instrument,
you have more fame (*āwāza*) than any of your friends!
When [hearing] your voice the heavens cry out (*charkh andar khurūsh ast*),
from your sounds Venus is all eyes and ears (*chashm u gūsh ast*)!
Everyone who is in the grip of sorrow (*ba chang-i gham giriftār*)

⁴⁵ This instrument was described by the celebrated musician Ibn Ghaibī in *Jāmi' al-alḥān*: “[it] seems to have had a globular sound-chest – “in the form of an orange” – and was furnished with six strings, four of them of silk and two of them of twisted copper. Its tonal scope was much the same as the ordinary *ṭanbūr*” (Farmer, “AbdalQādir Ibn Ġaibī on Instruments of Music”, 244). The description in Mu’in’s *Farhang-i fārsī*, s.v., must come from Ibn Ghaibī, although he gives no source. Curiously, it is not included in Dihkhudā’s extensive *Lughat-nāma*.

⁴⁶ Or, alternatively, “you are larger”.

is restored (*āyad bāz dar kār*) by you!
 In the world you have seen only happy hearts (*dil-i khurram*),
 in your own life you never saw any sorrow (*gham*)!
 For many years in happiness (*shādkāmī*)
 you have been sitting in joyful company (*'ishrat*) with the high and the low (*khāṣṣ*
u 'āmm)!⁴⁷
 With every hair you have on your body⁴⁸
 you give a hundred messages of the pain of love (*zi dard-i 'ishq*)!
 In this period no one profited from you
 [but] you spent your own life in enjoyment (*'ishrat*)!⁴⁹
 (vv. 429-36)

We see that the harp is associated both with happiness and wisdom, and this association with wisdom is even more prominent when it arrives at the beloved. “Listen to me”, it tells the beloved, because I am a wise elder (*pīr*) (v. 453). How can a young person who does not heed the advice of sages (*pand-i pīrān*) ever release prisoners from grief (v. 456)? As the beloved is young, he should listen to the *pand-i pīr* (v. 457). Thus, the *chang*, with its bent back (*qadd-i khamīda*) like a *pīr* who has lived a long life (*sāl-dīda*), counsels (*naṣīḥat kard*) him about what is good and evil (v. 458). The harp's association with wisdom is in contrast to a frequent earlier characterization in Persian poetry when many poets regarded its being “bent” as negative, and when it was compared to an elderly person, it was as a rule not a wise one.⁵⁰

The beloved, who, in contrast to the harp, walks upright (*sahī raftār*, v. 459) answers that he will not disobey the advice of a sage: “if I did so before, I won't do it again”, he promises (v. 460). This wise old man (*pīr-i khiradmand*) spoke so beautifully – whoever turns away

⁴⁷ Emending *ba 'ishrat ham-nishīn-i* for *ba 'ishrat ham-nishīnī*.

⁴⁸ The topos of the harp's strings as “hair” is found from the end of the eleventh century; see Mukhtārī's (d. between 513/1118 and 515/1121) riddle on this instrument (*Dīwān*, 159, v. 12); Niẓāmī, *'Iqbāl-nāma*, § 26, v. 11; and Khāqānī, *Dīwān*, e.g., 144, v. 10; 160, v. 11; 223 v. 3.

⁴⁹ In the following verse, the lover sends the *chang* to the beloved.

⁵⁰ Examples of a negative portrayal of the *chang* are numerous and dominant in the imagery connected to it. For instance, it was described as someone who is skinny and complaining because of it (e.g., Khāqānī, *Dīwān*, 427, v. -5), or, the other way round, someone who is himself “all skin and bones” with protruding “veins” (the analogue of the strings) was portrayed as a *chang* (Sa'dī, *Būstān*, v. 1359), as was a bent-over forlorn lover (Farrukhī, *Dīwān*, *qaṣīda* no. 80, v. 5). A *chang* as an old man, bent by age, is found many times in Khāqānī's *Dīwān*, but then, e.g., bent “from shame” (*zi sharm*, 493, v. 1) and certainly not represented as a sage. For more negative portrayals, see Beelaert, *Cure for the Grieving*, 186-92. A *chang* as a *pīr* does offer advice, albeit ironically, twice in Ḥāfīz: “The bent harp (*chang-i khamīda-qāmat*) invites you to pleasure (*'ishrat*) / listen, as the advice of sages (*pand-i pīrān*) won't do you any harm! (*Dīwān*, *ghazal* no. 122, v. 6) and “Give wine, since the harp bent its head toward my ear and said / “spend your time pleasurably, listen to this bent old man” (*pīr-i munḥānī*)!” (*ghazal* no. 470, v. 5).

from his advice would not be wise, he adds (v. 461).

The instrument the beloved summons for his final message, namely, the **'ūd**, is also associated with wisdom and is described as follows:

I have a *hakīm*, a perfect learned man (*dānā-yi kāmīl*),
eloquent (*sukhandān*), fortunate (*sa'ādatmand*), and intelligent (*'āqīl*). (v. 462)

He addresses it as “one who knows what passion is” (*sāhib-i ḥāl*, v. 467), adding that it makes his soul content (*khwushnūd*): its melodies are like those of David (v. 468). For the first time, the beloved elaborates on the suffering of the lover who “far too long has burned as aloeswood (*'ūd*)”, punning, as many poets did before 'Aishī, on the two meanings of *'ūd* (v. 469), and he regrets the unjust treatment to which he so long subjected him (v. 470).⁵¹ There is no longer any distinction between the lover and the beloved, “I am the lover”, the beloved says, “and you are the desired beloved” (v. 491). Lover and beloved are finally united and a feast is had in a garden that is lovingly described. A feast that will be enlivened by music as all the messengers also attend (vv. 497, 512).

6 Conclusion

With the edition of the *'Ishrat-nāma* I presented in the first part of this article a poem is added to the corpus of poems belonging to the *dah-nāma* genre. Even if this addition to the *mathnawī* corpus will do little to influence the judgment on the literary history of the ninth/fifteenth century, the age of Jāmī, each addition is an enrichment and refines our knowledge of a specific genre.

At the end of the ninth/fifteenth century, the messenger motif as a compositional device was still a fertile one, and one in which a poet still made variations.⁵² Although 'Aishī credits the amir 'Ināyat with the idea of making a change in this motif by replacing the wind with musical instruments, it is 'Aishī who gives this idea a highly personal interpretation; in his characterizations of the instruments, he adjusted the connotations they had come to carry in the centuries before in a completely original way.⁵³ The Persian *Bildersprache* is famously

⁵¹ The address is fourteen verses (vv. 467-80), but only the first two verses describe the instrument; the rest is devoted to the beloved's commiseration and repentance.

⁵² For earlier variations, see Beelaert, *Cure for the Grieving*, 39-48.

⁵³ My earlier remark on the choice of musical instruments as messengers in 'Aishī's poem (they “can perfectly be cast in the role of grieving alter egos”, Beelaert, *Cure for the Grieving*, 193) must be refined, for actually, in the course of the poem, these “alter egos” grieve less and less. Despite having a “bent back”, the *chang*, for instance, is not grieving but wise.

an enormously rich one and although a number of studies exist, it is yet far from being fully mapped.⁵⁴ This article is, first of all, intended as a contribution to this field.

The *Ishrat-nāma* may be only a minor poem – albeit one with undeniable charm – but even a minor poem contributes an essential element for the full picture. As yet, I have not found evidence that it influenced others, but if my hypothesis is correct that 'Aishī's patron 'Ināyat is the brother of Hidāyat-'Alī Beg, whose Turkish *Dīwān* survived,⁵⁵ its influence may have traces in both Persian and Turkish poetry. Dating a work of literature correctly is, arguably, an essential element into establishing an accurate history of Persian literature, and in this respect also there is much still work to do. Up till now the accepted date of the *Ishrat-nāma* was some seventy years off, and, unfortunately, in histories of Persian literature such a difference is not an exception.⁵⁶ To establish any influence 'Aishī might have had, further study should be made of the cultural milieu of the Aq-Quyūnlu Sulṭān Khalīl in Shiraz, to which we now know he belonged.⁵⁷ Finally, 'Aishī's poem contributes to our knowledge of the history of musical instruments – it is, e.g., one of the few texts we know of in which the *rūḥ-afzā* figures⁵⁸ – yet there may be more as yet unedited, or even uncatalogued. I hope this article provides inspiration to fill these lacunae.

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Abbreviations

El² = *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*. Leiden: Brill, 1960-2005.

Elr = *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; later Costa Mesa: Mazda; New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press and New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, 1985- and online <http://www.iranicaonline.org>. Rypka, *HIL* = Rypka, Jan. *History of Iranian Literature*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1968.

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⁵⁴ It is presented in all its splendour by Schimmel, *Two-Colored Brocade*, a more recent useful overview and a bibliography is Zipoli, "Poetic Imagery".

⁵⁵ See part 1 of this article, Beelaert, "A Little-Known *Dah-nāma*", fn. 18.

⁵⁶ A case in point is 'Irāqī's *Ushshāq-nāma*, which is still considered by too many scholars to be one of his authentic works, whereas we now know that it was written by someone else, some thirty years after 'Irāqī's death, see above, fn. 10.

⁵⁷ Sona does not discuss it in his edition of Hidāyat's *Dīwān* (Jan Schmidt, personal communication).

⁵⁸ See above fn. 45.

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Pakistan-Ukraine. Analogies in the Triangles of Regional Security Complexes

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Abstract The paper deals with two countries – Pakistan and Ukraine – that are located at the center of the following two interest triangles: India-Pakistan-Afghanistan (South Asia) and Russia-Ukraine-Moldova (post-Soviet regional security complex). Despite their considerable differences, they have similar problems with their geopolitical neighbours in the context of territorial conflicts. Existing issues with neighbouring countries give Pakistan and Ukraine the status of a ‘middle state’, which is characterized by threatening its territorial integrity and becoming an object of ‘penetrating’ into its RSC (regional security complex) for the states from neighbouring regions.

Keywords Pakistan. Ukraine. India. Russian Federation. Afghanistan. Moldova. South Asian regional security complex. Post-Soviet regional security complex. Analogies. Territorial conflicts.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The South Asian Interest Triangle. India-Pakistan-Afghanistan. – 3 The Post-Soviet Interest Triangle. Russian Federation-Ukraine-Moldova. – 4 Analogies between the Influence of Pakistan and Ukraine on the Transformation of the South Asian and Post-Soviet Regional Security Complexes. – 5 Conclusions.



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1 Introduction

With the end of bipolarity era, a tendency for the formation of separate regional systems increased. In many regions, interstate rivalry has become widespread, leading to an increased risk of local wars and territorial conflicts. Most of them are taking on forms of armed confrontation. Territorial conflicts imply confrontations at different levels of a frontier character, as well as armed clashes in a dispute over the seizure of a particular territory. Security becomes a determinant of interstate cooperation at the regional level. For this reasons, changes in the international system functioning at the present stage and approaches to their theoretical understanding could be discussed in the context of security factor.

One of the founders of the security complexes classical theory, a representative of neorealism and the Copenhagen School of international relations, Barry Buzan, considers the high level of interdependence in the security field, which is recognized by neighbouring countries, as the primary criterion for shaping specific international regions (Buzan 2003, 141). More precisely, Buzan's ideas on regional security cooperation were embodied in the theory of regional security complexes (henceforth RSC), which is conceptually one of the greatest achievements of the neorealism school in the regionalism phenomenon studies.

The 'security complex' concept, according to Buzan, should be understood as a transnational region containing states and their constituent parts, which are united by a stable view of security and relations in the security sphere. Moreover, the security interests of these states are so close that none of them can consider its national security separately from the national security of geopolitical neighbours (Lukyn 2011, 8).

Such intertwining of the state interests in a region becomes a determining factor for the development of the regional security complexes' principal parameters according to Buzan and Wæver. They consist of the following:

- borders, which separate one region from another;
- anarchic structure (a region must consist of two or more autonomous units, i.e. states);
- polarity, which characterizes the spread of power between the core actors in a region; social component, which determines the perception of neighbours within a region on the 'friend-enemy' scale (Buzan, Wæver 2003, 53).

In the 1990s, Northeast and Southeast Asian security complexes were merged into one - the East Asian complex. Besides this large complex, the South Asian one exists in the region as well. Highlighting the South Asian security complex, Buzan considers Pakistan as its

part and a state which has a security dilemma with India. In such context, Afghanistan is deemed as a 'country-insulator' that separates the South Asian complex from another regional system and embodies the above-mentioned level of interregional interaction (Buzan, Wæver 2003, 110). A substantial aspect of building the South Asian RSC is that only India has a common land or sea border with all other countries in the region. Pakistan, which in its turn has close ties with Afghanistan, remains separated.

Buzan's theory stresses that the post-Soviet RSC, together with the West European RSC, forms a weak European supercomplex (Buzan, Wæver 2003, 350). According to Eyvazov (2011), in the early 1990s, the political space, which had been united within the Soviet Union, underwent a transformation - fifteen Soviet republics became independent states that changed key vectors of security relations between them. The post-Soviet RSC consists of the Russian Federation and the following sub-complexes:

1. Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia;
2. Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova;
3. Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia;
4. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The polarity of the post-Soviet RSC is determined by the potential of Russia (the Russian Federation), which far exceeds the power potentials of other newly independent states. According to Eyvazov, in fact, Russia has retained its status as the sole centre of power in the post-Soviet space. At the same time, the processes taking place in the discussed space enhance the level of interference in the other states' RSCs from the neighbouring RSCs. In turn, the European segment of the post-Soviet RSC (Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova) comes under an impact of countries from the neighbouring RSC, which are members of the EU (European Union): Poland and Romania (Eyvazov 2011, 21).

The purpose of the present study is to examine two countries, Pakistan and Ukraine, located at the centre of two interest triangles - the South Asian RSC (India-Pakistan-Afghanistan) and the post-Soviet RSC (Russia-Ukraine-Moldova) - which have similar problems with their neighbours in the context of territorial conflicts, despite their significant differences.

Considering ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity within a country, as well as internal turbulence in regional states with a colonial and post-Soviet past, it is substantial to distinguish internal and interstate conflicts. The first category includes the subjects, which are the state and non-state groups, organizations that have private interests and mechanisms for influencing the conflict situation. The second category involves participation of states as the subjects of international relations. However, the examples of the South Asian RSC

and the post-Soviet RSC demonstrate that the interdependence of internal and interstate conflicts, which determine each other's dynamics, could be observed.

Pakistan is a country in Southern Asia that stretches from the Himalayas to the Arabian Sea and is bordered by the following four independent countries: Iran in the Southwest, Afghanistan in the West and North, China in the Northeast, and India in the East, with a coastline in the Arabian Sea. The country covers 880,254 km² and counts ca. 200 million inhabitants (making it the sixth most populous country in the world).

Pakistan has a rather diverse ethnic structure and has a number of internal conflicts on ethnic grounds. However, given the purpose of this study, the paper focusses on the conflict between Pakistan and India. Also, Pakistan has an inherent resistance to neighbouring India (including military methods), and inclination to overcome the effects of existing territorial conflicts.

Ukraine is a country of Central and Eastern Europe bordered by seven countries (Belarus, Russia, Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland), has access to the coasts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. In terms of size, population, and natural resource potential, Ukraine is one of the largest countries in Europe. Occupying an area of 603,700 km², it holds the second territory in Europe after the Russian Federation only and exceeds Germany by more than 1.5 times, Italy twice, the UK by almost 2.5 times. In terms of population (roughly 40 million people), Ukraine ranks sixth position in Europe (after Russia, Germany, the UK, France and Italy).

The updating of European vector of Ukraine's foreign policy is linked to the 2014 Revolution of Dignity and the aggression of neighbouring Russia against Ukraine, foremost, the illegal annexation of Crimea and hostilities escalated in Eastern Ukraine (Donbass). Due to the events of 2014, Ukraine's security policy was reformatted, and a military factor gained significance in the domestic and foreign policy of the country. The Ukrainian state has faced new problems and threats for itself: terrorist-oriented separatist groups and consequences of the neighbouring state aggression for both the social and economic spheres.

Thus, despite the fact that Pakistan and Ukraine are different states with their own histories, gains and miscounts, they deal with one similar issue (the threat of territorial conflicts), which unites the states in ways for searching a decision. Particularly, a unity of the nation in Pakistan (on the background of conflicts and threats, or the creation of a common identity in the state) can be justified in the following way. The results of opinion polls by the Pew Research Center (an American non-profit organization that is a subsidiary of the Pew Charitable Trusts in Washington) show the formation of Pakistani and Indian public perceptions of each other through the prism of 'friend-enemy' (Pew Research Center 2013).

A 2015 poll found that 61% of Pakistanis rated India as a very serious threat; particularly, the Taliban was detected as a threat by 55% of population. In a 2017 survey conducted by Pulse Consultant, 95% of respondents in Pakistan saw India as Pakistan's worst enemy. The 2018 Pew poll found that 76% of Indians saw Pakistan as a threat and 63% described it as a very serious threat. In 2009, after the famous terrorist attack in Mumbai (India) and the aggravation of bilateral Pakistani-Indian relations, 69% of Pakistanis called India their greatest enemy. In 2012, among such threats to Pakistan as India, the Taliban and al-Qaeda, 59% of Pakistanis chose India. Pakistan is a multi-ethnic country and, according to opinion polls, in 2009, 89% of the population identified themselves as Pakistanis, not as members of one or another ethnic group (Pew Research Center 2013).

Such triangles of interests as India-Pakistan-Afghanistan and Russia-Ukraine-Moldova have been chosen not by chance. The choice is conditioned by the purpose of study - to draw analogies between Pakistan and Ukraine in the context of their impact on security in the native geographical regions, considering these states as actors, which promote appropriate transformational changes in regional security complexes at the beginning of the XXI century.

2 The South Asian Interest Triangle. India-Pakistan-Afghanistan

The complexity of the India-Pakistan-Afghanistan interest triangle forms a certain axis of conflict in the region - 'Pakhtūnistān (or Pashtunistan)-Kashmir' (Tykhonenko 2017, 16). Both issues have a direct impact on Pakistan's internal stability, turning the state into the 'middle' one between the two centres of contradiction. At the same time, in a comprehensive review, they affect the security of Afghanistan and India, contributing to the regional security system transformation.

At the beginning of the XXI century, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a nuclear-weapon state, thereby creating counteraction to India in South Asia, but may lose its territorial integrity if territorial conflicts escalate. Historically, Pakistan has border conflicts with India and Afghanistan based on ethno-confessional factors. If the Kashmir problem could lead to the escalation of a nuclear war between Islamabad and New Delhi, then the conflict around a 'Greater Pakhtūnistān', - that is, the unification of the ethnic group into a single state, - threatens the territorial integrity and fragmentation of Pakistan and, as a result, Afghanistan. The destabilizing factor in resolving interstate conflicts for Islamabad is becoming a variety of groups (separatist and terroristic ones), which have their own positions on how to settle the problems. In particular, it is worth mentioning that the polarity in the approaches of India and Pakistan to

the settlement of disputes and their positions dates back to the time when both were parts of British India. For example, the 'father' of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, formed the theory of 'two nations': dividing British India, Muslims had to form their own state, as well as Hindus. That idea was theoretically implemented. However, in practice, the religious factor was not taken into account and that led to the Kashmir issue (Majid 2014, 186-7).

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic country. There are five major ethno-linguistic groups in the country: Punjabi Muslims, Pakhtūns (or Pash-tuns) divided into many tribes and clans (with most Pakhtūns living in Afghanistan), Sindhi, Baluchis (some Baluchs are living in Iran), Muhajirs (descendants of Muslims) from India, representing a conglomerate of dozens of different Indian ethnic groups, whose historical homeland has remained in India (Ihnatiev 2014, 38-9). Particular attention should be paid to Pakhtūns, Afghanistan's largest ethnic group, which ranks second after Punjabis in Pakistan (about 24 million people). Territorially, they reside in Khyber Pakhtūnkhwā and in the tribal zone. If the laws of Pakistan rule in the territory of Khyber Pakhtūnkhwā, then the rules of customary law - Pakhtūnwali (Pash-tunwali) - are primary in force in the area of tribes. The Pakhtūn (or Pashtun) ethnic group is made up of a large number of tribal groups that address significant issues at an assembly of elders and tribal clans called *jirga* (Mili, Townsend 2009, 8).

The peculiarity of the Kashmiri conflict is the entry of two civilizational *ecumenes* into the collision zone. According to American political scientist, adviser and academic Samuel Huntington ([1996] 2007), Islamic and Hindu civilizations with different worldviews crossed in Kashmir. In the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir the majority of population are Muslims seeking to unite with the Pakistani province of Azad Kashmir. As a consequence, their entry into Pakistan will threaten India's territorial integrity. The situation, in which the territorial integrity of India will be violated, can be defined as a breach of the balance of geopolitical positioning of India and Pakistan in South Asia. Due to this balance of power in the region and the India-Pakistan confrontation, it seems appropriate to use the division of Asia carried out by scientists East and Spate in the early 1950s. Asia was defined as the followings: 1) Southwest Asia; 2) India and Pakistan; 3) Southeast Asia; 4) the Far East; 5) Soviet Asia; 6) 'High Asia'. It is noteworthy that India and Pakistan are no longer positioned as British India. In addition, the authors disagreed with the use of the name 'India' by other Western scholars as a geographical definition of the 'Indo-Pakistani subcontinent' (East, Spate 1951, 45). Therefore, while India is geographically central to South Asia, given the significance of the political factor, it is impossible to rule out Pakistan's influence in the region. Moreover, regional security is being held hostage to the Pakistani-Indian confrontation.

The emergence of conflicts around Kashmir and Pakhtūnistān has a historical basis. The unwarranted division of British India with no regard to ethnic and religious factors has become a starting point for the Kashmir problem. It led to a military confrontation between the newly created states (Shaumian 2002, 15). The United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan had established a ceasefire line by 1 January 1949, thereby dividing Kashmir into two parts – the Indian Kashmir and the Pakistani one. According to the UN decision, a plebiscite was appointed to determine the future of the state (United Nations 1948). Nevertheless, it was not held. Thus, the border between Pakistan and India is based on a ceasefire line established in the last century. The only thing that could be added is that according to the 1972 Simla (or Shimla) Agreement, the ceasefire line between Pakistan and India in Kashmir became known as the “line of control” (Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India 1972).

A similar background is the problem of Pakhtūnistān, which is at the heart of defining the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Historically, the issue of Pakhtūnistān was linked to the Durand Line problem that arose from the signing of the Treaty establishing the State Border between Afghanistan and the British colonial possessions in South Asia as early as 1893. The problem was exacerbated with the appearance of a new state, Pakistan, on the world map in 1947. In July 1949, Kabul declared non-recognition of the treaty and, accordingly, the border strip (Belokrenytskyi, Moskalenko 2008, 302). Since then, the Pakhtūn tribal settlement zone has been an area of constant instability, and the Pakistani government has been nominated there through customary laws.

The problems of Kashmir and Pakhtūnistān are manifestations of asymmetric conflicts affected by the nuclear factor and the presence of non-state actors – separatist, terroristic and militaristic groups.

The Kashmir problem gained new status in the regional security system with the acquisition of Pakistan and India de-facto nuclear status in 1998. Since then, it has become not only a border and territorial conflict, but also a catalyst for the nuclear arms race in the South Asian region.

In the early 2000s, the problem of Pakhtūnistān also gained momentum. Initially, the territory of the Pakhtūn ethnic group became the object of dislocation for Talibans, Afghan refugees and development of illegal drug trafficking, and subsequently operations to counter terrorist threats. A number of ‘non-traditional’ security threats related to Pakhtūnistān have become a source of instability in the region. Afghanistan’s accession to the South Asian regional security system also contributed to that.

Therefore, both disputes give Pakistan the status of a ‘middle state’, which is forced to simultaneously respond to them: that is a prerequisite for changes in the South Asian RSC.

Considering these conflicts through the 'Pakhtūnistān-Kashmir' conditional axis, there are several unifying features to note.

Firstly, Pakistan's position on maintaining its territorial integrity plays a significant role, but in quite different ways. It is thought that in the case of Kashmir Pakistan insists on holding a plebiscite. Thus, the population of Jammu and Kashmir is defined as purely Pakistani. The situation with Pakhtūns is diametrically opposite. The Pakistani side does not agree to grant Pakhtūns the right of self-determination and denies their existence as a nation (Serheev 2010, 29). It is worth noting that Pakistan is still pursuing a policy of rapprochement with Pakhtūns. Thus, in 2010, the North-Western border province, which is mostly inhabited by Pakhtūns, was renamed Khyber Pakhtūnhwa.

Secondly, Pakhtūns and Kashmiris professed an idea of their own identity which should be embodied in the acquisition of statehood – the creation of the 'Greater Pakhtūnistān', united in an independent state of Kashmir. Based on the above-mentioned positions of Pakistan, a question regarding Islamabad's confidence in joining Jammu and Kashmir objectively arises. In the case of the Pakhtūn people unification, not only the territorial integrity of Pakistan will be violated, but also the complete fragmentation of Afghanistan could take place. The authors of this study consider that such options do not suit India, which may also suffer territorial losses and the growing terrorist threat from Afghanistan-Pakistan territory, which has already become an objectively existing fact.

Thirdly, it is an involvement of terrorist groups in the problems. Such groups closely interact with separatists by using each other for pursuing the own purposes.

Such common features of both conflicts are prerequisites for defining the interests of the opposing states – India, Pakistan, Afghanistan – and of non-state actors, on which the security level in South Asia depends.

Considering the Kashmiri issue in Pakistani-Indian relations, it is worth emphasizing the existence of bilateral dialogue and attempts to resolve the conflict. States, in their turn, have opposite views on the final result. The official position of the Indian side is that Kashmir is an integral part of India and this problem is solved; thus, the control or occupation of the northern and northwestern regions of Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistan is illegal (Kalis, Dar 2013, 118). Instead, Pakistan insists on holding a plebiscite under international control that will give the Kashmiri people the right to self-determination and considers the issue unresolved (Ahtisaari, Al-Sabah 2003, 18).

In the case of Pakhtūnistān, the Taliban has become increasingly involved in Pakistani-Afghan dialogue. The Pakistani initiative for peace negotiations with the Taliban contributes to such developments.

Pakistan considers the established the Durand Line a state border. Afghanistan refuses to do so. This position of Kabul justifies its nation-

al interests, namely, to attract the sympathies of Pakhtūns – the largest ethnic group in multinational Afghanistan. Since Pakhtūns have been usually at the head of the Afghan state, this course seems quite logical (Sarwar 2015). Moreover, Pakistani Pakhtūns and Baluchis – the influential national minorities in Pakistan – readily relied on Afghanistan, demanding broad autonomy and independence (Serheev 2009, 22).

Pakistan has slightly different national interests in this regard. There is no doubt that a stable Afghanistan is not in Pakistan's interests, but Islamabad intends to ensure stability in the Afghan territory by forming 'its' government. According to experts, Pakistan is not interested in making Afghanistan a strong country. It is needed as a weak and dependent state, as a strategic advantage in the conflict with India. Afghanistan's importance to Pakistan can be seen through the prism of the Pakistani concept of 'strategic depth' developed in Pakistan in the 1980s, which aims to involve Afghanistan more deeply in Pakistan's foreign policy interests. In particular, the US Ambassador to Pakistan, Richard Olson, has said in an interview that Pakistan uses the concept of 'strategic depth' in its relations with Afghanistan to control this latter and, thus, to manoeuvre in its relations with India (Gul 2012).

The formation of a new state union in the form of Pakhtūnistān will violate the territorial integrity of both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Consequently, there is a significant threat to the Pakistan national security on the part of unresolved territorial issues. Islamabad must respond comprehensively in two directions. The first is the Kashmir conflict with India, which goes beyond the borders of states and affects the South Asian system of regional security. The second is the problem of Pakhtūnistān, which is actualized in the form of terrorist threat and the post-Afghan settlement. Both the Kashmiri issue and the Pakhtūnistān problem become prerequisites for the aggravation of bilateral Pakistani contacts with neighbouring states and affect polarization between the actors of the South Asian RSC (Tykhonenko 2015).

3 The Post-Soviet Interest Triangle. Russian Federation-Ukraine-Moldova

The Russian-Ukrainian confrontation has deep historical roots. The absorption of Ukraine, its material and human resources is one of the key prerequisites for the deployment of the Russian imperial project. The origins of the modern Russian-Ukrainian war can be found in the period of forming of the Russian Empire and its confrontation with the Ukrainian state, known as the Hetmanate. The Konotop battle of 1659 became the starting point of an armed conflict, where Ukrainian troops of Hetman Ivan Vyhovsky defeated the Moscow ar-

my. A substantial stage of the confrontation was the battle of Poltava in 1709. The victory of Tsar Peter I in that fight secured the Russian influence on the Hetmanate territory and accelerated the creation process of the Russian Empire (V'iatrovych 2019).

During the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917-21, the Bolsheviks tried in every possible way to prevent the establishment of the independent Ukrainian People's Republic. When attempts to fix control over Ukraine through the creation of puppet governments failed, the Bolsheviks resorted to armed aggression and occupation (V'iatrovych 2019).

The spread of the USSR to the territories of Western Ukraine during World War II caused widespread armed resistance by the local population in the form of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (V'iatrovych 2019). The confrontation lasted more than ten years after the end of the world conflict and weakened the USSR. Therefore, the 'Banderites'¹ are still the primary anti-heroes of modern Russian propaganda, remaining a symbol of the liberation movement for Ukrainians.

In 1991, Ukraine regained its independence. However, the Russian Federation has not given up attempts to renovate its impact on Ukraine by blurring national identity (members of Ukrainian society have not realized themselves as a certain unity) (Kotlyar 2017, 102-3), language manipulating, hyperbolizing the regional differences, rejecting the right of Ukrainians to restore national memory, funding and recruiting Ukrainian politicians, and implementing their agents in Ukraine's defense structures (V'iatrovych 2019).

As Vladymyr Putin came to power in Russia, pressure on Ukraine intensified. In 2005, he declared that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical "catastrophe of the century". Such thesis defines the goals of his presidency and the direction of the Russian Federation development – the restoration of the USSR (V'iatrovych 2019).

Russia tried to blackmail Ukraine on a number of issues. A striking example is a conflict around the Tuzla Island in autumn 2003. Political confrontation has hardly grown into an armed one, but the conflict has been resolved (Hai-Nyzhnyk 2017).

The beginning of armed conflict in Ukraine should be dated 20 February 2014 (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2015a), when a military operation to seize the Crimean Peninsula by the special forces of the Russian Federation began. From the end of February to the end of March, operations were carried out by Russian servicemen to grasp military units and objects of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in Crimea. Also, by the end of March, Russian troops, assisted by the Cossack detachments, seized 41 military bases, 11 warships, 2,363 units of combat equipment, and 6 coastal anti-ship complexes (Harbar et al. 2018).

1 Members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). Radical branch under the leadership of Stepan Bandera.

On 15 March 2014, a so-called referendum was held in Crimea, where it was 'voted' for an idea of joining the peninsula to Russia. Three days later, on 18 March, the Kremlin signed a treaty on the admission of the Republic of Crimea to the Russian Federation (Presidential Executive Office of Russia 2014).

At the beginning of April 2014, Russia started implementing the 'Novorossiya'² plan and destabilizing the situation in eastern Ukraine. A new wave of anti-Ukrainian protests and the seizure of law enforcement administrations and buildings has led to armed protests. On 7 April, the armed bandit formations in the occupied administrative buildings, controlled by the special services of the Russian Federation, declared the creation of the 'Donetsk People's Republic' and the 'Kharkiv People's Republic'. The building of the Security Service of Ukraine was usurped in Lugansk. The militia prevented seizure of the Mykolaiv State Region Administration, and the premises of the Kharkiv Regional State Administration were released by special forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (V'iatrovych 2019).

On 12 April, an armed detachment of saboteurs of the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation under the command of the Colonel of the Russian Federation's Intelligence Service Ihor Girkin, who participated in two Chechen wars, battles in Bosnia and Transnistria, arrived in Sloviansk from Crimea. Later, on 13 April 2014, a group of armed separatists organized an ambush for the employees of the Security Service of Ukraine and soldiers from the 3rd Company of the 80th Ukrainian Brigade of the Armed Forces, resulting in the death of a Captain of the Security Service of Ukraine. In response to the actions of the separatists, the Acting President of Ukraine, Oleksandr Turchynov, introduced a regime of anti-terrorist operation in the territories of Luhansk and Donetsk regions (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2014).

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Law of Ukraine *On the Peculiarities of State Policy on Ensuring Ukraine's State Sovereignty over Temporarily Occupied Territories in Donetsk and Luhansk Regions*, which came into force on 24 February 2018, and states that Russia is recognized as an aggressor (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine 2018a). Thus, Kiev officially recognized Russia as an aggressor and a source of a real threat to Ukraine's national security.

Violating the rules and principles of international law, bilateral and multilateral agreements, the Russian Federation annexed the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol, occupied certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The approximate number of casualties in Ukraine is estimated between 30,000 and 35,000. More than 7,000 of them (civilians and Ukrainian military) were killed. Nearly

² The territory of the former Novorossiysk Governorate (province), the Russian Empire.

1,5 million residents of Eastern Ukraine were forced to leave their homes. The infrastructure of the occupied regions was destroyed and 27% of the Donbas industrial potential was illegally transferred to Russia (V'iatrovych 2019).

Simultaneously, with Russia's annexation of Crimea, the issue of delimitating of the maritime boundary between the two states emerged on the bilateral relations agenda again, since the Russian Federation has begun to perceive Crimea as its own territory, and inland waters around the peninsula as those under its jurisdiction. It is significant that the Sea of Azov is not only an object of cargo transportation and a trade component for the states, but a source of mineral deposits and an energy factor, which forms a conflict basis between Ukraine and Russia, as well.

The *Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Ukraine on Cooperation in the Use of the Sea of Azov and the Strait of Kerch* was signed by Putin and Leonid Kuchma in Kerch on 24 December 2003 (ratified in April 2004), following the already mentioned events around the Tuzla Island. The document fixed the historical status of the inland waters of the two countries along the coast, and also confirmed the freedom of navigation in the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait for their merchant ships and warships. The above agreement contains the phrase that the Sea of Azov is historically the inland sea of Ukraine and the Russian Federation. However, it is stressed that the borders in the Sea of Azov will be defined by a separate treaty.

Since 2014, the negotiation process for resolving the maritime border between Ukraine and Russia has been completely halted and the prospects for its restoration are extremely low (Hudev 2018, 91). After all, the Russian Federation began to perceive the Sea of Azov as its own 'inland sea' and built the Kerch Bridge, which created certain restrictions in the tonnage of vessels that can pass in the Sea of Azov (Samus 2018).

On 19 February 2018, Ukraine filed a memorandum in the International Court of Arbitration against the Russian Federation in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which alleges Russia's violation of Ukraine's rights in the Black Sea and in the Sea of Azov, as well as in the Kerch Strait (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine 2018b).

The resonant event in bilateral Ukrainian-Russian relations on the issue of water demarcation has become the capture by the Russian Federation of Ukrainian sailors, who seemed to have entered the inland waters of the Russian Federation near the Crimean Peninsula at the end of 2018 without warning ("Viina u Kerchenskii Prototsi: Taran, Shturmovyky ta Zakhoplennia Ukrainykykh Korabliv" 2018).

International security structures have shown their unpreparedness for the current developments in Ukraine. Key elements of European and Euro-Atlantic security - NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Or-

ganization), the EU, and the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) – are seeking urgent responses to regional and global threats, posed by Russia's actions.

One of Ukraine's western neighbours is Moldova, which has its own point of conflict that is a threat to Ukraine's national security and contains a 'Russian factor'. This problem is embodied by the *de facto* state of the 'Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic' (Transnistria).³ Diplomatic relations between Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova were established on 10 March 1992 (Embassy of Ukraine to the Republic of Moldova s.d.). Traditionally, a difficult legacy for the post-Soviet countries, including Ukraine and Moldova, has been a question of arrangement, considering demarcation and delimitation of the state border. The border between Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova is 1,222-km long; its 270 km pass through the territory of unrecognized Transnistria (Hladchenko 2016, 44). Ukraine has the status of a guarantor of the Transnistrian settlement, since it has been a participant of the Moscow Memorandum in 1997,⁴ and a negotiating party of the existing 5+2 format since 2006.⁵

Since the outbreak of the war with Russia, Ukraine's interest in Transnistria has increased significantly. On the one hand, the situation in Transnistria is seen as one of the possible scenarios that Russia can impose in the East of Ukraine. On the other hand, Russian troops stationed in Transnistria are perceived as a potential threat to Ukraine (the task force of Russian troops, illegally deployed in Transnistria, counts 1,600 personnel) (Herasymchuk 2018). Ukraine supports the position of the Government of Moldova on the need to implement the decisions of the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria, the elimination of weapons stores, and the transformation of a peacekeeping mission into a multinational civilian peacekeeping mission with an international mandate (Hurska 2018).

Thus, Russian aggression against Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea, and the actual occupation of certain areas of the Donbas have started a new era of the stimulated international conflicts, exacerbated the negative factors present in the international security environment, and triggered further destructive tendencies, violating the international legal foundations of the world. Ukraine's position

3 International sources also mention the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (its territory) in different variations as the self-proclaimed 'Transnistrian Moldovan Republic', 'Transdnestr', 'Transnistria' or 'Transdnistria'. For example, the discussed names could be found in European Parliament (s.d.).

4 Moldova and Transnistria participated in the Moscow Memorandum as the conflict sides; Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE as mediators.

5 The 5+2 negotiating format includes such five participants as the Republic of Moldova, Transnistria, Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE, and two observers – the EU and the USA.

on the world stage has undergone dramatic changes in recent years that requires a reflection and full identification of key foreign policy principles. Ukraine needs a clear foreign policy doctrine, subordinated to the task of preserving sovereignty and strategically aimed at restoring territorial integrity, disrupted as a result of the Crimea annexation, hostilities in the Donbass region, and the potential threat from Transnistria.

4 Analogies between the Influence of Pakistan and Ukraine on the Transformation of the South Asian and the Post-Soviet Regional Security Complexes

Territorial conflicts in the South Asian Triangle (India-Pakistan-Afghanistan) cannot be compared to the existing realities in the post-Soviet Triangle (Russian Federation-Ukraine-Moldova) in historical retrospect. The following analogies will be made using Buzan's triangles of RSC with an overview of the domestic and interstate political levels of relations in the region.

The problems of Kashmir in relations with India, Pakhtūnistān – with Afghanistan, and the war in the Donbass, the occupation of Crimea by Russia, and the conflict in Transnistria have common consequences for the formation of the foreign policy courses of both countries, their regional positioning, involvement of 'external' forces and impact on their 'native' RSCs.

In particular, Pakistan is a state that promotes gradual changes in the security environment of the South Asian RSC, and Ukraine in the post-Soviet RSC. Both states have some similarity in the mechanisms of influence on the RSC, given the following determinants:

- the 'state-state' format relations in the region that influence the formation of a regional identity (national identity) and the existence of the 'enemy state' image;
- changes in the RSC, its expansion and narrowing, in particular under the impact of attraction or interpenetration into the security environment of states from the neighbouring RSC, as well as the influence of the institutional dimension of relations between states in the region.

First of all, it is worth noting the similarity between Pakistan and Ukraine in the geopolitical positioning of the South Asian and post-Soviet RSCs, respectively.

It should be noted that the historical aspects of the independence of Ukraine and Pakistan have a common feature: both states have become subjects of international relations as a result of the imperial-type states dissolutions. Pakistan gained independence after the collapse of the British Raj in 1947 as part of the British Empire, and

Ukraine in 1991, after the inevitable crash of the Soviet Union.

Pakistan has no land border with the countries of South Asia except India and Afghanistan, and Ukraine has a land border within the post-Soviet RSC only with Russia, Belarus and Moldova. That is, both Pakistan and Ukraine border only a few states of the RSC they belong to. Note that both states have boundaries with states – Russia and India – which claim leadership in the regions, pursuing a hegemonic policy. Existing Pakistani-Indian and Ukrainian-Russian territorial disputes stimulate a secure environment in the RSC and facilitate the development of a certain line of behaviour of states and their perception of each other in the ‘friend-enemy’ format. It can be argued that security dilemmas exist between Pakistan and India, as well as between Ukraine and Russia.

A stable Pakistan without terrorist threats, but not strong in the format of powers coexistence and the state’s defense capability, is usually in the interest of the Indian side. According to Indian analyst Amarjit Singh (2014), if there is a military confrontation between India and Pakistan in which the Indian side wins, then, geographically, the new administrative-territorial units will be formed on the map of South Asia in place of Pakistan. Thus, Balochistan will gain independence, needing security from the Indian side, Kashmir will return to India, Sindh and Western Punjab will become states under Indian protectorate, and the Pakistani province of Khyber Pakhtūnkwa will be transferred under the Pakhtūn control, as well as Pakhtūnistān, which will include southern Afghanistan and Kandahār. It is easy to see that Afghanistan will be fragmented into two parts: the first part for Pakhtūns, and the second part as a new state for Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Khazars. Singh justifies such changes, calling them vital for saving the region of South Asia from the current bloodshed and the export of terrorism (Singh 2014).

A leader of the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), Subramanian Swamy, has repeatedly emphasized India’s military actions with Pakistan that should lead India to victory and Pakistan to be divided into four parts:

Let us [India] prepare for the possibility that Pakistan may carry out war by miscalculation. We should be ready to finish Pakistan and break it into four and look for that opportunity. (Outlook Web Bureau 2018)

A similar situation can be traced in Russia’s positioning on Ukraine. Special changes in their bilateral relations took place in 2014 because of the Russian annexation of Crimea and the events in the East of Ukraine. In 2019, Russian politician Vladymyr Zhirinovskyy ‘divided’ Ukraine, stressing that “Chernihiv, Sumy, Donetsk, Zaporizhia – all the mentioned is Russia” and ironically mentioning that “Kyiv, Podil and something else” could be left for Ukraine. Moreover, he highlight-

ed that only the third part of Ukrainian territory in the western direction is 'Ukraine', which must be called 'Galicia'; and the remaining 2/3 of Ukraine's territory is 'Southeastern Russia', which includes 'Malorosiia' [Little Russia] and 'Novorosiia' [New Russia] (Ivanovich 2019).

Of course, such statements by Zhirinovskiy cannot be called the official position of the Russian Federation, but these ideas are implemented in some way. The same could be asserted about Swamy's statements, although the rhetoric between India and Pakistan has long been much tougher than between Ukraine and Russia.

Therefore, territorial contradictions between the states existing in the South Asian RSC and the post-Soviet RSC contribute to the internal polarization of the region, which is expressed, accordingly to the theory of regional security complexes, developed by Buzan, in the inter-perception of neighbouring states within the region due to the 'friend-enemy' scale.

Russia was recognized by Kiev in the Military Doctrine of Ukraine as a threat to Ukraine's national security. The Third Edition of the Military Doctrine of Ukraine, adopted by the NSDC (National Security and Defense Council) of Ukraine on 2 September and enacted on 24 September 2015, defines the following actual military threats to Ukraine: Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine; the increase of the military power of the Russian Federation in close proximity to the state border, including the ability to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Crimea; activation of the Russian intelligence and subversive activities in Ukraine for destabilizing the internal situation. In particular, attention focusses on Russia's aggressive actions, carried out for depleting the Ukrainian economy (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2015b).

India is identified by Pakistan as a top security threat. Oddly enough, the Pakistani government is also focussing on the economic factor. In particular, it refers to the military 'face' of power in Pakistan, namely the statement of Pakistan's General, Commander-in-Chief of the Land Forces Qamar Bajwa that India cannot prosper by weakening Pakistan (Abi-Habib 2018). It is worth emphasizing that both the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, and General Bajwa emphasize the significance of the negotiation process with India on the settlement of the Kashmir issue and the establishment of economic ties between the two states. In particular, Pakistan's economic security is considered as a component of regional security (Monitor News Bureau 2018).

It should be noted that the existence of the enemy state or the aggressor state became an element of unification of society, creation of a unified identity both in Pakistan and in Ukraine. Pakistan has defined the neighbour-state as the 'enemy' more clearly and is adhering to this position more vividly and consistently, regardless of

whether the authority has military⁶ or civilian⁷ nature. During the years of its independence, Ukraine has been experiencing the polar vectors of governing – the West-oriented⁸ and the pro-Russian⁹ ones.

Talking about uniting the nation, in particular, appealing to the image of a hostile state, in Pakistan, it appears not only in the military and nuclear counteraction to India, but also on the example of the national sports game of cricket, emphasizing the victories and achievements of Pakistan in the world as opposed to India. In particular, it could be supported by the renewal of the ban on Indian television contents in 2018 with the election of oppositionist Khan as Prime Minister of Pakistan (Indo-Asian News Service 2018). It should be noted that after the Russian aggression, Ukraine also banned the broadcasting of media content from the Russian Federation (“V Ukraini Zaboronyly Transliatsiiu shche Dev’iaty Rosiiskykh Telekanaliv” 2016) that is a manifestation of the use of common counteraction methods to the aggressor state in Pakistan and Ukraine.

At present, the most effective unifying factor for Pakistanis is the military’s successful counter-terrorism efforts. Therefore, a rational grain in the idea of eradicating terrorism makes sense to strengthen Pakistan as a nation, albeit multinational. The implementation of such a large-scale project in modern conditions is possible with the direct involvement of the army.

The existing ‘nuclear’ and territorial contradictions between Islamabad and New Delhi undoubtedly link Pakistan to the South Asian RSC. Therefore, until the Kashmir issue is not resolved, Pakistan will be a leading country in developing the security environment of the South Asian RSC. Although in religious format, Pakistan also gravitates to the Middle East as a Muslim world, having close relations with Saudi Arabia.

Pakistan’s geographical location is strategic but, to some extent, makes the country vulnerable. Pakistan is located at the crossroads of three ancient civilizations and can serve as a bridge between Central and South Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia, and the Middle East and South Asia. Potentially, it can become a transit hub for neighbouring countries. However, Pakistan will be able to make full use of such a geopolitical position for its own sake only under a stable domestic political situation, which is not the case at the moment.

India has long been trying to use its own geostrategic position in the centre of the South Asian subcontinent and to dominate the po-

6 Political regime of General Pervez Musharraf.

7 Presidencies of Asif Ali Zardari, Mamnoon Hussain, Arif Alvi.

8 Political courses of such presidents as Viktor Yushchenko, Petro Poroshenko, Volodymyr Zelensky.

9 Political course of Viktor Yanukovich.

litical forces in the region. Therefore, the official New Delhi sees Islamabad as one of the core obstacles to achieving hegemony in the region (Majeed 2013, 221).

In the geopolitical format, Ukraine also has a rather favourable geographical position at the crossroads of trade routes between Europe and Asia. For a while, under Kuchma's presidency, Ukraine's foreign policy was dominated by the concept of not only a multi-vector policy, but of being a 'bridge between the West and the East'. However, as time has shown, it is not justified, because without a definite regional affiliation, i.e. partnerships with the West, which is for Ukraine the European Union and, in some way, the USA, and the East (mostly Russia), Ukraine has become a 'buffer zone' and a competition ground for two geopolitical centres: the Euro-Atlantic (the EU and the USA) and the Eurasian (Russia) ones (Chalyi et al. 2004, 9).

The problem of such balancing is also affected by issues of identity, both national (unity of society in its perception) and regional. In particular, there could be mentioned the ideas of Viacheslav Lypynskyi (1933), embodied in the popular scientific essay about the interrelation of religion and the church in Ukrainian history,¹⁰ in which Ukraine is described as a territory "between East and West". According to him:

the essence of Ukraine, its soul, given to it by God in the day of its birth, a historical calling, a symbol and a sign of its national identity. (Lypynskyi 1933, 59)

Moreover, the dual image of Ukraine lies in its history - from the oscillations between Rome and Byzantium in the choice of the Christian rite and to the divergent political and cultural tendencies towards Poland and Moscow - "two different cultures, worldviews, concepts and civilizations" (Lypynskyi 1933, 65-6).

However, Ukraine is related to Europe not only geographically, but also politically, as the current confrontation with Russia further unites Ukraine with Europe and the European Union. Considering the territorial contradictions, which exist between the states in the South Asian RSC and the post-Soviet RSC (bilateral level of interaction), and focussing on Pakistan and Ukraine, it could be stated that a certain modernization in both systems has already taken place in the XXI century.

Afghanistan, according to Buzan's theory, is a 'country-insulator', i.e. one that separates the South Asian RSC from its neighbours. Al-

10 *Relihiia i Tserkva v Istorii Ukrainy* Релігія і церква в історії України (Religion and the Church in the History of Ukraine) was written in December 1923 and published in 1925 in Philadelphia. In 1933, it was republished in Lviv.

though, with the entry of Afghanistan into the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) in 2007, the external transformation of the South Asian RSC can be questioned. In turn, Afghanistan is involved in the South Asian RSC through its close ties with Pakistan, in particular the Pakhtūnistān problem, as well as the impact of the illicit drug trafficking on the regional security environment in the format of Afghanistan (narcotics producer) and Pakistan (drug-transit country). Thus, the bilateral level of interaction between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the existing territorial contradictions, as well as the issue of illegal drug trafficking and Afghan refugees, closely link Afghanistan with the South Asian RSC. It should be emphasized that India, which provides assistance to the Afghan authorities, particularly, in the financial sector, is starting to be involved in the Afghan settlement. For instance, Afghanistan participates in the India-Iran agreement on the construction of the Iranian port of Chabahar. (Siddiqui 2019). Therefore, it is possible to assert also a gradual forming of a new stage of internal transformation in the RSC.

With respect to the post-Soviet RSC, it can be argued that its balance of power is more polarized than in the South Asian RSC. We will not take into account all the sub-complexes identified by Buzan in this RSC. It is reasonable to agree that Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus are the most substantial for Russia. These three states have a more stable structure than those belonging to the Caucasus and Central Asian sub-complexes (Sarıkaya 2017, 35). At the beginning of the XXI century, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have lost their status as a Baltic sub-complex and are not the insulator states that had separated the post-Soviet RSC from the Western European RSC because in 2004 they have become member states of the European Union and NATO. Therefore, these states are already full subjects of the Western European RSC. In turn, the 2014 events in Ukraine marked the beginning of an internal transformation in the post-Soviet RSC.

First of all, the manifestation of a new level of polarization in the RSC between Ukraine and Russia should be considered. Secondly, in 2014 Ukraine has signed an Association Agreement with the EU, thereby confirming its intention to join the European Community and as a result - with its full accession to the EU - Ukraine will belong to the Western European RSC. Also in 2014, Ukraine abolished its non-aligned status and made the NATO accession a priority in its foreign policy. It is worth to emphasize that, in 2019 amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine made accession to the EU and NATO the priorities of Ukraine's foreign policy (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2019). Both the EU and NATO are structures that can be considered 'opposition' to Russia. Thirdly, after the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the events in eastern Ukraine, Kiev started the process of withdrawal from the CIS (the Commonwealth of Independent States), which actually ended on 19 May 2018, when the President

of Ukraine signed a decree, terminating Ukraine's participation in the CIS statutory bodies ("MZS: Ukraina Faktychno Zavershyla Vykhid z SND" 2019). Now, the CIS could be considered as the institutional shell of the post-Soviet RSC, reflecting its external transformation, since Georgia has left the CIS in 2009, and Ukraine did the same in 2018. Both states withdrew from the CIS after the aggravation of their relations with the Russian Federation, namely, its military operations against Georgia and Ukraine.¹¹ It should be emphasized that Ukraine *de jure* was not a member state of the CIS, but had the status of a founding state and a CIS member state, as it did not sign the Charter of the organization, opposing Russia in its proposal to create the unified CIS armed forces.

Russia's CIS policy can be described as lobbying for its national interests, as well as India's role in SAARC, in which Islamabad is not sufficiently active and India is trying to 'disengage' other South Asian states from cooperating with Pakistan.

However, if Ukraine has confidently self-determined as a European state and has identified integration into the European Union as a priority, then Pakistan has a somewhat branched position on development priorities. In particular, geopolitically, the state belongs to South Asia; however, it actively cooperates with the Middle Eastern states, which are Muslim. Let us mention Pakistan's close cooperation with Saudi Arabia. By the way, Islamabad is a part of an Islamic military anti-terrorist coalition formed under the auspices of Riyadh, also known as the 'Muslim NATO' (Sultan 2018). In its turn, Ukraine is seeking to join the leading military-political bloc, the NATO.

It can be argued that territorial conflicts determine the intensity of transformational changes in the RSC, as well as the level of relations between states on the 'friend-enemy' scale. In the Russia-Ukraine-Moldova triangle, Ukraine acquires the same status of the 'middle state' as Pakistan in the India-Pakistan-Afghanistan triangle. Ukraine is threatened by Russia's military armed intervention, both from the Ukrainian-Russian border and from Transnistria, where Russian military forces are stationed. Such actions, as shown by the events of 2014, violate the territorial integrity of Ukraine at the present stage. Pakistan, in its turn, also faces the threat to its territorial integrity in the context of the hypothetical formation of the 'Greater Pakhtūnistān' and the Kashmiris defending the idea of their own identity and the option of holding a plebiscite by which Kashmiris would not accede to Pakistan.

As there are 'non-traditional' security threats on the Pakistani-Afghan border - the problem of refugees, illegal drug and arms traf-

11 As a result of Russian aggression, Georgia lost South Ossetia and Abkhazia in 2008, and Crimea was annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

ficking (Grare 2006, 19) – thus, the Ukrainian-Moldovan boundary with Transnistria becomes a route for smuggling alcohol, wine and cigarettes (illegally imported from Moldova) into Ukraine, migration of illegal aliens and drug trafficking (mostly psychotropic substances) (Hladchenko 2016, 45).

Russia is directly involved in the Transnistrian issue, and India is joining the Afghan settlement, creating the effect of the dual influence of the RSC central states on national security of both Ukraine and Pakistan.

5 Conclusions

As a result of this research, it becomes possible to identify the core aspects of the impact of Ukraine and Pakistan on the transformation of their respective RSC.

First of all, the level of internal changes and relations with neighbouring states draws analogies between Pakistan and Ukraine in the scopes of forming national and regional identity under the impact of the ‘enemy state’ image, which is embodied by India and Russia respectively.

Secondly, existing territorial issues with neighbouring countries give both Ukraine and Pakistan the ‘middle state’ status, whose territorial integrity is threatened and becomes an object of ‘penetration’ to its ‘domestic’ RSC from neighbouring regions.

Thirdly, talking about the possibility of expanding the external transformation of the South Asian RSC and the post-Soviet RSC, provided by certain states’ leaving them, the following perspectives could be distinguished:

- As long as the unresolved Kashmiri issue with India remains in Pakistan’s foreign policy agenda, the latter will belong to the South Asian RSC.
- Until Ukraine becomes a full member of the EU it will belong to the post-Soviet RSC, that is conditioned by a similar situation with existing contradictions with the Russian Federation.

Finally, it should be noted that, at the institutional level, Pakistan facilitated in a certain way Afghanistan’s accession to the South Asian RSC (enlargement of the SAARC member states number), and Ukraine ‘reduced’ the number of the post-Soviet RSC members with its institutional exit from the CIS.

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The Epistemological Model of Vedantic Doxography According to the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* for the Study of Indian Philosophy

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Abstract Since there is no proper Sankrit word corresponding to the English 'doxography', the literary genre of the compendium (*samgraha*) is examined, in the context of the school of the *kevalādvaitavāda*. The work chosen for the analysis is the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (Compendium of all the *darśanas*) by Mādhavācārya. Some critical remarks on the structure of this work allow to conclude that a possible alternative hermeneutical model used to explain the particular attitude of Indian doxography, such as 'Inclusivism', is not entirely satisfactory. The doxographic and hermeneutical structure of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* seems an entirely coherent theoretical model, within the limits of its own cultural context.

Keywords Doxography. Inclusivism. Hermeneutics. Sanskrit. Indology.

Summary 1 Methodological Remarks about Indian Doxography. – 2 A Survey of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* along with Methodological and Hermeneutical Remarks. – 3 Hermeneutical Remarks in Relation to Both Western and Indian Theories. – 4 Conclusions.



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1 Methodological Remarks about Indian Doxography

There is no proper Sanskrit word corresponding to the English 'doxography' (from δόξα 'opinion, point of view' + γράφειν 'to write, to describe'). This is not surprising, due to the fact that the term is a neologism, invented by the German philologist Hermann Diels (1848-1922), in his work *Doxographi Graeci* (1879), being used properly for the works of classical historians, describing the points of view of past philosophers and scientists. This notwithstanding, in fact doxography is a largely diffused literary genre in Indian philosophical tradition. Indian philosophical production employs an ample range of different literary genres, each one of them corresponding to different conceptual and pedagogical requirements. Within this perspective, the founding text of a system is generally speaking a *sūtra*, 'aphorism', a genre that, due to its characteristic feature of stylistic concision, needs to be explained in a number of different types of commentaries, such as the *kārikā* (mnemonic strophe), a sort of versified *sūtra*, the *vārttika* (explanatory gloss) inspired by a criterion of brevity, the *bhāṣya* (commentary), etymologically 'that about which it is to be spoken of', more detailed and extensive in style, with a particular propensity for long nominal compounds and a technical use of inflectional cases in order to indicate different causal, temporal or situational relationships, and the *ṭīkā* (delucidation), more colloquial in style, in order to delucidate the meaning of the glossed text, this one being often referred to as the 'root' (*mūla*) of all the entire textual stratification. But the conceptual building is not exhausted in the stratification starting with the *mūla* text and ending with the *ṭīkā*. In order to better vehiculate the concepts and technicalities of a philosophical system a further step is needed. This step must be accomplished by the treatises. So to the founders of a system, a large rank of scholars must follow, so that the scholastic thought could assume its final form as a structured system, and not simply a muddle of intuitive statements without a clear internal order. Coordination, elimination of apparent internal contradictions, internal coherence, are some of the goals that this kind of production is called to satisfy.

More than this, a confrontation with different systems of thought is now necessary, because all of the Indic thought lives and grows in the continuous and fruitful debate with different schools of thought, being them internal (related to the same central tenets of one's own school, and differing in matters of detail), or external (related to altogether different worldviews). To this demand a definite class of works may offer an answer, the so-called 'summaries' (*saṃgraha*). A *saṃgraha* is a compendium, a synopsis, being able to build a conceptual scheme including a wide range of different philosophical tenets and organizing them into an intellectual model. This model fulfils a double requirement: it offers a clear structure of the main tenets of

the school, and at the same it offers a useful pedagogical summary of the interrelated positions of one's own school and of rival schools, a summary used in public debates in order to support one's own position and to contrast the opponent's position. So its scope is not only, or not properly, a theoretical one, but rather a practical one, in accord with the practical undertone of all Indic classical philosophical tradition, being always connected with the main human goal (*puṛuṣārtha*), the liberation (*mokṣa*) from the cycle of rebirths (*samsāra*).

This epistemological and pedagogical model centred on the literary genre of the compendium (*saṃgraha*) is not restricted to brahmanical tradition, but it is shared beyond the pale of the Vedic milieu. As we will see, at least one important work comes from the context of Jainism. It is to be noted that the literary genre of the compendium (*saṃgraha*) must be accurately distinguished from an only apparently similar genre, this second one being the scholastic résumé, *sāra*. A *sāra* collects the main tenets of a school for a better mnemonic study of the system, but it is not so diffused in technicalities as the compendium, and above all it has no specific reference to other schools' point of view, it is no fit for a confrontation with different intellectual positions. For the Vedantic milieu the classical example of a *sāra* is the *Vedāntasāra* by Sadānanda (fifteenth century CE) (Kumar 1987).

The doxographical production of the school of Śāṅkara, the *kevalādvaitavāda* (doctrine of absolute non dualism), offers a complete review of nearly all the existing philosophical tendencies in Indian classical thought. This review is not an objective, impartial or impersonal one: it presents the thought of rival schools as seen through a particular filter. This is precisely what distinguishes a doxography from a history of philosophy, the conscious intention of the author is not to offer an unrealistic, cold and aseptic report of different views, a position impossible from the point of view of many Indian schools of thought, e.g. the *jaina* epistemological model, according to which only a multilateral view could avoid the risk of an over-simplification of the object studied, through the 'doctrine of the may be' (*syādvāda*) applied through the so-called 'sevenfold application [of *syāt*]' (*saptabhaṅginaya*) (Jaini [1979] 2001, 94-7). Rather, a doxography offers a record of positions different from one's own, but from the point of view of the same one's own tenet, in order to offer to the disciple a sort of road map to find his way out of a difficult route. This is not to be considered as a biased or partial presentation of intellectual facts, it is rather the intellectually honest acknowledgement that in philosophy simply does not exist a neutral point of view, a point of view above all other ones, but that to declare one's own position is the only way to be clear and sincere in the exposition of concepts and beliefs.

It should be noted that an intellectual *caveat* of this sort is at the root of contemporary interreligious dialogue, be it a theological or an existential one: only those who declare frankly and honestly their

position could compare it with others, there is no possibility for an 'outside from the mêlée' position, everyone must seat on a particular chair if a productive dialogue could start (Coward 1990; Prabhu 1996; Sharma 2011; Swindells 1997).

In the production of the Śāṅkarite school, all surrounding schools are arranged into a system of concentric orbits, in such a way that the school of Śāṅkara is situated at the very centre, with all the other ones gravitating around it according to different orbits corresponding to a degree of lesser or greater approach to the centre, represented by the *kevalādvaitavāda*. The *Veda* authorizes the people eligible for its teachings (Śāṅkara, *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* [Commentary on the Aphorism about the Absolute] 1, 3, 25-6), determining a sphere of legitimate 'differentiation of disciples' (*vineyabheda*), a hierarchy based upon the concept of 'differentiation of eligibility' (*adhikārabheda*) (Śāṅkara, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣadbhāṣya* [Commentary on the Big Secret Teaching] 3, 9, 9), a differentiation depending upon the different grade of knowledge, character, inner disposition, sensitivity of disciples, in a word, depending upon their individual peculiarities. The subsequent use of the concept of *adhikārabheda* by thinkers like Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (*Prasthānabheda*, a commentary upon the seventh verse of the *Śivamahimnastotra* by Puṣpadanta, stating that the systems of triple *Veda*, *sāṃkhya*, *yoga*, doctrine of Paśupati and *vaiṣṇava* faith are just different paths towards one and the same religious goal) (Norman Brown 1983; Hanneder 1999) redefines the term in a more accentuated inclusivistic nuance, opening the way to the contemporary use of the concept of *adhikārabheda* as a definitely inclusivistic tool for neo-hinduistic apologetic literary production, being able to absorb every sort of alien issues into one's own system of values (Young 1981, 1982; see also Bouthillette 2013).

The most famous text of the *saṃgraha* literary genre is probably the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (Compendium of All the *Darśanas*) by Mādhavācārya (fourteenth century CE).¹ The vast majority of manuscripts have only 15 chapters, and do not contain the chapter on Śāṅkara's philosophy. To the very same master Śāṅkara (Śāṅkarācārya, Ādiśāṅkara, sixth-seventh century CE) it has been attributed (with not so much plausibility) the possibly earlier work of this kind, the *Sarvavedāntasiddhāntasārasamgraha* (Compendium of the Résumé of All the Definitive Conclusions of the *Vedānta*'), nearly contemporary of an important *jaina* work, the *Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya* (Collection of the Six *Darśanas*) by Haribhadra Sūri (eighth century CE). The scene is enriched with an anonymous treatise (date unknown), the *Sarvamatasaṃgraha* (Compendium of All Opinions), with the *Siddhān-*

¹ Abhyankar 1978; Apte et al. 1977; Cowell, Gough [1892, 1894] 1986. I had not the possibility to see Agrawal 2002.

taleśasamgraha (Small Compendium of the Definitive Conclusions) by the *śaiva* teacher Appayya Dīkṣita (1552-1624), and completed with the *Sarvasiddhāntasamgraha* (Compendium of All the Definitive Conclusions) by a group of scholars (under the patronage of the *marāṭha* king of Tañjāvūr of Śāhajī, 1685-1711) (Winternitz 1967, 506-8).

As far as the authorship of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (floruit 1350) is concerned, a great debate is active about the identity of its author: should we consider Mādhava as the same as Vidyāraṇya (born to Māyañācārya and Śrīmatīdevī in Pampakṣetra), the brother of Sāyaṇa, or identical with Sāyaṇa, or what else? Should we consider Vidyāraṇya as a different person, and Mādhava and Sāyaṇa as his disciples? The author of the treatise should be identified with Mādhava-Sāyaṇa, or with Bharatīrtha, or with Cinnambhaṭṭa? (Thakur 1961). Cinnambhaṭṭa (*alias* Cannibhaṭṭa, Cinnabhaṭṭa, Cennubhaṭṭa), one of the many scholars in the court of Mādhava, raised to the position of royal preceptor, *rājapaṇḍita*, was a younger contemporary of Mādhava and Sāyaṇa, son of Sarvajñaviṣṇu who was the teacher of both of them, and is considered as the author of a commentary (*Prakāśikā*) on Keśava Miśra's *Tarkabhāṣā* (Definition of Reasoning), and of another commentary (*Vivaraṇa*) on Varadarāja's *Tārkikarākṣāsārasamgraha* (Compendium of the Essence of the Protection of Dialectician).

The *Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya* (Collection of the Six Perspectives) by Haribhadra Sūri (Sivakumara 1977) treats of the *bauddha*, *nyāya*, *sāṃkhya*, *jaina*, *vaiśeṣika*, *jaiminīya* (= *pūrvamīmāṃsā*) and *cārvāka* (*nyāya* and *vaiśeṣika* must be considered together if we want to have the total sum of the six *darśanas*). The *Sarvavedāntasiddhāntasārasamgraha* by Śaṅkara (Raṅgācārya 1983) treats of the *lokāyatika*, *ārhata* (= *jaina*), *bauddha* (*mādhyamika*, *yogācāra*, *sautrāntika*, *vaibhāṣika*), *vaiśeṣika*, *naiyāyika*, *prabhākara* (*pūrvamīmāṃsā*), *bhaṭṭa* (*pūrvamīmāṃsā*), *sāṃkhya*, the school of Patañjali, of Vedavyāsa (the philosophy of the *Mahābhārata*), and finally *vedāntadarśana*. The *Sarvamatasamgraha* (Compendium of All Opinions) (Gaṇapati Śāstrī 1918) treats of two kinds of subjects, not Vedic (*bauddha*, *jaina*, *cārvāka*) and Vedic, that is the systems of Kaṇāda (*vaiśeṣika*), Akṣapāda (*nyāya*), *yoga*, *sāṃkhya*, (*pūrvamīmāṃsā*), and *vedānta*.

2 A Survey of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* along with Methodological and Hermeneutical Remarks

The *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* includes 16 chapters, each one of them dedicated to a different 'vision' or 'point of view' (*darśana*). This term, nowadays usually employed with reference to the six 'canonical' schools of classical Indian philosophy, that is *sāṃkhya* and *yoga*, *vaiśeṣika* and *nyāya*, and finally *pūrvamīmāṃsā* and *uttaramīmāṃsā*

(or popularly, *vedānta*), derives from the root (*dhātu*) *drś*, 'to see', and it could be usefully compared (from the semantic point of view, not etymologically) with the Greek term *θεωρία*. Both *darśana* and *θεωρία* are linked with roots meaning 'to see', both seem to envisage a sort of objective perspective of the philosophical enquiring, aiming at discerning the essence of truth beyond the veil of the phenomenical level. This notwithstanding, the Sanskrit term *darśana* is perpetually hanging in the balance between a weak acceptance, - and in this sense it is potentially synonymous with *naya* (principle, method, procedure), *vāda* (doctrine), *mata* (opinion), *dr̥ṣṭi* (vision, conception), all of them being potentially used in a disdainful undertone (similar to the Greek *δόξα*) -, and a strong acceptance, referring properly to the well structured worldview of a philosophical school, be it theistic or not. In this second acceptance, *darśana* could be considered as almost synonymous with *siddhānta* (definitive conclusion, ultimate point of view). The architecture of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* is very interesting to enquire, because it says something about the mutual relationships of the different *darśanas* contained in it from the author's perspective. It works as a sort of planetarium, a model of a solar system for educational purposes. The first *darśana* presented is the more external or peripheral orbit, and the structure proceeds with more and more internal orbits, till we reach the very core of the system, where the solar orbit is situated, at the the very centre of the structure, its pulsating heart. Let us see briefly but in some detail the structure of the work.

The first *darśana* is named *cārvākadarśana* (134 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the system of the materialists, those who deny the authority of the *Vedas*, the moral mechanism of *karman*, and the existence of *ātman*, and consequently the mechanism of rebirth (*samsāra*). They are completely beyond the pale of the *Vedas*, the more external worldview with respect to *smārta* tradition. The chapter is a precious doxographical source, because it contains a lot of quotations from lost works of the *cārvākas*, a school that has severely suffered from a sort of *damnatio memoriae*, so that most of its basic texts have not been preserved (Bhattacharya 2013). The general trend of the work is to use primary sources, only rarely does it represent a *darśana* using second-hand material: this fact is more and more evident in the course of time, particularly nowadays when new texts are available for scholars, texts being unknown to the previous generations of scholars that have studied the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (Nakamura 1968).

The second *darśana* is named *baudhdadarśana* (375 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the system of the followers of the Buddha, Siddhārtha Śakyamuni, those who deny the authority of the *Vedas*, and at least partially the existence of *ātman*, but admit somehow the moral mechanism of *karman*, and consequently the mechanism

of rebirth (*saṃsāra*). They are completely beyond the pale of the *Vedas*, but in a less radical way than the previous *darśana*. The positions being analyzed within this *darśana* are in fact four, corresponding to the schools *mādhyamika* (nichilism), *vijñānavādin* or *yogācāra* (subjective idealism), *sautrāntika* (representationism) and *vaibhāṣika* (presentationism). It must be noted that in this chapter there is a reference to a *jaina* doxographical source, the *Vivekavilāsa* by Jinadatta Sūri.

The third *darśana* is named *ārhatadarśana* (438 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the system of the *jaina*, the followers of the Jina, Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, those who deny the authority of the *Vedas*, but admit the moral mechanism of *karman*, and consequently the mechanism of rebirth (*saṃsāra*). They are completely beyond the pale of the *Vedas*, but in a less radical way than the preceding *darśana*. In part the chapter reflects Kumārila's arguments against *jaina* doctrine. The author shows a good familiarity with both well-known and lesser-known *jaina* sources (*Prameyakamalamārtāṇḍa*, *Āptaniścayālaṅkāra*, *Paramāgamasāra*, *Tattvārthasūtra*, *Svarūpasambodhana*, *Syādvādamañjarī*). It is not at all meaningless the fact that this *darśana* is put after the *bauddhadarśana* and before the *rāmānujadarśana*, so in a position immediately following the tenets of *bauddha* school(s) and preceding Rāmānuja's doctrine. In fact it is the doctrine of *syādvāda*, the multilaterality of points of view, that assigns to *jaina* doctrine this intermediate position. This remark will become possibly more evident *infra*, when we will refer to the notion of Inclusivism.

The fourth *darśana* is named *rāmānujadarśana* (387 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the system of Rāmānuja, that is the qualified nondualism (*viśiṣṭādvaita*), the tradition of *śrīsampradāya*. It should be noted that within the structure of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* this school is situated in a conceptual position far remote from the school of Śāṅkara, not at all contiguous with it, immediately after the *jainas* that are still beyond the pale of the *Vedas*. This collocation sounds somewhat strange, due to the evident contiguity between *viśiṣṭādvaita* and *kevalādvaitavāda* within the pale of *uttaramīmāṃsā*. Perhaps this choice could reflect the attempt at building a block against the more direct rival of the Śāṅkaraite *kevalādvaitavāda* within the *vedānta* front, a debate field much animated in Indian philosophical controversies (Comans 1989, 1990; Lacombe 1937; Mumme 1992; Sawai 1991; Schmücker 2003; Veezhinathan 2003). Some important doctrinal points of the content of the chapter are a comparative analysis of the hermeneutics of a *mahāvākya* (great dictum), namely *tat tvam asi* (thou art that) (*Chāndogyopanīṣad* [Secret Teaching of the Singer in Metre] 6, 8, 7)² from the points of view of the rival schools of Śāṅkara and Rāmānuja; an ex-

² For a controversial interpretation of the passage see Brereton 1986.

position of the theory of the *vyūha* (emanations) of Kṛṣṇa, that is, Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa himself), Saṃkarṣaṇa (namely Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa's elder brother), Pradyumna (son of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī) and Anirudha (son of Pradyumna, Kṛṣṇa's grandson); and finally an analysis of the concepts of *bhakti* and *brahman* according to Rāmānuja's school.

The fifth *darśana* is named *pūrṇaprajñadarśana* (301 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the system of Madhva (*alias* Pūrṇaprajña, *alias* Ānandatīrtha), that is the dualism (*dvaita*), the tradition variously known as *brahmasampradāya*, *sadvaiṣṇava*, *atyantabheda* (Ikebe 1997). Here the polemic attitude of the nondualism (*advaitavāda*) against the dualism (*dvaitavāda*) is much emphasized, in order to show the internal contradictions of the *dvaita* system. A lot of sources are employed, some of them being part of the *itihāsa*, the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* by Īśvarakṛṣṇa (Gauḍa 1988), the commentary *Mahābhārataatāparyanirṇaya* by Madhyamandira, the *Sākalayasamhitā*, the *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, the *Agnipurāṇa*, the *Bhagavadgītā*, the *Bhāllaveyopaniṣad*, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, the *Tattvavādarahasya*, the *Mahopaniṣad*, the *Nyāyasūtra*, the *Tārkikarakṣā*, the *Brahmasūtra*, the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, the *Taittirīyabrāhmaṇa*, the *Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad*, the *Kūrmapurāṇa*, the *Skandapurāṇa*, the *Bṛhatsamhitā*, the *Ānandatīrthabhāṣyavyākhyāna*. A reference is made to the well-known interpretation of the great dictum (*mahāvākya*) *tat tvam asi* (thou art that) (*Chāndogyaopaniṣad* 6, 8, 7), that the *dvaita* school reads as *atat tvam asi* (thou are not that).

The sixth *darśana* is named *nakulīśapāśupatadarśana* (135 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of a *śaiva* school foreign to the tradition of the *āgamas*, inspired by the master Nakulīśa (*alias* Lakulīśa). The form of Śiva being object of veneration is Paśupati, the Lord (*pati*) of tied cattle (*paśu*). The main works of this tradition are the *Pāśupatasūtra*, 168 aphorisms commented by Kauṇḍinya (*Pañcārthabhāṣya*) and the *Gaṇakārikā* by Bhāsarvajña (tenth century CE, with comment *Ratnaṭīkā*) (Hara 2002). The doctrine is very systematic, comprehending *inter alia* a correlate structure of eight penitads (acquisition, impurity, expedient, locality, perseverance, purification, initiations, powers). The ritual antinomistic behaviour of the devotee in a certain grade of his spiritual career is examined in detail, with accurate references to the primary sources of the school.

The seventh *darśana* is named *śaivadarśana* (209 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of a *śaiva* school belonging to the tradition of the *āgamas*, a partly dualistic school, diffused mostly in Southern India (but having a strong tie with masters from Kaśmīr, and depending not only on Sanskrit but even on *tamil* sources), the *śaivasiddhānta* (definite conclusion of *śaiva* doctrine) (Torella 1980). Its main categories are the Lord, the bound soul and the bond, *pati*, *paśu* and *pāśa*. The sources of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* for this chapter can be divided into two groups: the first is formed by the

āgamas, the second one by a number of individual works with historical or semi-historical authors. In the first group we may mention the *Mṛgendrāgama* (a minor *āgama*, *upāgama*, affiliated to the tradition of the *Kāmikāgama*), with the commentary thereupon (*Mṛgendravṛtti* by Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha), the *Pauskarāgama*, the *Kiraṇāgama*, the *Kālottarāgama*, the *Saurabheyāgama*. In the second group we may mention Bhojarāja (*Tattvapraśāsa*), Bṛhaspati (the mythical founder of the *cārvāka* system), and above all Sadyojyotiḥ, Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha, Rāmakaṇṭha, Aghoraśiva, Somaśambhu: these last names are the most renowned masters of the *śaivasiddhānta*. It is to be noted that the chapter does not mention the *tamil* tradition of the school, whose main work is the *Śivajñanabodham* by Meykaṇḍa.

The eighth *darśana* is named *pratyabhijñādarśana* (149 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of a *śaiva* school belonging to the tradition of the *āgamas*, the renowned school of the nondualistic Kashmirian Śaivism, founded by Somānanda (*Śivadṛṣṭi*, ninth century CE) and developed by Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta, the *pratyabhijñā*, ‘recognition’ school.³ A partially obsolete method of classification of the *śaiva* schools puts this current within the so-called ‘nondualist Kashmirian Śaivism’, together with such currents as *kula*, *trika*, *spanda* and *krama*. This historiographical label has recently been criticized for its supposed generality and imprecision (Sanderson 2007). A number of quotations from the *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*, the *Mnemonic stanzas of the recognition of the Lord* by Utpaladeva, commented upon by the *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī*, the *Examination of the recognition of the Lord* by Abhinavagupta are the main source for this chapter. Apart from it we may mention a quotation from the *Śāstraparāmarśa* by Madhurāja Yogin. The texts quoted are practically the only source for the systems expounded in this chapter and in the previous one.

The ninth *darśana* is named *raseśvaradarśana* (135 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the school of Indian alchemy (Mazars 1977), whose keyword is *rasa*, a complex term important in Indian aesthetics and music (where it means flavour, taste, the aesthetic feeling or sentiment), but indicating in this specific context mercury, quicksilver, regarded as a sort of quintessence of the human body, as the seminal fluid of the god Śiva, the virile semen and so on. Even here a number of primary sources are quoted, namely the *Rasārṇava*, the *Rasahr̥daya*, the *Raseśvarasiddhānta*, the *Parameśvarī* by Parameśvara, the *Sākārasiddhi*, and such authorities as Govindabhagavat, Sarvajñarāmeśvara, Viṣṇusvāmin, Śrīkāntamiśra.

The tenth *darśana* is named *aulūkyadarśana* (182 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the school of Indian atom-

³ The pioneering work is Pandey 1963.

istic physics, the *vaiśeṣikadarśana*, whose semi-mythical founder is the sage (*muni*) Ulūka (a name meaning ‘owl’, because according to the hagiographic tradition he had assumed the form of an owl in order to gratify Śiva), better known as Kaṇāda (atom-eater). The chapter contains a synopsis and a résumé of the root text of the school, the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*. A specific interest is attributed to epistemology, particularly to the theory of the means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*); to the six categories (*padārtha*); to the twenty-four qualities (*guṇa*); to the process of perception (*pratyakṣa*); to the theory of numbers (*apekṣābuddhi*), particularly to the production of ‘twoness’ and duality (*dvitva* and *dvitvatva*); obviously to the atomic theory, with the two main concepts of atom and aggregate of two atoms (*aṇu*, *dvyāṇuka*); and finally to the category of non-existence (*abhāva*). Critics from both the currents of the *pūrvamīmāṃsā*, *prābhākara* and *bhāṭṭa*, from Śrīdhara cārya (a commentator upon the *Bhagavadgītā*), and from the logicians, *naiyāyika*, are taken into consideration.

The eleventh *darśana* is named *akṣapādadarśana* (216 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the school of Indian logic, the *nyāyadarśana*, whose founder is Gautama, nicknamed Akṣapāda (probably ‘having his eyes fixed [in intellectual rapture] on his feet’). The chapter contains a synopsis and a résumé of the root text of the school, the *Nyāyasūtra* by Gautama, commented for the first time by Pakṣilasvāmin Vātsyāyana (*Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya*). There is also a reference to the *Nyāyakusumañjali* by Udayana; and a quotation from *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* (The Secret Teaching of Śvetāśvatara) 3, 2 (Abhyankar 1978) towards the end of the chapter. The section treats particularly of epistemological and logical categories such as the four-fold means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*): perception, inference, analogy, verbal testimony (*pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, *upamāna*, *śabda*); the doubt (*saṃśaya*); the definite conclusion (*siddhānta*); the hypothetical reasoning (*tarka*); the ascertainment (*nirṇaya*); the fallacy (*hetvābhāsa*); the futility (*jāti*); but even ethic categories such as fault (*doṣa*) and the concept of self (*ātman*). A doxographical juxtaposition of *naiyāyika* doctrine with *bauddha* (*sautrāntika* and *yogācāra*) positions on point of detail is attempted; the same happens with *cārvāka* and *sāṃkhya* points of view. The theistic position of *nyāya* is debated, particularly with reference to the proofs in order to claim the existence of God. These proofs are defended, and possible defects in them are refuted, such as their hypothetical status as unproved, contradictory, too general, precluded, counterbalanced (*asiddha*, *viruddha*, *anaikānta*, *bādhita*, *satpratipakṣita*).

The twelfth *darśana* is named *jaiminidarśana* (291 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the school of Indian ritual exegesis, the *pūrvamīmāṃsā* (*breviter mīmāṃsā*), whose founder is Jaimini, the author of the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* (Aphorisms about Exegesis), a complex and deeply structured text containing 2745 aphorisms (*sūtra*).

The key term of this section is obviously *dharma*, to be intended in all its main acceptations, such as duty, law, rule, norm and so on. Other significant key terms in this section are focussed on the link existing between the ritual act and its remote effect, expressed by such concepts as the semantic sphere of 'unseen' (*apūrva*); the distinctions of the sections of a text concerning ritual practice in different parts, such as 'injunction' (*vidhi*), 'explanatory passage' (*arthavāda*), 'formula' (*mantra*) and so on. After a detailed synopsis of the root text of the school taken into consideration, the author starts from the very beginning of the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* (1, 1, 1), having as its object the intense desire to know duty (*dharmajijñāsā*), that must be examined through a fivefold hermeneutical path, including subject, doubt, *prima facie* argument, definite conclusion and connection (*viśaya, saṃśaya, pūrvapakṣa, siddhānta, saṅgati*). The sources used comprehend, apart from the teachings of the very same *pūrvamīmāṃsā* school and of its two main currents, *prābhākara* and *bhāṭṭa*, the *Manusmṛti*, the *Rgvedasaṃhitā*, the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* by Pāṇini, the *Nyāyabhūṣaṇa* by Bhāsarvajña, the *Nyāyakusumāñjali* by Udayana. A number of counterarguments from *sāṃkhya* and *nyāya* are taken into consideration and discussed. The particular position of the *pūrvamīmāṃsā* in the field of language philosophy is referred to, clearly distinguishing the two opposite positions inside the school about the mechanism of primary signification (*abhidhā*), namely the *abhihitānvayavāda*, or theory of the construction of the uttered (relating the meanings of words in a sentence after they are uttered, hold by the *bhāṭṭa* current), and the *anvitābhidhānavāda*, or theory of the expression of the construed (according to which the words convey their own meanings as well as the construed meaning of the sentence, hold by the *prābhākara* current). This section is very important, due to the strict and everlasting bond connecting the two *mīmāṃsās*, the first (*pūrva*) and the second one (*uttara*), both of them being interested in the preservation of the Vedic lore, the *pūrvamīmāṃsā* from the ritual point of view (*karmakāṇḍa*), the *uttaramīmāṃsā* from the point of view related to knowledge (*jñānakāṇḍa*). In this perspective the two *mīmāṃsās* are perhaps to be considered more as mutually synergistic schools, rather than as openly rival schools (Bronkhorst 2007; Halbfass 1983).

The thirteenth *darśana* is named *pāṇinidarśana* (284 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the school of Indian traditional grammar, the *vyākaraṇa*, whose founder (or at least the more ancient author whose work has arrived to us) is Dākṣiṣputra Pāṇini, the author of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, *Eight Day Grammar* (eight sections, each one of them divided in four 'feet', *pāda*, for a total sum of almost 4.000 aphorisms, *sūtra*), glossed by Kātyāyana (*vārttika*) and commented upon by Patañjali (*bhāṣya*). The term *vyākaraṇa* covers both the semantic spheres of grammar (and more generally of linguistics) and of philosophy of language, and it may etymologically be explained

alternatively as ‘formation of words’ or as ‘analysis’, in the sense of ‘separation, distinction’ of words into their constituent parts (such as root, prefix, suffix, and so on) (Thieme 1935; Palsule 1961). In this section too, as in some of the previous ones, the author takes into consideration the *incipit* of the root text of the school under examination, Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. In fact, the most celebrated example of the *incipit* (*śāstrārambha*, ‘beginning of a treatise’) of Sanskrit literature is the *śāstrārambha* of two works both attributed to Patañjali (and it is even deemed a sort of stylistic fingerprint of the author by those who consider these two authors being one and the same Patañjali, not two homonymous authors): the *Yogasūtra* begins with “*atha yogānuśāsanam*” (and now the teaching of *yoga*), and the *Great Comment* (*Mahābhāṣya*) to Pāṇini’s *Eight Day Grammar* (*Aṣṭādhyāyī*) begins with “*atha śabdānuśāsanam*” (and now the teaching of word) (see Slaje 2008). In this case *atha* works as a sort of illocutionary act, being able to begin a teaching and to validate its content (Austin 1962). The author of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* then discusses the distinction between Vedic words and common language words (*vaidika, laukika*), in this following the “Introduction” to Patañjali’s *Mahābhāṣya*, namely the *Paspaśā*. In fact, the *Paspaśā* is strictly followed in this section of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, and a famous Vedic passage quoted herein is discussed (*Rgvedasamhitā* 4, 58, 3). A number of Paninian rules are referred to (1, 2, 58; 1, 2, 64; 1, 4, 14; 2, 2, 14; 2, 3, 50; 2, 3, 65-6; 3, 2, 1; 3, 2, 3; 5, 1, 119), and for their exegesis on some occasions the classical subcommentary is used, namely the *Kāśikāvṛtti* (Benares commentary) by Vāmana and Jayāditya. Another very important grammatical work quoted in this section of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* is the *Trikāṇḍī* (Threefold work), *alias* ‘About word and phrase’, *Vākyaṇḍīya* (such passages quoted as 1, 1; 1, 11; 1, 14; 1, 16; 3, 1, 2; 3, 1, 33-4; 3, 2, 15-16) by Bhartṛhari (fifth century CE) (Abegg 1914; Yamashita 1998). There is even a reference to one of Bhartṛhari’s commentators, Helārāja, and to a subcomment to Patañjali’s *Mahābhāṣya*, the *Bhāṣyapradīpa* by Kaiyaṭa. So, not only the technicalities of Paninian Sanskrit grammar are referred to, but even the soteriological side of Bhartṛhari’s work, the so called ‘verbal absolute, absolute made of word’, *śabdabrahman*, a soteriological point of view dangerously contiguous with *kevalādvaitavāda*, and for this reason much attacked by Śaṅkara in such passages as *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 1, 3, 28 against the semantic doctrine of *sphoṭa* (Alston 1989, 108-16). Other works used in a doxographic attitude in this section are the *Mīmāṃsāslokaṅkārikā* by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, the *Nyāyasūtra* by Gautama; and grammar masters prior to Pāṇini are quoted too, such as Vāṅjyāyana and Vyāḍi.

The fourteenth *darśana* is named *sāṃkhyadarśana* (153 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the school of Indian cosmology, the *sāṃkhya* (enumeration [of the categories of reality]), the dualis-

tic school founded upon the dialectics between the two main principles of reality (*tattva*), the male inactive and conscious principle (*puruṣa*), and the female active and unconscious principle (*prakṛti*). The root text of the school is the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* by Īśvarakṛṣṇa, commented upon by Gauḍapāda (*bhāṣya*) and by Vācaspati Miśra (*Tattvakaumudī*). The *Sāṃkhyasūtra* by Kapila, commented upon by Aniruddha (fifteenth-sixteenth century CE, *Aniruddhavṛtti*) and by Vijñānabhikṣu (sixteenth century CE, *Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya*), is a late artificial work, entirely different from the 'real' *sūtras* being at the root of other schools. In fact the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (main passages quoted being 3-4, 9, 21-2, 24-7, 57, 59) is the main source for this chapter of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*; even the *Tattvakaumudī* by Vācaspati Miśra is used as a doxographical source. Two other important sources used by Mādhava are the *Bhagavadgītā* (The Song of the Supreme, 2, 16), and the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* (4, 5). The two famous metaphors of the system, the lame and the blind, and the actress on the stage (respectively *Sāṃkhyakārikā* [Aphorisms about the School of Enumeration] 21, 59), are reserved for the conclusion of the chapter. Evidently for the author of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, as for ourselves today, the literary sensitivity and a sort of theatrical attitude were an important feature of the *sāṃkhya* school.

The fifteenth *darśana* is named *pātañjaladarśana* (609 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the school of Indian ascetics, the *yoga* (discipline), the dualistic school founded upon the *sāṃkhya* doctrine, and adding to it the figure of a supreme deity (*īśvara*), so that the school is generally known with the alternative name of 'theistic *sāṃkhya*' (*śeśvarasāṃkhya*). Its root text is the *Yogasūtra* by Patañjali, and from this author the chapter derives its name. As usual for our text, immediate attention is dedicated to the *incipit* of the root text of the school being examined (*Yogasūtra* [Aphorisms about Discipline] 1, 1); a number of quotations from the same source are present in the chapter (*Yogasūtra* 1, 2; 1, 12-13; 1, 15; 1, 17-18; 1, 30; 1, 36; 1, 42; 1, 48; 2, 1; 2, 3-9; 2, 12-13; 2, 15; 2, 29-32; 2, 46; 2, 49; 2, 54; 3, 1-3; 3, 49-50; 4, 1; 4, 18; 4, 34), as well as from Vyāsa's comment upon it (*ad* 4, 21), and from Vācaspati Miśra's *Tattvakaumudī* (*ad* 2, 4-5). Other doxographical sources used are *Amarakośa* (*sub voce atha*); *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* (1, 5, 3; 4, 4, 23); *Kāṭhōpniṣad* (2, 12); *Bhagavadgītā* (2, 47; 2, 53; 6, 3; 6, 34); *Brahmasūtra* (1, 1, 1); Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* (*Paspaśā*); *Tāṇḍyamahābrāhmaṇa* (16, 8, 1; 16, 10, 1); Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (3, 3, 49); *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* (2, 1, 33-5; 3, 3, 14); *Yājñavalkyagītā*; Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (3, 2, 4; 3, 2, 78; 5, 2, 115; 7, 2, 115); *Śāradātilaka*; *Kāvya prakāśa* (2, 9-12); *Viṣṇupurāṇa* (6, 7, 36-8; 6, 7, 43-5); *Taittirīyāraṇyaka* (1, 2, 5). A certain interest is dedicated to non Vedic practices of Tantric *mantras*, a phenomenon properly extraneous to the *yogadarśana*, more related with *haṭhayoga* doctrine.

The sixteenth *darśana* is named *sāṃkaradarśana* (918 lines according to Abhyankar 1978), and it treats of the school of the absolute

nondualism, *kevalādvaitavāda*, based on the 555 aphorisms (*sūtra*) of the *Brahmasūtra*, divided into four chapters (*adhyāya*), each one of them divided into four feet (*pāda*), ascribed to Bādarāyaṇa (first-third centuries CE?). The second author relevant for the school is Gauḍapāda (sixth century CE?), author of the *Āgamaśāstra* (Authoritative Treatise on Tradition), divided in four books (*prakaraṇa*) and including in the first of them the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, for a total of 215 mnemonic strophes (*kārikā*). The real founder and head of the school is Śaṅkara (probably sixth-seventh century CE; an older date previously accepted, 788-820, is not so sure, being based on erroneous presuppositions), author of commentaries (*bhāṣya*) on the *Brahmasūtra*, on some *Upaniṣads* (mainly *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Taittirīya*, *Chāndogya*, *Aitar-eya*, *Īśa*, *Kaṭha*, *Kena*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Praśna*) and on the *Bhagavad Gītā*; and of a lot of original works (most famous the *Upadeśasāhasrī*). The doxographical sources of this chapter of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* are numerous: *Brahmasūtra* 1, 1, 1-4; Śaṅkara, *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 1, 1, 4 and 2, 1, 1; *Tarkabhāṣā*; *Tarkasamgraha*; *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3, 1, 1; 6, 2, 1; 6, 8, 6-7; *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2, 4, 1; *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 1, 10; 4, 5; 6, 19; *Bhāmati*; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2, 4, 5; *Yogasūtra* 4, 1; *Nyāyakusumañjali* 1, 15; *Śloka-vārttika*, *Autpattikasūtra*, *śabdapariccheda* 4; *Citsukhī*; *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 3, 3, 169; *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*; Śalikanātha, *Prakaraṇa Pañcikā*; *Sābarabhāṣya* 1, 15 and 8, 3, 14; Vācaspati Miśra explaining Maṇḍana Miśra's *Vīdhiviv-eka*; *Mahābhāṣya* 6, 1, 9; *Nyāyasūtra* 5, 2, 23; Padmapāda, *Pañcapādikā*; Prakāśātman, *Pañcapādikāvivaraṇa*; *Maṇikaṇa*; Sarvajñātman, *Samkṣepasārīraka*; *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 5, 17, 14; *Parāśarasmr̥ti* 12, 70; *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 2, 1, 5; *Taittirīya Samhitā* 1, 7, 4; Bhartṛhari, *Vāk-yapādīya* 1, 34; *Śloka-vārttika* 1, 1, 61; Śrīharṣa, *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā*; *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 22, 1; *Āpastambadharmasūtra* 1, 8, 22, 2. Apart from the work of tracing the sources quoted, already made by Abhyankar (1978) and Nakamura (1968-69), Klostermaier (1999) has traced the sources of some more quotations;⁴ some of them have nevertheless remained so far untraced.⁵ The content of the *sāṃkara-darśana* chapter of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* may be summarized as follows. First there is a refutation of *sāṃkhyadarśana*, based on the absence of necessary concomitance (*vyāpti*) between *probandum* and *probans* (*sādhya*, *sādhana*), and on the fallacy of the *probans* not being present in the minor term (*svarūpāsiddha*; sources Śaṅkara, *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 2, 1, 1; *Tarkabhāṣā*; *Tarkasamgraha*; lines 1-13). Then follows the remark of the absence of authoritative testimony for causality of *prakṛti* (sources *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3, 1, 1; *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4, 5; lines 14-25). The refutation of *sāṃkhyā* proceeds

⁴ Klostermaier 1999, 102 fn. 109; 104 fnn. 139, 142.

⁵ Klostermaier 1999, 104 fnn. 136-8, 140-1, 143, 148.

(source *Bhāmatī*; lines 26-63). Then the subject matter of the *Brahmasūtra* is expounded (lines 64-83). Then the exegesis of the term *brahmajijñāsā* (*Brahmasūtra* 1, 1, 1) is expounded (source *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2, 4, 5; lines 84-9). The impossibility to doubt that the desire to know the *ātman* is impossible is the next theme (lines 90-114). The next theme regards the impossibility of desire to know the self (lines 115-26). Then follows the expounding of absence of contradiction between the true experience of self and the world of daily experience (different opinions of Prabhākara Miśra and Kumārila Bhaṭṭa are compared; lines 127-37). Then follows the syllogistic proof that *brahman* cannot be the object of study (lines 138-47). The syllogism according to which *ātman* and non-*ātman* cannot be not different is expounded (lines 148-57). Then follows the *uttarapakṣa* about the possibility of beginning of *brahmajijñāsā* (lines 158-63). Then are expounded examples of the six characteristics (*upakrama* and *upasaṃhāra* together, *abhyāsa*, *apūrvatā*, *phala*, *arthavāda*, *upapatti*) of definite knowledge in a text (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6, 2, 1; 6, 8, 6; lines 164-71). Then follows the superimposition of the objectiveness of self on the ego-experience according to *vaiśeṣika* point of view (lines 172-85). Then follows the use of the metaphorical expression 'Rāhu's head' to illustrate the real meaning of verbal cognitions such as 'my body' (source *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 1, 1, 4; lines 186-94). Then follows the proof of superimposition of *ātman*, and the refutation of difference (sources *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 1, 1, 1; *Bhāmatī*; lines 195-205). Then the refutation of the *jaina* point of view about *jīva* is expounded (lines 206-19). Then follows the refutation of the proposition of *yogācāra* according to which *viññāna* is *ātman* (here a certain degree of doxographical distortion is actually present; lines 220-36). Then a doubt about the status of *ātman* is examined (sources *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6, 8, 6; *Brahmasūtra* 1, 1, 2; lines 237-53). Then the proposition according to which *āgama* is the means to ascertain *brahman* is illustrated (source *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2, 4, 1; lines 254-66). Then follows the proposition according to which *brahman* cannot be the subject matter of authoritative teaching (lines 267-70). Then it is expounded a *pūrvapakṣa* according to which *Veda* cannot be a *pramāṇa* for obtaining definite knowledge (source *Ślokaṅkārttika, Autpattikasūtra, śabdaparicheda* 4; lines 271-92). Then it is expounded an *uttarapakṣa* according to which meaning of words comes from established meaning (sources *Citsukhī*; *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 3, 3, 169; lines 293-321). Then follows a critique of the *nyāyavaiśeṣika* point of view relative to the doctrine of the beginning of the world (*pariṇamavāda* as *ārambhavāda*) (source *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*; lines 322-6). Then follows a discussion of superimposition (*adhyāsa*; source *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 1, 1, 4; lines 327-43). Then begins a long *pūrvapakṣa* concerning the criticism of *adhyāsa* by *mīmāṃsā* point of view (source Śalikanātha, *Prakaraṇa Pañcikā*; lines 344-61). This *pūrvapakṣa* is articulated in

five points: 1) absence of proof for illusory knowledge (lines 362-78); 2) absence of knowledge of the content of non-being (lines 379-84); 3) conjunction of cognition and remembrance (lines 385-407); 4) non-difference or identity of perception and memory (lines 408-32); 5) the common explanation of the phrase 'yellow conch' (lines 433-50). Then follows the *mīmāṃsā* point of view about the final proposition 'that is not silver' (lines 451-61). Then the critique of *abhāva* from the point of view of Prabhākara Miśra is expounded and discussed (lines 462-89). Then the answer of Śaṅkara to the preceding point of view is expounded (lines 490-538, source *Śābarabhāṣya* 1, 15). Then the confutation of a doubt regarding *adyāsa* is expounded (lines 539-46), followed by a reply to *mīmāṃsā* criticism (sources Vācaspati Miśra explaining Maṇḍana Miśra's *Vidhiviveka*; *Tarkabhāṣā*; lines 547-71). Then follows the refutation of two distinct *bauddha* points of view: first from *mādhyaṃika* perspective (lines 572-99); and subsequently from *vijñānavādin* perspective (lines 600-14). Then follows the refutation of the *anyathākhyāti* theory of error supported by the *nyāya* school (source *Nyāyakusumañjali*; lines 615-23). Then the epistemological problem of the unity of cognition of 'this' and 'silver' is dealt with (sources *Nyāyasūtra* 5, 2, 23; *Pañcapādikā*; lines 624-55). Then follows the exposition of the three levels of truth (*pāramārthikasatya*, *vyāvahārikasatya*, *prātibhāsikasatya*) and of the theory of error according to *advaitavedānta* (*anirvacanīyakhyaṭivāda*; sources Prakāśātman, *Pañcapādikāvivaraṇa*; *Citsukhī*; lines 656-76). Then the sameness of *māyā* and *avidyā* is expounded (lines 677-92). Then the proof for the existence of *avidyā* is dealt with (lines 693-704). Then follows the refutation of the thesis according to which absence, *abhāva*, is known through perception, *pratyakṣa*, supported by the *nyāya* school (lines 705-31). Then it is expounded the establishment of the nature of ignorance through a different interpretation of the phrase 'I am ignorant' (source *Mañikāṇa*; lines 732-48). Then follows the establishment of ignorance through inference (source Sarvajñātman, *Samkṣepaśārīraka*; some quotations untraced; lines 749-70). Then it is supported the proposition according to which nescience or ignorance, *avidyā*, can be ascertained from Vedic authoritative verbal testimony, *śruti* (source *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 1, 10; 6, 19; some quotations untraced; lines 771-80). Then the point of view of *śākta* thought about *māyā* and *śakti* is dealt with and refuted (lines 781-92). Then the point of view according to which the world is a projection of nescience is dealt with and refuted (sources *Parāśarasamṛti* 12, 70; *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 2, 1, 5; *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 1, 7, 4; Bhartṛhari, *Vākya-pāḍīya* 1, 34; *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6, 8, 7; *Slokavārttika* 1, 1, 61; Śrīharṣa, *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā*; lines 793-845). Then follows the critique of the reality of the world, due to the reason that there is no sublation of reality (source *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* 22, 1; lines 846-70). Then follows the discussion of the theme of the cessation of nes-

science through self-knowledge (parable of the prince) (sources *Chândogya Upaniṣad* 6, 8, 7; *Āpastambadharmasūtra* 1, 8, 22, 2; lines 871-97). Then it is expounded the conclusion of the first *sūtra* from the *Brahmasūtra*, and its connection with the rest of the work in the following *sūtras* (source *Brahmasūtra* 1, 1, 1; lines 898-902). Finally, the other *sūtras* of the portion of the *Brahmasūtra* known as *ca-tuḥsūtrī* are dealt with, and the concepts of *svarūpalakṣaṇa* and *taṭasthalakṣaṇa*; this part ends with some concluding remarks (source *Brahmasūtra* 1, 1, 2-4; lines 903-18).

3 Hermeneutical Remarks in Relation to Both Western and Indian Theories

After the analysis of the content and nature of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, along with a short review of its main doxographical sources, a pair of observations are now necessary. First, it is to be noted that no relevant mention is made in the treatise of any *śākta* school (apart from a brief refutation of *śākta* tenets in the last chapter, lines 781-92), and this is something strange, not easily to be accounted for. It is unlikely that no theoretical position from the *śākta* point of view could be present in the mind of the author of the treatise. The possibility that *śākta* position could have been considered by him as almost contiguous with *kevalādvaitavāda* is strengthened by the traditional attribution to Śaṅkara himself of such *śākta* works as the *Saundaryalaharī*. But it is obviously an *argumentum e silentio*, and it cannot resolve the problem definitively. The same kind of *argumentum e silentio* could be invoked for a possible solution to the problem of the contested authorship of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣyavivarana* ascribed to Śaṅkara; even this text is not alluded to in the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*. Second, even in absence of an overall study about the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, it is possible to conclude that its author uses frequently selected primary sources for the exposition of a single *darśana*, and that doxographical voluntary misrepresentation of rival schools is generally limited in the treatise. So we can confidently subscribe the conclusion by Nakamura about the third chapter of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, according to which sources employed in it are generally «authoritative and reliable» (Nakamura 1968, 514), and extend it to the entire work.

A possible hermeneutic tool for the theoretical interpretation of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* could be the application to the doxographical method of this text of the category of Inclusivism (German *Inklusivismus*), introduced by Paul Hacker (1983) and discussed by Wilhelm Halbfass (1990a, 1990b). In this perspective, Indian doxography could be hypothetically read as a good example of Inclusivism, that is of the peculiar Indian attitude to divide the subject matter into

an easily recognizable hierarchy, putting at the extreme periphery the doctrinal positions more distant from the position of one's own school, in an intermediate position those less distant from it, the ultimate position being obviously one's own and considered as the acme of the entire intellectual building of the different points of view. A certain degree of doxographical voluntary distortion of points of view different from one's own is unavoidable in this epistemic model of Inclusivism, being necessary to adapt other people's view to one's own point of view, in order to build a credible and consistent intellectual hierarchy.

A further hermeneutical tool for the theoretical interpretation of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* consists in a group of studies about the problem of the debate between different Indian schools of thought in the light of their possible political background and side-effects. Apart from two wide-ranging works by David Smith (2003) and Jonardon Ganeri (2011), a useful trend of research has been carried out by more sectorial works (Black, Patton 2015; Fisher 2017; Galewicz 2010; Mills 2018).

Within the hermeneutic perspective supported by Paul Hacker (1983) and Wilhelm Halbfass (1990a, 1990b), Inclusivism as described above stands in strong contrast with its opposite ideological position, namely Exclusivism, this last being a typical attitude for Middle East originary monotheisms (Hebraism, Christianity and Islam). Within this theological environment, Exclusivism means the fully aware will to exclude every possible alternative choice to one's own position, claiming that one's own concept of God is an absolute truth, irrespective of any serious confrontation with other possible options. Within Indian intellectual tradition this kind of trend is simply unconceivable, due to the importance of the vital need for each and every school to consider the opponents' positions, first of all in order to better confute them. This attitude is raised up to a hermeneutic and epistemological system within the horizon of *jaina* doctrine, with the concept of *anekāntavāda*, the doctrine according to which all phenomena and ideas are relatively manifold (Bhattacharya 2013; Mookerjee 1944). No proposition can be affirmed absolutely, all affirmations are at the same time true (and false, as says vedantic critique to this conception) under different conditions. So the nature of reality can be approached only through several steps: no single unilateral definition is adequate to describe things as they are, in their effective manifoldness and complexity.

According to *jaina* point of view,⁶ due to the fact that qualities are innumerable and their modalities are infinite, because they encom-

⁶ For a far deeper and more extensive treatment of *jaina* doctrine see Long (forthcoming).

pass both beginningless past and endless future, for the common people, not endowed with omniscience, it is not possible to perceive the existing (*sat*) in its entirety: in every single moment it will be possible only to perceive either the uniqueness (*ekatva*) of substance, or alternatively the transient multiplicity (*anekatva*) of its modalities. Complexity of what is existing, 'being' (*sat*), a reality simultaneously unique and multiple, is the very core of the doctrine of multiplicity of points of view, *anekāntavāda*, the only model being able to cope with the complexity of reality according to *jaina* epistemology. Change (*pariṇāma*) is continuous, and in epistemology this means that it is impossible (*rectius*: useless) to express judgments apart from the irrevocable multiplicity of points of view: *anekāntavāda* will become the pivot of *jaina* philosophy. The continuous change in which substances are immersed determines the doctrine of multiplicity of points of view (*syādvāda*, *anekāntavāda*), a position resulting in a 'doctrine of modes of considering' (*nayavāda*), having as its main rule the 'sevenfold method' (*saptabhaṅginaya*), a sum of possible statements about a given argument, starting from specific points of view, being defined by four specific peculiar factors: substance (*svadravya*), occurrence (*svakṣetra*), time (*svakāla*), and condition (*svabhāva*). The seven 'modes of considering' are: 1) 'current mode' (*naigamanaya*), considering the object regardless of generic and specific qualities; 2) 'synthetic mode' (*saṃgrahanaya*), putting in evidence generic features to the detriment of specific ones; 3) 'empiric mode' (*vyavahāranaya*), putting in evidence specific features to the detriment of generic ones; 4) 'straight mode' (*ṛjusūtranaya*), considering only the actual present aspect of its object; 5) 'verbal mode' (*śabdānaya*), considering the conventional meaning of words regardless of etymology; 6) 'advanced mode' (*samabhirūḍhanaya*), considering words according to etymology; 7) 'basic mode' (*evambhūtanaya*), considering the object as possessing or not possessing the qualities attributable to it according to etymology, that is, according to the relation of etymology with effective reality. Truth about a specific object can originate only from the comparison of these seven points of view, and only *jaina* doctrine can reach this goal, because each and every different speculation is overly unilateral. For example, *vedānta* overestimates *naya* 2 to the detriment of the other ones; *cārvāka* point of view overestimates *naya* 3; Buddhist position overestimates *naya* 4 and so on. The favorite formulation of *anekāntavāda* is named 'doctrine of the may be' (*syādvāda*), and it too involves seven points, applicable to any possible object of research whatsoever. The term *syāt* 'it may be', means more properly 'from a particular point of view', and the indeclinable particle *eva* has a limitative value, meaning 'only', excluding all unspecified conditions of the situation under exam. According to this formulation, about the object under exam it is legitimate to say that: 1) it is (*syād asti eva*); 2) it is not (*syād nāsti eva*); 3) both it is and it is not

(*syād asti nāsti ca eva*); with reference to different observers, or in different times; 4) it is undetermined (*syād avaktavyam eva*); with reference to the impossibility to see in it opposite qualities in one and the same moment; 5) it is and it is undetermined (*syād asti avaktavyam ca eva*); 6) it is not and it is undetermined (*syād nāsti avaktavyam ca eva*); 7) it is, it is not and it is undetermined (*syād asti nāsti ca avaktavyam ca eva*). For example, a certain piece of food may be available for subject A (1), but not for B (2), either it may be available or not for A or for B, or alternatively it may be available only for A in the course of time (3), it may be perceived as hot for A but not for B, or alternatively as hot for A in a moment and not hot in a subsequent moment, so resulting as undetermined (4), it may be available for A and undetermined (5), it may be not available for A and undetermined (6), and lastly, it may be available or not available, and undetermined for different subjects and under different circumstances (7). The continuous flux of becoming is channeled into a jail of judgments that try to preserve its fluidity: this is the only chance to offer an adequate description of a complex reality, opposing both perils: the declared impossibility of judgment, and the unilaterality of judgment. These two extremes must be avoided for *jaina* logic, insofar as they generate three wrong points of view, respectively illusionism (*māyāvāda*), determinism (*niyatīvāda*) and nihilism (*ucchedāvāda*). According to *jaina* doctrine, the multiplicity or multilaterality of points of view allows for a coordinated method (*samuccaya*), a method capable of coordinating different methods, being able to find a single path towards liberation (*mokṣamārga*), mainly based upon intuition (*darśana*), critical knowledge (*jñāna*), and behaviour (*cāritra*) (Bhattacharya 2013; Van den Bossche 1995).

