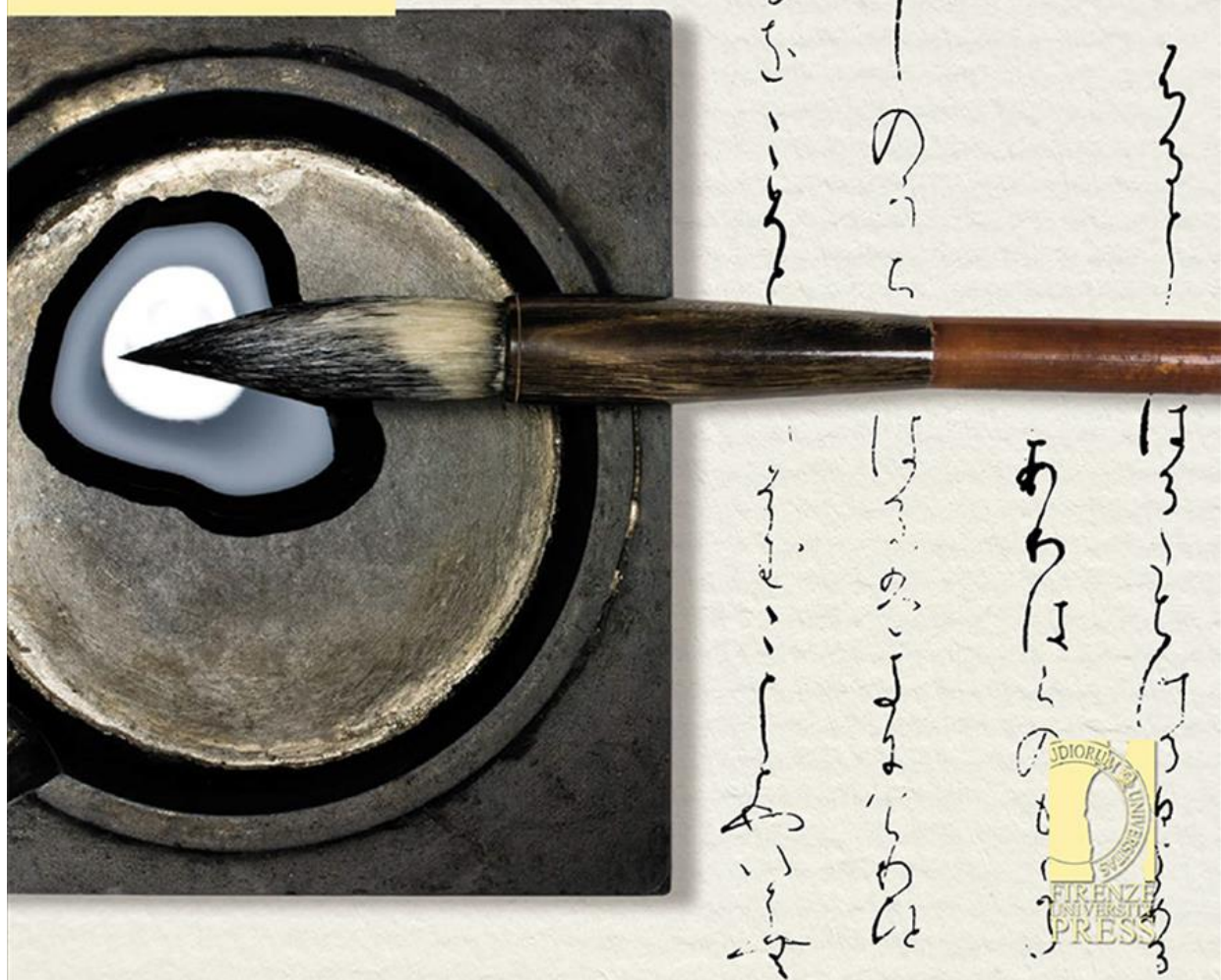# The Heian Court Poetry as World Literature

From the Point of View of Early Italian Poetry

EDOARDO GERLINI

STRUMENTI
PER LA DIDATTICA E LA RICERCA

– 159 –

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The Heian Court Poetry as World Literature

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ABBREVIATIONS, PRIMARY SOURCES AND ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

KKS   Ozawa Masao, Matsuda Shigeho (eds.) 1994, *Kokin-wakashū* (*Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 11), Shogakukan, Tokyo. English translation by Laurel Rasplica Rodd, Mary Catherine Henkenius (eds.) 1984, *Kokinshū : a collection of poems ancient and modern*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

MYS   Kojima Noriyuki et al. (eds.) 1994-96, *Man'yōshū* (*Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 6-9), Shogakukan, Tokyo. English translation by Teruo Suga (trans.) 1991, *The Man'yo-shu: a complete English translation in 5-7 rhythm*, Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages, Tokyo.

PSS   Roberto Antonelli, Costanzo di Girolamo, Rosario Coluccia (eds.) 2008, *I Poeti della Scuola Siciliana*, Mondadori, Milano.

DVE   Steven Botterill (ed.) 1996, *De vulgari eloquentia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Monarchia   Prue Shaw (ed.) 1996, *Monarchy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Convivio   Richard Lansing (ed.) 1998, *The Convivio*, Columbia University Press, New York.

KBKK   Kawaguchi Hisao (ed.) 1966, *Kanke bunsō Kanke kōshū* (*Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 72), Iwanami, Tokyo.

CS   Hirano Yukiko et al. (eds.) 2007, *Chisatoshū zenshaku*, (*Shikashū zenshaku sōsho* 36), Kazama, Tokyo.

Utaawase   1987, *Utaawase hen*, (*Shinpen Kokka taikan*, 5), Kadokawa, Tokyo.

QTS   *Qian Tang shi* 1985, Zhong hua shu ju, Beijing.

BW   *Baishi Wenji*, Hanabusa Hideki (ed.) 1960, *Sōgō sakuhin hyō*, in *Hakushi bunshū no hihanteki kenkyū*, Ibundō, Kyoto.

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INTRODUCTION

> The Francesists know about French matters,
> the Germanists about German matters,
> the other specialists know about their own
> matters; those who know about marginal
> and minor literary cultures are very few;
> the Italianists mostly know only about
> Italian matters, and this is quite a problem.
>
> (Remo Ceserani)

In recent years the definition of 'World Literature' has been object of attention for a growing number of scholars. As the globalized and interconnected world of the 21st century is facing new challenges concerning politics, economics, the environment, as a result, also the academic world has become increasingly globalized and interconnected, not only in the fields of Natural or Social sciences, but also as regards the Humanities and in particular Literature, traditionally considered the most conservative and 'classical' field in academic studies. The problem about the universal definition of 'Literature' has always been extremely complex, because as stated by Remo Ceserani «for the common experience, the meanings of the term literature, and the various concepts conceived in the course of time, seem to be numerous, diversified, and incompatible with each other» (Ceserani 1999, p. 3). Nevertheless, with the relatively new definition of World Literature, many scholars (Damrosch, Moretti, Pizer etc.) expressed the need to face the problem of re-defining the very concept of Literature, starting from the correction of its Eurocentric tendencies and its distinction between 'main' literatures and 'peripheral' or 'minor' literatures, that strongly characterized the literary studies of the 19th and 20th centuries.

In a recent article, Wiebke Denecke summarizes the current status of the academic curricula of World Literature – traditionally held by American universities – and underlines the importance for researchers of the so called 'peripheral' cultures to consider – and implicitly accept – this new Literary and academic paradigm in order to gain a wider and stronger view not only toward foreign literatures, but also toward their own (Denecke 2012, p. 198). Denecke's article, written in Japanese and published on the prestigious journal *Bungaku*,

is an attempt in this direction, as it addresses a specific audience of one of such 'peripheral' areas, namely the Japanese researchers of Japanese Literature.

The instance of Japan is indeed especially meaningful for the discourse about World Literatures. The Japanese word *bungaku*, that nowadays translates the term 'literature', was created in the late 19th century, in a period when Japan imported European literary theories, as well as the relevant foreign terminology to describe literary practices, like mimesis, metaphor, rhetoric, etc. At the same time the Japanese scholars abandoned the traditional terminology developed and used for centuries both in China and Japan by literary criticism to describe their own literature. According to Denecke and Kōno Kimiko, editors of the recent collection *Nihon ni okeru bun to bungaku* (2013), few scholars today are really concerned about the gap between the traditional concept of *bun* (文　letter, literature, writings) in Japan before the Meiji restoration (1868), and the new concept of *bungaku* (literature, study of letters) imported from abroad (Denecke 2013a, p. 5).

The point suggested by Denecke is that the problem about a correct collocation of Japanese Literature into the frame of World Literature should interest not only the researchers of Japanese studies or eastern Asian literatures. If the next step for literary studies in the 21th century is to expand the boundaries of research to get both a precise and a global view of the problems this field of studies could contribute to solve for our globalized society, this step can only be done through a careful analysis of the various cultures and literatures, starting from an inclusive vision more than a methodology based on the exclusion and field delimitations. Denecke is not the only one concerned about this issue. The collection of essays titled *Reading East Asian Writings – the limits of literary theory* (2003) already focused on the problem about the limits of the Euro-centric literary theories to describe and include various literary traditions around the world. The various essays included in this book face the problem of a literary theory from a shared point of view between students of Chinese and Japanese literatures, because, as stated by the editors «we should remember that the cultural practices in Europe and North America are just as tradition-specific as those in China and Japan. We should remember that this is a reason to rejoice: where universality ends, communication begins» (Hockx, Smits 2003, p. xii). Another collection of essays that took seriously the problem of communication between specialized but non-communicating academic communities is *Waka Opening Up to the World* (2012), edited by Haruo Shirane. In this book, published in Japanese and English, there is an obvious will to bring Japan into contact with the rest of the world, not only as an object of study (Japanese literature), but first of all as an academic community (the Japanese scholars), that usually discusses, reads and writes only in Japanese. Shirane's introduction to this volume is also particularly interesting because it

outlines some of the keywords that guided the research contained in my book, first of all 'vernacular language'. Shirane outlines some common points in early vernacular literatures in Europe and Japan, like some «ideals of restraint, sympathetic humanity, elegance and refined love. More specific features they have in common are (1) an emphasis on taste or aesthetic values, (2) a stress on gender, particularly the presence of the "woman", and (3) elegant and highly encoded forms of communication» (Shirane 2012, p. 186). Also Shirane acknowledges the possibility to get a wider, worldwide vision on specific issues like the consolidation of national vernacular languages or the role of women, the acknowledgement of social values like elegance or courtesy, or again the codification of a communicative tool like the poetry. It is therefore clear how some of these issues, while indicating a specific socio-historical environment, on the other hand are also related to elements we can easily find in many countries, even in totally different and extremely distant ages and geographical areas. The real novelty of these recent comparative studies is that the object of comparison doesn't need to have any proven historical connection or social exchange between two regions – for example among the European countries, or between China and Japan – that was the necessary condition to address a traditional comparative literature research, like comparative Romance Literatures or the Sino-Japanese comparative literatures (*wakan hikaku bungaku*). In other words, it is as if we were trying to demolish the barriers traditionally built to define and delimitate a certain literary tradition, like national borders, language, periodization, while starting to outline new borders and coordinates to analyze international and intercultural phenomena, like the constitution of a certain kind of political system – a centered kingdom or a republic – or the issues raised by the entrance of new originators – woman writers, or the illiterate audience – in the field of literary production.

Actually, beside the discourse about World Literature, we can observe that the position of the scholars toward the analysis of Literature has undergone an ongoing evolution during the last century. Let's consider for example the issue of love in the European poetry that will be, together with love poetry in Japan, the object of the last part of this book. We can see how, from a 'classical' interpretation like Denis de Rougemont's *L'amour et l'occident* (1939), Erich Köhler proposed, in many essays from the 50's to the 70's (collected and translated into Italian by Mario Mancini in 1976), a new historical-sociologic approach to literature, that gave new life and a new perspective to the discourse about the relationship between literature and societies and the genesis and functions of some characteristic issues of European literatures, in this case the *troubadours'* love songs and the Romance Literatures. The new – for that time – sociologic approach to literature proposed by Köhler enriched literary studies with a meaningful and wider point of view, stimulating a new direc-

tion for Humanities studies.

Pierre Bourdieu in the 90's, starting from a sociologic point of view, gave another important jolt to the traditional conception of literary work and literary production, with an absolute denial of concepts like 'masterpiece' or 'literary genius'. Bourdieu considers every work of art as a product made under certain social conditions, called *habitus*. It is the *habitus* that deeply affect both the possibility that a certain work will be accepted and eventually acknowledged as a 'classic', and the capacity for the author to gain prestige and a social capital through his work. Somehow for Bourdieu, the production of a literary work could seem subordinated to the canonization of that work: «the production of the (critical, historical, etc.) discourse on the work of art is one of the conditions of the production of the work» (Bourdieu 1994, p. 35). Bourdieu's studies had widely influenced the field of Humanities in the last 20 years, giving the basis for a sociocentric approach that constituted a valid alternative to the older structuralist approach. Even so, some scholars started to point out the weak points of the sociocentric theories inspired by Bourdieu's studies that can be summarized in Rein Raud's statement: «there is, however, one basic weakness in the sociocentric theory, and that is its negligence of literary quality. […] It is still difficult to accept that the quality of the literary texts or works of art, for which there is admittedly no absolute standard, plays little or no part in the elevation of the texts to their assigned status» (Raud 2003, p. 92), or by Haruo Shirane: «it would be foolish to imply that texts are empty boxes ready to be filled by their next owners» (Shirane 2003, p. 22). In this book I will not directly deal with Bourdieu's theories or with literary theories in general, but, agreeing with Raud and Shirane's positions, I will try do give some examples that could help explain the issues left unsolved by the sociocentric theory. In other words, taking advantage of the sociocentric approach while at the same time recognizing the importance of a textual analysis of the internal qualities of a literary work. From my point of view, the seek for a new, more comprehensive literary theory is strictly connected to the definition of a new concept of World Literature, as this new approach aims to manage the object 'literature' in every country and in every historical period. That's why a distinction between 'central' and 'peripheral' cultures or literary traditions loses its raison d'être: on the contrary, the study of some of these so-called 'peripheral' cultures could become a valuable object to verify the real universality of the literary theories. It was probably from these premises that Raud, trying to combine «a sociocentric approach to the literary practice with one concerned with the internal textual mechanisms» suggested that «the context of classical Japanese poetry, especially in the Heian period (794-1185), is particularly suitable for this, because the social mechanisms are perhaps more visibly at work in the poetic process than elsewhere

in world literature» (Raud 2003, p. 93).

Raud's suggestion helps me to introduce the main subject of this book: an analysis of Japanese poetry of the Heian period (8th-12th centuries), carried out in comparison with the early Italian poetry of the 13th century. First of all, comparing various aspects of the same problem in different environments is one of the most basic strategies to conduct an analysis, not only on a scientific basis, but also in a more abstract, logical or philosophical way. It is therefore obvious that, since the most ancient times, the contact between two extremely different cultural macro-regions like Europe and eastern Asia stimulated first of all a search for differences and similitudes, not only from the Eurocentric point of view. Even if the debate about the definition of a World Literature has been mainly conducted by the American academies (Denecke 2012, pp. 174-7), we can find also among the Japanese scholars the interest for a wider and more global point of view toward literature in general, and also toward Japanese literature. An example could be the extra-curricular course titled 'Multi-disciplinary exchange seminar – Contemporary world literature (多分野交流演習 今日の世界文学 *Tabun'ya kōryū enshū – Kon'nichi no sekai bungaku*) held from 2003 to 2006 at the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology of the University of Tokyo (the lectures have been partially collected in a small volume *Moji no toshi – Sekai no bungaku*, Tokyo University Press, 2007). Even if this effort can't be compared to the works in English I cited before, it collects some interesting essays that try to get past the traditional concept of comparative literatures – as the direct historical connection between two or more literary works – that is still the majority among Japanese academies. An example could be Fujiwara Katsumi's lecture comparing a masterpiece of Japanese classical literature, the *Genji monogatari* (early 11th century), with the 17th century French novel *La Princesse de Clèves* (Fujiwara 2007), two literary works that, of course, didn't directly influence each other. In a different publication, Fujiwara made another attempt at contextualizing the Japanese court poetry of the 9-10th century into a worldwide point of view, referring to European scholars and authors, from T. E. Hulme to T. S. Eliot, from Judith Gautier to Rainer Maria Rilke, discussing theoretical definition like 'modernism' from a wider and somehow de-contextualized point of view (Fujiwara 2004). Of course, Fujiwara is not the first to perform this kind of attempt in Japan. In the early 60's Ochi Yasuo, inspired by Rougemont's *L'Amour et l'Occident*, pointed out a similitude between the Japanese love poems of the 10th century and love songs of the European *troubadours*' of the 11-12th century (Ochi 1963). The problem of 'love' is of course a macro-theme findable in almost every literature, but in the case of Japan it needs to be re-examined in an even wider and more elastic perspective. Yanabu Akira's study underlined how, while the modern ideal of love in Europe had been set by the

troubadours' tradition, the concept of 'love' in Japan had a such different evolution, so that he even went so far as to state that before Meiji's period (1868-1912), «*love* didn't exist in Japan» (Yanabu 1982, p. 89-91). Yanabu's point is that the meaning of the word *ren'ai*, that used to translate the Western words 'love' or 'amour' from the Meiji period onward, was clearly different in use from words like *koi*, *ai*, *jō*, *iro*, used before in Japan to describe a love relationship. The most interesting point in Yanabu's study is that it reminds us the deep difference and the original 'fact of belonging to a geographic area' of the Euro-centric modern concept of love, and how this concept has been forcedly received and accepted by 'peripheral' cultures.

As clearly expressed by Tomi Suzuki, the occidental ideology of love has been quickly absorbed – not without contradictions – by the Japanese writers of the so-called I-novel (*watakushi-shōsetsu*) genre (Suzuki T. 1996, pp. 74-76). The concept of love passes inevitably through literature, with a particular attention for a new kind of reader: the young women of the eras of Meiji and Taishō (1912-1916). In these terms we can find analogies in the point of view expressed by Yanabu about the import of 'love' in Japan, with that of Denecke about the concept of Literature/*bungaku*; therefore finding a common field to conduct a coherent and articulated discourse about Literature shared by the scholars of different cultural areas and academic traditions it seems possible to. Discussing each other's positions is indeed the great task scholars and researchers are called to in the years to come. As clearly declared by Denecke during an interview, «only in this way can we overcome the engrained habit of imposing Western literary categories onto the rest of the world and develop a true understanding and respect for other cultures» (Schwab 2013).

The volume *Crossing the Bridge: Comparative Essays on Medieval European and Heian Japanese Women Writers* (2001) is a good example of the attempt the various scholars made to mix and exchange their knowledge on some issues we can find in many – and directly unconnected – cultures, in this case, the figure of women writer. Another important and recent contribute is Wiebke Denecke's *Classical World Literatures: Sino-Japanese and Greco-Roman Comparisons* (2014), where the author compares the development of new literary traditions and their relationship with the older ones, taking as example the four countries/traditions of China-Japan, and Greece-Rome.

With this book, I want to give my modest contribution to this new field of studies about World Literature, and in the more specific field of «classical world comparative literatures (世界古典比較文学)» defined by Denecke (2012, p. 196), comparing and analyzing the two cultural areas whom, for different reasons, I belong to: Japan, since my original research field is Japanese Literature, and Italy, as an Italian native speaker. In particular, this book analyzes the poetry of the so-called Sicilian School at Frederick II of Hohenstaufen's

court (13th century), and the poetry of the Heian court in the 9th and 10th century. The main concern about this choice was the risk implied in leaving my usual field of study (Japanese literature), and 'invading' a different and relatively unknown one (the Italian medieval literature), almost without any specific knowledge, having as unique advantage – compared to non-Italian speakers – of a direct access to the most recent and updated studies on that subject, thanks to my knowledge of the language. Indeed, an important part of the academic resources about the specific field I chose – the Italian court poetry of 13th century – is still only available in Italian. I am thinking in particular of two recent publications: the *Enciclopedia Federiciana* (2005), a huge and detailed encyclopedic work about Frederick II's court and culture, and the three volumes of *I Poeti della Scuola Siciliana* (2008), that for the first time offered an exhaustive edited version of all of compositions of the Sicilian School poets. Fortunately, during my studies, I found an unexpected encouragement from the words of one of the greatest scholars of Provencal literature, the above quoted Erich Köhler. When Köhler tried a comparison between his field of study (Occitan literature) and a different one (German literature), he too was aware of the danger of entering an unknown field of studies – even if still within the European literatures – that's why he decided to use «as a starting point the statements of trusted scholars of German literature» (Köhler 1976, p. 275), to give his comparative discourse reliable bases. That is exactly the methodology I chose for my research: quoting the results of the most acknowledged researchers and specialists of medieval Italian and European Literature – Roberto Antonelli, Costanzo Di Girolamo, Alberto Vàrvaro, Mario Mancini, etc. – trying to compare them with the researches and results of my field of studies, the Japanese Classical Literature. Actually, Köhler gave me a further and even more important encouragement, when he suggested that, exactly because of his 'external' and 'not specialized point of view (on German literature), he could on the contrary be blessed by a «long eyed perspective allowing him to catch some aspects with even more lucidity» (Köhler 1976, p. 296), that is almost the same concept of the «distant reading» theorized by Franco Moretti about World Literature (Moretti 2000). Moretti states also that «World literature is not an object, it's a *problem*, and a problem that asks for a new critical method; and no-one has ever found a method by just reading more texts. That's not how theories come into being: they need a leap, a wager – a hypothesis – to get started» (Moretti 2004).

The reader will be free to judge whether in this book I accomplished the aim of catching some aspects with even more lucidity, but even in the event the results fail to meet the expectations, at least I hope I have suggested a new way of looking at two quite specific literary contexts – 9th century Japan and 13th century Italy – and have presented some of the most interesting results

of literary studies published only in Japanese and Italian language and made them available to a wider public.

Both in Japan and in Italy there is indeed a strong presence of 'traditional' comparativism, «interested in the sources and in the lending of themes and genres or styles from one country to another» (Ceserani 1999, p. 314) – namely the Romance literature comparativism in Italy and the Sino-Japanese comparativism in Japan – but we still lack a solid tradition of the 'new' comparativism «that studies analogies and contrasts, linguistic structures and cultural objects, as well as the historical background, on a world scale» (ibid.). This research is a contribution to the second kind of comparativism between the two specific 'minor' cultures of Japan and Italy, following the example of what is usually called World Literature. This is probably the first attempt to compare Japanese Heian poetry directly with Italian poetry of the Sicilian School in such an extended way.

In other words, this book is my answer to the double challenge proposed by Wiebke Denecke: «you're kind of poking both the Eurocentrists and the too culture-specific philologists out of their holes and saying, 'Let's look at all these traditions together, in mutual illumination'» (Schwab 2013).

Contents of the book

This book is divided in five parts. In Part I I will try to outline some similitudes and differences between the historical background behind the literary works produced in the Sicilian (Italian) court of Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (1194-1250), the so called *Magna Curia* (Great Court), and the early Heian court of 9th century Japan, in particular during the lifetime of Emperor Saga (786-842) and Emperor Uda (867-931).

Starting from the direct comparison between these rulers and their political strategies, in Part II I will focus on the relationship between power and literature, and court culture in more general terms, but still under a comparative point of view.

In Part III I will introduce the problem about the origin and consolidation of vernacular language as a literary canon, focusing on two specific poetical collections, the *Kokinwakashū* 古今和歌集 (or simply the *Kokinshū*, Collection of Japanese poems ancient and modern) in Japan, and the poems of the Sicilian School in Italy. I will attempt some answers to the reasons behind the consolidation of these two collections as literary canons, through a textual analysis of prose works such as Ki no Tsurayuki's *Kanajo* and Dante Alighieri's *De vulgari eloquentia*.

In Part IV I will discuss the problem of formalization of poetic language, underling the similitudes between the rhetorical devices of the *Kokinshū* and

the Sicilian School, with particular attention to the translation process from other languages and to poetic traditions.

Part V is dedicated to love poetry, a leitmotif both in the *Kokinshū* and in the Sicilian poems. I will show how the new notion of love appears the same under many points of view, particularly the idealization of love, in the elaboration of the Japanese and Italian poets of the reference period, and influenced by some changes in the social background; but at the same time how it differs in some substantial aspects, such as in the 'ennobling force of love'.

As I will demonstrate in this book, the choice of these two particular contexts – the Sicilian court of the 13th century, and the early Heian courts – is motivated first of all by some strong similitudes in the History of Literature. 13th century Italy and 9th century Japan, more precisely under Frederick II, Saga and Uda's courts, are usually considered important turning – or, with a different nuance, starting – points for both countries' literatures, especially as regards the 'literary canon'. Therefore, the keywords that will orient this research are 'court literature' and 'vernacular language', two central elements not only for these two periods, but also for the entire history of world literature, as the relationship between court culture and vernacular culture has been underlined by many by previous studies.

Court and vernacular in Japan

As stated by Li Yuling, the main characteristic of the Heian literature, compared to previous and later periods, is that the greatest part of its literary works can be properly considered 'court literature' (*kyūtei bungaku* 宮廷文学), namely «literary works created on the stage of the court» and «literary works that were enjoyed at court» (Li 2011, p. 2). In other words, the core of the Heian literature was composed by and for the nearly exclusive use of court members.

It is not an exaggeration to say that during the three centuries of the Heian period, the main part of the cultural production, especially literature, was strictly tied to and rooted in the center of the capital city Heiankyō (modern Kyoto) at the court of emperors and regents. That is why the Heian literature as a whole is often defined as court literature: its role, function and its very existence cannot be properly explained outside the social-historical frame of the court.

Of course, the Heian court was not the earliest in Japan, and neither the first whose members produced a particular kind of literature. It is common knowledge that Japanese Literature is usually supposed to have started with Nara's period (710-794) when the earliest literary works we know today had been written. Nara's politics was based on a jurisdiction known as *ritsuryō system* 律令体制 (translated sometimes as «statutory system», cfr. McCullough 1999),

an imitation of a Chinese law code carrying the same name. The *ritsuryō* government featured the foundation of a centralized bureaucracy composed by the ruler and his officials, gathered in a kind of court usually indicated with the Japanese term *chōtei* 朝廷 (Imperial Court). But it is only at the beginning of the Heian period that this concept of 'court' evolved to a more centralized and localized society composed by the sovereign, his family and the courtiers living in close contact with and in a relationship of direct dependence on the ruler. This new court that appeared in the early Heian period, characterized by the centralization of power around the emperor's physical persona and his residence, is usually indicated with the term *kyūtei* 宮廷 (literally: Court of Palace), to underline the centrality of the imperial palace (宮*kyū* or *miya*) in this new society.

In fact, it is first of all with the foundation of the new capital Heiankyō that according to Masuda Shigeo, the upper classes and court members that lived in the capital became aware of the difference between the people living in other regions of the country, at the time called the 'country of men' (*hito no kuni*) and those living in the capital (*miyako*) where the *tennō* (emperor), who was believed to have divine origins, lived (Masuda 2004, p. 3). This new social assessment that consolidated in the first decades of the 9th century lead to the birth of a new and 'real' aristocratic class, different from the former aristocracy of Nara period, still tied to local traditions and territorial power. For the first time in the history of Japan we witness the birth of a «purely consumer class» (Ibid.), whose economical and political power didn't come from the direct possession of lands, but instead from the duties they fulfilled in court bureaucracy.

This social change will be the basis for a big cultural change during the Heian period, because this new social class will be the main actor in later cultural developments: «The aristocrats start to establish new life-styles, and start to foster a new sensibility about life» (Ibid.). As summarized by Morota Tatsumi, the birth of the aristocracy in the early Heian led to an «aristocratization of culture» (Morota 2007, p. 96).

One of the earliest examples of this new court society's cultural activity is the compilation of three anthologies of poems in Chinese language known as the *Chokusen sanshū* (勅撰三集, Three collection by imperial orders): the *Ryōunshū* (凌雲集, Cloud-borne collection, 814) and the *Bunkashūreishū* (文華秀麗集, Collection of literary masterpieces, 818) ordered by emperor Saga, and the *Keikokushū* (経国集, Collection for administrating the State, 827) ordered by his brother Junna (786-840). At the peak of the import of Chinese culture in Japan, Saga's Kōnin era (810-824) and Junna's Tenchō era (824-834) represent the first stage of Heian court literature, also from a chronological point of view. As stated by Wiebke Denecke, during Saga's lifespan

we witness one of «the most '*literary*' period in the history of Japan » (Denecke 2013b, p. 93). According to Denecke, it is during Saga's period that for the first time Japanese literati tried to define a personal historical identity, as representatives of a 'modern age' (近代 *kindai*) compared to the former one of the previous Asuka and Nara period. At the same time the Japanese poets acquired a new consciousness of the shared features of Japanese and Chinese literature; Saga's period poems are much more refined than those of *Kaifūsō* and of the previous periods, and the literary scene is enriched with new genres. We observe a general process of *literarization* (文学化 *bungakuka*) of culture (Denecke 2013b, p. 99).

For all these changes, first of all the birth of a real aristocratic court culture, and the consequent production of a 'court literature', we can consider Saga's reign the perfect starting point for our study on court poetry.

If Saga's reign can be considered as a valid starting point for the study of court literature in ancient Japan, the same can't be said about the other keyword of this research: vernacular language. Although we can correctly indicate Saga as the promoter of a new cultural tradition, the literary works in his court were mainly, if not exclusively, written in Chinese.

In the early Heian court, Chinese – like Latin in Europe – was the language of law, bureaucracy, Buddhism and culture in general. Moreover, because at that time Japan hadn't developed a native writing system yet, Chinese was the only system available. However, even if largely used for writing and official duties, Chinese never totally replaced the native language of Japan, Japanese, also called *Yamato kotoba* (language of Yamato, the ancient name for Japan). In other words, Chinese was, and continued to be, a foreign language radically different from the spoken Japanese of the time – the vernacular Japanese – despite the enormous influence it had on Japanese, especially from a lexical point of view.

The introduction of Chinese in Japan first of all met the need to write and keep records. The earliest surviving literary work written in what we can call Japanese – albeit transcribed with Chinese characters here and there with phonetic or semantic meaning – is the *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (*Collection of a myriad of leaves*, second half of 8th century), a huge anthology of *waka* 和歌 (Japanese poems) compiled during Nara's period. Even if some of the poems included in this collection – such as the poems by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro and Ōtomo no Yakamochi – can be considered court poetry, having being composed in public occasions such as banquets or court ceremonies, the *Man'yōshū* itself is usually considered a private collection, and its heterogeneous structure and complex compilation process makes it hard to consider it as a representative example of court literature of a specific court.

To have a Japanese literary work that matches both the key words 'court literature' – also in the sense of 'official literature of the court', such as the *Chokusen sanshū* – and 'vernacular literature', such as the *Man'yōshū*, we have to wait until the beginning of the 10th century, with the compilation of the first imperial ordered collection of Japanese poems, the *Kokinwakashū* in 905. The *Kokinshū* inherited from *Chokusen sanshū* the tradition – and status – of imperial collection, as well as its basic structure – the division in sections and themes, the presence of prefaces – and symbolizes the passage of the baton from *kanshi* (poetry in Chinese) to *waka* (poetry in Japanese) as the court's official poetic language. Moreover, it is in the *Kokinshū* two prefaces, one in Japanese, the *Kanajo* (仮名序) and one in Chinese, the *Manajo* (真名), that the political vision of poetry, as symbol and direct effect of emperor's virtue, makes the *Kokinshū* appear closer to *Chokusen sanshū* than to *Man'yōshū* (cfr. Masuda 1976, p. 32).

The historical boundaries of vernacular language in Japan are anything but clear, therefore it will require a careful analysis of the development of vernacular literature in Japan from the *Man'yōshū* to the *Kokinshū*, on the background of the whole Heian period. Although the compilation order of the *Kokinshū* came from emperor Daigo (885-930), many documents testify the importance of his father, emperor Uda, in the process of rehabilitation of the *waka* and Japanese vernacular culture which the *Kokinshū* represents. For these reasons, in the study of court literature and vernacular literature in Japan, both Saga's and Uda's courts seem to be the most appropriate candidates for a comparison with the European court and vernacular literature.

Court and vernacular in Italy

Since Dante's time, the Sicilian court under emperor Frederick II has been unanimously considered the cradle of Italian literature. Aside from a few exceptions such as Saint Francis of Assisi's *Cantico delle Creature*, and five fragmented lyrical texts in various Italian dialects (Di Girolamo 2008, pp. XX-XXXVI), for the first time an Italian dialect, the Sicilian vernacular, had been adopted as literary language to express the most highly regarded genre of literature: poetry. This so called Sicilian School of poetry became a model for almost every Italian poet or author that from then on decided to write in vernacular instead of Latin, until then the classical language of culture and writing. The relationship between the European medieval courts and vernacular romance languages is very interesting, and the origin of the Italian *vernacular* literature is a perfect example of this process. Therefore, the poetry of the Sicilian School at Frederic II's court perfectly matches the two keywords of 'vernacular language' and 'court literature' marking this study.

Of course, the Sicilian School is not the earliest vernacular court literature in Europe, as the Sicilians themselves imitated their elder cousins, the troubadours of southern France. Actually, a comparison between the troubadour and Heian vernacular literatures seems anything but inappropriate, because the discourse about vernacular culture and court environments, or vernacular poetry as the starting point of a new tradition, affected – and undeniably started in – French and Occitan courts as well.

But in the general process of the centralization of power – that in the following centuries in Europe led to the birth of the modern nation states – and in its relationship with cultural politics, we can see in Frederick II's court an even more appropriate term of comparison with Heian Japan. Not only many of Frederick's government features resemble Saga's, but also in a wider view, the shift from *chōtei* to *kyūtei* described before seems to be somehow comparable to the shift from the feudal system, typical of southern France, to Frederick II's centralized *state* and *regal* court – the Magna Curia. The point is that unlike the fragmented troubadours' courts, «the state in which the Sicilian poets lived is a courtly one, and no longer feudal » (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 124). This also means that between the troubadours and the Sicilian poets there was first of all a *social* change that determined a different approach to literature and a different type of poet. Now, although a parallel between Japan and Italy in these terms can be made, I think we need to be extremely careful in jumping to conclusions. It would be in fact totally wrong to define the court of Nara period or the *ritsuryō* state system, a 'feudal system' like we use to do in the European medieval courts. The *ritsuryō* was indeed based on a firmly centralized state structure, so the difference with feudalism, where the king, the emperor or the pope legitimated various landlords to possess, govern and exploit land under highly autonomous conditions, is by contrast quite remarkable.

So, the parallel between the Heian court with Frederick II's court I am addressing in the first part of this book will focus on the process of the personalization of court politics pursued by the ruler, that through a precise plan of law and administrative reforms, progressively led to a shift of powers from the upper aristocratic clans – like feudal barons and vassals – to bureaucrats and men under the direct control of the ruler.

Undeniably, similarly to what happened in the early Heian period, as a consequence of the political changes sought by Frederick, a new social class was born in Sicily: the notary class, a state bureaucracy that like the Heian aristocracy would characterize the tastes and features of this new literary tradition. Again, I am not equating the Heian aristocracy with the Sicilian notary

class; instead I would like to outline the typical features of each environment and verify whether, over a long period of time, a similar evolution and process related to literature may be identified in both contexts.

In the first place, even if we cannot talk about an aristocratization of courtiers like it happened in Heian-kyō, it is common knowledge that the Sicilian Poetry is anything but a sort of popular poetry. The language used in the Sicilian poetry, usually called 'illustrious Sicilian', was not the dialect spoken by the commoners. Let's not forget that Sicily also featured solid multi-linguism with complex historical roots. Instead, this was a highly elaborated and conventional language, enriched with numerous loanwords from Latin and Occitan. The distinction between *noble* and *humble* language was one of the main issues raised also by Dante Alighieri in his *De Vulgari eloquentia*, that awards the highest rank to Sicilian, criticizing other Italian vernaculars, as in the following example:

> One of them is so womanish, because of the softness of its vocabulary and pronunciation, that a man who speaks it, even if in a suitably virile manner, still ends up being mistaken for a woman.
> (DVE I-xiv, 2)
> There is also another vernacular, as I said, so hirsute and shaggy in its vocabulary and accent that, because of its brutal harshness, it not only destroys the femininity of any woman who speaks it, but, reader, would make you think her a man.
> (DVE I-xiv, 4)

It is with Dante, and thanks to the work of the Tuscan copyists who at around the same time transcribed in Tuscan vernacular the poems of the Sicilian School, that this poetry was acknowledged as a canon, the first stage of Italian vernacular literature of art.

A direct comparison

So, like the Heian literature of the 9th-10th century, the Sicilian School became a canon of taste and style whose influence is evident in later Italian and European Literature. Moreover, as well as Li Yuling defined the Heian literature as a 'proper' court literature – unlike Nara and the post-Heian literatures – we can say that literature at Frederick II's court is – if not the most – the earliest suitable literature fitting this denomination in the history of Italian Literature. The status of 'court literature', with the same universalistic meaning, fails to appear in the later Italian literature, first of all among the Sicilians' closer prosecutors, the Tuscan poets. These poets, such as Guittone d'Arezzo or Dante Alighieri himself, lived in a very different socio-political environment,

that was not the court of a king or emperor, but a new dynamic and demo-cratic space: the state-cities called *Comuni*. Half a century after Frederick II's death, it was Dante who denounced the lack of a central court environment in Italy when he theorized that the ideal 'Italian vernacular' was expected to be «illustrious, cardinal, aulic and curial» (DVE, I-xvi, 6), with 'curial' meaning 'courtly' in the sense of belonging to the court. Although some later courts, like the Este's court in Ferrara, gave birth to important pieces of literature – e.g. Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* and Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* – they were not *national* courts, nor *royal* or *imperial* ones, as was instead Frederick II's and his son Manfred's Magna Curia.

Other characteristics like the role of the ruler as cultural promoter, the lack of a political theme and the centrality of love in vernacular poetry, give mean-ing to the comparison between the early Heian court and Frederick II's Magna Curia, and it will be this book's subject of analysis. In particular the discourse about love in poetry is not only a central macro-theme of the literary tradi-tions of both Italy and Japan, but it is also another important issue showing the novelty of both the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū* and their value as turn-ing points in the evolution of world literature. Love becomes a poetic theme detached from real life experiences, an idealized love: in the *Kokinshū*, «love is taken as a simple subject, without dealing with concrete love experiences; it becomes abstract and idealized» (Masuda 1976, p. 42), also in the Sicilian School; it becomes a «literary myth, increasingly transcending the concrete reality of social relationship» (Roncaglia 1978, p. 382).

The research published in this book is not intended as a contribution to the field of comparative literature between the east and the west, but as an exper-imental study that, taking advantage of the previous results of different and until today unconnected fields of research – Italian medieval literature and Classical Japanese literature – and proposing new methods of analysis, aims at casting new light on some big issues of world literature, such as the consol-idation of national vernacular languages, its relationship with power, or the centrality of the love theme. In the specific instance, this research is also an attempt to insert Japanese court literature into the wider frame of world liter-ature according some generally accepted categorizations, such as 'court liter-ature' or 'vernacular literature'. I will try to verify whether these categories, already outlined and analyzed by studies on European literature, are valid al-so for Japan, and if not, to understand why.

In this sense, I think the instance of the Sicilian School and the *Kokin-shū* should deserve further attention. The comparison presented in this work should not to be read as a mere 'quest for similitudes', but rather as an attempt to open the debate on questions like 'what is court poetry in Europe and Ja-pan' and the meaning of vernacular traditions through the analysis of a precise

social and historical area and of two highly representative texts – the Sicilian School poems and the *Kokinshū*.

So, the comparison between the cultural-politics of Frederick II and Saga or Uda is intended as a helpful introduction to the many similitudes in the historical, political and cultural background – and also as a starting point from which the early Italian literature and the Japanese classical literature may be compared like never before. One of the questions rised by the present research is if a very particular social environment – the court – and a similar cultural background can give birth to analogous literary aptitudes, for example the formalization of poetry, or a similar aesthetic taste.

The choice of these two particular periods is therefore motivated by some actual similarities both in the social and textual contexts. So, it is the sum of all these elements, in combination with a new and particular idea of literature as 'state activity' sustained by the rulers to legitimate and consolidate their power, and the centrality of the imperial court that makes this comparison meaningful. In other words this research starts from the observation of the history of the Italian and Japanese Literatures, and from the identification of three important turning points coincident to the reigns of three rulers in particular: the birth of Italian poetry with the Sicilian School at Frederick II's court, the birth of the imperial collections at Saga's court, and the return of the *waka* and the vernacular language during Uda's lifetime, culminated in the compilation of the *Kokinshū*.

Therefore, the first object of analysis and comparison will obviously be the personas of the rulers that were also pivotal centers of their own court's cultural activity. Saga may be compared to Frederick in the political reforms, their role as organizers of cultural activities with a political aim, and the stress on the ruler's centrality. Uda may be compared to Frederick because of their coinciding support to literature both in high language (Chinese/Latin) and in vernacular language (Japanese/Italian). In this first part I will also analyze the role of two poets/bureaucrats in particular, Sugawara no Michizane (845-903) and Peter de Vinea (it. Pier della Vigna, lat. Petrus de Vinea, 1190-1249). We can anticipate here how Michizane, who became the main tool of Uda's politics, had a role and a position quite similar to Peter's one at Frederick II's court. Both lacked strong political backgrounds, both were skilled in 'high' writing (Chinese/Latin) as well as in vernacular (Japanese/Italian), and thanks to the direct favor of the ruler both reached the highest position in court. The fact that both Michizane and Peter's lives will end tragically – the former dying in exile, the latter perhaps committing suicide in jail – may just be a coincidence; nevertheless, it is interesting to analyze these two poets as symbols of a particular environment linked to the literary production.

Finally, we must underline that the choice of focusing the textual compar-

ison only on two works, namely the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School poems, doesn't invalidate the general meaning of the research, since, as David Damrosh stated «world literature is not an immense body of material that must be somehow, impossibly, mastered; it is a mode of reading that can be experienced intensively with a few works just as effectively as it can be explored extensively with a large number» (Damrosh 2003, cit. in Denecke 2012, p. 198 n.9).

PART I
FREDERICK II, SAGA AND UDA

At first glance, emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen's historical stature seems to easily overshadow Japanese emperors like Saga or Uda. Known as *Stupor mundi* (amazement of the world) – an epithet given by the historian Matthew Paris (1200-1259) – Frederick was King of Sicily from 1198, and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire from 1220 until his death in 1250, ruling over a reign as wide as one third of Europe. In a continuous struggle with the Church of Rome, famous both as a military leader and as a man of great culture, Frederick's status as a legendary ruler took hold during his lifetime, and few kings or emperors in world history can match his fame.

By comparison, we can't say that emperor Saga is one of the most renowned emperors in Japanese history, or even within the shorter Heian period: he is clearly less famous than his father Kanmu (737-806), who founded two new capitals, Nagaoka and Heian-kyō, and whose reign is recorded «not because of grand temples, magnificent art, nor superlative literature, but for its accomplishments in city building, war, and governmental reform» (McCullough 1999, p. 25). Nevertheless, it was with Saga that Kanmu's reforms and new ideas of the state, including his clear will to follow the Chinese models – as symbolized by the urban plan of Heian-kyō, an imitation of Tang's capital Chang'an – reached their maturity and accomplishment. The so-called 'period of estimation of Chinese culture' reached its peak in the Kōnin era (810-824), corresponding to Saga's reign, and in the Tenchō era (824-834) corresponding to Saga's brother Junna's (786-840) reign. During that period, thanks to that circle of poets-officials and courtiers who lived very close to Saga, there was a widespread embracing of some Chinese customs and rituals from the Tang court generally called *tōrei* (唐礼, Tang rituals) that triggered the flourishing of a particular court poetry based on poetic exchanges between the emperor and his poets, the *ōsei* (応製 poems composed on response to the emperor), held at particular occasions, the so called *shien* (詩宴, poetic banquets) (Li 2011, p. 10).

We will see how, between the many common points we can find in Saga and Frederick II's character and politics, the most interesting one for us is that they were both poets that took active part in the literary scene, and were

at the same time the 'reason of being' – as patrons – of that very literature.

Let's start by outlining the similitudes and differences between Saga and Frederick from a historical point of view. First of all, foreign blood ran in both rulers' veins, albeit in different percentages. Frederick's relatives had Swabian, Burgundian, Norman, and Lotharingian origins: his father was Henry VI of Hohenstaufen (from Swabia, a southern region in ancient Germany) his mother was Constance of Hauteville (a Norman dynasty from northern France), but he was born in central Italy and spent his childhood in Sicily (Brül 1994, p. 18). Although not as internationally blooded as Frederick, Saga is supposed to have had Korean ancestors from his grandmother's side, a descendant of Muryeong武寧, king of the Korean kingdom of Baekje 百済 (Kudara in Japanese), and this legacy may explain his familiarity with the Chinese culture, as well as the post of head of state academy held by his father Kanmu before his accession to the throne.

Both Frederick and Saga were known for their proficiency in several languages and their interest in foreign cultures.

Frederick could speak Italian, French, German, and probably had a good knowledge of Latin, Occitan, and even a little Arabic (Lusignan 1994, p. 28). International relations with the Islamic states were in fact held in Arabic, thanks to Arabic native Sicilians like the notary Giovanni de Panormo and the chief astronomer Teodoro di Antiochia (Nef-Bresc, 2005).

Frederick's Sicilian court was one of the most important centers of translation of Greek and Arabic texts into Latin. Frederick's private library was: «a multilingual library unlike any in the Europe of the middle ages, […] it was a library for *reading*, […] virtually universal and diachronic, unlike the sectorial and synchronic one of religion and scholasticism; it was an 'open' library, due to the infinite possibilities of new accessions, and to the lack of any potential hierarchy of genre, matters, languages» (Petrucci 1983, cit. in Antonelli 1995, p. 319).

Salimbene de Adam (1221-1288), one of Frederick II's contemporary observers, stated that he was not only a poet but also a composer of tunes and music for his poems: «[Fridericus] legere, scribere et cantare sciebat et cantilenas et cantiones invenire» (Frederick could read, write, and sing, and he was able to compose tunes and poems) (Scalia 1966, p. 508). Six poems in Italian vernacular are ascribed to him (Rapisarda 2005), and he was also an active member of the Sicilian School of poetry. Frederick's most important work is *De arte venandi cum avibus (The art of hunting with birds), an extremely* detailed scientific manual in Latin about falcon hunt, his favorite leisure activity.

More than other Heian emperor, Saga embodied the ideal of the 'sage king' (Ury 1999, pp. 355-9). Able to read and write in Chinese, he was a renowned

calligrapher, and a good poet for his time's standards, as we can see from his compositions included in the three *Chokusen sanshū*. Some of the most qualified intellectuals at Saga's court, like the monk Kūkai and the scholar Sugawara no Kiyogimi, actually visited China, through the so called *kentōshi* 遣唐使, diplomatic mission to Tang court ordered by Japanese emperors, one of the clearest symbols of the links and imitation – but also of the active elaboration – of Chinese models in the early Heian Japan.

Frederick and Saga's love for foreign cultures showed also in their appearance and in their court customs: Frederick usually wore oriental clothes, and his court, frequented by Greeks, Arabians, Jews, and a range of rare animals – gifts from African and mid-eastern regions – showed a typical exoticism (Gabrieli 1989, p. 134); «the fiderician's parade that was moving through Italian cities with its entourage of costumes, men, and exotic beasts was maybe the earliest example of exhibition functionalized to secular purposes, in Italy's new political history» (Antonelli 1979, p. 70); his love for hunting with hawks is well documented, and many castles and palaces built under Frederick's order had the sole function of private estates for the emperor's delight.

Saga too was renowned for his extravagant life style (Ury 1999, p. 357). If the great change in court customs, including officials' clothes, hair styles, or the translation of the names of imperial palace pavilions and gates into Chinese counterparts, can be considered part of a wider process of sinicization started by Saga's father (Fujiwara 2001, p. 50); it also reflects Saga's personal tastes and luxurious lifestyle, as the over 100 episodes of imperial excursion and hunts recorded in historical documents demonstrate (Mezaki 1968, cit. in Fujiwara 2001, p. 39).

Frederick and Saga passed their love for knowledge and literature on to their respective children, as revealed in the examples of King Enzio, son of Frederick and poet of the Sicilian School, and Saga's daughter princess Uchiko, one of the few women in early Japan acknowledged as proficient in Chinese poetry (Ury 1999, p. 357; Li 2011, pp. 287-293). Moreover, the origin of the Minamoto clan, composed by Saga's descendants excluded by succession lineage, made him the first patriarch of a new kind of aristocratic dynasty (Fujiwara 2001, p. 39), that in some ways resembles the European royal houses like the Hohenstaufen. Also Frederick II had some heirs from extramarital relations, such as the above-cited King Enzio, son of Alayta von Urslingen Marano, a German noblewoman.

A different type of similarity between Saga and Frederick II can be seen also in the supernatural aura medieval commentators attribute to them. Japanese *tennō* always claimed a divine descent from Shinto deities, but as pointed out by Ernst Kantorowicz also in Frederick we find the idea of a direct derivation of the empire and the Sicilian kingdom from God's will (Kantorowicz

1927, cit. in Landau 1994, pp. 32-33). The legend of the emperor's immortality lasted long after Frederick's death: in Sicily the belief that he entered into the Etna volcano with an army of 5000 men was widespread (Delle Donne 2010, p. 157), while in Germany a legend stating that he was sleeping inside a mountain and would wake up at the end of the times to bring back his order to the world was common (Kamp 2005). The Church, in open contrast with his hegemonic plan on the Italian peninsula, often blamed him as the anti-Christ and enemy of religion, as the two excommunications, in 1227 and in 1239 by pope Gregory IX, demonstrate. In any case, nobody could deny his extraordinary personality, or at least, the surprising fame he gained before and after his death.

Similarly, like all the other Japanese *tennō* (usually translated as emperor), Saga was not only a divine ruler directly descending from Amaterasu, the sun god in the Shinto tradition, but his divine being was often highlighted in literary works addressing him. The buddhist monk Kūkai considered him a reincarnated bodhisattva (Hotate 1996 p. 27), and expressions like *seikun* 聖君 (holy sire) or *seishu* 聖主 (holy lord) or 聖帝 (holy emperor), attested already in early collections like the *Kaifūsō* (751) referring to previous emperors, are also attributed to Saga, with a particular emphasis tied to the Confucian theories I will discuss later.

From the political point of view, the main aspect that characterizes the two rulers is the strong will to wield direct power, eluding the control or opposition of the aristocracy or religious institutions – a feature that will be inherited by emperor Uda in Japan. In Frederick II's politics we recognize «the constant will to firmly wield the mechanism of power» (Mazzarese Fardella 1986, p. 123), as his strategy of power legitimation demonstrates (Landau 1994), but this is a definition we can easily apply also to Saga, whose abdication to his brother Junna made him the first emperor to maintain almost complete political control over the court even when he retired. We should add here that Uda's firm reaction to the power gap caused by *kanpaku* (chancellor) Fujiwara no Mototsune's death in 891 is what assimilates him to Saga or Frederick under this aspect, unlike emperors Montoku (827-858) or Seiwa (850-880) who were totally subdued to the hegemonic power of the Fujiwara regents. Uda himself tried to follow Saga's example, abdicating in favor of his son Daigo but still imposing his will on court politics, although he eventually lost control on the court with the great debacle of *Shōtai no hen*.

It is therefore logical, first of all from the political and historical points of view, to consider Saga and Uda respectively as the beginning and the maturation of a new political system characterizing more or less all of the Heian history, as I will analyze more in depth later.

From many points of view, like the love for literature and art, and the lux-

urious lifestyle featuring banquets and events related to poetry, Uda resembles his great-grandfather Saga, but as I said before, it is first of all politically that we can identify the continuity between these two rulers. In the first five years of his reign, the monopolistic influence of the Great Chancellor (*kanpaku*) Fujiwara no Mototsune limited Uda's personal policy, but after Mototsune's death in 891, Uda enjoyed «a freedom of rule that had not been enjoyed by an emperor since the days of Saga and Junna» (McCullough 1999, p. 55).

What really makes Frederick II and Saga – and consequently Uda – very similar is the way they worked toward the consolidation of their personal power. This strategy is represented by the reinforcement of the centrality of the ruler in opposition, in Europe, to the centrifugal force of feudalism (and the fragmentation of territory by the *Comuni*'s independence in central and northern Italy), and in Japan, to the power of the Council of State (太政官 *Daijōkan*), emanation of the upper aristocracy, that represented a counterpart to *tennō*'s power. Despite the fact that in Heian Japan we can't talk about 'feudalism', and the general history settings are very different, the opposition between the personal power of the emperor against the interests of the upper aristocracy is quite similar in both contexts, as well as the strategies for reinforcing the emperor's centrality: some substantial modification to administrative law and bureaucracy, and a precise cultural policy.

Both Frederick II and Saga inherited from their fathers' a court – the *Magna Curia* of Sicily and *Heiankyō*'s court – that was the center of a state regulated by a pre-existing system of law – the Norman regulation established by William II of Sicily (1155-1189), grandfather of Frederick II (Kölzer 1994, p. 68), and the *ritsuryō* system introduced by the *Taihō* Code (beginning of the 8th century) and already updated by Saga's father Kanmu. From this somehow similar starting point, both Saga and Frederick implemented a reform of law codes and bureaucracy whose aim was to make the emperor the unique center of bureaucracy and the unquestioned controller of the state. Key points of this project were:

1) a law reform to grant the emperor freedom to choose directly high officials to manage state organs, specifically, Frederick II's chancellery and Saga/Uda's *Kurōdo dokoro* (Chamberlains' office)

2) the creation or reform of an educational system for the training and recruitment of loyal bureaucrats, not belonging to the high aristocracy: the *Studium* of Naples in Italy and the *Daigakuryō* in Japan.

3) the employment of these loyal officials in key-positions to manage and control the government, that in Japan passed through a system regulating and limiting contacts and relations between officials and the emperor, known as *shōden* (rise to the palace) system.

Law reforms with Frederick II and Saga

With the *Constitutiones Regni Siciliae* in 1231 (also called *Liber Augustalis* or *Constitutions of Melfi*, from the name of the city that hosted its compilation), considered «the greatest secular law monument of the Middle Ages» (Besta 1925, p. 731), Frederick II ratified the power of the emperor to choose and nominate directly judges, notaries and knights, namely the key positions of state bureaucracy (Gasparri 1994, p. 306). Frederick directly invested many knights not only in Sicily but also in Germany and in northern Italy to strengthen his role as military leader and to control the territory (Gasparri 1994, p. 314). The Constitutions limited the power and autonomy of the kingdom's barons and upper aristocracy, with the prohibition to have their own army unless with the emperor's permission, and the subjection to the emperor's taxes and other imposts. To be independent from his barons, Frederick also had a special army composed by Saracens, who were allowed to live in the city of Lucera (Apulia), and were free to practice Islamism, in exchange for their military service. This Saracen army, composed by a number of soldiers between seven and ten thousand, was one of the most loyal divisions in Frederick's forces, participating in almost every military action of the emperor (Amatuccio, 2005).

Moreover, Frederick enlarged the scopes and functions of the court chancellery upgrading it from a simple office assigned to writing and compiling acts and edicts, to a more neuralgic administrative organ, allowed to make minor decisions autonomously, and fulfill everyday procedures to lighten the emperor's work (Kölzer 1994, p. 73). The bureaucrats working at the imperial chancellery were, of course, the notaries.

In a wider sense, after Frederick's reforms, promotions in bureauctacy were no longer depending on titles and lineage, but rather on personal abilities and connections with the emperor: Peter de Vinea and Taddeo di Suessa, who reached the highest position at the *Magna Curia* despite not being members of the upper aristocracy, were the living examples of this policy. In particular Peter de Vinea, Frederick right-hand man after Taddeo's death, was a central figure in the Magna Curia both politically and culturally. As logothete (theorist) and protonotary (the highest level of court notary) he was chief of the Magna Curia's chancellery, being also credited, together with the Archbishop of Capua, of the compilation of the aforementioned *Liber Augustalis*, which set the new jurisdictional basis of Frederick's kingdom. «Peter de Vinea carried out also an important role as coordinator between the great court [of justice] and the chancellery, that, among its ordinary duties, also solved a large number of questions regarding justice, without the need to go to trial » (Cuozzo 2005). On the cultural hand, he was also a leading poet in the Sicilian School

of poetry, demonstrating a perfect competence in the new Sicilian literary language, and embodying the fusion between the Latin and the vernacular culture. The result of Frederick II's strategies is summarized by Kölzer as the decreased influence of the aristocratic families that were almost excluded by the royal council, the loss in importance of the honorary titles, and the selection of a close group of consultants that depended not on family ties, but on actual abilities and personal loyalty to the emperor (Kölzer 1994, p. 70).

Kölzer's summary seems to match the conclusions William H. McCullough expresses about Saga's politics in Japan: «Of the thirteen men who occupied the highest government offices in 841, the year before Saga's death, only four were Fujiwara […]. Among that selected group of thirteen there were four members of the imperial clan, or descendants of (Minamoto), and four men from lower-ranking families who were known chiefly for their Sinitic learning or administrative abilities» (McCullough 1999, p. 35). So, in Saga's instance we can also observe a relative weakening of the upper aristocracy and the strengthening of the power of the imperial house, realized, as we will see later, with the help of loyal officials.

There is of course an important difference we must underline here. While Frederick II's reign, with his «great court, no longer feudal, but royal and imperial» (Antonelli 2008, p. LII), is sometimes considered the precursor of the 'modern' absolute monarchies based on a centralized state bureaucracy, in Heian Japan, after the political struggles in the Nara period, some sort of imperial absolutism was reached by Kanmu, but this tendency didn't succeed in forming a bureaucracy capable of supporting a 'real' absolute monarchy (Furuse 1998, p. 123).

In any case, as I said before, the most remarkable point in Saga and Frederick II's policy is not just their similar result, but also the strategy adopted to pursue that result. In 820, Saga revised and corrected the law code of the time, with the compilation of the *Kōnin kyaku* 弘仁格and the *Kōnin shiki* 弘仁式, two law codes that clearly represented Saga's will for a political change after his victory against his predecessor, emperor Heijō, during the so called Kusuko incident (*Kusuko no hen*) in 810 (Hotate 1996, p. 26). These two works can be considered, in my opinion, an equivalent of the *Liber Augustalis* by Frederick II.

Saga's administrative reforms started as early as 810, after the Kusuko incident was settled, with the foundation of two important administrative institutions. The first was a new police bureau, called *Kebiishi* (検非違使 Imperial Police, or Imperial Inspector), that would become a totally independent organ in 834. *Kebiishi* gathered almost every security power in and around the Capital, rationalizing the police forces and giving Saga a stronger and more direct

control of the territory, with «the concentration of the governmental authority in and around the person of the emperor […], developments antithetical to the basic principles of the statutory regime» (McCullough 1999, p. 44). Also in Japan the political power was necessarily tied to military supremacy.

The second and most important innovation introduced by Saga to the bureaucracy system is the Chamberlains' Office (蔵人所 *Kurōdo dokoro*). Created like the *Kebiishi* at the time of the Kusuko Incident, this new office – a sort of emperor's private secretary – gave Saga an even more direct control on the government, allowing him to bypass the consultation and veto of the Council of State (*Daijōkan* 太政官), the highest organ of government in *ritsuryō* codes, to issue imperial edicts and laws. At the beginning the *Kurōdo dokoro* was composed by two chief chamberlains (*kurōdo no tō* 蔵人頭) and eight chamberlains (*kurōdo* 蔵人), selected directly by the emperor. A similar office, the *Chokushi dokoro* (勅旨所, Office for Imperial Orders) founded in 782 after the suspension of the ministry *Chokushishō* (勅旨省, the Ministry of Imperial Orders) had existed before the foundation of the *Kurōdo dokoro,* but its duties had related only to administrating imperial household's properties (Furuse 1998 p. 119).

Actually, «The Chamberlain's Office also looked after the Emperor's falcons and took care of musical instruments, books, coins (metal currency), and clothing» (Tyler 2001, p. 1161), thus taking care of both the 'public' and 'private' aspects of the emperor's life. Along with the Kebiishi, the *Kurōdo dokoro* was one of the so called *ryōge no kan* (令外官extra- ritsuryō offices), special administrative positions that were not regulated by the *ritsuryō* law code. This means that appointments to these posts, as well as the one of regent (*sesshō*) or of chancellor (*kanpaku*), were not decided by the Council of State, like all of the other ministries, but they were totally depending on the emperors' will and power. As of Saga's reign, the *Kurōdo dokoro* would become a preferential path to rise to the post of Consultant (参議 *sangi*, a junior post in the Council of State, below Councelor and Minister) and its dependence on imperial will is emblematic of the «shift of the political power from the public, semi-bureaucratic institutions of the statutory regime towards a more personal kind of rule that depended chiefly on the emperor and a narrow circle of his intimates» (McCullough 1999, p. 41). In other words, the constitution of the *Kurōdodokoro* symbolized the passage from the so called *ritsuryō* state (or code-based state, *ritsuryō kokka* 律令国家) of the Nara period to the imperial court state (*ōchō kokka*王朝国家) of the Heian period, which I will analyze later.

The state academy

The organization of educational institutions and its employment for political aims is another common point between Frederick II and Saga's governments. In Naples, Frederick II founded a high educational institution called *Studium* that was in many aspects similar to the court academy of the Heian court, the *Daigakuryō*.

The Heian *Daigakuryō* and the Neapolitan *Studium* feature by three main points:

1) the status of *state academy*, that is an organ totally independent of private influences as well as of religious power and culture;

2) a curriculum of courses focused on non-technical subjects, but rather on matters like Literature or Law;

3) the actual chance given to the alumni to enter state bureaucracies, for their personal academic achievements and not depending on their family status or extraction.

Of course, while *Daigakuryō* and *Studium* have different backgrounds and characteristics, the two have more in common than with other universities in Europe, such as Paris or Bologna.

The *Daigakuryō* (Bureau of Higher Education, sometimes translated as Academy) was first established around the mid-7th century, probably in 670 as part of the Ōmi Codes, and then expanded in 701 with the Taihō Codes (Hisaki 1968, p. 6). As the suffix '-*ryō*' (bureau) proves, since its beginning the *Daigakuryō* «was not an independent institution but an ordinary government bureau» (Borgen 1994, p. 85). During the reign of Emperor Kanmu – who before becoming emperor held the position of *kami* (head) of the *Daigakuryō* – there was the first important reinforcement of the function of this academy. Kanmu fostered literati and «vigorously pursued policies aimed at restricting the power of the great monasteries and noble families, encouraging able but less well-born men to enter government services» (Borgen 1994, p. 39). A clear example of this policy is the financial aid the academy received as land allotments and scholarships for the students: in the year 757 the number of student receiving a payment was 130, and the area of land assigned to the *Daigakuryō* to earn its income (*kangakuden* 勧学田, field for the promotion of learning) was just 30 *chō* (1 *chō* = 9.917 m²), but at the end of Kanmu's reign the numbers rose to 260 students and 139 *chō* (Hisaki 1968, p. 64).

However, the Heian emperor who spared no effort in supporting the *Daigakuryō* and attempted to use culture and education as a tool to govern is without doubt Kanmu's son, Saga. Not only did Saga raise and enlarge the government grant and the numbers to 310 students and 196 *chō*, he himself participated in the literary scene, encouraging the spread of the Chinese culture and litera-

ture in Japan, also through the *Daigakuryō.*

The rise of rank in court hierarchy of *monjō hakase* (文章博士 Professor of Letters[1]) was particularly emblematic of Saga's intentions, and the term *monjō* 文章 (Letters, in the sense of Chinese writings and Literature) can be considered the real keyword behind all of Saga's cultural politics and government ideals as expressed by the *Chokusen sanshū* (Denecke 2013b, p. 99). Until its creation in 728, the *monjō hakase* was one of the professors of the *Daigakuryō*, lecturing about Chinese literary works such as *Wenxuen* (文選, jp. *Monzen*) or *Erya* (爾雅, jp. *Jiga*) to a small class of twenty students, called *monjōshō* (文章生 student of letters), training them in the recitation of texts and written composition.

Until Saga's time the post of *monjō hakase* was held by the men of the senior 7th lower rank in the court hierarchy, but in 820 the emperor rose it to junior 5th lower, including it officially in the aristocracy[2]. With this promotion, the *monjō hakase* ranked the highest among *Daigakuryō*'s *hakase*, even higher than the professors of Confucian Classics (*myōgyō hakase* 明経博士), usually considered the most important in the professors of the *Daigakuryō*. Moreover, in 834 Saga added a second post for *monjō hakase*, clearly reinforcing this curriculum position inside the academy (Borgen 1994, p. 82). The duties of the *Monjō hakase* were initially limited to teaching to the students of the *Daigakuryō*, but with Saga the *Monjō hakase* would also become a kind of special secretary of the emperor, as I will explain later.

The foundation of the *Studium* in Naples in Frederick II's Kingdom of Sicily resembles *Daigakuryō*, first of all from the point of view of its constitution as a *state academy*; as for Saga, this approach marked the ruler's will to integrate the educational system into the bureaucratic mechanism, and secondly, to use that system to strengthen his own position. On the 5th of June 1224, Frederick issued an edict, later ratified in 1234, opening a school for higher education, the *Studium* in Naples, with which he invited the youth of the Kingdom of Sicily to attend its courses (Arnaldi 2005). As the *Studium* in Naples was «the first state university in Europe» (Kamp 2005, p. 8) we could well consider Frederick II as the first ruler in Europe to gain direct and total

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[1]   I use the term Letters and not Literature, used instead by Borgen, because the term *monjō* seems to subtly differ from the term *bungaku*, generally used from the Meiji period onward to translate the European word 'literature'. Cfr. Denecke 2013a, p. 4.

[2]   The rank system of the Heian court can be divided in three large social areas: non-aristocratic from 8th to 6th, aristocratic from 5th to 4th, upper aristocratic from 3rd to 1st.

control of education and academic institutions within his rule. Other power-
ful rulers that formerly led cultural and educational reforms needed to rely
on the collaboration of clerics and, more generally on the religious power of
the Church, the singular referee and owner of 'culture' during the first half
of the Middle Ages. More accurately, Frederick was not the first nor the only
one to try such an approach during his time, as the establishment of the uni-
versities of Salamanca (1218) and Toulouse (1229) – two state institution that
aimed at being independent from the Church – demonstrated. But because
these two academies ended up being assimilated into other universities such
as Bologna or Paris, the *Studium* in Naples is generally considered the oldest
academic institution of this level established by imperial laws and managed
directly by the state (Verger 1994, pp. 138-40). It is for this reason that I find
the *Studium* in Naples, as concerns its nature of *state* university, closer to the
Daigakuryō than to the universities of Bologna or Paris. In Bologna, at least
since the beginning of 13th century, we can find associations of students and
professors, free election of deans, and the issuing of degrees conducted al-
most in perfect autonomy (Ibid., p. 131). Moreover, it acquired the status of
studium generale (general academy) –meaning that anybody with a degree
from Bologna had the right to teach in any other university or school – though
this right was still granted and legitimated directly by the Pope, reflecting the
implicit tie with clerical and religious power. The same can be said about the
University of Paris, whose teaching staff was still composed in great part by
clerics. Unlike in Bologna, in Naples there wasn't an independent association
of teachers or students, and the selection and assignment of the professors
was decided – or at least approved – directly by Frederick II with a nomina-
tion *ad personam* (Ibid.)

The nature of 'state' institutions became stronger with the subsequent
prohibition for the citizens of the Sicilian kingdom to attend courses in Bolo-
gna or universities other than Naples. Frederick's prohibition can be read as
a direct consequence to the decision taken in 1226 by the city of Bologna to
join the Lombard League, an alliance formed by northern Italy cities in open
conflict with Emperor Frederick II's forces and influence (Arnaldi 2005). A
similar decision on the regulation and monopoly of the academic curriculum
in the Kingdom of Sicily took place in 1231 with the duty for every doctor of
the reign to obtain a degree from the *Schola Medica Salernitana*, the oldest
academic institution in Europe specialized in medicine. All these elements
demonstrate the total submission of the academic institutions and schools to
Frederick's will and his imperial political project.

The same subordination of the academy to the political system can be found
in Japan. At the *Daigakuryō*, professor's posts were subject to the Council of

State and the emperor's will, and the nomination of *kami* or *hakase* were also part of a political strategy and competition, as a result of trading and compromising between members of the aristocracy, rather than the result of an impartial competition based on personal abilities and academic achievements. As Borgen points out, it is hardly a coincidence that, for example, the year Sugawara no Michizane was appointed *monjō hakase* – a long-yearned position – his father Koreyoshi was employed as a Consultant of the Council of State (Borgen 1994, p. 125). If this process – that became the norm as the following hereditary monopoly of posts at the *Daigakuryō* among Sugawara and Ōe's family members demonstrated – could symbolize somehow the failure of a policy aimed at rewarding personal abilities and efforts against dynastic privilege, it is undeniable that at least in Saga's time, that ideal was realized to some extent.

Furthermore, we should consider a substantial characteristic in the socio-political background in the Heian period; namely, the tendency to inherit power and professional duties, not only among the Fujiwara-regent family, but also among lower status families, such as the Ōe or the Sugawara. Also before Heian period, the power of clans like the Ōtomo were substantially hereditary, but it was with the beginning of the Heian period that, according to Furuse, the aristocratic status perfectly fitted the definition of 'aristocracy' by Marc Bloch: owners of special privileges accorded by *law* and by *heritage* (Furuse 1998, p. 292). The access to the *Daigakuryō* can be considered one of these privileges, because while the sons of the high aristocrats (3rd rank and above) had the automatic right to attend the courses, lower rank courtiers needed to pass a difficult test to obtain the same privilege. Moreover, as underlined by Fujiwara, while in Tang China the state examination system offered real chances to lower classes and the countryfolks of obtaining high positions in the state bureaucracy – as in the instance of Bai Juyi, born in a poor family – in Japan this system always showed a form of 'aristocracy' that precluded the promotion of non-aristocrats (Fujiwara 2001, p. 258). In any case, many of Frederick's and Saga's most trusted ministers and officials were not members of the upper aristocracy, and although for a short period, proficiency in knowledge represented a (narrow) path to state bureaucracy.

The same possibility, at least in theory, was clearly stated in the founding document of the *Studium*, when Frederick promised a concrete perspective of good employment, income and business for those who would attend: «the young men answering this call will have the chance to elevate themselves through study, sit in the reign's courthouse seats, become rich, and make friends and clients» (Arnaldi 2005). The position of 'judge of the great court', a minor post in the court tribunal, was often accorded to the alumni of the *Studium*, as stated by Norbert Kamp. It is this new figure of bureaucrat, the *notaio* (no-

tary), that would became the symbol of «servant of the state» in Frederick's Sicily (quote in Kölzer 1994, p. 74), or, for Antonelli, the «hero of Frederick II's period» (Antonelli 1979, p. 72), replacing the key figures of the knight and the clerk of the European feudal courts. In Japan, the new figure of bureaucrat at Saga's time was represented by the *bunjin* (文人 literate, man of letters). The exact meaning and usage of the word *bunjin* is problematic, as pointed out by Kudō Shigenori (1993, quoted in Fujiwara 2001, p. 263), but here this term will be used only in the meaning suggested by Takigawa: *bunjin* were the specialists of *kanshibun* (Chinese poetry and writing) (Takigawa, 2004 p. 249). According to Furuse, the *bunjin* as a social group (*bunjin-ha* 文人派) took shape in Saga's court in response to the new career path offered by the reforms of the Kōnin era (Furuse 1998, p. 121).

As stated earlier, such a chance of self-promotion was possible only for a very short period. In Italy, it actually occurred only under Frederick II's reign, and already during his son Conrad IV's reign (1250-1254) it was drastically reduced (Arnaldi 2005); in Japan, after Uda's reign and the definitive consolidation of the politics of the *sekkan* (regent-chancellor), the chance for a *bunjin* to obtain a high position in the bureaucracy was very limited. The instance of Ki no Tsurayuki – one of the most important figures in the history of Japanese Literature – who never surpassed the fifth rank in his lifetime, is emblematic of this new political scene.

After Frederick's death in 1250 and the definitive fall of the Hohenstaufen in 1266, the *Studium* quickly lost its importance, as did the *Daigakuryō* after the reign of Uda and the consolidation of the Fujiwara monopoly. Even if the *Studium* continued to exist after 1266 under the new royal dynasty of Anjou, with the relocation of new law professors from Paris (Cortese 2005) the centrality this institution had in the Sicilian court as training center for officials and notaries, and its tie with the state bureaucracy, became weaker. In Japan, the alumni of *Daigakuryō* would never reach as high the posts as the ones occupied by Sugawara no Michizane under Uda, and this exclusion of literati from the political scene would have important consequences for the evolution of the literary production, with a shift of the authors' attention to lighter genres such as fantasy novels and *monogatari* (Fujiwara 2001, p. 263).

The end of the *Studium* and the *Daigakuryō* demonstrate how these institutions were part of a precise political and governmental plan directly connected with the person of a specific ruler, therefore they couldn't survive the fall of that particular regime.

