

# Annali di Ca' Foscari

Serie orientale

Vol. 53  
Giugno 2017

ISSN 1125-3789



**Edizioni**  
Ca' Foscari

# **Annali di Ca' Foscari**

## Serie orientale

[online] ISSN 2385-3042  
[print] ISSN 1125-3789

Direttore  
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**Edizioni Ca' Foscari** - Digital Publishing

Università Ca' Foscari Venezia

Dorsoduro 3246, 30123 Venezia

URL <http://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/it/edizioni/riviste/annali-di-ca-foscari-serie-orientale/>

# Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie orientale

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**Editore** Edizioni Ca' Foscari - Digital Publishing | Dorsoduro 3246, 30123 Venezia, Italia | [ecf@unive.it](mailto:ecf@unive.it)

**Stampa** Logo srl, via Marco Polo 8, 35010 Bogoricco (PD)

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## Medietà e facilitazione

### Note a margine di alcune fonti arabe islamiche contemporanee

Ida Zilio-Grandi  
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

**Abstract** Islamic culture, from its earliest foundational texts, has demonstrated an aversion to all forms of excess, going hand in hand with an appreciation of the Golden Mean. This latter concept has recently come to occupy a central place in the concerns of scholars and commentators of the Islamic and of the Western world. The present paper aims at making its own small contribution to the issue, examining the work of two major symposia held in the Saudi cities of Mecca (2003) and Riyadh (2004) in response to the events of 9/11: we will attempt to highlight the relationship linking the Koranic ideal of *wasatīyya* or the Golden Mean with the concepts of facilitating and enabling (*yusr*, *taysīr*).

**Sommario** 1 Premessa. – 2 L'ambiguità della moderazione: *medietas aut mediocritas*? – 3 La medietà contro l'eccesso. I simposi di Mecca (2003) e Riad (2004). – 4 Medietà, tolleranza, semplificazione. Ancora sul simposio di Mecca (2003). – 5 La semplificazione della Legge e la *medietas* di Dio. Ancora sul simposio di Mecca (2003). – 6 Conclusioni.

**Keywords** Wasatīyya. Golden Mean. Tolerance. Islam. Salafism.

## 1 Premessa

Lo studioso afgano Mohammad Hashim Kamali ha recentemente dato alle stampe *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam*, un lavoro dedicato al principio coranico della *wasatīyya* (Kamali 2015). Di quest'ultima – appellandosi ampiamente all'opera di Yūsuf al-Qaraḏāwī (n. 1926) (Kamali 2015, 11),<sup>1</sup> principale esponente del movimento centrista contemporaneo<sup>2</sup> – Kamali indaga i termini concettuali a partire dalle fonti canoniche, gli sviluppi teoretici e istituzionali fino alla contemporaneità nonché le manifestazioni del suo contrario cioè l'eccesso, offrendo qualche affondo su temi d'attualità come l'ambiente, la finanza, il jihad, i diritti delle donne e la

1 L'autore cita in particolare al-Qaraḏāwī 1984, 27-60.

2 Su al-Qaraḏāwī e la sua proposta di mediazione fra tradizione e modernità (*aṣāla/mu'āṣara*) gli studi sono molto numerosi. Tra i contributi recenti più notevoli: Gräf 2009; Freyer-Stowasser 2009; e, su al-Qaraḏāwī e il movimento centrista nella politica islamista in Egitto, Mandaville 2014, 141-9.

globalizzazione. Con questo studio, che risponde alla retorica del terrore successiva all'11 settembre e alle inquietudini sollevate prima dalla nota teoria di Huntington, Kamali ha voluto ricordare anche al musulmano della diaspora il peso fondamentale della *medietas* secondo la tradizione religiosa islamica. L'autore afferma ripetutamente che l'ideale della *wasatiyya* ha sempre guidato la comunità islamica, nel passato come ai nostri giorni, solo che oggi la stampa preferisce rilevare gli atti sanguinari di una frangia numericamente trascurabile ignorando un'ampia maggioranza centrista e silenziosa. L'importanza del giusto mezzo - sottolinea ancora Kamali (2015, 1) - sta nell'essere un concetto interculturale, una virtù morale apprezzata dall'Islam e dalla gran parte delle civiltà mondiali.<sup>3</sup>

Riflettere sui principi generali su cui si regge l'Islam, e sul riconoscimento dei medesimi valori da parte di chi musulmano non sia, è un tema di grande importanza nel nostro tempo, perché quel che serve per costruire la convivenza pacifica nelle odierne città del mondo non è la compatibilità delle regole contingenti ma proprio la compatibilità dei valori che ad esse soggiacciono, in quanto tali capaci di generare altre regole e misure. Questo percorso, inoltre, aiuta a ripensare - e forse a ritrovare - i principi della vita morale sui quali si regge la nostra collettività. Raccogliamo allora lo spunto di Mohammad Hashim Kamali e riflettiamo ulteriormente sul tema della *wasatiyya* e sulle nozioni ad essa collegate.<sup>4</sup>

3 Com'è noto, nella tradizione occidentale l'apprezzamento della medietà risale all'*Etica Nicomachea*, dove il giusto mezzo tra eccesso e difetto (μεσότης) è il criterio delle virtù etiche (ad es. il coraggio è medio tra viltà e temerarietà, la temperanza tra intemperanza e insensibilità, la liberalità tra avarizia e prodigalità, etc.). Gli stessi identici argomenti si ritrovano peraltro nell'*Iḥyā' usūl al-dīn* di al-Ghazālī (m. 505/1111), ad es. nel *Kitāb riyāḍat al-nafs*, *passim* (tr. ingl. di T.J. Winter [1995] 2007). Vedi anche Campanini 2005, *passim*.

4 Questo saggio è parte di una ricerca *in progress* dedicata alla moralità secondo l'Islam. Mi permetto quindi di ricordare i titoli di alcuni lavori precedenti: «The Gratitude of man and the gratitude of God. Notes on *shukr* in traditional Islamic thought». *Islamochristiana (ISCH)*, 38(2012), 45-61; «Return, repentance, amendment, reform, reconversion. A contribution to the study of *tawba* in the context of Islamic ethics». *ISCH*, 39(2013), 71-91; «Réflexions sur la *raḥma* dans la tradition religieuse islamique». *ISCH*, 41(2015), 129-45; «*Hilm* or 'judiciousness'. A Contribution to the Study of Islamic Ethics Based on Traditional Sources». *Studia Islamica*, 110(1)(2015), 81-100; «La pace nel Corano. Appunti di lavoro». *Italia Francescana*, 90(2-3)(2015), 235-47; «Silence and Speech Etiquette A Contribution to the Study of Islamic ethics». *Annali di Ca' Foscari, serie orientale*, 52(2016), 7-29; «Islamica moralia: appunti sulla gentilezza o *rifq*». *Studi Magrebini* (in corso di stampa); «What God loves. The Qur'an and Islamic ethics». *Proceedings QLAMA. The Qur'an between Late Antiquity and Middle Ages. Form, Structure, Comparative Studies* (in corso di stampa); «Dalla tenda di Abramo alle dimore dei credenti: la sacralità dell'ospite nella tradizione islamica». *La valenza teologico-politica del Tempio*. Politica e Religione. Brescia: Morcelliana (in corso di stampa). «'Dio è bello e ama la bellezza'. Appunti per un'estetica islamica in chiave morale». Raveri, M.; Tarca, L.V. (a cura di), *I linguaggi dell'Assoluto*. Mimesis: Sesto San Giovanni (Milano) (in corso di stampa); «La virtù islamica del *ḥayā'*. Modestia, pudicizia e riserbo tra letteratura fondativa e istanze contemporanee». Roldan Castro, Fatima (ed.), *Literatura y vida: entre la autobiografía, el viaje y la ficción*. *Philologia Hispalensis* (Universidad de Sevilla).

## 2 L'ambiguità della moderazione: *medietas aut mediocritas*?

Nel titolo della sua opera – *The Middle Path of Moderation* – Kamali fa appello contemporaneamente alla moderazione e alla via mediana; in tale modo articolato l'autore traduce il termine arabo *wasatīyya*. Questo termine è peraltro attentamente esplorato all'inizio dell'opera, dal senso generale di medietà tra due estremi opposti, ai principali sinonimi arabi (*tawassuṭ*, *i'tidāl*, *tawāzun*, *iqtīṣād*), ai termini inglesi intercambiabili (*average*, *core*, *standard*, *heart*, *not-aligned*) agli opposti nella medesima lingua (*excess*, *extremism*, *radicalism*). Terminato il percorso definitorio, l'autore conclude che *wasatīyya* vale per 'scelta migliore' ed è sinonimo di giustizia ('*adl*').<sup>5</sup> Quanto a 'moderazione', Kamali nota che essa può rimandare alla mediocrità e confondersi con una certa carenza di entusiasmo (cf. *appeasement*, *mediocrity*, *compromise*, *weakness*). Dopodiché viene a un punto fondamentale: l'idea di moderazione, specie se applicata all'Islam – ad es. 'Islam moderato' o 'musulmano moderato' – assume significati differenti secondo i contesti culturali (Kamali 2015, 14-5).

Su quest'ultimo argomento verte un articolo altrettanto recente a firma di due accademici malesiani, Tazul Islam e Amina Khatun (2015).<sup>6</sup> Da parte occidentale – essi osservano – 'moderazione' ha il senso di un processo politico attraverso cui i gruppi radicali abbandonano il proprio programma, si integrano all'ambiente democratico e passano eventualmente da anti-occidentali a pro-occidentali. Invece da parte islamica la moderazione è sentita come una categoria, un concetto generale, un modo di pensare la realtà. Proprio essendo una generica prospettiva nella vita dei credenti, la *wasatīyya* può abbracciare ogni ambito, da quello intellettuale a quello morale a quello giuridico (Islam, Khatun 2015, 75). E questo significa – possiamo aggiungere sulla scorta di altri studi recenti<sup>7</sup> – che essa può assumere coloriture politiche differenti e perfino antitetiche.

Dietro il diverso modo di concepire la moderazione se applicata all'Islam c'è la consueta fretteolosità nel tradurre i termini arabi nelle lingue europee.<sup>8</sup> Infatti moderazione è solo una delle possibili traduzioni di *wasatīyya*, forse la più irriflessa. Perché è vero che *wasatīyya* vuol dire moderazione, ma appunto nel senso di posizione mediana, centralità, giusto mezzo e quindi lontananza dagli estremi e dagli estremismi (cf. *wasat bayna al-radhīlatayn/bayna ṭarafayn madhmūmayn*), ovvero ordinarietà

5 Cf. soprattutto cap. 1, 10-1. Griffel (2003) offre pochi spunti a questo proposito.

6 L'articolo è interessante anche per la cernita della contenuta bibliografia.

7 Ad es. Nakissa 2012. In questo contesto, è molto interessante anche Steuer 2013.

8 Non a caso, l'espressione «moderate Islamists» in opposizione a «hard-line Islamists» sarebbe stata coniata da Geneive Abdo, una giornalista americana di origine mediorientale, in seguito alla rivoluzione iraniana del 1979. Cf. Islam, Khatun 2015, 69 e Hoveyda 2001.



o normalità intesa non come abbassamento o livellamento al basso ma come bilanciamento, e infine correttezza o dirittura (Kamali 2015, 10).<sup>9</sup> A riprova di questo, basta notare che molta pubblicistica araba contemporanea sente la necessità di appaiare *wasatīyya* a *i'tidāl*,<sup>10</sup> quest'ultimo con il significato di moderazione intesa come buona proporzione, equilibrio e buon governo di sé. Al contrario, nella moderazione vi è anche la quantità ridotta o il contenimento dei toni; e in quest'ultimo senso – di riduzione e contenimento – moderazione non corrisponde più a *wasatīyya* ma ad altre voci arabe quali *taltīf*, *taskīn* o *takhfīf*.

Ora, l'europeo medio che parla di Islam moderato non pensa alla *medietas*, ma a un'adesione di fede tiepida o parziale e non del tutto convinta; e si figura il musulmano moderato come qualcuno che è facile al dialogo e all'intesa solo perché è moderatamente musulmano. Nulla di più fuorviante: ogni musulmano è moderato e lo è per definizione, giacché nella seconda sura (Q 2,143) il Corano chiama la comunità islamica «una comunità di mezzo» o «di centro» (*ummat<sup>an</sup> wasat<sup>an</sup>*);<sup>11</sup> e nella sura della Mensa la ribadisce come «una comunità che segue la via mediana» (*umma muqtaṣida*) (Q 5,66) tra gli eccessi opposti delle Genti del Libro.<sup>12</sup>

### 3 La medietà contro l'eccesso. I simposi di Mecca (2003) e Riad (2004)

Dopo l'11 settembre 2011, la sovraesposizione mediatica di una versione o sedicente versione criminale e violenta dell'Islam ha portato molti intellettuali musulmani a interrogarsi sui valori della religione.<sup>13</sup> Così facendo, e tenendo presenti in prima istanza le definizioni di Islam storico contenute nel Corano – *ummat<sup>an</sup> wasat<sup>an</sup>*, *umma muqtaṣida* – hanno insistito sulla *wasatīyya* come elemento chiave del credo, e hanno finito per identificare la *medietas* con l'Islam più autentico.

9 Un'utile tavola comparativa che illustra le proposte di alcuni autorevoli commentatori coranici, da al-Ṭabarī (m. 310/923) al damasceno Wahba al-Zuhaylī (m. 2015), compare in Hanafi 2014, soprattutto 53.

10 Come è stato notato da altri (Nakissa 2012, 8 nota 1), i riferimenti al pensiero centrista accostano usualmente i due termini, nella formula *al-wasatīyya wa al-i'tidāl*; così fa tra gli altri Yūsuf al-Qaraḏāwī 2008, 13; sull' *i'tidāl* vedi anche in seguito.

11 Nel Corano, la radice w-s-ṭ ricorre cinque volte (Q 2,143 e 238; 5,89; 68,28; 100,5); sul suo significato, vedi Badawi, Abdel Haleem 2008, s.v. "w-s-ṭ".

12 Le ricorrenze coraniche di q-ṣ-d sono sei. Sul significato della radice (anche: «procedere diritto verso lo scopo»), vedi ancora Badawi, Abdel Haleem 2008, s.v. "q-ṣ-d".

13 Un buon esempio recente è Ushama 2014.

Alla conferenza mondiale tenutasi il 23 aprile 2004 nell'Università Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd di Riad, *La posizione dell'Islam rispetto al terrorismo (Mawqif al-islām min al-irhāb)*, non pochi tra gli intervenuti hanno insistito sulla coincidenza di Islam e medietà.<sup>14</sup> Tra questi, Šālih Ḥabīb Allāh al-Šīnī dell'Università di Shanghai, con la relazione intitolata «Wasatīyyat al-Islām» (al-Šīnī 2004), nella quale l'autore spiegava che l'Islam è mediano in molti contesti, nella dottrina e nella fede vissuta, nelle relazioni sociali e in quelle politiche, e in generale nel rapporto dell'uomo con se stesso e con la realtà che lo circonda. Osserva:

[L'Islam] è il giusto mezzo (*wasat*), né eccesso e nemmeno negligenza (*lā ifrāt wa lā tafriṭ*); è il giusto mezzo, né esagerazione né carenza (*lā tuḡhyān wa lā nuqṣān*); è il giusto mezzo, né intransigenza né arrendevolezza (*lā tashaddud wa lā tarakhkhuṣ*). Esso media tra l'osservanza dei diritti del singolo (*ri'āyat ḥuqūq al-fard*) e il rispetto della collettività, ovvero tra l'attenzione agli interessi (*mašāliḥ*) della collettività e il rispetto del singolo. [...] L'Islam è una religione mediana dagli ampi orizzonti, aperta a ogni rinnovamento in vista di progresso, avanzamento e costruzione; esso rifiuta l'immobilismo, il bigottismo, la violenza e la distruzione [...].

La medietà dell'Islam persegue l'affermazione di un programma di vita capace di bilanciare (cf. *tawāzun*) la vita spirituale e la vita materiale della persona, concordemente alla natura prima (*fiṭra*) che Dio ha dato agli uomini [cf. Q 30,30], un programma in cui si incontrino il mondo sensibile e il mondo sovrasensibile (*'ālam al-shahāda*, *'ālam al-ghayb*), perché l'Islam è un credo basato al tempo stesso sulla materia e sullo spirito (*mādda*, *rūḥ*) [...]. (al-Šīnī 2004, 5-6)

Per illustrare meglio la medietà dell'Islam, al-Šīnī attinge anche alle definizioni per contrario, e si chiede cosa siano l'eccesso, il fanatismo, il superamento del limite (*ghuluww*, *taṭarruf*) che la religione mette al bando; si appoggia esplicitamente al pensiero di Qaraḍāwī e spiega che l'eccesso

è lo smodato entusiasmo per una data convinzione, con l'incapacità di riconoscere una convinzione diversa; è forzare (*ilzām*) gli altri a fare qualcosa alla quale Dio non li forza; è l'essere duri (*tashdīd*) quando non è il caso; è l'essere rozzi nei rapporti interpersonali, rudi nei modi, aspri nella richiesta; è pensare male degli altri e guardarli attraverso una lente negativa; è l'essere arroganti e umiliare gli altri; ed è cadere nel baratro dell'anatema (*hāwiyat al-takfīr*) [...]. (al-Šīnī 2004, 10-1)

14 <http://www.al-jazirah.com/> (2016-08-17). Vi partecipò anche Philip Seib del Center on Public Diplomacy, University of West California.

Conclude che la *wasatiyya*

è nella visione delle cose e nel credo (*taṣawwur, i'tiqād*) [...], nella dottrina (*'aqīda*) [...], nella morale e nella condotta (*akhlāq, sulūk*) [...], nella promulgazione delle leggi (*tashrī'*) [...] e nell'adempimento degli atti cultuali (*'ibādāt*). (al-Ṣīnī 2004, 12)

Sempre sulla medietà come il contrario dell'eccesso insisteva un altro simposio di grandi dimensioni, tenutosi a Mecca il 7 ottobre 2003, dal titolo eloquente: *L'effetto del nobile Corano nel realizzare la medietà e respingere l'eccesso (Athar al-Qur'ān fī taḥqīq al-wasatiyya wa daf' al-ghuluww)*. I numerosi contributi erano arrangiati in quattro sezioni tematiche: *Medietà e moderazione (wasatiyya, i'tidāl)*, *La guida del Corano alla tolleranza e alla facilità (samāḥa, yusr) dell'Islam*, *L'eccesso (ghuluww): aspetti e cause*, e infine *Valorizzare l'insegnamento del nobile Corano per consolidare la medietà e guarire l'eccesso*.<sup>15</sup> Gli Atti vennero pubblicati l'anno successivo.<sup>16</sup>

Il contributo del saudita 'Abd al-Salām b. Barjis al-'Abd al-Karīm (m. 2004) verte sulle manifestazioni dell'eccesso nel credo, nell'azione e nel giudizio sugli altri (*i'tiqād, 'amal, ḥukm*).<sup>17</sup> Eccone i contenuti per sommi capi.

Chi eccede nella religione non soddisfa alla Legge; infatti, indebitamente e per di più ascrivendo ciò a Dio stesso, costui trasforma la facilitazione, che il Legislatore ha riservato a quanti sono legalmente responsabili (cf. *taysīr al-mukallaḥīn*), in durezza contro se stessi e gli altri. Tra le varie forme dell'eccesso, quello che riguarda il credo (*al-ghuluww fī al-i'tiqād*) è la più nociva e difficile da estirpare; e quanti diffondono versioni devianti e settarie della religione sono più pericolosi dei peccatori e degli immorali. L'eccesso nel credo – scrive l'autore in buona sostanza – mette a rischio la comunità perché procura discordia al suo interno. L'unica arma che vale a combatterlo è la stretta adesione all'esempio dei profeti, del Corano, del *Ḥadīth* e delle prime generazioni di musulmani, e proprio questo è il senso del Libro nella sura della famiglia di Imrān: «Afferratevi tutti alla fune di Dio e non disperdetevi (*lā tafarraquū*)» (Q 3,103). Di seguito l'autore si appella al dotto wahhabita Sulaymān b. Saḥmān (m. 1930) e segnala che l'eccesso nel credo è tra i segni distintivi di chi introduce illecite innova-

15 Come riportava un popolare quotidiano, il simposio venne inaugurato da Ṣāliḥ b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥuṣayn (m. 1434/2013), allora deputato alla direzione delle due grandi moschee saudite, vedi <http://www.alyaum.com/article/1116805> (2016-08-17).

16 Con il titolo di *Buḥūth athar al-Qur'ān fī taḥqīq al-wasatiyya wa daf' al-ghuluww*. Cf. <http://www.qoran-karim.com/book-details-1332-0.html>. La 2a ed. (1425h) in <http://shamela.ws/browse.php/book-31448> (2016-08-17).

17 al-'Abd al-Karīm 2004.

zioni nella religione (*ṣāhib al-bid'a*), insieme all'accusa di infedeltà quando si tratta invece di colpa e disubbidienza (al-'Abd al-Karīm 2004, 165).<sup>18</sup> Questa forma di eccesso è stata eminentemente rappresentata dai *kharjiti* del I secolo dell'egira i quali, appunto, eccedettero nel giudicare il peccatore (*ḥukm 'alā ṣāhib al-ma'siyya*) assimilandolo all'infedele (*kāfir*); e a partire dall'anatema che essi scagliarono sui governatori, vessarono ogni musulmano che non aderisse al loro programma (161).<sup>19</sup> Un buon esempio del pericolo costituito dall'eccesso nel credo è la parabola profetica dell'uomo che recita il Libro di Dio e ne trae gran gioia, poi lo mette da parte, si volge al vicino e lo aggredisce con la spada accusandolo di politeismo (*shirk*) (162).<sup>20</sup>

Quanto all'eccesso nell'azione - continua al-'Abd al-Karīm - deriva dal tipo precedente e si ha quando il musulmano esagera nell'ottemperare agli atti del culto e alle prescrizioni giuridiche, convinto che in ciò stia un bene maggiore (cf. *ziyādat khayr*); è il caso di alcuni gruppi sufi dediti alle pratiche ascetiche e alla macerazione. A questo proposito l'autore chiama in causa la sura della Mensa dove è detto: «Voi che credete, non privatevi, come se fossero illecite, delle buone cose che Dio vi ha reso lecite, e non eccedete, quelli che eccedono Dio non li ama» (Q 5,87), e ne richiama l'occasione storica della rivelazione: il versetto sarebbe stato rivelato per l'uomo che smise di mangiare carne perché essa gli procurava il desiderio delle donne;<sup>21</sup> e per i Compagni che volevano rinunciare al «mondo» (*dunyā*).<sup>22</sup> La rinuncia ai doni divini - spiega l'autore - è un'autonomia indebita, deplorabile anche perché può nascondere esibizionismo e ricerca di notorietà, si tratti di cibo oppure di abiti decenti:

Rabī' b. Ziyād al-Ḥārithī chiese a 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib di aiutarlo con suo fratello 'Aṣim. «Che cos'ha?» chiese 'Alī. L'altro rispose: «Si è messo la cappa (*'abā'*) e vuole fare l'asceta (cf. *jurīd al-nask*)». 'Alī gli ordinò di portarlo da lui. Glielo portò, che era avvolto in una cappa [...] con i ca-

18 E anche alla durezza (*tashdīd*), la rozzezza (*ghilẓa*), il superamento del limite (*mujāwazat al-ḥadd*) negli ordini e nelle interdizioni, l'imposizione di quel che opprime e crea divario.

19 Si tratta del cd. *takfīr al-ḥākim*, sul quale vedi ora Adang et al. 2016. In contesto saudita, vedi in particolare Nedza 2016.

20 Cf. anche Ibn Ḥibbān (m. 354/965), *Ṣaḥīḥ, kitāb al-'ilm*, no. 81 (da Ḥudhayfa). Il detto è riportato a margine di Q 7,175: «Narra loro la storia di colui cui noi insegnammo i nostri segni, ma egli se ne allontanò e così Satana lo inseguì ed egli smarrì il sentiero». Per riferimenti alla Tradizione del Profeta qui e in seguito si rimanda a <http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/>.

21 Al-Tirmidhī, *kitāb tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, no. 3054.

22 Questa spiegazione compare ad esempio nei *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* di Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, commento a Q 5,87. Per riferimenti all'esegesi coranica si rimanda a <http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp>.

PELLI e la barba in disordine. 'Alī si accigliò e gli disse: «Guai a te! Non ti vergogni per la tua famiglia? Non hai pietà di tuo figlio? Non sai che Dio ti ha reso lecite le cose buone [...]?» (169)

Secondo al-'Abd al-Karīm anche l'eccessiva durezza nel giudicare gli altri deriva infine dall'eccesso nel credo. L'autore richiama un aforisma di al-Hāfiẓ al-Dhahabī (m. 748/1348), allievo di Ibn Taymiyya (m. 728/1328): «Può parlare degli altri solo chi sia perfettamente dotto e perfettamente devoto (*tāmm al-ma'rifa tāmm al-wara'*)» (171).<sup>23</sup> Conclude:

Ai nostri giorni, siamo messi alla prova da alcuni affiliati alla *salafiyya* che sono tra coloro che eccedono nell'accusare gli altri di innovazione eretica (*bid'a*) e arrivano a tacciare di eresia tutta la società [...]. Ma essi sono ignoranti (*juhāl*) della Legge, non conoscono affatto le parole dei dotti sulle innovazioni eretiche (*bida'*) e sui loro seguaci. Quel che affermano non ha valore (cf. *lā 'ibra*), è polvere senza peso. (al-'Abd al-Karīm 2004, 172)

#### 4 Medietà, tolleranza, semplificazione. Ancora sul simposio di Mecca (2003)

Riprendiamo il discorso sulla *wasatiyya* continuando per comodità a seguire la traccia del simposio di Mecca.

Il contributo di Nāṣir ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-'Aql, docente nell'Università Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd di Riad,<sup>24</sup> dal titolo «Le nozioni di medietà e moderazione» (*Mafhūm al-wasatiyya wa al-i'tidāl*) (al-'Aql 2004, 4-9), identifica la medietà con il sunnismo. Spiega che la comunità islamica è superiore a tutte le altre (cf. *afḍal al-umam*) e che, nel complesso dei musulmani, Dio ha contraddistinto della *wasatiyya* i credenti sunniti (*ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a*) i quali rappresentano i seguaci della medietà e della moderazione (*ahl al-tawassuṭ wa al-i'tidāl*) in ogni aspetto della religione, nel credo, nella dottrina, nell'operato e nella moralità. L'autore conclude che *i'tidāl* o moderazione/equilibrio e *wasatiyya* o *medietas* sono due concetti prossimi tra loro nell'indicare quel che è meglio: sono la regola della verità seguita dai profeti, rappresentata dall'Islam dopo la predicazione di Muhammad, adottata dagli antichi (*salaf*) dopo il manifestarsi delle deviazioni e delle divisioni (al-'Aql 2004, 5-7).

23 Cf. al-Dhahabī 2009, vol. 3, 46.

24 L'autore è noto specialmente per *Mujmal uṣūl ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a*. Cairo: Dār al-safwa, 2a ed. 1412h. Su di lui vedi ad es. Roy 2003, 109.

Muḥammad ibn 'Umar Bāzmūl, docente all'Università Umm al-Qurā di Mecca,<sup>25</sup> firma invece un contributo sulle prove scritturali (Bāzmūl 2004).<sup>26</sup> Tra le citazioni più rilevanti, la sura *Fātiḥa* o «dell'Esordio», con l'idea che i musulmani divergano sia da coloro che fanno adirare il Signore sia da coloro che errano (Q 1,7); la sura delle Donne, con il divieto di esagerare nella religione dichiarando la Trinità (Q 4,171); le sure della Vacca e delle Greggi, con la dicotomia tra le vie frammentate delle comunità pre-islamiche e il sentiero diritto a cui Dio guida chi vuole (Q 2,213 e 6,153).<sup>27</sup> Quanto alla Sunna, l'autore apre la trattazione con un racconto piuttosto diffuso:

Il Profeta tracciò per noi una linea e disse: «Questo è il sentiero di Dio (*sabīl Allāh*)». Poi tracciò delle linee a destra e a sinistra di essa, e disse: «Questi sono sentieri che separano (*subul mutafarriqa*), e per ciascun sentiero c'è un diavolo che ad esso conduce». Poi recitò: «Questa è la mia via dritta (*ṣirāṭ-ī al-mustaqīm*), seguitemela dunque e non seguite i sentieri che vi separano dal suo sentiero» (Q 6,153). (Bāzmūl 2004, 26)<sup>28</sup>

In seguito, Bāzmūl inserisce la *wasatiyya* nel contesto delle virtù morali, giacché cita le note parole del Profeta: «Sono stato inviato per portare a compimento le buone qualità del carattere (*ṣāliḥ al-akhlāq*)» (Bāzmūl 2004, 27); poi spiega la medietà come bontà in generale (*khayriyya*); quindi fa propria la definizione classica di giusto mezzo:

le qualità più belle e nobili (*maḥāsīn al-akhlāq wa makārimu-hā*) – scrive – sono il medio tra due estremi (*wasat bayna ṭarafayn*). La religione invita soltanto alle buone qualità che si trovano a mezza via tra le varie caratteristiche biasimevoli appartenenti ai due opposti estremi dell'esagerazione e della negligenza (*ṭarafayn al-ifrāt wa al-tafrīt*). (Bāzmūl 2004, 27-8)

25 Due suoi testi sul medesimo argomento si trovano in traduzione inglese in [http://www.authentic-translations.com/trans-pub/ae\\_miub\\_1.pdf](http://www.authentic-translations.com/trans-pub/ae_miub_1.pdf) e [http://www.authentic-translations.com/trans-pub/ae\\_miub\\_2.pdf](http://www.authentic-translations.com/trans-pub/ae_miub_2.pdf) (2016-08-17).

26 Per le fonti della *medietas* islamica vedi anche il già citato Kamali 2015, 9-15.

27 Questi sono i primi dei molti passi coranici citati dall'autore. Seguono Q 7,86; 3,99; 7,45 e 146; 40,38; 2,143; 3,110; 4,58; 5,8; etc.

28 Racconto trasmesso sull'autorità di Ibn Mas'ūd; l'autore si appoggia a molte fonti, a partire dal *Musnad* di Ibn Ḥanbal, cf. [http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display\\_hbook.php?bk\\_no=121&hid=3997&pid=60281](http://library.islamweb.net/hadith/display_hbook.php?bk_no=121&hid=3997&pid=60281) (2016-08-17). Al detto appena citato l'autore fa seguire la spiegazione proposta da Ibn Taymiyya (Bāzmūl 2004, 26-7). Sulla medietà in Ibn Taymiyya vedi ora Vasalou 2016, 11-21 e *passim*.

Sempre dalla Sunna del Profeta, Bāzmūl offre un esempio di medietà relativamente alle azioni culturali:

Tre persone si recarono a casa delle mogli del Profeta per chiedere loro delle sue pratiche devozionali (*'ibāda*); e una volta che ne vennero informati le trovarono scarse: «Come siamo avanti noi - dissero - rispetto al Profeta, al quale è stata perdonata ogni colpa di prima e di poi!» Uno di loro disse: «Quanto a me, io prego di notte». E l'altro: «Io digiuno e non mangio per un periodo prolungato (*dahr*)». E l'altro ancora: «Io mi tengo lontano dalle donne e non mi sposo». Il Profeta arrivò da loro e chiese: «Siete voi quelli che hanno detto così e colà? Ebbene [...], io digiuno e mangio, prego e dormo e anche mi sposo, e chi vuole allontanarsi dalla mia *sunna* non è dei miei». (Bāzmūl 2004, 28)<sup>29</sup>

Nel suo contributo al simposio di Mecca, Bāzmūl porta continui riferimenti all'accondiscendenza o indulgenza ovvero *samāḥa*, un termine che serve a esprimere altresì la tolleranza come accettazione della molteplicità delle religioni;<sup>30</sup> e richiama con particolare enfasi anche la facilità o *yusr*.<sup>31</sup> È un dato di fatto che gli studiosi musulmani contemporanei sono soliti appaiare *samāḥa* e *yusr*, quest'ultimo termine eventualmente accompagnato o sostituito da *taysīr* o facilitazione; essi trattano la tolleranza e la facilità/facilitazione come il metodo per eccellenza della *wasatīyya*, da tenere in mente oggi a maggior ragione, e da applicare con rinnovata convinzione nel contesto intraslamico e nella stretta contemporaneità.<sup>32</sup> Non così accade tra gli studiosi occidentali, che preferiscono analizzare la tolleranza

29 Sull'autorità di Anas b. Mālik. L'autore rimanda tra gli altri ad al-Bukhārī. Cf. [http://library.islamweb.net/newlibrary/display\\_book.php?idfrom=9255&idto=9258&bk\\_no=52&ID=2809](http://library.islamweb.net/newlibrary/display_book.php?idfrom=9255&idto=9258&bk_no=52&ID=2809) (2016-08-17).

30 Su questa nozione rimando a Kamali 2015, 134-6.

31 *La guida del Corano all'accondiscendenza e alla facilità dell'Islam (Dalālat al-Qur'ān 'alā samāḥat al-Islām wa yusrī-hi)* è del resto, come anticipato, il titolo di un'intera sessione del simposio di Mecca. Cf. Bāzmūl 2004, 56-126. Nell'opera di Kamali citata all'inizio, il tema della facilità/facilitazione è oggetto del cap. 15, 128-36.

32 Lo fa ad esempio lo stesso Bāzmūl in un'opera eloquentemente intitolata *Al-yusr wa al-samāḥat fī al-Islām*; oppure, sempre a titolo di esempio, Fāliḥ ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr, *Al-yusr wa al-samāḥat fī al-Islām*; o ancora il discusso 'Alī al-Ṣallābī (n. 1963), *Al-wasatīyya fī al-Qur'ān al-karīm*, 119-34, reperibile in <http://download-islamic-pdf-ebooks.com/freedownload8769> (2016-08-17). E naturalmente il già citato Kamali 2015 nell'intero cap. 14 intitolato «Forbearance, Bringing Ease and Removing Hardship» (*taysīr, raf' al-ḥaraj, samāḥa*, 128-45). L'accostamento di tolleranza e semplificazione sembra appartenere specialmente alle opere recenti. Ad esempio, nel voluminoso *Samāḥat al-Islām fī al-da'wa ilā Allāh* di 'Abd al-'Azīm Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Maṭ'ānī, del 1414/1993, la facilità/facilitazione manca dal titolo ed è quasi assente all'interno del libro.

islamica in prospettiva storica e interreligiosa a un tempo,<sup>33</sup> e si rivolgono alla contemporaneità solo occasionalmente.<sup>34</sup>

Sempre tra i lavori del grande convegno meccano dedicato alla *wasatiyya*, il contributo di Nāṣir ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Maymān, anch'egli docente all'Università Umm al-Qurā, si intitola appunto «Le nozioni di tolleranza e facilità nel Corano e nella Sunna e le loro prove» (al-Maymān 2004).<sup>35</sup> Insiste sulla fondamentale sinonimia di *yusr* e *samāḥa*, entrambi i termini indicanti semplicità, flessibilità, docilità e agio (*suhūla*, *salāsa*, *līn*, *sa'a*); ed entrambi indicanti, per converso, la rimozione dell'impedimento, della ristrettezza e della difficoltà (*ḥaraj*, *dīq*, *shiqqa*). L'autore riprende dal Profeta che «questa religione è facilità» (*inna hadhā al-dīn yusr*);<sup>36</sup> che la fede primordiale è «tollerante» (cf. *al-ḥanīfiyya al-samḥa*)<sup>37</sup> essendo fondata sulla semplicità (*suhūla*); e che a sua volta la semplicità è «lodevole» (*maḥmūda*) perché è incapace di produrre danno o turpitudine.<sup>38</sup> Dopodiché insegna:

Dio ha fatto di questa Legge benedetta (*sharī'a mubāraka*) un monoteismo tollerante e semplice [...]. Il Corano recita che «Dio vi ha fatto amare la fede e ve l'ha resa bella nel cuore; e vi ha reso odiose l'incredulità, l'empietà e la disubbidienza. Ecco i ben guidati» (Q 49,7). E questo versetto, secondo l'*imām* al-Shāṭibī [m. 790/1388], annuncia che Dio ci ha fatto amare la fede grazie al fatto che è facile e semplice [...]. «Facilitazione» (*taysīr*) è un modo generale per descrivere la Legge nei suoi precetti fondamentali e anche in quelli dettati da motivi occasionali (*aḥkām aṣliyya*, *aḥkām ṭarī'a 'inda al-a'dhār*) [...]. In essa non si trova alcuna difficoltà (*mashaqqā*) che non sia di tipo usuale (*mu'tāda*), perché il Legislatore non ha voluto che il dovere avesse adempimento per via di tormento e pena.

33 Penso naturalmente a Friedmann 2003. Mi permetto anche di citare Zilio-Grandi 2008. Come gli occidentali, anche i musulmani attivi in Occidente sottolineano la tolleranza islamica in chiave diacronica, come fa per esempio Shah-Kazemi 2012. Un altro esempio simile è offerto dagli interventi raccolti da Abou El Fadl 2002. Al confine tra le due attitudini si situa la prospettiva di Soroush 2006, che rileva il fondamento essenzialmente razionale dell'Islam come delle religioni in genere: giustizia e diritti umani sono valori di ragione che le religioni hanno dovuto - e devono - fare propri; di conseguenza, conciliare Islam e democrazia non richiede una secolarizzazione dell'Islam.

34 Tra le eccezioni, Philpott 2013.

35 Titolo originale: *Mafhūm al-samāḥa wa al-yusr fī al-Qur'ān wa al-Sunna wa adillatu-hā*.

36 Per la versione estesa, vedi ad es. al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *kitāb al-īmān*, *bāb al-dīn yusr*, no. 38 (da Abū Hurayra).

37 Cf. al-Bukhārī, *Al-adab al-mufrad*, no. 283: «Chiesero al Profeta quale religione fosse più amata (*ayy al-adyān aḥabbun*) da Dio. Rispose: "Al-ḥanīfiyya al-samḥa"» (da Ibn 'Abbās).

38 Per l'espressione *al-suhūla maḥmūda*, l'autore si appella a Ibn 'Āshūr (m. 1973) (1425/2004).



Tuttavia - aggiunge - facilità e tolleranza nella religione non significano inerzia e indolenza (*tark al-'amal, takāsul*) negli atti di ubbidienza e devozione (*ṭā'āt, 'ibādāt*); né rendere ardua (*tashdīd*) la religione significa perfezionarla. Al contrario, occorre adempiere al dovere mantenendosi nel mezzo (*iltizām bi-al-tawassuṭ*), senza esagerazione e senza negligenza (*bi-lā ifrāt wa lā tafrīt*). Proprio questo è il metodo mediano (*manhaj al-wasaṭ*), la via diritta (*al-sirāṭ al-mustaqīm*) di Dio: non si deve pendere né dal lato dell'esagerazione, con il troppo scavare e inasprire (*ta'mmuq, tashdīd*) contro se stessi e gli altri, né pendere dal lato della troppa facilitazione e della trascuratezza (*taysīr shadīd, tasāhul*) che possono raggiungere il limite del distacco e dell'allontanamento dai precetti. Come si tramanda da alcuni antichi (*salaf*), «la religione di Dio sta fra chi eccede e chi si tira indietro» (*bayna al-ghālī fī-hi wa al-jāfī 'an-hu*). (al-Maymān 2004, 60-1)<sup>39</sup>

## 5 La semplificazione della Legge e la *medietas* di Dio. Ancora sul simposio di Mecca (2003)

Continuiamo a scorrere il contributo di Nāṣir al-Maymān sulla tolleranza e la facilità della soluzione islamica.

Dopo gli ammonimenti appena visti, l'autore chiama in appoggio le fonti testuali canoniche. Inizia dai versetti coranici, che arrangia in tre sezioni. Prima quelli indicanti la volontà divina positiva (*irāda*) di facilità e attenuazione (*yusr, takhfīf*): il celebre «Dio vuole l'agio (*yusr*) per voi, non vuole il disagio (*'usr*) per voi», nella sura della Vacca (Q 2,185), che autorizza il malato e il viaggiatore a rinviare il digiuno legale; l'altrettanto noto «Dio vuole rendervi leggeri i pesi perché l'uomo è stato creato debole» (Q 4,28), in materia di matrimonio, nella sura delle Donne; e «Ti renderemo facile la buona sorte (*nuyassiru-ka al-yusrā*)», nell'antica sura dell'Altissimo (Q 87,8), che promette al Profeta la fine della povertà (al-Maymān 2004, 62-3).<sup>40</sup>

Seguono i versetti indicanti la volontà divina negativa quanto alla difficoltà e all'angustia (*raf' al-ḥaraj wa al-'anat*): «Dio non vuole imporvi nulla di gravoso», nella sura della Mensa (Q 5,6); e «Egli vi ha prescelto e non vi ha imposto pesi gravosi nella religione», nella sura del Pellegrinaggio (Q 22,78) (al-Maymān 2004, 63).

Infine, i versetti sull'adeguamento dell'obbligo giuridico all'umana capacità, che hanno suscitato l'argomento detto *al-taklīf bi-mā lā yuṭāqu*, caro

39 Si tratta della parafrasi di un detto accolto da Abū Dāwud, *Sunan, kitāb al-adab*, no. 4205, per la quale l'autore fa appello a Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya (m. 751/1350) in *Al-muwāfiqāt*.

40 Su Q 2,185 vedi anche in seguito.

alla teologia mu'tazilita: «Dio non imporrà a nessuno un carico pesante più di quanto ognuno possa portare», nella sura della Vacca (Q 2,286), «Noi imponiamo a ciascuno solo quel che può sopportare», nella sura delle Greggi (Q 6,152); e «Noi imponiamo a ogni anima solo il peso che essa può sopportare», nella sura del Limbo (Q 7,42) (63-4).

Quanto alla Sunna, la trattazione di al-Maymān è molto ampia e nuovamente arrangia il materiale in tre sezioni. Nell'ordine: i detti indicanti la facilità e la tolleranza della religione (64-7);<sup>41</sup> i detti che ordinano la facilitazione e vietano l'inasprimento e la durezza (68-72);<sup>42</sup> e i detti indicanti che il Profeta inseguiva la facilità nelle proprie azioni e facilitava la comunità (72-5).<sup>43</sup> Tra i passaggi più significativi, «la parte migliore dell'Islam è quella più facile» (*khayr dīni-kum aysaru-hu*), che Muhammad ripeté per tre volte consecutive (65).<sup>44</sup> E inoltre:

Dio non mi ha inviato a costringere e cavillare (*mu'annit, muta'annit*), invece mi ha inviato a insegnare e facilitare (*mu'allim muyassir*). (65)<sup>45</sup>

Dio ha misericordia dell'uomo tollerante (*rajul samḥ*) quando vende, quando compra e quando reclama un credito [dal suo debitore] (*bā'a, ishtarā, iqtadā*). (66)<sup>46</sup>

Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī raccontò che quando il Profeta incaricava i suoi di un viaggio raccomandava loro così: «Portate annuncio e non procurate avversione (*bashshirū wa lā tunaffirū*), facilitate e non procurate disagio (*yassirū wa lā tu'assirū*)». (68)<sup>47</sup>

Da 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ. Il Profeta mi chiese: «E' vero che tu digiuni di giorno e vegli di notte?» Risposi: «Sì, Inviato di Dio». L'Inviato di Dio mi disse: «Non lo fare, e invece digiuna e mangia, veglia e dormi,

41 *Al-aḥādīth al-muṣarriḥa bi-yusr al-dīn wa samāhati-hi*.

42 *Al-aḥādīth al-āmira bi-al-taysīr wa al-nāhiya 'an al-tashdīd wa al-ta'ammuq*.

43 *Al-aḥādīth al-dālla 'alā iltizām al-nabī (s) al-yusr fī 'umri-hi wa taysīr ummati-hi*.

44 Cf. ad es. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad, musnad al-'ashara al-mubashsharīn bi-al-janna*, no. 15618.

45 Versioni simili a quella citata dall'autore compaiono nel *Musnad* di Abū Ya'lā, no. 2223, e in al-Bayhaqī, *Al-sunan al-kubrā, kitāb al-wasāyā*, no. 12277 (sempre da Jābir). Al-Maymān richiama il *Ṣaḥīḥ* di Muslim, ma non mi è stato possibile rintracciare nell'opera in questione il detto citato.

46 Cf. al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, kitāb al-buyū'*, no. 1944; e, tra gli altri, al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan, kitāb al-buyū'*, no. 1237.

47 Cf. al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ad es. *kitāb al-'ilm*, no. 68; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ, kitāb al-jihād wa al-siyar*, no. 3270; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad, musnad al-'ashara al-mubashsharīn bi-al-janna*, no. 12103 (sempre da Anas).

perché il tuo corpo ha un diritto su di te, il tuo occhio ha un diritto su di te, e tua moglie ha un diritto su di te, tua moglie ha un diritto su di te (2 volte). Ti sarà sufficiente digiunare tre giorni al mese [...]». (69)<sup>48</sup>

Non siate duri con voi stessi cosicché altri siano duri con voi. Vi furono alcuni che furono duri con se stessi, e Dio fu duro con loro [...]. (71)<sup>49</sup>

Tra due cose, l'Inviato di Dio sceglieva sempre la più semplice se non era un peccato (*ithm*). Se invece era un peccato, teneva lontana la gente da essa. (74)<sup>50</sup>

Il medesimo simposio di Mecca, che, come si è già detto molto volte, era dedicato in generale alla *wasatiyya*, sviluppava naturalmente anche il tema della semplicità nel contesto specifico della dottrina giuridica. A questo proposito è interessante il contributo dal titolo «La tolleranza della *sharī'a* in relazione alla realtà degli Stati e degli individui»,<sup>51</sup> firmato da 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Zayd al-Zunaydī (2004, 106-26), autore saudita prolifico sul rapporto tra Islam e modernità.<sup>52</sup>

Al-Zunaydī spiega che la *sharī'a* persegue gli interessi (*maṣāliḥ*) della persona, che ogni ordine si traduce in clemenza, facilitazione e semplificazione (*rahma*, *taysīr*, *tashīl*) e che, per converso, ogni divieto si traduce nella rimozione di costrizione, necessità, difficoltà e sofferenza (*'anat*, *ḍank*, *ḥaraj*, *bu's*). E come i suoi colleghi, porta a sostegno passi coranici<sup>53</sup> e detti profetici sulla «facilitazione di Dio per i Suoi servi». Riprende per esempio dalla Sunna:

Voi vi trovate in un tempo in cui chi di voi tralascia un decimo di quel che gli è stato ordinato perirà. Poi verrà un tempo in cui chi di voi farà un decimo di quel che gli è stato ordinato sarà salvato. (al-Zunaydī 2004, 112)<sup>54</sup>

48 Cf. al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, kitāb al-ṣawm*, no. 1848; 54; e, tra gli altri, Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ, kitāb al-ṣawm*, no. 1970 (sempre da 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ).

49 Cf. Abū Dāwud, *Sunan, kitāb al-adab*, no. 4260, e, tra gli altri, Abū Ya'lā, *Musnad*, no. 3646, sempre da Anas b. Mālik.

50 Questo detto è piuttosto noto, in varie versioni più o meno estese ma sempre sull'autorità di 'Ā'isha. Compare in Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad, musnad al-'ashara al-mubashsharin bi-al-janna*, no. 25375 e anche, tra gli altri, in Ibn Abī al-Dunyā 1410/1989, no. 319.

51 *Samāḥat al-sharī'a fī al-ta'āmul ma'a al-wāqi' li-al-duwal wa al-af'rād*.

52 Cf. <http://www.arabicbookshop.net/main/CatalogueFilter.asp?auth=Zunaydi,%20Abd%20al-Rahman%20ibn%20Zayd&sort=6&type=AUTHOR> (2016-08-16).

53 Q 2,185; 7,108; 4,28 e 5,6. *Buḥūth*, 110-1.

54 Cf. al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmi'*, *kitāb al-fitan*, no. 2198.

Più avanti l'autore osserva che le formule coraniche che dicono la liceità (*ibāḥa*), quali «non vi è fatto divieto» (*lā junāḥa 'alay-kum*) oppure «vi è permesso» (*uḥilla la-kum*) oppure «non è peccato» (*fa-lā ithma*), compensano ampiamente le formule che dicono la proibizione (ad es. «vi è proibito», *ḥurrima 'alay-kum*) (113).<sup>55</sup> Quindi passa in rassegna alcuni tra i principi (*mabādī'*) del diritto sciaraitico, pertinenti al suo discorso sulla facilità. Eccone i contenuti per sommi capi.

Alcuni principi si basano sulle parole del Profeta: «né danno né reciprocità di danno» (*lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār*)<sup>56</sup> e riguardano i casi di prevenzione. Ad esempio, chi si trovi di fronte a due peccati, dovrà incorrere nel minore se ciò vale a evitare il maggiore (*an yartakiba akhaff al-ḍararayn li-ittiqā' ašhaddi-himā*). Un altro principio vuole che la rimozione di quel che nuoce sia prioritaria rispetto all'acquisizione di quel che giova (cf. *daf' al-maḍārr muqaddam 'alā jalb al-manāfi'*).<sup>57</sup> Un altro ancora è il principio di necessità, vale a dire che il bisogno rende lecito ciò che altrimenti sarebbe vietato (cf. *al-ḍarūrāt tubīḥu al-maḥzūrāt*); e così via (al-Zunaydī 2004, 114).

Tra i principi del diritto - insegna ancora al-Zunaydī - alcuni si basano sulla sura del Pellegrinaggio dove è detto: «Egli non ha posto per voi delle difficoltà nella religione» (Q 22,68), e riguardano la rimozione della difficoltà (*ḥaraj*). Tra essi, quello secondo cui chi si trovi in difficoltà ha il diritto di attuare il modo per uscirne in deroga alle comuni prescrizioni (cf. «la difficoltà dà luogo a facilitazione», *al-mashaqqa tajlibu al-taysīr*) (114).

Altri principi ancora riguardano la proibizione di quel che può indurre disubbidienza (*sadd al-dharā'i'*). Ad esempio: «quel che porta al proibito è anch'esso proibito» (*mā yufḍī ilā al-maḥzūr fa-huwa maḥzūr*); oppure: «quel che è necessario per adempiere a un obbligo è anch'esso un obbligo» (*mā lā yatimmu al-wājib illā bi-hi fa-huwa wājib*); o ancora: «quel che in gran quantità nuoce, in piccola quantità è proibito» (*mā aḍarra kathīru-hu ḥurrima qalīlu-hu*).

Vi sono infine i principi che riguardano «l'innocenza originale» cioè lo stato primordiale di non obbligazione (*al-barā'a al-ašliyya*), i quali si basano sulla sura della Vacca dove è detto: «Egli è colui che ha creato per voi tutto quel che è sulla terra» (Q 2,29). Vale a dire - spiega al-Zunaydī - che se manca un'indicazione di senso contrario tutte le cose vanno conside-

55 L'autore si appella a Ibn Taymiyya: in generale il Corano accusa i miscredenti (*al-mushrikūn*) solo per il loro politeismo e perché vietano quel che invece è permesso (cf. *shirk, taḥrīm*).

56 Cf. Santillana 1925. Per questo rimando, ringrazio Ersilia Francesca. Il detto profetico in questione è accolto tra gli altri da Ibn Māja, *Sunan, kitāb al-aḥkām*, no. 2333 (da 'Ubāda) e 2334 (da Ibn 'Abbās). Cf. anche Kamali 2015, 124-6, e, per esempio, Yanagihashi 2014, specialmente 153.

57 Più noto come principio giuridico nella versione: «*dar' al-mafāsīd muqaddam 'alā jalb al-mašāliḥ*».

rate lecite, che l'uomo va considerato innocente, che quel che è evidente va considerato indubitabile, e così via (114-5).<sup>58</sup>

## 6 Conclusioni

Numerosi intellettuali musulmani contemporanei sottolineano l'ideale della *wasatiyya*, cioè medietà come lontananza dagli estremi, centralità, opzione del giusto mezzo, moderazione nel senso di equilibrio e bilanciamento, e ne fanno un'espressione fondamentale dell'Islam o addirittura un'equazione: questa religione altro non sarebbe che medietà, nella dottrina, nell'adempimento dei precetti, nei rapporti con gli altri, e, quel che più interessa in questa sede, anche nella moralità. Essi si appoggiano a un numero di passi coranici e racconti sulla vita del Profeta che palesano la medietà come virtù essenziale della comunità dei credenti, e additano all'*homo islamicus* l'ideale mediano come criterio di vita.

Ampiamente rilevata è anche l'idea che la *medietas* islamica sia intimamente connessa con la facilità e la semplificazione (*yusr*, *taysir*, *suhūla*, *samāha*, *salāsa*, etc.). Seguendo le tracce offerte da due convegni ospitati dall'Arabia Saudita a inizio millennio, poco o per nulla noti alla cultura occidentale sebbene utili al ricercatore e significativi per l'osservatore europeo, si è tentato di dimostrare che certa influente cultura islamica individua proprio nella facilità/facilitazione la regola, il dispositivo e l'obiettivo dell'Islam di oggi. Questi intellettuali sostengono che, avendo Dio reso l'Islam una forma di medietà, tale medietà si conserva solo se i musulmani semplificano la vita di credenti a se stessi e ai confratelli, mettendo al bando le asperità e le durezza che minano al tempo stesso la coesione della comunità e il buono stato dell'individuo.

Dio stesso ha reso facile aderire alla religione e ha alleggerito il peso dell'obbligazione giuridica. Questo significa che la facilità è una caratteristica dell'agire divino.<sup>59</sup> E al pari di altre caratteristiche della divinità, anche la Facilità va imitata *mutatis mutandis*; aiutandosi con la *sharī'a* e non solo con la ragione come il virtuoso dell'*Etica a Nicomaco* (1103b-1104b), il buon musulmano eviterà gli eccessi con se stesso e con gli altri e guarderà a se stesso e agli altri con tolleranza e flessibilità.

Infine, se è vero che in questo contesto il medio è facile e virtuoso men-

58 Su questo principio del diritto islamico, cf. Hallaq 2009, 120-1.

59 A titolo di ulteriore esempio basta pensare che Egli può essere invocato come *al-Muyasir*, 'il Facilitatore' o *al-Musahhil*, 'il Semplificatore' anche se questi nomi non figurano tra quelli canonici; così la *fatwā* no. 124345 emanata il 7-5-2009 dalla Commissione permanente per la ricerca scientifica e l'emanazione di responsi giuridici (*Al-lajna al-dā'ima li-al-buḥūth al-'ilmiyya wa al-iftā'*), <http://fatwa.islamweb.net/fatwa/index.php?page=showfatwa&option=FatwaId&Id=124345> (2016-08-17).

tre gli estremi sono viziosi e pieni di difficoltà, proprio la correlazione con la facilità/facilitazione sembra l'aspetto più tipico della riflessione islamica – almeno di quella odierna – sul tema universale della *medietas*; sapendo che al pensiero occidentale è invece consueto l'abbinamento della virtù alla difficoltà,<sup>60</sup> tale correlazione risulterà anche un esempio di specificità culturale.

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60 «Errare è possibile in molti modi [...] mentre operare rettamente è possibile in un solo modo, perciò anche l'uno è facile e l'altro difficile: è facile fallire il bersaglio, e difficile coglierlo. E per queste ragioni, dunque, l'eccesso e il difetto sono propri del vizio, mentre la medietà è propria della virtù: si è buoni in un sol modo, cattivi in molte e svariate maniere», *Etica Nicomachea*, 1106b. Si pensi anche alla 'porta stretta' in *Lc* 13,24.

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# **Language, Power and Democracy in *Othello*, Translated into Egyptian Dialect by Moustapha Safouan: a Realistic, Utopian or Dystopian Challenge?**

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**Abstract** Can the Egyptian dialect be a poetic language? Should it be taught at school? Can it convey literary serious/tragic contents? Moustapha Safouan thinks so, and he also thinks that such a linguistic revolution is necessary in Egypt to boost a democratic process to deprive the dictators of the fake legitimacy they gain from using Modern Standard Arabic instead of the vernacular linguistic variety. His translation of Shakespeare's *Othello* into Egyptian dialect, in 1998, is his way to put words into action. This paper presents Safouan's translation, a provocation and a successful challenge, and the debate it aroused. Language, writing devices, musicality of the translation and the spontaneous reaction of Egyptian native speakers are investigated to demonstrate that there are quite a few points in which Safouan succeeds in conveying sublime intellectual/aesthetic pleasure. Safouan's *Othello* shows that the Egyptian dialect can be a poetic language and therefore it might one day turn into a weapon in the hands of the people against the powerful ruling élites, as Safouan wishes.

**Summary** 1 Introduction: Which Language for Which Theatre? – 2 Language and Theatre in Egypt. – 3 Moustapha Safouan as a Translator. – 4 Translation as a Democratic Act: Safouan's Introduction to *Othello*. – 5 A Different Perspective on Translating into Egyptian Dialect: *Othello* in Dialect from Madiha Doss' Viewpoint. – 6 Safouan's Answer to Madiha Doss: Language, Power and Politics. – 7 Translation as Challenge: *Othello* and Safouan's Revolutionary Linguistic-Political Stand. – 8 Egyptian Dialect as a Poetic Weapon? – 9 Concluding Remarks.

**Keywords** Egyptian Dialect. *Othello*. Safouan. Power. Poetic Revolution.

## **1 Introduction: Which Language for Which Theatre?**

"In many speech communities two or more varieties of the same language are used by some speakers under different conditions [...] two varieties exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play". (Ferguson 1959, 232) and "For convenience of reference, the superposed variety in diglossias will be called H (high variety) [...] and the regional dialects will be called L (low varieties)" (234).

Ferguson's definition of diglossia perfectly fits the Arab world, Egypt included, which is characterized by the coexistence of at least two language

varieties: Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth MSA) and the so-called Egyptian dialect,<sup>1</sup> along with hundreds of other local language varieties. MSA is present throughout the Arab world, and is the superposed language variety, while each Arab country has one or more low varieties, or dialects, commonly spoken by the people. MSA enjoys immense social prestige, while dialects, despite their widespread use, are considered low varieties, tolerated in daily communication, but not in writing, particularly serious writing. Newspapers, serious television talk shows, political pamphlets and textbooks are all written in MSA, while dialect is used in daily communication, TV commercials, entertainment, songs, i.e., in informal situations. A reversal of roles is inconceivable. Choosing to use a particular language variety has ideological premises as well as consequences. In fact, dialect automatically marks the linguistic production with a low popular typecasting, while MSA marks the linguistic production with a high prestigious labelling. Of course most literary production is written in MSA while films are in dialect, unless they have a historical content, in which case they may either be in MSA or in a more obsolete language variety, Classical Arabic.

This article is a meaningful case study that investigates how language can be a proxy for social and political issues, with particular reference to the language commonly chosen for the Egyptian theatre, and to a revolutionary proposal.

## 2 Language and Theatre in Egypt

From its inception, the theatre in Egypt has been presented in both MSA and dialect, in both indigenous productions and in translations. But how are the two varieties used on stage? What functional role did and do they still have? And, when translating, what are the translational norms for the stage? Sameh F. Hanna<sup>2</sup> gives useful hints:

*Tamṣīr* (Egyptianization) was a dominant translational norm during the early stages of the history of Egyptian theatre. Through the work of both

1 MSA and dialect are respectively referred to with the Arabic terms *fuṣḥa* and *ʿāmmiyya*. It is very common to find these terms transliterated and not translated into foreign languages.

2 Sameh F. Hanna was born and educated in Egypt before going to the U.K. where he obtained his PhD from the University of Manchester. He worked as a lecturer in Translation at the Academy of Arts in Cairo, the American University in Cairo, Salford University and University of Manchester. Sameh Hanna is a founding member of the International Association of Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS).

Ya'qūb Ṣanū' (1839-1912)<sup>3</sup> and Muḥammad 'Uṭmān Ğalāl (1829-1898)<sup>4</sup> a whole range of French comedies were translated into the Arabic vernacular of the Egyptians.

Apart from using the Egyptian vernacular, *tamṣīr* involved, as Cachia puts it, "the transposition of the plot to an [...] Egyptian milieu, and that in turn entailed making the characters behave in accordance with locally accepted customs" (Cachia 1990, 36). *Ta'rīb*, that is, transposing the plot into an Arab milieu (36), was usually the norm in translating Shakespeare. There was hardly any Egyptianized Shakespearian tragedy. (Hanna 2005, 118)

In a footnote Hanna significantly adds:

Though in general terms Egyptian translators have tended to use classical Arabic as a means of signalling cultural/temporal distance (especially if the source text was set in an ancient historical time), there have been a few attempts where the Egyptian vernacular was used, especially if the source text was a social comedy, farce, children's drama.<sup>5</sup> (118)

Hanna also provides an excellent summary concerning the issue of which language should be used on stage:

The question of which language variety is most appropriate for theatre was a pressing issue of which early producers of theatre in Egypt, who were mostly translators and adaptors of foreign plays, were well aware. The founder of modern Egyptian theatre, Ya'qūb Ṣanū' (1839-1912) was aware that *fušḥa* was the medium for all forms of elitist cultural products. In the early 1870s, when he started producing theatre, *fušḥa* was the language of canonical literature and religious exegesis, the two main cultural products at the time. *'Āmmiyya* was only associated with popular culture in the form of singing, shadow plays and folk tales, as well as epic, romance and *zajal* poetry, narrated or sung in local gatherings, such as cafes, markets, religious festivals or social celebrations.

Ṣanū''s choice of *'āmmiyya* as the medium of his adaptations did not go down well with the traditional intellectual elite. [...] Ṣanū' [...] justifies his use of *'āmmiyya* in connection with the theatrical genre he

3 Ya'qūb Ṣanū' (1839-1912) was a Jewish journalist, Egyptian nationalist and playwright (see Sadgrove 1998).

4 Muḥammad 'Uṭmān Ğalāl (1828-1898), Egyptian dramatist, author and translator. He 'Egyptianized' several plays by Molière including a famous version of *Tartuffe* (see Somekh 1998, 778).

5 For detailed studies of the language of Egyptian drama see Somekh 1991, 37-45, and Nasser 2010, 355-67.

used for his performances. "Comedy", says Şanū' in *Molière mişr wa-mā yuqāşihī*, "deals with what happens among people, and hence it must be a reflection of reality and its language an emulation of the language used by all people in their daily conversations" ('Omar 'Aṭiyya 1967, 79). Since Şanū', the association between 'āmmiyya and staged comedy became the norm for playwrights, drama translators and adaptors. (Hanna 2009, 162)

An interesting suggestion to resolve the language issue on stage came from Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm.<sup>6</sup> In the appendix to his play *al-Şafqa* (The Deal), written in 1956, and in notes inserted in his play *al-Warṭa* (The Dilemma), written in 1966, he explained his theory about what he termed *al-luġa al-ṭālīṭa* (the third language), to be used on stage, one that could be read in MSA but that could also be performed in a way which, while not exactly the Egyptian dialect, was certainly comprehensible to a larger population than the literate élite. His 'third language' would leave the actors free to perform the written text either in MSA or in dialect. So, in the 'third language' lexicon, syntax and expressions should be those in common between MSA and Egyptian dialect, while pronunciation could change according to the actor's sensibility, or, rather, according to the stage directions.

However, the double association dialect/comedy and MSA/tragedy has always been extant, as Hanna notably observes: "If opinions on translating comedy in 'āmmiyya have been divided, publishing a translation of a tragedy totally in 'āmmiyya has almost been anathema in the cultural history of modern Egypt" (Hanna 2009, 265).

The translations of *Othello* which appeared throughout the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries in Egypt are no exception to this rule. "The most celebrated and best known translation of *Othello* is that of Ḥalīl Muṭrān, the Lebanese-born poet who immigrated to Egypt. He translated *Othello*<sup>7</sup> at the specific request of George Abyaḍ, actor, director and head of the theatrical troupe known by his name" (Ghazoul 1998, 2). In his introduction, Ḥalīl Muṭrān explained his translational choices and his view of the tragedy. In his opinion *Othello* was originally an Arabic story, to be given back to where it belonged: i.e. the Arab world. Hence, the name of the protagonist was 'restored' to its alleged Arabic origin, becoming 'Uṭayl, while Desdemona turned into the Arabic sounding form *Daydamūna*. More than a translation, Ḥalīl Muṭrān carried out what he called an 'Arabization', where the protagonist became victim of wicked foreign deceit, much more in control of himself than in the original text. Muṭrān's *Othello* became a

6 Prominent Egyptian writer (1898-1987), one of the pioneers of the Arabic novel and drama (see Starkey 1998, 263-5).

7 Performed at the Cairo Opera House on March 30th 1912.

proud, feared Arab leader.<sup>8</sup> The offensive expressions of the Shakespearian text were often censured by the translator, Christian religious references were either removed or changed and the same happened to several references to sex and wine. The translator protected 'Uṭayl's public image as one would do for a political leader. As to the language, Muṭrān declared his wish to 'kill' dialect, responsible for having destroyed the unity of the Arab Community: "If dialect were mine, I would kill it without any regret, and my crime would but be revenge for a glory that used to exceed all glories, that has been falling from its untainted eloquent golden frame to the level of filthy earthenware feet, and still continues to descend towards them, that still disfigure it. Revenge for a Community whose unity dialect has scattered" (Muṭrān 1912, 4). Instead of dialect, Muṭrān chose to use a language that today sounds like an impressively elegant, elaborated variety of MSA. However, in 1912, this language variety probably sounded more common and less elaborate. In fact, the translator labelled his language variety as 'intermediate' (4). The ideology behind this choice is clear: in Muṭrān's view, MSA could be the central bond of identity between the Arabs in different countries. In 1912 the dream of pan-Arab unity was still alive, and the Lebanese Christian Muṭrān living in Egypt, who could not base his nationalist idea on religion or citizenship, chose language as the basis of pan-Arab pride. His celebrated translation would remain the main one until 1978, when the Palestinian poet Ġabrā Ibrāhīm Ġabrā<sup>9</sup> translated *Othello* from English.

In his introduction to the translation, Ġabrā refuted Muṭrān's theories about the origin of *Othello*, and translated with care, wishing to convey the Shakespearian text in all its nuances, with no censures. He distributed the text in lines corresponding to the original text and he added footnotes meant to aid the reader. While Muṭrān's was not a translation but an 'Arabization', Ġabrā's was the first real translation of *Othello* into MSA. One can't help noticing that, unlike his predecessor, Ġabrā no longer used *Othello* as a means to validate national pride. Therefore his language, free of pan-Arab national pride, became lighter and the translation was definitely more faithful to the original text than Muṭrān's. He used a reader-friendly MSA that still sounds fluent and elegant today, but not at all obsolete.

The translations following Ġabrā's are accomplished works too, based on the original English text. They give detailed information about the English sources they are based on, and they have detailed footnotes. This is the

8 For further reading see Hanna 2005, 109-28.

9 Ġabrā Ibrāhīm Ġabrā (1920-1994) was a Palestinian author of Syriac Orthodox origin educated in Jerusalem and later at Cambridge University. Poet, novelist, painter, translator and literary critic, he also translated some English works into Arabic (see Boullata 1998, 405).

case with Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī, a scholar of English and Arabic literature, who published his translation in 2004, with the title *Ma'sāt 'Uṭayl*. In 2005, Muḥammad Muḥammad 'Inānī, a Professor of English Language and Literature at Cairo University, published his *'Uṭayl*, an excellent work with an introduction of 64 pages and very detailed footnotes that compare his translation with the original English text. His translation is not only meant to be read or performed, but also to be used as an object of study. What is the language used in both translations? Again, it is MSA. The anathema of using dialect in tragedies is still there. Yet, in 1998, someone not only challenged this tradition, but did it with reasons that make of him a very interesting case. It was Moustapha Safouan.<sup>10</sup>

### 3 Moustapha Safouan as a Translator

A vibrant awareness of the symbolic value of linguistic choices is the motive lying behind Moustapha Safouan's translation of *Othello* into Egyptian dialect.<sup>11</sup> His central idea is: language and power are strongly linked, and power takes advantage of the diglossia present in the Arabic world in order to prevent the democratization process. With diglossia, the literary language enjoys a prominent prestigious position which is superior to the one assigned to the vernacular language. Such a language is also a useful means in the hands of the leading class to consolidate their power and to keep on exploiting the masses. These ideas are developed in Safouan's *al-Kitāba wa-l-sulṭa* (Writing and Power) (2001) as well as in his *Limādā al-'Arab laysū aḥrār<sup>an</sup>* (Why are the Arabs not Free?).

Actually, these are not original ideas at all, but refer to a topic that both sociology and political sciences have deeply analyzed. However, Safouan develops it in quite an original way because, unlike other scholars who simply expose their theories, he puts his words into action.

His translation of *Othello* and its introduction, written in Egyptian vernacular too, prove it. Assuming that the literary language hinders democracy, the best way to stand up against such an impediment is to rebel

10 Moustapha Safouan is an Egyptian psychoanalyst with a sound philosophical competence, who has been living in France since 1949. His philosophical, literary and psychological knowledge endow him with a particularly deep critical aptitude that enables him to suggest original psychoanalytic literary interpretations, along with political ones. Since Safouan has been living in Europe longer than he lived in Egypt, and he's better known in Europe than in his home country, I prefer to use the written form of his name that is to be found in the author's French writings as well as in other European translations.

11 Before him, Nu'mān 'Āšūr had translated *Othello* into the Egyptian dialect, in 1984. Nu'mān 'Āšūr's experiment was an example of 'Egyptianization', that deserves deep study. Analyzing 'Āšūr's translation here would go well beyond the scope of this paper. It suffices here to mention it, and to observe that it did not have positive feedback.

against that language simply by ignoring it, and by taking up the vernacular language in writing. His *Othello* in Egyptian dialect sounds like a challenge to traditional translational norms from its opening line, which is a dedication:

إهداء إلى محمد على عبد المولى!

Dedicated to Muḥammad 'Alī 'Abd al-Mawlā!<sup>12</sup> (Safouan 1998)

Muḥammad 'Alī 'Abd al-Mawlā may be any common man, the man on the street, the one who can read very little, the one who is not familiar with the literary language. He's the one to whom Safouan chooses to dedicate no less than Shakespeare's *Othello*, in his own native language, namely, the Egyptian dialect.

Reading Safouan in the Egyptian dialect is at first a puzzling experience. The dialect used by Safouan deeply affects the Egyptian reader, who is used to reading in MSA. The Egyptian reader normally tunes into the MSA mode while reading out loud. When required to read out loud in the vernacular, he will tend to pronounce sounds and word endings as they would be in the literary mode.<sup>13</sup> It is an unusual experience for the eye too, since he is not used to seeing vernacular words in writing, some of which are very long, resulting from the orthographical duplication of what actually happens in speaking: up to two or three suffixes are pasted to a single word, while in MSA they would be different words.<sup>14</sup> 'Interior reading' too is an unusual experience, because the reader is not used to seeing the written form of dialect, with its peculiar un-normed spelling,<sup>15</sup>

12 Unless otherwise stated, translations into English are mine.

13 This reaction reminds us of Tawfiq al-Hakīm's proposal of a 'Third Language' for theatre. For further reading about this proposal and about the search for a language on the Egyptian stage see R. Dorigo 2006, 173-91.

14 For example, on page 14 of Safouan's introduction to his translation we read the Egyptian dialect word *Māyigayyirhāš* (he does not change it). It is the result of 4 different elements pasted together: *mā* (negation) + *yigayyir* (verb) + *hā* (suffix pronoun) + *š* (Egyptian dialect suffix used in negative sentences). In MSA the same meaning would read differently: *lā iuḡayyir<sup>u</sup> šay<sup>an</sup> fihā* (he does not change anything in it). So, instead of four MSA words, the reader here finds only a long single one. This feature of the Egyptian dialect clearly denotes that it is an agglutinative language, with reference to the definition introduced by Wilhelm Von Humboldt who classified languages from a morphological point of view, back in 1836. For a similar example see also Behnstedt, Woidich 2005, 37, and Durand 2009, 32.

15 For example, a peculiar feature recurring in Safouan's Egyptian dialect spelling concerns the way he writes numbers. On page 5 of Safouan's introduction he writes the number *ḥamsa talāf* (five thousand) writing the letter *t* at the beginning of the second word. In MSA the spelling would be *ḥamsat ālāf*, with the *t* at the end of the first word. The effect of Safouan's dialect spelling on the reader is quite bewildering.



especially in a serious dramatic literary work. Nevertheless, after a few lines, the Egyptian reader experiences what in most parts of Europe is usually taken for granted: reading in one's own mother tongue.

A similar puzzling feeling at first affects whoever tries to translate Safouan's language into English. In fact, the translator is first of all a reader who goes through the same odd experience of dialect reading mentioned above. On setting out to translate, the translator naturally wonders if it is possible to somehow mark in translation the spoken language quality of Safouan's language, a variety that sounds completely different from the one normally used in Arabic writing, i.e. MSA.

Actually, the vernacular variety used in Safouan's writing is understood everywhere in Egypt, as well as in almost the entire Arab world, although it is not recognized as official. In order to mark in translation that Safouan's starting language is not the standard variety, it would be necessary to use an un-normed English understood by all native English speakers, a sort of slang English variety understood by millions of English native speakers. Such a variety does not exist.

#### **4 Translation as a Democratic Act: Safouan's Introduction to *Othello***

Safouan begins his introduction with a polemic opening line, a quotation from Euripides<sup>16</sup> chosen for the number of key words to be found in it: "No logic will overthrow the traditions we have received from our fathers, traditions as old as time, no matter what clever arguments are thought up by the greatest minds. Euripides"<sup>17</sup> (Safouan 2007, 47).

'Traditions', 'our fathers', 'overthrow', 'think up', 'clever arguments' are key words corresponding to topics developed by Safouan, who declares he is for change, although he is also aware of the many obstacles that hinder that change. He desires a democratic kind of change, that consists in giving the best of literature to everybody, including the millions of people who have not mastered the literary language, but who may understand writing in the vernacular:

<sup>16</sup> Here Safouan mentions only Euripides, but not his detailed source, which can be found in Safouan 2007, 54, in a footnote where the translator clearly refers to Euripides's *Bacchae*, lines 168-171.

<sup>17</sup> Safouan's writings are full of quotations of worldwide prized names that have made the history of literature and philosophy, as well as of contemporary scholars. Here are those he mentions in his introduction to his translation of *Othello*: Euripides, Dante, Virgil, Horatius, Malraux, Pushkin, Gogol, Shalamov, Solzhenitsyn, Günter Grass, Beckett, Yves Bonnefoy, Yeats, Racine, Salām al-Kindī, Ṣalāḥ Ḡāḥīn, Fu'ād Ḥaddād, Dominique Valbelle. One can't fail to notice that Safouan's cultural profile is astonishing.

The purpose of translating into dialect is clear: a day will come when Muḥammad 'Alī 'Abd al-Mawlā, and millions like him, will be able to read great writers, ours and others, in the language they have learnt while nursing at their mothers' breasts, the language they have lived with and will speak until they die. (Safouan 1998, 5)

As for the intellectuals, Safouan clearly states what their duty should be: to tell the truth, without fearing authorities,<sup>18</sup> a duty that they have often betrayed to become slaves to power, which wouldn't have been possible if writing had been more accessible. He observes that writing has always been in the hands of the powerful and of the scribes, and this has created a deep chasm between the élite and the common people. Writers used to be part of the élite, because they wanted to keep and defend their prestigious position:

Living peoples owe their lives to writers, but not because writers can advise them. Just listen to people's jokes and you will see that people know everything, especially about power, its appetites, its authority, its arrogance, its strength, its splitting people into different social classes one above the other, and about the false rhetoric lying behind praising [...] Nevertheless, great writers are the first dwelling place for ultimate truths, and those who look straight at the truth do not fear the Sultan. (Safouan 1998, 5)

Is it possible to imagine a different history? Safouan hopes so, and he mentions the European example:

Who can imagine what destiny Europe would have had if Latin had remained the language for literature, science and philosophy? The fall of such hegemony is a story worth telling [...]

The first to speak to people in their language in Europe [...] were the fools, or love poets, especially in the south of France, where there were more than two languages, and in Italy, where there used to be dozens of languages. After them, came Dante [...] who decided to compose poetry in the living languages of his time, in a book that is the equivalent of Horatio's *Art of Poetry*, from which he took inspiration for the title of his book: *De Vulgari Eloquentia*.<sup>19</sup> The book starts with the distinc-

18 Safouan's 'European cultural profile' probably includes Michel Foucault's essays on the relation between State and People. See e.g. Foucault 2014.

19 Nevertheless, *De Vulgari Eloquentia* was written in Latin and not in the Tuscan dialect. Safouan does not comment on the paradox, but he does notice that the book is not complete, and he observes that Dante did not finish it probably because he realized that facts would be more effective than theories. So, he set out to write *The Divine Comedy*.

tion between the spoken language, that we all use without studying, by imitating our governesses, and a second type of language, a secondary language, that the Romans used to call 'grammatical'. Then, after this distinction, he writes: "Of these two kinds of language, the more noble is the vernacular". (Dante I.i.4, trans. Botterill 1996) It's not a complicated sentence: subject, verb, full stop. But this sentence has marked the declaration of independence for the European languages. Next, Dante explains his reasons: "First, because it was the language originally used by the human race; second because the whole world employs it, though with different pronunciations and using different words; and third because it is natural for us, while the other is, in constraint, artificial" (Dante I.i.4) [...] Considering that the issue is a general one, even if here it is specifically about Latin and Italian, it can occur at any time or in any place. (Safouan 1998, 7)

If the issue is general, and can occur at any time in any place, of course it can well describe Egypt today.

Safouan then moves to the heart of the matter, i.e. the relationship between language and power:

After these theoretical preliminaries, Dante asks (and here his book's political and not merely literary objective becomes plain) what language, amongst at least fourteen languages in Italy, deserves to be the language of government, or rather the language that could unify Italy in the absence of a unified political authority? It is worth noting that his criterion was neither beauty nor practical utility, but the suitability of the language for poetry. In his view the echoes and strength of poetic language would far outstrip the domain of poetry and even of any aesthetic conception of language to inform the tensions of real life, its battles and ambiguities. (Safouan 2007, 51)

So, Dante thinks that poetic language could become bond of identity even without political unity, and that this is possible despite a political-linguistic situation far more complex than the present Egyptian one, for different reasons. First, the language varieties spoken in Dante's Italy were more numerous than those present in Egypt today, where diglossia is the prevailing context.<sup>20</sup> But, above all, it should be noted that while Egypt has a political unity today, Dante's Italy didn't. Nevertheless, Dante started the process that led to transforming the Tuscan dialect into poetic language, literary language and national language. Despite its national unity, and

<sup>20</sup> A dualist definition of diglossia is of course a simplification and it is now outdated. I chose here to use the dichotomous meaning of the term, and to focus only on MSA and the Cairene dialect because it is functional to my argument.

despite the fact that the Cairene dialect is already understood and used all over the country, Egypt is still far from transforming this linguistic variety into a literary language.

Safouan strongly agrees with Dante's theoretical basis but, most of all, he appreciates that Dante not only stated his theories, but put his words into action:

[...] But the book is not finished. It stops in the middle of a sentence, and it is very likely that Dante stopped because he realized that the solution to this issue couldn't be found by comparing theories but only by putting words into action. So he set out to write *The Divine Comedy*, which is still today considered the greatest poetic masterpiece in the history of European literature, and which actually gave the Italian language the shape it still retains today. (Safouan 1998, 8)

*The Divine Comedy* is actually the best way to show that the Tuscan dialect is not inferior to Latin.

Safouan too wants to prove that the Egyptian dialect is not inferior to MSA. His translation of *Othello* has this specific purpose. But why does he choose Shakespeare and why *Othello*? "Why Shakespeare? Because he's the most poetic among God's creatures, and so if the vernacular succeeds with him, who will feel annoyed?" (Safouan 1998, 11). If Safouan succeeds in translating him in an effective poetic way using the Egyptian dialect, he will prove that the vernacular linguistic variety is able to convey tragic, dramatic, and poetic contents in the best possible way. But why *Othello*?

Why *Othello*? Because *Othello* speaks as if he were constantly looking in a mirror to check that his image has all the perfections that fascinate the eye and please society. The reason for an existence enthralled by such an ideal image is articulated by *Othello* when he says, thanks to Shakespeare's divine intuition: "O curse on marriage!/ That we can call these delicate creatures ours,/ And not their appetites". (Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act 3, iii: 268-270) *Othello* thus betrays his inability to understand, or his incapacity to admit, that desire is a gift: he is not content with having obtained Desdemona's desire; what he wants is to possess it so that the beloved may not take it back or turn it to some other object, as if it were a house, a field, or a cow. This of course is impossible unless she is transformed into an icon, a statue or an inert corpse. And in fact he kills her.<sup>21</sup> (Safouan 1998, 11)

21 As stated in the introduction, Safouan's multi-faceted cultural profile enables him to suggest original literary interpretations. Here is an example of a psychoanalytic interpretation that plainly reveals the translator's psychoanalytical background.

Safouan finds in the Moor all the features of a leader, but the leader he has in mind, in 1998, is a bloody dictator, blinded by his desire for possession, full of weaknesses and limits that lead him to kill those he loves. Othello has the same kind of power which is concentrated in the hands of the Arab leaders in the 1990s, and so the reason why Safouan chooses to translate it is mainly a political one: "More than any other play I know, Othello teaches us to temper this natural infatuation for ideals that annihilates thought" (Safouan 2007, 53). Believing that someone can be perfect, no matter what 'perfect' means, believing that someone may be an exemplary ideal for the others, thinking that someone is always right, being unable to see defects and weaknesses, in ourselves or in our role models, is a mistake that, if committed by a leader, can lead to irrevocable consequences.<sup>22</sup>

About the translation itself, Safouan states that translating into dialect is exactly like translating into other languages, from which it can be concluded that the Egyptian dialect, like MSA, as well as any other language,<sup>23</sup> is a linguistic means suitable for expressing any meaning.<sup>24</sup>

It is worth noting finally that translating *Othello* into spoken Arabic posed no difficulties other than those that occur when translating such a work into any other language: the metaphors that lose their beauty and impact because the metaphorical word does not evoke the same associations in the mind of the reader of the translated text; the mental switches based on double meanings; the metonymies that lose their meaning in a different cultural context; the differences in the syntactic structures that call for a different phrasing; the ellipses that have to be made explicit; the idiomatic expressions that have to be reworked in order to touch the reader's linguistic sensibility, and so on. [...] I tried as much as possible to produce a translation that could be heard as well as read. If aiming at perfection could be considered an incentive to do better, I can say that I do hope to see someone better my translation. The important point for any translator is that there are no two words belonging to two different languages that have exactly the same meaning. [...] The use of any word, from an article to a proper name, especially in its poetic use, sets in motion the whole system of the language with its semantic implications, which give the word its unique resonance, its specific weight. (Safouan 2007, 53)

22 A telling example of the reuse of literary tradition in dealing with political power is a novel by Nobel Prize winner writer Nağīb Maḥfūz's, and notably *Layālī alf Layla*.

23 For further reading on the status of Arabic dialects see Suleiman 2013, 239-50.

24 Fred Donner's article *al-Lahağāt al-'Arabīyya wa ahammiyyat dirāsatiḥā*, is interesting with regards to this: although calling for a recognition of the dignity of Arabic dialects and studying them in the light of modern linguistics studies, Donner does not call for using dialects in writing (Donner 1993, 11).

In my opinion these words have a revolutionary import in the present Egyptian linguistic context. Stating that translating into dialect is like translating into other languages Safouan challenges the dominating belief in Egypt today, or rather the dominating prejudice, that the Egyptian dialect falls short of serious-tragic contents. His translation is therefore a revolutionary experiment by Egyptian standards. As to his understanding of 'translation', he talks about poets and translators who should not bring Shakespeare or other writers to us, but who should lead us to them. It's a translation in the 'foreignization' sense, the opposite of a 'domesticating' translation.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, he wishes for his translations to help bridge the gap between scholars and common people:

However, [...] the translation into Arabic shouldn't be an Arabization but, rather, the use of a language to get out from under a linguistic captivity. You cannot accomplish this simply by transferring meanings or superficial references. The shape, or a prolonged use, is more important here. If the writer has sensibility and mastery to such a degree that enables him to break the syntax, to abbreviate, to omit, he should do so! It is well known that prose makes words lose most of the matter they possess in poetry, hence I declare the inferiority of the present translation: it's in prose, while the original text is in poetry, [...] I cannot state that I wrote this translation hoping to open a door for Ṣalāḥ Ġāhīn or a new Fu'ād Ḥaddād,<sup>26</sup> to bring us Shakespeare or others, or, rather, to carry us towards them, since this last hope of mine - if you want the truth - has failed. I just state that my translation witnesses that I did all I could to tear down the obstacle that has always oppressed us, the obstacle between us, 'those who have studied', and common people. (Safouan 1998, 14-5)

Was his endeavor appreciated? What feedback did it arouse?

25 We use here the notions of 'domesticating' practices and 'foreignizing' practices in the sense of Lawrence Venuti 1995. Safouan's idea of translation clearly reflects Venuti's viewpoint on the need to introduce foreignizing practices in translation.

26 Ṣalāḥ Ġāhīn (1930-1986) and Fu'ād Ḥaddād (1927-1985) are Egyptian poets and friends who promoted using dialect in poetry in the 60s. See Booth 1998a and Booth 1998b.

## 5 A Different Perspective on Translating into Egyptian Dialect: *Othello* in Dialect from Madiha Doss' Viewpoint

In an article that appeared in the magazine *Wiḡhāt naẓar*, in October 1999, called *Šaksbīr bi-l-luġa-al-‘āmmiyya man yaqra’uhu?* (Shakespeare in dialect, who reads him?)<sup>27</sup> Madiha Doss<sup>28</sup> expresses her doubts about Moustapha Safouan's translation.

Briefly summarizing the history of the Egyptian theatre since its inception, she observes that dialect has been used on stage since the very beginning and she denies any originality to Safouan's translation due to the language used. Far from being only Safouan's worry, the concern about being understood by the popular masses dates back to the first stages of Egyptian theatre: "So, the second half of the nineteenth century sees the beginning of the Theatre Movement in Egypt, and dialect has been the means of expression used by this Movement since Ya'qūb Ṣanū' founded the first Theatrical Company in Egypt" (Doss 1999, 68). She points out that when Safouan starts writing in dialect, he is simply re-inventing the wheel! It is no breaking news that choosing to write in dialect is motivated by the desire to reach the common readers, bridging the gap between them and the world of the scholars. It was true in the past, and it is still so today.

Starting from identical grounds, Safouan and Doss reach opposite conclusions. In fact, Doss questions both the need of translating into dialect, and the type of text chosen. She does not believe that translating Shakespeare into dialect will really bring literature within the common audiences' reach, nor that writing in dialect is still as necessary today as it was in the past. She correctly points out that MSA today, compared to the literary variety used a century ago, has been simplified and brought into every home by means of the radio and TV. Moreover, increasing literacy has certainly made a great contribution to the spread of written Arabic in the country. So, according to Doss, there's no longer the need to use dialect to be widely understood. MSA is enough.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, she points out that Safouan's introduction, although in dialect, has historical, philosophical

27 We might contentiously ask, paraphrasing Madiha Doss: 'Shakespeare in MSA, who reads him?'

28 A University Professor at the University of Cairo, specialized in Arabic language, linguistics and philology. Her membership in the *International Association for the Study of Middle and Mixed Arabic* denotes her absence of prejudice against Arabic vernacular language varieties. I use the same form of her name that she uses in her publications.

29 According to the *CIA World Factbook*, last updated: 2016-07-29, the Egyptian literacy rate in 2015 was 73.8%. In 2003 it was 57.7%, in 1995 it was 51.4%, in 1989 it was 45%. Detailed figures are not available for the first half of the twentieth century, but, according to the *Historical Atlas of the 20th Century*, Egypt's literacy rates were below 30% until the 1960s. However, there is no doubt that the Egyptian literacy rates have been rising in the last century, and they continue to do so.

and literary content of such an advanced level that places his writing far beyond the reach of a common reader in Egypt. Her remarks are certainly correct when referring to Safouan's introduction, as well as to many other of his writings, but they are not right when referring to Safouan's translation of *Othello* which is easy for everyone to understand. Madiha Doss does not acknowledge this in her article. Nor does she focus on Safouan's revolutionary motives. She focuses on the need of a rich cultural background to understand either Safouan's introduction and translation. For example, she mentions the telling 'hydra' case, that is in Act 2, iii, in Safouan's translation:

Some ideas and opinions require a specific cultural-intellectual background to be understood by a reader or a listener. Comprehension becomes impossible if this background is missing and the writer, or the translator, does not supply any explanations or additions. Thinking about the common reader, wouldn't it have been better if the translator, instead of floating between philosophical cogitations difficult to grasp even for a learned reader, had instead supplied his readers with information about Shakespeare's personality, his times, about the sources for his play, or about the historical situation around the development of the plot?

And even supposing Safouan didn't believe this was necessary, wouldn't it have been right and proper to add some comments in the margin to allow the reader to understand the elements present in the play? For example, to explain the meaning of the word hydra (a legendary animal with several heads), that is on page 73: "If I had as many mouths as the nine a hydra has, an answer like this would shut them all up". (Doss 1999, 69)

It should be noticed that her criticism here is in general about the kind of translation accomplished: Doss reproaches Safouan for choosing the trend of 'foreignization', a choice that is not directly linked to the language variety used. Safouan could have written in MSA without explaining what the hydra is. Moreover, the problem of background knowledge for a fuller comprehension does not only concern the man on the street of Egyptian nationality. How many educated Egyptians (and in general, how many people in the world) know what 'hydra' means? Only a few, but this does not prevent them from reading *Othello* or from going to the theatre, understanding it and, maybe, from inquiring into the missed meanings afterwards.

So, in Doss' opinion, the real problem is the lack of cultural background, and not so much the language variety chosen in writing.

But criticism directly concerning the use of dialect is present, and it is the core of the article. She thinks that dialect can be accepted in litera-



ture when in funny situations, otherwise it is inappropriate. There are also value judgments associated with the language varieties. It is taken for granted, necessary and unchangeable that dialect should well suit the insolent behavior of popular characters, and not others. It is a value prejudice that refers to the superior prestige of the literary language variety, as well as to the inferior prestige of the dialect:

What is to be said, therefore, about the dialect translation of the play *Othello*? [...] To what extent does the dialect suit a serious, dramatic text like Shakespeare's play, especially considering that this text does not come from the local or Egyptian tradition, but has arrived to us from geographical and cultural horizons that are very distant? When George Abyaḍ arabized the play *The Taming of the Shrew*, with the title 'al-Ġabbāra',<sup>30</sup> critics found good reasons to account for this dialect version in terms of the humour and wittiness it has. Indeed, some have even appreciated this choice because this play by Shakespeare portrays an insolent woman and the dialect style suits her behaviour well. Finally, they have appreciated it because the play deals with a character flaw that is more likely to be present in the lower classes. (Doss 1999, 70)

Therefore, Doss thinks that *Othello* was not meant to be translated into dialect. In my opinion Doss' views about the limits in Safouan's writing, and about how language matters have developed since the nineteenth century, have solid grounds and strong supporting arguments. But when it comes to dialect, her arguments become weaker. In fact, when she looks for arguments against the use of dialect, she re-cycles opinions dating back to the 1930s, when *The Taming of the Shrew* was translated into Egyptian dialect. Moreover, her criticism goes deeper when she overtly reproaches Safouan for carrying out a translation, and not an 'Arabization':

On the other hand, the play *Othello* does not have humorous or witty traits, and Moustapha Safouan made a translation, not an Arabization, namely, the dealing with the original text to balance it in the Egyptian cultural environment, as it is was customary to do with the plays previously translated into Egyptian dialect. Since Moustapha Safouan decided to translate the original text faithfully, including the environmental features just the way Shakespeare proposed them, he should also have conveyed the theatrical features, language included, with more precision, and more attention to the language levels of the characters in the play. (Doss 1999, 70)

30 *Al-ġabbāra* (The Despot) was translated into the Egyptian dialect by Bišāra Wākīm, and it was performed in November 1930, at Printania Theatre, Downtown, Cairo. For more information see 'Awaḍ 1967, 107-8.

So, translating into dialect is tolerated, as long as an 'Arabization' is aimed at an adaptation suitable to an Egyptian cultural setting. Otherwise Doss thinks it is not properly used. But Doss also criticizes Safouan because she thinks that he has not sufficiently respected the characters' social status, and in so doing she carries out a comprehensive analysis of the language employed in translation, as in the following, telling example:

Desdemona, for example, is not a common woman character whom we can imagine pronouncing some of the words in dialect that Moustapha Safouan puts on her tongue. She is the daughter of a Venetian notable, and as such she should speak in a style well-matched to her social level. How is it possible that she utters words like those she tells Jago, when she accuses him of being a liar: '/God protect us from you, you ruthless/'<sup>31</sup> (Safouan 1998, 52). Although the two words 'slander' [iftirā'] and 'slanderer' [muftarī] have a common origin, yet they are different in their stylistic and linguistic nuance. 'Slanderer' has an extra semantic nuance that is not present in 'slander'. In fact every single word and idiom have their own history, charging them with specific meanings related to them only, and no others. (Doss 1999, 70)

It is difficult, if not impossible, to understand in translation what Madiha Doss wants to say here, which is due to her mother tongue sensibility. Some explanation is necessary. The term *muftarī*, that means 'slanderer' in MSA, has developed its meaning in Egyptian dialect, becoming a very common popular insult, used either seriously or in jest, on different occasions. Its present common meaning in Egyptian dialect does not really correspond to the obsolete English term 'slanderer' but, rather, it could be better translated as 'ruthless', 'merciless', 'pitiless', 'cold-blooded', 'cutthroat'.<sup>32</sup> Doss here observes that Desdemona, a girl with a good upbringing, in Safouan's translation uses words that clash with her social status. I decided to investigate the matter and did some field research. It was carried out in the summer of 2015 and it involved a random sample of 20 English mother tongue speakers, who were asked to score the term 'slanderer' according to how offensive it sounded to them, and a random sample of 20 Egyptian dialect mother tongue speakers, who were asked to score the term *muftarī* according to how offensive it sounded to them. The English sample found

31 In Egyptian dialect the sentence sounds quite common place. For this translation of the Arabic *muftarī* see below.

32 This is the result of a small field survey carried out in the summer of 2015 in Sharm El Sheikh. A random sample of 20 Egyptian dialect mother tongue speakers were asked to explain the meaning of the term *muftarī*. *Bilā raḥma* (merciless) and *qāsī* (ruthless) were their main answers. None of them mentioned a meaning corresponding to the Shakespearean meaning of 'slanderer'.

it very difficult to answer, because the term sounded obsolete more than offensive. However, recurring to imagination, the people interviewed tried to figure out how offensive 'slanderer' would be if still in use, and the average result of their answers was 6.1 on a 1-10 scale. The average result of the Egyptian sample scoring *muftarī* was not dissimilar: 7.2 on a 1-10 scale. Moreover, both English native speakers and Egyptian native speakers declared that their score would significantly change according to the language context. If used by people they knew, and in jest, the word would not sound offensive at all.<sup>33</sup> In context, Act 2, i, on page 52 in Safouan's translation, as well as in the Shakespearian text, the word is used in a light jolly context, that has nothing tragic or dramatic, and therefore it does not sound offensive. Still, Doss does not forgive Desdemona for using a kind of language that would make of her a low class girl. Is she right? I do not think so. Desdemona is clearly joking in that context, and she does so with people who do not belong to the highest possible social class: Iago, his wife Emilia, who is not a noble woman, and Cassio, a soldier.

Moreover, although Desdemona has received a good upbringing, she is not totally controlled by it. In fact, her good manners do not prevent her from defying all possible social conventions by marrying a foreigner and a Moor, without her father's consent. So, on the whole, if sometimes she is free in her speech too, and uses popular idioms, it does not seem to me that it completely clashes with her characterization. If on the one hand Safouan's *muftarī* is not a faithful translation, on the other hand it is faithful to the context, since it belongs to a witty, lively language register that sounds appropriate and thriving in this case.

Doss insists on pointing out Safouan's lack of concern for social differences. For example, she thinks that Desdemona's father, Mr. Brabantio, in Safouan's translation is humiliated as much as his daughter. Her criticism refers to the beginning of the play, Act 1, i, when Brabantio is awakened by Iago and Roderigo's shouts, and finds out that his daughter is not in her bedroom. He rushes out into the street, half dressed. Doss states that Safouan's translation of 'night gown' by means of *gallabeyya* is not appropriate. In his stage directions Shakespeare writes as follows: "[...] Enter Brabantio, in his nightgown, with servants and torches." (Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act 1, i: 160)

Safouan translates 'nightgown' with *gallabeyya*, and Doss criticizes this choice with sound arguments:

On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine [...] her father appearing wearing a 'night *gallabeyya*' (25). It would have been better to use the

<sup>33</sup> More specifically, the 20 Egyptian dialect mother tongue speakers were also asked to score the term *muftarī* according to how offensive it sounded to them, if used in jest. The average result on a 1-10 scale was very low: only 2.9.

word 'nightgown' or 'nightdress', to remove the popular touch conveyed by *gallabeyya*, a popular meaning that is not in tune with the translation itself. (Doss 1999, 70)

The *gallabeyya* is an item of clothing traditionally used in Egypt mainly by men belonging to the lowest social classes not only to sleep in but also in their daily life. Safouan's translation here is not a 'foreignization' but, rather, a 'domestication', and it seems to me that Doss' criticism is correct.

But her criticism is, more in general, about the aptness of dialect in translating tragedy, i.e. a kind of text characterized by loftiness of contents and style. Referring to the specific functions of MSA and dialect,<sup>34</sup> she states that dialect is not the proper means to convey Shakespeare's foreign and distant world:

The use of dialect in itself leads us far from the dramatic atmosphere of the play, and its characters. [...] it will be hard to imagine the dramatic atmosphere of events that happened a long time ago [...] using dialect, i.e. the language variety used in daily communication, near in time, and that therefore will be hardly ever used to lead into Shakespeare's foreign and distant world. (Doss 1999, 70)

The argument is here quite weak. Actually Shakespeare's dramatic world, in Shakespeare's language and in Shakespeare's times, was impeccably conveyed by means of the language variety spoken in his times, a variety that was perfectly understood by an extremely heterogeneous audience: from the illiterate boors to the Royal Court. More than supporting her ideas, Doss seems to be expressing a sort of tout court aversion to dialect used in tragedy.

The article goes on to criticize those parts in Safouan's introduction where the translator expresses his reasons for choosing Shakespeare and *Othello*. Moreover, Doss reproaches Safouan for translating the play without the help of a poet, which would have been useful, since Shakespeare is history's greatest poet.<sup>35</sup>

When Doss focuses on some linguistic features of Safouan's translation, and notably on code switching, her remarks become interesting to us. Her analysis of Safouan's language shows that his Egyptian dialect is

<sup>34</sup> i.e. the codification of five levels, or functions, proposed by Badawī 1973. The linguistic levels/functions defined by Badawī refer to diastatic linguistic variation much more than to diaphasic linguistic variation.

<sup>35</sup> Her criticism is also addressed to other matters like Safouan's cryptic psychoanalytic reasons for choosing to translate *Othello*, or his choice of ignoring the symbolic sociological aspects surrounding the character of Othello. These arguments are interesting but not directly relevant to our point.

sometimes a mixture of dialect and MSA, sometimes it can be either, or both. Here follows a striking example:

فما هو المستوى الذى استخدمه مصطفى صفوان فى ترجمته؟ نراه أحيانا يمزج بعض المفردات أو العبارات الكاملة من الفصحى فى نسيج النص العامى، مثل ذلك فى الرد الذى يقدمه عطيل إلى مجموعة الأعيان الذين جاءوا ليتحققوا من صحة خبر زواجه من دسديمونة:  
 أنا أرجوكم **ترسلوا** فى طلب السيدة **وتخلوها** تتكلم عنى فى حضور والدها، فإذا تبينتم من كلامها أنى مذب، فلا تكتفوا بسحب الثقة **اللى** وضعتها **فيّه** والمنصب **اللى** وضعتونى فيه وانما اجعلوا حكمكم ينصب على حياتى نفسه (ص. 35).

What is the level Moustapha Safouan used in his translation? Sometimes we see him mix single words or entire expressions in MSA in the fabric of the vernacular text, as in Othello's answer to a group of notables who have come to investigate the truth of the news about his wedding to Desdemona: I beg you **send** the lady, and **let her** speak about me in the presence of her father, and if you find me guilty in her speech, don't simply take back the trust **that** you **placed in me**, and the position **that** you **placed me** in, but let your judgement destroy my very life (p. 35). (Doss 1999, 70)

Being an extract that mixes two language varieties, impossible to differentiate in translation, I marked in red the parts in dialect. Actually, it is remarkable here to find MSA in the text, for no evident reason. The general impression is that this specific part of the play, with its official formal-context, makes the character tune into the formal language variety, the one that would really be used in a similar official-formal context. In fact, Othello is addressing a group of notables. The Duke himself is present, and so it does not sound surprising that Othello switches to MSA when talking to high class characters.

Madiha Doss appreciates the parts where MSA contaminates the vernacular text fabric. In her article she observes that the translation would have probably been better had the extent of these expressions been wider. May the code-switching phenomenon, so frequent in diglossia-featured speaking communities, explain why sometimes the characters actually change language mode in Safouan's translation of *Othello*? Referring to Charles Ferguson's definition of diglossia, and with particular reference to the specialization of function for both the 'High' language variety and the 'Low' language variety, this may actually be a good example. So, in *Othello*, the different scene settings sometimes do account for the code-switching.

Doss notably observes that the language used by Safouan sometimes resembles the 'Third Language', while at other times it seems more to be

the so-called 'Middle Arabic'.<sup>36</sup> With regard to her understanding of 'Middle Arabic', Doss writes that it is necessary to give precise definitions, to avoid possible confusion:

This style seems to me closer to Middle Arabic than to dialect. In order to define this language variety, called Middle Arabic, first of all it is necessary to distinguish between 'Middle Arabic' and 'Third Language', a classification introduced by Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm,<sup>37</sup> and now present in the dictionary of the Arabic terms, when he wrote his play *The Deal*,<sup>38</sup> in which he devised a writing strategy that makes reading possible both in MSA and in dialect. Al-Ḥakīm undertook this experiment [...] to deal with the crisis of the Arabic theatre [...]. 'Third Language' consists in choosing words and language constructions in common between the two language levels. So, Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm wrote his play in 'Third Language', leaving readers and actors the freedom to read and perform in their favourite language mode. 'Middle Arabic' is a classification with a completely different meaning. Western Linguistics scholars coined this definition to describe anything that was and still is written in MSA mixed with structures and constructions either coming from dialect, or representing mistakes according to the criterions of correctness in MSA. (Doss 1999, 71)

Actually, Doss' clarification is necessary, interesting and appropriate.

At the end of her article, Doss summarizes why dialect is, in her opinion, useless for achieving the desired aim. Here are her conclusions:

Translating Shakespeare's *Othello* into dialect, Moustapha Safouan wanted to contribute to solving one of the main crises in our society: the language crisis and that of the gap between those who can study, read and take part in cultural life, and those who have no such opportunity. Yet the disproportion will remain, despite translating texts into dialect, because the main issue is cultural much more than linguistic. The situation will remain the same as long as Muḥammad 'Alī 'Abd al-

36 Middle Arabic is an ambiguous definition: see e.g. Larcher 2001, 578-609, and J. Lentin 2009, who defines Middle Arabic as "an intermediate, multiform variety, product of the interference of the two polar varieties on the continuum they bound, a variety that, for this very reason, has its own distinctive characteristics. Since the mixing is achieved to variable extents, one actually has to deal with a whole set of mixed varieties".

37 Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm wrote about 50 plays: comedies, tragedies, plays with a realistic, fantastic, social or political background.

38 On the main proposals about the best possible language to be used on stage, and in particular on Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm's *al-luġa al-tāliṭa*, (Third Language) and Maḥmūd Taymūr's *al-'āmmiyya al-fuṣḥā* (Polished Dialect) see Dorigo 2006, 173-91 and Taymūr s.d.

Mawlā is not so much unable to read and study as unable to understand the perspectives of the written words. Herein lies the real danger, in this lack of balance, and not only, or mainly, in reading and studying. (Doss 1999, 71)

These observations are correct too. Writing in dialect is not a magic wand that in itself can solve a much deeper cultural problem.

Yet, in my opinion Madiha Doss does not sufficiently clarify which texts she is writing about. If referred to the theoretical, historical and philosophical texts written by Safouan I am afraid that her criticism hits the mark. If referred to Safouan's translation of *Othello* into dialect, I cannot agree. In fact, the tragedy does not possess difficulties so great that it is impossible to grasp. The Egyptian dialect used in translation definitely brings the play within reach of a larger number of readers than those keen on reading similar translations in MSA. So Safouan, in view of this, has achieved his purpose.

Doss' article ends with a question: "How will the language issue find a solution?" (Doss 1999, 71). The question still remains.

## 6 Safouan's Answer to Madiha Doss: Language, Power and Politics

Madiha Doss' article provoked Safouan's reaction, which is in an article published in the magazine *Aḥbār al-Adab*, 9th January 2000. The article's title is *al-Fuṣṣḥā, taqnīn sulṭawī* (MSA Power Codification) and it is written in MSA.<sup>39</sup> Safouan's reply revolves around the core topic of the relationship between language and power. The close link between language and power is the central theme in Safouan's writings, and it is also the theme Doss most neglects in her article. So, Safouan needs to reaffirm his deep political motives, and he does this as follows:

About 'coding', I would like to draw Dr. Doss' attention to the fact that it is power that codes and discards teaching the mother tongue at school as a language with its rules and eloquence. It is power that forces the study of MSA and supports not only its superiority but also its sacredness so as to receive a fake legitimacy from it. Choosing dialect is discarding such a coding. (Safouan 2001, 133)

So, Safouan's choice to write in dialect is a political one.

<sup>39</sup> The same article is included in the collection *al-Kitāba wa-l-sulṭa* (Writing and Power) with the title *Dawr al-kātib fī-l-muḡtama'* (The role of the Writer in Society), used as the source for the following extracts.

As for *Othello* itself, starting from his introduction, Safouan explains he did not mean to dedicate it to the man on the street, nor to men of letters: “and not even to the men of culture, or the experts of reading and writing (who are many) but to the men of letters endowed with intelligence (who are very few)” (Safouan 2001, 133). Who are the men of letters endowed with intelligence? We can guess from the general context that they may be those who examine things in a critical way, without religious-conservative prejudices. So, the introduction is actually written for people who have culture, while the translation is dedicated to the common man. Nor does Safouan see any contradiction between his choice to write in dialect and his primary purpose:

So, where is the contradiction between this speech and the purpose I aim at when I write in dialect, as long as my aim is in no way to acculturate Muḥammad ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Mawlā, but, rather, to create a new sensibility in him? A sensibility [...] about how the language he speaks is endowed with a hidden but enormous potential to create new worlds? (Safouan 2001, 133)

Safouan here claims he does not mean to acculturate the man on the street, but simply to create in him a new sensibility about the potential hidden in his mother tongue. But reading Shakespeare’s works broadens culture, and so reading them in dialect, for the common man, brings both general culture and refinement of taste, through discovery of the refined expressive possibilities to be found in dialect.

As for Doss’ remark that few people will read *Othello* in dialect, Safouan agrees, but takes this opportunity to explain why he chooses to translate plays, rather than other types of writing. He knows very well that readers are only a small number of educated people, but he wants to address many people, including those who are not educated. Therefore Shakespeare’s theatre is in his opinion the best possible choice because it addresses everyone. The theatre offers more possibilities than other cultural vehicles to go beyond the borders marked by small intellectual groups, especially if it is in dialect:

As to the opinion that only learned people will read *Othello* translated into dialect or, even fewer, just a handful of them, it is correct. Without any doubt, we are still at this point. And that is exactly the reason why I have taken to translating plays, since they address the hearing (and I have the pleasure to announce, by the way, that *Othello* will



be on stage next February, in Manṣūra)<sup>40</sup> [...], yet Shakespeare's theatre, like Sophocles' does not address this audience or that, but it addresses the being entrapped in speech, at any time, in any place [...]. And this is my first and strongest reason for choosing Shakespeare. (Safouan 2001, 134-5)

So, Safouan's choice of plays and dialect is motivated by his desire to address the highest number of possible readers, by means of lively characters, who speak a lively language. He states this in his answer to Doss' *muftarī* case.

Dr. Doss also thinks that the expression "God protect us from you, you ruthless" does not become the daughter of a Venetian notable, who should rather behave more appropriately to her social standing. But Desdemona [...] is an expert chatterer, she is gifted in dialectical reasoning, she can play music, dance and sing. Therefore, I can't see why she should not talk like others would do in her place in similar situations. Why should the translation tinge her only with a celestial blue colour? (Safouan 2001, 135-6)

Desdemona is a young, lively, dynamic woman, and her language has to show that. An 'azure' idealized translation would necessarily make the character fall into line, and Safouan rejects this. But the most interesting part of Safouan's article is, in my opinion, where he writes about the choice of *Othello* restating his lack of interest in traditional readings of the tragedy, remarking his interest in the political aspects, and drawing a striking parallel with the Egyptian situation:

My choice of *Othello*, as I explained in my introduction, is merely a political one. In fact, we are a people who do not listen to the majority, but to the leader's word, the one in charge, or the religious leader, who is to the community as the head is to the body. Othello is a leader indeed and a Moor but, unlike Dr. Doss, I don't bestow any importance on this. I would do so if Shakespeare had conceived *Othello* by himself, while *Othello* is originally an Italian story, similar to other stories Shakespeare read, that gave him inspiration for a tragedy of a man who is not content with being a General, but who is smitten with the image of his leadership, and who wants to be an exemplary leader in all he says and does. Then, he comes to see the truth, i.e. that he is a murderer who kills those he loves, obsessed with his exemplary appearance, and he comes to loathe

40 It was performed in al-Manṣūra, at the *Qaṣr ʿaṣāfa al-Manṣūra*, (al-Manṣūra Culture Castle) in 2000, directed by Dr. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Ġalīl.

his very human existence with its unavoidable limits, and sacrifices his kinsmen in the name of a God who makes him blind. Hasn't Egypt been all offered as a sacrifice, by some of its leaders? Here is the heart of the matter. (Safouan 2001, 135)

The parallel with the Egyptian political situation, from Nasser onwards, is striking. Othello kills those he loves, because he is made blind by his own obsession with his leadership. His bloody methods do not differ from those Egypt has been sadly familiar with, for a long time.

At the end of his reply to Doss, it is perhaps worth noticing that Safouan cannot resist writing a farewell joke, not void of a pinch of polemic: "In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to observe that I have chosen to write these words in MSA since they address Dr. Doss and her readers" (Safouan 2001, 136).

## 7 Translation as Challenge: *Othello* and Safouan's Revolutionary Linguistic-Political Stand

Safouan's provoking ideological position has been fully appreciated only by a few intellectuals. One of them is Sameh Hanna who states that Safouan's translation is only a means intended to question long-standing language habits with reference to its consequences in terms of identity and political awareness. In Safouan's mind language becomes a revolutionary weapon. Hanna writes: "Safouan used this translation as a means of questioning the unquestionable and challenging long-standing doxas regarding language and identity". (Hanna 2009, 166). I couldn't agree more. The doxas regarding language refer to the anathema of using dialect in tragedies. The doxas regarding identity refer to the people's consciousness confronting authorities.

In Safouan's translation, Othello, a kiss up kick down type of leader, shows very few superhuman talents. Safouan's Othello is particularly weak, unreliable, confused and not suitable to be a leader. The reader sees Othello's flaws in such a clear way that he cannot but feel the need to despise and deeply reject such an unworthy authority. In Hanna's article some striking examples can be found. In Act 4, i: 34-37, Iago is trying to deceive Othello, having him believe that Desdemona has lain with Cassio. He uses the verb 'lie' that has the double meaning of 'telling lies' and 'lie down'. Othello, confused and shocked by this pun, answers showing his increasing mental confusion:

IAGO Lie-

OTHELLO With her?

