





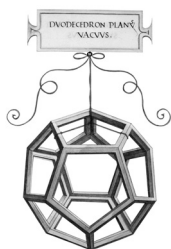
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E NELLA SOCIETÀ DELL'ASIA

Arts in Asian history and society

a cura di

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SABRINA RASTELLI

SONG (960-1279) CERAMICS: AESTHETICS, THEORIES, AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

In 1915, Robert Hobson, then assistant in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography, British Museum, defined the Song dynasty “an age of pottery in its purest manifestation”¹. What fascinated most collectors, curators, and connoisseurs was the intensity of Song monochrome glazes which greatly contrasted with the imported porcelain in vogue in Europe since the 17th century.

After the Second Opium War (1856-1860), a growing number of foreigners (government and customs officials, businessmen and travellers) established themselves in China and began to explore the Country. Among many other things, they discovered that ceramic production had a century-old history before the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and that pre-Ming (1368-1644) genres were completely different from those they were accustomed to. These “earlier” (in comparison with those imported first by Portuguese merchants) ceramics met the favour of the British in particular, but not only, and began to be assembled by private collectors who often lent their pieces to museums and galleries for special exhibitions². The impressive assemblages we can now admire at the British Museum or the Victoria and Albert Museum – just to mention two of the most remarkable ones in the West - owe their existence to great collectors, such as George Eumorfopoulos (1863-1939) and Augustus Frank (1826-1897). This interest for “earlier” ceramics stimulated research and the publication of important volumes on the subject. To begin with, western research almost exclusively depended on Chinese sources and, as a consequence, the first publications were translations of authoritative Chinese books. In 1856 Stanislas Julien (1799-1873) published his translation of the *Jingdezhen taolu* 景德鎮陶錄 (Notes on Jingdezhen ceramics), written by Lan Pu 藍浦 in 1815³, while

¹ R.L. HOBSON, *Chinese Pottery and porcelain. An Account of the potter's art in China from primitive times to the present day*, vol. I, “Pottery and Early Wares”, New York, Funk and Wagnalls company, London, Gassell and company, 1915, p. xxii.

² For an interesting and captivating account of the reasons behind the formation of Chinese collections in the UK, see J.T. GREEN, *Britain's Chinese collections, 1842-1943. Private collecting and the invention of Chinese art*, PhD dissertation, University of Sussex, 2002, accessed through ETHOS <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.271892>.

³ Stanislas Aignan Julien (1797 – 1873) was a very famous French sinologist who was appointed second Chair of Sinology at the Collège de France in 1832 succeeding Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat

Stephen Bushell (1844-1908) translated the *Taoshuo* 陶說 (Theories on ceramics)⁴ in 1891 (but not printed until 1910) and the *Lidai ming ci tupu* 歷代名瓷圖譜 (Illustrated catalogue of noted porcelains of successive dynasties)⁵ which appeared in 1908⁶.

Ancient texts, appeared since the 13th century, list a series of wares/kilns⁷. The number and order of the wares mentioned is very variable, but usually manuscripts start with Chai 柴, a ware not yet identified, but said to have been used by the Later Zhou (951-960) imperial family – the last

(1788-1832). A. JULIEN, *Histoire et fabrication de la porcelain Chinoise*, Paris, Mallet-Bachelier, 1856.

⁴ Written by ZHU Yan 朱琰 in 1774, in HUANG BINHONG 黃賓虹 and DENG SHI 鄧實 (eds.), *Meishu congshu* 美術叢書, Shanghai, Shenzhou guoguang shi, 1947, ji 集 2, ji 輯 7.

⁵ Compiled by XIANG YUANBIAN 項元汴 (1525-1590) at the end of the 16th century, surviving only in Bushell's publication.

⁶ Stephen Wootton Bushell (1844-1908) was medical doctor of the British Legation in Beijing from 1868 to 1900. S.W. BUSHELL, *Description of Chinese pottery and porcelain being a translation of the Taoshuo*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1910, digitized version <https://archive.org/details/descriptionofchi00zhuy/>; S.W. BUSHELL, *Chinese porcelain. Sixteenth century coloured illustrations with Chinese MS text by Hsiang Yuen-P'ien*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1908, digitized version <https://ia700509.us.archive.org/17/items/chineseporcelain00hsia/chineseporcelain00hsia.pdf>.

⁷ The most important ones in chronological order are: *Fuxuan zalu* 負暄雜錄 by GU WENJIAN 顧文薦, published between 1260 and 1279, it survives only in the form of excerpts in the *Shuofu* 說郛 by TAO ZONGYI 陶宗儀, preface dated 1370, in *Shuofu xu* 說郛續, compiled by TAO TING 陶頌纂, published by Li Jiqi Wanweishan tang 李際期宛委山堂, 1646 清順治三年; *Laoxue an biji* 老學庵筆記, by LU YOU 陸游 (1125-1210), in *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書, zi 子 section no. 171, zaji 雜家 category, general vol. 865, pp. 1-89; *Tanzhai biheng* 坦齋筆衡, by YE ZHI 葉真, Southern Song dynasty, 13th century, it survives only in the form of excerpts included in the *Chuogeng lu* 輟耕錄, by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀, written in 1366, in *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書, zi 子 section no. 346, xiaoshuojia 小說家 category, general vol. 1040; *Gegu yaolun* 格古要論, by CAO ZHAO 曹昭, written in 1387, in *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書, zi 子 section no. 177, zaji 雜家 category, general vol. 871, pp. 85-114, translated by Sir Percival David as *Chinese connoisseurship – The Ko ku yao lun, the essential criteria of antiquities*, London: Faber & Faber, 1971; *Xuande dingyi pu* 宣德鼎彝譜, by LÜ ZHEN (et al.) 呂震 (1365-1426) (等), in *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書, zi 子 section no. 146, pulu 譜錄 category, general vol. 840, pp. 1019-1068; *Yanxian qingshangjian* 燕閑清賞箋, by GAO LIAN 高濂 (end of 16th cent), in HUANG BINHONG 黃賓虹 and DENG SHI 鄧實 (eds.), *Meishu congshu* 美術叢書, Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguang shi, 1947, 集 3, 輯 10; *Qingbi zang* 清秘藏, by ZHANG YINGWEN 張應文, published in 1595, in *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書, zi 子 section no. 178, zaji 雜家 category, general vol. 872, pp. 1-29; *Liuliqing* 留留情, abridged version of the *Liuqing rizha* 留情日札 edited by XU MOUSHENG 徐懋升, published in 1614, 1614 edition available at SOAS Library. The *Ming Qing biji congshu* 明清筆記叢書, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992, pp. 757-759 non-facsimile edition of the *Liuqing rizha* 留情日札 also reports the sixth *juan* of the *Liuliqing* dedicated to ceramics; *Bowu yaolan* 博物要覽, by GU TAI 谷泰, written between 1621-1627, in *Zhongguo jindai xiaoshuo shiliao xubian* 中國近代小說史料續編, Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1986; *Wuzazu* 五雜俎, by XIE ZHAOZHI 謝肇制, written in the 1620s, in ZHANG YIPING 章衣萍 ed., *Guoxue zhenben wenku* 國學珍本文庫, 1st series, no. 13, vol. 2, Shanghai: Zhongyang shudian zongdian, 1935; *Nanyao biji* 南窯筆記 by an anonymous author, was published during the Qianlong reign 乾隆 (1736-1795), in SANG XINGZHI 桑行之 et al., *Shuo tao* 說陶, Shanghai: Keji jiaoyu, 1993, pp. 369-374; *Wenfang sikao tushuo* 文房肆考圖說, by TANG BINGJUN 唐秉鈞, written in 1776 and published in 1778, 1778 library edition available at SOAS library.

