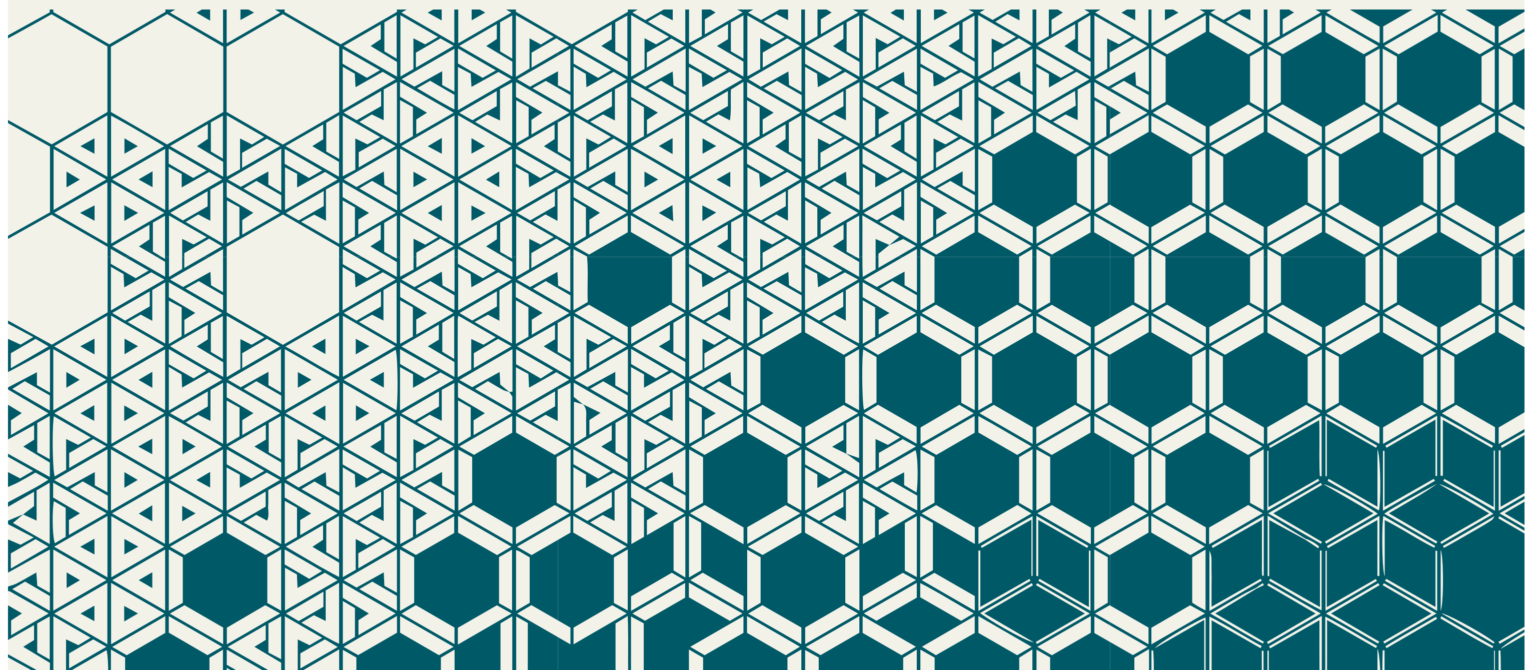
Studi e ricerche 12

Proceedings of the XV East Asia Net Research Workshop

edited by
Daniele Brombal

Edizioni
Ca'Foscari



Proceedings of the XV East Asia Net Research Workshop

Studi e ricerche

12

Edizioni
Ca’Foscari

Studi e ricerche

Direttore | General Editor
prof. Eugenio Burgio (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Comitato scientifico | Advisory Board
Vincenzo Arsillo (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)
Agar Brugiavini (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)
Giovanni Colavizza (École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Suisse)
Giulio Giorello (Università degli Studi di Milano, Italia)

Comitato scientifico del EAN Workshop | EAN Workshop's Advisory Board
Werner Pascha (Universität Duisburg-Essen, Deutschland)
Tiziana Lippiello (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)
Ana Guy Yamamoto (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, España)

URL http://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/it/edizioni/collane/studi-e-ricerche/

Proceedings of the XV East Asia Net Research Workshop

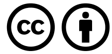
Venice, May 14-15, 2015

edited by Daniele Brombal

Venezia
Edizioni Ca’ Foscari - Digital Publishing
2017

Proceedings of the XV East Asia Net Research Workshop. Venice, May 14-15, 2015
Daniele Brombal (edited by)

© 2017 Daniele Brombal for the text
© 2017 Edizioni Ca' Foscari - Digital Publishing for this edition



Quest'opera è distribuita con Licenza Creative Commons Attribuzione 4.0 Internazionale
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

Qualunque parte di questa pubblicazione può essere riprodotta, memorizzata in un sistema di recupero dati o trasmessa in qualsiasi forma o con qualsiasi mezzo, elettronico o meccanico, senza autorizzazione, a condizione che se ne citi la fonte.
Any part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission provided that the source is fully credited.

Edizioni Ca' Foscari - Digital Publishing
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
Dorsoduro 3246
30123 Venezia
http://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/
ecf@unive.it

1a edizione giugno 2017
ISBN 978-88-6969-190-4 [ebook]

Publication of this volume has been funded by the Department of Asian and North African Studies, University Ca' Foscari Venice. Scientific and institutional support has been provided by East Asia Net (EAN).

Certificazione scientifica delle Opere pubblicate da Edizioni Ca' Foscari - Digital Publishing: tutti i saggi pubblicati hanno ottenuto il parere favorevole da parte di valutatori esperti della materia, attraverso un processo di revisione anonima sotto la responsabilità del Comitato scientifico della collana. La valutazione è stata condotta in aderenza ai criteri scientifici ed editoriali di Edizioni Ca' Foscari.
Scientific certification of the works published by Edizioni Ca' Foscari - Digital Publishing: all essays published in this volume have received a favourable opinion by subject-matter experts, through an anonymous peer review process under the responsibility of the Scientific Committee of the series. The evaluations were conducted in adherence to the scientific and editorial criteria established by Edizioni Ca' Foscari.