IAGO With her, on her, what you will

OTHELLO Lie with her? Lie on her? We say lie on her when they belie her! Lie with her, zounds, that's fulsome! - Handkerchief! Confessions! Handkerchief!

Safouan translates as follows:

ياجو: قَبَّحٌ<sup>41</sup>  
عَطِيلٌ: عليها؟  
ياجو: عليها، معها، زي ما أنت عايز.  
عَطِيلٌ: عليها، معها؟ الناس تقول قَبَّحٌ عليها لما يكون اتكلم بالباطل، قَبَّحٌ معها! ودم المسيح، دا  
شء بشع، المنديل! الإعتراقات! المنديل!  
(Safouan 1998, 112-13)

IAGO he was filthy

OTHELLO on her?

IAGO on her, with her, as you like it

OTHELLO with her? On her? People say (someone) was filthy to her when (he) had spoken untruthfully of her; filthy with her! Blood of Christ! Confessions! The Handkerchief!

(Hanna 2009, 173)

So, Safouan fully conveys the deep confusion dominating Othello's mind at that crucial moment. The verb *qabbaha*, which means 'to behave in an obscene or objectionable manner'<sup>42</sup> anticipates Othello's loss of control. Can such a mentally disordered and confused man ever be a good General? How can he commendably represent power? Does he not rather resemble the Arab dictators, against whom it is necessary to revolt? By means of a sort of identification between Othello and the Arab leaders, Safouan probably hopes to contribute to people's hatred against political authorities, and to show the need to revolt against them. He does not even hesitate to turn Othello into a common laughing stock if someone manages to cheat on him, even if it implies emphasizing the translation, as in the following example in Act 3, iii: 393, where Iago addresses Othello who insists on having damning evidence that his wife is unfaithful, and he asks him with offensive words if he would like to be the witness while his woman is being 'topped':

41 In a footnote Safouan here explains that he had to forego the pun in his translation, since it was impossible to convey in Egyptian dialect. See Safouan 1998, 112.

42 See Badawī, Hinds 1986, 682: "*qabbaha*: to behave in an obscene or objectionable manner".

IAGO ...Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on? | Behold her topped??

Safouan translates:

ياجو: ... تحب وبقك مفتوح زى الصنم، تتفرج عليها وهى بتتنط؟  
(Safouan 1998, 97)

IAGO ...Would you like to behold her topped gaping at her like a pagan idol?

Safouan's translation is here rougher than the original text. He adds the simile of the pagan idol, that irritates and exasperates the reader more and more. In fact a pagan idol is considered *par excellence* the symbol of superstition, falsehood, underdevelopment, backwardness, infidelity, in Egypt and, in general, in the whole world. This is exactly the idea Safouan has in mind when he thinks about the Arab leaders in general, particularly Egyptian leaders. As for the translation of 'topped', the Egyptian vernacular verb chosen is *bititnatt*, a verb deriving from the Arabic root *ntt* which means 'to jump'. With this verb form, that in Egyptian dialect is a passive form, the obscene picture presenting itself to an Egyptian mother tongue results strengthened. So, Safouan's Othello is not only weak and mentally confused, but he is also the object of obscene and offensive references. He is overtly ridiculed by the translator, that does his best to make him totally unacceptable as a General, as a political leader, and also as a husband and a man. So, Safouan's revolutionary linguistic-political stand becomes clear in his translational choices as well as in his linguistic choice.

But the real question still awaiting an answer is if the Egyptian dialect can be a literary language. Has Safouan succeeded in using the Egyptian dialect in a sublime form? Is using dialect in writing instead of MSA a realistic, utopian or dystopian proposal?

## 8 Egyptian Dialect as a Poetic Weapon?

Has Safouan's Egyptian dialect touched the deepest strings and emotions of his readers? It is necessary to answer this question to prove or disprove Safouan's theory. If a linguistic revolution is a necessary stepping stone on the path to democracy, and if such a revolution is not possible unless a poetic language substitutes the cold intellectuality of MSA, either Safouan's Egyptian dialect is a poetic language or Safouan's plan is destined to fail. However, answering this question is not easy, because it deals with an aesthetic/poetic issue. The answer, which is complicated in itself, becomes even more so considering that my opinion is not that of an Egyptian native speaker's. Can a foreign reader give a reasonable opinion

about an aesthetic/poetic/linguistic topic concerning a language that is not their own? Without a doubt, this reader is at a disadvantage. Yet, on the other hand, this reader may have some advantages too. Being a foreigner puts this reader in an unbiased position when facing the different Arab language varieties. Unencumbered by the social/religious conditionings that influence many Egyptian citizens, a foreign reader will probably either read in MSA or in dialect without preconceived judgements about prestige attached to the language in the text.

My attempt to answer is necessarily the outcome of my personal reading experience that at first was an individual reading, followed by a group reading carried out with two Arabic language professors, both Egyptian dialect mother tongue speakers.<sup>43</sup> This was in the summer of 2014. One of the purposes of my reading was to check if Safouan had succeeded in demonstrating that the Egyptian dialect is able to convey in a sublime way the greatest poet God ever created: William Shakespeare. In fact, Safouan's aim was to show that the Egyptian dialect can be a poetic language just as Italian was for Dante. When I read Safouan's translation of *Othello* with the two Egyptian Arabic teachers in Cairo, they initially showed some slight resistance,<sup>44</sup> which was soon overcome. Some of the parts translated, which are sublime in Shakespeare's original text too, have particularly fascinated mother tongue informants. Here follow some examples. In Act 2, i: 67-73, set in Cyprus, Cassio has already arrived, and he is waiting for Othello. He is a bit worried because a terrible storm has separated his ship from the General's. Unexpectedly Iago arrives and Desdemona is on board with him. Cassio comments on her arrival with very lyrical words:

43 They both have an Arabic Language University degree, obtained at Cairo University, and they both work as Arabic teachers in secondary schools in Cairo.

44 They did not understand my interest in the translations in dialect, and they tried to convince me to read only those in MSA. They thought the translations into MSA would probably be better, simply because they were written in MSA. Their confusion increased when I asked them to read the translations in MSA too, because they could not understand whether I was more interested in dialect or in MSA. With some difficulty I had to explain that, to my foreign ear, both MSA and the Egyptian dialect sound equally beautiful, and that I do not perceive either of them to be better or superior. The text was new for them. They did not even know the storyline. While reading, they became deeply involved with it. One of them was so involved that, reading out loud in dialect, he instinctively started reciting. Moreover, he refused to read the female parts, but also Iago's part, that deeply disgusted him. So, I had to read the female roles, and also Iago's.

CASSIO

He's had most favourable and happy speed:  
 Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,  
 The guttered rocks and congregated sands,  
 Traitors encarp'd to clog the guiltless keel,  
 Having some sense of beauty, do omit  
 Their mortal natures, letting go safely by  
 The divine Desdemona.

كاسيو: السحر أمّن له الطريق،  
 العواصف نفسها، البجور العاليه، والرياح النابحة،  
 الصخور المتساقطة والرمال المتراكمة،  
 كل المكامن الخائنه الراقده تحت الميه عشان تعقل بطن السفينه،  
 كلها نسيت طبايعها المميته  
 كأنما حسست بالجمال، عشان تسيب  
 دسدموئه الإلاهيه تمر بسلام.  
 (Safouan 1998, 50)

I marked in red the Egyptian dialect parts, while the rest of the extract, can be either read in MSA or in dialect, as in the 'Third Language'. The mix of the two varieties here is a good example of translation in the variety called Middle or Mixed Arabic.<sup>45</sup> I then examined the rhyming sound *ā*, marked in blue. This rhyme is repeated in the extract 15 times, and it gives the language a very pleasant, musical quality. The rhythm in the extract is regular. It is built up by means of several subjects contributing to create a climax and to increase the reader's suspense until the verb finally satisfies one's expectation with its sublime meaning.

Of course the English text too presents recurring sounds and internal rhymes. Here again, I marked in blue the *s* sounds that recur 15 times. So, rhythm, climax and originality fill the text here. The musical quality of the extract is superb, both in English and in translation. In fact at this point both the Egyptian readers reacted by stopping and repeatedly exclaiming: "Allah! Allah! Allah!". It is not a prayer but rather a spontaneous cry of wonder, used in Egypt to express appreciation for something. So, at this point of his translation Safouan has succeeded in deeply touching the sensibility of the mother tongue reader, hitting the mark, i.e. the purpose aimed at.

Another telling example of the successful use of dialect is at the end of Act 4, iii: 85-102, where Emilia utters her speech about equality between husband and wife:

45 As stated above, the term 'Middle Arabic' in itself is ambiguous, because it can have different definitions. Here it is used according to Lentin's definition.

EMILIA [...]

But I do think it is **their** husbands' faults  
 If wives do fall. Say that they slack **their** duties,  
 And pour our treasures into foreign laps;  
 Or **else** break out with peevish jealousies,  
 Throwing restraint upon us; or say **they** strike us,  
 Or scant our former **having** in despite -  
 Why, **we have** galls, and though **we have some** grace,  
 Yet **have we some** revenge. Let husbands know  
**Their** wives **have** sense like them: they see and smell,  
 And **have their** palates both for sweet and sour  
 As husbands **have**. What is it that **they** do,  
 When **they** change us for others? Is it sport?  
**I think** it is. And **doth** affection breed it?  
**I think** it **doth**. Is't frailty that thus errs?  
 It is so too. And **have we** not affections,  
 Desires for sport, and frailty, as men **have**?  
 Then **let them** use us well: **else let them** know  
 The **ills** we do, **their ills** instruct us so.

As marked in different colours, the extract is rich in consonances, repetitions and rhymes. These features provide the language with such musicality and such a pleasant quality that, along with the images conveyed, they grant the reader the intellectual enjoyment Shakespeare is justly famous for.

Here is Safouan's translation:

إميليا: ... لكن أنا اعتقادي إنَّ الغلطة غلطة الرجال،  
 إذا كانت نسوانهم بتقع في المنكر، افرض إنهم أهملوا واجباتهم  
 وراحوا يرموا الحب اللي من حقنا في حجر غير حجرنا،  
 أو من غير كده ولا كدا يقرفونا بغيرتهم  
 ويحاسبونا على الخرجة والطلعة، أو افرضي إنهم يضربونا  
 أو يقللوا المصروف انتقام ليه،  
 ما احنا كمان عندنا الصفر، وإذا كان عندنا لطف  
 فبجدنا كمان غل، خلى الأزواج تعرف  
 إن زوجاتهم زيها زيهم، بتشوف وتشم،  
 عندهم حلق يدوق الحلوة والمرّة  
 زي اللي عندهم، آيه اللي بيعملوه  
 لما يبجروا ورا غيرنا؟ رياضة؟  
 أفكر كدا، هل الميل هو السبب؟  
 أفكر أيوه. هل ضعف وبيتوهم عن الطريق؟  
 دا كمان أيوه. طيب هل احنا ما عندناش ميل؟  
 غية رياضة وضعف زي اللي عند الرجال؟  
 إذن خليهم يعاملونا كويس، وإلا خليهم يعرفوا  
 أذانا ليهم اتعلمناه من أذانهم لينا.  
 (Safouan 1998, 139-40)

Safouan translates this part fully and faithfully, using mainly dialect syntax and words. As for the rhythm, repetitions and internal rhymes, they are as present in this translation as in the original text. The different colours mark them. Safouan's great effort to convey the original text in its details and musicality is evident here, and the result is magnificent. To achieve it, Safouan used the very same writing techniques used by Shakespeare.

In conclusion, I report another extract where Iago is speaking, giving his masterly definition of a deserving woman. It is in Act 2, i: 145-54:

IAGO She that was ever fair and never proud,  
 Had a tongue at will, and yet was never loud;  
 Never lacked gold, and yet went never gay;  
 Fled from her wish, and yet said "Now I may";  
 She that being angered, her revenge being neigh,  
 Bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly;  
 She that in wisdom never was so frail  
 To change the cod's head for salmon's tail;  
 She that could think and never disclose her mind:  
 See suitors following and not look behind

Here is Safouan's translation:

ياجو: الجميله دايمًا وعمرها ما اتغرت،  
 اللي لسانها ملكها، ومع كده عمره ما على،  
 اللي ذهبها كتير لكن عمرها ما اتبهرت  
 اللي احجمت عن رغبتها ساعة ما قالت "ممکن دالوقت"،  
 اللي لما غضبت، وكان انتقامها في إيدها،  
 مسكت نفسها وصرفت زعلها،  
 اللي عقلها عمره ما نقص  
 لدرجة أنها تبدل الكويس بالوحش،  
 اللي تعرف تفكر لكن عمرها ما تبوح بسرها،  
 اللي المعجبين يبقوا وراها  
 لكن عمرها ما تدور وشها.  
 (Safouan 1998, 53)

Only in line 152, the fourth from the end in the extract translated, does Safouan simplify the line generically mentioning "good" and "bad", instead of reporting the metaphor of "the cod's head for salmon's tail". Doing so he makes the line poorer but on the whole his translation is faithful and sublime. The different colours mark repetitions and rhymes, that are as numerous, pleasant, and musical as in the original text. In fact, here like



elsewhere, both mother tongue readers reacted<sup>46</sup> by crying out: "Allah! Allah! Allah!" to express their profound intellectual and aesthetic enjoyment.<sup>47</sup> On reading the text in MSA they did not have the same enthusiastic reaction.

So, the Egyptian dialect used here is indeed sublime. It does not show it possesses any such intrinsic limit as to prevent the translator from trying to convey Shakespeare's rich language nor does it show it has any specific limits superior or inferior to those of other languages, including MSA. Therefore it may actually become a poetic weapon in the hands of the people able to boost a process leading to a linguistic-political revolution.

## 9 Concluding Remarks

The aim of this article was to investigate how language can be a proxy for social and political issues. In Safouan's view only by abolishing MSA in writing, and taking up the Egyptian dialect in its place, can a slow process leading to democracy be started. As long as the written language is in the hands of power, as long as the gap between élite and people remains, the élite will use it to keep and defend their prestigious position to the detriment of the people.

However, in order to take up the Egyptian dialect in writing, it needs to become a poetic language. Safouan's translation of *Othello* aims at showing that if the Egyptian dialect can worthily convey Shakespeare's poetic world, it can also be considered a poetic language worth being taken up in writing.

The analysis of Safouan's translation of *Othello* shows that the sublime can be achieved in Egyptian dialect. Yet, the feedback to Safouan's *Othello* has been very poor. In fact, there has been hardly any feedback. Apart from Madiha Doss' and Sameh Hanna's articles, little or nothing relevant has been written on the topic. Nor has *Othello*'s performance been kissed by fortune. Safouan's *Othello* was only performed in al-Manşūra, at the *Qaşr ʔaqāfa al-Manşūra*, (al-Manşūra Culture Castle) in 2000, directed by Dr. Ahmed 'Abd al-Galil. More than the language used on stage, it seems that the music was appreciated. In fact, the Ministry of Culture awarded the play the First Prize for music, while no records concerning any debate about the language used on stage can easily be found. So, indifference was the dominating feedback to Safouan's *Othello*.

Does this mean that Safouan's translation is esthetically worthless? I do not think so. *Nemo propheta in patria*. The text analysis I carried out shows

46 Considering the cultural background of my informants and their initial opposition to reading *Othello* in the Egyptian dialect, I find their reaction significant.

47 This extract definitively put an end to any resistance the Egyptian professors had against reading in dialect. In this vernacular version, one of them unexpectedly dedicated the extract to his wife. She was very pleased and grateful, but it did not even cross her mind to ask why it was in dialect and not in Modern Standard Arabic!

that Safouan's translation is in some places superb. Moreover, Egyptian dialect mother tongue speakers were repeatedly sent into raptures while reading Safouan's *Othello*, which definitely proves that the Egyptian dialect can be a poetic language.

Will Safouan's revolutionary proposal become reality one day? Will dialects substitute MSA in writing in a futuristic democratic Arab world? Is it only a utopian dream? At the moment it seems to be indeed. Only time will really answer this question.

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## **Surveying Georgia's Past** **On The Use Of Cartographic Sources** **For Caucasian History**

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**Abstract** This study represents the historical geographer's approach to the History of cartography. Modern historians of the Roman Empire and archaeologists misuse geographical information from Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus–Ptolemy's 3rd Map of Asia in the standard set of twenty-seven maps, including a world map, all in the Ptolemaic model, with twenty-six regional maps. In fact, modern writers on ancient history think that the story of maps is linear–beginning, middle and end. But the case of Ptolemy is typical in that his work began to have a powerful influence in the fifteenth century. After Ptolemy's death in the second half of the second century, however, his Geography had disappeared for a thousand years, and with it the idea of coordinate-based mapping according to a mathematical grid system. No original copies from Ptolemy's own time have survived. A medieval Greek copy without maps only reappeared in fourteenth-century Florence, with maps first drawn by Florentine cosmographers in further copies in 1415. Here we have an antinomia, an apparent contradiction, which nothing but the History of cartography solves as “Ptolemy's paradox”. Ptolemy's maps of Roman Britain makes a striking contrast with the map showing our present state of knowledge about the British Isles. It has long been recognized as a puzzling fact that, in Ptolemy's map of the British Isles, the shape of Britain is turned abruptly to the east from the latitude 55° north, corresponding to Scotland, so as to make a right angle with the southern part of the country–England and Wales. But what is unknown still is how Colchis (West Georgia), Ibería of the Caucasus (East Georgia), Albània of the Caucasus (Alania / Daghestan), Upper or Greater Armenia, Media (Osroenê / upper Mesopotamia) and Assyria are misaligned west-east, and distorted as well. The “dogleg” appearance of the Mescit Mountains (currently Turkey) is a distorted feature which occurs exclusively on Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus. Since A.D. 114 the three Kingdoms of Colchis, Ibería and Albània of the Caucasus had been federated with Rome. Since A.D. 117 the neighbouring provinces of Greater Armenia, Media and Assyria had been annexed to the Roman Empire, when Ptolemy composed his system of geography about A.D. 150. As a result, the Ptolemaic map of the Caucasus is quite useless in the history of the Caucasus. Ignoring the set of Ptolemy's maps of all the countries and even the question of Ptolemy's distortion, however, modern historians of ancient Rome and archaeologists in the Caucasus consult Ptolemy's 3rd Map of Asia as a source of primary information.


**Summary** 1. The Paradox of Ptolemy. – 2 Ptolemy's Maps at Fault. – 3 The 'Dogleg' Appearance of the Mescit Mountains. – 4 The Gates of Ibería or the Caucasian Gates. – 5 Are the Kartveli the People called Kardueni or Cardveni in Trajan's Time? – 6 Bayburt Fort is Ibería of the Caucasus in A.D. 928. – 7 In Modern Times. – 8 The Falsification of Polo's Text and the Authorized 'Testo Ottimo della Crusca'. – 9 All-Georgia on Portolan Charts in the 1330s. – 10 Conclusions.

**Keywords** Ptolemy. Distortion. Georgian-Gorge. Gates-of-Ibería-or-Caucasian. Caspian-Gates. Alan-Gates.

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**DOI 10.14277/2385-3042/AnnOr-53-17-3**

Submission 2016-12-20 | Acceptance 2017-04-10

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## 1 The Paradox of Ptolemy

By the time of Marinus of Tyre (fl. A.D. 107-114) and Claudius Ptolemy (A.D. c.90-168), Greek and Roman influences in cartography had been focused to a considerable extent into one tradition. Almost all our knowledge of Marinus is derived from Ptolemy's *Geography* about A.D. 150. Notwithstanding his immense importance in the study of the History of cartography, however, Claudius Ptolemy remains a complicated figure to assess.

Many questions about his work remain unanswered. Very little is known about Ptolemy the man. Moreover, in relation to the cartographic component in his writings, we must remember that no manuscript copy of Ptolemy's *Geography* earlier than the end of the fourteenth century has come down to us. The oldest extant Ptolemaic maps are products of the scholarly exertions of Manuel Chrysoloras after A.D. 1397 and manual labour of European map-makers about A.D. 1415 (*Codex Urbinas Graecus 82*).<sup>1</sup>

Ptolemy's work lay hidden for countless years and found no one to bring it to light. Most serious of all is the whole debate about the true authorship and provenance of the general and regional maps that accompany the versions of the first surviving copies in Greek dating only from the second decade of the fifteenth century. As we elaborate in the upcoming sections, it was the work on geographical coordinates that a small group of scholars carried out in the 1410s and 1460s at Florence and Vienna, and nearby Klosterneuburg. Although Leo Bagrow, Gerald Crone, Roberto Almagià and other authors claim it cannot be established whether maps were drawn in connection with the *Geography* in the second century of the Christian era, a rereading of the early Greek version may demonstrate that such maps existed. And yet, there is no general agreement on this question, and it illustrates how the whole subject of Ptolemy's role in cartographic development must be handled with caution (Harley, Woodward 1987, 177-8).

Corresponding to our natural perception of time, we commonly consider time and mapping experience in the physical artefacts we now call maps as proceeding linearly from the Past to the Present, from a unique predeces-

1 Chrysoloras, a Greek scholar from Constantinople, was invited to the first Chair of Greek Letters in the Studium of Florence. The Byzantine monk Maximos Planudes is also credited with having found a copy of Ptolemy's work. But when and how the scholar Planudes (c.1255-1305) came across a Greek manuscript of Ptolemy's *Geography*, which had disappeared for many years, is unclear and in need of judgement (Berggren, Jones 2000, 43, 46, 49-51; but see note 65 on Kugéas 1909, 115-8). Yet it seems in 1295 that this monk of Chora at last found a copy, sadly lacking maps, of the *Geographike Hyphegesis* of Claudius Ptolemy of Alexandria. In a poem Planudes refers enthusiastically to Ptolemy's work and world map; cf. Dilke O. and Dilke M. 1994, 117. The more specific argument that the oldest extant Ptolemaic maps are products of the scholarly exertions of Maximos Planudes about A.D. 1300, however, depends primarily on a poem which had vanished for many years.

sor and successor. Unfortunately, this is dangerous, scientifically false and an all too common mistake in those who are not familiar with the History of cartography-map history. Chapters in the History of cartography do not proceed linearly with time. The oldest surviving copy of Ptolemy's Greek text was actually compiled more than a thousand years after he wrote in the second century. The last attestation dates back to the sixth century. There was utter silence then. The art of delineating maps, exhibiting either the figure of the whole earth as far as it has been explored, or that of particular countries, was known to the ancients. Some of these maps are mentioned by Herodotus and early Greek writers, but no Ptolemy's maps prior to those which were formed in 1415 from his listed geographical coordinates in order to illustrate his *Geography* have reached our times (Codazzi 1950, 15, 23-4, 28-9).

Ptolemy's *Geographike Hyphegesis* is a "Guide to Drawing a World" in eight books but better known as the "Geography". The paradox is that Ptolemy's map is more commonly used as a creation before the time of portolan charts in the early 1300s whereas it was first constructed in the 1400s. The oldest-known dated portolan chart was made by Pietro Vesconte of Genoa in 1311.

In any event, all that can be said with certainty is that Ptolemy provided raw material for future map-makers to work, and for modern writers to write fiction instead of history. In general, the historical geographer follows Bagrow's reasoning in concluding that manuscript and printed maps based on Ptolemy from the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries cannot be regarded as reliable primary sources for answering questions on ancient geography. Bagrow even argued that Ptolemy's text must be inauthentic on the basis that some place-names demonstrably post-date Ptolemy's lifetime (Bagrow 1945, 318-87).

So how representative are those place-names? The object of this paper is to show how Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus seriously distorted the physical truth. Specifically, my analysis will focus on the following research questions:<sup>2</sup>

2 The work in this paper is an elaboration of ideas on my lecture delivered at the Vatican on 27 November 2013. H.E. Khétévane Bagration de Moukhrani, Ambassador of Georgia to the Holy See and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, hosted a guest lecture on 'Georgia in the European Identity.' The occasion was the Third Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, EU. H.R.H. Princess Khétévane Bagration de Moukhrani gave a 'Guest of Honour' address in which she pointed out how Georgia actively participated in the EU's Eastern Partnership programme. In her lecture H.E. Irena Vaišvilaitė, Ambassador of Lithuania to the Holy See, emphasized the importance of cultural, religious and social features in defining European identity (*Georgia and European Perspectives*). In her lecture Prof. Dr. Patrizia Licini, Geographer of the Italian Association (A.Ge.I.), called attention to historical Georgia, which was Europe on the Juan de la Cosa oceanic portolan chart of 1500 ([www.mappaemundi.eu.ge](http://www.mappaemundi.eu.ge). *Il contributo della Georgia al processo della costruzione europea*).



- a. Why did modern historians of the Roman Empire and archaeologists misuse geographical information from Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus?
- b. How might historical cartography create a Georgian identity that is not fixed over time but articulated in time, using legal documents and certified maps of location, plans, specifications, estimates, and statements?

A map is, after all, thought to illustrate the geography of a nation's domain, the legitimacy of a country's ancestry, as well as the nature of the people ruled over by a sovereign state. Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus, however, is made up of badly constructed parts. The latitude of Pontus is correctly known, and as an inscription says, the proper Pontus lies in latitude forty degrees north, inside what is now Turkey. It is bounded by modern Georgia (Colchis) on the north. Nonetheless, Ptolemy's Colchis (West Georgia), Iberia of the Caucasus (East Georgia) and Albania of the Caucasus (Alvania, Daghestan) are five degrees too far north, occupying the same latitudes as East Crimea. From these authentic facts it results that modern historians and archaeologists are deceived when they, aware or unaware, assume the Ptolemy map of the Caucasus as a resource for making their works sound coherent. Instead of assuming that the geographical testimony of Ptolemy is not true, they assume that the presentation of the Roman past flows naturally from this muddled and garbled source, largely indifferent to physical reality. In fact, from the point of view of the History of cartography, the source is a Renaissance revival of spurious knowledge lost in the long centuries when Ptolemy's *Geography* was not known nor read.

## 2 Ptolemy's Maps at Fault

One might suppose that Ptolemaic space has had a continuous existence from antiquity to the present, but that is not the case. Through most of the middle ages, Ptolemy's *Geography* was unknown. At the time of the last attestation in the sixth century, Cassiodorus the prime minister of Emperor Theodoric recommended Ptolemy's Greek codex to the monks of Squillace, high up on the Calabrian hills, Gothic Italy. With Ptolemy then disappeared the great geographers of antiquity. However, the fortunes of Ptolemy's *Geography* changed abruptly around the year 1406. The explanation of the *Geography's* renewed popularity is to be found in 1397 when Manuel Chrysoloras arrived from Constantinople to Florence via Venice

Details at the site <http://www.easydiplomacy.com/conference-georgia-in-the-european-identity-27-november-2013/?lang=en//>.

bringing a copy of Ptolemy's *Geography* in Greek. Iacopus of Angelus Acciajolus from Scarperia, a Florentine in Rome, completed Chrysoloras' translation into Latin in 1406; in the preface he tells us that Chrysoloras was his *praeceptor*.

Certainly Iacopus' translation had no maps according to Vespasiano da Bisticci, and the family of manuscripts of Ptolemy's *Geography* with attached maps can be dated back to 1415. It was then that first Francesco di Lapacino made maps in Greek in the Greek codices and maps in Latin to accompany the Latin versions in Florence (Mai 1859, 515-6).

Its impact is shown by the number of surviving fifteenth-century manuscripts of the Latin version illustrated with maps and by the succession of the early printed editions. In 1475 the first printed edition of Ptolemy's *Geography* was issued at Vicenza. It consisted of a Latin translation but contained no maps. The first issue with maps came out at Bologna in 1477, Rome in 1478 and 1490, Ulm in 1482 and 1486. Other world maps quickly assimilated elements from Ptolemy's.

However, not all map-makers were affected by that mania. We see little trace of Ptolemy maps in Andrea Bianco's world map of 1436. We see no trace of a Ptolemaic copying method on any early portolan charts. And yet, the oldest extant portolan chart is the Pisan Chart dating from between 1275 and 1291 - that is, eleven centuries after Ptolemy's *Geography*.

The most important copies of Ptolemy's *Geography* are beautiful large-format parchment codices containing illuminated maps. These are of two types: world maps showing the whole surface of the earth and sea, and regional maps. All manuscripts containing maps have the world map laid out according to Ptolemy's first map projection, except for the manuscripts of so-called K version, which employs the second projection, but they fall into two different classes according to the number of regional maps they contain. The traditional class displays twenty-six regional maps, which begin with Britain and end with Taprobana Insula, modern Sri Lanka. Such are ten maps of Europe, four of Africa (Roman Lybia), and twelve of Asia according to Ptolemy (Ptol. *Geography*, book 8.2). The Latin translation was printed in many times from 1475 (Vicenza) on, with revisions of the text and additions of modern maps progressively depicting new lands and uncharted seas. However, old and new maps were framed in the Ptolemaic rediscovered grid of latitude and longitude circles, by which the position of any place on earth could be defined.

The fact is that Ptolemy's values for latitude were in error by up to 5°; longitude was even worse because there was no reliable method to determine geographic longitude, a problem that remained until the invention of the chronometer near the end of the eighteenth century.

Ptolemy drew his prime meridian at the Canary Islands, or, as the Greeks and Romans call them, *Fortunatae Insulae*, on the far western edge of the

known world, but as he went further east, errors accumulated. By the time his estimate reached eastern China (*SINARUM REGIO*), the world between the Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean and China stretched out through 180 degrees of longitude horizontally. The inhabited world known to Ptolemy did not yet extend eastward much beyond the Ganges and *Sērikē*, the Silk Country, that represents the Chinese terminus of the Silk road. Finally, his known world covered about 80 degrees of latitude vertically from the Equator to the Arctic Circle and North Pole (Berggren, Jones 2000, 33. Codazzi 1950, 9-10).

The problem is that the latitudes and longitudes of Ptolemy are widely different from modern reckoning, but the places and their distances being still the same, as they ever were, we have to consider what led to his idea of measurements and distanced. The whole known world, according to Ptolemy, had 180° 0' of longitude, extending horizontally from 0° 00' at the *Fortunatae Insulae* or Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean. Ptolemy connected Borneo, the Philippines, and Formosa into one line of coast, which he supposed joined to the south coast of China, and here shut in a large ocean gulf, with our Singapore and Borneo at its extremities.

However, Ptolemy made the mistake of stretching Asia out eastward to reach far beyond its real dimensions. Today we know that this distance is actually about 130 degrees of longitude horizontally around the globe, instead of 180. He made a big mistake. Ptolemy's erroneous estimate of the size of the world and his eastern extension of Asia made the distance west from Europe to India seem much smaller than it actually is. Notwithstanding Ptolemy's biggest mistake, and having been followed by institutions, Cristoforo Colombo sailed westward of the Canary Islands, for, on the evidence of Ptolemaic maps in which he had faith, India was at the same latitude. We see it in his copy of Ptolemy's *Geography* printed at Rome in 1478. In fact, he sailed for the Western "Indies" in 1492. But between 1497 and 1504 Americo Vespucci made four voyages to that fourth part of the world which was ever after to bear his name—America. On the authority of *Cosmographiae Introductio* printed at Saint-Dié of Lotharingia (Lorraine) to give America its name on 25th April 1507, the Reign and Empire of the Romans at the time, cosmographers understood that a fourth continent as large as America stood between Europe and Asia. New lands would be discovered, new maps would be drawn. And European explorers and cosmographers would eventually correct Ptolemy's mistakes.

Published in Antwerp in 1570, the great *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* of Abraham Ortelius was the first of the modern atlases, the work that led masters of maps definitely out of the Ptolemaic wilderness. Early in the fifteenth century the geography of the second century was rediscovered. The fact was that Ptolemy was all wrong but the mathematized space of Ptolemy's grid covering the whole of the globe was infinitely extendable from observations of the positions of celestial bodies in the heavens.

For a very long time many, indeed most, maps were not constructed within the Ptolemaic space, especially in the middle ages. Portolan charts in the meanwhile were a type of sea map designed to be of practical use to mariners by detailing sailing directions and coastal geography of the Mediterranean, Aegean (Greek) and Black Seas. During the Roman Empire, the Greek and Latin name for the Black Sea was Euxine Pontus, or the Hospitable Sea. Portolan charts were world maps for navigators. They began as mariners' sea charts during the thirteenth century, developing first among the mariners of Pisa, Ancona, Genoa and Venice, and then among the Catalans and Mallorcans. The origin of portolan charts is unknown. However, the compass directions drawn on them indicate the nautical origin of the chart from the use of the magnetic compass. Modern historical geographers call them compass-charts.

In any case, portolan charts in the 1300s are much more correct than Ptolemy's maps constructed on his original projections in the 1400s and 1500s. Anyway, surviving maps were not compiled by Ptolemy himself. The scientific implication of this is that we have no copies of ancient maps based on Ptolemy. Therefore we must constantly question the accuracy of the Ptolemaic texts that came down to us.

In 1466 Ptolemy's map of Britain at first sight is grotesquely inaccurate (Appendix, fig. 1). This is Ptolemy's 1st Map of Europe in the traditional series. Certainly something is wrong here. The map-maker turned Scotland north of the Tay River through 90 degrees so that Britain bends suddenly to the east instead of running broadly south to north. We see it in Nicolaus Germanus' manuscript copy of Ptolemy's world and regional maps displaying Ptolemy's geographical conceptions in 1466. With no exception, however, the maps examined here are the same in all editions. In Florence Nicolaus created the illuminated manuscript of Ptolemy's *Cosmographia* in the Latin version of Iacopo d'Angelo da Scarperia and made the world and 26 regional maps for Borso d'Este, the Duke of Modena.<sup>3</sup>

It has long been recognized as a puzzling fact that, in Ptolemy's map of the British Isles (*ALBION INSULA BRITANICA. IBERNIA INSULA*), the shape of Britain is turned abruptly to the east from the latitude 55° north,

3 In a letter dated March 15, 1466, Borso d'Este, the Duke of Modena, gave the news that "domino Nicolao germanico" had come from Florence and the Duke had obtained a commission to examine his version of Ptolemy's text and maps; Modena, Regio Archivio di Stato di Modena, Cancelleria ducale, Archivio proprio a. 1466; Camera Ducale, Reg.to mandati 1466, f. 125v. Sources edited by Fischer 1902: 113, 2. Borsius Dux [Clarissimo viro Ludovico Casellae referendario et cancellario nostro secreto]; 114, 2a. Borsius Dux [Mandato. Aristoteles de Bruturijs scripsit xxx marcij 1466], 2b. Borsius Dux [Mandato. Aristoteles de Bruturijs scripsit viii aprilis 1466]; 115-16, 5. Lobhymnus des Domnus Nicolaus Germanus auf Italien; 116-21, Widmungsschreiben des Domnus Nicolaus Germanus an den Fürsten Borso von Este und den Papst Paul II. The emended word *Cosmographia* for *Geographia* appears in Iacobus's first Latin translation in Rome.

corresponding to Scotland, so as to make a right angle approximately with the southern part of the country—England and Wales. The strong west-to-east distortion of maps based on Ptolemy's deficient source for the knowledge of Britain, Italy, France, Spain and the Sea of Azov, is known to the History of cartography, but what is unknown still, as I shall try to present it in the next section, is how the fractured structures of the Mescit Mountains, or as the ancients call them, *moschivis montes*, are misaligned west-east, and distorted on Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus, the 3rd Map of Asia in the series. The Mescit Mountains are in what is now northeast Turkey. Not surprisingly, therefore, the geologic structure of the Mescit Mountains is wrongly represented on the map by contour lines based on the shape of a right angle, having two long corridors which give clear, separate channels to travel through.

The 27 Ptolemaic old maps are from Nicolaus Germanus, with the world map given in Ptolemy's first projection of the sphere. However Nicolaus added the new maps of France (*Gallia novella*), Italy (*Novella Italia*), Spain (*Spania novella*) and The Holy Land (*Palestina, Terra sancta*). The four additional *Tabulae Novae* of the manuscript edition are France, Italy, Spain, The Holy Land and Palestine. In fact, in 1466 they represent contemporary countries as opposed to the countries of Ptolemy's time.

The effect of Ptolemy's coordinates on maps drawn from them is also borne out in a number of other examples in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The point is that Ptolemy's *Geography* originally comprises a list of some 8,000 coordinates of places on the earth in the second century of the Christian era. In general, maps drawn from Ptolemy's coordinates are repeated without change.<sup>4</sup> They are therefore inaccurate in many places, and distorted. However, editions of Ptolemy's text and maps multiplied after 1406 in Greek and Latin versions until they were expunged in the 1570s.

Another paradox was that Ptolemy's old maps gradually came to be no more than a traditional adjunction to Ptolemy's *Geography*, and more and more modern maps "extra Ptolemeum positae" were added to successive editions of Ptolemy's *Geography* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Even in Italy where Ptolemy's *Geography* was reborn in 1406 and Ptolemy's maps were born in 1415, this trend is apparent. The printed edition of Francesco Berlingeri, Florence, 1482, had four modern maps; Ptolemy's *Geography* printed at Ulm in 1482 presented maps of Spain, Italy, Gaul (France), The Holy Land, the countries of the North, and, for

4 All coordinates are from Stückelberger 2009, 1. Teilband, 122-33. See also 2. Teilband, 5. Buch, Kapitel 1-8 Asien, 480, 1. Karte (Türkei), Kapitel 10-13, Asien, 3. Karte (Kolchis, Armenien); 523, Asien, 1. Karte Klein-Armenien; 543, Asien, 3. Iberien; 544-45, Asien, 3. Karte Albanien 12. Kapitel Albanien/Aserbaidshjan [Asien, 3. Karte]; 547, Asien, 3. Karte Gross-Armenien.

the first time, a map of Eastern Europe and the Baltic littoral: the "Tabula Moderna Prussiae, Sueciae, Norvegiae, Gotciae et Russiae, extra Ptolemeum posita" which has a special explanatory chapter to itself in the 1486 edition (book III.5).

After Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus, we have no other delineation of the Caucasus, till much more recent ages. Although modern maps of Spain, Italy, France, The Holy Land, Prussia, Sweden, Norway, Gothia and Russia were first introduced to the reader as "Tabulae modernae extra Ptolemeum positae" and used as adjustment layers to alter the Ptolemaic set of 27 traditional maps that were not the work of Ptolemy himself but had been executed in accordance with his method in the 1460s and the early 1480s, European map-makers and cosmographers had to wait for another two centuries before Cristoforo Castelli could make the first map of modern western Georgia (Colchis renamed Mingrelia). Castelli's map bears the title *Totius Colchidis, Hodie Mengrelliae a Corace amne ad Phasim usque Descriptio* (Palermo, BC, Fondo Castelli, 3QqE92). It covers the Colchian region from the K'odori River (*Corax*) to the Phasis River, or, as the Georgians call it, Rioni (Lamberti 1654, 210). No doubt, the K'odori mountain valley and river mark the northern edge of Georgia (Colchis). The map was printed from a copperplate engraving at Naples in 1654. (Lamberti 1654, "Tavola De' Capitoli", Castelli's map, attachment. Guiorgazze 1977, 405, N. 525 as explanation of plate N. 524. Licini 1980, 1st map, La Mingrelia, disegno; 1989, 341-42; 2001, 341, N. 1).

Beginning in the 1400s and continuing in the 1500s, Ptolemy's map of Britain is seriously distorted in orientation compared to modern maps, a reflection of the incomplete and inaccurate descriptions of road systems and trade routes at Ptolemy's disposal in the second century, so that north-south distances are greatly compressed relative to west-east distances, and all outlines are accordingly distorted. Similarly, the Sea of Azov (*Palus Meotis*) is exaggerated and too far north, the Caspian Sea in a prone instead of upright position.

And thus Britain is not the only distorted map in the manuscript and printed collections of maps based on Ptolemy's rediscovered *Geography* in Renaissance Europe. Even the Ptolemy map of Italy and Corsica, Ptolemy's 6th European Map from Ptolemy's resurfaced copy of his eight books without maps, is seriously distorted in size and west-to-east orientation compared to modern maps (Appendix, fig. 3). Italy is oriented almost entirely east, having the Adriatic for its northern, and the Tyrrhenian for its southern boundary. In the Augustan period Ptolemy's coordinates for *ITALIA* showing the city of Rome, the capital of the Empire of the Romans, are not as good as one might expect for such a well-known area. It seems inevitable that anyone attempting to draw a map from them would have problems of orientation over the whole Italian Peninsula. And yet, the division into eleven administrative regions by Gaius Iulius Caesar Octavian

Augustus had already been made according to Pliny (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 3,46).

Northern and central Italy are bound to be portrayed with a largely west-east rather than northwest-southeast orientation. Although this applies throughout those areas, it can best be illustrated from the Po valley according to Harley and Woodward (1987, 193-5). If we plot the towns along the *Via Aemilia* (Ptolemy does not give coordinates for roads), we find that many of them lie in a west-east line; the striking result is that the Italian Peninsula appears in too north-south an orientation. This feature applies south of a line Naples - Benevento - Monte Gargano, so that the Italian Peninsula, from Ptolemy's coordinates, presents an unwarranted bend (Harley and Woodward (1987, 195; Lago 1992, I, 32).

In 1466 Nicolaus Germanus' edition of the Ptolemy's *Geography* showing grotesquely distorted maps of Britain and Italy does not differ in any respect from the first extant in a Greek manuscript of Ptolemy's *Geography* in the early fifteenth century, the *Codex Urbinas Graecus 82* (Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Urbinas Graecus 82*, ff. 63v-64r and ff. 71v-72r respectively).

In accordance with the preceding remarks, the observer should compare Ptolemy's map of North Britain with a modern map of Scotland laid upon it. As I will elaborate in this study, a similar distortion is shown on Ptolemy's 3rd Asian Map, Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus. It shows *COLCHIS* (West Georgia), *IBERÍA* of the Caucasus (Kartli, East Georgia), *ALBÀNIA* of the Caucasus (Alvânia, Daghestan), and the neighbouring regions of *ARMENIA MAIOR* (Upper, or Greater Armenia), *MEDIA* (Mesopotamia) and *ASSIRIA* (above Syria). I will use, as an example, Nicolaus Germanus' manuscript copy of 1466 (Appendix, fig. 4).

The third Ptolemaic map of Asia shows Greater Armenia, Media, Assyria, and the three neighbouring Caucasian Kingdoms of the north all lying between the Black or Pontic Sea to the west and the Caspian Sea to the east. Ibería of the Caucasus or, in Georgian, K'art'li, is East Georgia, the historical nucleus of the Georgian nation. In English, the corresponding word is Kartli. The problem of distortion, it appears, can not be separated from the problem of how modern historians on ancient political geography and archaeologists approach, unintentionally, the acquisition of knowledge about the past from Ptolemy's wrong interpretation of the region of the Pontus and Caucasus as it resurfaced in the Renaissance. Ignoring the History of cartography as a discipline, historical and archaeological examination of evidence grounded in Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus is, therefore, utterly worthless and would be rejected by serious historians.

Picking just one map from a complete collection of twenty-seven maps is a daunting task without the support of the History of cartography. Modern Armenians are particularly proud of the copy of Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus which shows Armenia extending from the Black or Pontic Sea to

the Caspian according to Deirdre Holding (2014, 153). And yet, however, a very brief review of Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus in the same series of regional maps showing distorted Britain and Italy would have set its imperfections in a clear light. Indeed, the outline of Armenia is spectacularly wrong. North of the Taurus Mountain front lay a portion of Armenia in what is now northern Turkey (*Thaurus mons-Niphates mons*). However, the map-maker turned Greater Armenia (*ARMENIA MAIOR*) north of the Aras River (*araxes f.*) through 90 degrees so that Mesopotamia (*MEDIAE PARS*), Iraq in ancient times, bends suddenly to the east instead of running broadly south to north. We see it in Nicolaus Germanus' manuscript copy of Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus (Appendix, fig. 4). In this way, Mesopotamia is so incorrectly placed on the map, that it borders the Caspian Sea (*HIRCANUM [SIJVE CASPIUM MARE]*) and is situated on the bottom right of the map. Meaning 'between rivers', Mesopotamia is the West Asian region between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, north of the bottle-neck at Baghdad, in modern Iraq; it is Al-Jazīrah of the Arabs—The Island.

In 1890 Ramsay's *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor* was a pioneering work of classical geography and topography, but it should not remain a key reference for archaeologists, classicists, historians of the Roman Empire, Byzantinists. In fact, it examines the trade routes and road systems of Roman and Byzantine Asia Minor and its political divisions into cities and regions. It shows, in the innumerable quotations on historical Armenia from sources, how very much we have really advanced in the knowledge of ancient geography and Ptolemy's inaccuracy. Remarkably, however, Ramsay totally failed to mention Colchis (West Georgia) and Iberia of the Caucasus (East Georgia) in his work. And yet, Colchis and Caucasian Iberia occupied what mostly was then the Kingdom of all-Georgia, stretching from the foot of the Caucasus mountains to İspir, the Geogian Gorge (Gürcü Boğazı) and Bayburt (A.D. 928) in what is now Turkey (see below, note 14).

Rouben Galichain most appropriately concludes his study of Armenia and the region south of the Caucasus on medieval western and Islamic maps, by frankly asserting that "Countries south of the Caucasus can also be seen in the maps of Ptolemy, which are outside the scope of this volume. In maps attributed to Ptolemy, Colchis, Iberia, Albania, Greater and Lesser Armenia feature prominently and even have demarcated borders, but one should bear in mind that these maps were made during the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, based on the data provided by the second century texts of Ptolemy's *Geographia*, therefore these borders can hardly be regarded as true second century demarcations" (2007, 198-9).

In criticising the correctness of maps attributed to Ptolemy and attached to his *Geography* in 1415 at the earliest, it should be remembered that he had to depend for his information on the reports of travellers and navigators who were unfurnished with the instruments which we consider indispensa-



ble for the ascertaining of geographical data. The ancient ship's pilot had no mariner's compass, no sextant, and no chronometer in the second century.

But when I consider these maps as primary sources in modern studies of historical geography and connected cartography of the Caucasus, I am unable to accept this explanation as satisfactory, for two reasons. In the first place the mistakes and exaggerations of Ptolemy no doubt have resulted in a very distorted delineation of the outline of the coast, and in a regular and consistent substitution of due north for due east, which is what we find in world and regional maps that customarily accompany manuscript and printed editions of Ptolemy's text resurfaced in the context of Florentine humanism around 1400. The deformation is general in that it extends over the entire length of the Greek *oikoumenē*, or, the "known world" in the second century of the Christian era. In the second place, as for Britain, Cornelius Tacitus did not share at all in Ptolemy's mistake. Tacitus is a near contemporary of Ptolemy. He states that earlier writers had compared the shape of Britain up to Scotland to that of an oblong, small shield (Tac. *Agricola* 10,3):

formam totius Britanniae [...] oblongae scutulae adsimulavere.

This comparison is fairly correct for the nearer half of Britain, but the remoter half extends northwards in the shape of a prolonged wedge or diverging 'V' east of the shoreline on Ptolemy's distorted map of Britain, Ptolemy's 1st European Map in the series (Appendix, figs. 1-2). Indeed, the outline of Scotland is spectacularly wrong, with an eastern protuberance extending far towards the German Ocean (*Oceanus Germanicus*) and modern Denmark.

Certainly, Scotland is bent eastward with an axis at a right angle to that of England on Ptolemy's 1st European Map. This is a usual degree of error for Ptolemy. The Mediterranean basin as a whole has been badly distorted in overall length. In fact, Ptolemy showed the length of its axis as 62° rather than its correct extent of 42° from west to east (Bennett Durand 1952, 100). The distortion of the Mediterranean followed from its fundamental error in seriously underestimating the earth's size (Appendix, fig. 5). Ptolemy also extended the continent of Asia too far to the east by some 50°.

In Ptolemy's Britain, - as, I suppose, is also the case in the Caucasus, - there is a big distortion.

### 3 The 'Dogleg' Appearance of the Mescit Mountains

The revival of Ptolemy in Europe was almost entirely the work of members of humanistic circles in the century when America was discovered. Ptolemy's erroneous estimate of the size of the world and his eastern extension of Asia made the distance west from Europe to India seem much

smaller than it actually is. In fact, editions of Ptolemy's *Geography* misled Colombo into thinking that in the Carribean Sea he had reached India across the Western Ocean in 1492.

Ptolemy's 3rd Asian Map in the standard set, then, belongs to a whole group of maps which can not be seen as a culminating development in a line of tradition going back to the Roman period. In the fifteenth century it depicts the Caucasus region on the basis of Ptolemy's erroneous calculations in the second century.

The ancient writers locate Ibería of the Caucasus in a country stretching from the Caucasus Mountains to the Meschic, or Moschic Mountains, formed by the last range of high and steep mountains belonging to the Euxine Pontus, that is to say, the Pontic Alps on the Black Sea.<sup>5</sup> Not at all the questions that this paper seeks to answer are immediately obvious, at least to modern historians of ancient Rome. I should perhaps therefore briefly attempt to clarify my approach. I believe that ancient Mescit Mountains and modern Mescit Dağları in northeastern Turkey were Caucasian Ibería (East Georgia). Native speakers call it Kartli. The third side, towards the west, is terminated by a chain of mountains to which Pompey's campaign gave the general name of *Meschici montes* in the year 65 before Christ, or, as Strabo calls them, the Moschic mountains (Μοσχικοῖς), touching Armenia.<sup>6</sup>

Twice Nicolaus Germanus explains them as *moschivis montes* (*mosch[vi] s montes-moschivis mon[te]s*). On Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus they are laid in a simple grid pattern, the coordinate system of latitude and longi-

5 "a Scriptoribus Byzantinis omnibus appellantur Iberes (Ἰβηρες), [...] Anno enim ante C. N. 65 a Caucaso usque ad Meschicos montes et Pontum Euxinum pertinebant". Stritter 1779, 25; see also 268 note a "Ioannis Zonaræ Annarium X.4: Pompeius Afranio: Iberi, hi ad Meschicos montes et Pontum pertinentes" and paragraphs dedicated to Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (Pompey the Great), 66-65 before Christ, 3rd Mithridatic War against Mithridates the King of Pontus escaping to Colchis (West Georgia), Pompey's campaign in Ibería and Albània 65 B.C. (source: *Plutarchi Pompeius*, c. 36-46 et 50).

6 Strabo 1877, *Geographica*, 691, 698-699, 11,2,1, "After the Heniochi is **Colchis, lying at the foot of the Caucasian and Moschic mountains.** [Μοσχικοῖς], 11,2,13, "The whole of the coast of the **Achæi**, and of the other nations, as far as Dioscurias, and the inland places lying in a straight line towards the south, are at the foot of the **Caucasus**. [15] This mountain overhangs both the **Euxine** and the **Caspian** seas, forming a kind of rampart to the isthmus which separates one sea from the other. To the south it is the boundary of **Albania** and **Iberia**, to the north, of the plains of the **Sarmatians**. It is well wooded, and contains various kinds of timber, and especially trees adapted to shipbuilding. Eratosthenes says that **the Caucasus is called Mount Caspius by the natives, a name borrowed perhaps from the Caspii. It throws out forks towards the south, which embrace the middle of Iberia, and touch the Armenian and those called the Moschic mountains,** and besides these the mountains of Scydises, and the Paryadres. All these are portions of the **Taurus**, which forms the southern side of **Armenia**, and are broken off in a manner from it towards the north, and extend as far as **Caucasus**, and the coast of the **Euxine** which lies between **Colchis** and **Themiscyra**. [16"]. For the English versions, see Strabo 1856 (Falconer ed.), 1928 (Jones ed.).

tude; nearer the Caucasus they are in alternating rows, with a distinctly dogleg effect (Appendix, figs. 4, 6).

These mountains have never been identified on Ptolemy's 3rd Map of Asia. Originating in the western part of the Mescit Mountains, however, the Č'oroxi River flows 466 km (290 miles) before reaching the Black Sea in modern Georgia. The Mescit Mountains are called, in the Georgian language, Meskhes (Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, 124, n. 1).

How was it, that the Mescit Mountains have never been identified? The Mescit Mountains in the real world, however, do not turn abruptly to the east from the latitude 45° north as to make a right angle from west to east, that is to say from the Pontic or Black Sea to the confluence of the rivers Aras (*araxes f.*) and Kur (*Cirus Fluvius* = *Cirus fluvius* = *Cyrus River*) on Ptolemy's erroneous map. The Turks call it Kura Nehri and the Georgians call it Mtkvari. The Azeri call it Kür, 70 miles south of Baku (Appendix, fig. 6). On a map of the fifteenth century, *Boschis mons* and *Boschius mons* are graphic variants of the same name, Moschic, in an altered shape as a 'dogleg right' (Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, *cod. Lat. V F. 32*).

There is evidence for sudden changes in direction at Sebastopolis, lower Colchis (West Georgia), where the Mescit Mountain range stretches into the valley of the Phasis River (*F. phasis* = *Fluvius phases*), current Rioni River, modern Georgia. The range then reaches the valley cut by the confluence of the river Kur (Cyrus) and Aragvi before artificially climbing up to Albània of the Caucasus, the third of the Caucasian countries depicted on Ptolemy's map in 1466. The Cyrus is the transboundary Kur River in modern Turkey and Mtkvari in modern Georgia. Here we see Mcxeta (*mescheta*), the ancient capital of Iberia of the Caucasus (Kartli. Eastern Georgia) since the people called Kartveli had been associated with a set ethnonym, and the mythical city of Armazi (*armatica* = *armatica*).

The sinking city of Colchian Sebastopolis was still visible on portolan charts of the middle ages. To the south of Poti, Sebastopolis was where the Horse River (Hippus, ცხენისწყალი) and the Phasis River (Fasso, Rioni) end in an extensive coastal swamp, as it was depicted on Castelli's map 1654 (Lamberti's report on Colchis, or, Mingrelia).<sup>7</sup>

In any event, Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus is quite useless in the history of the Caucasus, showing the wrong latitude of 45° north for the southern slopes of the Caucasus Mountains (Appendix, fig. 4). It actually corresponds to the latitude of Crimea (45°3'N). And yet, there is a note in red ink in the right margin, the outside margin, which states that the

<sup>7</sup> Inscriptions are *Fasso Fl. accolis Rion*; *Hippus Fl. accolis Scheni schari*; *Puti*; *Sebastopoli*. See also Lamberti 1654, § Delli Fiumi, 209; Castelli's map, attachment; Palermo, Biblioteca Comunale, Fondo Castelli, 3QqE92, fol. 52v "Predica nella villa di Sebastopoli, dove fu anticamente una città famosissima"; and *Totius Colchidis*, map. See Guiorgazze 1977, 389 and image n. 338; Licini 1980, map 1, reproduction.

parallel of mid-Pontus corresponds to the latitude of 40° North (“Quartus decimus Paral[lelus] p[er] mediu[m] Pontum”). To the south the Pontic Alps are actually located at latitude 40° North. Strangely enough, however, the map-maker did not take notice of the given latitude.

The geographical latitude of 45° north, erroneous as it is *per se*, also conveys the false and misleading information that the three States of Colchis (West Georgia), Iberia of the Caucasus (East Georgia) and Albania of the Caucasus (Alvania) in what is now Daghestan, Azerbaijan, were all aligned in parallel in a west-to-east direction from the *Phasis* River, ancient Colchis, currently the Rioni River, modern Georgia.

At first sight the Mescit Mountains are grotesquely inaccurate on Ptolemy's 3 Asian Map, the map in the series Nicolaus Germanus made covering the Caucasus and neighbouring regions in 1466 (Appendix, figs. 4, 6). It shows the wrong latitude of 45° north for the upper Mescit Mountains, and 47° and a half (1/2) for the southern slopes of the Caucasus Mountains.

In design the dogleg is the absolute change of direction; a dogleg is a route, way, or course that turns at a sharp angle, originally a type of staircase; a road doglegged through the mountains is something bent like a dog's hind leg. In any event, the “dogleg” appearance of the northern Mescit Mountains is a distorted Ptolemaic feature which occurs throughout the series of 27 maps from the early fourteenth century, and which we first see on Ptolemy's map of Britain—the 1st Map of Europe in the series. In any event, the “dogleg” appearance of northern Britain is a Ptolemaic feature that becomes more conspicuous with mapping (Harley, Woodward 1987, 190).

In fact, the prominent feature in the physical geography of Pontus is presented in its vast mountain-system, which should have stretched in unbroken line along the southern flank of Pontus. Here the chain of the Mescit Mountains stretches almost unbroken northeast from Bayburt to İspir, Yusufeli, Kara Dağ near Dere in the province of Artvin, currently, Turkey.

To an eye accustomed to modern maps of the world, Ptolemy's Europe is the most instantly recognizable of the three known continents. The outline of the European mainland is complete as far north as the east coast of the Baltic Sea. But distortions of direction and scale are obvious in the more remote parts toward the north and west, as in the outlines and relative position of the British Isles; and even in the Mediterranean there is a surprising error of orientation in the shape of Italy (Appendix, figs. 1, 2, 3, 5).

No doubt it is only with hindsight, and a knowledge of correct coastal outlines that we can see this in the Ptolemy maps of Britain, Italy and France. These regional maps were constructed from Ptolemy's text and added to the book by a copyist at any date between the rediscovery of Ptolemy's *Geography* around 1397 in Europe and the earliest known manuscript editions in Greek and Latin with maps in 1415. But indeed, the outline of Scotland and Italy on the portolan chart is more accurate.

When we examine the Ptolemaic maps that have survived since 1415, however, it becomes clear that the basic principle of linear perspective was not yet practised as the “vanishing point” was still to be invented (Valerio 1998, 265-90).<sup>8</sup>

Rather, Ptolemy’s *Geography* is driven by the idea of simply rendering visible the form and pattern of the earthly sphere considered as a mathematical, solid figure. We have to imagine a canvas enveloping the sphere in miniature form. Importantly, there are three ways to get input coordinates of points painted on a canvas as a two-dimensional surface resembling a map. The three ways discussed in Ptolemy’s books are very different. The resulting three-dimensional model projected onto the flat table is then employed to locate, on the simulated earth’s surface, points in respect of which no direct measurements have been actually taken (Farinelli 1995, 139; Neve 1999, 207).

So is Ptolemy’s 3rd Asian Map, *Tertia Asiae Tabula*, the map depicting the Caucasus (Appendix, figs. 4, 6). However, geographical objects such as settlements and isolated cities are not fuzzy in themselves, but they are fuzzy with respect to the precision of the underlying knowledge. Inland frontiers and broad boundaries, such as those shaping collective identities in terms of sovereignty in Caucasian Iberia (Kartli, East Georgia), are harder to identify than the extended lateral seaward boundaries of a coastal State. Consequently, today historical geographers have to rely on literary sources, although this does not necessarily mean that the source is the most accurate one. One of the primary sources of evidence in history is testimony by witnesses, or others who have firsthand knowledge of the geographical area in question. Witnesses who provide inaccurate testimony may face oblivion and their testimony may be impeached, or set aside, when it can be demonstrated that it knowingly did not provide truthful testimony.

Primary sources such as Strabo’s geography and the Elder Pliny’s natural history are original materials. Strabo was born to a Greek family from Amasya Pontica, south Pontus under Roman rule, in 64 or 63 B.C. in what is now Turkey. And Pliny had the opportunity to see what he describes as *situs depicti*, “places drawn”, or “coloured plans” at Rome within A.D. 79. The Caucasus is depicted in a series of full-coloured maps (Plin., *Naturalis historia* 6,15):

After we pass the mouth of the Cyrus [the Kur River], it begins to be called the ‘Caspian Sea;’ the Caspii being a people who dwell upon its

<sup>8</sup> Francesco di Lapacino first made maps in Greek and Latin to accompany Ptolemy’s editions in Florence about 1415. In 1425, only 10 years after the first extant Ptolemaic maps, Filippo Brunelleschi discovered the vanishing point, which would give to two-dimensional works of art the illusion of depth and consistent scale.

shores. In this place it may be as well **to correct an error into which many persons have fallen**, and even those who lately took part with Corbulo in the Armenian war. **The Gates of Ibería, which we have mentioned as the Caucasian, they have spoken of as being called the 'Caspian,' and the coloured plans which have been sent from those parts to Rome have that name written upon them** [hi Caspias appellavere Portas Iberiae, quas Caucasias diximus vocari: situsque depicti et inde missi, hoc nomen inscriptum habent]. **The menaced expedition, too, that was contemplated by the Emperor Nero, was said to be designed to extend as far as the Caspian Gates [*ad caspias portas*], where as it was really intended for those which lead through Ibería into the territory of the Sarmatae; there being hardly any possibility of approach to the Caspian Sea, by reason of the close juxtaposition of the mountains here.** [...] There are, however, other gates, which join up the Caspian tribes; but these can only be distinguished from a perusal of the narrative of those who took part in the expedition of Alexander the Great.

For my purposes, this puts the matter very clearly. The Kur flows from north to south, and takes its rise in the Caucasian Mountains of Ibería, currently, Georgia (Kartli, East Georgia). We have no difficulty in finding the mouth of the Kur River, or, as the ancients call it, the Cyrus, on whose banks the Caspii live. They give the Caspian Sea its name according to Pliny. The mouth of the Kur River fronts on the Caspian Sea and extends 70 miles south of Baku in what is now Azerbaijan. The Emperor Nero organized an Armenian campaign, which was to extend as far as Sarmatia, currently, Russia, through the territory of Ibería of the Caucasus. Immediately after the Armenian campaign in the year 63, however, the Roman Army never reached the objective. Pliny is saying that the primary reason for the worst days in Roman military history was the failure of Nero's general Corbulo to proceed by neutralizing the enemy's defence and strongpoints through surveying and cartography. In fact, Pliny's new drawings are inscribed "The Gates of Ibería as the Caucasian Gates". Yet here Pliny says that "The Gates of Ibería as the Caucasian Gates" are not to be confused with "The Caspian Gates", as the Gates of Caucasian Ibería "do not" lead from Ibería of the Caucasus to the Caspian Sea.

Where are the Gates of Ibería, or, the Caucasian Gates, which lead from Armenia northwards across the mountains of Ibería of the Caucasus (Kartli) into Sarmatia (Russia)? Nor is it a very easy task to trace their topographical situation and origin. Maps serve to clarify complex areas where you might go wrong. And really, in point of fact, to use for the conveyance of land, inaccurate maps is worse than useless; it is likely to lead to dispute and litigation. Ptolemy's map of France, Europe, is one of the 26 regional maps in a fifteenth-century manuscript of the Latin

version of Ptolemy's *Geography*. And yet, it exemplifies the strength and the weakness of Ptolemy's maps. Positions of places are determined by geographical coordinates, and even degrees of latitude and longitude are entered in the margin. The work seems perfect. But the coordinates are often incorrect, and contemporary portolan charts offer a more accurate map of the French Atlantic coast (Harvey 1991, 58).

Although Ptolemy's lists locate 8,000 places by their geographical coordinates, it is clear that these did not all come from immediate observation of the earth but they were worked out from whatever information was available to him, such as accounts of journeys giving distances from one place to another and tables of coordinates. This means that their appearance of great accuracy is often spurious.

No wonder, then, that the map of the Caucasus displays the same type of distortion (Appendix, figs. 4, 6). On Ptolemy's 3rd Asian Map, the inland State of Iberia of the Caucasus (Kartli, Eastern Georgia) lies at the same parallel of latitude as the coastal State of Colchis (Western Georgia) to the west on the Pontic or Black Sea, and the coastal State of Albania of the Caucasus (Alvania, Daghestan) to the east on the Hircanian or Caspian Sea: the wrong parallel of latitude 45° North.

The name Mesopotamia comes from two Greek words that mean "middle" and "rivers". Both the Tigris and the Euphrates, currently, Dicle Nehri and Firat Nehri, still begin in mountains that are modern-day Turkey and Iraq. Roman Mesopotamia, or, as Ptolemy calls it, Media, should be a land surrounded by two rivers, but incredibly, it is a sea-coast land on Ptolemy's 3rd Asian Map (*MEDIÆ PARS*). The land of the Medians here stretches from the Euphrates and the Tigris eastwards, to the shores of the Caspian Sea (*HIRCANUM [SI]VE CASPIUM MARE*. Appendix, figs. 4, 6).

In 1466 Nicolaus Germanus, the map-maker, duly added land to land till no space was left on the graph paper according to Ptolemy's grid methodology. As a result, the Hircanian or Caspian Sea is in a prone instead of upright position. Even so, a bit of Mesopotamia (*MEDIÆ PARS*) protrudes eastwards into the frame and it ends unfinished.

Indeed, the outline of Upper or Greater Armenia (*ARMENIA MAIOR*) and Mesopotamia (*MEDIÆ PARS*) on Ptolemy's 3rd Asian Map are spectacularly wrong, with an eastern protuberance of the land of the Medians extending far towards the Caspian Sea. Mesopotamia is bent eastward with an axis at a right angle to that of Greater Armenia.

We see it in how misaligned west-east are the fractured structures of the Mescit Mountains, currently, Mescit Dağları, Turkey, and how they turn abruptly to the east from the latitude 45° north so that one parallel line can be drawn through the wrong points Colchis (West Georgia, Caucasian Iberia of the Caucasus (East Georgia, Kartli) and Caucasian Albania (Daghestan) on Ptolemy's 3rd Asian Map. The Mescit Mountains are *moschivis montes*, which are seriously distorted in size and west-to-east orientation

compared to modern maps. We can see the level of distortion in the way in which the Mescit Mountains are represented as a series of peaks, forming a pattern similar to the letter Z on the Ptolemaic 3rd Map edited by Nicolaus Germanus in his codex of 1466, the exemplar we are following (Appendix, fig. 6).

From this description I can conclude that Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus is as distorted as that of Britain. At the very best, distorted as it is, the course of the Euphrates River, currently, Firat Nehri, is an utter confusion of names at pleasure, a conjectural location of nonsense within geographical coordinates of "nowhere" that could have deceived even Trajan's commanders in A.D. 114.

Yesterday and today, reasoning about single cities, mountains, lakes, sites often involves uncertainty and imprecision. For example, when we talk about Kayseri of Kapadokya in modern Turkey today, that was *Caesarea Cappadociae* in Greek Anatolia in the Roman reign, or, as the Greeks called it, *Romània*, we usually do not know exactly the boundaries of the region called Kapadokya. Nonetheless, purely geographic names as posts along the Roman public road can be very problematic if we decide to enlarge the view of the scene in progressive steps through Greek Anatolia including Kapadokya and the river Euphrates (Firat Nehri mod. Turkey). Cities, mountains, lakes, sites are no more than spots on the regional map if they have no reference whatsoever to the administrative situation of the territory as a whole through the creation of transportation links with the rest of the area, whether included in one sovereignty or another. It simply regards the fact whether grants arise under the same or under different States. Of all geographical indications and ancient limits of Greek Anatolia, Kapadokya is the Anatolian portion of the Roman Empire at the "Head" of historical Syria and Cyprus, currently, south-east Turkey, according to primary sources.<sup>9</sup> Matters of such importance as the conveyance of sovereignty and political jurisdiction of lands are not left to inference or conjecture.

History reveals that Colchis, the eastern end of Pontus, occupied the territory that is modern Georgia. But the Colchian coast-line on Ptolemy's 3rd Map of Asia is nothing more than the Cappadocian coast turned the wrong way! In fact, the Pontic port of Trabzon (*trapesoz*) is depicted to the west of Kapadokya (*Capadotię pars*. Appendix, fig. 6). This is yet another case of the inlet and outlet connections being wrongly located on Ptolemy's maps.

Today the Ch'orokhi is a trans-boundary river, currently, Çoruh Nehri in Turkey and ჭორღობო in Georgia. From the west summit of the Mescit

<sup>9</sup> Bongars 1611, 30-81, Roberti Monachi Historia Hierosolimitana, 3, vv. 16-18 "Dehinc prospero successu venerunt ad *Caesaream* Cappadociae. *Cappadocia* autem regio est in capite *Syriae* sita, ad Septentrionalem plagam porrecta; cujus incolae civitatis ultro se tradiderunt eosque benique receperunt".



Mountains, currently, Turkey, the Ch'orokhi River flows through Bayburt. The Ch'orokhi River, at its sources, flows and extends across the western part of the Bayburt Plateau on the isolated Mount Uzundere, and it marks the west flank of the Mescit Mountains. At the Bayburt Plateau's western edge is Vardzahan, renamed Uğrak today. Then the river suddenly bends to the east and runs to the İspir Plateau. It flows through the cities of İspir, Yusufeli and Artvi, and passes out on the east to the Pontic or Black Sea at Batumi, modern Georgia.

Mount Uzundere is the isolated one of the chain of the Mescit Mountains stretching almost unbroken northeast from Bayburt via İspir and Yusufeli to Kara Dağ near Dere, which is a town in the province of Artvin, currently Turkey.

Trabzon is the Hellenic colony in the Roman Empire on the frontier with Colchis (West Georgia), as Arrian observes in his survey report to Emperor Adrian about A.D. 132. West of wrong Kapadokya (*Capadotię pars*) as it is, however, the port of Trabzon (*trapesoz*) looks strange on Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus. In fact, on Xenophon's authority as eye and ear witness, Arrian says that the Trapezuntines have inhabited the eastern end of Pontus bordering on Colchis since the Hellenic colony from Sinop in Pontus settled east at this spot. And when Arrian was himself at the spot, he must have possessed the very best means of information (Arrian 1885, *Periplous*, 15,1). Arrian was a native of Greek Pontus, and born in Nicomedia, Roman Bithynia (currently İzmit, Turkey). Since A.D. 129 Arrian had been appointed as governor of the Roman province of Kapadokya when he set sail for Colchis.

Ptolemy wrote a text describing world geography as it was understood around the year 150. And yet, in the year 132 Arrian says that the Colchians border on the Trapezuntines. Thus the Trapezuntines and the Colchians (western Georgians) were neighbouring peoples. Nonetheless, *Capadotię pars*, the wrong section of Kapadokya, thus covers the sea route north from Trabzon (*trapesoz*) to the Roman fort called Apsarus and takes a northeastern direction to the Colchian shore. After all, it may be said, the fort is correctly located at the mouth of the river of the Apsua, *Apsor[orum] fluvius*] on Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus (Appendix, fig. 6). Its position, however, as the third river of Kapadokya, is wrong. In the myth, the river Apsarus was named after Apsyrtus, the man who was murdered by Medea. Now Gonio Fortress, previously called Apsaros, or Apsaruntos, is a Roman fortification in Adjara (Aç'ara), modern Georgia, on the Black Sea as the Pontic Sea is called today, 15 km south of Batumi, at the mouth of the Ch'orokhi river (Tsetschladze 1999, 118-9, Gonio-Apsarus; Kakhidze et al. 2002, 251-62).

Ptolemy's west-to-east orientation sharply contrasts with the north-south geography of the Mediterranean region and connected seas, including those basins such as the Black or Pontic Sea, the Sea of Azov or Lake

Maiōtis, and the Western Ocean all connected by the Strait of Hercules to the larger Ocean basin (Ptol., *Geography*, 7,5,7). But in spite of the egregious errors on all of Ptolemy maps, his *Geography* was an unsurpassed masterpiece for almost a hundred and fifty years. The reintroduction of his geography into the Latin West in 1406 influenced cartography decisively for more than two centuries. Many editors had laboured to reconstruct Ptolemy's maps in manuscript, but it was the multiplied production made possible by the arrival of the movable type printing press that made them accessible to a wider audience late in the fifteenth century.

Thus, the importance of the Ptolemy maps does not lie in their accuracy. It lies in the merits of the mathematical method of their construction as plane representations of the surface of the sphere, irrespective of the accuracy of the information they display.

A map based on Ptolemy's instructions is puzzling in many ways. It is hard even to draw, as his text places long rivers only by their sources and mouths, and strings of notable peoples loosely "above" or "below" each other in the great days of the Roman Empire (Thomson 1948, 245).

And the districts of the native peoples are only roughly delineated by Ptolemy (Berggren, Jones 2000, 90, 120).

World and regional maps that show information about the past or where past events took place are called historical maps today. Historical maps are important tools in understanding history on the clear understanding that geographical information obtained from transmitted copies of ancient texts is accurate. In the critical study of ancient texts today, the general principle in the formation of the best version of a text is that of following evidence, and in cases of discrepancy, of discriminating those which have originated in mistakes (Prindeaux Tregelles 1856, 140-1).

The assumption that Ptolemy made an erroneous estimate of the value of the degree of the equinoctial line from west to east is deeply embedded in the History of cartography. It is thus surprising to find that modern historians of the Roman Empire and archaeologists are not aware of Ptolemy's mistakes and take everything the Ptolemaic map of the Caucasus displays for truth.

#### 4 The Gates of Ibería or the Caucasian Gates

Different authors put the natural boundaries of the Caucasian region in different places. On the one hand, on Ptolemy's authority about A.D. 150, in 1466 Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus should show where the three Kingdoms of Colchis (West Georgia), Ibería of the Caucasus (Kartli, East Georgia) and Albània of the Caucasus (Alvànìa, Daghestan) actually end, and where the neighbouring Roman provinces of Armenia the Greater, Media (Mesopotamia) and Assyria begin in the Roman Principate in A.D. 117

according to *Breviarium historiae romane* of Eutropius (*Breviarium*, 8,3, Sylburgii 1762, 1, 363). The section in Eutropius' *Compendious History of Rome* is based on fragment 4 from *Principia Historiae* by M. Cornelius Fronto, a man of consular authority (c.100-late 160s). On the other, Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis historia* writes a topographical account of the Caucasus within A.D. 79 of the Christian era. And as we have just seen, Pliny the Elder describes Albània of the Caucasus, Colchis, Ibería of the Caucasus, Armenia and Media (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,15, 17,14, 17,15).

From Pliny we learn three things on the Caucasus within A.D. 79. The first concerns surveying plans of Ibería (Kartli) of the Caucasus in Rome; the second, local place names and their geographical features; the third that the error of many should be corrected at this point, even of those who were recently on campaign in Armenia with Corbulo, the Roman governor of Syria. In 61-2 the military expeditions of Nero's governor Corbulo in Armenia produce what Pliny describes here as *situs depicti*, places drawn, coloured plans in form of a coloured map. But Corbulo made a big topographical mistake according to Pliny. Corbulo fought a number of campaigns to recover Armenia from Parthia and planned operations in the Caspian theatre. In this place, however, it may be as well to correct an error into which many persons had fallen, and even those who lately took part with Corbulo in the Armenian war: two are the passes which through Caucasian Ibería lead, alternatively, into Sarmatia, currently, Russia, or the Caspian region.

Thus, Pliny, in the sixth book, is at pains to make this clear. The "other pass" should properly be called "The Gates of Ibería as the Caucasian Gates" and they must be clearly distinguished from the Caspian Gates as Corbulo erroneously called them. Along the coast of the Caspian Sea, Pliny explains (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,15, 16,16, 6,17,14, 6,17,15):<sup>10</sup>

10 Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,5 "Flumina per **Albaniam** decurrunt in mare, Casius et Albanus: deinde Cambyse in **Caucasiis** ortus montibus: mox Cyrus in **Coraxicis**, ut diximus. **Oram omnem a Casio praealtis rupibus inaccessam, patere [ccccxxv] mill. auctor est Agrippa.** A Cyro Caspium mare vocari incipit; accolunt Caspii. Corrigendus est in hoc loco error multorum etiam, qui in Armenia res proxime cum Corbulone gessere. Namque hi **Caspias appellavere Portas Iberiae, quas Caucasias diximus vocari: situsque depicti et inde missi, hoc nomen inscriptum habent.** Et Neronis principis comminatio, **ad Caspias Portas** tendere dicebatur: quum peteret illas, **quae per Iberiam in Sarmatas tendunt, vix ullo propter adpositos montes aditu ad Caspium mare. Sunt autem aliae, Caspiis gentibus iunctae:** quod dignosci non potest nisi comitatu rerum Alexandri Magni. XVI. Namque **Persarum regna, quae nunc Parthorum intellegimus, inter duo maria, Persicum et Hyrcanum Caucasii iugis adtolluntur.** Utrumque **per devexa laterum Armeniae maiori** a frontis parte, quae vergit in **Commagenen, Cephena**, ut diximus, copulatur eique **Adiabene, Assyriorum initium:** cuius pars est Arbelitis, ubi Darium Alexander debellavit, **proxima Syriae.** Totam eam Macedones Mygdoniam cognominaverunt a similitudine. **Oppida: Alexandria, item Antiochia quam Nesebin vocant.** Abest ab Artaxatis [dcl] M. passuum. Fuit et Ninus, imposita Tigri, ad solis occasum spectans, quondam clarissima. Reliqua vero fronte, qua tendit ad Caspium mare, Atrapatene, **ab Armeniae Otene**

there are the Albani, the descendants of Jason, it is said; that part of the sea which lies in front of them, bears the name of 'Albanian.' This nation, which lies along **the Caucasian chain, comes down, as we have previously stated, as far as the river Cyrus, which forms the boundary of Armenia and Iberia** [*Armeniae confinium atque Iberiae descendit*]. Above the maritime coast of Albania and the nation of the Udini, the Sarmatae, the Utidorsi, and the Aroteres stretch along its shores, and in their rear the Sauromatian Amazons, already spoken of. The rivers which run through Albania in their course to the sea are [...] and next **the Cyrus, rising in the mountains of the Corax** [*in Coraxicis*], as already mentioned. Agrippa states that the whole of this coast, inaccessible from rocks of an immense height, is four hundred and twenty-five miles in length, beginning from the river Casius [*a Casio*]. After we pass the mouth of the Cyrus, it begins to be called the 'Caspian Sea;' the Caspii being a people who dwell upon its shores. In this place it may be as well to correct an error into which many persons have fallen, and even those who lately took part with Corbulo in the Armenian war. **The Gates of Iberia, which we have mentioned as the Caucasian, they have spoken of as being called the 'Caspian,' and the coloured plans which have been sent from those parts to Rome have that name written upon them** [*Namque hi Caspias appellavere Portas Iberiae, quas Caucasias diximus vocari, situsque depicti et inde missi hoc nomen inscriptus habent*]. The menaced expedition, too, that was contemplated by the Emperor Nero, was said to be designed to extend as far as the Caspian Gates [*ad caspias portas*], where as it was really intended for those which lead through Iberia into the territory of the Sarmatae [*ad Caspias Portas.. per Iberiam in Sarmatas tendunt*]; there being hardly any possibility of approach to the Caspian Sea, by reason of the close juxtaposition of the mountains here. There are, however, other gates, which join up the Caspian tribes [*aliae, Caspiis gentibus iunctae*]; but these can only be distinguished from a perusal of

**regione discreta Araxe.** Oppidum eius Gaza, ab Artaxatis [cccc] M passuum: totidem ab Ecbatanis Medorum, quorum pars sunt Atrapateni. XVII.14. Ecbatana caput Mediae, Seleucus rex condit, a Seleucia magna [dccl] M passuum: **a Portis vero Caspiis** [xx] M. **Reliqua Medorum oppia, Phazaca,** Aganzaga, Apamia Rhapsane cognominata. **Causa portarum nominis eadem quae supra, interruptis angusto transitu iugis, ita ut vix singula meent plastra, longitudine [viii] mill, passuum, toto opere manu facto. Dextera laevaue ambustis similes impendent scopuli, sitiente tractu per [xxviii] mill. passuum. Angustias impedit corrivatus salis e cautibus liquor atque eadem emissus. Praeterea serpentium multitudo, nisi hieme transitum non sinit.** XVII.15. **Adiabenis connectuntur Carduchi quodam dicti, nunc Cordueni, praefluente Tigri:** his Pratitae, παρ' ὁδὸν appellati, qui tenent Caspias Portas. Iis ab latere altero occurrunt deserta Parthiae, et Citheni iuga". Latin edition 1906, Mayhoff. English version 1855, Bostock and Riley. Words are evidenced for sake of convenience.

**the narrative of those who took part in the expedition of Alexander the Great.** And indeed the kingdom of the Persians, by which we now understand that of Parthia, is elevated upon the Caucasian chain between two seas, the Persian and the Hyrcanian. As we said, to the Greater Armenia [*Armeniae maiori*], which in the front slopes towards Commagene,<sup>11</sup> is joined Cepheneia, which lies upon the descent on both sides thereof, and next to it is Adiabene, the place where Assyria begins; a part of which is Arbilitis, where the army of Darius was defeated by Alexander, and which joins up to Syria. The whole of this country was called Mygdonia by the Macedonians, on account of the resemblance it bore to Mygdonia in Europe. Its cities are Alexandria, and Antiochia, also called Nisibis; this last place is distant from Artaxata seven hundred and fifty miles. There was also in former times Ninus, a most renowned city, on the banks of the Tigris, with an aspect towards the west. (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,15, 6,16)

A few chapters later, Pliny remarks that (*Naturalis historia*, 6,16, 6,17,14, 6,17,15):

[6,16, end] Adjoining the other front of **Greater Armenia, which runs down towards the Caspian Sea, we find Atropatene, which is separated from Otene, a region of Armenia, by the river Araxes.** Gazae is its chief city, distant from Artaxata four hundred and fifty miles, and the same from Ecbatana in **Media, to which country Atropatene belongs.** [6,17,14]. Ecbatana, the capital of Media, was built by King Seleucus, at a distance from Great Seleucia of seven and fifty miles, and twenty miles **from the Caspian Gates** [*a Portis vero caspiis*]. **The remaining towns of the Medians, the people of Media, are Phazaca, Aganzaga, and Apamea, surnamed Rhagiane. The reason of these passes receiving the name of "Gates", is the same that has been stated above. The chain of mountains is suddenly broken by a passage of such extreme narrowness** [*interruptis angusto tran-*

11 Samosata (currently Samsat) is the capital town of the Seleucid kings of Commagene. The land lies outside the River Euphrates according to Procopius. It was a crossing point on the River Euphrates. By reason of its strong position on the right bank of the River Euphrates (currently Fırat Nehri, Turkey), the city of Samosata / Samsat was the terminal road of the great Euphrates via Sadak (anc. Satala) and Eski Malatya (anc. Melitene) in Armenia. Procopius (1833, *De bello Persico*, 2,17,18-2,17,30) says that "The land which lies outside the River Euphrates, beginning with Samosata, was called in ancient times Commagene, but now it is named after the river. But the land inside the river, that namely which is between it and the Tigris, is appropriately named Mesopotamia; however, a portion of it is called not only by this name, but also by certain others. For the land as far as the city of Armida has come to be called Armenia by some, while Edessa together with the country around it is called Osroene, after Osroes, a man who was king in that place in former times, when the men of this country were in alliance with the Persians".

***situ iugis***] that, for a distance of eight miles in longitude, a single chariot can barely find room to move along: the whole of this pass has been formed by artificial means. Both on the right hand and the left are overhanging rocks, which look as though they had been exposed to the action of fire; and there is a tract of country, quite destitute of water, twenty-eight miles in extent. This narrow pass, too, is rendered still more difficult by a liquid salt which oozes from the rocks, and uniting in a single stream, makes its way along the pass. Besides this, it is frequented by such multitudes of serpents, that the passage is quite impracticable except in winter. [6,17,15] **Joining up to Adiabene are the people formerly known as the 'Carduchi,' now the Cordueni, in front of whom the river Tigris flows [*praefluence Tigri*]:** and next to them are the Pratitae, entitled the *Par Odon* [on the road], who hold possession of the Caspian Gates. On the other side of these gates we come to the deserts of Parthia and the mountain chain of Cithenus.

Two are then the geographic objects in the four cardinal directions which are both erroneously described as "Caspian Gates" in the reign of Nero. We must bear in mind that there are "other gates" leading through Caucasian Iberia into Sarmatia, Russia in the future, than the "Caspian Gates", and that Pliny the Elder can now see the exact location of "the Iberian Gates, or, the Caucasian" leading through Iberia of the Caucasus into the territory of Sarmatia. In fact, the coloured plans which have been sent from those parts to Rome have that name written upon them. To the west of the mouth of the Kur River (*Cyrus*) flowing into the Caspian Sea from the K'odori mountain valley (*Corax*, Colchis, currently West Georgia), the former "Caspian Gates" are labelled "the Iberian Gates, or, the Caucasian" in Pliny's time.

They set a course in an unknown direction to us, and by attending to the possibilities which such a new direction gives we can now gain the means of putting the question rationally as to whether "the Iberian Gates, or, the Caucasian" exist or not. We have to assume that Pliny the Elder had at hand "places drawn / *situs depicti*" and drew upon a number of them to complete his book on the Caucasus.

At first sight the "Caspian Gates" in the Caucasus are easy to identify. The Caspian Gates are, currently, the "Gates" at Dariali Gorge (Darialis Kheoba) at the east base of Mount Kabegi (Kazbek) linking northern Georgia and southern Russia in current geography. The Dariali Gorge is pierced by the river Terek. Today, the Dariali Gorge has many names: the Caspian Gates, the Caucasian Gates, the Gates of Iberia of the Caucasus, and even the Gates of the Alans as the Albanians of the Caucasus were called in what is now Dagestan.

However, in book six Pliny the Elder has given an independent descrip-

tion, founded on the actual knowledge of his time. These observations apply especially to book 6,15, where he corrects the Roman notion that “the Caspian Gates” are those leading through Ibería of the Caucasus into the territory of the Sarmatians (Russia). A story is fictitious which has no foundation whatever in truth. Among the Romans guilty of the mistake which Pliny the Elder corrects is Corbulo, Nero’s general in the Armenian war. Failing to reach targets across an enlarged theatre of operations, which the war now demanded, he had to beat a retreat to the south side of the Armenians.

Thus “The Iberian Gates, or, the Caucasian”, which lead north along Caucasian Ibería into Sarmatia (Russia), are still to be rediscovered.

My specific aim is then to find out where the distinction between Ibería of the Caucasus (Kartli, East Georgia) and Armenia at the geographical level occurs, and whether Ptolemy or Pliny should be the model for modern historians and geographers. I shall start with Pliny’s comments on the Gates of Ibería, which he mentioned as the Caucasian Gates.

Thus there were full-colour maps depicting the Gates of Ibería, otherwise called the Caucasian, on display in Rome in the first century of the Christian era. Pliny fairly describes them as topographical maps of the Caucasus (*situs depicti*). In some convenient part of the plans the Roman surveyors wrote the title of the place, “The Gates of Ibería as the Caucasian Gates”, in large characters.

Then, a few lines further on, Pliny catapults us into mystery. Joining up to *Adiabene*, the place where Assyria begins, are the people formerly known as the “Carduchi” now the *Cordueni* in front of whom the river Tigris flows. But where is *Adiabene*? A large portion of Armenia consists of plains, and a large portion also of mountains, as *Cambysene*, where Armenians approach close both to the Iberians and the Albanians of the Caucasus. From Greek Pontus, Strabo tells us that, “Armenus of Armenium, a Thesalian city, accompanied Jason, in his expedition into Armenia, and from Armenus the country had its name, according to *Cyrsilus* the Pharsalian and *Medius* the Larisaen, persons who had accompanied the army of Alexander. Some of the followers of Armenus settled in *Acilisene*, which was formerly subject to the *Sopheni*; others in the *Syspiritis*, and spread as far as *Calachene* and *Adiabene* beyond the borders of Armenia” (Strabo 1856, *Geografica*, 11,4,1; and 4,8).

So *Adiabene*, where Assyria begins, lay beyond the borders of historical Armenia, currently, Turkey. Therefore *Adiabene* is out of Armenia. According to this disposition, then, the first portion towards the north of *Adiabene* (Assyria) is inhabited by the *Cordueni* of Pliny. In fact, joining up to *Adiabene* are the people formerly known as the *Carduchi*, now the *Cordueni*, in front of whom the river Tigris flows (*Naturalis historia*, 6,17,15).

Very often, however, Eduard Böcking observes, Byzantine translators

of Pliny's Latin text use the term "Cardueni" in Greek.<sup>12</sup> And the variant name "Kardueni" can be taken from any source.<sup>13</sup>

The Cardueni, or, Kardueni remain unidentified and the case is still unsolved. Other peoples can be rather easily identified in geographical terms in Pliny's time. From north to south, the land called *Adiabene* is the place where Assyria begins beyond the borders of Armenia; a part of it is Arbilitis, the capital town (Pliny). The name is preserved in the modern place-name Arbīl in northern Iraq today. Ninus is Niniveth, Roman Assyria, located on the Tigris River (Pliny), on the outskirts of Mosul in modern-day northern Iraq. Nisibis in Roman Assyria is Antiochia (Pliny), Antiochia Migdonia in Greek, now Nusaybin in south-east Turkey at the border with modern Syria.

And the river *Cyrus* is currently the Kur (*Cirus Fluvius*). Having its sources in Georgia, it is a trans-boundary river, Kura Nehri in the Turkish language, Mtkvari in the Georgian language, Kür south of Baku in the Azeri language (Albània of the Caucasus). The Mtkvari, or, Kur, flows through the very heart of Tiflis, currently Tbilisi, and the province of Trialeti, Georgia.

The Aras River (*araxes f.*) takes its rise in the Başçayı mountains. The valley of the Başçayı River was originally in Armenia. Flowing from the Başçayı mountains today, currently, Turkey, the Aras River joins the Kur River in Albània of the Caucasus (Alvànìa) in what is now Daghestan, and the two pour their united waters through three mouths into the Caspian Sea from the west. Başçayı is *Pasiani* on Delisle's map of 1722 (Appendix, fig. 7).

Beyond the Mescit Mountains is the Başçayı River where the Aras River takes its rise.

It is crucial, in our view, that if Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili the Prince of Georgia says that the valley of the Başçayı River ("le Basian") had originally belonged to Armenia when the Bagratid dynasty conquered it, there is clear evidence that the Iberians, or, as the Georgians call themselves, the Kartlians (eastern Georgians), conquered the Armenian valley of Başçayı at some point of their history. In the Mescit Mountains, Oltu was the highest, southernmost point of the Kingdom of the Iberians of the Caucasus (Kartli) above Armenia, Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili says. The post-war frontier changes have brought the Armenian valley of the Başçayı within the confines of Iberia of the Caucasus. And Aşkale, province of Başçayı, is situated in the southern part of the valley, the town lying on the northern bank of the Aras

12 Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,15,17 "Adiabenis connectuntur Carduchi quodam dicti, nunc Cardueni, praefluente Tigri". See also Böcking 1839, 416,32 "Notitia Orient. Dux Mesopotamiae: Cordueni, qui et Cardueni scribuntur".

13 Peter the Patrician, *Fragments*, from the edition by Karl Müller, *Fragm. Hist. Graec.*, IV, 187, published in Paris in 1928.



River (*Araxes*).<sup>14</sup> It happened in A.D. 928, when Romanos I Lakapenos and Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, the co-emperors of the Romans, agreed that the Aras River should serve as the boundary line between the two States of the Romans and the Caucasian Iberians (Kartlians). Thus from Constantinople the co-emperors “abandoned all the country north of the said river to the Iberes” as Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus observes in *De administrando imperio* (Bekkerus 1840, Const., *De administrando imperio*, § 45, 204-5).

From Constantinople, or, as the Turks call it, İstambul, Constantine's diplomatic codex of the Roman administration has very justly said that the King of the Iberians is a *socius*, or, ally of the Roman Empire when they sign the treaty with him in A.D. 928 containing the clauses on the northern bank of the Aras River and Armenia.

A Roman province since A.D. 117, Armenia is directly controlled by the Emperor of the Romans through a strategos, a commanding general. Consequently, the two sovereign parties to the treaty still are the Roman Empire and the Kingdom of Iberia of the Caucasus in A.D. 928.

Then we see something odd on Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus, the 3rd Map of Asia in the distorted set of 1466. The northern section of the Caucasus Mountains gradually dies away east of the sources of the *albanus-Albana* river towards the Caspian Sea (Appendix, fig. 6). Two bolted doors point to a passage on the map. The Caucasus Mountains that constitute this interrupted chain stretch along in uniform ridges. The legend reads: “The Gates of Albània” (*Porte albaniae*). And it is strange enough to find the course of a single river with a double name, *albanus. Albana Flu*. It independently flows to the Caspian Sea (*HIRCANUM [SI]VE CASPIUM MARE*).

The twin river system is represented by a single waterway sector, specified in the Ptolemaic model as Albània of the Caucasus in what is now Azerbaijan. The Alazani option seems to me by far the most probable, since there are two rivers bearing the name of Alazani (Alazan), within few miles

14 Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, 121-2, “Il y a des bourgs sur les rivières; les habitants ressemblent à ceux des contrées déjà décrites. Idi et Naroumac [**Narman**] sont entièrement comme le Thrialetth [**Trialeti**] et le Djawakheth. - Au S. d'Olthis [**Oltu**], de Nariman et d'Idi, au delà du **mont Iridjlou**, est le **Basian** [**Başçayı**]; bien que ce pays appartienne à l'**Arménie** [**Armenia**], ayant été conquis par les Bagratides, il fit depuis partie de Samtzhké [**Mesxeti**]. Le Basian est aux sources du **Rakhs ou Arez** (l'Araxe). Sa ville principale s'appela autrefois Basian, et tout le pays en prit le nom. Maintenant la ville se nomme Asan-Qala [**Aşkale**] et se trouve au milieu du Basian, sur le bord septentrional du Rakhs [**Aras / Arax**]: ce n'est pas une ville considérable. Le pays est borné: à l'E., par un rameau de la montagne du midi qui est celle d'Arménie; à l'O., par la montagne d'Iridjlou et de Déwaboïn; au N., par les mont Iridjlou et Qalnou; au S, par une montagne partant du Déwaboïn et par celle de l'Arménie. Dans ce pays le Rakhs reçoit, à droite et à gauche, des rivières sortant des montagnes, et dont les rives sont garnies de bourgs”. From now on Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili will be used to refer to Prince Vaxušt'i (Bagrat'ioni / Bagration, 1696-1757), the son of King Vaxt'ang VI.

of each other. Greater Alazani and Lesser Alazani, or, as the Georgians call it, Iori (Jor), flow in parallel valleys in a southeastern direction and eventually joint together before emptying into the much larger Kur River (*Cyrus, Cirus Fluvius*). Indeed Greater Alazani in K'axeti, and Lesser Alazani in Tušeti, both derive their name from Alan, Alban. The latter of these is now scarcely known under that name; Iori is also called in modern documents, from "Iora", split in two (Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, 289).

Place-names are the most perceptible indicators of the reticulate Caucasian Iberian-Caucasian Albanian linguistic bond. Both the Alazani may be the rivers mentioned as *albanus-Albana Flu.* in Albània on Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus. However, Greater Alazani is a river in inner K'axeti, Georgia. It flows through the Caucasus Mountains near Telavi, the largest town in K'axeti. Similarly, Lesser Alazani or Iori is a river in Tušeti, currently, Georgia (Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, 283-5, 317-27).

Upon Alexander's death, *The life of the Kings (K'art'lis c'xovreba)* reports the partition of his empire into four sections. The descendants of the eponym *K'art'los*, from whom the *K'art'velians* arose, soon ascended to the vanguard of eastern Georgia's political and cultural life. In these mountains the waters of both the Alazani take their rise and flow in a south-east direction through *K'art'li* (Kartli), as the *K'art'velians* (Kartvelians) call their own land, that is to say, through Ibería or Hibería of the Caucasus in classical sources and geography.

Consisting of *k'art'vel-* and the geographical circumfix *sa...o*, S'akart'velo has been used in modern times as the official, native name of the country that the ancient writers call Ibería of the Caucasus both in Greek and in Latin. The Georgian circumfix *sa-X-o* is a standard geographical construction designating "the region/place where X dwell", where X is an ethnonym or name of a founding ancestor. Thus, S'akart'velo literally means "the region/place where the K'art'velians dwell". But the ethnonym *k'art'veli* acquired a double meaning: first, its earliest sense, the dominant population of *K'art'li* proper (Kartli), progressively encompassing adjacent peoples and lands in eastern Georgia; and second, the crown's "Georgian" subjects distributed from the Pontic or Black Sea littoral to the far eastern regions of K'axeti and Hereti, bordering and overlapping with Albània of the Caucasus (cf. Rapp 2003, 420; Shurgaiia 2014, 80-1). The toponym *K'art'li* underwent a similar transformation, its "all-Georgian" reach being extended by Kings and their contemporaries.

"Roman age" references to Ibería of the Caucasus and "Bagratid age" references to S'akart'velo in the sense of the all-Georgia realm often occur as a derivation from the Ibero-K'art'velian nucleus; and in this way the term *k'art'vel* came to mean both Iberian (East Georgian) and Georgian, between the year 928 (Roman-Iberian Treaty on the Aras River), and 1008. Before this, it is hardly correct to speak of Georgia as a political unit.

Considering their origin and historical context, K'axeti and Tušeti are

Kartli, that is to say, Iberia of the Caucasus, eastern Georgia. Lastly, this huge Kingdom of Kartli (Iberia) and its states remained undivided right up to the year 1466 of our era, so that K'axeti and Tušeti were Kartli (Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, 283).

Both the Alazani Rivers are Ibero-K'art'velian—geographically, and historically (Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, 283). Their lower paths now form the border between modern Georgia and Azerbaijan before they meet the Kur River in northwestern Azerbaijan in what was Albània in ancient geography. Then, the twin Alazani should not have been represented as an independent river, all Alban, or, Alvan, from the head to the mouth on Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus in 1466. The Alazani are misplaced on the map by several hundred miles eastward. They are really tributaries of the Kur River (*Cirus Fluvius*). And yet, no junctions are seen that can be correlated with the Kur, or, as the Georgians call it, the Mtkvari. Moreover, the Kur flows from north to south, and takes its rise in the Caucasian Mountains of Georgia (currently, K'odori River mountain valley: *Corax*, ancient Colchis, western Georgia).

Great Alazani is impassable except at one place: Mosabronu; it was known as "the entrance gate" from the point of view of Russian Transcaucasia (Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, 307).

If so, the "Albanian Gates" are modernly known as the Abano Pass in the central part of the Caucasus Mountains connecting K'axeti, and Tušeti on the northern side of the Caucasus via Pancia. These are two inner provinces of modern Georgia, Kartli, Iberia of the Caucasus through times of history. On Delisle's map about 1722, K'axeti is the place where the Alazani takes its rise (*Karahulki, Alax R.*), and Tušeti is the place where the Iori as the Lesser Alazani takes its rise (*Tusheti, Iori R.*). Both are tributaries of the Kur River (*Kor ou Mekvari R.*) (Appendix, fig. 8).

We see it in the way Nicolaus displays two bolted doors that here represent the double gates—K'axeti (Greater Alazani) and Tušeti (Lesser Alazani or Iori). If so, however, in 1466 Nicolaus Germanus makes a number of surprising mistakes. In contrast with his map, Kur's important tributaries are Greater Alazani and Lesser Alazani (Iori) on the northern bank, and the Aras on the southern side. The two Alazani do not discharge independently into the Caspian Sea, however, but into the Kur flowing from modern Tbilisi, Georgia, to Azerbaijan. To the south, the confluence of the great Aras (*araxes f.*) and Kur (*Cirus Fluvius*) is shown as the upper end of the zigzag Mescit Mountains stretching eastward into the interior of Albània of the Caucasus, in what is now southwestern Azerbaijan. In this way the Aras and Kur look very far from the twin Alazani (*albanus-Albana Flu.*) on Ptolemy's 3rd Asian Map. After this junction at Javād, Azerbaijan, the depth and breadth of the Kur are so much increased, that it immediately becomes navigable for larger boats in the real world. And so the Kur flows onward for fifty miles, through the region where the Caspii dwell upon its

shores according to Pliny, and empties into the Caspian Sea. The Caspii are the people who gave the sea its name.

To sum up our conclusions from this evidence: The twin Alazani (*albanus-Albana Flu.*) are mislocated in places. Once again, we see the strong west-to-east distortion of maps based on Ptolemy's mistake in making Scotland trend to the east instead of the north.

A map supplies a frame of reference without which most passages of history are unintelligible. But so far as I have been able to learn, nowhere except in northern Georgia (Iberia, Kartli) can all these elements (gates, river, the Caucasus, and the Caspian) be found. At the east base of Mount Kazbek, one of the major mountains of the Caucasus, northern Georgia, the Dariali Gorge or Pass alone is at the very centre of the Caucasus where the Terek River takes its rise next to the two Alazani. The Terek flows through modern Russia, or, as the ancients call it, Sarmatia, into the Caspian Sea.

The ancient "Albanian Gates" and the modern "Abano Pass", even if misplaced on the 1466 map, remains the Georgian (Iberian) sector of the Dariali Gorge which does not issue in a pass into the Caspian Sea. From this it follows that Nero's general Corbulo failed to find "The Caspian Gates" through Iberia of the Caucasus when he organized the Armenian campaign, which was to extend as far as Sarmatia, currently, Russia. Now Pliny refers to "the Iberian Gates, or, the Caucasian" that he has at hand (*N. h.* 6,15). In fact, the coloured plans which have been sent from those parts to Rome have that name written upon them instead of "The Caspian Gates". Here there is a mistake made by many Romans: they have all called the "Caspian Gates" those of Iberia, or, the Caucasian.

We then go on to get through the entrance and the exit gates. From the ancient "Albanian Gates" and the modern "Abano Pass" where said gates are in position to open the exit to Russia (*Sarmatia*) via Tušeti (Lesser Alazani or Iori) and K'axeti (Greater Alazani), Iberia or Kartli (currently Georgia), we will have to find the route back from B to A, that is to say, from the exit gates to the entrance gates. Indeed, the coloured plans and the places drawn upon, which have been sent from those parts to Rome learn to follow a route all indicated by "the Iberian Gates, or, the Caucasian". The plans should lead back through Iberia of the Caucasus from the north side of Sarmatia (Russia) down into the territory of Armenia and the mouth of the Kur River (*Cyrus, Cyrus*).

On the Roman side of the story, around the year 18 A.D. Strabo, the geographer from Pontus, first juxtaposes the *Georgi*, or "tillers of the ground" as the description is based on Greek from *geo*, "earth", and the Sarmatians who are Scythians extending as far as the Caucasus Mountains toward the south. Some of these tribes are nomads, or shepherd tribes, other are *Scenitae* or dwellers in tents, and *Georgi*, or tillers of the ground (Strabo 1856,

*Geographica*, 11,2).<sup>15</sup> The Georgi from *geōrgos*, farmer, have a different manner of life and take the ethnic name from it. In the Roman language the ethnic word comes via Latin from Greek. In fact, Pliny the Elder calls them *Georgi* about A.D. 79 (*N. h.* 6,14).

There are, however, other gates, Pliny says, and these unknown gates are of extreme narrowness. Pliny brings out very clearly the characteristic features (Plin., *Naturalis historia* 6,17,14). He describe the movement from Media to the land of the Cordueni, even if he does not give the coordinates of the point on the coloured plans. Now the question is: Where are the Iberian Gates, or, the Caucasian, that the Romans could see in the first century? Joining up to *Adiabene*, the place where Assyria begins, Pliny says, are the people formerly known as the “Carduchi”, now the *Cordueni*, in front of whom the river Tigris flows. Variants of the name are *Cardueni* and *Kardueni*. And Adiabene lay “beyond” the borders of Armenia according to Strabo of Amasya. Therefore the Cordueni, or, Kardueni are neither the Armenians nor the Assyrians, though there is still not enough information and detail.

Ptolemy’s inexact method resulted in some spectacular mislocations on Ptolemy’s map of the Caucasus made in 1466. Although three passes were often confused by Greek, Roman and Syrian authors and indistinctly called the Caucasian Gates, the Caspian Gates, or, the Albanian Gates, yesterday and today no author can actually point to three passes in the Caucasian region.<sup>16</sup>

And, yet, however, further to the south, across the street from Media, Pliny the Elder can see another pass, “The Gates of Iberia as the Caucasian Gates” as the “places drawn” which have been sent from those parts to Rome have that name written upon them (*Naturalis historica* 6,17,14, 6,17,15). He knows it with certainty. The whole of this pass has been formed by artificial means according to Pliny. But we have to find more evidence.

An argument of correct logical form based on false premises can lead to a false conclusion. From the point of view of the historical geographer, my goal in this paper is to prove that Ptolemy’s 3rd Asian Map, the map

15 Strabo 1877, *Geographica*, 11,2 “According to this disposition, the first portion towards the north and the Ocean is inhabited by certain tribes of Scythians, shepherds, (nomades) and Hamaxoeci (or those who live in waggon-houses). Within these tribes live Sarmatians, who also are Scythians, Aorsi, and Siraci, extending as far as the Caucasian Mountains towards the south. Some of these are Nomades, or shepherd tribes, others Scenitæ, (or dwellers in tents), and Georgi, or tillers of the ground [γεωργός]. About the lake Mæotis live the Mæotæ. Close to the sea is the Asiatic portion of the Bosphorus and Sindica”.

16 See, for example, Chrisholm 1911, 832. Michael the Syrian points to two passes in the Caucasus range: the Derbent Pass in Caucasian Albània, present-day Daghestan, also known as “Guard of the Huns” and to the Darial Gorge or Pass in Eastern Georgia (Kartli); see van Donzel, Schmidt 2009, 52-3. Derbent is the city located on the Caspian Sea.

of the Caucasus and the level of the Caspian Sea, has remarkable west-to-east distortion of the geographical features within wrong coordinates of latitude and longitude. Historians of the Roman world and archaeologists should dismiss Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus as having no value as historical evidence.

Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus at first sight is grotesquely inaccurate. Yet if we look at the world map that Pietro Vesconte was drawing at Venice in the 1320s, the scene suddenly changes (London, BL, Add. MS 27376, ff. 187v-188). The Mediterranean and the Black Sea (*mare po[n]ticu[m]*) are no longer an unrecognisable pattern of shapes that can be identified only by the names attached to them, when possible. Instead we see, more or less accurately drawn, the outline that we are familiar with today. This reflects the advent of the portolan chart. A portolan chart can be defined as a catalogue of directions to follow between notable points and mnemonics for recalling lists of ports. The directions are made graphically vivid by the so-called rhumb lines, the radiating lines, measured clockwise from 0° to 360°. The notable points are brought lucidly to our attention by various cartographic images, iconic and symbolic alike. The word *portolano* is Italian and means written sailing directions to accompany wind and current charts. A *portonano* is then prepared by the master of marine charts for a more detailed account of the navigational system.

Portolan, or nautical charts share a characteristic: a network of rhumb lines for the eight primary winds or directions, like a web of a spider, that forms a grid for the map. The network of lines is made within a circle which defines the grid. The radiating lines, called rhumb lines, are for the purpose of plotting a sailing course at sea. Rhumb lines, therefore, converge at the circle's centre. Patterns of squares, triangles and parallelograms are thus visible within the circle on a portolan chart. The navigator can now define and describe the direction in which he is sailing at any particular moment—*e.g.*, N. E. b. E., or N. 56° 10' E. He is also able to take this direction by the help of the magnetic needle, which carries a card divided by rhumb lines exactly similar to those making the division of the horizon. The horizon is divided according to the common method of dividing any circle into 360°.

Let us now consider the case of two places on the earth's surface from one of which we wish to conduct our ship to the other. Sailing to a rhumb line so that a constant direction is maintained in the presence of a steady wind is easy with the aid of our compass. By the 1320s navigators read *GEORGIA* on Vesconte's world map 35 centimetres across, oriented with East at the top.<sup>17</sup> This is actually the modern name for the United Kingdom

17 Kingdoms of Abasgia and Iberia of the Caucasus (Kartli, East Georgia) were united in 1008 (all-Georgia). Christian Abasgi lived in the Kingdom of Abasgia; the land is not to be confused with modern Abxazija and the Abxazi as the Apsua were originally called until the

of the Georgians that the ancients knew as the three Kingdoms of Colchis (West Georgia), Christian Abasgia (mod. Abxazija) and Caucasian Iberia (Kartli, East Georgia). The world map illustrates the manuscript by Marino Sanudo *Liber secretorum fidelium Crucis, sive de recuperatione terrae sanctae* when Christian Armenia was invaded from the east by the Turks. An earlier political version of the map of the Caucasus then appeared across a manuscript copy of Ptolemy's *Geography* in Florence first in 1415.

Meanwhile, developments in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries particularly affected the content of portolan charts, compiled from the sailing directions; these works were for the practical navigator. The most important of these developments was the succession of voyages along the African coast, culminating in Bartolomeu Dias rounding the Cape of Good Hope for the King of Portugal in 1488 and presaging voyages of exploration still further afield, in the old world as well as the new. The whole continent of America and whole Oceans wait discovery.

Europe had by now acquired the standard set of maps to accompany Ptolemy's resurfaced *Geography*, a single world map and twenty-six regional maps. But the geographical coordinates were often incorrect, and contemporary portolan charts offered more accurate maps of the coastal areas. The History of cartography deals with original materials from the past. Physical environments did not change significantly in the Pre-industrial World. While historical details, as far as we know, did not survive, the fact is that the maps did. Where was Roman Greece, or, as the ancients call it, *Romània*, now is modern Turkey. Geographically, Constantinople was Greece according to Byzantine-Greek and Latin authors before modern Turkey was created. Greeks in antiquity did not use the term Georgia, but referred instead to western Georgia as Colchis and to eastern Georgia as Iberia of the Caucasus, or, Hiberia. Ancient Colchis was on the border with Trabzon of the Greeks (*Trebisonda*), Chaldia, Roman Pontus. The Georgians, as an ethnic group, identify themselves as *Kartveli / Kartvelians*, and call their land *Sakartvelo*, or the Land of the Georgians. The Georgian language, or, as the Romans call it, "Cardveli" in the seventeenth century, is the only one in the Caucasian family to have its own unique alphabet.<sup>18</sup>

nineteenth century. The Apsua or modern Abxazi were partly Sunnah Muslims and partly Pagans from Kuban' Plain and the Sea of Azov in the eleventh century. The tribe of the Apsua moved across the rivers K'odori and Enguri and invaded the lands of Colchis (West Georgia) in the seventeenth century; slowly the name changed to Abxazi as the Apsua did not distinguish themselves among the lowest layers of the original Abasgian or Abxazian society. They still call themselves Apsua. Cf. Magarotto, Shurgaiia 2008, 725-44.

**18** Beyond the United Kingdom of Georgia was Greece according to official reports to Popes at Rome and Tsars at St. Petersburg until the eighteenth century, as a result of the Roman Empire's collapse in the East. See Constantinus Porphyrogenitus 1588, Pars Lat., ff. 1-8 "*De Thematibus Liber. Bonaventura Vulcanio interprete: De Thematibus pertinentibus ad regnum Romanum, unde appellationem duxerint, et hae ipsae appellationes quid significant, et quod*

Constantinople is Istanbul today. On the one hand, historical geographers record facts with special reference to spatial organization; they record – in varying forms – who drew what, where, and when. Historical geographers, on the other hand, are concerned not only with reconstructing past geographies, but also with studying geographical changes in political and administrative boundaries over time.

Indeed a map is real when it shows part of the physical universe we live in. However, geographical knowledge of right and wrong is the prerequisite for selecting real and unreal maps before a scientific sequence is made. The best idea may be formed of Ptolemy, by following his own words about A.D. 150. As Ptolemy tells us in the first book, the cartographer's task is not to gather and digest afresh all the information that is to go into the map, but to take as his starting point the most recent comprehensive and competent work of the same kind, correcting and augmenting it using his critical skills and the most up-to-date specialized sources (Berggren, Jones 2000, 23, Ptolemy, *Geography*, 1,4,6).

