

DRAFT, PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR QUOTE!

**LO STUDIO DELL'ASIA FRA
ANTICO E MODERNO**

*Giornate di studio, 10-12 giugno 2010
Facoltà degli Studi Orientali / Museo di Arte Orientale*

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Lo studio dell'Asia fra antico e moderno. Giornate di studio, 10–12 giugno 2010.

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LE FONTI MANOSCRITTE FRA
ECDOTICA E CODICOLOGIA

Moderatore: Camillo Formigatti

*Giovedì 10 giugno 2010, ore 9.00–13.30
Facoltà di Studi Orientali*

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Lo studio dell'Asia fra antico e moderno. Giornate di studio, 10–12 giugno 2010.

**HISTORY, TEXT AND IMAGES OF A CODEX.
SOME NOTES ON THE MANUSCRIPT VATICANO
ARABO 368 ḤADĪT BAYĀḌ WA RIYĀḌ**

Arianna D'Ottone
Università di Roma “La Sapienza”

The manuscript *Vaticano Arabo* 368, containing the text known as *Ḥadīṭ Bayāḍ wa Riyāḍ*, is, under many respects, an unicum. The text was first edited and translated in Spanish in 1941 by A.R. Nykl and since then some of the 14 miniatures illustrating the text were often published as beautiful plates without any care for the text they referred to.

The codex remained practically unstudied for decades but various articles were recently devoted to it and a new English translation is now available. However the most recent studies dedicated to the manuscript *Vaticano Arabo* 368 miss a number of details, related both to the history of the codex and to the text, and give a questionable interpretation of its first illustration.

My contribution aims, therefore, to reconsider the whole manuscript. Through a codicological analysis of the codex and a careful examination of both text and images, I will point out new details for dating the manuscript and understanding the context of its production.

Last but not least I would like to shed light, as far as possible, on the disregarded history of the codex.

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**FROM MANUSCRIPT TO XYLOGRAPH: IN THE
SEARCH OF STYLISTIC MODELS FOR THE
IDENTIFICATION OF TIBETAN XYLOGRAPHS**

Michela Clemente

Università di Roma “La Sapienza”

The paper I intend to present is not the end result of a research but the starting idea of a project I would like to carry on. I will confine myself to present this idea, after having provided some information on xylographs and having illustrated the current state of study in this field. Finally, I will tell about the method I would like to apply.

The xylographic technique originated in China during the Tang dynasty (618–907) but Tibetan people started to use it widely only after the 14th century. Important printing projects were undertaken starting from the 15th century which was a flourishing period for arts and culture throughout Tibet. The fall of the Yuan dynasty (1280–1368) in the middle of the 14th century had enabled some noble families to grow up locally. Those families became the patrons of the different schools of Tibetan buddhism and of the emerging artists. They initiated the building of monasteries, temples, chapels, *stūpas*, and so on, and also sponsored the printing of the xylographs of the most relevant religious works.

At the time of its introduction, the xylographic technique offered great advantages for several reasons. The texts had remained in manuscript form until that time. Thanks to this new technique Tibetan people were finally able to make as many copies of a text as they wanted, thereby assuring a wide distribution of the works all over the country, and reducing the risk of their loss. Tibetan people consider printings the most reliable and authoritative editions of a work. Before printing a text, they indeed edited and proofread it many times. Furthermore, the abbot of the monastery had to approve it. The promoters of the various projects had numerous aims. They wanted not only to preserve and to spread Buddha's teachings—meritorious deeds according to the Bud-

dhist tradition—but also to increase the prestige of a certain lineage through the printing of the works of that order's renowned masters.

To these days we do not have an accurate picture of the printing projects undertaken in the various areas of Tibet since the introduction of the xylographic technique in the country. One of the reasons that can explain the state of study in this field is the fact that most of the works printed at that time have not survived to the present day in their original editions. One of the possibilities of studying the history of xylographs in Tibet is identifying the different schools on the basis of stylistic criteria of the extant printings. The schools could be identified thanks to the religious figures, to the communities or else to the sponsors whom the artists are associated with. A project based on this criterion has been undertaken a few days ago. The scholars involved in the project are examining the extant xylographs printed in the Mang yul Gung thang area (south-western Tibet) from the 15th century onwards. This project is a relevant starting point for Tibetological studies. In order to progress in this field, it is necessary to do further research. My idea is to study the stylistic typologies and editions of the original xylographs kept at the Tucci Tibetan Fund of the IsIAO Library in Rome. The fund is a mine of information. During his several expeditions to Tibet, the famous scholar and explorer Giuseppe Tucci (1894-1984) selected all the works representing the knowledge of that country. The aim of my project is trying to provide some stylistic models to identify the xylographs of the different printerries. Thanks to the heterogeneity and to the amount of works kept in the Tucci Tibetan Fund, it is possible to trace a detailed—although incomplete—map of the printerries present in the country as well as the printing projects, the historical periods in which these were undertaken, the political situation in the different areas, the sponsored schools, the works considered as most authoritative at a given time, in addition to the historical, political and religious changes over the centuries.

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rGod tshang ras pa sNa tshogs rang grol (1482–1559), *bCom ldan 'das dpal 'khor lo sdom pa'i spyi bshad theg mchog bdud rtsi'i dga' ston ye shes chen po'i sman mchog bzhugs s.ho* (vol. 1460).

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THE DIFFERENCE ENGINE. MANUSCRIPTS,
MEDIA CHANGE AND TRANSMISSION OF
KNOWLEDGE IN PRE-MODERN JAPAN

Mark Schneider
University of Hamburg

The paper I am going to present is decidedly a report on a work in progress. My research is conducted as part of the efforts of the research group Manuscript Cultures in Asia and Africa at Hamburg University. As a research group we aim at a unified approach to manuscripts as encountered in diverse cultures in Asia and Africa, ranging from Ethiopia in the West to Japan in the Far East. While each sub-project displays a different methodological approach—partly pre-determined by the historical facts of the respective manuscript culture—our leitmotifs are, first, a certain stress on the material aspects of our sources and, second, the phenomenon of variance in its diverse manifestations.

The research of the Japanological sub-project, which I am working on, centers on a genre of medieval Buddhist commentary literature, the so-called “direct instructions” (*jikidan*). This genre, several of its representatives having been disseminated both in the form of manuscripts as well as woodblock prints, presents a good opportunity to study the workings of a double media change: from speech to writing, from writing to print.

More specifically, my research concentrates on a group of commentaries on the Lotus Sutra, namely the *Hokekyô jikidanshō* (Selection of Direct Instructions on the Lotus Sutra), the *Ichijō shūgyokushō* (Selection of Gathered Jewels of the Single Vehicle) and the *Hokekyō jurin shūyōshō* (Selection of Gathered Leaves of the Lotus Sutra from a Grove on Eagle Peak). The Lotus sutra was one of the pivotal texts in medieval Japanese Buddhist culture, and as such spawned a plethora of copies and commentaries. The “direct instructions”, at the end of a long commentarial tradition, emerged in the context of doctrinal education at Buddhist centers of learning (*dangisho*).

The underlying questions of my research pertain to problems of text management, the evolution of layout features and paratexts, as well as the production process and its socio-cultural context.

In the introduction, I will first give a short summary of the history of writing and the media in pre-modern Japan (up to 1868). This will be necessary for the general background as well as for an underpinning to some of the problems to be researched.

The second part will deal with the centers of learning (*dangisho*) and the circumstances underlying the production of works of our genre. Furthermore, the general features setting apart the genre from traditional commentary literature will be clarified. I will also try to show that these features, owing much to the oral character of doctrinal transmission, grow very much out of the situation the established schools of Buddhism find themselves in during the latter years of the Japanese middle ages and the paradigm shift of the beginning early modern era.

The third part will present concrete examples of research topics, such as conventions of converting word to script, features of text management or use of colophons and other paratexts.

In the conclusion, I will provide some preliminary results and give you an outlook as to the problems I have to address in the further course of my research.

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**ON SOME OLD NEPALESE MANUSCRIPTS
AND THEIR DATING**

Kengo Harimoto
University of Hamburg

In this presentation I would like to give some insight into the current state of studies with regard to the Nepalese manuscripts. I will focus on some of the oldest manuscripts preserved in or hailed from Nepal. (Apart from manuscripts from Central Asia, they are the oldest manuscripts that witness works written in Indic languages.) I will touch upon some codicological, palæological, and finally philological issues. The aim of the presentation is to illustrate that every issue is interesting in their own light and that none of the issues can be approached without the help of the other considerations... and much more (e.g., epigraphy, astrology, history, etc.).

First I will demonstrate why the manuscripts I am going to introduce are some of the oldest, starting from the oldest manuscript verifiably dated: a manuscript of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā*, dated and confirmed to be completed on 13 April, 878. Then I move on to the oldest dated manuscript: a manuscript of the original *Skandapurāṇa*, dated 19 April, 810. We will also take a look at a manuscript that is similarly dated.

Having seen the oldest dated manuscripts written in Nepal, we examine other potentially similarly old, or even older manuscripts. We then discuss significances of having those old manuscripts: this is going to be philological. And finally we go back to the oldest dated manuscripts and discuss problems that further complicates the evaluation of those manuscripts.

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**CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY: COMPARISON,
WRITTEN TEXT AND BEYOND**

Sara Kaczko

Università di Roma “La Sapienza”

Textual criticism of Greek and Latin texts is based on three key-points: *recensio*, *emendatio* and constitution of the critical edition of a text as closely as possible to the original. The method almost universally applied (rather than, e.g., the “bon manuscript” method, used in other philologies) is the “genealogic method”, which is, in fact, valid for the majority of Greek and Latin text, as long as the editor know the history of the text.

The aim of this panel, in the general framework of the comparison between Classical and Oriental world, and, in the present case, of the possibility of (mutual) advantages from the comparison between the different approaches of textual criticism in Classical and Oriental Philology, I will discuss two aspects in which the traditional method applied in Classical Philology calls for flexibility on the on hand and familiarity with the history of the text on the other.

1. The methodology applied in Classical textual criticism was elaborated for written texts, i.e. for texts which were originally composed in writing and in writing, of course, transmitted. However, in the case of literature orally composed and also orally transmitted for a long time, before it was put down in writing and then transmitted as written text (such as Homer), we should not attribute all the alterations to the manuscript tradition: some modifications are to be explained as generated during the oral transmission.

2. The intervention of the ancient scholars has been limited as some conjectures or variants or was it stronger and determinant as to the shape of classical texts, as we have them? The latter was the case, more often that we usually imagine, especially with the Alexandrian scholars during the Hellenistic times. The

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intentional modification of the text by ancient scholars is strictly interrelated with a crucial aspect, i.e. the familiarity with the history of the Greek language and of the Greek dialects, often neglected in Classical Philology: most Greek poetic and prose compositions had a strong dialectal shape and in more than a situation it is possible that the original dialectal shape of the original texts was modified not only in the sense of a “translation” of the Greek dialects of the Archaic and Classical period into the Common Greek (*koiné*) in use during the Hellenistic and Roman times, when these texts were copied—a very common process—but that ancient editors and scholars deliberately tampered with the linguistic and dialectal shape of the original texts.

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**THE CHOICE OF THE BEST READING: ECDOTIC
METHODS APPLIED TO THE NYĀYAMAÑJARĪ**

Alessandro Graheli
University of Vienna

In July 2009 a project of a critical edition of the sixth chapter of Jayantabhaṭṭa's *Nyāyamañjarī* (FWF project M–1160 G–15) was started in Vienna. The edition presupposes a collation of (so far) nine available manuscripts and of the two relevant editions. The project also entails a cladistic analysis of the collated data.

Among the available manuscripts, a document in Śāradā script, dated 1472 CE, appears for a number of reasons particularly meaningful. Other important manuscripts, in Malayālam script, were found in South India.

How feasible, relevant and useful can stemmatic conjectures going to be in the projected critical work? Why is not better to more simply elect this old and authoritative Śāradā manuscript to the rank of "best manuscript", and proceed to edit it and emend only its most obviously wrong readings with evidences from other witnesses?

After a brief description of this Śāradā manuscript and of the main Malayālam manuscript, some virtues and flaws of both approaches will be discussed in the light of a substantial variant.

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**PENSARE LA LETTERATURA STRUMENTI
EMICI E STRUMENTI ETICI?**

Moderatore: Daniele Cuneo

*Giovedì 10 giugno 2010, ore 14.30–19.00
Facoltà di Studi Orientali*

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**ARABIC LITERATURE AND WESTERN
CANON: NOTIONS OF LITERATURE
ACROSS TIME AND CULTURES**

Elisabetta Benigni

Università di Roma “La Sapienza”

The aim of my speech is to discuss general issues pertaining the critical and aesthetical analysis of Arabic literature. As an introduction, I will try to state the most common difficulties a scholar encounters when approaching Arabic texts. I will highlight the gap between the Western idea of literature and aesthetics and the function and role played by literature in Arabic society in different ages. In particular, in my introduction I will focus on the use of Western categories in the analysis of Arabic literature and, above all, on the problem of defining a canon and an aesthetics of literary works.

Moreover, this excursus is an attempt to offer a general perspective and it is directed to an audience of scholars, who study different geographical areas and epochs, with the aim of stimulating a debate on the common points and differences. After this historical survey, I will continue presenting my personal experience and approach, tackling the field of contemporary Arabic literature. I will refer specifically to the case of Egyptian prison writing, which was the topic of my PhD dissertation

Indeed, the problems related to the past are objectively distant from those addressed by contemporary literature. Nevertheless, I believe that some issues, which are typical of the modern times, namely the influence of Western canon on Arabic literature, are still present in the contemporaneity, even if with different nuances, and are sometimes concealed by the idea of the existence of a worldwide canon.

My methodological proposal stands on the principle that the notion of a “global world literature” must not be indiscriminately applied to all the fields of literature. Thus, the only way to enhance an anti-hierarchical approach is to consciously identify the objective differences between the various socio-cultures linked to production and to its specific reception contexts.

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**THE MAHABHARATA AS A NARRATIVE MUSEUM:
SOME THOUGHTS ON THE POWER OF ANALOGICAL
THINKING IN STUDYING THE GREAT SANSKRIT EPIC**

Adheesh Sathaye
University of British Columbia

It is difficult to think of a work of Sanskrit literature that has been as crucial to early India as the Mahabharata of Vyasa. Without question, this massive, monumental text—at over 100,000 verses the largest epic of the classical world—stands at a watershed moment in the history of Hindu religion, polity, and social practice, for it self consciously supplements the earlier Vedic literature and becomes itself the object of nearly two millennia of later exegesis, expansion, and exhibition. Still, the Mahabharata's fuzzy dating (c. 185 BCE – 300 CE) remains one of the central impediments in the rigorous study of early Indian religious and cultural history. Simply put, because we can't speak precisely about when and where the epic was composed, it has been difficult to speak convincingly of how and why its textual production was of importance in early India. This paper will attempt to circumvent this problem by means of an analogy: much like the modern museum, I suggest, the Mahabharata organized older, 'floating' narratives of the past within the confines of its overarching, master narrative, thereby producing an intellectual break from this older, Vedic past while simultaneously providing an authentic, institutionalized means of experiencing the religious significance of this very past. The paper thus hopes to arrive at a methodological discussion on the value of analogy as a hermeneutic tool in the historical study of early religious texts.