4Proceedings of the XV East Asia Net Research Workshop. Venice, May 14-15, 2015 / A cura di Daniele Brombal. — 1. ed. — Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari - Digital Publishing, 2017. — 142 p.; 23 cm. — (Studi e ricerche; 12).
URL http://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/it/edizioni/libri/978-88-6969-190-4/
DOI 10.14277/978-88-6969-190-4

Proceedings of the XV East Asia Net Research Workshop
Venice, May 14-15, 2015
edited by Daniele Brombal

Sommario

Editor's Introduction to the Volume
Daniele Brombal 7

NATURAL RESOURCES, CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Ecological Discourse and Ecological Risk in China
Sean Golden 13

Small and Micro-Scale Hydropower in Japan
A Solution to Energy Transition?
Yveline Lecler 31

The Social Construction of Seawater and Seascape in Japanese Fishing Communities
An Interpretative Framework of Agency and Sense of Place
Giovanni Bulian 65

CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC DIPLOMACY

China According to China
Web-Based Nation Branding of Chinese Culture, Geography and History
Tobia Maschio 87

How to Carve Out a Town
A Multi-Level Perspective on Hanoi's Japanese Quarter
Marco Zappa 101

Fooling the World or Fooling Itself: China's Spectacular-Oneiric Society
An Intervention from a Critical Cultural Studies Perspective
Gregory Lee 121

Proceedings of the XV East Asia Net Research Workshop
Venice, May 14-15, 2015
edited by Daniele Brombal

The Social Construction of Seawater and Seascape in Japanese Fishing Communities
An Interpretative Framework of Agency and Sense of Place

Giovanni Bulian
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Abstract This paper gives a preliminary overview of the processes of social construction of seawater and seascape in Japanese fishing communities. Attention is directed to the interactions of local fishermen with their maritime territories, exploring also the modalities in which seawater is contextualized and negotiated in relation to a disparate constellation of symbolic values, embodied practices and economic activities. A theoretical framework, based on the social construction theories, is also provided to define the role of seascape and seawater as powerful agents that produce culture and interact with social practices.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Seascape as Sensorial Landscape. – 3 Relationality of Seascape. – 4 The Symbolic Power of Seawater. – 5 Conclusion.

Keywords Japanese fishing communities. Seawater. Seascape. Environmental anthropology. Landscape phenomenology. Folk religion.

> The sea is multiple, it moves, and it is dense and cohesive. Its multiplicity lies in its waves; they constitute it. They are innumerable; the sea-farer is completely surrounded by them.
> (Canetti 1978, 80)

1 Introduction

Starting from a sea-set multi-sited ethnography located along the coastal and insular areas of Ise Bay and Shima penisula,[1] this paper explores the socio-cultural interactions between local fishermen and seascape, explor-

1 The ethnographic research period took place from 2008 to 2009, then between 2014 and 2015. The main coastal and island villages where research was conducted are the fishing communities of Kamishima, Kuzaki, Sugashima, Tōshijima, Sakatejima, Kuzaki, Ijika and the city of Toba (all located in Mie prefecture).

Studi e ricerche 12
DOI 10.14277/6969-189-8/SR-12-1 | Submission 2017-01-19 | Acceptance 2017-02-01
ISBN [ebook] 978-88-6969-190-4
© 2017 | Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License

ing also the modalities in which seawater is contextualized and negotiated in relation to a disparate constellation of symbolic values, cultural practices and economic activities.[2] Despite the vast amount of anthropological literature on the cultural perception of landscape and seascape, in the context of Japan, critical research following this perspective has not been produced yet. There are, therefore, methodological precautions adopted in this introductory essay. Firstly, it was given greater prominence to the theoretical approach than the ethnographic context in order to provide an overall picture to a research topic that has been exclusively and extensively described but not theorised in Japanese Folklore Studies (cf. Hiroyuki, Schnell 2003). Secondly, this paper is an attempt to consider seascape and seawater as two physically interdependent but culturally independent elements, since there is not any critical distinction that could be drawn between physical representations of a 'natural seascape' and symbolic representations of a 'cultural seascape' (cf. Ingold 2000). Echoing also the thoughts of Tilley, "[seascape] is not something 'natural' and opposed to people, but totally socialized. It is a symbolic form, a series of signs relating to the […] past on which people draw in day to-day experience and through which they live" (1994, 38).

Following this perspective, the contribution of this paper is to give, firstly, a preliminary overview of the cultural dimensions of seawater, mindful that fresh water or other aqueous phenomena demand their own specific interpretive approach (cf. Helmreich 2011). Water is a fundamental environmental element invested with a 'total meaning', which has historically occupied an ambiguous place in anthropological categories, especially in broader discourses on "nature" and "culture" (Strathern 1980, 181; Strang 2004, 4; also quoted in Helmreich 2011, 132). As Helmreich observed, "water oscillates between natural and cultural substance, its putative materiality masking the fact that its fluidity is a rhetorical effect of how we think about 'nature' and 'culture' in the first place" (2011, 132). Although the models of modernity have imposed an "indifferent look to water" (Van Aken 2012, 11), it is still invested by many forms of symbolic valorisations and it is "experienced and embodied both physically and culturally" (Strang 2004, 4). From an anthropological perspective one of the main characteristic of water is its "authoritativeness" (Solinas 2002, as quoted in Breda 2005, 3), because it is not "purely a *resource* […] rather an *active subject*, even a *creative agent* in some cultures" (3; Author's italics). Recognising the authoritativeness of water means carefully comparing water to a ritual rather than a natural element (4), as being trafficked and frequented as

2 I would like to thank the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) and, in particular, the Director Dr. Sudo Ken'ichi, Professor Taku Iida, and Professor Kazunobu Ikea for helping me during my ethnographic research. Greetings are due also to Dr. Yoshitaka Ishihara, Director of the Toba Sea-Folk Museum.

a busy intersection (Rosaldo 1989, as quoted in Breda 2005, 4; Van Aken 2012). Far from being a mere, residual, passive factor, or limiting natural element in shaping biologically human life (Strang 2004; Van Aken 2012), water is articulated in a socially network of shared meanings.