From a hermeneutical perspective, it is possible that the incentive to cope with logic may have infiltrated Jainism, surely from the above-mentioned *syādvāda* and *anekāntavāda* methods, but even from the continuous attribution of authority and prestige to the *Veda* being maintained by the followers of the brahmanical school of the first exegesis (*pūrvamīmāṃsā*). Along this apologetical and polemical line we may collocate such works as the *Āptamīmāṃsā* by Samantabhadra (fifth century CE). A great focus about the problem of how to confer authority to a source, this work is the basis of a vast commentarial work, always rich in controversy, including such works as the *Aṣṭasatī* by Akalaṅka (eighth century CE) and the *Aṣṭasahasrī* by Vidyaṅanda (ninth century CE).

A method resembling *anekāntavāda* in the scope of its feasibility, but starting from very different theoretical premises, is the so-called tetralemma (*catuṣkoṭi*) ascribable to Nāgārjuna (secondo-third century CE). This dialectic method applies the fourfold negation to a thesis A in four steps (negating A, negating not-A, negating both A and not-A, negating neither A nor not-A), mainly applicable to be-

ing (*sat*), as negating being, negating not-being, negating both being and not-being, negating neither being nor not-being. As such, this method denies each and every possible ontological presumption. It is the main dialectical tool of the *mādhyamika* school, able to dismantle any conceptual building with meticulous and ruthless elegance (Chakrabarti 1980; Ruegg 1977; Westerhoff 2006). Within Nāgārjuna's thought, the tetralemma is functional to the doctrine of voidness (*śūnyatā*), but in a different context it will be considered as a neutral dialectical tool. As such it will be used within an entirely different hermeneutical perspective, without involving its extreme consequences proper to its Buddhist context, and it will be considered fitting within Vedantic apologetics, in such works as the *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā* by Śrīharṣa (twelfth century CE) and the *Tattvapradīpikā* aka *Citsukhī* by Citsukha (thirteenth century CE).

Should we adopt, methodologically and provisionally, the point of view of *nyāyadarśana* about the core of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, that is the way in which the different *darśanas* are expounded, we could affirm that the author of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* adopts a style of debate in the use of its arguments, while exposing perspectives different from his own, that we may identify in *naīyāyika* terms as *vāda*, a term meaning first of all 'speech, discourse, talk, utterance, statement' and more specifically 'thesis, proposition, argument, doctrine', if the exposition of an argument is concerned; and 'discussion, controversy, dispute, contest' (but even 'demonstrated conclusion, result'), if the discussion of the argument within a formal environment is concerned.

The founding text of *nyāya* school, its root (*mūla*) teaching, is the *Nyāyasūtra*, ascribed to Gautama Akṣapāda (200 CE?), a collection of aphorisms that characterizes a philosophical system already well-structured, claiming to be a *vādaśāstra*, an ideal normative system dealing with the philosophical debate, with all its variants, starting with the ideal debate (*vāda*), the philosophical discussion perfectly regulated in every minute detail. This method of discussion is not a monopoly of the logicians of the *nyāyadarśana*. We may find substantial traces of *vādaśāstra* in the works of Buddhist logicians such as Maitreya, Aśaṅga, Dignāga, and principles of scientific methodology of philosophical debate (*tantrayukti*), including norms for dialectics and eristic, both in the *Arthaśāstra* and in the *Carakaśāhitā*. The main distinction at work distinguishes above all the means for valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*), and the objects of valid knowledge (*prameya*), that is to say, mainly the individual conscious principle, the self (*ātman*). The *pramāṇas* constitute the main interest for *nyāya* and are considered as mere tools, means to the end consisting in the correct knowledge of the *prameya*. The *pramāṇas* accepted by Akṣapāda are four: direct sensory perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), analogy (*upamāna*) and authoritative verbal testimony (*śabda*).

Within *nyāya* we find the harmonic fusion of two originally distinct epistemological traditions: the *ānvīkṣikī vidyā* (science of critical examination), the very basis for treatises, because it individuates the norms according to which a treatise could be composed; and the tradition of the debate (*vāda*), that allows to defeat an opponent during a public dialectical debate. The debate in turn derives probably from the dialogical and enigmatic hymns of the *Vedas*, *brahmodya* and *vāk-ovākya*. The norms for composing a treatise (*tantrayuktis*), are the immediate and logical antecedent of the sixteen categories of *nyāya* system: we find them in medical texts (*Carakasamhitā* and *Suśrutasaṃhitā*) and in political texts (*Arthasāstra*). A list of 39 *tantrayuktis* includes: argument (*adhikaraṇa*); combination of words (*yoga*); determination of the meaning of a polysemic term according to its context (*padārtha*); illustration of unknown things in the light of known examples (*hetvartha*); brief enunciation of a theme (*uddeśa*); detailed description of a theme (*nirdeśa*); general instruction (*upadeśa*); presentation of a logical reason (*apadeśa*); resolution of a present difficulty through analogy with a past one (*pradeśa*); anticipation of a future event according to a present norm (*atideśa*); exception (*apavarga*); completing the meaning of a sentence according to its context (*vākyaśeṣa*); implication (*arthāpatti*); contrary assertion (*viparyaya*); referring to themes described in a different section of the treatise (*prasaṅga*); univocal assertion (*ekānta*); possibility of different points of view (*anekānta*); preliminary thesis (*pūrvapakṣa*); further thesis (*uttarapakṣa*); scrutiny through question and answer (*nirṇaya*); implicit acceptance of an opponent's position (*anumata*); arrangement according to a preset order (*vidhāna*); anticipation of arguments to be developed further on (*anāgatāvekṣaṇa*); allusion to previously discussed themes (*atikrāntāvekṣaṇa*); doubt (*saṃśaya*); elaborate explanation (*vyākhyāna*); technical use of a term (*svasaṃjñā*); etymologic explanation (*nirvacana*); illustration by example (*nidarśana*); injunction (*niyoga*); collation of different themes (*samuccaya*); alternative choice (*vikalpa*); understanding of something left unexpressed according to the context (*ūhya*); making extrinsic (*uddhāra*); analogy (*upamāna*); example (*dṛṣṭānta*); expression of missing terms (*pratyutsāra*); purpose (*prayojana*); possibility (*sambhava*) (Lele 1981).

According to *nyāya* the different typologies of debate are articulated as follows. The debate properly (*vāda*) is a discussion carried out using valid means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and hypothetical reasoning (*tarka*), with its arguments exposed in the form of inference (*anumāna*). The *vāda* has not the purpose of contrasting an opponent's theory, but of ascertaining the factual truth with reference to the discussed theme. Both the supporter and the refuter of a thesis (*vādin*, *pratīvādin*) are led by the sincere desire to arrive to the truth, as in the case of a debate between master and disciple from the same school. Eristic (*jalpa*) is an insincere discussion, in which the two

parts are led by the aim to defeat the opponent, not of ascertaining a part of truth being possibly common to both of them. The arguments used are, in full consciousness of the debaters, possibly counterfactual and insincere. The trophy of the dialectic competition is the only real goal of this style of discussion, irrespective of any judgement about effective truth. The quibble (*vitaṇḍā*) is at play when, within a discussion, the goal is not to support a thesis (like was still the case in the eristic), but exclusively to defeat the opponent's point of view, using a merely destructive method. The method of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, using wherever possible original sources for the schools under examination, and limiting at the most the doxographical distortion of their doctrine, allows us to suppose that the type of debate that its author had in mind was a sincere debate (*vāda*), not eristic (*jalpa*) and least of all a quibble (*vitaṇḍā*).

4 Conclusions

We have, *inter alia*, referred to two possible comparisons of Vedantic hermeneutical and doxographical tools from *jaina* and *bauddha* contexts, namely *anekāntavāda* and *catuṣkoṭi*, and to the methodological tools common to *nyāya* and scientific treatises (*tantrayukti*), these being partially shared by Vedantic exegesis.

More than this, it is to be noted that the very same possibility of a multilateral point of view in the interpretation of other people's positions is not at all an exclusive privilege of *jaina* epistemology (with its doctrine of *syādvāda* and *anekāntavāda*, alluded to above) within India's intellectual history. Indeed, it has been explicitly considered within *smārta* sphere by Bhartṛhari (fifth century CE, in such passages such as *Vākyapadīya* 2, 489), and it has been proposed to call this theoretical position Perspectivism (Houben [1997] 2007; see also Passi 2000), the point of view according to which the validity of different perspectives is accepted, and eventually one's own intellectual position emerges as the result of a sort of integration with the contrasting views of one's own opponents. Seen in the light of this additional hermeneutic model originating from *smārta* environment, in fact the more coherent interpretation of the doxographic methodology of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* could result in considering it as inspired by the dialectical method of the succession of the three classical positions presented in the large majority of Indian philosophical treatises. Within this perspective, arguments are presented according to a conceptual stratigraphy, considering in the first position the exposition of an argument by a disciple (*śiṣya*, etymologically 'the one that must be instructed'), so a preliminary exposition. In the second position there is the argument expounded by a subject being nearly a master, but still not in the role of a real master (*ācāryadeśīya*, 'al-

most a master'), so an intermediate position, being radically unilateral (*ekadeśin*). The final position is expounded as the definite conclusion of a master (*ācārya*, 'authoritative master'), so it is the definite position of the school with regard to the debated argument. This hierarchical sequence takes the name of 'preliminary point of view' (*pūrvapakṣa*), 'further point of view' (*uttarapakṣa*) and 'definite conclusion' (*siddhānta*) (Tubb, Boose 2007, 239-42).

Due to the fact that 1) our treatise uses a lot of original sources for the points of view under examination, and that 2) a doxographical distorsion of opponents' points of view for dialectical goals is reasonably limited, and in many cases a simple hypothesis *sub iudice*, the natural conclusion is that 3) the triadic dialectical model starting with *pūrvapakṣa*, going on with *uttarapakṣa* and concluding with *siddhānta*, is probably still the best and most appropriate way to consider the doxographical method of the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*. This kind of interpretation offers the methodological convenience that it uses an 'emic' rather than an 'etic' point of view (Pike 1967; Swadesh 1934). The glasses we wear above our nose can sometimes heavily influence our vision of the world outside us, and to use Indian lenses in order to enquire into Indian world is perhaps still the best thing to do, at least under certain conditions.

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The Architectural Heritage as a Projection of Competition and Negotiation Shared Muslim-Vīraśaiva Sacred Sites in Northern Karnataka. A Preliminary Approach

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Abstract Recent studies have reported that the mausoleum of Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī (r. 1422-1436), in Ashtur (Karnataka), is frequented by both Muslims and Vīraśaivas. Now, setting out from the pilgrimage performed on the occasion of the sovereign's 'urs, the aim of the present contribution is to analyze some of the architectural sites that are touched by the pilgrimage, and to examine how their spaces are understood and perceived by the devotees. The paper aims to shed light on the coexistence of these two religious groups and on the way in which certain forms of competition and negotiation have come to be transposed onto the cultural and historical landscape.

Keywords Indo-Islamic architecture. Bahmanī dynasty. Vīraśaiva. Pilgrimage. Sacred geography. Shared sacred sites.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Mausoleum of Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī in Ashtur – 3 Muslims and Vīraśaivas in the 15th-Century Deccan. – 4 From the Ziyāra to the Yātrā. – 5 The Village of Madiyal and its 'Allama Prabhu Temple'. – 6 From the Yātrā to a Shared Sacred Geography.



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1 Introduction

The dynamics behind the sharing – and sometimes disputing – of sacred spaces in central-southern India by Muslims and Vīraśaivas (or Liṅgāyats), have been the subject of field studies and research conducted over the past few years. The importance of the Viraśaiva presence in the Deccani region, on the one hand, and its proximity to the Muslim community, on the other, had already attracted the attention of various scholars.¹ Nevertheless, further research on the issue was inspired by the surveys carried out on the Indo-Islamic architecture in northern Karnataka. Here, some sites frequented by the two religious communities reveal the complexity and depth of their intertwining in the area and the crucial importance of the architectural heritage in witnessing and transposing – but also strengthening – the dynamics of coexistence between the two groups over the centuries. While the forms of this encounter had already partially emerged in previous studies, the observation of visits to local sites and of the rituals performed there has now suggested the existence of what could be defined as a ‘shared sacred geography’ and, at the same time, an evolution in the perception of these sites. In this sense, the present attempt to understand the sites’ transformation and redefinition over the time can bring out the growing role of architectural heritage in the processes of identity-building and political propaganda, also highlighting possible contemporary tensions.

The preliminary research conducted has set out from the mausoleum dedicated to Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī (r. 1422-36), the ninth sovereign of the Bahmanī dynasty, who reigned in the Deccan from 1347 to 1527. The first results have already highlighted the importance of the structure located in Ashtur – in the Bidar district, in northern Karnataka – and have shown that it is frequented by Muslims, Vīraśaivas and Hindus. The mausoleum appears to lie at the heart of a peaceful coexistence that has endured for centuries, and is the setting for a Muslim-Vīraśaiva celebration whose ‘syncretic’ rituals have always been extensively covered by the local and national press as an occasion for ‘communal harmony’ among the different religious communities.²

1 In this regard, one can think, for example, of the work of Roy Burman (2002), who focussed on the concept of syncretism applied to shrines frequented by both Hindus and Muslims, to the studies conducted by Jackie Assayag (1983, 1993 and 2004) in Karnataka and in South India, to the the work of Yoginder Sinkand (2003), which also touched, albeit marginally, on one of the sites that are the object of the present analysis, and – most recently – to the study by Manu V. Devadevan (2016).

2 Consider, for example, how each year *The Hindu* covers the event: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/hindumuslim-festival-to-conclude-today/article8435041.ece>.

While this preliminary research sought to trace the main characteristics of the mausoleum in relation to Aḥmad Shāh's ambitions, the observation of its fruition and frequentation on part of the devotees led to an initial reflection on the change in the monument's perception over the centuries in view of the persistence, or indeed consolidation, of its shared use.³ Furthermore, a study of the celebrations conducted every year on the occasion of the sovereign's 'urs'⁴ revealed a pivotal role of the structure as a major site at the centre of a sacred geography that appears to be reinstated each year through the performance of a pilgrimage that culminates at the sovereign's mausoleum and which involves a large number of both Muslim and Vīraśaiva devotees in the region. By focussing on the modern sharing of the structure, on its frequentation and veneration, and on participation in the 'urs pilgrimage, the present contribution intends to outline the mausoleum's relation to other 'shared sites', possibly connected to it from an artistic and architectural point of view, and to investigate the variety of meanings and powers these sites have come to embody in relation to the historical intersection between the Muslim and Vīraśaiva communities.

Traces of a 'peculiar relation' between the two communities, albeit fragmentary, have emerged in the studies concerning both the religious and the historico-political context. A strong Vīraśaiva presence, close to the Muslim authorities, emerged in the last decades of the Bahmanī Sultanate, after the transfer of the capital to Bidar (ca. 1424),⁵ and is reported to have also characterized the 'Ādil Shāhī Sultanate.⁶ So far, however, it has not been investigated in depth. De-

³ In this regard, see the two works published by the Author on the mausoleum of Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī (Mondini 2014, 2016), which provided a starting point for the present investigation.

⁴ From Arabic 'urs, lit. 'marriage'; it stands for the union with one's beloved - the divine.

⁵ After a brief period in Daulatabad, the dynasty of the Bahmanīs (1347-1527) - the first independent Islamic dynasty of the Deccani region - established its capital in Gulbarga (today known as Kalaburagi), but then transferred it to Bidar around 1424. Sherwani remembers how different dates have been assigned to this event, ranging from 1424 to 1426-7 (1985, 17-36, 122-6). He also mentions the Vīraśaiva literary production in Kannada, which must probably be dated to the Bahmanī period (Sherwani 1985, 292-3).

⁶ Eaton describes the Liṅgāyat (Vīraśaiva) presence on the Bijapuri plateau at the time of the Islamic conquest (1978, 9-13). He mentions the influence that the "dominant Hindu sect in the Bijapur region" had on the 'Ādil Shāhī Sultan Ibrāhīm II (r. 1580-1627), as demonstrated in his view by the sovereign's interest in a series of deities mentioned in the *Kitāb-i Nauras*, all of whom related to Śiva. Furthermore, he mentions a miniature that portrays the sultan wearing dark beads, which have been suggested to represent *rudrākṣa* berries, the ornament of Śaivaite devotees, and his epithet "Jagat Guru" (Eaton 1978, 101, see in particular note 68). He also describes the proximity and intertwining between the Sufi component - especially the "Sufi Dervish" Shāh Amīn al-Dīn A'lā (1597-1675) - and Liṅgāyat (Eaton 1978, 243-56, see in particular note 19). Beside noting the proximity between the two institutions of the Sufi *khānqāh* and

vadevan's recent study (2016)⁷ appears to take stock of the encounters and connections between the Vīraśaiva and the Islamic presence in the region. Thus, in the light of the scenario he has depicted and of the importance assigned to Aḥmad Shāh's mausoleum in the region, the present investigation intends to set out from the role the structure plays in rituals and the way it contributes to establishing a precise sacred geography in the devotees' imagination.

2 The Mausoleum of Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī in Ashtur⁸

As has emerged from the first published results, the central focus of the research conducted is certainly the mausoleum attributed to Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī (r. 1422-36) [fig. 1], within the last Bahmanī royal necropolis located in Ashtur, a village 2.5 km away from the city of Bidar, which encloses the tombs of the sovereigns based in the city.⁹ This renowned funerary complex was erected northeast of the capital, on the road leading to the village, and consists of a small funerary mosque, thirteen mausoleums, and a series of minor tombs and secondary structures (Yazdani [1947] 1995, 114-40).

Already described by Yazdani in the forties, the mausoleum ([1947] 1995, 114-28) - which inaugurated the complex that was later expanded until 1527 - has been the subject of several studies in recent years on account of its extraordinary decorative scheme, but also as a sacred space shared by Vīraśaivas and Muslims. On the one hand, both symbolically and artistically, the structure seems to perfectly meet the requirement of preserving the memory of the sovereign while epitomizing Bahmanī power; on the other hand, it is difficult to pigeonhole because of its mixed frequentation and the rituals performed there, as well as the complex range of meanings it has come to embody.

the Liṅgāyat *maṭha*, he recalls that, like Sufi devotees, Liṅgāyats began frequenting *dargāhs* (Eaton 1978, 9-13).

7 The study by Devadevan turned out to be essential in sketching the religious scenario in which the sharing of sacred sites here discussed seems to have originated.

8 The present chapter draws upon the results previously published by the author concerning the mausoleum of Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī (Mondini 2014, 2016), integrated with those of other scholars. Since the investigation here presented sets out from the celebrations held at the mausoleum, it is essential to reaffirm the dense articulation of meanings assigned to its space.

9 The mausoleums of the very first Bahmanī rulers were erected in Gulbarga, northwest of the Fort. Then a royal necropolis was erected northeast of the Fort, in proximity of the *dargāh* dedicated to Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Gīsūdīrāz (d. 1422). After the transfer of the capital to Bidar, all sovereigns were buried in the Ashtur complex. See Philon 2005, 155-9, 167-72; Mondini 2018, 293-7.



Figure 1 Interior of the mausoleum attributed to Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī (Ashtur, Bidar). Photo by Sara Mondini

Although, technically speaking, the funerary structure devoted to Aḥmad Shāh cannot be regarded as a *dargāh* درگاہ,¹⁰ and rather represents the mausoleum of a sovereign, it continues to attract thousands of Muslim and Hindu pilgrims. By virtue of the powers attributed to the ruler and his identification as a saint, the structure has become a major object of *ziyāra* (visit) and pilgrimage, and it is perceived by devotees more like a *dargāh*,¹¹ if not a temple – considering the shared attendance by Vīraśaivas and Hindus. This perception is primarily attributable to – and at the same time fuelled by – the complexity of the messages inherent to the structure itself and proclaimed by the epigraphic programme, as well as by the established rituals.

As emerged during the previous phases of the investigation, the mausoleum of Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī seems to perfectly reflect the

10 In South Asia the term *dargāh* refers to a shrine built over the grave of a revered religious figure, generally a Sufi saint or the representative of a Sufi brotherhood; *kḥānqāh* instead refers to a residential Sufi monastery.

11 Certainly, the appeal exercised by the mausoleum cannot be compared to that of the main *dargāhs* in the region, such as the Khuldabad ones dedicated to Sheikh Burhān al-dīn Gharīb (d. 1337) and his disciple Zayn al-Dīn Shirāzī (d. 1369), or the one dedicated to Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Gīsūdirāz (d. 1422) at Gulbarga, but its fame is equally remarkable; see Ernst 2004a, 227-38; 2004b; Hussaini 2004.

sovereign and patron's desire for self-representation and self-affirmation. In terms of its shape – a quadrangular layout with a domed roof – and decorative scheme, the mausoleum conforms to tendencies and models commonly adopted for funerary structures in the region, as illustrated by the mausoleum dedicated to the first legitimizer of Aḥmad Shāh, Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Gīsūdirāz (d. 1422), a representative of the Chishtiyya order, in Gulbarga.¹² However, it is the charm and the extraordinary complexity of the epigraphic and painting programme for the interior of Aḥmad Shāh's structure that have attracted the attention of many scholars, who have proposed detailed analyses, on several interpretative levels.

The interior presents some of the most remarkable and sophisticated decorations to be found in the sultanate's production. Despite the serious deterioration, it is possible to appreciate how both the walls and the dome originally featured a magnificent painted decorative programme consisting of floral arabesques of Persian inspiration, interspersed with geometrical motifs and epigraphic bands developed according to the *kufi*, *naskh* and *thuluth* calligraphic styles.

Philon, approaching the monument, focussed on the choice of decorative motifs and formal elements, which would recall Central Asia and the Iranian tradition. She noted how the painted decorations of the mausoleum not only find no parallel in 14th and 15th-century South Asian productions, but may be regarded as crucial evidence for Islamic painting in this period.¹³ Firouzeh (2015) and Gupta (2017) have instead concentrated their attention on the content of the epigraphic programme that runs on the interior walls of the mausoleum. More specifically, Firouzeh emphasizes the evocation of Shāh Ni'matullāh (d. 1430),¹⁴ the new spiritual guide to whom Aḥmad Shāh turned after Gīsūdirāz's death, and remarks that the choice to feature a text of Ni'matullāh inside a mausoleum was a clear attempt to record the Sufi-Sultan relationship and to legitimize Aḥmad Shāh and his descendants' right to the throne by establishing a sacred bond (2015, 209-13). While also referring to the Deccani adaptations of the Timurid international style or its Ottoman refractions,

12 The structure dedicated to the famous sheikh and erected in the first Bahmanī capital, Gulbarga, was apparently selected as a model for the ruler's mausoleum and for the mausoleum of his predecessor, Firūz Shāh Bahmanī (r. 1397-1422); see, among others, Merklinger 1981, 36-43; Michell, Zebrowsky 1999, 66-76; Hussaini 2004.

13 According to Philon, this is otherwise only evidenced by limited Yemenite, early Ottoman, and Timurid examples (Philon 2000, 5).

14 Shāh Ni'matullāh (d. 1430) was the founder of the Ni'matullāhiyya, the Persian Sufi order. Aḥmad Shāh would appear to have repeatedly invited its leading representative to move to Bidar. Ni'matullāh (d. 1430) initially turned down the sovereign's offer, but a few years later he agreed to send his grandson Nūrullāh to the Bahmanī court and, after the death of Ni'matullāh, his son Khalilullāh (d. 1455) – Nūrullāh's father – also moved to Bidar. See Rizvi 1986, 251-2; Aubin 1991; Speziale 2013; Mondini 2016, 159-62.

Gupta reflects on the several ways in which the poems are integral to the shrine's visual context, and on the new and multiple meanings the visual milieu assigned to the poetry selected for the epigraphical programme (2017, 205). He specifically focuses on the recurrence of the wordplay on *'ain* – a term that both in Persian and in Arabic carries several meanings, including 'eye, vision, wellspring, fountain, or source' – whose use creates multiple meanings evoking the eye of the beloved, water sources (poetic and physical – those surrounding the mausoleum), and Aḥmad Shāh himself (Gupta 2017, 189, 205).

In my contributions to the study of Aḥmad Shāh mausoleum (Mondini 2014, 2016), I instead focussed my attention on the ruler's religious identity and on the instrumental use he appears to have made of the title of *walī* bestowed upon him by Shāh Ni'matullāh,¹⁵ in an effective political propaganda effort which would appear to have ensured the sovereign's fame immediately after his death. Artistic and architectural patronage met the constant need to represent political power and fulfil propaganda requirements by visually conveying the distinguishing features of ruling dynasties. This often meant the use of select registers, and especially inspiring models and symbolic elements, even in the architectural field: as might be expected, the peculiarities of the patronized monuments and their specific location at times make up for existing gaps in terms of identity or religious orientation. From this point of view, the mausoleum of Aḥmad Shāh constitutes a striking example. In the Deccani religious and political context, *dargahs* became seats of religious power and symbols of the union and reciprocal investiture between religious and political authority, extending beyond the rulers' death.¹⁶ My analysis of the inscription adorning the dome of Aḥmad Shāh's mausoleum aimed to suggest that the figure of the ruler-saint and his legitimation were no longer exclusively based – as had been the case in the other Islamic capitals in South Asia – on a constant interplay between the sovereign's mausoleum and the *dargāh*.¹⁷ What we have, then, is an overlap of religious and political meanings: as stated also by Gupta: "the water flowing through Bidar springs from the source of the mystical beloved and is blessed" and the sovereign, the *walī*, would be responsible for "bestowing Bidar with such fortune that the land became fertile, the crops had water, and the community thrived" (2017,

¹⁵ While Shāh Ni'matullāh declined the sovereign's invitation to take up residence at the Bahmani court, he sent him a letter of 'initiation', addressing him by the title of *walī*, along with "a cap of discipleship and a robe authorizing the sultan to act as Ni'matullāh's disciple" (see Rizvi 1986, 251-2; Aubin 1991; Speziale 2013; Mondini 2016, 159-62).

¹⁶ See for example Ernst 2004a, 201-26 and Mondini 2018.

¹⁷ The topic has been widely investigated, especially from a political and religious point of view. See in particular, among others, Digby 1986, 1990; Kumar 2017; Aquil 2008; Banerjee 2014. More specifically focussed on the Deccani scenario are Sherwani 1990; Ernst 2004a; Green 2004b, 2012; Mondini 2017.

205). The decorative programme designed for these purposes would appear to revolve around the use of a consciously striking language, although its various parts play on an underlying ambiguity. Aḥmad Shāh, the *walī* and friend of God, is at the same time a disciple; and although he apparently embraces the teachings of the Ni'matullāhiyya – as mentioned above, the lower walls of the mausoleum display the writings of Ni'matullāh himself –¹⁸ and maintains the Sunni beliefs of his predecessors, he now inhabits a mausoleum that, precisely by virtue of an epigraphic programme whose content finds no parallel in the Deccan, comes across as Shi'ī in the eyes of many art historians.¹⁹ The decorations thus stand as an enduring testimony to the sovereign's role and to his unique qualities as an elect.

In the light of the double, political and spiritual, role acquired by Aḥmad Shāh, his final resting place – from which he continued to operate for the good of his subjects and devotees – was intended to powerfully convey the ruler's authority, as well as the distinguishing traits of his identity. Indeed, the recognition of his status as a saint and the ambiguity in defining his religious orientation contributed to transforming his burial into one of the most important pilgrimage destinations in northern Karnataka, also frequented by non-Muslims. It is therefore probably by virtue of the identity of Aḥmad Shāh – that of a sovereign-saint – that the practice of celebrating his 'urs, the anniversary of his death,²⁰ was consolidated. Today, the striking endurance of the celebrations (*jātrā*) constitute a tangible manifestation of the great influence the monument exerts, at least on a regional level.²¹

3 Muslims and Vīraśaivas in the 15th-Century Deccan

Given our current knowledge of the history of the perception of Aḥmad Shāh's burial, it is difficult to reconstruct and fully explain the sharing of the site by Muslims, Vīraśaivas, and Hindus, and the origins of their joint pilgrimage, especially owing to the fragmentary information existing and the discordance of local testimonies.

¹⁸ As remarked by Firouzeh 2015, 191-204 and Gupta 2017, 192-204.

¹⁹ The idea of an adherence to Shi'a Islam by the sovereign whose religious orientation remains debated, see in particular Haig 1924 and Mondini 2016.

²⁰ In Muslim India, annual celebrations of this kind are generally reserved for Sufi saints and they are meant to commemorate the saints' union with God on the anniversary of their death. As remarked by Green, over the course of its history South Asia has also witnessed celebrations held for the 'urs of sovereigns – one could think of Aurangzēb (d. 1707) and Mumtāz Mahal (d. 1631) or of famous poets such as Bidel (d. 1720); see Green 2004a, 135, 142.

²¹ The importance of the structure and its modern frequentation and perception by devotees has been analyzed in depth for the first time in Mondini 2014.

According to what is reported by Yazdani and to local testimonies, the Viraśaivas' participation in the 'urs of Aḥmad Shāh, as well as their 'appropriation' of the figure of the saint-sovereign and of his burial, gradually emerged after the sovereign's death (1995, 115-16). However, while in the case of religious figures with a key role in the region, such as the above-mentioned Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Gīsūdirāz, the sources help us reconstruct interfaith encounters and exchanges between the representatives of these religious traditions,²² in the case of the sovereign the sources examined so far do not seem to provide any information regarding his perception by non-Muslims. Moreover, the secondary sources surveyed and the devotees' accounts are anything but uniform and consistent, which does not help to explain the link between Viraśaivas and Aḥmad Shāh, making the modern perception of the ruler far from univocal.

The Viraśaivas, in particular, would generally appear to identify the sovereign as an incarnation of Allama Prabhu - a saint and a leading Viraśaiva spiritual authority - but local accounts further suggest that some devotees believe the ruler-saint to be an incarnation of Basava (d. 1196), the person responsible for spreading the movement across south-central India in the twelfth century. All Viraśaiva devotees - and an increasing number of Muslims too - attribute the mausoleum to 'Sultan Basha', which appears to be a contraction of 'Sultan Bahman Shāh',²³ and whose name is sung and invoked during the *jātrā*'s celebrations. Regardless of the difficulties in defining the perception of the sovereign-saint by the faithful belonging to the various religious communities, the devotees all seem to acknowledge the moral and spiritual stature of Aḥmad Shāh, along with his thaumaturgical powers and ability to perform miracles, including - as also reported by Sikand - rain miracle described by Firishta.²⁴

In his pioneering work, Devadevan (2016) explores religious processes in the Deccan region between the 11th and the 19th century, and throws new light on the making of religious communities. In a way, he seems to corroborate the present Viraśaiva perception by

²² See for example Rizvi 2003, vol. 1, 251-6.

²³ The term *bāshā*, a variant of *pāshā*, is a Turkic title recurring in some sources; see, for example, the term "Isupāšca" attested in a later period and mentioned by Devadevan 2016, 91.

²⁴ Aḥmad Shāh was believed to possess healing powers, the ability to solve fertility problems, and more generally the power to act as an intermediary with God - by virtue of his proximity to the divine as a *walī* - and hence the capacity to dispense *baraka*. According to Firishta, the sovereign performed the 'rain miracle' by bringing rain during a drought through the power of his prayers. This, however, can easily be identified as one of the most recurrent *topoi* in Islamic hagiography, which frequently ascribes the effective use of *ṣalāt al-istisqā'* (lit. 'prayer for the rain') to religious figures throughout history. For this view, see Sikand 2003, 83; Firishta 2006, 250.

quoting Tarikere,²⁵ who mentions the presence of an inscription “on the tomb” of Aḥmad Shāh, “where the word ‘Allamaprabhu’ [appears] in Devanagari letters” (Devadevan 2016, 103, and note 376; Tarikere 1998, 56). However, this inscription, which would evidently confirm the link between the sovereign and the Vīraśaiva saint, is not mentioned in any of the studies conducted so far on the mausoleum and its epigraphical programme, as it has not been found during the field research conducted. Even Yazdani, in his translation of the whole epigraphic programme of Aḥmad Shāh’s mausoleum, apparently did not come across any mention of Allama Prabhu. During his analysis of the various monuments of the royal necropolis and of their epigraphic evidence, he only mentions a Marathi inscription – coupled with a Persian one – on the well located south of the Bahmanī ruler’s mausoleum and dated to the Baridi era (1487-1619) (Yazdani [1947] 1995, 114-29, 140-1). However, the two inscriptions appear to be quite distinct and do not mention Allama Prabhu in any way.

Despite the absence of the evidence he mentions, Devadevan’s analysis sheds considerable light on the proximity between Vīraśaivas and Muslims in the region. His study, which investigates the complex intertwining between the two religious communities, integrates the results of the field research conducted by the anthropologist and historian of religions Jackie Assayag.²⁶

In the Deccan, during the period under examination, earnest attempts were made to integrate many of the saintly genealogies and practices that had appeared in the preceding centuries into a single system called Vīraśaivism through new narratives which were polyphonic and variously interlinked, but at the same time all centred on the figures of Allama Prabhu or Basava. Furthermore, from the picture outlined by Devadevan, it emerges that by the 16th century onward the authority previously assigned to scriptures, visions, and practices had come to be embodied by individuals through the figure of the guru: “His word, both written and oral, and his ideals, represented through legends, were worthy of adoration by the followers”. This emphasis on the individual as the source of authority had two important consequences according to him:

having lost their authority, texts, visions, and practices were now only secondary in importance, with bars removed from subjecting them to revision, discarding them at convenience, and draw-

²⁵ Tarikere’s *Karnatakada Sufigalu* (The Sufis of Karnataka), has informative comments on a number of these sites, although it does not engage in an architectural analysis of the sites (Tarikere 1998, 56). I thank Dr. Manu V. Devadevan for his kind indications and comments on Tarikere’s work.

²⁶ Assayag has long worked on the Hindu-Muslim encounter in South India, especially looking at Vīraśaivas; see, among other works, Assayag 1983 and 2004.

ing authority from sources of any other tradition [and] archetypal guru figures could be brought into the imagined genealogies of these traditions, irrespective of which tradition they actually belonged to. (Devadevan 2016, 100)

In his reconstruction Devadevan presents saint Koḍēkallu Basava (presumably born around 1450) as the one who consolidated and gave systematic expression to these developments (2016, 103), while his hagiography is significant in expressing the kind of intertwining of traditions that can contribute to explain the sharing of sacred sites. He reports that it was saint Ārūḍha Saṅgamaṅātha, who arrived in Vijayanagara sometime in the last quarter of the 15th century, who made Koḍēkallu Basava realize who he had been in his fourteen previous births. In four of his previous lives he had been Tirujñānasambandhar, one of the sixty-three Śaiva Nāyanārs of Tamilnadu, Allama Prabhu and Basava (contemporaries in the mid-12th century), and Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam. Devadevan continues by stating that when Koḍēkallu Basava was at Kalyana, a “lord of the world” (*lōkapati*) – referred to as “Isupāśca” and identified as Yūsuf Bādśāh or Yūsuf Khān, the founder of the ‘Ādil Shāhī dynasty (1490-1510) of Vijayapura (Bijapur) – contacted him in order to meet him. Although Koḍēkallu Basava was reluctant to meet the ruler, he was forcibly taken to the sultan’s palace. Here “Isupāśca” struck him with a dagger, but the dagger passed through his body as though it was moving through water, without harming the saint. The sovereign became his devotee, and asked for a gift of five bundles of *vacanas*, and some hair. Since Koḍēkallu Basava was deemed to be an incarnation of the Prophet Muhammad, the hair he gave the sultan came to be preserved in Bijapur as a relic of the Prophet. In the light of the fact that the hair now preserved in the Hazratbal shrine – in Srinagar, Kashmir – as Muhammad’s relic was brought from Bijapur, it may be assumed that what is believed to be Hazratbal’s hair is actually the hair of Koḍēkallu Basava (Devadevan 2016, 91).

The numerous exchanges or ‘cross-fertilization’ between different religious traditions, as those reported in the example here outlined, are often interpreted as instances of ‘religious syncretism’. Nevertheless, Devadevan highlights Tarikere’s critiques of this position, even though they are rather poorly articulated. Hutton too, while discussing the artistic environment of the Deccan at the time of ‘Ādil Shāhī, is skeptical about the pertinence of this kind of interpretation. She notes that the idea of syncretism is based on a conception of different (religious or artistic) traditions autonomous and watertight entities, which in practice was hardly the case in the region (Hutton 2006, 13-19). Artistic vocabularies, like religious traditions, were porous and, especially at a popular level,

they tended to enmesh into one another in complex ways that involved conflict, negotiations, exchanges, conciliation, acceptance, and assimilation to an extent that made a distinction between one tradition and the other impossible. (Devadevan 2016, 86, in particular fn. 290)

The above-mentioned case of Koḍēkallu Basava and his role in the religious developments of the time can be compared to some extent to the slightly earlier figure of Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī and the construction of his identity, crucial to my own argument. The Bahmanī sovereign would appear to have legitimized his own role – as a political and spiritual leader – by resorting to ‘fanciful genealogies’, and by locally promoting a further development in Sufi-sultan relations, through the intertwining of different religious traditions. In the region, from the 14th century onward, after the establishment of Sufi brotherhoods, *dargāhs* and *khānqāhs* underwent a fundamental transformation, which led them to play a key role from a political, social and religious point of view. During Bahmanī rule, the already mentioned Sayyed Moḥammad Ḥosaynī Gisūderāz, the first legitimator of Aḥmad Shāh, initiated the practice of hereditary succession in his *khānqāh* in Gulbarga. The bestowing of a perpetual land grant by Aḥmad Shāh was historically decisive in this context. Indeed, the fact that control over the land was linked to succession within the brotherhood reinforced the principle of hereditariness, by consolidating the position of the *khānqāh* also as a political force. This, as remarked by Devadevan,

led to the creation of strong images of tradition and continuity that came to be explored through representational strategies deployed in the legends and hagiographies (2016, 80)

and fostered the evolution of the above-mentioned real and imaginary lineages of succession.

Today this complexity and its historical, political and religious consequences are often overlooked and seem foreign to popular beliefs and to the faithful’s feelings. The devotees’ perception of Aḥmad Shāh continues to be marked by a certain degree of confusion. On the Muslim side, the issue does not seem to be considered relevant, and there is a tendency to emphasize the ‘open-mindedness’ of what is seen as an ‘enlightened ruler’. Already Yazdani ([1947] 1995) had actually speculated that the links between the Vīraśaiva and Muslim communities could be rooted in the sovereign’s liberal views. Having been disciple of Gisūderāz and having embraced Ni‘matullāhiyya principles, he would have followed no fixed doctrine, fluctuating between Sunna and Shi‘ia Islam while probably also respecting Vīraśaiva doctrine. And precisely because of Aḥmad Shāh’s rather ‘syncretistic’

and inclusive views, Yazdani compares him to Akbar (r. 1556-1605) and Dara Sikoh (d. 1659) ([1947] 1995, 116). While this hypothesis is certainly tenable, the picture of the regional religious context accurately drawn by Devadevan and the rituals centred on the ruler's mausoleum point to a complexity that goes beyond the Ashtur site and must be understood in the wider regional trends and religious transformations.

4 From the Ziyāra to the Yātrā

The grand celebration held for Aḥmad Shāh's 'urs reveals how the religious authority of this figure has long outweighed his role as a sovereign, and is recognized by the various religious communities. While in everyday routine his grave is an object of *ziyāra* for devotees belonging to different faiths, it is on the occasion of the anniversary of his death that the sharing of the mausoleum's sacred space and rituals has apparently been confirmed and consolidated over the centuries. In the light of the crucial importance assigned to these celebrations as a means to understand Aḥmad Shāh's identity and propaganda, as well as the present relations between the Muslim and the Vīraśaiva community, I decided to focus my field investigation on the annual *yātrā* (pilgrimage) and *jātrā* (festival)²⁷ held to celebrate the event. The two terms seem to be used inconsistently by the devotees. Most of them often use the term *jātrā* to refer both to the pilgrimage that starts from Madiyal and ends at Aḥmad Shāh's mausoleum in Ashtur, and to the five-day festival at the burial site, which opens with the arrival of the pilgrims [fig. 2]. While still having religious connotations, *jātrā* generally indicates primarily or largely secular fairs and festivals but in this case it seems to be used despite the strong religious connotation of the event. On the other hand, the two meanings of *jātrā* and *yātrā* can often converge at the time of religious events, for example when people travel to witness the procession of deities along prescribed routes or congregate at some sacred site (Gurung 1981, 31; Messerschmidt, Sharma 1982, 148; Gold 1990, 136-45).

Alongside the daily visit to the sovereign's mausoleum made by devotees, the 'urs celebrations, that generally take place each year between late March and early April, have become a strikingly important event in the region. Approximately one week before the celebration, when Aḥmad Shāh's tomb is washed and smeared with sandal paste, the Vīraśaiva *janḡam* of Madiyal – a village in the district of Gulbarga – sets off in the direction of Ashtur, with a trail of hun-

²⁷ Both terms derive from the same Sanskrit root; for a discussion of *jātrā* and *yātrā* see also Gold 1990, 136-45.



Figure 2 The arrival of pilgrims in Ashtur, at the Bahmani necropolis, at the end of the annual *yātrā*. Photo by Sara Mondini

dreds of pilgrims and devotees, both Muslims and Vīraśaivas. This *yātrā* of over 150 km, which also touches other sites,²⁸ has apparently been performed every year since the sovereign's death in 1436. It culminates with a five-day *jātrā* by the mausoleum itself in Ashtur. It is not my aim here to provide a detailed description of the shared rituals held by pilgrims and devotees from the different religious communities during the nearly five days of the foot-march and the other five days of the *jātrā* in Ashtur.²⁹ Nevertheless, the striking endurance of the celebrations dedicated to Aḥmad Shāh and the great influence they exert on a regional level call for a reflection on the significance of the spaces and buildings involved.

The long *yātrā* touches an established series of sites along an itinerary, which winds its way through the districts of Gulbarga and Bidar, in northern Karnataka, nearly touching the Maharashtra border. According to popular belief, these stopovers retrace a journey made by Allama Prabhu, but it is difficult today to verify this tradition and identify its origin. The various stops are made both to per-

28 The Author performed the pilgrimage from Madiyal to Ashtur for the first time in March 2016, while further research has been carried out over the following years with the aim of observing rituals and studying the sites involved, their architecture and their modern perception by devotees.

29 The Ashtur *jātrā* held at the mausoleum of Aḥmad Shāh begins with the *janḡam* and pilgrims' arrival at the site and lasts for five days; it is marked by the daily performance of rituals and by a rich programme of events, such as concerts featuring *qawwālī* (devotional music traditionally performed at Sufi shrines), and a *kuṣṭī* tournament (a kind of South Asian wrestling), rituals and events that are now being studied in detail.



Figure 3 *Mazār* in Khamthana, one of the stops of the annual *yātrā*. Photo by Sara Mondini

form rituals and to take some rest. During the last editions, due to the high temperatures - 45-47 Celsius degrees - pilgrims were marching during the night and resting during the day.³⁰ The stopovers are generally in open areas or near recently built (or rebuilt) temples.

One interesting exception is the last stop in Khamthana, an important suburb of Bidar, where pilgrims spend the night in what appears to be an Islamic *mazār* [fig. 3] before their triumphal entrance in Bidar. In this case the *pūjā* takes place right at the *mazār*, where the pilgrims rest before entering the city late in the afternoon on the last day of march. Despite the limited architectural interest of many of the sites touched by the journey, it is interesting to note that in the case of stops in the proximity of sacred structures, including temples - with the exception of the above-mentioned case of Khamthana, where the *pūjā* is held at the *mazār* - the ceremonies and the rituals are kept outside of the established sacred spaces, in open areas. Here the religious symbols brought along on the pilgrimage are laid out and rituals are performed, imbuing the spaces with peculiar new symbolic values and meanings. Through the performance of the pilgrimage we thus witness the creation of an 'itinerant ritual space' characterized by new ritual regulations, and within which all the prescriptions and typical hierarchies of village life - and the

³⁰ This also happened on the occasion of the *yātrā* in which the Author took part in 2016. For a discussion on the religious significance of walking in India, as a bodily expression of liminality and for an understanding of the dimension of pilgrimage see, among others, Karve 1962 and Olivelle 2007.



Figure 4 The inaugural evening of the annual *jātrā*, the *mutawallī* and the *jaṅgam* officiating together at the Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī tomb. Photo by Sara Mondini

kind of “decoupage spatiaux” studied by Assayag – appear to be overthrown (1983, 85).

Upon his arrival in Ashtur, the *jaṅgam* meets the *mutawallī* of the necropolis at the mausoleum of Aḥmad Shāh to officially open the celebrations. During the five days of *jātrā*, each ritual and procession performed at the site will involve devotees from different religious communities. The *mutawallī* and the *jaṅgam* will celebrate the ‘*urs*’ simultaneously, each according to the prescriptions of their own religious tradition (Mondini 2015, 133-41). On the inaugural evening of the *jātrā*, both will officiate at the sovereign’s tomb, the former by reciting the *sūrat al-fātiḥa*, the opening *sūra* of the Qur’an, the latter by performing a *pūjā*, while the faithful’s songs and invocations to ‘Sultan Basha’ will mark the rhythm of the procession [fig. 4]. The ritual, established and repeated every year, while centred on the mausoleum of the ninth Bahmanī sovereign, also involves some of the adjacent mausoleums, which are part of the complex too. In particular the mausoleum presumably attributed to Aḥmad Shāh’s son, the mausoleum of Aḥmad Shāh’s wife, the mausoleum of Sultan ‘Alā al-Dīn Shāh II Bahmanī (r. 1436-58), the mausoleum of Sultan Humāyūn Bahmanī (r. 1458-61) and the mausoleum of Sultan Nizām Shāh – Humāyūn’s son – (r. 1461-63) [fig. 5].

It is interesting to note that the rituals also involving other structures within the complex seem to encourage their frequentation by devotees. The field research carried out over the years has appar-



Figure 5 The performing of rituals at the Bahmani necropolis during the annual *jātrā*.
Photo by Sara Mondini

ently revealed an increase in devotees' visits not only to the mausoleum of Aḥmad Shāh, but also to the other ones within the complex that are touched by the rituals performed on the occasion of the 'urs. These are mausoleums that until a few years ago were considered part of a historical more than sacred site. Thus, it is evident that in order to understand the modern value assigned to Aḥmad Shāh's burial - and to the entire Bahmani necropolis - it is necessary to study and appreciate it in relation to the wider network of sacred places and Vīraśaiva shrines, starting perhaps from the Madiyal structures from which the *jaṅgam* sets out on the occasion of the 'urs, and from the series of sacred places involved in the celebrations for this important anniversary. In these sacred places, in the collective imagination, the history of Vīraśaivas intertwines with legendary episodes from the life of the Bahmani sovereign, whose study could also contribute to perpetuate this peaceful sharing of spaces.

5 The Village of Madiyal and Its 'Allama Prabhu Temple'

As already mentioned, the annual pilgrimage to the mausoleum attributed to Aḥmad Shāh I Bahmanī on the occasion of his 'urs starts



Figure 6 Pilgrims leaving Madiyal to Ashtur on the occasion of the annual *yātrā*. Photo by Sara Mondini

from Madiyal, a small village of nearly 7,000 inhabitants³¹ in the Gulbarga district. Every year the *yātrā*, which sees the participation of Vīraśaivas and Muslims alike, sets out from the so-called 'Allama Prabhu temple',³² after a *pūjā* is performed inside the 'temple' and a procession through the village [fig. 6].

The information we have about Madiyal is nothing short of scarce. The village is dominated by what appear to be the remains of a small citadel, of which however only a tower remains, along with a few collapsed walls and at least a couple of ancient temples with inscriptions in Kannada [fig. 7]. As often happens, the reuse of building material for the construction of the village houses has further compromised the conservation of the entire site. Although the analysis of the evidence found is currently underway and few conclusions can thus be drawn on the history of the place, some sculptures of elephants emerging from the ground [fig. 8] - found in one of the main streets of the village and in front of one of the damaged temple structures - would suggest at least a Chalukyan (ca. 975-1189) phase of patronage, before the whole area fell under the control of the Islamic dynasties. While these sculptures are very ruined today and used inappropriately by the population, in terms of their style and decora-

31 According to the 2011 census.

32 The geographic coordinates of the so-called 'Allama Prahbu temple' in Madiyal are 17°23'21.1"N 76°29'36.1"E.



Figure 7 Ruins in the village of Madiyal. Photo by Sara Mondini

Figure 8 Elephant sculpture emerging from the ground in the village of Madiyal. Photo by Sara Mondini

tive elements they seem to recall the rock-cut elephants so typical of the dynasty's production – for example, those of the Thousand Pillar Temple of Warangal (present-day Telangana), dating back to 1163 CE.

According to Sikand, the choice of Madiyal as a starting point for the annual pilgrimage is due to the existence there of a “small structure” devoted to Aḥmad Shāh and associated with legendary events in his life (2003, 84-6).³³ Nevertheless, the complex from which the Vīraśaiva *jaṅgam* sets out to reach Ashtur is regarded today as a ‘temple’ dedicated to Allama Prabhu, and its connection with Aḥmad Shāh remains unclear. The local accounts I have personally collected during the pilgrimage and during my research in the region differ considerably from, and often clashes with, the data recorded by Sikand as regards the exact relationship of the Madiyal complex with Aḥmad Shāh and Allama Prabhu. Devadevan, in his above-quoted work, refers to the site in Madiyal as a “tomb-replica” of the Ashtur one, and reports that in Madiyal Koḍēkallu Basava is worshiped as Allama (2016, 103).

The sharing of sacred sites by the various religious communities and the role and perception of architecture in northern Karnataka are yet to be systematically researched, and this also applies to the sites that interest us. The majority of structures have not been published and for many of them we have only fragmentary information, frequently imbued with local or popular beliefs.³⁴

The Madiyal ‘temple’ complex appears heavily restored today, and this makes it difficult to precisely identify its original shape and appearance [fig. 9]. Still, it is extremely interesting from an architectural point of view. Located in an elevated position at the centre of the village, this complex consists of several structures enclosed by an outer wall and is accessible through a monumental gateway. The three main structures that compose the complex are erected on a basement and are aligned along the same axis; all three have a quadrangular shape and are covered by a dome, and each is open on the northeast side. Next to them is a further basement on which is positioned what was probably originally intended to be a gravestone. Two additional structures – one leaning against the monumental gateway and the outer wall (on the northern corner), the other on the northern side of the outer wall – are almost unrecognizable today owing to the poor state of conservation. While the wall and the collateral structures are extremely damaged, the recent heavy restoration

33 In a more recent publication Sikand has defined the ‘temple’ in Madiyal a “subsidiary shrine of Sultan Ahmad” (2017, 178).

34 As already mentioned, studies devoted to the sharing of sacred spaces by Muslims and Vīraśaivas in the region have generally focussed on frequentations and practices, and often, while mentioning relevant sites and buildings, they do not provide accurate descriptions of their architecture, stylistic analyses, or an interpretation of their spaces.



Figure 9 The 'Allama Prabhu temple' in the village of Madiyal. Photo by Sara Mondini

makes it difficult to recognize the original functions of the complex and has altered those artistic features that could have helped date and reconstruct the history of the complex. However, despite these difficulties, the presence of burials within the three main structures suggests that the complex may have originally been conceived as a *dargāh*. This appears to be confirmed by the presence of some of the distinctive formal characteristics of such buildings in South Asia: the complex is located in an elevated position within the village, it has a monumental gateway [fig. 10], and it includes at least three structures whose essential shape – a quadrangular building covered by a dome – is consistent with the typical model adopted for mausoleums in India. This also seems to be confirmed by the presence of a cenotaph inside each of the monuments, today covered by the typical shrouds used in Muslim *khānqāhs* and *dargāhs*.³⁵

³⁵ The idea would be further supported by Sikand who states that “till 1948, this area formed part of the vast dominions of the Muslim Nizams of Hyderabad, and Hindus and Muslims would regularly visit these Muslim-style shrines. Since 1948, when the Indian armed forces overran Hyderabad and incorporated it into the Indian Union, in the course of which scores of Muslims were killed, these shrines have been undergoing a rapid process of Hinduization. In 1948, a Shiva *lingam* is said to have been forcibly installed on the Muslim grave-like structure at the subsidiary shrine of Sultan Ah-



Figure 10 Monumental gateway of the 'Allama Prabhu temple' in the village of Madiyal. Photo by Sara Mondini

The main presumably funerary structure, which is larger in size and today actually has the function of a temple, appears to have been recently renovated and adapted to meet the needs of 'Vīraśaiva rituals'. Furthermore, iconographic representations of Hindu demigods have been added on the minor basements - that could hypothetically host further burials - and dislocated within the space of the complex. The formal elements, although attributable to the Islamic-Indian architectural vocabulary, can only partially help formulate hypotheses as regards the dating and attribution of the complex.

It seems plausible to hypothesize that the complex was expanded over the decades - a development quite typical for *dargāhs* in the region - and then, in more recent times, progressively underwent a more pronounced transformation into a Vīraśaiva site. However, while it remains difficult to speculate on the major mausoleum-temple on account of its the recent restyling, the more bulbous profiles adopted for the domes of the minor structures seem to emulate those Central Asian models which spread across this area mainly from the mid-15th century onward. On the one hand, although the walls are tapered, the simplicity of their decorative schemes and of the mer-

mad at Mudiyal" (2017, 178), nevertheless Sikand does not mention any sources to support his statements.



Figure 11 Minor structures in the 'Allama Prabhu temple' in the village of Madiyal. Photo by Sara Mondini

lons might lead us to date the foundation of the complex to the early Bahmanī period or even to the years of Tughluq (1321-98) rule over the area. On the other hand, the mature shape of some of the salient formal elements certainly push the construction date forward, to the 15th century, if not later. The domes' profiles and their finials, and the shape of the arches' extradoses seem to be too elaborate to date to an early Bahmanī period [fig. 11]. Moreover, the kind of ring of petals occurring around the base of one of the minor domes appears to have been introduced in Gulbarga only during the reign of Fīrūz Shāh Bahmanī (r. 1397-1422); in a more elaborate shape, it became a defining feature of the 'Ādil Shāhī architectural vocabulary (between the late 16th and the early 17th century).

The *guldastās* crowning the monumental gateway could be dated perhaps to an early Baridi phase (ca. 1487-1619) on account of their shape – they are high and culminate with small domes surrounded by crowns of petals at the base. If the original functions of *dargāh* – or in any case of funeral complex – are confirmed, it would be logical to assume that the complex was enlarged over the time and that its various patrons – as often happens with structures of this kind – introduced stylistic elements specific to the artistic vocabulary adopted.

What makes it even harder to date the complex is the continuous and invasive renovation work that has taken place in recent years – and up to the present day – altering its original appearance.



Figure 12 The *janigam* inside the 'Allama Prabhu temple' in the village of Madiyal. Photo by Sara Mondini

From a visual (and ritual) point of view, the main structure certainly has the greatest impact. Although, as already mentioned, it has been presumably transformed from a mausoleum into a 'temple', and adapted to the needs of a Viraśaiva cult, its interior remains that of an 'Islamic' mausoleum. A series of objects - probably original - preserved in the interior might help date the structure, but access and the possibility to study the small collection of objects has not been granted. Moreover, local witnesses speak of an alleged inscription, in Arabic or Persian, on the cenotaph or in any case inside the mausoleum,³⁶ but again I was not allowed to verify this. Throughout its history the complex has been enriched by 'Hindu' elements, such as sculptural representations of gods and demigods, today also an object of cult practices. It is hard to establish how recent this 'transformation' might be, with the reshaping of the main structure, its appropriation by the Viraśaivas, and the addition of 'new' iconographic elements. However, despite the coexistence of rituals, in terms of perception, as in the case of Ashtur, the site remains strongly 'Islamic'. Indeed, from an architectural and decorative point of view, owing to the distribution and conception of the spaces, it still remains indisputably attributable to the regional Indo-Islamic tradition. Even some ritual practices, such as listening to music and poetry (*samā'*) on Thursdays, or the visiting of the complex on Thursday evening, evoke the Sufi practices associated with *dargāhs*.

Although, much as in the case of Ashtur, the Madiyal complex is frequented by both Viraśaivas and Muslims - and not just for the 'urs celebrations - what we have is a religious complex 'controlled' by the Viraśaivas. The maintenance and performance of rituals are in the hands not of a *mutawallī*, as generally happens in *dargāhs*, but of the Viraśaiva *jaṅgam* and his family, who lives in a small building adjacent to the complex, along the northern outer wall. Access to what I have called the mausoleums remains forbidden to devotees - only the *jaṅgam* can access them for ritual purposes [fig. 12].

It is clear that at the present state of the investigations, any precise attribution or reconstruction of the edification phases of the complex is hard. However, as mentioned, local devotees today refer to the complex as the 'Allama Prahbu temple', and both Viraśaivas and Muslims acknowledge its connection with 'Sultan Basha', as in the case of the Ashtur mausoleum. If the local attribution were confirmed, we could date the complex approximately to the 1420s-1440s, which is to say to Aḥmad Shāh's reign, or the years immediately af-

36 Similarly to what has been noted with regard to the Aḥmad Shāh mausoleum, where Tarikere (1998) mentions the presence of a devanagari inscription reporting the name of Allama Prahbu, here some devotees affirm that the inscription inside the temple-structure of Madiyal bears the name of Allama Prahbu (see footnote 25).

ter his death. Certainly, a reconstruction of the site's context, and an in-depth study of the village, with its numerous ruins and traces of pre-Islamic and Islamic patronage, would help understand the historical function of the site and its significance.

6 From the Yātrā to a Shared Sacred Geography

The fact that both Muslims and Vīraśaivas share the same sites is far from surprising, particularly in the context of the Deccan. As already noted, the region has always been marked by religious encounters and intersections. The presence of various religious sites charged with complex symbolic juxtapositions and providing a setting for shared rituals bears witness to this complexity.

As mentioned, a range of different powers are attributed to Aḥmad Shāh and are recognized by the Vīraśaivas by virtue of the sovereign's alleged connection with Allama Prahbu. As is customary, after the ruler-saint's death the powers attributed to him were transferred to his tomb, which became a symbol of his presence and charisma (Werbner, Basu 1998, 3-20), as well as a physical means to transmit the powers he exercised during his life. These powers have come to be extended to the site as a whole – as clearly confirmed by the fact that pilgrims feel it is important for them to spend the days of the *jātrā* at the site itself, near the other structures touched by the pilgrimage, and in those surrounding areas believed to be connected to them.

A study of cults and ritual practices connected both to the Ash-tur mausoleum and to the Madiyal complex has brought to light the sharing of a sacred geography by different religious communities, but also the kind of competition and negotiation that over the past decades has been remodelling and redefining both the sites and the historical and cultural landscape. Although, as mentioned, very little research has been carried out in the region on those buildings that are the setting of this sharing, during the pilgrimage from Madiyal to Ashtur and the final *jātrā*, I was able to envisage a first network of shared sacred sites. Sikand states that

Sultan Ahmad has several subsidiary shrines dedicated to him at various places in the Bidar and Gulbarga districts [and that] these are believed to actually have been *chillahs*³⁷ marking places where the Sultan halted on his journeys. Alternately, they may have been *dargah*-like structures dedicated to the Sultan built on lands granted by him to various Lingayat families as *jagirs*. (2017, 178)

37 *Chillah*, in the Sufi context, refers to a solitary retreat, traditionally of forty days, dedicated to spiritual exercises and practices of penance.

Despite the original functions and histories of these sites remain unclear, the ongoing observation of their architecture seems to reveal a process of rewriting of their history and the use of their newly constructed identity for political purposes, namely the self-promotion of various leaders during local campaigns and the reinforcing of the identity of the various religious communities. Although today it is difficult to reconstruct the motivations, salient stages and chronology of these interactions and disputes between the Muslim and the Viraśaiva communities, and above all to trace their effects on the architecture over the centuries, there is no doubt that we are dealing with a major phenomenon in northern Karnataka.

During the most recent research conducted in the region, two further complexes emerged in the surroundings of Aland, in the district of Gulbarga, both frequented by Muslims and Viraśaivas, connected to 'Sultan Basha', and involved in the celebrations for Aḥmad Shāh's 'urs. Once the Ashtur *jātrā* is over, in fact, the pilgrims move to further *jātrās* on the two sites which are characterized by similar rituals held by the local *janīgams*. While the study of Madiyal is already challenging enough, at the moment the absence of any element on which to base investigations pertaining to these two additional sites makes it even more difficult to approach them.

The two complexes are respectively known as the Prabhuling Temple in the village of Hebli and the Shree Prabhuling Temple in the village of Jeerhalli.³⁸ Each year devotees leave these villages for Madiyal to participate in the pilgrimage to Ashtur. Both structures, which the devotees regard as 'temples', are difficult to approach because of the heavy restorations and transformations they have undergone. The Hebli 'temple' is made up of several structures similar to those encountered in Madyal [fig. 13]. Like the Madiyal complex, in terms of its layout, the typology of its structures and the distribution of its spaces, it is reminiscent of a *dargāh*. The recent restorations do not allow us to draw any conclusion on the style; however, a structure immediately outside the outer wall seems to be attributable to Islamic patronage and is presumably ascribable to the 15th or 16th century [fig. 14]. In the Jeerhalli complex, the analysis is even more difficult, as the structure identified as a temple is a new construction, probably dating back to a few years ago. Sikand too remarks how the shrine has been now completely 'Hinduized', and "its Muslim-style domes have been torn down, and replaced with a Hindu-style tower (*shikara*)" (2017, 179). According to him the transformation of the "grave-like structure" would date sometime in the mid-1990s, when militant Hindutva groups be-

38 The geographic coordinates of the two small sites are: 17°58'61.15"N 76°49'90.76"E for the Prabhuling Temple in Hebli and 17°33'36.0"N 76°30'52.0"E for the Shree Prabhuling Temple in Jeerhalli.



Figure 13 The Hebli complex. Photo by Sara Mondini

Figure 14 The Hebli complex and a further structure immediately outside the outer wall. Photo by Sara Mondini



Figure 15 The Jeerhalli complex. Photo by Sara Mondini

came increasingly popular in some districts of Karnataka and would have add a platform with a *śiva linga* - thus eventually transforming a mausoleum into a temple - and installed “pictures and idols of various Hindu deities at the entrance of the inner chamber of the shrine” (Sikand 2017, 179 and in particular fn. 9) [fig. 15].

However, the outer wall and the monumental gateway to the site seem to have remained unaltered and are stylistically ascribable to the regional Indo-Islamic architectural tradition. In both complexes it is possible to notice the presence of further iconographies, such as sculptural representations of Hindu gods or demigods that do not seem to have originally belonged to the sites.

Although further speculation on the structures is difficult in the absence of more detailed information and further analyses, the ritual practices and their sharing by the two religious communities appear quite similar to what has been observed in Ashtur and Madiyal. These structures too are perceived by devotees as linked to ‘Sultan Basha’. Further elements that all the structures considered here seem to share are a ‘tension’ between different artistic vocabularies and the continuous transformation which they have undergone.³⁹ To

³⁹ Contrary to what I have observed and the testimonies I have collected, Sikand remarks how “the denial of the cult’s Muslim links is apparent in the stories that are now

a certain extent, these peculiar features evoke other geographically distant sites in central Karnataka that are not connected to the pilgrimage we have been examining, but which also represent an object of sharing or contention between Muslims, Viraśaivas and Hindus. One emblematic example in this sense is the Sangamanatha Temple in Kaginele (Kaginelli).⁴⁰ Here the renovation, partial destruction and reconstruction of the monument is an essential part of the process of 'retrieval' or 'construction' of memories and identities, and the attention to the artistic vocabularies implied in the shared or contested sites acquires a crucial role. The perception of a shared sacred site as 'too Islamic' or 'not Islamic enough' becomes an ideal justification for extremist groups to promote processes of radical reshaping and renovation which erase the appearance of the original or historical foundation and the values it embodies.

Although the investigations of sites and architectures that make up this sacred geography shared by Muslims and Viraśaivas are only in their preliminary phases, the importance of their results for understanding the religious, social and political context has already clearly emerged. On the one hand, this kind of research could help better depict that climate of fluidity and overlap between Viraśaivas and Muslims that has been repeatedly evoked here and that characterizes both artistic patronage and the political and religious scene in the Deccan between the 14th and the 16th century. The analysis of the monuments as 'witnesses' to and 'products' of this religious complexity would help reconstruct - when at all possible - the religious context of this area during the Bahmanī period and after the dynasty's decline. On the other hand, it would also shed light on how this heritage is perceived today and how it has become part of political and social discourses, at times transforming the many sites surveyed into disputed spaces, spaces of conquest, and sites of confrontation.

A progressive understanding of the historical roots of this network of shared sacred sites appears to be crucial in order to try and ease the tension and competition between the Viraśaiva and Muslim communities in certain Deccani districts, which have transposed and inscribed on the cultural historical landscape. This kind of research can also help avert the risk of irreversible appropriations, which could engulf and transfigure sacred spaces and monuments whose history and identity would then be lost.

told to explain its origins. The Lingayat custodians of these shrines deny any association with Sultan Ahmad and insist that Allama Prabhu and Sultan Ahmad are two distinct figures" (Sikand 2017, 179).

40 The case of Kaginele and the competition and transformations of its sites is also mentioned by Devadevan (2016, 115-16, note 403).

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Atypical Compound Verb Constructions in Hindi/Urdu The Case of Transitive Polar Verbs with Intransitive Vector Verbs

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Abstract While a lot of research has already been done on defining compound verb constructions and understanding their semantic and pragmatic usages, there is still a gap when it comes to our understanding of atypical compound verb constructions where transitive polar verbs are paired with intransitive vector verbs and vice versa. In this paper we focus on atypical constructions with two intransitive vector verbs: *jānā* and *baiṭhnā*. We collate and review the different meanings that scholars have ascribed to these constructions and present our own analysis. We conclude that the main reason behind using an intransitive vector verb with a transitive polar verb is to reduce the transitivity of the action by implying reduced agency on the part of the Agent-like argument of the sentence. In addition to that, the use of an intransitive vector verb with a transitive polar verb also tells us which argument in the sentence is affected by the action from the point of view of the speaker. However, sometimes atypical constructions are also used by the speaker to express his/her shock or astonishment over a particular event, thus imposing his/her own ideas about agency, volitionality, and affectedness on the action being observed.

Keywords Hindi. Urdu. Transitivity. Involuntary agent.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 What Are Atypical Compound Verb Constructions? – 3 Reduced Transitivity of Atypical Compound Verb Constructions. – 4 Negative Surprise. – 5 Conclusion.



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1 Introduction¹

The compound verb construction in Hindi/Urdu (hereafter H/U) is a widely studied and discussed phenomenon.² However, so far, a conclusive understanding of the factors or conditions under which compound verbs are used still evades us. The semantic implications, like ‘completeness’ or ‘perfectivity’, of these constructions have already been studied and discussed in detail (see, among others, Pořízka 1967-9; Hook 1974, 1978, 1991, 1993; Kachru 1979, 158-9; Butt, Ramchand 2001; Poornima 2012). However, some scholars agree on the fact that there are other factors that govern their usage and these are more pragmatic in nature and depend on the informational context of the action (Kachru 1979; Jagannathan 198, 264-5; Hook forthcoming; Drocco, Tiwari forthcoming).

Moreover, compared to the studies concerning the semantic difference between using a compound verb as opposed to a simple verb, there are not many studies on the use of different vector verbs with the same polar verb, especially when a polar transitive verb is compounded with an intransitive vector verb (Drocco 2018). Indeed, as has been pointed out by many scholars (see, for example, Hook 1974, 1978; McGregor 1977, 99-105; Caracchi 2002, 163-9; Jagannathan 1981, 266; Shapiro 1989, 145-60; Nespital 1997, vii-xxvii), in compound verb constructions we typically see the use of intransitive vector verbs with intransitive polar verbs and transitive vector verbs with transitive polar verbs. However, the same scholars maintain that there are certain instances where a transitive polar verb is used with an intransitive vector verb and vice versa. In this paper our aim is to study some of the instances when transitive polar verbs are used with intransitive vector verbs, what we are referring to as an ‘atypical compound verb construction’.³

This paper is divided into four sections. In section two we define both typical and atypical compound verb constructions and present a proof of the ‘atypicality’ of the latter. We also discuss semantic implications of atypical compound verb constructions that use *jānā*, ‘to

1 Our thanks first and foremost to Pinuccia Caracchi, Giuliano Bernini, Peter Hook, V.R. Jagannathan, Ali Taqi and other teachers at the Zabaan School of Languages for their insights. All errors and inadequacies are our responsibility. For all the abbreviations see the list at the end of this article.

2 For an overview of the study on compound verbs in Indo-Aryan, from both a synchronic and diachronic point of view, see Slade 2016, who also provides the reader a useful listing of studies on this topic, with respect to the Indo-Aryan group, selected by language (Slade 2016, 567). For a diachronic perspective see especially Slade 2013.

3 This title for these particular constructions is based on the work of Montaut 1991, Ch. 5; 2004, 125-6).

go' and *baiṭhnā*,⁴ 'to sit' as intransitive vector verbs when paired with transitive polar verbs. In section three, we briefly review how different points on the transitivity continuum (Hopper, Thompson 1980; Tsunoda 1985; Lazard 2002; Kittilä 2002; Næss 2007) are realized morpho-syntactically in H/U and we discuss the implications atypical compound verb constructions have on the transitivity of the clause. In particular we show that the use of atypical compound verb constructions can change the transitivity parameters for the main verb. In section four we build further from the analysis of Kachru (1979) and Drocco (2018) and discuss the idea of negative surprise and astonishment associated with the use of atypical constructions with *jānā* as a vector verb.⁵ We conclude with our main findings in section five.

2 What Are Atypical Compound Verb Constructions?

As mentioned above, in atypical compound verb constructions⁶ certain transitive polar verbs are paired with intransitive vector verbs and vice versa. Following Montaut (1991, Ch. 5; 2004, 125-6) in calling these constructions 'atypical,' we think the main reason behind the use of this nomenclature is the fact that, above all, they are encountered less frequently in texts and spoken language⁷ compared to their 'typical' counterparts. This fact can be demonstrated by comparing the search results for typical and atypical compound verb constructions in a Hindi corpus developed by Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.⁸ We will do this for two transitive polar verbs: *karnā*, 'to do') and *kahnā* ('to say').

The transitive polar verb *karnā* is normally seen compounded with *denā*, *lenā*, *jānā* and *baiṭhnā*, where *denā* and *lenā* are transitive and

⁴ While *jānā* is commonly paired with intransitive polar verbs in typical constructions, *baiṭhnā* only occurs in atypical compound verb constructions where it is paired with transitive polar verbs (McGregor 1977; Caracchi 2002, 168; see also Nespital 1997, 936-40).

⁵ See also Kachru, Pandharipane 1980, 119-21 as regards the use of *baiṭhnā* as vector verb.

⁶ We think that it is not necessary here to introduce the reader of what is a H/U compound verb construction and thus to the meaning of polar and vector verb. See the well-known definition offered by Hook (2001, 101), recently adopted in Drocco (2018, 266) and Drocco, Tiwari (forthcoming).

⁷ While we have provided evidence of the infrequent usage of compound verbs in texts, the claim about that being the case for spoken language as well is based on the authors' own experience speaking, learning and teaching H/U and on the opinion of the majority of H/U scholars (see references in the text). One of the anonymous reviewers of the paper thinks that "such combinations are used to generate particular kind of nuances. I would say that in spoken Hindi the combination is used more than in written Hindi".

⁸ <http://www.cfi.lt.iitb.ac.in/~corpus/hindi>. The search results are from 21 December 2019, 25 January 2020 and 28 January 2020.

jānā and *baiṭhnā* are intransitive.⁹ If we look at the frequency of the occurrence of these pairs in the simple perfect, *kar diyā*, *kar liyā*, *kar gayā* and *kar baiṭhā* in the corpus we get the following results:¹⁰

Table 1 Simple Perfect

Typical			Atypical				
<i>kar diyā</i>	1935	<i>kar liyā</i>	669	<i>kar gayā</i> ⁱ	29	<i>kar baiṭhā</i> ⁱⁱ	9
<i>kar dī</i>	733	<i>kar lī</i>	299	<i>kar gayī</i> ⁱⁱⁱ	13	<i>kar baiṭhī</i> ^{iv}	4
<i>kar dīm</i>	17	<i>kar līm</i>	16	<i>kar gayīm</i>	1	<i>kar baiṭhīm</i>	1

i After excluding 10 occurrences of the conjunctive participle verb stem + *kar jānā*, for example, *lekar jānā* (to take and go).

ii After excluding 29 instances of the conjunctive participle stem + *kar baiṭhnā ā*, for example, *ākar baiṭhā* (came and sat).

iii After removing occurrences of the conjunctive participle and the verb *mukar jānā*, and 4 strings that were wrongly pulled up in the search results.

iv After excluding 16 occurrences of the conjunctive participle and one occurrence of the plural *kar baiṭhīm*.

As is evident from these search results, *kar diyā* and *kar liyā* are encountered over 60 and 20 times more (respectively) when compared to *kar gayā* and over 200 and 70 times more compared to *kar baiṭhā*. While these results are based on one corpus, they are indicative of the relative infrequency of atypical constructions.

The two compound verbs *kar jānā* and *kar baiṭhnā* commonly occur in the perfect because the specific meanings they convey, the realization of ‘going beyond’ or ‘making a mistake’,¹¹ are probably possible only after the fact. However, we are also including search results for the simple future for comparison. Also, note that the instances of *kar denā* and *kar lenā* (cf. table 2) in the simple future are also relatively much fewer. This could be because one of the semantic implications of using compound verbs is emphasizing the perfective aspect (cf. § 1), which, while possible in the simple future (it will be done/completed), is less frequent.

⁹ For differences in meanings amongst these different pairings see Snell, Weightman ([1989] 2010, 189, 190, 278), Hook (1974, 1978) and Drocco, Tiwari (forthcoming).

¹⁰ We have removed the results for the masculine plural simple perfect forms as the search results were also returning strings for masculine singular forms on the corpus.

¹¹ As we will see below, this is the specific meaning that *jānā* and *baiṭhnā* add respectively when adopted as intransitive vector verbs of transitive polar verbs.

Table 2 Simple Future

Typical		Atypical					
<i>kar degā</i>	67	<i>kar legā</i>	33	<i>kar jāegāⁱ</i>	1	<i>kar baiṭhegā</i>	1
<i>kar deṅge</i>	38	<i>kar leṅge</i>	40	<i>kar jāeṅgeⁱⁱ</i>	0	<i>kar baiṭheṅge</i>	1
<i>kar degī</i>	38	<i>kar legī</i>	12	<i>kar jāegīⁱⁱⁱ</i>	2	<i>kar baiṭhegī</i>	0
<i>kar degīm</i>	8	<i>kar legīm</i>	1	<i>kar jāeṅgī</i>	0	<i>kar baiṭheṅgī</i>	0

i After excluding one string that did not contain the search phrase.
ii After excluding one occurrence of the conjunctive participle.
iii One search result was repeated.

We can repeat the same search for *kahnā*, ‘to say’ which is also transitive. The polar verb *kahnā* is normally only paired with *denā*, as a transitive vector verb. This is due to the fact that the object of the verb ‘to say’, which are the things said, are meant for the listener. Comparing the occurrences of *kah denā*, *kah jānā* and *kah baiṭhnā*, we get the following results in simple perfect (cf. table 3) and in simple future (cf. table 4) respectively:

Table 3 Simple Perfect

Typical		Atypical			
<i>kah diyāⁱ</i>	137	<i>kah gayāⁱⁱ</i>	4	<i>kah baiṭhāⁱⁱⁱ</i>	3
<i>kah dī</i>	62	<i>kah gayī^{iv}</i>	2	<i>kah baiṭhī^v</i>	1
<i>kah dīm</i>	4	<i>kah gayīm</i>	1	<i>kah baiṭhīm</i>	1

i Both the simple verb *kahnā* and the compound verb *kah denā* have the meaning ‘to tell someone to do something’ (Nespital 1997, 716). Some of the search results have this meaning instead of ‘to say’, but this meaning of *kahnā* is not relevant for the present paper.
ii After excluding 3 results that did not contain the search string, one result that was repeated and one other where *kah gayā* can be seen as a verb in combination, *kah-kar gayā* (see footnote 13). Also, as mentioned in footnote 18, some of the search results also had *kahnā* in the sense of telling someone to do something.
iii After excluding 2 results that did not contain the search string.
iv Excluding one occurrence of the plural *kah dīm*, one repeated search result and three results where *kah gayā* can be seen as a verb in combination, *kah-kar gayā* (see footnote 13).
v After excluding 8 occurrences that did not contain the search string and one occurrence of the plural *kah baiṭhīm*.

Table 4 Simple Future

Typical		Atypical			
<i>kah degāⁱ</i>	8	<i>kah jāegāⁱⁱ</i>	0	<i>kah baiṭhegā</i>	0
<i>kah demgeⁱⁱⁱ</i>	6	<i>kah jāemge</i>	0	<i>kah baiṭhemge</i>	0
<i>kah degī</i>	0	<i>kah jāegī</i>	0	<i>kah baiṭhegī</i>	0
<i>kah degīm</i>	1	<i>kah jāemgī</i>	0	<i>kah baiṭhemgī</i>	0

i After excluding one repeated result.
ii After excluding one result that did not contain the search string.
iii After excluding 4 occurrences that did not contain the search string.

Thus, we can see that atypical constructions occur less frequently with respect to typical compound verb constructions.

One of the reasons why these constructions are less frequently encountered is because they encode a very specific meaning.¹² Let us consider the vector verb *baiṭhnā*, ‘to sit’ for example. It is adopted in this function when the Agent-like argument of the sentence commits (or might commit in the future) what is often seen by the speaker as an action with an undesirable result, that is to say, a mistake or something done foolishly (Snell, Weightman [1989] 2010, 278; McGregor 1977, 102-3; Kachru, Pandharipande 1980, 119-21; Nespital 1997, 936-40; Caracchi 2002, 168). For example:

- vah** **kaisā** **kām** **kar** **baiṭh-ā**. (**us ne*)
 3SG.DIR which work do sit.VV-PERF.M.SG
 ‘What kind of mistake/sin/crime has he committed?’ (adapted from Caracchi 2002, 168)
- oho** **choṭū** **kyā** **kar** **baiṭh-ā** **h-ai**. (**choṭūne*)
 oho Chotu what do sit.VV-PERF.M.SG be-3SG
 ‘Oh! What has Chotu done?’ (adapted from Snell 2016, 225).

While all scholars agree on the semantic nuance expressed by the vector verb *baiṭhnā* we just discussed, the same is not true for *jānā*, ‘to go’ when it is compounded with transitive polar verbs.¹³ Accord-

12 Another reason that can partially account for the infrequent usage of atypical constructions, especially with the vector verb *jānā*, is that the set of polar transitive verbs that can form meaningful pairings with *jānā* is limited. For this last statement see, for example, Nespital 1997, 554-9 and Drocco 2018. More research is needed to understand the precise reasons behind this fact.

13 Another interesting instance of atypical usage of *jānā* as a vector verb is often seen when it is used along with *kahnā*. The different meanings discussed in this paper that are typically associated with using *jānā* do not explain all the instances where *kah jānā* is encountered. For these cases sometimes it is possible to look at *kah jānā* as a verb

ing to the majority of scholars, the intransitive vector *jānā*, when compounded with transitive vector verbs, signals lack of volitionality of the Agent-like argument (cf., among others, Pandharipande 1981, 168-70; Kachru 1981, 187; Mohanan 1994).

3. **vah** **kām** **kar** **ga-y-ā.** (**us ne*)
3SG.DIR work.M do go.VV-PERF-M.SG
'He did the work unintentionally'.¹⁴ (adapted from Pandharipande 1981, 169)

However, as we just said, not all of them agree on this additional semantic implication of *jānā* when used as intransitive vector verb of transitive polar verbs (see, among others, Nespital 1997, 556-9; Montaut 1991, 2004). For example, Shapiro simply maintains that:

in combination (i.e. *kahkar jānā*) and not as a compound verb. However, it is important to point out that this is not always the case. To illustrate this last point, see the examples in (a) and (b) below:

- a. *jānī* *log* *pahle hī kah* *ga-e* *haiṁ ki* *satya kā*
learned men already say go.VV-PERF-M.PL be that truth GEN

 mārg māyā *se* *ḍhakā* *rah-t-ā* *hai*
way illusion by covered stay-PRES-M.SG be
'Knowledgeable/learned men have already said (and gone) that the way of truth stays covered by illusion'. (adapted from one of the examples on the Hindi Corpus 2004a)
- b. *lekin bhābhī* *to* *tīn mahīne se* *apne maike* *merṁ haiṁ*
but bhābhī PTC three months since her parent's place LOC be

 aur kah ga-ī *haiṁ ki* *ab kabhī na* *ā-ūṁ-g-ī.*
and say go.VV-PERF.F be that now never come(back)-1SG-FUT-F
'But *bhābhī* is at her parent's place since three months and has said that I will never come (back) now'. (adapted from *Devī ek aur kahānī* by Premchand see <http://web.bookstruck.in/book/chapter/11129>)

In sentence (a), if we analyze *kah ga-e haiṁ* as *kahkar ga-e haiṁ*, 'have said and gone', it does not have the same meaning. The latter sounds as if the subject said something and then left (or passed away) intentionally in that particular order. But in reality, the original compound form, by which we mean the meaning expressed by *kah ga-e haiṁ* in (a), is less volitional or planned when it comes to how the two actions *kahnā* and *jānā* were temporally realized. These constructions are typically used when the Agent-like argument is no longer around to confirm what he/she said or is deceased. Other verbs like *karnā* and *banānā* are also sometimes seen used with *jānā* in this way.

In sentence (b), however, *kahkar ga-ī haiṁ* comes close to the meaning of *kah ga-ī haiṁ*. Interestingly, sentence (a) is semantically in between 1. 'Verbs in Combination', where both verbs retain their full meaning and 2. 'Compound Verb Construction', where the vector verb loses its original meaning. While more research is needed on this topic, we believe that this could be one of the ways in which compound verbs slowly evolved and became grammaticalized (cf. Hook 1991).

¹⁴ This translation and interpretation of unintentionality expressed by *karnā* + *jānā* is from Pandharipande (1981, 169). We do not fully agree with this interpretation (see below). This is also the view of one of the reviewers of this paper.

With transitive verbs indicating ingestion, जाना (i.e. *jānā*) adds a sense of totality or thoroughness of the acts of ingestion. (Shapiro 1989, 146)

He supports this statement with the following sentence as an example:

4. ***kām se lauṭ kar vah ghar kā sab khānā***
work ABL come back CP 3SG.DIR home GEN all food
khā jā-t-ā h-ai.
eat go.VV-PRES-M.SG be-3.SG
'He eats up all the food in the house when he comes home from work'.
(adapted from Shapiro 1989, 146)

Starting from these different and inchoate ideas about the use of *jānā* as a vector verb of (some) transitive polar verbs, Drocco (2018, 276-82) advanced the hypothesis that this particular construction encodes the negative attitude of the speaker/narrator about some unintended, unwanted, unpleasant, and irrevocable effect/result of the action expressed by the transitive polar verb. He explains in detail this particular use of *jānā* when compounded, especially, with ingestive verbs *khānā*, 'to eat' and *pīnā*, 'to drink'. Here is an example from his paper (taken originally from Montaut 2004):

5. ***māim zarurāt se zyādā khā ga-y-ā, peṭ***
1SG.DIR need than more eat go.VV-PERF-M.SG belly
phūl ga-y-ā, jhapkī lag gaī.
swell go-PERF-M.SG doze be attached go.VV-PERF.F
'I ate (gulped) more than needed, my belly swelled up, I fell asleep'. (adapted from Montaut 2004, 126)

According to Drocco (2018, 278), in (5) *jānā* is used as an intransitive vector verb for the transitive polar verb *khānā*, because the speaker's intention (a 1st person singular pronoun) is to emphasize a particular negative affect of the act of eating too much on the Agent-like argument, that is, on himself. In particular Drocco continues giving the following explanation:

With the use of *zarurāt se zyādā*, "more than needed", the action of *khānā*, "to eat" results in an unintended, unwanted, unpleasant, unexpected, and irrevocable effect. This result is in fact explicitly mentioned in the same sentence with the expression *peṭ phūl gayā, jhapkī lag gaī*, "(my) belly swelled up, (I) felt sleepy". (2018, 278)

Therefore, it must be noted that while previously scholars have mainly emphasized the semantic implications of the atypical usages of *jānā* and *baiṭhnā*, we think that it is also important to pay attention to the fact that these meanings are associated to the speaker's perception of the event (who, sometimes, can be the Agent-like argument of the sentence, as in the last example). This is because the speaker also has at his/her disposal at least one alternative phrasing of the event which does not use this construction¹⁵ and thus the fact that the speaker chooses to use an atypical construction also shows his/her attitude or opinion about the action in question. While this may not appear to be an important distinction to make at this stage, we will discuss its implications in section four.

To sum up, we have seen that *jānā* and *baiṭhnā*, when used with transitive polar verbs, have very specific meanings and that, in part, could explain why they are encountered less frequently in the language. Also, as we have reported above, while there is a general agreement among scholars when it comes to the semantic implications of *baiṭhnā* as a vector verb, this is not the case with *jānā*.

In the next section we will try to understand how the different semantic meanings associated with the usage of *jānā* and *baiṭhnā* in atypical constructions are related to the effect they have on the transitivity parameters of the clause/sentence they are used in.

3 Reduced Transitivity of Atypical Compound Verb Constructions

While the grammatical categories of 'transitive' and 'intransitive' are centuries-old,¹⁶ the linguistic understanding of what 'transitivity' is has become more refined in the decades after Hopper and Thompson's seminal paper (1980). Linguists now view 'transitivity' as a spectrum, where a certain verb under a certain construction is 'more' transitive, while the same verb under a different morphosyntactic setting can be 'less' transitive (Tsunoda 1985; Lazard 2002; Kittilä 2002; Næss 2007, Ch. 2).

Different languages have different ways of encoding information about transitivity seen as a scalar notion. In H/U we typically see it expressed in one of the following main ways:

¹⁵ For example, another way in which (1) can be reported is: *usne kaisā kām kar diyā*. In this example the transitive polar verb *karnā*, 'to do' is compounded with the transitive vector verb *denā*, 'to give' and, for that reason, the Agent-like argument is followed by the ergative postposition *ne*. For our explanation on why *baiṭhnā*, instead of *denā*, is used in (1) as an intransitive vector verb of *karnā*, 'to do' see § 3.

¹⁶ As regards the Indian grammatical tradition see *Vākyapadīya* by Bhartṛhari (5th century CE) (Bhate, Bronkhorst 1997), while for the Western grammatical tradition see Hopper, Thompson 1980 and Lazard 2002.

1. The use of the postposition *ne* in the perfect with transitive verbs (Hock 1985, 250; Bashir 2016, 450-3);¹⁷
2. Indirect constructions with the subject followed by the postposition *ko* that are used for encoding the experiencer (for an overview on this topic see Masica 1991, 346-56 and Hock 2016);
3. The use of passive derivation in negative sentences to express the inability to do an action by the agent (see Masica 1991, 356-8, but especially Pandharipande 1979);
4. The use of intransitive/anticausative verbs with the Agent-like argument expressed by adding the postposition *se*, as an Instrument through which the action happened;¹⁸
5. The use of compound verbs (Drocco 2018).¹⁹

The first three features just listed have been widely studied in H/U and Indo-Aryan linguistics in general. On the contrary, the transitivity implications for compound verbs have so far only been studied by a few scholars.²⁰ Thus, as said above, the goal of this section is in part to fill this gap.

In the previous section we mentioned that the speaker's choice of using a polar transitive verb compounded with an intransitive vector verb is linked to his perception of the event. In these cases, the speaker perceives the result of the action done by the Agent-like argument of the sentence as either:

- unwanted, unintended contrasted against what is wanted, intended in accordance with a socio-cultural norm or a personal habit, or
- a mistake made by the Agent-like argument of the sentence.

This specific attitude of the speaker is realized in H/U by means of compounding transitive vector verbs with *jānā* and *baiṭhnā* respectively. The resulting atypical constructions taken into examination here are very interesting, because they change the syntactic status

17 Some linguists question the view that *ne* can be seen as a marker of transitivity (see, among others, Mohanan 1994).

18 An example to illustrate this usage is the following sentence found in the web: *ek dīn mujh-se kap ṭūṭ gayā*, 'One day the cup broke 'through' me'. This kind of meaning can also be expressed by the simple verb *ṭūṭnā* and similar verbs. Cf. <https://www.bhaskar.com/news/JHA-RAN-HMU-MAT-latest-ranchi-news-034003-736146-NOR.html>.

19 A small category of verbs in H/U can be used both transitively and intransitively, like *khonā*, INTR 'to get lost', TR 'to lose (something)' and *badalnā*, INTR 'to be changed, to change', TR 'to change (something)'. When these verbs are paired with *jānā*, the resulting compound form becomes definitively intransitive (Snell, Weightman [1989] 2010, 189; Caracchi 2002, 165-6).

20 And this is true also for the use of intransitive/anticausative verbs with the Agent-like argument followed by the postposition *se*.

of a transitive construction to an intransitive one, even if the result is still a bi-actant construction that can be translated as a transitive clause in other languages such as English. According to some scholars (see, among others, Pandharipande 1981, 168-9 and Kachru 1981, 182-3, 186-7), the intransitive status of this particular construction is proven by the fact that the use of an intransitive vector verb with a transitive polar one:

- changes in the perfective the canonical case-marking of an original ergative construction with the Agent-like argument followed by the postposition *ne* and the Object-like argument in agreement with the verb (if not followed by the ACC postposition *ko*) to a non-ergative one;
- moreover, the passivization of this particular type of construction is not possible.

So, the main goal of this section is to answer the following question: Given the fact that using an intransitive vector verb with a transitive polar verb changes the transitivity parameters for the latter, how does this fact relate to the speaker's perception of the underlying action? In particular, how does an atypical construction with *jānā* and *baiṭhnā* bring about the different semantic nuances associated with their use as previously discussed in section 2. The sentence in (6) with vector verb *jānā* is a good starting point to answer these questions:

6. **harī mirc aur dhaniyāpattī kī caṭnī ke sāth**
green chilli and coriander EN.F sauce.F GEN.OBL with
cār-pāmc roṭī-yām khā ga-y-ā.
four to five roṭī-PL.DIR eat go.VV-PERF-M.SG
'(Agent-like argument) ate four to five *rotiis*²¹ with the green chilli and coriander sauce'. (adapted from *Ātmārām kī ātmakathā* 2018)²²

In (6), the Agent-like argument who probably does not eat four/five *rotī* normally because that may be too much for him, ended up eating these many because he found the combination with the sauce tasty. When *jānā* is used with transitive polar verbs, it often gives the sense of the Agent-like argument 'going beyond' and this can mean, specifically, 'going beyond a certain norm or habit', thus performing an action or realising a result that was, at first, unwanted and sometimes even unpleasant. It is important to point out and to add that, in many instances, this can be linked by the speaker's perception that the Agent-like argument 'lost control'. This is clear in sentence (6)

21 Indian bread.

22 <https://bit.ly/3ffM4gX>. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the Authors.

where, while the Agent-like argument was intentionally eating, he lost control over how much he wanted or originally intended to eat, as he came under the control of his senses and was no longer completely in control of the action he was performing. Thus, when *jānā* is compounded with a transitive polar verb, we see that the reduced grammatical transitivity of the construction is, in this case (cf. 6), linked to the Agent-like argument's reduced agency (as discussed in § 2).

However, the loss in agency perceived by the speaker, when using an atypical construction with *jānā*, could also result from the fact that the Agent-like argument is forced to do something either by another person or by the circumstances in which he finds himself. This can be seen in one of the examples mentioned in Drocco's paper (2018, 279):

7. **un-hoṁ-ne** **glās** **le** **li-y-ā** **aur** **(ve = 0)**
 3PL-OBL-ERG glass.M take take.VV-PERF-M.SG and [...]
- sir** **jhukā-kar** **ek** **sāṁs** **meṁ** **pī** **ga-e.**
 head bow-CP one breath LOC drink go.VV-PERF.M.PL
 'He took the glass, bowed (his) head [...] drank down (the liquor) in one breath [...]' (Premchand [1936] 1966, ch. 6, 74)

Thanks to the fact that this example is taken from a bigger text, we can look at the context in which this sentence was said. In (7) the Agent-like argument (*unhoṁne*, *ve*) is Paṇḍit Omkārnāth. Because of his religious observances he has never had a glass of liquor before. But in this particular situation, when he is in a modern setting, he cannot refuse it. Thus, in the context of chapter six of *Godān* (Premchand [1936] 1966), where the sentence is reported, the Agent-like argument can be seen as not completely volitional while engaging in the act of drinking liquor, because he was forced by the circumstances to do an action that was unpleasant and not 'right' according to his convictions.

The aspect of 'losing control' as discussed in the case of sentence (6) above, is also seen when *jānā* is paired with other transitive polar verbs like *kahnā*, 'to say'. The latter is often used with *jānā* when the Agent-like argument is being quoted by the speaker as having said something in excess of perhaps what they had intended to say. Consider the following example:

8. **maze** **kī** **bāt** **yah** **hai** **ki** **yah** **bāt-bāt** **meṁ**
 fun GEN thing this be that this all the talking in
- mujh-e** **bevqūf** **bhī** **kah** **ga-ī**
 1SG.OBL-ACC idiot PTC say go.VV-PERF.F
- khair** **mairn-ne** **us-kī** **bāt** **kā**
 anyway 1SG.DIR-ERG 3SG.OBL-GEN saying GEN
- burā** **nahīm** **mān-ā.**
 offence NEG believe/accept-PERF.M.SG

'The funny thing is that in the midst of all the talking, she ended up calling me an idiot. Anyway, I did not take offence at her saying that'. (adapted from Hindi Corpus 2004b)²³

In (8) the Agent-like argument ended up saying something they should not have. However, in this particular example the impact of doing that is quite low. But look at example in (9):

9. *us-ne turamṭ anubhav ki-y-ā ki*
3SG.OBL-ERG immediately realization.M do-PERF-M.SG that
yah maim kyā kah ga-y-ā par ab to
this 1SG.DIR what say go.VV-PERF-M.SG but now PTC
bāṇ pratyamcā se chūṭ cukā thā.
arrow bow-string ABL leave have already-PERF.M.SG be
'He immediately realized, 'What did I end up saying', but not the arrow had already left the bow-string'.²⁴ (adapted from *Rājsūya yajña* by Manu Sharma 2004)²⁵

In (9), in contrast to (8), it is clear that the Agent-like argument, who is also the speaker of the sentence, realizes that he said something he probably should not have. However, unlike (8) where the Agent-like argument was let off the hook by the speaker, in (9) we can see that he is filled with remorse.

This last observation leads us to another important and correlated aspect associated to the use of intransitive vector verbs like *jānā* or *baiṭhnā* with a transitive polar verb. In an atypical compound construction, the focus of the speaker is often not on the resulting state of the Object-like argument, as normally happens in typical transitive clauses, but on the consequences of the action on the Agent-like argument. Thus, the transitivity of the sentence is 'lower' not only because of reduced agency, but also because the action affects the Agent-like argument. Indeed, this is obvious in (9), where the speaker, who is himself the Agent-like argument, regrets what he has done and possibly foresees a negative consequence linked to that in the future.

However, it must be noted that for ingestive verbs (Næss 2007, Ch. 4), where the normal effect of the action is already on the Agent-like argument, the impact of using *jānā* instead of *lenā* as a compound verb, is to make the effect on the Agent-like argument 'neutral' or even more 'negative' (see sentence in 6) as opposed to 'beneficial'

²³ <https://bit.ly/2V3TP16>.

²⁴ 'The arrow had left the bow-string,' is an idiom in H/U that means that words once said cannot be taken back.

²⁵ <https://bit.ly/326FnK2>.

which is often the implication of using *lenā*. This is evident in (10) below:

10. *cūhe ne soc-ā - maim̄ bāhar nīkī-ā*
mouse(M) ERG think-PERF.M.SG - 1SG.DIR outside comeout-PERF.M.SG
to billī mujh-e khā jā-e-g-ī.
then cat(F) 1SG.OBL-ACC eat go-3SG-FUT-F
‘The mouse thought: ‘If I come out, the cat will eat me up’’. (adapted from:
<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/mideast/hindi/stories/mouse.html>)

In this sentence, the ‘mouse’, who is also the speaker, is not so much concerned by the benefit the cat might derive from eating him. He is rather worried about the fact that he might get eaten and it would not be good for him. Consequently, using *jānā* with *khānā* in this sentence takes the focus away from how the action of eating would impact the Agent-like argument, the ‘cat’, positively.

Thus, we have seen that in cases where *jānā* is used as an intransitive vector verb along with a transitive polar verb, the speaker is able to express his perception of the action and/or the result of the action, that it was originally unwanted, due to the fact that *jānā* implies a loss of agency either because the Agent-like argument was forced to perform the action or because he lost control during the performance of the action.

Let us now consider the case of *baiṭhnā*. As we pointed out in section 2, *baiṭhnā* is used as a vector verb when the speaker thinks that the Agent-like argument made a mistake (sentence (1) above). The reason behind the fact that this point of view of the speaker is verbalized through the use of the intransitive vector verb *baiṭhnā* is because, according to the speaker, the Object-like argument of the sentence is sometimes the result of an unconscious state of mind of the Agent-like argument. As a consequence, the speaker confers reduced volitionality²⁶ to the Agent-like argument, as mistakes are (hopefully) non-intentional. Let us see this with an example:

11. *gaṁv k-e kolī pāgal ho uṭh-e haim̄*
villageGEN-M.PL weavers mad be VV-PERF.M.PL be
kah-ā jā-t-ā hai ki āj
say-PP.M.SG go.PASSIVE-PRES-M.SG be that today
unhōm-ne ek khūn kar dī-y-ā
3PL.OBL-ERG one murder do give.VV-PERF-M.SG

²⁶ In this paper we use the terms ‘volitionality’ and ‘intentionality’ and the adjectives associated with them in their broadest sense - when the Agent acts with a goal/purpose in mind. For a more nuanced understanding of ‘volitionality’ in agentivity theory, see Dowty 1991, DeLancey 1984, Grimm 2011 and Levin 2019.

patā nahīm kal kyā kar baiṭh-em-g-e.
knowing NEG tomorrow what do sit.VV-3PL-FUT-M.PL
'The weavers of the village have gone mad. It is said that today they murdered (someone)! Who knows what they might end up doing tomorrow'. (adapted from *Āmne sāmne kī khinchatāni*).²⁷

In this sentence, the Agent-like argument (the weavers) seem to have lost their ability to think rationally (they have gone mad) and have already demonstrated that they could do something as extreme as killing someone. So, the speaker is worried they might do something even more extreme in this altered mental state which they or others would regard as a mistake later. Hence, according to the speaker, the Agent-like argument is not fully aware of the actions they are currently performing and might perform in the future.²⁸

To better understand the different possible attitudes of the speaker towards the action performed by an Agent-like argument of a clause compare the constructions below:²⁹

12. **us-ne kāṁ meṁ galtī kar d-ī.**
3SG.OBL-ERG work LOC mistake make give.VV-PERF.F
'He made a mistake in (his) work'.
13. **us-se galtī ho ga-ī.**
3SG.OBL-INSTR mistake.F become go.VV-PERF.F
'The mistake happened through/by him'.
14. **vah galtī kar baiṭh-ā.**
3SG.DIR mistake.F make sit.VV-PERF.M.SG
'He ended up making a mistake in a hurry'.

In (12) the speaker chooses to use the transitive vector verb *denā* because according to the speaker, regardless of whether the Agent-like argument was aware or unaware of his mistake while making it, he is still responsible for it to an extent because he caused it. It is possible that the speaker thinks that the Agent-like argument causes the mistake intentionally. On the contrary, in (13) and (14), the speaker chooses to use the intransitive vector verbs *jānā* and *baiṭhnā*, because he wants to emphasize the fact that the Agent-like argument made the mistake unintentionally and perhaps he regrets it. It is also important to note that the volitionality in these cases is reduced

²⁷ <https://bit.ly/2DpAx0h>.

²⁸ See Kittilä 2005 and Fauconnier 2011, 2012 for additional nuances on accidental events, Agent's awareness and control.

²⁹ Example sentences by Neha Tiwari.

only when we are looking at the mistake as the direct object. It is not a comment on the state of the mind of the Agent-like argument with respect to the work he was intentionally performing. He could have been engaged in his task with full volition and awareness, but the same cannot be said about the mistake he made, because that was not intentional (Kittilä 2005).

While (12) is in contrast to (13) and (14) when it comes to the Agent-like argument's parameters of volitionality, we can see that (13) and (14) also differ with respect to how the speaker perceives the action impacting the Agent-like argument. In (13), where an anticausative construction is used, the focus of the speaker is on the mistake that is made, while in (14), the focus shifts back to the Agent-like argument and the impact the mistake might have on him. While both the sentences are reporting that a mistake was made, and to reiterate, this mistake was unintentional, in (14) the speaker is more concerned about the impact the mistake has (or could have) on the Agent-like argument or somebody else. If he realizes its impact, he is already feeling very sorry (or should feel so according to the speaker). If he doesn't realize it yet, he most likely would in the future and would probably feel contrite at the point. So, while in (13) he is just an 'instrument' that leads to the mistake coming into existence, in (14) he does have to shoulder some responsibility for it and 'pay for it' in some sense. Let us look at another example that brings out this aspect of *baiṭhnā*:

15. *vah śighrata se kah baiṭhā – maim cāhtā huṁ ki yahām se kahīm bhāg caleṁ aur vahām jākar donoṁ vivāh kar leṁ. rājiv jin vicāroṁ ko prakṛt karnā cāhtā thā, vicār to usne ṭhik vahī pragaṭ kie; kintu jo bhūmikā vah banākar lāyā thā, vah na jāne kahām gum ho gai? uske vicār bilkul rashīn aur nirarthak siddh hue so to ṭhik hai hī, lekin sunne meṁ bhī bhadde aur aḷib-se lage.*

'He blurted out (*kah baiṭhā*) in a hurry – I want that we elope from here and go to some other place and get married there. The thoughts that Rajiv wanted to express, he expressed them, but the introduction to these thoughts that he had come prepared with, who knows where that got lost? His thoughts proved to be completely dry and meaningless and that was still okay; however, they also felt uncouth and strange when he (himself) heard them'. (adapted from *Avgunṭhan* by Ravindranath Tagore)³⁰

As is clear from the context of the sentence, the speaker is reporting that the subject ended up saying something contrary to what he had planned, and this caused him a lot of embarrassment and perhaps also regret. Thus, in this sentence, we can see both the aspects of loss in volitionality and affectedness of the Agent-like argument coming into play.

30 <https://hindisamay.com/kahani/avgunthan.htm>.

A final remark is in order about the volitionality of the Agent-like argument in atypical constructions with *baiṭhnā*. While the examples we have seen so far clearly have Object-like arguments that can be classified as a mistake, often, whether something is/was a mistake or not can only be determined from the context or after the fact. For example:

16. *hām vah pyār thā ek taraf, use*
yes 3SG.DIR love.M be one side/way 3SG.OBL-DAT
doṣṭī cāhie thī aur main pyār kar baiṭh-ā.
friendship.F wanted be-F and 1SG love do sit.VV-PERF.M.SG
'Yes, that was one-sided love, she wanted friendship and I ended up falling for her'. (adapted from *Jānu tum jān ho merī* 2020)³¹

The word 'love' (*pyār*), which is the Object-like argument in (16), need not always be a mistake and, in fact, is not so, when used in an affirmative sense as in *main tumse pyār kartā hūm*, 'I love you'. However, due to the fact that it is used along with *baiṭhnā*, and because of the context (it was one-sided), it is clear that the speaker and the Agent-like first person argument thinks of this as a mistake. Also notice that since this is a narration, it is quite likely that he concluded that it was a mistake not in the moment of falling in love, but only later when he realized that it was one-sided. Earlier in this section we established that with *jānā*, the agency of the Agent-like argument is reduced from the point of view of the speaker during the performance of the action itself, either because he/she loses control (cf. example in 6) or because he/she is forced (cf. example in 7). However, in the case of *baiṭhnā*, the lack in volitionality with respect to the result of the action is sometimes ascribed after the fact, in particular, after looking at the result of the action in its broader context – this is the case in sentence (16) where the narrator thinks that being in one-sided love is foolish and he reinterprets the action of falling in love in that light and concludes that it was a mistake and that the result was not what he intended. Hence, many times it is translated into English using adverbs like "by mistake" or "foolishly" (Shapiro 1989; Snell 2016, 225) emphasising the fact that the Agent-like argument was not fully aware of the result of his actions. Let us look at this final example that illustrates this difference:

17. *rām ne is bār uskā mārg rok liyā aur bolā – "vākya purā kijie na – yūm kisī bhī bāt ko adhūrā choṛna thīk nahīm hai".*
"rahne dijie. āp kaheṅge – gaṅgā bahut adhik boltī hai".
"viśvās kijie – mujhe āpka adhik bolnā bhī acchā lagegā. kahie na".

31 <https://bit.ly/2W0ZWnn>.

“kyā?”

“man kī bāt”.

“uhūn – mere andar itnā sāhas nahīm. laṛkī jo ṭhahrī”.

“to maim kahūm?”

“kahie”.

“mair̄ āpko cāhne lagā hūm. mair̄-mair̄ āpse prem kartā hūm gaṁgā jī”. rām ne kahā aur apne śabdōm kī pratikriyā jāne ke lie dhyān se gaṁgā kā cehrā dekhne lagā.

gaṁgā ne kuch nahīm kahā. usne ek bār palaker̄m uṭhākar rām ko dekhā aur ise paścāt muṁh meṁ cunrī kā chor dabākar vah śighrata se rasoi meṁ calī gāi.

rām use der tak jāte dekhā rahā aur soctā rahā ki kahīm **vah kuch anucit to nahīm kah baiṭhā hai**.³²

This time, Ram stopped her and said – Please finish what you were saying, it’s not right to leave something unsaid like this.

– Please let it go. You will say Ganga talks a lot.

– Trust me. I would like it if you talk a lot. Please tell me.

– What?

– What’s in your heart.

– Umh – I don’t have that much courage. I am a girl, that’s why.

– So, can I say (that)?

– Please do.

– I have started loving you. I love you Ganga ji.

Ram said and, in order to know her reaction to his words, he started looking at Ganga’s face intently.

Ganga did not say anything. She lifted her eyelids and looked at Ram once and then with one end of her stole in her mouth she quickly went to the kitchen.

Ram kept on watching as she left and kept thinking, **what if he has said something inappropriate (kuch anucit to nahīm kah baiṭhā hai)**.’ (adapted from *Rām kī Gaṁgā* 2016)³³

This example is interesting because the Agent-like argument is deliberating whether he has made a mistake by speaking out his heart. From the context we can see that he was in control of the situation to a great extent and he knew that he wanted Ganga or himself to express certain feelings. However, having done that and after looking at Ganga’s reaction, he is now wondering if that was appropriate or not. Thus, the use of *kah baiṭhnā* shows that Ram is wondering if what he just said to Ganga was a mistake.

In conclusion we can say that with atypical constructions, where transitive polar verbs are used along with intransitive vector verbs, there could be a reduction in the overall transitivity of the construction due to:

³² The use of the present perfect, as per Montaut’s analysis (2006), also confirms the fact that the present perfect can have experiential and resultant connotation. Ram in this case has integrated the possibility that he made a mistake into his information set and is not astonished by it.

³³ <https://bit.ly/2VZ04UI>.

1. Reduced agency of Agent-like argument either because of a) loss of control or b) reduced volitionality;
2. Affectedness of the Agent-like argument.

In the following section, we will look at cases where the speaker chooses to talk about certain astonishing negative events in a way that they were 'unexpected' using atypical constructions with *jānā* as the vector verb. Even though the speaker in talking on these astonishing negative events sometimes ascribes a loss in agency to the Agent-like argument, we will see that this does not always correspond to reality.

4 Negative Surprise

While in section three above, we looked at how in atypical compound verb constructions the use of the intransitive vector verb draws attention to the fact that the transitivity of the action, from the point of view of the speaker, is reduced, but there are also instances where this may not be the case.³⁴ To demonstrate this, we will first analyze an example from Drocco (2018, 281) in terms of the 10 well-known parameters related to the "transitive continuum" introduced by Hopper and Thompson (1980).

18. *apn-e pāṛṭnar k-ī sahamti se yah*
REFL-M.OBL partner.M GEN-F agreement with 3SG.DIR
- vyakti us-e khā ga-y-ā.*
person/individual.M 3SG.OBL-DAT/ACC eat go-PERF-M.SG
'This person ate up his partner with his consent'. (adapted from Drocco 2018, 281)³⁵

1. Agent is human (or at least animate): *Yes*.
2. Agent is conscious: *Yes*. The Agent first obtained the permission of the Object before performing the act. So, he was conscious and in control.
3. Agent has as goal a change in state of patient: *Yes*.
4. Change of state is physical: *Yes*.
5. Agent has ability to effect change in patient: *Yes*.
6. Agent is responsible for the change in patient: *Yes*.
7. Agent is source of energy required: *Yes*.
8. Agent touches patient with self or instrument: *Yes*.
9. Agent succeeds in effecting change in patient: *Yes*.
10. Change of state in patient is perceptible: *Yes*.

³⁴ In this section we restrict our analysis to *jānā* as we have not come across such usages with *baiṭhnā*.

³⁵ <http://www.gazabpost.com/cannibal-from-germany>.