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**HISTORY AS IT IS OR HISTORY IGNORED?
THE SEARCH FOR A DEFINITION OF
HISTORICAL FICTION IN MEIJI JAPAN**

Luca Milasi

Università di Roma “La Sapienza”

Meiji Japan's Historical novel: a lack of definitions

When, having received a fellowship grant from my home institution, I was officially entrusted with the task of producing a dissertation upon the historical fiction of Meiji Japan, no particular objections came up to my mind in the first place. I felt that it should be a simple, descriptive task. Literature in the Meiji period (1868-1912) has been a subject of such a variety of studies that I erroneously figured it out easy to develop my own view on the subject of “history and fiction” relying on such an impressive flowing of words. Yet, I started to feel a little anxious when I could not locate a proper, clear, straightforward definition of “historical fiction” not only in the secondary literature about Meiji Japan, but even in more general studies on literary genres in general. Having taken for granted that “historical fiction” meant fiction which to some extent relied on historical reference, the very subject of “history and fiction” become “history vs. fiction” as I tried to classify all the original materials I had gotten hold of as belonging to one or the other of these two. At this stage, I simply happened to lack a necessary framework, that of a systematic methodology. With no better understanding of how to solve the riddle, I turned to using the digital archives I had scanned several times for specific items in search of a more general understanding of the subject of my increasingly ambiguous dissertation plan. Trying to find my way across more “globally oriented” bulletins such as “History and Theory”, “The American Historical Review”, and the like, which were, in any case, quite a bunch of unusual references for me, I sensed I was starting to gain a somehow “scientific” notion of what writing “historical” fiction implied, though the latter, the word “fiction”, did not seem to fit in this somewhat objective frame.

During my early training as a scholar of Japanese literature, I had in fact mostly devoted myself to overcome the manifold problems which popped up constantly while accessing original texts, so that I apparently had had no time at all to focus on a more scientific, theory-based approach to literary genres as a whole. The very concept of literary theory, in the brilliant reflections of Professor Alastair Fowler (1985), had never appeared so monolithic even to the eye of a technician such as myself, and in this respect, I could sense that literary theories in Japan, whether implicit or explicit, had for so long been astray from an “European” standard, if there ever be one, that I felt the only concept I could borrow freely from Fowler’s normative study was the plain admission of the uncertainties of the grounds on which to base a “theory” of literature itself he had touched upon in his preface.

Yet, the reasons why I had so readily agreed on carrying on a research project on the subject of historical fiction in Japan were still there: apart from theory, there were, in fact, a conspicuous bunch of works by various authors, some of which had gained the status of great Japanese writers in the meantime, that could easily be ascribed to the “historical” genre, in its broader sense. Actually, the tradition of writing fiction over historical occurrences has been so florid from the time of the Meiji Restoration onwards, as to welcome an impressive collection of narratives variously based on, or inspired by, historical facts. Starting from the '50s and with Inoue Yasushi’s popular contributions, “Historical fiction” (Rekishī shōsetsu) through the '50ties and well up into the '90ties had put forth some of the most revered writers of fiction, all of which had claimed themselves advocates of a revival of Japan’s (lately, even Ancient Rome’s) past, so that more than a little of Japan’s best sellers of all times were classified by either critics or general public as “historical fiction”; compared to some other countries, the trend of sprinkling “artistic” endeavours with references to history had a considerable place even in popular culture, including television dramas, manga and *anime*. Where did it sprung out from then, was the task I felt I had to accomplish.

So, adopting temporarily the most obvious definition of “historical” fiction as a fiction based on, or inspired by, historical evidence, I applied to locating the best examples of Meiji Japan’s fiction that could fall

into this general, umbrella category of “retelling things of a documented time in the past” and to discuss them singularly. By that time I had not yet realized the importance of Chinese historical tradition that Japan had inherited, and so, apart from this definition, which I had always perceived as totally unsatisfactory, I tackled one more question that seemed crucial, that of verifying to which extent were those supposedly writing “historical” fiction actually respectful of historical evidence, which would, in turn, lead me back to China’s tradition of recording things past. Working out the sources revealed, in earnest, a painstaking experience, as I found out that, apart from the obvious problem represented by having to search for, sometimes even guess, documented sources for every single piece of literary work, I could perceive that even the greatest literates of the period, traditionally revered as the “founders of a new, modern, Japanese literature”, though largely informed by Western thought and models, had a scarcely recognizable common concept of “fiction” at all. Thus the fonts more often than not provided more plot than the author himself would deliver in his or her own elaboration.

The Meiji Historical Novel as seen by a “Classicist”: Rohan’s attempt at “non-fiction”.

One of the most revered classicists of his age, although little known outside Japan, the novelist and exegete Kōda Rohan (pseudonym of Kōda Shigeyuki, 1867-1947), offered a striking example in that respect. Rohan’s fiction had not received, besides two or three noted exceptions, due attention by Western scholars, neither had he been translated and as widely read as some of his contemporaries; the difficulty of his prose could account for much of this, as Rohan’s prevalent mood of expression lied in a pastiche clearly moulded after Chinese and Japanese classics, of which language Rohan had a mastery command. A closer look at what had been termed the literary output of a “nostalgic” nevertheless suggested me that the respect professed by Rohan for Chinese and Japanese antiquity had not, in any case, prevented the author from innovating the concept of “fiction” with original choices of content. Reading what had been classified as Rohan’s masterpiece of historical fiction, the “novel” *Unmei* (Destiny, 1919), which proved on his part a

fairly unsurpassed success of both critics and public, I ran into so many personal remarks, consistently breaking the main plot, that I began to question whether the author had intended to write a novel at all. In spite of the remarks of well-known authorities such as Donald Keene, claiming *Unmei* to be a masterpiece of fiction, I counted regularly passages in which the author openly explained his usage of the sources, that I concluded *Unmei* portrayed such a definite identity of his author as to elicit the more satisfactory definition of “critical historiography”. The essay has both the quality of a novel and the critical discussion of the sources which pertains to a domain largely alien to that of fancy. The story herein deals with the struggle for imperial succession in the early Ming dynasty, and is based entirely on Chinese historical records. Once in a while I had no trouble locating them, as the author declares every reference throughout the work, pushing himself to the point of justifying his inclusion of sources he himself declared apocryphal, for the sake of artistic purposes. Thematically, the work deals, as has been promptly noted, with questions concerning inevitability, justice, and the conceptions of fate (i.e. whether there is a preordained destiny, which is a clear rendition of some important traditional Buddhist conceptions). Yet, when I managed to sort through the author’s elegant, erudite, and extremely difficult style, *Unmei* seemed to contain much more than that. Published along with the first issues of a newly edited magazine, *Kaizō* (Reconstruction), the work, combining a secure erudition with such personal reflections on historical sources, seems to elicits at every page the opinion of even the least literate of readers. It is, in other words, a historical workshop, brilliantly conducted by an informed writer, eager to make passionate connoisseurs of Chinese history out of his readers, a task that Rohan accomplishes through the overtly didactic remarks he carefully intertwines his plot with. Now, this is a point of major interest over which I shall return later on, but it could be that writers of the Meiji period such as Rohan and Ōgai could have been experimenting with a literary genre that is a precursor of the “non-fiction” novel well earlier than their most noted Western counterparts.

The first important Critic of the fiction of Meiji Japan: Shōyō's attempt at theorization.

Remarkable as it may have been, Rohan's late effort had come out seven years after the splendour of Meiji Era literary achievements had faded, at a stage in which the author himself had wilfully withdrawn from the literary scene for almost a decade; neither would he regain the status of a mainstream writer for the twenty years to come, which Rohan spent delivering mostly academic essays on various subjects (mostly classical literature or Buddhist thought), all of which retained some of the flavour of his attempt at non-fictional popular historicism in the aforementioned *Unmei*. Having been presented with so diverse texts, then, there was for me obviously one problem to deal, that of a systematic theorization about Japanese historical fiction. Now, what I had previously adopted as a “prose in which are retold things of the actual past” had been a vague definition that I could recall having read somewhere in the painstakingly complex essays put forth by Japanese literary magazines of the 1870's and 1880's, which were traditionally considered the cradle of all new ideas that were introduced into Japan mostly from the West. The uncertainties about this definition had puzzled me ever since I had reverted to a critic I had almost neglected in the first place, Tsubouchi Shōyō (Yūzō, 1859-1935). Though not much of a writer himself, Shōyō had been credited by literary historians of both Japan and the West as having exerted a profound influence over the reform of fiction in Meiji Japan, mostly through his seminal essay *Shōsetsu shinzui* (The Essence of the Novel), which he had begun publishing in 1885 and through 1886.

The author, whose essays deal at some point with history in fiction, had been presented by the English translator of his early work, Nanette Twine, as:

...a literary critic, translator of Western literature, and novelist who had a profound influence on the young writers of Meiji Japan, most notably Futabatei Shimei (1864-1909). He began to formulate his ideas for changing the face of Japanese fiction while a student of Western literature at Tokyo University. *Shōsetsu Shinzui* (The Essence of the Novel), published in nine parts between September 1885 and April 1886, was an attempt to

present a then radical view of the true novel, drawn from study of Western novels, as an art-form in its own right, and, by so doing, to expose the deficiencies of the Japanese novel and open the way for its reform.

Though Twine's statement that Shōyō had been successful in exposing the deficiencies of the Japanese novel up to this point readily met my agreement, I was startled as I read through her English rendering of the text (and constantly comparing with the original text of *Essence of the Novel*) whenever I noted the vagueness of the author's theses, and the many hindrances to a straightforward view of literature that sprung out of his archaic vocabulary and wide reliance on classical syntax. Now, Shōyō's essay came up to a point in which a thoroughly reform of the very medium of literature, written language, had not been carried out yet in Japan (the first proposals were bound to be delivered some years later). That given, Professor Kornicki's (1982: 26) remarks that "it goes without saying that *Shosetsu shinzui* is of course a major work of literary criticism but this is quite separate from the matter of its contemporary impact and influence, which may have been as great as it usually claimed but which have never been documented" definitely hit the point in my opinion. Although it has been customary in both Japan and the West to adopt a retrospective approach and treat Shōyō's first important essay as an epoch-making work largely responsible for the development of the "modern novel" in Meiji Japan, I could not find any evidence of that in the documents of that period (cf. Kornicki 1982: 25). The essay in itself, though impressive in some respect, showed its limitations in terms of constructing a theorization of a "modern Japanese novel". It is significant that Shōyō would be puzzled at the realistic depictions of actual life that Futabatei Shimei put forth for his novel *Ukigumo* (*Floating Clouds*, 1887-89), which Futabatei had clearly derived from his extensive readings in contemporary Russian fiction. Yet, Shōyō is usually referred to as the critic who laid down the theoretical framework in which Futabatei's concrete attempt at recreating the novel genre would be rooted. In fact, it appeared to me as well as to more eminent (and ponderate) critics such as the aforementioned Kornicki, that Shōyō had been mistaken for an advocate of psychological introspection as a ground feature

for fiction, whereas he had been mainly concerned with rejecting the didacticism of some of Japan's literary legacy and reaffirming another principle that was a clear feature of Japanese's fiction of the past, that of adherence to a realistic depiction of "human feeling" (*ninjō*), by which, if we have to give credits to the few novels which Shōyō himself produced shortly after *Essence*..., the critic intended mainly romantic love, in its platonic sense as well as sensual implications; apart from that, we find only love-related descriptions of feelings, such as longing, and desire for one another. Though the shift from depicting behaviours to that of portraying the characters' inner feeling is evident in Shōyō's prose, this is still a far cry from the innovation that Futabatei introduced with his heavy reliance on psychological introspection of the characters. In fact, the few novels that Shōyō had produced in the four years after his first important essays were criticized by his contemporaries as being a failure, with no sufficient introspection on the part of their characters, and this, along with the mixed feelings aroused by his contemporary Futabatei's effort to put forth his novel, may account for Shōyō's decision to quit writing fiction altogether in 1889. From that point onwards Shōyō went on as a literary critic of relevance, and in fact produced a series of essays which expanded his views on literature, carrying on some important reflections on historical fiction among others. At the time of *Essence of the Novel*, Shōyō's indebtedness to the flourishing tradition of fiction of the preceding Tokugawa period (1600-1868) was still evident in his advocacy of *ninjō* as an aesthetic principle of the utmost importance in fiction. Particularly when it comes to discuss in detail the style suitable for the so called "new" Japanese novel, Shōyō's reliance on the fiction of popular *gesaku* writers such as Tamenaga Shunsui (1790-1844) becomes striking: though a student in English literature, Shōyō almost exclusively discusses the style of Tokugawa period fiction, to the point that one author harshly criticized for his didactic view of literature, Takizawa Bakin (1767-1848), is clearly depicted as a novelist that Shōyō admires nonetheless. When discussing into some detail the subgenre of historical fiction, Shōyō only briefly cites Walter Scott, which he states to be a great master of this genre (see the Appendix to read excerpts). In challenging the theoretical grounds of Meiji Japan's most revered work

of criticism, I had happened to question not only the definition of a historical fiction, but also the very concept of fiction in its own regard. The traditional definition of Meiji literature as a turning point in Japan's cultural history that I had been raised on as a scholar did merge altogether into a potpourri in which Tokugawa fiction, traditionally regarded as the product of a culture that developed mostly on its own, exerted considerable influence on what would otherwise be called Japan's Westernized, modern literary output.

Shōyō did actually make a point when he dealt with historical fiction in this and subsequent essays; on the specific problems of historical fictions he produced two more papers, "On Historical Fiction" and "The Dignity of Historical Fiction" (both published on the Daily Yomiuri in October 1895), as well as an "Again on History as It is" of closely related interest. His views here are clearly derived from his former training as a scholar of English literature, and he seems quite at pains dealing with the supposed "historicism" of writers such as Bakin, which used to mix social depictions of the past with more overtly contemporary elements. His critical body of literature is, as a whole, more a useful tool for evaluating the extent to which some important theories and models of the historical novel circulated in early modern Japan than it is for gaining an overall valid knowledge about the features of the new literature that was about to circulate shortly thereafter. In addition to that, Shōyō's advocacy of the dignity of the novel actually fostered the collapse of the old conception that "fiction" (a term that had been promptly translated by its Sino-japanese equivalent, *shōsetsu*, literally "little discourse" with a pejorative nuance) was not a proper medium of high literary expression. In this respect, Shōyō was the first advocate of the novel form as the best expression of literary concerns.

Mori Ōgai's Ideals of the Novel form: Historical Fiction as an alternative to Japanese Naturalism.

One of the most striking feature of Meiji Japan's literary scene is, I guess, that the trend of adopting "all things western" came to be generally very popular up to the end of the 1890's, some thirty after the opening of Japanese ports, yet, those who were regarded as the pre-eminent writers

of the period would engage, as soon as the 1895's, in restoring, by means of their literary criticism, the importance of Japanese's peculiar identity. The same task they would subsequently undertake in the field of original fiction from the period 1905-onwards. This identity had its core at the country's cultural past, and it mostly expressed itself through history. Important writers such as Rohan, Natsume Soseki, perhaps the most appreciated Meiji writer abroad, and Mori Ōgai, another interesting intellectual which I shall return to shortly, had never yielded uncompromisingly to the trends of the West. Great modern Japanese writers did share a common interest in both the Western and the Eastern literary tradition; it would be the exceptional quality of their education, which encompassed both the old curriculum based on Chinese and Japanese classics as well as the innovations of Western thought, that would enable them to write their own works deriving themes from both the past and the present. In this respect it could be that the Meiji literati did with Western literary models what they had previously done with their Chinese counterparts: they took the aspects that suited most their own spirit, leaving the rest virtually untouched upon. This is also the first time in Japanese history in which the theories of Positivism informed the intellectuals, enabling them to apply to historical documentation the rigorous proceedings of modern philology.

