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TRADITIONAL WISDOM
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CONTENTS

Welcome Address

by

Christian STURTEWAGEN[*]

Exzellenzen, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen, sehr geehrte Damen und Herren, liebe Freunde,

Selten wird eine Tagung oder Symposium in unserer Akademie für Überseewissenschaften auf Deutsch geöffnet. Heute haben wir einen guten Grund es zu tun. Deutsch ist nicht nur auch eine Nationalsprache, aber wir haben das Glück und die Ehre drei Kollegen aus deutschen Universitäten unter uns zu haben. Ein herzliches Willkommen in unserer Akademie.

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Although English is not (yet) a national language here, it is the most widely understood. To illustrate this, one only needs to look at our poster. But English is not the only language to appear. The Academy tried to put on it the translation of "wisdom" in eight languages covering more or less the area on which we focus today. As you may have noticed, we have limited ourselves to the Near and Middle East and the Far East, leaving Africa, which contains many treasures of wisdom, for another time. This also applies for the treasures of traditional wisdom in the Americas and the Pacific islands. In underscoring the Islamic world and the political expression of it, we had not yet experienced the events that occurred in the last two years.

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* Member of the Academy.

Ce symposium est d'une certaine manière la continuation, ou plutôt l'approfondissement de notre premier congrès sur la sagesse traditionnelle, organisé le 28 septembre 2007, dont un nombre de textes ont été publiés dans le *Bulletin des Séances* de notre Académie [1]*. Nous avions alors couvert un vaste territoire géographique ainsi qu'une longue période de temps, avec l'avantage d'avoir un large éventail de cultures et de langues, mais aussi le désavantage d'un trop grand éparpillement: on trouvait des contributions sur la sagesse africaine, indienne, chinoise, mésopotamienne, égyptienne, etc. Cette fois, nous nous sommes concentrés non seulement sur un territoire limité, mais également sur la dimension politique de celui-ci avec les sagesses traditionnelles, en d'autres mots sur la «Sagesse traditionnelle et l'Expression politique», à savoir l'organisation de la société par les sagesses traditionnelles. Ce sont les sagesses traditionnelles qui sont à l'origine de l'organisation politique de notre société, de toutes nos sociétés.

Les deux épithètes dans le titre du symposium ont leur importance, tant le terme «politique» que «traditionnel». Quand on lit ou relit les «anciens» ou les «classiques», comme on les appelait autrefois, mais surtout les très anciens Égyptiens, Sumériens, Perses, Japonais, Chinois, Indiens, et la liste peut continuer, on découvre que notre époque actuelle n'a pour ainsi dire rien inventé du tout. Les sociétés humaines ont presque tout expérimenté dans leur longue histoire.

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Stefan Zweig (1881-1942) schrijft ergens: „Wer die Vergangenheit nicht versteht, versteht nichts wirklich" of een variante daarop, waar het woord voor „verleden" vervangen wordt door „tegenwoordige tijd" door Hans Georg Gadamer is: „Wer die Gegenwart verstehen will, muss Bücher lesen, die 2000 Jahre alt sind" [2].

De wijsheid of liever het zoeken naar de wijsheid zou ons van zelf moeten brengen naar het zoeken van de waarheid. Het Oud-Griekse woord voor „waarheid" is *alètheia*, waarvan de Duitse filosoof Martin Heidegger beweert dat het van het werkwoord *a-lantano* zou komen, met *alpha privativum*, dat wat niet verborgen kan blijven, „das Unverborgene". Misschien is zijn

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* Les chiffres entre crochets [ ] renvoient aux *notes and references*, p. 7

etymologie niet volledig juist, maar het voordeel is dat ze een denkpiste geeft [3].

Een beroemde Amerikaanse universiteit, geen echte *Ivy League*, maar toch een met veel prestige voor wat betreft *ancient studies* is de *Johns Hopkins University* te Baltimore. Haar motto is *Veritas vos liberabit*, een variante van *Veritas liberabit vos*, d.i. de Vulgatavertaling van Joh. 8:32 en betekent „de Waarheid zal u bevrijden". Het is precies dat zoeken naar de waarheid, waarvan wij de definitie niet kennen, die ons naar de vrijheid zal brengen, waarvan wij de definitie eigenlijk ook niet kennen.

Laat me deze korte inleiding beëindigen met een uitdrukking, die ik gehoord heb van een van onze leden, een van de bedenkers en organisatoren van dit symposium, die er jammer genoeg vandaag niet kan bijzijn. Hijzelf heeft die uitdrukking gelezen in een Nederlandse doctoraatsthesis, waar men, zoals het ook hier de gewoonte was, een serie bijstellingen moest formuleren, en een van die stellingen was: „Wie met zijn twee voeten op de grond staat, gaat niet vooruit". Een Engelse equivalent kan zijn: „one who keeps both feet on the ground does not make any progress". En dit kan tellen als wijsheid [4].

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] *Bulletin des Séances / Mededelingen der Zittingen*, **55** (3-2009).
[2] Ik herinner me niet meer waar precies ik dit gelezen heb, en ik ben er ook niet ingeslaagd deze citaten terug te vinden.
[3] M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen, 2006, p. 220).
[4] An allusion is made here to Prof. Dr. Urbain Vermeulen who left us, after a short illness, on February 13, 2016, two weeks after the conference.

Practical Wisdom as a Measure of Recognition

by

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KEYWORDS. — Practical Wisdom; Applied Knowledge; Recognition; Advisor; *Mencius*.
SUMMARY. — With special regard to a passage from the "Mengzi" (lat. *Mencius*), a collection of texts important for the doctrinal formation of Confucian tradition, the present essay aims to discuss recognition and the situation of the advisor as important issues of practical wisdom. Considering that a linguistic expression of judgment means to do both, doing something in saying something and effectuating something by saying something, references to wisdom can be understood as measures of interpersonal recognition and action. Action, knowledge, and judgment are addressed as relevant factors of authority formation this traditional account of wisdom implies.

Introduction

Politically-motivated references to the pre-scientific construct of wisdom produce a linkage between specific types of rationality, which do not operate independently of traditional values, and the respective tradition defining social and cultural norms, ethics, and other objects of politics. Wisdom implies norms and values that were established and handed down within a specific tradition; we may therefore refer to wisdom by quoting emic accounts of wisdom, such as for example Socrates' view of wisdom, the wisdom of the Native Americans (NERBURN 1999), etc. The Socratic understanding of wisdom, for example, refers to the skill of making the right decisions and taking proper actions for the common good, encouraging others to orient oneself to an exemplary way of life (prudence, *phronēsis*), the ability to commit oneself to the pursuit of truth (sapience, *Sophía*), and to gain knowledge (justified true belief,

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epistemē) of the true state of things and insight into the laws that govern the world (Robinson 1990, pp. 14-15).

Wisdom cannot be reduced to forms of rationality related to purely functional or instrumental objectives. If we consider practical wisdom (*i.e.* prudence) as a normative-affective form of rationality behind applied knowledge which depends on traditional values, it has to be clearly distinguished from logical-empirical reasoning with its emphasis on empirical evidence, practical and professional knowledge, and more generally from instrumental skills that can be acquired by training for a specific purpose (Etzioni 1988). The practical dimension of wisdom requires the actualization of traditional values and a pursuit of cognitive excellence in respect of virtues that were established in the social and political contexts of pre-modern high cultures; depending on the respective tradition, wisdom represents a cardinal virtue in itself. Politically-motivated references to wisdom inevitably actualize a sense of distance to and discrimination against those lacking the wisdom deemed necessary in order to be able to appreciate the proper objectives: "Wisdom is […] a good thing to have and the more a person has of it the better he is. The opposite of wisdom is foolishness, universally recognized to be a defect" (Kekes 1983, pp. 277, 286). By providing the binary distinction wise/unwise suitable for a judgmental representation of a large variety of subjects, the political reference to wisdom operates as a measure of recognition, self-ascertainment, and segregation. When understood as an individual character trait, wisdom can be referred to as a distinguishing mental capacity of spiritually privileged yet socially not necessarily recognized persons. Whereas illiteracy, illness, poverty, a marginal social status and other potential reasons for social repudiation do not preclude the ascription of wisdom, references to wisdom may help to legitimize the rule of "wise men" as well as the solitary or even antisocial lifestyle of a recluse by putting emphasis on their excellence of personal integrity and perspicacity.

With that in mind and with special regard to a passage from the "Mengzi", a collection of conversations and texts attributed to Meng Ke (fl. 372-289 BCE, lat. *Mencius*), which are of seminal importance for the doctrinal formation of Confucian tradition, I aim to approach the communication of recognition and advice as a political expression of practical wisdom. The issue at stake is not the hermeneutical problem to what degree the English word "wisdom" could be regarded as an appropriate translation of the Chinese word "zhi", or what the historical meaning of "zhi" according to the "Mengzi" might have been (Thompson 2007, pp. 330-334), but instead theoretical aspects of the connection between practice, knowledge, and judgment this traditional account implies. For this reason, I will discuss a

selection of paragraphs from the first part of the second book of "Mengzi", which is dedicated to the "Ducal Grandson Chou" (Gong sun Chou, "Mengzi" 2A) and which addresses questions regarding the practical adaptation of the principles of good governance established in the first book dedicated to King Hui of Liang. The paragraphs under consideration are revealing with regard to the situation of an advisor and the references to wisdom they make.

Wisdom as a Measure of Interpersonal Recognition ("Mengzi" 2A)

The pre-modern Chinese and in particular the Confucian traditions construe social distinction in a variety of ways, such as for example in terms of descent, family relationship, age, and correspondingly they differentiate measures of status-dependent propriety and accomplishment, which at least in certain regards directly refer to interpersonal recognition as an object of practical wisdom. The most prominent ideals of accomplishment are the "worthy" (Ch. *xian*) and the "sage" (Ch. *sheng*), traditional role models distinguished by their privileged insight into human flourishing and their capacity to act accordingly, their perspicacity, and authority.

Drawing from a multitude of largely pre-Qin sources standardized during the Han-period (206 BCE to 220 CE), Unger (2003) characterized the Confucian ideal of the sage as a personification of thorough understanding (Ch. *tong*): the sage is capable to foresee fortune and calamity by recognizing the relevant symptoms and without relying on fortune-telling and extrasensory perception. He discerns and knows without depending on prior verification and therefore is able to act appropriately before anyone else does. He acquires such competence through the lifelong accumulation of experience, skills, and knowledge, as every human being at least potentially can do, and yet the sage not only excels in terms of thorough mastery of the virtues that shape good human relationships, but also in his capability to act accordingly and without fail being an example to others (Unger 2003, pp. 24-30). Such excellence privileges the sage to become a ruler actualizing the four fundamental principles of benevolence (Ch. *ren*), righteousness (Ch. *yi*), propriety (Ch. *li*), and wisdom (Ch. *zhi*), without any self-interest. Although tradition claims that such accomplished persons rarely appear in human history, the sources do not provide coherent lists of sages, their number usually ranging from fifteen up to seventy-one identifiable (legendary as well as historic) figures among which at least in the context of Confucian tradition Confucius usually is regarded as the most venerable one (Unger 2003, pp. 34, 36).

Accordingly, references to the figure of Confucius tend to epitomize the Confucian ideal of an accomplished human being.

GASSMANN (2016) identified within the "Mengzi" a clear distinction between the worthy and the sage regarding their respective functions: the worthy is a person perfectly able to fulfil his proper role according to his social status, and as such he is privileged to become a role model leading the way in complying with the social norms and the natural principles. The sage is capable not only to define and to fulfil his role as a model (as the worthy does) but also to act as a normative authority, shaping and ultimately putting into effect the principles of perfect rule (pp. 188-193). They both excel in wisdom (Ch. *zhi*), which is generally understood as the sense of approving and disapproving required for the "rectification of names" (Ch. *zheng ming*) and the actualization of their normative power (GASSMANN 1988, pp. 18-21, 138-143) as well as for the related capability to make the proper distinctions and to judge accordingly (GASSMANN 2016, pp. 193-196). Moreover, the "Mengzi" distinguishes wisdom (Ch. *zhi*) as one of four fundamental principles mentioned above, viz. benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom:

> The sense of approving and disapproving is the principle of wisdom ("Mengzi" 2A.06; tr. LEGGE, p. 203).

> The sense of solicitude and sympathy is benevolence; the sense of shame and dislike is righteousness; the sense of reference and respect is propriety; the sense of approving and disapproving is wisdom ("Mengzi" 6A.06; tr. LEGGE 1895, p. 402).

> The richest fruit of benevolence is this, — the service of one's parents. The richest fruit of righteousness is this, — the obeying one's elder brothers. The richest fruit of wisdom is this, — the knowing those two things and not departing from them ("Mengzi" 4A.27; tr. LEGGE 1895, pp. 313-314).

These thesaurus-like definitions should not distract from the fact that neither the ascription of wisdom nor the status of being a worthy or sage were regarded as self-evident and incontestable. On the contrary, Confucius is represented as categorically rejecting such ascriptions:

> 19. *Mencius* said, 'Oh! what words are these? Formerly Tsze-kung asked Confucius, saying, "Master, are you a Sage?" Confucius answered him, "A Sage is what I cannot rise to. I learn without satiety, and teach without being tired." Tsze-kung said, "You learn without satiety: — that shows your wisdom. You teach without being tired: — that shows your benevolence. Benevolent and wise: — Master, you ARE a Sage." Now, since Confucius would not allow himself to be regarded as a Sage, what words were those?' ("Mengzi" 2A.02; tr. LEGGE 1895, pp. 192-193).

This passage — seemingly reminiscent of the Socratic humility theory of wisdom (RYAN 2014) — addresses interpersonal recognition and self-ascertainment as central issues of practical wisdom (as in contrast to knowledge): because Confucius is asked whether he is a sage, he replies that he cannot reach that state of accomplishment. Wisdom (Ch. *zhi*) is effectuated by an insatiable will to learn and complemented by benevolence (Ch. *ren*) manifest in the tireless commitment to teaching others. Zigong (*i.e.* Tsze-kung) interprets his master's reply in an affirmative sense, concluding that Confucius actually is a sage. The issue in question is situated in a state of ambiguity inasmuch as it remains undecided whether Confucius is truly convinced that he is no sage, not able to become a sage, or just rejecting his disciple's straightforward question. Mencius concedes that Confucius "would not allow himself to be regarded as a sage", which however does not rule out the possibility that Confucius is a sage or able to become one. Further below, Mencius explicitly attests that Zigong "had wisdom sufficient to know the sage", and that he would not have demeaned himself "to flatter" his master ("Mengzi" 2A.02; tr. LEGGE 1895, p. 195), which qualifies Zigong's judgment as epistemically accurate and yet practically inappropriate: the whole passage suggests in a self-referential manner that the recognition of a sage cannot be reduced to a matter of judgment based either on knowledge about reality or on purpose-oriented instrumental knowledge, that is to say in Aristotelian terms: either theoretical or practical wisdom. For Mencius, factors such as self-examination and self-control, interpersonal recognition, situational and anticipatory discernment have to be taken into account as aspects of wise judgment. Epistemic certainty necessitates appropriate speech and the awareness for the illocutionary dimension. Taking into account that a linguistic expression of judgment means to do both, doing something in saying something and effectuating something by saying something, Mencius understands references to wisdom and benevolence as measures of interpersonal recognition and action, which require not only "to know the sage" but also to observe the pragmatic dimension of judgment Zigong apparently ignored.

The political dimension of wise judgment becomes more apparent in the wider diegetic context of Mencius' narrative: it takes as its point of departure the general problem of how to actualize proper standards for good governance and in particular the ducal grandson's Chou (*i.e.* Kung-sun Ch'âu) question whether Mencius would feel concerned if he were to be appointed to the position of a prime minister "so as to be able to carry out [his]

principles into practice" possibly raising "the ruler to the headship of all the princes" ("Mengzi" 2A.02; tr. LEGGE 1895, p. 185). Explaining how to remain unperturbed, Mencius evaluates various accounts of self-examination and self-control, mutual dependence, and principles for guiding others. His self-ascertainment and comparative observations on knowledge, valour, and appropriate speech, prompt Chou to question in what respect Mencius would recognize himself surpassing others and whether he would consider himself a sage, referring to the fact that even Confucius — although combining "the qualities of the disciples in himself" — had not regarded himself competent "in the matter of speeches" ("Mengzi" 2A.02; tr. LEGGE 1895, p. 192). Largely consisting of the dialogue between Zigong and Confucius quoted above, Mencius' evasive reaction turns out to be a *mise en abyme* putting in practice Confucius' reply. Nevertheless, just like Zigong, Chou insists on clarifying the normative and epistemic dimension, and he therefore asks how to measure the satisfaction of the relevant criteria and with which of the mentioned examples Mencius would rank himself. Mencius declines to reply and reflects on the propriety of the inferior's submission and the superior's virtue of benevolence, addressing the reconcilableness of carrying out in practice the proper principles and dealing with the adversities which one may come across in office while trying to remain true to oneself (LEGGE 1895, pp. 193-195).

The whole passage aims to ward off the looming separation of action from its normative and epistemic aspects. By using the example of an accurate and yet inappropriate judgment on "knowing the sage", it construes wisdom as a paradoxal measure by which the distinction of action and knowledge appears to be suspended, a distinction an advisor advocating his expertise is being put to good use should be aware of.

Considering the attributes of wisdom significant for the Confucian tradition after the composition of the "Mengzi" and other formative texts of that period, the apparent emphasis on "sensitive discernment and attunement", on "perspicacity" and "skill" to "fashion appropriate, adaptive responses to complex, changing situations" (THOMPSON 2007, p. 330), our question is to what sort of problem the construct of practical wisdom may offer a political solution.

Practical Wisdom and Giving Advice to the Ruler

On the basis of Luhmann's theory of power, a political expression can be defined as related to the capacity to impose collectively-binding decisions and sanctions. For a pre-modern autocratic system of rule we may generally regard power as a means to determine specific choices and related expectations, to control action and reaction; power consolidates and is based upon reciprocity, mutual recognition and asymmetrical interdependence. The political expression operates by communicating power on the basis of the distinction between those who govern and those who are governed. Such political expression can be actualized by governmental offices, which produce and amplify power operating with distinctions between incumbents and subjects on the one hand and between person and office on the other hand. As the possession of office is based on selection procedures, the criteria of which correspond to traditional values deemed binding, the legitimacy of the government and the distinction between ruler and subjects can be ensured (LUHMANN 2003, pp. 19-30, 37-38, 107-110).

Properties of practical wisdom such as perspicacity, sound anticipation of action and reaction, and last but not least skilful communication with the relevant authorities and adversaries, are qualities required by people, who are serving in the institutional settings designed to process and control the outcome of collectively-binding decisions. Referring to classical political theories such as that of Machiavelli, ETHERIDGE (1992) generally proposes to regard statesmanship as the fullest political expression of wisdom. For the present context, however, I suggest considering only the dyadic relationship between the advisor and the ruler as a political expression of practical wisdom, simply because the lower complexity of such a relationship largely corresponds to the limited capacity of individual knowledge, judgment, and action as depicted in the relevant sources.

The situation of an advisor Mencius refers to in terms of wisdom, is in many ways characteristic for the government servants (Ch. *shi*) who offered their expertise to the ruling elite of the Warring States period (475-221 BCE): their duties and authority often depended on offices and the advisory services they provided to those in power. Their expertise usually covered a variety of fields of knowledge such as administration, legislation, taxation, and agriculture, and was closely linked with specific beliefs regarding human nature and the proper way of ordering social life. As they were vying with each other for influence, they had to convince the respective practitioner of power, generally a local ruler, that their advice was decisive and, once applied, would outperform the competition. The selection of approaches the advisors offered was adapted to the specific needs and influenced by the political ambitions of the potentates they served, and consequently they had to make use of a variety of sources and arguments that allowed them to combine empirical

and technical knowledge with general reflections on duty, ethics, and appropriate uses of language (GASSMANN 2016, pp. 67-73, 78-85, 99-101).

Generally, there are only few options for direct and legitimate political expression available to a subject in a pre-modern autocratic system of rule — apart from carrying out the duties of the office. Possibly the most promising option was to gain the advisor's capacity to exert influence on governmental decisions, which requires not only regular access to and information about the governmental meetings but also opportunities to establish a solid relationship of trust between autocratic ruler and advisor. Influence presupposes mutual trust, communal structures, shared accounts of meaning, reliance on tradition and agreed upon objectives. The advisor's influence then operates by giving pieces of advice in such a way that the ruler's options for action can be represented within the conceptual framework of the advisor's expertise. Similar to the mediating function of wisdom in respect of action and knowledge, exercising influence requires the advisor to be pragmatic and normative at the same time. The stronger his influence becomes, the more he will be able to facilitate a collective denial of empirical evidence, which in turn helps to establish an increasing reliance on normative teachings based on unverifiable truth claims, expectations, and beliefs (LUHMANN 2003, pp. 74-76). Providing both, a certain amount of independence from the external political and practical constraints, and a greater flexibility in compensating for errors and potential misjudgements, frequent references to commonly acknowledged virtues such as wisdom, benevolence, propriety, etc. cushion the more precarious aspects of the advisor's position. Self-control and self-ascertainment, a utilitarian commitment to serve the good ends represent further factors the advisor may refer to in order to immunize himself against political reality, apart from the above-mentioned legitimacy of traditional role models and the authority defined by legendary precedents he aims to associate himself with. Last but not least, he may remind the ruler that in the end, should the implementation of a policy fail, it is due to his lack of virtue and self-control, which will require the wisdom to seek "the cause of his failure in himself" and therefore, tacitly, assistance from the advisor regarding virtuous manners:

> 2. 'Confucius said, "It is virtuous manners which constitute the excellence of a neighbourhood. If a man, in selecting a residence, do [*sic*] not fix on one where such prevail, how can he be wise?" Now, benevolence is the most honourable dignity conferred by Heaven, and the quiet home in which man should dwell. Since no one can hinder us from being so, if yet we are not benevolent; — this is being not wise.'
> 3. 'From the want of benevolence and the want of wisdom will ensue the entire absence of propriety and righteousness; — he who is in such a case must be the servant of other men. To be the servant of men and yet ashamed of such servitude,

> is like a bowmaker's being ashamed to make bows, or an arrow-maker's being ashamed to make arrows.' 4. 'If he be ashamed of his case, his best course is to practise benevolence.' 5. 'The man who would be benevolent is like the archer. The archer adjusts himself and then shoots. If he misses, he does not murmur against those who surpass himself. He simply turns round and seeks *the cause of his failure* in himself.' ("Mengzi" 2A.07; tr. LEGGE 1895, pp. 204-205)

Although direct influence may have been regarded as acceptable and the access to esteemed inventories of expert knowledge as safeguarded, the political environment of the advisor entailed a dilemma of recognition, if only because of his inferior position as a servant claiming to know better than the practitioner/ruler he is invited to teach. Gassmann made the point that the advisor could not assume the authority of a teacher as it would imply a particular leading role, demanding unreserved allegiance from the ruler who would be supposed to learn by obedience (GASSMANN 2016, p. 91). Nevertheless, the recognition an advisor enjoys cannot be fully explained by making reference to the ruler's fundamental appreciation of expert knowledge — at least when we take into account the distinction a reference to wisdom produces, viz. separating the inventory of traditional values and knowledge from the way their application is advocated and ultimately implemented.

Practical wisdom requires both, accuracy of description and knowing how to realize a related task. But there is more to it: as practical wisdom is directed at making the right decisions and taking proper actions for the common good in order to lead an exemplary way of life, to know the rules, to know the facts, and to know what to do is not enough. KEKES (1983) argued that wisdom in general is also based upon interpretative knowledge: "In descriptive knowledge one knows facts; in interpretative knowledge one knows the significance of the descriptively known facts" (KEKES 1983, p. 278). But agreement about the descriptively known facts as well as about the relevant norms and traditional values does not imply an agreement about their significance and implementation. Moreover, the advisor has to decide what is of practical relevance for being interpreted. In this respect the traditional, text-oriented forms of hermeneutics are not really expected to be of much help either. Although they promise to convey the original meaning of a given teaching or may be used in order to adapt a traditional inventory of knowledge for a theoretical approach to realizing a particular task, they do not suffice to bridge the gap between knowledge and action.

Advocating the particular pieces of advice to be put into practice, the advisor has to take recourse to his own experiences and judgment so as to

ensure that the potentate concerned will react accordingly. Such experience-based approach may encourage a "thinking with cases", leading to epistemic problems proper to inductive reasoning on the one hand and a tendency to rely on traditional normative casuistry on the other (FURTH 2007, pp. 3-5, 18-20). Despite such tendencies towards generalization, the apparent emphasis on situational discernment and experienced judgment permits the advisor not only to resist the rigidity a normative casuistry may entail, but also promises to bridge the gap between insight and action, knowledge and application. Therefore, in order to persuade the potentate to trust his judgment, to follow his advice, and thereby to recognize him as an authority, the advisor has to make him understand the weak points of governmental practice without exercising unequivocal critique or suggesting something problematic that could in any way give the impression of disrespect and offense. An apparently safe way is to appeal to the ruler's sense of reputation by putting emphasis on practising virtue as a shared common property. The advisor may refer to traditional examples and prominent precedents who understood learning from others as tried and tested learning through experience:

> CHAP. VIII. 1. Mencius said, 'When any one told Tsze-lû that he had a fault, he rejoiced.' 2. 'When Yü heard good words, he bowed *to the speaker*.' 3. 'The great Shun had a still greater *delight in what was good. He regarded* virtue as the common property of himself and others, giving up his own way to follow that of others, and delighting to learn from others to practise what was good.' 4. 'From the time when he ploughed and sowed, exercised the potter's art, and was a fisherman, to the time when he became emperor, he was continually learning from others.' 5. 'To take example from others to practise virtue, is to help them in the same practice. Therefore, there is no attribute of the superior man greater than his helping men to practise virtue.' ("Mengzi" 2A.08; tr. LEGGE 1895, pp. 205-206)

Such learning through experience and reflection on doing good aims to reformulate the ruler's questions in a well-meaning, ethically sound manner according to the inventory of agreed-upon values, arguments, and precedents the advisor proposes to draw upon. In order to lend plausibility to his judgment and confer meaning to the pieces of advice he gives, the advisor has to establish his inventory of knowledge as the binding frame of reference at least for his advisory services. If he fails to establish such a normative basis or, quoting a metaphor coined by MULKAY *et al.* (1987): to "colonize the mind" of the ruler, he lacks the authority to demonstrate the practical relevance of his expertise. His political expression would be no more than voicing either criticism or consent with the ruler's decisions, a function not sufficiently different from that of a court jester: "— the words of jesters

always contain sound judgment" as the statesman and poet Su Shi (1037-1101 CE) once remarked, pleased with a renowned jester's positive comment about his poetry (OTTO 2001, p. 22).

