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Artykuły / Articles

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Typological, Phylogenetic, and Areal Properties of Conative Animal Calls in Ewe

Abstract

This article is dedicated to conative animal calls (CACs) in Ghanaian Ewe (Kwa). The study is couched within a 'radial-network-with-prototype-effects' approach to linguistic categorisation and examines the typological features of CACs (phonetics and morphology) as well as their phylogenetic (cognate) and areal (contact-induced) properties. Drawing on previous works on CACs, fieldwork activities involving seven speakers of Ewe, and the native-speaker competence of one of the authors, a set of 17 primary CACs is identified and complemented with an open class of (poorly lexicalised) secondary CACs. The analysis of the material collected demonstrates that Ewe CACs comply with the formal features associated with the prototype of a CAC and, when treated holistically, the CAC category fulfils its typological profile. The canonicity degree exhibited by Ewe CACs closely matches that reported for another Kwa language, Akan, with some CACs being (nearly) identical in both languages. The authors argue that this lexemic similarity most likely stems from crosslinguistic tendencies and thus instantiates the phenomenon of parallel development instead of having an areal or phylogenetic motivation.

Keywords: Ewe, Kwa, conative animal calls, typology, cognancy, language contact

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1. Introduction

The present article is dedicated to Ghanaian Ewe (ISO639-3 [ewe] / Glottocode ewee1241). Ewe is one of the Gbe languages that form part of the Kwa linguistic branch, which in turn belongs to the Niger-Congo realm.[1] According to a 2021 census, Ewe is spoken by 3.8 million Ghanaians or 14% of the country's population.[2] Ewe is also widely used in Togo, where it is the most spoken indigenous language and one of the languages recognised at a national level.[3] In Ghana, the Ewe mainly reside in the east: in the Volta Region close to the Togolese border.

Our study concerns one of the most under-researched parts of Ewe grammar and lexicon – as well as the grammars and lexica of Gbe and Kwa languages, more generally – namely, conative animal calls or CACs. CACs are operationally defined as (a) lexemes and lexicalised constructions that (b) are used by human speakers to make non-human animals perform determined actions and that (c), in addition to the lexemic status of words, can be employed holophrastically as self-standing non-elliptical utterances.[4] In Ewe,

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[1] Kay Williamson and Roger Blench, 'Niger-Congo', in: *African Languages: An Introduction*, eds. Bernd Heine and Dereck Nurse, Cambridge 2000; James Essegbey, 'Ewe', in: *Concise encyclopedias of language and linguistics*, eds. Keith Brown and Sarah Ogilvie, Amsterdam 2006, pp. 408–409; Felix Ameka and Kropp Dakubu, 'Introduction' in: *Aspect and Modality in Kwa Languages*, eds. Felix Ameka and Mary E. Kropp Dakubu, Amsterdam 2008, pp. 1–7; Angela Kluge, *A sociolinguistic survey of the Gbe language communities of Benin and Togo: Gbe language family overview*, SIL Electronic Survey Reports 2011; Mary E. Kropp Dakubu, 'Kwa', in: *The Oxford handbook of African languages*, eds. Rainer Vossen and Gerrit J. Dimmendaal, Oxford 2020, pp. 184–190; The (extent of) inclusion of Ewe (and the Gbe branch) in the Kwa family is still debated; see: Mary E. Kropp Dakubu, 'Kwa languages', in: *Encyclopedia of language and linguistics*, ed. Keith Brown, Amsterdam 2005, pp. 272–274. Nevertheless, most scholars accept "Kwa hypothesis" even if it is not entirely conclusive; see: Mary E. Kropp Dakubu, 'Towards a phonology of Proto-Kwa: Onwards from Stewart's "Potou-Akanic-Bantu"' (paper presented at the International Congress Towards Proto-Niger-Congo: Comparison and Reconstruction, Paris, France, September 18–21, 2012). Indeed, Ewe is considered as one of the Kwa languages in Diedrich Westermann and Margaret Bryan, *Handbook of African languages. Part II: Languages of West Africa*, London 1952; John Stewart, 'Niger-Congo, Kwa', in: *Current trends in linguistics*. *Linguistics in sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok, The Hague 1971, pp. 179–212; Kay Williamson and Roger Blench, 'Niger-Congo'; James Essegbey, 'Ewe'; Felix Ameka and Kropp Dakubu, 'Introduction'; Kirill Babaev, 'О реконструкции личных местоимений в праязыке ква [O rekonstrukcii ličnyx mestoimenij v prajazyke Kva = On reconstructing personal pronouns in Proto-Kwa]', in: *Вопросы языкознания* [Voprosy Jazykoznanija] 4, 2010, pp. 81–108; Angela Kluge, *Sociolinguistic survey of Gbe language communities*; Gbegble Nada and Jan Nuyts, 'The expression of epistemic modality in Ewe', *Africana Linguistica* 18 (2012), pp. 133–168; Mary E. Kropp Dakubu, 'Kwa'; Doreen Enyonam Esi Yegblemenawo and Stella Afi Makafui Yegblemenawo, 'Doc-umenting praise names ahanoŋkɔ among Ewes: A socio-semantic perspective', in: *Celebrating 50 years of ACAL: Selected papers from the 50th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, eds. Akinbiyi Akinlabi et al., Berlin 2021, pp. 331–347. It is also classified as Kwa Volta-Congo by Glottolog (see: 'Spoken L1 Language: Ewe', Viewed 5 June 2024, https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/ewee1241), a linguistic family that, similar to the traditional Kwa group, includes Potou-Tano and Gbe branches, and thus Akan and Ewe – which is important for the present study (see further below).

[2] 'Ghana Statistical Service', Viewed 5 June 2024, www.statsghana.gov.gh.

[3] James Essegbey, 'Ewe'.

[4] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype', *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* 37/1 (2021), pp. 3–40; Alexander Andrason and Admire Phiri, 'Talking

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CACs have only been mentioned by Felix Ameka, who more than 30 years ago dedicated four pages of his PhD dissertation to these types of expressions.[5] To be exact, Ameka lists 8 CAC lexemes in total and explicates their meaning with the apparatus of Natural Semantic Metalanguage.[6] The description only includes summonses and dispersals and is mostly focused on primary CACs (referred to as "phonations").[7] Other manners of calling animals are also mentioned, especially the use of natural-kind labels and proper names in a summoning function, although it is unclear to what degree these are members of the CAC category or mere vocatives.

More recently, CACs have systemically been analysed in three closely related varieties (dialects) of another Kwa language, Akan: Asante, Bono, and Fante. Duah, Andrason, and Antwi tested more than a hundred Akan CACs – between 30 and 40 per variety – for their pragmatic, semantic, phonetic, and morphological compliance with a crosslinguistic prototype of CACs and examined the overall extent of their cognancy.[8] This study demonstrates that although the CAC category in each of the three Akan varieties closely matches the CAC prototype by complying with almost all features associated with it, the cognancy of CACs in Asante, Bono, and Fante and their heritability are low. While this seems to "corroborate […] the hypothesis according to which CACs tend to be different even in (closely) related languages,"[9] the authors conclude that many more comparative studies are needed. These should analyse CACs not only in the dialects of a language (as is the case of Asante, Bono, and Fante) but also in (more) distant members of a language family (as is the case of Akan and Ewe).

Although, as mentioned above, the category of CACs is under-researched, our typological knowledge has continually been increasing.[10] This advancement also pertains

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to animals in a moribund language: Pragma- semantics, phonetics, and morphology of conative animal calls in Tjwao', *Linguistic Variation* 23/2 (2023), pp. 318–342; Bernd Heine, *The grammar of interactives*, Oxford 2023. Strictly speaking, humans are part of the animal kingdom too. Hence the modifier 'non-human' in this sentence. However, for the sake of simplicity, we will omit the term 'animal' when referring to animals in the remaining portions of the article.

[5] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices' (PhD diss., Australian National University, 1991).

[6] The section discussing CACs (and interjections) was subsequently repeated verbatim in an article published a year later; see: Felix Ameka, 'The meaning of phatic and conative interjections', *Journal of Pragmatics* 18/2–3 (1992), pp. 245–271.

[7] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 489. The terms 'primary' and 'secondary' used with reference to CACs will be explained in section 3.

[8] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls: Asante, Bono, and Fante', Talk at the Semantics Colloquium, Institute für Linguistik, Goethe Universität Frankfurt, 4 May, 2023. The Akan data may be consulted in Alexander Andrason, Anna Luisa Daigneault, Maya Hendrix, Rebecca Pizzitola and Anusha Somu, *A living database of conative animal calls*, Salem 2024.

[9] Reginal Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls', p. 31.

[10] See, especially: James Bynon, 'Domestic animal calling in a Berber tribe', in: *Language and man: Anthropological issues*, eds. William McCormack and Stephen Wurm, The Hague 1976, pp. 39–66; Ewa Siatkowska, *Zachodniosłowiańskie zawołania na zwierzęta: stan obecny, funkcje historyczne, stosunek do systemu językowego* [*West-Slavonic animal calls: Present situation, historical functions, and relationship with the language system*],

to the phylogenetic behaviour of CACs mentioned above.[11] In contrast, very little is known about the areal properties of CACs. Current research suggests that CACs can be borrowed but their borrowability is overall a peripheral phenomenon, especially when compared to other sources of CACs (i.e., language-internal primary and secondary CACs). In other words, although in most languages analysed thus far, one finds CAC loanwords (with apparent preference for the transfer of secondary rather than primary CACs) and although some CACs may spread across adjacent areas, this seems to pertain to a highly limited set of lexemes and/or languages.[12]

Given the above-mentioned gaps in Ewe and CAC scholarship, the present article has the following objectives. First, we aim to expand our knowledge of CACs in Ewe. We will analyse a larger set of primary and secondary lexemes and constructions than has been done thus far (i.e., our study includes the so-called directionals and CACs unrelated to motion in addition to summonses and dispersals) and focus on the examination of the formal properties of CACs (i.e., we study the phonetics and morphology of CACs in addition to semantics).[13] Second, we aspire to contribute to the typology of CACs. We

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Warszawa 1976; Fernando Poyatos, *Paralanguage: A linguistic and interdisciplinary approach to interactive speech and sounds*, Amsterdam 1993; Fernando Poyatos, *Nonverbal communication across disciplines. Volume II: Paralanguage, kinesics, silence, personal and environmental interaction*, Amsterdam 2002; Anna Wierzbicka, *Cross-cultural pragmatics: The semantics of human interaction*, Berlin 2003; Alexandra Aikhenvald, *Imperatives and commands*, Oxford 2010; Azeb Amha, 'Directives to humans and to domestic animals: The imperative and some interjections in Zargulla', in: *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Cushitic and Omotic Languages*, *Paris, 16–18 April 2008*, eds. Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle and Martine Vanhove, Köln 2013, pp. 211–229; T. Denisova and L. Sergeev, 'О некоторых особенностях верхового диалекта в говорах чувашской диаспоры Ульяновской области [On some dialectal features in the varieties spoken by the Chuvash diaspora of the Ulyanovsk region]', in: *Вестник ЧГПУ им. И. Я. Яковлева*, 2015, pp. 32–37; Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Anni Jääskeläinen, 'Eläinten omat sanat: Eläimille suunnatut interjektiot ihmisen ja eläimen vuorovaikutuksen osina', in: *Kieli ja elain. Vuorovaikutusta ja kielioppia monilajisissa yhteisöissä*, eds. Rea Peltola, Anni Jääskeläinen and Katariina Harjunpää, Helsinki 2021, pp. 133–184; Alexander Andrason, 'Conative animal calls in Xhosa: Testing the prototype', *Africana Linguistica* 28 (2022), pp. 25–54; Alexander Andrason and Admire Phiri, 'Talking to animals in a moribund language: Pragma-semantics, phonetics, and morphology of conative animal calls in Tjwao', *Linguistic Variation* 23/2 (2023) pp. 318–342; Bernd Heine, *Grammar of interactives*. For a more detailed account of research on CACs, see: 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Alexander Andrason, 'The non-arbitrariness of some conative calls used to chase animals', *Linguistica Silesiana* 44 (2023), pp. 73–103.

[11] Ewa Siatkowska, *West-Slavonic animal calls*; Sybilla Daković, *Interiekcje w języku polskim, serbskim, chorwackim i rosyjskim. Opis i konfrontacja* [*Interjections in Polish, Serbian, Croat, and Russian. Description and comparison*], Wrocław 2006; Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'; Alexander Andrason and Pius W. Akumbu, 'Towards a linguistic analysis of conative animal calls in Babanki and Bum (Grassfields languages of Cameroon)', *Kervan: International Journal of Afro-Asiatic Studies* 28/1 (2024), pp. 3–28.

[12] James Bynon, 'Domestic animal calling in a Berber tribe'; Daković, *Interiekcje w języku polskim, serbskim, chorwackim i rosyjskim*; Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Alexander Andrason, 'Conative animal calls in Xhosa'; Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[13] Due to the lack of sufficient corpora involving CACs, we do not study the syntax of Ewe CACs.

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will compare Ewe data with what is known about CACs in Akan (a distantly related but geographically adjacent language with which Ewe has entertained an "intense […] contact" "over the past several hundred years")[14] and other languages of the world. In particular, by contrasting Ewe and Akan data, we seek to shed light on the phylogenetic status (cognancy) of CACs in the two languages (or language clusters) as well as their potential areal relationship.

To achieve these goals and following the recent wave of publications dedicated to CACs, we will couch our study within a 'radial-network-with-prototype-effects' approach to linguistic categorisation.[15] Accordingly, we respond to the following research question: What is the typological profile of CACs in Ewe. This enquiry warrants three more specific questions: (a) Do Ewe CACs comply with the formal (phonetic and morphological) features postulated as inherent to the crosslinguistic prototype of a CAC? (b) Does the extent of their canonicity coincide with that identified in Akan? (c) Do CACs in Ewe and Akan exhibit shared phylogenetic (cognate) and/or areal properties?

The article will be structured in the following manner: in section 2, we present our conceptual framework and data-collection method; in section 3, we introduce original Ewe evidence, embedding it within Akan and crosslinguistic evidence; in section 4, we evaluate our findings against the theoretical backdrop adopted by us, respond to the research question(s), and conclude the study.

2. Theoretical backdrop

As in the recent works on CACs in Kwa[16] and other languages,[17] we make use of a linguistic-categorisation framework referred to as a radial network with prototype effects.[18] This means that the category of CACs – in Ewe, Kwa, or other language systems – is understood as a network of real-world exemplars structured conceptually and topographically given the extent of their compliance with an ideal prototype. Exemplars that comply with the prototype fully are canonical and located in the centre of the category; exemplars that comply with the prototype partially are semi-canonical and located in the areas more distant from the categorial nucleus; exemplars that comply with the prototype

[14] Felix Ameka and Kropp Dakubu, 'Introduction', p. 3.

[15] See: Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Bernd Heine, *Grammar of interactives*.

[16] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[17] See especially: Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Alexander 'Conative animal calls in Xhosa'; Alexander Andrason 'The non-arbitrariness of some conative calls used to chase animals'; Bernd Heine, *Grammar of interactives*.

[18] Eleanor Rosch and Carolyn B. Mervis, 'Family resemblances: Studies in the internal structure of categories', *Cognitive Psychology* 7 (1975), pp. 573–605; John Taylor, *Linguistic categorization*, Oxford 2003; William Croft and Alan Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*, Cambridge 2004; Vyyan Evans and Melanie Green, *Cognitive linguistics: An introduction*, Edinburgh 2006; Lara Janda, 'Cognitive linguistics in the year 2015', *Cognitive Semantics* 1 (2015), pp. 131–154.

minimally are non-canonical and located in the category's peripheries. The relation that connects all the exemplars to the prototype and to each other – whether fully, semi-, or non-canonical – is of a family-resemblance type. That is, instead of being related by a single (or a few) essential feature(s), exemplars are related through a (repeatable) sequence of partial similarities that, in principle, hold for some exemplars only. However, when this overlapping-similarity operation is reiterated *n* times, *all* exemplars become connected to each other and the category becomes coherent, yet internally diverse. As a result, belonging to the category becomes gradient and ranges from full to minimal. Moreover, the category becomes connected – conceptually, topographically, and dynamically – to many other categories;[19] and in the case of CACs, to other types of interactives.[20]

While all elements of the categorial network are relevant – this includes all the exemplars regardless of their canonicity degree as well as the rules guiding the radiation paths out of the centre to the periphery and thus violations and exceptions – the position of the prototype is 'privileged'. It is so because the prototype constitutes a 'meridional' in relation to which the conceptual and topographical distance of all the members is measured. The prototype itself is defined cumulatively as a set of properties. The prototypical features of CACs as well as the motivations for their association with the prototype can be consulted in several publications dedicated to CACs in the languages of Africa written by one of the authors of the present article.[21] Here we mention the prototypical features relevant for the present study, i.e., those that are related to the form of CACs. Regarding phonetics, CACs are mono-syllabic, exhibit extra-systematic sounds (IPA and non-IPA) and phonotactics, and are accompanied by marked modulations (e.g., volume, speed, pitch, and melody). They also draw on consonantal material to a greater extent than is the case of the lexical classes of so-called sentence grammar (i.e., lexical classes of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, numerals, and adpositions).[22] Regarding morphology, CACs are mono-morphemic, do not contain morphemes (inflectional, derivational, or compounded) other than the root, and are often realised in replications (this is typical of summonses, whereas dispersals tend to be punctual).

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[19] Eleanor Rosch and Carolyn B. Mervis, 'Family resemblances'; John Taylor, *Linguistic categorization*; William Croft and Alan Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*; Vyyan Evans and Melanie Green, *Cognitive linguistics: An introduction*; Lara Janda, 'Cognitive linguistics in 2015'.

[20] Cf. Bernd Heine, *Grammar of interactives.*

[21] See: Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Alexander Andrason 'Conative animal calls in Xhosa'; Alexander Andrason 'The non-arbitrariness of some conative calls used to chase animals'; Alexander Andrason and Admire Phiri, 'Talking to animals in a moribund language'.

[22] Regarding the distinction between sentence grammar and interactive grammar, consult: Bernd Heine, *Grammar of interactives*; see also: Bernd Heine, Tania Kuteva and Gunther Kaltenböck, 'Discourse grammar, the dual-process model, and brain lateralization: Some correlations', *Language and Cognition* 6/1 (2014), pp. 146–180; Bernd Heine, Tania Kuteva and Haiping Long, 'Dual-process frameworks on reasoning and linguistic discourse: a comparison', in: *Grammar and cognition: Dualistic models of language structure and language processing*, eds. Alexander Haselow & Gunther Kaltenböck, Amsterdam 2020, pp. 59–89.

The evidence that we will discuss in this article has been gathered in a threefold manner: desk research, native-speaker competence, and fieldwork. We started our data collection by reviewing scholarly literature: Westermann, Capo, Aziaku, and, especially, Ameka.[23] Concurrently, we have consulted the database of Akan CACs compiled by Duah, Andrason, and Antwi.[24] Next, we drew on the native-speaker competence of one of the authors of this article, who had grown up in both the south (in the town of Aŋlɔga) and centre (in the capital Ho) of the Volta Region and is equally proficient in the Aŋlɔ and Ewedome varieties of Ghanaian Ewe.[25] Subsequently, we conducted semi-structured interviews with seven Ewe speakers. Most of them reside in the south of the Volta Region (in Keta and Aŋlɔga) and are Aŋlɔ speakers. Nevertheless, Ewe speakers residing in Ho were also consulted. Once our database was compiled and certain tendences as well as problems became evident, we conducted follow-up interviews to verify and/or refine our observations.[26] In total, 8 speakers have contributed to the dataset underlying this paper. Although our participants lived at least parts of their life in rural areas (where their exposure to animals was intense and varied), were both female and male, and their age ranged from young adulthood to elderly, the evidence collected certainly does not encapsule the entire richness of the Ewe language, nor does it reflect the repertoire of all Ewe speakers. To elicit CACs, we used the operationalised definition introduced in section 1 and the 4-page-long guidelines developed for our previous work on CACs in other languages, although carefully adjusted to the reality of the Ewe community. These guidelines included: the types of animals that were expected to be the addressees of CACs given the ecosystem in which the Ewe of Aŋlɔga and Ho live; the types of actions that were likely to be expressed by CACs or the situations in which one would expect CACs to appear; and the various types of encodings that could be exploited by CACs. This means that our data collection activities were preceded by a series of interviews in which the members of the Ewe community discussed the ways in which they (had) interacted with domestic and wild animal species. Most data were gathered over the period of three months in 2023. The study itself was developed within the Ki-Afrika research program funded by the Living Tongues Institute of Endangered Languages during the stay of the first author in Ghana in 2022–2023.

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[23] Diedrich Westermann, *Grammatik der Ewe-Sprache*, Berlin 1907; Diedrich Westermann, *Evefiala: Ewe-English Dictionary*, Berlin 1928; Diedrich Westermann, *Wörterbuch der Ewe-Sprache: Ewe-Deutsch*, Berlin 1954 [1905]; Hounkpati Capo, *A comparative phonology of Gbe*, Berlin 1991; Vincent Erskine Aziaku, *A linguistic analysis of Ewe animal names among the Ewe of Ghana*, Köln 2016; Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices'; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections'.

[24] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[25] Regarding the dialectology of Ewe (and Gbe), consult: George Nickerson Clements, 'The verbal syntax of Ewe' (PhD diss., University of London, 1991), pp. 16–18; Angela Kluge, *Sociolinguistic survey of Gbe language communities*, 2011; Jemima Sam and Cynthia Ablah Agbloe, 'Lexical variations in the Ewe language spoken in Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana', *Journal of Education* 7 (2015), pp. 69–87.

[26] A second range of such follow-up interviews concerned specifically (and exclusively) the lexeme *les* (see section 3.1.4). In some of our data collection activities we were kindly assisted by Ramada.

3. Evidence

In the present section, we introduce Ewe data by discussing primary (section 3.1) and secondary (section 3.2) CACs separately. We do so because, cross linguistically, these two types of CACs tend to exhibit quite distinct profiles with regard to their phonetics and morphology,[27] as well as heritability and, apparently, borrowability.[28] Within these two classes, each CAC or each cluster of similar CACs will be described independently, following alphabetical order. Whenever possible, we will locate our findings within the previous works on CACs in Ewe[29] and Akan,[30] showcasing the similarities and differences between our and other scholars' observations.