Consequently Ptolemy is not interested in fresh information that is to go into a map. In Ptolemy's time, however, Emperor Trajan's treaty of alliance has been the most up-to-date specialized source for the Caucasus region since A.D. 114. Then Trajan devoted the years 114 and 115 to the Parthian war. As we have seen, Pliny the Elder says that Parthia is the kingdom of the Persians (*Naturalis historia* 6,15, 6,16). When Pliny the Younger became governor of Bithynia in autumn and winter of 110-111, or 112-113 at the latest, and asked for land surveyors, Trajan turned him down on the ground that he had scarcely enough for the public works in progress in Rome (Plinius junior, *Epistolae*, 10,17b, 8; Sordi 2004, 91 and n. 6). Bithynia was Roman Pontus and Trajan chose Pliny the Younger as his representative for a special mission. Pliny's first task was, in Trajan's words, to inspect the accounts of the various towns as they were evidently in confusion. As for land surveyors, Trajan noted that reliable surveyors were to be found in every province and no doubt Pliny would not lack assistance (*Epistolae*, 10,18). Pliny the Younger then arrived in Bithynia,

nonnullae Graecanicae". And Roma, Curia Generalizia dei Chierici Regolari in Sant'Andrea della Valle, Archivio Generale, Pietro della Valle, *Informazione della Giorgia data alla Santità di Nostro Signore Papa Urbano VIII. Da Pietro della Valle il Pellegrino l'anno 1627*, ff. 1-14; f. 1 "E più à basso nelle parti più Occidentali verso Trabisonda, se non m'inganno, qualche parte anco della Cappadocia. Tutta questa terra, che hoggi parla una sola lingua, a quei popoli propria, è comune, detta da noi Georgiana, ma da loro Cardveli". Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, Description du Karthli actuel; ses frontières, ses montagnes, ses fleuves, les diverses localités et les édifices qu'elles contiennent. Description des lieux remarquables du Samtzhké ou Saathabago, 40, 61, 129-27, 175, 196, 200, 220, 249, 251, 261, 273, 346, 521; 27 "Gourdij Boghaz est précisément à l'O. de Khendzoreth. Cette vallee, jusq'au mont de Baibourd, est la limite de la Géorgie et de la Grèce; elle est étroite, rocheuse et boisée. Au-dessus de l'endroit ou le Gourdji-Boghaz tombe dans la rivière d'Ispira, sont les montagnes que projettent celles de ce dernier pays et qui le séparet de Baibourd, ainsi que nous l'avons dit".



along the shore across the Bosphorus in what is now Asian Turkey. There it is supposed that he remained until his death, which probably occurred in A.D. 113, or 114. Meantime via Kapadokya, Parthamasiris the Parthian had laid aside the style and title of King of Armenia before Trajan since A.D. 106. Trajan was now at Elegia, a town of Armenia (currently Elaziğ, Turkey). Since 106 Parthamasiris had surrendered Armenia, when Trajan replied that Armenia should obey none but a Roman sovereign (Dion Cassius, lxxviii, 779). Accordingly, having drawn an army composed of legions from the Danube, the future Emperor Adrian entered the Roman territory of Satala, a town of Armenia (currently Sadak, Turkey). Here Adrian joined Trajan the Emperor who was planning a massive invasion of Parthia, Persia. The provisions of the 114 treaty of alliance between the Roman state and neighbouring states were carefully preserved by the two fourth-century chroniclers, Sextus Rufus Festus and Eutropius. Accompanied by a geographical list of those countries, a formal treaty of alliance, or, as the Romans called it, *foedus*, could effectively bind the parties to the commitments laid down by the clauses. Based on ancient records, in the *Breviarium* of Roman history Sextus Rufus Festus and Eutropius list the six Kings who finally did homage to the Emperor of the Romans at Satala, Armenian Pontus, in A.D. 114.

The Kings of the Iberians of the Caucasus (East Georgians) and the Bosphorians, the Arabs, the *Osdroëni* and the Colchians (West Georgians) presented to the Emperor of the Romans certain gifts, and claimed in return a right to federate with Rome. For the Albanians, the people of Caucasian Albània, the Emperor Trajan appointed a King: "Albanis regem dedit" (Eutrop. *Breviarium*, 8,3, Sylburgii 1762, 1, 362-3).

On numismatic evidence, then Trajan went by, and the Armenian war against the Parthians went on until A.D. 115 (Migliorati 2001, 235-7).

For thirty years the six Kingdoms had been federated with Rome, when Ptolemy composed his *Geography* about A.D. 150. Now the question arises: Did Ptolemy best represent the current state of geographical knowledge on the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire with the Caucasian Kingdoms after A.D. 114? He, himself, after all, declares that the cartographer's task is not to gather and digest afresh all the information that is to go into the map.

Because drawing the boundary line is so important in public policy, and on maps, and because it is an illustrative example of geographers' relationship with knowledge about history, let us take a closer look at how the two Roman chroniclers handle the issue of federation in A.D. 114.

The development of the Roman Auxiliary Forces from Octavius Augustus to Trajan passed through several phases. At last during the Principate of Trajan (98-117 A.D.), actions were taken. In the happy time of the Roman Empire of the second century which goes under the name of the Antonines, from Trajan onwards, the reign is called the Principate, from *princeps* - the

best citizen (Sordi 2004, 87-9).<sup>19</sup> Around A.D. 111, thus the Emperor Trajan took the most effectual measures to put the frontiers of the Principate of Rome in a state of defence. After the treaty of Sadak (Satala) was signed, he studied ways of improving the public road system from the federated Kingdom of Colchis (West Georgia) to the Red Sea. On the western bank of the Euphrates, or, as the Turks call it, Firat Nehri, the camp of what is now Eski Malatya (*Melitene*) was converted into the metropolis of Melitene in Armenia, the new province within the Roman Principate (Angeli Bertinelli 2000, 34-5).

The Roman stations are given in the Antonine Itinerary (early third century). Finally, Ammianus Marcellinus from Syria named the public road *Regia Via* in the fourth century (*Codex Theodosianus* 1665, t. 2, 328).

From Trajan's time onwards the terrestrial route which we are describing possessed some considerable importance not merely as a connection with many great provinces in the Roman reign, but also as an overland road, ultimately the Imperial post-road, to the East.

Thus Trajan's Parthian War 114-17 has been explained as an attempt to establish a "scientific" frontier beyond the Euphrates River. Trajan's Parthian War was not, however, a limited border rectification offensive. It happened that the Arsacid Osroes I, the King of Parthia since A.D. 110, replaced a fellow Arsacid, Axidares, the King of Armenia by Roman approval, with another, Parthamasiris, who had not been approved by Rome as required by the terms of the Roman-Parthian agreement. Between 113 and 117, diplomacy failed (Luttwak 2016, 121-2). By the end of 113 Trajan was in Antioch, the capital of Roman Syria, currently Antakya, Turkey, to review the situation. Consequently, Trajan moved north to the Roman part of Armenia. He gathered his army and made himself available at Satala to an invited gathering of client Kings from the Caucasus and neighbouring reigns. Parthamasiris, the King of "the other part of Armenia", could have come to this meeting, but did not. At Satala in Armenia, north of the Euphrates River, Trajan then held court in A.D. 114. Here all the Caucasian Kings were assembled, and some Kings around the Black Sea as we noted before.

Trajan first recovered Armenia, which the Parthians had "occupied". Now Sextus Rufus Festus and Eutropius list the six Kings who did homage in the following order at Satala in A.D. 114 (*Breviarium*, 8,3, Sylburgii 1762, 1, 362): the King of the Iberians from the Caucasus (Eastern Georgians), and the King of the Sarmatians who ruled the territory at the mouth of Tanais, the Don, according to Strabo (Strabo 1877, *Geographica*, 11,1,1, 12,1,1). Then came the King of the Bosphorians, and the King of the Arabs, the King of the Osroenians and the King of the Colchians

19 Trajan styled himself Imperator Nerva Caesar Augustus.

(Western Georgians). Now Trajan gave Albània of the Caucasus a King (Alvànìa, currently, Daghestan). But the Parthian nominee to the throne of Armenia, Phartamasiris, whose installation had provided Emperor Trajan with the *casus belli*, did not appear (Eutrop. *Breviarium*, 8,3, Sylburgii 1762, 1, 362-6).

Trajan first stationed at Satala, Roman Armenia, and then departed for Parthia, Persia, to conduct the Parthian War, which lasted from A.D. 114 to 117. Trajan's march from Satala to the Red Sea was made in two stages, Seleucia on the Tigris (southeast of Baghdad currently Iraq) marking the mid-way point. And soon we will see the Roman Army conduct operations against the Parthians in the field and against their fortified cities and positions.

Trajan advanced as far as the frontiers of India and the Red Sea, "and there he made three provinces, Armenia, Assyria and Mesopotamia with those peoples which border on Madena" in A.D. 117 according to the *Breviarium* of Roman history (Eutrop. *Breviarium*, 8,3, Sylburgii 1762, 1, 363). Thus, three provinces were created and added to the Roman Empire.

It is essential to note that at this stage in Roman history the Emperor Trajan abolished the Kingdom of Armenia. It was then that "Armenia, Assyria and Mesopotamia with their peoples were constituted as fully organized provinces of the Roman Empire and added to the Roman Empire" and the new Roman frontier was established on the closer bank of the Euphrates River, currently Firat Nehri (Eutropius *Brev.* VIII.III, Sylburgii 1762 I. s., 366).

There was no Roman protectorate in Armenia, but instead Armenia was simply added to the Roman state when it was constituted a province of the Roman Empire in A.D. 117. The limits of the Roman Empire were demarcated on the ground, so that all could tell what was Roman, and what was not. Armenia was Roman, Iberia of the Caucasus (Kartli) was not. Since then Armenia has been a province of the Roman Empire under the centralized administration of the Roman government from Rome first, and afterwards from Constantinople. The mentioned act shall continue in force until the first crusade in Alexius' reign in A.D. 1097.<sup>20</sup>

On Eutropius' authority, on the one hand Trajan strengthened border defences and secured Roman power by perimeter infrastructures that complemented the natural barriers of rivers. Enemies were kept aloof by the Euphrates River. On the other hand, "into faith" Trajan received the King of Iberia of the Caucasus (Kartli, East Georgia) in the name of the Roman people ("in fidem accepit"). When Trajan came to hold court at Satala in 114 the seven friendly states of the Caucasian Iberians, the Sarmatians along the Don, the Bosphorians, the Arabs, the *Osdroëni*, the Colchians,

20 Alexius 1 Comnenus then had himself crowned as Emperor of the Romans at Constantinople; see Bongars 1611, Fulcherii Carotensis Gesta Peregrinantium Francorum cum Armis Hierusalem Pergentium. Balduinus Rex, 387-8.

and the Albanians of the Caucasus were all admitted into the federative alliance with Rome (Eutropius *Brev.* VIII.III, Sylburgii 1762 I. s., 363).

Since 114, the existing political system of the Caucasus has consisted of states subsidiary, federative, and independent. The first condition of this subsidiary alliance is that the Roman government should protect the native states from external invasion and internal dissention, but the troops assigned for this purpose are not to be employed in the civil administration, or collection of the revenue. An aspect of Trajan's regime which is specially relevant here is the constitution of the three new provinces within the Roman Empire, that are Armenia, Assyria and Mesopotamia.

Politically, federated Kingdoms were on a par with any of the neighbouring states and the Roman Empire. The Latin word *fidēs* in the passage *in fidem accepit* translates into Latin as treaty. Trajan respected their laws and their privileges. Consequently, we should see the three federated Caucasian Kingdoms depicted on Ptolemy's 3rd Asian Map, Colchis, Iberia of the Caucasus and Albània of the Caucasus, and the three new Roman provinces of Armenia, Mesopotamia, that is, Media, and Assyria in the Roman Empire around the year 150 (Appendix, figs. 4, 6).

At this point, Eutropius relates that "Trajan occupied" the lands of two peoples: *Cardueni* and *Marcomedi* (Eutropius *Brev.* VIII.III, Sylburgii 1762 I. s., 364).

About forty years before Ptolemy's time (c.150 A.D.), at Satala then the Emperor Trajan defined an easterly direction for the boundary line between the three easternmost provinces of the Roman Empire along the Euphrates River, Armenia, Mesopotamia (Media) and Assyria, on the one hand, and the federated Kingdoms in the East on the other. These Kingdoms only were independent states federated to the Romans.

The oldest traces of Roman public international law, in the sense of law regulating relations with other polities, are to be found in the contemporary context of the *foedus* in return for military assistance and transit. The federative alliance with Rome is a Roman institution that is practised to hold kingdoms, peoples or tribes, and cities together. A treaty, *foedus* in Latin, is a pact entered into by sovereigns for the welfare of the states in perpetuity. It is used in an international context, and accompanied by ancient ritual; the treaty allows the Roman state to enter into bilateral relations with any other federated state, but it does not allow federated states to enter into relations among themselves (Valvo 1992, 122-5; Zecchini 2005, 129-48).

Federated Kings proclaim the alliance with Rome publicly. What Emperor Trajan really projects in his *foedus* in A.D. 114 is a multitude of fully sovereign states voluntarily submitting themselves to a single body of international laws in accordance with which conflicts and disputes between them could be properly adjudicated and authoritatively resolved.

The Roman *foedus*, the federative alliance with Rome, on the one hand, was made by Kings alone and not all Kings received such a privilege. Every

sovereign on his accession should seek not only to be recognized by Rome as friend and ally, but to be addressed by the royal title. However, there was no interruption caused by death; the eldest son was *ipso facto* King and was proclaimed immediately. Every King then upon his succession, if he wished to have behind him the support of Rome, sought recognition in one of three ways (Sands 1908, 70-1).

Yet on the other hand, Armenia, Assyria and Mesopotamia entered the Empire of the Romans as new provinces. The closer bank of the Euphrates River became the outer frontier of this militarized Roman territory fronting Parthia. From the larger point of view the history of Parthia is that of Persia and Central Asia under the Arsacid dynasty. Now Trajan wanted the Euphrates River to be a median between the Romans and the Parthians, or, as Pliny the Elder calls them, the Persians. Since A.D. 114 Trajan had regained Armenia from the Parthian Kings and abolished the Kingdom of Armenia, when he made three new Roman provinces, Armenia, Mesopotamia and Assyria in A.D. 117 according to the *Breviarium* of Roman history.

Emperor Trajan, however, had other plans for the land of the people called *Cardueni*, with the variant name *Cardiveni* in critical editions of the *Breviarium* often accompanied by vocabularies and palaeographic notes.<sup>21</sup> In fact, after the 114 treaty, the federative alliance with Rome, Eutropius relates that "Trajan occupied" the lands of two peoples: *Cardueni* and *Marcomedi* (Eutropius *Brev.* VIII.III, Sylburgii 1762 I. s., 364).

However, joining up to *Adiabene* are the people known as the *Corduani*, in front of whom the river Tigris flows according to Pliny The Elder. Variants of their name are *Cardueni* and *Karduani*. Clearly *Adiabene* lay beyond the borders of *Armenia* according to Strabo from Amasya. And *Adiabene* is the place where *Assyria* begins according to Pliny The Elder. A spelling variant occurs for the people called *Cardueni*, not far from Mesopotamia: *Cardveni*. Such is the German editor's reading of the text by Sextus Rufus Festus the chronicler.<sup>22</sup>

Now Trajan, occupying the country of the *Cardueni*, a country with definite boundaries above *Assyria*, crossed the new frontier of the Roman Empire with a formidable army. It is clear, that the *Cardueni* are not within the Roman Empire.

Immediately after the ratification of the treaty (*foedus*), the federative alliance with Rome, we assume that Trajan's forces "occupied" the country of the *Cardueni* according to Eutropius. But the Romans did not keep it.

21 Eutrop., *Breviarium*, Sylburgii 1762, 1, 364; and 8,3 *Variae Lectiones: Corduenos pro Carduenos; Cardivenos, Carduena autem.*

22 Reinhold 1898, 6, Sextus Rufus, *De Victoribus Populi Romani*, 3 "Ponti regnum occupatum; et Armenia minor, quam idem tenuerat, armis obtenta est. In Mesopotamiam Romanus pervenit exercitus: cum Parthis foedum initum est, contra Cardvenos ac Saracenos et Arabas bellatum est, Judaea omnis victa est".

Otherwise Eutropius would have said that Trajan “conquered and kept” the country of the *Cardueni* as he did for other peoples around them according to his *Breviarium* of Roman history, as we shall see.

We notice that the *Cardveni*, the people that Trajan occupied, are to be found also in the Elder Pliny’s natural history, book 6. *Cardueni* and *Karduani* are likewise attested in variant editions. Pliny opens chapter sixteen by defining the Kingdom of the Persians, “by which we now understand that of Parthia, which is elevated upon the Caucasian chain between the two seas”, the Caspian from the Caspii on the one hand and the Persian from the Persians on the other. To the *Greater Armenia*, Pliny reports, which in the front slopes towards *Commagene*, is “joined *Sophene* which lies upon the descent on both sides thereof”, and “next to it is *Adiabene*, the most advanced frontier of *Assyria*” (Plinius *N. h.* 6,16).

Further information is required at this point. We understand that *Commagene* is the land of the Seleucid Kings which lies “outside the River Euphrates” according to Procopius; it is a crossing point on the River Euphrates (Procopius 1833, *De Bello Persico*, 2,17,18, 2,17,24-2,17,30).

There was also in former times *Ninus*, a most renowned city, on the banks of the Tigris “with an aspect towards the west. This then allows Pliny to finish off the speech by remarking on how the Aras River (*Araxes*) separates Greater Armenia from Media, which closes chapter sixteen. The *Ninus* of classical antiquity can be identified with the *Niniveth* of Roman records, on the outskirts of Mosul in modern-day northern Iraq. “Adjoining the other front of Greater Armenia, which runs down towards the Caspian Sea”, Pliny says, we find *Atropatene*, which is separated from *Otene*, a region of *Armenia*, by the river *Araxes*. And Gazae is its chief city, distant from Artaxata four hundred and fifty miles, and the same from Ecbatana in *Media*, to which country Atropatene belongs (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,16, end).

Thus chapter sixteen ends with the geography “of the other front of Greater Armenia” bounded to the north by the Aras River, the *Araxes* of classical antiquity, which runs down toward the Caspian Sea along the far boundary between Greater Armenia (*Armenia Maior*) and Media. Ancient *Araxes* River and modern *Aras* rises in what is now eastern Turkey and flows eastwards, until it joints with the ancient *Cirus* River and modern *Kur* before emptying into the Caspian Sea. Now the *Kur* becomes navigable. Meanwhile from its junction with the *Alazani* River, the *Kur* traverses a hilly country of some extent, *K’axeti*, modern Georgia, and then enters that extensive plain which extends along the Caspian Sea from Baku to the Bay of *Kizil-Agatch*.

The description of the direction is correct. In fact, in describing the towns of Media, Pliny describes them from “The Caspian Gates”, that is to say from the mouth of the *Kur* River fronting on the Caspian Sea, 70 miles south of Baku in what is now Azerbaijan (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,15).

We understand that the Caspian Sea and the Caspian Gates have not as reference point the same meaning in physical geography. The Caspian Gates mark the mouth of the Kur's River where the Caspii dwell upon its shores (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,15).

Chapter seventeen begins with the geography of Media in two paragraphs. Here "the other front of Greater Armenia which runs towards the Caspian Sea" on the one hand, and Media from the boundary of "The Caspian Gates" on the other, being in accordant directions, converge to a single point. It is here, to this converging point, that we stop.

In the territory of Media are four towns in an east-westerly direction from the boundary of "The Caspian Gates". Ecbatana, the capital of the Medians, was built by King Seleucus "at a distance of twenty miles from The Caspian Gates", and the remaining towns of Phazaca, Aganzaga, and Apamea lead to gates. The reason of these passes receiving the name of "Gates", is the same that has been stated above, Pliny notes. The reference goes to chapter 6,15, as follows: "After we pass the mouth of the Cyrus [the Kur River], it begins to be called the 'Caspian Sea;' the Caspii being a people who dwell upon its shores. In this place it may be as well to correct an error into which many persons have fallen, and even those who lately took part with Corbulo in the Armenian war. The Gates of Iberia, which we have mentioned as the Caucasian Gates, they have spoken of as being called the 'Caspian,' and the coloured plans which have been sent from those parts to Rome have that name written upon them. The menaced expedition, too, that was contemplated by the Emperor Nero, was said to be designed to extend as far as the Caspian Gates, where as it was really intended for those which lead through Iberia into the territory of the Sarmatae; there being hardly any possibility of approach to the Caspian Sea, by reason of the close juxtaposition of the mountains here".

It follows, that the accordant directions converge to a single point: "The Gates of Iberia, which we have mentioned as the Caucasian Gates". From the Median towns, the position of these gates, Pliny notes in chapter seventeen, is where "the chain of mountains is suddenly broken by a passage of such extreme narrowness that, for a distance of eight miles in longitude, a single chariot can barely find room to move along: the whole of this pass has been formed by artificial means. Both on the right hand and the left are overhanging rocks, which look as though they had been exposed to the action of fire; and there is a tract of country, quite destitute of water, twenty-eight miles in extent. This narrow pass, too, is rendered still more difficult by a liquid salt which oozes from the rocks, and uniting in a single stream, makes its way along the pass. Besides this, it is frequented by such multitudes of serpents, that the passage is quite impracticable except in winter. Joining up to *Adiabene* are the people formerly known as the 'Carduchi,' now the *Cordueni*, in front of whom the river Tigris flows" (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,17,15).

From Media westwards along the northern side of the Aras River “The Gates of Ibería as the Caucasian Gates” mark the entrance to the land of the *Cordueni / Cardueni / Kardueni / Cardveni*. Next to the land is *Adiabene* (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,17,14), where the land of the Assyrians begins (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,16). However, *Adiabene* is located beyond the borders of *Armenia* (Strabo 1857, *Geographica*, 11,4,1 and 11,4,8). In fact, *Adiabene* is the most advanced frontier of Assyria (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,16).

We conclude that the ancient authors provide us with a response to basic administrative questions on the Roman government in the East. So we can say that the other front of Greater Armenia which runs down towards the Caspian Sea, Media and the *Cardueni* make a tri-border ethnic area at the “The Gates of Ibería as the Caucasian Gates”. Two provinces since A.D. 117, however, Armenia and Media are constituent elements of a larger state unit called the Roman Empire. A federated Kingdom since A.D. 114, Ibería of the Caucasus has the right of government over the province of the *Cardueni* which is constituent element of this state through “The Gates of Ibería as the Caucasian Gates” (“in fidem accepit”). That is presumably why Trajan’s army “occupied” the *Cardueni* province of federated Ibería before advancing through Niniveth (currently Mosul) into the territory of Assyria.

Further, the *Notitia dignitatum imperii romani*, from the early fifth century, refers to an *Ala*, the Roman cavalry regiment “Fifteenth Ala Flavia *Carduendorum*”, stationed at Caini. The spot on Delisle’s map may be the modern place-name Gania (*Kanja*), which refers to the place that is situated immediately below the triple junction of both the rivers Alazini (Greater Alazani and Lesser Alazani or Iori) into the Kur River (anc. *Cyrus / Cirus Fl.*), Azerbaijan. The Roman Army has a complex history of integration that is characterized by numerous organizational changes. The chain of command from the Senate of Rome to the army was reorganized. Each duke was in charge of a *Notitia Dignitatum*, and listed in a dedicated section of the *Notitia* at the head of a military force in the field. The administrative register known as *Notitia Dignitatum* records troop dispositions for both the western and eastern halves of the Roman Empire. Furthermore, we can identify nations and establish their sovereign and independent existence according to their military status in the Roman Armed Forces. The term *ala*, literally a wing, reflects the position of the allied troops on each flank of the two-legion army; later, under the Empire, the term *ala* was used exclusively for cavalry (Keppie 1984, 10, 22f and 36f, 69, 216, 272). Cavalry was the most distinguished arm in the Roman Army; cavalry men were called *equites* (Kennedy 1965, Iulius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* 1,42).

It also appears that the confederate *Alae Sociorum* were engaged as regular military units in the early Empire (27 B.C. -A.D. 200). In the army of the early Empire, confederate *Alae* were provided by allied nations. The



Romans always relied on their allies, or, *socii*, to provide native cavalry, that is to say non-citizen cavalry, either recruited in the subject provinces or supplied by allied Kings.

Allied cavalry men were *equites foederati*. In the eastern part of the Roman Empire, the unit of the allied *foederati* called *Cardueni* under the title *Ala XV. Flavia Carduenum* was at the command of the Duke of Mesopotamia. In the western part of the Roman Empire, another cavalry unit of *Cardueni* serving in Rome's military forces stationed in Mauritania Tingitania.<sup>23</sup>

We dare not argue from silence that “Ala XV Flavia Carduenum” was recruited in a region called Cordyene, skirted by the Tigris River. Neither can we argue from the neighbouring Roman provinces that *Cardueni* were recruited in Armenia. It is evident instead that in the Roman Empire of the East a series of military ordinances, published by the *Notitia Dignitatum*, stamped the ducal authority upon the personnel, organization and command structure of the army. Accordingly, the military units are numbered progressively. The Duke of Mesopotamia and the Duke of Armenia were given, respectively, office number XXXVI and office number XXXVII; they were to be stationed at different posts, and spread over a very large extent of country. No doubt Ala XV. Flavia Carduenum was at the command of the Duke of Mesopotamia, that is to say, Media.<sup>24</sup>

23 Graevius 1698, “Notitia Dignitatum Imperii Orientis: Notitia. Sub dispositione viri Spectabilis Ducis Mesopotamie. Et qua de minore Laterculo emittuntur [along with the following units from a lesser register]”, coll. 1729-34, Or. XXXVI, 18-36: (Mesopotamia), Notitia. DUX MESOPOTAMIAE Cum Insignibus: XXXVI.34, “Ala quintadecima Flavia Carduenum Caini” coll. 1730 and 1734; coll. 1735 and 1738, Or. XXXVII, 10-30: “Armenia, Notitia. DUX ARMENIAE Cum Insignibus”; “Notitia Dignitatum Imperii Occidentis: Notitia. Qui numeri ex praedicti, per infrascriptas provincias habetur”, coll. 1855-62, Occ. VII.209: “Intra Tingitaniam cum viro spectabili Comite Tingitane: Equites Cardueni Comitatusenses” col. 1858. From Pliny, and some inscriptions in Gruter, it appears that *Mauritania Tingitania* was simply called *Tangitania*, from its principal city, *Tingi*, in order to distinguish it from *Mauritania Caesariensis*. The Kingdom of Mauritania Tingitania, being reduced to a Roman province in the reign of Claudius, as we are informed by Dio, was not included in the corresponding parts of Mount Atlas lying more to the southwest. Then Augustus divided Spain (*Hispania*) into three provinces; fifty years after his death, Otho added to Spanish Baetica, or rather incorporated with it, the African province of Tingitania.

24 It has been argued, not convincingly in my view, that Ala XV Flavia Carduenum may mean that the regiment was recruited in Cordyene. However Michael Dodgeon's and Samuel Lieu's study focused on where the various *Limitanei* Units were stationed: “The title of the unit implies that it was recruited in the early part of the fourth century in Cordyene, one of the five *regiones*, ceded to Rome by Narses. Caini: Site unknown; Dilleman (1962: 239, n. 3) believes it was listed in error under the ducate of Mesopotamia”; cf. Dodgeon, Lieu 1991, Appendix 5, 341, nn. 38-9. But this does not appear and we cannot presume it without evidence. The reference goes to the peace settlement between Diocletian and Narses, the King of the Persians, in A.D. 298, but the treaty no longer exists. The treaty is described in a commentary by Peter the Patrician (c.500-564). It established the Tigris River as Rome's new eastern boundary with the eastern Trans-Tigris regions of *Intilene* (aka Ingilene), *So-*

## 5 Are the Kartveli the People called Kardueni or Cardveni in Trajan's Time?

Finding errors on Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus requires knowledge of physical and political geography in Ptolemy's time, otherwise no comparison can be made. Now, if we are able to make out the logical and appropriate line between the sovereign jurisdiction of the Roman State and the sovereign jurisdictions of the various Allied States in the Caucasus, and to do so with precision and clarity as to the degree of latitude to which the Romans extended it, then we should determine whether Ptolemy in person and map-makers based on Ptolemy's geographical information, and deformation, committed any mistakes in the map of the Caucasus in the set of twenty-seven maps wholly based on Ptolemy's rediscovered *Geography* in Renaissance Europe and first made in 1415.

What we know of the international relations of the Caucasus and the Roman Empire is confined to a treaty, or, as the Latins call it, *foedus*. The treaty was carried on by the Emperor of the Romans, Trajan, who, in A.D. 114, promulgated, from Satala, Armenian Pontus, the federation edict for six Kings only. Thus the federal alliance is known about forty years before Ptolemy's time. Meantime, Trajan's Parthian war of 114-7 saw Roman armies thrusting across historical Armenia (currently Sadak, Turkey). Armenia, says Tacitus, had been then assailed by Parthian influence (Tac. *Annales*, 2,3; *Jos. Ant.* 15,104; Dio 49,5).

This century was one of annexation by Rome and direct confrontation with Parthia and Parthian-occupied Armenia. The Emperor Trajan required Parthamasiris the Parthian to lay his diadem in abject submission in A.D. 114. It happened when Trajan came to hold court at Satala in the land of Armenia, north of the upper Euphrates (currently Firat Nehri, Turkey). Of particular importance in the geographical context is Eutropius' use of different verbs to describe assorted military actions in Latin in his *Breviarium* of Roman history.

Thus Eutropius wrote that (*Breviarium*, 8,3, Sylburgii 1762, 1, 363):

**Trajan recovered Armenia, which the Parthians had occupied, after killing Parthomasiris who controlled it** [Traianus Armeniam, quam occupaverant Parthi, receipt, Phartamasire occiso, qui eam tenebat]. He gave a King to the Albani [Albanis regem dedit] and received

*phene*, *Arzanene*, *Corduene* (Cordylene), and *Zabdicene* ceded to Roman control. However, such treaty does not exist. Sextus Rufus Festus and Eutropius attest that the Kingdom of Iberia of the Caucasus has been federated with Rome since Satata 114. As subjects of the Iberian government, the Cardueni have enjoyed the right of serving in the region unit under the title Ala XV Flavia Carduenorum at the command of the duke of Mesopotamia, as a consequence of the federative alliance with Rome.

into alliance the Kings of the Caucasian Iberes [Iberorum regem], the Sarmates [et Sauromatarum], the Bosphorians [et Bosphoranorum], the Arabs [et Arabum], the Osroenians [et Osdroënorum] and the Colches [et Colcorum in fidem accepit].

[Trajan] **occupied the Cardueni** and Marcomedi [Carduenos et Marcomedos occupavit].

He also occupied Anthemusium in the great region of Persia, but conquered and kept Seleucia and Ctesiphon, Babylonia and the Messeni [vicit at tenuit], down to the borders with India and the Red Sea [accessit]; and **there he made three provinces, Armenia, Assyria and Mesopotamia with those peoples** which border on Madena [atque ibi tres provincias fecit, Armeniam, Assyriam, Mesopotamiam cum his gentibus, quae Madenam attingunt]. Arabia he afterwards reduced to the government of a province. On the Red Sea he established a fleet, so that he might go and ravage the borders of India.

Now we can trace an accurate map of Trajan's march down the rivers Euphrates and Tigris from Satala, Armenian Pontus, to Persia, and follow the places along the route of march that are easily recognizable on a modern map. Satala (mod. Sadak), the starting point in historical Armenia, lies north of the River Euphrates (Firat Nehri), and southwest of, and mostly adjacent to, the Mescit Mountains, currently, Mescit Dağları, Turkey. Modern Sadak is located south-west along the mountains between the Kelkit River basin, the *Lycus* River of the ancients, and the city of Köse where it takes its rise.

*The second stage of Trajan's march from Osroenê to Persia:* The reconstruction of the second part of the route to Persia is easier to follow, and we trace it first. *Anthemusium* was a battlemented town in Osroenê, the upper portion of Mesopotamia (*Media*) bordering on southern Chaldia (*Chaldaea*). Trapezus, currently Trabzon, Turkey, will be the metropolis of "The Eighth Thema of Chaldia" on the Pontic or Black Sea.<sup>25</sup>

Then comes Seleucia. It will form "The Thirteenth Thema called Seleucia" as one of the military districts in the Roman Empire of the East. Seleucia was bordered by the Taurus mountain range to the west and the mounts of Cilicia to the east, currently, İçel, Turkey; its second name was Decapolis,

25 Constantinus Porphyrogenitus 1588, Pars Lat., 22, Thema octavum, dictum Chaldiae. Cellario 1786, 100, § 23 De Mesopotamia et Chaldaea. For the first century and a half, the themata were created only in the East. Emperor Constantinus Porphyrogenitus compiled his *De Thematibus* with the clear understanding that themata had been created before Emperor Heraclius' reign between the years 610 and 641, except when otherwise specified. The 8th Theme of Chaldia was created in the first century of the Christian era.

the ten towns. Thus in Constantine Porphyrogenitus *De thematibus*.<sup>26</sup> Seleucia stood on the west bank of the Tigris River opposite Ctesiphon, within the present-day Babil Governorate in Iraq. From across the river, Seleucia and Ctesiphon formed the metropolis of Media under the Parthian Kings. Seleucia on the Tigris lay southeast of modern Baghdad, Iraq.

Babylon lay close to the Euphrates, some 90 km to the south of modern Baghdad, in what is today Iraq. The Messeni are the inhabitants of Edessa, currently Urfa or Şanlıurfa; the upper reaches of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers drain the tableland of the Urfa region in what is today south-east Turkey. Finally, the region of Madena belongs to the Armenians; Plutarc says that the Greeks call it Migdonia (currently Nusaybin, in what is now southeastern Turkey at the border with modern Syria).<sup>27</sup>

*The first stage of Trajan's march from Satala to Osroenê*: The reconstruction of the first part of the route to Persia is more complex in Trajan time. The mountainous part of the route starts at Satala in the portion of Armenia that the Parthians "had occupied". First we may call attention to the Latin verbs *occupare* and *tenere* in the passage describing the coming of Parthamasiris the Parthian in Latin. In A.D. 114 Trajan recovers Armenia, which the Parthians "had occupied", after killing Parthomasiris who controlled it: "Traianus Armeniam, quam occupaverant Parthi, receipt, Phartamasire occiso, qui eam tenebat. Albanis regem dedit. Iberorum regem et Sauromatarum et Bosphoranorum et Arabum et Osdroënorum et Colcorum in fidem accepit. Carduenos et Marcomedos occupavit". (Eutrop., *Breviarium*, 8,3, Sylburgii 1762, 1, 363).

The lines including "Armeniam, quam occupaverant Parthi" and "Phartamasire occiso, qui eam tenebat" should be taken, I think, in the political sense. The starting point of action is, in English, expressed by the modern verb "to occupy". Nevertheless, the translation is doubtful from a grammatical and semantic point of view. Not only is the verb "to occupy" in the pluperfect tense but it must be treated as a purely Roman verb from the legal point of view. In effect, the legal point of view privileges an "as if" condition or possibility. From the legal point of view, an authorized norm directs that an individual, the Emperor of the Parthians in the case of Armenia, must follow a certain conduct. The legal person assumes that the legal institutions are a premise from which practical conclusions may be inferred with deep consequences for the political content of any one norm. In fact, Eutropius has preferred rendering the verb "to occupy" in the pluperfect tense (*occupavērant*, "Armenia, which

26 Constantinus Porphyrogenitus 1588, Pars Lat., 27-8, Thema decimumtertium, dictum Seleuciaie.

27 Eutrop. *Breviarium*, 8,3, Sylburgii 1762, 1, 365-6, Variarum Lectiones: k. Messenios, Edesios vulgo; n. Madenam, Sextus Rufus c. xv vocat optimam Armeniarum regionem.

the Parhians had occupied”, third-person plural pluperfect active form, indicative of *occupo*).

In the subsequent action, Eutropius uses the verb “to hold”, *tenere*, which marks the subsequent action of Parthamasiris the Parthian in Armenia as immediate after the preceding action here. But Parthamasiris nonetheless “holds” the Kingdom of Armenia against the will of Rome. I more particularly think that the Latin verb *tenere* takes up the political meaning of violating Rome’s right to be respected and relates, if we are to believe to Eutropius, to the preceding action”.<sup>28</sup> Here the verbs *occupare* and *tenere* actually mean “the Arsacid Osroes I, the King of Parthia since A.D. 110, replaced a fellow Arsacid, Axidares, the King of Armenia by Roman approval, with another, Parthamasiris, who had not been approved by Rome as required by the terms of the Roman-Parthian agreement”. Thus Osroes’ nominee Parthamasiris was killed at Satala in A.D. 114, and so the Armenians were without a King and government the space of three years.

What had happened is this. After leaving Armenia without a King, then Trajan conquered Persia “down to the ancient borders with India and the Red Sea”, Eutropius concludes, and “there he made three provinces, Armenia, Assyria and Mesopotamia with those peoples which border on Madena”, currently Nusaybin, in what is now southeastern Turkey at the border with modern Syria. In A.D. 117 thus Trajan annexed Armenia as a Roman province constituting the region of the imperial domain.

As a verb, “to occupy” (*occupare*) appeared in Latin around A.D. 114 meaning, quite logically, “as required by the terms of the Roman-Parthian agreement”, either physically or in competition policy and rivalries. The line “Armeniam, quam occupaverant Parthi” can thus be viewed as offering one kind of political experience. The verb *occupare* predicates a political situation: a King of the Armenians by Roman approval as required by the terms of the Roman-Parthian agreement. In other words, the verb predicates the status of a people under the law.

Trajan’s route from Satala via the Meschit Mountains is much more difficult to trace than the second stage described above, as shifted boundaries now obliterate tracks. When the events and locations described in the *Breviarium* are placed next to a modern map, however, geographic logic suggests one possible route out of here.

In A.D. 114 Trajan, the Emperor of the Romans, held court at Satala, to the east of modern Sadak along a trail now known as the Kelkit River valley, the *Lycus fl.* of the ancients. From here Roman troops could only push north along the Görçedere River to reach Vardzahan, or, Varzahan, in what is now Uğrak, Bayburt İli, on the Çoruh River, Turkey. The Georgians

<sup>28</sup> Please note the equal description of Trajan in the episode of Parthamasiris’ murder as narrated by Marcus Cornelius Fronto (c.100-late 160s) in his *Principia historiae*, 2,1, 16 (Romanorum fama impune).

call it Č'oroxi River. At the confluence of the rivers Görçedere and Č'oroxi lies Vardzahan on the far left side of the Bayburt Plateau. The Bayburt Plateau stands on the isolated Mount Uzundere that the Č'oroxi River (Çoruh Nehri) cuts from the west side of the Mescit Mountains (Mescit Dağları) where the Č'oroxi takes its rise, in what is now Turkey.

Here, nonetheless, it is Eutropius who once again provides the verb *occupare* ("to occupy") in the Roman sense. What we read here is not that Trajan "conquered" the *Cardueni* and *Marcomedi*, but only that he "occupied" them. Unlike modern historians who relegate the *Cardueni* to the margin of Roman history, chroniclers of their own age credited Emperor Trajan with planning a general administrative change of system. The Latin text says "Carduenos et Marcomedos occupavit" (Eutrop. *Breviarium*, 8,3, Sylburgii 1762, 1, 364). Trajan did not "take possession" of the *Cardueni* and the *Marcomedi*, neither did he "seize" their lands. That Eutropius, or his sources, described Trajan's action in terms of Roman legal language and procedure is what one would expect of an educated writer from the Roman period. This passage is similar to the passage from the Parthian occupation of Armenia I quoted in the preceding paragraph. By the terms of the agreement between the Emperor of the Romans and the King of the X peoples subjected to him, a King of a people so called may take his people by Roman approval.

In reading Eutropius we simply understand that both the *Cardueni* and *Marcomedi* were neither conquered nor kept in subjection by violence. It must be remarked, that this is a route of march which has in view only to convey a body of Roman troops from one position to another, being connected with military operations relative to the Parthian enemy ahead of them in A.D. 114-7.

In other words Trajan, the Emperor of the Romans, did not oppose those two peoples. The *Marcomedi* possibly were the Osroenians, as Malkutā d-Bēt Ōsrā Īnē in Syriac translates the reign of Osroenē in Latin. In fact, the King of the Osroenians had been federated with Rome since A.D. 114 according to the *Breviarium* of Sextus Rufus Festus and Eutropius, written after 364.

Thus may the two great peoples' appellations, *Cardueni*, and *Marcomedi* as one of the Osroenian peoples, be still traces among them. The *Cardueni*, the former people dwelling along some route across the mountains between the Kelkit River in Armenia (Satala) and the Kingdom of the Osroenians, are still to be found there. A general description of Emperor Trajan's progress from settlement to settlement is confirmed by cartographic sources. Empires follow one another. Physical geography, however, remains the same from age to age, or, if there be change, it is unimportant in a general view.

We see it in the way Guillaume Delisle made the map *L'Arménie, la Géorgie, et le Daghistan*. This Delisle map, first published in 1722, depicts the Başçayı mountains (*Pasiani*) which contain the springs of the Aras

River (*Araxi ou Kaksi R.*) flowing to the district of Malazgirt (*Manzikerd*) (Appendix, fig. 7).<sup>29</sup> The map's title leads the eye to the all-Georgia realm, Ottoman Armenia and Persian Daghestan, exactly as Ptolemy's 3rd Map of Asia should have done from Nicolaus Germanus' manuscript copy in 1466.

In the biographical note alongside the coat of arms of the King of France, Guillaume Delisle is described as "The First Cartographer of the King" on another map dated the 15th August, 1723, Paris. Delisle distinguished himself as one of the most important cartographers of the eighteenth century. And, perhaps most significantly, his regional maps are highly reliable sources in the History of cartography. Following the meeting with Peter the Great, Delisle was sent maps from Russia. He received improved maps of the Caspian Sea based on surveys made in 1719, 1720 and 1721 (Allen 1953, 99-121; Urness 1993, 30). In pursuance of his work on this project, Delisle drew heavily from a manuscript memoir of Sulxan-Saba Orbeliani (1658-1725), a Prince of Georgia in the reign of Vaxt'ang VI, a towering figure among contemporary scholars in Europe. We see it in the fact that Orbeliani is included in the map's title cartouche, 1723: *Carte des Pays voisins de la Mer Caspienne*.<sup>30</sup> Since 1712 Vaxt'ang, being King over Kartli alone (Iberia, East Georgia), had been living in captivity in Isphahan, Persia, when Orbeliani sailed to France to ask for help and sent letters to Pope Clement VI in 1713-14 (Salia 1980, 336-44).

Data were collected at a more detailed scale of investigation on the map of 1722 for the areas contained in Georgia, Armenia and Daghestan. The title says what the map shows—*L'Arménie, la Géorgie, et le Daghistan*. A thousand and six hundred years later, what Delisle's map shows through the spelling and transliteration of place-names are Colchis, Iberia of the Caucasus (Kartli), Albania of the Caucasus, or, Alvania, Armenia, and Mesopotamia or Osroenê.

And therefore Delisle's map can serve as a guide in following that line of march which Trajan pursued in the narrow valley of the Č'oroxi River in the Parthian campaign (Persia) in 114-15. We left Trajan marching northeast from the Kelkit River valley (Satala), towards the confluence of the rivers Gôrçedere and Č'oroxi. At the junction of the rivers lies Vardzahan (*Variuhan*), today's Uğrak, on the far left side of the Bayburt Plateau (*Baiburdi*)

29 Now let me refer back to Licini 2001, 346-56, 349 and map 4.

30 30 "Carte des Pays voisins de la Mer Caspienne, dressée pour l'usage du Roy. Sur la Carte de cete Mer faite par l'ordre du Czar, Sur les Memoires manuscrits de Soskam-Sabbas Prince de Georgie, Sur ceux de M.rs Crusius, Zurabek, et Fabritius, Ambassadeurs a la Cour de Perse, et sur les éclaircissements tirez d'un grand nombre de personnes intelligentes du pais. Assujettie aux Observations Astronomiques Par Guillaume Delisle, Premier Geographe du Roy, de l'Academie Royale des Sciences, 15 Aout 1723 (A Paris, Quay de l'Horloge)". Decorative cartouche upper right. Philippe Buache printed the map on 30 April 1745. Soskam-Sabbas should be Sulxan-Saba Orbeliani; he died in Moscow in January 1725.

that the Č'oroxi River cuts from the west side of the Mescit Mountains, currently Mescit Dağları, Turkey (Appendix, figs. 7 and 8). The ancients call them *moschivis montes*.

We see the Bayburt Plateau (*Baiburdi*) and the İspir Plateau (*Ispira*) on Delisle's map. There is a gorge there, I understand, "The Georgian Gorge" (Appendix, fig. 7). Different spelling of the same place-name are entirely normal, but here we have a calque, a loan translation, two words borrowed from another language by literal, word-for-word translation. On Delisle's map the Georgian Gorge is Gürcü Boğazı (*Gurdzis Bogasi*), in modern Turkey today. During the Caucasian Wars (1553-1648), the Georgians lost some territory to the Ottoman Turks, and in 1648 İstanbul, the Constantinople of the Romans, was able to push its state borders far inland. Thus the English adjective "Georgian" is rendered into Turkish by the adjective "Gürcü" and the English word "Gorge" by "Boğazı".

Nor should it pass unnoticed that Trajan trod the road that Roman surveyors had laid out, measured his passages by Roman milestones, crossed rivers and swamps on Roman bridges and causeways. The sight of geographical objects told Trajan's troops that they were near their intended destination. Ancient gates marked their entry onto city streets and the territory of a host country. There are, however, other gates, which join up territories and peoples: "After we pass the mouth of the Cyrus [**the Kur River**], it begins to be called the '**Caspian Sea**;' the Caspii being a people who dwell upon its shores. In this place it may be as well to correct an error into which many persons have fallen, and even those who lately took part with Corbulo **in the Armenian war. The Gates of Iberia, which we have mentioned as the Caucasian, they have spoken of as being called the 'Caspian,' and the coloured plans which have been sent from those parts to Rome have that name written upon them.** The menaced expedition, too, that was contemplated by the Emperor Nero, was said to be designed to extend as far as the Caspian Gates [ad caspias portas], where as it was really intended for those which lead **through Iberia into the territory of the Sarmatae** [currently Russia]; there being hardly any possibility of approach to the Caspian Sea, by reason of the close juxtaposition of the mountains here" according to Pliny.

Pliny the Elder thus testified as an eye-witness before A.D. 79 (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,15).

But, in fact, I believe that there is more to the story, and that the more does concern the Kartvelians (*K'art'velians*) specifically. When we speak of Trajan's time, we have to use the word Kartvelians in its earliest sense in the second century of our era as the people who dwell in Kartli. However, in 1722, the toponym Kartli (*K'art'li*) has undergone considerable transformations during one thousand and five hundred years of time. We have already seen that the ethnonym *k'art'veli* acquired a double meaning in Georgian history: first, its earliest sense, the dominant population



of *K'art'li* proper (Kartli), encompassing adjacent peoples and lands in eastern Georgia; and second, the crown's "Georgian" subjects distributed from the Pontic or Black Sea littoral to the far eastern regions of K'axeti and Hereti, bordering and overlapping with Albánia of the Caucasus (section 4).

The toponym *K'art'li* underwent a similar transformation, its "all-Georgian" reach being extended by Kings and their contemporaries. But translating the Greek and the Latin, we say "Ibería of the Caucasus", which are the Greek and Latin words here.

To judge from the context, I rather think that the Turkish words "Gürcü Boğazı" (*Gurdzis Bogasi*), The Georgian Gorge on Delisle's map, here translate The Gates of Ibería as the Caucasian Gates. Following the coloured plans, in fact Pliny could read with ease the title ("Namque hi Caspias appellavere Portas Iberiae, quas Caucasias diximus vocari: situsque depicti et inde missi, hoc nomen inscriptum habent").

Therefore, on Delisle's map, the inscription "Gürcü Boğazı", the Georgian Gates, says that these are "The Gates of Ibería as the Caucasian Gates" in 1722. That is to say, "The Gates of Kartli as the Caucasian" in the first century, or "The Gates of all-Georgia as the Caucasian Gates" in the Bagratid era, or "The Georgian Gorge as the Caucasian" in the modern era, or "Gürcü Boğazı" as "Kafkas".

At the Bayburt Plateau's western edge is Vardzahan (*Variu-Han*), renamed Uğrak today; the Č'oroxi River (*Turak R.*) flows to water it (currently Çoruh Nehri, Turkey). Delisle shows that there are variant regional spellings of the name still in use in 1722 to designate, at the same time, the principal branches of the river: *Tchoroki ou Bitumi, Turak R., Tshorola R.*

Further to the south is the Georgian Gorge (*Gurdzis Bogasi*), Gürcü Boğazı in modern Turkish. That is, if our identification hypothesis is accepted, the geographical object called the Gates of Ibería as the Caucasian Gates on Roman maps in the first century.

The place-name is given in many languages in the royal description of Georgia by Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili: Gourджи-Boghaz, Sakharthwélos-Qel, défilé de Géorgie. It is situated on the eastern slope of the Tortum River Valley, in Mount Uzundere (*Kenzoreti*). This is the westernmost extension of historical Georgia (*GIURGISTAN ou GEORGIE*) according to the royal description that Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili compiled as the Prince of Georgia and dated the 20th October, 1745. The point is *Khendzoreth* in the royal description; it has the distinction of being the last place in historical Georgia, Kartli (East Georgia).<sup>31</sup> On the main road of Tortum-Uzundere,

31 See more fully Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, "Description du Royaume de Géorgie: Description du Karthli actuel; ses frontières, ses montagnes, ses fleuves, les diverses localités et les édifices qu'elles contiennent: Description des lieux remarquables du Samtzhé ou Saathabago": 72, Cette contrée s'appelle **proprement Karthli**, parceque ce fut la portion

*Tartomisi-Kenzoreti* on Delisle's map, Oški Monastery (Öşk Manası) is a Georgian church of the second half of the tenth century (Kartli, Iberia of the Caucasus). Cascading 50 metres high off a cliff in Uzundere (*Kenzoreti*), the impressive Tortum Waterfalls (*Tartomisi*) are situated as high up as this point and the narrowing Georgian Gorge upwards marks the commencement. They have been sufficient to serve as a stable western frontier of Caucasian Iberia (Kartli) for five dynasties until 1801 (Appendix, fig. 7).

At the start of the Parthian campaign in A.D. 114, Trajan begins a new march of conquest. He has recoreved Armenia and now the Armenians are without a King. The Emperor is on horseback at the head of the line of march. From Satala, Armenia, through the Kelkit River valley (*Lycus fl.*) leading into the valley of Bayburt (*Baiburdi*) the Roman march progress down to the far side of the Georgian Gorge (*Gurdzis Bogasi*), the Kingdom of all-Georgia in 1722 (*GIURGISTAN ou GEORGIE*). Thence along the river Aras (*Araxi ou Kaksi R.*) through Roman

de Karthlos, dont elle prit le nom; et après sa mort, elle fut appelée Sakarthwélo ou Sakarthlo, nom qu'elle porte encore de nos jours; 121, Au-dessus d'**Arthwan** [Artvin mod. Turkey], jusqu'à Idi, à l'O. du **Dchorokh** [Çoruh Nehri mod. Turkey], à l'E. du pays de **Thorthom** [Tortum mod. Turkey], est **Parkhal, Taos-Car ou Tao** [Tao-Klarceti mod. Turkey], limité à l'E. par le **Dchorokh** [Çoruh]; 121, **Basian, Olthis** [Başçayı and Oltu mod. Turkey] Basian :Au S. d'Olthis, de Nariman et d'Idi, au delà du mont Iridjlou, est le **Basian; bien que ce pays appartienne à l'Arménie, ayant été conquis par les Bagratides, il fit depuis partie du Samtzkhé**; 123, **Ispira** [mod. İspir]; 124, **la rivière d'Ispira reçoit celle du Sakharthwélos-Qel** (défilé de Géorgie) **ou Gourdji-Boghaz** [Gürcü Boğazı mod. Turkey. Georgian Gorge]; 124, **Baïbourd** [Bayburt mod. Turkey]; 125, La rivière de **Thorthom** reçoit, à son tour, celles des monts de Thorthom et de Chiphaklou, sur lesquelles il y a des bourgs grands et petits. La vallée de Thorthom a pour limites: à l'E., la montagne de Thorthom, qui la sépare de **Tao**, et court du S.O. au N.E., c'est un rameau de l'Iridjlou, qui le rattache à **la montagne d'Ispira** [İspir mod. Turkey]; 126-7, **Khendzoreth** [Uzundere]; 121-7, Gourdij Boghaz est précisément à l'O. de Khendzoreth. Cette vallée, jusqu'au mont de **Baïbourd**, est la limite de la Géorgie et de la Grèce; elle est étroite, rocheuse et boisée. Au-dessus de l'endroit où le **Gourdji-Boghaz** tombe dans la rivière d'Ispira, sont les montagnes que projettent celles de ce dernier pays et qui le séparent de **Baïbourd**, ainsi que nous l'avons dit.; 127, **Gourdji-Boghaz** [Gürcü Boğazı. Georgian Gorge]. A l'O., par-delà la montagne de Chiphaklou, est la vallée de **Gourdji-Boghaz, ou Sakarthwélos-Qel**. En effet, quand les Osmanlis s'emparèrent d'Azroum [Erzurum, historical Armenia in mod. Turkey], ils donnèrent au pays le premier de ces nomes. Sa longueur court du mont Déwaboïn à **la rivière de Sper** [İspir valley], qui en sort et coule du S. au N. **Gourdji Boghaz** est précisément à l'O. De **Khendzoreth** [Uzundere mod. Turkey]. Cette vallée, jusqu'au mont de **Baïbourd**, est la limite de la Géorgie et de la Grèce; elle est étroite, rocheuse et boisée; 127-9, **Baïbourd** [Bayburt]; 130-1, Le **Dchaneth**, aussi appelé **Las**. The modern names of ancient places are added, when known. See also Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1849, 1<sup>re</sup> Partie: Histoire ancienne, jusqu'en 1469 de J.-C., 327 / n. 1 An. 1053: **Baberd**, cf. Tchamitch, t. II; 628 **Sper, Baberd** (1301-1307); 955; 274 / n. 8- 276 / n. 3. The **Mescit Mountains** are called, in the Georgian language, **Iridjlou**. Beyond the mountains is the valley of the **Başçayı River (le Basian)** where the Aras River takes its rise (**I'Araxe**); the valley had originally belonged to the Armenians, when the Bagrat'ioni conquered it (Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, 121-122; see section 4.

Armenia (*IRMINIA* ou *ARMENIE*), the next identified destination is Malazgirt (*Manzikerd / Mantzicierte*), that is Media (Mesopotamia) in Trajan's time.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile the forward troops push down to the city of Erzurum (*Arzrum*), or, as the ancients call it, Theodosiopolis, Armenia (*IRMINIA* ou *ARMENIE*).

While it is still unclear who the people called *Cordueni*, *Cardueni*, *Kardueni*, *Cardveni* actually were in the time of the Elder Pliny and Trajan, the fact remains that the existence of the land *Καρδοήνων* is also attested in the Greek text of Zosimus Historicus around A.D. 598 (Zosimus 1837, *Historia*, 3.31, 167).<sup>33</sup>

Narrow "Gates" lead through Media into another territory. Joining up to *Adiabene* are the people known as the *Cordueni*, *Cardueni*, *Kardueni*, *Cardveni* according to Pliny (*Naturalis historia*, 6,17,14-6,17,15). And *Adiabene* lies "beyond the borders of Armenia", according to Strabo from Amasya Pontica, currently Turkey (Strabi 1856, *Geographica*, 11,4,1 and 4,8).

And although modern historians do not give us any information, the purpose of my study is to understand where the unidentified people lived, and why they intersected the line of march which Trajan pursued.

A spelling variant occurs for the people called *Cardueni* in Roman history. From Pontus to Mesopotamia, dwell the *Cardveni*; such is the German editor's reading of the *Breviarium* by Sextus Rufus. As for letters "v" and "u", Latin texts make no distinction between consonant [v] and vocalic [u], writing both as v in epigraphs. The two spellings of the ethnic name *Cardueni* and *Cardveni* probably belong to the same root as the Georgian word *kartu*.

The ethnonym *k'art'veli* acquired a double meaning in history: first, its earliest sense, the dominant population of *K'art'li* proper (Kartli); and second, the crown's "Georgian" subjects distributed from the Pontic or Black Sea littoral to the far eastern regions of *K'axeti* and *Hereti*, bordering and overlapping with *Albânia* of the Caucasus. In this way the term *k'art'vel* came to mean both Iberian (East Georgian) and Georgian, between the year 928 (Roman-Iberian Treaty on the Aras River), and 1008 (see section 4).

32 Stritter 1779, Ex Scriptoribus Byzantinis: Lazica, Avasgica, Tzanica, Svanica, Meschica, Iberica, Alanica, Index Historicus: 129, "*Mantzicierte*, urbs: *Iberes* cum *Mantziciertanis* amicitiam colunt"; and particularly 95-6, chapter 3, "*Urbs a Tangrolipice Sultano appugnatur*"; 122, "*Turci paret, Romanus Diog. ad eum venit, et oppugnatam capit*; Index Geographicus"; 278, "*Mantzicierte, Mediae*: urbs munitissima, (olim, ut quidem Isaac Catholicus auctor est, *Theodosiopolis* dicta, de quo tamen dubitari potest)"; 286-7, chapter 4, "*Lazica*: a.C. 555, Imp. Iustiniano, Gubazem". In fact, Malazgirt is not to be confused with Theodosiopolis, the ancient name of Erzurum, historical Armenia, currently Turkey.

33 See also Eutrop., *Breviarium*, 8,3, Sylburgii 1762, 1, 364-5, *Variae Lectiones*. Notae: Coduenos pro Carduenos. Nostram lectionem confirmat Sextus Rufus c. xx. Zosimus *Hist.*, Lib. III in Joviano, *Καρδοήνων*. The text of Zosimus survives in a single manuscript now in the Vatican Library, Codex Vat. Graecus 156; this copy was written over a period of two centuries, the tenth-twelfth, Constantinople.

In its earliest sense, as given in section 4 (Rapp 2003, 420; Shurgaiia 2014, 80-1), the people of *K'art'li* is both an ethnic group and a political designation for a collective region. Geography has the power to politically define territory and to name regions. Once a territory has become associated with a set ethnonym, the ethnonym can remain in use for a considerable period of time. For example, writing from the Roman Empire of the East. in the first half of the sixth century, Procopius uses the same ethnonyms in Emperor Justinian's reign to describe Italy as Strabo from Amasya Pontica 500 years earlier. Indeed, it was only when the local population came into contact with a central authority from Rome, the *iuridicus*, the curator of a public road, for example, or the prefect of the *alimenta*, that there was contact with the notion of a wider collective region. However, what is important, in the context of the use of ethnonyms by Roman geographers, is the division of territory according to ethnonym and the association of a common mythology. The eleventh regions of Italy and their associated names, ethnonyms and others, were not a natural division of territory. For the regions to have coherence, they depended upon a mythology of descent that denied heterogeneity of native population to create a number of unified regions, which were associated with one or two ethnonyms. Perhaps we see in the Italy of Augustus, during the first two centuries A.D., a shift from the ethnonym representing the people to the ethnonym representing a territorial division (Laurence 1998, 106-7).

The people of Kartli (*K'art'li*) is both an ethnic group and a political designation for a collective region. Such a view can be seen as a simple principle in Roman geography even for the foreign nations entering reports and chronicles. The Marcomedi possibly were the Osroenians, as Malkutā d-Bēt Ōsrā Īnē in Syriac translates the reign of Osroenē in Latin. As such, the ethnonym entered the *Breviarium* of Roman history. And *Cordueni*, *Cardueni*, *Kardueni*, *Cardveni*, the land Καρδοῦνων, as a word for the ethnonym representing a territorial division appears at least four times in Roman history.

Trialeti is in central Georgia today. The Trialeti culture is attributed to the early second millennium before Christ. It naturally evolved into that of the Kartli of Mxeta during the Late Bronze Age. Mxeta is located 20 km north of Tiflis, currently Tbilisi (Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, 157-9, Thrialeth; Shurgaiia 2014, 81).

We see Trialeti (*Trialeti*), Tbilisi (*Tiblis*), Mxeta (*Msketa*) in the Georgian region of the people called Kartveli (*CARDUEL*) on Delisle's map *L'Arménie, la Géorgie, et le Daghistan* of 1722 (Appendix, fig. 8). *Carduel* is then the modern variant of *Cordueni*, *Cardueni*, *Kardueni*, *Cardveni*, the land Καρδοῦνων, the land of the ethnic group called the Kartvelians after Kartlos.

Moreover, the Georgian language is still known as *Cardueli* in 1627

(Pietro della Valle, *Informatione*, p. 1/a). Trabzon, Constantinopolitan Greece, borders on Bayburt, Georgia (see also Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, 127).

By A.D. 114, the federal alliance with Rome was widespread among the Kings of the Caucasus and Osroenê, clear-cut, and politically irresistible. At the head of the Roman Army, from Satala, Roman Armenia, through the Kelkit River valley (anc. *Lycus Fl.*) and the Ch'orokhi River valley (currently Çoruh Nehri) Trajan could actually reach the upper and far end of the narrow Georgian Gorge, or, as Roman surveyors call it, the Gates of Iberiá as the Caucasian Gates, which led into the territories of Media and Armenia.

In A.D. 114 Trajan's Army "occupied" the *Cardueni*, that is to say the region called *CARDUEL* on Delisle's map about 1722. The Romans did not occupy Iberiá of the Caucasus with those peoples which border on Media and Armenia, but the Kartvelians, one of the Iberian peoples of the Caucasus, the descendants of the eponym *K'art'los*. After we pass the course of the Ch'orokhi River, modern Georgia, it begins to be called *CARDUEL*; the Kartvelians being a people who dwell beyond its northern bank in Trajan's time. In the context of the use of ethnonyms by Roman geographers, this is a division of territory according to ethnonym and the association of a common mythology. Since Trajan's time the Romans have called the unified region *Cordueni*, *Cardueni*, *Kardueni*, *Cardveni*, Καρδουήνων, that is to say *CARDUEL*, a province of the all-Georgia realm on Delisle's map of 1722.

The Kartvelians are the people who dwell in Mcxeta and other Kartlian towns within the Kingdom of the Iberians of the Caucasus in Trajan's time. The passage from the *Breviarium* contains the oldest reference to the people of Kartli which I am aware: [Trajan] occupied the *Cardueni* and *Marcomedi* ("Carduenos et Marcomedos occupavit"). In this southern region of Iberiá of the Caucasus, all the people who are placed under the ethnonym *k'art'veli* and dwell along the northern bank of the Kur River, the State's frontier, have been consecrated to separate rule since A.D. 114, the year of the treaty (*foedus*) of Satala with Rome.

Ibero-Kartvelian place-name harks back to Ptolemy's maps. We see Mcxeta (*mescheta*), and the mythical city of Armazi (*armatica* = *armatica*). In the myth the people called Kartveli have been associated with a set ethnonym and Mcxeta (*mescheta*), the capital of Iberiá of the Caucasus, was built on the bank of the Kur River, the *Cirus* / *Cyrus* of the Romans, or, as the Kartvelians call it, Mtkvari. Its geographical position is a few miles north of the Pontus. The Kur takes its rise in the Caucasus Mountain according to Pliny (*Corax*, currently K'odori River; Plinius, *N. h.* 6,15). It passes Iberiá and the line of the State frontier on the south side near Mcxeta. Receiving from the west a great affluent, the Aras River from Greater Armenia, the Kur runs through Albània of the Caucasus in an east direction and falls into the Caspian, or Hircanian Sea. The geographical work of Nicolaus Germanus includes the Kur River. Here *Cirus Fluvius*,

the Greek form, flows along the southern frontier of the Kingdom of Ibería of the Caucasus, bordering on the Mescit Mountains. The Kur is traced correctly but it wrongly receives from the south its great affluent, the Aras (*araxes fl.*), Greater Armenia (*Armenia Maior*). The proper Pontus actually lies at a latitude of between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude, marking off the Caspian, or Hircanian Sea. However, we see Mcxeta (*mescheta*) on Ptolemy's 3rd Map of Asia in Nicolaus Germanus' copy showing the wrong latitude of 45° north in 1466 (Appendix, figs. 4, 6).

Ptolemy's measurement is not very satisfactory. The correct latitude of Mcxeta is 41°41'N. The Ibero-Kartvelian frontier, bordering the Roman Empire and Roman provinces, was defined by treaty (*foedus*) at Satala (Kelkit) in A.D. 114-17. It appears reasonable that from this parallel the southern frontier should have run from Mcxeta to Albània of the Caucasus (Daghestan) in Ptolemy's time (A.D. c.90-168). We can compare now the line of latitude of Mcxeta at the southern border of Ibería of the Caucasus on Ptolemy's 3rd Map of Asia in 1466 with that of Mcxeta in 1722. Delisle got the true latitude of this line correctly.

The ethnonym *k'art'veli* eventually acquired a double meaning in the Bagratid era: in its earliest sense, however, as given in section 4, the Kartvelians are a people then linked with the border region of a Sovereign territory where they dwell within the first half of the second century. The name of the Kartvelian people has caused much speculation among modern historians. Nevertheless, they should not see the Kingdom of Caucasian Ibería, or, Kartli (East Georgia), as split into two halves, Roman Ibería or Kartli and Parthian Ibería or Kartli. By the terms of the federal agreement (*foedus*) with Rome, the Roman Emperor does not claim dominance over all those peoples living in the Sovereign territory of Caucasian Ibería in times both of peace and armed conflict. The King of the Iberian peoples of the Caucasus simply recognizes the Roman dominance of one of them, the Kartvelians. The history of the political process between the Roman Empire and the Kingdom of Ibería of the Caucasus regarding the Kartvelians dates back to A.D. 114 when the Roman-Caucasian Iberia governments start to define the administrative jurisdiction by drawing an inner Line in relation to the unique people involved at the western frontier tract. The *Cordueni*, *Cardueni*, *Kardueni*, *Cardveni*, the land Καρδουήνων, *CARDUEL* are different imitations of the same name, while the people thus called share the more general name of *Georgi*, or, "tillers of the ground", with the other descendants of the same *geōrgos*, farmer (Strabo 1877, *Geographica*, 11,2; Plinius *N. h.* 6,14).

We can see a strong continuity with later periods. The eastern part of the Roman Empire then lost Rome and became the Roman Empire of Byzantium, the former name of the city of Constantinople, Greece politically, strategically, and geographically. However it retained much of that was Roman in government, law, and administration.

Since A.D. 114 the Kingdoms of the Osroenians, the Albàni of the Caucasus (Alvànì, Daghestan), the Colchians, the Iberians of the Caucasus, the Bosphorians, the Sarmates at the mouth of Tanàis, that is the other name of the Don River, therefore, have been independent States, and only in federal alliance with the Romans in the form of *foedus*. In fact, Cicero uses *liberi populi* as equivalent of *socii* (Cic. *Pro Cornelio Balbo oratio ad iudices*, par. 27). Federal Ibería of the Caucasus is directly governed from Mxeta. As sovereign state, Ibería of the Caucasus embraced many peoples; one of them, the Kartvelians, stretch down to the Kur river in a south direction, and to the Ch'orokhi river in a south-westly direction where the Ch'orokhi takes its rise. Its sources in the west flank of the Mescit Mountains (Mescit Dağları) form the narrow "Gates of Ibería as the Caucasian Gates". Its governing authority is no way legally dependent on any higher authority. The Gates of Caucasian Ibería border on Armenia. A Roman province since A.D. 117, Armenia is now directly governed from Rome.

In A.D. 114 Trajan then proceeded through the narrow Gates of Ibería as the Caucasian Gates, that is to say through the Georgian Gorge, or "Gürcü Boğazi" (currently Turkey). The exit gates led through Caucasian Ibería into the territories of Media and Assyria. With this base, Trajan immediately marched on the Caspian Gates, the other gates.

In fact, Pliny says: "After we pass the mouth of the Cyrus, the Kur River, it begins to be called the 'Caspian Sea;' the Caspii being a people who dwell upon its shores". (Plin., *Naturalis historia*, 6,15).

Trajan also "occupied" Anthemusium in the great region of Persia, but conquered and kept Seleucia and Ctesiphon, Babylonia and the Messeni, down to the borders with India and the Red Sea. "And there", in the region of the Red Sea, Eutropius says, under the year 117, Trajan "made three provinces, Armenia, Assyria and Mesopotamia with those peoples which border on Madena. Arabia he afterwards reduced to the government of a province. On the Red Sea he established a fleet, so that he might go and ravage the borders of India" (Eutrop. *Breviarium*, 8,3, Sylburgii 1762, 1, 363).

Consequently coins with Armenian references were struck by the mint at Rome. If we think that we are dealing with the Roman province of Armenia receiving *insigna* from the Roman Emperor, it ought not to surprise us much (but Sayles 1998, 62). Roman provincial coins are usually arranged geographically by issuing authority. Attributing Roman provincial coins is not really as hard as it looks since the geographical arrangement of provinces conforms with history. Four centuries later Procopius refers that the five Armenian satraps held the power, and these offices were always hereditary and held for life. However, "they received the symbols of office only from the Roman Emperor" (Procopius 1833, *De aedif.* 3,4,17- 3,4,19).

Ptolemy was right about one thing: satrapies are simply provinces under another name in the Roman reign as we read in his *Geography*: "Provin-

ciae seu Satrapiae notae hae sunt. In Europa 34. [...] In Africa Provinciae seu Satrapiae 12. [...] Asiae magnae provinciae 408” (Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. Lat. V F. 32, Tabula XXVII, f. 124).

On this account we cannot observe any “basic similarity” between “the satraps of Armenia as the allies of the Emperor” of the Romans and the *foederati* in complete autonomy without supervision from the Roman authorities. Neither can we say, “the Satrapies were miniature kingdoms ruled by their own princes, who were the equals in rank of king” (but see Adontz 1908, Garsoïan 1970, 87-8; Garsoïan 1998, 239-64). Given that satrapies are simple provinces in the Roman reign, there undeniably follows the conclusion. Since the year 117 the people of Armenia have received the provincial form and have been administered according to Roman laws and order. Yet they have arrogated to themselves rank superior to that of the other provinces forming the Roman Empire. Provinces, or, Satrapies forming the Roman reign follow Roman law in all ways. And, on the contrary, *Foederati* are foreign Kingdoms in formal alliance with Rome on the basis of a treaty, *foedus* in Latin, between the Roman Empire and several, independent, sovereign States. Federated Kingdoms are not tributary to Rome.

State sovereignties are not found under apple-trees. Sovereignty is not the Power, it is not the Authority, it is not the Command, but it is the Right of Power, the Right of Authority, the Right of Command, as Emmerich de Vattel so correctly declares.

Territorial sovereignty is not something to be decided by mere prime ministers, diplomats, residents, and scholars. Rather, it has a function. In international relations, sovereignty's function is to demarcate the international from the domestic, so that the boundaries appear to be self-evident in international treaties. And topographical maps are indispensable for the planning of military manoeuvres on the frontiers and public administration, for levying taxes, for the rule of law and space systems to work.

The claim here is quite simple: yesterday and today, national frontiers are fixed by treaty, unless scholars assume that a sovereign ignores his/her own State's frontier and rules over an unknown territory.

## 6 Bayburt Fort is Iberia of the Caucasus in A.D. 928

Four centuries passed. Justinian I, the Roman Emperor of the East at Constantinople, was then at war with the Persian Emperor. The truce of A.D. 532 allowed Justinian to commence fortification of the flank of the Euphrates at the Persian frontier of the Roman Empire. First he strengthened the territory of the East with new fortifications. By these measures, he fortified the whole of that remote frontier. Therefore he devised a plan and Procopius wrote the most important eyewitness account of the buildings in his reign (Procopius 1833, *De aedif.*, 2-4).



Osroenê, we understand, is a part of Mesopotamia (Media). A Roman province since A.D. 117, Mesopotamia was directly controlled by the Emperor of the Romans. From Constantinople, Justinian the Emperor of the Romans made impregnable all the places which previously lay exposed to assailants; "as a result of this", Procopius relates, "Mesopotamia is manifestly inaccessible to the Persian nation" (Procopius 1833, *De aedif.*, 2,4,14-2,4,21). In book two, then, Procopius says (2,7,1-2,7,2, 2,8,1, 2,8,1, 2,8,2):

Such were the works of the Emperor Justinian in Mesopotamia. And it is necessary for me at this point in my narrative to mention Edessa and Carrhae and Callinicum and all the other towns which chance to lie in that region, for those too are situated between the two rivers [...] So these structures were erected by the Emperor Justinian in the manner which I have described in Mesopotamia and in Osroenê, as it is called. And I shall describe the fashion in which his work was carried out on the right of the Euphrates River.

In book three on the buildings, Procopius goes on to tell about all the other works that the Emperor Justinian executed "in the other Armenia" as a place-name. The fort of Satala (Sadak) is in the territory of the other Armenia (Procopius 1833, *De aedif.* 3,4,1, 3,4,2). Here the Emperor Trajan held court in A.D. 114. Next Procopius adds that (3,3,9 -3,3,12):

As one goes from Citharizôn to **Theodosiopolis [currently Erzurum]** and **the other Armenia**, the land is called Chorzanê; it extends for a distance of about three days' journey, **not being marked off from the Persian territory** by the water of any lake or by river's stream or by a wall of mountains which pinch the road into a narrow pass, **but the two frontiers are indistinct**. So the inhabitants of this region, **whether subject of the Romans or of the Persians**, have no fear of an attack, but they even intermarry and hold a common market for their produce and together share the labours of farming. And if the commanders on either side ever make an expedition against the others, when they are ordered to do so by their sovereign, they always find their neighbours unprotected. Their very populous towns are close to each other, yet from ancient times no stronghold existed on either side. It was possible, therefore, for **the Persian King** to proceed by this route with comparative ease and convenience in passing through into Roman territory, until **the Emperor Justinian** blocked his way in the following manner [...].

It refers to the whole territory of Armenia that Procopius has described, whether subject of the Romans or of the Persians. While one Armenian region seems more open to outsiders along the Aras River (*Araxes*), "the other Armenian region" seems to be compact along the Euphrates River (currently Firat Nehri). Then Procopius relates (Procopius 1833, *De aedif.* 3,4,1-3,4,6; 3,4,10):

These things were accomplished by **the Emperor** in the manner described. I shall now go on to tell about all the other works which by his

diligence he executed **in the other Armenia**. The city of **Satala** had been in a precarious state in ancient times. For it is situated not far from the land of the enemy and it also lies in a low-lying plain and is dominated by many hills which tower around it, and for this reason it stood in need of circuit-walls which would defy attack. [...] And he set up admirable works on all sides and so struck terror into the hearts of the enemy. **he also built a very strong fortress not far from Satala in the territory called Osroenê. There was a certain fortress in that region erected by men of ancient times on the crest of a precipitous hill, which in early times Pompey, the Roman general, captured;** and becoming master of the land by his victories, he strengthened this town materially and named it Coloneia. [...] In that region also **he constructed the forts called Baiberdôn and Aerôn.**

Two are the Roman forts, Procopius tells us, that Justinian built in the territory called Osroenê, the Romans Empire. These forts are called *Baiberdôn* (Βαίβεργδών), or, as the Turks call it, Bayburt, and *Aerôn* (Ἄρεων). The modern name of Aerôn is unknown. The territory called Osroenê is not far from Satala "in the other Armenia" but it is not Armenia, either. And Coloneia, or, Koloneia, is Koyulhisar, Sivas İli, modern Turkey today.

Yesterday and today, Bayburt (*Baiburdi*) is just 95 km south-east of İspir (*Ispira*). However to complicate matters, today's İspir is situated in the modern province of Erzurum (*Arzrum*), which yesterday was the town of Theodosiopolis in historical Armenia. Erzurum lies below the Georgian Gorge, or, the Gates of Iberia as the Caucasian Gates (*Gurdzis Bogasi*) through the isolated Mount Uzundere (*Kenzoreti*) in the Mescit Mountains. Currently, these cities are in the Republic of Turkey as one of the successor States of the Ottoman Empire. To the north, the modern Province of Erzurum stretches as far as Tortum (*Tartomisi*), Tortumkale and Oltu on the isolated Mount Uzundere as the westernmost portion of the Mescit Mountains, currently Mescit Dağları.<sup>34</sup> We can point out its exact situation on Delisle's map of 1722 (Appendix, fig. 7).

Further, physical geography shows that Vardzahan was not Turkish Armenia (*Variu-Han*; currently Uğrak, Bayburt İli).<sup>35</sup> Vardzahan lies above the slope-forming unit of "The Georgian Gorge" (*Gurdzis Bogasi*), above both Bayburt (*Baiburdi*) and İspir (*Ispira*). The modern "Georgian Gorge" (Gürcü Boğazı) and the ancient "Iberian Gates as the Caucasian Gates" marks the entrance gates to Iberia of the Caucasus leading through the Kartvelian

<sup>34</sup> Civil Administration Units Municipality Villages, Turkey, 2002: BAYBURT 69: I. Bayburt-İl Merkezi B.; ERZURUM 25: İspir İlçesi, I. İspir-İlçe Merkezi B; Oltu İlçesi, I. Oltu-İlçe Merkezi B; Tortum İlçesi, I. Tortum-İlçe Merkezi B., 29. Tortumkale.

<sup>35</sup> But see Cuneo 1988, 1, 703, Maria Adelaide Lala Comneno ed. "N. 458 Varjahan, Vardzahan: chiesa ottagonale X-XI secolo, vilayet di Gumushane"; 2, Carta di Localizzazione dei Monumenti e dei Siti, n. 458.

route into the territory of Sarmatia (Russia). It occupies the gorge cut through the Mescit Mountains (currently Mescit Dağları, Turkey).

Bayburt (*Baiburdi*) appears just across the northern neck of the Georgian Gorge (*Gurdzis Bogasi*). Originally in Osroenê forming the Roman Empire, Bayburt Plateau and Fort then passed to the patrimony of the Kings of Iberia of the Caucasus, Kartli, in the Bagratid era. In A.D. 928 Catacale retired at the co-emperor's orders from Constantinople (currently İstanbul). Catacale was the Master of the Soldiers for Theodosiopolis (currently Erzurum, Turkey) and the region of Phasianes, the region of the Phasis River of the ancient writers, Colchis (West Georgia). The name of the river, in its modern form, is Rioni, Georgia. As soon as Catacale retired from Theodosiopolis and the region of Phasianes, the King of Iberia of the Caucasus seized upon all those strongholds and kept possession of them according to Greek Byzantine authors.<sup>36</sup> A political solution came, in A.D. 928, at Constantinople. Romanos I Lakapenos and Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, the co-emperors of the Romans, agreed that the Aras River (*Erax fluvius. Araxes*) "should serve as the boundary line between the two States not to commence war against this Prince, who was a *socius*, or, ally of the Roman Emperor". Thus the co-emperors "abandoned all the country north of the said river to the Ibererians of the Caucasus",

36 Le Beau 1770, Tome 13, 428, Romain Lécapène, 73, Le roi d'Ibérie à Constantinople: Le 20 février de l'année suivante 922, mourut Théodora, femme de Romain. [...] Les rois d'Ibérie étaient alliés de l'Empire, et ces princes, moins fiers que leurs ancêtres, s'en étaient rendus les vassaux en acceptant le titre de curopalates, devenu chez eux héréditaire. Celui qui régnait alors vint à **Constantinople**, et Romain s'empressa de le recevoir avec honneur, et d'étaler à ses yeux toute la pompe impériale; 35, Ann.924, Révolte de Boilas: 622, *Cedrenus*; 499 et al., *Leo gramm.*; 442-3, Mais en 924, il s'éleva des troubles sur la frontière de **l'Arménie** et du **Pont**. Le Patrice Bardas Boilas commandait en cette contrée. Voulant apparemment se faire une principauté, sans courir lui-même aucun risque, il excita deux seigneurs puissants, Adrien et Tazate, à prendre les armes. Ils levèrent l'étendard de la révolte, en s'emparant d'une place forte nommée **Païpert [Bayburt]**. Curcuas, qui se trouvait alors à **Césarée de Cappadoce** [currently Kayseri, Turkey], accourut au bruit de ces mouvements; il livra bataille aux rebelles [...]; 463, 468-9, Guerre en Arménie. *Const. Porph. de adm. imp.* c. 45. de Iberibus. Ann.927 Le révolte de Boilas avait été un signal de guerre pour les **Sarasins de Malatia** [currently Esky Mataya, Turkey]. Ils recommenceront leurs ravages sur les frontières de l'Empire. Mais ils trouverent dans Curcuas qui commandoit en Orient, un ennemi invincible [...469] II. Guerre en **Arménie**: *Constant. Porphyr. de adm. imp.* c. 45. *Abulfeda*. Quoique **les Rois d'Ibérie** fussent alliés et comme vassaux de **l'Empire**, ils disputoient néanmoins aux **Grecs** la possession des pays limitrophes. Sous le règne de Léon, Catacale s'était rendu maître de **Theodosiopolis** [currently Erzurum, Turkey] et de la **Phasiane** [Phasis, currently Rioni, Georgia], d'où il avait presque entièrement chassé les Sarrasins. Après le départ de ce Général [Catacale], le **Roi d'Ibérie** s'était emparé de toutes ces places, et prétendait s'y maintenir. **Constantinus VII. Romain** A. 928. Pour éviter une guerre avec ce Prince, on convint que **l'Araxe [Aras] ferait la borne des deux Etats, et on abandonna aux Ibériens tout le pays situé au Septentrion de ce fleuve**. Joannes Curcuas (John Curcuas) was born in Lesser Armenia. Phasiana (var. Fasiana) is the land of the Phasis River, or, Fasso, Colchis (West Georgia). The name of the river, in its modern form, is Rioni. It flows to Poti, Georgia.

or, Kartli, as the Emperor Constantinus Porphyrogenitus wrote in his *De administrando imperio* (Bekkerus 1840, 204-5, § 45).

To this, the reply of Romanos I Lakapenos and Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus was simple: Armenia belonged to the Romans. Bayburt was property of the Kingdom of Iberia of the Caucasus and hence was under Bagratid jurisdiction. In A.D. 928 Ioannes Curcuas, the commissioner on the revision and consolidation of the public laws of the State of the Romans, with his back to the source of the Aras River (Başçayı River valley) explains: "The left bank of the Aras River (*citeriora*) will belong to Iberia of the Caucasus, and that on the right bank (*ulteriora*) to the Roman Empire" (Bekkerus 1840, 205, chapter 45). The Empire of the Romans as owner State transfers sovereignty over half the Aras River (*Erax*) to the *curopalates* of Iberia as there is a constant threat of armed incursions from Theodosiopolis (currently Erzurum) into Iberia of the Caucasus. Since 928 the Aras has been the *terminus intermedius inter*, by the Roman public law of connecting parts to parts into a whole, between the Kingdom of the Caucasian Iberians (up it) and the Roman Empire (below it).

Finally, the Roman public road finishes at the *Iberici vici*, the buildings of each *vicus* bordering it according to Greek Byzantine authors. In fact, bordering the north face of the Köse Mountains along the Kelkit-Çoruh Fault (*Lycus Fl.*) as far as Koyulhisar, we reach the ancient *Coloneia Pontica* of the Romans, Sivas province today, Turkey. In the middle, between Kelkit and Köse, stands Satala in "the other Armenia" forming the Roman reign (currently Sadak, Turkey). Yet both in the north and east parts there was consciousness of a frontier that ended the holdings of the Roman Empire in the East. A Ibero-Kartvelian province since A.D. 928, Bayburt Plateau and Fort stands on the western bank of the Ch'orokhi (currently Çoruh Nehri, Turkey). An Ibero-Kartvelian province since time immemorial, on the eastern bank of the Ch'orokhi, and rather to the north of Varzahan (currently Uğrak), stands İspir Plateau and Fort; it serves the main route through the narrow north-to-south Georgian Gorge (currently Gürcü Boğazı, Turkey), that is to say, through the narrow Gates of Iberia as the Caucasian Gates in Pliny's time, as we see on the 1722 map. People journeying to communities away from the river have to continue south through the Gates to either Manzikerd or Theodosiopolis. On the one hand, Manzikerd is a city of Osroenê otherwise called Mesopotamia, a Roman province since A.D. 117 (currently Malazgirt, Turkey). On the other, Theodosiopolis is a city of Upper or Greater Armenia, a Roman province since A.D. 117 (currently Erzurum, Turkey).<sup>37</sup>

37 Stritter 1779, 309-10, § 72, Romanus Diogenes Turcis et Saracenis ad Hierapolim vic-tis, hic arcem aedificare statuit, **Pharsmane Ibero huic rei praefecto**. Imp. ROMANO Diogene. a. C. 1068; 310, § 74, **Romanus Diogenes Turcos** petens, **in Iberiam** contendit, et **Theodosiopolin** [current Erzurum, Turkey] venit: a. C. 1071 BELLO Turcico fervente,

Greek Byzantine and Latin records attest that the Kings of Iberia of the Caucasus (Kartli, East Georgia) as *socii* gave free access to the Emperors of the Romans exercising their right of transit through the Iberian Gates, that is to say, *Iberici vici*. From Constantinople (İstanbul) across the Bosphorus Thracius (Bithynia), the Roman Army then progressed along the old Roman public road from Greek Anatolia to the narrow Kelkit River valley, surrounded by steep mountains—the Mescit. The Gates of Iberia, or, the Caucasian Gates led to quicker access through the far side into the province of Upper or Greater Armenia in the Roman reign whenever necessary in military operations. For example, in 1068 and 1071 the King of all-Georgia gave access to the Emperor of the Romans to reach Erzurum (*Theodosiopolin*) in Greater Armenia under Seljuk Turkish attack. Since August 1071 the Turks had opened a road to Malazgirt (*Manzikert / Mantzicierte*), Roman Media, along the shoreline of the river Aras (*Araxes*) (see note 36).

The Roman Empire stops here. In fact, in Roman surveying *vicus* is a row of houses without a city in Roman topography across the Roman Empire. And the word *kleisoura* actually indicates command over a battlemented pass at the frontier, a gorge, a gully (Pertusi 1952, 142-3, Costantino). Thinner than a razor blade, certainly the *kleisoura* of Sivas (*savasto*) was in Georgian hands on Dulcert's portolan charts in 1339 and c.1340, with the battlemented tower forming a frontier between all-Georgia (*GIEOR-GIANJA*) and Turkey (*TURCHIA*), as we shall see (Appendix, fig. 9).

## 7 In Modern Times

Originally, Bayburt Plateau was Osroenê; so says Procopius' eyewitness account (Procopius 1833, *De aedif.*, 3,4,5-3,4,12); then it passed from Roman to Ibero-Karvelian hands by treaty in A.D. 928 (East Georgia), and it stood there.

Nine centuries later, the act of annexation and patronage of the first portion of the Kingdom of Georgia (Kartli and K'axeti) to the Russian Empire was announced in Moscow and Sankt Petersburg on 19 January 1801. Af-

imperator Romanus Diogenes ad **Sebastiam** proficiscitur, contendens in **Iberiam** pervenire, ubi etiam eorum, qui cum Manuele Curopalate Commeno ceciderant, spectator fuit. et inde sensim ac paulatim progressus ad **Theodosiopolin** se confert.; 310, § 75, Romanus Diogenes a Sultano e captivitate dimissus, Turcis comitantibus **Theodosiopolin et per vicos Ibericos Coloniam venit**: ROMANUS Diogenes a Sultano, in cuius potestatem brevi ante proelio victus venerat, dimissus, **Theodosiopolin** venit. Indeque profectus peregrabat **Iberios vicos** una cum Sultani, qui secum aderant, legatis, et inde usque ad ipsam **Coloniam** processit. Given also in Migne, *PG*, 1889, Vol. 122, 420 (D), 432. Today Koloneia (Colonia / Coloneia) is Koyulhisar, Sivas İli, Turkey; Theodosiopolin is Erzurum, historical Greater Armenia. Pharsman of Caucasian Iberia was in charge as governor of Hierapolis Bambyce, or, Commagene (currently Manbij, modern Syria).

ter the Persian-Russian war 1805-1813 and the Turkish-Russian war 1806-1812, the Georgian natural districts were long considered as a matter of dispute.

And, later, the valleys of Parkhal (Tao), and those originally in Turkish Georgia, Tortum, İspir, Bayburt and the Georgian Gorge (Gürcü Boğazı), were all declared denationalized by the Turkish government:

It should be noted that in 1918-1921 the most Turkicized of the Georgian regions now in Turkey –Parhal, Torton, İspir, Bayburt and Gurdıjbogaz– are the two southern ones of Bayburt and Gurdıjbogaz, where the denationalization of the Georgian population came to an end.

Gurdıjbogaz is the Georgian Gorge. Thus, after the annexation of Georgia in 1801, it is not surprising that the Soviet Union can lay claim to these regions as heir to the former territory of the Russian Empire. However, Soviet Georgia as incorporated within U.S.S.R. does not include all the territory which naturally belonged to it. And the frontiers of Turkey, Soviet Armenia and Iran come together in the vicinity of Mt. Ararat, which is a few miles inside the Turkish side of the boundary. Since Novembre 1945, this area has become the location of military events. They start in the Iran, Caucasia and Turkey Area (19 Dec 45 to 18 Jan 46). Now *The Field Artillery Journal* admits that their location and nature indicate a possibility of serious complications. The Unites States and the British Empire have united in an attempt, as yet unsuccessful, to limit the trouble. Turkey is allied to Iran, but Russian occupation of Iran Azerbaijan separates Turkey's Armies from those of Iran.<sup>38</sup>

However, we must not confuse geographical frontiers across time. The westernmost extension of Iberia of the Caucasus, Kartli, East Georgia, all-Georgia, is not Tao-Klarceti, Tao or Taokh, or, as the Press calls it, Parhal or Parkhal.<sup>39</sup> Its eastern border is formed by the Ch'orokhi River (Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, 121). In fact, Tao is described as follows in 1745 (Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1842, 121):

TAO. Au-dessus d'Arthwan [Artvin], jusqu'à Idi [?], à l'O. du Dchorokh [Çoruh Nehri], à l'E. du pays de Thorthom [Tortum River Valley], est Parkhal, Taos-Car ou Tao, limité à l'E. par le Dchorokh; au S., par un montagne allant de Thorthom jusqu'à Idi; à l'O., par le mont de Thorthom; au N. par le Dchorokh et par le mont d'Ispira [İspir].

<sup>38</sup> Lanza 1946, 165-67; Perimeters in Paragraphs, 163-72, Baltimore, Washington D.C., United States Field Artillery Association.

<sup>39</sup> But see among others Brosset 1839, coll. 158-60; Bayram 2015, 482.

A further error, as Rouben Galichian observes, is introduced by the terminology “Eastern Anatolia” literally meaning “east of the east” in Greek (2007, 10-11, 19). Today, however, Bayburt is commonly classed as an “Armenian” stronghold in the highlands of “eastern Anatolia”, but this is a triple error, historical, geographical, and archaeological.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, if archaeologists say that “the district of Bayburt, though to the north of the Euphrates, fell within Armenia” (Sinclair 1987, 64), they had better offer documentary proof of it. In fact, the Bayburt Plateau, the source of the Çoruh River and the İspir Plateau, Iberia of the Caucasus, All-Georgia, are mistakenly identified in historical Armenia, and mistakenly localized in the region of Tao-Klarjeti. The result is a mass of misinformation and confusion about the whole subject-geographical as well as dynastical. A Roman province since A.D. 117, Armenia is dependent on Rome. The Emperor Trajan acknowledged no Kingly government. No Kingly government both in name and thing subsisted in Armenia until the first crusade in A.D. 1097 in Emperor Alexius’ reign.<sup>41</sup>

40 See Adontz and Garsoïan, 1970, *The Political Division of Armenia*, 22-23, 39, 51; Notes, 398, 31b; *The Reform of Justinian in Armenia*, 112; *Armenia Interior*, 58; Appendix V, *Toponymy: B Cities - Towns - Villages*, 191; *Locality Baiberdön, Equivalents Bayburt*, Note 3, n. 25; *Locality Bayburt, Variants Baybert, Equivalents Baiberdön*, References G. 82 (2) = *Turkey [G], Maps U. 324 C IV. = the USAF Aeronautical Approach Chart [U] (for the modern equivalents)*. See also Sinclair 1987, 1, 78. And Sagona A., Sagona C., 2004: *Sagona C.*, 2,33; *Gümüşhane* 68,3,7; *Conclusions*, 95-96; Sagona A., Sagona C., 122; Sagona C., 94; Sagona A., Sagona C., 168, 172.

41 But see for instance Sagona A., Sagona C. 2004, 94-5: “One Georgian family, the Bagratids, whose homeland was in Sper, within Tao-Klarjeti, claimed to be descended from David and Solomon according to Moses Khorenats’i [note 137], but this was an unfounded claim driven by political expediency. After having reached highly ranked positions within the Armenian kingdom, the Bagratid clan went from strength to strength. They benefited from the weakening of Byzantine interests over the Çoruh river valley in the eighth century, and the cessation of Saracen control over the Caucasus in the closing years of the ninth century. The fortresses that had secured the eastern frontier of the Byzantine Empire fell into disuse. The extent of Bagratid territory is not always precise. The castle at İspir, guarded the northern route across the Pontic Mountains to Rize, on the Black Sea coast. Another at Bayburt defended the caravan routes from central Asia, Persia and on to Trabzon and north to the Black Sea and south to the interior, to Erzincan. A number of important Christian sites emerged on or near the major routes through the region. Church architecture has been dealt with by others, but both simple small chapels and major religious precincts do survive. Layard [1853] was the first to describe three ruined churches at Vazahan, 15 km west of Bayburt, but these have long since been destroyed. The Bayburt region is known to have had sources of yellow limestone possibly exploited during the construction of churches around Trabzon as well as for the church within the walls of Bayburt citadel itself. Erzurum fell to Seljuk forces in the Battle of Manzikert. The year was 1071. Thereafter, the region witnessed settlement by Turkish people. Reforms made by David the Builder (1089-1125) shaped Georgian religious, political and military institutions. Not only were local rulers reigned in under his firm control, but Georgian troops regained power and commanded tribute from Seljuk Turks. This upper hand in religious politics lasted through to the early 1200s, through the reigns of Giorgi

For certainly the Bagratid dynasty, the fifth dynasty of the Ibero-Kartvelians originated at Īspir (Geo. სპირი), on the east side of the Çoruh River (currently Turkey).<sup>42</sup> The site is located “above” the Georgian Gorge. Historically and geographically, the assertion that the fifth dynasty originate at Īspir, historical “Armenia”, makes no sense. So, Mxit’ar Ayrivanec’i’s *Chronographia* simply says that “The reign of the Bagratunis began in K’art’li. Simultaneously Gurgēn ruled in K’art’li and his brother Smbat in Armenia”. Kartli is Iberia of the Caucasus in Greek and Latin sources; its western border is formed by the Çoruh / Ch’orokhi River. However, King Gurgēn did not “belong to the Tao/Tayk’ branch of the Georgian Bagratids” as modern historians comment through unknown primary sources.<sup>43</sup> King Gurgēn belonged to the primary line of the Bagratids from Īspir commanding “The Georgian Gorge” (currently Gürcü Boğazı), that is to say, “the Gates of Iberia as the Caucasian Gates”, as the westernmost extension of the people called Kartvelians (Cardueni / Kardueni) in Trajan’s time. Immediately after the treaty (*foedus*) with the King of the Caucasian Iberians, Trajan “occupied the people of the Kardueni” among the Caucaso-Iberian peoples of that Kingdom on primary sources (A.D. 114).

III, Tamar and Lasha Giorgi. Incursions by Mongol tribes brought an end to Georgian unity in the year around 1240 at which time, the Georgian state fell into the three territories of Kakheti, Kartli and Imereti. Mongol dominance lasted until 1335 with the death of Il-khan Abu Said at which time the empire fell into economic and political disarray.”; note 137: “Moses Khorenats’i, Book II.37, mentions a tutor, Smbat, son of Biurat Bagratuni, in the province of Sper, in the village of Smbatavan”.

42 Vaxušt’i Bat’onišvili 1849, 1<sup>re</sup> Partie: Histoire ancienne, jusqu’en 1469 de J.-C., 83-216, “Quatrième race royale: Khosroïde (24<sup>e</sup> roi, Mirian, Khosroïde - 38<sup>e</sup> roi Bacour III, Khosroïde) durant 472 ou plutôt 469 ans, 263-570 et 619-787 de J.C.”; 216-687 “Cinquième dynastie: Bagratides (39<sup>e</sup> roi Gouram-Couropalate, Bagratide par son père, mais Khosroïde par sa mère - 76<sup>e</sup> roi Bagrat IV, Bagratide, de 575 à 619, i. e. 44 ans, puis en 787-1801, ou 1015 ans, en tout 1059, ou plutôt 1030 ans, à cause des interrègnes”; 295 “52<sup>e</sup> roi, Bagrat III, fils de Gourgen, roi des rois, Bagratide (règne 24 ans, 980-1014). Bagrat devient roi d’Aphkhalie en 980”; 693, Table de Matières. For primary sources, see Salia, 1980, 137-41. Georgian historiography correctly insists that Īspir was Kartli; cf. Suny 1988, 29.

43 For example, Allen holds among scholars that David (reigned in the years 876-81) of the Bagratid dynasty of Tao-Klarjeti (Tao-Klarjeti) was the titular King of Iberia (Kartli); cf. Allen 1932, 56-5, 95-100. However, Rapp Jr makes the prudent comment that “This is a tribute to Toumanoff’s dynasties based on secondary sources” (Rapp jr 2003, 465); see also 459, Rapp’s comment “When early medieval Armenian histories refer to K’art’velians / Georgians, it is sometimes to illustrate Armenia’s purported superiority”, 464-5 (Excerpts from Mxit’ar Ayrivanec’i’s *Chronographia*, K, and Rapps comment), 495 (Black Sea/Geo. Speri Sea, mod. Shavi Zghva/Gk. Euxine Sea). The reference goes to Toumanoff 1952, 22; 1963, 488 (note 227); 1969, 2-5. Further details in Rapp jr 2003, 14, 18, 31-2, 145-7, 163, 233-5, 266, 337-41 (Ch. Six: Sumbat Davit’is-dze: A Bagrat Perspective on Georgian History), 342-409, 413-25, 438-40, 443, 446-7, 449-51 (Appendix I. Reception: Mxit’ar Ayrivanec’I). More prudently, Giusto Traina avoids over-vast presuppositions of an Armenian origin of the “Bagratuni”; cf. Traina 1991, 20, 25, 28, 33, 94, 100-2, 105.



If my supposition is correct, I would derive the place-name Ìspir from “at even”, ἔσπερίοις (esperíois) in Greek, so that it would mean “the westernmost extension of Caucasian Ibería” in reference to the cardinal point West in the horizon. The localization between Colchis (upper Georgia) and Media corresponds to that of Herodotus, “But the way from Colchis to Media is not long, no other people than the Saspirens [Σάσπειρες] lying between both” (Herodotus, *Clio*, 1, 104). The forms *Saspirens*, σάσπειρες, Σάσπειρες, *Saspirens*, *Saspers*, *Syspiritis*, or, *Hyspiratis*, as the Turks call the archaeological site today, are graphic variants.

A Roman province since A.D. 114, Armenia belonged to the Romans, and protected the frontier of the commonwealth. Thus, in Malalas' *Chronographia* the table of contemporaneous Kings during the Roman Empire of the East (Byzantium) had *Zamanazus*, the King of the Iberians (*Iberi*) of the Caucasus.<sup>44</sup> He is Pharsman V (Pharasmanes, P'arsman), Chosroid, in linear succession within the fourth dynasty of ancient Ibería of the Caucasus and lineal descendent from King Vaxt'ang I Gorgasali, Wolf's head in Persian. Malalas the chronicler and Photius the Patriarch add chronological details: as soon as Justinian I the Emperor of the Romans appointed Belisarius General of the East, Cabades as “mihran” raised a Persian Army, and marched on the city of Daras. In A.D. 530 “The Caspian Gates, or, Daras” are the *casus belli* in the Roman-Persian war. In fact, the Persians, Procopius reports, shall not lay down their armies until “the Romans either join in the Guard of the Caspian Gates or dismantle Daras” (Procopius, *De bello Persico*, 1,12). Cabades, or, as modern historians call him, Kavadh, the King of the Persians, reigned until 531.<sup>45</sup> In fact, first, Cabades the Persian King was Coades “Darasthenus” in Greek, from Daras; and, second, Justinian the Roman Emperor sent Ztittas as the first Master of the Soldier for Armenia, as Armenia was property of the Roman Empire and hence was under Justinian's jurisdiction.<sup>46</sup> In 531 Pharsman V had already ruled the Kingdom of Ibería of the Caucasus for four years, when Cabades

44 Malalas 1831, 429-30, De Temporibus Justiniani Imperatoris, § 18, “Quo autem tempore sacratissimus Justinianus imperium tenuit, Persarum Rex fuit Coades Darasthenus, Perozi filius. Romanorum vero regnum habuit Alarichus, Africanum, Ghildericus; ille [...] Iberi vero Zamanazus. Supradicto autem anno imperii Justiniani Ztittas, in Armenia Militum Magister constitutus est, quippe quae antehac Ducibus, Praefectis, et Comitibus paruit; Militum vero Magistrum non habuit. Quinetiam ei dedit Imperator Militum Numeros, quos duobus Praesentibus Militiis Orientalique subtraxit. Ztittas autem, Magistratu suscepto, Scrinarios indigenas sibi accepit: Imperatorem etiam exoratum habuit, uti Divino suo ex Edicto, Scrinarii Militiae inservientes, ex indigenis (ut qui Armeniae regiones penitus callerent,) deinceps deligeretur. [...]”.

45 Procopius 1833, *De bello Persico*, 1,13,12-1,13,14. The hostilities of A.D. 530 began in June.

46 Photius 1606, Procopii, Photii Bibliotheca, 28,34-29,35, “Cabades Perozen genere Persam, dignitate Meranem”. Procopius 1833, *De bello Persico*, 1,13.12-1,13,14.

died. Pharsman was the son and successor of Bakur II, Chosroid, the 35th King of the Iberians of the Caucasus.<sup>47</sup>

It is really important that we understand here that “The Caspian Gates, or, Daras” are where people enter the mouth of the Kur River, south of modern Baku. The Caspii dwell here (Plinius *N. h.* 6,15). Indeed, Nero’s general Corbulo had been wrongly addressed as regarded the “The Caspian Gates” leading through Iberia of the Caucasus into the territory of the Sarmatians (currently Russians). Perhaps the Roman copyist inserted the word North instead of East, and Darial, an adjective, from the place-name, Daras (See Conclusion B).

## 8 The Falsification of Polo’s Text and the authorized ‘Testo Ottimo della Crusca’

Originally a province of Roman Osroenê, the Bayburt Plateau has been under Georgian sovereignty since the year 928 until 1801. What has been said is, I believe, enough to prove that Bayburt and the Georgian Gorge below were not Armenia. How did such geographical error creep into modern scholarship?

Modern historians and archaeologists take Marco Polo’s account of Greater Armenia and Georgia seriously. *Giorgiania* and *Zorzania* are the two versions of the place-name in Polo’s editions. Following the terrestrial route via Persia and Greater Armenia (*Armenia Maior*) the three Polos reached Trabzon, the Pontic port on the southern shore of the Black Sea, at the end of 1291. They then proceeded by the sea way of Constantinople and the Venetian colony of Negroponte to Venice. They landed in 1295.

47 Bakur came to the throne in 514. The traditional regnal years are those preserved by Prince Vaxušt’i Bat’onišvili (Bagrat’ioni), 1849, 200, “34e roi, Datchi, fils de Wakhtang Ier, Khosroïde (règne 14 ans), 499-514; n. 3, le roi Wakhtang-Gourgaslan”; 122, n. 6, “il a été dit que trois fils étaient nés de la reine Eléné, mais nous ne connaissons les noms que de deux d’entre eux, qui vont paraître dans notre texte”; 201, “35e roi, Bacour II, fils de Datchi, Khosroïde (règne 14 ans)”; 514-28, “36e roi, Pharsman V, fils de Bacour II, Khosroïde (règne 14 ans, 528-542)”; 202, “37e roi, Pharsman VI, fils d’une frère de Pharsman V, Khosroïde (règne 15 ans, 542-537)”. Fourteen kings presumably succeeded to the throne of Kartvelian Iberia for 200 years. Vaxušt’i reckons from the death of King Mirian in A.D. 342 to the accession of King Pharsman VI (542); 1849, Préface de l’historien Wakhoucht, 7, n. 3-9). See also Mikaberidze 2015, Introduction, 12, “The death of King Vakhtang seriously weakened Kartli (Iberia) and exposed it to Persian encroachment. In 523 King Gurgun rose in rebellion but was defeated, and Kartli was occupied”; 701 “514-528 Bakur II (Gurgun) (Toumanoff: 534-547)”. See also Toumanoff, 1969, 29, “34. Bacurius/Bakur II (534-547), son of Dach’I, reigned for 13 years”. And Cantoclarus 1610, 244-54, “*De Menandro*: Menander protector historicus, sic de se scribit: Mihi pater est Euphrates Byzantinus”; Ex Codice Manuscripto Augustano: Argumentum Collectionis de Romanorum Legationibus ad Ethnicos. Proemium; Excerpta ex Historia Menandri de Abaris: Ad Alanos: Ex Libro Secundo”. Zamnarsus or Zamassardus is Pharsman V, the King of Caucasian Iberia in Greek and Latin sources.

Existing scholarship, however, ignores that the critical edition of Polo's Travels (*Viaggi*) first appeared by Baldelli Boni at Florence, in 1827. It was based on a thorough examination of all the extant manuscript copies which number more than twenty. The project was undertaken under the sponsorship of the Accademia della Crusca.

We understand the story of Marco Polo's Travels from the first printed edition by Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi*, Venice, 1559, in the Italian language. This, the second volume in the series, is devoted entirely to the East Indies, Babylon, Armenia, Georgia, the Tatar lands, Persia. Ramusio's edition was printed posthumously.

In book one, the self-declared author, Marco Polo, presents a general outline of Greater Armenia (Ramusio 1559, 4, Libro 1, Cap. 1.F). Polo says that in Greater Armenia, "Within a castle named Bayburt [*castel Paipurth*] which you meet with in going from Trebizond to Tauris, there is a rich mine of silver" (Ramusio 1559, 5, Libro 1, Cap. 2 F).

Silver mine is translated Gümüşhane in Turkish. Today Gümüşhane is a modern city a few miles north of Bayburt. At first glance Polo's description appears to be true beyond reasonable doubt. The Venetian edition of Polo's work, however, lived a story worth telling. No original text survives. Over two hundred and fifty years later, the first printed edition of Marco Polo's Travels in three books was issued, however, in translation in the second miscellany volume *Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi* at Venice in 1559.<sup>48</sup> As usual, the printer was Tommaso de Giunti. Here, in his preface to the second volume, he tells us that, regrettably, Ramusio the editor died before the completion of the second volume in 1557. Not enough. Four months after his death fire destroyed the printer's premises. And, consequently, some editorial passages do not appear due to injury.

The first volume in the series was printed in 1555, quickly followed by the third volume in 1556. The second volume was finally printed in 1559.

Ramusio, the editor of Marco Polo, wrote nearly two centuries and a half after Polo's time. No original manuscript survived from the years that Polo and Rustichello spent together in prison. For this reason, the Polo books available today are technically not primary sources, and many of them drastically differ from one another. Readers have many versions to choose

48 Ramusio 1559, 1-8, Di M. Giovanni Battista Ramusio Prefazione Sopra il Principio del Libro del Mag.ro M. Marco Polo All'Eccellente M. Hieronimo Fra Castoro (Di Venetia, à sette di Luglio MDLIII); 9-17, Esposizione Di M. Gio. Battista Ramusio sopra quelle parole di Messer Marco Polo; 18, "Gio. Battista Ramusio alli Lettori; 1r, Proemio Primo, Sopra il Libro di Messer Mardo Polo, gentil huomo di Venetia, fatto per un Genovese (l'anno del MCCXCVIII); 1v, Prohemio Secondo Sopra il Libro de M. Marco Polo, fatto da Fra Francesco Pipino Bolognese dell'ordine de i Frati Predicatori, quale lo tradusse in lingua latina, et abbreviò Del MCCCXX (Qual libro fu scritto per il detto M. Marco del 1298 trovandosi pregion in la città di Genova, et si parte in tre libri), 2r, De I Viaggi Di Messer Marco Polo Gentiluomo Veneziano Libro Primo.

from. A significant problem with Polo's book, however, concerns the order of the events. In any case, since its completion in 1827, the Polo critical edition has been "Testo Ottimo della Crusca" or Polo's "Best Text", by the authority of the Academy of the Crusca. The critical editor's role is to judge which of these variants is authorial or otherwise, and which to showcase. Baldelli Boni the critical editor reports that some of the transmitted copies of Marco Polo's lost text have geographical errors and inaccuracies. Polo's original text in Latin is lost. And Baldelli Boni argues convincingly that the Polo's version in the Italian vernacular language of Tuscany known as "Testo Magliabechiano" is the most authoritative. The "Testo Magliabechiano" was then translated from the French version of "Paris Text 1" showing French distortions by Michele Ormanni surely within 1309. It is indeed the oldest of the extant copies of Polo's abbreviated text. And yet it transmits only a second-hand translation of a copied text. Baldelli Boni critically notes among other interpolations and misconstructions of the 1559 Italian text edited by Ramusio, the long sentence on Bayburt in Greater Armenia. He concludes that someone later added certain narratorial interjections and frases. The whole sentence on Bayburt is thus presented among the interpolations and misconstructions of Polo's text on the ground that it was not included in "Paris Text 1", the earliest extant one from the French copy.<sup>49</sup>

And so the whole sentence on Bayburt was judged false and not introduced into the authorized Academic edition of Polo's "Best Text" in 1827, the "Testo Ottimo della Crusca" for scholars. Therefore, modern editions of Polo's text, with, or, without the sentence on Bayburt in Greater Armenia, rely either on unauthorized copies, or, on "Testo Ottimo della Crusca" edited by the Crusicans.

## 9 All-Georgia on Portolan Charts in the 1330s

It is only in portolan charts of the navigable world that we can clearly see a continuous tradition linking Roman and medieval maps. Chapters of global history have been depicted in the form of small icons on portolan charts for centuries. However, a few inland features are shown. Prominent here, for instance, are Greater Armenia (*Armenia maior*), "Mount Ararat where the ark of Noah landed" and the Taurus Mountains (Licini 2008, 191-218; 1992, 515-25).

Nevertheless, portolan charts illustrate the level of flexibility in toponymy and the way in which place-names are updated over time. We can see

49 Baldelli Boni 1827, 1, t. 1, "Storia del Milione", 1-172: 11-12, 17 and note 1; 13, 18; 1, t. 2, "Dichiarazione al Libro Primo per rischiarare le vie tenute dai Poli nelle andate e ritorni dalla Cina", 3-26: 3, *Giorgiana*; 13, *Paipurt*; "Storia del Milione", 9, 11, 9, 12, 10, 13, 10, 14, 10-11, 15, 11, 16, 11-13, 17, 13-14, 18.

the national flag of Sak'art'velo, all-Georgia, on the earliest extant portolan charts that Angelino Dulcert from Genoa made in Mallorca in 1339 (Paris, BnF) and c.1340 (London, BL).<sup>50</sup> By taking direction lines across the chart, Dulcert connects flag-points at intervals. The Georgian flag is displayed in triplication on the first chart, and in duplication on the second (Appendix, figs. 9, 10). The flag of the people who made Saint George their patron and standard-bearer has a white field with centred red cross, St George's, and smaller four crosses on the corners. The Dulcert portolan chart of 1339 displays the modern name *GIEORGIANJA*. Here it should be emphasized that the name of the united nation first appeared in Georgian chronicles in the tenth century.

Georgian flags mark Sebastopolis (*Savastopoli*) at the mouth of the Phasis River (currently Rioni, Georgia), Tbilisi (*Tifilis*), the capital town, and Sivas (*Savasto*), now a town in Turkey. Georgia has been the name of the United Kingdom of the Georgians since the year 1008.

So it comes that we read the ancient names of Colchis (West Georgia) and Iberia of the Caucasus (Kartli, East Georgia) on Ptolemy's 3rd Map of Asia in Nicolaus Germanus' copy in 1466. On the other hand, and contemporaneously, Dulcert's portolan chart of 1339 marks the political change in the name of the Caucasian reign. By the 1320s, if not before, all navigators can clearly read *GEORGIA* on the portolan chart that Pietro Vesconte, also from Genoa, made in Venice.