of the Five Dynasties (907-960) that dominated China before the Song reunification. The second ware is Ding 定 (fig. 1, tav XI), accepted by the Song court, but as it had the mouth rim bound with metal, Ru 汝 kilns were ordered to supply the court with blue-green⁸ ware (fig. 2).



Fig. 1 – Bowl, Ding ware, H. 7.8 cm. Excavated from the Lingshanzhen kiln site, Quyang, Hebei

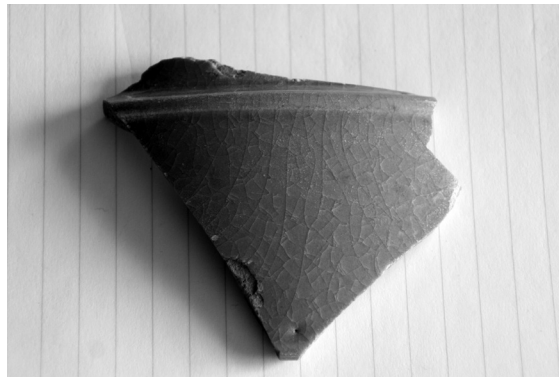


Fig. 2 – Fragment, Ru ware. Excavated from the Qingliangsi kiln site, Baofeng, Henan

However, soon the government founded its own official *guan* 官 kilns, which gave the name to the ceramic there produced. The kilns are said to have been set up in the capital Bianjing 汴京 (today's Kaifeng) and when the court established itself in Lin'an 臨安 (today's Hangzhou), after

⁸ As the Chinese term *qing* 青 means both “green” and “blue” and it refers indeed to glazes of blue and green colours, the author has decided to use this translation.

the Jurchen occupation of the north, the official kilns were first under the Xiuneisi 修内司 control (fig. 3, tav XII) and then also set up in the capital outskirts, at Jiaotaxia 郊壇下.



Fig. 3 – Zun-shaped incense burner, Guan ware, H. 14 cm. Excavated from the Laohudong kiln site, Hangzhou, Zhejiang

The identification of Ding ware has never been a problem; Ru was identified by Sir Percival David in 1936⁹ and the kilns were finally located in 1986 at Qingliangsi 清凉寺, Baofeng 寶豐 (Henan)¹⁰. The so-called Northern Guan (supposedly made in Kaifeng) has never been found, while both Southern Guan kilns are well known: Jiaotaxia was surveyed in the 1930s and in 1956 and excavated in 1984-86¹¹; Xiuneisi was finally located at Laohudong 老虎洞 (just outside the Song imperial palace) in 1999¹².

⁹ P. DAVID, *A commentary on Ju ware*, « Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society », XIV, 1936-37, pp. 18-69.

¹⁰ WANG QINGZHENG (et al.), *The discovery of Ru kiln. A famous Song-ware kiln of China*, Hong Kong, Woods Publishing Co., 1991.

¹¹ ZHOU REN 周仁, *Fajue Hangzhou Nan Song Guanyao baogaoshu* 發掘杭州南宋官窯報告書, Beijing, Guoli zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 1932; SHA MENGHAI 沙孟海, *Nan Song Guanyao Xiuneisi yaozhi wenti de shangque* 南宋官窯修內司窯址問題的商榷 (Discussion on the question of the site of the Southern Song Xiuneisi kilns), «Kaogu yu wenwu», 1985, 6; YE HONGMING (et al.) 叶宏明等, *Nan Song Guanyao qingci de yanjiu* 南宋官窯青瓷的研究, «Zhongguo gu taoci yanjiu», 1987, 1; ZHU BOQIAN 朱伯謙, *Tan Nan Song Guanyao* 談南宋官窯, «Zhongguo gu taoci yanjiu», 1987, 1.

¹² DU ZHENGXIAN 杜正賢, *Hangzhou Laohudong Nan Song Guanyao yaozhi de kaoguxue yanjiu* 杭州老虎洞南宋官窯窯址的考古學研究, «Gugong Bowuyuan yuenkan», 2002, 5, pp. 1-7; QIN DASHU, DU ZHENGXIAN (ed.) 秦大叔, 杜正賢, *Nan Song Guanyao yu Geyao. Hangzhou Nan Song Guanyao Laohudong yaozhi guoji xueshu yanlunhui lunwenji* 南宋官窯與哥窯。杭州南宋官窯老虎洞窯址國際學術言論會論文集 *Guan and Ge wares of the Southern Song*, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Daxue chubanshe, 2004; in English, DU ZHENGXIAN, *Archaeological research conducted on the Laohudong kiln site in Hangzhou*, in S. PIERSON (ed.), *Song Ceramics: Art history, archaeology, technology, Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia No. 22*, London, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 2004, pp. 193-207.