Drocco (2018, 276-82) concluded that in many instances similar to (18) even if there is volitionality on the part of the Agent-like argument and he/she in no way is affected by the action, *jānā* can still be used. Indeed, according to the same author, atypical constructions with the vector verb *jānā* are often used when the speaker, as a consequence of the fact that the Agent-like argument 'went beyond', expresses a negative reaction (astonishment, shock, etc.) towards a particular action or event. This 'negative reaction' can be explained as a 'negative surprise' or also as a 'shock'.³⁶ Therefore, it is not always clear if 'volitionality' and 'affectedness' are the only factors correlated with the use of *jānā* in an atypical construction.

In general, and also to anticipate some of our conclusions, we can say that very often atypical constructions are used for talking about 'unexpected events'. By 'unexpected events' we mean events that should not have happened according to the speaker. In (18) for instance, cannibalism is seen as something not morally correct and desirable. One of the ways in which the speaker/writer (and also the reader) can make sense of an event like this is by reducing the agency of the Agent-like argument while reporting it. Even though the Agent-like argument acted consciously with respect to the goal he wanted to achieve (by taking the consent of the person he ate), in a broader sense, when his actions are judged in contrast to another 'normal' or 'mentally sound' agent, he is classified as being 'out of his mind' by the speaker.

Thus, it seems that there is some other parameter associated with this use of *jānā* which impacts the transitivity category in H/U and which is apparently not included in Hopper and Thompson's transitivity parameters. This parameter seems to be normative in nature, where the speaker, after looking at an action, asks himself whether a 'normal' agent would act in this way or not. This helps the speaker to somehow rationalize an extreme event which perhaps was too shocking to understand. Let us look at another example from Drocco (2018, 282) to illustrate this point further:

19. *machlī* *pakaṛ rahe* *yuvak* *ko* *zimḍā* *khā* *ga-y-ā*
fish catch PROG man ACC alive eat go.VV-PERF-M.SG

magarmacch.

crocodile. M

'A crocodile ate a man catching fish alive'. (adapted from Drocco 2018, 282)³⁷

³⁶ This is in contrast to our analysis of the usage of compound verbs (Drocco, Tiwari forthcoming) where we talk about how 'typical constructions' with vector verbs *jānā*, *denā* and *lenā* - and thus contrary to the 'atypical constructions' examined in the present paper - are used when the speaker and the listener share information about the event in question, therefore not in a context of 'surprise.' See footnote 38.

³⁷ <http://khabar.ibnlive.com/news/city-khabrain/crocodile-ate-young-man-in-indore-377047.html>.

The grammatical features of the verbal part of (19) are:

- use of transitive verb + *jānā* (*khā jānā*);
- use of the aorist (perfect without auxiliary);³⁸
- atypical word order with the subject coming after the verb.³⁹

In this sentence as well, we can see that while the crocodile would have, in all probability, acted fully volitionally, the speaker reports the action using *khā jānā*, thus rendering the sentence intransitive grammatically. As Drocco points out, the use of the atypical compound construction in (18) and (19) above demonstrates a feeling of shock and astonishment. We can compare (19) to the sentences below:

20. *machlī pakar rahe machuāre ko magarmacch ne*
fish catch PROGR fisherman ACC crocodile.M ERG

khā li-y-ā.

eat take.VV-PERF-M.SG

'A crocodile ate a man catching fish alive'.⁴⁰

21. *machlī pakar rahe yuvak ko zimdā khā-y-ā*
fish catch PROGR man ACC alive eat-PERF-M.SG

magarmacch ne.

crocodile.M ERG

'A crocodile ate a man catching fish alive'.⁴¹

In (20) we can see that while the event in itself is shocking for most people, the speaker is talking about it in a way where it benefitted the crocodile because he has used the transitive vector verb *lenā* which is often used when the actions affects or, as in this case, benefits the Agent-like argument. This is another way to look at the same event where the positive effect of the action on the Agent-like argument is being emphasized. The way the action is phrased (*kha liyā*) is also transitive, thus the speaker ascribes full agency to the Agent-like argument and makes it sound like the action was premeditated. This is in contrast to (19) where the focus is more on the action of eating itself and on its impact on the Object (the 'man'). By reducing the Agent's volitionality, the speaker increases the astonishment ex-

³⁸ See Montaut 2006 for the link between 'mirativity' and the aorist in H/U; as regards the grammatical category of 'mirativity' see DeLancey 1997, 2001, 2012.

³⁹ The word-order in H/U plays an important role in determining where the pragmatic emphasis in sentence falls. Although in many cases where a surprising or unexpected event is reported we find that the sentence ends with the Agent-like argument and the word order becomes, as a result, OVS, this has to be analysed further in detail.

⁴⁰ <http://khabar.ibnlive.com/news/city-khabrain/crocodile-ate-young-man-in-indore-377047.html>.

⁴¹ Example sentence by Neha Tiwari.

pressed by the sentence by taking away from him his capacity to act intentionally and in a planned manner.

Another way in which (20) differs from (19) and also (21) is the informational context. Hook (forthcoming), Jagannathan (1981) and Drocco, Tiwari (forthcoming), have talked about how the use of typical compound verb constructions is linked to prior information.⁴² While in (20), it is hard to say without the context whether there was something expected about the action,⁴³ *prime facie*, the use of a typical compound construction has the inverse effect of making the event sound like it was somehow expected. In (21) however, the simple verb does not have any such implication and hence increases the element of surprise over (20). However, compared to (19), (21) expresses less astonishment regarding the event. This is because, as we have seen in sections 2 and 3 above, when *jānā* is used as a vector verb with transitive polar verbs, it often shows that the speaker regards the event as ‘unexpected’ because it goes against a particular habit or norm or it is seen as excessive. Thus, *khā jānā* already carries this flavour of being ‘unexpected’ and this implication can be carried over to cases of unexpected events in general even when they may have been volitional and transitive and the basic transitivity parameters were not in question.⁴⁴

Thus, based on the analysis above, we can say that the element of surprise/astonishment increases in the order below:

1. *khā liyā* (cf. 20)
2. *khāyā* (cf. 21)
3. *khā gayā* (cf. 19)

This does not mean that the three constructions are interchangeable in the sense that the speaker can choose one over the other purely based on how much surprise he wants to express. On the contrary, the informational context in which the event takes place and who he is speaking to, also impacts this choice.

42 In the context of any sentence (or utterance), ‘prior information’ is that state of the world in which the speaker and the listener both already have some information about the event that is being spoken of in the sentence and they both know this to be true for the other person as well: i.e., the speaker knows that the listener is aware of the event and vice versa. In H/U, ‘prior information’ is encoded by the use of compound verb constructions with vector verbs *jānā*, *denā* and *lenā* restricted as follows: 1. *jānā* is used with intransitive verbs; 2. *denā* is used with transitive verbs; 3. *lenā* is used with transitive verbs and some intransitive verbs. Therefore, the concept of ‘prior information’ is applicable for ‘typical’ compound verb constructions and not for ‘atypical’ constructions.

43 Interestingly, the article from which (19) is taken, opens with (19) as the headline and reiterates it with *khā lenā* in (20), which is similar to (19), but, as already pointed out, with a typical compound verb construction. This could be because once the reader has read the headline, what follows is expected by him/her.

44 But perhaps should not be so from the point of view of the speaker.

However, more often than not, *jānā* performs both the functions – encoding reduced transitivity and expressing shock or negative surprise. For instance:

22. *mām kā galā kāṭ khūn pī ga-y-ā beṭā.*
mother GEN throat cut blood drink go.VV-PERF-M.SG son.M
'A son having slit his mother's throat drank up her blood'. (adapted from:
<https://www.livehindustan.com/news/national/article1-story-493560.html>).

The context of this sentence is that the Agent-like argument asked his mother to give him some money to buy alcohol. When she refused, he slit her throat and drank up her blood. As is clear from the sentence and the context, the Agent-like argument was not completely in control of his actions and got carried away either under the influence of alcohol or anger or both. Thus, *jānā* here encodes loss in agency and also captures how shocking the incident was.

5 Conclusion

In this paper we have analyzed the usage and semantic and pragmatic implications of atypical compound verb constructions in which transitive polar verbs are paired with two intransitive vector verbs, *jānā*, 'to go' and *baiṭhnā*, 'to sit'. In section 2, we demonstrated that these constructions can be called 'atypical' because they are encountered less frequently as opposed to their typical counterparts. As we have seen in the rest of the paper, this is primarily due to the fact that these constructions encode a specific attitude or evaluation of the action and/or its context by the speaker.

While in the case of *baiṭhnā*, scholars agree on what specific meaning is encoded, this is not the case with *jānā*, for which we have listed several implied meanings in section 2, concluding that it is necessary to shed more light on this topic. We then investigated why this particular construction is used by the speaker in H/U for expressing a particular perception of the situation. In languages like English and Italian, the same effect is realized by either the use of expletives or by a change in intonation or both (see Kittilä 2005 and Fauconnier 2011, 2012). On the contrary, we showed that this effect is realized in H/U through an atypical compound construction with intransitive vector verbs where in many cases the meaning conveyed is that the Agent-like argument either acted foolishly, or unconsciously, or lost control over his actions, or was even forced to do something against his wishes. In addition to agency and volitionality, another attribute of these constructions is the fact that the Agent-like argument is of-

ten affected by his own action, losing control and saying or doing something unacceptable and later regretting it. Thus, the Agent-like argument in an atypical construction is often not the ‘fully volitional’ and ‘unaffected agent’ of a prototypical transitive verb. The reason we have qualified the last statement by saying ‘often’ is because as discussed in section 4, sometimes these constructions are also used to express shock or negative surprise on the part of the speaker about an action that was otherwise typically transitive. Building further from the analysis in Drocco (2018), we showed how the element of negative surprise is realized in H/U by using an atypical construction in the simple perfect. In these cases, even though the Agent-like argument could have acted fully volitionally (like in the case of the crocodile in (19) or the man in 18), the speaker still chooses to use the intransitive construction which interestingly betrays the need of the speaker to enforce his view of the world (crocodiles and humans should not be eating humans, at least not fully volitionally) on the true state of affairs (crocodiles and sometimes also humans eat whatever they want to eat and can find to eat in their vicinity). In most of the examples we have seen above, it was possible to talk about the action in question using a typical compound verb construction. Thus, the choice to use an atypical construction comes down to the speaker and his understanding and perception of the action.

While in this paper we have looked at atypical constructions with intransitive vector verbs, we have not covered cases where intransitive polar verbs are paired with transitive vectors like in *cal denā* where the intransitive polar verb *calnā* means ‘to walk’ and *denā* means ‘to give.’ We hope to do so in a future paper.

List of abbreviations

ABL	Ablative
ACC	Accusative
CP	Conjunctive participle
DAT	Dative
DIR	Direct
EMPH	Emphatic
ERG	Ergative
F	Feminine
FUT	Future
GEN	Genitive
HON	Honorific
IMPF	Imperfective
IMPV	Imperative
INF	Infinitive
INSTR	Instrumental
INT	Interrogative
INTR	Intransitive
LOC	Locative
M	Masculine
MIR	Mirative
NEG	Negation
OBL	Oblique
PART	Participle
PAST	Past
PAST.PART	Past participle
PERF	Perfect
PL	Plural
PP	Past Participle
PRES	Present
PROG	Progressive
PTC	Particle
REFL	Reflexive
REL	Relative
SG	Singular
TR	Transitive
VV	Vector verb

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MF Husain's Hindi Autobiography *Em. Ef. Husen kī kahānī apnī zubānī* Sketches of a Performative Self, Surfing the World in Space and Time

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Abstract Drawing from Elizabeth Grosz's notion of the body as a socio-cultural artefact and the exterior of the subject bodies as psychically constructed, and Rosi Braidotti's concept of nomadic identities, in this article I introduce world-renowned Indian painter MF Husain's verbal and visual autobiography *Em. Ef. Husen kī kahānī apnī zubānī* as a series of sketches of a performative self, surfing the world in space and time. Bodies and spaces are envisioned as "assemblages or collections of parts" in constant movement, crossing borders and creating relationships with other selves and other spaces. People and places become a catalyst for manifestations of the self in art – MF Husain being foremost a painter – and eventually also in literature. I look for strategies that MF Husain uses in order to construct or deconstruct the self through crossings and linkages. I try to investigate how the self is performed inside and outside private and public spaces, how the complex (sometimes even contradictory) relationship between self and community is portrayed, and how this autobiography does articulate notions of (imagined) community/ies, nationalism, transnational subjectivity, nostalgia.

Keywords MF Husain. Autobiography. Hindi literature. Modernism. Performative self.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Writers, Scribes, Painters, and an Earthen Pot. – 3 (Dis-) Embodying the Self. – 4 A Branded Self in Performance. – 5 Memories Becoming Visible.



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1 Introduction

This article focuses on MF Husain's Hindi autobiography *Em. Ef. Husen kī kahānī apnī zubānī* (MF Husain's autobiography).¹ Maqbool Fida (MF) Husain (1915-2011) is one of the few painters of his generation to have garnered international recognition and he is acclaimed as a unique figure in the Indian art scene. His pictorial production has been widely investigated, but to date no effort has been made to analyze his literary production. In this paper, I will suggest some possible trends of analysis of MF Husain's autobiographical production, focusing on the notion of a performative self, surfing in space and time.

MF Husain was born in 1915 into a large, working-class Suleimani Muslim family in the Hindu Vaishnava temple town of Pandharpur, Maharashtra. His mother Zainab died when he was only one and half years old. His father Fida remarried, and the family moved to Indore. The young Maqbool's early education was perfunctory, but his association with painting began at this early age, as he learned the art of calligraphy and practiced *al-ḥatt al-kūfī*, the kufic calligraphy with geometric forms. At the age of twenty, he moved to Bombay with the determination to become an artist; he worked as an assistant to a painter of billboards, painting cinema banners until he was invited by Francis Newton Souza to become one of the components of the Progressive Artists Group (PAG) of Bombay, an association created in 1947 with the aim to encourage an Indian avant-garde. They wanted to break with the revivalist nationalism established by the Bengal school of art as well as come out of the influence of the British academic painting, and they aimed to promote a modern art movement engaged at an international level. Public recognition came together with the independence of the country, when he won his first award at the annual exhibition of the Bombay Art Society. Subsequently, state recognition came in 1955, when he was awarded the Padma Shri; later he was conferred the Padma Bhushan in 1973 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1989, and he was nominated to the Rajya Sabha in 1986. In 1968, MF Husain won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival for his film *Through the Eyes of a Painter*. He received a large number of international honors and today he is one of the most celebrated artist of India, thanks to his pioneering experimentations with new forms of art. MF Husain is also one of India's priciest painters: in 2011, his work *Sprinkling Horses* was sold in an auction for 1.14 Million US\$, at that time the highest price so far achieved for an Indian work. He died at the age of 96 in 2011.

MF Husain indulged in autobiography at many levels. He produced a series of self-portraits and paintings titled *Autobiography*. Besides

¹ Literally, *apnī kahānī apnī zubānī*, that is to say "his own account of his own story", an expression that is the equivalent of "autobiography" in Hindi/Urdu.

Em. Ef. Husen kī kahānī apnī zubānī, MF Husain wrote a personal diary, *Harf va nakś* (Words and paintings), that unfortunately I could not see. This is described as an unbound book, entirely in beautiful calligraphy, existing in seven or eight copies. It contains poetry, unsent letters, some abstract sketches and other notes, written in three different languages - Urdu, Hindi, and English (Tripathi 2012). Last but not least, a dramatised version of the artist's life written by Varun Gautam and directed by Nadira Zaheer Babbar was brought on stage in 2006 by Ekjute, the renowned theatre group based in Mumbai (www.ekjute.com). In his long association with the group, MF Husain designed Ekjute's 15th, 20th, 25th, and 30th year celebration logos. He also entrusted them with his memoirs and diaries on his life, which resulted in the much-acclaimed play *Pensil se braś tak* (From pencil to brush). MF Husain personally designed the sets for the play and was closely associated with the production. The play traces Husain's evolution over several decades, from his humble background to his years struggling as a painter of movie posters in Mumbai, to being globally acclaimed as an international artist. The stress is on the figure of a painter from a small village rising above all prejudices and used his art to reflect the cultural diversity of India, trying to bring harmony in this diversity. In the play, the current avatar of MF Husain meets his young self and his child self and they have an engaging conversation of how Husain has changed over the years, and how he has become almost a victim of his own brand. The younger versions claim he has forgotten them, but the older Husain states that his greatest achievement was keeping his inner child and his passionate youth alive inside him. This structure is repeated in the Hindi autobiography as well, as MF Husain himself stated:

This book is not about my achievements. It only talks about things which I would like to share with my children, friends, and other people. The book has short stories, with three characters, a small boy, Maqbool, and M.F. Husain, which is a brand name. I call this a brand name because nobody bought my paintings when I was plain Maqbool but did so when the paintings were sold under the name M.F. Husain. (Sundar 2003)

Combining Elizabeth Grosz's (1995) notion of the body as a socio-cultural artefact and the exterior of the subject bodies as psychically constructed with Rosi Braidotti's (1994, 2002) concept of nomadic identities - insofar they don't belong anywhere and belong everywhere - I will introduce the representation of the self that appears in this autobiography as sketches of a performative self, surfing the world in space and time. Bodies and spaces are envisioned as 'assemblages or collections of parts' in constant movement, crossing borders and creating relationships with other selves and other spac-

es. People and places become a catalyst for manifestations of the self in art - MF Husain being foremost a painter - and eventually also in literature.

According to Grosz, art is generated by a dynamic corporeality that vibrates to the rhythm of the universe. Rather than being a cultural accomplishment, art explodes when the “forces of the earth (cosmological forces that we can understand as chaos, material and organic indeterminacy)” interact with the “forces of living bodies, by no means exclusively human” (Grosz 2008, 2-3), in the tumultuous, excessive, not so much useful as intensifying forms of sexual selection. Art, according to Grosz, is not about taste, cultural accomplishment, or a reflection of society, but it is experimentation with materiality, sensation, and life - an extraction from the universe and an elaboration on it. Life does not produce fixed products; in its constant creativity, life produces processes of becoming (Braidotti 1994, 2002). According to a nomadic notion of identity, one could say that the stuff of life, its materiality is constant change that destabilizes the present (Grosz 2004, 96, 111). I will refer to this analytical frame in order to analyze MF Husain's autobiography, keeping in mind Husain's words, “Creativity is when you go into something and in the process you discover something” (Sundar 2003).

2 Writers, Scribes, Painters, and an Earthen Pot

MF Husain's Hindi autobiography, which was originally written in Urdu, was published in September 2002, soon followed by an English version, freely interpreted by journalist/editor/film critic/screenwriter/film director Khalid Mohammed. *Em. Ef. Husen kī kahānī apnī zubānī* is introduced as an assemblage or collection of parts. It is a book that is in constant movement, as it crosses linguistic borders (English, Hindi, Urdu). It has a strong visual impact too. First of all, it is a printed book, but it has the form of a manuscript. Moreover, the text has to be appreciated both visually and orally, because it is accompanied by drawings. This literally makes MF Husain's autobiography a *citralkh*, or ‘picture-writing’ (also ‘picto-gram’, ‘picto-graph’). The Hindi volume has a fascinating history, that is told by the ‘scribe’ Rashda Siddiqui in the introduction:

When Husain started writing his autobiography, he would just keep on writing wherever he was, whether he was in the *dhabā* sipping his morning chai from a clay cup or in a five-star hotel coffee shop, or else he was travelling on a plane (something he did a lot, and really liked doing!). He used to get up very early; sometimes he would even get up at three o'clock at night, and start writing. This is actually his disposition: once he starts something he

would not let go until it is finished, he would not leave it incomplete. Husain's autobiography was written on paper napkins, on table mats, on the empty surface on the back of letters, on notes made of torn envelopes, and even what was written on nice paper sheets came out of his pockets as a crumpled bundle. He would often read out his writings to friends: he liked to steal the scene at any *mahfil* (meeting). Then one day we collected all the papers, we paired chapter to chapter, note to note. It was wonderfully written. Its beauty is found in the writing and the language is poetic, the exposition is unique. I wrote down the manuscript as a book, and embellished it with drawings made by Husain. (Husen 2002, 6-7)²

From this account, one can get an idea of the scarce relevance given to the written word by M.F. Husain. On the contrary, the cathexis is on the sonic force of the actual act of recitation, oral-gestural compositions, speech and gesture. In this case, the (autobiographical) account is directly linked to the body of the reciting individual. The need to make possible the retention of memories outside the body is satisfied by the written text, as well as by "surrogate or prosthetic apparatuses" (Rao 2016, 73) such as archives and museums. Indifference to writing has been a century-long feature of the Indian subcontinent (Rao 2016), that got modified in premodern and colonial time, bringing about a whole set of scribal specialist communities (Raman 2012; O'Hanlon 2013). Scribal documentation was confined to revenue and administrative domain. Even today, the creative force of the poet or writer is conceived as orality and mnemoculture. In India, the poet is basically one who does not write, but recites. The poet must have a companion who is polyglot, who can communicate readily, who has a beautiful hand, learned in many scripts, herself capable of poetic composition, a rhetorician: such a companion must be the poet's scribe.

The book under analysis has a very active and dynamic scribe. Rashda Siddiqui's obsession with painter MF Husain began in 1977. Their liaison developed from being a teacher-student relationship into one in which Rashda played muse to Husain, remaining his close friend for decades. The way she describes the process of assembling the fragments of autobiography that MF Husain had produced is not only a passive recording of something he had told or written, but rather a complex puzzle construction, involving not only the shaping of a text, but also the manufacture and selection of drawings to accompany and complete the written body. It is a co-creation, such that the common notion of 'autobiography' is shaken: the final book is indeed MF Husain's account, but it involves the agency of Rashda Siddiqui as well.

² Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the Author.

Rashda is also a character in the narrative. She is the protagonist of a chapter where she is introduced as the author of the first book written as a tribute to MF Husain, *In conversation with Husain's paintings* (Husen 2002, 187-90). Interesting enough, the chapter is divided into two parts, showing two different calligraphic styles. The first part tells poetically of their first meeting and emphasises Rashda's ability to appreciate MF Husain's paintings outside the logic of art business:

This is a time when everything is bought and sold. Some people buy, some sell. It's very rare to find people like you, who are so devoted and crazy for love as to go around with a painting by Maqbool in their hand! (Husen 2002, 188)

The second section does not show the horizontal headline called *śirorekhā* on top of each word. This is a typical trait of the Devanagari script, that is sometimes shun in handwriting to make writing fast. Therefore, it suggests that the text is a sort of annotation or a gloss. The main text retells the event of the first meeting with more realistic details, ending with an overt advertisement of the book by Rashda Siddiqui: "This is the first book of this kind in the language of art. The artistic book design is by Rashda's talented second daughter Anjum" (Husen 2002, 190).

Nomadism, meant both as movement in space and as a constant process of becoming, is another important feature of *Em. Ef. Husen kī kahānī apnī zubānī*. The book, as MF Husain often stressed, traces a journey in time, from the little Maqbool playing in his grandfather's lap to the artist whose works are on display at major exhibitions worldwide. MF Husain's public persona has been analyzed with reference to the Indian nation (Ramaswamy 2011; Bagchee 1998), because one of the features of his most famous and controversial paintings is the representation of India's diverse cultures, and a strong sense of Indianness. After the 1996 controversy on the supposedly obscene paintings hurting the sensibilities of the Hindu community, he became one of the favorite targets of the right-wing Hindutva groups, to the point that some nine hundred cases were filed against him in various courts of India; he was personally harassed by fanatical mobs, and exhibitions of his work were repeatedly vandalised. In 2005, he left India in a self-imposed exile, and 'settled' among Dubai, Qatar and London. In 2010, he was conferred Qatar nationality at the instance of the modernizing emirate's ruling family - a very rare occurrence - and he renounced his Indian passport. This caused a controversy in India, given MF Husain's "self-elected role as a modern-day *śubradhār* for the nation-state" (Kapur 2009, 7 fn. 4).

The condition of exile is a paradox for MF Husain. He was the emblematic modernist painter, secular by default, his Muslimness be-

ing underplayed in the name of secularism that was the default condition of the modern artist. In fact, he was deeply committed to the composite, multi-religious, and secular values of Indian civilisation. But in the postcolonial and globalised world the secular agenda has been relativized, and he had to face the Muslimness entrusted upon him by the communal discourse. For decades he sang the nation, but he was partisan to the notion of a secular, 'bourgeois' Indian state. When the state turned to Hindutva, he got trapped in the Islamophobic construction of the Muslim as terrorist, that obscures the 'good Muslim', who must be detached from Islam (Mamdani 2004). Struggling to refuse the role of national martyr, he remained not national and not yet global, but living in a general condition where accelerate mobilities are linked also to voluntary migration, troubled citizenship, and human rights discourse. Another kind of exile is caused by the postmodern turn: as the modernist phase gets deconstructed the notion of the artist as author is questioned, and MF Husain – an author “in the hyperbolic mode” – is “periodized and sent into exile within (and without) the domain of art history” (Kapur 2009, 14), even if MF Husain's liaison with popular genres such as Bollywood puts him beyond the high art/popular art binary.

When MF Husain left the country for good, many claimed that, despite leading a full life abroad, he wanted to return to India, if for no other reason, just to drink tea at his favorite Irani teashop in Mumbai. Incapable of express loss, he became celebratory, the triumphal marker of individual and national survival. He had always been peripatetic and lived an eventful life, spent nomadically crisscrossing the globe and enjoying his moment in front of the canvas and behind the camera, spinning out paintings, films, books, anecdotes, etc. In the first interview released to NDTV after he became a citizen of Qatar, MF Husain humorously questioned the very notion of one's physical location, paraphrasing the popular song “Hindvī haiṃ ham, vatan hai hindostāṃ hamārā” (We are of Hind (India), our homeland is Hindustan) into “Hindī haiṃ ham vatan hai sārā jahām hamārā”, that is: “We are of Hind (India), our homeland is the whole world”. When the interviewer asked MF if he craved to be at home, he replied “What is this physical presence? In today's world with so much technology and communication you are everywhere and a creative person is not bound by any geography” (“Husain. The Art of the Matter” 2010).

3 (Dis-)Embodying the Self

If 'geography' is a relational process, it is important to investigate the relation between the self and space that comes through the body. In this section, I will address this issue as it appears in *Em. Ef. Husen kī kahānī apnī zubānī*, drawing on Elizabeth Grosz's notion of the

body as a socio-cultural artefact and the exterior of the subject bodies as psychically constructed (Grosz 1995).

The book opens with a family tree (Husen 2002, 3), which is not a graph but a drawing, visually presenting the self that is going to be set in space and time with more details in the subsequent written introduction to the family genealogy (Husen 2002, 25-9). Here characters are clearly set in space and time, through references to geographical locations, professions, kinship. Maqbool and MF Husain appear as two distinct characters. The first is a child at the bottom, identified with the label "Maqbool in Dada's lap". He and grandfather Abdul Husain are leaning on the trunk of the tree, that has on its backdrop the blessing hand of great grandfather Ibrahim. MF Husain is represented as painting in a central position, and his name appear again in connection with Fazila, identified as "Husain's wife".

The tree is rooted on a square piece of land, or carpet, marked as Pandharpur. Another toponym, which is also graphically drawn as a factory, marks the icon of Maqbool's father: Fida Husain was employed at Indore Malwa Mill as a timekeeper of manual labour workers. Some characters are more detailed and they are identified by objects referring to their jobs: Fida, a clerk who monitored workers' daily attendance, their absence, and maintained account of their labor hours and work rates, holds a book; Dada Abdul, who had a shop of oil lamps, is shown with a lantern; Owais, a cinema director, is connected to a camera; Mulla Nisar Ali is praying on a sliced moon backdrop; and MF Husain is painting a horse that jumps out of the frame, as if alive. Objects, thus, are crucial in constructing identities. Few characters have face features (a beard, a straight line marking a nose), and Mother Zainab is the only character facing backwards - symbolizing death.

Turning to the written text, I now focus on the way MF Husain introduces the 'self'. The double narrating self presents two different characters, who sometimes engage in conversation, or else appear to observe each other. One is a child, Maqbool. He is a boy born in Pandharpur and raised in a totally masculine environment by his paternal grandfather. The other voice is MF Husain, the adult, branded painter. Interesting enough, the actors introduced in the first chapter of the text - titled "Suddenly, an Earthen Pot Burst Out Speaking" (Husen 2002, 9-11) - are not human. Of course, the conventional metaphor of body as a clay pot cannot be lost to any reader having a minimal acquaintance to Indian literatures (Kabir 2002, 67), but the fact remains that the only overt human feature is found in the drawing before the text, where Maqbool as a young man sits on a *cārpāī* (jute bed), with his hand on an earthen pot. The written text, on the contrary, shows a room devoid of animated beings. Unanimated objects tell the story of a departure through an external narrator, who describes the room: there is an earthen pot, placed on a *cārpāī*, a lan-

tern, a book open at page fourteen; some clothes, that are listed in detail – a man shirt, boy knickers, a dupatta; a broken bicycle chain, a flute, kite paper, a sweet box. The wish to eliminate any animated being is corroborated by the casual notation about the sweets: “surprisingly no ants” (Husen 2002, 9). As I pointed out, the earthen pot is a very recognizable literary *topos*, the metaphor of the human body that was popularised through Kabir’s *bījak*-s (Kabir 2002, 67; 114; 116). Therefore, it is clear that the narrating voice is Husain’s. Somebody has just left, somebody has just come in, with a torch in his hand: they cannot meet, as they are the same person in different time. But the pot has an open mouth, the story cannot be contained, it has to come out. We can understand this as an example of the exterior of the subject body as psychically constructed (Grosz 1995).

MF Husain applies a process of dis/embodiment to his characters. A clear example of this is found in his construction of ‘the Mother’. In order to understand it, I draw on the butlerian notions of performance – as a bodily practice that produces meaning, that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be – and performativity (Butler 2007). Drawing on Foucault’s “model of inscription” and rejecting the commonly accepted distinction between surface and depth or the Cartesian dualism between body and soul, Butler refers also to the notion of “linguistic performativity,” an account of a discursively constructed body which cannot be separated from the linguistic acts that name and constitute it, with the consequence that bodies are never merely described, they are always constituted in the act of description (Butler 2007, 134-5).

Maqbool is motherless. He has no memory of her face as she died when he was too young to have memories of her devoid of the memory of her face, leaving no photograph or picture that might be used to construct such memories. In his quest for Mother, MF Husain reiterates signs in a way that remind of the (Derridean and/or Butlerian) notion of “citation” (Derrida 1982, 315; Butler 1997, 49; 155-6). Discourse precedes and constitutes the ‘I,’ i.e. the subject. Signs are vulnerable to appropriation, norms are far from monolithic or stable, but they may be reiterated and cited in ways that undermine hegemony or conventional use. MF Husain uses the sign of a nun, a *sādhvī*’s cloth – that is conventionally disconnected from the notion of motherhood – to construct a body that is devoid of any flesh and facial feature. M.F. Husain’s numerous paintings of Mother Theresa are a proof that places, objects, signs, they all contribute to the construction of the body.

[The child’s] undying ember of love went into the caves of human civilization. It met the elegant *apsaras* of Ajanta. It scabbled the broken pots of Mohenjo Daro. It inscribed “Ibnzainab” with its fingers on the scalding sands of the Karbala. He asked about her

to Nimrod's Nefertiti, Milo's Venus, Michelangelo's *Pietà*, Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, he did not hesitate to meet even Picasso's *Mademoiselles d'Avignon*. In art, many painters have represented their mothers on canvas and paper, beyond immortal life, conferring to them a body of the shadow of the soul that is the essence of the whole creation. The tiny secret of God's creation. For sure Van Gogh would have painted countless portraits of his mother seated in the sun-blazing sunflower fields, but, alas, people declared him a lunatic and locked him in an asylum. Whistler painted a portrait of his mother sitting silently in a corner of a room, dressed in the color of the night. Rembrandt painted a woman carrying a lamp, who became the mother of his son.

Kolkatta, December 1980. The lavish Tata Center in Chowringhee Road. The opening of MF Husain's saris exhibition. A whole crowd of Bengali women adorned in colorful saris, Bihari begums, Punjabi glitterati collected there. In all paintings a repeated white sari, appearing from an inky blue background. There were flashes of tiny orphan children hidden, concealed amidst the folds of those saris. There was no human body in the white sari, no mother's face. Two thin blue stripes comprised the sari's border. One could recognize the world-famous divine woman: Mother Theresa. Her identity is not her face, but her infinite love for those children who have been deprived of their mother's love. An old, torn sari fluttering in the wind entwined itself around Maqbool's feet. It was very old, maybe 60 or 70 years old. Many, countless women must have worn that sari on their bodies. Perhaps it had been bought in Pandarpur, perhaps it had danced once on the river bank, in Indore. It must have been washed by many *dhobis*, it must have ripped then it must have been stitched. Eventually it must have been given to the poor, in charity. A poor woman, whose breast was now dry, must have sold that worn out sari for a pittance at Chor Bazaar in Kolkatta, to get a couple drops of milk for her whining baby. (Husen 2002, 20-2)

In this passage, MF Husain constructs the Mother's body combining everyday clothing pieces and his artistic performance, tracing its cultural history both in the Indian and Islamic milieu and in the European and American one. Once again, the body is literally a socio-cultural artefact.

This is a strategy that comes repeatedly in the autobiography. For example, when the narrator tells about Dada's death in the chapter "Dādā kī ackan" (Husen 2002, 38-43), he shifts between times and places (Indore, the room where Dada died; Paris; the time when Dada died and 1970), sounds (voices, noises), objects (Dada's cloth, his fur *ṭopi*) and relations (the neighbours, Maqbool and MF Husain). It

is during a concert of John Cage in 1970s Paris³ that the boy/alter ego reminds MF Husain of Dada's room in Indore, because of the voices and noises that are being performed on stage. This scene is anticipated by a similitude made by the narrator when describing the noises of the house "the sound of the water, the utensils and the bucket blended into a symphony, as memorable as the compositions of John Cage, the master of avant-gard fusion" (Husen 2002, 38). There is a circular movement of memories of the boy and the branded artist, and the narrating voice tells to the younger himself his life.

4 A Branded Self in Performance

Maqbool left childhood, lost his familiar space and his beloved Dādā, and became an adult. After Dādā's demise he was sent to a boarding school in Baroda. During vacations, he would go to his father's house in Indore and work as an account keeper. But his real interest was in drawing and painting. In Indore, he came to know Narayan Shridhar Bendre (1910-92), whose journey of modernism took Indian modern art on its first revolutionary step.

The sentimental education of young Maqbool took place while he discovered women's bodies, getting a crush on Jamuna or Batool, girls that were anyway bound to get married to someone else. At the same time Maqbool was slowly developing into MF Husain, the artist. At the time of his death, Dādā Abdul had handed Maqbool a 10 rupee note, and this banknote was to play a significant part in his life. In 1932, Maqbool Fida Husain's career as a painter started off at a street corner in Indore, when a stranger paid him ten rupees for the painting he was working on. He would soon leave to Bombay, the city where he met his wife-to-be Fazilabibi and that conferred on him the title of international artist. He would travel extensively and get wealth and honors, his paintings and drawings being eagerly sought by India's new rich, often not for love of art but as good investment. Despite all his fame and wealth, MF Husain seemed to be untouched by both: he could be as comfortable in a dhaba eating desi food, as in a five-star hotel relishing an expensive meal.

MF Husain would become a branded artist, a painter whose identity was highly performative. He stopped wearing footwear as a tribute to the Hindi poet Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh (1917-64) in 1974, and he used to walk barefoot into the most exclusive gatherings and clubs

³ *Song Books (Solos for Voice 3-92)* is a collection of short works by John Cage, composed and compiled by the composer in 1970. It contains pieces of four kinds: songs, songs with electronics, directions for a theatrical performance, and directions for a theatrical performance with electronics. It was first performed on 26 October 1970 at the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris, by Cathy Berberian, Simone Rist and John Cage.

all over the world. In the next decades, as modern Indian art gained wider acceptance, he constantly used the media to create hype around his mild eccentric persona and his escapades, steadily scaling up his prices. His ascetic looks and gentle, softly-spoken, watchful manner commanded attention and respect, while several of his artworks garnered adulation and riches from festivals and auctions worldwide and earned him the label of “the Picasso of India”. With time, he progressively enriched his branded persona with other features: a free-flowing white beard and hair, impeccably-tailored Hermes suits, and his ‘baton’ – an oversized paintbrush modelled on a type devised by Matisse – made him an instantly recognizable figure in India’s art world.

MF Husain wanted his art to go beyond the boundaries between elite and popular practice, and he started performing as a painter in front of an audience. Painting is generally believed as a solitary activity, that the artist performs with no disturbance, concentrating. Therefore, it is not understood as an activity requiring an audience. But MF Husain challenged this convention, and in 1968 he started his first performance of “Six Days of Making” at Shridharani Gallery in New Delhi. Every day he would paint for forty minutes in total silence, sharing this experience with the people who had gathered in the gallery (“Painter M.F. Husain” 2010). MF Husain designed his performance as an act of creation and destruction, similar to the everlasting process of transformation that life itself is, producing his paintings in a performative way, through a dynamic corporeality that vibrates to the rhythm of the universe, which recalls the Groszian definition of art. He projected the figure of the artist as a practitioner rather than a master, one that creates through doing rather than expressing, adopting the persona of picture showman, an artistic figure common to India’s rural and urban cultures that informs the tradition of narrating a story with a visual aid from the folk storytelling with the help of a painted scroll (Coomaraswamy 1929; Jain 1998) to the bioscopewallah and commercial Hindi cinema (Mahadevan 2010). This meant taking a critical stance towards the mainstream projection of artist, artistic production and art in general: he wanted his art to reach everyone and “understood himself as a postcolonial master who would emulate the picture showman of India’s great and little traditions to invent a distinctive modernist language” (Khullar 2015, 129).

Artistic creation and craft production had in common the fact that they are non-mechanical, non-industrial, handmade and nationalist labor; MF Husain’s paintings emphasised the wonder of workday routine, the ability of the painter to generate art just seeing and hearing ordinary things: people cooking, washing clothes, singing. His 1968 film titled *Through the Eyes of a Painter* is an experiment in making, a discovery of the creative potential of improvised artefacts and everyday materials. In the passage of the autobiography I quoted at the end of the previous section, everyday sounds such as

vessels washing and water splashes become sophisticated experimental music: through the artistic sensorial perception the simplest thing can become extremely sophisticated, the ordinary can produce the extraordinary.

An account of the performative exhibition of the branded self can be found in *Em. Ef. Husen kī kahānī apnī zubānī*, in a chapter titled “Kolkattā” (Husen 2002, 202-9). The first paragraph locates chronologically the story in February 1992 and positions MF Husain, who is an old renowned artist now, sipping his morning tea from a mud cup at a teashop situated in an alley behind Tata Centre at the corner with Ho Chi Minh Sarani, as he has done for the past fifteen years whenever he happens to be in Kolkatta. He is writing his memories, and he is struggling to avoid the general tendency to boasting that famous people show in their autobiographies. He is shown chatting with an “engineer babu”, and giving him an autograph accompanied by a drawing of Ganesh. He stresses the fact that he considers common people more reliable than snobbish high-class people, and that what his art needs is the appreciation of the honest and receptive people of Kolkatta, not the snobbish faces of Bombay or the emotionless faces of Delhi’s bureaucrats. He wants to connect with common people, this is a paramount feature of his art. “People want to see both the paintings and the painter’s physiognomy and movements.” (Husen 2002, 204). The narrator reports an anecdote proving the strong bond between the artist and common people:

A passing taxi stopped; two Bengali women gave him three flowers with enthusiastic bliss, as if it were a votive offer. They said “We are looking forward to seeing you painting at the Tata Centre on the 21st!” And off they were! Husain was flabbergasted. He could no longer sip his tea, nor move his pen. Those women had not emerged from a Mercedes or a Contessa, they did not wear French chiffon saris. Perhaps they were returning from a temple after their morning puja. (Husen 2002, 203-4)

MF Husain had a six-day exhibition in Tata Centre, filmed by his son Mustafa in the short documentary *Six Days of Making*. He produced six paintings – representing six female deities in front of a live audience and on completion of his work, he whitewashed all of it. The narrator inserts his notion of art creation in a wider cosmological frame quoting the Urdu poet Jigar Murādābādī (1890-1960):

banā banā ke jo duniyā miṭāī jāī hai
zarūr koī kamī hai ki pāī jāī hai (Murādābādī 2015)

The world is destroyed and reconstructed time and again.
Surely, it’s because a flaw is found somewhere.

According to the narrator, everything in the universe is flawed, half-finished: for example, man is incomplete and woman is incomplete, and the notion of Ardhanāreśvara suggests a possible hope for perfection, so that the world stay alive, instead of giving up life in despair. It is impossible to reach the ultimate mystery of the universe, and even if the human intellect can reach the heights of the miracle of beauty, the body cannot. Therefore, every form of art contains a flaw. That's why the artist should always be aware of the flaw that is in himself.

The account of the six-day performance starts in a highly theatrical mode, showing MF Husain manically absorbed in the effort to express all the achievements he had got in four decades of artistic production. He would paint with the soundtrack of the famous habanera dance from Bizet's *Carmen* - which he defines as a "belly dance" - and Beethoven's seventh symphony. He would be at the same time Maqbool and MF Husain, that is the young artist and the branded artist. Sometimes Maqbool would grab the brush and paint restlessly before disappearing in the crowd; other times Husain would alternate moments of excitement and waves of exhaustion, when he would walk on the stage as if he had lost his way. The audience's mood follows the artist's, thrilled when he is inspired, disappointed when he isn't.

On the morning of the sixth day, the last day, Husain headed straight to the office of the Tata Centre Public Relation Officer, Barun Banerjee. He asked for a blank sheet and he jolted down a drawing. It showed Husain sitting, a brush in his hands. He was surrounded by six canvases, but they were completely blank, not even a line on them. There was only an empty can of white paint next to them. (Husen 2002, 209)

MF Husain has often been characterised by his love for excess, sexuality and sensuality. In this performance, the almost eighty-year-old artist engages in extracting the essence of a turbulent heap of sensations, feelings, experiences and memories seething inside him like the Ganga river, captive inside Śiva's hair. He surfs the waves of a vibratory universe with no precise direction or purpose, accompanied by the sound of music and by the collective gaze of the audience. He is surrounded by six deities, in a shower of colours that covers his whole body. He paints the feminine *śakti* as fertility, love and devotion (Parvatī), knowledge and learning (Sarasvatī), warrior energy (Durgā), destroyer of evil forces (Kālī), divine Mother (Mary), and wealth and prosperity (Lakṣmī). Then, as in the universal cycle of creation and destruction, he whitewashes all forms: when art is produced, it is the consequence of excess, of the "energy or force, that puts life at risk for the sake of intensification, for the sake of sensa-

tion itself - not simply for pleasure or for sexuality, as psychoanalysis suggests - but for what can be magnified, intensified, for what is more, through which creation, risk, innovation are undertaken for their own sake, for how and what they may intensify" (Grosz 2008, 63). But when the powerful impact of its presence is destroyed, it creates an even bigger impact, ceasing to exist physically yet remaining in memories.

5 Memories Becoming Visible

Em. Ef. Husen kī kahānī apnī zubānī is introduced by a short essay penned by renowned Hindi writer Nirmal Varmā, titled "Maqbool's 'Husaini' pen," with a pun about the meaning of the word "ḥusayn" in the original Arab form as "noble, good." Nirmal Varmā states that "the magic in Husain's images, words, details, can be summarised in a single word: metamorphoses. Any single thing changes its form as soon as it gets into his magician-like hands, it gets transmogrified, one after another, new forms of Lilliputian dolls pop up from within, like in a Russian matrioska" (Husen 2002, viii). In the stream of life, time and space flow; tiny details and particulars, insignificant fragment flowing in the stream of life, raw childhood memories ripen with time, they all become real objects that take form in some of Husain's films, paintings, or poems. At the beginning of the autobiography, after a long time, a lantern, an earthen water pot, a muslin dupatta, wandering in the labyrinth of Husain's inner world, become visible; forgotten words, innocent faces do not disappear in the darkness of oblivion, but return years after and take shelter in the artist's workshop and writing.

MF Husain was an iconic mixing of self, community and nation, whose life and work are "intimately entangled with the career of independent India as a democratic, secular and multi-ethnic nation" (Ramaswamy 2011, backcover). He would eulogise Indira Gandhi during the Emergency, when he painted her in the form of Durga riding a tiger; and yet he was totally apolitical, absolutely blank regarding talks about the right wing or leftism. MF Husain's art is an art of existence, an extraction from the universe and an elaboration on it. The body - particularly the female body - is translated into an image that reconfigures the vocabulary of Modernism. For an artist like him, art is not tied to the reproduction of the known, but to the possibility of the new, overcoming the containment of the present to elaborate on futures yet to come. This might be understood as the claim for a different political role for art, meant as a bio-aesthetics entrusted with the creation of new worlds and forms of life (Grosz 2008). In MF Husain's artistic production, as well as in his autobiographical writing, art goes much beyond a narrow understanding of art as a

practice about taste, cultural accomplishment, or a reflection of society. It emerges as territorializing and de-territorializing force, sexual selection, and nonhuman power.

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Sexuality as Translation. Locating the “Queer” in a 1920s Vietnamese Debate

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Abstract Transnational debates on LGBTQ identities have centred on the conflict between universalism and particularism. Do LGBTQ identities, which are presumptively ‘Western’ come to colonize other local cultures? Does the use of the idea of ‘queer’ constitute an infelicitous Western imposition onto other cultures? In this study, I challenge some of the nativist responses to these questions by problematizing territorial claims of ‘Asian values’ and so-called ‘Western’ queer sexualities by showing the cultural infelicities and hybrid moorings in both. The article does so by examining a public debate that exploded in the Vietnamese print media in the late 1920s over the phenomenon of amorous relations between primarily male youth in the then newly emerging French-Vietnamese secondary schools. Based on this archive, the study maintains that same-sex sexuality foregrounds the dynamic practices of cross-cultural translation from East Asia and France, reflecting both the anxieties and aspirations of the interlocutors. Belonging neither solely to Eastern nor Western cultures, the phenomenon reveals its fundamental cultural impurity. In so doing, the archive brings into high relief the constructed artifice of Vietnamese nationalist ‘tradition’ and the ‘foreignness’ of queer sexuality.

Keywords French Colonial Vietnam. Thu Xu. Homosexuality. Queer. Cultural translation. Transnational debates. LGBTQ.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Historical Context. The Cultural Milieu of Early 20th-Century Vietnam. – 3 Overview of Archival Sources. The Background on the *People's Voice* Newspaper. – 4 The Problem. What Is ‘Thù Xú’? – 5 Same-Sex Sexual Relations as a Projection of Anxieties about the Decline of ‘Traditional’ Vietnamese Culture. – 6 Same-Sex Sexuality as a Sign of Western Decadence? – 7 Conclusion.



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1 Introduction

Same-sex sexuality, what it is, its meaning, and its significance, remains a subject of scholarly dispute and interpretation. Historical scholarship informed by the constructionist approach begins with the premise that the subject of sexuality in no way exists prior to social structures, institutions, and discourses but is constituted through them (Sedgwick 1990; Butler 1993; Jackson 2000; Halperin 2004). Hence, the mere evidence of same-sex sexual relations is, in itself, insufficient in illuminating the historical meanings by which a culture understands such relations.¹ The rhetoric of the ‘closeted’ homosexual, for instance, can be traced to a specific context arising out of a 1960s North American discourse of minoritarian oppression and liberation movements (Corber, Valocchi 2003, 2-6). In no way does it embody all models of homosexuality and therefore ought not to be universalized without undue violence to the distinctiveness of other historical contexts (Jackson 2001; Blackwood, Johnson 2012; Chiang, Wong 2017). One purpose of queer historiography, then, is to reconstruct and interpret the meanings of same-sex sexuality in different times and places.

Scholarship on Southeast Asia, however, has yet to look at the historical question of same-sex sexuality in Vietnam. Few studies have been conducted, if any, on this question based on primary sources. Those that do emphasize the discourse of French colonialism (Proschan 2002), concentrate on contemporary accounts (Newton 2015; Nguyễn 2015; Horton 2019; Horton, Ryndstrom 2019), or touch on queer identities as they pertain to other practices, such as spirit mediumships (Fjelstad, Nguyễn 2006). While these studies remain important contributions to scholarship, an historical inquiry into the question of same-sex sexuality in Vietnam has yet to be undertaken. Without such an inquiry, knowledge would be incomplete concerning what is arguably a vital dimension of the Southeast Asian region (Ong, Peletz 1995; Loos 2009; Peletz 2009).

This study focusses on one meaning of same-sex sexual relations in the late 1920s in Vietnam. It analyzes a heretofore unexamined debate concerning the activity of amorous male-male relations taking place in the then emerging modern French-Vietnamese secondary schools. The debate was published in the *People’s Voice* (*Tiếng Dân*) (1927-43), the longest running newspaper in the romanized Vietnamese script during the interwar period. The paper catered to a readership primarily in the country’s central region near the former imperial capital of Huế (Pham 2002, 216). According to the newspaper

¹ I use the term ‘same-sex sexual relations’ instead of ‘homosexuality’ to distinguish the latter as an historical formation beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century in Europe that crystallized the binary pair homosexuality/heterosexuality (Halperin 2004, 106).

reports, the amorous relations were called *thủ xú*, an argot invented by outsiders to label the practice among the male youths. According to one observer, the literal meaning of the phrase is to “take in air”, referring to the male youth’s public displays of affection. Apart from the student missives quoted by their opponents, little evidence exists concerning how the participants understood or came to understand themselves in particular ways. Nevertheless, an examination of the response to this phenomenon yields insight into some of the prevailing discourses concerning same-sex sexual relations. How did this discourse portray such relations? What kinds of rhetoric did the interlocutors deploy? To what degree, if any, did Western notions of ‘homosexuality’ influence the terms of the debate?

I will argue that the meaning of same-sex sexuality was a complex *translation* of minimally two different cultural traditions: one emanating from East Asia, the other from the West. More concretely, as we shall see, the findings will suggest that the interlocutors in the debate conceived of same-sex sexuality as more akin to cultural ‘habits’ or ‘tastes’. In no way did they conceive of amorous male-male relations as a coherent identity. Furthermore, the findings will also demonstrate the agency of local actors: interlocutors in the debate strategically appropriated different cross-cultural elements in support of their own various contingent political ends. The evidence will problematize, then, the notion of a simple cultural transfer – either from a monolithic ‘West’ or ‘East’ – into Vietnamese culture. Instead, Vietnamese same-sex sexuality became a protean ‘queer’ figure in serving as a placeholder for the various anxieties and aspirations of the interlocutors in the debate. Hence, the study will call into question some of the dualistic assumptions in the conflict between ‘West’ and ‘East’, what queer translation studies scholar Brian J. Baer calls “Beyond Either/Or” (Baer 2018).

By ‘translation’ I do not refer to a simple process of communicative fidelity from one language to another or from original to copy. Rather, I refer to an epistemic struggle and negotiation in the production of meaning, and by extension, a site of cultural knowledge production (Spurlin 2014; Kedem 2019). By ‘sexuality’ I refer to the historical effect of an ensemble wrought by cultural narratives, norms, expectations, desires, fantasies, and institutions (Foucault 1990; Corber, Valocchi 2003). Finally, I deploy the idea of ‘queer’ to refer to gendered or sexual subjects that a society finds culturally illegible within its terms (Butler 1993; Corber, Valocchi 2003). To locate the ‘queer’, then, is to specify that cultural zone of illegibility and the terms by which a society finds some subjects ‘queer’ and some not.

An inquiry into the terms by which Vietnamese culture defined ‘queerness’ can help inform some of the problems in the study of sexuality. This article helps to inform two key problems. First, if scholars consider sexuality as historical – that is, a contingent form of erotic

subjectivity – then this article provides a glimpse of another historical modality of human subjectivation, what Halperin calls an exercise in historicizing the subject of desire (2004, 88). Second, the reconstruction of same-sex sexuality in a public debate during Vietnam’s late French colonial period, when the West arguably exerted significant cultural impact, furnishes historical and area specificity to the question of ‘foreign’ influence on notions of sexuality.

For this article, I limit the focus to data that I researched during the first six years of the *People’s Voice*. The relevant documents that I analyze, however, were all published in the late 1920s. The newspaper is archived in microfilm and available at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris. Also, while I will not analyze it here, I wish to acknowledge the existence of a creative adaptation of the *thủ xú* phenomenon. An eponymous short story written in 1936 by the male Vietnamese author Tchya (Đái Đức Tuấn) slightly alters the historical events by casting the main characters as two female lovers. This study provides the requisite historical reconstruction of this phenomenon for future research. Finally, the analysis of the newspaper is based on the assumptions of both rhetorical cluster analysis (Foss 2004) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 2003; Van Leeuwen 2008). Through such analytical tools, I determine whether the archive, unconsciously or not, prescribes to a particular social order and, by so doing, map the broader meanings of same-sex sexuality in Vietnamese culture. Finally, unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine.

The article will be organized into five sections. First, it provides the historical context of Vietnam’s late French colonial period. Second, it will describe an overview of the archival sources. Third, it will elaborate on the meaning and significance of the term *thủ xú*. Finally, in the fourth and fifth sections, the article engages in a close reading of the debate, reconstructing the interlocutors’ views concerning male-male sexual relations. Ultimately, the study reveals the cultural infelicities and hybrid moorings at the heart of Vietnamese ‘queer’ sexuality.

2 The Historical Context. The Cultural Milieu of Early 20th-Century Vietnam

In the 1920s and 1930s, Vietnam stood at the crossroads of two powerful civilizations. The East Asian civilization embodied by China left an indelible mark on the Nguyễn emperors who ruled the area throughout the nineteenth century. In the aftermath of a brutal civil war between the Le and Nguyễn Dynasties, the victorious Nguyễn emperor, Gia Long, relocated the capital from Hà Nội in the north to Huế in the central region. He and his heirs found solace, political

stability and imperial gravitas in emulating China, and so sought to turn Vietnam – its symbols, its customs, its rituals – into the image of the great northern neighbour. Several generations of Vietnamese mandarins were trained under the “Great Tradition” of Neo-Confucianism (Marr 1971, 44-76; Woodside 1988, 126-32).

When the French arrived in 1858, Vietnam faced another civilization. Like the changes that the Nguyễn emperors imposed on the country, the French dramatically altered Vietnam’s landscapes. By 1897 Paul Doumer, who served under the French Finance Ministry, channelled increased funding for infrastructure and public works projects to re-engineer and modernize much of Vietnam – its architecture, its towns, its cities, its roads – in the image of France (Jennings 2011; Goscha 2016).

In addition to infrastructural developments, the French also developed a parallel French-Vietnamese educational system. The French, in fact, channelled a relatively unusual amount of resources to its development. Between ten and twenty percent of government expenditures were allocated to this system, which served to compete with the existing traditional one (Kelly 1977). Between 1918 and 1938, the country saw a growth in French-Vietnamese schools that, by some estimates, annually enrolled more than one hundred thousand Vietnamese youths (Marr 1981, 35-44). Some of these schools and the accompanying dormitories were built in the central region near the former imperial capital of Huế and would serve as the *mise-en-scène* for the male-male amorous relations captured in the documents that this study will examine.

These schools also served to educate the populace in the modern vernacular, *quốc ngữ* (national language), a romanized script initially developed by seventeenth-century missionaries but popularized by the French to sever Vietnam from its East Asian classical past, thereby orienting its future towards France and the West. These conditions led to the eventual obsolescence of the Chinese script in the country. By 1919, the Mandarin examination system shuttered its doors.

One consequence of the explosive growth of *quốc ngữ* was the birth of a thriving print culture. This print culture, in turn, ushered in a lively period of public debate (Peycam 2012). A significant debate in early twentieth-century Vietnam was the question of the relationship between the country’s past and future. Despite the collapse of the mandarin system, several pressing issues preoccupied the minds of intellectuals. Should Vietnam continue to embrace Neo-Confucian tradition? What utility, if any, was left in preserving such a tradition amidst the onslaught of a rapidly modernizing country? Should Vietnam embrace, instead, Western modernization? Some supported restoring the classical culture inherited from the East Asian tradition. Others supported the embrace of France and its concomitant sym-

bolos of Western modernization. The conflicts over these and related questions raged in elite circles.

The conflict over existential questions concerning the status of Vietnam’s cultural past spilled over into literary debates that, in turn, led to tensions over the question of gender, sex and sexuality. One of the most ferocious of literary debates at the time centred on the value of Nguyễn Du’s *The Tale of Kiều*. In this epic, the eponymous heroine sells her body to pay for her father’s debts, acts inconsistent with the Confucian precept of female chastity. I will briefly elaborate on the controversy over this epic, because the figure of Kiều will serve as a key cultural reference when we examine the debate over male same-sex sexual relations.

Kiều is a Vietnamese incarnation of a character from a relatively obscure Qing-era novel.² Du purportedly read it while on a diplomatic sojourn to the Beijing court sometime between 1813 and 1814. The original novel is set during the Ming dynasty (Thông 1983, xx-xxi). Some critics believe that Du transformed the Chinese version into a new story with Vietnamese sensibilities in its use of rhythm, tone, sound and imagery. The modern critic Huỳnh Sanh Thông explains:

By triumphantly rescuing Vietnamese poetry from the stranglehold of classical Chinese, Nguyễn Du performed for the vernacular what Dante had once done for Italian, liberating it from its position of subservience to Latin. (Thông 1983, xxi)

Even though the *The Tale of Kiều* is now considered a national classic, Thông’s appraisal of the work on the basis of its formal literary qualities represents a relatively recent consensus. For heuristic purposes, let us call this the ‘modernist’ view, whose opponents by contrast held the ‘traditionalist’ view.

In the early twentieth century, *The Tale of Kiều*’s status as a national classic had not yet been solidified: fierce debates broke out over the epic. The modernist view in support of the epic’s formal qualities represented only one camp. On the one hand, Phạm Quỳnh, who was fully cognizant of both the Chinese and French traditions and who also believed in French political collaboration, sought to create a national identity in embracing the romanized transcription of Nguyễn Du’s epic. Quỳnh was famous for his proclamation that “If Kiều exists, our language exists, and our country exists” (Pham 2002, 230). The ‘language’ in question is the modern Vietnamese vernacular. Implicit, too, in this proposition is that Kiều is the embodiment of Vietnamese national identity. Belonging to a broadly similar modernist

² The novel on which *The Tale of Kiều* is based is *Jin Yun Qiao zhuan* 金雲翹傳 (The story of Jin, Yun, and Qiao) by Qingxin cairen 青心才人. See Zamperini 2010, 13-14.

camp, Phan Khôi, the father of the New Poetry Movement, advocated modernization and rejected the proposition of reviving Neo-Confucianism.

Opponents, on the other hand, insisted on the enduring value of traditional poetry. Scholar literati such as Ngô Đức Kế and Huỳnh Thúc Kháng, the founder of the *People's Voice* newspaper, argued that poetry, traditionally conceived, ought to be grounded on moral principles that would edify its readers. Literary works such as the *Tale of Kiều* not only failed to be anchored to such morality, but also sought to corrupt readers with its ‘pornographic’ depictions of prostitution and brothels (Thanh-Lãng 1972; Marr 1981, 154-6; Jamieson 1995). If *Kiêu* is the embodiment of national identity, then the logical implication is that Vietnam was symbolically a *whore*. This inference was unacceptable to the Neo-Confucian traditionalists. The metaphor also had political implications insofar as it revealed undertones of one’s *unchaste* allegiance, thereby implicating oneself as a ‘prostitute’ to a foreign power. Nguyễn Du himself was originally a royalist to the Lê Dynasty but, due to political changes beyond his control, ultimately survived to serve the opposing and triumphant Nguyễn Dynasty. Hence, some critics believe *The Tale of Kiều* may have been a political allegory for Du’s own predicament (Woodside 1983). In the context of the early twentieth century, some Neo-Confucian critics insisted that the modernist camp were being “whores” to a foreign power, in this case, France (Marr 1981, 154-6).

The debate between the traditionalists and the modernists over the status of *The Tale of Kiều* represents only one example of the conflict over the proper (or improper) representation of gender, sex and sexuality. Similar controversies would later engulf, for instance, other colonial-era writers such as Vũ Trọng Phụng – renowned for his explicit depictions of sex, prostitution and venereal diseases. The controversy surrounding Phung has already been documented elsewhere (Malarney 2011; Zinoman 2014), and so the details of the debate will not detain us here. Finally, it is also worth noting that a younger generation of Vietnamese writers in this period was also questioning the norms of the traditional family, including ideas concerning arranged marriages and female chastity (Jamieson 1995, 117-59, Wilcox 2006).

The main point in citing the prior examples is to provide a context for the debate concerning male-male amorous relations by underscoring the vociferous conflicts among early twentieth-century Vietnamese intellectuals and youth over evolving conceptions of gender, sex and sexuality.

3 Overview of Archival Sources. The Background on the *People’s Voice* Newspaper

The *People’s Voice* on which this article’s analysis is based was published several times a week in the Vietnamese modern vernacular in Central Vietnam. The newspaper was founded and edited by the Neo-Confucian literati Huỳnh Thúc Kháng (1876-1947), who earned his doctorate, *tiến sĩ*, in 1904. He belonged to an anti-colonialist cohort that Marr has called the “reformist scholar-gentry,” a generation that witnessed the collapse of the nineteenth-century dynastic system and the early twentieth-century emergence of modern Asian states (1971, 105). Some scholars go even further in arguing that Kháng was, in fact, a nationalist (Zinoman 2001, 68-9). Of this generation, two of Kháng’s contemporaries are worth mentioning. The first is the figure of Phan Bội Châu who, supporting the Japanese imperial model, spearheaded radical militant resistance; the second figure, by contrast, is Phan Châu Trinh who advocated Franco-Vietnamese co-existence founded on French Republican values, values that supported notions such as the universal rights of man, mass education, and representative government (Marr 1971, 98-119; Goscha 2016, 98-105). It was Trinh who goaded Kháng to jumpstart the *People’s Voice* to educate the Vietnamese in democratic processes.

Despite the founder’s Neo-Confucian background, the *People’s Voice* was considered avant-garde for its time. Knowledgeable in French, Classical Chinese and modern Vietnamese, Kháng saw his newspaper as a means to educate his audience, many of whom were primarily from the countryside (Pham 2002, 216). The first issue printed the following mission statement:

Justice leads the way of *Tieng Dan*, and the goal of the newspaper is to serve the people. It will not be used by any party, nor publish evasive propaganda material...*Tieng Dan* will be, for our compatriots, a bitter drug,... and for the government an honest friend. (Kháng, cited in Pham 2002, 226)

Although the French authorities did enforce press censorship during this time, the mission statement reveals something of the newspaper’s idealistic and didactic orientation. The newspaper featured contemporary literature, Western political philosophy, current events, and trending fashions. It exhibited an eclectic quality that drew on cultural ideas extending from China, Japan, France, Italy, England to the United States. Emphasizing the psychological, political and cultural impact of the newspaper on Central Vietnam, Pham Thi Minh Le observes that “*Tieng Dan* [People’s Voice] introduced Vietnamese to gender equality, politics, economy, history, geography, humanities and sciences” (2002, 230). The newspaper’s coverage of such wide-

ranging scope and topics is consistent with Kháng’s belief in the value of universal education.

Still, many of the newspaper’s contributors were, like Kháng, trained in Neo-Confucian learning and the classics. It was not unusual to see articles on classical literature in the original Chinese with translations rendered into the Vietnamese modern vernacular. As for the interlocutors involved in the same-sex sexuality debate, there were three primary ones: the Vietnamese male youths, the newspaper’s editorial Board and Mr. Nguyễn Vỹ, the investigative reporter who first broke the news story. The identities of the students are not known. The editorial Board included Kháng, who apparently wrote many of the articles himself (Pham 2002, 227). As for Mr. Nguyễn Vỹ, sources suggest that he was raised in Central Vietnam in a Neo-Confucian family in an environment that allowed him to interact with renowned scholar-literati such as Phan Boi Chau (Nguyễn 1969, 14). Vỹ subsequently worked as a newspaper reporter and poet. He took on different pseudonyms, one of which was a female name: *cô Diệu Huyền* (Miss Dieu Huyen) (Tùng 1973, 213). The practice by which male writers assumed feminine *personae* was commonplace in Vietnam and East Asian cultures (Pastreich 2001, 1099; Song 2004, 61), a detail that will be relevant in the analysis to come.

With respect to the overall views of the different interlocutors, as we shall see, whereas Mr. Vỹ and the editorial Board both opposed the practice of male-male amorous relations, the Vietnamese youths supported and defended their actions. The perspective, however, of the Vietnamese youths appear only indirectly. The letters they wrote to the *People’s Voice* in response to the reportage about them were never published in their entirety. Rather, only excerpts are available and quoted by their opponents. Hence, while I may call this a ‘debate’ in the general sense of a disputation, it is one that is uneven in terms of balance of power and perspective. Unless new evidence emerges about this historical event, the contemporary reader’s access to it will only be partial. Nevertheless, this study strives to reconstruct a plausible interpretation based on the documents available in the *People’s Voice*.

Finally, one last detail about the newspaper merits attention. Even though it ran for sixteen years, the longest Vietnamese newspaper in the new romanized script during the interwar period, the *People’s Voice* shuttered its doors on 23 April 1943. The cause was due to a literary quarrel that was already brewing for several years, a quarrel over the status of Nguyễn Du’s *The Tale of Kiều*. The newspaper’s founder, Huỳnh Thúc Kháng, refused to have the French authorities censor his articles that were highly critical of the epic. As a result, they suspended his newspaper (Pham 2002, 230). This background story provides some indication of how explosive – and materially consequential – the conflict over *The Tale of Kiều* was during this period,

a literary work that will play a meaningful role in the discussion that follows when I examine the issue of male-male amorous relations.

Thus far, I have described the newspaper – its founder, its mission, its coverage, its didactic orientation, its general contributors – to provide something of the overall character of the *People’s Voice* as a forum for debate concerning male-male amorous relations. On the basis of this context, it is not readily obvious how or why the newspaper would oppose such relations. Still, one thing is certain: the *People’s Voice* was a historically, socially, and culturally significant newspaper.

4 The Problem. What Is ‘Thủ Xú’?

In a reportage first published in the *People’s Voice*, Mr. Nguyễn Vỹ explains that one day he ventured out to visit the former imperial capital of Huế to check on the status of today’s youth. The tone is one of eager anticipation: he is eager to observe the progress and intellectual formation of the next generation in the modern French-Vietnamese secondary schools, a generation that would embody Vietnam’s future. To his apparent shock, however, he observes instead the seemingly widespread phenomenon of male homoerotic relations.

According to Mr. Vỹ, this phenomenon is called *thủ xú*, a denomination invented by outsiders to label the practice they observed in the secondary schools. The phrase is composed of a coupling of two Sino-Vietnamese characters: 取醜 *qu chou* (or in simplified form 取丑). In his reportage, Mr. Vỹ explains that the literal meaning of the phrase is to “take in air” in reference to the participants’ public displays of affection. In a footnote, he explains:

The original meaning of “*thu xu*” is to take in air; this term was coined by indifferent onlookers who saw the group [of male students] who had a tendency to kiss each other, and so invented the term to **tease them**. It’s not a term the group [of students] coined themselves. (Nguyễn 1928, 3; emphasis added)

The fact that outsiders invented the term *thủ xú* is no trivial point. In the history of LGBTQ studies, the act of being labelled, usually in a derogatory manner, has played no small part in contributing to social stigma, the formation of sexual subcultures and, paradoxically, the creation of resistance movements. In fact, prior to its designation as a disciplinary field of inquiry, the term ‘queer’ was an insult lodged against gender or sexually variant subjects. Because such subjects differed from prevailing norms, society considered them ‘strange’ – in short, a deviation from societal standards of gender or sexual propriety. In other words, ‘queer’ names that which is, in some sense,

a failure - a failure to conform to social norms in specific times and places (Eribon 2004; Halberstam 2005).

As the prior passage indicates, the term *thủ xú*, like the original meaning of ‘queer’, was invented to “tease”, and so could function as a taunting insult. Indeed, the second character in the couplet, *xú*, typically means ‘ugly behavior’. In his Sino-Vietnamese dictionary, Đào Duy Anh lists the first definition of the character to mean the following: “Ugly activity - ugly scar - ugly face - ugly belongings - the opposite of aesthetic beauty [美]” (1932, 579). Among the other definitions listed, the second one is related to “air”: the term *xú mùi* 取臭 *qu chou* denotes that which exhibits a ‘foul smell’. In both cases, the character *xú* can have pejorative connotations. I say ‘can’ and not ‘always’ because the label *thủ xú* appears to be a pun. It refers simultaneously to ‘taking in air’ and ‘behaving in an ugly, non-aesthetic manner’. Depending on which meaning is construed, the term could simply be a description or an insult. To understand the pun, however, demands linguistic and cultural translation - in this case, from the East Asian discourse.

Moreover, the question at issue here is not simply about a play on words. Rather, the labelling of the same-sex acts also raises another important matter, namely the relationship between discourse and violence. Outsiders do not know what to call this seemingly strange practice, and so attempt to name it and, thereby, classify it, organize it, and make sense of it within their own cosmology. The rhetorical term for such an act is catachresis. The equivalent Latin is *abusio* to refer, in traditional rhetoric, to the misuse of figural language, such as referring to a mouth as ‘blind’. Quintilian defined the term more precisely as the “practice of adapting the nearest available term to describe something for which no actual term exists” (Quinn 1982, 55-6; Parker 1990, 60). Whereas metaphor exemplifies the operation of a ‘successful’ translation, the comparison of two dissimilar objects whereby the familiar helps to illuminate the unfamiliar, catachresis embodies the quintessential figure of failure. It is a failure due, in part, to language’s inability to capture an existential referent. For this reason, Derrida associates catachresis with violence. In his explanation, albeit in a different context, Derrida states that “the term is the use of a sign by violence, force, or abuse, with the **imposition of a sign** on a sense not yet having a proper sign in language”. He continues:

And so there is no substitution here, no transfer of proper signs, but an **irruptive extension** of a sign proper to one idea to a sense without a signifier. (Derrida, Moore 1974, 57; emphasis added)

Postcolonial scholars have productively taken up the concept to describe a tactical reversal that the colonized deploys to re-code, and

thereby enlarge, the meanings of European enlightenment concepts, such as sovereignty, self-determination, nationhood, and citizenship. As such, for some postcolonial theorists, the idea of catachresis can lead to emergent, hybrid and complex postcolonial identities (Spivak 1993, 64-5; Bhabha 1994, 236).

In the context of this archive, both senses of catachresis will be in operation in the documents that follow. The definition advanced by Derrida more aptly fits the strategy deployed by the opponents of male-male amorous relations, who use the invented *thủ xú* term to label what they perceive as a strange practice. By contrast, as we shall see, the Vietnamese male youths will utilise the second postcolonial meaning of catachresis: a redeployment of Western culture in support of locally contingent political ends.

5 Same-Sex Sexual Relations as a Projection of Anxieties about the Decline of ‘Traditional’ Vietnamese Culture

One prominent understanding of the *thủ xú* phenomenon is the belief that it symptomizes the decline of ‘traditional’ Vietnamese culture. During this period, as discussed previously, many Vietnamese intellectuals fought over the status of Nguyễn Du’s epic *The Tale of Kiều*. Recall that in the battle over this literary work, some Neo-Confucians insisted that the epic was a danger to society in representing pernicious ‘modern’ values. In the context of the *thủ xú* phenomenon, some observers drew an analogy between Du’s eponymous heroine and the Vietnamese male youths. In his explanation, for example, the reporter Mr. Vỹ makes clear to his readers that the male-male relations are not simply a platonic “friendship” (*tình bằng hữu*). Rather, they are more akin to what he calls amorous “male and female” relations. He explains:

Thủ xú (let us abbreviate as T.X.) means something similar to “**male and female**” relations, but the *thủ xú* practice of these young fellows is an attached form of sentiment [*tình mật-thiết*] that requires a lad to **love** another one, who may be studying in the same school, just as a **male would love a female**. This relationship is not simply one of friendship. It is a love relationship arising from **carnal desire** [*vật dục*]. (Nguyễn 1928, 2; emphasis added)

By “male and female” love relations, Mr. Vỹ presupposes a specific gendered regime, according to which the woman is the effeminate and weaker sex in the relationship. In comparing the prior male-male sexual relationship to this heterosexual model, the speaker simultaneously maps this gendered regime onto the former. Significantly, he compares the young men to Du’s eponymous heroine: they walked and

stood in a “graceful” (*yếu điệu*) manner and strove to display countenances that were as “beautiful” (*đẹp-xinh*) and “fair” (*trắng trẻo*) “like **Kiều**” (Nguyễn 1928, 2; emphasis added). In the cultural context of the times, the comparison of the male youths to Kiêu is a culturally fraught reference. It is hardly clarifying because the heroine herself is a contested sign. In making this comparison, on which side of the debate does Mr. Vỹ belong? Does he believe that Kiêu ought to be a symbol of national modernity? Or does he believe that she is a symbol of moral debauchery?

Evidence suggests the latter interpretation. Even though Mr. Vỹ seems to believe that male same-sex sexual relations are “no different” from male-female ones, he nevertheless denigrates the former by calling it morally debased. He considers some of the male youth as *feminine* – just “like Kiêu” – and then labels them as a “bunch of prostitutes” (*dàng điếm*). According to Mr. Vỹ, the male youths engage in relations based on “carnal desire” (*vật dục*) and practice “habits” (*thói*) that are “ignominious” (*sĩ-nhục*) and “abject” (*đê tiện*). All of these practices are antithetical to what the reporter believes constitutes true male “friendship”.

Here two key issues stand out regarding Mr. Vỹ’s response. First, despite his disapproval of the male youths, the language he employs to describe their supposed moral failings suggests that the male-male amorous relations in no way index a stable sexual identity. Instead, Mr. Vỹ considers them practices – “habits” (*thói*) – albeit ones that are laden with opprobrium. This conception of male-male amorous relations is different from the modern dyadic notion of homosexuality/heterosexuality, according to which ‘sexuality’ is a fixed identity that defines who one is and limits what one can become. Halperin explains:

Homosexuality is the specification of same-sex sexual object-choice in and of itself as an **overriding principle** of sexual and social difference. Homosexuality is part of a new system of sexuality, which functions as a means of **personal individuation**: it assigns to each individual a sexual orientation and a **sexual identity**. (Halperin 2004, 134; emphasis added)

By contrast, it is clear that Mr. Vỹ does not believe that the Vietnamese male youths are ‘homosexuals’. Neither does the editorial Board. In its public letter, the Board describes the male-male amorous relations as unusual cultural practices. The Board states the following: “Have you ever seen our **culture and customs** [*phong tục ta*] exhibiting this bad **habit** [*thói*] before?” (Nguyễn 1928, 3; emphasis added). Neither Mr. Vỹ nor the Board ever use the modern term ‘homosexual’. In other words, in these documents, same-sex sexual relations are not perceived as an ‘essence’, but contingent practices

of cultural difference – one that the interlocutors nevertheless oppose. Had the modern concept of ‘homosexuality’ penetrated the local culture, one would expect it to enter into the debate. But it does not. Lacking a term to describe what they see, the interlocutors employ the invented Sino-Vietnamese term – *thủ xú* – to label the practice, consistent with the Derridean notion of catachresis: the imposition of a sign lacking an existing one in language.

Second, if the *thủ xú* phenomenon is different from the modern conception of ‘homosexuality’, then a corollary question is, what cultural assumptions seem to be driving the opposition to the Vietnamese male youths’ amorous “habits”? After all, it is apparent that the youths did not see their activities in such a negative light. According to Mr. Vỹ, they not only engaged in competitive love games, but also exchanged love letters with each other (*Lại cũng có thơ tình qua lại cùng nhau*). By comparing them to the figure of Kiều, Mr. Vỹ impugns the youths’ character – rhetorically associating them with the moral depravity of female prostitution. Yet, any objective observer ought to conclude that their conduct – the exchange of love letters and public displays of affection – would hardly seem to fit the standard definition of ‘prostitution’. Nowhere does the reportage indicate that the youths, unlike Kiều, sold their bodies in exchange for money. Moreover, if male-male amorous relations are analogous to male-female ones, according to Mr. Vỹ, why does he disapprove of the former? Why does the idea that ‘love is love’ – one of today’s slogans in the global LGBTQ movement – fail to register cultural traction? Before we jump to the conclusion that homophobia is the reason for Mr. Vỹ’s response, I suggest that we exercise caution and try, patiently, to understand the sociohistorical context. As Jeffrey Wasserstrom and Susan Brownell point out, researchers must be prepared to ask:

Whose femininity and masculinity are being produced and displayed, and by whom? And whose [italics in the original] purposes are served by this production and display? (2002, 34)

Even though their focus is on the Chinese context, I believe Wasserstrom and Brownell’s critical questions are relevant to the present case study.

To grasp the full significance of Mr. Vỹ’s response, a brief digression is necessary to explain certain cultural notions about gender and sexuality. In particular, two key terms – ‘male friendships’ and ‘femininity’ – merit further explanation. Now, recall that Du’s *The Tale of Kiều* was adapted from a Qing-era novel involving characters who historically lived during the Ming Dynasty. To the extent that one can map Ming and Qing era gender and sexual norms onto the Vietnamese case, a more historically contextualized understanding of the response to the *thủ xú* phenomenon may be possible.

Scholarship on masculinity in late imperial China has mapped gendered and sexual configurations different from the modern paradigm of homosexuality/heterosexuality. The context of the times was different. In a world in which social mobility, prestige and power centred on preparing for and passing the androcentric civil service examination and later serving in the equally male world of politics and business, elite Chinese men for most of their professional lives interacted with other men. Hence, male-male friendships were the norm in this Neo-Confucian world and, arguably, even reached a “golden age” by the late Ming Dynasty (Huang 2007, 17). In such a world, male-male friendships could be a springboard for same-sex erotic relations (Vitiello 2011, 54-9). Moreover, the culture generally conceived of such erotic relations as akin to those of a “husband and wife” – thereby, replicating the gender inequality in heterosexual relations (Kutcher 2000, 1623-4; Huang 2007, 25). For many Chinese authors, these relations in no way posed a threat to the social order. So long as male-male sexual relations did not subvert the prevailing Confucian hierarchy, Chinese culture perceived them as part of everyday social relationships (Kutcher 2000). Unlike the modern paradigm of homosexuality, therefore, male-male sexual relations during the Ming and Qing were not a sign of a fixed identity.

In the context of the Vietnamese case, the newspaper reporter appears to converge in some respects with the prior cultural notions. Like the Neo-Confucian world of the Ming and Qing, Mr. Vỹ does not see in the Vietnamese youths and their behaviour signs of a ‘homosexual’ essence. Rather, as already noted, he sees their amorous relations as akin to cultural “habits”. Furthermore, just as Chinese authors conceived of male homoerotic relations like those of a ‘husband and wife’, so too does Mr. Vỹ compare the Vietnamese male amorous relations to a “male and female” one. Finally, like those living during the Ming and Qing periods, Mr. Vỹ seems to embrace a certain model of male friendship. However, the Vietnamese youths’ behaviour appears to have deviated from this model, thereby leading to moral censure. We will need to analyze further the specific character of this model if we are to understand more precisely the reasoning of the moral censure.

Towards that end, let us now historicize the second key term: ‘femininity’. The modern homosexual/heterosexual paradigm has created a binary gendered division, according to which masculinity is a male heterosexual preserve and, conversely, homosexuality is defined by overt forms of femininity (Halperin 2004, 110). In such a paradigm, the ‘heterosexual’ male is the marker of masculine plenitude, devoid of any traces of femininity.

Yet, such a rigid distinction between femininity and masculinity lacks a cultural analogue in the East Asian context, especially during the Ming and Qing periods. As Paul Rouzer (2001) and Martin W.

Huang (2006) have each demonstrated in their respective studies, elite men of imperial China engaged in practices in which they presented themselves as ‘women’. Examples of such practices include male literati assuming the literary figure of the courtesan or masculine men striving to appear as ‘feminine’ as possible. While potentially strange to some modern readers today, these practices were once considered the norm. Indeed, based on the modern homosexual/heterosexual paradigm, one might deduce – erroneously – that these practices are all signs of ‘homosexuality’. However, recall that Mr. Vỹ himself once assumed a feminine penname, a common practice by male Vietnamese writers of the time. In the case of female impersonation, Rouzer explains that the act represents a complex cultural performance – what he coins “articulated ladies” – that enable male literati to create cultural “fantasies of power and victory” or “laments of failure” before the emperor, court ladies and fellow officials (Rouzer 2001, 6).

Likewise, Huang explains that in Ming and Qing literature, the idea of masculinity is intertwined with cultural notions of femininity. Signs of femininity in no way detracted from a man’s ‘masculinity’. Huang draws a distinction between “femininity” and “effeminacy.” Whereas the former could culturally enhance a man’s erotic appeal, the latter diminished it. Huang demonstrates that this culturally gendered notion of beauty – the attractiveness of the feminine man – was widespread and not limited to scholar literati.³ Rather, the idea encompassed other professions typically considered ‘masculine’ by modern standards, such as martial warriors. “Even in the few scholar-beauty novels that emphasize the martial prowess of the male protagonist”, Huang explains, “the **men’s feminine beauty is presented as a masculinity** to be celebrated with great enthusiasm” (2006, 138; emphasis added). One implication of this gendered cultural system is that, unlike the modern paradigm, same-sex eroticism is neither the cause nor the effect of feminine behaviour, and vice versa. Rather, during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the ‘feminine’ and the ‘masculine’ were not absolute opposites, but components of a gendered continuum.

In light of this contextualized notion of ‘femininity’, one now has a partly better understanding of the reception of the *thủ xú* phenomenon. Within the East Asian context, the feminine acts by the Vietnamese male youths do not necessarily signify same-sex erotic object choice, and vice versa. This partly explains why the modern

³ There is a Western analogue to this idea of male femininity. Halperin notes that the idea that men must display *feminine* qualities to appear more attractive to women has a cultural parallel in Greek and Roman civilizations. Given the cross-cultural parallels, it is the *modern* paradigm whereby a man’s masculinity is devoid of any feminine trace that ought to appear “strange” (Halperin 2004, 111).

vocabulary of ‘homosexuality’ failed to register any cultural traction in the reportage. At the same time, Mr. Vỹ’s response departs in some ways from the prior East Asian cultural notions of gender. For, if femininity and masculinity are not opposed concepts, then Mr. Vỹ ought to have relished the *feminine* beauty of the Vietnamese male youths who behaved just “like Kiếu”. Yet, neither Mr. Vỹ nor the editorial Board registered any appreciation for the Vietnamese youths’ gendered performance.

Here, it is important to remember that Mr. Vỹ’s moral censure of the male youths is based on a metaphorical comparison *to* Kiếu. So the critique cuts both ways: he disapproves of the male youths at least as much as he does Kiếu. Recall that the controversy with Kiếu is not simply the fact that she engages in prostitution, arguably one of the world’s oldest professions; rather, the problem resides in what she *symbolizes*. Just as some Neo-Confucians insisted that Kiếu symbolized abhorrent modern values – the absence of chastity and, by metaphorical extension, loyalty to a given political dispensation – so too do the male youths and their behaviour signify a sign of the *modern*. For the Neo-Confucians, the male youths and their behaviour represent a historical rupture from what purportedly constitutes Vietnamese ‘tradition’.

Indeed, towards the conclusion, the reportage raises the thematic conflict between tradition and the modern. Mr. Vỹ insists that the male youths, in practicing *thủ xú*, have “cheapened” (*bán rẻ*) their “dignity” (*phẩm giá*) and that of Vietnamese tradition. Explaining the reasons for his objection, Mr. Vỹ states:

What will happen to the **nation’s customs and traditions** [*phong hóa của nước nhà*] [...]. If you all are like this, you will cheapen [*bán rẻ*] your dignity and make light of your responsibility towards the **preservation of culture** [*bảo toàn phong hóa*] [...] why not focus on your studies, build your character and sense of ethics so that you will someday bear the **awesome responsibility of leading the nation** [*gánh vác việc xã hội quốc gia*]? (Nguyễn 1928, 3)

The Vietnamese word he employs for “cheapened” (*bán rẻ*) also has connotations meaning ‘to prostitute oneself’. The Vietnamese male youths, of course, have not literally sold their bodies. But in embracing these supposedly new practices, according to Mr. Vỹ, they have in effect **exchanged** this imagined ‘traditional’ Vietnamese culture for a modern one – as did Kiếu. One implication, then, is that the Neo-Confucians in this debate opposed the *thủ xú* phenomenon not so much because they were homophobic but saw in these practices the sign of the *modern*.

It is possible that in the early twentieth century a cultural paradigm shift occurred among some Vietnamese Neo-Confucians in

the way they perceived of female prostitution. Scholars studying the phenomenon in Shanghai, for example, have suggested a historical shift in the cultural perception of this female figure (Henriot 1994, 33; Hershatter 1999, 9). Prior to the middle of the twentieth century, the female prostitute was associated with high culture and pleasure, embodied in the figure of the exquisite courtesan. At a certain point, however, as Shanghai and other urban centres were modernizing, the prostitute became associated with what Hershatter has described were “themes of victimization and sexual danger” (1999a, 9). Among the reasons for this shift is that modern reformers began to see in female prostitution a symbol of China’s “national shame” (Hershatter 1999, 9).

A parallel argument can be made in the case of the *thủ xú* phenomenon. It is plausible that Mr. Vỹ and other Neo-Confucians saw in the female prostitute – and by extension, the Vietnamese male youths – a sign of modern national depravity. Vietnam, like China, also experienced larger structural changes in the early twentieth century, namely the collapse of the premodern dynastic system and rise of the modern state. These dramatic changes led many Vietnamese intellectuals to be intensely preoccupied over their country’s predicament. Recall that Mr. Vỹ’s initial purpose in visiting the French-Vietnamese schools was to check on the “intellectual formation” of the Vietnam’s next generation. In the passage that I cited above Mr. Vỹ is concerned, among other issues, with the “awesome responsibility” of the Vietnamese youths to someday lead the “nation”.

The preoccupation with political leadership is connected to another archetype of East Asian masculinity, namely the one premised on sexual abstinence. This is the “hero” whose political career or military ambitions depends on his ability to maintain proper distance from sexual desire and their perceived detriments (Huang 2006, 107). It is also this heroic model that Mr. Vỹ appears to promulgate. He maintains that the youths’ “love games” can lead only to pernicious consequences. He states:

From this carnal desire are sprung many foibles [*tính xấu-xa*]: deception, sulkiness, jealousy, hatred, ridicule; the loss of precious study time and a waste of money that parents have sent to nourish an ignoble carnal desire [*cái dục tình đê tiện*]. (Nguyễn 1928, 3)

This passage suggests that the youths’ amorous relations will only lead to a range of negative passions and material losses, including time and money. For this reason, the male youths ought to be focused on more serious pursuits, such as the development of their “character” and “sense of ethics”. These are the pursuits that, as the prior quoted passage suggests, will equip the male youths in the solemn task of leading the Vietnamese nation.

It is significant that the thematic opposition between the dangers of the libido and the ascetic activity of nation-building parallels the anxieties of early twentieth-century modern reformers in Shanghai. In other words, to the extent that modern urban changes in China are comparable to those in Vietnam, one reason for the *People's Voice's* opposition to the *thủ xú* phenomenon derives from an anxiety over the perceived decline of ‘traditional’ Vietnamese culture in the context of modern nation-building. Finally, it is noteworthy that Mr. Vỹ only selectively translated certain East Asian models of masculinity. In no way was there a monolithic transfer of all elements of the East Asian cultural tradition, and certainly not the one that prized female prostitutes as exquisite courtesans.

6 Same-Sex Sexuality as a Sign of Western Decadence?

Besides considering the *thủ xú* phenomenon as a symptom of modernization – and by extension, the perceived decline of ‘tradition’ – the evidence also suggests that same-sex sexuality represents a practice reflective of Western culture. The interlocutors in the debate, however, exhibited differing attitudes towards Western culture. On the one hand, the Neo-Confucian traditionalist considered the practice as a sign of Western decadence unbefitting of Vietnamese civilization. On the other hand, the youths believed the opposite: namely, that same-sex sexual practices embody a fashionable Western cultural trend. Let us look at examples of each point in turn.

Evidence for the belief that same-sex sexual practices is a sign of Western decadence is most clear in the vocabulary deployed to characterize this phenomenon. Mr. Vỹ, for instance, repeatedly calls it “uncivilized” (*dã man*). In his address to the Vietnamese male youth, Mr. Vỹ states:

Now, to all of you young students! What kind of **race** [giống] have you become, certainly not that of Viet-Nam! I have never heard of teenagers of any of our **Asian nations** who have behaved like you before! Very **unseemly** [*chướng lẫm*]! Such an **uncivilized** practice [*thói dã man*] [...]. You must have learned this from the **new educational system**, is that right? Why do you not know how to keep your own sense of **dignity** [*phẩm giá*]? (Nguyễn 1928, 3; emphasis added)

The passage stages a key dichotomy between civilization and barbarism. The fact that the speaker speculates that the practice may have derived from modern Western educational system creates a division between the prestige of an ancient Asian civilization and the barbarism of a modern Western one. He calls the *thủ xú* practice “unseem-

ly”, “uncivilized” and unbecoming of the Vietnamese “race”. He worries that the practice will inflict damage on the prestige of the nation’s “cultural mores”. As already noted, in the early twentieth century, the conflict between preserving tradition and embracing modernization raged among Vietnamese intellectuals. Under the shadows of French imperial prestige, the younger generation tended to reject what they perceived as embarrassingly backward ‘tradition’ and sought for ways to modernize their country. In the prior passage, however, the speaker appears to belong to an older generation that considered Vietnam an inheritor of the prestige of the Great Neo-Confucian tradition. He speculates that the Vietnamese youth may have acquired this “bad habit” from the “new educational system”, namely the modern French-Vietnamese schools that now dominated the country.

Moreover, the opposition between civilization and barbarism is further heightened by the vocabulary concerning race. Mr. Vỹ compares Vietnam to other “Asian nations” and asks the Vietnamese youth to what “race” [*giống*] they have become. ‘Race’ in this context seems to correspond to something akin to ethnic origins. Scholars studying this period have noted a prevailing cultural dichotomy between the ethnic Vietnamese majority, the *Kinh*, and the mountainous highlanders. Both the prevailing French colonial discourse and the Vietnamese majority perceived the highlanders as ‘savages’ beyond the limits of modern civilization (Saleminck 2003; Jennings 2011). By labelling the *thủ xú* phenomenon as “barbaric”, then, the speaker simultaneously implies that it lies outside the limits of Vietnamese civilization proper.

Yet, if some of the Neo-Confucian literati conceived of same-sex sexuality as a sign of Western decadence, the male youths who participated in the activity believed otherwise. For them, the activity appears to be a fashionable Western trend. We do not have direct evidence from the youth. But we do have quotations provided by their opponents, from which we can draw inferences. In its criticism of this phenomenon, the editorial Board of the *People’s Voice* attempts to refute the claims of the Vietnamese youth. The Board writes:

You male youths claim that “our neighbours may see this but probably won’t find it too strange” and you point to the story of *Poil de Carotte* in which a proctor **enacted** “*thu xu*” on a pupil and the case of Mr. Rousseau on whom two Moors attempted to **enact** “*thu xu*”. In this regard, you male youths are mistaken. Have you ever seen our **culture and customs** [*phong tục ta*] exhibiting this bad **habit** [*thói*] before? If not, then why would you think our neighbours would not find it strange? What you say is enough evidence to show that this social vice is a “foreign import” which you have enthusiastically rushed to imitate and embrace. (Editorial Board [Toà Soạn], 1928, 3)

This passage foregrounds at least two key points. First, like Mr. Vỹ in the earlier passage, it is clear that the editorial Board does not see this phenomenon as evidence of some form of innate gender or sexuality. Instead, much like dietary preferences, sports, smoking or drinking, same-sex sexuality is something akin to a practice. In response to this phenomenon, the editorial board of the *People's Voice* repeatedly refer to *thủ xú* as a kind of “custom” (*lệ*), “cultural practice” (*cái tục*) or “habit” (*thói*), but one that is simultaneously “bad” (*xấu xa*), “vile” (*đê mạt*) or “strange” (*quái vật*). The editors explain by posing the following question: “Have you ever seen this *thủ xú* custom in our culture before?” (*Các cậu đã thấy trong phong tục ta xưa nay có cái thói ‘thủ xú’ ấy chưa?*). They continue: “If not, then how could folks not consider this as something strange?” (*Nếu chưa thì làm sao bà con nghe đến lại không lấy làm quay gở?*). In other words, the so-called *queerness* of this practice derives not from some innate psycho-biological etiology, as some scholars have demonstrated with the dominance of sexology (Tran 2014). Rather, same-sex sexuality is “strange” to the Board only because, at least to them, it appears to have no precedent in Vietnamese culture.

Second, this so-called “custom”, according to the prior passage, appears to be a Western “foreign import”. The French texts are references to Jules Renard’s novella *Poil de Carotte* and Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Confessions*. In the former, Renard depicts a scene in which a proctor appears to have intimate relations with one of the boarding school pupils. In the latter, Rousseau recounts a homoerotic experience with some Moors during a visit to the city of Turin.

In invoking these Western texts, the Vietnamese youths, I suggest, are *translating* them in the service of their own contingent political ends. They are enacting the postcolonial meaning of catachresis: the redeployment of Western cultural concepts to other contexts. In this case, the male youths capitalize on the French prestige of the aforementioned texts in their defence of same-sex amorous relations. In response, the editorial Board likewise invokes the same texts as negative examples of what not to emulate. Since same-sex sexuality, according to the editors, derived not from Vietnamese but French culture, it follows that this “bad habit” is something that need not be preserved – at least not for the various visions of nationhood to which the editors subscribed – and therefore can be stopped. Chastising the Vietnamese male youths, the Editorial Board concludes:

[Y]ou [...] misunderstand that just because there exists this **cultural practice** [*tục ấy*] in the West in no way implies that you should try to imitate it; you male youths are mistaken when you take this vile **habit** [*thói*] to be synonymous with the **noble ideals of male friendship...**” (Editorial Board [Toà Soạn], 1928, 4)

Regardless of whether this “custom” or “habit” derived from the French or not, my point is that this archive dramatizes how different actors drew on French culture and translated it to serve their various local claims in the debate over the meaning of same-sex sexual practices. Ultimately, the case study brings into relief how the meaning of sexuality is located in the cross-cultural translation process, where ‘translation’ is understood to be an epistemic struggle in the negotiation and production of meaning, and by extension, a site of cultural knowledge production.

7 Conclusion

The article has analyzed one meaning of same-sex sexual relations in the late 1920s in Vietnam based on a debate in the *People’s Voice* (*Tiếng Dân*), a prominent newspaper during the interwar period. The paper published an investigative story about a phenomenon called *thủ xú*, a local argot to refer to male-male amorous relations taking place in the then newly emerging French-Vietnamese secondary schools. Based on an examination of the newspaper, this study has argued that the meaning of same-sex sexual relations is a cultural translation of East Asian and Western traditions. Indeed, to grasp the meaning of *thủ xú* is already to enter into the complex process of linguistic and cultural translation.

The research suggests two key conclusions concerning the character of Vietnamese same-sex sexuality. First, the interlocutors conceived of sexuality less as a coherent and stable identity in the image of the modern homosexual paradigm. Rather, caught in the traffic of both Eastern and Western discourses, Vietnamese same-sex sexuality signified contingent practices of cultural difference. Put another way, it was a protean ‘queer’ figure – a cathectic object onto which different interlocutors projected both their anxieties and aspirations. For the Neo-Confucians, male-male amorous relations represented ‘modern’ Western habits that threatened what they perceived as ‘traditional’ Vietnamese culture. By contrast, the Vietnamese male youths conceived of their amorous relations as a fashionable practice of Western modernity and civilization. In no way did either party conceive of the amorous relations as an essence that defined who the participants were and what they could be.

Finally, the *thủ xú* phenomenon problematizes some of the dualisms in the debates in sexuality studies. According to one such dualism, the West imposes its universal identity constructs onto other local cultures. This archive, however, complicates this narrative in two ways. First, the study challenges the notion of a monolithic transfer of external cultural influence. Local actors were not passive receptacles. Rather, they dynamically translated and appropriated ‘for-

eign’ cultural ideas in the service of their contingent political ends. Second, the meaning of Vietnamese same-sex sexuality derived from multiple cultural sources. Belonging exclusively to none, the *thủ xú* phenomenon – and by extension, Vietnamese same-sex sexuality – reveals its hybrid moorings and fundamental cultural impurity. While the *thủ xú* phenomenon appears to have been a fleeting moment in Vietnamese cultural history, it provides one indication of the rich and complex meanings of variant genders and sexualities yet to be further excavated.

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Acquisition of Double-Nominative Constructions by Italian L1 Learners of Chinese A Cross-Sectional Corpus Study

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Abstract This paper presents new results of an ongoing cross-sectional corpus study investigating the acquisition of Chinese word order by Italian L1 learners. Specifically, it focuses on the acquisition of 'double-nominative constructions', as well as the correct sequential organisation of topical and focal information in the Chinese sentence. The analysis is conducted on three learner corpora, created by the Author on the basis of a test submitted to three groups of university (BA and MA)-level Italian L1 learners of Chinese, for a total of 132 learners. Quantitative and qualitative analysis conducted on the collected data show that, while the double-subject construction may appear as a simple and straightforward pattern, it is in fact a rather difficult construction to acquire and spontaneously produce for Italian L1 learners. Rather, students tend to use patterns they are used to in their L1 (or other L2s, such as English). These include the [NP1 have NP2], [NP1 的 NP2], or [NP1 *adjectival predicate*] patterns, among other types, thus confirming the inhibitive L1 transfer hypotheses of this study.

Keywords Chinese SLA. Double-nominative constructions. Cross-sectional study. Learner corpus. Italian L1 learners. Inhibitive transfer.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Approach. – 2.1 L2 Errors and Interlanguage. – 2.2 Cross-Linguistic Influence and Linguistic Transfer. – 2.3 Importance of L1-L2 Contrastive Analysis. – 3 Double Nominatives and Their Italian and English Counterparts. A Contrastive Form-Function Analysis. – 3.1 Structure and Meaning of Double Nominatives 384. – 3.2 Italian and English Influence. What Students Are Used to. – 4 The Study. – 4.1 Hypotheses. – 4.2 Test Design. – 4.3 Data Collection and Participants. – 5 Results. Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis. – 5.1 Quantitative Analysis. – 5.2 Qualitative Analysis. – 6 Discussion. – 7 Conclusion.



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1 Introduction

This paper presents new results of an ongoing cross-sectional study investigating the acquisition of Chinese¹ word order by Italian L1 learners. The focus of this paper is the acquisition of so-called “double-nominative constructions” (Chappell 1996; Shen 1987; Modini 1981; Li, Thompson 1976, 1981; Tsao 1977; Mullie 1933; Teng 1974b; Li 2004, see section 3) as well as the correct sequential organization of topical and focal information in the Chinese sentence. Double nominatives² generally refer to a pattern consisting of two nominals that occur next to each other at the beginning of the sentence, followed by a predicative element (henceforth, PE), e.g., an attributive or stative verb, as in (1.C).

1. C. 大象, 鼻子 长。
dàxiàng bízi cháng
elephant TOP nose long
NP1 NP2 PE
E. (Lit.) ? ‘Elephants, (their) noses are long’.
I. (Lit.) ? ‘L’elefante, il (suo) naso è lungo’.

Such constructions are tightly connected with the topic-prominent nature of the language, which is a fundamental typological feature of Chinese: as discussed in detail in section 3, this construction allows hosting topical elements (NP1, *dàxiàng* ‘elephants’) in the sentence-initial position, while maintaining focal (informationally salient) elements at the very end (in this case, *cháng* ‘long’ or *bízi cháng* ‘nose (is) long’ depending on the context). However, such a pattern is not allowed in most Indo-European languages of Europe, including English (1.E) and Italian (1.I). Rather, such languages may, for example, use the verb *have* to express that possession/whole-part relationship, and specifically the [NP1 *have* NP2] pattern, as in (2.E) and (2.I’). Thus, students are not familiar with the double-nominative pattern and may find it difficult to spontaneously produce it. Rather, they may tend to produce patterns that are closer to the structures

1 In this paper, I use the term ‘Chinese’ to refer to *Putonghua*, the standard language of the PRC. Simplified Chinese characters and the *Pinyin* romanization system have been used throughout the article. The glosses follow the general guidelines of the Leipzig Glossing Rules. A list of all abbreviations and glosses is available at the end of the article.

2 The term ‘double nominative’ is here used for the reader’s convenience, i.e., to allow readers to refer to the relevant literature on the topic. It is nevertheless important to note that grammatical cases (intended as a system of marking of a dependent nominal for the type of relationship they bear to their heads, such as nominative, accusative, ablative etc. in Latin or German) are not part of the grammar of Chinese (see section 3).

of their native language, e.g., the [NP1 *have* NP2] pattern as in (2.C), which however is a less preferred pattern in Chinese in terms of information structure³ (section 3):

2. E. 'Elephants have long noses'.
I. 'L'elefante ha il naso lungo'.
NP1 HAVE NP2
C. ?大象 有 很 长 的 鼻子。
 dàxiàng yǒu hěn cháng de bízi
 elephant have very long SP nose

This paper specifically looks at negative L1 transfer phenomena that affect the production of double-nominative constructions by Italian L1 learners of Chinese. Specifically, it presents the results of an ongoing cross-sectional study consisting of translation tasks submitted to three cohorts of Italian L1 learners of Chinese with different proficiency levels and from different universities, for a total of 132 learners. The test has been elaborated on the basis of existing cross-sectional studies conducted on English L1 learners of Chinese (Jiang 2009) and on a preliminary contrastive analysis of the form-function associations connected to this construction in Chinese and Italian. The analysis singles out different linguistic forms and patterns used by Italian and Chinese to encode the same meaning, which may lead to negative transfer and high error rates. The data collected through the test are then used to determine whether there is a correlation between L1-L2 differences, the proficiency level of the students, the complexity of the tested structure, and the percentage of the related word order errors in L2 production due to L1 transfer.

This work aims to contribute to Chinese as a Second/Foreign Language (CSL/CFL) acquisition as a growing area of research. The past decade has witnessed an increasing interest in CSL/CFL acquisition. However, most studies have been conducted among English L1 learners, while there exist very few studies on Italian L1 learners of Chinese, especially on word order acquisition. This study wants to contribute filling this gap. An increasing number of Italian educational institutions are now offering Chinese courses, not only at the university level, but also in primary and secondary schools. The findings of the study will contribute to a clearer understanding of the acquisitional processes of double nominatives by Italian L1 learners, thus building up towards a more effective pedagogy.

3 This can be observed in corpora, as well. The string “鼻子很长” *bízi hěn cháng* occurs 11 times in the the BCC corpus of Modern Chinese (Beijing Language and Culture University, 15 billion characters), while no occurrence can be found of the string 有很长的鼻子 (Xun 2019). Obviously, the use of one over the other form depends on the context and on the information structure/focus of the sentence.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: section 2 presents the approach the study adopts, namely that of form-to-function studies (Long, Sato 1984; Bardovi-Harlig 2014, 2015), along with its basic notions, tools, and research methods. Section 3 offers a description of double nominative constructions, their formal characteristics and their functions, as well as a contrastive analysis with Italian and English. Section 4 describes the study, and in particular the hypotheses, the test design, the participants, and information on data collection. Section 5 presents the results, both from a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. Section 6 discusses these results, while section 7 draws the conclusions and proposes some indications for CSL/CFL teaching.

2 The Approach

This study adopts a functional approach to the investigation of second language acquisition (henceforth SLA), and specifically that of form-to-function studies (Long, Sato 1984; Bardovi-Harlig 2014, 2015) in line with previous studies on related issues (Morbiato 2017). Such an approach is particularly useful for several reasons. First, a form-oriented (form-to-function) approach allows a comprehensive investigation of a specific construction/aspect (form) of the L2 (e.g., the English past tense *-ed*, or in this case the double-nominative construction) by examining its different facets: it investigates its use in language to identify its functions (which may be multiple) and compares these functions to correspondent forms in students' L1; then, it verifies whether and to what extent learners use the target form in L2 production. Second, it provides useful tools and notions that allow analyzing the complex process of acquisition of the target L2 form, including: the importance attributed to *learners' errors*, that are not seen as students' failures, but rather as SLA diagnostic tools allowing investigation of acquisitional processes at different stages (section 2.1); the role of *interlanguages*, i.e., idiolects developed by each L2 learner, which evolve over time and include errors (section 2.1); the notion of 'linguistic transfer' and, consequently, the crucial role attributed to contrastive analyses of L1-L2 differences to predict transfer-related acquisitional issues (section 2.2). Third, it encourages to examine the 'inventory' of means (forms) learners use to express a specific meaning (function), as well as and the 'reorganization of the balance'⁴ of these means over time and across dif-

⁴ The *-ed* form and the 'past time' function are often used as examples of interplay and changing balance of linguistic forms. The earliest resource to express time sequence builds on the iconic universal principle of temporal sequence: events are told in the same order in which they happened (*Veni, vidi, vici*, 'I came, I saw, I conquered'). The next (lexical) stage involves, for example, temporal adverbials (e.g. 'yesterday') or connectives (e.g.

ferent proficiency levels. This is based on the tenet that learners already have access to a full range of concepts (functions), as well as the means (forms) to express these concepts in their L1, but lack the related forms in their L2, which may significantly differ from forms in their L1. An awareness of students' meaning-form associations is crucial for language pedagogy: recent researches have shown that a focus both on form and on meaning/communication can have advantages over purely meaning-focussed instruction (Alcón-Soler 2012). The next subsections present in greater detail concepts mentioned above that are important for the present analysis (for a more detailed discussion of the framework see Bardovi-Harlig 2015).

2.1 L2 Errors and Interlanguage

While students' L2 errors used to be seen as something to be eradicated, after Corder's article (1967) and subsequent literature on the topic, they started to be considered as significant diagnostics to monitor learners' acquisitional processes. Now, in SLA research, L2 errors are regarded as part of the strategies each learner develops in the process of creating their own interlanguage. "Interlanguage" (Selinker 1972, 2012) is seen as a dynamic and evolving linguistic system with its own code and rules, and with an unstable nature. It is mostly explained as the result of an interaction of two language systems, usually the mother tongue and the target language (TL). The analysis of interlanguage development, of common errors and error types, and of the reasons beyond such errors, leads to a clearer understanding of the learning stages and the learners' difficulties caused by L1 interference (see section 2.2). Errors refer not only to forms that are grammatically incorrect, but also forms that are semantically or pragmatically inappropriate in the context: an L2 error is also

a linguistic form [...] which, in the same context [...] would in all likelihood not be produced by the learner's native speaker counterparts. (Jiang 2009, 126)

An awareness of how errors (and error types) evolve over time or across different proficiency levels contributes towards more effective pedagogical actions that help learners self-monitor, cope with, and eventually overcome persistent errors more efficiently and effectively.

'then'). The following stage involves the use of tense, verbal morphology, and so on. In this process, the inventory of forms changes (i.e., it increases over time) and the balance changes as well, as the use of morphology overrides temporal sequence, e.g., in sentences such as 'I entered after buying the ticket', which display reverse chronological order.

2.2 Cross-Linguistic Influence and Linguistic Transfer

The term ‘transfer’ in general refers to “the extent to which knowledge and skills acquired in one situation affect a person’s learning or performance in a subsequent situation” (Ormrod 2014, 206). Transfer affects all areas of language; it is a narrower term than ‘cross-linguistic influence’, although the two are often used interchangeably (Ringbom 2012). While in SLA this notion is used across different theoretical frameworks, views about linguistic transfer have undergone considerable change. Initially, it was assumed that the ‘habits’ of the L1 would be automatically carried over into the L2; now, scholars agree that L1 transfer works in complex ways and constitutes only one of the many factors and processes involved in L2 acquisition (Gass 1996). Research has shown that transfer-related differences apply mainly to early stages of learning: as learning progresses, all learners apply strategies and processes that are closer and closer to the TL (Ringbom 2012, 399). Traditionally, two types of transfer were distinguished: ‘positive transfer’ takes place when the influence of previous knowledge leads to flawless or rapid acquisition/use of new knowledge; ‘negative transfer’, on the other hand, occurs when such influence leads to errors or acquisitional issues. Recently, more types of transfer have been singled out: for example, transfer that predominantly happens from students’ L1 (in our case Italian) or from other second/foreign languages the learner masters rather well (in our study, we take English as such a possible language), is called ‘procedural’ Negative procedural transfer may, in turn, either be *intrusive* or *inhibitive*. Intrusive transfer happens when learners inappropriately use structures or other items from their L1, while inhibitive transfer refers to L1 structures that inhibit learners to appropriately use new words and structures. This is well illustrated by Ringbom:

TL words and structures without L1 parallels provide the learner with no concrete item transfer and are therefore often avoided as they are **perceived as redundant**. At one stage children learning L1 frequently produce forms like *runned*, *goed* for *ran*, *went*, thus avoiding what they apparently perceive as unnecessary redundancy for expressing past tense. Similarly, **L2 learners initially also avoid what is perceived as redundant in the TL**. (Ringbom 2012, 399; emphasis added)

As we will see, both intrusive and inhibitive transfer are likely to be observed in this study. Crucial to the correct investigation of the role of linguistic transfer (both positive and negative) is a contrastive analysis of the differences between learners’ L1 and L2, which is the focus of the next section.