The place called Sivas (*savasto*) was maintained with some military state as "The Eleventh Thema of the East called Sebastea" in Constantine Porphyrogenitus's reign in the early tenth century.<sup>51</sup> Originally, the Theme of Sebastea was Roman territory. The land became patrimony of the Kings of all-Georgia by conquest in the war 1202-1203 in Tamar's time; and the annexation may, perhaps, be in connection with the newly founded Constantinopolitan-Bagratid Empire of Trabzon, to cross the Black Sea from the Colchian ports of Poti and Sebastopolis to the Pontic port of Trabzon on the southern shore.<sup>52</sup> In fact, the dissolution of the Thematic armies and

50 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département Cartes et Plans, *Rés. Ge B 696*, Angelino Dulcert, Mallorca, mm 1020 × 750, "an. MCCCXXXVIII mense Augusto Angelino Dulcert in civitate Maioricarum composuit" 1339. London, British Library, *C 6424-04 Add. 25691*, Portolan Chart by Angelino Dulcert, c.1340.

51 Constantinus Porphyrogenitus 1588, Pars Lat., 24, "Thema Undecimum, Dictum Sebasteae: Similiter et Sebasteae Thema ex minore Armenia initium habet. [...] id est, Augusto Caesare Iulio accepit, qui Caesar eum dominatur, ac principatum primum occupavit". See also Migliorati 2001, 235 and note 53.

52 Queen Tamar, Bagratid, ordered the Georgian Army to march on the valley of Başçayı River, which was originally Armenian; it was conquered via Vardzia and Kars in the war 1202-1203 against the Sultan. See Vaxušt'i Bat'onišvili 1849, 1<sup>re</sup> Partie, 384 and note 1, 460-465; 1842, Géographie de la Géorgie: Description du Karthli actuel; ses frontières, ses montagnes, ses fleuves, les diverses localités et les édifices qu'elles contiennent, 121.

military Themes was well underway in the Roman Empire of the East now in the hands of the Latins from the West; and in the great and protracted struggle, Constantinople was almost swept away.

Consequently, Dulcert's portolan chart of the transit system at first sight shows flags of all-Georgia in close proximity to major transit stops and interconnections from the sea, and earth. Again, we can turn to primary sources from different times for a local description of the path. Since Trajan's time the terrestrial route has possessed some considerable importance across Anatolian Kapadokya not merely as a connection with Roman provinces in the east but also as an overland road leading through Colchis (West Georgia) into the territory of the Red Sea (see above section 4). In Roman law, the equation of royal and public roads is achieved by straightforward assertion, "*Regia Via*, the royal way, cannot be the property of anyone except the king. The same may be said of a military road which can be called public".

The federated Kings of Caucaso-Iberians have given the Romans access to the public roads crossing from the west since the alliance (*foedus*) was founded in A.D. 114. In fact, twice Romanus Diogenes, the Emperor of the Romans at Constantinople, assembled a large Byzantine Army against the Seljuk Turks in 1068 and 1071. From Sivas (*Sebastia*) and up to Koyulhisar (*Colonia Pontica*), Sivas İli (currently Turkey), his Roman troops then marched through the wards—the *Iberici vici*. Since Trajan's reign they have been all post stations along the Roman public road (*Regia Via*).<sup>53</sup>

The Emperor of the Romans, on bad news, passed the strait from Constantinople. By a wall of mountains that pinch the road into a narrow pass, the Emperor of the Romans then followed the line of the Roman public road (*regia via*) that ran along the Kelkit River Valley (*Lycus fluvius*) to Sadak (*Satala*), a town of Roman Armenia, and out to the north-east border of the Roman State with the federated Kingdom of all-Georgia. Byzantine-Greek and Latin authors made specific references to particular places, such as

53 For example, the Emperor Trajan was at Elegia (currently Ereğli, Turkey) in A.D. 106; see section 4. For medieval reference to the Roman public road through Anatolian Kapadokya and Greater and Lesser Armenia, see especially Bongars 1611, 215, Alberti Aquensis Expeditionis Hierosolymitanae, 3, "ad urbem finitimas, *Reclei* et *Stancona* descendit, ... regia via a longe sequebantur, et *Antiochiam minorem* reclinantes, quae in latere *Reclei* sita est". *Reclei* is Ereğli in Konya province (currently Turkey); it is located in the central Anatolian Plateau. *Antiochia minor*, Little Antiochia, is an ancient Hellenistic city on Mount Cragus overlooking the Mediterranean coast in the region of Cilicia (currently İçel) and Cyprus. In modern-day Turkey the site is located in the area of Güney, Antalya province. See also Bongars 1611, 39, Roberti Monachi Historia Hierosolimitana, 3 (Incipit Liber Tertius), 40, 42, 43-45. In 1075-1139 Frank and Langobard chroniclers still mention Salt Lake in Latin; see also Pertz 1846, 727-844, Auctore Petro (a. 1075-1139), § 4, 767, "Nos-trorum itaque exercitus dum illos indesinenter insequeretur, per inaquosa et deserta loca, maximam equorum multitudinem amisit". The chronicle is also known as Die Chronik von Montecassino.

*per vicos Ibericos* and *peregrabat Iberios vicos* for Georgian mountainwards towards Bayburt (see note 37). A Caucaso-Iberian plateau by treaty (*foedus*) since A.D. 928, Bayburt in the upper Çoruh Valley led to İspir, supported by frontier guards. Not far from İspir the Roman Emperor rode to south through the Georgian Gorge, the Gates of Iberia as the Caucasian Gates in Pliny's time, into Greater Armenia, a Roman province since A.D. 117.

Dulcert's portolan chart covers even the southern part of all-Georgia down to the frontier at Sivas (*savasto*) in the 1330s. The Georgians have pushed the frontier further and further towards the south-west. We see it in the way the Georgian flag is depicted here on the battlemented tower (Appendix, fig. 9). Beyond Sivas runs the line of towers on the left bank of the Euphrates River (*Fl. Eprates.*, Firat Nehri in modern Turkey). The line points at the bridge of Eski Malatya (*pons meldenj*) as the eastern border of historical Armenia (*Armenia*). On the left side is new Turkey (*TURCHIA*); Ankara, the place-name, is displayed in the ancient form it enjoyed in Roman times (*anciras*). And yet, the Georgian port of Colchian Sebastopolis (*Savastopoli*) - Poti, a double port, still leads through all-Georgia into the territory of historical Syria via Anatolian Kapadokya, and to the places of the Holy Land. Spaces align with the cardinal axis to allow for proper solar orientation; and the direction line from upper Georgia (Colchis) to the mid-Red Sea ridge is consequently the cardinal (north to south) axis of connected systems.

While ex-Roman Anatolia and Anatolian Kapadokya were gradually transformed into a Turkish dominion in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, portolan charts reached their peak (Licini 1989, 341-52; 1997-98, 56-65).

Essentially, the Dulcert portolan chart is a sea chart of the parts of the world then known. Britain is correctly drawn in the early 1330s (Appendix, fig. 11); modern names are given to Kingdoms (*ANGLIETERA*, *SCOCIA*). And yet, however, Ptolemy's *Geography* was still to be rediscovered and taken away from Constantinople, and Ptolemy's first distorted map of Britain was still to be drawn.

As pointed out in section 1, the paradox today is that Ptolemy's map is more usually studied as a creation before the time of Dulcert's portolan charts of 1339 and c.1340, whereas the first copy of Ptolemy's *Geography* in Greek without maps was rediscovered in 1397 and Ptolemy's world and regional maps were first constructed in the 1400s. The oldest surviving copy was made more than a thousand years after Ptolemy wrote in the second century and Ptolemy's maps were first drawn about 1415 from his listed geographical coordinates of wrong latitudes and longitudes.

## 10 Conclusions

### Conclusion A

I have thought of my work on the Caucasus as a contribution to the History of cartography-map history. Ptolemy's *moschivis montes* are identified here for the first time as the Mescit Mountains, (currently Turkey). Thus the conclusion can only be that the westernmost extension of historical Georgia (Kartli) is the İspir Plateau in Ptolemy's time, and it continues along the terrible north-to-south Georgian Gorge, or, as the Romans call it, the narrow Gates of Iberia otherwise called the Caucasian Gates for a distance of eight miles in longitude. Indeed, the Georgian Gorge runs along the isolated Mount Uzundere on the plateau of the Mescit Mountains. The Elder Pliny was right—the Gates of Iberia as the Caucasian Gates lead from Iberia to Sarmatia (Russia) around A.D. 79. The forlorn spot is now known by the name of Gürcü Boğazı, Sakharthwélos-Qel, défilé de Géorgie.

A little above it to the north is the İspir Plateau and Fort. From the Empire of the Romans of the East, the Bayburt Plateau and Fort of the Osroenians (upper Medians) passed into the possession of the Kings of the Ibero-Kartvelians by the treaty on the Aras River (Araxes) in A.D. 928, all-Georgia soon after.

The far end of the Georgian Gorge is located at latitude 40° North on Delisle's map of 1722. Needless to say, Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus is quite useless in the history of the Caucasus, showing the wrong latitude of 45° north for the southern slopes of the Caucasus Mountains joining the Mescit Mountains (currently Turkey). It actually corresponds to the latitude of Crimea (45°3'N).

Ptolemy's map of the Caucasus is grotesquely inaccurate. And the "dog-leg" appearance of the Mescit Mountains is a distorted feature which occurs exclusively on Ptolemy's maps. The map of Britain in all the general editions of him is the most awkward that can be conceived. Italy has the Adriatic for its northern, and the Tyrrhenian for its southern boundary.

Modern writers on ancient history think that the story of maps is linear—beginning, middle and end. But the case of Ptolemy is typical in that his work began to have a powerful influence in the fifteenth century. After Ptolemy's death in the second half of the second century, his *Geography* had disappeared for a thousand years, and with it the idea of coordinate-based mapping according to a mathematical grid system—latitude and longitude for about 8,000 cities and other world locations.

No ancient Ptolemaic map survives. A copy of Ptolemy's work resurfaced in Europe in about 1397, in Florence, and as the years progressed it exerted an increasingly powerful influence on Renaissance thought and mapping practices. In 1415 Ptolemy's *Geography* was first duplicated in manuscript with 27 maps, and then it circulated in printed form from 1475



without maps and from 1477 with them.

Today the History of cartography considers Ptolemy among the most incorrect of all ancient authors. And yet, modern historians of the Roman Empire, classicists, and archaeologists follow Ptolemy's distorted maps and their impossible routes without regard to their story and without even considering that they belong to different historical strata.

Having on distorted premises proposed that Colchis (West Georgia), Iberia of the Caucasus (East Georgia), Albania of the Caucasus (Alvania, Daghestan), Kapadokya, Trabzon, Armenia the Greater, Media, Assyria, actually were where they stand on Ptolemy's 3rd Map of Asia in the second century of the Christian, they drew distorted conclusions.

## Conclusion B

Thus Pliny was right when he said, "After we pass the mouth of the Cyrus [the Kur River], it begins to be called the 'Caspian Sea;' the Caspii being a people who dwell upon its shores. In this place it may be as well to correct an error into which many persons have fallen, and even those who lately took part with Corbulo in the Armenian war. The Gates of Iberia, which we have mentioned as the Caucasian, they have spoken of as being called the 'Caspian,' and the coloured plans which have been sent from those parts to Rome have that name written upon them" (Plinius *N. h.* 6,15).

*Direction, east.* "The Gates" at Dariali Gorge (Darialis Kheoba) actually were "The Caspian Gates, or, Daras" and they should have been placed some other way than the North. In fact, Procopius says that the castle of Daras stood watch over the Caspian Gates, that is to say, on the Caspian, at the mouth of the Kur River south of Baku.

*Direction, north.* "The Iberian Gates, or, the Caucasian" leading through Iberia of the Caucasus into the territory of Sarmatia (Russia) may actually be "The Georgian Gorge". In fact, the Turks call it Gürcü Boğazı. Since it was Ibero-Karvelian territory, the İspir Plateau and Fort commanded "The Iberian Gates, or, the Caucasian"; the Saspyritis being a people who dwelt upon the İspir Plateau at the westernmost extension, "at even", ἔσπερίοις (esperiois) in Greek. As they are the *Iberici vici* of Byzantine-Greek and Latin sources, "The Iberian Gates, or, the Caucasian" led through Mount Uzundere (Mescit Mountains) into the Armenian border, to the south (Theodosiopolis, currently Erzurum).

*Direction, north.* "The Albanian Gates" are modernly known as "The Abano Pass" in the central part of the Caucasus Mountains connecting the Ibero-Kartvelian provinces of K'axeti, and Tušeti on the northern side of the Caucasus where the Alazani, the twin rivers, originate. Greater Alazani and Lesser Alazani, or, Iori, the split in two, are tributaries of the Kur River before it becomes navigable.

İspir and Telavi operated the entrance and the exit gates. They are “The Iberian Gates, or, the Caucasian” or “The Georgian Gorge” (Gürcü Boğazı) on the one hand and “The Albanian Gates” or “The Abano Pass” on the other. The far end of “The Georgian Gorge” is located at latitude 40° North on Delisle’s map of 1722. The Georgian Gorge runs along the isolated Mount Uzun-dere (*Kenzoreti*) on the plateau of the Mescit Mountains (currently Mescit Dağları), or, as the ancients call them, the Meschic, or Moschic Mountains.

Then, according to my hypothesis, there should have been, instead of latitude 45° North on Ptolemy’s 3rd Map of Asia, latitude 40° North as the correct line of latitude. A new province of the Roman Empire since A.D. 114, Media (*MEDIÆ PARS*) is *terminus intermedius per quem ambulatur* (intervening path) in this way, the *inter-vallum*. By the public law of connecting parts to parts into a whole, this *terminus* runs between a new province of the Roman Empire since A.D. 117, Armenia (*ARMENIA MAIOR*), and three newly federated Kingdoms of Caucasia since A.D. 117, *COLCHIS*, (West Georgia), *IBERÍA* (East Georgia) and *ALBÁNIA* (Alvânia, Daghestan).

Ptolemy’s west-to-east distortion sharply begins here on the map of the Caucasus in the series.

In any case, given the immense difference in geography and political landscape in comparison to now, historians of Armenia’s past and archaeologists would most likely not have based its districts on modern province borders, in what is now northeast Turkey.

Appendix



Figure 1. Ptolemy's 1st European Map, ms. Britain and Ireland (*ALBION INSULA BRITANICA. IBERINIA INSULA*). Nicolaus Germanus' edition 1466. Warszawa, Biblioteka Narodowa. By Permission of the Library.



Figure 2. Ptolemy's 11th European Map in Latin, ms. The protruding Reign of Scotland, The German Ocean, The Peninsula of modern Jutland and Schleswig, Great Germany, Norway, Eastern Götaland now Sweden, Lapland, The Iced Sea. Nicolaus Germanus' edition 1466. Warszawa, Biblioteka Narodowa. By Permission of the Library.



Figure 3. Ptolemy's 6th European Map, ms. Italy and Corsica. Nicolaus Germanus' edition 1466. Warszawie, Biblioteka Narodowa. By Permission of the Library.



Figure 4. Ptolemy's 3rd Asian Map, ms. The Caucasus: Colchis (Western Georgia), Ibería of the Caucasus (Kartli, Eastern Georgia), Albània of the Caucasus, or, Alvània (Daghestan), Armenia Maior (Greater or Upper Armenia). Nicolaus Germanus' edition 1466. Warszawie, Biblioteka Narodowa. By Permission of the Library.





Figure 5. Ptolemy's World Map, ms. *Totius Orbis Habitabilis Brevis Descriptio*. Nicolaus Germanus' edition 1466. Warszawa, Biblioteka Narodowa. By Permission of the Library.



Figure 6. Ptolemy's 3rd Asian Map, ms. Nicolaus Germanus, 1466. Detail. The Mescit Mountains (*mosch[iv]s montes - moschivis mon[te]s*). The Apsarus River (*apsor[orum] f.*), wrong Kapadokya (*Capadotie pars*), Trabzon (*trapesoz*). Detail.

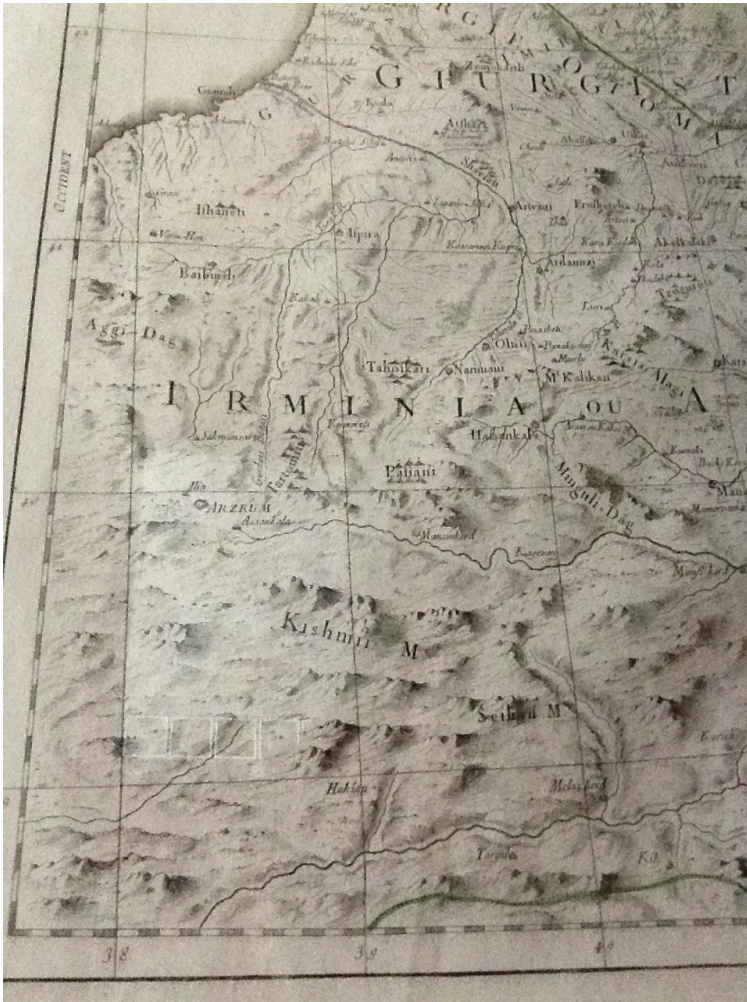


Figure 7. Vardzahan (*Variu-Han*; mod. Uğrak, Bayburt İli), Bayburt (*Baiburdi*), The Georgian Gorge (*Gurdzis Bogasi*, Gürcü Boğazı), Tortum River Valley (*Tartomisi*), Uzundere (*Kensoretî*). *GIURGISTAN* ou *GEORGIE* (historical Georgia: Kartli, East Georgia), currently Turkey. Erzurum (*Arzrum*, anc. Theodosiopolis), *IRMINIA* ou *ARMENIE* (historical Armenia), Aras (*Araxi* ou *Kaksi R.*), Malazgirt (*Manzikerd*); currently Turkey. Detail. Guillaume Delisle, *L'Arménie, la Géorgie, et le Daghistan*, 1722, Paris. Private Collection.



Figure 8. The province of Kartveli (*CARDUEL*) from Tbilisi (*Tiblis*) and Trialeti (*Trialeti*) to the rivers Ch'orokhi (*Turak R.*) and Kur (*Kor ou Mekvari R.*), historical Georgia, Kartli (East Georgia). Detail. Guillaume Delisle, *L'Arménie, la Géorgie, et le Daghistan* (1722, Paris). Private Collection.

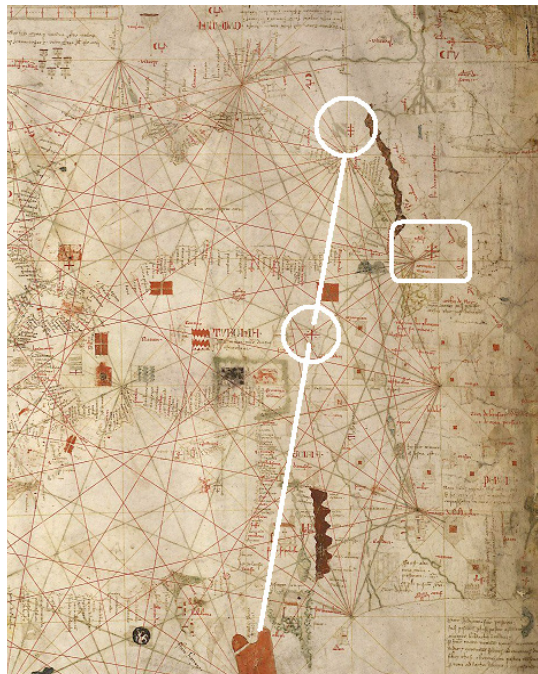


Figure 9. The national flag of All-Georgia (the United Kingdom of the Georgians) on the earliest extant portolan charts that Angelino Dulcert made in Mallorca in 1339 (Paris, BnF). Detail. Georgian flags mark Colchian Sebastopolis (*Savastopoli*) at the mouth of the Phasis (currently Rioni, Georgia); Tbilisi (*Tifilis*); Sivas (*Savasto*). G. flags are displayed in triplication. By permission of BnF.





Figure 10. The Georgian Flag of United Georgia triplified. Detail (the underline is mine). Portolan Chart by A. Dulcert, (1339 Paris, BnF). By permission of BnF.



Figure 11. Britain. Detail. Portolan Chart by A. Dulcert, 1339 Paris, BnF. By permission of BnF.



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## On the *Kabīsa* of the Saffarid Amīr Khalaf ibn Aḥmad

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**Abstract** The Persian *risāla* titled *Nawrūznāma* is a classical work of *adab*, featuring an account on the history of Iranian calendar and materials (notices, anecdotes etc.) about courtly and popular customs linked with the Iranian New Year Day. Here we will discuss an isolated notice about an intervention on the solar calendar of the Iranian tradition performed by Khalaf ibn Aḥmad, *amīr* of Sīstān. The inaccuracy of the *Nawrūznāma* on historical and astronomical matters does not reduce the importance of this ancient source as a literary work, revealing of its own time's mindset. In fact, the text gives us a plausible clue about the importance of the long reign of Khusraw I for the history of Persian chronology, thus supporting some of the hypotheses traced out by modern scholars. Moreover, it recounts of actual celebrations of the beginning of Spring – to be called Nawrūz – at the time of Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn. The conclusion is that, although roughly, the *Nawrūznāma* not only corroborates other extant sources on the existence of alternative – or parallel – ways of time-reckoning in the Iranian world, but also opens the way for a more precise reconstruction of the relation between a well-ordered social life and kingly governance, that, in Seljuk times, was going to be increasingly thought as essential.

**Keywords** Khalaf ibn Aḥmad. Nawrūz. Kabīsa. Nawrūznāma. Iranian calendar. Zoroastrian calendar.

In the first part of a *risāla* attributed to 'Umar b. Ibrāhīm al-Khayyām(ī) and titled *Nawrūznāma*<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter *NN*) after the main topic discussed in it, there is a brief report on the reform of the Iranian calendar ordered in 1075 CE by Jalāl al-Dawla Malikshāh al-Saljūqī (r. 465-485 H./1072-1092 CE). As it is well known, the necessary operations were carried out by a

<sup>1</sup> The *risāla* is preserved in two extant manuscripts, the Berlin Ms. (hereinafter B) Staatsbibliothek Cod. Or. 8° nr. 2450 (copied in 1365 CE according to Rosen 1930, 5, 16; but according to Mīrzā Muḥammad Khān Qazwīnī, it is “decisively not posterior to the 7th c. of Hījra [13th c. CE]”; see Mīnawī 1312/1933, 30; cf. Minorsky 1936, 1054), and the London Ms. (L in the follow) British Library Add. 23,568. The authorship of this *risāla* is attributed to al-Khayyām(ī) only in the incipit of the Berlin Ms. (the incipit is missing in the London Ms.). The title *Nawrūznāma* does not appear in the London Ms., where the work is generically titled *Risāla dar taḥqīq-i nawrūz* (Treaty on the Nawrūz). A short passage of *NN* is preserved at pp. 620-1 of a miscellaneous work, specially containing texts from the Zoroastrian tradition, written in 1718 CE by the Parsee savant Rustam Gushtāsp Ardashīr. The passage was published by Unvala (1900, 235); an abridged English translation of it is available in Unvala 1908, 202-4.

commission of astronomers, to which the presumed author of the *NN* took part too.<sup>2</sup> The astronomers fulfilled their work in 1079 CE. Since then, the Spring equinox day (15 March 1079 CE) has been considered as the first New Year Day (Nawrūz) of the new calendar. This new solar calendar has been called with several attributes (*jalālī*, *malikshāhī*, *sulṭānī*, *malikī*) after the name or in honour of the Seljuk ruler. From that time onwards, Nawrūz fell on a date to be yearly individuated on the basis of the astronomical observation of the exact moment in which the Sun apparently reaches the Spring equinoctial point. This system to determine the beginning of the year is officially in use nowadays in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

In the *NN* the brief report on Malikshāh's reform is preceded by a section,<sup>3</sup> featuring a long account on Nawrūz and its history since the institution until the final positioning on the Spring equinox. So, this account gives us a picture of the traditional history of the Iranian calendar, since its quite mythical beginnings until Seljuk times. In this para-historical reconstruction, the first historical figures we meet are Alexander the Great and two of the most outstanding Sasanian kings, Ardashīr I and Khusraw I. Then, one after the other, we are told about all the adjustments – may they be only attempted or successfully carried out – on the Iranian calendar the author of the *NN* knew.<sup>4</sup> Doing so, he gives us some generic notices on the well-known research activity in the field of astronomy at the court of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn, on the reform of the fiscal calendar (which was based on the Iranian calendar) denied by al-Mutawakkil, and on the famous reform of the fiscal calendar carried out under al-Mu'taḍid. Then, immediately before mentioning the momentous reform ordered by Malikshāh al-Saljūqī, he shortly mentions a reform carried out in southeastern Iranian regions by the Saffarid *amīr* Khalaf ibn Aḥmad. The passage is as follows:

After that [i.e. the calendrical reform ordered by al-Mu'taḍid], the *amīr* of Sīstān Khalaf ibn Aḥmad did another intercalation (*kabīsa*). Nowadays, starting from Nawrūz, there are sixteen days of difference from where it was at that time, but it is not clear to me how it happened.<sup>5</sup>

2 So according, for instance, to the *Kitāb al-tuḥfat al-shāhiyya fī al-hay'a* by Quṭb al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Shīrāzī (d. 1311), and other Arabic and Persian works. On this matter, see Taqizadeh 1939, 108-17.

3 B ff. 78a-105b; L ff. 86a-101b (892 H./1487 CE).

4 For example, the author of *NN* does not mention the shifting of the five epagomenal days (*panja*, *andargāh*, *khamṣa al-mustaraqa*) in the Iranian calendar, occurred around 1006 CE in some Iranian regions.

5 The English translation is mine. Probably, the ending part of this passage (“... but it is not clear to me how it happened”) is a gloss, because it appears in the London Ms. only: “Wa pas az ān {L: shanīd ki} Khalaf ibn-i Aḥmad-i amīr-i Sīstān kabīsa-yi dīgar bikard {B: ki}

Khalaf ibn Aḥmad ruled over the Sīstān in the last part of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century CE.<sup>6</sup> At that time, the Nawrūz of the traditional solar calendar ended up, after more than a millennium, to coincide with the first degrees of Aries, because of its slow backward motion. The exact moment of such a momentous coincidence<sup>7</sup> is the period 1004-1007 CE. However, in that period Khalaf – who was still alive – was not ruling any more over the Sistanic region, that had fallen under the rule of Maḥmud al-Ghaznawī in 1003 CE.

From a more general perspective, in those times in the oriental regions of the Islamic world a fundamental calendrical reassessment happened. Indeed, the five epagomenal days of the Iranian calendar, that since the Sasanian age (at least since the time of Khusraw I and afterwards) were placed between the eighth and the ninth month of the traditional calendar, were shifted to the end of the twelfth month. Then, Nawrūz moved back again, gradually coinciding four years by four years with the 30°, the 29°, the 28°... of Pisces.

Now, the *NN* is the sole available source on a Khalaf ibn Aḥmad's *kabīsa*,<sup>8</sup> and the nature of this presumed *kabīsa* is not clear. Indeed, which sort of calendrical intervention was the one attributed to Khalaf? And what does the author mean by speaking of "sixteen days of difference"? Moreover, it is noteworthy that the text does not speak of other famous reforms or readjustments of the Iranian calendar, such as that of the aforementioned shifting of the five epagomenal days. The paucity of information given by the *NN* can be summed in the following two data: the name of the responsible of the *kabīsa* (Khalaf ibn Aḥmad) and a number of days (16) between two ill-defined calendrical occurrences (Nawrūz and the moment of the year in which it occurred "at that time"). On this basis, one can speculate which pieces of information the author of the *NN* had: was he aware of the name of the ruler who ordered the *kabīsa*, and deduced the number of 16 days? Or, on the contrary, was he aware of that number of days of difference from the last *kabīsa* – that of Malikshāh? – and this number let him to find out Khalaf as the one who ordered the former *kabīsa*?

aknūn shānzdah rūz {B: -i} {L: az nawrūz} tafāwut az ānjā karda-st {L: ammā chigūnagī-yi ān ma-rā muqarrar na-gasht}"; see B f. 83a; L f. 89b (the words between curly brackets are only in the given manuscripts).

6 Khalaf ibn Aḥmad, *amīr* of Sīstān (r. 352-393 H./963-1002 CE; d. 399 H./1009 CE), has been the last reigning ruler of the Khalafid stock of the Saffarid family; on this figure see Bosworth 2011.

7 Celebrated by one of the most beautiful still existing monuments of that time, the so-called *Mīl-i Qābūs* in the modern Iranian city of Gonbad-e Kāvus. On this matter see Cristoforetti 2016.

8 It is noteworthy that the *NN* does not mention the shifting of the five epagomenal days from the end of the eighth month to the end of the year in the Iranian calendar happened when Khalaf was still alive.

More than ten years ago, I wrote some pages on the matter, taking into account that isolated notice and offering three possible explanations for the questions that it arose. The matter was not fully decided, and all the three hypotheses proposed there were equally acceptable.<sup>9</sup> Now, having completed an Italian translation of the *risāla* on the basis of both the existing manuscripts (Cristoforetti 2015), I have to ask the following methodological question: does this notice have more credibility in term of historicity just because, being isolated, it is not denied by any kind of sources? In other cases (see below), we can easily note that the author of the *NN* is not accurate. Consequently, the notice on Khalaf should not be taken neither as more nor as less accurate than others from the same source. Therefore, I think that is possible to give a convincing explanation of the quoted passage of the *NN* by following step by step the very account on the Iranian calendar given by the author of the *risāla*.

In order to adequately introduce the reader to the way the matter is exposed in the text, I will resume below some passages from the initial part of the *NN* regarding the history of the Iranian calendar, and containing relevant information on the calendrical matter in relation to the aforementioned question. *Ça va sans dire*, the omitted passages report mostly traditional information on the ancient kings and the other figures quoted in the text, and contain also materials – some of these of extreme interest for their links to Zoroastrian, Indian and Hellenistic traditions – on astronomical and astrological aspects of the Iranian calendar.

At the beginning of his report, the author of the *NN* explains the primordial, ideal connection existing between the first day of the year of the Iranian calendar (i.e. Nawrūz) and the Spring equinoctial point (1° of Aries). Then, he gives the measure of the solar tropical year as 365.25 days, and mentions the fact that the solar year of 365 days only (the solar 'vague' year) is the basis of the Iranian calendar, explaining the 1,461-yearly cycle depending on it. This is the main cycle of the Iranian calendar and the measure of time Nawrūz needs to regain its ideal position at the Spring equinox after moving backward throughout all the four seasons of the year (indeed, the aforementioned employ of the solar vague year in the calendar implied a slow backward motion of Nawrūz accounting for one day every

9 I exposed the matter at the 5th Conference of the Societas Iranologica Europæa (held in Ravenna, Oct. 6-11, 2003). The hypothetical explanations I offered in that occasion were all in relation to the reform carried out by the *Khwarazmshāh* Abū Sa'īd Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Irāq ibn Manšūr (for the uncertain dates of his reign, see Fedorov 2000, 73-4). As noticed by Bīrūnī in his *Kitāb al-āthār al-bāqīya* (see Abū Rayḥān Bīrūnī 1879, 229-30), in 1270 *Æra Alexandri* (958-959 CE) that reform fixed the New Year Day of the local solar calendar at the beginning of the Syriac month *Nisān* in coincidence with the 19° of Aries. On the whole matter, see Cristoforetti 2006.

four years with respect to a fixed seasonal point).<sup>10</sup> This great calendrical cycle is called “the cycle of the calendar of Gayūmarth” by the author of the *NN*;<sup>11</sup> and this is the first clear indication of the way the author sees the whole matter: the right seasonal position of Nawrūz is at the Spring equinox and the history of the Iranian calendar is marked by long cycles determined by its return to that seasonal point.

Then, after mentioning the deeds of the first kingly figures of Iranian tradition (Gayūmarth, Hūshang, Ṭahmūrath), he speaks of king Jamshīd and his long, fabulous reign. According to the text, it was on the 421th year of his reign that the first day of the Iranian year for the first time after 1,461 years regained its original position at the Spring equinox. Therefore, Jamshīd named that day Nawrūz, i.e. ‘New-Day’,<sup>12</sup> and instituted its yearly celebration at the beginning of the first month of the calendar in order to remember such an epochal coincidence.

After the fall of Jamshīd and the millennial reign of the usurper Bīwarāsb, then the time of the righteous Afrīdūn followed. In 164th year of Afrīdūn’s reign the second cycle of the Gayūmarth’s calendar came to an end. After “his epoch and those of the other kings”, it was the time of the king Gushtāsp, the last pseudo-historical figure mentioned in this reconstruction of the history of the Iranian calendar. His 30th year was the moment of the coming of Zoroaster, coinciding with the 940th year of the third cycle of the Gayūmarth’s calendar. This was a time of big changes in the calendar, because the king ordered to displace Nawrūz in coincidence with the first degree of Cancer (Summer solstice) for both religious and fiscal purposes, and introduced an intercalary mechanism (*kabīsa*) in the Iranian calendar.<sup>13</sup> The mechanism worked by the insertion of one month every 120 years (indeed,  $0.25 \text{ day} \times 120 \text{ years} = 30 \text{ days}$ ), in order to maintain Nawrūz in an acceptable proximity to the beginning of Summer (=  $1^\circ$  of Cancer). This practice was performed until the time of Alexander the Great. With the mention of Alexander the Great the ‘mythical’ part of this history of the Iranian calendar comes to an end.<sup>14</sup>

10 I recently discussed this passage; see Cristoforetti 2014, 146-7 and note 5.

11 “Dawr-i ta’rīkh-i Gayūmarth”; see B f. 82a l. 3; L f. 88b l. 19.

12 Looking at this story, it could be fathomed that “naw-rūz” is an elliptic form of a more precise expression such as “the day of the new cycle”, see B: f. 81a-b; L: L f. 88b.

13 “Gushtāsp ordered to do a *kabīsa* [...] because the [ $1^\circ$  of] Cancer is the Ascendant of the World, and for landowners and farmers it is easier to pay taxes in that moment” (B f. 82b ll. 4-5; L f. 89a ll. 13-14). On the Ascendant of the World in Zoroastrian tradition, see Raffaelli 2001. The equity of the fiscal levy is a leitmotiv in the sources on the calendrical reforms of the Abbasid period. On this matter, see Borroni 2015, 156-62.

14 The text seems to suggest that during the Zoroastrian age, since the king Gushtāsp and afterwards, nothing changed in the calendar.



In the following part of his account, the author of the *NN* calls *kabīsa* every kind of intervention on the calendar,<sup>15</sup> and this is the second clear indication of the way the author understands the whole matter: when a king operated on the calendar, he did a *kabīsa*, i.e. he brought the wandering Nawrūz of the Iranian calendar back to its 'rightful' seasonal position. It is to note that this second part of the account lacks any kind of reference to the great cycles of Gayūmarth's calendar, not to say any reference to other calendrical systems.

As usual in the Iranian tradition, the Arsacid period is underrepresented in the text, and the passage on Alexander is followed by the account on two historical figures pertaining to Sasanian times, Ardashīr I (r. 224-241 CE) and Khusraw I (r. 531-579 CE). The first of the Sasanians, Ardashīr, did the *kabīsa*, and the custom was regularly performed until the reign of Khusraw I ('Nūshīn Ruwān the Righteous'). The last – surprisingly enough – did not put into effect the requested *kabīsa*, and ordered to allow Nawrūz to move backward until it would reach the Spring equinox, i.e. the position it occupied at the time of the ancient kings Gayūmarth and Jamshīd.

After this point the author briefly relates on what happened during the Islamic age. The aforementioned passage on the *kabīsa* of Khalaf ibn Aḥmad is to be found in this part of the *NN*. So, I offer here an English translation of the text regarding the Sasanian age afterwards:<sup>16</sup>

The time of Ardashīr, the son of Pābag, arrived. He did the *kabīsa* with a great festival, and regulated the matter putting it in writing, and celebrated that day. The custom continued until the time of Nūshīn Ruwān the Righteous. When the palace (*īwān*) of Ctesiphon was finished, he did Nawrūz and followed the habit of celebrating it as it was customary. But he did not the *kabīsa* and said: "Let the norm be like this up until the end of the cycle, when the Sun will return to the beginning of Farwardīn [i.e. Aries].<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the remote scope of the original Nawrūz was certainly not that the Sun should enter in the first degree of Cancer [at Farwardīn], so to abolish what Gayūmarth and Jamshīd indicated!"

15 On the meaning of the term *kabīsa*, see Cristoforetti 2009.

16 B f. 82b l. 15-f. 83a l. 13; L f. 89b ll. 3-16. Omitted passages are indicated by [...]; the words between square brackets are mine.

17 As in other passages of the text, Farwardīn is here synonymous with Aries. The author of the *NN* uses the word 'Farwardīn' with two different meanings; in some cases, he uses it in order to indicate the historical Farwardīn (i.e. the first month of the solar vague Iranian calendar, moving backward throughout the seasons), and in some other cases he uses it *sic et simpliciter* as synonymous with Aries. This last meaning can be explained by making reference to the idea of a rightful calendar of the origins (the same one employed at the time of the author of the *NN*), in which the month of *Farwardīn* coincided with Aries (in a passage, he clearly shows this way of thinking, speaking of a Farwardīn as "Sun's own", see B: f. 81a ll. 12-13, L: f. 88a ll. 17-18).

He said so, and did not the *kabīsa*.<sup>18</sup>

The time of caliph Ma'mūn arrived. He ordered to do astronomical observations and commanded to celebrate Nawrūz yearly, when the Sun is coming in Aries. He prepared the astronomical tables which are named after him and on which basis the calendar is established up till now.<sup>19</sup>

The time of Mutawakkil 'alā-Allāh arrived. Mutawakkil had a minister named Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik, who told him that the fiscal levy occurred in a moment far from the harvest, causing the people to suffer, and the kings of Persia were accustomed to do a *kabīsa*, so that the year was [periodically] put back in order and paying taxes was easier for the people; indeed, [by doing so, at Nawrūz] they would have crops in abundance. Mutawakkil neither agreed nor changed his mind afterwards.

The time of Mu'taḍid arrived, and his minister Abū al-Qāsim 'Ubaydallāh ibn Sulaymān ibn Wahb<sup>20</sup> posed him again the question of the *kabīsa*. He agreed and ordered to do a *kabīsa*, bringing the Sun back from Cancer to Farwardīn.<sup>21</sup> The people came to be well again, and the custom kept.

After that, the *amīr* of Sīstān Khalaf ibn Aḥmad did another *kabīsa*. Nowadays, starting from Nawrūz, there are sixteen days of difference from where it was at that time, but it is not clear to me how it happened.

They informed the prosperous sultan Mu'izz al-Dīn Malikshāh – *may God render bright his evidence* – on the matter. He ordered to do a *kabīsa*

18 This passage in Berlin Ms. is partially missing a line (this gap was probably due to close presence of two identical series of words in the original, i.e. "ki āftab bi-awwal..."); the text is as follows: "wa guft īn ā'in {B: bi-jā mānad} {L: bi-jāy mānid} tā {B: bi-} sar-i dawr {L: ki āftab bi-awwal-i farwardīn āyad chi maqṣūd-i andarnahād-i nawrūz-i aṣlī na īn būda ast} ki āftāb bi-awwal-i saraṭān āyad tā ān ishārat {B: -i} {L: ki} Gayūmarth u Jamshīd {L: kardand az meanie} bar khīzad; īn {L: bi-} guft u {L: bīsh} kabīsa nakard"; see B f. 82b ll. 13-15; L f. 89a l. 21-89b ll. 1-3 (the words between curly brackets are those of the indicated manuscripts).

19 No doubt, it is a reference to *The Ma'munic Astronomical Table (al-Zīj al-ma'mūnī li-'l-mumtaḥin)*, a work dedicated to caliph al-Ma'mūn, presenting the results of the astronomical observations carried out in Baghdād during the first years of the ninth century CE by a commission directed by the astronomer Yaḥyā ibn Abī Maṣṣūr (d. 830 CE ca.). Only some fragments of this work are still existent, and they are preserved in the first ff. of the *Codex Arabe 927* of Escorial; see Kennedy 1956, 10.

20 'Ubaydallāh ibn Sulaymān ibn Wahb (d. Rabī II 288 H./April 901 CE) has been *wazīr* under caliph al-Mu'tamid and remained in charge when al-Mu'taḍid became caliph; see Sourdel 1959, 329.

21 As in other passages of the text, here too Farwardīn is synonymous with Aries.

and to put the calendar back in order, to get the most learned men of his time to come from Khurāsān, to construct any sort of instruments needed for the astronomical observation, as mural quadrants, armillary spheres and suchlike, and to bring Nawrūz back to Farwardīn. However, destiny did not allow the king the time he needed, and the *kabīsa* remained unfinished.<sup>22</sup>

In this second part of the account on the calendar, one can easily see how the attention of the author swings between an astronomical approach to the matter (al-Ma'mūn, Malikshāh) and a fiscal one (al-Mutawakkil, al-Mu'taḍid). Both themes have been already exposed during the retelling of the history of the Iranian calendar offered by the author in the first section of the *NN*. Being presented from the beginning of the text onwards, the 'rightful' Nawrūz as the 1° of Aries (Spring equinox) is the main theme, shaping the decrees of the first ancient kings, and, later, the project of Khusraw I. The theme of a fair fiscal levy occurring at the beginning of the month of Cancer (Summer solstice) appears with the king Gushtāsp and his *kabīsa*. At any rate, the two positions are mutually incompatible, and there is some confusion in the way the various calendrical operations are exposed and on what was their scope.

Coming back to the main question posed by Khalaf's *kabīsa*, in order to try and answer the questions posed above (why there is an isolated mention of Khalaf's *kabīsa* in the sources? Which sort of calendrical intervention was that performed by Khalaf? And what does the author mean by speaking of "sixteen days of difference"?), I think that one should pay special attention to the passages in which the author speaks of Khusraw I and al-Mu'taḍid, in both cases mentioning the zodiacal month of Cancer.

According to the author of the *NN*, Khusraw I did not agree to do a *kabīsa* - which at that time was necessary as the text clearly suggests. So doing, the king abolished the intercalary custom introduced by Gushtāsp,<sup>23</sup>

**22** The questions posed by this statement have been discussed by a number of scholars, such as, for example, Mīnawī (1933, 24) and Rosenfeld (2002, 898). In my opinion, it is probably understandable as a cautious echo of the harsh reaction against the partisans of the late Nizām al-Mulk (d. Ramaḍān 485 H./Oct. 1092 CE), the powerful minister of Malikshāh, arranged by the widow of the Seljuk ruler Turkān Khātūn and her minister Tāj al-Mulk immediately after his death. One can speculate, indeed, that in the period of disorders immediately after the unexpected death of Malikshāh, preceded by about a month by his minister's, the new calendar was no more officially used. At any rate, the famous astronomical observatory built at this purpose in Iṣfahān was completely abandoned and destroyed. On the importance of this observatory for solar observation, see Dallal 2002, 145.

**23** In a very broad sense, this statement of the text can be considered historically correct. Indeed, from that time afterwards the Iranian calendar was no more object of structural modifications at least until 1006-1007 CE, when the five epagomenal days were displaced from the place they occupied in the time of Khusraw I between the 8th and the 9th month

who did so in order to maintain Nawrūz in an acceptable correspondence with the beginning of Cancer for reasons of fiscal justice. The refusal by Khusraw I of the needed *kaḇīsa* was dictated by his desire to restore the custom of the ancient kings. Indeed, by avoiding to intercalate a month every 120 years (or “to do *kaḇīsa*”) in order to maintain the first month of the calendar in coincidence with the zodiacal month of Cancer, Nawrūz would start again to slowly move back throughout the seasons, returning to the 1° of Aries, where it was in the ancient times.

In the following part of the text – where al-Ma'mūn and al-Mutawakkil are mentioned – the author did not speak openly of *kaḇīsa*, until the reign of al-Mu'taḍid. He “did the *kaḇīsa*”, and brought back Nawrūz “from Cancer to Farwardīn (= Aries), and it went well for the people”; but this statement openly contradicts what the author had previously said regarding king Gushtāsp about the problem of a fair fiscal levy at the beginning of Summer. Moreover, the notice is historically inaccurate. Indeed, contrary to the statement of the author of the *NN*, the scope of the reform carried out by al-Mu'taḍid had not been the positioning of Nawrūz at the beginning of Spring – even though Nawrūz was actually fixed. In 895 CE, indeed, Nawrūz – which occurred on 12 April – was displaced into a fix date of the Syriac calendar, i.e. 11 Ḥazīrān (11 June).<sup>24</sup> At that time, this last date coincided with 1 Khurdād, the third month of the Iranian calendar. Consequently, from the Iranian calendrical perspective, Nawrūz has been simply *posticipated* of two months (from 1 Farwardīn to 1 Khurdād). Then, the author of the *NN* seems not to be fully acquainted with the technical reasoning of the reform of al-Mu'taḍid, since he just knows that at that time a reform (*kaḇīsa*) of the Iranian calendar was carried out by the Abbasid caliph. At any rate, he was acquainted with the advantage the people obtained by means of it! Does this all mean that he was likewise unaware of the year in which the reform occurred? It is a fact that at the beginning of Khusraw I's reign Nawrūz occurred around the 19° of Cancer, and at the beginning of al-Mu'taḍid's reign it occurred around the 28° of Aries. Moreover, the author of the *NN* notices very precisely the names of both the ministers involved in the matter. However, the mention in both cases of the zodiacal month of Cancer and *kaḇīsa* can unveil the way of thinking of the author. Indeed, the time elapsed between the beginning of the reigns of these rulers is 360 years, equivalent to three intercalary turns ( $120 \times 3 = 360$ ), and this number of years is linked to the month distance between Cancer and Aries, or, in other words, to the number of months

of the calendar (this is the *communis opinio* attested by the Arabic astronomical tradition) to the end of the 12th month.

<sup>24</sup> The aforementioned contradictory statement by the author about the well-being of the people would have found a better context here, as commentary to al-Mu'taḍid's intervention on the calendar.

(3) that would be affected by how many *kabīsas* (3) had been rendered necessary by the elapsing of 360 years.<sup>25</sup>

Even if the author does not give any dating in his account, this fact does not necessary mean that he was completely unaware of the informal chronology known at his time, such as that about the reigns of the last Sasanians kings and the Abbasid caliphs, i.e. of “the kings of Persia”, as they are collectively presented in the text.<sup>26</sup>

Now, let us pass to the case of the reform of al-Mu‘taḍid and the role that its exact dating may or may not have played in these matters. The date of the reform is 282 H./895 CE.<sup>27</sup> If the author interpreted the reform of al-Mu‘taḍid as a *kabīsa* displacing Nawrūz from Cancer to Aries, he necessarily considered it a triple *kabīsa*, i.e. a *kabīsa* valid for three intercalary turns, amounting to 360 years. So then – our author may have thought – by subtracting this number of years from the year in which the reform was carried out, one can find the year of the precedent *kabīsa*, that is the fifth year of the reign of Khusraw I.<sup>28</sup> On this point, it is noteworthy that our text presents the Nawrūz celebrations and the skip of a *kabīsa* by Khusraw I as subsequent to the end of the building of Ctesiphon *īwān*, that is some time after the beginning of his reign. Otherwise, starting from the year of al-Mu‘taḍid’s enthronement (Rajab 279 H./ Oct. 892 CE), one finds the second year of the reign of Khusraw I as moment of the precedent *kabīsa*.

25 For ease of reading, in what follows the given calculations refer exclusively to the Christian era, because the *NN* does not give explicit chronological references. At any rate, the reform of al-Mu‘taḍid was carried out in the year 264 of the era of Yazdgard III, and the first Nawrūz of the new calendar of Malikshāh has been celebrated in coincidence with 19 Farwardīn of the year 448 of the era of Yazdegard III.

26 See B f. 83a ll. 15-16; L f. 89b ll. 17-18.

27 Bīrūnī, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, 37-9; al-‘Askarī, *Kitāb al-awa’il*, 220. A complete listing of Arabic sources on the matter is available in Borroni 2015, 183-6.

28 In the Persian work titled *Gayhān-shinākht*, based on the *Tatimmat shiwān al-ḥikma* by ‘Ayn al-Zamān Abū ‘Alī Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-Qaṭṭān al-Marwazī (d. 548 H./1153-1154 CE), and composed in the first part of twelfth century CE, it is said that the last *kabīsa* had been carried out at the time of Khusraw I, when the Sun entered in the 1° of Aries in the month of Ābān; see *Gayhān-shinākht*, 240-1. According to the tradition reported by Fakhr al-Dīn Injū in his *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* (*apud* Taqīzada 1937-1938, 27 note 63), the last *kabīsa* had been carried out by the Persians during the reign of Khusraw I. This tradition is coherent with the statement by ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Thābitī al-Kharaqī, author of the *Muntahā al-idrāk fī taqāsīm al-aflāk* (Ms. Or. 110 of the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, f. 93b l. 13), who speaks of a *kabīsa* in the 24th year of the reign of Yazdgard III, since 120 years before that date was the year 535 CE, the 5th of the reign of Khusraw I. In a Persian astronomical work titled *Sharḥ-i sī faṣl* (Commentary to the Thirty Chapters), that is probably an anonymous commentary to *Sī faṣl dar ma’rifat-i taqwīm* by Khwāja Nasīr al-Dīn-i Ṭūsī composed in 824 H./1421 CE, it is said: “until the turn of kingship came to Anūshirwān [i.e. Khusraw I]. He intercalated the month of Ābān and posed the five epagomenal days at the end of Ābān”; see the quotation from Ms. Add. 7700 of the British Museum Library in London, in Taqīzadeh 2014, 268.

If I am correct in believing that this had been the way of thinking of the author of the *NN*, then it becomes possible to explain the passage concerning the last *kabīsa* carried out before the one ordered by Malikshāh. In fact, if the author of the *NN* interpreted the nature of the reform of al-Mu'taḍid as a simple dislocation of Nawrūz on the Spring equinox on the basis of a rough calculation of the intercalary turns elapsed after Khusrau I, it would make sense to presume that he thought in a similar fashion that the next *kabīsa* happened 120 years (i.e. one intercalary turn) either after the first year of al-Mu'taḍid's reign or after the year of his reform. In the first case we have 1012 CE, in the second 1015 CE. On the basis of similar dates, a simple calculation (maybe too simple, but in accordance with the general attitude of the text) of the years elapsed between 1012/1015 and 1076/1079<sup>29</sup> gives 64, and dividing it by 4 in order to reckon the number of days Nawrūz moved back through the seasons, one gets 16, that is the number of days indicated by the author of the *NN*.

At this point, however, a problem with the chronology presumably came out. On one hand, that presumed 'traditional' *kabīsa* (1012 or 1015 CE) occurred later than the death of the Saffarid *amīr* Khalaf, who, on the other hand, was a famous maecenas and a pious learned man, whose biographic data were unlikely to be unknown. And this could very well explain the uncertainty expressed by the copist of the London manuscript: "but it is not clear to me how it happened".<sup>30</sup>

The appearance of a famous figure – such as Khalaf was – in connection to a *kabīsa* derived from some sort of calculation can not be considered surprising. As H. Taqizadeh said, "this genre of deductions based on pure calculation – not so infrequent in the works of some ancient authors of the Islamic age – is not to be considered as a historical truth or, conversely, as a mere legend" (Taqizadeh 1937-1938, 37 note 68; transl. mine). Even if the possibility that, during the reign of the Saffarid *amīr* Khalaf, in the Sīstānīc

29 According to the surviving fragment of the astronomical tables (*Kitāb al-zīj al-malikshāhī*) by al-Khayyām(i) (see 'Omar Chajjām 1961-1962, 177-9 for the facsimile of the Ms. 5968 ff. 224a-225a of the Bibliothèque National in Paris, and 225-35 for a Russian translation of the fragment) and other sources (see Abdollahy 1990, 670) Friday 9 Ramaḍān 471 H./15 March 1079 CE (= 19 Farwardīn 448 Yazdegerdī) is the official starting date of the new reformed calendar. It is plausible that the enterprises for the reform of the calendar started yet in 1075 CE (445 Yazdegerdī), but the sources disagree both on the date of the issue of the sultanial decree appointing a special commission of astronomers and on the names of the involved scholars. At any rate, in 1076 CE the Nawrūz was no more celebrated at the court on 26 February, but on 15 March, in the vernal equinox day; see Taqizadeh 1939, 108-17.

30 If the quoted words are not a gloss, contrary to what was suggested above, the historical proximity of Khalaf's reign to the moment in which the author of the *NN* puts the composition of the text (written – as it seems to be understood – little time after the end of Malikshāh's reign) could also explain this apparent uncertainty; however, this would leave unexplained the lack of those same words in the Berlin manuscript.

region some sort of intervention on the fiscal calendar (that was based on the solar traditional calendar) could have been carried out is not to be excluded,<sup>31</sup> the main focus of the author's attention may not be the *amīr* himself. It is possible that his name came out for mere reasons of prestige<sup>32</sup> in connection with a rough calculation of the intercalary turns the author supposed had elapsed.<sup>33</sup> In the *NN*, this rough – and implicit – calculation is clearly connected to a political attempt to praise the righteous and just sovereign, which is the main purpose of this text. In fact, all mentioned *kabīsas* are connected to great kings of the past, who operated thusly in order to guarantee equity and justice for the people. In such model figures one can easily recognize the one of the Saljuk ruler Malikshāh, who must have played an important part in the planning of the text. Since he speaks of the “unfinished” *kabīsa* of Malikshāh (see above), the composition of this work should be dated to the years immediately following the death of Malikshāh, and it may be the work of an exponent of the Nizāmiyya, the partisans and clientes of the descendants of the Seljuk vizier Nizām al-Mulk, who died just a month before his master.<sup>34</sup>

31 For an account about the interventions carried out in the neighbouring Buwayhid territories at the half of the tenth century CE by Rukn al-Dawla and, later (after 373 H., 984 CE), by Ismā'il ibn 'Abbād, *wazīr* of Fakhr al-Dawla, see *Ta'rikh-i Qumm*, 144-5. The famous learned man Ismā'il ibn 'Abbād al-Tālaqānī was friend and personal assistant of the Buwayhid ruler of Iṣfahān and Rayy Mu'ayyid al-Dawla – the brother of Fakhr al-Dawla and 'Aḍud al-Dawla –, and became his *wazīr* only after the death of his father, Rukn al-Dawla, in 366 H. (976 CE). Then, after the death of 'Aḍud al-Dawla (372 H., 983 CE) and Mu'ayyid al-Dawla (373 H., 984 CE), he became *wazīr* of Fakhr al-Dawla; his interventions on the fiscal calendar date to this period.

32 On the great role played by Khalaf in the literary field of his time, Clifford E. Bosworth says that he “achieved an international reputation within the Islamic world as a maecenas and as an encourager of learning and literature” (Bosworth 2010) and that “scholars and literary men flocked to his court, including the famed poet and secretary Abu'l-Faḥ Bostī, and the celebrated poet and author of maqāmāt, Badi' al-Zamān Hamadāni, who named his Ḳalafiyya maqāma (Hamadāni, p. 210) after the Amir. Above all, Ḳalaf achieved fame far beyond Sistān for commissioning an immense, hundred-volume Koran commentary; this non-extant work is said to have incorporated all earlier variants and commentaries. There was apparently a copy in the Ṣābuniya madrasa in Nišāpur in 'Otbī's time, and it is said to have been extant until the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century, its size doubtless militating against its being copied” (Bosworth 2011, 362).

33 If the author of the *NN* was not a consumed astronomer – as it is evident in numerous passages of the *NN* characterized by a disconcerting approximation or veritable inaccuracies – he was surely able to perform some simple arithmetical calculations.

34 During 1092-1093 CE the military action in favour of the Nizāmiyya was guided by the *ghulām* Ergush, who, in 1093, won the army of Turkān Khātūn at Iṣfahān and deposed the five-year-old Maḥmūd, one of the sons of Malikshāh and Turkān Khātūn. In 1094, the eldest of Malikshāh's sons, Barkiyāruq (his mother was Zubaydā Khātūn), who was fifteen-year-old at that time, takes control of the situation, despite some of his relatives put up a serious resistance to him. For a brief description of the political situation during the last years of Malikshāh's reign and immediately after it, see Lambton 1988, 43-5.

So, the prevailing of a political purpose over historical and astronomical accuracy may explain this unique mention of Khalaf's *kaḥīsa* in known sources: no other records on the matter being available in known Islamic sources. At this regard, any attempt to infer which sort of calendrical intervention was that performed by Khalaf according to the *NN* may be pointless. When it comes to Khalaf's reform, further records to check what the author of the *NN* says about it are nowhere to be found. In the cases of Khusraw I, al-Ma'mūn, and al-Mu'taḍid we are able to compare what the author says with other sources, that, however, relate divergent information. As a matter of fact, the author is equally inaccurate when he speaks about Khalaf's deeds and when he speaks about Khusraw I, al-Ma'mūn, and al-Mu'taḍid. The only difference between those cases is that about Khalaf's *kaḥīsa* we have no source to confront it with, while about Khusraw I, al-Ma'mūn, and al-Mu'taḍid, we have sources, and these sources talk about a different state of things, relating facts at odds with the version related by the author of the *NN*.

At any rate, the inaccuracy of the *NN* on historical and astronomical matters does not reduce the importance of this ancient source as a literary work, revealing of its own time's mindset. In fact, the text gives us a plausible clue about the importance of the long reign of Khusraw I for the history of Persian chronology, thus supporting some of the hypotheses traced out by modern scholars.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, it recounts of actual celebrations of the beginning of Spring – to be called Nawrūz – at the time of Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn. This passage becomes an explicit source toward explaining by means of a royal order (in the case issued by al-Ma'mūn) the otherwise well-known and richly testified presence of Springtime celebrations of Nawrūz that were distinct from those of the wandering Nawrūz of the traditional 1 Farwardīn. The presence of such distinct celebrations is testified by numerous other sources,<sup>36</sup> among which the most interesting and ancient is the one by the Shi'ite traditionist Ibn Bābawayhi.<sup>37</sup> Another

35 See, for instance, Panaino 1996 and 2014.

36 On the matter see Cristoforetti 2000, 124-37.

37 This author (d. 381 H./991 CE) relates a very interesting tradition attributed to 'Alī al-Riḍā, when he was at the court of al-Ma'mūn. This tradition regards the legendary people called Aṣḥāb al-Rass and their twelve villages, whose names were as follows: Ābān, Ādhar, Day, Bahman, Isfandār[maḥ], Farwardīn, Urdibihisht, [Kh]jurdād, Murdād, Tīr, Mihr, Shahriwar. The most important village – “in which their king T.rkūz dwelt” – was Isfandār[maḥ]. In the name of this fabulous king one can easily recognize a defective form Nugrūz (< Middle-Persian Nōg-rōč), *i.e.* Nawrūz. The link between the names of the villages and the months of the Iranian calendar is openly affirmed by the tradition itself. Hereafter, it is said that every year each village did a festival in one of the twelve month, and “the Persian month are named after these villages, because they customary said each other: ‘This is the festival of this or that month’” (*apud* Scarcia Amoretti, 28-29; translation and reconstruction of the Persian forms of the names of the months are mine).



later and apodictic source can be found in the work of the astronomer Muḥammad ibn Ayyūb al-Ḥāsib al-Ṭabarī.<sup>38</sup> On the matter, one should not forget that some fifty years after the reign of al-Ma'mūn the beginning of Spring fell approximately on 1 Isfandārmadh (the 12th month of the Iranian calendar) and that it was celebrated as a Spring festival. The conclusion is that, although roughly, the *NN* not only corroborates other extant sources on the existence of alternative - or parallel - ways of time-reckoning in the Iranian world, but also opens the way for a more precise reconstruction of the relation between a well-ordered social life and kingly governance, that, in Seljuk times, was going to be increasingly thought as essential.

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<sup>38</sup> In the first part of the thirteenth century CE, Muḥammad ibn Ayyūb al-Ḥāsib al-Ṭabarī composed a Persian set of astronomical tables titled (*al-*)*Zij al-mufrad* (Kennedy 1956, 134). There 1 Isfandārmadh is called *bahārjashn*, i.e. 'Spring festival'; see Ms. (Browne) O.1 (10) of the Cambridge University Library, f. 6b ll. 20-21. Such identification of 1 Isfandārmadh as the Spring day clearly suggests a connection between this day and the beginning of Spring not only from the astronomical point of view (the coincidence between the vernal equinox and 1 Isfandārmadh occurred in the second part of the ninth century CE), but also on the social level, being *bahārjashn* the festival celebrating *that* seasonal moment.

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## **Literary Mirrors and the Reconstruction of the Holy Places of Shiism in Nawabi Lucknow** A Few Topological Asides from Qatīl to Ghālib

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**Abstract** The article deals with a few literary responses, in Persian and Urdu, to the reconstruction of the sacred places of Shiite Islam in the North Indian centre of Lucknow. Focusing on some lines of poetry of representative authors of the period such as Ghālib and Qatīl, the paper hints at some possible and hitherto overlooked textual paths to look at the capital of the Shiite state of Awadh as a significant literary space-time to be located in a peculiar 'region' of that geography of the 'Ajam and the Indo-Persian. By adopting a loose topological approach, we show how an analysis of the poetical discourse on the city and the places of Shiite pilgrimages might help in understanding how the Nawabi architectural theatrics were received and what were the implications of the urban dissemination of Imambaras and other comparable structures.

**Keywords** Lucknow. Ghalib. Qatīl. Indo-Persian. Shi'a. Imambara.

It is no groundbreaking assumption to say that the North Indian centre of Lucknow – the subject of persistent narratives of decadence<sup>1</sup> – has been since the colonial times imagined as a city of memory and nostalgia, and orientalistically represented as India's last capital of 'Muslim splendor' (if not emblematically identified with the "last phase of an Oriental culture"<sup>2</sup>). The fall of the Shiite Nawabs that had ruled there since 1775, with the failure of the Mutiny of 1857 and the consequent definitive annexation of the territories of Awadh to the British possessions, leaves an indelible mark on the image of a centre that is still perceived in South Asia as the melancholy bastion of an otherwise vanished world (see, for instance, Graff et al. 1997, 14 and Llewellyn-Jones 1997). The prevailing idea of Lucknow as a literary site is, indeed, composed of the crystallisation of a series

1 We may think for example of the world of the courtesans described in one of the most famous novels in Urdu, *Umrā'o jān Adā* by Hādī Ruswā, published in 1905, the object of numerous reprints and also, in 1981, of a film (see in this regard Oldenburg 1997).

2 Here I take up the title of a famous work by Abdul Halim Sharar (1860-1929) dedicated to Lucknow, *Hindūstān mē mashriqī tamaddun kā akhīrī namūna*, initially published as a series of independent articles in the Lucknow review *Dilgudāz* beginning in 1913. The text has been translated into English (Sharar 1975).

of precise identifying aesthetic ideas relating to the eighty years during which the city held the role of political and cultural capital of a large part of the Gangetic area: the exhausted magnificence of the courtly life, the Shiite connotation of power and of public rituals, the real and the imagined connections with Iran, the refinement of a social *etichette* perceived as the epitome of the Indo-Islamic *adab*, the formation of a distinct school of Urdu poetry, the influx of Persianate literati from Delhi, etc.<sup>3</sup> Keeping in mind such well-known premises, in this paper I will briefly explore some possible and hitherto overlooked textual paths to look at the *construction* of Lucknow as a significant literary space-time – signifying much more than the above mentioned late romantic ‘Oriental’ decadence – to be located in a peculiar ‘region’ of that geography of the ‘*Ajam* and the Indo-Persian brilliantly explored, for instance, by Sunil Sharma and Mana Kia (Sharma 2012; Kia 2014). As a matter of fact, the capital of Awadh does appear – in a particularly visible manner from the urbanistic and monumental standpoint – as a city conceived in order to represent a series of values and relationships already crystallised at the moment when it was chosen as the centre of power. Its characteristic eighteenth/nineteenth century architectural scenography is the expression, among other things, of a programmatic attempt to emphasise a semantic bond with a certain idea – in stylistic dialogue with the rococò, the neo-classical and the neo-moresque – of Iran, Iraq and the Ottoman space, as exemplified, for instance, by the Rūmī Darwāza, a declared imitation of Istanbul’s Bâb-i Hümâyūn.<sup>4</sup> As Juan R. Cole has shown in a detailed study published almost thirty years ago (Cole 1988) this must of course be read on the background of a series of profound connections – identifiable first of all in the search for a cultural and political legitimisation – with the Shiite centres of the Iranian plateau and especially of Mesopotamia.<sup>5</sup>

Similar phenomena can also be observed on the level of textual reality: all the more so if we look at authoritative literary examples where the city in question seems to turn into a sort of Eastern reflection of the mausoleums of the Imams in Najaf and Karbalā and, at times, even of the

3 What came afterwards – and, especially, what came before – counts for much less. The city was a centre of significant importance well before the Nawabs (e.g., see Alam 1997, especially 17-22), although the increase in population in the last quarter of the eighteenth century – from approximately 5,000 to 30,000 inhabitants according to Llewellyn-Jones’s estimates (1985, 12-3) – is sufficient to suggest the extent of the change that followed its choice as capital by Āṣaf al-Dawla. On the history of Lucknow after 1856, see Oldenburg 1984.

4 Specific studies on this subject are those of Llewellyn-Jones 2006 and Tandan 2001. Regarding the general characteristics of the nawabi taste in the Indo-Islamic architectural system, the summary observations by Bianca Maria Alfieri (1994) can serve as an introduction.

5 With regard to the Awadh state’s place in the historical and cultural system of the Shiite transregional network, see also Scarcia Amoretti 1994.

*ḥaramayn* of Mecca and Medina. Two verses taken from an Urdu *ghazal* probably composed in Lucknow in 1827<sup>6</sup> by the man who was also India's last great Persian poet, Mīrzā Ghālib (1797-1869), can serve to introduce the principal aspects of the problem we are dealing with here:

*lakhna'ū āne kā bā'is nahiñ khultā ya'nī*  
*hawas-i sayr u tamāshā so wuh kam hai ham ko*

*maqṭa'-i silsila-i shawq nahiñ hai yih shahr*  
*'azm-i sayr-i najaf u ṭawf-i ḥaram hai ham ko*  
 (Ghālib 1982, no. 119, vv. 9-10)

It is not clear what urges us to come to Lucknow:  
 weak, in us, is the desire for pleasant vistas.

The city is not the final verse of a long ardent wandering:  
 we wish to see Najaf, and walk around the Ka'ba.

What is the relationship between Lucknow, Najaf and Mecca on which Ghālib is basing his topological play of mirrors here? A particularly useful clue can be found in an observation by Veena Oldenburg, who affirms in fact that, with respect to the 'devotional' interpretations normally proposed,

A more historical explanation might be that Ghālib did not like the tawdry imitation of Najaf and Karbalā made by Ghazi al-Din Haydar in his Shah Najaf, which later became his tomb. This was built around 1813-1816 or thereabouts. Everyone gets a bit upset with the pretentious stuff the Nawābs did – and perhaps that's what he's saying about Lucknow.<sup>7</sup>

It is well-known that beginning in 1775, the year in which Āṣaf al-Dawla abandoned the former capital of Fayzabad and moved his court to Lucknow, immediately declared Dār al-Shī'a, the city underwent an extremely rapid and impressive process of architectural transformation aimed at giving it a recognizable modern Shiite visual identity also in its modules of construction and public meeting places. According to the observations of historians and travellers, already at the beginning of the nineteenth century Lucknow had roughly two thousand *imāmbāras* and six thousand *ta'ziyakhānas*, sites that were dedicated to hosting official or private events – especially the rites of *'ashūrā* – and to conserving the instruments

6 This date of composition is suggested by Imtiyāz 'Alī 'Arshī in Ghālib 1982, 244.

7 The comment, dated 'May 2006', is taken from Frances W. Pritchett's website dedicated to Ghālib's Urdu *ghazal* (Pritchett 2002-).

needed for the public celebration of the mourning of the martyred Imam.<sup>8</sup> Ghālib is probably referring in his verse to the most striking examples of this scenographical riedition of the holy places:<sup>9</sup> not only the *imāmbāra* Shāh Najaf erected at the behest of Ghāzī al-Din Ḥaydar, but also the far more representative Āṣafī or Baṛā *imāmbāra* and Ḥusaynābād *imāmbāra*, where the taste for mimicry led to reconstructing, in addition to the sepulchre of the *imām* Ḥusayn in Karbalā, a scale model of the Taj Mahal, not coincidentally another building conceived as a mausoleum. Lucknow is therefore imagined, first of all architecturally, as a mirror destined to reproduce the originals of a specific topography of the sacred. This does not escape Ghālib, who however, working on a textual level, uses a poetic *topos* already widely-used and structured in the Perso-Islamic poetic space, in order to introduce this *contingent* historical/architectural theme. We are obviously referring to the motif of the journey to the holy places, of which there is a representative and pertinent example in the *dīwān* by Ḥāfīz of Shiraz (d. approx. 1390):

*ḥāfīz agar qadam zanī dar rah-e khāndān ba šidq  
badraqa-yi rah-at shawad himmat-i shaḥna-yi najaf*  
(Ḥāfīz 1996, no. 290, v. 9)

Along the path of the sacred family if you move sincere your steps  
the certain sentinel of Najaf protects you, oh poet, on your journey

If the *mutaqaddim* Ḥāfīz simply textualizes the wish to set forth physically on the road that will lead him to the western resting places of the members of the *ahl al-bayt* (the 'sentinel', but also the 'prefect', *shaḥna*, of Najaf is a metaphorical allusion to the *imām* 'Alī as protector of the pilgrims), the verses of the *muta'akhhir* Ghālib present a series of layers of interpretation that can be read in the immediate compositional context. As we have seen, he appears to situate the holy places alongside the site where they have been reconstructed and which he is observing while writing the text - Lucknow's Shiite religious scenario in fact - substantially calling into question the absolute validity of the Nawabs' theatrical operation and expressing the need to continue his textual journey to the places reflected

8 I am relying on the data deduced by Cole 1988, 96, who bases himself on Lakhnawī 1976, 49-50, 77-127, 182-3, 192-3 and Shīrwānī 1974, 3, 1053.

9 The even too obvious parallel with the innumerable New Jerusalems of sixteenth-eighteenth c. Southern Europe (and especially the great Counter-Reformation projects of the Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy) and the clamorous Ethiopian case of Lalibela, definitely needs a comparative study. Interestingly enough, the Christian reconstructions at times appear in the two-pronged version of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, to be juxtaposed to the coupling of Mecca-Medina and Najaf-Karbalā.

in the Indian mirror. At the same time, however, Ghālib *passes* through Lucknow and alludes to the scenographies of the *imāmbāras*, which remain a fundamental stage on his textual path and appear to acquire, also because of their rejection, the rhetorical-cognitive value of *ishāra* ('sign' but also 'hint') and necessary metaphor. Phenomena of this kind are common in the literary space of the capital of Awadh, that finds exactly in the *imāmbāra* – which in many ways compete with the institution of the Sufi school here in their social function<sup>10</sup> – centres of intellectual aggregation for *thinking* Karbalā and Najaf. The *imāmbāra* played in fact a fundamental role as the preferred place for the recitation of the *marsiya* and the usual celebratory verses for the Imam. Moreover, its importance as a centre of literary exchange was such that – as noted by Cole – the poets and the reciters of elegies (*marsiyakhwān* or *rawzakhwān*, according to the typology of the text recited) who performed here acquired greater notoriety, in the religious context, than the '*ulamā* themselves; attracted by the Nawab court's warm reception, at times they came directly from Iran, like Mullāh Muḥammad Shushtarī and Shāh Ḥusayn Wilāyat (see Cole 1988, 97-8).

But in the literary circles which are based in these places dedicated both to remembrance and to geographical fiction<sup>11</sup> something more happens, something that concerns us more directly in these notes on the imaginary dimension of the capital of Awadh. In fact, the Hindu authors who are members of Lucknow's various circles and schools (*maktab*) of Persian poetry – the writer has identified approximately seventy of these by systematically examining more than a dozen contemporary and only slightly later biographical collections<sup>12</sup> – participate actively in the readings of elegies held in or around these new Najafs or new Karbalās,<sup>13</sup> present-

10 Observations regarding the difficult relationship between *shī'a* and Sufism in Awadh are found in Cole 1988, 146-8.

11 As I observed in the course of fieldwork carried out in 2002 and 2003, saying 'I am going to Najaf' may still mean today, in Lucknow, 'I am going to the *imāmbāra* of Shāh Najaf'. Much more significant, in this sense, is the name 'Karbalā' attributed to the various places (usually open spaces) where the celebrations of the mourning of the '*ashūrā* and the *chihilum* end and where the reproductions of the mausoleum of the *imām* (*ta'ziya*) carried in procession are symbolically buried. Moreover, some typologies of *imāmbāra* are called 'Karbalā': five of these 'replicas' are listed and briefly described in Abbas 2002, 31-44, 85-8, 105-112.

12 See Pellò 2012, 136-52, where the data is provided in detail.

13 Among the best known Hindu authors who tried their mettle with the literary genre of the *marsiya* in Urdu poetry, I recall here Munshī Chhanū Lāl Dilgīr Lakhnawī (born circa 1796, he was a pupil of Nāsikh) and Munshī Kunwar Sen Muḥṭar Lakhnawī (d. circa 1850, he was a pupil of Muḥṭafi), about whom see Srīvāstav 1969, 456-9. Among those who used, other than Urdu, Persian, at least Rāja Ulfat Rāy 'Ulfat' is worthy of mention: the *tazkira Ṣubḥ-i gulshan*, for example, recalls his active participation in the celebrations of *muḥarrām* and mentions several verses taken from a *mukhammaṣ* in honour of Ḥusayn (Salīm 1878, 32); a note concerning him is also found in Srīvāstav 1969, 459). A monograph on the subject is Sayyid Amjad Ḥusayn 1995.



ing their own compositions to vast audiences of different faiths and in a certain sense acting as cultural 'representatives' in the religious/literary assemblies (*majlis*).<sup>14</sup> And if being close to, or in, an *imāmbāra* means being metaphorically close to, or in, the sanctuaries of Iraq or the holy places of the Arabian peninsula, the presence of non-Muslim authors in these *loci* raises interesting questions regarding textual identities and identifications (see Pellò 2015). The Hindu poets, in order to be able to accede to these places of fiction, appear in fact to acquire a Shiite textual identity that does not necessarily correspond to a real conversion. Leaving for a moment the field of literature, the doxographic *Haft tamāshā* by Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan 'Qatīl' (d. 1817) provides a piece of information concerning the religious and social field that is of use in understanding this type of process; this is a work dedicated to the description of various confessional groups present in North India during the second half of the eighteenth century. In this context, one in particular attracts our attention: the Husayni Brahman of Deccan, a group of Brahmans whose religious practices are characterised by a decided devotion to the *imām* Ḥusayn despite the absence of a formal conversion to Islam. What concerns us most here however is a specific point mentioned in Qatīl's description, according to whom the Husayni Brahman declare themselves to be natives of *Karbalā-yi mu'allā*, i.e., of the "lofty Karbalā":<sup>15</sup> in order to sanction their pro-Shiite identity, they imagine for themselves a geographical ancestry in striking contrast with their absolutely Indian quality of Brahmans. But what is most pertinent to our analysis is, in fact, the idea of the place and the values associated with it, in a context where Karbalā is effectively present, as we have seen, in its 'replicas' that bestow on Lucknow an important part of its identity. In the literary context, certain aspects of the similar 'special' relationship between the Hindu Persian poets, the city of Lucknow and the holy places of the Mesopotamian area are highlighted, for example, in the *Safīna-yi Hindī* (completed in 1804) by the Hindu Bhagwān Dās 'Hindī', a collection of biographies of poets living in Lucknow in the 1700s that furnishes rather clear indications in this regard.<sup>16</sup> A paradigmatic case is the biographical note on Meḍī Lāl, known, as an author of Persian verses, by the poetic pseudonym 'Bīmār'. Here the *topos* of the journey to the holy places which we have introduced reading Ghālib performs an essential function in determining the identity of the poet in question:

14 It is interesting to note, in this regard, the perplexed reaction of the Iranian traveller Sayyid 'Abd al-Laṭīf Shūshtarī, who visited North India at the end of the eighteenth century and who is not able to explain the reason why many Hindus "who do not intend to accept Islam" gave large sums of money for the construction of cultural buildings dedicated to the veneration of the *imām* (Shūshtarī MS, f. 199a-b).

15 Qatīl 1875, 39-41.

16 I partially draw here from Pellò 2015.

He belonged to a Hindu caste of Lucknow, the *rustogi*. In his youth he was extraordinarily handsome and had an ardent, sensitive and suffering spirit. He spent most of his time in the company of the ascetic lovers who were the envy of the beauties of China, and he was always engaged in the study of the various treatises of Sufism and in the reading of the *Masnawī* by Mawlawī, and read the verses and the *Masnawī* with intense suffering. I myself saw him once or twice while he was reciting poetry with tears streaming down his cheeks. Finally, in 1182 he abandoned every bond and went to Ajmer. It is said that he remained there for a while, and that he then headed for the holy places of Islam, and of this God knows more. (Hindī 1958, 29-30)

That Lucknow ideally 'borders on' Iraq, and that the journey to the Shiite West is the natural consequence and continuation of the sojourn in the capital of Awadh is an idea that appears to be suggested in the text time and time again, where Hindī mentions quite frequently the pilgrimages of the poets to the principal centres of Iraq and Iran. This is the case, for example, if we read the notes dedicated to Mīrzā Bhachchū 'Zarra', an author born right in Lucknow and linked to the court of Shujā' al-Dawla:

following the death of the Nawab Shujā' al-Dawla Bahādur he headed in the direction of the lofty Karbalā, where he ended his earthly existence. (Hindī 1958, 80)

The direct passage from Lucknow to Karbalā is clearly expressed in the biography of Mīr Shams al-Dīn 'Faqīr', who, according to Hindī, after having moved from Delhi to the capital of Awadh, "remained in Lucknow for a year, and then headed towards the holy Karbalā" (Hindī 1958, 153). Other than for the couple Karbalā-Najaf,<sup>17</sup> Bhagwān Dās (we note how in the definitions used to indicate the various holy places he adopts an internal, pseudo-Shiite, point of view) also shows an interest in the Iranian centres of pilgrimage, in particular Mashhad. In the entry concerning the poet Mīr Awlād 'Alī 'Zāyir' (a Shiite native of Awadh whose own *takhalluṣ* reflects on his poetic persona the inclination to visit the holy places), for example, we read the following:

He honoured himself with the pilgrimage to the sublime sacred temples of Iraq [...] and after having acquired further honours with the pilgrimage to the Mashhad of the *imām* Riżā – may peace be upon him – returned to India [...] A year ago he left again in the direction of those blessed precincts, may God allow him to reach his destination. (Hindī 1958, 99)

17 The city is mentioned as *Najaf-i ashraf*, "the most noble Najaf", according to the traditional eulogistic formula (Hindī 1958, 220).

Also connected to the relation of proximity and dialogue with the holy places is the reference to the *rawza-yi rażawiya* ('The garden of Riżā', i.e., the sanctuary of the *imām* Riżā in Mashhad) of which the poet Sayyid Muḥammad 'Ḥasrat', who emigrated from Khorasan to India, is described as one of the 'honoured servants' (Hindī 1958, 56. In this case, too, Hindī uses the common denomination *Mashhad-i muqaddas*, 'the holy Mashhad'). What is more significant for us is however the fact that Hindī himself, in the space dedicated to his own autobiography, inserts a *qaṣīda* partially centred exactly on the theme of the journey to the holy places of Islam and in particular, those of Shi'ī Islam on the Arabian peninsula, in Mesopotamia and on the Iranian plateau. Subsequently, what is reported both in transcription and in translation, is the opening to and the section of the text where corresponding to every verse is the mention of one of the holy sepulchres to which the Hindu poet - who meanwhile, in Lucknow, is observing the construction of some of their replicas - imagines sending a message of devotion:

*ay nāma bar ba jānib-i ān dilrubā biraw  
ay hudhud-i khujasta ba shahr-i sabā biraw*

*bar khīz ay ṣabā wa biyābānnaward bāsh  
az tishna sūy-i chashma-yi āb-i baqā biraw [...]*

*az man sar-i niyāz binih bar dar-i khudāy  
w-āngah ba sūy-i shahr-i rasūl-i khudā biraw*

*ānjā ṭawāf-i rawza-yi pāk-ash ba ṣidq kun  
z-ānjā ba dargah-i 'alī-yi murtażā biraw*

*ānjā niṣār kun dil u jān-rā ba ṣad niyāz  
z-ānjā bar āstāna-yi khayr al-nisā biraw*

*ānjā jabīn-i 'ajz ba khāk-i adab bisāy  
z-ānjā bar rawza-yi ḥasan-i mujtabā biraw*

*ānjā hazār pāra jigar az du dīda rīz  
z-ānjā qadam zi sar kun u dar karbalā biraw*

*ānjā ba nālahā-yi gharībāna girya kun  
z-ānjā ba ṭawf-i rawza-yi zayn al-'ibād biraw*

*z-ānjā guzashta rawza-yi bāqir ṭawāf kun  
z-ānjā ba rawza-yi ja'far-i khudā biraw*

*z-ānjā ba ṭawf-i marqad-i kāzīm kharām kun*  
*z-ānjā ba sūy-i mashhad-i mūsā rizā biraw*

*z-ānjā pay-i ṭawāf-i mazār-i taqī shitāb*  
*z-ānjā ba rawza-yi naqī pārsā biraw*

*z-ānjā pay-i ziyārat-i dargāh-i 'askarī*  
*bā ṣad taḥiyat u ṣalawāt u sanā biraw*

*z-ānjā maqām-i ḥaẓrat-i mahdī talāsh kun*  
*bā ṣad adab ba khidmat-i ān muqtadā biraw*  
 (Hindī 1958, 244-5)

Reach, message, that thief of hearts,  
 And you glorious hoopoe reach the land of Saba!

Now then rise up, breeze, and cross the deserts quickly,  
 the thirsty sends you, go then to the spring of the water of life! [...]

For me bow your imploring head before the house of God,  
 then go to the city of he who is of the Lord the Prophet.

When there walk around, sincere, that pure garden,  
 then leave it and go into the court of 'Alī, who is the beloved.

When there make a sacrifice of the heart, with a thousand prayers,  
 then go to the court of she who among women is the most excellent.

When there humbly rub your head on the ground, obsequious,  
 then go to the garden of Ḥasan, the certain chosen.

When there pour shreds of heart from your eyes in thousands,  
 then with rapid step reach Karbalā.

When there weep with loud laments, just as he who is in exile,  
 then go to walk around the garden of Zayn al-'Ibād.

Go, having left that place, to pay homage to the garden of Bāqir,  
 and then go to the garden of the Ja'far of God, to walk around it.

From there go to walk with grace around the tomb of Kāzīm,  
 and then reach the place where to Mūsā Rizā was granted martyrdom.

Hasten, then, to pray at the tomb where Taqī rests,  
and from there go to seek the garden of Naqī, the devoted ascetic.

Of 'Askarī, then, you must visit the court,  
and take him myriads of praises and prayers and greetings.

And then with commitment reach the threshold of the saint Maḥdī,  
and paying him a thousand respects, enter his venerated service.

As in Ghālib, for Hindī, too, the vision of Lucknow's religious scenography is perhaps a sign that suggests the necessity of continuing the journey towards the originals. These are obviously extra-textual suggestions of interpretation that must be verified with reference to sound and ample repertoires; it is possible however to indicate at least one case where the sense of the psychological and urbanistic repositioning of the holy places in Lucknow has been expressly taken to its extreme consequences by transforming – on the textual level – the sign/hint itself, the *ishāra*, into the true goal. Preference is in fact accorded to the metaphor, with respect to the original, by an author just slightly older than Ghālib, the previously-mentioned Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan 'Qatīl' (a prominent Hindu *munshī* who turned Shiite in his youth<sup>18</sup>). The following verse comes from a *ghazal* of his *dīwān*, still unpublished:

*shawad naẓẓāra-yi rūy-i tu rūzīy-am ānjā*  
*imāmbāra bih az khāna-yi khudā-st ma-rā*<sup>19</sup>

The spectacle of your face will be my support there:  
To the house of God I prefer, for myself, the enclosure of the Imams.

For Qatīl the replica is better than the original, and the empty *imāmbāra* ('the enclosure of the Imams': the translation, based on the etymology of the term, is explanatory) which constitutes an architectural hypostasis of the absence of the body of the Imam – in this case superimposed on the poetic figure of the *ma'shūq* – is preferable to the empty Ka'ba which is the supreme sign of the divine reflection on the earth's mirror. The conceived city of Lucknow, a mirror that reflects other reflections, thus transforms itself into a familiar destination that is within reach; interpreted through the textual filter, the meaning of the originals, is already codified within its architectures.

18 On Qatīl's discourse on the superimposition of the ideas of Iran, Shiism and the Persian language see Pellò 2016.

19 Qatīl MS, f. 7a.

Speaking of the capital of Awadh as an imagined space made up of continual references to a multiform elsewhere (not only the 'classic' Islamic space of West Asia but also 'modern' Europe, whence a form of self-exoticism also derives<sup>20</sup>) Rosie Llewellyn-Jones asks herself whether a real Lucknow ever actually existed, pointing out, furthermore, how the city was already felt by some travellers to be like a façade that conceals the sign of illusionary fiction.<sup>21</sup> But Lucknow's aesthetic truth really appears to be (also) reproduction and *real* evanescence, like the revealing reflection of the mirror so dear to the poets of the so-called 'Indian style' and to their most significant representative Bīdil (1644-1720).<sup>22</sup> In this context, the verses which we have cited here, too few to confirm our suggestions, are if nothing else an invitation to investigate in greater depth and systematically (also through lexical and thematic scrutiny) the poetic dimension of pre-mutiny Lucknow so as to better verify, in the context of the city's literary community, how the Nawabi architectural theatrics were received and what were the implications – in terms of identifications and hermeneutics – of the anxiety to reconstruct the Shiite sacred places.

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20 "Given the weight of all these foreign elements (and the Nawabs themselves had come from Nishapur in Iran only at the beginning of the eighteenth century), can the 'real' Lucknow be said to have existed at all?" (Llewellyn-Jones 1997, 51). On the subject of 'feeling out of place' and internationalisms in Lucknow, see Rota 1996.

21 In this regard, M.A. Beg's observations quoted by the scholar in question are clear: "You find, on examination, that the white colour of the buildings, which presented in the sunlight the effect of the purest marble, is simply whitewash. The material is stuccoed brick, and your taste is shocked by the discovery that the gilded domes, of perfect shape and apparently massive construction [...] are mere shells of wood, in many places rotten" (Beg 1915, 7 [*non vidi*], quoted in Llewellyn-Jones 1997, 49).

22 Significantly enough, the authoritative Iranian scholar Muḥammad Rizā Shafī'ī-Kadkanī calls Bīdil, in the title of a classical study on the Indo-Persian master, *shā'ir-i āyīnahā* 'poet of mirrors' (Shafī'ī-Kadkanī 1987).

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## Who Are the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas*?

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**Abstract** The paper seeks to identify the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* mentioned in the *Tipiṭaka* and concludes, after comparing a reference to the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇa* in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, that the word *lokāyatika* in both the contexts refers to an argumentative *brāhmaṇa*, not a materialist.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 What Is Meant by *lokāyata*: Various Suggestions. – 3 *Lokāyata* in the Jain Tradition. – 4 The *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. – 5 What Does *lokāyatika* Mean in the *Rāmāyaṇa*? – 6 *Lokāyata* in Pāli ≠ Materialism. – 7 Meaning of *lokāyatika* in the *Jātaka*. – 8 The Upshot. – Appendix 1. – Appendix 2.

**Keywords** Lokāyata. Lokāyatika brāhmaṇas. Materialism.


### 1 Introduction

*The Three Baskets (Tipiṭaka)* is a grand portrait gallery, abounding with various characters, male and female, kings and commoners, philosophers and enquirers. Most of them are given local habitations and names. But some are introduced simply by some epithets or descriptions. The *lokāyatika brāhmaṇa* is a case in point. Altogether three such persons appear in the *Nikāyas*. There is a Lokāyatika-suttam (LS) in the SN [12.48 (1975-1999, 2, 77)] in which we meet one, and a Lokāyatika-brāhmaṇā-suttam (LBS) in the AN [9.4.7.1 (1979-1995, 4, 428)] in which we meet two of them. Their identity has always been somewhat problematic, the word *lokāyatika* in Pāli being rather obscure. Nevertheless, one point is certain: whatever it may mean, it *does not mean* materialism as it does in classical Sanskrit. *Lokāyata*, from which *lokāyatika* is derived, occurs, according to Tan (2010, 27), fourteen times in the *Tipiṭaka*:

Lokāyatika Sutta	<i>lokāyatika</i> (cosmologist?)	SN 12.48/2:77
Lokāyatika Brāhmaṇā Sutta	<i>lokāyikā brāhmaṇā</i>	AN 9.38/4:428
Mahāsīla list (to be avoided)	<i>lok'āyata...tiracchāna,vijjā</i> , etc	DN 1.26/1:11, 2.60/1:69 etc
Ambaṭṭha Māṇava	<i>lok'āyatamahāpurisalakkhaṇa</i>	DN 3.3/1:88
Soṇadaṇḍa Brāhmaṇa	<i>lok'āyatamahāpurisalakkhaṇa</i>	DN 4.5/1:114, 13/1:120,15/ 1:121, 20a/1:123

DOI 10.14277/2385-3042/AnnOr-53-17-6

Submission 2015-11-16 | Acceptance 2016-03-04

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Kūṭadanta Brāhmāṇa	<i>lokāyatamahāpurisalakkhaṇa</i>	DN 5.6/1:130
Purohita Brāhmaṇa	<i>lokāyatamahāpurisalakkhaṇa</i>	DN 5.14/1:138, 17b/1:141
Assalāyana Māṇava	<i>lokāyatamahāpurisalakkhaṇa</i>	MN 93.3/2:147
Āsava Sutta	<i>lokāyatamahāpurisalakkhaṇa</i>	AN 6.58/1:163
Dāru Kammika Sutta	<i>lokāyatamahāpurisalakkhaṇa</i>	AN 6.59/1:166
Doṇa Brāhmaṇa	<i>lokāyatamahāpurisalakkhaṇa</i>	AN 5.192/3:223
Sela Sutta	<i>lokāyatamahāpurisalakkhaṇa</i>	SN 3.7/105
Sippa Sutta	<i>lokāyata sippa</i>	Udāna 3.9/32 ( ' 2); UA 205
Vinaya	<i>lokāyate sāradaṣṣavī</i>	Cv 5.33.2 = V 2:139

The list is by no means exhaustive, for there are at least five more to be found in the *Tipiṭaka* that refer, directly or indirectly, to *lokāyata*. Chattopadhyaya (1975, 143) mentions the following:<sup>1</sup>

Brahmajāla Sutta		DN 1.1
Sāmaññaphala Sutta		DN 1.47
Jāṇussoṇi Sutta		AN 3.59
Vinaya	Tiracchāna-vijjā	<i>Cullavagga</i> , 5.17
Vinaya	Chabaggiya-bhikkhuvatthu	<i>Pācittiya</i> , 5.18(1)

Lokāyata(-śāstra) is mentioned along with the Vedas, grammar, and the study of the marks of a superman (*mahāpurisalakkhaṇa*) in several *Suttas*.<sup>2</sup>

## 2 What Is Meant by *lokāyata*: Various Suggestions

It is now generally admitted that *lokāyata* along with the *mahāpurisalakkhaṇa* was a subject of study of the *Brāhmaṇas*, theoretically of all the three twice-born (*dvija*) *varṇas*. It is also agreed that *lokāyata* was not anti-Vedic; neither in the *Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra* nor in the *Tipiṭaka* there is even the remotest hint of its being so. On the other hand, it was quite a respectable subject of study, along with *saṃkhya* and *yoga* (whatever they might mean in Kauṭīliya's times). Nevertheless, as yet there is no unanimity regarding which discipline *lokāyata* represents. Widely

<sup>1</sup> Chattopadhyaya (1975, 27-8), however, does not mention most of the sources noted by Tan (2010, 27). Tan too refers to some other Sūtras that have some bearing on the issue.

<sup>2</sup> Notably in MN (1958) 91. Brahmāyu-sutta (2.5.1), 93. Assalāyana-sutta (1958) (2.5.3), and 10, and Sārṅgārava-sutta (1958) (2.5.10). More examples are provided by Jayatilleke ([1963] 1980, 46-57, 69, etc.).

different conjectures have been and are still being made.<sup>3</sup> Rudolf Otto Franke (cited in Rhys Davids, Stede, s.v. “lokāyata”) proposed “logisch beweisende Naturerklärung” (logically proven explanation of nature); T.W. Rhys Davids ([1921-25] 1975, s.v. “loko”) apparently approved of it. However, he thought ‘Nature-lore’ to be more appropriate.<sup>4</sup> He and William Stede ([1921-25] 1975, s.v. “loko”) took this to be the first meaning, and ‘sophistry, casuistry,’ the second.<sup>5</sup>

Some other meanings proposed by the translators of various canonical and paracanonical texts are: ‘metaphysics’ (Hare 1935, 287), ‘world-lore’, ‘world-wisdom’ (C. Rhys Davids 1922, 53).<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, a *lokāyatika* would mean ‘[one] skilled in metaphysics’ and ‘[one] wise in world-lore’ or ‘a world-wise [Brahmin]’ respectively (C. Rhys Davids 1922, 53). More recently two other meanings of *lokāyata* have been offered: ‘cosmology’

3 For all references see Rhys Davids, Stede, *Pāli English Dictionary*, s.v. “loko”. Jayatilleke ([1963] 1980, 49) is wrong in saying that “Prof. [T.W.] Rhys Davids and after him all the scholars who discuss the meaning of *lokāyata* – missed both passages in the Nikāyas which could have given some information about the subject-matter of *lokāyata* –, one occurring in the Saṃyutta Nikāya (II.77) and the other in the Aṅguttara Nikāya (IV.428)”. Rhys Davids for some strange reasons did miss both these in his pioneering study (1899). But he and William Stede did not subsequently ‘miss’ the first; although their interpretation leaves much to be desired. In the *Pāli-English Dictionary* they have dealt elaborately (as much as possible, or even perhaps more than is warranted or generally afforded within the scope of a lexicon) with the two meanings of *lokāyata*, namely, Nature-lore and sophistry. Jayatilleke ([1963] 1980, 50 note 1) further complains that Malalasekera (1971, s.v. “lokāyata”) has ignored the problem of the meaning of *lokāyata* altogether, despite the fact that he quotes from the SN in his article on *lokāyatikā brāhmaṇā* in his *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*. It is true that Malalasekera leaves the second source, LBS (AN IV.428), totally out of consideration, but that is a case of justifiable + omission. There is nothing on the surface in this Sutta to help us comprehend what *lokāyata* or *lokāyatika* stands for. Other translators and writers too have not fared better in Jayatilleke’s view.

4 Tan (2010, 29, note 17) has explained that ‘lore’ here stands for “traditional knowledge, usu[ally] one handed down from previous teachers or traditions”. K.C. Chattopadhyaya (1975, 152) endorses Rhys Davids’ interpretation. The word ‘Nature-lore’, however, has been misprinted in his essay as ‘mature lore’.

5 The entries of *lokāyata* and *lokāyatika* in this dictionary are reproduced below for ready reference:

[Lok]-**āyata** what pertains to the ordinary view (of the world) common or popular philosophy, or as Rhys Davids (*Dal.* I.171) puts it, “name of a branch of Brahman learning, probably *Nature-lore*”; later worked into a quāsi system of “casuistry, sophistry.” Franke, *Dīgha trs*<sup>1a</sup> 19, trsl<sup>s</sup> as “logisch beweisende Naturerklärung”

[Lok]-**āyatika** (Brāhmaṇa) one who holds the view of *lokāyata* or popular philosophy SII.77 (trsl<sup>n</sup> K.S. 53: a Brahmin “wise in world-lore”; Miln 178; J VI.486 (na seve lokayatikroaṃ; expl<sup>d</sup> as “anatta-nissitaṃ... vitaṇḍa-sallāpaṃ lokāyatika-vādaṃ na seveyya,” thus more like “sophistry” or casuistry).

6 Misquoted by Jayatilleke ([1963] 1980, 50) as “worldly-lore”. Anyway ‘world-lore’ is merely a literal rendering of the two constituent words of the compound, *loka-* and *-āyata*, but it does not help us comprehend the sense intended by the author.

(Jayatilleke [1963] 1980, 51; Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000, 764 note 128; Thanissaro Bhikkhu 1999, SN 12.48) and speculation (Tan 2010, 28).<sup>7</sup>

Let us review the meanings one by one. As to 'Nature-lore', Tucci (1990, 389-90) pointed out long ago that *loka* in Pāli signifies the world, as in *devaloka* (the world of gods), *martyaloka* (the world of mortals), etc.; *loka*, he further points out, means the people, public, as in *lokayātrā* (way of the world), *lokaprasiddha* (accepted by all), *lokokti* (proverb), *lokavāda* (common opinion), *lokaviśruta* (famous in the world), etc. So neither Franke's nor T.W. Rhys Davids' rendering reflects the original sense of *lokāyata*.

Jayatilleke ([1963] 1980, 49) refers to Tucci's objection and proposes the meaning 'cosmos' instead of 'nature'. He is perhaps prompted by a passage in the 'Lokāyatika-sutta' with four points of debate called *lokāyata*, and by another passage in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (1923, 176-9) which deals with thirty one theses beginning with *sarvaṃ* (lit. all things or everything) (55).<sup>8</sup> He thinks the *Nikāyas* also confirm this meaning (55, 60). More recently Franco (2011) rejects both 'Nature-lore' and 'cosmos', for cosmos "has a particular connotation of good order and orderly arrangement, which is absent in *loka*...." Therefore, Franco (2011) elects "to keep the neutral word 'world'". However, in his view, "*lokāyata* in the early sources such as the Buddhist canon, the *Arthaśāstra*, the *Mahābhārata*, and so forth refers to (a thesis about) the world as well as *the science that deals with such theses in a dialectical context*". (Emphasis added).

*Lokāyata* in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (1923, 176-9) was rendered in English as 'materialism' by Suzuki (1956, 152-5). Jayatilleke ([1963] 1980, 51-3) objected to this mistranslation. However, old understandings, or rather *saṃskāras*, die hard. As late as 1996 Golzio repeated the same blunder in his German translation of the same text (1996, 181-2) and for this reason has rightly been censured by Franco (2011).

So the two meanings of *lokāyata*, Nature-lore and materialism, can be safely dispensed with. It is now generally admitted that this *lokāyata* in the Buddhist canons has nothing to do with materialism (known since the eighth century as the *Cārvāka*), and although the contexts in which the word occurs in Buddhist, Jain and Brahmanical works "do not allow an exact determination of the word, the meaning of materialism or materialist is nowhere apparent" (Franco 2011); K.C. Chattopadhyaya (1975, 152-3),

7 I have the impression that Tan (2010) does not reject 'cosmology' altogether. Just because he considers 'cosmology' and 'cosmologist' for *lokāyata* and *lokāyatika* to be too technical in the given contexts, he proposes to render them as 'speculation' and 'speculator' instead.

8 The *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* passage is obviously derived from the "Lokāyatika-sutta" (SN 1959, 2, 77). The only difference between the two is that instead of only four *lokāyatas*, 'points of debate', mentioned in LS, the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* passage refers to no fewer than thirty ones.

probably following M. Winternitz, declares that *lokāyata* “was probably a precursor of the Vaiśeṣika system of thought. *It was not a system of atheism, of identification of the self with the body and of the denial of the authority of the Vedas, which are the basic tenets of the later lokāyata or Cārvāka systems*” (Emphasis added). Moreover, Tan (2010, 28), referring to Rhys Davids, says: “These early occurrences of *lokāyata* do not seem to reflect any reference to the materialistic philosophy of Cārvāka, which is apparently later”. In any case, in the whole of Pāli literature, the name for materialism is invariably *ucchedavāda*, ‘the doctrine of annihilation’, not *lokāyata* or anything else.

In spite of all this, *lokāyata* in the Common Era was the name of a materialist school which is noted, most probably for the first time, in the Tamil epic, *Maṇimēkalai* 27.78, 273 (composed between the fourth and the sixth/seventh century by the Buddhist scholar-poet Sīthalai Sāttanār). There was another materialist school current in south India (if not all over the subcontinent) called *bhūtavāda* (lit. elementalism, an exact rendering of ‘materialism’).<sup>9</sup>

On the basis of the available evidence only this much can be definitely said, i.e. that by the eighth century the word *lokāyata* has become synonymous with the Cārvāka. By that time this system was also called Bārhaspatya and Nāstika (for sources etc. see Bhattacharya 2013, 3-8). But long before the appearance of the Cārvākas there were at least two materialist schools in south India. These two had some differences between themselves, but neither of them can definitely be called a direct descendant of Ajita Kesakambala’s doctrine of annihilation: several centuries intervene between *ucchedavāda* on the one hand and *bhūtavāda* and *lokāyata* on the other. *Lokāyata* and its derivatives in Buddhist literature, whether in Pāli or in Sanskrit, have nothing to do with this later development. Whatever *lokāyata* may mean in early Buddhist canonical works, it is definitely *not* materialism.

It is, however, certain that the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* in the Pāli Buddhist canons were fond of raising questions which the Buddha would dismiss as ‘unexplained’ or ‘undecided,’ *avyākata* (Sanskrit *avyākṛta*), as noted by Tucci. In the ‘Culamāluṅkya-sutta’ (MN 63) the Buddha had called such questions as ‘Is this world eternal?’ ‘Has the world an end?’ etc. *avyākata*. He only considered the Four Noble Truths to be properly explained. He urged the son of Māluṅkya to accept the unexplained as unexplained and the explained as explained. Perhaps this is why the Buddha did not approve

9 For *bhūtavāda* see Basham 1981, 200. *Maṇimēkalai* also mentions this name (27.264, 153). For a study of pre-Cārvāka materialism see Bhattacharya 2013, 1-12.

of idle talks and metaphysical speculations.<sup>10</sup> And for this very reason he seems to have disliked those who indulged in futile speculations (see Appendix A below). Another passage in the same Sutta bears testimony to his disapproval, although the word *lokāyatika* has not been employed in either of the two instances.

### 3 *Lokāyata* in the Jain Tradition

So much for the Pāli tradition. Relying exclusively on Pāli sources, we may say that *lokāyata* originally had one and only one sense, namely, *disputatio*, the art and science of disputation (see Bhattacharya 2009, 187-92). Rhys Davids, who had proposed a different meaning first, viz., Nature-lore, and/or popular philosophy, also admitted this meaning in case of the *Milindapañha* in the PTS Dictionary (s.v. “lokāyata”). It has been shown that this meaning holds true for the two Mahāyāni Buddhist Sanskrit works, *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna-sūtra* (*Divyāvadāna*) and the *Sad-dharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra* (See Bhattacharya 2009, 193-6 and 2012).

Now to other, non-Pāli sources. The first occurrence of *ānvīkṣikī* and *lokāyata* in Sanskrit is met with in the *Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra* 1.2.1 and 10. *Ānvīkṣikī* is one of the subjects of learning, *vidyās*; and includes *sāṃkhya*, *yoga*, and *lokāyata* (1.2.10). There is no unanimity of opinion concerning the meaning of *ānvīkṣikī* in this particular context – the science of reasoning, philosophy, or logical philosophy or what (see note 3 above). Although later commentators wrongly identify this *lokāyata* with the Cārvāka/Lokāyata system, the earliest commentary in Malayalam glosses it as the *Nyāyaśāstra* propounded by Brahmagārgya (or Brahman and Gārgya), *lokāyatam nyāyaśastam brahmagārgyoktam* (adapted in KA, Ganapati Shastri 1924, 27). This evidently was a pre-Gautama system of logic. So the connection of *lokāyata* with arguments is presumable. *Lokāyata(-śāstra)* is mentioned along with the Vedas, grammar, and the study of the marks of a superman (*mahāpurisalakṣaṇa*) in several Suttas in the *Nikāyas* (see the chart above).

Very much like the Buddhist canonical and paracanonical works,<sup>11</sup> some Jain works too record more or less similar curricula of studies (for the

10 See the “Brahmajāla-sutta”, DN, 1.1.22: “...desultory chat, speculations about land and sea, [24] talk about being and non-being, [25] the ascetic Gotama refrains from such conversation.” ...*nānattakathaṃ lokakkhāyikaṃ samuddakkhāyikaṃ itibhavābhavakathaṃ. Iti vā itievarūpāya...paṭivirato samaṇo gotamo*”ti.

11 E.g. the “Brahmāyu-sutta” MN 2:41.1.1, 382; 41.2.9, 390; “Sela-sutta” 2:42.3, 397; “Assalāyana-sutta” 2:43.1.1, 403; “Caṅkī-sutta” (1958) 2:49.1.1.3, 429; “Saṅgārava-sutta” (1958) 2:50.1.1., 482 (all in the MN) and paracanonical works like MP *Milindapañho* (1986) 1.10, 1.23, 4.3, 4.26, and LV *Lalitavistara* (1877), ch. 12, 179.

Brāhmaṇas and/or the princes). They comprise, besides the three or four Vedas and their six ancillary texts called Vedāṅgas, and such secular subjects as arithmetic, music, poetry, drama and stories, a number of philosophical systems as well. In the *Vasudevahimḍī*, we read of Mīmāṃsā, Saṃkha (Sāṃkhya), Loyiya, Loyāyatiya, Saṭṭhitamta (Ṣaṣṭhitantra), etc. (Vasu 1987, 24).<sup>12</sup> The *Anuyogadvārasūtram* (Anu) (1999 ed. *sūtra* 49, 91) mentions Loyāyayaṃ. It also mentions Vaisesiyaṃ, Buddhavayaṇaṃ, Vesiyaṃ, Kāvilāṃ, Loyāyayaṃ, Saṭṭhitamtaṃ, Māḍharaṃ, etc. (Anu 1999; see also 1966 ed., 64; 1968 ed. *sūtra* 72, 29). *Nandi-sūttam* *sūtra* 67 too has a similar list of subjects under the head of *mithyāśruta* works, beginning with the Bhārata (*Mahābhārata*) and the *Rāmāyaṇa*: Kanakasaptatiḥ, Vaiśeṣika, Buddhavacanāṃ, Vaiśikaṃ, Kāpilāṃ, Lokāyatāṃ, Ṣaṣṭitantraṃ, Māṭharaṃ (Nos.10-17) (1924 ed. *sūtra* 42 f.193b; 1997 ed., 113).<sup>13</sup>

The position of Lokāyata in the syllabus may suggest that it stands for a system of philosophy, not *disputatio*, teaching the art and the science of disputation (*vitaṇḍā-vāda-śāstra*), as in the Pāli and Buddhist Sanskrit tradition. The haphazard manner in which the subjects of study are enumerated – philosophical systems along with various other subjects related to philosophy, set side by side – coupled with the uncertainty of reading<sup>14</sup> renders the task of identifying their subjects and their contents doubly difficult, if not impossible, at the present state of our knowledge.

Secondly, comparison with Sanskrit texts, however, has led to happy results: for example, the syllabus for studies of Brāhmaṇa boys found in the Upaniṣads (particularly the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya*) has shed welcome light on the meaning of the Pāli word, *lokāyatāṃ* (Jayatilleke [1963] 1980, 47). The parallel columns of subjects found in the *Chāndogya* list, Śāṅkara's commentary thereon and the Pāli equivalents occurring in the *Dīgha Nikāya* are illuminating. It is almost certain that *lokāyatāṃ* was nothing but *vākovākyāṃ* (*Chāndogya*), explained by Śāṅkara as *tarkaśāstraṃ*.

Then why did some later commentators go against the older commentators who glossed *lokāyata* as *vitaṇḍa-(vāda)-sattha*? Jayatilleke

12 Jamkhedkar (1984, 78-9) writes 'Loyāyatiyavāda (*lokāyatikaāāda*)' [sic], instead of 'Loyāyatiya' as in the printed text (24). The *Vasu*, middle section (first part) [*majjhimakhanda* (*padamo bhāgo*)] contains more names, some of which are not easy to identify: *samikkhamtavāda*, *kaṇaga*, *sattari*, *māsurakkha-sikkha*, *vesisita*, *yovayoī*.... (24). For a general survey of the Jain system of education, see Dasgupta [1942] (1999) *passim*.

13 Attempts have been made to identify the names with little success. *Vaiśika*, for instance, has been explained as a book of erotics (*Kāmasāstra*). It has been called *strīveda* (Veda related to women) in the commentary on the (*Nandi* 1997 ed. "Bhūmika", 20).

14 For instance, the mss of the *Nandi*. mention several names to denote one subject: *Ābhītamāsurakṣaṃ*, *Haṃbhīmāsurukkaṃ*, *Bhībāsūkṣma* and *Bhībāsurutta* (1997 ed. "Bhūmika", 20). See also *Anu* 1999, 91 and *Nandi* 1968, 44.



([1963] 1980, 48) accounted for this misinterpretation as follows: “The fact that when Pāli commentaries came to be written *lokāyata*- exclusively meant Materialism is perhaps an added reason”.

#### 4 The *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* in the *Rāmāyaṇa*

What about the identity of the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* then? Apart from the characteristics mentioned above (disputation for disputation’s sake) it can be asserted with certitude that they *did not* belong to the Buddha’s Order (Saṃgha). In the LBS, two *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* were so impressed by the Buddha’s reply to their queries that they decided to join the Buddhist Order. In the LS too the lone *lokāyatika* requested the Buddha to consider him as a lay follower of his Order. In other words, the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* obviously belonged to the Brahminical fold, as expected.

It so happens that there is a mention of the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Ayodhyākāṇḍa (critical ed. (1960-75) vol. 2, 94.32; vulgate (1983) 100.28), which throws light on the issue. John Muir (see *Cārvāka/Lokāyata* 1990, 354-8) and T.W. Rhys Davids (see *Cārvāka/Lokāyata* 1990, 372) and others had already noticed the passage, but no one paid it the attention it deserves. Chattopadhyaya (1975, 150-1) was convinced that the whole passage was an interpolation. In fact, the passage, although found in *all* recensions, is almost certainly a later addition.<sup>15</sup> In spite of its dubious authenticity, two verses (crit. ed. 1960-75, 2, 94.32-33, vulgate 1983, 100.28-29), even though interpolated after the fourth century, still contain an indication of what the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* meant in the early centuries of the Common Era, long after they were first mentioned in the Pāli Suttas. It may be noted that the word *lokāyatika* occurs only once, not just in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa, but in the whole of the *Rām*. The

15 While editing the Mbh, Sabhāparvan, Franklin Edgerton noted that Mbh 2.5.7ff had parallels in the *Rām* 2.100 in the Bombay ed. (= 2.109 in Gorresio 1844). “About 37 stanzas are parallel stanzas of our chap” (Mbh 1933-66, vol. 2489). On the basis of intrinsic evidence and other grounds P.L. Vaidya, editor of *the Rām*, Ayodhyākāṇḍa (crit. ed. 1962) too, comes to the same conclusion:

“To me, the entire set of stanzas beginning with [*kaścit*] except the first [94.4], is out of place. Compare, in this context, Mbh. 2.5.7-99. These questions there cover some 93 stanzas in the constituted text and about 100 or more in the Vulgate. Our Critical Text [of the *Rām*] contains just 56 stanzas against 73 in the Vulgate and a few less in Gorresio. Professor Edgerton has given a note in his Addenda et Corrigenda, to Sabhāparvan pp. 489-91. He says there that about 37 stanzas of *Rāmāyaṇa* have their parallels in the Mbh 2.5. I think there is clearly an imitation here of the Mbh., where the questions are justified on more than one ground, while there is a good deal of absurdity in them in the *Rāmāyaṇa* on emotional ground. We may have been justified in ignoring them altogether, but our MSS. authorities are uniform in keeping at least 56 of the stanzas”. (Note on *Rām*, crit. ed. 2.94 = vulgate 2.100, 702).

passage indicates another characteristic of the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas*: in addition to their fondness for disputation, they did not care for the religious law books, i.e., the *Gṛhya-sūtras* and the *Smṛti* texts.