3.1. Primary CACs

Primary CACs are constructions that are employed in a directive-to-animal function either exclusively or, if they allow for some other uses, with notable regularity. In compliance with the definition provided in section 1, these types of CACs may also be used holophrastically as self-standing non-elliptical utterances. Cross linguistically, most primary CACs have entertained this holophrastic directive-to-animal function from the beginning of their grammatical life – they were coined as CACs. A smaller group of them arguably originates in non-CAC sources. However, due to the advancement along a CAC-isation path – a conversion of structures built around other lexical classes into CACs – a conceptual and formal link connecting such CACs to their non-CAC sources is irrecoverable and their association with a CAC status can be regarded as absolute.[31] Overall, we were able to identify 17 primary CACs in Ewe.

3.1.1. *Hai* and *hei*

The CACs *hai* [ɦáì] and *hei* [ɦéì], which are not mentioned in previous literature, are directed to small domestic species: goats and sheep, as well as dogs and cats. These lexemes are only employed in a dispersing function to chase away

[27] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Alexander Andrason, 'Conative animal calls in Xhosa'; Alexander Andrason, 'The non-arbitrariness of some conative calls used to chase animals'; Alexander Andrason and Admire Phiri, 'Talking to animals in a moribund language'; Bernd Heine, *Grammar of interactives*; Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices'; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections'.

[28] Ewa Siatkowska, *West-Slavonic animal calls*; Sybilla Daković, *Interjections in Polish, Serbian, Croat, and Russian*; Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'; Alexander Andrason and Pius Akumbu, 'Towards a linguistic analysis of conative animal calls in Babanki and Bum'.

[29] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices'; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections'.

[30] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[31] See: Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Alexander Andrason, 'Conative animal calls in Xhosa'.

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an animal.[32] The consonant [ɦ] present in the onset is systematic and belongs to the standard Ewe inventory.[33] In contrast, the vocalic material is partly extra-systematic. While [a] and [i] are common vowels in the general word stock in Ewe,[34] "double nuclei" or vowel sequences found within a single syllable, including diphthongs and thus CVV̩ structures, are limited to ideophones and interjections.[35] In the vocabulary of sentence grammar (for example, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, numerals, and adpositions), the allowed syllable types are V, CV, and CLV/CGV.[36] In the sentence-grammar lexicon, vowel sequences can be found but only appear at a morpheme boundary, where two morphemes coalesce into a word.[37] In such cases, the consecutive vocalic elements are hetero-syllabic: they form two independent syllables. In contrast, in *hai* and *hei*, the vowel sequence occurs in the root, which is mono-morphemic and indivisible into more elementary meaning-bearing units. Given this mono-morphemicity and the considerable articulatory speed (that is, *hai* and *hei* are pronounced very fast as is common of dispersals across languages) as well as in harmony with the analysis of vowel sequences in other interactives mentioned above,[38] the sequence [ai] in *hai* and *hei* can be viewed as homo-/mono-syllabic and a diphthong.[39] Within [ai] itself, the vowel [a] is given prominence – the diphthong is thus falling. The prominent vocalic element carries high tone, while the non-prominent one bears low tone.[40] In addition to the particular shortness mentioned

[32] Contrast with *hé* which is used to draw a person's attention (cf. Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 484) and *hã́* expressing *refusal* (Diedrich Westermann, *Wörterbuch der Ewe-Sprache*, p. 233).

[33] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 1; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections', p. 262; Jacques Rongier, *Parlons éwé*, Paris 2004, p. 63.

[34] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 1; see also: F. K. Atakpa, 'The Ewe language', in: *A handbook of Eweland. Volume I. The Ewes of southeastern Ghana*, ed. Francis Agbodeka, Accra 1997, pp. 28–46; Gilbert Ansre, Ewe language, in: *A handbook of Eweland*. *Volume II. The northern Ewe in Ghana*, ed. Kodzo Gavua, Accra 2000, pp. 22–47.

[35] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 4; Felix Ameka, 'Ideophones and the nature of the adjectives word class in Ewe', in: *Ideophones*, eds. Ekhard Voeltz and Christa Kilian-Hatz, Amsterdam 2001, pp. 25–48; see also: Herbert Stahlke, *Topics in Ewe phonology*, Ann Arbor 1971; Vincent Erskine Aziaku, *Linguistic analysis of Ewe animal names*, p. 120.

[36] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 4.

[37] Ibidem.

[38] Ibidem; Felix Ameka, 'Ideophones and the nature of adjectives'.

[39] Indeed, in Akan, where each single tone-bearing mora forms its own syllable, this articulatory speed is one of the reasons why similar sequences of vowels are analysed homo-syllabically and regarded as diphthongs in CACs and several other interactives (Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'; see below in this section).

[40] Concerning the issue of tone in Ewe, consult: Gilbert Ansre, 'The tonal structure of Ewe', *Hartford Studies in Linguistics* 1 (1961); Gilbert Ansre, 'The grammatical units of Ewe: A study of their structure, classes and systems' (PhD diss., University of London, 1966), pp. 26–28; Neil Smith, 'Tone in Ewe', *Research Laboratory of Electronics Quarterly Progress Report* 88 (1968), pp. 290–304; Hounkpati Capo, *Comparative phonology of Gbe*, pp. 19–24; Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 35; Alan Duthie, *Introducing Ewe linguistics patterns: A textbook of phonology, grammar and semantics*, Accra 1996; Jacques Rongier, *Parlons éwé*, pp. 61–62; Vincent Erskine Aziaku, *Linguistic analysis of Ewe animal names*, pp. 1–7.

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above, *hai* and *hei* tend to be uttered with other modulations typical of dispersals: loud timbre and a harsh and aggressive voice.[41]

The CAC inventory of Akan includes lexemes that are highly similar to the Ewe *hai* and *hei* discussed above. Asante, Bono, and Fante all have CACs realised as [háì] and [héì]. In the three varieties, [háì] and [héì] may be used as dispersals to chase away mostly small animals: both domestic (dogs, goats, cats, goats, sheep, and poultry) and wild (e.g., birds). Additionally, [háì] and [héì] can be used in Akan as directionals (to turn back an animal, stop its motion, and incite it to chase prey) or in motion unrelated functions (to silence an animal).[42] Although the affinity with Akan seems evident – with the substitution of the Akan [h] with the Ewe [ɦ] as Ewe lacks a voiceless glottal fricative[43] – similar HAI/HEI forms are found in CACs in many other languages. Indeed, HAI/HEI dispersals are attested in Arusa Maasai (*hei*), Babanki (*hɔ́ɔ́í?*), Dogon (*hei*), and Tjwao (*hayi*), as well as, although, in non-dispersing functions, in Xhosa (*heyi*) and Macha Oromo (*haayi*). More generally, directional and attention getting interactives, whether addressed to animals or humans, make common use of HAI/HEI forms.[44]

3.1.2. *Kai*, *kpai* and *kaa(a)ii(i)*

Kai [k$^{(h)}$ái] is directed to domestic animals, specifically, small livestock: sheep and goats.[45] The lexeme is exclusively employed in a dispersing function to chase away animals. The occlusive velar consonant [k] is systematic.[46] In contrast, as in *hai* and *hei*, the vowel sequence in *kai* ([ai]) is homo-syllabic and forms a falling diphthong. As a result, it exhibits an extra-systematic syllable structure: CV$\underline{\text{V}}$. The more prominent vocalic element [a] bears high tone while the less prominent [i] bears low tone. As is true of the general phonetic inventory of Ewe,[47] the voiceless stop [k] can be aspirated and realised as [k^{h}]. *Kai* is mono-morphemic and usually pronounced quickly, loudly, and harshly as is typical of dispersals. *Kai* may also be realised as *kpai* [k͡pái] – a variant that is unmentioned in previous works on CACs in Ewe. That is, instead of the voiceless velar stop [k], a labial-velar variant [k͡p] is used. The semantic potential of *kpai* and all its remaining formal characteristics are identical to *kai*. Another lexeme related to *kai*

[41] Cf. James Bynon, 'Domestic animal calling in a Berber tribe'; Azeb Amha, 'Directives to humans and to domestic animals'; Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Alexander Andrason, 'Conative animal calls in Xhosa'; Alexander Andrason and Admire Phiri, 'Talking to animals in a moribund language'.

[42] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[43] Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections'.

[44] Bernd Heine, *Grammar of interactives*, pp. 116–119.

[45] See: Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 490; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections', p. 267.

[46] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 1; Jacques Rongier, *Parlons éwé*, p. 63; Vincent Erskine Aziaku, *Linguistic analysis of Ewe animal names*, p. 4.

[47] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 2.

is *kaa*(*a*)*ii*(*i*) [k$^{(h)}$á:(:)ì:(:)]. From a phonetic perspective, this form may be regarded as a lengthened variant of *kai*.[48] It is, however, far more than a mere variant. Both with regard to the animal referent and the action requested, *kaa*(*a*)*ii*(*i*) substantially differs from *kai*. First, according to the interviewed speakers, *kaa*(*a*)*ii*(*i*) can be used with all animals, whether domestic or wild and whether small or big. Second, *kaa*(*a*)*ii*(*i*) entertains a directional function. It is used to make the animal move forward: to start its motion or sustain it. *Kaa*(*a*)*ii*(*i*) exhibits an extra-systematic behaviour with regard to vocalic length. Ewe does not allow for long vowels except in loanwords and interactives, for instance, interjections, ideophones, and phatic lexemes: *atúù* 'welcome', *dzáà* 'welcome' or *yoo* 'OK'.[49] *Kaa*(*a*)*ii*(*i*) tolerates not only long or bi-moraic vowels ([a:] and [i:]) but also extra-long or three-moraic vowels ([a::] and [i::]). According to our data, this exaggerated type of length is more common. In contrast to ideophones, where "vowel lengthening […] is used to indicate emphasis"[50] or serves "expressive purposes,"[51] this is not the case in *kaa*(*a*)*ii*(*i*). *Kaa*(*a*)*ii*(*i*) is not more "emphatic"/ "expressive" than *kai* nor is the variant [k$^{(h)}$á::ì::] more "emphatic"/ "expressive" than [k$^{(h)}$á:ì:].

In Akan, one finds a CAC that is identical to Ewe *kai*. Indeed, both Asante, Bono, and Fante contain the lexeme *kai* [kâi] that, as in Ewe, chases away animals. The typical animal referents in Akan are dogs, cats, goats, sheep, and cattle, as well as, although less regularly, all types of birds, monkeys, and small reptiles (e.g., snakes). Additionally, in Bono, *kai* assumes a directional function and makes dogs turn back. Similar to Ewe, the vowel sequence in the Akan *kai* is argued to form a diphthong given articulatory speed and certain other phonological properties pertinent to the Akan language. In further similarity to Ewe, *kai* is often uttered in Akan with an aggressive and harsh voice. The aspiration of [k] ([k^{h}âi]), commonly attested in Asante and Bono, is regarded as a manifestation of this aggressive/harsh pronunciation.[52] Since Akan lacks labial-velar plosives (both [k͡p] and [g͡b]), no equivalent of *kpai* is attested. Nor is there a direct equivalent of *kaa*(*a*)*ii*(*i*) in Akan. Certainly, in Asante, Bono, and Fante, *kai* can occasionally be lengthened. However, such lengthened *kai* forms are neither stabilised nor particularly common, and their semantic potential is identical to the unlengthened variant – and thus distinct from the Ewe *kaa*(*a*)*ii*(*i*). The available typological evidence does not reveal any marked tendencies to exploit KAI-type forms for dispersing purposes in CACs across languages, although [k] *is* the most common consonant in dispersals taking sibilants apart.[53] In contrast, the use of extra-systematic extra-long vowels in CACs is highly common cross

[48] Felix Ameka, 'Ideophones and the nature of adjectives', p. 30.
[49] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 4; Felix Ameka, 'Ideophones and the nature of adjectives', p. 30.
[50] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 7.
[51] Felix Ameka, 'Ideophones and the nature of adjectives', p. 30.
[52] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.
[53] Alexander Andrason, 'The non-arbitrariness of some conative calls used to chase animals', pp. 95–96.

linguistically.[54] This phenomenon is attested in all languages which we have studied the CACs of thus far, e.g., Berber,[55] Omotic,[56] Nilotic,[57] Bantu,[58] Khoe,[59] Kwa,[60] Dogon,[61] and Cushitic.[62]

3.1.3. *Krii*(*i*) and *krr*(*r*))*u*

Krii(*i*) [kri:(:)] is only addressed to poultry, typically chickens. This CAC, which has thus far remained unacknowledged in scholarly literature, may be used in motion-unrelated functions: to draw the attention of an animal or encourage it to eat. In the latter cases, it often triggers a venitive action on part of the animal and functions as a summons as well. *Krii*(*i*) comprises of phones that are systematic in Ewe: consonants [k] and [r] and the vowel [i].[63] The onset cluster found in this CAC (generally) complies with the rules governing Ewe phonotactics and syllable structures. In Ewe, the syllable structure found in sentence-grammar lexicon is $(C_1)(C_2)V$. C_1 may be any consonant excluding [r] while C_2 can only be a liquid, [l] or [r].[64] In combination with [k], the lateral liquid [l] seems much more common and the cluster [kl] is found in a number of words both indigenous and borrowed. In contrast, [kr] is rare although it is not foreign to the Ewe language and Ewe speakers. It mostly features in loans (*Krismas* 'Christmas') and proper names (*Kratsi*),[65] as well as a few other words such as *adikra* 'dark red' and *kra* 'inform'. Similar to *kaa*(*a*)*ii*(*i*) discussed in section 3.1.2, *krii*(*i*) attests to extra-systematic length types with the nucleic vowel [i] lasting two or three morae: [i:] or [i::]. Both the bi- and tri-moraic realisations of the vowel count as a single syllable. The vowel, long or extra-long, bears high tone. The lexeme is mono-morphemic and consists of the root only. It does however often appear replicated in series.[66] *Krii*(*i*) is typically

[54] James Bynon, 'Domestic animal calling in a Berber tribe'; Fernando Poyatos, *Nonverbal communication across disciplines*; Azeb Amha, 'Directives to humans and to domestic animals'; Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'.

[55] James Bynon, 'Domestic animal calling in a Berber tribe'.

[56] Azeb Amha, 'Directives to humans and to domestic animals'.

[57] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'.

[58] Alexander Andrason, 'Conative animal calls in Xhosa'.

[59] Alexander Andrason and Phiri, Phiri, 'Talking to animals in a moribund language'.

[60] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[61] Alexander Andrason and Idrissa Sagara, 'The grammar of conative animal calls: The case of Togo-Teŋu Kan of Dourou (Dogon)', *Asian and African Studies* 33/1 (2024), pp. 48–96.

[62] Alexander Andrason, Mulugeta Onsho and Shimelis Mazengia, 'Conative animal calls in Macha Oromo: Function and form', *Linguistic Vanguard* 10 (2024), pp. 199–207.

[63] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 1; Hounkpati Capo, *Comparative phonology of Gbe*, p. 48.

[64] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 4.

[65] Cf. Diedrich Westermann, *Grammatik der Ewe-Sprache*, p. 143.

[66] Regarding re(du)plication in Ewe, consult, *inter alia*: Gilbert Ansre, 'Reduplication in Ewe', *Journal of African Languages* 2 (1963), pp. 128–132; Gilbert Ansre, 'The grammatical units of Ewe: A study of their structure, classes and systems', pp. 201–203, 214–215, 225–226, 231; Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions

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realised with mark phonation, in particular, an excessively high pitch. It is likely that *krii*(*i*) has an onomatopoeic foundation. This especially holds true of the consonants [k] and [r] (see below).

There is another CAC in Ewe that is functionally and formally similar to *krii*(*i*). This CAC is the summons *krr*(*r*)*u* [kr:(:)ú].[67] While similar in some respects, *kr*(*r*(*r*))*u* exhibits certain important differences when compared to *krii*(*i*). First, although *krr*(*r*)*u* can be used with all types of poultry, it is more commonly dedicated to roosters, turkeys, ducks, and fowl, rather than hens and chicks. Additionally, it can be directed to doves and any other bird species, both domestic and wild. Second, while *krii*(*i*) exhibits a long or extra-long vowel, *krr*(*r*)*u* makes use of a long or extra-long consonant and attests to the following onset and syllable structure: C_1C_2:V and C_1C_2::V. Consonantal length (and thus long and extra-long consonants) and the above onset types do not form part of the standard phonetic repertoire of Ewe, being limited to interactives (ideophones and interjections).[68] The other phonetic difference with *kriii* concerns the vowel – *krr*(*r*)*u* makes use of [u] instead of [i]. This may be motivated. Cross linguistically, back close vowels tend to be used with referents that are large, fat, adult/old, and masculine and imitate sounds that are duller, deeper, and lower. In contrast, front close vowels tend to suggest referents that are smaller, younger, and feminine and imitate sounds that are higher, more acute, and squeaking. *Krii*(*i*) and *krr*(*r*)*u* seem to conform to this tendency. While *kriii* is used with smaller poultry (chicks and hens), *krr*(*r*)*u* is particularly common with bigger poultry (roosters and turkeys). As in *krii*(*i*), the tone in *krr*(*r*)*u* is high, the lexeme is mono-morphemic, and has an onomatopoeic foundation (see below).

Akan does not have direct equivalents of *krii*(*i*) and *krr*(*r*)*u* in its CAC inventory. However, similar forms – or rather forms that exploit similar strategies – are attested. That is, forms with [k] and [r] (e.g., *krɔ̀krɔ̀*) are used in Asante and Fante to call poultry, especially its larger and noisier representative – turkeys. By contrast, forms without the consonant [r] are used with smaller poultry, in particular, chicks and hens: *kákákákáká*/ *kõnkõnkõn* in Asante, *kékékéké*(*ké*) in Bono, and *kúkú*(*kú*) in Fante. Crosslinguistically, the use of the consonant [k] in summonses addressed to poultry is highly common.[69] Usually, [k]-summonses to chickens also contain liquids, either [l] (see the segments *kul-* and/or *kul* found in Macha and Harar Oromo, Amharic Zargulla, and Gedeo)[70] or [r] (see *kírí* in Babanki, *krrr*(*u*)-*krrru* and *kukru-kukru* in Kihunde, and *kúrukúru* in Maasai). All such summonses likely exploit onomatopoeic strategies since onomatopoeias imitating calls

and illocutionary devices'; Felix Ameka, 'The typology and semantics of complex nominal duplication in Ewe', *Anthropological Linguistics* 41 (1999), pp. 75–106; Felix Ameka and Kropp Dakubu, 'Introduction'.

[67] See: Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 490; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections', p. 226.

[68] Felix Ameka, 'Ideophones and the nature of adjectives', p. 30.

[69] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'.

[70] Azeb Amha, 'Directives to humans and to domestic animals'; Alexander Andrason, Mulugeta Onsho and Shimelis Mazengia, 'Conative animal calls in Macha Oromo'.

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made by poultry typically draw on [k], often accompanied by [l] or [r] (see *kokokoko* (hens and chicks) and *kukuryku* (roosters) in Polish). Indeed, in Ewe, chicken-noise onomatopoeia is *kruukruu* and the word for 'chicken' – *kokló*.

3.1.4. *Les*

Les [lés] is directed to dogs.[71] According to our informants, this form is rare in contemporary usage, even in Ho – although it may be more common in other parts of the Inland Ewe region. Among the Ewe speakers that we have consulted, only two persons were vaguely familiar with this CAC. Indeed, according to a native Ewe linguist who read our study, *les* (as well as its variant *lesh* with which our informants were unfamiliar) are "unpopular in contemporary usage". In that expert's view, the much common term used are *lee* and *lii* (see below). As far as we could determine, *les* only functions as a directional: it incites a dog to chase small animals (e.g., rodents), get them from their hiding places and eventually catch them. The consonantal and vocalic material exploited – [l], [s], and [e] – is systematic. However, the syllable structure [CVC] is extra-systematic. As explained above, the basic syllable structure in the Ewe sentence-grammar lexicon is $(C_1)(C_2)V$ – with the syllables being open. Syllables with codas are only attested in loanwords and interactives. Only nasal consonants ([n] or [ŋ]) are attested in such cases.[72] As in all the CACs described above, the nucleic vowel bears high tone.

The origin of *les* is partially problematic. Ameka relates *les* to the imperative of the verb *le* 'catch'.[73] In contrast, the coda element *-s* apparently comes from English and the whole expression originally meant 'catch it!'. Even if the form originates in non-CAC sources (see below), this connection is poorly recoverable and accessible to speakers. Indeed, the participants of our study, including those who were aware of this CAC, were unable to link *les* to any words or constructions. Therefore, we most likely deal with a highly lexicalised secondary CAC that is currently untransparent and thus primary.[74]

Following Ameka's proposal, we think that the verbal source of *les* is plausible.[75] First, as correctly observed by Ameka, *le* in *les* is likely related to the verb *le* [lé] 'catch'. The imperative of this verb – realised as *le* 'catch!' when accompanied by a noun (often lengthened to *lee*) and *li-i* 'catch it!' when followed by the 3rd person pronoun *-e*/*-i* – is commonly used by hunters to incite dogs to chase prey (see section 3.2.1). In fact, *le*(*e*) and *li-i* are much more common than *les* and all participants were familiar with the usage of the verb *le* in a directive-to-animal function. Second, considering the formal properties of this form, [l] is not a common consonant in primary CACs across languages.

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[71] Sometimes, *les* is realised as *lesh* [léʃ]. See: Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 490; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections', p. 227.

[72] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 4; Felix Ameka, 'Ideophones and the nature of adjectives', p. 30.

[73] Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections', p. 490.

[74] This would be consistent with Ameka's inclusion of *lés* into his class of "phonation summonses for animals" on par with *kai*, *kru*, and *pus*; Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 490.

[75] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices'.

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For instance, in dispersals, which are semantically related to some directionals, liquids especially of an L-type are the least common consonants used.[76] Since it is unlikely that the LV- segment found in *les*, would be primary from the beginning of the grammatical life of this CAC, a non-CAC source is more plausible. The above-mentioned use of imperative verbs with the meaning 'catch!' or 'take!' to generate secondary CACs is indeed highly frequent crosslinguistically.