Yuan, Ming and Qing sources mention other kilns, some still unidentified, such as Dong 董, while others, such as Longquan 龍泉, Ge 哥, Jun 鈞, Jian 建, Jizhou 吉州, Cizhou 磁州 and Raozhou 饒州, are well known. The amount and order of the listed kilns are irregular, therefore it seems that there was not a preference for a specific group. However, maybe because most texts discuss Chai, Ding, Ru, Guan and Ge, 20th century scholars have interpreted this chronological succession as a selection of the best Song wares. From this has emerged the theory of the “five famous wares of the Song dynasty” (*Songdai wu da ming yao* 宋代五大名窑), according to which Ding, Ru, Jun, Guan and Ge were superior wares made for the Song court. This concept has dominated the discourse on Song kilns since the 1970s, deeply influencing the understanding of Song ceramics for decades, and it has been passed down as a theory proposed in ancient literature, explaining how ceramic wares were used and appreciated in Song times. However, a thorough re-examination of the sources reveals that none of the texts mentioned above sets aside Ding, Ru, Jun, Guan and Ge as superior wares, let alone that they were used by the imperial house – except for Ding, Ru and Guan which are in different ways connected to the court. Jun is not even mentioned until the second half of the 15th century, and the only text singling out Chai, Ru, Guan, Ge, Jun and Ding, as wares present in the court collection, is the *Xuande dingyi pu* 宣德鼎彝譜¹³, allegedly compiled in 1428, but more likely to have circulated in the late 16th century¹⁴ – in any case it does not seem to have influenced later writers and the above-mentioned types were however included in the Ming imperial collection, not the Song one. Many other 16th century – and later – literary sources mention or discuss pre-Ming wares, but the number and order of the listed kilns is rather flexible and a Song dynasty date is seldom specified. What emerges, instead, is the clear divide between pre-Ming kilns and Ming production, the latter coinciding with wares made during different reign periods of that dynasty at Jingdezhen. A hint that transpires from these sources, without being clearly stated, is the link that associates Chai, Ru, Guan, and Ge, which presumably resides in the bluish tinge of the wares. Chai, Ru and Guan are also connected to the Song court – together with Ding, but Ge is not. The only Ming text to identify Ding, Ru, Guan and Ge as Song is the *Wuzazu* 五雜俎¹⁵, published in the 1620s. However it will not be until the middle

¹³ See note 7 above.

¹⁴ QIN DASHU 秦大树, “Junyao san wen 钧窑三问” (Three questions on Jun ceramics), «Gugong bowuyuan yuankan», 2002, 5, pp. 16-26; S. RASTELLI, *The controversial history of Jun ware/La controversia storia delle ceramiche Jun*, in G. REPETTI, S. RASTELLI, R.L. ENSEKI HANCOCK, *Jun shards in the collection of the Chinese Museum of Parma*, Brescia, C.S.A.M., 2011, pp. 1-15.

¹⁵ See note 7 above.

of the 18th century that Ding, Ru, Guan, Ge, Longquan and Jun ceramics will be regularly associated with the Song dynasty.

So where does the concept of the “five famous wares of the Song dynasty” derive from¹⁶?

In 1915, Xu Zhiheng 許之衡 states that “Chai, Ru, Guan, Ge and Ding, the famous five Song kilns”, is a common term among ceramic experts¹⁷, and in 1928, Chen Wanli 陳万里, the father of ceramic archaeology, reiterates saying that every scholar knows the comprehensive term “Chai, Ru, Guan, Ge, Ding”¹⁸. However, like Xu Zhiheng, he excludes Jun and keeps doing so as late as 1963, when he introduces Guan ware as one of the four famous Song kilns, as Chai is in fact related to the Later Zhou court of the Five Dynasties period¹⁹. In spite of this, in 1958, according to Guan Songfang 关松房, the classification of Ding, Ru, Jun, Guan and Ge as the five famous great kilns of the Song dynasty is already an acquired notion²⁰.

It seems, therefore, that from the end of the 16th century, Ding, Ru, Guan and Ge are always listed, but no-one says that they were the outstanding wares of the Song period. The fact that they are often recorded in this order is due to their history: Ding used to be accepted by the Song court, but was then substituted by Ru ware until Official kilns were established first at Kaifeng and then at Hangzhou – first the Xiuneisi and then the Jiaotianxia factories. The singling out of Chai, Ru, Guan, Ge and Ding as the most famous Song kilns transpires in books published not before the beginning of the first republican period – Minguo 民国 (1911-1949). However Jun is usually excluded from this shortlist and often comes after Longquan. Moreover the association with the court is made only about Chai, Ding, Ru and Guan for their particular history, but they are not explicitly defined as imperial wares.

The concept of the *Songdai wu da ming yao*, where Jun substitutes Chai ware, is therefore a 20th century notion that surreptitiously emerges in the 1950s and slowly, but inexorably asserts itself until it becomes unshakable

¹⁶ In a paper dedicated to Jun wares, Li Baoping suggested that the term may have been coined in the 20th century, see LI BAOPING, *Numbered Jun wares: controversies and new kiln site discoveries*, «Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society», LXXI, 2006-2007, pp. 65-77.

¹⁷ XU ZHIHENG 許之衡 (1877-1935), *Yinliuzhai shuoci 飲流齋說瓷*, 1915, *juan 5*, in SANG XINGZHI 桑行之, *Shuotao 說陶*, Shanghai: Shanghai keji jiaoyu, 1993, p. 52; text also retrievable from <http://wenku.baidu.com/view/a97204ffbba0d4a7302763aa0.html>.

¹⁸ CHEN WANLI 陳万里, *Longquan qingci zhi chubu diaocha 龍泉青瓷之初步調查* (Preliminary investigation on Longquan blue-green ware), in *Chen Wanli taoci kaogu wenji 陳万里陶瓷考古文集 Collected works on archaeology and ceramics by Chen Wan Li*, Beijing, Zijincheng chubanshe, and Taipei, Lianmu chubanshe, 1989, pp. 33-38.

¹⁹ CHEN WANLI 陳万里, *Zhongguo lidai shaozhi ciqi de chengjiu yu tedian 中国历代烧制瓷器的成就与特点* (Achievements and characteristics of ceramic firing in China through successive dynasties), «Wenwu» 1963, 6, pp. 26-41.