Let us take a look at the context as found in the constituted text of the *Rām* When Bharata goes to the Citrakūṭa Mountain with the intention of bringing Rāma back to Ayodhyā, there is a report of the conversation between the two princes. Rāma advises Bharata:

Don't you serve the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇa* for they are experts in doing harm, are puerile and consider themselves to be learned (which they are not).

*kaścinna lokāyatikān brāhmaṇāṃs tāta sevase |*  
*anarthakuśalā hy ete bālāḥ paṇḍitamāninaḥ ||*  
(crit. ed.: 1960-75, 2, 94.32; vulgate: 1983, 100.28)

The other reason why the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* are suspect is given in the next verse:

Even though there are principal religious law-books,  
these dimwits having recourse to sophisticated intelligence talk fraud.

*dharmaśāstreṣu mukhyeṣu vidyamāneṣu durbudhā |*  
*buddhim ānvīkṣikīṃ prāpya nirarthaṃ pravādanti te ||*  
(crit. ed. (1960-75) vol. 2, 94.33, vulgate (1983) 100.29)

## 5 What Does *lokāyatika* Mean in the *Rāmāyaṇa*?

Commentators and translators of the *Rām* have taken the word *lokāyatika* in this passage (crit ed. (1960-75), 2, 94.32-33, vulgate (1983) 100.28-29) to mean:

1. A follower of the Cārvāka doctrine (Rāma, *Tilaka* comm. (1983))
2. The Cārvākas and the Buddhists, etc. (Śivasahāya, *Śiromaṇi* comm. (1983))
3. The *nāstikas*, that is, the Buddhists and the Cārvākas (Govindarāja, *Bhūṣaṇa* comm. (1983))
4. The followers of Cārvāka doctrine (Lokanātha Cakravartī, *Manoharā* comm. (1932-41))

5. Loquacious in (expounding) the science of Cārvāka, *cārvāka-sāstra-vāvadūka*<sup>16</sup> (Śrīmādhavayogin, *Amṛtakataka* comm. (1965))
6. Atheist (Gorresio 1851, Dutt 1892, Makhanlal Sen 1976)
7. Materialist (Shastri 1976, Sheldon Pollock 1986)

All of them, I am afraid, missed the mark. Tarkavagisa (1989, 14-5) has demonstrated that *lokāyata* in ancient times meant Nyāya as well, and two kinds of *haitukas* (reasoners) are mentioned in orthodox brahmanical works: the first, those who adhered to the Veda (hence *āstika*), and the second, who did not (hence *nāstika*) (1989, 15-6). These *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas*, as Rāma describes them, are basically argumentative by nature and apparently disinterested in the ordinances laid down in the canonical law books (*dharmasāstras*), i.e. such *saṃhitās* as the *Code of Manu* and others ordained by other law-makers. But there is nothing to show that the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* followed a well-formulated philosophical system with its own ontology and epistemology. In the Mbh too there are, as Hopkins ([1910] 1993, 86) puts it, “[a]ny number of these unbelievers who deny everything there is to deny”. Unlike Ajita Kesakambala, however, they had nothing to assert. Ajita at least declared quite unambiguously, “Nothing exists after death” (Sāmaññaphala-sutta DN 1958, 1:2.4.21-23, 48-9; *Ten Suttas* 1978, 83. Translation modified). This is why he is justly regarded as a proto-materialist (as Kosambi [1956] 1975, 164 brands him).

Moreover, the word *lokāyata* and its derivatives do not appear in Sanskrit before the sixth century (as in Vātsyāyana’s *Kāmasūtra*) to signify any anti-religious system of philosophy. Such a characteristic is first encountered in Bāṇa’s *Kādambarī* (sixth century).<sup>17</sup> In the *Rām* and the Mbh, and the MN and AN Suttas mentioned above, as well as in the *Vasu*, we always come across the omnibus term *nāstika* (*natthika* or *nahiyavādī*) to mean such an outlook. But it is not associated with the *lokāyatas* or *laukāyatikas* before the sixth century, by the time when *lokāyata* had already appeared in South India as a rival materialist doctrine of *bhūtavāda* (as described in Nandakumar 1989, *Maṇimēkalai* 27.272-76). The word *nāstika* itself is

16 Cf. “The loquacious men, possessed of great learning, roam all over the earth....” *caranti vasudhām kṛtsnām vāvadūkā bahuśrutāḥ*. Mbh (1933-66) 12.19.24cd, in both crit. ed. and vulgate.

17 In Vātsyāyana’s fourth century *Kāmasūtra* (n.d.) six aphorisms, 1.2.25-30, are followed by the statement “So (said) the Laukāyatikas”, *iti laukāyatikāḥ*. However, the aphorisms are more in the nature of popular maxims, *laukika nyāyas*, or, as the *Jayamaṅgalā* commentary on the *Kāmasūtra* says, idioms well known (or established) in the world (or, among the people), *lokaprasiddhi* (see Bhattacharya 2009, 94-5). Bāṇabhaṭṭa (1950, 513) employs a simile in *Kādambarī* which, however, reflects on the heretical nature of the Lokāyatikas: “As the science of the Lokāyatika is to one who has no taste for religion...” ...*lokāyatikavidyayevā dharmaruceḥ*....

very old; Pāṇini refers to it in his *Aṣṭ* (1989) along with its antonym, *āstika*, and another word, *daiṣṭika*, a fatalist (*asti-nāsti-diṣṭaṃ matiḥ*, 4.4.60).

## 6 Lokāyata in Pāli ≠ Materialism

Let us then review the question of the *lokāyatikas* in the light of what has been stated above. Many scholars of the last two centuries, not unlike the latter-day commentators and sub-commentators of the Pāli canonical works, seem to have been under the impression that the word *lokāyata*, whether in Pāli or in Prakrit or Sanskrit, could have one and only one meaning, viz., materialism. T.W. Rhys Davids (see *Cārvāka/Lokāyata* 1990, 369, 373), however, had shown as early as 1899 that *lokāyata* in Pāli stands for a respectable subject to be learnt by every prince and every Brāhmaṇa (Bhattacharya 2009, *Cārvāka/Lokāyata*, 369, 373). The same holds true for the *Kauṭīliya Arthasāstra*, 1.2.10 (see Bhattacharya 2009, 131-6). Jayatilke ([1963] 1980, 69) too had asserted this. More recently Eli Franco (2011) has reviewed the issue and rejected the view that *lokāyata* in the Pāli tradition could ever mean 'materialism'.

In spite of all this, eminent scholars have discovered materialism whenever and wherever there is reference to *lokāyata*, whether in Pāli or Prakrit or Sanskrit. However, others who agreed with Rhys Davids in refusing this wrong identification have failed to offer a commonly accepted rendering of *lokāyata* and *lokāyatika*. The other terms preferred by Pāli scholars today, 'cosmology' and 'cosmologist' (as used by Thanissaro Bhikkhu (1999) AN 9.38 in his translation of the AN) are not beyond question. The common factor found in all descriptions, both in Pāli and Sanskrit texts, viz., disputatiousness, is not reflected in any of the renderings, whether in the works of the PTS translators or in others. Rhys Davids and Stede ([1921-25] 1975, s.v. "lokāyata", "lokāyatika"), in spite of their first preference for 'common or popular philosophy', or 'Nature-lore', admit that in the *Milindapañha* ([1880] 1986, 178) and the Vidhura-pañḍita-jātaka (*Jātaka* 6.486) *lokāyata* is "more like 'sophistry' or 'casuistry'". The statement is true for the MP, but quite off the mark in relation to *Jātaka* 6.486, as we shall soon see.

What made some scholars to take the word *loka*, the first part of the compound *lokāyata*, to mean 'the world,' while others had taken it to mean 'the people' (hence understanding *lokāyata* as 'popular philosophy')? I think it was the four questions concerning *sabbam*, 'All' (or everything) raised by the *lokāyata brāhmaṇa* in the LS. As against this preoccupation with the All, we may counter pose the question put to the Buddha by the two *lokāyatika brahmanas* in the LBS. Their question has less to do with the world; on the contrary, it concerns the relative merits of two other teachers contemporaneous with the Buddha. Now, it is this propensity to ask odd questions, and engaging themselves in fruitless discussions and arguments

regarding inconsequential matters that the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* came to be recognized as enemies of both Brahminical religion as also of the *saddharma*, Good Law. The *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* mentioned by Rāma in his conversation with Bharata may very well be the free-thinkers of ancient times, unaffected by the books of religious law. But it will be wrong to call them 'materialists'. In the given context a *lokāyatika brāhmaṇa* can only mean a disputant pure and simple, often a person indulging in disputation for disputation's sake (as he is found to do in the commentaries on the Pāli canonical works). In short, borrowing from the title of Amartya K. Sen's collection of essays (2005), we may call the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇa* the prototype of the 'argumentative Indian'.

It is this second characteristic of the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas*, namely, their fondness for senseless disputation, which seems to preponderate over the sense of Nature-lore or cosmology or even speculation, if such meanings were ever current at all. Moreover, most of the Pāli dictionaries and commentaries and sub-commentaries take *lokāyata* to mean 'the art and science of disputation', *vitaṇḍa-(vāda)-satthaṃ*. It is therefore suggested that this should also be the meaning applicable in case of the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* in the LS and the LBS as well. The questions they raised apparently sprang from their love of disputation. Hence, by applying Occam's razor, we may take the term *lokāyatika brāhmaṇa* in both Pāli and Sanskrit uniformly to represent a 'disputatious Brāhmaṇa'.

## 7 Meaning of *lokāyatika* in the *Jātaka*

There is another, non-technical, meaning of *lokāyatika* in the 'Vidhura-pañḍita-jātaka' (*Jātaka* 1896 XII.8, text vol. VI.486). It is not unrelated to the former (viz., disputatious); rather it reinforces the censorious attitude towards the *lokāyatika* found in other texts. It refers to a Brāhmaṇa who indulges in 'vain conversation' (as translated by Cowell 1973, 2, 139), or 'frivolous or captious discussion' (as given in the PTS Dictionary s.v. "vitaṇḍā", but not s.v. "lokāyata" or "lokāyatika", although both *lokāyata* and *vitaṇḍā* are admitted to be synonymous).

Rhys Davids (see *Cārvāka/Lokāyata*, 1990, 372) has made much of a passage in the text as also the commentary on the 'Vidhura-pañḍita-jātaka': *na seve lokāyatikam, n'etaṃ paññāyo vaddhanam*, which he translates as "Follow not the *lokāyata* [NB. the text has *lokāyatikam*, not *lokāyatam*] that works not for progress in merit". The commentary, however, says: *anattanissitaṃ...vitaṇḍa-sallāpaṃ lokāyatika-vādaṃ na seveyya*. The context does not warrant taking *lokāyatika* in a technical sense in this instance. The advice concerns the conduct of a righteous person: it has nothing to do with logic or philosophy. This is a model case of a trusting reader (in this instance, Rhys Davids) being misled by a careless commentator. The

commentator looked at the word *lokāyatikaṃ*, and, without bothering to consider the context, immediately displayed his knowledge concerning *lokāyatika* and *vitaṇḍā*, all out of context.

What is the context of this advice? King Puṇṇaka asks Vidhura-pañḍita four questions. The first is: "How shall be a prosperous life to him who lives as a householder in his own house" (*vasamā gahatthassa sakam gharam khemā vatti katham assa*)? To which Vidhura-pañḍita replies: "Let him not have a wife in common with another, let him not eat a dainty meal alone, let him not deal in *lokāyatikaṃ*, for this increases not wisdom" (*...na seve lokāyatikaṃ n'etaṃ paññāyo vaddhanam....*). The answer is an exhortation to the avoidance of adultery, selfishness, etc. *Lokāyatikaṃ* here can never mean casuistry or sophistry (an instance of tautology preferred by Rhys Davids) as noted in the PTS Dictionary s.v. "lokāyatika" in the *Milindapañha* ("thus more like 'sophistry' or 'casuistry'"). E.B. Cowell's (1973, 2, 139) rendering of *na seve lokāyatikaṃ*, "[L]et him not deal in vain conversation", suits the context much better.

It may be noted that the PTS Dictionary too provides a meaning of *vitaṇḍā* (but not of *lokāyatika*) as 'tricky disputation, frivolous, captious discussion'. And as to *vitaṇḍā*, we are advised to look up *lokāyata*, for they are for all practical purposes synonymous. Moreover, most of the Pāli dictionaries and commentaries and sub-commentaries take *lokāyata* to mean 'the art and science of disputation', *vitaṇḍa-(vāda)-sattham*. The passage in *Rāmāyaṇa* 2.93 speaks of the same characteristic of the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas*, viz. disputatiousness, their arguments being fraught with 'vain conversation', as does the 'Vidhura-pañḍita-jātaka'.

## 8 The Upshot

The upshot of the whole discussion is then: both *lokāyata* and *lokāyatika* refer to a subject of study, viz. disputation as well as a disputant. The other meaning given in the PTS dictionary, 'common or popular philosophy', or 'Nature-lore', and by applying Occam's razor the other ones employed by translators (metaphysics, speculation, cosmology, etc.) and their derivatives should be dispensed with. Once and for all it should be declared that 'disputatious' is the only meaning applicable in case of the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas*.

Why did Jayatilleke and Tan speak of cosmos/the cosmologist? Even Franco (2011) did not reject the meaning of 'world'. In his view, "lokāyata in the early sources such as the Buddhist canon, the *Arthaśāstra*, the *Mahābhārata* and so forth refers to (a thesis about) the world as well as the science that deals with such theses in a dialectical context". It is perhaps the repeated reference to *sabbaṃ* found in several canonical and para-canonical works that led them to this conclusion. However, the reference

to 'everything' is often coupled with examples of crude casuistry. While explaining *lokakkhāyikā*, Buddhagosa explains:

Foolish talk according to the *lokāyata*, that is the Vitaṇḍā [*lokāyata-vitaṇḍa-sallāpa-kathā*], such as: "By whom was this world created? By such a one. A crow is white from the whiteness of his own; cranes are red from the redness of their blood". (cited by Rhys Davids in *Cārvāka/Lokāyata*, 1990, 371)

In the *Saddanīti* too we have the same kind of juxtaposition:

Now the *lokāyata* is the book of the unbelievers full of such useless disputations as the following: "All is impure; all is not impure; the crow is white, the crane is black and for this reason or for that...". (cited by Rhys Davids in *Cārvāka/Lokāyata*, 371-72)

The issue or the point of dispute is not important; the *lokāyatika brāhmaṇas* were prepared to take any side, depending on the one taken by the opponent/other disputant. Even the questions they raised – whatever that might be, highly serious or utterly trivial – apparently sprang from their love of disputation. In my opinion, instead of casuistry and/or sophistry, the word disputation, disputatiousness and other derivatives from the root 'dispute' are to be preferred in translating *lokāyata* and its derivatives in Pāli. Hence, we may take *lokāyatika brāhmaṇa* in both Pāli and Sanskrit uniformly as meaning 'disputatious brāhmaṇa'.

## Appendix A

A passage from the 'Brahmajālasutta' (DN) provides some examples of several points of disputes (called *lokāyata* in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*):

Whereas some ascetics and Brahmins remain addicted to disputation such as:

"You don't understand this doctrine and discipline - I do!"

"How could you understand this doctrine and discipline?"

"Your way is all wrong - mine is right!"

"I am consistent - you aren't!"

"You said last what you should have said first, and you said first what you should have said last!"

"What you took so long to think up has been refuted!"

"Your argument has been overthrown, you're defeated!"

"Go on, save your doctrine - get out of that if you can!"

The ascetic Gotama refrains from such disputation.  
(Walshe 1987, 71)

## Appendix B

*Vitaṇḍā* is one of the categories (*padārthas*) in the *Nyāyasūtra* (1.2.3, 4.2.50-51). *Nyāyasūtra* 1.2.3 states: "This (scil. *jalpa*, debating maneuver, mentioned in 1.2.2) becomes *vitaṇḍā* (destructive criticism) when the 'opponent has no care for establishing any thesis of his own'", 'sa pratipakṣa-sthāpanā-hīno vitaṇḍā.

*Nyāyasūtra* 4.2.50-51 says: "*jalpa* and *vitaṇḍā* are (to be employed) for protecting the ascertainment of truth, just as fences with thorny branches are constructed to protect the seedling coming out of the seed", *tattvādhyavasāya-saṃrakṣaṇārthaṃ jalpavitaṇḍe, bīja-praroha-saṃrakṣaṇārthaṃ kaṇṭaka-śākhāvaraṇavat.*

The last *sūtra* states: "One may start a debate 'by attacking' (the opponent) with the help of both (*jalpa* and *vitaṇḍā*)", *tābhyāṃ viḡrhya ka-thanam.*

The position of the *vaitaṇḍika* can be inferred from NS 2.1.8-11 which is refuted in 2.1.12-20, also in 5.1.18-20. Śrīharṣa (1914) throughout his book *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khādyā* refutes others' views without establishing his own, as does Jayarāsibhaṭṭa (1940) in his *Tattvopaplavasimha* (this feature is overlooked by some scholars who brand him as a Cārvāka of some other kind). These two works are the classic examples of *vitaṇḍā*.

However, other than the name *vitaṇḍā*, there seems to be nothing in



common between the use of the word in Buddhist Pāli and Sanskrit literature and the *Nyāyasūtra*. Any attempt to relate them would be tenuous and an exercise in wish-fulfilment.

It may be recalled that *jalpa* (debating maneuver) is 'a kind of disputation (overbearing reply and disputed rejoinder)' (*Nyāyasūtra* 1.2.2, etc.). It is a technical term but in common parlance, i.e., in a non-technical sense, it stands for 'talk, speech, discourse...chatter, gossip,' (Monier-Williams ([1899] 2000), s.v. "jalpa"), as does *lokāyata* in Pāli.

## Acknowledgements

Amitava Bhattacharya, Krishna Del Toso. The usual disclaimers apply.

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# **Rājasthānī Features in Medieval Braj Prose Texts**

## The Case of Differential Object Marking and Verbal Agreement in Perfective Clauses

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**Abstract** One of the few scholars who paid attention to the 'dark' period of the evolution of NIA from late MIA was Luigi Pio Tessitori. The studies of this scholar resulted in his well-known *Grammar of the Old Western Rajasthani*. In the introduction of his Grammar, Tessitori advanced the hypothesis that probably in this first period of NIA there was an intermediate form of speech that surely separated Old Western Rājasthānī from what he called an Old form of Western Hindī, but in which these two linguistic varieties of Western NIA merged together. Tessitori called Old Eastern Rājasthānī this old intermediate form of speech. As stated by himself, one of Tessitori's future objectives would be to find some proof to demonstrate or to invalidate this hypothesis. However, due to his untimely death, he was not able to do this. Due to the fact that at the present there's lack of specific studies on this topic, the present study intend to pursue Tessitori's hypothesis using some medieval published texts in Braj-bhāṣā prose. Even if the language of this kind of texts could be classified as a form of Braj, we will see that these texts show a language different from classical Braj, where many examples of a typical characteristic of Māravāṛī (i.e. Rājasthānī) are attested: the agreement of O with main verb, in a perfective construction, even if O presents an overt marking with the DAT/ACC postposition. Therefore these texts show the existence of a feature of convergence between different varieties. In the last section I will conclude that this seems to be in agreement with Tessitori's hypothesis, but a more detailed study on language contact involved in the evolution and formation of Western Hindī dialects is necessary to validate this hypothesis.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 The Braj Language. – 2.1 Braj-bhāṣā Prose Texts. – 3 Ergativity: Some Introductory Remarks. – 3.1 Ergativity in Indo-Aryan. – 3.2 Ergativity and Differential Object Marking in Indo-Aryan. – 4 Differential Object Marking in Early New Indo-Aryan. – 4.1 Differential Object Marking in Early Braj-bhāṣā prose texts. – Conclusion.

**Keywords** Rājasthānī. Braj-bhāṣā. Ergativity. Differential Object Marking.

## 1 Introduction

Several authors, including Hock,<sup>1</sup> Witzel,<sup>2</sup> Lubotsky,<sup>3</sup> Kulikov,<sup>4</sup> Norman (1990-1996), Bubenik (1996, 1998) and Peterson (1998),<sup>5</sup> amongst many others, have recently examined Old Indo-Aryan and Middle Indo-Aryan from a historical linguistic perspective. On the contrary the New Indo-Aryan languages have not received the same attention, even if in the last few years it is possible to see a renewed interest by part of the scientific community.<sup>6</sup> Notwithstanding their scientific approach and contemporary usefulness, only works published at the end of nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth century are available (see, for example, Hoernle 1880; Bloch 1920; Chatterji 1926). As regards Hindī there has been considerable

This article is an English, enlarged and totally revised version of a previous paper in Italian entitled "La concordanza verbale nelle costruzioni transitive al passato della braja-bhāṣā" and published in Caracchi, Pinuccia; Comba, Antonella Serena; Consolaro, Alessandra; Pellissero, Alberto (eds.) (2010). *Tīrthayātrā. Essays in Honour of Stefano Piano*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 161-85. My thanks to two anonymous revisers: they made very helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. All errors and inadequacies are my responsibility.

1 For an overview on the huge work done by Hans Hock in the field of South Asian Linguistics and in particular of Old Indo-Aryan Linguistics see <http://www.linguistics.illinois.edu/people/hhhock> (where is also available a complete list of Hock's production) and <http://faculty.las.illinois.edu/hhhock/>.

2 A full list of Witzel's publications is available at: <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~witzel/mwpage.htm>.

3 A full list of Lubotsky's publications is available at: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/staffmembers/sasha-lubotsky>.

4 A full list of Kulikov's publications is available at: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/staffmembers/l.i.-kulikov>.

5 The following abbreviations are used in this article: 1: 1st person pronoun; 2: 2nd person pronoun; 3: 3rd person pronoun; A: Agent-like argument of a transitive clause; ABL: ablative; ACC: accusative; OIA: Old Indo-Aryan; ERG-ABS: ergative-absolutive; AUX: auxiliary; DAT: dative; DIR: direct; ERG: ergative; F: feminine; GEN: genitive; IMPF: imperfective; LOC: locative; M: masculine; MIA: Middle Indo-Aryan; NEG: negation; NIA: New Indo-Aryan; NOM-ACC: nominative-accusative; O: Object-like argument of a transitive clause; OBL: oblique; PAST: past; PERF: perfective; PL: plural; PAST.PART: past participle; PRES: present; S: Subject-like argument of an intransitive clause; SG: singular; INSTR: instrumental; V: main verb.

6 For example at the 49th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea (31 August-3 September 2016, University of Naples Federico II, Naples) a specific workshop was dedicated to the study of Early New Indo-Aryan, called a 'dark' stage in the language development and a period characterized by a tremendous evolution and dynamics. The workshop was titled "Middle and Early New Indo-Aryan: a crucial period for linguistic development?" and the convenors were Saartje Verbeke (Ghent University/Research Foundation Flanders) and Krzysztof Stroński (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland). A summary of the workshop and of the talks accepted for this workshop are available at: <http://sle2016.eu/list-of-workshops>.

work on Hindī linguistics during the last sixty years in the form of books, research articles, monographs and dissertations. However, in recent times, there has been limited linguistic research on the varieties of Hindī, which, even if now classified as dialects, have been of primary importance in Indian linguistic analysis. This is especially true for the Braj language (often known as Braj-bhāṣā). The aim of this study is to address this deficit by presenting the analysis of one of some features of old NIA, which I commenced in 2008 in my study *L'ergatività in hindī. Studio diacronico del processo di diffusione della posposizione ne*, and continued with some other papers and talks (in particular Drocco 2016a, 2016b). At the same time the paper would like to offer a modest contribution to the study of Braj-bhāṣā from both a linguistic and philological point of view. In particular, this study investigates the details of a specific aspect of Braj-bhāṣā morpho-syntax, which has not received much attention; that is, the verbal agreement with O, the object-like argument of a transitive clause, in a perfective construction, especially when it is accompanied by an overt case-marker. As we will see even if the language of the texts analysed could be classified as a form of Braj, these texts show a language different from classical Braj, where many examples of a typical characteristic of Māravārī (i.e. Rājasthānī) are attested: this characteristic is properly the verbal agreement with O in perfective clauses, even if followed by a postposition. In section 2, in support of our main point concerning its diachronic evolution, we will briefly describe Braj-bhāṣā's literary tradition and its geographical location. Section 2.1 provides an overview of the Braj-bhāṣā texts, mostly in prose, analysed in this study. Section 3 describes the typological parameter of ergativity and in section 4 we introduce the Differential Object Marking in Early New Indo-Aryan, in particular in the IA languages considered in this study. In section 4.1, we first of all discuss the works of a few scholars who have examined this phenomenon not only in Braj-bhāṣā, but also in pre-nineteenth century Māravārī. In sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 we present the constructions taken from the Braj prose texts examined, providing our conclusions in section 5.

## 2 The Braj Language

Braj-bhāṣā is the language of Braj, a region extending from the south of Delhi to western Uttar Pradesh and eastern Rājasthān. This language is known with various names: Gvāliyarī (the language of Gwalior; Hindī: Gvāliyar), Braj-bhāṣā, Braj-bhākhā or simply Bhāṣā/Bhākhā (McGregor 2003, 914; Bush 2010a, 85 and 2010b, 268 note 1). Grierson (1916, 69) adds that



Braj-bhāṣā is also known as Antarbēdī, that is the language of the Antarbēd<sup>7</sup> or the *doāb* ('a region lying between and reaching to the confluence of two rivers') between the Ganges and the Jamna.

Perhaps surprisingly, Braj seems to be a mixed language lacking in homogeneity. This is true not only for the various spoken forms (cf. Grierson 1916, 70), but also for its literary variety adopted in the multilingual environment of Muḡal India. In this regard Busch (2010a, 86) clearly maintains that, "we find considerable internal variation within the loosely-defined larger rubric of Braj Bhasha". Indeed, from a linguistic point of view, Braj-bhāṣā covers considerable territory. In particular it is spoken in the nebulously defined region of Vraja Bhūmi, which was a political state in the era of the *Mahābhārata* wars. This region, though not defined politically, is very well demarcated culturally. The area stretches from Mathurā, Jalesar, Agra, Hathras and Aligarh right up to Etah, Mainpuri and Farrukhabad districts (Michelutti 2002, 49). The largest cities in which Braj-bhāṣā is spoken are Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, Gokula, and Govardhan. According to tradition these were the places in which Kṛṣṇa spent his childhood and youth (McGregor 1968, 3; Entwistle 1987, 1-21). For example in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* the kingdom of King Kaṃsa is described as spreading through the Vraja region (Hindī: Braj), where the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa was born and spent his childhood days. Before Modern Hindī became the primary literary language of North India, Braj-bhāṣā was very important (cf. Grierson 1916, 72; Chatterji 1926, 12 and 1960, 191-200; McGregor 1974, 62-3; Rai 1984, 101-10) thanks to its use to write Kṛṣṇaite devotional literature (see Varmā 1935; McGregor 1968, 3; Snell 1992, 9-10, 29-36). The prestige of this language, now classified as a western dialect of Modern Hindī, was also based on its influence on the linguistic development of Khaṛī-bolī Hindī, particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that is in the period between the 1566 and 1658. During this time Agra, the most important city of Braj, was the capital of the Muḡal Empire (Masica 1991, 28) and Akbar, Emperor of Agra, composed some of his poems in Braj-bhāṣā. It is perhaps for this reason that Chatterji (1960, 200) chose to call this language *bādśāhī bolī*, 'the Emperor's language', or *darbārī zabān* 'imperial language', 'court language'. Similarly, according to Nespital (1998), it is on this language that the so-called urban *koinè* of Agra was formed, which significantly influenced the *zabān-e-urdū-e-mu'alla* of the new capital Delhi. More recently, in three excellent and informative studies Bush (2010b, 2011, 2014) illustrated masterfully the rise of Braj-bhāṣā in the Early Muḡal period.

7 The Braj word *Antarbēd* derives from Sanskrit *Antarvēd* literally meaning 'the country within the sacrificial ground, i.e. the holy land, *par excellence*, of India' (Grierson 1916, 69).

Moreover, it is important to highlight that what is called “Hindī”, “Hinduī” (Garcin de Tassy 1847) and “Hindavī” by some authors to designate the language of their works is, in the majority of cases, Braj-bhāṣā (cf. Bangha 2010, 35-6). Perhaps this is due to the fact that Braj-bhāṣā, as already said above, was the most important literary medium of northern India until the beginning of nineteenth century, especially for prose texts. Its prestige was so strong that it influenced both the linguistic and literary aspects of Khaṛī-bolī during most of nineteenth century (McGregor 1974, 67-8; Nespital 1998, 214-5).

Śiva Prasāda Simha (1958) carefully analysed the historical phase leading to the development of Braj-bhāṣā by attempting to draw a strict derivation of that language from its previous diachronic phase, i.e. Śaurasenī Apabhraṃśa. This thesis is possibly based on the fact that both languages developed during different ages, but in the same geographical area, the Madhyadeśa, in particular, as said above, in the *doāb* Gaṅgā-Yamunā. Moreover, according to the majority of scholars (Tessitori 1913b, 64 and 1914, 22-3; Chatterji 1926, 11, 113-4; Simha 1958, 8; Rai 1984, 106, 110), Avahaṭṭha<sup>8</sup> and Piṅgala<sup>9</sup> are to be considered younger than Śaurasenī Apabhraṃśa but spoken in its same area: both these literary languages of early New Indo-Aryan show strong affinities to Braj-bhāṣā. In this respect Chatterji (1949, 65, taken from Rai 1984, 110) maintains that:

a newer, later form of Saurasenī Apabhraṃśa was taken up by the poets in Rajasthan and Malw, it was called Pingala. Pingala may be described as the intermediate language between the literary Saurasenī Apabhraṃśa and the medieval Brajbhāṣa.

The development of Braj-bhāṣā from Śaurasenī Apabhraṃśa probably occurred at the beginning of Hemacandra’s life (1087-1171 AD).<sup>10</sup> Indeed,

8 For more on Avahaṭṭha or Abhibhraṣṭa see Sen (1973) and Nara (1979), who advance the hypothesis that Avahaṭṭha was, especially in the beginning, a popular form (*laukika*) of Apabhraṃśa.

9 Piṅgala was the main literary language of poetry in the first period of evolution of Western New Indo-Aryan. Indeed the bardic literature of Rājasthān, especially eastern Rājasthān, of this period, was composed in Piṅgala (cf. Tessitori 1914, 23; Chatterji 1960, 196). The most important bardic text available is *Prṭhvirāja rāsau* (circa twelfth century) (but about its authenticity cf. McGregor 1984, 19). Tessitori (1914, 23) maintains that the language of the *Prṭhvirāja rāsau* is a “distinct form of language [...] and which might well be called Old Western Hindī”. Regarding Diṅgala, the other literary language of poetry in the same period, but in Western Rājasthān, see Smith (1975, 433-64).

10 Pischel (1965, 47) considers Hemacandra the most important of all the Prakrit grammarians. Hemacandra’s Prakrit grammar is the eighth chapter (*adhyāya*) of his *Siddhahemaśabdānuśāsana*, of which the first seven chapters are devoted to Sanskrit; cf. Pischel (1965, 47-50) and Nitti-Dolci (1972, ch. 5).

the Śauraseni Apabhraṃśa in the examples offered in the grammar of this important Jaina scholar shows strong linguistic affinities with the literary languages known as Avahaṭṭha and Piṅgala. As already noted, the latter became Braja-bhāṣā at the end of fourteenth century (Chatterji 1926, 12; Siṃha 1958, 49; Snell 1992, 3). Rāmacandra Śukla was probably the first person to note that “Sūrasāgar appears to be the final, developed form of some continuing tradition, even though only oral, rather than the beginning of a later tradition [...]”.<sup>11</sup> Indeed Siṃha considers Sūradāsa’s text (XV-XVI century)<sup>12</sup> the literary peak of this important early New Indo-Aryan language that was subsequently held in great esteem for many centuries (Siṃha 1958, 8; cf. also Grierson 1916, 74-5).

## 2.1 Braj-bhāṣā Prose Texts

The majority of Braj-bhāṣā works are in verse governed by strict metrical rules (cf., among others, McGregor 1968, 3). This makes linguistic analysis particularly difficult, since it is difficult to distinguish between words chosen for metrical reasons and those chosen for grammatical reasons. Moreover, it is important to add that Grierson (1916, 75) clearly maintains that the first recognition of Braj-bhāṣā as a distinct dialect was Lallū Lāl’s grammar (1811); however this text is of no more help in studying the grammatical feature here taken into examination. As a consequence, the present study is based primarily on the analysis of excerpts from the few extant prose texts composed between the seventeenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, namely:

- i. the prose commentary of Indrajit of Orchā on the *Nītiśataka* of Bharṭṛhari, composed around the beginning of the seventeenth century, edited and analyzed by Ronald Stuart McGregor (1968, 3, 5-8);
- ii. the entire *Prabodha nāṭaka* (PN) of the Mahārājā Jasvant Siṃha (1626-1678), whose rule of Jodhpur began in 1638;<sup>13</sup>

**11** For this English translation, see Rai 1984, 101-2. The original Hindī version is taken from Śukla 1973, 168.

**12** Sūrdās is reputed as the most important author of Braj literature. He is known as an author of the *Aṣṭachāpa*, the eight kṛṣṇaite poets of Vallabhācārya’s *puṣṭi-mārga*. Sūrdās’s work is called *Sūrasāgara*, a well-known poem in the Braj language which describes Kṛṣṇa’s childhood.

**13** Little has been written about this author (but see Snell 1992, 43). Jasvanta Siṃha is known for his *Bhāṣā-bhūṣaṇa*. This text, written in *dohā* – the most common couplet metre of early Hindī poetry (for its explanation see Snell 1992, 20) –, deals with rhetoric. He also wrote smaller works in Braj prose, including *Siddhātambodha*, *Bhagavada gītā ṭīkā bhāṣā* and *Prabodha nāṭaka*. All these works are included in *Jasvantsiṃha granthāvalī* (cf. Miśra 1972). Much of this paper’s analysis is based on the *Prabodha nāṭaka* (pages 81 to 111), which is a Braj translation of the famous Sanskrit drama *Prabodhacandrodaya* by Kṛṣṇamiśra (on

- iii. the *Caurāsī vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā*,<sup>14</sup> in particular the four hagiographical stories, or *vārtā*, included in this text describing the most influential of the eighty-four Vaiṣṇava followers of Vallabha: the poets Sūradāsa, Kumbhanadāsa, Paramānandadāsa and Kṛṣṇadāsa, known also as the first of *Aṣṭachāpa* (McGregor 1974, 83-8; Grierson 1916, 74; Barz 1976), the well-known school of Braj poetry. The *vārtā* pertaining to these four poets are respectively 81, 82, 83 and 84;<sup>15</sup>
- iv. the *Do sau bāvana vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā*.<sup>16</sup>

### 3 Ergativity: Some Introductory Remarks

In this section we describe the fundamental principles of ergativity and its role in NIA. As we will see, this paper's argument rests on these principles. Ergativity has been explained in quite distinct ways. In the present paper the term describes a cross-linguistically recurring case marking and agreement pattern, expressing, formally, the syntactic relation between the core arguments of one- and two-place verb sentences. Consequently, if we use the well-known symbols A and O to identify the two fundamental arguments of a transitive construction and S to identify the fundamental argument of an intransitive construction with single argument,<sup>17</sup> it is cor-

this text see Boccali 2000, 531-2; it is mostly in prose and the only one with critical edition available.

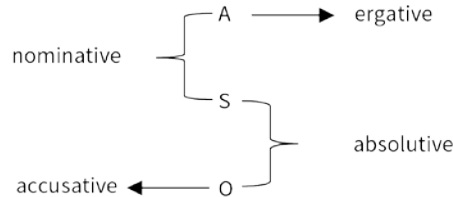
14 The *Caurāsī vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā* is the most important Braj-bhāṣā text in prose from the Vallabhācārya's *sampradāya* (1478-1530 AD) (for details of his life, see Barz 1976, 20-56), the *puṣṭi-mārga*. This work is an easy and colloquial text, where the life description of eighty-four (*caurāsī*) *vaiṣṇava* (introduced into *bhakti* by Vallabhācārya) is narrated to train followers. According to Vallabhācārya's *sampradāya* tradition, the *Caurāsī vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā* was written by Gokulanātha (1552-1641 AD), Viṭṭhalanātha's fourth son (1515-1564 AD). Viṭṭhalanātha was the son of Vallabhācārya. Gokulanātha collected his grandfather's and his eighty-four followers' experiences, together with those of his father Viṭṭhalanātha and his two hundred and fifty two followers (*do sau bāvana*). He drew on these when teaching the *puṣṭi-mārga* practice. According to tradition, Gokulanātha wrote them down in Braj-bhāṣā in his older age and used Braja-bhāṣā for both spiritual and ordinary life. Gokulanātha's work was collected in the *Caurāsī vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā* and in the *Do sau bāvana vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā*. His nephew Harirāya (1590-1715 AD) subsequently wrote a commentary on these *vārtā* called *Bhāva prakāśa*. For further information, see Ṭaṇḍana (1960); Nagendra, Gupta (eds.) (1973, 404-8); McGregor (1984, 131-2, 208-14) and Entwistle (1987, 261-4).

15 For our analysis cf. Parīkh D. (ed.) VS 2027 (1970). This edition, considered *standard*, was firstly published in 1948 and is based on a manuscript dated 1695 AD (VS 1752) (cf. Barz 1976, 49), from a private collection in Sidhpur, in the district of Patan, in Gujarāt; cf. Ṭaṇḍana (1960, 50-1, 107-9).

16 For our analysis cf. Śarmā B., Parīkh D. (eds.) 1951-1953.

17 For a synthesis on this argument cf. Drocco (2008, 18-26).

rect to say, according to Dixon (1994, 22)<sup>18</sup> that “the term ‘ergativity’ will be used in the standard way, for referring to S and O being treated in the same way, and differently from A. Ergative is then used in relation to A, the marked member of such an opposition, and ‘absolutive’ in relation to S and O, the unmarked term”. Dixon (1994, 9) proposes this scheme to illustrate his definition of ergativity:



Generally speaking, ergativity relates to two different parameters: morphological and syntactical. Morphologically speaking, in an ERG-ABS system, S = O in terms of the case-marking system and/or the verbal agreement (Comrie 1978, 336-42; Dixon 1994, 39). In this paper we will focus on this type of ergativity, since syntactical ergativity is not attested in modern IA (cf. Drocco 2008, 110-2). The majority of, if not all, the world’s languages which use the ERG-ABS system present alongside this system of case marking and/or verbal agreement also the NOM-ACC system (characterized by S = A, both distinct in respect of O): the resulting system is often described as a *split ergative system* (cf. Comrie 1978; Dixon 1994, 70; Plank 1995, 1184-5). The main factors determining the different split-ergative systems are (i) the location of A on the animacy hierarchy; (ii) the clause type (main vs. dependent); (iii) the semantic nature of the main verb, and (iv) the tense/aspect/mode of the main verb (Dixon 1994, 70-110).

### 3.1 Ergativity in Indo-Aryan

In most modern IA languages, the ERG-ABS system is attested in perfective clauses. As a consequence these languages are characterized by a split-ergative system, which is conditioned by the tense and aspect of the main verb. The following perfective clauses illustrate how this phenomenon is attested in Modern Hindī and Modern Māravārī:<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See Drocco (2008, 53-5) and notes to find bibliographic references about interpretations and/or definitions of ergativity and Dixon’s definition used in functional and typological studies in *Role and reference grammar*.

<sup>19</sup> For the transliteration of *devanāgarī* script, the *International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (I.A.S.T.)*, based on a standard established by the International Congress of Orientalists at Geneva in 1894, is used.

## Hindī

(1) *sāvitrī kala sārā dina mere pāsa rahī.*

Sāvitrī (S)    kala                    sārā    dina    m-er-e                    pāsa    rah-ī(V).
   
 Sāvitrī(F)    yesterday                    all    day    1.SG-GEN-OBL.                    near    stay-PERF.F
   
 Yesterday Sāvitrī stayed at my house for the whole day. (Caracchi 2002, 119)

(2) *gopāla ne cāya chānī (V).*

Gopāla (A)    ne                    cāya (O)                    chān-ī (V).
   
 Gopāla(M)    ERG                    tea(F)                    pour-PERF.F
   
 Gopāla poured tea. (Priyamvadā 2000, 42)

## Māravārī

(3) *sītā aṭhe kale āī.*

Sītā (S)                    aṭhe    kālē                    ā-ī (V).
   
 Sītā(F)                    here    yesterday                    come-PERF.F
   
 Sītā came here yesterday. (Magier 1983, 248)

(4) *sītā eka sogro jīmālīyo.*

Sītā (A)                    eka    sogro (O)                    jīmālī-y-o (V).
   
 Sītā(F)                    one    (a piece of) bread(M)                    eat-PERF-M.SG
   
 Sītā ate (a piece of) bread. (Magier 1983, 248)

In (1), S, in the direct case and not followed by a postposition, governs the gender and number of the main verb, while (2) shows a perfective transitive clause using the ERG-ABS system in respect to case marking and verbal agreement: A is followed by a specific case-marker, which is *ne* in Hindī, and main verb shows agreement with O in gender and number (cf., among many others, Matthews 1952, 394; Pandharipande, Kachru 1977, 219-20, 223-4). The ERG-ABS system of Māravārī is different from that of Hindī and the majority of modern NIA languages. Indeed, in this language  $S \neq A$ , as typical of an ERG-ABS system, but this is true only for some pronouns and some nouns (Magier 1983, 244-5; Khokhlova 2001, 167; cf. also Khokhlova 2006). For example, in (4) A is not followed by any case-marker, because it is a proper noun. When a proper noun is used in Māravārī,  $S = A$ , even in perfective clauses. As in (2), the main verb is in agreement in gender and

number with O, which is a genuine ERG-ABS system.

What it is true for Hindī and Māravāṛī it is also true for all modern IA languages showing the typological parameter of split-ergativity. Although there are variations of the case-marking rules of A in perfective clauses (sometimes S = A, as in Māravāṛī), their verbal agreement, in the majority of cases,<sup>20</sup> is aligned according an ERG-ABS system if O is not followed by any postposition.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.2 Ergativity and Differential Object Marking in Indo-Aryan

An intriguing feature of modern IA with ergative and non-ergative constructions alike,<sup>22</sup> but of particular interest in those languages showing split-ergativity, is the marking of O when it is either animate or 'definite' (i.e. one that is already known) (cf. Comrie 1979, 212-5; Klaiman 1987, 76-7; Masica 1991, 365-9). This is normally done with the dative postposition, called for this reason the DAT/ACC postposition (Masica 1991, 365).<sup>23</sup> In an IA ergative construction the case-marking of O is very important, even if done for a reason other than that under examination, for the resulting verbal agreement (cf. Klaiman 1987, 77-93; Masica 1991, 342). Consider the following Hindī perfective clause:<sup>24</sup>

20 In Nepālī, A is always in agreement with main verb in perfective clauses, even if in the latter is followed by the ergative case-marker *le* (cf. Klaiman 1987, 78; Masica 1991, 343).

21 See Dahl, Stroński 2016 for a recent and detailed account of ergativity in IA; cf. also the papers included in Dahl, Stroński (eds.) (2016).

22 In Kāśmīrī, where is also present an ERG-ABS system in perfective tenses, O is followed by a specific case-marker only in non-perfective clauses (cf. Klaiman 1987, 77). In contrast, as Hook and Koul (2002, 143) have pointed out, explicit marking for direct object is not required "in the simple past and perfect tenses". Even if Verbeke, De Clercq (2016, 47) assert that this construction occur only in Kāśmīrī and Pogulī (the latter also a Dardic language spoken in Jammu and Kashmir state and resembling Kāśmīrī), Zoller (2007) and recently Drocco (2016c) showed that also in the endangered language Baṅgāṇī (spoken between the Pabar and Tons rivers in the Uttarkāśī district of the Uttarākhaṇḍ state), where is also present an ergative-absolutive case-marking and verbal agreement system in perfective constructions, O is never marked in ergative clauses.

23 According to Masica (2001, 243-6) the marking of definiteness (as he called it) by the use of the ACC (or DAT/ACC) marker on direct objects is a typical feature of the South Asia seen as a linguistic area. As regards India reputed a good example of a linguistic area see also Masica 1976.

24 In the absence of explicit reference, the extract is drawn from the interviews conducted with mother-tongue speakers.

Hindī

(5) *rāma ne una laṛakiyoṃ ko dekhā.*

<i>Rāma</i> (A)	<i>ne</i>	<i>una</i>	<i>laṛaki-yoṃ</i> (O)	<i>ko</i>	<i>dekh-ā</i> (V).
Rām(M)	ERG	3.PL.OBL	girl(F)-OBL.PL	DAT/ACC	see-PERF.M.SG
Rām saw these girls.					

In (5), the main verb is not in agreement with O, a feminine noun (= *laṛakiyoṃ*, F), but is masculine and singular. Since both A and O in this Hindī construction are followed by a postposition, the main verb cannot agree with either and, consequently, is always in the masculine singular. This form of the verb has been called the ‘neutral’ form by several scholars (cf. Matthews 1952, 394; Masica 1991, 342; Palmer 1994, 59). Therefore in Hindī if A is followed by *ne* and O is followed by *ko* the standard ERG-ABS agreement is blocked.

Before continuing it is important to point out that in Hindī if O is ‘definite’ (i.e. one that is already known) thus, even if non-human, the DAT/ACC postposition *ko* is present, exactly as in the following constructions:

Hindī

(6) *āja merī bahana isa kahānī ko nahīm paṛhegī.*

<i>āja</i>	<i>m-ēr-ī</i>	<i>bahana</i> (A)	<i>isa</i>	<i>kahānī</i>	<i>ko</i> (O)
today	1.SG-GEN-F	sister(F)	3.SG.OBL	story(F)	DAT/ACC
<i>nahīm</i>	<i>paṛh-e-g-ī</i> (V).				
NEG	read-3.SG-FUT-F				
Today my sister will not read this story. (adapted from Caracchi 2002, 83)					

(7) *bhikṣuka ne gaṭharī ko ājamāyā.*

<i>bhikṣuka</i> (A)	<i>ne</i>	<i>gaṭharī</i> (O)	<i>ko</i>	<i>ājamā-y-ā</i> (V).
beggar(M)	ERG	bundle(F)	DAT/ACC	weigh-PERF-M.SG
The beggar weighed the bundle.				
(Premacanda, “Kajāki”, in <i>Mānasarovara</i> , bhāga 5, 200)				

In (6) a non-animate but ‘definite’ O is followed by *ko*: the construction is not ergative and therefore the verb is in concord with A. However in (7), a transitive perfective and thus ergative clause, the main verb is not in agreement with O, a feminine noun (= *gaṭharī*, F), but is masculine and singular.



In Hindī perfective clauses, the verb does not agree with O (thereby showing its 'neutral' form), not only if O is followed by *ko*, but also if O is a subordinate object clause, as in the reported speech, or if no specific O is expressed or implied (cf. Matthews 1952, 393-4; Caracchi 2002, 80-1).

The DAT/ACC postposition follows O also in Gujarātī and Māravārī. In both languages this case-marker is represented by the postposition *ne*. But in Gujarātī and Māravārī the verbal agreement is aligned differently to Hindī. This is an example of a Gujarātī perfective clause:

Gujarātī

(8) *chokarāmē strī ne joī.*

<i>chokar-ām-e</i> (A)	<i>strī</i> (O)	<i>ne</i>	<i>jo-ī</i> (V).
child-M.PL-ERG	women(F)	DAT	see-PERF.F
The children saw the women. (Lambert 1971, 89)			

In this example A is followed, as expected, by an ergative case-marker, namely the suffix *-e*, and O is followed by the DAT/ACC postposition *ne*. But, as we can see, the main verb is in concord with O, despite the DAT/ACC case-marker following O (cf. Cardona 1964, 270; Lambert 1971, 89; Comrie 1979, 214-5). The same phenomenon occurs in Māravārī (cf. Allen 1960, 9-13; Magier 1983, 252-3). In short, in both languages verbal agreement is always organized according an ERG-ABS system, even when O is followed by case-marker.

The Hindī ERG-ABS system is attested in all perfective sentences, that is in all clauses where the verb is constructed with the past participle of main verb and an auxiliary verb of *honā* (cf. Matthews 1952; Caracchi 2002, 80). In these clauses the auxiliary *honā* is in agreement with O if the latter is in the direct case, but if O is followed by the DAT/ACC postposition the auxiliary *honā* is 3rd singular person, as in (9):

Hindī

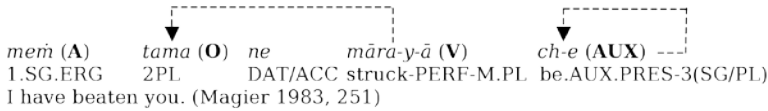
(9) *prasāda ne una laṛakom ko dekhā thā.*

<i>Prasāda</i> (A)	<i>ne</i>	<i>una</i>	<i>laṛak-om</i> (O)	<i>ko</i>
Prasāda(M)	ERG	3.PL.OBL	boy-M.PL.OBL	DAT/ACC
<i>dekh-ā</i> (V)	-----	<i>th-ā</i> (AUX)	-----	
see-PERF.M.SG		be.AUX.IMPF-M.SG		
Prasāda had seen those boys. (Caracchi 2002, 80)				

However, as described earlier, the situation is different in Gujarātī:

Gujarātī

(10) *mem tama ne mārayā che.*



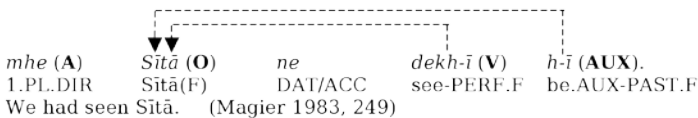
In (10), contrary to Hindī (cf. example 9), the main verb agrees with O, while auxiliary is in the ‘unmarked form’ showing concord with no nominal at all (cf. Cardona 1964, 270; Magier 1983, 251).<sup>25</sup> In Māravārī, depending on the tense of the auxiliary after the past participle of the main verb, two different compound past tenses can be formed, namely the present perfect and past perfect. According to Magier (1983, 248-50), in this language the main verb is in agreement with O in the present perfect, even if O is followed by postposition, and, in contrast to Gujarātī, the auxiliary agrees with A (cf. example no. 11). If the verb is in past perfect, both the main verb and auxiliary follow the standard ERG-ABS system, even if O is followed by the DAT/ACC marker *ne* (cf. example no. 12).<sup>26</sup>

Māravārī

(11) *mhaiṁ sītā ne dekhī hūṁ.*



(12) *mhe sītā ne dekhī hī.*



<sup>25</sup> This kind of verbal agreement is not only attested in Gujarātī, but also in Mevārī, a dialect of Rājasthānī; see Magier (1983, 251).

<sup>26</sup> We use this gloss for the 1st person singular pronoun of Māravārī because in the contemporary form of this language the instrumental suppletive form is sometimes used, instead of the nominative one, for S and A in perfective clauses; cf. Drocco (2008, 94-5).

Khokhlova's studies on modern Māravārī (1992, 89-90 and 2001, 168) seem to confirm Magier's work (1983). However, she adds that this specific kind of verbal agreement in the present perfect is particularly frequent when A is the first person singular pronoun (cf. also Allen 1960 note 13). With examples from contemporary Māravārī prose, Khokhlova further notes that in present perfect sentences with A as a first person singular pronoun, both the main and auxiliary verbs agree with O, following the standard ERG-ABS system, as in the past perfect (cf. example no. 12).

#### 4 Differential Object Marking in Early New Indo-Aryan

As we said in the introduction of this paper, little attention has been devoted to the evolution and the formation of the main NIA languages, especially from a syntactic and morpho-syntactic perspective. For example, there are few works examining the evolution of the original IA ERG-ABS system in NIA. Some recent examples are those of Khokhlova (1992, 1995, 2001), Drocco (2008, 2016a, 2016b), Montaut (2007, 2016) and Stroński (2011). However, although these works examine the dissolution and restoration of the ERG-ABS system, they focus on the case-marking of A. They dedicate little attention to the morpho-syntactic coding of O, in terms of case-marking and verbal agreement.<sup>27</sup> The rest of this paper aims to fill this gap<sup>28</sup> by analysing sentences from the texts mentioned above.<sup>29</sup> Since we will focus on medieval Māravārī and especially on Braj, we think it is useful to mention the findings of those scholars who have studied this topic.

Tessitori's work (1913a, 553-67; 1914, 216) was especially concerned with the etymology of the dative marker *naim*, which is mostly used to mark O. He asserts that the use of this postposition is regular in this function; however, he does not explain in which tenses this postposition is generally employed. Furthermore he does not illustrate the verbal agreement patterns found in perfective sentences when O is followed by *naim*. Therefore

27 The case-marking of O with a specific postposition, if human/animate and/or definite, seems to be an NIA innovation. In pre-nineteenth century studies, it was proposed that the argument in the O role is variably marked by the oblique case and/or by a postposition. However, it remains unclear how and when this innovation took place in modern IA languages, especially in those varieties characterized by an ERG-ABS system.

28 A very recent contribution devoted to the diachronic analysis of this important feature of NIA languages is the talk titled "Dative/accusative syncretism in New Indo-Aryan" presented by Ashwini Deo, Christin Schätzle and Miriam Butt at the workshop "Middle and Early New Indo-Aryan: a crucial period for linguistic development?" in the context of the 49th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea (see note 6 above).

29 In the texts examined, *ne* is used as an ergative case-marker in the perfective. In this study, we only consider those sentences in which this postposition is present, because genuine ergative constructions.

the diachronic development resulting in the agreement patterns of present-day Māravāṛī have not been described (cf. § 3.1 and § 3.2 above). Like Tesitori, Khokhlova (2001) examined pre-eighteenth century Māravāṛī, but focused her attention on the attrition of the original ERG-ABS system of IA. She (2001, 167) says, “The ‘accusative’ postposition appeared first in constructions with verbs in imperfective tenses and later penetrated also into the perfective domain”. Khokhlova (2001, 182 note 5) also adds that, in regards to the imperfective tenses, “the accusative postposition has been used since the fifteenth century”, but only since the seventeenth century in perfective tenses. Smith (1975, 449), also focusing on early Māravāṛī, says that, “If the logical object of a transitive verb is followed by the objective postposition *nai/nūm*, the verb and auxiliary show the form expected if there were no such postposition”. However, this author does not give examples which illustrate this. Moreover, he does not illustrate the evolution of this particular morpho-syntactic phenomenon. Consequently, there remains a lack of evidence showing Māravāṛī’s agreement pattern in ergative constructions where O is followed by the DAT/ACC postposition.

As regards *verba dicendi* it is interesting to examine the following ergative construction taken from a Māravāṛī prose text:

### Medieval Māravāṛī

#### (13) *pābūjī kahī [...]*

<i>Pābūjī</i> (A)	<i>kah-ī</i> (V)	[...]
<i>Pābūjī</i> (M)	<i>say</i> -PERF.F	
<i>Pābūjī</i> said [...]		

(Naiṇasī, Mumhato, *Mumhatā Naiṇasīrī Khyāta III.66.3x*, adapted from Smith 1975, 450)

In (13), despite A being masculine,<sup>30</sup> the verb is feminine. This is typical not only in Māravāṛī (Smith 1975; Hāṛautī, a Rājasthānī dialect cf. Allen 1960, 10), but also in Braj-bhāṣā (McGregor 1968, 85, 94, 224, note 3) when is present a reporting speech. The verb appears to agree with the noun *bāta* (F) ‘the thing said’, which is not mentioned. However, it is important to point out that in some cases sentences with the argument in A role show ‘neutral/impersonal’ form agreement, akin to that in Modern Standard Hindī; that is, masculine and singular, as in the following construction:

<sup>30</sup> In medieval and modern Māravāṛī (as regards the latter cf. § 4.) proper nouns does not present any case-marker and/or inflection when they occur as A of perfective constructions; as a consequence in these clauses they show S = A.

## Medieval Māravārī

(14) *pābūjī kahyo [...]*

<i>Pābūjī</i> (A)	<i>kah-y-o</i> (V)	[...]
<i>Pābūjī</i> (M)	say-PERF-M.SG	
<i>Pābūjī</i> said [...]		

(Naiṅasī, Mumhato, *Mumhatā Naiṅasīrī Khyāta III.66.3x*, adapted from Smith 1975, 450)

Data illustrating the case-marking of O in Braj-bhāṣā perfective clauses and the associated agreement patterns are scantier than those of Māravārī. Indeed, in Varmā (1935) and Snell (1992), it is not possible to find any evidence about this particular topic. The same is true for the introductory linguistic notes to the editions of the devotional poems of Svāmī Haridās, of Kevalarāma's *Rāsa māna ke pada* and of Hita Harivaṃśa's *Caurāsī pada*, published by Ludmila L. Rosenstein (ed. 1997), Alan W. Entwistle (ed. 1993) and Rupert Snell (ed. 1991), respectively. To my knowledge, the only scholar who has analyzed this phenomenon seems to be McGregor (1968): we will review his work in the following section.

#### 4.1 Differential Object Marking in Early Braj-bhāṣā Prose Texts

In the prose text of Indrajit of Orchā, ergative constructions, called *perfective-agentive* by McGregor (1968, 224), are normally used. In these sentences O agrees with main verb (sometimes followed by an auxiliary), while A, if a noun, takes the oblique case (if different from the direct one); in case it is a pronoun, it shows either the oblique case or a case other than the direct. Both arguments are never followed by any postposition. Indeed, in this text the typical ergative case-marker of Hindī, the postposition *ne*, is not attested (129-130, 224-5). In regards to the verbal agreement pattern of perfective clauses with *ko* after O, McGregor (1968, 225) says:

It is noteworthy that there are no examples clearly parallel to the common impersonal perfective-agentive construction of mod.(ern) st.(andard) H.(indī), which shows obl.(ique) case nominal form + *ko* with perfective participle in concord [...] [and] which is found wherever a 'definite object' would have been semantically appropriate in conjunction with a non-perfective verbal form.

We can thus conclude that, in the language used in the prose of Indrajit of Orchā a case-marking system of O in perfective clauses, which influences verbal agreement as in Modern Hindī, had not developed. McGregor

makes some very interesting arguments about the occurrence of this kind of construction in other Braj-bhāṣā literature. He (1968, 225) asserts:

Sūr's use of perfective-agentive constructions appears to agree substantially with that of this text. His perfective forms predominantly show concord with unsuffixed substs., even where there would be scope for regarding these as 'definite objects' in terms of the mod.(ern) st.(andard) H.(indī) construction.

This is confirmed by some ergative clauses found in the *Sūrasāgara*, as in example (15) and (16) below:<sup>31</sup>

(15) *prathama karī hari mākhana corī.*

<i>prathama</i>	<i>kar-ī</i> (V)	<i>hari</i> (A)	<i>mākhana</i>	<i>corī</i> (O).
first	do-PERF.F	Hari(M)	butter(M)	theft(F)
Hari made his first butter-theft.				
(Sūradāsa, <i>Sūra-sāgara</i> , vol. 1, <i>Rāga Rāmakalī</i> 886, 250)				

(16) *jasoda ūkhala bāmdhe Syāma.*

<i>Jasoda</i> (A)	<i>ūkhala</i>	<i>bāmdh-e</i> (V)	<i>Syāma</i> (O).
Yaśodā(F)	mortar(M)	tie-PERF.M.PL	Śyāma(M)(PL)
Yaśodā tied Śyāma to the mortar.			
(Sūradāsa, <i>Sūra-sāgara</i> , vol. 1, <i>Rāga Rāmakalī</i> 997, 310)			

As we can see, in both constructions O is in agreement with the verb. In particular this is true also for construction in (16) where O is a proper noun referring to a human argument: in a similar Modern Hindī construction O would certainly have been followed by the DAT/ACC postposition *ko*, the latter neutralising the verbal agreement according an ERG-ABS system.

#### 4.1.1 Differential Object Marking in the Prabodha nāṭaka

In the *Prabodha nāṭaka*, unlike in Indrajit's text, A is followed by *ne*, but only in perfective sentences. It is important to note that the use of this postposition as the ergative case marker of A is not obligatory, as in Mod-

<sup>31</sup> In this example *Syāma* shows plural agreement with the verb, probably because it is an honorific. The same is true for Modern Standard Hindī, especially when are used titles and/or honorific prefixes/suffixes (cf. Caracchi 2002, 30-2).

ern Standard Hindī (Drocco 2008, chapter 6). In a perfective clause with A followed by *ne* but with O in the direct case, the latter agrees with the main verb in both gender and number. In the few instances in which there are human and/or definite Os (e.g. proper nouns and first and second person pronouns), the DAT/ACC postposition *koṃ/kaum̃* is present. Nevertheless, verbal agreement is not always clear,<sup>32</sup> as in the following sentence:

(17) *Bastubicāra nai Kāma kaum̃ māryau [...]*

<i>Bastubicāra</i> (A) Investigation into Truth(M) Investigation into Truth (Jasvanta Siṃha, <i>Prabodha nāṭaka</i> , in <i>Granthāvalī</i> , 105)	<i>nai</i> ERG killed [...]	<i>Kāma</i> (O) Desire(M) Desire [...]	<i>kaum̃</i> DAT/ACC [...]	<i>mār-y-au</i> (V) --[...] kill-PERF-M.SG [...]
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Dashed lines with arrows and question marks connect the O (*Kāma*) to the V (*mār-y-au*) and the V to the A (*Bastubicāra*), indicating uncertainty in agreement.

In (17), it is not possible to determine whether the main verb *māranā* is masculine and singular, because O is marked by the postposition *kaum̃*. The verb could be either in the ‘neuter form’, as it would be in Hindī, or in agreement with O, as it would be in Māravārī and Gujarātī. This is because O is masculine, singular, and a 3rd person. Similar observations can be made about (18), since the past participle of *paṭhā-* is masculine and singular and the same is true for O, a 1st singular person pronoun related to *Bairaga*, occurring in the previous construction, also masculine and singular. However, the auxiliary *honā*, here in the 3rd person singular, does not agree with O, but is surely in the ‘neuter form’.

(18) *mo kaum̃ devī āsatikatā nai paṭhayo hai [...]*

<i>mo</i> (O) 1SG.OBL [...]	<i>kaum̃</i> DAT/ACC [...]	<i>devī</i> Goddess(F) [...]	<i>Āsatikatā</i> (A) Āsatikatā(F) [...]	<i>nai</i> ERG [...]	<i>paṭhā-y-o</i> (V) --[...] send-PERF-M.SG [...]
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Dashed lines with arrows and question marks connect the O (*mo*) to the V (*paṭhā-y-o*) and the V to the A (*Āsatikatā*), indicating uncertainty in agreement.

<i>h-ai</i> (AUX) --[...] be.AUX.PRES-3SG The Goddess Āsatikatā sent me [...] (Jasvanta Siṃha, <i>Prabodha nāṭaka</i> , in <i>Granthāvalī</i> , 107)
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Consequently, with regard to the morpho-syntactic feature under examination, examples (17) and (18) do not provide sufficient data to establish whether Braj behaves like Hindī or Māravārī/Gujarātī. However, if we look at the following sentence (i.e. 19), it is interesting to observe how

<sup>32</sup> As such, in 17, as well as in some of the following examples, we have shown the various possibilities by marking them with “?”.

example (18) is given in a different manuscript of the *Prabodha nāṭaka*:

(19) *mo kauṁ devī āsatikatā naim paṭhayau haum̃.*

mo (O)	kauṁ	devī	Āsatikatā (A)	naim	paṭha-y-au (V)
1SG.OBL	DAT/ACC	Goddess(F)	Āsatikatā(F)	ERG	send-PERF-M.SG

*h-āum̃ (AUX).*  
 be.AUX.PRES-1.SG  
 The Goddess Āsatikatā sent me [...]  
 (Jasvanta Siṃha, *Prabodha nāṭaka*, in *Granthāvalī*, 107, note 77)

As we can see, example (19) is very similar to (18). The only difference in the reading is the form of the auxiliary. In (19), there is agreement of the auxiliary with the first singular person pronoun, that in the construction is O + *kauṁ*: as we have mentioned above, this is a characteristic of present-day Māravārī (cf. Khokhlova's arguments above).

Now we offer another example:

(20) *mo koṁ devī āsatikatā nai paṭhāi hai [...]*

mo (O)	koṁ	devī	Āsatikatā (A)	nai	paṭha-ī (V)
1SG.OBL	DAT/ACC	Goddess(F)	Āsatikatā(F)	ERG	send-PERF.F

*h-ai (AUX) [...]*  
 be.AUX.PRES-3.SG  
 The Goddess Āsatikatā sent me [...]  
 (Jasvanta Siṃha, *Prabodha nāṭaka*, in *Granthāvalī*, 108)

In (20) O is a 1st person singular pronoun referring to feminine noun. Consequently, in this example, the main verb *paṭha-* seems to be in agreement with O, even if followed by the DAT-ACC postposition *koṁ*, while the auxiliary is in the 3rd person singular, that is, the 'neutral form'. This construction (20) is thus morphosyntactically very similar to other constructions in Gujarātī (cf. example no. 8) and Mevārī, the latter being a dialect of Rājasthānī (cf. note no. 25).<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, it is not possible to advance conclusive arguments concerning agreement patterns in the *Prabodha nāṭaka*'s perfective sentences which introduce reported speech. This is due to the fact that in this text a reported speech is introduced through

<sup>33</sup> It is possible to advance the hypothesis that in (20) the main verb and auxiliary are both in agreement with A, 3rd feminine singular, even if the same argument is marked by *nai*. This pattern of agreement, although very rare, is attested in other texts of the same period (cf. Drocco 2008, 229), but in languages other than Braj-bhāṣā.

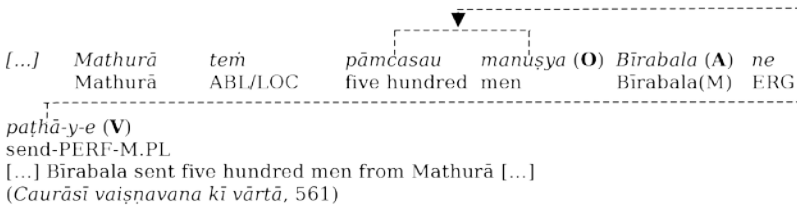


the verb *bola-*: the latter always agrees with its subject and thus follows a NOM-ACC pattern (cf. Drocco 2008, 230 note 28).

#### 4.1.2 Differential Object Marking in *vārtā* Literature

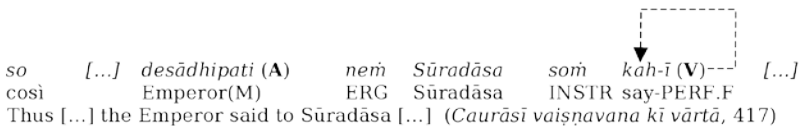
In the *Caurāsī vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā* perfective clauses following an ERG-ABS alignment are very frequent, but, as in the *Prabodha nāṭaka*, the use of the ergative case-maker *ne* is not fixed (see Drocco 2008, ch. 6 and Drocco 2016a). In perfective clauses, when A is followed by *ne* and O is not followed by any case marker, verbal agreement typically follows an ERG-ABS pattern (cf. 21).

(21) [...] *mathurā teṃ pāmcasau manuṣya bīrabala ne paṭhāye*



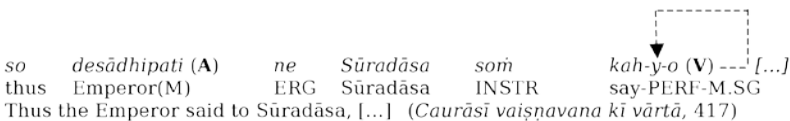
A verb introducing reported speech (for example, *kaha-*, *pucha-*), if perfective and with A followed by *ne*, is frequently in the feminine, as in medieval Māravāṇī and other Braj-bhāṣā texts. Consider the following example:

(22) *so [...] desādhipati neṃ sūradāsa soṃ kahī [...]*



However, as illustrated in (23), the same verbs in the perfective may be masculine and singular, as in Modern Standard Hindi:

(23) *so desādhipati ne sūradāsa soṃ kahyo [...]*



In the *Caurāsī vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā* the use of the DAT/ACC postposition after O in a ergative construction is infrequent. When it occurs, O is always human and definite. However, in such cases, verbal agreement is always according an ERG-ABS system. For example:

(24) *hama koṃ śrīācāryajī ne [...] rākhe hate, [...]*

hama (O) 1PL.DIR	koṃ DAT/ACC	Śrīācāryajī (A) Śrī ācāryajī	ne [...] ERG	rākhe (V) put-PERF.M.PL.
hāt-e (AUX), be.AUX.IMPF(past)-M.PL Śrī ācāryajī had charged us [...] (literally: Śrī ācāryajī had put us [...]) (Caurāsī vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā, 539)				

The same is true for these common and proper nouns occurring as O (cf. 25), sometimes followed by the honorific suffix *-jī* (cf. 26): with this kind of nominals the typical ‘honorific plural’ (cf. note no. 31) is normally adopted and, as a consequence, the verb shows plural agreement:

(25) *[...] śrīgusāmījī ne sūradāsa koṃ [...] na dekhe.*

[...]	ŚrīGusāmījī (A) Śrī Gusāmījī	ne	Sūradāsa (O) Sūradāsa	koṃ DAT/ACC	[...] na	dekhe (V) see PERF.M.PL
[...]	Śrī Gusāmījī didn't see Sūradāsa [...] (Caurāsī vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā, 436)					

(26) *[...] taba śrīgiradharajī ne sūradāsajī koṃ bulāye [...]*

[...]	taba śrīgiradharajī (A) thus Śrī Giradharajī(M)	ne	sūradāsajī (O) Sūradāsajī	koṃ DAT/ACC	bulā-ye (V) call-PERF.M.PL
[...]	thus Śrī Giradharajī called Sūradāsajī [...] (Caurāsī vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā, 412-22)				

The situation described so far is very similar to the situation of *Do sau bāvana vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā* that, even if also ascribed to Gokulanātha, it has a different manuscript tradition compared to *Caurāsī vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā*; see examples in (27) and (28) below very similar to (22) and (23) above:

(27) [...] *śrīnāthajī nem śrīgusāmījī soṃ kahyo* [...]

[...]	<i>Śrīnāthajī</i> (A)	<i>nem</i>	<i>Śrī Gusāmījī</i>	<i>soṃ</i>	<i>kah-y-o</i> (V)	[...]
	Śrīnāthajī	ERG	Śrī Gusāmījī	INSTR	say-PERF.M.SG	
	[...] Śrīnāthajī said to Śrīgusāmījī [...] ( <i>Do sau bāvana vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā</i> , 38)					

(28) *taba śrīgusāmījī soṃ dharmadāsa ne pūchī* [...]

<i>taba</i>	<i>Śrī Gusāmījī</i>	<i>soṃ</i>	<i>Dharmadāsa</i> (A)	<i>ne</i>	<i>pūch-ī</i> (V)	[...]
so	Śrī Gusāmījī	INSTR	Dharmadāsa	ERG	ask-PERF.F	
So Dharmadāsa asked Śrīgusāmījī [...] ( <i>Do sau bāvana vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā</i> , 11)						

In regard to the topic of the present study, it is possible to find perfective clauses with A followed by the ergative postposition *ne* and O in agreement with main verb also in the *Do sau bāvana vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā*, even if marked with the DAT/ACC postposition *koṃ*, exactly as the other Braj constructions presented below and, as already said, similarly to the situation found in present-day Māravārī.

(29) [...] *tāhī samaya bhītariyā āyo* [...] *kānhabāi koṃ dekhī*.

[...]	<i>tāhī</i>	<i>samaya</i>	<i>bhītariyā</i> (S = A)	<i>ā-y-o</i> [...]	(A = zero)
	that	moment	family member(M)	come-PERF.M.SG	
	<i>kānhabāi</i> (O)	<i>koṃ</i>	<i>dekh-ī</i> (V).		
	Kānhabāi(F)	DAT/ACC	see-PERF.F		
	[...] in that moment a family member came [and] [...] saw Kānhabāi. ( <i>Do sau bāvana vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā</i> , 5)				

(30) *tuma koṃ śrīgusāmījī ne bulāe haim*.

<i>tuma</i> (O)	<i>koṃ</i>	<i>Śrī Gusāmījī</i> (A)	<i>ne</i>	<i>bulā-e</i> (V)
2.PL(M)	DAT/ACC	Śrī Gusāmījī	ERG	call-PERF.M.SG
<i>h-aim</i> (AUX)				
be.AUX-PRES.3.PL				
Śrīgusāmījī have called you. ( <i>Do sau bāvana vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā</i> , 45)				

It is interesting to point out that in the *Bhāva prakāśa*, Harirāya's commentary of *Caurāsī vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā* (as regards Harirāya see note no. 14), there occur some perfective clauses with A + *ne* and O marked by

the postposition *koṃ*, with the main verb certainly in the unmarked form, i.e. masculine and singular and the auxiliary in the third person. This is the situation found in Modern Standard Hindī. For example:

(31) *hama koṃ corana nem lūṭyo hai.*

<i>hama</i> (O)	<i>koṃ</i>	<i>cor-ana</i> (A)	<i>nem</i>	<i>lūṭ-y-o</i> (V)
1.PL.DIR	DAT/ACC	thief-M.PL.OBL	ERG	rob-PERF-M.SG

*h-ai* (AUX) ---  
 be.AUX.PRES-3.SG  
 (Some) thieves have robbed us.  
 (*Caurāsī vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā*, 527)

But even more interesting one can see very few exceptions to what said above also in the *Do sau bāvana vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā*; example in (32) is one of such exceptions:

(32) *tuma koṃ kinane bulāyo hai?*

<i>tuma</i> (O)	<i>koṃ</i>	<i>kinane</i> (A)	<i>bulā-y-o</i> (V)	<i>h-ai</i> (AUX)?
2.PL(M)	DAT/ACC	who-OBL-ERG	call-PERF-M.SG	be.AUX-PRES.3.SG
Who has have called you.			<i>(Do sau bāvana vaiṣṇavana kī vārtā</i> , 19)	

## 5 Conclusion

Until now, the morpho-syntax of verbal agreement in Braj-bhāṣā perfective sentences, especially when O is followed by a case-marker, has received little attention from scholars. The main aim of the paper was to contribute in filling this gap. The aforementioned examples from the texts of the few available Braj-bhāṣā prose works, which are reliable for the purpose of linguistic analysis, show that Braj-bhāṣā and other NIA languages and/or dialects related to Rājasthānī and/or to Gujarātī behave quite similarly in respect to the phenomenon under investigation. It is interesting to note that Tessitori (1913b), although focusing on other phenomena, advanced some arguments about the relatively similar language of the Digambara version of *Karakuṇḍa kī kathā*. According to the writer from Udine, that language seemed classifiable as 'Jaipurī'; however, this Jaipurī is distinct from Modern Jaipurī, since the language was at an earlier stage of development and showed similarities with both Māravārī and Braj-bhāṣā (Tessitori 1913b, 63). In fact the Jaipurī language of the *Karakuṇḍa kī kathā*

is more similar to Western Hindī than Modern Jaipurī. The latter is now considered a linguistic variety of Māravārī and therefore very similar to Gujarātī (cf. Tessitori 1913b, 63) and this, according to this Italian scholar (1913b, 64), is:

according to the hypothesis [...] that the dialects of eastern Rajasthani and those of Western Hindī would be derived from a single language that I would call ancient eastern Rajasthani, to distinguish it from the ancient western Rajasthani that [...] is the mother of Maravari and Gujarati. (1913b, 64)<sup>34</sup>

We believe that this paper has further evidenced Tessitori's hypothesis, which is not yet fully developed. Indeed we propose that both *Karakuṇḍa kī kathā* and the texts in Braj prose examined in this paper show evidence of common features shared by different varieties. As already pointed out, according to Tessitori this is probably the result of the origin of these varieties from an old vernacular form of Eastern Rajputana – whether Old Eastern Rajasthānī or Old Western Hindī – “in origin more closely allied to the language of the Gangetic Doab than to that of Western Rajputana and Gujarat, and [...] only afterwards differentiated from the former under the influence of the latter” (Tessitori 1914, 23). However a more detailed analysis, taking into account the studies on contact linguistics (cf., for example, Thomason, Kaufman 1988; Thomason 2001; Winford 2003), should be done to validate Tessitori's hypothesis.

In conclusion, a study of the major dialects of Rājasthānī, especially the eastern ones, and those of Western Hindī could help to understand and define more precisely the development of the current ERG-ABS system of Modern Hindī. This is particularly true if this study is coupled with an analysis of the possible mutual influence between them, of which, it should be remembered, significant written evidence exists, though most remains unexamined in manuscript.

34 Translation of the following original Italian text: “in pieno accordo coll'ipotesi [...] secondo cui i dialetti della rājasthānī orientale e quelli della hindī occidentale sarebbero derivati da un unico ceppo e cioè da quella lingua, che io chiamerei antica rājasthānī orientale, per distinguerla dall'antica rājasthānī occidentale che [...] è la madre della māravādī e della gujarātī” (Tessitori 1913b, 64).

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# La bellezza che porta all'eccesso (*yin li* 淫麗) Utilizzo e rilettura del giudizio critico di Yang Xiong nei confronti della poesia rapsodica durante il primo medioevo cinese (220-598)

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**Abstract** The article investigates how Yang Xiong's 揚雄 (53 BCE-18 CE) famous judgment about rhapsodic poems ("The *fu* of the *Odes* poets, through their beauty, offer standards [of moral behaviour], the *fu* of the epideictic poets are beautiful and lead to excess" 詩人之賦麗以則，辭人之賦麗以淫) was recalled and reinterpreted in order to make a point about what genre is worth pursuing in literary writing. Yang's words were first quoted in the concluding remarks at the end of the "Shifu" 詩賦 section of the *Hanshu's* 漢書 (Book of Han) "Yiwen zhi" 藝文志 (Bibliographical chapter), and since then, they became a well known trope particularly used in *fu* 賦 (rhapsody, poetic exposition) poetry literary criticism. The article makes an overview on how and when Yang's judgment was utilized, to provide evidences of the different kinds of approaches regarding literature, and in particular *fu* poetry, since Han to 6th century.

**Summary** 1 Introduzione. – 2 La critica di Yang Xiong nei confronti della rapsodia. – 3 Il successo della rapsodia nel primo secolo dopo il crollo degli Han (III-IV secolo). – 4 Verità filosofiche attraverso la descrizione del paesaggio: i *fu* di Xie Lingyun (385-433). – 5 *Yin li* e *diaochong*: posizioni classiciste sotto i Liang. – 6 Conclusioni.

**Keywords** Rhapsody. Yang Xiong. Classicism.

«Non ho mai visto chi sia attratto dalla virtù quanto dalla bellezza»  
吾未見好德如好色者也。  
(*Lunyu* 9.18)


## 1 Introduzione

La tipologia poetica *fu* 賦 (rapsodia, esposizione poetica) è un 'genere'<sup>1</sup> poetico i cui stilemi e tematiche vennero delineati durante gli Han occi-

1 Il termine *fu* (che come verbo significa 'esporre'), indicante un genere poetico con caratteristiche formali definite, è un termine coniato in retrospettiva analizzando componimenti che spesso inserivano la parola *fu* all'interno del loro titolo. È indubbio che ci fosse un'affinità tra tutti i componimenti che adesso sono definiti come appartenenti a questo

DOI 10.14277/2385-3042/AnnOr-53-17-8

Submission 2016-11-17 | Acceptance 2017-03-14

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dentali (206 a.C.-9 d.C.), in particolare alla corte dell'Imperatore Wu 漢武帝 (r. 141-87 a.C.), il quale ne promosse e incentivò la produzione letteraria chiamando appositamente a corte dei poeti che eccellessero in tali composizioni. Il *fu*, sotto gli Han, era principalmente un componimento poetico encomiastico, un panegirico che mirava, attraverso un uso sapiente del linguaggio, a glorificare le conquiste e i meriti dell'imperatore. I *fu* (in particolare quelli poi definiti *da fu* 大賦, letteralmente 'grandi *fu*') erano scritti per essere però poi recitati in presenza del sovrano, e i poeti addetti alla loro composizione erano scelti dall'imperatore stesso; spesso lo seguivano nelle sue varie attività (battute di caccia, escursioni, inaugurazioni di palazzi, ecc.) per poi comporre testi che ne magnificassero le gesta. Poiché questi componimenti erano principalmente volti all'intrattenimento del sovrano e della sua corte, anche se alcuni contenevano conclusioni moraleggianti,<sup>2</sup> in seguito, in particolare sotto gli Han orientali (25-220), vennero fortemente criticati da importanti letterati classicisti (*ru* 儒) che, pur dedicandosi a questo genere ormai popolare, ne criticarono l'impiego a fine didattico. Questi letterati espressero una visione conservatrice dell'opera letteraria che tuttavia si impose nella società e nella cultura dei funzionari di corte diventando ortodossia.

In particolare, questa visione parziale è canonizzata nello *Hanshu* 漢書 (Libro degli Han) di Ban Gu 班固 (32-92), che in diversi passaggi descrive gli autori di *fu*, tra i quali si annovera anche Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (ca. 179-117 a.C.), in maniera poco elogiativa, caso peculiare vista la fama e l'abbondante produzione letteraria di questi poeti all'epoca. I poeti rapsodi vengono paragonati da Ban Gu a dei 'giullari di corte' (*paiyou* 俳優) e quindi ritenuti inferiori sia per la loro posizione sociale che per la letteratura da loro prodotta.<sup>3</sup> L'aspra critica nei confronti delle rapsodie è presente

genere, tuttavia nell'epoca a cui si fa risalire la loro genesi, gli Han occidentali, con *fu* si identificavano tutti quei componimenti lunghi che venivano recitati e non cantati, con verso variabile. Per un'analisi più approfondita riguardante genesi e sviluppo di questa tipologia poetica si rimanda a Knechtges 1976, 1-43, e Knechtges 2008.

2 Secondo David Knechtges (1976, 40) le conclusioni moraleggianti erano spesso inserite per venire incontro alle convenzioni letterarie dell'epoca. Un esempio a tale riguardo, secondo lo studioso, è la conclusione contenuta nello «Shanglin fu» 上林賦 (Il parco dell'Imperatore); nella poesia, dopo una presentazione sfarzosa del parco imperiale che attraverso iperboli e climax appare come un luogo mitico, e una lunga descrizione della caccia imperiale e dei sontuosi banchetti che ne conseguono, l'ultima parte, breve nel contesto della poesia, vede l'imperatore riflettere sui suoi eccessi e convenire che dovrà in futuro concentrare i suoi sforzi per promuovere il benessere nel popolo.

3 «Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 e Mei Gao 枚舉 non erano capaci di portare avanti un'argomentazione ed erano considerati come giullari», *Hanshu* 64.2775; per un approfondimento riguardante l'assimilazione dei poeti rapsodi a giullari di corte si rimanda a Baccini 2011. Ban Gu è invece molto meno critico riguardo a queste personalità nella prefazione al suo stesso *da fu*, il «Liang du fu» 兩都賦 (Le due capitali), dove espressamente si inserisce nel solco della tradizione di poeti come Sima Xiangru; cf. Knechtges 1982a, 92, 99.

però in particolar modo nel commento finale alla sezione «Shifu» 詩賦 (Poesia e *fu*) contenuta nell'«Yiwen zhi» 藝文志 (Trattato bibliografico). Qui Ban Gu presenta la genesi di questa tipologia poetica come una narrazione di decadenza. Lo storico afferma che i poeti del passato, come Xun Qing 荀卿 (Xunzi 荀子, 313-238 a.C.) e Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 340-278 a.C.), sono i massimi rappresentanti del genere perché avevano come fine l'ammonire tramite rimostranza indiretta (*feng* 諷), mentre i poeti delle generazioni successive (a partire da Song Yu 宋玉, III a.C., fino, e in particolare, ai poeti degli Han occidentali), con i loro componimenti eccessivamente elaborati e linguisticamente opulenti, «annegarono i significati espressi dalle persuasioni indirette e dalle illustrazioni morali» 沒其風諭之義 (*Hanshu* 30.1756.), contribuendo alla degenerazione del 'genere'. È qui presentata una divergenza qualitativa tra il passato e il presente che ha come termine di giudizio la moralità e il fine didattico del componimento. Per rafforzare la sua critica, alla fine del commento, Ban Gu invoca la figura di Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 a.C.-18 d.C.), uno dei più eminenti letterati della fine degli Han occidentali, che in molti suoi scritti, rammaricandosi di essersi dedicato ai *fu* in giovinezza, definì la rapsodia uno strumento incapace di veicolare messaggi moraleggianti e quindi un 'genere' non degno di essere perseguito (*Hanshu* 87B.3575).<sup>4</sup> Ban Gu cita in particolare un passaggio tratto dagli scritti di Yang Xiong: «I *fu* dei poeti delle *Odi* con la loro bellezza (*li*) offrono modelli di comportamento morale (*ze*), i *fu* dei poeti rapsodici con la loro bellezza (*li*) portano all' eccesso (*yin*)» 詩人之賦麗以則，辭人之賦麗以淫. Questo breve commento che esprime quasi in una formula un giudizio conservatore,<sup>5</sup> che critica una tipologia che continuerà ad avere fortuna nei secoli successivi, inserito in un testo (come era il trattato) che si prefiggeva di stabilire un canone letterario, acquisisce un posto di riguardo nella tradizione critica e verrà in seguito citato e riformulato da altri autori, in altri testi in cui si discuterà dei *fu*. Il presente articolo mira a mettere in evidenza come tuttavia queste parole siano state adattate ogni volta in maniera diversa a seconda del contesto, del periodo storico, o dei gusti personali dell'autore che le ha impiegate, e come siano state utilizzate in modo strumentale anche da coloro che accettavano l'opera letteraria come espressione dei sentimenti personali e non unicamente vincolata al didatticismo. In particolare, ci si propone di illustrare approcci diversi nei

4 La biografia di Yang Xiong contenuta nello *Hanshu* è per la maggior parte tratta dalla sua autobiografia; cf. Knechtges 1982a, 1-6.

5 L'approccio classicista all'opera letteraria è incarnato nell'interpretazione della tradizione *Mao* 毛 dello *Shijing* 詩經 (Libro delle Odi), che verrà istituita come l'interpretazione canonica delle *Odi* sotto l'Imperatore Ping 平 (r. 1 a.C.-6 d.C.). Tale approccio è stato canonizzato dall'«Yiwen zhi», e, come sottolineato da Martin Kern (2003b, 431), mirava esplicitamente a colpire la corte dell'Imperatore Wu, e quindi anche la sua produzione letteraria, descrivendola come un periodo di degenerazione morale.

confronti della letteratura durante il periodo preso in esame utilizzando il discorso critico riguardo al *fu* come caso di studio.

## 2 La critica di Yang Xiong nei confronti della rapsodia

Per meglio capire come il giudizio di Yang Xiong sia stato utilizzato e riletto è necessario spiegare quei passi dei suoi scritti in cui tale giudizio è articolato. Yang Xiong servì l'imperatore Cheng degli Han 漢成帝 (32-7 a.C.) che, avendo saputo che i *fu* di Yang Xiong erano simili a quelli scritti da Sima Xiangru, lo aveva chiamato a corte appositamente perché li componesse in occasione di eventi della vita di corte (*Hanshu* 87A.3522). Yang Xiong per il sovrano scrisse diversi componimenti tra i quali si annoverano: il «Ganquan fu» 甘泉賦 (Il Palazzo delle Dolci Sorgenti), il «Jiaolie fu» 校獵賦 (La caccia con barricate), e il «Changyang Fu» 長楊賦 (Il Palazzo tra gli Alti Pioppi). I *fu* di Yang Xiong sono quindi anch'essi dei panegirici rivolti all'imperatore, anche se il poeta nei suoi scritti autobiografici sottolinea che il suo fine era rimostrare indirettamente.<sup>6</sup>

La critica di Yang Xiong nei confronti di questa tipologia poetica appare evidente ed è più volte ripresa all'interno di alcuni capitoli del suo *Fayan* 法言 (Figure esemplari),<sup>7</sup> un testo costruito come un dialogo tra Yang Xiong e un non ben identificato interlocutore che gli pone domande di filosofia, letteratura, politica o di carattere morale. In particolare, il capitolo «Wu zi» 吾子 (I nostri maestri), esordisce con il seguente famoso passo:

或問：「吾子少而好賦。」曰：「然。童子雕蟲篆刻。」俄而曰：「壯夫不為也。」或曰：「賦可以諷乎？」曰：「諷乎！諷則已，不已，吾恐不免於勸也。」或曰：「霧縠之組麗。」曰：「女工之蠹矣。」[...]或問：「景差、唐勒、宋玉、枚乘之賦也，益乎？」曰：「必也淫。」「淫則奈何？」曰：「詩人之賦麗以則，辭人之賦麗以淫。」

6 Il «Ganquan fu» è stato composto in occasione dei sacrifici a Taiyi 太一 (Suprema Unità) officiati presso l'altare ai piedi del Monte Ganquan nell'11 a.C. mentre gli altri due risalgono all'anno successivo e sono sempre dedicati ad occasioni ufficiali. Questi tre componimenti sono conservati sia nella biografia di Yang Xiong contenuta nello *Hanshu* che anche nel *Wenxuan* 文選 (7.321-336, 8.387-402, 9.403-414), e nel specificarne il fine Yang Xiong utilizza per tutti la stessa fraseologia: «Una volta tornato presentai al Sovrano il 'Ganquan fu' al fine di rimostrare indirettamente» 還奏甘泉賦以風 (*Hanshu* 87A.3523); «Perciò ho usato il 'Jiaolie fu' al fine di rimostrare indirettamente» 故聊因校獵賦以風 (*Hanshu* 87A.3541); «Quindi ho presentato al Sovrano il 'Changyang fu' [...] al fine di rimostrare indirettamente» 上長楊賦[...]以風 (*Hanshu* 87B.3557). Il carattere *feng* 風 indica *feng* 諷, 'rimostrare indirettamente'; *Hanshu* 87A.3522 nota 2. Per la traduzione della Biografia di Yang Xiong si rimanda a Knechtges 1982b.

7 L'opera, il cui titolo è tradotto spesso anche come *Detti Esemplari*, è tradotta integralmente da Michael Nylan (2013). Nello *Hanshu* (87B.3585), Ban Gu ci informa che il testo aveva ampia circolazione al suo tempo.

Qualcuno mi ha domandato: «Quando voi maestro eravate giovane amavate comporre *fu*» «È vero. **I giovani incidono insetti e stili a sigillo.**» Un momento dopo, ho aggiunto, «Ma gli uomini adulti non si dedicano a tali attività» Qualcuno mi ha chiesto, «Le rapsodie possono essere utilizzate per le rimostranze indirette?» «Rimostranze! Se fossero utilizzate per quelle non sarebbe che cosa giusta e buona. Ma non si fermano a quello. La mia paura è che non possano fare a meno di incoraggiare [un comportamento scorretto]» Qualcuno ha detto «Ma i *fu* sono belli come la seta più sottile e tralucente!» «In realtà sono più simili [ai buchi lasciati dalle] falene del legno posate sul lavoro delle donne» [...] Qualcuno mi ha chiesto, «C'è niente che si possa ottenere dalle rapsodie di Jing Chai, Tang Le, Song Yu, e Mei Cheng (o Sheng)?» «**Sono sempre portate all'eccesso!**» «**Quindi se sono eccessive cosa bisogna fare?**» «**I *fu* dei poeti delle *Odi* con la loro bellezza offrono modelli di comportamento morale, i *fu* dei poeti rapsodici con la loro bellezza portano all'eccesso.**»<sup>8</sup> (*Fayan*, 3/2A.45; trad. da Nylan 2013, 24, con modifiche)

In questo passo Yang Xiong esprime chiaramente una critica nei confronti della poesia rapsodica. Egli paragona la sua produzione poetica giovanile agli esercizi calligrafici assegnati ai ragazzini (*diaochong* 雕蟲 'incidere insetti'): un'attività che può avere come risultato dei caratteri esteticamente apprezzabili; tuttavia il testo scritto sarà privo di un vero contenuto personale e concreto.<sup>9</sup> L'espressione *diaochong* diverrà poi un termine dispregiativo con cui indicare le rapsodie e sarà impiegato anche per definire in generale un tipo di letteratura ornata, il cui messaggio morale e didattico non è riconoscibile. Successivamente Yang paragona la produzione rapsodica, soprattutto in riferimento ai poeti Han, a quella dei poeti legati alla tradizione dello *Shijing* 詩經 (Libro delle Odi), i cui componimenti sono stati sempre letti dalla tradizione classicista come veicolanti norme di comportamento morale. Le rapsodie, a differenza di quest'ultimi, a causa dell'impiego di un linguaggio eccessivamente ricer-

8 Martin Kern (2003b, 391 nota 20) giustamente nota che il carattere *yin* non significa soltanto 'stile letterario eccessivamente elaborato' (come è spiegato nel commentario del *Fayan* 3/2A.50) ma indica anche il comportamento del destinatario che viene influenzato dal componimento.

9 Gli esercizi calligrafici in vari sigilli erano parte dell'educazione dei fanciulli. Yang paragona i *fu* a questo tipo di calligrafia, considerata un'arte minore (*xiaozhi* 小技); in tal modo afferma che anche i *fu* lo sono e quindi non possono essere impiegati per esporre alti concetti morali (*da dao* 大道); si veda *Fayan* 3/2A.46. Ban Gu rende ancora più chiara la critica nei confronti dei *fu* quando aggiunge sempre ai margini della sezione sulla poesia del Trattato: «Questa è la ragione per cui (perché inefficaci nella persuasione morale) Yang se ne pentì» 是以揚子悔之. Il verbo *diao* 雕 «incidere», è usato perché durante gli Han veniva impiegato un coltello per incidere i caratteri sulle listarelle di bambù o di legno (Nylan 2013, 23 nota 2).



cato, conducono invece, secondo il letterato, inevitabilmente a un comportamento scorretto. Benché quindi inefficaci nel persuadere (il sovrano), Yang Xiong riconosce però alle rapsodie un'indubbia 'bellezza' (*li* 麗)<sup>10</sup> e considera comunque Sima Xiangru<sup>11</sup> un raffinato poeta. Secondo Michael Nylan (2013, 25 nota 8), Yang con *li* si riferisce probabilmente al parallelismo (*li* 儷) utilizzato nel linguaggio poetico, una ricercata costruzione delle parole che, secondo Yang, nella rapsodia è talmente potente da sviare moralmente il fruitore del componimento. La 'bellezza' espressa dal carattere *li* non indica unicamente una qualità oggetto di apprezzamento estetico in termini astratti ma esercita in realtà una vera e propria attrazione verso i sensi (Owen 1992, 589); ecco perché, secondo Yang, ha la forza di sviare poi l'animo umano. Dal suo punto di vista, la bellezza di un componimento, del suo linguaggio, deve essere quindi accompagnata da *ze* 則 (principi morali) per essere corretta (Zong Fan 2007, 85). *Lize* 麗則, la combinazione di bellezza estetica, linguaggio accattivante e contenuto morale, è dunque la lente attraverso cui i classicisti Han analizzano le rapsodie (ma il criterio si applica in realtà a tutta la produzione letteraria).

Il tema dell'attrazione verso i sensi esercitato dai *fu* è riaffermato nello stesso capitolo «Wu zi» quando Yang Xiong compara il fascino che certi testi possiedono con quello femminile:

或曰：「女有色，書亦有色乎？」曰：「有。女惡華丹之亂窈窕也，書惡淫辭之澆法度也。」

Qualcuno ha detto: «Le donne hanno **fascino** (*se*). I libri hanno anche loro questa qualità?» «Sì, ce l'hanno. Per quanto riguarda le donne, uno odia quando i cosmetici interferiscono con la loro grazia femminile. Per quanto riguarda i testi, uno odia **quando un linguaggio troppo elaborato macchia e confonde i modelli e le misure (modelli morali)**». (*Fayan* 3/2A.57; trad. con modifiche da Nylan 2013, 27)

*Se* 色, quindi, è collegato a qualcosa di eccessivo, esagerato;<sup>12</sup> in particolare, *se* indica il piacere che la bellezza provoca nel corpo, e la capacità di suscitare l'attrazione carnale. Per Yang alcuni componimenti possono avere lo stesso effetto sul destinatario e quindi sviarlo verso comportamenti *yin*. Yang prosegue la sua argomentazione nel passo contrapponendo 'sostanza' (*shi* 事) a 'retorica' (*ci* 辭), e definendo il *fu* come un componimento che si

10 All'interno del *Fayan*, il carattere *li* di «bellezza» viene utilizzato solo tre volte e sempre in riferimento alle rapsodie.

11 Yang Xiong cita Sima Xiangru anche nel capitolo «Junzi» 君子 (Il gentiluomo): «linguaggio ornato di poca utilità, [questo] è Zhangqing (Sima Xiangru)» 文麗用寡，長卿也; *Fayan* 18/12.507, traduzione, con modifiche, da Nylan 2013, 211-13.

12 Nei *Lunyu*, *se* è due volte in contrapposizione a *de* 德, virtù morale; *Lunyu* 9.16; 15.13.

verifica quando «la retorica sovrasta la sostanza» (*ci sheng shi ze fu* 辭勝事則賦),<sup>13</sup> cioè quando gli artifici del linguaggio ne sovrastano il contenuto, un concetto richiamato anche in un passo dei *Lunyu* 論語 (Dialoghi) 6.18 dove la figura del gentiluomo confuciano viene definita come, invece, un perfetto equilibrio tra ornamenti e sostanza.

### 3 Il successo della rapsodia nel primo secolo dopo il crollo degli Han (III-IV secolo)

Durante il periodo che seguì la fine dell'Impero Han e vide la nascita di tre nuove entità politiche nel Regno di Wei, di Wu e di Shu l'opera letteraria divenne progressivamente uno strumento di espressione personale. Tracce di questo diverso approccio sono visibili nel «Lun wen» 論文 (Discorso sulla letteratura)<sup>14</sup> scritto dal futuro imperatore dei Wei, Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226), un testo seminale per la comprensione del periodo. Come puntualizzato da Stephen Owen (1992, 58), qui *wen*, il testo scritto, la 'letteratura' in senso lato, non è articolato attraverso la tensione cara agli Han che vede forza morale e seduzione dei sensi su due poli opposti, e, benché anche per Cao Pi la letteratura non sia un'arte autonoma, la sua analisi non si concentra sulla moralità e il possibile fine didattico; al contrario, egli «è interessato a comprendere come le personalità dei singoli autori vengano iscritte nelle loro opere, quali caratteristiche facciano sì che un testo sia convincente e interessante piuttosto che moralmente corretto».<sup>15</sup> La pluralità di vedute in campo letterario tipica di questo periodo storico si riscontra anche nella reinterpretazione della tradizione e dei suoi termini di giudizio.

Zuo Si 左思 (ca. 250-305), poeta dei Jin occidentali, cercò di stabilire la sua fama letteraria in società con quella che rimarrà la sua opera più famo-

13 Lo studioso di epoca Qing, Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1738-1801) è stato uno dei primi a vedere una correlazione tra l'arte retorica ascritta ai persuasori itineranti (*you shui* 游說) degli Stati Combattenti e il sapiente uso del linguaggio impiegato nella creazione dei *fu*; si veda Knechtges 2010a, 319. È facile qui notare un'eco del sospetto confuciano nei confronti di coloro che sono abili nella retorica ma che la utilizzano per recare vantaggi a se stessi e non a fine morale; si veda *Lunyu* 1.3, 5.5, 11.25, 16.4.

14 Il testo, unica parte rimasta di un'opera ben più ampia e ambiziosa, il *Dianlun* 典論 (Discorsi canonici), che doveva discutere e analizzare vari aspetti della vita sociale e culturale dell'epoca, presenta il punto di vista di Cao Pi nei confronti dell'opera letteraria.

15 Cao Pi tratta la tipologia sia nella sua forma breve (*xiao fu* 小賦) che nella sua forma più maestosa (*da fu*), e, soffermandosi sulle qualità dei singoli generi, per quanto riguarda il *fu* dichiara: «la poesia e il *fu* aspirano alla bellezza (*li*)» 詩賦欲麗; si veda Owen 1992, 64.

sa, il «San du fu» 三都賦 (Fu sulle tre capitali).<sup>16</sup> Nella prefazione,<sup>17</sup> il poeta delinea lo sviluppo del *fu* come genere poetico, identificandone l'origine nella tradizione poetica dello *Shijing* e soffermandosi in particolare sui «Sei Principi» (*liu yi* 六義) di analisi delle *Odi*, così come sono esposti nella «Grande Prefazione» (*Shi daxu* 詩大序). Zuo Si dimostra di padroneggiare la tradizione critica sull'argomento citando sia Yang Xiong che Ban Gu:

蓋詩有六義焉，其二曰賦。楊雄曰：「詩人之賦麗以則。」班固曰：「賦者，古詩之流也。」

Le *Odi* hanno Sei Principi. Il secondo è detto Esposizione (*fu*). Yang Xiong ha detto «I *fu* dei poeti delle *Odi*, attraverso la loro bellezza offrono modelli di comportamento morale». Ban Gu ha detto, «I *fu* sono un tipo di poesia antica».<sup>18</sup> (*Wenxuan* 4.173; Knechtges 1982a, 337)

Poiché Zuo Si confidava di consegnare con il suo *fu* il proprio nome alla posterità,<sup>19</sup> presenta il giudizio di Yang e Ban in maniera strumentale, proponendo, della loro critica, solo la parte che collega il *fu* all'antica tradizione poetica delle *Odi* senza però fare menzione della parte che ne biasima una degenerazione. Al suo posto, Zuo Si procede nello specificare che una delle qualità più importanti delle *Odi* passata ai *fu* è la capacità di descrivere la realtà, di informare il destinatario riguardo agli oggetti del reale che lo circondano, al fine di accrescere la sua conoscenza (un'eco del *Lunyu* 17.9).<sup>20</sup> Questa qualità, secondo il poeta, si era persa sotto gli Han, dalla cui tradizione rapsodica egli cerca di distaccarsi, poiché gli autori Han (tra i quali cita anche Yang e Ban) «Fabbricarono rarità e stranezze per abbellire i loro scritti» 假稱珍怪，以為潤色. Il poeta cita solo la prima parte del giudizio espresso da Yang Xiong, ma la seconda doveva essere comunque ben presente ai letterati dell'epoca; tuttavia nell'interpretazione di Zuo Si, il linguaggio ornato che per Yang Xiong attraeva i sensi allontanando dal progresso morale è qui colpevole invece di dipingere la realtà in modo 'eccessivo', quindi esagerato. Il poeta insiste su questo punto af-

16 Il testo è tradotto in Knechtges 1982a, 337-40, e descritto in dettaglio in Knechtges, Chang 2014, 2382-5.

17 La prefazione è uno dei primi e più importanti testi di critica letteraria sui *fu*; Knechtges 1982a, 337. Analizzata anche da Kong 2011, 280-2.

18 L'ultima frase è una citazione dalla prefazione di Ban Gu al suo «Liang du fu», *Wenxuan* 1.1.

19 Zuo Si impiegò ben dieci anni per scrivere il suo componimento, preoccupandosi anche delle modalità della sua distribuzione e circolazione.

20 *Lunyu* 17.9: «Il Maestro disse: 'Miei giovani discepoli, perché mai nessuno di voi studia le *Odi*? Con lo studio delle *Odi* vi eleverete, svilupperete lo spirito di osservazione, sarete socievoli e imparerete a esprimere la vostra disapprovazione. Applicandolo vicino a voi, servirete vostro padre, applicandolo lontano, servirete il vostro sovrano. Inoltre, imparerete molti nomi di uccelli, animali, piante e alberi'; trad. da Lippiello 2003, 211.

fermando: «Per quanto riguarda la retorica [impiegata dai poeti Han], era facile produrre vistosi ornamenti, ma per quanto riguarda il significato, i loro componimenti sono vacui e mancano di veridicità» 於辭則易為藻飾，於義則虛而無徵 (*Wenxuan* 4.173; trad. da Knechtges 1982a, 339). Perciò la loro produzione poetica non può essere considerata come un modello per la poesia *fu*.

In contrasto con la tradizione che lo ha appena preceduto, Zuo Si espone la sua visione e il suo approccio nella creazione del *fu*; utilizzando parole e verbi normalmente correlati al lavoro dello storico («ho consultato mappe» 稽之地圖; «ho verificato le gazzette» 驗之方誌, *Wenxuan* 4.174), dichiara:

升高能賦者，頌其所見也。美物者貴依其本，讚事者宜本其實。

Colui che si arrampica sulla vetta ed è capace di comporre *fu* dovrebbe celebrare ciò che ha visto. Colui che magnifica un oggetto, ne considera con grande attenzione la vera natura. Colui che elogia un avvenimento, dovrebbe basarsi sui fatti. (*Wenxuan* 4.174; trad. Knechtges 1982a, 339)

È evidente in questa trattazione l'importanza di *shi* 實, 'fatti':<sup>21</sup> un'autentica descrizione della realtà che possa creare per il destinatario un effetto di verosimiglianza, quella qualità che invece, secondo Zuo Si, mancava ai *fu* degli Han.<sup>22</sup> Tuttavia, leggendo il «San du fu» non vi si trovano grandi differenze formali rispetto ai *da fu* Han; anche Zuo fa grande uso di quelle stesse esagerazioni e iperboli che rinfacciava ai poeti del passato e il testo può essere considerato un panegirico per i Wei.<sup>23</sup> Benché la poesia abbia un chiaro destinatario, l'imperatore, non si fa menzione nella prefazione di una qual si voglia efficacia suasive del *fu*, mentre il fine educativo è chiaro ma consiste nel presentare in maniera veritiera informazioni sui diversi territori. Il legame politico del *fu* con tale fine didattico è comunque fortemente presente, in quanto, attraverso queste informazioni, l'imperatore può conoscere come tenere sotto controllo il suo stato.

Quando il «San du fu» iniziò a circolare, tuttavia, non riscosse il successo che il suo autore si aspettava, quindi, al fine di promuovere la sua opera all'interno dell'élite culturale dell'epoca, Zuo Si chiese a Huangfu Mi 皇甫謐 (215-282), uno degli eruditi più in vista dell'epoca, di scrivergli una

21 Stephen Owen (1992, 590) spiega il termine nel modo seguente: «*shi* refers to the fixity of definite form [...] and to the external solidity of a *jing*, 'scene'. [...] A line is *shi* if it describes external things and has no 'empty' words that subordinate the description to the way the subject feels about it or interprets it».

22 La grande quantità di *xiaofu*, prodotti durante il periodo Jin, che descrivevano in dettaglio oggetti, animali, piante ecc. può essere considerata dovuta al fine letterario di 'investigare la realtà', di moda all'epoca, un approccio che qui è ascrivito anche ai *da fu*.

23 Quindi verso i Jin, considerati i diretti successori dei Wei e la dinastia sotto cui Zuo Si si trova a vivere.

prefazione (*Jinshu* 92.2376; Knechtges 2010a, 190). La prefazione scritta da Huangfu Mi presenta gli stessi repertori retorici ormai consoni alla genesi del 'genere'. L'erudito collega il *fu* alla grande tradizione poetica dello *Shijing*, e riporta la concisa definizione del genere così come appare nell'«Yiwen zhi»: «Recitare senza cantare, questo è ciò che si definisce *fu*» 不歌而頌謂之賦 (*Hanshu* 30.1756; *Wenxuan* 45.2038). Quindi ne specifica le caratteristiche dicendo:

然則賦也者，所以因物造端，敷弘體理，欲人不能加也。引而申之，故文必極美；觸類而長之，故辭必盡麗。然則美麗之文，賦之作也。[...] 及宋玉之徒，淫文放發，言過於實，誇競之興，體失之漸，風雅之則，於是乎乖。

Quindi il *fu* ha origine quando si è attratti dai fenomeni esterni, vasta e ampia la sua forma e il contenuto, tanto che anche se uno volesse non riuscirebbe ad aggiungere altro a quanto già espresso. Per fare in modo che l'organizzazione del discorso si sviluppi conforme per tutta l'estensione del componimento, il testo deve essere estremamente elegante (*mei*); perché si possano presentare in gran numero oggetti e creature di simile tipologia, **il lessico** deve essere totalmente **bello** (*li*). Quindi **il *fu* si definisce come un testo elegante e bello. [...] A partire dai discepoli di Song Yu, lo stile eccessivo si diffuse, le parole eccedettero la realtà dei fatti, esagerazione e competizione sorsero, l'antica composizione [della rapsodia] progressivamente sparì, e i modelli di comportamento proposti dalle Arie e gli Inni così vennero deviati.**<sup>24</sup> (*Wenxuan* 45.2038)

Benché Huangfu Mi presenti qui la tradizionale narrativa di decadenza che vede i *fu* prodotti da Xunzi e Qu Yuan come gli esempi massimi raggiunti dal genere, e vi sia un accenno al fatto che le rapsodie Han avevano abbandonato la Via degli Antichi sovrani (*wangdao* 王道), l'attenzione è spostata su altro. Il linguaggio impiegato nel *fu* è elogiato a prescindere (Zong 2007, 177), e il 'modello' (*ze* 則) esemplificato dalle *Odi* a cui si dovrebbe ricollegare il genere, similmente a quanto già espresso da Zuo Si, è un modello fedele alla realtà (Zong 2007, 176),<sup>25</sup> cosicché la colpa maggiore individuata nei seguaci di Song Yu è l'aver impiegato un linguaggio troppo ornato tanto da non essere più verosimile e fedele al reale.

Nella parte finale della prefazione, Huangfu si concentra sulla delucidazione degli argomenti trattati specificamente nel *fu* di Zuo Si. Anche se Huangfu

24 Le traduzioni, se non indicato diversamente, sono mie.

25 Questa capacità attribuita ai *fu* diventerà una delle caratteristiche prominenti della poesia *shi* del primo periodo medievale (identificata poi coi caratteri *xingsi* 形似), specialmente nel periodo Liu-Song, la verosimiglianza; come puntualizzato da Kong (2011, 267 nota 1): «The purpose of medieval Chinese poets' application of *xingsi* as a style or a skill was to reach universal truth by depicting tangible objects».

Mi presenta una visione tradizionale elogiando l'opera perché «fornisce un modello appropriato di governo» (Knechtges 2001, 218) (il governo dei Wei), l'attenzione ancora una volta non si concentra sul modello morale. Il *fu* descrivendo come la capitale e l'impero dovrebbero essere, fornisce un modello pratico<sup>26</sup> che una volta studiato può essere riprodotto.