Bearing also in mind that salinity is one of the main distinctive features of seawater, determining various physical characteristics and aspects of the chemistry and of biological processes within it, the meanings encoded in the saltiness of water emerge from an intimate interaction involving practices and other cultural forces that contribute to produce a "socially built environment" (cf. Lawrence, Low 1990). Seawater is generally recognised as "water from the ocean, that is salty"[3] and the presence of salinity, which characterises its identity and distinguishes seawater from other typologies of waters, offers also a discursive analysis of the practices of cultural construction and social organisation, which transform an aqueous environment into the anthropological category of landscape. Such perspective is even more evident by using the holistic term of 'seascape', which is generally defined as "an area of sea, coastline and land, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of land and sea, by natural and/or human factors" (Briggs, White 2009, 5). According also to Pungetti "landscape is the visible interaction of abiotic, biotic and human processes developing on the earth surface over time. The interaction of these processes on the coast, sea and adjacent waters constitutes the seascape. Coasts outline the link between landscape and seascape" (2012, 52).

Taking the above-mentioned issues into consideration, this paper focuses on a series of key anthropological questions: in which way are the individual natural elements, such as seawater, which compose the environmental and geographical features of a seascape, linked to the cultural practices? And what social values could they determine? How does seascape become a complex cultural and social process involved in active relationships between people? This series of questions is connected to a broader interpretative model related to the 'social production theories' (cf. Lawrence, Low 1990), which take the main concepts of habitus, locality and structuring (cf. Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984) and tend to highlight the impact of social action on a given environment. Taking into account that it is obviously impossible here to focus on the countless modalities of the exploitation of marine aquatic environments by human groups in a particular context and at a particular time, this paper aims to give some examples of patterns of interpretation, values, norms, practices and beliefs, which are embedded in encompassing political-economic, cultural structures and

3 URL `http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/sea-water` (2017-01-05).

constraining forces of ecological adaptations related to seawater. From this perspective, seawater is, therefore, presented in a kaleidoscopic flux, transformed into culturally meaningful phenomena because of its material qualities (namely, transmutability, reflectivity, transparency, fluidity) which are, at the same time, *inherent* and *reactive* to seawater (cf. Strang 2004).

In what follows, this paper proposes a scheme of some interrelated key categories that define the previously mentioned idea of authoritativeness of seawater, and are here summarised into three analytical perspectives, namely: seascape as a sensorial landscape, relationality of seascape and seawater as a powerful symbol. All these categories demonstrate how the sea – a term understood in this paper as a broad interpretative category that includes both seawater and seascape – becomes a place and agent with a power capable of imprinting "a pattern of knowing, acting and being" (Brown, Humberstone 2015, 23) on Japanese fishermen. In conclusion, the idea that seascape is therefore "a place with character, agency and personality" is stressed (Anderson, Peters 2014, 9), in which seawater plays a role of powerful connecting link between seascape and local fishermen.

2 Seascape as Sensorial Landscape

The physical setting of Japanese archipelago is characterised by an elongated shape in north-south direction, which has played a fundamental role in moulding the country's natural landscapes (Karan 2005, 9). Japanese archipelago has also a long and irregular coastline, which is characterised by a variety of coastal features, and lowlands overlooking the sea. In other words, from a geographical point of view, Japanese people have objectively a sort of 'maritime outlook'. The perceived landscape and seascapes are a refined interpretation of observed patterns across specific cultural patterns and, in the context of fishing communities, seascape typically represents a socially constructed place (cf. Hirsch, O'Hanlon 1995), especially when it is considered as an *operative* place. As result of considerable accumulated adaptive experiences, Japanese fishing communities located in the rugged coastlines or in the small islands still exhibit a highly nuanced ecological sophistication, which offers a critical understanding of the maritime environment related to the perception and the cultural organisation of the territory. That is, through the 'fluid knowledge' of daily practices, seascape is covered by a 'mantle of symbols'.

Two salient aspects could be found in general discourses around landscape: firstly, seascape, as just seen, is considered as a 'cultural process' (Lai 2000, 9; see also Ingold 1993), in which the social, technical, symbolic, economic aspects are closely tied to ecological ones (Lai 2000, 9); secondly, landscape could be reconnected to discourses on the 'geography of the senses' (Rodaway 1994, 9), which considers "four senses (touch, smell, hearing

and sight) in turn, identifying their distinctive contributions to geographical experience at individual and social levels, in different historical, cultural and technological contexts" (Rodaway 1995, 9). Leaving aside for now the first aspect, which constitutes the main framework of a given social organisation, I use the expression 'sensorial landscape' to indicate and summarise the idea of fusion of experience and sensuous knowledge of space, which produce a practical knowledge of place, based on habitus (Bourdieu 1977).

According to this perspective, then, the expression "seascape as sensorial landscape" clearly shows the well-established anthropological approach to the dialectical relationship between local environment and human perception of place, which expresses the existential and phenomenological reality of place, focusing on the sensory dimensions, such as, smell, feel, sight or colour (Richardson 1982, 1984, Lawrence-Zúñiga, Low 2003). The concept that better expresses this practice of moulding the sensorial and practical experience into microgeographies of daily life is the "embodied place" (Richardson 1982, 1984), a model to understand the creation of place, which is defined as "the location where human experience and consciousness take on material and spatial form" (Lawrence-Zúñiga, Low 2003, 2). In this context, one of the main cultural device of territorial identification that creates an "embodied place" is the language, which expands the territory out of its 'objective reality' showing how the experience has sedimented in a cumulative way, and bringing with it a layering of notions and practices of place (Duranti 1992; Csordas 1994; Lawrence-Zúñiga, Low 2003).