2.3 Importance of L1-L2 Contrastive Analysis

A contrastive analysis of word order in students' L1 and L2(s) is important for several reasons. First, the role of cross-linguistic influence (Odlin 2012) is crucial in word order acquisition: studies have now attested that both the comprehension and production of a second language can be affected by cross-linguistic influence (Odlin 2012, 152). Moreover, studies show that, with respect to other L2 linguistic features, L2 word order is comparatively more influenced by L1 word order (James 1998). Pioneering studies on Chinese word order acquisition include the large-scale cross-sectional study conducted by Jiang (2009) on English L1 learners. Specifically, Jiang (2009) developed a taxonomy of Chinese L2 word order errors based on a contrastive analysis of Chinese and English, aimed at enabling explicit description and clear explanation of these errors. On the other hand, apart from a preliminary investigation conducted by Morbiato (2017), very few studies have so far been conducted on Italian L1 learners. Typological and grammatical differences existing between Italian and Chinese are often reflected in the errors students commit in conversation or translation tasks. Jiang (2009) and Morbiato (2017) present an overview of the salience of word order and its functions in the grammar of Chinese. Due to space constraints, I refer the reader to these studies, while in what follows a contrastive analysis is proposed with a special focus on double nominatives. As said earlier, in addition to Chinese and Italian, English is also considered as an example of students' already acquired second language: while much research concentrates on either L1-L2 influence, studies focussing on cross-linguistic influence involving a third language are a promising area of research (Odlin 2012).

3 Double Nominatives and Their Italian and English Counterparts. A Contrastive Form-Function Analysis

The double nominative construction is "typologically characteristic of many languages in the East Asian region" (Chappell 1996), as for example Korean and Japanese (Park 2010; Wunderlich 2014), while it is almost absent in the Indo-European languages of Europe. It has been referred to as "double-nominative" (Mullie 1933; Teng 1974a; Li 2004) or "double-subject construction" (Chappell 1996; Shen 1987; Modini 1981; Li, Thompson 1976, 1981; Tsao 1977) due to the feature of two NPs juxtaposed in sentence-initial position. In Chinese, it is referred to as 主谓谓语句 *zhǔ-wèi wèiyǔ jù* 'sentences with a subject-predicate predicate'. Investigation of this structure has been a continuing concern within Chinese linguistics: since the 1970s, a significant number of articles have been published on this topic, both by Chinese and

international scholars investigating Chinese grammar. In the China Academic Journals (CAJ) full text database, 386 articles can be found with the search term 主谓谓语句, 129 of which contain this term in their title. A paper such as the present one cannot do justice to all the literature on the subject: this section is devoted to a brief presentation of some of the main features such construction presents that are relevant to their acquisition with a particular focus on its structure (i.e., the form) and its semantic and discourse features (functions).

3.1 Structure and Meaning of Double Nominatives

Structure

The double-nominative structure involves two nominals occurring adjacent to each other and followed by a predicative element, as in (1). Scholars tend to agree that this structure is related to the topic-prominent nature of Chinese: Li and Thompson (1976, 480) consider it as a prototypical topic-comment sentence. According to such an analysis, the first NP is a topic, followed by a comment of the type NP-predicative element (PE). Since Chao's (1968) and Li and Thompson's (1976, 1981) seminal works, the importance of the notion of topic in Chinese is well established in the literature: the fact that Chinese sentences are best described as topic-comment, rather than subject-predicate, structures is widely accepted across almost all theoretical persuasions.⁵ The topic is generally regarded as the sentence-initial element that 'sets a frame of validity for what comes afterwards' (Chafe 1976; Her 1991; Paul 2015; Morbiato 2018) and is what the sentence is about (but see Chafe 1976; Paul 2015 and Morbiato 2018 for a critique of this generalization). The topic may, but need not, be argument of the predicative element. Accordingly, N1 (the topic) is not a verbal argument: the sole argument of the PE *jìnshì* 'short-sighted' is NP2, i.e., *yǎnjīng* 'eye':

5 An overview of the historical development of this notion for Chinese is beyond the scope of the present article; see, among others, Li 2005, Shyu 2016 and LaPolla 2016.

3. 他	眼睛	近视。
# <i>tā</i>	<i>yǎnjīng</i>	<i>jìnshì</i>
3SG	eye	short-sighted
NP1	NP2	PE
<u>WHOLE</u>	<u>PART</u>	<u>STATIVE PREDICATE</u>
TOPIC	COMMENT	
'He is short-sighted'.		

The comment is generally defined as what follows the topic and says something new about it. In this case, the comment is composed of the string NP2-PE. The predicative element located sentence-finally in the comment is often the focus of the message. Scholars have observed that, in many cases, the predicate is stative or intransitive (Chao 1968; Chappell 1996):

the commonest subtype of an S-P predicate is one which describes the state or characteristic, less commonly an event, about the main subject. A personal subject may have an S-P predicate in which the subject represents a part of the body and the “small” predicate some physiological or psychological condition or property. (Chao 1968, 96)

Recursivity

Double nominatives can be recursive, thus constituting embedded topic-comment structures. One well-known such example is proposed by Her (1991, 6), who represents its structure as in figure 1; note again that English uses (and Italian would, too) either the possessive *of*-construction or the *have*-construction:

4. 这一棵树, 花, 颜色 很好。 (Her 1991, 6)
zhè yí kē shù huā yánsè hěn hǎo
 this CLF tree flower colour very nice
 'The flowers of this tree have very nice colours'.

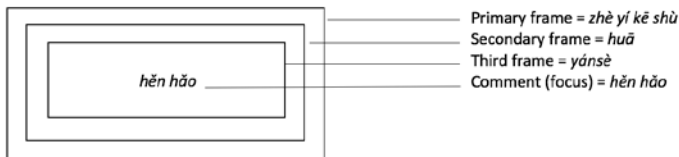


Figure 1 Representation of multiple double nominative constructions as embedded frames (adapted from Her 1991)

Embedding

Furthermore, double nominatives can be embedded in more complex structures, for example, in relative clauses (compare with sentence (1) above):

5. 大象 是 鼻子 最长的 动物 之一。
dàxiàng shì bízi zuì cháng de dòngwù zhīyī
 elephant be REL [nose most long sp] animal one-of
 NP1 NP2 PE
 ‘The elephant is one of the animals with the longest nose’.

Another possibility is that of complex sentences where NP1 acts as a sentential or discourse topic that is later omitted to achieve textual cohesion, thus forming a topic chain (Tsao 1990; Li W. 2004, 2005). In (6), the NP2 denotes a property of NP1, as observed by Chao above:

6. 那辆车, 价钱 太贵, 我 不 想买。(adapted from Li 2005)
nà liàng chē, jiàqián tài guì wǒ bù xiǎng mǎi
 that CLF car price too high 1SG NEG want buy
 NP1 NP2 PE
 ‘That car, the price is too high, I don’t want to buy it’.

Semantic Features

Several scholars agree that the two NPs in the construction bear a semantic relationship between them, that is often that of whole-part, possessor-possessed (thing, property, characteristic), individual frame-characteristic, set-subset etc.⁶ According to Modini (1981) and Chappell’s corpus study (1996), such a relationship is that of inalienable possession in terms of the personal domain. Morbiato’s corpus study (forthcoming) further reveals that inalienable possession is one of the instantiations of a more general linearization convention of the frame-part or containment schema,⁷ that is observable for Japanese as well (Cook 1993). Morbiato proposes that Chinese displays a structural position, i.e. the preverbal position, and a relational structural pattern, i.e. the container-before-contained, or frame-before-

⁶ See Chappell 1996 and Morbiato forthcoming for further discussion on the nature of such relationship.

⁷ Due to space constraints, the matter cannot be discussed in detail here (the reader is referred to Morbiato forthcoming); nonetheless, the nature of the containment relationship varies and must be interpreted metaphorically, in the sense of Lakoff and Johnson (2003). For example, NP1 in (6) ‘that car’ metaphorically contains its properties, such as its colour, its price, etc.

part/participant, which inherently encode containment and frame setting. This is connected to the frame-setting properties of topics (Chafe 1976; Paul 2015; Morbiato forthcoming). In short, NP1 represents a semantic frame, a container within which something is predicated about NP2, that is a part/participant/property/contained thing.

Information-Structural Features

Chinese has a strong preference for ‘initial topic’ and ‘end-focus’. The initial and final parts of the sentence are two very salient positions: as mentioned earlier, the former hosts the topic, i.e., the frame of interpretation, as well as the point of initiation, which contains given/identifiable/locatable information. These characteristics make it serve as a convenient introduction to the main point of a message (focus, new information) that resides in the comment. Given information carries very low Communicative Dynamism (CD), whereas new, focal information carries the highest CD (Firbas 1971). Thus, in the topic-comment structure, i.e., from the sentence-initial to the sentence-final position, the degree of CD tends to increase from low to high.⁸ It is common to process the information of a message in such a way as to achieve a linear presentation from low to high information value. This is referred to as the Principle of End-Focus (Quirk et al. 1985). Focus may be signalled in different ways, including prosodic prominence expressed by an accent or stress in spoken language, e.g., in Italian and English, while it is mostly signalled by the sentence-final position in Chinese (with exceptions as per the literature mentioned in fn. 6). By the Principle of End-Focus, the intonational nucleus in Chinese tends to fall on the last open-class lexical item of the last sentence element, in this case, the PE:

7. 他	眼睛	又蓝又大。
<i>tā</i>	<i>yǎnjīng</i>	<i>yòu lán yòu dà</i>
3sg	eyes	also blue also big
NP1	NP2	PE
		FOCUS
[TOPIC (frame)]	[COMMENT
]
		‘He has got big blue eyes’.

The focus may also coincide with the whole comment (see Lambrecht 1994 and Hole 2012 for a detailed discussion of different types

⁸ In fact, there are exceptions to this, including marked forms and marked focus constructions, focus markers (连, 也, 都, 才, 就 etc.), among others; however, this is generally not the case in the double nominative construction, hence I will not discuss such exceptions and refer the reader to Hole 2004, 2012 and Xu 2015 for further details.

of foci, i.e., sentential, predicate and narrow focus). To sum up, the form-function association connected to double nominatives involves:

8.

Form: NP1 = main topic; NP2+PE = comment; generally, PE = focus.
The pattern may be recursive and embedded in more complex sentences.

Functions: (a) Frame/containment/possession: semantic relation of whole-part/participant/property, container-contained, set-subset, etc., between NP1 and NP2 (as discussed above).
(b) Initial topic: Topicality of NP1, that is the frame of validity of the following predication; generally, it is what the rest of the sentence/discourse is about, and controls coreference in topic chains.
(c) End-focus: Saliency of the sentence-final element(s).

3.2 Italian and English Influence. What Students Are Used to

As discussed earlier, Italian and English do not have a form as described in (8). How do these languages encode the three functions identified in (8.a-c)? English and Italian tend to encode containment and possession relationships lexically, rather than structurally, and namely: (i) with the verb to *have* [NP1 *have* NP2], as mentioned in the introduction; (ii) with possessive constructions (e.g., the *of*-construction in English and the preposition *di* in Italian, [NP2 *of* NP1]. This is evident in the possible English and Italian translation of the Chinese sentences above. For example, possible Italian and English counterparts to sentences similar to (4) could be:

9. E. 'The flowers of that tree are very beautiful'. [NP2 *of* NP1]
I. 'I fiori di quell'albero sono bellissimi'.
E'. 'That tree has very beautiful flowers'. [NP1 *have* NP2]
I'. 'Quell'albero ha fiori bellissimi'.

(iii) A further possibility, e.g., with semantic relationships denoting properties, as in (3), is an adjectival form:

10. E. 'He is short-sighted'. [NP1 *adjectival predicate*]
I. 'È miope'.

This L1-L2 function-form difference is likely to have a negative impact on learners' interlanguage development: students may use the same patterns ([NP1 *have* NP2], [NP2 *of* NP1], or [NP1 *adjectival predicate*]) rather than the double-nominative construction (inhib-

itive transfer). However, while these forms are indeed available in Chinese, and are grammatically correct/understandable by native speakers, the functions they express do not fully adhere to those of double nominatives. In what follows, each form is examined in detail.

NP1 有 (have, exist) NP2. If we consider a sentence like (7), it is in fact possible to express it by preserving the English/Italian [NP1 have NP2] structure, namely with the 有 (have, exist) verb:

11. I. 'Ha grandi occhi azzurri'.
 E. 'He has got big blue eyes'.
 C. 他 有 又蓝又大的 眼睛。
tā yǒu yòu lán yòu dà de yǎnjīng
 3SG have also blue also big SP eye

However, such pattern does not fully adhere to the end-focus principle. As discussed in section 3.1, focus in Chinese is normally searched in the last part of each sentence. In (11), the point is not that the subject has eyes, but rather, that his eyes are blue. The most salient, focal element is expressed by the adjectives (underlined), and not by NP2. However, the [NP1 have NP2] pattern involves that the sentence-final, and hence focal, element, is NP2. While this is not an issue in Italian and English, a sentence like (11.C) is less natural in Chinese. The double nominative, on the other hand, allows the focal PE to occur in sentence-final, focal position. This is why a sentence like (7) is perceived as better, more natural, by native speakers (including those I surveyed). This is clearly stated by Loar:

Normally verb elements cannot be focused in the SVO construction. However, when such focus is desirable, with an intransitive verb, like an adjective stative verb, End-Focus is easily achieved. Thus the S adjective-predicate sentence is widely used to highlight the [verbal] element that is communicatively prominent. (Loar 2011, 465)

To illustrate this, Loar (2011, 465) proposes a number of sentence pairs (focal element is underlined):

12. E. 'There were truly lots of people on the plane'.
 I. 'C'erano moltissime persone nell'aereo/plano'.
 C. ? 飞机上 有 真多人。 C'. 飞机上 人 真多。
fēijī shàng yǒu zhēn duō de rén fēijī shàng rén zhēn duō
 airplane-on have very many SP people airplane-on people verymany
 (NP1) (have NP2=focus) (NP1) (NP2) (PE=focus)

NP1 的 NP2: The meaning in (10) can also be expressed using the 的 construction:

13.	他	的	眼睛	又	蓝	又	大。
	<i>tā</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>yǎnjing</i>	<i>yòu</i>	<i>lán</i>	<i>yòu</i>	<i>dà</i>
	3SG	SP	eyes	also	blue	also	big
	NP1	的	NP2	PE=focus			

Such a pattern also correctly allows the focal PE to occur sentence-finally. What is then the difference with (7)? And most importantly: how to explain this to students? The difference lies in what is to be analyzed as the topical element. In sentence (7), the topic is NP1 (*tā*); in sentence (13), NP1 modifies NP2 and forms with it a single constituent, that functions as the topic (*tā de yǎnjing*, 'his eyes'). The choice lies in what the speaker wants the sentence (and the discourse) to be about. This can be better appreciated in longer strings of discourse: complex sentences such as (14) below may be useful for teaching purposes, as well. If we consider sentences (14.E-I), we notice that the topic of the discourse is *he*: the three clauses that follow all talk about that referent. A translation that employs the double nominative construction, as in (15.C), preserves the topicality of the referent, which is then omitted in its later occurrences, forming a topic chain. If, on the other hand, a 的 structure is used, as in (15.C'), the topic changes for each of the three clauses: *tā de yǎnjing*, 'his eyes', *tā de tóufa*, 'his hair', and *tā*, 'he', thus affecting the structure of the discourse and, in particular, discourse cohesion and topic continuity:

14. I. '(Lui) ha dei grandi occhi azzurri e capelli neri e lucenti, è davvero bello'.
E. 'He has big blue eyes and shiny black hair, he is very handsome'.

15.	C.	他	眼睛	又	蓝	又	大，	头发	黑	黝	黝	的，	非常	帅！
		<i>tā</i>	<i>yǎnjing</i>	<i>yòu</i>	<i>lán</i>	<i>yòu</i>	<i>dà</i>	<i>tóufa</i>	<i>hēiyōuyōu</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>fēichǎng</i>	<i>shuài</i>		
		3SG	eyes	also	blue	also	big	hair	pitch.black	SP	very	handsome		
		NP1	NP2	PE = focus				NP2'	PE' = focus		PE'' = focus			
		TOPIC []			COMMENT (1) []			[]		COMMENT (2) []		COMMENT (3) []		

C'.	他	的	眼睛	又	蓝	又	大，	他	的	头发	黑	黝	黝	的，
	<i>tā</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>yǎnjing</i>	<i>yòu</i>	<i>lán</i>	<i>yòu</i>	<i>dà</i>	<i>tā</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>tóufa</i>	<i>hēiyōuyōu</i>	<i>de</i>		
	3SG		eyes	also	blue	also	big	3SG		hair	pitch.black	SP		
	NP		PE = focus				NP'		PE' = focus					
	TOPIC (1)			[COMMENT (1) []]			TOPIC (2)		[COMMENT (2) []]					
	(他)		非常帅！											
	(<i>tā</i>)		<i>fēichǎng shuài</i>											
	(NP'')		very handsome											
	(TOPIC 3)		PE'' = focus											
			[COMMENT (3) []]											

NP1 adjectival predicate

This pattern is clearly available only if there is a correspondent adjective in Chinese. While it is possible to say 他是近视的 (lit. 'he is short-sighted') to express the meaning in (3), other adjectives do not have direct correspondences, which might cause difficulties for Chinese L2 learners. One such example is 'populous' (lit. 'popoloso'). The student may easily look up and find a possible translation in the adjective 稠密 *chóumì*:

16. I. 'La Cina è molto popolosa'.

E. 'China is very populous'.

C. ?中国 很 稠密。⁹

Zhōngguó hěn chóumì
China very populous

C'. 中国 人口 很稠密。

Zhōngguó rénkǒu hěn chóumì
China people very populous (dense)

However, sentence (16.C) has at least two problems: the first is that the adjective 稠密 *chóumì* should be referred to, e.g., *people*; hence a double nominative is in order, as in (16.C'); the second is its truth value: while it is true that China is populous (i.e., it has a big population), it is not equally true that it is 稠密 *chóumì*, i.e., densely populated (some areas, like its western parts, are definitely not). The correct, unmarked translation would then be a double-nominative construction of the type of (17). However, this involves a quite elaborate L1 form-function-L2 form transition, especially for beginner-level learners who may have not yet been exposed to this as a chunk/formulaic expression.

17. 中国 人口 很多。

Zhōngguó rénkǒu hěn duō
China people very many

All in all, the double-nominative construction, while widespread in Chinese, is not available in languages like English and Italian, which instead use three other forms, including: [NP1 *have* NP2], [NP2 *of* NP1], and [NP1+*adjectival predicate*]. These forms may therefore be preferred by students, in that they are more familiar. However, depending on the context, these three forms may present semantic, syntactic, and/or pragmatic/information structural differences as compared to the double-nominative construction. This may lead both to intrusive and to inhibitive transfer: students may use forms that are available in their L1, while usage of double nominative could be perceived as redundant and thus be 'inhibited'. This is what the study aimed at testing.

4 The Study

This section presents the details of the study, its hypotheses, participants, and data gathering method. The participants comprised three cohorts of Italian L1 learners of Chinese with different proficiency levels, for a total of 132 participants. Written production data, comprising translations of given sentences, was collected. Details are provided below.

4.1 Hypotheses

The study aims at verifying whether there is a correlation between L1-L2 differences with respect to form-function mappings and the percentage of the related word order errors in L2 production/comprehension due to Italian/English interference. Specifically, with respect to the present analysis, the test sought to gather some empirical evidence to verify the following three hypotheses, based on the analysis in section 3:

- a. *Double-nominative constructions*. Italian L1 students are not familiar with this construction, in that neither Italian nor other Indo-European languages that are generally studied in Italian high schools (English, French, Spanish, German) do allow such patterns. Hence, Italian L1 learners might find it difficult to acquire it and, consequently, produce it.
- b. *Encoding of frame-part/participant/property, containment, and possession relationships*. Given the L1-L2 differences in expressing such relationships, learners – and especially beginner level ones – may tend to produce structures that are similar to those of their L1, and namely [NP1 *have* NP2], [NP2 *of* NP1], or [NP1 *adjectival predicate*].
- c. *Topic-first and End-focus*. While Italian and other European languages tend to follow the universal tendency of given-to-new, topical-to-focal information progression, they tend to be less rigid than Chinese. Thus, Italian L1 learners, just like English L1 learners (Jiang 2009), might not feel the need to adhere to Chinese topic-first and end-focus patterns. As topic is, again, not as relevant in the grammar of Italian or English, topic-first related word order error rates may tend to be high also among advanced-level students.

All hypotheses (i-iii) involve negative transfer/inference, and thus a relatively high percentage of word order errors is expected in related translation tasks, especially in lower proficiency levels and in more complex sentence types – e.g., with embedded double nominatives of the type of (5).

4.2 Test Design

For the study, a cross-sectional design was chosen over a longitudinal one. While a longitudinal design seeks to obtain data on the development of interlanguage and L2 over time, and for a small number of learners (generally one), a cross-sectional design gathers data at one point in time, and from learners at different developmental stages.¹⁰ A cross-sectional design was chosen because it allows gathering a statistically relevant amount of data from a large number of Chinese L2 learners at different proficiency levels, who are more likely to produce a greater and more varied number of errors. The test consisted of an Italian-to-Chinese translation task. It was designed to test only structures and word order patterns; hence all the necessary vocabulary was provided in brackets. The test was anonymous to prevent students from feeling the pressure of making mistakes. Data considered for this research comprise three sentences which native speakers would translate using simple double-nominative constructions, i.e. (18), (19) and (20), and one sentence which native speakers would translate using a double-nominative construction embedded in a relative clause, i.e. (21). These sentences were submitted to a control group of 5 Chinese native speakers, all with university-level education, 3 of which are Chinese language teachers, all born in China. Sentences are reported below, along with translations provided by native speakers:

18. (S1)

I. *Il mi-o ragazz-o ha un buon caratter-e.*
 the.M.SG my-M.SG boyfriend-SG have.PRS.3SG a.M.SG good.M
 character-SG
 'My boyfriend has a good character'.

C. 我 男朋友 脾气/性格 很好。
wǒ nán péngyou píqì/xìnggé hěn hǎo
 1SG boyfriend character very good

19. (S2)

I. *Mi-a mamm-a non ha un-a buona vista.*
 my-F.SG mom-SG NEG have.PRS.3SG a-F.SG good-F.SG eyesight
 'My mom doesn't have a good eyesight'.

C. 我 妈妈 眼睛/视力 不好。
wǒ māma yǎnjīng/shìlì bù hǎo
 1SG mom eyesight NEG good

¹⁰ For further discussion see Jiang 2009, Jackson 2012.

20. (S 3)

I. Venezia è poco popolos-a.
 Venice be.PRS.3SG few populated-F.SG
 'Venice has a small population'.

C. 威尼斯 人(口) 不多。
 Wēinísī rén(kǒu) bù duō
 Venice people/population NEG many

21. (S 4)

I. La Cina è il paes-e più popolos-o
 the.F.SG China be.PRS.3SG the.M.SG country-SG most populous-M.SG
 al mondo.
 in.the.M.SG world
 'China is the most populous country in the world'.

C. 中国 是 世界上 人口 最多的 国家。
 Zhōngguó shì shìjiè-shàng rénkǒu zuìduō de guójiā
 China be world-on REL [population most many SP] country

Sentences 1 and 2 (18-19) present a [NP1 *have* NP2] pattern, while sentence 3 (20) presents a [NP1+*adjectival predicate*] structure, whereby the predicate lacks an equivalent adjectival counterpart in Chinese, as discussed in section 3.2. Sentence 4 (21), finally, requires the same *adjectival predicate* to be translated with a double-nominative construction embedded in a relative clause.

4.3 Data Collection and Participants

The test was submitted to three cohorts of Italian L1 learners of Chinese with different proficiency levels – and a focus on lower levels for the reasons discussed above, for a total of 132 participants. Group A is the group with the lowest proficiency level: it comprises 30 students enrolled in the 2nd year of the BA degree in Languages and Cultures for Tourism and International Commerce, University of Verona. In their first year, students received 3 hours (grammar) + 3 hours (conversation) of lessons per week in both semesters; 5 of them had studied Chinese before. Group B has a slightly higher level of proficiency: it comprises 54 students enrolled in the 2nd year of the BA degree in Foreign Languages and Literatures and Languages, Markets and Cultures of Asia and Mediterranean Africa, University of Bologna. In their first year, students received 3 hours (grammar) + 4,5 hours (conversation) of lessons per week in both semesters; 4 of them had studied Chinese before, and 8 of them had spent a few weeks in China. Students in Group C are the most advanced: the group comprises 49 students enrolled in the 1st year of the MA degree course in Editorial Interpreting and Translation at the University of Venice,

Italy. 48 of them hold a bachelor's degree in Chinese or related fields from 12 different Universities, hence they constitute an interesting and diverse sample, representative of BA-level Italian L1 graduates majored in Chinese. One student is a Chinese native speaker who got his MA from the Chengdu Institute of Sichuan International Studies University in China, and is one of the members of the control group, as discussed in section 4.2. The test was submitted at the beginning of the semester, to avoid interference with contents and knowledge shared in the upcoming teaching unit.

5 Results. Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

5.1 Quantitative Analysis

The following tables show rates and percentages of error types grouped according to the three students' cohorts. Specifically, figures indicate how many times each sentence was translated using the indicated form:

I. Group A: students' translations

	Double- nom.	%	有 structure	%	的 structure	%	other	%	no answer	%	total
S1 Venezia è poco popolosa	1	3.33%	8	26.67%	0	0.00%	7	23.33%	14	46.67%	30
S2 La Cina è il paese più popoloso al mondo	1	3.33%	1	3.33%	0	0.00%	5	16.67%	23	76.67%	30
S3 Il mio ragazzo ha un buon carattere	0	0.00%	11	36.67%	3	10.00%	4	13.33%	12	40.00%	30
S4 Mia mamma non ha una buona vista	0	0.00%	17	56.67%	4	13.33%	2	6.67%	7	23.33%	30

II. Group B: students' translations

	Double-nom.	%	有 structure	%	的 structure	%	other	%	no answer	%	total
S1 Venezia è poco popolosa	5	9.26%	5	9.26%	0	0.00%	23	42.59%	21	38.89%	54
S2 La Cina è il paese più popoloso al mondo	1	1.85%	0	0.00%	3	5.56%	25	46.30%	25	46.30%	54
S3 Il mio ragazzo ha un buon carattere	1	1.85%	18	33.33%	18	33.33%	7	12.96%	10	18.52%	54
S4 Mia mamma non ha una buona vista	0	0.00%	29	53.70%	18	33.33%	2	3.70%	5	9.26%	54

III. Group C: students' translations

	Double-nom.	%	有 structure	%	的 structure	%	other	%	no answer	%	total
S1 Venezia è poco popolosa	11	22.92%	7	14.58%	21	43.75%	7	14.58%	2	4.17%	48
S2 La Cina è il paese più popoloso al mondo	3	6.25%	9	18.75%	5	10.42%	24	50.00%	7	14.58%	48
S3 Il mio ragazzo ha un buon carattere	1	2.08%	7	14.58%	36	75.00%	4	8.33%	0	0.00%	48
S4 Mia mamma non ha una buona vista	1	2.08%	6	12.50%	41	85.42%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	48

The tables below, on the other hand, gather data from different learners' cohorts for the same sentence. Again, figures indicate how many times each sentence was translated using the indicated form:

IV. First sentence: usage rate for each form

S1 Venezia è poco popolosa	Double-nom.	%	有 structure	%	的 structure	%	other	%	no answer	%	total
Group A	1	3.33%	8	26.67%	0	0.00%	7	23.33%	14	46.67%	30
Group B	5	9.26%	5	9.26%	0	0.00%	23	42.59%	21	38.89%	54
Group C	11	22.92%	7	14.58%	21	43.75%	7	14.58%	2	4.17%	48

V. Second sentence: usage rate for each form

S2 La Cina è il paese più popoloso al mondo	Double-nom.	%	有 structure	%	的 structure	%	other	%	no answer	%	total
Group A	1	3.33%	1	3.33%	0	0.00%	5	16.67%	23	76.67%	30
Group B	1	1.85%	0	0.00%	3	5.56%	25	46.30%	25	46.30%	54
Group C	3	6.25%	9	18.75%	5	10.42%	24	50.00%	7	14.58%	48

VI. Third sentence: usage rate for each form

S3 Il mio ragazzo ha un buon carattere	Double-nom.	%	有 structure	%	的 structure	%	other	%	no answer	%	total
Group A	0	0.00%	11	36.67%	3	10.00%	4	13.33%	12	40.00%	30
Group B	1	1.85%	18	33.33%	18	33.33%	7	12.96%	10	18.52%	54
Group C	1	2.08%	7	14.58%	36	75.00%	4	8.33%	0	0.00%	48

VII. Fourth sentence: usage rate for each form

S4 Mia mamma non ha una buona vista	Double-nom.	%	有 structure	%	的 structure	%	other	%	no answer	%	total
Group A	0	0.00%	17	56.67%	4	13.33%	2	6.67%	7	23.33%	30
Group B	0	0.00%	29	53.70%	18	33.33%	2	3.70%	5	9.26%	54
Group C	1	2.08%	6	12.50%	41	85.42%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	48

The Chi-Square result shows that there is a significant difference between the answers given within the three groups ($\chi^2(8) = 153.77$, $p = 3.19E-27 < 0.05$). Also, the Chi-Square calculated on double-nominatives vs. other forms show significant difference ($\chi^2(2) = 9.09$, $p = 0.01 < 0.05$). This suggests that there is a significant difference of performance between the three groups. From the above data, an overall reorganization of the balance of means employed by students can be observed: group A tends to use the 有 structure (i.e., the NP *have* NP2 pattern) the most, while the 的 structure (*of* specification pattern) is increasingly preferred in all sentences as the proficiency level rises (e.g., 10% vs. 75% in the third sentence and 13.33% vs. 85.2% in sentence 4). Nonetheless, the double-nominative structure is used rarely at all proficiency levels, although higher rates are observable in Group C.

5.2 Qualitative Analysis

In what follows, examples of the most relevant errors committed by students are reported.¹¹ Glosses are provided to illustrate different patterns and errors. Errors are presented with respect to the construction (form) they display, namely [NP1 *have* NP2], [NP1 的 NP2], or [NP1 *adjectival predicate*], and other types. This helps provide a general overview of the means learners use in their interlanguage as well as the differences across proficiency levels (learners groups are specified for each sentence).

Topic-Related Errors

Sentences below contain the 的 construction: while correct, the topicality of NP1 ('boyfriend', 'mum', and 'Venice', respectively) is not preserved, as discussed above:

- | | | | |
|-----|---|--|---------------------|
| 22. | 我的男朋友的脾气
<i>wǒ de nán péng you de pí qì</i>
1SG SP boyfriend SP character (TOP) | 很好。
<i>hěn hǎo</i>
very good | Group C |
| 23. | 我妈妈的眼睛
<i>wǒ mā ma de yǎn jīng</i>
1SG mum SP eye (TOP) | 不很好。
<i>bù hěn hǎo</i>
NEG very good | Group A |
| 24. | 住在威尼斯的人
<i>zhù zài Wēi ní sī de rén</i>
live at Venice SP people (TOP) | 不多。
<i>bù duō</i>
NEG too many | Group B and Group C |

Focus-Related Errors

In sentences below, the student failed to place the focal element (the adjective) at the end of the sentence, either because using the 有 construction (25-26), or the bare adjectival predicate (27-28):

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|---|---------|
| 25. | 我男朋友
<i>wǒ nán péng you</i>
1SG boyfriend | 有
<i>yǒu</i>
have | 一个很好的脾气。
<i>yī ge hěn hǎo de pí qì</i>
one CLF very good SP character | Group A |
| 26. | 在威尼斯
<i>zài Wēi ní sī</i>
at Venice | 没有
<i>méi yǒu</i>
NEG have | 很多人。
<i>hěn duō rén</i>
very many people | Group C |

¹¹ For more examples, see the appendix.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---------|
| 27. | 我的男朋友
wǒ de nán péng you
1SG SP boyfriend | 很好脾气。
hěn hǎo pí qi
very good character | Group C |
| 28. | 我妈妈
wǒ mā ma
1SG mum | 不好眼睛。
bù hǎo yǎn jing
NEG good eye | Group A |

Use of adjectival forms. In the following examples, students tried somehow to render the Italian adjectival form ‘popoloso’ with a Chinese adjective. In (29) the noun 脾气 *píqi* is wrongly used as if it were an adjective; in (30), the student assumes there is an adjectival translation of ‘popoloso’ that (s)he does not know/remember; in (31-32), students used the adjective 稠密 *chóumì* ‘densely populated’ (see discussion above).

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|------------------|
| 29. | 我的男朋友
wǒ de nán péng you
1sg SP boyfriend | 很 脾气。
hěn pí qi
very character | Group A |
| 30. | 威尼斯
Wēi ní sī
Venice | 不太‘popoloso’。
bú tài
NEG too | Group A, Group C |
| 31. | 威尼斯
Wēi ní sī
Venice | 不太 人口 稠密。
bú tài rén kǒu chóu mì
NEG too population dense | Group C |
| 32. | 威尼斯
Wēi ní sī
Venice | 很 稠密。
hěn chóu mì
very dense | Group C |

Other Errors

Finally, the analysis has highlighted other types of errors. Sentence (32) seems to treat *hǎo píqi* as an adjective – just as in (27-29) above – that is placed in a 是……的 *shì...de* construction (maybe to provide emphasis or because it resembles an individual-level predicate that requires the copula *shì*, ‘be’, just like adjectives such as 方 *fāng*, ‘squared’):

- | | | | |
|-----|---|--|---------|
| 33. | 我男朋友
wǒ nán péng you
1SG SP boyfriend | 是好脾气的。
shì hǎo pí qi de
be good character SP | Group C |
|-----|---|--|---------|

6 Discussion

Data presented above tend to confirm all the three hypotheses of this study. Production rate of double-nominative constructions is low across all sentence types (both in simple and in more complex sentences) and across all proficiency levels, including MA students. The high percentage (22,9%) of double-nominative constructions for sentence 3 ('Venice has a small population') in group C may be related to the successful acquisition of the formulaic expression 中国人口很多, which students have very likely already been exposed to at that level of proficiency. This hypothesis is preferred to that of a successful acquisition of the double-nominative construction in that double nominative percentages are low for the same students in simpler sentences like sentence 1 and 2. The [NP1 *have* NP2] pattern is used across all sentence types and proficiency levels, hence it is one of the errors students tend to stick with throughout their learning process, although it decreases over time through interlanguage development. It is worth noticing that L1 transfer is present not only with respect to the [NP1 *have* NP2] pattern, but also in the word-for-word translation of the Italian indefinite article 'un' (English 'a'), that is expressed by the numeral classifier string 一个 in a number of sentences, e.g. (25). The [NP1 的 NP2] pattern is also very widespread and used across all sentence types and proficiency levels. Errors of this type do not compromise the intelligibility of the sentence, nor do they 'feel wrong' in isolation. Maybe this is the reason why the usage rate of this structure increases across all sentence types from lower to higher proficiency levels. The [NP *adjectival predicate*] pattern is used mostly for sentence 4, which confirms the role of L1 influence and word-for-word translation: a significant number of students left the adjective in its Italian form 'popoloso', others used semantically wrong adjectives, e.g., *chóumì*, 'dense'. In (59) a synonym of dense, i.e., 挤 *jǐ*, 'crowded', is used. However, as said earlier, the truth value of the sentence is compromised, as China is not the most densely populated/crowded country in the world. Overall, a both intrusive and inhibitive transfer connected to L1 forms can be hypothesized to cause the low rates of production of the target form, i.e., double nominatives.

7 Conclusions

While the double-subject construction may appear as a simple and straightforward pattern, the present study shows that it is in fact a rather difficult construction to acquire for Italian L1 learners. Rather, students tend to use patterns they are used to in their L1 (or other L2s, such as English). These include the [NP1 *have* NP2], [NP1 的

NP2] or [NP1 *adjectival predicate*] patterns, among other types, thus confirming the hypotheses of this study, and namely:

- a. Italian L1 students are not familiar with double-nominative construction and rarely produce it.
- b. L1-L2 differences lead to negative (intrusive and inhibitive) L1 transfer: learners, especially beginner level ones, prefer structures that are similar to those of their L1. Beginner-level students prefer the [NP1 *have* NP2], while, in later stages, the [NP1 的 NP2] pattern is preferred.
- c. Students often fail to perceive and adhere to Chinese topic-first and end-focus patterns. Moreover, topic-first related word order error rates may tend to be high also among advanced-level students.

Similar results were obtained in Jiang (2009): English L1 students also find it difficult to naturally produce this pattern, along with other topic-comment related constructions. Often, L2 word order errors are the result of learners relying on carrying out word-for-word translations of native language surface structures when producing written or spoken utterances in their target L2 performance. This is what seems to be happening in most cases. L1 word order features provide one of the most important sources for adult learners' L2 word order errors. Hence, topic-comment related constructions such as double nominatives need to be introduced to students, not only for theoretical accuracy, but also to clarify some structural and functional peculiarities of Chinese sentences as compared to, e.g., English and Italian. In particular, the functions of double nominatives (i.e., allowing focal elements to occur sentence-finally and topical ones to occur as the first constituent in the sentence) should be introduced when explaining this pattern. Examples of the pattern should be explained and compared to forms (translations) in students' mother tongues, explaining similarities and differences, as well as why a form is preferred over the other.

List of abbreviations

C.	Chinese
CSC	Chinese as a Second Language
CFC	Chinese as a Foreign Language
CLF	Classifier
E.	English
F	Feminine
I.	Italian
M	Masculine
NEG	Negation
NP	Noun Phrase
PE	Predicative Element
PRS	Present
REL	Relative clause
SG	Singular
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SP	Structural Particle
TL	Target Language
TOP	Topic Marker

Appendix

This section includes examples of the most relevant errors committed by students.

Correct Constructions (with Minor Errors)

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------------|---|--|---------|
| 34. | 威尼斯人
<i>Wēinísī rén</i>
Venice people | 住
<i>zhù</i>
live | 不太多。
<i>bú tài duō</i>
NEG too many | Group A | |
| 35. | 中国人民
<i>Zhōngguó rén</i>
China population | 是
<i>shì</i>
be | 世界上
<i>shìjiè shang</i>
world on | 最大的。
<i>zuìdà de</i>
most big SP | Group A |

Correct Meaning But Different Construction

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--|---------|
| 36. | 威尼斯
<i>Wēinísī</i>
Venice | 住
<i>zhù</i>
live | 不多人。
<i>bù duō rén</i>
NEG many people | Group B |
|-----|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--|---------|

NP1 有 NP2 Pattern

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|--|---------|
| 37. | 我男朋友
<i>wǒ nán péngyou</i>
1SG boyfriend | 有
<i>yǒu</i>
have | 一个很好的脾气。
<i>yī ge hěn hǎo de píqi</i>
one CLF very good SP character | Group A |
| 38. | 我的男朋友
<i>wǒ de nán péngyou</i>
1SG SP boyfriend | 有
<i>yǒu</i>
have | 一个好的脾气。
<i>yī ge hǎo de píqi</i>
one CLF good SP character | Group B |
| 39. | 我的妈妈
<i>wǒ de māma</i>
1SG SP mum | 没有
<i>méi yǒu</i>
NEG have | 一个好的眼睛。
<i>yī ge hǎo de yǎnjing</i>
one CLF good SP eye | Group C |
| 40. | 我妈妈
<i>wǒ māma</i>
1SG mum | 没有
<i>méi yǒu</i>
NEG have | 一个很好的眼睛。
<i>yī ge hěn hǎo de yǎnjing</i>
one CLF very good SP eye | Group A |
| 41. | 我的妈妈
<i>wǒ de māma</i>
1SG SP mum | 没有
<i>méi yǒu</i>
NEG have | 一个好的眼睛。
<i>yī ge hǎo de yǎnjing</i>
one CLF good SP eye | Group C |
| 42. | 在威尼斯
<i>zài Wēinísī</i>
at Venice | 有
<i>yǒu</i>
have | 很少人。
<i>hěn shǎo rén</i>
very few people | Group B |

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--|--|--|---|---------|
| 43. | 在威尼斯
<i>zài Wēinísī</i>
at Venice | 没有
<i>méi yǒu</i>
NEG have | 很多人。
<i>hěn duō rén</i>
very many people | Group C | |
| 44. | 威尼斯
<i>Wēinísī</i>
Venice | 没有
<i>méi yǒu</i>
NEG have | 很多人
<i>hěn duō rén</i>
very many people | Group A | |
| 45. | 世界上,
<i>shìjiè shang</i>
at world on | 中国
<i>Zhōngguó</i>
China | 是
<i>shì</i>
be | 最有人口的国。
<i>zuì yǒu rénkǒu de guó</i>
most have population SP country(?) | Group B |
| 46. | 中国
<i>Zhōngguó</i>
China | 在世界上
<i>zài shìjiè shang</i>
at world on | 是
<i>shì</i>
be | 最有人的国家。
<i>zuì yǒu rén de guójiā</i>
most have people SP country | Group C |
| 47. | 中国
<i>Zhōngguó</i>
China | 是
<i>shì</i>
be | 世界上
<i>shìjiè shang</i>
at world on | 最有人的国家。
<i>zuì yǒu rén de guójiā.</i>
most have people SP country | Group C |

NP1 的 NP2 Pattern (Wrong Topical Element)

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---------|
| 48. | 我的男朋友的脾气
<i>wǒ de nán péngyou de píqì</i>
1SG SP boyfriend SP character | 很好
<i>hěn hǎo</i>
very good | Group C | | |
| 49. | 我妈妈的眼睛
<i>wǒ māma de yǎnjīng</i>
1SG mum SP eye | 不很好。
<i>bù hěn hǎo</i>
NEG very good | Group A | | |
| 50. | 我妈妈的眼睛
<i>wǒ māma de yǎnjīng</i>
1SG mum SP eye | 很差。
<i>hěn chà</i>
very bad | Group C | | |
| 51. | 住在威尼斯的人
<i>zhù zài Wēinísī de rén</i>
live at Venice SP people | 不多。
<i>bù duō</i>
NEG too many | Group B and Group C | | |
| 52. | 中国的人口
<i>Zhōngguó de rénkǒu</i>
China SP population | 是
<i>shì</i>
be | 世界上
<i>shìjiè shang</i>
at world on | 最多的。
<i>zuì duō de</i>
most many SP | Group C |
| 53. | 世界上
<i>shìjiè shàng</i>
at world on | 中国的人口
<i>Zhōngguó de rénkǒu</i>
China SP population | 最大
<i>zuì dà</i>
most big | Group C | |

Adjectival Pattern

54. 我的男朋友 很 脾气。 Group A
wǒ de nán péng you hěn pí qi
 1SG SP boyfriend very character
55. 威尼斯 不太‘popoloso’ Group A, Group C
Wēi ní sī bú tài
 Venice NEG too ‘populous’
56. Venezia 很少/有一点... (no adjective specified) Group B
Venezia hěn shǎo/yǒu yí diǎn...
 Venice very few/a bit ...
57. 威尼斯 不太 人口稠密。 Group C
Wēi ní sī bú tài rén kǒu chóu mì
 Venice NEG too population dense
58. 威尼斯 很 稠密。 Group C
Wēi ní sī hěn chóu mì
 Venice very dense
59. 中国 是 世界 最挤的国家。 Group C
Zhōng guó shì shì jiè zuì jǐ de guó jiā
 China be world most crowded SP country

Other

60. 我男朋友 是好脾气的。 Group C
wǒ nán péng you shì hǎo pí qi de
 1SG SP boyfriend be good character SP
61. 我的男朋友 好 脾气。 Group A
wǒ de nán péng you hǎo pí qi
 1SG SP boyfriend good character
62. 我的男朋友 很好的脾气 Group A
wǒ de nán péng you hěn hǎo de pí qi
 1SG SP boyfriend very good SP character
63. 我的男朋友 很好脾气。 Group C
wǒ de nán péng you hěn hǎo pí qi
 1SG SP boyfriend very good character
64. 我妈妈 不 好眼睛 Group A
wǒ mā ma bù hǎo yǎn jing
 1SG mum NEG good eye

65.	中国 Zhōngguó China	是 shì be	世界上 shìjiè shàng world on	最多人的国家。 zuì duō rén de guójiā most many people SP country	Group C
66.	中国 Zhōngguó China	是 shì be	世界 shìjiè world	最多人口的 zuì duō rénkǒu de most many population SP	Group C
67.	中国 Zhōngguó China	在世界上 zài shìjiè shàng at world on	是最人口稠密国家。 shì zuì rénkǒu chóumì guójiā be most population dense country	Group C	

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Etymological Elaboration in *Chengyu* 成语 Teaching The Role of Opacity, Type of Instruction, and Competence Level

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Abstract As a sub-type of Chinese idioms, *chengyu* 成语 play an important role in Chinese teaching. This study tested the effectiveness of etymological elaboration in relation to the type of instruction (direct or indirect), the degree of transparency of the *chengyu*, and the participants' proficiency level. 48 post-elementary and 53 pre-intermediate learners were divided into three groups, one control and two experimental groups. The experimental groups attended to a 30-minute treatment, then a post-test was submitted to all the participants. Statistical and qualitative analysis revealed that indirect instruction was significantly more effective than direct instruction, independently from the participants' competence level, and that opaque *chengyu* were more easily retained than transparent *chengyu*.

Keywords *Chengyu*. Chinese as a Foreign language. Idiom teaching. Etymological elaboration. Chinese idioms. Formulaic sequences.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Literature Review. – 2.1 Defining *Chengyu*. – 2.2 Difficulties in *Chengyu* Learning. – 2.3 The Character-Centred Approach. – 2.4 Etymological Elaboration. – 2.5 Research Questions. – 3 Method. – 3.1 Participants. – 3.2 Design and Procedure. – 4 Analysis. – 4.1 Statistical Analysis. – 4.2 Qualitative Analysis. – 5 Discussion. – 5.1 Effect of Instruction. – 5.2 Effect of the Type of Instruction. – 5.3 Effect of the Degree of Transparency. – 5.4 Effect of Competence Level. – 6 Pedagogical Implications, Limitations, and Conclusions



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1 Introduction

Idioms are defined as multiword expressions consisting minimally of two words, including compound words, non-literal or semi-literal in meaning, and generally rigid in structure (Liu 2008, 23). Under the influence of generative grammar, figurative expressions have long been considered as a marginal component of language and, until recently, idiom teaching has been largely neglected in foreign language teaching (FLT). However, a large body of research provided evidence that building up an adequate repertoire of idioms is a necessity for foreign language (FL) learners of any competence level, especially for improving their communicative and socio-pragmatic competence (Liu 2008, 103-4).

Chengyu 成语 are the most renowned type of Chinese idiomatic expressions and play an important role in Chinese as a foreign language (CFL). In addition to their cultural relevance, many scholars (e.g. Guo 2017; Huang 2011; Shi H. 2007; Shi J. 2008) underlined that *chengyu* are very effective in communication and can help learners convey messages more successfully. Nevertheless, the importance of *chengyu* learning in CFL has been overlooked until recent times, and although the number of studies in this field is constantly increasing, pedagogically-oriented studies on *chengyu* teaching have been primarily descriptive, whereas experimental research is still at an early stage.

This study is an attempt to fill this gap by integrating Chinese scholars' proposals on *chengyu* teaching with the results obtained in experimental intervention studies on FL learners' acquisition of idioms. More precisely, it tests the effectiveness of etymological elaboration, a teaching technique based on the reactivation of the literal meaning of idioms, combined with the character-centred approach to Chinese vocabulary teaching. The ability tested is the active recall of the meaning of the target *chengyu*, and the effectiveness of the considered technique is measured in relation to the following variables: type of instruction (direct or indirect), degree of transparency of the target *chengyu*, and the participants' proficiency level.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Defining *Chengyu*

The issue of the classification of Chinese idiomatic expressions is still debated, and to date there is no definitive agreement among scholars on how to define *chengyu* (see Conti 2019).

Basing on Rosch's Prototype theory and Lakoff's Idealized cognitive models, Hu (2015) proposed a definition of the prototypical *chengyu*. According to the scholar, prototypical *chengyu* are conventional, lexicalized expressions characterized as follows:

- Invariable four-character structure with a bipartite prosody (AABB);
- Unitary, concise meaning with different degrees of semantic opacity;
- Literary origins;
- Formal register;
- Lexemic function,¹ i.e. they are syntactically identifiable as a form class in the lexotactis.

From the semantic point of view, several scholars (e.g. Ni, Yao 1990) identified three types of relationship between the literal and idiomatic meaning of *chengyu*, corresponding to three degrees of transparency.² Transparent *chengyu* are completely compositional, that is, their meaning is obtained by summing up the literal meaning of each component. Semi-transparent *chengyu* are those whose idiomatic meaning is an extension of the literal meaning, that is, their metaphorical meaning can be metaphorically inferred. Lastly, opaque *chengyu* are those which display little or no relationship between their literal and metaphorical meaning.

From the morphosyntactic point of view, the types of relations between the composing characters of the *chengyu* are varied, going from the simple juxtaposition of synonyms or antonyms to more complex structures, such as subject-predicate, predicate-object, predicate-complement, modifier-head, etc. (An 2016).

Lastly, the syntactic behavior of *chengyu* resembles that of single words or phrases, that is, they can function as any other syntactic component. Ni and Yao (1990) observed a correspondence between the morphosyntactic structure of *chengyu* and the syntactic role they can fulfil. Even though the majority of *chengyu* display one or few preferred syntactic functions (Xia 2009), it can be maintained that nominal *chengyu* mostly consist of modifier-noun sequences and can occur as subject or direct object, whereas predicative *chengyu* can be used as predicate, noun or verb modifier, verb complement, etc. As observed by Hu (2015), some *chengyu* are also used independently, functioning as linking words and, following Fernando's (1996) terminology, fulfilling a relational function.

¹ The terminology adopted here is that of Makkai (1978).

² The terminology used in this paragraph is that adopted by Moon (1998) in her description of English idioms.

2.2 Difficulties in *Chengyu* Learning

The acquisition of idioms is no easy task for learners. Since they are figurative expressions that do not generally mean what they literally state, one of the major challenges for learners is comprehension. Liu (2008) classified the factors that affect FL learners' comprehension of idioms into two categories, namely, factors relating to idioms and their use and factors relating to language users. The first category includes frequency of use and degree of semantic and syntactic transparency, and the second includes age, cognitive style, L1, and competence level. The difficulty is further increased by the poor quality of exposure to idioms, which appears to mainly occur in non-interactive situations such as movies or television (Irujo 1986a, 1993). Similar difficulties were also reported by the participants in the survey on *chengyu* learning and teaching conducted by Liu (2013).

A prolific line of research examined the errors committed by CFL learners in *chengyu* use (e.g. Guo 2011; Hong 2003; Li 2011; Shi J. 2008; Shi L. 2008; Zhang 1999; Zhang 2006), finding that most of the errors concerned the form and meaning. Other errors involved the syntactic and pragmatic use, particularly the register. As noticed by many (e.g. Hong 2003; Shi J. 2008; Shi L. 2008), one of the main causes of syntactic errors is that learners fail to recognize the morpho-syntactic structure of the *chengyu*.

Other causes of errors include cultural specificity and interlanguage interference, as well as the current teaching practices and materials. Cui (2008) and Huang (2011), for instance, observed that *chengyu* are underrepresented in the most common teaching syllabi and that the selection itself is not based on principled criteria. This led to a general lack of guidelines for practitioners and textbook editors, corresponding to a high degree of freedom both in the selection of *chengyu* for textbooks and in language teaching practices (Hong 2012; Lao 2009).

Some scholars proposed difficulty scales for the graded selection of *chengyu* for teaching. Based on semantic criteria, Pan (2006) suggested presenting *chengyu* by increasing opacity, under the assumption of transparent *chengyu* being easier to learn than semi-transparent and opaque *chengyu*. Other scales such as Zhang's (2012) are more comprehensive, even though relevant factors such as frequency, syntactic analyzability, lexical complexity, or register are rarely considered.

As for teaching practices, Zhou and Wang (2009) observed that *chengyu* teaching is often limited to a brief explanation of the meaning of the expression or a translation into English, which is likely to lead to the occurrence of negative transfer. Such observations were confirmed in a recent study by Guo (2017), who interviewed 34 CFL practitioners and found that most of them did not consider *chengyu*

as a necessity for learners: even though they recognized the importance of *chengyu*, the respondents considered *chengyu* teaching as a high-effort/low-result activity, limiting themselves to simple explanations with no subsequent practice.

2.3 The Character-Centred Approach

In recent years, an increasing number of studies offered suggestions aimed to overcome learners' difficulties and provide effective instruction in *chengyu* teaching (e.g. Jiang 2012; Pan 2006; Xia 2010; Zhang 2006; Zhou, Wang 2009). However, as already mentioned, the techniques suggested in these studies are rarely supported by empirical evidence.

One of the few examples of quantitative studies on *chengyu* teaching is that conducted by Huang (2017), who investigated the effectiveness of deep-rooted cultural input (DrCI) on the ability of beginners, intermediate, and advanced learners of inferring the meaning of unknown *chengyu*. After a six-week treatment either based on conventional cultural input (CCI) or DrCI and four post-tests, Huang observed that overall DrCI was statistically more effective than CCI, and also assisted learners' retention of cultural information. The study also evidenced a significant impact of DrCI for learners at different proficiency levels, surpassing lack of linguistic knowledge and competence.

Many scholars recommend adopting a character-centred approach in *chengyu* teaching (e.g. Jiang 2012; Yang 2015; Zhang 2013). As reported by Wang (2000), the character-centred approach (*zibenwei* 字本位) was first introduced by Bellassen in his *Méthode d'Initiation à la Langue et à l'Écriture Chinoises*, as opposed to the word-centred approach (*cibenwei* 词本位) for the description and teaching of Chinese vocabulary. Given the word-building properties of Chinese characters, the character-centred approach is considered as particularly beneficial in CFL, as it can help learners broaden their vocabulary size quickly and autonomously (Jia 2001). An empirical study by Zhang et al. (2019) recently confirmed these assumptions, demonstrating that students can spontaneously develop word knowledge through exposure to print materials as long as they have sufficient morphological discrimination knowledge and metalinguistic awareness; therefore, the authors concluded that learners should be explicitly taught to use word-internal information to derive word meanings.

Based on these assumptions, scholars such as Yang (1996) and Zhou and Wang (2009) advocate that the starting point in *chengyu* teaching should be that of clarifying the meaning of *chengyu* at the literal, morphemic level. According to Guo:

[i]t would be a deficit-oriented approach to learn *Chengyu* as unanalysed chunks, without understanding their constituent parts and grammatical functions. (Guo 2017, 84)

This is because, given the deep relationship between the literal and idiomatic meaning and between the morphosyntactic structure and the syntactic use, the analysis based on the character-centred approach is the key for fully mastering *chengyu* (Zhou, Wang 2009). In addition, given the high productivity of numerous morphosyntactic structures, the character-centred approach is also useful to increase the analyzability and predictability of *chengyu* meaning and to enhance learners' autonomy in *chengyu* learning (Xiang 2013).

These assumptions, though not empirically demonstrated, are consistent with Wray's (2000, 2002) hypothesis on formulaic language learning. According to the scholar, learners' and native speakers' mental lexicons have different compositions, in that the former find it difficult to avoid analytic word-by-word processing of the FL/L2 and tend to acquire single-word units instead of ready-made multi-word strings. In order to effectively teach formulaic sequences (including idioms), teachers should satisfy learners' need for analysis and look for a way of accommodating analyticity and formulaicity: the character-centred approach in *chengyu* teaching is apparently fit for this purpose.

2.4 Etymological Elaboration

The meaning of idioms is motivated, that is, its derivation from the literal meaning can be metaphorically explained (Gibbs, Nayak 1991). The research on cognitive metaphors (e.g. Gibbs 1994; Kövecses, Szabó 1996; Lakoff 1993) offered the possibility of presenting idioms in ways that promote insightful learning rather than blind memorization and inspired numerous proposals for teaching techniques that require learners' cognitive engagement with the target forms. Some examples include appraising the phonological or graphemic shape of word and phrases, making cross-cultural comparisons, grouping idioms on metaphorical bases, and more.³

A group of studies explored the mnemonic potential of the imageability of figurative idioms, i.e. idioms that call up mental pictures. The studies conducted by Boers (2001), Boers, Demecheleer, Eyckmans (2004), and Boers, Eyckmans, Stengers (2007) demonstrated the effectiveness of etymological elaboration, a technique which consists in resuscitating the original, literal reading of idioms, and by doing

³ For a review, see Boers, Lindstromberg 2012.

this stimulating learners' rich processing and engagement with the lexical items. In other terms, this technique invites learners to use imagery by asking them to hypothesize about the etymological origin of idioms.

In a first study, Boers (2001) tested etymological elaboration on 54 EFL learners divided into two groups. Both groups were given a handout with ten idioms and the task to explain their meaning. The participants were also given an extra task, which consisted in supplying a possible context in which the idiom could be used for the control group, and supplying a possible origin of the idiom for the experimental group. Two follow-up tasks measured the participants' retention of the form and the meaning of ten idioms, respectively. The comparison of the results was statistically significant, with the experimental group outperforming the control group in both tasks.

In the 2004 and 2007 studies, the scholars implemented the etymological elaboration in a computer software including three types of exercises, a multiple-choice task, asking to select the more plausible origin of the idiom; a comprehension task, asking to select the correct meaning of the idiom; and a fill-in-the-gap task which stimulated meaning recall. In both studies, the tasks were submitted to the participants in different orders. After the analysis of the results, the authors observed that tackling the identify-the-source task prior to the identify-the-meaning task generally led to better recall. In other terms:

students who had been given the opportunity to use etymological information to try and figure out the idiomatic meaning of the expressions seemed more likely to remember the expressions than students who had perhaps resorted to blind guessing. (Boers, Eyckmans, Stengers 2007, 53)

Therefore, etymological elaboration proved particularly effective when an inductive teaching approach based on problem-solving activities was adopted.

2.5 Research Questions

Based on what discussed in the previous sections, etymological elaboration seems particularly suitable for *chengyu* teaching for at least two reasons: 1) the origin of *chengyu* is well documented and their etymology can be tracked down in most cases; 2) the literal interpretation of the idiom meaning satisfies the assumptions of the character-centred approach to *chengyu* teaching. Therefore, the aim of this study is that of applying etymological elaboration to *chengyu* teaching and testing its effectiveness. The analysis of the literal meaning

of the *chengyu* will be carried out adopting the character-centred approach. The research questions for this study are the following:

1. Is etymological elaboration combined with the character-centred approach effective for the comprehension and retention of the target *chengyu* (TC)?
2. Is there any difference between the direct/deductive approach and the indirect/inductive approach?
3. Does semantic transparency affect the participants' comprehension and retention of the target *chengyu*?
4. Do results depend on the participants' competence level?

The study adopts a QUAN + qual post-test only quasi-experimental design, with post-test score as the dependent variable and type of exposure to the input, type of instruction, TC transparency, and participants' competence level as the independent variables.

3 Method

3.1 Participants

The participants in the experiment were 101 Italian second- and third-year bachelor students of Chinese coming from two different institutions, the University of Naples "L'Orientale" and the University of International Studies of Rome - UNINT. In each course year, intact classes were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions (Table 1).

Table 1 Sample composition*

Year	CG	DG	IG	Total
Year 2	12	16	20	48
Year 3	17	16	20	53

*CG = control group; DG = direct group; IG = indirect group.

In order to measure the proficiency level of the participants, the reading part of the Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) levels 2 and 3 (elementary and pre-intermediate) was submitted to a randomly selected sub-sample (88 participants in total) from both institutions. It was then assumed that the measured proficiency levels were representative of the average level of the entire sample. Year 2 satisfactorily completed HSK 2 but did not obtain sufficient scores in HSK 3, whereas year 3 satisfactorily passed both tests. It can thus be concluded that at the time of the test, the participants in the two years

had different proficiency levels, corresponding to HSK level 2 in year 2 and HSK level 3 in year 3.

3.2 Design and Procedure

3.2.1 TC Selection

In order to guarantee learnability and minimize between-item variability, it was established that the selected TCs must satisfy the following criteria:

1. Lexical complexity not exceeding HSK level 2;
2. Structural homogeneity;
3. Presence of both nominal and predicative *chengyu*;
4. Same number of transparent, semi-transparent, and opaque TCs;
5. High frequency and informal register, so that the vocabulary and the communicative settings in which the TCs typically occur are likely to be familiar to the participants.

100 *chengyu* were randomly selected from a cognitive semantics study by Tang and Xu (2010) on the 1.992 most frequent *chengyu* of Modern Chinese and the HSK syllabus, level 6 (Hanban 2010). The frequency, register, and transparency of the selected expressions were determined by means of a questionnaire submitted to 17 native speakers of Chinese (see Conti 2020), whereas the word class was determined by examining the concordances of the CCL Corpus of Peking University.⁴

The final selection consisted in the 6 TCs shown in Table 2.

Table 2 List of the selected TCs*

	Target <i>chengyu</i>	Pinyin	
			Literal translation [idiomatic meaning/rephrasing] (Word class, frequency, register, transparency)
1	大手大脚	<i>Dà shǒu dà jiǎo</i>	Big hand big foot [wasteful] (Predicative, very frequent, very informal, opaque)
2	五颜六色	<i>Wǔ yán liù sè</i>	Five colours six tints [multicoloured] (Nominal, very frequent, very informal, semi-transparent)

⁴ http://ccl.pku.edu.cn:8080/ccl_corpus (2019-10-15).

3	见多识广	<i>Jiàn duō shí guǎng</i> See much vast knowledge [experienced and knowledgeable] (Predicative, very frequent, informal, transparent)
4	说三道四	<i>Shuō sān dào sì</i> Tell three say four [to gossip] (Predicative, very frequent, very informal, semi-transparent)
5	三长两短	<i>Sān cháng liǎng duǎn</i> Three long two short [unexpected misfortune, death] (Nominal, very frequent, very informal, opaque)
6	自言自语	<i>Zì yán zì yǔ</i> Self speak self talk [to talk to oneself] (Predicative, very frequent, informal, transparent)

*The number under the # column refers to the order in which the TCs appeared in the post-test.

3.2.2 Material and Treatment

For the teaching session, a short dialogue composed of two or three turns was created for each TC. The vocabulary and the grammar of the dialogues was maintained within HSK level 2. The turns containing the TCs were retrieved from entries of the CCL Corpus, partially adapted to match the competence level of the participants. The turns not containing the TCs were created *ad hoc*. A native speaker of Chinese reviewed all the dialogues.

The dialogues were then inserted into two PowerPoint slide-show presentations, one for each teaching approach. The contents of the two presentations were the same, and consisted in three parts: 1) a general description of prototypical *chengyu*, including information on their form, origins, and the various relationship between morpho-syntactic structure and word class, and between literal and idiomatic meaning; 2) the dialogues with the TCs in bold; 3) six slides presenting each TC in isolation and providing information on their form, meaning, and syntactic use.

The presentations for the two types of instruction only differed in the order of the contents, following a top-down progression for the direct approach and a bottom-up progression for the indirect approach. As the direct approach proceeds from the general rule to the exemplification of the specific cases (Ellis 2005), in the presentation for the direct group (DG) the contents were ordered as follows: general description of *chengyu* > description of the TCs in isolation > exemplification through dialogues.

On the contrary, in the indirect or discovery approach, learners:

are provided with L2 data that illustrates the form and are asked to work out how the form works from themselves. (Ellis 2005, 717)

Therefore, the presentation for the indirect group (IG) was inverse, going from the data to the general rule. Thus, the order of the contents was the following: Dialogues > description of the TCs in isolation > general discussion on the characteristics of *chengyu*.

The teaching sessions for the treatment were conducted during regular class hours by the author of the study. The duration of each session was approximately 30 minutes. In the teaching session for the DG, the contents of the PowerPoint were entirely presented by the researcher without interaction with the participants. Special stress was laid on the metaphorically motivated relationship between the literal and the idiomatic meanings, and between the morphosyntactic structure and the word class.

In the teaching session for the IG, the participants were randomly divided into small groups. After showing each dialogue, they were given one minute for discussion. The request was to infer the meaning and word class of each TC based on word-internal (morphemes) and word-external elements (syntactic and contextual cues). The groups were also asked to provide a possible motivation to the relationship between the literal and idiomatic meaning. The slide describing the TC in isolation was then showed to the groups in order to provide feedback, either confirming or correcting their inferences. The teaching session ended with the discussion on the general characteristics of *chengyu*.

3.2.3 Post-Test

The post-test was administered one week after the treatment. The duration was approximately 20 minutes. The TCs in the test were randomly distributed (see Table 2). The test consisted of six items corresponding to the six TCs. Each item comprised four tasks: two translation tasks (t1 and t3) and two multiple-choice tasks (t2 and t4). In t1, the participants had to provide a literal translation for each character composing the TC. In t2, they had to indicate if the TC was transparent, semi-transparent or opaque. In t3, they had to provide an explanation of the figurative meaning or a rephrasing of the literal meaning in the case of transparent TCs. Lastly, in t4, they had to indicate the word class of the TC and to provide a motivation for their choice.

In t1, each correctly translated character was assigned 1 point. The translations in t3 were rated 0 points for missing or totally inaccurate translations, 1 point for partially accurate translations, and 2 points for accurate translations. The multiple-choice items (t2 and t4) were assigned 1 point for correct answers and 0 points for missing or wrong answers. No score was assigned to the motivations in t4.

Two independent raters evaluated the tests. Two-way intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) was calculated for inter-rater agreement

estimate. The results suggested a high degree of agreement between the scores assigned by the two raters, ICC = 0,99; 95% CI [0,984; 0,996]; F (100; 20,5) = 336; p = 0,001.

4 Analysis

4.1 Statistical Analysis

The descriptive data of the post-test results are reported in Table 3.

Table 3 Descriptive data for post-test results*

Group	Tot (SD)	TC1 (SD)	TC2 (SD)	TC3 (SD)	TC4 (SD)	TC5 (SD)	TC6 (SD)
2-CG	2,50 (2,8)	0,33 (1,1)	0,00 (0,0)	0,00 (0,0)	0,25 (0,9)	1,92 (2,5)	0,00 (0,0)
2-DG	21,94 (9,4)	6,34 (1,5)	4,72 (2,5)	2,28 (2,8)	4,13 (1,7)	3,44 (2,7)	1,03 (1,5)
2-IG	33,48 (7,8)	6,54 (1,4)	6,50 (2,4)	3,98 (2,8)	5,60 (1,2)	6,20 (1,3)	4,75 (2,4)
3-CG	4,71 (8,4)	1,29 (2,1)	0,76 (1,4)	0,71 (1,4)	0,59 (1,2)	0,88 (1,7)	0,47 (1,3)
3-DG	26,31 (8,4)	6,31 (1,5)	5,06 (2,4)	3,59 (2,3)	4,56 (2,1)	5,06 (1,3)	1,72 (2,3)
3-IG	35,80 (8,6)	7,68 (0,7)	6,68 (2,4)	5,13 (2,0)	5,45 (1,7)	6,75 (1,2)	4,13 (2,5)

*The number preceding the group indicates the year (2-CG = year 2 control group, etc)

Overall, the groups that performed better were the IGs in both years, whereas the scores obtained by the CGs were the lowest in all cases (see also [fig. 1](#)). The TC which obtained the highest scores was TC1, closely followed by TC5, whereas the TCs that obtained the lowest scores were TC3 and TC6.

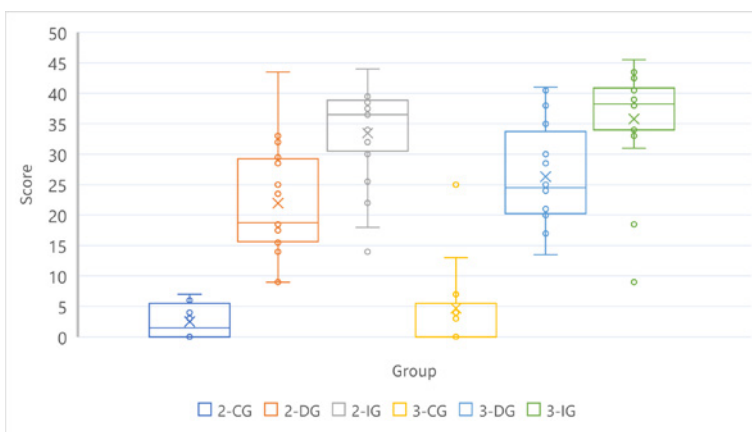


Figure 1 Post-test results divided by group

The effect of the instruction on year-2 groups was measured by means of robust one-way ANOVA.⁵ The results of the omnibus test are statistical: $F(2; 17) = 166,72; p = 0,00 (< 0,05); \xi = 0,82$. This means that, overall, the treatment was effective. The same procedure was followed for year 3. The robust ANOVA test is again significant for $p < 0,05$: $F(2; 17,99) = 237,86; p = 0,00; \xi = 0,83$. Robust post-hoc test confirmed that the difference between the three experimental conditions is significant in both years, with the IGs obtaining the highest scores (Table 4, $p_{crit} = 0,017$).

Table 4 Post-hoc group comparisons

Year	Groups	ψ	95% CI	p	ξ
Year 2	2-CG vs 2-DG	-18,93	[-26,35; -11,50]	0,001*	0,91
	2-CG vs 2-IG	-33,50	[-38,23; -28,76]	0,000*	0,92
	2-DG vs 2-IG	-14,58	[-22,11; -7,04]	0,001*	0,79
Year 3	3-CG vs 3-DG	-23,55	[-31,10; -16,00]	0,001*	0,96
	3-CG vs 3-IG	-35,95	[-40,15; -31,76]	0,000*	0,95
	3-DG vs 3-IG	-12,40	[-19,95; -4,85]	0,001*	0,72

* $p < 0,017$

The better performance of the IGs over the DGs is also evident if the overall results for each TC type (transparent, semi-transparent, or opaque) and each task are considered. As confirmed by the results of the robust independent-sample *t*-tests conducted on the data reported in Table 5, the comparisons between the two groups in both years are always statistical ($p < 0,05$), with strong effect sizes in most cases except one medium effect size in year 2, *t*₂ (Table 6).

Table 5 Descriptive data for overall TC type and sub-item results*

Group	M_{TR} (SD)	M_{STR} (SD)	M_{OP} (SD)	t_1 (SD)	t_2 (SD)	t_3 (SD)	t_4 (SD)
2-DG	3.31 (3.7)	8.84 (3.4)	9.78 (3.6)	14.5 (4.8)	1.63 (1.0)	3.69 (3.7)	2.13 (1.5)
2-IG	8.73 (4.4)	12.1 (2.9)	12.7 (1.7)	19.9 (3.3)	2.15 (0.9)	6.73 (3.3)	4.70 (1.4)
3-DG	5.31 (4.1)	9.63 (3.6)	11.4 (2.5)	16.7 (2.9)	1.44 (1.4)	4.34 (4.6)	3.88 (1.3)
3-IG	9.25 (4.1)	12.1 (3.6)	14.4 (1.8)	19.6 (4.0)	2.90 (1.6)	8.45 (2.8)	4.85 (1.3)

*TR: transparent TCs; STR: semi-transparent TCs; OP: opaque TCs

5 As the data sets of this study rarely meet the assumptions of parametric statistics, and due to the consistent presence of outliers, robust statistics (20% mean-trimmed) was used for the estimate of group difference. All statistical tests were performed in R using the WRS2 package. The reported effect size is the explanatory measure of effect size ξ for non-homogeneous variances. Values of $\xi = 0,10; 0,30$ and $0,50$ correspond to small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively (Mair, Wilcox 2019; Wilcox, Tian 2011).

Table 6 Robust t-test for DG-IG comparison (TC types and sub-items)

Year	TC/task	t	df	p	95% CI	ξ
Year 2	TR	5,42	18,05	0,001*	[-10,06; -4,44]	0,74
	STR	3,33	15,69	0,001*	[-6,30; -1,39]	0,68
	OP	2,72	11,31	0,019*	[-5,48; -0,59]	0,75
	t1	3,82	11,60	0,003*	[-9,45; -2,57]	0,69
	t2	2,59	19,28	0,020*	[-1,32; -0,14]	0,44
	t3	3,54	16,25	0,003*	[-6,88; -1,73]	0,60
	t4	2,72	19,33	0,001*	[-4,18; -2,02]	0,80
	Year 3	TR	4,62	19,83	0,001*	[-7,71; -2,91]
STR		2,59	11,51	0,024*	[-5,52; -0,46]	0,56
OP		4,35	11,99	0,001*	[-5,68; -1,89]	0,67
t1		3,72	17,63	0,002*	[-5,90; -1,63]	0,74
t2		2,42	13,66	0,030*	[-2,87; -0,17]	0,52
t3		3,10	10,69	0,010*	[-9,55; -1,60]	0,63
t4		2,72	13,57	0,020*	[-1,91; -0,22]	0,55
* $p < 0,05$						

Robust repeated measures ANOVA was used to compare within-group results for each TC type. The test was not significant for year-2 and year-3 CGs ($p > 0,05$), suggesting that in these groups semantic transparency did not play any relevant role for the comprehension of the target items. 2-CG: $M_{TR} = 0,00$ (SD = 0,00); $M_{STR} = 0,23$ (SD = 0,87); $M_{OP} = 2,25$ (SD = 2,49); $F(1; 7) = 4,38$; $p = 0,07$. 3-CG: $M_{TR} = 1,77$ (SD = 2,63); $M_{STR} = 1,35$ (SD = 2,60); $M_{OP} = 2,18$ (SD = 3,63); $F(1,08; 10,79) = 0,82$; $p = 0,39$.

In contrast, the outcome of the RM ANOVA was significant for $p < 0,05$ in all the experimental groups. 2-DG: $F(1,92; 17,29) = 39,80$; $p = 0,000$. 2-IG: $F(1,75; 19,25) = 11,21$; $p = 0,001$. 3-DG: $F(2; 18) = 41,98$; $p = 0,000$. 3-IG: $F(1,57; 17,28) = 32,87$; $p = 0,00$. The results of the corresponding post-hoc tests are reported in Table 7.

Table 7 Post-hoc results for RM ANOVA on TC types

Group	Comparisons	ψ	95% CI	p	p_{crit}	ξ
2-DG	TR vs STR	-5,15	[-7,54; -2,76]	0,000*	0,025	0,82
	TR vs OP	-6,40	[-8,22; -4,58]	0,000*	0,017	0,86
	STR vs OP	-1,55	[-3,05; -0,05]	0,014*	0,050	0,17
2-IG	TR vs STR	-3,42	[-5,54; -1,29]	0,000*	0,017	0,68
	TR vs OP	-3,13	[-5,42; -0,83]	0,002*	0,025	0,80
	STR vs OP	-0,17	[-1,66; 1,33]	0,759	0,050	0,03
3-DG	TR vs STR	-3,90	[-6,76; -1,04]	0,003*	0,025	0,69
	TR vs OP	-5,95	[-7,54; -4,36]	0,000*	0,017	0,81
	STR vs OP	-1,50	[-4,08; 1,08]	0,123	0,050	0,22
3-IG	TR vs STR	-2,75	[-4,53; -0,97]	0,001*	0,025	0,65
	TR vs OP	-4,79	[-7,32; -2,26]	0,000*	0,017	0,96
	STR vs OP	-1,71	[-2,96; -0,45]	0,003*	0,050	0,61

* $p < p_{crit}$

Table 7 shows that the difference between transparent and non-transparent TCs is always significant, with transparent TCs obtaining the lowest scores. The difference between semi-transparent and opaque TCs is significant in the 2-DG and the 3-IG, whereas it is not significant in the 2-IG and the 3-DG. In the comparison between semi-transparent and opaque TCs, however, the explanatory measure of effect size is always small except in 3-IG. This suggests that the magnitude of the comparison is significant only in this last case, while it is negligible in the others. The explanatory measure of effect size is large in all the other comparisons.

Lastly, robust two-way ANOVA was computed to investigate how competence level (year), type of instruction (direct or indirect), and the interaction between the two factors affected the post-test total scores. The main effect of year ($F = 2,26$; $p = 0,145$) and the interaction effect between year and type of instruction ($F = 0,30$; $p = 0,59$) on post-test results are negligible ($p > 0,05$). On the contrary, the main effect of the type of instruction is significant, $F = 46,79$; $p = 0,001$ ($< 0,05$). This indicates that the overall results of the post-test did not depend on the competence level, nor that years 2 and 3 were differently affected by the type of instruction received. The only relevant factor that determined the differences in the total score is the type of instruction, with the IGs obtaining better results regardless of the competence levels of the participants.

4.2 Qualitative Analysis

From a qualitative perspective, the two CGs are characterized by the nearly complete absence of responses. Some literal translations were attempted, but the accuracy rate was low.

The two DGs are also characterized by a large number of missing responses. In the translation task (t1), over-generalization errors in the literal translations were very frequent and mostly regarded characters which were already familiar to the participants: an example is *dao* 道 ‘to say’ (TC4), which is part of the compound *zhidao* 知道 ‘to know’ and was erroneously translated as ‘sapere’ (‘to know’). Another relatively frequent type of error consisted in what Richards called “false concepts hypothesized” (Richards 1974, 178), which derive from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. For instance, *liang* 两 ‘two’ (TC5) was translated as ‘quattro’ (‘four’) in six cases (three in year 2 and three in year 3), due to its graphic resemblance with *si* 四 ‘four’.

In t2, there was a clear tendency to indicate the TCs as non-transparent. As a result, the explanations provided in t3 to the idiomatic meanings of the transparent TCs are often metaphorical or ‘proverb-like’. In TC3, for instance, partially accurate explanations like ‘vedere tanto insegna tanto’ (‘seeing much teaches much’) and ‘chi vede molto conosce più cose’ (‘who sees much knows more things’) clearly resemble the form of Italian proverbs.

Another tendency observed in TC5-t3 consisted in only providing the vehicle of the metaphor which motivates the expression (‘the coffin’) instead of explaining its metaphorical meaning (‘unexpected misfortune or death’).⁶

As a last remark, when explaining the metaphorical meaning of TC1, the participants often recurred to equivalent Italian expressions such as ‘avere le mani bucate’ (lit. ‘to have holed hands’) or ‘essere uno spendaccione’ (lit. ‘to be a money-waster’), suggesting a strong effect of L1 transfer.

The responses to t4 are very scarce and the accuracy degree low, especially in 2-DG.

In the IGs, the number of responses was larger than the other groups, and the degree of accuracy was higher. In addition, the occurrence of over-generalization errors was sensibly reduced: in year two, for instance, the critical character *dao* 道 was translated as ‘sapere’ (‘to know’) in only 5 cases out of 14.

⁶ According to the free online encyclopedia *Baidu baike* 百度百科 (<https://baike.baidu.com/item/三长两短>, accessed 2019-10-15), the literal meaning of *san chang liang duan* 三长两短 (Table 2) refers to the wooden boards composing a coffin, excluding the top lid. Though not attested in the other consulted sources, this explanation seemed suitable to activate the mental imagery required by the etymological elaboration.

Like the DGs, the IGs also tended to consider the TCs as non-transparent (t2), even though the degree of accuracy of the explanations provided in t3 was generally higher. Nevertheless, some cases of proverb-like explanations of the transparent TCs are also attested.

Another difference worth noting is that in TC5 only one participant limited the explanation to the vehicle of the metaphor. Most of the remaining responses are either accurate or partially accurate. Some examples are 'essere in fin di vita' ('to be on your deathbed') and 'stare con un piede nella fossa' (lit. 'to have a foot in the grave'). Like the DGs, the participants in the IGs recurred to Italian idioms to explain the meaning of the TC, confirming the general reliance on L1 transfer whenever feasible.

Lastly, the responses to t4 were more numerous than the other groups, and the motivations more accurate. Concepts like 'head of the phrase' and 'syntactic function' were frequently mentioned, suggesting that the benefits of the instruction are also reflected in the participants' metalinguistic knowledge.

5 Discussion

5.1 Effect of Instruction

Both the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the collected data suggest that the performance of the experimental groups was significantly better than the controls. This leads to the conclusion that explicit instruction - either direct or indirect - did have an effect on the comprehension and retention of the TCs.

The high percentage of missing responses in the CG tests confirmed that, as assumed, the TCs were not previously known by the participants, thus validating the results of the test. On the other hand, all the constituent characters were already familiar to the participants: it was thus expected that the CGs would be able to attempt some answers, at least for the literal translations. Presumably, prior knowledge on *chengyu* and their difficulty might have inhibited the participants from attempting any translation of the meanings of the TCs, even though they were already familiar with the single characters. Without the literal meaning, the participants in the CGs did not have any base for activating the comprehension strategies that characterize the heuristic approach to L2 idiom interpretation described by Cooper (1999), nor were they able to infer their meaning or word class.

On the contrary, the participants in the experimental conditions seem to have benefited from the didactic interventions despite the short duration of the teaching sessions and the relatively long distance between the treatment and the post-test.

The treatment was also beneficial for the memorization of the critical characters, and this confirmed the effectiveness of the character-centred approach. Character-by-character analysis not only mitigated the influence of the critical characters over the comprehension of the literal meaning of the TCs, but also helped the participants adjust their previous knowledge accordingly. These results are consistent with those obtained in previous studies on idiom and collocation learning (e.g. Hsu 2010; Kasahara 2011). As demonstrated by Zyzik's (2011) findings, learning idioms with unknown lexical items is not necessarily more difficult, as the extra cognitive step required for learning idioms with unknown constituent parts is minimal and easily overcome during the learning process. In the present study, the required cognitive effort was even more reduced, as the constituent characters were not completely unknown, and the participants only had to readjust their prior knowledge.

5.2 Effect of the Type of Instruction

Despite both the DGs and the IGs overperformed the CGs, the IGs obtained better results both from a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. It can thus be concluded that indirect instruction was more effective than direct instruction.

The inductive approach not only was effective for the retention of the meaning of the target structures, it was also beneficial for metalinguistic awareness, allowing the participants to notice salient structures and to express their metalinguistic knowledge more precisely.

The factor that better explains the performance of the IGs is the higher cognitive effort required in discovery learning. According to Boers, Demecheleer and Eyckmans (2004, 72), it is possible that a problem-solving task requiring students to try and infer the meaning of an idiom via its etymology and then verify (or falsify) their interpretation involves deeper processing than rote learning, and this may be beneficial to retention. These activities allow learners to focus their attention on the salient elements of the input and improve their analytic abilities for the comprehension of the target forms, while stimulating their autonomy and favouring their engagement in the heuristic approach to idiom comprehension (Liu 2008).

The participants in the IGs also benefited from collaborative learning. According to constructivism (Jonassen 1994; Vygotskij 1980), knowledge is the result of active social collaboration and negotiation. In other terms, the interaction with others plays a primary role in the co-construction of meaning from experience. In Vygotskij's terminology, acquisition occurs when learners are placed in their zone of proximal development, defined as the region between what they are capable of doing independently and what they have the potential

to do under the guidance of or in collaboration with peers. In vocabulary learning, negotiation, which involves working out the meaning of a word through discussion, provides all the conditions needed for effective learning, namely, interest, understanding, repetition, deliberate attention, and generative use (Nation 2005, 585). It can thus be hypothesised that working in groups, between-group discussion, and instructor's feedback just provided the IGs with the beneficial conditions discussed so far.

5.3 Effect of the Degree of Transparency

The answer to RQ3 is less straightforward. The results of the RM ANOVA and the post-hoc tests seem to suggest slightly different scenarios in the two years. In brief, the transparent TCs resulted as the most difficult to retrieve in both years and conditions, whereas apparently semi-transparent and opaque TCs did not show any regular pattern in terms of easiness to memorization and retrieval.

These results are in contrast with previous assumptions on idioms' and *chengyu*'s easiness to learn, as the cognitive advantage of non-metaphorical expressions alone did not seem to correspond to a reduced difficulty. A possible explanation is provided by the Levels of Processing and the Dual Coding theories, on which the etymological elaboration is based (Boers, Demecheleer, Eyckmans 2004; Boers, Eyckmans, Stengers 2007). Compared to transparent *chengyu*, non-transparent *chengyu* require more engagement with the linguistic data, as the identification of the metaphoric themes behind them involves a higher degree of cognitive effort (Boers 2001). This satisfies the assumptions of the Levels of Processing theory, according to which the greater the cognitive involvement load, the greater the chances for the retention of linguistic information are (Cermak, Craik 1979). At the same time, according to the Dual Coding theory, verbal information associated with mental imagery leaves more durable traces in the long-term memory (Paivio 1986): as figurative *chengyu* are likely to call up a mental picture, it can be assumed that they have a higher mnemonic potential.

As for semi-transparent TCs, the mixed results might depend on the fact that the evoked imageries are perhaps less vivid than those evoked by opaque TCs and thus less memorable. Similar conclusions have been drawn in several studies on idiom learning, particularly those investigating the effectiveness of this cognitive semantic approach to teaching phrasal and prepositional verbs based on orientational metaphors (Kövecses, Szabó 1996).

Summing up, in instructed conditions, a difficulty scale based on *chengyu* transparency can be hypothesized. At one end of the scale are transparent *chengyu*, which require less cognitive effort and do

not call up any mental imagery, thus leaving feeble mnemonic traces. At the other end are opaque *chengyu*, which evoke vivid images and require deeper processing, resulting in more durable mnemonic traces. Between the two are semi-transparent *chengyu*, which can still benefit from etymological elaboration, even though with mixed results due to their weaker imageability.

Lastly, it cannot be excluded that L1 transfer played an important role, especially on the TC *da shou da jiao* 大手大脚, lit. 'big hand big foot' (Table 2). In fact, the TC and the Italian idiom 'avere le mani bucate' (lit. 'to have holed hands') are based on similar metaphors and share the same communicative function (describing someone who is exceedingly wasteful). This might have constituted an additional aid to the participants, demonstrated by the fact that the Italian idiom occurred very often in the responses to TC1-t3. To date, however, the benefits of L1 transfer in idiom comprehension and learning is yet to be demonstrated, and several studies reported divergent conclusions (Abdullah, Jackson 1998; Bulut, Çelik-Yazici 2004; Irujo 1986b; Taki, Soghady 2013).

5.4 Effect of Competence Level

Concluding, the last RQ asked if the effects of etymological elaboration in *chengyu* teaching vary according to the participants' competence level. Although the test scores obtained by year 3 were generally higher than year 2, the results of the robust two-way ANOVA test clearly suggest that the main effect of year and the combined effect of year and type of instruction are not significant. Etymological elaboration combined to the character-centred approach proved effective for upper-elementary and intermediate learners alike, provided that the selected *chengyu* and the context in which they are presented are adequate to lower-level learners, both from the lexical and the grammatical standpoint. The only factor that distinguishes the participants in the two years is the type of instruction received – direct or indirect.

6 Pedagogical Implications, Limitations, and Conclusions

As observed by Guo:

given the importance of *Chengyu* and the fact that learners at all proficiency levels will almost inevitably be faced with *Chengyu* in any encounter with native Chinese speakers [...] it is beneficial to lay the foundations for *Chengyu* acquisition as early [...] as possible. (Guo 2017, 101)

The present study demonstrated not only that *chengyu* teaching is feasible at earlier stages, but also that, under certain conditions such as adequate lexical and grammatical complexity, lower-level learners can obtain the same benefits as higher-level learners.

The results of this study also contradict previous assumptions concerning the difficulty of *chengyu* by showing that transparent *chengyu* are not necessarily easier than non-transparent ones. If associated with indirect instruction and cognitive-mnemonic techniques such as etymological elaboration, semantic opacity can be an aid to memorization and retrieval and can thus facilitate acquisition.

This study has several limitations, which correspond to a number of interesting issues for future research. First, whether imagery processing is beneficial for the retention of the form of the *chengyu* as well as their meaning was not demonstrated. In fact, this is still an area of debate, and the results obtained in different studies on idiom learning are contrasting (Boers et al. 2009; Szczepaniak, Lew 2011). Second, how to better teach transparent *chengyu* also needs further investigation. Teaching techniques that proved effective for the acquisition of non-idiomatic and non-transparent *formulae* might result in better outcomes (Boers, Lindstromberg 2012). One possibility might be to focus on phonetic regularities such as rhyme, alliteration, or tonal alternation (An 2016). Third, the influence of L1 transfer and *chengyu* morphosyntactic structure surely deserves deeper inquiry. They were only indirectly touched on in this study, but there are good reasons to hypothesize that these aspects might play a relevant role in *chengyu* learning. In particular, some preliminary evidence seems to suggest that L1 transfer may have a negative effect in the interpretation of unknown *chengyu* (Conti 2017). Fourth, the longitudinal effects of the etymological elaboration were not tested. Guo (2008) found that this technique proved effective for the long-term retention of English idioms; however, there is no evidence that this is also the case of *chengyu* learning.

Lastly, according to Liu (2008), a solid grasp on idioms involves a command on all the three key aspects of idiom knowledge, that is, form, meaning, and use. This study only focused on the recall of the meaning of the TCs. Other aspects of *chengyu* knowledge which surely need to be addressed in future studies include production and depth of *chengyu* knowledge, especially for what concerns register, connotation, and use. However, the comprehension of idiom meaning

plays a crucial role in idiom acquisition because a learner needs to understand an idiom before acquiring it. Thus, helping students understand idioms should be the main focus of idiom instruction. (Liu 2008, 126)

Despite its many limitations, this study was still able to demonstrate that etymological elaboration and discovery learning did help learn-

ers establish a form-meaning link for at least some types of *chengyu*, thus paving the way for future acquisition.

List of Abbreviations

(n-)CG	Control group (year n)
(n-)DG	Direct group (year n)
(n-)IG	Indirect group (year n)
95% CI	95% confidence interval
CCI	Conventional cultural input
CFL	Chinese as a foreign language
df	Degree of freedom
DrCI	Deep-rooted cultural input
FL	Foreign language
FLT	Foreign language teaching
HSK	Chinese Proficiency Test
ICC	Intra-class correlation coefficient
L2	Second language
M	Mean score
OP	Opaque
qual	Lower-weight qualitative analysis in a mixed-method design
QUAN	Primarily quantitative analysis in a mixed-method design
RQ	Research question
SD	Standard deviation
STR	Semi-transparent
TC	Target <i>chengyu</i>
tn	Task n
TR	Transparent

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Wreckage, War, Woman. Fragments of a Female Self in Zhang Ailing's *Love* *In a Fallen City* (倾城之恋)

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Abstract This article examines wreckage and war as key elements in Zhang Ailing's novella *Qing cheng zhi lian* 倾城之恋 (Love in a Fallen City) exploring the strategies used by the female protagonist to engage on a *nüxing* 女性 'feminist'-oriented spatial quest for independence in a male-centered world. Analysed from a feminist perspective, these strategies emerge as potentially empowering and based on the idea of conflict/conquest while dealing with man and romance, but they are also constantly threatened by the instability of history and by the lack of any true agency and gender-specific space for women in the 1940s Chinese society and culture. By analysing the floating/stability dichotomy and the spatial configurations of Shanghai and Hong Kong as described in the novella, the author argues Zhang Ailing's depiction of Chinese women while dealing with history, society and the quest for self-affirmation is left in-between wreckage and survival, oppression and feminism, revealing her eccentric otherness as a woman and as a writer with respect to socially committed literature.

Keywords Zhang Ailing. Love in a Fallen City. Wreckage. War. Feminist spatial quest.

Summary 1 Introduction. An Ambivalent Form of Desolation. – 2 From Wreckage to Wreckage. – 3 Conflict and Conquest. Bai Liusu and Her 'War' for Life. – 4 Empty Fragments Floating. Urban Spaces and the Unconnectedness of Woman. – 5 Conclusions. A (Post) Modern View on History.



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1 Introduction. An Ambivalent Form of Desolation

Wreckage and war were the ontological background of all forms of literary creations for Chinese writers of the 1940s. On the one hand, the Sino-Japanese conflict (1937-45) “simply deprived Chinese people of any marginal space or any symbolic choice granting them a viable historical way out” (Dai, Meng 1989b, 203); on the other hand, the actual physical space of the nation came to be organized along “a three-spaced pattern configuration” (204): the Nationalist-controlled areas, the liberated areas and the areas occupied by Japan. This configuration had a profound impact on writers and on their literary creations; in particular, as far as women writers were concerned, while in Nationalist-controlled areas and Communist-liberated areas alike, women authors were forced into neutralizing any potentially gender-specific political standpoint they might have – what we may refer to as a *nüxing* 女性 standpoint¹ – because of the emergence of the all-encompassing ‘manly’ celebration of national resistance against the foreign invaders, women authors working in the territories occupied by Japan paradoxically managed to find a possible woman-centred space of self-expression in “the accidental crevices generated by the language and culture of aggression” (Dai, Meng 1989b, 219). In other words, although they literally lived in prison, somehow these women authors found a way to exert a form of suffocated agency among the splinters of the Chinese nation. Yet, being the 1940s characterized by heightened precariousness and being the Chinese nation reduced to a wrecking space itself, this construction of women’s authorial voice and of a possible *nüxing* self inevitably came to be inscribed “in the debris of history” (Yan 2006),² often emerging as a fragmented female self rather than as a whole.

This was particularly true for Zhang Ailing (Eileen Chang), a woman writer whose overt lack of interest in political concerns condemned her writing to oblivion for thirty years in mainland China

¹ My reference here is to Dai and Meng’s use of the term *nüxing* 女性 as “the rejected and the different”, a politically conscious subject whose critique and subversive analysis on social, historical and cultural constraints against women can emerge as “divergent and even in opposition to” the male modern nation as a group in China from the late-Qing era to 1949 (Dai, Meng 1989a, 29). This non-essentialistic definition of *nüxing* represents a feminist political standpoint echoing a Western poststructuralist definition of ‘woman’ as “hors scène, hors représentation, hors jeu, hors je” and as somebody whose history has to be stopped “pour se laisser prescrire par celle d’un autre: celle de l’homme-père”. It is precisely by reinventing herself “pour éviter le vide” and by creating a “passage entre”, that is through the crevices of culture, matter and history, that ‘woman’ can re-emerge to the surface and finally become a woman-subject (Irigaray 1974, 21, 47, 283, 439 respectively). Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the Author.

² Yan’s definition is inspired by her reading and analysis of Walter Benjamin’s work on modern history.

(but not in Taiwan)³ as the creation of a 'bourgeois' individual. Indeed, "an unapologetic individualism" (Wang 2012, 565) was the most distinctive feature of Zhang's writing, one that seemed to confine her work to a tepid reception also in the West outside the circle of Chinese literature scholars, despite early praise by literary critic C.T. Hsia⁴ and the late 1990s-early 2000s worldwide re-discovery of her work following two film adaptations of two homonymous novellas by Zhang (*Red Rose, White Rose* and *Lust, Caution*, directed by Stanley Kwan and Ang Lee respectively in 1994 and 2007).⁵ Besides, though she has often been praised as a literary genius⁶ and compared to influential Western writers - Henry James, Jane Austen and, quite recently, Alice Munro,⁷ to name just a few - Zhang's solitary isolationism sometimes has been seen by Western or Western-oriented critics and scholars (especially feminist ones) with suspicion. According to Yan Haiping, for example, her apolitical stories of oppressed, seemingly non-triumphant women, are mere products of "an ontological desolation", ultimately resulting in "human bankruptcy" (Yan 2006, 153). In her book analyzing Chinese women writers of the modern era from a feminist perspective, Yan Haiping completely dismisses Zhang Ailing, implying her writing wasn't concerned with women's empowerment - let alone liberation - at all, a view shared by Chinese scholar Wang Tian in her comparison between Zhang Ailing's and Virginia Woolf's visions on life and women (Wang 2014, 35-7). No doubt, trying to analyze Zhang Ailing from a liberating and empowering perspective for women would prove disappointing, given

3 For a discussion on the popularity of Zhang's writings in Taiwan and her influence on Taiwanese *feminine* writers of the 1970s and the 1980s in Taiwan, see Chang 1993, 215-37.

4 "Eileen Chang is not only the best and most important writer in Chinese today; her short stories alone invite valid comparisons with, and in some respect superiority over, the work of serious modern women writers in English: Katherine Mansfield, Katherine Anne Porter, Eudora Welty, and Carson McCullers" (Hsia 1961, 389). As Liu Zai-fu acknowledges, C.T. Hsia "helps Chinese and foreign readers recognize her as a literary genius" (Liu 2009).

5 For additional information on the sudden growing interest for Chang's writing in the West following the film adaptations of her short stories and a revival of popularity towards her work in mainland China, as opposed to the constant interest shown in Hong Kong and Taiwan, see Kam 2012a, 2-3. For a discussion on how literary criticism has changed from the 1980s onwards in mainland China, see also Liu 2009. Karen S. Kingsbury, one of the most important translators of Zhang's work in English, also mentions the 'Chang craze' spreading in Taiwan, Hong Kong and mainland China. See Kingsbury 2007, xiv.

6 After Zhang Ailing's death in 1995, "a veritable mystique has been built around her" in all Chinese-speaking countries, including mainland China, where critics suddenly changed their attitude towards her writing (Lee 1999, 267).

7 Scholar Wang Yuanfei (2004) has devoted her entire MA thesis to the comparison between the two authors.

the pessimistic tone of her writings:⁸ the optimistic vision of many May Fourth-inspired writers was replaced in her work by a profound pessimistic view on the human soul – man's and woman's alike. She had no faith at all in the possibility to change one's own destiny, because for her human beings (and women in particular) were just mean creatures paralyzed inside the *nèi* 内 'innerness' of their petty little lives, with no *wài* 外 'outerness' to run to.⁹ This is why analyzing Zhang Ailing's stories from a Euro-American-centred feminist perspective can be frustrating: her pitiless description of women's weakness and of their material drive, ultimately resulting in no real agency for any of them, inevitably makes the author look irritating to our eyes. Yet denying Zhang's pessimism – with no independence whatsoever granted to women – would not simply mean misinterpreting her writing but also ignore the pain hidden in it. If *huāngliáng* 荒涼 'desolation' was what ultimately prevailed in her writing – as she herself frankly admitted (Chang [1944] 2007a, 1) – it is because she wanted to depict neither heroines nor exceptional beings, but mediocre pawns crushed by destiny.

Yet, her desolation was an ambivalent one. Despite the fact that she did not share the main concerns of Chinese women intellectuals of her time, displaying no belief in woman's ability to improve her destiny, this did not necessarily mean she couldn't see reality as suffocating and oppressive for Chinese women. On the contrary, she did indeed analyze the ways in which woman's displacement within Chinese family and society could reveal her daily struggle for survival, albeit surrounded by a halo of desolation. Yan Haiping's (2006) negative evaluation on Zhang Ailing as a 'non-feminist' writer doesn't

⁸ Hsia defines Zhang Ailing as "a profound pessimist" (Hsia 1961, 414).

⁹ Before the twentieth century, the spatial and ideological organization of patriarchal society in China had always been based on the *nèi* 内/*wài* 外 dichotomy. This imposed a strict separation on the male and female genders in terms of accessibility and movement within and without a specific segment of space: whereas men were endowed with the possibility of moving freely in the vast public (social, political *and* literary) arena of *wài* 'outerness', implying the ideas of power, authority and literary talent as inherently 'male' and visible, women were exclusively confined to the most secret part of the family mansion, the so called *guīfáng* 闺房 'lady's chambers', or 'inner chambers', hidden from sight and constituting *nèi* 'innerness', implying the ideas of domesticity, obedience and disappearance as inherently 'female' and crucial to the functioning of the patriarchal structure of traditional Chinese society. This meant that space was experienced by woman as associated to confinement, self-restraint (including chastity) as her sole virtue and self-effacement as her ideal (or desired) aspiration. Although this space of innerness was used by generations of women as a potential form of empowerment within a patriarchal system denying them any authority in the *wài* arena, its ontological perimeter inevitably coincided with the semantics of prison, as there was no other alternative offered to them, no outerness to aspire to. This lack of any outer space implied that woman merely functioned as a tool within the family order, the very naming of her subjectivity in the Chinese language reduced to a function and a rigid formalized set of correct behaviours (Dai, Meng 1989a, 2-3).

take into account a possible Chinese configuration of feminism as a denunciation of the patriarchal oppression of women within the man-woman transaction, rather than as a search for woman's empowerment at all costs. Actually, in her essay *Tan nüren* 谈女人 (On Women), Zhang Ailing explicitly denounced women's inferior status as caused by men and by socio-cultural circumstances:

Because of their lack of physical strength, since remote ages, women have always been subjugated and dominated by men's control and they have adapted to these circumstances, cultivating the so-called "wifely attitude". [...] If women's weakness is entirely the result of their circumstances, then why is it that modern-times women, who have received the same college education of their male counterparts, often disappoint others by displaying hypersensitive and hot-headed temperaments similar to their grandmothers'? Certainly, century-old habits can't be discarded in just one day; one only needs to wait for the right time to change them... (Zhang 2003e, 61)

Not only does Zhang Ailing complain about women's oppression as caused by men, but she also points out women themselves are often not strong enough to change their fate, as the 'lethargy' of die-hard habits takes hold of them completely. Although Yan assumes feminism is some sort of monolithic universal regardless of any specific historical and ethnical context within a given space-time frame, dismissing Zhang Ailing's attempt at defining (and denouncing) woman's constraints within the enclosure of domesticity simply as anti-feminist tokens of desolation implies we should see this attempt as exclusively essentialist, and thus irrelevant from a supposedly 'authentic' feminist standpoint.

No doubt Zhang Ailing is highly problematic as a woman writer, as she doesn't fit into any clear-cut definition of either what a 'feminist' woman author (or the female characters she creates) should be - fully independent - or what a post-May Fourth Chinese intellectual is supposed to be - leftist. Also, she clearly wished to extricate herself both from the May Fourth-generated *nüxing* signifier and from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-oriented *funü* 妇女 signifier¹⁰ by deliberately using the term *nüren* 女人, namely in *Tan nüren*,

10 During the 1930s, there was a gradual shift from *nüxing* to *funü* as the main signifier referring to 'woman', especially in leftist mainstream literature; this shift was deemed by (male) intellectuals as necessary in order to replace a supposedly 'individualistic' and 'bourgeois' view on woman with a 'collective' one, directly associated to the idea of revolution. Originally signaling the "female member of the patrilineal family", *funü* was deliberately used as a way to de-gender women's literature and eventually turning it into a genderless space, where a generic leftist standpoint would high-

which makes her ambivalence even stronger. The difference in meaning among these signifiers and Zhang's deliberate use of *nüren* was connected to the historical changes China had been going through, especially during the Japanese invasion and in the occupied areas. The new form of precariousness generated by foreign aggression ushered both men and women living in these areas into an age of disillusionment, confused as it was with pain, death and a vague hope of victory (Dai, Meng 1989b, 219). This shattering of all beliefs soon became the only certainty for women writers living in the areas controlled by Japan: they found themselves living in a world where no actual *nüxing* choice seemed possible; consequently, they deliberately wrote about "the lack of any alternative for themselves, and their realization of the impossibility of evading from this situation gave rise to a form of writing characterized by sober, sanguine and lucid self-awareness" (Dai, Meng 1989b, 220). This prison-like ideological standpoint turned women writers' spatial quest from the *nüxing* rebelliousness of the 1920s-1930s into fierce "straightforwardness and ruthlessness" (Dai, Meng 1989b, 221), a quest which, far from displaying mere passivity, showed a true

awareness of society's chauvinistic core [...] [which] wasn't limited to the wish of conveying the resentment and hate they felt about how much they were oppressed, toyed with or reduced to mere commodities. They moved away from this "weak" phase [...] so as to become powerful and wise by taking their rightful position in a man's world as 女人 [*nüren*]. This kind of woman does not cast man aside, but understands him, her own self [...] and the specific details of the love strategies required in the man-woman relationship. (Dai, Meng 1989b, 222)

While for example Ding Ling's heroines of the late 1920s asked for "fair treatment from a sexist society", the women characters created by 1940s women writers imprisoned in the areas occupied by Japan

since they knew this fair treatment was impossible, they thought it better to stand upwards, face the truth and behave accordingly; of course they *had to* behave like 女人 [*nüren*], as they couldn't use other people to fill in the semantic void they had to bear and acknowledge for themselves. (Dai, Meng 1989b, 223)

In other words, writers like Zhang Ailing created female characters who deliberately chose to behave like female versions of men, that is

light the rebirth of the nation and the triumph of the CCP and of the masses together (Dai, Meng 1989a, 28).

as *nüren*, because it was the only strategy left they had to survive in a world ravaged by history where all meaning seemed lost, including what 'woman' and her spatial quest might mean. Yet, if we take Tani Barlow's definition of *nüxing* as a woman displaying "an organic will" of her own (Barlow 2004, 140) despite the world constantly erasing her specificity, we can easily see how the shrewd *nüren* Bai Liusu, the protagonist of Zhang Ailing's story *Qing cheng zhi lian* 倾城之恋 (Love in a Fallen City), shares many traits with Chinese heroines created by the 1920s women writers in her struggle for self-awareness. Furthermore, being Bai Liusu's spatial quest also an indirect questioning of woman's role in Chinese society, *Qing cheng zhi lian* can indeed be interpreted as a *feminist* story from a distinctly Chinese perspective, more specifically from a late-Qing elite woman's perspective and from an author who chose to focus on the stifling limitations the *nei* still caused to women in the 1940s despite social changes, paradoxically in the very year - 1943 - China's unequal treaties were abrogated and the country was internationally granted a "civilized status" despite being invaded by Japan (Duara 2003, 96).

Besides, Zhang Ailing's gender-specific quest, unlike that of many Chinese women writers of the 1930s, wasn't related to "the master narratives of political revolution or salvation" at all, as she chose to explore the "contractual" nature of all human interactions in general focusing on feminine sorrow in particular (Chow 1993, 94-5), thus on what most literary critics and writers considered to be 'individual' matters at the time.¹¹ In many ways, it was precisely in professing a deliberate 'unapologetic individualism' that Zhang revealed her own otherness as a woman and as a writer: in a time when the majority of authors, both female and male *as well as* both communists and nationalists in the Nationalist-controlled areas and the Communist-

11 The *Zhongguo zuoyi zuojia lianmeng* 中国左翼作家联盟 'League of the Left-Wing Writers', which was founded in 1930, changed literature's horizon dramatically, its new focus being the *da zhong zhi shen* 大众之神 'spirit of the masses'. Soon, all discourse came to be structured around a new dichotomy, opposing *xiaowo* 小我 'the small I' to *dawo* 大我 'the big I', the 'individual' to the 'collective', urban intellectuals to the working class/peasantry, and in doing literature "nearly no one could avoid repressing the former as negligible and highlighting the latter as important" (Dai, Meng 1989b, 102). This dichotomy between 'individual' and 'collective' ended up drowning any possible gender-specific focus, so the "ideological shield" (106) that *nüxing* was granted during the May-Fourth period as a signifier of rebellion towards the rule of the father "once again was gradually neutralized by the new ideology created by the League of the Left-wing writers" (108). Consequently, the female gender was granted room *inside* the space politics of national literature only if the woman writer erased her specificity, as many women authors of the 1930s chose to do. Otherwise, she would be forced "outside the father and son's order; she was entitled to criticize but not to overthrow this power structure [so], pushed to the margins of the age [...], she could only lie low under the shadow of the great collective deity and fall behind its radiance, functioning as the difference positioned outside the relational pattern between the great masses and the rule of the father" (109).

controlled areas alike, felt compelled to profess an optimistic drive towards progress and modernity, thus finding purpose in political activism and in politicized literature despite the Japanese invasion (and also because most of them operated *outside* the Japanese-controlled areas), isolationism and detachment came to symbolize a far more troubling form of otherness, because it was at odds with anything else, offering no solution to life's contradictions and sufferings but laying them bare for everyone to see. Like Lu Xun, Zhang chose to focus her attention on the 'disease' and decline of late Qing-generated Chinese society and of the urban elite in particular¹² while simultaneously transcending history depicting "the unhealthy collective unconscious of the Chinese" (Liu 2009).¹³ Unlike Lu Xun, though, Zhang Ailing found no consolation nor any reform-driven mission in literature.¹⁴ Her primary concern in describing the decline of late-Qing middle class values stemmed from her cold acknowledgement of history being on the verge of collapse while she was constantly struggling against the precariousness of life in mid 1930s-late 1940s China. The war with Japan was at the very core of Chinese people's (and writers') existence, but although everyday life was bleak and ravaged, this "time being wrecked" (Zhang cited in Yan 2006, 2) state of mind paradoxically granted her the lucidity to dissect human nature "with an artist's compassionate detachment" (Kingsbury 2007, xiii). As an echo of what was going on in the country as a whole, she dealt with family matters as she was dealing with war matters themselves, depicting a universe characterized by war on all fronts. If 'human bankruptcy' was what ultimately prevailed in most of her writings, as Yan (2006) explicitly states, it was not because Zhang reveled in the desolation and wreckage history was imposing on Chinese people in general and on late Qing-born elite members in particular, but because she wanted to denounce that same bankruptcy as the most poignant element emerging from the ruins of society, family, people, and women too.

12 C.T. Hsia speaks about her work as dealing with "a society in transition [...]" and with "the persistence of the past in the present, the continuity of Chinese modes of behaviour in apparently changing material circumstances" and displaying "a strong historical awareness" (Hsia 1961, 396).

13 Though Liu gives this definition on the collective unconscious only referring to Lu Xun's writings, I believe Chang's ability to create unpassionate portrayals of Chinese men and women as mean at heart makes her own writing a further example of this definition.