As I stated at the beginning of this section, the *Daigakuryō* and the *Studium* also show some differences, mainly in the organization and contents of the syllabus. In Naples, the main focus of the *Studium* was indisputably the law school, an essential prerequisite for the bureaucrats of the reign, mainly

judges or notaries. In the Japanese *Daigakuryō* instead, the law school had little importance if compared to the courses on Chinese classics and Literature (Borgen 1994, p. 75). Moreover, the so called *liberal arts* taught at the European universities, including also some scientific subjects such as arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, showed a significant difference with the ideals of individual education in Asia – both in China and in Japan[3].

Although Frederick II was also described as an expert of *artis mechanicae* (mechanical, technical arts) (Maierù 2005), we can underline that in Naples a particular stress was laid on grammar, logic, rhetoric, and the so called *ars dictamini* (the art of writing letters), all subjects that were more or less related to what we generally would call Literature, or literary production; at the same time that represented a precious skill for the notaries who were called to write official documents for the court. In fact, the *dictator* at Magna Curia had the double meaning of «master that teaches how to write in an adorned style» and of man that «writes and composes documents» (Brunetti 2005)

In general, like in the medieval universities, technical disciplines were considered lower subjects and consequently didn't find a place in the curricula (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 89). The same hierarchy is found in the Heian education where the supremacy of Chinese Classics, History and Literature was evident: «the *ritsuryō* codes provided instruction in a wide range of specialized fields, including yin-yang studies, astronomy, medicine, acupuncture, and water-clock technology; but these were technical subjects, the mastery of which never led to high office» (Borgen 1994, p. 71). As we said before, Saga raised the rank of the *monjō hakase* (Professor of Literature) over other professorial ranks, and both at Saga and Frederick II's courts literature held a prominent place. The support and active employment of a state academy and the promotion of officials that were also producers of literature, poetry first of all, was part of a wider cultural policy whose main aim was the consolidation of the emperor's authority and centrality, against the external influence of the religious institutions or aristocracy.

The private relationship between ruler and officials, and the shōden system in Japan

The law and educational reforms endorsed by Frederick, Saga and Uda had the same final aim: the centralization and rationalization of power through

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[3] For a more detailed analysis of this issue see Fujiwara 2001, pp. 8-34, especially notes 43 and 47.

bureaucracy, and the consolidation of the ruler's power. The key to these political objectives was the private and direct relationship between the emperor and his loyal officers, usually the emperor's relatives, or otherwise members of the lower aristocracy or middle class, as in the instance of the *bunjin* in Japan or the notaries in Sicily.

In Japan the courtiers' approach to the emperor was not free, and during the 9th century a complex ceremonial system called *shōden* 昇殿制 (rising to the palace system) was created to regulate and limit these contacts. The *shōden* system limited the number of courters allowed to meet the emperor in the *denjō no ma* 殿上の間, a special chamber inside the Seiryōden 清涼殿 (the daily residence of emperors), that was also the place of official bureaucratic activities. The people admitted to this space were called *tenjōbito* (殿上人 privy gentlemen), courtiers «individually authorized by the Emperor to enter the privy chamber». The term referred more specifically to those gentlemen of the fourth and fifth ranks, together with the Chamberlains (Kurōdo) of the sixth rank, who otherwise would not have enjoyed the privilege automatically granted the top three ranks. The number of privy gentlemen varied but usually fell below one hundred and was sometimes less than a third of that» (Tyler 2001, p. 1166). The *tenjōbito* could stay overnight at the imperial palace, served at the Seiryōden during the daytime, and were a sort of reserve to the regular members of the Council of State, called *kugyō* 公卿, that represented the highest ranked officials of the court. The *tenjōbito* were coordinated by the *Kurōdo no tō*, and at the end of the 9th century, being *tenjōbito* was a more exclusive status than a normal appointment in court offices and ranks, as it indicated a special favor bestowed directly by the emperor in this new ruler-centered bureaucracy.

The consolidation of the *shōden* system, that will reach its final form with Uda (Furuse 1998, p. 333), is connected in fact to the institution of the *Kurōdo dokoro* and to the rise of the *monjō hakase*'s rank; the most evident symptom of the change in the political structure occurred in 9th century Japan would lead to the end of *ritsuryō*-based state. Saga's political strategy was put into practice by the narrow circle of his most loyal officials, the *kinshin* (近臣 close officials), Fujiwara no Fuyutsugu 藤原冬嗣 (775-826), Yoshimine no Yasuyo 良岑安世 (785-830) and Ono no Minemori 小野岑守 (778-830). Fuyutsugu was the first to be charged with the role of *kurōdo no tō* (Chief Secretary of emperor) at the moment of the foundation of the *Kurōdo dokoro* in 810, just one year after Saga's enthronement, and the next year he was appointed member of the Council of State as Consultant. Likewise Yasuyo, named *kurōdo no tō* in 811 and Consultant in 816. Minemori had a similar career, being promoted from his position as *kōgōgū taifu* (皇后宮大夫) – a post closely related to the management of the imperial palace – to the post of Consultant in 822. Saga,

Yasuyo and Fuyutsugu were also bound by a sort of kinship: Yasuyo was Saga's half-brother on their father's (emperor Kanmu) side, and Fuyutsugu was Yasuyo's half-brother on their mother's side. These personal bonds may have been at the basis of the trust the emperor accorded them.

As stated by Furuse, Natsuko, Fuyutsugu, Yasuyo, and Minemori's changeover from emperor's private officers (like the *kurōdo*), to official members of the Council of State (*kugyō* 公卿) reflects the shift of power from an 'outer court' (*gaitei* 外廷) corresponding to the Council of State and regulated by the *ritsuryō* codes, to an 'inner court' (*naitei* 内廷) whose appointments were entirely subject to the emperor's will: Fuyutsugu and the others started their career as *ryōge no kan* – like the *kurōdo* – but ended up becoming *kugyō*, or members of the Council of State (Furuse 1998, p. 33, 82). Formally, the Council of State continued to exist until modern times, but the politics, at least during Heian period, was actually managed by the members of this 'inner court'. In the final analysis, the political reforms endorsed by Saga and his three close officers Fuyutsugu, Yasuyo and Minemori, through some strategic laws and administrative reforms – like the new taxation system that mined old landlord clans assets – resulted in the shift from the *ritsuryō*-based state system to an imperial court system (*ōchō kokka seido* 王朝国家体制), featuring the further centralization of power in the person of the *tennō* and his close collaborators. This political strategy was still based on *ritsuryō* institutions like the Council of State, but the real decisional pivot – the emperor – was somehow outside the *ritsuryō* itself; that's why Fujiwara Katsumi denominated it a 'beyond-*ritsuryō*' (超律令) system (Fujiwara 2001, p. 39): Saga didn't eliminate the Council of State, but through the creation of a new bureaucratic and administrative circuit – the *kurōdo dokoro*, the *shōden system* – he succeeded in absorbing the old *ritsuryō* system into a new, more personally controlled form of monarchy.

This major change was also the ground on which the Fujiwara clan set up its marriage strategy with members of the imperial household that would guarantee the Fujiwara regents' monopoly in the 10-11th centuries, the so-called *sekkan* (regents and chancellors) period. The *Sesshō* (regent) and the *kanpaku* (chancellor) were in fact two other *ryōge no kan* (extra-*ritsuryō* offices), whose power, originated directly from the emperor's authority was, and based on their personal links with the imperial family, often as brothers or fathers of imperial spouses.

The monjō hakase and the poetic banquets

The *Daigakuryō* was also involved in this process. With the rise in rank wanted by Saga, the *monjō hakase* became the most sought-after position

for a *bunjin*, not only because of the direct economic benefits derived by the higher rank, but also because of the acquired right to be summoned directly by the emperor, according the rules of the *shōden* system. It is fundamental to remark here that at the time of this promotion (820), the post of *monjō hakase* was held by Sugawara no Kiyogimi, a bureaucrat of low aristocracy who took part in the *kentōshi* of 804, and participated in the compilation of all three *Chokusen sanshū* collections, symbols of Saga's cultural ideology. The promotion of the *monjō hakase* to the fifth rank reflects first of all Saga's will to have a direct and unmediated contact with a trusted person such as Kiyogimi (Fujiwara 2001, p. 51).

To understand the importance gained by the *monjō hakase* during Saga's reign, it is very useful to compare it with its Chinese counterpart, the Tang court *hanlin xueshi* (翰林学士, the Scholar of the Forest of Brushes). In China, the *hanlin xueshi* was, like the *kurōdo* in Japan, a *ryōge no kan* and a position extremely close to the emperor, like a sort of emperor's personal secretary (Furuse 1998, p. 39). *Hanlin xuexi*'s most important duty was to write the imperial orders and edicts, but because of his literary background, he was also requested to compose *shi* (poems) and *fu* (rhymed prose). He also had the right and the duty to exhort and counsel (*fengyu* 諷諭) the emperor on political and moral matters, often using a particular genre of poetry, highly refined in rhetoric and rich in allegories: the so called *fengyushi* (諷諭詩, poems of admonition).

The correspondence with Tang's *hanlin xueshi* is the proof of the new role expected from the *monjō hakase* at Saga's time: not only a professor of the *Daigakuryō*, but a special advisor to the emperor, often summoned to give opinions and suggestions about various political matters (Furuse 1998, p. 122), and also to exhort the emperor to pursue the way of virtue, despite his relatively low rank (Fujiwara 2001, p. 252). Sugawara no Kiyogimi, who from *monjō hakase* (5th rank) would be promoted to the 3rd rank as Extra-Consultant (*hisangi*) of the Council of State, perfectly symbolized the importance Saga gave to this particular figure. Even though his family extraction was relatively low in the court rank, thanks to his post as *monjō hakase* Kiyogimi was allowed to meet the emperor, and take active part into Saga's political and cultural reforms.

According to Furuse, the *shōden* system had two turning points: the first during the Kōnin era with the constitution of the *Kurōdo dokoro*, and the second with Uda (Furuse 1998, p. 120). During Uda's time «the *Kurōdo dokoro* reached its maturation» (Ibid., pp. 342-4) and at the end of 9th century, it overwhelmed all the other *tokoro* (offices), becoming the pivot of the Heian political power. The *shōden* became part of a custom regulated by rules and invested by an even more precise political meaning. As pointed out by McCullough, the active employment of the Chamberlains' office to gain political autonomy from Saga is one of the strategies inherited by Uda he effectively employed in his

attempt to check the power of the Fujiwara regents (McCullough 1999, p. 41).

Uda strengthened the Chamberlains' Office and enlarged the *Kebiishi*, and just a month after Mototsune's death, he appointed a loyal official, Sugawara no Michizane, who had previously supported him against Mototsune, for the position of *kurōdo no tō*. Michizane was Sugawara no Kiyogimi's grandson, and his role in Uda's court was very similar to his grandfather Kiyogimi's at Saga's court.

Michizane worked as *monjō hakase* at *Daigakuryō*, but in 891, just some weeks after the death of the *kanpaku* (chancellor) Fujiwara no Mototsune who had monopolized the court government during the last ten years, he was appointed *kurōdo no tō*, becoming in the following ten years the principal agent of Uda's political action. Michizane used to compose *fengyushi* following the example of mid-Tang poet Bai Juyi, with the only difference that, while Juyi showed a perfect coherence in its critical *fengyushi* during all of his life, Michizane's *fengyushi* under Uda showed little relation to real political matters (Fujiwara 2001, p. 256).

Even if Michizane's skill as a bureaucrat or poet was outstanding for his time – he started writing official documents by commission for high officials or imperial house members since he was still a student – what really cleared his way to higher offices was his loyal support to Uda during his conflict with Mototsune, and a private relationship cultivated during poetic banquets and ceremonies in which Michizane had the chance to develop his friendship with the emperor, also thanks to a shared interests in literature and poetry.

Court banquets and ceremonies were not just ornamental aristocratic diversions, but as analyzed by recent studies (cfr. Li 2011, Takigawa 2007), they fulfilled a precise symbolic role related to the management and display of the political power. Being allowed to join such events was not only an honor, but also a declaration of status, in a social environment where individual and family power was directly proportional to the physical distance from the emperor. It is therefore clear that the regulation of these rituals held not just an aesthetic but also a political meaning.

It is not a coincidence that these court ceremonies and seasonal banquets took a precise configuration during the first decades of the Heian period: «the one who put the rules of such court ceremonies and rites, and gave way to the aristocratic culture that will be model for later generations, is emperor Saga» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 50). As Li's detailed analysis clarifies, during the reigns of Saga and Junna, the Heian court imported, mainly through the *kentōshi*, the «newest ceremonies and court poetic banquets» from Tang China (Li 2011, p. 236). The seasonal banquets in Heian Japan, called *sechie* 節会, were therefore imitations of Chinese customs, that, following the yin-yang calendar, were held specifically on the third day of the third month, the fifth day of fifth month,

the seven day of the seventh month, and the ninth day of the ninth month. Of these *sechie*, the last one, named *choyōen* 重陽宴 held special importance especially concerning poetic compositions (Ibid., p. 197). In China, starting from the Jin dynasty (265-420), the *chōyōen* became an occasion to hold poetic gatherings, the already mentioned *shien*, and the same happened at Saga's court at the climax of the introduction of the Tang customs. The *shien* were a sort of public rite recorded by official accounts, and had a very specific political meaning, namely, to «visually confirm the position and hierarchy between the emperor and his officials, and to strengthen the tie between the two parts […]. At the *shien*, through the composition of poems in Chinese, the emperor's infinite virtue was repeatedly glorified. That's why I prefer to consider this kind of court *shien* a political event, rather than as gatherings where poetic compositions were the main aim» (Takigawa 2004, p. 233). The *shien* was an official ceremony having the emperor at its summit, and the *bunjin* as participants, often the alumni of the course of Literature at the *Daigakuryō*, the *hakase* and the most brilliant students. At the *shien* the poets – who were 'public officials' – composed *shi* and *fu* (the two main styles of Chinese poetry) with the exclusive aim of exalting and glorifying the ruler's infinite virtue. That's why, for Takigawa, the real meaning of a *shien* lays in the official relationship with politics and power. They were «public affairs» and «political ceremonies» (Takigawa 2004, p. 233).

The custom of the *shien* would continue after Saga, though subject to variations in number and themes, depending on the ruling emperor's taste and influence. In particular with Uda, together with the official *shien*, we find many records of occasions of poetic composition that were joined not only by the *bunjin* – Confucian scholars, alumni of *Daigakuryō* and in general persons proficient in Chinese – but also by courtiers lacking an academic training that were unable to compose the *kanshi*. These occasions are called *mitsuen* 密宴 (secret banquets) and had a totally different nature compared to the official *shien* that Uda continued to hold. Since some of the participants were members of the *Kurōdo dokoro*, and some others were relatives of Uda's private entourage, these *mitsuen* were configured as a private occasion between courtiers that had a preferential relationship of some kind with Uda (Takigawa 2004, p. 238). While after Saga the *shien* became a mere official rite held independently of the emperor's will and interest, in Uda's *mitsuen* we find again the personal taste of the emperor and the will to foster a precise cultural activity. As stated by Takigawa, «Uda's literary salon was guided by the emperor's will. People summoned to that place [emperor's quarters] were family or close collaborators of the emperor that had a private relationship with him » (Takigawa 2004, p. 239). The constant presence of Sugawara no Michizane at both poetic banquets, the 'public' *shien* such as the *chōyōen* and the 'private'

mitsuen, is the perfect illustration of the complete internalization and over-laying of court politics onto the private sphere of emperor. Michizane would be Uda's most trusted minister who took important decisions after consulting him, for example in the instance of Uda's abdication in 897.

Frederick II's individualistic administration

With the promulgation of the *Constitutions of Melfi*, the selection of judg-es, notaries and knights of the Sicilian Kingdom, the Holy Roman Empire and the appointment of professors at *Studium* of Naples became a prerogative of Frederick II himself. The most important parameter of choice was of course the loyalty to the emperor and a clear distance from the Church of Rome. As quoted above, according to Kölzer «from this moment on, personal skills and loyalty as officers rather than [aristocrat] titles and appointments, would de-termine the insertion of individuals into the innermost circle of counselors, as Peter de Vinea and Taddeo di Suessa proved» (Kölzer 1994, p. 70).

Even if we have many accounts of Frederick II's private life, such as his love for falcons and natural science, his relationships with members of the Sicilian School of poetry are not well-documented, so it's hard to know whether there were poetic banquets or gatherings comparable to the Heian *shien* or Uda's *mitsuen*. Nonetheless, we can say that because of Frederick's direct power to choose notaries, professors of the *Studium*, knights and court delegates, the character of private relationships with the emperor was a key element behind official appointments, also in the Magna Curia.

It is demonstrated for example that Frederick had a special regard for his *falconerii* (falconers), who shared with him the passion for hunting and birds; these falconers, responsible for the private *solacia* (leisure) of the emperor, received some special benefits, such as the use of squires and servants, and a payment coming directly from court funds (Pasciuta 2005a). Iacopo Mostacci, representative poet of the Sicilian School, was member of a falconers group sent by Frederick to the island of Malta in 1240, with the task to get new fal-cons for the emperor (*Historia diplomatica*, V, 2, pp. 969-970, cit. in Pasciuta 2005a), and he is supposed to have taken part to some important diplomatic missions, such as the marriage of Manfred's daughter with Peter the Great king of Aragon, in 1260 (Pasciuta 2005a). We can't exactly say how Iacopo approached Frederick, but it is evident how, in the Magna Curia, the sepa-ration between the emperor's public and private life was anything but clear.

The most representative example of the private and extra-jurisdictional relationships between emperor and bureaucrats lies in the one Frederick had

with the Sicilian School's poet Peter de Vinea (1200?-1249). Peter's first appointment at court probably came thanks to a letter of intercession of the archbishop of Palermo, Berardo di Castagna, since 1221 a member of Frederick's court (Schaller 2005). Even if Peter was the son of a *iudex* (judge) of the city of Capua and had perhaps attended the University of Bologna, his family background didn't justify the important post of *magne imperialis curie iudex* (judge of the great imperial court) he held at least since 1224, so that his fortunate career could only be explained as the result of Frederick's favor.

The special trust accorded to Peter is proved by the role of mediator between court officers and the emperor, a duty he would fulfill from 1240 to 1247. In this period «his presence seems fundamental for the activity of that office [the Magna Curia, meaning the high court of justice], especially because with Taddeo da Sessa, he carried out a very delicate task: dealing with the emperor, the source of every jurisdictional right, and also holder of the last word on final judgments). […] For example, when the judges of the great court were requested to examine a prosecution against Città di Castello […] Peter de Vinea was the one charged by his colleagues to inquire the emperor's will» (Cuozzo 2005).

The post occupied by Peter de Vinea under Frederick, *imperialis aule prothonotarius et regni Siciliae logotheta* (protonotary of the imperial chamber and logothete of Kingdom of Sicily) (Pasciuta 2005b) shares some common points with the Heian *monjō hakase* and *kurōdo no tō*, reflecting the change in political customs and the relationship between ruler and ministers. Both the logothete and the protonotary were offices already recorded in the first half of the 12th century: the protonotary was the highest official responsible for the «control of notaries assigned to drafting the documents of the chancellery of the regal court» (Pasciuta 2005b), while the logothete (that literally means 'organizer of words') was employed in editing law codes, and was «a political officer with the highest level in the regal court, a kind of personal secretary to the sovereign and his most direct counselor, dealing especially with the examination of petitions and forwarding them to the relevant offices. He was a versatile bureaucrat that, because of his high position, was able to fulfill various tasks [on behalf of the emperor] each time a 'direct' intervention of the sovereign was needed» (Pasciuta 2005c). With Peter de Vinea, the positions of protonotary and logothete merged in the same person, with the consequent exponential enlargement of his powers, making him the most trusted and important originator of Frederick's political – and cultural – projects, as half a century after his death the famous passage in Dante's Divine Comedy perfectly summarized:

Io son colui che tenni ambo le chiavi
del cor di Federigo, e che le volsi,
serrando e diserrando, sì soavi,
che dal secreto suo quasi ogn'uom tolsi;
I am the one who guarded both the keys
of Frederick's heart and turned them, locking and
unlocking them with such dexterity
that none but I could share his confidence
(Inferno XIII, vv.58-61)

As protonotary Peter de Vinea had also the role of overseer of state exams for the new notaries of court, but among his duties as logothete there was the important task of promoting Frederick's cultural and political plan: the absolute centrality of the ruler, both in political and cultural matters, was a subject Peter de Vinea managed to include into his writings in Latin.

Conclusions

In this first part I analyzed the similitudes between the Sicilian and the early Heian courts regarding the steps taken by the emperors Frederick and Saga to increase their power in an absolutistic way. According to previous studies, we can say that both in Italy and in Japan private relationships with the rulers were significant for court members, due to their influence on their social and career promotion. Moreover, we saw how the main part of administrative and jurisdictional reforms pursued by Saga and Frederick were actually aimed at reinforcing their personalistic control of court and state government. The same personalistic approach to politics can be seen in emperor Uda, as well as the role of promoter of culture, and holder of poetic gatherings and banquets.

I believe this preliminary historical background can be seen as a first common field from which the comparison can start.

PART II
COURT AND CULTURE

As outlined before, Frederick and Saga's political actions were sustained by precise and extensive cultural politics which were the basis of a new conception of power and court. In this part I will try to define the modality with which this cultural policy took place, in particular analyzing the strict relationship between (imperial) power and literature, both theoretically and textually. Like in the first part, the discourse on Japan will start from emperor Saga and continue with Junna and Uda, covering the timespan of about a century.

Emperors as centers of the court, courts as centers of culture

Frederick's centrality in the cultural program of the Sicilian court has been pointed out in numerous studies, like Saga's influence on the cultural production of the early Heian court. First of all, I want to clarify the fact that the centrality and absolutism of the emperors on the political scene corresponded to their centrality on the literary scene, not only as recipients and potential beneficiaries of literature, but also and especially as organizers and modifiers of the courts' tastes and orientations.

The discourse can't be considered complete without taking into account all of 9th century Japan, in particular emperor Uda's reign. Excluding Kanmu, Saga and Uda were the only two emperors in the 9th century that firmly tried – and for some time succeeded – to hold the political power, taking decisions to contain court aristocracy, especially against the rising of Fujiwara's monopoly. Moreover, Saga and Uda were the two emperors that more than all the others, contributed to and influenced the literary scene of the first half of the Heian period, with their own personal tastes reflected in the court's official and private activities. Therefore, first of all we need to describe the emperor's cultural activity and his relations with the court members and intellectuals.

In Niccolò Jamsilla's chronicle of the 18th century, Frederick II is presented as an amateur and promoter of philosophical studies (Maierù 2005). He was especially interested in natural sciences, and his unfinished work, *De arte venandi cum avibus* (The art of hunting with birds), is «unanimously recognized

as one of the most remarkable scientific works in that period we usually define medieval» (Trombetti Budriesi 2005). Frederick's private interest seems have played a central role in the orientation of the culture, also concerning the books that circulated at his court. Simonetta Bianchini pointed out how the circulation at the Magna Curia of the German translations of the European courtly literature, such as Chrétien de Troyes' *Cligés*, coincided with the period Frederick spent in Germany, from 1212-1220: «the hypothesis that Frederick II was somehow involved in this explosion of imported courtly culture could be validated by the literary impulses of the emperor, who promoted (and suggested) translations from Latin into German, including Ovid, and whose behavior tended to impersonate the virtues of the courtly hero sung by the Provençal and French poets, and by the *minnesänger* poets. Maybe we could reconnect the presence in his library of French works like the *Guiron le Courtois* and the *Prophecies Merlin* to Frederick's specific interests, that spread afterward among the 'Sicilian' court» (Bianchini 1996, pp. 45-46).

Moreover, Frederick was not just the pivot of court politics, but according to Giuseppe Galasso he seemed also deeply concerned with defining the historical and ideal reasons of his government. The group of intellectuals that gathered around him from all over Europe can be considered an «elaboration, reflection, formulation of the principles which the ruler refers to with his action» (Galasso 1989, p. 37). This relationship between ruler and court culture is something strongly tied with the function of the ruler in the state-system of medieval Europe. The king, assisted by his officials, is the creator of a state that cannot exist separated from his persona (Voltmer 1989, p. 73); this may be the explanation why the Sicilian court – as was intended by Frederick II – didn't survive the great defeat of the Hohenstaufen forces in 1266, the year of the Battle of Benevento, where Frederick II's heir Manfred died. In other words, the 'imperial' court could not exist without its own emperor.

The emperor's relationship with culture is an essential part of the ruler's duties as organizer of the state as clearly declared in the letter of constitution of the *Studium* issued by Frederick: «We have therefore decided that in the most pleasant city of Naples the arts and all disciplines shall be taught, so that those who are starved of knowledge will find it in their own kingdom, and they will not be forced in their search for knowledge to become pilgrims and to beg in foreign lands» (Dunne 2006, p. 86). The emperor's will to meet a need (for knowledge) among the kingdom's citizens is obvious, as well as the fundamental role of cultural organizer Frederick felt.

For this reason – but also due to his personal interests – Frederick II gathered and contacted some of the greatest scholars from around Europe and the Mediterranean world at his court, such as Michael Scot from Scotland, astronomer and 'magician'; Theodore of Antakya (Syria), imperial philosopher;

Leonardo Fibonacci, mathematician from Pisa, Ibn Sa'bīn Islamic, philosopher from Andalusia etc. Many were also directly selected to become professors at the *Studium* of Naples, like Peter of Ireland. The fact that in that period Peter was *magister* (professor) at the *Studium* of Naples, and among his disciples he also had (Saint) Thomas Aquinas, one of the main theorists of Christianity and the first to have tried the fusion of classical culture and philosophy with medieval theology and thought, is quite a meaningful example of Frederick's cultural political influence (Dunne 2006, p. 86). Under this aspect the *Studium*, which never reached the status of *universitas* like Bologna or Paris as it lacked the faculties of medicine and theology, was the most advanced academy at a time when even in Paris and Bologna Aristotle's philosophy was still looked at suspiciously (Verger 1994, p. 142).

The Magna Curia was in fact an important translation laboratory of various Greek and Arabic texts still unknown to the Latin-Christian Europe; for example the Latin translations of Averroes' commentaries to Aristotle's works, usually attributed to Michael Scot (Morpurgo 2005). The Magna Curia was the center of diffusion for new and foreign (from an Europe-centric point of view) culture, and that this cultural activity deeply influenced the European thinking, not only in medieval times, but also in the following centuries.

This dependence of the cultural activity on the ruler's persona is not unusual in pre-modern monarchies, but with Frederick it seems to have reached a higher, more systematic value.

For what concerns Japan, in Part I we talked about the cultural influence of the *kentōshi*, the official embassies sent from the Heian court to Tang court. Actually, these diplomatic missions to China were first established during the Asuka period, exactly in 607 and 608 with the two *kenzuishi* 遣隋使 (embassy to Sui dynasty court, the antecedent to *kentōshi*), that preceded the Taika administrative reform of 645. It is common knowledge how these embassies in China – that would exist until the first half of the 9th century – would widely affect Japanese society, and especially literature, for the following centuries, as great effort was put in collecting and importing Chinese books to improve the writing skill and style of the Japanese literati (Takamatsu 2013, p. 82). Under emperor Kanmu and his son Saga the trend of Chinese imitation received new support and reached its highest results (Furuse 1998, p. 333), so that the beginning of the Heian period is commonly known as the 'age of Chinese culture flourishing'. After the *kentōshi* wanted by Kanmu in 804 –in which Kūkai and Kiyogimi took part – in 838 there was another *kentōshi* during emperor Ninmyō's reign. Ninmyō was Saga's son, and thus this *kentōshi* can also be seen as a result of the continued influence Saga exerted on the Heian court until his death in 842. As I said before, the spread of poetic banquets inspired

by Chinese court customs imported through the *kentōshi* (Li 2001, p. 236) is one of the clearest proofs of the process of assimilation of the Chinese culture by the Japanese ruling class.

We can thus say that also thanks to the experience accumulated through the *kentōshi*, Saga's court became the main center of emanation of Chinese culture in Japan.

In talking about 'centers', I need to point out an important difference between the Heian court and the Magna Curia. While the Heian court was located in the capital city of Heiankyō (the actual Kyoto), Frederick's Magna Curia was famous for being a 'wandering court', following the many movements of the emperor around Europe and the Mediterranean regions: from Germany to Sicily, to move war to northern-Italy cities or Rome's Church, or again during his crusade in Jerusalem. Even if the ten years between 1222 and 1232 he spent in southern Italy corresponded to the period of the most active political and cultural organization, as the compilation of *Liber Augustalis* in 1231 or the foundation of *Studium* around 1224 demonstrate, Frederick never went back to Sicily after 1235, so it is hard to consider Palermo – the capital of Sicily – as something more than the formal capital of Frederick's kingdom (Kölzer 1994, p. 66).

A recent publication titled *Heian Japan: Centers and Peripheries* (ed. by Adolphson et al. 2007) suggests a new conception of Heian Japan not so capital-centered but more connected and depending on peripheral and extra-court institutions, such as the Buddhist monasteries. Even so, the support to the *kentōshi* and the role these embassies fulfilled in the process of the renewal of Japan prove that the emperor's court was still the main benchmark, not only for the international exchanges but also for the diffusion of the Chinese culture in Japan. Admitting that there were other centers of cultural diffusion and elaboration, we can't deny the incomparable prestige and cultural capital of Heiankyō, first of all because of the constant presence of the emperor himself, who accorded authority and legitimation to that very cultural activity and environment. Moreover, also in comparison with China, we can easily observe that regarding the cultural and literary production, the Heian court would always be a preferential place for literary activities.

Latin and Chinese as languages of culture and bureaucracy

Speaking about the cultural activities and their relationship with the political power, the languages of writing are a different matter. One of the common

points between Frederick and Saga's cultural policy is the acknowledgement accorded to Latin and Chinese as highest cultural languages.

Latin in medieval Europe was first of all an indispensable skill for the composition of imperial edicts and, in general, of public documents of state bureaucracy, not only at Frederick's court, but in almost every medieval state. Latin was also the language of the ancient Roman Empire from which Frederick's Holy Roman Empire claimed to descend, and was the language of the Roman law which was the ideal basis of Frederick's new law code, the *Liber Augustalis* or *Constitution of Melfi* of 1231 (Lusignan 1994, p. 28). Moreover, «Latin was the language of the theological and philosophical speculation, of scientific, historiographical, and rhetorical texts, as well as of a flourishing literature. The ancient language was still a flexible and vital tool, and in its lower and simpler code, it was still understood by a wide section of society» (Barbato 2005). Latin was also the language of scholars and universities, as well as the main 'international language' in Europe, almost indispensable for relationships between countries and kingdoms. In particular the Kingdom of Sicily – that included the Sicilian island and, since king Roger II's time (1095-1154), also mainland Italy below the southern border of the Papal States, had a well-known multicultural and multiethnic history that determined a rich multilingual environment as recorded by Peter of Eboli (1196-1220): Palermo, capital of Sicily, was «urbs felix populo dotata trilingui», a pleasant city whose citizens were trilingual (Liber ad honorem Augusti*, quote in Kölzer 2005). Still, during Roger II's times, the bulk of the documents of the Sicilian court was written in Greek, though soon after a progressive Latinization (Kölzer 2005) reached its climax with Frederick II's reign.* Latin was the official language of the imperial chancellery and of international affairs (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 123). «At the swabian court of Sicily, Latin is firmly and primarily configured as the language of prose, bureaucracy and science» (D'Angelo 2005). Sicily was no longer just a kingdom in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, but with Frederick II, it became the center of a larger empire and thus, unifying the language of chancellery was a primary need.

In most regards it seems easy to compare the role of Latin in Italy and Europe with the role of Classical Chinese, namely *kanbun* (漢文 literally 'writings of Han dynasty', here used with the general meaning of writings in

Chinese[1] in pre-modern Japan and eastern Asia. Like Latin, also the *kanbun* was a highly regarded language used mainly by officials and more generally by educated persons, a language that made the interchanges between Japan and the mainland countries possible and proficient, as explained by Kin Bunkyō: «diplomatic documents and written communication exchanged between diplomats in pre-modern Asia, are all basically written in the shared language of *kanbun*» (Kin 2010, p. 181). In other words, in Heian Japan the *kanbun* was the main language for writing, both the official documents of the court and the private diaries.

I stated before how the great cultural reform started by Kanmu and endorsed by Saga received part of its vital input from the *kentōshi*, the diplomatic embassy of Japanese courters at the Tang court joined by the most outstanding scholars of the time. The members of the *kentōshi* that arrived in Chang'an, the capital of Tang empire, usually joined Tang's court rites and ceremonies and occasionally participated in the ranks of Tang's bureaucracy as immigrant officials, like the famous Abe no Nakamaro (698-770) who passed away in China.

Therefore, the knowledge of *kanbun* for the Japanese officials of the time was an indispensable skill required for everyday duties. Not only in the early 9th century, but also after the end of the Heian period and until modern times, *Kanbun* can be considered the most official language for Japanese writing.

Here I must say a few words on the fact that the language of culture is defined a 'male' language.

Medieval Latin was without doubt a 'language for men', both because of its tie with the Church of Rome – an institution traditionally governed exclusively by men – that made it its official language, and for the traditional lack in education for women in all of medieval Europe.

The debate about the definition of *kanbun* as writings 'by man's hand' (男手 *otokode*) opposed to *yamatokotoba* (language of Yamato, Japanese language) intended as writings 'by woman's hand' (女手 *onnade*) in Heian Japan is not totally resolved, but it is logical to imagine more flexible boundaries between these two fields of the Heian literature. However, if we limit our discussion to pre-*Kokinshū* times, we can assume that the women's active role in written literature – in an age when the *kana* phonetic alphabets were still

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[1]   In this book I deliberately chose to not use the term 'Sino-Japanese' to translate the word *kanbun*, because, even recognizing the peculiarity of Chinese writings in Japan, I prefer to underline the character of international and shared language, especially during the 9th century. Of course, the motivations indicated by John Timothy Wixted to use the word 'Sino-Japanese' are totally agreeable (Wixted 1998).

reaching consolidation – was basically subordinate to men's. Even if women poets such as Ono no Komachi or Ise contributed significantly to the evolution of Japanese poetry, from the point of view of the number and importance of literary works, it is hard to consider the production of women authors more influential than the works of the men such as, for example, Ki no Tsurayuki. In Tsurayuki's *Tosa nikki* (Diary of Tosa), considered one of the earliest examples of *nikki* (diary) written in vernacular Japanese, the author pretended to be a woman, and therefore chose to write not in the 'masculine' *kanbun* but rather in the 'feminine' *yamatokotoba*, but the fact that he is a man makes us understand how much the literary role of women was still subject to men, at least until the beginning of the 10th century.

Occasional records of Chinese writings by women, like the few *kanshi* left by Saga's daughter Uchiko and other two court ladies (Li 2011, pp. 287-293), in my opinion should be considered just an exception proving the rule.

Of course it is important to underline that there is a fundamental difference between Latin in medieval Italy and Classical Chinese in Heian Japan. While neo-Latin languages like Italian are direct derivations and evolutions of ancient Latin, Chinese in Japan has always been a foreign language that maintained its lexical and syntactical identity even after becoming part of Japanese (cfr. Kin 2010). So it is clear that from the linguistic point of view, the relationships between Chinese-Japanese and Latin-Italian are almost incomparable.

Even so, if we focus on the role and use of Chinese and Latin described before, we can find this comparison meaningful, especially because of the nature of 'conventional languages' shared by *kanbun* and Latin. Classical Chinese in eastern Asia countries present different characteristics that reflect the relationship with each country's native language, so we can see that the Japanese *kanbun*, and the Japanese way to read *kanbun* (the so called *kundoku*) is somehow different from the Chinese used in Korea or Vietnam. The discourse on the *kanbun* is quite complex, and, in Kin Bunkyō's conclusions, it would be more correct to speak about a «cultural area of *kanbun*» than just a «cultural area of *kanji*» (Kin 2010, pp. 229-230) where *kanji* is the Chinese character and *kanbun* is the Chinese writing, namely a more complex level of language. Again, this can also be seen as a common point with Latin, because we can also speak of a «cultural area of Latin», that covered for example regions using Germanic languages. At the same time, because both Latin and Chinese were indissolubly tied to their *writing* system, exactly like the Chinese characters have been used to write Japanese words, also the Roman alphabet was adopted to write words and sounds of non-Latin languages, so we can correctly speak of a 'cultural area of Latin characters'.

The conclusion is that, in the process of recording an originally oral ver-

nacular tradition into written form, the comparison with an already con-
solidated writing system and language like Latin and Chinese was the only
possible solution.

The prestige of high language

Classical Chinese in the Heian court was in practice a communication tool
with an important application relevant to state bureaucracy and diplomacy,
exactly like Latin in Frederick II's court. But Chinese writings in Japan and
Latin writings at the Magna Curia also fulfilled a similar political and ideo-
logical role, that, to anticipate the conclusions, was to symbolize the greatness
of the court and the emperor's virtue.

The point on which many critics agree is that Latin in Frederick II's court
needed to be not only a *useful language*, but also a *beautiful language*, a model
for high writing. From a socio-political point of view, the Latin at the Sicilian
court had to be so perfect and refined so as to shadow writings in Latin pro-
duced in the offices of the Church of Rome, the strongest and most legitimated
center of production of Latin culture at that time. This competition between
Frederick's Magna Curia's Latin and the Vatican's Latin had first of all a po-
litical and historical explanation, as the Church, especially during Gregory
IX's pontificate, was the greatest opponent to Frederick's domination and au-
thority in the Italian peninsula. In Frederick's universalistic and hegemonic
plan, this opposition to the Church can't have been just political or territori-
al, but also had to involve cultural activities, encouraging secular culture and
scientific research (Pagano 2007, p. 21). It may be for this reason that theology
was the only subject still excluded from the faculties at the *Studium* in Naples.

«Certainly it wasn't possible to hinder the papal power without a sophisti-
cated use of a style and a language effectively opposing the one used by the
Pope's chancellery, at that time representing the highest grade of perfection.
This was the duty Peter de Vinea was called to: to win battles on the politi-
cal side it was necessary to compete against the enemy also culturally, par-
ticularly by showing that literature that flourished in the imperial garden was
of a beauty and a quality superior to the opponent's. The magniloquent and
pompous rhetoric, the rich and accurate language used by Peter de Vinea, fit
perfectly the spirit of Frederic II's politics» (Delle Donne 2006, pp. 114-115).

The definition of Latin as the 'language of bureaucracy' was therefore
linked to a wider idea of 'culture' aimed at legitimating and supporting the
emperor's authority. In other words, it wasn't just a 'practical' and 'useful'
language for bureaucracy: it also had a symbolic meaning in the wider – and

higher – context of imperial power legitimation.

If we want to make a comparison with early Heian Japan, we should first of all notice that extra-territorial relationships with China and other Asian countries weren't as complicated as in Frederick's Europe, so the 'competition' with neighboring countries never became so harsh. Even so, the craving for cultural prestige and a sort of 'competition' with Chinese models was not just a problem concerning scholars or poets. We shouldn't forget that, despite the enormous cultural debt to Chinese culture, the Heian emperors never considered themselves as tributaries or vassals of the Chinese emperors, and despite the rituals imposed upon foreigners visiting Tang's court – including the Japanese members of *kentōshi* – they never admitted Japan's clear subjection to the Tang court. Perhaps Japan's effort to improve the quality of its Chinese writings may be partly explained by its peripheral position in eastern Asia, a wide China-centric cultural and geopolitical system, and the consequent attempt to consolidate its own position – albeit just on a symbolic level – in the area. After all, as stated by Li Yuling, we can't explain the Heian literature without considering its place within the larger frame of Asian literatures (Li 2011, p. 3), and, as demonstrated by studies such as Yong Wong and Kuboki Hideo (Wong, Kuboki 2001) Heian Japan was anything but an isolated country. The composition of highly refined texts exalting the emperor's prestige had also the secondary function of elevating Japan to the status of an acculturated (today we would say 'modern') country, because the existence of the *tennō* was attached to the existence of the Japanese court itself, probably even more deeply than in the European countries. In fact, in medieval Europe there was no king – or emperor like Frederick II – that could avoid facing the power of an institution that was in any case older, higher, and in theory more powerful than any state: the Church of Rome. In practical terms, in the Christian-centered Europe of the middle ages, the Pope had the power to crown a king, bestowing on him the legitimacy to rule a country, but also the power to excommunicate a king, nullifying the pact of submission and loyalty of his vassals. In Japan, even if in practice Fujiwara's regents had great influence over the selection of the crown prince or even the emperor's abdication, in theory, nobody had the *formal* power to remove a *tennō*, who held – as an embodied deity – both the highest political and religious power in the country.

A clear example can be the ceremony of Frederick II's coronation as Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Honorius III in 1220: the symbolic subordination to the pope was displayed by various rites, such as the offering of gifts and the kissing of the pope's foot symbolizing the emperor's role as 'servant' of Christianity. This ceremony was a «service publicly offered by the emperor for the Pope, that expressed in an unmistakable way the papal interpretation of

imperial dignity as *defensio Romanae ecclesiae* [Church of Rome's defender]» (Petersohn 2005). Similarly, the two excommunications of 1227 and 1239 by Pope Gregory IX, Honorius's successor, had not just religious, but also political consequences. Frederick would have surely envied Japan *tennō*'s unquestionable divine authority when he was kept in check by Gregory IX's strategy.

Even with this significant difference, the task of elevating Latin and Chinese knowledge – also by supporting educational institutions like the *Studium* in Naples and the *Daigakuryō* – as part of a wider cultural politic, was successful.

In Europe, the Latin prose of Peter de Vinea, chief of the imperial chancellery, soon became the highest regarded model of the *ars dictandi* (technique of writing letters) for contemporary and ensuing medieval scholars; his writings were studied in schools and universities, and also his style of poetry, rich in rhetoric and stylistic devices such as repetition, alliteration, simile, oxymoron. «From the point of view of the 'form', [Peter de Vinea's] letters are some of the most important documents of *stilus altus* or *supremus* [supreme or lofty style], an overloaded style that first appeared in 12th century France and was quickly adopted also in Italy, especially in the Pope's court» (Schaller 2005). «His style, focusing on rhythmic clauses, adjective richness, assonance and wordplay – sometimes so complex that the meaning became unclear – gave new life to epistolary prose of the middle ages» (Delle Donne 2006, pp. 119-120). Moreover, the collection of his letters, the *Epistolario*, has been preserved in more than 150 manuscripts (Schaller 1986, p. 96), proving the fame of his work, especially among pro-imperial communities, like Tuscan Ghibelline cities (ibid. p. 113) hostile to the Pope's influence.

In Japan, Chinese works written by Japanese scholars during the 9th century – especially Sugawara no Michizane – hardly can be placed, from a stylistic and technical point of view, under their Chinese counterparts. The level of self-confidence reached by the Japanese scholars about their own tradition and literary skill is demonstrated by the compilation, during the mid-Heian period, of literary collections like the *Honchō monzui* (本朝文粋, Selection of texts of our reign, 11th century) that includes writings in Chinese by early and mid-Heian Japanese poets and scholars with the purpose to offer a model of style, or the *Wakan rōeishū* (和漢朗詠集, Collection of *waka* and *kanshi* for recitation, 1013), an anthology of *kanshi* verses both by Chinese and Japanese poets mixed with *waka* (poems in Japanese), according to a precise thematic order. As stated by Wiebke Denecke, the acknowledgment of Saga's reign as the greatest period of Chinese writings in Japan was widely accepted ever since the Heian period by scholars like Ōe no Masafusa (Denecke 2013b, p. 94), but I find it important here to stress also how during all of the 9th century, the prestige of Chinese writings continued and evolved, with two particular

peaks corresponding to Saga and Uda's reigns.

As we will see in the following chapters, the support of the educational institutions, the endorsement of Latin/Chinese culture, and the support of scholar poets such as Peter de Vinea or Sugawara no Michizane can be seen as part of the same unitary and organized political program.

Imperial power and Literature: the theory

I have said before that the prestige of the high culture, in particular refined writings, reflects the prestige of the court and of the emperor that should be the center of the world. This is the focal point that makes Frederick II and Saga/Junna's courts extremely similar. The particular emphasis put on literature and cultural activities like translations of foreign texts or banquets with poetry compositions is part of this cultural project, and the relationship between 'state' and 'culture', and the role of the emperor as guarantor, or motor of cultural action, is a key aspect of this ideology.

In Japan

The tie between literature and state featured Saga and Junna's reigns, and can be summarized by the motto «Literature is the great task of governing the state, it is a supreme work that shall never perish» (文章経国之大業、不朽之盛事). It is a quotation from the treatise *Lunwen* 論文, a theoretical work about literature and government, later included into one of the most influential Chinese text we can find in Japan: the *Wenxuan* (文選 *Monzen* in Japanese) (Ikeda et. al 2006, p. 221). The *Lunwen* was written by Cao Pi曹丕 (187-226), also known as emperor Wen of the Wei dynasty, during the Chinese period of the Three Kingdoms, and the similitude between Wen and Saga – two sage ruler-poets – becomes one of the central themes of all of the three *Chokusen sanshū*'s prefaces, as clearly demonstrated by Wiebke Denecke (Denecke 2013b, pp. 101-3). The state-literature ideology theorized by emperor Wen, usually called *monjō keikoku ron* (文章経国論, the theory of literature to administrate the country), became the dogma of Saga's court, and the *Chokusen sanshū* ought to be in fact the symbol of this ideal.

The motto *monjō keikoku* expresses the idea of writings as 'helpful' for the administration and the government, not only on an immediately practical and 'instrumental' level (the necessity to issue the written documents of bureaucracy), but also and especially as a moral and social activity that fostered harmony between the ruler and his officials.

The *kunshinshōwa* 君臣唱和 (harmony between emperor and officials)

was the aim of this kind of literary practice, performed at those *shien* poet-ic banquets through a particular composition method, the *ōsei* 応制 (poems composed on imperial order). In the *ōsei*, the emperor composed a poem or proposed a theme, and the other poets answered composing another poem that 'harmonized' with the contents and imagery selected by the emperor. It is important to underline that the main actors of this particular kind of liter-ature were first of all the emperors Saga and Junna and their close officials, such as Fuyutsugu or Kiyogimi, whose compositions are abundantly collect-ed into the three *Chokusen sanshū*.

According to Masuda, under Saga and Junna, letters – and poetry in par-ticular – were praised as tools to express virtue and to show the true character of a *bunjin*. Because these *bunjin* were also court officials, serving on public occasions like the *shien*, knowing their most intimate nature was something directly connected to politics, and that is also the explanation why to gain ac-cess to *Daigakuryō*'s *monjōdō* (literature course) the tests included poetry compositions (Masuda 2004, p. 8): *Daigakuryō*, *monjō hakase* and *shien* were part of the same cultural-political vision, influenced by the same ideology. The basis of this ideology is, of course, Confucianism, and the practice of *kunshin-shōwa* and the ideals of *monjō keikoku* proclaimed by *Keikokushū*'s title – the Collection to administrate the State – is a direct evolution of this «political/religious conception of literature by Confucian scholars» (Morota 2007, p. 98).

Actually, both the *monjō keikoku ron* and the *kunshin shōwa* have philo-sophical bases in Confucianism, in particular with the so called 'ideal of Heav-en-man mutuality' (天人相関 *tenjinsōkan*), elaborated by the Han dynasty scholar Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. 176-104 b.C.). Based on the *yin-yang* phi-losophy of the *Yijing* (Classic of Changes), this theory directly connects the peaceful changing of the seasons and weather with the emperor's virtue, and by contrast, natural disasters with bad government or the loss of the ruler's virtue. The explanation asserted that the emperor, or 'son of the Heaven' (天子, *tianzi*), could exert his political influence passively, without any real ac-tion, just emanating his virtue, *toku* 徳 (or *de* in Chinese). Consequently, the emperor's virtue and benevolence was the first reason for every good thing in the world, and the production of refined literature was one of them. On the other hand, the very existence of refined writings and art became the most tangible proof of an emperor's virtue and greatness.

The result of the application of this Confucian ideal to real literary pro-duction is evident in court poems of the Six Dynasties period (from the 3rd to the 6th centuries) collected in the *Wenxuan*. The various writings included in *Wenxuan* are characterized by a «principle of literary ornament» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 50), a strong focus on the formal and technical side of composition that made these works look too mannerist and shallow to the eyes of modern

readers, especially if compared to the great Tang poetry of the following centuries. Of course, at the time of the *Wenxuen*, this refinement of form and rhetoric was not seen as a weak point, but it was instead the very reason for which these texts had to be collected and transmitted. The almost identical approach and taste can be recognized in the poetry during Saga's reign, as the *Wenxuan*, including emperor Wen's *Lunwen*, had been imported in Japan around the 7th century (Ikeda et al. 2006, p. 45) strongly influencing Nara and the early Heian literature, both on theoretical formulations and textual performances.

The earliest traces of this particular ideal of literatures in Japan was firstly stated by the preface to the oldest collection of Chinese poems composed by Japanese poets, the *Kaifūsō* (751):

> 四海殷昌。旒紘無為。巖廊多暇。旋招文學之士。時開置醴之遊。当此之
> 際。宸翰垂文。賢臣献頌。
> The four seas [=all the Earth] flourish and prosper. The crown jewel [=the emperor] has to do nothing. In the high corridors [=imperial palace] He has lot of spare time. Again and again He summons the Masters of Letters. Many times He holds banquets with sweet wines. It is during this occasions that the imperial brush drops writings [=the emperor composes poems]. The good officials raise hymns.
> (*Kaifūsō*, Preface)

The word *ryūkō* 旒紘 indicates the emperor's crown, and for metonymy the emperor himself, while the expression *mui* 無為 (literally 'do nothing'), concisely expresses the belief that «the emperor, without doing anything in particular, thanks to the strength of culture (*bunka*), could control nature and the State» (Fujiwara, Tada 2009, p. 95). The word *bunka* (culture) includes writings, ceremonies, music and 'arts' in general, as well as literature and knowledge. The tight cause-effect concatenation is clear: as the virtuous emperor has no need to do anything to have his country prosper, he had 'lot of spare time' 多暇, to spend summoning his 'masters of Literature' 文學之士 to enjoy banquets at which both the emperor and the courtiers composed refined poems such as the *Kaifūsō*. So the very existence of this collection proves the emperor's virtue.

Saga's court directly inherited the literary ideal of the *Kaifusō*, enlarging and reinforcing it as testified by the three *Chokusen sanshū*. In particular, the preface of *Bunkashūreishū*, written by Naka Oō (仲雄王), directly recalls the ideal of Heaven-man mutuality, stating for example the hierarchical relation between emperor and his officials.

> 而天尊地卑。君唱臣和。
> But the Heaven is noble, the earth is humble.

The emperor sings, the official harmonizes.
(*Bunkashūreishū*, Preface)

The symbolism of heaven=emperor and earth=officials is clearly merging with the *kunshinshōwa* relationship.

The divine origin of the imperial power had direct repercussions on the court's literary production performed by officials-poets. Recalling Chinese history, the *Bunkashūreishū*'s preface states that

朝英國俊捒藻之靡絶時哉
The genius of the court and the talent of the country, there is no moment when they quit spreading the seaweeds [= refined writings]
(*Bunkashūreishū*, Preface)

during the reign of great rulers. The most explicit expression of the Heaven-men mutuality and the *monjō keikoku* principles is the preface of the *Keikokushū*, written by Shigeno no Sadanushi 滋野貞主. For example Sadanushi compared with a metaphor the emperors' poems to a dragon, and the officials' poems to a snake: even if their nature is different – the dragon is a higher and nobler being than the snake – they share the same lair (the poetic collection), 'harmonizing' 調和 with each other (Kojima 1968, p. 2176).

The concept is reiterated in many passages in the preface to the *Keikokushū*.

在君上則天文之壮観也。
在臣下則王佐之良媒也。
When the emperor stays in the upper Heaven, this should be called a magnificent spectacle of astronomical phenomena.
When the official lays on the earth below, he is the good intermediary of the emperor.
(*Keikokushū*, Preface)

It is evident how the character of the official 臣 is in a perfectly symmetrical position to that of the ruler 君. The preface to the *Keikokushū* insists also in the concept that heaven is the 'source' of literature:

天肇書契、奎主文章
Heaven created writings, the star of Kui governs the Letters
(*Keikokushū*, Preface)

In general, because literature is the image of heaven and earth, «it clarifies the order of human morals and its reasons, and it is what lets us comprehend the right way of everything» (Kojima 1968, p. 2141). As accurately described

by Denecke, «here the concept of '*monjō*' [writings] reaches its deepest, cosmological meaning. It is a manifestation of the 'calligraphy/characters' drawn in the sky, having its own (Chinese) constellation. […] The excellence of *monjō* fulfills the role of administrating the State. […] It is something useful to the promotion of harmonious and highly virtuous governance, through the *feng* 諷 [allegorical exhortation] that lets know to the emperor the good and bad qualities of his people» (Denecke 2013b, p. 100).

From this universalistic, cosmological position, Shigeno no Sadanushi deploys, with the following passage of the preface, the central concept giving the name to the collection, *Keikokushū*:

> 楊雄法言之愚、破道而有罪、
> 魏文典論之智、経国而無窮。
> The *Fayan* by Yang Xiong is foolness, destroying the way [of letters] is a sin,
> The *Dianlun* by Wen of Wei is wisdom, the government of the state, has no limits.
> (*Keikokushū*, Preface)

The strange contraposition between Yang Xiong, scribe of emperor Wu of Han dynasty and author of *Fayan*, and emperor Wei, compiler of *Dianlun*, is controversial. Denecke explains it as Sadanushi's attempt to offer a 'bad example' (Yang Xiong) to oppose to the 'good example' of emperor Wen, that was in turn emperor Saga's direct model (Denecke 2013b, p. 102). Yang Xiong was a scholar who criticized the moral utility of poetry, and this theoretical position contrasted with emperor Wen's *monjō keikoku* theory, expressed in the treatise *Lunyun* and originally included in the collection *Dianlun*.

In the next line we have the conclusion:

> 是知文之時義大矣哉
> Here we know how great are the time and significance indicated by the Letters.
> (*Keikokushū*, Preface)

Actually, the meaning of the character *wen* 文 is ambiguous, as it could indicate 'letters' as well as the name of emperor Wen. Anyway, the point is that the presence of lofty and refined literature is the signal of good government and of the emperor's virtue, and in this we can recognize the greatness of literary production: it has the power to legitimate the emperor's power.

In classical Japan, literature – or rather, letters – is also tied with scholarship since the times of *Kaifūsō*, where the poets were indicated with the character *shi* 士, a word that can be translated as 'man of letters', but with a particular

Confucian connotation (Yoshikawa 1968a, p. 434). It is not by chance that, in *Keikokushū*'s preface, Saga is called 'holy emperor' (聖皇), and Junna 'excellent lord' (叡主), and together they work to make the scholarship brilliant (Kojima 1968, p. 2171).

> 共勉積学之添明。同要博聞之助道
> Together they strive because scholarship achievements could make [all things] grow brilliant.
> They both wish the study of letters helped the way [of virtuous government].
> (*Keikokushū*, Preface)

Saga and Junna are also compared to the legendary Chinese emperor Yao, one of China's mythical ancient rulers:

> 尭之克譲文思
> The emperor Yao governed the world with thoughtful consideration
> (*Keikokushū*, Preface)

This phrase implied the existence of a cosmological order corresponding to a centralized and divine State, as explained by Kojima: «The expression *bunshi* 文思 is composed of *bun* 文, that has the meaning to control over the universe, or indicates the sage's work, and by *shi* 思, that means to deeply consider and reflect on how to realize this according to logic» (Kojima 1968, 2169).

In Italy

The concept of an emperor responsible for universal harmony, due to his divine status, and some expressions from the prefaces of the *Bunkashūreishū* and the *Keikokushū* I quoted before, may partly remind us of the philosophical elaboration on imperial power expressed by various writings produced in Frederick II's court, especially in Latin.

Also according to the Magna Curia's official doctrine, the absolute importance and necessity of the ruler as guarantor and driving force of high cultural activities was based on a precise ideal, a philosophy concerning political authority and moral values. We can find the clearest theorization of this doctrine in Dante Alighieri's writings. Somehow similarly to the preface of the *Keikokushū*, half a century after Frederick II's death, Dante identifies Frederick and his heir Manfred as the two sage rulers who, through their moral qualities and virtues, inspired the flourishing of a refined culture, especially literature and poetry. Dante's discourse is threefold: a critical analysis of various Italian vernaculars; the acknowledgment of Sicilian as the most important

and refined dialect in the Italian peninsula; and the relation between the creation of refined literature in Sicilian with the virtuous reign of the two rulers. To figure out this meaning I need to quote a large excerpt from Dante's text.

1 Exaceratis quodam modo vulgaribus ytalis, inter ea que remanserunt in cribro comparationem facientes, honorabilius atque honorificentius breviter seligamus.
2 Et primo de siciliano examinemus ingenium, nam videtur sicilianum vulgare sibi famam pre aliis asciscere, eo quod quicquid poetantur Ytali sicilianum vocatur, et eo quod perplures doctores indigenas invenimus graviter cecinisse: puta in cantionibus illis, Anchor che l'aigua per lo focho lassi, et Amor, che lungiamente m'ài menato.

3 Sed hec fama trinacrie terre, si recte signum ad quod tendit inspiciamus, videtur tantum in obprobrium ytalorum principum remansisse, qui, non heroico more, sed plebeo secuntur superbiam.

Siquidem illustres heroes Federicus Cesar et benegenitus eius Manfredus, nobilitatem ac rectitudinem sue forme pandentes, donec fortuna permansit, humana secuti sunt, brutalia dedignantes; propter quod corde nobiles atque gratiarum dotati inherere tantorum principum maiestati conati sunt; ita quod eorum tempore quicquid excellentes Latinorum enitebantur, primitus in tantorum coronatorum aula prodibat

1 Having thus, as best as we can, blown away the chaff from among the vernaculars of Italy, let us compare those that have remained in the sieve, and quickly make our choice of the one that enjoys and confers the greatest honour.
2 First let us turn our attention to the language of Sicily, since the Sicilian vernacular seems to hold itself in higher regard than any other, firstly because all the poetry written by Italians is called 'Sicilian', and then because we do find that many learned natives of that island have written serious poetry, as, for example, in the canzoni
Ancor che l'aigua per lo foco lassi [Although water flees from fire]
and *Amor, che lungiamente m'hai menato.* [Love, who have long led me]
3 But this fame enjoyed by the Trinacrian isle, if we carefully consider the end to which it leads, seems rather to survive only as a reproof to the princes of Italy, who are so puffed up with pride that they live in a plebeian, not a heroic, fashion.
4 Those illustrious heroes, Emperor Frederick and his worthy son Manfred, knew how to reveal the nobility and integrity that were in their hearts; and, as long as fortune allowed it, they lived in a manner befitting men, despising the bestial life. On this account, all who were noble of heart and rich in graces strove to attach themselves to the majesty of such worthy princes, so that, in their day, all that the most

gifted individuals in Italy brought forth first came to light in the court of
these two great monarchs.
(DVE, I-xii).

It is because of the *nobilitatem ac rectitudinem* (nobility and integrity)
these two rulers had, that people with *corde nobiles* (noble hearts) and *gra-
tiarum dotati* (rich in grace) gathered at their court, composing refined poems
like the two quoted by Dante, both by Guido delle Colonne, one of the most
important poets in the Sicilian School. I feel that the relation between the em-
peror's qualities, virtue and grace, and the origin of high level literature – and
cultural activity in general –are rather comparable to the literary ideal at Sa-
ga's court. In particular, it is important to underline that, also for Dante, an
emperor's virtue had the power to instill good deeds in other people, and that
this resulted in the production of refined literature and arts, as Dante's dis-
course was directly connected to the analysis of the Sicilian School of poetry.

Apart from Dante's *a posteriori* categorization, the clearest example of
the new formulation of the universalistic effects of the imperial power can be
found in Frederick's most talented and trusted notary-poet, the logothete Pe-
ter de Vinea. «Peter de Vinea's letters had the merit of mixing wonderfully
richness of expression and refinement of discourse with virulence and ideo-
logical precision. His writings reached the extreme synthesis of philosophical
statements about the genesis and nature of the imperial power, that found in
the Swabian court their most fertile and prolific field» (Delle Donne 2006, p.
114). With Peter, Latin «became the most remarkable propagandistic tool of
the imperial ideology through the *stilus supremus* [supreme style] of the im-
perial chancellery» (D'Angelo 2005).

Let's see how this result is pursued at textual level. Included in Peter de
Vinea's *Epistolario* is a *dictamen* (3rd book, chapter XLIV) – an epistolary
composition in prose – composed before the year 1239 (Delle Donne 2010, p.
155), that is also the clearest document produced by the Magna Curia about
the imperial power and Frederick II's divine persona. This letter was written
as a response to someone's questioning Frederick's virtue, and through the
reuse of expressions from the Bible and from religious hymns by Venantius
Fortunatus (6th century) and Boëthius (5th-6th century) initially addressed to
God, it declares the emperor's divine nature.

> *Hunc siquidem terra et*
> *pontus adorant, et aethera*
> *satis applaudunt...*
> *mundum perpetua ratione gubernat...*

In eo denique insita forma boni, tanquam livore carens, elementa ligat et elementata coniungit, ut conveniant flammis frigora, iungantur arida liquidis, planis associentur aspera, et directis invia maritentur
Therefore land and sea worship Him, and the sky applauds with vim…
He rules the world with a perennial law… in Him the idea of good is innate, free from any envy; He ties generating elements with generated elements, so that cold will harmonize with the flames, the arid with the liquid, the rugged will adhere to the polished, the curved will combine with the straight.
(Delle Donne 2010, p. 148)

Peter de Vinea was not the only one to compare Frederick to God. The Latin poet Marquard de Ried, on the day of Frederick's triumphant entrance in Jerusalem on March 17 of the year 1229, at the end of the brief and painless Sixth Crusade, declared that all the natural elements obeyed the emperor:

Adveniente Dei famulo magno Federico, sol nitet, aura tepet, aqua bullit, terra virescit.
When the Great Frederick, servant of God, comes, / the sun shines, the air becomes warm, the water boils, the land spreads green
(Dronke 1994, p. 46)

Many other writings about Frederick use the hyperbole of an emperor as «cosmic sovereign, Lord of the four elements» (Dronke 1994, p. 44). In the two texts I quoted we see the image of an emperor whose virtue can influence natural events such as climate and the sprouting of vegetation and plants.

Some preliminary conclusions

Two points are worthy of attention here: the textual similarities with the ideal of Heaven-man mutuality, and the way this ideology of the imperial power is proclaimed and spread.

The textual similitude with the theory of Heaven-man mutuality as seen in the prefaces to the *Bunkashūreishū* and the *Keikokushū* is quite evident, as well as the concept of the emperor's 'divine status', and the otherworldly origin of his power and legitimacy: God for Frederick, Heaven for the Chinese or Japanese emperors.

Some differences may be noticed in the fact that, according to the theory of Heaven-man mutuality, nature doesn't just obey an emperor's will, nor «worship» him as in Peter de Vinea's eulogy, but responds to his mode of government and virtue, so that, if the emperor is responsible for bad government,

catastrophes like flooding or drought will occur. Moreover, the emperor, or 'son of Heaven', will be always subjected to Heaven itself. Even so, I believe that the similarities are more remarkable than the differences. As the expression *Dei famulo* used by Marquard de Ried demonstrates, Frederick II was also considered a 'servant of God', an intermediate figure between Heaven's will and men's world.

It is also interesting to notice another parallelism about the legitimation of the imperial power in Europe and eastern Asia. In Europe, the emperor's power could always be limited and 'revoked' by a higher power, namely the power of God administrated by the Roman Pope; similarly in China, the so-called 'mandate of Heaven' (天命 *tianming*), could always be *revoked* (革命 *geming*, a word used also to translate the term 'revolution') and accorded to a different dynasty, should the emperor's virtue be insufficient to grant the population's welfare. Therefore, from this point of view, the two theoretical approaches to the imperial legitimation seem more similar between China and Italy than Japan, where the imperial dynasty continued essentially uninterrupted to the present day.

It is fundamental to underline the effort put in stressing Frederick's divine being, a feature on the one hand making him similar to a Chinese emperor, and on the other distinguishing him from the other European rulers of the middle ages. The main difference between Frederick and the previous European kings was that, «from this moment the emperor couldn't be not just the keeper and defender, nor mediator or bearer, but the source of the divine-natural law» (Kantorowicz 1927, cit. in Landau 1994, p. 31), or in other words «Frederick as emperor was considered a source of *iustitia* [justice] in the state. He was not just the defender of rights, but the *creator of rights*; he was mediator and bearer [of rights], in an analogy with Christ that is an instrument of divine grace» (Landau *ibid*.). The theory of imperial identification with God didn't start with Frederick, but was a relatively recent process, as the first use of the definition of Roman Empire as *sacrum* (holy) dates back to 1157, just half a century before Frederick's birth (Delle Donne 2010, p. 150). The formulation of this theory has a historical explanation in the conflict between the empire and the Church that at Frederick's time had reached its harshest consequences. In his 1227 *encyclica* in response to Pope Gregory IX's excommunication, Frederick denounced the lack of *caritas* (charity), the most important virtue, in the ecclesiastical institutions.

> *Cum non tantum in ramis, set in radicibus etiam videatur caritas refrigere. Non enim solum gens contra gentem insurgit, non regnum regno minatur, non pestis et fames tantummodo corda viventium*

premisso terrore conturbant, set ipsa caritas, qua celum et terra regitur, non tantum in rivulis, set videtur in fonte turbari.
Because charity seems to become cold not only in the branches, but also in the roots. Not only do people arise against other people, not only is the kingdom threatened inside the kingdom, not only plague and famine frighten with terror the hearts of men, but it is charity itself, by whom sky and earth are sustained, that seems to be upset not only in its flow, but in its spring. (Delle Donne 2010, p. 151)

The competition with Rome was clearly not only territorial, but first of all theoretical and cultural. The similitude with the Confucian theory of the Heaven-men mutuality is also quite evident in this *encyclica*: the distorted flow of charity's virtue, upset at its source (the Pope), is the cause of disorder in the world and unhappiness for the people.

A perfect summary of Frederick II's ideology is given by Fulvio Delle Donne: «The sovereign embodies justice, and because of that he is a watch-dog, defender, creator of rights, or in other words, of God's will, because the *iurisprudentia est divinarum atque humanarum rerum notitia* [jurisprudence is the knowledge of divine and human things]. That's why, when Frederick states that *princeps legibus solutus est* [the prince is freed from laws][...], he wants to underline his preferential relationship, his mystic communion with the heavens, his role as mediator between divine law and human law: the ruler is exempt from laws, not because he has the right to perform acts against established laws, but because he himself, as secular delegate of the heavenly God, is the source of [the laws] on Earth. (Delle Donne 2010, p. 153).

To be more precise I must say that compared to Japanese *tennō* or Chinese *tianzi*, the figure of the emperor created around Frederick II seems even more absolutistic and personalistic. For example, the possibility that because of Frederick's bad government nature (or God) could react with calamities and disasters, as happened in China, is not given. Frederick II seems to be an infallible ruler. In any case, I think that the difference between Frederick and the previous European rulers seems bigger than the difference between Frederick and Saga, at least according to the texts we have analyzed here.

The second important point of similitude is the modality with which this imperial ideology is proclaimed: Peter de Vinea was not a common poet, but the court logothete, namely the one allowed to formulate the logos: the reasons and the words that oriented all of imperial thought. Peter's eulogy is not just a private speculation of a proficient scholar about imperial power – as can be considered, in some sense, Dante's De vulgari eloquentia – but was the official doctrine of the Swabian dynasty and the Holy Roman Empire, legitimat-

ed by Peter's official position and role. It was a doctrine that, despite reaching the highest level of idealization, at the same time was supposed to have – and actually had – a real direct application and influence on Frederick's political action and on his positioning into the European scenario. As summarized by Delle Donne, even though some writings produced at the Magna Curia, especially after Frederick's second excommunication, can be read as a mere propaganda against the Pope's political power, «Peter de Vinea's refined style could work especially as an instrument of cultural promotion, one of the most effective tools to glorify the emperor's figure. The language and the style used by Peter de Vinea were the vehicle chosen by Frederick II to spread the message of his temporal supremacy and of his divine mission. The prose to which that duty was committed, was rich in quotations from the Bible and from legal texts, and it had a kind of sacred, hieratic function. In other words, the dictatores of court, first of all Peter de Vinea, were also priests of the ecclesia imperialis [imperial Church], a kind of mystical institution that with Frederick II reached its completion and its crumbling» (Delle Donne 2006, pp. 121-2).

In these terms, we should underline again the similarity with Heian Japan. The collections by imperial orders of the Kōnin and Tenchō eras were the product of a precise vision of culture, literature, and State, a «humanistic vision based on the Heaven-man mutuality» (Morota 2007, p. 97), that, because of the prestige of the *chokusen* (imperial order) assumed importance and dimensions overcoming the boundaries of *literature of art*, thus becoming a fundamental part of a wider political action.

Imperial power and Literature: the texts

Peter de Vinea and Marquard de Ried were not the only ones who wrote about Frederick II. With regard to the production in Latin, that, as I said, was the loftiest and most official language in Europe and in the Magna Curia, Edoardo D'Angelo counts eleven authors of Latin verses *dedicated to* Frederick II, who lived at or had contact with the court of Frederick and of his father Henry VI, or his son Manfred: Quilichino da Spoleto, judge at Recanati (city close to Jesi, where Frederick was born), wrote an epic-panegyric work, the *Preconia Frederici*, exalting Frederick's heroic deeds; Enrico di Avranches, a *clericus vagantes* (wandering cleric) wrote three poems dedicated to Frederick, comparing the emperor to the greatest rulers of the past, praising his incomparable knowledge and wisdom; Riccardo da Venosa, another judge, dedicated an elegiac comedy of 1140 couplets to Frederick; and there is also a satirical series against Frederick's political enemies (D'Angelo 2005).

The earliest and most influential work that directly praised Frederick II is

Liber ad honorem Augusti (Book in honour of the Emperor, also known as *De rebus Siculis carmen*) by Peter of Eboli (1196-1220), a long work in verse dedicated to Henry VI of Hohenstaufen, telling of the rise of the Swabian dynasty in a sumptuous tone. In this poem, Peter recognizes in Frederick's birth the return to a golden age, on the model of Virgil's 5ᵗʰ *Eclogue*, so that the *Liber ad honorem Augusti* is considered the beginning of Frederick's supernatural myth (Delle Donne 2005).

What is important to underline here is that, at Frederick's time, and especially on Frederick himself, we have accounts of poems written with the clear aim of glorifying the emperor, or, on the contrary, of de-legitimating him. Peter Dronke analyzes the poetry on Frederick, not only in Latin but also in other languages, and states that «the most important themes common to all the five main languages [of poetry on Frederick], are the eulogy and the blame of the emperor. Like no other rulers, Frederick inspired the extremes of panegyric and invective, of love and hate. Depending on the poets, he was the most graceful monarch, or the most cowardly, the most generous or the stingiest, […] he was a messianic savior or the Antichrist» (Dronke 1994, p. 44). So, Frederick became *object* of poetry, with direct references to real historical events like for example the Sixth Crusade or the various wars against northern Italian cities (Dronke 1994, pp. 48-49).

This is an important issue in the comparison with the Heian literature, especially poetry, and especially in Saga, Junna and Uda's reigns. In fact, even if the prefaces to the *Bunkashūreishū* and the *Keikokushū* show expressions very similar to the eulogies on Frederick, as pointed out by many scholars, a clear 'political' theme is hardly found in the poems included in these collections (Denecke 2013b, p. 96), and it is impossible to find poems written in open contrast or blaming one of these emperors.

Here we must underline one further difference between the Japanese and the Chinese poetry. In Tang literature, the political element, even if charged with rhetorical embellishments, was often explicitly expressed also within the text of poems, in particular with the genre of *fengyushi* we talked before (see Part I - The monjō hakase and the poetic banquets), a genre of poems of admonition to the emperor, whose first formulation dates back to Confucian Classic of Poetry, *Shijing*. *Shijing*'s *Great preface* (大序 *Daxu*), «declares the moralistic and political meaning of poetry as something that, correcting the right and wrong behaviors of politics by indirectly admonishing the governors, prospers or declines together with the *imperial virtue* (王道) that educates the population» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 203). Bai Juyi, who wrote many *fengyushi* especially in the period he was appointed *hanling xuexi* and worked as a close

counselor of the emperor, is the perfect example of this 'use' of poetry for political and moral aims.

On the contrary, Saga and his officials-poets seemed to never touch upon political themes in their lyrics, restricting the subjects to natural descriptions and aesthetical contemplation. In the group called *Ten poems on Heyang* (河陽 十詠), Saga and his poets composed together on the same theme, the description of a famous landscape of ancient China; but these compositions «seem to symbolize a clear spirit of Taoist taste. And even if they call for an ideal world of a land governed by imperial virtues, we can't deny their super-mundane and de-politicizied nature» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 45).

I should note that during the Nara and Heian periods there are almost no accounts of poetic works explicitly stressing the results of a specific political action, like the success of war victories or the foundation of a new city, nor poems that «indirectly admonish the governors». Also the praise of the emperor as it is managed in *Kaifūsō* or in *Chokusen sanshū* is not direct and explicit, but always indirect and unclear. We have poets exalting emperors' 'holiness' and divine status with expressions like *seikun* 聖君 or *seishu* 聖, as well some accounts to the Heaven-man mutuality as seen before, but we cannot find direct connections to precise historical events or certain political actions. The most interesting thing is that, even in the instance of the theoretical literary ideals like *kunshinshōwa*, *monjō keikoku*, or *Heaven-man mutuality*, expressed clearly in the prefaces to the collections, it is hard to find direct connections to these themes in the poems themselves. If we want to find some connections between the poems of these collections and the political and philosophical theories described in the prefaces, we must decode the symbolic and metaphorical language and read a deeper meaning in the poem, taking advantage of meta-textual hints such as prefaces or commentaries. Let's examine some examples.