Nel Primo Medioevo cinese fiorirono studi e opere letterarie individuali e anche se la maggior parte dei testi non è giunta sino a noi, tracce della vivacità intellettuale del periodo possono essere ancora percepite grazie ai frammenti testuali rimasti. È questo il caso dell'opera di Zhi Yu 摯虞 (m. 311), studente di Huangfu Mi, autore di uno dei primi lavori di critica letteraria che cerca di analizzare i vari generi letterari al tempo utilizzati, l'oggi purtroppo perduto *Wenzhang liubieji* 文章流別集 (Collezione di scritti letterari divisi per genere).<sup>27</sup> Uno dei pochi frammenti rimasti concerne il *fu*,<sup>28</sup> e nell'incipit della spiegazione il noto repertorio retorico relativo alla genesi del *fu* è utilizzato per esporre un approccio più conservatore di quello del suo maestro:

賦者，敷陳之稱，古詩之流也，古之作詩者，發乎情，止乎禮義。

Il *fu*, è il nome con cui si indica l'esposizione ed è un tipo di poesia antica. I poeti dell'antichità scrissero **mossi dai loro sentimenti ma si fermano presso i limiti della proprietà rituale**.<sup>29</sup> (*Yiwen leiju* 56.1018; trad. con modifiche da W. Swartz 2014, 278)

Torna qui in evidenza l'importanza della moralità, cara all'esegesi classicista, come caratteristica fondamentale dell'opera letteraria che vigila al fine che i sentimenti espressi nelle parole del poeta non superino i 'limiti' e sfocino quindi nell'eccesso. Anche Zhi Yu segue la tradizione riproponendo la storia del 'genere' come la storia di un fallimento che inizia a partire da Song Yu:

至宋玉則多淫浮之病矣。[...] 古詩之賦，以情義為主，以事類為佐。今之賦，以事形為本，以義正為助。[...] 文煩省煩，辭之險易，蓋由于此，夫假象過大則與類相遠，逸辭過壯則與事相違，辯言過理則與義相失，麗靡過美則與情相悖。此四過者，所以背大體而害政教。是以司馬遷割相如之浮說，揚雄疾「辭人之賦麗以淫」。

26 La prefazione si conclude con: «Tutte le istituzioni e i regolamenti per amministrare lo stato possono essere verificati consultando i testi storici; come sarebbe possibile prendere in giro qualcuno?» (*Wenxuan* 45.2040).

27 L'opera constava di 60 *juan* e probabilmente è servita da modello per il *Wenxuan*.

28 Il testo più antico dove sono raccolti alcuni dei frammenti rimasti è l'*Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Collezione di testi letterari organizzati per categorie) (56.1018-19).

29 Le frasi messe in evidenza sono una citazione dalla «Grande prefazione» dello *Shijing*.

**Giunti a Song Yu, troviamo per la maggior parte il difetto della propensione all'eccesso.** [...] Nei *fu* delle antiche *Odi*, sentimenti e giustizia erano di primaria importanza, mentre fatti e cose erano secondari. Nei *fu* di oggi, fatti e fenomeni sono fondamentali, e giustizia e correttezza supplementari. [...] Quando le immagini che vengono create sono esagerate, sono rimosse dalla tipologia a cui in realtà appartengono. **Quando un linguaggio aulico è eccessivamente marcato, si pone in opposizione alle cose reali.** Quando le parole utilizzate in dispute sono troppo razionali, esse non arrivano a cogliere il reale senso (del discorso). **Quando l'ornamento eccede l'eleganza, è contrario ai reali sentimenti.** Questi quattro difetti sono contrari ai grandi principi e recano danno agli insegnamenti morali. Questa è la ragione per cui Sima Qian tralasciò i frivoli discorsi di Sima Xiangru, e **Yang Xiong si dispiacque che «i fu dei poeti rapsodi fossero belli ma conducessero all'eccesso».** (*Yiwen leiju* 56.1018; trad. con qualche modifica da Swartz 2014, 278)

Zhi Yu presenta una critica assai aspra verso i *fu*. Definisce in termini negativi anche quelle caratteristiche identificate come pregi e messe in risalto precedentemente da Zuo Si e Huangfu Mi, come la capacità dei *fu* di descrivere il reale. Secondo il letterato l'unico fine a cui dovrebbe mirare un'opera letteraria è quello morale; tutto il resto passa in secondo piano. La visione classicista viene riaffermata appellandosi alla figura di Yang Xiong e alla sua critica nei confronti dei poeti rapsodi. Nella parte conclusiva del frammento poi, qui omessa, Zhi Yu passa anche in rassegna le varie tipologie di verso impiegate in ambito poetico, e, benché a partire dagli Han orientali, i poeti avessero adottato le più diverse forme, ritiene superiore a tutte il verso tetrasillabico, da sempre associato alla tradizione delle *Odi* e quindi ritenuto ortodosso.<sup>30</sup>

30 In un altro frammento rimasto (*Yiwen leiju* 57.1020) Zhi Yu tratta della tipologia rapsodica dei 'Sette' (*qi* 七), un sottogenere di rapsodie che vede la sua origine nella poesia «Qi fa» 七發 (Sette stimoli) di Mei Cheng 枚乘 (m. 141 a.C.). Nel passo, Zhi Yu riconferma la sua critica asserendo che queste opere hanno la bellezza eccessiva (*yin li*) tipica dei componimenti dei poeti rapsodi (率有辭人淫麗之尤矣), e ancora una volta cita le parole di Yang Xiong che avvalorano il giudizio negativo nei confronti di questi componimenti: «Ah! Yang Xiong ha detto 'I giovani incidono insetti e stili a sigillo' e poco dopo ha aggiunto 'un uomo adulto non lo farebbe'» 揚雄有言「童子雕蟲篆刻」。俄而曰：壯夫不為也。

#### 4 Verità filosofiche attraverso la descrizione del paesaggio: i *fu* di Xie Lingyun (385-433)

La critica letteraria acquista durante il periodo delle Dinastie del Sud ulteriori parametri di giudizio e categorie con cui definire le diverse caratteristiche di testi del passato e del presente (come per esempio 'abilità artistica' *qiao* 巧 e 'verosimiglianza' *xingsi* 形似). Appaiono quindi progressivamente diversi e variegati punti di vista su cosa sia bello e appropriato in letteratura (Knechtges 2001, 207). In particolare, il famoso poeta Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385-433), vissuto a cavallo di diverse realtà politiche, diventa nel V e VI secolo modello di maestria poetica e molti letterati ne fanno oggetto di critica letteraria, elogiandolo o criticandolo.<sup>31</sup> Xie Lingyun si appropriò della tradizione lasciata in eredità dai poeti Han, facendo delle lunghe rapsodie dedicate al panorama naturale il suo marchio di riconoscimento (Swartz 2008, 129), ma elaborando il genere in maniera diversa e personale. La descrizione enciclopedica non è più collegata a un abuso di dettagli ornamentali ma è identificata come una qualità appropriata per descrivere la realtà; tale qualità, utilizzata prima nei *fu*, venne poi trasferita alla poesia *shi*,<sup>32</sup> ed è a Xie Lingyun che se ne deve l'introduzione.

Nella prefazione di uno dei suoi *fu* più famosi, lo «Shanju fu» 山居賦 (Dimorando tra le montagne),<sup>33</sup> Xie dimostra una continuità di pensiero con quanto espresso precedentemente da Zuo Si. Tuttavia, benché faccia uso degli stessi paradigmi adottati dalla tradizione (anch'egli cita le parole di Yang Xiong concernenti il genere), li reinterpreta per esprimere il suo particolare punto di vista. Vediamo di seguito la prefazione per esteso:

古巢居穴處曰岩棲，棟宇居山曰山居，在林野曰丘園，在郊郭曰城傍，四者不同，可以理推。言心也，黃屋實不殊於汾陽。即事也，山居良有異乎市塵。抱疾就閑，順從性情，敢率所樂，而以作賦。揚子雲云：「詩人之賦麗以則。」文體宜兼，以成其美。今所賦既非京都宮觀游獵聲色之盛，而敘山野草木石穀稼之事，才乏昔人，心放俗外，詠於文則可勉而就之，求麗，邈以遠矣。覽者廢張、左之艷辭，尋台、皓之深意，去飾取素，倘值其心耳。意實言表，而書不盡，遺跡索意，托之有賞。

31 Shen Yue 沈約 (m. 513) è il primo ad usare *xingsi* come termine tecnico per la critica letteraria alla fine della biografia di Xie Lingyun del suo *Songshu* 宋書 (Libro dei Liu-Song) (67.177); si veda Kong 2011, 267. Il termine è poi ripreso nella sua variante *qiaosi* 巧似 per descrivere la poesia di Xie nello *Shipin* 詩品 (Valutazione dei poeti) di Zhong Rong 鍾嶸 (467?-518?); Kong 2011, 268. Specialmente sotto i Qi e i Liang, Xie Lingyun, benché molto apprezzato in particolare per la sua 'spontaneità' (*ziran* 自然) verrà anche criticato per essere troppo 'sfrenato' (*yidang* 逸蕩), una qualità non in linea con il gusto corrente del V secolo; si veda Tian 2007, 155.

32 Come puntualizzato da Chang (1986, 110): «As *shi* became more descriptive than before, *fu* also acquired more expressive elements».

33 Secondo David Knechtges (1982, 505 nota 188) questo *fu* non fu inserito nel *Wenxuan* perché troppo lungo.



Nei tempi antichi, dimorare in isolamento sugli alberi o nelle grotte delle montagne era detto *yan qi* (fare il nido su altezze remote); abitare in rifugi sui monti: *shan ju* (abitare sui monti); risiedere in lande desolate e boschive: *qiu yuan* (abitare su colline e in giardini); risiedere nei sobborghi vicino alle città: *cheng bang* (essere vicino alle mura cittadine). Queste quattro [tipologie di eremitismo] sono diverse e possono essere comprese attraverso [differenti] principi. Per il cuore/mente, andare sulla carrozza imperiale può non essere diverso dall'[abitare] a nord del fiume Fen,<sup>34</sup> tuttavia nei fatti vi è una differenza tra il vivere ritirati sui monti o al centro del mercato cittadino. Le angustie covate si trasformano in calma, si può seguire la propria natura originaria e i propri sentimenti, si osa mettere in pratica ciò che ci dà gioia, ecco perché ho scritto un *fu*. **Yang Xiong ha detto: «I fu dei poeti delle Odi, attraverso la loro bellezza offrono modelli di comportamento morale» Ornamento e struttura devono apparire insieme per portare a perfezione la bellezza [del pezzo].** Oggi quei componimenti definiti come *fu* non sono quelli che raccontano ogni aspetto della capitale, dei palazzi e belvedere, delle spedizioni di caccia e di suoni e colori [della vita di corte], ma quelli che descrivono la realtà legata alle piante, alberi, pietre, e cereali di monti e campagne. Il [mio] talento è inferiore a quello dei poeti del passato, ma il [mio] cuore/mente si trova al di là delle usanze comuni; se [lo] trascrivo in versi allora posso con sforzo realizzarlo. Ma la ricerca della bellezza, è un'impresa sempre più lontana da raggiungere. Colui che leggerà [questo *fu*] abbandoni le magnifiche parole di Zhang Heng (78-139)<sup>35</sup> e di Zuo Si, [e] ricerchi i significati profondi di Tai Tong<sup>36</sup> o dei «Quattro canuti»;<sup>37</sup> elimini l'ornamento e adotti la semplicità, solo allora forse riuscirà a cogliere il suo cuore/mente (quello espresso nella poesia). Sebbene le idee possano in realtà essere espresse a parole, i testi scritti non ne esauriscono il significato. Le tracce che ho lasciato e le idee che ho perseguito, le affido a qualcuno che le apprezzi. (*Xie Lingyun ji jiaozhu*, 318-34)<sup>38</sup>

34 Con «a nord del fiume Fen» si indica la scelta dell'eremitismo come stile di vita e deriva da un passo del primo capitolo del *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (1.31).

35 Zhang Heng è un famoso autore di *fu* degli Han orientali, in particolare, la rapsodia «Er jing fu» 二京賦 (Le due metropoli) è considerata il suo capolavoro. Il testo è contenuto nel *Wenxuan* e tradotto da Knechtges 1982a, 80-309.

36 Tai Tong 臺佟 visse alla fine della dinastia Han - inizio dei Wei. Sotto il regno dell'imperatore Zhang 漢章帝 (r. 75-88) decise di abbandonare tutto e diventare un eremita vivendo nei boschi e cibandosi di erbe; si veda De Crespigny 2007, 781.

37 Quattro uomini che durante la fine della dinastia Qin, per scappare dai tumulti che conclusero la dinastia, si ritirarono in eremitaggio sul monte Shang 商山; si veda. Declercq, 1998, 357-9.

38 Il testo è contenuto anche nel *Songshu* 67.1754-72.

Xie Lingyun cita qui le parole di Yang Xiong sui poeti delle *Odi* reinterpretandone però il significato originario: i modelli morali proposti dalle *Odi* vengono tradotti come modelli formali di componimento poetico. Egli ne elucida il senso infatti dicendo: «Ornamento e struttura devono apparire insieme per portare a perfezione la bellezza [del pezzo]» 文體宜兼，以成其美.<sup>39</sup> La contrapposizione qualitativa avviene invece tra i *fu* encomiastici legati alla tradizione Han occidentale, quelli cioè dedicati alla descrizione elogiativa della capitale, dei suoi palazzi e giardini, e la sua personale produzione di *fu* che, come è espresso chiaramente dal poeta, mira a descrivere ed elogiare il paesaggio naturale. La dipartita dai canoni estetici tradizionali del genere è riaffermata quando Xie sostiene che la ricerca della bellezza è un'impresa irraggiungibile a cui egli stesso non è interessato (求麗，邈以遠矣) e invita anche il suo lettore ideale a non perseguirne l'interesse, esortandolo a non curarsi delle opere di poeti che invece grazie ai *da fu* hanno acquisito prestigio e fama (Zhang Heng e Zuo Si). Il modello proposto dal poeta è invece fortemente influenzato dalle istanze care alla Xuanxue 玄學 (Scienza del mistero), e si concretizza nell'invito a rigettare l'ornamento (*shi* 飾) e ad adottare la semplicità (*su* 素).<sup>40</sup>

Leggendo il componimento è possibile notare come Xie Lingyun faccia uso dello stesso stile enciclopedico utilizzato dai grandi poeti rapsodi, ma innova il genere sostituendo il sapere libresco, che caratterizzava l'aulico linguaggio del *fu*, con il sapere acquisito tramite l'esperienza diretta (Swartz 2010, 383) resa evidente dalla precisa descrizione del panorama naturale rappresentato nel suo componimento. È necessario fare qui una breve puntualizzazione. La rilettura del genere *fu*, prima destinato all'imperatore, operata da Xie può avvenire anche perché le condizioni sociali in cui i poeti si trovano a comporre sono decisamente mutate nel periodo delle dinastie del Sud e la figura del letterato stesso è ora declinata in diverse tipologie. Xie Lingyun, in particolare, non è un poeta di corte, né un poeta in cerca di gloria o di compiacere le autorità nella speranza di un riscontro sociale. Xie era membro di una delle più potenti famiglie dell'epoca e non aveva certo bisogno di glorificare nessuno per acquisire prestigio; le montagne che descrive sono infatti di sua proprietà. È evidente nella prefazione una conscia manifestazione di possesso del capitale culturale letterario e un'altrettanto conscia manipolazione della tradizione. Il *fu*, nella personale visione di Xie Lingyun, è ormai lontano dal dissidio legato al genere tra rimostranza e ricerca di piacere estetico e dei sensi; è stato trasformato in uno strumento di espressione del sé attraverso un linguaggio ricercato.

39 Leggo qui *wen* 文 e *ti* 體 (ornamento e struttura) come due sostantivi staccati mentre Wendy Swartz (2010, 383) li lega insieme: «Literary form must combine both [beauty and the standard] in order to achieve perfection».

40 Per una dettagliata spiegazione su come le istanze care alla Xuanxue siano state rielaborate dal poeta si veda Swartz 2010, 381-5.

## 5 *Yin li e diaochong*: posizioni classiciste sotto i Liang

Il classicismo era però ancora presente nel panorama culturale delle dinastie del Sud, e il giudizio di Yang Xiong riguardante i *fu* non era stato accantonato dal discorso letterario dell'epoca. Abbiamo detto come il concetto di *yin li* 淫麗 riferito alle rapsodie venisse spesso evocato in coppia insieme alla definizione di 'incidere insetti' (*diaochong*), che continuerà a essere utilizzata per indicare pratiche letterarie non ortodosse,<sup>41</sup> e benché questo sia il periodo che vede la promozione in ambito letterario del nuovo stile di poesia *gongti shi* 宮體詩 (poesia di palazzo), troviamo dei letterati che si rifanno alla tradizione più antica, invocando una letteratura impegnata nella persuasione morale.

Uno dei letterati più rappresentativi di questa posizione è Pei Ziye 裴子野 (469-530); storico e studioso conservatore, discendente di una rinomata famiglia di letterati,<sup>42</sup> vive durante i Liang. Nel suo saggio, conosciuto poi con il nome di *Diaochong lun* 雕蟲論 (Discorso sull'incidere insetti),<sup>43</sup> che rappresenta uno dei pochi frammenti rimasti della sua ben più ambiziosa opera, il *Song lue* 宋略 (Storia concisa dei Song),<sup>44</sup> Pei lamenta che durante le dinastie del Sud (Pei scrive durante il V secolo ma ferma la progressione storica della sua trattazione ai Liu-Song), la persuasione morale non fosse più stata il fine principale nel comporre le poesie e che invece gli autori scrivessero per *zitong* 自通, «un'espressione che trasmette sia il senso di far conoscere i propri sentimenti al mondo che quello di cercare di farsi conoscere dal mondo» (Chen 2014, 268). L'autore collega quindi

41 Shen Yue, ad esempio, all'interno del capitolo «Zang Tao, Xu Guang, Fu Long liezhuan» 臧熹徐廣傅隆列傳 (Biografie di Zang Tao, Xu Gang e Fu Long) del suo *Songshu* (55.1552), usa questa formula per indicare quella che lui riteneva essere un'epoca di decadenza in ambito poetico, il periodo Wei: «A partire dal periodo in cui i Wei ricevettero il mandato, [i letterati] si appassionarono principalmente all' 'incidere insetti', le tradizioni esegetiche abbandonarono l'insegnamento ortodosso dei classici (*zhangju*) e tutti si dedicarono alle più diverse arti» 自魏氏膺命, 主爰雕虫, 家棄章句, 人重異術. In questo passo, *zhangju* si riferisce all'insegnamento ortodosso dei classicisti Han, la così detta *Jingxue* 經學. Secondo Shen Yue, durante i Wei, coloro che erano al potere erano interessati ai più diversi tipi di arte (un chiaro riferimento a Cao Cao 曹操, 155-220, e alla sua ricerca di *cairen* 才人, 'uomini con abilità'), promuovendo un tipo di letteratura priva di fini didattici e lontana dagli standard morali.

42 Il suo bisnonno era infatti Pei Songzhi 裴松之 (372-451), a cui si deve il prezioso commentario del *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Annali dei Tre Regni).

43 Il titolo non fu originariamente dato da Pei ma fu attribuito al testo successivamente, estrapolando il commento di Du You 杜佑 (735-812), compilatore del *Tongdian* 通典 (Compendio comprensivo delle istituzioni) (*juan* 16), in cui il testo di Pei era contenuto: «Thus the empire admired how people laid ornament to their own words, and the art of insect carving was ascendant in the age» 於是天下向風人自藻飾雕蟲之藝盛於時矣 (Chen 2014, 268); tuttavia l'espressione era ormai ben nota e appariva nel testo di Pei quindi l'associazione tra i due risultava naturale; Williams 2015, 81 nota 82.

44 Per maggiori informazioni su Pei Ziye e la sua opera si rimanda a Chen 2010, 119-25.

il linguaggio elaborato dei testi poetici, lo stile elegante e ornato, con il desiderio di affermare il proprio nome e la propria personalità di scrittore nella società, al fine di promuovere «ciò che è personale e soggettivo, a scapito dell'illustrazione dei principi morali» (269). In particolare, nel passo che segue, egli afferma:

自是閭閻年少，貴游總角，罔不擯落六藝，吟詠情性，學者以博依為急務，章句為專魯，淫文破典，斐爾為功。無被於管弦，非止乎禮義。

A partire da questo periodo, i giovani dei villaggi e i bambini della nobiltà hanno tutti abbandonato i *Sei Classici* per intonare in versi i loro intimi sentimenti. Gli studiosi fraternizzano in gran misura con le figure poetiche come se fosse una necessità impellente e [invece] considerano stupidi e inutili i commentari ai testi ortodossi. **I loro scritti sregolati violano le norme tradizionali (*dian*), e ciò che è sgargiante e ornato è degno di merito. Non compongono in accordo ai flauti e alle corde, né «si fermano presso i limiti della proprietà rituale».** (Testo ricostruito in Wang 2012, 69; trad. con qualche cambiamento da Knechtges 2001, 208)

Pei Ziye indirizza la sua critica in particolare nei confronti dell'era Daming (457-64) della dinastia Liu-Song, quando, secondo l'autore, i componimenti letterari erano diventati il mezzo attraverso cui accedere alle cariche da funzionario, mentre i testi cari ai classicisti erano stati messi da parte.<sup>45</sup> L'enfasi sull'importanza di *dian* 典 (variamente tradotto come 'canonico', 'appropriato', 'decoroso' ecc.) in campo letterario fa di Pei Ziye un arcaista che invocava l'antica visione Han nei confronti dell'opera letteraria. Essa accettava l'espressione dei sentimenti personali e intimi in poesia solo e esclusivamente nel caso in cui vi fossero nel componimento tematiche politiche e sociali, e condannava invece l'espressione di sentimenti volta a definire la personalità del poeta. Vediamo nel passo sopra citato come Pei faccia uso delle stesse citazioni classiche utilizzate in precedenza da Zhi Yu e tratte dalla «Grande prefazione» al *Libro delle Odi*.

La visione conservatrice di Pei è condivisa da un altro suo contemporaneo, Liu Xie 劉勰 (465?-523), che all'interno della sua opera più rinomata, il *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (La mente letteraria e l'intaglio di draghi), è anch'egli promotore della tradizionale visione classicista della letteratura.<sup>46</sup> Nel capitolo «Zong Jing» 宗經 (I *Classici* come modello letterario), Liu Xie espone le sei caratteristiche che fanno sì che un testo letterario

45 Critica che ha già dei precedenti nella tradizione cinese; si veda ad esempio il clamore che suscitò sotto gli Han orientali l'istituzione dell'Accademia della Porta Hongdu 鴻都門學 che selezionava i letterati in base a criteri letterari diversi da quelli adottati dall'Accademia Imperiale; si veda Knechtges 2010b e Baccini 2011, 168-73.

46 Per un'analisi della concezione letteraria di Liu Xie si rimanda a Cai 2001, 51-5.

possa essere definito affine ai *Classici*: purezza della forma, verità del contenuto, profondità di sentimenti, moralità delle idee espresse, stile semplice e non artificioso, e, infine, bellezza letteraria lontana dall'eccesso (*wenli er buyin* 文麗而不淫) (*Wenxin diaolong* 1/3.27). Per sottolineare la validità delle norme esposte, Liu ricorre quindi alla figura di Yang Xiong, collegando quanto espresso alla tradizione classicista dello studioso Han: «Maestro Yang comparò [la composizione dei *Classici*] all'intaglio di oggetti di giada, volendo esprimere che i modelli letterari sono innati nei *Cinque Classici*» 揚子比雕玉以作器謂五經之含文也 (*Wenxin diaolong* 1/3.27; trad. basata su Shih 2011, 20-1). In particolare, la 'bellezza' letteraria per Liu Xie è quella che combina la bellezza estetica del linguaggio con i principi generati dal processo civilizzatore proprio dei *Classici* (Chen Gong 1999, 85). È evidente qui l'immagine allegorica della giada intagliata (*diaoyu* 雕玉) simboleggiante testi letterari ortodossi e degni, che viene messa in implicita, ma allo stesso tempo evidente, relazione con l'intaglio di insetti (*diaochong* 雕蟲).

Liu Xie, oltre a dedicare un capitolo intero del *Wenxin diaolong* alla poesia rapsodica, il «Quan fu» 銓賦 (Spiegazione del *fu*) (*Wenxin diaolong* 2/8.95-106), ritorna sull'argomento varie volte in diversi capitoli dell'opera. In particolare, nel capitolo «Qing cai» 情采 (Emozioni e ornamenti letterari), egli condanna fermamente quei poeti che abbelliscono i propri scritti con un linguaggio ricercato solo per ottenere fama (e promuovere se stessi e il proprio talento nella società) e stigmatizza le composizioni rapsodiche facendo ricorso al paradigma *yin li* 淫麗: «perciò [...] se si ha come fine solo la creazione di un testo letterario [a costo di inventarsi sentimenti], il testo sarà dotato di una bellezza eccessiva (*yin li*) e prolissità esagerata» 故 [...] 為文者淫麗而煩濫 (*Wenxin diaolong* 7/31.416). In accordo con la visione espressa anche da Pei Ziyue, Liu Xie accetta l'espressione dei sentimenti in poesia solo se vincolata a un messaggio da indirizzare al potere politico.<sup>47</sup> Forse non è ininfluente al fine di spiegare perché entrambi i letterati mantenessero delle posizioni così conservatrici in un'epoca di grandi innovazioni letterarie il fatto che sia Liu che Pei provenissero da famiglie un tempo eminenti ma ormai, nella loro epoca, in decadenza: in epoca Liang era possibile attraverso la composizione di opere letterarie trasformare il capitale culturale in prestigio sociale (Tian 2007, 113) ed entrambi, in mancanza di un effettivo potere sociale e politico, affidarono ai loro scritti il compito di preservare il loro nome presso la posterità e acquisire rispetto; nessuna visione poteva essere più consona a questa

47 *Wenxin diaolong* 7/31.416: «Perché l'apparire delle 'Arie degli stati' (*feng*) e degli 'Inni' (*ya*) fu dovuta al fatto che le emozioni e gli intenti [dei poeti] accumularono indignazione che [questi] espressero in versi al fine di rimostrare contro i propri superiori; questo è ciò che si definisce: creare un testo letterario dalle emozioni» 蓋風雅之興, 志思蓄憤, 而吟詠情性, 以諷其上, 此為情而造文也.

missione di quella classicista, che da sempre<sup>48</sup> legava l'immortalità di un'opera al suo valore didattico e morale e che era comunque sempre stata privilegiata all'interno dell'apparato politico di corte.

## 6 Conclusioni

La pluralità di approcci nei confronti dei *fu* che caratterizza il primo periodo medievale è un ottimo esempio per analizzare come la tradizione possa essere utilizzata, riletta e adattata in contesti e per fini differenti. Nei secoli che separano il crollo degli Han dall'avvento dei Tang, un'altra grande dinastia che riuscirà ad allargare i territori assoggettati all'impero anche verso occidente, le posizioni più conservatrici sono bilanciate da quelle che rivendicano per l'opera letteraria un impiego non prettamente didattico. Sotto i Tang la visione classicista, funzionale alla legittimazione politica della classe dirigente del nord che doveva succedere all'impero delle dinastie del sud, tornò invece dominante e colpì in particolar modo i *fu* il cui influsso malefico fu paragonato a quello delle Arie di Zheng 鄭 e Wei 衛 dello *Shijing* (Graham 1980, 46).<sup>49</sup> Da quel momento in poi la tipologia rapsodica affine ai *da fu* degli Han fu trattata con sospetto e pur continuando ad avere degli estimatori perse il suo prestigio.<sup>50</sup>

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48 Espresso nella formula *li yan* 立言, 'stabilire le parole', questo concetto appare per la prima volta all'interno dello *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (ca. 300 a.C.); si veda Baccini 2012, 213 nota 1.

49 La musica delle arie degli stati di Zheng e Wei secondo l'esegesi classicista è la musica di stati in decadenza. Essa ha la capacità di agire sull'animo umano e corromperlo (*Lunyu* 15.11, 17.18). Per un approfondimento sulla tematica si veda Sabattini 2012.

50 La produzione rapsodica sotto i Tang, sebbene presente, è raramente trattata anche perché ritenuta poco rappresentativa della produzione letteraria dell'epoca. In epoca Tang la tipologia rapsodica più utilizzata è quella dei *xiao fu* e *lü fu* 律賦 (*fu* regolati); si veda Kroll 2010, 277-8.

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# Mapping Ideology in Language Han Dong's *Zha gen* (*Banished!*) and Ma Jian's *Rou zhi tu* (*Beijing Coma*)

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**Abstract** Ideology can play a significant role in shaping literary representations of contemporary China. This study aims to demonstrate that a close reading of the authors' use of language can reveal the influence of ideology on the literary texts, even when it comes to authors whose positions towards P.R.C. are diametrically opposite. The analysis compares Han Dong's *Zha gen* (*Banished!*) and Ma Jian's *Rou zhi tu* (*Beijing Coma*), implementing Fairclough's model for Critical Discourse Analysis on vocabulary and grammar. The experiential, relational, and expressive values coded in the texts reveal different tendencies in the authors' attitudes when representing social reality. Nonetheless, they prove the existence of common ideological features underlying the authors' literary expression.

**Summary** 1 Language and Ideology through Literature. – 2 Selected Corpus and Methodology. – 3 Analysis. – 3.1 Vocabulary. – 3.2 Grammar. – 4 Two Voices, One Ideology.

**Keywords** Han Dong. Ma Jian. Banished! Beijing Coma. Ideology. Critical Discourse Analysis.

## 1 Language and Ideology through Literature

Ideology and language have always been influencing each other in many significant ways.<sup>1</sup> This is especially true for the Chinese language, whose roots lie in an extremely politicised territory, where ideology and power have actively contributed to shaping language features over centuries (Hodge, Louie 1998, 96). As a result, aside from the juxtaposition of 'official' and 'non-official' language (Link 2013, 243), political influences underlie the common speech of contemporary Chinese as well, being found even in everyday language. In such a scenario, narrative plays a central role in providing authors with an effective tool to project their vision and becomes an even more effective mirror through which to analyse the re-

1 This article is a revised version of a paper presented at the II Young Scholars' Forum in Chinese Studies (7-9 May 2015, ICS, The Chinese University of Hong Kong). I would like to thank Prof. Lik-Kwan Cheung and Prof. Lai Chi-Tim for their important observations and suggestions. Special thanks also to Prof. Nicoletta Pesaro, Prof. Roberta Dreon and Dr. Francesca Masi for their comments on the first draft of the paper.

flection of politics seeping from an author's idiolect. Han Dong 韓東 has always asserted his writing to be the expression of an individual position, claiming a complete detachment from the political scene. On the other hand, Ma Jian's 馬建 critical spirit (Wang Der-wei 2010, 6) has guided his attack to the Chinese system and its way of dealing with social issues by adopting an approach whose straightforwardness has led him to exile.

This study aims to demonstrate that a close reading of the authors' use of language can reveal features that are symptomatic of a political position, showing the influence of ideology on their use of contemporary Chinese. Analysis of the linguistic level, in fact, can reveal both the political connotation underlying an apparently neutral text, and the key role language plays in expressing overt criticism.

Given the socio-cultural perspective of the study, the analysis was conducted following the theoretical model provided by Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter CDA). The CDA approach arises from the field of critical linguistics, among whose first developers include scholars like Fairclough (1989) and van Dijk (1993). The applications of the CDA model range widely among a variety of fields, usually focusing on non-literary texts. However, a significant contribution to its application in the field of literature was provided by Birch (1989) and Weber (1992). Among the most recent studies, examples of investigation of literary texts can be found in the field of gender fiction (Sunderland 2004) and literary translation (Isbuga-Erel 2008; Mansourabadi, Karimnia 2013). In the Chinese context, analysts have increasingly implemented the CDA model; the works by Wang Xinlong (2014a, 2014b) and Wu Hongyan and Xu Yan (2008), in particular, have contributed significantly. However, their research focuses on the analysis of news reports, generally in English, and they do not investigate the impact of ideology on narrative texts.

With regard to the influence of Chinese politics on language, research has been conducted from many perspectives in order to reveal the political jargon underlying contemporary Chinese language. In this field, the studies by Hodge and Louie (1998) and Link (2013) deserve a special mention. They have addressed the issue of political control over common language from a cultural perspective, the former investigating categories such as lexicon, grammar, and metaphor, and the latter conducting analysis ranging from literature to visual art. Additionally, the study by Fengyuan Ji (2004) provided a significant contribution in representing the linguistic engineering behind the political shaping of the Chinese language. Nevertheless, the focus of the abovementioned studies lies essentially in the political value intrinsic to the lexico-grammatical structure of contemporary Chinese, and they do not address the issue of politics influencing subjective literary expression.

Han Dong has been investigated mainly for his poetry (Crevel 2005a, 2005b). While his narrative has been studied by Chinese liter-

ary critics (Wang Chunlin 2011; Wang Yong 2011a, 2011b), on the international scene the contribution is still very limited (Hunt 2010), and his fiction still lacks deep investigation. Conversely, Ma Jian's work has been analysed both as one of the main examples of the literature of the diaspora (B. Kong 2012; Damgaard 2012; S. Kong 2014) and as a case study from a translational perspective (Pesaro 2013).

These approaches provided the background for this study, which aims to make a further step towards the analysis of political features of the Chinese language as they are contextualised in the narrative text, subsequently serving as tools to project the authors' ideological stances.

## 2 Selected Corpus and Methodology

This study was conducted on two major works by Han Dong and Ma Jian, namely Han Dong's *Zha gen* 扎根 ([2003] 2010), translated in English as *Banished!* (2009), and Ma Jian's *Rou zhi tu* 肉之土 (2010), translated in English as *Beijing Coma* ([2008] 2009), focusing in particular on two selected sections. The significance of the corpus lies in its particular contextualisation: *Zha gen* is a novel set in the very politicised era of the Cultural Revolution and describes the life of families banished to the countryside, while *Rou zhi tu* takes place in the new millennium and recounts the 1989 Tian'anmen Square protests. The two novels show very different narratological features and, similarly, a very thorough comparison can be drawn on the linguistic level of their expression.

The inspiration to write *Zha gen* came from Han Dong's childhood experiences in the countryside, and narrates the story of the family of a writer named Tao. During the Cultural Revolution Tao walks the way of the Glorious Banishment, and, together with his family, moves from Nanjing to a country village named Sanyu, located in Jiangsu province. Through a detailed description of everyday life, the novel depicts the efforts of Tao's family to overcome many difficulties, such as harsh living conditions, poverty, and the social gap between the Taos and the local people, in order to forget about their past life in the city and 'strike roots' in the village of Sanyu. The chapter of *Zha gen* object of the study is titled "516" and deals with two cases of imprisonment and detention during the Cultural Revolution: Hou Jimin - Tao's old friend, and Su Qun - Tao's wife. The two characters, both victims of injustice, are taken for interrogation as suspects related to the counterrevolutionary movement named '516'. Although they are later released, their involvement in the case continues to affect their future lives. Given the particular stress on the relationship with the authorities and the issue of coercive power, this chapter contains many features that can be analysed to provide an insight on the influence of ideology in Han Dong's writing.

Ma Jian's *Rou zhi tu* is a memoir of the Tian'anmen incident of 1989 from the point of view of Dai Wei, one of the students involved in the protest. During the massacre of June 4th Dai Wei is shot in the head and falls into a deep coma, in which he stays for ten years. During his vegetative state, Dai Wei puts together the pieces of his memory and recollects those spring days, describing the complicated mechanics behind the organisation of the student protest. The narration is divided into two temporal dimensions: the memories of 1989 and the present, in which – even as a comatose patient – he is able to perceive through hearing and smell. The section which is the subject of this study recounts an episode of vandalism during which three protesters throw ink onto Mao Zedong's portrait hanging over Tian'anmen Square. The confrontation with the political aspect represented by Mao, and with the authorities willing to undertake certain measures to punish the narrated fact, makes this passage particularly suitable for the analysis of the interactions between text and ideology.

The theoretical approach elaborated by Fairclough (1989) known as CDA provides a model to investigate the impact of ideology on the use of language from a social perspective. The scheme is divided into the three categories of 'vocabulary', 'grammar', and 'textual structure'. The first category analysed was vocabulary, subsequently, the study focused on the use of grammar. The third category, textual structure, was not included in the study, as it would require a more comprehensive approach addressing the whole structure of the novels. Fairclough's model distinguishes between three types of values implicit in the formal features of the text, namely: experiential, relational, and expressive. The experiential value is related to the speaker's experience of the world in terms of knowledge and beliefs; the relational value contributes to shaping and defining social relationship; and the expressive value concerns 'subjects', with its scope being to build and express social identities within the text (Fairclough 1989, 112).

### 3 Analysis

The analysis is divided into the two main categories of vocabulary and grammar. Both of these are further differentiated into the subcategories of 'experiential', 'relational', and 'expressive' values. Clearly, text features are likely to carry several types of values at the same time, and categories are expected to overlap. The resulting classification was outlined according to the most significant values observed in the analysed features of lexicon and grammar. Nevertheless, these are not intended to be absolute, as each of them is loaded with various shades of different meanings.

### 3.1 Vocabulary

#### 3.1.1 Experiential Values

In Han Dong's narration of the 516 case, the relations of synonymy, antonymy, and similitude established in the texts contribute to shaping the ideological background against which the narration takes place.

The first significant feature to be encountered in the references to the period of the Cultural Revolution is the relation of synonymy between *shijie* 世界 (world)<sup>2</sup> and *shidai* 時代 (era), established by adding the prepositional phrase *huo shidai* 或時代 (or era) in brackets for the first five occurrences of the word *shijie*. This suggests the understanding of the Cultural Revolution not merely as a period in Chinese history but as a world apart, implicating a totally different system of rules, values, and also language, able to alienate *lai ziyu lingwai yi ge shijie de duzhe* 來自於另一個世界的讀者 (Han 2010, 144), "those [lit. the readers] from another world" (Han 2009, 144).

A second noteworthy cue is coded in the reference to *Mao's Collected Works*. The book is not described as a milestone in the contemporary literary scene, but is regarded as a weapon to combat the guards looking over Hou Jimin instead. In fact, Han Dong uses the exact formulation *youli de wuqi* 有力的武器 (powerful weapon) when describing how Hou's knowledge of Mao's writings ultimately provides him with a tool to stand against power. This weapon is the symbol of *wendou* 文鬥 (fight with words) which the author contrasts with *wudou* 武鬥 (use of violence), creating a relation of antonymy between the first powerful weapon – as the Confucian tradition suggests – and the guards' *xuruo* 虛弱 (weaker) one. The identification of Mao's thought with a *wuqi* 武器 (weapon) was a widely used metaphor during the Cultural Revolution, when, in fact, it was considered as the most powerful weapon of all: "To our troops, the best weapon is not airplanes, nor big cannons, nor tanks, nor atomic bombs; the best weapon is Mao Tse-tung's thought" (*Renmin Ribao*, 1 March 1966, as quoted in Chuang 1967).

Another example of an established relation of antonymy involves the term *fandongpai* 反動派 (reactionary faction), typical of the 'official' language (Link 2013, 249), as opposed to *geming xianlie* 革命先烈 (revolutionary martyrs). The second term of the antonymy is clearly connoted, since the commonly used collocation contributes to positively represent the revolutionaries as they are compared to the counterrevolutionaries. In fact, although Hou's character is not directly depicted as a villain to the reader, Han Dong still refers to him by a synonym for 'reactionaries',

2 Unless otherwise specified, the translations in brackets are by the author of the article. The translations reported between quotation marks are cited from the English editions of the novels, translated by Nicky Harman (Han Dong) and Flora Drew (Ma Jian).

*fangeming jituan* 反革命集團 (counterrevolutionary group), using its negative connotation to negatively define Hou's good behaviour:

至於侯繼民是否真是反革命？五一六是否真是反革命集團？已無關緊要，小陶也不關心。侯繼民的獄中表現和電影裡的那些革命先烈別無二致。(Han 2010, 146)

Was Hou really a counterrevolutionary? Was the 516 group really counterrevolutionary? It was irrelevant, and young Tao did not care. To him, Hou's behaviour in prison was just like that of the revolutionary martyrs in films. (Han 2009, 147)

In Ma Jian's passage, the most evident feature of lexicon expressing experiential value is related to the representation of Mao Zedong's double identity. The author gives space to both of the contrasting perspectives, depicting the Chairman as a hero on the one hand, and as a criminal on the other hand:

那車上的解放軍全是熱愛毛主席的 (Ma 2010, 383)

The soldiers waiting to march into the city worship Chairman Mao. (Ma 2009, 416)<sup>3</sup>

毛是一個國家制度問題的全部象徵 (Ma 2010, 384)

He symbolises all that's wrong with our country. (Ma 2009, 417)

Although Ma Jian clearly expresses his personal criticism throughout the novel, the cult of Mao Zedong still represents a deeply rooted belief, which received mention in this section. In fact, the students' concern about the consequences of such an extreme gesture contributes to demonstrate their seriousness and credibility. Closely related to the significance of Mao's figure is the debate on the symbolic meaning of the portrait hanging over Tian'anmen Square. Even the students who clearly refuse to recognise the Chairman as a *taisui* 太歲 "emperor", tend to believe that the portrait is endowed with the same representative value as the national flag, and that it therefore has the power to *xiangzheng guojia* 象徵國家 (symbolise the nation).

Despite the author's open criticism, references to contemporary political discourse are coded in Ma Jian's text. An example can be found in the sentence *zanmen shi juzhe guoqi changzhe guoge zoujin guangchang de* 咱們是舉著國旗唱著國歌走進廣場的 (Ma 2010, 392), "We arrived in this Square

3 The translated version of the novel presents significant differences to the original Chinese text; these were introduced by Flora Drew and Ma Jian in order to create a text capable of delivering the author's meaning to a foreign readership in the most effective way. For a detailed analysis see Pesaro 2013.

waving the national flag and singing the national anthem” (Ma 2009, 426). The collocation *juzhe guoqi* (to hold up the national flag) is a clear reference to the expression ‘*gaoju... qizhi*’ 高舉……旗幟 (to hold up the flag of...): a military metaphor frequently used in contemporary political speeches (Magagnin 2014, 116).

Fairclough states that some words are “ideologically contested”, as they express “social struggle” (1989, 114). In Ma Jian’s text, this feature is shown in the following sentence, where the author uses the word *Gongchandang* 共產黨 (Communist Party) to describe the students’ movement:

我們搞運動的模式主要來自文革經驗，這就很容易把民主運動變成共產黨式的反抗運動。(Ma 2010, 380)

Our only reference point is the Cultural Revolution, so there’s always a danger this democracy movement will degenerate into a communist-style rebellion. (Ma 2009, 413)

This choice can be regarded as an attempt to heavily condemn the methods used in the past by the Party and define democracy first and foremost by stating expressively what it is not. Similarly, the reference to the *wenge* 文革 (Cultural Revolution) seems to express strong criticism towards this phase of Chinese history, representing a very detached attitude that only a disenchanted spirit could adopt.

### 3.1.2 Relational Values

The expression *xiafang* 下放 (literally ‘downward transfer’, often translated in English as ‘banishment’) is of vital importance to Han Dong’s novel and one of the most effective in providing relational meaning. The word is used to refer to the social group that underwent the transfer to the countryside and contributes to place the described characters in a particular social position. In fact, it implies they are part of a movement aimed at “forcing the intermixture of large social groups and the interfusion of varied cultural levels, as well as the rehabilitation or reinvigoration of the cadre, under the compulsion of Party ideology” (Hsia 1963, V). The ideology intrinsic to this term operates autonomously and provides the characters of the novel, as well as the readers, with a ‘given set’ of defined social relationships.

When referring to *Mao’s Selected Works*, Han Dong chooses a wording that is loaded with relational meaning and suggests Hou Jimin’s intellectual superiority to the guards who are detaining him. In fact, when describing the officers’ feeling upon realising that the prisoner apparently knows this literature much better than they do, the author writes that they are afraid of being *zhuazhu* 抓住 (caught) by him in misquoting Mao’s words. The low



register and the implicit aggressiveness of the colloquial word *zhua* 抓 (to grasp), further enhanced by the resultative *zhu* 住 (firm), suggests an almost infantile attitude that contributes to lower the intellectual level of the interrogators. In contrast, the author uses the *chengyu touliang huanzhu* 偷梁換柱 (to perpetuate a fraud) to describe Hou's success in making the officers believe in the authenticity of his false quotations. The choice of a *chengyu* itself tends to raise the register, and, moreover, its collocation evokes a completely different social scene, hinting at Hou's intellectual superiority. However, Hou is then described as *tai shusheng yiqi le* 太書生意氣了 "too much the noble-hearted scholar". This expression, although it further elevates him intellectually, actually contributes to collocate him in a lower position, as it highlights his inconsistent idealism. At the end of the section, the author reports young Tao's thought about Hou's behaviour while in prison: *Hou Jimin de yu zhong biao xian he dianying li de na xie geming xianlie bie wu er zhi* 侯繼民的獄中表現和電影里的那些革命先烈別無二致 (Han 2010, 146), "to him [...] [it] was just like that of the revolutionary martyrs in films" (Han 2009, 147). This similitude contributes to confirm the discrepancy between the common belief and the actual behaviour, establishing a new social relationship between these alleged 'counterrevolutionary' figures and the common people. Nevertheless, when describing young Tao's attitude towards the pieces of writing that Hou has made out of recycled cigarette packs, the author writes that the boy regards these *cucuo* 粗糙 "crude" artefacts as if they were *geming xianlie de yiwu* 革命先烈的遺物 (Han 2010, 148), "relics of revolutionary martyrs" (Han 2009, 149). This collocation clearly implies moral superiority of the martyrs to Hou's creations, which are not legitimised, and, hence, considered less elevated.

In the section of the chapter that describes the detention of Su Qun, a new system of social relations is presented. Su Qun holds the disadvantaged position of a detainee, which is in stark contrast to the position of the powerful people who she has the chance to informally meet in the dining hall. Moreover, the author depicts her relationships with the members of the *gongzuo zu* 工作組 (production team), described as *daqun zaiwo* 大權在握 (wielding the sceptre of power), and with the two female *zhiqing* 知情 (urblings), whose job it is to supervise her. Although they are said to be *qinjin* 親近 (friendly) to Su Qun, they become *yansu* 嚴肅 (severe) when acting in front of the interrogators. The word *zu* 組 (team) itself carries a connotation of "fear and gravity", since the "'organisation department' in a 'work unit' controlled not just your career but your entire fate in life" (Link 2013, 257), and contributes to the creation of a special sense of authority. The author explains the reason for their behaviour, stating that otherwise they *gei ziji zengjia mafan* 給自己增加麻煩 (Han 2010, 152), "would get into trouble" (Han 2009, 153). The use of this euphemism reveals the ideological pressure that refrains him from giving a full explanation, leaving the reader to imagine for himself what the consequences of

such an act would be. On the contrary, Han Dong spares no details when describing Su Qun's decision to take her own life, in order to avoid being killed by the officers. The author lists a variety of ways to commit suicide, showing a completely detached attitude towards the peasants' conduct. In the scene that recounts the evening in which Su Qun was planning to start her reading session in the activities room with the people of the commune, two key figures are described: *Yu duizhang* 余隊長 (team leader Yu) and *Yu shuji* 余書記 (party secretary Yu). The former's authority is subordinated to the latter's, and this social order is reflected in Han Dong's choice of words when describing the two characters. When presenting party secretary Yu's late arrival, the author underlines the fact that *da huo'er shankai le yi tiao dao* 大伙兒閃開了一條道 (Han 2010, 162), "the crowd made way for him" (Han 2009, 163). The informality of the expression emphasises the submission of the peasants and their prostration in front of the secretary, whose main qualities are his *jizhi* 機智 "quick thinking" and *weili* 威力 "physical strength". In contrast, the team leader Yu is only represented in his falling off the bench as the secretary stands up. The narration of the scene is clearly an attempt to ironically depict the relation of power between them, using the description of personal manners as representative of a social rank.

In Ma Jian's novel the web of social relationship is masterly spun through the description of the interactions between the many authorities, both official and non-official, present in the square. The most evident power relationship is embodied in the opposition between the protesters and the government, the latter being represented by the police. The students' point of view is expressed in a predominantly informal way, as they use verbs such as *duifu* 對付 (to cope with) or *du* 堵 (to block up) when referring to their action against the army to prevent the government from *zhua zhu* 抓住 (catching) them. The policemen speak in a similarly low register, as well; for instance, when claiming their authority to manage the vandals' situation:

他大聲說「你們是哪裡的？」  
「廣場保衛科，這件事歸我們管。」 (Ma 2010, 384)

"Who are you?" he said loudly.  
"We're from the security office," one of them answered. "We should be handling this matter." (Ma 2009, 417)

Another example of a similarly ambiguous, low-register expression is the verb *chuli* 處理 (to deal with). It is used both by the students and the officers in referring to the vandals and in representing the unspecified ways adopted by the government to eliminate inconvenient subversives. These choices of register seem to suggest an equal level of authority shared by

the students and the officers, preventing the reader from being influenced by the verbal exhibition of power. In contrast, the protagonist Dai Wei, who is in charge of security in the square, succeeds in elevating himself through speech when he has the chance to respond to the angry officers:

「你是幹什麼的？」便衣警察冒火了。

「我是廣場糾察副總指揮。這件事要考慮全體學生的安全，你們要再耐心點。」我堵住他倆的氣焰。(Ma 2010, 384)

“What’s your job?” the government agent asked me brusquely.

“I’m the Square’s deputy commander of security. I must ask you to be patient. We can’t afford to do anything that might jeopardise the safety of the students in the Square.” I could tell my authoritative tone had successfully bridled them. (Ma 2009, 418)

In Dai Wei’s formulation, the formality of his speech is a clear mark of the authority he represents, contrasting with the policemen’s hostile attitude.

The second most evident social relationship represented in Ma Jian’s excerpt is the one between the students and the vandals who damage Mao’s portrait. They are repeatedly accused of having *pohuai* 破壞 (harmed) the *zhengtixing* 整體性 “integrity” and *yanmixing* 嚴密性 “good behaviour” of the movement, thus marking the distinction between the civil attitude of the protesters and the insulting behaviour of the three hooligans.

Thirdly, the protesters themselves are divided into a number of different organisations that generate a complicated system of authority. More specifically, Ma Jian refers to seven different groups present in the square: the *Wai gao lian* 外高聯 “Provincial Students’ Federation”, the *Jueshi zhihuibu* 絕食指揮部 “Hunger Strike Headquarters”, the *Gong zi lian* 工自聯 “Beijing Workers’ Federation”, the *Shimin gansidui* 市民敢死隊 “Dare-to-Die Squad”, the *Bei gao lian* 北高聯 “Beijing Student’s Federation”, the *Xi bei lang jiucha dui* 西北狼糾察隊 “Wolves of the North-West”, and the *Baowei Tian’anmen guangchang zhuihuibu* 保衛天安門廣場指揮部 “Defend Tiananmen Square Headquarters”. Some of them are being dissolved, some others have just been established, and the resulting picture is so confused that the authority seems to derive from the individuals rather than from the organised groups. For instance, two of the most powerful characters, Wang Fei and Tang Guoxian, are delineated through the depiction of their opposite behaviours, both represented in the students’ protest. Wang Fei is described as more intellectual, as he sees through the lenses of his *zongse huaxue yanjing* 棕色化學眼鏡, “square, brown-framed glasses”, and more rebellious, as he confesses his desire to *ba lao Mao de shiti cong jiniantang li tuochulai* 把老毛的屍體從紀念堂裏拖出來 (Ma 2010, 382), “go and drag Mao’s body out of the Mausoleum” (Ma 2009, 415). Contrastingly, Tang Guoxian’s arrogant attitude seems to compensate for his lack

of intellect, which brings him to *zhimi buwu* 執迷不悟 (persist in error) in several situations. The resulting anxiety translates into abrupt behaviour and inclination to cooperate with the policemen by handing the vandals to them. It can be argued that this representation of the relationship between the two implicitly refers to the contraposition between *wendou* and *wudou*. Ma Jian seems to blur the distinction between the two concepts by suggesting that even intellectuals can slip into violence, and that different forms of violence can – or cannot – achieve more or less elevated goals.

Finally, a consistent amount of power is delegated to women. In this section of the novel two female characters are represented as embodiments of authority: Jenny, the President of the Hong Kong Student Association, and Bai Ling, the Commander-in-Chief of the newly established “Defend Tiananmen Square Headquarters”. The Hongkongese girl is described in all her avantgardeness, both her clothes and ideas being extremely new for Beijing. In fact, on describing her outfit, the author adds that *Beijing hai mei ren chuan guo* 北京還沒人穿過 (Ma 2010, 380), “it was a style that hadn’t reach Beijing yet” (Ma 2009, 413). Immediately afterwards, she suggests organising a *lianhuan huodong* 聯歡活動 (social event) to resist the military force, thus implicitly suggesting that the methods of the Beijing students are archaic and ineffective. Moreover, the girl’s superior position is further enhanced by the fact that her association has just donated *hao ji wan yuan gangbi* 好幾萬元港幣, “over tens of thousands of Hong Kong dollars”, to the Beijing Students’ Federation. Nevertheless, the most authoritative character in this section of the novel seems to be Bai Ling, whose leadership skills are revealed through her own speech rather than through the author’s description. Due to this, the ideology implicit in Bai Ling’s character is mostly expressed through grammar, and, therefore, it will be analysed in the second part of the study.

### 3.1.3 Expressive Values

The analysis of the expressive value of words is of primary importance, as it reveals the writer’s evaluation implicit in the text. Moreover, the expressive value can be ideologically significant since it is coded in a classification scheme that can – or cannot – be in contrast with the canonical values embodied in other discourse types.

Han Dong’s choice to use the expressions *shenmi moce* 神秘莫測 “veiled with mystery” and *ling ren wang er sheng wei* 令人望而生畏 “terrifying” to describe the ‘catch phrases’ used by the Chinese Communist Party during the Cultural Revolution provides an immediate insight to the author’s attitude. The fear and confusion commonly felt during that period are also expressed through the adjectives which are used to describe it, such as *qite* 奇特 “weird”, *niuqu* 扭曲 “distorted”, together with the expression

*canlan huihuang* 燦爛輝煌 (glorious and resplendent). This opposition in meaning reflects Han Dong's mixed feelings surviving from his childhood memories. Similarly, the fear that takes over the young Han Dong during his experience is well represented by little Tao, whose terror is frequently depicted using common verbs such as *haipa* 害怕 (to be afraid) or *xia* 嚇 (to frighten).

Another interesting feature of the text is the expressive value coded in the references to authorities. In this section of the novel, the author refers explicitly to Mao Zedong nine times, using either the expression *Mao zhuxi* 毛主席 (Chairman Mao), *zhuxi* 主席 (the Chairman), or just *Mao* 毛 (Mao). The frequent repetitions of Mao's name and the references to his works, quotations and portraits which the characters *xinshang* 欣賞 "admired" contribute to load it with positive connotations.

苏群跳下板凳，走到小陶身邊，一隻手搭在他的肩膀上，和小陶一起欣賞著牆上的主席畫像。的確，貼的很正，沒有絲毫的歪斜。(Han 2010, 161)

Su Qun jumped down, walked over to young Tao, and put her hand on his shoulder, and they admired the Chairman's portrait. She had done a good job: the picture hung perfectly straight. (Han 2009, 162)

Similarly, the interrogators and the other functionaries are described as *zhongyao renwu* 重要人物 (important people) deserving *you jing you ai* 又敬又愛 (love and respect). It can be argued that such a choice of words contributes to keeping a neutral tone that suggests a silent submission to power. Furthermore, another noteworthy feature of the vocabulary used by Han Dong is the way in which he refers to the villagers. He often highlights their lack of knowledge and education using both neutral expressions like *mei you shou guo jiaoyu* 沒有受過教育 (lacking education), and negatively connoted adjectives like *yumei* 愚昧 (ignorant). This can be regarded as a symptom of the Tao family's - and the author's - attitude towards a lower social stratum that, despite its apparent impartiality, sometimes slips into unconscious judgement.

In Ma Jian's text it is possible to detect a sense of fear as well, which is represented in two ways. The first is the more concrete fear of the army surrounding the square and of the upcoming storm metaphorically associated with Mao's rage:

女同學有的真嚇得亂叫了。 [...]

奇怪的是，一會兒功夫，陰氣真很逼人，氣溫竟然下降到像是進了地窰似的寒冷。我也有點害怕了，平時再大地雷震雨天也不會這麼黑呀。(Ma 2010, 387)

In the distance, I could hear girls screaming in terror. [...]

A sense of menace pervaded the Square. It was cold and dark. Even

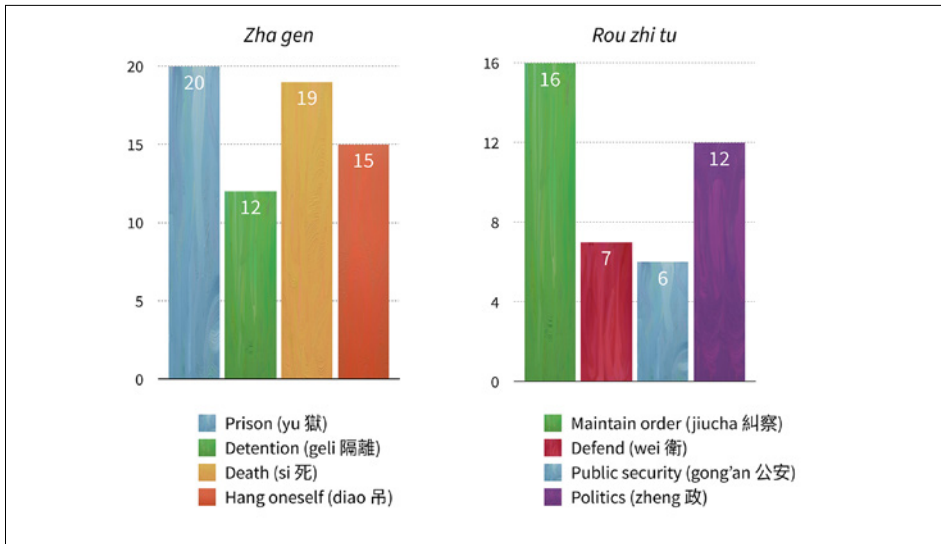
during the biggest thunderstorms, I'd never seen the sky turn so black before. (Ma 2009, 421)

The emotional description reveals the inner feelings of the characters, whose most human side is expressed through simple verbs like *haipa* (to be afraid) or *xia* (to frighten), the same mentioned before in the analysis of Han Dong's character 'little Tao'. The second is the terror of the government, linked to a more ideological dimension: *women neixin kongpa zhege zhengfu* 我們內心恐懼這個政府 (Ma 2010, 392), "That shows how petrified we are of the government" (Ma 2009, 426). The importance of fear and its central role in the author's description is further enhanced by the frequent occurrences of words linked to 'security', as will be shown later in this section.

The analysis of expressive value in Ma Jian's representation of official authorities is mostly confined to the description of Mao Zedong's character, whose name is repeated fifteen times using the three common forms mentioned before: *Mao zhuxi*, *zhuxi*, and *Mao*. Despite the multiple references, Ma Jian's depiction of Chairman Mao is far from positive. He is described as a *bainen lao lian* 白嫩老臉 "pale face" and a *ducaizhe* 獨裁者 "a tyrant", loading his name with negative connotation. The most evident expression of the author's negative evaluation is represented by Wang Fei's exclamation: *qu ni ma de lao Mao, laozi jiu bu niao ni ge jiba* "去你媽的老毛，老子就不尿你個雞巴！" (Ma 2010, 387), translated in English as "Fuck you, Chairman Mao!" (Ma 2009, 421). The offensive tone of the sentence clearly expresses Ma Jian's position, and the choice of such rude words represents a further stress on Wang Fei's rebellious character.

By looking more closely at the occurrences in the text it is possible to identify the main semantic areas whose related words are frequently repeated: "imprisonment" and "death" in *Zha gen* and "security" and "politics" in *Rou zhi tu* (see graphic 1).

Graphic 1. Frequent Occurrences of Words/Lexemes Loaded with Expressive Value in *Zha gen* and *Rou zhi tu*



In the analysed section of *Zha gen*, the noun *yu* 獄 (prison) and its derivatives present the greatest number of occurrences, closely followed by *si* 死 (death), *diao* 吊 (hang oneself), and *geli* 隔離 (detention). The continuous use of such terms clearly loads the text with negative connotation, showing the author's intention to provide as truthful a description of reality as possible and revealing his inner response to the pressure of ideology during the Cultural Revolution at the same time. In contrast, it is not possible to find two equally represented semantic areas in Ma Jian's section of *Rou zhi tu*. The category of "security" includes the verb *jiucha* 糾察 (maintain order), the lexeme *wei* 衛 (defend) and the noun *gong'an* 公安 (public security), while the category of "politics" only includes the noun *zheng* 政 (politics), which presents the second greatest number of occurrences, as shown in the graphic. This might suggest the importance given to security as both cause and effect of the students' fear. The author tries to stress the students' power to resist the stronger force of the government, which is represented as an indistinct ideological and military colossus that they are willing to attack.

The classification scheme resulting from the analysis of Han Dong's excerpt can be built on a rather general taxonomy, including the categories of "good", "bad", and "unknown", as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Han Dong's *Zha gen* Classification Scheme

	Good	Bad	Unknown
Cultural Revolution	•		•
Mao Zedong	•		
Officers	•		•
Villagers		•	

The text shows the author's tendency to positively represent something that is actually mysterious (the Cultural Revolution, the authorities), maintaining a negative evaluation only for the category he represents as inferior according to level of education and knowledge (the villagers). Conversely, the analysis of expressive values in Ma Jian's text reveals a classification scheme that is less spontaneous and more politically connoted (table 2).

Table 2. Ma Jian's *Rou zhi tu* Classification Scheme

	Democratic	Communist
Cultural Revolution		•
Mao Zedong		•
Officers		•
Villagers	•	

The scheme drawn by Ma Jian is built on two labels: 'Democratic' and 'Communist'. The students fighting for democracy are opposed to the other elements representing communism. Although this political conflict hints at a positive and negative judgment, respectively, such evaluation should not be regarded as absolute. In fact, as shown above, the blurred distinction in the ethical dimension seems to prevent the reader from clearly seeing beyond the ideological struggle, focusing the reader's attention on the conflicting factions, instead.

## 3.2 Grammar

### 3.2.1 Experiential Values

The analysis of the experiential values of grammar constructions showed a higher rate of processes of action compared to those of attributions and events, which are found less frequently. The clear preponderance of actions could possibly be a consequence of the position of the narrators, who focus on narrating facts instead of giving space to their evaluation of them.



Nevertheless, the representation of a process can sometimes be distorted by the choice of words, which can contribute to making it appear as if it were another type of process. In Han Dong's text, such an example can be found in the passage where the author describes Hou Jimin's imprisonment and the time he spends reading *Mao's Selected Works*. This book, together with *The Little Red Book*, was the only one allowed in prison at the time (Goldman, Cheek, Hamrin 1987, 247), yet Han Dong uses a formulation that represents this fact as an attribution: *zhe shi qiushi li wei yi de duwu* 這是囚室裡唯一的讀物 (Han 2010, 145) "the only reading material he had [lit. in his cell]" (Han 2009, 145). This can be regarded as the expression of a passive acceptance of the given conditions, so that the author does not feel the need to highlight the reason for such a prohibition and focuses on the attributed state instead, obscuring any possible act of judgement.

According to Hodge and Louie (1998), the use of transitivity in the so-called 'actional models' is strongly linked to the type of ideology they serve. More specifically, they argue that a transitive sentence - referred as 'transactive model' - typically serves a P-ideology function, or in other words, its goal is to express 'the power of the powerful'. In contrast, the intransitive 'non-transactive model' is more likely to be used in order to "assure the solidarity of the non-powerful, their identity of interests with the powerful", therefore serving a S-ideology function (Hodge, Louie 1998, 49), and at the same time allowing a convenient vagueness as to who is responsible for the action. The text shows an overall balance in the rate of active and passive sentences; nevertheless, while agency is explicit when the narration is focused on the prisoners and the behaviour of their interrogators, the actions related to their imprisonment are often described through agentless passive verbs. Although this grammatical choice might be due to the common use of verbs like *bu* 捕 (to arrest), *geli* 隔離 (to detain), etc., which are more often to be found in their passive form, leaving the agents of such processes unspoken can be regarded as a way to compensate for the negative connotation naturally associated with these verbs. A further confirmation of the author's refusal to clarify agency can be found in the formulation that explains the content of Hou Jimin's note on his own execution: *shangmian xiezhe, ta shi yuanwang er si* 上面寫著，他是冤枉而死 (Han 2010, 145) "it said he had been wrongfully killed" (Han 2009, 146). This formulation allows the prisoner to avoid explicitly stating by whose hand he was about to die, in what way and even the reason for it.

Ma Jian's text appears to be far more transparent in articulating processes and defining agency. The majority of the processes of action are expressed through active sentences. These types of constructions contribute to clarify not only the process, but also the participants: the 'agent' and the 'patient' (Fairclough 1989, 122). This is generally true for the majority of the processes of action, no matter which side of the protest they are related to. For example, a sentence like *zhe san ge ren pohuai le xuesheng*

*yundong de zhengtixing he yanmixing* 這三個人破壞了學生運動的整體性和嚴密性 (Ma 2010, 382) “They [lit. these three people] have harmed the integrity and good discipline of our movement” (Ma 2009, 415) is a regular SVO (Subject, Verb, Object) construction, in which the process and the participants are very clearly defined. The preponderance of active positive sentences seems to reflect the author’s desire to report the facts as honestly as possible and to specify the responsibility of the narrated actions.

An exception to this pattern can be found in the words used by the government agent when talking to Dai Wei about how to deal with the three vandals: *na ni mingbai le, zhe jian shi zaowan yao you ge jiaodai* 那你明白了，這件事早晚要有個交待 (Ma 2010, 384) “Well, you understand that this matter needs be sorted out [lit. a resolution], then” (Ma 2009, 418). In this type of sentence, *zhe jian shi* (this matter) is the unanimated agent of an action process whose object is the *jiaodai* (resolution). Such a construction allows the speaker avoid revealing the actual agent (the police) and the action it is about to take. This choice can be seen as a reflection of the author’s intention to further emphasise the obscurity surrounding the measures carried out by the government and the officers when dealing with sensitive matters.

Nevertheless, given the majority of transitive sentences, Ma Jian’s text seems to serve a P-ideology function, as it tends to express the power of both the protesters and the government.

### 3.2.2 Relational Values

The first step in the investigation of relational values is the analysis of the modes used by the authors. Due to the narrative nature of the texts, the clear preponderance of declarative sentences is hardly surprising, as this is the mode that allows the narrator (or the character) to give information to the addressee, who becomes its receiver. However, by looking more closely at the variety of speeches in the text, significant features can be pointed out.

In Han Dong’s text, it can be noticed that the imperative mode is mostly used in two types of speech: slogans and orders. While slogans are always expressed using the positive imperative, e.g. *xiangxin qunzhong, xiangxin dang* 相信群眾，相信黨 (Han 2010, 153) “trust the party and the masses” (Han 2009, 155) orders coming from the authorities such as the interrogators, the party secretary, or even Mao himself, are more often reported in some other character’s speech and expressed using the negative imperative. In this way, the original imperative becomes reported speech in a declarative sentence, e.g. *Yu shuji bu jiao ni du baozhi* 余書記不叫你讀報紙 (Han 2010, 162) “The party secretary does not want you to read the newspapers” (Han 2009, 164). This can be regarded as a way to mitigate the relations between the participants, as it mitigates the request coming

from the speaker by implicitly suggesting the action to the addressee. It can be additionally argued that this choice aims to differentiate the rules of the Communist Party from the rules of individuals, in order to further define the power relations existing at the time. The degree of authority expressed covertly in an obligation appears, in fact, to be higher than the one implicit in a prohibition.

Another contribution to the definition of a participant's authority in relation to others is provided by modality—specifically relational modality. The abovementioned reported orders are expressed using modal verbs in their negative form, such as *bu yao* 不要 (do not) or *bu jiao* 不叫 (not allowed to). The first formulation allows the authority – and hypothetically also the addressee – to remain implicit, together with the power relations it implies, e.g. *bu yao nüedai fulu* 不要虐待俘虜 (do not mistreat prisoners). Conversely, the second modal verb must carry an explicit speaker, in this case, 'party secretary Yu', and an explicit addressee, 'you': *Yu shuji bu jiao ni du baozhi* 余書記不叫你讀報紙 (Han 2010, 162), "The party secretary doesn't want you to read the newspapers" (Han 2009, 164). The order appears to be more effective when the power relations are better defined, which may account for the author's frequent choice to specify the speaker and the addressee.

In Ma Jian's passage, the imperative mode is used on many occasions, due to the particular context, in which orders are frequently given. However, the use of such mode is particularly significant when clearly linked to authority, as in the case of the orders expressed by Bai Ling (the commander-in-chief of the Defend Tiananmen Square Headquarters) and the policemen. In the officer's sentence *ba ren jiaogei women chuli ba* 把人交給我們處理吧 (Ma 2010, 384), "Hand those guys over to us. We'll deal with them" (Ma 2009, 417), the imperative mode is mitigated by the use of the particle *ba*. This might suggest a lower level of authority, combining the moderate tone with the vagueness about the addressee. On the other hand, Bai Ling's orders are explicitly addressed to a specific target and further enhanced by the use of relational modality. In fact, she frequently expresses her orders using auxiliaries like *yao* 要 (have to), *bu yao* 不要 (do not), and *bie* 別 (do not). The use of these grammatical constructions allows the author to endow this character with a particular power, which makes it easier for the reader to identify Bai Ling as a leader. This is true not only for the cases in which a specified other is receiving the order, but also when the addressee includes the speaker herself, like in the sentence: *women yao yi quanqiu de huaren liliang lai kangyi jieyan* 我們要以全球的華人力量來抗議戒嚴 (Ma 2010, 392) "I want to mobilize every Chinese person around the world to resist martial law [lit. we have to resist martial law with the power of every Chinese person around the world]" (Ma 2009, 427). Moreover, this form of 'inclusive we' (Fairclough 1989, 128) is loaded with relational value as it gives the speaker the authority to speak for the others, while at the same time stressing the unity of a people (the protesters) towards the

common goal of defending the democratic movement. Conversely, the students', the officers' and the vandals' frequent use of the personal pronouns *women* 我們 (we) and *nimen* 你們 (you) is less likely to carry relational value linked to ideology. In fact, its only purpose seems to be to emphasise that the characters belong to different factions present in the square at the same time, without implicitly suggesting authority or solidarity.

### 3.2.3 Expressive Values

The expressive values are ideologically significant when they are concerned with the claim of authenticity identifiable in the use of modality, or in other words, when the identity of the subject is asserted through the authority of its statements (Fairclough 1989, 128-29). In the case of a narrative text, such a feature may not be as easy to spot as it would be, for instance, in a news report.

In Han Dong's text, the analysis of the characters' direct speech can be an effective way to identify the expressive use of modality. The author seldom lets the interrogators express themselves through direct speech, but when he does, the lack of modal adverbs is a frequent feature. This can be regarded as an attempt to further assert the characters' institutional power by leaving their judgment out of the reach of the reader's criticism. For example, the sentence *ni de shijian yijing bu duo le* 你的時間已經不多了 (Han 2010, 145) "your time is nearly up" (Han 2009, 145) is a clearly authoritative statement, which leaves nothing to either the prisoner's or the reader's imagination. In contrast, the author/narrator's opinion is made more questionable by the abundant use of modal verbs and adverbs. For instance, the use of adverbs such as *huoxu* 或許 (maybe), *wuyi* 無疑 (undoubtedly), or modal verbs like *keneng* 可能 (might) underline the personal point of view of the narrator, affecting the authority of his statements. As a result, the gap in authenticity contributes to increase the authority of power, contrasting with the narrator's and other characters' 'humanity'.

In Ma Jian's excerpt, the degree of certainty revealed through expressive modality is generally high. This can be observed, for example, in the limited use of modal adverbs in the dialogues, which might suggest the author's intention to express the determination in the student's thoughts by increasing the authority in their speeches. Moreover, the use of auxiliaries like *bixu* 必須 (must), *neng* 能 (can), *yao* 要 (shall), etc., further enhances the speakers' authority conveyed through expressive modality. In contrast, verbs like *renwei* 認為 (to believe), *guji* 估計 (to estimate), etc., are found less frequently, as the author does not stress the characters' personal doubts or insecurities. The officers' speech seems to follow this general trend as well; however, it appears to be less relevant for the analysis of the authority implicit in certainty, since it occupies a limited space.

## 4 Two Voices, One Ideology

This study attempted to analyse the influence of ideology in the writings of Han Dong and Ma Jian by investigating their use of language through the analysis of vocabulary and grammar. It was argued that ideology, here held as “[structure] of signification that constitute[s] social relations in and through power” (Barker, Galasinski 2001, 25), can be detected in the textual structures of narratives, providing insight into the role of social reality in shaping the two novels. The CDA model proved to be an important tool in developing a detailed textual analysis, since it allows for the social meanings of texts to be highlighted as they are coded in the lexico-grammar structures of language.

The first and most striking difference in the authors’ representations is that Han Dong’s language seems to follow the line of the current ideology by retracing beliefs and relations as they were propagated at the time of the Cultural Revolution, whereas Ma Jian is not afraid to desecrate key concepts of Chinese contemporary history. Secondly, quite divergent perceptions of power seem to be revealed through the respective authors’ expression. Han Dong’s way of conveying meaning seems to be the result of a general attitude of submission to power and authority, as he carefully defines the power relations by means of their authority. However, in Han Dong’s scenario, power relations cannot be reduced merely to degree of authority. In fact, the intellectual self of the author is revealed through the emphasis put on literature that – aside from *Mao’s Selected Works* – generally contributes to increase the power in the hands of the prisoners. In other words, this ‘literary dignity’ grants the prisoners a privileged status; despite the strong the power the interrogators wield, they are never described as intellectually superior to the prisoners. Conversely, Ma Jian’s mental scheme appears to be more complicated. In addition to the classification of the authorities present in the square, the author proves to be well aware of the power of the socio-cultural background against which the narration takes place. The influence of Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution is still present, as it affects not only people’s behaviour but also their linguistic expression. Moreover, although Ma Jian does not fully recognise the superiority of the government, its coercive power is well represented as capable to control everything lying under ‘the red flag’.

Nevertheless, the two authors appear to share a common feature: the representation of a sense of fear that contributes to loading their writing with negative connotations. For Han Dong, such a feature seems to increase the sense of blind respect and admiration towards power on the one hand, while being symptomatic of the author’s attitude to escape the social conformation towards a new dimension of the self on the other. For Ma Jian, this fear seems to provoke uncontrolled manifestations of rage, as it appears to represent the main obstacle to the students’ freedom and

the most tangible expression of the government's coercive power. The central role given to the government is another feature that was found in both novels, as it is represented as shaping the lives of Chinese citizens in both of the narrated periods.

Given Han Dong's view of language, stating that language is like a ray of light, a dimension of meaning that allows us to see the world (Han 2003, 87-9), together with his well-known fondness for truth and reality, it can be argued that the primary function of his depiction was to convey a general idea of the atmosphere present at the time; therefore, his language does not show open opposition to power. However, his implementation of an allegedly detached zero degree narration still seems to fail to obscure the author's inner feelings underlying an apparently 'smooth' surface. Contrastingly, although Ma Jian's critical intent does find its overt expression in the author's clearly stated position, it cannot be ignored that his text is somehow subject to the socio-cultural environment in which it was conceived, revealing the marks of the leading ideology that remain implicit in the linguistic formulation.

The identities of the two authors are clearly representative of two diametrically opposed positions: Mainland Chinese literature and exile literature. The authors' subjectivity was shaped through very dissimilar processes, undertaking different cultural paths. Nevertheless, their linguistic representations seem to be strongly bonded to the cultural reality to which the authors belong, no matter how strong the spatial or temporal detachment they claim is. Given a set of cultural linguistic tools, Han Dong and Ma Jian re-interpret these tools and re-use them to shape the power relations represented in their novels. Although the novels *Zha gen* and *Rou zhi tu* show a clear divergence in themes, style and language structures, the authors' use of language is clearly rooted in common ground, soaked with the same ideology against which they take such different positions.

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# Orientamento semantico degli avverbi 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* negli enunciati cinesi contenenti quantificazioni

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**Abstract** In modern Chinese 就 *jiù* and 才 *cái* take on a quite complex relation: sometimes they appear to be synonymous and sometimes appear to be antonymous. The diverse interpreting of the two adverbial operators in contexts where quantifiers are involved is accounted for by treating them as focus markers on the one hand, and as operators expressing speaker's subjective view of quantity on the other hand. It is argued that, as focus markers, the two of them exhibit 'bidirectional' properties, and it is suggested that their being synonymous or antonymous depends on their forward or backward semantic orientation. It is also pointed out that, by virtue of their semantic features, sentences with 才 *cái* are not ambiguous even without context, while sentences with 就 *jiù* can be ambiguous and the speaker's subjective view of quantity uncertain.

**Sommario** 1 Introduzione. – 2 Premessa generale. – 3 Antonimia di 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái*. – 3.1 Sequenze  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái$ . – 3.2 Sequenze 就 *jiù* / 才 *cái* +  $X_2$ . – 3.3 Sequenze  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái + X_2$ . – 4 Sinonimia di 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái*. – 5 Interazione tra 就 *jiù*, quantificazione e particelle 了 *le*. – 5.1 Sequenze 就 *jiù* +  $X_2$  con predicato nominale. – 5.1.1 Sequenze con soggetto frasale. – 5.1.2 Sequenze con soggetto nominale. – 5.2 Sequenze  $(X_1 +)$  就 *jiù* +  $X_2$  con predicato verbale. – 5.2.1 Sequenze 就 *jiù* +  $X_2$ . – 5.2.2 Sequenze  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù + X_2$ . – 6 Orientamento semantico, focus e polarità. – 7 Specularità e asimmetria. – 8 Conclusioni.

**Keywords** Chinese language. Adverbs 就 *jiù* and 才 *cái*. Quantifiers.


## 1 Introduzione

La gran parte degli studiosi che hanno condotto ricerche su 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* ha affrontato l'indagine in un'ottica contrastiva, mettendo in luce le opposte implicazioni che i due operatori mostrano in coppie di frasi quali le seguenti:<sup>1</sup>

1 Per comodità ed esclusivamente a fini pratici in questo lavoro ci riferiremo a 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái*, oltre che con il termine di operatori, anche con quello tradizionale di avverbi, pur consapevoli che discutibile e discussa è la questione della loro corretta categorizzazione. Per una breve, ma esauriente, presentazione del problema, e una panoramica delle diverse proposte avanzate a riguardo, cf. Hole (2004, 59-61).

DOI 10.14277/2385-3042/AnnOr-53-17-10

Submission 2016-11-17 | Acceptance 2017-03-14

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1. 我叫他八点钟来, 他七点钟就到了。(Wang H. 1956, 35)  
*Wǒ jiào tā bā diǎn zhōng lái, tā qī diǎn zhōng jiù dào le.*  
 io chiedere lui otto CL orologio venire, lui sette CL orologio JIU  
 arrivare MOD  
 «Gli avevo detto di venire alle otto, ma lui alle sette era già qui.»
2. 我叫他六点钟来, 他七点钟才到。(Wang H. 1956, 35)  
*Wǒ jiào tā liù diǎn zhōng lái, tā qī diǎn zhōng cái dào.*  
 io chiedere lui sei CL orologio venire, lui sette CL orologio CAI arrivare  
 «Gli avevo detto di venire alle sei, ma lui è arrivato solo alle sette.»

In effetti, in molti casi 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* mostrano di avere sensi e impieghi opposti, ma in altri paiono essere invece sinonimi:

3. 我就有五块钱, 不够买书的。(Wang H. 1956, 35)  
*Wǒ jiù yǒu wǔ kuài qián, bù gōu mǎi shū de.*  
 io JIU avere cinque CL:yuan denaro, non bastare comprare libro MOD  
 «Ho solo 5 *yuan*, non sono abbastanza per comprare dei libri.»
4. 我才有五块钱, 不够买书的。(Wang H. 1956, 35)  
*Wǒ cái yǒu wǔ kuài qián, bù gōu mǎi shū de.*  
 io CAI avere cinque CL:yuan denaro, non bastare comprare libro MOD  
 «Ho solo 5 *yuan*, non sono abbastanza per comprare dei libri.»

就 *jiù* si rivela inoltre capace, in costrutti identici, di convogliare sensi diversi, mostrandosi così portatore di ambiguità semantica:

5. 他每月就挣二百块钱。(Chen R. 2005, 137)  
*Tā měi yuè jiù zhèng èrbǎi kuài qián.*  
 lui ogni mese JIU guadagnare duecento CL:yuan denaro  
 «Guadagna ben 200 *yuan* al mese.»  
 «Guadagna solo 200 *yuan* al mese.»

L'ambiguità semantica che connota 就 *jiù*, che gli rende possibile trasmettere, in costrutti identici, indicazioni opposte, non è condivisa da 才 *cái*. Si evidenzia così un'asimmetria nelle proprietà dei due operatori, che si manifesta in una curiosa coesistenza di antonimia da una parte e sostanziale sinonimia dall'altra, come dimostrano le due diverse letture di (5) messe a confronto con l'unica lettura di (6):

6. 他每月才挣二百块钱。(Chen R. 2005, 137)  
*Tā měi yuè cái zhèng èrbǎi kuài qián.*  
 lui ogni mese CAI guadagnare duecento CL:yuan denaro  
 «Guadagna solo 200 *yuan* al mese.»

Per altro, vi sono enunciati in cui un costituente quantificato può essere al tempo stesso preceduto e seguito rispettivamente da 才 *cái* e da 就 *jiù*:

7. 小李才十八岁就大学毕业了。(Yi 2009, 68)  
*Xiǎo Lǐ cái shíbā suì jiù bìyè le.*  
 Xiao Li CAI diciotto CL:anno JIU laurearsi MOD  
 «Xiao Li si è laureato a diciott'anni soltanto.»

Ma non basta, in determinati contesti contenenti elementi quantificati, invertendo il segmento di enunciato che precede 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* e quello che li segue, si ottengono coppie di frasi con implicazioni semantiche di segno contrario, il che si traduce in una sorta di sinonimie e antonimie 'incrociate'. È il caso delle seguenti frasi dove all'opposizione semantica di (8) e (9) e di (10) e (11) fa riscontro la sostanziale identità di senso di (8) e (11) e di (9) e (10):

8. [她]三十岁就结婚了。(Chen R. 2005, 136)  
*[Tā] sānshí suì jiù jiéhūn le.*  
 [lei] trenta CL anno JIU sposarsi MOD  
 «S'è sposata a soli trent'anni.»
9. [她]结婚就三十岁了。(Jin 2015, 36)  
*[Tā] jiéhūn jiù sānshí suì le.*  
 [lei] sposarsi JIU trenta CL anno MOD  
 «Aveva già trent'anni quando s'è sposata.»
10. [她]三十岁才结婚。(Chen R. 2005, 136)  
*[Tā] sānshí suì cái jiéhūn.*  
 [lei] trenta CL anno CAI sposarsi  
 «S'è sposata solo a trent'anni.»
11. [她]结婚才三十岁。(Jin 2015, 36)  
*[Tā] jiéhūn cái sānshí suì le.*  
 [lei] sposarsi CAI trenta CL anno  
 «Aveva solo trent'anni quando si è sposata.»

Obiettivo del presente lavoro sarà fornire un tassello utile alla composizione di una cornice idonea a inquadrare in modo sistematico le relazioni esistenti tra i due operatori e offrire una chiave interpretativa dei loro diversi usi. La nostra analisi sarà circoscritta ai contesti in cui 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* ricorrono in abbinamento con elementi quantitativi (da cui possono essere preceduti e/o seguiti): non prenderemo dunque in considerazione il loro impiego quali avverbi di 'tempo' (indicanti imminente o recente com-

pimento), o come avverbi modali o congiunzioni/connettori,<sup>2</sup> ma cercheremo unicamente di chiarire, integrando nell'indagine aspetti semantici e pragmatici, come i due avverbi operino in presenza di quantificazioni.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 Premessa generale

I due avverbi in questione hanno attratto l'attenzione di non pochi studiosi, i quali hanno contribuito in varia misura ad affinare via via gli strumenti utili per l'indagine. A questo riguardo particolare attenzione meritano alcuni lavori, che qui ricorderemo brevemente.

Inizieremo citando Wang H. (1956), il primo a mettere a fuoco l'opposizione semantica esistente tra 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* (presto/tardi, rapido/lento, poco/tanto e così via), caratterizzandola in termini di percezione del parlante.

A distanza di 25 anni Paris (1981) affronta il problema ponendo l'accento sulla diversa polarità propria dei due avverbi quanto ad 'aspettativa': 就 *jiù* segnala un valore inferiore rispetto a quello atteso, 才 *cái* ne segnala uno superiore. Anche Biq (1984), attraverso un'articolata analisi contrastiva, offre una spiegazione sul piano semantico e pragmatico incentrata sulla 'aspettativa' del parlante, mentre Shi (1993) sostituisce al concetto di 'aspettativa' quello di 'previsione', di fatto ad esso molto simile. Dal canto suo Chen X. (1994) introduce la nozione di 主观量 *zhǔguān liàng* «quantità soggettiva, valutazione soggettiva di quantità», mentre Lai (1995), giungendo a conclusioni sostanzialmente concordi con quelle di Paris (1981), riconduce il significato profondo di 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* a «prima del / dopo il (o meno del / più del) previsto».

Più recentemente Hole (2004), che fonda la sua indagine sulla struttura informativa della frase e sulle relative funzioni di *focus* e *background*, fornisce un'analisi estremamente ampia, approfondita e dettagliata della semantica dei due avverbi. Zhou (2004) e Wang Q. (2005), invece, per sistematizzarne la capacità di orientarsi semanticamente verso sinistra o verso destra nei diversi contesti, elaborano categorie quali 起点化 *qǐdiǎnhuà* «punto d'avvio», 终点化 *zhōngdiǎnhuà* «punto d'arrivo» e 语义指向 *yǔyì zhǐxiàng* «direzione semantica», il primo, e 双向性 *shuāngxiàngxìng* «bidirezionalità», il secondo.

Avvalendoci dei risultati dell'elaborazione teorica di questi studiosi, e cogliendo i suggerimenti e gli spunti offerti dai ricercatori che negli ultimi anni hanno ulteriormente approfondito l'indagine, cercheremo di

2 Per una breve presentazione critica dei vari usi riconosciuti ai due operatori da studiosi diversi cf. Wang S. (2008, 6-17).

3 Per una casistica semantica degli elementi quantitativi in riferimento ai quali 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* possono operare e una ricognizione delle diverse indicazioni da essi fornite, cf. Fan (2009), Yi (2009), Yang (2013) e Ding (2015).

comprendere e spiegare il diverso assetto e le diverse implicazioni di frasi quali (8)-(11) e (12), contenenti un elemento quantitativo, preverbale o postverbale:

12. 她结婚就二十五岁。(Chen Q. 2013, 10)  
*Tā jiéhūn jiù èrshíwǔ suì.*  
 lei sposarsi JIU venticinque CL:anno  
 «Aveva solo venticinque anni quando s'è sposata.»

E cercheremo altresì di comprendere e spiegare il diverso assetto e le diverse implicazioni di frasi quali (13)-(17), contenenti due elementi quantitativi in uno stesso enunciato:

13. [他]半个月就挣了五百块钱。(Cao 2011, 79)  
*[Tā] bàn ge yuè jiù zhèng le wǔbǎi kuài qián.*  
 [lui] mezzo CL mese JIU guadagnare ASP cinquecento CL:yuan denaro  
 «Ha guadagnato ben 500 *yuan* in soli 15 giorni.»  
 «In 15 giorni ha guadagnato solo 500 *yuan*.»
14. [他]挣了五百块钱就半个月了。  
*[Tā] zhèng le wǔbǎi kuài qián jiù bàn ge yuè le.*  
 [lui] guadagnare ASP cinquecento CL:yuan denaro JIU mezzo CL mese MOD  
 «Gli ci sono (già) voluti ben 15 giorni per guadagnare solo 500 *yuan*.»
15. [他]半个月才挣了五百块钱。(Cao 2011, 79)  
*[Tā] bàn ge yuè cái zhèng le wǔbǎi kuài qián.*  
 [lui] mezzo CL mese CAI guadagnare ASP cinquecento CL:yuan denaro  
 «Ha guadagnato solo 500 *yuan* in ben 15 giorni.»
16. [他]挣了五百块钱才半个月。  
*[Tā] zhèng le wǔbǎi kuài qián cái bàn ge yuè.*  
 [lui] guadagnare ASP cinquecento CL:yuan denaro CAI mezzo CL mese  
 «Gli ci sono voluti solo 15 giorni per guadagnare ben 500 *yuan*.»
17. [他]挣了五百块钱就半个月。  
*[Tā] zhèng le wǔbǎi kuài qián jiù bàn ge yuè.*  
 [lui] guadagnare ASP cinquecento CL:yuan denaro JIU mezzo CL mese  
 «Gli ci sono voluti ben 15 giorni per guadagnare solo 500 *yuan*.»  
 «Gli ci sono voluti solo 15 giorni per guadagnare ben 500 *yuan*.»

### 3 Antonimia di 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái*

Inizieremo la nostra analisi dai costrutti in cui i due operatori forniscono indicazioni semantiche contrastanti. Pertanto, visto che ci limiteremo ai contesti in cui essi ricorrono in abbinamento con elementi quantitativi, tre saranno i tipi di sequenze che prenderemo in esame (con  $X_1$  e  $X_2$  denomineremo segmenti di enunciato contenenti espressioni quantitative che rispettivamente precedono e seguono 就 *jiù* o 才 *cái*):

- 1)  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái$
- 2)  $\text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái + X_2$
- 3)  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái + X_2$

#### 3.1 Sequenze $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái$

Pressoché tutti gli studiosi, sia quelli più sopra menzionati, sia i numerosi altri che hanno condotto ricerche sui due avverbi, sono praticamente concordi nel riconoscere che «*cái* and *jiù* presuppose a change of state of the truth value of a proposition and [...] this change happens at a different point from where it is expected to happen. For *cái*, the asserted value of change is located 'farther up' on the structure than the expected value, whereas for *jiù*, the asserted value of change is located 'farther down'» (Lai 1999, 625). In altre parole 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* convogliano valutazioni soggettive (in riferimento a fattori quantitativi quali tempo, età, consistenza, numero, incidenza ecc.) che non hanno effettiva rilevanza sulla quantificazione oggettiva. Con il ricorso a 就 *jiù* e a 才 *cái* il parlante intende sottolineare una difformità tra le reali circostanze di svolgimento dell'evento e quelle che ci si aspettava fossero, rimarca cioè una discrepanza rispetto a un valore di riferimento tra realtà oggettiva e presupposizione soggettiva, discrepanza consistente in una differenza in difetto, nel caso di 就 *jiù*, o in eccesso, nel caso di 才 *cái*:<sup>4</sup> ad esempio, in (1) e (2) il parlante vuole sottolineare che il soggetto si è presentato con un'ora di anticipo/ritardo rispetto a quanto gli era stato

4 In verità, l'informazione fornita da 就 *jiù* nelle sequenze  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù$  può a volte risultare ambigua per effetto della sua duplice natura di indicatore di valutazioni soggettive di quantità inferiore al previsto o di congiunzione/connettore temporale. Frasi quali (18) hanno infatti una doppia interpretazione, potendosi 七点 *qī diǎn* intendere come indicativo di un'ora più mattutina rispetto a quella ritenuta normale, oppure come termine di riferimento in una semplice successione temporale (arrivata la data ora, il dato evento ha luogo):

richiesto; similmente (8) e (10) inducono a intendere che il matrimonio abbia avuto luogo a un'età inferiore/superiore rispetto a quella ritenuta generalmente (o personalmente dal parlante) normale o consigliabile.<sup>5</sup>

Nelle sequenze  $X_1$  + 就 *jiù* / 才 *cái* i due avverbi grammaticalmente operano come modificatori del gruppo verbale che li segue, ma è il riferimento di tipo anaforico alla quantificazione che li precede che apporta il contributo determinante al senso pragmatico della frase. Ci pare dunque corretto intendere 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* come semanticamente orientati a sinistra, in direzione dell'elemento che della frase è il focus.<sup>6</sup>

La contrapposizione tra i due operatori in termini di valutazione soggettiva sembra inoltre avere, in queste sequenze, una ricaduta diretta sulla opposta compatibilità che manifestano rispetto alla particella modale 了 *le*. In contesti riferiti al passato, infatti, l'occorrenza di 了 *le* modale è obbligatoria con 就 *jiù*, mentre è assolutamente esclusa in presenza di 才 *cái*; se (8) e (10) venissero espresse come (19) e (20), risulterebbero decisamente inaccettabili:<sup>7</sup>

18. 七点就去上课。(Ding Q. 2015, 22)

*Qī diǎn jiù qù shàng kè.*

sette CL JIU andare assistere lezione

«Alle sette già si va a lezione.»

«Si va a lezione alle sette.»

L'impiego di 就 *jiù* in sequenze  $X_1$  + 就 *jiù* in qualità di connettore temporale intrafrasale o interfrasale non sarà qui preso in esame in quanto estraneo alla sfera di interesse del presente lavoro.

5 Resta inteso che il valore di riferimento in base al quale è formulata la valutazione soggettiva può essere reso esplicito, come in (3) e (4), o essere sottinteso e lasciato implicito se, come in (8) e (10), il parlante ne ritiene condivisa la conoscenza.

6 Il termine focus sarà qui impiegato nella sua accezione tradizionale. Designeremo con tale termine l'elemento della frase più saliente dal punto di vista comunicativo, suo centro intonazionale e nucleo della nuova informazione trasmessa, ovvero «the part of the sentence that answers the relevant wh-question (implicit or explicit) in the particular context in which the sentence is used» (Gundel 1999, 295).

7 Si sta qui ovviamente parlando di frasi riferite al passato che non contengano indicazioni aspettuali perfettive. Contrariamente a 了 *le* modale, infatti, l'occorrenza della particella 了 *le* aspettuale è compatibile sia con 就 *jiù* sia con 才 *cái*, come dimostrano (13) e (15). Proprio la compatibilità di 才 *cái* con 了 *le* perfettivo spiega l'accettabilità, notata da Zhu e Wang (2011, 14), di enunciati quali (21) e (22) in cui 了 *le* compare alla fine della frase, alla destra del gruppo verbale predicativo, riassumendo in sé le funzioni di particella aspettuale e particella modale:

21. 我们约好七点见面, 他八点才无精打采地来了。(Zhu, Wang 2011, 14)

*Wǒmen yuē hǎo qī diǎn jiànmiàn, tā bā diǎn cái wújīngdǎcǎi de lái le.*

noi accordarsi buono sette CL vedersi, lui otto CL CAI fiacco ST venire ASP+MOD

«Ci eravamo messi d'accordo di vederci alle sette e lui è arrivato mogio mogio solo alle otto.»

22. 劝了好半天, 他才答应了。(Zhu, Wang 2011, 14)

*Quàn le hǎo bàn tiān, tā cái dāying le.*

convincere buono lungo-tempo, lui CAI acconsentire ASP+MOD

«Ha acconsentito solo dopo una lunga opera di persuasione.»



19. \*小李三十岁就结婚。(Yue 2000, 21)  
*Xiǎo Li sānshí suì jiù jiéhūn.*  
 Xiao Li trenta CL:anno JIU sposarsi
20. \*小李三十岁才结婚了。(Yue 2000, 21)  
*Xiǎo Li sānshí suì cái jiéhūn le.*  
 Xiao Li trenta CL:anno CAI sposarsi MOD

Quali possono essere le ragioni della diversa compatibilità di 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* con 了 *le* modale? Posto che:

- 1) la particella modale 了 *le* denota l'aspetto dinamico dell'enunciato, stando a significare un cambiamento da non attuale ad attuale conseguente al compiersi di un evento o all'entrata in essere di un nuovo stato e di una nuova situazione;
- 2) 就 *jiù* segnala che quanto predicato ha avuto luogo in anticipo, con facilità e rapidamente, ovvero che il momento di accadimento reale ha preceduto quello soggettivamente presunto;
- 3) 才 *cái* segnala che quanto predicato ha avuto luogo in ritardo, con difficoltà e lentezza, ovvero che il momento di accadimento reale ha seguito quello soggettivamente presunto;

la diversa compatibilità dei due operatori con la particella dipende verosimilmente dal fatto che nelle sequenze  $X_1 +$  就 *jiù* / 才 *cái* riferite al passato, non essendo il riferimento temporale assunto dal parlante il momento del discorso, bensì quello soggettivamente atteso per il compiersi dell'evento, l'occorrenza di 了 *le* è richiesta in presenza di 就 *jiù* perché l'accadimento precede il riferimento temporale soggettivo, ma è rifiutata in presenza di 才 *cái* dato che l'accadimento è in questo caso ad esso successivo. Infatti in (8), dove si intende che il matrimonio sia avvenuto prima di quanto si supponesse, vale a dire in un tempo precedente (passato) rispetto al momento di riferimento, l'occorrenza di 了 *le* è obbligatoria (la sua assenza rende infatti (19) inaccettabile), mentre in (10), dove si intende che il matrimonio abbia avuto luogo dopo il previsto, cioè in un tempo successivo (futuro) rispetto al momento di riferimento, la particella 了 *le* è assente (e la sua eventuale presenza, come in (20), rende inaccettabile la frase).

Come puntualizzano i due studiosi, casi simili, per altro assai limitati, si verificano qualora l'elemento predicativo alla destra di 才 *cái* sia relativamente complesso (21), o descrittivo di qualcosa a lungo e ansiosamente atteso (22).

3.2 Sequenze 就 *jiù* / 才 *cái* +  $X_2$ 

Le sequenze 就 *jiù* / 才 *cái* +  $X_2$ , contrariamente alle precedenti sulle quali molto si è scritto, sono state poco indagate e sono tuttora piuttosto dibattute.

È facile osservare che quando i due operatori, nel loro impiego antonimico, non sono preceduti da quantificazioni, ma ne sono seguiti, la valutazione soggettiva che emerge risulta di segno opposto rispetto a quella convogliata dalle sequenze  $X_1$  + 就 *jiù* / 才 *cái*, implicando una differenza in eccesso, nel caso 就 *jiù*, o in difetto, nel caso di 才 *cái*, rispetto al valore di riferimento:

23. 小王身高就一米七了。(Chen R. 2005, 136)  
*Xiǎo Wáng shēngāo jiù yī mǐ qī le.*  
 Xiao Wang statura JIU uno CL:metro sette MOD  
 «Xiao Wang è alto ben un metro e settanta.»
24. 小王身高才一米七。(Chen R. 2005, 136)  
*Xiǎo Wáng shēngāo cái yī mǐ qī.*  
 Xiao Wang statura CAI uno CL:metro sette  
 «Xiao Wang è alto solo un metro e settanta.»
25. 外语就考了80分。(Chen R. 2005, 137)  
*Wàiyǔ jiù kǎo le bāshí fēn.*  
 lingua straniera JIU fare-esame ottanta punti  
 «In lingua straniera ha preso nientemeno che 80.»<sup>8</sup>
26. 外语才考了80分。(Chen R. 2005, 137)  
*Wàiyǔ cái kǎo le bāshí fēn.*  
 lingua straniera CAI fare-esame ottanta punti  
 «In lingua straniera ha preso solo 80.»

Sembrirebbe che i due avverbi, nell'espletare la loro funzione pragmatica (mettere in luce una discrepanza tra le reali circostanze di un accadimento e quelle invece supposte), siano in grado di operare semanticamente secondo due corsie di marcia, a seconda della posizione che nella frase occupa l'elemento quantificato: se esso si trova in  $X_1$ , l'implicazione di 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* è rispettivamente "al di sotto del valore presunto" e "al di sopra del valore presunto", mentre se l'elemento quantificato si colloca in  $X_2$ , il senso suggerito dai due operatori risulta rovesciato: "al di sopra del valore presunto" nel caso di 就 *jiù* e "al di sotto del valore presunto" nel caso di 才 *cái*. Che alla diversa posizione dei due operatori rispetto agli

8 Come vedremo meglio più avanti (cf. § 4), questa frase si presta in realtà anche a una seconda lettura: «In lingua straniera ha preso solo 80.», sinonima di (26).

elementi quantificati facciano riscontro opposte implicazioni semantiche pare confermato anche da costrutti quali (8)-(11).<sup>9</sup>

Vedremo più avanti (cf. § 3.3) se questo capovolgimento nell'indicazione fornita da ciascuno dei due avverbi effettivamente dipenda, come da più parti sostenuto (cf., tra gli altri, Cheng R. 2005, 137; Ding 2015, 24), da una loro intrinseca elasticità e capacità di operare semanticamente, in modo alterno, verso sinistra o verso destra a seconda del contesto. Per ora ci limitiamo a prendere atto del fatto che, così come in frasi tipo (8) e (10), anche in enunciati quali (9) e (11), o (23) e (24), riferiti al passato e privi di indicazioni aspettuali, l'occorrenza di 了 *le* modale è obbligatoria in presenza di 就 *jiù* ed è esclusa in presenza di 才 *cái*. Ciò è più che comprensibile posto che, in quanto indice di cambiamento, la particella modale 了 *le* è affatto adeguata a esplicitare il senso dinamico dei predicati con 就 *jiù*, e in particolare di quelli nominali designanti incrementi e riduzioni,<sup>10</sup> mentre contrasta ed è incompatibile con il senso statico proprio dei predicati che invece seguono 才 *cái*.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.3 Sequenze $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái + X_2$

Come (13)-(17) esemplificano,  $X_1$  e  $X_2$  possono comparire entrambi nella medesima frase. In tali casi, quando i due operatori trovano impiego antonimico (del loro uso in qualità di 'sinonimi' derivante dal senso limitativo, «solo, solamente», che 就 *jiù* può avere in (13) e (17) tratteremo al § 4), la natura della valutazione soggettiva a ciascuno associata emerge con ancora maggiore evidenza proprio grazie alla compresenza di  $X_1$  e  $X_2$ : 就 *jiù* denota che la quantificazione espressa in  $X_1$  è inferiore al valore presunto e, contestualmente, che quella espressa in  $X_2$  è superiore ad esso ( $X_1$  就 *jiù*  $X_2$  = BASSO 就 *jiù* ALTO), al contrario di 才 *cái* che connota la prima come superiore al valore presunto e la seconda come inferiore ad esso ( $X_1$  才 *cái*  $X_2$  = ALTO 才 *cái* BASSO). Ad esempio, da (13) si evince che i soldi sono ritenuti parecchi a fronte del poco tempo impiegato per guadagnarli, mentre in (17) si intende che i soldi sembrano pochi a fronte del lungo tempo richiesto per guadagnarli (BASSO 就 *jiù* ALTO); da (15) si desume che il tempo è considerato tanto a fronte dei pochi soldi guadagnati, laddove,

9 È ovvio che non tutti i contesti consentono lo 'spostamento' dell'elemento quantificato di  $X_1$  nella posizione di  $X_2$  e viceversa. Non è possibile, ad esempio, in (23)-(26) per evidenti ragioni di ordine sintattico e semantico.

10 Avremo modo di appurare in seguito (cf. § 5) quanto complessa sia l'interazione tra 就 *jiù*, quantificazione e particelle 了 *le*.

11 Per un approfondimento delle problematiche connesse al 'senso dinamico' e al 'senso statico' di diverse tipologie di frasi, e un chiarimento della ricaduta che ciò può avere sugli enunciati con 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái*, cf. Zhu, Wang (2011) e Wang, Mei (2015).

viceversa, in (16) si percepisce che il tempo pare poco a fronte dei molti soldi guadagnati (ALTO 才 *cái* BASSO).

Certo, se si accetta l'ipotesi che i due avverbi siano capaci di operare semanticamente, in modo versatile, verso sinistra (in  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái$ ) o verso destra (in  $\text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái + X_2$ ) a seconda della posizione dell'elemento quantificato, diventa difficile raccapezzarsi riguardo al loro orientamento semantico in presenza di sequenze, quali  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái + X_2$ , dove compaiono due quantificazioni, l'una in  $X_1$ , l'altra in  $X_2$ .

Se però soppesiamo con attenzione le sequenze qui in esame, possiamo constatare che è dalla contrapposizione dei due termini quantificati presenti in  $X_1$  e  $X_2$  che la valutazione soggettiva scaturisce, come in modo affatto convincente osservavano Lu (1984, 33) e Chen X. (1994, 21-3) e di recente hanno puntualizzato Chen Q. (2013, 9-10) e Jin e Du (2014, 149-50). Tali studiosi, pur riconoscendo l'apparente contraddittorietà delle indicazioni fornite da 就 *jiù* nelle sequenze  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù$  e  $\text{就 } jiù + X_2$  ( $X_1 = \text{BASSO vs } X_2 = \text{ALTO}$ ) e di quelle fornite da 才 *cái* nelle sequenze  $X_1 + \text{才 } cái$  e  $\text{才 } cái + X_2$  ( $X_1 = \text{ALTO vs } X_2 = \text{BASSO}$ ), rimarcano tuttavia che nelle sequenze  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái + X_2$  è il riferimento a  $X_1$  che, per contrasto, assegna a  $X_2$  la sua connotazione: ad esempio, in (13) è il riferimento al termine quantificato 半个月 *bàn ge yuè* contenuto in  $X_1$ , segnalato da 就 *jiù* come inferiore al valore presunto (BASSO), che assegna per contrasto a quello contenuto in  $X_2$ , 五百块钱 *wǔbǎi kuài qián*, il valore ALTO, esattamente come in (15) è il riferimento al termine quantificato 半个月 *bàn ge yuè* contenuto in  $X_1$ , indicato da 才 *cái* come superiore al valore presunto (ALTO), che assegna per contrasto a 五百块钱 *wǔbǎi kuài qián* contenuto in  $X_2$  il valore BASSO.

Da ciò si evince che anche in queste sequenze, come in quelle  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái$  già viste, gli operatori 就 *jiù* / 才 *cái* sono semanticamente orientati sulla quantificazione presente in  $X_1$  che costituisce il focus della frase.

Appurato ciò, viene spontaneo chiedersi se, nonostante la mancanza di  $X_1$ , le sequenze 就 *jiù* / 才 *cái* +  $X_2$  non condividano la medesima struttura semantica delle altre due sequenze,  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái$  e  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù / \text{才 } cái + X_2$ . Per dare risposta a questo interrogativo ci affideremo a Jin e Du (2014, 150) e a Jin (2015, 36) i quali ben argomentano che in tutti i casi, anche quando il segmento di enunciato a sinistra di 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* non contenga quantificazioni, tra esso e  $X_2$  sussiste sempre e comunque una relazione assimilabile a quella più sopra presentata, rispettivamente connotabile come BASSO 就 *jiù* ALTO e ALTO 才 *cái* BASSO.<sup>12</sup> Del resto ciò

12 Nel primo saggio, i due studiosi si riferiscono in realtà unicamente alle strutture  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù + X_2 + \text{了 } le$  (da loro denominate X 就 Y 了), dove  $X_2$  (ovvero Y) è costituito da un predicato nominale (Jin, Du 2014, 150); nel secondo saggio Jin Lixin estende la sua trattazione anche alle strutture  $X_1 + \text{才 } cái + X_2$  (denominate X 才 Y), con  $X_2$  (ovvero Y) costituito da predicati nominali (Jin 2015, 36). Noi riteniamo di poter includere nella generalizzazione anche frasi, come (25) e (26), in cui compaiono predicati verbali.

appare più che ragionevole se si riflette sul fatto che anche nelle sequenze 就 *jiù* / 才 *cái* +  $X_2$ , i due operatori forniscono valutazioni soggettive di quantità ( $X_2$  = ALTO/BASSO) per contrasto con valori presunti che, seppure non esplicitati, sono comunque intelligibili perché logicamente connessi e ricollegabili a un elemento presente nel contesto: (età al momento del) matrimonio in (9)-(10), (lunghezza in metri e centimetri della) statura in (23)-(24), (punteggio ottenuto agli) esami in (25)-(26).

Nelle sequenze 就 *jiù* / 才 *cái* +  $X_2$ , quindi, il focus della frase, in direzione del quale i due operatori sono orientati, non cade su un'espressione quantitativa, bensì su un elemento che, in ogni caso, alla luce del contesto linguistico o extralinguistico, o di una conoscenza o convinzione del parlante, è suscettibile di quantificazione. Possiamo allora affermare che in tutti e tre i tipi di sequenze esaminati, che vedono l'impiego antonimico di 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái*, i due avverbi operano verso sinistra, segnalando che in quella porzione di enunciato è collocato il focus della frase in direzione del quale essi sono semanticamente orientati.

#### 4 Sinonimia di 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái*

I due operatori sono anche impiegati, in sequenze ( $X_1$  +) 就 *jiù* / 才 *cái* +  $X_2$ , in qualità di 'sinonimi', con valore limitativo analogo a quello degli avverbi italiani «solo, solamente», per restringere l'ambito della predicazione implicando una valutazione soggettiva di quantità, in riferimento a  $X_2$ , inferiore al valore atteso o previsto, come è il caso di (3) e (4).<sup>13</sup>

13 In verità 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* non possono essere ritenuti autentici sinonimi non essendo, in molti contesti, realmente intercambiabili. Pur esprimendo ambedue una valutazione soggettiva di quantità inferiore al valore presunto, la sostituzione dell'uno con l'altro comporta in genere ricadute sull'interpretazione dell'enunciato. Come nota Chen L. (2005, 30-1) osservando (3) e (4), dalla prima si desume che il parlante non possa comperare libri perché ha pochi soldi (5 *yuan* e non di più), mentre dalla seconda si arguisce che non può comperarne perché i soldi in suo possesso ancora non bastano (perché finora ha accantonato solo 5 *yuan*). Parimenti in (27) si evince che l'evento è concluso e il parlante intende sottolineare quanto poco il soggetto abbia bevuto, laddove (28) implica che l'evento, pur essendo anch'esso concluso, non ha raggiunto il compimento auspicato perché il soggetto non ha bevuto a sufficienza:

27. 他就喝了一杯酒。(Chen L. 2005, 30)

*Tā jiù hē le yī bēi jiǔ.*

lui JIU bere ASP uno CL:bicchiere vino

«S'è fatto solo un bicchiere.»

28. 他才喝了一杯酒。(Chen L. 2005, 30)

*Tā cái hē le yī bēi jiǔ.*

lui CAI bere ASP uno CL:bicchiere vino

«S'è fatto solo un bicchiere.»

Chen X. (1994, 22) connota la differenza tra i due operatori, nel loro impiego limitativo, in termini di «non molto» vs «troppo poco». Per questo frasi quali (4) e (28) sono recepite come indicanti una sorta di insufficienza/difetto, tratto assolutamente estraneo alle con-

Ecco perché (6), (13), (17) e (25) sono frasi ambigue, mentre (7), (15), (16) e (26) sembrano non esserlo. Nelle prime infatti, a seconda del contesto, 就 si presta a essere inteso come indice di valutazione soggettiva di quantità in  $X_2$  superiore al valore presunto (relazione BASSO-ALTO) oppure inferiore ad esso (avverbio di limitazione), comportando di conseguenza sensibili variazioni di significato: «Guadagna ben 200 *yuan* al mese.» a fronte di «Guadagna solo 200 *yuan* al mese.» in (6), «Ha guadagnato ben 500 *yuan* in soli 15 giorni.» a fronte di «In 15 giorni ha guadagnato solo 500 *yuan*.» in (13), «Gli ci sono voluti ben 15 giorni per guadagnare solo 500 *yuan*.» a fronte di «Gli ci sono voluti solo 15 giorni per guadagnare ben 500 *yuan*.» in (17), «In lingua straniera ha preso nientemeno che 80.» a fronte di «In lingua straniera ha preso solo 80.» in (25). Al contrario, in (7), (15), (16) e (26) l'occorrenza di 才 *cái* quale indice di relazione ALTO-BASSO o quale avverbio di limitazione non si traduce in differenze semantiche percepibili, trattandosi in entrambi i casi di valutazioni soggettive di quantità in  $X_2$  inferiori al valore presunto.

Nella lingua orale l'ambiguità di 就 *jiù* nelle sequenze ( $X_1 +$ ) 就 *jiù* +  $X_2$  viene risolta grazie all'indicazione fornita dall'accento, che cade su un costituente a sinistra dell'avverbio (il focus) quando l'operatore è indice della relazione BASSO-ALTO, e cade invece sull'avverbio e sul costituente quantificato alla sua destra in caso abbia valore limitativo (Xu, Yang 2010, 51, 56-8).