Against this theoretical background, Gassmann's observations regarding the distinction between the sage as the accomplished person who is able to define models and roles in society, and the worthy who makes an example in fulfilling his role within society (GASSMANN 2016, pp. 188-193), help us to make more precise the political expression of practical wisdom in the present context: depending on the given political requirements of his duties, the advisory practice of the worthy would remain restricted to the skilful application of knowledge, drawing upon traditional values and precedents. The sage, however, would be also capable to distinguish himself by observing his advisory practice as a normative measure for the ascertainment of his authority. This difference fits the implicit distinction motivating Chou's comment about Mencius' self-ascertainment:

> 17. *Kung-sun Ch'âu* further asked, 'What do you mean by saying that you understand *whatever* words *you hear*?' *Mencius* replied, 'When words are one-sided, I know how *the mind of the speaker* is clouded over. When words are extravagant, I know how *the mind* is fallen and sunk. When words are all-depraved, I know how *the mind* has departed from principle. When words are evasive, I know how *the mind* is at its wit's end. *These evils* growing in the mind, do injury to government, and, displayed in the government, are hurtful to the conduct of affairs. When a Sage shall again arise, he will certainly follow my words.'

> 18. *On this Ch'âu observed*, 'Tsâi Wo and Tsze-kung were skilful in speaking. Zan Niû, the disciple Min, and Yan Yüan, while their words were good, were distinguished for their virtuous conduct. Confucius united the qualities of the disciples in himself, *but still* he said, "In the matter of speeches, I am not competent". — Then, Master, have you attained to be a Sage?' ("Mengzi" 2A.02; tr. LEGGE 1895, pp. 191-192)

Mencius and Chou understand that even the most accomplished advisor's expertise does not suffice to bridge the gap between knowledge and action, as it remains a "matter of speeches". Decisive for the esteem of expert knowledge is the degree to which the advisor is able to establish himself as an authority capable of imposing its own terms of decision-making on the ruler. Ideally, if the advisor succeeds in establishing his teachings as the normative frame of reference and in having put them into practice by the ruler, the Confucian framework of traditional values is ready to provide measures of recognition ultimately referring to the context of the worthy/sage distinction.

In terms of political expression, the reference to wisdom is a recognized claim to authority the advisor may take advantage of without much need for legitimation and generalization, provided that both sides, the advisor/servant and the practitioner/ruler, have confidence in their own perspicacity and judgment. Apart from this, recognition and mutual trust between advisor/servant and practitioner/ruler appear to be less endangered by epistemic shortcomings than by linguistic intrusions the latter may consider as inappropriate and, in consequence, a reason to dismiss or punish the expert.

Afterthought

The academic system of Confucian scholarship initiated by Emperor Wu of Han (r. 141-87 BCE) with its increasing methodological rigidity, formalization, and institutional routinization, abetted a political neutralization of the Confucian scholar-official. The construct of wisdom and other virtues related to the charismatic learning and expertise the government servants of the Warring States period were occupied with had been reproduced as an object of text-oriented exegesis, bolstering a philological and ideological framework for the "direct worship of the lineage of power through the textual body" (Li 1997, p. 214). By breaking apart the dyadic relationship between advisor/servant and practitioner/ruler, the situational aspects of practical wisdom lost relevance once the person-related authority of the advisor-servant and its recognition by his superior were replaced by a new form of stereotyped scholarship maintained by the central government. The uncertainty of the political situation the pre-Qin advisor/servants had to cope with, has given way to institutional selection procedures and academic career models installed by the emperor.

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Reclaiming Public Space:
Shinto and Politics in Japan Today

by

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KEYWORDS. — Shinto; Abe Shinzō; Ise Shrines; Jinja Honchō; Public Religion.

SUMMARY. — In recent years, various attempts have been made to challenge Japan's secular system and renegotiate the position of Shinto shrines and symbols in society. Today, Shinto leaders arguably have more political influence than at any time since the end of World War II. Shinto lobby organizations have close connections to the current government: they influence political decision-making processes and provide ideological legitimacy to the Abe administration. This article analyses the increasingly important role of Shinto in Japanese politics, looking at two recent events: a campaign for constitutional reform, promoted at shrines throughout the country, and the visit of the leaders of the G7 countries to the Ise shrines in May 2016. It shows that the role of Shinto in politics is getting increasingly visible, as the shrine establishment seeks to restore what it sees as Japan's traditional culture, with shrines located in the centre of public space both literally and metaphorically.

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Shinto is commonly described as a religious tradition with a strong this-worldly orientation, characterized by life-cycle rituals, community festivals, and the worship of immanent deities believed to reside in elements of nature. Accordingly, Shinto leaders and scholars often assert that Shinto is essentially a "public" ritual tradition, concerned with the common good of local communities as well as the Japanese nation as a whole (ROTS 2017a). In contrast to "private" religions such as Buddhism or Christianity, they argue, Shinto is neither faith-based nor exclusivistic; according to them, it transcends the category "religion", constituting the underlying value orientation of "the Japanese people". In reality, though, since 1945 Japan has had a strict

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constitutional separation of religion and state, and shrines are legally classified as religious institutions. As such, they are subject to the same rules and limitations as other religious organizations. Moreover, popular conceptualizations of Shinto as Japan's "collective" and "indigenous" worship tradition notwithstanding, few Japanese personally identify with Shinto, even if they occasionally visit shrines or participate in ritual festivities.

In recent years, various attempts have been made to challenge Japan's secular system and renegotiate the position of Shinto shrines, rituals and symbolism in the public sphere (Breen 2010, Guthmann 2010, Mullins 2012). The ongoing visits by senior politicians to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine have received significant media attention internationally — and understandably so, since they have direct consequences for the relations between Japan, Korea and China. They have also been subjected to much scholarly debate (Breen 2007, Nelson 2003). By contrast, prime minister Abe's official participation in the 2013 inauguration ceremony of the newly-rebuilt Ise shrines (Shinto's most sacred site, which is completely rebuilt every twenty years) received hardly any media attention outside Japan, and little critical attention domestically, despite the fact that it represented an important change in state-religion relations (Breen & Teeuwen 2017). Significantly, Shinto actors currently appear to have more political influence than at any time since the end of World War II, as Shinto lobby organizations have close connections with the current government. While Abe is criticized internationally for his wartime revisionism and plans to change the constitution, there has been little awareness of the role Shinto organizations have been playing behind the scenes — until recently, that is. Today, it becomes increasingly clear that notions of Japan as a unique and divinely ordained nation, guided by an emperor who is a direct descendent of the gods, are affecting some major decisions made by the Abe administration, and providing it with ideological legitimacy.

As this article demonstrates, 2016 was a particularly important year in this respect. The increasing politicization of shrine Shinto was exemplified by, first, a campaign for constitutional change, in which shrines came to play an unprecedentedly central role; and second, the choice by the Abe government to organize this year's G7 summit in the vicinity of the Ise shrines, and convince the presidents of the other G7 states to join Abe on a visit to those shrines. In the first part of this article, I will discuss and analyse these recent events, and explain why they are significant. Following this discussion, I will proceed to analyse contemporary understandings of Shinto as a "public" and "collective" tradition, as expressed by some influential lobby groups and umbrella organizations. My discussion focuses on three interrelated

organizations, all of which subscribe to the notion of Shinto as a "public" tradition of national importance: Jinja Honchō, Shintō Seiji Renmei, and Nippon Kaigi. Finally, I will conclude the article by showing how these activities are imbedded in a utopian view of history, and explaining why they are of immediate political significance.

"Beautiful Japan"

Until 1945, Shinto was closely intertwined with imperial ideology: the *kokutai* ("national body") system was legitimated by means of Shinto mythology, and shrines throughout the country were incorporated (forcibly, at times) into a national ritual system centred on the divine emperor. Although the precise nature of the relationship between Shinto and the state during the period between 1868 and 1945 remains subject to heated discussion [1]*, there is no denying the fact that Shinto was closely intertwined with national politics both ideologically and institutionally, especially during the last decades of this period. This changed dramatically after Japan's surrender, when the so-called "State Shinto" system was dismantled. In December 1945, the occupation authorities issued the Shinto Directive, which stated that Shinto should no longer receive state support, and that shrines were to become private religious institutions. Subsequently, in 1946, the Association of Shinto Shrines (Jinja Honchō) was established, which has served as the umbrella organization for the majority of shrines in the country ever since. Although the term *honchō* usually refers to government agencies, Jinja Honchō is a private organization, classified as "religious" and thus independent from the state.

Since the end of World War II, shrine priests have typically shied away from politics. In *emic* discourse, Shinto has been framed as an essentially apolitical cultural tradition that concerns *all* Japanese, regardless of personal faith or ideological affiliation. Moreover, Shinto is typically presented as a tradition without doctrine, creed, or central authority — despite the fact that, in reality, Jinja Honchō actively attempts to standardize the tradition and minimize ideological or ritual diversity by means of priestly education and written publications. As several scholars have pointed out, Jinja Honchō leaders have long felt uncomfortable with their assigned status as "religious" organization, and have made various attempts to challenge the secularist state apparatus — either directly, or via their political lobby organization,

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* Numbers in brackets [ ] refer to the notes, pp. 41-43.

Shintō Seiji Renmei (Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership) (BREEN 2010, BREEN & TEEUWEN 2010, GUTHMANN 2010, MULLINS 2012, TAKAYAMA 1993). In contrast to Jinja Honchō, however, individual shrine priests do not typically speak out on politically sensitive matters. Unlike Christian churches, shrines do not have services, and priests do not give sermons; their main task is the performance of rituals on behalf of communities or individuals. Thus, until recently, shrine priests were not expected to be actively involved in politics.

This appears to have changed. In early 2016, it became abundantly clear not only that the Shinto establishment has an explicitly political agenda, but also that local shrines are expected to promote this agenda. Every year, during the first days of January, millions of people in Japan visit a shrine to pray for good luck in the New Year and purchase protective amulets or talismans. This practice is called *hatsumōde*, and many of those who engage in it do not normally visit shrines on other occasions; nor, for that matter, do they personally identify with "Shinto". Together with *matsuri* (seasonal neighbourhood festivals), *hatsumōde* constitutes the main opportunity for shrines to attract large numbers of visitors, and present itself to parishioners and potential sponsors who may not frequently participate in other shrine events. All the more significant, therefore, was the fact that this year many shrines affiliated with Jinja Honchō had large new banners and posters on the shrine grounds, urging people to sign a petition for constitutional reform. One of the posters showed a middle-aged woman wearing a kimono, standing in front of Mount Fuji and a cherry tree in bloom, two instantly recognizable symbols of the nation [2]. The picture was accompanied by the following text: "Let us make a Constitution for this beautiful Japan, by the hands of our nation" (*Kokumin no te de tsukurō – utsukushii Nippon no kenpō*). The poster urged people to sign a petition for constitutional change, supporting prime minister Abe Shinzō in his attempts to change the current constitution, which was created by the US occupation authorities in 1946. The campaign was organized by a group called *Utsukushii Nippon no Kenpō o Tsukuru Kokumin no Kai*, which has been translated as "Citizens' Association for the Creation of a Constitution for Beautiful Japan". The aim of this organization is to collect ten million signatures of citizens who support Abe's plans to change the constitution. As of May 2016, reportedly seven million signatures had been collected (*Mainichi Shimbun* 2016b).

Seven million is a large number. Nevertheless, Abe's proposed constitutional reforms are highly controversial, and opposed by a majority of the Japanese population (*Asahi Shimbun* 2016). That does not appear to deter him, however. For several years, Abe has been planning to organize a

referendum that should lead to the desired adaptations, but for various legal and political reasons this has not taken place yet [3]. The most controversial change concerns article 9 of the constitution, which stipulates that the Japanese people "forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes" [4]. Right-wing organizations have long lobbied for changing this text in order to make Japan a "normal" nation-state with a proper army (the current military is euphemistically called "Self-Defense Forces"), which has the same rights as other states and does not outlaw war. Pacifists, on the other hand, strongly oppose any changes to article 9, and thousands of people have joined in mass protests against Abe's government. Yet the proposed constitutional changes are not limited to article 9: as one commentator rightly pointed out, other amendments might lead to further restrictions on the freedom of speech and to the persecution of protesters interfering with "public interest and public order" (SMITH 2015), which could lead to Japan becoming increasingly authoritarian. These changes are framed as part of Abe's project to re-create a "beautiful Japan" (*utsukushii Nippon*) based on "traditional culture" (*dentō bunka*), inhabited by proud patriotic citizens. It is no coincidence that the name of the group responsible for this campaign echoes the title of Abe's well-known book, in which he sets out his vision for this "beautiful", proud Japan (ABE 2013).

In Abe's beautiful Japan, Shinto takes centre stage. In May 2016, the leaders of the G7 countries — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States — came together for their annual summit, and it was Japan's turn to organize it. It took place on Kashiko Island, near the coastal city of Shima (Mie prefecture), known for its oysters, pearl cultivation and tourist resorts. But the city was not selected because of its industries, and not because of its coastal landscape, either, pretty though it may be. Rather, it was chosen because it neighbours another famous place: the city of Ise, home to the Ise shrines (Ise Jingū). Generally considered as the most sacred site in Shinto (and thus, by extension, as the most sacred site in Japan, rivalled only by the imperial palace itself), Ise is home to a large number of shrines. The two largest, known as the Inner Shrine (Naikū) and the Outer Shrine (Gekū), have played a central part in the development of modern Shinto, and were deeply imbedded in the imperial ideology that was developed during the Meiji period. The Outer Shrine is dedicated to the goddess Toyouke-Ōmikami, who is associated with rice cultivation — which, not coincidentally, came to play an important part as a marker of national identity during the modern period (GLUCK 1985, OHNUKI-TIERNEY 1993). The Inner Shrine, meanwhile, is home to Amaterasu-Ōmikami: the sun

goddess, believed to be the divine ancestress of the imperial lineage. According to Shinto-nationalist mythology, the modern emperor is a direct descendant of the mythical first emperor, Jimmu, who is believed to have founded Japan in the seventh century BCE. Jimmu was the great-grandson of the god Ninigi-no-Mikoto, who was the grandson of Amaterasu. Thus, the current emperor is believed to be a descendant of the sun goddess, who is worshipped at Ise. Although the Ise shrines are typically framed as apolitical vestiges of ancient Japanese tradition, characterized by harmony with nature and supposedly unchanging ritual practices (Inata 2009, Public Affairs Headquarters for Shikinen-Sengu 2010), in reality they have been closely intertwined with politics throughout their history; accordingly, they have been subject to continuous re-signification and change (Breen & Teeuwen 2017, Rambelli 2014). As a site deeply associated with the nation and imperial power, it remains of great ideological significance today.

Abe is well aware of the symbolic capital provided by the Ise shrines. For him, Ise is the prime manifestation of Japan's "traditional culture", allegedly characterized by social harmony, unique aesthetics, and patriotic love of the land. In reality, much of what today counts as "traditional" or "ancient" — including the "love of nature" supposedly expressed in ritual and (agri)cultural practices at Ise — goes back to nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century mythmaking, and was part of the modern nation-building project (Rots 2017b, pp. 51-59). To Abe and like-minded people, however, Ise is a unique manifestation of "the ancient Japanese spirit", and of core importance for the continuation of the imperial institution — and, *ipso facto*, the nation as a whole (which, needless to say, is conceived of in highly essentialist and primordialist terms). Significantly, Abe was the first prime minister since the end of World War II who participated in a major ceremony at Ise: as mentioned above, he played a central role in the 2013 *shikinen sengū* ceremony, which consists of the rebuilding of the shrines, and ritual removal of the deities to their new homes, once every twenty years. Abe's participation constituted a major change in state-religion relations, and a profound reinterpretation of post-war Japanese secularism (Breen & Teeuwen 2017, Rots 2017a). Since 1945, political patronage of religious institutions has been rare, as the constitution prohibits state support of religion. By joining in such a major shrine ceremony, however, Abe has successfully contributed to the reshaping of state-religion boundaries. Whereas visits to Yasukuni shrine by leading politicians repeatedly lead to negative publicity and international tensions, political patronage of the Ise shrines has gone largely unnoticed until very recently, despite Ise's profound ideological significance [5]. (The same, incidentally, applies to Meiji shrine in Tokyo: although it was one of the

major sites involved in the development of "State Shinto" between the 1920s and 1945, it was successfully depoliticized in the post-war period, and in recent years it has been visited by a number of foreign dignitaries.)

Thus, the choice to invite the leaders of the other G7 countries to visit the shrines of Ise was highly political indeed. One of the core symbols of the nation's unity, uniqueness and divine character, Ise plays a central part in Abe's ideology; international recognition of Ise's importance arguably serves to provide him with legitimacy [6]. As a matter of fact, Mie prefecture was not even among the candidates who initially applied for hosting the G7 summit: "it was the staff of the Prime Minister's Office who encouraged [the governor of Mie] to enter the bidding", despite the fact that the application deadline had long passed (*The Japan Times* 2015). In all likelihood, then, it was Abe's own idea to host the summit near Ise, so that he could invite his colleagues on a visit to the shrine. Indeed, this is what happened. On May 26, 2016, the G7 leaders visited the Inner Shrine of Ise [7]. In addition to visiting the shrine itself, they took part in a tree-planting ceremony, together with the governor of Mie and a group of elementary school students [8].

Thus, at first sight, Abe's strategy appears to have been successful. Although international media admittedly paid more attention to Obama's visit to Hiroshima than the summit in Mie, Ise did receive its share of media coverage. Not all of this was positive, however. Indeed, as one blogger has noted, Abe's plans to use Ise as a means to support his own controversial agenda may well have backfired, as it has led to more international attention to the role of Shinto in contemporary Japanese politics (Dougill 2016). Critical journalists and scholars have drawn attention to Abe's agenda, arguing (quite correctly) that he appropriates Ise for ideological purposes, and that the visit serves to provide him with domestic legitimacy in the face of the upcoming elections, which are of crucial importance for implementing constitutional changes (Holtz 2015, Larsson 2016, McCurry 2016, Yoshida 2016b). The myth that Shinto is an "apolitical" tradition of nature worship has thus been proven wrong, and Shinto's role in contemporary Japanese politics has finally received international attention. Presumably, this was not what Abe had in mind when he decided to organize the summit in Ise.

A Public Tradition?

Three organizations that have received more media and scholarly attention in recent years are Jinja Honchō (Association of Shinto Shrines), Shintō Seiji Renmei (Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership), and Nippon Kaigi

(Japan Conference). While there is significant overlap between the three, both ideologically and in terms of the people involved, they are not the exact same. Jinja Honchō, as mentioned, is a religious umbrella organization that represents the majority of Shinto shrines in Japan — or claims to do so [9]. Its national headquarters are in Tokyo, next to Meiji shrine. The organization has several departments, which have different responsibilities, ranging from international PR to developing the curriculum for priestly education to producing the weekly shrine newspaper, *Jinja Shinpō*. It is currently led by the head priest of Iwashimizu Hachimangū shrine (Kyoto prefecture), Tanaka Tsunekiyo. As with so many Japanese organizations, however, many important decisions are made by bureaucrats behind the scenes, not by the president, who serves more as a public ambassador. Indeed, in terms of organizational structure and decision-making processes, Jinja Honchō has clearly adopted the corporate culture typical of Japanese companies and state agencies. Although it is classified as a religious organization, Jinja Honchō itself does not organize ritual ceremonies or worship meetings, but rather sees itself as a mediator between shrines (where the actual rituals are conducted) and the state. From the outside, it appears to be a closed, unified organization. In reality, there is significant disagreement even among employees — almost all of whom are priests — regarding Shinto's basic tenets, priorities, and ideological orientation [10]. What they share, however, is the view that Shinto is the foundational worship tradition upon which Japanese culture and society are based, the essence of which goes back to primordial times. In addition, most would probably agree that the emperor is of profound importance for the continuity of this tradition and the well-being of the Japanese nation as a whole, even if they disagree on the extent to which he should exercise real political power.

The Shintō Seiji Renmei (abbreviated as Shinseiren) is affiliated with Jinja Honchō, and has been described as its "main political arm" (MULLINS 2012, p. 2). It is a political lobby organization, founded in 1969, which maintains close connections with the ruling LDP, counting approximately three hundred Diet members and a majority of Abe's cabinet (sixteen out of nineteen, as of December 2014, including Abe himself) among its members (LARSSON 2014). As Mullins wrote:

> According to [its] official sources, the central aims of Shinseiren are (1) to nurture support for the Imperial Household and to guard its dignity or majesty; (2) to work for a revised Constitution that will be the pride of the Japanese people; (3) to reestablish as a "national rite" the care of the Shōwa martyrs enshrined in Yasukuni Shrine; and (4) to put in place an education system that will cultivate the heart of young people and give them hope for the future (this is elaborated in various places

in terms of a restoration of moral and patriotic education, which resembles the *shūshin* curriculum for moral education and training used during the prewar period) (MULLINS 2012, p. 73).

Mullins aptly described the Shinto Seiji Renmei as an example of the "deprivatisation" of religion in contemporary Japan, which is part of the "sacralisation" of Japanese politics. Interestingly, the fact that this organization today exercises such an unprecedented political influence shows that Japanese politics is going through a period of *de*-secularization — *i.e.*, we are witnessing the return of religion to the public sphere (CASANOVA 1994), despite the fact that, simultaneously, some religious institutions and practices in Japan are showing clear signs of decline (READER 2012). Apparently, then, *political de-secularization* (understood as deprivatization, and the return of religion to the public sphere, as described by Casanova) can go hand with *societal secularization* (understood as the decline of religious beliefs and practices in society as a whole). It is important to note, however, that Shinto leaders and ideologues do not conceive of their activities in terms of a "return of religion" in politics. According to them, Shinto is (and has always been) an essentially *public* tradition, not a *private* religion (ROTS 2017a). The Japanese term for religion, *shūkyō*, was introduced during the Meiji period, based on Western, protestant-centric notions of religion as faith- and membership-based (JOSEPHSON 2012). Significantly, during this time, Shinto was *not* classified as *shūkyō*; instead, it was turned into a public, "non-religious" ritual worship system, centred on imperial ideology. This changed after the war, when Shinto *became* a "religion". According to Jinja Honchō (and, accordingly, Shinseiren) ideology, this is an "unnatural" situation, and Shinto should be restored as the "public" (*i.e.*, state-sponsored) tradition it supposedly was throughout history.

This argument is put forward by Jinja Honchō president Tanaka Tsunekiyo, among others. Shrines are a "natural" part of Japanese community life, according to Tanaka, and shrine worship is "in the DNA of the Japanese people" (TANAKA 2011, p. 15). Thus, shrines have an intrinsically public character. By extension, the use of public land for shrines — or the use of public funds for the maintenance of shrine buildings or the organization of shrine festivals — is only "natural". Restricting the access of Shinto shrines to public land or funding, on the other hand, is said to be at odds with Japanese tradition, cause unnecessary confusion, and eventually undermine social cohesion. The role of Shinto priests, according to Tanaka, is fundamentally different from priests in other religions; while the latter are seen as preachers

who mediate between this world and the divine, Shinto priests merely conduct rituals for the benefit of the community.

> When seen from our perspective as shrine priests, shrine ritual worship and governance (*jinja no matsurigoto* [11]) is always public (*ōyake*). Private affairs do not take place at all. Put simply, all we do is pray for the peace and safety of the nation and the community (*kyōdōtai*) where we live. These are, so to speak, public prayers (*paburikku na inori*) (Tanaka 2011, p. 7).

Of course, the claim that shrine practices are intrinsically public is problematic, for various reasons. Not only is there a wide diversity of ritual and devotional practices taking place at shrines, they also earn most of their money by performing rituals on behalf of private companies and individuals. Although they may frame their activities as public, and although they constitute the focal points of *matsuri* and other collective events, the reality is that shrines are actors that operate within the post-war Japanese "religious market", competing with other religious and commercial institutions for the patronage of individual "parishioners" and corporate sponsors. In fact, if it were not for the financial support from companies, many shrines would have even greater difficulty paying their employees and maintaining their buildings.

Tanaka does not deny this reality. However, he does not see companies as private actors, but describes them as collective entities akin to local communities, both of which constitute the building blocks of Japanese society. Central to his argument is the notion of *kyōdōtai*, which is used to refer to a community, but which literally means "collective body". As Tanaka argues, most Japanese are part of such a local "collective body", which can be experienced most directly during a *matsuri*, when people of all ages "become one body" by carrying a portable shrine (*mikoshi*) together. Ultimately, these local communities together constitute the "collective body" of the Japanese nation: the imaginary extended shrine parish (*ujiko*) to which "all Japanese belong", which is symbolically united by the imperial family at its head. Although the political implications are not necessarily identical, the similarity of these ideas to pre-war *kokutai* ("national body") ideology is significant. They clearly point to an organicist understanding of nationhood that denies internal diversity and downplays historical contingencies.

This all appears as a rather romantic-nationalist understanding of Shinto, which may have some implications for the separation of state and religion, but which is not explicitly political in other respects. Shintō Seiji Renmei, however, has a far-reaching understanding of what the "public" role of Shinto entails. The organization clearly does not limit its activities to

lobbying for legal revisions with regard to the separation of state and religion. Nor, for that matter, is it particularly concerned with securing public funding for local shrines. In fact, its main priorities are of little or no significance to the vast majority of Shinto shrines in Japan: reintroducing imperial symbolism in the public sphere (*e.g.*, by creating new public holidays based on imperial ceremonies) and censoring any criticism of the imperial family; changing article 9 of the constitution, as discussed above; re-nationalizing Yasukuni shrine (a matter of little relevance to most other shrines in the country); and changing the educational system so that it is more "patriotic" — *i.e.*, removing references to Japan's war crimes from the history curriculum. It is also concerned with preventing equal rights for women and migrants (Breen & Teeuwen 2010, p. 202), as well as with territorial conflicts, urging the government to adopt a hard-line approach vis-à-vis China and Korea.