However, contrary to Ameka's suggestion, we think that the presence of *-s* in *les* is not borrowed but analogical and more "catastrophic" or primary-like. According to crosslinguistic data, CACs tend to exhibit a "consonantal nature".[77] Although they often draw on both vowels and consonants, the consonantal material is more prominent. One of the exponents of this is the common presence of consonantal codas in CACs and the resultant CVC syllabic structure. The use of sibilants is also noticeable in CACs. First, CVS is the most common pattern exploited in dispersals, especially those directed to smaller animals.[78] The most common sibilants are [ʃ] and only slightly less so [s], as in Ewe, which lacks [ʃ] in its standard phonetic repertoire (see below). Second, CVC syllables and coda sibilants (and thus a CVS structure) are also commonly exploited in summonses, specifically those directed to dogs as *les*. Such forms are attested in Ayt Hadiddu (*kkiz*),[79] Kihunde (*kús-*), Arabic (*qawš*),[80] and Chuvash (*кuc-кuc*).[81] A CVS structure is even more pervasive in summonses directed to cats (see *bŭŭs* and *mŭŭs* in Babanki,[82] *кuc/кăc* in Chuvash,[83] and *puu*(*u*)*s* in Ewe itself analysed in section 3.1.6). It is also used with pigs (see *kès-kès* in Dza). Consequently, the emergence of *-s* may be attributed to "naturalness" or the crosslinguistic pressure of closing mono-syllabic CACs with consonantal codas and using sibilants for these purposes. The verbal root *le-* would in this manner receive a typical CAC formant *-s* and exhibit a common CAC shape.[84]

No CACs comparable to *les* are found in Akan. While, as mentioned above, some Akan CACs display a CVS syllabic structure, none of them makes simultaneous use of the consonant [l] and [s]. However, in Akan, several secondary CACs draw on the imperative of a semantically equivalent verb *kye* 'catch', which in its CAC usage may[85] contain pronominal objects: *kye-no* 'catch it'. As in Ewe, CACs built around *kye* typically incite

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[76] Alexander Andrason, 'The non-arbitrariness of some conative calls used to chase animals', p. 96.

[77] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype', p. 15.

[78] Alexander Andrason, 'The non-arbitrariness of some conative calls used to chase animals'.

[79] James Bynon, 'Domestic animal calling in a Berber tribe'.

[80] Alia Bader Abdullah and Zahraa Nasir Talib, 'The meanings of interjections in English and Arabic', *Journal of the College of Arts University of Basrah* 50 (2009), pp. 89–107.

[81] T. Denisova and L. Sergeev, 'Dialectal features in the varieties spoken by the Chuvash diaspora'.

[82] Alexander Andrason and Pius Akumbu, 'Towards a linguistic analysis of conative animal calls in Babanki and Bum'.

[83] T. Denisova and L. Sergeev, 'Dialectal features in the varieties spoken by the Chuvash diaspora'.

[84] Compare with the use of *š* [ʃ] in Lithuanian to form dispersals from (onomatopoeic) summonses; see: Vytautas Ambrazas et al., *Lithuanian grammar*, Vilnius 2006, p. 429.

[85] Cf. Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices'.

dogs to chase prey (although they may also have other uses).[86] As mentioned above, the use of imperatives derived from semantically similar verbs ('catch', 'take', 'bring') for directional purposes is also highly common from a crosslinguistic perspective.[87]

3.1.5. *Mee(e)*

Mee(e) [meː(ː)] is directed to domestic species, specifically small livestock: goats and sheep (compare with *mbhe* in Ameka 1991). It is only used as a summons to call animals to come closer, often to be fed. The vocalic and consonantal material used – [m] and [e] – is systematic. However, the presence of two- or tri-moraic nucleic vowel is not, as explained in the sections above. *Mee(e)* has an onomatopoeic foundation. The speaker communicates with goats and sheep by imitating the sound that is perceived as made by these animals.[88] Indeed, a homophonous form is used as a genuine onomatopoeia mimicking goats and sheep's bleating. The CAC *mee(e)* is usually pronounced with modulation that in speakers' view approximate it to the sounds made by goats and sheep in the real world. This especially involves higher pitch and a vibrating pulse (without however separating the respective [e] morae), as well as pharyngealisation (some type of [meˤːː]). *Mee*(*e*) is mono-morphemic and consists solely of the root.

A similar CAC is found in one Akan variety, namely Fante, where [méɛ́] is employed to summon goats.[89] However, the use of *ME*-type forms to call small livestock, especially goats, and at the same time to imitate sound made by these animals is also highly pervasive crosslinguistically. It is, for example, attested in Konso (*meʔeʔeʔ*),[90] Polish (*mee*), Kihunde (*meee*), amd Dogon (*mɛmɛmɛ*).

3.1.6. *Puu*(*u*))*s*

Puu(*u*)*s* [púːː(ː)s] is directed to cats and invariably employed in a summoning function, ordering the animal to come closer to the speaker.[91] The consonant [s] is systematic. However, [p] present in the onset is, in Ewe, limited to borrowings[92] and ideophones.[93] The vocalic component [u], which bears high tone, is also systematic, although its two- and tri-moraic realisations – and thus the use of a long [uː] or extra-long [uːː] vowel – are not (see sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3). *Puu*(*u*)*s* transgresses another phonotactic rule: it exhibits the syllable structure [CVS] and thus ends with a consonantal coda. As explained

[86] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[87] Alexandra Aikhenvald, *Imperatives and commands*; Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; James Bynon, 'Domestic animal calling in a Berber tribe'; Azeb Amha, 'Directives to humans and to domestic animals'.

[88] Cf. Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 489; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections', p. 266.

[89] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[90] Oda Orkaydo Ongaye, *A grammar of Konso*, Utrecht 2013, p. 256.

[91] Cf. Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 489.

[92] Irene Wartburton, Prosper Kpotufe and Roland Glover, *Ewe basic course*, Bloomington 1968, p. viii; Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 2.

[93] Felix Ameka, 'Ideophones and the nature of adjectives', p. 30.

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in section 3.1.4, closed syllables with consonantal codas are limited to loanwords and interactives and only nasal consonants ([n] or [ŋ]) are found in such instances. *Puu*(*u*)*s* is mono-morphemic and indivisible into more elementary meaning-bearing units. It often forms sequences. In such cases, the vowel [u] tends to be shorter.

A similar, yet not identical form is attested in Bono. In this Akan variety, *bú*(*ú*)*s* and *mú*(*ú*)*s* are employed to summon kittens.[94] Both Ewe and Akan thus make use of the CVS pattern with the onset consonant being a labial. This pattern, namely, labial consonant + vowels + sibilant, is highly common in summonses directed to cats in the languages of the world. It is, for instance, attested in Arabic (*bis(h)*), Azeri (*pish*), Babanki (*bŭŭs* and *mŭŭs*), Danish (*mis*), Dutch (*poes*), Georgian (*pis*), German (*beez* and *miez*), Italian (*mush*) and Romanian (*pis*; see Section 3.1.4).

3.1.7. *Sã*, *sui*, and *shuu*(*u*)

Ewe contains a cluster of CACs that exhibit a sibilant onset and are used in non-summoning functions.

Sã [sə̀̃] is directed to two domestic species (dogs and cats) to chase them away.[95] The lexeme draws on systematic phones: the consonant [s] and the vowel [ã]. It is, however, the only CAC in Ewe that contains a nasal vowel. Interestingly, in Polish, a Slavonic language with oral and nasal vowels, nasal vowels are avoided in primary CACs.[96] The sparse presence of nasal vowels in Ewe CACs – a language in which each oral vowel has its nasal counterpart – would be consistent with the apparent avoidance of nasal vowels in other languages.[97] The phonotactics of *sã* and its CV syllabic type are also systematic. As in many other CACs, the vowel bears high tone. The CAC is often realised with an aggressive pronunciation: quickly, loudly, and with harsh voice, as is typical of dispersal across languages.[98] It is also mono-morphemic.

Another s-onset CACs is *sui*. *Sui* is directed to domestic birds, poultry, and fowl,[99] as well as insects. It is employed in a dispersing function to repel animals. The phones used in *sui* are systematic. This especially holds true of the consonant [s] and the more prominent vocalic element, that is, the nucleic vowel [i] carrying high tone. The other vocalic component noted orthographically as *u* is regularly pronounced in *sui* as a semi-vowel [u̯] or glide/approximant [w]: [su̯i] or [swi]. This stems from the articulatory speed typical of dispersals and the resultant mono-syllabic realisation of the vowel sequence [u] + [i] in *sui*. The phonotactics of *sui* comply with the syllabic structure found in the

[94] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[95] Cf. Irene Wartburton, Prosper Kpotufe and Roland Glover, *Ewe basic course*, Bloomington 1968, p. 490; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections', p. 267.

[96] See: Ewa Siatkowska, *West-Slavonic animal calls*; own data.

[97] See however: Azeb Amha, 'Directives to humans and to domestic animals', p. 223.

[98] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; James Bynon, 'Domestic animal calling in a Berber tribe'; Azeb Amha, 'Directives to humans and to domestic animals'.

[99] As observed in Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', pp. 490–491; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections', pp. 267–268.

general word stock in Ewe. As explained above, the typical syllable types is $(C_1(C_2))V$ in which C_2 is a liquid or a glide/approximant [w]/[j] as illustrated by *sue* [swe] 'small'.[100] Such a glide pronunciation of a non-prominent [u], often further realised as a palatal ([ɥ]) rather than a velar ([w]) labial(ised) approximant, is common in all Gbe varieties before oral vowels in "rapid speech".[101] *Sui* is mono-morphemic and does not contain meaning-bearing units other than the root itself.

The third sibilant-onset CAC, *shuu(u)* [ʃu:(:)] – to our knowledge, thus far unmentioned in literature – can be directed to all animal, whether domestic or wild, and whether big or small. The CAC *shuu(u)* is used in three functions. It is employed to silence an animal (e.g., to make a dog stop barking); repel/chase/drive away animals, scare them, or make wild animals move out of their habitats or hideouts; and incite dogs to chase their prey during hunting. The consonant [ʃ] is absent in the standard Ewe phonetic repertoire.[102] However, the sibilant [ʃ] occurs in the southern dialects and the two Vhe lects, Aveno and Aŋlɔ where [s] can be realised as [ʃ] before [i] and [j].[103] The vowel [u] is systematic but it exhibits an extra-systematic behaviour with regard to length, being bi-moraic/long [u:] or tri-moraic/extra-long [u::].

Akan contains CACs that are similar to *sã* – yet not identical. In Fante, [sá] is used to chase away dogs like in Ewe. In Asante, [s(:)áẁ.s(:)áẁ] is employed in a radically distinct function, namely, to summon poultry (esp. chickens). There are also CACs in Akan that formally approximate *sui*, especially [sᶣíɛ̀], [sᶣɛ̀], and [t͡ɕᶣí]. As in Ewe, these lexemes are used as dispersals and their principal referents are poultry and/or other small animals including insects. In contrast, Akan does not have direct equivalents of the CAC *shuu*(*u*) and the silencing of animals is achieved through other means (for example with [háì]/[héì] and secondary CACs). The presence of sibilants in dispersals is also highly pervasive from a cross-linguistic perspective. Among all sibilants, the two most common ones are [ʃ] (42% in the sample of 79 languages) and [s] (34%).[104] The syllable structure S(V)V – as in *sã*, *sui*, and *shuu*(*u*) – is the second most frequent typologically.[105] The vowels [u] and [i] present in *sui*, and *shuu*(*u*) are also the most common vowels used in dispersals.[106] Indeed, this sibilant-driven strategy to repel animals is widely used in Akan as well: apart from the CACs mentioned above, Asante, Bono, and/or Fante also include a cluster of dispersals of the type [(t͡)ɕ(ᶣ):(:)] (see also [ɕ(p)ɕ] in Bono). *Shoo*(*o*) is also present in English, including the English variety spoken in Ghana.

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[100] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 4.

[101] Hounkpati Capo, *Comparative phonology of Gbe*, p. 55.

[102] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 1; Jacques Rongier, *Parlons éwé*, pp. 62–64; Vincent Erskine Aziaku, *Linguistic analysis of Ewe animal names*, p. 4.

[103] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 6; Hounkpati Capo, *Comparative phonology of Gbe*, pp. 10, 47, 51.

[104] Alexander Andrason, 'The non-arbitrariness of some conative calls used to chase animals', p. 92.

[105] Ibidem, pp. 93–94.

[106] Ibidem, p. 95.

3.1.8. The click ǁ

The alveolar lateral click ([ǁ]) is directed to small domestic animals: goats and sheep[107] as well as, according to our fieldwork, dogs and cats. The semantic potential of ǁ is broad ranging from a summoning function to directional and motion unrelated functions. To be exact, ǁ is employed not only to call an animal to come[108] but also to draw an animal's attention or to make it move (more) quickly. While the alveolar lateral production of this click is pervasive, other realisations, thus far unnoticed in scholarship, are possible as well, especially the palatal one: [ǂ]. In all such cases, the tongue's shape is laminal: apico-laminal in [ǁ] and fully laminal in [ǂ]. Clicks are extra-systematic consonants in Ewe and Ewe is not a click language.[109] However, there are click-lexemes in Ewe other than the CAC analysed in this section. All of these are interactives. For instance, an interjection of contempt is encoded with "a double articulated lateral and dental click",[110] some type of [ǁǀ] – or, in Doke's notation used by Ameka, [ʖʇ].[111] Another click word expressing agreement exploits "a palatal click with nasal release",[112] that is, [ǂⁿ] (Ameka uses the symbol ᶜⁿ, which in Doke's notation, contrary to the description provided, refers to an alveolar click [!]).[113] As in all non-click languages, the click CAC constitutes the entire lexeme – the CAC is mono-morphemic.

Click CACs are attested in Akan. Specifically, Asante, Bono, and Fante have in their repertoires the CAC [ǂ.ǂ.ǂ.(ǂ)] that is used to call poultry and, especially in Fante, cats. As in Ewe, several variations of this click are attested: in addition to the more common palatal realisation, "the [so-called] second sealing closure made with the tongue […] may be more frontal such that the sound actually produced gradually approximates an alveolar (lateral) click [ǁ] or a dental click [ǀ]".[114] This variation is attributed to the extra-systematicity of clicks in Akan and their distinctiveness from the other phones: "Whatever the exact second construction is […] any realisation is admissible. As long as the click is (semi)laminal and bright rather than "dark" and "hollow sounding" […] as in [!], there is no 'misunderstanding'".[115] Clicks are also the most common extra-systematic (from

[107] Cf. Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 489; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections', p. 266.

[108] See: Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices'; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections'.

[109] Compare with: Bonny Sands, 'Click consonants: An introduction', in: *Click consonants*, ed. Bonny Sands, Leiden 2020, pp. 1–73.

[110] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 7.

[111] Clement Doke, *The phonetics of the Zulu language*, Johannesburg 1920; Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices'.

[112] Ibidem, pp. 7, 681.

[113] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', pp. 7, 681; Clement Doke, *Phonetics of Zulu*.

[114] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls', p. 16.

[115] Ibidem.

a language-internal perspective) IPA sounds used in CACs across languages.[116] Indeed, in all non-click languages studied by us thus far (for example, Babanki, Bum, Dogon, Kihunde, Maasai, and Macha Oromo), the category of CACs draws on clicks and contains click-lexemes. These are typically used as summonses, similar to Ewe and Akan.

3.1.9. {Kiss}, {whistle}, and *eeer*

The last class of primary CACs contains forms that are particularly extra-systematic from a phonetic perspective. These CACs, none of which has previously been discussed in scholarship, either exhibit sounds that are not considered by the International Phonetic Alphabet or their description with the IPA symbols can only be approximate.

The only {kiss} present in our database is directed to small domestic animals: goats and sheep as well as dogs. It is employed as a summons to call the animals to come closer, usually for food. This {kiss} is identical to the most common kiss sound exploited in CACs across languages, which has been represented in scholarship with the symbol [↓B'].[117] This sound is characterised by two clusters of traits related to the build-up of air-pressure tension and the manner of its release. The pressure is made by sealing the air pocket in the oral cavity with two simultaneous closures: a frontal (labial) one made with strongly protruded lips and the posterior (dorsal) one made with the tongue. The release occurs when the lips open and trigger the suction of air, which in turn results in an ingressive, high-pitched, squeaking sound. The {kiss} is highly extra-systematic in Ewe and, as far as we know, kiss sounds do not exist in the other parts of the language's lexicon. The {kiss} is undividable into more fragmentary meaning-bearing units. However, it often occurs in sequences ranging from one (usually longer) to many (usually realised as a series of short kiss sounds).

CACs that exploit kiss-like mechanisms are attested in Akan. The 'kiss' CAC that is the most similar to the {kiss} present in Ewe is the so-called {kiss-1} found in Asante, Bono, and Fante. It draws on the [↓B'] kiss sound and, as in Ewe, tends to occur in sequences. {Kiss-1} mostly functions as a summons addressed to small animals such as dogs, cats, poultry, goats, and sheep. It can however be used with cows and employed in directive and other functions.[118] As mentioned above, variants of the kiss [↓B'] are highly pervasive across languages. They are attested in almost all the languages in which CACs have been studied thus far (for instance, Arusa Maasai, Xhosa, Tjwao, Dogon, Babanki and Bum, Kihunde) and typically summon domestic species, especially dogs and smaller livestock.[119]

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[116] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; see also: James Bynon, 'Domestic animal calling in a Berber tribe'; Fernando Poyatos, *Nonverbal communication across disciplines*; Alexandra Aikhenvald, *Imperatives and commands*.

[117] See: Fernando Poyatos, *Paralanguage*; Fernando Poyatos, *Nonverbal communication across disciplines*; Alexander Andrason, 'Conative "kisses" in human-to-animal communication', *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* 20 (2024), pp. 103–129.

[118] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[119] For detail see: Alexander Andrason, 'Conative "kisses" in human-to-animal communication'.

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The CAC to which we refer as {whistle} is directed to fowl and insects and is invariably used to chase them away. It is not a genuine whistle, contrary to what is common across languages.[120] Rather, it is a "whistled" variant of the CAC *sui*, i.e., some type of [s̪ui̪] or [s̪ʷi̪]. That is, one protrudes their mouth to produce a whistle and simultaneously a *s*-type sound. Subsequently, the narrow opening made with the lips is widened and becomes more horizontal and whistling is coarticulated with a *ui*-type sound.

Akan has a relatively rich inventory of CAC whistles: 3 in Asante and Bono each and 4 in Fante. Contrary to Ewe, these are proper whistles rather than CAC lexemes that are realised in a whistled manner. In further contrast, whistles in Akan are typically used as summonses (also as directionals to start or stop motion, incite it to chase prey, or in a silencing function) and are mostly directed to dogs.[121] Whistles are also commonly exploited in CACs from a crosslinguistic perspective and virtually all languages of which the CACs have been studied thus far include whistles.[122] They are typically employed as summonses although directional, dispersal, and motion-unrelated functions are also attested. In contrast, to the best of our knowledge, whistled lexemes similar to the ones found in Ewe have not been reported in the inventories of CACs in other languages.[123]

The CAC which we represent with the grapheme *eeer* is directed to dogs and used as a dispersal to chase them away. It consists of a deep guttural, harsh, low vocalic sound, similar but not identical to [ɯ]. It may be more vibrating and sometimes ends with a weak offglide similar to a voiced alveolar/postalveolar approximant [ɹ]. This sound is acoustically similar to a noise made when feeling sick and needing to throw up and can be pronounced even more aggressively and intensely – hence, the IPA notation suggested above is only approximate. Duah, Andrason, and Antwi do not include a similar CAC in their inventory of CACs in Akan.[124] However, guttural non-IPA-sound CACs are attested in CACs in the languages of the world, for instance, in Dogon.[125] In Ewe, *eeer* may have some onomatopoeic foundation, imitating sounds made by dogs.

3.2. Secondary CACs

Secondary CACs are CACs that derive from non-CAC lexical classes, typically verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns, as well as phrases and clauses built around these types of lexemes. Put differently, secondary CACs are verbal, nominal, adjectival, adverbial, and pronominal constructions that entertain a directive-to-animal

[120] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'.

[121] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[122] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype', p. 34.

[123] However, judging impressionistically from the data collected in the course of our 5-year-long research on CACs in Africa and on other continents, such realisations do seem to exist.

[124] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[125] Alexander Andrason and Idrissa Sagara, 'The grammar of conative animal calls: The case of Togo-Teŋu Kan of Dourou'.

function and this usage has been stabilised as part of their semantic potential; nevertheless, despite this stabilisation and association with a CAC role, the functional (semantic) and formal (phonetic, morphological, and syntactic) relationship with their non-CAC sources remains evident. Therefore, across languages, secondary CACs exhibit many properties that are typical of non-CAC lexical classes from which they derive. Certainly, a distinction between secondary and primary CACs is gradient and therefore fuzzy; the same applies to the distinction between secondary CACs and the non-stabilised (ad-hoc and idiolectal) use of non-CAC expressions in a directive-to-animal function.[126]

All secondary CACs originate in situations where human speakers use standard linguistic repertoires to communicate orders to animals. This reflects a common aspect of human-to-animal communication, namely, the fact that animals can, and as crosslinguistic data clearly indicate it, often are addressed with conventional human language. In Ewe, the most typical animals with which humans can "converse" are dogs because, according to the interviewed speakers, these animals are (perceived as) more intelligent and receptive than any other species. The class of secondary CACs in Ewe is open and comprises of a large number of lexemes drawing on imperatives, natural-kind labels, proper names, and other sources.