14 Although Lu Xun himself lost his 'faith' in the reform-driven mission of literature in the late 1920s.

2 From Wreckage to Wreckage

Zhang Ailing's own life was a constant struggle to emerge and survive from wreckage to wreckage: her family belonged to the once powerful late Qing aristocracy (Yu 2008, 3-4)¹⁵ whose privileged status had crumbled to dust because of China's unstoppable drive towards modernity. When Zhang Ailing was born in 1920 Shanghai, under the child name of Xiao Ying (Yu 2008, 5), there was little left of the glorious past of both her family and of the country as a whole; this preliminary family wreckage echoing national disintegration soon resulted in a violent tension between decadent nostalgia for tradition and thirst for cosmopolitanism, symbolized by her parents' conflicting behaviours. While her refined but reactionary father Zhang Yanzhong devoted his time to debauchery, smoking opium and taking a concubine to live with him, thus embodying all negative aspects of Chinese tradition, by contrast, her liberated *nǚxing* mother Huang Yifan (herself coming from a distinguished family) preferred Western culture and independence, eventually discarding family life from 1924 to 1928 to continue her studies in Europe and temporarily leave the immobility and oppression of Chinese society behind (Yu 2008, 5-11).¹⁶ This duality¹⁷ left its mark on the daughter too, born under the Chinese name of Zhang Ying but later enrolled to the Virgin Mary Missionary School for Girls by her mother under the English name of Eileen Chang, a glamorous name her mother started using in Chinese as well, translating it directly from English (Yu 2008, 14-15). As a child, the girl already experienced life as wreckage through this parental conflict, with her father and mother both consumed by a self-absorbed quest which eventually ravaged familial and personal survival alike. When her mother returned from her travel abroad in 1928 (Yu 2008, 12),¹⁸ living together proved impossible for the couple and they divorced in 1930: again life was shattered to pieces for Ailing and everything had to be built again out of the debris of her parents' relationship. There was no clear-cut solution to this split-

15 Zhang Ailing's paternal grandfather, Zhang Peilun, had married prominent Qing diplomat Li Hongzhang's daughter; consequently, he enjoyed a prestigious career as a government officer. Zhang Ailing's great-grandfather Li Hongzhang "was known to Westerners as the Superintendent of Trade - the chief architect of foreign policy in the late Qing. He was such a highly regarded figure that Queen Victoria made him a Knight of Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order" (Kam 2012a, 3).

16 An authentic rebellious *nǚxing*, Huang Yifan hated the fact that marriage had deprived her of the possibility of cultivating knowledge at a very young age only to bear and rear children, so she decided to leave her family behind for a while.

17 Yu Qing refers to Zhang Yanzhong and Huang Yifan as "two worlds apart, completely incompatible to one another, like fire and water" (Yu 2008, 41).

18 The family moved back to Shanghai after Zhang Yanzhong had lost a prestigious government-related post in Tianjin.

ting of life in two, no simple choosing between “father’s dark, smoky lair; mother’s bright, modern apartment”(Kingsbury 2007, xi) as both parents seemed oblivious of their two children (Yu 2008, 17-18).¹⁹ At first Ailing had no choice but to live with her father, as the parents established he would be the only one entitled to raise the children, while the mother would continue providing for their education (although, finally free from marriage, she would soon leave for Europe one more time). Ailing’s life was once again split in-between her father’s relapse into the dusky cloud of self-destruction and the bright light of education she could enjoy at school (Yu 2008, 18-19). Despite being encouraged to write by her father (Yu 2008, 29), as a young teenager Ailing managed to cultivate her own knowledge only by locking herself up in her room, without gaining any practical knowledge of the outside world. The war with Japan hadn’t broken out yet, but young Ailing already lived as a *neixiang* 内向 ‘introvert’ prisoner, physically and psychologically self-confined to the domesticity of *nei* and strongly influenced by the indolent lethargic atmosphere of the house, devoting her time to studying not to see decay and human bankruptcy taking hold of her father, eventually becoming oblivious of her own decay too. She spent so much time in her room that she “completely forgot the way to the front door of the house”, not even knowing “where the doorbell was” (Yu 2008, 34) but dreaming of going to England once graduated from school (Yu 2008, 38). When her mother came back from her second trip to Europe, in 1936, not only did Ailing find the strength to go to see her, expressing her wish to study abroad, but she also announced her decision to her father and his new wife, both of whom reacted very badly (Yu 2008, 41). When in 1937 Ailing was beaten up by her father and stepmother for speaking up against their opium addiction (Yu 2008, 41-4), everything shattered to pieces again: locked up in her room for six months as a punishment for ‘unfilial behaviour’ and suffering from dysentery-induced hallucinations, at the age of sixteen Ailing nearly died of lack of food and medicines but finally managed to escape from her prison at night, finding momentary shelter in her mother (Yu 2008, 43-5).²⁰ But wreckage reared its ugly head once more: the Japanese invasion of Shanghai had already begun, and despite being free from her father’s decay, her personal survival was still threatened. Had the war been confined to China only, Ailing would have managed to study English literature in the UK, but she was forced to settle for the

19 During this period, Zhang Yanzhong dilapidated all the money he had been left by his own family and by Huang Yifan’s dowry, thus pushing the marriage to its final wreck. The couple had two children, Ailing and her little brother Zhang Zijing.

20 Ailing recounted her house imprisonment in an article written in English for the *Damei wanbao* 大美晚报 (Evening Post).

University of Hong Kong instead, hoping to build life anew there. This experience too was interrupted by yet another Japanese invasion on 8 December 1941, this time in the British colony itself (Yu 2008, 57). Fleeing from wreckage again, Ailing returned to occupied Shanghai, where she enjoyed a brilliant but brief career as a writer. She managed to publish a collection of stories in 1945, finally revisioned with the unpretentious title of *Chuanqi* 傳奇 in 1947, and had an immense success, though history constantly threatened her life until the ultimate wreckage came: when the CCP took hold of the country in 1949, being overtly apolitical and previously married to a man publicly denounced as traitor,²¹ Zhang Ailing was forced to leave Shanghai for Hong Kong first, then for the USA, where she arrived in 1952 never to set foot on Chinese land again (Yu 2008, 170). Her success had been stunning but meteoric and it was soon destroyed, just like any other part of her life had been: once in the USA, Zhang Ailing tried to build up her career again out of the debris of her past, salvaging fragments of existence re-writing her stories and her own self,²² but ultimately achieved only oblivion. She still tried to survive and create her own self out of the multiplied wreckage of her life caught in-between spaces – darkness and light, ruins and survival, desolation and reaffirmation of the self – in a constant echo of the family conflict between the father's Chinese dim lair and the mother's European bright apartment.

Wreckage is also an important element in the stories included in the *Chuanqi* collection, the most celebrated work by Zhang Ailing. These novellas depict life in Shanghai and Hong Kong and focus on characters “defined against [...] a culture in decadence” (Hsia 1961, 397), thus, like Zhang herself, living among the ruins of civilization but hoping to rise from its ashes. All her female characters seem to revolve around a vital question: can woman salvage some possible fragments of identity in a world constantly on the verge of collapse, or collapsed already? The novella *Qing cheng zhi lian*, in particular, explicitly associates the idea of wreckage to the presence of war,

21 Her husband Hu Lancheng 胡兰成, critic and editor in chief of the *Zhonghua ribao* 中华日报 (China Daily) and of the *Nanhua ribao* 南华日报 (Southern China Daily), had served as deputy director of the cultural propaganda department in the puppet government of the Reorganized nationalist regime run by collaborationist Wang Jingwei 汪精卫 and established by the Japanese between 1940 and 1945. As the Japanese officialy surrendered on 25 August 1945, Hu Lancheng escaped first to Japan, then went to Taiwan, where he was offered a post as university professor at the Taiwan Institute of Chinese Culture. The marriage between Hu and Zhang Ailing, though very brief (it only lasted from 1944 to 1947) and constantly kept secret for political reasons, was soon discovered by comrade Xia Yan 夏衍, responsible for the CCP cultural work in Shanghai. This permanently damaged Zhang Ailing's career (Yu 2008, 137, 145, 152, 154, 163).

22 Her final, posthumous work *Xiao Tuanyuan* 小团员 (Little Reunions), is a re-enacting of her own existence and writing combining them in a fragmented whole.

whose main setting is Hong Kong before and during the Japanese attack of 8 December 1941, that same attack that had forced Zhang Ailing to flee the city and its university and go back to occupied Shanghai. Wreckage and war are at the core of this novella, where Hong Kong as a city of ruins collapses all the while Bai Liusu, the female protagonist who left Shanghai in search for stability, tries to cling on to a fragment of life out of the debris of history: all of a sudden, the outside world steps inside narration, apparently wrecking the protagonist's life. But it is precisely in the debris of the city itself and within the wreckage of history that Bai Liusu eventually manages to find a crevice back into her life and hold on to a self-evident fragment of a *nüxing* self in the dichotomy of existence, in-between Shanghai and Hong Kong, China and the West, semi-colonial spaces and colonial ones, stale tradition and glittering modernity, oppression and escape – though this fragmented salvaging of the woman-self may prove to be just an illusion.

Bai Liusu herself is a woman wrecked by destiny when the story starts: she's a 28-year-old divorcee forced to live with her brother's family and with no money of her own – her brother squandered all her dowry after she moved back with her relatives. Her position within the Bai household is determined by her decision to leave a violent husband, his actions giving her enough ground to file for divorce. The rights granted to women by the Guomindang (GMD) Civil Code in terms of divorce were a recent innovation in China,²³ yet these legal changes did not necessarily give any real freedom to women, as their fate was still chained to their family's and to centuries-old oppressive traditions. Zhang explicitly states so through a male family member, Third Master, whose words embody the atavic oppression still stunting Chinese women's growth as individuals in the 1940s:

The law is one thing today and another thing tomorrow. What I'm talking about is the traditional ethics, the three rules and the five constant virtues of Confucianism, and these will never change! Your life belongs to the family, and when you die, your ghost too will belong to the family. (Zhang [1943] 2009, 114)

The only freedom Bai Liusu seems to enjoy is the ability to ferociously snap back at her relatives whenever they verbally attack her. Besides, though the GMD reforms in matters of divorce may well have originated from the need to modernize the family, as a form of com-

23 “The new GMD Civil Code (1929-30) – on the basis that all citizens were equal before the law – accorded women the same divorce rights as men, allowing them to initiate a divorce on ten different grounds (including bigamy, adultery, ill-treatment, incurable disease or mental illness)” (Bailey 2012, 92).

compensation for the government's deliberate destruction of the women's movement during the White Terror campaign of 1927-8 (Bailey 2012, 76-7), traditional elite people in decline were still prone to consider divorce as unsuitable for women and a divorcee family member as a burden, "a jinx" (Zhang [1943] 2009, 114), because divorce could only result in irresponsible disaster, that is in wrecking the foundations of family life and turning the divorcee woman into a wreck herself. After all, while apparently granting new rights to women in terms of marriage, divorce and inheritance, the GMD had simultaneously reinstated traditional feminine virtues through the New Life Movement of 1934-5. In other words, the personal wreckage Bai Liusu has to deal with echoes the wreckage of all Chinese women smashing against their lack of any actual agency within society and family while being granted new institutional rights.²⁴ Disillusioned, sour, yet not prone to passivity nor despair, Bai Liusu can only resort to sarcasm and anger to survive her family in a context more and more characterized by a war-like atmosphere. This cannot last for long, though: as a potentially modern urban woman fighting to escape from a traditional context, she needs a way out of her misery and will do anything she can to accomplish her task.

Ironically, being the microcosmos depicted by Zhang Ailing in her novella characterized by "semitraditional, semicolonial" (Wang 2012, 566) traits, education and manual labour cannot be considered as viable options for a woman; here we won't find any Nora defying and eventually fleeing social and family conventions because life is frozen, leaving the 'rebellious' woman "floating and unconnected" (Zhang [1943] 2009, 117)²⁵ to anything and anyone else: Bai Liusu cannot rely on economic independence in order to break free from her family ties. As relative Mrs. Xu suggests, "looking for a job is the wrong thing to do. But looking for a somebody, that's the right way to proceed" (Zhang [1943] 2009, 116). In order to defeat her family and win the war for her own survival, it is imperative for Bai Liusu to find a husband she can rely on.

What Zhang envisages here, though, is not the building of a possible romantic relationship: despite what the title may suggest, *Qing cheng zhi lian* is not a tale of love, but rather a reversal of love, just

²⁴ Not coincidentally, as Hershatter points out, although in 1936 "a draft constitution gave women the right to vote [...] this provision was not implemented until 1947" - exactly the same year when the *Chuanqi* collection was revised (Hershatter 2007, 94). This meant that Zhang was creating a possible *nüxing* struggle to obtain rights in family and society precisely in the same period in which real women were still being denied actual political rights.

²⁵ Here I opted for Karen Kingsbury's rendering of the second set of characters, *bu luo shi di* 不落地, which she translates as 'unconnected', though they may also suggest the idea of 'lack of fixity' and of 'leaving no trace behind' (Chang 2007b, 120).

as the whole collection of *Chuanqi* stories is a reversal of traditional Tang and Ming tales of the extraordinary.²⁶ Zhang explicitly declared in a famous essay “there are neither war nor revolution in my works” (Zhang [1944] 2003d, 16), yet *Qing cheng zhi lian* eventually proves to be a tale of war indeed, even before any actual bombing breaks into the palace of the story. As it happened in most literary creations by women authors imprisoned in the areas occupied by Japan, Bai Liusu and other female characters created by Zhang Ailing display

an unprecedented clear-headedness and awareness with respect to their literary predecessors. They knew how to assess their unfavourable situation, their position and value in society if compared to man's [...]; they knew they had to choose *whatever means to survive*. [...] Thus, Zhang Ailing's love stories are not about “love” at all; they describe the war between man and woman and their mutual warfare strategies. (Dai, Meng 1989b, 221-2; emphasis added)

For Bai Liusu, finding a new husband involves using elaborate tactics and schemes aimed at conquering a man and his assets, because this is deemed by social and cultural conventions as the sole means of survival for woman, as the only way out of a ravaged family situation and out of her ‘unconnected’ self.

3 Conflict and Conquest. Bai Liusu and Her ‘War’ for Life

Right from the start, Bai Liusu is highly aware of her anomalous position within the family as a divorcee woman, a status which can only cause conflict with the other household members, consequently generating a wish to escape on her part. In planning to do so, she also comes to understand the need for acting completely by herself: “She had no one of the family to turn to: she was on her own” (Zhang [1943] 2009, 120). Yet in a semi-traditional world where hierarchies of any kind are still important to achieve self-preservation, escape from conflict and independence from family ties for a woman can only come at a price, without involving any path to individual independence *per se*. Bai Liusu cannot look for a job to support herself, for she would lose her social status, nor can she use her own personal qual-

²⁶ “The tradition of *chuanqi*, or ‘accounts of the extraordinary’, as a literary genre can be traced back to the Tang dynasty prose *chuanqi* as well as to the popular genre of Ming drama. In the Tang genre in particular, the accounts of extraordinary happenings often involve ghostly figures or legendary heroes and heroines. The Ming *chuanqi* drama deals, among other subjects, with historical romance” (Lee 1999, 288).

ities to her advantage, for she seems to believe she has none.²⁷ Sadly enough, she can only resort to marriage and consequently to reliance on a man to be fully independent. As explained by Wang Tian

In Zhang Ailing's works, women have no awareness whatsoever about their own personal value [...]; a woman whose economic safety did not come from relying on a man was considered to be worthless and eventually loathed and humiliated by the whole society. (Wang 2014, 36)

Having no value, no skills nor money of her own, Bai Liusu soon has to set off on a life journey whose destination is a man's fortune, in order to secure her place in a male-dominated world. This journey is both a physical and a metaphorical one, during which the break from family ties leads Bai Liusu to experience Hong Kong, war and victory over a man's fortunes in the process. All three aspects of her journey originate from her basic quest for a husband as the only way out of her conflict with family members. Her main concern being the desolation and pettiness hidden inside the human soul, the narrator makes it perfectly clear that Bai Liusu's quest has nothing to do with love but rather with self-preservation at all costs; this implies dismantling her previous configuration of life by creating a con-quest strategy and waging war against everything and everyone standing in her way:

She turned on the lamp, moved it towards the mirror and studied her own reflection: not bad, she wasn't that old yet. She had that kind of delicate figure that doesn't show age - her waist permanently thin, her breast still budding like a girl's. Her face, formerly as white as porcelain, now had turned similar to jade - a semi-transparent jade tone tinged with green. Her cheeks, formerly plump, had gradually slendered in time, so that her face, already small, now seemed even smaller and more attractive. Her face was quite narrow, but the space between her eyebrows was quite wide. Her eyes were bright, delicately pretty and seductive. On the balcony, Fourth Master had resumed playing his *huqin* and Liusu couldn't help but tilting her head to one side, in tune with the rising and falling of the melody: her eyes started fluttering, her hands dancing to the music. As she performed while facing the mirror, the *huqin* no longer sounded like a *huqin*, but flutes and strings playing a secret imperial court dance. She took a few steps to the right, then to the left. Her steps seemed to trace the lost rhythm of ancient melodies. Suddenly, she smiled - a secret, malevolent

²⁷ Later on in the story, she openly admits to Fan Liuyuan: "I'm not good at anything, I'm a utterly useless person" (Zhang [1943] 2009, 123).

smile. The music ceased abruptly. Then the *huqin* resumed playing on the outside, but it was telling old and distant tales of filial piety and moral integrity - tales that had nothing to do with her. (Zhang [1943] 2009, 117-18)

In this mirror scene, Bai Liusu is intently engaged in a cynical appraisal of her own image, performing an imaginary courtship dance which could sweep all traditional values away and establish her control over destiny. While watching her reflection, she already seems to be preparing for a strategic battle array, with beauty and physical appearance functioning as a way to free herself from the shackles of family constraints and as possible ammunition to be used against a man and win his assets. The woman smiling her 'secret, malevolent' smile looks more like she's preparing for aggression than for romance, fleeing the past to finally meet the future. In order to do so, she has to transform her 'floating, unconnected' present as a woman with no identity of her own, so that her search for a man may also become a search for her own identity, to make her drifting self become whole.

When destiny accidentally happens to send a man along her way - Fan Liuyuan, a rich playboy educated in England and wishing to settle down after years of debauchery - Bai Liusu initially has no conscious plan of conquering him: he has been chosen as the ideal husband candidate for her stepsister. Yet, as soon as Fan Liuyuan shows more interest in her than on the woman chosen by the family, Bai Liusu realizes she has to use all her weapons to steal him from other women, in a fight over "the prey everyone eyed like greedy tigers" (Zhang [1943] 2009, 122). Her first, casual attempt at catching the man's attention is a reenacting of the performance opposite the mirror, being centred again on dancing as both a form of seduction and as a way to escape from family constraints: Liusu spends quite a lot of time at the dance hall, enjoying three dances with Liuyuan. This behaviour is easily condemned by her relatives as sinful, implying that no respectable woman knows how to dance: though dance halls were very popular symbols of modernity in Shanghai at the time, they couldn't possibly be seen as spaces devoted to legitimate courtship by traditional families like the Bai household. Yet, no matter what the family might think, the 'prey' seems to be interested in Liusu indeed: he secretly arranges a meeting with her in Hong Kong, where he has temporarily settled down. So, accompanied by Mrs. Xu, a close relative of the Bai family, Liusu finally sets off for the British colony, hoping to strengthen her conquest strategy and finally secure her role as a married woman.

For all her triumphant glee over leaving home and her dream of conquering a 'prey', though, Bai Liusu has no idea of how to behave or what to do once arrived in Hong Kong: cast away from her usual

space, she has no moral compass to guide her in her independence-driven decisions. Alone in an “alien” (Lee 1999, 295) place, she is far from being the conqueror she believed she could be, and her idea of dealing with Fan Liuyuan as a prey stolen from ‘greedy tigers’ proves to be a figment of her imagination. Chinese women in the 1940s (more specifically, *nüren*, the terms Zhang uses to define ‘women’ in the story)²⁸ could not be conquerors, the author clearly implies; men were the only ones in control of the situation and the only ones who could dictate their own terms – which is precisely what Fan Liuyuan does throughout their courtship. The only strategy Bai Liusu can resort to, then, is accepting the rules of the game to secure a role for herself and have a chance at winning the ‘war’ against Fan Liuyuan, and possibly conquer his assets. According to Leo Ou-fan Lee, role-playing is not just a token of male rule in the story, but also a key element within Liusu’s strategy of survival and an empowering one too, because it allows her to impersonate an ‘alien’ (read ‘non-traditional’) woman displaying ‘alien’ manners. Yet, like Lee himself admits, this role-playing strategy eventually results in a reversal of roles, with the ‘conqueror’ Liusu feeling more and more like the conquered one: being a returnee man educated in Europe, in his search for the quintessence of traditional Chinese womanhood, Fan Liuyuan regards Liusu “as an exotic Oriental woman under his colonial gaze” (Lee 1999, 295), so that the woman rapidly turns into the colonized space while the man turns into the conquering colonizer. Besides, Fan Liuyuan’s answer to Liusu’s candid confession of her supposed uselessness clearly corroborates his colonial appropriation of Liusu’s traditional Chineseness and womanhood.²⁹ This does not mean Liusu wants to give in easily: she is a natural-born fighter and a very aggressive one too³⁰ and she still believes she can conquer it all – money, marriage, status, and everything else (possibly including a true independent *nüxing* space). Their whole courtship to one another in Hong Kong is described as a sort of sophisticated abstract war, a set of chess moves whose main purpose ultimately seems to be

28 The following comment by the narrator perfectly encapsulates the typical shrewd and sanguine *nüren* mindset of 1940s women living and writing in the areas occupied by Japan: “A woman [*yi ge nüren* 一个女人], no matter how charming she might be, won’t be respected by her own sex if she does not get the love of the opposite sex. So despicable can women [*nürenmen* 女人们] prove to be” (Zhang [1943] 2009, 120).

29 “It’s the useless women [*wuyong de nüren* 无用的女人] who are the most amazing” (Zhang [1943] 2009, 123).

30 Zhang Ailing herself describes the character of Bai Liusu as “a very strong person, decisive and eloquent”, so not as useless as the character herself might claim to be (Zhang [1944] 2003a, 122).

either the fall or the ensnaring of the opponent³¹ within the trap of 'romance': Bai Liusu cautiously treads on this path trying to detect any *faux pas* on the man's part, possibly unveiling his real intentions, i.e. marrying or playing her. Fan Liuyuan's constant teasing her with public displays of intimacy is undermined by private cold manners and overt indifference over the possibility of a life together in the future. This game proves so self-consuming that Bai Liusu finally gives in, first by leaving Hong Kong when all seems lost, then by returning once again to come to terms with the prospect of being a kept woman – that is, by accepting the man's conditions after their interpersonal 'war' has ended, because negotiation has failed and one of them inevitably needs to capitulate. In her unveiling of Chinese women's desperate lack of agency in the semitransitional (and semicolonial) 1940s, Zhang Ailing makes it perfectly clear that Bai Liusu has to be the one to capitulate and eventually be content with anything the rich man suggests, because she has no other choice left: by securing her own financial stability, Liusu at least can finally live in a house all by herself. But when Fan Liuyuan temporarily leaves for England, war and conquest slowly fade away and she suddenly feels deflated and without a purpose, like "a warrior without a battlefield" (Zhang [1943] 2009, 135). Her physical and metaphorical journey seems to have ended, bringing her personal war to a close: in a way, she has 'conquered' her own life leaving family constraints behind by becoming the (probably disreputable) mistress of a rich man; yet, a new reversal of events will bring *actual* war to her door, turning the whole city of Hong Kong into an empty battlefield.

When war comes, on 8 December 1941, Bai Liusu's selfish drive for self-preservation is amplified by history wrecking time and space. The Japanese invade the island and everything falls apart – walls, houses, existence. Curiously, though, Fan Liuyuan reappears: his ship has never left Hong Kong's harbor because of the attack and they are forced to be reunited by war – physical, brutal, collective war, not the abstract and sophisticated dialogical war they used to play together. This radical change in the fabric of reality creates a shift in their interaction; cold strategy and negotiation make way to basic human weakness and fear of loneliness, so they spontaneously seek shelter in one another because there's no one else to turn to and nothing left to do:

in that unstable world, money, property, permanent things – they were all unreliable. The only thing she could rely on was the breath in her lungs, and that person sleeping beside her [...]. He was just

31 "It was like facing a great enemy who would finish you off standing perfectly still" (Zhang [1943] 2009, 129).

a selfish man; she was just a selfish woman. In that age of chaos and disorder, there was no place for those who stood on their own. (Zhang [1943] 2009, 139)

Their unexpected reconciliation in the city wrecked by war functions as a desperate, selfish clinging to one another in a crumbling world. And perhaps it's precisely because of these exceptional circumstances – the separation between them abruptly interrupted by actual war and their hungry embracing this sudden reunification – that Fan Liuyuan decides to officially organize a marriage, finally making Bai Liusu the *de facto* winner in their personal war against one another, “his wife in name and in truth” (Zhang [1943] 2009, 140). Bai Liusu seems to revel in this unexpected turn of events: she has secured a complete victory over man, family and society, a victory so strong as to cause an entire city to collapse, like the legendary beauties of the past managed to do.³² She feels Hong Kong's fall was somehow necessary for her to triumph in the end, though it is easy to detect the narrator's sarcasm behind Bai Liusu's thoughts.³³ After all, what the woman protagonist really achieves in the end is very little, as she will depend on a man for the rest of her life. As Jessica Tsui Yan Li puts it, she

becomes an ordinary housewife with signs of the usual frustration with life in a down-to-earth marriage, rather than turning into a heroine to achieve enlightenment. (Tsui 2012, 44)

In Zhang's universe, there are neither heroes nor heroines; despite her thinking about the legendary *femmes fatales* of the past, implying she might be as powerful, beautiful and dangerous as them, Bai Liusu in the end remains an oppressed Chinese woman of the 1940s with very limited prospects. Her victory is in fact disappointing, because it just reinstates the role traditional Chinese society expected from

32 The theme of the *femme fatale* causing a whole city to fall, which the title of Zhang's novella alludes to, stems from two main traditional sources. The first two lines of the third stanza from the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of Odes), Ode 264, read: “Zhefu cheng cheng, zhefu qing cheng 哲夫成城, 哲婦傾城 (A clever man builds cities, a clever woman makes them fall)” (Couvreur 2004, 414). A passage from the *Qian Hanshu* 前漢書 (History of the Former Han Dynasty) reads: “Beifang you jiarren, jueshi er duli. Yi gu qing ren cheng, zai gu qing ren guo 北方有佳人, 絕世而獨立。一顧傾人城, 再顧傾人國 (In the north there's a beauty, independent in her ways and unparalleled to any other in the world; with just one look, she will make a city fall; with another look, she will make a whole nation fall)” (Ban s.d.).

33 Leo Ou-fan Lee explains how Zhang Ailing uses “an almost omniscient narratorial voice that not only hovers or enters into the characters effortlessly but also constantly comments on them with an intimate and *bemused* tone”, using a voice which “places itself both inside and outside the world of fictional characters” (Lee 1999, 285-6; emphasis added).

women, that is, being “the appendage of men” (Wang 2014, 37).³⁴ Her aggressive quest for social status and economic stability only leads to frustration as the desolate *huqin* sound in the end of the novella suggests: after the war ends, Fan Liuyuan will probably leave again, thus turning Bai Liusu into a concubine again, a wife only in name:

no matter how astute Liusu is, in the end Liuyuan wins out [...]. In the same way that a fallen city can give rise to an unexpected wedding, it can also render a marriage meaningless. Not long after the wedding, Liuyuan leaves for South East Asia and Liusu is left on her own to live the life of a kept woman, in fact if not in law. (Kam 2012b, 25)

So Liusu's final victory is at best accidental, a by-product of the world suddenly being wrecked by war – and illusional – because it is ultimately orchestrated by Fan Liuyuan, not by her. Bai Liusu's real gains are survival and self-preservation, not independence. Hers is a *nüren* tale of a ghost trapped in an empty space but still trying to salvage some pieces of a broken *nüxing* self out of the debris of history, getting on with her life despite everything at all costs, because Zhang Ailing's ultimate goal in her story was not to describe a woman's path to awakening and self-awareness but “to capture some stability and constancy in a collapsing world” (Kam 2012b, 24), despite knowing this stability might prove to be just an illusion, an empty shell leaving the longed-for *nüxing* self still unconnected and misplaced.

4 Empty Fragments Floating. Urban Spaces and the Unconnectedness of Woman

Urban space is a crucial element within *Qing cheng zhi lian*: both Shanghai and Hong Kong provide an important imaginal backdrop for Bai Liusu's fight towards self-preservation and in her war/courtship with Fan Liuyuan, each city symbolizing a different representation of war and also a different version of female unconnectedness.

Being concerned with everyday life, Zhang Ailing's depiction of Shanghai is often allusive and indirect: far from being the hybrid pre-globalized modern biopolis (Kong 2009) where East and West imperfectly coexisted,³⁵ the city is reduced in size and the narrator focuses

³⁴ “By analysing the family ambience Zhang Ailing lived and grew up in, we realize that women at the time were still considered to be as nothing more than the appendage of men” (Wang 2014, 37).

³⁵ Shanghai was a semi-colony “in the hybrid sense of a mixture of colonial and Chinese elements” (Lee 1999, 309).

on the small “localized world” (Lee 1999, 271) of confined domestic spaces, characterized by a strange combination of sensuous, elegant timelessness and stifled individual choice. These spaces may occasionally open and reinstate time whenever the main characters “enter into the public arena” (Lee 1999, 275), that is when they take part in the modernity of Shanghai by going to restaurants, dance halls, cinemas, coffeehouses. Bai Liusu herself finds access to the modern atmosphere of the city when she and her family go to the movies first and to a dance hall later on the first night she meets Fan Liuyuan. This fictional reduction of Shanghai to a world of detail, as opposed to its reality as a cosmopolitan city,³⁶ indirectly hints at war hovering on the desolate contrast between indoor decadent (and decaying) immutability and outdoor glittering glamour: despite the city of Shanghai “reached the pinnacle of its urban glory in the early 1930s”, after its partial occupation by the Japanese in 1937-41 and its entire capitulation to the invaders in 1942 – exactly when Zhang Ailing returned to the city (Yu 2008, 62) – its splendor and cosmopolitanism was “already on the wane” (Lee 1999, 322-3). The reduction of the invaded city to a detailed microcosmos of daily rituals and “atomized lives’ marginality” (Kong 2009, 281) was Zhang Ailing’s way of mentally erasing war and its potential threat of wreckage from her writing, creating a small familial (often female-centred) and personal world sealed from within not to face the without of public history. Yet somehow her beloved Shanghai as an occupation-infected city persists in the world of details she creates because it is “a part that is always already broken from a presumed ‘whole’ [...] itself cut off, incomplete, and desolate” (Chow 1991, 114). Everything in the Shanghai segment of the novella seems displaced and cut off from the rest of the world, already falling apart itself: there are no landmarks describing the city at large, only domestic spaces and/or nameless places of entertainment. Trapped in-between these elegant zones tinged with decay and nostalgia, Bai Liusu can’t help but feeling paralyzed within the suffocating enclosure of the Bai household.³⁷ Her status as a di-

36 As Leo Ou-fan Lee explains in his book, “Shanghai in the 1930s was the cosmopolitan city par excellence” (Lee 1999, 315) and also “the largest city in China [...], the place where most of its literature was produced and circulated to the country at large” (Lee 1999, xi) as well as “the fifth largest city in the world and China’s largest harbor and treaty port, a city that was already an international legend (‘The Paris of Asia’), and a world of splendid modernity set apart from the still tradition-bound countryside that was China” (xiv). The word *mó dēng* 摩登 ‘modern’ itself was coined in Shanghai, thus making the city and the concept of modernity permanently linked to one another. Here traditional Chinese buildings and Western high-rise American skyscrapers, *art déco* interior designs and neoclassical British imperial buildings coexisted side by side.

37 “While she lives squarely within a stable domestic environment and a cosmopolitan landscape, a sense of intense *entrapment* and *claustrophobia* permeates her experience of Shanghai” (Kong 2009, 284; emphasis added).

voinee (thus 'failed') woman detached from the rest of the family is symbolized by two scrolls hanging on the wall, where "each character seemed to float in emptiness, far from the paper's surface. Liusu herself felt like one of those characters, floating and unconnected" (Zhang [1943] 2009, 117). Woman is reduced in size to a small set of Chinese characters aimlessly floating in the air, lost in an "infinite self-atomizing" situation (Kong 2009, 281):³⁸ she is a fleeting silhouette who may easily be swept away leaving no trace behind, just like modernity and cosmopolitanism were waning from Shanghai, constantly under the threat of evanescing in time and space³⁹ in the wake of the Japanese invasion. What Bai Liusu ultimately needs is a new configuration of space, not just an opening of her atomized familial enclave into Shanghai's shattered modernity, but a new "spatial imagination" (Kong 2009, 293) granting her permanent survival as a woman, and possibly giving her a way out of unconnectedness.

The site Zhang Ailing chooses to stage this new spatial imagination is Hong Kong, itself yet another version of a Chinese city conquered by foreigners, but with one notable difference: Hong Kong was *indeed* a colony, not a semicolonial atomized cosmopolis like Shanghai. The British had officially taken control of the island in 1841 and had been ruling there ever since (Tsang 2004, 16). Its being traditional and utterly colonial, without any of the modern architectural and cultural audacities Shanghai had gone through in the 1930s certainly had a strong impact on Zhang upon her arrival as a student - a negative one. As Leo Ou-fan Lee puts it, "Hong Kong did not have Shanghai's '*cultivation*' (*hanyang*), a word that originally referred to the cultured sophistication of a person who has the elegant appearance of self-restraint"; on the contrary, Hong Kong was "too blatant, too vulgar and flamboyant in its Western imitation, hence producing cultural kitsch" (Lee 1999, 327). Seen from a Shanghainese perspective, Hong Kong was an undistinguished cultural desert, a floating Chinese space dominated by Britain, not just a proud treaty port never fully colonized nor conquered by foreign powers. Why, then, did Zhang Ailing choose Hong Kong as the site of a possible new configuration of spatial imagination for her heroine? Was it just to pay a tribute to the city she had found temporary refuge in as a student, or were there other reasons too?

From 1937 onwards, Hong Kong had served as a temporary site for refugees escaping from Japan-invaded mainland China, turning the

38 More specifically, Kong analyses wartime Shanghai as a "polycentric" site characterized by a proliferation of boundaries, also focusing on Shanghai as an open city (Kong 2009, 293-4; 297-8).

39 What actually took place after the chaos of the civil war in 1945 and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949: Shanghai inexorably decayed and faded from the new rural-based Chinese nation's memory (Lee 1999, 323).

city into “an important lifeline to China” (Tsang 2004, 114): historically, Hong Kong represented a *temporary* place of refuge for people who wanted to start life afresh, but conceptually it was already “not so much a place but a space of transit” (Abbas 1997, 4), granting passage towards elsewhere. Yet Bai Liusu travels to Hong Kong hoping to write her own destiny and leave her mark into existence: to her, Hong Kong first looks like a space of unexpected promises, a space where she can permanently flow and no longer float, mainly because of its distance from home, and thus from Shanghai. Zhang’s first description of the city upon the protagonist’s arrival conveys precisely this sense of promise; her depiction of Hong Kong is somehow already characterized by a postmodern “visual density” (Abbas 1997, 35): there are no words drifting unconnected but huge billboards and vibrant contrasts everywhere, creating a picture of wonder, “a city of such hyperboles” (Zhang [1943] 2009, 122) where there seem to be no boundaries but crowded spatial and visual juxtapositions. Whereas Shanghai’s cityscape was only indirectly suggested to heighten its “urban - and urbane - sophistication” (Lee 1999, 340), Hong Kong’s skyline - the Victoria Harbour every ship and boat can see upon their arrival on the island - is vividly described with all its ostentatious exaggeration, a violence of “clashing colours plunged in murderous confusion” (Zhang [1943] 2009, 122). Hong Kong is hyperbolic excess, with no room for the “hidden colourfulness” (Zhang [1944] 2003c, 8)⁴⁰ Shanghai was characterized by. Paradoxically, it is precisely in this saturation of visual elements that lies a possible new configuration of spatial imagination for Bai Liusu: far from the restrained elegance of her family rooms in Shanghai and into the splashing excessive colours of Hong Kong, she can finally hope to step out of impermanence and write her own her-story.⁴¹

This idea of Hong Kong as a city associated to permanence rather than to the impermanence a ‘space of transit’ might suggest is reinforced by the second view on the city, characterized by specific landmarks or spatial symbols whereas Shanghai’s description was devoid of them. First, the narrator briefly introduces the Repulse Bay Hotel which, as Abbas explains, was “a grand colonial-style building that became a famous Hong Kong landmark” (Abbas 1997, 8) after being built in the 1920s. Consequently, in the late 1930s and early 1940s (when presumably Zhang herself visited the hotel), everyone considered it to be “a fashionable meeting place” (Abbas 1997, 8), a potent symbol of wealth and entertainment. Then Zhang shifts our atten-

⁴⁰ See Chang [1944] 2005, 8. Andrew F. Jones’ rendering of *miyan* 秘艳 as ‘coy allure’, though far more poetic, does not account for the idea of ‘hidden colourfulness’ suggested by the set of two characters.

⁴¹ Meant as a feminist-oriented version of his-tory.

tion to another symbol, located beyond the hotel: a wall, something virtually anonymous, almost unreal and out of place, if associated to the glamour of the Repulse Bay Hotel and the excess of Hong Kong's skyline. Despite being an odd presence, "like a left-over object from another era" (Lee 1999, 296), the wall does not suggest any idea of transit or floating, but rather firmness and durability in its 'sublime' elevation. Its description is characterized by "the colour of death" (Zhang [1943] 2009, 126), but it highlights Bai Liusu's face turning red by contrast, filling it with the colour of life. Fan Liuyuan even hints at the idea that the wall might last longer than the end of the entire world, and Liusu's tacit acceptance of his hopeful prediction gives an aura of grandeur and ahistorical universality to the wall itself, despite its being a residual of history persisting in wartime:

Someday, human civilization will be completely destroyed, everything will be utterly eroded, burst, collapsed and ruined, but maybe this wall will still be here. (Zhang [1943] 2009, 126)

The wall evokes the idea of timelessness, as opposed to the ticking of time slowly corrupting and changing things. As Wang Xiaoping puts it, it simultaneously symbolizes middle class' "strong will to live an eternally peaceful, comfortable life" and "a world in which meaning and life are once more indivisible" (Wang 2012, 574). So, the wall symbolizes a world and a society devoid of war where the self can finally exist and persist in time and space, but it may also symbolize the soul and the immaterial outliving the body and the material, as well as culture winning over nature, eternity winning over history.

This sense of durability and timelessness is echoed by the fourth stanza of Poem 31, Chapter 3, Section 1, of the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of Odes), later quoted by Fan Liuyuan. The poem is called *Jigu* 擊鼓 (Beating the War Drum) and the original text reads:

死生契闊
與子成說
執子之手
與子偕老
(Couvreur 2004, 36)⁴²

Facing death, life and distance,
I promised to be faithful to you;

⁴² Zhang misquotes the second line of the fourth stanza, using *xiangshuo* 相說 instead of *chengshuo* 成說. The poem describes the lament of a soldier who is forced to leave his family and beloved to go to war for his prince, yet the ending of the poem (which is not included in Zhang's novella) suggests that the soldier will not manage to come back and his promise won't be fulfilled, so the overall tone is one of desolation.

Holding your hands in mine,
I swore I would grow old with you.

Both the wall and the poem are strong symbols within the courtship strategy between Bai Liusu and Fan Liuyuan: though used by the man as tokens of a supposedly eternal love vow, they are tacitly accepted by the woman, who apparently is familiar neither with Hong Kong and its landmarks nor with Chinese classical culture. Caught in an aggressive ruthless *nüren* search for durability out of her unconnected status as divorcee woman without a prospect, Bai Liusu can easily believe in something as immortal as a classical poem and in something as strong and fixed as a wall. Like foundations built to last, words and bricks can forge fate and identity against a world afloat, where everything seems to be vague and uncertain. Yet for a woman like Bai Liusu, grown in a traditional late-Qing elite background, to be *both* durable and true, an eternal love vow must include marriage, a further symbol of stability, something Fan Liuyuan seems not so willing to comply to. So the promise and the poetic symbols emanating from 'the city of such hyperboles' seem to be void of any actual meaning: the drifting unconnected self Bai Liusu was destined to be for the rest of her life in Shanghai still lingers on, leaving the whole 'romance' between her and Fan Liuyuan vague and confused.⁴³ Hong Kong remains a space of floating colours and void promises vanishing, just like Shanghai was reduced to Bai Liusu's suffocating room with empty characters floating on a scroll. Thus, her decision to go back to Shanghai and face the 'shame' of finding a job to support herself comes out of despair and impossibility of permanence, not out of a real *nüxing* agency. For a revolutionary May Fourth-oriented woman, looking for a job as a way to survive would mean real power and independence, but Bai Liusu is no revolutionary; she's just an ordinary woman with neither skills nor culture, trapped in a male-dominated world where failing to secure marriage to a rich man can only mean defeat – and eventually disappearance. That is why when Fan Liuyuan calls on her to join him once again in Hong Kong, she cannot choose but go: like a drifting flower, she floats in the upstream current of 'romance', hoping to find a space of reappearance where she can finally bloom.

The Hong Kong Bai Liusu goes back to, though, is no longer the city of hyperboles she discovered on her first visit, but a space characterized by absence: the landscape is reduced in size to the moon's, seen

⁴³ "These acts of courtship are nothing but a casual and spiritual game of two hedonists [...], they float on the surface of feelings" (Xun 1986, 124-5). Despite Xun Yu's remarks were meant as a negative critique on the novella, the floating he suggests corroborates my idea.

as “merely a hook of white” (Zhang [1943] 2009, 123); besides, there is no room waiting for her at the glamorous Repulse Bay Hotel this time, just a house devoid of people, an “empty realm” (Zhang [1943] 2009, 124) where she is destined to live on her own for a whole year, as Fan Liuyuan is abroad on business and he has rented a place for her to stay and wait for his return.

In this new attempt at escaping her own unconnectedness towards life, Bai Liusu ends up living disconnected towards anyone else, alone as a kept woman in an empty house echoing her empty heart (and the other way round). Perhaps here more than elsewhere, Bai Liusu acknowledges her situation and the space she inhabits not for their fallacious promise of durability, but for their contingent possibility of self-preservation: why bother becoming the official wife of Fan Liuyuan when she can simply be his mistress and enjoy his money anyway? Being a matter-of-fact ‘space of transit’, once again Hong Kong proves to be the perfect location for Bai Liusu’s awakening to women’s limited options in a male-dominated society. In such an unsentimental and prosaic place where “everything floats – currencies, values, human relations” (Abbas 1997, 4), raw survival becomes more important than any pretense of respectability. Her choice becomes merely a practical one, so as to pick up the broken pieces of her female self.

As war comes and Fan Liuyuan unexpectedly returns, though their clinging to one another may function as an extreme attempt to reconnect the past to the present, what is left are just empty fragments floating in a dead city, itself a world of fragmented ruins:

there was only a stream of empty air, a bridge of emptiness leading to darkness, into the void of voids. Here, everything had ended. There were only some broken bits of desolate wall [...]; in fact, there was nothing left. (Zhang [1943] 2009, 139)

No matter how hard Bai Liusu imagines the wall may still be standing as a space symbolizing eternity and durability, what we are shown here is just the wall’s non-appearance, its image being replaced by a scene of wreckage instead. If everything else we can actually see has fallen, why should an unseen (and thus unseeable) wall still be there? Despite the *Shijing* poem’s vow proving right and Bai Liusu’s original plan – becoming a legitimate wife – coming to pass, her newly found social and financial safety won’t grant her any wholeness. Clearly functioning as a metonymy for the city of Hong Kong whose space vanishes in the end, the absent wall may also symbolize Bai Liusu’s volatile self in its illusion of asserting a true form of *nüxing* power – her supposedly ‘dangerous’ beauty making an entire city fall – which in fact reinstates her floating status of unconnected woman but which paradoxically helps her survive somehow, alone, with her husband gone and no talent of her own to rely on. And the pos-

sibility of a new configuration of space, from the stifled family room of Shanghai to the excessive flamboyant clashing of colours in Hong Kong, is ultimately dissolved in the ground zero of war – but the broken bits of *nüren* are still standing, and perhaps her true *nüxing* independent nature might resurface one day.

5 Conclusions. A (Post) Modern View on History

In *Qing cheng zhi lian* Zhang Ailing explored the ways through which historical, social and cultural circumstances forced Chinese elite women to “learn to give up their own desires in exchange for their social ‘place’” (Chow 1993, 94). Consequently, her woman protagonist opted for a spatial quest which still confined her within an oppressive *nei* dimension she paradoxically managed to oppose through an aggressive counter-hegemony, war-like strategy, thus avoiding the role of victim.

Also, the final collapse of Hong Kong as opposed to the fleeting persistence of woman are an intriguing testimony to Zhang Ailing's ambivalence towards history with its wrecking time, space and the female self. On the one hand, the novella's conclusion proves the author was deeply inside the fabric of history:

her intoxication of the impending danger during the Japanese bombing are all underscored with an acute self-consciousness of her own powerlessness, capsulated by the term ‘*wunai*’ [...] a sense of keen awareness of the ephemerality and arbitrariness of subjective experiences. Self-consuming, personal anguish is ultimately irrelevant in the face of the overwhelming violence of history. (Chang 1993, 223)⁴⁴

In the end, both the empty city of Hong Kong and the empty heart of woman seem to float together like meaningless characters on a scroll, becoming symbols of human ephemerality and meaninglessness while facing history. Yet, it is precisely because of history forcing its way inside the novella through war, building a fleeting and impermanent present out of the disintegration of the past, that the potentially feminist status of *nüxing* can emerge: despite her victory ultimately is ephemeral, Bai Liusu manages to survive and soldier on into the future, hopefully outliving her former aggressive *nüren* strategy by positioning herself no longer as a mere female replica of

⁴⁴ *Wunai* 无奈 literally means ‘having no other choice nor alternative’. In a way, the story also focuses on “the conflict between a single woman's fortune and the fate of the whole nation or whole civilization” (Meng [1991] 1993, 127).

a man, but as an independent woman-subject with 'an organic will of her own', immersed in history but not defeated by its ravaging pull.

On the other hand, though, Zhang Ailing's

best works "The Golden Cangue" and "Love in a Fallen City" transcend historical awareness and moral judgement, which is precisely what makes these works such remarkable masterpieces. (Liu 2009)

As Liu Zaifu further points out,

with its social concern, modern Chinese literature is, in general, focused on condemning the injustices in society, but it does not ask questions about the meaning of human existence. Yet Zhang Ailing masterfully describes many human tragedies as she asks these questions. (Liu 2009)

Because her main concern was with "rejecting the historical trend" (Liu 2009) - which does not necessarily imply rejecting history *per se*, though.

I rather think that Zhang Ailing was *both inside* history - in her analysis of Chinese society's (and women's) collapse in a period wrecked by war and in her using "a melancholy evocative of the irreversible disintegration of an old China" (Chang 1993, 222) - *and outside* history, transcending it as a Chinese elite individualistic *nüren* of the 1940s, that is as a woman still having no defined her-story to reveal but seeing things both from a limited *wunai* 无奈 perspective and from a lucid, potentially liberating *nüxing* perspective, that same perspective her own mother had helped her foresee in her own self and in women's destiny in general. As Qiao Yigang puts it:

Chang's description of women's imprisoned soul and analysis of the female unconscious reveals the truth that although the lifestyle of urban women has been revolutionized, the mindset of many women has not undergone any significant change [...]. Such a phenomenon is the result of traditional beliefs and women's lack of self-esteem. Whether they are old-fashioned women, like Cao Qiqiao, or new women, like Bai Liusu and Ge Weilong, women in Chang's works are "subjects with agency", albeit limited in their worlds. They live under the threat of traditional culture that drives them gradually into "a corner without light". Chang senses a crisis in the portrayal of women. (Qiao 2010, 84)

It is once again this ambivalence between desolation and rebellion, his-story and her-story, *nüren* and *nüxing*, that ultimately makes Bai Liusu both a powerless, disconnected traditional woman and a would-

be optimistic winner in the game of life, floating in perpetuity like a fragment in the empty house of history, both inside it and transcending it in the impossibility of finding a permanent space of her own but constantly suspended in an eternal war-like quest for self-affirmation.

This is yet another example of Zhang's in-betweenness, something making her far too modern and almost on the brink of postmodernism in her focusing on the details of "little narratives" (Andermahr, Lowell, Wolkowitz 2000, 208):⁴⁵ as a daughter escaping a violent father yet also as a writer celebrating the decadent life of late-Qing male-dominated society; as an admirer of her liberated Westernized mother yet also as a cynicist denying women's actual ability to find liberation in a society dominated by men; as a 'Shanghaiense, after all' yet writing about Hong Kong as well. As a woman with a double name, one in Chinese, one in English, like two characters floating on a scroll, consciously disconnected from her contemporaries' preoccupations with socially-oriented and political literature,⁴⁶ but strongly connected to her own talent, the only constant in a world wrecked by history and war.

45 "Postmodernism refuses master narratives which purport to explain the whole movement of history and social life as a single interconnected totality. Postmodernism offers instead 'little narratives' which do not necessarily add up, but which may be woven together as a succession of short threads into a blanket. The search for the fundamental causes of injustice, oppression, the movement of history, is ruled out of court" (Andermahr, Lowell, Wolkowitz 2000, 208). In a way, Zhang's stubborn refusal of dealing with the master narrative of political liberation shared by most of her contemporaries makes her already a postmodern writer, albeit caught within the frame of a semi-traditional, semi-colonial modern space.

46 1942, a year before Zhang Ailing wrote *Qing cheng zhi lian*, Mao Zedong notably wrote his famous *Zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua* 在延安文藝座談會上的講話 (Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art). See Cannella 2014.

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Ah Q Travels to Europe Christoph Hein's *Die wahre Geschichte des Ah Q* (1983) and Dario Fo's *La storia di Qu* (2011)

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Abstract This study focuses on the adaptations of the novella “The True Story of Ah Q” by the Chinese writer Lu Xun (1881-1936), produced by two important European playwrights, Christoph Hein (b. 1944) and Dario Fo (1926-2016), who ‘translated’ Lu Xun’s famous character respectively into a problematic nihilist (*Die wahre Geschichte des Ah Q*, 1983) and into a revolutionary Chinese Harlequin (*La storia di Qu*, 1989; 2011). These two plays appropriate the ‘hypotext’ into a new cultural geography, which is neither Chinese nor completely German or Italian, but rather a transcultural space based on the European intellectual tradition of the ‘anarchist’. In this case translation means a thorough transformation and change which allows Lu Xun’s work to ‘live on’ (*Fortleben*, as in Walter Benjamin’s theory).

Keywords Adaptation. Transcultural rewriting. Contact zone. Appropriation. Fortleben.

Summary 1 Adaptation or Transcultural Rewriting? – 2 The Adaptability of “Ah Q zhengzhuan” 阿Q正传. – 3 Christoph Hein’s *Die wahre Geschichte des Ah Q. Zwischen Hund und Wolf* (The True Story of Ah Q. Between Dog and Wolf). – 4 Dario Fo’s *La storia di Qu* (The Story of Qu). – 5 ‘Transculturating Ah Q’. The Main Themes. – 5.1 The Importance of Language. Can the Subaltern Speak? – 5.2 The Idea(l) of Revolution. – 5.3 Anarchism. – 5.4 Iconoclasm and Anticlericalism. – 5.5 The Figure of the Scapegoat and the Dilemmatic Relationship between Intellectuals and Peasants. – 5.6 The ‘Tragedy of Love’. From Misogyny to Human Degradation and Romanticism. – 6 Conclusion.



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1 Adaptation or Transcultural Rewriting?

This paper deals with two case studies of intersemiotic translation, which should actually rather be inscribed within the category of adaptation (Hutcheon 2006) or transcultural rewriting (Lefevere 1992). I am using the word “rewriting” here because I will not carry out an analysis based on theatre studies – which is neither my field of research nor my interest in this study; rather, I will observe the phenomenon of adaptation merely from the point of view of textual re-location. An “extended palimpsest and, at the same time, a transcoding into a different set of conventions” (Hutcheon 2006, 33), adaptation is a “transgeneric practice” (Genette 1997, 395) of cultural relocation which gives a new life to the source text – often a classic – by bringing it “into greater proximity to the cultural and temporal context of the readers or audiences” (Genette 1997, 304). The intriguing thing about this kind of ‘translation’ – which is not considered such by some scholars – is that, despite the radical changes and metamorphoses undergone by the prototext, one can still recognise a core set of elements that survive and, moreover, acquire new life and a new meaning in the metatext. While reflecting on the nature of adaptation as a peculiar form of translation, I will also enquire as to the possibility for a text to transcend its historical and cultural boundaries, while still retaining its intrinsic values and identity. Borrowing Benjamin’s concept of *Fortleben* (“to live on”), I will demonstrate, on the contrary, that transculturation and the radical changes applied to the original text guarantee its lasting existence in new forms.

As far as the method of analysis is concerned, I will draw from translation studies the main tools for reconstructing and classifying the strategies of appropriation and transformation of the prototext into different metatexts, which – despite possessing an autonomous life and being received as an original production of the target culture – at a deeper level, cannot completely be separated from the specific roots from which they have taken shape in the adapters’ mind. Indeed, the fascinating ‘transforming appropriation’ operated by the authors of these adaptations represents a complex cultural re-invention, which blends local and exotic factors, and subverts the usual perspective on modern Chinese culture as rooted in the imitation or appropriation of Western models. On the contrary, the case studies analysed in this paper will provide an opposite example, where a modern Chinese literary work has been appropriated and adapted into the cultural tradition of modern European drama. For this reason, I will also draw upon Mary Pratt’s concept of “contact zone” (1991), in order to better accommodate and explain the process and the effects of the adaptation.

The case studies analysed in this paper are the adaptations of Lu Xun’s famous novella “Ah Q zhengzhuan” 阿Q正传 (The True Story of Ah Q, first published serially in 1921 and 1922), produced respective-

ly by the German playwright Christoph Hein (b. 1944) in 1983 (first staged one year later) and by the Italian Nobel laureate Dario Fo in 1989 (then rewritten later in 2011, and staged only in 2014).

Lu Xun 鲁迅 (1881-1936) is unmistakably the most authoritative and representative modern Chinese writer. More specifically, he stands as the epitome of the so-called May Fourth literature, which flourished in the first decades of last century. This was an epoch of intense and innovative literary creativeness, which represents - in a controversial but indisputably cosmopolitan way - forms of appropriation of Western culture and the reinvention of Chinese culture in terms of a more international modernity. Indeed, Gloria Davies has noted that

The True Story of Ah Q “read” an entire generation of Chinese intellectuals; a generation who recognized the May Fourth Incident in 1919 as the historical moment which marked the advent of a modern revolutionary consciousness in China. (1991, 71)

If we accept this view, we can consider the text to be highly representative of the period in question: its later adaptations and transcultural rewritings demonstrate that the May Fourth Movement, rather than a mere historical period, is, actually, a “contact zone”, a “space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (Pratt 1991, 34). May Fourth literature and its legacy can thus be seen as a space where “cultures encounter each other [and] each of the parties invariably exerts a strong influence on the other(s)” (Hermann 2007, 257). Like many other canonical texts or classics, the novella and its protagonist long outlived their author’s epoch, becoming the object of a complex and profound rethinking of Chinese culture in China, named “Ah-Qism” (*Ah Q zhuyi* 阿Q主义).

阿Q虽然被枪毙了,但阿Q并没有死;阿Q的形象和所为“阿Q相”或“阿Q气质”也并没有就此消失。(Ge [1981] 1999, 756)

Although Ah Q was executed, he is not dead at all. Neither his figure nor the so-called “image of Ah Q” or “temperament of Ah Q” have disappeared at all.¹

The longevity and “exportability” of Ah Q - who was created by Lu Xun in order to carry out a critical scrutiny of traditional Chinese culture triggered by the encounter and confrontation with Western thought and society - demonstrate the extraordinary power of this text to meet new needs and different ‘socioscapes’ also in the West by means of the transcultural process. I will argue that, to some ex-

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the Author.

tent, this has been possible thanks to the multicultural and cosmopolitan nature of the May Fourth literature. By 'transcultural rewriting' I thus mean the creation of new spaces for the original Chinese text and its leading character, where they continue to engender meanings and critical views on society, no matter what epoch or context they are addressed to, while at the same time acquiring a distinct European flavour. In my paper, I will analyse how and to what extent the text and the protagonist undergo this process of transculturation, in both adaptations - which are set many decades later and in thoroughly different socio-political systems. I will provide an innovative view of the intercultural relationships between China and the West, challenging the commonplace of the alleged appropriation of Western models performed by Chinese writers, and reversing it into a case of appropriation of a modern Chinese classic by two Western intellectuals.

2 The Adaptability of "Ah Q zhengzhuan" 阿Q正传

The novella "The True Story of Ah Q" recounts the tragicomic vicissitudes of a poor farm labourer at the time of the first Chinese revolution in the early twentieth century. After an early Chinese adaptation for the stage and for the screen, the novella was then further adapted, to create almost twenty different theatrical and literary versions in mainland China - as recorded and discussed by Foster (2006) and Stecher (2012). Moreover, the tale has been translated into more than thirty languages all over the world and has been staged several times even outside China.

Since its first appearance in the early 1920s, Lu Xun's novella has been the object of a transgeneric adaptation, both in China and abroad, through a practice of "dramatization" (Genette 1997, 278). Lu Xun himself was aware of both the potential and the risks embedded in the adaptation of his narrative work for the stage or the screen, as one can see in this passage:

我想, 普遍, 永久, 完全, 这三件宝贝, 自然是了不得的, 不过也是作家的棺材钉, 会将他钉死。譬如现在的中国, 要编一本随时随地, 无不可用的剧本, 其实是不可能的, 要这样编, 结果就是编不成。(Lu Xun [1934b] 1994, 748)

I think that universality, eternity and completeness are of course three extraordinary treasures, but they are also the nails in a coffin for a writer, they can nail him to death. For instance, in contemporary China, it is impossible to write a play which is valid at all times and all places: if anyone wishes to compose such a play, s/he would never succeed.

However, it was Lu Xun who actually paved the way for the adaptation of his novella, when he claimed that

我以为现在的办法,只好编一种对话都是比较的容易了解的剧本,倘在学校之类这些地方扮演,可以无须改动,如果到某一省县,某一乡村里面去,那么,这本子就算是一个底本,将其中的说白都改为当地的土话,不但语言,就是背景,人名,也都可变换,使看察觉得更加切实。譬如罢,如果这演剧之处并非水村,那么,航船可以化为大车 [...]. (Lu Xun [1934b] 1994, 748)

the only solution now is to write dialogues that are easy to understand. If the play is to be staged in a place like a school, there is no need to change the script; if the play is staged in some province or in some village, then, even considering it only as a source book, the spoken parts can be adapted to the local dialect - not only the language but also the setting and the name of the characters can be changed in order to make them sound more realistic to the audience. For instance, if the performance venue is not near a river, the boats can be changed into big carriages [...].

This passage is taken from the letter Lu Xun wrote in 1934 to Yuan Mei 袁梅 (袁牧之 Yuan Muzhi), the editor of the magazine *Xi* 戏 (Drama), who was publishing a stage version of “The True Story of Ah Q”. In these few words lies the potential reproducibility of Lu Xun’s novella in terms of adaptations, translations, and rewritings. Despite rejecting the idea of the universality and eternity of literature, Lu Xun himself believed in the power of appropriation, as his famous theory of *nalaizhuyi* 拿来主义 (take-ism) clearly demonstrates.² Both Ah Q’s human and psychological features as a symbolic character and the representativeness of the village where the story is set (Weizhuang 未庄, literally Not-Yet-Village) as a parochial community could acquire new meanings and resonance in the hands of different authors, in different contexts and at different moments.

Actually, as mentioned before, Lu Xun at first was not in favour of adapting the novella into a film or a play, as he wrote in this letter to the director of the first film adaptation:

我的意见,以为《阿Q正传》,实无改编剧本及电影的要素,因为一上演台,将只剩了滑稽,而我之作此篇,实不以滑稽或哀怜为目的,其中情景,恐中国此刻的“明星”是无法表现的。况且诚如那位影剧导演者所言,此时编制剧本,须偏重女脚,我的作品,也不足以值这些观众之一顾,还是让它“死去”吧。(Lu Xun [1930] (1982), 27)

² In the 1934 essay (also entitled “Nalaizhuyi”), Lu Xun explained his theory of “grabbing” (*nalai* 拿来) things from foreign cultures in order to “自成为新人 [...] 自成为新文艺” (Lu Xun [1934a] 1994, 715) (transform ourselves into new men [...] and transform our literature into a new literature).

In my opinion, I believe “The True Story of Ah Q” hasn’t the essentials to be adapted to the stage or cinema because as soon as it goes on stage all that will be left is the farcical [*huqji*]. I didn’t write this work for the purposes of comedy or pity, and I’m afraid that China’s “stars” at the moment have no way to express the scenes in it. Furthermore, true to that film director’s [Wang Qiaonan’s] words, adaptations written at this time must emphasize women’s feet, and my works are not sufficiently worth the attention of some audiences. So, it would be best to let it “die” [*siqu*]. (Foster 2006, 205)

Nonetheless, this tone of self-questioning and self-mockery was typical of Lu Xun’s essays. Indeed, “The True Story of Ah Q” was destined to have a long series of sequels and adaptations. As early as in 1926, Lu Xun himself felt that such a character did not belong only to the past:

民国元年已经过去，无可追踪了，但此后倘再有改革，我相信还会有阿Q似的革命党出现。我也很愿意如人们所说，我只写出了现在以前的或一时期，但还恐怕我所看见的并非现代的前身，而是其后，或者竟是二三十年之后。(Lu Xun [1926] 1994)

The first year of the Republic has long passed, and what’s gone is gone, but if there is another revolution to come, I do believe that revolutionaries like Ah Q will reappear. I would much prefer that I had, as people have said, written only about a time before the present or about a certain period, but I fear that what I saw was not, in fact, a precursor of the present, but rather what is to come, or even what is to follow twenty or thirty years from now. (Lu Xun 2017a, 40-1)

In the abovementioned 1934 letter, Lu Xun also suggested that:

总括一句，不过是说，这剧本最好是不要专化，却使大家可以活用。(Lu Xun [1934b] 1994, 748)

In a word, the best thing is not to make the play too particularised but capable of rather free adaptation. (Foster 2006, 213)

Foreseeing the possibility that his story and his ‘hero’ could also re-appear in different circumstances, Lu Xun definitely admitted that they were not confined to one time and one place.

But what made possible and plausible the 'transplantation'³ of Lu Xun's story and of the character Ah Q into such different social and cultural contexts as the 1980s East Germany and early twenty-first century's Italy? The two European adaptations analysed in this paper share certain traits with the original text, namely, a set of intellectual and cultural values. Precisely because of this shared set of values, which take different shapes according to the local context, we can define the process undergone by the novella and its main character as a real process of transculturation, an ironical shift from early modern China (where the first sprouts of communism had appeared) to the era of the crisis of communism in Europe (1980s). During this process, Lu Xun's original thought was adapted and transformed so as to fit the receiving historical and cultural background of East Germany's gloomy society and the politically corrupt Italy at the turn of the last century.

In my paper I will argue that the transculturation of Ah Q is possible precisely because, despite the chronological and spatial hiatus as well as the different historical and cultural background separating the three works, the core values embedded in Lu Xun's text represent a solid basis for its future adaptations. These, in turn, revive and profoundly change the meaning of the source text, giving it a *Fortleben*, a "transformed new life" (as in Benjamin's theory).⁴ In 2018, the French playwright Michel André Dydim staged his adaptation of the "True Story of Ah Q" (a Sino-French collaboration presented at the Xinchuan Centre for Theatre Arts in Beijing); in an interview he declared that

he was a big fan of Lu Xun and had read five different translated editions of the story. "Ah Q is a tragic character with a comic shell, like one of the homeless characters in the Charlie Chaplin movies", he said. "The theme goes beyond its time, or the location — it speaks about the human experience". (Zhang 2018)

³ In one of his short essays on translation, Lu Xun explained his idea of 'transplantation' as a form of empathy necessary to understand and translate foreign cultures into one's own: "如果还是翻译, 那么, 首先的目的, 就在博览外国作品, 不但移情, 也要益智" (Lu Xun [1935] 1994, 813) (If one is a translator, the goal is to read foreign works extensively, in order not only to change one's feelings, but also to expand one's knowledge).

⁴ As argued by Caroline Disler, Walter Benjamin in his famous essay on translation (*The Task of the Translator*, Benjamin 1996) only used the German word *Überleben* once, which has been extensively translated as "afterlife". Indeed, the word rather suggests the survival of a work of art. However, as Disler demonstrates, Benjamin later used the word *Fortleben*, which underlines the transformative power of translation: "There is no afterlife. There is no survival. Neither is there a simple continuation of the original that was. There is *Fortleben*, metamorphosis, evolution, transformation, renewal, renovation, supplementation. And translation is a sign of this *Fortleben* stage. Herein lies one of Walter Benjamin's most revolutionary ideas. Not only has the origin of a literary work nothing to do with its creation or realization at the hands of its author or artist, but in its *Fortleben*, by definition, the original itself actually changes" (Disler 2012, 193-4).

I do not think Ah Q can be considered as a thoroughly globalised or universal character, but I would contend that he can be interpreted in the light of - and adapted to - different cultural contexts, according to a set of values, particularly: a (self)critical view of intellectuals; the concern for the subordinate individuals' right to speak and voice their needs; a social commitment representing, for each of the three writers, the basic motivation underpinning their literary engagement and the radical critique of society. Notwithstanding the profoundly diverse societies and cultures they belong to, these authors were all inspired by a Marxist view of the world, which they nevertheless subjected to harsh criticism. Indeed, one element which is only implied by Lu Xun and more properly embodied by Fo and Hein is "the ironic treatment of orthodox Marxist-Leninist views on the philosophy of history" (Jackman 2000, 253).

3 **Christoph Hein's *Die wahre Geschichte des Ah Q. Zwischen Hund und Wolf* (The True Story of Ah Q. Between Dog and Wolf)**

The first study case is the adaptation by Christoph Hein (b.1944), faithfully entitled *Die wahre Geschichte des Ah Q* (The True Story of Ah Q), written in 1983 and put on stage for the first time in East Berlin in 1984. Hein began his career as a playwright and went on to become an important novelist and translator. Born in the Democratic Republic of Germany (DDR), he initially adhered to the communist regime but eventually became a harsh critic of its political system. His adaptation of Lu Xun's masterpiece is based on a Brechtian reinvention of the classical Chinese text, with some elements of the 'absurdism' of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. The Chinese setting is maintained in the play, but the atmosphere is more reminiscent of the DDR's repressive system. In his adaptation, Ah Q is a poor villager (*Dorfwohner*), a beggar, with a drinking problem and a vague inclination towards anarchism. Hein's main change in the text is the addition of a central character alongside Ah Q: Wang Louse-Beard (Krätzebart Wang), who is actually a combination of the original character of Lu Xun's novella, Ah Q's worst enemy, Bearded Wang, and of Kong Yiji, the failed intellectual from another short story by Lu Xun.⁵ By putting the two together, Hein develops - through his own personal interpretation, the unresolved and tormenting contradiction between

⁵ The story was published in Lu Xun's first collection *Nahan* 呐喊 (Outcry, 1925), along with "The True Story of Ah Q".

peasants and intellectuals⁶ which haunted Lu Xun. The other characters in the play are the guardian of the temple, where the two thugs live, a young nun and Mask, a disfigured policeman. In Hein's view, Ah Q and Wang represent an unrealistic impulse towards anarchy, an instinctive refusal to submit to any externally imposed authority: both the beggar and the intellectual are imbued with a desire for rebellion, but they both fail to participate in the revolution when it occurs. As in Lu Xun's original text, Hein's Ah Q is both a victim and a perpetrator, driven by unrestrained instincts, in the end he rapes and kills the young nun. Afterwards, as in Lu Xun's story, he is eventually executed, not for killing the woman, but for a theft he has never committed. The element of sexual misconduct, which is part of Ah Q's misogynist character in Lu Xun's work, is further developed here in Hein's pessimistic *Weltanschauung* of an inhuman society. Indeed, according to Iwabuchi Tatstuji "Heins Ah Q sollte irgendwann einmal bewußt und intellektuell gewesen sein, damit er sich anschließend in ein unmenschliches Wesen verwandeln kann" (1995, 395) (Hein's Ah Q should at some point become for one time a conscious man and an intellectual, so that he can be turned into an inhuman being).

On the one hand, Heins' play often shifts its focus to the intellectual, Wang, voicing the kind of heavy self-criticism familiar to Lu Xun's himself. On the other hand, Ah Q embodies the lower class and its inability to oppose the political status quo. But his fellow, Wang, the decadent and cynical intellectual, is equally powerless and selfish.

4 Dario Fo's *La storia di Qu* (The Story of Qu)

Contrastingly enough, Dario Fo's version of Ah Q is based on a more idealistic and carnivalised interpretation of the character. His play too underlines the opposition between the subaltern condition of the protagonist and a hierarchical society based on a violent repression. However, Fo's approach is much more playful and – by contrast to Hein's nihilistic attitude – filled with liveliness. His Ah Q is actually a Chinese Harlequin, whose whole life and even the participation in the revolution seem to be completely random, as he and the other peasants have absolutely no control over the circumstances they live in. Nevertheless, Fo makes a staunch revolutionary of the poor

⁶ "Im Stück ist es nicht mehr die Dorfarmut, wie bei Lu Xun, sondern die Intelligenz. Da ist vielleicht eine vergleichbare Haltung zu finden. In Mitteleuropa auf jeden Fall war sie immer dort vorhanden, also auf dem Dorf. Die chinesische Dorfarmut war in Mitteleuropa immer die Intelligenz" (Hein, cited in Iwabuchi 1995, 392) (In my play there are not only the poor villagers, as with Lu Xun, but there is also the intelligentia. The two may be seen to share a similar attitude. In any case, the poor Chinese villagers of Central Europe have always been the intellectuals).

subaltern – something that Lu Xun, in his radical pessimism, would have never dared to do.

Fo discovered Lu Xun on his trip to China in 1975, when he had the chance to read his stories in French. Later, he also read them in an Italian translation. This ‘encounter’ was a deeply inspiring one, whose effect lastingly influenced the Italian playwright until the last years of his life.⁷ In an online interview, Fo states that Lu Xun’s character made people laugh and cry: Ah Q is a “cialtrone” (slob) but also “una maschera di grande sapienza satirica” (Fo 2015) (a mask endowed with great wisdom and satirical power).

It is important to note that the composition of *The Story of Qu* was not a simple task. The Italian adaptation was first written by Fo in 1989 in his typical half-invented North-Italian dialect with a few insertions of his famous grammelot (an onomatopoeic language originally invented to avoid censorship, based on phonetic rather than semantic utterances); the manuscript is still accessible online in the Franca Rame archive (Fo 1989).

The original form of the script was a monologue based on the narration of the story by a storyteller, who is reminiscent of the ironical narrator in Lu Xun’s novella. The protagonist, moulded on Lu Xun’s Ah Q, is Qu-Stray (Qu-Randazzo) a poor peasant in an imaginary town of the Himalayas, who lives from hand to mouth and often wears a monk’s habit in order to beg for food. One day, during a farcical attack against the local governor by a group of rebels disguised as monks, he is mistaken for their leader and arrested. Although he protests his innocence, the governor and the local warlord decide to put him on trial and to make a scapegoat of him through an exemplary punishment. Qu-Stray is only a buffoon, an ordinary man, but ultimately decides to accept his fate and dies as a hero.

⁷ As reported by Rossella Ferrari (2005, 37), *The Story of Qu* is not the only work by Dario Fo inspired by Chinese culture and society: in 1989, right after the Tian’an men massacre, Dario Fo wrote a couple of texts devoted to the Chinese revolution: “Storia della tigre” (Tale of a Tiger, 1977), which tells the story of a wounded soldier during Mao’s Long March, and his encounter with a tigress; and “Lettera dalla Cina (Mandata a Parigi da una ragazza di Pekino)” (Letter from a Chinese Girl [Sent to Paris by a Girl from Beijing] 1989). Besides, *The Story of Qu* is not the only text inspired by Lu Xun’s fiction: there are traces in his archive of an incomplete study for a story based on the short story “Yao” 药 (Medicine, 1919) entitled “Appunti dattiloscritti con correzioni manoscritte di Dario Fo per un testo sulla Cina” (Typewritten Notes with Handwritten Corrections by Dario Fo for a Text about China, 1975). In the incomplete script, Fo depicts a girl in 1928 China, who dies after taking a deadly medicine – a steamed bun soaked with blood, the blood of a communist. Ferrari, who mentions these texts in her article on Meng Jinghui’s adaptation of Fo’s “Morte accidentale di un anarchico” (Accidental Death of an Anarchist, 1970), defines this cross-cultural exchange between Chinese culture and Italian theater as a “barter of techniques” (2005, 39), a bidirectional “process of cross-fertilization, localization and creative appropriation” (38).

In the monologue and, later, in the expanded version of the text, Fo wisely and joyously blends his own satirical style inspired by the *Commedia dell'Arte* with typical elements of Chinese popular theatre such as Beijing opera, acrobatics and dance.⁸

More than twenty years later, the script was expanded into a more complicated play, thanks to the translation of Fo's unique dialect into Italian by Fo's wife Franca Rame and Giselda Palumbo. The new text is an extended version featuring a large number of characters and combining the characteristics of a carnivalesque farce interweaved with political and romantic intrigue. Lengthy episodes and references to the Italian political scene were added to the original script, which was mainly based on the scenes of the communists/monks' attack against the governor and Qu's arrest and trial, narrated by the storyteller. The new version was staged for the first time in 2014 at the Piccolo Teatro and other theatres in Milan. The play was staged again in 2015 on the occasion of the Milan Expo.⁹

Dario Fo finds in Ah Q a Chinese embodiment of the famous *Commedia dell'Arte* character, Arlecchino, Harlequin, a popular and ironic embodiment of the subaltern in the northern Italian tradition. In an interview with the *Corriere della sera* newspaper Fo defines Qu as a "revolutionary jester" and he further explains that:

Qu è una sorta di Arlecchino cinese, uno zanni affamato e anarchico, che vive di espedienti e di ironia. (Manin 2014, 47)

Qu is a sort of Chinese Harlequin, a hungry and anarchic *zanni* [a character type in *Commedia dell'Arte* best known as an astute servant], who lives by his wits and irony.

Despite subjecting both the text and the character to an intense process of transculturation, Fo fully grasps the profound meaning of Ah Q: as he also states in another interview released in 2015, Qu-Stray

Si trova a partecipare ad una rivolta ma senza la coscienza del significato che ha questa rivolta, così per il piacere dell'assurdo, per il piacere di vedere della gente che si dà un sacco di arie, che impone agli altri regole, leggi ecc. ecc. che a un certo punto fugge spaventata [...] (Fo 2015).

⁸ For a description of Fo's travel to China and his interest in the Chinese theatrical tradition, associated with the Italian tradition of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, see Ferrari, who speaks of "assimilation and intercultural exchange" (2005, 36).

⁹ The most recent version, since Fo's death in 2016, has been the dialogue between two voices staged by Massimo Navone in 2018, starring Veronica Franzosi and Luca Daddino.

Finds himself involved in an uprising, yet without being aware of its meaning, only for the pleasure of absurdity and of seeing people who are full of themselves, who impose rules and laws on others, flee in fear at some point [...].

In Fo's own words, Ah Q is a "grotesque"¹⁰ hero, someone "che si fa burla anche della morte" (Fo 2015) (who mocks even death). In the interviews and various speeches he gave about his adaptation, Fo claims to have been inspired by Chinese satirical theatre and its taste for grotesque.

This adaptation strikingly contrasts with Christoph Hein's darker and more intimistic play. Nonetheless, the two adaptations are both convincing transpositions of the same core story. Hein's play is closer to the original plot and setting, whereas Fo, aimed to preserve Ah Q's naivety and potential rebelliousness but ended up with a rather utopian reinvention of the character.

5 'Transculturating Ah Q'. The Main Themes

Treating the May Fourth tradition as a contact zone, I have tried to determine what features have been adapted and transculturated, in this "process of cultural transformation marked by the influx of new culture elements and the loss or alteration of existing ones" (Merriam-Webster 1993, 2426). Owing to the limited space in this article, I will just examine the main elements: a) the importance of language, and the answer given by the three texts to the famous question "can the subaltern speak?"; b) the idea(l) of revolution; c) anarchism; d) iconoclasm and anticlericalism; e) the figure of the scapegoat and the dilemmatic relationship between intellectuals and peasants; f) the tragedy of love: from misogyny to human degradation and romanticism.

Presenting some significant excerpts from the two texts, I will analyse each of these aspects and the way in which they have been 'translated' to suit the target contexts of the 1980s East Germany and the Italian society at the turn of the twentieth century, by means of a close reading of the three texts; for Hein's script I have drawn up-

¹⁰ Lu Xun used the same adjective to define his story: "中国现在的事, 即使如实描写, 在别国的人们, 或将来的好中国的人们看来, 也都会觉得grotesk。我常常假想一件事, 自以为这是想得大奇怪了; 但倘遇到相类的事实, 却往往更奇怪。在这事实发生以前, 以我的浅见寡识, 是万万想不到的。" (Lu Xun [1926] 1994, 251). "If things that take place in China now are written up as they really are, they will seem *grotesk* [German in the original] in the eyes of people in other countries or to the people in a better China of the future. I often imagine things that seem just too strange, but when I actually encounter things similar to what I imagined in real life, they are invariably even stranger. But prior to these things taking place in real life, based on my shallow knowledge, I could never have imagined them" (Lu Xun 2017a, 42).

on the English translation by Allan and Manheim (Hein 2000), while the translations of the Italian excerpts are mine.

5.1 The Importance of Language. Can the Subaltern Speak?

It is clear from the works and personality of the authors I am discussing in this paper, that they all insistently asked themselves the famous question posed by Spivak ([1988] 1994), but much already addressed by Antonio Gramsci in his *Notes on Italian History*: “Can the subaltern speak?”

Upset by the ghostly presence of “literary language” (*wenyan wen* 文言文) in his own life and works, but especially by its functioning as an oppressive impediment for the subaltern, Lu Xun's greatest concern was indeed the liberation from this oppressive obstacle, which prevented the subaltern from speaking.

因为那文字，先就是我们的祖先留传给我们的可怕的遗产。而大多数的人们却不懂得，结果也等于无声。文明人和野蛮人的分别，其一，是文明人有文字，能够把他们的思想，感情，藉此传给大众，传给将来。中国虽然有文字，现在却已经和大家不相干，用的是难懂的古文，讲的是陈旧的古意思，所有的声音，都是过去的，都就是只等于零的。所以，大家不能互相了解，正像一大盘散沙[...]。 (Lu Xun [1927] 1994, 319)

So, although China has a system of writing, it has now become irrelevant to the majority of the people since it uses a difficult to understand archaic language good only for expressing ancient and obsolete ideas. All the sounds in this language are outmoded and are thus tantamount to having none at all. People are therefore unable to understand one another and are like a big platter of loose sand. (Lu Xun 2017b, 165)

Lu Xun's reading of the subalterns' (un)ability to speak and fight for themselves in “The True Story of Ah Q” is unavoidably a pessimistic one, a narrative of failure. Still, his most important contribution to the May Fourth Movement was indeed his successful support of the struggle for the language reform, which paved the way for future democratisation by replacing the obsolete *wenyan wen* with a still immature yet more accessible *baihua wen* 白话文 (vernacular).

In the incipit of his script, Fo inserts a sentence expressing an important concept in Marxist thought, namely a people's right to speak out:

LA STORIA, LA FANNO I POPOLI A PARTIRE DAI SOTTOPOSTI MA POI SONO I PADRONI CHE LA RACCONTANO (Fo, Rame [2011] 2014, 4)

History is made by peoples, starting from the subaltern, but it is told by the bosses.

A vibrant political and social commitment brings the three authors together. Concern for the subalterns – the desire of giving them a voice – is apparently the tightest bond uniting Lu Xun, Christoph Hein and Dario Fo. From Lu Xun's essays and literary works in general it is clear that his main target were the passivity and resignation of the masses. In many passages of his *zawen* 杂文 (short free essays), we get to realise that his thought is still affected by the historical and cultural limits of his day; however, his outlook and his profound understanding of the main dynamics underpinning the unhealthy and violent relationship between the subaltern and the hegemonic classes already show an extraordinary and revolutionary intellectual lucidity.

Lu Xun's Ah Q is a negative hero, one who, according to the author's own words, should not inspire pity but only anger and hate. The darkness of Lu Xun's epoch and his controversial, self-dissecting spirit prevented him from depicting a more positive and constructive figure. In Hein's case, his political disappointment with the DDR regime is clearly expressed by the choice of the characters surrounding Ah Q in his play: the guardian of the temple, the policeman and even Wang the intellectual – who is actually allied with the subaltern – each of them represents a form of oppressive, silencing power, which, in turn, is violated at the same time. The play's ending in Ah Q's meaningless death reveals Hein's stern criticism of German communism as a system that has failed to really let the subaltern speak. Besides, his nihilistic, pessimistic existentialism does not allow his Ah Q to reach any positive outcome.

Differently enough, Dario Fo – an extremely talented actor and singer himself – not only metaphorically lends voice to the subaltern through his popular figure of the jester (“giullare”), but directly interprets it on stage. As noted by Paolo Puppa, the characters in Fo's plays are

good-natured, sulphuric louts, a kind of proletariat of the outer suburbs who have to live on their wits in order to survive. Coming from the tradition of naturalistic melodrama [...] they represent a type of marginalised underworld, cheerful and desperate at the same time, from which the protagonist has to free himself in order to assert himself as an individual and a social being. (cited in Mitchell 2014, 66-7)

Indeed, Fo's transformation of Ah Q into a positive jester is one of the most striking changes the playwright makes to the original text. However, it should be noted that, despite his gloomy representation of oppressed peasants, Lu Xun never ceased to explore all the possibilities of giving them the power to speak. This is exactly what Fo

stresses in his rewriting of Lu Xun: in the incipit of both the 1989 and the 2011 script, we read that the play has been

ispirata ad un racconto di Lu Xun, filosofo e poeta cinese nato nel 1881 e fondatore - poco prima della rivoluzione - della lingua cinese moderna detta semplificata. (Fo, Rame [2011] 2014, 1)

inspired by a short story by Lu Xun, a philosopher and poet born in 1881 and the founder - slightly before the revolution - of the so-called simplified modern Chinese language.

Anyway, the answer to the question "Can the subaltern speak?" is clearly negative according to Lu Xun. In the final chapter of the novella entitled *Datuan* 大团圆 (Happy Ending), Ah Q undergoes a trial, during which he is interrogated by a bald old man (the judge):

老头子和气的问道,“你还有什么话说么?”阿Q一想,没有话,便回答说,“没有。”(Lu Xun [1922] 1982, 525)

"Have you anything else to say?", the old man asked mildly. Ah Q gave the question some thought, but he had nothing to say, so he answered: "No".

Later, when asked to sign his name, he is still 'mute', incapable of expressing his voice/thoughts:

我……我……不认得字。”阿Q一把抓住了笔,惶恐而且惭愧的说。(Lu Xun [1922] 1982, 524)

"I... I can't write." Ah Q confessed terrified and ashamed, grasping the brush.

In the end, he does not even sing out the few arias from the opera the audience is expecting to hear from him. Similarly, Hein lets us know that on the verge of death:

TEMPELWÄCHTER [...] Und dann schrie Ah Q: Es lebe die Anarchie. Und dann: ratsch. Das war alles, und wir mussten vom Platz. Nicht eine Strophe hat er gesungen. (Hein 1984, 134)

GUARDIAN OF THE TEMPLE [...] Ah Q shouted "Long live anarchy" and then *zack*. That was all, and we had to clear off. He didn't sing a single line. (Hein 2000, 302).

On the contrary, in depicting Qu-Stray, Dario Fo stresses the possibility of lending voice to the subaltern. First, in the story, Qu falls in

love with a girl, Moon, who gives him a dictionary, through which he will learn how to speak to his fellow peasants. Thanks to that he will be able to perform his final sacrifice by becoming a willing scapegoat, in order to awake his fellow peasants' spirit of rebellion against the hegemonic classes represented by the governor, the warlord and the soldiers. Besides, in the final scene, Qu-Stray is asked to sing during the parade to the execution field (Fo, Rame [2011] 2014, 76-7); he performs a song he has written himself, a proud protest song, which compares the subaltern peasant to a dashing horse reduced to captivity.

The episode of the song represents a transcultural transformation and a political evolution of the original character. Lu Xun would not have expected his creature to transcend its own limits and speak out its rebellion against the silencing forces of traditional power.¹¹ In Lu Xun's text, Ah Q can only draw an imperfect circle, unable to sign with his name; besides, his lack of empathy towards his fellow villagers shows Lu Xun's scepticism in this regard. On his part, Christoph Hein leaves his original ideal unachieved, shattered by the inconsistency of both the intellectual and the subaltern's reaction to violence and oppression. Similarly to Lu Xun, he also seems to believe that without self-awareness and a thorough enlightenment of consciousness, there is no space for any kind of redemption of the subaltern. His nihilism is complete and reflects Lu Xun's thought.

5.2 The Idea(l) of Revolution

Mocked as an illusion, as something from which people are still excluded from in Lu Xun's novella, revolution is also central in the two adaptations under investigation. Following in Lu Xun's steps, Hein's absurdist play points out that revolution is something that can never be really achieved, a utopian "phantom" (Jackman 2000, 254) for both the intellectuals and the lower classes:

WANG [...] Sie reden alle davon. Wo du hinhörst, Ah Q. Es kann nicht mehr lange dauern. Manche sagen, sie sei schon in der Stadt. Und von der Stadt bis zu uns, für eine Revolution ist das ein Katzen-sprung. (Hein 1984, 103)

WANG [...] everybody's talking about it, wherever you go. It won't be long now. Some say it's already reached the city. And from the city to us is no distance at all for a revolution. (Hein 2000, 274)

¹¹ However, I would say that Ah Qu's contempt for the *juven* 举人 (successful candidate in a provincial examination) and the other village notables represents – to a certain extent – a germinal awareness and dissatisfaction with his own condition of subalternity.

These words are spoken by Wang, the anarchist-intellectual. But, as in Lu Xun's stern criticism of the 1911 Chinese revolution, at the end of the play both Wang and Ah Q find out that the revolution has already happened without them, and nothing has really changed:

WANG Eine unerwartete Wendung der Geschichte. Ja.

AH Q Ah ja.

WANG Die Geschichte liebt Sprünge. Dialektik. Vom Niederen aufsteigend zum Höheren und abfallend ins Triviale. (Hein 1984, 125)

WANG Historical events seem to have taken a most unexpected turn.

AH Q I suppose they have.

WANG History is characterised by leaps. That's dialectic. Rising from the lower to the higher, then lapsing into banality. (Hein 2000, 294)

Such is the cynical conclusion drawn by Wang.

On the contrary, we find a more optimistic and voluntaristic stance in Fo's Qu. The poor thug turns into a brave and romantic revolutionary despite himself. In the following passage, Qu-Stray discusses the meaning of revolution with another convict:

QU-RANDAZZO [...] perché con la rivoluzione tutto si ribalta, anche l'impossibile diventa normale, tutto! diventa il rovescio di prima: guerre, uomini, donne e ragazzini accoppiati, stupri, saccheggi... basta! Perché se ci resta 'sta roba, compresi i tribunali, le galere, le banche coi prestiti a strozzo, e 'sta massa di trappole... che comunismo è?

OTTAVO CARCERATO Perché, voi comunisti avete in mente di far tabula rasa di tutto? È questa la rivoluzione?

QU-RANDAZZO Eh sì, (estrae il grosso libro regalo della ragazza) sapete cos'è questo? È un vocabolario, e qui, alla parola "rivolta" dice che significa "capovolta, rovescio"; e rivoluzione significa "rivolgimento in azione, circonvoluzione", che poi è anche il capovolgere della Terra col giorno e la notte. (Fo, Rame [2011] 2014, 61)

QU-STRAY [...] because with the revolution everything is turned on its head, even the impossible becomes normal, everything! It becomes the opposite of before: wars, men, women and children killed, rapes, plunders ... enough! Because, if what is left to us is this stuff, including courts, prisons, banks with their loan sharks, what kind of communism is that?

EIGHTH CONVICT Why, do you communists plan to erase everything? Is this what you call a revolution?

QU-STRAY Oh, yes (he takes out the thick book the girl gave him): do you know what this is? It's a dictionary, and here, under the word "revolt", it says that it means "overturning, reversal"; and revolution means "upheaval, convulsion", which also applies to the Earth's turning upside down with day and night.

By contrast to what happens in both Lu Xun's novella and Hein's adaptation, at the very moment of his death, the "revolutionary" Qu-Stray is applauded by people and his death is not received with indifference and contempt, but with deep feeling. The final line of Fo's script reads: "era un comunista utopico" (Fo, Rame [2011] 2014, 81) (He was a utopian communist); instead, Hein's statement is, again, much more pessimistic and cynical. Commenting on Ah Q's death, Wang states: "Wegen diesem Dummkopf will ich nicht den Kopf verlieren" (Hein 1984, 135) (I don't want to lose my head on account of that idiot, Hein 2000, 303).

5.3 Anarchism

Throughout their works, both Hein and Fo plunge Lu Xun's Ah Q into their political discourse on anarchism, and their criticism of all institutionalised power. Originally, in Lu Xun's novella, Ah Q seems to passively absorb this attitude from some speech he has heard at the wine shop, but when the revolution seems to be approaching Not-Yet-Village, he merely invokes it as the right for him to take whatever he wants. Besides, throughout the text, although Ah Q's attitude is not a rational and conscious one, he often shows a general intolerance towards rules and power (by attacking figures embodying social or cultural power, such as the False Foreign Devil, the nuns, the Zhao family etc.). However, in the end, during the trial, he remains completely passive and unaware, stubbornly accepting his destiny as a scapegoat. Lu Xun – whose anarchist thought has been recently explored by Fang (2008) – was apparently convinced that the illiterate people were incapable of any independent political thought or act, except for a generic, instinctive refusal to abide by the law.

Hein and Fo clearly show a much stronger tendency towards anarchism, albeit with certain nuances. Hein also depicts Ah Q as an "anarchist by instinct" when highlighting his feelings of hate towards everything, but he further articulates the character's implied anarchism by placing an intellectual by his side. For the two protagonists of "Die wahre Gesichte", anarchy is "ein schönes Wort. Scharf und kräftig" (Hein 1984, 90) (a great word. Direct – powerful, Hein 2000, 262). In Wang's words, "Das heist, dass ich gegen alles bin. Gegen alles, verstehst du? Ein Anarchist ist gegen alles" (Hein 1984, 90) (It means I'm against everything. Everything, you follow me? Anarchists are against everything, Hein 2000, 262).

Then Ah Q naively asks:

AH Q Sind wir Anarchisten?

WANG Wir haben keine andere Wahl.

AH Q Wie schön. – Ich bin gern Anarchist. Ich habe soviel Hass in mir. – Es lebe die Anarchie. (Hein 1984, 90)

AH Q Are we anarchists?

WANG We haven't any choice.

AH Q It's great being an anarchist. I've got so much hate inside me. I hate everything. Long live anarchy! (Hein 2000, 262)

He even tries to transmit this belief to the nun, in the following conversation:

NONNE Es gibt Worte, die Kraft geben, die zufrieden machen.

AH Q Das stimmt, Nonne. Anarchie zum Beispiel. (Hein 1984 95)

NUN There are some words that give you strength, that bring happiness.

AH Q That's a fact sister, 'Anarchy' for example. (Hein 2000, 266).

Hein himself explained the anarchistic stance taken by the two protagonists of his play, which, undoubtedly, reminds us of Lu Xun's radical scepticism yet pushes it even further:

The anarchistic moment, destruction in order to arrive at a tabula rasa, in order to come to a new beginning, to find a new hope, expose illusions as illusions – this is the focal point around which the thoughts of both figures in the play circle. (Hein cited in McKnight 1995, 149)

Fo's anarchist faith goes without saying; one also finds many references throughout his works revealing his personal beliefs. The following passage unmistakably shows his refusal to submit to any kind of organised political structure, in his transcultural rewriting and appropriation of Ah Q's discourse:

Un partito?! Figurarsi se potrei starmene dentro un partito... con le regole, i programmi... Mi fa schifo solo pensarci a un partito! Io non sopporto la politica... che mi sono sempre fatto i fatti miei e degli altri me ne strafrego... che vadano tutti a farsi fottere! Loro, i loro trucchi, le ruberie, gli intrallazzi e gli sgavazzi! (Fo, *Rame* [2011] 2014, 35)

A party?! How on earth could I ever join a party... with all its rules, the programmes... Only thinking of a party makes me sick! I can't

stand politics... I have always minded my own business, and I don't give a toss about others... Fuck them! They, their tricks, their thievery, their wheelings and dealings!

5.4 Iconoclasm and Anticlericalism

Iconoclasm and the debunking of any authoritarian religious or philosophical belief are defining features of the May Fourth Movement, and a consequence of the anarchism embraced by some of its writers. But these are also values that the two European authors share with Lu Xun, and which they redefine within the framework of a critical rejection of Christianity as a form of oppressive power. For all of them, the subalterns are continuously exploited and oppressed by the compelling force of religious or cultural biases. The "contact zone" acts here as a space where, at first, the anti-clerical ideas which Lu Xun derived from European radical thought (from the Enlightenment to Nietzsche) are inserted into the Chinese struggle against an obscurantist tradition, and then taken up and newly re-interpreted by Hein and Fo in their critical theatre.

Ah Q is at the same time an enemy and an expression of tradition. While resenting the Zhao and Qian notables and their power based on their traditional cultural capital as families of successful candidates at official examinations, he also despises the young False Foreign Devil because of his zest for Western culture and modernity. But it is mostly the ironical voice of the narrator that reveals Lu Xun's deep aversion to a superimposed and uncritical reception of the cultural tradition. His parody of the ancient historiographic and literary texts throughout the novella subtly achieves the effect of a thorough rejection of what he considers to be obsolete and irrational dogmas.

In Hein's play, when reacting to the guardian of the temple where Ah Q and Wang live, Wang says that the revolution will dismantle the abusive power of religion:

WANG Du und dein Pfaffe. Rom und die Inquisition. Alle ihr bigotten Speichellecker [...].

WANG Von der Erde werden wir euch fegen. Ertränken im heiligen Blut der Revolution. Die Feinde der Freiheit, die Feinde des Volkes, wir werden sie zerschmettern wie - (Hein 1984, 88-9)

WANG You and your priests. Rome and the Inquisition, the whole lot of you bigoted toadies [...].

WANG We are going to sweep you off the face of the earth. Drown you in the sacred blood of the revolution. Like all enemies of freedom and enemies of the people, we'll smash you to pieces like... (Hein 2000, 260)

Ah Q immediately reinforces his message, launching an anarchist attack on the power represented by priests:

AH Q Wir werden ein bisschen Revolution machen, du Gymnastiker. Dann gehts dir an den Kragen. (Hein 1984, 89)

AH Q We are going to have a bit of revolution here, you health freak. Then you'll see what's what! (Hein 2000, 261)

In another passage, he repeats his attack when talking to the policeman:

AH Q Nach der Revolution gibt's keine Vorschrift. Wird abgeschafft, Maske, deine Heilige Vorschrift. (Hein 1984, 117)

AH Q After the revolution there won't be any regulations, Mask. Your God-given regulations will all be abolished. (Hein 2000, 286)

Famous for his unconventional views on Catholicism and his tense relationship with religious authorities in Italy, Dario Fo, in his adaptation, provides critical references to the bigoted rules imposed by religion; like Hein, he also associates religious power to political oppression: one of the authorities who decide to arrest and then execute Qu-Stray is called "Government priest" (*Sacerdote governativo*). Moreover, Fo/Qu-Stray launches his attack against hegemonic powers, such as "governments, parties and religions", which always imply the plague of violent and corrupted bureaucrats (Fo, Rame [2011] 2014, 62).

5.5 The Figure of the Scapegoat and the Dilemmatic Relationship between Intellectuals and Peasants

A fascinating element shared by the texts scrutinised in this paper is the figure of the scapegoat: both Hein and Fo re-interpret and expand on this idea, already embedded in Ah Q's character, who is sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit (although he wished he had). Like China, in Lu Xun's in the previously quoted essay *Wusheng de Zhongguo* 无声的中国 (*Voiceless China*, 1927), Ah Q is speechless before the bald old man judging him and vis-à-vis the hostile gaze of the crowd. He cannot even sing the few lines of the Chinese opera he knows, and which would let him gain the townspeople's respect. The whole story reveals traits of passivity and a tendency to be exploited (as well as to exploit), a characteristic which was harshly condemned by Lu Xun, when criticising the so-called Chinese na-

tional character. Both Sebastian Veg and Marston Anderson elaborate on the figure of the scapegoat as presented by Lu Xun under the influence of Nietzsche:

The Christ figure in "Revenge II"¹² is effectively tied in with Ah Q; however, precisely because of this similarity I cannot agree that Nietzsche's critique of Christianity is of "infrequent concern to Lu Xun"[as argued by Nick Kaldis]. (Veg 2014, 54)

One can see here the effect of the "contact zone": "it is precisely this critique of Christianity", Veg claims, "that Lu Xun translates into his own critique of the weakness of Confucianism" (Veg 2014, 54).

Ah Q's character is [...] at once bound and free. As a transient scavenger, he depends for survival on the odd jobs occasionally offered him by the townspeople, who in turn use him as an all-purpose scapegoat. In this latter capacity, he is frequently made the butt of public ridicule, which is the means by which individuals at all levels of the village society assert their position and bolster their pride. (Anderson 1990, 81)

In their turn, both Hein and Fo re-use and expand on Lu Xun's interpretation of the scapegoat. Lu Xun's tragic and farcical treatment of the scapegoat is echoed in the epilogue of Fo's play, where Qu-Stray is deliberately punished by the judge in order to deter other rebellions. Let's compare the following passages from Lu Xun's novella and Dario Fo's script:

然而这一夜，举人老爷反而不能睡：他和把总呕了气了。举人老爷主张第一要追赃，把总主张第一要示众。把总近来很不将举人老爷放在眼里了，拍案打凳的说道，“惩一儆百！你看，我做革命党还不上二十天，抢案就是十几件，全不破案，我的面子在那里？破了案，你又来迂。不成！这是我管的！”举人老爷窘急了，然而还坚持，说是倘若不追赃，他便立刻辞了帮办民政的职务。而把总却道，“请便罢！”于是举人老爷在这一夜竟没有睡，但幸第二天倒也没有辞。(Lu Xun [1922] 1982, 524-5)

Mr. Provincial Examination couldn't sleep at all that night, brooding over a tiff with his captain of militia. The former had argued that the most urgent task was to go after the booty, while the latter counters that *someone needed making a public example of*. The captain had of late been showing a distressing want of respect for the esteemed man of letters. "Kill a chicken, and you'll scare the

¹² A prose poem by Lu Xun, which stages Jesus's crucifixion in a strikingly alienating way, portraying him as one persecuted by the masses.

monkeys" he declared, thumping the table. "It's less than three weeks since I joined the Revolution, and there have been a dozen robberies, none of them solved. It's making me a laughing stock! Here we are, the case solved, and you're fussing like an old woman. I've had it up to here - keep your nose out of this!" Still the discomforted scholar insisted that he would resign forthwith from the civil administration if they didn't go after the stolen goods. To which the captain responded: "Fine! Resign!" Mr. Provincial Examination failed to sleep that night; but neither, happily, did he resign the following day. (Lu Xun [1922] 2009, 121; italics added)

SIGNORE DELLA GUERRA State tranquillo eccellenza che la vostra testa, voglio dire la testa del vostro capro espiatorio, da porre inchiodata sul muro come un trofeo di caccia, l'avrete per certo!
ACCUSATORE Quindi per chiudere il Qu-Randazzo è da dichiarare capo ribelle comunista e non ci sono discussioni. (Fo, Rame [2011] 2014, 41)

WARLORD Don't worry, Your Excellency, you'll have your head, I mean, your scapegoat's head, so you can nail it to the wall as a hunting trophy; you'll have it for sure!

PROSECUTOR Therefore, to conclude, Qu-Stray must be declared the rebel head of the communists, no discussion here.

SECONDO GIUDICE Perché? Dove avremmo sbagliato? Non abbiamo fatto altro che applicare la regola infallibile del "colpiscine uno per punirne mille" dopotutto!

GIUDICE Attento, stai nominando una regola del capo dei Rossi!

SECONDO GIUDICE Eh beh! L'importante è che sia una regola che funzioni. (Fo, Rame [2011] 2014, 53)

SECOND JUDGE Why? Where have we gone wrong? After all, we just applied the infallible rule of "striking one to punish one thousand"!

JUDGE Be careful, you're mentioning a rule of the head of the Reds.

SECOND JUDGE Oh, well! The important thing is that the rule work.

Fo's Ah Q ultimately proves to be a successful scapegoat, as the punishment devised by his persecutors works against them. Indeed, the thug's sacrifice will awake and redeem - almost in a Christian sense - his poor fellow villagers.

On the contrary, as far as Hein's play is concerned, one finds a strongly pessimistic and cynical position, very similar to Lu Xun's negative attitude. Both Wang and Ah Q seem to vaguely allude to a sense of engagement, as it is showed by the following lines:

AH Q Der Moment eines sinnerfüllten Lebens. Wir hätten nicht umsonst gelebt. (Hein 1984, 92)

AH Q The mission that will give our lives some meaning. We won't have lived in vain (Hein 2000, 264)

WANG Ein Anarchist sollte ein Vorbild sein. Einer, zu dem man aufschaut. Oder auf den man spuckt, je nachdem. Ein Märtyrer, kein Geschäftsmann. (Hein 1984, 122).

WANG An anarchist ought to set an example. People should be able to look up to him. Or spit on him. As the case may be. Anyway a martyr not a businessman (Hein 2000, 291).

Nonetheless, in the ending, where Ah Q is about to be carried away and executed, the final dialogue between him and Wang reveals Hein's intellectual conundrum, which also characterises Lu Xun's political thought: is the people's sacrifice worth it?

WANG Auch Gesetze sind Anarchie. Alles Anarchie, mit Gesetz oder ohne. Alles Gewalt. Der Unterschied ist, wir sind ehrlicher, betrügen das Volk nicht.

AH Q Es lebe die Anarchie. Nicht wahr, Krätzebart?

WANG Sie wird leben, Ah Q. [...]

TEMPERLWÄCHTER So ein Unglück. Das Urteil steht fest. Den Kopf wird ihm Maske abschlagen. Den Kopf für einen Diebstahl, den er gar nicht begangen hat [...]. (Hein 1984, 133)

WANG Law is anarchy. Anarchy is law. Anarchy is everywhere - law or no law. Violence is everywhere. The only difference is that we are more honest, we don't pull the wool over peoples' eyes.

AH Q Long live anarchy, eh Louse-Beard? It will, won't it?

WANG Yes, Ah Q, it will live. [...]

THE GUARDIAN OF THE TEMPLE It's too bad! There won't be any appeal. Mask will chop his head for a crime he didn't commit. (Hein 2000, 301)

The final, cynical comment by the intellectual Wang reinforces the idea that utopian revolt and individual's sacrifice are foolish behaviours: "Leb wohl, Ah Q. Du warst ein guter Mensch, aber ein Dummkopf" (Hein 1984, 133) (Goodbye Ah Q. You were a goodman - but a fool, Hein 2000, 301). While both Lu Xun and Hein adopt a negative or at least contradictory attitude towards the role of the scapegoat, Fo's Qu-Stray eventually adopts this role (emphasising in a positive way the Christian elements which have also been detected in some traits of Lu Xun's character) as a major aspect of his new, positive identity.

QU-RANDEZZO [...] Porca d'una miseria! Sono quasi un intellettuale: bel salto da quel zozzone che ero! Tutto perché mi credono un brigante sovversivo. Ma cosa sarà mai essere un brigante comunista? Bisogna che mi informi! Guarda, è così importante questo giorno che quasi sono contento che m'abbiano condannato ad essere accoppato! Sono felice! (Fo, Rame [2011] 2014, 47)

QU-STRAY [...] Bloody Hell! I am almost an intellectual: a big leap compared to the slob I used to be! All because they think I am a subversive bandit. But what does it mean to be a communist bandit? I need to find out! Look, this day is so important that I am almost glad that they have sentenced me to be killed! I am happy!

In this sense, Fo seems to fully develop a thread of thought which is only potentially implied in Lu Xun's conundrum between the enlightened intellectual and the inert peasant masses, and denied by Hein, according to his own experience in the DDR: in Fo's script Qu combines the two figures in utopian fashion, ideally becoming a sort of 'enlightened peasant', who, for all his ignorance and slovenliness, manages to embody the positive, utopian prototype of the awakened masses who liberate themselves. One could say that in his transculturation of the character, Fo overcomes a century of political struggles and social claims, almost implementing the figure of the peasant-writer, whom Mao Zedong himself had once yearned for.¹³

On the one hand, Lu Xun – as well as Hein – could not see a better future for people like Ah Q yet, and let him die alone and scared, a victim of both the hegemonic classes and of his own ineptitude at the same time, 'bitten' to death by the indifferent and hostile gazes of the unsympathetic crowd. On the other hand, Dario Fo – who throughout his life fought against censorship, cultural hegemony and conservatism in Italian society – displays a more optimistic and positive view of the subaltern, as he inserts messianic elements of redemption in his interpretation of the scapegoat.

¹³ In his 1942 speech at the *Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art*, Mao outlined a new type of writer, able to embody the ideas, problems and needs of the masses by being one of them, writing directly about them and for them (Mao Zedong [1942] 2002, 48-85).

5.6 The 'Tragedy of Love'. From Misogyny to Human Degradation and Romanticism

Finally, a few words should be said on the image of women in these three texts. In Lu Xun's story this image is in line with his pessimistic views on women's condition in China: occupying a subaltern position under the yoke of traditional culture, they are not only heavily discriminated against but even blamed for men's mistakes and misfortunes. Ah Q vents his dissatisfaction by harassing the young nun, who rejects his advances with indignation. As in Confucian texts against women, for Ah Q she and women in general are the main cause of men's corruption; in particular, they are the source of sexual desire which, according to a bigot Confucian belief, leads men to ruin. Ah Q hypocritically criticises them, but, pushed by his sexual drive, awkwardly attacks the maid in Zhou's house and is sternly punished by the community.

Christoph Hein's reading of Lu Xun pushes the element of sexual harassment further, adding a brutal ending, which is nonetheless completely accidental (Ah Q kills the nun involuntarily). The play's only female character, the young nun, is called Maria Martha Martirio (a name which, through the term "martyr", encapsulates the character's fate). She brings food to the temple where the two thugs are confined: in Ah Q's eyes she is a grotesque mix of sexual and religious, sacred and profane elements. Hein eventually turns his Ah Q into an involuntary rapist. Comparing this theme with Lu Xun's, Hein appropriates the misogynist bias and transforms it into a gloomy picture of men's brutality, staging the violence induced by sexual repression and frustrations under the DDR. However, the (unwanted) killing of the nun is mainly a sign of human degradation:

the inadvertent killing of the nun comes to simbolize drastically misplaced priorities when Ah Q is executed for stealing the overlord's belongings, which he didn't do, but as implicitly defined by the social structure, the goods are more important than the nun anyway. (McKnight 1995, 150)

A striking difference compared to this approach is represented by the figure of Moon (Luna), the girl with whom Qu-Stray falls in love in Dario Fo's adaptation: in this case, again, the Italian playwright completely reverses Lu Xun and Hein's perspective, shaping a positive image of love and sex as something natural and even beneficial for a community. It is precisely thanks to the affection between the two, that Qu ultimately manages to become a spokesman for and a symbol of the people. This optimistic view on gender issues might be connected to Dario Fo's lifelong successful sentimental and professional relationship with his wife Franca Rame, a famous activist and feminist.

6 Conclusion

After this short description of elements drawn from the prototext, which have been revived and further explored in Hein and Fo's meta-texts, it should be remarked that by means of their transcultural re-writing, the two authors have successfully adapted Lu Xun's original character and its story to their own historical and cultural contexts, namely: Hein's oppressive East Germany and Fo's disillusioned Italian society at the turn of the twentieth century.

As Hutcheon states, "the appeal of adaptations for audiences lies in their mixture of repetition and difference, of familiarity and novelty" (2006, 114). The unquestionable value of Hein and Fo's adaptations of "The True Story of Ah Q" lies in their ability to resurrect for the German and Italian audiences a classical Chinese text from the last century, which represents the spirit of the May Fourth Movement - something which is quite unknown to the European audiences. Interestingly enough, the 2014-15 version of Fo's play has been staged both in English and in Italian. By inserting this May Fourth masterpiece in the tradition of European satirical theatre, the two playwrights have given Lu Xun's text a new and original *Fortleben*.

While Lu Xun's definition of the subaltern through the character of Ah Q is mainly a desperate one, as though the writer struggled to find a real way out, still, he seems to be endowed with the "pessimism of the intellect, and the optimism of the will" (Gramsci 2016, 111). The "iron house" that haunted his thought and writing - to the very end of his days - was ultimately shattered by the important legacy he left not just to Chinese readers but to an international audience as well.