The earliest account of the theory on the Heaven-man mutuality is found in the first poem of the *Kaifūsō*, by prince Ōtomo 大友皇子.

> 皇明光日月　　帝徳載天地　　三才並泰昌　　万国表臣義
> The imperial brightness shines like sun and moon
> [The]Sovereign's virtue stands between Heaven and earth
> The three principles stay in harmony
> Ministers of every country celebrate rites [for Him]
> (*Kaifūsō*, 1)

The 'three principles' or 'three elements' 三才 (the second character is a variation of 材: element) are heaven 天, earth 地, and man 人, and represent

the three elements theorized by the ideal of the Heaven-man mutuality. The Emperor's virtue is described as the source of harmony in Nature.

The same concept is repeated, with less directness, in Mino no Kiyomaro 美努浄麻呂's poem *Response on a Spring day* 春日応詔.

> 玉燭凝紫宮
> 淑気潤芳春 […]
> 此時誰不楽
> 普天蒙厚仁
> The jewel and the torch are tempered at the emperor's palace,
> the peaceful air moistens the fragrant Spring. […]
> Who could not enjoy such a moment?
> The whole world is blessed by His great benevolence.
> (*Kaifusō* 24)

The expression 'jewel and torch' (玉燭 *yuzhu*) is explained by the Erya (爾雅, jp. *Jiga*, the oldest Chinese dictionary existing, 2nd century B.C.), in the phrase: «the harmony of the four seasons, we call it 'jewel and torch'» (四時和、謂之玉燭) (Kojima 1964, p. 94). So the harmony of seasons and weather, like the fragrance of Spring, is connected with the emperor's benevolence (*jin*/*ren* 仁) that originates in the heavens.

In *Kaifūsō* we find also the concept of the emperor's virtue determining the birth of refined literature and arts, for example in Tori no Yasutsugu's poem *Serving at the banquet* 侍宴.

> 嘉辰光華節
> 淑気風日春
> 金堤払弱柳
> 玉沼泛軽鱗
> 爰降豊宮宴
> 広垂柏梁仁
> 八音寥亮奏
> 百味馨香陳
> 日落松影闇
> 風和花気新
> 俯仰一人徳
> 唯寿万歳真
> In this bright and beautiful season, / the peaceful air and wind in this Spring day […] / young willows brush the golden dikes / light fishes float in the pearly pond, / here he [the emperor] holds a banquet like in the Palace of Abundance [of King Wen of Zhou] / here drips his benevolence like at the gathering at [emperor Wu of Han's] House of Cedar / music of every instrument resounds brilliant, / one hundred

tastes, flavors and perfumes are lined up. / The sun falls, pines shadows darken, / the wind brings fresh smells of flowers. / Prostrate to adore the virtue of the One [the emperor], / we can only wish for a ten thousand years of this truth.
(*Kaifūsō* 35)

The word «one man» 一人 here refers to the emperor, whose virtue 徳 is the cause of all the beautiful things presented above, from nature and food, to music and poetry – the poetry is symbolized by the word gold 金 and jewel 玉 (Kojima 1964, p. 103). The benevolence of the emperor, compared to that of the legendary Chinese emperors, covers the participants of the banquet.

Despite the detailed and explicit analysis of the Heaven-men mutuality and the *monjō keikoku* presented in the *Bunkashūreishū* and the *Keikokushū*, with Saga's reign the references to this political/moral theory inside the poems seem to become increasingly hidden and rarefied.

One of the *Ten poems on Heyang* titled The *mew gull on* the *water* (水上鷗), included in the *Bunkashūreishū* (2nd book, section Miscellanea 雑詠), ends with the following two verses.

鷗性必馴無取意
況乎玄化及飛浮
As the gulls for their nature are tamed by who has no will to catch them, even more so the benevolent influence can reach the water bird.
(*Bunkashūreishū*, 104)

The second verse is paraphrased by Fujiwara Katsumi as «even more my Holy Lord exerts the benevolent influence produced by his virtue without action, to the water bird» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 45), that is an allegory for the theory on the Heaven-man mutuality. The emperor's virtue causes good 'changes' in the natural world, symbolized by the bird, even without a direct action of the ruler. The bird could also symbolize the officials, gathered around the ruler because of his virtue. This interpretation could echo Dante's explanation of Frederick and Manfred's *nobilitatem ac rectitudinem* (nobility and integrity) and the *corde nobiles* (noble heart) of illustrious men gathering at their court.

It is evident that by the simple reading of the text, the *political* nature of this poem is not only difficult to detect, but also very generic.

A clearer example could be the following poem by Kamitsuke no Kaihito, included in the *Bunkashūreishū*, on the theme *Composition in a beautiful woman's place, on* the *silk tree in front of* the *palace* (奉和代美人殿前夜合詠之什一首), which compares the ladies serving at the imperial palace with

a silk tree transplanted at court.

久厭幽渓何処託
朝家仮貸御楼傍
即今自入仙園裡
已後春恩任聖皇

For a long time I hated the silent valley, but where can I confide? / At court they lent me for a while a high palace. / Now I'm placed in a garden as the Immortals' one. / From now on I will put the favor of Spring in the Holy Emperor's hands.
(*Bunkashūreishū*, 122)

The 'favor of Spring' 春恩 that is a proper change of seasons, blessing trees and flowers when Spring comes, is left (任) in the Emperor's hand, so it is the emperor (and his virtue) that affects seasons, nature, and everything in the world. «It is thanks to the emperor's virtue that, like the sky and the earth nurturing all the creatures, the three elements of heaven, earth, and man are harmonized, the change in nature is favorable, and a peaceful prosperity is pursued» (Fujiwara, Tada 2009, p. 99).

We said that the exclusion of political themes can be regarded as a common feature of all of the Nara and Heian poetry. The most remarkable exception – apart from two *waka* by Yamanoue no Okura included in the *Man'yōshū* – is undoubtly represented by Sugawara no Michizane's *fengyushi* composed during the four years he spent as a governor of the province of Sanuki: for example the *Ten poems on early cold* (早寒十首, *Kanke bunsō* 200-209; English translation in Borgen 1994, p. 187) or *Spring Tour* (行春詞, *Kanke bunsō* 219, English translation in Borgen 1994, p. 158). In these poems Michizane expresses the point of view of the poor, criticizing political corruption and social injustice, and representing a surprising exception not only in the history of Heian literature, but also in Michizane's lyrical production itself. In fact, during the ten years following his return to the court, when Michizane became the right hand of emperor Uda and one of the most powerful officials at court, his *fengyushi* immediately lost their critical charge. As Fujiwara Katsumi underlines, even if Michizane had continued writing some *fengyushi* with political meaning after his return to Uda's court, «the *ōsei* poems composed under imperial order at official banquets (侍宴応制詩), representing more than half of his production after his return to the capital, they are, after all, just naturalistic [風月 *fūgetsu*, literally 'wind and moon'] lyrics without any political implications» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 256).

Despite the fact that in Michizane we can find some references to the theory of the Heaven-man mutuality, as the concept of imperial authority and virtue,

we hardly find explicit eulogies to the emperor like for Frederick II. A significant example could be the poem *In the day of Chōyō, serving at the banquet in Shishinden palace, in response to imperial order I compose on the same topic of jewel and torch* (重陽日、侍宴紫宸殿、同玉燭歌、応製, *Kanke bunsō* 144), composed in the 8th year of Gangyō era (884), when Michizane was still a student of *Daigakuryō*, and Kōkō, Uda's father, had just become emperor.

> 無為無事明王代
> 欲令雨順又風調
> 人望天従明玉燭
> 自春渉夏到金颷
> 菊知供奉霜籬近
> 東西郡老承成頌
> 南北州民習作謠
> 臣在陶鈞歌最楽
>
> Without action and without troubles, the reign of the bright king / [Emperor's virtue] makes the rain fall regularly, and the wind blow gentle / When the Man wants, the sky obeys him, like a bright jewel and torch / the Spring becomes Summer, until the Autumn wind / The chrysanthemum knows who I am serving, and [it blooms] near the frost-covered fence / The elderlies from western and eastern villages receive it [the emperor's virtue] and compose songs / All the people from northern and southern provinces learn it, and create hymns / The official is the tool to create the earthenware, with songs of greatest joy (KBKK 144)

All the 'good things' told in the poem are direct effects of emperor Kōkō's virtue. In particular, the image of the «tool for pottery» is a metaphor for the *monjō hakase*, that trains young talent in literature and song composition as part of the imperial will.

Other poems of Michizane aren't so explicit, referring quite indirectly to the imperial virtue. In the poem *I encourage the emeritus student of Letters Ki to put effort into poetry* (励吟詩寄紀秀才), in which he addressed his friend Ki no Haseo, Michizane criticizes other Confucian scholars, and in the last two lines cheers up Haseo saying that

> 他日不愁詩興少
> 甚深王沢復如何
> In future days don't worry that poetic inspiration could decline,
> because the imperial grace is deep, more than anything else.
> (KBKK 94)

The word «imperial grace» 王沢 and its link with «poetic inspiration» 詩

興 comes from the *Shijing* and the *Wenxuan* (Fujiwara 2001, p. 233), stressing the belief that, at the court of a virtuous ruler, good poetry is in no risk of declining. It is interesting to underline that the criticism of other scholars in this poem is very explicit, but at the same time we must remember that this is not an *ōsei*, nor a poem composed on a public occasion like a *shien*, but simply a private message to Haseo. The difference of tone is quite evident if compared to an *ōsei* poem like *Poem of the frost-covered chrysanthemum* (霜菊詩), composed at a *shien* in the presence of emperor Uda. After having described the various features of the chrysanthemum, the poem ends with the following two verses.

> 戴白知貞節
> 深秋不畏涼
> Covered in white [frost] you understand its loyalty.
> In deep autumn, it doesn't fear the cold.
> (KBKK 332)

In Michizane's intentions, the chrysanthemum symbolizes the official, loyal to his emperor even in difficult (cold) times. The fact that this metaphor pivots on the word «loyalty» 貞節, would be hardly understood without the preface Michizane wrote for this gathering, in which he explains the political value of poetry: «both for poems [*shi*] and for rhapsodies [*fu*], each character of the composition should not to be a meaningless word detached from reality, and for example, also when we sing about natural elements like the late chrysanthemum and cold frost, we should sing about the loyalty that doesn't tremble even under wind and frost» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 254). But, even if we accept the metaphor of loyalty in the last two verses as 'political', the first part of the poem is nothing more than a naturalistic description, enriched with quotes from the Chinese Classics, that seems to have nothing in common with political or moral ideology. The contrast with the poem addressed to Haseo, and furthermore with *fengyushi* at Sanuki is evident.

We can also say that as with the *Bunkashūreishū* and the *Keikokushū*, the explanation of the political/moral meaning in Michizane's poems composed at official banquets is left to metatextual proses that accompany the poems, like a preface, rather than to the text of the poem. Another example could be the preface to a poetic banquet held in 868.

> 天以春為化、帝以惠為和。惠化一時、煦嫗何甚。
> Through spring, the sky makes everything sprout, through his mercy, the emperor creates harmony in his people. The mercy and the changes come at the same time, as a mother that warms up her baby.
> (KBKK 27, preface)

Also if with allegories and metaphor, the concept that the emperor's mercy and the changes in season have a cause-effect relationship, following the Heaven-man mutuality, is quite clear in this preface. The problem is that when we look at Michizane's poem composed at the same banquet, nothing seems to connect it with the concepts previously expressed in the preface.

> 詩臣膽露言行樂
> 女妓粧成舞步虛
> 侍宴雖知多許事
> 一年一日忝仙居
> The poet officials, deeply moved, express with words their joy /
> The court dancers, in their make up, move their steps to dance /
> Serving at the banquet, you can know a myriad of things, / once
> an year, I'm grateful to be here, where the Immortals stay.
> (KBKK 27)

After the first four lines describing the end of winter and the arrival of spring, the poem expresses the joy of the poet-official 詩臣 at being invited every year at this banquet, compared to the house of immortal sages 仙居.

All these examples demonstrate that the eulogy of the emperors, even if present, is never related to real political actions, not even exalting an emperor's achievements, like victories over political opponents as was the rule at Frederick II's court. This doesn't mean that the political debate was totally absent, as we can understand from the abundant prose about precise facts at court. A fitting example is the letter sent by Michizane to Fujiwara no Mototsune in the 4th year of the Ninna era (888), relevant to the so called 'Diatribe on the *Ako*' (*Ako no fungi*). The letter (titled *Letter presented to* the *high minister Shōsen [Mototsune]* 奉昭宣公,書published in appendix to Kawaguchi 1966), openly – and very bravely – criticizes and admonishes Mototsune, at the time the most powerful person at court. Even if Michizane belonged to rank much lower than Mototsune's, he declared that it was «his duty» (己業) to correct him, also for Mototsune's sake himself.

> 寒心酸鼻、寝食不安。先為己業、次為大府。
> With cold in my heart and acid in my nose, without properly sleeping or
> eating. [I write this] firstly as my duty, and secondly for the minister
> [Mototsune].

Even if this letter can appear as a proof of Michizane's inexperience in the politics and intrigues of the court, it shows how the political debate – even if focused on an apparently trivial matter like the denomination of Mototsune's

post as chancellor – was not only possible, but also, occasionally very live-
ly. In this letter the point is not a nebulous speculation about the ideal of the
Heaven-man mutuality as in Michizane's *ōsei* poems, but a direct and harsh
criticism of a real political action of a real person (Mototsune) in a precise
historical moment.

Even if some expressions are derived from Chinese poetry – for example
suan bi (酸鼻 acid nose) is probably a quote from the *Gaotang fu* (高唐賦)
by Song Yu (3rd century B.C.) – this letter marks again the gap between the
'reality of court' and the poetry produced at the official *shien* and included
in collections by imperial order whose professed aim was to address political
and government action.

From the examples offered above, we can conclude that while in Japan
the debate on moral or political theories seldom became explicit in the liter-
ary text, in Europe, and in some cases also at Frederick's court, we can find
a more direct reference to 'politics', or explicit eulogies of the emperor, as in
panegyric works such as Peter of Eboli's *Liber ad honorem Augusti*, or other
texts in different languages as indicated by Peter Dronke (Dronke 1994) and
Edoardo D'Angelo (D'Angelo 2005).

Let me investigate this point. Even if the comparison with Japan makes the
poetry of the Magna Curia's seem 'more political', the opinion of the critics
about the presence/absence of political discourses in the Magna Curia's liter-
ary works is not uniform. Dronke and D'Angelo indicate that many literary
works were composed *for* and *about* Frederick, but other commentators stress
a lack of a political discourse inside the poetry of the Magna Curia, especially
after Frederick's enthronement as emperor in 1220. Fulvio Delle Donne counts
only three eulogistic works, composed during Frederick's reign, (Delle Donne
2010, p. 146), one of them being Peter de Vinea's letter I quoted before. Actu-
ally, the main poem dedicated to the Swabian dynasty, and *also* to Frederick
II, the *Liber ad honorem Augusti*, was composed in 1195 under Frederick's
father Henry VI's reign, and not on Frederick's initiative. We know that the
Occitan *troubadours*, masters of political poetry within the genre of the *sir-
vente*, never received Frederick's favor. Nor are there other long epic or histor-
ical poems, like the *Liber ad honorem Augusti*, during Frederick's reign. This
could be for some commentator the proof of Frederick's disinterest in poetry
compared to his well-demonstrated interested in sciences: «literary works of
a eulogistic nature were probably not his favorite tool for garnering consent,
and were not the answer to an explicit or implicit request [from the emperor
to the poets]» (Delle Donne 2010, p. 159). Vàrvaro observes that «the histo-
riographical works written by the Swabian emperor's order are few and quite
simple. I cannot find other explanations except for Frederick II's disinterest

in legitimating his power through History» (Vàrvaro 1989, pp. 85-86). This distinguishes Frederick II from his father Henry VI or from previous rulers like Frederick I Barbarossa or Henry II of England.

These positions seem to deny the theory of imperial power legitimation through culture and literature we discussed before, making it more difficult to find a coherence between these two profiles: the emperor concerned in legitimating his power through culture, and the emperor uninterested in being glorified through poems and hymns. But, at the same time, this contrast, or contradiction, matches Saga and Frederick all the same. Even if we must admit the two rulers weighed poetry differently – it would be totally wrong to say that Saga was not so interested in poetry – we should also remark in both courts the comparative lack of works explicitly exalting the emperor's greatness.

Therefore I find it useful to face the problem of the role of literature in pre-modern courts, and in particular in the Heian and early Italian courts, taking advantage of the studies carried out on this subject in each area.

The role of literature in pre-modern courts

In the area of Japanese Literature studies it is commonly asserted that there is a substantial and undeniable gap between the poems gathered under the three *Chokusen sanshū* – the summa of Saga and Junna's court poetic production – and the cultural theory subdued to their compilation and clearly expressed in the prefaces of the *Bunkashūreishū* and the *Keikokushū*. This contradiction led to the question: if literature is intended as a «great task to manage the state», what could be the *political utility* of poems that only focus on natural descriptions, the longing for Chinese landscape and traditions, and the manneristic repetition of Chinese models?

The most straightforward answer to this question is to consider the *monjō keikoku* theory as a mere façade, used to cover the real aims of poetic activity: nothing more than an aristocratic play – poetry – hidden behind the aura of official legitimation – the 'great task' of the government. It has also been argued that all this theoretical structure was nothing but a useful excuse for the huge expenses these banquets and pastimes entailed (Kinpara 1981, cit. in Denecke 2013b, p. 97).

This criticism is probably one of the main causes of the low popularity of the poetry at Saga's court among modern scholars and common readers. The *Chokusen sanshū* do not realize on the textual level what they declare in theory, and the contradiction between these two aspects, theory and practice, prefaces and poems, remains unsolved, mining the value – or rather, the evaluation – of this kind of literature. In other words, the reader feels that these poems

betray the theory and the political function they are supposed to have, with the result of being useless to real political aims and false in their intentions.

This evaluation is not only a modern position. As Masuda Shigeo acutely notes, the awareness of this contradiction, and the acceptance – or refusal – of poetry as a mere courtly leisure can be detected also among the Heian people, in the same bureaucrats and courtiers that assisted and took part in these official banquets. At the same time part of the intellectuals – especially the ones tied to the *Daigakuryō*'s course of Letters – were aware that these three imperial collections were a concrete attempt to realize the *monjō keikoku* theory, and not just a literary pastime (Masuda 2004, p. 9).

This ambiguity characterizes all of the 9th century Heian literature. «The contradiction between the aesthetic and luxurious court culture and the *real* politics of *ritsuryō* at Saga's court became serious as early as the last years of the Kōnin era» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 197), and the problem about the contrast between 'poet' and 'Confucian scholar' will be inherited and embodied by the late 9th century's poets like Sugawara no Michizane. In Michizane the sense of continuity with Saga's court with regard to the vision and role of literature and literary taste is clearly evident (Morota 2007, p. 113). Especially during the Kanpyō era (889-898), which corresponds to the period when Uda held the maximum political power after Fujiwara no Mototsune's death, Michizane became the emperor's most trusted advisor for political matters, being at the same time the most outstanding figure on the literary scene. As a *shishin* (詩臣), or 'poet-official' Michizane composed many poems at poetic banquets, but in his instance too, the contents of the poems and the Confucian ideal of adherence to political utility were «in clear contradiction» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 257).

Fujiwara Katsumi suggests that despite the tie with Saga's court, Michizane's poetic ideal was no longer the *monjō keikoku* but rather, it can be summarized by phrases as «poetry expressing feelings» 詩言志 or «poetry is where the feelings go» 詩者志之所之也. Both of these expressions, suggesting further attention for the poets' individuality and feelings, are actually quoted from Confucian Classics; therefore, as pointed out by Denecke, the dualism between a poetry for government and a poetry for pleasure could be seen as a constant in ancient east Asian literatures (Denecke 2013b, pp. 94-5). According to Fujiwara Katsumi, the contradiction is still strong in Michizane himself, as clearly exemplified by the *Poem of the frost-covered chrysanthemum*. Despite its preface, we can't find any clear account of political or moral matters, so the question is «what could ever be the 'reason of being' of court banquets poems on natural scenery?» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 257).

The only conclusion Fujiwara proposes in answer to this question is that this problem can't be solved, and even if «Michizane himself felt the contradiction between the courtly elegance and his political morals » (Fujiwara

2001, p. 220), this inconsistency doesn't undermine the value of his work, by contrast giving it a particular and exceptional energy (Fujiwara 2001, p. 269).

I think we can add some elements to attempt a further analysis of the problem of the 'usefulness of literature', for example starting by an interesting suggestion by Morota Tatsumi. As stated by Morota, the tendency to aesthetic poetry – already present in Saga's court and later inherited by Michizane – «is not contrary *a priori* to the 'Confucian ideology' itself» (Morota 2007, p. 115). This is because Michizane's naturalistic poems are part of an official aesthetic ideal that Morota called *miyabi of elegance* (優雅の風流)[2] that has its origins in the moral ideals codified by the Chinese literary theory expressed in *Wenxuan* (Morota 2007, p. 91). According to Morota's reconstruction, the earliest appearance of this ideal of *miyabi of elegance* in Japan is *Man'yōshu*'s poet Ōtomo no Tanushi; after that the *miyabi* passed on through Saga's poetic banquets – and the *Chokusen sanshū* – and it was lastly inherited by Uda's court banquets and Michizane's poetry (Morota 2007, p. 116). Simplifying Morota's thesis, the refinement of letters, even in the instance of a total devotion to the elegance of expression and aesthetic enjoyment, is not totally extraneous to the Confucian moral and doctrine that, since its origin, always promoted and stressed the relation between *belles lettres* and good government.

Actually, the acknowledgment of the Confucian basis in both Chinese and Japanese Literature is not new: already in the 1960's Yoshikawa Kōjirō stated that «for the power of the persons in charge of politics and morals, the memorization of the whole text of the Confucian classics, namely 'The Four Books and the Five Classics' was an essential condition» as well as «the ability to compose poems and prose in a fixed form»; in other words «the fact that poetry was one of the Confucian classics [the *Shijing*] is already a demonstration of this [the respect Confucianism has for Literature]. Therefore, from Confucius onward, the importance given to poetry-writing-rites-music [*Shishuliyue* 詩書礼楽] shows the doctrine of culture for culture's sake inside that teaching [Confucianism]» (Yoshikawa 1968a, p. 434). Quoting Yoshikawa's lines, Fujiwara Katsumi poses a rhetorical question: «from our contemporary point of view, the fact that poetry is useless to politics is self evident, right?», adding that «actually, also in China, the debate about the uselessness of poetry for the government was constantly present» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 248).

Based on all these comments, I feel that the analysis on the relationship

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[2]   The translation of the word *miyabi* is problematic, that's why I prefer to left it untranslated; anyway *miyabi*'s etymology is tied to the court or to the imperial palace, so a possible translation is 'courtly' or 'courtesy'.

between literature and (political) power in pre-modern courts should also address the problem of the *usefulness* of the literature of art, and in our case in particular, of poetry.

Utility of poetry: the problem

The debate over the 'utility' of literature and writings is still a major issue for literary critics, and it is impossible to give here a complete and satisfactory answer to such a wide and complex question. What I will try to do here is to outline the problem in both reference areas, to verify if similar social and political contexts imply similar problems and solutions on the use and production of literature, in particular poetry.

In Japan

First of all we need to outline the problem in both areas more accurately. In Japan, the key concept about the usefulness of literature can be exemplified with the so-called *shijin muyō ron* 詩人無用論 (poet-uselessness theory) a kind of reaction to the *monjō keikoku* theory that reached its peak during the Jōgan era (859-877) but that «can be seen as a constant phenomenon of the aristocratic and academic society between the second half of the 9th century and the beginning of 10th century» (Gotō 2005, p. 85). As we said before, the contradiction on the problem of the political utility of poetry, innate to the most ancient formulations of Confucian ideology, was already sensed in early Heian Japan. The particular stress on the 'usefulness' of literature in many statements of the preface to the *Keikokushū* can be seen as a proof that the *monjō keikoku* theory was already vacillating during Junna's reign, and therefore it needed a stronger re-affirmation.

> 才何世而不奇。世何才而不用。
> [The literary] talent in every age is not rare.
> In the world every [literary] talent is never useless.
> (*Keikokushū*, Preface)

In the following years, especially in the Jōgan era (859-77) under emperor Seiwa's reign, the 'poet-uselessness theory' reached its climax, dividing the literati of *Daigakuryō* in two factions, a «'Confucian scholar' faction, and a 'poets' faction» (Gotō 2005, p. 85). Confucian scholars in the traditional term, like Ōe no Otondo (大江音人), were «literati-bureaucrats that fulfilled their administrative duties on the basis of a scholarship, and used their ties

with the regent's family [the Fujiwara] as a foothold to improve personal career » (Ibid., p. 106). On the other hand there were «pure Confucian-poets» like Sugawara no Koreyoshi (Michizane's father) who, even though he had the same Confucian basis, were more committed to the production of literature for a more aesthetic and non-utilitarian enjoyment. Koreyoshi was recorded as a man «constantly praising *fūgetsu*, and enjoying reciting poems» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 197). This is also the context in which Sugawara no Michizane, the man that somehow embodied the opposition between these two factions of literati, lived and died.

Given that the contrast between these two positions is a constant in 9th century Japan, can we find an answer to the question of whether or not literature was useful? Also modern critics are still divided on this point.

Some decades ago, Kojima Noriyuki explained the poems composed at *shien*, as the product of *suji* 理 (political content) plus *aya* 文 (literary refinement, rhetoric) (Kojima 1976, p. 113). In other words, the refinement of letters should be a way to express the political message more effectively is true as regards the genre of *fengyushi*. But as we already noticed, many of the poems composed at Saga's banquets, as well as at Uda's court, show no trace of *suji*, being only focused on landscape description or the enjoyment of nature.

As we saw before Takigawa Kōji states that even those poems that didn't show any relation with political matters fulfilled an implicit political function in the very moment of their public composition at a *shien*: that is, to visually symbolize the distance of each courter from the emperor, and his rank and political importance – we could say, his social capital – inside the court's hierarchy. Therefore, the literary – or artistic – component of poems became nothing more than a vehicle for a precise and extra-textual political meaning (Takigawa 2004, p. 233).

Takigawa indicates *shien* poetry as a ritual tool useful to court society, but at the same time he seems to relegate its literary value to the rank of a literary pastime, a product of the elegant taste of an extravagant ruler like Saga, especially in the instance of poems having as only focus the enjoyment of natural landscapes. The contents of the poems – and their literary quality – seems to become totally secondary.

As reported by Denecke, there are also scholars like Gotō Akio or Suzuki Hideo that do not see a contradiction between poetry as official duty and poetry as a tool to communicate the poet's personal expression (Denecke 2013b, p. 98). I find Suzuki Hideo's position, summarized by Denecke, particularly interesting for our discussion: the poems included in the collections are important not so much for their contents, but because they were composed before emperor Saga, and created a «virtual community of poets holding the same

heart […]. It fulfilled the duty of a kind of cooperative rite aimed at harmonizing the various powers inside the court society» (Denecke 2013b, pp. 98-9). This position is not too far from Takigawa's, but at least it seems to admit a greater emotional component: the 'harmonization' between ruler and officials is not just a matter of duties and ranks, but it is something based on the sharing of the same poetical and artistic taste.

In Italy

The comparison with medieval court literature in Europe showing, as we discussed before, some important similarities with the early Japanese instance, could maybe cast new light on this issue.

Claudio Giunta accurately analyzed the problem of the usefulness of literature starting from Horace's *Ars Poetica* who recognized in poetry the double function of *delectare* (enjoy) and *prodesse* (to be useful). Giunta concluded that the idea of poetry as 'art for art's sake' was just a modern, post-romantic position, and that in particular, for almost every medieval poet, poetry – like prose – had always had an 'instrumental' didactic function (Giunta 2002, pp. 514-518). The idea of 'practical' literature of the Middle Ages is not new. According to Alberto Vàrvaro, medieval poets had always been aware that their poems were being written for a practical purpose: «the text should be read as though inserted into an amalgam of contemporary problems to which it might give a valid solution, otherwise it becomes *useless* for the reader» (Vàrvaro 1985, p. 47). Therefore, 'useful' was also the figure of *clericus* (cleric) that until the 10th and 11th centuries whose religious studies based on the Bible and on classical writings made him the only person able to read and write. «For the powerful people, he [the cleric] was the one who, because of his ability to read and write, could fulfill some practical needs, from correspondence to document editing, from annals to historical annotations, or even to meet more personal needs like *celebrating powerful men with timeless poems*» (Vàrvaro 1985, p. 72). The inclusion of the composition of poems to celebrate powerful characters in the group of 'practical functions' of a cleric can be arguable, but it wasn't considered strange in medieval Europe where professional poets like the *troubadours* or the *minnesänger* were often similar to 'mercenaries' who offered their rhetorical ability to this or that feudal lord, depending on the privilege and the payment granted. On the other hand, also in Europe, it seemed possible to outline a poetry whose function overcame the common definition of 'usefulness', and could instead be considered just as a courtly divertissement, an elegant pastime, like in the instance of vernacular poetry in the love poems of the *troubadour* tradition. Therefore, also in Italy, we

have to face the problem of the 'utility' of literature, especially in poetry. The problem becomes even more urgent for our study when we observe that the most important poetic achievement at Frederick II's court, the poems of the so called Sicilian School, was almost entirely devoted to love songs.

Utility of poetry: a possible solution

Before facing the complex discourse on vernacular poetry in Italy and Japan that will be topic of the second half of this book, I want to suggest a solution for the problems raised until now about literature and power, and the usefulness of poetry. The question that remains unanswered is, again: what could be the real political meaning and utility of a poetry that doesn't touch political themes at all?

Roberto Antonelli gives a very important hint to distinguish 'useful literature' from a different – higher? – kind of literary works. «Frederick's court was one of the biggest centers of translation in medieval Europe […], and we also know the personal use that Frederick made of translations (for the compilation of *De ars venandi cum avibus*), but we especially know the political (cultural) use that Frederick made of them» (Antonelli 1979, p. 84). To discuss this issue, Antonelli analyzes a letter the Magna Curia sent to university scholars in Paris and Bologna with a translation of Aristotle's works. Recent studies (Delle Donne 2010, p. 145) stated that the letter was written during the reign of Frederick II's son, Manfred, in 1263 (Delle Donne 2010, pp. 145, 161), but as already stated by Antonelli in years when document dating was uncertain (1979, p. 87); the year this letter was written doesn't change its value as a document to understand Frederick II's cultural ideals. As confirmed by Delle Donne, «the solemn declaration on the value of culture expressed in this letter, felt more adequate to Frederick II's figure», than to Manfred's (Delle Donne 2010, p. 145). According to Antonelli, this letter declared Frederick's «intelligently hegemonic program» on culture (Antonelli 1979, p. 86). Antonelli underlines the following passage of the letter:

> *Omnes homines naturaliter scire desiderant*
> Every man yearns, for his nature, knowledge.

and comments: «what is hard to deny or underestimate about Frederick's position, so explicitly and clearly expressed here, is the organic relationship established by the emperor between *State* and *culture* […]; the role assigned to scholars in the State and state hierarchy […] that is wider and more comprehensive than the also existing immediate instrumentalism» (Antonelli 1979, p. 89).

We need to underline how the tie between state and culture – including the physical places where culture was made, the universities – seems very close to the one outlined by Wiebke Denecke at Saga's court among the emperor, the *Daigakuryō* and state bureaucracy, and the role of Saga as «emperor, poet, cultural supporter, compiler» (Denecke 2013b, pp. 101-2).

But what is more important in Antonelli's quote is the clear outline of two kinds of literatures: one with an «immediate instrumentalism», and one with a «wider meaning». The immediate instrumentalism is, for example, the translation of literary works from Arabic or Greek into Latin, to make them accessible to European readers – and to Frederick himself, who could read Latin. This translation activity contributed also to the consolidation of Latin as the empire's official language, with an evident practical merit for bureaucracy and optimization of the administrative system. The second, «wider meaning», is something whose direct utility can't be easily demonstrated, but that was neither a practice of pure aestheticism nor entertainment. In the instance of the translation sent to the universities of Paris and Bologna, Manfred inherited his father's cultural ideal and commitment. That letter declared the centrality and the leading role of the Magna Curia in the European academic world, and this regardless of the contents of the translation (in this instance, Aristotle's philosophy). It was the translating process itself – and not its text – that was charged with politically significant messages.

Other commentators apply the same explanation to poetry, in particular to the Italian poetry of the Sicilian School, almost entirely focused on love themes, and never dealing with political subjects. According to Alberto Vàrvaro, even when a poem doesn't refer to politics on a textual level, it can still be a vehicle of political meaning in a social and symbolic way. Talking about the Sicilian School, Vàrvaro states that «poetry is functionalized to a political activity, not by managing political matters, nor supporting it, nor becoming its sounding board, [as happens in the poetry of the troubadours or in the Latin eulogies about Frederick] but just demonstrating that the ruler, and his court, are the center of the world» (Vàrvaro 1989, pp. 87-88). Delle Donne agrees and states: «the existence of a poetic school, able to stand comparison with the European models, was in any case profitable enough to create a certain image of supremacy, also cultural» (Delle Donne 2010, p. 160) and D'Angelo: «in poetry, one of the cornerstones of Frederick's cultural project consisted in giving space – for anti-Pope reasons – to the use of national [vernacular] languages (creation of the Sicilian School of poetry)» (D'Angelo 2005).

Even if the Sicilian School poetry never touched political subjects, because poetry was the highest genre of literature – and this was true in Europe, from Homer onwards, as well as in Eastern Asia, ever since Confucius – assuring

the supremacy of poetry composed around the ruler over any other possible kind of literature and poetry was a real *political* need, more than a merely *cultural* one. In these terms, it didn't really matter what the content of the poems was: the only important thing was that the poetry composed at court could be recognized as the highest example of writing.

Delle Donne places this 'strategy' in relation with the lack of eulogies and poems in praise of Frederick, and with the few works in Latin of this genre: «Frederick must have considered politics and propaganda as matters too delicate and important to let literati and poets organize and manage them. They [the poets] could at most contribute in giving prestige to the image the emperor succeeded in creating. […] None of these [works of celebrative nature] seems to be written exclusively to celebrate Frederick. But all of these [literary works], in one way or another contribute to the spread of that halo of rarity and prestige around the figure of the greatest temporal ruler of that age» (Delle Donne 2010, p. 160). Also the support of liberal arts at the *Studium* in Naples can be seen as part of this 'wide' strategy, since «the mastery of letters contributes to the greatness of the kingdom » (Lusignan 1994, p. 29), because the importance of showing a highly refined style of writing is deeply rooted in the process of legitimation, for example against the monopolist of Latin culture, the Church of Rome.

In other words, all these studies agree on the fact that even when poetry didn't carry any explicit political message or theme, as in the instance of the esthetic enjoyment of a natural landscapes, or in the instance of love songs, it could still work as carrier of political meanings at an extra-textual level.

This explanation, stressing the importance of the form and symbolic value of the literary product itself when inserted in a public context, is a definition that, in my opinion, fits perfectly also the early Heian Literature, especially in the Kōnin and Tenchō eras when the concept of imperial anthology was elaborated.

One of Vàrvaro's statements could even be applied as it is to Saga's court literature: «the emperor is identified as an emperor because his court produces the highest and most refined style of writing, which is also a proof of power» (Vàrvaro 1989, p. 88). Because at court we have refined writings and poetry, we understand we are living in a golden age under a virtuous ruler: exactly the position expressed in many passages of the prefaces to the *Bunkashūreishū* and the *Keikokushū*, and underlined by Denecke (Denecke 2013b, pp. 102-3).

Under Vàrvaro's statement we can easily put other interpretations of the Heian court poetry, for example with Takigawa's study about the poems composed at poetic banquets that had the purpose of glorifying the «emperor's infinite virtue», but that in most cases only repeated Chinese patterns and praised the scenery. Or we could quote Marian Ury, who talking about the rise of *mon-*

jō hakase's rank in the Kōnin era said: «the prestige of this [literature] curriculum corresponded not only to Saga's convictions but also to the demands of a government mode that required the preparation of memorials and edicts in a refined style. So elegant was the parallel prose of the memorials that many were prized for their beauty and even included in literary anthologies, quite distant from any relationship to their original context» (Ury 1999, pp. 368-9).

Moreover, Suzuki Hideo's explanation of poetic composition as a collective activity aimed at harmonizing and balancing the social parts inside the court is totally coherent with the idea of the Magna Curia's notaries as ecclesia imperialis (imperial Church) (Delle Donne 2006, pp. 122) or a fraternitas (religious confraternity) (Kölzer 1994, p. 73).

Conclusions

The comparison between the Japanese and the Italian Literature studies I carried out led to the conclusion that it is possible to give the same answer to the question 'what is the usefulness of a poetry that doesn't deal with political themes?', both in Japan and in Italy. Both for the Sicilian School poetry and the poems of the *Chokusen sanshū* we can say that the political meaning was almost exclusively symbolic, but it wasn't weak or totally absent. The literature for the government of the state of Saga and Junna's courts, as well as Michizane's naturalistic poems at Uda's court, *were not* useless, or more precisely, were not more useless than the writings aimed at exalting the glory of a ruler or a powerful person in the Middle Ages in Europe. Moreover, as suggested by Vàrvaro and others, also the poems of the Sicilian School were implicitly charged with a wider political meaning. Even if this kind of poems didn't talk about government, they *are* political by their own existence, by the practice that led to their composition –as for Japan, the *ōsei* and the *shien* – as well as their inclusion in collections by imperial order, or because of the direct participation of the emperors in the poetic activity – like in the instance of Frederick II.

In Saga's court, the preface to the *Chokusen sanshū* explains and clarifies the political meaning we can't catch in the poems' text. As Masuda points out, «the meaning of the *chokusenshū* was to fix cultural directions and models, based on the Confucian-*ritsuryō* state ideology» (Masuda 1976, p. 32), and this role of literature as example – or symbol – for state ideology is not so far from some of the features of cultural politics at Frederick II's court. The same definition could be given to Michizane's poetry. Even though, unlike his Chinese counterparts Bai Juyi, Michizane seems to be discontinuous in his adherence to the *fengyushi* principle, moving away from the political and

social criticism in the very moment he was closer to Uda and at the climax of his power, the symbolic function of *shien* and *ōsei* remain a primary need also in Michizane's conception of *poet-official*, and can't be considered just a mere ornament to a courtly pastime.

These poems fulfilled the function of promoting culture, part of the specific duty of the ruler, and on the other hand were the proof of his virtue and greatness, giving him legitimacy as a sovereign *just due to their existence* and incomparable *quality*. Therefore, the distinction should be made not between 'useful' and 'useless' literature, but between an 'immediate instrumentalism' and a 'wider meaning' of literature, as suggested by Antonelli. Even if in *ōsei* poetry Michizane doesn't seem concerned about political problems at court, from other poems, writings and historical documents, like the letter to Mototsune, we know about his great commitment – that will also be the cause of his exile – to political and moral matters. The choice not to stress the real political message in the *ōsei* poetry was Michizane's deliberate choice, that in some way resembles Frederick's 'disinterest' in poetry, because political propaganda was not intended to be managed by poets. From this point of view, Michizane and Peter de Vinea, who were both poets and at the same time higher officials in the respective courts, show a surprisingly similarity also in the choice of different literary media for different tasks: Peter's political message with the eulogistic prose and Michizane's letter to Mototsune; and Peter's literature of art with love poetry in vernacular and Michizane's aesthetic *ōsei*.

We could also push the discourse to a further conclusion, that is to recognize in the 'wider meaning' outlined by Antonelli the same novelty acknowledged by Wiebke Denecke to Saga's period as the moment in which a new historical self-consciousness is reached by the poets, together with the «independence of literature» from government (Denecke 2013b, p. 104). Both in Saga and Frederick II's court, writings and poetry in particular were no longer simple tools for propaganda or bureaucracy like before, but they earned a higher and more universal meaning, a human activity that, if on the one hand it needed an official legitimation (the imperial order or participation), on the other by contrast it became the proof and the source of court greatness, in turn legitimating the imperial power. This new perspective, as well as Denecke's suggestion of changing the definition of the early Heian period from a «dark age of national style» to an «age of independence of literature», will need further analysis and more accurate discussion by scholars, before gaining global acceptance. Even so, I think I proved the benefits of a comparative research that brings together the results of different areas of literary studies disconnected from each other first of all because of the linguistic barriers. Problems like the 'usefullness of literature', the relationship with politics and power, and the influence literature can exert on society, are of course problems that interest ev-

ery culture and every literary tradition of the world. Italy and Japan's historical backgrounds are considerably different, but the pursuit of legitimate imperial power and absolutistic centralization of the government (Part I) is a remarkable common point we can't overlook, especially if considered alongside the direct influence this political-ideology exerted on literary production (Part II).

In the next part of this book I will attempt a further comparison between the Heian court and the Magna Curia, that while validating the thesis proposed so far, could represent a fertile field for future studies aimed at inserting Japanese Literature in the frame of world literature, according the keywords we outlined in the introduction: 'court' and 'vernacular'.

At Frederick II and Uda's courts, some events were destined to change the history of literature in Italy and Japan forever: the birth or re-affirmation of vernacular/native language, with the Sicilian School of poetry and the first imperial collection of *waka*, the *Kokinshū*. I delayed this discourse about the vernacular because it is indissolubly tied to what I said about the Latin/Chinese writings, the role of culture in the court, and the interaction between social changes and literary production.

Moreover, the influence of ethical and aesthetic values elaborated and fixed by the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School will influence not only later positions in the literary field, but it will deeply permeate the society and the intellectual discourse of later centuries.

PART III
COURT AND VERNACULAR

The Kokinwakashū and the Sicilian School of poetry: similarities and differences

In Part I of this book I showed how, from a historical and social point of view, Frederick II's Sicilian court and the Heian court in the 9ᵗʰ century have some substantial similitudes like the role of the sovereign and a specific reform strategy finalized to consolidating the imperial power, and the birth of the culture and sensitivity of the 'imperial' court. Part II focused on the relationship between culture and political power, and the role fulfilled by Latin and Chinese literatures in the process of consolidation of centralized monarchies like Frederick II and Saga's. Apart from the conclusions proposed in the previous part, and even excluding the discourse on politics, a comparison between the most representative poetical product of these two courts, the *Kokinwakashū* and the poetry of the Sicilian School, seems meaningful for many other reasons, which I will briefly list here. It is the combination of all of these shared features that on the one hand matches the two works, at the same time distinguishing them from their respective literary traditions.

- Acknowledged status of 'canon', or starting point of national lyric traditions for the later generations of poets.

- Social background of the poets: a mix of scholars and aristocrats, holders of a new concept of court.

- The political function attributed *a posteriori*, opposed to the absence of explicit political themes in the poems' text.

- The predominance – relative or absolute – of love themes, and a new, highly idealized conception of love.

- The use of vernacular as the most refined tool for the production of (love) poetry.

- The formalization of poetic language, pursued through a process of translation from foreign and previous literary traditions.

- The research of new rhetoric devices (*engo* and *kakekotoba*) or rhythmical structures (*sonetto*), as expression of poets' creativity.

Even if some of these features can be detected in many other poetic tradi-

tions, I think that the combination of all of these makes the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School very similar.

Particular attention must be paid about the problem of formalization of (poetic) language, as someone could note that formalization is an issue characterizing not only Sicilian poets, but also the previous Occitan troubadoric poetry. I will discuss this problem in depth in Part IV, but we can already address the discourse this way: from a socio-political point of view, the courts of southern France were first of all 'feudal', a social and political system constituted by two poles: high status aristocrats, and knights of low extraction and without property, the so called *iuvenes* (Mancini 1976, p. XXVI). The knight had the duty to serve his lord, but he also had the right to abandon him if he didn't show the appropriate *largueza* (generosity) in economic terms, and to start serving another lord. This possibility, that also left its traces in poetry with the sub-genres of *comjat* (farewell) and *chanson de change* (song of change), had no equivalent in the totalizing bureaucratic states like Frederick II's or Heian Japan. The presence of such a centralized and authoritarian state, revealed also by the prohibition for the Sicilian citizens to attend courses at the University of Bologna, left no second choice to the notaries of the Magna Curia, who couldn't easily change their lord or move freely to other countries or universities. The situation was similar for the Heian literati, since the central court of Heiankyō can be said to have been the only court a Japanese poet or scholar could yearn to belong to. Therefore, the difference between the courts of southern France, and the Magna Curia and the Heian court is the one between a 'feudal' system and society, and a more centralized 'bureaucratic monarchy'.

If the historical, social and political settings of Sicily and Japan represent a solid ground upon which the two courts may be compared, there are also many differences, first of all the very definition of the two 'works' we intend to analyze, the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School poetry. While the *Kokinshū* can be considered as a single and unitary literary work, a 'collection' in the real sense, the discussion is more complex for the Sicilian School's poems. Until the recent edition in the series 'Meridiani' by the publisher Mondadori in 2008, the poets and the single poems that ought to have been included in the *corpus* of the Sicilian School has been a debated issue. The Sicilian poetry represented «one of the rare cases in literary historiography in which the label of "school", affixed by Adolf Gaspary in 1878, has never been argued» (Di Girolamo 2008, p. XVII), but the different versions of this 'collection', as well as the debate on definitions like 'Sicilian-Tuscan poets' or 'Tuscan-Sicilian poets' testifies the difficulty of tracing precise boundaries to this 'school' that didn't leave a unique and coherent manuscript tradition comparable to the *Kokinshū*.

That's why, first of all, I need to outline briefly the historical backgrounds that gave birth to the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School, clarifying why this peculiar kind of poetry took shape exactly in the court environment we described before.

The path to the Kokinshū

Even if the order of compilation of the *Kokinshū* was issued by emperor Daigo (ruling 897-930), it is now accepted that the *Kokinshū* was not the starting point, but the final result of a process of revaluation of Japanese poetry that followed the long period of Chinese learning and imitation culminated in Saga and Junna's eras. The start of this period of the '*waka* renaissance', and the relevant end of the so called 'dark period of national style', can't be fixed in a precise date, but as already shown by many studies, we can list a number of events that demonstrate the progressive return of the *waka* on the stage of court literature.

One of the earliest episodes testifying the presence of the *waka* in official occasions is the ceremony for emperor Ninmyō's 40th birthday, in 849, when the monks of the Kōfukuji temple composed and presented to the emperor a long poem (*chōka* 長歌) in pure Japanese. In this poem the monks declared that Japanese was Japan's real and only national language, (Suzuki 2012, p. 15), and that they didn't need the Chinese knowledge of the *hakase* to compose good poetry (Takada 2009, p. 259). It was maybe the first direct criticism to the customs of public composition of *kanshi* by Confucian scholars, and it may not be by chance that the authors were Buddhist monks, and not *bunjin*. Two years later in 851, during the ceremony held at Fujiwara no Yoshifusa's house to offer a copy of the *Hokkekyō* (Sutra of Lotus) to Ninmyō, some *waka* were composed with *kanshi* (Suzuki 2012, p. 15). Under Kōkō's reign (884-887) *waka* were composed during the *Nihongi Kyōen Waka* 日本紀竟宴和歌, a special ceremony to celebrate the completion of the compilation of the *Nihongi* (Masuda 1976, p. 32). But the most remarkable events and initiatives related to the *waka* would take place during the following Kanpyō era (889-898), under the direct influence of the political and cultural will of emperor Uda – Kōkō's son and Daigo's father.

During Uda's reign we have at least two important facts connected with the return of the *waka* on the public scene: the holding of semi-public and private events related to the composition of the *waka*, such as the *Kanpyō ōntoki kisai no miya utaawase* (889), or the *Koresada shinnō ke utaawase* (in an uncertain year before 893), and the compilation of works that somehow mixed poetry in Chinese and Japanese, in particular, the *Shinsen Man'yōshū* 新撰万

葉集 (893, with a second book added later, in 913), a collection of *waka* trans-
lated or adapted in the *kanshi* verse, and the *Chisatoshū* 千里集 (also called
Kudaiwaka 句題和歌) by Ōe no Chisato (894). The latter is a collection con-
taining Chisato's *waka* composed using as topic (*dai* 題) some famous Chi-
nese verses (*ku* 句), creating a sort of Japanese paraphrase of Chinese poems.
In the preface of this collection Chisato wrote:

> 臣千里謹言、去二月十日、参議朝臣傅勅曰、古今和歌、多少献上。
>
> Your minister Chisato humbly says that, on the tenth day of the second
> month of this year, the noble Consultant reported to him the imperial
> order: "to offer His Highness a certain number of Japanese poems,
> ancient and modern".
>
> (CS, Preface)

It is not a mere coincidence that the order Uda gave to Chisato reminds us
of the title of the *Kokinshū* in the phrase «*kokin waka*» (ancient and modern
Japanese poems). Nowadays, it is a consolidated interpretation to consider all
of these initiatives as a prelude to the first collection of *waka* by imperial or-
der, the *Kokinshū* (Masuda 1976, p. 32).

In the fifth year of the Engi era (905) under emperor Daigo's order, the
first of the 21 imperial collections of *waka*, the *Kokinwakashū* – or just the
Kokinshū – were compiled. Here we need to say something about the unclear
role of Daigo and Uda in the compilation of the *Kokinshū*. Takigawa Kōji
stated that the compilation of the *Kokinshū* under Daigo's reign looked like
nonsense (Takigawa 2004, p. 262), and that the plan to edit the first imperi-
al collection of *waka* was elaborated at Uda's time (Takigawa 2004, p. 234)
who, it is important to remember, was still alive at the time of the presenta-
tion of the *Kokinshū* and seems to have somehow taken part in the process of
re-editing it after that date (Takada 2009, p. 531). Takigawa's thesis is based
on the analysis of the number of *mitsuen* (密宴, emperor's private banquets)
held at Uda and Daigo's courts. These private banquets organized directly by
the emperor for his pleasure are considered an important foreground for the
Kokinshū, and could give us some clues on the emperor's private interest in
the *waka*. Because the number of *mitsuen* decreased considerably after Uda,
Takigawa concludes that Daigo seeeds less interested in literature or poetry,
compared to his father (Takigawa 2004, p. 257), but also compared to Saga,
who, an active poet, left more than ninety poems in the three *Chokusen san-
shū*, and more than Uda and Daigo symbolized the figure of the poet-emperor
(Denecke 2013b, p. 98).

Actually, to say that Daigo had hardly any interest in poetry is inexact. First
of all, we have many *waka* by Daigo included in later imperial collections,

as well as a personal collection of the emperor's poems called *Engi gyoshū* 延喜御. Moreover, his praise for Sugawara no Michizane's *kanshi* is proved by some episodes recorded in Michizane's collection itself. When Daigo was still crown prince, for his own pleasure he asked to Michizane to compose, in a very short time, 20 poems on various themes like 'bamboo', 'rose', 'pine', 'wine', etc. (*Kanke bunsō* 400 and following). Once Daigo became emperor, he gave Michizane his robe as a present to praise a poem Michizane composed at a banquet; and when in 900 Michizane presented Daigo with the three collections of poems of the Sugawara family, the emperor declared that they were so beautiful as to surpass even Bai Juyi's collection.

Even so, Daigo's role as a cultural organizer, and his influence in the compilation of the *Kokinshū*, remains unclear, and his cultural activism seems to have been shallower than Uda's. The doubt raised by Takada Hirohiko about why the *Kokinshū* wasn't ordered by Uda (Takada 2009 p. 530) is somehow of secondary importance if we consider that a continuity in cultural activities is still recognizable between Uda's and Daigo's courts, for example the hypothesis of Uda's involvement to some degree in the compilation work of the *Kokinshū*, also after 905, with some corrections that determined the inclusion of poems by a poet close to Uda (Takada 2009, p. 531).

As regards Uda's position in this research, we should also consider that not only did Uda himself resemble his great-grandfather Saga in many ways more than his son Daigo – from his political ideas to his role as literature promoter – but during the process of legitimation of vernacular Japanese as a literary language, he seemed to have played a role quite similar the one played by Frederick II in the process of the birth of Italian vernacular. For these reasons, analysing the process of consolidation of literary vernacular, I find it useful to focus on the continuity between Uda and Daigo's courts rather than on their differences.

The *Kokinshū* is composed of more than 1000 poems divided in 20 books (*maki*) arranged thematically, the two main ones being the seasons (books 1-6) and love (books 11-15). For many reasons, like the number of books and the themes selected, as well as the presence of (two) prefaces, the *Kokinshū* shows the continuity as imperial collection with the *Keikokushū*, the last imperial collection of *kanshi* ordered by Junna more than 50 years before. In the *Kokinshū* the various poems are arranged in a very structured way, with poems grouped by theme, or a temporal consecution, especially for the seasonal songs – starting from the beginning of spring and finishing with the end of the year – and love songs – from the early stages of love to its end and regrets. The songs included in the *Kokinshū* spanned almost a century, and are usually divided into three periods: 1) the period of the most ancient and anony-

mous poets (about the first half of the 9th century); 2) the period of Rokkasen (the Six Genies of *waka*), generally after the Jōwa era (second half of the 9th century); the period of the compilers, coinciding with the end of the 9th and the beginning of 10th century. Many of the poems of the compilers are supposed to have been composed at the same time as when the compilation work began, to address and express more explicitly the aesthetic canon proposed. As a result, the tie between the compilers' poems and the various parts of the collection is extremely deep and systemic. Of the four court officials chosen to collect and order the poems of the *Kokinshū*, the leading role is without doubt accorded to Ki no Tsurayuki (ca870-ca945), who despite his young age was also the poet with the largest number of poems included. So, one of the main features of the *Kokinshū* is that the compilers are at the same time authors of the microtext – the poems – and of the macrotext – the prefaces and the collection as a unitary work.

The shaping of the Sicilian School

On the European side, despite the many other examples of court vernacular literature – first of all, the troubadour poetry – the continuity with the following poetry traditions (like the Tuscan poets, or Dante), and the discourse about the 'official literature of the court' seems to match the Sicilian School perfectly, more than the troubadours, who unlike the Sicilian poets, are not generally identified as a 'school', but as a wider and more variegated genre of poets.

The cultural activity tied to the so-called Sicilian School spans about half a century, starting some time after Frederick's enthronement as emperor and his return to Sicily from 1220 to 1232, and ending with the dissolution of the Magna Curia after Manfred's defeat in Benevento in 1266. This periodization of the school remains under debate. In fact, according to the most updated studies, it is almost certain that there may have been some form of 'prehistoric' Sicilian poetry, inserted in the wider tradition of vernacular poetry diffused among all of the major European courts, firstly in the southern courts of France. This assumed early-Sicilian poetry left no records, and one of the reasons offered by Costanzo Di Girolamo is their relationship with the musical performance. The Occitan *troubadours*' was «a poetry committed to voice, or more precisely to chanting, usually accompanied by one or more musical instruments, that lived in the execution, and not in the written page; a poetry with its strong theatrical nature taking the shape of a show, for whom the term literature seems arguable or even incorrect» (Di Girolamo 2008, p. XIX). The main written source of the *troubadour* songs are not manuscripts contemporary to the authors, but later transcriptions, in great part realized by northern

Italian copyists to meet the demands of the Italian aristocracy for an Occitan repertoire. Even if vernacular poetry became very popular in all the European courts, at least until the 12th century they were not transcribed because they were considered simple entertainment unworthy of written preservation, also because at that time the costs of paper and copyists were still high. The Sicilian court of William II of Sicily (1166-89)is likely to have had the same problem, so this 'prehistoric' production «didn't leave traces just because, over the centuries, nobody recorded it» (Girolamo 2008, p. XXXI).

From the first half of the 13th century, thanks to the private interest of new social classes with writing abilities, like the notaries, the songs started being transcribed on improvised paper supports – like the last white pages of administrative documents – and then collected in specific manuscripts. Even so, we have no surviving documents of the original manuscripts directly written by the Sicilian poets, even if it is almost certain that some form of written media supported the circulation of this poetry among the members of the Magna Curia, and in the cities touched by Frederick's political influence. The great part of the poems of the Sicilian School we can read today were preserved by three big *canzonieri* (song collections) compiled in Tuscany around the end of the 13th century or the beginning of the 14th: the *Vaticano latino 3793* (preserved at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City), the *Palatino 418* (Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence), and the *Laurenziano Rediano 9* (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence). These manuscripts contain, in different numbers, various songs in vernacular by many authors of the 13th century, from the Sicilian to the Tuscan poets of the generation immediately before Dante Alighieri. The *Vaticano latino* in particular is a text of primary importance for the reconstruction of the history of the early Italian literature, being the largest (about 1000 poems) collection of the three, and because of the space given to the Sicilian School in the first books of the collection which demonstrates the importance accorded to Sicilian poetry by the people of the early 13th century. It is of primary importance to underline here that all of these manuscripts were written in Tuscan dialect, an 'Italian vernacular' quite different from the Sicilian dialect in which the poems of the Sicilian School were originally written. «The work of Tuscanization, in this case comparable to a real translation, is part of the usual process of updating of medieval texts […]. Medieval copyists usually added their dialectal nuances, regardless of the importance they gave to the text they were transcribing. […] The differences between Sicilian and Tuscan [dialects] weren't small, and the adaptation process had crushing effects, especially on the metric» (Di Girolamo 2008, p. LVII).

The difference between Sicilian and Tuscan became clear thanks to the discovery of a fragments of a song by King Enzio (PSS 20.2) transcribed by Giovanni Maria Barbieri, a 16th century scholar, that evidently had access to

a manuscript closest to the original Sicilian.

> (Sicilian version)
> *La virtuti ch'ill'avi*
> *d'alcirim'e guariri*
> *a lingua dir nu l'ausu*
> *pir gran timanza ch'aio nu lli sdigni;*
>
> (Tuscan version)
> *La virtute ch'ell'ave*
> *d'ancidermi e guarire*
> *a lingua dir non l'oso*
> *per gran temenza ch'aggio non la sdigni;*
> (Pagano 2007, pp.92-93)

The problem of a Sicilian-Tuscan translation lays in the totally different ending of a great number of words (*avi - ave*, *guariri - guarire*, *ausu - oso*): the change of desinence deeply affected the structure of the ryhmic system.

The role of Tuscany in the process of transmission of the Sicilian poetic tradition is not accidental. Many Tuscan cities and *comuni* were allied with Frederick II, and many Tuscan intellectuals had direct contacts with members and officials of the Magna Curia, a 'wandering court' continuously moving up and down the peninsula. King Enzio, son of Frederick and active poet of the Sicilian School, spent his last twenty years in jail in the city of Bologna, that had joined the anti-Frederick line created by northern Italian cities. King Enzio's presence in Bologna can be connected to the diffusion of the Sicilian poetry in mid-Italy (Coluccia 2008, p. XXV), but it is just one possible explanation. Other studies suggest another possible moment for the transplanting of Sicilian poetry in Tuscany in Frederick II's stay in Pisa between 1239 and 1240, a period in which the «poetic production at his court supposedly reached a certain consistency» (Leonardi 2005).

What is almost certain is that the Sicilian experience converged directly into the next Italian lyrical tradition following a south-to-north vector. So, «we may distinguish two generations of poets at the Swabian court [the Magna Curia], the first one tied to Frederick's persona and represented by his most prominent officers like Giacomo da Lentini, Peter de Vinea, eradicated in Sicily and southern Italy, and the second one grown around Manfred and with ramifications in Tuscany. […] Not even the Guelph victory of Benevento (1966) and Manfred's death could have produced the immediate interruption of the [poetical] service and the retirement of court poet groups» (Coluccia 2008, p. XLII). So, according to Coluccia, the political end of the Magna Curia, coinciding with the battle of Benevento and the Pope's forces defeating

Manfred, didn't determine the end of the school, but we can observe in any case a progressive change in the generation of poets, identified by Coluccia in two groups: *Siculo-toscani* those poets that, «born and working in Tuscany, reused the Sicilian model with minor changes» and *Toscano-siculi* poets that «were more innovative than their great predecessors in a more or less explicit and declared manner» (Coluccia 2008, p. XLII).

This outline of the broadly-speaking 'Sicilian poets' is very important for the discourse on the 'canons' we will soon undertake, because it testifies the direct connection between the poets that lived close to Frederick, like Peter and Giacomo, and the Italian copyists and Dante Alighieri, responsible for the process of the 'canonization' of the Sicilian poetry.

About Giacomo da Lentini (active in 1233-41, but probably also before), we should underline here his role as *caposcuola* (leader of the movement), and recognize that his position in the manuscripts is predominant, first of all for the number of poems (38), and under this aspect a parallel could be drawn with Ki no Tsurayuki. «Even if Giacomo is not the creator, nor the oldest poet of the School, he is for sure the great literary founder, as *caposcuola* and canonical *auctor*, as unanimously acknowledged by his contemporaries» (Antonelli 2008, p. XVII).

But there is also a big difference between Giacomo and Tsurayuki. While Tsurayuki was also the leader of the group of compilers, Giacomo da Lentini and the other most representative poets of the Sicilian School were not the compilers of the *Vaticano latino* and the other exitent manuscripts that transmitted their poems. So, while the compilers of the *Kokinshū* were at the same time authors of microtexts (the poems) and macrotexts (the collection), the Sicilian poets were only authors of the microtexts, and macrotexts would be realized some decades later, by the Tuscan copist's hand.

Therefore, the relationship between the Sicilian poems and their collocation into manuscripts like the *Vaticano latino*, results unescapably different from the *Kokinshū*'.

The composition of the poetic community

As I discussed in part I of this book, the political and social changes that occurred at the beginning of the Heian period, especially at Saga's court, and during Frederick's reign in the years following his return to Sicily, determined the rise of two new social classes very similar to each other: the *bunjin* in Japan and the notary in Sicily.

The bunjin

The rise of the *bunjin* in the Heian society can be seen as a direct conse-
quence of the new career path opened by the reforms of the Kōnin era (Furuse
1998, p. 121). If we want to read this event according to Bourdieu's theory
of the field of power, we can say that during the first half of the 9th century
the *bunjin*'s succeeded in converting their cultural capital (Chinese literature
knowledge and poetic ability) into a social capital (Bourdieu 1996, pp. 225-
227), that was also converted into an economic and political power, as the
monjō hakase's rise in rank during Saga's reign testifies.

I mentioned that the *bunjin* was the specialist of Chinese literature and
writings, such as Ono no Minemori or Sugawara Michizane, but also the com-
pilers of the *Kokinshū*, as well as the authors of the 9th century works in Jap-
anese, like the early *monogatari*, can be identified as members of this social
group. According to Masuda Shigeo, the four compilers of the *Kokinshū* were
chosen not because of their poetic ability in Japanese, but mainly due to their
bureaucratic proficiency (Masuda 1976, p. 33). In the next chapter, I will dis-
cuss the problem of the Confucian orientation of the *Kokinshū*, but first of all
we need to outline more in detail the figure of the *bunjin* and his relationship
with *wabun* (Japanese writings). It is undeniable that intellectuals like Ki no
Tsurayuki belonged to that very *bunjin-ha* (literate-class) already defined by
Furuse (Furuse 1998, p. 121), a social group that, also according to Masuda,
was distinct from the group of 'common bureaucrats' at Saga's time (Masuda
2004, p. 9). The clear identification of *bunjin* as a specific social class is none-
theless problematic, because of the social changes this category underwent
in the span of about a century. For example, Takigawa uses the term 'low bu-
reaucrats' (卑官) to describe the compilers of the *Kokinshū* (Takigawa 2004,
p. 263) underlying the fact that, despite their literary effort, they would never
receive remarkable promotions in terms of court ranks: Ki no Tomonori, the
highest ranked among the compilers of the *Kokinshū*, was in fact just a sixth
rank, and his cousin Tsurayuki finally reached the fifth rank junior lower –
that represented the lowest step in the aristocracy – only 12 years after the
compilation of the *Kokinshū*. According to Takigawa, the references to *Shi-
jing* and the Confucian theories we can find in the prefaces to the *Kokinshū*
can be read as a stratagem of the *bunjin*-compilers to gain the attention of the
high officials (公卿 *kugyō*) (Takigawa 2004, p. 263). Although this explana-
tion seems to fit perfectly the sociocentric theory of a conversion of cultural
capital into social – and therefore economic – capital, some problems remain
if we consider that, in general terms, also the *bunjin* were more or less part of
that court-centered aristocratic society, and almost every man in the aristoc-
racy received some literary education based on Chinese stories and Confucian

Classics. It is hard to identify univocally as 'aristocrat' *or* '*bunjin*' characters such as Fujiwara no Fuyutsugu or Sugawara no Michizane.

Kudō Shigenori offers a more detailed definition of the word *bunjin*, based on its recurrence in the Heian text, where it is used to indicate 1) a person with writing proficiency, 2) a Confucian scholar, or 3) a poet in charge at poetic banquets (Kudō 1993, cit. in Fujiwara 2001, p. 263). It is clear how the three usages have very unclear boundaries, the first one (the ability to read and write) being the essential condition for the other two, that if not necessarily conflicting, in some cases, like in the poet-uselessness debate, they could also shape a contraposition between the two aspects of the *bunjin*, 'Confucian' and 'poet'.

So, the easiest way to distinguish a *bunjin* from a non-*bunjin* seems to be to verify whether or not he was able to compose *kanshi*, according to the third definition proposed by Kudō: «a poet in charge at poetic banquets» (Kudō 1993, cit. in Fujiwara 2001, p. 263). To be a *bunjin* meant to be able not only to read Chinese, and enjoy Chinese poetry – something that at some level every male member of the court should have been able to do – but first of all to be able to *compose* Chinese poems and texts in a precise and codified form (Yoshikawa 1968a, p. 434), a task requiring high academic level. Because of the importance given to court ceremonies like the *shien* (see Part I – The *monjō hakase* and the poetic banquets), also the social function of these poet-scholars – in great part graduate students of the course of Letters of *Daigakuryō* – was also officially defined, and this public function of *bunjin*-poets lasted for all of the Heian period. Nevertheless, the position of the *bunjin* inside the Heian society underwent a radical change between the 9th and 10th centuries, with direct consequences on their literary production.

The biggest novelty of the *bunjin* literary production after the Jōwa era (834-848) was its bilingual, or more appropriately «biliterate» (Denecke 2012, p. 184) nature, as we have accounts of the *bunjin* able to compose texts both in Chinese and Japanese.

Actually, also during the Nara period the *bunjin* were able to produce literature, especially poems, in their own language. Eighteen of the 64 poets included in the most ancient collection of Chinese poems (*kanshi*) by Japanese poets, the *Kaifūsō*, are also included in the most ancient collection of Japanese poems (*waka*), the *Man'yōshū*.

Even so, if we think of the poets who composed in both languages, such as prince Ōtsu (663-686), son of emperor Tenmu, Ōtomo no Tabito and his son Yakamochi, it seems wrong to define them as pure *bunjin*. Rather, they were higher level aristocrats also proficient in Chinese letters and poetry. The pure *bunjin* I am referring to is a courtier featuring literary knowledge and writing ability, as in the instance of Sugawara no Kiyogimi. As demonstrated by Furuse, this kind of *bunjin* who built their social status mainly through their

scholarship, made their appearance only during Saga's time, because of the particular administrative reforms pursued by Kanmu, Saga and Junna (Furuse 1998, p. 121). On the other hand, we can't say that Ōtomo's clan in power during the Nara period depended entirely on the scholarship level of its members, so from a social class point of view, even if *bunjin* like Kiyogimi were also somehow members of the aristocracy, we can detect a difference in the social status between him and the Ōtomo clan.

Of course, we cannot exclude that the *bunjin* of the first half of the 9th century were also biliterate. On the contrary, we can reasonably say that also during the so called 'dark age of Japanese style' some form of Japanese writing, or at least *waka* composition might have existed, but the lack of documentation makes it impossible to formulate firm statements. After the Jōwa era and especially during Uda's reign we have many accounts of this growing biliterate activity, especially regarding poetry. In the Kanpyō era, the *bunjin* were often the ones the emperor directly charged with writing and compiling works in Japanese, as in the instance of Ōe no Chisato and his *Chisatoshū*, in whose preface the author begs forgiveness for his lack of experience with the *waka*, being as he was a descendant of a family of Confucian scholars, or *bunjin*:

> 臣儒門餘孽側聴言詩、未習艶辞、不知所為。
>
> Your servant [Chisato], being a member of a family of Confucians, has always heard people composing *shi*, and never learned the elegant words [of *waka*], so he does not know how to compose them. (CS, Preface)

This preface is extremely important because in Chisato's words we notice not only the contraposition between *kanshi* and *waka*, but also between Confucian and *waka* poets, and the identification of Confucian scholars with *kanshi* poets, suggesting that *kanshi* poets and *waka* poets have a substantially different formation. Chisato may not have been an exception in the late 9th century court, but, like Sugawara no Michizane, he can be considered as the missing link between the *kanshi*-based pre-Jōwa poetry and the new current that would lead to the compilation of the *Kokinshū*. Michizane is the most representative *bunjin* of this period, not only for the quality of his *kanshi*, but especially for his role in the *waka* revival. He is indicated as the author of the first book of *Shinsen Man'yōshū*, and usually took part in Uda's *mitsuen* being an active *waka* poet: «On this excursion [the imperial visit to Miyataki], Michizane revealed that his poetic skills were not limited to writing verses in Chinese. He had written *waka* in his earlier years; however, it was only now, as Uda's high official and confidant, that he began to compose poems regularly in Japanese on elegant public occasions such as this trip. This was largely because Uda

had elevated *waka* to a status approaching that of poetry in Chinese. And, if verbal dexterity is taken as the measure of excellence, Michizane proved to be a capable poet in his native language. Although Michizane's *waka* are not as distinctive as his *kanshi*, he nonetheless participated in the ninth-century revival of poetry in Japanese» (Borgen 1994, p. 268).

The importance of *kanshi* poets or *bunjin* in the revival of *waka* poetry could sound contradictory, but it is a natural or essential step in a period where the phonetic alphabet *hiragana* was still on its way toward stabilization, and 'writing' still meant automatically 'Chinese-writing'. So, also the draft of the early literary works in vernacular Japanese couldn't have been performed by anyone other than someone with the academic and cultural background of the *bunjin*. That's also the reason why, in many works in Japanese of this period that would become paradigms of new literary genres, such as the *Taketori monogatari* and *Utsuho monogatari* (tales), the *Tosa nikki* (diaries), *Kanajo* (poetic criticism in Japanese), we find evident reference and a general debt to Chinese literature and culture.

The bilingual ability would also interest the next generation of poets, protagonist of the cultural scene at Daigo's court, first of all of the compilers and poets of the *Kokinshū*. As pointed out by Takigawa, not only the four compilers but also at least one third of many other poets of the *Kokinshū*, as we can understand by their curricula and duties in state bureaucracy, are likely to have been proficient in Chinese writing: they were in great part members of court offices and bureaucracy, a role that implicitly demonstrates their ability to read and write in Chinese (Takigawa 2004, p. 247). Even if Michizane mastered Chinese writing and poetic composition at a level that was probably one of the highest in the Heian period, we can also suppose that many of the poets of the *Kokinshū* shared with him and Chisato similar educational backgrounds that entailed not just practical writing skills, but also a fairly deep knowledge of Chinese literature. As we will see later, in Tsurayuki's *Kanajo*, for example, there is sufficient evidence of the influence of Chinese treatise about poetry to demonstrate his double ability in the everyday composition of *waka* and in his knowledge in Chinese texts (Masuda 2004, p. 11, and also Suzuki 2000).

Moreover, the connection – or rather, the identification – between the compilers (or poets of the same generation) of the *Kokinshū* with the previous *kanshi* poets was also based on blood-ties, like in the instance of Ki no Yoshimochi, author of the Chinese preface of the *Kokinshū*, the *Manajo*, who was Ki no Haseo's son, one of the most outstanding poets and *bunjin* of the late 9th century, who is in turn indicated as possible author of many works in Japanese like the *Taketori monogatari*. Michizane himself, despite being the symbol of the 9th century *bunjin* and the uncontested 'hero' of Sino-Japanese literature and *kanshi*, left just five *waka* of proved authorship, two of them

being included in the *Kokinshū*. On the textual side, for example through the study of Michizane's rhetorical devices and style, Fujiwara Katsumi asserts the direct connection with the poetry of the *Kokinshū*: «clarifying this characteristic of Michizane's poetry [the use of rhetoric], at the same time allows the correct collocation of the poetical work of this poet – who tragically ended his life just some years before the compilation of the *Kokinwakashū* – into the history of exchanges between *kanshi* and *waka* expressions of the same period» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 269).

So we can say that the first actor of the renaissance of the Japanese vernacular literature is the *bunjin*, that is also the connection between the *Kokinshū* and the first half of the 9th century (Suzuki 2012, p. 17). We can also give the following definition of the Heian *bunjin*: a Confucian scholar proficient in Chinese and *kanshi*, who from the Jōwa era onward, composed *waka* and *wabun* (Japanese writings) in public or semi-public occasions (Raud 2003, pp. 99-100), because the changes in political and social fields determined a progressive change also in the field of the literary production. Clearly, the many changes the figure of *bunjin* underwent between the 9th and 10th centuries reflect broader social changes, as indicated by Fujiwara and Borgen: for the *bunjin* «the possibility to take part in politics like the Chinese *hanlinxuexi*, was experienced to its limit through the glory and the debacle of Michizane» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 260), but «Michizane's downfall, however, was more than a personal disaster, for it also was one of the events that marked the end of an age in which the Japanese court habitually looked to Chinese examples for guidance in both government and culture» (Borgen 1994, p. 256).