Based on these premises, I now present some brief examples from my research experience in the area of Ise Bay and the Shima peninsula, to make an 'ethnographic synthesis' of the role of language in encoding the local environment as a means for sustaining the integrity of local knowledge systems and, on the cultural and sensorial perception of seascape and its culturally dominant and characterising element: seawater. I did fieldwork in Kamishima, a small island located at the entrance of Ise Bay, between Mie prefecture and Aichi prefecture. Asking information from any inhabitant of Kamishima on the main business activities of this fishing community was perhaps the easiest part of my ethnographic interviews. Often, especially when interviewing fishermen, I began with questions like, "What species are fished in Kamishima?", "How is the local fishery?", "How fishery has changed over the last twenty/thirty years?", "People who works in the boats are related to each other?", and so on. As it often happens during the early stages of ethnographic research, these apparently simple questions helped me to look for a point of contact, a topic of common interest. In some cases, however, this approach could also be a backfire, causing me some embarrassment: "What colour is your sea?" asked me an old fisherman with a passion for painting. Not knowing exactly what to answer, the fisherman began to describe *his sea* using local terms that were not always easy to understand. One of these terms was *aka ami* (liter-

ally 'red sea'), which indicates the reddish colour of the surface of the sea, when the schools of *kōnago* ('sandfish' or *Ammodites personatus*) came up to the surface attracted by the glitter of some rods used in a complex traditional fishing technique called *kōnago sukui*.

The *kōnago sukui* represents, along with *takoryō* (octopus fishing), the main activity carried out by Kamishima fishermen and is called *otoko no shigoto* (men's work), which is to be distinguished from fisherwomen's diving activities. According to the local fishermen, the nets were lowered into the sea not far from the coasts of Kamishima and only one boat carrying three fishermen was used. The schools of sandfish were identified thanks to the cormorants, followed by seagulls, which flew over the schools of fish when they reached the surface, colouring the water of red. The role of the birds was also important to understand how deep the *kōnago* was allocated: if cormorants still flew over the *aka ami*, it meant that the fish had not yet reached the surface. In this case, fishermen threw the rocks into the sea to scare *kōnago* dividing them into smaller groups so that they quickly reached the sea surface. The experience encapsulated in the memories of this fisherman shows how seawater is not reducible to a technical vision: it is obviously part of a technical event where, however, the technique is a condensate of practical knowledge, senses and social institutions. As my informant told me, to practice *kōnago sukui* is necessary to have a 'good view' (*mega yoku*), 'intuition' (*satoru*) and a good 'technique' (*jukuren*), and required a complex cooperation between fishermen.

Another similar example, where senses and knowledge of place are strongly related to the fishermen's practical experience, is the traditional fishing technique of *tarozame* (basking shark). The main fishing areas, where local fishermen use a pear to catch *tarozame*, are the coastal area of Atsumi Peninsula, in south-eastern Aichi prefecture, and offshore area of Enshu sea. During March and April, seawater temperature came to 13-14 degrees and the behaviour of seasonal wind trend is a 'meteorological signal' for local fishermen for the beginning of shark fishing season. That is, when strong northwest wind is getting weak in March and south wind (*maze*) starts blowing. Fishermen catch *tarozame* in a fishing area where 'green bay' water and offshore 'blue water' of Kuroshio (the north-flowing ocean current on the west side of the North Pacific Ocean) are mixed making a junction line at the mouth of Ise Bay. As local fishermen explained, seawater at Ise Bay contains freshwater from the rivers, where the presence of large masses of plankton attracts sharks, thus giving fishermen the opportunity to fish them with a harpoon. Even in this case, the perception of water colours is part of a traditional ecological knowledge, intensified senses and practical skills, including distinctive signs and symbols associated with this environmental system (Berkes, Folke 1998).

Finally, I will present a brief example of the perception of seascape and seawater from an 'internal' perspective: the case of the fisherwomen

of the coastal village of Kuzaki, located in the Shima peninsula, where they generally dive to fish *awabi* ('abalone', *Haliotis sorensen*) and seaweeds near the coast or offshore. In this context, seawater represents a way in which these fisherwomen have given a cultural meaning to their 'sea world': not coincidentally, the word with which they are called is *ama*, 'sea women'. As being completely surrounded by seawater, *ama*'s fishing technique represents a vivid example of the "complicity between the body and the environment and the two interpenetrate each other" (Shields 1991, 14). It follows that underwater diving is related to a sensuous knowledge of place, which is based on the strength, visual acuity and physical resistance.

The so-called 'fifty seconds battle' (*goju byō no shōbu*) is a folk expression used by these fisherwomen to indicate how they bet on each short dive to catch as many abalones as possible using particular diving techniques. *Isobue* (ocean whistle) is a particular breathing technique, for example, used by *ama* when they return to the sea surface. This fishing technique, as any diving activities, requires also the visibility of the sea bottom. In Ise Bay and in the coastal area, the seabed is particularly sandy and, during storms or when strong seasonal winds are blowing, the sand raised by marine currents hinder the fishing of *awabi*. *Ama* use a saying to explain this phenomenon: "The sand blows from the bottom of the sea" (*sunaga soko kara kuru fuite*), i.e. an expression that explains not only how these divers have elaborated a detailed knowledge of the morphological characteristics of the sea bottom, but also refers, more indirectly, to how they have a particular sensuous ordering of space. Sea bottom becomes, therefore, an 'embodied map' traced thanks to their ability to see and memorise, for example the holes (*ana*) in the rocks where abalones are hiding, or to the ability to predict the intensity and direction of the winds that blow on the sea surface based on the type of sea current that flows on the sea bottom.