In his adaptation, Christoph Hein explored and expanded the limits and possibilities of the alliance between the intellectual and the subaltern - only glimpsed by Lu Xun - by providing the character Ah Q with an intellectual counterpart, Wang Louse-Beard. Hein's translation of the tense relationships between Confucian authoritarian power and its subject - Chinese people - into the relationship between the East German communist regime and its citizens sheds new light on the moral burden felt by left-wing intellectuals both in modern China and in contemporary Europe. In the second case study, Dario Fo's *Qu-Stray* is indeed one of the best examples of the positive effects of transculturation, illustrating how this can revive an original text and potentially achieve posthumous success for it through the creation of a new text. Fo's somewhat exoticising adaptation manages to add a positive, utopian outcome for Lu Xun's tormented quest.

As Hutcheon states, the audience of an adaptation should be aware of it, i.e. it should be able to recognise the original text that inspired the adaptation. Thus, we might have a knowing audience or an unknowing one (Hutcheon 2006, 121). A good adaptation should be able to speak to both audiences.

Although it would be difficult to argue that the reception of the two plays in the 1980s and at the beginning of our century addressed a knowing audience, we could still say that the transcultural rewriting succeeded in both cases: Hein and Fo's adaptations not only paved the way for a brand new history of the legacy of Lu Xun's work, but gave this novella a meaningful afterlife. "Adaptations are not simply repetition; there is always change" (Hutcheon 2006 176): it is precisely by means of their changes that Hein and Fo's creative rewritings have kept Ah Q's story alive. They clearly show us that "evolving by cultural selection, traveling stories adapt to local cultures, just as populations of organisms adapt to local environments" (Hutcheon 2006, 177).

I wish to conclude my article with Rossella Ferrari's comment on the relationship between the text and its adaptation, which seems particularly appropriate here: "strategies of hybridization and intentional rewriting can generate higher degrees of artistic and discursive innovation without necessarily eroding the aesthetic and critical strengths of the original" (Ferrari 2012, 251).

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Troubles on the Border Marking Japanese Case-Particle Boundaries in Grammatical Annotation

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Abstract This paper aims to determine the extent and effects of the phenomenon of inconsistent case-particle boundary marking in the grammatical annotation of Japanese. It is focused on establishing what represents 'inconsistent boundary marking', how it is dealt with in informational terms, what effect it has on communication, and why it should be avoided. To this purpose, I will first build a typology of the tokenization strategies in the grammatical annotation of Japanese. I will then individuate several forms of inconsistent boundary marking and, more in general, of poor grammatical annotation, and discuss them according to the types of inconsistency and their different epistemic effects.

Keywords Japanese. Grammatical annotation. Tokenization. Case-particles. Boundary symbols. Script conversion.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 1.1 The Sample. – 1.2 The Structure of This Paper. – 1.3 Unanswered Questions. – 2 Purpose and Structure of Linguistic Annotation. – 3 The Grammatical Annotation of Japanese. – 4 Word-Boundary Marking in the Grammatical Annotation of Japanese. – 5 The Morphological Categorization of Japanese Case Particles. – 6 A Discussion of the Sample. – 6.1 Inconsistent Case-Particle Boundary Marking in Collections. – 6.2 Inconsistent Case-Particle Boundary Marking in Single Works. – 6.3 The Case of Shibatani. – 7 Poor Segmentation and Sloppy Annotation. – 7.1 Sloppy Annotation. – 7.2 Weak Editing. – 8 Linguistic Annotation and Information. – 9 Sloppy Annotation and Conventionality. – 10 Coping With Sloppy Annotation. – 11 Conclusions.



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[A] sense of common interest; which sense each man feels in his own breast, which he remarks in his fellows, and which carries him, in concurrence with others into a general plan or system of actions, which tends to public utility.

(Hume [1751] 1983, 95)

1 Introduction

Whether Japanese case markers are free word-forms, affixes, clitics, or morphemes of another kind has been the object of some debate. In a recent paper, Kageyama (2016) has provided what is probably a definitive settling of the question by determining that Japanese case markers are intermediate between independent words and clitics, and form a morphological class of their own. Japanese traditional grammar calls this class *fuzokugo* 附属語. Obviously, the issue is mainly of interest to morphologists, but it is also relevant to any linguistic work containing annotated examples of Japanese, for in grammatical annotation the marking of morph boundaries is achieved by way of conventional symbols that differ according to the nature of the morphemes being separated.

Given that linguistic annotation presupposes and reflects linguistic analysis (Iannàccaro 2000; Lehmann 2004a, 208), regardless of whether an author takes a realist or a nominalist stance on the nature of the objects represented in annotation (Hutton 1993, 166-7), one might assume that in the annotation of Japanese the boundary marking of case particles is based on the morphological theory which has won the greatest consensus. Or, alternatively, that the use of boundary symbols is explicitly motivated, possibly as part of a general explanation given in some introductory remarks. This is not the case, though, for even a cursory glance at few random works will show how the treatment of the boundaries of Japanese case markers is erratic, to say the least. In grammatical annotation, Japanese case particles are variously represented as independent words, suffixes or clitics in works by different authors, chapters of collections, papers by individual authors and even within single articles. In extreme cases, the symbol used to mark the boundary of a given particle may even vary within one and the same annotated example. Moreover, the marking strategy adopted is hardly ever discussed. The question therefore naturally arises as to whether the actual use of boundary symbols reflects a theoretical choice, or is rather decided superficially, even at random.

This paper aims to determine the extent and the effects of the phenomenon of inconsistent case-particle boundary marking in the grammatical annotation of Japanese. More specifically, it is focused on establishing what represents ‘inconsistent boundary marking’, how it is dealt with in informational terms, what effect it has on communi-

cation, and why it should be avoided. To this purpose, I will first build a typology of the word-boundary marking (or *tokenization*) strategies in the grammatical annotation of Japanese as they appear in English-language linguistics after the rule codification by Lehmann (2004b) and the *The Leipzig Glossing Rules* (hereafter LGR, Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2004). I will base this typology on the stable equilibrium of the past fifteen years, not on a diachronic analysis of trends before or after 2004. Within this frame, I will individuate several forms of inconsistent boundary marking and, in a more general sense, of poor grammatical annotation, and discuss them individually according to the types of inconsistency and their different epistemic effects.

1.1 The Sample

For this research I parsed a sample of 184 English-language works (journal articles, chapters in collections, monographs) in linguistics containing annotated examples of Japanese. I chose this corpus from the material of my own library on the basis of the following criteria.

- a. I only considered material published on or after 2006, allowing two years for the 2004 codification to settle and for the process of editing and publishing the papers to be complete before testing for compliance with the norms.
- b. I gave preference to collections, both for practical reasons and because the different approaches to boundary marking can be better appreciated when appearing close to each other within a single volume.
- c. I excluded from the sample works authored by those typologists with no specific knowledge of Japanese (such as Stassen 2009 or Creissels 2014, for example, writing on the typology of possession and functive phrases respectively). This is because I noticed that many such authors have no informed opinion about the morphology of Japanese case markers and are prone to adopt their sources' different styles of annotation, even when inconsistent with each other. As an exception, though, I included in the sample all relevant chapters in morphology collections and in general works on case (such as Malchukov, Spencer 2009) for I thought that the contributors to such volumes should have enough knowledge about case morphology to represent Japanese case particles accurately.
- d. I made no specific choice of authors. However, since the contributors to the collections in my sample are among the leading scholars of the field, the sample ended up including works by the most authoritative linguists of Japanese (Jacobsen, Kageyama, Kuno, Miyagawa, Shibatani) and by the main experts on case (such as Blake and Malchukov).

1.2 The Structure of This Paper

This paper is structured as follows. After introducing linguistic annotation in general, with special regards to its nature as a coordinative convention, I will introduce, more specifically, the grammatical annotation of Japanese and illustrate the three attested methods of showing Japanese case-particle boundaries. With the aid of few concrete examples, I will point out the distinct theoretical stances on the morphological nature of Japanese case markers that each method presupposes. The works forming the sample will be listed at this moment, grouped by type of boundary marking strategy. Then I will briefly introduce the theory on the morphology of Japanese particles, noticing how the practicalities of grammatical annotation interact with it to originate the problematic boundary marking actually observable in the literature. In this light, I will then discuss the sample in more detail, focusing on inconsistent boundary marking in collections and single works. I distinguish two degrees of inconsistency: minor inconsistencies, when a differential treatment of particle boundaries might be ascribed to some rationale, and major inconsistencies, when it may not. Within each group, I will deal with individual works in chronological order of publication. This choice is based on practical reasons only, for the purpose of this paper is not to investigate the evolution of the use of boundary symbols, either in the whole sample or in the works of individual authors. Thus, I will not make any effort to establish diachronic trends. The authoritative linguist Masayoshi Shibatani, however, stands out in this and in many other respects, so that I deemed it necessary to briefly discuss his case in a specific section (§ 6.3). Since this paper does not deal with the validity of theories but only with the ways they are projected in annotation, I also considered irrelevant the quantitative distribution of the different types of boundary symbols, that is, the relative success of the distinct theories on the morphology of Japanese case markers as it may be inferred from the sample. I will therefore provide the distributional figures but I will not comment on them.

Inconsistent case-particle boundary marking is actually part of a larger phenomenon, which I call ‘sloppy boundary marking’, to which poor segmentation also belongs. Instances of poor segmentation are symbol mismatching, bad alignment, use of conflicting boundary markers in one and the same annotated example. Then again, sloppy boundary marking is only one subtype of ‘sloppy annotation’, an affliction endemic to all the grammatical annotation of Japanese which includes the use of non-standard symbols and of conventional symbols in unconventional ways, poor category labelling, copy-and-paste errors and so on. The vast typology of sloppy annotation is not the focus of this article, because to deal with it would complicate the picture and require a deeper, more extensive pars-

ing of the sample. However, the worst cases of sloppy annotation may be seen as representing a problem of cohesion, as they often destroy the epistemic value of annotation. I therefore decided to briefly address sloppy annotation and more specifically poor segmentation in a dedicated section.

In conventional terms, sloppy annotation represents a systematic violation of the norms of annotation and should be rejected on both practical and ethical grounds. However, it is persistent, unsanctioned so far, and evidently accepted by the community of linguists. To explain this I will discuss sloppy annotation in epistemic terms, as an instance of bad data encoding prone to convey ‘misinformation’. This term refers to information with semantic contents which is *unintentionally* false but is wrongly believed to be true (Fetzer 2004; Floridi 2011; Lewandowsky et al. 2012, 124-5). I will show that the acceptance of sloppy annotation is due to the ability possessed by all linguists to filter out notational inconsistencies and thus to avoid being misinformed and acquiring false beliefs. Eventually, I will revert to the specific topic of inconsistent particle-boundary marking and, in the conclusive section, I will assess it practically and express my advice on the necessity of preventing it.

1.3 Unanswered Questions

I must admit that my motivation in writing this paper was a desire to investigate the reasons of the sense of sloppiness I often feel when faced with instances of grammatical annotation of Japanese. My choice of terms in naming certain aspects of bad annotation reflects this. Sloppiness implies carelessness; sloppy annotation, thus, originates in a lack of interest in accuracy, not in poor notational skills or bad knowledge of linguistics. How can it be then that so many linguists and editors, Japanese and non-Japanese, show so little motivation towards accurately representing Japanese in the metalanguage of annotation? The question is important, because to the reader who does not already know Japanese, annotation is essential to acquire new knowledge about the language. Moreover, good annotation gives readers the possibility of extracting from the examples more information than that to which the author has given salience.

The processes that lead to sloppy annotation take place in the minds of annotating authors, and are therefore impossible to ascertain without direct interviews, or at least without an in-depth analysis of the whole scientific production of each author. Certain attitudes, or deep motivations, may be inferred, but any judgment based on such inferences is pure speculation. To be honest, though, after so much research I have formed an opinion on the matter, and I will provide a concise account of it in the last subsection of the conclusions.

2 Purpose and Structure of Linguistic Annotation

In the study of language, the term ‘annotation’ refers to any descriptive or analytic notation applied to raw language data, which may include any kind of transcription (phonemic, phonetic, relating to discourse structure), tagging, syntactic analysis, ‘named entity’ identification and so on (Bird, Liberman 2001, 23). Generally speaking, such a system of notation has the function of providing the community of linguists with a common, artificial metalanguage whereby they can describe and talk about linguistic phenomena. In particular, through shared symbols and category labels grammatical annotation allows experts in the field to understand schematically how general rules work in a given language even without knowing that language.¹

In other words, linguistic annotation originated for the purpose of solving a coordination problem. In lack of any authority formally appointed to institutionally codify it, linguistic annotation has evolved as a convention in a true Lewisian sense (Lewis [1969] 2002, 85 ff.), i.e. an arbitrary system of norms practiced by a large population² for the strong reason that its usefulness for the community will improve as the number of members complying with it increases (according to the principle of “compliance dependence”, Marmor 2009, 10-11). Over the years, a core of experts has taken stock of the trends in annotation practice as they appear in published annotated works, compared the usefulness of the notational devices with the needs of the community of linguists, recommended changes and proposed principles of standardization, in a process of “encyclopedic codification” (Marmor 2009, 50). For the devices relevant to this paper, which concerns grammatical analysis, the milestones have been Lehmann (1982, see his rationale for encyclopedic codification: 199-200), followed by Bakker et al. (1994), Croft (2003), Lehmann (2004b) and the two first editions of the LGR (Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2004, 2008). Other relevant works include Schultze-Berndt (2006), Himmelmann (2006) and the recent Ide, Pustejovsky (2017). The lack of relevant publications on the topic after 2008 suggests that by that year, and probably even as early as 2004, sufficient codification had been reached to establish a coor-

¹ With ‘not knowing’ a language I refer collectively to the conditions of not being a native speaker of that language, of not being able to use it in any real-word communication event, and of merely being unfamiliar with it (cf. Lehmann 1982, 200).

² According to the philosophy dealing with conventions, the absolute size of the relevant population is important because in a large population it is hardly possible for members to reach formal agreements. Coordination conventions provide a solution to this problem. The community of linguists may be considered too small and too well-networked for needing a coordination convention on a matter as technical as annotation. However, it is sparse; and it is a fact that no authority exists to regulate annotation or provide standard style-rules.

dinating equilibrium, and no further major rule change was needed. For several years, then, the community of linguists has been able to rely on a powerful set of communicative tools which, by their very conventional nature, are expected to be employed consistently by every expert in the field.

Grammatical annotation is a complex system of smaller, specific conventions, regulating different levels or fields of linguistic analysis. When language examples are provided in the literature, for instance, utterances are reproduced in the original standard orthographies, or in other phonetic or phonemic transcriptions; they are freely translated into a background language which is not necessarily the writer's native language, but is often the *lingua franca* of English; they are segmented into components which are then re-described and re-codified by means of an artificial metalanguage of labels and symbols. These notational fields are classified in a number of levels or tiers (the latter notion is credited to Edwards 2001): Lehmann (2004b, 1836-7) proposes seven possible levels, Schultze-Berndt (2006) discusses twenty tiers/fields. The number of tiers used in actual instances of annotation is of course decided by authors according to the type of source text and to their analytical goal. Many tiers are often irrelevant and thus remain unexpressed.³

The number of possible tiers is high because one and only one distinct type of data is to be represented in each tier. Hence, each tier should occupy one dedicated line of text and, conversely, each line should contain one tier only. One would expect then that actual annotation should be structured as a stack of many lines, each encoding a different type of information (see 1 and 2 below). As a matter of fact, though, in the literature on syntax and semantics the norm is of formatting annotation in three lines only, corresponding to the three "main levels" of transcription, grammatical annotation and translation (Schultze-Berndt 2006, 215, 217). Since the very beginning of the encyclopedic codification of annotation the actual unit of notation has been the *line*, so that, in order for a trilinear format to be maintained, several tiers have to be compressed into one single line (Lehmann 1982, 218-9; Duranti 1997, 158-9; Edwards 2001, 327; Lehmann 2004b, 1837). In other words, grammatical annotation is afflicted by an unfortunate confusion between the notion of 'line', which is actually a unit of text, and that of 'tier', which corresponds more properly to a type of information or of analysis. The effect is that in the only two lines carrying grammatical information, it is often unclear which linguistic phenomena are represented and what value the encoding symbols have.

In the grammatical annotation of Japanese, this problem is particularly evident when decoding the information represented in Line

³ On the overall necessity of frugality in annotation, see Schultze-Berndt 2006, 217.

1, where boundary symbols are first shown. In the next two sections I will address this problem by analyzing several concrete examples of annotated Japanese.

3 The Grammatical Annotation of Japanese

Japanese is a head-final SOV language in which nouns bear no grammatical gender or number and do not inflect. Case is marked with a set of postnominal particles. The right boundary of a NP's nominal head is also the site of the topic and other focus markers, which are added to or replace case markers. Case stacking may also occur but is very limited. For the purpose of this paper the difference between case markers, postpositions (see discussion on Tsujimura 2007, 2013 in § 6), focus markers and their combinations is irrelevant, and I will refer to them collectively as 'case markers', 'case particles' or occasionally 'postnominal particles'. The latter two expressions will be used when the need arises to avoid confusion with the word 'marker' used to refer to the notational symbol encoding the boundary between nominal and particle.

In this section I will provide a line-by-line analysis of two actual examples of trilinear annotation of Japanese.

1. Case particles as free word-forms (Takezawa 2016, 473)

Taroo ga kabe o aka-ku / makka-ni nut-ta
 Taro NOM wall ACC red-KU / crimson-NI paint-PST
 'Taro painted the wall red/crimson'.

1' Line # Tier type(s) Actual contents and structure of example

Line 0	\ref	1. Case particles as free word-forms (Takezawa 2016, 473)
Line 1	\orth \phonet \mo	<i>Taroo ga kabe o aka-ku / makka-ni nut-ta</i>
Line 2	\it	Taro NOM wall ACC red-KU / crimson-NI paint-PST
Line 3	\ft	'Taro painted the wall red/crimson'.

2. Case particles as suffixes (Fukuda 2006, 90)

Takeshi-ga Kenji-no-kaoj-o makkuro-ni nur -ta
 T-NOM K-Gen-face-Acc black paint -Per
 'Takeshi painted Kenji's face black'.

2' Line # Tier type(s) Actual contents and structure of example

Line 0	\ref	2. Case particles as suffixes (Fukuda 2006, 90)
Line 1	\orth \phonet \mo \gr	<i>Takeshi_i-ga Kenji-no-kaoj_j-o makkuro-ni_{i,j} nur -ta</i>
Line 2	\it	T-Nom K-Gen-face-Acc black paint -Per
Line 3	\ft	'Takeshi painted Kenji's face black'.

In this paper I will quote the examples exactly as they appear in the sources. I will faithfully retain the original punctuation, transcription system, capitals, italics and bold characters. Examples will only differ from the originals in font type and by the addition of a header line (Line 0 above), hosting a progressive number and a reference to the source.

In this section I will explain the structure and contents of examples (1-2) with the use of (1'-2'), wherein two columns are added to the left of (1-2) to display line numbers and tier labels. The latter are the short names used to code tiers by Schultze-Berndt (2006), following the format of the Shoebox/Toolbox software developed by the Summer Institute of Linguistics.⁴ This software and several more recent tools of the same kind are used for generating annotation automatically, mostly in treebanking. It follows that tier labels are ordinarily omitted in the simpler, hand-made grammatical annotation of the sample. The type of data, the processing and the output are very similar, though, so that I found it useful to quickly refer to tiers by means of Schultze-Berndt's labels. For clarity's sake, in the discussion that follows I will accompany each mention of tier labels with a reference to their functions and contents.

Line 0 This header line contains no linguistic data but only a reference Id and/or metadata used for indexing the example. In this paper, I will use Line 0 for showing the source of the example (as in 1-2) and for specifying the theoretical stance on the nature of Japanese case markers conveyed by the use of boundary symbols.

Line 1 (Level of Transcription) In both (1-2) Line 1 hosts:

- A representation of the utterance in Latin script. This script is that of the standard orthography of the annotated language, or is a phonemic or phonetic transcription of it (tiers \phonem and \phonet respectively) (Lehmann 1982, 209-10; 2004b, 1836-7; Schultze-Berndt 2006, 220-1; Himmelmann 2006, 258). In the grammatical annotation of Japanese, this transcription follows the conventions of either of the two more common Latin notations of Japanese. These systems are the *Shūsei hebonshiki* 修正へボン式 (or Modified Hepburn system, henceforth Hepburn), and the *Naikaku kunreishiki* 内閣訓令式 (or Cabinet official directive system, hereafter Kunrei).⁵ The former, dating from 1905, is widely used in public signs and when transcribing proper names. It is a type of broad phonetic transcription in which allophones are graphically distinguished (e.g. by writing <ta> and <chi> for [ta] and [tɕi] respectively). The latter is the system officially pre-

⁴ The Toolbox software is still in use, and can be downloaded from the page <https://software.sil.org/toolbox>.

⁵ A short history of the two systems is provided by Wellisch (1978, 86-90) and Nishikawa (1983).

scribed by the government since 1954, and is currently serving as the ISO standard 3602 for the Romanization of Japanese.⁶ It is a phonemic transcription in which graphic confusion between allophones is maintained (<ta> and <ti> for [ta] and [tɕi]). Neither system is a transliteration of the Japanese syllabaries *hiragana* 平仮名 and *katakana* 片仮名, the two overlapping sets of native graphemes which make it possible to render in writing the sounds of the language. In linguistics, a slightly modified Kunrei is most commonly used, but for the purpose of this paper the system adopted in the examples is of little interest. What is of great importance, however, is that both the history and the current status of the Hepburn and the Kunrei systems qualifies them both as *alternate established orthographies*, functionally substituting the standard logo-syllabic writing system currently used by the speech community.⁷ Consequently, there is no need of representing utterances in the original non-Latin orthography, as is suggested for those languages whose writing systems do not use a Latin script (Schultze-Berndt 2006, 220-1; Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008, 2). Line 1 thus expresses both the orthographic transcription tier (\orth) and either one of the phonetic (\phonet) or phonemic (\phonem) transcription tiers.

- Morphemic segmentation. Line 1 also displays morphological analysis and expresses the morpheme break tier, labeled \mo. In both (1-2), morpheme breaks are shown by the hyphenation of the boundary between the verbal base and the suffix *ta*, and in (1) by the hyphen separating the adverbializers *ku* and *ni* from the adjectival bases. Affix boundaries are not marked in the Latin orthography of any language, Japanese included, so that inserting them in Line 1 may cause a “disfiguration” of the original orthography (Lehmann 2004b, 1852) or even prove impossible (Lehmann 2004b, 1837). To solve the problem, a quadrilinear representation has been proposed wherein a fourth line is added before Line 1 for displaying the utterance in unaltered orthography, irrespective of the original script (Schultze-Berndt 2006, 220-1, 237-8; Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008, 2).

- A theoretical statement on morphemic classification, implicitly expressed by boundary marking. The representation of morpheme breaks in Line 1 presupposes a background segmentation guided by morphological theory (Schultze-Berndt 2006, 240). This is what happens in (1), where case particles are distinguished from affixes because the boundaries with the nouns they mark are shown by blank

⁶ ISO3602, first published in 1989, was reviewed and confirmed in 2019 (ISO 1989).

⁷ Historically, the modified Hepburn and the Kunrei systems were first formulated as part of a Latinization project, i.e. the total replacement of the standard writing system with a new system based on a Latin alphabetic script (on the notion of “Latinization” see Wellisch 1978, 22-3).

spaces. Blanks imply that particles are items of the same morphological status as the nouns they accompany. In contrast to this, in (2) the left boundaries of case particles (and even the right boundary of the genitive particle *no*) are hyphenated just like those of suffixes. The authors' choices are indeed expression of two distinct theoretical stances. I will address these matters in the next section of this paper.

Line (2) only, Line 1 also hosts:

- An indexing of constituents. Here, the result phrase *makkuro-ni* is co-indexed with the two nominal arguments with the aid of subscripted letters. Such indexing is proper of a specific tier, that of grammatical tagging, coded `\gr` (Schultze-Berndt 2006, 241-3). Also belonging to `\gr` is the representation of reduced tree diagrams by bracketing (not shown in 2 but present in 7 and 8). In annotated Japanese it is very frequent to express grammatical tagging in the same line as the morpheme break tier `\mo`. This habit makes the informational burden of Line 1 even heavier, leading to illegibility in extreme cases (Lehmann 2004b, 1854).

- Underlying verbal forms. The sentence-final verb is represented in (2) as *nur-ta*. This is the underlying form of the surface form *nutta*, which is transcribed as such in (1). The function of representing underlying forms is also typical of morpheme break tier `\mo` (Schultze-Berndt 2006, 240) so that, in trilinear annotation, underlying forms end up further cluttering Line 1.

Line 2 (Level of Grammatical Annotation) In (1-2) Line 2 hosts:

- Morphemic segmentation and word-boundaries marking in biunique mapping to those in Line 1 (Lehmann 2004b, 1837). This means that exactly the same number of blanks and hyphens (and also equals signs, discussed below) must occur in the transcription (Line 1) and in the glosses (Line 2). Moreover, when one of those symbols marks a boundary in one line, it must be matched by a corresponding identical symbol in the other line, with left vertical alignment of the segmented words (Lehmann 1982, 219; Lehmann 2004b, 1851, 1856; Schultze-Berndt 2006, 239; Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008, 2). Ony (1) fully complies with this norm. In (2), Line 1 *makkuro-ni* is segmented with a hyphen which is not matched by another hyphen in the Line 2 gloss 'black'.

- The glossing of the object language's morphs by means of a reference to the morphemes of a metalanguage. In case of functional morphemes, abbreviated grammatical category labels in the metalanguage are used. Such morpheme-by-morpheme glossing constitutes the gloss tier `\it` (Schultze-Berndt 2006, 239; "Interlinear morphemic gloss" or IMG in Lehmann 2004b and Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008). Examples (1-2) present no major issue in this regard. Since this paper focuses on the boundary marking of Japanese case particles, in the first part of it I will not comment on how much the actual examples of annotation I quote comply with the norms of glossing.

However, after pointing out several issues of lack of accuracy and consistency in the use of boundary symbols, I will argue that the annotation of Japanese is afflicted by a more general problem, which I will call ‘sloppy annotation’. Being a significant part of sloppy annotation, bad glossing and bad category labelling will then become relevant, and I will address them in § 7.

Line 3 (Level of Translation)

This line hosts a free or idiomatic translation in a background language (tier \ft) (Lehmann 2004b, 1838; Schultze-Berndt 2006, 234-7; Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008, 2). In this paper, translations of the examples are included to facilitate comprehension and to the effect of reproducing the quoted materials in complete form, but are irrelevant for the main discussion.

4 Word-Boundary Marking in the Grammatical Annotation of Japanese

As mentioned above when discussing (1-2), in Japanese the representation of the boundary between a nominal and a case marker can reveal two contrasting theoretical stances, i.e. that case markers are free word-forms or that they are suffixes. In a small minority of annotated works, a third stance is taken, that of treating case markers as clitics. In the following section I will show several examples of annotation and discuss in more detail which theory on Japanese case markers is implicitly supported by the boundary symbols adopted. I will assign any given work to one boundary marking type on the basis of the author’s use of symbols even if the annotated examples are admittedly taken from secondary sources. This is because the convention requires that authors change their sources’ glossing methods to fit their own purposes (Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008, 2), so that all annotation is to be taken by default to reflect an author’s theoretical persuasion. In sum, authors are always directly responsible for the meaning expressed through their notational devices. I will consider the morphological categorization of Japanese case markers in a subsequent separate section.

3. Case markers as free word-forms, or of undetermined nature (Shimojo 2018, 405)

Tarō ga Hanako ni sono hon o yatta.
 NOM to that book ACC gave

‘Taro gave the book to Hanako’.

According to the norms of grammatical annotation, blank spaces carry information as symbols for the boundaries between free word-forms (Lehmann 2004b, 1852; Schultze-Berndt 2006, 221, 239). This seems to be the meaning assigned to blanks in (3), as one would ex-

pect given the technical nature of Shimojo's work. As a matter of fact, however, Line 1 of (3) is not graphically different from one of the many occurrences of Romanized Japanese in the linguistic landscape, where only blanks are ever used, with no theoretical significance. There is no positive proof that a theory-based transcription is used in (3). In the technical terms explained above, instead of hosting the morpheme break tier \mo as expected, Line 1 might be a mere expression of the orthographic transcription \orth, and maintain its default boundary marking. This point is crucial and needs some clarification.

In the standard Japanese writing system, graphic spaces do not exist, but a distinction between morpheme types can be visually understood thanks to the fact that lexical words are commonly written in Chinese-derived logograms (*kanji* 漢字), while functional morphemes are rendered phonetically in syllabic script (*kana* 仮名). (The resulting multi-script orthography is known as *kanjikanamajiri* 漢字仮名交じり, or 'kanji-kana mix'). If such a lack of graphic spaces were maintained in the alternate Latin orthographies of Japanese, utterances would be transcribed as unbroken strings of characters. This is of course unacceptable, making it necessary to adopt some breaking device. Reflecting a native speaker's intuitive notion of wordhood, but perhaps also to keep graphic words within a constant, moderate length, in the common Latin script of Japanese nominal prefixes and verbal and adjectival suffixes are conventionally attached to bases, while all other morphemes are separated by blanks. This is consistent with the orthographic trend pointed out by Himmelmann (2006, 257) of using the least possible number of boundary marking devices. A frugal segmentation of this kind is observable in the Hepburn transcription of the title of Hattori's papers in the references ([1949] 1960, 1950). In this transcription, the segmentation has no technical function.⁸

In instances of annotation like (3), where no boundary symbol other than blank spaces is present, the Latin script of Line 1 could be an occurrence of the default pretheoretical Latin orthography. As

⁸ In the current standard *ISO3602*, which explicitly adopts the Kunrei system (ISO 1989, 1), it is declared that

In a language using a syllabic System of writing is usually written without rules governing the division between characters and/or words, the conversion System must include such rules taking account of the morphological and grammatical structure of the language. (ISO 1989, v)

The main text of the ISO document, though, contains no provision on how to recognize and separate words. This is all it has to say on the matter:

In all Japanese documents, a sentence in *kanzi* and *kana* is spelt in a sequence without divisions by words, in romanized Japanese texts separation into words is necessary. (ISO 1989, 1)

Obviously, the ISO itself is unconcerned about morpheme boundaries, and leaves segmentation to be decided by following the unwritten conventions already attached to the Kunrei orthography.

Lehmann points out, the use of a language's original orthography in the line hosting the morpheme break tier \mo is always problematic, for original orthographies employ several types of delimiter (blanks, hyphens and punctuation marks) which do not necessarily represent grammatical boundaries and may therefore interfere with the glossing (Lehmann 2004b, 1837).

Indeed, when in Japanese annotation Line 1 is a mere transcription in the Latin orthography, blank spaces occurring there are not symbols. They are given no theoretical meaning by the author. But then, according to the very norms of annotation, blanks are copied into Line 2, in biunique correspondence to Line 1 blanks. Now, a Line 2 graphic device charged with meaning by the rules of annotation is always decoded consequently. There is no way of opting out of the convention: writing Line 2 without giving a technical function to morpheme breaks is impossible, even if the morphology of Line 2 elements is irrelevant for the topic under discussion. In this sense, grammatical annotation does not allow for observance of Grice's maxims of Relation and Quantity, which require to be relevant and not overinformative (Grice 1975, 45-6).

It so happens that when Line 1 blank spaces, originally meaningless, intrude into Line 2, they acquire a proper meaning there, becoming boundary symbols for free word-forms. At this point, since symbols are supposed to have the same meaning in both Lines, Line 2 blanks unavoidably project their meaning back into Line 1. Line 1 blanks are now taken to represent the boundaries between free word forms just as they do in Line 2. Such a 'semantic infection' of Line 1 occurs even if an author wanted to use blanks pretheoretically, or atheoretically, giving them no technical function or meaning in either the object-language or the metalanguage. It happens even without an author's knowing it.

That blank spaces are often used meaninglessly is confirmed by the fact that a proliferation of blanks may even affect word-internal morpheme breaks:

4. All morphs represented as free word-forms (Shirai 2015, 225)

Ken wa sin de iru.
 Ken TOP die RES NONPST
 'Ken is dead'.

Sinde is actually a converbal form derived from *sinu* 'die' (see glossing in 8 and 9), but the use of blank spaces in (4) implies that the morph *de* is considered a word by itself, bearing the grammatical meaning of 'resultative' (I will comment on Shirai's glossing when discussing again this example in 29 below). Here the problem is that the author, perhaps under the influence of Latin orthography, only knows blanks as morpheme separators. An effect of this is that neither line contains

real morphemic analysis, even if it seems to do so. There would be no confusion if morpheme breaks were systematically expressed in a distinct line and not forcibly and intrusively inserted into the line already hosting the orthographic or phonetic transcription.

In sum, interpreting blanks as word-boundary symbols when occurring between nominals and case particles, and so as being expression of morphological analysis, might be a side effect of a takeover of Line 2 IMG by meaningless blanks. The possibility of such takeover makes it ultimately undecidable whether in annotated examples like (3) case markers are intentionally represented as free word-forms or not. Such ambiguity does not occur when more than one type of boundary symbol is present in Lines 1-2. For example, in (1) hyphens allow the reader to infer that the default, uncoded morpheme-breaking system of the Latin orthography, where the use of hyphens is not contemplated, is not employed in Line 1, and that this Line expresses the morpheme break tier *mo* as expected. The effect is that blank spaces are correctly taken to encode meaning in both Lines 1 and 2, and inform that case particles are independent words.

In my sample, the works for which no such disambiguation is possible even by way of comparing annotated examples with each other are eighteen, nearly one fifth of all the works in which blanks are used. Among them, five belong to *The Oxford Handbook of Case* edited by Malchukov and Spencer (2009) and only contain one or two Japanese examples each. Eight are part of the *Handbook of Japanese Psycholinguistics* edited by Nakayama (2015). This volume contains seven more chapters that are relevant for the present analysis. A simple blanks-only-boundary-marking strategy thus accounts for nearly one half of the chapters. This is consistent with the nature of the collection, in which no complex morphologic analysis is required. The use of blanks in this volume can therefore be traced back to the atheoretical word-boundary marking discussed above. Two more ambiguous works are chapters in the *Handbook of Japanese Syntax* edited by Shibatani, Miyagawa and Noda (2017); three are in Hasegawa (2018b).

5. Case markers as free word-forms (Sato 2014, 317)

3-*nin* *no* *gakusei* *ga* *Ito-sensei* *ni-yotte/* *ni maikai* *sas*
 3-people GEN student NOM Ito-prof. by/ by every-time call
are-ta.

PASS-PAST

'Three students were called on by Prof. Ito every time.'

As opposed to blanks, hyphens are used in grammatical annotation to separate segmentable word-internal morphemes (Lehmann 2004b, 1852; Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008, 2). Just like in (1), in (5) both blank spaces and hyphens are used. The co-occurrence of both break-

ing devices implies that they are used as symbols with contrasting meaning, and therefore that case markers are here considered to be independent words, not affixes.

An unambiguous treatment of case markers as free word-forms is by far the most common in my sample, occurring in a group of 95 works. I list them in chronological order, omitting references to single chapters in collections:

List 1. Case Markers Unambiguously Considered as Free Word-Forms

Shibatani 2006;
 Otoguro 2006;
 1 chapter in Rehbein, Hohenstein, Pietsch 2007;
 3 chapters in Frellesvig, Shibatani, Smith 2007;
 Shibatani 2009c;
 2 chapters in Malchukov, Spencer 2009;
 1 chapter in Frellesvig, Sells 2013;
 1 chapter in Giriko et al. 2014;
 5 chapters in Nakayama 2015;
 1 chapter in Kubozono 2015;
 Shibatani, Kageyama 2015 (the “Introduction” to the whole series in the earliest HJLL volume);
 7 chapters in Minami 2016;
 18 chapters in Kageyama, Kishimoto 2016;
 8 chapters in Kageyama, Jacobsen 2016;
 18 chapters in Shibatani, Miyagawa, Noda 2017b;
 13 chapters in Hasegawa 2018b;
 all 23 chapters in Pardeshi, Kageyama 2018.

In (6) the second most used strategy for separating nominals and case particles is shown. Here, the boundaries of postnominal particles are marked with hyphens, like in the morphemic segmentation of verbal forms. Case markers are thus unambiguously treated as affixes or bound morphemes:

6. Case markers as bound morphemes (Tsuboi 2010, 420)
Taro-wa Hanako-ni home-rare-ta.
 Taro-TOP Hanako-DAT praise-PASS-PST
 ‘Taro was praised by Hanako’.

In my sample, case-marker hyphenation consistently occurs in 50 works:

List 2. Case Markers Unambiguously Considered to Be Affix-Like

Fukuda 2006;
 Tsujimura 2007;
 Tomioka 2007;
 1 chapter in Rehbein, Hohenstein, Pietsch 2007;
 4 chapters in Frellesvig, Shibatani, Smith 2007;
 13 chapters in Miyagawa, Saito 2008;
 Harada, Larson 2009;
 6 chapters in Malchukov, Spencer 2009;
 Tsuboi 2010;
 Nakazawa 2012;
 Motomura 2013;
 Tsujimura 2013;
 9 chapters in Saito 2014;
 1 chapter in Giriko et al. 2014;
 1 Kishimoto, Kageyama, Sasaki 2015;
 1 chapter in Kubozono 2015;
 2 chapters in Minami 2016;
 1 chapter in Kageyama, Jacobsen 2016;
 3 chapters in Hellan, Malchukov, Cennamo 2017;
 1 chapter in Hasegawa 2018b.

The choice of either blanks or hyphens appears to be even more strongly theory-based whenever case markers are distinguished from clitics:

7. Case markers as free word-forms contrasting with both clitics and affixes (Shibatani 2017, 281)
- [*Ame ga kyuuni huridas-i*]=*soo da*.
 rain NOM suddenly fall.start-NMLZR=EVID COP
 ‘It appears that rain will start falling suddenly’.
8. Case markers as bound morphemes contrasting with clitics (Shibatani 2007a, 47)
- Gakkoo-ni sake-o non-de ku-ru=to-wa nanigoto=ka?*
 school-to sake-ACC drink-CON come-PRES=COMP-TOP whatever=Q
 ‘Whatever (it is the matter with you) to come to school (after) drinking sake?’.

In grammatical annotation, the boundaries between clitics and hosts are shown by equals signs (Lehmann 2004b, 1852; Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008, 2). In (7-8) the use of boundary symbols reveals that the author is conscious of the existence of clitics in Japanese and of the need to mark clitic boundaries in a specific fashion. He identifies as clitics the evidential marker *soo* in (7) and the two sentence-final particles *to* and *ka* in (8), and shows the relevant boundaries consequently. Shibatani’s contrasting ways of treating case markers

as free word-forms in (7) and as bound morphemes (alike to verb-internal morphemes) in (8) are therefore to be reckoned as expressing two opposite morphologic analyses. In his career, that same author has also taken a third, different theoretical stance and represented Japanese case markers as clitics:

9. Case markers as clitics (Shibatani et al. 2014, 364)

<i>Teisyu=ga</i>	<i>kaet-te</i>	<i>kuru=no-o</i>	<i>matte</i>	<i>iru.</i>
husband=NOM	return-CON	come=NMLZM=ACC	wait	be
'(I am) waiting for (my) husband to return (home)'.				

In (9) the use of boundary symbols associates case markers to clitics and keeps them distinct from free word-forms and word-internal morphemes. Shibatani is the only author in my sample to have ever firmly taken the stance of considering Japanese case markers clitic-like, as can be seen also in Sibatani 2007b and Shibatani 2013. His case is of particular interest and I will discuss it later in a separate subsection (§ 6.3).

5 The Morphological Categorization of Japanese Case Particles

In this section I will briefly introduce the main hypotheses on the morphologic categorization of Japanese case markers, without discussing the validity of each theory.

According to the influential analysis of Hattori ([1949] 1960, 1950), Japanese case and focus markers are non-independent free forms: non-independent because they may never be used alone to form a whole utterance, and free because they can be uttered separately (by means of pauses) from other adjoining forms. They are therefore different from affixes, which are non-independent and bound forms, and from free-standing lexical words. Hattori named the class of case- and focus-markers *fuzokugo*, a term taken from Japanese school grammar which he himself translated as 'clitic' ([1950] 1960, 103). Hattori's association of Japanese case particles with clitics went basically unchallenged until Vance (1993), who applied Zwicky, Pulum's (1983) and Zwicky's (1985) diagnostics and concluded that Japanese postnominal particles are certainly not affixes, but neither are they clitics. Rather, Vance concluded, focus markers are independent words, while case markers "seem no less word-like than English prepositions" (Vance 1993, 29).

Hattori's and Vance's divergent analyses only became relevant for grammatical annotation much later, when detailed conventions for marking morpheme boundaries were thoroughly codified by Lehmann (2004b) and the LGR (Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2004).

One might think that from that moment on the segmentation of functional morphemes has been implemented by way of either spaces or equals signs, according to the theory espoused by each author. However, that has not happened, as my corpus reveals. Hyphens have not been abandoned and are extensively used even today, while the use of equals signs is virtually nonexistent. Why?

One reason for not discontinuing the use of hyphens is, as trivial as it may sound, the strength of the convention itself. Up to the first pioneering attempt at codifying grammatical annotation by Lehmann in 1982, the hyphen had been used as a convenient general-purpose morpheme-boundary symbol, to the extent that Lehmann himself remarked:

By now, the only morpheme boundary symbol used in L1 [source] texts is the hyphen. One might ask whether it would not be desirable to distinguish various kinds of morpheme boundaries. (Lehmann 1982, 215)

At the time of Lehmann's writing, then, the hyphen was polysemic and carried little information. It was so versatile that it survived unscathed the thorough codification of 2004. An important role was also played by the status of orthography held by the Latin script of Line 1. As Lehmann points out,

No orthography distinguishes clitic boundaries from word and morpheme boundaries. If L1 is represented in conventional orthography, then the simplest solution for an IMG is not to distinguish them either. (Lehmann 2004b, 1852)

Once the atheoretical word-boundary marking of the Hepburn or Kunrei orthography has intruded into the second line of annotation, we are left with very little choice of symbols for marking case-particle boundaries: the only alternative to meaningless blanks are all-purpose hyphens.

In more general terms, the same factors pointed out by Himmelmann (2006) as part of a general discussion on the principles for representing wordhood in transcription seem to be at work here. First, there may be inferred to exist what I call a 'cognitive constraint' which imposes limits on how many morpheme-boundary symbols can be used consistently by writers and can be understood by readers without constantly referring to the conventions (Himmelmann 2006, 273 fn. 2). When strongest, such a constraint originates a general tendency to reduce the options for distinguishing morpheme boundaries to the smallest possible number of two: marking no boundary, using a space. It will be recalled that the two alternate Latin orthographies of Japanese use this very strategy. When increased complexi-

ty is needed, as it happens in theory-informed segmentation, hyphens are first added. Indeed, even in the Latin orthographies of Japanese a limited use of non-standard hyphens is occasionally attested, although only for separating roots in compounds. With the introduction of hyphens an equilibrium is reached. Now the constraint hinders further complexity, practically inhibiting the use of additional symbols like equals signs even when an explicit marking of clitic boundaries should be scientifically appropriate. This block leads to forcibly reducing clitics (or morphemes with some clitic-like property) to either affixes or independent words (Himmelman 2006, 258), to the effect that clitics are wiped out from the metalinguistic representation of grammar.

To better illustrate this point, one can go one step further in the morphological analysis of Japanese case markers. Drawing from both Hattori (1950) and Vance (1993), Kageyama has recently claimed that *fuzokugo* are neither independent words or clitics. Rather, they constitute a distinct class of syntactic words, which he dubs “non-independent words”. These “non-cliticized morphologically bound morphemes” are characterized by the fact that, though “glued to their bases”, they occupy a position of their own in syntactic structure without phonologically adjoining to any surrounding word (Kageyama 2016, 509).

According to Kageyama, then, morphological objects of four different kinds exist in Japanese. Their properties are plotted as follows.

Table 1 Types of morphological objects in Japanese

	Independent words	<i>Fuzokugo</i>	Enclitics	Affixes
Independent status in syntactic structure	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Phonological independence	Yes	Yes	No	No
Unboundness	Yes	No	No	No

(Kageyama 2016, 519)

Kageyama’s notion of *fuzokugo* is absent from European linguistics (Kageyama 2016, 519). Actually, it might be that *fuzokugo*-like objects exist in other languages as well but have been unrecognized so far. At least for annotating Japanese a new symbol should be adopted in order to distinctively mark *fuzokugo* boundaries and hence distinguish them from morphemes of a different nature. I would suggest the sign <~>, available on all English keyboards and already considered for the role, as discussed below in relation to Ogawa (2009), Sakoda (2016) and example (22). But if three symbols are already too

many, so that little effort is made to distinguish clitics from non-clitics, one can imagine how complicated it would be to add a fourth symbol to the list. Indeed, as far as grammatical annotation is concerned, *fuzokugo* seem to suffer the same fate as clitics: they are not recognized as an individual class of morphemes, are forcibly assimilated to clitics and treated just like them, i.e. dropped from the above table and represented as either independent words or affixes. See how Kageyama deals with their annotation:

10. Case markers (*fuzokugo*) represented as free word-forms, clitics as affixes (Kageyama 2016, 511)

<i>Kanozō</i>	<i>wa</i>	[<i>otoko</i>	<i>ni</i>	<i>damas-are</i>]- <i>soo</i>	<i>da</i> .
she	TOP	[man	DAT	deceive-PASS]-appearance	COP

'She looks like getting deceived by the man'.

Under Kageyama's analysis, the case marker *ni*, the focus marker *wa* and the dummy item *da* are all *fuzokugo*, but throughout his article he treats their boundaries as those of free word-forms. Likewise, Kageyama considers the element *soo* to be a clitic (2016, 513), but marks its boundary as that of morpheme *are*, which is an affix. Such a reductionist treatment of morpheme boundaries occurs throughout Kageyama's paper – the very paper in which the author ascertains the nature of Japanese case and focus particles as entities distinct from clitics and remarks the significant difference between clitics and affixes. Obviously, Kageyama himself considers it unnecessary that such a complex set of distinctions be reflected in annotation.

The morphological nature of Japanese postnominal particles may be unclear and difficult to assess and, as Kageyama's case shows, properly conveying it in annotation can be troublesome. In particular, the current conventions do not provide an accurate choice of symbols under the *fuzokugo* and clitic theories. How to mark case-particle boundaries, all considered, is up to individual authors, in accordance with their theoretical persuasion and with the relevance of particle morphology relative to the topic they discuss. Of the three symbols made available by the current convention, the hyphen is surely the least accurate, but none is wrong in itself. What linguistic theory clearly says, though, is that there are no prosodic or morphological differences between types of postnominal particles (like that between case/focus markers and postpositions, which may only be distinguished syntactically) such as to justify the use of distinct boundary symbols in annotation. In any given work, therefore, coherence and theory-consistency demand that one and only one type of symbol be used for marking the boundaries of Japanese case particles.

6 A Discussion of the Sample

In this section I will discuss my sample of 184 works with regards to clarity and consistency in boundary marking. As noticed above, the choice of boundary symbols is hardly ever motivated. The few authors who dedicate even the briefest comment to the morphology of Japanese case particles are the following.

Otoguro (2006) is part of a PhD dissertation, of particular interest in view of the author's theorization on the nature of Japanese case. Otoguro so concludes his analysis:

Thus, there are plenty of reasons to believe that the nominal particles in Japanese are suffixes.

However, the particles in question display some degree of separability from the host. (Otoguro 2006, 242)

The conclusion [...] is that the Japanese nominal particles seem to have mixed properties of morphological suffixes and independent syntactic units, i.e. phrasal suffixes or clitics [...]. Therefore, I analyse the particles as bound elements in the morphological component, but non-projecting postpositions [...] in c-structure. (Otoguro 2006, 243)

According to Otoguro, then, Japanese “nominal inflection” is realized by bound particles that are morphologically intermediate between clitics and affixes. Interestingly, his conclusion is different from that of Kageyama (2016), who uses the same diagnostics (like Zwicky, Pullum 1983 on clisis). Consequently, Otoguro's most logical choice of symbols for showing case-marker boundaries in annotation should be equals signs (as in Otoguro 2003), or possibly hyphens. Instead, just like Kageyama, Otoguro opts for blank spaces, the least accurate symbol according to his own analysis. Otoguro never uses equals signs for marking clitic boundaries.

In the entry “Japanese” of the fourteen-volume *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* edited by Keith Brown, Shibatani explicitly associates Japanese case markers to prepositions: “postpositional particles are used instead of prepositions” (Shibatani 2006, 104) and consistently annotates them as free word-forms.

In the two latest editions of the *Introduction to Japanese Linguistics*, Tsujimura painstakingly distinguishes “case particles” from “postpositions” (2007, 121-30 and fnn. 209-11; 2013, 133-43, 233-4). Case particles, she explains, are the surface markers of grammatical relations, with no semantic content. Morphologically, they are bound morphemes like the verbal affixes expressing tense, form a single NP with the host noun, are outside the word class but are not part of nouns either. Postpositions are the markers of semantic re-

lations, and bear a specific or inherent meaning. Even if not constituting a word class (Tsuji-mura 2007, 122; 2013, 133), they nevertheless represent a lexical category (2007, 210; 2013, 233), the Japanese counterpart of English prepositions. As such, they head the PP formed with the preceding noun. However, postpositions too are morphologically bound, for they cannot stand independently but “always occur with accompanying nouns in order to form a meaningful unit” (Tsuji-mura 2007, 122). On such a basis, Tsuji-mura consistently hyphenates the morpheme boundary of both case particles and postpositions.

A remarkable case is that of Iwasaki (2013), a general introduction to Japanese language. Along with Shibatani, Kageyama (2015), discussed below, Iwasaki’s work contains both a statement on the nature of Japanese postnominal particles and a clarification about the symbols used for marking their boundaries:

In presenting clauses/sentences, words are separated by spaces. Particles (case particles and others) can be regarded as enclitics, but for the sake of simplicity and readability (and in accordance with the tradition), a space is put to separate a word from the following particle (except for Chapter 1), as if particles were regular, independent words, e.g. *boku wa koko de hon o katta*. (I TOP here INS book ACC bought) “I bought a book here”. (Iwasaki 2013, xix)

Iwasaki’s reasons for preferring blanks to hyphens are the same as Kageyama’s, whose case was discussed above. Both authors thus express a refusal to introduce specific clitic-boundary markers as a third kind of symbol. It is puzzling, then, why Iwasaki makes an explicit exception for Chapter 1, where he hyphenates particle-boundaries in the twenty-two annotated examples that contain postnominal particles. He provides no justification for it, and neither can I find one.

Two contributors to Hasegawa 2018b take an explicit position on the matter. One, Horie, explicitly states that Japanese case markers are bound morphemes (2018, 66). Horie’s boundary marking is quite inconsistent, though, and I will discuss it in § 6.2.2. The second one is Nakamura (2018), who distinguishes case particles from both declensional suffixes and independent words, and identifies them as clitics:

These case particles are phonologically bound to the preceding words, but the fact that other elements may intervene between the case particles and the nouns they mark and that their scope may extend over more than one NP when they are coordinated [...] indicates that the case particles are phrasal clitics rather than nominal declensions. (Nakamura 2018, 249)

That said, Nakamura is facing the decision as to whether to project such a distinction on boundary marking. Following the general

trend of ignoring clisis in annotation, Nakamura disregards equals signs – which no other contributor to the volume ever uses anyway, with the unsurprising exception of Shibatani (2018a) – and chooses to highlight the bounded nature of case markers by using hyphens.

In my sample, other authors just touch upon the topic and seem to be intentionally noncommittal about the nature of Japanese case markers. In “Case marking” Kishimoto (2017) writes:

Even though the grammatical functions of arguments are coded morphologically by means of postnominal case markers in Japanese, the relationship between the two is not always straightforward. (Kishimoto 2017, 447)

The volume with Kishimoto’s article is one of the *Handbooks of Japanese Language and Linguistics* (HJLL) published by De Gruyter Mouton (Shibatani, Miyagawa, Noda 2017b). If, in search for clarification, the readers refer to the general introduction to the series, identical in each volume, they will find a straightforward but equally noncommittal explanation of the boundary marking strategy adopted in HJLL:

In line with the general rules of Romanization adopted in books and articles dealing with Japanese [...] HJLL transliterates [*sic*] example sentences by separating word units by spaces. [...] [W]ord-internal morphemes are separated by a hyphen whenever necessary, although this practice is not adopted consistently in all of the HJLL volumes. (Shibatani, Kageyama 2015, xviii-xix)

Special attention should be paid to particles like *wa* (topic), *to* ‘with’ and *e* ‘to, toward’, which, in the HJLL representation, are separated from the preceding noun or noun phrase by a space [...]. Remember that case and other kinds of particles, though spaced, form phrasal units with their preceding nouns. (Shibatani, Kageyama 2015, xix)

Because case markers can be set off by a pause, a filler, or even longer parenthetical material, it is clear that they are unlike declensional affixes in inflectional languages like German or Russian. Their exact status, however, is controversial; some researchers regard them as clitics and others as (non-independent) words. (Shibatani, Kageyama 2015, xx)

In the annotated examples of the HJLL series, one gathers, hyphens are explicitly given a meaning in accordance with the general conventions, but blank spaces are not. While the use of hyphens for showing case-particle boundaries is more or less explicitly rebutted on theoretical grounds, blanks are instead introduced into Line 1 and into

morphological analysis as part of the pretheoretical boundary marking of the object language's Latin orthography. Blanks also occur in the metalanguage, but bear no meaning there as well. This is what I have noticed and discussed in relation to (3).

As remarked, the few authors quoted above represent exceptions to the norm, which is of not taking any explicit stance on the nature of Japanese case markers and of not expounding the rationale behind the choice of boundary symbols. In most cases, the actual boundary marking used in annotation simply works as an implicit statement of what an author believes Japanese case markers morphemically are. Experts do not agree as to whether this is acceptable. The LGR deny that an IMG may be a way of stating an analysis (Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008, 2), while Lehmann has an open attitude (2004b, 1836). For this author, especially in the morpheme break tier and in the IMG, it is possible to conceive representations from which readers can abduce an author's entire grammatical theory (Lehmann 2004a, 208). Of course stating a morphological analysis exclusively by ways of morpheme break symbols may only work if the distribution of symbols is coherent.

One interesting instance of using boundary symbols as theory statements is Ogawa (2009), the only chapter devoted to Japanese in the *Oxford Handbook of Case* (Malchukov, Spencer 2009). In the annotated examples, Ogawa hyphenates Japanese case-particle boundaries, but uses the sign <~> whenever he mentions them, as in the list "sensei~ga (teacher-nominative), ~wo (accusative), ~ni (dative)" etc. (Ogawa 2009, 780). He gives no clarification about the meaning of the tilde. A similar case is Sakoda, who uses blanks in the examples and tildes when mentioning (and glossing) constructions, as in "~ga aru '~NOM exist'" (Sakoda 2016, 145). Equally unexplained tildes also slip into Narrog (2017), as shown below in (22). If these authors are giving the tilde a value as a boundary symbol, they would indirectly suggest that Japanese case markers are neither ordinary affixes or free word-forms. In this case, they would also implicitly invite their readers to ignore the boundary marking in the annotated examples, where, alas, they only use conventional symbols.

6.1 Inconsistent Case-Particle Boundary Marking in Collections

In my sample, the norm for collections is to host both authors that hyphenate particles boundaries and authors that use blanks. This variation is expected, of course. I consider it inconsistent because, when unexplained, a use of conflicting boundary symbols disconcerts readers with no specific knowledge of Japanese morphology. In the following list, for each parsed volume I will schematically show the ratio of articles with hyphens to those with blanks by means of figures

separated by a slash. I will list the volumes of the HJLL series separately, further below. In § 6.2 I will specifically deal with those cases in which several conflicting boundary symbols are used in one and the same single work (monograph, article or chapter).

List 3. Ratio of Hyphens to Blanks in Collections

- *Current Issues in the History and Structure of Japanese* (Frellesvig, Shibatani, Smith 2007): 4/3.
- *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Linguistics* (Miyagawa, Saito 2008): 13/0; in two other chapters (Takahashi 2008; Heycock 2008) both hyphens and blanks are inconsistently used.
- *The Oxford Handbook of Case* (Malchukov, Spencer 2009): 6/7.
- *Japanese/Korean Linguistics*. Vol. 20 (Frellesvig, Sells 2013): 1/1.
- *Japanese/Korean Linguistics*. Vol. 22 (Giriko et al. 2014): 1/1; moreover, in a third chapter equals signs are used.
- *Japanese Syntax in Comparative Perspective* (Saito 2014): 10/0.
- *Transitivity and Valency Alternations* (Kageyama, Jacobsen 2016): 0/10; in two other chapters (Shibatani 2016; Malchukov 2016) more than one symbol is used.
- *The Cambridge Handbook of Japanese Linguistics* (Hasegawa 2018b): 1/13; in one other chapter (Horie 2018) both symbols are used.

In the works in my sample, then, the tendency is for editors to leave authors free to decide which boundary-marking system to use. Editors also allow authors to express their stance on the morphology of Japanese case markers either explicitly (almost never done) or implicitly, through the very boundary symbols they use (the norm). The listed volumes are among the most important English-language collections on Japanese linguistics in the years considered, so that intuitively such an editorial attitude may be considered representative of the editorial strategy of the period.

As for the recent HJLL series, given the statement in the general introduction to the series, quoted above, one would expect all authors to mark postnominal particle boundaries with blank spaces only. This is not the case, though, as several freak instances of hyphenation do pop up.

List 4. Ratio of Hyphens to Blanks in the HJLL Series

- HJLL *Psycholinguistics* (Nakayama 2015): 0/17; in two other chapters both hyphens and blanks are used (Murasugi 2015; Sakamoto 2015).
- HJLL *Phonetics and Phonology* (Kubozono 2015): 1/1.
- HJLL *Applied Linguistics* (Minami 2016): 2/8.
- HJLL *Lexicon and Word Formation* (Kageyama, Kishimoto 2016): 0/18.

- HJLL *Syntax* (Shibatani, Miyagawa, Noda 2017b): 0/19; in four other chapters the authors use more than one symbol (Iwata 2017; Kitagawa 2017; Miyagawa 2017; Narrog 2017; Shibatani, Miyagawa, Noda 2017a).
- HJLL *Contrastive Linguistics* (Pardeshi, Kageyama 2018): 0/23.

In the HJLL series, one gathers, compliance to the general, explicit rule of using blanks is ultimately entrusted to each author's sense of responsibility, with no editorial attempt to enforce it. The success of such a policy is limited, though, as the six inconsistent cases show.

6.2 Inconsistent Case-Particle Boundary Marking in Single Works

By 'single works' I refer to monographs and dissertations, articles in journals and chapters in collections, either written by a single author or by multiple authors. In this sense, all the chapters contained in the collections discussed above are single works.

As expected, a consistent use of one case-particle boundary symbol only is so well attested among the single works in my sample as to render it unnecessary to provide the exact figures. However, in eighteen cases, slightly less than 10% of the sample, the authors mark the boundaries of postnominal particles with different symbols (usually with a mixture of hyphens and blanks). Such a differential treatment is not backed by any theory (that is, is invalid, or theory-inconsistent), and, although rare, is confusing enough as to justify a specific discussion. I classified the instances of such poor boundary marking in two levels, according to the degree of inconsistency. It should be noticed that the epistemic effect of bad boundary marking may actually be worse when inconsistency is low (see § 9.1 below).

6.2.1 Minor Cases of Inconsistency

I considered of low inconsistency works in which, (a) only one type of boundary symbol is used but with certain recurring particles or combination of words, whose boundaries are instead shown by way of other symbols; and (b) such a treatment is regular enough as to suggest that those particles or phrases may have some special status. In simpler words, I classified in this group those uses of conflicting boundary symbols for which some rationale might be inferred, even if weak. I also assigned to this group the works in which (a) the inconsistency is limited to so few instances as to be obviously due to copyediting errors; and (b) it does not affect the robustness of the general discussion. The most interesting cases are the following.

In Fukuda (2006) case-particle boundaries are always hyphenated, but so are also the boundaries between nominal heads and their gen-

itive-marked modifiers, as shown in (2): *Kenji-no-ka-o*. The segmentation hints to the fact that the bound between those elements is so tight as to resemble that between base and affix. Such a hyphenation is maintained throughout the article and is consistent with Fukuda's general treatment of case particles. However, it is incorrect, for other modifiers may occur right before the head noun (see discussion of 17).

11. Case markers in local functions as free word-forms (Murao 2009, 102)

*Niwa ni neko/*ki-ga iru*
 yard in cat/tree-NOM be.
 'There is a cat/tree in the yard'.

In Takahashi (2008) and Murao (2009), with some effort a rationale might be detected according to which certain particles in local functions (such as Locative *de*, Dative *ni*), the focus marker *mo* and few sentence-final particles (such as Q *ka* and quotative *to*) are independent words, whereas all other postnominal particles are affix-like. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that both authors gloss local particles and focus markers with English free word-forms (prepositions, adverbs, pronouns). One such example is (11), where Dative *ni* is glossed 'in'.

12. Case markers in local functions as affix-like (Ono 2013, 420)

[*John no Osaka-de no kooen*]
 John GEN Osaka-in GEN speech
 [Untranslated in the original source, but meaning 'John's speech in Osaka']

A similar but opposite case is that of Ono (2013). As shown in (12), the author only uses blanks but for Locative *de* (variously glossed 'in', 'at' and 'on'), whose boundary he makes a (not always successful) effort at hyphenating. With such hyphenation, Ono suggests that *de* belongs to a morphological class distinct from that of all other case markers.

Iwasaki also belongs here. As seen above, Iwasaki explicitly states (2013, xix) that in Chapter 1 he will not use blanks. And, indeed, in that chapter he marks postnominal particle boundaries with hyphens. Nevertheless, in four of the twenty-two relevant examples there, blanks do pop up for tokenizing random instances of particles *o*, *wa*, *ga* and *ni*. Thanks to the author's preliminary explanation about his boundary-marking strategy, though, the reader has no problem in interpreting such freak hyphenation as a mere copyediting error.

13. Genitive marker *no* as free word-form (Saito, Lin, Murasugi 2014, 13)

Taroo-wa san -satu no hon -o katta
 Taroo-TOP three-CL no book-ACC bought
 'Taroo bought three books'.

Of special interest is Saito, Lin, Murasugi (2014), represented by (13). The authors use hyphens, like all other contributors to the same volume. As an exception, though, they show with blanks the boundary of Genitive particle *no*, which they call a “modifying marker”, and specifically a “contextual Case marker”, and do not gloss. By so doing the authors probably only want to stress a functional (not morphological) peculiar relation occurring between a nominal and this marker, whichever it may be. Given that the topic of the chapter are NPs, a reader will interpret such a choice of symbols as based on a morphological theory according to which the marker *no* does not belong to the same morphological class as all other postnominal particles.

14. Allative case markers *e* as clitic (Narrog 2017, 345)

<i>Taroo</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>gakkoo=e</i>	<i>arui.te</i>	<i>it.ta/ki.ta.</i>
Taroto	TOP	school ALL	walk-GER	go-PST/come-PST

‘Taro walked (walk went/came) to school’.

Narrog marks with an equals sign the Line 1 boundary of Allative *e* (shown in example 13), and in one occurrence that of Limitative *made* as well (in a second occurrence, *made* is hyphenated). However, he shows with blanks the boundaries of other local case markers like *ni* (also glossed ALL) and Ablative *kara* (Narrog 2017, 333, 345-6, 348). Again, no theory supports a morphemic status as clitics of *e* and *made* only, as distinct from all other postnominal particles. But all annotation in Narrog (2017) is problematic, with repeated violations of lexical conventions. This is an issue of cohesion, and I will discuss (14) again in § 7 as an instance of ‘poor segmentation’.

15. Focus marker *mo* as affix-like (Miyagawa 2017, 604)

<i>Dareka</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>dono-hon-mo</i>	<i>yonde-iru.</i>
someone	NOM	every book	read-ing

‘Someone has read/is reading every book’.

Over-hyphenation also occurs in Miyagawa (2017), same volume as Narrog (2017). Departing from the official policy for the HJLL series, Miyagawa hyphenates case-particle boundaries in all the notes but one, the boundary of genitive *no* in some instances, and the boundaries between all elements in phrases having the structure ‘*dono N mo*’, like *dono-hon-mo*; *dono-hashi-mo*; *dono-sensei-mo*; *dono-mado-mo*; *dono-omocha-mo*. In these constructions, the first element is a *wh* adjective meaning ‘which’, the middle element is the head noun (‘book’, ‘bridge’, ‘professor’, ‘window’ respectively), and the rightmost element is a focus particle whose addition transforms the whole NP in an indefinite expression with the meaning ‘every N’. By so doing, the author probably wants to suggest that such phrases form a fixed pattern with a specific, non-compositional meaning. There is no mor-

phological property of either *dono* or *mo* which may justify hyphenation, however, because other items can occur between *dono* and the head noun (*dono akai bōshi mo* ‘which red hat FOC’ ‘all red hats’) and between a host noun and *mo*.

Other cases of low inconsistency are Murasugi (2015), Sakamoto (2015), Shibatani (2016) and Kitagawa (2017), for a total of eleven works in this group.

6.2.2 Major Instances of Inconsistency

I assigned to this group those works in which the boundaries of a given particle are marked with blank spaces in certain examples, and with hyphens in others. Often this problem consists in the fact that, in a work where blanks are used, hyphenated examples pop up from nowhere in two or three places. In such cases there is no logic behind the use of different boundary symbols, and the reader cannot determine which of them reflects the true morphology of the particle in question or the author’s actual theoretical stance.

In some cases, I could ascertain that the inconsistency originates from boundary marking having carried over from the original sources of the annotated examples. This might seem a trivial fault, as it could be interpreted as an author’s candid admission of incompetence in Japanese grammar or as a sign of respect for the theoretical persuasion of the cited source(s). Boundary symbols and glosses, however, are not part of the data (as they are in this paper, which makes of the former its main epistemic object), to be reproduced in unaltered form. Rather, they are part of the analysis. When citing examples from a published source, authors may change them if they favor a different analysis or glossing system (as explicitly done in Iwasaki 2013, xix),⁹ but if they cite them in original form, they implicitly adhere to the source’s theoretical persuasion. In other words, since Line 2 boundary markers are theory-reflecting meaningful symbols, an author who uses conflicting boundary markers is expressing adherence to conflicting theories. The seven works belonging to this group are discussed in chronological order in the next paragraphs.

16. Occasional hyphenation (Heycock 2008, 69)

Motto anzen-ni ki-o tuketa-hoo-ga ii-desu-yo
 more safety-DAT attention-ACC pay-rather-GA good-COP-PART
 ‘You’d better pay more attention to your safety’.

⁹ Remarkably, Iwasaki 2013 is the only work in my whole sample whose author informs the reader that the annotated examples taken from secondary sources have been re-glossed.

In Heycock (2008), the author marks particle boundaries with blank spaces. However, for no apparent reason, she occasionally hyphens the boundary of Nominative case particle *ga*. Moreover, in one example, here reproduced as example (16), she hyphenates all particle boundaries. In this example and in one instance of hyphenated *ga* (62) Heycock uses examples taken from Tomioka (2007, 899 and 882 respectively). Interestingly though, Heycock does not seem to appreciate the original format of her source's annotation, because she re-glosses Tomioka's examples by writing category labels in small capitals (they were not, in the original) and by changing the gloss of sentence final particles from 'particle' to 'PART' (see *yo* in 16). Despite so actively revising her source's annotation, Heycock does not extend her effort to particle boundary marking, which she leaves unaltered.

In Malchukov, Haspelmath, Comrie (2010), the authors only provide three annotated examples of Japanese. In two, they use blanks (2010, 12, 33), with no source quoted; in one (2010, 29), identical to the quoted source (Miyagawa, Tsujioka 2004, 16, 19), hyphens.

In Malchukov (2016), the author provides four Japanese language examples, all taken from the works of other scholars. I could ascertain that in all examples Malchukov adopts his sources' original annotation. In one example case boundaries are shown by blanks (Malchukov 2016, 395), in three by hyphens (396, 401).

17. Genitive marker *no* as affix-like (Iwata 2017, 246)

<i>Hanako-no-te</i>	<i>ni</i>	<i>hari</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>sasu</i>
Hanako-GEN	hand	in	needle	ACC
stick				
'Stick a needle in Hanako's hand'.				

Iwata (2017) is a chapter in the HJLL volume on syntax. The author follows the general policy of the series and tokenizes case particles by way of blanks. However, he also sprinkles his article with a number of hyphens, and uses hyphens in all figures. Of special interest is the peculiar treatment of Genitive *no*, represented in example (17). Iwata hyphenates not only the (left) boundary of the Genitive marker, so distinguishing it from all other case particles, but also the boundary to the right, that with the modified head noun. In addition to *Hanako-no-te* in (17) other instances are *koyubi-no-tume*, glossed 'little finger-GEN nail' (Iwata 2017, 262) and *kabe-no-daibubun* 'wall-GEN most' (236, 242). This arbitrary secondary hyphenation is invalid because an adjective may occur between the two elements, as in *koyubi no nagai tume* 'little_finger GEN long nail'. Interestingly, but confusingly, the additional hyphens are not maintained in Line 2, where they are replaced by blanks. As I remarked on example (2), such a use of hyphens is not supported by morphologic theory. In the specific case of Iwata it also lacks in cohesion (because of the mismatching of symbols in Line 1 and 2), and is accompanied by an inconsis-

ent use of hyphens throughout the article, so that I could infer no background logic to it.

Shibatani, Miyagawa, Noda 2017a is the specific introduction to the HJLL volume on syntax. As expected, the authors show case-particle boundaries with blank spaces. Surprisingly, however, hyphens also occur in five examples (2017a, 15, 18, 20-1), showing no consistent pattern. Of them, two (2017a, 20-1) are associated to a reference to chapters by other authors in the same volume (Kishimoto 2017; Saito 2017). Of those authors, though, only Saito (2017, 710) mistakenly uses a hyphen. The deviation from the norm is probably to be ascribed to Shibatani, Miyagawa and Noda only. I consider this instance as major not only because of the erratic nature of such a deviation, but also because of the importance of the chapter within the volume.

A puzzling case is Horie (2018), a chapter in *The Cambridge Handbook of Japanese Linguistics* edited by Hasegawa, bearing the important title “Linguistic Typology and the Japanese Language”. The author states his purpose by saying that:

Inspired by the recent findings in Linguistic Typology and its related disciplines, this chapter is intended to provide a structural and functional typological profile of the Japanese language. It first provides a general typological sketch of the Japanese language in terms of structural properties such as word order, agglutinating morphology, case marking, and the degree of differentiation between noun and verb. (Horie 2018, 65)

He then adds some remarks on morpheme boundaries:

Morphologically, Japanese is categorized into an agglutinating language in which free and bound morphemes are tightly glued, as it were, in a strict co-occurrence order, while keeping the morpheme boundaries distinct, with each bound morpheme coding a different grammatical meaning, as shown in (1) [=18]. (Horie 2018, 66)

Next it comes the very first annotated example:

18. Case markers represented as bound morphemes (Horie 2018, 66)

Chichi-ga haiku-o hajime-mashi-ta.
 father-NOM poem-ACC begin-POL-PST
 ‘My father started composing *haiku* poems’.

accompanied by the commentary:

As shown in [18], the morpheme boundaries are clear and each bound morpheme encodes a distinct grammatical meaning. (Horie 2018, 67)

Despite his distinction between “tightly glued” free and bound morphemes, Horie leaves no doubt that Japanese case particles are of the very same nature as the *POL* auxiliary and the *POST* suffix. The hyphenation implies that all these forms are bound morphemes. But after briefly discussing the sentence above and two more under the same heading, Horie abruptly renounces hyphens and marks case-particle boundaries with blanks throughout the chapter. What might have happened here is that the author, after making his point, just backed off into atheoretical boundary making, to the confusion of the unwarned reader.

6.3 The Case of Shibatani

Among the authors in my sample, Masayoshi Shibatani stands out because during the time span under analysis he has marked case-particle boundaries by using all three attested symbols. Such a variation can hardly be missed, for a contribution of his is included in almost all the collections published in the period.

His case is relevant for several reasons. First of all, Shibatani is probably the most authoritative Japanese linguist on the scene. As a typologist, he has to deal with languages in which case marking is expressed in any possible grammatical way, and with languages in which clisis is an important phenomenon. Consequently, Shibatani is well aware of the necessity of distinguishing affixes from clitics from independent words in annotation, and is accustomed to doing so in his papers. Needless to say, he is also frequently addressing syntactic issues related to Japanese language (even if, for as much as I know, he has never treated the morphological nature of Japanese case marker in a specific paper). As a consequence, the expert reader expects that Shibatani will deal with the marking of Japanese case-particle boundaries with the same wisdom he applies to other languages. The changes in his use of case marker boundary symbols in annotating Japanese, then, cannot be simply ascribed to carelessness or to a shaky knowledge of glossing conventions. Rather, they reflect a true evolution in Shibatani’s theoretical opinions. It is under such an assumption that in this subsection I will comment on his change in Japanese particle boundary marking as revealed in my sample of works.

I parsed the fourteen works of Shibatani which are relevant for the present paper (they include multi-author articles) plus two slightly older works, to see whether a diachronic pattern emerges. I could detect the following phases.

Phase 1 From 2003 to 2009, Shibatani marked Japanese case-particle boundaries alternately with blanks (2004, 2006) or hyphens (2003, 2007a, 2007b, 2009a). Especially in the most recent years, a slight preference for the latter symbols may be observed. One of such

cases is (8). I compared Shibatani's use of symbols with the instances of annotated Japanese by other contributors to the same volumes (not included in the sample of 184 works under analysis in this paper), and I could not notice any pattern of compliance with (unstated) general norms: all contributors showed Japanese case-particle boundaries as they liked. In two works, Shibatani's use of hyphens can be interestingly contrasted with that of equals signs for marking clitic boundaries, in both Japanese (2007a, the clitic is nominalizer *koto*) and other languages (Chukchi) (2009a).

Phase 2 From 2009 to 2014,¹⁰ Shibatani mostly used equals signs (2009b, 2013; Shibatani et al. 2014). He also continued to so mark clitic boundaries in Japanese (the nominalization marker *no* in example 9) and other languages (2009b).

Phase 3 Since 2015, Shibatani has definitely abandoned equals signs in favor of blank spaces (Shibatani, Kageyama 2015; Shibatani, Miyagawa, Noda 2017a; Shibatani 2018a, which are all chapters in HJLL volumes, where blanks are indeed required as a general policy). Remarkably Shibatani has retained the use of equals signs for distinguishing the boundaries of Japanese true clitics (2016, 2017, 2018a), as shown in (7), and of clitics in other languages (2018b).

I interpret the data as follows. In a first phase of low general interest (despite the seminal works of Hattori [1949] 1960, 1950; Vance 1993, discussed above), Shibatani complied with the conventional reductionist use of two marking symbols only, alternating between blanks and hyphens. This strategy was probably grounded in the perception that, morphologically, Japanese case particles are somehow intermediate between free word-forms and affixes (the two poles of Table 1). In general, Shibatani preferred hyphens, but when the type of publication required some judgment on the morphology of Japanese case markers, he expressly identified them as postpositions, associated them to prepositions (2006, 104), and consistently marked their boundaries with blanks. At a certain point, however, he saw the need to distinguish case markers from both affixes and independent words. He so began to annotate them as clitics, the third commonly acknowledged morphemic class, intermediate between words and affixes (Table 1). Such a strategy may reveal either a persuasion that Japanese case markers are clitic (strong stance), or a mere will to distinguish them as neither free word-forms of affixes (weak stance). After that, Shibatani adhered to Kageyama's claim (2016) that Japanese case markers form the unique class of *fuzokugo*, and felt the need to distinguish between *fuzokugo* and true clitics in annotation. To do so, he maintained the conventional equals signs for marking

¹⁰ In his CV, Shibatani lists no publication for the years 2010-12 and no publication on Japanese for 2015, <https://linguistics.rice.edu/matt-shibatani>.

clitic boundaries, whereas reverted to blanks for *fuzokugo*. Even if he occasionally supported this choice with statements about the adpositional nature of Japanese particles (Shibatani 2009c, 754), I do not believe that Shibatani's return to blanks reflects a reversal in his theoretical persuasion, given the previous complex evolution of his notational strategies. I rather believe that Shibatani, again following Kageyama (2016), judged the introduction of a new symbol to be unnecessary, and just adopted the boundary marking symbol already in use for the class next to *fuzokugo* in Table 1, that of independent words.

In sum, the change in Shibatani's particle-boundary marking reflects an active, well pondered evolution in his beliefs about the status of Japanese case particles, and a consequent search for the boundary marker whereby best to represent their unique nature. One might not agree with Shibatani's theoretical stance or choice of symbols, but his case, as reconstructed above, is an example of sound scientific practice.

7 Poor Segmentation and Sloppy Annotation

Up to this point, I have dealt with contradictions in the use of boundary symbols at text level. At this level, inconsistent case-particle boundary marking consists in the fact that certain cohesively annotated examples convey information conflicting with that of other well-formed examples. In collections, this type of inconsistency confounds the reader, who becomes uncertain about the morphology of Japanese case markers. In single works the problem may be considered to be one of coherence, as bad tokenization hinders the comprehension of the overall message an author wants to transmit.

As a matter of fact, however, the main problem related to boundary marking in the grammatical annotation of Japanese does not concern the semantic choice of symbols, but consists in bad matching between the symbols used in Lines 1 and 2. I call this phenomenon 'bad segmentation', as it involves all boundary symbols, not only those showing word breaks. In the metalanguage of annotation, the matching of symbols between the two Lines can be considered a form of anaphora. Bad segmentation is therefore a problem of cohesion, for it comes from bad grammar, and has the power to disrupt the epistemic value or function of individual instances of annotation.

As seen above, the conventional norms prescribe that words are to be vertically aligned in Lines 1 and 2, and that blanks, hyphens or equals signs must match in both. Moreover, words and attached affixes must be left-flushed. In my sample, the deviations from this set of prescriptions include the following:

• Using a Boundary Symbol in Line 2 with no Corresponding Break in Line 1

19. Blanks in Line 2 vs. no breaks in Line 1 (Tamaoka 2015, 615)

Siryoo ga keikakutekini zyunbisareta.
 reference ACC deliberately prepare PASS PST
 'The reference was deliberately prepared'.

20. Blanks in Line 2 vs. no breaks in Line 1 (Shirai 2015, 222)

Hanasiteimasu.
 speak PROG POL NONPST
 'He is speaking'.

In (19-20), Line 2 blanks have no counterpart in Line 1. When no segmentation is necessary in Line 1 but the meanings of Line 1 morphemes are to be shown as part of the glosses, the relevant Line 2 boundaries (only) should be marked with colons or periods, not with blanks (Lehmann 2004b, 1852; Schultze-Berndt 2006, 239; Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008, 3-5). Shirai (2015) and Tamaoka (2015) are chapters in the same HJLL volume. The latter has only three groups of annotated Japanese examples; here Lines 1 blanks are used in two cases, hyphens in one (see discussion of example 4 in § 4). With reference to example (20), Shirai mentions "the aspect marker *-te i-(ru)*" (2015, 222), using a segmentation which he deems relevant but not enough to be represented in the annotated examples.

Occasionally, it also happens that hyphens, rather than blanks, are present in Line 2 but not in Line 1. One case is example (5), where the Line 1 word *maikai* is glossed 'every-time'. In this case, either the Line 1 word had to be segmented *mai-kai*, or the Line 2 gloss had to be rendered as 'every_time'. This would comply with the convention, which states that when a Line 2 translational equivalent consists in more than one graphic word, the elements must be separated with underscores (Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008, 4).

A variation is the use of a hyphen in Line 1 in correspondence with a Line 2 blank space. This can be observed, among other examples, in (17), where Line 1 *Hanako-no-te* is mismatched by Line 2 'Hanako-GEN hand'; and in (15), where Line 1 *dono-hon-mo* corresponds to 'every book' in Line 2. A similar variation is the use of an equals sign in Line 1 and of a blank space in Line 2, as in (14) (= 23 here below), where *gakko=e* is mismatched by 'school ALL'.

21. Mismatching of boundary symbols in Lines 1-2 (Ono 2013, 423)

[*Mary no kinoo-no kami*]
 Mary GEN yesterday GEN hair
 [Untranslated in the original source, but meaning Mary's hair, yesterday, ...']

Another type of interlinear mismatching is the misuse of a hyphen in Line 1 and of a blank space in Line 2 as shown in (21). Other problems in (21) are the lack of alignment (discussed below) and the loss of cohesion caused by the conflicting treatments of *no* in Lines 1-2.

• Using Morpheme- and Word-Boundary Symbols in Line 1 only

This is a reversal of the mismatching of the previous paragraph. In (2), Line 1 *makkuro-ni* is rendered as ‘black’ in Line 2; in (5) the hyphenated *ni-yotte* in Line 1 corresponds to the gloss ‘by’ in Line 2.

• Using Line 2 Unique Morpheme Boundary Symbols in Both Lines or in Line 1 only

This is perhaps the most confusing deviation from the norm. It mostly involves a misuse of period signs:

22. Line 1 tildes and periods in partial substitution of Line 2 hyphens (Narrog 2017, 345)

*Yamada-sensei wa ippai non.de ki.ta/*mie.ta.*
 Yamada-Prof. to TOP a.drink drink-GER come-PST/come.HON-PST
 ‘Professor Yamada had a drink (and came)’.

23. Line 1 periods in substitution of Line 2 hyphens (Narrog 2017, 345) (= 14)

Taroo wa gakkoo=e arui.te it.ta/ki.ta.
 Taroto TOP school ALL walk-GER go-PST/come-PST
 ‘Taro walked (walk went/came) to school’.

As remarked above, the norms of grammatical annotation prescribe the use of colons or periods for segmenting the Line 2 morphs whose boundaries are not shown in Line 1. This use of periods might be at the back of ‘a.drink’ in (22), since the form *ippai* is actually analyzable into *ip*, a morph standing for the numeral ‘1’, and *pai*, an allomorph of the classifier for cups of drinks *hai*. When hyphens, blanks or equals signs are present, however, they must match in both lines. This does not happen with the clitic boundary symbol in (23). More important, the convention does not contemplate replacing Line 2 hyphens with periods in Line 1, as it happens in (22-23) and throughout Narrog 2017 and 2018. It should be added that Narrog actually takes (22-23) from Shibatani (2007b, 116, 119 respectively), where hyphens are used to segment all boundaries in both lines.

The peculiar use of period signs in (22-23) might be explained as follows.

In annotating texts for phonetical and phonologic purposes, periods are used to mark syllable boundaries (see for instance the annotation in Ito, Kubozono, Mester 2017). Now, it is a property of Japanese that morpheme breaks always fall at syllable boundaries. In

other words, syllable and morpheme boundaries always match. What might be inferred from the use of symbols in (22-23), then, is that the author intends to mark suffix boundaries with hyphens in the grammatical annotation tier of Line 2, while marking the corresponding syllable breaks by means of periods in the phonetic/phonemic tier of Line 1. The two Lines thus represent not merely two different kinds of data, but two types of annotation altogether.

This double strategy fails for three reasons. First, as I remarked, a non-mirroring use of symbols between Lines 1 and 2 is not contemplated in grammatical annotation. Second, the strategy is not justified by the general purpose of the two articles, which bear the title “The Morphosyntax of Grammaticalization in Japanese” (Narrog 2017) and “Modality” (Narrog 2018) and deal with grammar, not prosody or phonology. Now, syllable boundaries and syllable quality are not relevant *per se* in Japanese grammar. In the grammatical annotation of Japanese there is simply no need to mark syllable boundaries and to use the symbol <ɴ> for representing a non-contrasting allophone of /n/. Third, such a double strategy is applied inconsistently. In (23) a conventional morpheme-break symbol (the equals sign) appears in Line 1, where, according to this very strategy, it does not belong. In (22), prosodic syllable-breaks (period signs) occur in Line 2, where only *grammatical* annotation symbols should be used. But one also wonders why be so specific on the sound properties of /n/ while not considering other phonetic matters (like the devoicing of /i/, for instance).

Line 1 periods are not the only notational device used aberrantly in Narrog (2017). The confused segmentation of *mieta* in (22) implies that this form is composed of a root *mie* meaning ‘come’ and a portmanteau morph *ta* bearing both a connotative meaning HON and a grammatical meaning PST, or perhaps being further analyzable in two smaller components each with one of such meanings. This is not the case either: the PST suffix is *ta*, as (23) helps clarify, while *mie* is the root of *mieru* ‘being visible’, a verb which replaces verb *kuru* (occurring as *ki.ta* in 22-23) ‘come’ in honorific speech. The source (Shibatani 2007b, 116) correctly segments *mie-ta* and glosses ‘come.HON-PAST’.

As for the tilde <~>, it occurs seven times in Narrog (2017), always in Line 1, where it corresponds to a Line 2 hyphen. A tilde is used for showing the breaks between personal names and the title *sensei* ‘Professor’ (as in 22); between two roots in some (but not in all) compounds, between a verbal noun and the verbalizer dummy *suru* ‘do’, and between a converbial form and the auxiliary *kuru* ‘come’. The tilde is not a conventional symbol in grammatical annotation. I know of no morphological theory supporting the distribution of the tilde observable in Narrog (2017). Concerning (21-22), I will abstain from commenting on the non-idiomatic translation in the free-translation tier of Line 3 and on proof-reading errors, causing the repetitions of meaningless syllables (a recurrent problem throughout Narrog 2017).

Another example of a confusing misuse of period signs is the following (extracted from a very long annotated text):

24. Misuse of period signs in Lines 1 and 2 (extracted from Hasegawa 2018a, 12)
- dete.ko-nai
 come.out-not
 [Unrendered in the free translation, but meaning ‘do(es) not come out’]

Hasegawa (2018a) is the introduction to the edited volume Hasegawa (2018b). A reader with knowledge of the norms of grammatical annotation who has accepted Hasegawa’s deviant use of periods would probably be misled to believe that *dete* is a verbal root meaning ‘come’; *ko* is an element meaning ‘out’, in some indistinct morphemic relation with the previous root; and *nai* is an affix meaning ‘not’. Instead, *deteko* is a form derived from the grammaticalized verb *detekuru*, meaning ‘come out’, and segmentable into *de-te* (exit-cvB) and *ko* (come). Remarkably, the author’s glossing has the effect of inverting the actual meaning of the two components, for it is *dete* that contributes the meaning ‘out’ to the construction. As for *nai*, it is the present, unmarked form of an adjective meaning ‘inexistent’, which in Japanese is agglutinated to verbs to express negation. At the level of the morphological analysis required in Hasegawa’s chapter, such detailed segmentation is indeed superfluous. This is a typical case in which encoding information in excess opens the door to errors and misinformation. This problem could be avoided by simply segmenting *deteko-nai*, and glossing it <come_out-NEG> or <come_out-NEG:PRS>. An occasional misuse of periods also occurs in Hasegawa (2016).

• Bad Word Alignment

Lastly, there are cases in which words are not aligned in Line 1 and 2, or in which only partial alignment is implemented.

25. No vertical alignment of words (Ono 2013, 422)
- a. *eki de no kyaku no otosimono*
 station at GEN passenger GEN lost-thing
 ‘A lost article of a passenger at the station’.
- b. *kyaku no eki de no otosimono*
 station at GEN passenger GEN lost-thing
 ‘A lost article of a passenger at the station’.

When no alignment is present, as in (21) and (25a-b), the correspondence of Line 1 graphic words with Line 2 glosses can only be retrieved by *counting* words and finding the matching positions in the string. This does not facilitate the comprehension of the examples. When I

first selected (25) for discussion, I only intended to use (25a) for I had not noticed that the two gloss lines in (25a) and (25b) are identical. The correct Line 2 sequence should be <passenger GEN station at GEN lost_thing>. This is obviously a copy-and-paste error; it went unnoticed by author, copy editors and at first by myself due to the very crowding of words in Lines 1 and 2 that the lack of alignment originates.

26. Partial vertical alignment with flush left (Shirai 2015, 228)

<i>butyoo wa</i>	<i>Ruusii-san ni</i>	<i>kopii o</i>	<i>sasemasita</i>
dept. chief TOP	Lucy Miss OBL	photocopy ACC	do CAUS POL PST

‘The department chief made Lucy make photocopies’.

In (26), constituents are aligned vertically, but the strings of elements are left-flushed even if word-internal morpheme boundaries are marked with blank spaces (see also 4). This fact, along with the normal use of capital letters for category labels, suggests that the flushed elements are not suffixes but neither are they ordinary free word-forms. Even if making no use of Line 2 conventional symbols like colons, periods or underscores, this system does accurately convey an analysis and is therefore informative and useful to the reader.

7.1 Sloppy Annotation

The inconsistent marking of case-particle boundaries and poor segmentation are part of a vast array of deviations from the conventional norms of grammatical annotation which I call ‘sloppy annotation’. Sloppy annotation involves a misuse of all notational devices, not only of boundary symbols, and it is not limited to the few works I dealt with in the previous sections. Rather, it is a widespread ailment affecting to various degrees many works whose boundary marking I judged to be otherwise consistent. I cannot go into a detailed analysis of it, because to produce a true typology of sloppy annotation would require a whole treatise of its own, especially for as much as category labels are concerned. So I will only produce a sketchy profile of it. Listed below are instances of sloppy annotation:

- Occasional errors due to inadequate proofreading, like the use of ACC instead of NOM in (19); the copy-and-paste error of (25); and others which I did not specifically pointed out.
- The insertion of underlying forms in the morpheme break tier \mo of Line 2 rather than in a dedicated line. As it happens for *nur-ta* in (2), the underlying forms of a language do not necessarily bear any resemblance with the sounds of actual speech or any correspondence with the sequence of characters of the orthography. Being objects of a different order altogether, under-

lying forms should never be represented in the same line(s) as the phonetic or orthographic transcription. If they are required, they ought to be shown in a distinct line; one more reason for expressing \mo separately. This is a general problem in annotation, stemming from the trilinear format itself. In the grammatical annotation of Japanese, the problem is particularly annoying because it is unclear from the beginning whether the transcription in Line 1 is orthographic or phonetic or phonemic.

- The abuse of representing Japanese case particles in Line 2 glosses by way of ambiguous translational equivalents (English prepositions) instead of category labels, as in the following:

27. No category labelling (Saito, Lin, Murasugi 2014, 1)

isi -de no koogeki
stone-with *no* attack
'An attack with stones'.

In (27) *de* is glossed 'with'; similarly, in (5) *ni* and *niyotte* are glossed 'by'. See also (8), where *ni* is glossed 'to'. This habit is strongly criticized by Lehmann (1982, 205; 2004b, 1840-1).

- The use of a Japanese morph as a gloss. Example (27) also shows a lack of true glossing, in that Genitive particle *no* is represented in the IMG of Line 2 by an italicized version of itself. Similarly, in Heycock (2008), particles *wa* and *ga* are not glossed but simply reproduced in small capitals as 'WA' and 'GA' (the latter is shown in 16). The rendering of the adverbializer *ku* and *ni* in (1), respectively glossed 'KU' and 'NI', follows the same principle. Such a renouncement of glossing suggests that the properties of those morphemes are so unique as to defy grammatical description. Lehmann considers it an inadmissible "bankruptcy declaration of grammatical analysis" (Lehmann 1982, 205).
- Poor Labelling of Grammatical Categories, as in the Following:

28. Unclear labelling (Tomioka 2007, 891)

Hayashi-san(-wa) atama ii yo.
Hayashi-honor-(top) smart-part
'Mr./Ms. Hayahi is smart'.

In (28) category labels are bad not because wrong, but because graphically indistinguishable from lexical words. Such cases are by no means rare. Conventionally, category labels and translational equivalents should be distinguished in Line 2 by writing the former in upper case letters (usually small capitals) (Lehmann 2004b, 1840, 1856; Schultze-Berndt 2006, 239; Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008, 3) "to facilitate the reader's understanding" (Lehmann 1982, 205). In (28), the lack of this helpful graphic distinction generates the most

unfortunate confusion as to the meaning of elements like *san*, *wa*, *atama* and *yo*. Are they lexical words, meaning, respectively, ‘honor’, ‘top’, ‘smart’ and ‘part’, as shown in the gloss tier? They are not: *san* is a honorific suffix, *wa* is the topic marker, and *atama* means ‘head’; while it is the sentence *atama (ga) ii* ‘head (NOM) good’ as a whole that bears the sense of ‘smart’. As for *yo*, it is a sentence-final assertive particle. Elsewhere Tomioka uses the full word “particle” for labelling not only *yo* but also sentence-final confirmative particle *nee* and the morph *syō*, which is actually part of the dummy portmanteaux *desyō* (2007, 894, 898-9). In his encyclopedic codification of grammatical annotation, Lehmann remarks that different morphemes are never to be rendered by means of one and the same label (2004b, 1839). Moreover, particles, of any kind, must not be glossed as such, since the gloss ‘particle’ denotes, at best, a word class, whereas a label should give information on the meaning or grammatical function of the relevant item (Lehmann 2004b, 1838-44). Heycock (2008) (briefly discussed in § 6.2.2, see 16) also takes some examples from Tomioka (2007) and glosses sentence-final particles in the same wrong fashion. Additionally, Heycock shows inconsistent glossing, as elsewhere in her chapter *yo* is glossed ‘ΕΜΡΗ’, and *desyoo* is left unsegmented and glossed ‘be-would’ (e.g. Heycock 2008, 73).

29. Wrong category labelling (Shirai 2015, 225) (= 4)

Ken wa sin de iru.
 Ken TOP die RES NONPST
 ‘Ken is dead’.

In (29) the labelling of grammatical functions is bad because of both the misuse of blanks and the choice of wrong category labels. Faced with (29), the reader who wants to extract the meaning or functions of items *de* and *iru* from the glosses cannot avoid assigning *de* the grammatical meaning of ‘resultative’, and *iru* that of ‘non-past’. Instead, *de* is an allomorph of *te*, a converbal affix, while *iru* is the (non-past) dictionary form of an existential verb ‘be’. As a matter of fact, the predicate does have the resultative meaning shown. But this meaning occurs when the whole *-te iru* ending is assigned to punctual verbs (or, in constructional terms, when a punctual verb is inserted into the *-te iru* construction). The label ‘RES’ has nothing to do with an inherent function or meaning of the individual morpheme *te*. Likewise, when elsewhere in the same article Shirai names the same two elements PROG and NONPST respectively (see 20), the progressive meaning does not reside in the morpheme *te* but rather originates from the association of *-te iru* with durative verbs. There is no doubt that the author knows all this. The problem is that not only did he not display such knowledge but also ended up encoding data which, albeit well-formed and meaningful, are false, and thus misinformed the reader.

Miyagawa (2017) also analyzes the *-te iru* construction in a misleading way. In (15) he glosses *yonde-iru* as ‘read-ing’, so conveying that *yonde* is a verbal root meaning ‘read’ and *iru* a suffix for deriving the gerundive of converbal form. At Miyagawa’s level of morphologic detail, the correct segmentation and glossing should have been *yonde-iru* ‘read:cvb-be’ or ‘reading-be’. Miyagawa’s analysis is particularly confusing because he uses (15) for showing that *yonde iru* can express both progressive and resultative meanings, a fact that the gloss ‘read-ing’ does not convey at all.

7.2 Weak Editing

All the above errors and misrepresentations are not an exclusive responsibility of authors. They float into the final, printed version of many works because of a lack of power of editors. An exemplary case of weak editing is the HJLL series. As I remarked in § 6, in the general introduction to the series, identical in each volume (Shibatani, Kageyama 2015), a clarification is added saying that Japanese case markers are not free word-forms but in the HJLL volumes their boundary will be marked as if they were. HJLL authors do make an effort to comply with such a general prescription. Nevertheless, in eight of the ninety-two relevant chapters hyphens also pop up. Such inconsistency had to be detected and prevented from reaching the final volume by the editors, but it was not. As for the scientific editors, to sieve out inconsistencies is not properly their job; and besides one can hardly image a Shibatani or a Kageyama reading his colleagues’ papers and pointing out to them their notational errors. As for the copyeditor (credited on page vi of each volume) and his staff, I ascribe their failure in enforcing compliance with the conventions to their little authority over the scientific editors and the illustrious contributors. An 8% deviance rate has little weight and might be considered unavoidable. But the HJLL volumes are expensive, each costing between €299 and €320 (US\$344-70) in pdf or hardcover. For that price I believe a purchaser is legitimated to expect no proofreading error of such great misleading effect.¹¹

¹¹ Since it started, the HJLL series has acquired more and more consistency in the distribution of boundaries symbols. In the latest volume, on the contrastive linguistics of Japanese (Pardeshi, Kageyama 2018), all contributors use blanks, with no exception or incoherence. Probably, editors’ control was stricter in this handbook because the volume is intended for linguists unfamiliar with Japanese, who rely heavily on annotated examples and expect full compliance with the rules.

8 Linguistic Annotation and Information

To better understand the danger of misinformation originating in sloppy annotation, it is useful to stress the role of linguistic annotation as an encoding system. The author translates a source language text into a metalanguage following the specific lexicon and syntactic rules provided by a complex system of notational conventions. Boundary symbols properly belong to the lexicon, as each encodes a different meaning. The message, thus formatted, is made public to a community of expert linguists, all in possess of the decoding keys (lexicon and grammar). Each receiver applies those keys, decodes the message and so acquires information. In order to be epistemically effective and epistemologically valuable, this act of communication presupposes trust in the informer's observance of the Gricean maxim of Quality (Grice 1975, 46). This trust is of three kinds. The first is trust in the informer's honesty, thereby ruling out the possibility that the informer is conveying false information on purpose (i.e. is *disinforming* the reader, Fetzer 2004; Floridi 2011, 260). The second is trust in the author's expertise as an encoder, i.e. in the sender's knowledge of the metalanguage and competence to use it.¹² In short, the receiver needs to believe that the informer is not unintentionally misinforming her due to weak or wrong encoding. The third form of trust concerns the actual meaning of the message, and consists in the assumption that it is based on valid linguistic analysis and encodes information which can become knowledge.

Within this framework, every individual token of the several types of rule violation listed above as instances of sloppy annotation may only have one of two outputs. In theory, an occurrence of sloppy annotation might be uninformative. This happens when the use of the notational devices has so little cohesion as to make no sense. This is a very rare output, though, as it presupposes the use of devices not contemplated by the rules, or a totally messed up, jumbled use of conventional symbols. Sloppy annotation, instead, is technically still annotation. Each token of it consists in the misuse of one symbol only, which yet carries a conventional meaning and is decoded consequently. This is why sloppy annotation almost invariably conveys misinformation. There is no point in remarking the deleterious pow-

¹² I do not consider rumour to be a factor in determining a sloppy-annotation output. For example, it might seem reasonable to ascribe to rumour the insertion of the syllable <to> in Line 2 in (22-23), and the copying of Line 2 from (25a) to (25b). However, I see the role of copyeditors as a filter which activates after the first, main encoding of information, with the function of cleansing the code of wrong or misplaced symbols. In such a role, copy editors are members of the input staff, and bear part of the responsibility for the quality of the code. In this sense, the first type of trust under discussion extends as deference in editors.

er of the incorrect data encoded in all the examples discussed above. Misinformation is indeed carried by the repetition of (25a) Line 2 in (25b), the mislabelling of elements in the gloss of the predicates in (22), (24) and (29); the typographic error ACC in (19), and so on. In most cases, the misinformation consists in the suggestion that Japanese case particle belongs to more than one morphological class, while in fact they do not. Allowing the atheoretical boundary marking of the Latin orthography to take over the theory-informed use of boundary symbols in Line 2 is also cause of misinformation. In this specific case, the product of noncompliance with a rule (the showing of case-particle boundaries as meaningless blank spaces) at source corresponds by chance to a meaningful signal according to that very same rule (“blanks mark the boundaries of independent words”). As an effect, the ‘annotated’ text only resembles a genuine instance of annotation, but is not. The receiver cannot know that, though, and will take the output as truly annotated text. Of course, if each singular instance of annotation is taken out of context, one cannot really determine in which role blanks are used. It may well be, but is equally undecidable, that the encoder uses blanks non-theoretically but that s/he collaterally believes that Japanese case markers are independent words. There would so occur a casual match of the encoded meaning with the encoder’s beliefs. I may call this an instance of ‘lucky information’. The epistemic problems caused by sloppy annotation are nearly endless.

9 Sloppy Annotation and Conventionality

Sloppiness thus endangers the utility of the whole system of linguistic annotation. As any other conventional system, linguistic annotation is both inspired by purely utilitarian (“I use this shared metalanguage otherwise no one would understand me”) and ethical (“I talk the same language as others so that they’ll make less effort to decipher me”) reasons, and is dependent on the compliance of all actors (Marmor 2009, 52-4). In general, compliance does not necessarily require of an actor to be conscious of the fact of being following a norm, of the conventional nature of it, or of its reasons (Marmor 2009, 5-7). Linguistics and linguistic annotation, however, are very specialized fields, populated by a community of learned scientists well used to investigate the relationship between particular and universal, and to express themselves by means of metalanguages. All members of this community are legitimately expected to know better, and to be conscious of the nature, importance and ethical value of the technical conventions that regulate their world. As I pointed out in § 2.1, linguistic annotation is a coordination convention, which solves a coordination problem related to data sharing by providing a universal

packaging format based on the standardized analytical tools of descriptive grammar. The rule-breaking represented by sloppy annotation, therefore, diminishes the communicative value of the annotated text and puts the unaware reader at a disadvantage. So, disregarding the role of the convention is a denial of the value of the metalanguage itself and a betrayal of the very ethos that sustains the conventional system as such.

Moreover, linguistic annotation can also be considered a constitutive social convention, in the sense that it is a practice which does not exist unless an author actually engages in it, and that its rules can be defined only with reference to the activity they regulate (Marmor 2009, 33). As Marmor puts it, every set of constitutive conventions has, as a 'prologue', the voluntary engagement in the relevant activity. This is an 'if clause' which may be expressed as "if you want to play, these are the rules you ought to follow" (Marmor 2007, 134-5, 161). The same point was made by Grice in relation to the Cooperative Principle (1975, 49). Differently put, this means that those linguists who want to annotate can only do so by engaging in annotation, but if they do that, they must do it by the rules, otherwise they are not annotating at all. From a formalist point of view, then, the authors that slip into sloppy annotation are breaking some constitutive rule, no matter how marginal it may seem, and so effectively put themselves out of the game - both the game of linguistics and that of annotation. Sloppiness invalidates linguistic annotation, and changes an annotated text into something else.

According to the arbitrariness condition, however, conventional norms have as a definitional property the possibility of being substituted by alternate rules ultimately achieving roughly the same purpose (Marmor 2009, 43). Does sloppy annotation represent a collection of alternate conventions, then? At the present level of analysis, my answer for sloppy annotation in general is negative, for it is not uniform or widespread enough. My answer is negative for bad morpheme-boundary marking too, even though a significant number of linguists seem to be following it. For one thing, neutralizing the morphological distinction between clitics, *fuzokugo* and free word-forms, as the confusion of hyphens and blanks does, can hardly be considered epistemically equivalent to maintaining that distinction. Rather, it causes a significant loss in the encoding power of the marking symbols (Marmor 2009, 9). It does not achieve the same purpose of the current rule; and therefore it does not represent a viable substitute for it - certainly not at the present state of equilibrium of the convention as a whole. Moreover, alternate norms are only effective if they are recognized as such and universally adopted by the relevant community. Bad boundary marking could never be so recognized and thereby changed into a simpler marking convention, because it would introduce a language-specific bullet into a larger rule

system expressly designed to be universal. One can hardly imagine a rule like “For Japanese case particles only, boundaries can be indifferently shown by means of blanks, hyphens or equals signs” in an encyclopedic repository like the Leipzig Glossing Rules. No matter how conventional bad boundary marking may be, then, it represents a breaking of the larger set of norms that regulate linguistic annotation – a more complex system which antedates it and already includes perfectly viable prescriptions on boundary marking.

10 Coping With Sloppy Annotation

The question now arises as to how poor boundary marking and sloppy annotation in general may survive in the community of linguists. A first important point is that, like the rules of certain games, the norms of linguistic annotation work (up to a point) even if they are followed partially, or imprecisely. The home-rules of certain games work so well (i.e., satisfice), that the players may never even realize something is wrong. They believe they are still playing the same game, without feeling a need to change their ways of playing it or to learn the listed rules better.

The homologies with natural languages are evident. Natural languages work effectively in coding communication even when used incompetently, with opaque expressions or expressions that are unacceptable to a large part of their speaking communities. Beyond a certain threshold, of course, the source code is too corrupted and communication becomes impossible. When this happens, one has to consider if there is a community of speakers which still understand the source. If there is, then the source has become another language. The notational problem of imperfect encoding is the same in natural languages as in the artificial metalanguage of linguistic annotation. Until an abstract point is reached when cohesion is lost and sloppy annotation becomes unintelligible, it still displays somehow regular associations of meanings and signs. Therefore it still works, albeit imperfectly, so that, even if noticed and informally disapproved, is not subject to criticism and sanction. In other words, although under rigid formalism sloppy annotation is not annotation at all, in practice its home-rules do not change it enough to invalidate its function or constitute a different language altogether.

The disruption provoked by sloppy annotation is kept within acceptable limits because of the important role played by another actor, the informee or decoder, that is, the reader. The reader is the site of two distinct damage-control mechanisms. The first one is related to relevance.

As I noticed in § 4, there is no way of *not* representing Line 2 word boundaries theoretically, even if doing so is irrelevant to the

discourse. Therefore, in boundary marking the Gricean maxim of relation (“be relevant”) and, consequently, the maxims of quantity (“provide enough information, but not too much”) (Grice 1975, 45-6), cannot be observed. This is actually true for grammatical annotation in general. With few exceptions (works on phonetics, phonology, discourse analysis), no matter how frugal it is, grammatical annotation is structured in such a way as to require a representation of grammatical contents more finely grained than strictly needed. Moreover, as discussed by Lehmann, a high degree of detail is advisable because an author cannot foresee all the uses his readers may make of the annotated examples (Lehmann 1982, 202; 2004a, 194; 2004b, 1839). Now, as Grice himself put it, the excess of information so generated may cause confusion:

The second maxim [“Do not make your contribution more informative than is required”] is disputable; it might be said that to be overinformative is not a transgression of the C[operative] P[rinciple] but merely a waste of time. However, it might be answered that such overinformativeness may be confusing in that it is liable to raise side issues; and there may also be an indirect effect, in that the hearers may be misled as a result of thinking that there is some particular point in the provision of the excess of information. However this may be, there is perhaps a different reason for doubt about the admission of this second maxim, namely, that its effect will be secured by a later maxim, which concern relevance. (Grice 1975, 46)

The readers of the literature of linguistics know that the threshold (the “guarantee of relevance”: Sperber, Wilson 1995, 49-50) is set low and that the annotated examples are prone to contain information in excess. In extreme cases, when the reader is uninterested (perhaps because already expert enough), the examples go unread, or are only summarily parsed, to the effect that sloppy annotation is filtered out and neutralized. In this way the readers avoid being misinformed simply because they do not act in order to be informed. In other cases, in a given work, sloppy annotation is concentrated in areas of the annotated examples which are not relevant to the general topic under discussion. For example, the morphologic properties of Japanese case particles are specifically addressed in only one work in my sample.¹³ This means that the readers use all the works in the

13 The work in question is Kageyama 2016, discussed in §5. In Kageyama’s case the whole article is on the morphological status of Japanese postnominal particles, so that the information provided by the main text overrides the conventional meaning of the boundary symbols used in annotation, effectively depriving them of semantic function. The same occurs in Horie 2018, discussed in § 6.2.2.

sample but one for learning something different from the morphology of Japanese case particles. To them, how case-particle boundaries are marked is irrelevant and they will rather pay attention to other features of the annotated texts. To make a more specific example, in Narrog (2017, 345-6) the discussion of (23) is focused on the allative phrase *gakkoo=e*, written in bold. Readers who follow Narrog's line of reasoning will hardly notice the bad segmentation in the rest of the two lines. Again, misinformation does not occur because the agent does not process the misinforming material.

The second mechanism is an effortful inferential procedure that kicks in and functions in very much the same way as when a subject is coping with output errors in processing natural language. In this situation, the reader does notice sloppy annotation, and also considers the information which the text is supposed to convey as epistemically relevant. The problem is how to extract it. The reader is confronted with a jumble of signs wherein it is unclear which ones are used as symbols, and with what meaning, and what function meaningless signs might have. The reader therefore activates a procedure for restoring the epistemic value of the received information consisting in four parallel operations (adapted from Lewandowsky et al. 2012, 112-13):

- A cohesion check, based on a comparison of the association of meaning and symbols within each annotated example.
- A coherence check, carried out by comparing contextual instances of annotation.
- A consistency check, performed by comparing the data provided by the present instance of annotation with previous encyclopedic knowledge (both in linguistics and of specific languages, including Japanese). This check might not necessarily reveal invalid analysis.
- A validation check, to assess the source's credibility and expertise, based on previous acquaintance with the author's works.