3.2.1. Imperatives

Ewe speakers often address animals by means of imperatives. While some of these expressions can be regarded as secondary CACs, none of them is restricted to animal referents; rather, all are compatible with human addresses as well. The most common imperative-driven CACs and the most profoundly associated with animals according to our data, are the following forms: *zɔ* 'walk!', *dzudzɔ* 'stop!', *tɔ* 'halt / stand still!', *le(e)* 'catch', and *li-i* 'catch it'.[127] Equally frequent are more complex constructions built around imperatives and other elements: two imperative verbs (*va ɖu nu* 'come [and] eat!'), imperative and an internal object (*ɸu du* 'run (a race)!'), and an imperative verb and a "satellite" (*kplɔ-e ɖo* 'follow him/her/it!' and *ɖo to* 'stop talking/making noise; quiet!').[128] These types of CACs tend to entertain directional functions (start/sustain

[126] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Alexander Andrason and Admire Phiri, 'Talking to animals in a moribund language'. The tripartite distinction between primary CACs, secondary CACs, and non-stabilised/ad-hoc CACs matches the tripartite division of interjections (cf. Felix Ameka, 'Interjections: The universal yet neglected part of speech', *Journal of Pragmatics* 18/2–3 (1992), pp. 101–118; Damaris Nübling, 'Von oh mein Jesus! zu oje! – Der Interjektionalisierungspfad von der sekundären zur primären Interjektion', *Deutsche Sprache* 29/1 (2001), pp. 20–45; Ulrike Stange, *Emotive interjections in British English. A corpus-based study on variation in acquisition, function and usage*, Amsterdam 2016; Alexander Andrason and Mawande Dlali, 'The (crucial yet neglected) category of interjections in Xhosa', *STUF – Language Typology and Universals* 73/2 (2020), pp. 159–217; Bernd Heine, *Grammar of interactives*).

[127] As we explained above, *li-i*, which is a variant of *le*, results from the presence of the pronoun *-e*/*-i* (compare with *se* 'hear' and *si-i* 'hear it' in Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 6; Hounkpati Capo, 'Determining the third person singular object pronoun in Gbe', in: *West African languages in education*, ed. Kay Williaamson, Wien 1985, pp. 106–131; cf. section 3.1.4).

[128] See: Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 42.

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motion – *zɔ* and *ɸu du*; terminate motion – *dzudzɔ* and *tɔ*) or refer to actions that expand beyond the idea of motion (eat – *ɖu nu*; be silent – *ɖo to*). Imperative-driven CACs may be directed to a single animal (as in the forms quoted above) or a group of animals. In the latter cases, the source verb is usually inflected in a plural form, which is marked with the "subject pronoun" morpheme *mi*:[129] *mi va ɖu nu* 'come and eat (pl.)!' and *mi ɸu du* (run (pl.). Additionally, one may use 1st-person imperatives or (co)hortative forms: *ma se nu* 'let me hear (it), quiet!'.[130] All such imperative-driven CACs are originally small clauses composed of the verb (which constitutes the predicative nucleus) and verbal complements or modifiers: pronominal affix (*-e* 'him/her/it'), nominal object (*nu* 'thing/it/something'), satellite marker (*ɖo*). These CACs may therefore be pluri-morphemic. They can consist of a verbal root inflected in the imperative – which in the second person singular is "the verb stem alone" although with certain tonal regularities[131] – and other pronominal, nominal, and satellite elements, as well as additional verbs (yielding serializing constructions).[132]

The CAC-isation of the above-mentioned imperatives is low. The fact that most of these imperative forms can be used with human addresses, mentioned above, is a clear manifestation of this. The only (partial) exception is *le*. First, the imperative *le* features in *les* which can be considered a primary CAC limited to animal addresses and no longer derivationally/diachronically transparent. Second, in its usage with animal referents, the imperative *le* is often realised in an extended manner, i.e., with the long or even extra-long vowel *e* (see 3.1.4).

Imperatives are common sources of secondary CACs in Akan. Indeed, several Akan CACs are homophonous with the corresponding imperative forms: *kye* 'catch', *bra* 'come!', *gyae* 'stop!', *sane* 'return!', or *firi* 'leave!'. Other secondary CACs draw on more complex small-clause structures built around imperatives and complements, as well as sequences of imperatives or serializing verbs. As in Ewe, the semantic potential of these types of secondary CACs pertains to a directional domain or, less frequently, expands beyond a motion idea (e.g., silencing). The use of imperatives as sources of secondary CACs is also common crosslinguistically.[133] This is motivated by both the functional and

[129] George Nickerson Clements, 'The verbal syntax of Ewe', p. 163.

[130] See: Gilbert Ansre, 'The grammatical units of Ewe: A study of their structures, classes and systems', pp. 181–182; George Nickerson Clements, 'The verbal syntax of Ewe', p. 163; Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 52.

[131] George Nickerson Clements, 'The verbal syntax of Ewe', p. 162.

[132] Regarding multiverb and serial verb constructions in Ewe consult Christopher Thad Collins, 'Topics in Ewe syntax' (PhD diss. MIT, 1993); and Felix Ameka, 'Ewe serial verb constructions in their grammatical context', in: *Serial verb constructions: A crosslinguistic typology*, eds. Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald and Robert M.W. Dixon, Oxford 2006, pp. 124–143.

[133] Alexandra Aikhenvald, *Imperatives and commands*; Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Bernd Heine, *Grammar of interactives*; see also: James Bynon, 'Domestic animal calling in a Berber tribe'; Ewa Siatkowska, *West-Slavonic animal calls*; Azeb Amha, 'Directives to humans and to domestic animals'.

formal properties of imperatives and CACs. Functionally, both CACs and imperatives are inherently directive. Formally, imperatives tend to be the simplest verbal forms. Like CACs, they can be mono-morphemic and identical or highly similar to roots.[134]

3.2.2. Natural-kind labels

Another source of secondary CACs in Ewe, mentioned previously in literature are natural-kind labels or nouns that refer to specific species.[135] Indeed, in Ewe, it is always possible to address animals by using the noun that denotes the phylogenetic class to which they belong: *koklo!* 'chicken!', *gbɔ!* 'goat!', *alẽ!* 'sheep!', *avu!* 'dog!', *dadi!* 'cat!'. Similar to imperatives, these nouns are not limited to a CAC function (directive) but can also be used in other functions as subjects, objects, and complements, entertaining the semantic roles of agent, experiencer, theme, patient, beneficiary, source, and others. They may also be employed as vocatives to draw the attention of the addressee. In such cases, they can precede imperative verbs that specify the type of action that is ordered. The most evident examples of the recruitment of natural-kind labels for directive-to-animal purposes (and thus the usage of these types of nouns as CACs) are attested in holophrastic contexts. In such instances, natural-kind labels are employed to summon animals. In contrast, according to our data, natural-kind-label CACs are not used as dispersals and directionals. In a summoning function, these CACs are usually repeated and pronounced quickly, often with a higher pitch and an "inviting" friendly melody: *koklo koklo koklo!* 'chicken, chicken, chicken!'.

The above-mentioned natural-kind labels may also be used in their diminutive forms when functioning as CACs.[136] In such cases, the respective noun is marked by the suffix *-vi* [ví]: *koklo-vi* 'chicken-DIM; chick', *gbɔ-vi* 'goat-DIM; kid', *alẽ-vi* 'sheep-DIM; lamb', *avu-vi* 'dog-DIM; puppy' and *dadi-vi* 'cat-DIM; kitten'.[137] According to Ameka, when used as CACs, the natural-kind labels of turkeys and ducks are not marked with a diminutive suffix.[138] Instead, the bare forms are preferred: *dɔku!* 'turkey!' and *kpakpa*(*xe*)*!* 'duck!'. According to our data, the forms *dɔku-vi* 'turkey-DIM!' and *kpakpa-vi* 'duck-DIM' are fully grammatical and/or felicitous in their CAC usage. Again, all diminutive-driven CACs are typically employed as summonses. While their usage in a directive-to-animal function is stabilised, all such diminutive forms may also assume non-CAC roles and appear as subjects, objects, adjuncts, and vocatives (*Avuvi la ɖu nu* 'The puppy has eaten').

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[134] Cf. Bernd Heine, Grammar *of interactives*; Alexandra Aikhenvald, *Imperatives and commands*.

[135] See: Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 488; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections', p. 265.

[136] Cf. Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 488; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections', p. 265.

[137] Cf. Bernd Heine and Friederike Hünnemeyer, 'On the fate of Ewe *ví* 'child' – the development of a diminutive marker', *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 16 (1988), pp. 97–121; Tania Kuteva et al., *World lexicon of grammaticalization*, Cambridge 2019, p. 890.

[138] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices'.

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Natural-kind labels can be used to summon animals in Akan. None of such forms seem, however, to have been lexicalised into a stabilised secondary CAC.[139] Cross-linguistically, the use of natural-kind labels as fully stabilised secondary CACs is attested, being attributed to the original vocative usage of these forms.[140] However, such lexicalisations are not particularly frequent (they are indeed much less common than de-imperative CACs) and, thus far, the most evident examples of this process are found in Xhosa[141].

3.2.3. Proper names

Another strategy of interacting with animals through the standard linguistic repertoire of Ewe involves the use of proper names. As observed by Ameka, "animals that have 'personal' names may [always] be summoned by their names".[142] Similar to natural-kind labels, proper-name CACs are not used as dispersals and directionals, nor are they employed for motion unrelated purposes. As vocatives, they may however accompany constructions (primary CACs or secondary imperative-driven CACs) that are used in such dispersing, directional, and motion-unrelated functions. In Ewe, the animals that are given proper names are dogs and "less frequently" cats.[143] Other animals do not receive proper names. In fact, during our fieldwork, we were not able to collect cat names, and only dog names are represented in our database. Apart from *Nyasɔ̃* 'Wisdom' and *Dodzi* 'Perseverance', the two names mentioned by Ameka,[144] the common dog names are *Elikem* (= He/God has sustained/supported me), *Sedinam* (God has answered my prayers), *Woelinam* (You/God are/is there for me), *Mawulinam* (God is there for me), *Ewoenam* (He/God has done it for me), *Ɖutifafa* 'Peace', and *Dzidzɔ* 'Happy'. All these names are Ewe names given to people and are (more or less) widely used with human referents as well. Their usage with animal is thus secondary. According to our informants, the most common dog name is *Jack*, which is borrowed from English. Other common English-based dog names are *Scoobie*, *Blackie*, *Max*, and *Snow*. Most of these borrowed names cannot be used with humans in Ewe.[145] According to our data, it is more common

[139] See: Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[140] Fernando Poyatos, *Nonverbal communication across disciplines*; Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype', pp. 23, 34; Bernd Heine, *Grammar of interactives*.

[141] Alexander Andrason, 'Conative animal calls in Xhosa', p. 42.

[142] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 489; Felix Ameka, 'Meaning of phatic and conative interjections', p. 266.

[143] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 489.

[144] Ibidem.

[145] Regarding the naming system of the Ewe consult F. K. Atakpa, 'The naming system of the Ewe', in: *A handbook of Eweland. Volume I. The Ewes of southeastern Ghana*, ed. Francis Agbodeka, Accra 1997, pp. 177–192. Concerning English-to-Ewe borrowing, see Mawuli Adjei and Edzordzi G. Agbozo, 'Contemporary English loan-words in Ewe: A sociolinguistic appraisal', *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies* 2 (2014), pp. 111–118; and Albert Agbesi Wornyo, 'English loanwords in Ewe: A phonological analysis', *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics* 22 (2016), pp. 42–51. Concerning English-Ewe code-switching see Evershed Kwasi Amuzu, 'Ewe-English codeswitching: A composite rather than classic codeswitching' (PhD diss. Australian National University, 2005); and Evershed Kwasi Amuzu, 'Double plurality in codeswitching', *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 20 (2009),

to hear dogs being called in English than using Ewe names. This is related to the fact that according to the speakers, they often speak English with their dogs.

Proper names are also used in interactions with animals in Akan. However, there are no precise data revealing the types of names used and their semantic functions.[146] In many languages, animals can be addressed with the names given to them (see Maasai, Xhosa, Kihunde, Dogon, Bum and Babanki) and proper names-vocative constitute one of the crosslinguistic sources of CACs.[147] However, the lexicalisation of such constructions into genuine secondary CACs is not particularly common. As in Ewe, secondary CACs derived from proper names that are attested in other languages tend to be used in a summoning function.

3.2.4. Other sources of secondary CACs

Across languages, one can recruit other lexical classes and constructions to demand the performance of an action from an animal. One such form is the category of adverbials.[148] Indeed, secondary CACs derived from adverbials are attested in Macha Oromo[149] and Dogon,[150] as well as residually in Tjwao[151] and Xhosa.[152] In Ewe, however, adverbials such as *afísía* 'here', *afímá* 'there', or *fifía* 'right now' have not been sufficiently entrenched and/or stabilised in a directive-to-animal function to view them as secondary CACs. In Akan, locative adverbials only feature as parts of secondary CACs that are built around imperatives.[153]

4. Discussion and conclusion

The evidence provided in the previous section allows us to answer the research question and establish that, from a formal perspective, the CAC category in Ewe fulfils the typological profile of CACs.[154] Primary CACs comply with the features associated

pp. 151–180. Lastly, concerning the use of English among the Ewe, see Lena Awoonor Aziaku, 'The effect of Englishisation on language use among the Ewe of Southern Volta in Ghana', *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies* 4 (2015), pp. 192–202.

[146] Compare: reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[147] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; see also: Fernando Poyatos, *Nonverbal communication across disciplines*.

[148] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype', p. 23; see also: David Fleck, 'A grammar of Matses' (PhD diss. Rice University, 2003); Alexandra Aikhenvald, *Imperatives and commands*; Bernd Heine, *Grammar of interactives*.

[149] Alexander Andrason, Mulugeta Onsho and Shimelis Mazengia, 'Conative animal calls in Macha Oromo'.

[150] Alexander Andrason and Idrissa Sagara, 'The grammar of conative animal calls: The case of Togo-Teŋu Kan of Dourou'.

[151] Alexander Andrason and Admire Phiri, 'Talking to animals in a moribund language'.

[152] Alexander Andrason, 'Conative animal calls in Xhosa'.

[153] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls'.

[154] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Alexander Andrason, 'The non-arbitrariness of some conative calls used to chase animals'.

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with the crosslinguistic prototype of a CAC and are both phonetically and morphologically extra-systematic if compared to the general word stock of Ewe. Regarding phonetics, primary CACs are invariably mono-syllabic. Although they may draw on vowels and consonants, the contribution of consonantal material is greater in CACs than in sentence-grammar lexical classes: (a) there are primary CACs that only consist of consonants but, in contrast, primary CACs built only around vowels are unattested – in the general word stock the opposite takes place; (b) most primary CACs exhibit syllables with consonantal onsets, while no onset-less primary CACs are attested – contrary to the general word stock where this latter structure is common; (c) contrary to other lexical classes, primary CACs tolerate consonantal codas. Primary CACs may host extra-systematic sounds: IPA phones that are otherwise absent in Ewe or limited to other interactives, as well as non-IPA sounds. Primary CACs exhibit extra-systematic phonotactics: complex clusters in onsets, the above-mentioned consonantal codas, and falling diphthongs, as well as long and extra-long consonants and vowels. Primary CACs are also commonly accompanied by modulations: excessive volume and articulatory speed, unusual pitch, melodic patterns, and pharyngealisation. Regarding morphology, primary CACs are mono-morphemic. Contrary to the transitory isolating-agglutinating profile of Ewe[155] and the commonness of words formed by "a concatenation of individual morphemes,"[156] primary CACs do not contain morphemes (inflectional, derivational, or compounded) other than the root itself. Primary summonses are often realised in replications, while primary dispersals tend to be punctual.[157]

In contrast to primary CACs, secondary CACs do not exhibit the above-mentioned extra-systematic properties with the exception of modulations by which they are commonly complemented. The typical sources of secondary CACs are imperatives, vocatively used natural-kind labels (often in their diminutive forms), and proper names. This behaviour of secondary CACs in Ewe matches what characterises secondary CACs across languages.[158] In Ewe, overall, the CAC-isation of these non-CAC lexemes/constructions is relatively low and none of them have been fully lexicalised into a genuine CAC (except for *les* which may be regarded as (nearly) primary).

The canonicity degree exhibited by Ewe CACs matches the canonicity extent observed in Akan, where "primary and secondary CACs exhibit distinct [phonetic and morphological] profiles" and where "the category of [primary] CACs […] coincides virtually with all prototypical features and thus instantiates the prototype of CACs to a large extent".[159] The typological profiles of the CAC categories in Akan and Ewe – with regard to both primary and secondary CACs – are thus analogous.

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[155] Felix Ameka, 'Ewe: Its grammatical constructions and illocutionary devices', p. 7; Felix Ameka, 'Ewe serial verb constructions in their grammatical context'.

[156] James Essegbey, *Ewe*, p. 408.

[157] Compare with: James Bynon, 'Domestic animal calling in a Berber tribe'; Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'.

[158] Alexander Andrason and Michael Karani, 'Conative calls to animals: From Arusa Maasai to a cross-linguistic prototype'; Bernd Heine, *Grammar of interactives*.

[159] Reginald Duah, Alexander Andrason and Mike Ofori Antwi, 'Phylogenetics of conative animal calls', p. 27.

It is not only the typological profiles of the Ewe and Akan CAC categories that are equal; some CACs are similar or even identical in both languages too. All such coinciding CACs are primary. The CACs *hai*, *hei*, and *kai* as well as the kiss CAC are identical in Ewe and Akan. A few other Ewe CACs, i.e., *mee*(*e*) *puu*(*u*)*s sã* and ǁ, have their close equivalents in Akan: *mɛɛ*, *bu*(*u*)*s*, *s*(*s*)*aw*, and ǂ.ǂ.ǂ.(ǂ)/ǁ.ǁ.(ǁ)). Given the nature of the phonological evolution of Kwa languages from Proto-Kwa to Proto-Potou-Tanu and Proto-Gbe and next to Akan and Ewe, respectively, with a number of shifts and changes separating the two linguistic lineages[160] – all of which is the manifestation of the considerable remoteness of Akan and Ewe within the Kwa linguistic branch[161] – and in light of the facts that will be discussed below, the striking similarities between some CACs in Ewe and Akan are unlikely to reflect an uninterrupted phylogenetic trajectory and be inherited. In our opinion, the CACs that coincide in Ewe and Akan are (paradoxically) not true cognates.

A more plausible scenario is that the above-mentioned similarities are due to areal phenomena. Indeed, as "Akan and […] the Gbe group (particularly Ewe) […] have been in close contact with each other for less than a millennium,"[162] (nearly) identical CACs might have resulted from borrowing from one language to another. If this was the case, the available data do not allow us to determine the direction or the origin of the transfer. However, it is noteworthy that no secondary CACs have been borrowed from Akan to Ewe or vice-versa. Since the transfer of secondary CACs seem crosslinguistically more common rather than that of primary CACs (this is especially evident in Gorwaa – a language spoken in the Rif valley where a number of secondary CACs have been borrowed from Swahili),[163] the absence of secondary CAC loanwords renders the hypothesis of areal convergence quite problematic. If borrowing had been a force explaining the coinciding CACs in Ewe and Akan, one would expect it to operate in secondary CACs as well and in fact more intensely than in primary CACs – which is not the case according to our data.

Therefore, while areal spreading remains a possible explanation (certainly to a greater extent than any phylogenetic legacy), the most probable reason of the synchronic similarity exhibited by some CACs in Ewe and Akan is the exploitation of shared cross-linguistic strategies. In other words, instead of being borrowed or inherited, identical/similar CACs

[160] Mary E. Kropp Dakubu, 'The Potou lenis stops and Western Kwa', *Anthropological Linguistics* 19 (1977), pp. 431–435; Mary E. Kropp Dakubu, 'Towards a phonology of Proto-Kwa'; Hounkpati Capo, *Comparative phonology of Gbe*; John Stewart, 'The second Tano consonant shift and its likeness to Grimm's law', *Journal of West African Languages* 23 (1993), pp. 3–39; John Stewart, 'The comparative phonology of Gbe and its significance for that of Kwa and Volta-Congo', *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 15 (1994), pp. 175–193; John Stewart, 'The potential of Proto-Potou-Akanic-Bantu as a pilot Proto-Niger-Congo, and the reconstructions updated', *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 23 (2002), pp. 197–224; Kirill Babaev, 'Reconstructing personal pronouns in Proto-Kwa'.

[161] Kirill Babaev, 'Reconstructing personal pronouns in Proto-Kwa'; Mary E. Kropp Dakubu, 'Kwa languages', p. 273; Mary E. Kropp Dakubu, 'Towards a phonology of Proto-Kwa'.

[162] Mary E. Kropp Dakubu, 'Towards a phonology of Proto-Kwa', p. 3; see also: Felix Ameka and Kropp Dakubu, 'Introduction', p. 3.

[163] Alexander Andrason and Andrew Harvey, 'Consonantality of conative animal calls | Vocalicity of interjections. Accidental or motivated? The case of Gorwaa', under review.

have most likely emerged (or have been reemerging) in Ewe/Gbe and Akan/Potuo-Tanu independently and constitute examples of parallel developments motivated by typological "rules" or tendencies. Indeed, each of the pairs of CACs that coincide in Ewe and Akan – perhaps except *kai* – has a close equivalent in many other languages that are neither related nor geographically adjacent and, overall, complies with the typological behaviour of CACs. We think that such semi-universal typological strategies have operated in CACs in Ewe and Akan and ultimately led to the formal and functional convergence of some lexemes in these two languages. This conclusion is consistent with the analysis of CACs in Babanki and Bum – two Grassfields languages spoken in Cameroon.[164] According to that study, "most CACs that coincide formally and functionally [in Babanki and Bum] may owe their similarity not to cognancy, but rather to iconic and universal strategies exploited in the two languages separately".[165]

While three sources of the lexemic similarity of Ewe and Akan CACs form a hierarchy of plausibility – parallel development (the most likely) > areal spreading (less likely) > phylogenetic legacy (unlikely) – all of them remain possible. This confirms the difficulty of analysing synchronic data related to CACs and interactives in African languages.[166] Most varieties lack written texts that would attest to historical developments and, at the same time, experience (intense) language contact. Additionally, interactives tend to draw on motivated strategies: embodied, imitative, and/or iconic. Consequently, determining which of the three possibilities of language evolution – i.e., shared ancestry, areal convergence, or parallel development – is the case, becomes (highly) difficult.[167] As we explained above, in Ewe, the latter scenario (i.e., parallel development) is, in our view, the most plausible.