²⁰ GUAN SONGFANG 关松房, *Jindai ciqi he Junyao de wenti 金代瓷器和钧窑的问题* (Questions about Jin dynasty ceramics and Jun kilns), «Wenwu cankao ziliao», 1958, 2, pp.

in the 1980s. It does not reflect the perception of Song kilns by Ming connoisseurs and even less the perception of Song wares by their contemporaries. Why this concept was elaborated, is difficult to pinpoint: if Jun ware is unquestionably beautiful, Longquan is certainly not inferior, and yet the first one was chosen to replace Chai ware.

Before this re-examination of ancient texts, however, archaeological excavations carried out in the past 15 years had already begun to instil doubts on the reliability of the theory of the “five famous wares of the Song dynasty”. Excavations conducted in 2001 and 2004 at Shenhouchen 神屋鎮 and Yuzhou 禹州 city (Henan), for example, have proved that Jun flower vessels and stands (fig. 4), until then believed to be Song imperial Jun, were actually fired in the Yuan and early Ming dynasties.



Fig. 4 – Flower pot, “Imperial Jun” ware, H. 14,4 cm. National Museum of History (Beijing)

Nonetheless, not all experts agree on the later date of these pieces, so the debate is still ongoing²¹. From archaeological evidence, it appears that in the Song period, the Shenhouchen kilns first produced a type of Jun characterised by a sky blue monochrome glaze and scars left by spurs placed under the base during firing. At the very end of that dynasty, a variation appeared: irregular purple splashes were added to the sky blue glaze creating a striking chromatic contrast (fig. 5).

²¹ References on Jun ware are plentiful, the most relevant ones for this discourse are: Beijing Daxue Zhongguo kaoguxue yanjiu zhongxin 北京大学中国考古学研究中心, Henansheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 河南省文物考古研究所, *Henansheng Yuzhoushi Shenhouchen Liujiamen Junyao yizhi fajue jianbao* 河南省禹州市神屋镇刘家门钧窑遗址发掘简报 (Brief report of the excavations at the Jun kiln site at Liujiamen, Shenhouchen, Henan), «Wenwu» 2003,11, pp. 26-52; Henansheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 河南省文物考古研究所, *Yuzhou Juntai yao* 禹州钧台窑 (Juntai kilns at Yuzhou), Beijing, Wenwu chubanshe, 2008; LI BAOPING, *Numbered Jun wares: controversies and new kiln site discoveries*, «Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society», LXXI, 2008, pp. 65-77; S. RASTELLI, *The controversial history of Jun ware/ La controversia storia delle ceramiche Jun*, in G. REPETTI, S. RASTELLI, R.L. ENSEKI HANCOCK, *Jun shards in the collection of the Chinese Museum of Parma*, Brescia, C.S.A.M., 2011, pp. 1-15.



Fig. 5 – Bowl, Jun ware with purple splashes, H. 6 cm. Excavated from the Shenhouchen kiln site, Yuzhou, Henan

In the course of the Jin dynasty (1115-1234), during which Jun kilns were greatly developed, monochrome pieces diminished consistently, while those with purple splashes became typical, but no “imperial Jun” has emerged from Song and Jin strata.

Ge ware is the other weak point in the “five famous wares” theory, as we still ignore when and where it was produced. The situation is made even more uncertain by the fact that not even the distinctive features of this genre are clear. In 1963 Chen Wanli 陳萬里 distinguished two types of Ge: one called “textual Ge”, as its description derives from literary sources, the other called “handed-down Ge”, that is, held in all major museum collections²². “Textual Ge” is described in 14th century sources as very similar to Guan ware, with a bluish-grey glaze, dark mouth and foot rims (in Chinese *zikou tiezu* 紫口铁足 or “purple mouth and iron foot”) (fig. 6); pieces made at the end of the Yuan dynasty are said to be of lesser quality, while those made earlier (but nobody specifies how much earlier) are better²³.

²² CHEN WANLI 陈万里, *Zhongguo lidai shaozhi ciqi de chengjiu yu tedian* 中国历代烧制瓷器的成就与特点 (Achievements and characteristics of ceramic firing in China through successive dynasties), « Wenwu » 1963, 6, pp. 26-41.

²³ *Zhizheng zhi ji* 至正直記, *juan* 卷 4, *Yaoqi buzhu zhen* 窯器不足珍, by KONG Qi 孔齊 (unknown dates, but alive in 1367), in *Song Yuan biji congshu* 宋元筆記叢書, Shanghai, Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987, p. 156; *Gegu yaolun* 格古要論, by CAO Zhao 曹昭, written in 1387, in *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書, *zi* 子 section no. 177, *zajia* 雜家 category, general vol. 871, pp. 85-114, translated by Sir Percival David as *Chinese connoisseurship – The Ko ku yao lun, the essential criteria of antiquities*, London: Faber & Faber, 1971;



Fig. 6 – Bowl, “Textual Ge” ware?, H. 5.5 cm. Excavated from the Xikou kiln site, Longquan, Zhejiang

“Handed-down Ge” is characterised by light body, very pale glaze and a double network of crackles (in Chinese *jinsi tiexian* 金丝铁线 “gold thread and iron wire”)²⁴ (fig. 7).

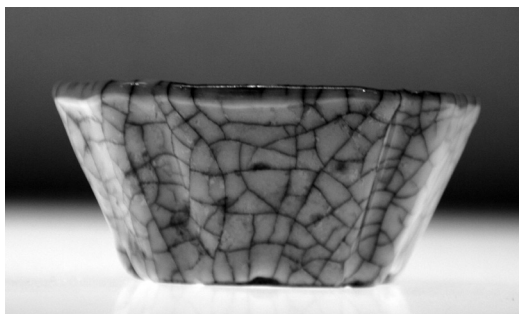


Fig. 7 – Bowl, “Handed-down Ge” ware, H. 3.5 cm. National Museum of History (Beijing)

While “handed-down Ge” is easy to recognize, “textual Ge” is very elusive. However, while no kiln has so far produced sherds comparable to “handed-down Ge”, since the 1950s several attempts have been made to identify “textual Ge” with dark-bodied specimens uncovered in the Longquan area and later at Laohudong²⁵.

²⁴ CHEN WANLI 陈万里, *Zhongguo lidai shaozhi ciqi de chengjiu yu tedian* 中国历代烧制瓷器的成就与特点 (Achievements and characteristics of ceramic firing in China through successive dynasties), « Wenwu » 1963, 6, pp. 26-41.