Indeed, this state of affairs elicited a more general consideration on my part: that all evolutions of Meiji fiction, as varied as they may be, need to be thoroughly dealt with and encompassed within a bigger frame in order to understand the core meaning of the literature of Meiji writers. This attention to the “big picture” was the element which partially fulfilled my poor understanding of methodology, and also, I guess, took me one step further from the more technical side of the question towards a better understanding of the overall significance of literary research.

The cultural dimension of Meiji literature showed its close connections with a more sociologically-oriented aspect when I tackled the wide reliance on historical sources that informed the literature of one more important writer, the Japanese translator, essayist and novelist Mori Ōgai (Rintarō, 1862-1922).

Though one of my first acquaintances from the times of my Bachelor dissertation, Ōgai has always been a complex entity to deal with. Born in Shimane, the son of a doctor serving in the Tsuwano Clan, he had graduated from the University of Tokyo in 1881, and subsequently become an army surgeon. He was officially sent to Germany (Leipzig, Dresden, Munich and Berlin) to study hygiene from 1884 to 1888. During this time, he had also developed an interest in European literature which fostered an impressive body of translations from Western literature he produced over the years. Meanwhile, he also attempted to revitalize modern Japanese literature and published his own literary journals (the first of which is *Shigarami zōshi*, 1889–1894).

Although Mori did little writing from 1892, before resuming original fiction, he continued to edit a literary journal (*Mezamashi gusa*, 1892–1909). He also produced translations of the works of Goethe, Schiller, Ibsen, Hans Christian Andersen. While criticism was clearly one of the main concerns of Meiji intellectuals, the first attempts at it revealed all the limitations implied by the conflicting aesthetics of Tokugawa fiction that still helded their own against newly imported European models in the minds of Japanese intellectuals. It is in the debates (*gappyō*) recorded and published on literary magazines of the mid-Meiji period that Ōgai instituted a modern literary criticism, less based on the aesthetic theories of Karl Von Hartmann that had informed his early attempts. The latter included a 1889 essay, “On reading the recent Theories on the Novel”, in which Ōgai repeatedly borrowed from and quoted Shōyō’s critical works. In discussing his early literary theories, both Shōyō and Ōgai had shown a tendency to employ terms clearly derived from the Classical tradition in a somewhat broader sense; in the debates of the 1890’s, the authors made one step further towards a new concept of fiction in that they focused on actual works rather than theory. Yet, as is clearly shown in Ōgai’s remarks on Chinese theatre (see the Appendix), the focus was still on the rejection of “didactic” fiction and the acceptance of the “human feeling” as the core of literary portrayal. In the meanwhile Ōgai, whose early fiction had included the popular “German trilogy” which recounted for his fondness of German Romanticism, had temporarily stopped writing fiction in the period from 1892

to 1905. When he reverted to fiction he produced a series of short stories, three novels and, from 1912 onwards, a collection of historical short stories that would later come to be regarded as some of the highest achievements of this era.

Ōgai is traditionally regarded as having provided the best reflections on writing historical fiction in his well-known, although extremely short essay *Rekishi sono mama to rekishi banare* (*History as it is and History ignored*, January 1915).

Though apparently an anecdotic reflection in the manner of the comments Rohan himself would sprinkle his masterpiece *Unmei* with more than twenty years later, *History as it is* and *History ignored* indeed proved the true harbinger of a clear definition of historical fiction in my attempt at reconstructing this complex part of Japanese literary history. I had to look at the big picture once more this time, as the simple definitions advocated by Ōgai, to adopt *History as it is* (*Rekishi sono mama*) or departing from it (*Rekishi banare*), and his profession of fondness for the former, did in fact echo Shōyō's somewhat unsatisfactory definition of the novel as the genre depicting human nature "as it is" (*ari no mama*); now if I wanted to read Ōgai's historical literature as a whole, I should avoid doing what critics had done up to that point, that is, ascribing all of his stories to one of the two aforementioned categories: there could in fact be a case of an apparently "fictional" attempt at history which revealed based on sound, though undeclared written sources, such as in *Kanzan Jittoku* (*Han Shan and Shi Te*, 1916), which if we have to take literally its author's words, should be no more than the record of an oral legend. Or one could happen to read a short story such as *Gyogenki* (*Yu Xuanji*, 1915), which, in spite of the almost complete reliance on the few extant written sources that the author openly listed at the end of the novella as "references" (*sankō bunken*), clearly departed from historical evidence in the reconstruction of two or three key episodes. More often than not, the material Ōgai employed for his historical fiction, which maintains by the way an overall impressive degree of accuracy, was rearranged and occasionally provided with brief statements clarifying the author's personal interpretation of the truth within history. It is obviously a truth that the author regards as more valuable than the "half-

truth” of fictional characters portrayed in the psychological novels he had praised over a decade earlier. In the case of undeclared sources for his historical reconstruction, the process Ōgai applied could be somehow similar to that of any gifted writer at least partially unaware of his models when writing original works. Apart from “History as it is” or “History ignored” then, I had to deal with the inbetweens that ultimately convinced me to relinquish my generic definition of “historical novel” and instead trying to find an answer to the question the question, what as to the *significance* of Ōgai’s historical fiction. This would apply to all the writers I had analyzed up to that point: given the fact that not all of the public had a ready access to the sources, did the overall value of these historical works of fiction lie in having the readers check every reference, which would result in the less learned be left behind, or was it not a matter of “interpreting” history to the benefits of today’s readers, that these authors were eager to put forth.

By the time I was convinced that Ōgai had laid down some of the best examples of interpreting history by means of a novels, the significance of Meiji Japan’s historical reference in literature had become clear enough in spite of my limited knowledge and access to the sources. The “big picture” of Meiji Japan’s peculiarities had come to include a pivotal element, that of criticizing the mainstream of Japanese literary trends.

Earlier on had Shōyō stated, though in a rather clumsy fashion, that the model of the psychological novel which had its most important parallels in Western masterpieces was the best model of “novel” to date. To the point where Ōgai’s interest shifted to history, there were the so-called Japanese “naturalist” school (*shizenshugi*) had temporarily gained a hegemonic literary position, stealing the scene with a “Confession” literature which had gained its heights in 1906-10. The “Naturalists” arouse frequent scandals by confessing sometimes lurid autobiographical details in a self-declared attempt to show the “truth” of the individual self. The bare prose of the confessional I-novel, preferring truth to artistry even in linguistic expression, had been heavily criticised by more self-consciously artistic writers such as Rohan and Ogai, which obviously didn’t agree to a conception of “didactic” literature either. Ogai’s *Vita Sexualis*, of 1909, was written as a parody of the Naturalists’ obsession

with sex and self-indulgent anguish. By the time Ōgai' put forth his historical fiction, the debate was heated over the value of the novel, and the main point it revolved around was, should literary representation be moral. This, in Ōgai's view, was a clear backtrack from the new grounds that the new Japanese novel had uncovered. Japanese "Naturalists" had apparently turned the theories of Zola, which they had known mostly by second hand, into a rather bizarre form of confession, namely the aforementioned "I-novel" (*Watakushishōsetsu* or *shishōsetsu*) and they were claiming it artistry. The epitome of this "literary trend" Ōgai had so harshly criticized even in his earlier attempts at criticism.

In Ōgai's view, the Japanese Naturalists, while claiming to be respectful of actual truth, had mistaken "actual truth" for the truth of their ego which they had blatantly put forth in their novels. This was not the intent of Zola's naturalistic description, which in turn, Ōgai had judged as lacking one more important ingredient to make it a form of art, which is reverence to Beauty. As soon as 1889, Ōgai had exerted that a literature with an artistic purpose should serve both truth and beauty. The model offered by the psychological novel had been the first endeavour to counterfeit the ugliness of the Japanese Naturalists' earlier attempts at reforming fiction their way (though to be fair to them I have to admit that the best examples in the genre had yet to come at this point). It is my opinion that Ōgai's historical fiction came out as a true alternative to the "I-novel" when the psychological novel proved an unsuitable model as regards to adherence to "truth". Thus, true "dignity", in Ōgai's view of the novel genre, was found in reverting to history, as a means of rethinking both the present and the past. This was a view that Ōgai maintained when he adopted the model of Chinese historical chronicles upon which he, and most intellectuals of his era, had based their first literary training. Ōgai's sudden shift from historical fiction to historiography, in his late biographies of Tokugawa period men (*shiden*) showed a style closely resembling that of the great Chinese chronicles, though based on modern syntax, and this shift would be echoed in Rohan's scientific approach to historical materials; by reverting to complete truth both authors could be assumed to have welcomed the last incarnation of their ideals as literary journalists who had, after many an

attempt at artistry, relinquished any will to revere beauty; yet, it is the beauty of truth that they sensed in their shift from contemporary portrayal of fictional characters to faithful depiction of past living models of their cultural history. This beauty was the same that had shaped the ancient Chinese chronicles, from the time of Sima Qian (ca. 145 BC – 86 BC) onwards: these represented not only some of the most important historical documents, but also the true incarnation of both beauty and truth, retaining an unsurpassed literary quality. This overall conception of historical literature is overtly suggested in “History as it is and history ignored”, whose informal tone should not lend to a superficial overlooking of the powerful remarks it contains:

There has been considerable discussion, even among my friends, as to whether or not my recent works that make use of actual historical figures can be considered as fiction. At a time when there has been no shortage of scholars who, under the aegis of an authoritarian ethic, insist that novels should be written in some particular fashion or other, rendering a judgment becomes rather difficult. I myself recognize in the works I have written considerable differences in the degree to which I have taken an objective point of view about my own material. (...) The kind of work I am now writing does differ from the fiction of other writers. I have not in my recent historical works indulged in the free adaptation and rejection of historical fact common to this type of composition. (...) Why? My motives are simple. In studying historical records, I came to revere the reality that was evidenced in them. Any wanton change seemed distasteful to me. This is one of my motives. Secondly, if contemporary authors can write about life “just as it is” and find it satisfactory, then they ought to appreciate a similar treatment of the past. [Italics mine].

Questions of literary workmanship aside, my works differ in a variety of ways from those of others, but the real basis for all those differences lies, I believe, in what I have written above (see Rimer and Dilworth 1991: 180).

In conclusion, I have to be honest in admitting that, to this day, my reflections upon the florid tradition of historical fiction in modern Japan do definitely leave some important questions unanswered; while this is

may account for my personal limitations as a scholar and researcher, I nonetheless do hope to make my fellow researchers think differently about the significance of Japan's fondness for historical literature: a phenomenon that may be a timely reminder that literature needs to be assessed not only by the usual criteria applied—plot, characters, setting, theme, and tone—but also by cultural considerations. In my opinion, then, the search for a definition of “historical fiction” in a specific moment of Japanese's cultural history, that of Meiji Japan, should both encompass pre-existing definitions of “historical novel” that entered Japan through the open gates of the Modernization, and give proper due to the cultural heritage and specific conditions that arouse within the framework of Japan's specific literary achievements; apart from theories, it is of the utmost importance to thoroughly examine the best examples of this kind of literature with special regards to the overall picture that they are part of. In the specific case of Meiji Japan's historical fiction, it's main purpose seems to be to perform a task as manifold as the variations of historical fiction itself; Meiji's historical fiction may have been ultimately deemed as a tool for both preserving the past and correcting superficial trends of today's literary fashions.

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**BALANCING BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: APPROACHES
TO TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION
OF TIBETAN MEDICAL DIDACTIC POETRY
AND ITS COMMENTARIAL TRADITION**

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University of Manchester

The analysis and evaluation of texts that come from ethnically, linguistically and religiously different cultures pose a number of problems before researchers. On the one hand, it is necessary to step out from conceptual tools of one's native culture and to immerse oneself into foreign culture, in order to be able to understand its cultural constructs as interconnected whole, in relation with other elements. On the other hand, researchers should be able to look for components that can be valid across cultures and to interpret foreign cultural constructs in their own languages and, most importantly, in terms that are intelligible in their native culture. However, it is not always easy to become free from conceptions imposed by a native culture or to fathom correctly a foreign culture in order to be able to switch between etic and emic approaches, which inevitably become intertwined with each other. Combining these two approaches may be appropriate for the study of complex cultural constructs such as Asian medical traditions, which has a number of different facets (written texts, oral traditions, popular believes, contemporary practices etc).

The study of Tibetan medical texts can serve as an instructive example of how these two approaches can be successfully employed for the study of Asian medical systems and, more generally, cultural traditions. Using both approaches interchangeably enables scholars, on the one hand, to understand Tibetan medical concepts as they have been developing in the native cultural environment without disregarding or overlooking the complex connections between Tibetan medical tradition and other aspects of Tibetan culture. On the other hand, it is essential to detect universal elements that can also be found in other cultures, not

only to be able to successfully employ the Tibetan medicine in recipient cultures but also to improve understandings of certain concepts in the native culture. For instance, in the study of Tibetan texts, which provide formulas of medical prescriptions, emic approach help to understand the choice of particular herbs and minerals in Tibetan prescriptions inside the Tibetan medical paradigm. By contrast, etic approach enables scholars to find ways of employing these prescriptions nowadays globally, by obtaining a wider picture across cultures. This allows us, eventually, to acquire deeper insight into reasons behind the choices of Tibetan pharmacopoeia. This is, however, a task, which is only achievable for a group of scholars from different fields—Tibetologists, biomedical and Tibetan doctors, pharmacologists, historians of medicine and many others—uniting their efforts.

Tibetan medicine emerged in the seventh century as synthesis of several medical traditions. Although some of the aspects of healing were passed on via oral sources, the bulk of Tibetan medical knowledge was transmitted via written texts. The oral tradition existed foremost (i) in families, where medical knowledge was transferred from father to son or (ii) in lineages, which were sustained through apprenticeship. The literary tradition has been developing inside monastic schools and was part of curriculum in monastic universities, until the first lay medical institute was opened in the nineteenth century. Thus, from its very beginning, Tibetan medicine was connected with Buddhism, from which it borrowed its main explanatory concepts. These include, in particular, three poisons, which cause disbalances in our bodies and minds, and their affect on the three constituents (humors), which when disturbed eventually cause illnesses; as well as ethical aspects of healing. Note, especially, that, within the Mahayana Buddhist system of values monastic rules prescribed monks to heal sick people, since unhealthy bodies and minds are incapable of enlightenment.

The main manual for all students of Tibetan medicine irrespective to which school of Buddhism they belong was and still is *rGyud-bZhi* (Four tantras). This text has also been in the focus of European scholarship. *rGyud-bZhi* has a well-structured concise organisation and is created specifically for learning by heart. Condensed character of its content

does not suggest elaborate explanations for the topics it discusses. Some of the topics are presented by mere listing of most important questions without going into further details. Such concise texts were common in Tibet: many of Buddhist sutras or philosophical treatises were composed in similar compact form, also being intended for learning by heart. Condensed form of text resulted in its ambiguity, allowing for multiple interpretations. Students normally have detailed written commentaries at their disposal and also receive oral explanations from their teachers in accordance with their monastic and teachers' lineages. Each school produced their own commentaries on *rGyud-bZhi*. Such practice allowed interpreting medical and philosophical ideas expressed in *rGyud-bZhi* in conformity with different traditions.

When studying Tibetan medical texts, one should bear in mind that they are part of a living tradition and are still being used, evaluated and commented upon inside the culture that produced them. Thus, researchers should decide which conceptual grid they want to follow. Should it be a study of one particular Tibetan medical school at certain historical period, when the text was written? or shall researcher analyse the text across all schools both synchronically and diachronically, paying attention to past and (if relevant) present debates around it. Scholars should also be familiar with the history of ideas concerning a particular text and Tibetan medical tradition in general.