What 'emerges' from the examples is that seascape is part of a broader performative network of human and non-human relations acted out in practice. It is a submerged world, in which the meanings conferred to seascape and seawater are derived from a fusion of human senses and practice brought together through the orientation and movement of the fishers on the given maritime territory. The cultural heritage of the *ama* – an example of gendered local knowledge secretly transmitted from mother to daughter according to matriarchal customs – represents the different modalities of perception of seascape, offering also a discursive analysis of the different ways in which these female fishers' body "*reads* the different places" (Ligi 2003, 262), moving in symbolically and physically ordered spaces, that operate as "mnemonic devices for the individual" (262). Seascape, in this case, could be an example of a "structured and structuring spatial unit" (262), which defines the categories of interpretation of space, thanks to an

Figure 1. *Ama* operating in the coastal area (Kuzaki, 9th December 2014)

interactive process between local fishermen and their environment. This could be linked also to the reflectionsof McGann and Torrance:

> The structures of the world allow the structures of the observer to exist, while the structures of the observer allow the structures of the world to be conceived and perceived. It is this complex interplay between the world and the subject which gives rise to meaning […] of the world […]. The enactive mind is not a passive recipient of information from the world, but actively engages with its environment […]. Cognition is not tied into the workings of an 'inner mind' […], but occurs in directed interaction between the body and the world it inhabits. (2005, 184)

Figure 2. A group of *ama* (Kuzaki, 10th December 2014). A man, known as *tomae*, keeps watching over the diving women. When *ama* are almost out of breath and ready to ascend, they tug on the rope attached to their waist so that the *tomae* pulls them to the surface using a pulley system on the boat

3 Relationality of seascape

In the wake of these previous reflections, another main characteristic of seascape is to be an example of socio-relational space (Tilley 1994), a type of space defined through a very broadly diversified social experiences within a given territory. As Tilley points out,

> Space has no substantial essence in itself, but only has a relational significance, created through relations between peoples and places. Space becomes detotalized by virtue of its relational construction and because, being differentially understood and produced by different individuals, collectivities and societies, it can have no universal essence. […] The experience of space is always shot through with temporalities, as spaces are always created, reproduced and transformed in relation to previously constructed spaces provided and established from the past. Spaces are intimately related to the formation of biographies and social relationships. (1994, 11)

It follows that the specificity of seascape in fishing culture is an essential element in understanding the meanings of space in a subjective dimension according to the symbolically constructed life worlds of social actors. Yet, seawater, as the main constitutive element of maritime seascape, has intrinsically a *relational* character, because it represents a complex social, political and environmental arena: that is, it is both the *means* and the *place* of fishing production. In both cases, seascape is the key element that determines a complex space of interaction, which is structured in close relation with the events of the social life of a fisherman. This connects us, in the first analysis, to the vast literature on the issue of territoriality, management models, resource access regulations, property rights etc., which constitutes the cross-cultural and historical universe of fishing (Acheson 1981; Durrenberger, Palsson 1987). This inherently relational dimension between maritime environment and culture in fishing communities transforms seascape into a powerful social medium: it is enhanced by the cultural point of view just as a mediator of multiple meanings, interconnecting fishermen, fishing territories and specific economic systems. Let us consider, for example, fishing territories that are defined not only on the basis of coordinates established by precise economic policies, based on a particular tradition of fisheries management (cf. Durrenberger, Pálsson 1986), but they also *project* to the seascape the social interactions and the cultural practices related to fishing. The key concern of this perspective is the way in which seascape constitutes space as "[centre] of human meaning, [its] singularity being manifested and expressed in the day-to-day experiences and consciousness of people within particular lifeworlds" (Tilley 1994, 14).

In the ethnographic context of Japanese fishing communities let us think about, for example, the traditional and informal fisheries management systems of the island community of Kamishima where religious rituals are strategically performed by local fishermen. The Kamishima's *takotsubo kumiai* (Fishery Association for Octopus Pots) is a small organisation that focuses mainly on management of local fishing territories for the traditional octopus fishery. According to some interviewed local fishermen, the richest area for fishing octopus is about 12-16 km far from the island and local fishing territories are divided into forty fishing lot areas, called *kujidate*. The ritual practice of allocation of fishing lots still requires a particular organisation in order to maintain a balance and to prevent internal conflicts. Since the fishing lots are not all equal in richness of marine life, these are reassigned each year through a special ceremony, called *kujitate*, which takes place twice a year (10th September and at the end of the year) at the *yadomato*'s house, a fisherman charged annually to coordinate the octopus fishing activities. Schematically, the ceremony can be described in the following way: some fishermen prepare some boiled rice (*kome*) above a wooden tray (*bon*), on which some wooden sticks (*kuji*) are

arranged, bearing the names of the fishing lots. After the ritual purification concerning in the sprinkling of sake on the four corners of the tray, fishermen take in turn a *kuji* relying on the order of the previous *kujitate* in a tense atmosphere.

Kujidate is a typical example of practice of territoriality performed in small-scale fishing communities, which is crucial to determine the social and economic implications in the relations between Kamishima fishermen. What is interesting to note, however, is how these fishermen track 'invisible boundaries' on the seascape surrounding their community, which are not exclusively derived from their local strategies of fisheries management. The boundary is perceived by the fisherman also in its symbolic dimension, which expresses a *relational* idea (Cohen 1985, 12), encapsulating "the identity of the [fishing] community and, like the identity of an individual, is called into being by the exigencies of social interaction" (12). Moreover,

> [boundary] may be physical, expressed, perhaps, by a mountain range or a sea. […] But not all boundaries, and not *all* the components of *any* boundary, are so objectively apparent. […] They may be thought of, rather, as existing in the minds of their beholders. This being so, the boundary may be perceived in rather different terms, not only by people on opposite side of it, but also by people on the same side. (12)

That is, boundaries are perceived by local fishermen but may be 'imperceptible' to others.

Seascape is, therefore, a mosaic of interactions socially created and recreated through life activities, economic and power negotiations. If it is considered also from a 'figurative' perspective, this is even more evident when one takes into account the maps representing fishing territories and features of the local topography drawn by local fishermen. Mapping is "a means of projecting power-knowledge" (Corner 1999a, 214) and fishermen's mapping practices, besides constituting an example of practical geographical knowledge, represents an example of "an open and inclusive process of disclosure and enablement" (250). Apparently less detailed and precise than a geographical or nautical map, these maps "inaugurate new grounds upon the hidden traces of a living context" (215), highlighting the 'essential elements' of social interactions between fishermen and seascape: vernacular names, fishing boundaries, notes and personal considerations, drawings of marine currents, wind directions and other meteorological phenomena refer to an embodied dimension of seascape, a 'de-constructed' physical place that is 're-constructed' according to precise cultural logics.