²⁵ ZHEJIANGSHENG QINGGONGYE (ed.) 浙江省轻工业 (编), *Longquan qingci yanjiu* 龙泉青瓷研究 (Research on Longquan blue-green ware), Beijing, Wenwu chubanshe, 1989; DU ZHENGXIAN 杜正贤, *Hangzhou Laohudong Nan Song Guanyao yaozhi de kaoguxue yanjiu* 杭州老虎洞南宋官窑窑址的考古学研究, «Gugong Bowuyuan yuenkan», 2002, 5, pp. 1-7; in English, DU ZHENGXIAN 杜正贤, *Archaeological research conducted on the Laohudong kiln site in Hangzhou*, in S. PIERSON (ed.), *Song Ceramics: Art history, archaeology, technology, Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia No. 22*, London, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art,

The first explanation of the name “Ge”, “elder brother”, appears in a 16th century source, the *Chunfengtang suibi* 春风堂随笔 by Lu Shen 陆深 (1477-1544)²⁶, which tells the story of two brothers, by the surname Zhang 章, both running kilns in the Longquan area – to be noted that this is also the first time Ge ware is associated with Longquan kilns – and as the elder one fired light-coloured specimens, the latter were called “Ge” (presumably to distinguish them from the pieces produced by the younger brother). Later texts elaborate on crackles, but none of them states that Ge ware is characterised by a double set of crackles. A re-examination of literary sources reveals, as in the case of the “five famous wares of the Song dynasty”, that the *jinsi tiexian* designation is a 20th century definition, first applied by Chen Wanli and then used by generations of scholars as if it had derived from the distant past.

The other bizarre aspect of “handed-down Ge” is this very definition: all the pieces in the imperial collection are handed down, no matter the genre. So why only this is defined as such? Maybe the reason is that, as this specific type was easy to single out because of the pale glaze and the double set of crackles, it was labelled as Ge, although we do not know whether it really was a type of Ge, nor when it was produced. As to “textual Ge”, none of the attempts to identify it with sherds uncovered at some kiln sites in the Longquan area or at Laohudong has been fully convincing²⁷, therefore until now both its production place and its aspect remain a mystery.

Concerning the question of Song ceramic aesthetics, the theory of the “five famous wares” and the appreciation of some western collectors between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th have deeply influenced our perception of Song taste, characterised (we have been told) by the perfect balance between monochrome glazes that heighten simple, but elegant, forms, which in turn enhance the glaze texture and hues. The fact that some shapes are common to monochrome lacquers of the Song dynasty seems to reinforce this theory, although Song ceramics also included types characterised by chromatic contrasts, such as splashed Jun,

2004, pp. 193-207; LU MINGHUA 陆明华, *Shishu Longquan heitai qingci* 试述龙泉窑黑胎青瓷 (Tentative description of black-bodied Longquan blue-green ware), in ZHONGGUO GU TAOCI XUEHUI (ed.) 中国古陶瓷学会编, *Longquanyao yanjiu* 龙泉窑研究 (Research on Longquan kilns), Beijing, Gugong chubanshe, 2011, pp. 45-54.

²⁶ The year in which the *Chunfengtang suibi* was published is unknown, but it must have been compiled before Lu Shen’s death in 1544. For the text, see *Qinding siku quanshu* 钦定四库全书, *zi* 子 section, *xiaoshuojia* 小说家 category. For a survey of literary sources mentioning Ge ware, see LI BAOPING 李宝平, “Yuan Ming wenxian zhong jizai de Geyao ji xiangguan wenti 元明文献中记载的哥窑及相关问题 (Ge ware recorded in Yuan and Ming texts and related questions)”, in QIN DASHU 秦大叔, DU ZHENGXIAN 杜正贤, *Nan Song Guanyao yu Geyao. Guan and Ge wares of the Southern Song* 南宋官窑与哥窑, Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue, 2004, pp. 257-262.

²⁷ See above footnote no. 25

and Ding ware owes its colour to the body, not the glaze. The type of porcelain known by Europeans was that from south China (mainly from Jingdezhen 景德镇, “Raozhou” in ancient sources referring to pre-Ming production), whereas the history of northern porcelain dates as far back as the Sui (581-618) – Tang (618-907) period, when it was first produced at kilns in the provinces of Hebei (Xing 邢 and Ding) and Henan (Gongxian 巩县). Ding kilns were established in Quyang 曲陽 county in the Tang dynasty and their Song production was stylistically comparable to contemporary Yaozhou 耀州 ware, except, of course, for the colour, which is a vivid green on Yaozhou specimens (fig. 8).



Fig. 8 – Bowl with cover, Yaozhou ware, H. 10.8 cm. Excavated from the Huangbaozhen kiln site, Yaozhou, Shaanxi

Despite the fact that the glaze is monochromatic, the decorative motifs, carved or impressed underneath, make the glaze hues fluctuate from light to dark, thus resulting in a very lively effect. The quality of Northern Song Yaozhou ware is extremely high, but its style is undoubtedly different from that of Ru ware. During the 11th century, the dominant genres were Ding and Yaozhou, but at the end of that dynasty, when emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1100-1126), also known as the aesthete emperor, was sitting on the throne, aesthetic taste underwent a marked change. Emperor Huizong began to appreciate translucent, bluish glazes, such as Ru and (presumably) Northern Guan, which made decorative motifs carved or incised underneath useless. We do not know how Northern Guan specimens looked like, but judging from Ru and Southern Guan features, it is easy to guess. Before they were requisitioned by the court at the beginning of the 12th century, Ru kilns mainly fired Yaozhou-type ware. It is difficult to establish how strict control over Ru pieces not sent to the imperial house was, but judging from the appearance of monochrome Jun and the so-called “moon-light” type developed by Yaozhou potters, clearly inspired by Ru ware, it is possible to conclude that the subdued and yet powerful style favoured by emperor Huizong established a new trend that cultivated people quickly embraced.

When the Southern Song court established its capital at Hangzhou, the Longquan kilns adapted their production to the new fashion: there is a type of Longquan, characterised by blue glaze and crackles (fig. 9) that some scholars consider an imitation of southern Guan, while others reckon it was southern Guan made at Longquan when the Hangzhou kilns could not meet imperial orders²⁸.