Another problem with which researchers of Tibetan medicine are faced is that, nowadays, Tibetan medicine is practiced not only in its indigenous areas—that is, in Tibet or Central Asia, as well as in the Tibetan refugee communities in India,—but also worldwide, in the USA and many European countries. This creates a unique situation of cross-cultural influence and adaptation, as Tibetan medicine is being glocalised across the globe by recipient cultures in a variety of hybrid forms.

The condensed character of the medical texts, which are unintelligible without accompanying verse-by-verse commentary, the use of specific terminology (which is not comprehensible even to the native speakers without proper training), and the frequent omission of words and even of whole sentences allegedly deducible from context or preceding text, pose a plethora of problems for researchers and makes trans-

lating into foreign languages extremely difficult. Needless to say that such task not only requires from translators excellent knowledge of the Tibetan language but also the acquaintance with the Tibetan medical tradition and Buddhism as well as with the Tibetan hermeneutical techniques—an elaborate system of hermeneutical procedures and devices developed for commenting and interpreting texts. It is, therefore, not surprising that early translations and renderings of *rGyud-bZhi* were full of mistakes and misinterpretations of important Tibetan medical concepts, which often resulted in underestimation of Tibetan medicine in the eyes of its first explorers. Though the study of Tibetan medicine began as early as in the eighteenth century, when Italian Jesuit monk, Ippolito Desideri, published his first general account of Tibetan medical system, our contemporary knowledge of Tibetan medicine still have many lacunas. Particularly regrettable is the lack of detailed analytical studies and commented translations of several basic Tibetan medical texts and their commentaries.

The most important problems emerging before researchers of Tibetan medicine include: (i) how to translate a text without losing its subtext, which carries many implications of the culture inside which it was produced? and, at the same time, (ii) how to minimise and, if possible, to avoid undesirable associations/connotations in the recipient languages? For instance, it is unclear what is the adequate translation of the Tibetan terms for the three constituents (humors). The terms humors, bile, phlegm and wind, which are used today, on the one hand, carry different connotations in the European cultural context and, on the other hand, do not fully convey the meaning of the corresponding Tibetan terms. One of the possible solutions to this problem is to leave Tibetan terms without translation and complement them with extensive explanations giving, where appropriate, references to and examples of similar concepts in other cultures.

Another difficulty is posed by the limits of possible interpretation of Tibetan medical concepts. Some researchers (which may, at the same time, also act as practicing doctors) believe that Tibetan medical system is a method, which one can apply and interpret differently in various cultures. There are also attempts to reinterpret (and, in fact, to reshape)

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Tibetan medicine from standpoints of European medical tradition. For instance, diseases that, according to Tibetan doctors, are caused by spirits, can be explained in terms of nervous disorders; some problematic Tibetan medical concepts that do not readily fit into European scientific framework can be cast off. This is, however, a mistake of a researcher of a foreign (in particular, oriental) cultural tradition, which should be strongly avoided.

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**“THINKING” DANCE “LITERATURE” FROM
BHARATA TO BHARATANATYAM**

Elisa Ganser

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In its broader sense, the term ‘literature’ can refer to any corpus of written texts through which meaning is culturally transmitted. In India literary practice has invested branches of knowledge which in other cultures have received a written form only at a later date, if ever at all. Such is the case of the visual and performing arts.

A conspicuous body of texts from an early period is concerned with artistic practices. However, if the evaluation of the relationship between texts and living practices can, in the case of visual arts, find support in the comparison with material data, i.e. the works of art, and thus establish at least a preliminary consonance or dissonance between the two, in the case of the performing arts no material evidence is available.

An inquiry about the performing arts in pre-modern India will necessarily have to take into account its textual basis. Hence, the question addressed by this paper will be: How can we evaluate the textual corpus about dance in India? How can we think dance literature?

Various instruments, put forward as candidates for this task, will be tested, according to the dichotomy proposed as a working hypothesis in this panel. In particular, the “European” textual criticism and the “Indian” traditional interpretation will be singled out and compared as the main categories of etic and emic instruments.

Which are the texts on dance and in which period have they been written? Can we attempt to establish any historical periodization for classifying them? Should these texts be regarded as purely literary compositions or rather as manuals for the actors? Do they actually record living practices or do they reflect an ideal situation and act as normative texts?

Do the texts themselves, or the traditional commentaries thereon, tell us something about their use, or about the living practice? Can

the contemporary tradition of classical Indian dance illuminate us on these matters? Do contemporary practitioners make use of texts in their training?

The investigation will be centred on the following triad:

- *Nāṭyaśāstra*: the first text on dance as part of Indian theatre, authored by Bharata and generally dated between 2nd c. BC and 2nd c. AD.
- *Abhinavabhāratī*: the only available commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, written by the Kashmiri thinker Abhinavagupta in the 11th century.
- The contemporary tradition of classical Indian dance called *Bharatanatyam*.

As I will try to show, the multiplication of agents, time-perspectives, questions and interpretations will make the watertight division between etic and emic itself questionable.

In what follows I will provide some cultural and historical data which may be useful, especially for the non-indologists, in order to follow the discussion. I apologize for the oversimplifications and imprecision that this attempt has inevitably involved:

Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* [NŚ].

Nāṭya-śāstra: “Scientific Treatise (*śāstra*) on Theatre (*nāṭya*)”. The word Theatre is intended in its broader sense, encompassing the ensemble of actors and audience, the play in its literary form, and the spectacular object carried out through acting techniques, music and dance.

The term *śāstra*, “instrument for teaching” (from Sanskrit root *śas*, to teach), refers to a wide category of texts, usually appearing as a series of precepts and rules disciplining knowledge and human activities. There are *śāstras* on law (*Mānavadharmasāstra*), on love (*Kāmasāstra*, better known as *Kāmasūtra*), on architecture (*Śilpasāstra*), and even a manual on the art of stealing, to cite only some famous examples. It is difficult to evaluate the nature of these texts, whether they were records of actual states of things or ideal depictions of how things should be. In the case of the visual arts, for instance, an agreement between texts and art-works is seldom verified. What is quite sure is that these texts were

composed by Brahmins, exponents of the priestly class which detained the use of Sanskrit language and the symbolic power. These texts, many of which have received commentaries in various epochs, exercised a normative influence, at least over literary practices.

In the case of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, it is possible to find correspondences between the dramatic works which have come down to us (datable roughly from the 2nd c. to the 11th c. AD) and the dictates laid down in the treatise on how to compose a play (dramatic genres, plot construction, type of characters, etc.). However, as regards its spectacular character, we do not know if its rules were followed, or, in the case of dance, if it was practiced in the ways described in the fourth chapter of the NS, that is, though a series of dance movements strictly codified and known as *karaṇas*.

About the author, the historicity of Bharata and his single authorship are still matter of debate. His very name means “actor” and he is referred to in the text as a Brahmin. Bharata is considered an authority by all later writers on subjects such as dramatics, aesthetics, dance and music, as well as by contemporary artistes.

Abhinavagupta's *Abhinavabhārati* [ABh].

Among the various commentaries written on the NS, the only extant is the *Abhinavabhārati*. Its author, Abhinavagupta, was an one of the most influential exponent of the non-dualistic tradition of Kashmir Shaivism. He comments on the whole of the NS about ten centuries after Bharata wrote it. Obviously enough, the artistic practice had changed, however Abhinavagupta superficially maintains Bharata's categories, while providing the text with a new and comprehending aesthetic orientation, in line with his philosophical tenets. In the case of dance, he maintains the categories of movement laid down in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (the *karaṇas*), but provides detailed descriptions of them, and in some cases even alternative interpretations about the execution of specific movements. This fact would point to the presence of living traditions of dance which report their practices to the NS. However, the continuity of the tradition is itself highly questionable, since we know from historical sources that at

the time when Abhinavagupta wrote (11th c.), Kashmir had witnessed a revival of theatre, started in the 8th c. under one of its rulers.

At about the same epoch, in South India, bas-reliefs depicting Bharata's karaṇas and accompanied by inscriptions bearing the verses of the NŚ, are found in some of the major temples of Tamil Nadu, in South India. The massive presence of dance sculptures is sometimes accompanied by epigraphs attesting the existence of ritual dancers, called *devadāsīs* (lit. Servants of God), within the premises of the temples. These women were appointed to the temple at a very young age and accompanied the daily ritual service to the deity with dance and songs. They constituted a separate caste and were allowed to study Sanskrit, along with the arts. In some cases, they even performed at royal courts and during religious festivals. It is a matter of debate whether their connection with prostitution should be considered a late phenomena related to the loss of court patronage, or the vestige of an ancient fertility cult.

Bharatanatyam: a contemporary tradition of Indian classical dance. Despite its Sanskrit name, which could be translated as “the theatrical art of Bharata”, and its claim for antiquity and direct link with the Sanskritic tradition, this style of dance has its origin in Tamil Nadu in the 20th c. Its older name is *Sadir*, or *Dasi Attam*, which was changed into *Bharatanatyam* during the revival of dance in the 1930's, following the stigma put upon dance by the British society, and due to its ties with prostitution. Many of the protagonists of the 're'construction, who brought dance from the temple to the theatre and provided it with new contents, were members of the Brahminic class. The “revived classical tradition of dance” found an ally in the editorial effort of Indian scholars, and a supporter in the nationalistic drive.

Nowadays, while the supposed direct link to the Sanskritic tradition continues to be nurtured through the use of Sanskrit text in dance training, its formulation has been somehow revised by the new generations of performers.

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THE DEVELOPMENT QUESTION IN
ASIA: POLICIES AND PROCESSES

Moderatore: Matilde Adduci

*Venerdì 11 giugno 2010, ore 9.00-13.30
Facoltà di Studi Orientali*

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**NEOLIBERAL POLICIES, PATTERNS OF SOCIAL
DOMINANCE AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION
IN THE INDIAN STATE OF ORISSA**

Matilde Adduci
Università di Torino

In 1991 the Indian Union started a process of integration within the new international economic order, characterised by the rise of neoliberalism.

Orissa, historically one of the Indian states mostly affected by severe poverty and economic stagnation though richly endowed with natural resources, has enthusiastically endorsed the neo-liberal project, implementing all the relevant national policies related to it. In the last two decades, while the economic policy of the State of Orissa has been thus increasingly shaped according to the neoliberal guidelines recommended by the Centre, the disturbing socio-economic scenario of the State has not changed significantly.

By adopting a political economy perspective, this analysis aims at investigating the dynamics of social dominance and social exclusion in Orissa in the course of the transition of the Indian Union towards the neoliberal order.

More specifically, the research focuses on the socio-economic and political implications of the ongoing natural resources—and in particular mineral resources—privatization process, with particular attention to the nature and pattern of reproduction of the local dominant stratum. The research aims on the one hand to tackle the question of class affiliation of this social stratum, taking into account the fundamental role historically played by Orissa within the Indian Union as a supplier of raw materials to the pan-Indian. On the other hand the research aims at investigating the dynamics of social reproduction of the Orissa dominant stratum, taking into account the deployment of local, pan-Indian and global capitalistic dynamics.

It will be argued that the current scenario supports the proposition according to which the unfolding of neoliberal dynamics in Orissa

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opened the way for the creation of new spaces of social reproduction for the local dominant stratum and, with them, for the reproduction of old relations of power and social dominance in the State. By tracing the continuity in the patterns of social dominance in Orissa this research originates several doubts on the self-proclaimed modernising vocation of neoliberalism itself.

After assessing the major outcomes of this research work, further research lines will be outlined, in relation to the impact of neoliberal policies on the Orissan labouring poor. The issue of the creation of social spaces of reproduction of fragmented labour classes affected by high level of poverty—or, which a definition borrowed by Henry Bernstein, of 'classes of labour'—will be raised. This will bring to tackle the question of the related dynamics of labour (circular) migration within India, outlining the basis for a political economy of labour migration in Orissa.

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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL
AUTHORITARIANISM: PAHLAVI IRAN AND
ITS PATH TO MODERNIZATION IN THE
FRAMEWORK OF THE COLD WAR**

Claudia Castiglioni
Università di Firenze

The paper analyzes American policy towards Iran during the Sixties. The research tries to explore the implications and the results of the so called “Pahlavi premise”, the basic assumption according to which the Shah was to be considered the only possible answer to Iranian political weakness and instability, confronted with the evolution of the political, economic and social reality of Iran in the Sixties.

In this study, the analysis of the so called “White Revolution” has a central role: further aim of the paper is to evaluate the consequences of the process of rapid modernization started and supported by the Shah from 1963.

The program had deep impact on Iranian political and social structure, creating the conditions for new dynamics doomed to alter in many ways the future not only of the regime but also of the country.

In this perspective, the White Revolution represents a clear example of the contrast between the prescriptive and the concrete dimension of development: conceived as a challenge to the traditional system and as an instrument of modernization able to fight the yoke of feudalism and backwardness, the White Revolution could have, in fact, created the basis for a new stability of the regime, but it would also have had costs for the Shah.

Unable to accept these costs, the Shah ended up starting new and, in some ways, unexpected dynamics that, without a system that could channel the new social conflicts, eventually put a growing pressure on his regime.

The democratic Administration of Kennedy and Johnson, confronted with the evolution of the Iranian situation, after a period of partial

rethinking, decided to support “this modernization”, a perfect example of that model of “revolution though the progress” promoted towards the Third World countries.

The sources of dissent were gradually identified, by Washington as much as by the Iranian government, with the reactionary forces that were opposing the change and the right path to modernity. This fact contributed to the poor understanding of the real sources of threat for the Iranian regime that, in the end, brought to its collapse.

The way Washington faced the Shah’s strategy to these challenges and evaluated it in the light of American interests constitute the focal point of the research, that makes use of the diplomatic sources as a vehicle not only of policies but also of projects and ideas for a Third World that, in the Sixties, was emerging on the international scene.

The use of the diplomatic material is combined to the contribution offered by the oral sources and by some collections of personal papers, able to provide a broader framework of programmes, expectations and personal experiences of the people who actually contributed, both on the Iranian and on the American side, to the great project of Iranian development.

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**PRODUCTION, LABOUR AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE
ERA OF GLOBALIZATION. THE CASE OF VIETNAM**

Michela Cerimele

Università di Napoli “L'Orientale”

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**OBSTACLES TO THE ORGANIZATION OF
A LABOUR MOVEMENT IN TAIWAN. THE
FEAR OF EXCLUSION AS A *FIL-ROUGE*
BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY**

Francesca Congiu
Università di Cagliari

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the contemporary debate on the nature of civil society and the State in East Asia. It will analyse the attitudes and roles played by the main actors of the organized labour movement in Taiwan during the late 1980s. The paper will argue that one of the major obstacles to the organization of the labour movement has to be found in the difficulties faced by the Labour party, Trade Unions and labour NGOs in building up a process of membership beyond the traditional relations of power. The interpretative and methodological approach derives from Antonio Gramsci's understanding of state and society relations. It allows to propose a model of analysis that goes beyond authoritarianism which represents, according to developmental state theories, the main barrier to a free and autonomous civil society.

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**LABOUR RELATIONS AND LABOUR CONDITIONS
AMONG MIGRANT CONSTRUCTION
WORKERS. THE CASE OF DELHI**

Valentina Prospero
Università di Roma “La Sapienza”

This research is situated inside the vast debate on labour mobility and migration. The regional focus is on India, where internal labour migration is high, especially in some sectors. The sector analysed is the construction sector.

The scope of this analysis is to take a close look at the labour relations in which migrant construction workers are involved and to try to contribute to a better understanding of determinants, characteristics and consequences of labour migration, in the background of neo-liberal policies implemented by the Indian government, its dubious political will to enforce its own labour laws and the complete vulnerability of the workers, especially migrant.