The conclusions we can draw for the moment are as follows: 1) during Japan's 9th century it is possible define the *bunjin* as a subgroup of court society; 2) we can detect the fact that between the compilers and the poets of the *Kokinshū* – writing mainly in Japanese – and the *bunjin* of the previous generation, like Sugawara no Michizane or Ki no Haseo – writing mainly in Chinese – there is a strong and evident continuity; 3) this 'new' *bunjin* is the real protagonist for the recovery of the *waka* and the vernacular language successfully attempted by the *Kokinshū*.

The notary

In the centuries between the fall of the Western Roman Empire (480) and the 11th century, the only institution that succeeded in preserving culture and writings and fulfilled the role of educational center in Europe was the Church, especially through the activity of monasteries and cathedrals that maintained schools and libraries. The primary aim of these schools, or possibly the only

one, was to create new clerics and priests, so «we can say that in this period, the intellectual class almost coincided with the clergy» (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 12). The only exception to the equation 'intellectual'=cleric is represented by the jester, a 'wandering artist' that from the 12th century started composing poetic texts for public exhibition – both on the streets and at the feudal courts – gaining a growing cultural prestige. The language used by the jester, whose public were the illiterates, was not Latin but vernacular, the daily language of oral communication. In southern France it was the jester who was the main executor of the *troubadour* songs, and it is thanks to the jester that the troubadoric repertoire spread among European courts, becoming the basis for many other vernacular literatures.

The two figures of the *troubadour* (composer of songs) and the jester (executor of the *troubadour*'s song) are paradoxically embodied by one of the most powerful aristocrats of the period, William IX Duke of Aquitaine (1071-1126). Often called the 'first' *troubadour* – at least, the first we know of – William is usually considered the initiator of a new literary tradition openly opposed to the religious and clerical power represented by the literature in Latin. «The first poetic initiative in vernacular, the beginning of the Romance lyric tradition, and therefore of the modern one, was taking shape with a strict parallelism with an anti-Church attitude, sometimes indifferent, but often even hostile and competing with it» (Antonelli 1979, p. 20). William's poetic collection is the first one in vernacular in all of Europe, and represents the first solution proposed by the aristocratic class to the conflict between clerics and knights (Antonelli 1979, p. 22-23), respectively symbols of the religious culture of the Church and the secular culture of the court.

During the 12th century, especially at the regal court of Henry II Plantagenet (1133-1189) King of England, for the first time the secular scholar was offered an alternative to depending on the Church for his economic subsistence, and consequently a new independence. Scholars – who at that time were still equivalent to clerics – were in fact useful to regal power, not only to promote courtly ideals and to legitimate the King's power, but also as counselors (Antonelli 1979, p. 46), so they started being paid for their 'literary' services. The ideological problem in this period is that the court values and ideals – first of all the *amour courtoise*, that was by definition, a love outside marriage and therefore, adulterous – was often in conflict with the religious values of the Church and the ideal of chastity. It is thanks to the court that the vernacular *literatus* finally found new reasons for his existence, at the same level as the Latin literati: the self-awareness to 'serve' and to 'be useful' to a great project, personified by the king. Hence the need to let both the religious and the secular literatures coexist within the same court environment (Antonelli 1979, p. 54).

Henry II was a well-educated king, and after his marriage with Eleanor

of Aquitaine, his kingdom covered a wide territory including England and France. The side effect of his marriage to Eleanor, granddaughter of William IX, was the introduction of the *troubadour* tradition to English courts, that led to the composition of the most important works in vernacular of the period. Eleanor's direct influence on the development of vernacular literature is clear if we consider that the daughter she had with her first husband Luis VII of France, Marie of Champagne, had in her entourage intellectuals such as Andreas Cappellanus, author of the most influential manual of love in medieval literature, the *De amore*, and Chrétien de Troyes, the most important medieval poet before Dante.

Despite the rising prestige of the vernacular authors, in the great European courts vernacular and Latin continued to exist on completely separate dimensions. There are no Latin works dedicated to Eleanor, and Latin literati never wrote in vernacular. Henry and Eleanor's patronage of culture had the prestige to identify it with the Kingdom and the court, but it lacked a unitary perspective or aim. Moreover, unlike William IX, Henry was a patron and organizer of culture, but not a poet.

The first ruler that merged the figure of poet and organizer of culture is Frederick II of Hohenstaufen. In the evolution of the vernacular literature traced by Roberto Antonelli (Antonelli 1979), the blood ties between these three rulers appear to be no coincidence: Henry II's wife was Eleanor of Aquitaine, granddaughter of William IX, and one of Henry and Eleanor's daughters, Joan, married William II of Hauteville, King of Sicily from 1166 to his death in 1189. William II's aunt was Constance d'Hauteville, mother of Frederick II. Like her mother Eleanor, Joan's entourage too was composed of poets and courtiers that followed her from England to Sicily (Vàrvaro 1989, p. 84), and this can be seen as one of the routes through which the European vernacular culture influenced Frederick's Magna Curia.

Compared to Henry II's court, Frederick court was not just 'regal' (as court of the Kingdom of Sicily) but also 'imperial' (as the center of the Holy Roman Empire), so the importance given to secular scholars at the court was invested of a higher and more universal meaning. Moreover, in Frederick's court the contrast between the 'vernacular dimension' and the 'Latin dimension' that characterized William IX and Henry II's courts disappeared because both traditions were inherited by a new kind of intellectual, able to write both in Latin – for political issues and to compete with the Church's ideology – and in vernacular – inheriting the *troubadours*'s secular tradition. This intellectual is the notary of the imperial court.

The notary was different both from the cleric and the *troubadour,* first of all because of his educational background: he studied at universities, and not

in clerical or chivalric schools. At Henry II's court, the intellectual was often a cleric working as a state officer, while the Sicilian court notaries were laymen, holders of a secular culture derived from the universities, and not directly connected to the Church. The notaries' main duty was not to compose poetry, as with the professional *troubadours* or jesters, but bureaucracy. The notaries were a compact social class with a strong identity, so strong that Ernst Kantorowicz went so far as to identify them as a sort of chivalric brotherhood, the «first state corporation in the middle ages» (Kölzer 1994, p. 73). Their social function was totally tied to the State and the emperor, so we can say that «the hero of Frederick II's period […] is the jurist, the notary» (Antonelli 1979, p. 72).

Some of these notaries, like Peter de Vinea or Giacomo da Lentini, were also the most important poets in the so the called Sicilian School, which for many reasons can be considered a direct prosecution of the *troubadour* poetry. This bilingual and biliterate activity is the second feature of the notaries of the Magna Curia. At least ten of the 25 poets composing the original core of the Sicilian School were notaries and court officers, and «an important corollary tied to their profession is that they could read, and especially write, in Latin […] a double competence that we find more frequently in other court poets in Europe in the 12th and the first half of the 13th century» (Di Girolamo 2008, p. XL). The consequence of this double proficiency is the «coexistence in the same persons of literary production in Latin and vernacular, without those cases of competition between different specialists we notice in the Anglo-Norman court [Henry II's court]» (Antonelli 1979, p. 72).

The notary, a secular with a double competence in Latin and vernacular, and a great ability in rhetoric, can be so defined as the starter – or the main actor – of the Italian literary tradition. After the brief experience of Frederick's court poetry, the tradition of the Sicilian School would be inherited by the Tuscan notary-poets, like Bonagiunta Orbicciani, mediator between the Sicilian poetry and the next generation of poets like Guinizzelli or the young Dante.

So as regards the early Italian literature we can conclude that: 1) we may identify a subgroup of court society that is the notary (in a wider sense, including judges and court bureaucrats); 2) the notaries inherited and resolved the contradiction and duality between Latin and vernacular writings present in the European courts; 3) that the notaries, more than any other social class, was the protagonist of the linguistic renovation of Italian vernacular represented by the Sicilian School of poetry.

The others, aristocrats and non-literati

From the brief analysis conducted in this chapter, it is therefore undeniable that, behind the compilation and composition of the *Kokinshū* as a literary work, and behind the poems of the Sicilian School, intended as a unique and homogeneous *corpus* as it is recorded in manuscripts like the *Vaticano latino*, the presence and action of a relatively new class of intellectuals is fundamental, the *bunjin* and the notaries, at the same time authors of a great number of poems, and – as we will analyze in depth in the following chapters – main actors of the theorization and organization of this new poetic ideal and tradition. As I suggested before, identifying the social group of intellectuals (*bunjin* and notaries) means to identify at the same time the opposite group of non-intellectuals. *Bunjin* and notaries are undoubtedly the leading figures of this new literary activity, but they are not the only poets included in the poetic collection of the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School.

The first example of non-intellectuals taking part in the poetic activity are the rulers. Frederick II, his son Enzio and a not well identified Re Giovanni (King John, probably corresponding to John of Brienne, King of Jerusalem) left some poems in Sicilian later included in the *corpus*. In the *Kokinshū* we find *waka* by emperors Kōkō and Heizei, as well as poems by other members of the imperial family. Aside from the narrow group of emperor's relatives, previous studies demonstrated the existence, both in the Heian court and in Frederick's court, of a group of poets that can't be identified with the *bunjin*/notaries, first of all because of their educational background and linguistic ability. The definition of this group is not identical in Japan and Italy, but as regards the contraposition with the highly educated class of intellectuals (*bunjin* and notaries), I think we can outline some important similitudes and differences.

The most important difference rests in the educational background of the aristocratic class in Europe and Japan. In medieval Europe, the majority of the court members generally identified as 'aristocrats' – including members of royal families – did not receive an academic teaching in Latin, nor usually attended courses at universities. They were more likely to have received a 'chivalric education', derived in part from the religious education of clerics, and in part from the needs of a warrior-based feudal society. Basically, high nobles and landlords preferred to study military strategy and government skills, leaving the study of Latin and writing to their servants (Giunta 2002, p. 398). Claudio Giunta reports a very meaningful quote of Herbert Grundmann: «also in various list of chivalric virtues and quality compiled during the age of court, it is very rare to find an allusion to the necessity for a good knight to be able to read and write » (Grundmann 1936, pp. 143-144, quote

in Giunta 2002, p. 27) and underlines that, in feudal court aristocracy, little importance was given to theoretical and non-practical knowledge that didn't lead to concrete aims and results, as were instead hunting, war and governing. The clerical component of the traditional teaching program for the aristocrats included also musical education, as well as singing and playing exercises, because of its application during religious rites and ceremonies. This curriculum was the basis that allowed the *troubadours* to express their secular art, still strongly tied to the musical execution. The first *troubadour*, William IX, is the perfect example of this kind of poet, but we can suppose that also Frederick II, who «could write, sing, and compose music» (Salimbene de Adam), received this kind of education, especially during his youth spent at the German courts where the *minnesänger* lived (Dronke 1994, p. 59-60). Claudio Giunta goes as far as saying that, in general, the court society of medieval Europe was a «social elite» but not a «cultural elite» (Giunta 2002, pp. 26-28), being composed by nobles and a wealthy class that were basically illiterates, or in other terms, owners of a political and economic capital, but lacking any sort of cultural capital.

Although Giunta's simplification might seem a little too categorical, two different 'social' profiles of poets are recognizable also in the Sicilian court and within the Sicilian School: «the chivalric circle, composed by youths born in the Kingdom's aristocrat families, that seems to be tied to that courtly lyric tradition already flourished among Provence castles, and from there migrated into the feudal courts of northern Italy; and the circle of jurists, judges, notaries and officials of imperial chancellery, whose existence represented a remarkable feature of Frederick's court and in general, of the new literary life in Italy» (De Stefano 1938, cit. in Roncaglia 1978, p. 389).

As I anticipated before, in Japan it is hard to distinguish two distinct social groups like in Europe, firsty because a member of the court was, by definition, an aristocrat – even with a more or less variable difference of rank– and secondly, because the average level of literacy was generally higher than in medieval Europe, especially if we consider that, by rule, almost every member of the court the was somehow employed in court bureaucracy, and therefore, everybody was required a minimum skill in reading and writing. Even so, as we successfully described the *bunjin* as a subgroup of court society, it is also possible to identify the other group of 'non-*bunjin*' within the poets of the *Kokinshū*.

The easiest way to identify a *Kokinshū* poet as *bunjin* or non-*bunjin*, is to check their gender. As general rule, in the entire Heian period, Chinese education was almost exclusively reserved to male children, while the girls of the aristocratic families received a different kind of education, finalized to mar-

riage, that did not include the study of Chinese writings. The *bunjin* would be always and without exceptions – also long after the Heian period – a man. Of course, if we include Japanese writings, the discourse on 'literacy' will change drastically during the 10th century, with the consolidation of Japanese writings and of the phonetic alphabet *hiragana*, that allowed women the access to writings, and that would lead to the birth of the Heian period masterpieces such as *Genji monogatari*, *Makura no sōshi* or *Sarashina nikki*.

If the equation non-*bunjin*=woman can generally work, the discourse becomes more complex if we talk about the men. Takigawa Kōji's analysis of *kadan* (歌壇 poetic circle) in early Heian period, shows how Uda's *kadan* was composed not only by *bunjin*, as was the instance of the first half of the 9th century, but also by courtiers that, without a proved knowledge of Chinese, joined poetic banquets thanks to their direct and private relationship with Uda, for example his relatives and people working at his apartments (see Part I – The private relationship between ruler and officials, and the *shien*). The two figures could eventually overlap, for example in the instance of *kurōdo*, the chamberlains or personal secretaries of the emperor, which can be considered like a sort of emperor's 'private *bunjin*'. Takigawa notes how, in some private occasions and banquets organized by Uda, Sugawara no Michizane and his master and father-in-law Shimada no Tadaomi, were the only ones to be considered real *bunjin* (Takigawa 2004, pp. 237-238). An example of these 'occasions' could be the imperial trip to Miyataki (*Miyataki gokō* 宮滝御幸) organized by Uda for his private pleasure outside the 'official spaces' of the court. In this short trip Michizane seems to have been the only one able to compose *kanshi* in the group – since his friend Ki no Haseo was forced to go back home due to a horse-riding wound. When Sosei, a famous monk and *waka* poet that joined the trip for a while, asked where they would stop for the night, «Michizane responded with a couplet in Chinese:

> The road ahead is uncertain: where shall we spend the night?
> White clouds and crimson trees shall provide the traveler's lodging.

Although many of the men in the excursion were gifted *waka* poets, they were less skilled at *kanshi*. No one was able to cap Michizane's couplet and complete the quatrain. "If only Haseo were here!" Michizane cried out repeatedly, for his friend surely would have been able to finish the verse» (Borgen 1994, p. 266). Anyway, Michizane, who, as we said before, was able to compose *waka* too, had also a very close and 'private' relationship with Uda, having given his daughter as wife to Uda's son Tokiyo, so he is again the perfect example to represent the complexity of the relationship among court members, and the difficulty to give clear borders to a social group like the *bunjin*.

So, apart from the *bunjin*, who are the courtiers that used to write *waka*, representing the other half of the *Kokinshū* poets? An example is the already cited monk Sosei, famous for his *waka* skill but unable to respond to Michizane's Chinese verses. Sosei, son of abbot Henjō, one of the Rokkasen (the six genies of *waka*) analyzed in the prefaces to the *Kokinshū*, is the perfect representative of that category of poets that Takigawa called «poet by dynasty» or «poet by generation» (*jūdai no utayomi* 重代の歌よみ) (Takigawa 2004, p. 249) allowed to join Uda's private banquets where the composition of *waka* flourished. While at the official *shien* only the *bunjin* could compose the difficult form of *kanshi*, at Uda's *mitsuen* also other members of the court, with a particular relationship with him, were allowed to participate and possibly compose in the relatively easier native language of Japanese. Even if Ki no Tsurayuki stated that the *waka* before the *Kokinshū* was like an abandoned and buried piece of wood, it is quite evident that it must have been a lively part of courtiers and aristocrats' everyday life. The existence and importance of the so called Rokkasen during the second half of the 9th century, one of them being a woman – Ono no Komachi – is the proof that the *waka* was far from dead among court members, and that in contrast, a kind of hereditary talent on the knowledge of the waka can easily be identified, as indicated by Takigawa.

In conclusion, the novelty of Uda (Daigo) and Frederick's court poets compared to the previous periods, is the heterogeneous nature of their members, both in their social, but mainly educational background, distinguished by a different linguistic competence, and moreover, the resolution of that conflict – or at least contraposition – between vernacular culture/language/poetry and high culture/language/poetry pursued by *bunjin* and notaries.

In Europe, it is only with Frederick's Magna Curia that poetry in Latin and in vernacular, managed by a different profile of intellectuals in all of the other European courts, became the domain of the same person, namely the notary. While at Henry II's court there were poets that would write only in Latin and others that would write only in vernacular, at Fredrick's court we find Peter de Vinea and others managing both languages.

In Japan, it is only with Uda that the 'dark age of the national style' is finally resolved by bilingual poets and authors like Michizane or bilingual works like the *Shinsen Man'yōshū* or the *Chisatoshū*, committed not to *utayomi* like Sosei, but to *bunjin* like Michizane or Chisato. Even if Takigawa observes a decrease in the number of *mitsuen* at Daigo's time compared to Uda's reign (Takigawa 2004, p. 250), there are also many points of continuity between Uda and Daigo's poetic community, for example a similar familiar background between Tsurayuki and Michizane (Mezaki 1992), or the way the poets could

be summoned by the emperor to have them compose there and then a poem about a certain subject or natural event (Takigawa 2004, p. 252-3).

The *Kokinshū*, compiled by *bunjin* such as Tsurayuki, can be seen as the natural result of a literary evolution, and the very moment in which the *aporia* of the 'poet-uselessness theory' that Fujiwara Katsumi finds «internal to the very state of being of the poet» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 259), seems to be solved, surpassed, or, in other terms, to lose its importance.

Therefore, the composition of the poetic community may be the first element we could focus on in the direct comparison between the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū*, because it affected directly the new conception of poetry and the fixation of a new literary canon.

The birth of the vernacular canon

«Poetry is something born from the peculiar problematic held by the very people that gave birth to that poetics, facing the historical circumstances of that period» (Inomata 1987, p. 122). Inomata Kenji's statement is useful to focus correctly on the problem I want to analyze in this chapter about the process of consolidation of these two new traditions of vernacular poetry. This process is a task that has been performed by scholars/poet at Frederick and Daigo's court, and the historical circumstances of that period, that, as we saw in Part I and II of this book, show some peculiar similitudes, should be considered not as a mere coincidence, but as the fundament of the definition of these new poetics.

One of the first characteristics identifying the poetry of the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū*, is that both can be considered, with some caution, the earliest literary canon respectively of the Italian poetry and the Japanese *waka*, two poetic traditions that continued until modern times.

A first clarification is needed to distinguish the concept of 'canon' and the concept of 'earliest'. In the instance of the *Kokinshū*, we can't talk about the 'birth' of *waka*, nor about a 'maturity' of *waka*. The earliest exitent *waka* anthology, the *Man'yōshū* (second half of the 8th century), included some very elaborated and 'mature' poems – as considering *Manyōshū* poems as 'immature', 'simple', 'unsophisticated' is an outdated conception – where the poetic form of 31-syllable *tanka*, the most characteristic form of *waka* (Japanese poem), shows already a predominant position. But if we consider the importance of the *Man'yōshū* as a 'model' and 'canon' for the *waka*, we know that at least until the end of the Heian period this position was occupied by the *Kokinshū*, generally accepted as the first of the 21 anthologies of *waka* ordered by the emperor. The prestige of the *Kokinshū* among the Heian poets

is proved by custom as the *Kokin denju* (古今伝授 the secret transmission of the interpretation of the *Kokinshū* poems) or by the title of the eighth imperial *waka* collection, the *Shin-Kokinwakashū* (the *New-Kokinwakashū*, compiled in 1205, exactly 300 years after the *Kokinshū*). In other words, the *Kokinshū* can be surely considered as a 'canon' of *waka*, considering the term canon in its narrower sense: «the standard repertoire, the most highly prized or most frequently read or performed works within a particular genre or institution» (Shirane 2003, p. 22).

In Italy, the Sicilian School is usually considered the first example of the literature of art in Italian language, and the beginning of the Italian vernacular literature. Although its dimensions are limited to a few decades (before and after Frederick II's death in 1250) and a few hundreds of compositions, and its fame would be soon exceeded by the new canons represented by Dante and Petrarch, the title of starting point in the Italian literature attributed to the Sicilian School seems indisputable, non only for the process of canonization we will analyze in this chapter, but also for some concrete novelties introduced by Frederick II's court poets, first of all a formal elaboration that will influence and characterize great part of the following European poetry: the invention of the sonnet, usually credited to the Sicilian School 'master' Giacomo da Lentini, is the clearest example of this. Also in Sicily, as we said before, a 'prehistory of poetry' must have existed, but also because this previous poetry left no documental traces, we can consider the poets of the Sicilian School the unquestioned fathers of the Italian lyric poetry.

Another important premise we should make before we start our analysis is suggested by Masuda Shigeo on the social and political background of the collections, as we already discussed in Part II about the Latin and Chinese writings. Masuda states that the first collection by imperial order (*chokusen-shū*), the *Kokinshū*, was two-fold: a state work ordered by the *tennō*, and a selection of poems edited by the poet-compilers; the second aspect was, for Masuda, totally subordinated to the first (Masuda 1976, p. 31). The point in Masuda's analysis is that even if the compilers had their own value and tastes about the *waka* and literature in general, they lacked the political power needed to legitimate a new literary tradition, and so, without the 'imperial order', not only we would never have had an 'collection by imperial order', but also the process of elaboration of poetry (as the *shigaku* described by Inomata before) itself, that is in its process totally ascribable to the compilers, could never have had the motivation to start and evolve in a unitary way. «The theory that guided the process of the compilers's selection of the *Kokinshū* took a clear shape because of the reception itself of the imperial order, and in many ways became structuralized and systematized in a conscious way up to its details.

[…] The personal relationship with poetry in the compilers' private life, and the summa of their fragmentary thoughts about poetry, have been forced to take a uniform and theoretical point of view, becoming aware of its own orderliness, due to the external requisite of the "imperial selection"» (Masuda 1976, p. 31). Therefore, the legitimating task couldn't be accomplished without a strong and external impulse to social acceptance they found in the person of the emperor, and in the title of *chokusen*.

As we know, in the Italian case we don't have traces of anything similar to an 'imperial order' or Frederick's explicit request to compose poetry or poetic collections – because of the lack of any sort of documentation of this kind – but even so, the relationship between the poetic activity of the Sicilian School and the central power is stated by Antonelli in a way that resembles Masuda's statement: «the Sicilian School would never have existed [without Frederick II], because it would not have had the political and socio-cultural conditions for its existence» (Antonelli 1994, p. 313). So, both in Japan and in Italy, the birth of these 'new' poetic traditions is closely tied and dependent on imperial power.

On the other hand, the explanation for the rise of vernacular literature can't be totally ascribed to ruler's will or taste. Both for Frederick and Daigo – and Uda as well– their direct and strong concern about the rise of vernacular culture at a public and official level is not demonstrable (Takigawa 2004, p. 261; Di Girolamo 2008, pp. XXXVIII-XXXIX).

On the contrary, Takigawa outlines many evidences suggesting Daigo and the high aristocrats' poor interest showed toward the compilation of the *Kokinshū*; for example the lack of *waka* composed by *kugyō* (high bureaucrats) in the collection. Takigawa's interpretation is that if the *Kokinshū* was already considered a great work for the State and a symbol of political and social status – as was the instance of *kanshi*, from *Kaifūsō* onward – there should have be some sort of competition between the courtiers – especially the *kugyō* – to have their own *waka* included in it (Takigawa 2004, p. 261). The discourse is somehow recognizable also in Uda's court, where, even if the *waka* enjoyed a wider fruition and was esteemed by the emperor himself, it was always tied to the private dimension of *mitsuen* or semi-private environment of *utaawase*. Perhaps it is no coincidence that two of the most important events related to *waka* during Kanpyō era, the *Kanpyō ōntoki kisai no miya utaawase* and the *Koresada shinnō ke utaawase*, were held at the empress' palace or at prince Koresada's quarters, instead of being directly held by Uda at the *Shishinden*, the imperial palace chamber where official *shien* and poetic banquets took usually place.

Also in the instance of Frederick II, it is hard to state that he had a particular attention for poetry in Italian: more than poetry, his private interests

seem to have been in science and hunting with falcons. Moreover, the official language for state bureaucracy and imperial propaganda was undoubtedly Latin, not Italian. The loss of the original manuscripts of the poetry of the Sicilian School, that should have circulated in Sicily and in the cities visited by Frederick II's wandering court, is pinpointed as a proof of the relatively low importance accorded to vernacular poetry in the wider field of the Magna Curia's cultural world, especially if compared with the manuscripts of Frederick's greatest literary work, the *De arte venandi cum avibus*, copied and conserved by his son Manfred (Trombetti Budriesi 2005).

What I feel is more important to underline here is that, in the final analysis, the emperors' real interest in poetry didn't necessarily affect the level of 'officiality' of a certain poetry. As stated by Masuda, «even if the direct motivation [of the compilation of the *Kokinshū*] had been originated by the private taste of the emperor, it couldn't have avoided embedding, naturally, a political nature» (Masuda 1976, p. 33), and this because the official aura given by the 'imperial order' of the compilation (in the *Kokinshū* instance) or the participation of the emperor in the activity of the poetic community (in Frederick's instance). We can say that both the compilation of the *Kokinshū* and the constitution of the Sicilian School are the result of a particular historic moment, that in both countries featured similar elements: the consolidation of a new political order consequent to a renewal of court society, the balance between the action of a relatively new class of intellectuals and social legitimation accorded by the ruler, the affirmation of the vernacular as the language of culture and as catalyzer of the national identity 'against' a higher language and culture, namely Latin and Chinese.

Even if the political motive behind the constitution of the new literary canon is undeniable, at the same time I find it too simple to reduce the compilation of the *Kokinshū* and the production of the Sicilian School to a mere political operation. Even admitting that the *Kokinshū* is charged with the political value indicated by Masuda, as a job wanted and supported by part of the upper aristocracy – in particular Fujiwara no Tokihira – through the imperial legitimation of the *chokusenshū*, it is undeniable that the effort put by the compilers to establish this new canon, even if subordinate to their sense of duty as Confucian scholars, could have followed *also* some other rules and aims, that for the moment I will call 'artistic' or 'literary'. It is not plausible that all of the poems of the *Kokinshū* and its very compilation had the sole aim of creating an occasion for the Fujiwara women to get closer to the emperors, and eventually give birth to an imperial prince to reinforce Fujiwara's legacy. As Masuda pointed out in the passage I quoted at the beginning of this chapter, the *Kokinshū* had also the meaning of a 'literary work conducted by the compilers', and even if we agree with Antonelli that the Sicilian School (and

the *Kokinshū*) would never have existed without a solid respective political legitimation and motivation, the compilation of the *Kokinshū* itself and the production of the Sicilian poets represented a huge literary exertion aimed at elaborating a coherent and unitary literary theory, through the elevation of the vernacular to the status of high literature. Apart from any supposed results on the political side, the most remarkable thing is that both the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū* successfully accomplished that 'literary' task, with consequences that would influence the respective cultural traditions for many centuries.

A preliminary problem

The first point we need to clarify is how to compare a specific and well defined literary work, the *Kokinshū*, with a more variegated and not well fixed collection of lyrical texts that goes under the general name of the poems of the Sicilian School. As seen before (see Part III – The shaping of the Sicilian School), because of the lack of an original collection of Sicilian poets, or of a collection 'by imperial order' like the *Kokinshū*, it is still hard today to define whether or not a certain Italian poem of the 13th century can be labelled as Sicilian. The most important source in the poetry of the Sicilian School we have, the manuscript *Vaticano latino*, is a collection of about 1000 poems in Italian vernacular composed during the 13th century, roughly in chronological order. The collection opens with Giacomo da Lentini and other poets who, also because of their belonging to the Magna Curia's bureaucracy or aristocracy, may be surely defined as Sicilian poets, but after them the *Vaticano latino* continues with the so-called Sicilian-Tuscan poets, and Tuscan and Italian poets almost contemporary to Dante, as Guido Guinizzelli, father of the *Stilnovo* movement. It is at Dante's time (late 13th, early 14th century) that the *Vaticano latino*, and the two other main manuscripts of the early Italian poetry are edited by Tuscan anonymous copyists. The selection and layout performed by the compiler of the *Vaticano latino* is an important object of study to understand the process of canonization of the Sicilian School and the consolidation of the 'new wave' of the Tuscan poetry of the time, like the Stilnovo. The other great actor of the canonization of the Sicilian poets would be Dante himself, who with his Latin work *De Vulgari eloquentia* (about the vernacular language) would solder the experience of the early Sicilian poets with his own poetry.

The compilation work followed a precise logic that was reflected in its internal order and in the hierarchical organization of poems and poets – each book of *Vaticano Latino* opens with a 'great poet', followed by minor authors; the exclusion of determined genres and themes – like religion and politics – and the theorization accomplished by Dante with his *De Vulgari eloquentia,* are the two tracks that allow the comparison with the *Kokinshū*. In other words,

even if the Sicilian School poetry didn't leave an *official collection* like the *Kokinshū*, we still have a *corpus* of poems selected according to a precise taste and poetic ideal, and also a critical elaboration in prose about the importance of that *corpus*.

The relationship between the poems and the two prefaces of the *Kokinshū* is of course deeper and more structured than the relation between the poems of the Sicilian School contained in the three Tuscan manuscripts and in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, first of all because the compilers of the *Kokinshū* were at the same time the authors of the majority of the poems. In contrast, when Dante wrote the *De Vulgari eloquentia*, legitimating the Sicilian School as the origin of Italian literature, the School itself was already closed, and he had never been a member of the School, but rather a close continuator. Moreover, as pointed out by Masuda, even if the prefaces to the *Kokinshū* were written at the end of the selection process, the theory that they exposed must have been a precondition to the selection itself (Masuda 1976, p. 35).

From this point of view, a parallel between the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School would be arguable, but as I will try to demonstrate in this chapter, the continuity between the Sicilians and the Tuscans as tacitly suggested by the *Vaticano latino*, the criterion of selection and integration of the Sicilian poems into the Tuscan tradition, and the historical reconstruction of vernacular performed by Dante in the *De vulgari eloquentia* can be considered as fragmented stages of an unique process that, in its unity, can be compared to the *Kokinshū*. The *Kokinshū* collected and organized a number of poems written in the time span of about one century, following literary demands and tastes of the early 10th century people (the compilers), like the Tuscan copyists: the Sicilian poems from the first half of the 13th century onward were selected and organized according to the late 13th century Tuscan taste, that is also somehow close and coherent to Dante's ideals and point of view he expressed some year later in his *De vulgari eloquentia*. Moreover, as the two prefaces of the *Kokinshū* look back to the history of the *waka* from the *Man'yōshū* onward, so did Dante's *De Vulgari eloquentia,* from Frederick II's court up to his time.

De Vulgari eloquentia and the legitimation of the Italian vernacular

Dante Alighieri's *De Vulgari eloquentia* is an unfinished work written around the 1305, during the first period of Dante's exile from Florence (begun in 1302), his hometown that forced him to move to various cities and courts of central and northern Italy. It is an analysis about the various uses of the Italian vernacular, and perhaps it represent the most influent and earliest work trying to give prestige to Italian as a language suitable to high and refined literature.

Being unfinished, we don't know which title Dante had decided to give this work. The name *De Vulgari eloquentia* comes from a line found in another of Dante's work of the same period, the *Convivio*:

> *Di questo si parlerà altrove più compiutamente in uno libello ch'io intendo di fare, Dio concedente, di Volgare Eloquenza.*
> This will be more fully discussed elsewhere in a book I intend to write, God willing, on Eloquence in the Vernacular.
> (Convivio I-v, 10)

Because of the tie between the *De vulgari eloquentia* and the *Convivio*, I wish to spend some words about this second work written in Italian vernacular. Like the *De vulgari eloquentia,* the *Convivio* is an unfinished treatise in Italian whose aim was to present every aspect of the human knowledge, with a main focus on philosophy and morals: a philosophic-instructive encyclopedia. Also in the *Convivio* we find an expressed praise of the Italian vernacular as language suitable not only for poetry but also for poetic criticism. The choice of Italian for the *Convivio* is naturally determined by the audience Dante was addressing with this work, that was obviously the new middle class of the Italian *Comuni* (State-cities). This new audience was unable to understand and read Latin, but at the same time was motivated to expand its range of knowledge, not only on practical matters, but also on higher and more difficult questions, like philosophy and morals.

At first, Dante asserted the superiority of Latin as language of culture:

> *Dunque quello sermone è più bello, nello quale più debitamente si rispondono [li vocabuli; e più debitamente li vocabuli si rispondono] in latino che in volgare, però che lo volgare séguita uso, e lo latino arte. Onde concedesi esser più bello, più virtuoso e più nobile.*
> Therefore that language is the most beautiful in which the words correspond most properly; and they correspond more properly in Latin than in the vernacular, because the vernacular follows custom, while Latin follows art; consequently it is granted that Latin is the more beautiful, the more virtuous, and the more noble.
> (Convivio I-v, 14)

But, as I said before, the use of Latin would preclude an audience of unlearned, that were «far more numerous than the learned» from the reading.

> *E lo latino non l'averebbe esposte se non a' litterati, ché li altri non l'averebbero intese. Onde, con ciò sia cosa che molti più siano quelli che desiderano intendere quelle non litterati che litterati, séguitasi che non averebbe pieno lo suo comandamento*

come 'l volgare, [che] dalli litterati e non litterati è inteso.
Latin would not have explained them [the vernacular poems] except
to the learned, for no one else would have understood it. Therefore,
since among those who desire to understand them the unlearned
are far more numerous than the learned, it follows that Latin
would not have fulfilled their command as well as the vernacular,
which is understood by the learned and the unlearned alike.
(Convivio, I, vii, 12)

Therefore there is the need for Dante – and many other literati of his time –
to write this work in vernacular. Moreover, not only the vernacular was more
useful when the author wanted to talk to an audience that couldn't understand
Latin, but it was also more suitable when he needed to comment texts origi-
nally in vernacular, like the *canzoni* (poems, songs) Dante would collect and
comment in the *Convivio*. Translating a word into another language had the
unavoidable consequence of causing a loss of value.

> *E però sappia ciascuno che nulla cosa per legame musaico armonizzata*
> *si può della sua loquela in altra transmutare sanza rompere tutta sua*
> *dolcezza ed armonia.*
> Therefore everyone should know that nothing harmonized according to
> the rules of poetry can be translated from its native tongue into another
> without destroying all its sweetness and harmony.
> (Convivio I, vii, 14)

The praise of vernacular of this first book of the *Convivio* is taken up again
and examined more in depth in the *De Vulgari eloquentia* whose declared aim
was to analyze, in Latin, the value and the correct use of vernacular.

> *Et quia intentio nostra, ut polliciti sumus in principio huius operis, est*
> *doctrinam de vulgari eloquentia tradere, ab ipso tanquam ab excel-*
> *lentissimo incipientes, quos putamus ipso dignos uti, et propter quid, et*
> *quomodo, nee non ubi, et quando, et ad quos ipsum dirigendum sit, in*
> *in- mediatis libris tractabimus.*
> And since my intention, as I promised at the beginning of this work,
> is to teach a theory of the effective use of the vernacular, I have begun
> with this form of it, as being the most excellent; and I shall go on, in
> the following books, to discuss the following questions: whom I think
> worthy of using this language, for what purpose, in what manner, where,
> when, and what audience they should address.
> (DVE I-xix, 2)

The main difference between the *Convivio* and the *De Vulgari eloquentia*

is, as I said before, the different readers these works speak to, and consequently their aims. «The first [*Convivio*] must convince its own user (the commoners) of the potentiality of their own language [Italian vernacular][…]; the second [*De vulgari eloquentia*] must demonstrate to its readers (the specialists that understand Latin) the good reasons (philosophic and politic) and the right modes (rhetoric) that determined the recent literary popularity of vernacular (and therefore, of Dante himself), and that could lead the mother tongue to results not far from (and maybe superior to) the one achieved by Latin during the centuries» (Coletti 1991, p. XVII).

The analysis of the Italian vernacular dialects conduced by Dante followed a precise method:

> *Quibus illuminatis, inferiora vulgaria illuminare curabimus, gradatim descendentes ad illud, quod unius solius familie proprium est.*
> Having clarified all this, I shall attempt to throw some light on the question of the less important vernaculars, descending step by step until I reach the language that belongs to a single family.
> (DVE I-xix, 3)

Dante identified fourteen Italian dialects, criticizing all of them because of their gross nature especially as regards the phonetic and the lexicon. The only exception was the appreciation accorded to the Sicilian language, unquestionably recognized as an example for every Italian poet, and as «the one that enjoys and confers the greatest honor»:

> *Et primo de siciliano examinemus ingenium, nam videtur sicilianum vulgare sibi famam pre aliis asciscere, eo quod quicquid poetantur Ytali sicilianum vocatur, et eo quod perplures doctores indigenas invenimus graviter cecinisse: puta in cantionibus illis, Anchor che l'aigua per lo focho lassi*, et *Amor, che lungiamente m'ài menato.*
> First let us turn our attention to the language of Sicily, since the Sicilian vernacular seems to hold itself in higher regard than any other, first because all poetry written by Italians is called 'Sicilian', and then because we do find that many learned natives of that island have written serious poetry, as, for example, in the *canzoni* "*Ancor che l'aigua per lo focho lassi*" [Although water flees from fire] and *Amor, che lungiamente m'ài menato.* [Love, who long have led me]
> (DVE I-xii, 2)

The next passage suddenly shifts the focus on the environment this vernacular was created in, that is Frederick II's Magna Curia, and the relationship between the ruler's virtue and greatness of literature, as we already

discussed in part II of this book. Because of its importance for our discourse, I will quote the entire text.

Sed hec fama trinacrie terre, si recte signum ad quod tendit inspiciamus, videtur tantum in obprobrium ytalorum principum remansisse, qui, non heroico more, sed plebeo secuntur superbiam.

But this fame enjoyed by the Trinacrian isle [Sicily], if we carefully consider the end to which it leads, seems rather to survive only as a reproof to the princes of Italy, who are so puffed up with pride that they live in a plebeian, not a heroic, fashion.

(DVE I-xii, 3)

Siquidem illustres heroes Federicus Cesar et benegenitus eius Manfredus, nobilitatem ac rectitudinem sue forme pandentes, donec fortuna permansit, humana secuti sunt, brutalia dedignantes; propter quod corde nobiles atque gratiarum dotati inherere tantorum principum maiestati conati sunt; ita quod eorum tempore quicquid excellentes Latinorum enitebantur, primitus in tantorum coronatorum aula prodibat; et quia regale solium erat Sicilia, factum est ut quicquid nostri predecessores vulgariter protulerunt, sicilianum vocaretur: quod quidem retinemus et nos, nec posteri nostri permutare valebunt.

Indeed, those illustrious heroes, the Emperor Frederick and his worthy son Manfred, knew how to reveal the nobility and integrity that were in their hearts; and, as long as fortune allowed, they lived in a manner befitting men, despising the bestial life. On this account, all who were noble of heart and rich in graces strove to attach themselves to the majesty of such worthy princes, so that, in their day, all that the most gifted individuals in Italy brought forth first came to light in the court of these two great monarchs. And since Sicily was the seat of the imperial throne, it came about that whatever our pre- decessors wrote in the vernacular was called 'Sicilian'. This term is still in use today, and posterity will be able to do nothing to change it.

(DVE I-xii, 4)

Dante was the first to state without doubt that the earliest and most illustrious Italian vernacular was the one used by some of the Sicilian poets at Frederick and Manfred's court. But here Dante marked also an important distinction between 'common Sicilian' and 'noble Sicilian'.

Et dicimus quod si vulgare sicilianum accipere volumus secundum quod prodit a terrigenis mediocribus, ex ore quorum iudicium eliciendum videtur, prelationis honore minime dignum est, quia non sine quodam tempore profertur; ut puta ibi: Tragemi d'este focora, se t'este a

boluntate. Si autem ipsum accipere volumus secundum quod ab ore primorum Siculorum emanat, ut in preallegatis cantionibus perpendi potest, nichil differt ab illo quod laudabilissimum est, sicut inferius ostendemus.

So I say that, if by Sicilian vernacular we mean what is spoken by the average inhabitants of the island - and they should clearly be our standard of comparison - then this is far from worthy of the honor of heading the list, because it cannot be pronounced without a certain drawl, as in this case:

"Tragemi d'este focora se t'este a bolontate [Get me out of this fire, if you would be so kind]".

If, however, we mean what emerges from the mouths of the leading citizens of Sicily - examples of which may be found in the canzoni quoted above - then it is in no way distinguishable from the most praiseworthy variety of the vernacular, as I shall show below.

(DVE I-xii, 6)

What is important to underline in this passage of the *De Vulgari eloquentia*, apart from the dependence of high language and poetry upon the virtue of the ruler, is the ascertainment that only the illustrious Sicilian, used by the *doctores illustri* (illustrious scholars) of the imperial court, reached the status of high language, while the Sicilian as everyday language didn't pass Dante's test. Dante reserved an even more inflexible criticism for the Tuscan poets, that *in suo turpiloquio sint obtusi* (are steeped in their own foul jargon)*,* and *in hac ebrietate baccantur* (rave in this drunkenness) (DVE I-xiii), but after this statements he also acknowledged to other Tuscan poets such as Guido Cavalcanti and Lapo Gianni – his friends and comrades in that poetic current later known as *Stilnovo* – an undisputed ability to put in poetry a *vulgaris excellentiam* (excellence of vernacular), placing them on the same level as the Sicilian poets, with an implicit genealogy recognizing in Dante's style of poetry the direct heir of the Sicilian School experience.

So, at the beginning of the 14th century, around the very same years and cities where the most important manuscripts of early Italian poetry, the *Vaticano latino*, the *Laurenziano* and the *Palatino*, were edited and copied by anonymous Tuscan copyists, Dante formulated his theory of vernacular language and poetry, addressing this discourse first of all to the literati, with his *De Vulgari eloquentia*, in Latin, but also to the non-literati, through his work in vernacular, *Convivio*.

The focal point of Dante's discourse is the indication of the highest example of Italian in the verses of the most skilled Sicilian poets, underling the relationship between the court of noble rulers and refined poetry. From this process of 'canonization' many poets – especially among the Tuscans, like Guittone

d'Arezzo – were excluded because of their language considered 'too common'; at the same time Dante elevated his friends (and himself) as righteous prosecutors of the Sicilian illustrious vernacular tradition. It is in particular in this passage that the refined work of canonization of Italian vernacular pursued (also) by Dante becomes clear. It may be no coincidence that the manuscript more than others presenting the clearest and best organized will to connect the Sicilian tradition starting with Giacomo da Lentini, to what at the time was the most recent Tuscan poetic experience represented by the pre-*Stilnovo* poets, the *Vaticano latino*, had been written precisely in Florence. As perfectly summarized by Romano Luperini, the Tuscan manuscripts cooperate to initiate «a predominant poetic tradition that rejected, for example, religious poetry (totally absent in these three collections), ranking lyric poetry first, thus favoring the *canzone*; on the other hand the Tuscan model came to establish its goal and future cornerstone. Therefore, just at the beginning of the history of Italian Literature we assist to the establishment of a canon […]. For the first time in Italy, a cultural hegemony was evidently able to re-elaborate past traditions, take possession of it and reshape it, and at the same time through that very annexation, acquire an authority destined to influence the future. […] On the ground of such a great cultural operation […] there is Dante's prestige […] that, in the *De Vulgari eloquentia* […] placed himself and the *Stilnovo* poets as the unique legitimated heirs of that experience» (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 128).

The Manajo and the Japanese poetry

It's surprising how many of the problems raised explicitly and implicitly by Dante's works, as well as the role the *De vulgari eloquentia* (and to a lesser extent, the *Convivio*) fulfilled in the history of the early Italian Literature, can match some of the issues touched by the two prefaces to the *Kokinshū*, the *Kanajo* (Japanese preface) by Ki no Tsurayuki and the *Manajo* (Chinese preface) by Ki no Yoshimochi, that are also probably the earliest works of poetic criticism attempting a reconstruction of the history of Japanese poetry. Our basic knowledge of the 9th century *waka* is directly influenced by the prefaces to the *Kokinshū*, the main source of information on *waka* of this period (Suzuki 2012, pp. 9-10). Even if *Manajo* and *Kanajo* are not valid historical documents, reporting erroneous and approximate data – such as the order of the compilation of the *Man'yōshū* wrongly attributed to emperor Heizei (774-824), eldest son of Kanmu, and Saga's brother – they are a very important document for the study of the early *waka* criticism.

The first important aspect is the existence of not just one, but two prefaces, one in Chinese and one in Japanese. The problem about which one should

be considered the official or original one, and which the consequent transla-
tion, is long standing (Craig McCullough 1985, pp. 299-300). A recent article
by Kudō Shigenori pinpoints the Chinese preface *Manajo* as the official one
(Kudō 2004), but in any case, the presence of a Japanese text like the *Kanajo*
represents an important novelty in the history of written. At the same time,
the presence of a preface in Chinese is realistic, both because of the continu-
ity with the previous imperial collection of the Kōnin and Tenchō eras, and
also because of the content managed by the prefaces: a theorization of poet-
ry largely based and lent by Chinese models, first of all the Great Preface to
the *Shijing*. Quoting a Chinese text in a *kanbun* text was naturally easier and
more immediate than translating it into a language, like Japanese, that had
never been used to manage theoretical matters of this kind.

As regards the *Manajo*, apart from the well known process of adaptation
and transformation of Chinese theories to fit paradigms of Japanese poetry, I
find it remarkable that the choice of 'high language' (Chinese) to discuss the
prestige of the Japanese vernacular poetry, could match the choice performed
by Dante with the *De vulgari eloquentia*'s Latin. Both Dante and Yoshimochi
felt the need to write in the *official* language of culture to analyze and legiti-
mate the dignity of vernacular and poetry. This fact is by itself a proof of what
the goals and readers these works aimed at: rising the vernacular culture to
the same level as Chinese/Latin, legitimating it as a tool for high culture, was
a task that only *bunjin*/literati could manage, or maybe, from another point of
view, that only scholars were really concerned about.

In the instance of Japan, the use of *kanbun*, as well as the many quotes
from the *Shijing*, represented not only, as suggested by Takigawa, the compil-
ers' attempt to gain attention from high bureaucrats, because of the prestige
Shijing had as a Confucian classic, (Takigawa 2004, p. 263), but it was prob-
ably the only way the compilers had to perform such a theoretical discourse.
«Should we think of poetry in general, or try to find a meaning for a re-elab-
oration of the concept of poetry, for the people of that time there was no other
theory available as support than the vision of literature under a political log-
ic, developed within the Confucian China of the time» (Masuda 1976, p. 33).

Also in *Manajo* the question of the utility of literature and poetry and their
political function is evident, and the rhetoric used to demonstrate its impor-
tance is almost the same as the *Bunkashūreishū* and the *Keikokushū*: to prove
that the compilers were living in a golden age thanks to the emperor's (Dai-
go) virtue. The *Manajo* opens with a definition of Japanese poetry, and of its
supernatural powers:

動天地、感鬼神、化人倫、和夫婦、莫宜於和哥。
Nothing surpasses Japanese poetry as a means of moving heaven

and earth, stirring the spirits and gods, inculcating upright
conduct, and bringing harmony between husband and wife.
(KKS *Manajo*)

Some expressions as «heaven and earth» or «harmonize» clearly remind
us of the previous prefaces to the imperial collection, and the theory of Heav-
en-man mutuality. The same can be said about how *Manajo* managed the prob-
lem of usefulness of poetry during ancient times:

古天子。每良辰美景。詔侍臣。預宴筵者献和歌。君臣之情。由
斯可見。賢愚之性。於是相分。所以随民之欲、択士之才也。
Whenever there were good seasons or beautiful scenes, the former
Emperors commanded their banquet guests to compose Japanese poems.
The sentiments of rulers and subjects were revealed, and degrees of
sagacity also became apparent, so that poetry enabled the sovereigns
both to satisfy their people's aspirations and to select able men.
(KKS *Manajo*)

After narrating the history of the *waka* from the golden age of the
Man'yōshū's poets Kakinomoto no Hitomaro and Yamabe no Akahito, and
the decline of *waka* consequent to the introduction of Chinese poetry in Ja-
pan – the well known 'dark age of national style' – Yoshimochi reached his
current time, praising Daigo's reign as follows.

仁流秋津洲之外、恵茂筑波山之陰。淵変為瀬之声、寂々閑口、
砂長為巌之頌、洋々満耳。思継既絶之風、欲興久廃之道。
His benevolence extends beyond the outermost reaches of the Dragonfly
Isles; his concern for his people is deeper than the shade on Mount
Tsukuba. The voices that once lamented the transformation of pools
into shallows are stilled, and our ears overflow with celebratory odes
speaking of pebbles enduring to become mighty rocks. Desirous of
restoring a discontinued practice and reviving a long-extinct art.
(KKS *Manajo*)

Exactly as in Saga and Junna's collection, the benevolence (*jin, itsukushimi*
仁) and the grace or concern (*kei, megumi* 恵) of the emperor, after having
successfully tamed the country, give birth to refined poetry.

The epilogue of *Manajo* perfectly closes the timeline of the history of
waka with the work of the compilers; after a ritual expression of self humility
for the poorness of their abilities, it states:

適遇倭哥之中興、以楽吾道之再昌。嗟乎、人丸既没、和歌不在斯哉。
By fortunate chance, we live in a time when Japanese poetry is

taking on new life, and we rejoice that our art is flourishing again. Although Hitomaro is dead, does not Japanese poetry live? (KKS *Manajo*)

A few lines before, Yoshimochi noted that the original name of the *Kokinshū* should have been *Shoku-Man'yōshū* (続万葉集, Sequel of *Manyōshū*) and was supposed to become an anthology of private collections of new and old poems collected by the compilers (Takada 2009, p. 531). Not only the prefaces to the *Kokinshū* indicate *Man'yōshū* as an imperial anthology, legitimating and accepting it as the starter of the *waka* tradition (Ibid., p. 533), but through the mention of Hitomaro in the last passage I quoted, the compilers placed themselves as the final result of the history and evolution of *waka*, declaring the renewed glory of the *waka*, despite Hitomaro's death.

I believe it is quite evident that the compilers (including also Yoshimochi, who was not actually credited as compiler) aimed at establishing a new canon on the basis of an ancient tradition, both declared – the *Man'yōshū* – and undeclared – the *kanshi* collection of the Kōnin and Tenchō eras.

The struggle for legitimation

Even recognizing all the differences between the Italian and the Japanese cases I listed in the first part of this chapter, and keeping in mind the risks of a direct comparison between such different contexts, I find Luperini's resumé of the Sicilian canonization by Tuscan poets like Dante I quoted before could almost perfectly fit also the *Kokinshū*. I could even re-write Luperini's passage changing (in *italic*) some keywords to adapt it to Heian Japan: «*At the beginning of 10th century* we therefore assist to the establishment of a canon [...]. For the first time in *Japan*, a cultural hegemony able to re-elaborate past tradition became manifest, re-shaping and taking possession of it, and at the same time acquiring, through that very annexation, an authority destined to influence the future. [...] On the grounds of such a great cultural operation [...] there is the prestige of the *compilers* [...] that, in *Manajo and Kanajo* [...] placed the*mselves* and the *waka of* the*ir age* as the unique legitimate heirs of that experience».

A possible objection to this formulation could be that such an operation, stealing a precedent literary tradition to gain legitimacy and prestige in a new cultural environment, is something we can find also in other countries and periods. For example, Inomata Kenji tried an interesting comparison between the poets of the *Kokinshū*, like Tsurayuki, and the 16th century French poets of the so called La Pléiade circle, like Joachim du Bellay (1522-1560). Inomata outlines how, similarly to prefaces to the *Kokinshū*, also Bellay's man-

ifesto, *Défense et illustration de la langue française*, proposes a renaissance of the language and poetry in vernacular French *against* the hegemony of the central culture, first of all Latin, encouraging the imitation of the highest examples of Latin writings, and of newer but already legitimated traditions like Petrarch's Italian poetry (Inomata 1988, pp. 10-11). Actually, also Inomata analyzed Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*, stating that the need to imitate the best examples of earlier poetry to elevate modern vernacular is common in Dante and in Du Bellay (Inomata 1988, p. 13), but I find that the instance of the 13th century Italian vernacular matches even more perfectly the discourse on the *Kokinshū* than Du Bellay's, first of all for their position – and relative importance – in the respective histories of Literature. Moreover, in Inomata's reconstruction, Du Bellay doesn't sound interested in taking advantage of the real origins of French literature, the poetry of the 12th century *troubadours* and *trouvères*, despite the fact that they were actually the starting point of vernacular literature of all of Europe, and exerted great influence also on the vernacular literature of the northern Italian courts and on the Sicilian poetry itself. Unlike Du Bellay, both Dante and Yoshimochi started their discourses from elevating to literary canon the earliest roots of their own vernacular, namely the Sicilian School and the *Man'yōshū*. That's why, Luperini's (modified) quote «For the first time in Italy [*Japan*], a cultural hegemony able to re-elaborate past tradition become manifest » can work for the *Kokinshū* (and of course for Dante) but not as much, in my opinion, for Du Bellay, who after all lived in a social environment that was no longer Dante's medieval Europe when all of the European literatures were created.

On the other hand, it is also true that, in Japan, the attempt to inherit the prestige of past traditions had been accomplished before the *Kokinshū* exactly by the anthologies of Kōnin/Tenchō, whose prefaces and poets, by imitating Chinese theories and poetry, disclosed a yearning for identity and official legitimation that at that time took the shape of a manneristic imitation of the Chinese models. With the *Kokinshū* we have, *for the first time*, a similar attempt towards the native poetry of Japan, that is the tradition of the *Man'yōshū*. In the *Man'yōshū* itself, due to the lack of a preface and of a theorization similar to the *Manajo*, we can't find this kind of attempt, despite the fact that it would be *later* elevated to the rank of imperial collection by the *Manajo*. Maybe, at the time of the *Man'yōshū*, both poets and compilers didn't feel the need to declare the supremacy of the *waka* over the Chinese language and culture, as the compilers of the *Kokinshū* seemed to do.

To be more precise, even if the *Man'yōshū* has no preface, an attempt to analyze the poetry of the *Man'yōshū* from a theoretical point of view could be represented by the *Kakyōhyōshiki* 歌経標式, a treatise about *waka* poetic theories and composition methods that, according to Hirasawa Ryūsuke Fu-

jiwara no Hamanari must have written and offered to emperor Kōnin (709-781) in 772 (Hirasawa 2009, p. 279). If this theory is confirmed, it means that this peculiar piece of criticism was written more than one century before the *Kokinshū* and about half a century before the *Chokusen sanshū* were compiled, making it the earliest work of this kind in Japan, a forerunner of the *Manajo* and the *Kanajo*. Even accepting Hirasawa's thesis indicating the *Kakyōhyōshiki* as the earliest attempt to explain and organize the *waka* poetics through the absorption of Chinese theories, it is Hirasawa himself who recognizes that «in the poetic theory of the Nara period represented by *Man'yōshū* and *Kakyōhyōshiki* […]the acquisition of a general and universal criticism toward the real essence of the *waka* is lacking », and that «to gain a general criterion to criticize the *waka*, an even higher level of critic consciousness was required» (*ibid.* p. 287), a level reached only with the *Kokinshū*, that, even with some doubts about the real application of the Chinese theories like the '*sama*' to the Japanese *waka*, «can be said the first example in Japan of standard criticism of the *waka* considered in its real essence» (*ibid.* p. 289).

Moreover, as I said before, even if *Manajo* celebrates the *Man'yōshū* as the first of imperial *waka* collections, the major debt of the theoretical organization of the *Kokinshū* to the Kōnin/Tenchō eras' *Chokusen sanshū* is undeniable. The influence of the *Keikokushū* on the *Kokinshū* is evident for example in the internal organization of the thematic chapters, as well as in the number of *maki* (books, sections), that is 20 in both collections, and also in the progressive order of the seasonal poems (Masuda 1976, p. 32). Many comparative works of the last 20 years have unquestionably demonstrated the importance of considering the evolution of the *waka* as directly connected to the Chinese and Sino-Japanese literature of the same and previous periods: Miki Masahiro considers the relationship between Sino-Japanese and Japanese poetry as a concatenation of vectors, influencing each other, and being contemporarily influenced by original Chinese poems like the Bai Juyi (Miki 1999); some years before him, Watanabe Hideo clearly demonstrated the tie between poems in Chinese by Chinese poets, poems in Chinese by Japanese poets, and poems in Japanese, affirming that the so called dark age of the Japanese style, and the imitation of the Chinese models, resulted in a great endorsement for the evolution of the *wabun* (Japanese writings) to meet the new needs of a new society (Watanabe H. 1991); finally, in more recent years Nakano Masako conducted a deep analysis of poetic expressions imported from the *kanbun* into the *Kokinshū* (Nakano 2005).

From this point of view, many are the elements attaching meaning to a comparison between the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū* as typical cases for the study of the consolidation of vernacular traditions, from the perspective of World Literature. The similarity in the way a group of poets, characterized

by a new educational profile (*bunjin*/notary), attempted to take possession of a previous tradition for their personal legitimation (*Man'yōshū*/The Sicilian School), are common to other countries and cultures. This discourse raises also other complex questions: who was the real committee behind the compilation of the *Kokinshū* and the foundation of the Sicilian School? Was there actually some kind of conflict between the Japanese/Italian and the Chinese/Latin languages and cultures? What were the strategies adopted to demonstrate the superiority of vernacular, and again, what were the consequences of all this on a textual level?

The problem about the relationship/contrast between a previous, legitimated literary tradition and the new vernacular culture is very complex, and deeply connected with the social and political background of that period. First of all we should verify if the hypothetical conflictuality between the two traditions – high language and vernacular – did actually exist at the time of the *Manajo* and of the *De vulgari eloquentia*. As we said before, the very existence of these two works is already a self-evident proof of the lower status and prestige accorded to vernacular compared to the higher language of culture: to demonstrate the nobility of vernacular and poetry, Dante and Yoshimochi needed to write in Latin and Chinese.

The prefaces to the Kokinshū and the complex of dependence upon Chinese poetry

Many scholars of Japanese Literature have stressed the attempt the compilers of the *Kokinshū* made to legitimate the *waka*. Nihei Michiaki states that « [in *Kanajo* and *Manajo*] there is a clear will to give value [to the *waka*] as 'art of the public scene', *shi* and *kanbun* were acknowledged in public on the same level. We would be led to think that there was a clear sense of resistance against the *shi*» (Nihei 2008, p. 384). Ōoka Makoto is even more explicit, talking about an «inferiority complex» of the compilers toward the *kanshi* (Ōoka 1989, p. 197).

As we saw in the chapter The path to the *Kokinshū*, in Japan, during the second half of the 9th century and in particular during Uda's Kanpyō era (889-898) we are given account of many episodes of private or semi-public composition of *waka*. Even agreeing with the opinion that all these events testify a growing interest for *waka* among the court, and the great expectation for the compilation of the *Kokinshū* (Takada 2009, p. 530), many clues suggest that the *waka* was still seen as nothing more than a refined divertissement, if compared to the *kanshi*. The analysis of historical recordings of the composition of the *waka* seems to suggest that, since Kanmu's reign, and until Daigo's, the *waka* continued to be performed only at private events, even under

the will of upper class aristocrats, as the Fujiwara's regents, or of some emperors such as Kōkō or, in particular, Uda. As already noted, two of the most important *utaawase* in Kanpyō's era have been held not directly at Uda's palace, but at the private quarters of Uda's empress and brother. Many scholars (Kudō, Masuda, Takigawa, cfr. Suzuki 2012, p. 20) seem to agree on the fact that, even if the compilation of the *Kokinshū* can be read as part of a wider political strategy (see next chapter), its compilation didn't receive much attention from the members of the upper aristocracy or by Daigo himself, despite the fact that it was him who ordered the compilation (Takigawa 2004, p. 261). We have mentioned before that the high aristocrats and bureaucrats' lack of interest in the *waka* can be proved by the few *waka* they left in this collection, but this data is more remarkable if compared with the second collection of *waka*, the *Gosenshū*, ordered by emperor Murakami (926-967, reigning 946-967) in 951. Not only does the *Gosenshū* host considerably more poems written by high aristocrats, but its compilation was held inside a new office established for the occasion, the *Senwakadokoro* 撰和歌所 (*waka* selection office), located inside the imperial palace. Takigawa's conclusion well summarizes the change in social status the *waka* underwent in the years between the *Kokinshū* and the *Gosenshū*: «the *Kokinwakashū* was compiled not because the *waka* achieved public acknowledgment, but it is on the contrary because the *Kokinwakashū* was compiled that the *waka* obtained its public acknowledgment» (Takigawa 2004, p. 263).

Even without Takigawa's conclusion, based on the observation of the later history of the *waka*, I think we can learn about the low prestige the *waka* held at the beginning of the 10th century directly from the compilers' words. I think that, from a careful analysis of the *Manajo* and the *Kanajo* we may detect a sort of spirit of competition, a kind of challenging attitude of the compilers to demonstrate that the *waka*, and Japanese, were superior to the still predominant tradition of *kanbun* and *kanshi*. Of course, this kind of competition didn't take too severe a tone, first of all because the compilers themselves were *bunjin* with a Confucian background and a *kanbun* ability, as the basic theories behind the *Kanajo* and the *Manajo* – imitations of Chinese theories – demonstrates. Moreover, the rise of the *waka* during the Kanpyō era coexisted and was mixed with a general renovation that invested first of all the Heian court's *kanbun* and *kanshi*, thanks to the poets of the «literary area of Bai Juyi» (Kojima 1976, p. 175) like Sugawara no Michizane. The many point of contact between the late 9th century *kanshi* and the *Kokinshū waka* outlined by previous studies in the so called *wakan hikaku* field are the proof of this controversial relationship between Chinese and Japanese literature.

Anyway, the regret for the decadence of the *waka* during the first half of the 9th century is stressed out in the prefaces to the *Kokinshū*, and even though

there is no explicit charge against the *kanshi* tradition, it is still possible, from my point of view, to detect a veiled and indirect critique to the Chinese imitation and the *kanbun* tradition. In *Manajo* we find:

> 昔、平城天子、詔侍臣。令撰万葉集。自爾以来。
> 時歴十代。数過百年。其後、和哥弃不被採。
> A sovereign of the past, Emperor Heizei, commanded some of his attendants to compile *Man'yōshū* [Collection for a Myriad Generations]. Ten sovereigns have occupied the throne since then, and more than 100 years have elapsed. After Emperor Heizei's time, Japanese poetry was cast aside and ignored.
> (KKS *Manajo*)

Apart from the fact that Heizei (774-824), Kanmu's son and Saga's brother, had no proved relations with the compilation of the *Man'yōshū*, his political opposition to Saga during the Incident of Kusuko (810) and his retirement into the old capital Nara, symbol of the *Man'yōshū* period, may be seen as an idealization of the opposition between the Chinese culture, symbolized by Saga (never cited in the *Manajo* and *Kanajo* texts) and the Japanese culture symbolized by Heizei himself. In other words, the *kanshi* is 'fought' with a strategy of dimming and exclusion, not only from the reconstruction of the history of the *waka* displayed in the *Kanajo/Manajo*, but even from the textual level of the prefaces. Not only the imperial collections of *kanshi* of Kōnin and Tenchō eras had been 'forgotten', but also the unbalance between *waka* and *kanshi* poets seemed distorted. The following passage is, in my opinion, particularly meaningful:

> 雖風流如野宰相。雅情如在納言。而皆以他才聞。不以斯道顕。
> There were masters of the elegant style, like the Ono Consultant [Takamura], and of the refined style, like the Ariwara Counselor [Yukihira], but all were known for their proficiency in Chinese poetry; it was not our art that brought them to prominence.
> (KKS *Manajo*)

The difference between «skill» (*sai* 才, translated by Helen Craig McCullough as «proficiency») and «art» (*dō, michi* 道) is that the first indicates the *kanbun* skill, and the second the art of *waka*. Takamura and Yukihira, even if used to composing also *waka*, were introduced by Yoshimochi merely as experts in the Chinese studies, and the closing sentence seems to hide a kind of disappointment.

Takamura, Consultant at the Council of State, was the son of Ono no Minemori, one of the loyal poet-bureaucrat of emperor Saga's entourage, so

his *kanbun* knowledge does not come as a surprise. What is more important is that, as noticed by Takada Hirohiko, Takamura and Yukihira were both members of a generation of poets who, despite leaving also some *waka*, were basically poets of *kanshi*, therefore substantially different from the next generation of *kajin* (poets of *waka*) represented by the *Rokkasen* of the second half of the 9th century (Takada 2009, p. 529).

The elusion of direct references to the *kanbun* culture in the *Manajo* and the *Kanajo* becomes more evident if we analyze the basic theory supporting their conjectural structure. I have already pointed out how, also in the *Manajo* we can detect the theory of a relationship between the emperor's virtue and refined writing, but even if the model of the prefaces to the *Kokinshū* is undoubtedly the Chinese poetic theory, from *Shijing* to *Wenxuan* or *Shiping* (詩品) the whole text didn't have a single reference to China, or to the Chinese courts. The most ambiguous passage of the *Manajo* is perhaps the following:

> 和歌有六義。一曰風、二曰賦、三曰比、四曰興、五曰雅、六曰頌。
> There are six Japanese poetic styles. The first is called the *fū*, the second the *fu*, the third the *hi*, the fourth the *kyō*, the fifth the *ga* and the sixth the *shō*.
> (KKS *Manajo*)

These are exactly the six principles (*liu yi*) defined by the Great Preface to the *Shijing*, but nothing clarifies the origin of these definitions. Nor is there a reference to the *Chokusen sanshū* that, as we said before, greatly influenced the structure and shape of the *Kokinshū*.

The 'absence' of *kanshi* from the reconstruction of the history of the *waka* presented by the *Kokinshū* becomes even clearer with the *Kanajo*, the preface in Japanese vernacular written by Tsurayuki, leading figure of the team of compilers and first poet of the collection for number of poems. The *Kanajo*, probably written after the *Manajo*, translates and expands the *Manajo*'s contents, possibly showing a sort of conceit toward Chinese poetry. Quoting and translating the passage in the *Manajo* on the 'six styles' of poetry, from the preface to the *Shijing*, Tsurayuki adds:

> そもそも、歌のさま、六つなり。唐の詩にもかくぞあるべき。
> Well, the styles of [Japanese] poems are six. The same should be in the poetry of Tang [China]. (translated by the author)
> (KKS *Kanajo*)

Not only Tsurayuki takes deliberately possession of the Chinese poetic theories, translating them into Japanese and adding a *waka* poem as an example of each of the six *sama* (styles), but the way he mentions the Chinese poetry,

that «should be the same» (*kaku zo aru beki*), sounds like a somewhat awkward attempt to ignore that very Chinese tradition that lent him and Yoshimochi the basis to formulate their theory on the *waka*. I'm not saying that Tsurayuki hated or disliked *kanshi*, rather, the opposite; but in the duty of elevating the *waka* to the status of official court poetry, in a period when that role was monopolized by *kanshi*, perhaps they should have decreased or relativized the importance of Chinese poetry, just by letting it disappear from the text.

Also the progression with which Tsurayuki narrated the history of the *waka* seems to be rearranged to describe the progression from a dark age (Saga's reign), to a new golden age for the *waka* (Daigo's reign). We can divide *Kanajo*'s narration in: A) the birth of the *waka*, B) the dark age of the national style, when the *waka* was forgotten, C) the golden age of the *waka* (age of Hitomaro and Akahito), D) period of Rokkasen, E) compilation of the *Kokinshū*. Actually, in a chronological order, C should precede B, but according to Suzuki Hiroko, this inverted sequences aims at indicating the correct and logical sequence that led to the *Kokinshū* (Suzuki 2012, p. 11), somehow reducing the influence of the Chinese letters on the national style of the *waka*.

I think that the previous textual analysis of the *Kanajo* and the *Manajo* confirms Nihei and Ōoka's position I quoted at the beginning of this chapter. If we try to consider the problem of the consolidation of the new literary tradition, we will notice that the 'inferiority complex' toward the older and more legitimated tradition is a constant in World Literature. According to Wiebke Denecke, also the ancient Romans had an inferiority complex toward the more refined and highly rewarded Greek literature and culture, except that, while ancient Japan and China have always been two distinct territorial and political entities, in 146 B. C. ancient Greece became part of the Roman Empire, therefore the Romans had the political/military supremacy, but were in turn dominated on the cultural level (Denecke 2012, p. 182). Moreover, the inferiority complex felt by the Romans toward the Greek culture was, according to Denecke, greater than the one felt by the Heian Japanese: a Roman couldn't directly access Greek texts without a Latin translation – or without learning Greek grammar and alphabet before – while Japanese *bunjin* could read and write *kanbun* without actually speaking real Chinese (Denecke 2012, p. 184).

This kind of bird-eye view on World Literature helps us to outline aspects that could be considered almost universal, for example the strategies actuated to overcome this 'inferiority complex'.

The 'stealing' of Chinese terminology actuated by Yoshimochi and Tsurayuki, is for example very similar to the process made by Du Bellay, who plagiarized the ancient roman author Quintilianus and the Italian theorist Sperone Speroni to formulate his theory for the renaissance of French poet-

ry (Inomata 1988, p. 1), or made by Dante who tried to legitimate the Italian vernacular using Latin writing and rhetoric. Also in Dante's instance we can detect not only a kind of reject against the Latin culture, implicit in his love and preference for the vernacular, expressed in his words «*lo naturale amore della propia loquela*» (the natural love for his own language, *Convivio* I-x, 5) but also a contradiction between his love for the vernacular and his esteem for the Latin culture, derived from his training as *literatus*.

The condition of *literatus* and *bunjin*, the strategies performed to acquire symbolic capital toward a more legitimated tradition, the 'opposition' to the Latin and Chinese culture, are all issues that could be somehow described with Pierre Bourdieu's terminology. We could say for example that the compilers of the *Kokinshū* were trying to define new boundaries and hierarchies inside the field of literary production of the Heian court, still dominated by Chinese writings and poetry, through the «reaction of resistance or exclusion» toward *kanshi* we detected in the *Manajo* and the *Kanajo* (Bourdieu 1996, p. 226). Moreover, the position of the compilers of the *Kokinshū*, and their concern for the process of relegitimation of the *waka*, seems to fit the following excerpt from Bourdieu: «It is for the same reasons that the literary field is so attractive and so welcoming to all those who possess all the characteristics of the dominants *minus one*: to 'poor relations' of the great bourgeois dynasties, aristocrats ruined or in decline, members of minorities stigmatized or rejected from other dominant positions, and in particular from high public service, and those whose uncertain and contradictory social identity predisposes them in some way to occupy the contradictory position of dominated among the dominants» (Bourdieu 1996, p. 227).

A poet like Tsurayuki, bureaucrat of mid-low rank, descendant of an ancient noble family in relative decline, and to all intents and purposes, a member of a class, the *bunjin*, that after Michizane's fall had been rejected by the dominant position in the field of the political power – monopolized now by Fujiwara's family members – could be seen exactly as dominated among dominants. The same could be said about Dante after his exile from Florence: both Dante and Tsurayuki could be compared and analyzed according to some of Bourdieu's principles, especially the concept of 'field' and 'cultural capital'.

Reverting to the problem of the relation between the *waka* and the *kanshi* at the time of the *Kokinshū*, we can draw the following conclusions. While the poetic works ordered by Uda, such as the *Shinsen Man'yōshū* and the *Chisatoshū*, seem to equate the *kanshi* and the *waka*, although never declaring the superiority of the *waka* upon the *kanshi* (Takada 2009, p. 530), the prefaces to the *Kokinshū* are the first literary works that, even in a indirect and implicit way (what I called the 'eclipse of *kanbun*'), seem to try to overturn this order.

The effects of this process would be not instantaneous nor would be accomplished with the *Kokinshū*. Tsurayuki continued to reflect on the problem of *yamatouta* (Japanese poetry) and *karauta* (Chinese poetry) also in another important work in Japanese, the *Tosa nikki* (935) (Inomata 1987, p. 119), but what is more important to outline here is that this sort of competition between the *kanshi* and the *waka* did exist, even with all the contradiction of the case.

Now we can research the historical origin of this contraposition, and a possible political motivation to this complex process. A «reaction of resistance or exclusion» toward the *kanshi* is already visible some decades before the *Kokinshū*. The clearest episode is maybe the already quoted *chōka* (long *waka*) composed by the monks of the temple of Kōfukuji for the fortieth birthday of emperor Ninmyō. In the description of that episode in *Shoku Nihon kōki* 続日本後紀, the fourth of the Six National Histories of ancient Japan (*Rikkokushi*) we read as follows:

> The prayers for the eternal kingdom addressed to Buddhas and deities are recited in the original language of our country, without using Chinese, that's why to transcribe it we don't need to disturb the doctors of Letters (*hakase*). It is said that the Land of Rising Sun is the land where the spirits of words prosper
> (*Utaawase* I: *kashū*, 1987, p. 1140, also quoted in Inomata 1988, p. 7, and Takada 2009, p. 529).