Nella lingua scritta, ovviamente, solo il contesto consentirà di interpretare correttamente il ruolo di volta in volta esercitato da 就 *jiù*, con l'ausilio in alcuni casi di 才 *cái* la cui eventuale occorrenza in  $X_1$  (alla sinistra del focus) ben si presta, in tali casi appunto, a denotare in modo univoco l'impiego di 就 *jiù* quale indice di relazione BASSO-ALTO:

29. 才一天就100块钱。(Chen Q. 2013, 10)  
*Cái yī tiān jiù yībǎi kuài qián.*  
 CAI uno CL:giorno JIU cento CL:yuan denaro  
 «Nientemeno che 100 *yuan* per una sola giornata.»
30. 她才一个月就减了三公斤。(Cao 2011, 79)  
*Tā cái yī ge yuè jiù jiǎn le sān gōngjīn.*  
 lei CAI uno CL mese JIU diminuire tre CL:chilo  
 «Ha perso ben tre chili in un mese soltanto.»

troparti (3) e (27). Per un confronto tra 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* a chiarimento delle diverse proprietà sintattiche, semantiche e pragmatiche di cui fanno mostra quando utilizzati come avverbi 'restrittivi', cf., tra gli altri, Paris (1981, 332-46) e Che (2011).

È dunque proprio la 'sinonimia' esistente tra 才 *cái* e 就 *jiù* 'restrittivi' che ne spiega la compatibilità semantica e la possibile cooccorrenza, già osservata in (17).<sup>14</sup>

Ma come mai (9), (12), (14) e (23), pur connotandosi come sequenze ( $X_1 +$ ) 就 *jiù* +  $X_2$  al pari di (5), (13), (17) e (25), a differenza di queste non presentano ambiguità? Per rispondere a questa domanda è necessario fare chiarezza sull'influenza che l'eventuale occorrenza della particella modale 了 *le* e/o della particella aspettuale 了 *le* ha sull'interpretazione delle sequenze in questione.

## 5 Interazione tra 就 *jiù*, quantificazione e particelle 了 *le*

Delle sequenze ( $X_1 +$ ) 就 *jiù* +  $X_2$  qui in esame considereremo separatamente, prima, quelle con predicato nominale e, a seguire, quelle con predicato verbale.

### 5.1 Sequenze 就 *jiù* + $X_2$ con predicato nominale

Nell'analisi delle sequenze con predicato nominale distinguiamo quelle con soggetti frasali da quelle con soggetti nominali.

#### 5.1.1 Sequenze con soggetto frasale

Esaminiamo innanzitutto i costrutti con soggetti frasali analoghi a (9) e (12), che differiscono per l'occorrenza o meno di 了 *le* modale. Tutti gli studiosi concordano nell'imputare il loro diverso senso alla presenza della particella: quando essa manca, come in (12), 就 *jiù* è inteso quale avverbio di limitazione («Aveva solo venticinque anni quando s'è sposata.») ed è quindi accentato; quando invece, come in (9), la particella è inserita, sottolineando il valore dinamico dell'enunciato induce a recepire 就 *jiù* quale indice di relazione BASSO-ALTO («Aveva già trent'anni quando s'è sposata.»), bloccandone di conseguenza l'accentazione (Fan 2009, 108).

Osserviamo ora (32) che, seppure assai simile a (9) dal punto di vista strutturale, contrariamente ad essa risulta ambigua:

<sup>14</sup> Va precisato che non solo 才 *cái*, ma anche altri avverbi di limitazione, quali 光 *guāng*, 仅 *jīn* e 仅仅 *jīnjīn*, sono semanticamente compatibili con 就 *jiù* e capaci di ricorrere contestualmente ad esso:

31. 光他们就十个人。(Chen Q. 2013, 10)

Guāng tāmen jiù shí ge rén.

soltanto loro JIU dieci CL persona

«Loro soltanto sono nientemeno che in dieci.»

32. 现在结婚就10万了。(Jin 2015, 35)  
*Xiànzài jiéhūn jiù shíwàn le.*  
 adesso sposarsi JIU centomila MOD  
 «Adesso sposarsi costa nientemeno che 100.000.»  
 «Adesso sposarsi costa solo 100.000.»

Come nota Jin (2015, 36-7), in (32) è descritto un cambiamento che, a seconda del contesto, può consistere in un aumento non previsto del costo delle cerimonie nuziali oppure in una sua diminuzione altrettanto inaspettata; (9) invece è passibile di una sola interpretazione (l'età degli sposi è superiore a quella ritenuta normale o consigliabile). La differenza sostanziale che Jin coglie tra (9) e (32) riguarda la natura della quantificazione, che può essere di tipo 'unidirezionale', come in (9), o di tipo 'bidirezionale', come in (32). Appartengono alla categoria della quantificazione 'unidirezionale' eventi e fenomeni che si sviluppano a senso unico, secondo dinamiche per così dire di crescita (invecchiamento, scorrere del tempo ecc.); fanno capo invece alla categoria della quantificazione 'bidirezionale' eventi e fenomeni a doppio senso, che seguono dinamiche di crescita, ma anche di decrescita (fluttuazioni valutarie, variazioni degli indici di consumo ecc.). Gli enunciati analoghi a (9), contenenti quantificazioni ascrivibili alla categoria 'unidirezionale', non sono mai ambigui, al contrario degli enunciati simili a (32) che, avendo in sé quantificazioni ascrivibili alla categoria 'bidirezionale', lo sono sempre.

Invero (33), che ha in sé una quantificazione 'bidirezionale' ed è chiusa dalla particella modale analogamente a (32), al pari di questa si rivela ambigua:

33. 现在挣五百块钱就半个月了。  
*Xiànzài zhèng wǔbǎi kuài qián jiù bàn ge yuè le.*  
 adesso guadagnare cinquecento CL:yuan denaro JIU mezzo CL mese  
 «Adesso ci vogliono solo 15 giorni per guadagnare 500 yuan.»  
 «Adesso ci vogliono ben 15 giorni per guadagnare 500 yuan.»

Se però, in una sequenza 就 *jiù* +  $X_2$  con predicato nominale e quantificazione 'bidirezionale', nel soggetto frasale è presente un 了 *le* perfettivo, la cooccorrenza di 了 *le* modale rende univoco il senso della frase (che invece, in assenza della particella modale, risulterebbe ambiguo): indubbia infatti è l'immediatezza semantica di (14) dove la compresenza di entrambe le particelle, stando a significare che l'azione si è effettivamente esercitata solo su una parte dell'oggetto (e continuerà a esercitarsi sulla parte restante), qualifica in modo univoco 就 *jiù* come indice di relazione BASSO-ALTO («Ha (già) impiegato ben 15 giorni per guadagnare solo 500 yuan.»); altrettanto indubbia è, per contro, l'ambiguità di (17) che, in assenza di 了 *le* modale, ammette due letture a seconda che 就 *jiù*, nel dato contesto, si connoti come avverbio di limitazione («Gli ci sono voluti ben 15 giorni



per guadagnare solo 500 *yuan*.») o quale indice di relazione BASSO-ALTO («Gli ci sono voluti solo 15 giorni per guadagnare ben 500 *yuan*.»).

### 5.1.2 Sequenze con soggetto nominale

Delle sequenze 就 *jiù* + X<sub>2</sub> con predicato nominale consideriamo ora quelle con soggetto anch'esso nominale. Se mettiamo a confronto (23) e (24), entrambe contenenti quantificazioni 'unidirezionali', constatiamo che, esattamente come nel caso di (9) e (12), esse differiscono per l'occorrenza o meno di 了 *le* modale, fattore chiave che consente di discernere l'impiego di 就 *jiù* quale indice di relazione BASSO-ALTO («Xiao Wang è alto ben un metro e settanta.») in (23) e quale avverbio di limitazione («Xiao Wang è alto solo un metro e settanta.») in (24). Se invece osserviamo (34) e (35), che all'opposto includono quantificazioni 'bidirezionali', non possiamo non prendere atto dell'ambiguità di entrambe:

34. 他们就十个人。(Chen Q. 2013, 9)  
*Tāmen jiù shí ge rén.*  
 loro JIU dieci CL persone  
 «Sono nientemeno che in dieci.»  
 «Sono solo in dieci.»
35. 这学期选这门课的就10个人了。(Jin 2015, 36)  
*Zhè xuéqī xuǎn zhè mén kè de jiù shí ge rén le.*  
 questo semestre scegliere questo CL:corso lezione ST JIU dieci  
 CL persona  
 «Questo semestre nientemeno che in dieci hanno scelto questo corso.»  
 «Questo semestre solo in dieci hanno scelto questo corso.»

Solo il contesto (oltre all'accento, nella lingua orale) ci consentirà di comprendere l'uso che di volta in volta viene fatto di 就 *jiù* in enunciati tipo (34) e (35), permettendoci di ricavarne la corretta interpretazione.

Ma perché mai, se (34) e (35) sono potenzialmente ambigue, (36) non lo è, nonostante all'apparenza sia loro assai simile?

36. 今年新分来的毕业生学历都高, 10个里就(有)9个博士。(Yang 2013, 82)  
*Jīnnián xīn fēn lái de bìyèshēng xuélì dōu gāo, shí ge rén jiù (yǒu)*  
*jiǔ ge bóshì.*

quest'anno appena assegnare venire ST laureato titolo-di-studio tutti alto, dieci CL persone dentro JIU (avere) nove CL dottore-di-ricerca  
 «I nuovi laureati che ci sono stati assegnati quest'anno hanno titoli di studio di alto livello, ben nove su dieci sono dottori di ricerca.»

Il motivo non può che essere un blocco posto in (36) alla lettura restrittiva di 就 *jiù*: una simile lettura contrasterebbe infatti con la struttura logica della frase, in quanto da essa deriverebbe un senso pragmaticamente inaccettabile («I nuovi laureati che ci sono stati assegnati quest'anno hanno titoli di studio di alto livello, solo nove su dieci sono dottori di ricerca.»).

Riassumendo, ci pare di poter affermare che, salvo vincoli di ordine logico, sintattico, semantico o lessicale, quali quelli operanti in (36), le sequenze 就 *jiù* +  $X_2$  a predicato nominale che contengono quantificazioni 'unidirezionali' non sono mai ambigue, mentre quelle che hanno in sé quantificazioni 'bidirezionali' potenzialmente lo sono sempre, a meno che non si verifichi la cooccorrenza di entrambe le particelle 了 *le* (perfettiva e modale).

## 5.2 Sequenze ( $X_1$ +) 就 *jiù* + $X_2$ con predicato verbale

Passiamo ora a esaminare le sequenze con predicato verbale, tutte accomunate della peculiarità di presentare in  $X_2$  sempre e solo quantificazioni 'bidirezionali'.

### 5.2.1 Sequenze 就 *jiù* + $X_2$

Sebbene nelle sequenze 就 *jiù* +  $X_2$  qui considerate di primo acchito l'avverbio tenda a essere percepito nel suo valore limitativo, a una considerazione più attenta ci si rende conto che in realtà è anche possibile intendere la quantificazione espressa in  $X_2$  come significativa di un valore superiore a quello presunto. Ciò avviene qualora, alla luce del contesto linguistico o extralinguistico, sia virtualmente ravvisabile nella frase un segmento  $X_1$  contenente una quantificazione, sottintesa o implicita, il cui valore sia percepibile come inferiore a quello presunto, sicché il valore della quantificazione espressa in  $X_2$ , per contrasto, risulta connotato come superiore a quello presunto. È il caso di (25) e (37), enunciati in cui 就 *jiù* può essere recepito, oltre che come avverbio restrittivo, anche come indice di relazione BASSO-ALTO:

37. a. 你就买一百斤大白菜, ..... (Hole 2004, 99)  
*Nǐ jiù mǎi yībǎi jīn dà báicài, ...*  
 tu JIU comprare cento CL:jin cavolo-cinese  
 «Comperi solo cento *jin* di cavoli, ...»
- b. 你[一次]就买一百斤大白菜, ..... (Hole 2004, 99)  
*Nǐ [yī cì] jiù mǎi yībǎi jīn dà báicài, ...*  
 tu [uno CL:volta] JIU comprare cento CL:jin cavolo-cinese  
 «[In una volta sola] comperi ben cento *jin* di cavoli, ...»

Enunciati quali (25) e (37), che mettono pienamente a nudo l'ambivalenza di 就 *jiù*, ne svelano la sistematica potenziale ambiguità.

Osservando (27) si potrebbe però obiettare che talune frasi non danno luogo ad ambiguità alcuna. La risposta a questa obiezione è semplice: una volta assodata l'influenza che eventuali restrizioni di natura logica, sintattica, semantica o lessicale possono esercitare sulle valutazioni di accettabilità delle singole frasi, è facile comprendere come l'interpretazione univoca di (27) dipenda dalla illogicità del senso che si deriverebbe da una lettura non limitativa di 就 *jiù* («S'è fatto nientemeno che un bicchiere.»).

Resta il problema di enunciati come (3), dove il verbo 有 *yǒu* ricorre nella sua accezione possessiva e dove un'eventuale lettura di 就 *jiù* quale indice di relazione BASSO-ALTO pare sia da escludersi. Con tutta probabilità il blocco di una simile lettura è ascrivibile proprio ai tratti semantici che connotano il verbo, i quali sembrano condizionare differentemente il valore di 就 *jiù* a seconda che 有 *yǒu* sia preceduto da un gruppo nominale designante il 'possessore' o piuttosto da un elemento locativo. Nel primo caso l'uso dell'avverbio è circoscritto alla sua funzione limitativa, mentre nel secondo caso 就 *jiù* può anche essere inteso quale indice di relazione BASSO-ALTO, come ben testimonia (36).

### 5.2.2 Sequenze $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù + X_2$

Dunque, a causa dell'ambivalenza di 就 *jiù* (avverbio di limitazione o indice di relazione BASSO-ALTO), le sequenze 就 *jiù* +  $X_2$  possono implicare valutazioni soggettive di quantità tra loro contrastanti (inferiore o superiore al valore presunto), venendo di fatto a connotarsi, nel secondo caso (superiore al valore presunto), quali sequenze  $X_1 + \text{就 } jiù + X_2$  aventi l'elemento quantificato in  $X_1$  sottinteso o implicito. In effetti, anche in queste ultime sequenze l'avverbio 就 *jiù* è di fatto caratterizzato dalla medesima ambivalenza da cui discende l'ambiguità riscontrata, ad esempio, in (5) e (13).

In tali sequenze la potenziale ambiguità viene meno (per i motivi già esposti al § 5.1) unicamente in enunciati quali (38), dove la particella modale ricorre a chiusura della frase e il verbo è specificato come perfettivo:

38. [他]半个月就挣了五百块钱了。

[Tā] bàn ge yuè jiù zhèng le wǔbǎi kuài qián le.

[lui] mezzo CL mese JIU guadagnare ASP cinquecento CL: yuan denaro MOD

«In 15 giorni soltanto ha già guadagnato ben 500 yuan.»

In sintesi, fermo restando il ruolo dirimente che nella lingua orale ha l'accentazione, possiamo affermare che, salvo restrizioni poste da eventuali vincoli di tipo logico, sintattico, semantico o lessicale, le sequenze ( $X_1 +$ ) 就 *jiù* +  $X_2$  a predicato verbale (le quali in  $X_2$  contengono esclusivamente quantificazioni facenti capo alla categoria 'bidirezionale') sono sempre potenzialmente ambigue, a meno che non si verifichi la cooccorrenza di entrambe le particelle 了 *le* (perfettiva e modale).

## 6 Orientamento semantico, focus e polarità

Abbiamo visto (cf. § 3) che 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* possono essere impiegati come antonimi, in abbinamento con espressioni quantitative da cui sono preceduti e/o seguiti, per segnalare valutazioni soggettive opposte in ordine alla quantificazione/quantificazioni espresse:

- A)  $X_1 +$  就 *jiù* ( $X_1 =$  BASSO) vs  $X_1 +$  才 *cái* ( $X_1 =$  ALTO)  
 B) ( $X_1 +$ ) 就 *jiù* +  $X_2$  (BASSO-ALTO) vs ( $X_1 +$ ) 才 *cái* +  $X_2$  (ALTO-BASSO)

In tutti questi casi i due avverbi operano semanticamente verso sinistra, sono cioè diretti sul focus della frase che si colloca nel segmento di enunciato che li precede.

Abbiamo altresì visto (cf. § 4) che 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* possono essere anche impiegati in qualità di 'sinonimi', in abbinamento con espressioni quantitative da cui sono preceduti e seguiti, o solamente seguiti; in tal caso hanno valore limitativo e sono usati per restringere l'ambito della predicazione implicando che la quantificazione espressa alla loro destra è soggettivamente ritenuta inferiore al valore presunto:

- C) ( $X_1 +$ ) 就 *jiù* +  $X_2$  ( $X_2 =$  BASSO) ( $X_1 +$ ) 才 *cái* +  $X_2$  ( $X_2 =$  BASSO)

Ma dove si colloca, in quest'ultimo caso, il focus della frase? O, in altri termini, qual è la direzione semantica dei due avverbi?

La risposta a questo interrogativo è relativamente semplice per quanto concerne 就 *jiù* la cui ambivalenza, molto spesso fonte di potenziale ambiguità (cf. § 5), nella lingua orale è ovviata grazie all'accento, che cade su un costituente a sinistra dell'avverbio (quello che incorpora la quantificazione o è, comunque, suscettibile di implicita quantificazione) nei casi più sopra

denominati A e B, e cade invece sull'avverbio e sul costituente quantificato alla sua destra nel caso C (cf. § 4). Se riconosciamo a 就 *jiù* il ruolo di operatore «focus sensibile» utilizzato per evidenziare la collocazione del focus comunicativo della frase e assumiamo che una delle principali funzioni dell'accento frasale sia quella di dar rilievo al focus stesso, non possiamo disconoscere che in A e in B 就 *jiù*, 'attratto' dal costituente accentato (il focus), quanto a orientamento semantico punti a sinistra e punti invece a destra in C. Ad esempio in (5), se 就 *jiù* non è accentato, risulta semanticamente orientato su un elemento messo a fuoco alla sua sinistra (每月 *měi yuè*), ed è allora inteso come indice di relazione BASSO-ALTO; se, al contrario, è accentato, risulta orientato semanticamente su un elemento, anch'esso accentato, messo a fuoco alla sua destra (二百块钱 *èrbǎi kuài qián*), e dell'avverbio viene in tal caso recepito il senso limitativo.

Per quanto riguarda 才 *cái*, la risposta all'interrogativo di cui sopra può essere meno immediata e più problematica. Invero, mentre 就 *jiù* è connotato da un'ambivalenza (avverbio di limitazione o indice di relazione BASSO-ALTO) che oralmente si palesa in modo esplicito e quasi tangibile per via dell'accentazione, 才 *cái* non solo non è portatore di accenti distintivi, ma non è neppure mai apertamente ambiguo: infatti, quando è seguito da una quantificazione, sia che rappresenti un indice di relazione ALTO-BASSO, come in (11), (24) e (26), sia che rivesta invece una funzione restrittiva, come in (4) e in (28), in ogni caso esprime una valutazione soggettiva di quantità inferiore al valore presunto.

Su questa base vari studiosi (Cao 2011, 80; Ding 2015, 24) hanno ipotizzato che nelle sequenze ( $X_1 +$ ) 才 *cái* +  $X_2$  l'avverbio operi semanticamente sempre in una sola direzione, verso destra, dove sempre si collocherebbe il focus della frase. Altri (Wang Q. 2005, 19; Jin 2015, 41) hanno invece inquadrato il problema in termini più articolati, riconoscendo anche a 才 *cái* due possibili orientamenti semantici, in linea con le conclusioni che a suo tempo Chen X. (1994, 22-4) aveva tratto dopo aver rilevato come in (39) l'accento possa variamente cadere su 十个人 *shí ge rén* o su 五瓶汽水 *wǔ píng qìshuǐ*:

39. 十个人才喝了五瓶汽水。(Chen X. 1994, 22)

十个人才喝了 五瓶汽水。(Chen X. 1994, 22)

*Shí ge rén cái hē le wǔ píng qìshuǐ.*

dieci CL persona CAI bere ASP cinque CL:bottiglia gazzosa

«In dieci hanno bevuto solo cinque gazzose.»

Va da sé che in (39), così come in tutti gli enunciati analoghi, ai due diversi tipi di accentazione corrispondono collocazioni diverse del focus. Se accento e focus cadono su 十个人 *shí ge rén*, il parlante intende evidenziare che la gazzosa è stata bevuta da un numero di persone più alto del previsto («In nientemeno che dieci hanno bevuto cinque gazzose.»), se invece accento e focus cadono su 五瓶汽水 *wǔ píng qìshuǐ* il fine comunicativo della frase

muta, mirando il parlante a rilevare in primo luogo la scarsa quantità di bibita bevuta («In dieci non hanno bevuto che cinque gazzose.»).

Facendo nostre le conclusioni di Chen X. e inserendole in una prospettiva più generale, ci sembra di poter affermare che sia 就 *jiù* sia 才 *cái* siano caratterizzati da quella che Wang Q. (2005, 19) definisce «bidirezionalità semantica» e che noi preferiamo chiamare bipolarità, siano cioè entrambi capaci di orientarsi semanticamente in direzioni opposte, a seconda del contesto, esprimendo sensi contrari (impiego antonimico), se il focus è collocato a sinistra e quindi a sinistra essi puntano, ed esprimendo invece sensi simili (impiego sinonimico), se il focus è collocato a destra e a destra essi pertanto puntano.

## 7 Specularità e asimmetria

Si spiegano così, con la bipolarità di 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái*, i due fenomeni rilevati inizialmente (cf. § 1) consistenti nella sinonimia e antonimia 'incrociate' di gruppi di frasi quali (8)-(11) e nell'asimmetria delle proprietà semantiche dei due avverbi resa evidente dal confronto di enunciati quali (5) e (6).

Il primo dei due fenomeni, che ha luogo quando il focus è collocato a sinistra di 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái*, testimonia come, in questo caso, i due operatori abbiano un comportamento perfettamente speculare. La loro alternanza, infatti, in enunciati strutturalmente identici quali (8) e (10), nonché (9) e (11), comporta implicazioni semantiche di segno contrario, mentre in frasi simili a (8) e (11), e a (9) e (10), dove inversa è la collocazione del costituente quantificato, determina una sostanziale identità di senso, essendo parimenti inversa la valutazione soggettiva segnalata dai due avverbi in ordine alla quantità: in virtù della doppia inversione le due coppie di frasi vengono a risultare praticamente identiche dal punto di vista semantico.

La capacità di 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* di orientarsi semanticamente in direzioni opposte, veicolando significati contrari se il focus si trova a sinistra e sensi simili se è collocato a destra, spiega anche la situazione di asimmetria che connota i due operatori in enunciati quali (5) e (6). Caso emblematico di come il significato di alcune frasi non possa essere derivato dalla frase in sé, ma dipenda necessariamente dal contesto, 就 *jiù* in (5) viene inteso, a seconda della posizione del focus, come indice di relazione BASSO-ALTO (focus a sinistra) o, all'opposto, come avverbio di limitazione (focus a destra), con significative ricadute sul senso della frase. Al contrario in (6) l'occorrenza di 才 *cái* quale indice di relazione ALTO-BASSO o quale avverbio di limitazione non si traduce in differenze semantiche percepibili, segnalando esso in entrambi i casi valutazioni soggettive di quantità inferiore al valore presunto. In pratica, dalla loro bipolarità 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* derivano una diversa capacità di esprimere, nello stesso contesto, sensi differenti, il primo, e sensi sostanzialmente identici, il secondo.

## 8 Conclusioni

Col presente lavoro ci eravamo proposti di chiarire le differenti implicazioni di cui fanno mostra 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* quando ricorrono in abbinamento con elementi quantificati. L'indagine condotta ha consentito di verificare quanto segue:

- 1) 就 *jiù* e 才 *cái* sono operatori focus sensibili bipolari, utilizzati per segnalare la collocazione del focus della frase (in direzione del quale si orientano semanticamente) e al contempo convogliare la valutazione soggettiva del parlante in ordine alla quantità espressa (inferiore o superiore al valore presunto);
- 2) quando il focus si trova alla loro sinistra, essi veicolano valutazioni soggettive di quantità di segno contrario, inferiore al valore presunto nel caso di 就 *jiù* e superiore ad esso nel caso di 才 *cái*;
- 3) quando il focus si trova alla loro destra, ambedue veicolano la medesima valutazione soggettiva di quantità inferiore al valore presunto;
- 4) le valutazioni soggettive in merito alla quantità trasmesse da 才 *cái* non sono ambigue, quelle trasmesse da 就 *jiù* possono esserlo;
- 5) i casi di ambiguità in presenza di 就 *jiù*, derivanti dalla sua peculiare ambivalenza (focus a sinistra → valutazione di quantità inferiore al valore presunto vs focus a destra → valutazione di quantità superiore al valore presunto), si verificano laddove ricorrano predicati verbali contenenti quantificazioni di tipo 'bidirezionale', qualora nella frase non vi sia cooccorrenza di entrambe le particelle 了 *le* (perfettiva e modale).

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## **Urbanizzazione e sostenibilità in Cina** Verso un cambiamento trasformativo?

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**Abstract** Since the 1990s China has witnessed an urbanization process with no parallel in history. It is no overestimation to say that the country's future will be largely shaped by it. To many respects, Chinese urbanization is stretching to the very limit the capacities of the environment to sustain development. On the other hand, it is portrayed as a crucial driver for innovation. This paper aims at shedding light over China's urbanization potential to bring about transformative change for sustainability. It does so by analyzing the political discourse and official objectives of urbanization. Results show that sustainability has taken roots in Beijing's approach to urbanization. However, its narrative and objectives remain anchored to the same conventional ideas of incremental development, which to this day has inspired post-reform China's path to modernization. The potential for transformative change in China's urbanization appears therefore limited.

**Sommario** 1 Introduzione. – 1.1 Sostenibilità e trasformazione. – 1.2 La rilevanza dell'urbanizzazione cinese. – 1.3 Obiettivi, metodologia e struttura del lavoro. – 2. Coordinate dell'urbanizzazione cinese nel periodo post-riforme. – 3. Il discorso politico: analisi del 'Piano nazionale per l'urbanizzazione di nuovo tipo (2014-2020)'. – 3.1 Contesto della formulazione e contenuti generali. – 3.2 Cornice politico-ideologica. – 3.3 Sostenibilità urbana. – 4. Obiettivi dell'urbanizzazione: analisi degli indicatori in uso. – 5. Conclusioni.

**Keywords** China. Urbanization. Sustainability. Political discourse. Policies. Transformative change.

环境不好  
都不到这儿干活，  
都不到这儿投资，  
经济搞不上去了。

Huanjing bu hao  
dou bu dao zher gan huo,  
dou bu dao zher touzi,  
jingji gao bu shang qu le.

Se l'ambiente fosse in cattivo stato,  
nessuno verrebbe qui a lavorare,  
nessuno investirebbe qui,  
l'economia non crescerebbe più.  
(Residente di Wuxi, 16 settembre 2015)

## 1 Introduzione

### 1.1 Sostenibilità e trasformazione

Sono trascorsi trent'anni dalla prima formulazione ufficiale del concetto di sviluppo sostenibile, ad opera della Commissione Brundtland delle Nazioni Unite. Questa definì sostenibile uno sviluppo «che soddisfi i bisogni del presente senza compromettere la possibilità delle generazioni future di soddisfare i propri» (WCED 1987, cit. in Ispra s.d., 1). Inizialmente focalizzato sulla necessità di coniugare crescita materiale e un utilizzo oculato delle risorse naturali, sulla scorta delle tesi esposte dal Club di Roma nei primi anni Settanta,<sup>1</sup> il concetto di sostenibilità è andato gradualmente ad assumere una connotazione più comprensiva delle dimensioni ambientale, economica, sociale e culturale (Meadows, Meadows, Randers 1972; Colanantonio 2007; UCLG 2010). Pur su queste basi comuni, il dibattito culturale e politico sulla sostenibilità è andato articolandosi in visioni diverse e complementari. Tra queste, due prospettive assumono particolare rilievo: quella della sostenibilità 'debole', laddove il capitale naturale e quello creato dall'uomo vengono considerati come sostituibili, contrapposta a un'idea di sostenibilità 'forte', secondo cui alcune funzioni svolte dalla natura non sarebbero compensabili, né sostituibili (Pearce, Atkinson 1993; Gutés 1996; Martinez-Alier 1995). Sarebbe difficile tracciare un bilancio su quale delle due visioni abbia avuto un peso specifico maggiore nell'orientare lo sviluppo delle società umane verso obiettivi di sostenibilità (Pelenc et al. 2015). È certo tuttavia che l'idea di un progresso economico indefinito è rimasta al centro del discorso politico globale e delle aspettative dell'opinione pubblica. Ciò ha significato un implicito riconoscimento della bontà dello *status quo*: il ruolo dei sistemi politici e socioeconomici sarebbe dunque quello di promuovere il raggiungimento di uno stato di benessere materiale crescente, pur mitigando l'impatto sull'ambiente delle attività umane, garantendo equità sociale e un giusto riconoscimento delle diversità culturali (Clifton 2013). A fronte di un sempre più esteso ricorso a politiche per la sostenibilità, in anni recenti si è avuto un crescente riconoscimento dell'inadeguatezza dei paradigmi sin qui elaborati nel produrre risultati tangibili e duraturi. Tale riconoscimento è il prodotto

Ringraziamenti: l'autore riconosce il sostegno ricevuto dal Settimo Programma Quadro della Comunità Europea attraverso il progetto GLOCOM (Global Partners for Contaminated Land Management), *grant agreement* no. 269233. Vedi <https://www.dais.unive.it/~glocom/>. Un grazie particolare ad Angela Moriggi, ricercatrice del Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE), per il sostegno nell'inquadrare le diverse declinazioni di sostenibilità.

<sup>1</sup> Rilevante notare come da tali tesi prendesse vigore il piano di controllo delle nascite in Cina. In merito, si rimanda all'ottimo volume dell'antropologa statunitense Susan Greenhalgh (2008). Per una trattazione più agile, vedi Brombal 2015.

di una serie di fattori: (a) il permanere nelle organizzazioni (siano esse di natura statale o aziendale) di logiche particolaristiche e/o concentrate sul breve/medio termine, inconciliabili con la necessità di perseguire gli obiettivi di lungo termine connaturati al concetto stesso di sostenibilità (Millar et al. 2012); (b) il permanere (o l'aggravarsi) di situazioni di inquinamento ambientale, sfruttamento eccessivo delle risorse, iniquità socio-economica, marginalizzazione e alienazione culturale, nei paesi sviluppati come in quelli in via di sviluppo (Cutter 2006); (c) la presa di coscienza dell'interdipendenza dei sistemi umano e naturale su scala globale, rafforzata attraverso il dibattito sul cambiamento climatico (Cutter 2006); (d) l'estendersi delle problematiche ambientali e sociali tipiche dei paesi di più antica industrializzazione a nuovi paesi emergenti (Leach et al. 2012); (e) l'approfondirsi di una coscienza critica in seno alla società (Cohen 2014). In tale contesto, letteratura scientifica e rapporti delle agenzie di cooperazione internazionale fanno sovente riferimento alla necessità di un radicale cambio di passo nell'individuazione di politiche e pratiche per la sostenibilità. Crescente riferimento viene fatto alla necessità di adottare un approccio 'trasformativo', ovvero capace di produrre un cambiamento paradigmatico e sistemico nelle modalità di intendere e perseguire lo sviluppo delle società umane, con particolare riferimento alle interazioni fra uomo e natura (Feola 2015; Lonsdale, Pringle, Turner 2015; Olsson 2014). Questo indirizzo viene contrapposto in letteratura a un approccio c.d. 'incrementale', ovvero graduale e caratterizzato da azioni e pratiche mirate alla soluzione di specifiche problematiche (Lonsdale, Pringle, Turner 2015; Clifton 2013). Da queste differenze assiomatiche deriva che, mentre l'approccio incrementale ripone maggiore attenzione sul ruolo della tecnologia, quello trasformativo sottolinea l'importanza delle istituzioni<sup>2</sup> politiche e socio-economiche quali determinanti alla base delle azioni di singoli e organizzazioni nel perseguire la sostenibilità (Clifton 2013; Retolaza 2011). A tale attenzione verso le istituzioni, i proponenti dell'approccio trasformativo accompagnano la necessità di un maggiore coinvolgimento attivo di portatori d'interesse nei processi decisionali, creando altresì le condizioni per innescare processi di *empowerment* delle categorie marginalizzate e di apprendimento sociale (Retolaza 2011; Lonsdale, Pringle, Turner 2015). Connaturata a un approccio trasformativo è la messa in discussione dello *status quo* politico e socio-economico, basata su assunti riconducibili al concetto di sostenibilità forte. Tali assunti includono: (a) la crescita indefinita basata sul consumo è intrinsecamente insostenibile; (b) priorità deve essere data alla riallocazione delle risorse, anziché all'aumento costante

2 Per istituzioni, si fa qui riferimento alla definizione invalsa nel campo della *Institutional Theory*, dove le istituzioni vengono suddivise in strutture e attività cognitive (credenze condivise), normative (valori, aspettative, prassi consolidate), regolative (regole formali, sanzioni). Vedi Scott 2004, 408-14.

della loro estrazione e mercificazione; (c) criteri etici orientati verso la giustizia ambientale devono guidare le azioni dei portatori d'interesse più influenti, evitando lo sfruttamento delle risorse a spese di quanti siano economicamente, socialmente e politicamente marginalizzati; e (d) limiti precisi vanno posti allo sfruttamento delle risorse naturali, in linea con le capacità degli ecosistemi (Williams, Millington 2004; Clifton 2013; Olsson 2014). Può essere ricondotto a queste istanze anche l'accento posto sulla necessità di rivalutare i beni comuni quale risposta alla logica di mercificazione della natura, trovandovi nuova collocazione culturale, politica e giuridica (Capra, Mattei 2015). Alcuni degli elementi associati all'approccio trasformativo iniziano ad essere presenti nel discorso politico di Stati e organizzazioni internazionali. In particolare, il riferimento alla trasformazione ha permesso di inquadrare nuovamente aspetti più prettamente politici e socio-culturali nel dibattito sulla sostenibilità, fungendo da complemento all'attenzione (altrimenti predominante) riservata all'innovazione tecnologica (Scoones 2016). Un arricchimento di prospettiva che riguarda in specie le trasformazioni istituzionali, il tema della partecipazione dei portatori d'interesse ai processi decisionali e lo sganciamento da una logica estrattiva nel rapporto con la natura (Scoones 2016).

## 1.2 La rilevanza dell'urbanizzazione cinese

Una delle dimostrazioni più recenti della rilevanza attribuita a elementi trasformativi è rappresentata dal rapporto 2016 della Commissione delle Nazioni Unite per gli Affari Socioeconomici della Regione Asia-Pacifico, intitolato *Transformations for Sustainable Development*. Nel rapporto si sottolinea la necessità da parte dei governi di sostenere trasformazioni istituzionali capaci di creare alleanze di portatori d'interesse, i cui obiettivi convergano su valori orientati verso un futuro sostenibile (UN-ESCAP 2016). Il potenziale ruolo guida della Cina nella regione è menzionato in svariati punti del documento. Ciò non sorprende: i progressi fatti dalla Cina (specie nell'ambito delle 'tecnologie verdi') vengono spesso citati quali fattore in grado di incidere positivamente sul fronte della lotta a degrado ambientale e cambiamento climatico (Rumney 2016). Complici i grandi investimenti nel settore dell'energia pulita e una posizione più accomodante circa la mitigazione del cambiamento climatico, in anni recenti la Cina è passata dall'essere identificata come un paese arretrato, inquinato e inquinante, a una delle variabili positive di cambiamento per la sostenibilità a livello globale (Zhang, Barr 2013). A riguardo, l'urbanizzazione viene considerata come un elemento in grado di minacciare i progressi sinora fatti dal paese verso la sostenibilità e, al contempo, una finestra di

opportunità<sup>3</sup> per l'introduzione di innovazioni in ambito ambientale, economico e sociale (Bai, Shi, Liu 2014). In tal senso, viene spesso citato il potenziale positivo dell'urbanizzazione in termini di adozione di tecnologie verdi e bonifica ambientale, terziarizzazione dell'economia ed estensione dei servizi pubblici e sociali (UNDP 2016). Il relativo dibattito ha acquisito momento all'indomani del superamento della soglia del 50 per cento di residenti urbani sul totale della popolazione cinese, nel 2011-2 (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 1; Yang s.d., 3). L'attenzione riservata al tema dell'urbanizzazione appare giustificata se si considerano i seguenti fattori: (a) volume e rapidità del fenomeno, mai sperimentati nella storia dell'umanità (b) natura multi-settoriale delle implicazioni del processo di urbanizzazione; (c) ruolo centrale attribuito all'urbanizzazione dalla presente compagine partitica e governativa, guidata da Xi Jinping (Looney, Rithmire 2016). Con riferimento a quest'ultimo punto, è da notare come a partire dal 2012 abbiano visto la luce importanti provvedimenti politici (Taylor 2015). Fra questi, particolare rilievo riveste il *Guojia xinxing chengshihua guihua (2014-2020)* 国家新型城市化规划 (Piano nazionale per l'urbanizzazione di nuovo tipo). Il documento è il primo strumento di macro-pianificazione cinese dedicato integralmente a definire priorità e modalità dell'urbanizzazione (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014; Taylor 2015). L'importanza dell'urbanizzazione per lo sviluppo socio-economico è stata altresì riaffermata nel XIII Piano quinquennale (2016-2020).<sup>4</sup> A ciò va aggiunta infine la crescente importanza attribuita nel discorso politico cinese al concetto di 'civiltà ecologica' (*shengtai wenming* 生态文明), centrato sulla necessità di trovare un nuovo equilibrio fra uomo e natura, sovente riferito al tema dell'urbanizzazione<sup>5</sup> e interpretato da molti osservatori come dimostrazione di attenzione politica e volontà programmatica in termini di sviluppo sostenibile (UNDP 2016).

### 1.3 Obiettivi, metodologia e struttura del lavoro

Se la rilevanza dell'urbanizzazione nel definire il volto futuro dello sviluppo cinese (e, in una certa misura, dell'intera regione Asia-Pacifico) appare assodata, rimane da comprendere in che modo questa sarà capace di pro-

3 Si fa qui riferimento al concetto di 'window of opportunity', sviluppato dalle scienze politiche nel quadro della teoria dei movimenti sociali. Vedi Della Porta e Diani (1999).

4 Sul portale internet del Consiglio di Stato sono accessibili risorse di agile consultazione relative al XIII Piano quinquennale. Per un'utile infografica sul piano, vedi: [http://english.gov.cn/policies/infographics/2015/11/04/content\\_281475227546918.htm](http://english.gov.cn/policies/infographics/2015/11/04/content_281475227546918.htm) (2016-01-01). Vedi anche il video a: [http://english.gov.cn/news/video/2015/10/28/content\\_281475221854979.htm](http://english.gov.cn/news/video/2015/10/28/content_281475221854979.htm) (2016-01-01).

5 In merito, vedi il par. 4 del presente lavoro.

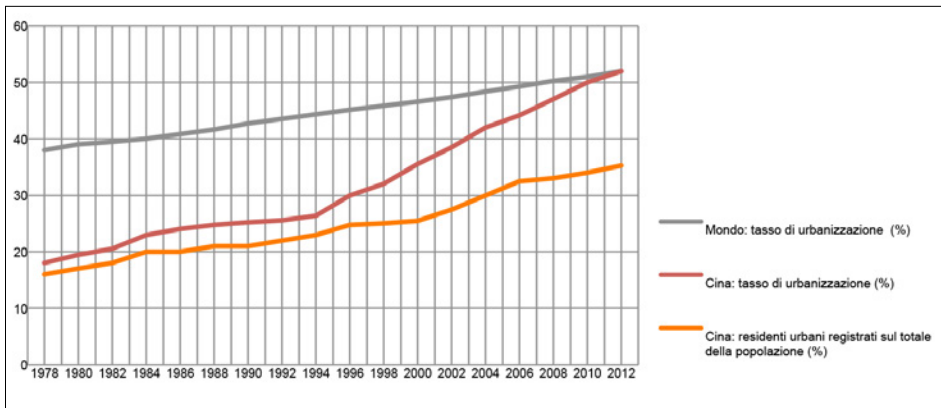
durre ricadute positive per la sostenibilità. In particolare, resta inesplorato il potenziale del processo di urbanizzazione cinese nel facilitare una transizione verso un approccio trasformativo alla sostenibilità. Il presente lavoro intende contribuire a tale dibattito, focalizzandosi sull'evoluzione recente del discorso politico e degli obiettivi dell'urbanizzazione cinese. Il lavoro si propone di dare risposta a due domande di ricerca: (1) In che modo il discorso politico e gli obiettivi dell'urbanizzazione cinese riflettono principi generali di sostenibilità? e (2) In che misura è possibile rintracciare elementi riconducibili a un cambiamento trasformativo per la sostenibilità? Lo studio del discorso politico proposto in questo articolo si basa in larga misura sull'analisi del *Guojia xinxing chengshihua guihua (2014-2020)* 国家新型城市化规划 (Piano nazionale per l'urbanizzazione di nuovo tipo), poiché rappresentativo della declinazione ufficiale dell'urbanizzazione. Concettualmente, il lavoro muove dall'approccio all'analisi del discorso di matrice marxista.<sup>6</sup> Questo si focalizza sulla funzione egemonica del discorso, in grado di normare pensiero e pratica circa un dato oggetto (Lees 2004). L'assunto alla base di tale approccio è che il discorso sia elaborato da attori politici ed economici dominanti, con il fine di legittimare i propri interessi e/o la propria visione del mondo, con ricadute tangibili sull'agenda politica (Burnham et al. 2008. Vedi anche Martson 2002). In linea con tale approccio, l'analisi proposta nel terzo paragrafo si focalizza sull'individuazione nel testo di rimandi a elementi di natura ideologica, legati agli obiettivi di sviluppo iscritti nel più ampio discorso politico cinese. Viene inoltre dedicata particolare attenzione alla tematizzazione (*framing*) della sostenibilità. La seconda parte dell'analisi si focalizza sugli obiettivi dell'urbanizzazione sostenibile in Cina. Quale *proxy* per l'individuazione di tali obiettivi vengono presi in considerazione i sistemi di indicatori di sviluppo urbano, in specie quelli definiti da/per conto di autorità governative. Questi costituiscono una fonte di estremo rilievo nel normare, definendone i criteri di valutazione, le pratiche e i processi di urbanizzazione. Il lavoro è strutturato in quattro parti: nella prima (paragrafo 2) sono fornite le principali coordinate temporali, spaziali e demografiche dei processi di urbanizzazione e le maggiori problematiche in termini di sostenibilità emerse negli ultimi due decenni. La seconda e la terza sezione (paragrafi 3 e 4), che costituiscono il nucleo principale del lavoro, analizzano discorso politico e obiettivi dell'urbanizzazione. Nel paragrafo conclusivo (5), i risultati dell'analisi vengono discussi *vis-a-vis* le caratteristiche salienti del cambiamento trasformativo, discutendo infine il caso dell'urbanizzazione cinese alla luce del dibattito internazionale sulla sostenibilità.

6 Nell'ambito dello studio dell'urbanizzazione, in anni recenti ha assunto particolare rilievo l'analisi critica del discorso (Critical Discourse Analysis, CDA) (Jacobs 2006). Riconducibile in buona misura al filone marxista (Lees 2004), l'analisi critica del discorso offre un impianto metodologico articolato nell'analisi di tre diverse dimensioni: testo, pratiche discorsive, pratiche sociali (Fairclough 1995).

## 2 Coordinate dell'urbanizzazione cinese nel periodo post-riforme

Il processo di urbanizzazione occorso nella Cina continentale negli ultimi trent'anni è il più massiccio mai avvenuto nella storia. Alla vigilia delle riforme avviate nel 1979, circa il 20% della popolazione cinese viveva nelle città, contro l'oltre 50% attuale (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 1). Entro il 2030, i residenti urbani cresceranno di ulteriori 100.000.000 (Looney, Rithmire 2016, 7). Ciò è la conseguenza di vasti fenomeni di inurbamento (lo spostamento di abitanti dalle campagne alle città), dello sviluppo urbano di centri minori (specie capoluoghi di contea) e dell'estendersi delle città verso le aree di frangia periurbane. Il processo di urbanizzazione è stato determinato dalla trasformazione del modello economico da prevalentemente agricolo a industriale. L'esperienza cinese in questo senso non differisce da quella dei paesi di più antica industrializzazione, dove l'affermarsi di modelli di sviluppo basati sui settori secondario e, in seguito, terziario è andata accompagnandosi alla concentrazione della popolazione in aree urbane.

Grafico 1. Urbanizzazione in Cina (1978-2012)



Fonte: Rielaborazione dell'autore, sulla base di Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 1.

Quanto accaduto in Cina è tuttavia peculiare in termini di volumi e rapidità e per il coesistere di aree caratterizzate da livelli e fasi di urbanizzazione assai diversificati (UNDP 2015). Tale diversificazione trae origine da fattori quali il diverso livello di sviluppo locale e delle reti di trasporto e telecomunicazioni, la disomogenea disponibilità di risorse naturali, la conformazione geomorfologica del territorio, nonché le differenze su



scala locale in termini di priorità politiche. L'urbanizzazione comporta pressioni considerevoli su ciascuna delle dimensioni in cui convenzionalmente viene suddivisa la sostenibilità, ovvero ambientale, sociale ed economica, nonché sulla c.d. 'quarta dimensione', quella culturale (Soini, Dessein 2016). In termini ambientali, le conseguenze negative verificatesi in Cina sono riassumibili in: (a) aumento delle emissioni di inquinanti, specie da sorgenti puntiformi; (b) maggiore consumo di risorse idriche, del suolo, energetiche; (c) danni o distruzione di ecosistemi (Cui, Shi 2012; Vaughan 2014; Brombal et al. 2015; Deng et al 2016). Tra le problematiche connesse all'ambiente è da annoverarsi anche la vulnerabilità al cambiamento climatico: la fascia costiera della Cina orientale e sud-orientale (la più popolosa) è particolarmente esposta agli effetti del riscaldamento globale, in termini di innalzamento del livello medio dei mari e maggiore frequenza e intensità di eventi meteo-climatici estremi (Brombal 2016). In ambito sociale, le maggiori preoccupazioni pertengono alla salute umana: il combinato di maggiori emissioni di inquinanti e maggiore concentrazione della popolazione genera un circolo vizioso, con ricadute negative sulla salute pubblica (Gong et al. 2012). Peculiari del caso cinese sono poi le difficoltà di accesso da parte delle popolazioni inurbate (i 'lavoratori migranti', *nongmingong* 农民工) ai servizi sociali (educazione, sanità, pensioni). Ciò è dovuto in primis al sistema di registrazione familiare: sino a tempi recenti l'accesso a tali servizi ha avuto come prerequisito la registrazione familiare urbana (*hukou* 户口), concessa tuttavia in casi assai limitati (Looney, Rithmire 2016). In tale contesto, si osservano seri fenomeni di marginalizzazione a danno delle classi sociali più svantaggiate. Fonte di marginalizzazione socioeconomica sono anche gli espropri di terra e la rilocazione a danno di contadini residenti nelle aree di frangia, per lasciare spazio a progetti infrastrutturali e di espansione urbana (Grano 2008). In termini culturali, infine, si assiste a una perdita di beni culturali tangibili e intangibili (Tian, Zhu 2015). Fra le cause principali del rapido processo di urbanizzazione cinese figurano gli incentivi perversi in ambito amministrativo. A causa della decentrazione fiscale attuata a inizio anni Novanta, le amministrazioni locali hanno fatto abbondante ricorso alla concessione dei diritti d'uso del suolo e oneri di urbanizzazione quale fonte di entrate (Grano 2008, Ong 2014). Ciò ha incentivato il consumo di territorio e le espropriazioni, favorendo processi speculativi nel settore immobiliare (Grano 2008, Ong 2014). Le problematiche dell'urbanizzazione sono dunque di natura multisettoriale e multiscale. In termini settoriali, rimandano infatti ad ambiti diversi, fra i quali figurano pianificazione urbanistica, infrastrutturale e ambientale, politiche energetiche, regolamentazione, finanziamento ed erogazione dei servizi sociali, politiche del lavoro, conservazione dei beni culturali. Tali aree chiamano in causa diversi livelli di competenza legislativa e am-

ministrativa: nazionale, provinciale, città-prefettura e contea-distretto.<sup>7</sup> Considerate la scala dei processi di urbanizzazione, la complessità degli impatti e l'interrelazione dei diversi aspetti di politica pubblica interessati dall'urbanizzazione, non sorprende come essa sia al centro del dibattito politico cinese. Il tema è del resto da lungo tempo presente nell'agenda politica nazionale e locale. Dal punto di vista più prettamente riconducibile alla pianificazione urbanistica, una delle innovazioni più rilevanti risale al periodo a cavallo fra gli anni Ottanta e Novanta, quando comparvero i primi requisiti ambientali nella definizione dei piani urbanistici (Chung 2015). A tale innovazione sono riconducibili numerose sperimentazioni avviate a livello locale dai primi anni Duemila, tese alla creazione di sistemi di gestione territoriale integrata (Brombal, Moriggi 2017). Sul piano sociale, la crisi dei migranti ha portato nel corso degli anni a provvedimenti tesi all'estensione della copertura di welfare (specie sanitario) nelle città, anche a quanti privi di *hukou* urbano (Brombal, Cortassa 2011). A tali provvedimenti si accompagna il processo di riforma del sistema dello *hukou*, orientato all'alleggerimento dei requisiti previsti per l'accesso allo status di residente urbano, in particolare nelle città di piccole e medie dimensioni (Kam 2014). Fra le tendenze emerse negli ultimi anni, figura inoltre l'introduzione di misure di pianificazione regionale, con l'individuazione di sette macro-regioni urbane e dei relativi corridoi infrastrutturali, definite nel 2010 dal Consiglio di Stato (Han 2015). Se l'attenzione al tema non è dunque recente, la fase attuale è caratterizzata dal tentativo di ridurre la frammentarietà delle politiche sull'urbanizzazione. Tangibile dimostrazione di questa tendenza è il *Guojia xinxing chengshihua guihua (2014-2020)* 国家新型城市化规划 (Piano nazionale per l'urbanizzazione di nuovo tipo), una raccolta di linee d'indirizzo definite dal governo centrale per guidare nel medio periodo l'urbanizzazione. Il documento costituisce un distillato delle diverse prospettive presenti in seno alla *leadership* cinese e può fungere da valido strumento per interpretare il relativo discorso politico e il ruolo attribuito al suo interno al tema della sostenibilità.

7 Nella dizione cinese, rispettivamente: *guoji* 国家级, *shengji* 省级, *diji* 地级, *xian/quji* 县/区级.

### 3 Il discorso politico: analisi del 'Piano nazionale per l'urbanizzazione di nuovo tipo (2014-2020)'

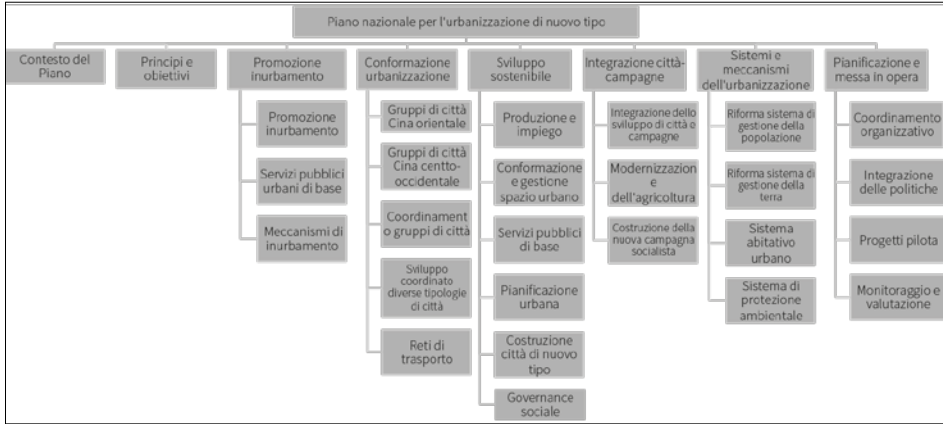
#### 3.1 Contesto della formulazione e contenuti generali

Il 'Piano nazionale per l'urbanizzazione di nuovo tipo (2014-2020)' (d'ora in poi 'Piano') è stato redatto da un gruppo di coordinamento composto dai rappresentanti di 14 organi a livello ministeriale, coordinati dalla Commissione Nazionale per lo Sviluppo e le Riforme (Frey, Gleave, Dawson 2014; Kam 2014). Il processo ricalca la pratica, invalsa nei processi decisionali statali cinesi, di perseguire un dialogo inter-settoriale fra organi aventi diverse competenze legislative e amministrative, al fine di promuovere un consenso collegiale (Brombal, Moriggi 2017). Il 'Piano' è una raccolta di linee d'indirizzo destinata sia ai sottoposti gerarchici nel sistema del Partito-Stato che al pubblico generale, in virtù dell'ampia diffusione e libero accesso dato al documento.<sup>8</sup> Ha dunque la duplice valenza di coordinare il lavoro dei diversi organi aventi potere decisionale e di garantire legittimità all'indirizzo definito dalle autorità centrali. Le prime bozze del 'Piano' sono circolate nell'autunno 2013, quando alcuni dei principi poi inclusi nella sua versione finale sono stati approvati dal terzo *plenum* del XVIII Comitato Centrale (Frey, Gleave, Dawson 2014; Kam 2014). La versione finale del documento è stata resa pubblica nel marzo 2014. Il piano consta di circa 23.000 caratteri e si compone di otto sezioni.<sup>9</sup> La struttura risponde a una suddivisione tematica. La prima sezione introduce il contesto, la rilevanza e le dinamiche di sviluppo dell'urbanizzazione. La seconda illustra principi e obiettivi cui il processo di urbanizzazione dovrebbe ispirarsi. Le sezioni successive sono dedicate a temi specifici, inclusi i processi di inurbamento (3), la conformazione urbanistica (4), lo sviluppo urbano sostenibile (5), l'integrazione dello sviluppo urbano e rurale (6), il sistema amministrativo e gestionale (7). Infine, l'ottava sezione è dedicata alle modalità di messa in opera delle linee d'indirizzo del 'Piano' (vedi grafico 2).

8 Il comunicato della Commissione Nazionale per lo Sviluppo e le Riforme è disponibile all'indirizzo [http://www.ndrc.gov.cn/gzdt/201403/t20140317\\_602980.html](http://www.ndrc.gov.cn/gzdt/201403/t20140317_602980.html).

9 La suddivisione nell'originale cinese corrisponde a 'parti' (*pian* 篇) e 'capitoli' (*zhang* 章). Quest'ultimi sono suddivisi all'occorrenza in 'sezioni' (*jie* 节).

Grafico 2. Struttura e contenuti del 'Piano nazionale per l'urbanizzazione di nuovo tipo (2014-2020)'



Fonte: Traduzione, sintesi ed elaborazione dell'autore, sulla base di Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan (2014)

Dalla struttura del documento appare evidente come il fulcro tematico del 'Piano' sia la transizione del paese da rurale a urbano. In tal senso, è significativo notare come il documento sia stato redatto nel periodo immediatamente successivo al simbolico superamento della soglia del 50% di residenti urbani sul totale della popolazione (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014), nonché contestualmente al dibattito politico sulla riforma del sistema di registrazione familiare (*hukou* 户口) (Guowuyuan 2014).

### 3.2 Cornice politico-ideologica

La prima sezione del 'Piano' è dedicata a fornire la cornice storica e politica entro la quale interpretare il processo di urbanizzazione. I fenomeni di inurbamento vengono descritti come un 'processo storico naturale' (*ziran lishi guocheng* 自然历史过程) (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 1, cap. 1). Se il processo di inurbamento viene descritto come rispondente a un processo 'naturale' e dunque inevitabile, poco oltre viene asserita la natura necessaria dell'urbanizzazione quale fattore di modernizzazione:

— 一国要成功实现现代化，在工业化发展同时，必须注重城镇化发展  
*Yi guo yao chengong shixian xiandaihua, zai gongyehua fazhan tongshi, bixu zhuzhong chengzhenhua fazhan*

Affinché un paese realizzi con successo la modernizzazione, accanto all'industrializzazione è necessario dare rilievo allo sviluppo dell'urbanizzazione (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 1, cap. 1)

L'urbano viene identificato quale volano dello sviluppo economico nazionale, con particolare riferimento alla crescita dei consumi interni:

城镇化水平持续提高, 会使更多农民通过转移就业提高收入, 通过转为市民享受更好的公共服务, 从而使城镇消费群体不断扩大

*Chengzhenhua shuiping chixu tigao, hui shi gengduo nongmin tongguo zhuanji jiu ye tigao shouru, tongguo zhuanwei shimin xiangshou genghao de gonggong fuwu, cong'er shi chengzhen xiaofei qunti buduan kuoda*

La crescita duratura del livello di urbanizzazione può permettere a un numero crescente di contadini di accrescere il proprio reddito grazie al cambiamento del loro impiego lavorativo e di godere di migliori servizi pubblici divenendo cittadini, facendo dunque sì che il gruppo di consumatori urbani continui ad allargarsi. (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 1, cap. 1)

Per puntellare il discorso vengono fatti diversi riferimenti a principi iscritti dell'ideologia del PCC (Partito Comunista Cinese). L'obiettivo di raggiungere una 'società moderatamente prospera' (*xiaokang shehui* 小康社会) viene citato sin dalle prime righe, come anche il concetto di 'modernizzazione socialista' (*shehuizhuyi xiandaihua* 社会主义现代化) e il 'sogno cinese' (*zhongguo meng* 中国梦), di più recente introduzione. Le problematiche di 'agricoltura, campagne e contadini' (i cosiddetti *sannong wenti* 三农问题) vengono citate più oltre, con riferimento alle potenzialità insite nel processo di urbanizzazione di porvi rimedio (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 1, cap. 1). Nella seconda sezione del documento, dedicata a illustrare i 'principi base e gli obiettivi di sviluppo' dell'urbanizzazione (*jiben yuanze he fazhan mubiao* 基本原则和发展目标), fanno capolino diversi elementi di natura ideologica riconducibili alla sostenibilità. Viene innanzitutto citata la funzione guida della 'visione scientifica dello sviluppo' (*kexue fazhan guan* 科学发展观) rispetto all'urbanizzazione (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 1, cap. 4). Introdotta ufficialmente da Hu Jintao nel corso del XVII Congresso del PCC, la 'visione scientifica' esprime un approccio allo sviluppo largamente riconducibile a criteri di sostenibilità, ovvero:

armonizzato e onnicomprensivo, programmato con rigore, metodo, sistematicità, che si differenzi da una crescita selvaggia, la quale ha lasciato, invece, nel corso del processo di riforma, sempre più spazio a disparità sociali. (Miranda 2007, s.p.)

Il termine 'scientifico' (*kexue* 科学) ricorre frequentemente nel resto del documento, spesso giustapposto a 'razionale', 'ragionevole' (*heli* 合理),

per qualificare processi di pianificazione, costruzione e sviluppo urbano.<sup>10</sup> Oltre al riferimento alla 'visione scientifica dello sviluppo', in questa sezione del 'Piano' viene fatto riferimento ai concetti di 'uomo come fondamento' (*yi ren wei ben* 以人为本), riconducibile a principi di equità sociale (Scarpari 2015) e di 'civilizzazione ecologica' (*shengtai wenming* 生态文明). Quest'ultima è stata introdotta ufficialmente con il XVIII Congresso del PCC ed è ispirata a una rimodulazione del rapporto fra uomo, società e natura (Gobbicchi 2012). In termini più prettamente economici, viene fatto riferimento al ruolo trainante del mercato, pur sotto guida governativa (*shichang zhudao, zhengfu yindao* 市场主导, 政府引导). È in tal senso significativo notare come si faccia ricorso all'aggettivo 'naturale' (*ziran* 自然) nel descrivere il ruolo del mercato nel promuovere lo sviluppo urbano:<sup>11</sup>

使城镇化成为市场主导、自然发展的过程

*shi chengzhenhua chengwei shichang zhudao, ziran fazhan de guocheng*  
far sì che l'urbanizzazione diventi un processo guidato dal mercato, che si sviluppi in modo naturale (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 2, cap. 4)

Le prime due sezioni del documento forniscono dunque una narrazione coerente dell'urbanizzazione, quale processo (a) inevitabile, poiché iscritto nelle 'leggi naturali' dello sviluppo; (b) componente essenziale della modernizzazione cinese; (c) latore di benefici economici e sociali, se inquadrato correttamente ('scientificamente') nei principi iscritti nel sistema ideologico del Partito-Stato. Ne consegue che l'urbanizzazione non vada intesa come un processo intrinsecamente problematico. Al contrario, essa deve essere intesa come solidamente e intimamente connessa al cammino intrapreso da Pechino nel periodo post-riforme.

### 3.3 Sostenibilità urbana

Come già menzionato, il 'Piano' dedica un'intera sezione, la quinta, al tema dello sviluppo sostenibile (*kechixu fazhan* 可持续发展). La sezione è la più corposa del documento (circa 6.200 caratteri). La struttura ricalca, pur

<sup>10</sup> È significativo come il termine, oltre a fornire un riferimento ideologico preciso nella 'visione scientifica dello sviluppo', svolga la funzione di presentare le linee d'indirizzo presentate nel documento quali frutto di un processo decisionale privo di errori o condizionamenti, scientifico e pertanto incontestabile, secondo una pratica comune nel linguaggio politico cinese (Schoenals 1992, Link 2003, Greenhalgh 2008).

<sup>11</sup> In merito alla funzione dei meccanismi di mercato nel promuovere lo sviluppo urbano, vedi Frey, Gleave, Dawson 2014.

se non pedissequamente, la suddivisione tradizionale nelle tre dimensioni della sostenibilità, ovvero ambientale, economica e sociale, quest'ultima inclusiva anche di aspetti culturali. L'articolazione delle diverse componenti è presentata nel paragrafo introduttivo come segue:

加快转变城市发展方式, 优化城市空间结构, 增强城市经济、基础设施、公共服务和资源环境对人口的承载能力, 有效预防和治理‘城市病’, 建设和谐宜居、富有特色、充满活力的现代城市

*Jiakuai zhuanbian chengshi fazhan fangshi, youhua chengshi kongjian jiegou, zengqiang chengshi jingji, jichu sheshi, gonggong fuwu he ziyuan huanjing dui renkou de chengzai nengli, youxiao yufang he zhili ‘chengshi bing’, jianshe hexie yiju, fuyou tese, chongman huoli de xiandai chengshi*

Accelerare la trasformazione delle modalità di sviluppo delle città, ottimizzare la struttura dello spazio urbano, rafforzare la capacità di economia, infrastrutture di base, servizi pubblici, risorse e ambiente urbani di sostenere la popolazione, prevenire e governare in modo efficace le ‘malattie della città’,<sup>12</sup> costruire città moderne caratterizzate da armonia e vivibilità, ricche di peculiarità, dotate di grande vitalità (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 5)

Più oltre, nell'introdurre la nuova concezione della pianificazione dello sviluppo urbano, si fa nuovamente riferimento alle dimensioni della sostenibilità, inclusa la sfera culturale:

坚持以人为本、尊重自然、传承历史、绿色低碳理念融入城市规划全过程

*Ba yiren weiben, zunzhong ziran, chuancheng lishi, lvse ditan linian rongru chengshi guihua quan guochen*

Integrare nel processo complessivo di pianificazione urbana i concetti di ‘uomo come fondamento’, rispetto della natura, trasmissione dell’eredità storica, [sviluppo] verde e a basse emissioni (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 5, cap. 17, sez. 1)

La prima parte della sezione si focalizza su questioni economiche e socioeconomiche, specie in merito alle funzioni produttive e all’impiego nelle aree urbane. Viene qui fatto ampio ricorso al termine ‘innovazione’ (*chuangxin* 创新), con riferimento ad ambiti riconducibili alla sfera economica, quali tecnologia (*jishu* 技术), azienda (*qiye* 企业), modelli commerciali (*shangye moshi* 商业模式), risorse umane (*rencai* 人才), servizi (*fuwu* 服务), capitale (*ziben* 资本) (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014,

<sup>12</sup> Sulle cosiddette ‘malattie della città’, vedi anche una recente dichiarazione di Xi Jinping, di cui a <http://politics.people.com.cn/n1/2015/1224/c1001-27973347.html>

parte 5, cap. 14, sez. 2). La tematica ambientale fa qui capolino, alternando ai ridondanti riferimenti all'innovazione quello alla necessità di utilizzare nuove energie e risorse (*xin nengyuan* 新能源; *xin ziyuan* 新资源), con rimando sotteso all'innovazione tecnologica (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 5, cap. 14, sez. 1). Viene citata inoltre la necessità di limitare gli impatti antropici sull'ambiente, con particolare riferimento al settore industriale, e di pianificare lo sviluppo delle città sulla base della capacità di carico dell'ambiente. La parte del documento dedicata in maniera più specifica all'ambiente si muove sulla stessa falsariga, focalizzandosi su risparmio energetico, nuove energie, gestione oculata delle risorse (incluse quelle idriche e del suolo), mitigazione dell'inquinamento nelle città, specie dell'aria. Utilizzando una figura comune nella retorica dello sviluppo sostenibile, viene fatto largo ricorso del termine 'verde' (*lvse* 绿色), a qualificare processi e materiali di costruzione, infrastrutture e mobilità, unitamente al concetto di 'basse emissioni' (cd. *low carbon*, *ditan* 低碳), con riferimento implicito allo sviluppo economico e industriale (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 5, cap. 18, sez. 1). Il termine 'ecologico' (*shengtai* 生态) ricorre circa la necessità di stabilire aree destinate alla protezione dell'ambiente ('linee rosse per la protezione ecologica', *shengtai baohu hongxian* 生态保护红线), di estendere la copertura forestale, lacustre e di zone di acquitrino,<sup>13</sup> nonché con riferimento alla bonifica di siti contaminati e all'introduzione nelle città di corridoi ecologici. Tali indicazioni relative alla gestione ambientale si accompagnano all'accento posto su 'modelli di produzione, vita e consumo verdi' (*lvse shengchan fangshi*, *shenghuo fangshi he xiaofei moshi* 绿色生产方式, 生活方式和消费模式) (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 5, cap. 18, sez. 1).<sup>14</sup> Non si fa alcun riferimento a problematiche di natura globale: né la vulnerabilità delle città cinesi al cambiamento climatico né la possibilità di adottare politiche di adattamento vengono menzionate (mentre, seppur indirettamente, si fa riferimento alla mitigazione, insistendo su nuove fonti di energia). La parte più corposa della sezione è dedicata alle questioni di natura sociale. Queste vengono trattate in due parti distinte, l'una dedicata ai 'servizi pubblici' (*gonggong fuwu* 公共服务) (cap. 16), la seconda alla 'governance sociale' (*shehui zhili* 社会治理) (cap. 29). Le linee d'indirizzo sui servizi pubblici coprono sia questioni infrastrutturali (reti di comunicazione e trasporto) che relative ai servizi sociali, in linea con il concetto di 'uomo come fondamento':

13 Le bonifiche ambientali sono in misura crescente legate a opere di rivitalizzazione e rinnovo urbano in Cina. Vedi Brombal, Moriggi 2017.

14 Sull'argomento, vedi Dias Simões 2016.



在学有所教、劳有所得、病有所医、老有所养、住有所居上持续取得新进展  
*Zai xue you suo jiao, lao you suo de, bing you suo yi, lao you suo yang, zhu you suo ju shang chixu qude xin jinzhan*  
 continuare a ottenere nuovi progressi nel garantire educazione, lavoro, sanità, assistenza agli anziani e abitazioni (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 5, cap. 16, sez. 3)

È da notare come il riferimento a principi di equità sociale sia svolto facendo esplicito riferimento alle problematiche che più interessano la vita delle persone comuni, secondo una pratica diffusa nel linguaggio politico cinese, specie a partire dal decennio della *leadership* Hu-Wen (2002-2012) (Bulfoni 2011), nonché riproponendo tematiche sollevate nel dibattito sulle 'malattie della città' (Renmin wang 2015). Una seconda, sostanziale trattazione di tematiche riconducibili alla sfera sociale è presente nella parte conclusiva della sezione dedicata alla sostenibilità (cap. 29), dove si sostiene l'importanza del rafforzamento e innovazione della 'governance sociale' (*shehui zhili* 社会治理) (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 5, cap. 29). È significativo notare come il concetto di *governance* faccia riferimento a dinamiche decisionali aperte al contributo di attori diversi, inclusi quanti esterni al sistema politico. Ciò conferma lo scarto avutosi con il terzo *plenum* del XVIII Comitato Centrale del 2013 rispetto al concetto di 'gestione sociale' (*shehui guanli* 社会管理), maggiormente connotato da approccio verticale, c.d. *top-down* (Novaretti 2014). Il documento riafferma la valenza dell'apporto di attori sociali (inclusa la società civile) nel dare soluzione ai problemi dell'urbanizzazione. Tuttavia, questa apertura è fortemente temperata dal ripetuto ricorso al termine 'partito' (*dang* 党) e al suo 'ruolo guida' (*lingdao* 领导), altrove piuttosto rari. Inoltre, si citano i limiti imposti dalla 'legalità' (*yifa* 依法), come a voler arginare un'eccessiva libertà da parte degli attori sociali nell'esprimere il proprio contributo alla gestione urbana.

Nel complesso, temi e contenuti di questa sezione paiono confermare la metabolizzazione da parte di Pechino dei concetti fondamentali della sostenibilità e la loro coerente inclusione nel discorso politico sull'urbanizzazione, a sua volta da intendersi quale strumento per favorire il raggiungimento degli obiettivi di sviluppo prioritari del paese. Ulteriore conferma in tal senso è data dall'assenza di riferimenti espliciti all'interazione fra urbanizzazione cinese e più ampie sfide globali (specie cambiamento climatico). La sezione dedicata alla sostenibilità rafforza la narrazione offerta nelle due sezioni introduttive del 'Piano', con riferimento al carattere 'naturale' dell'urbanizzazione e al ruolo del Partito-Stato nell'interpretarne lo sviluppo. Alcune strategie linguistiche, peraltro comuni ai documenti pianificatori cinesi, favoriscono quest'esito: l'impersonalità del testo in particolare contribuisce a naturalizzare le linee di indirizzo proposte, quali soluzioni oggettive alle problematiche dell'urbanizzazione. L'unica eccezio-

ne è ravvisabile nella sezione sulla *governance* sociale, dove il riferimento al ruolo guida del partito inserisce (pur se implicitamente) un agente atto a governare i processi partecipativi. D'altro canto, l'ampio ricorso in apertura di paragrafo a verbi quali 'migliorare' (*wanshan* 完善), 'promuovere' (*tuijin* 推进), 'accelerare' (*jiakuai* 加快) trasmette al lettore l'impressione che il cammino già intrapreso verso uno sviluppo urbano sostenibile sia positivo, pur necessitando di rinnovato vigore per centrare gli obiettivi di sviluppo definiti dai vertici del Partito-Stato.

#### 4 Obiettivi dell'urbanizzazione: analisi degli indicatori in uso

A livello globale, l'utilizzo di sistemi di indicatori per valutare la sostenibilità dei processi di urbanizzazione è pratica diffusa e consolidata (European Commission 2015). La Cina non costituisce un'eccezione: sin dagli anni Novanta, diversi sistemi sono stati introdotti nel paese al fine di sostenere, informandoli, i relativi processi decisionali (Shen, Zhou 2014). La definizione di un sistema di indicatori avviene sulla base di requisiti di natura tecnica, riassumibili in: (a) rilevanza rispetto al fenomeno fatto oggetto di analisi; (b) consistenza analitica, vale a dire l'appropriatezza del dato indicatore per l'approccio di analisi utilizzato; (c) sensibilità, ovvero la capacità di rilevare cambiamenti di stato rispetto al fenomeno fatto oggetto di analisi; (d) facilità di comprensione; (e) disponibilità e accessibilità di dati e informazioni (Marcomini, Suter, Critto 2009). Nell'ambito della definizione, monitoraggio e valutazione delle politiche pubbliche, a monte di tali requisiti si colloca la definizione di obiettivi, generalmente già iscritti in provvedimenti politici, rispetto al cui raggiungimento le autorità considerino utile un monitoraggio puntuale. Ne consegue come la definizione di un indicatore o di un sistema di indicatori non sia un processo neutro né oggettivo. Questi riflettono piuttosto la priorità di volta in volta attribuite a questo o quell'aspetto, sulla base del giudizio di decisori ed esperti (Shen, Zhou 2014). Al contempo, i sistemi di indicatori esercitano una pressione su quanti abbiano responsabilità circa la messa in opera degli indirizzi politici, contribuendo a normarne le pratiche. Tale processo può essere facilitato dalla presenza di sistemi di incentivi (ad esempio relativi alla promozione dei funzionari), legati al raggiungimento di dati valori soglia o parametri (Marinaccio 2016). Fra gli indicatori chiave della pianificazione quinquennale cinese figura il tasso di urbanizzazione, con riferimento al quale vengono periodicamente stabiliti obiettivi di crescita, sia a livello centrale che locale (Guojia fazhan gaige weiyuanhui 2016; Marinaccio 2016, Melton 2015). Considerato il discorso politico dominante, non stupisce che il tasso di urbanizzazione figuri tra gli indicatori più rilevanti per valutare il progresso economico e sociale della Cina. In anni recenti i sistemi di indicatori relativi all'urbanizzazione sono andati strut-

turandosi attorno alle diverse dimensioni di sostenibilità. Lo stesso 'Piano', analizzato nel paragrafo precedente, è dotato di un sistema di indicatori dove appare rilevante il ruolo di criteri ambientali e sociali, quali servizi pubblici, risorse e ambiente (Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 2).

Tabella 1. Indicatori per la valutazione dell'urbanizzazione, tratti dal 'Piano nazionale per il nuovo tipo di urbanizzazione (2014-2020)'

Indicatore	2012	2020
<b>Tasso di urbanizzazione</b>		
Tasso di urbanizzazione, popolazione domiciliata (%)	52,6	60,0 ca.
Tasso di urbanizzazione, popolazione residente (%)	35,3	45,0 ca.
<b>Servizi pubblici di base</b>		
Tasso dei figli a seguito di lavoratori migranti aventi accesso all'istruzione (%)	-	≥99,0
Tasso di disoccupati urbani, lavoratori migranti, nuova forza lavoro aventi accesso ad addestramento professionale gratuito (%)	-	≥95,0
Tasso di copertura delle pensioni di anzianità per la popolazione domiciliata (%)	66,9	≥90,0
Tasso di copertura medico-assicurativa per la popolazione domiciliata (%)	95,0	98,0
Tasso di copertura delle abitazioni popolari per la popolazione domiciliata (%)	12,5	≥23,0
<b>Infrastrutture di base</b>		
Percentuale del trasporto pubblico sul totale del trasporto motorizzato, nelle città con oltre 1 milione di abitanti (%)	45,0	60,0
Copertura dell'erogazione pubblica dell'acqua (%)	81,7	90,0
Tasso di trattamento delle acque reflue (%)	87,3	95,0
Tasso di trattamento dei rifiuti (%)	84,8	95,0
Banda larga per uso domestico (Mbps)	4	≥50
Tasso di copertura dei servizi di quartiere (%)	72,5	100,0
<b>Risorse e ambiente</b>		
Superficie costruita pro-capite media (m.q.)	-	≤100,0
Fonti di energia rinnovabili sul totale del consumo energetico urbano (%)	8,7	13,0
Costruzioni 'verdi' sul totale delle nuove costruzioni (%)	2,0	50,0
Copertura verde nelle aree costruite	35,7	38,9
Tasso di raggiungimento dello standard nazionale di qualità dell'aria nelle città superiori al livello di prefettura	40,9	60,0

Fonte: Traduzione ed elaborazione dell'autore basata su Zhonggong zhongyang, Guowuyuan 2014, parte 2, tab. 1.

Va notato come quello incluso nel piano non sia un sistema di indicatori specificatamente destinato alla valutazione dello sostenibilità dello sviluppo urbano. Come già accennato, questo tipo di sistemi è tuttavia presente in Cina sin da metà anni Novanta. Ciò è il risultato sia di fattori endogeni, ovvero la crescente attenzione riservata al governo del fenomeno dell'urbanizzazione e al raggiungimento di un modello di sviluppo più sostenibile, che di fattori esogeni, in particolar modo le attività di organizzazioni internazionali e gli scambi tecnico-scientifici con pae-

si occidentali.<sup>15</sup> Uno dei maggiori esempi è costituito dallo *Urban Sustainability Index*, sviluppato dalla *Urban China Initiative* (UCI). Fondata nel 2010 da Columbia University, Tsinghua University e McKinsey & Company, l'UCI viene spesso citata come indicativa del progresso registrato in Cina nello sviluppare metriche per la valutazione della sostenibilità urbana (European Commission 2015). Lo *Urban Sustainability Index 2013* rappresenta uno dei progetti più estesi di mappatura della sostenibilità urbana cinese, includendo nella propria analisi 185 città campione (Li et al. 2014). A livello domestico, lo sviluppo dei relativi sistemi di indicatori muove le prime mosse in seno a programmi governativi tesi a migliorare la vivibilità delle città, quali la 'Città giardino nazionale' (*Guojia yuanlin chengshi* 国家园林城市) (1992) (Lin 2013). Se quest'ultimo si concentra su un paniere specifico e limitato di parametri,<sup>16</sup> a partire dalla fine degli anni Novanta iniziano ad apparire sistemi più articolati, comprensivi delle diverse dimensioni della sostenibilità (Shen, Zhou 2014). Ciò si lega alla graduale metabolizzazione in Cina dei concetti proposti nell'Agenda 21 delle Nazioni Unite (1992), dove trova espressione un concetto di gestione integrata del territorio (Huang, Yan, Wu 2016). Nel 1997, nell'ambito del programma denominato 'Città modello nazionale per la protezione ambientale' (*Guojia huanjing baohu mofan chengshi* 国家环境保护模范城市) (1997) viene definito un paniere composto da 24 indicatori, relativi ad aspetti socio-economici, qualità ambientale, infrastrutture e gestione ambientale (Yantai shi renmin duiwai youhao xiehui 2012). In uno dei lavori più completi dedicati all'argomento, Shen e Zhou (2014) individuano otto sistemi di indicatori, rappresentativi dello sviluppo di strumenti per la valutazione della sostenibilità da parte di istituzioni governative (o a queste affiliate) cinesi.<sup>17</sup> Nell'analizzare struttura e contenuti dei sistemi di indicatori, gli autori denotano una sostanziale aderenza alla suddivisione della sostenibilità nelle dimensioni ambientale, economica e socia-

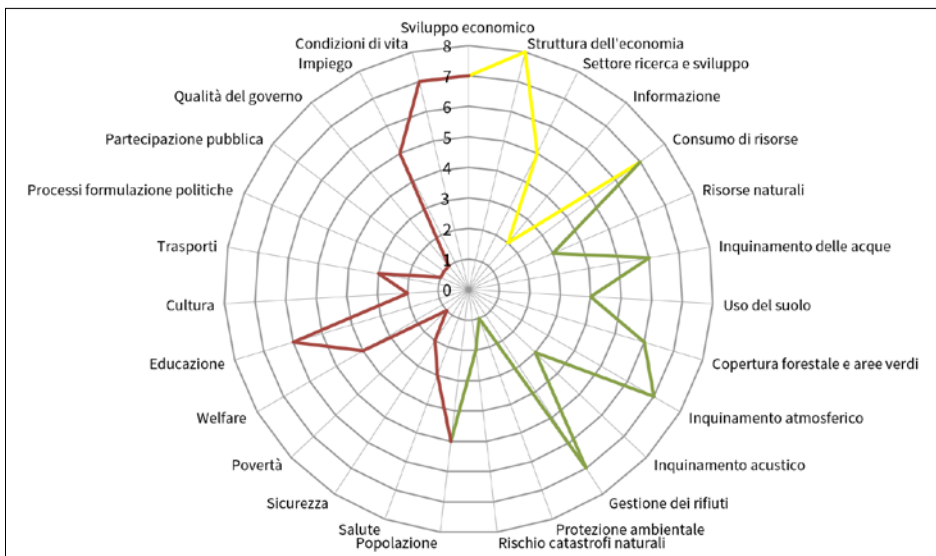
15 Con riferimento agli scambi fra Europa e Cina, cf. il comunicato diffuso dalla Delegazione dell'Unione Europea in Cina, accessibile a: [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/eu\\_china/sustainable\\_urbanisation/sustainable\\_urbanisation.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/eu_china/sustainable_urbanisation/sustainable_urbanisation.htm) (2016-01-01).

16 Nel 2000, i criteri di valutazione includevano: verde nelle strade pubbliche; verde nelle aree residenziali; verde nelle unità di lavoro; costruzione di vivai; piantumazione. Cf. [http://www.mohurd.gov.cn/zcfg/jsbwj\\_0/jsbwjcsjs/200611/t20061101\\_156922.html](http://www.mohurd.gov.cn/zcfg/jsbwj_0/jsbwjcsjs/200611/t20061101_156922.html).

17 Ufficio Nazionale di Statistica (1996) (*Guojia tongji ju* 国家统计局), Commissione Nazionale per la Pianificazione dello Sviluppo (1996) (*Guojia fazhan jihua weiyuanhui* 国家发展计划委员会), Amministrazione dello Stato per la Protezione Ambientale (1999) (*Guojia huanjing baohu zongju* 国家环境保护总局), Ministero della Scienza e Tecnologia (2002) (*Kexue jishu bu* 科学技术部), Ministero della Protezione Ambientale (2007) (*Huanjing baohu bu* 环境保护部), Commissione Nazionale per lo Sviluppo e le Riforme (2009) (*Guojia fazhan gaige weiyuanhui* 国家发展改革委员会), Centro Informazioni dello Stato (2009) (*Guojia xinxi zhongxin* 国家信息中心), Accademia Cinese per lo Sviluppo Urbano (2010) (*Chengshi fazhan yanjiuyuan* 城市发展研究院), Accademia Cinese delle Scienze (2010) (*Zhongguo kexueyuan* 中国科学院).

le, nonché l'inclusione di indicatori relativi all'efficacia degli strumenti di *governance*. Nel complesso, l'attenzione posta alla valutazione della *performance* urbana nelle diverse dimensioni risulta equilibrata, con una marginale precedenza accordata a indicatori ambientali. Sul totale dei 270 indicatori proposti nei sistemi analizzati, il 39,6% pertiene alla sfera ambientale, il 30,4% a quella sociale, il 28,1% alla sfera economica, mentre il restante 1,9% riguarda la valutazione della *governance* (rielaborazione dell'autore, sulla base dei dati in Shen, Zhou 2014, 114, tab. 2). È tuttavia presente una forte eterogeneità fra i diversi sistemi, riconducibile secondo gli autori al fatto che «different organizations propose different systems of indicators by focusing on different perspective», contribuendo così alla natura frammentata e poco coerente della valutazione dei progressi verso la sostenibilità urbana (Shen, Zhou 2014, 114). È significativo altresì notare come l'eterogeneità sia maggiore nella sfera sociale, a fronte di una maggiore coerenza nei criteri afferenti all'economia e all'ambiente. Altro elemento rilevante è la carenza di indicatori relativi agli aspetti più propriamente politici. Il grafico 3 fornisce una raffigurazione visiva della rilevanza attribuita a diversi criteri di sostenibilità nei sistemi analizzati da Shen e Zhou: la linea indica quanti sistemi (sul totale degli otto considerati) siano dotati di almeno un indicatore per misurare il rispettivo criterio (es. sviluppo economico, struttura dell'economia, e così via). Il colore della linea indica la natura dei criteri: gialla per quelli economici, verde per i criteri ambientali, rossa per quelli sociali. Dal grafico è possibile notare come a una copertura più ampia di criteri di natura economica, socioeconomica (impiego, condizioni di vita), relativa ai servizi sociali (educazione, welfare) e ambientale si accompagni una carenza di indicatori per aspetti quali partecipazione pubblica, processi di formulazione delle politiche, qualità del governo locale, cultura. Nel complesso, ciò sembra indicare un'attenzione maggiore all'integrazione di economia e ambiente nello sviluppo delle città.

Grafico 3. Criteri di sostenibilità presenti nei sistemi di indicatori per la sostenibilità urbana<sup>18</sup>



Fonte: Elaborazione dell'autore, sulla base dei dati reperibili in Shen e Zhou (2014), Appendix A.

Se i dati testé presentati restituiscono un'idea di un approccio orientato all'integrazione delle dimensioni economica e ambientale, recenti sviluppi sembrano indicare una maggiore attenzione alla sfera sociale. In particolare, l'introduzione dei concetti di 'civiltà ecologica' (con la sua enfasi su di un approccio relazionale uomo-ambiente), 'governance sociale', e del 'cinque-in-uno' (*wu wei yi ti* 五位一体),<sup>19</sup> sembrano essere legati a tentativi di integrare nella valutazione della sostenibilità urbana anche indicatori riconducibili ad aspetti più prettamente politici. Un esempio rilevante è il lavoro di Wang e Li (2015), finanziato dall'Ufficio di Statistica della pro-

**18** Come già menzionato in testo, il valore assegnato alle diverse categorie corrisponde al numero di sistemi di indicatori (sul totale di otto) che utilizzano almeno un indicatore afferente al rispettivo criterio. Ad esempio, il criterio 'struttura dell'economia' è presente in tutti i sistemi di indicatori presi in considerazione. All'estremo opposto, il criterio 'partecipazione pubblica' è presente soltanto in uno fra i sistemi di indicatori considerati. I criteri inclusi sotto la categoria *governance* da Shen e Zhou (2014) sono stati inseriti dall'autore fra i criteri sociali, secondo pratica invalsa in letteratura.

**19** Il concetto del 'cinque-in-uno' cui si fa qui riferimento è stato discusso nel corso del XVIII Congresso nazionale del PCC (Partito Comunista Cinese) del 2012, quale strategia complessiva per lo sviluppo cinese, fondata sulle 'cinque costruzioni' (*wu ge jianshe* 五个建设): economica (*jingji* 经济), politica (*zhengzhi* 政治), culturale (*wenhua* 文化), sociale (*shehui* 社会) ed ecologica (*shengtai* 生态) (Renmin Wang 2012, UNDP 2015).

vincia dello Shandong, dove viene proposto un indicatore relativo al 'livello di partecipazione pubblica nell'ambito della civilizzazione ecologica' (*gongzhong canyu shengtai wenming jianshe shuiping* 公众参与生态文明建设水平). Parimenti, Xu e Qi (2015), facendo esplicito riferimento al concetto dei 'cinque-in-uno', includono fra gli indicatori del proprio modello di valutazione anche il grado di soddisfazione della popolazione e l'accessibilità delle informazioni di pubblico interesse (*xinxi gongkai* 信息公开). L'inclusione di tali indicatori non costituisce di per sé una novità: è rilevante tuttavia come gli indicatori siano inquadrati nel discorso dell'urbanizzazione sostenibile. Pur trattandosi di evidenze ancora isolate,<sup>20</sup> ciò sembra indicare una maggiore consapevolezza tra i ricercatori cinesi circa la necessità di includere aspetti politici nella valutazione della sostenibilità.

## 5 Conclusioni

Con riferimento alla prima domanda cui il presente lavoro si è ispirato, ovvero in quale misura principi e obiettivi di sostenibilità siano presenti nel discorso e negli obiettivi dell'urbanizzazione cinese, l'analisi proposta non lascia spazio a dubbi: temi e approcci riconducibili alla sostenibilità sono presenti in maniera sostanziale. Ciò è l'esito della metabolizzazione da parte delle autorità cinesi di principi presenti nel dibattito internazionale e della presa di coscienza delle ricadute negative dello sviluppo accelerato del periodo post-riforme. Con riferimento alla seconda domanda di ricerca, non è al contrario possibile rintracciare elementi riconducibili a un approccio trasformativo alla sostenibilità. Il discorso politico sull'urbanizzazione rimane ancorato ad alcuni degli assiomi tipicamente associati a una visione c.d. incrementale delle politiche per la sostenibilità, esprimendosi secondo modalità rese più rigide dalla forte continuità del sistema ideologico cinese.<sup>21</sup> Tali assiomi includono la precedenza attribuita al miglioramento delle condizioni di vita della popolazione, da raggiungere attraverso le possibilità di crescita economica, espansione e razionalizzazione dei servizi pubblici e innovazione fornite dalla concentrazione urbana. In termini sociali e ambientali, l'ottica predominante è quella del superamento delle contraddizioni del periodo post-riforme, superamento di cui l'urbanizzazione è presentata come strumento fondamentale. Il fatto che siano assenti riferimenti a sfide di natura globale (cambiamento climatico), potenzial-

20 Una *review* sistematica dei sistemi di indicatori per la sostenibilità urbana ispirati al concetto di civilizzazione ecologica è in corso d'opera, a cura di un gruppo di ricercatori e studenti coordinati dall'autore. Si veda la newsletter #4 del progetto *EuropeAid 'New pathways for sustainable urban development in China's medium-sized cities'*, accessibile da <http://mediumcities-china.org>.

21 Riguardo alla continuità del discorso politico cinese, vedi Cammelli 2016.

mente in grado di generare un radicale ripensamento rispetto agli obiettivi di sviluppo, conferma la natura essenzialmente centrata sugli obiettivi di sviluppo domestico dell'urbanizzazione. In questo contesto, il ruolo attribuito all'innovazione è quello di garantire maggiore efficienza (energetica, produttiva, nell'utilizzo delle risorse umane). I riferimenti all'innovazione sociale, che pure sono ravvisabili nell'introduzione del concetto di *governance* e, in una qualche misura, in quello di 'civiltà ecologica', sono peraltro temperati dal ruolo centrale attribuito dal Partito nel definire i limiti della partecipazione pubblica e dalla carenza di parametri attraverso cui misurare il raggiungimento di obiettivi di inclusione pubblica. Non vi sono, in altri termini, elementi che riconducano alle istanze più rappresentative del concetto di cambiamento trasformativo, specie in termini di *empowerment* di gruppi sociali marginalizzati. In questo quadro, fortemente improntato allo *status quo*, gli obiettivi di sostenibilità sono ascrivibili ad alcuni dei principi ideologici su cui è andata incentrandosi la costruzione della legittimità del Partito-Stato (fig. 1).

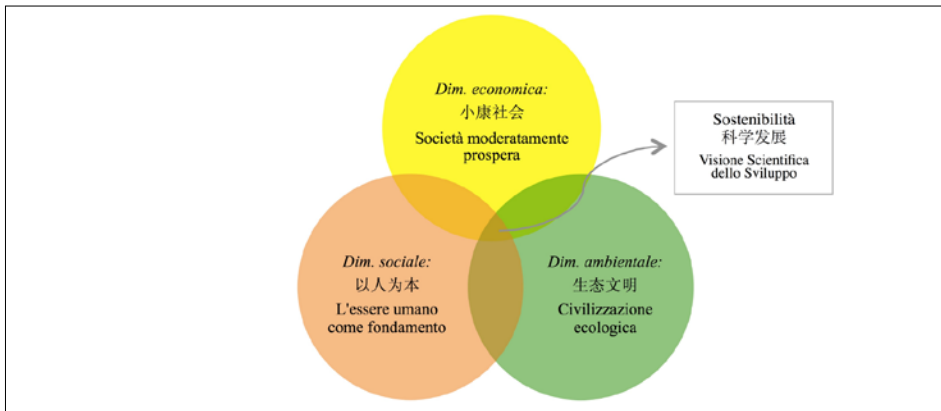


Figura 1. Dimensioni della sostenibilità e ideologia

La predominanza di un concetto incrementale dello sviluppo nel discorso politico e il forte orientamento dei sistemi di indicatori verso la misurazione di aspetti economici e ambientali offrono una conferma a quanto indicato in lavori di recente pubblicazione, relativi ai mutamenti delle politiche di urbanizzazione cinese. Chung (2015) e Wu (2015) in particolare evidenziano come l'urbanizzazione cinese stia muovendo verso una crescente integrazione della sfera ambientale ed economica. Fermo restando il discorso politico dominante, secondo questi autori le città agiscono in misura crescente quali organizzazioni semi-autonome, impegnate in una competizione per attrarre investimenti, residenti abbienti e turisti. In tale



contesto riveste un ruolo fondamentale l'interazione fra vari attori a livello locale: l'istituzione di meccanismi di gestione integrata del territorio diviene dunque il risultato della negoziazione fra interessi pubblici e privati, con un ruolo preponderante giocato dalle élite politiche e economiche. A riguardo è particolarmente significativo il caso di Wuxi, città considerata in Cina quale modello di urbanizzazione sostenibile, dove nel 2013 la gestione integrata del bacino del lago Lihu è stata affidata a una *partnership* pubblico-privata, guidata da uno dei maggiori attori locali nel settore delle costruzioni (Brombal, Moriggi 2017. Sul tema della gestione integrata a livello di bacino, vedi anche Deng et al. 2016). La logica sottesa a tali processi sarebbe dunque non tanto una rivalutazione e riaggiustamento del rapporto fra uomo e natura, quanto la monetizzazione del valore della natura stessa: un ambiente pulito diviene uno strumento di promozione economica, specie nei settori immobiliare e turistico. L'esperienza cinese in tal senso non si discosta molto da quella maturata nei paesi occidentali a partire dagli anni Ottanta e Novanta. Se confrontata con gli sviluppi più recenti avvenuti in Europa e Nordamerica (vedi ad es. Perry, Atherton 2017), l'esperienza cinese appare d'altro canto carente di una visione propriamente trasformativa (basata su *empowerment*, partecipazione, co-creazione), capace di generare cambiamenti incisivi, inclusivi e durevoli per la sostenibilità.

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# Multiple Layers of Transmission Gasán Jōseki and the Goi Doctrine in the Medieval Sōtō school

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**Abstract** Scholars have investigated Gasán's role in the so-called 'popularization' of the medieval Sōtō school. What is noticed less often is Gasán's doctrinal role in the shaping of medieval Sōtō Zen. This article sheds light on the particular importance given by Gasán to the transmission of the Five Ranks through an analysis of the *San'unkaigetsu* and the two Muromachi variants. The three texts share some common features in the analysis of the Five Ranks, which are at the center of the transmission process in Gasán's group. I suggest that the rediscovery of the Five Ranks attempts to legitimate Gasán and his group of disciples. *San'unkaigetsu* achieves this through three different layers: the textual layer, the cosmogonic layer and the secrecy layer which endow Gasán's group with the legitimacy of past tradition. My analysis collocates Gasán and *San'unkaigetsu* in the complex scenario of the medieval Sōtō school, providing a nuanced understanding of the influential role of Gasán.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 The life of Gasán: The Importance of Being a Disciple. – 3 The Five Positions Prior to Gasán: Dōgen, Between Transgression and Transmission. – 4 The Architecture of *goi* Transmission: The Textual Layer. – 5 *Goi* Cosmogony of/in Practice: The Cosmogonic Layer. – 6 Secrecy in *absentia*: The Secrecy Layer. – 7 Conclusion.

**Keywords** Sōtō School. Gasán Jōseki. Five Ranks. Kirigami.

## 1 Introduction


Gasán Jōseki 峨山韶碩 (1275-1366), along with Meihō Sotetsu 明峰 素哲 (1277-1350), is considered one of the most prominent disciples of Keizan Jōkin 瑩山紹瑾 (1268-1325). His role in the medieval Sōtō School scenario is frequently analyzed in relation to his master Keizan, thus avoiding the emergence of his doctrinal influence in the development of medieval Zen.

As is clear from extant sources, Gasán spent most of his life at Sōjiji 総持寺 (Ishikawa province), where he was able to construct a solid monastic community from which emerged the 'twenty-five disciples of Gasán' (*nijūgo tetsu* 二十五哲), who founded different groups (*ha* 派) and temples. Thanks to the community originally based at Sōjiji, Gasán nourished a group of disciples which created the basis for the 'popularization' of the school in the subsequent centuries. According to William Bodiford:

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DOI 10.14277/2385-3042/AnnOr-53-17-12

Submission 2016-11-25 | Acceptance 2017-03-14

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histories compiled during the Tokugawa period credit the founding of more than twenty monasteries to just thirteen of Gasan's disciples. Geographically, these monasteries range over seventeen provinces, from Mutsu on the northern tip of Honshū to Hyūga on the southern tip of Kyūshū. In other words, monks from just one monastery (Sōjiji) laid the foundations for the development of Sōtō communities literally from one end of Japan to the other, within the span of just one generation. (1993, 108).

Even though these data were exaggerated in order to fill in gaps in the historical accounts of Gasan and his disciples, the contribution of Gasan's disciples to the foundation of Sōtō temples throughout the country is undeniable. On the other hand, the role of Gasan in medieval Zen appears to be more complex and varied, especially if we focus on his teachings. A common feature regarding Gasan is his use of the most prominent teaching of Caodong school founder, the five positions<sup>1</sup> (Ch. *wuwei*; Jp. *goi* 五位) of Dongshan Liangjie 洞山良价 (Jp. Tōzan Ryōkai), as the main content of transmission for his closest disciples. Noticeably, the analysis of the sources related to *Gasan-ha* offers important elements, helping to define the development of the Sōtō school from the late Kamakura to the first half of the Edo period, with particular attention to the use of secret documents and the introduction of doctrinal syncretism.

The identification of the Sōtō school with its founder's teachings often occurs, limiting the emergence of tendencies distinct from Dōgen's 'pure Zen'. The return to the teachings of the Sōtō Zen 'founder' is the result of Menzan Zuihō's great philological effort, which aimed to rediscover Dōgen's work in the Edo period<sup>2</sup> (see Riggs 2002, 12-7). Before Menzan, medieval Zen presents some peculiar features, as seen in certain types of documents such as *monsan* 門參 and *kirigami* 切紙. In this sense, Gasan's related sources allow the (re)discovery of another side of medieval Japanese Zen and the (re)consideration of the implications about Gasan's doctrinal dimension. In this paper, I will try to situate the transmission of the five positions in the medieval panorama mainly relying on the *San'unkai-getsu* 山雲海月, dated 1677, and other editions of the text from the temples Ennōji 円応寺 (1479) and Jōrokuji 丈六寺 (1530); this material will also be

1 'Rank', frequently used to translate the term *goi*, appears too narrow in its connotations, exclusively emphasizing the hierarchy among the different positions rather than their mutual interaction. Thus, in this paper I decided to use the term 'positions', appearing more neutral in its meaning.

2 According to Riggs, Menzan used Dōgen as the 'raw material' of a new tradition, based on the textual authority which emerged from the rediscovery of the material related to Dōgen. "[Menzan] was inventing a tradition, using the authority of selected ancient texts to change customary practices" (2002, 12).

compared to a *kirigami* from Yōkōji 永光寺 (1613), which offers important information on the elaboration of Tōzan's *goi* in *Gasan-ha*. The paper is divided into two parts. The first part deals with Gasan's biography, with particular attention to the years preceding his abbotship at Sōjiji. In fact, the hagiographical sources recounting Gasan's life tend to focus on the importance of the past tradition before his abbotship at Sōjiji. The stress on the significance of the past assigns Gasan a role in the immutable tradition of buddhas and patriarchs, contributing to the construction of the paradigm of tradition/transmission, which constitutes an important element for the investigation of *goi* transmission. The second part will deal with the fundamental question: 'Why *goi*?'. In order to define the main features of *goi* transmission in Gasan's group, the five positions discourse will be seen as the product of multiple layers of semantic space, which overlap and include a textual, a cosmogonic and a secrecy layer. The five positions serve as semiotic space, conceived as a "multi-layered intersection of various texts" (Lotman 2009, XXII) that interact with each other creating a plethora of internal relationships in the displaying of the multi-discursive nature of *goi*.

## 2 The Life of Gasan: the Importance of Being a Disciple

The life of Gasan can be divided into two parts: prior to 1321 and after this date. The year 1321 represents a crucial moment in Gasan's life as it corresponds with Keizan's foundation of Sōjiji and the transmission of the precepts. We can also see this date as a divide, since the extant biographical sources<sup>3</sup> particularly emphasize the presence of buddha and patriarchal tradition in Gasan's early years. The displacement of the narration regarding protagonists from the present (Gasan and Keizan) and from the past (buddha and patriarchs, i.e. the past tradition) is particularly useful when examining Gasan's teaching. Moreover, it allows the emergence of the transmission paradigm as a common thread, characterizing the first part of his life as a disciple and being central in his role of master.

According to the *Sōjiji nise Gasan oshō gyōjō* 総持寺二世峨山和尚行状, the only source clearly reporting this element, Gasan was born in the first year of the Kenji era (1275). A common feature of the examined sources is the emphasis on the importance of the mother figure. Quoting from *Gasandaioshō bōchoku* 峨山和尚芳躰:

3 In this paper I will examine the following material: *Sōjiji Gasan Jō Zenji den* 総持寺峨山碩禪師傳 (S-Shiden jō, 45); *Noshū Shogakusan Sōjiji Gasan Jōseki Zenji* 能州諸嶽山総持寺峨山碩禪師 (S-Shiden jō, 250-1); *Tōkoku Daiyonso Daiyūan Kaiki Sōjiji Nise Gasan Oshō den* 洞谷代四祖大雄庵開基総持二世峨山和尚伝 (S-Shiden jō, 598); *Gasandaioshō Bōchoku* 峨山大和尚芳躰 (S-Goroku 1, 42-3) and *Sōjiji Nise Gasan Oshō Gyōjō* 総持寺二世峨山和尚行状 (ZGR Vol. 9 II, 578-9).

When making a vow to Kannon of a Thousand Arms, Gasan's mother asked: "Please give me a child that will become a saint [*shōnin* 聖人]."<sup>4</sup> One night, she saw Kannon in her dreams piercing her womb with a sword three *sun* long. The sword went through her womb and it was like eating cold ice. Once she woke up she was pregnant, and finally her son was born. (S-Goroku 1, 43)

The craving for a child that leads the mother to pray incessantly for childbirth; the revelation and thus the imminent realization of her hope in the form of a dream; an agonizing pain in her womb as a symptom of pregnancy: all these are hagiographic *topoi*, frequently recurring since the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni. They symbolize a recurring theme of 'monk genesis' in the hagiography narrations, where the conception is rooted in an oneiric world and is the materialization of the willingness of the mother and a non-human agent which realizes her desire. Furthermore, Gasan's mother was devoted to Kannon as was Keizan's mother Ekan Dai-shi. Hence, Gasan was ideally a child of Kannon sharing the same genesis as his master Keizan (see Faure 1996, 39). Consequently, from the very beginning of the different biographical accounts we can find evidence for a double directionality: on the one hand with Gasan's direct master Keizan and on the other with the past 'tradition' of eminent masters and patriarchs.

At the age of eleven Gasan's mother left him at a temple and at the age of sixteen (1291) he started the practice at Mount Hiei.<sup>5</sup> During the winter of the fifth year of the Kenji Era (1297), Gasan met Keizan for the first time at Daijōji 大乘寺. Some of the examined texts<sup>6</sup> report a dialogue between the two, in which Gasan explains his doubts about Tendai doctrine, asking Keizan why the different schools have different ways of conceiving the Law. Gasan did not receive any verbal answer, as Keizan replied with a smile, the encounter resembling the famous episode known as *nengemishō* 拈華微笑. In the *Gasan Daioshō Bōchoku* we read:

Gasan turned to Keizan and asked: "According to the teaching of many masters from Tendai School: 'The mind of the person who casts off the body will neither obtain the thought of illusion nor the Nature of the Law. The Nature of Law does not encompass the Nature of Law'. This

4 Unless otherwise specified, all translations from Japanese are the Author's. The term *shōnin* 聖人 is here translated as 'saint' with the meaning of holy man, enlightened person.

5 This part is missing only in *Gasan Daioshō Bōchoku*, where the first encounter between Master Keizan and sixteen-year-old Gasan is recorded.

6 The quoted dialogue also appears in: *Noshū Shogakusan Sōjiji Gasan Jōseki Zenji; Gasan Daioshō Bōchoku; Sōjiji Nise Gasan Oshō Gyōjō*.

is considered the main point of our school. Then, why the teachings of other schools are different from ours?”. Keizan did not answer the question and just smiled. (S-Goroku 1, 43)

This specific event particularly emphasizes Gasan's uncertainty about the period of practice at Mount Hiei and, in general, the Tendai doctrine. It represents a rather familiar narrative pattern when dealing with life records of famous monks, as the same doubt arose in Dōgen, facing the discontent with the Tendai doctrine of original enlightenment. Under the impulse of change, Gasan eventually decided to join the school in 1299, after meeting Keizan for a second time. *Gasan Daioshō Bōchoku* and *Sōjiji nise Gasan oshō gyōjō* report an episode which does not appear in other sources. Gasan tried to refuse Keizan's request to join the school as his mother had fallen ill and he had to take care of her. This irrelevant detail stresses the fact that at that time Gasan was still immature and had not practiced properly, betraying in that way a strong feeling of attachment. In order to persuade him, Keizan quotes an episode related to the Sixth Patriarch Enō, who left his mother to practice the Dharma. Once again, the connection with past prominent figures strongly emerges, showing a constant resemblance to other masters, which not only seeks to legitimate Gasan's role, but also to place him in an ideal lineage of continuity firmly related to the past. Moreover, in the biography of Gasan's master, Keizan, a similar ambiguous attitude toward his mother frequently appears. Keizan's mother served as his spiritual guide: clearly, he nurtured a deep bond with both his mother and grandmother throughout his life. He also dedicated Enzūin to his grandmother and worshiped a statue of Kannon commissioned by his mother there (see Faure 1996, 39).

Eventually Gasan became part of the Daijōji community and began his training under Keizan's guide.

Even though there are some discrepancies between the biographical sources, all of them contain the account of the *Tsuki Ryōko* 月兩箇 episode, which appears in several *kirigami* documents and is often related to the transmission of the five positions (see Ishikawa 1991, 129-31; 2000, 241). This episode symbolizes the growth of Gasan as a disciple and his deep understanding of the received teachings. In 1302, Keizan succeeded Tetsū Gikai 徹通義介 (1219-1309) as the abbot of Daijōji, gathering around him disciples such as Gasan and Meihō Sotetsu, one of his closest pupils along with Gasan. In the same year, following Keizan's guidance, Gasan visited different temples whilst travelling throughout the country. This was a great chance to practice under different masters, especially those from the Rin-zai school. In the *Enpō Dentōroku* 延宝伝灯録 there is an important dialogue

between Gasan and Kyōō Unryō 恭翁運良 (1267-1341),<sup>7</sup> which begins by stressing the fact that Gasan had travelled a lot before reaching Kyōō:

Gasan had travelled all over the country learning the wisdom of the different teachings. [During his journey] he visited Master Kyōō Unryō. Kyōō ordered him: “Rip that piece of paper!”. In that moment, the paper blew in the wind. Kyōō asked: “Is the paper moving or the wind moving?”. Gasan remained in silence. Then, Kyōō said: “I am the disciple”. Gasan replied: “One should understand what being a master means”. (Sahashi 1964, 17)

This short account introduces an important element, very common in the sources related to Gasan’s teachings. The practice under different Rinzaï masters appears to have particularly influenced Gasan as the presence of *kōan* is very strong in his teachings and in that of his disciples. In particular, the encounter with Kyōō and the *kōan* between the two known as *fushikijō no ikku* 不識上之一句 emphasizes the central role of the five positions as a fundamental part of the transmission process and often appears as an independent *kōan* in many documents (see Ishikawa 2001b, 812-3).

In 1313, Keizan founded the Yōkōji in Noto, where Gasan joined his master after travelling for several years. In 1321, Gasan formally received the transmission of the Precepts from Keizan. The *Gasan Daishō Bōchoku* adds a particular emphasis to this moment, ascribing to Gasan the promise to contribute actively to the growth of the school: “I will spread everywhere the teachings I received and the greatness of my master” (S-Goroku 1, 43). In 1322<sup>8</sup> Keizan designated Gasan and Meihō as his successors,<sup>9</sup> making the former the guide of Sōjiji<sup>10</sup> and the latter that of Yōkōji. Furthermore, referring to the formal succession from Keizan to Gasan at Sōjiji where the

7 After the death of Gikai, Daijōji was in an uncertain condition and Keizan was not able to maintain the temple under Sōtō school’s control. Eventually, the Togashi family replaced Keizan’s successor with the Rinzaï master Kyōō Unryō. Only several years later, after Keizan’s passing, did the temple return to the Sōtō school under Meihō’s abbotship (see Bodiford 1993, 64).

8 This date is reported in the *Gasan Daishō Bōchoku* and the *Sōjiji nise Gasan oshō gyōjō (zoku gunsho)*, whereas the *Tōkokuki* states that Gasan became the Abbot of Sōjiji in 1324.

9 Even though the *Gasan Daishō Bōchoku* particularly stresses Gasan and Meihō as Keizan’s formal successors, it must be considered that according to the *Tōkokuki*, Keizan indicated six disciples as his successors and not only two (see S-Shūgen ge).

10 Prior to Keizan, Sōjiji was known as Morookadera and was part of the Morooka Hiko Jinja located in the northern half of the Noto Peninsula. In 1296, the temple received a conspicuous donation from a local warrior, which was the basis for a stable economic condition. Jōken Ritsushi was thus approved as resident priest and when in 1321 Jōken moved with Morooka Hiko Jinja as it was relocated to a different area, he placed Morookadera under

master handed over the robe to the disciple, Azuma presents an example from the *Tōhokuki*, in which such an important event was sealed with a poem composed by the same Keizan:

In the blowing wind, the green paulownia leaves fall  
 Bamboo branches are aware of the surrounding green  
 My disciple [Gasán], you shall wear the robe of gold  
 Like the sun shining on our temple (Azuma 1996, 784)

Here, Keizan uses an image which recalls Śākyamuni's donation of the robe to Mahākāśyapa,<sup>11</sup> demonstrating a deep sense of respect toward Gasán. Indeed, this image links the episode with one of the historical Buddha, strengthening the connection and creating a symmetrical pattern, in which Keizan corresponds to Śākyamuni and Gasán is one of his main disciples, Mahākāśyapa. According to Diane Riggs,

the ancient story of the *kesa* woven with golden threads to be held in trust for Maitreya became fused with the Chan school's account of their lineage. Previously restricted to the Buddhas, the Chan school reinterpreted the golden robe as the mark of transmission in their lineage of living teachers. (2007, 92)

Moreover, the robe is not a simple sign as it "commits (*en-gage*) the future", its imagery going far beyond the gesture and the meaning of transmission (see Faure 2003, 215).

At Sōjiji, Gasán was able to create a group of disciples who deeply influenced the following developments of the school. The closest disciples were known as the twenty-five disciples of Gasán, from whom emerged his successors described as the five disciples of Gasán. Gasán died at the age of ninety-one.

The different episodes of Gasán's early life connect Gasán with his master and more in general with the past tradition of buddhas and patriarchs through common traits that weave him with illustrious predecessors' narratives. Likewise, any act or gesture is not important in itself, rather its relevance is embodied in the symbolic universe created by the resemblance of the past and the connection to the 'tradition'. In other words, is what Averintsev defined as "the ability of each person and event to serve as a sign and representation of things more general" (2002, 32).

Keizan's guardianship. Eventually, Keizan converted Morookadera into a Sōtō temple and renamed it Sōjiji (see Bodiford 1993, 97).

11 This episode also appears in the *Jingde Chuandenglū* 景德伝灯録.



### 3 The Five Positions Prior to Gasan: Dōgen, Between Transgression and Transmission

From the Medieval period, the five positions<sup>12</sup> became one of the pillars of Zen transmission. This doctrine is often identified as the most representative teaching of Dongshan Liangjie (807-869) and of his disciple, Caoshan Benji 曹山本寂 (Jp. Sōzan Honjaku, 840-901). The assimilation of the five positions of vacuity and phenomena among Linji's teachings deeply affected the configuration of *goi*, to the extent that a shift of the importance of practice progression occurred. Although in the extant writings Dongshan does not highlight the correspondence of each position with the related improvement in practice, the subsequent interpretations of his doctrine are mainly based on this point, namely a direct correspondence between the five positions and the practice progression expressed in the five positions of merit (Ch. *gongxun wuwei*; Jp. *kōkun goi* 功勳五位) (see Ishikawa 2001b, 807-8).