Puzzlingly, none of these topics directly concern shrines and shrine priests. Shinseiren staff consider them of utmost importance, however: as one of them stated, all these issues are fundamentally interrelated, and the separation of religion and politics is an artificial dictate that does not fit the Japanese situation [12]. Significantly, one topic for which they do *not* lobby is environmental policy: despite the fact that Jinja Honchō has actively appropriated the global trend to associate religion with environmental issues and repeatedly pronounced its commitment to nature conservation (Rots 2015a, 2017b), its political lobby organization appears utterly uninterested in the matter. I have asked several Shinto priests why this is the case. Those who sympathize with Shinseiren usually answer that environmental issues are not a political issue, but a *moral* one, and that Shinseiren is concerned with the return of "traditional" moral values in Japanese society. If the Japanese worship the emperor and the war dead at Yasukuni, the logic goes, they will rediscover their ancestral "love of nature", which will automatically lead to sustainable behaviour [13]. Moreover, while most priests profess a concern for the environment, many of them argue that environmental policy simply is not the task of Shinseiren, which is focused on "more fundamental" issues that are believed to be more explicitly political. In sum, the assumption that environmental problems are not of a political but of a moral nature is widespread.

Ideologically speaking, Shintō Seiji Renmei is very similar to another right-wing lobby organization, Nippon Kaigi. The main difference is institutional: whereas Shinseiren is directly associated with Jinja Honchō, Nippon Kaigi is a secular (*i.e.*, not religiously affiliated) organization, which brings together a number of smaller nationalist groups, not all of which identify with Shinto. It was formed in 1997 through the merger of two older

organizations. According to Mark Mullins, it claims approximately one hundred thousand members, including over one hundred Diet members (MULLINS 2016, pp. 113-114). The *Mainichi Shimbun*, however, writes that "the current organization has a membership of some 38,000 across the country, and 300 multi-partisan lawmakers are members of the group's legislators panel" (*Mainichi Shimbun* 2016a). In either case, its influence is growing. Until very recently, Nippon Kaigi remained largely below the radar; unlike Shinseiren, which has been discussed by several scholars (BREEN 2010, GUTHMANN 2010, MULLINS 2012), no comprehensive study of the organization has been published yet. Nippon Kaigi may be even more influential than Shinseiren, though, as it is larger and brings together representatives from a variety of right-wing organizations that extend far beyond the world of shrine Shinto. While they disagree on certain matters, they all subscribe to notions of the emperor as sacred, and to revisionist historical narratives that downplay or deny the atrocities committed by Japan during its imperialist period. Not surprisingly, the organization responsible for the campaign conducted at shrines during the New Year season, the "Citizens' Association for the Creation of a Constitution for Beautiful Japan" (see above), is associated with (and, presumably, funded by) Nippon Kaigi (*Mainichi Shimbun* 2016a).

Unlike Jinja Honchō and Shinseiren, Nippon Kaigi is not usually perceived as a religious organization, even though it has been described as "sectarian" and "cult-like" (Koichi Nakano, in *Lateline* 2015) and is based on an ideology that arguably contains religious elements (*e.g.*, a view of the emperor as sacred). Concerned with the Japanese nation as a whole, the movement is framed as "secular" and "public", rather than "religion" (which, as mentioned, is typically conceived of as a "private" affair). That does not mean religious organizations are not actively involved with Nippon Kaigi, however. As Thierry Guthmann has demonstrated, Jinja Honchō is directly involved with the management of Nippon Kaigi, actively shaping the organization's ideological orientation (GUTHMANN 2017). In addition, several new religious movements are affiliated with Nippon Kaigi, which even has some Buddhist and Christian members. Thus, Guthmann made clear Nippon Kaigi is not solely a "Shinto" organization, even though Jinja Honchō is among its most influential members; rather, he argued, it constitutes a type of nationalism that has a strong "civil religious" character (GUTHMANN 2017). Anybody can join, as long as they venerate the emperor, the importance of which is non-negotiable.

Concluding Remarks

In an insightful 2001 article, Matthew Levinger and Paula Franklin Lytle analysed the dynamics by which nationalist myths are produced and employed for the purpose of social mobilization. According to them, nationalist rhetoric is often characterized by its triadic structure: in such rhetoric, contemporary society is portrayed in negative terms, as "degraded"; this is contrasted with an idealized "glorious past", during which "the original nation […] existed as a pure, unified and harmonious community"; and with a utopian future, achieved "through collective action" (LEVINGER & LYTLE 2001, p. 178). Thus, they explained, "these three elements are framed within a series of binary oppositions, contrasting the vision of an ideal past or future with the degraded present. The project of national rebirth represents an inversion of the existing disordered condition and a reconstitution of the ideal community" (LEVINGER & LYTLE 2001, p. 178). As they argued, such visions of a utopian future, legitimized by myths of a glorious past, have a profound mobilizing potential — as illustrated by the use of such mythical imagery in former Yugoslavia, which played an important part in the escalation of violence in the 1990s (LEVINGER & LYTLE 2001, pp. 187-190).

Levinger and Lytle's theory is based primarily on European cases, but it clearly applies to contemporary Japan as well. The ideologies of Nippon Kaigi, Shintō Seiji Renmei, and the Abe administration are not merely romantic and nationalistic, they are highly utopian indeed, combining fantasies of a "pure" Japanese future society with concrete calls for action. Underlying this utopianism are images of a "traditional" Japanese society characterized by social harmony, racial purity, and even environmental sustainability. It is this imaginary glorious past they seek to restore. The importance of Ise lies not only in the fact that it is the main shrine of the sun goddess (and, therefore, the ancestral shrine of the imperial family), but also in the belief that Ise is one of the very few places where this glorious past still survives. Hence the importance placed on the continuation of centuries-old ritual practices, such as the *shikinen sengū*, regardless of the costs: as remnants of the idealized past, their survival is perceived as crucial for the rebirth of the nation, in all its former glory. This also explains the zeal with which Nippon Kaigi and Shinseiren lobby for constitutional reform and historical revisionism: the "resurrection of the sacred land of Japan" (BREEN 2010) goes hand in hand with the production of a new constitution — one that befits a sovereign nation-state, not one that is imposed by occupation authorities — and a historical narrative that emphasize the glorious past.

Some have warned that such constitutional change might lead to a loss of democratic rights and freedoms (SMITH 2015). This is not something that deters Nippon Kaigi and Shintō Seiji Renmei, however. Eager to restore the pre-war imperial system and reposition the emperor in the centre of political power, organizations such as these are not particularly interested in preserving the post-war democratic system anyway. And if a revised historical narrative leads to tensions with China or other Asian countries, so be it: a proud Japan stands up for itself, and does not accept China's provocations, or so the thinking goes. Thus, the recent politicization of Shinto is of profound significance, not only for Japan itself but also for the region. The argument that Shinto is a "public" tradition that should not be subjected to secularist limitations, made by Tanaka and like-minded scholars, may sound valid, but that in itself is no justification for the current appropriation of Shinto symbolism for political purposes. More politically influential than at any time since the end of World War II, the shrine world currently stands at a crossroads: will it provide legitimacy to anti-democratic and neo-imperialist forces once again, just as it did in the first half of the twentieth century? Or will it become the environmentally-oriented, pluralist ritual tradition many of its sympathizers want it to be? This is the choice shrine priests will have to make. If necessary, that may even involve challenging the authority of Jinja Honchō.

QUESTIONS

C. KIRSCHEN*. — You spoke about the relations between Buddhism and Confucianism; what about the relations between Shintoism and Taoism?

A. P. ROTS. — As I explained briefly during my presentation, modern Shinto is strongly influenced by both Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism, despite popular understandings of Shinto as Japan's "indigenous" worship tradition. The historical relationship between Shinto and Daoism is equally interesting. Several scholars have written about the impact of Chinese cosmology and ritual on *kami* worship in the ancient and medieval periods, which was quite profound indeed. Chinese-style astrology, divination, *yin-yang* thought and *feng shui* practices have long been popular in Japan. During the Nara and Heian periods (8th-12th century), ritual specialists who were skilled in these practices, so-called *onmyōji* (practitioners of Onmyōdō,

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"the Way of Yin and Yang"), even played an important part in political decision-making processes.

Of course, whether or not *yin-yang* cosmology, astrology, *feng shui* and related ritual practices all deserve the label "Daoist" may be subject to debate. Likewise, it is arguably anachronistic to refer to *kami* worship prior to the early modern period as "Shinto". It is important to bear in mind that both "Shinto" and "Daoism" are modern, contested categories, subject to competing definitions and historical narratives — more so, perhaps, than other so-called "world religions". Regardless of the categorization, however, it is undeniably true that Japanese worship traditions have been profoundly influenced by Chinese cosmology, in various ways.

This is still visible today. Some Shinto shrines have subshrines for each of the twelve Chinese zodiac signs — Shimogamo Shrine in Kyoto is a well-known example. Many shrines and temples sell different amulets (*o-mamori*) for each zodiac sign. At most shrines, one can purchase *o-mikuji*: small strips of paper used for fortune-telling, based on Chinese astrology (those who are unhappy with the outcome can attach the paper to a tree or fence and pray to the *kami* for good fortune). The notion of *yakudoshi* — certain years during which people are especially prone to bad luck, and require extra ritual protection — is originally Chinese. And, interestingly, some popular *kami* worshipped at Shinto shrines are of Chinese origin.

Such influences notwithstanding, in modern times, Shinto and Daoism are distinctive traditions. At first sight, they do look quite different indeed: Daoist priests do not resemble their Shinto counterparts, wearing robes that are much more colourful; Daoism contains meditation and ascetic practices, which are largely absent from mainstream Shinto; the two traditions have different "sacred texts"; and Daoism — a reinvented version of it, that is — has acquired a popularity in the West that Shinto never has (in this sense, Daoism is more similar to "Zen"). Nevertheless, in recent years, some very interesting similarities between the two traditions have emerged, and further comparative research on this topic is necessary, in my opinion. One similarity lies in the fact that both Shinto and Daoism are increasingly identified with nation-states (Japan and China, respectively), re-appropriated by national elites for purposes of identity politics, and redefined as national "heritage" rather than private "religion". Simultaneously, however, both have been redefined as "green" religions containing important resources (both ideological and material) for overcoming environmental problems, not only in China and Japan, but globally. The Association of Shinto Shrines and the Chinese Daoist Association have both discovered the legitimacy provided by nature conservation and environmentalist rhetoric, and have developed

projects (in collaboration with international organizations such as UNESCO and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation) for the conservation of sacred forests. Thus, *mutatis mutandis*, several of my observations concerning contemporary Shinto can also be applied to contemporary Daoism.

C. NEUMANN. — My question is about environmentalism, conservatism and nuclear power (in Japan): I understand that the movement you have described is well connected to the political establishment and to the government of Japan, and that it regards itself as not openly political; this stance is part of its conservatism. Now, there are ecological problems of obvious prime importance to Japan, and here I think of nuclear power and the situation after Fukushima. What is the position of the shintoist movement in face of the massive destruction meted out to the environment and human habitation by the nuclear accident and to nuclear power in general?

A. P. ROTS. — The disasters of March 11, 2011 have had a profound impact on many aspects of Japanese society, ranging from energy issues and political activism to literature and religion. Shinto is no exception. As I wrote in a book chapter on this topic [14], the events led to a re-examination of notions of nature as "benevolent" and a reconsideration of nature's destructive power. Topics such as wrathful deities, divine retribution, *kami* offering protection against natural disasters, and collective purification rituals received new attention. In short, Shinto scholars and priests were suddenly confronted with the question of theodicy. In addition, "national resurrection" became an important theme; applying millenarian logic, some Shinto ideologues perceived the tragic events of March 2011 as an opportunity for moral and spiritual regeneration. The "national resurrection" discourse employed by Shinto leaders is clearly in accordance with the ideology of organizations such as Nippon Kaigi, but it is also compatible with environmentalist rhetoric concerning Shinto as a spiritual tradition concerned with the worship of "Great Nature".

Considering the fact that the Shinto establishment has embraced the Shinto environmentalist paradigm, as I demonstrated in my presentation, it might be expected that they are against nuclear energy. After all, environmentalists in other countries tend to see nuclear power as an environmental hazard, not as a solution, and often rally against it. The same applies to Japan's secular green movement. However, Shinto attitudes towards this issue are more ambivalent, and different priests have different opinions. I have met several priests who are personally against nuclear power, but the Association of Shinto Shrines does not have an official stance on the topic, and I have got

the impression that this is a sensitive issue that is not discussed much in shrine circles.

As a matter of fact, many conservatives in Japan are in favour of nuclear power both for economic and ideological reasons: they want to reduce Japan's dependence on foreign fossil fuels (which, incidentally, could be achieved by investing in alternative energy, but that option does not seem to occur to them). The nuclear industry is powerful in Japan, and there are many influential actors who have vested interests in it. Generally speaking, Shinto is a conservative religion, concerned with maintaining the status quo. In addition, however, I suggest that it can also be described as a *corporate* religion — at least this is a hypothesis that I would like to investigate further. In post-war Japan shrines are private religious institutions, *de jure* independent from the state; as they lack a permanent membership base, they are largely dependent on corporate sponsors for their income.

As a consequence, shrine priests are generally reluctant to protest against construction projects, resource extraction, polluting industries and so on, when influential members of their communities are in favour of them for economic reasons. If not supported by powerful members of a local community, shrine priests who engage in political activism risk jeopardizing their relationship with the shrine's parish and sponsors. For instance, when a priest in Yamaguchi Prefecture tried to prevent the use of "sacred" shrine land for the construction of a nuclear power plant (a project that was supported by the local elite), the Tokyo shrine establishment intervened and forced him to resign, so that the land could be sold after all.

Thus, Shinto's environmental credentials are not as impressive as some of the popular literature suggest. As far as I know, the shrine establishment has *not* lobbied against the reopening of nuclear power plants — or for any other environmental issue, for that matter. Its lobby organizations are primarily concerned with issues such as the return of imperial symbolism to the public sphere, the nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine, and historical revisionism, but not with the environment.

P. SCHWIEGER. — With reference to the "ideological" background of environmentalism in Japan and Europe, is environmentalism in Japan, unlike Europe, not driven by an animist view of the nature?

A. P. ROTS. — Japanese culture has often been described as "animistic" and, therefore, as environmentally friendly. This is a claim made by Shinto ideologues and other conservative nationalist scholars, such as Yasuda Yoshinori and Umehara Takeshi. According to them, environmental degradation in

modern Japan is the result of the alienation of the Japanese people from their "animistic" roots. Echoing the famous arguments of historian Lynn White, they argue that "monotheistic" (*i.e.*, Western) culture is responsible for the ruthless exploitation of natural resources and environmental degradation we are witnessing today; as a result of the twin evils of "westernization" and "individualization" in the modern period, they argue, Japan has made some of the same mistakes. Thus, they perceive the environmental crisis as a *moral* crisis, which cannot be solved by policy change or technological invention, but by a return to "traditional" worldviews and values. These worldviews and values are grounded in "animism", or so they claim.

Thus, when discussing the "animistic" character of Japanese views of nature, it is important to bear in mind the fact that this category is ideologically charged. This is the main reason why I have shied away from using "animism" in my work as an analytical term, even though some interesting new work has been done on the topic in recent years by anthropologists such as Philippe Descola and Tim Ingold (but they were probably not familiar with Japanese reappropriations of the term!). Aside from these ideological concerns, however, in order to answer this question, there are two other fundamental problems which need to be addressed: first, is "animism" indeed an accurate description of Shinto (and, by extension, Japanese) worldviews, as so many authors have asserted? What does it mean to say that Shinto is "animistic"? And second, if we accept the premise that Shinto does indeed represent some sort of animism, would that make it a "sustainable" or "environmentally-friendly" tradition? Put differently, does animism prevent environmental destruction? These are big questions, and I do not have the space to discuss them here at length. However, I will briefly summarize some of my thoughts on the topic.

Unfortunately, I cannot give a definitive answer to the question whether or not Shinto is animistic: the answer depends largely on one's definitions of both "Shinto" and "animism", both of which are highly contested categories. Undeniably, Shinto has elements which are not animistic at all: the importance placed on the imperial institution and its symbols; the worship of anthropomorphic deities believed to be the divine ancestors of the imperial family; the worship of the spirits of soldiers who died during Japan's modern imperial wars, etc. Nevertheless, when it comes to the worship of local deities residing in natural phenomena such as trees, rocks and rivers, it may be argued that Shinto does in fact contain some animistic elements. That is, only *some* elements of nature are considered as divinely animated and set apart as sacred (and therefore, perhaps, in need of protection); other elements are not. Generally speaking, Shinto is neither holistic nor pantheistic: the universe as a whole is not considered sacred, only some designated elements are.

This brings us to the question of animism's sustainability. As described by the anthropologists Poul Pedersen and Arne Kalland, one of the assumptions underlying the religious environmentalist paradigm is that "non-Western" worship traditions — in particular, "Eastern" spiritual traditions such as Daoism, Zen and Shinto, as well as "indigenous" traditions associated with Native Americans, Aboriginals and so on — are based on understandings of the natural environment as intimately interconnected with the human world, which supposedly makes them more sustainable. However, as we all know, values do not necessarily correspond to actions, so the existence of certain values and norms in a given society does not in itself tell us much about people's actual behaviour.

More fundamentally, a belief in elements of nature as divinely animated does not necessarily prevent their exploitation. After all, the spirits of exploited animals, plants and mountains can be pacified by means of rituals. Thanks to these rituals, those spirits will not start wandering around and causing trouble when their bodies are used for other purposes. This applies to trees as much as it does to fish: Shinto and Buddhist rituals arguably make deforestation and overfishing possible, exactly because they serve to prevent spirits from getting angry. Thus, as Kalland has convincingly argued, the fact that a certain society has developed rituals in order to pacify the spirits of trees or animals used for consumption does not necessarily lead to a sustainable use of resources; on the contrary, it may actually serve to legitimize exploitation. Animism does not prevent deforestation.

NOTES

[1]   I do not have the space to rehearse the entire "State Shinto" debate in this article. For a concise overview, see Rots 2015b, pp. 128-131. For classical studies of "State Shinto", see Murakami 1970, Hardacre 1989; for a more apologetic account, written from a Shinto perspective, see Sakamoto 1994; for an insightful study of the role of local shrines in this system, see Azegami 2009.

[2]   On the use of natural symbols in Japanese nation-building, see Kalland & Asquith 1997. For a more in-depth analysis of the ways in which cherry blossoms have been employed to naturalize violent ideology, see Ohnuki-Tierney 2002.

[3]   As Yoshida explained in 2016, "Article 96 of the Constitution states that it can only be amended through a national referendum that is to be initiated by the Diet with support of two-thirds or more of all members of both the Lower and Upper houses. Abe's ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito now holds more than two-thirds of the 475-seat Lower House but doesn't boast the same majority in the 242-seat Upper House" (Yoshida 2016a).

[4]   See http://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html (last accessed: May 31, 2016).

[5] Thus, it has been argued, Abe has chosen not to visit Yasukuni shrine anymore (his last visit was in 2013), despite the fact that many of his supporters want him to do so. He has found a symbol much more powerful, and much less contested: the shrines of Ise. As long as he promotes Ise, Abe keeps most of his right-wing supporters satisfied (after all, Ise is the ancestral shrine of the imperial family, whom they revere), while simultaneously maintaining good ties with Korea and China — who object vigorously whenever a Japanese prime minister visits Yasukuni, but appear indifferent and/or oblivious when it comes to patronage of other Shinto shrines (see CUCEK 2015).

[6] Abe was not the first to discover the symbolic capital of Ise, and invite foreign dignitaries to the shrine as a means to acquire legitimacy and promote Shinto internationally. In June 2014, Jinja Honchō organized a large interreligious conference in Ise, in cooperation with the UK-based Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), on the topic of religion and sustainability. The conference was attended by representatives from major religious traditions throughout the world, as well as the UN and other international organizations, nearly all of whom visited the Inner Shrine and bowed to Amaterasu. It led to positive publicity in international media such as *The Independent* (VALLELY 2014), and served to substantiate the popular claim, made by Jinja Honchō as well as others, that Shinto is a tradition of "nature worship" concerned with solving environmental problems. For more elaborate discussions of this topic, see ROTS 2015a, 2017b.

[7] The 2016 leaders of the G7 were Abe Shinzō (Japan), David Cameron (UK), François Hollande (France), Angela Merkel (Germany), Barack Obama (US), Matteo Renzi (Italy) and Justin Trudeau (Canada). They were accompanied by Jean-Claude Juncker (President of the European Commission) and Donald Tusk (President of the European Council).

[8] From http://www.mofa.go.jp/ms/is_s/page4e_000438.html (last accessed on June 1, 2016).

[9] Some shrine priests might disagree, saying that Jinja Honchō interferes too much with local shrine affairs and places too heavy financial burdens on shrines that are already struggling to survive. See BREEN 2010 for a discussion of this issue.

[10] This is my own observation. It is based on formal interviews as well as informal conversations with (former) staff members of Jinja Honchō and other priests. Some of them acknowledge this ideological diversity; some even applaud it, arguing that this is the strength of Shinto, which supposedly has "no doctrine" and is capable of uniting people with different beliefs. Others, more ideologically motivated, downplay this diversity, arguing that there is no disagreement at all about the core issues: the importance of the emperor; the central role of Shinto in the formation of "Japanese culture" (*Nihon bunka*); the sacred character of Ise; and issues related to Japanese sovereignty and war memory (*e.g.*, political patronage of Yasukuni).

[11] The term *matsurigoto* goes back to the Ritsuryō system, the China-influenced system of state administration and ritual ceremonies implemented in the Nara period. Interestingly, it refers to both political administration and ritual ceremonies. The term was reapplied in the Meiji period, and used to refer to the role of the emperor.

[12] Field research notes, March 2016.

[13] It should be noted that, ironically, Shintō Seiji Renmei is strongly in favour of whaling, which is framed as a core part of Japanese "traditional culture".

[14] A. P. Rots, "Nature's blessing, nature's wrath: Shinto responses to the disasters of 2011", in R. Starrs (Ed.), *When the Tsunami Came to Shore: Culture and Disaster in Japan* (Leiden, Brill, 2014), pp. 23-49.

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Religion and Politics in Pre-Modern Tibet

by

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Keywords. — Dalai Lama; Emperor of China; Tibetan Society; Wisdom; Union of Religion and Politics.

Summary. — This paper aims to present a general outline of the close interrelationship of religion and politics in pre-modern Tibet, in particular under the so-called *dGa' ldan pho brang* government from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-twentieth century. In this context the general topic of the conference, the question of a possible link between "traditional wisdom" and political expression including practical consequences, will be examined. The main questions briefly to be answered are: To what extent did religion and "traditional wisdom" shape the political structures and the political agenda in Tibet? To what extent did religion shape the organization of the Tibetan society? How did religion influence law and justice? What were the impacts of the union of religion and politics for the internal and for the external affairs?

1. Introduction:
A Sketch of Tibet's History

Buddhism arrived rather late in Tibet. First introduced in the seventh century at the royal court, it was systematically spread under royal patronage not before the second half of the eighth century. It became then deeply rooted in Tibetan societies and culture only after the so-called later spread of the Buddhist doctrine from the tenth/eleventh century onward. When in the thirteenth century the Mongols conquered Tibet and Qubilai Qan incorporated it into the newly-established Yuan Empire, he ruled Tibet by relying on Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs as his vassals. Thus a pattern was created for the future on how foreign rulers could control Tibet with the help of the Tibetan clergy. Later Buddhist Tibetan historians depicted the relationship between the Yuan

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emperor and the Tibetan hierarchs of the *Sa skya* school of Tibetan Buddhism as a priest-patron relationship in which both sides would be on a par with each other. This narration — though not confirmed by Tibet's legal documents — became an ideological model in Tibetan history offered to foreign rulers by Tibetan clerics who were in search of military and economic support needed in inner-Tibetan and inner-Asian rivalries. In this regard the hierarchs of the *dGe lugs* school of Tibetan Buddhism were the most successful ones. With the help of the military power of the Qoshot Mongols they were able to establish in the seventeenth century the *dGa' ldan pho brang* government which ruled Tibet until the invasion of the so-called People's Liberation Army of the Chinese communists in the middle of the twentieth century.

From the very beginning this government with the figure of the Dalai Lama at its top acted in accordance with a clear concept called "the union of religion and politics" (*chos srid zung 'brel*). This concept can also be described as Buddhist government (ISHIHAMA 2004). While in the second half of the seventeenth century the position of the Dalai Lama was raised not only above the regents, but also above the Mongolian qans, the situation changed dramatically in the early eighteenth century when the Qing emperor got more and more involved with the inner-Mongolian conflicts. The emperor identified the figure of the Dalai Lama as a key to control the Mongols and in particular to fight the West-Mongolian Dsungars as his rivals in struggling for the creation of an Inner-Asian empire. After having been deceived for many years by the famous Tibetan regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho as the mastermind behind the great Inner-Asian conflict and the diplomatic and military campaigns to unite all Mongols under the spiritual umbrella of the Dalai Lama, the Kangxi emperor became finally aware of the since long hidden death of the Fifth Dalai Lama and the intriguing play of the Tibetan regent behind the scenes. The consequence was a development through which Tibet became more and more incorporated into the Qing Empire, controlled through the *Lifanyuan*, the Dependency Office, created to administrate the Inner-Asian affairs within the empire. Nevertheless, Buddhist government with the Dalai Lama at its head continued to be the basic concept of politics in Tibet, but now clearly subordinated to the emperor claiming for himself the higher position. Below him the Dalai Lama or the regent were now on a par with the *amban*s, the imperial representatives stationed now permanently in Lhasa.

For an easier control of Tibet and the Mongols the Qing emperors backed as far as possible a rigid *dGe lugs* orthodoxy. Among the effects was not only

a great economic support for *dGe lugs* monasteries, but also an obstruction of monasteries of other Buddhist schools to prosper.