4 The Symbolic Power of Seawater

One last consideration should be given to the symbolic dimension of seawater seen through the religious practices. In Japanese religious tradition, water is generally considered to be one of the main ritual element, especially in Shinto tradition (Bocking 1995, 94), and its symbolic power is particularly emphasised, for example, by the practice of *misogi*, a "ritual of physically cleansing one's body and spirit in cold water" (Evans 2001, 126). From a historical perspective, there is a strong link between seawater and these ritual ablutions. According to De Leeuw and Rankin "*misogi* was originally practiced in the ocean [and] still forms part of a modern program of Shinto-based exercises. It is also practiced in some localities [where] the spiritual leaders who performs these rituals enters the ocean himself to practice *misogi*" (2006, 91-2). In the coastal and island fishing communities of Ise Bay, seawater still represents one of the main ritual elements in local festivals and domestic rituals, because it is considered to be a powerful symbol of purification, a 'physical and mental filter', through which, in the first instance, the material and spiritual well-being of fishermen and their communities must pass.

According to my fieldwork research data, there are approximately four main categories of festivals and rituals directly connected to the seawater. In the schematization that follows, a brief outline of the religious practices directly related to the symbolism of seawater is proposed.

1. *The ritual practices of 'enshrining seawater'*, i.e. propitiatory rites to ensure good fisheries. For example, fishermen in Yukiura village (Kumano-shi) pray for a big catch at Okunishisama shrine on a cliff close to the port. This ritual before sailing out is called 'enshrining seawater': fishermen draw seawater with a well bucket, wash their mouth with it as a symbol of purification, then they pour seawater on the edge of a fishing boat to purify it as well. If fishermen get a big catch, they offer fish to the god Okunishi-sama at the local shrine as a gesture of gratitude. Similarly, in Nigishimaura (Kumano-shi), fishermen pour seawater on the sacred rock called *Jingu-sama* (another name for *ryūjin*, dragon god) at a port before going to fish. Finally, in Wagu area, *ama* perform a ritual of warding off evil spirits before diving: they cast a spell, then splash seawater and hit the fishing boat using a chisel (*awabi okoshi*). According to the local folk tradition, these rituals were created to avoid the demons of the sea, such as, *tomokazuki*, a 'fake *ama*' that drowns *ama* who dive alone, *bōshin* (ghost boat) or *hikimōren* (sea ghost).
2. *Seawater scattering*, i.e. ritual uses of seawater to perform exorcisms or pray for big catch. The ritual practice of seawater scattering is performed at the island of Kamishima, where a parish

guild organiser or a representative of local guardian god goes to the beach or port and draws seawater during the morning on New Year's Day. This water is offered to a household *kamidana* (domestic Shinto altar) and to the guardian god to congratulate for New Year's Day. Another case in which it presents a very similar ritual pattern is *mifune matsuri*, a fishing boat festival performed at the Kōchi shrine in Koza village, in Wakayama prefecture. During this festival, shrine parishioners draw seawater with a pail, put it at their house gate and purify their house every day before and during this festival. It is common to have a 'seawater scatterer' in front of a festival procession in seashore villages: this person holds a pail with seawater and leads a procession purifying the road with this water scattering with a branch of *sakaki* (*Japanese cleyera*). Another example of ritual purification can be found in archery festivals (*jinji*), performed during the New Year's Day, in which seawater in a pail is scattered with *sakaki* branch to purify the archery ground. This ritual is called *shio harai* (purification with seawater) and is very popular in Kumano-nada seashore area. For example, in Yukiura (Kumano-shi) a 'seawater scatterer' draws seawater with a pail and purifies houses one by one a day before the festival begins. One of the most famous seawater scattering festival is the *shiokake matsuri* (seawater scattering festival), which takes place on June 1st at Wagu Oshima island. At the start of the festival, a fishing vessel transfers a talisman (called Mandofuda, Mando talisman) received from Ise Jinju Shrine to Oshima Shrines in Wagu Oshima island. During the morning, abalones caught by *ama* and fishermen of the island are offered for maritime safety and big catch. After the prayers, a local shinto priest and one from Ise Jingu board the talisman and set off toward the mainland. To celebrate this ritual event, fishermen and *ama* use buckets and scoops to splash each other with seawater to propitiate a good fishing.

3. *Immerse ritual objects into the sea*, i.e. the ritual practice of *kaijō togyo* (which approximately means 'transfer a sacred object from an enshrined place to the sea'), is often organised during festivals in the local fishing communities. During this event, a local god is transferred from his Shinto shrine to a sacred spot at a festival site with a ship via the sea. In other cases, carry or immerse ritual objects in the sea acts are instead forms of exorcism. It is the case of the *yarimashobune* (roughly translated as 'ward off boat'), a rite organised at Kamishima on 8th December: a group of old fishermen called *inkyoshu* make a small boat during the morning, which is then carried on the main streets of the village where local residents purify their body with a bunch of cogon grass, and put it inside the boat. Later, this small boat is placed on a fishing vessel and left to

sink into the open sea (fig. 3.). Another important example of this category is the Katsuura Hachiman Festival performed at Katsuura Port (Nachikatsuura, Wakayama prefecture). Five *kaitenma* boats (sculling boats) start sailing clockwise at the port in the evening. Fishermen row the boats and, after several rounds, they stop rowing and jump into the sea for purification. Afterwards, a portable shrine (*mikoshi*) carried by a group of young fishermen approaches the port and, finally, is carried into the sea. Two ropes are tied to the *mikoshi*: one for the rowers of the *kaitenma* boats and another for a group that is waiting on the beach. *Kaitenma* boats rowers start rowing offshore, while the other group on the beach pull the rope to hold the *mikoshi*. After the ritual tug of war ends, the *mikoshi* is put on a boat and is brought to the shrine. This ritual event could be interpreted as a 'fight' to propitiate a big catch at sea or a rich harvest on the land.

Figure 3. Yarimashobune while being transported in a fishing boat (Kamishima, 8th December 2014)

4. *Shio gori*,[4] or ritual purification with seawater. Seawater purification is still performed in many coastal areas where fishermen, who play an important role in the local festival, plunge into the sea. Generally held during the New Year period, these ablution practices are designed to put a person in a state of ritual purity, eliminating what

4 The Japanese terms *kori* and *misogi* have similar meaning. *Kori* is described in the Kōjien dictionary as "before praying for Shinto and Buddhist gods, clean oneself with cold water" (1998, 1011).