While the above conclusions demonstrate that our study has achieved its objective, the present paper and the research from which it emerged have had much wider ramifications for us than a mere scholarly publication. When we initially met during the first author's work with hunters in a rural area north from Kumasi, we envisioned this paper as an academic project. The subsequent fieldwork, data analysis, and work on the manuscript have, however, transformed this collaboration from purely scholarly into a most beautiful friendship. We gradually learned about each other's lives, understood our respective family histories and generational struggles, and disclosed our dreams, ambitions, and fears. We shared our knowledge with each other and allowed ourselves to benefit from the other person's experience and expertise. Above all, we supported each other on the days where our worlds seemed to be falling apart and celebrated together our successes, whether shared or individual. And while we continue to do research and write jointly, we have built a relationship that transcends linguistics, academy, and scholarship. We deeply care about each other: about our cultures, languages, and people.

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[164] Alexander Andrason and Pius Akumbu, 'Towards a linguistic analysis of conative animal calls in Babanki and Bum'.

[165] Ibidem, p. 22.

[166] See: James Bynon, 'Domestic animal calling in a Berber tribe'.

[167] Compare: Tom Güldemann (ed.), 'Historical linguistics and genealogical language classification in Africa', in: *The languages and linguistics of Africa*, ed. Tom Güldemann, Berlin 2018, pp. 58–444.

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The Burden of Jealousy: Shame, Self-Love and Betrayal in *Sāra* (1938) by ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād

Abstract

This article offers a reading of the theme of jealousy in the novel *Sāra* by ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād (1889–1964), a theme depicted with such realism that many of his contemporaries perceived it as drawn from the author own life. Al-ʿAqqād presents a phenomenology of jealousy through Hammām, male protagonist in his forties, and the vicissitudes of his romantic relationship with a foreign woman, Sāra in her twenties. Jealousy emerges as a destabilizing force that triggers the protagonist's psychological turmoil, fuelled by cultural fears of dishonour, wounded pride, a sense of social betrayal, and the erosion of trust. This article argues that jealousy functions as an emotion shaped by the urban environment – thriving in a setting where anonymity and concealment prevail, in contrast to rural areas where social control is more pervasive. The novel of Al-ʿAqqād explores various expressions of the universal emotion of jealousy within the context of the cultural and ideological tension between two worlds in Egypt.

Keywords: Egyptian novel, Al-ʿAqqād, *Sāra*, jealousy, shame, self-love, betrayal

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Introduction

The novel *Sāra* by ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād (1889–1964) holds a significant place in the development of modern Arabic fiction. It was initially serialized in the magazine *Ad-Dunyā*, but the publication was discontinued, as the novel was deemed linguistically too elevated for the target audience.[1] The author continued developing the novel, which was later serialized in *Al-Balāġ* and subsequently published in book form in 1938.[2] The work is particularly significant due to its novelty within the literary landscape of the period and its arguably pronounced experimentalism.[3] The novel employs a third-person narrative through which is prominently filtered the perspective of the protagonist in his romantic journey. The narrative begins with a chance encounter on the streets of Cairo between the protagonist, Hammām, and Sāra, a woman with whom he had previously been involved in a romantic relationship that was some unspecified reasons interrupted. The initial encounter is succeeded by a series of meetings in which Sāra appears to elude full emotional or psychological grasp – or is at least perceived as such by the protagonist – leading Hammām to experience the relationship with her as a source of deep emotional unrest and great jealousy. Hammām is portrayed as persistently doubting Sāra's sincerity in her love for him, prompting him to adopt a series of strategies aimed at securing her affection or seeking a proof of it. The narratives presents the protagonist between obsessed on her fidelity suspended between delusion and potentially reasonable suspicion. The roots of Hammām's mistrust appear to lie partly in Sāra's emotional distance and in his own insecurities, which are arguably hinted to be partly due by the significant age gap between them – she in her twenties, and he in his forties. The relationship reaches its conclusion when the private investigator hired by Hammām to follow Sāra claims to have seen her entering another man's car. Irrespective of whether the betrayal actually occurred, the justification for the dissolution of the relationship is experienced by Hammām not as a loss, but as a release from his tormenting emotions and a return to life.

The novel *Sāra* represents a significant innovation, driven by artistic ambition, within a literary landscape largely defined by the dominant currents of Romantic aesthetics.[4] The fact that realism should be the horizon of literature had been underlined as early as 1905, by Muḥammad Luṭfī Ğumʿa (1886–1953) in the preface to his novel *Fī wādī al-humūm* (*In the Valley of Sorrows*) where he presents this current as the most difficult and ambitious in the literature of the time.

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[1] Matti Moosa, *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*, Boulder 1997, p. 291.

[2] Ibidem, p. 110.

[3] Robin C. Ostle, 'Three Egyptian Poets of "Westernization": 'Abd al-Rahman Shukri, Ibrahim 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mazini, and Mahmud 'Abbas al-'Aqqad', *Comparative Literature Studies* 7/3 (1970), p. 366; Muḥammad Ibn ʿAyād, *Ar-Rihān at-taraǧiḍātī Ibrāhīm al-kātib li-Ibrāhīm ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Māzinī unmūdaǧan*, Ṣafāqis 2003, p. 33; Maya I. Kesrouany, *Prophetic Translation: The Making of Modern Egyptian Literature*, Edinburgh 2020, p. 11; J. Brugman, *An Introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt*, Leiden 1984, p. 1; Reuven Snir, *Modern Arabic Literature: A Theoretical Framework*, Edinburgh 2017, p. 198.

[4] ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād and Ibrāhīm ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Māzinī, *ad-Dīwān fī al-adab wa-an-naqd*, 1997, pp. 77–114.

وليعلم القارئ الكريم، أن فن الروايات منقسم إلى قسمين؛ القسم الأول يسمونه «رومانتيك»؛ أي روايات خيالية، والقسم الثاني يسمونه «ريالستيك»؛ أي روايات حقيقية، فالأولى هي التي تصور البشر كما يجب أن يكونوا، لا كما هم في الحقيقة، والثانية تمثل البشر كما هم بنقائصهم ومعايبهم ومخازيهم، وأشهر كتاب الخيال السير ولترسكوت القصصي الإنجليزي وإسكندر ديماس وماكس بمبرتون وغيرهم، وطريقة كتاب القصص الخيالية هي أن يجلس الكاتب في غرفته، ويتخيل الحقول الخضراء، والحدائق الغنَّاء، وغدران الماء، والطيور المغردة، والليالي المُقمرة، والأبطال الشجعان، والنساء الجميلات، والغزل والغرام، والشكوى والجفاء واللقاء، ثم يكتب قصته. وأما طريقة كتابة الروايات الحقيقية هي أن يلبس الكاتب ملابسه أو يتزيَّى بغير زيه، ويتجول في الطرق والأزقة، ويدخل المجتمعات والمحطات، ويرقب حركات الناس في ملاعب القمار والحانات والحدائق العمومية، ويبقى طول ليلته هائمًا في الطرق؛ يدرس الأخلاق والطبائع والعادات، وهو فيما بين تلك الأشياء يقيد ما يراه ويسمعه ويدرسه، ثم يجلس ويكتب قصته ويسبك فيها كل ما رآه وسمعه. وكل الكُتَّاب في أوائل القرن التاسع عشر وما قبله، كانوا يميلون للطريقة الخيالية؛ لسهولتها ورواج رواياتها، وينفرون من الطريقة الثانية؛ لصعوبتها ونفور القراء منها.[5]

The esteemed reader has to know that the art of the novel is divided into two categories: the first is called “romantic”, meaning fictional novels, and the second is called *“realistic”*, meaning true-to-life novels. The first portrays humans as they should be, not as they truly are, while the second depicts people as they are, with their flaws, shortcomings, and disgraces. Among the most famous writers of fiction are Sir Walter Scott, the English storyteller, Alexandre Dumas, and Max Pemberton, among others. The method of writing fictional stories is for the writer to sit in his room and imagine green fields, lush gardens, flowing streams, singing birds, moonlit nights, brave heroes, beautiful women, romance and love, lamentation, estrangement, and reunion – then, he writes his story. As for the method of writing true-to-life novels, the writer must dress himself or even change his attire, wander through streets and alleys, enter social gatherings and stations, observe people’s movements in gambling halls, taverns, and public gardens, and spend the entire night roaming the streets, studying morals, nature, and customs. Amidst these observations, he records what he sees, hears, and examines. Then, he sits and writes his story, weaving into it everything he has witnessed and experienced. All writers in the early nineteenth century and before tended toward the fictional approach, due to its ease and the popularity of its novels, while they avoided the second method because of its difficulty and the readers’ aversion to it.

Muḥammad Lūṭfī Ǧumʿa identifies the limits of Ǧurǧī Zaydān (1861–1914), whose narratives often position the hero as a moral exemplar, with psychological complexity subordinated to didactic intent. This tendency is characteristic of a broader literary current in which love stories are structured around the well-known novelizations or free adaptations

[5] Muḥammad Luṭfī Ǧumʿa, *Fī wādī al-humūm*, 2018, pp. 11–12.

of Muṣṭafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī (1876–1924). In these works, romantic themes occupy the narrative centre, and the protagonists exhibit the defining features of romantic heroes: hypersensitivity, social maladaptation, and an inability to navigate a world perceived as morally corrupt. These figures seek refuge in nature – whether in the countryside, as with Istifān in *Māğdūlīn* (a free adaptation of Jules Sandeau's *Madeleine*), or in the wilderness, as in *Al-Faḍīla* (*The Virtue*) – yet ultimately succumb to the corruption of their contemporaries and the materialism of their age. Al-ʿAqqād elaborated on this view in the collection of articles, *Ad-Dīwān*, co-authored with Ibrāhīm ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Māzinī (1889–1949).[6] At the center of *Ad-Dīwān* critique of narrative – penned by Al-Māzinī – is a pointed criticism of Muṣṭafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī (1876–1924), whose work is dismissed as a flawed model due to its lack of realism, defined as an unnatural style.[7]

The narrative of *Sāra* aligns the novel closely with the literary transition championed by the *Dīwān* group, and its most prominent author al-Māzinī. The same conclusion drawn by readers of Al-Māzinī's novels – especially his widely acclaimed *Ibrāhīm al-Kātib* (1931; *Ibrahim the Writer*) – can arguably be applied to *Sāra*. His writing are seen to adopt a mode in which the distinction between reality and fiction becomes increasingly blurred, producing narratives that consistently take the form of autobiography and stream of consciousness. As Muḥammad al-Mandūr highlights, Al-Māzinī's literary style:

> يخلط في المقروء بالنتاج نفسه ولا يعود يميز بين ما أخذه عن غير وما نبأ من ذاته.[8]
>
> He mixes the product itself in what he reads, and no longer distinguishes between what he has taken from others and what has come from himself.

This phenomenon is further reinforced by the accounts of his family members, who were convinced that Al-Māzinī's literary works were drawn exclusively from his own life experiences. As Niʿmāt Aḥmad Fuʾād met the family of the writer for her doctoral research, they affirmed that every place, person, and event described in his novels was directly taken from his personal experience and that they had lived together as a family.[9] This novel is thus part of a stream of narrative that aims represent lived experience through fiction in forms[10] even if it may lack sometimes a clear narrative goal.[11] This is arguably exemplified by many novels of Al-Māzinī in which is evident the lack of a clear narrative design. In the novel *Min an-nāfiḍa* (*From the Window*), Al-Māzinī describes for instance his afternoons spent gazing out of a window, interweaving reflections with narrations of encounters with acquaintances – only for the novel to end abruptly.

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[6] Edmond Saussey, 'Ibrāhīm Al-Māzīnī et Son 'Roman d'Ibrāhīm', *Bulletin d'études Orientales* 2/2 (1932), p. 163.

[7] Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī, 'Al-Māzinī the Novelist', *Journal of Arabic Literature* 4 (1973), p. 114; Muḥsin Jāsim Mūsawī, *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel: Debating Ambivalence*, Leiden 2003, p. 39; Saussey, 'Ibrāhīm Al-Māzīnī et son 'Roman d'Ibrāhīm', p. 171; Pierre Cachia, *Arabic Literature: An Overview*, London 2002, p. 137.

[8] Muḥammad al-Mandūr, *Muḥāḍarāt ʿan Ibrāhīm al-Māzinī*, Al-Qāhira 1954, p. 6.

[9] Niʿmāt Aḥmad Fuʾād, *Adab al-Māzinī*, Būlāq 1954, p. 146.

[10] Moosa, *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*, p. 121.

[11] Muḥammad al-Mandūr, *Muḥāḍarāt ʿan Ibrāhīm al-Māzinī*, p. 330.

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The narration of *Sāra* parallels that of Al-Māzinī, both being read as autobiographical narratives that positioned individual experience as the goal literary creativity. This autobiographical mode informs the novel's structure, in which the love story unfolds through a formally discontinuous, stream-of-consciousness-like narrative that, while not strictly causal, achieves thematic and emotional coherence. The novel presents depth and realism of the emotional content in a progression that appears shaped by autobiographical memory as the narration itself that resists the conventions of fiction, presenting the story not as a carefully constructed novel in the classical sense, but rather as a process of fictionalizing lived events. This resistance is particularly evident in the narrator's explicit reference to the act of fiction-making, when he states that the names assigned to the protagonists are used merely as a matter of convention, names that are, furthermore, introduced only in the middle of the narrative.[12] The sense of narrative of real experience is further arguably reinforced by the presence of an intradiegetic narrator, whose measured and at times reticent tone suggests an implied author personally implicated in the events and thus aiming to preserve his own memory and honor. Essential elements of the story, including Sāra's maternity and the age difference between her and Hammām, and Sāra being a foreign Christian are conspicuously withheld by the narrator until the latter part of the novel.

The novel's highly realistic and personal tone is confirmed by the reception of the text upon its publication. The plausibility and emotional intensity of the narrative led many readers to doubt that Sāra was entirely fictional, prompting widespread speculation about the real-life referent behind the character.[13] Some believed she was a Syrian woman named Alice, with whom the author was rumored to have had a relationship; others speculated that she was Greek, a foreigner, or even a Jewish woman – given the biblical connotations of the name *Sāra*.[14] Still, many believed that *Sāra* was none other than Mayy Ziyāda (1886–1941).[15] In the introduction to the second edition, the author himself attempted to dispel these rumors by firmly asserting that the story was entirely fictional.[16]

The novel *Sāra* is particularly compelling as it offers a window into possible psychological and cultural construct of jealousy in Egypt between the two world wars. Within this framework, this article examines the theme of jealousy as represented in *Sāra* through a psychological lens. The perspective of an intradiegetic narrator presents

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12 ʿAbbās M. al-ʿAqqād, p. 104.

13 Matti Moosa mentions an ambiguous pamphlet where one of the friends of Al-ʿAqqād, Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Ǧabalāwī claimed that Al-ʿAqqād had in the period a romantic relation with a girl named Sāra of Lebanese origins, but that the relationship was complicated because Al-ʿAqqād questioned her character and conduct. Like in the novel, Al-ʿAqqād is claimed to asking him some other friends to spy on Sāra. Al-Ǧabalāwī claims that he was the one who saw her enter a house of ill repute and informed al-ʿAqqād. Al-Ǧabalāwī also recalls Al-ʿAqqād crying while listening to a song by a Syrian singer that made him remember his beloved, prompting him to immediately turn off the phonograph. See: Matti Moosa, *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*, p. 110.

14 J. Brugman, *An Introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt*, p. 273.

15 Matti Moosa, *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*, p. 110; J. Brugman, *An Introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt*, p. 127.

16 ʿAbbās M. Al-ʿAqqād, *Sāra*, Al-Qāhira 1943, p. 9.

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jealousy not as a phenomenon to be analysed in its entirety but rather as a specifically male phenomenology. While the novel adopts the voice of an omniscient narrator, which allows for the extensive use of the protagonist's stream of consciousness, its representation of *Sāra's* thoughts is arguably lacking in psychological depth. This absence paradoxically reinforces the novel's strong sense of realism, giving the impression that the characters are not entirely fictional but rather a condensation of the author's own experiences. It appears as though the author is projecting his own voice, perspective, and biases through a narrator who, while ostensibly omniscient, ultimately aligns with the protagonist's worldview. This partiality suggests that the narrator fully comprehends only Hammām's perspective, thereby shaping the reader's understanding of events through a single, gendered lens. In this sense, the emotional connection between the narrator and the protagonist suggests that Hammām functions as an alter ego of the author, serving as an expression of his own internal conflicts and perceptions.

1. Jealousy and anxiety

While the expression and behavioural manifestations, jealousy may vary across cultures, but in its core dynamics appear to be constant. Jealousy is a complex emotion and is classified among the fundamental, universal emotions, alongside anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise.[17] It is considered universal not only because it transcends specific cultural contexts[18] – in its essential structure,[19] at least – but also because it can be observed as early as four months of age in infants. Moreover, components of this emotion have been observed in various mammalian species, suggesting a biological and evolutionary basis.[20] Jealousy typically arises as a response to a perceived or potential threat to a privileged relationship, most notably within affective or intimate bonds. It is also thought to be linked to unconscious processes, as it may be triggered not only by actual threats but also by imagined ones. In infancy, the experience of jealousy is rooted in the symbiotic relationship with the mother and the sense of security and protection associated with maternal attention – particularly her smile.[21] The threat of losing this exclusive bond, whether due to external agents or the presence of other

[17] David M. Buss, 'Sexual Jealousy', *Psihologijske Teme* 22/2 (2013), p. 157.

[18] Peter N. Stearns, 'Jealousy in Western History: From Past toward Present', in: *Handbook of Jealousy*, eds. Sybil L. Hart and Maria Legerstee, Oxford 2010, p. 9.

[19] Phil Mollon, *Shame and Jealousy: The Hidden Turmoils*, London 2003, p. 101; R. Peter Hobson, 'Is Jealousy a Complex Emotion?', in: *Handbook of Jealousy*, eds. Sybil L. Hart and Maria Legerstee, Oxford 2010, p. 294; Danielle L. Zandbergen and Susan G. Brown, 'Culture and Gender Differences in Romantic Jealousy', *Personality and Individual Differences* 72 (2015), p. 176.

[20] Scott Forbes, 'Sibling Rivalry in the Birds and Bees', in: *Handbook of Jealousy*, eds. Sybil L. Hart and Maria Legerste, Oxford 2010, p. 121; Christine R. Harris and Caroline Prouvost, 'Jealousy in Dogs', ed. Elissa Z. Cameron, *PLoS ONE* 9/7 (2014), p. 157; Ben S. Bradley, 'Jealousy in Infant-Peer Trios: From Narcissism to Culture', in: *Handbook of Jealousy*, eds. Sybil L. Hart and Maria Legerstee, Oxford 2010, p. 193.

[21] Phil Mollon, *Shame and Jealousy: The Hidden Turmoils*, pp. 11–12.

children, provokes feelings of jealousy, shame, and disorientation.[22] Rivalry with the father, often repressed, tends to emerge more openly in relation to siblings or others perceived as competitors.[23] This rivalry can be interpreted as an early attempt to cope with these affective disturbances. Such early experiences of jealousy may shape the emotional dynamics of later interpersonal relationships and manifest in adulthood as an instinctive fear of losing a privileged emotional connection.

At the core of jealousy lies a profound fear of abandonment, wherein the object of one's affection – typically, in the case of the child, the mother as the source of life and protection – is perceived as withdrawing attention in favor of others. This perceived displacement gives rise to feelings of unworthiness and guilt, as the child experiences a failure to merit such exclusive care.[24] Underlying this conceptualization is the aspiration to be loved exclusively, such that any attention directed toward others is interpreted as a deprivation of affection toward oneself. The fear of abandonment becomes a persistent and intrusive mental presence, experienced as a fundamental threat to one's very existence. This perceived threat is feared, internalized, and repeatedly relived in fantasy, which also accounts for the obsessive dimension often associated with jealousy. The denial of a person's value – through the withdrawal of exclusive relational bonds – triggers a constellation of emotional responses, including sadness, a desire for revenge or vindication, and a resistance to forgiveness.[25] In adulthood, betrayal is not experienced merely as a painful personal event but also as a social one: the failure to be deemed worthy of love becomes amplified by the shame induced through perceived social judgment.[26] The threat of betrayal, which activates the primal fear of abandonment, often gives rise to dysfunctional responses, among which obsessive jealousy is particularly prominent.[27] This condition is defined by intrusive, unpleasant, and irrational ruminations about the partner's potential infidelity, typically accompanied by compulsive monitoring and control of the partner's behavior.[28] Jealousy, emerges as an emotion that encapsulates a complex reflection on identity itself, intertwining the fear of the beloved's absence with a deep sense of shame for not having been deserving of their attention.

Jealousy is a well-known emotion whose cultural perceptions have varied across time and space. While its excessive forms have consistently been viewed in a negative light, its more moderate expressions often occupy a more ambivalent space, bearing neither

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[22] Gregory L. White, 'Jealousy and Partner's Perceived Motives for Attraction to a Rival', *Social Psychology Quarterly* 44/1 (1981), p. 24.

[23] Phil Mollon, *Shame and Jealousy: The Hidden Turmoils*, p. 103; Leon Wurmser and Heidrun Jarass, 'Pathological Jealousy: The Perversion of Love', in: *Jealousy and Envy: New Views about Two Powerful Emotions*, ed. Leon Wurmser and Heidrun Jarass, New York 2008, p. 8.

[24] Ledon Wurmser and Heidrun Jarass, 'Pathological Jealousy: The Perversion of Love', pp. 16–17; Phil Mollon, *Shame and Jealousy: The Hidden Turmoils*, pp. 2–3.

[25] Danielle Zandbergen and Susan G. Brown, 'Culture and Gender Differences in Romantic Jealousy', p. 122.

[26] Phil Mollon, *Shame and Jealousy: The Hidden Turmoils*, p. 2.

[27] David M. Buss, 'Sexual Jealousy', p. 161.

[28] R. Almeida Leite et al., 'Obsessive Versus Delusional Jealousy: Destruction in a Form of Creation – A Review', *European Psychiatry* 33/S1 (2016), p. 531.