In Tibet as well as among the Mongols the system of reincarnated spiritual teachers had become an institution widely accepted in societies. It had been corrupted through close relationships of the clergy with Tibetan noble houses and Mongolian *qan* families. These close relationships were a fertile ground for bribery and rivalries. Toward the end of the eighteenth century such a rivalry opened the door for the invasion of the Nepalese Gurkhas into southern Tibet. To repel the invaders the Qianlong emperor had to send a great army to Tibet and across the Himalayas. The difficult logistics and the enormous expenses involved caused imperial efforts to reform Tibet's administration. The result was the famous 29-Article-Decree of 1793. Article One regulated the selection and identification of Tibetan reincarnations through a newly-introduced lottery. The lottery was performed under the supervision of the *amban*s with the help of a golden urn donated by the emperor. A second golden urn was placed in Beijing's Yonghegong to identify reincarnations among the Mongols [1][*].

2. To What Extent did Religion and "Traditional Wisdom" Shape the Political Structures and the Political Agenda in Tibet?

During the so-called *dGa' ldan pho brang* government from the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the twentieth century the Dalai Lama functioned as the head of the Tibetan government. However, for most of the time this was only nominally the case. The most glaring instance was the secrecy of the Fifth Dalai Lama's death by the regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho for a period of fifteen years. Allegedly the regent acted in conformity with instructions given by the Dalai Lama himself. Moreover, according to the regent's statement, the Dalai Lama shall have advised him to consult after his death a specific oracle — also with regard to the right time for disclosing the secret (SCHWIEGER 2015a, pp. 71, 96-97). As well known, this manoeuvre resulted in a great disaster. Whether planned according to a prior agreement with the deceased Dalai Lama or by the regent alone, the secrecy finally ruined the Inner-Asian agenda of the *dGa' ldan pho brang*. Also the advices given to the regent by the oracle did not reveal wisdom, but resulted only in the complete infuriation of the emperor.

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* Numbers in brackets [ ] refer to the notes, p. 56.

The emperors of the High Qing, in particular the Yongzheng and the Qianlong emperor, were skeptical toward the Tibetan institutions of oracle and of reincarnation. Nevertheless, the Qianlong emperor had decided not to abolish them, but to control them. Especially the institution of reincarnated lamas the Qianlong emperor skillfully used for his own political agenda. Thus, from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, the emperor promoted a second level of high reincarnations below the Dalai Lama which could be used as a pool for the selection of a new type of regents installed and certified by the emperor himself. During almost one and a half century these regents and not the Dalai Lamas were *de facto* the heads of the Tibetan government.

Also on the level below, that is the Council (*bka' shag*) which most of the time consisted of four ministers, the clergy had been since the imperial reorganization of the Tibetan government of 1751 represented by a monk minister. On that monk minister the emperor bestowed the rank of *jasak* grand lama. The monk minister was always a member of the *dGe lugs* school of Tibetan Buddhism. Though the Council of Ministers included a member of the clergy, it was not authorized to deal with monastic affairs and with the monk officials. For that purpose, there existed a second chancellery beside the Council of Ministers. This was the so-called *yig tshang*, which also consisted of four members, so-called great secretaries. All of them were monks. Since the first Gurkha war at the end of the eighteenth century, there had been installed the office of the so-called Chief Abbot (*spyi khyab mkhan po*) above the *yig tshang*, functioning as a link between the Dalai Lama or the regent and the *yig tshang* (PETECH 1973, pp. 7-14). Both chancelleries, the *bka' shag* and the *yig tshang*, were responsible for issuing legal documents (SCHUH 1981, pp. 36f).

In many cases lay and monk officials functioned also on par with each other at the top of Tibetan districts. Most of the Tibetan districts were governed by two governors, commonly one being a layman and one a monk (PETECH 1973, p. 13).

The official programme of combining religion and politics meant a subordination of politics to religion. The underlying scheme was the idea of a salvation programme according to which the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara had intentionally incarnated again and again in Tibet's history to take particular care of the Tibetans (SCHWIEGER 2001, pp. 965-968). Consequently, the incarnations were regarded in Tibet's society as endowed with wisdom and especially skilled in applying the proper means to guide the Tibetans on the path to liberation. The space for a critical view on the incarnations'

behaviour and decisions was thus from the outset restricted. At best it was possible with regard to incarnations of rival Buddhist schools.

Wisdom is one of the perfections or practices corresponding to the different stages of the bodhisattva path. The Tibetan term is *shes rab*, equivalent to Sanskrit *prajñā*. The term is linked with the Mahāyāna concept of salvation and denotes the direct insight into emptiness, the true nature of all phenomena. To enable all living beings to gain that direct insight and thus liberate them from the cycle of rebirth is defined as the main goal of the bodhisattva's activities. Therefore, also the activities of a bodhisattva in the political and social sphere have to be subordinated to that goal of salvation. The other way round it meant that working for the welfare of Tibet and its people was equivalent to creating a perfect environment for everyone to practise Buddhism.

Therefore, not only the activities of Tibet's incarnations were considered as essential to the welfare of Tibet and its people. It was the clergy in general which, through its prayers and abundant ritual services, guaranteed good social preconditions which for everyone enabled the progress on the path to enlightenment. According to the orthodoxy and the official opinion of the emperor, the teachings of Tsong kha pa, the founder of the *dGe lugs* school or Yellow Hats, were the purest Buddhist teachings in Tibet. Therefore, the imperial regulation of 1751 determined that taxes "were made funds for the stream of virtue of the Yellow Hat doctrine" (SCHWIEGER 2015a, p. 154). The *dGa' ldan pho brang* government perceived it as important task to ensure that the salaries for the monks performing rituals for the welfare of the country would not be interrupted. Moreover, in the eyes of the Tibetan government the ritual services of the monks were regarded as essential to defend the country against war. And also military leaders fighting for the agenda of the *dGa' ldan pho brang* government, like Galdan, the famous Dsungar antagonist of the Kangxi emperor, strongly believed in the effectiveness of the lamas' prayers and services (SCHWIEGER 2015a, p. 98).

The programme of combining religion and politics also determined to a great extent Tibet's relations to the outside world, in particular to the Chinese empire and the various Mongol groups. While the imperial court in China phrased similar relations commonly as tribute relations, the Tibetan hierarchs perceived them through the pattern of the traditional priest-patron relationship. However, such a relationship implied on the spiritual level the subordination of the patron to the priest. In the context of classical Chinese imperial orthodoxy, such an implication was of course problematic. It was in particular the Qianlong emperor who found a way to bypass the spiritual subordination by depicting himself as an authority in the spiritual and

scholarly field of Tibetan Buddhism itself. Thus he put himself in a position from which he was even able to criticize and admonish the Dalai Lama himself (SCHWIEGER 2015a, pp. 164-166).

3. To What Extent did Religion Shape
the Organization of the Tibetan Society?

Under the *dGa' ldan pho bran*g government, society in Tibet was organized in a feudal-like system. Theoretically all the land belonged to the Dalai Lama. However, this did not mean that the ruler had all the land at his own disposal and could give it away or confiscate it without good reasons. *De facto* the land was owned by three types of landlords: a rather small group of aristocrats, the monasteries and the government itself. The aristocrats held their land in exchange for their service or service preparedness to the government.

In principle the land ownership was hereditary, but could be confiscated in case an heir was lacking or in case of severe misconduct. The latter reason could also apply to a monastery or the household of a reincarnated lama. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century the ones who confiscated property were not the Dalai Lamas, but the regents and the emperor. Through confiscation there was a constant drain of land ownership from the aristocracy as well as from various Buddhist schools to the *dGe lugs* school of Tibetan Buddhism. Gyalo Thondup, the current Dalai Lama's elder brother, wrote in his memoirs that most of the estates were owned by the Tibetan government (THONDUP & THURSTON 2015, p. 50). However, with regard to landownership the difference between the land owned by monasteries and the land owned by the government had in 1959 become very small, only about 2 %. According to Jin Hui *et al.*, the nobility owned at that time 790.000 *khal* (24 %), the high clergy 1.214.400 *khal* (36.8 %) and the government 1.283.700 *khal* (38.9 %) (JIN HUI *et al.* 1995, p. 65). Among the various Buddhist schools in Tibet the *dGe lugs pa* were by far the greatest estate holders. The rich economic base allowed their monasteries to house communities of up to several thousands of monks.

The people working on the land were bound to the land. Without the consent of the lord they were not allowed to leave the land. Runaways were brought back. People who wanted to marry outside the lord's territory had to provide compensation through the exchange of serfs. The status of a serf was heritable. The lord had also judicial rights. There were three major types of serfs (GOLDSTEIN 1971, pp. 4-5). The taxpayers held greater portions of land hereditarily, but they could not sell it. They were bound to their lord and cultivated the land in exchange for heavy taxes paid in kind or delivered as corvée

labour. The second type of serfs held only small plots of land. It was in particular their labour force that they offered to the estates of their lord. The third type — though in principle bound to his lord as well — could "lease" territorial mobility from his lord.

In case of tax exemption a lord could keep all revenues for himself. Tax reduction or even complete tax exemption was widely practised, in particular with regard to monastic estates. Monasteries could even receive the privilege to collect taxes themselves, for instance from traders passing through the area. A special privilege granted to monasteries was the right to collect a so-called monk tax. This was a method to fill newly-founded *dGe lugs* monasteries or to fill up already existing *dGe lugs* monasteries which had a lack of monks. In such a case the local families were obliged to send one of their sons into the monastery. Moreover, the parents had to pay a regular salary for their sons and had to provide their clothes [2].

Another common method to strengthen the position of the *dGe lugs pa* in Tibetan society was the forced conversion of monasteries and monk communities belonging to other Buddhist schools into those of the *dGe lugs* order. This policy had started under the Fifth Dalai Lama and continued during the eighteenth century with the backing of the emperor (SCHWIEGER 2011, p. 241).

The social position of an individual was to a great extent determined by the family background. The clergy offered a greater chance for vertical mobility, but also within the monastery the origin from a so-called good family combined with its corresponding economic resources was for the most part the dominant factor (JANSEN 2014, pp. 62-65).

Like in every pre-modern society also in Tibet the life of the lay population was to a great extent coined by religion. Pilgrimages to monasteries, shrines and holy places, regular rituals performed by monks of the local monastery to protect the lay people and their cattle from diseases or the crop from hail, rituals performed for the benefit of the deceased ones and offerings made for a better fate in this or the next life were not only essential in the life of the lay population, but meant also an important economic resource for the monasteries. It could occur that the government authorized a *dGe lugs* monastery to receive alone the donations or to perform the ritual services for the people in a specific area and thus cut off the economic basis for monasteries of rival schools (SCHWIEGER 2015a, p. 169).

Even executing simple work could have an important religious connotation demanding the supporting ritual service and prayers of monks. For example, when digging in the ground deities of a delicate character living under the ground might be disturbed and displeased and thus caused to send diseases or other kind of obstructions. When planning important events in one's life, like

marriage, or undertaking a business, an astrologer or diviner was needed. In all such circumstances it was the clergy which offered the appropriate experts to consult.

4. How did Religion Influence Law and Justice?

The base of the traditional Tibetan law was a set of codes varying according to the different versions between thirteen and sixteen articles (SCHUH 1984, pp. 296f; CÜPPERS 2011). *De facto* these codes are more like chapters on legal and moral issues than law codes in the modern sense. They were last modified under the early *dGa' ldan pho brang* government. Except for the oldest version, the various versions do not differ to a great extent; remarkable is perhaps that the last modification underlined the social priority given now to the clergy (SCHWIEGER 2015b, p. 198).

Tibetan historians have argued that the Tibetan law would be based on the moral principles of Buddhism. However, this statement is not backed by a tangible derivation of the Tibetan law from Buddhist moral principles (SCHUH 1984, pp. 299f, 302). Tibet's criminal law did include death penalty for severe crime, though it was executed only rarely. Nevertheless, such cases are well testified. Quite common were corporal punishments in form of whipping, mutilation, blinding, branding and exiling. All these forms of punishment were executed in cases of severe crimes, like murder, especially killing one's parents or a lama, stealing a monastery's possession, robbery, using black magic, rebellion, etc.

Monastic communities in Tibet had their own judicial guidelines, set of rules, which were in each case established to regulate the life of a specific community. However, as recently emphasized, state and religious justice in Tibetan society was in practice often intertwined — not least because of the close combination of religion and politics (JANSEN 2014, pp. 188, 190f). Thus, prominent Tibetan monks were often asked to assume the role of mediator in disputes also outside the boundaries of monastic communities [3].

5. What were the Impacts of the Union of Religion and Politics for the Internal and for the External Affairs?

For the internal affairs the union of religion and politics had the consequence that no priority was given to the improvement of the living

conditions of the lay population, but to use the public revenue to support religious institutions in various ways. Notable efforts to ease the hard life of Tibet's peasants were initiated by the *amban*s, the imperial representatives stationed in Lhasa. At the end of the eighteenth century they made a proposal to reduce the tax burden and the corvée labour of Tibet's peasants [4]. From the view of the Tibetan Buddhists an improvement of one's social situation in this and the next life could especially be expected through accumulating good *karma*. And for that purpose the Tibetan clergy offered the people plenty of chances.

For the external affairs the union of religion and politics narrowed fatally the range of political goals and options and reduced the possibility to understand complex political issues to coined explanations through patterns offered by the traditional religion. Choosing persons regarded as incarnations of transcendental bodhisattvas as heads of the Tibetan government implicates that they pursue a policy based on higher wisdom. Such a system does not integrate an institution able to criticize and correct political decisions. Even when the emperor criticized Tibet's high incarnations, he did it in most cases within the horizon of the Tibetan religious system either by assuming a higher spiritual position or by accusing an incarnation as a faked one.

6. Arriving at a "Wise" Conclusion

As well known from numerous examples up to the present day, uniting religion and politics is not at all a guarantee for a fair society and a wise policy, no matter how the term wisdom should be defined. Apparently, this truism has been fully realized by the current Dalai Lama. As a "wise" politician he therefore advocates for the first time in Tibetan history a withdrawal of the clergy from politics. Nothing else was implicated when the Dalai Lama in 2011 announced his retirement from politics and — combined with a constitutional change — the upgrading of the role of the Tibetan prime minister "to benefit Tibetans in the long run" [5]. Already the following month the Tibetan exile community elected a non-clerical head of its government: Lobsang Sangay, a graduate from the Harvard Law School [6]. Apparently, in the eyes of the current Dalai Lama the traditional union of religion and politics does no longer fit to the modern situation. Thus, he goes even beyond the policy of the current Chinese administration which not at all separates strictly between religion and politics, but subordinates religion and the clergy under politics to exploit it for its own purpose [7].

NOTES

[1]   For a detailed history of religion and politics in Tibet, see SCHWIEGER (2015a).
[2]   For an example, see SCHWIEGER (2011, p. 244).
[3]   See JANSEN 2014, pp. 198f. For illustrative examples, see SCHWIEGER & DAGYAB (1989, pp. 41-47).
[4]   A Chinese version is contained in the chronicle of Tibet called *Weizang tong-zhi*. A Tibetan version is preserved in the Tibet archives in Lhasa. Both versions are currently translated by K. N. Gurung and Liu Yuxuan. For details, see GURUNG (2013) and LIU (2013).
[5]   *The New York Times* (10 March 2011), Dalai Lama gives up Political Role; *The Guardian* (10 March 2011), Dalai Lama to retire from Political Life.
[6]   *The Tibet Post International* (27 April 2011), Dr. Lobsang Sangay is the New Political Leader of Tibet; *Harvard Law Today* (27 April 2011), Lobsang Sangay LL.M. '96 S.J.D. '04 named Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government in Exile.
[7]   For an illustrative example on how this strategy is put into practice even in the field of Tibetan religious art and architecture, see SCHWIEGER (2010).

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Une autre conception de la royauté:
de deux dynasties hindoues du sud de l'Inde

par

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Mots-clés. — Inde; Hindouisme; Royauté; *Śāstra*; Pallava.

Résumé. — En Inde ancienne, parmi les textes dénommés *śāstra* qui, au sens large, représentent la sagesse traditionnelle, les *Dharmaśāstra* énoncent une conception de la société qu'on qualifiera de brahmanique. Le roi, de fonction guerrière ou politique, s'y trouve subordonné au brahmane, de fonction sacerdotale ou religieuse. Les dynasties hindoues ont souvent souscrit à cette conception brahmanique de la royauté. Cependant, dans certains contextes, des sources royales, épigraphiques et iconographiques, expriment un point de vue différent. Certains aspects de ce discours royal «hétérodoxe» seront illustrés à partir de l'exemple des Pallava du Tamil Nadu et des Kadamba du Karnataka, deux dynasties sud-indiennes du premier millénaire de notre ère.

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Qu'est-ce que la sagesse traditionnelle en Inde ancienne? Le terme sanskrit choisi pour illustrer l'affiche de la conférence, dont le présent ouvrage constitue les actes, est *prajñā*, «connaissance, intelligence, sagesse, jugement» [1][**]. Ce substantif féminin dérive du verbe *prajñā* qui signifie «connaître, comprendre, avoir expérience de; découvrir, percevoir, apprendre». Dans une conception proche de ce que pourrait être la nôtre en Occident, on peut comprendre que la sagesse est la connaissance juste, celle qui permet d'adopter la bonne conduite car elle repose sur l'expérience. Le sage peut transmettre ce savoir à son disciple, qui deviendra à son tour un sage. Ce qui fonde ici la sagesse du sage est son expérience: il connaît la conduite appropriée

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[**] Les chiffres entre crochets [ ] renvoient aux notes, pp. 71-72

pour avoir fait l'expérience de son efficacité antérieurement. Mais si l'on se place du point de vue du disciple, un autre aspect doit être pris en compte: la compétence, ou autrement dit l'autorité, du sage dont il accepte l'enseignement.

Partant de l'importance de l'autorité, je voudrais proposer un autre référent sanskrit au concept de sagesse traditionnelle, à savoir l'ensemble de textes appelés *śāstra*. Ce terme dérivé du verbe *śās* («punir; gouverner; commander; prescrire; enseigner, instruire») signifie, entre autres: «ordre, loi; enseignement, instruction, bon conseil, règle, théorie, norme; précepte; ouvrage didactique, traité technique faisant autorité; recueil de préceptes; doctrine, science». En première approximation, on peut, avec POLLOCK (1989a, p. 18), définir un *śāstra* comme «a verbal codification of rules, whether of divine or human provenance, for the positive and negative regulation of particular cultural practices». Il s'agit en fait de la définition classique, car certains penseurs indiens réservent le nom de *śāstra* aux seuls textes régulant le domaine sacré (POLLOCK 1989a, p. 21; 1989b). Pour POLLOCK (1989b, pp. 301-303) les *śāstra* sont des «cultural grammars» ou un «cultural software» et il insiste sur leur valeur normative: «*śāstra* is above all a collection of rules for what the culture evaluates as a "successful" accomplishment of any given human activity» [2]. On retiendra donc qu'un *śāstra* est de forme textuelle (orale ou écrite), qu'il s'agit d'un savoir systématique, de valeur normative ou prescriptive, et qu'il couvre tout le domaine des activités humaines [3]. POLLOCK (1989a, p. 25) donne également un aperçu de l'étendue des domaines couverts par les *śāstra: «*An idea of the broad area penetrated by this genre of learned inquiry can be suggested by a bare inventory of lexically attested *śāstras*: agriculture, elephant-training, arithmetic, perfumery, thievery, painting, carpentry, cooking, fishing, sculpture, liberation-from-transmigration, ascetic renunciation, the lapidary's art, alchemy, penmanship, augury, music (instrumental, vocal, and dancing), hawk-training, horse-training».

En tant qu'ouvrage de pensée systématique, théorique et normative, on peut concevoir qu'un *śāstra* donné contient, au sens large, la sagesse traditionnelle concernant un domaine de l'activité humaine. Comme l'a montré POLLOCK (1985, pp. 516-519), les *śāstra* fondent leur autorité sur le modèle du *śāstra* par excellence qu'est le Veda (ou les Veda), la révélation, éternelle et d'origine non humaine. Cette sagesse traditionnelle est ainsi transmise dans des traités (*śāstra*) qui se présentent comme des versions abrégées d'œuvres d'origine divine ou même comme des révélations divines (POLLOCK 1985, pp. 512-516). La sagesse traditionnelle consiste donc en quelque sorte à se conformer à l'ordre immuable des choses.

Parmi les *śāstra*, il est une catégorie que l'on nomme *Dharmaśāstra*, les traités sur le *dharma*, c'est-à-dire sur l'ordre socio-cosmique, au sens large [4]. On désigne également les *Dharmaśāstra* comme la *Smṛti* («souvenir, mémoire») par opposition à la *Śruti* («audition»), c'est-à-dire les écritures, ou mieux, dans le contexte indien d'oralité, la révélation [5]. La *Smṛti*, œuvre humaine des sages, prolonge la *Śruti* et en dérive. Elle fait donc aussi autorité [6].

Les *Dharmaśāstra* édictent notamment des normes sociales, le *dharma* au sens restreint, c'est-à-dire le devoir propre à chacun selon son statut social. La société hindoue est ainsi divisée en quatre *varṇa*, terme qui signifie littéralement «couleur» [7]. À chacun de ces *varṇa* sont associés des devoirs spécifiques, définis notamment par rapport au Veda et au Sacrifice. Les «Lois de Manu», le plus célèbre et le plus orthodoxe des *Dharmaśāstra*, les caractérisent, après une allusion transparente à un hymne du Veda, comme suit:

> For the protection of this whole creation, that One of dazzling brilliance assigned separate activities for those born from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet [8].
>
> To Brahmins, he assigned reciting and teaching the Veda, offering and officiating at sacrifices, and receiving and giving gifts.
>
> To the Kṣatriya, he allotted protecting the subjects, giving gifts, offering sacrifices, reciting the Veda, and avoiding attachment to sensory objects;
>
> and to the Vaiśya, looking after animals, giving gifts, offering sacrifices, reciting the Veda, trade, moneylending, and agriculture.
>
> A single activity did the Lord allot to the Śūdra, however: the ungrudging service of those very social classes.
>
> (*Mānavadharmaśātra* 1.87-91, traduction d'OLIVELLE 2005, p. 91)

Au sommet de la hiérarchie sociale se trouve ainsi le *varṇa* des brahmanes (Brāhmaṇa), les dépositaires du Veda et spécialistes religieux qui incarnent la fonction sacerdotale; vient ensuite le *varṇa* des Kṣatriya, les guerriers; puis le *varṇa* des Vaiśya, artisans, agriculteurs et commerçants; et enfin le *varṇa* des Śūdra, serviteurs des trois premiers *varṇa*.

La supériorité du brahmane repose sur sa connaissance des textes révélés qui fait de lui l'interprète du *dharma* car le Veda est en effet la source ultime du *dharma* [9]. Les «Lois de Manu» sont très explicites à ce propos:

> By his very origin, a Brahmin is a deity even for the gods and the authoritative source of knowledge for the world; the Veda clearly is the reason for this.
>
> (*Mānavadharmaśātra* 11.85, traduction d'OLIVELLE 2005, p. 219)

Par son expertise du Veda, le brahmane est ainsi à même de définir les devoirs de chacun des membres de la société: lui seul peut déterminer ce qu'est un comportement dharmique, c'est-à-dire allant dans le sens de l'harmonie du monde.

Le Kṣatriya, de statut inférieur au brahmane, occupe la fonction royale. Le roi, idéalement ou en théorie du moins, un Kṣatriya, est le protecteur du *dharma* compris dans un double sens. Au sens restreint, le roi doit veiller à ce que chacun des membres de la société observe ses devoirs de *varṇa*, définis, comme on l'a vu, dans les «Lois de Manu». Au sens large, le roi doit veiller à entretenir le bon ordre du monde, l'harmonie du cosmos. Le roi doit faire des dons, comme peuvent le faire le brahmane et le Vaiśya, mais on notera que les «Lois de Manu» ne mentionnent comme bénéficiaires des dons que le brahmane. Le roi doit donc patronner les brahmanes, en particulier ceux qui sont connaisseurs du Veda.

En termes occidentaux, on peut dire, *mutatis mutandis,* que le brahmane incarne le «pouvoir spirituel» et le roi le «pouvoir temporel» [10]. La relation entre le brahmane et le roi, qui incarnent ces pouvoirs respectifs, est conçue comme hiérarchisée, mais aussi complémentaire. Les «Lois de Manu» précisent ainsi:

> The Kṣatriya does not flourish without the Brahmin, and the Brahmin does not prosper without the Kṣatriya; but when Brahmin and Kṣatriya are united, they prosper here and in the hereafter.

> (*Mānavadharmaśāstra* 9.322, traduction d'OLIVELLE 2005, p. 206)

C'est de la coopération entre les deux premiers *varṇa*, entre les brahmanes et les rois, que dépend le bien du royaume, lui-même métonymie du monde. Dans la pratique, cela implique que le roi ait pour le guider dans l'exercice de sa charge un *purohita* (littéralement «celui qui est placé devant»), c'est-à-dire un brahmane officiant comme chapelain royal. Pour reprendre la formule de LINGAT (1967, p. 242): «Le pouvoir temporel a seul la possibilité d'agir, mais c'est une force aveugle qui a besoin d'être dirigée pour que son exercice soit efficace». Le pouvoir brahmanique (*bráhman*) est supérieur au pouvoir royal (*kṣatra*). Dans les termes de DUMONT (1992, pp. 356, 365), le religieux (*dharma*) englobe le politique (*artha*), dans un effort, de la part de la pensée brahmanique, de sécularisation de la fonction royale.

Tel est donc le point de vue savant et normatif concernant la relation entre le brahmane et le roi. Malgré la conception traditionnelle du *śāstra* qui se veut, comme l'a montré Pollock, l'expression de l'ordre des choses en s'associant à l'autorité de la révélation, il n'en reste pas moins que les

Dharmaśāstra sont l'œuvre de brahmanes et exposent donc un point de vue brahmanique. Mais comment ce point de vue sur la royauté selon une sagesse traditionnelle brahmanique est-il reflété dans l'expression politique?

POLLOCK (1989b, p. 312, n. 30), venant de constater que la production littéraire se conformait très fidèlement aux prescriptions des *śāstra* la concernant, concluait: «How far one could extrapolate from the precept-practice map of aesthetic production to other areas of traditional Indian life, especially matters of power and domination, is a question that merits close theoretical and historical scrutiny». Ce n'est pas exactement cette question qui va nous occuper ici, à savoir la mise en pratique de la théorie brahmanique concernant la royauté. En effet, examinant la conception de la royauté dans des sources royales, nous resterons dans le domaine des conceptions, de l'idéologie. Il s'agira de déterminer si le discours royal sur la royauté — accessible dans l'épigraphie royale, en particulier dans les portions panégyriques des inscriptions, et dans l'iconographie royale, c'est-à-dire les images des temples royaux — est en accord avec le discours brahmanique sur la royauté.