There are two main aims of this paper: firstly, explore and analyze the labour conditions and labour relations of migrant workers, in particular in public sector worksites; and secondly, investigate the determinants and dynamics of their migration. For this purpose, a case study will be illustrated. Moreover, the present attitude of the Indian state towards migrant workers will be briefly considered.

Detailed information is presented in the paper about the socio-economic background of the migrant construction workers, the migration patterns which have characterised their working lives, the labour conditions experienced and the labour relations they are involved in. The causes of migration are investigated, with the aim to collect some field data to discuss theoretical issues regarding the determinants of migration (survival vs. subsistence motivations, push vs. pull factors, individual choice vs. collective (household) decision, etc).

The information presented have been gathered during repeated visits to the work sites and through participatory observation, focus group

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and in depth structured interview (questionnaires). The location of the case study is Delhi, and specifically two work sites in the two main Universities where public institutions have contracted construction work to private companies who employ largely migrant labour. An analysis of the available state-level data will be presented, and compared with the findings of the case studies.

This research contributes to challenging some of the 'neo-classical' assumptions regarding the determinants of migration, such as the role of individual choice in internal migration, and makes an attempt to link the labour conditions and labour relations observed in the work sites to the pressure to cut costs and be competitive and to the incapacity/unwillingness (corruption issue) of the State to implement labour laws. The results of the research show clearly that the use of migrant labour guarantees better control of the workforce and lower wages, which leads to an easier and higher surplus extraction.

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LINGUE ORIENTALI E LINGUISTICA
OCCIDENTALE: QUALE INCONTRO?

Moderatore: Artemij Keidan

*Venerdì 11 giugno 2010, ore 14.30–19.00
Facoltà di Studi Orientali*

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LA CATEGORIA DELL'AGGETTIVO IN VEDICO:
UNA PROSPETTIVA TIPOLOGICA

Luca Alfieri

Università di Roma “La Sapienza”

Dixon (1977) ha mostrato come la presenza di una classe di aggettivi primari immagazzinati nel lessico e distinti sia dai nomi che dai verbi è normale nelle lingue classiche e nello *Standard Average European*, ma è solo un'opzione di minoranza a livello interlinguistico. La maggior parte delle lingue del mondo ha solo una classe piccola e chiusa di aggettivi (tra 3 membri come in wari' e i circa 60 dello swahili, con un valore medio di circa 10-20 elementi) oppure non ha alcun aggettivo primario.

In entrambi i casi i “significati aggettivali” (solitamente chiamati *adjectivals* o *adjectival concepts* nella letteratura tipologica) devono essere codificati tramite nomi o tramite verbi. Ovviamente questi “nomi” e questi “verbi” che esprimono qualità, solitamente detti *noun-like* e *verb-like adjectives*, hanno delle particolarità di codifica rispetto ai nomi e ai verbi veri e propri, ma queste particolarità non sono sufficienti per definire una vera propria classe di aggettivi. Secondo una *vulgata* quasi universalmente accettata a livello tipologico (Dixon, Aikhenvald 2004), quindi, le lingue si possono dividere in tre gruppi principali a seconda della strategia preferenziale con cui vengono codificati i significati aggettivali: lingue con aggettivi veri e propri, lingue con *verb-like adjectives* e lingue con *noun-like adjectives* (vedi tabella a pagina successiva).

In vedico gli aggettivi non hanno differenze flessionali rispetto ai nomi (Speijer 1974: 2, Green-Eklund 1978: 38, Breunis 1991). Su questa base, autorevoli tipologi (Bhat 1994, 2000) hanno ritenuto di classificare il vedico tra le lingue con *noun-like adjectives*. Lo scopo dell'intervento sarà quello di mostrare che questa classificazione, pur così evidente a prima vista, è basata su due punti deboli: una carenza teorica e una scarsa analisi dei dati vedici.

La carenza teorica dipende dal fatto che la *vulgata* sulla classificazione delle “lingue senza aggettivi” solitamente confonde quelle che Ha-

<i>Continuum</i> nome-verbo			
Tipo a	nomi	aggettivi	verbi
	(latino, russo, burushaski)		
Tipo b	nomi	<i>verb-like adjectives</i>	
	(lao, garo, chukchee, koasati)		
Tipo c	<i>noun-like adjectives</i>		verbi
	(quechua, hausa, pitjantjatjara)		

spelmath (1996) chiama *lexeme word-class* e *word-form word-class*. La prima riguarda la classificazione dell'elemento minimo immagazzinato nel lessico, ossia il morfema lessicale che serve da *input* per i processi morfologici ma non può essere l'*output* derivazionale. La seconda rappresenta la classificazione l'unità minima di competenza sintattica, ossia la "parola" che si trova in una frase concreta, che può essere l'*output* di un processo derivazionale ma non è un *input* per la morfologia derivazionale in senso stretto. L'arabo fornisce un esempio classico:

Kataba *al-kātib-^u* *al-kutub-^a* *fī*
maktab-i-hi.
 write.PF.3SG.M the-writer.SG.M-^{NOM.DET} the-book.PL.M-^{ACC.DET} in
 office.SG.M-OBL.DET-3SG.M
 'The writer wrote the books in his office'.

Tutti i sostantivi presenti nell'esempio sono derivati da una medesima radice verbale *k.t.b.* 'scrivere'. Si tratta di nomi per quanto riguarda la *word-form word-class*, come testimonia la presenza della flessione nominale, ma di radici verbali se si guarda alla *lexeme word-class*.

L'identità flessionale degli aggettivi rispetto ai nomi non è quindi sufficiente per determinare la codifica aggettivale di una lingua. Se gli aggettivi sono secondari come i nomi dell'esempio arabo, è la classificazione della radice lessicale primaria a determinare la codifica aggettivale, come ricorda esplicitamente lo stesso Dixon (2004: 2). In altre parole, è la *lexeme word-class* degli aggettivi che determina la classificazione tipologica di una lingua rispetto alla sua categorizzazione aggettivale, non la loro *word-form word-class*.

In vedico gli aggettivi non hanno rilevanti differenze di codifica rispetto ai nomi, ma non sono primari, sono bensì derivati nominali di radici verbali. In tutto il *Wörterbuch zum Rigveda* di Grassmann compaiono solo 13 aggettivi primari, ossia l'equivalente di quello che i tipologi considerano la classe chiusa e ristretta di aggettivi tipica delle lingue solitamente chiamate “lingue senza aggettivi”.

I significati aggettivali in vedico sono codificati da radici verbali indicanti stati e qualità. Le radici verbali di senso stativo formano predicati verbali tramite *media tantum* o presenti inaccusativi in *-ya-* (Lazzeroni 2002, 2004, Stassen 1997). Da queste radici si possono derivare un gran numero di derivati nominali, che possono a loro volta essere utilizzati come teste di sintagma o come modificatori. Questi derivati nominali secondari rappresentano il più vicino equivalente vedico rispetto agli aggettivi delle lingue europee e del latino. Gli aggettivi vedici sono, quindi, nominali per quanto riguarda la *word-form word-class* ma verbali se si guarda alla *lexeme word-class*, esattamente come i nomi dell'esempio arabo.

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**WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN
CASE SYSTEM, OR WHAT HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS
CAN TELL US ABOUT THE PREHISTORY OF EURASIA?**

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This talk deals with a diachronic typology of the morphological case, concentrating on evidence available from the history of cases in Indo-European languages.

The Indo-European family provides an enormous variety of types of development: we can observe all the three logically possible evolutionary types of languages. There are languages which attest (i) the increase and expansion of case systems (case-increasing languages; cf. New Indo-Aryan, Tocharian); (ii) the loss of cases and decay of case systems (case-reducing languages; cf. Italic/Romance and Celtic, Germanic, Albanian, Greek); and (iii) processes which do not lead to quantitative changes in case systems but help to resist phonetic erosion (case-stable languages; cf. Armenian, Slavic, Baltic).

Most interestingly, these sub-types are not chaotically distributed over the map of the Indo-European languages. I will argue that the main factors determining the evolutionary type of a language include language contact and substrate influence.

Thus, Baltic and Slavic are quite conservative in the diachrony of case systems: Old Lithuanian has even extended its case system, developing three new locatives; likewise, Russian has expanded the original (Common Slavic) case system, developing a new locative and partitive. Both phenomena are likely to be due to the influence of the neighbouring Finno-Ugric languages with their rich case systems, which include a number of locative cases and partitive.

The emergence of new cases in New Indo-Aryan and Tocharian may be due to the influence of the adjacent agglutinating Dravidian and Altaic languages, respectively.

By contrast, Balkan languages attest quite dramatic reduction of the Proto-Indo-European case system, ending up with 2 or 3 cases at maximum (cf. Rumanian, Albanian, Greek and Bulgarian). As in the case of Indo-Aryan, Tocharian and Balto-Slavic languages, these developments may be due to the substrate influence. Thus, we can make some cautious assumptions about the character of the case system (and, possibly, some other grammatical features) of the hypothetical Mediterranean language(s) with which (some) ancient Balkan languages could be in contact (the language documented in the undeciphered linear A?) and perhaps even to suggest its/their genetic affiliation.

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**RECONSTRUCTING PHONOLOGIES OF DEAD
LANGUAGES: THE CASE OF LATE GREEK**

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Reconstructing phonological systems of ancient languages has always been a challenge for the scholars. Information from native speakers is obviously lacking, and all investigation has to rest on what can be inferred from two factors: (a) writing systems and (b) indirect evidence from ancient sources.

Ancient languages have exploited these possibilities in a wide range of ways. Writing systems can be nearly phonetic (as it is the case with Avestan) or neatly phonological (as it is the case with Vedic)—or they can provide no information at all about pronunciation, as ideographic writing systems do.

For Greek dialects syllabic and alphabetic writing systems have been used, the last being by far the most common and widely spread. The values of single alphabetic signs are defined easily enough by comparison with other Indo-European languages and the semitic writing system that provided the model for Greek alphabet. The exact phonetic values of a number of alphabetic signs, however, are still unclear (as is the case with zeta and sampi).

Indirect evidence may not always be available (we have nothing the like for the earliest attested Greek, i.e. Mycenaean, or Hittite, as for possibly the majority of languages ever spoken), but when it is it can be of the most different kinds. We do indeed have treatises on correct pronunciation (orthoepy from now on) for Vedic Sanskrit, and at the roots of Avestan phonetic spelling there must have been a similar care for the way one should utter the sacred avestic hymns. In both cases we must notice that the attention to orthoepy is caused by the importance given to some particular literature, i.e. the sacred texts of Vedic Hinduism and Zoroastrianism.

For the earliest stages of Greek we lack any texts of this kind. We do not know whether there had been texts specifically meant for worship or liturgy, neither we have any evidence of any care paid to orthoepy, at least as it would be relevant for worship, as it is for sure in Vedic ritual.

When we do have texts dealing with orthoepy in the Greek world, the “golden Age” of Greece had since long reached to an end. And it is mostly interesting that the age in which orthoepy is clearly dealt with in theoretical treatises is when the Greeks themselves started looking at their language as a multifaceted reality, one that could be analysed in several layers, and these layers could be ordered in a chronological order. It was the 2nd century CE, and curiously this is when the Greek world becomes overtly an object of admiration for the highest charges of the Roman Empire, the Antonine emperors.

As the indian *Pratiśakhya* were composed after the age in which Vedic was a vital language, one could wonder whether this special care for orthoepy is the result of the perception that the currently spoken language had eventually become something quite different from the language employed by the classical writers. Anyway, there is indeed a perception of Greek as a single language that survives well later on in time, to reach the at least the Byzantine Age, and the ‘belles lettres’ composed at the time.

There have been several attempts at understanding in detail the phonological system of Greek, mostly of the attic dialect and koiné (Lupaş 1972, Teodorsson 1974, 1977, 1978). The interesting conclusions drawn by some of these surveys, namely those of S.V. Teodorsson, are that there might have been as early as the 4th century BCE a substandard pronunciation of ancient Greek strikingly resembling the phonology of modern Greek. Teodorsson’s results are based on a large-scale comparison of spelling variations in inscriptions and papyri. Though Teodorsson’s method is definitely highly arguable (Ruijgh 1978), it is nevertheless a fact that many changes towards ‘modern pronunciation’ are indeed much less ‘modern’ than we think, and could easily have been achieved by Plato’s time, i.e. at the very core of the classical age of Ancient Greek (Horrocks 1997: 102 ff.).

A minority of Teodorsson's conclusions is indeed confirmed by the much stricter method of Threatte (1980), as Teodorsson's based on the corpus of Attic inscriptions, and a larger number was confirmed by Gignac (1976) for Egyptian papyri. Inscriptions and papyri, anyway, show a different degree of variability. Whereas inscriptions are more homogeneous in showing quite regularly the same kind of variation, for instance $\epsilon\iota \sim \iota$, papyri do normally show a quite fuzzier picture, for instance $\epsilon\iota$ alternating with ι but also with η and ε or even $\alpha\iota$. This can be explained because of the later date of most papyri, or the more isolated geographical position of Egypt, and especially of the Egyptian country, as opposed to the more educated Greek-speaking elites dwelling in the Egyptian cities. But mostly, papyri were not meant to last as were inscriptions, and this allowed for a higher degree of inaccuracy. Some of the misspellings that are accounted for by mere inaccuracy can be just due to distraction, but others reveal features of the phonological system of the less educated.

As papyri give us a picture 'from below' of the evolution of the pronunciation of Greek among the less educated, it is interesting to check what could have been the changes among the educated. A good source of information comes from treatises about orthoepy. These were not written with any religious purposes, as it was the case in India, but instead they were conceived as an aid to those who based their professional success on pronunciation, namely the orators. It is well known that oratory had been flourishing in the 2nd century CE (Whitmarsh 2005), and it is exactly in this century that we have a number of technical treatises aimed at polishing the orators' style. A special sort of such technical literature contains precious information about orthoepy: these treatises come in the form of lexica, and their shapes range from the mere list of words to the more extensive comment to single glosses. The lexica that contain information on orthoepy are of the prescriptive kind: they do not aim at describing meanings and/or usages, but at preventing the speaker or the writer from using certain words instead of others. The condemned word would be normally a more popular or recent one, whereas the recommended word would be part of the usage of the authors that had come to be part of the canon.

But there are instances of glosses that do not prescribe a specific word, yet a specific pronunciation. One of the most interesting case is the following, from Phrynichus' *Ecloga*:

Phry. *Ecl.* 80

πελαργός οἱ ἀμαθεῖς ἐκτείνουσι τὸ α, δέον συστέλλειν· Πελαργός γὰρ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ Ἐρετριακῶς Πελασγός.

“πελαργός: the uneducated lengthen the α, yet it has to be short: Πελαργός it is indeed nothing but the Eretrian for Πελασγός.”

It is clear here that the difference in pronunciation involved cannot concern anything but the length of the vowel (and not for instance the accent or the metrical value of the syllable with α). This points to the existence of different pronunciations at the time when Phrynichus composed its *Ecloga*, and to the social appraisal that these variant must have had during the 2nd century.

A survey of similar such instances will help the understanding of the exact nature of these variants and thier influence in the developing of the most conservative varieties of Greek.