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exclusively negative nor wholly positive connotations. In cultures across the Mediterranean sea jealousy is frequently considered socially acceptable, provided it does not become excessive or obsessive.[29] Male jealousy has been culturally sanctioned as a protective mechanism against female infidelity and the fear of the "cuckoo in the nest."[30] Jealousy, at its core, is also seen to imply a deep emotional investment in the beloved; in some respects, its total absence may be interpreted as a form of emotional detachment or indifference. This entanglement between jealousy and genuine love is further underscored by the fact that in Islam, jealousy (*ġayra*) is not classified as a sin but is instead counted among the divine attributes. God Himself is described as *Al-Ġayyar* (the Jealous One) whose jealousy is expression of love for his creation which inflects idolatry as a form of betrayal of this divine love.[31] Furthermore, in the Sunna the Prophet Muḥammad himself is portrayed as having experienced jealousy, particularly in relation to his wife ʿĀʾiša, as recounted in several *ḥadīṯ* traditions.[32] Within this religious framework, legal and theological acumen has arrived to what appears to be a broad consensus among Islamic scholars that jealousy is acceptable. Nevertheless, the Sunna establishes a clear limit through the *ḥadīṯ* of the Prophet: *iyyākum wa-aẓ-ẓann fa-inna aẓ-ẓann akḏab al-ḥadīṯ* ("Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the most deceitful of speech")[33] that indicates that only jealousy grounded in objective evidence is allowed and not the one arising from unfounded suspicion or delusional projection.[34]

The emergence of jealousy as an emotionally salient category in Egypt during the *Nahḍa* period can be attributed, in part, to the profound social transformations underway at the time. The rapid demographic expansion of Cairo and the shift toward urban living drew many individuals from rural environments – contexts traditionally structured around strong communal bonds and rigid mechanisms of social control, particularly in relation to *ʿirḍ*, or female honour – into a new urban reality characterized by greater social fluidity and personal autonomy. A defining feature of urban life, in contrast to rural settings, was the relative anonymity it afforded. The city, populated increasingly by recent arrivals unmoored from extended kinship networks, offered a degree of independence from the familial oversight that had previously regulated personal conduct. Cairo had become a city of individuals, where the spatial vastness and the breakdown of traditional surveillance weakened the reach of collective familial authority.[35] Within this new context, women,

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[29] Peter N. Stearns, 'Jealousy in Western History: From Past toward Present', p. 184; D. P. H. Barelds and P. Barelds-Dijkstra, 'Relations between Different Types of Jealousy and Self and Partner Perceptions of Relationship Quality', *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy* 14/3 (2007), p. 189.

[30] Candida Yates, *Masculine Jealousy and Contemporary Cinema*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, New York 2008, p. 28.

[31] Ḥamāda Aḥmad Muḥammmad Ismāʿīl, *Faḍāʾil al-ġayra ʿalā an-nisāʾ*, p. 34.

[32] Marion Holmes Katz, 'Beyond *Ḥalāl* and *Ḥarām* : *Ghayra* ("Jealousy") as a Masculine Virtue in the Work of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya', *Cultural History* 8/2 (2019), p. 203.

[33] Ibidem, p. 114.

[34] Ḥamāda Aḥmad Muḥammmad Ismāʿīl, *Faḍāʾil al-ġayra ʿalā an-nisāʾ*, p. 116.

[35] Peter C. Dodd, 'Family Honor and the Forces of Change in Arab Society', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4/1 (1973), p. 48.

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too, entered the workforce and navigated public space with a level of autonomy previously unavailable to them in more tightly regulated rural settings. The absence of strong communal mechanisms of accountability and the loosening of gendered restrictions on mobility and visibility rendered jealousy a more socially intelligible emotional response. In the context of the *Nahḍa* and Cairo's rapid urban expansion, jealousy may thus be read as a response to shifting norms and structures of intimacy. With women's increasing participation in the market economy[36] and the formation of direct, individual relationships,[37] their relative independence grew.[38] Combined with the anonymity and invisibility afforded by urban life, this development made interpersonal relations less publicly observable,[39] in contrast to rural communities where such interactions were subject to communal scrutiny.[40] The resulting atmosphere of uncertainty fostered a sense of insecurity, and jealousy emerged as an affective response to this perceived erosion of social and emotional control.

2. Hammām's jealousy

The interplay between modernity and jealousy is vividly illustrated in the novel *Sāra*. The author, Al-ʿAqqād, situates the relationship between Hammām and Sāra within the modern and symbolically charged setting of a cinema. This choice of locale reflects the broader cultural shifts of the time, as cinemas – unlike traditional cafés frequented by older generations – were perceived as spaces associated with youth and modernity. As Al-Māzinī affirms in his *Min an-nāfiḍa* (*From the Window*, 1949), the cinema represented a departure from traditional social spaces.[41] The setting of a cinema also aligns with the foreignness attributed to modern culture, as most films screened in Egypt at the time were imported, owing to the nascent stage of the local film industry.[42] The cinematic space appears not only a marker of modernity but also a site of encounter with the foreign.[43] This notion is reinforced through the character of Sāra, a Christian foreign woman, whose relationship with the protagonist brings cultural differences – particularly in the conception of honour – into sharp relief. The protagonist is deeply invested in safeguarding Sāra's respectability and implicitly expects her to demonstrate an equivalent regard for his own. His actions suggest a reciprocal, though culturally asymmetrical, concern for mutual honour.

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[36] Judith E. Tucker, *Women in Nineteenth-Century Egypt*, Cambridge 1985, p. 8.

[37] Ibidem, p. 64.

[38] Muṣṭafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī in his *An-Naẓarāt* three collection of his articles emphasizes this aspect of individualism as a result of westernized life, see: Muṣṭafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī, *An-Naẓarāt*, Al-Ǧīza 1991, p. 355.

[39] Peter C. Dodd, 'Family Honor and the Forces of Change in Arab Society', pp. 47–48.

[40] Ibidem, p. 3.

[41] Ibrāhīm ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Māzinī, *Min an-nāfiḍa*, Al-Qāhira 1995, p. 47.

[42] Delphine Pages-El Karoui, 'Deciphering the Binary Code "Egyptian versus Foreigner" in Egyptian Cinema', *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 16 (2017), p. 382.

[43] Lucie Ryzova, *The Age of the Efendiyya: Passages to Modernity in National-Colonial Egypt*, Oxford 2014, p. 9.

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In the novel *Sāra*, the cinema is portrayed as a symbol of promiscuity and sensuality. This association stems from the physical characteristics of the cinema itself: the darkness of the theatre hall offered one of the few semi-private spaces where unmarried couples could seek intimacy, away from the public gaze. A similar depiction appears in *Min an-nāfiḏa*, where the female protagonist's visit to the cinema with her boyfriend serves not only as a moment of intimacy and relationship-building but also as an encounter with sin and the fleeting nature of romantic entanglements.[44] For Al-ʿAqqād's alter ego in *Sāra*, the cinema is not considered an appropriate or respectable venue for individuals concerned with honour and public reputation. The protagonist, Hammām, carefully navigates this tension. His visits to the cinema with Sāra are conducted with secrecy and discretion, driven by a desire to avoid social censure and preserve his image as a respectable man. To this end, he purchases two separate tickets and enters the cinema alone, only joining Sāra once inside, in the cover of darkness and away from the public eye.[45] This ritual of concealment lends the relationship a tone of moral ambiguity, suggesting both the transgressive potential of such urban spaces and the latent risk of social disapproval. The cinema in *Sāra* thus emerges as a liminal site of 1930s romantic encounters – one situated on the margins of social acceptability and charged with an implicit atmosphere of licentiousness.

The novel opens in the vicinity of the cinema, marking it as a charged spatial and emotional locus. Following a prolonged and unexplained separation from Sāra, Hammām returns to the same street near the cinema, a place still haunted by memories of their past relationship.[46] He claims to have entered the cinema by chance, after five months of absence.[47] The narrative begins *in medias res*, immediately immersing the reader in the protagonist-narrator's emotional turmoil, characterized by anxiety and unease. Hammām describes his journey to the cinema as a passage through "demon-ridden" alleys to express the psychological distress he experiences.[48] He reflects on the tumultuous period that followed the breakup, referring to it evocatively as *ašhar mūḥiša* ("mournful months") conveying the intensity and disorientation of his emotional state.

The author delves into the psychological motivations underlying Hammām's return, framing it as an internal conflict between two opposing dimensions of his personality as he defines them one rational and one irrational. Although initially reluctant to reopen an emotional wound,[49] Hammām is ultimately compelled by an inner impulse to embark on this journey. The narrative presents this decision as the result of an internal dialogue between two contrasting voices within his psyche. The first is the rational and apprehensive self, characterized by a concern for self-preservation and a desire to avoid emotional risk. The second voice, by contrast, is marked by irrationality and hopefulness, driven by

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[44] Ibrāhīm al-Māzinī, *Min an-nāfiḏa*, p. 33.

[45] ʿAbbās M. al-ʿAqqād, *Sāra*, p. 9.

[46] Ibidem, p. 9.

[47] Ibidem, p. 11.

[48] Ibidem, pp. 13–14.

[49] Ibidem, p. 10.

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a longing to re-experience the past, regardless of its possible consequences. This internal dialectic culminates in the triumph of the irrational self, as Hammām admits his inability to offer a logical explanation for his return to the street near the cinema, describing his action as the result of an irresistible, irrational compulsion.

The extended period of separation between Hammām and Sāra appears to stem from Hammām's desire to punish her by withholding his presence – a form of emotional retribution. The novel's opening scene immediately underscores the lingering effects of his inner turmoil. Although the eventual encounter with Sāra is, in narrative terms, foreseeable, it is framed as unexpectedly charged. Hammām does not actively seek her out; rather, he merely passes through the street where she might be encountered.[50] It is Sāra who first notices him and initiates contact, asking, *ʾa huwwa anta?* ("Isn't it you?"). Hammām is depicted as emotionally paralyzed, unable to offer a response. The trauma elicited by these words is rendered in strikingly catastrophic terms. The moment is render through the metaphor of a ship overwhelmed by a violent storm[51] to express the protagonist's psychic disarray. What initially appears to be a tranquil sea is suddenly revealed as treacherous, its calmness concealing a series of inner upheavals that, as the narrator claims, defy articulation through ordinary language.[52] The scene thus dramatizes the collision between surface composure and submerged emotional chaos, a theme that recurs throughout the narrative.

In the initial encounter with Sāra, she is portrayed as attuned to Hammām's emotional distress and chooses to accompany him, though she too is rendered silent by the awkwardness of the situation. Both characters appear to navigate a shared discomfort – primarily precipitated by Hammām's behavior – yet ultimately depart together. Hammām expresses a clear desire to avoid the gaze of onlookers on the crowded cinema street, underscoring his persistent preoccupation with public perception and social judgment. Once inside the taxi, it is Sāra who assumes control of the situation, instructing the driver to proceed wherever he wishes,[53] while Hammām remains speechless. Though his reaction may appear exaggerated, it effectively conveys a state of unresolved trauma tied to the emotional rupture in their relationship.[54] At the same time, the protagonist's near-pathological withdrawal can be read as an implicit plea for recognition and care. It may represent a nonverbal attempt to elicit Sāra's empathy and to communicate the intensity of his emotional attachment – perhaps even as a means of inducing her to acquiesce to the very demands that led to their initial estrangement.

Upon arriving at their destination and exiting the taxi, Hammām's first words immediately reveal his jealousy, which functions as an expression of his desire to reassert control over Sāra. Instead of inquiring about her well-being during their five-month

[50] Ibidem, p. 11.
[51] Ibidem, p. 12.
[52] Ibidem, pp. 14–15.
[53] Ibidem, p. 15.
[54] Ibidem, p. 16.

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separation, his opening question focuses on her recent whereabouts. Sāra does not recount the intervening months, but instead refers only to the moments preceding their unexpected encounter – an exchange that appears habitual, as if she anticipated his interest and responded accordingly. She informs him that she had gone to the cinema, a revelation that deeply unsettles Hammām. Interpreting this as a potential betrayal, he experiences a renewed sense of disappointment and recognizes that any attempt to restore their relationship will be fraught with emotional difficulty. Yet, despite the emotional charge of this moment, the confrontation between the two regarding the underlying causes of Hammām's jealousy – particularly his controlling behaviour – is postponed.

Once again, an internal, hidden will within Hammām emerges – one that operates in opposition to his declared intention to end his relationship with Sāra. This latent impulse does not manifest through reasoned deliberation but rather asserts itself through spontaneous and unpremeditated action, effectively undermining Hammām's conscious agency. It intervenes in the narrative with the force of a *deus ex machina*, reanimating the relationship through a sudden, impulsive kiss that he bestows upon Sāra in the public space of Cairo's streets. Overwhelmed by this uncontrollable desire, Hammām subsequently attempts to rationalize the kiss, downplaying its sensual dimension.[55] From his perspective, the act was not erotic but rather frightening, nervous, and suffused with regret. He likens the experience to an electric shock – abrupt, disorienting, and disturbing. The brevity of their renewed intimacy leaves Hammām emotionally unmoored, as though he were a shipwrecked figure engulfed by a storm. In the aftermath, he claims to have retreated to a distant mental space, overwhelmed by the intensity of the encounter. Yet despite this vulnerability, Hammām soon adopts a posture of dominance, assuming the authoritative role of Sāra's partner. He attempts to reimpose control over the relationship by issuing unilateral demands, instructing Sāra to meet him the following day without consideration for her own schedule or autonomy.[56]

Hammām is persistently haunted by the fear of losing Sāra, a fear that arguablt manifests through his continual doubts regarding her sincerity. Although the couple has reconciled after a period of estrangement, Hammām remains unable to dispel his anxieties about the authenticity of Sāra's affection. He recalls subtle signs – her expressions, gestures, and tone of voice – that he interprets as inauthentic, leading him to question even the genuineness of her kiss. Driven by suspicion, Hammām visits the cinema after parting from Sāra, motivated by a desire to investigate her activities during their separation.[57] Once inside, he approaches a cinema attendant to inquire about Sāra's companions in his absence. The attendant informs him that Sāra had not acted inappropriately and was, in fact, accompanied by another woman. Nevertheless, Hammām persists in questioning whether any men had been present, prompting irritation from the attendant. Instead of reflecting on the inappropriateness and invasiveness of his behavior, Hammām becomes

[55] Ibidem, p. 18.
[56] Ibidem, p. 19.
[57] Ibidem, p. 23.

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increasingly paranoid, suspecting that the attendant is deliberately concealing information. His persistence is so intense that the attendant himself grows anxious, fearing that Hammām might jeopardize his employment.

In the narrative, the "irrational dimension" of Hammām's self as he calls it[58] appears curiously immune to the emotional turbulence typically associated with jealousy, which is instead framed as a rational and calculated response. Within this framework, jealousy is not portrayed as a spontaneous outburst of passion but rather as a product of deliberate reasoning – originating, paradoxically, from the protagonist's rational self. This characterization complicates conventional understandings of jealousy and reinforces broader thematic concerns in the novel, particularly those related to individualism and the internal conflict between emotion and reason. In the context of modernity, as portrayed in the text, Hammām's experience of jealousy becomes emblematic of the broader psychological struggle to reconcile competing dimensions of the self in an increasingly fragmented and introspective social world.

3. Desire and denial: Hammām's inner conflict in relation to Sāra

The nature of Hammām and Sāra's relationship gradually settles into a routine characterized by emotional superficiality and a lack of depth. The protagonist himself acknowledges that the relationship has become a mere *ʿāda* (habit),[59] one he finds difficult to abandon despite a tacit sense of indolence and diminished desire. This sense of stagnation is also reflected in the banality of their interactions. The novel exemplifies this through a comical argument Hammām presents to justify their compatibility for marriage: he prefers the legs and wings of a chicken, while she prefers the breast – therefore, he reasons, they would have no cause for conflict.[60] While this observation may appear humorous on the surface, it is strikingly unaccompanied by any deeper reflection on emotional or intellectual compatibility. This absence of meaningful introspection suggests that Hammām is either unwilling or unable to engage with more substantive questions about the foundation of their relationship. Such superficiality may, in turn, be the root of his persistent anxiety and insecurity – feelings that manifest in his recurring suspicions that Sāra is seeking alternative partners. The underlying fear appears linked to a perceived lack of novelty or emotional richness within the relationship itself. The novel thus presents their bond as marked by alternating cycles of pleasure and dissatisfaction, underscoring its emotional instability and the unfulfilled needs of both characters.[61]

Hammām is caught in a persistent psychological dilemma: on one hand, his rational self urges him to end the relationship with Sāra in order to escape the emotional turmoil it

[58] Ibidem, p. 33.
[59] Ibidem, p. 43.
[60] Ibidem, p. 47.
[61] Ibidem, p. 48.

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generates; on the other, his irrational self compels him to remain bound to it. This internal division – between rational detachment and irrational attachment – is never resolved over the course of the novel. Instead, the narrative continually stages this opposition as a dynamic of oscillation and paralysis, in which neither impulse decisively prevails. Hammām's indecision creates a state of existential stalemate, wherein he is immobilized by the tension between his conflicting drives. His struggle to justify or subdue the intrusive and overpowering force of his irrational self becomes a central feature of his emotional and psychological landscape. The conflict is narrated through the metaphor of two fictional characters inhabiting Hammām's mind – personifications of reason and emotion. While the rational self recognizes the pain caused by his inability to exert control over Sāra and thus seeks to avoid further encounters, the irrational self persuades him to maintain the relationship, cloaking its emotional compulsion in a sense of duty or inevitability. The irrational self exploits the rational ego's aversion to suffering and its desire for stability, further complicating the internal struggle. Ultimately, the irrational self prevails, persuading Hammām to pursue another meeting with Sāra despite the emotional risks involved.[62] This internal debate, framed as an ongoing contest between opposing selves, illuminates the protagonist's deeper crisis of agency. Hammām's actions are not portrayed as the result of deliberate choice, but rather as responses to an instinctual force that operates beneath the threshold of consciousness. His preparation to meet Sāra is presented not as a rational decision, but as something that happens to him – as though his body moves toward her under the compulsion of an unconscious drive, revealing the extent to which his autonomy is undermined by internal fragmentation.

Hammām's fear of losing his beloved Sāra manifests in a recurring internal interrogation concerning the authenticity of his own loyalty and the potential for his own betrayal. This repetitive cognitive process may be understood within the broader framework of human psychology, where repetition functions as a common mechanism for processing unresolved emotional conflicts.[63] It is not unusual for individuals to revisit earlier experiences or anxieties that remain unresolved; such repetition serves as both a symptom and a strategy of the psyche attempting to work through latent tensions. In this context, Hammām's obsessive preoccupation with the possibility of Sāra's departure – and the continual reevaluation of their emotional bond – can be interpreted as an effort to impose coherence upon his emotional turmoil. His repetitive thoughts reflect a desire to achieve closure or control, yet they simultaneously underscore the compulsive nature of repetition when it is tethered to unresolved psychic wounds. The narrative thus positions Hammām's fear not merely as a reaction to present insecurity but as a deeper entanglement with past affective failures, resurfacing through the inescapable pull of repetition that marks the human condition.

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[62] Ibidem, pp. 27–28.

[63] Stephen Owen, 'Repetition: Of Small Pleasures in Idleness', in: *Remembrances: The Experience of the Past in Classical Chinese Literature*, Cambridge 1986, p. 100.

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4. Sāra between the virtuous mother and the fallen woman

The narrator constructs the character of Hammām primarily through his gaze upon Sāra, thereby offering insight into his psychological projection and perception of her. The depiction of Sāra functions as a mirror of Hammām's internal conflict – his oscillation between rational restraint and irrational desire. Rather than presenting Sāra as an autonomous subject, Hammām projects his own fragmented self-image onto her, attributing to her a multiplicity of identities that he claims to understand fully.[64] Yet, upon closer examination, his characterization of her is reductively dualistic. On one hand, he imagines Sāra as a virtuous mother figure – modest, chaste, and protective of her honour. On the other, he perceives her as a pleasure-seeking, bohemian woman, immersed in sensuality and modern freedoms. Within this framework, Hammām assumes the role of moral guide, urging her to embrace modesty and maternal virtue.[65] However, this portrayal is neither stable nor entirely convincing. Hammām's narrative is marked by inconsistency and rhetorical overcompensation. If Sāra were genuinely inclined toward moral corruption, as he intermittently suggests, such a characterization would suffice as a justification for ending the relationship – without the need for constant surveillance or proof of betrayal. The fact that he does not act on this presumed moral judgment suggests a deeper ambivalence. It implies that Hammām himself does not fully believe in the negative portrayal he constructs, but rather uses it to rationalize his own insecurities, exert control, or manage the cognitive dissonance produced by his conflicting desires.

Hammām's accusation that Sāra is inclined toward a bohemian lifestyle appears to be driven less by objective observation and more by a projection of his own envy and insecurity. The depth of Sāra's capacity for romantic engagement and emotional vitality is portrayed as a source of unease, even jealousy, for Hammām.[66] He critiques her apparent pursuit of pleasure, warning that such a lifestyle will inevitably result in the erosion of youth and physical beauty. This critique reflects a broader thematic tension in the novel between the pursuit of pleasure and the societal pressures associated with aging, propriety, and the preservation of beauty – especially for women. However, this concern may be interpreted less as a reflection of Sāra's priorities and more as an externalization of Hammām's own internal anxieties. As he approaches middle age, Hammām exhibits a growing sense of vulnerability regarding his own desirability and emotional viability. His critique of Sāra's lifestyle, then, can be read as a projection of his fears about his diminishing capacity to engage in fulfilling romantic relationships. This interpretation suggests that Hammām's preoccupation with the loss of beauty and youth does not derive from any intrinsic deficiency in Sāra's character or behavior, but rather from his own struggle with self-worth and aging. In this light, his moralizing stance serves as a defense mechanism, masking deeper emotional insecurities under the guise of ethical concern.

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64 ʿAbbās M. al-ʿAqqād, *Sāra*, p. 121.