In the case of the Sōtō school prior to Gasan, the transmission of *goi* appears in a sermon from the *Giunroku* 義雲錄 addressed to Giun, in which the five positions are not seen as an evaluation tool for practice progression. Nevertheless, in the records of Giun's disciples there is no reference to *goi*, making the reconstruction of the five positions transmission rather intricate (Arai 1993, 75). In *Shōbōgenzō* there are several references to the *goi*, although a full interpretation is lacking. Besides, Dogen's considerations about *goi* are the result of quotations from different chapters, thus often appearing incoherent and contradictory.

In the *Shunshū* chapter from *Shōbōgenzō*, Dōgen recounts a famous story based on a dialogue between Tōzan and one his disciples:

This master [Jōin Kōboku] is a descendant of Tōzan, a hero in the Patriarch's order. That being so, he clearly admonishes the many individuals who mistakenly prostrate themselves to Great Master Tōzan, the founding patriarch, inside the cave of the relative and the absolute.

12 When not differently specified, the term 'five positions' refers to the five positions of vacuity and phenomena (Ch. *pianzheng wuwei*; Jp. *henshō goi* 偏正五位). Here, I adopt 'vacuity' with reference to *shō* 正 and 'phenomena' to *hen* 偏. The most common translation is 'absolute' and 'relative' (see Verdú 1966; Nishijima, Chodo 2008), although it evokes a specific philosophical background that does not fully adapt to Dongshan's *wuwei*. Moreover, in the *Chongbian Caodong wuwei xianjue* 重編曹洞五位顯訣 we read: "According to [Cao]shan, the position of vacuity (Ch. *zhengwei*; Jp. *shōi* 正位) is the realm of emptiness (Ch. *kongjie*; Jp. *kūkai* 空界) [...]. The position of phenomena (Ch. *pianwei*; Jp. *hen'i* 偏位) is the realm of form (Ch. *sejie*; Jp. *shikikai* 色界)" (DNZZ, v. 63, 1236b). This terminology is also adopted in *Zengaku Daijiten*, where *shō* is explained as "the ultimate liberation of all *dharmas*" (524), whereas *hen* is "the discrimination, the phenomena, the myriad of forms, etc." (1113).

If the Buddha-Dharma were transmitted and received on the basis of limited consideration of the relative and the absolute, how could it have reached the present day? Wild kittens, barnyard bumpkins, who have never explored Tōzan's inner sanctum, people who have not walked the threshold of the truth of the Buddha-Dharma, mistakenly assert that Tōzan teaches people with his five positions of the relative and the absolute, and so on. This is an outlandish insistence and a random insistence. We should not see or hear it. We should just investigate the fact that the founding patriarch possesses the right Dharma-eye treasury. (trans. in Nishijima, Chodo 2008, 311)

In the analysis of this *kōan* about Dongshan, Dōgen uses eight different commentaries in order to allow the emergence of misleading interpretations. Even though from this passage it would be an easy conclusion to see Dōgen as a ferocious critic of Dongshan, a careful reading leads to different considerations. The focus of Dōgen's criticism appears to be the complete identification of Dongshan with *wuwei*, which leads an oversimplified hermeneutics of the teachings of Caodong's founder. In this passage, Dōgen is therefore well aware of the teachings of the founding patriarch, revealing the need for a rediscovery of his teachings. This is further confirmed in another essay from *Shōbōgenzō* called *Bukkyō*, where Dōgen describes Dongshan as "[the person who] has received the authentic transmission of the fundamental principles, and has directly indicated Buddhist conduct; his can never be the same as other lineages" (trans. in Nishijima, Chodo 2008, 149), demonstrating great reverence toward Caodong's founder. Nevertheless, Dōgen's disapproval particularly focuses on the five positions, as emerges in another passage from *Bukkyō*:

Sometimes, hoping to offer a guiding hand to others, they quote Rinzai's 'four thoughts' and 'four relations between reflection and action', Unmon's 'three phrases', Tōzan's 'three paths' and 'five relative positions', and so on, and see them as the standard for learning the truth. My late master Tendō was constantly laughing at this, saying, "How could learning the state of Buddha be like that? [...] Truly, we should know that old veterans in all directions have no will to the truth; it is evident that they do not learn in practice the body-mind of the Buddha-Dharma". (trans. in Nishijima, Chodo 2008, 144-5)

Quoting the words of his Chinese master Tiantong Rujing 天童如淨 (Jp. Tendō Nyōjo), Dōgen disapproves of anyone who seeks to learn the state of Buddha practicing among others Dongshan's *goi*, seen as an obstacle to complete realization.

The five positions was a somewhat criticized and questioned teaching method at the time (see Matsuda 2002, 297), so it is not surprising that Dōgen took part in this debate, neglecting *goi* as practice.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, he appears to distinguish the *goi* from Dongshan's other teachings, underlining the importance of studying the latter. However, Dōgen's decision to downplay the centrality of *goi* is not representative of medieval Zen, as the five positions generally occurs in many secret transmission documents such as *monsan* and *kirigami*.

#### 4 The Architecture of *goi* Transmission: The Textual Layer

Dōgen's writings do not treat in depth the five positions teaching, raising many doubts of its effective role in the knowledge production at the time. In contrast, the reinterpretation of *goi* and its assimilation as an important part of the transmission discourse can be clearly traced back to Gasan (see Ishikawa 2001a, 195). In the case of Gasan, *goi* constitutes a complex semantic pattern that is the product of different layers. Among the different layers composing five positions discourse, the textual layer plays a fundamental part in Gasan's hermeneutics of practice.

From the study of the *goi* based upon Gasan's related sources, a clear link between Dongshan and the five positions emerges. However, the main source of reference appears to be other than Dongshan's *wuwei*. Thus, the five positions system Gasan refers to is anything but Dongshan and his disciple Caoshan's one, yet it reveals a complex textual architecture which blurs the 'categorization' of what is supposed to be the teaching of one sect or another. This feature undoubtedly appears in the different editions of the *San'unkaigetsu* text.

The *San'unkaigetsu* (S-Goroku 1, 44-63), which is categorized as a *goroku* and dates back to 1677, is composed of three chapters with a clear content structure: the first one describes the five houses and seven schools (Ch. *wujia qizong*; Jp. *goke shichishū* 五家七宗), whereas the last two deal extensively with an explanation of the *goi*. The organization of the text and the contents resembles the *Rentian yanmu* 人天眼目 (Jp. *Ninden ganmoku*), a well-known source<sup>14</sup> at the time that focuses on the descrip-

<sup>13</sup> It not clear on which type of *goi* Dōgen's criticism is based upon (see Matsuda 2002, 296). According to Arai, the later interpretations of *goi* were deeply influenced by the introduction of the *kōkun goi*, which he defines as a skillful means through which the student reaches a full understanding of the five positions. This led to a sort of hybrid system, which is the product of the overlapping of different teachings (1990, 240) and in which great importance is given to the measurement and the progression of practice.

<sup>14</sup> The widespread usage of this text in the Chan/Zen context is further confirmed in a passage from the chapter *Butsudō* of *Shōbōgenzō*, where Dōgen critically depicts the spread

tion of the *wujia qizong* and their more representative teachings. When describing the Sôtō school, the first teaching displayed is Dongshan's *wuwei*, including the five positions of the lord and servant (Ch. *wuwei junchen*; Jp. *goi kunshin* 五位君臣); the Gāthā on the five positions of vacuity and phenomena; the five positions of merit; Caoshan's chart of five positions of the lord and servant (Ch. *wuwei junchen tu*; Jp. *goi kunshin zu* 五位君臣圖) (see T. v. 48: 2006). The structure of *San'unkaigetsu* appears to be symmetrical to that of the *Rentian yanmu*: after a brief presentation of the five houses and seven schools described as two "different flags of Buddha's Law" (S-Goroku 1, 45) the main attention is given to the description of the five positions of vacuity and phenomena, which covers the remaining two chapters. Whereas the *Rentian yanmu* attributes particular emphasis to the Linji School, Gasan transfers an identical structure and organization in favor of the Sôtō sect.

The important implication of *Rentian yanmu*, especially within Gasan's group, emerges from the oldest extant commentary of the text, namely the *Ninden ganmoku shō*, ascribed to Sensō Esai 川僧慧濟 (?-1475), a component of the *Gasan-ha*, which proves the spreading of this source among Sōjiji's group (see Ishikawa 1978, 781). Another source related to this commentary is a manuscript from Rokujizōji 六地藏寺, namely the *Ikkekaigoyō* 一華開五葉,<sup>15</sup> in which the *Gasan Oshō Ninden ganmoku dai* 峨山和尚人天眼目代 is listed. From the title, it is clear that it is a collection of *daigo* ascribed to Gasan about the *Rentian yanmu* (see Iizuka 1996, 189). Moreover, the *Ninden ganmoku shō* was very popular at the time and played a fundamen-

of *Rentian yanmu* as follows: "The names of the five sects were not established during the lifetimes of the respective ancestral masters. Since the deaths of the ancestral masters who are called the ancestral masters of the five sects, flotsam in the stream of their lineages—people whose eyes were not clear and whose feet did not walk—without asking their fathers, and going against their forefathers, have established the names. The principle is evident and anyone can know it. [...] So, please, do not give names to sects, and do not say that there are five sects in the Buddha-Dharma. Latterly there has been an infantile man named Chisō who made a collection of one or two sayings of ancestral masters and described the five sects. He called [this collection] Eyes of Human Beings and Gods [*Ninden ganmoku*]. People have not recognized it for what it is; beginners and late learners have thought it to be true, and there are even some who carry it hidden in their clothes. It is not the eyes of human beings and gods; it darkens the eyes of human beings and gods. [...] [But] this work is deranged and stupid. [...] We should not call [the author] Chisō, which means 'Wise and Clear'; we should call him Gumō—'Stupid and Dark'" (trans. in Nishijima, Chodo 2008, 96-101). The collection of quotations from *Butsudō* displays Dōgen's sharp irony in judging *Rentian yanmu*. Despite Sôtō Zen founder criticism, this text proved to be an extremely influential source in *goi* scholarship, and so to say it was the lenses through which Tōzan and Sōzan's five positions doctrine was actually learned and transmitted during the medieval period.

15 In the *San'unkaigetsuzu* from Ennōji, the *Ikkekaigoyō* is listed among the commented *kōan*, though this commentary appears to be different from that of the Rokujizōji (see note 21 in Iizuka 1996, 199).

tal role in the tendency of Sôtō Zen to rely more and more on *kanna zen* rather than on Dōgen's *shikantaza* (see Ishikawa 1978, 780).<sup>16</sup>

The sources cited above prove the ascendancy of *Rentian yanmu* as a pillar in reshaping the five positions and in *Gasán ha* in general. Thus, the *Rentian yanmu* and its commentaries allow the evaluation of the predominant presence of this source as an essential reference in the hermeneutics of *goi*, revealing its authoritative role.

In the third chapter of *San'unkaigetsu*, Gasán clearly identifies the teaching of the five positions with Tōzan and his disciple Sōzan:

Tōzan and Sōzan's teaching is based on the practice of the word that has yet to be understood. This is also the entry not yet gained. [This teaching] is the interdependence of phenomena and vacuity. The body of the person who receives this teaching awakens and their eyes open. (S-Goroku 1, 44)

This passage results in being a crucial point in the analysis of Gasán's *goi*, since it establishes a direct connection between Tōzan/Sōzan, the five positions and Gasán as the transmitter and thus heir of this 'tradition'. Furthermore, it discloses the intertextual binary structure. We thus have an authoritative intertext and an effective intertext. The former is unified under the label 'Tōzan and Sōzan's teaching'. Several times throughout the text, Gasán refers to Tōzan and Sōzan teachings as the authentic teaching of the Sôtō school, designating this as the knowledge to be transmitted and the inspirational and especially authoritative source of his sermons. On the other hand, the *Rentian yanmu* represents the most prominent intertext which is the basic structure and reference that serves as foundation of *goi* hermeneutics within *Gasán ha*. The sum of these 'intertexts' allows the development of multiple textual relations which actively contribute to the continuity of the school through master-disciple relationship. This text, as the kernel of knowledge within transmission, is not a flat and lifeless surface, yet it manifests itself as multidimensional and dynamic space in which the single textual elements blend and clash (see Barthes 1977, 146).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The span of time from the first part of Muromachi period to the first part of Edo period is called 'the dark period of the Sôtō school', as it assumed a completely different shape from the one advocated by Dōgen. The widespread use of *kōan*, the display of secret transmission and the consequent formation of 'esoteric Zen' constitute some of the most prominent features in the depiction of the medieval reshaping of the Sôtō school (see Ishikawa 1978, 780).

<sup>17</sup> Beal also defines intertextuality as "[the] total and limitless fabric of text which constitutes our linguistic universe - Derrida's 'general text' - and from which all writings are untraceable quotations, inscriptions, transpositions" (1992, 27), where "attempts to close down a text's meaning will always be frustrated, because the text-as-dialogue is always referring beyond itself to other texts and other contexts" (30).

In the explanation of the five positions, the *Rentian yanmu* recalls some famous *gāthās*, among which Fenyang Shanzhao's five positions *gāthā* is also included. This *gāthā* is particularly important for Gasan, as it constitutes the basis on which the organization and description of *goi* takes place.

The highlighting of the hierarchical progression represents the hermeneutical foundation elaborated by Fenyang Shanzhao 汾陽善昭 (Jp. Fun'yō Zenshō; 947-1024), a member of the Linji School. Fenyang is well-known for the subversion of the order and the complete re-adaptation of Tōzan's *goi* (see Sahashi 1956, 95). Fenyang was one of Shimen Huiche's disciples and began to practice *goi* under his master<sup>18</sup> (see Kirino 1997, 244).

The influence of Fenyang in Gasan's five positions stresses one of the main differences between Tōzan and Gasan. Gasan accentuates the progression among each position, creating a hierarchy expressing the improvement in practice achieved by the practitioner. On the other hand, Tōzan's *goi* are based on the vacuity/phenomena polarity, yet the depiction of every single position compared to each other is not integrated in any cumulative hierarchical scheme, rather the different positions appear to be in a discursive interaction that avoid any form of supremacy. The different positions are displayed following a logic that goes from a superficial level of comprehension and interpenetration to a deeper one, whilst avoiding any hierarchical structure of the different positions as each of them contains the previous one. The supremacy of the last two positions and the deconstruction of *goi* as they appear in Gasan was the reflection of Fenyang's interpretation, whose groundbreaking character was deeply influential in both China and Japan regardless of which school. Therefore, the further re-elaborations of the five positions, especially within the Linji School, introduced a progression converting the *goi* into an evaluation system of practice improvement. This tendency was due to the integration with Tōzan's five positions of merit, often seen as a skillful means through which prepare the practitioner to a full understanding of *goi*. Practice progression as a peculiarity of the five positions of merit was then integrated within the five positions of vacuity and phenomena, constituting a hybrid system, which is the product of the two (see Arai 1990, 240; Kirino 1997, 249).<sup>19</sup> The five positions thus went beyond the boundaries of categorization, revealing itself as a dynamic and fluid teaching, subject

18 In the *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* 禪林僧寶傳 (Jp. *Zenrin sōhō den*), Juefan Huihong 覺範慧洪 (Jp. Kakuhan Ekō; 1071-1128) reports that Fenyang was introduced to the *goi* by his master Shimen (see Kirino 1997, 244).

19 In the *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* there is a dialogue between Shimen Huiche and another Linji member. Shimen advocates the five positions of merit in reference to Dongshan's *wuwei*. This episode proves that Shimen adopted this teaching with his disciples and this might have influenced Fenyang's progressive approach to the five positions explanation (see Kirino 1997, 248-9).

to a multiplicity of interpretations and re-adaptations. What is classified as 'Tōzan's five positions' only formally bears Tōzan's name and nothing else, as 'the five positions' is actually an ever-changing teaching which constantly adapts and is re-adapted.

Both in the *Rentian yanmu* and in *Fenyang Shanzhao chanshi yulu* 汾陽善昭禪師語錄 (Jp. *Fun'yō Zenshō Zenji Goroku*) the *gāthā* of the five positions is displayed as follows:

#### Gāthā of the Five Positions

Coming from vacuity: Brandishing the five-pronged Vajra, one side of the world of divine light is crossed and its light eliminates the dust of the world.

Vacuity within phenomena: Look at thunder's eyes! Their blinding light has already dimmed. Thoughts and doubts are thousands mountains far away.

Phenomena within vacuity: Realizing the fair directions of the Great King is [like] one thousand children craving the jewel mirror.

Approaching togetherness: Arrange a golden-haired vassal and any arising obstacle or doubt will be turned down on earth with a shout.

Attainment of togetherness: Express the no-merit and stop arriving. The wooden ox after a long walk arrived at the reverse of fire. The true king of the Dharma is inconceivable within the inconceivable. (see Kirino 1998, 105)

In Fenyang's *gāthā* there are some expressions which recall the *Baojing sanmei ge* 宝鏡三昧歌 (Jp. *Hōkyō zanmai ka*) (e.g. the five-pronged Vajra), yet the displayed order is different from Dongshan's, as the first position is 'coming from vacuity' (Ch. *zhengzhonglai*; Jp. *shōchūrai* 正中来), usually the third position.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the denomination of the fourth position 'approaching togetherness' (Ch. *jianzhongzhi*; Jp. *kenchūshō* 兼中至) does not compare in Dongshan<sup>21</sup> and thus the 'phenomena' of the

20 There are several interpretations explaining why the third position is placed as the first. According to Kirino it might be due the irreverent teaching style of Fenyang, or a stratagem to draw practitioners' attention to the teaching (1998, 107).

21 In the *Shimen wenzi chan* 石門文字禪 (Jp. *Sekimon moji zen*), Juefan Huihong discusses whether the fourth position should be called 'approaching from phenomena' or 'approaching togetherness'. Since the former appears in the *Record of Caoshan*, Juefan considers it the correct denomination. Juefan's commentary on the fourth position appears in *Shimen wenzi*

'approaching from phenomena' (Ch. *pianzhongzhi*; Jp. *hENCHŪSHŌ* 偏中至) is not taken into consideration, avoiding the achievement of the unreciprocal relation (*fuego* 不回互) (see Sahashi 1956, 97). Hence, there is a slight difference between the fourth and the fifth position, although ultimately both represent the "supreme position achieved by the true man" (see Kirino 1998, 106). Fenyang develops a completely new hermeneutics of the five positions, generating a different theory whose ascendancy goes far beyond the Linji school.

At the beginning of the third chapter of *San'unkaigetsu*, Gasan claims that "both the position of 'Approaching togetherness' and 'Attainment of togetherness' represent the fundamental part of the teaching [of Sōtō Zen]" (S-Goroku 1, 58), thus the fourth and fifth positions are placed at the top of the *goi*, embodying "the complete realization of true man's original position".

## 5 *Goi* Cosmogony of/in Practice: The Cosmogonic Layer

In the *Baojing sanmei ge*, the reference to the doubled *li* hexagram (Ch. *zhong li*; Jp. *jūri* 重離) initiated the interpretation of the five positions using the hexagrams as in the *Yijing* 易經 (Jp. *Ekikyō*):

In the end, things are not gotten at, because the words are still not correct. In the six lines of the doubled *li* hexagram, Phenomena and the Real interact; Piled up to become three, each transformed makes five. (trans. in Powell 1986, 64)

The absence of further elaborations about the connection between the five positions and *Yijing* allowed the emergence of numerous speculations about the integration of hexagrams in the *wuwei* system. This integration is expressed through the creation of a hybrid cosmogony displaying the five positions in a complex organization within Buddhist hermeneutics. Focusing on Japanese Buddhism, we see that in the *San'unkaigetsu* the five positions are placed in an organization informed by different and heterogeneous elements. The text presents a large usage of terms that

*chan* as follows: "The five positions are composed by 'vacuity within phenomena' and 'phenomena within the vacuity', [these first two positions are followed by] 'coming from vacuity' and 'approaching from phenomena' and lastly there is 'attainment of togetherness'. Then, why [the name of the fourth position] has been changed from 'approaching from phenomena' to 'approaching togetherness'? The Great Old Master in the state of calm does not know any form of suspicious. He just laughs" (see Kirino 1998, 237). In Japan during the Muromachi period, the problem of the correct denomination of the fourth position was at the center of the doctrinal debate and especially Nan'ei Kenshū 南英謙宗 (1387-1460) extensively dealt with this problem (see Matsuda 1995, 263-74).



evoke the *Taiji tu* 太極圖 (Jp. *Taikyoku zu*) and the *Yijing*, relying on the “cosmogony of concretization” (Rambelli 2009, 252)<sup>22</sup> as developed by Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (Jp. Shū Ton’i).<sup>23</sup> In Song period, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (Jp. Shuki) placed Zhou Dunyi at the center of Neo-Confucianism cosmogony. The rediscovery of Zhou Dunyi’s thought in Song China<sup>24</sup> was also influential in Japan through Gozan scholarship, which greatly contributed to promoting the *Yijing* and its related commentaries during the medieval period (see Ng Wai-Ming 1997, 26).<sup>25</sup> Gasan outlines the main elements of *goi* cosmogony as follows:

From its origins, the Buddha Law is the profound truth of the Mind of Buddha and the Mind of Law. The ‘Mind’ is unborn and its complete realization [leads to the understanding that] before the arising of Su-

22 Rambelli defines the cosmogony discussed in Daoist and Neo-Confucian texts as ‘cosmogony of concretization’, since “it describes a process moving from formlessness to the appearance of differentiated forms and, in mathematical terms, from zero (primordial void) to one (undifferentiated chaos), two (yin and yang), three (Heaven, Earth and Humanity), and many (the myriad of things)” (2009, 252).

23 Hon describes the diagram of Supreme Polarity as follows: “Graphically describing the evolution of the universe, the *Diagram of the Supreme Polarity* consists of five circles. The top circle is an empty circle symbolizing the universe as a whole. The round shape of the circle indicates that the universe is an organic entity which has no beginning and end. Like a bouncing ball, the universe is constantly in motion. Movement and self-regeneration are the two hallmarks of the universe. The second circle contains three nested semi-circles with dark and light colors. The dark-colored semi-circles represent *yin* 陰 (the yielding cosmic force), and the light colored semi-circles represent *yang* 陽 (the active cosmic force). The third circle is the most complicated. It consists of a group of five small circles, each symbolizing one of the Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行): Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth. These small circles represent the Five Phases’ driving all activities and revitalizing all beings in this universe. To highlight the inter-connection of Five Phases, the five circles are arranged in a rectangle with lines linking one circle to the others. At the center of the rectangle is the earth circle, and the other four circles are scattered at the corners of the rectangle. This arrangement signifies that the earth force is the source of other forces. It will be noted that this group of circles is linked to the second circle by a small ‘V’ sign. The sign shows that the Five Phases are the products of the interaction of the *yin* and the *yang*” (2010, 4-6).

24 Zhou Dunyi was placed at the head of the Neo-Confucian lineage of Song sages by Zhu Xi. Zhu Xi elaborated his thought on the basis of Zhou Dunyi’s writings, connecting the cosmological discourse on the *qi* 氣 in the *Taiji* with the metaphysical discourse elaborated by the Cheng brothers (Adler 2014, 4-6).

25 As pointed out by Ng Wai-Ming: “A large number of Zen Buddhist monks studied the *I Ching*; they punctuated, annotated, and reprinted some important Chinese commentaries. [...] Believing that *I Ching* could help them attain enlightenment, Zen Buddhist monks studied it in the final stage of their training and used it widely to explain Buddhist ideas” (1997, 26-7). When summing up the main features in the studying of *Yijing* in medieval Japan, Ng Wai-Ming identifies a particular element which is particularly important in my analysis: “[...] it was a secret transmission among Zen Buddhist scholar. Its main lineage was kept unbroken for centuries” (1997, 32).

preme Polarity the Mind did not depend from the word 'Mind'. From the origins, the 'Law' manifests [itself] and turns everything into the True Dharma-Eye. From the past to nowadays, [the Law] has never resorted to concrete form. This is why the Great Shadow encompasses the Great Light, the Great Light reaches the Great Shadow, before/after and after/before are possible and the seal of the Dharma is confirmed [i.e. the reality appears in its true aspect]. You should forget that Mind/Dharma are two [different words] and return to the One Position. This One Position is the No-Position, the Original Position, the True Position, the Present Position, the Lord Position and the Void Position. When this Position is fully achieved, the Supreme Polarity is the Non-polarity. (S-Goroku 1, 45)

The 'Buddha Law' allows the student to overcome the duality grounded in the deluded mind, hence the Great Shadow encompasses the Great Light and vice versa, creating the basis for a reality where illusion and enlightenment are possible in a non-obstruction (*muge* 無礙) relationship as expressed in Huayan Buddhism.

According to Gasan, the condition prior to the emergence of the Supreme Polarity and the subsequent actualization of its activity as *Yin* and *Yang* correspond to the state 'above form' as we conceive it. Therefore, the Mind was purely Mind without relying on its signifier, the word 'Mind'.<sup>26</sup> The practice and the achievement of the condition which precedes form in a dualistic sense is identified with the One Position and thus with the Supreme Polarity/Non-polarity.<sup>27</sup>

Gasan especially focuses on the upper part of the scheme of Supreme Polarity. In particular, the first line of the *Taiji tu* "Nonpolar and yet Supreme Polarity" (*wuji er taiji* 無極而太極) is clearly quoted at the end of the aforementioned passage, thus interpreting it as a non-dual element. Despite its 'twoness', the principle of *taiji/wuji* is seen as undifferentiated,<sup>28</sup> it is the representation of the non-dual reality which manifests itself in the awakened mind.

26 From this passage, it is clear that Gasan relies on Zhu Xi's interpretation of Zhou Dunyi, collocating the *Taiji* and all its correlated elements in the realm above form.

27 The origin of the term *Taiji* can be traced back to the *Xici* appendix of the *Yijing* (see Adler 2014, 116). The term also appears in *Laozi* (chapter 28), revealing the Daoist connection between the supreme polarity and Zhou Dunyi. Furthermore, the diagram was probably transmitted by a Daoist master to Zhou Dunyi, thus revealing as strong connection between Supreme Polarity and Daoism (68).

28 In this sense, Gasan was deeply influenced by the interpretation of the Scheme of Supreme Polarity given by Zhu Xi. Zhu Xi collocates the bipolarity of *wuji er taiji* at the basis of Chinese cosmology, of which it constitutes the basic principle. *Wuji er taiji* is "the undifferentiated principle of differentiation" or "the formless basis form" (Adler 2014, 105).

The One Position here described as “No-Position, Original Position, True Position, etc.” is identified with the fifth position, as “‘Attainment of togetherness’ is the Original Position” (S-Goroku 1, 58); hence, the last position is to be seen as the One Position or the Original Position. In the first two chapters, the occurrence of the term ‘One Position’ is extremely high, even though only in the third part it is possible to determine that the ‘One Position’ corresponds to the fifth position. It reveals an unfolding cosmogony that is not delineated in once, yet it proceeds by degrees through the revelation of its composing elements. The ‘One Position’ constitutes neither an immobile status nor an achievement, as it is often associated with the action of ‘*ki*’ 帰, here with the meaning of ‘return to’. The act of returning implies dynamism in the process of coming back to a prior form of reality which constitutes the authentic condition of the practitioner. Even though the action of ‘return to’ might advocate a physical space or dimension, here the One Position-Supreme Polarity/Non-polarity equivalence does not indicate any concrete place in order to avoid a sort of parallel substantial reality which will cause different forms of attachment.

The representation of Supreme Polarity/Non-polarity/One Position in terms of Zhou Dunyi’s “dynamic and self-generating universe” (Hon 2010, 6) reveals the dynamics leading to the production of reality, making possible the overturning of this cosmological configuration. The aim of Zhou Dunyi is to affirm the “centrality of human morality in the unfolding universe” (Hon 2010, 3), whereas Gasan intends to display the map of a practitioner’s mind using *goi* theory. In other words, he aims at faithfully depicting the student’s condition in reality, i.e. lacking a stable selfness and thus emptiness. The real comprehension of the multiplicity of things becomes possible in the fifth position, seen as the return to the condition preceding the world as pure form and appearance, and the displaying of the phenomena without the intermediation of form.

Jōrokuji’s *San’unkaigetsuzu* (1530) displays a correlative cosmogony where the reciprocity between the five positions, the five positions of merit and hexagrams strongly emerges.

●☰☷ The Great Polarity (the birth within the palace;<sup>29</sup> attainment of togetherness; not-departing; the union of lord and servant); Merit upon Merit (emptiness and existence have not been overcome yet; principle and phenomena do not obstruct); Unsudden (the uniqueness of *ki*; the innumerable forms do not exist yet; it is similar to the fields of the Mind in which there is no seedling to grow. It precedes the arising of Buddha and sentient beings).

29 Here we find the five positions of the prince (Ch. *wangzi wuwei*; Jp. *ōji goi* 王子五位) by Shishuang Qingshu 石霜慶諸, which were deeply influenced by the five positions of merit.

○☳☳ The changing (the changing form birth; approaching togetherness; the inconceivable activity; the lord faces the servant). Merit in common (the light of emptiness; the understanding of mind and consciousness). Unreciprocity (it is similar to the perfection of the sun and the moon in the sky; it is the luminousness of Mind and Earth).

◎☳☳ The two opposites (the birth of the multitude of vassals; coming from the vacuity; the servant staring at the lord). Merit (the manifestation of the emptiness form; the attempt to interrupt critics). Nonexistence of word/Existence of word (It is similar to Heaven/Earth/Shadow/Light and the distinction of feminine and masculine. The actual form of feminine and masculine).

●☳☳ The four symbols (the illegitimate child birth; the vacuity within the phenomena; the servant); Serving the lord (the form is empty; Buddha's Truth towers above everything like the highest peak). The dew (wood/fire/metal/water; the limits of the four directions; four constituents).

●☳☳ The eight trigrams (the legitimate heir; the phenomena within the vacuity; the Lord); The orientation (the emptiness is form, the emptiness is in smithereens). Before the separation of black and white (the unexpected formation of the four directions; the coming of the perfection of the eight activities). (Iizuka 2002, 125)

In this passage Gasan quotes the *Diagram of the five positions of merit* as it appears in the third chapter of the *Rentian yanmu* (T. v. 48: 2006). The *Rentian yanmu* thus proves to be the main source on which Gasan relies for the elaboration of the five positions doctrine in which the five positions of vacuity and phenomena and the five positions of merit are completely integrated. A very similar elaboration also occurs in a *kirigami* from Yōkōji (Ishikawa prefecture), dating back to 1613 and entitled *Gasan Daishō Goi no zu narabini hōgo* 峨山大和尚五位之図并法語 (see Ishikawa 1992, 34-5). As can be gleaned from the title, the first part displays a scheme illustrating *goi*, followed by an *hōgo*. It presents several similarities with Jōrokuji's *San'unkaigetsuzu*, except for the fact that here the hexagrams are not displayed. Moreover, we find the full description of every position using some expressions from the *Baojing sanmei ge*. Noticeably, Yōkōji's *kirigami* focuses on the five positions of vacuity and phenomena while failing to mention the five positions of merit, hence lacking the progressive development within every position as stressed in the different versions of *San'unkaigetsu*. In the *hōgo* following the scheme, the case known as *fushikijō no ikku* 不識上之一句 is mentioned several times, described as "the place where the unity of *yin* and *yang* illuminates the Supreme Ultimate" (Ishikawa 1992, 34). Particular attention is given to the fourth and

fifth position through the explanation of each character of the respective denominations and interestingly the ideogram 'ken' 兼 is identified with the unity of *yin* and *yang*, displaying a deep correlation between the name and its cosmological equivalent (see Ishikawa 1992, 34-5).

In both cases, we notice the emergence of a correlative thinking which "draws systematic correspondences among aspects of various order of reality or realms of the cosmos" (Henderson 1984, 1). The diagram of Supreme Polarity serves as a hermeneutical basis in the displaying of *goi*, producing a binary combination of elements, which interacts with each other in the formation of a spatialization of practice. In Jōrokuji's *San'un-kaigetsuzu*, the arrangement of the 'cosmogony components' occurs in list form. Interestingly, we find a list in the list, as each element is explained by the list of elements between brackets, revealing a kaleidoscopic interaction of practices. The list allows the plethora of elements to be organized in a clear and distinct form (see Eco 2009, 131), yet these lists are not finite and every part of it can be integrated with further explanations and elements. For instance, in the *Kango fumi* 閑語不見 we find a series of correlations which associate the vacuity and phenomena with different elements, integrating the passage from the Jōrokuji's document:

The vacuity and phenomena [teaching] of Tōzan is the *Yang*, the servant, the white, the light, is the no-discipline-and-method. It is the patriarchs' words. The 'vacuity' is *Yin*. It is the Lord, the darkness, the discipline and method, the *tathāgata* meditation. [...] The 'phenomena' is rebellion, [whereas] the 'vacuity' is obedience. The rebellion of the phenomena means that when it emerges it is the no-original position. The obedience of vacuity means that when it immediately arises it becomes part of the Original Position that must be preserved. In the middle [of phenomena and vacuity], there is the complete turning and continuous changing and movement. There is rebellion and obedience, life and death, past and present, *tathāgata* and the patriarchs; discipline and method, no-discipline-and-method; the servant and the lord; black and white. They all are one. (Iizuka 1999, 203-4)

In the passage, the vacuity and phenomena are explained following the organization of the five positions, from the first to the fifth.<sup>30</sup> Moreover,

30 The passage can be divided as follows:

The vacuity within the phenomena: The vacuity is *Ying*. It is the Lord, the darkness, the discipline and method, the *tathāgata* meditation. [...] The phenomena within the vacuity: The 'phenomena' is rebellion [whereas] the 'vacuity' is obedience. The rebellion of the phenomena means that when it emerges it is the no-original-position. Coming from the vacuity: The obedience of 'vacuity', means that when it immediately arises it becomes part of the Original Position that must be preserved. Approaching togetherness: In the middle [of phenomena and vacuity] there is the complete turning and continuous changing and

the organization through the list form and the correlation of each element particularly resembles the *kirigami* from Yōkōji, yet the full explanation of the different positions integrates the document from Yōkōji enhancing *goi* cosmogony.

An important component of *goi* cosmogony is introduced in *San'unkaigetsu*:

The reason why the Supreme Polarity is Non-polarity is 'not-known'. [...] The primary cause of the 'not-known' is above the hidden principle of Non-polarity. This is why even the Seal of Buddha Mind cannot reach [the 'not-known']. (S-Goroku 1, 61)

This passage introduces 'not-known' (*fushiki* 不識)<sup>31</sup> as the *raison d'être* of the two pillars of the entire cosmology, namely the Supreme Polarity/Non-polarity and thus the One Position. It represents an important concept in Gasan's related documents, appearing several times as a key term at the basis of *goi*. *Fushiki* is directly related to Keizan, as "Master Keizan's secret teaching of *fushiki* lays here" (Iizuka 1999, 178). In a case analyzed in the *Hōonroku* the *fushiki* emerges as a *kōan*, the *fushikijō no ikku*, between Gasan and Kyōō Unryō and it is developed through three different stages (*san'i* 三位), namely 'the self', 'the unknowable' and 'the when'. In the fourteenth case from *Hōonroku*, *Gasan Osho fushikijō tokusho kien narabini goi gosōden* 峨山和尚不識上得所機縁並五位御相傳 Gasan offered Keizan his awakening to the truth, yet Keizan did not accept it and sent his disciple to Master Kyōō, who formally recognized Gasan's awakening based on the *fushijō no ikku*. The same episode appears in Enōji's version of *San'unkaigetsuzu* (see Iizuka 1999, 178). Here, it is clear that the *fushikijō no ikku* was transmitted as an independent *kōan* and was included in secret transmission documents, as it appears in a *kirigami* from the Shōryūji in the Saitama province (see Iizuka 1999 178-9). This *kirigami* reports that "the *fushikijō no ikku* is the achievement of the principle irradiating the

movement. There is rebellion and obedience, life and death, past and present, *tathāgata* and the patriarchs; discipline and method, no-discipline-and-method; the servant and the lord; black and white. Attainment of togetherness: They all are one.

31 The term *fushiki* appears in a famous *mondō* between Bodhidharma and the Chinese Emperor Wu of Liang in the *Blue Cliff Record*: "Emperor Wu of Liang asked the Great Master Bodhidharma: 'What is the highest meaning of the holy truths?' Bodhidharma said, 'Empty, without holiness'. The Emperor said, 'Who is facing me?'. Bodhidharma replied, 'I don't know'. The Emperor did not understand. After this Bodhidharma crossed the Yangtse River and came to the kingdom of Wei. Later the Emperor brought this up to Master Chih and asked him about it. Master Chih asked, 'Does your majesty know who this man is?'. The Emperor said, 'I don't know'. Master Chih said, 'He is the Mahasattva Avalokitesvara, transmitting the Buddha Mind Seal'. The Emperor felt regretful, so he wanted to send an emissary to go invite (Bodhidharma to return). Master Chih told him, 'Your majesty, don't say that you will send someone to fetch him back. Even if everyone in the whole country were to go after him, he still wouldn't return'" (trans. in Cleary 1977, 1).

Supreme Ultimate” (Iizuka 1999, 178-9). From this quotation, it is clear that the achievement of the One Position is not considered as the ultimate achievement. The true understanding and practice of the One Position depends on incessant practice, thus represented by the *kōan* of the *fushikijō no ikku*. The correlative cosmogony displayed starting from the five positions and organized according to Zhou Dunyi’s principle, reveals itself to be fluid and dynamic. It is a never-complete system based on the *kōan* teaching, which encourages the practitioner to continue the practice without seeking a destination. *Taiji/Wuji* and all its related elements are seen as a turning point, a juncture (see Adler 2014, 118) which unfolds a further ‘reality’ that practices and is practiced.

The cosmogony elaborated in Gasan’s related sources is intimately connected with transmission and religious authority. Gasan collocates the *fushikijō no ikku kōan* between the material to be studied and practiced, placing himself among the patriarchs and eminent past masters’ *kōans*. He thus becomes part of the corpus of texts and teachings that his disciples are to transmit from generation to generation. This particularly emerges from the fact that the *fushikijō no ikku* often appears in the many *kirigami mokuroku* along with famous cases from *kōan* collections. As pointed out by Griffith Foulk, “on the one hand, it is clear that the patriarchs, being ancestral figures, have seniority in the Ch’an lineage. Their words, especially ones that have repeatedly been raised as *kōans* within the tradition, are invested with great prestige. To be living heir in the lineage – a Ch’an or Zen master – is to benefit from association with eminent patriarchs of old. To comment on the words of the patriarchs, similarly, is to be on the receiving end of the prestige with which those words are invested” (2000, 34). Therefore, Gasan places the *kōan* he originally practiced under Kyōō’s guide as a textual tradition for his community of disciples, actively participating to the craft of this same ‘tradition’ in which he gained a pivotal role. In this sense, the tradition laid out by eminent patriarchs is renewed and manipulated in the process of legitimation and self-legitimation that inevitably involves knowledge and its production.

## 6 Secrecy in *absentia*: The Secrecy Layer

The different variants of *San’unkaigetsu* report an explanation of the context in which *goi* transmission took place. The text is the recorded collection of the sermons held by Gasan for his closest disciples in his last years of his life. This is a clarifying element about the study of the five positions and its role within the process of transmission in itself.

In the sermons held during the night, Master Gasan allowed only the disciples who would succeed him into his quarters. This is what he taught them. The disciples who took part to these sermons did not exceed three

to five people. What is taught here is the secret part of the transmission (S-Goroku 1, 44).

The text does not clearly state the names of the involved disciples, hence it is possible to presume that they might be the so-called *gotetsu*, i.e. Gasan's closest disciples. Therefore, only a very small group among the many disciples was supposed to be admitted to the master's quarters and involved in the explanation of *goi*, apparently considered as a secret doctrine. Secrecy is the "normative mode of transmission" which characterizes the five positions doctrine and in general medieval Buddhism and the cultural sphere (Klein 2002, 145). In the Sōtō school, a secret form of knowledge transmission emerges during the medieval period, especially regarding *monsan* and *kirigami* documents. This material often reports the final remark 'secret' to stress the fact that the contents cannot be shared with any person outside the relation master-disciple. In a broader sense, the process of secrecy developed within the so-called 'popularization' of the Sōtō school and its development throughout the country. As mentioned above, Gasan's disciples significantly contributed to the foundation of a great number of temples, which corresponded to the formation of different groups. The pressure deriving from the arising of different *ha* led to elaboration of legitimacy strategies, in order to express and preserve the 'identity' of the group (see Ishikawa 1977, 157).

In *San'unkaigetsu* the secret nature of the teaching is expressed as follows:

In our school, the deepest teachings are secretly transmitted from master to disciple. However, recognizing one's own enlightenment and that of disciples on the base of a superficial and wrong understanding [of these secret teachings] is the expression of Buddhas and Patriarchs' sorrow. (S-Goroku 1, 53)

Furthermore, in the *Jitokukiroku shō* 自得暉録抄 some important elements help to define *goi* as secret teaching. The *Jitokukiroku shō* is a commentary about Zide Huihui's recorded sayings and addressed to Gasan. The version from the Ennōji (Kaga prefecture) is dated 1571 and it is one of the oldest extant commentaries written in *kana*, after Keizan's *Hōonroku* (see Ishikawa 2001a, 84). At the end of the final chapter, we read: "Transmitted by Master Gasan. [The contents] must be kept secret" (Ishikawa 2001a, 90). Even though the title itself indicates that this text is a commentary of recorded sayings (*gorokushō*), in practice it was considered as a prototype of *monsan* and thus kept secret (see Ishikawa 2001a, 91). Moreover, the many references to the five positions doctrine throughout the text attributed to Gasan lead us to suppose that the *goi* doctrine was considered a secret teaching.

Ennōji has preserved many documents such as important *kirigami* regarding transmission within the Gasan-*ha*. Among these, the material



about Gasan and *goi* is comparatively significant in number (see Iizuka 1998, 201), emphasizing the important role of the *goi* system. In particular, the *Sanunkaigetsu zu* from Ennōji (1479) reports an important passage that does not appear in the text from the *Sōtōshū Zensho*:

The person who has not understood and practiced the teachings of our school is not allowed to receive the teachings in this document. These teachings are the most secret part of our school. [...] [In this occasion] along with the alms bowl, the monastic bowl and the worship necessary, Gasan gave [to the extant disciples] the inner secret of the temple. (Ishikawa 1980, 755)

The manuscript from Ennōji contributes to shedding light on the modalities through which *goi* transmission took place in Gasan's group. The admonition not to divulgate the contents applies to the entire manuscript from Ennōji, emphasizing the important function of the five positions in the master-to-disciple transmission process (see Ishikawa 1980, 755). The nature of secrecy implies that the teachings in it should be unknown and thus hidden to other sects. However, there is no real reason for the first three chapters to be kept secret as they follow the same structure and contents of *Rentian yanmu*, a well-known source in medieval Zen. On the other hand, the fourth and fifth chapters present different structures and contents and are not part of the text included in the *Sōtōshū Zensho* and dated 1677. The last two chapters focus on the development and explanation of famous sayings attributed to eminent Zen Masters.<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, some famous quotations<sup>33</sup> present the commentary of both Meihō and Gasan, revealing some typical characteristics of *monsan* documents (see Ishikawa 1980, 756). Therefore, the final chapters from Ennōji's manuscript should be considered as the actual secret part of *San'unkaigetsu*; in this sense, Ishikawa points out the need to distinguish between the first three chapters dealing with *goke shichishū* and *goi* and the last two, centered on the commentary of famous passages and thus resembling a *monsan* structure (1980, 756).

In the last part of the *San'unkaigetsu*, we read that the text was originally part of the *Taihakuhōki* 太白峯記. The name *Taihakuhō* refers to the records collected at the Tiantong temple 天童寺 on Mount Taibai located in the Song realm. These records are actually a series of *mondō* between Rujing and Dōgen during his stay in Song China and were

32 For instance, these commentaries regard the three mysteries, the four shouts, the four classifications by Linji Yixuan; Dongshan's three paths, etc.

33 Among the commented passages, we find: the four classifications, the *gāthā* from Hongzhi Zhengjue 宏智正覺 and some sayings about the *sokushin jōbutsu*.

gradually integrated with other texts ascribed to the same genre (Ishikawa 1981, 191; 1977, 149). In the last part of *Taihaku hōki*, it states: "To Patriarch Dongshan's [successor]. [The contents] of the *Taihaku hōki* must be kept secret and nobody [except the person who received it] is allowed to see it" (Ishikawa 1981, 191). Since it is a collection of records which can be traced back to Dōgen and was updated over the years with texts of the same nature, the final remarks about the secrecy of the text serves as a pure formality responding to the need for authority<sup>34</sup> rather than secrecy itself (see Ishikawa 1981, 191-2). However, the standard formula of secrecy is not always a realistic feature of transmission knowledge, appearing more as a standardized formula which does not necessarily reflect the real contents of these documents as it mainly refers to the type of document rather than the information contained. Consequently, secrecy became a contagion and its proliferation especially affected the transmission as such. Secrecy as 'contagion' allows the emergence of its heterogeneity, as it applies to different sphere of knowledge but it is also possible with different elements of the same sphere. According to Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*:

We oppose epidemic to filiation, contagion to heredity, peopling by contagion to sexual reproduction, sexual production. [...] The difference is that contagion, epidemic, involves terms that are entirely heterogeneous: for example, a human being, an animal, and a bacterium, a virus, a molecule, a microorganism. (1987, 241-2)

The transmission is thus displayed as secret and "[there] is no secret because [it has] become a secret itself" (Deleuze, Guattari 1987, 289). The proliferation of the 'secrecy virus' exclusively affects the ones who were not provided with the vaccination, i.e. the people admitted to the group and bestowed with the preservation of the secret. This group owns the secret, yet since there is no secret to preserve, they become themselves the secret through the identification with the act of transmission itself. Therefore, the nature of secrecy that characterizes transmission affects the subjects who receive it. The perception of the secret is the product of the people who do not know it. If we apply this notion to Sōjiji's group of disciples led by Gasan, it is possible to identify a specular relationship within the group and the knowledge it possesses and partially hides. The creation of a privileged group among the disciples, namely the *gotetsu*, emphasizes the proximity and the relation to the center, i.e. the owner of the knowledge of transmission (the master). This small group of people is

34 The *Taihaku hōki* often appears in many *kirigami* lists, among the documents related to the transmission of the Dharma from master to disciple.

bestowed with the secret, represented, among other things, by *goi*. In this sense, secrecy appears as the “grey eminence” which becomes the “grey immanence” (Deleuze, Guattari 1987, 290). Secrecy is developed at different stages of complexity which are not revealed at once, and eventually the secret becomes an infinite form. Released from the form, the secret permeates every layer of society and thus of transmission, as “the more the secret is made into a structuring, organizing form, the thinner and more ubiquitous it becomes, the more its content becomes molecular, at the same time as its form dissolves” (Deleuze, Guattari 1987, 289).

## 7 Conclusion

In *Shōbōgenzō*, Dōgen clearly criticizes *goi*, raising doubts over the validity of this doctrine. However, Dōgen’s criticism did not affect the (re)appropriation of the five positions and its subsequent reshaping. The five positions can be considered as one of the most representative doctrines of the medieval Sōtō school, often appearing in secret transmission documents. In this paper, in light of the considerations we have shown thus far, it is clear that Gasan played a pivotal role in the initiation of *goi* transmission, collocating it at the center of the inner transmission discourse, which has been defined as the product of different levels of complexity. These levels encompass three different layers.

There is a textual layer, which displays binary sources of reference. Apparently, the main reference of Gasan’s elaboration is identified with Dongshan and Caoshan’s teaching, which is placed as an authoritative source. However, on a deeper level the effective source is nothing other than *Rentian yanmu*, which lays the basis for both the content organization and the reinterpretation of *goi*, mainly relying on Fenyang. The second level is the cosmogonic level, which aims at placing the five positions in a primordial ontological discourse. The cosmogonic layer is a powerful tool which situates the student’s mind in the world, creating an ordinate system of progression which actually interacts with reality and manipulates it. The cosmogony of *goi* as created by Gasan is borrowed from Zhou Dunyi and the *Yijing*, appearing as a ‘heterodox’ discourse from which a proliferation of symbols occurs. In the Yōkōji’s *kirigami*, symbol production is realized in a correlative form, allowing the unfolding of the cosmogony of practice. The heterodox nature that emerges from this elaboration is unified with *kōan* practice, placing at the top of *goi* cosmogony the *fushikijō no ikku*, which avoids the creation of a parallel substantial reality. The textual and cosmogonic layers are displayed along with the secrecy layer. Secrecy creates a hierarchy based on the relationship with the center (the master). In the case of *goi*, the group believed to possess the secret represents the secret itself. Indeed, there is no need to hide the transmission of a well-

known teaching such as the five positions as secrecy serves as a discourse strategy for the groups not placed within the secret discourse.

The three layers pertain to the “specific layer” (Lotman 2009, XXII) weaving them together as a multi-layered intersection of various texts. In Gasan, the five positions doctrine appears as the skillful mean through which the reduction of temporal and authority distance between himself and the past tradition occurs. Gasan places himself in the mythical, linear and uncorrupted time of patriarchal tradition (see Faure 1996, 54), acting as the direct successor of Dongshan when transmitting and readapting the five positions.

In *San'unkaigetsu*, *goi* doctrine is depicted as the authentic and true teaching of the Sōtō school, emphasizing the rhetoric of legitimacy connected to its elaboration. In Gasan,

the practice of commenting<sup>35</sup> on the words and actions of venerable Chan masters of the past clearly functioned to reify the central claim of Song Chan school [Sōjiji's group, in this case] that as a member of the grater Chan transmission family, a Chan master was the direct heir to its past master and even to the Buddha himself, and that he was therefore fully qualified and authorized to comment upon and judge past masters' sayings and doings. (Schlütter 2008, 110).

The influential role Gasan played in the spreading of Sōtō Zen with the foundation of temples and communities throughout the country needs to be explained through his key role in the transmission of doctrines such as the five positions, identified as a core element of secret documents of the group related to Gasan's disciples. The construction of a stable community at Sōjiji was sustained by the manipulation of the past tradition, which serves as a mirror of this same tradition. At that time, the Sōjiji community was facing a conflict with the Meihō's group based at Daijōji. A passage from Daijōji's *Tōkokuki* reports the rivalry between the two groups, clearly showing that the group of successors designated by Keizan himself had irremediably split (see Kawai 1996, 719; 2000, 175). Therefore, the transmission of *goi* is the blood which actualizes and legitimizes kinship between a group of people sharing the same origins. Gasan identifies these origins with Dongshan and Caoshan's *goi* and bestows his closest disciples with the 'authentic' doctrine of Sōtō tradition. Indeed, this group owns and defends the authentic teaching they received, sharing common origins that allow them to nourish their own community and face the conflict with other groups. In this sense, the making and the actualiza-

35 The practice of commenting, adapting, re-elaborating the saying of the past tradition constitutes a fundamental tool in medieval group from Sōtō tradition and it clearly appears in documents such as *daigo* and *monsan*.

tion of kin relationship create the basic scheme on which the social order and its legitimation occur. We thus have what Pierre Bourdieu defines as representational kinship, which is “the group’s self-representation and the almost theatrical presentation it gives of itself” (1977, 35).

## Abbreviations

DNZZ = Nishi, Giyū; Tamaki Kōshirō; Kawamura, Kōshō (1975-89). *Dai Nihon zoku zōkyō*. Tōkyō: Kokusho konkōkai.

T = Takakutsu, Junjirō; Watanabe, Kaigyoku (eds.) (1924-32). *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*. 100 vols. Tōkyō: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai.

S = Sōtōshū Zensho (ed.) (1970-73). *Sōtōshū Zensho Kankōkai*. 18 vols. Tōkyō: Sōtōshū Shūmuchō.

ZGR = Hanawa, Hokiichi; Ōta, Toshiro (ed.) (1959-60). *Zoku gunsho ruijū*. 37 vols. Tōkyō: Zokugunshoruijū Kanseikai.

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# **Practical Studies in Japanese Language Education** A Report about *Action Research Zero Workshop* in Venice (Italy)

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**Summary** 1 Project Background. – 2 Project Detail. – 3 Japanese Language Education at Ca' Foscari University: First Year of Bachelor Course. – 4 Details of the Action Research Zero Workshop. – 5 Conclusion and Remarks.

**Keywords** Critical Pedagogy. Japanese Language Education through Global Activities. Zero beginners. Action Research. Citizenship.

## **1 Project Background**

The edited book, finally-published in July 2016, *Shiminsei keisei to kotoba no kyōiku: bogo, daini gengo, gaikokugo o koete* (Citizenship formation and language education: beyond native, second and foreign language; Hosokawa, Ōtsuji, Mariotti) collected research papers, which focused on the importance of dialoguing as a milestone for identity and community formation. The study pointed out how a classroom of Japanese language can be a stimulus to dialogue and reciprocal values exchange for all participants too, no matter their native language.

Several fundamental questions have remained opened though: is such a formative dialogue feasible in a class of zero beginners of Japanese learners? How can they step up from 'words-only communication' to the construction of meaningful sentences, during a 15 meetings workshop focusing on 'contents – self-expression – citizenship formation' instead of classes focusing on grammar only? If it is feasible, as already shown in the previous research on zero-beginners of Japanese Language as Second Language (Kim, Take, Furuya 2010), what kinds of processes do learners go through? Does having the same native language influence such process? If so, in which way?

The above questions initiate the starting point for a joint research conducted by Hideo Hosokawa (Waseda University, emeritus professor, project

supervisor), Noriko Ichishima (Akita University, visiting scholar at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, project leader and facilitator), and Marcella Mariotti (Ca' Foscari University of Venice, project leader and facilitator) at the Department of Asian and North African Studies (DSAAM) of Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Italy). The Japanese language course at Ca' Foscari University of Venice has the highest number of new students who enrol into Japanese language courses in whole Italy; 315 students out of almost 500 applicants every year admitted through an admission test about basic knowledge of the chosen area of studies, i.e. Japan.

## 2 Project Detail

The project, named *Practical Studies: Action Research Zero*, was originally thought of as a total of fifteen 1.5/2 hours meetings during 10 weeks period, from September 12 to November 27, 2016, scheduled as in the table 1. It planned to accept the first 8 participants who contacted the email address [action.research.zero@gmail.com](mailto:action.research.zero@gmail.com). The limited number of participants was to facilitate the dialogue between them and to build a strong sense of community.

Table 1. Activity Plan


Meeting	Date	Activity	Contents
0	9/12	The workshop participants deadline	
1	9/19	First meeting (2h): Hosokawa leader, Ichishima & Mariotti facilitators	Presentation of the project and self-introduction
2	9/20	Second meeting (2h): Hosokawa leader, Ichishima & Mariotti facilitators	Thinking about a common theme
3-4	9/21	Third meeting (4h): Hosokawa leader, Ichishima & Mariotti facilitators	Selecting an individual subtitle for the final paper and social gathering
5-6	9/22	Fourth meeting (4h): Hosokawa leader, Ichishima & Mariotti facilitators	Students describing their selected theme + common Mailing List settings
	9/25	Online theme sharing	Mailing List – Topic and Motivation
7	9/26	Group meeting 1 (1.5h): Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion
	9/28	Online report submission	
	10/2	Online comment submission	
8	10/3	Group meeting 2: Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion
	10/5	Online report submission	
	10/9	Online comment submission	
9	10/10	Group meeting 3: Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion
	10/12	Online report submission	

Meeting	Date	Activity	Contents
	10/16	Online comment submission	
10	10/17	Group meeting 4: Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion
	10/19	Online report submission	
	10/23	Online comment submission	
11	10/24	Group meeting 5: Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion
	10/26	Online report submission	
	10/30	Online comment submission	
12	10/31	Group meeting 6: Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion
	11/2	Online report submission	
	11/6	Online comment submission	
13	11/7	Group meeting 7: Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion about assessment
	11/9	Online report submission	Assessment standards
	11/13	Online comment submission	
14	11/14	Group meeting 8: Ichishima & Mariotti	Mutual assessment
	11/16	Online report submission	
	11/20	Online comment submission	
15	11/21	Group meeting 9: Ichishima & Mariotti	Online reports booklet
	11/23	Online reports booklet	Online reports booklet
	11/27	Online report booklet submission	Online reports booklet delivery

As the first semester begun on September 12th, 2016, the research team distributed the leaflet (fig. 1) during the first Japanese Grammar lesson to all the 315 learners of the first year, followed by a very brief oral orientation of the workshop contents. The front and the back of the leaflet were written in Italian and in Japanese respectively, so to stimulate the students to check both sides and eventually be curious about the way of writing date and time in Japanese.

As the image at the bottom right of the back-side of the leaflet illustrates, the project kicks off with the lecture by Hosokawa in September 19th at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. The lecture aimed to inform the participants, the teachers and the concerned scholars about the concept *Kangaeru tame no nihongo* (Japanese for Thinking) and the theoretical background of *Action Research Zero Workshop*. The whole lecture is available online at the following YouTube address: <https://youtu.be/Rbhs7xUQ5YY>.

Since this kind of intensive *sōgo katsudō gata nihongo kyōiku* (Japanese Language Education through Global Activities) usually experiences a quite high percentage of students drop-off, the research team decided to accept the all 15 applications received, twice the programmed number. To ensure a good class management, facilitators Mariotti and Ichishima searched for tutors too, through selecting them from students in the Master Course in Language and Civilisation of Asia and Mediterranean Africa



# Action 0

Attività in lingua giapponese per principianti assoluti.  
Partecipanti: max. 8 studenti del primo anno (ordine di prenotazione)

**Contenuto:**  
Negli incontri "Action Zero" si mira ad esprimere ciò che si pensa e a comprendere il pensiero altrui in lingua giapponese. Si parlerà e scriverà dei propri interessi. Leggendo e discutendone insieme, si apprenderanno nuovi vocaboli e aumenterà la capacità di esprimersi.

**Responsabili:**  
dott.ssa Marcella Mariotti (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), prof. Ichishima Noriko (Akita University),  
**Supervisor:**  
prof. Hosokawa Hideo (Tokyo, Waseda University, in presenza a Venezia dal 19/9-23/9)

## Vuoi partecipare?

Scrivi entro il 16/9 ore 23:55 a  
action.research.zero@gmail.com

13 incontri:  
19/9, 20/9, 21/9, 22/9 (orario da concordare con i partecipanti)  
da lunedì 26/9 ogni settimana 17.30 – 19.00

Figure. 1 Leaflet distributed to the students

## 日本語 0 ビギナー活動 参加者募集

### 活動概要

このクラスでは、日本語で自分の考えてることを表現し、相手の考えていることを理解することを目指します。クラスでは、自分の好きなこと、興味のあることについて話したり、書いたりします。そして、それをみんなで読み、話し合いながら、言葉を学びます。

### 担当者

マルチエツラ・マリ奥特ティ (カ・フォスカリ大学)、  
市嶋典子 (秋田大学、「カ・フォスカリ」大学)

### 日程


9月9日 (月) ~11月12日 (月)  
9月9日 ~12日までは、日本から細川英雄先生 (早稲田大学名譽教授) が参加します。  
なお、9月22日 (月) 以降は、毎週月曜日 5時 54分 ~7時 51分 に行う予定です。

### 授業予定

第1回: 9月9日 (月) 5時 ~6時  
第2回: 9月12日 (火) 10時 ~11時  
第3回: 9月12日 (水) 10時半 ~11時  
第4回: 9月22日 (木) 6時 ~9時 懇親会  
第5回以降: 9月22日 (月) ~11月12日 (月) 毎週月曜日:  
5時 45分 ~7時 51分  
単位: インターシッピング 3 単位

「対話をするために必要なもの – ワークショップゼロの理論的背景」

講演者: 細川英雄、早稲田大学名譽教授  
日程: 9月19日, 11時 ~ 12時半  
会場: Aula Baratto  
住所: Dorsoduro, 3246, 30123 Venezia



活動型クラス  
……上級生・中級生も歓迎……

(area Japan) who were writing their master thesis on, or simply who were interested in Japanese Language Education (Rizzatello, Bartolommeoni), ex-students who had already experienced such class concept (Vischi), conference attendants, Japanese native speaker interested in the concept (Kato), gathering 4 tutors in total. Many teachers in Japanese Language who had attended Hosokawa's conference *Taiwa o suru tame ni hitsuyō na mono – wākushoppu zero no riron teki na haikai* (What do we need to dialogue? Theoretical background for Workshop Zero) had expressed their interest on the project, but due to other classes schedule they were not able to attend the project as tutors.

The original schedule of the Workshop Zero class had to be modified to accommodate participants' needs, so that they could continue to attend all other first year classes. Furthermore, although participation to the Workshop Zero would not result in any credits as Japanese class, it yet allowed the students to gain 3 credits as alternative activity to the mandatory internship.

### 3 Japanese Language Education at Ca' Foscari University: First Year of Bachelor Course

In Italy, the academic year usually starts in September and ends in August. As for the A.Y. 2016/17, the first year of Japanese language education is worth 18 credits. It consists of 60 hours of Japanese grammar (4 classes/77 students each) taught by faculty members (lecturers and professors), 300 hours of exercise with native speakers (CEL: language expert collaborators), 90 hours of individual study, a middle term online test, and a final oral and written exam. Exercise with native speakers consist of:

- textbook readings (Shin Bunka Shokyū Nihongo, 60 hours, 2 classes /155 students each),
- conversations (role play, 60 hours, 4 classes/77 students each),
- grammar exercises (120 hours, 3 classes/103 students each) and
- writing (60 hours, 2 classes / 155 students each), enriched by lecture notes.

As for the first semester of the first year, the students deal with half of the total hours: 30 hours grammar, 150 exercitation hours, 45 individual study hours.

In brief, the 15 participants started the Workshop Zero in the second week of the language course, i.e. after 1 week of Japanese classes. The first week of Japanese classes consists of 2 hours general introduction by a faculty member where they could listen about focusing on a general presentation of the language, and 8 hours of exercitations about greetings, *hiragana* and counter words (*josūshi*).

### 4 Details of the Action Research Zero Workshop

The Action Research Zero Workshop started soon after the Hosokawa's lecture on September 19, 2016. The summary of this workshop is as follows, which slightly differs from the initial schedule.

1. Target learner: Zero-beginners of Japanese language at Ca' Foscari University of Venice.
2. Participants: 15 learners, 4 tutors, 3 teachers
3. Class period: 12.9.2016 - 15.12.2016
4. Lessons (see table 2): 16 lessons, 1.5/2 hours for one lesson
5. Credit: 3 credits for internship alternative activity might be gained upon request
6. Project Leaders and Facilitators: Marcella Mariotti (assistant professor, Ca' Foscari University of Venice) and Ichishima Noriko (associate professor, Akita University, visiting scholar at Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

7. Project Supervisor: Hosokawa Hideo (emeritus professor, Waseda University). Hosokawa conducted the first 5 meetings between September 19 and 22nd.

As described in the leaflet in Italian, Action Research Zero Workshop aimed for students to be able to express their thoughts and understand the others'. The learners would discuss and write about their interests, learning phrases and new vocabulary through the activities. Individual learner selected his/her own theme and started writing a report titled *Watashi to ...* (... and myself), discussing their themes with each other in the classroom. In addition, the learners exchanged opinions through email as well using a dedicated googlegroup; they needed to write (rewrite) and submit their reports at least once a week to their own discussion sub-group. The 15 learners were divided into 4 groups where each of them supported by 1 tutor.

The titles of the reports are as follows. The Japanese notations are just as the learners wrote it at the final submission.

1. ゲンダイアートと私 (*Gendai āto to watashi*, Modern art and Myself)
2. ドラムと私 (*Doramu to watashi*, Drum and Myself)
3. バスケットボールと私 (*Basuketto bōru to watashi*, Basketball and Myself)
4. 日本のしと私 (*Nihon no shi to watashi*, Japanese poetry and Myself)
5. ストリーを書くことと私 (*Sutori to watashi*, Writing story and Myself)
6. ファッションと私 (*fashon to watashi*, Fashion and Myself)
7. 私の猫と私 (*Watashi no neko to watashi*, My cat and Myself)
8. 星を見ることと私 (*Hoshi o miru koto to watashi*, Watching stars and Myself)
9. 描くことと私 (*Egaku koto to watashi*, Drawing and Myself)
10. ロックの反抗と私 (*Rokku no hankō to watashi*, Resistance rock and Myself)
11. ゆびわものがたりと私 (*Yubiwa monogatari to watashi*, Lord of the Rings and Myself)
12. パリのルブルビじゅつかんと私 (*Pari no Ruburu bijutsukan*, Louvre of Paris and Myself)
13. ハリーポッターと私 (*Harī Pottā to watashi*, Harry Potter and Myself)
14. 空手と私 (*Karate to watashi*, Karate and Myself)
15. だいにじせかいたいせんと私 (*Dainiji sekai taisen to watashi*, World War II and Myself)

Under normal practice, zero-beginners class supposes not to be widened outside classroom. However, the strong motivation of the learners and their willingness 'to go further' convinced the teachers to proceed as usual with non-zero-beginners classroom. The final delivered reports consisted of a motivational paragraph, a dialogue report, and conclusions. In the motivational paragraph, the learners described about the relations between the theme they had chosen and themselves. They had to think about the reason why they had chosen his/her own theme. For the dialogue report, they had to choose one person to discuss the motivational paragraph and think further about their themes. Thereafter, they had to summarize the dialogue

contents focusing on some main 'turning points' of the dialogue they had, commenting on the reasons that they selected such quotations. Finally, they wrote the conclusions drawn from their initial motivational paragraphs and the report of the whole dialogue processes in and outside of the classroom.

At the second week of the workshop, the teachers indicated the following three criterias as purposes of the class and the main aim of the report: 1) originality, 2) the reception of others' argumentation, 3) logicality. At the final stage of the workshop, the learners were asked to discuss and decide which criteria to evaluate their reports according to the above three points. They had to check each of them before drawing to their own conclusions. The following are the criteria, which the learners themselves decided that they should evaluate and the reasons of such a choice.

1) オリジナリティ (Originality)

・皆さんはレポートで自分の興味を表現しました。

(Everybody expressed his/her own interest in the report)

・皆さんはオリジナルのテーマをかんがえました。オリジナリティはじぶんじしんを表します。

(Everybody thought about an original theme. The originality expresses oneself.)

・このワークショップの大切ポイントはやるきがでたことです、自己がわかるからです。そしてクリエイティビティも大切です。自己のかんしょうについて話すからです。

(The important point of this workshop is to have felt motivated, because it makes me understand myself. And creativity is important too, because one talks about the feelings of him/herself.)

2) 意見交換はクールだったか? どうして? (Was the exchange of opinions cool? Why?)

・たにんをはなします。あたらしいけんをみいだす。

(I talk with another person. I find a new opinion.)

・じぶんのでーまをのべるとじぶんがわかる。

(If I talk about my theme, I can understand myself.)

・私のともだちと私はじぶんをかんがえました。みなさんはきもちをもしあげました。

(My friends and I thought about ourselves. Everybody talked about his/her feelings.)

3) テーマは違っても同じ気持ち (Even if the themes are different, the feeling is the same)

・私たちは tema がちがいますが、私たちはどようのきもちがあります。

(Our themes are different, but we have same feeling.)

・きょうゆうのポイントがあります、でもおなじではありません。

(We have common points, but they are not the same thing.)



## 4) 考えの比較 (Comparison of the thought)

・ぐるーぶのたいわはひかくをじゅりつします。

(The dialogue of the group established a comparison.)

・たいわへのかんしんがたかまりました。

(The comparison of thought grew interest on dialogue.)

## 5) 変わる (Changement)

私のかんがえよりおおきいです。なぜならみなさんのかんがえはことなります。そしてわたしのかんがえもかわりました。

(My thought become bigger, because everyone has different opinions, and my opinion is changed.)

私のグループ友達をたすけます。いぜんテーマについてわかりません。何わたしはしました。あとでわかりました。

(The member of my group helps the other group mate. I had not understood about a theme before, but understood it later.)

While the learners wrote each other comments through email, they managed to rewrite their reports based on the received comments according to the above points. On the last day of the workshop, each learner performed a 2 minutes presentation about his/her theme. After the presentations, they were asked to re-organize the above 1) to 5) points and shrink them to only 3, according to which they would have done their own self-evaluation before submitting the full report. The final 3 points for evaluation become: 1) originality, 2) reception of other's ideas, and 3) transmission of own values. Each group, without tutors, conducted the gathering of the reports during winter holiday that supposed to strengthen further the sense of community. The reports will be available by February 2017 at the following websites: <http://virgo.unive.it/mariotti/kangaeru> and [html http://ichishima.thyme.jp/](http://ichishima.thyme.jp/).

## 5 Conclusion and Remarks

It is worth pointing out that Action Research Zero Workshop is the very first practical study based on the 'Japanese for thinking' concept conducted on absolute beginners of Japanese language outside of Japan. Actually, the previous researches on absolute beginners were conducted in Japan (Tsumura, Suga, Shioya, Ichishima, and Take 2009) and they didn't reach to the stage of 'outside classroom dialogue activity', possibly because of the limited time. For this reason, and the other reasons that will be discussed in the next research paper about few case studies, the teachers of Action Research Zero Workshop decided to widen the time length of the workshop until December 15th, 2016. It will also allow the learners to fully immerse themselves into the *sōgo katsudō gata nihongo kyōiku* (Japanese

Language Education through Global Activities). The final schedule is as described in table 2.

Table 2. Actual date and activities

Meeting	Date	Activity	Contents
0	9/12	The workshop participants deadline	
1	9/19	First meeting (2h): Hosokawa leader, Ichishima & Mariotti facilitators	Presentation of the project
2	9/20	Second meeting (2h): Hosokawa leader, Ichishima & Mariotti facilitators	Thinking about a theme, Mailing List – Topic and Motivation
3	9/21	Third meeting (2h): Hosokawa leader, Ichishima & Mariotti facilitators	Thinking about a theme
4	9/22	Fourth meeting (2h): Hosokawa leader, Ichishima & Mariotti facilitators Dinner with students and tutors	Thinking about a theme
5	9/23	Fifth meeting (2h) with: Hosokawa leader, Ichishima & Mariotti facilitators	Students describing their selected theme
	9/27	Online Report submission	
6	9/29	Group meeting 1 (2h): Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion about motivation
	10/3	Online Report submission	
	10/5	Online comment submission	
7	10/6	Group meeting 2 (2h): Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion about motivation
	10/10	Online Report submission	
8	10/13	Group meeting 3 (2h): Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion about motivation
	10/17	Online Report submission	
	10/18	Online comment submission	
9	10/20	Group meeting 4 (2h): Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion about motivation
	10/24	Online Report submission	
10	10/27	Group meeting 5 (2h): Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion about motivation
	10/31	Online Report submission	
11	11/3	Group meeting 6 (2h): Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion about motivation and dialogue report
	11/3	Online Report submission	
12	11/10	Group meeting 7 (2h): Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion about dialogue report

Meeting	Date	Activity	Contents
	11/13	Online Report submission	
13	11/17	Group meeting 8 (2h): Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion about dialogue report and conclusions
	11/20	Online Report submission	
14	11/24	Group meeting 9 (2h): Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion about conclusions
	12/2	Online Report submission	
15	12/6	Group meeting 10 (1.5h): Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion about assessment
	12/10	Online comment submission	
	12/14	Online Report submission	
16	12/15	Group meeting 11 (2h): Ichishima & Mariotti	Class discussion about assessment, Presentation for themes
	2017/1/31	Online Reports booklet submission	Online reports booklet delivery, Self assessment

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## 対話をするために必要なもの — ワークショップゼロの理論的な背景

### **Transcript of the Conference *In Search for Dialogue: Theoretical Frameworks for Workshop Zero* (September 19th, 2016)**

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et des Cultures)

はじめに—何のためにことばによって活動するのか

本稿は、今週からカ・フォスカリ大学で行われる「ワークショップゼロ」のための理論的な背景を説明するものである。題して「対話をするために必要なもの」ということだが、その前に、まず、何のためにことばが存在するのか、また、そのことばによって活動するということはどういうことなのかを言語教育として考える必要があることを指摘しておきたい。この問いなくして、言語教育を考えると、言語をどう教えるかという、きわめて技術的かつ表層的な陥穽に陥るからである。

ここでは、ことばの活動の総体として、身体としての感覚、精神としての感情、論理としての思考という3つの面を挙げておく。ことばによる活動というものが、この三者一体による総合的な全包括的（ホリスティック）なものであるところから始めたい。

次に、このことばの活動によって、わたしたちは、自己・他者・社会の関係を形成しているということを確認しよう。つまり、自分の考えていること（テーマ）の発信、他者からのフィードバック、他者とのやりとり（インターアクション）、自分と相手を取り包む社会をどうするか、どのようにして社会に参加していくか（社会参加意識）というような道筋が、ことばの活動には重要だということだ。

このことは、それぞれの個人が一人の市民として、さまざまな場で社会的行為主体として生きることを意味している。ここに、市民性形成とことばの教育の関連が強く指摘できるからである。

ことばの活動とその教育のメカニズムを考えた人々とその歴史

いわゆる近代に入って、ことばの活動とその教育のメカニズムを考えた人々とその歴史について簡単に触れておこう。なぜなら、後述の対話活動を中心としたことばの活動への転換には、言語教育というものがどのようにとらえられていたかという認識の把握が重要だからである。

18世紀半ばの蒸気機関の発明から大航海時代に入り、植民地主義を経て、第1次、第2次世界大戦に突入する、近代の歴史は、そのまま言語教育の歴史でもある。その過程で、さまざまな先人たちが、言語教育というものをどのようにとらえてきたかを知ることは、ことばの教育の21世紀のあるべき姿を考えるうえで、きわめて意味のあるものといえよう。

ここでは、紙幅の関係で、個々の言説等について詳しく述べることはできないため、年表の形で、ことばの活動とその教育のメカニズムを考えた歴史を振り返ることとし、言語教育の考え方と課題としての差異については、次に詳述する（次ページの年表参照）。

問題意識の共通点と相違一言語の構造・形式と対話の中身との関係

いわゆる直接法が開発されたのは、この年表の初めの方からもわかるように、19世紀の半ばのことで、F. グアンによれば、子どもの母語獲得がヒントになっているとされる。このことは、訳読中心から活動中心へ言語教育が動きはじめるきっかけだったといっているだろう。

フランソワ グアン (Francois Guoin 1831-1895, 64 歳)	伊沢 修二 (1851-1917, 66 歳)		ベルリッツ (M. Berlitz, 1852-1921, 69 歳)	1830
				1850
西尾 実 (1889-1979, 90 歳)	山口喜一郎 (1872-1952, 80 歳)	ハロルド・E・パーマー (Harold E. Palmer, 1877-1949, 72 歳)		1870
	木村宗男 (1912-2004, 92 歳)	長沼直兄 (1894-1973, 79 歳)		1900
	国際学友会	東京言語研究所 (長沼スクール)		1970

直接法の動きは、ヨーロッパを中心に同時多発的に起こっていることがわかるが、日本語教育では、明治末期の台湾で山口喜一郎らによって始まり、ことばの活動との関係、つまり、構造から機能・場面へといういわばコミュニケーション・アプローチを先取りする形で、「問答」という手法が開発される。この直接問答法は、長沼直兄、木村宗男らによって継承され、戦後に至るが、その後衰退する。

「問答」の問題点としては、機能・場面と構造を結びつけても、本当のやり

とりにはならないことを乗り越えられなかったことであろう。山口、長沼、木村といった実践家たちがそろって、対話という用語を使っているが、いずれも、言語の機能・場面と構造を結びつける点にフォーカスしていて、対話の内容（何を話題とし、テーマとするのか）という点に関しては、ほとんど発言していない。

対話は、言語を習得するために起こるのではない。個人にとっての対話のはじまりは、答えのないやりとりによるものである。すなわち、正解のある答えをめざして私たちは対話をするわけではないということだ。言い換えれば、自分の考えていることを相手に発信すること、相手の言っていることを理解するために何が必要か、について考えること、このプロセスそのものが対話なのであり、対話とは、それぞれのテーマのやりとりであると同時に、それぞれの持つテーマ（中身）を相互的に交換・共有することで、自らの居場所、立場、環境について社会的行為主体として考えることなのである。

19世紀にはじまった言語教育の歴史の中では、言語の構造と場面・機能を結びつける努力がなされた一方で、こうした対話の概念に関する議論がほとんど起こらなかったところに、言語教育の技術化・表層化の問題が指摘できる。

それはおそらく、言語の構造・形式を知らなければ、対話はできないという思い込みが、支配的であったからではなかろうか。

人間のことばの獲得を見ればわかるように、自分から発信したいという動機と意志さえあれば、かたち（構造と形式）は必要に応じて後からついてくるということ、要は、そうした動機と意志を生成する環境としての場を形成すること、この教育活動の原理が重要だということである。そのような観点から、確認するならば、対話は、「なかみ」（中身）・「かたち」（容れ物）・「ば」（場）の三位一体によって形成されるということだ。

## 対話活動の方法と手順—「あなたは何が好き？」という質問の意味

こうした環境の場をつくるための具体的な手順の一例を簡単に説明しておこう。

動機と理由（自己の興味・関心について語る。／その動機・理由を述べる。／興味・関心の情報を交換・共有する。）

対話（自己の興味・関心について説明する。／情報の奥にあるものを対話によって考える—なぜ、そのことに興味・関心を持つのか／自分でも気づかなかった。深いところにあるテーマを発見する。／自分のテーマをその場の他者と交換・共有する。）

結論（自分のテーマについてさまざまな他者と議論した結果を確認する。／初めの興味・関心から、テーマの発見に至るまでのプロセスを振り返る。／これから、「私」は、さまざまな他者と、この社会でどのように生きていくのか。／そのために、自己・他者・社会にとって何が重要かを考える。）

以上のような手順で、活動を行い、発表やレポート記述等を繰り返しつつ、自己の興味・関心に基づくテーマを生成することにより、対話活動は活性化するのである。

## 対話にとって必要なもの—対話活動のための理論的な背景

一方的な知識説明という点では、訳読法・直接法も同じである。双方とも構造と形式の注入という思想に裏づけられているからだ。次に、構造・形式から機能・場面へという流れの中で、どんなに機能・場面を規定し、文脈化の流れをつくっても肝心の中身がなければ対話にはならない。その中身とは、たんに個人的な自分の話をすればいいということではない。また、はじめから一定の内容があつて、それをどのように教えるかという内容重視の立場と、対話の充実ということは、質的に異なるものであることも指摘できる。対話は決してタスクではない、対話の中身の充実とは、人としての生の充実の課題である。

したがって、ここで必要なことは、中身（自分の言いたいこと）を伝えようとする意志、相手からの反応を寛容に受け止める態度、他者とともに人間のあり方について考えようとする思想といったものである。このことがはじめに述べた市民性の形成ということとつながるのである。

## **Recensioni**





**Gilman, Sander L. (2014). *Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Collaboration and Conflict in the Age of Diaspora*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 194 pp.**

Dario Miccoli  
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Sander Gilman – docente presso la Emory University – è probabilmente uno dei più apprezzati ed originali studiosi dell'identità ebraica e degli Studi Culturali applicati al mondo ebraico contemporaneo, temi ai quali ha dedicato numerose pubblicazioni: da *Jewish Self-Hatred* (1986), fino a *The Jew's Body* (1998) ed al più recente *Fat: A Cultural History of Obesity* (2010). Con *Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, pubblicato per i tipi di Hong Kong University Press, Gilman riprende argomenti a lui cari – dal rapporto tra medicina, religione ed etnicità alle relazioni tra antisemitismo e identità nazionale – declinandoli in chiave transnazionale e interreligiosa. Il volume trae origine da un convegno organizzato nel 2013 presso l'università di Hong Kong e comprende nove capitoli scritti da studiosi statunitensi, cinesi, tedeschi ed inglesi impegnati in vari ambiti disciplinari: dall'antropologia agli Studi Culturali, alla storia culturale e alle letterature comparate. Lo scopo dell'opera, come il curatore spiega nel capitolo introduttivo, è investigare le «Abrahamic cultures and identities as minoritized ethnic and cultural groups in a diaspora that may be majority Muslim, Christian, Jewish or self-consciously secular» (xiii). In altre parole, ci si domanda quali possano essere le dinamiche di conflitto e collaborazione tra le tre religioni monoteistiche nel mondo di oggi, ponendo l'accento sui processi di globalizzazione da un lato e sulla formazione di nuove identità diasporiche dall'altro. Il volume, di straordinaria attualità, che ha il pregio di guardare a tali questioni in una prospettiva globale e che abbraccia differenti aree geografiche e culturali, si apre con un capitolo di Martin J. Wein e Benjamin Hary dedicato alle traduzioni della Bibbia e al loro impatto dal punto di vista linguistico e culturale sia nei paesi di tradizione cristiana che non. I due autori propongono una lettura della relazione tra religione, lingua e nazionalismo sostenendo – attraverso esempi non sempre chiarificatori – che la canonizzazione e traduzione del testo biblico abbia contribuito a creare «standard languages» (30), i quali a loro volta si caratterizzerebbero come vettori di nazionalismo in diverse parti del

globo. Il secondo capitolo, *Jews and Muslims: Collaboration through Acknowledging the Shoah*, è scritto dalla studiosa Mehnaz M. Afridi e riflette su come la Shoah possa essere insegnata e discussa nel mondo arabomusulmano e in relazione all'Islam. Per quanto interessante sia il tema, il capitolo si basa su fonti – ad esempio le testimonianze raccolte da Robert Satloff nel volume *Among the Righteous: Lost Stories from the Holocaust's Long Reach into Arab Lands* (2007) – sulle quali vari storici hanno espresso più di una riserva e che andrebbero discusse con maggior attenzione. Afridi mette insieme autori estremamente diversi, da Edmond Jabès a Yehudah Amichai fino a Mahmud Darwish, confondendo forme di negazionismo nei confronti della Shoah con espressioni di antisemitismo o antiisraeliane – senz'altro da stigmatizzare, ma che non rimandano necessariamente ad un identico contesto ideologico e storico. Sander Gilman è l'autore del terzo capitolo, dove leggiamo invece di come pratiche di circoncisione (islamica ed ebraica) siano regolamentate e giustificate dal punto di vista medico e/o giuridico, dalla Germania agli Stati Uniti. Partendo da dibattiti interni alla Riforma ebraica tedesca e dall'etnologia ottocentesca, Gilman discute con competenza svariate fonti di tipo medicoscientifico, giuridico e giornalistico per spiegare i nessi tra identità religiosa, idea di nazione e pratiche sanitarie, arrivando alla conclusione che spesso «the health exception is used to argue for or against what is in its essence a religious practice» (71). Wayne Cristaudo, nel quarto capitolo, si sofferma poi sul dialogo filosofico instaurato nel periodo tra le due guerre mondiali tra Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy e Franz Rosenzweig sul tema del rapporto tra Islam ed Occidente. Come nel caso di Afridi, il capitolo appare molto teorico e contiene letture forse riduttive del concetto di modernità, ad esempio che «being modern is to sever roots» (92) ed affermazioni – «the Islamic world has yet to examine its own shameful history» (96) – che generalizzano in modo astorico una realtà più complessa. Zhou Xun firma un interessante quinto capitolo sulla comunità ebraica di Hong Kong, a metà tra storia e antropologia, descrivendo le origini ottocentesche della comunità ad opera di mercanti di origine ebraica irachena e indiana, per arrivare ai profughi ebrei arrivati in città durante la Seconda Guerra Mondiale, fino alla situazione odierna con Hong Kong che ospita una piccola comunità piuttosto ben integrata nel tessuto urbano ed economico, in parte erede delle precedenti ed in parte composta da *expats*. Nel sesto capitolo, Yulia Egorova – nota studiosa di *Jewish Studies* e di ebrei in Asia – analizza le relazioni tra ebrei e musulmani nel Sud-Est asiatico, soffermandosi sui casi dei Bene Israel, una delle comunità che compongono la diaspora ebraica indiana, e dei Bene Ephraim – un poco conosciuto gruppo etnico dell'Andhra Pradesh che, a partire dagli anni Ottanta del Novecento, ha sostenuto essere discendente di una delle dieci Tribù Perdute d'Israele e sul quale l'autrice si era già soffermata nel bel volume *The Jews of Andhra Pradesh: Contesting Caste and Religion in*

*South India* (2013), scritto insieme con Shahid Perwez. Egorova, attraverso l'esame di casi di violenza interreligiosa ed interetnica, mostra la plasticità delle categorie 'ebreo' e 'musulmano', le quali possono essere utilizzate negoziando, a seconda dei casi, «the boundary between a Jewish or Muslim person as a person and as a symbol of the perceived threat associated with their religious affiliation» (126). Con il capitolo di David Feldman, *The Damascus Affair and the Debate on Ritual Murder in Early Victorian Britain*, si fa un salto all'indietro alla Gran Bretagna di metà Ottocento. Il cosiddetto affare di Damasco (1840) era stato infatti il più noto caso di accusa di omicidio rituale nei confronti degli ebrei dell'Impero Ottomano, incolpati ingiustamente di aver rapito ed ucciso a scopo rituale un frate francescano, scatenando così una *querelle* diplomatica internazionale cui presero parte in primo luogo la Santa Sede, la Francia e notabili ebrei inglesi tra cui il celebre Sir Moses Montefiore. Il tema - al quale nel 1997 lo storico anglo-israeliano Robert Frankel aveva dedicato l'imprescindibile monografia *The Damascus Affair* - è riletto da Feldman attraverso articoli e discussioni della stampa britannica dell'epoca, arrivando così a scoprire che dietro alla relativa protezione e difesa che l'opinione pubblica britannica dimostrò nei confronti degli ebrei, si celavano non tanto forme di filosemitismo, ma piuttosto tendenze anti-papiste nonché gli interessi politici e militari britannici nel Vicino Oriente. L'ottavo capitolo di Katja Garloff si sofferma su opere letterarie e filmiche tedesche - dal film di Margarethe von Trotta *Rosenstrasse* (2003), al romanzo di Barbara Honigmann *A Love Made Out of Nothing* (1991) - che raccontano di relazioni sentimentali interreligiose tra tedeschi ebrei e cristiani durante e dopo il nazismo, o tra cristiani e immigrati di origine musulmana nella Germania di oggi. Riallacciandosi a studi di antropologia e storia delle emozioni, Garloff introduce la categoria di amore come portatrice di «infinite chains of encounters» (163), aprendo nuovi ed interessanti scenari metodologici sullo studio delle relazioni interreligiose e sugli scambi quotidiani che da queste possono derivare. Il nono capitolo, di Jane Garnett e Michael Keith, presenta un'analisi affascinante dell'East End londinese, concentrandosi su pratiche di dialogo interreligioso nella sfera pubblica, nonché su edifici e memoriali che ad esse si ricollegano: ad esempio la St Paul's Anglican Church del *borough* londinese di Tower Hamlets, o un monumento nell'odierno Altab Ali Park a Whitechapel, che commemora scontri interetnici con la comunità bengalese lì avvenuti nel 1978. Riflettendo sui significati del termine 'diaspora' e sulle sue ricadute a livello urbano, il capitolo offre uno sguardo innovativo sulla questione delle relazioni tra etnie e religioni diverse, coniugando gli strumenti degli Studi Culturali con quelli della storia politica e dell'urbanistica. Chiude il volume una breve riflessione conclusiva di Gilman, dove il curatore mette in luce l'ambivalenza insita in tutte le forme di pluralismo etno-religioso affrontate dai vari autori, le quali - come i capitoli dimostrano - assumono signi-

ficati sia distruttivi che produttivi e dunque possono determinare sia forme di collaborazione, sia di scontro.

Nel complesso, *Judaism, Christianity and Islam* offre un'ampia panoramica sulle relazioni tra le tre religioni monoteistiche, e non solo, e si sofferma su casi di studio spesso poco studiati. Se alcuni capitoli si rivelano di estrema originalità - da quello di Gilman allo studio dell'East End londinese - altri avrebbero probabilmente necessitato di un più ampio apparato di fonti che in qualche modo chiarisse meglio ciò che si voleva sostenere. Penso soprattutto al capitolo di Afridi sulla Shoah nel mondo islamico, a quello di Cristaudo su Franz Rosenzweig e, in parte, anche allo studio sulle traduzioni bibliche di Wein e Hary. Ciò detto, il volume è da ritenersi un'interessante collezione di ricerche su un argomento di grande rilevanza nel mondo contemporaneo ed interesserà sia chi si occupa di storia e filosofia delle religioni, piuttosto che ricercatori di *Area Studies* ed antropologia.

**Reske, Katka (2013). *Return of the Jew: Identity Narratives of the Third Post-Holocaust Generation of Jews in Poland*. Brighton (MA): Academic Studies Press, 230 pp.**

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In *Return of the Jew*, Katka Reszke analizza il fenomeno della 'costruzione' di una nuova identità ebraico-polacca, che ha preso piede dopo la caduta del regime comunista nel 1989 in Polonia. Questo lavoro è basato su una ricerca antropologica condotta nel corso di dieci anni, fra il 2001 e il 2011, dall'autrice, una documentarista indipendente e ricercatrice polacca di storia e cultura ebraica all'Università Ebraica di Gerusalemme. L'oggetto della sua ricerca sono dunque le narrative della terza generazione di ebrei polacchi dopo l'Olocausto: giovani adulti che hanno recentemente scoperto le loro radici ebraiche. Definita dall'autrice come una «unexpected generation» (generazione inaspettata), questa è la prima generazione, dopo quella di sopravvissuti all'olocausto e quella del 1968, a ricercare e ad affermare apertamente la propria identità ebraica in Polonia. La fonte principale di rottura rispetto al passato per questa generazione non è, come accade in genere per le terze generazioni, l'immigrazione, bensì l'Olocausto. Infatti con la morte traumatica, o l'assimilazione, della maggior parte degli ebrei sopravvissuti in Polonia, gli unici resti della cultura ebraica in questo paese sembravano essere le poche tracce materiali rimaste, insieme ad un patrimonio folklorico abbastanza stereotipato. Sulla base di 50 interviste semi-strutturate, l'autrice cerca quindi di capire quali siano i processi coinvolti nella narrazione dell'identità, in particolare in una situazione dove i singoli individui si trovano a dover fare i conti con un'eredità culturale della quale prima non erano a conoscenza. Reszke, essa stessa parte di questa generazione di giovani polacchi che hanno scoperto e adottato una nuova identità ebraica, si posiziona all'interno del gruppo che studia, per analizzare e comprendere il processo di 'transizione' verso l'ebraismo dei giovani intervistati, la costruzione di un'identità ebraico-polacca che si svela nella stessa attività narrativa, e i meccanismi di appropriazione attraverso i quali questi giovani si raccontano, cercando in questa nuova identità un senso di appartenenza e un'autenticità, sullo sfondo del revival, in un certo senso 'virtuale', che ha caratterizzato la

presenza della cultura ebraica nella Polonia degli ultimi vent'anni. Il libro è organizzato in tre sezioni principali dove l'autrice traccia in primo luogo un quadro teorico, presentando in seguito la metodologia utilizzata, per poi passare a un'analisi delle interviste. Queste ultime sono categorizzate secondo vari temi, che prendono in considerazione le diverse prospettive e fasi del processo di riconfigurazione identitaria attraversato da questi giovani dopo la scoperta delle loro radici ebraiche. Reszke individua dunque in questo processo differenti fasi: 'la scoperta'; il senso di 'missione' nel portare avanti la propria identità ebraica; il grado di 'autenticità' dell'identità ebraica di ciascuno; la relazione fra identità ebraica e polacca; il quadro narrativo utilizzato per dare senso alla scoperta di una nuova identità, che passa dal primordialismo al costruttivismo, dove appunto la decisione di essere ebreo è ugualmente importante che essere ebreo per nascita. Uno degli obiettivi del lavoro di Reszke è infatti dimostrare l'importanza della concezione primordialista dell'identità etnica, che, in questo caso, viene identificata come lo strumento narrativo più importante utilizzato dagli intervistati per provare l'autenticità delle loro 'incerte' radici ebraiche. Grazie a questo strumento infatti, i giovani intervistati, che nella maggior parte dei casi non sarebbero da considerarsi ebrei secondo la legge halachica, hanno l'occasione di far vedere come la loro identità si è effettivamente ri-costruita e ri-configurata dopo la scoperta di avere «una goccia di sangue ebraico». Un altro strumento al quale alcuni degli intervistati ricorrono è quello della conversione. Utilizzata per confermare un'autentica appartenenza al popolo ebraico, più che per motivi strettamente religiosi, la conversione è infatti inclusa nel discorso di autenticità culturale in cui si iscrivono le narrative di questi giovani. La scelta dell'autrice di considerare il primordialismo come lo strumento principale utilizzato dai giovani intervistati per costruire la loro identità ebraica, sembra essere produttiva, dal momento che le permette di comprendere in che modo questi giovani polacchi riescano a rassicurarsi dell'autenticità delle loro origini ebraiche. Resta tuttavia aperta la questione del perché questi giovani adulti, dopo aver scoperto le loro radici ebraiche, abbiano preso la decisione di ricostruire la loro identità come ebraica, e quale valore e significato essi assegnino alla loro ebraicità nella Polonia contemporanea. Sicuramente questo libro apre la via per uno studio più approfondito del posto occupato al giorno d'oggi dalla cultura ebraica in Polonia, e delle modalità con cui l'ebraismo è evocato dai diversi gruppi sociali e politici, in particolare alla luce del grande revival contemporaneo della cultura ebraica in questo paese.

**Ossama, Bahaa Ed-Din (2015). *Kilma Hilwa: Egyptian Colloquial Arabic through Songs. Intermediate Level*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 229 pp.**

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The book *Kilma Hilwa: Egyptian Colloquial Arabic through Songs. Intermediate Level* is an anthology and textbook of Egyptian songs that allows users to explore the realm of Egyptian music, cinema and culture. The author, who teaches Arabic to foreign learners in Cairo, affirms in his introduction that songs are not only didactic tools: “they are more than this, they are the receptacle of a culture (*wi'ā' taqāfa*), people's thoughts and are comparable to poetry and prose”.

According to Bahaa Ed-Din Ossama, the idea of drafting a didactic anthology of Egyptian songs sprang from two motives: the lack of a dedicated textbook and the fact that he wanted to insert songs in his lessons to provide learners with authentic texts composed in Arabic for Arabs. Therefore, *Kilma Hilwa* can be used as a reference textbook by both teachers and students of Egyptian Arabic, which is used by the author in the whole work. In this light, the book is targeted for learners of Egyptian Arabic as a Foreign Language (EAFL), even though the author hopes for its adoption also in Egyptian schools to preserve Egyptian culture, art forms and heritage. The book is organized in 20 units, each corresponding to a song carefully selected among a large musical production that goes from the year 1949 to 2010, covering more than sixty years of Egyptian music. The singers, musicians and songwriters considered are the most disparate: from the prominent Mohammed Abdel Wahab to the superstar Leila Mourad, both singers and actors; from Mohammed Fawzi to the ‘King of the Oud’ Farid al-Atrash; from the world renown Umm Kulthum to the Lebanese Sabah, both awarded with the title of ‘Diva of Music’, etc.

Each unit opens with a comic strip either dedicated to the main topic of a song or evoking a specific verse of the song itself in a humorous way; then the lyrics are presented. The book displays various types of texts, e.g. ‘classical’ Arab pop songs, but also more hybrid ones like Dalida's *Helwa ya baladi* (You're Beautiful, My Country) and the very famous quatrains (*rubā'iyāt*) by Mohammed Mounir. The verses encompass a wide range



of themes. Songwriters describe the romantic love for their sweetheart, kindness, passion; they formulate teachings for kids, but also speak about nostalgia for the country (*ḥanīn*) and the past (*nūstālġyā*), social problems like violence, hardship, poverty, selfishness, etc.

The new vocabulary is then presented, followed by a brief written comment by the author on the song, its lyrics and atmosphere, while also providing information on Egyptian culture, history, cuisine, cinema, television series, theatrical plays, etc. With this in mind, the book focuses the study of the language within Egyptian culture and the country's recent history. The author, in fact, encourages the study of culture and art along with language, a position that links Ossama to other Arab scholars of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL), who stressed the bond between language and culture in the past and maintained that culture is a fundamental aspect in language learning. Hence, when commenting the recent success by Reham Abd Elhakim *Bi-l-waraqā wa-l-qalam* (By Paper and Pen), the author takes advantage of the lyrics stressing certain distinctive cultural traits of Egypt such as hospitality (*diyāfa*) and kindness (*karam*). Through other songs, he highlights some happenings that marked Egypt's recent history, e.g. the Suez Canal nationalization, population explosion, etc. Moreover, at the beginning of each unit, QR codes allow users to quickly find the songs on SoundCloud and their videos on YouTube. Through this, students are encouraged to practice pronunciation, but can also actually watch what has been described in the song's comment, gaining insight on Egyptian cinema, television series and theatrical plays. For instance, the second unit features the song *Alf layla wa-layla* (A Thousand and One Nights), which is both a hit by Samira Said and the theme song of the television series (*musalsala*) starring Naglaa Fathi in the role of Shahrazad, first broadcasted in 1981. This can easily bring students to gain access to other authentic texts that are not only songs but also movies, soap operas, videos on the internet, etc.

After that, observations on lexicon, grammar and – again – culture are given, followed by a series of exercises: e.g. written comprehension, true or false, cloze, multiple choice, grammar check, oral (*munāqaša*) and written production activities. As a whole, the book can be used in classroom practice but also for self-study, even though keys to exercises are not included at the end of the book. A series of appendices (short biographies of singers, musicians and songwriters; English translations of the songs; a short list of references and the links to the songs on YouTube and SoundCloud) concludes the volume.

*Kilma Hilwa* appears a well-structured textbook. Songs are introduced gradually, from the easiest to the most difficult; nonetheless, as Ossama affirms, one can also study them chronologically thanks to the timeline in which songs are organized from the oldest to the most recent.

We should note that this second option is demanding for intermediate

learners of EAFL, since the most difficult texts would be studied randomly and without graduation, thus making the learning process challenging. The text is certainly good, but some improvements could be suggested. Exercise keys for instance would have been a welcome addition. Furthermore, teachers that plan to use *Kilma Hilwa* in class may consider anticipating some information concerning both the lexicon and contents of songs before reading or listening to them. Indeed, pre-input activities that help learners focus on the main topics and issues of songs, such as key words, vocabulary lists and comments, come after the lyrics.

This textbook is an excellent contribution to the field of teaching EAFL and AFL in general: AFL learners are not usually exposed to such a profusion of information and details on culture, which is, nonetheless, fertile ground for their curiosity and vital in quenching their thirst for knowledge. Through this volume students can be nourished with real, lively and highly interesting aspects related to their language of study. Accessing culture through music can engage language learners and make them experience pleasure in learning, which is the best fuel for language progress. This is a most valid reason to recommend this textbook to teachers, students, but also to interested users who aim to teach or learn Egyptian Arabic and Egyptian culture.



**Harowt'yownyan (Haroutyunian), Sona (2005).  
*Hayoc' c'etaspanowt'yan t'eman italakan  
grakanowt'yan mej* (Il tema del genocidio  
armeno nella letteratura italiana). Erevan: EPH  
Hratarakč'owt'yown, 128 pp.**

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Il genocidio degli Armeni ottomani, perpetrato dal governo dei Giovani Turchi negli anni della prima guerra mondiale e subito dopo, è uno dei più tragici eventi del XX secolo. Non è forse il primo genocidio del secolo: anteriore ad esso è quanto meno lo sterminio degli Herero e dei Nama, che ebbe luogo nell'Africa Tedesca del Sud-Ovest (attuale Namibia) tra il 1904 ed il 1907, con modalità che sono state considerate genocidiarie. Quello armeno si prefigura comunque come uno sterminio di massa, tra l'altro collegato in modo inquietante ad avvenimenti simili risalenti alla seconda guerra mondiale, dato che Hitler, il 22 agosto 1939, sul punto di invadere la Polonia, ed intendendo tale invasione come finalizzata all'eliminazione fisica di qualsiasi persona di origine o di lingua polacca, esplicitamente si riferisce ai fatti armeni di oltre vent'anni prima come esempio di massacri rimasti impuniti e dimenticati, e quindi come una sorta di garanzia sull'impunità di cui potranno godere i nuovi sterminatori.

Quello armeno, poi, è un genocidio paradossale: ben noto nel momento in cui si perpetra, per diverse ragioni in seguito diviene oggetto di un silenzio assordante, che di fatto comincia a rompersi solo nel momento in cui se ne celebra il cinquantenario, anche se la sua conoscenza a livello dell'uomo comune avverrà ben più tardi: se se ne cerca una menzione nei libri di storia redatti anche solo un ventennio fa, non si trova nulla o tutt'al più, solo notizie ridotte a poche righe, e, leggendo il lavoro oggetto di questa nostra recensione, abbiamo l'ulteriore conferma del fatto che, in Italia, per un certo numero di persone, anche dotate di un buon livello di cultura, il genocidio è stato 'scoperto' solo recentemente, grazie ai romanzi di Antonia Arslan o alla versione cinematografica della sua *Masseria delle allodole*, ad opera dei fratelli Taviani.

In un'epoca come quella attuale, in cui, finalmente, il genocidio armeno sembra essere largamente, anche se non unanimemente, riconosciuto, il 2015, anno del centenario degli inizi delle stragi, è stata l'occasione

per fare il punto sulla situazione. In quest' ottica si colloca il bel libro di Sona Haroutyunian, che si pone come finalità il presentare ad un lettore armenofono una serie di pubblicazioni originali, redatte in italiano e concernenti questo argomento o comunque ad esso collegate.

In un capitolo introduttivo l'autrice affronta il problema in generale, sottolineando l'apparente paradosso di un dramma che, come dicevamo, risulta essere stato ben conosciuto nel momento in cui si compie, ma poi dimenticato, per mille ragioni di opportunità politica, ma forse anche per la reticenza, psicologicamente comprensibile, da parte degli stessi sopravvissuti, o dei loro discendenti.

Il primo capitolo del libro è dedicato principalmente a memoriali di sopravvissuti, redatti in italiano o comunque in questa lingua pubblicati per la prima volta. Qui l'autrice ci fa sfilare davanti agli occhi figure come il padre Cirillo Zohrabian (Kiwreġ Zohrapean), un sacerdote cattolico arrestato nel 1923 con l'accusa di aver soccorso dei Greci, ma anche e soprattutto di aver cospirato con loro contro il governo ottomano, ed anzi di essersi macchiato di vari crimini e di celare la sua vera identità sotto le mentite spoglie di un ecclesiastico. Siamo al tempo in cui sta per finire, nel sangue, il tentativo di occupazione, da parte della Grecia, di alcune porzioni della Turchia in cui era presente una consistente popolazione greca. Padre Zohrabian è incarcerato, torturato, condannato a morte, ma alla fine riesce a dimostrare chi egli veramente sia. Nondimeno viene esiliato, e, dopo una lunga peregrinazione, approda in Italia. Ed in Italia arriva anche Coren Mirachian (Xorēn Mirakēan): costui della sua famiglia di origine non ricorda nulla, vede uccidere la famiglia armena che lo ha successivamente adottato e, dopo aver vissuto come un servo in una famiglia turca, ed essere passato per diversi orfanotrofi, riesce, in Italia, ad abbracciare la professione di dentista. E con loro altri, come Raffaele Gianighian (Řafayēġ Čanikean) che, dopo diverse peripezie, riesce infine ad arrivare nel nostro paese ed a stabilirvisi, ma quando, nel 1977, torna nel suo Xotorġowr, non vi rinviene più alcuna traccia della presenza armena; o Manug Khanbeghian (Manowk Xanbekean), che nel 1915 si salva semplicemente perché viene a sapere quello che sta succedendo in patria mentre si trova in Italia per motivi di studio, e non ritorna a casa.

Tante storie, tragiche nel contesto in cui avvengono, in qualche misura a lieto fine per i protagonisti, che poi nel paese che li accoglie trovano modo di distinguersi, spesso esercitando libere professioni: un esempio, questo, da non dimenticare.

A questi e ad altri memorialisti l'autrice rende la parola nella loro lingua madre, giovandosi dell'aiuto del mechtarista padre Vahan Ohanean: ritraducendo dall'italiano i loro scritti (solo di uno di questi esisteva già una traduzione in armeno occidentale), la Haroutyunian non utilizza l'armeno orientale, da lei usato per redigere la sua monografia, ma appunto la varietà occidentale, e così il lettore sente questi personaggi parlare nella

loro lingua natale. Un segno di rispetto, questo, che meritava di essere sottolineato.

Il capitolo si conclude con un accenno ad altri mezzi di documentazione del genocidio, come la fotografia, alla scelta del fumetto per raccontarlo (è ciò che fa Paolo Cossi), nonché ad alcuni romanzi che ne trattano. Infine, in una lunga nota, vengono elencati i lavori (memoriali o opere di finzione) che, originariamente pubblicati in una lingua diversa, sono poi stati tradotti in italiano.

Anche questa attività di traduzione ci pare opera meritoria, perché ha permesso che il genocidio armeno fosse progressivamente conosciuto da un numero sempre maggiore di lettori. Qualche volta, però, dobbiamo notarlo, il traduttore di turno si rivela un po' distratto, con effetti che possono risultare abbastanza divertenti. Ci sia concesso di fare un esempio, uno solo. *Nuit turque* di Philippe Videlier (2005<sup>1</sup>) presenta una narrazione del genocidio, con stile romanzesco, ma sulla base dei dati storici. Ad un certo punto del XIX capitolo (a p. 116 dell'edizione uscita nella collana *Folio*) l'autore immagina il trapasso dell'ex sultano, Abdul Hamid, che le sue colpe non destinano certo a «jouir [...] des houris et des odalisques promises à ceux qui suivent à la lettre les préceptes célestes», ma a subire la meritata punizione. Il libro è stato tradotto in italiano (*Notte turca*, 2007<sup>2</sup>), ma a questo punto (98) la traduttrice incorre in un incidente (quale che ne sia la ragione) e parla del «godersi [...] gli uri e le odalische», con quel che segue. E noi immaginiamo questo mondo opportunamente popolato da questi bovini primigeni ormai estinti quaggiù (e non dalle fascinose uri/urì/hurì, come ci saremmo aspettati), e pensiamo che tutto sommato non è andata poi così male ad Abdul Hamid, se ha potuto fare a meno della loro ingombrante compagnia.

Ma torniamo senz'altro alla monografia di Sona Haroutyunian. In essa, il secondo capitolo è dedicato all'opera di Antonia Arslan, a cui si devono una trilogia (*La masseria delle allodole*, 2004;<sup>3</sup> *La strada di Smirne*, 2009;<sup>4</sup> *Il rumore delle perle di legno*, 2015<sup>5</sup>) ed alcuni altri scritti (ad esempio *Il libro di Mush*, 2012<sup>6</sup>) che in misura più o meno preponderante sono collegati al genocidio. La Haroutyunian presenta naturalmente tutta l'attività di questa studiosa e scrittrice, dai primi lavori dedicati alla letteratura italiana dell'ottocento e del novecento, alle traduzioni o curatele del po-

1 Videlier, Philippe (2005). *Nuit turque*. Paris: Gallimard.

2 Videlier, Philippe (2007). *Notte turca*. Roma: Donzelli.

3 Arslan, Antonia (2004). *La masseria delle allodole*. Milano: Rizzoli.

4 Arslan, Antonia (2009). *La strada di Smirne*. Milano: Rizzoli.

5 Arslan, Antonia (2015). *Il rumore delle perle di legno*. Milano: Rizzoli.

6 Arslan, Antonia (2012). *Il libro di Mush*. Ginevra; Milano: Skira.

eta armeno Varujan (Varowžan) e di vari libri concernenti il genocidio, fino alla sua produzione originale di romanzi ad esso collegati. Di fatto però, esaurita questa parte introduttiva, l'attenzione sostanzialmente si concentra sul primo e più noto dei romanzi della trilogia cui sopra accennavamo, *La masseria delle allodole*, tra l'altro tradotto in armeno dalla stessa Haroutyunian. Il libro non è comunque semplicemente riassunto: l'autrice preferisce esporre il modo in cui esso è nato, anche avvalendosi di testimonianze rese dalla stessa Arslan, parlare di come quest'ultima abbia raccolto informazioni dai suoi familiari (di fatto la trilogia è una saga familiare), focalizzare l'attenzione del lettore sul ruolo che talvolta giocano le fotografie, evocate dalla Arslan in una sorta di dialogo con figure del suo passato familiare, soffermarsi su passi particolarmente significativi per la loro poeticità o drammaticità (e talvolta una cosa non esclude l'altra). Sempre sulla scorta del romanzo della Arslan l'autrice non rifugge dal sottolineare il ruolo svolto dalle donne durante il genocidio, né dimentica di notare come quest'opera, grazie al grande successo di cui ha goduto, sia stata il mezzo tramite il quale molti lettori sono venuti a conoscenza di un fatto storico di cui erano ignari, come già ricordavamo in precedenza.

Una sezione del capitolo è dedicata alle traduzioni della *Masseria*, o, per essere più esatti, alle difficoltà riscontrate da alcuni traduttori, non solo o non tanto nel far accettare la pubblicazione del lavoro, quanto piuttosto nell'evitare o comunque nel riuscire a superare un coinvolgimento emotivo forte, che avrebbe portato ad interrompere il lavoro stesso. Qui la Haroutyunian non esita a raccontare anche la sua esperienza personale, offrendoci alcune pagine dense e veramente interessanti.

Non poteva mancare, è ovvio, una sezione dedicata al film che, nel 2007, i fratelli Taviani hanno tratto dalla *Masseria*, e non poteva mancare la constatazione che romanzo e film, pur nella somiglianza di base, non si ricoprono esattamente, dato che diversi sono i generi a cui appartengono e diverse le esigenze e le aspettative di chi ne fruisce. Tuttavia, anche se il film non è semplicemente la trasposizione scenica del romanzo, e sebbene le scelte fatte dai fratelli Taviani non abbiano incontrato unanime consenso, la trasposizione cinematografica è stata un altro modo per far conoscere, ad un pubblico ancor più vasto di quello dei lettori, la realtà storica del genocidio armeno. Il capitolo si conclude con una serie di giudizi su romanzo e film offerti soprattutto da studenti delle università americane di Bridgewater (Massachusetts) e Fresno (California), una sezione, questa, abbastanza lunga e, a nostro parere, meno interessante del resto della monografia.

Leggendo il lavoro della Haroutyunian abbiamo notato alcuni, in realtà veramente pochi, refusi, che certamente non sono di ostacolo alla comprensione del testo. Fra questi annoveriamo senz'altro quanto si legge alla nota 122 di p. 70, in cui i canoni del concilio di Šahapivan vengono datati «K<sup>c</sup>. a. 443 t<sup>c</sup>.», ossia al 443 avanti Cristo. A quanto ne sappiamo,

la data di questo concilio, almeno quella più probabile, è il 444, dell'era volgare ovviamente.

Come dicevamo, la finalità dell'autrice è presentare a lettori armenofoni le pubblicazioni (memoriali e opere d'invenzione) redatte in italiano, o comunque originariamente pubblicate in questa lingua, collegate al genocidio armeno, inserendole nella problematica generale della letteratura relativa al genocidio stesso. Per i principali fruitori della monografia, crediamo che il fine sia stato raggiunto, e questa è la cosa più importante. Per chi però con l'armeno non ha troppa dimestichezza, per il lettore italofono in particolare, i due riassunti, in inglese ed in russo, che completano il volume non sono forse sufficienti: non ci sarebbe dispiaciuto vedere l'italiano presente non solo nel secondo titolo dato al lavoro, ma anche in uno dei riassunti che in esso si trovano.



# Rivista annuale

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