By so doing, the reader notices patterns and regularities, identifies errors, and eventually becomes able to assign valid, viable and consistent values to symbols and labels. This restores communication; a sense emerges from which the reader can acquire useful information, albeit with occasional data loss. For example, whenever period signs (and tildes) are used improperly, as in (22-23), it is not difficult to understand that they generally have the same function of hyphens. Once ascertained this, and confronted with the confused glossing of *mie.ta* as 'come.HON-PST' in (22), the reader only has to discard the incohesive segmentation as meaningless and, on the basis of the accompanying discussion, retain the fact that the sense of *mieta* is the sum of three meaning components: 'honorific', 'past' and 'come'. Here bad segmentation causes a loss of information about the individual

true value of the items, but the relevant message, the meaning of the whole construction, goes through. The same process leads to restoring the epistemic contents of *zyunbisareta* in (19), *hanasiteimasu* in (20), *dete.ko-nai* in (24) and *shin de iru* in (29). In (19-20) the lack of segmentation in Line 1 causes a partial loss of data; but this loss is intentional, and permitted by the notational rules themselves. Only, the authors signal it with the wrong symbols. In (24) and (29), discarding the segmentation as meaningless prevents from being misinformed by the wrong value assigned to Line 2 morphs (see discussion at the end of § 7).

When case-particle boundaries are marked in inconsistent fashion, a reader will restore the value of boundary markers by familiarity, adopting as valid (that is, as expressing the author's true theoretical persuasion) the most frequent use of symbols. This is what happens in Iwasaki (2013), where the boundaries of case particle are marked by hyphens in the first chapter and by blanks in the rest of the volume. The valid symbols will be taken to be the latter, even by those readers unaware of Iwasaki's warning on the matter (2013, xix). Additionally, for each segmented item or type of item, the most frequently used symbol will override all other symbols. For instance, again in Narrog (2017), three distinct boundary markers are used for particles in allative function. Rather than ignoring them because of lack of cohesion, the reader might just reckon blanks as valid, since they have the highest distributional value throughout the article:

30. Override by most frequent boundary symbol in (Narrog 2017)

- a. *gakkoo=e*
school ALL
- b. *heyani*
room ALL
- c. *heyani*
room-ALL

In (30) the variation in boundary marking for of all particles glossed ALL in Narrog (2017) is shown. The exact figures are omitted; combination (c) only occurs once, whereas (a-b) are quite frequent. From the frequency of blanks, a reader takes the valid boundary marker for allative particles to be a blank space, thus dismissing the use of equals signs and hyphens as an error. In this case, that allative case markers are free word-forms may, or may not, correspond to Narrog's true opinion.

The process of retrieving relevant content from poor boundary marking and sloppy annotation is within the reach of every linguist and is customarily applied by all members of the community. Being first of all a method for restoring cohesion, that is, for retrieving consistent associations of meanings and symbols, this process is used

in every daily-life instance of linguistic communication. Moreover, as happens in games and natural languages, a linguist knows that rules may have loopholes or might be difficult to understand and follow properly, and that when writing a paper many authors, including herself, prefer to invest time and mental energy in expounding their ideas than in polishing up their annotation. Authors know that readers would understand, readers know that authors know, and so on in a regression which is typical of the working of conventions. Indeed, a certain acceptance of sloppiness is in itself a deeper convention forming an integral part of the ethos of the profession; the trust in the expertise of some authors – and the deference towards editors – may decrease as an effect of bad annotation, but again theories and ideas are considered more important than technical accuracy.

It should be remembered, though, that the above process is sustained by a trust in the encoders' intention of informing truthfully about their theoretical persuasions. The process leads to recovering the integrity of the original message regardless of its truth content (that is, whether it represents valid linguistic analysis). As seen, when the use of symbols is too confused, it is just ignored as meaningless, but when it maintains, or is restored to, a certain cohesion, then it may be taken at face value, decoded as theory-consistent and hence convey false information. Without mobilizing previous linguistic knowledge of Japanese, which they may not have, readers cannot validate the decoded information and decide if it may be a source of new knowledge.

From the examples discussed above, it is clear that a misinformation effect has the greatest chance of happening when the use of boundary symbols implies that Japanese case markers are split into different morphological classes (independent words, clitics, affixes), while in fact they are not. Several minor cases of inconsistency (§ 6.2.1) have this misleading effect, for the marking pattern they display is logical enough that can be taken for the result of valid morphological analysis (see discussion of 11, 12, 13, 14 = 24 etc.). For example, among the major cases of inconsistency (§ 6.2.2), the overhyphenation in (15), (16) and (17) implies that particles like the genitive marker *no* and the focus marker *mo* become affix-like in certain constructions.

Finally, the atheoretical use of blanks is the least damaging instance of sloppy annotation. In extreme cases, like the intrusion of blanks into morpheme breaks shown in (29), it is easily detected and ignored as an instance of wrong encoding. In all other cases it is undetectable, yet it involuntarily conveys a meaning 'case particles are free word-forms' which is not inconsistent with morphological theory. Therefore, the atheoretical use of blanks may not correspond to an author's true theoretical persuasion – so representing a betrayal of the reader's second type of trust and a lack of observance of Grice's

maxim of quality – but does not otherwise misinform the reader by conveying incorrect analysis.

11 Conclusions

Matters of relevance, under which the attention and cognitive resources of the reader are channeled to filter out misinformation and recover meaning selectively, coupled with an ethos that tolerates sloppy annotation, help limit the disruption caused by poor boundary marking and allow it to persist in the English-language literature of Japanese linguistics. What follows is a conclusive assessment of the inconsistent treatment of Japanese case-particle boundaries under such conditions.

At the level of single works, be they monographs, journal articles or lone chapters in collections not specifically dealing with Japanese language, it is reasonable that the reductionist use of boundary symbols discussed in § 5 be let to intrude into Japanese annotation. Given the cognitive constraint working against the adoption of dedicated *fuzokugo* break symbol, and being Japanese case markers closer to free word-forms than to suffixes, the most accurate way of showing case-particle boundaries should be with blanks, reserving hyphens for the segmentation of word-internal morphemes. This two-marker-only strategy is indeed the one currently followed by Shibatani, in the latest stage of this author's long search for optimality. But there would be no harm in hyphenating case-particle boundary either. At most, such a choice of symbols could be criticized as being inaccurate but, within a single work, would not misinform.

In single works, for the sake of simplicity I also deem it acceptable for syntactic analysis to be stated by way of the glosses themselves and not in words. The readers will just assume that boundary marking is backed by a theory, whichever it is, without necessarily knowing of alternate theories, and of the validity thereof.

Care should be applied though when letting the pre-theoretical boundary marking of the original Latin orthography in Line 1 colonize Line 2 and grammatical annotation in general. Those authors who give no theoretical significance to the graphic way they show word boundaries should be aware of the fact that they are doing so and declare it explicitly.

In sum, then, in works that are not part of collections with a general introduction on Japanese morphology, the problem of how to interpret boundary symbols could be neutralized by simply adding some clarifying remarks. That authors hardly ever do so is another problem altogether.

In collections, my judgment is that inconsistency is ethically bad. An innocent reader, with no previous knowledge of Japanese, unaware of the morphologic nature of Japanese case markers, is confused

by seeing them treated now as affixes, now as independent words, now as clitics. Eventually, such a reader will most probably dismiss the conflicting pieces of information as inaccurate, leading to no misinformation, or conclude that Japanese case markers are of a controversial nature. Still, that reader will be no wiser as to what nature they are, with no new instrument to form a personal opinion about the matter. This type of inconsistency actually deprives boundary signs of meaning, and forces the morphology of Japanese case marker into irrelevance, to the effect that the reader acquires no information about it. It is a surrender of grammatical annotation.

The best possible solution is to require all contributors to comply with a general boundary marking strategy decided at editorial level, even if the chosen symbols do not reflect the personal opinions of all authors. In presence of uniformity, no explicit statement of the enforced policy would be needed in a preface or general introduction – but of course some explanatory remarks would do no harm either. The second best possible solution is to require all contributors to explicitly state the rationale of their boundary marking. This would allow all authors to freely express their theoretical stances and adopt the preferred marking method. Again, I could find no evidence that either of the above solutions has ever been adopted. I identified the cause in the little power that editors have over contributors.

A mix of several case-particle boundary marking strategies should never occur in one and the same work, for it may only generate uninformative or misinformative outputs. The most outstanding case of uninformative symbol-mixing in my sample is Horie (2018), discussed in § 6.2.2. It is true that readers have at their disposal a powerful cognitive procedure for disambiguating between conflicting boundary symbols, but after adopting one forced interpretation they will still be unsure about the true morphological status of Japanese case markers. In linguistic typology, it often happens that authors are not specifically competent in Japanese. When they use other sources' Japanese examples, in order to avoid using conflicting boundary symbols they should seek advice, or arbitrarily choose and enforce one method only. Then, assuming the choice is limited to hyphens and blanks, which one they use is ultimately unimportant – after all, if both can be found in original sources, both have some theoretical validity. On how to actually implement the chosen strategy, thereby altering the annotation of a language the author has little or no competence whereof, again advice should be sought. As an expert, though, a typologist is required to have enough knowledge to identify the relevant morphemes and separate them correctly, to the extent that Lehmann says:

If the author knows the number and order of morphs in an L1 form, then he should indicate them. If the author does not even know so much, he should probably not use the example. (2004b, 1854)

This is why I consider the cases of Malchukov, Haspelmath, Comrie (2010) and of Malchukov (2016) particularly serious, given the authors' high standing¹⁴ and the scope of the volumes hosting their chapters.

The differential treatment of case-marker boundaries, which implicitly splits Japanese postnominal particles into several distinct morphological classes, is absolutely unacceptable. The role of hyphens is to mark word-internal morpheme breaks, not some vague, affix-like morphological relation that sprouts out when certain words are in certain sequences, as all the instances of over-hyphenation discussed above imply. This view of Japanese morphology is aberrant. Such a free use of hyphens has no morphological basis and no place in the notational conventions. It must be avoided at all costs because of the misinformative effect on the innocent reader.

As for the mix of hyphens, blanks, tildes, occasional equals and period signs, freely alternating between the two lines of individual examples, often to mark the same type of boundary, and across the annotated examples of entire articles, it is nothing but a rude mockery of annotation. It has no epistemic value whatsoever, no matter how easily it may be ignored by an expert reader. It should not be allowed in the professional literature of linguistics.

What brings then many leading scholars in the field of Japanese linguistics to be so careless in their annotation? As I anticipated in the introduction, there is no way of giving a satisfactory answer to this question. However, I do have an opinion on the matter, and I will express it here, with no further analysis.

I think that the bad annotation of Japanese is not actually caused by sloppiness, but by a biased belief in the inutility of annotating Japanese. The line of reasoning underlying such a belief may be explained in the following way. Annotating Japanese is useless because no annotation, no matter how accurate, will ever be able to effectively encode Japanese grammar or bring about the 'spirit of the language' - which is, after all, the ultimate purpose of interlinear morphemic glossing (Lehmann 2004b, 1834). This lack of power does not lie in some technical weakness of the notational tools themselves. If this were the case, the tools would only have to be better tuned to become efficient. The problem is that they are based on Western linguistics, whose notions reflect Western categories of thought and can only represent languages to Western minds. Japanese, however, is different, because it originates in the mind of Japanese people, or perhaps it existed in nature and then penetrated into their brains.

14 Malchukov, Haspelmath, Comrie 2010 is by Andrej Malchukov, Martin Haspelmath and Bernard Comrie. Haspelmath and Comrie are coauthors of the LGR (Bickel, Comrie, Haspelmath 2008).

Either way, Japanese people think differently from all the other people in the world. Since Japanese does not follow the same logic as any other human language, the tools for representing them are powerless for Japanese. This is the same bias that originates the many theories on the unicity of the Japanese people (*nihonjinron* 日本人論) and of Japanese culture (*nihonbunkaron* 日本文化論) (Befu 2001). In the domain of language, this bias goes under the name of *nihongoron* 日本語論, ‘the question of Japanese language’, and manifests itself in a system of myths ascribing to Japanese interlaced properties such as being ancient, natural, prelogical, pure, unique, difficult, untranslatable (Miller 1982, 10-11; 1977).

Under this attitude, there is no reason to waste time and effort in trying to accurately represent a language that so defies Western categorization: no annotation could ever be accurate for Japanese. Since annotation is expected of them, authors do annotate, using symbols and applying rules. But many just do it for the sake of it, without acknowledging the true purpose of the convention, to the effect that their annotation is chaotic, sometimes unintelligible, often misleading. But under the discourse of *nihongoron*, it does not matter, because those readers who know Japanese will understand the contents even without annotation, whereas to the others the annotated text will be useless anyway. This is of course one of the many Japanese expressions of what is called ‘native-speakerism’ (Holliday 2005). Such a denial of the role of metalanguage is the only explanation I could find for the existence of the many instances of poor annotation discussed above. I am persuaded that all authors mentioned in this paper are fine scientists who are contributing with their works to the progress of the science of linguistics and of human knowledge in general. I am also positive that, if asked, they would categorically deny they believe in some nonsense like the incommensurability of Japanese. This is the very reason they should pay more attention to the way they annotate.

List of abbreviations

ACC, acc, Acc	accusative
all	allative
CAUS	causative
CL	classifier
COMP	complementizer
CON	converb
cop	copula
cvb	converb
dat	dative
EMPH	emphatic
evid	evidential
FOC	focus
\ft	free translation tier
GEN, gen	genitive
ger	gerund
\gr	grammatical tagging tier
\it	gloss tier
HJLL	Handbooks of Japanese Language and Linguistics
IMG	interlinear morphemic gloss
INS	instrumental
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
hon	honorific
honor	honorific
L1	object language
LGR	Leipzig Glossing Rules
\mo	morpheme break tier
neg	negative
NOM, nom, Nom	nominative
NONPST,	nonpast
NONPST	
NMLZM	nominalization marker
nmlzr	nominalizer
NP	noun phrase
OBL	oblique
\orth	orthographic transcription tier
Per	perfective
\phonem	phonemic transcription tier
\phonet	phonetic transcription tier
PART, part	particle
PASS, pass	passive
PAST	past
POL, pol	polite

PP	postpositional phrase
PRES	present
PROG	progressive
prs	present
PST, PST	past
Q	question
\ref	reference tier
RES	resultative
TOP, TOP, top	topic

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Izayoi nikki The History of a Disputed Heritage in the Kamakura Period (1185-1333)

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Abstract This paper aims to cast fresh new light upon *Izayoi nikki* (The Diary of the Sixteenth Night Moon, c. 1280), the most representative work of Nun Abutsu. After considering why it has long been undervalued by Japanese scholars, this study takes a close look at the long and complicated legal dispute described in the diary. In this legal dispute, Nun Abutsu played a central role as loyal mother and widowed nun in struggling to ensure a future for her children, the natural descendants of a famous dynasty of poets. To fully understand the strength of the reasons behind her actions, it would seem to be of fundamental importance to read *Izayoi nikki* from a different perspective, taking into account not only the personal story of the author but also the socio-historical framework of the Kamakura period, focusing in particular on inheritance practices and the kinds of responsibilities women were expected to bear in relation to the family.

Keywords Nun Abutsu. *Izayoi Nikki*. Marriage and women's rights. Medieval Japan. Mikohidari poetry. Fujiwara no Tameie.

Summary 1 Reading the Work of a Controversial Author. – 2 A Long and Complicated Dispute. – 3 A Widow's Role. – 4 A Bay of Salty Algae to Protect. – 5 Loyal Wife and Loving Mother... Or Merely a Wily Social Climber?



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The greatest revolution in a country is one that changes women and their way of life. Revolution cannot be achieved without women. Women may be physically weaker, but morally they have a force a hundred forces greater.
(Fallaci 1961, 40)

1 Reading the Work of a Controversial Author

The *Izayoi nikki* 十六夜日記 (The Diary of the Sixteenth Night Moon, c. 1280) proves to have an intrinsic composite structure that prevents us from classifying it within one specific genre. Literary critics tend to define it as a *kikō* 紀行, a ‘travel diary’, including it in anthologies that contain largely similar works, but due to the presence of more introspective passages, it could rightly be considered to belong to the so-called *joryū nikki bungaku* 女流日記文学, or diaries written by women from the Heian period (794-1185) onwards.

The division of the text into four distinct parts persuasively confirms its versatility, showing the confluence of various genres, to which each of its sections seems to correspond. The introduction, focusing on the personal experience of the protagonist, who freely expresses her distress in the face of adverse fate, brings to mind other examples of writing that open up the inner world of women. In particular, comparison with *Kagerō nikki* 蜻蛉日記 (The Kagerō Diary, c. 974) does not appear unduly audacious as, like the mother of Fujiwara no Michitsuna (935-95), Nun Abutsu (1225?-1283?) too, once far away from the court environment, focuses her attention on an acrimonious family experience she wishes to share with other women of her time. It may safely be said that these two heroines, living in distant ages, share a feeling of marginalization, where writing appears to take on an almost therapeutic role in an attempt to overcome a trauma to which they react according to their very different temperaments: the fragile and passive protagonist of *Kagerō nikki* contrasts with the strength and determination of Nun Abutsu who, through the pages of *Izayoi nikki*, impresses the reader as an unprecedented model of wife and mother.

The particular emotional tension that distinguishes the first part of the work, where the reader is informed of the circumstances that lead the author/protagonist to undertake the journey to Kamakura after a moving farewell from her closest relatives and friends, seems to fade away, or at least to return only intermittently, in the other three

* This contribution is the first result of the three months of study that the Author spent in Japan in the autumn of 2018 as guest researcher at the National Institute of Japanese Literature in Tokyo, to whom we must express our heartfelt thanks.



Figure 1 Portrait of Nun Abutsu, 14th century. Colour on Silk, 83.2×51.0 cm. Artist unknown, Private Collection, Hyōgo, Japan. Source: Miya 1979

sections of the work. The second part is already in a very different style from the first and, being a detailed account of the journey from Kyoto to Kamakura, is halfway between a travel diary (*kikō*) and a guide to famous places (*meisho* 名所); the writing style changes again in the third part, whose narrative structure is based on exchanges of poetic missives (*zōtōka* 贈答歌) with relatives and acquaintances left behind in the capital; in the fourth part, the prose sections are eliminated altogether to leave room for a long *chōka* 長歌, followed by a short *hanka* 反歌 that serves to restate in no uncertain terms the reasons for the trip to Kamakura.¹

In Japan, and consequently also abroad, the heterogeneous and fragmentary structure of *Izayoi nikki* has long affected its reception, leading some scholars to underestimate its literary value.² As if this were not enough, the controversial personality of Nun Abutsu and the numerous points of contact between the content of *Izayoi nikki* and her real-life experience, while attracting the interest of many, have further influenced judgment of the work's intrinsic value, subordinating it to an evaluation of the author's conduct as either positive or negative.³ While some scholars denigrate or even completely ignore a text written by a person whom they consider evil, shrewd, and careerist (Mezaki 1989), quite a few critics have reassessed it, seeing it as an account of the life of a faithful spouse and loving mother prepared to make whatever sacrifice necessary (Iwasa 1993). The second interpretation, which seems to have had particular fortune in Japan, perhaps because it coincides with the traditional model of the ideal woman, soon transformed the protagonist of the *Izayoi nikki* into an immortal symbol of the motherly love constantly presented in high school literary manuals. The suspicion that the work may have been cunningly exploited, considered useful in forging young minds, cannot be excluded *a priori*. Actually, it seems to lend itself naturally to this kind of purpose, since the true story in this text is mixed in with the carefully thought-out narration whose aim it is to make the reader passively accept a model of exemplary womanhood constructed to a specific end by the writer.

While critics have long limited themselves to reading *Izayoi nikki* as a reflection of one of the two antithetical images of Nun Abutsu handed down over the centuries, more recent studies (Wren 1997;

¹ There are different types of manuscripts of *Izayoi nikki*. Some of them include the final *chōka*, while others omit it. In this essay I follow the *Izayoi nikki* edited by Iwasa Miyoko (Iwasa 1994) based on the combination of two manuscripts (the *Kujōkebon* and the *Matsuhirabon*), which includes the final poem.

² Regarding the low literary value attributed to the work, see for example Kazamaki 1929 and Reischauer 1947.

³ For a detailed examination of the reception of *Izayoi nikki* see Hagiwara 1990 and Laffin 2005.

Tabuchi 2009; Laffin 2013) have tried to show that interpreting this work only on the basis of a positive or negative opinion on the author could in fact be rather reductive or even misleading. It might prove much more interesting to examine it carefully within the sociohistorical context in which it was produced to understand why Nun Abutsu felt the need to write it and why she decided to present herself as a devoted wife and mother sincerely concerned with the fate of her children. Starting from this vein of critical studies that consider the *Izayoi nikki* as a literary document with an interesting cross-section of its time, we will try to analyze the story of the disputed inheritance described in this work in order to reconstruct the role of women within the family and society in the Kamakura period through this complicated legal controversy. At a time of great change, when women's rights would gradually erode, Nun Abutsu's decision to fight so doggedly to obtain such an important legacy appears to acquire a special meaning, becoming a stubborn act of feminist resistance against an unjust and oppressive system, one in which we can recognize a multiplicity of women from every age and every part of the world, all engaged in the same struggle.

2 A Long and Complicated Dispute

The young people of today cannot even imagine that the title of that book, which is said to have been found hidden in a wall a long time ago, also concerns them. Therefore, despite the fact that my poor husband repeatedly left unequivocal evidence of his will, the father's recommendations have been ignored by his son. As if this were not enough, I then realized that I was the only insignificant person unworthy of the consideration of a just sovereign who should never abandon any of his subjects and that I did not even deserve the compassion of his faithful ministers who keep track of everything that happens in this world. Nevertheless, I am still unable to resign myself, and I suffer greatly on account of worries from which there is no respite. (Iwasa 1994, 268)⁴

The book alluded to by Nun Abutsu at the beginning of *Izayoi nikki* is the *Xiaojing* 孝經 (The Classic of Filial Piety),⁵ which condemns

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

⁵ A very short Chinese work containing the dialogues between Confucius and his disciple Zengzi engaged in a discussion on filial piety, one of the fundamental virtues of human conduct. This, the best-known text attributed to Confucius or his disciple, includes 9 chapters divided into 18 sections. It is thought to have been written in the middle of the third century BC.

Tameuji (1222-86), Fujiwara no Tameie's (1198-1275) son to another woman,⁶ for not respecting the new terms of his father's will. In 1273, the latter, retracting what he had previously said, assigned one of his properties, the Hosokawa estate, together with a series of documents belonging to the family, to another son, Tamesuke (1263-1328), whom he had to Nun Abutsu at an advanced age, citing Tameuji's reprehensible behaviour as a reason.⁷

Reference to the "book found in the wall", a text considered sacred and inviolable, at the beginning of the work is not accidental, as it has the precise function of making Tameuji's behaviour appear blasphemous, since he does not observe its teachings and immediately establishes a clear moral demarcation line between the writer and her antagonist. This effective premise is probably also intended to draw attention to the solid culture of Nun Abutsu who, with her knowledge of Chinese classics, cancels the traditional differences between men and women, not only from the intellectual point of view but also from the legal one, announcing her intention to address the legal issue on an equal footing (Wren 1997, 189-90). As evidence of how important Confucian thought and respect due to parents during the military government had become, the *Goseibai shikimoku* 御成敗式目, the code of fifty-two articles drafted in 1232, later revised and supplemented on numerous occasions throughout the Kamakura period, clarifies that in the event that children (not only males but females too) failed to show respect for their parents, the latter could at any time retract the contents of a will already drafted (Kasamatsu 1972, 19, article 18). Disinheriting relatives seems to have been widespread practice at the time, and this allowed wills to be revised several times, which suggests that sons and daughters reached a degree of tranquillity and stability after the death of both parents (Tonomura 1990, 607).

Consequently, if Nun Abutsu could manage to prove that Tameie had designated her son Tamesuke as his only legitimate heir because of Tameuji's reprehensible conduct, he would have a good chance of inheriting the Hosokawa estate and, with it, numerous important literary documents.

Shortly after Tameie's death in 1275, Tameuji and his stepmother, Nun Abutsu, who was determined to defend the rights of her son Tamesuke, began to fight for the inheritance of the Hosokawa estate

⁶ The daughter of Utsunomiya no Yoritsuna (1172-1259), a well-known general and renowned poet who, according to *Meigetsuki* (Diary of the Full Moon, 1226), was the recipient of the *Ogura hyakunin isshu* anthology (A Composition for One Hundred Poets, c. 1237) that Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241) produced at the request of his son, Fujiwara no Tameie, so that his father-in-law could use the poems from the collection to embellish the paper on the sliding doors of his summer residence on the slopes of Mount Ogura.

⁷ The full text of this letter is contained in a collection of documents belonging to the Reizei family. See Zaidan hōjin reizeiike shiguretei bunko 1993, 3-5.

in the province of Harima (today's Hyōgo prefecture). The dispute, which lasted almost forty years, continued even after the death of Tameuji and Nun Abutsu, coming to an end only in 1313 when the parties involved were now Tameuji's son Tameyo and Tamesuke himself. The inordinate length of time required to reach the final verdict was apparently due to a series of inevitable complications arising from a case judged by two different *fora* (one civil, i.e. the court, and the other military) following two distinct legal systems that treated inheritance issues in different ways: the courtier law set greater restrictions on revising wills and only tended to recognize the validity of the original one, while the *Goseibai shikimoku* prescribed that in case of multiple wills, the latest will was given priority (Fukuda 1962, 35-6).

At the heart of this dispute was a claim to the Hosokawa estate, and more specifically the need to establish who had the right to administer it, or who should perform, according to the provisions of the military government, the functions of *jitō* 地頭. It is known that in medieval Japan most of the land had become private property (*shōen* 荘園) exempt from taxation and protected from interference by public officials. The land did not usually belong to a single owner but was allocated through a layered system of rights called *shiki* 職. Small landowners had the power to grant their property to a central aristocratic or religious institution that could, in turn, grant them tax exemption for their portion of the property. The original owners had to offer their work in exchange for the protection received by these institutions, which were recognized as legitimate owners (*ryōke* 領家). They could also apply to remain on their portion of land as guardians (*azukari-dokoro* 預所) in lieu of the new owner.

The system, dating back to the eighth century, was later revised in 1185 by Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-99), who appointed the mainly military *jitō* as property administrators entrusted with ensuring protection and collecting taxes in exchange for a portion of the proceeds from produce. Although the power of the nobles had diminished considerably after the Gempei war (1180-85) and the Jōkyū riots in 1221, aristocrats continued to be considered – at least in social terms – superior to warriors. Precisely for this reason, in the ninth month of 1221, Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241), the father of Fujiwara no Tameie, obtained the *jitō* rights to the Hosokawa estate, of which he already owned the property rights. By accepting the appointment as *jitō*, Teika, who had lost the protection of GoToba (1180-1239), officially became a vassal of the *shōgun* 將軍, securing a significant economic return (Atkins 2006, 500-1).

As mentioned above, the Hosokawa estate inherited from Teika by Tameie's son should have gone – in accordance with a will amended by Tameie himself – to Tamesuke, his son born to Nun Abutsu in 1263, but Tameuji, to whom the estate had been entrusted by his father in 1256, opposed the new decision. Given that the civil court, unlike

the military court, tended not to recognize amendments to wills, it could not be said *a priori* that it was illegal for Tameuji to claim ownership. At the time, namely immediately after Tameie's death in 1275, the right to administer (*jitōshiki* 地頭職) the Hosokawa residence was subject to the jurisdiction of the military government, while the right to ownership (*ryōke*) was considered subject to the jurisdiction of the civil court. In 1286, through a ruling of abdicant Emperor Kameyama (1249-1305), the court granted the right of ownership to Tameuji, who was later authorized to administer it by the military court. As the Hosokawa estate was located in the western provinces, it was standard practice to submit the question of inheritance to the court of Rokuhara. However, should the decision of this court be considered unacceptable, it was possible to appeal to the court of Kamakura, given that the Rokuhara court could not issue the final verdict. Having rejected the Rokuhara court's ruling on the right to administer the residence, Tamesuke decided to appear before the Kamakura court. Tameie had foreseen the difficulties he would have to face in order to obtain the property in a letter of 1273 addressed to Nun Abutsu, where he wrote: "If a dispute should arise, you must turn with this document to both the civil and military courts" (Zaidan hōjin reizeike shiguretei bunko 1993, 5). Following her husband's instructions, in 1279 Nun Abutsu went in person to Kamakura in order to claim the rights of her son Tamesuke. There, she waited in vain for the final verdict, which did not come until after her death. Posterity would view this as proof of her exemplary maternal love, but it would perhaps be more appropriate to consider it a natural consequence of the important role that widows played in questions of inheritance at the time (Tabuchi 2009, 169-70).



Figure 2 Abutsu's grave at Eishōji in Kamakura (photo by the Author)



Figure 3 Fujiwara no Tamesuke's grave at Jōkōmyōji in Kamakura (photo by the Author)

3 A Widow's Role

Many documents dating back to the civil and military diarchy at the beginning of the Kamakura era recount endless disputes over inheritance involving women, especially widows, who refused to be passive victims and were increasingly aware of their important role in their husband's family even after his death (Faure 2003, 174-5).

とどめおく
古き枕の
塵をだに
我が立ち去らば
誰か払はむ⁸
(Iwasa 1994, 270)

When I am gone
who will take away
the dust
that has built up
on the old pillow?

This poem, that Nun Abutsu recited shortly before leaving for Kamakura, expresses her responsibilities as wife and mother very effectively. If the pillow represents the intimacy between Abutsu and Tameie, who once slept together, the dust accumulated does not simply indicate the end of their intense relationship. It also suggests Abutsu's imminent and prolonged absence from the capital and the impossibility of finding someone to act as lady of the house. The dust-covered pillow evokes an image of an abandoned house, irreparably fallen into ruin, also evoked in the long final *chōka* where, in even more dramatic tones, it emphasizes the negative consequences that might befall a family due to the absence of a female presence representing both protection and cohesive strength.

行く方も知らぬ
中空の
風にまかする
故郷は
軒端も荒れて
ささがこの
いかさまにかは

⁸ *Todomeoku | furuki makura no | chiri o dani | wa ga tachisaraba | tare ka harawamu.*

なりぬらん⁹

(Iwasa 1994, 301)

In the uncertainty of the future,
 my old house
 is abandoned to the elements,
 with rotting beams
 and covered in spider webs
 I wonder what it is like!

Her displeasure over separation from the house is great, but at the same time inevitable because it stems from a just cause: ensuring a future for her son Tamesuke, but first and foremost that of defending her rights as wife and mother. Nun Abutsu's story, that of a rigorous custodian of the family order, is inevitably intertwined with that of other protagonists of the Kamakura period, when the transformation of marriage customs led to the gradual erosion of women's property rights, which had previously afforded them considerable financial independence from their husbands.

As numerous scholars have shown,¹⁰ women in the Heian period were entitled to inherit lands, homes, and other family assets. This custom continued unchanged among peasants, aristocrats, and warriors in the Kamakura period, albeit with different class-dependent characteristics (Tabata 1987, 58-60; Wakita, Gay 1984, 93-5). In the early days of the Kamakura period, daughters could partake of the division of family property in exactly the same way as sons. Parents would often favour one of the daughters in particular and would designate her as 'first daughter' (*chakujo* 嫡女), entitled to the greater share of the property. The inheritance rights of females were not normally compromised by marriage, which in no way threatened their ties with their family of origin. The family inheritance was independent of marital status, and the husband was not entitled to obtain the wife's property, which, in the event of her death, was usually passed on to the children. Women could also hope to obtain an inheritance not only from their family of origin, but also from their husbands, who might entrust them with part of their property as a mark of gratitude, especially for having given birth to children (Tonomura 1990, 597-9). An example of this situation is the letter sent by Tameie to Nun Abutsu in 1268:

I have reserved lifetime rights for you as caretaker and deputy administrator of the Koazaka estate in the province of Ise. After your

⁹ *Yukue mo shiranu | nakazora no | kaze ni makasuru | furusato wa | nokiba mo arete | sasagani no | ikasama ni ka wa | narinuran.*

¹⁰ In this regard, see McCullough 1967; Fukutō 1980; Mass 1983.

death you may dispose of it as you see fit. I entrust these to you as a sign of gratitude for giving me three children and for supporting me thus far. (Zaidan hōjin reizeike shiguretei bunko 1993, 3)

While there is no doubt that women could inherit until at least the middle of the Kamakura period, it is unfortunately also true that, reading the documents, it is often difficult to precisely reconstruct family relationships and the criteria for handing down property. Greater knowledge of the system of succession, marital customs, and other related issues could give a better understanding of hereditary issues and their importance in defining the social position of women. Since the medieval system of kinship is by its very nature somewhat elusive, the necessary reference sources are lacking. There was no registration – such as that required in the seventh and eighth centuries – of birth, deaths, marriages, or divorces, nor do the laws in force make explicit reference to family relationships, which one may only try to painstakingly reconstruct by relying on last wills and testaments.

Marriage was not a matter of legal interest, and there were no rules governing the establishment of kinship. Marriages that can be defined as ‘marital’ were in fact the result of a relationship that had become naturally stable over time and therefore recognized by society without recourse to civil authority and, apparently, even without a formal contractual agreement between the parties involved. Separations too were not normally formalized, and no provision regulated possible second marriages. The vagueness of nuptial customs characteristic of Kamakura period is evident in the *Goseibai shikimoku* measures, issued regarding widows’ rights, much revised over time, testifying to the blatant indecision of the authorities concerning the attribution of a husband’s legacy in the event of a true or presumed second marriage (Tonomura 1990, 600-2). The original 1232 provision reads:

if a widow has received a property from her husband, she should renounce all other things and devote herself solely to praying for his future life. Should she soon forget about chastity and remarry, her husband’s legacy ought to be passed on to their children. If there are no children, another solution must be found. (Kasamatsu 1972, 22, fn. 24)

Subsequently, the military government was obliged to clarify more precisely the conditions under which the 1232 measure was to be applied:

if news of the second marriage of a widow who administers the property or follows sundry family matters becomes public knowledge, the previous provision [that of 1232] is valid. If, on the other hand, the second marriage is kept secret, even if rumours about it circulate, the rule is not applied. (Kasamatsu 1972, 60, fn. 121)

A further change, again on this issue, came in 1286, apparently because of the ambiguities arising from previous clauses:

regarding the secrecy of marriage, until now, in cases when new marriages were only the subject of rumour, the established law was not applicable due to lack of evidence. For this reason, widows, even if married, have kept their marriages secret. From now on, however, due punishment will be meted out even in the event of mere rumour of an alleged new marriage, despite the widow not actually being involved in the management of her new husband's property or the sundry family matters. (Kasamatsu 1972, 63, article 597)

It is assumed that there was a clear distinction between *tsuma* 妻 (wife) and *mekake* 妾 (concubine), as evidenced by the testamentary documents and court decisions usually referring to the beneficiaries of a husband's property as *tsuma*, suggesting that these women had a privileged role in the eyes of the man who had chosen them. Wives inherited their husbands' property and as such were responsible for managing this and other family matters. The *Goseibai shikimoku* clearly defends the rights of married women, but at the same time draws attention to the duties of widows towards the families they formed with their deceased husbands. For this reason, the expression "forgetting chastity" in the 1232 measure should not be interpreted as a criticism of morally reprehensible conduct but rather as a warning to avoid a second marriage, which would risk the dispersal of family property (Nomura 2017, 174-5). The provisions of the *Goseibai shikimoku*, unlike the legal requirements of previous eras, indicate a tendency to consider property not as possessions that may be personally disposed of at will but as a common good belonging to the entire family, who recognized the husband and his father before him as important points of reference (Fujie 1994, 72-3). For these reasons, after several revisions, it was decided to intervene not only if a widow officially remarried but also when there were only rumours concerning such an occurrence. This type of measure was necessary to prevent the widow's involvement in the management of her new husband's property and other family matters, the possible transfer of her deceased husband's property to her next husband, and finally the addition of the children of her previous marriage in a family other than her original one.

The *ie* 家 - the co-residential nuclear family - that came into being from the late eleventh century onwards, differs from the *uji* 氏,¹¹ that

¹¹ The *uji* (clan) was an endogamous group whose members shared the same name and deities. The members had a common descent and were ruled by an *uji* chief who was considered a direct descendant of the deity (*ujigami* 氏神) worshipped by the members. The *uji* was not only a political, social, and economic unit. It had also a religious significance and formed the basic, decentralized ruling structure in the fifth and seventh centuries.

have characterized previous eras, not so much on account of its patriarchal system but because it would place the married couple in prime position (Fukutō 1991). The family, previously made up of a man engaging in occasional relationships with a number of women, would gradually become a more stable nucleus comprising a husband with a wife who enjoyed a legally recognized position of privilege compared with all the other concubines (Wakita 1995, 23-5). The widow referred to as *goke* 後家 was usually given the power to control and manage family matters and was granted the right to inherit property at least until the Nanbokuchō era (1336-92), when recruiting soldiers who were to be rewarded with the concession of land ownership became a priority issue for the government, which gradually deprived women of the right to own property, thus weakening their position within the family (Kurushima 2004, 232).

Assuming that the *ie* was a family unit built around the couple who formed it, it became the norm to entrust the woman with the management of the family and to recognize the widow's right to exercise her power over the *ie* (Wakita 1992; Iinuma 1990; Kurushima 2004). After her husband's death, she would naturally become a sort of substitute figure, often gaining considerable authority and prestige: she would resolutely defend her spouse's dying wishes, but she could also try to modify them as she wished. Many legal documents describe cases of fearsome widows who, exploiting the power granted to them, especially with regard to hereditary matters, revoked and redirected the allocation of a property that their husband had assigned to a particular child to another one, often on the ground of reprehensible conduct of the former as a cause (Tonomura 1990, 606). It was also not uncommon for widows to transfer their property before a second marriage in order to avoid losing their right to manage it. In the light of this kind of outrageous behaviour, in 1239 the military government laid down that the widow could manage her husband's property as long as the second marriage remained secret, but she had no right to transfer it unless she was seriously ill (Kasamatsu 1972, 59, article 98).

With the threat of the Mongolian invasions (1274 and 1281) and the consequent increase in limitations on women's inheritance rights due to the need to curry favour with men serving in the military, many widows were forced to take vows as a sign of loyalty and tangible proof of their choice not to remarry if they were to secure their husband's property (Meeks 2010a, 49). As a matter of fact, it seems that this practice had been prevalent for some time, as evidenced by a legal document from 1239 which records that a widow was sued in court by one of the deceased husband's daughters because she had not transferred her father's inheritance despite remarrying. The widow won the case because she presented the terms of her husband's will where she was named as heir, swearing (clothed in monastic hab-

it) that she had never remarried. The woman's marital status was again challenged five years later by the same daughter, this time represented by her son before the court. In order to clarify the situation once and for all, the military government dedicated much time to investigating the widow's conduct, but having failed to find any reliable evidence of the alleged marriage, concluded that these were false charges and allowed the woman to retain the property she had received (Mass 1979, 270-6).

From the twelfth century onwards, widows would play a vital role because they formed a link between the head of the family and his successor. The widow's rights included bringing up children, maintaining the family property, dividing it up, and being directly involved in any disputes over inheritance.¹² It is surely no coincidence that the promise Nun Abutsu makes to her dying husband, related at the opening of the *Izayoi nikki*, draws attention precisely to the specific tasks entrusted to widows.

Many people have compiled collections of verse, but few have had the honour of receiving the order [to do so] twice from different emperors. Fate willed that I should have the good fortune to actually meet one of these people and to have three children in my care together with many old texts on poetry. Unfortunately, however, and for no reason, the Hosokawa property my husband left me, with the solemn promise that its income would be used to promote the poetic art, suitably educate his children, and offer prayers for his future life [...], ended up in the hands of someone else. (Iwasa 1994, 269)

Nun Abutsu had to get the Hosokawa estate back at all costs: its revenues were vital to promote the art of poetry and educate the children, and her decision to remain faithful to her vows was not only due to her desire to dedicate solemn prayers in suffrage for her deceased husband in the next life, but most probably also to making her position in the struggle for inheritance more credible. In this regard, it is interesting to note that while it was common for widows to go before the court of the military government to claim rights to a property in the Kamakura period, with the gradual transformation of the position of women in society, from the Nanbokuchō period this would no longer tend to happen. The *Izayoi nikki*, drafted in the interval between the two Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281, which led to the inevitable breakdown of the economic, social, and political balance of Japan, is therefore a text of paramount importance for understanding the concerns, in an era of transition, of a widow who

¹² On the rights and role of a widowed woman see Gomi 1982; Iinuma 1990; Fukutō 1991.

in this case had the primary duty of safeguarding the cultural heritage of a family of illustrious poets.

4 A Bay of Salty Algae to Protect

In the introductory part of the *Izayoi nikki*, just before leaving for Kamakura, Nun Abutsu hands over to her son Tamesuke a collection of poems belonging to her husband, to which she adds these verses bearing a very precise message:

和歌の浦に
かきとどめたる
藻塩草
これを昔の
かたみとは見よ¹³
(Iwasa 1994, 270)

You have to take care
of these salty algae
collected together
on the beach of Wakanoura
as a precious reminder of the past.

The poem focuses on the term *moshiogusa* 藻塩草, i.e. the algae burned to make salt found in *Wakanoura* 和歌の浦, ‘the bay of poetry’, located in the province of Kii, corresponding to today’s Wakayama prefecture and the southern part of the province of Mie. The bay symbolically indicates the family, custodian of the poetic art, while the algae represent the rich poetic production of Fujiwara no Tameie and his ancestors, entrusted here to his son as an important legacy.

It has been observed that the algae image, conventionally associated with poetry, recurs with some regularity in various parts of the *Izayoi nikki*, appearing for the last time within the long closing *chōka* in the expression “*wakanoura ji no moshiogusa*”, or ‘the algae along the beach of Wakanoura’ (Wren 1997, 193). This is clearly a rhetorical device that aims to persuade the reader of an important objective probably shared by many aristocratic intellectuals of the time: to preserve the transmission of an art at all costs, in this case the art of composing verse that had made the Mikohidari family famous (Tabuchi 2005, 5).

The name Mikohidari had ancient roots. It came from the residence where the founder of the family, Fujiwara no Nagaie (1005-64), the sixth son of Fujiwara no Michinaga (966-1027), known as the Ma-

¹³ *Waka no ura ni | kakitodometaru | moshiogusa | kore o mukashi no | katami to wa miyo.*

for Chancellor of Mikohidari because he lived on the property where Prince Kaneakira (914-87) resided. He was the son of the Emperor Daigo (885-930), temporarily downgraded to the status of subject and appointed Minister of the Left (*miko* 御子 means 'Prince', while *hidari* 左 means 'left').

The reputation of the Mikohidari family began to grow thanks to Fujiwara no Toshitada (1071-1123), son of Fujiwara no Tadaie (1033-91) and grandson of Nagaie, whose poems were included in the fifth and sixth imperial poetry anthologies (*chokusenwakashū* 勅撰和歌集). However, it was Toshitada's son, Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114-1204), who consolidated the family's prestige as the most important line of poets and poetry critics, forming the original nucleus of the family's collection of manuscripts with his personal copies of anthologies of poems, treatises, and other documents. Shunzei was responsible for the reappraisal of *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji, early eleventh century) as an important reference point for poetic composition, which had to show a knowledge of the courtly culture of previous eras in order to be deemed of any value. The importance that members of the Mikohidari family attributed to Murasaki's masterpiece is also evident in *Mumyo-zōshi* 無名草子 (An Untitled Book, early twelfth century), the first critical text on court narrative attributed to Shunzei kyō no musume (1171?-1252?), Shunzei's niece, who, surely by no coincidence, praises the work of Murasaki Shikibu as an unparalleled masterpiece.

A worthy heir to Shunzei, his son Fujiwara no Teika would go down in history as the most influential poet in the history of classical poetry, as well as an indefatigable copyist of numerous poetic anthologies and literary works, including *Genji monogatari* and diaries written by ladies in waiting. He was also the author of some important collections of poems of reference for poetic composition and critical treatises of enormous value. His son, Fujiwara no Tameie, despite not having his father's talent, and despite having shown few signs of responsibility in his youth, would live up to his ancestors in time, being appointed to compile two anthologies of imperial poetry,¹⁴ an honour reserved for the few and deserving of the highest esteem in both the Heian and Kamakura periods, because it officially sanctioned a poet's talent and his function as a chosen supporter of the culture promoted by the Emperor. Composing, reading, and quoting poetry was an activity to which many courtiers devoted themselves, both privately and publicly, demonstrating their cultural superiority at a time when they were losing political power in favour of the military class. Poetry competitions, during which participants challenged each other

¹⁴ For information on the principle members of the Mikohidari family, see for example Atkins 2006 and Iwasa 2018.

in composing poems on preestablished themes judged by an arbiter, underlined the importance of preestablished rules, and adhering to them was a sign of great culture and refinement. After the mid-eleventh century, several poetry 'families' or 'schools' (*ie*) were established. This allowed the development of a system of teaching poetry based on the relationship between teacher and disciples, allowing composition techniques, necessary to excel in these poetic circles, to be handed down, even secretly (Tollini 2017). The Mikohidari family was considered the most illustrious for the quality of its poetic output. This primacy, a source of great pride, explains the legal battle carried out by Nun Abutsu who, as a widow, felt the duty to protect and hand down the art of the family to whom she belonged.

As reported with such precision in the diary, on the sixteenth day of the tenth month (the text's eponymous date), she undertook a tiring journey along the Tōkaidō to reach Kamakura, seat of the military court, accompanied by one of her five sons, known as "Ajari no kimi" (Holy Master). At that time, the journey, if made on foot, took around fifteen days, while seven days might be sufficient on horseback. Since Nun Abutsu was a fairly old woman, it is thought she would have travelled in a sedan chair or on horseback, so the report of fifteen days' travelling might not actually be true. In any case, it may be assumed that it would have been a very demanding physical trial for her, as a commentary on the first day of the diary suggests, with a specific mention of tiredness from the journey (Tabuchi 2009, 176-7):

It was the night of the sixteenth day. Exhausted, I lay down to sleep. (Iwasa 1994, 274)

Little by little, however, with the passing of the days, almost as if she were awakening from a long emotional torpor caused by the pain of her husband's loss, she began to savour the pleasures of the journey, to take an interest in the landscape, local customs, the names of places, and their origins: she was struck by the meanings of hitherto unheard-of place names and dazzled by the mysterious charm of unknown lands. Instinctively, she translates her feelings into verse and does so constantly throughout the journey, so much so that the prose often appears only as a brief introduction to the circumstances that inspire her poetic compositions.

In an attempt to demonstrate her knowledge of the poetic practices of the Mikohidari school and to have her son come across as Tameie's rightful heir, especially in the section describing the journey, Nun Abutsu includes various poems that apply her husband's stylistic techniques. For example, when she crosses the Ōsaka barrier (Ōsaka no seki), she writes these verses:

定めなき
命は知らぬ
旅なれど
又逢坂と
頼めてぞ行く¹⁵
(Iwasa 1994, 273)

I know not what awaits me
on this journey,
as uncertain as my life.
I depart, hoping to return
to the hill of meeting.

It has been pointed out (Laffin 2013, 155) that these verses allude to a composition of Tameie's in 1223, found in the *Tameie shū* 為家集 (Collection of Tameie, c. 1270), in which he refers to the place-name "Ōsaka" as a place to trust in for a safe return and reunion with loved ones left in the capital.

あふさかは
行くも帰るも
別れ路の
人たのめなる
名のみふりつつ¹⁶
(Yasui 1962, 150)

The hill of meeting
is the road to separation
for those who come and those who go.
In its name alone
have people trusted over the centuries.

Although Ōsaka or Ōsaka no seki (literally 'the barrier of meeting') was the starting point for trips from the capital to the eastern provinces, the fact that the very name of this place was considered auspicious and could somehow guarantee a trouble-free return to the capital refers to a particular interpretation, apparently specific to the Mikohidari school, which is not found in previous poetic writings (Nagasaki 1987, 81-3).

During the journey, Nun Abutsu often dwells on the reasons she was forced to leave for Kamakura and her responsibilities as wife and mother. For example, upon crossing the Fuji River she writes:

¹⁵ *Sadamenaki* | *inochi wa shiranu* | *tabi nare do* | *mata Ōsaka to* | *tanomete zo iku*.
¹⁶ *Ōsaka wa* | *yuku mo kaeru mo* | *wakareji no* | *hitodanome naru* | *na nomi furitsutsu*.

On the eighteenth day when we crossed the Fuji River at the barrier of the province of Mino, I recalled this poem:

我が子ども
君に仕へん
ためならば
渡らましやは
関の藤川¹⁷
(Iwasa 1994, 275)

In order that my children
might serve
their sovereign,
would I be likely to cross
the Fuji river barrier?

She uses these lines to recall that her displacement is due to a very important cause: to show fidelity to her husband's desires by supporting his offspring. Her choice of the Fuji River is also no accident, as it was precisely in the vicinity of this river that Fujiwara no Teika had produced the *Fujikawa hyakushu* collection (A Sequence of One Hundred Poems on the Fuji River, 1224) lamenting his lack of promotion at the court. Later, his son Tameie wrote several poems in the same place when he met Nun Abutsu (around 1253), making a journey similar to the one she would undertake after his death. It is therefore unsurprising to note that in various places the poems recited by the author of the *Izayoi nikki* echo the words of her deceased husband, with whom she seems to have a moving poetic dialogue along her journey.

The poem she recites on the first day of the trip to the province of Omi lays the foundations for a sequential re-evocation in verse of the various stages of the itinerary previously followed by Tameie:

うち時雨れ
故郷思ふ
袖ぬれて
行く先遠き
野路の篠原¹⁸
(Iwasa 1994, 274)

Far is the destination
from Noji no shinohara,
where the rain

¹⁷ *Waga kodomo | kimi ni tsukaemu | tame naraba | wataramashi ya wa | seki no fujikawa.*

¹⁸ *Uchishigure | furusato omou | sode nurete | yuku saki tōki | noji no shinohara.*

bathes sleeves
already drenched with homesickness.

This poem is particularly reminiscent of the verses composed by her husband in the same place:

いかにとよ
野路のしの原
しばしだに
ゆけど程ふる
旅の長じを¹⁹
(Yasui 1962, 146)

What is the reason
that the road
from Noji no shinohara
seems even longer to travel
so soon after departure?

It is interesting to note that, unlike other poems connected with this *utamakura* 歌枕, normally full of dew, hail, and wind, both compositions lament the “far destination”, or the road “ever longer to travel” shortly after a painful separation from loved ones (Tabuchi 2009, 181).

In *Izayoi nikki*, the claim to *Tameie's legacy* is not only supported by the vivid memory of his poetic compositions but also by the poetic style of Nun Abutsu, who often adopts the *honkadori* 本歌取 technique of allusive variation, a rhetorical technique that consists in taking up some verses from an older poetic composition and inserting them in a new sequence of verses and in a different context from the original. As is well known, in *Yoru no tsuru* 夜の鶴 (The Night Crane, late thirteenth century), a treatise on Tameie's poetic theories, Nun Abutsu draws attention to the importance of this technique by writing: “How they take something from ancient poems distinguishes talented poets from less gifted ones” (Morimoto 1979, 191). Teika himself had spoken of it in detail several times in various writings, and Nun Abutsu is keen to demonstrate that she knows how to put into practice the teachings received from her husband by presenting herself to the reader as his most worthy disciple.

When, for example, she arrives in Samegai (literally ‘the same well’), a place located in today's Shiga prefecture, she recites:

結ぶ手に
濁る心を

19 *Ikani to yo | noji no shinohara | shibashi dani | yukedo hodo furu | tabi no nagaji o.*

すすぎなば
うき世の夢や
醒が井の水²⁰
(Iwasa 1994, 275)

If I were to lave
my tainted soul
with the water of Samegai,
gathered in my hands,
would it awaken me from the dream of this painful world?

These verses seem to take up, albeit in a different context, a famous poem by Ki no Tsurayuki included in the *Kokinwakashū* 古今和歌集 (Collection of Japanese Poem of Ancient and Modern Times, c. 905):

むすぶ手の
雫に濁る
山の井の
飽かでも人に
別れぬるかな²¹
(Ozawa 1971, 189)

Again desirous of drinking
the water of the pure mountain spring
now clouded by the perspiration
of my hands as they gather it
unwillingly, I take my leave from you.

In Nun Abutsu's verses, the original poem by a man forced unwillingly to take leave of his beloved, likened to a mountain spring whose purity is violated by the hands of the man who greedily draws water, bears a completely different meaning, becoming the heartfelt plea of a believer who hopes to reach longed-for salvation through the rite of purification.

Through these and other verses, the spatial movement of Nun Abutsu, who visits many famous poetic places (*utamakura*) appears, in the eyes of the reader, as a journey back in time, full of literary evocations that emphasize the dominant role of poetry, the common thread of a narrative through which, time and again, it takes on different functions: it is an important legacy to be defended against impostors and at the same time a rare talent that justifies the position of the writer; it is a precious gift offered to the gods in moments

²⁰ *Musubu te ni | nigoru kokoro o | susuginaba | uki yo no yume ya | samegai no mizu.*

²¹ *Musubu te no | shizuku ni nigoru | yama no i no | akademo hito ni | wakarenuru kana.*

of sorrow, but also an effective means of expression to convey feelings and emotions to relatives and friends. In the end, it appears as an irreplaceable means of persuasion in the final part, where all the author's words are hinged in a long *chōka* constructed as a solid harangue pronounced in support of an innocent victim.

5 Loyal Wife and Loving Mother... Or Merely a Wily Social Climber?

If, as it would appear, the legal action brought by Nun Abutsu stems from the solemn promises she made to her husband, namely “to promote poetic art, to educate her children, and to pray for his future life”, it can certainly be said that it is not only understandable but also exemplary, because it is wholly consonant with the duties of a widow in the society of the time. Nevertheless, the conduct of the author of the *Izayoi nikki* has not always been judged positively, due - inevitably - to denigration by her stepchildren involved in the struggle for inheritance,²² which inevitably conditioned the reception of the work. Attempts were made to replace the image of faithful wife and exemplary mother with that of a shrew, described as a greedy manipulator, influencing her elderly husband in the last years of his life and forcing him to change his will to the advantage of her son Tamesuke after deliberately tarnishing Tameuji in the eyes of his father on account of his reprehensible conduct (Seno 1997, 27-8; Genshō waka kuden kenkyūkai 2004, 303-7). In an attempt to overcome this stark dichotomy, some scholars (Fukuda 1969; Nagasaki 1990) seem to have chosen a third way allowing a more lenient verdict in her regard, namely to define her as a *chūsei onna* 中世女, or a woman typical of the Middle Ages who, unlike those of the Heian period, who accepted without resistance their own destiny, was strong, wilful, and enterprising, just like other heroines of literary works of the day. This new type of woman can be considered a natural consequence of the consolidation of the *ie*, that is, of a family nucleus centred on the couple and the children they produced, where the wife took care of the offspring and housework, giving orders to the servants and employees who worked for the family business and acting in every way as the head of the family in his absence.

Nun Abutsu showed that she was aware of the responsibilities her role as wife and mother entailed. Her choice to go to Kamakura to claim property rights, as many legal documents show, is no isolated incident for that time. Furthermore, the fact that it becomes the theme of a literary work probably indicates that the author wants to

²² See in this regard Genshō waka kuden kenkyūkai 2004, 303-9.

recount her personal experience so that other women who have family problems similar to her own can identify with it.

Actually, we do not know what really happened, and there is no way to discover whether Nun Abutsu manipulated her elderly husband to the detriment of his other children or not. However, we do know that she met Tameie shortly after 1250 upon being introduced by Abbess Jizen of the Hokkeji Temple in Nara,²³ where she was staying, to the daughter of Fujiwara no Tameie, Gosagain no Dainagon no Suke (1233-63), as a reliable expert on the *Genji monogatari* and qualified to work as copyist and personal assistant to her father (Genshō waka kuden kenkyūkai 2004, 300). Thanks to this fortunate circumstance, she embarked upon a romantic relationship with Tameie, then a leading figure in the Mikohidari family. Over time, this relationship apparently became so meaningful that Tameie would leave his previous wife, the daughter of Utsunomiya no Yoritsuna (1172-1259), to live with Abutsu on a permanent basis. There is no conclusive evidence of a marriage between the two, but some scholars (Tabuchi 2009, 81-2; Laffin 2013, 115; Wallace 1988, 392; Craig McCullough 1990, 289) consider the separation of Tameie from his previous wife and their consequent cohabitation as concrete evidence that he chose Nun Abutsu as his new wife. As a scholar of the *Genji monogatari* and a well-established poetess whose career Tameie himself had followed very closely and promoted,²⁴ she felt that her children could rightly be considered her husband's heirs. The numerous and precious poems she left us, and her treatise on the legacy of the poetic art, *Yoru no tsuru*, seem to confirm her position as a disciple already perfectly suited to the role of guardian of a very important heritage (Esteban 2015). It cannot therefore be excluded that Tameie may have seen her as the most suitable person to ensure the continuity of his celebrated family, and the *Izayoi nikki* could have been written precisely to show the world the privileged position this woman had been able to conquer in the heart of the man she loved through her extraordinary culture.

It is widely known that after the death of Fujiwara no Tameie, the family was divided into three distinct branches: the Nijō, the Kyōgoku, and the Reizei, entrusted to his sons Tameuji, Tamenori (1265-1328), and Tamesuke respectively. The family's literary documents, contested in the disputes over succession described in *Izayoi nikki*, thirty years after the death of Nun Abutsu in 1313, when the case finally ended with a judgment recognizing Tameie's last will,

²³ On the Hokkeji temple and the intellectual activity promoted by Abbess Jizen and other nuns related to the court environment, see Meeks 2010b, 58-90.

²⁴ The active participation of Nun Abutsu in the cultural gatherings organized in Tameie's Ogura residence, where selected passages of the *Genji monogatari* and other classics were read, is well documented in the diary of Asukai no Masaari (Mizukawa 1985).

were entrusted to Tamesuke, founder of the Reizei branch and the only school of poetry to survive to this day. His descendants have conserved precious literary documents with extraordinary care and dedication, protecting them from the threat of destruction by war and fire for over seven hundred years. Only in 1981, after centuries during which the family's collection continued to be totally unknown, was the *Reizeike Shiguretei Bunko* (The Reizei Family Shiguretei Library) founded in Japan as a public benefit foundation, thanks to which the family made available a varied selection of documents for the first time. These featured in exhibitions and publications created for the purpose of sharing this precious heritage with the family's countrymen (Brower 1981, 455). To this today, manuscripts are constantly being studied and selected in Japan, and when new documents belonging to the Reizei family are made public, the media promptly bring them to the attention of all, as they are considered newsworthy at national level (Tabuchi 2005, 14-15). Although opinions on the conduct of Nun Abutsu may differ, it is legitimate to think that if this enterprising and determined woman had not existed, the Reizei School of Poetry would probably never have been founded, and many precious manuscripts representing tangible evidence of her deep devotion to the memory of Fujiwara no Tameie would not have come down to us through generations (Iwasa 2018, 48).

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Fra Contadini di Errico Malatesta, da Firenze a Tokyo

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Abstract In recent years scholars of anarchism have examined the movement's transnational dimensions. This new research succeeded in redefining the periodization and the geography of anarchism. However, the debate has been limited to the Western speech communities. This paper tries to reconstruct the process of introduction and circulation in Japan of *Fra contadini*, a pamphlet written by the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta, focusing on the first thirty years of the twentieth century. Through the analysis of different periodicals, both Japanese and Europeans, this article will show how the pamphlet changed the Japanese perception of the Italian revolutionist, considering as well the way in which the text was instrumental in the evolution of the local Anarchist debate. The anomalous introduction of the Italian pamphlet in the Japanese context throws new light upon the transnational connections between European and East Asian anarchism, challenging the widely accepted diffusionist model.

Keywords Errico Malatesta. Transnational history. Contemporary Japanese history. Anarchism history.

Sommario 1 Introduzione. – 2 *Fra contadini*. – 3 Una panoramica della ricezione delle opere e della figura di Malatesta in Giappone. – 4 Le traduzioni di *Fra contadini*. – 5 Conclusioni.



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1 Introduzione

Questo articolo intende ricostruire la storia dell'introduzione e della circolazione del noto opuscolo malatestiano *Fra contadini, propaganda socialista* in Giappone nei primi trent'anni del XX secolo, con l'obiettivo di riflettere sulle forme di connessione tra l'anarchismo giapponese ed europeo.

Gli studi di area sui territori postcoloniali hanno recentemente contribuito in modo decisivo a ridefinire la geografia e la periodizzazione della storia dell'anarchismo mondiale. Sebbene il carattere internazionalista del movimento libertario, sia nella dottrina che nello sviluppo storico, fosse un dato acquisito sin dalle prime ricostruzioni storiche (Nettlau [1934] 1996), l'anarchismo è stato tradizionalmente connotato come movimento europeo, che aveva le sue roccaforti nell'Europa meridionale e orientale (Woodcock 1962, 403-4). Inoltre, era senso comune identificare la massima espansione del movimento anarchico nel periodo antecedente alla Prima Guerra Mondiale, quando gli anarco-sindacalisti giunsero ad una posizione dominante nel movimento operaio del vecchio continente (Hobsbawn 1993, 72-3).

Il recente volume di Hirsch e Van der Walt ha dimostrato che gli anarchici e gli anarco-sindacalisti furono una componente determinante anche nei movimenti operai e anticoloniali sudamericani e asiatici, per un periodo che si estendeva ben oltre la Prima Guerra Mondiale, ovvero per tutti gli anni Venti (Hirsch, Van der Walt 2010, xxxi-xxxiii). Occorre quindi ripensare le dinamiche di sviluppo dell'anarchismo internazionale, ridiscutendo l'approccio eurocentrico delle ricostruzioni tradizionali.

L'anarchismo in Asia orientale è stato in genere dipinto in una posizione di subalternità rispetto all'elaborazione teorica europea. Riguardo al Giappone, gli studiosi si sono concentrati sugli esponenti di spicco, Kōtoku Shūsui e Ōsugi Sakae (Stanley 1989; Notehelfer 1971), tratteggiati come divulgatori delle teorie di grandi personalità del movimento, in particolare di Pëtr Kropotkin, del quale sono state sottolineate soprattutto le linee di continuità con i compagni giapponesi. L'atteggiamento intellettuale implicito nel modello diffusionista di questi lavori non contestualizza il processo di ricezione delle idee, quasi come se il messaggio fosse 'trasparente', veicolato senza variazioni e modifiche da un capo all'altro del mondo. In Giappone, l'eurocentrismo insito nel modello diffusionista è stato contrastato con un approccio 'nativista', inaugurato da Ishikawa Sanshirō, alla ricerca delle radici asiatiche di atteggiamenti e pensiero riconducibili all'anarchismo (Ishikawa 1937). Importante è stato l'approccio 'internalista' di Komatsu Ryūji, teso a cercare le ragioni della divisione tra i sindacalisti di area marxista e gli anarco-sindacalisti avvenuta nel 1922 nelle discussioni interne al movimento operaio nipponico (Komatsu 1972, 131-68). Più di recente, gli studi che si rifanno

all'approccio transnazionale hanno rinnovato il dibattito sugli sviluppi dell'anarchismo internazionale. Acquista sempre più spazio la ricostruzione delle connessioni, delle reti del movimento attraverso lo studio dei militanti attivi oltre i confini nazionali, colti sia individualmente che in gruppo. Rimanendo nel contesto giapponese, è esemplificativo a questo riguardo un recente studio biografico su Ishikawa Sanshirō che ricostruisce la rete di contatti che l'anarchico giapponese aveva costruito con esponenti dell'anarchismo europeo durante un lungo soggiorno nel vecchio continente (Willems 2018). L'autrice del saggio sottolinea la mutua influenza che intercorse tra Ishikawa e i suoi compagni europei, e la soggettività del militante giapponese nell'interpretazione della propria esperienza all'estero. Il lavoro di Willems rimane un'eccezione, dato che gli studi sulle biografie o la diaspora di gruppi non riescono a superare un eurocentrismo di fondo presente nella scelta dell'area di studio. Rimangono prevalenti, infatti, gli studi rivolti all'Europa, e laddove si approfondiscono le reti internazionali del movimento, l'analisi non va oltre le comunità linguistiche diffuse in Europa o nelle Americhe, come ad esempio la comunità italoфона internazionale.¹

Lo studio di riviste e opuscoli si sta dimostrando un buon metodo per superare queste limitazioni: in molti casi, infatti, tali pubblicazioni avevano una circolazione che andava oltre le comunità omofone (Bantman 2017, 454). Ne è un esempio paradigmatico *Fra contadini*, che non è soltanto l'opuscolo malatestiano più diffuso nel mondo, ma sicuramente uno degli scritti dell'intera letteratura anarchica più conosciuti e diffusi (Berti 2003, 126).² Si pongono qui alcuni interrogativi, il primo dei quali è il seguente: in che misura la traduzione ha informato di sé la ricezione dell'opera? Lo stesso Malatesta, alla luce di una lunga esperienza di giornalista e redattore, visse in prima persona episodi in cui una cattiva traduzione o una curatela scadente di un articolo avevano finito per deformarne il senso.³ Se episodi simili non erano infrequenti in riviste in lingue occidentali, per le quali in alcuni casi Malatesta è potuto intervenire di persona, quanto le traduzioni giapponesi sono state 'fedeli' all'originale? Come si vedrà nell'intervento, *Fra contadini* non giunse in Giappone

¹ Questa critica è imputabile ai saggi del pur bel volume di Bantman e Altena (2015).

² Secondo Turcato (2007, 436-7) sono venticinque le edizioni del volume uscite tra il 1884 al 1913, che includevano sia ristampe che riedizioni, senza contare le pubblicazioni a puntate su rivista. Dodici edizioni italiane, pubblicate a Torino, Messina e altre località, otto quelle negli Stati Uniti (sei delle quali uscite a Paterson), le rimanenti edizioni europee e sudamericane.

³ Malatesta lamentò ad esempio l'errata traduzione del titolo di un suo testo pubblicato in spagnolo sul periodico argentino *El Productor*, si veda Malatesta [1926] 1995, 31. Nettlau, Malatesta (1926, 3) offre un caso in cui Malatesta stesso si accorse di aver sbagliato la datazione di un articolo di Max Nettlau.

nella sua versione italiana: in che modo i canali di trasmissione hanno influenzato l'opera di traduzione? E infine: che ruolo hanno svolto le traduzioni dell'opuscolo nel dibattito giapponese sull'anarchismo? Approfondire la ricezione dell'opuscolo malatestiano in Giappone ha diverse implicazioni: questo lavoro infatti non aspira soltanto ad ampliare la conoscenza sul movimento anarchico giapponese. Partendo dalla specificità del caso di un testo italiano,⁴ esso vorrebbe contribuire alla riflessione dei canali informali di scambio tra parti del movimento in Europa e in Giappone, e mettere in discussione il modello diffusionista ancora in voga. Più in generale, l'approfondimento dell'introduzione di *Fra contadini* in Giappone può offrire spunti di riflessione sullo scambio di prodotti culturali tra il Giappone e l'Europa nella prima metà del Novecento attraverso canali informali tra individui o piccoli gruppi, spesso in situazione di clandestinità.

2 *Fra contadini*

Errico Malatesta, nato a Santa Maria Capua Vetere nel 1853 e morto a Roma nel 1932, è considerato uno dei maggiori rappresentanti dell'anarchismo italiano e internazionale sia in ambito organizzativo (fu ad esempio uno dei fondatori dell'Unione Anarchica Italiana nel 1919) sia in ambito teorico. Giornalista e direttore di diverse testate giornalistiche in Italia e all'estero, contribuì alla discussione politica con diversi opuscoli di propaganda, tra i quali *Fra contadini*, uscito per la prima volta in Italia nel 1884. Questo scritto, insieme a *L'anarchia*, fu sicuramente quello di maggior diffusione, sebbene il primo non fosse il favorito dal suo autore (Fabbri 1979, 10). Le ragioni che permisero proprio a questo libro di circolare per più di mezzo secolo nel continente euroasiatico e nelle Americhe vanno cercate innanzitutto all'interno del volume.⁵ La prima edizione dell'opuscolo comparve dopo la fine del ciclo della federazione italiana della Prima Internazionale bakuninista, conclusasi nel 1880 con il congresso di Chiasso, che coincise grosso modo con la parabola della cosiddetta Internazionale 'antiautoritaria' europea. La crisi dell'internazionalismo italiano però cominciò nella metà degli anni Settanta dell'Ottocento, dopo la tentata insurrezione di Bologna (1874), e si aggravò coi fatti della 'Banda del Matese' (1877), che vide Malate-

⁴ La riflessione sulla ricezione giapponese dell'opera di Malatesta è stata inaugurata da Toda Misato. Si veda ad esempio Toda 1996.

⁵ Tra le numerose edizioni, è bene ricordarne la prima, pubblicata col titolo *Propaganda socialista - Fra contadini*, nel settembre del 1884 dal periodico *La Questione Sociale* in 62 pagine; ad essa Malatesta aggiunse una seconda parte di 15 pagine a partire dall'edizione edita a Londra nel 1891, cui in seguito l'autore inserì alcune note in un'edizione del 1913 (Fedeli 1951, 8).

sta tra i suoi protagonisti.⁶ In quegli anni si assistette a un progressivo sfrangiamento di posizioni critiche verso la prassi insurrezionale, che sui periodici *Il povero* e *La plebe* si coagularono in modo non sempre netto in correnti legalitarie, favorevoli alla via parlamentare (Della Peruta 1965, 247-84), e tradunioniste, che invece prospettavano la realizzazione del socialismo attraverso la costituzione di un sistema federalistico di corporazioni operaie.⁷ Fu però l'improvvisa 'svolta' legalitaria del punto di riferimento dell'anarchismo romagnolo, Andrea Costa, che si accompagnò a una intensa stagione di repressione giudiziaria in seguito alle azioni della 'Banda del Matese', ad assestare il colpo finale alla Federazione italiana della Prima Internazionale, sgombrando la strada alla socialdemocrazia, e dando vita nel frattempo a un periodo di riflessione negli ambienti anarchici. Nel primo quinquennio degli anni Ottanta del XIX secolo, infatti, l'anarchismo italiano, sprovvisto di una solida organizzazione nazionale, si trovava in balia di azioni terroristiche individuali, diviso tra tentativi di riorganizzazione e posizioni ambiguamente conciliatorie verso la via legalitaria (Pernicone 1993, 165-200).

Il quadro economico-sociale italiano richiedeva però un'azione tempestiva: nella prima metà degli anni Ottanta dell'Ottocento sopravvenne una lunga depressione che colpì soprattutto l'economia rurale, dovuta alla massiccia concorrenza dei cereali americani e russi (Castronovo 2006, 51-5). Nelle campagne crebbe la miseria dei braccianti, che sfociò in violente agitazioni spontanee, in particolar modo in Val Padana (Crainz 1994, 51-79).⁸ Non a caso furono proprio le campagne a divenire in quel periodo il principale terreno di propaganda socialista e internazionalista, diffusa soprattutto attraverso la stampa, che dalle città andava a conquistarvi nuovi lettori (Castronovo, Giacheri Fossati, Tranfaglia 1979, 121-2).

All'epoca della pubblicazione della prima edizione di *Fra contadini* Errico Malatesta, piuttosto scettico sul futuro della via legalitaria (Bertolucci 1984, 50-1), mentre si impegnava a difendere la via insurrezionale polemizzando con Costa sulle pagine de *La Questione Sociale* di Firenze (Pernicone 1993, 202-8), lavorava nel frattempo per la ricostituzione di un nuovo organismo internazionale dell'anarchismo. Frutto di questo sforzo fu il *Programma e organizzazione dell'Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori*, pubblicato nel giugno del 1884 sulle pagine del suddetto periodico fiorentino da lui diret-

⁶ L'espressione 'Banda del Matese' si riferisce al tentativo insurrezionale anarchico, messo in atto da ventisei internazionalisti sulle pendici meridionali del massiccio del Matese, in Campania, nell'aprile del 1877.

⁷ Rimando ad Angelini (1995, 645-7) per il tradeunionismo di Osvaldo Gnocchi-Viani.

⁸ In *Fra contadini* sono presenti critiche verso la politica liberista dell'epoca.

to.⁹ Nel documento Malatesta proponeva programma, tattica, organizzazione della nuova formazione, operando una sintesi delle posizioni teoriche maturate dagli internazionalisti italiani negli anni precedenti. In esso si rivendicavano le loro radici nella Prima Internazionale, ma spostandone l'orientamento su posizioni anarchiche, originali rispetto al pensiero di Kropotkin, non sempre facilmente collocabili nell'ambito del bakuninismo. Particolare rilevanza viene posta sul momento insurrezionale in quanto «propaganda del fatto»,¹⁰ criticando però lo spontaneismo e il terrorismo di matrice individualista, sostenuti invece da Cafiero e Kropotkin (Pernicone 1993, 188-90; Cahm 1989, 140-4). Esplicite sono le critiche all'azione parlamentare e alla lotta economica corporativa del tradeunionismo, incapaci di sostituire la rivoluzione violenta nella via verso il socialismo. Nonostante la presenza di residui della teoria del crollismo¹¹ condivisi con Bakunin (Berti 2003, 125-6), che in seguito Malatesta avrebbe disconosciuto (Malatesta 1925, 51 nota 1), nel *Programma* appare attenuata la fiducia nella possibilità di una rivoluzione in tempi brevi tipica dei documenti editi nel decennio precedente. Sulla società futura, viene esposta la superiorità del comunismo rispetto al collettivismo bakuniano, cui anche Kropotkin era approdato all'inizio degli anni Ottanta dell'Ottocento (Cahm 1989, 63-4).

In seguito Malatesta non sarebbe stato indulgente verso le posizioni da lui sostenute all'epoca della stesura di *Fra contadini*: oltre all'assenza di una riflessione seria su come gestire materialmente un'eventuale rivoluzione (Malatesta [1931] 1975d, 365), il rivoluzionario avrebbe criticato l'illusoria «fede mistica nella virtù del popolo» che aveva impedito di comprendere la sostanziale distanza delle masse dalle idee anarchiche (Malatesta [1928] 1975c, 331). Non a caso negli anni Novanta dell'Ottocento Malatesta, divenuto fautore di un'«andata nel popolo», cominciò una lunga riflessione in favore della partecipazione degli anarchici al movimento operaio, che ebbe risonanza anche in Giappone, ma che non era ancora presente nei testi del periodo in questione (Turcato 2012, 60-3). Se quindi il *Programma* non può essere considerato una *summa* del pensiero di Malatesta, in esso sono già presenti, sebbene in forma ancora abbozzata, alcuni punti caratteristici del suo pensiero più maturo. Si ricorda ad esempio l'ammissione della piccola proprietà di coltivatori diretti dopo la rivoluzione, previo l'abbandono del ricorso alla forza lavoro

⁹ Il testo del *Programma* è ora reperibile in Turcato (2014). Si veda Masini (1969, 215-18).

¹⁰ Cahm (1989, 76-91) scrive che la tattica della «propaganda del fatto» appare nel dicembre 1876 in una lettera firmata da Errico Malatesta e Carlo Cafiero indirizzata al *Bullettin de la Fédération Jurassienne*.

¹¹ Con crollismo si intende l'idea secondo cui il capitalismo è destinato necessariamente al disfacimento e che prevede come inevitabile una rivoluzione sociale.

salariata, adombrando così l'apertura alla libera sperimentazione che avrebbe sostenuto negli anni Venti del Novecento (Malatesta 1925, 8-11; [1920] 1975a, 30-1). Un altro argomento malatestiano presente nel *Programma* è l'appello all'organizzazione, che all'epoca l'autore sperava prendesse la forma di partito, seppur organizzato secondo principi libertari. Tipico del pragmatismo di Malatesta è un atteggiamento inclusivista rispetto ai socialisti, a condizione che aderissero al massimalismo rivoluzionario; atteggiamento diverso dall'intransigenza di Kropotkin contro ogni accordo con i «socialisti autoritari» (Cahm 1989, 150).¹²

L'opuscolo *Fra contadini*, uscito nel settembre dello stesso anno del *Programma*, è di fatto uno strumento di divulgazione di parte dei punti contenuti nel documento. Rispetto al *Programma*, nell'opuscolo mancano alcune questioni programmatiche, come la posizione del partito verso le «razze inferiori», la sovranità, il patriottismo, oltre a dettagli sull'organizzazione economica e politica nella società socialista (Masini 1969, 218). In compenso, oltre ai temi già citati, in *Fra contadini* trova maggiore spazio la questione del lavoro dopo la rivoluzione (Malatesta 1925, 35-41), le argomentazioni a favore della rivoluzione violenta, la critica al parlamentarismo (Malatesta 1925, 42-57). In esso si ritrovano però la varietà di temi e l'originalità di posizioni presenti nel *Programma* che contribuiranno al successo dell'opuscolo. La povertà delle classi lavoratrici (Malatesta 1925, 23-4), il rapporto con i socialisti e la socialdemocrazia (Malatesta 1925, 52-60), la prefigurazione della società socialista (Malatesta 1925, 35-51): come dimostrerà il caso giapponese, *Fra contadini* seppe sollevare questioni vicine al movimento anarchico e socialista internazionale, nonostante la distanza territoriale e a oltre cinquant'anni dall'uscita della prima edizione. Vi sono inoltre chiaramente esplicitati temi tipici dell'anarchismo, ovvero la critica di ogni forma di rapporto autoritario, un diffuso antiintellettualismo, la negazione di ogni delega a partiti od organizzazioni diverse dalla popolazione.

Non si potrebbe comprendere la popolarità del volume però se ci si limitasse solo a una rapida discussione dei suoi contenuti. *Fra contadini* è coevo alle prime iniziative editoriali dei periodici socialisti *La Plebe* e *La Giustizia* rivolte alla pubblicazione di propaganda minuta, la quale avrebbe conosciuto il pieno sviluppo a cavallo tra Ottocento e Novecento, soprattutto con la collana di opuscoli edita da *Critica Sociale* (Pisano 1986, 9-11). L'opera di Malatesta però conobbe un successo non comune in questa tipologia di scritti, e non solo negli

¹² In seguito Malatesta avrebbe rivisto almeno in parte la posizione inclusivista di quest'epoca, si vedano ad esempio gli scritti nel periodo londinese della rivista *L'Anarchia* (Di Paola 2013, 88-9).

ambienti anarchici:¹³ colpisce in particolare la capacità dell'autore di presentare in modo chiaro e sintetico complesse questioni teoriche e tattiche, rendendo il testo fruibile a una pluralità di destinatari che non si limita ai ceti popolari, né tanto meno a «militanti anarchici e socialisti dediti al proselitismo nelle campagne» (Berti 2003, 126).¹⁴

Fra contadini si inserisce nelle diverse stratificazioni della letteratura popolare di fine Ottocento. Nel testo si trovano continuità con la «letteratura per il popolo» da un lato, e con la letteratura più schiettamente «popolare» dall'altro (Sobrero 1980, 10-13, 26). Con la «letteratura per il popolo», esemplificata sia dalle collane moraleggianti di *Lecture per il popolo* e *Lecture popolari*, sia dai fogli di propaganda di massa mazziniana, antesignani dell'opuscolame socialista (Bergamini 2013, 119-22), il testo malatestiano condivide l'obiettivo di acculturare gli strati popolari, accordando i contenuti all'esperienza quotidiana dei destinatari. Si consideri ad esempio il riferimento al problema della povertà diffusa, che nell'opera di Malatesta è presentata come leva per la rivolta. Inoltre, con la «letteratura popolare», come la «letteratura ad un soldo», spartisce, oltre a caratteri formali come il piccolo formato e il prezzo contenuto, il tentativo di intercettare moduli espressivi e tematici della tradizione popolare. In primo luogo, la forma dialogica, che ben si adatta alla lettura ad alta voce e alla teatralizzazione del testo, era una strategia retorica efficace per superare lo scarto tra la lingua scritta e l'oralità tipica della cultura popolare (Sobrero 1980, 24-5).¹⁵ In secondo luogo, nel testo si trovano riferimenti a una figura ricorrente della tradizione carnevalesca, il Bertoldo di Giulio Cesare Croce (Camporesi 1976, 3-30). La maschera del contadino con le scarpe grosse e il cervello fino che mette nel sacco i potenti sbeffeggiando l'ordine sociale costituito, ripresa esplicitamente in una serie di opuscoli socialisti negli anni Novanta.¹⁶ Nell'opera malatestiana è identificata col personaggio del giovane Giorgio, l'audace militante che spiega con irrispettose sferzate retoriche i meriti dell'anarchismo a Beppe, anziano amico di suo padre preoccupato per l'attività politica del giovane. L'interlocutore dell'anarchico è una figura paterna che si trasforma a tratti in contadino «sciocco» nell'accettare supinamente la condizione di subordinazione. Infine, il testo affronta di-

13 Tra gli estimatori anche Camillo Prampolini, che chiese il permesso di pubblicarne una parte, e i socialisti austriaci (Fabbri 1979, 11).

14 Secondo Fabbri, tra i destinatari impliciti del testo ci sono anche i più colti e coloro che «si ritengono convinti a sufficienza possono leggendolo impararvi molte cose» (1979, 12).

15 Fabbri riporta la testimonianza di Pietro Gori, che leggeva ad alta voce pagine di *Fra contadini* a operai toscani (1979, 11).

16 Il primo della serie è *Bertoldo contadino ragiona sulle prediche del vescovo Bonomelli e spiega il socialismo*, pubblicato anonimo nel 1895 dalla Tipografia sociale di Cremona, ora in Pisano (1986, 197-220).

verse «obbiezioni più comuni», ovvero le argomentazioni che più di frequente il pubblico popolare contrapponeva ai comizianti, in seguito raccolte in modo sistematico nei manuali di oratoria socialista.¹⁷ Per esempio, alle accuse di immoralità dell'attività sovversiva viene contrapposta l'inaccettabilità della miseria (Malatesta 1925, 19-21), l'ipocrisia borghese e il superiore senso di solidarietà dei militanti. Viene respinto lo scetticismo molto comune sulla realizzazione della rivoluzione in tempi brevi (l'argomento conosciuto come «campa cavallo») e il tema del sovrappopolamento come causa della povertà (57, 46-51). Diversamente da altri noti divulgatori anarchici come Kropotkin e Reclus, Malatesta affronta questi temi senza cercarne una base scientifica, ma sforzandosi invece di fondarli su argomenti di buon senso, che fossero condivisibili con la platea popolare di riferimento (Berti 1994, 141-61).

Se è vero che parte di questi elementi popolareggianti sono presenti anche in altri opuscoli socialisti, non bisogna ignorare l'efficacia particolare di questo testo, che lo porta in alcuni brani a superare in termini qualitativi molta letteratura del genere. A questo proposito vale la pena sottolineare che la prima parte dell'opuscolo è nettamente migliore della seconda, aggiunta a partire dall'edizione inglese del 1891, dove il dialogo appare meccanico e farraginoso: in quest'ultima sezione le domande di Beppe sono solo pretesti per dare la possibilità al giovane di esporre le proprie in modo impersonale. Più interessante la prima parte, dove il colloquio tra i personaggi è più vivacemente arricchito di figure retoriche come similitudini: «i governi non assomigliano affatto alle mamme» (Malatesta 1925, 56), iperboli: «hai messa tanta loquela che imbroglieresti un avvocato», «che diresti se i signori si volessero impadronire dell'aria» (23, 26), espressioni di sapore proverbiale: «se vogliamo ragionare, lasciamo in pace Dio e i Santi» (22). Allo stesso modo, le domande dell'interlocutore si fanno più realisticamente aderenti alla psicologia delle classi subalterne, e ne fanno emergere per esempio il senso di soggezione verso le classi dominanti: «ma allora, quando non ci fossero più signori, come si farebbe a campare? Chi ci darebbe da lavorare?» (28).

Infine, tra i motivi del successo di questo opuscolo, non si possono ignorare inoltre le molte deliberate semplificazioni nell'esposizione dei rapporti sociali, diffuse peraltro anche tra le altre opere di propaganda minuta. L'idea di incentrare il dialogo tra due contadini, frutto del tentativo di collegarsi ai moti rurali dell'epoca, è altresì un chiaro riferimento al progetto bakuninista di unire l'insorgenza nelle campagne a quella urbana nelle fabbriche (Berti 2003, 46-7), di cui Malatesta fu non solo esecutore nei tentativi rivoluziona-

¹⁷ Si veda ad esempio il *Piccolo manuale dell'oratore socialista ad uso degli operai e contadini*, in Pisano 1986, 194-283.

ri degli anni Settanta, ma anche un promotore negli anni successivi (Rocker 2015, 53-4). Tuttavia, nonostante il titolo, la categoria lavorativa dei personaggi non è specificata nelle prime pagine del testo: vi sono invece categorizzazioni molto generali come «i poveri [...] lavoratori di campagna e di città» e «i signori», sebbene l'ambiente rurale emerga da riferimenti contestuali a mano a mano che il dialogo continua: si pensi per esempio all'accenno sull'uso delle macchine in agricoltura (Malatesta 1925, 33-4).¹⁸ Lo strumento pedagogico della semplificazione, nello specifico la rappresentazione dicotomica della società tra 'signori' e 'poveri', ebbe il pregio di facilitare la diffusione del testo in categorie lavorative diverse: sintomatico il fatto che nell'edizione inglese il titolo sia stato tradotto in *A Talk about Anarchist Communism between Two Workers*, privo quindi di riferimenti rurali. Come si vedrà, questa vaghezza è una delle ragioni che spiega la comparsa di quest'opera in un giornale con caratteri fortemente operaisti come *Rōdōsha* 労働者 (Il lavoratore).

3 Una panoramica della ricezione delle opere e della figura di Malatesta in Giappone

Fra contadini compare in Giappone in tre traduzioni diverse nell'arco di soli dieci anni, tra il 1921 e il 1930. La prima, parziale, uscì a puntate sul periodico *Rōdōsha* nel 1921, ma non ebbe lettori, dato che i numeri della rivista furono tutti sequestrati; le altre due uscirono nel 1929 e nel 1930, pubblicata la prima in forma di opuscolo dalla casa editrice Kosakuninsha e l'ultima inserita nella serie *Shakai shisō zenshū* 社会思想全集 (Il pensiero sociale) presso l'editore *Heibonsha*.

Per ricostruire il contesto della traduzione e della ricezione di questo testo in Giappone, proporrei innanzitutto il quadro generale dell'introduzione degli scritti malatestiani nell'arcipelago. Sulla base dello spoglio di alcune delle maggiori riviste giapponesi di area anarchica e sindacalista uscite nei primi trent'anni del Novecento, ho potuto individuare circa 50 scritti tra articoli in cui Malatesta è citato e traduzioni di scritti dello stesso rivoluzionario.¹⁹ Un primo dato interessante da rilevare è l'assenza di scritti tradotti direttamente dall'italiano e la preponderanza delle traduzioni dall'inglese e dal

¹⁸ La parola 'anarchia' compare solo tre volte nella prima parte, e undici volte nella seconda parte, ben più corta.

¹⁹ Si tratta dei periodici *Heimin shinbun* 平民新聞 (Il quotidiano del popolo), *Kindai shisō* 近代思想 (Il pensiero moderno), *Rōdō undō* 労働運動 (Movimento operaio), *Jiren shinbun* 自連新聞 (Il giornale della Federazione libertaria), *Dinamique*, *Kokushoku seinen* 黒色青年 (La gioventù della bandiera nera), *Kosakunin* 小作人 (Il fittavolo), *Nōmin* 農民 (Il contadino). Nel gruppo sono comprese numerose riproposizioni di testi già pubblicati.

francese.²⁰ Delle tre traduzioni di *Fra contadini*, la prima era una traduzione dall'edizione inglese, le ultime due erano invece basate sulla versione tedesca dell'opera. La mancanza di traduzioni dall'originale, riscontrabile in generale anche in testi non appartenenti all'ambito socialista,²¹ riflette la poca diffusione dello studio dell'italiano nel Giappone dell'epoca;²² essa è spia inoltre della mancanza di contatti diretti tra gli ambienti anarchici giapponesi e italiani, oltre che più in generale della poca diffusione dei periodici in italiano in aree sprovviste di una comunità italoфона.

È possibile identificare tre fasi nell'introduzione dell'opera malatestiana in Giappone, sulla base della distribuzione temporale delle traduzioni. Due sole traduzioni in un primo periodo tra il 1901 e il 1918 contrastano con le 31 di un ultimo periodo, tra il 1926 e il 1935; tra le due fasi si può considerare un periodo di transizione, tra il 1919 e il 1925, con tre traduzioni. I tre tempi corrispondono grosso modo a importanti momenti della storia dell'anarchismo e del movimento socialista giapponesi.

Le prime due traduzioni giapponesi di testi malatestiani furono l'opuscolo *L'anarchia* e l'articolo «Anarchismo e sindacalismo», entrambe pubblicate nel 1908, in un momento di svolta del socialismo giapponese. La rivoluzione industriale, iniziata alla fine degli anni Ottanta e completata, secondo Hara, dopo la guerra russo-giapponese, produsse un crescente numero di operai riuniti in grandi complessi industriali nelle periferie urbane (Hara 1994, 46-9). I lavoratori di fabbrica cominciarono una serie di azioni collettive ricorrendo a forme rivendicative tradizionali, sia attraverso scioperi spontanei, sia con vertenze organizzate da gruppi sindacali moderni (Gordon 1992, 63-79). Fu la discussione sulla regolamentazione delle condizioni di lavoro in fabbrica alla fine degli anni Novanta del XIX secolo a coagulare le rivendicazioni nel primo tentativo di organizzazione del lavoro, il *rōdō kumiai kiseikai* 労働組合期成会 (Assemblea per la formazione dei sindacati) (Nakamura 1998, 216-26). Alle prime, deboli, agitazioni in fabbrica, si affiancarono diversi episodi di sommosse urbane contro l'appesantimento del prelievo fiscale e per la democratizzazione della politica. La Legge sulla polizia e l'ordine pubblico

20 Tra le ventuno opere delle quali si è potuto verificare il testo originale su cui è stata approntata la traduzione, vi sono otto scritti tradotti dall'inglese, sei dal francese, tre dal tedesco, due dallo spagnolo e due dall'esperanto.

21 Negli anni Quaranta erano disponibili traduzioni dall'italiano di alcuni classici come Dante e Boccaccio in letteratura, e Bruno, Vico, Gentile in filosofia. Tuttavia, anche in ambito letterario la fruizione di opere italiane meno note avveniva spesso in traduzione da altre lingue (Nichiikyōkai 1941, 44-5).

22 L'insegnamento dell'italiano nelle università giapponesi cominciò solo nel 1899 presso la scuola di specializzazione *Tokyo gaikokugo gakkō* 東京外国語学校, conosciuta oggi come l'Università degli Studi Stranieri di Tokyo.

(1901, *chian keisatsu hō* 治安警察法), bloccando sul nascere l'opera dei sindacati, diede il via alla formazione di alcune organizzazioni di stampo socialdemocratico, le quali, seppur ostacolate dalla polizia, tentarono di affiancarsi ai sindacati nella lotta per il miglioramento delle condizioni di lavoro in fabbrica (Crump 1983, 141-8).

La maggiore di queste formazioni fu il Partito socialista del Giappone (*Nihon shakaitō* 日本社会党, febbraio 1906-febbraio 1907), costituito durante il primo gabinetto Saionji (dal gennaio 1906 al luglio 1908), noto per aver sensibilmente alleggerito la pressione governativa sui gruppi d'opposizione. La breve vita del partito si concluse con la rottura maturata tra una corrente legalitaria e un gruppo più chiaramente rivolto verso l'anarco-sindacalismo. La frattura si consumava sullo sfondo di un ciclo di mobilitazioni nelle miniere che con particolare violenza si opponeva alla fase di ristrutturazione apertasi dopo la guerra russo-giapponese (Crump 1983, 255-62). Alla guida del gruppo in favore dell'azione diretta dei lavoratori e contrario alla via parlamentare vi era Kōtoku Shūsui. Di ritorno da un soggiorno negli Stati Uniti nell'estate del 1906, il giornalista criticò il suddetto Partito socialista del Giappone per l'eccessiva aderenza al modello socialdemocratico tedesco (Akiyama 2006). Per superare questa *impasse*, Kōtoku proponeva un maggiore impegno nella diffusione della bibliografia anarchica in Giappone e nella valorizzazione dei rapporti con i gruppi anarchici all'estero.²³ «Anarchismo e sindacalismo», tradotto dallo stesso Kōtoku, era la rielaborazione di un intervento che Malatesta tenne durante il congresso internazionale anarchico di Amsterdam nel 1907. Se negli anni Venti il testo fu ripubblicato più volte in Giappone con precisi intenti critici nei confronti delle correnti anarco-sindacaliste, Kōtoku, forte di una robusta convinzione in favore del sindacalismo, lo tradusse invece senza obiettivi polemici (Komatsu 1982, 435-7).²⁴ Egli seguiva con particolare attenzione i lavori del congresso, ed è probabilmente con l'intenzione di diffonderne gli esiti che decise di tradurre il testo del rivoluzionario napoletano (Crump 1983, 275-6).

Ben maggiore impatto ebbe la diffusione dell'opuscolo *L'anarchia*. Tradotto nel gennaio del 1908 probabilmente da Shirayanagi Shūko

²³ Sull'importanza della traduzione per Kōtoku, si veda la sua lettera indirizzata a A. Johnson il 18 dicembre 1816, in (Kōtoku Shūsui zenshū henshū iinkai 1982b, 304-6). Dal febbraio del 1907 l'attivista giapponese si dedicò personalmente alla traduzione di tre classici dell'anarchismo, *Der soziale Generalstreik* di Arnold Roller (uscita in Giappone il febbraio 1907), il sopracitato articolo malatestiano sull'anarco-sindacalismo (febbraio 1908), *La conquista del pane* di Kropotkin (gennaio 1909).

²⁴ Nell'intervento Malatesta (1907, 1-2), pur auspicando la partecipazione degli anarchici nel movimento operaio, criticava il sindacalismo per alcuni automatismi teorici, come l'eccessiva fiducia nella funzione rivoluzionaria dello sciopero generale, sottolineando la necessità di distinguere finalità e prassi dell'anarchismo da quelle del sindacato.

e ritirato dalla censura nel dicembre dello stesso anno (Kindai nihon shiryō kenkyūkai 1957, 642),²⁵ era conosciuto da Kōtoku già prima del febbraio del 1907, quando lo citò in un passo decisivo del suo intervento durante il secondo e ultimo congresso del Partito socialista del Giappone.²⁶ Fu probabilmente lo stesso Kōtoku a consigliarne la lettura a un influente gruppo di rivoluzionari cinesi residenti a Tokyo, che ne curarono la traduzione e ne svilupparono un importante dibattito.²⁷

Nonostante la censura, in questo periodo alcuni testi malatestiani circolarono in lingua straniera. In un discorso pubblico nel novembre 1907, riguardo alla situazione italiana Kōtoku riporta che «secondo Malatesta, il capo del partito anarchico italiano, il movimento socialista italiano è diviso in diverse correnti, tra le quali il collettivismo e l'anarchismo», elemento che testimonia la conoscenza di altro materiale malatestiano (Kōtoku Shūsui zenshū hensū iinkai 1982a, 371).²⁸ Ōsugi Sakae lesse *L'anarchia* in prigione nell'estate del 1907, quindi prima dell'uscita della traduzione giapponese (Ōsugi 2015, 437) e relazionò su Malatesta e la situazione del movimento in Italia in un seminario sul sindacalismo nel 1914 (Ōsugi 2009, 53, 126).

La stretta censoria nel quadro della Legge sui giornali (*shinbunshi hō* 新聞紙法) del 1909, che aggravava ulteriormente la già severa legislazione del controllo governativo sui giornali, fu applicata con sempre maggiore efficacia dopo gli arresti per il caso «Alto tradimento» del 1910, che coinvolsero lo stesso Kōtoku (Haruhara 2003, 90-2; Yamaizumi 2007, 6-12).²⁹ Le riviste legate al movimento operaio e

²⁵ Rimando a Sakai (1989, 372-3) per l'attribuzione della traduzione a Shirayanagi. Secondo la testimonianza di Zhang Li, *L'anarchia* sarebbe stata tradotta invece dallo stesso Kōtoku (Onogawa 2010, 221-2).

²⁶ Il riferimento è al seguente passaggio nel discorso di Kōtoku: «come afferma Malatesta: "se a uno schiavo si è detto fin da bambino che può camminare grazie ai suoi ceppi e che se privato di essi cascherebbe a terra, sicuramente lo schiavo si opporrebbe alla sua liberazione dai ceppi"» (Kōtoku Shūsui zenshū hensū iinkai 1982a, 154; traduzione dell'Autore). Si tratta di una parafrasi del seguente passo de *L'anarchia* di Malatesta: «L'uomo, come tutti gli esseri viventi, si adatta e si abitua alla condizione in cui vive, e trasmette per eredità le abitudini acquisite. Così, essendo nato e vissuto nei ceppi, essendo l'erede di una lunga progenie di schiavi, l'uomo, quando ha incominciato a pensare, ha creduto che la schiavitù fosse condizione essenziale della vita, e la libertà gli è sembrata cosa impossibile» (1891, 4).

²⁷ La traduzione cinese de *L'anarchia* fu eseguita da Zhang Li nel 1907 e venne ripubblicata l'anno seguente con un'importante introduzione di Zhang Binlin, due figure centrali del movimento antimancese (Notehelfer 1971, 73-5, 150; Sakai 1989, 372-3). Sull'influenza dell'opuscolo sull'anarchismo e il pensiero politico moderno cinese si vedano Scalapino, Yu 1961, 28 e Zarrow 1990, 48-52.

²⁸ *L'anarchia* e «Anarchismo e sindacalismo», in effetti, non trattano di comunismo e collettivismo.

²⁹ Per una testimonianza sull'irrigidimento della censura dopo il processo per alto tradimento, si veda «Mouvement International» 1911, 5.

socialista furono costrette a interrompere le traduzioni degli autori più noti del socialismo, e con esse quelle di Malatesta, ormai associato al compromettente titolo *L'anarchia*.

Nei primi vent'anni del Novecento gli sporadici tentativi di dare vita a organizzazioni internazionali da parte degli anarchici europei non diedero dei risultati consistenti (Woodcock 1962, 248-52). I canali materiali attraverso cui circolarono i testi anarchici stranieri in Giappone erano costituiti da reti di conoscenza personale e dalle riviste. In questo primo periodo, infatti, i giapponesi si procuravano articoli e opuscoli in lingua straniera attraverso spedizioni effettuate da connazionali residenti all'estero o da amici stranieri, oppure acquistandoli in viaggio.³⁰ Grande importanza fu rivestita da alcune riviste in lingua inglese e francese di diffusione globale, sia nella circolazione delle idee, sia a livello organizzativo. Oltre a informare sull'attualità, grandi periodici conosciuti anche in Giappone come *Les Temps Nouveaux* pubblicavano ciclicamente testi classici dell'anarchismo sia a puntate sulle colonne della rivista, sia in opuscoli.³¹ Non è un caso che i testi malatestiani tradotti in questo periodo uscirono entrambi nella rivista londinese *Freedom*, sulle cui pagine furono probabilmente notati da Kōtoku (Komatsu 1982, 428). Non è da sottovalutare inoltre la funzione organizzativa delle riviste, fondamentali ad esempio per le campagne internazionali di raccolta fondi per compagni detenuti e famiglie.³² Tuttavia, in questa fase nelle pagine internazionali dei periodici anarchici europei non esistevano ancora servizi di corrispondenza dal Giappone.³³

Nel secondo periodo (1919-25), in soli sei anni sono sette gli articoli che trattano di Malatesta e dell'anarchismo italiano, e tre le traduzioni di testi malatestiani, pubblicate tutte su periodici, tra i quali si segnala la prima edizione di *Fra contadini*. Il nuovo impulso che

30 Noto è il contatto di Kōtoku con la rete socialista e anarchica di San Francisco, oltre che l'intenso rapporto di amicizia con Alberto Johnson, collaboratore del periodico *Mother Earth*. Il carteggio con quest'ultimo rivela la spedizione di diversi libri e materiali dagli USA, inoltre è lo stesso Johnson a comunicare all'anarchico giapponese l'indirizzo di Kropotkin. Si veda la lettera di Kōtoku ad Albert Johnson del 10 dicembre 1904 (Kōtoku Shūsui zenshū henshū iinkai 1982b, 237-8).

31 Ōsugi leggeva il periodico francese *L'anarchie* dal 1906, leggeva *Freedom* e aveva rapporti epistolari diretti col direttore di *Les Temps Nouveaux*, all'epoca uno dei centri nevralgici della rete internazionale dell'anarchismo (Ōsawa 1971, 56-7). Sul periodico francese rimando a Bantman 2017.

32 Sulla campagna di *Mother Earth* per la raccolta fondi destinata alle famiglie degli attivisti giapponesi giustiziati per alto tradimento nel 1911, si veda il carteggio in Kindai nihon shiryō kenkyūkai 1957, 396-424.

33 Basti citare ad esempio che *Freedom* diramò la notizia del processo e dell'esecuzione capitale di Kōtoku usando in gran parte articoli di altre testate giornalistiche, sia interne che esterne al movimento, e solo in casi rari citando lettere di giapponesi anonimi ricevute in redazione tramite amici, o pubblicate da altre testate. Si veda la ricostruzione dei fatti in «The Japanese Socialists» 1911, 5.

conobbe il movimento operaio dal 1917, riemerso nei grandi stabilimenti in difesa dei salari reali contro l'inflazione, si saldò l'anno successivo con i tumulti urbani per l'alto prezzo del riso e andò propagandosi nel 1921 nelle fabbriche di piccole e medie dimensioni (Hara 1994, 72-6). Dal 1918 anche nelle campagne cominciò un ciclo di sei anni di rivendicazioni condotte dai fittavoli per il blocco degli affitti. Se molte agitazioni avevano chiari caratteri spontaneistici, le organizzazioni del lavoro che andavano formandosi in questo periodo, di fatto tollerate a partire dal gabinetto Hara nel 1921, acquistavano un ruolo sempre maggiore nelle relazioni industriali e nei rapporti di lavoro nelle campagne (Ishii 1991, 290-2). Gli sviluppi nella legislazione sociale e sugli istituti di mediazione dei conflitti di lavoro di inizio anni Venti, varati da parte governativa, furono accompagnati da nuove sigle partitiche di classe, che se da un lato trovarono potenziali elettori a partire dall'istituzione del suffragio universale maschile nel 1925, dall'altro furono sempre più soggette a controlli e restrizioni in seguito alla Legge per il mantenimento dell'ordine pubblico dello stesso anno. Il riemergere del movimento operaio e contadino, accompagnato da un nuovo ruolo dello Stato e delle organizzazioni di rappresentanza nelle questioni di lavoro, insieme agli sviluppi contraddittori della rivoluzione sovietica, fecero da sfondo al periodo di massima crescita dell'anarchismo giapponese, interrotto nel 1923 con l'omicidio da parte delle forze dell'ordine di Ōsugi e Itō Noe, insieme ad altri socialisti, anarchici e oppositori politici.

Le novità in ambito politico e sociale furono discusse e commentate in numerose riviste in ambito socialista che conobbero un vero boom dopo la Prima Guerra Mondiale.³⁴ Se nel primo periodo l'anarchismo si sviluppò in un ambito fortemente operaista, negli anni Venti invece comparirono gruppi impegnati in ambiti diversi, nel mondo dell'arte ad esempio, e a fianco delle lotte mezzadrili. Si ricorda ad esempio la rivista *Kosakunin* 小作人 (Il fittavolo), con base nella provincia di Saitama, a nordovest di Tokyo, forse la maggiore della nuova tendenza «ruralista» (Kageki 2018, 21-2). Nonostante le intenzioni, il gruppo non riuscì ad inserirsi efficacemente nelle lotte; discioltosi poco dopo la fondazione del giornale, trovò un'organizzazione più stabile dal 1926 (Komatsu 1988, 196-8). Nonostante la fioritura di nuovi gruppi, in questa fase le opere di Malatesta riscosero maggiore interesse in ambiente operaista. Tra gli anarchici di tendenza operaista, a fianco dell'impegno organizzativo con i sindacati di matrice libertaria, si svilupparono accesi dibattiti sull'eventuali-

34 Osservando la lista delle riviste di ambito anarchico, per lo più a diffusione locale e di breve vita, riportate in *Nihon anakizumu undō jinmei jiten henshū iinkai* (2019, 1083-1130), si nota che se il numero di riviste di nuova uscita tra il 1913 e il 1918 si aggirava tra le quattro e le dodici l'anno, tra il 1919 e il 1929 crebbe fino a raggiungere 74 nuove riviste solo nel 1925.

tà di un fronte comune con i comunisti e sul ruolo dell'organizzazione nel movimento operaio. Tali dibattiti si diffusero tra la fine degli anni Dieci e l'inizio degli anni Venti con una rapida proliferazione di giornali e riviste, tra le quali anche *Rōdōsha*, su cui apparve la prima traduzione di *Fra contadini*. Al centro di questi molteplici sforzi c'era *Rōdō undō* 労働運動 (Movimento operaio), periodico con diffusione nazionale che nonostante diverse interruzioni fu pubblicato dal 1919 al 1927 (Kokushoku sensensha 1973-81, 471-2). Pur non rinunciando ad un'esplicita prospettiva libertaria, il giornale nelle sue prime due serie, tra il 1919 e il 1921, funse da piattaforma di collegamento e discussione delle diverse anime del movimento socialista e operaio, tentativo sostenuto dal Comintern, che finanziò la rivista (Ōsawa 1971, 290-4). Successivamente, nella terza serie (1921-22), si fece sempre più polemico il confronto tra i sostenitori dei sindacati 'centralisti' di ispirazione bolscevica e quelli in favore di un'organizzazione di tipo libertario, divisi su quale assetto organizzativo dare all'Alleanza dei Sindacati del Lavoro (*Rōdō kumiai dōmeikai* 労働組合同盟会), un sindacato nazionale unitario che si sciolse di lì a poco (Gotō 1984, 1-57; Komatsu 1972, 131-5; Stanley 1982, 127-41). Dopo la rottura dei due fronti la prospettiva anarchica della rivista si fece sempre più decisa.

Soprattutto dalla terza serie di *Rōdō undō* ottenne sempre più spazio la situazione internazionale: in primo piano vi era il dibattito sull'evoluzione autoritaria della rivoluzione russa, corredato da diverse traduzioni di scritti stranieri. Fu nella sezione internazionale di questo periodico operaista che nell'aprile del 1920 si riprese a parlare di Malatesta: l'occasione venne fornita dalla falsa notizia dell'arresto dell'anarchico, circolata in Europa nel gennaio dello stesso anno (Berti 2003, 660).³⁵ Ōsugi celebrò la figura dell'anarchico italiano in un articolo che, come si vedrà, ebbe una certa risonanza nel dibattito anarchico: lo scrittore cita un passo dell'autobiografia di Kropotkin che stava traducendo, in cui di Malatesta si sottolinea, più che l'impegno teorico, l'instancabile attività rivoluzionaria, ricorrendo ad epiteti quali «il braccio dell'anarchismo» (Ōsugi 1920, 16).³⁶ Nonostante l'intensa attività pubblicistica dell'anarchico campano negli anni Venti, nel 1925 *Rōdō undō* ripropose una nuova traduzione dal tedesco di «Anarchismo e sindacalismo»: questa scelta editoriale restituisce ancora una volta l'interesse che suscitava in Giappone la posizione di Malatesta nei confronti del sindacalismo.

35 La notizia in febbraio era già stata smentita nei periodici europei, mentre in Giappone in aprile non era ancora stata corretta. Si veda ad esempio «La situation en Italie» 1920, 1.

36 La traduzione dell'autobiografia di Kropotkin ad opera di Ōsugi sarebbe uscita il maggio successivo (Ōsawa 1971, 289). Il passo citato si trova in Kropotkin 1899, 200-1.

La rinnovata attenzione verso Malatesta in ambito operaista avvenne nel contesto di un nuovo impulso verso la ricerca e la traduzione di testi stranieri, accompagnato da una ripresa del lavoro di tessitura della rete di relazioni con i gruppi europei, che in questo periodo si fecero non solo più numerose, ma anche qualitativamente più intense. Negli anni Venti diventano significativi i rapporti con militanti e gruppi di lingua tedesca, divenuti nel frattempo uno dei centri nevralgici dell'anarchismo internazionale (Bernardini 2019). L'attività dell'Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori (*Internationale Arbeiterinnen-Assoziation*), fondata a Berlino nel 1922, fu seguita con massimo interesse dal Giappone: Nobushima Eiichi cominciò dal 1923 a curare articoli di corrispondenza sulla situazione giapponese non solo per *Freedom* e *Le Libertaire*, ma anche per *Der Syndikalist*, l'organo del movimento anarco-sindacalista tedesco *Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands* (Libera unione tedesca dei lavoratori) al centro dell'organismo internazionalista dei sindacati anarchici.³⁷ Lo stesso Nobushima, a partire dalla quarta serie di *Rōdō undō* (dicembre 1923-luglio 1926), si occupò di proporre traduzioni di articoli tratti da *Der Syndikalist*. Indice del salto di qualità nei legami transnazionali dell'anarchismo giapponese con l'Europa rispetto agli anni Dieci, la notizia del barbaro omicidio di Ōsugi nel 1923 venne riportata sul *Der Syndikalist* direttamente con una corrispondenza ad opera di Nobushima (Tanaka 2016).