65 Ibidem, pp. 54–55.

66 Ibidem, p. 52.

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It can be argued that Hammām instrumentalizes the question of Sāra's morality as a means of attracting and exerting influence over her. Within the narrative, jealousy is portrayed not merely as a personal emotion, but as a socially sanctioned virtue – particularly when it serves to uphold a woman's honour and social standing. In the Arab cultural context, non-excessive jealousy is often legitimized as a moral sentiment, especially in situations where it is seen to protect *ʿirḍ* – a concept of honour intrinsically tied to female chastity and virtue. In such a framework, jealousy becomes both a gendered and moralizing force, motivating women to embrace and display modesty.[67] The absence of jealousy, conversely, is frequently interpreted as a sign of moral decline.[68] This view is echoed in historical sources, such as Taqī ad-Dīn al-Maqrīzī (1364–1442), who associated the absence of jealousy with vice and societal degeneration.[69] Hammām's desire to assert control over Sāra's moral comportment becomes especially evident in his composition of an unsent letter, in which he articulates his intention to end their relationship.[70] Although the letter remains unread by Sāra and exerts no direct impact on the narrative, it provides critical insight into Hammām's psychology. Within it, he expresses feelings of vulnerability and danger, as he imagines and seeks to dispel rival figures in Sāra's social orbit. He asserts his privileged position as the only person capable of truly recognizing and preserving Sāra's dignity, implicitly casting other potential suitors as morally inferior. Framing his bond with Sāra as one rooted in honour and purity, Hammām contrasts their relationship with others he deems base or dishonourable. He also reproaches Sāra for speaking openly about her past lovers, suggesting that such disclosures compromise the ideal of modesty he seeks to impose. Ultimately, Hammām's desire is to construct a relationship that not only aligns with his own moral expectations but also symbolically elevates Sāra's social standing – provided that she conforms to the role he envisions for her. This idealization, however, is less a recognition of Sāra's autonomy than a projection of Hammām's own need for control, couched in the language of virtue and honour.

5. Sāra beyond possession

Jealousy can arise from underlying dynamics of power in the roles within romantic relationships.[71] It often reflects the tension between the desire to possess one's partner and the competing need to assert individual autonomy. Within this framework, factors such as physical attractiveness, intelligence, social status, and age often influence the distribution of power within a romantic relationship, and jealousy may be seen as an emotion that

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67 Peter C. Dodd, 'Family Honor and the Forces of Change in Arab Society', p. 49.

68 Marion Holmes Katz, 'Beyond *Ḥalāl* and *Ḥarām*', p. 208.

69 Ibidem, p. 209.

70 ʿAbbās M. al-ʿAqqād, *Sāra*, p. 48.

71 Marcianne Blévis, *Jealousy: True Stories of Love's Favorite Decoy*, (trans.) Olivia Heal, New York 2009, p. 3; Nancy Consuelo Martínez-León et al., 'A Systematic Review of Romantic Jealousy in Relationships', *Terapia Psicológica* 35/2 (2017), p. 204.

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aims to prompt action in who experience it to compensate for the potential risk of loss of the beloved due to these perceived deficiencies in these areas.[72] Jealousy, understood in this context, acts as a psychological mechanism for prompting action towards the perceived relational disequilibrium, compelling the affected individual to seek a solution of perceived disparities. This coping with fear may nevertheless produce reaction that contribute to relational instability and cause its failure.[73] The drive to possess, which lies at the core of jealousy and its associated fear of loss, may at times incite betrayal, functioning as a countermeasure to reassert one's autonomy in the one object of jealousy.[74] This dynamic is arguably exemplified in *Sāra*, where Hammām's insecurity brings him to make actions to provoke jealousy in Sāra as a mean to bring her attached to him. Yet these efforts ultimately, rather than securing the relationship, possibly gradually push Sāra away, which in this fear of possession render her less involved in the relation ultimately leading her to betray him. Within this psychological framework, jealousy propels Hammām into a pattern of possessive behavior born of fear, while Sāra's attempts to evade such control set into motion a spiral of conflict and resistance that fractures their bond.

Here, jealousy is not merely an emotional reaction but part of an ongoing relational game, one that Sāra is claimed to master more effectively than Hammām. Whereas Hammām is portrayed as consumed by inner conflict and psychological unrest, Sāra emerges as a figure of emotional equilibrium, largely impervious to the anxieties that torment her partner. Hammām seeks hence to make Sāra aware of the pain associated with jealousy and suspicion he is leaving. In an exchange coming out of the cinema[75] she asked whether he would accept a kiss from an actress in a film, Hammām replies, "Is it polite to refuse a kiss?" and follows with, "If the profession required it, it would be a business matter." Through these statements Hammām seeks to ignite her jealousy. Similarly, in another episode, Hammām make Sāra find an image of a beautiful woman among his papers. The image, as Hammām later explains, is of a dancer whom he explicitly describes as being more beautiful than Sāra. He attempts to justify his possession of the photograph by likening it to an aesthetic object comparable to a statue intended to be appreciated as art rather than as an object of desire. Sāra's outburst which culminates in the destroy of this image[76] gratifies Hammām's need for emotional affirmation as a sign of her love. Despite this charged moment, there are no other instances where Hammām succeeds in arousing Sāra's jealousy. Even this episode proves largely ineffective, as it fails to prompt any meaningful dialogue or emotional reckoning between the characters.

Her apparent ease in navigating jealousy is hinted to function as a defensive strategy, rooted in the emotional lessons derived from two previous relations. In the first relationship, Sāra is said to have ended the partnership after witnessing her partner engage in a prolonged conversation with another woman at a party, despite the absence of any definitive evidence

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72 Phil Mollon, *Shame and Jealousy: The Hidden Turmoils*, p. 108.

73 Ibidem, p. 222.

74 Gregory L. White, 'Jealousy and Partner's Perceived Motives for Attraction to a Rival', p. 222.

75 ʿAbbās M. al-ʿAqqād, *Sāra*, pp. 30–31.

76 Ibidem, p. 156.

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of infidelity,[77] in which she had a public confrontation with the partner and immediate termination of the relation. According to the narrative, Sāra's second relationship operated as an act of reparation; following the emotional trauma of betrayal and the implicit negation of her value, she pursued a relationship with a younger, physically appealing neighbour as a means of reaffirming her self-worth.[78] Yet this interpretation seems deeply inflected by Hammām's own present insecurities embedded into the narrating voice. By affirming her sensitiveness to the theme of jealousy and fear of loss the narration implicitly accuse her of not coping with these fears in Hammām. In this framework the narrator gives ways to interpret her perceived coldness in the relation as generated by her own fear of losing the partner by keeping a certain distance and thus her way of dealing with jealousy.

The novel suggests furthermore that Sāra's desire for independence plays a central role in the fraught dynamics of her relationship with Hammām. She appears to interpret Hammām's jealousy not as a sign of affection but as an attempt to assert control over her, which she firmly resists.[79] This resistance is consistent with the portrayal of Sāra as possessing a strong and assertive personality, which manifests in her frequent efforts to dominate arguments and assert autonomy within the relationship. One site where this dynamic is symbolically enacted is in their differing attitudes toward punctuality.[80] Hammām places great importance on timeliness, viewing it as a sign of respect and emotional investment, while Sāra often arrives late and leaving him waiting. Moreover, Sāra does not shy away from provoking jealousy, occasionally referencing her friendships with other men. A notable instance occurs when she tells Hammām that a male friend has invited her to accompany him to a car dealership a remark that foreshadows the later betrayal by entering in the car of another man. In response to these perceived transgressions, Hammām repeatedly threatens to end the relationship, positioning his demands as efforts to restore moral and emotional order. Yet Sāra remains largely unmoved by such ultimatums.

The root of Hammām's jealousy is portrayed as arising from a deep-seated desire to be the central focus of Sāra's emotional world.[81] The novel intimates that Hammām's greatest fear is not simply the loss of Sāra but the existential condition of being alone.[82] Without her, he appears to lack meaningful social ties, and his solitude becomes increasingly pronounced. While he interacts with others in passing, his emotional gaze is singularly fixed on Sāra; when she is absent, he is depicted as passively observing the street from his window, as emphasizing hi his social and emotional isolation.[83] This pervasive loneliness compels Hammām to construct a romantic narrative in which he positions himself as the only figure capable of offering Sāra a life of genuine emotional fulfilment. With a certain degree of naivety, he seems to hope that Sāra will come to believe that her best possible

77 Ibidem, p. 34.
78 Ibidem, pp. 34–35.
79 Ibidem, pp. 45–46.
80 Ibidem, p. 142.
81 Ibidem, p. 53.
82 Ibidem, p. 45.
83 Ibidem, p. 54.

life lies with him. He dismisses her past relationships as superficial and purely physical – experiences any woman might have – while presenting his own bond with her as uniquely meaningful and emotionally substantial. Ultimately, Hammām's possessiveness and jealousy seems less the result of mistrust in Sāra but arguably his underlying fear of loneliness.

The deterioration of Hammām and Sāra's relationship is attributed, within the narrative, to Hammām's perception of Sāra's increasing emotional distance. Sāra is described as concealing herself behind metaphorical veils, resisting complete exposure to Hammām's scrutiny.[84] In response to the growing instability of the relationship, he becomes increasingly preoccupied with understanding Sāra and unable to do it he seeks help by a friend physician to uncover hidden motivations and interpret Sāra's words and gestures.[85] This perceived opacity generates in him a sense of estrangement, as if she is gradually withdrawing from the intimacy they once shared. However, this interpretation is not unambiguous. One could argue that it is, in fact, Hammām who withdraws emotionally, unable or unwilling to fully engage with the complexity of Sāra's life. A key aspect of this complexity – one that remains untold until almost the end of the story – is Sāra's motherhood. Although the text makes it clear that Hammām is aware of her having a son from a previous relationship, this fact is neither addressed directly in his discourse nor explored as a meaningful component of their relationship. The child does not figure prominently in the narrative and is not presented as a source of conflict between the two. Nonetheless, the latent presence of the son takes on a pivotal role in the story's climax, as this hidden character was the source of the separation, it is ultimately he who provides evidence of Sāra's alleged betrayal. The postponed revelation of Sāra's status as a mother may be read as a narrative strategy that reflects a subtle disavowal of her maternity, an aspect arguably rendered invisible, as unwanted, or inconvenient for the characterization of Hammām.[86]

6. The relief of betrayal

Hammām's existence is portrayed as orbiting almost entirely around his relationship with Sāra, with his thoughts and actions consistently preoccupied by her presence – and more notably, her absence. His intense emotional dependency is revealed through repeated depictions of him observing the street from her window during her absences, as if hoping for a fleeting glimpse of her. This behaviour shows his anxious attachment and contrasts sharply with Sāra's more detached and nonchalant attitude, which arguably suggests a markedly asymmetrical emotional investment within the relationship.

Hammām's eagerness to be in Sāra's company is further emphasized by his habit of arriving early to their planned meetings that accentuates the intensity of his desire for her company, as well possibly as the underlying fragility of his emotional state. In contrast,

[84] Ibidem, p. 157.
[85] Ibidem, p. 39.
[86] Ibidem, p. 32.

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Sāra's habitual disregard for punctuality and her apparent indifference toward timeliness arguably function as an assertions of emotional detachment and personal autonomy. This imbalance contributes to Hammām's growing sense of insecurity and inadequacy within the relation. In response, Hammām seeks to incite jealousy and provoke Sāra into demonstrating emotional involvement, but his efforts fall short of producing the desired effect.[87] One of Hammām's primary strategies involves deliberately withdrawing his presence in an attempt to provoke a sense of loss and elicit fear of abandonment in Sāra. This tactic is further exemplified by his recurrent use of professional or social obligations as convenient pretexts for postponing their meetings, to manipulate the emotional dynamics of the relationship through "strategic absence." This appears in the final analysis the reason of the five-month separation between them before their meeting at the beginning of the novel. Sāra's apparent immunity to emotional manipulation is reflected in her indifference toward Hammām's attempts to provoke a reaction. These strategies of withholding presence as a form of punishment ultimately intensify Hammām's own emotional distress, as he comes to desire the very meetings he had chosen to defer.

The destabilizing effect of jealousy on Hammām's self-esteem is a central psychological thread in the narrative. His emotional state is marked by a persistent internal conflict, wherein jealousy becomes an overwhelming and disproportionate response that ultimately undermines, rather than protects, his well-being. This emotional excess gives rise to feelings of shame and self-reproach, as Hammām becomes increasingly aware of the irrationality of his behaviour. His sense of inadequacy is laid bare in comic moments that underscore the dissonance between his self-perception and behaviour, inviting the reader to view his plight with a mix of irony and empathy. Particularly illustrative in this context are the scenes depicting the interactions between Hammām and the private investigator he employs. The elderly private detective appointed to follow Sāra is indexically chosen as an older man out of fear that a younger one might be seduced by her. The comedic tone is heightened by the many discussions with the clumsy investigator Amīn which reveal his furthermore poor eyesight as when he mistakenly reports having seen another man with Sāra, unaware that the man in question is in fact Hammām himself.

Towards the conclusion of the narrative, signs of Sāra's possible infidelity begin to surface paradoxically bringing a sense of relief to Hammām. Tension escalates at the moment when Sāra's child repeats romantic expressions, and Hammām, struck by their unfamiliarity, recognizes them as evidence of another's presence. When questioned, Sāra attributes the child's expressions to a servant in the household. However, Hammām dismisses this explanation, contending that the refined diction and literary register of the repeated phrases are incongruent with the speech of a domestic worker. Hammām's suspicions are given credence – at least from his perspective – through the intervention of the detective, Amīn which exclaims with elation, "I've found it, I've found it!"[88] claiming having witnessed her entering another man's car.

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[87] Ibidem, p. 143.

[88] Ibidem, p. 193.

Regardless of the truth of the betrayal of Sāra, the narrative presents this resolution not as a tragic collapse, but as a moment of psychological liberation for the protagonist. Significantly, the betrayal arguably emerges not as a source of dread for Hammām anymore but also something he appears to seek, even hope for, as demonstrated by his precipitous acceptance of Amīn's account, notwithstanding the latter's previously demonstrated unreliability. Ironically, the resolution of Hammām's emotional turmoil is brought about by the realization of his greatest fear, Sāra's unfaithfulness, which paradoxically emerges as a liberating force.[89] After a prolonged period of emotional anguish marked by obsessive jealousy and insecurity, the confirmation of Sāra's disloyalty functions as a form of catharsis for the protagonist. This emotional release is symbolized by Hammām's ability to smile again and a return to psychological equilibrium.[90] The betrayal can arguably be seen wished as it offers him a morally and emotionally justifiable rationale for ending the relationship. Crucially, this discovery serves to rehabilitate Hammām's self-image and recast his prior emotional volatility in a more sympathetic light. Hammām's jealousy, previously verging on pathological, is retrospectively legitimized, while Sāra is positioned as the villain of the story.

The act of reclaiming personal freedom is furthermore dramatized through Hammām's withdrawal from the cinema district, a space that appears in the novel as emblematic of modern, arguably emotionally volatile forms of life. This departure serves as a symbolic severing from the affective milieu in which his dysfunctional relation with Sāra had been cultivated.[91]

Conclusions

Al-ʿAqqād's *Sāra* offers an exploration of the complex interplay between jealousy and shame, presenting these emotions as simultaneously personal and socially conditioned. Jealousy emerges as a profoundly destabilizing force – traumatic in its intensity and characterized by an unstable constellation of affective states, including wounded pride, internalized shame, and an acute anxiety over potential betrayal.[92] In confronting these anxieties – anxieties for which Sāra appears arguably not to understand or unable to offer the assurances demanded – Hammām enacts a masculine model that seeks to secure his partner's fidelity through various control-oriented strategies. These attempts, however, ultimately prove ineffective and counterproductive, as they fail to eliminate doubt regarding Sara's loyalty. Moreover, such strategies rebound upon Hammām himself, exposing his emotional vulnerability and culminating in a form of self-humiliation. The sense of self-humiliation is underscored through the novel's deployment of humour in scenes that highlight the protagonist's trepidation and anxiety. The novel suggests that the protagonist's

89 Ibidem, pp. 179–180.
90 Ibidem, p. 193.
91 Ibidem, p. 182.
92 Phil Mollon, *Shame and Jealousy: The Hidden Turmoils*, p. 12.

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jealousy arises not only from personal insecurity or a sense of inadequacy, but also from his inability to accept Sāra's emotional autonomy and her assertion of agency. Sāra's resistance to his desire for possession – and the independence this resistance enables – disrupts Hammām's model of relational control, thereby arguably fueling a cycle of suspicion and emotional instability. The pain of jealousy is such the narrative presents the dissolution of the relationship not as a tragic failure, but rather as a form of resolution, a 'happy ending' that liberates Hammām from this psychological burden.

The relationship between Hammām and Sāra, then, could arguably be interpreted as a symbolic confrontation between competing value systems: one rooted in conventional notions of honour, control, and emotional transparency, and the other aligned with modern ideals of personal freedom, privacy, and self-determination. Hammām's jealousy may be interpreted as a mechanism shaped by a traditional value system that places significant emphasis on the notion of *ʿirḍ* where jealousy functions as a drive to preserve this moral ideal. This desire is underpinned by a deep-seated fear of public humiliation and social censure for the self and the family. The anxiety he experiences can thus be situated within the shifting social dynamics of early 20th-century Cairo, a city whose expanding population fostered a heightened sense of anonymity and thereby eroded traditional forms of life within communal and familial oversight. The absence of social control is made starkly evident through Hammām's resort to hiring a private investigator that is unable to fully follow Sāra. Hammām's experience arguably points to a deeper unease with the social norms and relational dynamics of the city, highlighting his limited capacity to inhabit its space on his own terms.

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Architects, Stonemasons and Craftsmen of the Ayyūbid Period in Upper Mesopotamia (12th–15th centuries)[1]

Abstract

This article focuses on the architects, stonemasons and craftsmen of the Ayyūbid period (12th–15th centuries) in Upper Mesopotamia. Founded in Egypt in 1174, the Ayyūbid dynasty spread to Syria, Palestine, Yemen and Upper Mesopotamia, making significant artistic and architectural contributions to these regions. From 579H/1183 the Ayyūbids were active in important cities such as ʿAyntāb, Ar-Ruhā, Ḥarrān, Āmid, Mayyāfāriqīn, Ḥiṣn Kayfā and Siʿirt in Upper Mesopotamia. Ḥiṣn Kayfā became one of the most important centres of the Ayyūbids in the region from the 12th to the 15th century. In addition, in cities such as Āmid, Mardin, Dūnaysīr and Mayyāfāriqīn, the Artuqids lived under the Ayyūbids and minted coins reflecting this affiliation, bearing the names of Ayyūbid rulers. Arabic inscriptions on buildings often include the names of craftmen. Examples of architects working with the Artuqids and Ayyūbids can also be found in Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn. The Ayyūbid craftsmen included architects, stonemasons, *minbar* makers and plasterers. This study represents the first comprehensive examination of the workers of Ayyūbid architecture in Upper Mesopotamia from the 12th to the 15th centuries.

Keywords: Ayyūbids, Artuqids, Upper Mesopotamia, 12th–15th centuries, architects, stonemasons, craftsmen

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Introduction

While the Ayyūbid dynasty has often been closely associated with the battles and wars of the Crusader era, Ayyūbid military architecture has naturally been of most interest to contemporary chroniclers and researchers. Those involved in the construction of these buildings have been largely forgotten in historiography. However, traces of their work can be identified through the diversity of sources available for this period. In addition, Egypt and Syria have been the most common areas of study for Ayyūbid architecture, due to the number of remarkable remains preserved from this period, but also due to less investment in other regions of the Ayyūbid domain, notably Upper Mesopotamia, called *Al-Ǧazīra* by Arab geographers, which means "island" or "peninsula"[2]. This region, however, highlights different architectural influences and provides material that is well worth considering.

The region of *Al-Ǧazīra* was divided into three provinces based on the names of three Arabian tribal groups that settled in Mesopotamia during the Sasanian period (3rd to 7th centuries) and that continued their movement northwards after the Arab-Islamic conquest: Diyār Rabīʿa, Diyār Muḍar and Diyār Bakr[3]. Medieval geographers reported that the main districts of *Al-Ǧazīra* included Ar-Ruhā (Şanlıurfa), Ḥarrān, Al-Bīra (Birecik), Qalʿat Rūm (Halfeti), Hizan, Arzān (Erzen), Āmid (Diyarbakır), Mayyāfāriqīn (Silvan), Ḥiṣn Kayfā, Siʿirt, Ḥānī, Ḥazrō, Tall Fāfān, Mardin, Ṭūr ʿAbdīn ("the mountain of the servants" in Syriac), Dārā, Niṣībīn, Ǧazīrat Ibn ʿUmar (Cizre), Mosul, Sinǧār, Ra'ş al-ʿAyn (Ceylanpınar), Qalʿat Naǧm, Qalʿat Ǧaʿbar, and Ǧisr Manbiǧ, as well as Dūnaysīr, Ḫābūr, Samosate (Samsat), Al-Muwazzar (Viranşehir), Raqqa, and Sarūǧ (Suruç)[4]. The geographical term *Al-Ǧazīra* continued to be used during the Ayyūbid period to refer to this region.

Originally from the town of Dvin in Armenia, the Kurdish commander Saladin and his family first appeared in the Zengid state. Taking advantage of the political vacuum created by the death of the Zengid leader Nūr ad-Dīn Maḥmūd (r. 541H/1146–569H/1174)[5], Saladin officially established the state of Ayyūbid, named after his father. The borders of

[2] The region of *Al-Ǧazīra* was referred to in ancient Greek as Mesopotamia, derived from the words *mesos* and *potamos*, meaning "between the rivers". This term theoretically encompassed all the lands between the Euphrates and the Tigris. Abdülgani Bulduk, *el-Cezire'nin Muhtasar Tarihi*, (trans.) Mustafa Öztürk and İbrahim Yılmazçelik, Elazığ 2004, p. XIX; Marius Canard, *Histoire de la dynastie des Hamdanides de Jazira et de Syrie*, Alger 1951, p. 75.

[3] Marius Canard, *Histoire de la dynastie des Hamdanides de Jazira et de Syrie*, Alger 1951, p. 77.

[4] Abdülmü'min b. Abdilhak İbn Şemâil el-Katî'î Safiyüddîn (v. 739/1338), *Merâsidü'l-ittilâ' 'alâ esmâi'l emkineti ve'l-beka'*, 1. bs., Beyrut 1992, 1, pp. 331–332. The names of the cities we indicate in parentheses are the ones currently used. In particular, names of medieval cities within the current borders of Turkey were generally changed with the establishment of the Republic.