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HOW MODERN LINGUISTICS CAN HELP US
TO RECONSTRUCT THE COMPOSITIONAL
HISTORY OF PĀṆINI'S GRAMMAR

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Generally speaking, *kāraka* categories roughly correspond to what today's linguists call *semantic roles* or, to some extent, even to the *macro-roles* (for these notions see Van Valin and Lapolla 1997: chap. 4). The *kāraḥas* are six in number and have essentially semantic definitions, though the most important *kāraka*, i.e. the so-called *karṭṭ* ‘agent’, could be considered more similar to a syntactic entity, namely the subject, since it is defined as *svatantra* ‘the independent one’. Besides the *karṭṭ*, the other *kāraka* categories, listed in the traditional order, are: *apādāna* ‘source’, *saṃpradāna* ‘receiver’, *kaṛaṇa* ‘instrument’, *adhikaṛaṇa* ‘location’ and *karman* ‘patient’. Each *kāraka*, it is taught, has many possible morphological expressions. Interestingly, the finite verbal terminations are considered one such possibility, but we are more interested here in the other possible expression, namely the nominal case-form endings called *vibhakti*. The latter are similar to our grammatical cases categories, except for the fact that their nomenclature is purely formal and gets rid of any semantic reference. The *vibhakti* terms are based on their serial number within the standard sequence of cases: *prathamā* ‘first’, *dvtiyā* ‘second’, *ṭṭiyā* ‘third’, *caturthī* ‘fourth’, *pañcamī* ‘fifth’, *ṣaṣṭī* ‘sixth’ and *saptamī* ‘seventh’, corresponding, respectively, to *nominative*, *accusative*, *instrumental*, *dative*, *ablative*, *genitive* and *locative*. Each *kāraka* has a standard or “canonical” *vibhakti* realization: thus, the *karṭṭ* is taught to be primarily expressed by the instrumental case, the *karman* by the accusative, etc. Notice, however, that, besides a certain privileged status of *kāraḥas*’ canonical *vibhakti* realizations, there is no one-to-one relationship between *kāraka* roles and the *vibhaktis*: each *kāraka* may be expressed by more than one case-form; similarly, each *vibhakti* expresses several semantic functions, not even limited to *kāraḥas*.

Thus, Pāṇini's most brilliant achievement in the field of syntax amounts exactly to this treatment of semantic categories as separate entities with respect to their morphological realization. Such a clear-cut differentiation of the two sides of the language—the plane of forms and the plane of functions—remains unparalleled in any other ancient grammatical tradition, and has been fully attained by western linguistics only in the last few decades, particularly, as far as the sentence arguments realization is concerned, after the formulation of the Deep Case theory by Ch. Fillmore (1968).

However, if we take into account not only the definitions of the *kāraka* categories, but also the other rules of this section, where the primary definitions are emended and enlarged, the situation changes: the separation between the forms and the functions becomes far less accurate and rigid. The general tendency in this respect was to identify the *kārakas* with their canonical *vibhakti* realization and, eventually, to replace completely the former with the latter. This is what happened, according to Joshi and Roodbergen's (1983) analysis, to the *samāsa* section where the *vibhakti* terms are used as if they were equivalent to the *kārakas* 'semantic roles', in order to indicate the semantic constraints on compound formation. In the *taddhita* section even the *vibhakti* terms seem to be disclaimed: instead, inflected pronouns are used in order to denote their own case-form category, and therefore the related semantic role, as a constraint to the application of certain secondary nominal suffixes.

It must be stressed that the abovementioned approaches to one and the same linguistic material—namely, the morphological coding of semantic categories—are so antithetical as to induce the hypothesis of a possible difference in the authorship. The separation of the forms and the functions represents a revolutionary paradigm change in linguistics that should not be underestimated. A sudden abdication of this principle must be considered strong evidence for textual interpolation. Thus, my claim is that the present text of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* is to be analyzed in different theoretical strata put together only in a later period lying between Pāṇini's time and the earliest extant ancient commentary, namely the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali. Indeed, it seems impossible for one and

the same author to have adopted so many contradictory positions inside one and the same grammatical treatise.

What follows is a mere listing of the relevant theoretical layers. The listing itself does not imply very much regarding the relative chronology of the corresponding textual strata. However, the succession of the list entries is obviously not random, and could be taken as a preliminary approximation of the historical development of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.

The *first* and most “primitive” layer, which can be called the “proto-*kāraka* layer”, corresponds to the *kāraka* terms in their “etymological” or “everyday” meaning. Already the ancient tradition considers them borrowings that Pāṇini inherited from some *pūrvācāryas* ‘preceding authors’ of whom we know little. Genuine Pāṇinian terminology, indeed, is usually made of meaningless marks and abbreviations. The etymological meanings of *kāraka* terms vaguely recall the semantic definition of the relating *kāra*kas. Hypothetically, in a pre-Pāṇinian period, the *kāraka* terms were conceived as self-explanatory (as similarly the European case nomenclature), and were probably used for both semantic and morphological categories, i.e. semantic roles and grammatical cases, with no clear distinction yet between the two planes of the language.

The *second* layer corresponds to the standard *kāraka/vibhakti* framework. Pāṇini takes the pre-existing *kāraka* terms, gets rid of their “etymological” interpretation, gives them some abstract, clear-cut, but still semantic definitions, and puts them into correlation with *vibhaktis*. The latter are given their “numbering” names, and put into a special section of the grammar where all their uses are listed. Thus, the opposition between semantics and morphology is, for the first time in history, clearly stated and observed (notice that such level of sophistication has been reached by western linguists only in the second half of the 20th century).

Let us take as an example the definition of *kartṛ* ‘agent’ (or ‘actor’, if we accept the view of *kāra*kas as macro-roles), which is qualified as *svatantra* ‘self-standing, independent’. This definition has generated long-standing debates among traditional Indian grammarians, but could simply be an attempt to provide a more general definition of this se-

mantic role, going beyond the literal meaning of ‘doer’. Only with such a broadened definition could some peripheral semantic roles, such as experiencer (i.e., the one who experiences a feeling), be subsumed into the greater category of the macro-role. The *kartṛ* is expressed by either *kṛt* ‘primary suffixes’, such as the suffix *-aka*, or finite verb endings, such as the 3rd sg. active *-ti*, or some *vibhakti* ‘nominal case-form’, primarily the *tṛtīyā* ‘third one’, i.e. the instrumental case, but sometimes also by the *ṣaṣṭhī* ‘sixth one’, i.e. the genitive case.

Soon after the establishment of the *kāraka/vibhakti* device the definitions of *kāraka* started to be emended and enlarged, partly because the original general and abstract sense of the primary definitions was not understood anymore. Thus, the degradation of the theory of *kāraḥ* began. Initially this process did not result in a change of the theoretical approach, since the *kāraḥ* were still conceived as semantic categories, not yet confused with morphological ones.

The *third* theoretical layer surfaces in those rules where the *kāraka* categories are identified with corresponding canonical *vibhakti* realizations. At the beginning it was only an implicit tendency, and the *kāraka* terms were still in use, though the distinction between semantics and morphology was being blurred. At this stage, given a certain primary semantic definition of a *kāraka*, some rules were added where the semantic definition of a *kāraka* was changed and/or the *kāraka* category assignments underwent a modification depending on a certain case-form governed by some verb that had to be accounted for. On the contrary, within the standard *kāraka/vibhakti* framework, all such cases would have been treated in the *vibhakti* section, simply as alternative expressions of a given *kāraka*.

Let us analyze the *sūtra* 1.4.43 *divaḥ karma ca* as an example. It describes the fact that the verb *div* ‘to gamble’ can optionally code with the accusative—instead of instrumental—the argument corresponding to ‘what is gambled with’. In the view of the standard *kāraka/vibhakti* framework, it would be simply a case of alternative coding of a *kāraka*, to be taught in the *vibhakti* section. According to the commentators, instead, the *sūtra* means that, with the verb *div*, what seems a *karaṇa*

may also be optionally classified as *karman*. The implicit reasoning here seems to have been the following. (a) The instrument of an action is primarily classified as *karaṇa* by 1.4.42 *sādhakatamaṅ karaṇam*; (b) the verb *div* exhibits an argument matching the semantics of the *karaṇa* category; (c) the canonical *vibhakti* realization of the *karaṇa* is the instrumental case by 2.3.18 *kartṛkaraṇayos tṛtīyā*; (d) the *karaṇa* argument of the verb in question, however, may also be coded by the accusative; (e) the accusative case is taught to be the canonical realization of another *kāraka* category, namely *karman* by 2.3.2 *karmaṇi dvitīyā*; (f) ergo, the semantics of an instrumental argument must be classified, limited to the verb *div*, as belonging to the category of *karman* instead of *karaṇa*. In other words, according to this new approach, whatever stands in the accusative case-form must be automatically considered a *karman*. Therefore, the privileged one-to-one relationship between a *kāraka* and its canonical realization brought about a complete merger of these two planes of the language.

The *fourth* layer is the one to be found in the sections devoted to *samāsa* ‘compounding’, and in some other rules, where the *kāraka/vibhakti* distinction seems to be completely abandoned. While *kārakas* are not mentioned at all, the *vibhakti* terms are used here in order to express semantic functions totally undistinguishable from the corresponding morphological classes. Effectively, every *kāraka* is indicated by its canonical *vibhakti* realization. The *vibhakti* terms are used as such, or in composition with the word *arthe* ‘in the meaning of’. Thus, the *sūtra* 2.1.37 *pañcamī bhayena* teaches the formation of compounds whose first member is intended in the sense conveyed by the *pañcamī* ‘fifth case’ (i.e. ablative), hence the *apādāna* ‘source’ semantic role (e.g. *caurabhayam* ‘fear of thieves’).

The *fifth* layer is the one attested in the *taddhita* section as well as in some of the *paribhaṣūtras* ‘meta-rules’ of the grammar. Here, even the *vibhakti* terms are no longer in use. In order to refer to both semantic roles and case categories inflected pronouns are used: they indicate “iconically” their own case category, which, in its turn, refers to the cor-

responding semantic role (as in the preceding layer). A good example is that of the *paribhaṣūtras* defining the metalinguistic case-forms. Thus, *sūtra* 1.1.67 *tasmād ity uttarasya* defines the “left context ablative” (referred to as *tasmād* ‘from that’); *sūtra* 1.1.66 *tasminn iti nirdiṣṭe pūrvasya* defines the “right context locative” (referred to as *tasmin* ‘in that’).

Regarding the post-Pāṇinian developments, it must be noted that the idea of a radical *kāraka/vibhakti* distinction was often partly or completely disregarded within the grammatical schools which arose outside the strictly Pāṇinian tradition (see Butzenberger 1995: 54). For instance, in Candragomin’s grammar, the *vibhakti* categories and terminology prevailed for both morphology and semantics (as in our fourth layer). On the other hand, in the *Kātantra* tradition a more etymological interpretation of *kāraka* terms was restored (similarly to our first layer). For example, the *karman* is defined here by the *sūtra* 2.4.13 *yat kriyate tat karma* ‘what is being done that is *karman*’ (since the latter is a passive formation from the root *kṛ* ‘to do’). Eventually, an intelligent synthesis of Pāṇini’s *kāraka/vibhakti* device is to be found in the *Saddanīti*, an indigenous grammar of Pāli. Thus, the *sūtra* 551 defines the patient role as follows: *yaṃ kurute yaṃ vā passati taṃ kammaṃ* ‘what is done or seen is *karman*’. Here, the semantic definition of this meta-role is “demystified”, resulting simply in a summation of its most frequent components: the patient and the so-called *stimulus* (something that is perceived by our senses).

The question of authorship may arise regarding the different theoretical layers listed above. It must be noted that their theoretical “quality” is varying: the second layer seems to be the most complex and sophisticated, while the subsequent ones represent a continuous degradation of the original theory. So where should we collocate Pāṇini in this respect? Since we do not know much about Pāṇini’s dates (which is still an open question, notwithstanding all the hypotheses thus far proposed in this regard, see the “Introduction” to Joshi, Roodbergen 1976), I feel justified in arbitrarily identifying his authorship with the abovementioned

second theoretical layer, as homage to the great prestige Pāṇini has had through many centuries in Indian grammatical thought.

A grammar can change mainly for two reasons: the evolution of the language that it describes, or the evolution of the theoretical ideas regarding the description itself. Both these circumstances may have caused the theoretical evolution under consideration.

Thus, on the one hand, the passage from the first to the second layer, when the *kāraka/vibhakti* framework had been established presumably by Pāṇini, represented a revolutionary advance in the description. The subsequent layers might be at least partly explainable by an increasing misunderstanding of Pāṇini's original ideas (already starting, for instance, with the supplementary semantic qualifications added to the second layer in order to clarify some *kāraka* definitions that no longer appeared intelligible).

On the other hand, the evolution of some important facts of language may also have played a role. Some grammatical phenomena that could be irrelevant or even unattested in Pāṇini's time, became more pertinent in the subsequent periods. One such feature that strongly challenged the standard *kāraka/vibhakti* device was the rise in Sanskrit of many subject-related phenomena, namely voice transformations and valency derivation. Now, an explicit delineation of the grammatical relations is completely lacking in the original *kāraka* theory. However, the subsequent theoretical layers within the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, and even more some theories of ancient commentators, went clearly in the direction of a gradual and tacit rejection of the semantic-based *kāraka* category in favour of a more syntacto-centric categories similar, though not identical, to that of the grammatical relations. Furthermore, the later origin of the *taddhita* and *samāsa* sections of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, claimed by Joshi and Roodbergen (1983), may be substantiated if we think of the increasing importance assumed by compounding and secondary affixation in Late Sanskrit.

As pointed out by A. A. Zaliznjak (2007), the linguistic evidence can easily be underestimated or disregarded by non-specialists in the field of

linguistics. Indeed, the hypotheses I suggest in the present paper might seem unpersuasive to many traditional indologists and specialists in Pāṇini's grammar, as Cardona's (1999) critique against Joshi and Roodbergen's hypothesis shows. However, no linguist would deny that the distinction between semantic roles and case-form categories is such a revolutionary approach that a "backwards trip" would be virtually unimaginable for one and the same author. Therefore, I think that a theoretical stratification inside the received *Aṣṭādhyāyī* must be considered, unless a possible critical edition of its text, based on the collation of the extant manuscripts, would disallow such a hypothesis.

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**TESTI ALLE ORIGINI: COME
INTERPRETARLI?**

Moderatore: Elena Mucciarelli

*Sabato 12 giugno 2010, ore 9.00–13.00
Facoltà di Studi Orientali*

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ṚGVEDA 1.160: THE ENIGMA OF REVEALING
AND CONCEALING IDENTITIES

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The *R̥gveda* (= RV) or, strictly speaking, the *R̥gvedasam̥hitā* is a collection of 1028 hymns, which are in their majority directed to different gods of the Vedic pantheon. Each of these hymns usually consists of two parts: a praise of the god to who the hymn is addressed, which is followed by an unhumble request for riches. The hymns of the RV have not been recited in isolation, but belonged to sometimes rather elaborate ritual activities. Most prominently among these ritual activities figures the preparation and offering of Soma, a liquid/liquor/fluid which results from the pressing of the stalks of a homonymous plant.

The body of R̥gvedic hymns has been compiled in ten books (*maṇḍala*-s) of unequal length and age. *Maṇḍalas* 2–7, which are ascribed to particular mythical seers (*ṛṣi*-s), have been considered to be the oldest part. This part is chronologically followed by the *maṇḍalas* 8 and 1, which contain minor collections of hymns from different families of poets, and *maṇḍala* 10, which consists of comparatively late hymns. Finally, there is *maṇḍala* 9, which is significant for its liturgical character and consists only of hymns addressed to Soma in the stage of being purified for the ritual.

In the course of time the RV became a part of the so-called Vedic corpus, a huge body of texts dedicated to the proper performance of by then fairly complicated rituals. In this capacity it served as a manual for the *hotṛ*-, one of the main ritual priests whose prominent obligation consists in the recitation of RV verses during the course of the respective rituals. Seen as a whole, the RV marks the beginning of Vedic literature and even of Indian literary tradition, but its absolute dating is still subject to (sometimes heated) debate. Due to its similarity with Old Avestan texts it can on the other hand be regarded as a marker for the final stage of Indo-Iranian poetry. It is distinguished by its extremely

reliable transmission which up to now is carried out orally. As a result, while doing research on the RV one usually does not have to take textual variants or different readings of a passage into account.