D'une part, on constate que cette description idéale du roi selon les brahmanes fut acceptée par nombre de dynasties hindoues. Le roi est présenté dans ses panégyriques comme un donateur et un patron des brahmanes, se conformant au rôle que lui assignent les *Dharmaśāstra*. Comme le résume BROCQUET (1997, p. 238 *sqq.*), le panégyrique vise à actualiser la norme et à désactualiser l'histoire. L'explication habituelle de cette adhésion aux cadres brahmaniques est celle de la légitimation: l'appui des brahmanes est recherché par le roi en quête de légitimité, d'autant plus s'il appartient à une dynastie nouvelle sur l'échiquier politique qui a besoin d'«officialiser» son statut royal. Cette reconnaissance passerait par le brahmane, figure d'autorité [11].

D'autre part, on observe aussi que le discours brahmanique a été partiellement repris mais en même temps détourné, laissant entrevoir une conception royale de la royauté différente de celle des traités brahmaniques. Au discours brahmanique peut donc s'opposer un discours royal, qui en dérive mais en redéfinit certains termes. Illustrons les écarts de ce genre de discours royal sur la royauté par rapport à la norme brahmanique à partir de l'exemple de la dynastie des Pallava [12].

Entre 550 et 900 de notre ère, le royaume des Pallava était centré sur le nord du pays tamoul, sur la côte orientale de l'Inde du Sud. Mon but ici sera de montrer que deux corpus de leurs sources royales, l'un épigraphique et l'autre iconographique, attestent une conception cohérente de la royauté, qui diverge de celle exposée dans les sources brahmaniques. Le discours royal Pallava défie la conceptualisation brahmanique à deux points de vue, qui me

semblent en étroite corrélation. Premièrement, c'est le roi, et non le brahmane, qui est le médiateur entre le monde des dieux et celui des hommes. Autrement dit, il y a contestation de la sécularisation de la fonction royale voulue par les brahmanes. Deuxièmement, le roi est à même d'opérer cette médiation parce qu'il n'est pas un simple Kṣatriya. Au contraire, la dynastie est issue d'une lignée de brahmanes qui a progressivement intégré les valeurs et adopté le mode de vie des guerriers, jusqu'au point où du sang royal est entré, via le matrilignage, dans la lignée qui, cependant, conservait un patrilignage brahmanique. Il en résulta la naissance de l'éponyme Pallava, le premier roi de la dynastie.

La médiation royale entre dieux et hommes est exprimée dans les inscriptions royales. Le roi Pallava y est décrit, d'une part, comme recevant les hommages des autres rois de la terre qui se prosternent à ses pieds et, d'autre part, comme dévot de la divinité suprême. Se dessine ainsi, comme l'a vu Brocquet (1997, p. 232 *sqq.*), un axe qui unit la terre au ciel, au centre duquel se trouve le souverain Pallava. Ou dit autrement, dans les termes d'Inden (2000, p. 230 *sqq.*), il existe une hiérarchie des êtres, depuis les sujets d'un royaume jusqu'à la divinité suprême (celle-ci étant généralement Śiva ou Viṣṇu). Le roi occupe dans cette hiérarchie la place directement en dessous de la divinité suprême. Il est en quelque sorte le maillon de la chaîne à l'intersection des mondes humain et divin. À ce titre, le roi est le premier dévot ou le dévot par excellence de la divinité suprême, protectrice et bienfaitrice. Et il fonde des temples, où est activée et réactivée cette relation privilégiée avec la divinité suprême. Ce rôle médiateur est aussi celui des rois qui adhèrent à la théorie brahmanique de la royauté. Mais, dans le cas des Pallava, cette fonction royale est aussi figurée dans l'iconographie des temples et repose, comme on le verra, sur la double ascendance de la lignée.

C'est dans les représentations de la descente du Gange sur terre, thème iconographique qu'ils affectionnent particulièrement, que les rois Pallava mettent en scène leur rôle de médiateurs. Le mythe de la descente du Gange, attesté dans plusieurs versions, nous explique que le roi Bhagīratha désirait purifier les restes de ses ancêtres. Ces derniers avaient été maudits et réduits en cendres par la colère du sage Kapila dont ils avaient dérangé la méditation. Bhagīratha accomplit donc de longues austérités afin d'obtenir que le Gange, fleuve céleste et seul à même d'annihiler la malédiction frappant ses aïeux, descende du ciel sur la terre. Śiva accepta finalement de recevoir le fleuve dans sa chevelure afin d'éviter que sa chute ne provoque un cataclysme sur la terre. C'est ainsi que le Gange s'en vint à couler dans le nord de l'Inde.

Dans la grotte supérieure de Trichy (premier quart du VIIe siècle) se trouve le premier chef-d'œuvre sculptural de l'art des Pallava (fig. 1)*. Il représente le dieu Śiva sous la forme de Gaṅgādhara («celui qui soutient le Gange»). On y voit Śiva tendre une mèche de ses cheveux afin d'y recevoir le Gange, représenté par une figure féminine, en haut à droite de sa tête, dans le ciel d'où elle s'écoule sur terre [13]. La sculpture est accompagnée d'une inscription de huit stances sur chacun des deux pilastres qui la flanquent (Hultzsch 1892). Ce poème épigraphique établit un parallélisme, voire une identité, entre le dieu Śiva et le patron de la grotte, le roi Pallava Mahendravarman Ier. Par exemple, alors que Śiva est décrit comme épris des rivières (tel le Gange), le roi est l'amant de la Kāvēri, le fleuve qui coule au pied du rocher de la grotte et qui est le Gange du sud de l'Inde. Ce parallélisme implique que le dieu Śiva, médiateur de la descente inoffensive du Gange sur terre, représente sinon le roi, du moins la fonction royale de protection du monde, qui de longue date est exprimée en Inde par le fait que le roi est responsable des pluies, nécessaires aux récoltes.

Quelques décennies plus tard, vers le milieu du VIIe siècle, le même mythe inspire le grand relief sculpté à Mahābalipuram (fig. 2, où la crevasse au milieu de l'image représente le Gange), un des hauts lieux religieux du royaume des Pallava. On ne voit pas ici le dieu Śiva recevoir le Gange dans sa chevelure comme à Trichy, mais accorder au pénitent Bhagīratha son intercession pour permettre la descente pacifique de la rivière céleste (fig. 3). Ce n'est plus un roi particulier qui est ici comparé à Śiva, mais c'est toute la lignée des rois Pallava qui est assimilée à la descente bénéfique des eaux du Gange, comme nous l'indique la charte de Kacākūṭi, vers 750 de notre ère (*vaṃśāvatāra pallavānān ... gaṃgāvatāra iva ... nirmmalas*, «la descente de la lignée des Pallava … pure … comme la descente du Gange») [14]. Nous avons donc ici une allégorie, celle de l'arrivée sur terre de la dynastie des Pallava, comme l'a montré Schmid (2006). Comme le Gange, fleuve céleste devenu terrestre, la lignée royale des Pallava fait le lien entre ciel et terre. La présence du dieu Śiva sur le relief signifie que la médiation des Pallava est approuvée et sanctionnée par la divinité suprême.

Mais quelle qualité rend les Pallava aptes à cette fonction de médiateurs entre la terre des hommes et le ciel des dieux? On peut mentionner leur nature surhumaine. Les inscriptions des Pallava regorgent de comparaisons (*upāma*) et de métaphores (*rūpaka*) entre les rois et les dieux et héros. Elles impliquent que le roi, s'il n'est certes pas un dieu, n'est pas un homme ordinaire. Ce caractère liminaire est aussi attribué dans leurs éloges aux rois qui,

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* *Cf.* figures en fin de texte (pp. 74-80).

par ailleurs, ne remettent pas en cause la conception brahmanique de la royauté. Ce qui différencie les Pallava de ces autres rois est leur ascendance.

Nous abordons ici un deuxième aspect du discours des Pallava sur la royauté, qui concerne le mélange de lignages que représente leur dynastie. Entre 550 et 900, sept inscriptions procurent une généalogie mythique des Pallava, qu'on peut qualifier de canonique, tandis que neuf autres inscriptions présentent une généalogie incomplète ou comportent des variantes mineures [15]. La séquence généalogique est la suivante: Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Aṅgiras, Bṛhaspati, Śaṃyu, Bharadvāja, Droṇa, Aśvatthāman, Pallava. Ce dernier, l'éponyme et premier membre du lignage à être roi, descend donc en droite ligne du dieu Brahmā (lui-même issu du nombril du dieu créateur Viṣṇu) via une lignée de brahmanes. Les premiers ancêtres sont de purs brahmanes, comme Aṅgiras qui est associé à une partie des hymnes du Ṛgveda ou Bṛhaspati qui est le *purohita* d'Indra, le roi des dieux. Les ancêtres qui précèdent immédiatement l'éponyme se comportent cependant plus en guerriers qu'en brahmanes, tels Droṇa et Aśvatthāman, personnages bien connus du *Mahābhārata*. Quant à l'éponyme, si son père est un brahmane, du sang royal lui vient de sa mère. Selon les versions, elle est une nymphe céleste envoyée par Indra ou la fille même d'Indra. Son double lignage en fait un être particulier, qui est décrit comme suit dans une inscription (à nouveau la charte de Kacākūṭi, vers 750):

tejaḥ param brāhmam anūtthitopi sa kṣatram uccer abhajat svabhāvi

ambhodharād apy upabdhajanmā dāhātmako nanv aśaniḥ prakṛtyā [16]

    Quoique né d'un brahmane, il possédait au plus haut point et de façon innée l'énergie extrême des Kṣatriya.

    Quoique produite dans un nuage, la foudre n'a-t-elle pas naturellement une essence de feu?

                               (traduction: Francis)

Il faut comprendre que l'éponyme possède tout à la fois les pouvoirs et les statuts du brahmane et du guerrier. À ce titre, il appartient en quelque sorte à un super-*varṇa*, supérieur aux quatre autres. Ses descendants conservent les mêmes caractéristiques. Par leur statut duel — ils sont à la fois brahmanes et guerriers — les Pallava unissent les pouvoirs «spirituel» et «temporel». Le religieux n'englobe plus le politique. Le roi n'est plus dépendant du brahmane. Les deux pouvoirs sont englobés dans la dynastie même.

Cette prétention à un statut duel est aussi mise en scène dans le programme iconographique des temples royaux des Pallava. Je l'illustre ici avec l'exemple du complexe sacré connu aujourd'hui sous le nom de Kailāsanātha, qui date du début du VIIIᵉ siècle et est consacré à Śiva (fig. 4). Me fondant sur la comparaison des rois aux dieux dans l'épigraphie, et sur le précédent de la Gaṅgādharamūrti à Trichy, je lis les représentations des dieux de ce temple comme des images duelles, qui représentent aussi la fonction royale.

Sur le sanctuaire principal (le Rājasiṃheśvara des inscriptions) on trouve au sud (fig. 5) le couple que forme Śiva avec son épouse Pārvatī; Śiva Dakṣiṇāmūrti enseignant sa doctrine à ses disciples; la Liṅgodbhavamūrti, une forme par laquelle Śiva révèle sa supériorité sur les dieux Brahmā et Viṣṇu; la Bhikṣāṭanamūrti (fig. 6), c'est-à-dire Śiva le mendiant qui séduit les épouses des sages, ce qui montre la supériorité de sa religion sur celle des ascètes. Il s'agit de formes apaisées, ascétiques, enseignantes ou théophaniques du dieu Śiva. Ces formes sont donc liées plutôt à des préoccupations supra-mondaines et représentent le statut brahmanique des Pallava.

Au nord (fig. 5), on voit Śiva vaincre divers démons (par exemple, fig. 7, Kālārimūrti, forme de Śiva qui vainc Kāla, «le temps», c'est-à-dire la mort) et recevoir le Gange dans sa chevelure (Gaṅgādharamūrti), ainsi qu'une forme guerrière de la déesse. Ces figures, combattantes et protectrices, sont liées au mondain, à la protection du monde, et correspondent au statut guerrier (Kṣatriya) des Pallava.

Entre la face sud et la face nord, la face ouest (fig. 5) du temple montre des figures de Śiva dansant. La danse, que plusieurs sources permettent d'interpréter comme une geste de victoire, marque ici le triomphe du dieu sur la mort et la renaissance en relation avec la face sud, sur les démons en relation avec la face nord.

Enfin, au milieu du mur ouest, une chapelle accolée au temple contient une Gaṅgādharamūrti (fig. 5, lettre «G»), une image qui exprime, on l'a vu, la fonction médiatrice des Pallava et souligne combien la dynastie, de statut duel, brahmanique et guerrier, fait le lien entre le supra-mondain et le mondain, entre le monde des dieux et celui des hommes. Comme un rappel de l'importance de cette Gaṅgādharamūrti, c'est aussi l'image qui conclut la circumambulation rituelle du temple sur la face nord.

Le statut duel, brahmane et Kṣatriya, ou autrement dit la double nature, ascétique et guerrière, des Pallava, est aussi représenté par une image de culte qu'on trouve de façon systématique dans le saint des saints (*garbagṛha*) des fondations royales shivaïtes de la dynastie. Derrière l'image symbolique de Śiva (le *liṅga*) qui occupe le centre de la cella, une sculpture, sur le mur du fond, représente la Somāskandamūrti (fig. 8). Il s'agit d'une représentation de

la famille shivaïte: Śiva et son épouse Pārvatī sont assis côte à côte et Skanda, leur enfant et dieu de la guerre, repose dans le giron de sa mère [17]. Cette image en tant que sculpture de pierre et image centrale de culte n'apparaît pratiquement que dans des temples fondés par des rois Pallava. On ne la connaît après les Pallava quasiment que sous la forme de bronzes de procession et plus comme image de culte principale.

Des comparaisons diagrammatiques — établissant une analogie, pour les unes, entre les paires Śiva/Skanda et roi/prince, et, pour les autres, les couples Śiva/Pārvatī et roi/reine — sont récurrentes dans les inscriptions des rois Pallava (BROCQUET 1997, p. 135 *sqq.*). Elles permettent de considérer la Somāskandamūrti comme une image duelle où la triade divine (Śiva, Pārvatī et Skanda) renvoie à la triade royale (roi, reine et prince héritier). Il reste à comprendre en quoi cette représentation divine sert l'idéologie royale.

À cet égard, il faut rappeler que, dans la version la plus récente du mythe de Skanda, où celui-ci est le fils de Śiva, ce dernier est un ascète dont les dieux espèrent un fils puissant afin d'anéantir un démon qui les menace. Quant à Pārvatī, elle joue en quelque sorte le rôle de la nymphe tentatrice. La semence virile que Śiva ne peut plus contenir est recueillie par Agni qui la dépose aux bords du Gange où, dans un bosquet de roseaux, naît Skanda, que Pārvatī adoptera comme son fils. On note le parallélisme avec la naissance de l'éponyme Pallava: son père Aśvatthāman est aussi un ascète qui répand sa semence et celle-ci prend la forme de l'éponyme sur une couche faite de bourgeons ou de rameaux (*pallava* en sanskrit). On peut donc lire la Somāskandamūrti comme une image qui synthétise le double statut des Pallava. Śiva, dieu ascète, représente le statut brahmanique porté vers le transcendant, le supra-mondain. Skanda, le jeune dieu guerrier, représente le statut Kṣatriya, concerné par le monde.

En outre, en vertu des comparaisons entre, d'une part, le roi et Śiva et, de l'autre, le prince héritier et Skanda, la Somāskandamūrti peut se lire comme une image duelle qui symbolise la perpétuation de la lignée royale, la transmission de la mission royale du roi à son héritier. Le roi en fin de carrière peut se consacrer à sa quête spirituelle supra-mondaine, n'assumer plus que son statut de brahmane, parce qu'il a maintenant un héritier qui assurera le devoir mondain de la royauté: protéger son royaume et faire la guerre. La Somāskandamūrti illustre ainsi la solution trouvée par les Pallava, qui se prétendent brahmanes-guerriers, à la tension entre deux idéaux du roi, à savoir, d'un côté, la quête spirituelle et les désirs supra-mondains, et, de l'autre, le devoir terrestre de régner et de guerroyer. Le roi obtient le fils valeureux qui reprendra son rôle et lui permet de se retirer des affaires de ce monde.

Tels sont deux traits du discours royal des Pallava qui montrent qu'il n'y a pas toujours congruence entre la conception de la royauté selon la sagesse traditionnelle exprimée dans les *śāstra* et l'expression politique. Mais cette vision d'eux-mêmes des Pallava n'est pas pour autant acceptée par les dynasties concurrentes, comme nous le montre une inscription d'un roi de la dynastie des Kadamba.

Le royaume des Kadamba se situait aussi en Inde du Sud, dans l'État actuel du Karnataka, et prospéra de la deuxième moitié du IVe siècle à la première moitié du VIe siècle environ. Une célèbre inscription sur un pilier à Tāḷagunda, que l'on date de nos jours du milieu du Ve siècle, nous explique comment le brahmane Mayūraśarman devint le premier roi de la dynastie [18]. Les Kadamba se sont donc également prétendu être des brahmanes devenus rois. L'inscription de Tāḷagunda nous explique que Mayūraśarman se rendit à Kāñcīpuram (la capitale des Pallava), dans une institution nommée *ghaṭikā*, pour ses études de brahmane. Mais là, il eut une mésaventure avec un Pallava (probablement le roi), comme nous le racontent les strophes 11-12 de l'épigraphe:

> *tatra pallavāśvasaṃsthena kalahena tīvreṇa roṣitaḥ*
>
> *kaliyugesminn aho bata kṣatrāt paripelavā vipratā yataḥ*
>
> *gurukulāni samyag ārāddhya śākhām adhītyāpi yatnataḥ*
>
> *brahmasiddhir yyadi nṛpādhīnā kim ataḥ paraṃ duḥkham ity ataḥ* [19].

> Là (à Kāñcīpuram), irrité en raison d'une violente dispute à cause d'un cavalier Pallava / à cause du sacrifice de cheval d'un (roi) Pallava / à cause des chevaux du (roi) Pallava, il songea:

> «Quel malheur qu'en cet âge Kali, la condition de brahmane soit inférieure à celle du guerrier! Pour qui honore comme il se doit les familles des maîtres spirituels et étudie avec effort sa branche (du Veda), que la perfection en Veda soit aux bons soins des rois, qu'y a-t-il de plus pénible que cela?»

> (traduction: Francis) [20]

Le texte n'est pas sans poser quelques difficultés et a fait l'objet de plusieurs interprétations, notamment concernant le terme *pallavāśvasaṃstha*, qui explique la raison ou la circonstance de la querelle. Pour KIELHORN (1906, p. 34), il désigne le cavalier Pallava avec qui Mayūraśarman se dispute. Pour SIRCAR (1939, p. 184, n. 1), on fait ici référence à un sacrifice de cheval commandité par le roi Pallava et exécuté pour lui par Mayūraśarman.

WILLIS (2009, p. 204, n. 175) approuve et suggère que le roi Pallava se montra irrespectueux et pingre en ce qui concerne les honoraires sacrificiels. Pour TIEKEN & SATO (2000, p. 216), la querelle porta sur des droits de douane que Mayūraśarman avait commencé à prélever en tant que membre de la *ghaṭikā* de Kāñcīpuram sur les marchands de chevaux des Pallava. Quoi qu'il en soit, le point qui nous intéresse ici est que c'est suite à sa querelle avec le Pallava que Mayūraśarman, brahmane et donc membre du premier *varṇa*, se plaint des Kṣatriya qui, en cet âge Kali (c'est-à-dire l'âge de fer), sont dans une position de domination, faisant injure à la hiérarchie des *varṇa*. Mayūraśarman prit donc les armes pour venger son honneur, se rebella contre le roi Pallava et se conquit un royaume. Finalement, nous dit l'inscription, le roi Pallava préféra, étant donné la valeur de Mayūraśarman, s'en faire un allié plutôt qu'un ennemi.

Ainsi, dans une inscription des rois Kadamba, brahmanes-guerriers à les en croire, les Pallava qui se présentent à partir de 550 comme des brahmanes-guerriers sont en fait simplement des Kṣatriya. Toute part brahmanique leur est déniée. Les Kadamba se définissent comme des brahmanes forcés de devenir rois, car les rois Kṣatriya de leur temps ne se comportent pas comme ils le devraient [21].

L'inscription de Tāḷaguṇḍa précède probablement de plus d'un siècle l'articulation cohérente par les Pallava de leur double statut de brahmanes-guerriers dans leurs inscriptions. Mais à cette époque les Pallava, installés encore dans le sud de l'Andhra Pradesh et probablement seulement dans le nord du Tamil Nadu, sont déjà une des dynasties importantes de la région. Il est intéressant de constater qu'alors, du point de vue des rois brahmanes Kadamba, les Pallava sont purement et simplement des Kṣatriya. Il y a donc au niveau de l'expression politique, dans les inscriptions de dynasties rivales, des divergences sur le statut des Pallava. Celles-ci peuvent s'expliquer du fait que les Pallava ne se présentent pas encore comme des brahmanes-guerriers, mais nous pensons trouver cette prétention dans les sources *pallava* de cette période, certes de façon encore timide [22].

En conclusion, si l'on accepte qu'en Inde la sagesse traditionnelle est un point de vue brahmanique, du moins en ce qui concerne la hiérarchie sociale, on voit que, dans l'expression politique, c'est-à-dire dans les sources royales, la subordination du roi au brahmane n'est pas unanimement acceptée. Le discours royal Pallava nous montre qu'il a pu exister en Inde une conception royale de la royauté, différente de la conception brahmanique, opposée même à celle-ci en ce qui concerne les fonctions magico-religieuses du roi. On peut concevoir ce discours des Pallava comme une réaction à l'effort de sécularisation et de subordination de la royauté dans la pensée brahmanique. Le

point de vue des Pallava, qui se présentent comme des brahmanes-guerriers au-dessus de la hiérarchie des *varṇa*, est lui-même contesté par une dynastie rivale. Les Kadamba se prétendent brahmanes-guerriers et rabaissent les Pallava au statut de simples Kṣatriya. La coexistence de ces différents points de vue tend à prouver qu'on ne peut caractériser l'Inde ancienne hindoue comme asservie aux idéaux de la théorie brahmanique. Certes, des cadres et des catégories, tels que la hiérarchie des *varṇa* et la supériorité du brahmane, sont acceptés, mais il y eut place aussi, à l'intérieur de ces cadres, pour une joute idéologique entre les brahmanes et certains rois, notamment en ce qui concerne la prétention au statut de brahmane.

NOTES

[1] Toutes les traductions sont tirées du dictionnaire de STCHOUPAK *et al.* (1987).

[2] POLLOCK (1985, p. 511) traduit également *śāstra* par «theory» et note que le terme correspond aussi à «doctrine or ideology» dans le sens le plus neutre.

[3] Sur le caractère descriptif plutôt que normatif des premiers *śāstra*, voir POLLOCK (1985, p. 503).

[4] «To simplify a complex argument, we may say that *dharma* in the largest sense connotes the correct way of doing anything» (POLLOCK 1985, p. 511).

[5] Sur l'opposition entre *Śruti*, «perception», et *Smṛti*, «inférence», voir POLLOCK (1997).

[6] Voir POLLOCK (1985, p. 506): «the "traditional" *smṛtis* have authority insofar as they are held to be invariably based on the transcendent *vedas* whether or not such vedic texts are still extant or able to be located».

[7] Plus qu'aux castes ou aux classes socio-économiques, le concept de *varṇa* correspond à celui des «États» de l'Ancien Régime.

[8] Ce vers fait clairement référence au *Puruṣasūkta*, «l'hymne au Puruṣa», un hymne du *Ṛgveda* (10.90). Cet hymne explique notamment comment les quatre *varṇa* sont issus des différentes parties du corps du Puruṣa, l'homme cosmique, démembré lors du sacrifice primordial. Voir la traduction de RENOU (1985, p. 99).

[9] Sur les sources du *dharma*, voir POLLOCK (1985, p. 506): «According to nearly all *dharmaśāstras, dharma* is derived from three sources: *śruti* (revealed texts, considered transcendent), *smṛti* (traditional texts), and *sadācara* (the "practices of the good"). In problematic cases where *śāstra (śruti + smṛti)* does not provide any explicit solution, one must look to *sadācara*».

[10] LINGAT (1967, p. 242) précise cependant, afin de relativiser l'application à l'Inde de conceptions occidentales, qu'au contraire de la théorie chrétienne des deux glaives, il n'y a pas ici «deux pouvoirs s'exerçant chacun dans sa sphère propre, ici le sacré, là le profane». Le domaine du *purohita*, le brahmane qui est chapelain royal, s'étend «à tout le champ de l'activité royale, aussi bien à son côté politique qu'à son côté religieux».

[11] Cette théorie de la légitimation a été récemment battue en brèche par POLLOCK (2006, p. 511 *sqq.*) et ALI (2004, p. 14). On peut noter cependant que la théorie

brahmanique, et donc la caution du brahmane, apporte une sanction en quelque sorte divine à l'exercice royal de la violence.

[12] Pour plus de détails sur les Pallava et sur leur «discours», voir Francis (2013, 2017).

[13] Le Gange est en Inde une figure de sexe féminin.

[14] Voir Hultzsch (1895, p. 348, lignes 36-37, et p. 355). Pour *vaṃśāvatāra*, comprendre *vaṃśāvatāraḥ*.

[15] Pour les détails, voir Francis (2011, p. 342).

[16] Voir Hultzsch (1895, p. 347, lignes 32-33, et p. 355, strophe 18). Hultzsch lit *brāhmamanūrtthitopi* qu'il propose d'amender en *brāhmakulotthitopi*. Je lis *brāhmamanūtthitopi* sur le fac-similé. Pour *uccer* et *upabdhajanmā,* comprendre *uccair* et *upalabdhajanmā*.

[17] Brahmā et Viṣṇu sont aussi souvent présents en fonction d'assesseurs de Śiva, ce qui montre la supériorité de ce dernier.