> is unclean and thereby making possible the contact with the sacred, and to allow fishermen to resume their working activities. There are generally three main types of *shio gori*: rituals performed singularly or collectively, and those that could include also non-human ritual actors. A collective ritual of purification called *sou gori* (collective purification) is organised in Ago (Shijima): a big banner of the Fujisan-Asama Shrine is set up on the beach, then all villagers purify themselves plunging into the sea. Purification rituals could involve also animals, as in the case of Mifune festival in Shingu (Wakayama prefecture), in which horses are led into the sea to be ritually purified one day before the festival begins.

According to the canonical fieldwork methodology, this schematization of ritual practices undoubtedly does not offer any chance of theoretical deepening in the strict sense. However, on the basis of these ethnographical observations, it could highlight a few salient points about the relationship between fishermen and their maritime territory. Seawater is a socially indispensable element whose meaning echoes the ritual experience of the participants, while seascape consequently becomes a culturally defined ritual place, in which participants are literally embedded. As it has been said, seawater has the ritual function of increasing productivity, eliminating impurities, or warding off malevolent entities or dangers at sea, becoming also the main element through which a 'symbolic compenetration' between ritual actors and seascape takes place. In the most direct sense, seawater could simply mean a cultural sign of a local fishing tradition, part of an intimate and functionally-oriented knowledge of local maritime environment. According this perspective, Geertz's theory persuasively illustrates how symbols generate a map of reality, presenting worldviews, beliefs and ethos relating to a general and coherent order of existence (1966). However, it is possible to expand the Geertzian model, affirming that such religious symbols and their ritual performances could also be placed in the context of their production. On this point, Abu-Lughod is openly adjacent to Bourdieu (1977) arguing that, rituals, festivals and symbols are not simply "dispositions that generate and structure practices and representations but are themselves structured by such things as material conditions characteristic of a class condition" (1990, 88). It follows that, seawater symbolism in Japanese fishing communities is placed within a given historical context, which is materialistically determined by the control and use of the maritime territory. Yet, seawater symbology is therefore a structured and structuring cultural device: it is 'structured' by particular historical processes that vary depending on the circumstances of social actors embedded in a given environment and, at the same time, it structures a particular socio-economic context.

5 Conclusion

This paper has focused on the idea that seawater is a powerful embodied cultural and material element, which defines seascape as “a not-objectified arena” (Brown, Humberstone 2015, 5). This research has also sought to show how seascape and seawater reflect “the self-definition of cultural groups” (Garkovich, Greider 1994, 2), such as Japanese fishing communities, through the use of social constructions (cf. Berger, Luckmann 1967, as quoted in Garkovich, Greider 1994, 2) that are “symbols and meanings that […] reflect what people in cultural groups define to be proper and improper relationships among themselves and between themselves and the physical environment” (Garkovich, Greider 1994, 2). If “the sea is more than a metaphor” (Brown, Humberstone 2005, 22), because “[it has] real material and ideological effects on persons and social relations” (Tilley 2004, 222), it can therefore be assumed that seascape “is not merely the [sea]world we see, it is a construction, a composition of that world. [Seascape] is a way of seeing the [sea]world” (Cosgrove 1989, 13).

Based on these observations, the focus is upon the so-called theory of landscape agency, a theoretical framework in which “the emphasis shifts from landscape as a product of culture to landscape as an agent producing and enriching culture. Landscapes as a *noun* (as object or scene) is quieted to emphasize landscape as *verb*, as process or activity” (Corner 1999b, 4). Built upon a phenomenological approach to place that links landscape and human actions, landscape agency “refers to the material effects that places can have on human practices and social relations” (Allerton 2012, 74). As seen in the previous sections, seascape has agency through bodily practices, sensuous knowledge, or practices of organisation and classification of the maritime territory, while seawater is substantially “a medium of meaning and material relation” (Mosse 2003, 939), which can be contextualized in the broader theoretical framework of ‘agency of material world’. In conclusion, such a dynamic and recursive relationship between seascape, seawater and fishing communities demonstrates how “[seascape] is an instrument of cultural power”: as Mitchell observes, it “[elicits] a broad range of emotions and meanings that may be difficult to specify” (2002, 1). Such a multiplicity of veiled meanings could be summarised in a Japanese nautical proverb (*kotowaza*) that, with exquisite practical wisdom, exerts the subtle power of the sea: *itago ichimai shitawa jigoku* (hell is under the hull of a ship).

Bibliography

Abu-Lughod, Lila (1990). “Anthropology’s Orient. The Boundaries of Theory on the Arab World”. Hisham Sharabi (ed.), *Theory, Politics and the Arab World. Critical Responses*. New York: Routledge, 81-131.

Acheson, James (1981). “The Anthropology of Fishing”. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 10, 275–316.

Allertone, Catherine (2012). “Landscape, Power and Agency in Eastern Indonesia”. Chua, Liana; Cook, Joanna; Long, Nicholas; Wilson, Lee (eds.), *Southeast Asian Perspectives on Power*. London: Routledge, 67-81.

Anderson, Jon; Peters, Kimberley (2014). “A Perfect and Absolute Blank. Human Geographies of Water Worlds”. Anderson Jon; Peters, Kimberley (eds.), *Water Worlds. Human Geographies of the Ocean*. Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 3-19.

Berger L. Peter; Luckmann, Thomas (1967). *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Garden City: Anchor Books.

Berkes, Fikret; Folke, Carl (eds.) (1998). *Linking Social and Ecological Systems. Management Practices and Social Mechanisms for Building Resilience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bocking, Brian (1995). *A Popular Dictionary of Shinto*. Richmond (Surrey): Curzon Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge (New York): Cambridge University Press.

Breda, Nadia (2005). “Per un’antropologia dell’acqua”. *La Ricerca Folklorica*, 51, 3-16.

Briggs, John; White, Simon (2009). *Welsh Seascapes and their Sensitivity to Offshore Developments*. CCW Policy Research Report no. 08/5.