Nella terza fase dell'introduzione dell'opera malatestiana in Giappone prosegue il complesso delle opere presentate in questo Paese, fino a raggiungerne la massima espansione. Tra il 1926 e il 1935, infatti, in otto anni sono 10 gli articoli che trattano di Malatesta, 31 le traduzioni su rivista di scritti dell'anarchico napoletano, scelte con maggiore assiduità tra quelle pubblicate nelle riviste francofone *Le Libertaire* e *Le Réveil anarchiste*.³⁸ In questo periodo compaiono in opuscoli indipendenti, oltre alla prima traduzione completa di *Fra contadini*, anche *In tempo di elezioni* e *Anarchia*; articoli di Malatesta sono raccolti in tre volumi, uno dei quali a lui interamente dedicato. Riguardo alle traduzioni, oltre alla riproposta di pezzi già tradotti, si nota la ricerca di nuovo materiale. Le ragioni di questa crescita d'interesse verso Malatesta, che comincia prima della morte dell'anarchico avvenuta nel luglio del 1932, non stanno nella ricezione passiva

37 Il riferimento è agli articoli di Nobushima sui numeri di maggio (nr. 406, 25-6) e luglio (nr. 408, 37) del 1923 sulla rivista *Freedom*.

38 Sul mensile *Le Réveil anarchiste*, uno dei punti di riferimento di *Jiren shinbun* per ottenere informazioni sulla situazione europea, nel 1931 vengono pubblicati otto traduzioni di articoli di Malatesta, solo una delle quali venne tradotta per i lettori del periodico giapponese: si tratta di «Questioni di tattica», uscita nel gennaio 1931 (nr. 814, 1) del mensile francese e riproposta su *Jiren shinbun* nel numero di ottobre dello stesso anno.

di una 'moda' esterna,³⁹ né esclusivamente per effetto del grande impegno profuso nella traduzione di testi anarchici in questo periodo.⁴⁰ I settori trainanti dell'industria giapponese, il tessile, il metallurgico e minerario, già impegnati dalla metà degli anni Venti in politiche di ristrutturazione, furono costretti ad affrontare la crisi del 1929 organizzandosi in cartelli e con ulteriori azioni di contenimento del costo del lavoro.⁴¹ La crisi ebbe effetti devastanti anche nelle campagne, con la caduta dei prezzi dei prodotti agricoli e dei bachi da seta, la cui vendita rappresentava la maggiore fonte di introiti dei numerosi fittavoli (Nishida 1978; Ōkado 1994). Il numero di vertenze sul lavoro raddoppiò all'inizio degli anni Trenta: il nuovo ciclo di lotte rivitalizzò le organizzazioni di categoria e il sindacalismo anarchico (Gotō 1984, 99-146), concludendosi però bruscamente nella metà degli anni Trenta, in parte per l'eccessivo frazionismo delle formazioni di rappresentanza, in parte per la rampante repressione antisocialista unita alla progressiva fascistizzazione della società (Ōuchi 2006, 224-63).

Naufregata l'ipotesi della costituzione di un grande sindacato che unisse tutte le anime del socialismo, i sindacati anarchici si organizzarono nel 1926 nella Federazione libertaria dei sindacati del Giappone (*Zenkoku rōdō kumiai jiyū rengōkai* 全国労働組合自由連合会). L'esperienza fu di breve durata: solo due anni dopo ci fu la scissione degli anarco-sindacalisti dal gruppo a seguito della frattura con gli anarchici 'puri', questi ultimi più vicini alla tendenza ruralista, inclini ad anteporre il dibattito teorico e il decentramento economico alla lotta economica di fabbrica. Le due parti si sarebbero riunite nel 1934 (Komatsu 2018, 158-209). Organo della Federazione era *Jiyū rengō* 自由連合 (Federazione libertaria), dal 1928 rititolato *Jiren shinbun* 自連新聞 (Giornale della Federazione libertaria), un mensile a diffusione nazionale che ebbe ben dieci anni di vita. Concepito per seguire lo svolgimento del movimento operaio e contadino giapponese, dopo la scissione diede sempre più spazio a testi di carattere teorico sull'anarchismo. Fu in questo giornale che uscì nel dicembre del 1926 la notizia dell'arresto di Malatesta,⁴² cui seguì nello stesso mese un ap-

39 Su *Le Réveil anarchiste* non si registra un aumento degli interventi malatestiani in questo periodo, bensì un calo: se tra il 1921 e il 1925 si pubblicano in media 10,6 articoli di Malatesta all'anno, tra il 1926 e il 1932 la media cala a 4,8 articoli all'anno.

40 Nel 1928, in effetti, uscì un'importante raccolta degli scritti di Kropotkin in dodici volumi. Negli archivi dell'Istituto Internazionale della Storia Sociale di Amsterdam si trovano lettere di Koike Eizo, Asō Yoshi, Nobushima Eiichi, curatori di traduzioni di opere di Kropotkin, indirizzate a Max Nettlau, Pierre Ramus, Rudolf Rocker, Alexander Berkman tra il 1928 e il 1929, in cui chiedono notizie su nuove pubblicazioni dell'anarchico russo.

41 Rimando a Sugiyama 2012, 378-415 per la situazione delle aziende tra gli anni Venti e Trenta.

42 «Maratesuta tōgoku saru» 1926, 2. Si fa riferimento al fermo di di circa due settimane avvenuto nel settembre del 1926 a seguito dell'attentato a Mussolini di Gino Lu-

pello in italiano intitolato «Protesta contro il governo fascista» (1927, 47-8) per la liberazione dell'anarchico firmato dalla Federazione e dal gruppo *Kokushoku seinen* 黒色青年 (Gioventù della bandiera nera). Sullo stesso periodico, tra il 1931 e la fine del 1932, comparve una traduzione di testi malatestiani ogni tre numeri mensili.

Non è un caso che proprio in questo periodo vi fu una crescita di traduzioni di testi malatestiani: noto in Giappone per il suo punto di vista critico verso l'anarco-sindacalismo, le opere del rivoluzionario italiano erano tradotte probabilmente con l'intenzione di alimentare il dibattito interno al movimento giapponese. In effetti, le opere dell'anarchico campano furono spesso usate come spunto di dibattito. Il maggiore esponente dell'anarchismo 'puro', Hatta Shūzō fece riferimento al noto testo polemico di Malatesta *Sindacalismo e anarchismo* per corroborare la tesi secondo cui la lotta di classe facesse parte della prassi marxista e che fosse estranea alla tradizione anarchica (Hatta [1929] 1971, 8; Crump 1993, 111-17). Di contro, Ishikawa Sanshirō, vicino alla fazione sindacalista, citando l'articolo «Un progetto di organizzazione anarchica», sottolineò invece la grande considerazione che Malatesta aveva per il movimento operaio.⁴³ Nello stesso articolo, Ishikawa citò anche un passo di *Fra contadini*, non accorgendosi però, come si vedrà nella prossima sezione, di un fondamentale errore di traduzione.

4 Le traduzioni di *Fra contadini*

La prima, parziale, traduzione di *Fra contadini* esce con il titolo *Rōdōsha no taiwa* 労働者の対話 (Dialogo tra lavoratori), sul mensile di Tokyo *Rōdōsha* (Il lavoratore).⁴⁴ Essa si colloca nel secondo periodo dell'introduzione dell'opera malatestiana in Giappone, periodo caratterizzato dallo scontro tra bolscevichi e anarchici. Il comitato editoriale del periodico, privo di giornalisti di professione, era composto esclusivamente da lavoratori attivi in diverse sigle sindacali di area libertaria. Oltre a servizi di cronaca su agitazioni sindacali in corso, sulla rivista figuravano articoli di costume e commenti sul

cetti. Malatesta visse sotto stretta sorveglianza poliziesca dalla metà del 1926 fino alla morte (Berti 2003, 792; 789-95).

43 Tra i passi più significativi citati da Ishikawa Sanshirō ([1930] 1977a, 54): «Oggi la più grande forza di trasformazione sociale è il movimento operaio (movimento sindacale), e dal suo indirizzo dipende in gran parte il corso che prenderanno gli avvenimenti e la meta a cui arriverà la prossima rivoluzione. [...] Ma sarebbe una grande e letale illusione il credere, come fanno molti, che il movimento operaio possa e debba da se stesso, in conseguenza della sua stessa natura, menare ad una tale rivoluzione» (Errico Malatesta [1927] 1975b, 299). Il tema viene ripreso anche in Ishikawa ([1930] 1977b, 409).

44 Il mensile fu pubblicato in dieci numeri tra l'aprile del 1921 e il maggio dell'anno successivo.

movimento operaio giapponese e internazionale. Sfogliandola, balza all'occhio la chiara impostazione operaista e l'atteggiamento critico verso il progetto di un grande sindacato unitario, all'epoca sposato anche da *Rōdō undō* (Komatsu 1988, 180-2). La traduzione uscì in cinque puntate con una certa irregolarità: le prime tre nei numeri di giugno, luglio e novembre del 1921, nella traduzione di Negishi Shōkichi, le ultime due nell'aprile e nel maggio del 1922, con un diverso traduttore.⁴⁵ Le cinque puntate coprono poco meno di un terzo dell'opuscolo, dove, come già accennato in precedenza, Malatesta evita riferimenti espliciti all'anarchismo e alla «questione agraria», riuscendo nell'obiettivo di far presa su un pubblico più vasto di lettori con posizioni genericamente massimaliste.⁴⁶

Non ci sono informazioni sul testo originale su cui hanno lavorato i traduttori, ma da una lettura attenta del testo è facile dedurre che si tratta della versione inglese, edita nella collana degli opuscoli della *Freedom Press*, periodico che, come abbiamo visto, era molto conosciuto negli ambienti anarchici giapponesi sin dall'inizio del secolo.⁴⁷ Una riflessione sul titolo può aiutare a formulare un'ipotesi più precisa sul testo originale utilizzato. Il catalogo della *Freedom Press* era pubblicato sull'ultima pagina del giornale *Freedom*: osservandone le pubblicità sui numeri usciti nei primi vent'anni del secolo, si scopre che l'opuscolo risulta intitolato *A Talk about Anarchist Communism between Two Workers* tra il 1900 e il numero di maggio del 1914. Dopo 19 numeri mensili in cui scompare dal catalogo, dal numero di gennaio del 1916 a quello di novembre 1918 viene riedito col titolo *A Talk between Two Workers*, per poi uscire definitivamente dal catalogo. Da questa consultazione si può dedurre in via di ipotesi che i traduttori giapponesi abbiano lavorato sulla versione edita tra il 1916 e il 1918, più vicina alla titolazione che compare su *Rōdōsha*. L'edizione inglese fu fedele alle intenzioni dell'autore, pur contenendo alcuni adattamenti linguistici e culturali per rendere il testo più fruibile ai lettori anglofoni. Come già ricordato, fu lo stesso Malatesta, infatti, a curare la prima edizione inglese del 1891.

Per quale motivo un mensile operaista scelse di tradurre un'opera di Malatesta, e perché proprio *Fra contadini*? La vaghezza del contesto sociale dei suoi protagonisti, riflessa anche dall'equivoco della titolazione, non è l'unica spiegazione. Negishi, nelle poche righe

45 La traduzione fu interrotta quindi per la chiusura del giornale, e non perché fosse venuto meno l'interesse per questo scritto.

46 In queste sezioni Giorgio e Beppe trattano della necessità di ribellarsi ai «signori» e alla religione; si discute della base morale della messa in comune della proprietà da parte dei lavoratori e della superiorità del comunismo rispetto al collettivismo una volta realizzata la rivoluzione.

47 Rivelatori della fonte utilizzata dal traduttore sono ad esempio i nomi dei personaggi scelti dal traduttore: William e Jack, come in quella inglese.

di prefazione, cita tra i meriti del testo non tanto il suo contenuto, quanto la forma. Il traduttore, impegnato in quegli anni a coniugare la propria produzione poetica con l'attività politica, fu forse colpito dall'impianto narrativo, un dialogo fra due lavoratori, coerente con l'impostazione antiintellettuale del giornale, e dalla qualità letteraria del testo, elementi poco comuni nella saggistica socialista disponibile in Giappone all'epoca.⁴⁸

La ragione principale della pubblicazione del testo malatestiano però va forse cercata nella linea editoriale del periodico, che nel primo numero prese curiosamente forma in un omaggio a Malatesta: *Rōdōsha*, infatti, scelse per la prima pagina una foto di Malatesta. Il riferimento non era solo alla notizia della carcerazione dell'italiano, diramata, come si è visto, da Ōsugi sulle pagine di *Rōdō undō*, ma anche ad un articolo di Kondō Eizō (nello pseudonimo di Ii Takeshi) apparso sulla stessa rivista. Kondō era un rappresentante della fazione bolscevica, poi impegnato nel Comintern, che curò su *Rōdō undō* articoli celebrativi sulla rivoluzione russa (Ōsawa 1971, 295-301). Nell'articolo *Itari no shakai undō* イタリの社会運動 (Movimenti sociali in Italia), Kondō aveva criticato duramente Malatesta, liquidandone l'esperienza rivoluzionaria come rivolta «prepolitica», «popolare» perché priva di un'analisi sofisticata.⁴⁹ Il giudizio severo, tra le cui righe è facile leggere una critica al mondo anarchico in generale, anticipava lo scontro tra anarchici e bolscevichi che sarebbe scoppiato pochi mesi dopo. Assieme alla foto di Malatesta, nel primo numero di *Rōdōsha* si trova una lettera del redattore Yoshida Junji rivolta a Kondō, in cui l'autore prende le difese dell'anarchico italiano.⁵⁰ Dalla lettera emerge in modo chiaro la posizione massimalista e antiintellettuale del giornale, contraria alla collaborazione con i marxisti. Malatesta quindi veniva assunto a simbolo della corrente libertaria dei sindacati di fabbrica, in un'epoca, come già ricordato, di forti contrasti tra comunisti e anarchici. In questo quadro, la

48 Il traduttore scrive della sua titubanza a cominciare la traduzione di questa vecchia opera, preoccupato di togliere spazio a questioni di attualità di maggiore rilevanza, «ora che i lavoratori russi stanno costruendo una nuova società», ma che si sia deciso a cominciare la traduzione perché «facile da capire e interessante» (Malatesta 1921, 2; traduzione dell'Autore).

49 In Ii (1921, 3) sull'attività di Malatesta si legge: «un semplice tentativo di distruzione anarchica, non solo del capitalismo ma anche dello stato così com'è inteso dai bolscevichi [...] (un progetto che) nella sua semplicità, aveva una grande capacità di mobilitazione tra le classi più umili, dove lo sforzo di analisi non ha alcuna capacità di attrazione» (traduzione dell'Autore).

50 Nell'articolo di Yoshida (1921, 5) si legge: «esaminando la sua vita si capisce come Malatesta sia diverso da quei comunisti bolscevichi nevrotici, intellettuali e uomini di lettere che tra masturbazioni mentali e sogni di Lenin e Trotsky si guadagnano il pane solo con la propaganda politica, o come quei socialisti che vagheggiano la vita borghese e la fama da rivoluzionari» (traduzione dell'Autore).

pubblicazione di *Fra contadini* su *Rōdōsha* non fu motivata tanto per divulgarne il contenuto, quanto piuttosto per marcare una scelta di campo nel dibattito interno al socialismo giapponese di inizio anni Venti, legittimandola con la figura di Malatesta.

La prima versione giapponese di *Fra contadini* apparsa su *Rōdōsha* fu pressoché ignorata.⁵¹ Ad essa seguì nel gennaio del 1929 una seconda traduzione con una titolazione più fedele all'originale, *Nōmin ni goshite* 農民に伍して (Fra contadini), eseguita per i tipi dell'editore Kosakuninsha da Kinoshita Shigeru, direttore della rivista *Kosakunin*. Questa traduzione conobbe ben maggiore fama, a giudicare dall'ampia pubblicizzazione che ebbe nelle riviste giapponesi del movimento.⁵² A differenza della traduzione apparsa su *Rōdōsha*, le traduzioni successive furono eseguite sulla base della traduzione tedesca di *Fra contadini*, pubblicata in forma di opuscolo dal già ricordato *Der Syndikalist* (Malatesta 1923?).⁵³

Tra l'edizione tedesca e quella inglese esiste un'importante discontinuità: se quest'ultima fu fedele alle intenzioni dell'autore, nell'edizione tedesca appare più chiara la volontà del traduttore di adattare il testo all'attività propagandistica dell'organizzazione anarco-sindacalista tedesca. Si fa riferimento in particolare ai brani dedicati al collettivismo, uno degli argomenti forti del libro. Nell'edizione tedesca il termine «collettivismo» venne sostituito sistematicamente con «sindacalismo» (*Syndikalismus*) (Malatesta 1925, 63-5; Malatesta 1923?, 17, 18-19).⁵⁴ In particolare, laddove nell'originale Malatesta sottolineava la superiorità etica e pratica del comunismo sul collettivismo, richiamandosi all'importante dibattito apertosi in Italia negli anni Settanta dell'Ottocento, nella versione tedesca il riferimento al collettivismo è eliminato: al suo posto si trovano espressioni vagamente conciliatorie tra anarchismo e sindacalismo (Malatesta 1923?, 18).⁵⁵ Le versioni giapponesi del 1929 e del 1930 riportarono

51 La traduzione apparsa su *Rōdōsha* non compare nell'almanacco bibliografico sulla letteratura anarchica in giapponese di Ōtsuka (1928), né viene citata dalle due traduzioni complete dell'opuscolo malatestiano uscite successivamente.

52 La traduzione compare tra le opere consigliate nell'importante opuscolo *Ai contadini* di Miyajima Akira, per il fatto di affrontare «questioni concrete della società comunista» (Miyazaki Akira [1931] 1991, 60).

53 Certamente nel caso di Malatesta 1930, Asō, autore della terza traduzione di *Fra contadini*, notò l'opuscolo malatestiano, ormai un fuori catalogo nella sua versione inglese, proprio in una pubblicità sul settimanale *Der Syndikalist*.

54 In tedesco «collettivismo» è reso di norma con «kollektivismus». Si noti per inciso che anche la traduzione francese, come quella inglese, riporta fedelmente la traduzione del termine (Malatesta 1911, 26-8).

55 Nella versione originale, alla domanda «[...] dimmi, tu sei comunista o collettivista?», si legge la risposta: «Io, per me, sono comunista, perché mi pare che quando s'ha da essere amici, torni poco conto di esserlo a mezzo. Il collettivismo lascia ancora i germi della rivalità e dell'odio. Ma v'è di più. Se ognuno potesse vivere con quello che pro-

le interpolazioni della versione tedesca, senza nessuna segnalazione da parte dei traduttori.⁵⁶ Questo elemento, su cui pesa il mancato contatto tra traduttori e autore, testimonia in primo luogo la poca conoscenza del pensiero e delle opere di Malatesta nel Giappone dell'epoca. Esso documenta inoltre l'assenza di un approccio critico al testo da parte dei traduttori. L'errore non fu senza conseguenze: Ishikawa Sanshirō nel già citato intervento in favore dell'anarco-sindacalismo, per dimostrare come il lavoro sindacale fosse fin dall'inizio parte integrante della prassi dell'anarchismo, notò che in *Fra contadini*: «“anarchismo” e “sindacalismo” sono citati l'uno accanto all'altro e usati come sinonimi» (Ishikawa [1930] 1977a, 55; Ishikawa [1930] 1977b, 409).

Fra contadini nell'edizione Kosakuninsha venne pubblicato in un contesto editoriale e politico molto diverso da quello di *Rōdōsha*. Come già ricordato, in contrasto con l'approccio operaista della rivista diretta da Yoshida, il mensile *Kosakunin* fu di fatto un periodico di intervento culturale e di propaganda sprovvisto di un contatto diretto con i contadini, che diede largo spazio agli scritti di Hatta, collocandosi quindi su posizioni ruraliste fortemente critiche verso l'anarco-sindacalismo. Il giornale, incentrato sulla situazione nazionale, pubblicava per lo più articoli teorici sul movimento contadino giapponese, frammisti a brevi servizi di cronaca su vertenze sindacali locali. Non c'era una sezione internazionale paragonabile a quella di *Rōdō undō* o della rivista *Kokushoku seinen*, né rubriche riservate a classici della letteratura anarchica, tranne rari trafiletti di poco interesse sul machnovismo e il comunismo di Kropotkin. Non esisteva inoltre una collana di opuscoli edita dalla casa editrice Kosakuninsha. Considerati questi elementi, la pubblicazione del testo malatestiano per questi tipi non sembra motivata tanto dalla volontà di approfondimento della situazione italiana e di Malatesta, peraltro

duce egli stesso, il collettivismo sarebbe sempre inferiore al comunismo, perché tenderebbe a tener gli uomini isolati e quindi diminuirebbe le loro forze ed il loro affetto, ma, tanto quanto, potrebbe andare» (Malatesta 1925, 65). Nella versione tedesca, alla domanda «Was meint man aber mit Anarchisten und Syndikalisten?», la risposta è «Ja, ich bin der Ansicht, wer ein Freund sein will, muss es ganz sein: und wenn man eine Veränderung der Gesellschaft haben will, dann soll man nicht auf halbem Wege stehen bleiben. Der freiheitliche, staatslose Kommunismus ist das einfachste und gerechteste System. Alle arbeiten gemeinsam, und alle genießen gemeinsam die Früchte ihrer Arbeit [...]» («Sì, credo che se vuoi essere un amico, devi esserlo completamente: e se vuoi che ci sia cambiamento nella società, non dovresti fermarti a metà strada. Il comunismo libertario e senza Stato è il sistema più semplice ed equo. Tutti lavorano insieme e tutti godono insieme dei frutti del loro lavoro») (Malatesta 1923?, 18; traduzione dell'Autore).

56 Ad esempio, «collettivista», divenuto «sindacalista» nella versione tedesca, è tradotto in «shindakarಿಸuto» da Kinoshita e «sanjikarisuto» da Asō (Malatesta 1929, 42; Malatesta 1930, 268).

mai citati nella rivista.⁵⁷ Le motivazioni vanno cercate in primo luogo nelle molte affinità tra i temi affrontati da Malatesta nell'opuscolo e le convinzioni maturate dal traduttore, nonché direttore della rivista *Kosakunin*, Kinoshita Shigeru. Gli scritti del militante giapponese condividevano con quelli di Malatesta l'accento sulle terribili condizioni di vita delle famiglie contadine più povere (Kinoshita 1927, 1), sebbene nell'opuscolo malatestiano non ci siano riferimenti precisi all'affittanza. Altro punto in comune tra Malatesta e Kinoshita era la rilevanza del movimento contadino nel processo rivoluzionario, moderata dalla prospettiva di un federalismo solidaristico tra comuni agricole e sindacati, al posto di un'eccessiva enfasi sul contrasto di interessi tra città e campagna (Kinoshita 1930, 6), argomento centrale di Hatta Jūzō e altri comunisti anarchici nipponici. Infine, va citata la comune condanna della via legalitaria e di ogni forma di organizzazione del lavoro centralista e «autoritaria» (Kinoshita 1928, 6). Per Kinoshita quindi dedicarsi alla traduzione di Malatesta significava probabilmente lavorare per la divulgazione di questioni vicine a lui e al suo gruppo, in una forma semplice e accattivante.

Nel contesto editoriale della *Kosakuninsha*, la traduzione di *Fra contadini* contribuirà a divulgare in Giappone un'immagine diversa rispetto a quella di un Malatesta instancabile uomo d'azione («il braccio dell'anarchismo») e fustigatore degli eccessi corporativistici dell'anarco-sindacalismo. Ad emergere è un'inedita figura di Malatesta vicino alle istanze della popolazione rurale, immagine che nel contesto giapponese dell'epoca aveva chiari obiettivi politici. L'uscita dell'opuscolo, infatti, avveniva solo a un anno dalla già ricordata divisione tra anarchici 'puri' e anarco-sindacalisti che portò alla fuoriuscita di questi ultimi dalla rivista *Jiyū rengō*. Anche nel caso della traduzione di Kinoshita quindi, seppur in forme peculiari, la traduzione di Malatesta era funzionale a una particolare corrente dell'anarchismo per autolegittimarsi sotto l'egida di un'«autorità» dell'anarchismo internazionale.

La terza e ultima traduzione di *Fra contadini* uscì nel ventottesimo volume della serie *Il pensiero sociale* (*Shakai shisō zentai* 社会思想全集), pubblicazione in quaranta volumi uscita tra il 1928 e il 1932 per i tipi della Heibonsha. La serie conteneva opere di esponenti stranieri della letteratura socialista in senso lato, sia di tradizione marxiana che anarchica, includendo anche classici del pensiero politico europeo, come *Utopia* di Thomas Moore. L'opuscolo compare in una nuova traduzione ad opera di Asō Yoshiteru, storico della filosofia e anarchico, assieme a *In tempo di elezioni* e *L'anarchia*, quest'ultimo

57 La breve prefazione di Kinoshita all'opuscolo, interessante di per sé perché dimostra la conoscenza da parte del traduttore della biografia di Max Nettlau su Malatesta, non esplicita le motivazioni della pubblicazione. Non ci sono notizie sulla prima traduzione ad opera del Negishi (Malatesta 1929, 2).

tradotto da Ueda Nobuo. Asō non cita le traduzioni di Negishi e di Kinoshita, probabilmente perché non ne conosce l'esistenza. Nella prefazione Asō motiva la scelta di inserire nella serie *Fra contadini e In tempo di elezioni* perché

interessanti non tanto sul piano teorico, quanto su quello formale. La forma dialogica è stata molto adottata nella letteratura filosofica, non solo in età classica, notoriamente con Platone, ma anche nella prima modernità, nelle opere di Bruno, Barkley, Leibnitz [...]. Questa forma espositiva è però molto rara nella letteratura socialista. (Asō 1930, 229)

Il prefatore ignorava evidentemente la letteratura popolareggiante di propaganda socialista, dove, non solo in Italia, il dialogo era abbastanza diffuso. Nel caso de *L'anarchia*, Asō scrive di aver confrontato l'edizione tedesca e inglese nel lavoro di curatela. Tale scrupolosità non sembra sia stata adottata nel caso di *Fra contadini*, che è una fedele trasposizione in giapponese della versione ampiamente rimaneggiata pubblicata da *Der Syndikalist*.

In quest'ultima traduzione, l'opuscolo malatestiano sembra finalmente essere libero da una strumentalizzazione faziosa all'interno del movimento anarchico giapponese, come era stato per i due casi precedenti. Nel 1930 quindi, con la serie de *Il pensiero sociale*, Malatesta, inserito nel canone internazionale del pensiero socialista, viene collocato nel rango dei teorici, in contrasto con l'immagine di «uomo d'azione» che ancora circolava pochi anni prima. Questo elemento è un riflesso della parabola dell'anarchismo giapponese, che dopo un periodo di popolarizzazione nella prima metà degli anni Venti del XX secolo, si avviava negli anni Trenta ad una decisa marginalizzazione dalla lotta politica, divenendo, anche a causa della violenta repressione poliziesca, astratta posizione filosofica individuale.

5 Conclusioni

Ad emergere in questo intervento è l'anomalia del caso di *Fra contadini* nell'introduzione e circolazione del pensiero dell'anarchismo internazionale in Giappone: a cinquant'anni dalla sua prima edizione italiana, lo stesso testo fu pubblicato in tre traduzioni nell'arco di dieci anni, in contesti editoriali e politici diversi, se non addirittura contrapposti, pur se interni all'anarchismo: un giornale legato all'anarco-sindacalismo di fabbrica la prima, un periodico ruralista critico verso i sindacati di fabbrica la seconda, una serie di volumi sul pensiero socialista internazionale la terza.

Ci sono diverse spiegazioni per questa diffusione anomala: una prima risposta va cercata nel testo. Nato dall'esigenza di divulgare un

nuovo progetto organizzativo in modo chiaro e semplice, l'opuscolo mette in scena un dialogo tra due lavoratori pensando inizialmente alle campagne in agitazione dell'Italia liberale. Tuttavia la plasticità del testo, data la vastità dei temi trattati e l'indeterminatezza dei riferimenti contestuali, ne favorì la diffusione internazionale, anche con diversa titolazione. Quest'ultimo equivoco, che non sembra essere stato colto in Giappone, giocò forse a favore della riedizione locale nello spazio di pochi anni. Inoltre, nel caso giapponese, l'efficace forma popolareggiante, diffusa tra le opere di divulgazione socialista in Europa, fu accolta con interesse e curiosità, dove era ancora limitata la conoscenza verso questo tipo di letteratura di largo consumo.

Se alcuni importanti scritti di Malatesta circolarono già dal 1907, nella fase aurorale del socialismo moderno giapponese, *Fra contadini* fu tradotto solo negli anni Venti, decade caratterizzata da un grande impegno nella traduzione di materiale socialista straniero, nel quadro di una moderata apertura dello stato giapponese verso il movimento operaio e socialista. Il contesto politico e sociale del Giappone dell'epoca non poteva essere più diverso da quello dell'Italia postunitaria: non solo l'industrializzazione giapponese e i conflitti di fabbrica ad essa legati non erano ancora presenti in proporzioni comparabili in Italia, ma anche i protagonisti, la forma e i contenuti delle rivendicazioni nelle agitazioni contadine, incentrate sul problema dell'affittanza in Giappone, avevano poco da spartire con quelle dei salariati agricoli della Val Padana di fine Ottocento. Tuttavia, il testo, lungi dall'essere ignorato, conobbe diverse edizioni in momenti decisivi nella storia dell'anarchismo giapponese: poco prima dello scontro tra anarchici e comunisti filosovietici all'inizio degli anni Venti, e nel pieno della polemica tra anarco-sindacalisti e anarchici 'puri' di tendenza ruralista e comunalista, alla fine della stessa decade. Si tratta di periodi in cui i militanti giapponesi cercavano nei testi stranieri risposte a problemi organizzativi e di tattica politica maturati nel proprio paese. Soprattutto nel caso della traduzione per la Kosakuninsha, il traduttore e attivista Kinoshita condivideva molti temi contenuti nell'opuscolo, quindi è probabile che la scelta di tradurre il testo fosse legata alla volontà del traduttore di diffondere delle idee vicine a lui e al suo gruppo.

Inoltre, se in questi anni l'opuscolo malatestiano trovò un pubblico di militanti giapponesi disposti a lavorare alla traduzione del testo con gli scarsi mezzi disponibili, fu il paziente lavoro di tessitura di relazioni tra individui e gruppi giapponesi con gli Stati Uniti e l'Europa, insieme all'opera organizzativa e di diffusione di idee da parte di riviste europee con circolazione mondiale, che rese possibile materialmente l'arrivo del testo in Giappone nelle sue diverse edizioni. Fu di fatto il catalogo e le scelte editoriali di riviste francesi, inglesi e tedesche a determinare l'offerta degli scritti di Malatesta, fra cui venne scelto anche *Fra contadini*.

L'opuscolo fu significativo su diversi piani. Sebbene negli anni Venti la popolarità dell'anarchico napoletano fosse cresciuta in modo considerevole rispetto al passato, Malatesta in Giappone rimaneva una figura di secondo piano nel dibattito teorico interno all'anarchismo giapponese, assimilata in modo grossolano all'insurrezionalismo bakuniano e al comunismo anarchico di Kropotkin. *Fra contadini* e gli altri scritti malatestiani introdotti negli anni Venti contribuirono a svecchiare la percezione del rivoluzionario italiano, che da energico «uomo d'azione», testimone della Prima Internazionale ma rozzo sul piano teorico, verrà progressivamente inserito nel canone del pensiero socialista mondiale. Inoltre la traduzione dell'opuscolo fiorentino alla fine della decade offrì l'immagine di un Malatesta «ruralista», nuova rispetto agli articoli sull'anarco-sindacalismo cui fino ad allora era stato associato. *Fra contadini*, più che per il dibattito che suscitò, fu significativo soprattutto per l'uso che se ne fece: soprattutto nel caso della prima pubblicazione sul periodico *Rōdōsha*, la pubblicazione fu uno strumento per accreditare la corrente di cui il traduttore faceva parte.

Il caso dell'opuscolo malatestiano invita ad una riflessione sul carattere poco rigoroso dei canali di informazione di cui si serviva l'anarchismo internazionale, spesso presentati in tono eroico per la loro efficacia nonostante la clandestinità e la povertà di mezzi. Rivelandore della difficoltà di comunicazione e la modesta diffusione delle pubblicazioni anarchiche in Giappone risulta il fatto che i tre traduttori non citino le versioni precedenti dell'opuscolo, probabilmente perché ne ignorano l'esistenza. Inoltre, come dimostrano le versioni del Kinoshita e dell'Asō condotte sull'edizione tedesca dell'opuscolo, contenente vistose modifiche rispetto all'originale, la traduzione era spesso condotta senza un adeguato approccio critico al testo, su cui pesava il mancato rapporto tra i traduttori giapponesi e l'autore italiano. Il 'tradimento' della versione originale mostra quanto il processo di mediazione dell'opera non fosse neutro, ma influenzasse in modo non trascurabile la ricezione del testo. Quest'ultimo aspetto, insieme all'uso dell'opuscolo come strumento di legittimazione di una parte politica sotto l'egida di uno dei «padri dell'anarchismo», credo mettano in seria discussione il modello diffusionista ancora molto presente negli studi sulla circolazione del pensiero libertario internazionale.

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An Analysis of Some Illustrated Books by Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) in the Museum of Oriental Art in Venice

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Abstract The collection of Japanese prints, albums and illustrated books (*ehon*) in the Museum of Oriental Art in Venice is the result of the last stop in Japan of a journey to the Far East of Prince Henry Bourbon-Parma, Count of Bardi and his wife Adelgunde of Bragança, during the years 1887-1889. The gathering of more than thirty thousand objects became the core of the present collection. Among these there are about 500 illustrated books of famous *ukiyo*e masters, *surimono*, and colour prints *nishikie*. The creation of catalogue entries in Japanese and Italian and the analysis of each print reveals an amazing quantity of unpublished *ukiyo*e masterpieces and allows a division into different groups according to the subject matter. At the same time, this distinction into different genres shows an interesting tendency in the formation of the collection together with a possible new classification of the prints themselves. This study aims to shed a new light on this particular collection while focusing on a series of illustrated books by Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1848). Among these the famous volumes of the Manga, the illustrated books on warriors, an unusual album with some prints from the One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji and a selection from the five volumes dedicated to teach the artisans how to draw all kind of decorations.

Keywords Japanese prints. Museum of Oriental Art collection, Venice. Digital database. Hokusai's illustrated books. Painting didactic.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Warriors Album. – 3 One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji. – 4 Manga. – 5 Banshoku zukō. – 6 Conclusion.



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1 Introduction

The collection of Japanese prints, albums and illustrated books (*ehon* 絵本)¹ in the Museum of Oriental Art in Venice is the result of the last stop in Japan of a journey to the Far East of Prince Henry Bourbon-Parma, Count of Bardi and his wife Adelgunde of Bragança, during the years 1887-89.² The gathering of more than thirty thousand objects became the core of the present collection (Spadavecchia Aliffi 1990). Among these, there are about 500 illustrated books of famous *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 masters, *surimono* 刷物, and colour prints (*nishikie* 錦絵).

A joint project between the Museum of Oriental Art in Venice and the Art Research Center (ARC) of Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto in collaboration with the Department of Asian and North African Studies, University of Venice, allowed the creation of a digital database of all Japanese printed materials owned by the Museum. The final survey shows that there are 727 single sheets *ukiyo-e* prints (for a total 860 images) and 276 illustrated books (for a total of 12,200 images) (Akama 2013).³

The creation of catalogue entries of each work - in Japanese and Italian - reveals an amazing quantity of unpublished *ukiyo-e* masterpieces.⁴ The most represented artists being Utagawa Kunisada 歌川国貞 (Toyokuni III 三代豊国) (1786-1865), followed by Andō (Utagawa) Hiroshige I 安藤 (歌川) 広重 (1797-1858), Utagawa Kuniyoshi 歌川国吉 (1798-1861), Utagawa Kunisada II 二代歌川国貞 (1823-1880), Kikukawa Eizan 菊川英山 (1787-1867), Tsukioka Yoshitoshi⁵ 月岡芳年 (1839-1892), Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760-1849) and many others.

The aim of this paper is to try to present some of these materials with a special focus on Hokusai's illustrated books.

The analysis of the prints allowed a division into different groups according to their subject matter: *yakushae* 役者絵 (actor prints), *mushae* 武者絵 (warriors prints), *bijin* 美人 (female beauties), *meisho* 名所 (famous places), *kachōe* 花鳥絵 (images of nature) and *Genjje* 源氏絵 (parody of the *Tale of Genji*). This distinction into different genres shows an interesting tendency in the formation of the collection that could lead to a possible new classification of the prints themselves.

1 For a complete study on *ehon* and their relation to Japanese artists see Keyes 2006.

2 About Prince Bourbon-Parma Count of Bardi's travel see Spadavecchia 2000.

3 To better highlight the importance of the international research collaboration in terms of digital database of historical Japanese materials in worldwide collections see ARC digital database: <https://www.arc.ritsumei.ac.jp/en/index.html>.

4 On the close relation between *ehon* and *ukiyo-e* in the publications of Edo period see Suzuki 1979.

5 Also named Taiso Yoshitoshi 大蘇芳年.



Figure 1 Katsushika Hokusai, *Bijin by the shore using kinuta* to soften a piece of silk, *surimono*, *nishikie*, Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. no. 3782

The preliminary study of this huge graphic group of prints highlights the presence of 55 single sheets by Hokusai (there are 52 images cut off from the *yomihon Shinpen Suikogaden* 読本新編水滸画伝 [The New Illustrated Edition of Suikoden [The Water Margin], from inv. no. 3726 to no. 3777),⁶ (Spadavecchia 2013, 85, fn. 24), 2 *ukie* 浮絵 prints (perspective prints), one wonderful *surimono*⁷ with two *bijin* who, near the sea-shore, are beating a piece of silk to make it soft (inv. no. 3782)⁸ [fig. 1].⁹

This study will focus on a particular group of illustrated books by Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 among which the famous volumes of the

⁶ As pointed out by Prof. Akama Ryō 赤間亮 (Director Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University 立命館大学, Kyoto).

⁷ The *surimono* is a special kind of print produced in small limited editions in a non-commercial sphere, privately issued but superbly designed, meticulously and luxuriously crafted. The *surimono* combines poetic compositions with specific images commissioned by private literary circles in particular circumstances. For a complete description of this category see Carpenter 2008.

⁸ This *surimono* is neither dated nor signed, but from the observation of the subject and style, it can certainly be ascribed to the production of Hokusai between the years 1795-97 when the Master signed his works with the name Sōri 宗理. In this period the female figures are delicate, languid, suffused with a slight sadness and almost ethereal. The body lengthens and the face begins to take on the aspect that is defined as “melon seed” characteristic of the subsequent production.

⁹ All images courtesy of ©Museo d'Arte Orientale, Venice. I am grateful to Dott. Daniele Ferrara (Director Polo museale del Veneto) for allowing me the use of the images and to Dott.ssa Marta Boscolo Marchi (Director Museum of Oriental Art, Venice) for letting me study Hokusai's works in the Venetian collection.

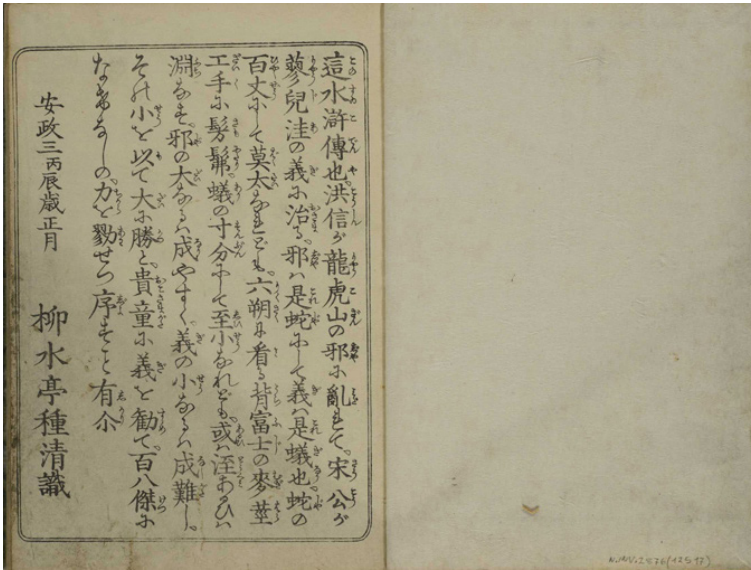


Figure 2 Katsushika Hokusai, *Suikogaden*. 1856. Illustrated book, preface. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. no. 2876-02

Manga 漫画, the illustrated books on warriors *Wakan ehon sakigake* 和漢絵本魁 (Warriors Illustrated: China and Japan, inv. no. 2877), *Ehon musashi abumi* 絵本武蔵鐙 (The Stirrups of Musashi Illustrated, inv. no. 2849-2850), a peculiar album with *One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji* (Fugaku hyakkei 富嶽百景, inv. no. 2709) and finally, another illustrated book called *Banshoku zukō* 萬職圖孝 (One Thousand Crafts Illustrated, vol. I inv. no. 2856, vol. II inv. no. 2857, vol. III inv. no. 2855, vol. IV inv. no. 2854, vol. V inv. no. 2853) inspired by Hokusai's *ehon* probably copied or produced by one of his pupil called Katsushika Taito II (二代葛飾戴斗).¹⁰

Before entering into some aspects of these specific illustrated books, I will introduce briefly one of the images from the 18 pages that compose the copy of the *Suikogaden* 水滸画伝 (inv. no. 2876) [fig. 2].¹¹

¹⁰ See also Vesco 2013.

¹¹ The peculiarity of this album is the sequence of the images that is an arbitrary selection from the many books originally illustrated by Hokusai. *The Shinpen suikōgaden* was published with Hokusai's illustrations and Kyokutei Bakin's text for the first part, first section, that is to say, vols. 1-6 in 1805; part I, section II, vols. 7-11 in 1807. The publication continued with Hokusai's illustrations but with Takai Ranzan's text, part III, vols. 22-31; part IV, vols. 32-41; part V, vols. 42-51; part VI, 52-61 in 1835. From volume 62 to volume 91 Hokusai passed the illustration job to his pupil Taito II.

The tale is inspired by a famous story of Chinese legendary twelfth century heroes celebrated in the Ming-Dynasty (1368-1644) Chinese novel *Shui hu zhuan* 水滸伝.¹² The Japanese translation used by Hokusai as an inspiration for his album is due to Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 (1767-1848) substituted later by Takai Ranzan (1762-1838) 高井蘭山 and composed of 61 volumes completed later till volume 91, by Hokusai's pupil Hokusai Taito II.¹³

After an introduction with the date of publication: first month (*shōgatsu* 正月), year of the dragon (*hinoe tatsu toshi* 丙辰歳), third year of Ansei era 安政三 (1856), the volume opens with the image of an enormous snake whose body becomes the frame for a picture where a big tiger with an open mouth is frightening a Chinese warrior.¹⁴ To emphasize the dramatic situation, the man – hands on his

12 The *Shui hu zhuan* (Water Margin), also known in the West as *Outlaws of the Marsh*, *All Men are Brothers* or *The Marshes of Mount Liang*, was based on the adventures of the outlaw Song Jiang 宋江 and his 108 companions (called the 36 “Heavenly Spirits” and the 72 “Earthly Demons”). The group acted in the Huainan 淮南 region and surrendered to the Song 宋 government in 1121. The story was written in XIV century and attributed to Shi Nai’an 施耐庵 (1296-1372). The novel opens with the story of the release of the 108 Spirits that had been imprisoned under an ancient stele-bearing tortoise (*bi xi* 龜跌) and of the liberation of one of the nine sons of the Dragon King who is depicted as a dragon with a shell of a turtle. The episode derives from the Daoist concept that each person's destiny is strictly tied to a “Star of Destiny” (宿命). In the story the 108 Stars of Destiny are representing 108 demonic overlords who were banished by the deity Shangdi 上帝. Since their expulsion, the 108 Stars repented and soon after their accidental release from their place of confinement, they were reborn in this world as 108 heroes whose life was devoted, from that time on, to defend the cause of justice. They are divided into the 36 Heavenly Spirits (天罡三十六星) and 72 Earthly Fiends (地煞七十二星).

In Japan, *Shui hu zhuan* was first translated around 1757, when the first volume of an early *Suikoden* (Water Margin) was printed. As early as 1773, Takebe Ayakari 建部綾足 adapted it in his *Japanese Water Margin* (本朝水滸伝 *Honchō suikoden*) soon followed, in 1783, by *Women's Water Margin* (女水滸伝 *Onna suikoden*) and Santō Kyōden's 山東京伝 1801 *Chūshingura Water Margin* (忠臣蔵水滸伝 *Chūshingura suikoden*). In 1805, Kyokutei Bakin published a Japanese translation of the *Water Margin* that was illustrated by Hokusai. The book, called the *New Illustrated Edition of the Suikoden* (新編水滸画伝 *Shinpen Suikogaden*) had such a great success during the Edo period (1615-1868) that it created a real “Suikoden” vogue. In 1827, Utagawa Kuniyoshi, was commissioned by the publisher Kagaya (Kichiemon) Kichibei 加賀屋吉右衛門・吉兵衛 (ca. 1815-1850) of the Seiseidō 青盛堂 firm, to produce a series of woodblock prints illustrating the 108 heroes. The series called *Tsuzoku Suikoden goketsu hyakuhachinin no hitori* 通俗水滸伝 豪傑百八人之壹人 (108 Heroes of the Water Margin) published between 1827 and 1830 brought Kuniyoshi to fame. Thanks to the positive response of the public and the consequent commercial success of Kuniyoshi's series, other *ukiyo*e artists were commissioned to draw the same subject. Among these, Yoshitoshi designed around 1866-1867 a series of 50 prints in *chūban* size 中判 (medium size print): (25/26 × 17/19 cm), which looked darker than Kuniyoshi's and featuring monsters and strange ghosts.

13 On Edo period publication see Konta 1974; Nakada 1950.

14 The episode is told in the first chapter of *Shui hu zhuan* in which Marshal Hong is terrified after the sudden apparition of a giant snake and a big tiger while on his way through the mountain. Hong Xin 洪信 was a Grand Marshal (太尉) sent by Emperor Renzong 宋仁宗 to seek Celestial Master Zhang to help to combat a terrible plague that was affecting the region. Hong Xin successfully completed his mission and before re-



Figure 3 Katsushika Hokusai, *Suikogaden*. Marshal Hong frightened by a giant Snake and a Tiger. illustrated book. 1856. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. no. 2876-03

head – curves his body in a completely unnatural “C” shape (inv. no. 2876-03) [fig. 3]. The images of this album, differently from the original by Hokusai, are not only printed with black *sumi* 墨, but with brilliant colours like green, yellow, light blue and red.

2 Warriors Album

In the collection of the Museum of Oriental Art in Venice there are two volumes dedicated to warriors. They are surprisingly well preserved and of a wonderful print quality.

Around mid-1830s Hokusai produced a trilogy of *mushae* of a very high quality both in the design and in the details of the characters.

turning to the capital he decided to visit the temple near where the Master resided and without been noticed, released the 108 demons that had been trapped in a secret chamber for centuries. The demons spread out throughout the land after their release and are reborn in the so-called “108 Stars of Destiny”. The legend tells that it seemed that Hong Xin’s action was predestined to the point that a stone tablet that stood on the location where the demons were imprisoned had the words “Opens when Hong (Xin) arrives” (遇洪而開) carved on it.

My special thanks to Riccardo Fracasso (Ca’ Foscari University, Venice) for the precious information on some details of the original text of *Shui hu zhuàn*.



Figura 4 Katsushika Hokusai, *Ehon musashi abumi*. Illustrated book. 1836. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. no. 2850-02

Chinese and Japanese warriors are depicted in different situations, according to legendary storytelling.

Hokusai created what seems to be a group of three books including *Wakan ehon sakigake* 和漢絵本魁 (Warriors Illustrated. China and Japan, 1836, inv. no. 2877),¹⁵ *Ehon musashi abumi* 絵本武蔵鑑 (The Stirrups of Musashi Illustrated, 1836, inv. no. 2849) [fig. 4] and *Ehon wakan no homare* 絵本和漢誉 (Heroes of China and Japan Illustrated, 1836-50) which is not present in the Venetian collection.¹⁶

Calza (1999) suggests an interesting theory stating that the group of books is not a trilogy but a tetralogy being therefore composed of four volumes, including also *Ehon wakan Katsushikaburi* 画本和漢葛

¹⁵ The cover of the Museum of Oriental Art copy says only *Ehon sakigake zen* 絵本魁全 (Complete volume of *Ehon sakigake*) omitting the reference to *wakan* 和漢 (Japan and China). For a study on *Wakan ehon sakigake* see Fagioli 2010.

¹⁶ *Ehon wakan no homare* according to Hillier (1980) was apparently designed first, but not printed until 1850, the year after Hokusai's death. No copy of the book is known with a colophon date earlier than 1850 and the title page inside the front cover also bears the same date. It is possible that the three books were ready for publication at the same time in 1836, but for different reasons like a falling-off in public demand, or the difficult socio-economic situation, the publication of this volume was postponed. The fact that the block-cutter of *Ehon wakan no homare* was Egawa Sentarō 江川仙太郎 son of the famous Egawa Tomekichi 江川留吉 – the engraver of the other two volumes – further corroborates the hypothesis of 1850 as the publication date.

飾振 (Chinese and Japanese Heroes Illustrated in Katsushika style).

Without entering into the details of this distinction, that is still matter of debate among scholars, let's consider closely the two volumes in the Italian collection. Both are in the classical *ehon* format with a *watoji* 和綴じ (Japanese style) binding, meaning that a printed sheet is folded in two, with the external margins bound together in the internal margin of the book. *Wakan ehon sakigake* measures 22.6 × 15.7 cm¹⁷ and it is a monochrome print signed *nanajūnana sai zen Hokusai aratame gakyō rōjin Manji hitsu* 七十七歳先北斎改画狂老人卅筆 (at the age of seventy-seven Hokusai changed in Manji the old man mad about painting) carved by Egawa Tomekichi 江川留吉,¹⁸ with a "Fuji" seal and published, as specify in the colophon, in Ōsaka 大阪, Nagoya 名古屋 and Edo 江戸 in the eight month of Tenpō 天保 era (1836) [fig. 5].

Worth noticing is that the copy owned by the Venetian Museum of Oriental Art has a peculiar page composition: the preface is taken from the original *Ehon musashi abumi* that was designed by Hokusai. The second page of the Venetian copy (inv. no. 2877-03) has part of the preface of *Ehon musashi abumi*, on the right page and the first image of the same album, on the left. As for the colophon, there is an interesting mixture between the two albums: on the right the original page of *Ehon musashi abumi*, followed by the real colophon of *Wakan ehon sakigake* (inv. no. 2877-33) [fig. 5] with the presentation of the volume itself and the announcement of *Musashi abumi* and *Katsushikaburi*. What contributes to create the complex order of this album is the fact that the final double page of the colophon, at the end of the volume entitled *Ehon sakigake*, is again the collation of two different pages from *Ehon musashi abumi*. The original block cut for the colophon of *Wakan ehon sakigake* shows on the right page Bingo no Saburō Takanori 備後の三郎高德, known for his fidelity to the Emperor Go Daigo 後醍醐天皇, carving on the trunk of a tree the date and Hokusai's signature: *Tenpō roku kinoto hitsuji dōshi shi gatsu* 天保六乙羊年四月 (Tenpō era six *kinoto*, year of the goat) | *yowai shichijūroku zen Hokusai iitsu aratame* 齡七十六前北斎為一改 (at the age of seventy-six before Hokusai changed in iitsu) | *Gakyō rōjin Manji hitsu* 画狂老人卅筆 (painted by the old man mad about painting). The engravers are Sugita Kinsuke 杉田金助 and Egawa Tomekichi 江川留吉.

*Ehon musashi abumi*¹⁹ measures 18.6 × 13.0 cm the technique remains the same (monochrome print) but the publication is only in

¹⁷ The copy owned by the British Museum, printed by Izumiya Ichibei 和泉屋市兵衛 signed *zen Hokusai aratame gakyō rōjin Manji hitsu*, inv. 1939.5-24.026 JIB 224 has slightly different measures, namely 22.5 × 16 cm.

¹⁸ The same block cutter of the famous monochrome series *One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji*.

¹⁹ The title refers to the village of Musashi that was a famous place for the production of stirrups.

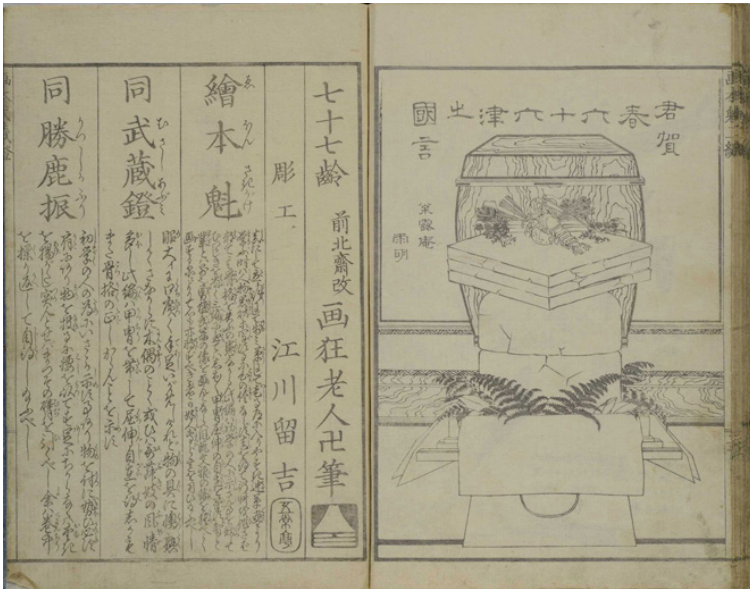


Figure 5 Katsushika Hokusai, *Ehon sakigake*. 1836. Illustrated book. Colophon. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. no. 2877-33

the city of Edo (present Tokyo), seven months later,²⁰ by the publisher Nishimiya Yahei 西宮彌兵衛 in the seventh year of the Tenpō era and signed *zen Hokusai aratame gakyō rōjin Manji histu* 先北齋改画狂老人己筆 (previously Hokusai changed in Manji the old man mad about painting).

The Venetian copy of *Ehon musashi abumi* is divided into two volumes and has only the first part of the original preface in a shape similar to a label with a crane flying over the title and the indication of the date; it has no colophon and it ends with the image of Akugenda 悪源太 (Minamoto Yoshihira 源義平) in the form of Raijin 雷神, the God of Thunder, who is typically depicted with fierce and aggressive facial expressions, standing atop a cloud, flying up in the sky, usually holding *taiko* 太鼓 drums that he plays to create the sound of thunder. Raijin holds large hammers in his hands that he uses to play the drums. Sometimes he is depicted with three fingers on each hand which are said to represent the past, the present and the future.

²⁰ The fact that the volume was published seven months after *Wakan Ehon sakigake* demonstrates that there was a great demand of this kind of works. The rendering of warriors and armours is less detailed than the previous volume.

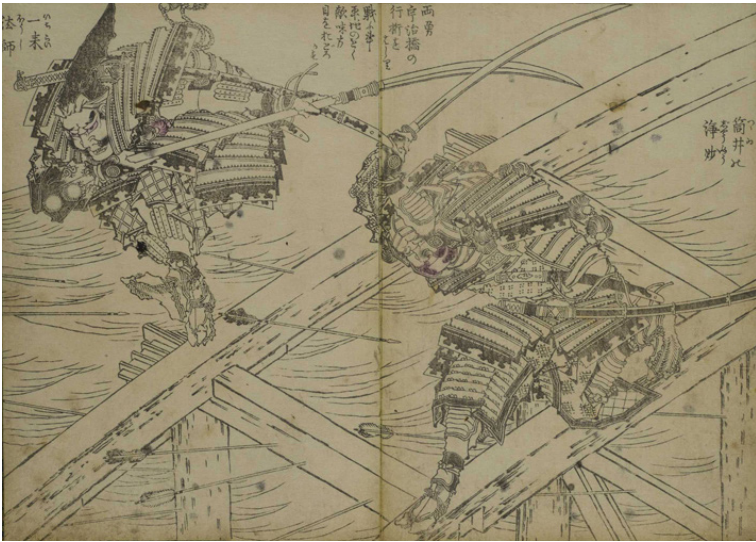


Figure 6 Katsushika Hokusai, *Ehon musashi abumi. Ichirai and Tsutsui no Shōmyō Escaping Across the Wrecked Uji Bridge*. 1836. Illustrated book. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. no. 2850-15

It could seem strange that a famous *ukiyo-e* artist as Hokusai put so much energy in the production of *mushae* and especially in such a peaceful time like the Tokugawa 徳川 period (1600-1868), but these volumes had such a great success that the market required the publication of two volumes in the very same year.²¹

The request of images of heroes of the past, whose adventures had become legendary, were appealing especially because they referred to very important virtues of the samurai class such as courage, loyalty, moral rectitude and ethical behaviour (Vesco 2019).²²

Those who appreciated themes connected to the more classical *ukiyo-e* production (images of *kabuki* actors, courtesans *bijin*, famous places, *meishoe* and nature *kachō*) were also very fond of stories related to warriors and especially Japanese warriors, because in the comparison with continental warriors (Chinese) their national pride was greatly enhanced.²³

21 On the role of the publisher and the publishing market in Edo period see Forrer 1985; Minami 1976.

22 See for instance the enormous success of the stories of the revenge of the 47 *rōnin*: *Kanadehon Chūshingura* 仮名手本忠臣蔵 (The Syllabic Manual. Treasury of the Loyal Retainers), which referred to the same values.

23 Smith, Henry D. II 2006; Lane 1989 and Hillier 1980.

In the warriors albums there is a strong attention to the details of the movements of the samurai and it does not matter if they wear very heavy armours or are engaged in difficult fights. Each gesture is fluid and the body moves in a natural way [fig. 6].²⁴

Hokusai is able to catch the dramatic moment in the same way he did while depicting the *climax* of the action frozen in what is called *mie* (見え or 見得) of the actors on the stage.²⁵

Ehon musashi abumi is used also as an excuse to employ in a very particular way the vertical composition on a double page so that the main character is exactly the centre of the image [fig. 7].²⁶

The copy owned by the Museum of Oriental Art in Venice is mounted into two volumes (inv. nos. 2849-2850) both formed by 17 double pages. The first volume has 15 images plus two pages with little thin silver inserts [fig. 8], the second, again, with 15 images, but with the title and the date as first page [fig. 4].

In both albums single images are alternated to those on a double page without a clear logic. A close comparison with the work commissioned directly to Hokusai shows that the images in the Italian volumes do not follow the order originally decided by the artist. On top of this, we can notice that some images are taken from *Wakan ehon sakigake* and mixed with those of *Ehon musashi abumi*.

In this volume the threatening facial expressions of the warriors and the mixing of their armours tend to be more stylized, nevertheless, the great dynamism of the heroes with their quick movements to escape the enemies contribute to the strong *pathos* of the story [fig. 9].

Many of the legends that fascinated the public of the period are well depicted in this volume; among these, for instance, the story of General Hōjō Tokimasa 北条時政 (1138-1215) receiving divine inspi-

²⁴ This print shows the priest Ichirai 一来 (died in 1180) and his companion-in-arms Tsutsui Shōmyō 筒井淨妙 fleeing from the Taira 平 forces across the Uji bridge 宇治橋, from which Minamoto Yorimasa 源頼政 had torn up the planking hoping to stop the enemy. Ichirai's jump across the beams is proverbial. Hokusai chases the heroic escape to underline the dynamism of the scene.

²⁵ *Mie* is a representative position used by *kabuki* actors to express strength and power. They take exaggerated positions, in what is called *aragoto* 荒事 style. The actor literally freezes for a few moments, in order to focus the audience's attention on a particularly important or expressive part of the representation. The term used to indicate these poses in Japanese literally means 'observation'. The purpose of a *mie* is to show the emotions of a character at their peak. While taking the pose, the actor opens his eyes wide and, in case the emotion to represent is anger or fury, conventionally crosses them. See Earle 1956; Gerstle 2000.

²⁶ Minamoto Yorie 源頼家 was the eldest son of Minamoto Yoritomo 源頼朝 who succeeded his father as shōgun in 1202. Yorie quickly faced competition for power from his mother Hōjō Masako 北条政子 and her father Hōjō Tokimasa 北条時政 - which may explain why it took three years to establish himself as shōgun when his father died in 1199 - and was forced into exile in 1203. A year later Yorie was assassinated, probably on Tokimasa's orders.



Figure 7 Katsushika Hokusai, *Ehon musashi abumi*, Minamoto Yorie riding a horse. 1836. Illustrated book. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. nr. 2850-14

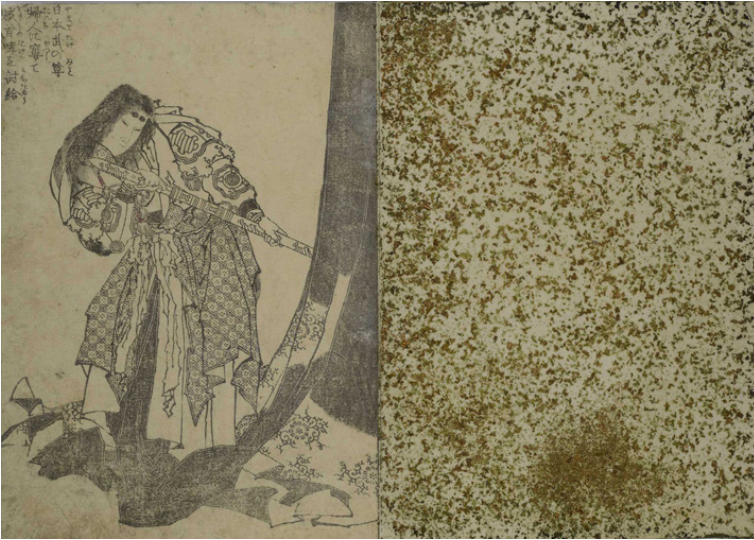


Figure 8 Katsushika Hokusai, *Ehon musashi abumi*. 1836. Illustrated book, first page. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. no. 2849-02

ration from the giant serpent.²⁷ Tokimasa is kneeling with his hands clasped, in front of the enormous reptile. As often noticed in Hokusai's representations of animals, the snake, though fearsome enough, has the unique Hokusai look of human expression and somehow embarrassed gaze (inv. no. 2850-06) [fig. 10].

27 The legend is connected to the isle of Enoshima 江ノ島 that was considered a very spiritual environment. The proximity to Kamakura 鎌倉 made it an important historical place during the Kamakura period. The Kamakura period (1185-1333) was under the control of two clans: the Minamoto and the Hōjō. Minamoto no Yoritomo, who guided the Minamoto clan to gain the control of large parts of Japan relocated the capital to his home town of Kamakura. At that time, Hōjō Tokimasa who was the father-in-law and the main adviser of Minamoto no Yoritomo, had gone to Enoshima to worship and during his prayer, a heavenly being appeared in front of him telling that he had been a priest in a previous life and that his descendants would become rulers over the country and in fact, his descendants became rulers from 1199 to 1333. The heavenly being disappeared into the sea in the form of a dragon leaving three scales that would become the family crest of the Hōjō. The dragon is often depicted in the shape of a snake and is always connected to Benten 弁天 (Benzaiten 弁財天), one of the goddess of fortune. This is the form in which she is depicted in Hokusai's print.

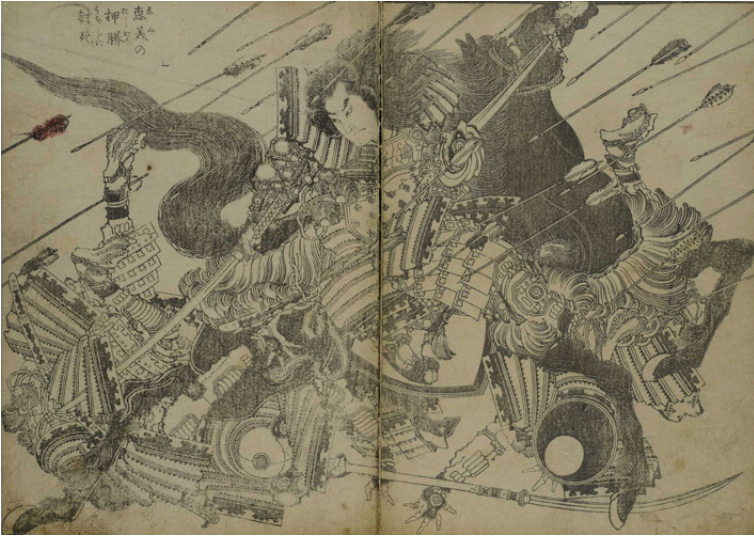


Figure 9 Katsushika Hokusai, *Ehon musashi abumi*. 1836. Illustrated book. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, Venice, inv. no. 2850-08

3 One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji

Fugaku Hyakkei 富嶽百景 (One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji) (inv. no. 2709), was originally composed of three volumes (the first published in 1834),²⁸ when Hokusai was seventy-five and in the preface of the first volume he also announced the final change of his name in *gakyō rōjin Manji* 画狂老人卍 (Manji the old man mad about painting).²⁹ The volumes are formed of 27 double pages, except for the third volume, that lacks the final page with the colophon.

The peculiarity of the Venetian copy is that it is a single volume with a strange rigid binding with two single sheets applied on each page [fig. 11].³⁰ It measures 20.4 × 14.4 cm, compatibly with the measures of the original woodblocks. Like the warriors' album, the prints of *Fugaku Hyakkei* follow a complete arbitrary order in the sequence of the images.³¹

28 A systematic study on the volumes of *Fugaku Hyakkei* in Suzuki 1986; Clark 2001.

29 On Hokusai's name changes see for example: Yasuda 1972.

30 *Sanpaku no Fuji* 山白之不二 (Three Whites Mount Fuji) left; *Muchū no Fuji* 霧中の不二 (Mount Fuji in the Mists) right.

31 For a detailed description of the sequence see Vesco 2013, 76-7.



Figure 10 Katsushika Hokusai, *Ehon musashi abumi*. 1836. Illustrated book. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, Venice, inv. n. 2850-6

I have suggested that this can be due to the fact that maybe Prince Henry Bourbon-Parma, Count of Bardi in the gathering of the objects of the collection was not able to buy the complete series of three volumes or the person who was in charge of compiling this volume was not aware of the existence of a third book.³²

Another important issue is that each image is chosen with the utmost care. Only well identified places with their names written in Hokusai's original prints are put in the particular order of the Venetian volume. Therefore, it is easy for the viewer to understand immediately which is the spot depicted. The result is nonetheless very charming and I think it fulfils the goal Hokusai aimed to: a tribute to the sacred mountain considered from all possible viewpoints.

³² It must be considered also that from 1907 to 1914 some books of the Bourbon collection were sold by the antiquarian Trau so there is the possibility that a volume could have been sold in that period. See Kumakura, Kreiner 2001; Spadavecchia Aliffi 1990.



Figure 11 Katsushika Hokusai, *Fugaku Hyakkei, Sanpaku no Fuji* 山白之不二 (Three Whites Mount Fuji) left, *Muchū no Fuji* 霧中の不二 (Mount Fuji in the Mists) right. 1834. Illustrated book. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, Venice, inv. no. 2709-18

4 Manga

The Museum of Oriental Art in Venice owns nine of the fifteen volumes that compose the complete series of the funny group of random sketches. We know that the publication began in 1814 and continued till 1875-78 after Hokusai's death (Michener 1958). Consequently, the problems connected to the attribution and the real aim of this work are not clear. We wonder whether all images are really by Hokusai and if so, we may ask if the order in which we observe them today is the real order Hokusai wanted (Bouquillard, Marquet 2007). In any case, the result is exactly what is suggested by the title: *man* 漫 (suggested by an idea, casual, unintentional) and *ga* 画 (picture, image). Apparently, there is not a logical classification of the subjects but more a free flow of ideas and sketches and an overwhelming curiosity towards every aspect of the world and of daily life. It is true that sometimes the sketches are grouped clearly according to a specific topic like: trees [fig. 12], leaves, fences, magicians, fat persons, *tengu* 天狗³³ playing games with their long noses [fig. 13], architect-

33 *Tengu* are fantastic creatures of Japanese popular iconography that can take different forms. They are generally represented as bird-men with a long prominent nose or even a beak. Sometimes benevolent, sometimes evil, they have wings attached to their heads; they live in the mountains and prefer dense pine or cryptomeria forests. See Miyake 2008; Mizuki 2005.

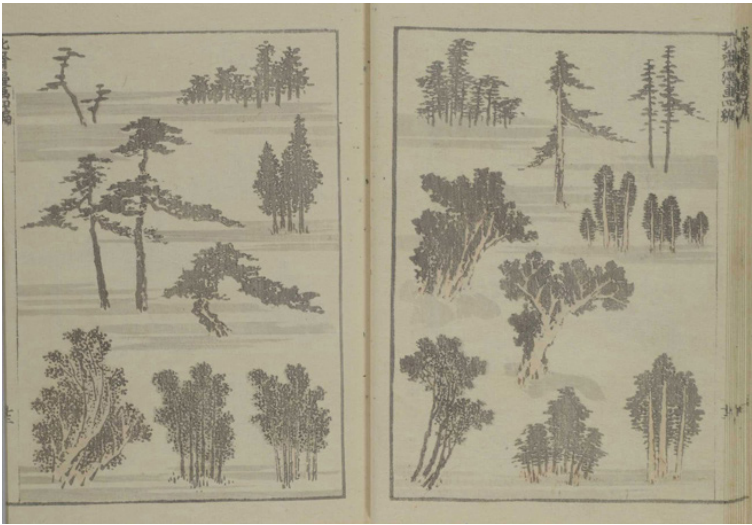


Figure 12 Katsushika Hokusai, *Manga, Trees*, vol. 4. 1878. Illustrated book. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. nr. 2860-15

tures, waves, rain, birds, fish, and so on, but this seems more an exception than a rule.³⁴

Despite this lack of a systematic organisation and practical explanations on how a pupil should paint the subject, the *Manga* had an enormous success and a great diffusion all over the country (Nagata 1986-87). This is further evidence of the fascination of the pictorial image both for the amateur painter and for the general public. The endless hints given by these random sketches are also the reason for the success of the *Manga* in nineteenth and twentieth-century Europe (Breuer 2010; Berndt 2015; Ferretti Bocquillon 2018).

The nine volumes³⁵ of the Museum of Oriental Art in Venice were published posthumous in 1878 (Meiji 明治 11) in Nagoya by Katano Tōshirō 片野東四郎.

The cover of each volume has a wave-like motif typical of the Nagoya production, very different from the diamond-like pattern used in Edo.

34 For a very interesting new perspective on the meaning and the role of the random sketches see Steiner 2014.

35 The measures of each volume are ca. 22.6 × 15.7 cm.

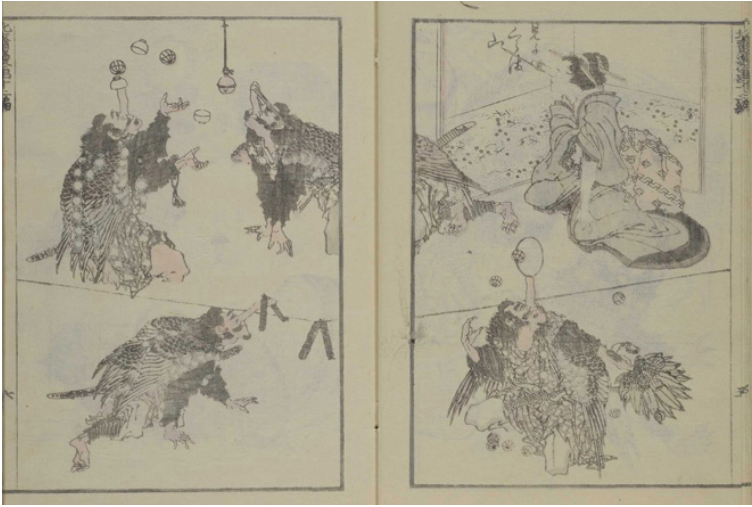


Figure 13 Katsushika Hokusai, *Manga*, vol. 12. 1878. *Tengu* playing games with their long noses. Illustrated book. Museum of Oriental Art, Venice, inv. no. 2866-08

5 Banshoku zukō

Banshoku zukō 萬職圖孝 (One Thousand Crafts Illustrated) is a group of five books of models for craftsmen. In the enormous didactic painting production by Hokusai the volumes of models are one of his favourite themes.

Each volume of *Banshoku zukō* is formed of 35 pages and a closer look suggests that they can be classified as a new edition of *Iitsumanga* 為一漫画 of 1841, published again in 1850.³⁶

The same work was reprinted in 1880 with another title: *Kachō sansui zukushi* 花鳥山水尽 (Flowers, Birds, Landscape Illustrated) and as part of the two series *Saiga zukushi* 細画尽 (Miniatures Illustrated) and *Hokusai zukushi* 北齋尽 (Hokusai Illustrated) in 1860s-1870s.³⁷

In the first page of volume one near the title and the signature *Katsushika Taito sensei ga* 葛飾戴斗先生画 (painted by master Katsushika Taito) we can notice the design of a pipe decorated with a peony in full bloom and a roaring Chinese lion seated on his paws [fig. 14].

³⁶ For a chronological hypothesis see Lane 1989.

³⁷ Another complete set of five volumes with the title *Banshoku zukō* with four-hole binding (*yotsume toji* 四つ目綴じ), published in Tokyo in 1891 (Meiji 24) by Ōkura Magobei 大倉孫兵衛 (1843-1921) is present in Biblioteca Braidense in Milan. See Menegazzo 2019, 132, cat. 86.



Figure 14 Katsushika Hokusai, *Banshoku zukō*, vol. 1. 1850. First page. Illustrated book. Museum of Oriental Art, Venice, inv. n. 2856-02

This image is very interesting because it shows the interest of a famous artist for the decoration of very common objects. It is the same process Hokusai used in the creation of another manual, in three volumes, addressed to artisans entitled *Imayō setsukin* [*kushi kiseru*] *hinagata* 今様櫛きん雛形 (今様櫛キセル) 雛形 (Models of Modern Combs and Pipes) printed in 1822-3 and signed *zen Hokusai aratame Katsushika Iitsu* 先北齋改葛飾為一, where he suggested all possible decorations for these items.

Banshoku zukō is printed in black ink with the addition of a light pink in some pages that becomes a vivid red and a nice green in the third volume to finish with blue in the fifth volume.

The design of different decorations is proposed in many different ways: sometimes on a page divided into eight small squares or much closer to show a specific detail of the image. In some other cases the figure is surrounded by a circular form [fig. 15]. The subjects of the decoration are those Hokusai was very fond of. For instance, flying mythological dragons, tigers, fish, shells are depicted together with squirrels and birds. Cocks and hens, turtles, bamboo sprouts, cherry blossoms and landscapes complete the image of the various manifestations of Nature.

Some pages are dedicated exclusively to Chinese lions (*shishi* 獅子), like in the *Nisshin jōma* 日進妖魔 (Daily Exorcisms), the group of more than 600 sketches (only 220 still extant today) painted daily like a powerful talisman against illness or a kind of prayer for a long



Figure 15 Katsushika Hokusai, *Banshoku zukō*, vol. 1. 1850. Illustrated book. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, Venice, inv. no. 2856-32

life. This exercise kept Hokusai busy for an entire year from 1842 to 1843 (Izzard 1997).

Particular interest is given in the fourth volume to the decorative motifs to embellish the guard of swords (*tsuba* 鐔 [fig. 16]). Once again this demonstrates how these images were the source of inspiration for the artisans' class and the starting point for the creation of fashionable and up-to-date objects required by a growing and very demanding market and public.

The success was so great that in the colophon of the fifth volume there is the announcement for the forthcoming publication of a sixth volume that, unfortunately, never appeared [fig. 17].

6 Conclusion

The preliminary survey of the rich collection of prints and illustrated books in the Museum of Oriental Art in Venice is a challenging opportunity to deepen our knowledge of *ukiyo-e* and, at the same time, a precious chance for further study and research in the fascinating world of Japanese graphic art.

The peculiar focus on what might seem a minor production, namely didactic painting manuals, of such a great artist as Hokusai was proved, instead, to be a stimulating task to give a new interpretation to some of his printed works. Far from being superficial examples of a mechanical 'how to do' method of drawing, Hokusai's albums inspired generations of beginners and expert painters alike.

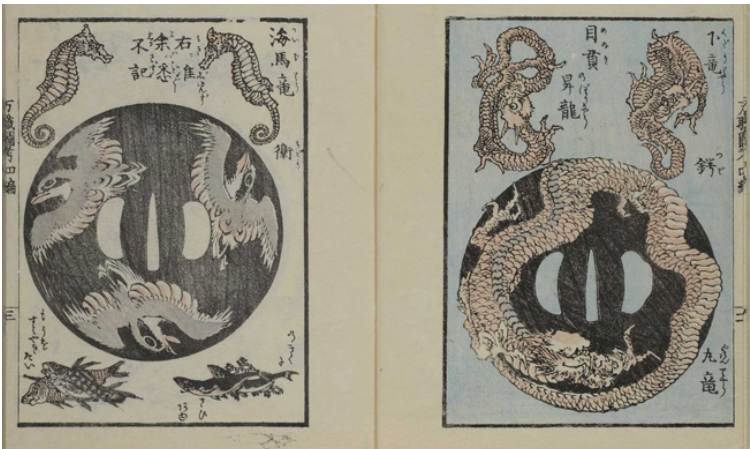


Figure 16 Katsushika Hokusai, *Banshoku zukō*, vol. 4. 1850. Illustrated book. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. no. 2854-04



Figure 17 Katsushika Hokusai, *Banshoku zukō*, vol. 5. 1850. Illustrated book, colophon. Venice, Museum of Oriental Art, inv. no. 2853-34

Hokusai himself, using a witty eye, was able to transform the reality that surrounded him, pushing everybody towards the search of Beauty. The artist does not use the common painting means - although employing a brush and a sheet of paper; the different aspects of human life and nature are filled with emotion and deep feelings so that through Hokusai's gaze we are led to a new and fascinating appreciation of the world around us. Free from the strict rules that official prints and paintings imposed on him, Hokusai projects his exu-

berant personality in the *Manga*, in the warriors albums and in the didactic manuals addressing an audience that was not necessarily eager to learn to paint, but was maybe, simply attracted by the fact that a famous artist could share some of his knowledge with them.

The enormous success and diffusion of these booklets, not forgetting the numerous attempts to copy them, prove once again that Hokusai's method was appealing and apparently easy to master. Following Hokusai's suggestions - drawing 'in the manner of' gave the certainty that everybody could eventually, without particular efforts, become a painter.

Hokusai has no need to go into deep philosophical explanations on the very nature of the laws of painting, he simply underlined the importance of harmony, of the balance of the composition, of the implicit dynamism of each form. His sketches, quick to draw, sometimes funny or ironic, are enough to strengthen the self-confidence of every potential pupil.

This is what can be called a 'vision beyond': Hokusai teaches that it is fundamental that the fantasy observes the object before the eyes. In this way, the capacity of penetrating the true spirit of things will be easily expressed. The real artist, therefore, through his drawings, is able to filter, interpret, transform reality and eventually, transmit it to whoever is willing to welcome it.

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Recensione di *Il calamo dell'esistenza. La corrispondenza epistolare tra Šadr al-dīn al-Qūnawī e Našīr al-dīn al-Ṭūsī* (2019). Cura e traduzione dall'arabo di Patrizia Spallino e dal persiano di Ivana Panzeca. Barcellona; Roma: FIDEM, 434 pp.

Il volume raccoglie la traduzione italiana – si tratta della prima traduzione integrale come viene ribadito nell'introduzione – della corrispondenza tra Šadr ad-dīn al-Qūnawī (m. 673/1274) e Našīr ad-dīn al-Ṭūsī (m. 672/1274), condotta sull'edizione critica di Gudrun Schubert, alla quale il testo italiano puntualmente rimanda, in modo da consentire al lettore un rapido confronto (Schubert 1995).¹ Si tratta di un lavoro a quattro mani, nel quale Patrizia Spallino si occupa di Qūnawī e della traduzione dall'arabo, e Ivana Panzeca di Ṭūsī e della traduzione dal neopersiano.

Alla breve introduzione segue una presentazione bio-bibliografica di Šadr ad-dīn al-Qūnawī di Patrizia Spallino (17-37), seguita da quella di Našīr ad-dīn Ṭūsī, a cura di Ivana Panzeca (39-94). Quindi uno «Studio e analisi del testo» (Spallino, 95-174) conclude la prima parte del volume. Segue la sezione della «Corrispondenza», che si apre con una nota sintetica che illustra aspetti 'tecnici' dell'edizione critica e tratteggia, seppure a grandi linee, la storia e il dibattito sorto intorno a questa corrispondenza (Spallino, 177-81); una «Nota sui mano-

¹ Schubert, V. Gudrun (1995). *Der mystisch-philosophische Briefwechsel zwischen Šadr ad-Dīn-i Qūnawī und Nasir ad-Dīn-i Ṭūsī*. Beirut; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.



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scritti" ce ne offre l'elenco, partendo da quelli utilizzati nell'edizione critica, cui fanno seguito le indicazioni bibliografiche 'canoniche' da Brockelmann, e un elenco dei manoscritti esistenti, ordinato per paesi e biblioteche (Panzeca, 183-95). Alla traduzione (199-379) segue una ricca e articolata bibliografia (381-412), per quanto intenzionalmente limitata agli argomenti direttamente presi in considerazione nel corso del lavoro. Quindi un «Indice dei termini tecnici», che costituisce un'utile indicazione delle scelte operate dalle traduttrici.

Come si può vedere dalla descrizione, si tratta di un lavoro che si presenta completo, anche riprendendo dati conosciuti, ma riuniti qui per una maggiore comodità del lettore interessato all'argomento, come nel caso delle indicazioni bibliografiche, o l'elenco dei mss. noti al momento della redazione definitiva.

Se l'elemento principale del lavoro è stata, ovviamente, la pubblicazione del testo della corrispondenza, va segnalata anche la volontà delle curatrici di offrire in un unico volume tutti i dati considerati utili, prima sotto il profilo documentario, e poi contenutistico, al fine di collocare i temi di questa corrispondenza nel contesto culturale loro proprio. L'impressione è che l'intenzione delle curatrici sia stata quella di fornire un'informazione che risultasse ragionevolmente completa, anziché avventurarsi nell'ambito delle interpretazioni e delle ipotesi. E ne è un esempio la questione delle variegate posizioni dottrinali di Naṣīr ad-dīn Ṭūsī: la curatrice si limita in sostanza a riprodurre i dati e i pareri degli studiosi, che riporta con una certa completezza, ma senza sostanzialmente prendere posizione, in particolare sulla questione, abbastanza delicata per una definizione del personaggio, della spontaneità della sua parentesi ismailita. Per quanto riguarda l'interesse di Ṭūsī per il Sufismo, riteniamo di dover condividere il punto di vista di Panzeca, quando opina che tale interesse non debba essere inteso come una prova di una sua adesione: siano meno inclini a condividere la *pars construens* della sua interpretazione, secondo la quale Ṭūsī avrebbe ravvisato nel Sufismo il mezzo «che poteva infrangere le barriere tra le scuole e le sette e unire tutti i musulmani sotto la bandiera dei grandi ordini» (87): la studiosa non offre ulteriori considerazioni o indizi in questo senso: può restare un'ipotesi, costruita su una certa interpretazione degli interessi del filosofo, ma la cui praticabilità ci appare fortemente dubbia, tenendo conto della funzione delle *maqāhib* nella tradizione islamica, la tendenza al cui superamento è caratteristica, e forse nemmeno universale, del modernismo sunnita, e giudicata dannosa anche da un esponente a noi quasi contemporaneo della scia duodecimana, quale 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī.² E che di tale più che dubbia praticabilità non fosse cosciente una personalità come Ṭūsī, attento e

² Cf. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, M.H. (1975). *Shi'ite Islam*. Trad. di S.H. Nasr. London: Allen & Unwin, 8.

prudente osservatore, ci parrebbe difficile accettare. Ammesso che il problema si ponesse in quei tempi. È tuttavia questo un tema tutto sommato secondario, anche perché quello centrale della corrispondenza ci appare piuttosto il rapporto tra la filosofia e la spiritualità di cui si fa paladino Ṣadr ad-dīn al-Qūnawī. Tra l'altro, a quanto appare, è sua l'iniziativa di questa corrispondenza. Considerando che il punto essenziale della discussione proposta da Qūnawī è quello della impossibilità della ragione a raggiungere le realtà eterne, concetto più volte e variamente ribadito alle pagine 220-1, 224, 227, 234, e ulteriormente riproposto alle pagine 352-4, là dove chiama a supporto proprio il maestro per definizione del corrispondente-avversario, Ibn Sīnā, di cui cita l'affermazione secondo cui è impossibile cogliere la realtà delle cose per via cognitiva, ne abbiamo ricavato l'impressione di trovarci di fronte a un 'invito' che Qūnawī rivolge a Ṭūsī perché superi quella che egli sostanzialmente ritiene un'*impasse* culturale: in altri termini, una sintetica, e maggiormente pervasa di *politesse*, sintesi del ghazaliano *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*.

In sostanza, si tratta di un testo di sicuro interesse per lo studioso del rapporto tra filosofia e Sufismo, ma anche per lo studente, grazie alla messe di note e raffronti con numerosi studi che affrontano questo o quel sottotema evocato dalla corrispondenza.

Tie Xiao *Revolutionary Waves.* *The Crowd in Modern China*

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Review of Xiao, Tie (2017). *Revolutionary Waves. The Crowd in Modern China*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Asia Center, xiv + 286 pp.

The political role of the crowd (and/or the mass) was a crucial theme in the debates of the 'short century'. Its roots went far further back in time and its echoes reverberate until today. Did (does) the crowd have any autonomous initiative? Was (is) it susceptible to becoming a political subject? Or was (is) it just an easily manipulated harbinger of mayhem? These questions were particularly poignant in twentieth-century China, whose history was shaped by mass movements, until the events of 1989. "The masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant" was a renowned maxim by Mao Zedong 毛泽东 ([1941] 1965). This declaration called into question the relationship of the political leader or vanguard force, but also of the committed intellectual, or in general of any subjective, creative singularity taking part in a mass movement, on the one hand, and the apparently muddled, often chaotic, utterly violent mass of the crowd, on the other.

This is also the core of Tie Xiao's book. The monograph discusses how the concept of 'crowd' was formulated, rearticulated and experienced by thinkers, writers and poets in early-twentieth-century China, with all their sometimes painful but always fruitful contradictions. This intellectual journey sets off after the fall of the Qing



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empire (1911), travels across disciplines, allegiances and time/space dimensions until the foundation of the People's Republic (1949), with some thought-provoking incursions also in its aftermath. Crucially, it does so by dismantling dichotomies that may appear intrinsic to this endeavour. It is easy to think of an insurmountable boundary existing between the intellectual self and the mass. Blending in mass politics for the intellectual is generally seen as tantamount to submission or indoctrination. This is partly due to excesses in the cultural policy of the Communist Party of China after the 1940s, as well as to traumatic experiences of forced collective experiences recalled by contemporary Chinese writers. Xiao's analysis questions such 'boundaries', particularly by uncovering intellectual and literary strategies employed by scrutinised authors to find their way out of this quandary.

The Introduction sets the tone of the entire investigation. A linguistic and historical review of the concept is followed by a theoretical contextualization showing how 'crowd' was always inseparable from psychological studies on its spontaneity and instability. These studies, in turn, intermingle with political considerations of the same issues, as well as intellectuals' participation in or opposition to local and global socialist politics. Multiple intellectual dimensions intervened not only to 'name' (i.e. configure), but also to participate in the history of the 'nameless' – Benjamin's *Namenlose*. This, Xiao emphasises, "had much to do with how one acted on *one's own* [emphasis added] desires and instincts" (16).

Chapter 1 offers a review of early psychological, but also more generally cultural, conceptualizations of the crowd. Much informed by Western pathologist theories, Gustave Le Bon's ground-breaking studies above all, many Chinese understandings also saw the 'crowd' as opposed to ordered society (but also social movements). This can be seen in thinkers of different political creeds and agendas, including, among others, Republican-period psychologist Gao Juefu's 高觉敷 fear of left-wing mobilisation, and Nationalist Zhang Jiuru's 张九如 effort at finding a way to govern it (Foucault is properly evoked by Xiao here). We are also surprised to find unexpected guests here, such as the early Communist leaders Chen Duxiu 陈独秀 and Qu Qiubai 瞿秋白, who were also wary of the crowd (as was Lu Xun 鲁迅, by the way), seen as the evil twin of revolutionary social movements. Again, the kernel was how to assess the agency of the crowd *vis-à-vis* its intrinsic spontaneity, and to what extent it conditioned the individual self. Kuomintang official Hu Hanmin 胡汉民 must have felt quite out of the (intellectual) crowd in his enthusiastic celebration of the (social) crowd, but he was, so to speak, ahead of his time.

The rational/irrational binary is deconstructed in Chapter 2 through the work of Zhu Qianzhi 朱谦之. The anarcho-nihilist philosopher produced a riveting mixture by combining a traditional understanding of 情 *qíng*, the deepest emotion of the human soul, Le Bon's

theories and the aestheticisation of self-destruction (one can hear a distant echo from Bakunin here). The effect of it was to overturn the relationship between rational and irrational, to make the latter prevail over the former. The crowd is to be embraced in its latent, subconscious irrationality, whose self-awakening is the very condition for the crowd's subjectivisation. Such 'self'-awakening, however, is possible only through the action of a vanguard. The self becomes one with the crowd, in the fusion of 'I' and 'we'. If this aesthetic activation of the crowd's performativity is more than fascinating, Xiao is lucid in his critique of its limitations, namely the absence of concrete forms, the inability to tactically manoeuvre in existing social relations, and political ambiguity. Nevertheless, this chapter is both effective in its critical analysis of Zhu's approach and important for the often overlooked history of Chinese anarchism (e.g. Dirlik 1991; Perini 2016).

Chapter 3 discusses the problem of viewing "the process of joining a crowd" (92) not only as a political prescription, nor a mere performative praxis, but as real, concrete experience for left-wing writers in the 1930s. Different narrative and formal solutions are attempted. Ye Shaojun 叶绍均 and Mu Shiyong 穆时英 go through some pains in admitting the intellectual's distance and detachment from the crowd, with the former not oblivious to the risk of the crowd to be misled or "hypnotised" (113), but in this very distance they find the possibility to be aesthetically productive. A certain detachment is maintained in the extreme physicality of Mao Dun's 茅盾 characters delving in the shapelessness of the crowd and getting "motion sickness" (117) from it. The point is not so much whether they were successful in joining the mass or not (important studies have analysed the limits of left-wing writers' integration with the 'broad masses', e.g. Chan 1983; Pickowicz 1977). The chapter's originality in this respect lies in investigating "under what conditions the crowd becomes visible to its intellectual beholder" (108) and how the writer's dilemma between the historical imperative of participating in mass struggle and the much-felt need for the intellectual self's autonomy produces "a sense of excitement, urgency, *and* uneasiness" (126; emphasis in original). It is the union of these three elements, rather than the triumph of one of them, to be germinating.

This discussion is continued in Chapter 4, with the analysis of Hu Yepin's 胡也频 fiction. The imaginary space of the crowd can be the theatre for some sort of *Bildungsroman*, where one does not have to give up desire (in other words, the self) for the sake of collective struggle, but rather learn how to become a desiring subject in the first place. The psychological and emotional complications that arise are not, again, mutually exclusive. The crowd here becomes hysteria, epidemic, contagion, but also a festive craze to which the intellectual must surrender as part of his self-forming process, rather than a self-renouncing one. After all, from a certain point of view, what is

the crowd if not a frantic conflation of desires spurred by certain social and political circumstances?

Chapter 5 explores the unavoidable issue of ventriloquism. Way before postcolonial studies became a thing, Chinese intellectuals (and not only, to be fair) were grappling with the problem of “not only speak[ing] about and to the crowd but also speak[ing] for it, in its place and its name” (156). The chapter focuses on Ai Qing 艾青 and his endeavour to let the crowd inside the intellectual’s own self, so that it may “*present* itself through the intellectual body” (166; emphasis in original). Also here, the crowd has a bodily impact on the poet, breathes inside his body but causes him respiratory distress as a result, to mark the individual’s loss of self-control to the mass. The poet’s I splits into a perceiving self and a vanishing self. Although this is a remarkable invention, one is left wondering whether the poet’s self has really vanished here. Does not the self reassert itself through its very disavowal (again, not unlike Zhu Qianzhi’s radical case)? The prevailing artistic line of the CPC would later favour a different approach, which can be seen in Ding Ling’s 丁玲 fictional account of a crowd of spontaneous impulses that need to be harnessed by the vanguard party (and its cultural agents).

The book wraps up with a dense Epilogue. An important side effect of the discourse on the intellectual’s relationship with the crowd is pointed out here, namely the fact that any designation of 我们 *wǒmen* (We) came along with the parallel exclusion of the constitutive 别人 *biéren* (Other), always rearticulated according to political circumstances. Tragic irony is that many of the authors mentioned above would eventually fall under the category of the Other due to the cultural rigidity in the early period of the PRC.

The Epilogue also builds a conclusion by connecting the analysis to later episodes of Chinese history, which any person interested in China’s post-1949 history would sooner or later come to think of while reading the book (at least so would the author of this review). In probably the most radical event of mass politics in China, that is the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the issues of self and collective would find new ground. Xiao is both provocative and eye-opening in pointing out the connections between the dilemmas encountered by Zhu Qianzhi, Mao Dun, Hu Yepin and the like on the one hand, and the Red Guards on the other. By what we learn from memoirs and later accounts of former Red Guards, “how they remember and make sense of their experience cannot be separated from more than a half-century of cultural engagement in mass politics in modern China” (190). As a matter of fact, the 彻底否定 *chèdǐ fǒuding* (integral negation) of the Cultural Revolution entailed a *chèdǐ fǒuding* of mass politics, as far as the CPC was concerned. Long-harboured fears of the irrational crowd susceptible to manipulation clearly see a comeback in the condemnation of the decade-long disorder. Xiao also identifies

other ‘afterlives’ of the intellectual questions he scrutinises, for example compellingly finding an echo of Zhu Qianzhi’s call to awaken the subconscious emotion of the crowd as part of its subjectivisation in the practice of 诉苦 *sùkǔ* (‘speaking bitterness’; this aspect is analysed also by Javed 2019).

The book is supported by an impressive theoretical framework and a rich body of references that Xiao skilfully puts together with an accessible style. These are among the strong points of the work, together with its interdisciplinary nature. It must be noted that secondary sources are predominantly from Western academia, whereas it would have been interesting to have a better picture also of the present state of Chinese scholarship on the matter.

In sum, Xiao’s perspective on the relationship between self and crowd in modern Chinese philosophy, literature and politics is both convincing and inspiring. Reading is especially suggested for scholars in intellectual history and modern Chinese literature, who may benefit from the author’s rigorous analysis of primary sources and his approach in combining the *vexata quaestio* of the crowd’s political agency and the complex but productive conflation of political and aesthetic commitment in post-New Culture writers (Pesaro 2018).

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Yoshinori Yasuda, Mark J. Hudson *Multidisciplinary Studies of the Environment and Civilization: Japanese Perspectives*

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Review of Yasuda, Yoshinori; Hudson, Mark J. (2018). *Multidisciplinary Studies of the Environment and Civilization: Japanese Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 184 pp.

Since a group of geologists recommended to adopt 'Anthropocene' as the name of a new geological era in 2016, an academic debate on the impact that human activities have had on the environment since at least the mid-20th century has gained momentum and has involved large sections of the public opinion. Area studies are not an exception.

The book *Multidisciplinary of the Environment and Civilization: Japanese Perspectives*, co-edited by Yoshinori Yasuda and Mark Hudson, is a rare attempt to offer a multidisciplinary perspective on the study of Japan. Focusing on Japan, the title is the first in a series dedicated to the studies of Anthropocene in the Asian context and from an Asian perspective.

The book aims at offering a truly multi-faceted perspective on the interactions between humans and the natural environment: each chapter is devoted to a specific case-study aiming at offering insights in geology, palaeogeography, archaeology, ichthyology, literature, art history and historiography. On top of this, apart from the chapters by Hudson, the book gathers a number of essays and studies by mainly Japanese scholars which otherwise would be hardly accessible for the English-speaking world.



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The book is ambitious and definitely provocative. As Yasuda admits in the “Preface” to the volume, the aim of the series is

to pursue, from an Asian perspective, the lifestyles and feasibility of a new civilization for the latter half of the twenty-first century that will enable humans to coexist with nature. (ix)

These words provides the opportunity for the editor to stress a few guiding concepts at the foundation of the book project. First, the importance of thinking of the modern age in terms of geocosmos, a concept developed in association with Tokyo University professor Takafumi Matsui, Heita Kawakatsu and Kazuhiro Ishii, which helps to better understand and acknowledge the unity and complementarity of the human and the natural spheres. Therefore, cooperation between natural and human scientists is desirable as the humankind has adapted to, clashed with, used and transformed the environment it lived in, though only limitedly until the 18th century Industrial Revolution, since its very appearance on Earth. Second, the need for reconsidering ‘Western’ (mis)conceptions on developing a civilization through unilateral nature domination and (in)finite exploitation.

In the “Introduction”, Mark Hudson further stresses the first of Yasuda’s points. The arrival of the Anthropocene asks for a general reconsideration of our relation with nature. Citing Shwägerl, he affirms that

There is no “environment” any longer that surrounds our civilization. We are living in an “invironment”, a new nature that is strongly shaped by human needs and that has no outside. (2)

Thus, “civilization can no longer be seen as an ‘insulation from nature’” (2). However, partially correcting Yasuda’s second point, Hudson maintains that, since the Anthropocene is a global phenomenon, debates on differences between Western and Asian civilizations seem irrelevant, but, at the same time, he recognizes the need to integrate Asian voices in an already flourishing debate that, however, has so far been dominated by Western scholars. After presenting the contents of the following chapters, Hudson reflects on the power of the Anthropocene to ‘naturalize’ artificial objects. A case in point is the crippled Fukushima Daiichi, nuclear power plant, which is now ‘a natural object’, or, a hyperobject which transcends time and geographical boundaries for it ‘sticks’ to our water, bodies, clothes and gene, more representative of not just Japan but the global anthropocenic nature than any natural beauty that has been immortalized in literature and art.

The book is structured into three parts, each dealing with a broad-topic. Part I, which is in turn divided into six chapters, focuses on Japan’s natural environment. The chapters are very diverse in scope

ranging from the analysis of sediments to poetry. Despite their thematic and methodological variety, half of the brief essays collected in this section have a strong geographical component associated with Shizuoka prefecture, and more generally, Eastern Japan.

Chapter 2, by Kōichi Shibukawa, offers a historical account of the evolution of fish research in Suruga Bay, citing the arrival of the 'Black ships' led by the United States Navy Commodore Matthew C. Perry in 1854 as a turning point in the development of a local sector. According to the essay, Perry's expedition, originally aimed at forcing the then Japanese military government to lift trade limitations with Washington, was instrumental in stimulating a scientific interest toward the marine fauna off the coasts of Shizuoka prefecture. Knowledge amassed in the US was further expanded by studies conducted by Japanese zoologists since the early decades of the 20th century. A total 1,200 have been inventoried so far, but, more species remain undescribed. Finally, the author claims that the knowledge of such unknown species can be key for local authorities to build a biodiversity conservation strategy.

Chapter 3, by Kazuyoshi Yamada, discusses the significance of laminated sediments in Japanese lakes as indicators of climate change over a period of around 30 thousand years. Data obtained through the analysis of lake varves, in fact, reveal that the end of the latest glacial period, and the beginning of the Holocene, have been asynchronous with the North Atlantic region. The chapter further hints at the impact that human activities such as wood cutting around the tenth century AD has had on the environment as reflected on sediments.

Chapter 4, by Daisuke Sugawara, deserves attention for its approach to the study of Anthropocene focusing on coastal environments and tsunami deposits in Northeastern Japan. Sugawara traces historical trends in the human response to such dramatic natural events since the Yayoi period until March 2011 in terms of abandonment, recovery/development of coastal areas by human communities. The results point in the direction of a correlation between human activity and removal of sediments resulting in a diminished capacity to understand scientifically the impact of more recent tsunamis in the early modernity and modernity compared to ancient times.

Chapter 5 discusses the results of a series of studies conducted on bone collagen and tooth enamel retrieved in Jomon time human skeletal remains. Arguing for the effectiveness of a mixed methodology combining radiocarbon dating and stable isotope analysis, the author, Sōichirō Kusaka, outlines the dietary habits of a sample of Late/Final Jōmon period individuals whose remains were found in the Yoshigo shellmound (3,500-2,300 years before present, BP hereafter). Particularly, the chapter indicates a higher dependence on plants (ranging from 31 to 94 %) rather than meat (1-49), fish and shellfish (1-47 and 1-51, respectively).

Chapter 6 and 7 sensibly differ from the previous ones in that they deal with Japan's natural environment as represented in poetry and art. Specifically, Chapter 6 by Kazuha Tashiro, examines how the representation of Mount Fuji, Japan's highest and most celebrated mountain, has changed in waka poetry through the century and as consequence of politico-institutional changes. Comparing poems from the classical VIII century *Man'yōshū*, the *Kokin Wakashū* (905) and *Shin Kokin Wakashū* (1205), with those of Edo period authors such as Keichū, Tayasu Munetake and Abe no Nakamaro, the author argues that the lyricism of poets trekking along the Tōkaidō in ancient and medieval times has gradually made way to expressions of a sense of pride and belonging typical of early modern nationalism, especially in authors that were either Edo natives or strictly tied to the Tokugawa shogunate. Chapter 7 further elaborates on the relation between the Edo regime and the image of Mount Fuji. According to Jin Matsushima, in fact, under the Tokugawa, Mount Fuji became a 'device', employed by regime artists such as Kanō Tan'yū (1602-74), the bakufu's first official painter, to create a distinctive 'Tokugawa dynasty' style. Inspired by the style of 13th century Chinese landscape artist Xia Gui and 15th century sumi-e painter Sesshū Tōyō, Kanō succeeded in creating analogies between the centrality of Mount Fuji over the Kantō plain and, by and large, over Japan, and the suzerainty of the Tokugawa over the other federated warlords constituting the bakuhan system and 'satellite' foreign entities such as the Kingdom of the Ryūkyū, Ezo and Korea.

The discussion of Mount Fuji seen through poetry and art ends Part I of the book. In Part II, dedicated to "Movements in Nature and Culture", the focus shifts to an analysis of the diffusion of pantropical plants across the Japanese archipelago (Chapter 8) and of practices by mountain ascetics on Mount Fuji (Chapter 9). In the first one, Kōji Takayama describes the pioneer capacities of certain pantropical plants with sea-drifted seeds (PPSS), dispersed along a wide area connecting the South Atlantic to the South Pacific through the Indian Ocean, and limitations scientists face in their study due to the severe impact of human activity on coastal environments. In the latter, by Yasumasa Ōtaka, the ascetic practices performed by a sect of practitioners on Mount Fuji (the Murayama shugen) are illustrated in detail. This chapter seems to underline the importance of archaic rituals that have died out (the last Murayama shugen died in 1987 without passing secret ritual instructions to others) against the transformation of such areas into tourist destinations and the environmental decay that ensues.

Finally, Part III explores the concepts of Neolithization and environmental justice contrasting a so-called 'Eastern' with a 'Western' perspective. Chapter 10 by Junzō Uchiyama presents Neolithization as a global transformative process that has led many societies

around the globe to adopt an agrarian lifestyle. Uchiyama rightly criticizes Childe's concept of a "Neolithic revolution" (Childe 1983) showing that, besides being elaborated on the basis of evidence collected mainly in western Eurasia, it does not accurately describe the complexity of a process which involved climatic as well as socio-economic transformations. More specifically, it entailed a gradual substitution of complex foraging habits with sedentism and "complex farming" rather than the adoption of a single "package" of Neolithic tools, such as ceramics and adzes, and technologies.

Archaeological evidence from East Asian Inland Seas demonstrates that sedentism was widespread by 10,000 and 6,000 BP, during a global warming phase nearly 3 thousand years after western Eurasia, but that the diffusion of farming was relatively faster than other parts of the world. The rise of global temperatures caused sea levels to rise and increased accessibility to freshwater resources. Coastal environments were relatively richer and gradually attracted foraging communities as they offered multiple resources on which humans could sustain themselves and access to early trade routes through which goods and technologies were exchanged between the Japanese archipelago and the continent. It is certainly along these routes that inundated rice cultivation spread across the region. According to Uchiyama, for peoples who were already accustomed to small scale plant cultivation, this crop was relatively more efficient in terms of land use and food resources. Rice paddies were also ideal for fish (carp) rearing, with fish excrements being a useful fertilizer, and in dry seasons could attract small and large game like hares, deers and boars. In sum, the 9,000-year-long transition toward the emergence of full-fledged agrarian societies in East Asia may be best understood in terms of serendipity and cost-efficiency rather than a 'revolution'.

The final chapter, by Mark Hudson, discusses the main trends in Japanese archaeology and historiography in the postwar period and in light of recent debates on the need for an "integrated human and natural history" (159). Based on a careful literature review of Japanese history and archeology texts, Hudson maintains that nature has been either neglected or described as a mere background against which culture develops and evolves. Hudson ascribes this indifference to a number of reasons which may be summarized as follows: first, the compartmentalization of archaeology, history and anthropology; and second, the protracted influence of positivism, on the one hand, and Marxism, on the other, both of which have contributed to demeaning nature and the concept of 'natural'.

Hudson then discusses the role of social sciences, in particular human geography, which contrary to history and archaeology have contributed to reshaping a new scientific discourse around nature. Particularly, he reviews the work by Yoshinori Yasuda, one of the few Japanese academics who have extensively written on human-nature

interactions. Yasuda is renown mainly for maintaining that the Japanese, heirs of a forest loving and milkless civilization who has contributed to the spread of rice cultivation across Asia, have the knowledge the world needs to solve the current climate crisis. According to Hudson, despite Yasuda's overt and disappointing simplifications, he has helped shape a truly 'postcolonial' view of Japanese history that have been nevertheless ignored or ostracized by the Japanese and international academia.

In light of the preliminary considerations and the summaries above, the book deserves a praise as it is a rare example of "writing back the environment" (172) in the Japanese past. Fostering relations between single scientific fields is all but an easy task and the editors have reached one of their aims. The hybrid array of research brought together by the two editors of the volume is in line with the ambitions declared in the opening chapters. The history of the transformations undergone by the Japanese archipelago in the last couple of million years is as fascinating as it is omitted in classes on Japanese ancient history. For instance, the different path toward sedentism followed by the first inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago as illustrated by Uchiyama cannot fully be understood without shedding light on the effects of global warming on the region's water resources. At the same time, looking at how people in the Neolithic responded to global climate changes it is possible to learn more on what might expect us in the coming decades. In this sense, one might agree with the initial claim that there is no 'environment', but rather an 'invironment'. It is undeniable that, inasmuch as the humankind actively operates in history, so does nature at a more profound level. One of the merits of this book is in fact underscoring once more the role of nature in history. Putting nature back in its place in history is key to realizing a truly "grand and deep history" *à la* Braudel.

Nonetheless, a few aspects of the book remain problematic, most notably, its inconsistency. Despite the division in parts, the chapters arrangement in the book does not seem to follow a specific criterion, nor do the single chapters seem to 'communicate' the one with the other, although there often seems to be room for internal referencing (i.e. chapters 4 and 10). At the same time, as also noted by Hudson in the introduction, some chapters do not discuss intriguing aspects of the topics touched upon, such as the origin of the simile between love and active volcano in classical Japanese poetry or anthropocenic disturbances impacted on the distribution of PPSS. The reader may be inclined to think that these studies, apart from Chapter 10 by Uchiyama, are still work in progress rather than more detailed pieces of research.

Another problematic aspect of the book is its geographical focus on Honshū and, more narrowly on East Japan, which seems to be disregarding of the diversity of the ecosystem of the Japanese archipel-

ago and of its peripheries. This is an issue that should have been addressed considering the scope of the book to convey perspectives from Japan and not just from its main island. Concurrently, if it is true that Anthropocene affects the entire human community, it is short-sighted to consider only Japanese scholars, excluding Hudson, capable of conveying original perspectives on the study of Japan.

This leads to the most problematic feature of the book, i.e. the attempt at reconsidering Yoshinori Yasuda as a ‘postcolonial’ intellectual. In a lucid article, Reitan (2017), much in the same vein as Morris-Suzuki (1998), defines Yasuda a “reactionary ecologist”. He compares Yasuda and others’ desire for the dissemination of a so-called “Japanese environmental ethics”, even through international marriages, to the wartime Japanese imperialist discourse on having the Emperor worshipped in all other nations. As other imperialist desires, the will to convert the world to the Japanese view on environment is “couched in the language of benevolence” (Reitan 2017, 12). Paternalism is a distinctive feature of Japanese technocrats and of Japan’s foreign policy toward developing Asia (see Zappa 2020). However, if history can teach us something, that is that exporting models or views irrespective of the recipient’s entails a certain degree of violence. At the same time, in his own books (see for instance Yasuda 2013) and in the preface to this book, the Japanese geographer is vocal about the damages that the so-called ‘Western civilization’ – versus the positive model offered by a peaceful forest-loving milkless civilization – originated along the Yangtze river and spread to Japan. This dichotomy, which has helped Yasuda to justify the environmental catastrophes caused by indiscriminated industrial policies between the 1960s and 1980s, if it is true what Hudson claims in the Introduction to the volume, has to be overcome. Blaming the ‘Western civilization’ that had ‘hegemonized’ the minds of Japanese policy makers and entrepreneurs for domestic disasters is a simplification and a historical error. To sponsor it as an attempt to create a post-colonial discourse in Japanese archaeology is a major intellectual flaw.

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