The Kōfukuji was the family temple of the Fujiwara clan, and the compiler of the *Shoku Nihon kōki* was Fujiwara no Yoshifusa, leader of the Fujiwara family, and the promoter of Fujiwara's regent system that would monopolize court politics for the following two centuries. The tie between the monopoly of the Fujiwara family and the renaissance of the *waka* is, for many scholars, one of the hidden paths behind the compilation of the *Kokinshū*.

The Fujiwara strategy and the political meaning of the Kokinshū

Many of the key events tied to revaluation of the *waka* in the 9th century show some ties with the Fujiwara family. Apart from the episode of the chōka of the monks of the Kōfukuji, inspired by Yoshifusa, the first official public event related to the *waka*, before the *Kokinshū*, seems to have been the Banquet of the wisteria flowers at the Higyōsha pavilion in the second year of the Engi era (延喜二年飛香舎藤花宴) (Takigawa 2004, p. 257). On this occasion Fujiwara no Tokihira, who inherited the role of Fujiwara leader from his father Mototsune, and who at that time had already succeeded in marrying his sister to emperor Daigo, made an official visit to the young emperor at the imperial

palace. Between the many presents offered in that occasion, such as musical instruments etc. there were also some *waka*. This visit seems to reflect Tokihira's artistic and literary tastes more than Daigo's. According to Takigawa, Tokihira should be seen as the real mind behind the *Kokinshū* project: he is the highest-ranked bureaucrat included in the collection, and was friends with Ki no Tomonori, the highest-ranked compiler of the *Kokinshū* (Takigawa 2004, p. 257). As already discussed before, the compilation of the *Kokinshū* can be read as part of the Fujiwara-regents' political strategy initiated by Fujiwara no Yoshifusa (804-872), whose aim was to tie the Fujiwara family with the imperial house through the marriage (*judai* 入内) of the Fujiwara women to the emperors (Takada 2009, p. 528). To obtain this, public or private occasions for poetry were to be held to compose and benefit from; the women – who were unable to compose in Chinese – were given the chance to get closer and win the favor and the attention of the emperor. This explanation validates Takigawa's opinion that the compilation of the *Kokinshū* did not dependent on Daigo's will, and should be rather attributed to Fujiwara no Tokihira's taste and initiative, but it suggests also a very specific – we could say utilitarian – application of the *waka* and a practical explanation to the compilation of the *Kokinshū*.

If we accept this theory, we must admit that the elaboration of a literary canon of the *waka* seems to be directly affected by the changes in the social and political balance and strategies of power consolidation. We said that the *monjō keikoku* and the rise of the *bunjin* in the first half of the 9th century was a direct effect of Saga and Junna's politics, but we can say the same about the rise of the *waka* and the 'fall of the *bunjin*', symbolized by Sugawara no Michizane's exile. Indeed, «for the Fujiwara family, Hiromi and Michizane were the core of the problem they needed to get rid of» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 254), because they were going to realize in Japan the Chinese ideal of the *hanlinxuexi*, namely a loyal *bunjin* directly chosen as the closest counselor of the emperors, regardless of their social origin. If these premises are true, it is logical that Tokihira – usually depicted as Michizane' archrival – needed to downsize the influence of the *bunjin* on the emperor shifting his interest from the *kanshi*, that only *bunjin* with a literary background were able to compose, to the *waka*, more easily accessible to other aristocrats and especially to the Fujiwara women.

Even if fascinating, this theory shows some contradictions. First of all the fact that the agents appointed to accomplish the task of the rehabilitation of the *waka* 'against' the influence of the *kanshi* and the *bunjin*, were *bunjin* themselves like Ki no Tsurayuki and Ki no Yoshimochi. In other words, even admitting that some kind of conflictuality between the *kanshi* and the *waka* existed, it couldn't reflect directly such a clear contraposition among the members of the Heian court. The Shōtai Accident (*Shōtai no hen* 昌泰の変) in 901, when

Michizane and many *bunjin* close to him were physically expelled due to the court's politics, is usually depicted as a fight between two opposed factions of courters – pro-Michizane and pro-Tokihira – but it would be a mistake to call these two factions 'pro-*kanshi*' and 'pro-*waka*'. The conflictuality between the Japanese and the Chinese culture should be seen more like a gradual and progressive shift from one to the other, from a period of *kanshi* (relative) supremacy to a period of *waka* (relative) supremacy.

It is true that the Shōtai Accident represented an abrupt rupture in the court politics, marking the end of Uda's hegemony and the definitive rise of power of the Fujiwara regents, and it is also true that this event had a direct influence on the compilation of the *Kokinshū* in 905, that is in turn usually seen as an ultimate rupture in the history of Japanese literature But actually, as we have seen before, the *waka* was already popular at Uda's time, and the compilation of the *Kokinshū* can somehow be considered as a natural consequence to the evolution of the discourse on Japanese literature. Moreover, *kanshi* and *kanbun* would not fall in disuse after the compilation of the *Kokinshū*, but would continue to represent until modern times, 'the other half' of Japanese literature, with its own spaces, users and evolution, as in the instance of the late Heian *kudaishi* (topic poetry) or even of poems by modern authors like Natsume Sōseki. The definitive fall from grace of Chinese writings in Japan is actually quite recent.

Apart from the hypothetical marriage strategy elaborated by the Fujiwara regents to consolidate their ties with the imperial house, we can detect in the compilation of the *Kokinshū* a wider – higher? – political meaning. According to Masuda, the *Kokinshū* was supposed to have been put in relation with the law code *Engi kyaku-shiki* 延喜格式 ordered by emperor Daigo to Fujiwara no Tokihira, exactly as at Saga and Junna's time the *Ryōunshū* and the *Bunkashūreishū* had a relation with the *Kōnin kyakushiki* codes弘仁格式 and *Shinsen shōjiroku* 新撰姓氏録, and the *Keikokushū* with the *Shinsen kyakushiki* 新撰格式 and *Ryō no gige* 令義解 codes. Masuda states that the Saga and Junna's poetic collections aimed at demonstrating, also in literature and poetry, the ideals that these law codes expressed in legal terms: «the meaning of *chokusenshū* was to fix cultural directions and models, based on the Confucian-*ritsuryō* state ideology» (Masuda 1976, p. 32). Similarly, the *Kokinshū* can be seen as a tool of propaganda for the new deal of the Engi era, led by Fujiwara no Tokihira and symbolized by these new law codes, that once again would change the structure of *ritsuryō* state bureaucracy into a completely consolidated regent system. Tokihira was also the editor of the last of the Six National Histories (*Rikkokushi*), the *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* (901, first year of the Engi era), narrating the reign of three emperors – Seiwa, Yōzei and Kōkō – that, by no accident, corresponded to the rise of the Fujiwara regents Yo-

shifusa and Mototsune. The fact that we can recognize the same target in the *Kokinshū* and the *Keikokushū* may be an evidence that the difference between the *kanshi* and the *waka* becomes secondary. Moreover, the relation between the relation of the poems with reality and their political/practical application, that the prefaces of the *Kokinshū* indicate as the primary role of poetry, becomes even vaguer and more cryptic with the *waka* in the *Kokinshū*. With the *Kokinshū*, indicated by Suzuki Hiroko as «part of the strategy on national politics by certain individuals» (Suzuki 2012, p. 20) it became clear that poetry could fulfill a role that was unrelated to the contents of the poems, and even to the meaning and the aim the poet had in mind at the moment of the composition. To use Rein Raud's attempted model (Raud 2003, p. 94), we can say that for example, a love poem written with the *goal* of seducing a courtier, when included in the collection, it changed its *function* to meet a wider and more socio-political need.

Summarizing the issues raised in this chapter, we detected a kind of conflictuality between the Chinese and Japanese literature, and that this opposition can reflect – albeit indirectly – a social conflict between two classes or groups of court society, high aristocrats like Tokihira and *bunjin* like Michizane. But with the foundation of the new literary canon of the *Kokinshū*, we saw the birth of a new kind of intellectual that seems to solve or overcome the conflictuality between these two traditions.

The key concept is that the conflictuality between the *kanshi* and the *waka* that was already present at Uda's time, finds a sort of solution in Daigo's court, through the activity of the *bunjin* who, because of social and historical coincidences, preferred to compose *waka* rather than *kanshi* to gain a position in the field of literary production, taking advantage of the prestige given by the compilation by imperial order.

State identity and the Sicilian School

If behind the compilation of the *Kokinshū* lays the problem about who was the real supporter of the first imperial *waka* collection –probably identifiable in the group of aristocrats leaded by Tokihira – a similar problem arises about the foundation of the Sicilian School.

Two main thesis are still debated over who could have been the starter of the Sicilian School of poetry: Giacomo da Lentini (according to Gianfranco Contini, Gianfranco Folena) or the emperor, Frederick II of Hohenstaufen himself (according to Angelo Monteverdi, Aurelio Roncaglia) (Antonelli 1994, pp. 309-310). Giacomo is unanimously considered the most influential poet in the School, the most prolific and, under many aspects, the most skilled. His

leading role was acknowledged first of all by other poets of the school that addressed him questions and doubts about courtly love, like Peter de Vinea and Jacopo Mostacci. Conversely, not only modern critics fail to consider Frederick II a 'great' poet, as only six poems have been attributed to him – and only two with certain attribution (Rapisarda 2005) – but, as we said before, his personal interest toward the Sicilian School, and his will to make of it a symbol of the cultural politics of the Magna Curia, is still questionable. Roberto Antonelli, who also acknowledges Giacomo's position as *caposcuola* (leader of the movement), underlines the importance of Frederick: «without the great customer and organizer Frederick, without his cultural politics, the Sicilian School and Giacomo da Lentini's poetry would never have existed, because they wouldn't have had the political and historical-cultural circumstances needed to exist» (Antonelli 1979, p. 313). This position has been reconsidered by Costanzo Di Girolamo, supporter of an «evolutionistic» hypothesis on the birth of the Sicilian School, opposed to a simpler, but unsatisfactory «creationistic» hypothesis, that saw Frederick or Giacomo as the primal «founders» of the school (Di Girolamo 2008, p. XLIV). The evolutionistic hypothesis proposed by Di Girolamo identifies Frederick not as the «founder» but as the «promoter» of the Sicilian vernacular poetry, a poetry that, according to the latest researches, must have had a prehistoric period before the first generation of Frederick's poets. «The fundamental step is represented by [Frederick II's] authorization to a poetic production formerly used as entertainment, by the transformation of this poetry into a higher form of art, no longer anonymous, by admitting it in the chambers of power, by assigning to it the duty of conveying examples of behavior, by guaranteeing modalities of transmission of any kinds; and of course, the first form of authorization is likely to have been the example given by Frederick himself, who personally composed poems. Under this perspective, at a certain point poetry had to be snatched from the professionals that formerly had exclusivity on it (the jesters), and adopted as a noble *otium* [leisure] by men close to the [political] power, namely the ruling class in Frederick's State» (Di Girolamo 2008, p. XLIII).

Di Girolamo's definition is very clear and persuasive, even if in some points it differs lightly from Antonelli's theory, for example in defining the activity of the School as «noble *otium*». For Antonelli, the Sicilian poetry is not just «a simple divertissement or a courtly fancy (as was perhaps with Frederick's father, Henry VI, who composed poems in *mittelhochdeutsch*)» because the participants in this form of art were «not only the aristocratic class, but the whole high state bureaucracy» (Antonelli 1979, p. 72). So, in the same essay where he attributes to the translation activities carried out at the Magna Curia a «wider and more comprehensive [role] than the also existing immediate instrumentalism» (Antonelli 1979, p. 89), Antonelli insists on a significance

of the Sicilian School that is not limited to a refined courtly play, nor to an instrumental activity of propaganda, but something more deeply connected with the official functions of state bureaucracy.

I think Antonelli's reconstruction of the evolution of the European vernacular can be equated with the evolution of the Japanese vernacular in 9th century Japan, under the rise of the Fujiwara regents. As I mentioned before, Antonelli sees in Frederick II the final product of the evolution of the 'poet-king', started with William IX of Aquitaine (1071-1126) and continued with Henry II Plantagenet (1133-1189). William IX was the first *troubadour* poet, but was not a culture organizer; conversely, Henry II was a culture organizer, but not a poet. Only Frederick embodies both positions, and vernacular poetry at his court inherited the «actual load of autonomy and prestige (potentially also institutional) that the vernacular literature carried, compared to the clerical culture» (Antonelli 1979, p. 58), since its first apparition in southern France. This is that 'wide political meaning' theorized by Antonelli: «creating a center of poetic production that could transfer the Provencal experience into a *local language* meant bestowing *autonomy* and *prestige* to the most emblematic and refined field of Romance culture, inserting also the vernacular literature into Frederick's political-cultural idea, aimed at equipping the State with every characteristic to that would turn it into a supreme institution as opposed to the other great Italian institution, the Church» (Antonelli 1979, p. 59). That's why in Sicily also the vernacular used by the poets underwent a process of linguistic refinement and elevation, and the most vulgar and uncivilized tendencies of the *troubadour* literature, like the genre of *pastorela* – where a knight enjoys a brief and comical love affair with a shepherdess – are restrained or excluded, aside from some exceptions like the disturbing eroticism of Cielo d'Alcamo's *Contrasto* (Antonelli 1979, p. 69). The lack of interest Frederick showed toward the *troubadour* poets and Occitan poetry, as opposed to his direct participation to the local (Sicilian) vernacular poetry, has its explanation in the «function of lyric [vernacular] poetry in underlining the secular effort of the ruler and the complete autonomy of Frederick's State» (Antonelli 1979, p. 70). Especially after the Albigensian Crusade (1209-1229), many *troubadours* fled southern France trying to win Frederick's favor, gathering around him after his coronation as Roman Emperor and upon his return to Sicily, in the hope of getting some real benefit – money or land – from the new Holy Emperor. Unfortunately for them, Frederick didn't show much generosity, as testified by many displeased poems against him, for example Uc de Saint Circ's (Dronke 1994, p. 54). Antonelli explains Frederick's disinterest in the *troubadours* with a general principle: according to Frederick, poets could only be state officials – notaries, for instance – and not a sort of mercenary poets waiting for an economic reward, like the *troubadours*. The notary-poet had

to be part of the state, and for Antonelli this choice had the secondary result that «in the Sicilian School, the hostile situation between the vernacular and the Latin level, typical of other large European courts (like Henry II of England's), no longer occurred» (Antonelli 2008, p. LX).

Antonelli acknowledges the close relationship between the secular literary culture and the power of legitimation at the great feudal courts of Europe: «the autonomy of the political power inevitably seems to pass also through the cultural autonomy and the development of a literature that is secular for thematics, genre, linguistic devices, and also for the basic interests it holds» (Antonelli 1994, p. 311). Actually, the function of literature as cement of national unity is not only a medieval concept, rather, it will be an important issue in the discourse about literature and national states in 19th century's Europe, especially in the culturally, economically and linguistically fragmented Italy: « literature was the only available paradigm of unification: it was in literature, rather than in reality, that the idea of Italy as a nation could be found» (Ceserani 1999, p. 316). Moreover, as stated by Friedrich Schegel, it was poetry – as the highest genre of literature – and in particular classical poetry, that fulfilled a fundamental role in the process of national identity and unity: «if a population, because of its great antiquity and the memories of its remote origins, becomes elevated and dignified in its own sensitivity, for that reason it will honored and acknowledged» (Schlegel 1974, pp. 8)

Apart from the evolution of the relationship between literature and state, the consideration on the position held by vernacular literature at Frederick II's court perfectly fits and completes the analysis of culture and power I conducted in Part II. The vernacular poetry was part of the great project of centralization and consolidation of the state institution, exactly like the constitution of the *Studium* in Naples, or Frederick's support for Latin writings and translations. Therefore, we can say that at the Magna Curia the very existence of poetry was a sign of power, and this applied especially to vernacular poetry, and most of all when this poetry didn't manage political themes directly. It is in this general configuration that I find a possible parallel with the renaissance of the *waka* at the beginning of the 10th century, but before I attempt such a comparison, let's look again at Dante's conception of the Italian vernacular.

Dante's concept of the vernacular

Antonelli's discourse is not based only on the existence of the Sicilian School, but it could find a validation also in Dante's notion that vernacular had a precise role in unifying citizens identity:

> *E così lo volgare è più prossimo quanto è più unito, [e quello è più unito], che uno e solo è prima nella mente che alcuno altro, e che non solamente per sé è unito, ma per accidente, in quanto è congiunto colle più prossime persone, sì come colli parenti e [colli] propî cittadini e colla propia gente.*
> And so a man's vernacular is nearest to the extent that it is most closely related to him, for it is in his mind first and alone before any other; and not only is it related to him intrinsically but accidentally, since it is connected to those persons who are nearest to him, that is, his kin, his fellow citizens, and his own people.
> (Convivio I-xii, 5)

The sense of citizenship stimulated by vernacular reaches a 'national' dimension, to the point of unifying cities, regions, and all of Italy:

> *Et sicut illud cremonense, ac illud lombardum, et tertium semilatium dicitur, sic istud quod totius Ytalie est latinum vulgare vocatur. Hoc enim usi sunt doctores illustres qui lingua vulgari poetati sunt in Ytalia, ut Siculi, Apuli, Tusci, Romandioli, Lombardi, et utriusque Marchie viri.*
> And just as the first is called Cremonese, the second Lombard, and the third half-Italian, so this last one, which belongs to all of Italy, is called the Italian vernacular. This is the language used by the illustrious authors who have written vernacular poetry in Italy, whether they came from Sicily, Apulia, Tuscany, Romagna, Lombardy, or either of the Marches.
> (DVE I-xix, 1)

This quote clearly shows the yearning for a vernacular that could be not just regional, but national, an Italian language common to all the «illustrious authors» that demonstrated their ability to manage it in poetry, from the first generation of Sicilian poets onward. If there had been a 'golden age' of Italian vernacular, tied to the court of the Magna Curia, it would have be possible to continue and resurrect that tradition. I find it important to underline the awareness of *Ytalia* (Italy) as a unitary national entity, whose identity is determined first of all because all of its dialects belonging to the family of language of the *sì* (the Italian), opposed to the language of the *oc* in Provence and of the *oïl* in northern France. That's why, in Dante, the problem of language is naturally connected to the political problem of a national identity, maybe even more deeply than in other countries, where a real State institution actually existed. Dante's biggest regret, both from a political and literary point of view, is the lack of a physical court where vernacular poetry could be practiced, fulfilling its duty of binding agent of the Italian population. The issue

of the *positive* notion of the court as center of culture – opposed to Church and Latin – as found with William IX, Henry II and Frederick II, with Dante evolved in its opposite direction, that is, the issue of «the absence of the State» (Antonelli 1979, p. 96).

Even though Dante's family was not Ghibelline (pro-emperor) but Guelph (pro-pope), in the Latin treatise the *Monarchia* he theorized a balanced division of powers, the secular and temporal political power to the emperor and Empire, the religious and moral power to the pope and the Church. He stated that

> *Ex quo sequitur Monarchiam necessariam mundo ut bene sit.*
> And   thus   it   follows   that   monarchy   is
> necessary   to   the   well-being   of   the   world.
> (Monarchia I-vii, 3)

because it reflects the supreme order established by God, that is one and only. Moreover, the existence of a monarchic State is absolutely necessary to the *bene esse mundi* (the wellbeing of the world):

> *Propter quod necessarium apparet ad bene esse mundi Monarchiam esse, sive unicum principatum qui 'Imperium' appellatur. Hanc rationem suspirabat Boetius dicens:*
> *"Oh felix hominum genus si vestros animos amor, quo celum regitur, regat".*
> Hence it is clear that monarchy (or that undivided rule which is called 'empire') is necessary to the well-being of the world. Boethius expressed this view when he sighed:
> "O happy race of men, if only the love by which the heavens are ruled might rule your minds".
> (Monarchia I-ix, 3)

The discourse on vernacular in the *De vulgari eloquentia* is coherent to this political position: Frederick II and his son Manfred are called «founders» of the vernacular experience (Antonelli 1979, p. 313), because without the political power centered in their courts the Sicilian School would have never existed. So, Dante's greatest problem was to manage the very lack of a court, and to rebuild at the same time the history of vernacular naming Frederick II as its starter. In Dante there is the «precise choice to acknowledge the *actual* predominance of *institutional* reasons, over the purely poetic ones. The illustrious vernacular was not an illusion, it really existed in the works of the *doctores illustres* [the other Italian poets admired by Dante], but it existed because a *regale solium* [royal throne] already existed before. When the *De vulgari eloquentia* was written, [Italy] lacked the *aula*

[chamber] and the *curia* [court]; nevertheless, its scattered limbs still existed, the *elite* of cultured and seculars: the *doctores illustres*» (Antonelli 1979, p. 98).

That's why for Dante it was so important to identify and define the illustrious vernacular by distinguishing it from the most popular variants that also gave birth to a poetic tradition that, at Dante's time, was a mere minority. At the end of the 13th century Dante was not yet recognized as the most illustrious poet in Italy, having exactly in Tuscany his greatest 'rival', Guittone d'Arezzo, «an uncontested master of poetry between 1260 and the year of his death, 1294, in that he left a multitude of imitators in every city of central and northern Italy (the so called *guittoniani*)» (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 134), so as I mentioned before, Dante, had to name himself and his poet friends real heirs of the Sicilian tradition, bypassing the handicap represented by the lack of an Italian court. The success of his operation would be testified by the 14th century poetic collections, where the importance of Dante and the Stilnovo poets would definitely outdo the Sicilian School: in these collections «the Sicilian presence is in clear minority, if not even residual, and anyway it is received as a far echo, as the testimony of a period of foundation, later surpassed by Cavalcanti and Dante's revolution » (Leonardi 2005). So, it is demonstrated that Dante succeeded in affirming his own legitimation through the canonization of a precise part of the previous vernacular poetry – the Sicilian School – having as primary basis Frederick and his son Manfred's political authority.

Dante's Italy was a fragmented and a messy amalgam of small nations; after the final fall of the Hohenstaufen dynasty it had lost its role as center of the Roman Empire. Therefore any comparison with Heian Japan during the Fujiwara regents' period seems useless, as this was one of the most stable and politically solid moments in the history of Japan. At the time of the *Kokinshū* Japan didn't have a division between religious and political powers, or the problem of the lack of a central court. Even so, I think the compilers can resemble Dante in their strategy of imposing their vision and the *waka* at the center of a court still dominated by the *kanbun* and *kanshi* literature.

First of all, it is remarkable how Masuda's persuasive explanation resembles Antonelli's, when he acknowledges «the *actual* predominance of *institutional* reasons, over the purely poetic ones». According to Masuda, the compilation of the *Kokinshū* was first of all a 'State work', where the taste and poetic deed of the compilers were subject to the higher duty of the collection by imperial order, with its Confucian-political meaning (Masuda 1976, p. 31).

Secondly, the problem of the lack of 'official spaces' dedicated to poetry was felt and analyzed also by Tsurayuki. While Italy no longer had a physical

court able to host vernacular poetry in a State-scale dimension, in Japan that official space did exist, but was monopolized by the *kanshi* poetry. Moreover, the basic strategy of demonstrating the superiority of the vernacular appears quite similar. I mentioned before how a part of this strategy was to acknowledge to the vernacular language (and poetry) a precise effectiveness to consolidate the national identity – for example in the Kōfukuji temple monks' *chōka*, or in the analysis of the Italian dialects performed by Dante. Another argument used both by Dante and Tsurayuki to demonstrate the importance of vernacular is the recognition of the superior 'naturalness' of vernacular as the native language of poetry.

Naturalness of vernacular

For Dante the 'naturalness' of the vernacular has first of all an egalitarian root, easily connectable to the political significance of the language:

> *Intra li uomini d'una lingua è la paritade del volgare*
> Among men sharing the same language there is the common ground of the vernacular
> (Convivio I-xi, 16)

Vernacular is also the language we all learn as children:

> quam infantes adsuefiunt ab adsistentibus, cum primitus distinguere voces incipiunt; […] quam sine omni regula, nutricem imitantes, accipimus.
> That, which infants acquire from those around them when they first begin to distinguish sounds; […] that, which we learn without any formal instruction, by imitating our nurses.
> (DVE I-i, 2)

As we said before, according to Dante it is impossible to translate poetry into another language without mining the effectiveness of its words, and vernacular is more suitable than Latin when we are talking about vernacular poetry and literature. The concept of naturalness is clearly expressed in the following passage:

> *Harum quoque duarum nobilior est vulgaris: tum quia prima fuit humano generi usitata; tum quia totus orbis ipsa perfruitur, licet in diversas prolationes et vocabula sit divisa; tum quia naturalis est nobis, cum illa potius artificialis existat. Et de hac nobiliori nostra est intentio pertractare.*

> Of these two kinds of language, the more noble is the vernacular:
> first, because it was the language originally used by the human race;
> second, because the whole world employs it, though with different pro-
> nunciations and using different words; and third, because it is natural to
> us, while the other is, in contrast, artificial.
> (DVE I-i, 4)

What is important here is not just the declaration of superiority of the ver-
nacular, showing, as we saw before, some contradictions also inside the *De
vulgari eloquentia* itself, but the attribution «*naturalis est nobis*» (it is natural
to us) for vernacular, and «*artificialis*» for Latin. This very passage is quoted
also by Inomata Kenji, who underlines its similitude with the concept of Du
Bellay's *La Defense*, and the *Kanajo*. The *Kanajo* opens with a quote from the
preface to the *Shijing*, but with the addition of the metaphor of seed and leaves.

> やまとうたは、人の心を種として、万の言の葉とぞなれりける。
> Japanese poetry has the human heart as seed, and myriads of words as
> leaves.
> (KKS *Kanajo*)

As pointed out by Inomata, this metaphor is directly tied to the concept of
the naturalness of language, because it clearly states that the human heart is
the seed, from which a plant and its leaves naturally grow. This is, according
to Inomata, the same idea as Kōfukuji's monks, asking for a language closer
to the Japanese heart (Inomata 1988, pp. 6-9). This concept of *kokoro* (heart)
and *kotoba* (words) symbolized by the seed-leaves metaphor, constituting the
bone structure of the theorization of the *Kanajo*, is so suitable to describe the
Japanese poetic mentality, to remain as a fundamental ground on which a large
part of the later *waka* theorizations would be oriented (Hirasawa 2009, p. 289).
Exactly as for Dante, Inomata stated that it was impossible to express the (Jap-
anese) heart with the words of a different language, like the *kanshi*, without
missing part of its feeling (Inomata 1988, p. 9). But it is the use of a *technique*
(技巧), to express *nature* (intended as feelings) that, for Inomata, represents
the common point between Dante, Du Bellay, and Tsurayuki. It is here that
we see an extremely important step in the path toward self-awareness of the
vernacular, which consequently leads to its refinement and evolution. To use
Inomata's words, we need highly refined words to express human feelings,
and so the concept of naturalness leads inevitably to the «discourse on the
literary style» (文体論) common to France and Japan (Inomata 1988, p. 10).

In the *Kanajo*, the concept of naturalness is merged with the problem of
the native tradition of language and poetry, its origin, and its ties with the lit-
erary style. One of the key points in Tsurayuki's reconstruction of the history

of the *waka* is the passage between the age of deities and the age of man, and the appearance of the metric form of 31-syllable *waka*. This metric is naturally suitable to (Japanese) people, and has its origin in Japan's deities, precisely with the god Susanoo:

> 人の世となりて、素盞嗚尊よりぞ三十文字あまり一文字はよみける
> When the human era began, Susanoo-no-mikoto introduced the thirty-one-syllable poem.
> (KKS *Kanajo*)

As remarked by Sagiyama Ikuko, «the reference to deities has its motivation in the need to give authority to the poems» (Sagiyama 2000, p. 41) by recalling a precedent to gain legitimation, because Japan inherited from China the idea that «only what is based on previous models can have value» (Konishi 1985, p. 248). Even with many differences, the attribution to Susanoo of the first 31-syllable *waka* could match Frederick's role as described before by Di Girolamo: the direct participation of the monarch/god in this form of literary production has a deep significance for its legitimation. Moreover, the acknowledgement accorded to a certain poetic form – the 31-syllable *waka* – to express human feelings, or more exactly, the feelings of the Japanese people, reconnect the discourse to the problem of naturalness and of the need for a technique – a *langue* – adequate and sufficiently refined to express those feelings.

As pointed out by Denecke, during Saga's reign we assisted to a «literalization» (文学化) of culture, with an increase of poetic genre and a refinement of techniques (Denecke 2013b, p. 99), that corresponded also to a new awareness of the poets of the Kōnin/Tenchō era on the distinction between their age and a more ancient period of Japanese *kanbun* (Denecke 2013b, p. 101). The prefaces to the *Kokinshū* inherited the awareness of belonging to a «modern age» (近代) corresponding to Daigo's reign (Denecke ibid.), but in my opinion there is something more. Not only Tsurayuki was aware of a distance and 'evolution' between his age and the golden age of the *Man'yōshū*, but this awareness is matched by the new awareness that the most 'natural' and 'right' language for poetic compositions is no longer Chinese, but Japanese, and the relevant pride to have been chosen to give back the *waka* its proper importance.

From this point of view, I find that the compilation of the *Kokinshū* represents the maturity not of a genre of poetry – that was already mature and 'complete' at *May'ōshū*'s time – but of the theoretical discourse about that very poetry, of the discourse on Japan's native language, and of the self-awareness of the 'Japanese nature' against a supposed foreigner 'Chinese nature'. This kind of discourse on the 'naturalness' of the vernacular, and its consciousness, couldn't have happened without the proper technical and rhetorical training

that we finally find in the *Kanajo*. Perhaps the same idea that moved Dante to say that vernacular is more indicated than Latin, to discuss about vernacular poetry. But it is clear that the vernacular we are talking about must be a written language, and this new dimension of vernacular is another common point between the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū*.

The Kanajo and the divorce between music and poetry

The drafting of a preface in Japanese to an imperial collection was, by its existence itself, a fact of primary importance in the development of written Japanese.

Even if from the point of view of its mere contents, the *Kanajo* basically is a translation of the *Manajo,* sometimes with richer examples and metaphors, the attempt to use *yamato kotoba* (Japanese) to translate poetic theories of Chinese origin represents a superlative result not only for Tsurayuki, but also for the whole Heian literature, in its process of emancipation from the imitation of the Chinese models.

It is therefore important to underline how, to develop the *wabun* (Japanese writing), the *Kanajo* accepted contributions from the *kanbun* and the Chinese literature and how it adapted – successfully or not – those theories and lexicon. The early Heian poets shared with their contemporary Chinese poets a great part of their cultural knowledge and education, first of all because, ever since the *Kaifūsō,* they studied and imitated the Chinese poetry of the Six Dynasties to refine their own poetic language (Inomata 1988, p. 23). This applies also to the poetical theorization: to write a treatise like the *Kanajo*, based on Chinese theories, they needed to refine and elevate Japanese to manage such complex issues (Ibid., p. 12).

For Masuda the refinement of Japanese words was a need that can be re-connected to the discourse of naturalness I mentioned above: Chinese expressions like *kanshō* (感傷, Ch. *ganshang*, sentimentality) or *aikan* (哀歡, Ch. *aihuan*, joys and sorrows) would have sounded more distant and abstract to the Japanese than the equivalent Japanese words *kanashibi* and *yorokobi* (sorrow and joy); that's why since the ancient times one of the most basic rules of the *waka* was to reject any use of foreign (Chinese) words, aiming at «something able to express feelings at an intimate level very close to [the poet] himself» (Masuda 2004, p. 4).

Here lays the revolutionary importance of the *Kokinshū*: since the *waka* was the only context in which the *wago* 和語 (vernacular Japanese) became *bungo* 文語 (written language), only through the *waka* (and the speculative theorization about it, symbolized by the *Kanajo*) the refinement of Japanese could be accomplished. For Masuda, the language of the *Kokinshū* «is so clearly de-

tached from the level of everyday oral language, that it succeeded in becoming a written language with a great component of conceptualism and abstraction, something we could also call speculative language» (Masuda 2004, p. 5). The absorption of the conceptuality of the *kango* by the early Heian aristocracy and cultural elite led the *wago* to develop its nature of written language, and the *Kanajo* is the clearest example of this effort: «describing more in depth the Chinese theories into a *wago* text like the *Kanajo* needed a mature development of the *wago* as written language» (Ibid., p. 12).

So the first great result of the *Kokinshū* is to have turned Japanese from a language mainly adopted for oral communication, into a language strongly tied to writing and reading (ibid., p. 1). For Masuda, the *waka* of *Man'yōshū* is still basically a poem with a sung origin, so it should be called *uta* (song) rather than *waka*, at least when comparing it with the *kanshi* (Masuda 2004, p. 4). This doesn't mean that we should refer to *Man'yōshū*'s poems as to 'oral poetry', even if Masuda still recognizes in it the «character of popular songs» (歌謡的な性格), but having transformed Japanese in a language suitable to literary criticism, and acknowledging the *waka* as a basically written form of poetry, are undoubtedly goals we must acknowledge to the *Kanajo* and the *Kokinshū*.

Acknowledging that a historical shift from oral to written language and literature occurs in the *Kokinshū* may suggest another meaningful comparison with the poetry of the Sicilian School. One of the most important steps attributed to the Sicilian poets on the evolution from archaic songs to modern poetry, not only in the history of Italian Literature, but also of Romance and European literatures, is the so called 'divorce between music and poetry', a concept firstly proposed by Gianfranco Folena (Folena 1965, p. 280) and then elaborated by Roncaglia (Roncaglia 1978, pp. 365-97). The main difference between the Sicilian poets and the French *troubadours* and *trouvères*– as well as the *minnesängers* in Germany – is the fact that the majority of Frederick II's court poets were not able to play an instrument, or sing, and consequently were unable to compose melodies for their lyrics, as was instead the rule in France. The etymology of the word 'lyric', from the Greek *lyrikē* or '(poetry) accompanied by the lyre', or the name of *troubadours*' most important poetic form, the *cansò* (song), testifies the historical link between poetic *text* and its musical performance. But, it is of common knowledge that the word 'poem' indicates today «a piece of <u>writing</u> in which the words are chosen for their sound and the images they suggest», clearly different from 'song', «a short piece of <u>music</u> with words that you sing» (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 6th edition), despite the fact that a poem could always become the text of a song, and vice-versa.

In fact, one of the greatest differences between the Sicilians and the *troubadours* is that «while the *troubadours* themselves composed music for their

poems, that were spread out through the jesters sung performances, we don't have evidence that the poets of the Sicilian School did the same, although we can't exclude that some of the lyrics might have been set to music by professional musicians, or, in rare cases, by the author himself. It is reasonable to think that the lyrics had, apart from rare exceptions, a written circulation, or at most, that were performed in public» (Di Girolamo 2005).

The important point expressed by Di Girolamo is that the Sicilian poets were probably the first poets in Europe to perform the transformation from basically sung to basically written poetry. The explanation of this shift comes with the social and historical changes we outlined in the previous part, especially about the birth of the notary as the most representative poet in the Sicilian School. The most famous Sicilian poets, such as Giacomo da Lentini or Peter de Vinea, were not aristocrats and didn't receive a chivalric education –usually including also training in music and singing – but were instead holders of an academic education based on law and liberal arts, like rhetoric and Latin classics. In other words they lacked the skill to play any instrument, as well as to compose or sing melodies. Moreover, they were «not professional [poets] as the greater part of the *troubadoric* poets, but 'amateurs', and at the same time they had a great competence (as notaries, judges, jurists), in cultural and *rhetorical* matters» (Antonelli 1994, p. 310). Accordingly to Roncaglia, also in southern France we can find *troubadours* unable to compose music, as well as the custom to ask a jester or musician to perform the song they wrote, and the use of *contrafacta* (to write a new text on a pre-existing melody) was quite common, but also in these cases, the definition of *troubadour* was that of a poet able to perform the songs he composed, both the text and the music (Roncaglia 1978, p. 336, 379).

So, Roncaglia conclusion's indicating that the changing of the poets' educational (and social) background in the Sicilian court caused the shifting of *sung* into *written poetry*, has an enormous importance because later generations of Italian poets would inherited it, first of allmthe Tuscan poets like Dante, who – as members of a new society that was no longer centered in feudal courts but in a new political entity, the state-city of the *Comune* – received an education more similar to the Sicilian notaries than the one of the *troubadours* of the feudal courts. The fact that the earliest documents of the Italian lyrics are usually found as annotations at the end or behind manuscripts edited by notaries is a further proof of the identity of the poet-notary in Italy: the 'Sicilian-Umbrian rhymes' were for example transcribed on the last pages of a copy of a mathematical work by Fibonacci (Leonardi 2005). At that time, Italian poetry was still not evaluated enough to be transcribed on an expensive support like paper. Subsequently, this change in the social background on the one hand was the cause of unmelodized poems, on the other it fostered

the evolution of language and rhetorical structures. As summarized by Roncaglia, «the Sicilians replaced the complexity of melodic-verbal composition [of the *troubadours*], with the intensity of a purely verbal invention, focused only on the value of words. Paradoxically we could say that what determined the evolution of the great Italian and European lyric was the lack of musical education in the *scholae notarorium* [notary school]» (Roncaglia 1978, p. 391), so that, in other words «the loss, at least partial, of the original musical component is somehow profusely compensated by the greater elaboration of the strophic architecture» (Di Girolamo 2008, p. LXXV).

Going back to Japan, apart from the complex analysis of the *Man'yōshū* and its orality, we already said that with the *Kokinshū* the *waka* definitely becomes a form of written poetry. Actually, many poems included in the *Kokinshū* were composed at public and at collective events like the poetic competitions called *utaawase*, where we can suppose there was some form of oral execution of the lyric itself, and the last book of the *Kokinshū* collected liturgical songs, like the *kamiasobi no uta* (songs for shintō ceremonies) or popular songs like the *azumauta* (songs of eastern provinces), that supposedly had an oral fruition originally. Even so, the inclusion of these originally oral texts in a written poetic collection automatically converted them in written literature. To use Rein Raud's terminology again, we witness a change of the *medium* of the song (from oral to writing), and of their *function*, from liturgical texts to the private readings (Raud 2003, p. 95).

For Haruo Shirane, the *waka* ad two potential functions: «1) as a one-time, social, political, or religious act or performance, which stressed addressivity and the significance of which was inevitably diminished or lost after the act was finished, and 2) as a hand written text, which continued to exist outside its initial context. In the first function, the poem is recited orally or sent to the addressee, while in the second function the poem is written down and circulated» (Shirane 2012, p. 188). For the first time in Japan, the second function in the *Kokinshū* became totally preponderant if compared to the first one. The many episodes of *waka* compositions by poets summoned by Uda or Daigo for an extemporary entertainment (Takigawa 2004, pp. 252-253) demonstrate that before the *Kokinshū* the *waka* was still 'disposable' poetry, and that it was recorded only in rare occasions like the most important *utaawase*. Only after the *Kokinshū* the *waka* would be converted into a durative, and highly legitimated written form. Thanks to the *Kokinshū*, after more than a century the *waka* became again a form of literature that deserved to be kept and handed down.

It is important to underline that Roncaglia's socio-historical explanation of the 'divorce between music and poetry', can hardly be applied to the Japanese poets. Even if the academic education of the *bunjin* at the Heian court, for

example at *Daigakuryō*, didn't provide specific musical education, the ability to play the *koto* (Chinese zither) was evaluated as a sign of refinement for the Confucian scholar, an idealized figure perfectly represented by Bai Juyi in poems like *The three friends of the northern window* (北窓三友BW 62:2285), where poetry, wine and zither are called a poet's three friends. In Japan, the ability of the protagonist of the *Genji monogatari* to play *koto* and to write Chinese poems in beautiful calligraphy, testifies the persisting importance of these courtly values. In actual facts, having a poet that was also able to play the *koto* was not that easy, as demonstrated by Sugawara no Michizane's poem on the regret for his musical inability, titled *I quit the exercises of zither:*

> 偏信琴書学者資
> 三余窓下七条糸
> 専心不利徒尋譜
> 用手多迷数問師
> 断峡都無秋水韻
> 寒烏未有夜啼悲
> 知音皆道空消日
> 豈若家風便詠詩
>
> I believed in the koto and brush as aids to the scholar / And even now my seven-stringed koto rests under my window. / In vain I concentrate; uselessy I study the score. / My technique is clumsy, I ask my teacher for help. / My "Deep Valley" sounds nothing like an autumnal stream. / My "Cold Crow" lacks the plaint of a bird's night cry. / All the musicians say I am wasting my time. / Much better our family's traditional art – the writing of poems!
>
> (KBKK I-38, English translation by Borgen 1994, 102-103)

This kind of lack of reference on the importance of music in the Sicilian School poems seems to prove the distance (or disinterest) the Sicilian poets took from the music issue, (Antonelli 1994, p. 322), distinguishing them both from the *troubadours* and, somehow, also from the Heian poets.

But even without stressing the 'divorce' issue, undeniably the *waka* at the time of the *Kokinshū* was a form of poetry that, similarly to the Sicilian poetry, stressed the importance of 'words' over 'music'. An important step in the direction of the *waka* as written literature may be found in the diffusion of *byōbuuta* (poems on folding screen), namely the art of composing *waka* on the image depicted on folding screens used in the houses of aristocratic families, transcribing it on the screen itself in calligraphic style. Ki no Tsurayuki distinguished himself in this particular application of the *waka*, that in its strongly visual element may have contributed to a further distancing of Japanese poetry from sung or oral performances, together with the development

of the phonetic alphabet system of *kana* (Suzuki 2012, p. 125). The diffusion of the *waka* as a form of visual decoration, that according to Masuda started exactly with the art of *byōbuuta* (Masuda 2004, p. 19), is the sign of a social change in the customs and tastes of the aristocratic class: «The *waka* of this period [pre-*Kokinshū*], although it may still be seen as just the part of a [courtly] play, penetrated deeply into the lives of many people more widely, not limiting to the boundaries of a literary genre» (Masuda 2004, p. 16). So, under this aspect, even with clear historical and social differences, we cannot ignore that in Japan, and in Sicily as well, the transformation of the *waka* into written literature was the result of the changes in the social structure and the habits.

The conversion of the *waka* and the Sicilian poetry into written literature has a fundamental, common denominator: the confrontation with a highly regarded tradition in a different language, that urged the evolution and refinement of the national vernacular, *kanbun* in Japan, and Latin and Occitan in Italy. Both the Italian vernacular and the *wago* may be considered 'peripheral cultures', as indicated by Inomata for Japanese and French: «The problem about the style of model and creation is evident on a practical level […] by the fact that the *Kokinshū* poets and the *Pléiade* poets shared the same awareness about the problem of how to create refined poetry in their native language through the imitation of a central culture» (Inomata 1988, p. 23).

In Japan, an emblematic example of this 'refinement' may be the use of the term 'word', *kotonoha*, we find in the *Kanajo*. As noticed by Inomata, the word *kotonoha*, 'leaves of words' translates the Chinese expression *shirin* (Ch. *cilin*) 詞林, 'forest of words' of *Manajo*. This term originates from the Chinese collection *Wenxuen*, fundamental canon of Six Dynasties poetry, and so the correct interpretation of the word *kotonoha* should be, according to the Chinese original meaning, «an art of language that holds stylistic refinement» (Inomata 1988, p. 9). Criticizing the simple translation of *kotonoha* as 'words' done by Miner in a previous essay, Inomata underlines the fact that the concept of *kotonoha* includes implicitly the meaning of 'rhetoric', the formal embellishment (Inomata 1987, p. 119); this 'word' corresponds for Inomata to the Chinese concept of *aya* (Ch. *wen*, 文), that is defined as «something extremely essential to literature, a "way of nature (自然之道)" that passes through the coloring of animal and plants» (Inomata 1988, p. 8). This concept that passes into *Manajo* with the term 'reason of nature' (自然之理), is also same that inspired the metaphor of the 'leaf' in the *Kanajo*. In other words, the 'word' indicated by the *Kanajo* with the term *kotonoha*, is not just the (vernacular) language as it is, but it is the literary language configured in Chinese literary tradition, a 'written language' rich in rhetoric and refinement that allows the natural connection between man and nature idealized in *Kanajo*:

世の中にある人、ことわざ繁きものなれば、心に思
ふことを見るもの聞くものにつけて、言ひ出せるなり
It [the *waka*] comes into being when men use the seen and the heard to
give voice to feelings aroused by the innumerable events in their lives.
(KKS *Kanajo*)

In conclusion, both in Japan and in Italy the refinement of the vernacular
proceeded as a necessary step to its consolidation and legitimation as literary
language, or language of the art, starting from Chinese poetic theories. Indeed,
also Dante in his *De vulgari eloquentia* performed his operation of 'purifying
the vernacular', basing his analysis not on geographical parameters, but rath-
er on an evaluation of the sound, musicality, richness and 'nobleness' of the
words, excluding the most uncivilized and popular expressions of the Sicilian
dialect, and elevating to model of vernacular – regardlessly of the region – the
poems that reached an adequately high level of refinement.

This tendency towards refinement and search for rhetoric elaboration is not
only typical of Dante, but was an innate characteristic of the Sicilian School,
also and especially in comparison with the *troubadour* poetry. Also in this in-
stance, the first reason can't be anything but the 'divorce between music and
poetry'. It is just the theory of the 'divorce' that can explain the novelty of the
poetry of the Sicilian School, «including the shift to the metric system, the
innovations of the strophe structure and the syllabic formula, the invention of
sonnet, the selection of genres and themes, the metric-rhetoric enrichment»
(Antonelli 1994, p. 322).

Even if the causes of this process are different in Japan, a 'conversion' from
sung *waka* to written *waka* can be detected at the time of the *Kokinshū*. More-
over, the compilation of the *Kokinshū* may have given further acceleration to
this process in the following century. The *Wakanrōeishū* (Collection of *wa-
ka* and *kanshi* for recitation, 1018), a collection of *waka* and *kanshi* verses on
selected topics edited by Fujiwara no Kintō, demonstrates the completion of
this process. Despite its title 'for recitation', according to Aoyagi Takashi the
Wakanrōeishū was not exactly thought as a text for declamation or recitation
in public, but rather for private and silent reading (Aoyagi 1999).

The similarity we detected between Italy and Japan as regards the pas-
sage from (oral) songs to (written) poems, may be seen as a constant in World
Literature. The fact that in every *written* literary tradition there has been a
moment when the change of medium from sung poetry into written poetry
occurred is a tautology. This 'step' can happen with different speed in differ-
ent environments, but it can happen only once, and the *Kokinshū* and the Si-
cilian School represent this moment in their respective histories of literature.
The *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School are of course the result of a longer and

more complex process that lasted several decades, or even centuries before it reached this fundamental turning point; but the fact is that both the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School worked as boundaries between an age when Italian and Japanese were not used for written poetry. I wish to call this a 'change of physical state' – like the one happening when water suddenly turns into ice at 0°C – of the literary medium, because actually it happened in a relatively short time if compared to the whole Italian and Japanese literary history. In my opinion here lays the greatest value – from the point of view of the history of literature – of these two works, regardless of the importance that later writers accorded to them. The shift from poems composed basically for singing, to poems composed basically for reading, first happened– in such a self-aware and deliberate way – with the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School.

In the next Part I will analyze more in detail some of the stylistic and formal features that are common to the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School in a very specific way, like the formalization of language with the invention of new metrics and rhetoric devices and the reduction of poetic themes, with the exclusion of politics and the focus on love poetry.

PART IV
FORMALIZATION, TRANSLATION, EXCLUSION

Quel est donc l'imbécile (c'est peut-
être un homme célèbre) qui traite
si légèrement le Sonnet et n'en voit
pas la beauté pythagorique?
Charles Baudelaire

One of the key points suggesting a similitude between the poems of the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū*, and at the same time marking the difference respectively with the poems of the *troubadours* and the *Man'yōshū* is the formalization of the poetic language, and a particular use of words, images, expressions, rhetorical devices and themes.

Let's start from two similar and important – albeit outdated – critical opinions about the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū*. At the end of the 19th century, the poet Masaoka Shiki in his *Utayomi ni atauru sho* stated that many of the poems in the *Kokinshū* showed a «invention of falsehood» (嘘の趣向), being poor in originality and in sincerity (cit. in Fujiwara 2004, p. 8). About half a century later, the Italian critic Gianfranco Contini, in his important study about the poetry of 13th century Italy, gave a less negative, but similar opinion about the Sicilian poetry: «the cultural and – in boundaries that cannot be extended too far – poetic importance of the Sicilians is all in the manneristic aspect» (Contini 1960, p. 48, cit.in Di Girolamo 2008, p. XCII). Contini stresses the lack of new contents in Sicilian poetry, totally subjected to a manneristic reiteration of just a part of the richest and more variegated Occitan troubadour poetic themes. Apart from the difference between Shiki and Contini – a poet the first, a scholar the second – their evaluation is characterized (or influenced) by the idea that the value of a literary work would necessarily be tied to its charge of 'creativity', becoming evident in the novelty of contents and subjects shown. Apart from the questionable equation 'creativity = value', also the opinion about a lack of originality is nowadays outdated, as contemporary scholars are unanimous in acknowledging great creative and intellectual efforts and an evident value of novelty and originality in the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School. It is true that this intellectual effort was principally focused on formality rather than on the research of new themes, if not all, almost bor-

rowed and inherited from previous traditions, but labeling this attitude as mere mannerism and lack of originality would be inaccurate.

The key point of the creativity of the Sicilian poets and the poets of the *Kokinshū* lays in a process of formalization of language and rhetoric, pursued through a careful practice of *translation* – in a broad sense – from previous and more legitimated literatures, and of re-elaboration of rhetoric and metric elements. Before I make any kind of consideration about the two kinds of poetry like the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū* I need to elude the influence of Romanticism on our modern idea of literature (Ōoka 164). We must be careful not to evaluate the 13th century European literature under the «romantic idea of creativity» (Landoni 1997, p. 11) we still tend to have today, because «the uniformity of courtly poetry was a scandal from which it was possible to break free only abandoning the aesthetic criterions introduced by Romanticism; searching for the truth of sentimental expression, personal 'sincerity', originality, could only preclude the access to the comprehension of medieval art» (Köhler 1976, p. 20). Actually, the 'warning against the romantic point of view' is expressed also by Wiebke Denecke in her analysis of the imperial collections of Saga's period: «according to the Romantic idea of poem as a form of personal expression of the poet, poems composed by imperial order to exalt the political objectives of the ruling class, couldn't be considered real literature» (Denecke 2013b, p. 94). But the interesting aspect added by Denecke is that this 'Romantic point of view' is not just a post-19th century European ideal, but was present also in Japan since the Heian period, and visible in the continuing debate between the defenders of lyricism and the supporters of the practical utility of literature (Ibid.).

Landoni suggests a very interesting application of this position specifically to the Sicilian School: «the novelty, in a period in which the tradition is represented by non-Italian writings, can be identified with the instrumental level itself, namely the written [Italian] language, that should be considered new because now for the first time it is destined to written expressions of beauty. And, through a process of specialization and diversification internal to the substance of writing, novelty could involve some components of writing, like grammatical cohesion, rhetoric organization, lexical selection, and could foster the rise of beauty from the basis of writing» (Landoni 1997, p. 12).

In my opinion, a very similar statement may be found in Masuda's thesis about the importance of technicalities in the parameters of the evaluation of the *waka* from the aristocratic class. «The poems of the *Kokinshū* are not selected with the intention of elevating the lyricism from the position of the individuals. The romantic behavior approving the individuality or diversity is not detectable; rather, there is a preference for a classical world that maintains a systematical order. That's why the personality of the poets of the *Kokin-*

shū couldn't create a territory of individual and original lyricism, but existed exclusively inside the pre-existing and pre-shared world of the *waka*, in the strong technicality that refined and brought to light its blind spots. […] The wide acceptation of the *waka* among the segment of non-poetic society, lays first of all in its technique» (Masuda 1976, p. 41).

It is true that the influence of previous literary works on later literatures is not a characteristic, but a constant, common to almost every literature of all times and countries; so this similitude may not suffice to justify a comparison between two literary traditions so distant in space and time as medieval Italy and Heian Japan. Even so, I think that in the instance of the Sicilian poems and the *Kokinshū waka*, this *translation process* shows a substantially peculiar configuration: the double relationship with a former vernacular culture (*troubadours* and *Man'yōshū*) and with a higher and more ancient culture (Latin and Chinese), and a similar approach to the organization and exclusion of determined expressions and elements of previous traditions to consolidate a new, highly elaborated model of poetry, whose first and strongest source of identity is the new poetic language. «The poetical language used by Giacomo [da Lentini] and the Sicilians was Sicilian-based, like the court, but with an over-regional *koiné* character; it was an "illustrious Sicilian", due to the powerful presence of the Provençal and Latin model, and was kept on "noble" levels of a refined and accurately measured [linguistic] register, also from a semantic point of view» (Antonelli 2008, p. LVII). Even if the linguistic distance between the *Kokinshū* and the *Man'yōshū* is considerably shorter than the one between Italian and Occitan, also the Japanese used in the *waka* was different from the everyday speech of the members of court, it was somehow intentionally kept high and 'distant' from the daily life. «Also for the literates that lived in the age when the *waka* was actually composed […] the feeling of distance of the *waka* was, also in ancient times, the mainstream. […] Because it aroused respect, it was distant. This sensation could be seen, on the contrary, as the driving force that made the *waka* last so long» (Watanabe Y. 2009, p. 2). If the distance of the *waka* from everyday speech was a natural characteristic of Japanese poetry – or maybe, of poetry in general – in this chapter I will show how the level of abstraction of the poetic language reached new heights in the *Kokinshū*, marking its difference first of all with many of the poem of the *Man'yōshū*'s, «strengthening the character of an indicative-symbolic language (指示的記号的) more than that of an emotional language (情動的)» (Masuda 1976, p. 35).

The importance not to fall under the modern conception of 'originality' is successfully pointed out by Landoni: «Fidelity to tradition, in a society in which the cultural contribution is symbolized by the marginal notes and in

which the progress is considered the opposite of change, is binding» (Landoni 1997, p. 49-50), a warning that I think can fit also the ancient Japan instance, invalidating Masaoka Shiki's positions – at least from a critical point of view.

Moreover, the caution we must use when comparing the formalization strategies in the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū*, is the same that has guided this research since the beginning: not to fall under simplistic and tautological conclusions where since A has some similarities with B, A and B are similar. To avoid this risk, to begin with I will focus on each field – Italy and Japan – trying to outline first of all the features distinguishing the Sicilians from the *troubadours,* the *Kokinshū* from the *Man'yōshū*, and the strategies attempted to formalize the vocabulary – on the syntactic, rhetoric, thematic side – of the previous tradition, basing the analysis on the most recent studies of each area. Only after that will I attempt to compare not the single poems, but rather the conclusions these area studies pursued. Thus I hope I will be able to outline similitudes not only between two or more specific texts, but rather in the general process of formalization and consolidation of vernacular court poetry, from the point of view of World Literature.

Formalization in the Sicilian School

Translations into Italian

It is common knowledge that Occitan poetry was the first and most influential model for the Sicilian poets: the acknowledgement of the *cansò* – *canzone* in Italian – as the highest poetic genre is its the most immediate proof, and many studies – for example Aniello Fratta's (Fratta 1996), or also the recent edition of *I Poeti della Scuola Siciliana* (2008) – accurately researched the ties between a specific Sicilian poem and its possible Provençal models and sources. According to some researches, such as Dronke's (Dronke 1994, p. 58), as regards some of the Sicilian poems, many formal structures resemble the German *minnesäng*, especially the Italian poems – for example *Dolce meo drudo* – written by Frederick II, who, during his adolescence in Germany, had been in contact with the German poets. The panorama of the early European vernacular literatures is very complex and abounding in interchanges reflecting a variegated and flowing political and social background, therefore it is not always easy to outline the origins of certain poetic elements. Anyway, researchers are unanimous in recognizing in the *troubadour* poetry the strongest and earliest pole of influence among the European vernacular lyrics, demonstrated both by the import of Occitan words and expressions into oth-

er languages – including Sicilian – as well as by the theoretical basis on the aesthetic of love elaborated at the Provencal and French courts, the so called *fin'amor* (perfect love) that would become the most universal ideal and distinctive feature of all of court literature.

Aniello Fratta outlines two modalities through which the Sicilian poets absorbed the troubadour texts, «the first tends to reuse single and limited portions, often corresponding to passages easily memorized (*incipit*, comparisons, statements, metaphors, etc.), the second aims at metabolizing larger parts [of text], like one or two *coblas* [stanzas]. In the first instance we can talk of restricted utilization '*a tarsia*' (or '*a collage*'), in the second instance of extensive utilization. These two modalities don't exlude one other, but on the contrary their coexistence [in the same poem] seems the most normal process, especially in the first generation of Frederick's poets» (Fratta 1996, p. 5).

The most suitable example of this process of reusing Occitan poetry may be found in the first poem of the most important manuscript of the early Italian poetry, the *Vaticano Latino*, namely the song *Madonna dir vo voglio* (Milady, I want to tell you, PSS 1.1) by Giacomo da Lentini, basically a translation from a *cansò* by Folquet de Marseille, a *troubadour* that lived at the same time as Giacomo. Furio Brugnolo performed an accurate analysis of this 'translation', underling how its novelty had been immediately recognized by the other Sicilian poets, as well as by the Tuscan copyist of the *Vaticano Latino*, that placed *Madonna dir vo voglio* as an overture of the entire collection, with all the connotation entailed in this choice. In fact, «it is common knowledge that the compilers of the medieval poetic collections (the '*canzonieri*') paid extreme attention to the opening of their collections, firmly believing that authors and compositions at the beginning [of the collection] could orient [the sense of] the whole collection […]. *Madonna dir vo voglio* – especially in the light of the medieval canons and aesthetic conventions – is not just a 'beautiful' poem, but it is also one of the most important benchmarks of all of the 13th century poetry, a model for courtly lyric, one of the most imitated, quoted and recalled texts of all 13th century and beyond» (Brugnolo 2004, p. 271). *Madonna dir vo voglio* is one of the two songs quoted by Dante in his *De vulgari eloquentia* as an example of «more refined manner» and «courtlier words» (DVE I-xii, 8).

Because of the importance of this 'first' Sicilian *canzone* - not chronologically, but for importance and positioning into the collections –, a more accurate textual analysis is required. Comparing it with Folquet's original we can clarify how, on a textual level, the Sicilian poets – in their most skilled and respected exponent, Giacomo da Lentini – accomplished that process of translation from the Occitan poetry finalized to the refinement of the Italian poetical language. Unlike Giacomo's song, that has been conserved integrally, the final part of Folquet's song is lost, so we can't say if Giacomo translated the

whole of Folquet's composition, or inserted some major changes in the second part. Therefore, I will quote only the first two stanzas of both.

> *Madonna, dir vo voglio*
> *como l'amor m'à priso,*
> *inver' lo grande orgoglio*
> *che voi, bella, mostrate, e no m'aita.*
> *Oi lasso lo meo core,*
> *che 'n tante pene è miso*
> *che vive quando more*
> *per bene amare, e teneselo a vita!*
> *Dunque mor' e viv' eo?*
> *No, ma lo core meo*
> *more più spesso e forte*
> *che non faria di morte   naturale,*
> *per voi, donna, cui ama,*
> *più che se stesso brama,*
> *e voi pur lo sdegnate:*
> *amor, vostra 'mistate   vidi male.*
>
> *Lo meo 'namoramento*
> *non pò parire in detto,*
> *ma sì com'eo lo sento*
> *cor no lo penseria né diria lingua;*
> *e zo ch'eo dico è nente*
> *inver' ch'eo son distretto*
> *tanto coralemente:*
> *foc'aio al cor non credo mai si stingua;*
> *anzi si pur alluma:*
> *perché non mi consuma?*
> *La salamandra audivi*
> *che 'nfra lo foco vivi   stando sana;*
> *eo sì fo per long'uso,*
> *vivo 'n foc'amoroso*
> *e non saccio ch'eo dica:*
> *lo meo lavoro spica e non ingrana.*
> [...]

Milady, I want to tell you (through these verses) how this love has taken possession of me –despite of the proud arrogance that you, beauty, show off – and [this love] doesn't help me. Alas, my heart, that endures so much pain to live in the very moment it dies due to its perfect love: and it considers this dying as life! So, do I die and live at the same time? No, it is not me: it's my heart that repeatedly dies, and with greater pain than if it really died by natural death; and this is your fault, lady, that it

[my heart] loves and yearns more than for itself, even if you continue to disdain it: to fall in love for you, my love, that's been my disgrace. My love is not expressible with words (=in a poetic phrase), on the contrary no (human) heart could perceive, nor language could be able to express the real load of my feeling; and even what I am saying is nothing compared to the intensity of the love I am taken by. In my heart I have such a fire that I think it will never be extinguished; rather it will continue to burn: so, why doesn't it destroy me? They say salamanders can live unharmed in the fire; so do I, for a long lasting habit: I live into the fire of love, but I don't know how to express it: my wheat sprouts, but doesn't yield grains. (Giacomo da Lentini, *Madonna dir vo voglio*, PSS 1.1, 1-32)

A vos, midontç, voill retrair'en cantan
cosi•m destreign Amors e men'a fre
vas l'arguogll gran, e no•m aguda re,
qe•m mostras on plu merce vos deman;
mas tan mi son li consir e l'afan
que viu qant muer per amar finamen.
Donc mor e viu? non, mas mos cors cocios
mor e reviu de cosir amoros
a vos, dompna, ce am tan coralmen;
sufretç ab gioi sa vid'al mort cuisen,
per qe mal vi la gran beutat de vos.

Parer non pot per dic ni per senblan
lo bens ce vos vogll ab <.........> fe
mas niens es so ce vos dic: si•m te
al cor us fiocs que no•s <........>an.
Per cals raisons no•m ausi consuman?
Savi dion e•l autor veramen
qe longincs us, segon dreic e raisos,
si convertis e natura, don vos
deves saber car eu n'ai eissamen
per longinc us en fioc d'amor plaisen...

To you, milady, I want to express by singing, how Love squeezes me and constrains me, and how [Love] doesn't give me any aid against the high pride (=haughty heartlessness) that you show to me as I ask for you mercy; yet such is my torment and grief that, to love you perfectly, I live when I die. Therefore, do I die and live? No, it is not me: it's my desirous heart that dies and lives again with the thoughts I address to you, lady, whom I love so intensely; please allow me to live with a joy [that a man] who is torn apart dead, because to his misfortune he saw your great beauty.

> The love I feel for you <.........> I can't express with words nor
> with my behavior; on the contrary, I tell you nothing: because
> my heart is entangled in a fire that doesn't<.........>. Why doesn't
> it kill me, destroying me? Ancient sages told, and it is a truth,
> that a long lasting habit, as it is logic and reasonable, changes
> in nature: that's why you must know that the same is happening
> to me, because of the long lasting habit of the fire of love…
> (Folquet de Marseille, *A vos, midontç*, from the Italian translation of
> Brugnolo 2004)

What Giacomo did to Folquet's song is not a real translation. As summarized by Brugnolo «the Notary [Giacomo] 1) removes (for example "on plus merce vos deman", "per senblan"), 2) replaces (reducing and condensing: "retrair'en cantan" becomes "dire"; destreing e men'a fre" becomes a more neutral "m'à priso"), moves ("coralmen" at v. 9 is placed at Giacomo's v.23, preceded by a *distretto* that replaces the previous *destreing*), […] 5) surrogates and compensates (especially from the phonetic point of view […])» (Brugnolo 2004, p. 276). Brugnolo states that all of these modifications performed by Giacomo on the original text followed «a well determined stylistic, but also ideological-conceptual vector: greater simplification and greater perspicuity of logical-syntactical nerves of the expression […]; greater generalization and phenomenological objectification of love […]; greater rationalization of sentimental and emotional data […]; and finally, greater incisiveness and expressive celerity […] and greater conciseness and intellectual lucidity» (Brugnolo 2004, pp. 276-277). Brugnolo remarks also the most important variation, the metric innovation, that is the real distinctive feature of the Sicilian School – and Giacomo da Lentini –, but the conclusion I want to underline is the following: «the Notary […] assimilates it [=the original text], but he also goes beyond it, and lastly gets rid of it. Once we have read *Madonna dir vo voglio*, we no longer feel the need to read Folquet's song again (unless for academic aims) and this is just because – ultimately – this [Giacomo's] version is superior to the original. And this is not because he "tells more" than the original text (enriching it with new suggestions or motivations) –rather, the opposite –, but because he realizes the inborn potentiality the original had, but that, we could say, the original wasn't able to catch: expressive and formal potentiality, not merely thematic nor discursive» (Brugnolo 2004, p. 288). In my opinion what is most important in Brugnolo's analysis is the fact that Giacomo's poem is richer than Folquet's, not because it «tells more», or adds something *quantifiable*, but because it elaborates the text, especially by the textual *reduction* and formal systematization, producing a 'copy' that Brugnolo considers 'better' than the original. It is the same consideration Antonelli made on the

originality of *Madonna dir vo voglio*, because he recognizes this poem's 'rational' structure: unlike the original by Folquet, in Giacomo's *canzone* «the structure is clearly visible, "rational", almost "logical"» perfectly balanced and built (Antonelli 2008, p. LXIII). In other words «in the Sicilians – and in their *caposcuola* in particular – translation is never a mere stylistic exercise […] but it is the path toward another and more ambitious goal: a cultural and linguistic assimilation of the troubadoric universe that at the same time could represent a firm overtaking of that tradition» (Brugnolo 2004, p. 290).

Apart from the specific instance of direct translations, like *Madonna dir vo voglio*, the limit of defining the Sicilians works as 'translations' is evident also in the way they manage the Occitan source. After the definition of 'restricted utilization' of the Occitan sources in the Sicilian poetry, Aniello Fratta makes another distinction between «direct and indirect sources» where remarkable is the definition of indirect sources as «a mnemonic overlapping of (indirect) sources, meaning a contaminatory action of reminiscence in which it is actually impossible to distinguish priorities and prevalences» (Fratta 1996, p. 5). So, the troubadours' 'vocabulary' of terms, expressions, themes and *topoi*, is usually absorbed by Sicilian in a way that doesn't allow to establish a precise and univocal correlation between a certain hypotext and a certain hypertext, that is instead appropriate to the instance of Giacomo da Lentini's translation from Folquet.

This is true not only about the poetry of the Occitan *troubadours*, but also as regards the literary works of northern France, both in French and Latin, that left unmistakable traces in Sicilian poetry (Bianchini 1996, p. 12). Since the first generation of Sicilian poets, the influence of the works that contributed to set ethic and aesthetic canons of all of the European courtly culture was clear, in particular the Latin treatise *De Amore*, by Andreas Cappelanus, and romances in *langue d'öil* (ancient French) by Chrétien de Troyes, like the *Cligés*. Also in this instances the Sicilian poets didn't just manneristically imitate the French model 'as it was', but rather proposed a personal and innovative reading that, as mentioned before, had in the formal process of deconstruction and reconstruction its most characteristic feature.

From Andreas Cappellanus the Sicilian poets, first of all Giacomo, 'learnt' how to discuss about the meaning and the definition of love, that, for the Sicilian poems, especially the sonnets, would become a central thematic. The same can be said about the example of Chrétien de Troyes and French Romances like the *Eneas* and the *Roman de Troie*, often quoted in the Sicilian poems, like in the following verses of Giacomo's sonnet *Sì come il sol che manda la sua spera*.

    Sì come il sol che manda la sua spera

> *E passa per lo vetro e no lo parte*
> As like the sun who sends its rays
> and passes through the glass without breaking it
> (Giacomo da Lentini, PSS 1.21, 1-2)

These verse «are anything but a paraphrase of vv. 719-720 of *Cligés* […]
the v. 8 works in the same way as v. 695 by Chrétien (*"lo dardo... / passa per
li ochi"* vs *"li darz est par mi l'uel passez"*» (Bianchini 1996, p. 32).

> *Que li rais del soloil n'i past,*
> *Sanz ce que de rien ne la quast;*
> That sunrays pass through it,
> whithout damaging it
> (Cligés vv. 719-20)

So, the relationship with the 'previous vernacular culture' is, first of all,
a debt of the Sicilians to the *troubadours*, and secondarily, to other previous
or contemporary vernacular literatures like French or – much less – German
as regards some formal features. Many are the examples in this sense, but the
most important thing to underline for our discourse is that the absorption of
these European models was never indiscriminate but always aware and con-
trolled: «the choice of genre and the preference accorded to the romance sector
is evident, both of the Classic and Breton subjects, also in the prose versions,
and the exclusion of the epic-historiographical side; this situation [of The Si-
cilian School], associated to the reference to key-texts for the discourse about
love phenomenology, seems to confirm the presence of intelligently focused,
or anyway well exploited, readings» (Antonelli 2008, p. XLVIII). The 'exclu-
sion of epic-historiographical side' of French literature, that means for exam-
ple the exclusion of fundamental works like the *Chanson de Roland*, that were
probably well known also among the Sicilian poets, is the further proof of an
aware and precise intellectual position toward the previous European models.

Sharing and interchanging among the Sicilian poets

The process of translation is not unique in Giacomo da Lentini, but it is
a feature common to every Sicilian poet, especially the first generation that
actually lived at Frederick II's court. The definition of 'School' itself is based
first of all on a clear sharing, not only of themes, but also of words and ex-
pressions. Elena Landoni carried out a meaningful study on the grammatical
structures of the Sicilian poems, and observed a specific coherence based on
numerous interconnections between the texts of various poets:

The comparative reading of a group of songs by different authors of the first generation, tells us much more than the reading of the same compositions separately. Quoted in the most probable [chronological] order of composition, the following text are:

Ruggieri d'Amici, *Sovente Amore n'à ricuto manti* [Often Love enriched many]

Rinaldo d'Aquino, *Per fin'amore vao sì allegramente* [Because of refined love I go so happily]

Peter de Vinea̱, *Amor, da cui move tuttora e vene* [Love, for which even now my veins move]

Iacopo Mostacci, *Mostrar vorria in parvenza* [I'd like to show it clearly]

Guido delle Colonne, *La mia gran pena e lo gravoso affanno* [My great pain and heavy grief]

Peter de Vinea̱, *Poi tanta caunoscenza* [Because so much knowledge]

What establishes this group is not a series of explicit cross-references, but rather the sharing of some formal elements on the lexical, metric, ryhmic side. These [elements] trace a path of textual references often designated to signal a distance, if not even a parody, toward the various positions presented intratextually. (Landoni 1997, p. 45)

So, for Landoni, what makes the Sicilian poets a 'School', is not an explicit reference to other poets in the text of the lyrics– that is also present, like in the poetic interchange between Giacomo da Lentini and the Abbot of Tivoli – but the 'sharing of some formal elements', as words or metric structures.

An important point focused by Landoni is the analysis of the Sicilian poetic vocabulary, constituted by a process of selection and promotion of some specific terms, where, again, «the novelty lays in a subtraction, not a replacement of previous [*troubadours*] themes» (Landoni 1997, p. 177). This is in general the main feature of a poetry in which «the relative fixity of modes and themes uses a rather limited lexical palette, whose monotony allows, on the contrary, to identify and formalize a genre», and in other words «the finding of new solutions is made possible by outlining thematic, lexical and grammatical standards, whose constitution is performed also through rhetoric strategies easily recognizable in the classical canon» (Landoni 1997, p. 239).

Some practical examples raised by Landoni are the recurrences of couples like *sollazzo e gioco* (amusement and play), or *saggia e canoscenti* (sage and educated), or the association woman-flower, with the words of *fiore* (flower) and *rosa* (rose) that «constitute an ideological circuit of reference» (Landoni 1997, p. 248) about the attributes of a woman.

The invention of the sonnet

The most meaningful example of how the organization of the language in a poetic system was considered a central problem in the work of the Sicilian poets, is at the same time the most revolutionary contribution that the Sicilian School gave to world literature: the 'invention' of the *sonetto* (sonnet), a fixed meter that made its first appearance at Frederick II's court, and whose inventor is supposed to have been Giacomo da Lentini. The *sonetto* can be considered as being composed by two 4-verse stanzas and two 3-verse stanzas, for a total of 14 verses, each one a hendecasyllable (11 syllables). Not only the hendecasyllable would be the most used verse in the succeeding Italian poetry, as in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, but especially through Petrarch and the literary current known as Petrarchism, the sonnet would influence all of the European poetry of the later centuries, as proved by William Shakespeare or Charles Baudelaire's sonnets. Actually, the birth of the *sonetto* is considered still today a sort of mystery, since nobody succeeded in answering the fundamental question raised by Brugnolo: «why did the *sonetto* – unique in this sense among medieval meters – appear *since* the *beginning*, since its birth, as a fixed and unchangeable form, a form in which not only the morphologic component, but also its number and mutual relations are strictly predetermined?» (Brugnolo 1998, p. 8). Although some similitudes can be found between the sonnet and some variations of *troubadours'* meters, like the *coblas esparsas* (scattered stanzas), also Antonelli admits the original fixity of the new meter: «the sonnet therefore appears since its earliest applications, as a 'fixed form': testifying Giacomo's will to propose a *new* metric type, not just a simple metric variation of the [*troubadours'*] *coblas esparsas*» (Antonelli 2008, p. LXVIII).