On the other hand everyone willing to deal with the RV faces an unusually large number of difficulties. Since the RV is older than every other Vedic text it provides us with an astonishingly high number of words transmitted only here and a bewildering variety of grammatical forms not to be found elsewhere in Indian literature. In addition to that the ritualistic background of most of the hymns is not particularly helpful. Though much is known about the later Vedic ritual, it is a commonly shared opinion among researchers that the Rgvedic hymns refer to rituals of an earlier stage. Information on these we only get from statements in the hymns but not from any other Vedic literature. The difficulties to be faced during the analysis of the Rgvedic hymns are further enhanced by the fact that the poets themselves made a point of composing inscrutable poems.

A lucid representative to illustrate the afore-mentioned difficulties is found in the poems of Dīrghatamas (RV 1.140–164), which are well-known in Vedic research for their obscurity. Out of RV 1.160, a hymn addressed to heaven and earth, five verses have been chosen to demonstrate why analysing Rgvedic poems can be such a demanding task. As will be seen during the analysis of the text, Dīrghatamas uses this hymn as a pretext for a playful mixture of revealing and concealing identities.

The first verse introduces heaven and earth:

RV 1.160.1

*té hí dyāvāpṛthivī viśváśambhuva ṛtāvārī rájaso dhārayátkavi
sujánmanī dhiṣāṇe antár iyate devó deví dhármaṇā sūryah śuciḥ*

“Heaven and Earth indeed, the two all-beneficent, truthful ones, carry the *kavi-* of the atmosphere. Between the two *dhiṣāṇā-s*¹ of good birth,

1. Word of unknown meaning, here designating Heaven and Earth. Cf. EWA, s. v. *dhiṣāṇa-*.

the two goddesses (= goddess and god) the god roams due to the foundation, the blazing Sūrya.”

Apart from heaven and earth at least one other god is mentioned here, the sun-god Sūrya. But with regard to the compound in *Pāda* b *dhārayátkavī* the first question comes up: Who is the *kavī*? Sūrya is explicitly mentioned, so he seems to be an obvious candidate. However, the term *kavī* is only rarely used for this god. Another option would be the human poet, who is also sometimes referred to as *kavī*-. The etymological connection between *dhārayát* and *dhármaṇā* argues for the poet being identical to the *kavī*, but this is not mandatory.²

In the next verse again another god (?) is mentioned in addition to heaven and earth:

RV 1.160.2

*uruvyācasā mahīnī asaścātā pitā mātā ca bhūvanāni rakṣataḥ
sudhṛṣṭame vapuṣyē nā ródasī pitā yāt sám abhī rūpaír ávāsayat*

“The two large ones, of wide perimeter, undrying, father and mother protect the beings. When the father dressed them with forms the two worlds were very bold, wonderful, as it were.”

The introduction of new characters on the poetical stage in this verse takes a more fanciful turn. Heaven and earth are called (appropriately) father and mother in the first two *Pādas*, and the dual forms in *Pāda* c should refer to them as well. Confusingly, another father is mentioned here who is said to have dressed the two worlds. This father cannot be heaven, since heaven is one part of the couple mentioned before and figures as an object to *sám abhī ávāsayat*. The choice of tense (imperfect)

2. According to Brereton there is a double meaning in this verse; on the cosmic level Sūrya is meant who is supported by heaven and earth, on the ritual level it is Agni being carried on the sacrificial ground, an act, which mirrors the movement of the sun (Brereton 2004: 468f.). This interpretation is possible, but in this place the focus is on the poetic level.

and the meaning of the secondary verbal stem (causative of *sám abhí vas-* “to dress with forms/colours”) point to a cosmogonic event by which the world was ordered. However, the identity of the actor remains unclear, since also Sūrya from verse one is an unlikely candidate. So there are two additional persons in this hymn whose identities remain a mystery.

The third verse occupies the central position in this hymn and gives an indication as to who the additional person (if it is only one) could be. Unfortunately, there are at least two options:

RV 1.160.3

*sá váhniḥ putráḥ pitróḥ pavítravān punāti dhīro bhúvanāni māyāyā
dhenúṃ ca pṛśniṃ vṛṣabhám surétaṣaṃ viśvāḥ śukráṃ páyo asya dukṣata*

“In that way the ‘draught animal’, the son of the parents possessing a strainer purifies wisely the beings with his miraculous power.³ And from the speckled cow, from the bull of good seed he all days milks his bright milk.”

Although the activities mentioned in this verse are not exactly clear, at least the choice of words points to two gods: *váhni*, “draught animal” is a term quite frequently used for the ritual priest, even more prominently in ritual contexts for Agni.⁴ *Pavítravant*, on the other hand, is used for poets and for Soma; since Agni is said to be purifying as well, *pavítravant* and *punā'ti* could also refer to him. The last Pāda finally points to the Soma ritual: The pressing and consumption Soma are often described as milking. Moreover, *śukráṃ páyas* accompanied by *duh-* is used once with Soma in RV 9.19.5 as is the semantically related *śukrapīyúṣa-* “beastings” (m.) in RV 9.109.3 and 6. Here again a direct reference to Sūrya seems improbable. Entirely unclear remains the relationship between *dhenúṃ* and *vṛṣabhám* as well as between the two and the

3. For *māyā'* “miraculous power” (better “ability to create and construct”) cf. Gonda (1959: 119–194).

4. E.g., in RV 1.128.4; 3.5.1; 6.11.2 and 8.43.20.

subject of *dukṣata*. Again heaven and earth are possible candidates, but then it is unclear who is milking the heaven.

The next verse, comparable to the second one, illustrates a cosmogonic setting:

RV 1.160.4

*ayám devánām apásām apástamo yó jajána ródasī viśvásambhuvā
ví yó mamé rájasī sukratūyáyārebhi skámbhanebhiḥ sám ānṛce*

“This one is the most active of the active gods, who has created the two all-beneficent worlds, who has by means of good vigour measured out the two atmospheres. He has been praised together with the undecaying pillars.”

Here, the cosmological context is made explicit by the activities of an again unnamed deity. The act of measuring space is ascribed to many gods,⁵ so once again the identity of the one in question here cannot be solved. The author nevertheless gives a clue with the instrumental *sukratūyáyā* of a verbal noun of the denominative stem *sukratūy-*. An inflected form of this is found once (RV 10.122.6), as well as another instrumental of the verbal noun (RV 1.31.3), both used in connection with Agni. He therefore could be meant in this hymn as well.

The last verse of this hymn fits in the ordinary scheme of Rgvedic poems, since it contains at the proper place, the end of the hymn, a formulation for requests:

RV 1.160.5

*té no gṛṇāné mahinī máhi śrávaḥ kṣatráṃ dyāvāpṛthivī dhāsatho bṛhát
yéñbhiḥ kṛṣṭís tatánāma viśvāhā panáyyam ójo asmé sám invatam*

“Being praised this way you will establish great fame for us, Great ones, and high reign, heaven and earth, by which we will everywhere stretch out over the people; for us set in motion the admirable power.”

5. E.g., Agni (RV 1.58.1; 6.7.7; 6.8.2; 10.110.11; 10.124.3); Soma (RV 9.68.3; 9.102.3); Viṣṇu (RV 1.154.1; 6.49.13); Varuṇa (RV 5.85.1) and Savitṛ (RV 5.81.3).

To sum up, it can be pointed out that in four out of five verses of this hymn unknown entities appear: *kaví* (1), *pitá* (2), *váhni* and *putrá* (3) and “this (god)” (4). Since it is unclear whether some or all of them are identical with each other even the number of the entities involved remains enigmatic. Some expressions point to Agni who would suit most of the designations, but this would leave line 4d completely incomprehensible. At least in this place Soma could be meant by the anonymous god.

A further complication has been mentioned only casually so far. Some of the descriptions also point to the poet himself! He is a *kaví* and as a participator in the ritual he could also be called a *váhni*.⁶ Poets have their *pavíttra*, their means of purification,⁷ which is needed for purifying their language, in other words to compose poems. Thus, the third stanza, holding the prominent middle position in this hymn,⁸ appears to contain a self-statement by the poet in which he claims the central position in the world as a kind of demiurg. This self-confident attitude finds its expression also in another verse from a hymn addressed to heaven and earth by the same poet, RV 1.159.3a-b: *té sūnávaḥ svápasah sudámsaso mahá jajñur mātārā pūrvácittaye* “the very active sons of good deeds have recognized the parents for the first thought”. Of course, one single parallel does not suffice to answer the fundamental questions concerning RV 1.160: Why are the two gods to whom this hymn is dedicated neglected? What are the reasons for this play with identities? And why does Dīrghatamas bring his own work to the hymn? The answer to the first question is presumably indicated by the attribute *sujánman-* in stanza 1: Heaven and Earth are highborn and this is the reason for expounding their birth which results from the activities of a god. The second question may find its answer in an aspect of Dīrghatamas’ worldview: As can be seen in his most famous hymn, RV 1.164, the search for an underlying unity figures as an essential part in his poems. Presumably for that reason the god hinted at in RV 1.160 is Agni who has

6. For the poet as *váhni* cf. RV 1.48.11; 3.20.1; 5.79.4 and 8.6.2.

7. In RV 9.73.3 *pavíttravant* is used for poets.

8. At least if one accepts Jamison’s argument for the omphalos-structure of many RV-poems (Jamison 2004).

been established by Vedic poets as the underlying cause of a number of different phenomena. These indications surely have been understood by the poet's audience. But unexpectedly, in verse 3c-d the idiom changes from Agni- to Soma-talk. In RV 1.164 Dīrghatamas is repeatedly looking for a fundamental unity behind phenomena and—as it seems to be appropriate—in this question the neutral gender is used. In RV 1.160.3 Dīrghatamas may have wanted to indicate that not even Agni, being a male god, could be the ultimate answer. To address the final question of Dīrghatamas' cryptical reference to his own activity: Reference to poetic activity is a prominent feature of Rgvedic poetry and its occurrence in this hymn is therefore nothing unusual. However, Dīrghatamas' self-referential statement in verse 3 adds another aspect to this: It is a truism that being a poet means being creative. In the Rgvedic context this statement has to be taken literally: The poet contributes by his activity to the creation of the world and among the Rgvedic poets Dīrghatamas' displays an utterly distinctive consciousness about this. As a consequence it comes as no surprise that in a hymn focusing on creation the poetic activity itself is brought to the fore.

In RV 1.160, a small hymn of five verses, Dīrghatamas takes his audience on an odyssey into creation, language and identity, without an end in sight.⁹ That he succeeds in doing so he owes mainly to his literary genius.

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9. E.g., the role of Sūrya in this hymn has not been discussed. As a guess he as well might stand for the poet since both move between heaven and earth and can see all around.

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Lo studio dell'Asia fra antico e moderno. Giornate di studio, 10–12 giugno 2010.

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INTERPRETING THE TERM ŚAKTI
IN THE VEDIC CONTEXT

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This research is focused on the interpretation of one of the skr. terms more connoting the Indian culture: the term *śakti*. As it is well known, it denotes “the feminine, personified might of the gods” (Kinsley, *Hindu Goddess* 1986: 17), the power “in act” of a divinity or “the agency by means of which the gods execute their actions” (Das, *Śakti or Divine Power* 1934: 11). As to the earliest Indian texts, the question is: is such a meaning already appropriate in the Vedic corpora? Is it possible that in the Vedic texts the term *śakti* implies a different interpretation? Finally, how can we interpret such a term in a multi-faceted cultural stage as the Vedic one?

It is worth noticing that also the Hindu tradition admits a different meaning for the term *śakti*: for instance, in MDhŚ 8.315 the expression *śaktiṃ cobhayatas tiḥṣnām* is inserted in a list of arms, and in this case *śakti* denotes an arm ‘well sharp on both the sides’, probably a spear or pike; such a meaning is attested also in the Paninian grammar, where in Pāṇ 4.4.59 *śakti-yaṣṭy-ór ikáK* suggests that *śāktiká-* means ‘wielder of spears’ or ‘whose weapon is a spear’.

As to the etymological studies, the term *śakti* is interpreted as a feminine noun derived from the IE root **k^he(n)k(u)* (with nasal infix) ‘to be powerful’ + **-ti-*, attested especially in the Indo-Aryan languages, but also in the Old Irish (*cécht*). However, among the OIA languages, in the Old Indian one (the Vedic one) two forms of the term *śakti* are attested: *śákti-* and *śakti-*, respectively derived from IE **k^hék(u)ti-* and **k^hṅk(u)ti-*. It is not so clear if they must be considered two different forms of the same root, belonging to the same semantic sphere ‘to be powerful, power, etc’, or if they can be two homophone terms derived from two homophone roots, referred to two different semantic spheres: the first one is related with the meaning ‘to be powerful, power, etc’, and the second one is

related with the meaning 'to be sharp, spear, etc'. In this last sense, also the Skr. terms *śákala-* 'splinter', *śankú-* 'wood pin, hook', *śákuna-* 'bird (beak?)' belong to the same semantic field (such a semantic ambiguity is evident in RV 10.134.6). However, in my opinion, the point is not interesting only from the historical linguistic perspective—the question of one/double roots with nasal infix or not is opened—, but also from a wider cultural perspective: which is the relationship between abstract and concrete values, how a culture can “image” or “think” other than what is present and concrete in the objective reality.

In effect, coming back to the common Hindu interpretation, the term *śakti* conveys in itself a double value: on the one hand it is an abstract term, referred to an abstract realm—‘power-potentiality’—or to an extra-human realm—‘divine energy’—, not corresponding with a concrete object of the human realm. However, on the other hand, every “effect”-“fruit” of actions is due to it, that is to say that every element of existence (human or extra-human) is realized through such a “power”: *śakti* implies the explicit and the concrete realization of existence, and represents such a realization in act. Therefore, this term can be located in that threshold between abstract and concrete sphere, or—in linguistic terms—between abstract meaning and concrete referred object. In my opinion, it represents the core of the notion of ‘culture’: the capacity of producing something more than what is in nature, the capacity of giving existence to Otherness, either in a technical sense—the ability to shape or to produce hand-manufactured objects—or in a philosophical sense—the capacity of “imaging” or “thinking” the existence of “Other” beyond the objective reality. In particular, such a capacity passes through the language: words are able to say what is present and absent at the same time. Therefore, *śakti* represents in itself such an extraordinary “power”: to make present and existent what is absent and not existent in the objective reality.

At the light of these considerations, a study on the term *śakti-* in the Vedic texts can be a starting point to verify the multiplicity of the expressive possibilities of the word, especially taking into account that the Rigvedic word is metaphorically and imaginatively connoted.

TRIḤ SAPTA AND EKAVIṢṢATI IN THE
VEDIC LITERATURE: AN INSIGHT INTO
NUMBERS, RITUAL AND SYMBOLISM

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“Playing” with numbers in ancient holy traditions is always as intriguing as a hard task, the risk being to get lost in a labyrinth, without being able to find any proper way, at the end of which you could had no gain from it. This can be true mainly in a literature, as the Indian one, where a great deal of numbers seems to deserve special interest and attention. We will try to do it, hopeful to enlighten some interesting issues and draw a global picture at least not too obscure.

In this path we will begin from texts that, although very old, are not at the “origins” of the Vedic tradition; then, we will go back to the earliest texts to find some references in order to understand the source and the meaning of the concepts we are dealing with. Finally, we will research also into the “following” texts to shed light on the ideas and symbols that are behind those expressions. In the meanwhile, we will pose the question of the reliability and correctness of such methodological approach.