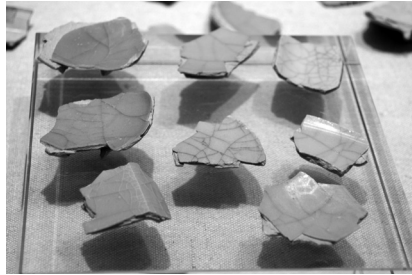


Fig. 9 – Fragments, Longquan ware with bluish, crackled glaze. Excavated from the Xikou kiln site, Longquan, Zhejiang

Nevertheless, when the “five famous wares of the Song dynasty” theory was developed in the 20th century, Chai ware was substituted with “imperial” Jun, rather than Longquan.

Besides these types, distinguished by their translucent, monochrome bluish or green glazes, other genres were produced during both the Northern and Southern Song dynasties. In north China, for example, Cizhou ware, characterised by a variety of different decorative techniques all centred on chromatic contrasts (fig. 10), was particularly successful.

In modern literature (both Chinese and Western), Cizhou ware has been defined as “popular”, an ambiguous term that lends itself to misconception. Cizhou kilns were certainly not imperial, but nor were Ding: they were “private” factories (a much more accurate and clearer term), like all the others, except for Guan kilns - the only true official manufacture. It is very likely that no Cizhou piece ever reached the Song court, nonetheless the complexity of some techniques and the sensibility of some decorative patterns show that these specimens could not be destined to common people, unless by this term we mean all social classes, included cultivated and well-off ones, below the imperial family. If this were the case, however,

²⁸ There are several papers on this subject, one of the most recent is LU MINGHUA 陆明华, *Shishu Longquan heitai qingci* 试述龙泉窑黑胎青瓷 (Tentative description of black-bodied Longquan blue-green ware), in Zhongguo Gu Taoci Xuehui (ed.) 中国古陶瓷学会编, *Longquanyao yanjiu* 龙泉窑研究 (Research on Longquan kilns), Beijing, Gugong chubanshe, 2011, pp. 45-54.

Ding porcelain ought to be classified as “popular” too, as the kilns were not run from the capital and the objects could be bought by anybody.



Fig. 10 – Fragment, Cizhou ware with painted design. Excavated from the Guantaizhen kiln site, Cixian, Hebei

The style of Jian and Jizhou wares is slightly less flashy in comparison with Cizhou, nevertheless their body is thick and rather rough, unlike that of Guan or Longquan pieces. Having said that, it is undeniable that Jian and Jizhou wares are aesthetically very charming, thus demonstrating the coexistence of different styles, or better still, different styles for different purposes: Ru ware was appropriate for ceremonial use at court, while Jian cups were perfect for tea drinking.

This shows that we should be more flexible and accept the simultaneous existence of several trends, rather than try to reduce Song aesthetic taste to one fashion, which prevents us from really understanding how diverse wares were perceived and used.



ABSTRACTS

GIAN CARLO CALZA

Scattered Visions of Dao

Aware of the impossibility to talk about something not subject to being interpreted by abstract nor rational concepts like Dao, the author has chosen to offer a selection of literary as well as pictorial visions by some leading figures in East Asian civilization. The aim is not to provide the lecture listener, and presently the essay reader, with new material or a new intellectual approach to better understand Daoism, a subject certainly not in want of publications. The essay is rather the effort of stimulating the reader to penetrate the world of Dao with his own senses and sensitivity by way of offering direct images of life experiences having become culture. In this way it is hoped he will be able to receive a message for his own personal self-understanding. This is the main reason why the essay moves freely, and apparently arbitrarily, among literature and art, from China to Japan and over a period of some twenty-five Centuries up to the present time. Such various parts are however linked by an undeclared *fil rouge* leading the different visions.

SABRINA RASTELLI

Song (960-1279) ceramics: aesthetics, theories, and archaeological discoveries

Song ceramics have been highly appreciated in the West since they were first imported at the end of the 19th century and in China since at least the 13th century. The concept of “five famous wares of the Song dynasty”, namely Ding, Ru, Jun, Guan and Ge, has informed the discourse on Song ceramics as if it had been transmitted from a remote past, thus influencing our perception. But was it really?

Archaeological excavations carried out in the past 15 years have undermined the reliability of the theory of the “five famous wares” prompting a thorough re-examination of ancient Chinese written sources which has

proved that, in fact, it is a 20th century notion that surreptitiously emerged in the 1950s and slowly, but inexorably asserted itself until it became unshakable in the 1980s. It does not reflect the perception of Song ceramics by Ming connoisseurs and even less the perception of Song wares by their contemporaries

The paper concludes with a long comment on the aesthetics of Song ceramics which re-considers what was favoured by the court (in Kaifeng and Hangzhou) and the main genres produced at the time. The outcome is a more balanced judgement that lays the groundwork for future research into the appreciation of ceramics in Song times.

TIZIANA LIPPIELLO

The rebirth of classical culture in contemporary China

On the occasion of the 2565th anniversary of Confucius' birth the International Confucian Association (Guoji ruxue lianhehui 國際儒學聯合會, ICA) organized the fifth International Congress in Beijing inviting more than 200 scholars from all over the world. The ICA, an international non-profitable academic organization formed by Academic societies, institutions and individuals relating to Confucianism from all over the world, is supervised by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China and managed by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China. Its purpose is "to study Confucian thinking, and to absorb and promote the essence of Confucian thinking to facilitate the liberty, equality, peace, development and common prosperity of humanity." (Constitution, art. 3)

The congress, held in Beijing from September 24 to 27, 2014, was followed by rites and ceremonies at the Confucius Temple in Qufu, in Shandong province, Confucius' hometown. Unexpectedly, President Xi Jinping delivered the opening speech: "On Wednesday he became the first Chinese president to address an international meeting on the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC)" (*China Daily*, September 25, 2014). Xi quotes Confucius as positive example for a modern nation, since "culture is the soul of a nation"... "If a country does not cherish its own thinking and culture, if its people lose their soul, no matter which country or which nation, it will not be able to stand". As we know, Confucian doctrines, which promoted values as moral righteousness, harmony, peace, loyalty, friendship, family relations etc. were promoted in ancient China and during imperial time, but they were denounced a century ago by Chinese scholars and intellectuals who saw in Confucian culture the main cause of China's decline and backwardness. Now, as in many historical phases of Chinese history, Confucianism has been rising since the last decades

of the twentieth century and today it has reached its climax. But what is Confucianism today in China? What kind, if any, of syncretism is the word *ruxue* 儒學 representing in contemporary China and what is the message addressed to the world?