Brown, Mike; Humberstone, Barbara (2015). *Seascapes. Shaped by the Sea*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Canetti, Elias (1978). *Crouds and Power*. New York: Continuum.

Clark, Jenifer; Harris, Tony (2011). “Landscape & Seascape” [online]. *Dorset Marine and Coastal Topic Paper Series*. URL `http://www.cscope.eu/_files/results/activity_1/dorset/topic_papers/Landscape%20and%20Seascape%20Topic%20Paper.pdf` (2017-11-06).

Cohen, P. Antony (1985). *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. London: Routledge.

Corner, James (1999a). “The Agency of Mapping. Speculation, Critique and Invention”. Cosgrove, Denis (ed.), *Mappings*. London: Reaktion Books, 213-52.

Corner, James (1999b). “Introduction”. Corner, James (ed.), *Recovering Landscape. Essays in Contemporary Landscape Theory*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1-26.

Cosgrove, Denis (1984). *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*. London: Croom Helm.

Cosgrove, Denis; Daniels, Stephen (eds.) (1988). *The Iconography of Landscape. Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cosgrove, Denis (1989). “Geography is Everywhere. Culture and Symbolism in Human Landscapes”. Gregory, Derek; Walford, Rex (eds.), *Horizons in Human Geography.* London: Macmillan, 118-35.

Csordas, Thomas (1994). *Embodiment and Experience.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

De Leeuw, Paul; Rankin, Aidan (2006). *The Essence of Shinto. Japan’s Spiritual Heart*. Tōkyō: Kodansha International.

Duranti, Alessandro (1992). “Language and Bodies in Social Space. Samoan Ceremonial Greetings”. *American Anthropologist*, 94, 657-91.

Durrenberger, Paul; Pálsson, Gísli (1987). “Ownership at Sea. Fishing Territories and Access to Sea Resources”. *American Ethnologist*, 14(3), 508-22.

Evans, A. Llewellyn (2001). *Shinto Norito. A Book of Prayers.* Victoria: Trafford.

Garkovich, Lorraine; Greider, Thomas; (1994). “Landscapes. The Social Construction of Nature and the Environment”. *Rural Sociology*, 59(1), 1-24.

Geertz, Clifford (1966). “Religion as a Cultural System”. Bantan, Michael (ed.), *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion.* London: Tavistock Publications, 1-45.

Giddens, Anthony (1984). *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Helmreich, Stefan (2011). “Nature/Culture/Seawater”. *American Anthropologist*, 113(1), 132-44.

Hirsch, Thomas; O’Hanlon, Michael (eds.) (1995). *The Anthropology of Landscape. Perspectives on Place and Space*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Karan, P. Pradyumna (2005). *Japan in the 21st Century. Environment, Economy, and Society*. Lexigton: The University Press of Kentucky.

Ingold, Tim (1993). “The Temporality of Landscape”. *World Archaeology*, 25, 152-74.

Ingold, Tim (2000). *The Perception of the Environment. Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London: Routledge.

Ingold, Tim; Janowski, Monica (eds.) (2012). *Imagining Landscapes. Past, Present and Future.* London: Ashgate.

Lai, Franco (2000). *Antropologia del paesaggio*. Roma: Carocci editore.

Lawrence, L. Denise; Low, M. Setha (1990). “The Built Environment and Spatial Form”. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19, 453–505.

Ligi, Gianluca (2003). *La casa Saami. Antropologia dello spazio domestico in Lapponia*. Torino: Segnalibro.

Lawrence-Zúñiga, L. Denise; Low, M. Setha (2003). "Locating Culture". Lawrence-Zúñiga, Denise; Low, Setha (eds.), *The Anthropology of Space and Place. Locating Culture*. Hoboken (New Jersey): Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1-47.

McGann, Marek; Torrance, Steve (2005). "Doing It and Meaning It (and the Relationship Between the Two)". Ellis, D. Ralph; Newton, Nakita (eds.), *Consciousness & Emotion. Agency, Conscious Choice, and Selective Perception.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 181-95.

Mitchell, W.J. Thomas (2002). *Landscape and Power.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mosse, David (2003). *The Rule of Water. Statecraft, Ecology and Collective Action in South India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Pungetti, Gloria (2012). "Islands, culture, landscape and seascape". *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures*, 1(2), 51-4.

Richardson, Miles (1982). "Being-in-the-Plaza versus Being-in-the-Market. Material Culture and the Construction of Social Reality". *American Ethnologist*, 9, 421-36.

Richardson, Miles (1984). "Material Culture and Being-in-Christ in Spanish America and the American South, Built Form and Culture". *Conference Proceedings.* Lawrence: University of Kansas.

Rodaway, Paul (1994). *Sensuous Geographies. Body, Sense, and Place.* London; New York: Routledge.

Rosaldo, Renato (1989). *Culture and Truth. The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Sauer, C. Ortwin (1963). "The Morphology of Landscape". Leighly, John (ed.), *Land and Life. A Selection from the Writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 315–50.

Sparkes, Andrew (1991). "Exploring Body Narratives". *Sport, Education and Society*, 4(1), 17-30.

Shinmura, Izuru (ed.) (1998). *Kōjien*. Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten.

Hashimoto, Hiroyuki; Schnell, Scott (2003). "'Guest Editors' Introduction. Revitalizing Japanese folklore". *Asian Folklore Studies*, 62(2), 185-94.

Solinas, Pier Giorgio (2002). "Un bene comune, un bene eccessivo". *Parolechiave 'Acqua'*, 27, 2-10.

Strang, Veronica (2004). *The Meaning of Water.* Oxford; New York: Berg.

Strathern, Marilyn (1980). "No Nature, No Culture. The Hagen Case". MacCormack, Carol; Strathern, Marilyn (eds.), *Nature, Culture and Gender.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 174–222.

Tilley, Christopher (1994). *A Phenomenology of Landscape. Places, Paths and Monuments.* Oxford: Berg.

Van Aken, Mauro (2011). *Le diversità delle acque. Antropologia di un bene molto comune*. Broni (Pavia): Edizioni Altravista.