Our investigation started from an expression found in the Brahmanical ritual literature—mainly *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, but also few passages in *Aitareya* and *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*—which states the sun as the twenty-first (*ekaviṣṣa*). This statement is related to the explanation of different ritual situations where the number twenty-one (*ekaviṣṣati*) plays a role. In one of these, the golden disk (*rukma*), which in the fire altar piling ritual (*agnicayana*) is placed down at the building of the fire altar, representing the sun, has twenty-one prominences (*nirbādha*), and the given reason is that the sun is the twenty-first. The same reason is asserted in the horse sacrifice (*aśvamedha*) with regard to the sacrificial posts (*yupa*), where are tied the sacrificed animals (*paśu*) involved in the sacrifice. Others ritual elements are concerned too, as chants (*stomas*), oblations (*āhuti*) or kindling verses

(*sāmidhenī*), etc. The explanation found in these texts is that the sun is at the end of a list including the twelve months, the five seasons, the three worlds and the sun itself as the twenty-first. Furthermore, the central day of the *aśvamedha* is defined as *ekaviṃśa*, but the man, Prajāpati or the fire altar itself (probably the field where is build, *agnikṣetra*) are too.

In order to find some elucidations of this symbolism we will turn to have a look at the earliest text of the Vedic tradition, the *Ṛgveda* (RV). In the RV hymns we have only one attestation of the word *ekaviṃśati*, that does not give us a real help in our task, but we find many occurrences of the term *triḥ sapta*, the meaning of which we hold certainly as 'three times seven'. Some ones are also in the *Atharvaveda Samhitās* (AVŚ and AVP).

In one of the most famous RV hymn, the *Puruṣasūkta*, that describes the first sacrifice of the primordial cosmic man (Puruṣa), there is a reference to the thrice seven kindling-sticks (*samidh*) prepared when the gods, performing the first sacrifice, tied the Puruṣa as a sacrificial animal (*paśu*). These are the kindling-sticks used as fuel for the sacrificial fire. Again, we find a ritual context where the number twenty-one (or in this case thrice seven) is related to an element of the rite, and refers to a real amount.

In the other hymns, instead, the context is not very clear and this expression does not seem to refer to a real amount of real elements. Notwithstanding the range of different employments and the obscurity of certain contexts, we can undertake a path that lead, even though not to ascribe a sole unequivocally meaning to it (that is distant maybe in same way from the present writer's intention and from the texts themselves), to argue a link between the different passages and employments, placing them in the same mythological and symbolic *milieu*. By doing so, we will cross divine and mythical figures and concepts such as the cows and rivers, Maruts and *ṛsis*, rays, *pada* and *prāṇas*, in the earliest and less ancient texts, and we will outline a complicated symbolism pivoting the expression under examination.

Finally, the link between the conceptions of the later ritual literature and those of the earliest texts will be inquired. Do the importance of the number twenty-one and the concept of the sun as twenty-first in Brah-

manical literature share the same symbolic meaning of the oldest expression? Were the authors of the Brahmanical literature fully aware of the meanings and relationship of the different expressions? Are the later conceptions a further development of the earlier symbolism? Could we answer the question of the origin of the expression 'thrice seven' and of the prominence of the numbers 'three' and 'seven' in the ancient Vedic culture?

Probably, not all the significances of this symbolism can be grasped (especially in the lapse of a brief insight), as the reliability of a certain origin could escape as well; nevertheless, we can identify a shared background for all these ideas. At the end, we would like to give a quick glimpse of few similar conceptions in different traditions in a comparative perspective.

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Lo studio dell'Asia fra antico e moderno. Giornate di studio, 10–12 giugno 2010.

**THE PĀDMASAMHITĀ IN THE PĀÑCARĀTRA
TRADITION: HOW TEXTS AND TRADITION
ARE LINKED ONE TO ANOTHER?**

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FONTI E RAPPRESENTAZIONE ARTISTICA

Moderatore: Cristina Bignami

*Sabato 12 giugno 2010, ore 14.30–18.30
Museo di Arte Orientale*

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Lo studio dell'Asia fra antico e moderno. Giornate di studio, 10–12 giugno 2010.

**ŚIVA E IL SACRIFICIO: STUDI SULL'ANTICA
ICONOGRAFIA ŚAIVA ALLA LUCE DELLE
TESTIMONIANZE MONETARIE**

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LE CACCIATRICI INDIANE: DEE, NINFE, REGINE

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Il tema della caccia femminile nella scultura indiana, dall'antichità al medioevo, è molto raro. Contrariamente al prodotto artistico, le cacciatrici, sono dettagliatamente descritte in spoglie divine o semidivine nelle narrazioni e nei miti della tradizione orale. Dee delle foreste o emanazioni della Grande Madre, esse incarnano culti e tradizioni di comunità nomadi e pastorali.

La ricerca si sofferma sull'area geografica del Karnataka, in particolare sull'analisi di stele denominate *madanikā*, collocate nel tempio di Cenna Keśava, Belur, raffiguranti il tema della caccia muliebre. Fino a oggi interpretate come elemento decorativo, sinonimo di bellezza e sensualità, paragonate alle surasundarī dei templi Candella di Khajuraho, le *madanikā* celano dietro la scelta peculiare di tale soggetto, il loro originale significato che si distanzia molto da quello puramente ornamentale sostenuto dai più.

Attraverso un'interdisciplinarietà di studi, antropologici e artistici, si mettono a confronto le diverse fonti su quello che è il nucleo centrale del significato più arcaico della caccia, ossia il lato predatorio. Partendo dai reperti archeologici di Mohenjo-daro e Kalibangan, si ripercorre quella che è una prima manifestazione della dea, ferina e predatrice, correlata a quella che è la potenza e "voracità" della Natura; tale aspetto si manifesta nei secoli in forme e culti eterogenei, ma nonostante ciò l'origine recondita non è mai dimenticata. Ancora oggi, infatti, ciò che si evince dagli studi di Gunter Sontheimer è che il lato predatorio e ferino della dea è ben presente nei miti e nelle leggende dei clan dei Kuruba, comunità tribale da cui ebbe origine Viṣṇuvardhana, sovrano e mecenate della costruzione del tempio di Cenna Keśava.

Il materiale che appartiene alla tradizione orale, pazientemente raccolto e pubblicato, ci mostra una varietà e per un certo verso completezza, di quella che è la dea immaginata, descritta, narrata nelle sue diverse

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azioni e situazioni, che siano la caccia o qualsiasi altra attività. Purtroppo tutto ciò non è traslato nel campo figurativo e questo rappresenta la causa di maggior difficoltà interpretativa.

Il tema della donna con arco e frecce si trova in quello che è l'artigianato locale in forma di ciondoli o persino intagliato nei carri processionali, ma difficilmente si ritrova cesellato nella pietra delle costruzioni templari. Fanno eccezione i templi Hoysala di Belur e Halebid e la reiterazione in piccolo formato dei loro successori, i Vijayanagara.

L'obiettivo di tale studio è riuscire a comprendere appieno i motivi di tale scelta che avrebbe, inoltre, come conseguenza il far luce su un ben più ampio raggio nella storia dell'arte indiana di periodo medievale.

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LE RĀGAMĀLĀ DELLA SCUOLA PITTORICA DI SIROHI: NUOVE SCOPERTE

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I dipinti delle *rāgamālā*, letteralmente “ghirlanda di melodie” o “ghirlanda di modi musicali”, rappresentano uno dei soggetti trattati con maggior frequenza dalle scuole pittoriche rājput e in particolar modo da quelle rajasthanī.

Tra gli inizi del XVII e la fine del XIX secolo molteplici sono le serie prodotte dalle diverse tradizioni pittoriche del rajasthan che, pur mantenendo tutte una certa aderenza alla classificazione tradizionale del cosiddetto “sistema del pittore”, si differenziano le une dalle altre oltre che per fattori stilistici anche attraverso la modalità di elaborare ogni specifico soggetto.

La maggioranza delle iconografie dei diversi soggetti rimane invariata nel tempo, per ogni stile e ogni scuola che aderisce alla tradizione rajasthanī durante tre secoli di produzione. Tuttavia esistono alcune varianti di *rāga* e *rāginī* che a prima vista sembrerebbero generate da una confusione, da parte del pittore, tra tema da rappresentare e la formula pittorica per rappresentarlo, ma che a uno studio più approfondito risultano essere elaborazioni locali, o tradizioni minori, in uso presso una sola scuola o resa in un particolare stile.

Sono piuttosto rare le serie complete (che originariamente erano composte da 36 o 42 dipinti) arrivate fino a noi, ma numerosi sono invece gli esemplari singoli o di piccoli gruppi di tre o quattro dipinti appartenenti a una medesima serie.

A Sirohi la produzione di *rāgamālā* sembra fare la sua comparsa solo nella seconda metà del XVII secolo per sopravvivere solo qualche decade. Questa tradizione pittorica elabora dipinti di *rāga* e *rāginī* caratterizzati da colori particolarmente vivaci e saturi e dall'impiego di alcune iconografie uniche.

Ad oggi sono note solo una serie completa composta da trentasei dipinti, un'altra serie incompleta e, conservati in diversi musei del mondo, alcuni esemplari singoli riconducibili a dieci o dodici diverse *rāgamālā*. L'esigua quantità di materiale a disposizione rende difficile uno studio approfondito e puntuale che permetta di comprendere tutti gli aspetti di questo fenomeno artistico all'interno della tradizione pittorica di Sirohi.

Risulta quindi evidente l'importanza che riveste la scoperta di nuovo materiale attribuibile a questa scuola e il presente lavoro intende presentare un gruppo di tredici dipinti, appartenenti a un'unica serie di *rāgamālā*, fino ad oggi sconosciuto.

Isolando alcuni esemplari di particolare interesse iconografico si procederà alla discussione di alcuni aspetti specifici di questa scuola, già affrontati da Ebeling nel suo insuperato lavoro sulle *rāgamālā*, per poi valutare l'insieme dei nuovi dati derivati da questo gruppo di dipinti. Il materiale in discussione conferma alcune teorie di Ebeling e offre nuovi spunti di riflessione sulla natura e l'origine delle varianti impiegate dai pittori di Sirohi.

**TRADIZIONE O INNOVAZIONE? SVILUPPI DELL'ARTE
BUDDHISTA HIMALAYANA NEL XXI SECOLO**

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L'attenzione rivolta all'arte tibetana tradizionale del XX secolo da parte degli storici dell'arte e dei collezionisti è circoscritta a casi limitati. Questo atteggiamento tipicamente occidentale di valutare un oggetto in base alla sua antichità, non considera le finalità dell'arte himalayana. Tale scopo, infatti, non è quello di soddisfare esigenze di carattere estetico ma quello di farsi strumento propedeutico alle pratiche meditative e liturgiche. Ciò implica che le immagini siano pertinenti alle descrizioni rintracciabili nei testi cui fanno riferimento e che si attengano a regole iconometriche ed iconografiche che ne determinano l'ortodossia. Il ruolo degli artisti durante i secoli, dunque, è spesso passato in secondo piano rispetto al loro lavoro. Questo fenomeno ha determinato una conseguente carenza di informazioni biografiche relative agli scultori e ai pittori, benché ci siano pervenuti alcuni nomi di artisti che durante i secoli hanno lavorato alle dipendenze di nobili, abati e sovrani. Singolare è il caso di Anige (1245-1306), artista nepalese attivo fino agli inizi del XIV secolo alla corte della dinastia mongola degli Yuan, il cui percorso professionale e umano è stato descritto dallo storico cinese Cheng Jufu (1249-1318). Ma a parte esempi eccezionali come questo, gli artisti rischiano di essere dimenticati rimanendo in una sorta di limbo. Per questo motivo, alcuni tibetologi hanno iniziato ad occuparsi di questo tema, come Erberto Lo Bue che dagli anni settanta ad oggi ha documentato la produzione degli scultori newar della valle del Nepal e di alcuni pittori e scultori del Ladakh. Gli artisti del XXI secolo lavorano ancora oggi utilizzando tecniche e materiali tradizionali tramandatisi nei secoli da maestro a discepolo, senza interruzioni. Gli storici dell'arte devono inoltre riconoscere e accettare le innovazioni in campo artistico, legate a nuove concezioni e ad evoluzioni dell'arte tradizionale, che si sono sempre verificati, e che hanno introdotto idee, stili e tecniche innovati-

ve, come accadde ad esempio durante i primi secoli nella regione ghan-
darica, dove una certa visione del mondo di influenza greco-romana
non condizionò solamente lo stile delle opere d'arte ma anche le idee
filosofiche e dottrinali alla loro base.

L'intervento proposto avrà come oggetto d'indagine il ruolo di
Mukthi Singh Thapa, eccellente artista nepalese contemporaneo. Il ta-
lento di Thapa e la sua storia, fanno di lui un artista eclettico e originale
che, pur rispettando l'ortodossia, si sta spingendo verso nuovi orizzonti
concettuali, di confine tra arte tradizionale e moderna, nonché tra arte
sacra e religiosa. Tali inclinazioni riflettono mutamenti in atto anche in
ambito sociale e culturale oltre che religioso, che hanno dato vita a scuo-
le di artisti influenzati anche da concezioni e suggestioni tipicamente
occidentali. Certi cambiamenti non devono preoccupare gli estimatori
dell'arte tradizionale, a cui non compete la valutazione dell'ortodossia
delle immagini, appannaggio dei committenti e dei monaci che con-
sacrano le immagini. Come sosteneva il compositore austriaco Gustav
Mahler, "tradizione è tramandare il fuoco e non adorare le ceneri".

**IL CINEMA POPOLARE HINDI:
STRUTTURE NARRATIVE ED ELEMENTI DI
CONTINUITÀ CON LA TRADIZIONE**

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Nel corso della sua lunga storia il cinema indiano, e in particolare il cinema popolare hindi, si è evoluto enormemente, pur mantenendo da un punto di vista tematico e strutturale alcune caratteristiche specifiche e riuscendo così a resistere all'imperialismo culturale di Hollywood. Gli aspetti di continuità con la tradizione culturale indiana sono molteplici ed è proprio attraverso l'analisi di queste relazioni che è possibile evidenziare e interpretare le caratteristiche principali di tale singolare cinematografia.

Il giudizio sommario di alcuni critici, svolto secondo canoni cinematografici occidentali, accusa spesso il cinema popolare hindi di proporre una narrazione disomogenea, denuncia la totale assenza di realismo e la ripetitività delle trame e, soprattutto, punta il dito contro la presenza ingombrante delle tipiche sequenze di canto e danza che interrompono lo svolgimento della narrazione. Si tratta esattamente di alcune delle peculiarità del cinema popolare hindi, caratteristiche fondamentali che è opportuno analizzare alla luce della tradizione.

Fin dagli esordi il cinema indiano ha tratto ispirazione da stili, estetica e semiotica di una grande varietà di forme culturali che nei secoli si sono succedute in India, spesso integrandosi tra loro ed evolvendosi, dando vita a un immenso patrimonio culturale. Le influenze più evidenti sono certamente da ricercarsi nei grandi poemi epici indiani, nel teatro classico sanscrito, nelle varie forme di teatro popolare e nel teatro parsi, innovativo ed eclettico, da cui il cinema ha attinto direttamente un'originale forma stilistica e un vasto repertorio narrativo. In questa ottica, risulta interessante anche risalire alle radici della tradizione culturale indiana, ossia rivolgere l'attenzione oltre lo stadio di mediazione della trasposizione in forma scritta, alla ricerca degli elementi di continuità tra le strutture narrative del cinema popolare hindi e quelle tipiche della narrazione orale.