A convincing step toward the solution of this 'mystery' was taken by Wilhelm Pötters, who carefully demonstrated the close relationship between the 'numbers' of the *sonetto*, 11 syllables, 14 verses and 154 total syllables (=11x14) and the new mathematical theories popular in the Middle Ages, in particular in the works of Leonardo Fibonacci. In his deep analysis of the historical sources, Pötters observes that:

> 1) the most influential mathematician of the middle ages [Fibonacci] used in his great *summa* of geometry of 1220, the figures 11 and 14 as calculation tools for the measurement of the circle. Fibonacci explicitly motivated his choice of the figures 11 and 14: they express the ratio between the surface areas of a circle and of the inscribed square "*in minimis numeris*".
> 2) Similarly, in the poetic form [the sonnet] invented, as far as we know, around 1230 and 1240 at the circle of scholars gathered at the court of Palermo, the numeric figures as basilar measures are 11 and 14.

3) It is common knowledge that Fibonacci had personal relations with various eminent personages of the Magna Curia, with the Emperor, always interested in new scientific-mathematical problems and methods, with Michael Scott, Frederick II's astrologer, and with others.
(Pötters 1998, p. 69)

These led to the following conclusion, from the point of view of the History of Literature, that «thanks to the flourishing of mathematical essays in the 12th and 13th century, thanks to the great mathematical *summae* by Fibonacci (1170/80-1240 ca.) and finally, to the close personal relationship between the mathematician of Pisa [Fibonacci] and Frederick II's court, the intellectuals gathered there were perfectly able to understand the existing structural relationship between metric measurement of the sonnet and some figures constantly used by the geometry of that time. […] The *sonetto* is geometry in metric form, or, more precisely, poetic transposition of two fundamental numeric values of medieval science: 14 and 11» (Pötters 1998, p168).

The invention of the sonnet could be sufficient in itself to represent the revolutionary novelty of the Sicilian poetry, but the point I want underline again is always the same, that also as regards the sonnet, the process actuated by Giacomo – or some other Sicilian poets, like the Abbot of Tivoli (Bianchini 1996, p. 55) – is not an 'invention' and innovation of the contents, but rather of the formal side, on how to manage and arrange words, and what is more important, it represent a level of systematization and regularization undoubtedly superior to the model of the *troubadours' cansò*.

Moreover, the birth of the sonnet perfectly matches and symbolizes that 'divorce between music and poetry' I discussed before: it was not by chance that «the first lyrical genre was born and conceived in a totally independently from the acoustic-musical dimension typical of Middle Age [poetry], and therefore destined solely to the perception of visual and silent *reading* – the par-excellence emblem of the crucial transformation in a deeply secular and intellectual way that the lyrical poetry went through at Frederick II's court» (Brugnolo 1998, p. 9).

We can therefore recognize in the Sicilian School a particular approach to the translation processes and the development of a shared formal system and vocabulary that endorsed the creation of fixed poetic forms, like the *sonetto*. From this point of view, the experience of the Sicilian School became, despite its brevity, an extremely important stage for the whole European literature, a necessary step between the medieval experience of the *troubadours*, and the new 'modern' lyricism of humanism.

Formalization in the Kokinshū

In the instance of Japan, after recalling the linguistic differences outlined before (Italian and Occitan are both an evolution of Latin, while Japanese and Chinese have almost totally different origins), we can observe a similar fact in the translation from a 'previous culture' (the *Man'yōshū*), and a 'higher culture' (the *kanbun*) to the 'new' vernacular language.

As for Sicilian poetry, the real originality of the *Kokinshū* doesn't lay in the invention of totally new themes or images, that are in great part inherited from the *Man'yōshū* and the *kanshi* poetry, but on the regulation, fixation and harmonization of this wide and heterogeneous compendium of poetical topics and expressions following a precise taste and ideology, that has its declaration of identity in the developement of new rhetoric devices, like the *engo*, or in the definitive consolidation of 31-syllable *waka* form. Moreover, one of the fundamental operations performed by the compilers of the *Kokinshū* is the exclusion, in absolute or relative terms, of a determinate kind of *waka* that didn't properly respond to the aesthetic rule chosen by Tsurayuki and the others, and to the symbolic importance given by the 'collection by imperial order'.

Translation from the kanshi: the Chisatoshū

Actually, the process of 'translation' from *kanshi* to *waka* is a constant in the Heian poetry, since *Man'yōshū*'s times, but it is in the Kanpyō era of emperor Uda that we assist to an acceleration of this process that would later lead to the *Kokinshū* style. Moreover, after the Jōwa era the import and quick diffusion of Bai Juyi's collection, the *Baiji wenji*, started to deeply influence Japanese poetry, firstly *kanshi* and secondarily what would later become the *Kokinshū waka*. The best example of this process of translation from Chinese poetry, especially by Bai Juyi, into *waka*, is the *Chisatoshū*, the poetic collection by Ōe no Chisato selecting Chinese verses and 'translating' them into *waka* form. Kuranaka Sayaka firmly states Chisato's importance on the scene of the late 9th century poetry: «The birth of the period of passage from the golden age of *kanshi* to courtly *waka* (*ōchō waka* 王朝和歌) is represented by Chisato's compositions, that took the form of a Japanese translation of *kanbun kundoku* [Japanese reading of Chinese text]» (Kuranaka 2000, p. 98).

Comparative studies between Japanese literature (*waka*) and Sino-japanese literature (*kanshi*) conducted in the last half century have explained quite accurately the modalities and the volume of this process of continuous absorption of Chinese models by *waka* poets, and the analysis of *mitate* in *Chisatoshū* performed by Kuranaka testifies Chisato's aware intention of absorbing Chinese models and translating – in the real sense of the word – them

in Japanese. This 'translation' process takes different modalities; the easiest is showed for example in the following song about the (originally) Chinese legend of *Tanabata* (七夕, *Qixi* in Chinese).

> 今宵織女渡天河
> Tonight the Weaver will cross the River of Heaven
> ひととせにただこよひこそたなばたのあまのかはらをわたるといふなれ
> *hitotose ni / tada koyoi koso / Tanabata no / ama no kawara o / wataru to iu nare*
> It is just once in a year, in this very night that, they say, the Weaver will cross the River of Heaven
> (CS 38)

In poems like this, Chisato «finds a Chinese verse of natural description or a poetical image that is already common to Japanese *kanshi* or universally fixed in China, selects it, and directly paraphrases it» (Kuranaka 2000, p. 100). According to this legend, two lovers, the Weaver princess and the Cowherd (identified with two stars, Vega and Altair), are divided by the River of Stars (the Milky Road), and allowed to meet only once in a year, in the day of Tanabata (7th day of 7th month). The interesting point is that, while in China and in the Chinese poems it is always the woman who crosses the river to reach the Cowherd, by boat or by riding a flying chariot – as happens with the Japanese *kanshi* of *Kaifūsō*, such as No. 33 or No. 56 – in the *waka*, since *Man'yōshū*, it is always the man that crosses the river to reach the weaver girl. This difference is particularly interesting if we notice that even an expert of Chinese things as Yamanoue no Okura, who also took part in a *kentōshi* and visited the Tang court, wrote 12 *waka* where, unlike the Chinese legend, it is the man who crosses the river (MYS book VIII, 1518 and following). It is very likely that when using Japanese to write the *waka*, also the poets who knew the original story chose to adopt the Japanese convention, that was maybe a reflection of the typical Japanese custom of *tsumadoi*, where the man visited the woman's house. This legend was absorbed by the Japanese culture in early times, as demonstrated by many poems on this theme included in the *Man'yōshū* (MYS book X, 1996-2093), and all of these poems, as well as Okura's, see the Cowherd crossing the river to meet the Weaver.

In this sense, Chisato's example is meaningful, as he translates the Chinese verse as it is, with the Weaver crossing the river to meet the Cowherd, in contrast with the Japanese tradition of the *Tanabata*.

Kuranaka indicates another strategy of 'translation' in *Chisatoshū*, not involving fixed images like the Tanabata, but that is more interesting for our discourse. First of all, in the following poem:

月照平砂夏夜霜

Moon lights up the plan of sand, frost in a summer night

月かげになべてまさごのてりぬればなつのよふかくしもかとぞみる

tsukikage ni / nabete masago no / terinureba / natsu no yo fukaku / shimo ka to zo miru

When the sand is lit up by the moonlight, it looks like frost in a deep summer night

(CS 31)

the *mitate* 'sand under the moonlight – frost' never appeared in the *waka* before Chisato, so it could be indicated as the first example of this kind of similitude directly translated from Chinese poetry into *waka*. But this is not the most important point focused by Kuranaka. In a poem structurally similar to the previous,

泉落青山出白雲

The spring falls from the blue mountain, a white cloud comes out.

ゆくみづのあをき山よりおちくればしらくもかとぞみえまがひつる

The running water, when falling from the blue mountain, is so confusing that it looks like a white cloud

(CS 82)

the similitude 'water' and 'white cloud' had already been used before Chisato by other *waka* poets, like Sosei, so it can't be considered a totally new introduction of the *kanshi* elements in the *waka*. For Kuranaka, poems like the two I quoted above are «*waka* that carry a colorful contrast and a pictorial beauty not by inserting a peculiar element from the *kanshi*, but rather arranging ordinary elements, and combining together a certain number of them» (Kuranaka 2000, p. 99). In other words, the *waka* composed in this way by Chisato, «doesn't introduce into the *waka* the original [poetic] world of *kanshi*, but discovers the elements shared by Japanese and Chinese [poetry] both as regards natural scenery and sentimental expression» (Kuranaka 2000, p 106).

So, already in Chisato, at the eve of the compilation of the *Kokinshū* and in the middle of period when the *waka* was being recovered and re-discovered, we saw a 'translation' process that in some instances could take the shape of a mere paraphrase, while in other instances demonstrated a conscious research of the Chinese elements *suitable* to Japanese poetry and feelings, and a 'creative' effort to express such elements in the 31-syllable *waka* form. Hanzawa Kan'ichi conducted an accurate measurement of nouns, verbs, adjectives and other syntactical elements composing the *Chisatoshū*'s *shiku* (the verse in Chinese used as topic) and the *waka*, and the results he draws are: 1) despite the fact that, from the point of view of number of words, the 31-syllable

waka are sufficient for a literal word-to-word translation, in *Chisatoshū* there are just few example of this kind; 2) the Chinese words directly translated into Japanese are basically nouns, and usually occupy less than an half of the poem, while the remaining part is represented by expressions like adjectives and suffixes typical and unique of the Japanese *waka*; 3) even in the instance where Chinese terms are directly translated into Japanese, these don't undergo a mechanical 'find-and-replace', but the same Chinese word is translated depending on the coherency of the poem (Hanzawa 2000, p. 193).

In other words, this process of arranging Chinese elements into new *waka*, is performed through additions and subtractions. An example of both is given by the following.

> 鵲飛山月曙
> The magpie flies, mountain, moon, dawn.
> かささぎのみねとびこえてなきゆけばみやまかくるる月かとぞみる
> *kasasagi no / mine tobikoete / nakiyukeba / miyama kakururu / tsuki ka to zo miru*
> When the magpie flying over the peak cries, it looks like the moon hidden behind beautiful mountains
> (CS 72)

If on the one hand Chisato decreased the number of element shown in the Chinese verse, eliminating the last character 'dawn' 曙 (ch. *shu*, jp. *akebono*), on the other hand he added the noun *mine* (peak), and expanded the verbal compounds from the single character of 'fly' 飛 (ch. *fei*, jp. *tobi*) to four elements, with 'fly over' (*koete*), 'cry' (*naki*) and 'go' (*yukeba*).

Moreover, in the last verse Chisato made the *mitate* of the magpie and the moon explicit, adding the verb *miru* (to look), a *mitate* that wasn't so clear in the Chinese text, or perhaps wasn't a *mitate* at all. If we consider the original couplet by the Tang poet Shang Guanyi 上官儀 (入朝洛堤步月, QTS 40)

> 鵲飛山月曙
> 蟬噪野風秋
> The magpie flies, mountain, moon, dawn.
> The cicadas chirp, fields, wind, autumn.
> (Shang Guanyi, QTS 40)

even trying to paraphrase the specular sequence of nouns as 'the dawn moon on the mountains' and 'the autumn wind on the fields', the association magpie-moon and, for coherence, cicadas and wind, can't be considered a real comparison or metaphor, as intended instead by Chisato.

The same can be done about the use of conjunctive particles like *-do, -do-*

mo, and -*ba*, to express in Japanese one of poetry rules regulated in Chinese, namely the intra-verse caesura between the 3rd and 4th character of a 7-syllable verse, and between the 2nd and 3rd character of a 5-syllable verse. In the previous example on magpie and moon, the -*ba* added to *yukeba*, works as a conjunction between the two halves of the poem. This kind of particles, absent not only in the Chinese verse, but – with a little simplification – also in classical Chinese, are actually 'unnecessary' to a direct and literal translation, that's why their presence proves the active and conscious choices behind Chisato's work.

From Kuranaka and Hanzawa's studies, we understand that the tendency to adopt fixed forms and expressions and especially interrelations between words that lead to the creation of fixed semantic fields, was already clear in the *waka* before the *Kokinshū*. For example, in *Chisatoshū*, «about the use of the words *fuku* [blow] and *oku* [lay down], we observe that they appear principally as an ornamental appendix respectively to *kaze* [wind] and *shimo* [frost], and so they are used to fix one single poetic phrase» (Hanzawa 2000, p. 192).

With the previous examples, I wanted to clarify that the study of the intermediate period between the *Man'yōshū* and the *Kokinshū* is a fundamental subject to comprehend the nature of the *Kokinshū* itself, exactly as the study of the poetry of the *troubadours* is indispensable to understand Sicilian poetry. By observing the 'translation' methods in works like the *Chisatoshū*, we can detect peculiar and innovative processes performed by the compilers. The compilers of the *Kokinshū* enhanced the process of aware selection and translation of Chinese sources showed by Chisato, applying also the same, coherent criterion to the previous *waka* tradition symbolized by the *Man'yōshū*. Moreover, although he didn't participate in the compilation process, Chisato can be correctly defined a '*Kokinshū* poet', as 10 of his *waka* were included in the collection, and he took part in many court events related to the *waka*. In other words he was the typical *bunjin* – expert of Chinese poetry – called to compose Japanese *waka* poems. A curious detail that I will not analyze here – but that may have something to do with the 'inferiority complex' of the compilers against the *kanshi* – is that even though Chisato was a contemporary of Tsurayuki and the other compilers, in the *Kokinshū* his poems are labeled as 'by anonymous'.

New interrelations of words and rhetoric devices in the Kokinshū

The same approach to *kanshi-waka* relations showed by Chisato, especially in the search and definition of fixed semantic and lexical fields connecting a certain word or expression with another, is clearly visible – and maybe should be indicated as the principal characteristic – in the *Kokinshū*, and in the criterion of assimilation of the previous *waka* elements.

Let's start from the analysis of the 'seasonal compounds' (景物の組合わ せ), namely the combination of two different elements of the natural or of the human world, such as plum flowers + snow, cherry blossoms + mist, autumn leaves + loom etc. Suzuki Hiroko counts about 70 of these compounds in the *Kokinshū*, but the most important thing she asserts is that almost every compound has been already used in the *Man'yōshū* (Suzuki 2012, p. 35). The combination of seasonal elements in the *waka* poems begun in the so called 'third period' of the *Man'yōshū*, after the foundation of the Nara capital, under the influence of the Chinese *yongwu shi* 詠物詩 (poetry about things); therefore we can say that already in the *Man'yōshū* the influence of the *kanshi* on the *waka* was constant and noticeable (Suzuki 2012, p. 36). The novelty the *Kokinshū waka* held in the adoption of this kind of pre-constituted combination of poetical images lays entirely on the systematic and aware re-arrangement of the images themselves. One of the examples proposed by Suzuki is the following poem by Mibu no Tadamine, one of the compilers of the *Kokinshū*:

秋の夜の露をば露と置きながら雁の涙や野辺を染むらむ
aki no yo no / tsuyu o ba tsuyu to / okinagara / kari no namida ya / nobe o somuramu
Is this merely the / dew of an autumn night or / have the red tears of / the wild geese dyed the fields with / the myriad hues of fall
(Mibu no Tadamine, KKS 258)

According to Suzuki, the association of goose (雁), dew (露) and autumn red leaves (紅葉) was already present in the *Man'yōshū* (i.e. MYS 2181), but while in the *Man'yōshū* the relationship between the three terms remained separated in two distinct concepts 'the dewdrops dye the leaves' and 'geese's tears resemble dewdrops', Tadamine merges, for the first time, the two ideas, suggesting that geese's tears are responsible for the fields becoming red (Suzuki 2012, p. 39). So, the 'innovation' introduced by the *Kokinshū* consists in taking an already defined 'vocabulary' of images and charging it with new meanings based on formal and rhetorical elaboration, creating new interconnections between these terms; this is the same conclusion reached some years before by Nakano about the influence of Chinese poetry on the Heian literature: «the *utakotoba* of the *Kokinshū* are those that created a new relation between words through vocabulary selection and extraction» (Nakano 2005, p. 65)

This process of arranging previous poetic elements in the *Kokinshū* is about the same as the one we detected in *Chisatoshū*'s *mitate*. Also the *mitate* in the *Kokinshū* is, like in Chisato, greatly influenced by the *kanshi* models, with fixed associations like 'autumn flowers that look like brocade', or 'wind between pines sounding like a zither', or 'flowers like waves' that the poets

of the *Kokinshū* abundantly used. What is important is to underline that, also
in the instance of *mitate*, what the poets of the *Kokinshū* did was not to create
some totally new *mitate*, but rather to fix precise couples of *mitate* in standard
associations (Suzuki 2012, p. 41).

In studying the differences between the *Man'yōshū*, the *Chisatoshū* and
the *Kokinshū*, we can detect changes and an evolution in the use and develop-
ment of rhetoric devices, during the three periods in which we usually divide
the poems of the *Kokinshū* – period of anonymous poets, period of Rokkasen,
period of the compilers (Suzuki 2012, p. 16). For example the *jokotoba* (序詞
introductory words), a phrase of different length (usually occupying the first
three verses of a *waka*) describing a natural element (*busshō* 物象) creating
a contrast or comparison with the following expression describing a human
feeling (*shinshō* 心象). The *jokotoba*, already present in the *Man'yōshu*, was
still largely used during the period of the anonymous poets, corresponding
roughly to the first half of the 9th century, but during the so-called Rokkasen
period (second half of the 9th century) it became marginalized, recovering im-
portance and becoming popular again only at the time of the compilers (end
of the 9th century). For Suzuki, the Rokkasen tried to develop old rhetoric de-
vices, like the *kakekotoba* (掛詞, pivot word) and to invent a new one, like
the *engo* (縁語 related words, or associative words), while the compilers tried
to go beyond the Rokkasen experience, absorbing it, and recovering older de-
vices like the *jokotoba* (*Ibid.*).

As regards the *kakekotoba*, first of all it is important to underline that, ac-
cording to Hirano Yukiko, it was the development of the *hiragana* phonetic
alphabet that made the existence of rhetoric devices as the *kakekotoba* we see
in *Kokinshū* (especially in the section *Mono no na*) possible (Hirano 2008, p.
377). The *kakekotoba*, namely the unification of two different meanings in
one word, made possible by the strong tendency to homophony of Japanese
– i.e. *matsu* (pine tree, to wait), *aki* (autumn, to loose interest), *nagame* (long
rain, to look away absorbed in thought) etc. – can be performed only in a pho-
netic representation of the poem. It is not by chance that the *kakekotoba* can't
be reproduced in *kanshi*, where each sound (phoneme) is expressed with a
graphic sign (grapheme) that has an almost univocal tie with a specific mean-
ing (morpheme). This can suggest that the refinement of the rhetorical side,
characteristic feature of the *Kokinshū* poems, is motivated by some changes
in the mode of fruition and composition of the *waka* in the second half of the
9th century. The invention of the *kana* and the development of the *kakekotoba*
are mutually connected.

The most original and characteristic rhetoric device developed at the time
of the *Kokinshū* is probably the *engo*. If the *kakekotoba* can be defined as the
casual encounter of two words that have no semantic relation but only a simple

homophony (Watanabe Y. 2009, p. 92), with the *engo* this 'fortuity' reaches a higher degree, as the concatenation of words creates a second level of meaning parallel to the main phrase of the poem. For example, let's see the following poem by Sakanoue no Korenori written on a folding screen:

> 刈りてほす山田の稲のこきたれてなきこそわたれ秋の憂ければ
> *Karite hosu / yamada no ine no / kokitarete / naki koso watare / aki no ukereba*
> New cut rice hung to / dry in mountain fields a line / of geese fly across / the sky crying for autumn / it is the season of sadness
> (Sakanoue Korenori, KKS 932)

Actually the literal translation of this poem should be 'hill paddy rice is reaped and hung down to dry. I cry for the autumn sadness', so, on a 'first degree' of reading the only meaning we can get is the description of rice plants cut and dried, and, totally detached from that, the poet's sadness for autumn. But through the *kakekotoba* of the words *kari* (cut, goose), *naki* (singing of birds, weeping of someone), and *aki* (autumn, stop loving someone) the semantic field around the wild goose (*kari*) is evoked at a 'second degree', creating a parallel phrase that doubles and enriches the poem, connecting the natural description of the first part (rice field), with the human feeling of the second (sadness of autumn). We can say that the *engo* and the *kakekotoba* support each other, because we can't create an *engo* without using some *kakekotoba*, but at the same time the 'casual encounter' between homophone words (the *kakekotoba*) becomes coherent and complete only through the correlation (*engo*) with other words. We could say that the *Kokinshū engo* is the natural evolution of *kakekotoba*, the *engo* «is the special relationship that arises between word A and word B inside a *waka*, and because word A or word B (or possibly both) hold two different meanings, this generates a special relation based only on the textual context» of the poem itself (Watanabe Y. 1999, cit. in. Suzuki 2012 p. 44).

Apart from the complex definition of the *engo*, it is clear that such a rhetorical device is mainly based on the fixation and formalization of certain determined associations and relationships between poetic words, like the *kakekotoba*. As clearly explained by Suzuki, in the example of the word *kari* (wild goose), there is a series of words that are automatically brought to mind with the word *kari*, such as moon, wind, voice, tears, crossing, returning… a sort of «linkage of *utakotoba* [poetic words]» based on the setting of determined combinations, that is consolidated by the repetition of the *kakekotoba*, the *mitate* and the *engo* in the macro-text of the Heian poetry.

Another example of this process could be the following poem by Ōshi-

kōchi no Mitsune, written while he was mourning for the loss of his mother.

> 神無月時雨に濡るるもみぢ葉ばただわび人の袂なりけり
> *kannazuki / shigure ni nururu / momijiba wa / tada wabibito no / tamoto narikeri*
> Glistening crimson / leaves soaked by the freezing rains / of the godless
> month / hang heavy as the sleeves of / the sorrow-laden mourners
> (Ōshikōchi no Mitsune, KKS 840)

The poem, in its narrowest textual meaning, appears unclear in the connection between the *shigure* (rain of winter or late autumn), the *momijiba* (red autumn leaves) and the mourning, but as clearly explained by Takeoka Masao, «the red autumn leaves were until now seen just as an 'external' element of the natural world, but in the circumstances of deep sorrow for his mother's death, that rain becomes his own tears, and the red leaves his own sleeves, and such feeling is showed as true in the elegy by not using the words 'red' or 'tears of blood' in the text » (Takeoka 1976, p. 840). Mitsune takes a further semantic step from a traditional expression – the 'red tears of blood', already attested both in Chinese poetry, for example Yuan Zhen, and in *waka*, with Chisato (CS 92) – to a less direct, and more evocative association. In a way quite similar to the one used by Korenori before (geese-tears-dew-fields), also Mitsune's poem becomes understandable thanks to the extra-textual association of tears-blood. Mitsune takes an expression of Chinese origin – Watanabe Hideo detects the first recurrences in *Han Fei zi* by Han Fei (? - 233 a. C.) and *Shiyi ji* by Wang Jia (? - 390) (Watanabe H. 1991, pp. 204-5) – rarely used in the *waka*, but probably well known to the *kanshi* poets, and without using it directly in the text, he suggests it through the association and the missing link between rain, leaves and sleeves.

This operation has finally the meaning of consolidating not the poetic terms (the *utakotoba*) that were already given in *Man'yōshū* or in *kanshi*, but rather the relationship between these terms and a determinate semantic field. As perfectly resumed by Suzuki, «The basic shape of this linkage of *utakotoba* is given by the *Kokinshū*, and it would become a shared knowledge of people, preserved for many centuries. Composing a new *waka* meant opening a new path inside this network of words» (Suzuki 2012, p. 48). It is evident that poems like Mitsune's, and rhetoric devices as the *engo* couldn't even exist without a precise process of linguistic fixation and regulation like this, involving first of all the poetic vocabulary, with a tendency to regulation and formalization concerning not only the poetical images, but also the syntactic construct, the use of words, and the rhythm (Masuda 1976, p39).

Suzuki Hiroko proposes another speculation about the formalization of the

Kokinshū, by analysing the adoption and modification of 'models' (*kei*, 型) from the *Man'yōshū* to the *Kokinshū*, for example in the instance of Ki no Tsurayuki's love poems (Suzuki 2012, p. 141-155). In *Man'yōshū*'s *sōmonka* (love exchanges, love declarations)[1], one of these 'models' intended as a fixed scene is, for example, love at first sight, that is shown in different patterns, such as

> おほほしく妹を相見て [so vaguely I see / the little, pretty maiden] (MYS 1909)
> はつはつに妹をそ見つる [I vaguely saw the maid] (MYS 2461)
> ただ一目相見し児 [only once I saw / that fair maid] (MYS 2565)
> ほのかに見えて [that was seen only vaguely] (MYS 2394)

This group of expressions tied to the word *miru* (see) constitute a 'typified verse' (類型的な歌句), concerning the concept of falling in love at first sight. Tsurayuki, maintaining this 'tradition', rearranges it in his own way with the following song, 'composed and sent later to someone he had seen at a place where a group of ladies were picking flowers':

> 山ざくら霞の間よりほのかにも見てし人こそ恋しかりけれ
> *yamazakura / kasumi no ma yori / honoka ni mo / miteshi hito koso / koishikarikere*
> A fleeting glimpse / as of mountain cherries seen / through the thick veil
> of / spring mists I scarcely saw / the one who captured my heart
> (Ki no Tsurayuki, KKS 479)

The focal point is the image of 'the mist hides the cherry blossoms', a *topos* set by the anonymous poems of the *Kokinshū*, that Tsurayuki first adapted to a love song. We can agree with Suzuki when she says that «it is Tsurayuki himself that uses abundantly the concept of "the mist that hides the cherry flowers" into his own poems, fixing and adding refinement to this model. In other words the poem A [KKS 479] can be seen as the earliest example of poem that inserted the "model" of nature describing formed in the *Kokinshū* into a love song » (Suzuki 2012, p. 146). This is the way Tsurayuki rearranges previous elements already fixed in *waka* tradition – love at first sight and the cherry flowers hidden by the mist – under a new perspective, and this 'novelty' is clearly not 'quantitative' or pursued by an 'addition' of terms, but rather obtained by enriching the meaning of each word with extra intercon-

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[1]   The definition of *sōmonka* is problematic. Originally it was intended as a letters exchange between lovers, but in the book '*Sōmon*' of *Man'yōshū* it seems to have the meaning of 'to let know the poet's feelings to another person'.

nections with other words, fixing – and therefore reducing the field of usage – a certain number of words as *utakotoba*, namely words allowed to be used in *waka* poetry.

Innovation by subtraction

As I said before, the interesting point of all this process is accomplished without any increase in the number of images or poetic vocabulary. In other words, it is not an 'innovation' by *addition*, but rather by *subtracting* a determined number of elements from a *previous* literary compendium, that is the *Man'yōshū waka* + the Chinese and Japanese *kanshi*.

Of course this process is not detectable by reading a single poem, but only through the analysis of the structure of the *Kokinshū* as a whole. A good example of this is offered by Masuda's analysis of the differences between the poems about *Tanabata*'s legend in the *Man'yōshū* and the *Kokinshū*. Of all the suggestions and applications that the poets of the *Man'yōshū*'s invented inspired by this Chinese legend – the lover that crosses the river, the river of stars, the weaver girl waiting for her man, the boat in the sky, etc., – in the *Kokinshū*, under the book of Autumn, the compilers only selected poems focusing on the 'once-in-a-year encounter' motif and the 'long wait' for that night (the *Kokinshū*, book IV, poems 173-183). «From a wide miscellanea of old and new poems, the compilers focused on what they considered the most essential, or the most representative image of each element, selecting and collocating poems with images complementary to, and having some correlation with that [element]» (Masuda 1976, p. 38). So the compilers selected only poems fitting this paradigm, and excluded many others that, without doubt, must have been composed following other 'models' offered by the *Man'yōshū*.

Proof of this explanation could be the fact that another poem about the *Tanabata*, but with different tones, was excluded from the books of Autumn, and included instead in the *haikaika* (誹諧歌, amusing or playful *waka*) section (book XIX) containing poems showing a less regulated or an extravagant style. In this poem, titled «A poem about Tanabata, composed on the sixth day of the Seventh Month» the poet can't wait another night to meet her lover on the day of *Tanabata*, so he lifts up his vest and crosses the river one day in advance.

> いつしかとまたく心を脛にあげて天の河原を今日やわたらむ
> *itu shi ka to / mataku kokoro o / hagi ni agete / ama no kawara o / kyō ya wataramu*
> Impatiently he / stands there cloak raised to his knees / eager to straddle / heaven's river wondering / if today he will cross it
> (Fujiwara no Kanesuke, KKS 1014)

The explanation for the exclusion of this poem from the book of Autumn could be that for some reasons this poem didn't respect the aesthetic rule and criterion chosen by compilers. Maybe the lover that couldn't wait for the fixed date 'broke' the rule of the *Tanabata*, or maybe the lifting his own vest showing his knees may have been considered somehow comical to the aesthetic sense of the Heian aristocracy.

Also Suzuki Hiroko agrees in recognizing a precise strategy of fixation of the *waka* 'canonical' elements, based on «the compilers' selection of inclusion and exclusion» (Suzuki 2012, p. 80). This strategy, that has the precise theoretical basis we discussed before, is pursued by including or excluding a certain *waka* in the collection, without the need to 'make some new images from scratch', or to use some words never used before, nor to sing about a flower nobody sung of before. The elements of the *waka* were already given by the tradition – including the Chinese one – so there was no need for a 'romantic' impulse for creation. The innovation of the *Kokinshū* lays entirely in the refinement of the language, and in the consolidation of the 'linkage of *utakotoba*'. That's why we could call this process *translation through selection*, or *reinvention through subtraction*.

This process of selection and subtraction is parallel to another important parameter followed by the compilers, namely the order in which the single poems are arranged inside the 20 books composing the *Kokinshū*. It is common knowledge that not only is the collection divided into macro-sections, first of all seasons and love, but every single section shows a precise intention to tie each poem to the previous and the next, or to group poems on the same subject, like wild geese and autumn leaves. In this process of arrangement, particular attention should be given to the position occupied by compilers' poems. As pointed out by Suzuki Hiroko, «in the work of editing of the *Kokinshū*, the already familiar [to the compilers] expression model is given new awareness and correspondences […]. Ki no Tsurayuki's love poems are born from this experience, and are decisive in the orientation of the *Kokinshū*» (Suzuki 2012, p. 154); this is true not only of the love songs, but of every other part of the *Kokinshū*. Let's see for example, the second poem of the first book of Spring, by Ki no Tsurayuki.

> 袖ひちてむすびし水のこほれるを春立つけふの風やとくらむ
> *sode hijite / musubishi mizu no / kōreru o / haru tatsu kyō no / kaze ya tokuramu*
> Today long-awaited / day when spring begins will / the breeze melt icebound / waters in which we once dipped / cupped hands drenching summer robes
> (Ki no Tsurayuki, KKS 2)

This poem describes, with the series water-ice-water, the passage of seasons that is often indicated as one of the characteristic features of the *Kokinshū*, in comparison with the seasonal songs of the *Man'yōshū*. The following ten poems are almost all on the same theme – the last snow, or the melting of winter ice – but it is Tsurayuki's song that most clearly focuses on the concept of the season changing and the water-ice image. The other poems following this one can be considered an enlargement of this central concept fixed by Tsurayuki's *waka*. Another example could be the group of four poems on the scent of plum flowers spreading into darkness, that opens with the following poem by Tsurayuki:

> 梅の花にほふ春べはくらぶ山やみにこゆれどしるくぞ有りける
> *ume no hana / niou harube wa / kurabuyama / yami ni koyuredo /*
> *shiruku zo arikeru*
> Though I cross in the / darkness of night the spring scent / of plum
> blossoms on / Mount Kurabu vividly / informs us of their presence
> (Ki no Tsurayuki, KKS 39)

Many are the studies about the inner composition of the *Kokinshū*, and the intertextual relation between single poems or groups of poems, but what is important to underline again is the awareness of the process and the direction of systematization, regulation, and decrease of the previous tradition according to the aesthetic rules fixed by the compilers, first of all Tsurayuki and Ōshikōshi no Mitsune. Moreover, since at the time of the compilation of the *Kokinshū* Tsurayuki and Mitsune were still young and lacking a strong curriculum as *waka* poets, many of their poems may have been composed during the process of the compilation itself (Suzuki 2012, p. 23), and this is a further proof of the coherence between the *Kokinshū* as a macro-text and the *waka* included in it. «The *Kokinshū* is not a collection of outstanding poems, but a collection of poems that work together to create something larger. It is a work created through the editorial efforts of the compilers, who took a body of individual poems and, by means of selection, classification, and ordering, created a new and unique work» (Rodd 1984, p. 24)

On the other hand, the outline of this compilation rule leads to the conclusion that the *Kokinshū* can't be considered a valid witness of the 9th century *waka*, because in its process of selection and organization of poems clearly shows a precise orientation to *privilege* a specific kind of *waka* and to *exclude* another, as we will see later about the exclusion of the political theme.

Rhetoric as self-determination of the poetic community

I want to spend some further words on the importance of rhetoric and language formalization for the self-determination of a poetic tradition, as reflection of a precise social group. As already concluded by Erich Köhler on the troubadours, «each song, as well as each new execution [of that song], becomes the approximately perfect realization of a unity, the ideal unity of the chivalric "State", that is sublimated into a human ideal that is exemplar and holder of a universal value» (Köhler 1976, pp. 29-30). Formalization, one of the keywords of this research, is also the most characteristic stylistic feature of *troubadour* poetry, and more in general of most of the medieval poetry. This formalistic side, that has an inborn monotony, has always been seen as a flaw of this kind of poetry – because of the influence of the romantic concept of 'originality' Landoni talked about – until Paul Zumthor elaborated, some years before Köhler, his convincing *théorie formelle*, acknowledging monotony itself as a rhetoric dimension: «the inflexible form including it [the contents of the poem] is almost woven in a net of relations by resemblance, opposition, repetition, complementarity, etc. […] Each element of the poetic form is a 'sign'. But it is not a sign directly referring to a reality outside the text (as metaphors could do, originally, or the symbol of some kind of modern poetry): it is a sign 'coagulated' into a group […] whose constituent elements are meaningful in relation to each other. It is a 'sign' in relation to other 'signs'. Poetry by itself – as tradition and as single works – represents a *wide group of reciprocally motivated signs*» (Zumthor 1973 pp. 202, 212, cit. in Vàrvaro 1985, pp. 190-191). In other words, «the lyric universe is organized according to rhythm and modes of formal invention, […] according to the power of resonance of *cliché*, the richness of its *milieu harmonique*, the grade of decoding receptivity of the audience» (Mancini 1976, p. XXX).

An example of these 'signs' could be the literary *topoi*, as interpreted by Vàrvaro, for example the '*aire de Proensa*' (wind of Provence) in a Peire Vidal's song:

> *Ab l'alen tir vas me l'aire*
> *Qu'ieu sen venir de Proensa*
> I breathe in and draw toward me the air
> That I feel coming from Provence

This fixed and recurring expression of *topos* have the power to «enable the formulation of a message with the maximum degree of personality compatibly with the capacity of comprehension of the receiver» (Vàrvaro 1985, p. 187). The *topos* is a kind of expressive code, an 'over-language' (*sur-langage*)

as indicated by Zumthor (cit. in Vàrvaro 1985, p. 191).

The definition of formal poetry and *topos* presented by Vàrvaro's point of view has a such wide application that we could find some similitudes with the expressions or 'models' in the *Kokinshū*, with the individuation of *topoi* like the *uguisu* (nightingale) announcing the Spring, or the sadness of autumn leaves etc. In particular, the following definition of formal poetry relevant to the *troubadour* Gace Brulé is particularly interesting for a comparison with, for example, Ki no Tsurayuki. Gace Brulé «expresses his ideas through commonplaces and formulas consecrated by the use […] in Gace, the song looks like a game of tones wisely but subtly varied through the careful use of a *poetic language* already given, and recognized as the only valid way to reach lyrical tonality» (Vàrvaro 1985, p. 193). That means that the *poetic language* is already constituted by the tradition, and the poet doesn't add or invent new 'elements' – like different flowers or adjectives – but he performs an 'addition of meaning', carried out through repetition and a conscious use of the same, given language. Maria Luisa Meneghetti states that «the *canzone* was essentially the most supplied exposition of troubadoric trivialities that a 13th century poet could set up» (Meneghetti 1984, p. 230), implicitly denying any novelty of contents of this genre that from a modern point of view can't be seen as anything more than pure mannerism.

Under this point of view, we are allowed to compare the poetry of the *Kokinshū* to the poems of the second generation *troubadours*, because of this 'formal side', built by the repetition of already given words and expressions, that is also the point on which Masaoka Shiki's critique is based. Nevertheless, as pointed out by many researchers like Roncaglia, the Sicilian School represented a further step in the path of the formalization of poetic language, and this step, from my point of view, could match the one many scholars accorded to the *Kokinshū*. The «*wide group of reciprocally motivated signs*» indicated by Zumthor, seems to reach an even higher level of systematization in the Sicilians, as seen in the example of Giacomo da Lentini's 'translation' of Folquet de Marselha's song. «The new structure [of the Sicilian poetry], that has no correspondence in the Provencal lyric nor in the old French one, creates "an all new sequence of relationships and structural ties between words, with a consequent exaltation of their expressive value"» (Roncaglia 1975, cit. in. Brugnolo 2004 p. 277). Moreover, in the troubadour poetry the process of translation from another language or previous tradition I outlined in this chapter is lacking, or to be more precise, impossible to theorize because of the substantial lack of texts of previous periods, that makes the *troubadours* themselves the 'starters' of all of the European vernacular poetry. Actually, we are aware of the existence of a vernacular literary tradition before William IX, testified by some fragments of poems in Mozarabican (a dialect spoken by the Christian

populations under the Arabic domination in the Iberian peninsula of the 11th and 12th centuries), the so called *khargiat*, and poems in Galician-Portuguese (the ancestor of Portuguese, spoken in the north-western part of the Iberian peninsula) the *cantiga de amigo*. But we have no sufficient data to properly draw an outline of these archaic vernacular traditions, and «it would be extremely risky to expect to rebuild that lost production we can hypothesize only on the most abstract and general level» (Vàrvaro 1985, p. 163). This statement could be applied also to the *Man'yōshū*, that is the earliest document about the *waka* in Japan. Even though something could be said about the influence of Chinese poetry on the *Man'yōshū*, there is no information on the influence of pre-*Man'yōshū waka*, as we have almost no documents on the *waka* before the *Man'yōshū* itself. Therefore, due to the lack of documentation from previous periods, both for the troubadours and the *Man'yōshū*, we are not able to perform a study of the evolution from a previous poetry that is likely to have existed, but that left no traces.

On the contrary, we can always do this kind of analysis with the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū*. The same process we outlined in the Sicilian School can be detected as one of the most characteristic features that more than others distinguishes the *Kokinshū* from the *Man'yōshū*: even if the overall number of expressions is lower, they are encoded in a shared and fixed language, as defined by Zumthor. It is this kind of formalization that, as I showed before, enables the birth of rhetorical devices like the *engo,* typical of the *Kokinshū*. In Masuda Shigeo we can find an early acknowledgement of this approach. «The so called technicality (*gikōsei* 技巧性) of the *Kokinshū* is not seen as something allowing the communication going beyond the separation from the others, but lays in the technique of [language] expressions, intended as a premise of continuity [with the tradition and with other poets]» (Masuda 1976, p. 36). Masuda offers examples of poems on plum blossoms, that share the association with the fragrance of that flower, or about the cherry blossoms, associated to cherry trees on a far mountain, or to the whiteness of their flowers. In the *Kokinshū*, we can't find poems about the *scent* of cherry flowers, or plum flowers *hidden by spring mist*, but only the contrary. In other words, each flower and bird is associated to a precise thematic area, and only a limited number of possible combinations and associations with other words are allowed. The poems of the *Kokinshū* are based on this shared knowledge of fixed associations between poetical images, upon which the poets built their own poem.

I find that this similitude is clearly expressed in the two following passages by Elena Landoni and Suzuki Hiroko, defining the uniqueness of the Sicilian and the *Kokinshū* poetry. For Landoni, in the Sicilian poetry, the «reference to a composition technique tested for long time in France, that consist in drawing

from reservoirs of words already conglomerated around certain subjects, is confirmed by the fact that inside a single poem the subject is often indicated by terms identifying a certain thematic area […]. In other words, there is an establishment of well known lexical tracks, through which the sense is given even before it is openly explicated» (Landoni 1997, p. 158-160). I already quoted Suzuki Hiroko's statement defining the rhetoric evolution of images as a 'wild goose' in the poems of the *Kokinshū*: «The basic shape of this linkage of *utakotoba* is given by the *Kokinshū*, and it would become a shared knowledge of the people, preserved for many centuries. To compose a new *waka* had the meaning of opening a new path inside this network of words» (Suzuki 2012, p. 48). Two passages are especially important, the «establishment of well known lexical tracks» and «the opening of a new path inside this network of words». They are only apparently opposite concepts, because Suzuki's discourse, linked to the analysis of *kakekotoba* and *engo*, assumes the necessary pre-existence of this «network of words», matching the «well known lexical tracks» of the Sicilian poems. If we mix the two statements, we could say that 'it is the opening of a new path on well known lexical tracks' that represents the most remarkable feature of the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School.

To give a further, practical example, we can observe how Landoni detects in Peter de Vinea's poem *Amando con fin core e con speranza* (Loving with a refined heart and hope) «some passages that transit clearly through Giacomo, like the assimilation of the poet with a painter» (Landoni 1997, p. 256), in the following verse:

> *Sì m'èste sua figura al core impressa*
> So much is her figure impressed in my heart
> (Peter de Vinea, PSS 10.5, 9)

The figure of woman impressed into poet's heart, recalls Giacomo's *canzone*, *Meravigliosa-mente*.

> *Com'omo che ten mente*
> *in altro exemplo pinge*
> *la simile pintura,*
> *così, bella, facc'eo,*
> *che 'nfra lo core meo*
> *porto la tua figura*
> *In cor par ch'eo vi porti*
> *pinta como parete,*
> *e non pare di fore;*
> Like a man that carefully looks
> at another model to paint

a similar painting,
so do I, my belle,
in my heart
carry with me your figure.
In my heart I feel I carry you
painted as you are,
and this [painting] is not visible from the outside;
(Giacomo da Lentini, PSS 1.2)

Also Gabriella Maciocca suggests that the 'figure of woman impressed in man heart' in Peter's verse could be derived from Giacomo's poem (PSS 10.5, p. 316), but what I find important to underline is that Peter's verse, as well as the entire poem, doesn't explicitly use the image of 'painting' or the similitude poet=painter as in Giacomo. To Peter, who probably wrote this poem later and knew Giacomo's, the use of the words *figura* (figure), *core* (heart) and *impressa* (impressed) is enough to recall in the reader the metaphor of poet=painter, a fixed and already given image that Peter can reuse, in tacit allusion, evidently sure that all of his readers would already know and share that very image.

Even if the object of the metaphor and the modality of the transmission are different, I think we could assimilate this process of reiteration of given images – fixed in an old, or as in Giacomo-Peter's instance, recent tradition – with the process of 'opening new paths in the network of *utakotoba*' so clearly summarized by Suzuki, for example in the already cited poem on the tears of the geese causing the field leaves to become red. Also in that instance, Tadamine's poem couldn't be understood without the already given association of geese's tears=dewdrops and dewdrops=red leaves, because the second part of the poem 'the meadows are tinted by the tears the wild geese shed' would be lacking a necessary logical passage of tears=dewdrops.

In other words, «the sharing of some formal elements on the lexical, metric, rhythmic side» (Landoni 1997, p. 45) that for Landoni characterized the Sicilian School, seems to be also the most characteristic features of the poets of the *Kokinshū*. In both countries, the use of a common and shared vocabulary contributed to the constitution of a poetic community. In Italy, the continuity with the literary tradition following the fall of the Hohenstaufen dynasty and the Magna Curia, was granted by the identification of the later poets – like Dante – with (part of) the literary values and tastes of the Sicilian School, testified by the sharing of the same poetic vocabulary. In Japan the acceptance and re-use of a codified poetical language and vocabulary (the *utakotoba* of the *Kokinshū*) became the proof of a poet's ability and status, as the knowledge of the *Kokinshū* would be, in later centuries, the grounds on which the late Heian poetic school would build and base its symbolic cap-

ital, with the birth of a new kind of professional poet, perfectly symbolized by Fujiwara no Teika. The identity with the *Kokinshū* will be always based on the rhetorical and formal side, and that's why rhetoric and formalism must be considered the key point for the consolidation of the Heian poetic community: a social group of refined courters to whom knowing the poems of the *Kokinshū* by heart was the first and essential condition to compose new *waka* suitable for every occasion.

Of course, the *engo* or the *kakekotoba* are two rhetorical devices too typical of the Japanese language and poetry that it would be meaningless, if not incorrect, to try to find some equivalent in the Italian or European poetry. Even so, I think that the formalization process behind the formation of this kind of new rhetorical devices, as well as the formation of a fixed repertoire of images and words used by the Sicilian poets, show some substantial similitudes that could demonstrate a common aptitude to manage the language by groups of poets that, as I showed in the previous parts, shared also a similar social and cultural background.

Conclusions

To conclude the chapter about the formalization of poetic language, we can say that, in the instance of the Sicilians, «their poetic versions were not aimed at consecrating a model: rather, they wanted to make that model relevant and operative in the new cultural context of the new language [the vernacular Italian]. In other words: they of course wanted to compete with the [*troubadour*] originals, but on the other hand they meant to intervene on their own autonomous production, through an effort of self-awareness and self-legitimation that is well contextualized in what we can call Frederick II's 'cultural politics'» (Brugnolo 2004, p. 291). The search for new formal contents that was, according to Aniello Fratta, «the only real great interest of those imperial bureaucrats that dedicated part of their time to poetry», was also supported by «a pure emulative spirit that drove them to compete with southern France troubadours, they felt stylistically the closest and most fitting to them, not with the aim of outdoing them [the troubadours], but with the more noble aim of finding new formal solutions able to free poetry from the doldrums of a courtly mannerism increasingly exhausted and repetitive» (Fratta 1996, p. 15).

The same can be said about the poets of the *Kokinshū*, especially at the period of the compilers. They accepted the confrontation with the tradition, both *waka* and *kanshi*, but at the same time they looked for self-awareness and self-legitimation, a position that was also influenced by the political-cultural frame of the politics of the Fujiwara regent led by Fujiwara no Tokihi-

ra, in which the compilers lived and operated. It is not by chance that «the *Kokinshū* represents the deepest period in the history of the *waka* » (Suzuki 2012, p. 29), because the combination of historical, social, political and cultural factors directly determined the constitution of this new canon, based on new aesthetic taste and awareness.

The process of formalization and organization of the poetic language performed by the compilers of the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian poets – as well as the Tuscan compilers of the 13th century collections – may be the most interesting point of similitude between these two poetries. Even if the *Kokinshū waka* and the Sicilian *canzone* or *sonetto* are still very dissimilar kinds of poetry, both in form and contents, the similitude in the process of the formalization we analyzed before, as well as a similar wish and pursuit of the cultural legitimation of vernacular language, are elements one can't easily find in other literatures or other periods, especially since the foundation of the 'classic' canon of literature is something that can hardly be repeated in the long-span of a country's literature history. Even if later movements or poets tried to renovate or deny the importance of such tradition, the presence of the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū* as starting points of the respective histories of literature – as regards the foundation of a poetic language –may be ignored, but not deleted or denied in their own existence. It is not by chance that, almost 1000 years after the *Kokinshū*, Masaoka Shiki felt the need to 'attack' it in order to propose a new concept of (modern) poetry, but by doing that he implicitly recognized the centrality and inevitability of the *Kokinshū* for whatever could be said about poetry in Japan. Paraphrasing Bourdieu, Shiki was granting existence, by fighting against them, to those [the poets of the *Kokinshū*] he wanted to exclude (Bourdieu 1996, p. 226). Talking about Bourdieu, it may be appropriate to quote also his thoughts on the problem of 'originality' and 'creativity' toward a previous tradition: «absolute freedom, exalted by the defenders of creative spontaneity, belongs only to the naïve and the ignorant. It is one and the same thing to enter into a field of cultural production, by settling an entrance fee which consist essentially of the acquisition of a *specific code* of conduct and expression, and to discover the finite universe of *freedom under constraints* and *objective potentialities* which it offers: problems to resolve, stylistic or thematic possibilities to exploit, contradictions to overcome, even revolutionary ruptures to effect» (Bourdieu 1996, p. 235).

Apart from the critique to Bourdieu's socio-centric theory, I find this passage totally coherent with Landoni and Suzuki's positions.

If I were to list the topics mentioned in this part, these would be some main features identifying the two collections.

1) The positioning of the poems of the compilers so «decisive in the orien-

tation of the *Kokinshū*» (Suzuki 2012, p. 154), is specular to the organization of the Vaticano Latino, that opens each of its *quaderni* (books) with a particular poem of a particularly important poet, because of the «firm belief that authors and compositions at the beginning [of the collection] could direct the whole collection» (Brugnolo 2004, p. 271).

2) Both in Japan and in Italy the relationship between the new vernacular and the language of culture (Latin/Chinese) led to a process of translation, in a broad sense, of words, concepts, images, stories, clearly aimed at assimilating the tradition to establish a new canon; the innovation and novelty of this process doesn't lay in the quantitative level, but rather in the ability to organize and fix new rules and relationships between already existing words and poetical images. Both in the Sicilian School and in the *Kokinshū* «the novelty lays in a subtraction, not in a replacement of previous themes» (Landoni 1997, p. 177).

3) This process of translation endorsed the refinement of rhetoric devices and new metric and stylistic solutions, for example the invention of the sonnet, or the fixation of 31-syllable *waka*.

4) The rhetorical refinement is in turn tightly linked to the definitive transformation of 'song' into 'poem', namely the 'divorce of music and poetry' of the Sicilians, and the consolidation of the *hiragana* at the end of 9th century Japan.

5) The refinement and constitution of a rhetoric system – in a broad sense – was able to contribute to the self-determination and identity, also political, of the poetic group that promoted it, even in very different historical contexts like Japan and Italy.

Appendix - The exclusion of politics

As an appendix to Part IV of this book, and at the same time as an introduction to the next part, I would like to examine the problem of the political theme in poetry I already mentioned, as a perfect example – at the thematic level – of the theories expressed until now. The process of 'reduction' of models offered by the previous tradition I discussed before is recognizable not only in the evolution and inclusion/exclusion of single expressions and images, but also in macro-themes like politics and love. The almost total lack of political issues featured both the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū*.

In Italy

While both the *troubadours* and later the Tuscan poets, as well as the German *minnesänger* or other European poets, wrote many emphatic lyrics – of-

ten with a sharp critical tone – about topical facts and rulers of their times, in Frederick II's Magna Curia ruled «the choice not to represent the political debate, but to develop only the phenomenology of love, practiced in Provencal poetry» (Antonelli 2008, p. LIII). There are just some rare accounts of historical and political facts, like in the poem *Ben m'è venuto prima cordoglienza* (Strong came out a sudden pain) by Giacomo da Lentini, where the poet assimilated his woman's arrogance to the anti-imperial politics of the cities of Florence and Milan, and invites her to do like the city of Pisa, that supported Frederick II.

> *E voi che sete senza percepenza,*
> *como Florenza che d'orgoglio sente,*
> *guardate a Pisa di gran canoscenza*
> *che teme tenza d'orgogliosa gente*
> And you that are without discernment,
> like Florence that behaves with arrogance,
> look at Pisa that has great knowledge
> and fears the quarrel with arrogant people
> (PSS 1.7, 33-36)

But this is the exception proving the rule: in practice we can say that the political theme almost totally lacks in the Sicilian poetry. « It has been often observed that this is only love poetry. Yes, there are some attempts to moral poetry, but political poetry lacks completely. At the imperial court [of Frederick] there is no Italian equivalent to the Occitan *sirventes* or the German *spruch*. When Peter de Vinea writes his anti-monastic and anti-papal satyr, he chooses Latin and goliardic verse» (Dronke 1994, p. 63).

So, the absence of a political theme in the Sicilian School is a fact, but what are the reasons for this? Dronke supposes Frederick's implicit censorship towards his courters, preventing them from commenting everyday and political events in the common vernacular language, but this supposition has been denied by Di Girolamo, asserting that at Frederick's court there was no systematic censorship, as demonstrated by the presence of political and satirical elements in the poems of the Greek courtiers (Di Girolamo 2008, XXXVIII). Also the German poets that served Frederick wrote openly about politics in their lyrics, like the most famous *minnesänger*, Walther von der Vogelweide, that offered a long poem to Frederick, *Palästinalied*, describing the 6th crusade Frederick fought some years before (Musca 2005). Another *minnesänger*, Reinmar von Zweter, became Frederick's court poet with a eulogy that declared the emperor the 'guardian of Christianity', but after Frederick's excommunication, he changed his poetry from praise into critical verses of opposition to the emperor (Dronke 1994, pp. 47-48). So, we can hardly say that in Sicily there was a

strong and real censorship against the poets. Even so, it is a fact that while in Occitan, German, Latin or Greek we have accounts of poetry supporting – or opposing – Frederick as a political figure, in the most important poetic experience of the Magna Curia, the Sicilian School, this theme is totally lacking.

As we have seen before, Frederick wasn't completely against a propagandistic – political – use of literature. Peter de Vinea's eulogy is the clearest example of this, but at the same time, texts like Peter's clarify how, at the Magna Curia, Latin and vernacular had a different and well defined area of application: official writings of political matters were committed to Latin. Moreover, as suggested by Vàrvaro, the lack of historical works composed under the will or by order of the emperor «can't find other explanations than Frederick II's disinterest in the legitimation of his power through the history, a will that has been instead greatly important for the Plantagenet sovereign [Henry II of England] and his contemporary emperor [Frederick I Barbarossa]» (Vàrvaro 1989, pp. 85-86). We already reported Vàrvaro's opinion, that at the Sicilian court «politics and propaganda were too serious matters to let poets manage them» (Vàrvaro 1989, p. 89), referring with this to the *troubadour* poets, that after Frederick's coronation visited the Magna Curia, receiving in turn the emperor's cold treatment, as we have no other records of *troubadour* activity in the Magna Curia after 1221 (ibid.). The explanation I gave before is worth repeating here: maybe perhaps because of their social status, the *troubadours*, heirs of a heterogeneous and fragmented society – the feudal courts of southern France– had a natural aptitude to interfere with their personal comments on political matters. The feudal ideology of 'service' by vassals to the king, had the implicit condition of a proper payback, making them look like a sort of 'mercenary poets', ready to be turncoats if a better payment became available elsewhere, or if their lord didn't show so much (economical) mercy. For Frederick, the poet was not supposed to be a mercenary but a member of state bureaucracy, a «man of the State» (Antonelli 1979, p. 65), and it is so clear how, the 'poets' mentioned by Vàrvaro are not the poets of the Sicilian School, that were members of the court bureaucracy, and their existence was functional and univocally tied to the existence of the federician state itself.

The most convincing answer to the question about the lack of political themes in the Sicilian poetry is the one given by Antonelli and already anticipated before: the Sicilian poetry didn't address political matters because «political is the very *raison d'etre* of the Sicilian School, its intrinsic substance, its parade against the world, its mark» (Antonelli 1994, p. 313). In other words, the political meaning should not be searched inside the single poems, but in the symbolic role the School played at the Sicilian court on the stage of the 13th century Italy.

The instance of Guido delle Colonne's song *Gioiosamente canto* (PSS 4.2)

is quite remarkable; Fratta states it was inspired by and partially translated from the troubadour Falquet de Romans's *cansò* titled *Cantar vuoill*. Falquet's *cansò*, probably composed between 1220 and 1228, was directly addressed to Frederick II, as clearly stated in verses 25-32:

> *Ogonet, portam per present*
> *ma canson a l'emperador,*
> Ogonet [jester's name], bring as a present
> my song to the emperor
> (Fratta 1996, p. 7)

But in Guido's *canzone*, reusing and translating the first 16 of Falquet's verses (Fratta 1996, pp. 50-51), there is no trace of a praise to Frederick: the 'political' expression, typical of troubadours is excluded.

Even if Meneghetti recognized in Guido's 'translation' nothing more than a parodistic *divertissement* about Occitan commonplaces (Meneghetti 1992, pp. 172-173), for Fratta it should be read as Guido's veiled attempt to praise the emperor. If as supposed by Fratta, this specific *canzone* must be indicated as one of the earliest composition of the school – because of the linguistic proximity to the Occitan words – almost contemporary to the 'translation' experiments of Giacomo da Lentini, then we could agree with Fratta: «in the frame of a centralistic project of re-use of the Occitan lyric, promoted or at least orchestrated by the emperor, the precedence granted to a composition [Falquet's song] that declaimed his high virtues [of Frederick] might have been considered by the bureaucrat of Messina [Guido delle Colonne] a proper and discreet homage» (Fratta 1996, p. 7).

If we accept Fratta's interpretation, we can consider this example as the clearest confirmation of Antonelli's theory about the 'intrinsic political meaning' of the Sicilian poetry: a poetry that doesn't show intratextually any explicit sign of the political meaning inborn in its existence.

In Japan

With the proper caution, I think Antonelli's explanation about poetry that is political in its own being and not for the subject managed, could fit also the Japanese instance, where the lack of political themes in poetic texts can be seen as a constant that ties the Kōnin and Tenchō era *kanshi* collections to the *Kokinshū.*

A direct comparison with Italy seems impossible, because, a part the *waka*, even in poems in Chinese like the *kanshi* it is very hard to find something that could be defined as 'political' in the same way we call the *troubadours*'s

sirvente or Guittone's compositions, or also Peter de Vinea's eulogy. The most political compositions we can find in the early Heian poetry, Michizane's *fengyushi*, can be considered more like the exception proving this rule. Moreover, as we already remarked, Michizane's *fengyushi* were somehow 'mild' if compared to his direct model, Bai Juyi, and after Michizane's death this kind of poetry would mostly fall into disuse. Even with these differences, we can detect the voluntary choice to exclude and not imitate poems like Bai Juyi's *fengyushi*, that may well have been read and known by Japanese poets, and under this aspect the Japanese poetry – both in Japanese and in Chinese – appears similar to the Sicilian.

If the lack of political criticism in *kanshi* can be considered a consequence of the Japanese poets' aptitude towards power, in the instance of *waka* this lack takes the configuration of a feature deeply rooted in Japanese poetry. The *Man'yōshū*'s poet Yamanoue no Okura actually wrote two poems (a *chōka* and a *tanka*) called 'song of a dialogue with the poor people' (貧窮問答歌, book V), in which he criticizes the taxation method introduced by the *ritsuryō* system, but these two songs, probably composed under the influence of Chinese models, are again nothing but an exception, not only in the *Man'yōshū*, but also among all of the Heian *waka*.

Another explanation for this total lack of poetry connected to political or social matters could also be the linguistic properties of the Japanese vernacular: unlike *kanbun*, the *wabun* may have been unsuitable to manage this kind of discourse, also from the lexical point of view, especially in a poetic language, and particularly if we consider that the short poetic meter of *tanka* (short 31-syllable song) is not really suitable to long narrations, descriptions or debates like in the troubadours' *tenso* or *partimen*, or even in the Chinese poems. Even so, if we consider the outstanding results pursued by a *bunjin* like Ki no Tsurayuki in dealing with complex Chinese theories about poetics that had never been dealt with before in a text in Japanese vernacular – the *Kanajo* –we could say that the language could not be the only cause, but rather the result of a cultural and social custom that dissuades the Japanese courtiers to try such discourses in poetry. The absence of poems that could be defined 'political', or at least of 'social criticism', not only in the *waka* but also in the Heian *kanshi* – with the exception of Michizane's *fengyushi* – seems to confirms this statement. As in *Chokusen sanshū*, also in the *Kokinshū* the poems that can be reconnected to a social, historical or political fact are very few, and anyway the representation of the 'political matter' is always transposed in an aesthetic description of the natural world whose decoding is entirely committed to the *kotobagaki*, for example in the following poem:

大空を照りゆく月し清ければ雲隠せども光消なくに

*ōzora o / teriyuku tsuki shi / kiyokereba / kumo kakusedomo / hikari
kenaku ni*
So brilliant the moon / that traverses the broad skies / casting its soft
light – / the clouds that try to hide it / cannot make it disappear
(Nun Kyōshin, KKS 885)

We cannot think of any political or factual involvement, until we read the
kotobagaki that introduces this poem: «During the reign of emperor Tamura
[Montoku], it was proposed to replace Princess Akirakeiko, the Kamo Vir-
gin, because of an alleged impropriety on her mother's part, but the matter
was dropped. Kyōshin composed this poem». We therefore understand that
the 'moonlight that never fails' is a similitude for justice about a precise his-
torical fact.

As I said before, the *Kokinshū* may have been part of a wide, political proj-
ect led by Fujiwara no Tokihira, with emperor Daigo's support, who was the
official promoter of the collection. In the *Kokinshū* book of Felicitations (*ga
no uta* 賀歌) we find some poems that wish a long and prosperous life to the
emperor, like the following, also quoted in *Kanajo*

> わが君は千代に八千代に細れ石の巌と成りて苔のむすまで
> *waga kimi wa / chiyo ni yachiyo ni / sazareishi no / iwao to narite / koke
> no musu made*
> My lord may you live / a thousand years eight thousand / till pebbles
> grow to / ancient boulders and the / dark green moss covers their sides
> (Anonymous, KKS 343)

Other poems exalt the emperor's benevolence, compared to the shadow
of mount Tsukuba.

> 筑波嶺のこのもかのもに陰はあれど君がみかげにますかげはなし
> *tsukubane no / konomo kanomo ni / kage wa aredo / kimi ga mikage ni /
> masu kage wa nashi*
> On Tsukubane / cooling shade is found beneath / each and every tree /
> yet nowhere is there shelter / like the refuge of my lord
> (Anonymous, KKS 1095)

But, of course, all of these poems don't aim at making a realistic and crit-
ical description of the society as in Michizane's *fengyushi*, nor can they be
properly called 'political poems'. The reference to the real world, also when
concerning a personal and precise circumstance, is always transmuted not
only through the natural description, but also through the adherence to fixed
forms established by the tradition, for example in the instance of poems of

regrets about a career's failure or exile, like

> 筑波嶺の木のもとごとに立ちぞ寄る春のみ山の蔭を恋ひつつ
> *tsukubane no / ko no moto goto ni / tachi zo yoru / haru no*
> *miyama no / kage o koitsutsu*
> I seek shade beneath / each leafy springtime bough on / Mount
> Tsukubane / just as I long for shelter / within the august spring
> mountain's shade
> (Miyaji Kiyoki, KKS 966)[2]

According to the *kotobagaki*, Kiyoki composed this poem «when he was told he was derelict in his duties and dismissed from the Crown Prince's Guards», and so the «august spring mountain» should be read as a metaphor for the Prince's favor.

Already in Ōe no Chisato's *Chisatoshū*, the last ten poems of the collection – that don't seem to have been 'translated' from Chinese verses, but totally original *waka* – deal with this theme, for example:

> あしたづのひとりおくれてなくこゑはくものうへまできこえつがなん
> *ashitazu no / hitori okurete / naku koe wa / kumo no ue made /*
> *kikoetsuganan*
> The crying voice of / the crane / left behind, alone, / will it ever be heard
> / over the clouds?
> (CS 120)

The expression «over the clouds» indicates the imperial palace and, by metonymy, the emperor, while the voice of the crane left alone represents Chisato's lament, who failed in getting a promotion in the court rank like the other courtiers.

Also in Chisato's instance, in the *waka* there is no space for a precise description of a certain fact, but everything becomes vague, and for this reason, a more easily shareable expression of general feelings, like the sorrow for the brevity and misfortune of human life.

Despite this lack of political topics inside the *Kokinshū waka*, or actually, exactly because of this, I can try to apply Antonelli's theory on a 'poetry that is political in its own being' also to the *Kokinshū*.

According to Masuda, the main principle that oriented the compilation of the *Kokinshū* is the Confucian nature implicit to the collection by *imperial*

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[2]   Rodd translates the verse *haru no miyama* (august spring mountain) as «my Prince's favor», dismissing the metaphor I want to underline.

order. We already discussed how the compilers of the *Kokinshū* were *bunjin*, therefore first of all Confucian scholars and officials of the *ritsuryō* bureaucracy. Therefore, the criterion of selection of the poems in the *Kokinshū* followed not only what we could call 'artistic rules', but mostly the principles depending on the status of 'imperial collection' (Masuda 1976, p. 33). This Confucian conception of literature is clear both in the selection of the poems and in the prefaces to the *Kokinshū*: the compilers' first duty was to symbolize the harmony in Daigo's court.

> 万の政をきこしめすいとま、　もろもろのことを捨てたまはぬ余りに、古
> のことをも忘れじ、旧りにしことをも興したまふとて、今もみそなはし、
> 後の世にも伝はれとて、延喜五年四月十八日に、大内記紀友則、御書
> 所預紀貫之、前甲斐少目凡河内躬恒、右衛門府生壬生忠岑らに仰せら
> れて、『万葉集』に入らぬ古き歌、みづからのをも奉らしめ給ひてなむ
> During his moments of leisure from the multifarious affairs of state, he does not neglect to other matters: mindful of the past and desiring to revive the ancient ways, he wishes to examine them and to pass them on to future generations. On the eighteenth day of the Fourth Month of Engi 5 (905) he commanded Ki no Tomonori, Senior Secretary of the Ministry of Private Affairs, Ki no Tsurayuki, Chief of the Documents Division, Ōshikōchi no Mitsune, Formen Junior Clerk of Kai Province, and Mibu no Tadamine, functionary in the Headquarters of the Palace Guards, Right Division to present to him old poems not included in the *Man'yōshū*, as well as our own. (KKS, *Kanajo*)

Masuda proposes as example of this 'political view' of the compilation of the *Kokinshū*, the exclusion of Sugawara no Michizane's *waka* on exile, despite some *waka* on the same theme by Ariwara no Yukihira and Ono no Takamura had been included. «The reason why these poems by Michizane don't appear in the *Kokinshū*, is because of their nature, but probably also because they are songs of exile» (Masuda 1976, p. 40). The explanation of this different treatment is that Yukihira and Takamura had been exiled by previous emperors in the past, while Michizane had been exiled by Daigo, creating a great scandal that deeply shocked the whole court just some years before. Therefore, inserting Michizane's *waka* in the first imperial sponsored *waka* collection would have created a 'political' problem, mining the 'Confucian harmony' at the base of the collection itself. Actually, this interpretation is invalidated by the fact that almost the totality of Michizane's *waka* – especially the one composed in exile – is today considered a fake composed by later poets – so we can't say how big and valuable Michizane's poetic production in Japanese was – but even so, I find that Masuda's interpretation is not totally wrong in

its principles. To me, the fact that only two poems by the most active poet at Uda's court – who also demonstrated a perfect proficiency in composing *wa-ka* – have been included in the *Kokinshū*, seems obviously related to his expulsion from court and his death as a traitor, in exile.

Moreover, the exclusion of politics from the *waka* and *kanshi* of the 9th century couldn't be totally unrelated to the deep political changes in the structure of the court represented by the rise of *sekkan* politics started with Fujiwara no Yoshifusa. After all, as already stated, «for the Fujiwara family, Hiromi and Michizane were the core of the problem they needed to get rid of» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 254). For Morota it is the exclusion of scholars from the centers of power, consequent to emperor Ninmyō's death (850), that led to the process of «de-politicization of literature (文学の脱政治化)» (Morota 2007, p. 99), at least intended as the definitive fall of the *monjō keikoku* (literature for the government of the State) theory, and of the figure of the *monjō hakase* as emperor's close counselor, symbolized by Michizane. Personages like Ono no Takamura or the priest Henjō, son of Saga's close minister Yoshimine no Yasuyo, or Minamoto no Akira, son of Saga, can be seen as key figures – maybe victims? – of this abruptly changed political asset, as they became Buddhist priest immediately after Ninmyō's death.

Michizane would probably be the last court poet in the Heian Literature to address social and political themes so directly. From the year following his exile, other poet-officials that shared with him the same political commitment, like Miyoshi no Kiyoyuki or Ki no Haseo, quickly changed the object of their works to less involved themes like love or fantasy stories. Around the same years of the compilation of the *Kokinshū*, Kiyoyuki, a scholar that had been in open contrast with the Fujiwara regents since Mototsune's time, wrote the *Letter of closed eyes* (詰眼文, *Kitsuganbun*) expressing regret for having spent so many years studying books, in a statement that sounds more like a «declaration of defeat of the Confucian scholar», while Haseo's lament for Michizane's death (in the *Preface to the poems after the Engi era* 延喜以後詩序) should be named «the declaration of defeat of a *kanshi* poet» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 261).

Watanabe Hideo accurately connects the evident disappointment of *kanshi* poets like Haseo after Michizane's death, with the birth of the new genre of *monogatari* and stories of hermits: these poets started creating stories characterized by «an attitude of hermitage and isolation, of critique or escape from this world, consequently to the loss of that poetical world [of *kanshi*]» (Watanabe H. 1991, p. 318). In the *Lament for a poor woman* (貧女吟) Haseo totally focused his mind on the 'useless' theme of love between men and women, so that, for Fujiwara, «in Haseo we can detect the presence of a *bunjin* consciousness, about the production of that useless thing called *monogatari*» (Fujiwara 2001, p. 263). In other words, many scholars detect a sudden change in the

status and self-awareness of the *bunjin*, according to a new space reserved to literature at court.

The *Kokinshū* appears in the midst – and as protagonist – of this important change in Japanese literature and in the position of the poets in court society. On the other hand, we did note that the compilers of the *Kokinshū* showed a clear and determined 'Confucian scholar' attitude in managing the compilation of the collection as an official work for the State, and this could be seen as a replacement (or equivalent) of that figure of Confucian-poet embodied in the generation before by Michizane. We know that Michizane's political weight was incomparable to Tsurayuki's, but even so, if we consider that Michizane's compositions in official occasions, like the poetic banquets *shien*, showed a clear tendency to idealized natural descriptions more than to social and political matters like in the *fengyushi*, also the lack of political matters in the *Kokinshū waka* doesn't seem so far from Michizane's positions.

In other words, I think we can detect a progressive change in the figure of the scholar-poet I described in Part III, that resulted in the constriction of the politician-poet (like Fujiwara no Fuyutsugu) into a non-political role (like Ki no Tsurayuki's), as a direct consequence of the politics of the regents of the Fujiwara clan. What is remarkable is that, after all, this change in the literary world doesn't seems to have had any effect on the *waka*, that as we said never addressed controversial themes – apart from Okura–, and only in minor part on the *kanshi*, as we notice that even in Michizane's instance, the *fengyushi* represents a 'minor' genre within his production.

Conclusions about politics

In the poetic activity of the Sicilian School and in the compilation of the *Kokinshū* we can detect a similar attitude and role assigned to vernacular. Poetry in vernacular has the symbolic function of official poetic production in the native language, as an aware distancing from more legitimated literary canons and languages, like Occitan and German in the Magna Curia and Chinese in Japan. Secondly, this also prevents the diffusion and application of ready-to-use models like the *sirvente* or the *fengyushi*, that could represent a potentially critical voice inside the organized hierarchical harmony of the court. I have already said that it is not appropriate to indicate this constriction as 'censorship', but it is also quite evident that the socio-political frame in which the poets lived must have influenced the way literature and poetry was conceived, with results somehow comparable in Sicily and Japan, namely, in this instance with the exclusion of political themes.