[18] Kielhorn (1906, p. 31) proposait de dater cette inscription de la première moitié du VIᵉ siècle.

[19] Voir Kielhorn (1906, p. 32, ligne 4, et p. 34, strophes 11-12).

[20] Nous traduisons *brahmasiddhi* par «perfection en Veda». Willis (2009, p. 204) préfère «fortune of a brāhmaṇa».

[21] Les entorses aux obligations du brahmane (dans le cas présent, le fait de prendre les armes) sont tolérées en cas de nécessité. Sur la notion de devoir en situation de détresse (*āpaddharma*), voir Bowles (2007).

[22] Voir Francis (2017).

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Fig. 1. — Gaṅgādharamūrti, grotte supérieure à Trichy, début du VIIe siècle.

Fig. 2. — Descente du Gange (centre de la composition), Mahābalipuram, VIIe siècle.

Fig. 3. — Descente du Gange, Śiva et Bhagīratha, Mahābalipuram, VIIᵉ siècle.

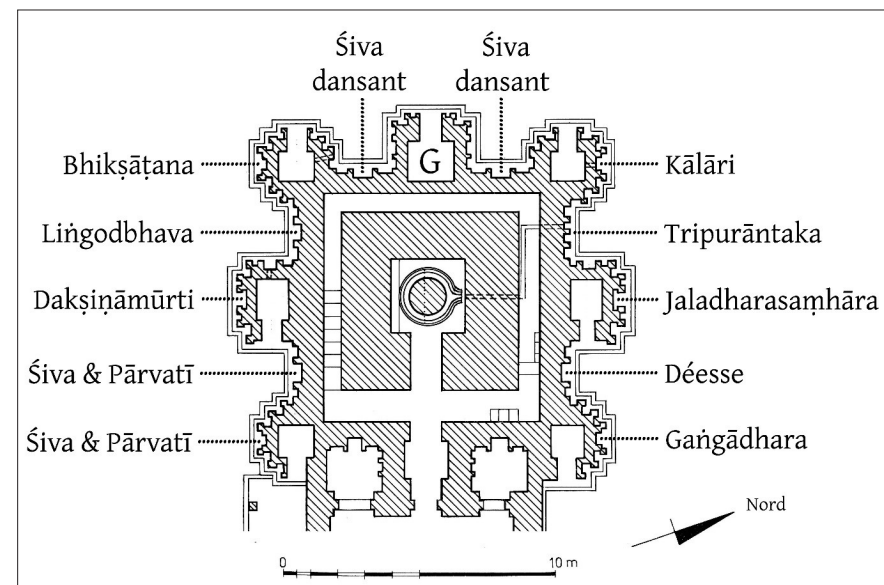Fig. 4. — Pavillon et sanctuaire principal, temple de Kailāsanātha, Kāñcīpuram, début du VIIIᵉ siècle.

Fig. 5. — Programme iconographique du sanctuaire principal, temple de Kailāsanātha, Kāñcīpuram, début du VIIIᵉ siècle. Plan d'après L'Hernault (1978, plan I, © EFEO, Pondichéry).
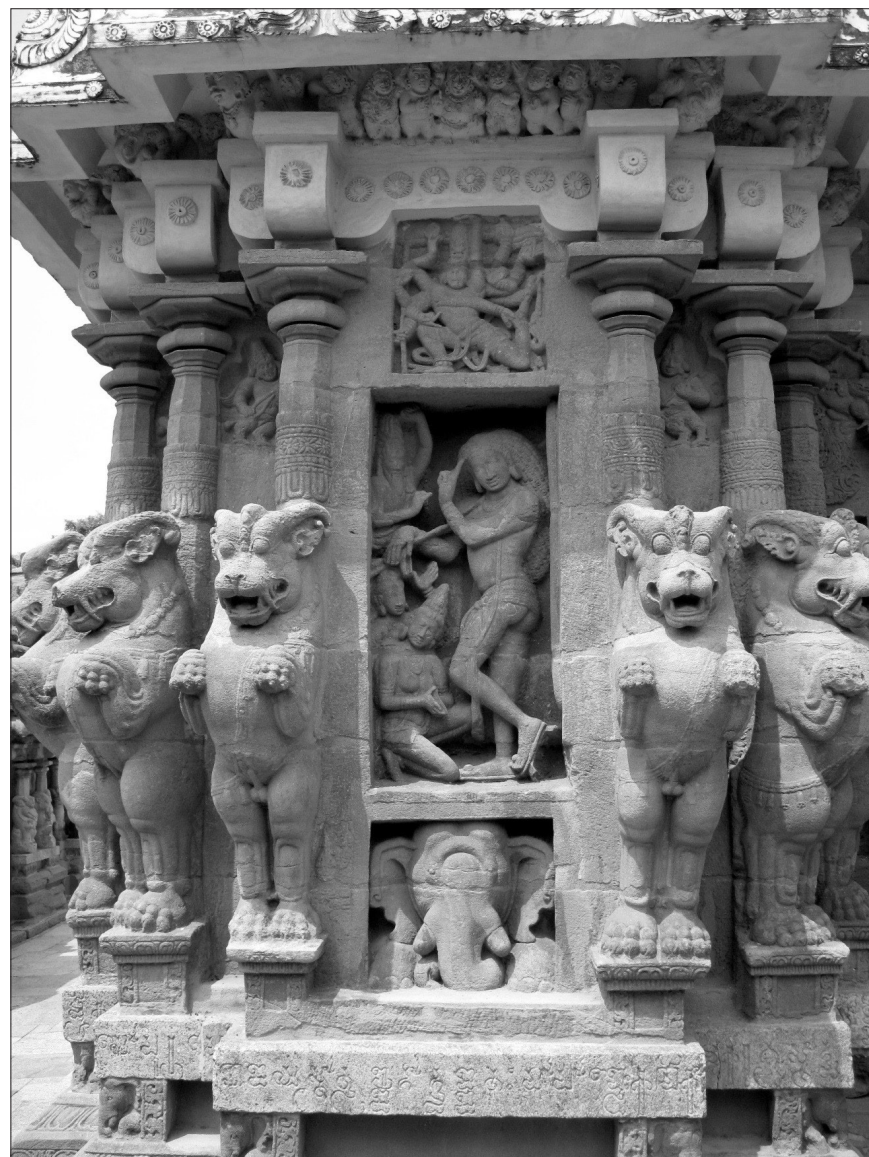
Fig. 6. — Bhikṣāṭanamūrti, face sud du sanctuaire principal, temple de Kailāsanātha, Kāñcīpuram, début du VIIIe siècle.

Fig. 7. — Kālārimūrti, face nord du sanctuaire principal, temple de Kailāsanātha, Kāñcīpuram, début du VIIIe siècle.

Fig. 8. — Somāskandamūrti, cella du petit temple de Śiva, temple du rivage, Mahābalipuram, début du VIIIᵉ siècle.

Ḳadīmden: A Notion of Truth Turning into Legal Claims in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire

by

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Keywords. — Wisdom; Sharia; Ottoman Empire, Courts; Ottoman Empire, Antiquities; Kadi Courts.

Summary. — The notion that an old notion is a valuable one and one connected to eternal truth was ingrained in Ottoman society and its many sub-societies. Among the Muslim population, it found its reflection among realms as different as mystical practice, poetry, and political thought. In this paper, after an attempt at sketching the notion of legitimate old (ḳadīm) I shall look into the legal applications. In front of the kadi, claims were often substantiated by the contention that something was valid or current "since olden times". This notion formed thus a bridge between everyday understanding of old practice and knowledge and the legal discourse where it had a clearly defined and circumscribed position. Interestingly, in the court this argument was generally efficient and helped people to win their cases. Special attention will be paid to occasions where the legal notion of "old" was somewhat stretched and to those examples where the argument did not held.

*
* *

Allow me an introductory remark: I mistrust wisdom. Wisdom, it seems to me, is unsubstantiated knowledge or, rather, knowledge substantiated by personal or social authority. Wisdom is a form of knowledge that has no students, but disciples and adepts, and it is not taught by argument and explanation but by initiation, revelation and mental drill. As a person, I may be fascinated with it; as a scholar, I have to confess disagreement. In Islamicate societies I would go to the mystics in order to find it. However, because in my view wisdom is void of intellectual substance, I thought it would be a proper heuristic term in order to explain a phenomenon that appears to be

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unfounded and not substantiated in doctrine but plays an important role in Ottoman law, namely the recourse to old custom. But before I turn to this matter, I need the reader to accompany me on a tour through Ottoman understandings of old wisdom.

Early modern Muslim Ottomans knew two kinds of antiquity. The older one is pre-Islamic. This was an antiquity Ottomans often found in their immediate material environment. Most Ottoman cities and towns were ancient settlements; and very often old buildings or their ruins remained more or less prominent in virtually all of them. The rural landscape in between was dotted with more remains of ancient cultures; and this is true for all the regions under Ottoman rule: south-eastern Europe, Asia Minor, the Fertile Crescent and northern Africa including, of course, Egypt.

Ottomans marvelled at these remains, used some of them, especially fortifications and infrastructural installations such as aqueducts and bridges; or they modified them in order to give them a new use — there is a quarter in Istanbul that takes its name, Kazlıçeşme, from a fountain displaying a late antique relief of a goose (EGEMEN 1993, pp. 464, 467) [1]*. Others were repaired and looked after, such as Constantine's column that owns its Turkish name, Çemberlitaş, to the iron rings that have kept it together since it was damaged in a fire (MÜLLER-WIENER 1977, pp. 255-257; EYİCE 1994). Many other monuments were just left alone, and systematic destruction was rare — it occurred in cases offending against moral and spiritual attitudes such as the naked ancient statues the grand-vizier Dāmād İbrāhīm Pasha had planted in front of his palace at the hippodrome, which had to be removed after popular protest (ATASOY 1972, ÇANTAY 1991). The same protest did not react against the familiar monuments on the hippodrome itself just in front of İbrāhīm's palace, among them the Roman relief at the base of the Theodosian obelisk and the serpents' column. Probably more important than damage done to antiquities by pious crowds was the destruction incurred — in good Byzantine tradition — through the re-use of columns supporting older structures.

The contrast to modern sectarian violence against remnants of pre-Islamic civilizations could not be greater. Still, while Ottomans appropriated the pre-Islamic past through everyday use and, if they were Turkish-speaking Muslims in south-eastern Europe and Anatolia, until the eighteenth century even called themselves "Romans" *(Rūmī),* they did not develop a systematic scholarly interest in any of the pre-Islamic antiquities they encountered

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* Numbers in brackets [ ] refer to the notes, pp. 89-91.

(ÖZBARAN 2004). This attitude extends to the intellectual remains as much as to the material ones. There was no Ottoman match to the interest Renaissance and Baroque intellectuals developed in the ancient world.

Let me add that, again in contrast to contemporary Latin Europeans, Ottomans did not prioritize any of the antiquities over the others either: Old Persians, Greeks, Mesopotamians or Egyptians all belonged more or less to the same realm of imagination, and the figure of Alexander the Great connected many of these different streaks (BAĞCI 1994). While Orthodox scholars at the patriarchal academy were staunch representatives of a lively neo-Aristotelianism (GAVROGLU *et al.* 1999, PATINIOTIS 2015) and there was never a lack of people able to make sense of Greek inscriptions in a townscape or cityscape, until today, historians of the Ottoman Empire have never ventured to conduct research in possible intellectual exchange between Muslim and Christian Ottoman scholars. Therefore, only anecdotal evidence has turned up rather than being unearthed (WURM 1971, pp. 22-50; HAGEN 2003, pp. 190-196, 277-280; SĂBEV 2006, pp. 199-204; BEYDILLI 1984, pp. 270-282). So far, Ottoman studies have given the impression that Ottoman scholars received their knowledge about ancient philosophy and thinking mainly through the channel of Arabic translations of medieval times.

This was still important enough: to give just one example, Ḳınalızāde ʿAlī Çelebi's famous work on practical and political ethics, the *Aḫlāḳ-ı ʿAlāʾī,* mentions not only Aristotle and Plato, household names for any educated Ottoman, but also Ptolemy, Euclid, Socrates, Empedocles and Pythagoras (KINALIZADE 2012, pp. 86, 408). At the very end of his work, Ḳınalızāde included the philosophical "testaments" *(veṣāyā)* of Plato and Aristotle, the latter according to a text by al-Dawwānī. These are the only lengthy passages from ancient authors he quotes *verbatim* — and it is the place where he explains the well-known "circle of justice" whose origin he traces back to Aristotle (KINALIZADE 2012, pp. 527-532). Ottoman political ethics is therefore taken as linked to ancient wisdom.

The second kind of antiquity known by Muslim Ottomans was, nevertheless, incomparably more important. This is, of course, Islamic antiquity. Historically younger than what I have mentioned up to now, it had a notional status radically different from pre-Islamic antiquity. First, it was "one's own" antiquity; Ottoman Turks appropriated the early Islamic period as theirs — in a way comparable to how Latin Europeans made classical antiquity their own past, but heightened by the central religious example the time of the Prophet offered (and continues to offer) to Muslims. In contrast, pre-Islamic antiquity always carried with itself an ambiguity as being not informed by the pure and final truth that comes with authentic divine revelation [2].

Secondly, Islamic antiquity, as it was connected to divine revelation, was as much eternal as it was old. Anything related to the time of the Prophet and his companions carried dignity and significance not only because of its age and its historical context but also because it was linked to the a-historical realm of divine truth.

On the material level, the identification, preservation and veneration of graves belonging to companions of the prophet Muḥammad in Istanbul is an example of this appropriation of something that is regarded as both old and of eternal relevance. Starting with the tomb of Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, called Eyyūb Sulṭān by the Ottomans, which had been recovered by Meḥmed the Conqueror's mentor Aḵ-Şems ed-Dīn in the wake of the City's conquest, these graves constituted *foci* of piety in Istanbul (ÜNVER 1953, İŞLİ [1988]). The tombs of the Prophet's companions were sites that connected the Ottoman Empire directly to prophetic history. Eyyūb Sulṭān's grave served the re-labelling of Istanbul: as the Byzantine capital, the city had evoked apocalyptic fears and was connected to the Deccāl, the Antichrist. Its conquest constituted not only a promise but also a threat to the victorious Muslim army. Eyyūb Sulṭān's presence, validated by the identification of his grave, healed this situation (COŞKUN 2015) [3].

Similar results were the outcome of the "discovering" of other burial sites belonging to companions of the Prophet, some of them at locations as improbable as the fundaments of the tower in which the chain had been stored with which the Byzantines used to close the entrance to the Golden Horn when under siege. These discoveries occurred when a popular religious movement threatened the legitimacy of Ottoman rule in the seventeenth century. The Ḵāḍīzādeli movement argued that economic, military and political difficulties had their reason in widespread moral impunity and religious impurity. Assuming a stance similar to modern fundamentalism the Ḵāḍīzādelis demanded the return to the ways of the time of the prophet Muḥammad; and among their most popular symbolic targets was the practice to visit tombs and shrines. The discovery of some hitherto unknown graves of prophetic companions effectively deflected this propaganda as such graves implied that the visit of tombs was going back to prophetic times [4].

All this has little to do with wisdom, I confess. I have taken the liberty to make these long introductory remarks in order to demonstrate what the status of old Islamic wisdom was, first in front of other old wisdom, and then, in the framework of everyday experience in Ottoman society or, at least, in the urban Muslim segments of this society [5]. In my view, this is a perspective that makes it possible to explain more fully how and why Ottomans so frequently took recourse to what counted as old and, more especially, as old wisdom when they appeared in court or before the imperial *dīvān*.

I have found such a framework also relevant as two issues are all too obvious: one, that Ottoman law, especially the Muslim *fiqh*, had a lot to do with old Islamic knowledge. Indeed, Ottoman jurists claimed that their discourse was deeply rooted in old Islamic times, and that the Quoran and the sayings of the Prophet, the *ḥadīṯ*, were the main sources of Islamic law as it stood (ROHE 2009, pp. 43-58). Seen from this perspective, to identify "old Islamic wisdom" in Ottoman courtrooms might appear as an utterly futile exercise in tautology.

The second aspect is the matter-of-course that most (if not all) societies know the recourse on old custom as a means to legitimize practices that otherwise may be devoid of legitimation. It is also well known that "times immemorial" did often not begin so long ago (LE GOFF 1988, pp. 43-44).

Islamic law, however, complicates this situation as it does not give much regard to precedent. It is a law that is based upon the discourse of jurists. It is neither a case law nor one developed through statutes issued by a legislator (HALLAQ 2009, pp. 37-56; LOHLKER 2012, pp. 40-47). The Ottoman Empire did not intervene in the character of the *fiqh* as a jurists' law until the second half of the nineteenth century. However, it did two things: it created institutions that secured effectively that 'ulemā gained access to influential posts only if they met imperial expectations; and it charged the ḵāḍī, the holder of the key position both in jurisdiction and local administration, with the application not only of the sharia law but also of a host of sultanic regulations: rules and orders issued by imperial *fiat* or by custom that had been formalized through an administrative act or an edict by the ruler (EBU'S-SUUD 1935, ERGENE 2014, JOHANSEN 1999). It is important to understand that the sultanic ḵānūn was not construed as something contradicting the sharia even if quite a number of its stipulations in fact were not in accordance with those of the *fiqh*. Instead, the often used formula *şerʿ u ḵānūn* designated basically the officiating of a ḵāḍī, regardless of its legal basis. For many "ordinary" Ottomans, it must have been quite indistinguishable whether a decision by the ḵāḍī had its rationale in the Islamic law or a sultanic ordinance. The ḵāḍīs, however, as Islamic scholars, had received a formal education exclusively in matters related to the sharia before they began their judicial career (AHMAD & FILIPOVIC 2004; ERGIN 1977, pp. 97-117; BILGE 1984, pp. 40-64).

Especially in cases where the *fiqh* envisaged discretionary punishments, so-called *taʿẕīr*, or where administrative regulations had to be applied, the recourse to old wisdom comes to the fore. I have used a database that includes

forty volumes of record books kept at courts in different parts of Greater Istanbul — the city *intra muros* plus the districts of Galata, Üsküdar, and Eyüp. These records comprise more than forty thousand entries from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century; and they are, fortunately, searchable as full texts (Aydın & Yılmaz 2008-2012). In more than five hundred of these forty thousand entries the database gives returns for the notion of "old" or *ḳadīm*, amounting to more than one percent of all cases [6]. This frequency is not matched by the formulation of a procedural or principled convention. I encountered a corresponding Arabic formula meant to sound authoritative only in two early examples from the year 1519 — it appears that the courts generally refrained from accepting or invoking a legal doctrine in the context of *ḳadīm* [7]. More often, people turning to the court referred to old custom as basis of their dealings or claims; and the judge then accepted or certified the situation. Occasionally, the notion of old custom turned into an imagination of old law *(ḳānūn-ı ḳadīm)* (Barkan 1946; İnalcık 1958, pp. 112-113) [8]. Custom and (sultanic) law then became synonymous, perhaps reflecting that sultanic law often codified and modified older practices that might consist of customary rules or older, often Byzantine legal stipulations [9]. The line between custom *('ādet)* and sultanic law *(ḳānūn)* is blurred even in such an official case as the appointment of an Orthodox metropolis to the hinterland of Istanbul, the Ḫāṣṣlar ḳażāsı [10].

In most cases old custom is quoted, the cases are pedestrian conflicts on usufruct, possession and occupancy or, perhaps even more typically, privileges granted to guilds of craftsmen *(eṣnāf)*. Invariably, the claim to old rights is connected to the absence of other documentation or at least the expectation that written titles do not exist. If challenged, the claim to old right is corroborated by the testimony of two (or more) competent witnesses [11].

In this respect, the procedure is re-integrated to sharia norms: two witnesses make a fact. Actually, the claim to an unspecified "from olden times" often would be unnecessary: the testimony to the situation as prevalent would be sufficient.

I hope to have made it clear up to now that if the invocation of old legitimacy was the more effective, the more unspecific, it was because it then implied a however vague continuity to usage from olden, potentially even prophetic times. Such implications are near to never made explicit, of course, as such an evocation would have had to be based on specific written evidence and therefore belonged to the realm of explicit sharia discourse. In quite a number of interesting cases, the connection to a presumed harmonious and salutary state of affairs in the past is put in terms that either appeal to a

sultanic will of olden times or the situation during a venerated past but actually contradict or modify norms of the sharia.

In the case of an ox that was maimed by an unknown person in a village close to Istanbul, the judge decided to ask compensation from the village community as the culprit was not identified. He did so by invoking "old Ottoman *ḳānūn*" and despite the fact that a previous vow of the community to vouchsafe in criminal cases had apparently never been given [12]. The case might have entailed complications, as the judgment constituted a clear breach of stipulations of the *fiqh,* which accepts collective responsibilities only under clearly defined conditions not fulfilled here. However, the village community apparently agreed to the sentence accepting its premises. That Ottoman *ḳānūn,* dignified by (presumed) old age, could precede the rulings of the sharia as expressed in the discourse of the *fiqh,* was clearly expressed in orders like the one by Süleymān the Magnificent ordering a general investigation of oppressions in western Anatolia while he was on campaign against the Safavids [13].

The sultan as vanguard of the old order fighting against unbecoming innovations *(bid'at)* is clearly visible in a long edict issued in 1726 against female fashion regarded as morally derelict. The text takes recourse not to specific stipulations on costume enshrined in divine sources of the law or legal debate but bases its argument on the preservation of social order [14].

The argument for old order could be utilized in both directions. Just a month after the edict on female clothing had been issued, the same sultan, Aḥmed III, eager to highlight the Ottoman military success on the Peloponnese and the splendour of the dynasty, ordered the illumination of the mosques on festive occasions. This was apparently a novelty at that time (to become a major distinctive feature of Ottoman public festivities); accordingly, the edict argues with old precedence in "the Arab lands" in order to legitimize the order [15].

The recourse to sanctified olden times was thus used both by the authorities and subjects in order to legitimize claims. Cases like the introduction of festive illumination where something new was justified by citing old custom are most interesting. To give just one more example, this time from a popular petitioner: a breads bakery had been given licence for a number of new retail places because it existed for a long time and presumably would not be profitable without more outlets [16]. Here the idea that the social and economic order is to provide everything the population needs becomes the main thought [17]; and similar reasoning is used in numerous instances concerning people as different as traders in salt, candle-makers or producers of glass

bottles who all use the argument of old order to attain new business opportunities [18].

Such cases are much fewer in number than those where a presumably old claim is used to fend off the intrusion of a perceived innovation. They do show, however, the mechanism behind the thought more clearly: the recurrence to an order imagined as harmonious, fair and, therefore, in accord with God's will. The mental connection established between oldness and good order was so strong that the appeal to old custom evoked without further specification sanctified legitimation. No wonder that sometimes both sides in a conflict would make a claim to old custom [19]. Whether anybody involved in such litigation sincerely believed in the factualness of these olden times and in the inspiration of the past with old wisdom is difficult to decide. As received wisdom, however, old wisdom and the wisdom of olden times remained difficult to challenge — actually, I have never encountered an attempt to do so in early modern Ottoman material. Such imaginations of the wisdom of olden times are notionally void, of course, as mentioned at the beginning of the paper.

QUESTIONS

B. Hellendorff*. — If you allow me, I would like to go back to the connection of the Sublime Porte to the Southeast-Asian maritime world. In the 16th century, the Sultanate of Aceh, on the island of Sumatra, was locked in a triangular confrontation with Portuguese Malacca and the Sultanate of Johore. The Sultan appealed to Suleiman the Magnificent for help, on the basis of the latter's defense (and self-proclaimed) command of the Islamic world, or *umma*. The Ottomans sent help to Aceh, including canons, which were critical to success in combat at the time. My question is related to the logics of harmony and continuity which — if I'm not mistaken — formed the core of your presentation, as tools of legitimation used by the Ottomans in reference to pre-Islamic and Islamic heritage: to what extent and how did these two logics play out in the Sublime Porte's decision to partake to Aceh's struggle? I see this particular decision as an important foreign policy move; do you see in it a different picture from what you expressed in the domestic sphere? In more general terms, do you see a similar legal-political use of "tradition", or "heritage", in the Ottoman Empire's external relations at the time?

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C. K. Neumann. — This is an exciting case, you are right. But I think what has been here at play might better be regarded as something else — namely, as a consequence that went along with the Ottoman claim to be the leading ruler of the Islamic world, really the leader of the community. They only occasionally used the term "caliph" for themselves, but all the time their claim explicitly amounted to this leadership. So, I think the decision to send military help to Aceh has to be seen in this framework, which you may also regard as a kind of inherited framework, but of something different from harmonious eternal order.

P. Schwieger. — What about the practical aspects of the coexistence of the sharia and "customary law" or the function of precedents, *i.e.* in which way were such precedents archived and made available to the kadis in the various districts and how did the kadis refer to the precedents when making decisions?

C. K. Neumann. — If we talk about early modern Ottoman society we have to consider a society using the printing press extremely rarely. Therefore, a general dissemination of precedents is difficult to achieve. However, if a judgement evolved into a more abstract and therefore general legal opinion, which in its turn made its way into a *fetvā* of the highest *muftī* of the empire, the so-called *şeyḫ ül-islām*, there were good chances that such a precedent would turn into an often-copied established legal view. But these were exceptional cases. Otherwise, each court had its registers — and then there was local knowledge: kadis changed often, but deputy kadis (*nā'ib*, pl. *nü'ebā*) more infrequently. Moreover, qadis sometimes collected exemplary cases in collections of muster judgements — and these also possibly preserved such cases.

NOTES

[1] The relief showing the bird was stolen in 2002 (Öztürk 2002, Tuna 2009). Today the fountain has been restored; no longer connected to any water line it stands in the middle of a main road (TAY projesi 2015).
[2] Hagen (2013, pp. 439-444) distinguished conceptions of "cosmic" and of "sacred" time in the early modern Ottoman understanding of the past.
[3] On the negative image of Istanbul among Muslims prior to the Ottoman conquest, see Yerasimos (1990) and Kaptein (1997, pp. 39-41, 49-51).
[4] On the Ḳāḍızādeli movement, see Zilfi (1988, pp. 136-143), Baer (2008, pp. 64-104).

[5] This paper relates to the segments of early modern Ottoman society sketched out by Faroqhi (1995, pp. 19-30).