EMANUELE BANFI

Processes in semantics relating to the notion of 'art': a comparison between Chinese and Indo-European languages

This short paper deals with semantic strategies related to the notion of 'art' in both Indo-European languages (namely in Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Baltic, Slavic, Germanic and Celtic) and in Chinese.

The first part of the paper employs parameters of historical linguistics to analyse the semantic evolution of the following Indo-European roots: i) * r_1 - / *ar- / *er- (* h_2r -/* h_2er -) > *arti- > Lat. *ars*, *artis*; ii) *te k^s - (*te-t k^s -) > *te k^s -snā > *τέκκ-/τέκκτ-σνā > Gr. τέχνη, ἥ; iii) * $\hat{\text{g}}\eta$ -/* $\hat{\text{g}}\eta\bar{\text{o}}$ - (* $\hat{\text{g}}\eta$ [e]h₃) > * $\hat{\text{g}}\eta$ -(s)ti- > Germ. *kun(s)t; iv) * $\hat{\text{g}}\text{us}$ - / * $\hat{\text{g}}\text{ews}$ > Slav. *izkus- > *iskus- > Sl. *iskustvo*. It is interesting to notice that many of these Indo-European roots are on the basis of lexemes related to very ancient rural, liturgical rites attested in many Indo-European cultural environments.

The second part of the paper, by means of the so-called 'graphic etymology', is devoted to the analysis of the following Chinese characters (equally depending on ancient rural traditions) meaning 'art' / 'technique': i) *yì* 藝 / 艺; ii) *shù* 術 / 术; iii) *jì* 技.

The final part of the paper puts forward a comparison between the semantic strategies documented both in Indo-European languages and in Chinese with a view to discovering, as far as regards the semantization of the notion of 'art' in both linguistic environments, the existence of common 'semantic universals'.

ELENA DE ROSSI FILIBECK

A note on Tibetan manuscripts as an art form

The illuminations that adorn the pages of the Tibetan manuscripts constitute a form of art that became widespread after the second introduction of Buddhism in Tibet (10th-11th century). According to the theory whereby canonical texts were considered the material support of the word of Buddha, the pages on which they were written were decorated as a sign of veneration since they were considered sacred. The illumination was then

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carried out also on the manuscripts of religious texts. My paper illustrates the connection between painting and illuminations, starting from the technique as well as from the choice of subject and from the respect for iconometric and iconographic rules.

RANA P.B. SINGH

Kashi: representation in the sacred cartographic art in the 19th century

The cosmogonic representation of *Kashi Mandala* is a result of sacred cartography, an art depicting the pilgrimage-cognitive perspective and the world of divinities as perceived and experienced by the devout Hindus on the line of pilgrimage traditions since ca. CE 12th century. In the 19th century six such sacrosanct artistic maps were made. The first of this series refers to the *Saptapuri Yatra* (1873), showing the seven pilgrimage-areas and the city as circle at the centre. The second map, *Kashi Darppana* (1876) is an extension of the preceding one with more preciseness of direction, mandalic frame and associated divinities. Later in 1877 a series of three maps called *Kashi Pradakshina* attempt to depict spatial location, textual citation and details of the important pilgrimages. All these five maps are incorporated into finally developed two mandalic-cosmo-maps dated ca CE 1900 that shows built architecture and iconographic art. All these seven artistic maps have followed within an aesthetic purview the symmetry of codification, messages and cosmogonic view, which could further be compared with scaled and modern artistic maps. These sacrosanct-cum-artistic maps throw light on the making of sacredscapes of Banaras (Kashi).

MARCO RESTELLI

Globalized Bollywood. Art and Film Industry in India in the Age of Globalization

Today Indian film industry is a powerful multimedia system aiming to sell its products (not only movies but music, dance videos, commercial tv channels, magazines, websites, etc.) to international markets. Indian cinema always looked abroad but today reveals a systematic tendency to globalization. This phenomenon is part of a broader process of globalization involving Indian economy and society; it also contributes to the current growth of Soft Power (i.e. of attractiveness and cultural influence) of India all over the world.

The aim of this study is to analyse five matters: 1) why, for the most part of the twentieth century, Indian cinema (and Bollywood mainstream in particular) was underappreciated by Westerners, which had not the cultural tools to understand references to Indian tradition, its values and aesthetics, in the movies; 2) industrial and cultural differences between *masala* movies and art movies in India; 3) the gradual renunciation of traditional values and aesthetics in Indian popular cinema, increasingly taking on behaviours and values derived from the West, so as to depict a real “genetic mutation” of Indian cinematography; 4) the main features (both in production and art fields) of the new Global Bollywood, which emerged since the nineties of the last century and today is challenging Hollywood in all fields; 5) risks and paradoxes (as well as opportunities) that this genetic mutation implies for the Indian society and culture of today and tomorrow.

ALDO TOLLINI

Cultura del tè in Giappone - una forma d'arte estremamente raffinata e rappresentativa della cultura giapponese.

In Japan *cha no yu*, or in Western terms, the tea ceremony is highly appreciated and is one of the most characteristic traditional art which includes various craftsmanships, like flower arrangement, gardening, architecture, ceramics, painting, etc.

As a Way, the Way of Tea, or *sadō*, was born and developed in the middle ages, that is during the XV and XVI centuries, among the merchant class, and then from the XVII century on became an almost exclusive prerogative of the ruling warrior class.

In this essay I try to explain the difference between an art and a Way, suggesting that the second has also a spiritual and moral value which lacks in the first and describe the characteristics of *sadō* highlighting its aesthetic and moral value.

NICOLAS FIÉVÉ

The legendary topography of the locality of Katsura

Prince Hachijō no miya Toshihito (1579-1629) undertook the construction of a retirement villa in the locality of Katsura on the outskirts of Kyoto at the beginning of the 17th century. His son, Prince Toshitada (1620-1662), expanded the villa and its grounds, giving the site its present-day appearance.