In these terms I find Haruo Shirane's statement on the Heian *waka* interesting, and more in general the new literature in *kana* (Japanese characters)

like *Ise monogatari* or *Genji monogatari*: «one of the major features of waka as a genre is that it has these two distinct aspects, one closely integrated with court culture, with the reinforcement of imperial power, and another, as the basis for vernacular genres that gave voice to those outside the center. Significantly, the protagonists of both *Ise monogatari* (Tales of Ise, c. 947) and *Genji monogatari* (the Tale of Genji, c. 1006), the two most important monogatari, committed transgressions against the imperial harem» (Shirane 2012, p. 187). This double and somehow contradictory nature of vernacular literature, that seemed to balance the centripetal power (emperor) and centrifugal forces (mid-low aristocracy) inside the court, reminds me of the persuasive interpretation proposed by Georges Duby on the 'courtly model' of the European feudal courts. For Duby, the court was a physical place with an inborn contradiction, «it was an organ of regulation and control; the holders of power aimed at containing turbulences of unmarried male knights by gathering them into the court; now, the court was also the best place for to hunt for noble women». For Duby, the courtly love between the knight and the lady – already married to the lord or king – and the literature describing that forbidden love «was the instrument of a careful pedagogy. It had the purpose of spreading a code of conduct whose rules aimed at limiting, among the military aristocracy, the damages of an uncontrollable sexual rampancy» (Duby 1994, pp. 320-1). In other words the woman «is posed at the center of a pedagogic device aimed to discipline sexual activity of males, to suffocate the overflowing of masculine brutality, to pacify, to civilize […] the most violent part of society, the environment of men-of-war» (Duby 1994, p. 322).

The deployment of forbidden feelings and relationships also in the official space features the Japanese court literature too, not only in *Genji monogatari* – where the considerations on love, taboo and power, reach their highest level of elaboration – but also in the most ancient *waka*, such as the *Man'yōshū*, in the exchange of poems between prince Ōama (later to become emperor Tenmu) and Nukata no ōkimi, emperor Tenji's wife, and Ōama's sister-in-law. As stated by Watanabe Yasuaki, the representation of forbidden love could be explained «as poems in which the two poets perform the role of two lovers, as an entertainment for the public banquet held on the occasion of an imperial hunt […], something we could call a co-starring in a love scene that the other courtiers must have enjoyed with great excitement» (Watanabe Y. 2009, p. 13).

This consideration, clearly connecting the formal (performance of) poetry and love, finally introduces the discourse about the core characteristic of the Sicilian School and the *Kokinshū*, that is the predominance – almost absolute in the instance of the Sicilians – of the love theme in the poems. Coherently with what I said so far, also the love poems of the Sicilians and in the *Kokinshū* would need to be contextualized inside the frame of court literature, with

its inborn political and social charge that, again, would be the cause of linguistic formalization and thematic idealization.

PART V
A NEW CONCEPT OF LOVE

> *Non sap de dompnei pauc ni pro*
> *qui del tot vol si donz aver.*
> He doesn't know anything about courting,
> the one who wants to possess his woman
> entirely.
> Daude de Pradas

In the analysis of love poetry in the *Kokinshū* and in the Sicilian School I will deal with in this chapter, I must increase the care used so far to avoid the risk of a simplistic and naïve comparison between two literary traditions that, also on the love theme, show some evident similitudes.

As already perceptively pointed out by Theodor Frings more than half a century ago in his *Minnesinger und Troubadours* (1949), often the love poems of different countries and ages have the tendency to be very similar, because human beings are inclined to choose similar subjects and images to express similar feelings (Vàrvaro 1985, p. 142). This risk is perfectly articulated by Peter Frenzel: «we might well ask, with Theodor Frings, if these love songs are so very different from those of other times and other places. If we look at any body of song within a specific culture, love is almost always a dominant theme exploited for its entertainment value, whether in Elizabethan madrigals, the German Lied of the nineteenth century, or the rock music of the 1960s. Songs seem everywhere a most natural expression of love, possibly because love, the most problematic of emotions, is so frequently unrequited and the only tangible aspect of the emotion becomes the song itself» (Frenzel 1982, p. 345). Also according to Morota Tatsumi, « the first source of literature is this 'emotion of sympathy', that having as origin that starting point, is performed in many variations among each cultural sphere and age» (Morota 2010, p. 45).

The universality of this concept is stated also by Alberto Vàrvaro, who extends the range of Frings' definition also to the Asian countries: «the analysis of the [poetical] themes can be conducted with a such high level of abstraction, namely identifying these themes in their most essential generality, that we can find precise affinity in great part of vernacular lyric traditions, from Europe to Eastern Asia» (Vàrvaro 1985, p. 162). This statement is quickly demonstrated, as it is well known how love songs occupy a consistent part both in

China and Japan's earliest poetic collections – the *Shijing* and the *Man'yōshū* – so if we raise the 'level of abstraction' of our analysis, we may find similitudes not only between China and Japan, but also between the Asian and European literatures.

Therefore, it is no surprise that, also in the instance of two specific poetic collections, like the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School poems, we can find a certain number of common points and similitudes. As an example, it is easy to imagine that the beginning of love would be symbolized by the coming of spring, with the similitude of warm climate and the warm feelings of the heart.

> *Dolze tempo e gaudente,*
> *inver' la pascore!*
> *Ogn'omo che ama altamente*
> *si de' avere bon core;*
> *de' esser cortese e valente*
> *e leal servitore*
> *inver' sua donna piagente,*
> *cui ama a tutore.*
> Mild and lovely time,
> is the spring!
> Every man that loves in a noble way,
> must hold a good heart;
> he must be courtly and valiant,
> and a loyal servant
> of his beloved woman,
> he loves at all times.
> (Re Giovanni, PSS 5.1, 16-23)

> 春たてば消ゆる氷の残りなく君が心は我に解けなむ
> *haru tateba / kiyuru kōri no / nokori naku / kimi ga kokoro wa / ware ni tokenamu*
> Like ice that thaws and / disappears into flowing / waters when spring comes / may my love's heart soften and melt toward me without reserve
> (Anonymous, KKS 542)

The same can be said about the literary stereotype of the 'fire of love', a feeling that, like fire, burns up the poet's heart.

> *foc'aio al cor non credo mai si stingua;*
> *anzi si pur alluma:*
> *perché non mi consuma?*
> I have a fire in my heart,
> I think it will never be extinguished;

instead it keeps on burnig:
why doesn't it consume me?
(Giacomo da Lentini, PSS 1.1, 24-26)

夏なれば屋戸にふすぶる蚊遣り火のいつまでわが身下燃えをせむ
natsu nareba / yado ni fusuburu / kayaribi no / itsu made wa ga mi /
shitamoe o semu
Like the mosquito / smudge which burns within my house / when
summer comes I too slowly char deep within – / for how long must I
smolder
(KKS 500)

人知れぬ思ひをつねに駿河なる富士の山こそわが身なりけれ
hito shirenu / omoi o tsune ni / Suruga naru / Fuji no yama koso / wa ga
mi narikere
Like fiery Mount / Fuji in Suruga my /yearning burns within – / an
eternally smoldering / passion my love can never know.
(Anonymous, KSS 534)

We can also find more specific images, for example the metaphor of a ship
caught in the storm.

Amor, poi ch'a madonna tormentare
mi fai, come lo mare
quand'è di gran tempesta,
ch'a la nave non resta
di dar gravoso afanno
Love, that makes milady
torment me like the sea,
when there is a great storm,
that doesn't stop giving
heavy grief to the ship
(Pucciandone Martelli, PSS 46.5, 33-37)

いで我を人なとがめそ大舟のゆたのたゆたに物思ふころぞ
ide ware o / hito na togame so / ōbune no / yuta no tayuta ni /
monoomou koro zo
Alas please do not / chastise me though all I do / is dream of love I /
drift through the days like a great / ship pitching tossing at sea
(Anonymous, KKS 508)

白浪の跡なき方に行く舟も風ぞたよりのしるべなりける
shiranami no / ato naki kata ni / yuku hune mo / kaze zo tayori no /
shirubenarikeru

Even the ship which / sails forth over white waves which / rise and fall
leaving / no trace can rely on the / winds to guide it safely home
(Fujiwara no Kachion, KKS 472)

Many are the examples we can find, but for the moment I will end this brief
overview with a classical scene: the death of the lover out of too much loving.

che morte mi sembrera / ogn'altra vita, sì m'à in sua possanza.
because it will seem as death to me, / every other life, if she has power
over me.
(Bondie Dietaiuti, PSS 41.3, 29-30)

*Perzò meglio varia / morire in tuto in tutto / ch'usar la vita mia / in pena
ed in corotto, / come omo languente.*
So it will be better for me / to die at all for all / than spend my life in
pain and grief, / like a languishing man.
(Folco di Calavra, PSS 22.1, 40-45)

恋しとは誰が名づけけむ言ならむ死ぬとぞただにいふべかりける
*koishi to wa / ta ga nazukekemu / koto naramu / shinu to zo tadani /
iubekarikeru*
Love's "longing" that word – / who could it have been gave this / feeling
that false name / better they call it / precisely what it is "death"
(Kiyohara no Fukayabu, KKS 698)

人の身も慣らはしものを逢はずしていざこころみむ恋ひや死ぬると
*hito no mi mo / narawashimono o / awazu shite / iza kokoromimu / koi
ya shinuru to*
Aren't humans too / creatures of habit if we do / no meet I will die / of
love let me try to see / whether death will come to me
(Anonymous, KKS 518)

こむ世にもはやなりななむ目の前につれなき人を昔と思はむ
*komu yo ni mo / hayanari nanamu / me no mae ni / tsurenaki hito o /
mukashi to omowamu*
Oh that I might soon / move on to the next life where / I could consider /
this heartless creature before / me as a mere memory
(Anonymous, KKS 520)

I don't need to give examples from other languages and literatures to
demonstrate that these few themes, expressions and metaphors I quoted are
easily findable in many love poems of almost any period around the world.
On the other hand, the fact that we can find analogous images and themes in
the Japanese love poetry could be a way to insert the Japanese classical poetry

within the frame of world literature, i.e., the main goal of this book. Nevertheless, I think we should look for a different method of comparison preventing the risk of falling in the naïve listing of very general properties, or on the contrary, of almost accidental similitudes.

A good suggestion to start with is given by Vàrvaro, who, in trying to distinguish the Iberian vernacular tradition from other the traditions of the European languages, stated: «the analysis of the themes might be done through abstraction, and in this way it would match similarities in almost every culture, from the west to the east. But if we went deeper into a selection of motifs, we would be able to identify a Romance [literary] tradition, and even just an Iberian tradition. […] It is obvious that the level of maximum generalization in which we examine the themes reduced to their most schematic essentiality, is useful to identify a lyrical archetype, common to all or most part of the humanity, but not enough to base a historical discourse» (Vàrvaro 1985, p. 162). So according to Vàrvaro it is possible, through a more detailed selection of motifs – that are the unique features of each literary tradition or of one single work – to reduce the number of examples meeting certain conditions. In our case, a starting point could be the following statement given by Frenzel about the medieval love poetry, to distinguish it, for example, from the love poetry of 18th century Europe. «Since in the courtly singing of the European medieval courts, at least in the fiction of the love-situation, love was so often unfulfillable, the song itself became an vehicle for love, even more intensely charged than in other societies. And with this intensity came a stronger bonding between love and songs which lent to the art that elusive and ambiguous quality which makes it difficult for us to understand today. The poetry became anchored to the metaphoric nexus of singing and loving. And it is this recurrent pattern which seeps through the centuries and survives, even to the present day, in the Western mind» (Frenzel 1982, p. 345).

«Unfulfillable» love, the birth of an «elusive and ambiguous art» and the poetry anchored in a «metaphoric nexus» are too generic definitions to uniquely identify the European medieval poetry, but they surely worked both for the troubadours and the Sicilian poets, and, at the same time, excluded a certain number of other literary traditions and poetries much less formalized and 'manneristic', much 'easier' or maybe just 'less distant' (in time) from us. With maybe a too simplistic example, I could say that for a modern European reader, some of Shakespeare sonnets, or Pablo Neruda's poems sound much 'easier' and more enjoyable, even if just at a superficial level, compared to the songs of the troubadours and the Sicilians. What is even more interesting in Frenzel's suggestion is the presence of a 'court', to which we could add the word 'formalization' – that we deduce from the following passage – as two characteristic features identifying medieval literature, and that are the leading

keywords of this research. These two general features of 'court' and 'formalization' are also detectable in the *Kokinshū*, but at the same time will exclude other literary works and historical 'moments', like for example Matsuo Bashō's *haiku*: even if we can call the *haiku* a 'formalized poem', it would be incorrect to define it 'court' poetry, at least in the meaning we use for the *Kokinshū*.

Also as regards the debate about love poetry, the safest approach seems to be a sociological one for the court, and a linguistic one for formalization. Therefore, also the task of defining a motif selection detailed enough to identify only the Sicilian School and only the *Kokinshū* necessarily need to take into exam also their main models and predecessors: the troubadours and the poetry – both *waka* and *kanshi* – before the *Kokinshū*. First of all we need to analyze, with the support of the previous studies on Japanese and Italian literature, novelties and differences between the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School and their respective previous models. This analysis will have the secondary meaning to implicitly show similitudes between the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School, not just in their singularity, but rather on the level of their evolutions: from the *Man'yōshū* and the troubadours' model to a more characteristic and formalized poetry, an evolution that on the one hand is parallel to the formalization of the language and the research for rhetoric devices (as seen in Part IV), while on the other hand it reflects a change in the social structure (Part II).

Therefore, I find the need to set the discourse in terms of the 'sociology of love poetry', trying to trace the trajectory this kind of poetry followed in the timespan of a couple of centuries, with the aim of detecting whether, in these two trajectories, there are some common points that can help us include the Japanese court literature into the wider frame of world literature, and in conclusion to verify if this kind of comparison can offer a new perspective to contextualize both traditions, as suggested by Wiebke Denecke's interview I quoted in the preface of this book: «Let's look at all these traditions together, in mutual illumination» (Schwab 2013).

The love poetry of the troubadours

The *fin'amor* (perfect love, pure love), that in modern criticism is usually called – not without criticism – *amour courtoise* (courtly love)[1] is the main theme of that particular form of poetry in Occitan born in the 12th century feudal courts of southern France, the so called troubadoric poetry. Unlike previous lyric works produced at the European feudal courts, like the *chanson de geste* (song of heroic deeds), that were focused on the masculine qualities of the hero/protagonist, like *cavallaria* (gallantry) and *fortitudo* (courage, strength), the hero of the troubadours – and later, of trouvères like Chrétien de Troyes – became a sensitive lover, whose value was now measured not by his courage on the battlefield, but by some totally new ideals, like *cortezia* (courtesy) and *largueza* (generosity). The most important of these ideals was probably the *mezura* (measure), a discipline of self-control and self-improvement that men should show, first of all, in their relationship with the beloved (Mancini 1976, p. XXIII). Features of this 'new kind of love', especially in comparison with the concept of love in the Greek-Roman classical world, can be summarized in three fundamental aspects: 1) the ennobling force of human love; 2) the elevation of the beloved to a place of superiority above the lover; 3) the conception of love as a never satiated, and ever increasing desire. (Denomy 1947 cit. in Mancini 1976, p. XIX). We can anticipate here that the 'ennobling force of human love' is something unknown in the Heian conception of love, as we will see later. Among the Roman poets – Catullus for example – the pain of love was an important topic, but in most cases, pain was caused by a woman's infidelity; in the troubadour poems, the anguish of love seems instead to be a necessary part to realize and define love. The satisfaction of erotic desire, if reached, has the inevitable consequence of annihilating man's spiritual elevation, because it would nullify the very incentive of that elevation. If love is reduced to a simple carnal desire, it becomes immediately *fals'amor* (untrue love) (Formisano 1994, p. 68). It is inside this 'paradox of love' that the balance between erotic desire and obedience of that desire to a regulated system of manners – the *cortezia* (courtesy) – leads to the *joi* (enjoyment) of social and individual acknowledgements, the very last goal of this process. Love becomes the «ideal kingdom of inalienable right of a new men regardless of

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[1]   The definition of 'courtly love' was first given by Gaston Paris in 1883, and thereafter its meaning and use has been largely debated, as resumed in John C. Moore (1979). In this book I will use the term 'courtly love' as a translation of *fin'amor*, to indicate the system of rules and the love relationship – with its inborn contradictions – described in literary works of the European medieval courts.

wealth and social status. […] Love has as only goal the increase of a lover's value and honor» (Mancini 1976, p. XXIII).

The 'paradox of love' rooted in the *fin' amor*, and the constant contrast between the desire to possess and the concurrent refusal to possess, has been related with the particular instance of the court society of southern France by Erich Köhler's research (1976). Köhler reads the *fin' amor* as a metaphor or reflection of the society of the feudal court, characterized by a different (social) position between the two lovers, with the assimilation of the woman, *domina* (mistress), to the feudal lord, and the lover to the vassal: the offering of a 'love service' by the lover in exchange for help and protection from the woman, one of the main themes of this poetry, is for Köhler the reflection of the relationship between vassals and feudal lords like counts and kings. In this 'merceological exchange' of humility and obedience for *mercede* (reward), also the woman had a precise duty: should she deny the service, or accept it from too many men, the lover would be freed from his vassalage, and could find another woman to serve, the same rule regulating the feudal system (Formisano 1994, p. 68). That's why also the woman was required to make use of *mezura*, to accept only those men that, according the rules of courtesy, she judged worthy of her grace, and to repay them with the right reward: *mezura* is the «supreme law that guarantees harmony inside the courtly word» (Köhler 1976, p. 16).

Andreas Capellanus, courtier of Marie of France, in his treatise *De Amore*, gave a indicative representation of the principles a *fin' amor*, and the correct behavior a courtly woman should keep[2]: a knight, crossing the land of France with his lord, got lost because of his horse, and, trying to get back on the right path, bumped into a caravan of dead souls, guided by the god Amore (love) and composed by women divided into three groups. The first group was composed by beautiful and richly dressed women, each of them riding a lavish chariot, accompanied and served by three knights: they were those virtuous women than, in life, granted their love only to few worthy lovers, and now they receive the right reward for such a sage conduct. The second group of women was accompanied by a much bigger number of servants, both on foot and on horseback, but because of the confusion caused by their too large number, these servants weren't able to offer the proper service to these women, who were on the contrary badly shattered in that chaos: these women were the ones that, in life, granted their love to every man without distinction, and now receive this discomfort as punishment. The women of the third group were badly dressed, and forced to ride without saddle on weak and limping horses, without a sin-

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[2]   I avoid to discuss about the real nature of the *De Amore*: whether it should be considered a real manual of love, or a parody and a denial of the *fin'amor*.

gle man to serve them, and what is more, suffocated by the dust risen by the previous group: these were the women that in life, keeping the door of love locked and preferring chastity, refused to give their love even to knights who worthily served them, and are thus punished (summary from the first book of *De Amore*, in Tartaglia 1998, p. 1). So, the *fin'amor* is based on an exchange of service and reward, a kind of social rule in which both parts had duties and rights. This commodification of love, sounding so untrue from a modern and post-romantic point of view, is explained by Köhler's theory by locating the rise of troubadour poetry «in a particular phase of the development of the feudal society, when the *annoblissement* [ennoblement] of chivalry [the knights] was already accomplished, but without having found roots and legitimation into the conscience of lords and vassals » (Köhler 1976, p. 13).

After the fall of the Carolingian Empire, and due to the anarchy and fragmentation of the vassal states, the high vassals, namely the counts, were forced to equip themselves with armies to defend their territory from the invasion of other feudal lords, but at the same time they needed to avoid the risk of exceedingly reinforcing the warrior class they employed. So, the aim of the principal vassals was «not only to make the court the administrative center of a wide territory, with all the required personnel, but also to gather around themselves the greatest number of poor knights, rewarded not by the supply of weapons and by their nourishment at court, but by a new personal bond. […] The custom to educate sons of vassals at court met a political need. The *domina* of the court now had a new and extremely important duty» (Köhler 1976, pp. 14-15) that was to educate the young knights and tie them to her through a relationship of loyalty. Because of this social structure, the feudal courts of southern France were configured as physical spaces characterized by a very close distance between a few women and many, unmarried men, and where a woman in particular – the queen or the lord's wife – was also the holder of the political and administrative power during the absence of her husband (the ruler or feudal lord).

The majority of this male population was composed by second-born young men excluded from the patriarchal heritage, which, to avoid the fragmentation of family assets, was entirely inherited by the first-born son; they were knights, or to use Köhler's definition, «chivalry of lower social extraction» (Köhler 1976, p. 296), a class of 'marginal men' located at the borders of the aristocratic society, lacking any economical or political power, depending directly on the feudal lord, but even so, also substantially different from the common people and the peasants.

«Every day life in common [with women] generated in these isolated individuals a very strong erotic tension, that, having no other outlet, was sublimated in the form of courtly love» (Hauser 1953, cit. in Köhler 1976, p. 17),

and therefore these knights of low extraction became the main protagonists and receivers – and often also producers, as many troubadours came from this class – of this new kind of literature. Köhler's theory is coherent and complementary to Georges Duby's interpretation of the court I quoted in the conclusions of Part IV: a defined and close space intended as a tool of containment of a segment of society – the knights – that no longer had the possibility to become, through the fulfillment of their military duties, owners of lands and hereditary privileges, as was instead the case of the vassals of the previous generations. For these men, the only hope for social redemption was to marry a noblewoman, heiress of a feud and of a aristocrat title, but the number of this kind of 'free women' was very limited. Therefore, a competition started between these men no longer fought through physical strength or conquering new lands, but exclusively in the field of courtesy to conquer woman's heart.

Now, one of the problems rooted in this system is that the *fin' amor* was by definition an adulterous love, clearly opposed to the rules of Christianity: in many medieval religious treatises even the love between husband and wife was considered 'adulterous', if it was too passionate and not exclusively aimed at procreation. But if this problem may be explained by the contraposition between the religious culture of the Church and the vernacular culture of the feudal courts, the question remains about why an adulterous love for a woman of upper social position, that threatened the legacy of the aristocratic class, was accepted by the aristocrats themselves. In these terms it is remarkable that the 'first' troubadour we know of, William IX, was not one of those 'marginal men', but the count of Poitiers and duke of Aquitaine, a member of the highest aristocracy and the maximum ruler of his court and territories. The reason behind the fact that the aristocracy accepted an adulterous ideology of love, potentially disruptive for the inner balance of the court society, and of a poetry that represented the aspiration of a class of servants, is, according to Köhler, that aristocracy needed to control this new class (Köhler 1976, p. 295). «At the origin of the European love poetry there was a class yearning for an integration through serving the State of the [feudal] lords that had an absolute need of that service; in France and Provence this extremely heterogeneous social group called *joven* was led by the poor knights that shaped the doctrine of love in its spirit and terminology» (Köhler 1976, p. 296). So, for Köhler, the consolidation of the *fin'amor* met a double need of two distinct, but contiguous social classes: the aristocrats and the lower chivalry. In this dualism, the lower chivalry was the main actor «that shaped the doctrine of love in its spirit and terminology» (Köhler, ibid.), but the aristocracy granted it its legitimation to perform those songs in public spaces at the court. The contrast between these two social classes is also at the origin of this particular ideology of love, and its tendency to formalize and idealize: «the solution of social tensions has an

erotic culture of pure desire as a result. Love is suppressed because of the so-cial distance, and elevated to an instrument of order: the basis of the *fin'amor* is the codified sublimation of desire» (Mancini 1976, p. XIII).

Of course, Köhler's theory has been criticized by later studies (Formisano 1994, p. 71), and could also be considered outdated, but I think that, for the present work, it still represents a sufficiently solid basis to set up the discourse about courtly love, if not in its extremely complex entirety, at least in its fundamental and more characteristic aspects. Moreover, it gives an excellent example of conjugation between social studies and literary studies, also from the point of view of comparative studies, because of the comparison Köhler performed about the troubadours and the minnesängers.

Therefore, I will not analyze the definition of courtly love any further, limiting this discourse to a simple and maybe partial conclusion about love poetry at the courts of the troubadours: Köler's research demonstrates that the historical and political changes in southern France (the fragmentation of old empires and the foundation of centralized courts) aroused a social change (the birth of chivalry) that in turn led to the elaboration of a system of values – the *cortezia* (courtesy) and the *mezura* – that would be codified in a rich and well defined literary practice (troubadour poetry).

Love and marriage at the Heian court

Around the same years when Köhler elaborated his 'sociologic literary critique', Takamure Itsue conducted a social study on the history of marriage in Japan that, in the way it analyzes literary works like the *Man'yōshū* or the *Kojiki* to understand the relationship between men and women in ancient Japan, could in some point resemble Köhler's work, also because of the influence it would have on later studies.

According to Takamure, the analysis of words tied to the love relationship in literary works can help identify different periods of the Japanese marriage system. For example, the word *tsumadoi* (visiting the wife) largely used until the period of the *Man'yōshū* (8th century), is the proof of a society where the husband didn't live together with his wife, and the role of the father was much less influent than that of the mother; since the Heian period the appearance of the term *mukotori* (accepting the groom), indicated a society in which the man was accepted into the wife's family; and in the Muromachi period the word indicating marriage became *yometori* (accepting the bride) that testifies the definitive change into a patriarchal society where the wife was accepted into man's family (Takamure 1967, p. 33).

Takamure recognizes in the Taika reform (645) the first political event that caused in turn a slower but continuous change in society, including matrimonial customs. This change, started in the mid-7th century, would last about four or five centuries: at the time of the *Man'yōshū* (8th century) the *tsumadoi* was still preponderant, while in the mid-Heian (11th century) the *mukotori* became common among both aristocrats and commoners (Takamure 1967, pp. 52-53).

Some examples of *tsumadoi* songs are easily detected in the *Man'yōshū*.

> 高麗錦紐解き交はし天人の妻問ふ夕ぞ我も偲はむ
> *Komanishiki / himo tokikawashi / amehito no / tsumadou yoi zo /ware mo shinobamu*
> Tangling the laces / of the brocade of Koma / the lad of Heaven / his wife tonight embraces, / and I feel as amorous.
> (MYS 2090)

In *Man'yōshū* the word *tsumadoi* is often linked to a particular poetic image: the deer visiting the bushclover, as a metaphor of man visiting (*tsumadou*) his woman.

> 奥山に住むといふ鹿の夕去らず妻問ふ萩の散らまく惜しも
> *Okuyama ni / sumu to iu shika no / yoi sarazu / tsumadou hagi no / chiramaku oshimo*
> The stag that is said / to live in the mountain far / comes to his hind dear / night after night, and scatters / bush-clovers to our regret.
> (MYS 2098)

Characters of the *Genji monogatari* (beginning of the 11th century) seem to live in an environment more similar to the *mukotori*, with a further influence of the bride's father in the choice of the groom, for example in the Genji-Aoi relationship. This reflects the fact that, during the Heian period the *oya* (parent, head of household) is no longer the mother, but the father (Takamure 1967, p. 54). Examples of this changed family system in the Heian period can be found also in the *waka*, for example in the following poem of the *Kokinshū*.

> 頼めこし言の葉いまは返してむわが身ふるれば置き所なし
> *tanomekoshi / koto no ha ima wa / kaeshitemu / wa ga mi furureba / okitokoro nashi*
> For so long I have / had faith in these sheaves of words – / now I must return / them for the winter of my / life has come and leaves must fall
> (Fujiwara no Yoruka, KKS 736)

According to the *kotobagaki* (introduction) to this poem, the woman poet, Fujiwara no Yoruka, sends back the love letters she received from the Minis-

ter of the Right Minamoto no Yoshiari «who had ceased to live at her house». The phrase «had ceased to live» (in the original, *sumazu narinikereba*) means stop «visiting the woman's house for conjugal living» (Ozawa 1994, p. 282), testifying the possibility for a man – of course, of high status – to live in different places, so that his tie with the woman seems to have been proved only by the frequency he visited and stayed at her home. Moreover, the symbolic value of the love messages «that made me trust you», testify the use and centrality of a courting system based on written and private communication.

Takamure's study is extremely detailed, covering also almost the entire history of Japan, but the most important conclusion we can draw for our research is that in Japan, between the Nara and the Heian period, a deep change in society started by a deliberate political plan – the Taika reform – involved also the structure of the nuclear family, and marriage customs. Therefore, takamure's analysis is coherent with the general frame we outlined in the first half of this book, about the social change in the Heian society and the birth of a real court aristocracy. Also for Takamure, it is the contrast between city and countryside and the 'invention' of private property that caused the social change that would influence also marriage customs (Takamure 1967, pp. 52-53). Secondarily, these social changes left their traces in the literary works of the period, making the study of literature useful to draw a more precise outline of the relationship between men and women, both on the social and literary side.

Attempting a comparison from the social point of view

If the tie between love songs and marriage customs can be considered somehow obvious, the peculiar characteristics showed by the love poetry of a specific culture can offer an interesting perspective to study that society, as suggested by Köhler and Takamure's works.

Now, the next step is obvious: is it possible to make a comparison between the love customs in Japan and Europe, their evolution, and the influence this particular social background – the court – had on the development of a love poetry? Before I formulate any kind of conclusion, I have to face two problems: the first is the different meaning and application of love/marriage rituals in Europe and Japan, and the second is the different role and position the woman historically had in the respective court societies.

The conclusion of many scholars such as Köhler or Duby is that the *fin'amor* was nothing but a 'game' elaborated and enjoyed by men, and, what is more important, it was almost never seen as a preamble for weddings. Since Andreas Capellanus's treatise, the *fin' amor* has always been – at least in practice, and

during all the middle ages – a love ideal clearly to be found outside marriage, often in open opposition to the religious institution of the wedding. It was a natural consequence, because the final realization of the *fin'amor* was an adulterous relationship, real or platonic. In Japan, the borders around the concept of adultery are more undefined, because, especially during the *tsumadoi* period, the end of a relationship was indicated just by the man ending his visits to the woman's house, and in the meantime the same man could visit – in a comparatively secret way – other women and thus start new relationships. In turn the abandoned woman had the implicit right to start receiving other men, if she deduced that the previous relationship was finished: it is what Takamure calls «sequential monogamy» of the Heian court aristocracy (Takamure 1967, p. 109-110). Another important point is that in Japan adultery was not a prerogative of 'pure love' like in medieval Europe, where 'love' within 'marriage' had an inborn contradiction, since the wife was always subjected to man's possession (father, elder brother, husband), and, from a religious point of view, even the passion between husband and wife was considered a sin (Bertini 1996, p. XI). According to the ethic of the *fin'amor,* marriage and love seem two totally different and untied social phenomena: a social economic contract between two families (marriage), and a new ideal of personal improvement that freed the lovers (love). Although in Japan the practice of courting a woman followed some precise customs, like the *yobai* (night visit, call), or the *yobu* (calling), or the poetic exchange before and after the meeting (Takamure 1967, p. 38), we must be careful not to draw hasty similitudes with some rules and rituals of the *fin' amor*. Both for the *tsumadoi* and the *mukotori*, the rituals described by Takamure – like the *fumitsukai* (messenger), the *hiawase* (joining the fire), the *kutsutori* (taking the shoes), *fusumaōi* (arrange the screens), the *mikanomochii* (meal of the third day) – are codified rules of a real matrimonial rite, while the rituals of the *fin'amor*, like the request of *mercede* or the *asag* (the naked embrace without sexual act) not only were somehow opposed to religious rules, but were not even aimed at marriage.

The second big difference is the status of women in Europe and in Japan. Before the consolidation of the *mukotori* customs, in Japan a woman was somehow free to accept or refuse independently a marriage request of a man, almost without any imposition from her or his family (Takamure 1967, p. 62), a freedom that European women would enjoy only many centuries later, as the tragic story of Abélard and Héloïse symbolized. During the greatest part of the middle ages in Europe, the wedding was decided by the respective families and both spouses, especially the bride, were usually nothing more than kids (L'Hermite-Leclercq 1994, p. 268). In Japan, only from the 8th century the woman's parents would progressively begin to play a role in the process of the marriage proposal and the selection of the groom, starting the slow shift

to the *mukotori* marriage (Takamure 1967, p. 63). From the mid-Heian (11th century), the situation drastically changed, as the most yearned solution for a woman was to be married to a powerful and noble man and live at his house, according to the so-called *sue*-marriage, for example like *Genji monogatari*'s character of Lady Murasaki, living at Genji's house (Takamure 1967, p. 71). Despite being an exception at first, the *sue* represented the definitive dissolution of pre-Taika tribal society, where a large matriarchal family was always present to sustain a woman during every moment of her life. In the new, capital-centered Heian court society, where family status was directly affected by the position occupied by the father in the bureaucratic ranks, an unmarried woman that lost her parents was often doomed to survive at the margins of court society.

Also through this brief comparison, we can detect the profound difference between the Europe feudal courts and the Heian court: while in Japan we saw the slow passage from matriarchy to patriarchy, in Europe, at least since the fall of Roman Empire onward, the condition of women would always be of submission, with just some variations and exceptions – for example in the early Merovingian period (6th century) (Fonay Wemple 1994, pp. 207-8). In Japan, the contradiction between a patrilineal system, imported with the *ritsuryō* codes, and the traditional matrilineal family, became clearly evident during the *sekkan* period, when the *mukotori* became more popular: even if the household still passed from mother to daughter, the head of the family, having the power to decide on the daughters' partner, became the father. On the other hand, in Europe, the centrality of the father and the patriarchal family were rooted in centuries of male-centred societies.

Even with these deep social and historical differences, we can still find some evident similitude between the love exchanges in Japan and in the troubadours' courts, that deserve a more accurate analysis.

For example, I find some similitudes in the figure of the low rank women at the Heian court and the *iuvenes* or knights in medieval Europe. A Heian court woman of lower rank, always hoped for the visit of a high-rank man that would marry her, elevating her status and saving her from misery; in some cases she could be sent by the family to serve at the imperial palace, in the remote hope to win the emperor's favor, and in the luckiest case to give him a son. In Europe, second sons of aristocratic families were sent to court to be educated and raised, looking for a noble woman to marry, and offering their service to queens, princesses or countesses. Both these figures, the low rank woman and the low rank knight, lived at the margin of the court society, spending their life in the effort of being included in a higher segment of that very closed and hierarchically structured society. In my opinion, it is not by

chance that most of the protagonists of the Heian literature and European ver-
nacular literature are women – often of low or medium rank – and knighs: the
aspirations to social improvement of this class of 'excluded' are embodied in
works like Bertran de Born's poems or Chrétien de Troyes's love romances,
or the *Sarashina nikki* diary by Sugawara no Takasue's daughter or even the
Genji monogatari's heroines whose destiny depends on the man's will.

Another point of comparison could be the function of the *nakadachi* (me-
diator) in the *tsumadoi* style wedding, and the jester in the Provencal courts.
The *nakadachi* was a messenger that delivered the marriage request to the
woman, substituting or preceding the direct visit of the man (Takamure 1967,
p. 39), while the jester, that performed the troubadour's song in front of the
woman, was the one 'delivering' the love message (Roncaglia 1978, pp. 372-3).
Of course, the *nakadachi* and the jester are two very different figures, whose
similitude lays only in their duty to deliver the message of love/marriage of a
man to a woman. But couldn't we advance the hypothesis that the custom to
send love messages through a third person – usually, a servant – could be some-
thing more than a coincidence, that may help us outline some more universal
similitudes specific of the social customs of the court? I should remark that in
Japan, the figure of the *nakadachi* was uncommon in the primitive wedding
form: «users of the *nakadachi* were more numerous among the aristocracy.
We can say that this *nakadachi* is a product of the division in social classes»
(Takamure 1967, p. 40), namely a product of the new aristocratic class. Is it re-
ally inappropriate to attempt a parallel with the European feudal courts where
the birth of the figure – or, rather, of such 'function' – of messenger of love,
can be read as a direct consequence of the life of court aristocracy, enclosed
into a narrow physical space, where love encounters must be kept concealed?
As I said before, this kind of comparison needs a more careful analysis, so for
the moment I will just indicate a certain number of similitudes, hoping this
may offer a more global view.

Some words could be spent here about the role of women as producers of
literary works at the European and Heian Japan courts. It is commonly known
that some of the greatest masterpieces of the Heian literature were written by
women, but if we limit the discourse to the 9th and early 10th century Japan, it
becomes hard to firmly state that the Japanese women were more prolific than
their European counterparts. Apart from the most ancient period, at the time
of the *Man'yōshū*, especially during empress Jitō's reign (686-687), we have
records of women that composed poems at official banquets, as well as women
expressing their personal feelings, like princess Nukata (ca. 630-690), and in
the last period of the *Man'yōshū*, the aunt of Ōtomo no Yakamochi, Sakanoue
no Iratsume, left about 50 *waka*, becoming the most representative woman

poet of that period. During the first decades of the 9th century, the daughter of emperor Saga, Uchiko, as well as some of her ladies-in-waiting, were even able to write poems in Chinese, and some of her compositions are included in the imperial collections. Also the birth of the *kana* alphabet in the second half of the 9th century seems somehow tied to the need for a simplified form of Chinese characters for written communication with women – an activity that fulfilled an important role in the relationship between men and women of the new aristocratic and capital-centered court. But even so, until the beginning of the 10th century and maybe later, women's writing was limited to *waka* composition.

In the male-centred Europe, the diffusion of written vernacular was linked not only to women, but also and primarily to illiterate members of the feudal courts, both men and women, who were unable to read and understand Latin. But also in Europe we have records of some literate women, as in the instance Baudonivia (7th century) a French nun-scholar, Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim (10th century) the first German woman poet, or Héloïse d'Argenteuil (11th century) intellectual and lover of Peter Abélard. It is true that, as regards the troubadour poetry, the compositions of the *trobairitz* (women troubadours) are a minority, but it is remarkable that there were active women poets, that could match the *Kokinshū* women poets for percentage of compositions. Although during all of the 9th century, especially during the Kanpyō era, court women were very active on occasions like the *utaawase*, the number of their poems included in the *Kokinshū* is still low: Ise, the most represented one, has only 22 poems compared to the over one hundred poems by Ki no Tsurayuki.

Lastly, we must add a further, but very important difference concerning the conception of love in medieval Europe and Nara-Heian Japan. In Japan we can't find – at least not with such a central role – two of the three characteristics indicated before about troubadour's love: 1) the ennobling force of human love; 2) the elevation of the beloved to a place of superiority above the lover. In Man'yōshū's love waka, as well as in the Kokinshū, it is hard to find a love relationship or declaration in which the lover elevates himself – becoming a 'better man' – because of his love for the woman. Usually, love is just the cause of a lover's suffering (due to the distance etc.). It was still possible to find a man of lower rank in love with a woman of higher status, but his condition would not lead to a spiritual or moral elevation, at least not as clearly as in the troubadours.

We can conclude that, despite the similitudes that can always be found, the feudal society of medieval Europe was an environment basically different from the Nara-Heian Japan, for the condition of the women, matrimonial customs, and love ethic.

The most remarkable common point is that the 'social struggle' of finding a partner – that is also part of a (maybe unconscious) strategy of self-positioning inside the court society – became in Heian Japan and medieval Europe the main theme and the driving force of a rich 'literature of love', that had as main communication tool the vernacular language – and not the high language of culture – and women as first theoretic interlocutors. Apart from the love poems used in private exchanges of letters, almost every work in Japanese vernacular, from the *Taketori monogatari* to the *Konjaku monogatarishū* or even the *Genji monogatari*, had a deep connection with the theme of love and women, and the same can be said about the European vernacular literature, from Chrétien de Troyes's romances, to the troubadour or even, with some caution, the Sicilian poetry. Therefore, since the social changes left their mark on the literary works, literature may become an effective tool to investigate society in a wider and more flexible way.

Love in the Kokinshū and in the Sicilian School of poetry

As discussed before, the history of medieval Europe and ancient Japan are so different that a comparison, if possible, should be made only at precise and very limited conditions. From the point of view of the political and social structures, the most remarkable difference is that following the disintegration of the Carolingian empire, Europe had a feudal system where some great feudal lords accorded land and power to lower rank vassals often in open fight against each other; Heian Japan shifted to a new centralized and bureaucratic state modeled on the Chinese law codes and theories, that led to a concentration of the political power into the emperor's hands (especially with Kanmu and Saga) and then progressively to a sort of hereditary oligarchy of an aristocratic family in particular: the Fujiwara-regent system.

Despite these deeply different political-historical backgrounds, both Japan and Europe saw the birth of a court society showing many common points, and this can validate the comparison proposed in this research. Focusing on the analysis of the literary works, I find it furthermore interesting to detect some specific similitudes in two fundamental 'works' of these two literary traditions: the first imperial collection of *waka*, the *Kokinshū*, and the collection of poems of the so called Sicilian School. Some features of these two collections seem so peculiar and so closely linked to precise changes in the social structure, that a comparison becomes not only possible, but also particularly meaningful.

From the troubadours to the Sicilians

It is common knowledge how the Sicilian poets inherited their style, lexicon and rhetoric devices from the *troubadours*, but most of all, the peculiar approach to the love theme. Also Sicily saw a reception of the troubadours' *fin' amor* in almost every fundamental aspect: the vassalage of love for the woman, described as a *domina* [mistress, female lord] of higher rank than the man, the request for a payback to the poet's love (the *guiderdone*), the suffering because of the denial of mercy etc. Therefore, the Sicilians can undoubtedly be called prosecutors and heirs of the troubadours, but, as demonstrated by recent studies, they are anything but mere imitators of the Provencal poetry.

A first distinction should be done on the different social environment where the troubadours and the Sicilians lived and composed their songs. In Provence, at least at the beginning of *troubadours*'s tradition, the literature of the *fin'amor* seems to reflect a somehow real – or at least realistic – behavior of feudal court members as discussed in Köhler's study. In Sicily, the different social background of the Magna Curia did not justify concepts like love services in return for a woman's reward. The typical poet of the Sicilian School is neither a knight nor a member of the aristocracy asking *mercede* to a higher-rank woman, as the typical troubadour could be described with some approximation, but a completely new figure: a notary or a state bureaucrat of the Magna Curia. As clearly stated by Di Girolamo, «our bureaucrat poets [the Sicilians] didn't share the same lifestyle of barons, princes and kings, and according to what we know of their few biographic records, it seems that they didn't usually live at court, or at [Frederick's] many courts » (Di Girolamo 2008, p. XLVI), as was instead the instance of Provence, where courtiers actually lived inside the court, which was also a very narrow and enclosed environment. Frederick II's Magna Curia was instead an itinerant court that only formally had its center in the Sicilian capital of Palermo, which is why many illustrious members of the School lived in different places and cities of the kingdom. It is evident that this different isocial background would influence the way Sicilians managed the *fin'amor* in their poems. In short, «the reality in which Sicilian poets lived was courtly, not feudal» (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 124). It was natural that a love ideology born in the Provencal and French feudal court, lost great part of its original meaning if transplanted in a bureaucratic centralized State as the Hohenstaufen Kingdom of Italy, an environment animated by a quite different kind of society, with different life styles and spaces.

From a fictional reality to a higher level of abstraction: Jaufre Rudel and Giacomo da Lentini

The relative 'proximity' of the troubadour poetry to real life experiences has often been stressed also in comparison with German *minnesänger*: «the troubadoric poetry [is] much closer to real life, more realistic, and the *minnesäng* more idealistic, more spiritual» (Köhler 1976, p282), but it is Köhler himself that, finding this explanation unsatisfactory, proposed a statement that, in my opinion, could also fit the Sicilian School: «the *minnesänger* is the spokesperson of a [social] group depending on aristocracy much more than its equivalent group in France. We cannot expect him to act in a direct, openly critical way towards aristocracy, or that even would question about its privileged status. Changing the lord to serve, when possible, meant to start again from the beginning» (ibid.). This statement cannot be truer speaking about the Sicilians, much more tied to Frederick and the Magna Curia than the Provencal troubadours or the German minnesänger to their feudal lords. According to Pagano, «compared to the troubadours, the Sicilians must be defined as the first real courtiers that served only one lord» (Pagano 2007, p. 37). If this can be seen as the main reason for the lack of political themes in Sicilian poetry, it has also some implications regarding the conjugation of the *fin'amor* in Italy. Aniello Fratta, analyzing how the Sicilian poets dealt with the *fin'amor*, detects «a substantial unconcern for the contents, that is obvious in a condition where there is no receiver, or rather, there is no restriction of the interlocutor: for example Rinaldo [d'Aquino] could easily manipulate or adulterate the rules of the game (the *fin'amors*) simply because that game didn't exist in reality, so he [the poet] was not forced to follow those rules» (Fratta 1996, p. 15). In other words, according to Fratta, the lack of a real feudal court in Sicily makes the love poems of the Sicilians nothing more than a game, where the contents established by the troubadour tradition – the rules of courtly love – were totally subordinated to a different aim, the search for new formal solutions and the foundation of a literary canon.

In the poems of the Sicilian School we can draw a clearer separation between the love experience narrated in the song, and the love experience in the poet's real life; this can be explained as a direct consequence of the different social environment, because, as I mentioned above, «the reality in which the Sicilians poets lived is courtly, not feudal. This explains why, often, the accent falls not on the knight-lady relationship, but on love per se» (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 125). In this process of «intellectualization of the love experience» (ibid.) we see a shift in the attention from the loved woman to the love for that woman; from a request of *mercede* (the reward from the woman) in the social frame of feudalism, to the refusal to ask for a reward for that love

service (in Giacomo da Lentini, *Amor non vole ch'io clami* [Love forbids me to ask], PSS 1.4) and the consequent reflection on love itself, into the no longer feudal court of Frederick II. We could call this the 'metaphysics of love', and anticipating the discourse about Japan, it is one of the most characteristic points of love poetry in the Heian period.

Actually the existence of the women to which the Sicilian poets addressed their poems is even uncertain, despite the number of texts speaking directly to the *madonna* (woman, milady), in dialogic form. We can't say that in the Magna Curia women were less present than in other courts, but just that they seemed not to take part – at least, not an active part – in the poetic scene as was more the case in Provence (with the trobairitz women poets) or even in northern France (with female patrons like Marie of Champagne). We can consider the Sicilian poetry closer to a dialogue between men on the theme of love, than a real tool of communication with the other gender, connected to real love experiences, as the troubadours' *canso* was supposed to be – at least in principle.

I said 'in principle', because actually this tendency of detachment from reality was not totally absent in the troubadours, who could rather be considered the real starters of the process of idealization of love feeling. As clearly stated by Mario Mancini: «the discourse of courtly love, in 12th-13th centuries Provence, is not with the woman, but with [the poet] himself, with his ghosts. The song has its unavoidable pivot in the first person of the lover, with a secret fear for description, perception, for any possible intrusion of objectivity. It is an expression of desire that follows the subject's desire, it is an exhibition of the one-who-desires. The body, both the poet's and the woman's, is excluded. Of course, the *domna* [woman] is desired, as expressed by the text, but we don't understand exactly how and why» (Mancini 1991, p. 21). In other words, since the troubadours, the love song started becoming «more than a discourse, a vocative instance in which "you" (the woman […]) is reduced to a projection of "I", a grammatical category that either the singer or the listener could charge with (auto)biographical substance» (Formisano 1994, p. 69).

With the troubadours this 'abstraction' of erotic desire has its clearest expression in the so called *amor de lonh* (long-distance love), for example in the instance of the aristocrat-troubadour Jaufre Rudel, who fell in love with a woman he had never met.

Jaufre Rudel de Blaia was a very noble man, prince of Blaia. He fell in love with the countess of Tripoli, without ever having seen her, just because of the good things he heard about her from the pilgrims coming from Antakya. And he composed many *vers* [verse, poems] onher, with quite good melodies but mediocre words. Out of desire of seeing her, he become a crusader and set sail on sea, and while he was on the ship he fell ill, and

driven to Tripoli, in a lodging, where he was given up for dead. Some-body informed the countess, so she came to him at his bed, and took him in her arms. Suddenly he understood that she was the countess, and he re-covered the senses of hearing and smell, and lauded God because he had given him the grace to live enough to see her; then he died between her arms. She wanted him buried with great honours in the Temple; then, the same day, she became a nun because of the deep pain she felt for his death. (*Vida* of Jaufre Rudel, Liborio 1982 cit. in Ura 2008, p. 29)

The fictional reconstruction of Jaufre Rudel's *vida* (life, biography) is a perfect example of the *amor de lonh*, a feeling that starts even before the poet has seen the object of his love, so that it may be called platonic love. Even so, it is important to underline here the difference with the position of the Sicil-ian poets, for example comparing Jaufre's *vida* with the *canzone* by Giacomo da Lentini, *S'io doglio no è meraviglia* (PSS 1.14), that shows a further step toward the idealization and abstraction of love feeling. In this poem Giaco-mo, recalling (and translating) the concept of *amor de lonh* with the words *amor lontano* (far love), changes the perspective between lover and beloved in a precise manner.

> *S'io doglio no è meraviglia*
> *e s'io sospiro e lamento*
> *amor lontano mi piglia*
> *dogliosa pena ch'eo sento,*
> *membrando ch'eo sia diviso*
> *di vedere lo bel viso*
> *per cui peno e sto 'n tormento*
> If I suffer, it is nothing to be surprised about / and if I sigh and moan / love from far away takes me / a painful suffering I feel, / when I remember that I am parted / [and unable] to see her beautiful face
> (Giacomo da Lentini, PSS 1.14, 1-7)

As correctly underlined by Ura (Ura 2008, p. 32), and Antonelli (Antonelli 2008, p. 300) the difference between Jaufre Rudel and Giacomo is that in the first instance a man fell in love with a woman he had never seen, while the second described the suffering for a separation: Giacomo suffers remembering the face of his beloved. The most important detail is, in my opinion, that even considering Jaufre's *vida* as nothing more than a fictional reconstruction, the countess of Tripoli is still a real and even historical personage, who also plays an active – and fundamental – part in the story. On the contrary, Giacomo's woman remains just an undefined and 'absent' character, only vaguely exist-ing in the text. Despite the short description of the woman in the last verses (32-35), this description is so vague and generic that it could be addressed to

almost every refined woman of the tradition of the *fin'amor*.

> *le suoe adornate fattezze,*
> *lo bel viso e l'ornamento*
> *e lo dolze parlamento,*
> *occhi, ahi, vaghi e bronde trezze.*
> her elegant features, / her beautiful face and ornament / and her lovely
> speaking, / eyes, alas, tender, and blond braids
> (Giacomo da Lentini, PSS 1.14, 32-35)

We can say that the poem doesn't focus on the woman, but on Giacomo's pain due the her absence. That's why we can say, with Luperini, that «the Sicilian poetry is in other words much more abstract and rarefied than the Provencal one, it is farther from the concreteness of real situations and everyday life. The woman's figure is less delineated, while often the lyrical focus is constituted by a reflection on the phenomenology of love, with the consequent process, on the one hand, of a psychological introspection, and, on the other, of the intellectualization of the love experience» (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 125).

The same approach is detectable in another of Giacomo's poem, *Meravigliosamente* (Wonderfully), that in vv.46-48, declares:

> *Assai v'aggio laudato,*
> *Madonna, in tutte le parti*
> *di bellezze ch'avete.*
> Many times I lauded you, / milady, in every part / of the beauty you have
> (Giacomo da Lentini, PSS 1.2, 46-8)

The beauty of the woman is not really declared 'in every part' as Giacomo says. «Her attractiveness is never described, only briefly mentioned, but in turn it is referred *in absentia* by [Giacomo's] affectionate tension» (Landoni 1997, p. 44). So, again, «the Sicilian poetry does not focus on the "love service" [of the troubadours], or […] on the woman, but on love itself as ontological truth, or natural phenomenon, whose description coincides with the very fact of composing poems» (Brugnolo 1995, p. 327).

We should probably spend some words here on the difference between the role of the woman for the troubadours and the Sicilians. First of all we must remark that, while in France we have records of (a few) women poets – the *trobairitz* – that were usually high aristocrats, among the Sicilian School poets, especially the first generation at Frederick's court, we can't find the name of any woman, nor do we have proof that women actually participated in some way to the poetic discourse and production. The only case in which we hear a

woman's words in a Sicilian poem is through the poem of a man, for example the following verses by Rinaldo d'Aquino.

> *ma 'l tempo m'inamora*
> *e fami star pensata*
> *d'aver mercé ormai*
> *d'un fante che m'adora;*
> But the season makes me fall in love / and makes me think continuously / of having the service / of a young man that adores me
> (Rinaldo d'Aquino, PSS 7.10, 1-21)

Other examples of men poets interpreting a woman are Matteo di Ricco in *Lo core inamorato* (PSS 19.2) and Cielo d'Alcamo in *Rosa fresca aulentissima* (PSS 16.1).

We can't totally exclude that among the group of anonymous poets included in the manuscripts some women were included too, but even in this case it would be correct to consider it more as an exception: maybe even more than the troubadours' *canso*, the Sicilian poetry is a form of literature created and managed by men. About the interlocutor the Sicilians addressed their poems to, I think it is not a coincidence that poetic exchanges like the *tenzone* (debate) between Giacomo da Lentini and the Abbot of Tivoli, or the other one among Giacomo, Iacopo Mostacci and Peter de Vinea about the nature of love (PSS 1.18, PSS 1.19) were performed by male poets.

Also in southern France, the 'game' of the *fin'amor* was completely controlled by men, while the women had only the illusion to be free and in a higher position: «the courtly love granted the woman an undeniable power. But it also restrained this power inside the borders of a well defined field, that of imagination and play» (Duby 1994, pp. 310-311). But we can still find records of women frankly expressing their desire, like the countess Beatriz de Dia who sang

> *Ben volria mon cavalier*
> *tener un ser en mos brazt nut*
> I'd really want my knight / and hold him, one night, naked in my arms
> (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 54)

Even if the desire expressed by the countess of Dia is probably nothing else than the representation of a ritualized desire – the rite of *asag*, part of the codified game of the *fin'amor* – I think it testifies how women were at least active as real interlocutors to men in the poetry of the troubadours; something we can't prove for the Sicilian School.

In the light of the recent studies about the Sicilian School, I think that, without confuting Mancini's interpretation about the 'elusion of body descrip-

tions' in the troubadours' poems, we can put the Sicilians on the next step in this path towards the of the idealization of courtly love, started by the troubadours. If in the troubadoric songs there is a tendency to formalize the language and a detachment from the real social application of the rules of love, it is with the Sicilians – court bureaucrats living in a new environment, maybe also physically 'outside' the court, as suggested by Di Girolamo – that the heritage of the *fin'amor* reaches new heights of abstraction and idealization. Angelo Pagano briefly remarks the same concept, placing the troubadours and the Sicilians on the same path: « Federick II's poets go beyond their French colleagues in the assertion that the lover-poet experience is exclusively mental» (Pagano 2007, p. 31).

The best proof I have found to validate the theory of a progressive evolution from the troubadours to the Sicilians – on the specific field of the idealization and abstraction – is represented by the intermediate experience of the *trouvères* in the courts of northern France. As pointed out by Luciano Formisano, the passage between the troubadours like Marcabru and the trouvères like Chrétien de Troyes «is not only ethical, but it deals also with the *inventione* [invention], authorizing that process of progressive linguistic abstraction representing one of the most distinctive features of the poetry of the trouvères, that will be later driven to the extreme consequences by Sicilian poets». Also, the poetry of the trouvères ends into «a self-retreat on poet's *ego*, in a sort of interiorization of desire» (Formisano 1994, p. 95). In a foot note, Formisano further explains: «It is not a coincidence that, at Frederick II's court, the foundation of a lyric of art of Provencal influence will be accompanied by a metalinguistic reflection about the essentially free and private nature of Love, as it is declared by the *caposcuola* Giacomo da Lentini in the *canzone Amor non vole ch'io clami* and in the sonnet exchange that opens the second section of Vaticano latino 3793» (Formisano 1994, ibid.). So, also Formisano suggests an evolution from troubadours to trouvères to Sicilians, that has its constant progression in the further self-retreat on the 'ego' and the 'metalinguistic reflection'.

Theatricalization as a common feature

In a recent study Claudio Giunta (2002) stated that troubadour poetry is closer to a theatrical representation than to an autobiography, because it is always addressing someone else, namely, the woman, although *in absentia* (Giunta 2002, p. 396). Even if we don't have any data about the way Sicilian poetry circulated among the poets – except that it may have been a kind of poetry primarily written more than sung – it is plausible that these poems were addressed to somebody, or written for a public or semi-public reading and

fruition. Giunta detects in the Sicilian poets like Giacomo da Lentini a clear approach to their interlocutor: «it is plausible that also for him [Giacomo], and for the Sicilians in general, the lyric was not the place of a representation of a historically given individual, but instead a social function; that the "me" expressed in the text didn't speak so to say in the first person, but the poets only repeated the convention of the courtly homage: so, the vaguer, more repetitive and traditional the message is, the more it will be suitable to express those shared values that the listener/reader felt as his own» (Giunta 2002, p. 397).

In other words Giunta underlines the continuity between the troubadours and the Sicilians as producers of a poetry meant as a public performance aimed at expressing certain values shared by the court, the leitmotiv of both traditions. If this position seems apparently contrasting with the one expressed before, that underlined the differences between the troubadours and the Sicilians, actually the process of de-personalization of poetry described by Giunta – common to the troubadours and the Sicilians – has as side effect the shifting of the attention from a physical woman to the analysis of the phenomenology of love started by the troubadours (Mancini) and led to its completion by the Sicilians (Formisano).

Conclusions

So, apart from the different language used, it seems impossible to draw a clear line to separate the troubadours from the Sicilians, because, as we have seen, while many Sicilian songs used troubadoric clichés, some troubadours as Bernart de Ventadorn or Jaufre Rudel already showed a clear tendency to idealization. Therefore it would be more correct to talk about a progressive evolution of the poetry of courtly love, started with the troubadours, and evolved in many different ways, like in the French trouvères, the German *minnesänger*, and the Sicilian School. Moreover, we should not forget that the various literary traditions we mentioned did not simply follow one another, but were instead contemporary, intersected and overlapping.

I mentioned before that love poems always show some tendency to abstraction, because «love is a literary myth always more transcendent than the actual reality of the social relationship» (Roncaglia 1978, p. 382), but even so it is possible to detect some specific features identifying, in an almost exclusive way, the Sicilian poetry, inside the larger frame of the European vernacular poetry, because «the history of the *fin' amor* is […] the history of an object [love] continuously changing, and never becoming stable, except during a period of decadence or in peripheral areas» (Di Girolamo, *I trovatori*, p. 68, cit. in Formisano 1994, p. 69). The Magna Curia can be considered one of those peripheral areas, where love poetry assumed specific characteristics reflect-

ing a specific historical and social background.

I can conclude remarking again the difference between the troubadours and the Sicilians: while «some troubadours exalted the intimate physical features of their women, and even their sexual accessibility» and while in the troubadour songs we detect «a general spirit of levity, even of irony», «the Sicilians are the ones who set the tragic register of this genre [love poetry]. […] The reflection about the "courtly question" gains a new substance, it becomes a philosophical analysis» (Di Girolamo 2008, p. LXXXII-LXXXIII). Antonelli is even more explicit in defining the differences between the Sicilians and the troubadours, stating that Giacomo is «concerned with anything that could contribute to a inner representation and an *aulico* [highly refined, suitable to court's chambers], "absolute" modeling of the love fact, freed from actual situations» and that «the most important authors of the School pursued a lyrical avant-garde project (in which the formal level was an essential component, first of all in the sonnet), focused on the analysis of lyrical subject interiority, and no longer just on the interpersonal exchange, that was characteristic of most of the troubadoric poetry» (Antonelli 2008, pp. XLIX-L).

Paraphrasing Antonelli, we can say that Giacomo da Lentini started a reflection that would surpass the troubadours' impasse, and that love poetry would become the occasion for an universal analysis of the human nature, that transcended social differences; it is not by chance that such poetry appeared in «a large court that was no longer feudal, but regal and imperial, directed to more general and emblematic representations» (Antonelli 2008, p. LII).

Even if we accept the position defining the Sicilian School poetry as mere amusement, a courtly divertissement of the Magna Curia's cultural elite, the strive for a spiritual elevation through the research on the human nature and feelings is undeniably rooted in these lyrics.

We can therefore state that previous studies on the Sicilian School are unanimous about the fact that the Sicilian poetry was more focused on the reflection on love than on the factual description of a personal, even if fictionalized, life experience as was the norm in France.

This is, in my opinion, the most important point of contact with the poetry of the *Kokinshū*, that «cerebral nature of the love experience» (Pagano 2007, p. 7) of the Sicilians that can be detected also in the love poems of the *Kokinshū*, especially in the comparison with the previous *waka* tradition of the *Man'yōshū*.

From the Man'yōshū to the Kokinshū

Before I verify if the adjective 'cerebral' can really fit the *Kokinshū*, I want to start from the definition of «literature of the bureaucrats (官僚文芸)» used by Kikuchi Yasuhiko to indicate the love poems composed at public events like the *utaawase* in the Kanpyō era (Kikuchi 1994, pp. 80, 86). Connecting and observing of the respective social structure of the love poems of the *Kokinshū* and of the Sicilians is a good starting point. First of all, this is also the point that distinguished the *Kokinshū* from the *Man'yōshū*, but also that draws a parallel between the poets of the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian poets – both characterized by the status of bureaucrat-poets – more suitable than the one between the poets of the *Kokinshū* and the troubadours (see Part III –The composition of the poetic community).

From the point of view of the social comparison with the Sicilian poets, the presence of women poets in the *Kokinshū* represents a difference in the social background and in the composition of the poetic community that we can't ignore, but as I discussed before, we can't say that at the time of the *Kokinshū* women were central actors of the literary scene. We should say on the contrary that the production of literary works in Japanese vernacular, at the time of the *Kokinshū*, was still led and oriented by men.

On the other hand, the problem of the genderization of literature during 9th century Heian cannot be easily solved. The division of the poets of the *Kokinshū* suggested by Kikuchi (ibid.) as a contraposition between the 'literature of bureaucrats' and 'poems written by women' 女の歌, doesn't seem to explain properly the composition of the love songs of the *Kokinshū*. As pointed out by Suzuki Hiroko, «the gender of the poet in real life and the "ego" inside the poem doesn't necessarily match», as some male poets wrote poems pretending to be abandoned women, or female poets wrote seasonal poems in the same manner of men, so «the "masculine essence" (男性的なるもの) and the "feminine essence" (女性的なるもの) creates a complex mix inside the same phenomenon» (Suzuki 2012, p. 83).

So, even if it is possible to detect the characteristic of a feminine sensitivity in the *waka*, as in most of the poems in the *Kokinshū* this aspect is hardly measurable. Maybe, the most important conclusion we can draw from Suzuki's analysis is that even if among the poets of the *Kokinshū* we can find some women, this doesn't mean that the majority of the love songs of the *Kokinshū* were the result of a real poetic exchange between lovers. On the contrary, the love poems composed at public occasions like the *Kanpyō ontoki kisai no miya utaawase* (the poetic contest at the palace of Empress in the Kanpyō era) demonstrate how some of the most typical love songs in the *Kokinshū* have been written without a real communicative purpose between a man and a

woman, as was the tradition at the time of the *Man'yōshū*'s.

Theatricalization of love: utaawase

Utaawase and *koi no uta* (love songs) are two fundamental elements that characterize the poetry of the *Kokinshū*, and that deserve a deeper analysis.

Speaking of the *utaawase*, Kubota Toshio suggested the idea of an evolution of 'place' (*ba*) of the composition, from a private place corresponding to the love poems of the *Man'yōshū*'s where 'one-to-one' communication between author and receiver was the rule, to the love poems of *utaawase* (and from there, to the *Kokinshū*), where a great part of poems were intended as 'one-to-many' communication from the author to a group of people gathered in a certain place, or even, thanks to the written diffusion of the *Kokinshū*, to the potential readers of the collection (Kubota 1961, cit. in Masuda 1976, p. 35). Masuda criticizes some issues in Kubota's thesis, underlining how also in the *Man'yōshū* poems that can be called 'one-to-many' – for example the 'folk song' *min'yō* 民謡 –, and that, similarly to what Suzuki said about gender, it is hard, if not impossible, to draw a line between 'public poems' and 'private poems'. Even so, I find Kubota's major intuition is the detection of a primary, even if not absolute, tendency of great part of the *Kokinshū* poems distinguishing them from great part of the poems of the *Man'yōshū*, at least as regards love poetry. As summarized by Masuda, «in the songs [of the *Kokinshū*], the poet makes more effort in attempting to transmit that feeling and make it understandable to the receiver more than in expressing the author's own feelings» (Masuda 1976, p. 35). It is Masuda himself that underlines how, while in the *Man'yōshū*, in particular in Ōtomo no Yakamochi's poems, we can outline the birth of a poetry where the presence of the poet's individuality is detectable, (Masuda 1976, p. 37), «the *Kokinshū* doesn't seem to inherit the position of the individual lyricism started by the *Man'yōshū*, instead it seems to continue the tradition of the 'folk songs', through a process of refinement and sensitization» (Masuda 1976, p. 40).

The first example Masuda gives to explain this process is the *utaawase*, the poetic competition where each poet was requested to compose a poem on a fixed theme, so that all of the participants could share the same feeling. Because of this need for sharing and comprehension by a larger number of people, «the poems at the *utaawase* had to be of conservative and classical style. […] the only space allowed to the poet's individuality and personality laid exclusively on the technical side»; this personal technicality became so important to represent at last «the general tendency of that period» (Masuda 1976, pp. 41-42). The other example is the *byōbu uta* (poem on folding screen) where the presence of the figurative element (the painting) further limited the

'creativity' of poets, to whom only the space to express their technical skill to catch the spirit of the painting remained (Masuda 1976, ibid.).

Both in the *utaawase* and in the *byōbu uta*, the direct expression of poet's personal feelings was forbidden, and this particular approach to lyricism was the same constituting the most characteristic nature of the *Kokinshū*. The compilers, because of their duty to bring the *waka* back on the public scene – the so called *mamenaru tokoro* (serious places), of the *Kanajo* – selected poems dealing with human feelings and natural sceneries from an universal and sharable point of view. The instance of love poetry is extremely meaningful: «also regarding a subject so unsuitable to an imperial collection, love is taken as a simple subject, without dealing with concrete love experiences; it becomes abstract and idealized, and it is inserted in the structure of the imperial collection as an expression of that particular view of the world» (Masuda 1976, p. 42).

Rein Raud perceptively points out the relationship between the constitution of new spaces for the poetic performance and the refinement of the formal side of the *waka*: «the organization of public and private spaces caused the need to practice such exchanges in semi-public settings, where the direct expressions of one's feelings might have damaged one's reputation. This, in turn, contributed to the development of encoding rules which enabled the expression of intimate feelings through publicity suitable vocabulary and also made it possible to back off from discursively difficult situations by reverting completely to the 'public' mood of a text» (Raud 2003, p. 114).

The function of the Kokinshū

This approach to poetry, that to modern readers may sound manneristic, is nothing but the application of the Confucian principles of harmony through literature, that was also the basis of the *ritsuryō* state philosophy (Masuda 1976, ibid.). From this point of view the *Kokinshū* can be correctly considered as the evolution of that 'state literature' which started with Saga and Junna, whose main aim was not the onset of personal and singular styles and feelings, but a harmony within the (court) society based on the sharing of the same values and tastes, symbolized by the new custom of holding poetic banquets at the court (see Part II).

Therefore this aspect contributes to giving more reliability to the thesis presented in this book, remarking the tie between the courts of Saga, Junna, Uda and Daigo, regardless of the dissimilarities in the language and style of the different literary works. At their respective courts, the «function» (Raud 2003, p. 94) of works like the *Keikokushū* and the *Kokinshū* was the same: to exalt the emperor's prestige and promote a philosophy of literature. We should never forget that, still at the time of the *Kokinshū*, «even if there were many

aesthetical poems, there was not a poetry for poetry's sake, the awareness of an independent art. In particular Literature was the ethic» (Masuda 1976, p. 34).

That's why also in the case of the most profane and exuberant subject among the human feelings, love, the *Kokinshū* built a carefully controlled system of values based not on an «emotional» (情動) language but on an «indicative-symbolic» (指示的記号的) language, (Masuda 1976, p. 35) perfectly coherent to the discourse on the formalization of poetry we mentioned before (see Part IV).

In other words, as regards love poems and their social function and receivers, we can quote Akiyama Ken: «the love feeling belonging to an interior individuality in its proper violence, is transposed from that blind violence, to words drawn up following a traditional agreement that is the form of *uta* (song); and because it changes into a public custom, it becomes a tool to open the way to sympathizing with others» (Akiyama 2000, cit. in Morota 2007, p. 123).

From reality to abstraction: *sōmonka* and *koi no uta*

The distinction between the love poems in the *Man'yōshū* and the *Kokinshū* is the clearest example of this changed function of the *waka* at the Heian court. It is a shared opinion to consider the love poems of the *Kokinshū* as a much more intellectualized form of poetry than the ones in the *Man'yōshū*, in turn more adherent to real love relationships. The different name given to love poetry in the *Man'yoshū* – the *sōmonka* (相聞歌), songs of mutual questions – and in the *Kokinshū* – *koi no uta* (恋歌), songs of love/longing – is not a coincidence, but the proof of a totally different approach with the interlocutor, as well as of the different goal of these poems. While the *sōmonka* were the result of a direct relationship between two individuals – the lovers – the *koi no uta* seems instead the result of an alienation of the poet from the others and society (Masuda 1976, p. 36). In other words, «the world of *sōmonka* is built upon the continuation between [the poet] himself and the other, the *koi no uta* are generated by the sense of alienation. […] The difference between the *sōmonka* of the *Man'yōshū* and the *koi no uta* of the *Kokinshū* is the same as between the prerequisite of the sense of communion between man and woman, and the basic theme of isolation and alienation» (Masuda 1976, p. 36). Masuda's opinion has been confirmed, in more recent years, by Suzuki Hiroko, with her analysis on the expression *hito shirenu omoi* 人知れぬ 思ひ (the thinking unknown to other people) recurring in many of the songs in the *Kokinshū*: «it is remarkable that the name of the books about love in the *Kokinshū* is not *sōmon*, with the meaning of a salute to the other, but *koi no uta*, that is to love/yearn for an unreachable person» (Suzuki 2012, p. 72).

What is most remarkable in Masuda's conclusion is that in the love poems of the *Kokinshū* the poet lives a condition of loneliness that has its ori-

gin in the new aristocratic society of the Heian period. A typical example of this condition of isolation is Ariwara no Narihira, one of the Six Genies of the *waka* (Rokkasen) and a model for the 'courtly lover' (*irogonomi* 色好み) of all of the Heian literature. In this poem that opens the fifth book of love in the *Kokinshū*, he sings:

> 月やあらぬ春や昔の春ならぬわが身ひとつはもとの身にして
> *tsuki ya aranu / haru ha mukashi no / haru naranu / wa ga mi hitotsu wa / mono no mi ni shite*
> Is this not that moon / is this spring not the spring we / shared so long ago / it seems that I alone am / unaltered from what was then
> (Ariwara no Narihira, KKS 747)

Narihira is alone, spending the night remembering a past love; the speech is presented as a monologue, where the poet asks and answers himself. What is remarkable here is that the questions doesn't deal with the 'when' and 'how' he will meet his beloved again, instead with the problem of 'what is love', with a reflection about the personal human situation of the poet, that is also the only physical body (*mi* 身) on the scene. Even if Narihira's poems show a load of personality that we can't find in the other poets in the *Kokinshū* (Suzuki 2012, p. 86), the self-reflection and the questioning about the theoretical – or even philosophical – problems about the human nature and feelings, and how to express these feelings in words, is a feature of all of the poetry in the *Kokinshū*. «The compilation of the *Kokinshū*, through the re-objectification of the various poems that were also the fertile soil on which the compilers cultivated themselves, has been an attempt to clarify, with a criticism, the meaning of those very poems. What is love? And how to sing about love? Compiling the love songs of the *Kokinshū* had the same meaning as creating a new love poetry» (Suzuki 2012, p. 103).

What is fundamental to underline now is the shift from a *Man'yōshū*-style love poem and a *Kokinshū*-style love poem. As we said for the troubadours and the Sicilians, it is impossible to draw a clear line to demarcate boundaries between the two collections, especially because, inside the *Kokinshū* some 'old songs' very close to *Man'yōshū* style are also included.

Even if many of these older songs are anonymous, it doesn't mean that every anonymous poem had been composed in an earlier period. Perhaps some love poems of known authors could have been marked as anonymous on purpose to preserve the privacy of the author and of the receiver. In the *Kokinshū*, the love poems that were actually the result of a real love exchange are converted in «songs that everybody could share» (Suzuki 2012, p. 80) through their

de-personalization and the loss of the author's name.

This pursuit for universalization is quite evident in the love songs of the *Kokinshū* that, reviving the *Man'yōshū*'s 'form' 型 (*kata*), renovate it through a «relativization» (相対化) of the situation and a «gain of awareness» (意識化) (Suzuki 2012, p. 154), like in the following first poem of the books of Love.

> ほととぎす鳴くやさ月のあやめ草あやめも知らぬ恋もする哉
> *hototogisu / naku ya satsuki no / ayamegusa / ayame mo shiranu / koi mo suru kana*
> When nightingales sing / in the swept purple iris / of the Fifth Month I /
> am unmindful of the warp / on which we weave love's pattern
> (Anonymous, KKS 469)

Also this example proposed by Suzuki Hiroko demonstrates that the shift from the *sōmonka* to the *koi no uta* is not an abrupt change or break performed by the compilers to cut with the tradition, but it is rather an evolution, a progressive but decisive further step toward the idealization and reflection. This path passes through a shared discourse that, paradoxically, takes its energy from the sense of isolation felt by the members of this new court society; a society that, as demonstrated by the transformations in the marriage customs, has its origin in a new social setting and originates in turn a new vision of the world. The fact that already in the *Man'yōshū* we can find some love poems composed for public fruition, like the *min'yō* suggested by Masuda or the fictional love exchange indicated by Watanabe Yasuaki, these poems don't invalidate the thesis of an evolution from the *sōmonka* to the *koi no uta*, on the private-public path, but gives it instead further validation. The solution is given by Suzuki Hiroko: there is a current of *waka* that is accepted by the compilers (the impersonal and general poetry of *min'yō*), and another one that is excluded (the most private and factual exchanges of *sōmonka*) (Suzuki 2012, p. 80). The choice not to include explanations about the circumstances of the composition of a certain love song in the *Kokinshū*, that is in countertrend compared to the second imperial collection, the *Gosenwakashū*, can be also seen as an attempt to keep the love experience presented in the *Kokinshū* uniform and universally sharable, avoiding the risk of fragmentizing the corpus into a series of realistic and personal experiences for each poet (Suzuki 2012, p. 85).