[6] In Ottoman Turkish, there are a number of words meaning "old", *ḳadīm* being the most significant one in the context of this article. The Ottoman dictionary of the sixteenth century (Aḥterī 1292, vol. 2, p. 121) explains the meaning of the word as that which has no precursor and as the opposite of *ḥādis*, "recent". The word is thus connected to *ḳıdem,* eternal existence in the past, one of the qualities of god (Yavuz 2002).

[7] http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=uskudar02&bsm=82dna82sk48 (Üsküdar, vol. 2, nr. 43, dated C-925/31.V.-28.VI.1519) and http://www.kadisicilleri.org/arascl/ayrmetin.php?idno=1016 (Üsküdar, vol. 2, nr. 190, dated II-B-935/9.-18.VII.1519). The principle cited in these cases meant that the early one surrenders to one earlier than him.

[8] http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=uskudar01&bsm=222jhk222yg87 and http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=uskudar01&bsm=223jhk223yg87 (Üsküdar vol. 1, nr. 331, dated 4-Ra-922/4.IV.1516); similarly from the same early register, http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=uskudar01&bsm=251jhk251yg87 (Üsküdar, vol. 1, nr. 407, dated II-L-922/7.-16.XI.1516).

[9] On the practice of *istimālet* connected to the recourse of older regulations by the Ottoman administration in newly-conquered regions, see Lowry 2002.

[10] http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=eyub61&bsm=289uyn289uy03 and http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=eyub61&bsm=290uyn290uy03 (Eyüp, vol. 61, nr. 336, dated 25-L-1065/28.VIII.1655).

[11] http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=bab46&bsm=432xbn432xn05, continued by http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=bab46&bsm=433xbn433xn05 (Bab, vol. 26, nr. 510, dated 7-Ş-1097/29.VI.1686). The proof through witnesses is central to the legal procedure of the sharia (Rohe 2009, pp. 38-40).

[12] http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=uskudar02&bsm=164dna164sk48 and http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=uskudar02&bsm=165dna165sk48 (Üsküdar, vol. 2, nr. 285, dated II-Ş-925/8.-17.VII.1519).

[13] http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=uskudar09&bsm=132xhk132cg87 and http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=uskudar09&bsm=133xhk133cg87 (Üsküdar, vol. 9, nr. 198, dated I-M-941, 13.-22.VII.1534). On such investigations, see Neumann & Yilmaz (2003).

[14] http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=istanbul24&bsm=97obn97on06, http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=istanbul24&bsm=98obn98on06 and http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=istanbul24&bsm=99obn99on06 (İstanbul, vol. 24, nr. 31, dated I-L-1138/12.-21.VI.1726). On clothing laws and their place in early eighteenth-century Istanbul, see Quataert (1997) and Hamadeh (2008, pp. 126-132).

[15] http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=istanbul24&bsm=38obn38on06 and http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=istanbul24&bsm=39obn39on06 (İstanbul, vol. 24, nr. 2, dated 11-Za-1138/11.VII.1726).

[16] http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=istanbul24&bsm=343obn343on06 (İstanbul, vol. 24, nr. 261, dated 15-R-1139/10.XII.1726).

[17] Together with traditionalism and fiscalism, provisionalism is one of the three principles of applied Ottoman economics in the early modern age identified by Genç (2000).

[18] Traders in salt: http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=istanbul18&bsm=395obn395on08 (İstanbul, vol. 18, nr. 398, dated 24-Ra-1087/6.VI.1676); candle-makers: http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=istanbul03&bsm=476hse476eg98 and http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=istanbul03&bsm=477hse477eg98 (İstanbul, vol. 3, nr. 730, dated 26-B-1027/19.VII.1618); producers of glass bottles: http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=istanbul24&bsm=208obn208on06 (İstanbul, vol. 24, nr. 127, dated 24-Z-1138/23.VIII.1726).

[19] http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=bab03&bsm=883esa883yt54, http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=bab03&bsm=884esa884yt54 and http://www.kadisicilleri.org/goster.php?blm=bab03&bsm=885esa885yt54 (Bab vol. 3, nr. 1155, 1157, dated II-C-1077/9.-18.X.1666 and I-L-1077/27.I.-5.II.1667, respectively).

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Itinéraires chiites: pouvoir politique et religion dans le Dār al-islām médiéval

par

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MOTS-CLÉS. — Fatimides; Almohades; Ibn Tūmart; Mahdī; Imām.

RÉSUMÉ. — La *fitna*/discorde qui éclate en 656 trouve son origine dans un différend politique portant sur la légitimité du calife. En 658, l'arbitrage d'Aḏruḥ, s'il met un terme au conflit, n'apporte pas de réponse claire sur ce point, mais il provoque l'éclatement de l'Umma. La communauté musulmane se scinde en trois courants: le sunnisme, le chiisme et le kharijisme qui se diffusent en Orient et en Occident. Par la suite, deux États chiites voient le jour en Afrique du Nord, les Idrissides au Maġrib al-aqṣā (789-974) et les Fatimides en Ifrīqiya (909-972). Toutefois, l'idéologie et les pratiques chiites ne se cantonnent pas à ces États, elles influencent certains mouvements sunnites, et en particulier celui des Almohades (1130-1269) par l'intermédiaire du Mahdī Ibn Tūmart et de son successeur 'Abd al-Mu'min.

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En 632, le prophète Muḥammad mourut sans désigner son successeur (*ḫalīfa*) ni avoir donné de consignes sur son mode de nomination. Dès l'accession au califat d'Abū Bakr, la discorde apparut pour atteindre son point d'orgue avec l'assassinat en 656 du troisième calife 'Uṯmān. Les tensions qui, depuis une vingtaine d'années, agitaient l'Umma aboutirent lors de l'arbitrage d'Aḏruḥ en 658 à sa scission en trois branches rivales, les Sunnites, les Alides-Chiites et les Kharijites.

Toutefois, si aucun descendant de 'Alī ne parvint à ravir le pouvoir aux Omayyades (661-750), puis aux Abbassides (750-1258), certains d'entre eux réussirent à s'établir dans des zones périphériques du califat. Ainsi, les Idrissides (789-974) s'implantèrent-ils au Maġrib al-aqṣā, tandis que les

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Fatimides (909-1171), après avoir dominé l'Ifrīqiya (909-972), s'installèrent en Égypte et partiellement en Syrie. Cependant, l'idéologie chiite influença les Almohades sunnites (1130-1269).

1. Ibn Tūmart, fondateur de l'almohadisme

Pour comprendre la démarche d'Ibn Tūmart, berbère originaire d'Iġīlīz, village situé dans les montagnes du Sūs (Anti-Atlas marocain), il est nécessaire de la replacer dans le contexte géopolitique, mais également religieux du Dār al-islām du XIᵉ siècle.

1.1. LE CONTEXTE POLITICO-RELIGIEUX

La conquête de l'Afrique du Nord, dont la population était composée dans sa très grande majorité de tribus berbères nomades et sédentaires, débuta avec la prise de la Cyrénaïque en 642-643 et se poursuivit jusqu'au détroit de Gibraltar franchi en 711. Après la conquête, des États ayant adopté les trois grands courants de l'Islam y virent le jour, notamment les Idrissides chiites (789-974) [1]*, les Aghlabides sunnites (800-909) et les Rustamides kharijites (777-909). Si les fondateurs de ces États avaient réussi à rallier diverses tribus berbères à leur cause, les pouvoirs suivants agirent de même: les Fatimides, des Chiites ismaéliens, s'appuyèrent sur les Kutāma, les Almoravides (1056-1147) et les Almohades sunnites (1130-1269) rassemblèrent autour d'eux les premiers les Lamtūna, les seconds les Maṣmūda.

Par ailleurs, les Fatimides, dont le fondateur, le *mahdī* ‘Ubayd Allāh, avait rapidement été proclamé *imām* puis calife en 910, quittèrent l'Ifrīqiya en 972 pour s'installer en Égypte, au Caire, la ville palatine qu'ils venaient de créer. Ce califat chiite ismaélien (910-1171) fut rapidement considéré comme un rival doublé d'un ennemi par les deux califats sunnites. Le premier, le califat des Omayyades de Cordoue (929-1031), était quasiment son voisin puisqu'il dominait l'Andalous. Le second avait à sa tête les Abbassides; né en 750, il devait perdurer à Bagdad jusqu'en 1258. Quant au Maġrib al-aqṣā/Maghreb extrême, il était à la veille de la naissance d'Ibn Tūmart sous la domination des Almoravides/al-Murābiṭūn, alors que l'éradication des mouvements considérés comme hétérodoxes se poursuivait, préparant le terrain à la domination de l'islam sunnite.

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* Les chiffres entre crochets [ ] renvoient aux notes, pp. 108-109.

1.2. L'HOMME

Il est difficile d'appréhender un individu dont la vie oscille entre quelques faits avérés que l'on peut considérer comme crédibles et une construction hagiographique *a posteriori*. En effet, on dispose d'un unique témoignage historiographique contemporain, celui d'al-Bayḏaq dont les «Mémoires» peuvent être datés des années 1150 [2]. Même la date de naissance d'Ibn Tūmart est incertaine, il est né dans le village d'Iġīlīz (près de Taroudant, Anti-Atlas marocain) entre 1076 et 1081. C'est un Berbère, ses parents appartiennent à deux fractions des Maṣmūda, son père aux Harġa et sa mère aux Masakkāla.

Si le berbère est sa langue maternelle, il acquiert une bonne maîtrise de la langue arabe [3]. D'après NAGEL (2000, pp. 129-130): «Il avait été formé par un jurisconsulte de l'école de Mâlik ibn Anas, avant qu'il ne quittât le Maghreb pour continuer ses études dans les centres fameux de l'érudition islamique comme Bagdad.» Aucune information précise ne permet d'apprécier ni son niveau d'études ni ses moyens de subsistance lorsqu'en 1106, il entame un périple intellectuel. Ses pas le portent aussi bien vers les centres culturels de l'Occident musulman — il séjourne à Cordoue, à Bougie et à Tunis — qu'en Orient — il réside à Alexandrie et à Bagdad. Toutefois, il est difficile d'affirmer qu'il a accompli le pèlerinage à La Mecque, car il ne porte pas le titre de *ḥāǧǧ* et ses disciples ne le lui attribuent pas. Peut-être, ainsi que le sous-entend LÉVI-PROVENÇAL (1948, pp. 268-269), des circonstances politiques ou matérielles l'en ont-elles empêché.

On situe son retour au Maghreb vers 1116-1117. Dans un faubourg de Bougie, à Mallāla, celui que l'on surnomme le «*faqīh*/juriste du Sūs» rencontre probablement en 1117 ‘Abd al-Mu'min ibn ‘Alī ibn al-‘Alwī ibn Ya‘lā al-Kūmī Abū Muḥammad [4], qui de fidèle disciple deviendra son successeur. Ibn Tūmart sillonne villes et villages et harangue des foules qu'il subjugue. Orateur hors pair, il les séduit grâce à son savoir et sa piété. Dans des discours enflammés, il met en avant la corruption et l'hérésie du pouvoir almoravide qu'il accuse d'anthropomorphisme. Toutefois, son succès est également à mettre sur le compte de l'hostilité d'une partie de la population vis-à-vis des Murābiṭūn. Sa conduite n'est pas sans rappeler celle d'Abū ‘Abd Allāh, le prédicateur/*dā‘ī* ismaélien au service du Fatimide ‘Ubayd Allāh, dénonçant l'impiété des Aghlabides auprès des Kutāma fin IXᵉ-début Xᵉ siècle. Le *dā‘ī*, homme cultivé, «éblouissait en effet ses interlocuteurs berbères aux connaissances rudimentaires par son étonnante maîtrise des sciences religieuses, fiqh [droit], ḥadīṯ [Traditions (paroles et actes du

Prophète)], kalām [″théologie spéculative″]. Sa conduite exemplaire toute de piété et d'austérité le rehaussait à leurs yeux.» [5]

Les prêches enflammés d'Ibn Tūmart échauffent souvent les esprits, quand ils ne suscitent pas des troubles. Ils finissent par attirer l'attention de l'émir almoravide 'Alī ibn Yūsuf et de son entourage qui le perçoivent très vite comme un agitateur. De nombreux affrontements entre l'armée almoravide et ses partisans incitent en 1123 Ibn Tūmart à se refugier à Tinmal où il continue sa prédication. D'après al-Bayḏaq, c'est dans cette localité qu'il aurait été proclamé *mahdī*. Le mouvement initié par Ibn Tūmart gagne en ampleur; cependant, s'il rallie à sa cause toutes les tribus Maṣmūda, en 1128-1129, il pratique le *tamyīz*/le tri, éliminant aussi bien ceux qui sont des dissidents avérés que ceux sur qui pèsent les soupçons d'un ralliement de circonstance [6]. Le Mahdī décède en août 1130, quelques mois après avoir échoué devant les murs de Marrakech, la capitale almoravide. Il est enterré à Tinmal [7]. Son disciple 'Abd al-Mu'min doit attendre trois années avant d'être reconnu officiellement comme son successeur; il s'arroge alors en tant que successeur du Mahdī le titre de calife. Voici donc brossée à grands traits la vie, du moins d'après le peu que l'on en sait, du fondateur de l'almohadisme, mouvement sunnite prenant appui sur le principe de l'unicité divine ou *tawḥīd*.

1.3. L'ALMOHADISME, UNE DOCTRINE BASÉE SUR LE *TAWḤĪD*

Le mot *tawḥīd* «désigne le fait de croire et d'affirmer que Dieu est unique (*wāḥid*), autrement dit le monothéisme» [8]. L'almohadisme s'appuie sur ce principe, mais Ibn Tūmart et ses disciples, *al-Muwaḥḥidūn*/les Almohades, estiment qu'ils sont les seuls à respecter la stricte orthodoxie monothéiste [9]. La doctrine élaborée par ce dernier est à mettre en étroite corrélation avec son parcours, et en particulier avec ses voyages. Si l'on sait peu de choses sur les enseignements qu'il a suivis, on peut aisément supposer que son cursus ait compris du droit malékite et hanbalite, mais également des enseignements délivrés par des savants instruits dans les différents courants de pensée tels le mu'tazilisme et l'acha'risme. Il s'est également intéressé au soufisme. D'après LÉVI-PROVENÇAL (1948, p. 269), «Ce qui est certain, c'est qu'il acquit pendant ce séjour — qui fut sans doute prolongé, mais sur la durée duquel il est difficile de se faire quelque idée — la presque totalité de ses connaissances théologiques et qu'il jeta les bases de ce qui allait devenir la doctrine des Almohades.»

Tous ces éléments se retrouvent dans sa doxa qui apparaît comme une «synthèse dogmatique et théologique» [10]. Ainsi, des éléments propres aux

deux autres courants de l'islam y sont décelables. L'almohadisme recourt à la violence et à l'exclusion de ceux qui le rejettent, imitant en cela les Kharijites-Ibadites. Le concept de l'*imām* impeccable et infaillible est emprunté aux Chiites. Pour le droit, Ibn Tūmart opère une sorte de «compromis juridique». Il reconnaît le *Muwaṭṭa'*, l'ouvrage de base de l'école malékite, mais s'oppose à toute utilisation du raisonnement par analogie, rejoignant l'école hanbalite qui n'admet pour fondements du droit que le Coran et la Sunna. La mystique est représentée par le biais du soufisme et les courants de pensée religieuse, le mu'tazilisme et l'acha'risme, sont également présents à travers l'usage du *kalām*/«théologie spéculative» [11].

D'après LÉVI-PROVENÇAL (1948, p. 270), «À son retour [d'Orient], il n'est ni Mahdī, ni Imām Impeccable; il est, comme bien d'autres avant lui et après lui, dans ce pays où la réaction et l'esprit conservateur ne perdent jamais leurs droits, le simple censeur des mœurs, celui qui se réclame des principes de l'*iḥtisab*, ordonne la pratique du bien et interdit celle des actes blâmables. Il a l'ardeur d'un convaincu, d'un illuminé.» Par la suite, le tribun religieux va aussi endosser le costume du meneur d'hommes. Cette nouvelle fonction est probablement facilitée par l'attribution et la reconnaissance des titres d'*imām* et de *mahdī* par ses partisans.

2. Ibn Tūmart: *imām* et *mahdī*

En déclarant Ibn Tūmart *imām* et *mahdī*, ses partisans lui attribuent les titres dont s'était paré le Fatimide 'Ubayd Allāh. Toutefois, si ce dernier se targuait de les utiliser légitimement, compte tenu de son ascendance, comment un Berbère d'Iġīlīz pouvait-il s'en prévaloir?

2.1. LA *SĪRA* D'IBN TŪMART

Pour évoquer Ibn Tūmart, Al-Bayḏaq adopte un genre littéraire particulier, celui de la *sīra*/«biographie». Il met en parallèle les différentes étapes de la vie d'Ibn Tūmart avec celles du Prophète Muḥammad [12], faisant de la *sīra* d'Ibn Tūmart une mise en abyme de la *Sīra nabawiyya*/biographie du Prophète. Ainsi, l'époque almoravide est-elle assimilée à la Ǧāhiliyya, la période d'ignorance que connut la péninsule Arabique avant la révélation prophétique. Comme le Prophète, Ibn Tūmart parvient à constituer autour de lui un noyau de fidèles — l'équivalent des Compagnons —, qui l'assimilent délibérément à Muḥammad, et Al-Bayḏaq qualifie les expéditions d'Ibn Tūmart de *maġāzi*, ses retraites de *hiǧra*… Ibn Tūmart est également obligé de

s'enfuir, puis il est proclamé *mahdī* à Tinmal, la bourgade devenant *de facto* la nouvelle Médine. Le mimétisme caractérise également leur fin de vie, Ibn Tūmart et le Prophète sont tous deux gravement malades, ils prononcent un long sermon avant leur mort et sont enterrés dans leur demeure.

Toutefois, cette construction hagiographique mettant en parallèle la vie du Prophète et celle d'Ibn Tūmart n'est pas nouvelle, car déjà le Qāḍī Al-Nu'mān (mort en 974) considérait l'avènement du Fatimide 'Ubayd Allāh Al-Mahdī comme une répétition de la mission de Muḥammad: «Lui et son descendant 'Ubayd Allâh al-Mahdî, tous deux prédestinés par Dieu, sont les seuls à garantir l'intégrité de la loi divine. Le Prophète l'a promulguée et 'Ubayd Allâh va la restituer» [13]. Certes, l'écriture de la *sīra* octroyait à Ibn Tūmart une place à part dans l'histoire de l'Islam sunnite, mais il était berbère alors que le Prophète et l'ismaélien 'Ubayd Allāh étaient arabes. Par ailleurs, dès le VIIIᵉ siècle, les Berbères avaient été sensibilisés à l'histoire des Alides, d'autant que certaines tribus se disaient alides. Aussi la tentation fut-elle grande de le rattacher à 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, cousin et gendre du Prophète.

2.2. L'*Imām* Ibn Tūmart

Ibn Tūmart a-t-il délibérément changé de nom, prétendant qu'il s'appelait Muḥammad et que son père se prénommait 'Abd Allāh? A-t-il succombé «à la hantise de se donner une généalogie arabe»? [14] La réponse se trouve peut-être chez ses disciples désireux de lui octroyer une légitimité irréfutable. Quoi qu'il en soit, la modélisation d'une généalogie fictive vit le jour. Et lorsqu'il évoque Ibn Tūmart, Ibn Ḫaldūn (mort en 1406) écrit que ce dernier se réclamait de la descendance du Prophète par sa fille Fāṭima, ce qui lui valut l'appellation d'Al-Fāṭimī/le Fatimide. Il le décrit comme étant «de filiation ṭālibī (de 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib)» et signale qu'il s'est établi «chez les Harġa, tribu des Maṣmūda». Il est étonnant que l'auteur, d'ordinaire pourfendeur de l'imposture, ait été aveuglé par son admiration pour Ibn Tūmart au point de reprendre cette fausse généalogie dans le *Kitāb al-'Ibar* [15].

Or, dans ce cas de figure encore, le rapprochement avec le chiisme ismaélien est flagrant. Le Fatimide 'Ubayd Allāh (de son vrai nom 'Abd Allāh) assurait être un descendant du sixième imam 'Abd Allāh, fils de Ǧa'far al-Ṣādiq. Il était donc un lointain descendant d'Abū Ṭālib. 'Abd Allāh avait hérité l'imamat de son père et l'avait transmis à ses descendants en secret. Quant à la prophétie selon laquelle «le *mahdī* porterait le nom du Prophète, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh, cette prophétie devait être accomplie par son fils et successeur Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Qā'im.» [16]

Quand on examine les procédés utilisés, on ne peut qu'abonder dans le sens de Nagel (2000, p. 128) qui remarque: «Dans la propagande mahdiste d'Ibn Tûmart, on retrouve de nombreux motifs qui figurent dans le mouvement ismaélien et qui aboutirent au califat fatimide.» Il ajoute: «Pour justifier ses prétentions, Ibn Tûmart se faisait passer pour un alide ou plus vraisemblablement ses partisans le faisaient passer pour un descendant de 'Alî.»

En tant que descendant de 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, l'époux de la fille du Prophète, Ibn Tūmart s'insérait *de facto* dans la lignée de celui-ci. Il pouvait légitimement se prévaloir du titre d'*imām*, à l'instar de tous les Alides. Toutefois, l'argumentation du sunnite Ibn Ḫaldūn a ses limites; s'il adhère à cette généalogie fictive, il désapprouve Ibn Tūmart lorsque ce dernier se proclame imam *ma'ṣūm*/impeccable, car, dit-il, «cette appellation relève du šī'isme imāmite» [17].

Faut-il voir dans cette appellation une influence chiite ainsi que l'écrit Ibn Ḫaldūn? D'après Urvoy (1974, p. 38):

> En fait, certains indices vont à l'encontre de cette idée. Le premier est la vision historique de l'*imāma*: Ibn Tūmart donne une liste des *imām* qui englobe Adam, Noé, Abraham, David, Jésus, Muḥammad, Abū Bakr et 'Umar et va jusqu'à trente ans après la mort du Prophète. À cette liste tout à fait traditionnelle ne s'ajoute *aucun* nom entre 'Alī et le *Madhī* des Almohades lui-même. Par ailleurs, alors que le šī'isme refuse tout crédit à 'Ā'iša, Ibn Tūmart accepte avec vénération les *ḥadīt* transmis par cette dernière.

En résumé, il est possible qu'Ibn Tūmart, voire ses partisans, aient utilisé le terme d'*imām*, mais en lui déniant une signification chiite. Toutefois, ce dernier ne fut pas uniquement considéré comme l'Imām par les Almohades, il fut également «leur Mahdī».

2.3. Le *Mahdī* Ibn Tūmart

Le mot *mahdī* signifie littéralement le bien guidé (par Dieu), l'homme devant apparaître à la fin des temps pour établir un règne de justice. Les partisans d'Ibn Tūmart préparèrent les esprits en divulguant la nouvelle que l'apparition du *mahdī* au Maghreb était imminente, imitant en cela la propagande fatimide menée par le *dā'ī* ismaélien Abū 'Abd Allāh. Toutefois, si le sunnisme et le chiisme admettent tous deux la venue d'un *mahdī*, ils divergent sur la place à lui accorder. Les Sunnites, contrairement aux Chiites, ne font pas du *mahdī* un *imām* occulté dont on attend le retour.

Par ailleurs, on ignore si Ibn Tūmart fut reconnu *mahdī* en 1121 à Iġīlīz ou à Tinmal en 1124, les auteurs sont en désaccord sur ce point. Selon Fierro (2000, pp. 109, 112), «il n'est même pas certain en ce qui concerne

Ibn Tûmart, que ce soit lui qui l'ait adopté [le titre de mahdi]», et elle rappelle qu'«il n'y a aucune mention d'al-Mahdi, ni dans la 'Aqida, ni dans les deux Murshida-s [les écrits d'Ibn Tūmart]». Quant à GHOUIRGATE (2014, pp. 27-30), il émet l'idée que la qualité de *mahdī* «ne lui a sans doute été octroyée qu'après sa mort». Ainsi, l'attribution du titre de *mahdī* à Ibn Tūmart, à l'instar de celui d'*imām*, suscite bien des interrogations.

Néanmoins, dans son cas, ce titre utilisé par les Fatimides était-il légitime? Pour FIERRO (2000, p. 113), il l'était puisque «l'apparition du Mahdi a été décrite dans les sources musulmanes d'après des signes qui furent reconnus chez Ibn Tûmart». Toutefois, elle modère sa pensée en rappelant que la fiction joue un rôle non négligeable tant dans l'écriture de la vie de ce dernier que dans la description des origines du mouvement almohade. Pour la définir, elle utilise l'expression «mélange d'histoire et de légende» (FIERRO 2000, pp. 110-111). Qu'Ibn Tūmart ait été reconnu *mahdī* de son vivant, à son initiative ou à celle de ses disciples, quel sens les uns et les autres attribuaient-ils à ce terme? En un mot, Ibn Tūmart a-t-il sciemment utilisé le concept de madhisme «chiite», conscient que cette appellation serait un gage de succès politico-religieux, comme il l'avait été pour les Fatimides, et en particulier pour son fondateur 'Ubayd Allāh? [18]

Enfin, on peut s'interroger sur la nécessité et sur la finalité d'une attribution *post mortem*. Compte tenu des difficultés rencontrées pour imposer le *tawḥīd* du vivant d'Ibn Tūmart, le calife 'Abd al-Mu'min et les shaykhs almohades ont sans doute craint qu'après sa mort le mouvement ne s'essoufflât, pire qu'il ne se désagrégeât. Il fallait maintenir intacte la cohésion des Muwaḥḥidūn autour de sa figure charismatique, voire les remobiliser, afin que le mouvement perdurât. Toutefois, prêcher l'almohadisme, le diffuser, puis s'emparer des territoires almoravides n'était qu'une étape, le but ultime d'Ibn Tūmart étant la constitution d'une communauté régie par le *tawḥid*.

3. Du religieux au politique:
des influences chiites ismaéliennes?

Ibn Tūmart et son successeur, 'Abd al-Mu'min, se sont inspirés des pratiques fatimides qui avaient démontré leur efficacité dans le domaine politico-religieux, en particulier en matière de propagande, d'éducation et de pratique religieuse.