Owing to the beauty of its architecture and landscape design, the villa served as a model for a great many retirement villas built by the nobility throughout the Edo period (1603-1868). As a unique example of its kind and one of the best-preserved vestiges of Japan's rich tradition of aristocratic architecture, the legacy of Katsura remains invaluable. No other 17th century mansion so perfectly expresses the quintessence of Japan's ancient elite culture.

At the time the villa was built, the court was barred from all political activity and encouraged to live a life of leisurely and cultural pursuits. The princes, invoking the *genius loci* of Katsura, thus embarked on an unprecedented architectural and landscape project that would be an ode to the genius of past poets incarnating the most glorious moments of imperial virtue. Drawing inspiration from the mythical tales and literature that transfigured the locality, and using the architectural forms and devices of the day, they sought to bring back to life the gardens of the ancient aristocracy. The resulting complex and garden played a pivotal role in the subsequent development of Japanese architecture and landscape design.

The aim of the paper is to highlight the intertwining myths and legends that shaped the history of the famous place Katsura from ancient times on (573-1185). The study is based on the study of poems, from the *Man'yō-shū* to the *Shin-Kokin-shū*, and on some aspects of the mythology expressed in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. This history reflects the fundamental relationship between man and sacred, earth and heaven, and reveals the elements that constituted the legendary topography of Katsura, a major centre for the Heian aristocracy, a land of renaissance, revived and glorified anew through the Hachijō Princes' architectural endeavour.

BONAVENTURA RUPERTI

On the roots of the puppet theatre

Narration and Buddhist world in the sekkyōbushi

The present paper attempts to delineate a landscape of evolutions and transformations of the buddhist world, preaching, and narrative dramas, from *sekkyō* 説教 (buddhist sermons), to *setsuwa* 説話 (the literal meaning of *setsuwa* means "spoken story" but it consists in myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes, stories of miraculous happenings which carry a moral message) and its anthologies 説話集, reaching the tragic and fantastical world of the *sekkyōbushi* (buddhist narrative style) narrative dramas, and ultimately puppet theatre. In medieval and pre-modern Japan *sekkyōbushi* was a musical performance of religious stories, that expresses the world of a story with voice and gestures of a *sekkyōshi* (performer) at a crossroad in a town, where people come together, like a street musician today, or then

in fixed theatres as a chanting accompanying puppet dramas. The style reached its greatest popularity in the mid-17th century.

The paper in particular focuses on the characters and their legends such as they appear in *sekkyōbushi* classic dramas: from *Karukaya* かるかや (菀萱) to *Oguri* をぐり (

小栗判官), from *Sanshōdayu* さんせう太夫 (山椒大夫) to *Shintokumaru* しんとく丸 (新徳丸), until *Aigonowaka* 愛護若, the most representative texts of *sekkyō*

These stories, in addition to other legends, heartrending and horrifying, reflect the world of medieval Japan and the dominant motifs of *sekkyō*: wives separated from husbands, mothers/fathers bereft of their children, suffering, illness, discrimination, beggary, long and painful journeys, in plots of extraordinary creative energy, which will ultimately contribute to creating imagery within the medieval and premodern era in theatre and in fine arts.

GIAN LUCA BONORA

Archaeological researches in the Republic of Kazakhstan during the years of independence (1991-2015)

This article presents the results of the most important excavations and the scientific achievements of the archaeological research in Kazakhstan from 1991, year of the independence, till today. Archaeological fieldwork in this country has been vigorously resumed since the beginning of the 1990s. However, the results of this work remains largely unknown to the non-Russian and non-Kazakh speaking public. This reports seeks to introduce and describe the results of archaeological fieldwork carried out in Kazakhstan over the last twenty-five years, thereby focussing on the periods from prehistory to the Middle Age, and to discuss the impact of these new results upon currently prevailing opinions regarding the cultural development not only in Kazakhstan but also across the Eurasian expanse.

SERIKKUL SATENOVA

Traditional popular Kazakh music and poetry

The Kazakh culture is very rich and diverse. During the formation of the Kazakh nation appeared specific musical traditions. As a result the rich musical culture was determined. Traditional music of the Kazakh people is the most significant treasure of rich spiritual legacy. It has been left to

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Kazakh people by ancestors, who have accumulated the beauty and wisdom of the Kazakh steppes for many centuries. And now it is historically and culturally significant value. Kazakh national songs, various types of traditional music have become the realistic record of Kazakh history. The rituals connected with the child's birth, weddings, funeral repast, usually were accompanied by singing.

EDOARDO CANETTA

The art of education in Abai Kunanbaev

Abai Kunanbaev (1845-1904) was born in a rich white *Jurta* in the village of Karauyil, the east of Kazakhstan. Abai attended not only the *Madresse* of his locality, for the initial studies about the Holy Quran, but also tried to learn Greek Philosophy, lectures on the scientific character and the foreign literature. Since he attended the Russian school also, he could understand the western culture also. He started to dedicate his life for the poetry only after his forties, because the poetry is the highest expression of the human spirituality. We can find the theme of education in the entire life of Abai. It is above all a self-reflection and also based on the literature. His writings are always regarding the spiritual and cultural formation of the Kazakh people. A real intelligent man cannot be away from the spiritual destiny of his own people. The attention given in the beginning of the education process by Abai is very interesting. The encounter of the children with reality is very important because it is not only something that we have to remember with nostalgia, but it is also very necessary to conserve the teachings.

GIAMPIERO BELLINGERI

Following the verses and the directions of Central Asia, on the thread of junctions and memories

Following the verses and the lines marking the landscape between Central Asia and the Bosphorus, the article could be a representation of a survey of the destinations of some literary genres (i.e. the "quatrains", the lyrics/ghazel): a travel moving from Kashgar (11th century, with Mahmûd Kashgarî), then observing the applications and practices of those forms along the centuries and the geographies. We remember `Ali Shir Nevâ'î, (15th century, Herât), Nedîm (18th century, Istanbul), and N. Hikmet; (without neglecting Iran and the Caucasus, with the Turkic contributions of Shah Isma`il, Vaqif...).

During this ideal travel, we can also get a general idea of the routes and modes of a reception of these literary forms (and we are indeed very conscious that they are a very particular and precious kind of “other gods”) in the West: often, but not always, through the Republic of Venice.