From this point of view, the inclusion of poems of Rokkasen like Ariwara no Narihira, characterized by strong personalization emphasized by the long *kotobagaki*, seems a contradiction to the universalistic orientation of the collection. But also here, as perceptively suggested by Suzuki Hiroko, the personality of Narihira's poems, their somehow anticonformistic nature, are rather canalized and controlled by the compilers, that intentionally exalting

his personality (*ko* 個), succeed in adding a strong dynamism to the temporal progression – from evening to dawn –regulating the collection's macrotext (Suzuki 2012, p. 90).

Thus, Narihira's personal love experience, regardless of its supposed realism, is transfigured into an ideal representation of those universal and sharable feelings; an ideal that will finally reach unity and complete fictionalization some decades later, with the *Ise monogatari*, the story of Narihira's love adventures based on his poems. The proof is that we can underline that a similar process invested another Rokkasen, Ono no Komachi, that like Narihira will be idealized as model of refined court lady. In the third book of Love of the *Kokinshū*, we find the following poems by Narihira and Komachi.

> 秋の野に笹わけし朝の袖よりも逢はで来し夜ぞひちまさりける
> *aki no no ni / sasa wakeshi asa no / sode yori mo / awade koshi yo zo / hijimasarikeru*
> Wetter than sleeves that / have pushed through fields of bamboo / grass on an autumn / morn are mine when i return / on a night we did not meet
> (Ariwara no Narihira, KKS 622)

> みるめなきわが身をうらと知らねばや離れなで海人の足たゆくくる
> *mirume naki / wa ga mi o ura to / shiraneba ya / karenade ama no / ashi tayuku kuru*
> Does he not know that / this bay holds no seaweed still / comes the fisherman / in search of me though his legs / grow weary on his vain quest
> (Ono no Komachi, KKS 623)

In Komachi's poem, the three elements of *mirume* (seaweed), *ura* (bay), *ama* (fisherman), compose an *engo* around the semantic field of 'fishing', while *mirume* is at the same time *kakekotoba* for *miru me* (chance of meeting); the whole composition has the meaning of a denial to the request of the love meeting.

These two poems, that originally may have had no connection with each other, have been arranged by the compilers of the *Kokinshū* to look like a poetic exchange between a man and a woman, and then taken and fictionalized, during the mid-Heian, in the *Ise monogatari*, the most important work of the genre of *uta monogatari*. For Suzuki this is the proof that the *Kokinshū* contributed to the constitution of this kind of models and ideals that would be transmitted under new literary shapes during all of the Heian period (Suzuki 2012, p. 88).

Actually, the strategy of the compilers to absorb the personality of famous

poets to express, through an organic representation of feelings, an universal and de-personalized ideal of love –also a model of courtly living, as the *miyabi* or the *irogonomi* – is not exactly an invention of the *Kokinshū*. Also in China, during the Tang period (618-907), the 'love' poems called «*gongyuanshi* 宮怨詩 on historical personages weren't focused on the single person, but on the representation of the feelings, in an universal way» (Wang 2004, p. 276-277). While during the previous Six Dynasties (220-589) these poems focused on the beauty of the woman, during the Tang period the focus shifted to the sadness of the abandoned woman, and on the universalization of that feeling. Historical figures often taken as 'models' are empress Chen (2nd century B.C.) and Lady Ban, whose stories were recorded in works of the Han period like the *Changmen fu* 長門賦 (Rhapsody of Changmen) by Sima Xiangru or the *Zi Dao fu* 自悼賦 (Rhapsody of Self-Commiseration) by Ban Jie Yu; but even if poems of the Tang period like Li Bai's *Changmen yuan* 長門怨 (Grudge of Changmen) reuse those characters, they are not interested in telling the story again, and focus exclusively on the description of the feelings and sorrow of the characters. Thus, the story becomes universal and sharable. Therefore we can say that the tendency of the poems of the court literature to idealize and de-personalize can be detected also in the Chinese literature between the Six Dynasties and the Tang period.

Even if we can't reduce the analysis of such a wide timespan in such a simplistic conclusion, being this period one of the most complex and richest periods in the history of Chinese poetry, I think that it is always an inaccuracy to ignore the influence of Chinese poetry when discussing about Japanese court literature. As Morota Tatsumi accurately analyzed, the Six Dynasties and the mid-Tang literature deeply influenced Nara and the Heian literature, for example with the import of the Chinese aesthetic of courtesy, translated with the Japanese word *miyabi*, that would later be used in Japan to identify a series of different concepts about human behaviors and love culture (Morota 2007, p. 87). Suzuki Hiroko detects the influence of Chinese literature in the women poets of the 9th century like Ono no Komachi and Ise (Suzuki 2012, p. 83), and Nakano Masako demonstrates how the stereotypes and expressions of the Chinese *keienshi* seeped widely into the poetic words of the *Kokinshū* through intermediate works as *Shinsen Man'yōshū*, «not only inside the love poems, but also in the seasonal poems and travel poems » (Nakano 2005, pp. 87-88). Morota states also that the enormous popularity of Bai Juyi's poetry, imported in Japan around the mid 9th century greatly influenced the consolidation of the love poems in the *Kokinshū*, for example through the absorption and translation of its ideals by Sugawara no Michizane (Morota 2007, p. 80).

The importance of the *kanbun* for the consolidation style of the *Kokinshū* is clear, also for love poems; but what I want to focus on here is the evolu-

tion described by Morota of the use of the word *miyabi*, and its relation with the love themes. Morota detects a difference between *Man'yōshū*'s *miyabi*, and a new use of the word during Saga's reign, and then in the period of the *Kokinshū* (Morota 2007, p. 125). For Morota «within the society of the Heian court, there is a shift in the values and aesthetics expressed by the conversion of evaluation words from *miyabi* to *suki*» (Morota 2010, pp. 46-7). *Suki*, or *irogonomi* (amorousness) is the term that will replace *miyabi* to describe the courtly lover, embodied by the fictional characters of *Ise monogatari*'s Ariwara no Narihira and *Genji Monogatari*'s Hikaru Genji. Also Morota connects the linguistic change of the literary expressions indicating love, with a wider change affecting the aesthetic taste and the social level (Morota 2010, p. 48). The 'universality' of this shift is demonstrated by Morota through the parallel Chinese example: also Bai Juyi was able to compose a poem like the following because of the change in the society and in the role of women in literature (Morota 2007, p. 109-110).

> 冬至夜懷湘霊
> 艶色無由見
> 寒衾不可親
> 何堪最長夜
> 倶作獨眠人
> Winter solstice, yearning for Xiangling
> Your beautiful shape, no way for me to see it
> Under the cold blanket I can't have affection
> How to resist to the longest night of the year
> that makes us to sleep alone
> (BW 13:0661)

Morota suggests also a direct influence of the theme 'spending the night alone' from Bai Juyi to the poems of the *Kokinshū* like

> 笹の葉にをく霜よりもひとり寝るわが衣手ぞさえまさりける
> *sasa no ha ni / oku shimo yori mo / hitori neru / wa ga koromode zo / saemasarikeru*
> The blades of bamboo / grasses covered in crystal / frost stand rigidly –
> / yet far colder is the sleeve / of one who must sleep alone
> (Ki no Tomonori, KKS 563)

But we must point out that the theme of *hitorine* (to sleep alone) was present already in the *Man'yōshū*, therefore Bai Juyi's influence is arguable.

Apart from particular similitudes and comparisons between the *waka* and the *kanshi*, I find the most important conclusions in Morota's study are that:

1) love poems are directly affected by the changes in the social background,
2) in China and Japan we can find a similar evolution of love theme
3) in the time span I examined we see a progressive idealization and the tendency to introspection in love poetry.

On the basis of the previous studies I have quoted so far, we can outline some peculiar features distinguishing the love poems in the *Kokinshū* from the ones in the *Man'yōshū*': a further detachment between the poet in real world and the poet in the poem; the preponderance of the 'public' context on the 'private' context, as well as the priority of the shared themes and feelings in personal and individualistic lyricism; a general 'cerebralization' of the love theme that for the poet became an occasion of reflection, often alone and no longer directly linked to a specific receiver, as was the beloved woman/men of the *sōmonka*, but connected with a group of poets/readers who shared his feeling and his vision of the world. This new social group enjoyed this performative transposition – the *waka* – of the love facts in a new public space, an *utaawase*, a *byōbu*, or the reading of a written collection like the *Kokinshū*, whose poems were not directly addressed to that specific reader. According to Suzuki Hiroko, in the *Man'yōshū* the typical relationship is between a man and a woman (*se* 背 or *kimi* 君 and *imo* 妹) and a third person *hito* 人 could only watch (*miru*), know (*shiru*) and *tell* (*iu*) about their relationship from outside; in the *Kokinshū* also the beloved becomes just a *hito*, merged in a wider and undefined 'other' that remained as the only counterpart to the poets' ego, expressed by the words *ware* 我 (I) or *mi* 身 (body, my body) (Suzuki 2012, p. 68).

I'd like to underline once again that I am not stating that in the *Man'yōshū* there were not 'public' love songs like the ones composed in the Kanpyō era *utaawase*, as the reader may remember the poetic exchange between prince Ōama and Nukata no ōkimi, performed as an entertainment during a banquet at an imperial hunt (Watanabe Y. 2009, p. 13). So the shift between the *Man'yōshū* and the *Kokinshū* should be rather seen as a progressive evolution of certain themes and styles from a very heterogeneous 'before', to a more regulated and uniformed 'after'; from an implicitly one-to-one communication, to an implicitly one-to-many (or also, many-to-many) communication, that left its traces also on the lexical level, as underlined by Suzuki Hiroko before.

The Kokinshū and the Sicilians, a direct comparison

In the analysis carried out in the previous pages, I tried to outline the respective differences between the Sicilians and the troubadours, and between the *Kokinshū* and the *Man'yōshū*, implicitly trying to detect the supposed si-

militude between the Sicilian love poems and the ones in the *Kokinshū*.

We have seen how the historical condition of the women inside the (poetic) society resulted quite different at the Heian court and at Frederick II's court, while the presence of women-troubadours, the trobairitz, seems to suggest a similarity between the Heian court and the Provencal courts. Moreover, as stated by Mario Mancini, the idealization of the love relationship was already a feature of the troubadours, as well as the theatricalization of the love experience, so that a comparison between the troubadours and the *Kokinshū* seems possible in these terms.

Even so, as I demonstrated in this book, the Heian courts are more similar to Frederick II's court on the political and administrative side, and the poets of the Sicilian School and of the *Kokinshū* (especially the compilers) pursued a similar process of formalization of the poetic language that brought to its extremes consequences some tendencies already present in the troubadours and the *Man'yōshū*. Dealing with the love theme, the progressive shift from a reality-related love poetry to a much more idealized, abstract one is, in its more general parameters, a common feature we find in Japan in the shift from the *Man'yōshū* to the *Kokinshū*, and in Europe in the shift from the troubadours to the Sicilian School.

At the Heian court semi-public events like the *utaawase*, where the poem was «purely fictional, and it was judged in relationship to the associations and history of the topic and relevant waka, not in its relationship to the poet's personal life» (Shirane 2012, p. 197), as well as the shift to an «indicative-symbolic language» (Masuda 1976, p. 35) that marked a clear distance from real life love experiences as the ones in the *sōmonka* of the *Man'yōshū*, are all features that, according to the most up-dated studies of the Italian Literature, seem applicable also to the poetry of the Sicilian School.

The problem of the continuity/rupture with previous tradition is the biggest point of contact between the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School. As I already said, we should underline not only a certain number of specific and circumscribed similitudes between the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School, but rather a global similitude concerning the approach and relationship with precedent and contemporary models (*Man'yōshū*, Kōnin/Tenchō *kanshi*, Bai Juyi, Sugawara no Michizane, troubadours, trouvères and minnesänger, etc.), and verify the characteristics of two similar evolutions.

The *Kokinshū* contains some ancient poems already present in the *Man'yōshū*, as well as other poems (especially anonymous) that are close to *Man'yōshū* on the chronological and stylistic side. Even so, because in the intertextual organization of the *Kokinshū*, where ancient poems 'supported' new ones (Suzuki 2012, p. 13), not only it is always possible to find a path of continuity between the *Man'yōshū* and the *Kokinshū*, but it is the *Kokinshū*

that into its very textual structure embodies that evolution and transformation from, for example, *sōmonka* to *koi no uta*. The same thing might be said as regards the translations of the troubadour songs into Sicilian, like *Madonna dir vo voglio* by Giacomo da Lentini. These 'hypertextual conversions'[3] that perfectly absorb the troubadour tradition into the Sicilian School canon, will therefore pass into the new Italian literary tradition legitimated by the 14th century poetical collections, and Dante's criticism.

Even if the problem of 'sharing' love feelings with a community of people socially close to the poet features also within the troubadours, what assimilates the Kokinshū to the Sicilian School more than to troubadours is the way the discourse about love is conducted and the characteristic 'cerebrality' of the poems detected by many critics, as well as the question about the true meaning of love, and the 'educative' goal detected also by Suzuki Hiroko, that «fertile, cultivable soil …».

Studies on the Italian Literature demonstrated that one of the central features of the Sicilian School is the already mentioned passage from a love song intended as a communication tool with the woman, to a love song that is closer to a public performance, a reflection about that love. Elena Landoni detects in Giacomo da Lentini's songs like *Madonna dir vo voglio* or *Dolce coninzamento* «an effect of the decentralization of the narrative focal point from the level of the emotional exchange [between man and woman] to the level of dramatization/verbalization of the feeling», expressed by the frequency of verbs like *dire* (to say, to tell), but at the same time in Giacomo there it is also an «interiorization of love» (Landoni 1997, pp. 48-9), with the explicit denial of the courtly rule of the troubadours of the 'request for mercy', for example in the song *Amore non vole ch'io clami* (Love forbids me to ask, PSS 1.4). The theme of this *canzone* is «the research for an affective "sincerity" and a poetic "novelty" that could distinguish the author from other poets» (Antonelli 2008, p. 89). This contraposition with Giacomo's other songs can be seen as a «self-reflection on his own way and poetic postulates» (Antonelli 2008, p. 90) that confirms the general definition of the 'intellectualization' of poetry in the Sicilian School, since its more influent exponent.

On the other hand, the shifting from everyday speech to written language that Masuda Shigeo detects in the *Kokinshū*, has not only the meaning of a consolidation of the *wago* (Japanese vernacular) as a tool for written literature, but it also testifies a new intellectual approach to the poetic activity, the birth of a «language of speculation (思考語)» (Masuda 2004, p. 4). The re-

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[3]   I freely adapt the definitions of *hypertexte* and *hypotexte* elaborated by Gérard Genette (1982), that in my opinion perfectly fits the instance of Giacomo's translations.

lationship between the development of the language and the personal refine-
ment of the poets' sensibility, defined by Masuda, becomes one of the most
interesting formulation on the Heian poetry and the *Kokinshū*: «the growth
and deepening of an interiority in the people of this period [Heian], urged the
development and the evolution of the language; and this evolution provoked
in turn the refinement of the people's heart» (Masuda 2004, p. 3). So, it is not
just the social changes that caused a literary and linguistic development, but
also the presence of a refined literary practice – and the prestige accorded to
those able to manage that kind of technique – that led to a 'sentimental ed-
ucation' of the court members, in a virtuous spiral of refinement of both the
human feeling and the words used to express that very feelings.

Masuda's statement is quite close to Antonelli's interpretation about Gia-
como I previously mentioned. The creation of a new poetical language is not
just a technical process and an erudite divertissement of a group of court in-
tellectuals, instead, it is an universal discourse involving the refinement of
the human heart – Giacomo's questioning about 'sincerity' – or, in less poetic
terms, of the court society as a social group; since the earliest troubadours,
this social group was looking for new values and modes of life that, if on the
one hand allowed the distinction between the 'courtly' and the 'villein', at the
same time aimed at constituting a model of behavior for all the society, in a
much higher and universal level than in Provence. This pursuit for higher so-
cial values reached its completion in the new stage of 'state court' – the Mag-
na Curia – with the tacit imperial legitimation of the activity of the Sicilian
School of poetry. This is perfectly specular to what happened in Japan with
the realization of the 'state works' of the *Kokinshū*, in the social and historical
background of the Heian court when the Fujiwaras were governing.

Textual comparison: intellectualization of love in the Sicilians

The previous studies in the respective fields of the Japanese and Italian
Literature seems to have led to very similar conclusions, even in their formu-
lation. We should now verify, through a textual analysis, whether the poets of
the Sicilian School and of the *Kokinshū* analyzed the human nature and feel-
ings in a similar manner, and in which terms.

In the Sicilian School, the study of the phenomenology of love takes the
shape of a real debate between poets, for example in the famous two *tenzoni*
(poetical debates) led by Giacomo da Lentini. In the first one, composed by
five sonnets, three by the Abbot of Tivoli and two by Giacomo, the Abbot pro-
poses a debate on the nature of love. He started (PSS 1.18a) with a prayer to
the God of Love (*deo d'amore*, v.1), asking justice for the wound he suffered
because of the golden arrow of love (*lo dardo de l'auro*, v.11), and Giacomo

answered (PSS 1.18b) with a sonnet «almost irreverent and playful» (Antonelli 2008, p. 355) that Love is not a God, because God is only one (*ca più d'un dio non è né essere osa*, v.8). Here the Abbot answered that he didn't trust Giacomo's sincerity as a loyal lover, because

> *Che s'Amor vi stringesse coralmente,*
> *non parlereste per divinitate,*
> *anzi voi credereste veramente*
> *che elli avesse in sé gran potestate*
> If really love were subjugating you,
> you couldn't talk about theology,
> instead you would really believe
> that it has such great power
> (PSS 1.18c, 5-8)

The exchanges continued with Giacomo's admission of his total submission to love, soaking him like water a sponge (*ed entra 'meve com'agua in ispogna*, PSS 1.18d, 14), and with the final answer by the Abbot, who in turn recognized in Giacomo the behavior of a firm and sincere lover, and praised his words that lightened him up more than sunny weather (*più mi rischiara che l'air a sereno*, v.6), admitting in conclusion Giacomo's value and superiority. The Abbot's 'defeat' in this *tenzone* is decided by the fact that «Giacomo performed a diplomatic conversion, without questioning his own opinion about the nature of love, but instead recognizing the power that love exerts on him» (Antonelli 2008, p. 383): this sort of rhetorical stratagem is evaluated by the Abbot as a correct 'courtly' way to resolve the dispute. It is clear that the debate couldn't be called neither scientific nor objective, but it was played in great part rhetorically and formally, shifting among different registers and disciplines – from theology to traditional courtly love patterns.

Even richer in theoretical speculation is the other *tenzone*, started by Iacopo Mostacci – maybe a falconer of Frederick's (Antonelli 2008, p. 392) – continued by Peter de Vinea and concluded by Giacomo. Iacopo suggests (PSS 1.19a) that the power of love could depend on its visibility, its 'substance', while Peter (PSS 1.19b) states that it is because love is invisible and incorporeal that we can understand its power and therefore its very existence, presenting also the unusual metaphor of the magnet attracting the iron (vv.9-11) to symbolize love's natural power. Giacomo (PSS 1.19c), here assuming the role of 'judge', didn't deny the power of love, but neither accepted Peter's solution of a totally invisible force, stating that

> *Ben è alcuna fiata om amatore*
> *senza vedere so 'namoramento*

> *ma quell'amor che stringe con furore*
> *da la vista de li occhi ha nascimento*
> Very often there are lovers
> that fall in love without seeing [the beloved]
> but that love that tightens you with fury
> has birth from eyes' sight
> (PSS 1.19c, 5-8)

So, even if Giacomo admitted the possibility to fall in love for someone never seen before– like in the famous instance of Jaufre Rudel –real love inevitably must pass through the eyes, the sight of the beloved, and after that the heart would nurture the feeling (*e lo core li dà nutricamento*, v.4).

These two *tenzoni* are just the most explicit example of a study on love that is the most characteristic feature of the School. Peter de Vinea's theory of an invisible love is recurring in other poems also of other poets, for example in Stefano Protonotaro, another of Frederick II's high bureaucrats.

> *Amor sempre mi vede*
> *ed àmi in suo podire*
> *m'eo non posso vedire*
> *sua propïa figura*
> Love, he always watches me
> and has me under his power
> but I can't see
> its real shape
> (PSS 11.2, 14-17)

Also the idea of love as a 'god', as proposed by the Abbot of Tivoli would recur in many other poets, especially between the Sicilian-tuscan section of the School, as well as the concept of love as an invisible 'desire' (*disio*) that comes from the heart, or otherwise that starts from the eyes.

One of the most interesting aspect of the debate of the Sicilian poets on the nature of love is well represented in the *canzone* by Guido delle Colonne, *Ancor che ll'aigua per lo foco lasse* (Even if water lacks, because of fire, PSS 4.5), where the poet compared himself to cold water, love to fire, and the woman to the vase (*vasello*, v.4) that, containing the water heats without falling into fire, which would extinguish it. In this poem Di Girolamo detects a «materialistic poesy, focused on physics laws and on the properties of elements» (Di Girolamo 2008, p. LXXXIII).

> *Ancor che ll'aigua per lo foco lasse*

la sua grande freddura,
non cangerea natura
s'alcun vasello in mezzo non vi stasse,
anzi averrea senza lunga dimora
che lo foco astutasse,
o che l'aigua seccasse:
ma per lo mezzo l'uno e l'altro dura.
Cusì, gentil criatura,
in me à mostrato Amore
l'ardente suo valore,
che senza amore er'aigua fredda e ghiaccia;
Even if water lacks, because of fire,
its natural, great coldness,
it [the water] could not change that nature
if between [the water itself and the fire] there we don't put a vase,
in fact on the contrary sudden the fire would extinguish
and the water would dry:
but thanks to this medium [the vase] both [water and fire] endure.
So, a gentle creature [the woman],
showed me of Love,
and its ardent value
because without love I was like cold and frozen water;
(PSS 4.5, 1-12)

The use of a 'scientific' analysis of nature to explain love phenomenology is an approach extremely coherent with the outline I drew about the Magna Curia and Frederick II's cultural politics, not least the relationship between math and the birth of sonnet.

The contrast between the rational and pseudo-scientific analysis of the over-natural and uncontrollable love feelings is well represented on the textual side by the large use of adynaton, like the image of fire [of love] arising from snow, the wound [of love] keeping the lover alive, etc. Giacomo's sonnet *A l'aire claro ò vista ploggia dare* is a good example of many of these contrasts and paradoxes.

 A l'aire claro ò vista ploggia dare,
ed a lo scuro rendere clarore;
e foco arzente ghiaccia diventare,
e freda neve rendere calore;
e dolze cose molto amareare,
e de l'amare rendere dolzore;
e dui guerreri infin a pace stare,
e 'ntra dui amici nascereci errore.

Ed ò vista d'Amor cosa più forte,
ch'era feruto e sanòmi ferendo,
lo foco donde ardea stutò con foco;
la vita che mi dè fue la mia morte,
lo foco che mi stinse ora ne 'ncendo,
d'amor mi trasse e misemi in su' loco.
In clear sky I saw raining, / and from darkness light coming out; / and ardent fire becoming ice, / and cold snow giving back warmth; / and sweet things very bitter, / and from bitter becoming sweet; / and two warriors making peace at last, / and a quarrel starting between two friends. / And I saw the strongest fact of Love, / that I was wounded, and it [Love] healed me while wounding me, / the burning fire being extinguished by fire; / the life it [Love] gave me was my death, / the fire that burned out me now ignites me, / it pulled me away from [the pain] of love and put me at my place.
(Giacomo da Lentini, PSS 1.26)

This sonnet represents in its formal balance, based also on the mathematical perfection of the sonnet meter, the clear contrast between the unintelligible power of love and the logical and measured reflection about that love itself. «The troubadoric and the rhetoric traditions are thus functionalized, through scientific or exemplar *autoritas*, to a "phenomenal" interiorization of the love fact: while reusing various single elements of his predecessors, the Notary [Giacomo] created the premises for a further and deeper verbalization of the feelings, through a metric-rhetoric architecture of the highest level» (Antonelli 2008, p. 454).

These few examples are representative of that 'intellectualization' of the love discourse theorized by many scholars such as Antonelli.

Textual comparison: intellectualization of love in the Kokinshū

It is a fact that the conception of love in the *Kokinshū* is usually that of an idealized, intellectualized, non-physical matter, a feeling of longing more than of passion, or physical attraction. What I want to underline here is the similitude with some of the aspects I described before about the Sicilian poetry. First of all, just like who Giacomo declared that it is possible to fall in love for a woman one has never met – «Very often there are lovers / that fall in love without seeing [the beloved]» – also Tsurayuki wrote a poem with a very similar concept:

世の中はかくこそありけれ吹く風の目に見ぬ人も恋しかりけり
yo no naka wa / kaku koso arikere / fuku kaze no / me ni minu hito mo /

koishikarikeri
Such are the ways of / this world my heart swells with love / for her and
yet she / is invisible as the winds / which whisper of her charms
(Ki no Tsurayuki, KKS 475)

As regards the 'debates about love', in the *Kokinshū* we can't find the po-
etical debates like in the *tenzoni* by Giacomo and the others, but we can still
find poetical exchanges that, because of their 'extratextual setting', have some-
thing to share with the Sicilian poets' tenzone.

One example is the following exchange between Abe no Kiyoyuki and
Ono no Komachi.

つつめども袖にたまらぬ白玉は人を見ぬめの涙なりけり
*tsutsumedomo / sode ni tamaranu / shiratama wa / hito o minu me no /
namida narikeri*
Although I wrap them / up my sleeves cannot hold them – / these white
jewels are / teardrops falling from eyes which / cannot see the one they
love
(Abe no Kiyoyuki, KKS 556)

をろかなる涙ぞ袖に玉はなす我は塞きあへずたぎつ瀬なれば
*oroka naru / namida zo sode ni / tama wa nasu / ware wa sekiaezu /
tagitsu se nareba*
Half-hearted are tears / that can settle as jewels in / sheltering sleeves
mine / burst forth tumbling rapids once / released nothing can hold
them
(Ono no Komachi, KKS 557)

By 'extratextual setting' I mean the fact that, even if these two poems are
configured as an exchange between lovers, the relationship between the two
poets and the factual setting on the background of the composition – a funer-
al function at the shrine at Izumo – puts these poems clearly outside the field
of a standard 'love exchange'. The focus of the poems seems to lay more on
the *mitate* of jewels and tears, rather than on mutual love feelings, so this ex-
change may be identified more as a courtly pastime rather than a real love ap-
proach. Moreover, the *kotobagaki* introducing these two *waka* does not have
the function of clarifying the relationship between Kiyoyuki and Komachi –
were they lovers? Did they meet after or before this episode? – but on the con-
trary it gives us a hint about the origin of the jewel-tears metaphor, probably
extrapolated from the sermon of the priest about a parable of the Lotus Sutra.
In other words the *kotobagaki* seems to tell us that what is noticeable in this
exchange is not the hypothetical love affair between Kiyoyuki and Komachi,

but rather the poetic skill demonstrated in converting – probably extemporarily – a religious image (the jewel) into a love poem: the real point of interest for which these poems are inserted in the *Kokinshū* is the poetic performance itself, and not the love story. From the extratextual point of view, Kiyoyuki and Komachi performed a 'social exchange' based not on the private and direct field of real love, but rather on words and on the sharing of the same rhetorical sensitivity, on the ideal stage of a real event happened at court. The rules of the *waka* become the agreement through which a shared analysis of the world can be carried out – are these tears or jewels? – that, even if it can't be compared to the pseudo-scientific approach of the Sicilians like Guido delle Colonne, it clearly testifies the stress on the rhetorical side, the measured rationality used to deal with such a controversial feeling like love, borrowing a word – jewel – that works in contrast with the original religious meaning.

In his recent edition of the *Kokinshū,* Takada Hirohiko perceptively summarizes this point: «The *Kokinshū* is often called logical or idealistic, but we should not forget that it first of all expresses a *kokoro* [heart] provided by the overlaying of 'feeling' (情) and 'logic' (理). How can the arrangement of logic let the feeling shine, making it even more lyrical?» (Takada 2009, p. 545). According to Takada, the tie between logic and human feelings is a predominant characteristic of the *Kokinshū*, distinguishing it from the previous *waka* tradition.

It is in these terms that, paraphrasing Di Girolamo, we could say that also at the time of the *Kokinshū* – maybe for the first time in the history of Japanese literature– «the reflection about the "courtly question" gains a new substance, becoming philosophical analysis» (Di Girolamo 2008, p. LXXXII-LXXXIII). Among overseas Japanese studies, Katō Shūichi's statement is renowned: it detects in the ancient Japanese people the uneasiness to deal with real philosophical matters and universalistic sistematizations like the Europeans or the Chinese did (Katō 1979, pp. 1-2). But even accepting Katō's general position, I think it would not be totally wrong to define the approach showed by the poets of the *Kokinshū* as 'philosophic'. First of all it is common knowledge that, while a key-word of the love poems of the *Man'yōshū*'s *tou* 問ふ (to ask for love), as in the compound word *tsumadoi* (visiting/asking for the wife), in the *Kokinshū* the verb *omou* 思ふ (to think, to long for) seems to be more preponderant. Therefore, the fact that the action of 'asking' something necessarily needs a receiver, while the action of 'thinking' is something one can, and usually does, alone, is self explanatory. I don't know if 'philosophical' is the most suitable adjective, but for sure a rational research of the meaning of love and human feelings can be indicated as a feature – or maybe the most characteristic feature – of many of the poems in the *Kokinshū*. In the *Kokinshū*, the linguistic and rhetorical level becomes the formulation of the new love ethic

and tool for the analysis of the world, and in this sense it can be defined 'philosophical', according to a generic definition of philosophy: «an intellectual activity outlining what is constant and uniform beyond changing phenomena, with the aim to define permanent structures of reality and to indicate universal rules of behavior» (Treccani 2009).

Let's examine some examples of how the poets of the *Kokinshū* analyzed and gave (a new) order and value to the phenomenon of reality around and inside them.

> 秋といへばよそにぞ聞きしあだ人の我をふるせる名にこそありけれ
> *aki to ieba / yoso ni zo kikishi / adabito no / ware o furuseru / na ni koso arikere*
> I heard them speak of / faithless autumn calmly once / for it meant naught to / me but now I know it tells / of one with a frostbound heart
> (Anonymous, KKS 824)

In this poem, the explanation of the suffering for an ended love is resolved not by a realistic analysis of the outer world – the behavior and the reasons behind the partner's departure – but only with the *kakekotoba* of *aki* (autumn, losing interest), and the surprising 'discovery' that, because the word *aki* (秋, autumn) sounds the same as the word *aki* (飽き, to lose interest), then the poet's love ends together with the season. The solution to the question about the human feelings is therefore exclusively managed and solved at a rhetorical level, where the poet finds a logic – even if only formal and rhetorical, the *kakekotoba* – inside an illogical reality that the poet can't accept: the fact of having been abandoned and forgotten by his beloved. Similarly, in the following poem

> あはれとも憂しとも物を思ふときなどか涙のいと流るらむ
> *aware to mo / ushi to mo mono o / omou toki / nado ka namida no / ito nagaruramu*
> Although I may sigh / with joy / although I may weep / with sorrow why is / there never a time when no / ribbons of tears wet my cheeks
> (Anonymous, KKS 805)

the poet wonders why the act of 'thinking about things' (*mono o omou*) brings him to tears. He doesn't ask his partner questions like 'why do you make me cry', nor does he tell us what really happened. The question is suspended, displayed, performed and finally inserted into a formal structure that, in this instance, is build around the contradiction between tears of sorrow and tears of *awareness*. The logic of the world is questioned – even without an answer – by underlining its apparent contradiction.

Many other poems could be taken as examples of the 'analysis' about phe-

nomenology of love, especially the ones containing questions and interrogative
words about the definition of love, of the heart, or about the origin of feelings
like pain or longing, or the poet's own body or nature.

> 伊勢の海に釣する海人の浮なれや心ひとつを定めかねつる
> Ise no umi ni / tsuri suru ama no / uke nare ya / kokoro hitotsu o /
> sadamekanetsuru
> Restlessly drifts my / heart as unsettled as the / bobbing buoys of the /
> fisherforks who cast their nets / into the sea at Ise
> (Anonymous, KKS 509)

> 涙川なに水上を尋ねけむ物思ふ時のわが身なりけり
> namidagawa / nani minakami o / tazunekemu / mono omou toki no / wa
> ga mi narikeri
> Where is the mouth of / this river of tears why did / I search for its
> source – / surely it whelms within my / being as I yearn for you
> (Anonymous, KKS 511)

> 篝火にあらぬわが身のなぞもかく涙の川に浮きて燃ゆらむ
> *kagaribi ni / aranu wa ga mi no / nazo mo kaku / namida no kawa ni /*
> *ukite moyuramu*
> My body is not / a blazing fisherman's flare – / why then does it burn /
> with passion even as I / float on this river of tears

> わが恋はみ山がくれの草なれや繁さまされど知る人のなき
> *wa ga koi wa / miyamagakure no / kusa nare ya / shigesa masaredo /*
> *shiru hito no naki*
> Is my love like the / hidden grasses deep in the / enchanting mountains /
> daily more luxuriant / they grow yet no one discerns them
> (Ono no Yoshiki, KKS 560)

> あひ見ねば恋こそまされ水無瀬河なにに深めて思ひそめけむ
> *aimineba / koi koso masare / minasegawa / nani ni hukamete /*
> *omoisomekemu*
> When we cannot meet / my love but grows the stronger – / what good to
> yearn / with deepening love for one / shallow as a river with an invisible
> flow
> (Anonymous, KKS 760)[4]

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[4] Rodd translated *minasegawa* (river without apparent stream) in the last verse
as the river's name, «Minase's stream».

We have also poems that try to give a definition of the heart, that analyze its behavior, its changes (KKS 781), its colors changing like flowers (KKS 795) or like autumn leaves (KKS 782, 788). We have questions about what 'desire' is (KKS 698), what memories are (KKS 743), on why the beloved is forgotten (KKS 802), on the meaning of love tears (KKS 805). In some cases, the link between the natural and the human world becomes particularly explicit, like in the following poem.

> 来ぬ人を待つ夕暮の秋風はいかに吹けばかわびしかるらむ
> *konu hito o / matsu yūgure no / akikaze wa / ika ni fukeba ka / wabishikaruramu*
> How mournfully the / autumn wind must blow to bring / me such yearning for / the one who will not come though I / still wait for him at twilight
> (Anonymous, KKS 777)

The autumn sadness is a topos derived from Chinese poetry, but here the relationship between the woman waiting for her beloved and the autumn wind, supported by the interrogative pronoun *ikani* (why, how much), seems to be put in a direct relation of cause and effect. ≪[this poem] is a fine piece of work that, through a simplistic examination, seems to blame the autumn wind for the deep sadness distressing the heart» (Ozawa 1994, p. 296). Also in the *Man'yōshū* we found poems expressing human feelings through elements and images of the natural world – for example through the rhetorical device of *jokotoba* –, but it is just in the *Kokinshū* that the natural world becomes more than just an ornamental embellishment used to introduce the focus of poem, namely the human feeling, and these two elements become so strictly and mutually bonded that they reach a higher level of identity and consciousness. This evolution is demonstrated at a rhetorical level by the birth of the *engo*, through which nature and feelings are so perfectly integrated to each other that one couldn't exist without the other, in the new logical universe of the *waka*. The exquisite balance between the human feelings and the natural world is fixed in a superb formal architecture that is the best proof of a psychological refinement described by Masuda, and reached, at sociologic or even at anthropological level, by the poets at the Heian court.

In general, this is the attitude we can detect in the poets of the *Kokinshū* to define and analyze – even in a «simplistic» way – the phenomenon of love. Similarly to the Sicilian poets, this analysis, even if very different at a textual level, leads to the same conclusion of an 'intellectualistic', 'idealized' solution to the problems of human feelings, symbolized by the most universal and sharable of them: love. It is this process of research and solution based on the

refinement of words and rhetoric, that allows the (careful) definition of a 'philosophic' poetry both for the Sicilian School and the poems of the *Kokinshū*.

Heart and spirit: Akugaruru kokoro and spirito

One expression in particular can be taken as an example of the intellectualistic approach of both our poetic traditions, and therefore deserves a deeper analysis: the image of the lover's heart separating from his/her body.

The following poem by Ki no Tomonori, the eldest in the group of the compilers, is a good starting point.

> 秋風は身をわけてしもふかなくに人の心のそらになるらむ
> *akikaze wa / mi o wakete shimo / fukanaku ni / hitono kokoro no / sora ni naruramu*
> The cold autumn winds / encircle us but do not / blow within why then / has her heart emptied of love / flown off to distant vacant skies
> (Ki no Tomonori, KKS 787)

The concept of the heart departing from the body and flying away in the sky, and its connection with the love theme is clarified by the collocation of this song into the fifth and last book of Love, the one about the ending of love relationship. Many other poems use this image, and collaborate to define an abstract concept like *kokoro* (heart, spirit).

> 人を思ふ心の木の葉にあらばこそ風のまにまに散りも乱れめ
> *hito o omou / kokoro no ko no ha ni / araba koso / kaze no mani mani / chiri mo midareme*
> My yearning heart if / it were those fluttering leaves / then only then would / it fall or drift far away / yelding to the autumn wind
> (Ono no Sadaki, KKS 783)

> たよりにもあらぬ思ひのあやしきは心を人につくるなりけり
> *tayori ni mo / aranu omoi no / ayashiki wa / kokoro o hito ni / tsukuru narikeri*
> Longing is not a / messenger and yet how strange / it is that my love has carried my heart away / and delivered it to her
> (Ariwara no Motokata, KKS 480)

> 思へども身をしわけねば目に見えぬ心を君にたぐへてぞやる
> *omoedomo / mi o shiwakeneba / me ni mienu / kokoro o kimi ni / taguete zo yaru*
> Though I long to go / I must remain I cannot / divide in two instead / I'll send this heart of mine an / unseen companion for you

(Ikago no Atsuyuki, KKS 373)

Almost the same identical image of 'heart/spirit separating from body', as well as the 'delivering of heart to the beloved', is frequent also in many Sicilian poems (for example 1.14,vv.15-16; 1.36, v.3; 1.20, v.14; 15.1, v.33; 14.1, v.36; 2.1, vv.37-39; 17.2, vv.28-32; 17.8, vv.5-6; 13.4, v.7; 41.1, vv.71-72; 42.5, vv.1-4) (Landoni 1997, p. 163). Let's see just some verses.

> *Lo meo core eo l'aio lassato*
> *a la dolze donna mia*
> My heart, I left it / to my lovely woman
> (Giacomo da Lentini, 1.14, 15-16)

> *che a voi riman lo mio core*
> that [near] to you remains my heart
> (Frederick II, 14.1, 36)

Particularly interesting is the poem *Lo core inamorato* (The loving heart) by Mazzeo di Ricco, presenting a dialogue between a woman and a man.

> [Women:] *Avendo di voi voglia,*
> *lo mio cor a voi mando,*
> *ed ello vene e con voi si soggiorna;*
> *e poi a me non torna*
> Longing for you, / I send you my heart, / and it comes and stays with you; / and then it doesn't come back anymore
> [...]
> [Man:] *Donna, se mi mandate*
> *lo vostro dolze core*
> *inamorato sì come lo me' ò,*
> *saciate in veritate*
> *ca per verace amore*
> *immantenente a voi mando lo meo*
> Lady, if you send me / your lovely heart / that is as in love as mine, / you must know that, truly, / because of true love / immediately I shall send mine to you
> (Mazzeo di Ricco, 19.2, vv.7-10, 13-18)

In the *Kokinshū* we have an almost identical poem, with the expression *kokorogae* (hearts exchange).

> 心がへするものにもが片恋はくるしきものと人に知らせむ
> *kokorogae / suru mono ni mo ga / katakoi wa / kurushiki mono to / hito*

ni shirasemu
If only there were / a way that we might exchange / hearts then I could make / that person realize how painful / a one-sided love can be
(Anonymous, KKS 540)[5]

This is one of those cases when it is necessary to be extremely careful not to jump to hurried conclusions, only based on the actual similitude between the texts. First of all, the image of the 'exchange of hearts' could already be found in the troubadour's poetry (PSS2, p. 453, note 36, p. 671), so it can't be indicated as an image characteristic only of the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School. It would be more meaningful to verify whether this image can be connected with the general evolution from the *Man'yōshū* to the *Kokinshū* and from the troubadours to the Sicilians I described before. For example we can underline that in poem 540 of the *Kokinshū*, the anonymous poet didn't address directly his/her lover, but apparently a third person, in a sort of monologue like Ariwara no Narihira's *Tsuki ya aranu* (KKS 747). The person the poet wants to disclose his feeling to is just an undefined *hito* (person) and not a more specific *kimi* (you) or *imo* (my young girl) like in *Man'yōshū*'s *sōmonka*.

Even if Mazzeo di Ricco's poem displays two characters, and lets the woman speak directly, we said that this could be seen more as a fictionalization of a cliché – the love exchange – that in Sicily was probably just an idealization, an amusement, having no connection with real love experiences. Moreover, the fact that the woman appears only as a character inside a man's poem and not as a real author, as was Ono no Komachi in the poetic exchange with Kiyoyuki, is on the contrary the proof of the performative, theatrical nature of this poem, and its consequent distance from a real love exchange.

Fujiwara Katsumi accurately analyzed the image of the 'heart/spirit separating from the body' in an article (2009a) focusing on the expression *akugaruru kokoro*: the heart that separates from the body wandering somewhere else. The first important information given by Fujiwara is that the earliest records of the term *akugaru* (to separate from the place one belongs to) dates back to the Heian period, to the poems of the *Kokinshū* or to immediately precedent works such as the *Chisatoshū* (Fujiwara 2009a, p. 43, 46-7). The use of *akugaru* in the Heian literary works seems already closer to the modern Japanese word *akogare*, used to translate foreign words like the German *Sehnsucht* (longing, yearning) (Fujiwara 2009a, p. 42). Moreover, in the Heian period, *akugaru*

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[5]   Rodd translates the expression *hito ni shirasemu* as «I could make you realize» but I prefer to keep the literaly meaning of «make that person know», as indicated by Ozawa-Matsuda (1994).

could be used not only in association to the word 'heart' (*kokoro*), that could be also replaced by the word 'spirit' (*tamashii*), but also with 'body' (*mi*) with the meaning of 'distancing from the social place a body/person belongs to' (Fujiwara 2009a, p. 45). One of Fujiwara's definitions of *akugaruru kokoro* is an «estrangement [*kairi* 乖離]» or alienation of the heart from the body, that is not limited to love songs, but widely entails the human existence itself. Fujiwara quotes some poems from the *Kokinshū*, expressing longing (*akugaru*) for the mountain flowers or for a life without pain and worries caused by social life:

> いつまでか野辺に心のあくがれむ花し散らずは千代も経ぬべし
> *itsu made ka / nobe ni kokoro no / akugaremu / hana shi chirazu wa / chiyo mo henubeshi*
> How long might my heart / enraptured linger here in / the meadows of spring – / if the blossoms never fell / I would stay a thousand years
> (Monk Sosei, KKS 96)

> いづくにか世をば厭はむ心こそ野にも山にもまどふべらなれ
> *izukunika / yo o ba itowamu / kokoro koso / no ni mo yama ni mo / madouberanare*
> Where shall I go to / renounce this sorrowful world / whether in the mountains / or in the fields my heart surely / will be distracted and stray
> (Monk Sosei, KKS 947)

For the first time in Japanese literature, in the poets of the *Kokinshū* «the sharp awareness of estrangement of the heart from the body» emerges (Fujiwara 2009a, p. 49). Also in the *Man'yōshū* and pre-Heian times the concept of the heart/spirit separating from the body was frequent and important, maybe because of the relations with shamanism and magic rites, but Fujiwara insists on the fact that until the Heian period «people didn't feel the need for an expression like *akugaruru kokoro* even when describing phenomena like dreams or phantoms» (ibid.). Thus, Fujiwara implicitly shifts the discourse from the analysis of the literary texts to a wider and social perspective. «Also the poets of the *Man'yōshū* may have felt the friction between *mi* and *kokoro*, but it is only in the Heian period that they started for the first time to sing frequently about the estrangement of the body and the heart […], and I see in this singing the *akugaruru kokoro* also the maturation of the historical basis of expression» (ibid.). This last definition of an evolution of the 'historical basis of expression' (表現史的基盤) is the focus of Fujiwara's thesis, as well as the link to our discourse on a 'sociologic literary critique'. It is this 'friction' (*kishimi*, another keyword in Fujiwara's article) between personal feelings and social constrictions that leads to the elaboration of the expression '*akugaruru kokoro*'. Also for Fujiwara, similarly to what Köhler theorized, a certain con-

dition and situation on the social level leads to the refinement and formulation of a defined expression as *akugaruru kokoro*.

The counterproof and final completion of this process of refinement of feelings and language is, according to Fujiwara, the 28th chapter of *Genji monogatari*, titled *Nowaki*. In this chapter where the author Murasaki Shikibu, with an «exquisite style» (Fujiwara 2009a, p. 55) widely and repeatedly uses the expression *akugaru* to indicate the feeling of a *mamebito* (honest, serious man) like Genji's son Yūgiri, fallen in (forbidden) love with his step-mother lady Murasaki: «Because Yūgiri had to suppress his feeling for lady Murasaki, that very emotion couldn't reach its complete combustion (不完全燃焼), and for that reason the friction of his heart becomes even stronger» (Fujiwara 2009a, p. 56). The following death of lady Murasaki will lead Yūgiri's separation (*hedate* 隔て) from the object of his attraction, to its maximum limit, making Murasaki «the object of an infinite longing 無限憧» (Fujiwara, ibid.).

This «infinite longing» for a dead woman reminds me of Dante's for Beatrice, and of Petrarch's for Laura, who after their death became the object of the most higly idealized feelings that, for both poets, coincided with a re-discovery of the Christian faith. But I will leave this issue for a future study.

Remarkably, Yūgiri's longing for Murasaki is described with the same terms used in the *Kokinshū* to describe the longing for spring flowers. In particular, in the beautiful passage where Yūgiri glimpsed at lady Murasaki's figure, the woman is described through the vision of cherry blossoms.

> 春の曙の霞の間より、おもしろき樺桜の咲き乱れたるを見るここちす。
> She looked like a lovely mountain cherry tree in perfect bloom,
> emerging from the mist of a spring dawn.
> (*Genji Monogatari*, vol.1, 28 野分, 第二段. English translation from
> Tyler 2001, p. 488).

Even if this brief glimpse is the origin of Yūgiri's longing, I think that here again we should underline the shift from a love based on the encounter *miru* (to see, but also to meet or even to get married), to a love based on an eternal longing impossible to meet, indicated by the term *kou*. Actually, the verb *kou* or the noun *koi* that are usually translated as 'to love' or 'the love', should be translated as longing, yearning, adoration. *Koi* is a feeling that because of the distance from its target, not only reinforces itself, but in that distance has its real meaning and origin. If we analyze briefly the use of the word *koi* in some *waka*, we find that since the *Man'yōshū* the term has had a different nuance compared to the occidental definition of 'love', 'amour', 'liebe' or 'amore'. *Koi* seems a feeling one can only feel while the beloved is away, waiting for the next encounter, but never used to indicate the passion invading the lovers

during their encounter. *Koi* is, in other words, a feeling of lack, incompleteness, and it has been this way since the *Man'yōshū*:

> 海人小舟泊瀬の山に降る雪の日長く恋ひし君が音ぞする
> Like the snow falling / on the mountains of Hatsuse / where the
> fisherman's boat docks / for long days I yearned you / until I heard the
> sound [of your arrival]
> (MYS 2347, translation by the author)

The past particle *shi* (conjugation of *ki*) in the phrase *koishi kimi* (you I yearned) although it does not necessarily have a perfective meaning, it indicates that the action of *kou* is passed, or that it took place 'before the arrival' of the beloved. Also in this case I find it inappropriate to translate *kou* as 'to love', like in «I loved you / until I heard the sound [of your arrival]», because this could give the impression that the poet stopped loving his partner at the very moment the two met.

The clearest example of the difference between *koi* and love should be the following poem where the word *kou* seems to even have a negative value.

> 春さればまづ三枝の幸くあらば後にも逢はむな恋ひそ我妹
> When spring arrives / as lucky as the lucky grass / we shall be able / to
> meet again, so my lass, / don't yearn for me
> (MYS 1895)

The invitation not to suffer because of the lack of the beloved in the last verse, *na-koi so*, couldn't be literally translated as 'don't love me' – nor with the expression «never love so hot just now», used by Suga Teruo (1991) – since it could sound, in my opinion, as nonsense, or even as a request to put an end to the relationship.

In the *Kokinshū*, the meaning of the word *kou* would not change, becoming the further focus of a love poetry based on the isolation and distance from the beloved. The clearest example is the following poem, where, with a hyperbole, the poet declares that he yearns for his beloved even during the time they are together.

> 心をぞわりなきものと思ひぬる見るものからや恋しかるべき
> *kokoro o zo / warinaki mono to / omoinuru / miru mono kara ya /*
> *koishikarubeki*
> Dear heart I know you / are an irrational thing – / does longing grow
> with / meetings can love deepen if / lovers often congregate
> (Kiyohara no Fukayabu, KKS 685)

In my opinion, the word 'love' used in Rodd's translation above can lead to a misunderstanding of the sense of the poetry. The point in Fukayabu's song is that, even if he meets his beloved, the feeling of longing for her can't be satisfied, and this absurdity – to long for something one already has before him – is caused by that 'illogical thing' (*warinaki mono*) that is the heart. So, *koishikaru* (derived from *kou*) should be translated just as 'longing' rather than as 'love'.

From this simple analysis, and on the basis of what I discussed until now, it is obvious that in the five books of the 'love poems', less than ten poems describe the love encounter itself (KKS 633-640). Moreover, also in these few cases almost each of them focuses on the sadness for the departing at dawn, or on the brevity of the night spent together, rather than on the encounter itself. Poem 634, working as a boundary between the poems before the encounter (books 1, 2 and first half of book 3) and the poems after the encounter (second half of book 3, books 4 and 5), is meaningful in this sense.

> 恋ひ恋ひてまれにこよひぞ逢坂の木綿つけ鳥は鳴かずもあらなむ
> *koikoite / mare ni koyoi zo / ōsaka no yūtsukedori wa / nakazu mo aramu*
> I have yearned so long / and at last tonight we meet – / may the beribboned / cock at the slope of meeting never / announce the break of day
> (Anonymous, KKS 634)[6]

The time before and after the encounter seems to be nullified in this single song, depicting the long yearning before the encounter, and the worry for the cock's crow, announcing the separation.

In conclusion, I believe it is more correct to call the *Kokinshū koi no uta*'s books not 'love songs', but rather 'songs of longing' or 'songs of yearning'.

Back to Fujiwara Katsumi's article, two more points help us to close the discourse about love. The first one is the direct relationship detected by Fujiwara – that quotes a previous study by Ochi Yasuo – between Narihira's poem *Tsuki ya aranu* and the poems of the *Kokinshū* like the following.

> 山高み雲居に見ゆる桜花心のゆきて折らぬ日ぞなき
> *yamatakami / kumoi ni miyuru / sakurabana / kokoro no yukite / oranu hi zo naki*
> So high the mountains— / interspersed among the clouds / are cherry blossoms— / every day that passes / my heart goes out to pluck them
> (Ōshikōchi no Mitsune, KKS 358)

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6   I corrected Rodd's translation of *ōsaka*, from «Osaka» to «the slope of meeting».

山桜霞の間よりほのかにも見てし人こそ恋しかりけれ
A fleeting glimpse / as of mountain cherries seen / through the thick veil
of / spring mists I scarcely saw / the one who captured my heart
(Ki no Tsurayuki, KKS 479)

Even if the word *akugaru* doesn't appear, according to Fujiwara the concept is the same, and in turn it reconnects these poems to the episode of Yūgiri and Murasaki in *Genji monogatari*: The chapter of *Nowaki* in *Genji monogatari*'s is nothing else than «the novelization of this reality of the poems of the *Kokinshū* » (Fujiwara 2009a, p. 53), having as focal point the *kou* (longing) for a beloved and unattainable person.

The second point is the influence of Bai Juyi's poetry on Heian poetry, in particular, after the second half of the 9th century. According to Fujiwara, although in Bai Juyi we can detect two natures and a distinction between *mi* (the social position imposed by Confucian rules) and *kokoro* (the inner side of feelings or also Buddhist faith) «in the Heian court poets, more than a peaceful harmony between *mi* and *kokoro*, the expression of themes like the estrangement of body and heart or the friction between body and heart is urgent. Here is the reason for singing about *akugaruru kokoro*» (Fujiwara 2009a, p. 51).

Both these points validate the theory I presented in this book: the existence of a global and progressive shift from the 'real love song' to a more 'idealized love song', or to 'cerebral song', that corresponds to the shift from the poetry of the *Man'yōshū* to the *Kokinshū,* on the background of a social and political change from the code-based state – the so called *ritsuryō kokka* – of pre-Heian period, to a capital based imperial court state – *ōchō kokka*.

The fact that at the time of the *Man'yōshū* there existed the concept of a separation between the heart and the body, but a fixed expression like *akugaru* to indicate it didn't exist, is a further proof of the intellectual work of formalization and elaboration of the language pursued by the Heian poets I discussed in Part IV. The expression *akugaru* is not unique of the Heian period nor of the *Kokinshū*, but it is during this period – and exactly in the second half of the 9th century – that this word started to be used to express a concept that was already present in the Japanese culture, but that wasn't fixed in a precise form. Through the influence and imitation of the Chinese models like Bai Juyi's poetry, the Heian poets elaborated a lexical form so appropriate to the concept that it would remain in use until our time, with the modern Japanese word *akogare*.

Therefore, how a theme like 'the heart separates from the body' is managed, and the function this poetic discourse fulfills in the respective environ-

ment, perfectly matches Masuda Shigeo's statement about «the maturation of language, and […] the refinement of the people's heart» (Masuda 2004, p. 3) in the *Kokinshū*. For the poets of the *Kokinshū* it was impossible to reach such a level of idealization without a proper rhetorical and terminological apparatus, as the word *akugaru*, appeared in the second half of the 9th century, perfectly symbolizes.

We can now turn to the Sicilian poets. I already said how Masuda's statement could be somehow applied also to the Sicilian School of poetry, being very similar for example to Luperini's analysis of the Sicilians I quoted above. For Luperini, the novelty of the School in comparison to the troubadours was first of all a consequence of the new social environment: «the reality in which the Sicilians poets lived is courtly, not feudal. This explains why, often, the accent doesn't fall on the relationship between knight and lady, but on love per se. […] often the lyric focuses on the phenomenology of love, with the consequent process, on the one side, of a psychological introspection and interiorization, and, on the other hand, of the intellectualization of the love experience» (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, pp. 124-5).

The novelty and distance of the Sicilians from the troubadours' conception of love is clear in Giacomo da Lentini, that «far […] from the simple reception of the [troubadours'] models, sometimes translates literally, and more often re-uses and freely accepts the troubadoric suggestions, following a precise project that aims at representing love feelings as an inner fact (it is Giacomo who introduced, among others, a keyword that would be used by Cavalcanti, *spirito* [spirit]), projected beyond the temporary context, sometimes at a level of defining rationalization, almost theoretic: an ideological and stylistic operation perfectly suitable to the sonnet» (Antonelli 2008, p. XLVI-XLVII).

I want to underline the keyword *spirito*, that seems to match perfectly the *akugaruru kokoro* –sometimes expressed also with the word *tamashii* (spirit, soul) (Fujiwara 2009a, p. 45). Antonelli tells us that Giacomo is the first one to use the word *spirito*, in the poem *Guiderdone aspetto avere* [I am awaiting for my reward]:

> *La figura piacente*
> *lo core mi diranca,*
> *quando voi tegno mente,*
> *lo spirito mi manca e torna in ghiaccio*
> The dear image [of a woman's face]
> tears apart my heart,
> when I look at you
> The spirits leaves me and turns [me] into ice

(Giacomo da Lentini, PPS 1.3, 49-52)

In a note, Antonelli explains the meaning of the word *spirito*: «'vital (and intellectual) capacity', more precisely the vital spirits (*animalis spiritus* according to Albertus Magnus) of the aristotelic-galenic theory, that let hot blood circulate from the heart to the entire body, and that, if they disappears, cause the freezing and drive the lover into an inanimate being» (Antonelli 2008, p. 85).

The image of man that without the spirit (of love) becomes ice, is found also in Guido delle Colonne's poem *Ancor che ll'aigua* we have seen before:

> *che senza amore er'aigua fredda e ghiaccia*
> that without love I was like cold, frozen water
> (Guido delle Colonne, PSS 4.5, 12)

The identity between the words *spirito* and *core* (heart) in other Sicilian poems I quoted at the beginning of this Part is clear, but the clearest example of this soul-heart equation would be Ruggeri d'Amici's *Sovente amore n'ha ricuto manti* [Often love enriched many men]:

> *Di lei sovemmi, ca ten lo mi' core,*
> *e non me ne poria giamai partire,*
> *però che saria corpo sanza vita,*
> I remembered her, who keeps my heart / and I could never depart from
> her / because I would be a lifeless body
> (Ruggeri d'Amici, PSS 2.1, 37-39)

The departure of the heart has the same effect as the departure of the spirit: the death of the poet.

Guido delle Colonne is often indicated by the critics (Antonelli 2008, p. LI) as a direct model of the Tuscan poets of the Stilnovo, like Guido Guinizzelli, Guido Cavalcanti and Dante. The latter, the very theorist of the Stilnovo 'school', indicates Guido delle Colonne's poetry as an example of the most illustrious style of the Italian vernacular (DVE I-xii, 2), and his concept of *spirito,* borrowed from Giacomo da Lentini, will deeply influence all of the Stilnovo: also for the poets of the Stilnovo «love arouses various turmoils, movements of incorporeal substances (or "*spiriti*"), that need to be analyzed to reach a rational significance» (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 138).

It is with Guido Cavalcanti (1259?-1300), close friend of Dante, that the «themes and stylemes of the Provencal and Sicilian tradition are reorganized according to a conscious philosophic interest […]. He affirms a specific and almost technical lexicon and style, suitable more to in-depth-analysis and variations around the same theme, than to variety and open inventiveness»

(Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 143). It is Cavalcanti that gives Dante an already elaborated model of *spirito*. Influenced by Averroes's aristotelianism, Cavalcanti sees in love «the most radical and complex experience of the *anima sensitiva* [sensitive soul], and because of that, only love is able to exalt the poet's individual identity [...]. Therefore, love passion is at the same time a condition of exceptional vital intensity and a threat of dissolution for the *ego*. A personality split is the unavoidable consequence of such a condition. Furthermore, the love experience breaks the poet into various vital functions (defined "spirits", on the ground of physio-psychological conceptions of that time) and destroys their harmony, making them reciprocally incompatible» (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, p. 144). From Luperini's description it is clear that the concept of *spirito* introduced by Giacomo da Lentini reaches in Cavalcanti a new, maybe higher or more elaborated phylosophical theorization. Moreover, Luperini states that in Cavalcanti «there is a friction between shape and contents. That friction reproduces the poet's psychological contradiction, when he declares that he is forced to love that very passion that kills him. On the other hand, the poetic expression is seen as a contingent and illusory match and compromise between love's irrationality and cheering up and counterbalancing action of rationality» (Luperini, Cataldi 1999, ibid.).

I want to underline here the word 'friction', that reminds me of the same word, *kishimi*, used by Fujiwara Katsumi to define *akugaruru kokoro*, or to be more precise, the concept of separation – in this case, splitting or even disintegration – of the individual's physical unity, and the counterbalancing and saving role of rationality, that is realized through rhetoric, intended as poetic language.

Now, it is clear that *spirito* and *kokoro* are two concepts derived from a totally different theoretical background: Averroes' Aristotelic philosophy and (maybe) some shamanistic or magical tradition of ancient Japan are expressions of two totally different worlds, whose comparison seems too risky not to fall into hurried and probably wrong conclusions.

Even so, we could conclude that the concept of 'departing heart/spirit' is a particular expression that, in poetry, testifies a totally new approach not only to literature and to the role of poetry among society, but rather a real change at a social – or we could even say anthropological – level that happened in some segment of the court societies of Heian Japan and medieval Europe; and that this change is particularly evident in two precise moments, that are, in my opinion, the two or three decades before the compilation of the *Kokinshū* and the two or three decades before the fall of the Hohenstaufen's Magna Curia, corresponding to the highest activity of the Sicilian School.

As I briefly demonstrated, the discourse about the *kokoro* and the *spirito* would evolve and reach a further completeness – and in Italy, even a phil-

osophical organization – in later years, like in the 10-11th century when the *Genji monogatari* was written and in 13-14th century when the Stilnovo was developed; when comparing these with more primitive samples, from a formal point of view – such as the *Man'yōshū* and troubadours' age, the literaly evolution becomes evident. The main proof of this change or 'step' into the evolution of the phenomenology of love is recognizable in the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School not because of their relative influence or 'importance', but for a formal and verifiable fact: the birth of a specific lexicon – in our example, the words *akugaruru kokoro* and *spirito* – and the consequent (or rather, precedent) acquisition of a new awareness on the human nature and love, that is for both the poets of the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School, no longer a tool to communicate or entertain the court members, as seems to be the case at the time of the *Man'yōshū* and the *Kokinshū* , but rather a tool for introspection, and for a higher level of human analysis.

It is hard to establish if a certain poem of the *Kokinshū* was really conceived as a love exchange between real people, or if it was just a 'ludic' composition performed at some public event, but surely the role (the «function», following Rein Raud (2003)'s terminology) it fulfills within the collection is part of this new – and I wish to underline *new* – intellectual reflection about the human being and human feelings. «In origin, the *waka* was born and developed having as a center the social function of the language, but it didn't stop there, shifting the focus solely to the function of the expression and representation of human interiority, pursuing and establishing a personal territory» (Masuda 2004, p. 10).

Masuda's statement, in its wider conception, could be also applied to the poetry of the Sicilian School. It is in fact with the Sicilians that an originally communicative or performative language – the troubadours' *canso* – would definitely change into a totally new use of the language designated first of all to analyze and to express human interiority, that would be the main path taken by poetry, first with Dante, and then with Petrarch. The Sicilians gave the model, the tools, the first orientation to further developments that, with Petrarch and his use of the Sicilian's most elaborated tool, the *sonetto,* and Petrarchism, will re-define the real meaning of 'poetry' and 'lyric' for the entire European literature. A process tightly connected to the 'divorce between music and poetry', that happened at Frederick II's court, and not by chance. On the other hand, and again not by chance, the development and refinement of the *waka* into a language able to express and analyze human interiority, took place in a precise moment of Japanese History, at the Heian court, in an environment that showed some important similitudes with Frederick II's court. In other words, we could state that various and comparatively defined social changes concurred to create what we could define a cultural 'syndrome', in

the etymologic meaning of 'various symptoms occurring together'. Lending Wiebke Denecke's terminology (2014, pp. 1-10), we could also say that Japanese and Italian cultures reached, at the time of *Kokinshū* and Sicilian School, the *relative age* of maturity and self consciousness to detach from their *reference cultures*, namely China and Occitan culture.

This 'syndrome' or reached maturity represented not only an isolated and circumscribed case in the history of literature in Japan and Italy, but it could even be seen as a step in World Literature, or in wider terms, in the evolution of human thought, maybe in an anthropological meaning. From this moment onward, poets started to feel the need to sing about new feelings, like the *akugaruru kokoro* or the detaching *spirit*, like they never did before. The poems of the *Kokinshū* and of the Sicilian School are the written proof of this evolutive step.

CONCLUSIONS

The research presented in this book leads to some fundamental conclusions we can summarize as follows. On the basis of the historical analysis conducted in Part I, we can compare the Japanese courts of emperors Saga, Junna and later Uda to the imperial court of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen due to some particular features that, even if findable also in other times and places, could hardly be found all together and simultaneously. These features are: the definitive concentration of political power into the emperor's hand, through jurisdictional and administrative reforms aimed at guaranteeing and legitimating his absolutistic power; the foundation or reinforcement of state educational institutions – *Daigakuryō* and *Studium* – whose first function was to raise a class of literati bureaucrats – the *bunjin* and the notaries – able to fulfill the various duties of state administration; and the direct and private relationship between the emperor and a narrow group of these literates, used by the ruler to contrast the oligarchic and hereditary interests of high aristocracy (Japan) or the power of Church (Italy). These political choices consequently caused an important social change represented by the birth of a new profile of courtier – a «purely consumer class» (Masuda 2004, p. 3) – totally depending on the existence of the court and on its institutional role and relation with the imperial power. The court itself became a much more centralized environment, no longer feudal (Europe) or based on the hereditary and direct ownership of lands (Japan).

As regards the history of literature, exactly in the period we chose, both in Japan and in Italy we see the rise of vernacular as a literary canon for national language, symbolized by the *Kokinshū* in Japan and the Sicilian School in Italy. These two 'events' are the consequence of a particular and similar movement and thought as regards addressing culture and literary activities at the court, as seen in Part II and III. In the span of about a century, between the reigns of William IX of Aquitaine and Frederick II and between those of Saga and Uda/Daigo, we observe the shift from a situation of 'conflict' between high literature (Latin/Chinese) and vernacular literature in Japanese and European courts, to a synthesis between these two elements during the reigns of Frederick and Uda, symbolized by the new figure of bi-literate intellectuals, like Giacomo da Lentini and Ki no Tsurayuki, or Peter de Vinea

and Sugawara no Michizane.

The above similarities create the basis for a comparison that lacks the primary requirement for the 'traditional' comparativism, namely a direct and verified historical connection or exchange between the two referring contexts. Having successfully detected such similar social and historical backgrounds is the requirement needed to allow a comparison, according to the methodology of 'new' comparativism, as already indicated in the preface. Therefore, the similitudes we find in the poems of the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School can be seen not as mere coincidences, but as the proof that similar societies could produce similar solution to similar problems, engaging comparable strategies within the field of literary production.

As seen in the second half of this book, these similitudes are: the formalization of poetic language; the elaboration of new rhetorical or formal devices; the translation and selection of already given themes – for example the exclusion of political themes and the focus on love; a refinement of language suitable to introspection and to the analysis of human feelings; a switch in the focus of the poems, from the woman (poetry as communication tool) to the poet's interiority (poetry as philosophical discourse); the definitive passage from (sung) 'songs' to (written) 'poems'; the consolidation of poetical meters that would remain unchanged for many centuries (31-syllable *waka* and *sonetto*); the constitution of a network of poetic terminology allowing a 'freedom under constrain' through the creation of new paths inside this 'tank' of already given words; and last, but not least, the status of canon and model for later authors.

All these similitudes between two historically unconnected traditions allow us to analyze and draw conclusions from a world-wide point of view, leading our conclusion to a more universal dimension.

It is true that some general features of court poetry, like the inner conflict lived by many poets forced inside the narrow borders of that close society, are not exclusive of the Sicilian and early Heian courts, as we can find similar notions already in the poets of the *Man'yōshū* like Ōtomo no Yakamochi or in many *troubadours*. Nevertheless, we must underline that it is only with the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School that the reflection on the poet's position in the society reached its evolution, as demonstrated by the appearance of words like *akugaruru kokoro* or *spirit*. That's why in this book, the choice of the poetry of the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School were meaningful to attempt an analysis of two specific 'peripheral' cultures of Heian Japan and 13th century Italy, and their respective literatures.

I hope this book can help scholars of other areas of Humanities to see under a new light not only the histories of the Japanese and Italian literatures, rooted respectively in the *waka* of the *Kokinshū* and the Sicilian School, but

also to verify some general paradigms of 'court literature', or the concept and function of the 'formalization of poetic language', within the frame of World Literatures.

I also hope I have partly contributed to the debate about the role and function of literature. Two further conclusions can be drawn from this research: 1) literature seems to be a necessary element for national and cultural identity, and 2) literature can be responsible for deep social changes. Literature is not just a product of society reflecting tastes and strategies of a more or less large social group of producers, but it seem to have also the strength to cause deep changes in social customs and common thinking. As pointed out by Takigawa, the *Kokinshū* was not compiled because the *waka* gained prestige at court, quite the opposite: after the compilation of a collection legitimated by an imperial order, the *waka* became worthy of being composed at official events by aristocrats and high officials, and recorded as written literature (Takigawa 2004, p. 251). In other words, we could say that the literary product of a minority, and the stylistic and aesthetic choices of the four compilers of the *Kokinshū*, deeply influenced the tastes and values of all of court society – that until that time highly valued only Chinese poetry.

Similarly, as explained by Duby, the moral and rules of courtly love expressed and elaborated in the *troubadours'* songs or courtly romance *didn't* actually reflect the real condition of women in medieval court society –courtly love was, according to Duby, just a game led by men – but it would end up to really influencing the customs and relations between men and women in the following centuries (Duby 2005, p. 328). Moreover, the holders of that ideal of 'nobility of mind' and not by birth, namely the knights and the 'marginal men' of feudal courts, would successfully impose their life philosophy to all court society, influencing also the ideology of upper aristocrat class (Mancini 1976 p. XXVII). So, we could assume that in some ways literature has the power to revert the given social context from which it was created. Literature finds its origin in society, but it could in turn drastically change the very society that gave birth to it.

As regards the influence of literature on (national) languages, as stated by Haruo Shirane the language of the *waka* would have «a deep impact on Japanese culture as a whole» (Shirane 2012, p. 186); it was a common language that «became the basis for elegant writing and eventually gave rich associations to a broad spectrum of material culture, from clothing to *wagashi* (sweets)» (ibid.).

In Italy, we know that also the vernacular language firstly elaborated at the Sicilian court was not spoken by commoners – as accurately pointed out by Dante in his *De vulgari eloquentia* – or rather, it was not even a real language at all. It was a poetic *koinè* that, acknowledged as worthy of imitation first of all by the Tuscan poets before Dante, would become the national language of

Italian citizens – only after many centuries and some deep changes. Indeed, «the court cultures in Europe, like in Japan, were later appropriated by commoner cultures (long after the demise of the aristocracy), with court culture often coming to represent high culture as a whole (Shirane 2012, p. 186).

Shirane's statement must not be read as circumscribed to medieval times: as stated by Frenzel, «poetry became anchored in the metaphoric nexus of singing and loving. And it is this remembered pattern which filters down through the centuries and survives, even to the present day, in the Western mind» (Frenzel 1982, p. 345). We can say the same about the problem of the role of vernacular as official national language: in the mid-19th century, in the newborn Kingdom of Italy, «it was in literature, rather than in real life, that it was possible to find the idea of Italy as a nation. A nation made of men of letters, more than anything else.» (Ceserani 1999, p. 316). Therefore, it is clear that the link between politics – or national and cultural identity – and literature overcomes the simple application of literature to political propaganda. This duality seems indeed to be more like a constant, a vector recurring during the centuries, incompatible with the post-romantic idea of 'art for art's sake' or absolute creativity and artistic freedom. Only if we break free of– or at least, contextualize – this now outdated vision, a new perspective will open up before our eyes, and we will be able to read the medieval texts under the right light. The possibilities here become enormous. We could for example analyze whether this kind of acknowledgment toward literature has something in common with the theory of 'literature to govern the state', – both in Japan and China – a literature considered a tool to educate the population, or even a proof of cosmic and universal order. We could also start outlining some key moments in world history corresponding to some important events, like the invention of writing, the birth of national states, the birth of a written tradition of vernacular poetry, etc. Denecke indicates Saga's reign as the time when the Japanese reached a new consciousness of their own identity – through the encounter with Chinese literature – and an awareness of living a 'new' historical age (Denecke 2013b, p. 98). Likewise, Frederick II's reign is often seen as a fundamental phase between the Middle Age and the Renaissance, as his fight against the Church (including his challenge in the field of cultural and philosophical hegemony) «left a heritage of ideologies that, together with other [cultural] movements of that century, offered [work] materials for the skeptic spirit of the Renaissance and for the formation of modern state and awareness» (Pepe 1938, p. 11, cit. in Delle Donne 2006, p. 120).

These two examples could be considered 'steps' in the evolution of thought, a sort of 'physical change' in human awareness and society, that seems to hold some universally shared characteristics. But, what is most important, this conclusion seems to suggest that literature can be, in the final analysis,

what stimulates and initiates intellectual speculation. It is not just a product of the human mind. Literature could be seen at the same time as the cause and the result of a virtuous spiral, object and agent of social transformations. If we acknowledge such a power to the literary works and production, then we should consider again with the proper attention some magniloquent and – to our eyes – exaggerated statement about literature. Tsurayuki's description of the *waka* as «a means to move heaven and earth, stir the spirits and gods, inculcate honest conduct, and bring harmony between husband and wife» (*Kanajo*) will appear not only a way to consolidate his own position inside the literary field through the elevation of Japanese poetry, but could also hold a deeper conviction of the function literature could or should have among society, more universally.

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