3.1. LA PRÉDICATION: *DU'ĀT* ET *ṬALABA*

Les Fatimides ismaéliens et les Almohades sunnites eurent recours à la prédication/*da'wa* dans un but similaire: rallier à eux des tribus berbères pour fonder une communauté qui constituerait la base d'un futur État. *Da'wa* ou appel est un terme qui s'applique à la propagande politico-religieuse dont est chargé le *dā'ī*/l'envoyé (pl. *du'āt*) [19]. Dans le cas des Fatimides, *al-da'wa al-hādiya*, la mission bien guidée ismaélienne a d'abord été cachée. Dès 893, Abū 'Abd Allāh, l'envoyé de 'Ubayd Allāh, a propagé parmi les Kutāma la nouvelle de l'arrivée d'un *mahdī*, mais sans révéler son identité [20]. C'est grâce à eux qu'il a pu conquérir toute l'Ifrīqiya.

Si les Almohades s'inspirèrent de ce procédé, Ibn Tūmart ne prêcha jamais sous le manteau et les premiers *ṭalaba*/les doctes, qui n'étaient autres que ses disciples, suivirent son exemple. Son successeur 'Abd al-Mu'min continua d'envoyer des prédicateurs auprès des tribus pour propager le dogme almohade; toutefois, s'il maintint cette structure, «il transforma le groupe informel de disciples missionnaires en un corps institutionnel d'inspecteurs-doctrinaires» [21].

On ne sait si ses successeurs maintinrent ce système et pendant combien de temps, alors que les califes-imams fatimides n'abandonnèrent jamais la *da'wa*. Cherchant à étendre leur autorité et leur pouvoir sur l'ensemble de la communauté musulmane/l'*Umma* et sur les autres populations, ils conservèrent un réseau de *dā'ī*-s [22]. Des institutions spéciales d'apprentissage et d'enseignement furent créées pour leur formation, tel le *Dār al-'ilm*/la Maison de la Connaissance fondé par Al-Ḥākim (996-1021) au Caire [23]. Si les premiers *ṭalaba* almohades étaient des disciples du Mahdī, personnages ayant suivi ses enseignements et donc à même de les propager auprès des Berbères, on peut supposer que les suivants furent choisis parmi les *ḥuffāẓ*/«gardiens» qui, grâce à leur instruction, étaient capables de diffuser et d'expliquer les fondements de la doctrine et les règles de conduite à observer.

Dans le système fatimide, les *du'āt* dépendaient d'un *dā'ī al-du'āt*, ou grand missionnaire, même si le calife-imam restait la tête pensante; or dans le cas des *ṭalaba*, il ne semble pas y avoir eu d'intermédiaire entre ces derniers et le calife almohade. Par ailleurs, on ignore si des traités spéciaux/*ādāb al-ṭalaba* leur étaient destinés hormis les écrits du Mahdī. En effet, sous les Fatimides, les *du'āt* avaient à leur disposition des ouvrages telle la *Risāla al-mūǧaza al-kāfiya fī ādāb al-du'āt* d'Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Naysābūrī (XIᵉ s.) qui comprend des chapitres sur les vertus et les devoirs du *dā'ī* [24]. Quoi qu'il en soit, dans le cadre du Maghreb, les missionnaires

fatimides et almohades s'exprimèrent en berbère afin d'êtres audibles par le plus grand nombre d'individus [25].

Par ailleurs, les Fatimides n'imposèrent pas l'ismaélisme, l'Égypte demeura sunnite, ses habitants restèrent majoritairement rattachés à l'école shaféite et une importante communauté copte perdura alors que le pouvoir ismaélien dura environ deux siècles [26]. D'après DAFTARY (2003, p. 106), «Les dignitaires fatimides, y compris les vizirs étaient choisis pour leurs mérites et leurs qualifications, sans considération d'appartenance religieuse ou ethnique.» Cette tolérance religieuse tranche avec les pratiques almohades, en particulier celle du *tamyīz*/le tri inauguré par le Mahdī en 1128-1129 et poursuivi pas son successeur 'Abd al-Mu'min.

3.2. L'ÉDUCATION: *ḤUǦAR* ET *ḤUFFĀẒ*

Dans *The Fatimids and their Tradition of Learning*, WALKER (1997, pp. 38-39) évoque les *ḥuǧar* (sing. *ḥuǧra*/chambre) fondées par le calife fatimide al-Mu'izz (953-975), probablement à proximité de la résidence califale au Caire. Ces *ḥuǧar* étaient l'équivalent des collèges militaires destinés à la jeunesse. Le pouvoir ambitionnant de former un corps d'officiers d'élite, les candidats étaient sélectionnés à l'entrée. Par la suite, les auteurs n'évoquent quasiment plus ces structures jusqu'à ce que Al-Afḍal (vizir au service des Fatimides de 1094 à 1121) les réhabilite. Des baraquements dont on ignore le nombre exact étaient destinés aux enfants d'émirs décédés ou vivants. Selon Ibn Ṭuwayr, ils y recevaient une instruction religieuse basée sur la doctrine ismaélienne ainsi que sur les arts martiaux et l'équitation.

Le successeur du Mahdī, le calife 'Abd al-Mu'min (1133-1163), conçut un système s'apparentant à celui des Fatimides probablement vers 1150, car les *ḥuffāẓ* (sing. *ḥāfiẓ*/«le gardien») sont mentionnés pour la première fois en 1156. Le calife sélectionna ou peut-être fit sélectionner trois mille garçons (dont cinquante venaient de Séville), âgés de six ans environ, pour leurs capacités d'apprentissage. Comme les enfants casernés dans des *ḥuǧar*, ils recevaient une formation religieuse basée sur les principes de l'almohadisme, et en particulier sur les écrits du Mahdī. Des ouvrages sur l'administration des gouvernorats figuraient également au programme. Le versant physique n'était pas oublié puisque les enfants pratiquaient les arts équestres, le tir à l'arc, la natation et apprenaient les règles de la navigation [27].

Si la finalité des deux projets était politico-religieuse, les Fatimides et les Almohades ne les appréhendèrent pas de la même manière. On l'a dit, les Fatimides maintinrent en poste la quasi-totalité du personnel sans se préoccuper de son appartenance confessionnelle. Ils désiraient former un corps

d'officiers d'élite acquis à leur cause pour mener à bien leur expansion territoriale en Syrie et auquel ils pourraient confier le gouvernorat des villes conquises.

Pour les Almohades, l'enjeu était tout autre. Tous les habitants de l'État almohade devaient, bon gré mal gré, adhérer à la doctrine officielle. 'Abd al-Mu'min eut rapidement conscience qu'il fallait certes éduquer des hommes qui seraient rompus aux fonctions administratives, militaires et navales, mais qui seraient surtout des relais de l'idéologie almohade. Toutefois, d'après BURESI & EL AALLAOUI (2013, p. 56), 'Abd al-Mu'min aurait pris «prétexte de la corruption de certains éléments almohades pour s'attacher les autres en recrutant leurs fils comme *ḥāfiẓ*-s».

Par ailleurs, si les «élèves-officiers» fatimides étaient éduqués dans la langue arabe, il est probable que «les gardiens» aient pratiqué le bilinguisme, arabe-berbère, pour une plus grande efficacité. Néanmoins, le projet de 'Abd al-Mu'min semble bien ambitieux alors que l'existence des *ḥuffāẓ* apparaissant en pointillés dans les sources, il est difficile d'évoquer leur pérennité.

3.3. LA VISITE AUX TOMBEAUX: *ZIYĀRA* ET *ḤĀǦǦ*

La *ziyāra* est une visite pieuse, un pèlerinage à un lieu saint, à un tombeau ou à un mausolée. À la différence du *ḥāǧǧ*, pèlerinage canonique à La Mecque, et du pèlerinage de moindre importance, la *'umra*, la *ziyāra* n'est mentionnée ni dans le Coran ni dans la Sunna. Cependant, tous les chiites s'accordent pour effectuer la *ziyāra* aux tombeaux de tous les imams chiites [28]. Au Caire, les visites pieuses aux tombes des personnes appartenant à la famille du Prophète (Sayyida Nafīsa, Sayyida Ruqayya, Sayyida 'Ātika) étaient devenues courantes sous les Fatimides aux XIᵉ-XIIᵉ siècles. Or cette pratique a eu ses défenseurs parmi lesquels Taqī al-dīn Al-Subkī (m. en 1355) et ses détracteurs en la personne d'Ibn Taymiyya (m. en 1328).

Il est surprenant que les Almohades aient imité les Chiites en faisant du tombeau d'Ibn Tūmart et de ceux des trois premiers califes des lieux de mémoire. Après son décès, l'*imām mahdī* fut inhumé à Tinmal dans sa demeure qui jouxtait une petite mosquée; celle-ci fut ensuite agrandie par 'Abd al-Mu'min [29]. Très vite, un culte officiel fut organisé autour de son tombeau. Il faut sans doute y voir le désir de faire perdurer le souvenir du Mahdī et un moyen de mobiliser, voire remobiliser, ses partisans autour de sa figure tutélaire. Pour entretenir la mémoire d'Ibn Tūmart, son successeur, le calife 'Abd al-Mu'min, donnait l'exemple; il s'exposait aux yeux de tous en venant prier sur la tombe de son mentor avant de prendre une décision importante. Il le consultait comme il le faisait lorsque ce dernier était encore en vie.

Si la pratique pouvait susciter des étonnements, ce fut surtout la dénomination de ces visites au tombeau du fondateur de l'almohadisme qui a fait débat, les auteurs ayant eu du mal à s'accorder sur le mot à employer. Certains privilègièrent le terme de *ḥāǧǧ* et d'autres celui de *ziyāra*. Cette décision peut sembler curieuse, car le *ḥāǧǧ* est une obligation des hommes à l'égard d'Allāh (III, 91), mais ce serait oublier que dans certaines traditions chiites, les mérites de la *ziyāra* surpassaient ceux du *ḥāǧǧ* [30]. Quoi qu'il en soit, que la visite au tombeau d'Ibn Tūmart fût pour celui qui l'effectuait une simple *ziyāra* ou l'équivalent du *ḥāǧǧ*, elle prenait *de facto* une dimension sacrale, exauçant le souhait des autorités almohades.

4. Conclusion

Si les Fatimides se sont établis sur les ruines de l'État aghlabide, les Almohades ont mis à profit les faiblesses de l'État almoravide pour le supplanter. Les parallèles sont nombreux quant à la terminologie politico-religieuse et aux méthodes utilisées par les Fatimides et les Almohades.

En effet, la doxa almohade emprunte au chiisme les concepts d'*imām* et de *mahdī*; toutefois, Ibn Tūmart et ses disciples se réclament fondamentalement du sunnisme. Par ailleurs, si les Almohades se sont intéressés au parcours des Fatimides en Ifrīqiya, c'est tant d'un point de vue dogmatique que logistique. Ils ont étudié avec soin les raisons du succès fulgurant de ces derniers, ne retenant que ce qu'ils estimaient utile pour parvenir à leurs buts, en particulier en matière de propagande. Ibn Tūmart a rapidement compris que les «thèmes classiques» sur le bien et le mal, sur l'égalité sociale ne captaient pas uniquement l'attention des foules, ils les fédéraient.

Ensuite, Ibn Tūmart et son successeur 'Abd al-Mu'min se sont inspirés des pratiques ismaéliennes. La *da'wa*, chère aux Fatimides, devint un levier primordial pour assurer le contrôle du territoire. Former des agents qui seraient en même temps des propagandistes du dogme almohade leur apparut également indispensable. Pour éduquer les futurs serviteurs de l'État, 'Abd al-Mum'in accorda le plus grand soin à la sélection et à l'éducation des jeunes recrues. Enfin, il fallut immortaliser la figure du Mahdī, ce réformateur doublé d'un orateur hors pair qui avait soulevé l'enthousiasme des foules. 'Abd al-Mu'min établit le pèlerinage au tombeau du Mahdī, prenant modèle sur les visites aux sépultures des nombreux imams chiites.

Après la fin de l'État almohade en 1269, l'almohadisme survécut en Ifrīqiya grâce aux Hafsides (1229-1574). Toutefois, la mort du Mahdī des Almohades en 1130 ne signifia pas l'arrêt du mahdisme dans le Maghreb

extrême. Au début du XVIᵉ siècle, le mouvement devait renaître suite à l'arrivée des Portugais sur la côte sud du Maroc. Vers 1510, sollicité pour mener la guerre contre les Portugais, le chérif Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān, fondateur de la dynastie saʿdienne (1509-1659), prit le titre chiite et mahdiste d'Al-Qā'im bi-amr Allāh (celui qui s'élève sur l'ordre de Dieu). Il s'appuyait sur les Berbères du Sūs, ainsi qu'Ibn Tūmart l'avait fait auparavant.

QUESTION

P. PETIT[*]. — Il est surprenant qu'une fiction généalogique rattachant le fondateur de cette dynastie d'origine berbère à la lignée du Prophète ait pu se réaliser si facilement. Les communautés berbères étant fort bien au courant des généalogies de tout un chacun, comment cette fiction a-t-elle pu prendre racine en dépit de la mémoire locale des filiations? Par ailleurs, cette reconnaissance d'une ascendance chérifienne était-elle prise au pied de la lettre par les contemporains de la dynastie almohade, ou bien s'agissait-il plutôt d'une «possibilité acceptée», du type de celles que Mondher Kilani évoque dans son article «Les oasiens croient-ils à leurs généalogies?» (2000), au départ de recherches en contexte tunisien?

B. MARTEL-THOUMIAN. — On peut effectivement s'étonner que le public berbère ait accepté cette construction généalogique, et que par la suite un savant réputé comme Ibn Ḫaldūn l'ait défendue. Il faut sans doute replacer la première de ces attitudes dans un contexte typiquement berbère. D'après DACHRAOUI (1961, p. 196), «Les Berbères étaient particulièrement sensibles à l'histoire glorieuse et aux récits épiques de la descendance 'alide, ainsi qu'aux légendes et poésies prophétiques qui chantaient le triomphe inéluctable de l'Imam impeccable.» Si l'on ajoute que des tribus berbères se disaient d'ascendance alide, les prétentions d'Ibn Tūmart n'avaient rien d'aberrant. Quant à Ibn Ḫaldūn, l'admiration sans borne qu'il voue au réformateur berbère annihile son objectivité.

Quant à savoir si les populations auxquelles Ibn Tūmart et ses disciples s'adressaient croyaient à cette généalogie mythifiée, il est difficile de répondre. Certains y ont sans doute adhéré, d'abord parce que cela flattait leur ego, Ibn Tūmart étant l'un des leurs, ensuite, parce que les Berbères qui avaient été conquis par les Arabes accédaient par la venue d'un Mahdi issu de leurs rangs au statut de peuple élu. D'autres se sont probablement montrés

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plus méfiants ou ont fait ouvertement état de leur scepticisme, et ce sont sans doute ceux-là qui ont fait les frais du *tamyīz*/tri. Toute contestation ou adhésion tiède étant inacceptable et punie par la mort, beaucoup ont probablement ratifié l'ascendance alide du Mahdī, préférant se conformer à la doxa almohade pour avoir la vie sauve.

NOTES

[1] Toutefois, les Idrissides n'ont pas été les premiers Chiites en Afrique du Nord, ils avaient été précédés en Ifrīqiya par deux missionnaires envoyés par l'*imām* Ğa'far al-Ṣādiq en 762-763 (DACHRAOUI 1964, p. 93).

[2] Cette source n'est pas d'une grande fiabilité et FIERRO (2000, pp. 110-111) de rappeler que Al-Bayḏaq dans son ouvrage s'intéresse davantage à 'Abd al-Mu'min qu'à Ibn Tūmart. Elle remarque également que dans le cas du *Kitāb*/le Livre d'Ibn Tūmart, on ne peut exclure la possibilité d'une réécriture, car la seule copie connue date de 579/1183-1184, soit plus de cinquante ans après sa mort.

[3] «Les lettres et les traités du Mahdī ne témoignent pas seulement d'une forte originalité d'esprit, elles dénotent aussi chez l'auteur d'une connaissance parfaite de la langue arabe et de toutes ses subtilités.» (LÉVI-PROVENÇAL 1948, p. 271).

[4] LÉVI-PROVENÇAL 1960, pp. 80-82.

[5] DACHRAOUI 1964, p. 95.

[6] BENHIMA 2009, pp. 140-143.

[7] HOPKINS 1971, pp. 983-984.

[8] GIMARET 2002, p. 417.

[9] SCHATZMILLER 1993, pp. 803-804.

[10] BURESI & EL AALLAOUI 2013, pp. 25-26.

[11] Pour de plus longs développements, voir URVOY 1974 et BURESI & EL AALLAOUI 2013, pp. 24-26.

[12] BOMBRUN 2011, pp. 94-98.

[13] NAGEL 2000, p. 128.

[14] URVOY 1974, p. 20.

[15] HAMÈS 2006, p. 438.

[16] BRETT 2000, pp. 97-98.

[17] HAMÈS 2006, p. 442, note 45.

[18] NAGEL 2000, p. 136.

[19] CANARD 1965, pp. 173-176.

[20] DAFTARY 2003, p. 112.

[21] BURESI & EL AALLAOUI 2013, pp. 33, 54-55; GHOUIRGATE 2014, p. 222.

[22] Après la création de l'État fatimide en Ifrīqiya, face aux nombreuses oppositions que les Fatimides durent affronter, la *da'wa* connut un moment de répit sous les trois premiers califes, puis un regain avec Al-Mu'izz (953-975). Toutefois, c'est sous le califat d'Al-Mustanṣir (1036-1094) qu'elle atteignit son apogée avec une multiplication du nombre de *du'āt* (DAFTARY 2011, pp. 54-56).

[23] DAFTARY 2003, pp. 105, 145, 150-151.

[24] KLEMM *et al.* 2011.

[25] «Le berbère est l'idiome de tous les jours, celui des insultes et des imprécations, c'est celui des propagandistes qui s'en vont proclamer la venue de l'Impeccable de village en village et de vallée en vallée.» (LÉVI-PROVENÇAL 1948, p. 261).

[26] DAFTARY 2011, p. 58.

[27] BURESI & EL AALLAOUI 2013, pp. 55-56; GHOUIRGATE 2014, p. 224. Les Almohades s'étaient substitués aux Almoravides en Andalous.

[28] MERI & TOUATI 2005, pp. 567-572, 574-576.

[29] BASSET & TERRASSE 1924, pp. 33, 44, 51, note 1; GHOUIRGATE 2014, pp. 416, 421, 439.

[30] MERI & TOUATI 2005, p. 567.

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Conclusions

by

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Concluding an international conference that has dealt with issues of 'wis-dom', 'politics', and their relation in a geographically-expanded area stretch-ing from the Ottoman empire to the island state of Japan and contemporary Thailand in Southeast Asia is not an easy task. The difficulty of it is, of course, related to the cultural diversity and the peculiar historical back-grounds and traditions which have shaped 'wisdom' and 'politics' in the individual countries and nation-states that form this geographical expanse, but it is further complicated by our approach to these issues, and by the way our approach is shaped by our own historical background and tradition.

I will illustrate this with an example taken from research conducted at the Ghent Centre for Buddhist Studies of Ghent University on the revival of Bud-dhism and the (re)shaping of a 'Buddhist identity' in contemporary China. The beginnings of academic research on Buddhism in Europe date back to the nineteenth century. It has been shown that nineteenth century European Bud-dhological research was fundamentally driven by a 'Christian' attitude: in the same way as philological research on the holy texts of Christianity had trad-itionally endeavoured to reconstruct the history of the Christian faith back to the time of Jesus, nineteenth century Buddhological research aimed at recon-structing the history of Buddhism back to the figure of the historical Buddha. This was done through philological analysis of Buddhist texts in Pāli and San-skrit. Neglecting all those elements that did not fit into the Christian-shaped framework and premises of religious development, the endeavour to recon-struct 'original Buddhism' in fact resulted in the 'creation' of a Buddhist his-toriography which was mirrored in the history of Christian faith [1][**]. This 'Buddhist construct', in turn, informed Buddhist identity in Asia. The latter phenomenon became particularly prominent when, as one aspect of the

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** Numbers in brackets [ ] refer to the notes and references, p. 114.

European colonial enterprise, the Christians inspired the concept according to which a 'religion' should be encroached on the Asian traditional concept of 'popular belief' and Asian societies reclassified and reorganized their traditional 'religions' in a reaction to adjust themselves to European 'modernization' [2]. The creation of a 'religious identity' is, however, not only the product of a negotiation with other traditions, but also of a negotiation with one's own past. As stated by Anthony Kemp, "A sense of time is fundamental to human thought to the extent that the past must be invoked in order to establish any present ideology, even one that involves a discounting of the past. All ideologies are fundamentally descriptions not of a present state, but of a past history" [3]. This implies that also Buddhist modernity will be influenced by the particular history of Buddhism in a given region and therefore by the peculiar mutual influence social and political structures and Buddhism may have had on each other. History and modern life — the contemporary *condition humaine* — in China are indeed different from history and modern life in India, Japan, or Thailand. This diversity is corroborated in interviews conducted with Buddhist nuns in contemporary China which revealed that, although nuns may generally claim that traditional rules for monastic conduct should be adapted to modern Chinese usage, they occasionnally also refer to (an undefined) 'tradition' to justify monastic conduct. 'Tradition' therefore appears to remain an important facet of contemporary 'identity building' [4].

What the above example shows is that 'tradition' is an important identity marker both in the West and in the East, and that this 'tradition' is *not* an 'absolute value'. This is, in my opinion, a first major conclusion that can be drawn from today's conference on traditional wisdom and political expression. In its characteristic of not being 'absolute', tradition opens up the way to the field of the myth and the divine. The importance of this was briefly summarized by Martin Kern as follows: "Through remembrance, history turns into myth", whereby "it does not become unreal but, on the contrary, and only then, reality in the sense of a continual normative and formative force" [5].

As a normative and formative force, tradition provides the present with a sense and the present only attains a sense because it is founded in an — imagined or unimagined — past. This is a second conclusion that can be drawn from today's conference. For the concrete Chinese case, this phenomenon has been studied by Wolfgang Bauer, among others. For China, a country in which inherited wisdom and politics have always been intricately connected (and contemporary China is no exception to this), W. Bauer claimed, "[W]as […] die chinesische Philosophie darüber hinaus mit der Vergangenheit verband, war der rückwärts gewandte Blick, der sie von Anbeginn charakterisierte. Die

chinesische Philosophie gab sich, so möchte man sagen, von vornherein nicht nur als erwachsen, sondern gleich auch als alt zu kennen" [6].

Having heard the different contributions on today's conference, the above observation pops up as a question that can be posed to all 'cultural identities' addressed here. In which way and to what degree is tradition a normative and formative force at play when we discuss Buddhist rituals in the Chinese Confucian state; the importance of traditional Shinto for contemporary Japanese nationalism; the Chinese Communist Party's self-portraying as the incarnation of absolute truth and its concomitant stance on the position of religion in society, *vis-à-vis* the traditional Tibetan culture and its positioning of Buddhist wisdom in society; the Pahlava king in his relation and self-defining in an overall Brahmanical Indian context; the Thai kings and their self-identification with Buddhism in the contemporary international context; the importance of the Sharia in the Ottoman empire and its ramifications for a (re)positioning of tradition in a non-Sharia context; the dynamics of politics and religion in the creation of Berber states and the Almohade Empire; the use of Islamic tradition(s) in contemporary Islamist movements? A third conclusion that may therefore be drawn from today's conference is that 'political expression' justifies itself on religion tradition as much as 'religious traditions' shape political expressions.

The three mentioned conclusions may thus be comprised in the following: 'traditional wisdom' (which may but should not be religious) and 'political expression' stand in a dynamic relation and are therefore not 'absolute'. Both 'traditional wisdom' and its 'political expression' are 'negotiated values'. Or, in other words, the paradox of tradition is that it is — by definition — not traditional.

We have started this conference with a paper on China. I have also started my concluding remarks with a reference to China. So, allow me to also bring this conference to a conclusion with China. I would like to do this with a free paraphrase of a poem by the famous poet Su Shi (1036-1101) who lived at a time when Chinese traditional Confucian political philosophy was considerably reshaped and re-established in a process of negotiation with history and actual fact. In my free paraphrase, Su Shi's socially critical poem runs as follows:

> *Allen hopen dat hun zonen later 'wijsheid' zouden hebben.*
> *Ich, dagegen, hoffe daß mein Sohn unbedeutend wird.*
> *So that, maybe, one day, he may become a politician.* [7]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] See C. Maes, *Dialogues with(in) the Pāli Vinaya. A Research into the Dynamics and Dialectics of the Pāli Vinaya's Ascetic Others, with a Special Focus on the Jain Other* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Ghent University, 2015), pp. 11-36.

[2] For the impact of the Christian concept of 'religion' on Asian indigenous traditions, see V. Goossaert & D. A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago & London, The University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 50. For the concept of 'popular belief', see M. Gaenssbauer, *Popular Belief in Contemporary China. A Discourse Analysi*s (Bochum/Freiburg, Project Verlag Edition Cathay, 69, 2015), p. 9.

[3] A. Kemp, *The Estrangement of the Past: A Study in the Origins of Modern Historical Consciousness* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 106.

[4] T. Chiu, *Contemporary Buddhist Nunneries in Taiwan and Mainland China: A Study of Vinaya Practices* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Ghent University, 2016).

[5] M. Kern, "Announcements from the mountains: The stele inscriptions of the Qin First Emperor", in F. H. Mutschler & A. Mittag (Eds.), *Conceiving the Empire. China and Rome Compared*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, [2008] 2009, p. 226.

[6] W. Bauer, *Geschichte der Chinesischen Philosophi*e (München, Verlag C. H. Beck, 2006), p. 37.

[7] The original poem, entitled "Jonkingly while washing my son", was translated into Dutch by W. L. Idema, *Spiegel van de klassieke Chinese poëzie van het Boek der Oden tot de Qing-dynastie* (Amsterdam, Meulenhoff, 1991), p. 503: "De mensen hopen allen dat hun zonen schrander zijn. / Maar ik heb door mijn schranderheid mijn leven wel verknoeid. / Mijn wens is daarom dat de jongen simpel zij en dom. / Zodat hij zonder rampspoed het zal brengen tot minister! //".