[5] Bahā' ad-Dīn Ibn Šaddād, *Nawādir*, Al-Qāhira 1964, (trans.) D. S. Richards, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*, Aldershot, 2001, p. 17; Ibn al-Munšiʾ al-Ḥisnī, *Hasankeyf Vekayinamesi (Nuzhat an-nāiẓr fi rāḥat al-ḫāṭir)*, (trans.) Eyyüp Tanrıverdi and Adnan Çevik, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Wien, nr. Cod. ixt. 355, 4b; Vladimir Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian history: I. New light on the Shaddādids of Ganja. II. The Shaddādids of Ani. III. Prehistory of Saladin*, London 1953, p. 123; Anne-Marie Eddé and Françoise Micheau, 'Saladin et la dynastie des Ayyoubides', Paris 2001, pp. 17–18; Anne-Marie Eddé, *Saladin*, Paris 2016, pp. 10–34.

the Ayyūbid state covered a vast area stretching from Egypt to Yemen, including Palestine (Jerusalem), Syria and Upper Mesopotamia. In the *Al-Ğazīra*, Saladin maintained territorial integrity under a single authority from 579H/1183 to 589H/1193. After Saladin's death, the government was divided between his brother Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Sayf ad-Dīn and his children. The names of the Ayyūbid rulers, indicating their allegiance to the Ayyūbids, can be found on the Artuqid coins minted in the cities of Āmid, Mardin, Dūnaysīr and Ḥiṣn Kayfā[6]. With the Mongol invasion of 1260, the territorial integrity of the Ayyūbids was largely lost; only Ḥiṣn Kayfā and its environs remained under Ayyūbid control until the mid-15th century. The Ayyūbids of Ḥiṣn Kayfā kept the traces of their dynasty by minting coins and undertaking extensive building work in Ḥiṣn Kayfā. Arabic inscriptions and coins left by descendants of the al-Ayyūbī lineage are common in the remains from this period. Ḥiṣn Kayfā underwent a process of transition between the Aq Qoyunlus ("White Sheep") and later the Ottomans in the mid-15th century. This marked the end of the Ḥiṣn Kayfā Ayyūbids (630–866 H/1232–1462), the longest-lived branch of the Ayyūbid dynasty. The last branch of the Ayyūbids had maintained their rule in Upper Mesopotamia, where the dynasty had originated four centuries before. Despite their expansion across vast territories, their legacy eventually returned to the lands of their origin, illustrating how historical power dynamics can shape the fate of a dynasty over time.

In Upper Mesopotamia between the 12th and 15th centuries, builders or building experts played a crucial role in promoting Ayyūbid architecture, complementing that of the patrons. The names of the patrons who funded the Islamic and Christian buildings are afforded notoriety, but the architects and craftsmen of these buildings are equally significant artisans. The beauty and strength of these buildings are influenced not only by the ideas of their patrons, but also by the skill and creativity of the architects and craftsmen who turn those ideas into reality. Understanding the relationship between these two groups is essential to the appreciation of our architectural heritage. This article examines the architects and stonemasons of Upper Mesopotamia, highlighting the lack of detailed studies of Ayyūbid craftsmen in the region.

A total of 27 artists have been identified from inscriptions on public, religious and military monuments. Some sites have several inscriptions by the same craftsman. It was therefore necessary to compare the epigraphic evidence with literary sources, which focus on the political context rather than the biographies of the architects. Unlike in other regions, the builders who signed the inscriptions were usually responsible for the entire monument. Although direct evidence is limited, inscriptions and literary sources together suggest that these builders played an extensive role in the design and construction of their respective structures[7].

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[6] See İsmail Galip Edhem, *Catalogue des Monnaies Turcomanes, Beni Ortok, Beni Zengui, Frou Atabeqyéh Et Meliks Eyoubites de Meiyafarikin*, Constantinople 1894; Ramazan Uykur, 'Artuklu Sikkelerinde Yazı ve Süsleme Kompozisyonu' (PhD diss., Ankara Gazi University, 2010); Necla Akkaya, 'Mardin Müzesi'ndeki İslami Dönem Sikkelerinden Örnekler' (PhD diss, Konya Selçuk University, 2011).

[7] This interpretation is based on the analysis of inscriptions and the roles described in literary sources, including Sevay Okay-Atılgan, 'Ortaçağ Anadolu Türk-İslâm Mimarisinde Sanatçılar', *Erdem*, 12/34, (1999), p. 164.

After compiling the vocabulary used to describe those involved in construction during the Ayyubid period, we will analyse the various Ayyūbid inscriptions from Upper Mesopotamia, which provide information about the workers who contributed to the construction of the buildings, and place them in their ancient context. In each case we will look at the vocabulary used, the date of the material analysed, and the individuals involved.

Identifying the building workers of the "Ayyūbid" period

The most common formula used in Arabic inscriptions to identify master builders of Ayyūbid architecture is the Arabic root *ʿamal* (عمل), which can be read as either the noun *ʿamal* ("work of") or the past conjugated verb *ʿamala* ("has done")[7]. In addition, the root *ʿumr* (عمر), which means "to repair, restore (a building)", can also be found. Following these roots, titles and functions are often added as epithets before or after the person's name. The active participle *ʿāmil* (عامل), meaning "one who builds"[8], was used alone or with additional epithets, similar to inscriptions found on medieval Anatolian monuments. Additionally, the title *al-bannāʾ* (البناء), which translates as "the builder, the architect", refers to a master builder or monument builder. This term may sometimes precede the name of the builder in the form *ʿamal al-bannāʾ* or be combined with *ʿāmil*. In addition, *al-miʿmār* (المعمار) refers specifically to "the architect", and this term, derived from the root *ʿumr* ("to repair, restore"), is used before the expert's signature. Another important title is *al-ustāḏ* (الأستاذ), meaning "the master", which emphasises the authority and expertise of the individual, often due to their seniority and experience. This epithet can be used alone or in conjunction with the root *ʿamal* or the active participle *ʿāmil*, which serves as a true professional title[9]. In some contexts, the term *ṣāḥib* (صاحب) is used, meaning "owner". Although it does not denote a specific profession, in certain contexts it refers to the manager of an establishment who can organise and manage it[10]. The term *tarsīm* (ترسيم), meaning "drawing, plan", when associated with a person, refers to the indicated architect. In rare cases, the presence of the roots *ʿamal* and *ʿumr* or the use of titles such as *al-bannāʾ*, *al-miʿmār*, or *al-ustāḏ* may not identify a master builder. In such cases, whether the person was an architect or a stonemason can only be determined by the context and content of the inscription. In rare cases, identification as a builder cannot be made either by the presence of the roots عمل and عمر or using an epithet (the noun *tarsīm*, titles such as *al-bannāʾ*,

[7] Albert Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français, contenant toutes les racines de la langue arabe, leurs dérivés, tant dans l'idiome vulgaire que dans l'idiome littéral, ainsi que les dialectes d'Alger et de Maroc*, Paris 1860, p. 364.

[8] Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, 'Yapı Faaliyetlerinin Organizasyonu: İşveren, Mimar ve Sanatçılar', *Anadolu Selçukluları ve Beylikler Dönemi Uygarlığı:Mimarlık ve Sanat*, Ankara 2006, p. 128.

[9] Zafer Bayburtluoğlu, *Anadolu'da Selçuklu Dönemi Yapı Sanatçıları*, Erzurum 1993, p. 25; Sevay Okay-Atılgan, 'Ortaçağ Anadolu Türk-İslâm Mimarisinde Sanatçılar', pp. 161–162; Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, 'Yapı Faaliyetlerinin Organizasyonu: İşveren, Mimar ve Sanatçılar', pp. 128–130.

[10] Leo Ary Mayer, *Islamic Architects and their works*, Genève 1956, p. 27.

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al-ustāḏ, etc.). Only the context and content of the inscription can then help to identify this individual as an architect or stonemason.

In the rather unique case of the Ayyūbid emirate of Ḥiṣn Kayfā, it is worth noting that a unique term is once used to describe a professional builder in this city. In the 14th century, the Ayyūbid historian Ibn Munšī, in his chronicle about Ḥiṣn Kayfā, refers to individuals involved in the construction of a building as "*fāsūl*-s". This word has no equivalent in Arabic and can only be understood as "stonemason" when referring to the Syriac term "*fosūlo*" (ܦܣܘܠܐ)[11]. The term does not appear in the Ayyūbid inscriptions of Ḥiṣn Kayfā. It is not entirely surprising to find a term borrowed from Syriac in the writings of an Arabic-speaking and Muslim author from Ḥiṣn Kayfā. This city lies on the northern edge of the Syriac Orthodox heartland that was and still is Ṭur ʿAbdin. The region, situated between Mardin, Niṣībīn and Midyat, remained an important centre in the production of Syriac texts and some inscriptions. It is highly likely that the Syriac Christian populations living in the area played an active role alongside Muslims in the region's construction activities. This interaction also influenced the technical vocabulary of occupational names in the area. Furthermore, during fieldwork in Ḥiṣn Kayfā in 2018, I noted the presence of a small church opposite the Ar-Rizq Mosque, which may have belonged to the Syriac rite. The materials and techniques used in the construction of this church were similar to those used in buildings from the Islamic period. These elements strongly suggest a mutual exchange in architectural and artistic traditions between the different religious communities, especially Christians and Muslims, under the Ayyūbid rule. The role of Christians in the construction of buildings is undoubtedly significant in a region where their presence persisted considerably.

In Ayyūbid Upper Mesopotamia, however, an important example is the wooden *minbar* of the Great Mosque of Siʿirt, now in the Ethnographic Museum in Ankara[12]. The calligrapher of the *minbar*, Yūsuf al-Ḫayālī, signed his name with the title *mudarris* (مدرس), which means "teacher" or "instructor". Apart from these examples, epigraphy of the same period contains the verbal roots كتب (*kataba*), "to write", and حرر (*ḥarrara*), "to write, to compose carefully", which precede the names of calligraphers who composed inscriptions on *minbar*-s and *miḥrāb*-s[13]. Therefore, the practice of signing calligraphic works was virtually absent during the Ayyūbid period in Upper Mesopotamia, and the evidence for this observation is limited.

The Arabic inscription found on the northern exterior wall of the Šāfiʿī *madrasa* within the *kulliya* Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī in Ar-Ruhā (**Image 1**), an important Ayyūbid city in

[11] Ibn al-Munšiʾ al-Ḥisnī, *Hasankeyf Vekayinamesi (Nuzhat al-nāẓir fi rāḥat al-ḫāṭir)*, p. 92a; Baluken Yusuf, 'Hasankeyf Eyyûbîleri (630–866/1232–1462) / The Ayyubids of Hasankeyf (630–866/1232–1462)' (PhD diss, Erzurum Atatürk University, 2016), p. 338.

[12] Zafer Bayburtluoğlu, *Anadolu'da Selçuklu Dönemi Yapı Sanatçıları*, p. 77; Sevay Okay-Atılgan, 'Ortaçağ Anadolu Türk-İslâm Mimarisinde Sanatçılar', p. 70.

[13] Semra Ögül, *Anadolu Selçuklu Sanatı Üzerine görüşler*, İstanbul 1986, p. 45.

Upper Mesopotamia, was written by a person named Ḥamza[14]. The craftsman's name appears in the seventh and last line of the inscription, where the Arabic phrase على يد (*ʿala yad*), which translates into English as "by, by the hand of", is present. This craftsman has no title or filiation and is referred to only by his first name. While he may be the engraver of the inscription, it is also possible that he was the master builder responsible for the construction. According to the inscription, the al-Šāfiʿī *madrasa* was built in 587H/1191[15]. The craftsmen thus worked in the service of the Ayyūbid sultan Al-Malik an-Nāṣir Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Yūsuf (r. 578–589H/1183–1193). Based on this date, he can be considered one of the earliest known craftsmen working during the Ayyūbid period in Upper Mesopotamia.

ʿAyntāb was an important Ayyūbid city in western Upper Mesopotamia, close to the northern border of Syria. In this city, which has architectural features similar to those of Aleppo, the last line of a two-line restoration inscription on the right side of the entrance to the ʿUmariyya Mosque contains information dated to 607H/1210 (**Image 2**). The name ʿAlī does not appear with any of the special titles commonly used for craftsmen, such as *al-bannāʾ* or *al-ustāḏ*; nor are they identified by a *laqab* or a *nisba*. However, the phrase عمله علي (*ʿamalah ʿAlī*) indicates that they were responsible for these works, meaning "was done by ʿAlī" or "ʿAlī did". Zeki Sönmez has suggested that ʿAlī belongs to the Seljuq period, while Halil-İbrahim Yakar dates the restoration of the mosque to the reign of the Seljuq sultan ʿIzz ad-Dīn Masʿūd (r. 1116–1156). By this time, however, the Ayyūbids were in control of ʿAyntāb under the authority of Al-Malik aẓ-Ẓāhir (r. 1193–1216), the Emir of Aleppo. The craftsman ʿAlī was therefore working within an Ayyūbid principality and not during the Seljuq period. Since the literary sources do not help to clarify the biographies of these individuals, it can be noted that ʿAlī's choice of materials and construction techniques in the ʿUmariyya mosque suggest that he may have been a resident of this region, or even of Syria. Indeed, the use of local basalt is practical, as it is abundant in the northern and southern parts of the ʿAyntāb region; furthermore, the bichrome design (*ablaq* technique), typically consisting of either black and white or red and white, found in the mosque's facade, entrance, floor, and *miḥrāb*, is a feature commonly found in Zengid and Ayyūbid buildings in Syria. For example, this technique is evident in several notable structures such as the Mosque of Nūr ad-Dīn (1164) in Hama[16], Mārīstān Nūrī (1154), *Madrasa* al-ʿĀdiliyya (592–615H/1196–1218), *Madrasa* Rukniyya (1224), *Madrasa* Ṣāḥibiyya (1232), *Madrasa* Atābakiyya (1242), *Madrasa* Nāṣiriyya (1255) in

[14] Neslihan Kaya, 'Émergence et développement de l'architecture Ayyoubide en Haute Mésopotamie (XII^{e}–XV^{e} siècles): éléments pour une histoire architecturale, épigraphique et ornementale' (PhD diss., University of Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2023), p. 119.

[15] Kemal Kapaklı (trans.), *Urfa Hakkında Salsaneme (1927)*, İstanbul 1998, pp. 39–40; Albert Gabriel and Jean Sauvaget, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, Paris 1940, 1940, p. 356; Neslihan Kaya, Émergence et développement de l'architecture Ayyoubide en Haute Mésopotamie (XII^{e}–XV^{e} siècles), pp. 117–119.

[16] Abd al-Razzaq Moaz and Zena Takieddine, 'Ayyubid Art and Architecture', in: *The Ayyubid Era: Art and Architecture in Medieval Syria*, Vienna 2015, p. 63.

Damascus[17], *Madrasa* al-Firdaws (1235), *Madrasa* aẓ-Ẓāhiriyya (1220), *Madrasa* aṣ-Ṣazbaḫtiyya (1193), *Ḫanqa* al-Farāfira (1237), and *Madrasa* al-Kāmiliyya (1230) in Aleppo. These examples illustrate the widespread use of the *ablaq* technique in the architectural heritage of the Zengid and Ayyūbid periods.

The three-line Arabic inscription on the southern entrance of the Yeni (New) ʿUmariyya Mosque/ /*masǧid* in the centre of Ar-Ruhā (**Image 3**) indicates that the mosque was built by Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad. The name of the craftsman is preceded by the professional title *al-ustāḏ*. According to the inscription, the mosque was built in 610H/1214[18]. The period of the craftsman who built the structure coincides with the reign of the Ayyūbid Al-Malik al-Ašraf Muẓaffar ad-Dīn Mūsā (r. 607–617H/1210–1220) over Ar-Ruhā and its surroundings.

The wooden *minbar*, made using the *kundakarī* technique and belonging to the Grand Mosque in Siʿirt, has Arabic inscriptions bearing the names of seven different craftsmen. Originally part of the mosque, the *minbar* is now exhibited in the Ankara Ethnography Museum (**Image 4**). The names of the craftsmen are ʿAbd al-Fatāh Ibn *al-ḥāǧǧ* Ismāʿīl, ʿAlī Ibn Abū Bakr, ʿAlī Ibn *al-ustāḏ*, ʿUmar Ibn *šayḫ* ʿUṯmān, Muḥammad Ibn *šayḫ* ʿUṯmān, Ḍiyā al-Arḍurūmī, Ilyās al-Mawṣulī, and Yūsuf al-Ḫayālī. This work is an important example of Ayyūbid art from a period when the craftsmen were at their most prosperous. The name of ʿ ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Ibn *al-ḥāǧǧ* Ismāʿīl appears in the inscription on the door of the *minbar*, indicating that it was built in 611H/1215[19] during the Ayyūbid reign of Al-Malik al-Ašraf Muẓaffar ad-Dīn Mūsā (r. 607–617H/1210–1220). However, the inscription on the *minbar*, dated 611, most likely refers to renovation and restoration work carried out in the late Ottoman period. This is because the format of the date in the inscription differs from the traditional way in which dates are usually written in other inscriptions. Normally, dates in inscriptions are given in full and clearly, but in this inscription only the Arabic numerals (611) are used. This unusual situation suggests that the *minbar* may have been damaged and had to be rebuilt. In such a case, the craftsmen involved in the original construction of the *minbar* may have reproduced the same inscription after the damage, creating a restoration that remained consistent with the original. The name of Ḍiyā al-Arḍurūmī is found on the cone of the *minbar*[20], preceded by the term عمله (*ʿamalah*), meaning "was made by". His name also includes the designation Al-Arḍurūmī, indicating that he was from the Erzurum region, where he helped to build the wooden *minbar*. Ilyās al-Mawṣilī's name appears next to Ḍiyā al-Arḍurūmī's on the cone

[17] François Bogard, 'Décor architectural et mécénat à Damas aux XII[e] et XIII[e] siècles' (PhD diss, Aix-Marseille Université, 2011), pp. 443–447; Ernst Herzfeld, 'Damascus: Studies in Architecture', Part I, *Ars Islamica* 9 (1942), pp. 2–11.

[18] Max Van Berchem, *Inschriften aus Syrien, Mesopotamien, und Kleinasien gesammelt im Jahre 1899 von Max Freiherrn von Oppenheim*, *I, Arabische Inschriften*, Leipzig 1909, p. 61; Mahmut Karakaş, *Şanlıurfa ve İlçelerinde Kitabeler*, Konya 2012, pp. 164–165.

[19] Mehmet-Zeki Oral, 'Anadolu'da San'at Değeri olan Ahşap Minberler, Kitabeler ve Tarihçeleri', *Vakıflar Dergisi* 5 (1962), p. 39; Gülay Apa-Kurtişoğlu, *Anadolu Selçuklu Dönemi Ahşap Minberleri*, Konya 2015, p. 148.

[20] Mehmet-Zeki Oral, 'Anadolu'da San'at Değeri olan Ahşap Minberler, p. 40; Gülay Apa-Kurtişoğlu, *Anadolu Selçuklu Dönemi Ahşap Minberleri*, p. 150.

of the *minbar*, indicating that they worked together. Like Ḍiyā al-Arḍurūmī, Ḍiyā's name is preceded by عمله (*ʿamalah*). Both craftsmen came to Siʿirt from different regions to build the *minbar*; Ilyās is from Mossoul in Iraq. ʿAlī Ibn *al-ustāḏ* is referred to by the title *al-ustāḏ* in the inscription on the *minbar*. The name of *al-ḥāǧǧ* Muḥammad Ibn *šayḫ* ʿUṯmān appears alongside that of *al-ḥāǧǧ* ʿAlī Ibn ʾAbī Bakr in the inscription on the *minbar*, suggesting that they worked together on the *minbar*. It is also known that *al-ḥāǧǧ* Muḥammad Ibn *šayḫ* ʿUṯmān and *al-ḥāǧǧ* ʿUmar Ibn *šayḫ* ʿUṯmān were brothers. These two siblings assisted the craftsman known as *al-ustāḏ* ʿAlī Ibn Abī Bakr. Yūsuf al-Ḫayālī's name is inscribed on the wooden *minbar*[21], preceded by the title *mudarris*. As the calligrapher of the *minbar*, Yūsuf al-Ḫayālī signed with the title *mudarris*, which means "teacher" or "instructor".

Abū al-Faraǧ, the façade of the basalt semicircular tower (XI), located between the Harput (Dağ) and Urfa (Ar-Ruhā) gates of the surviving Āmid city walls, bears a three-line Arabic inscription (**Image 5**). This inscription refers to Abū al-Faraǧ with the title *al-bannāʾ* (البناء) preceding his name. According to the text of the inscription, this craftsman was involved in the construction of the tower in 634H/1236 and served under the Ayyūbid ruler Al-Malik aṣ-Ṣālih. Sultan Al-Malik al-Kāmil I conquered Āmid completely from the Artuqids in 630H/1232 and appointed his son Al-Malik aṣ-Ṣālih as governor of the city[22]. After the conquering of Āmid, Al-Malik aṣ-Ṣālih initiated the first restoration of the city walls. The same inscription also mentions another craftsman named Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī. According to Zeki Sönmez, Abū al-Faraǧ was a disciple of Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī[23].

The name of ʿĪsā Abū Dirham appears in Arabic inscription on the front of the semicircular tower (X) of the basalt city walls in Āmid (**Image 6**). Like Abū al-Faraǧ, this craftsman is referred to by the title *al-bannāʾ* (البناء). According to the inscription on the tower, this structure was built in 634H/1236 in the service of Ayyūbid Al-Malik aṣ-Ṣālih, and the inscription indicates that he participated in the construction of the tower alongside Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī. In addition to this tower, the name of ʿĪsā Abū Dirham is also found in the inscription of Bāb al-Faraǧ ("The Gate of Liberation"), one of the walls of Āmid, built in 595H/1198 by the Artuqid ruler Al-Malik al-Masʿūd Sukmān Ibn Muḥammad[24], who served under the Ayyūbids. In addition, the name of ʿĪsā Abū Dirham appears on a basalt stone on the southern facade of the courtyard gate of the Zinciriye *madrasa* in Āmid. However, this inscription does not include the date of construction of the *madrasa* or any information about the sultan or malik of the period, leaving open the

[21] Mehmet-Zeki Oral, 'Anadolu'da San'at Değeri olan Ahşap Minberler, p. 40; Gülay Apa-Kurtişoğlu, *Anadolu Selçuklu Dönemi Ahşap Minberleri*, pp. 148–150.

[22] R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193–1260*, Albany 1977, pp. 221–222; M. Remzi Ataoğlu, 'Hısn-ı Keyfa Artuklu Devleti' (PhD diss, Ankara University, 1989), pp. 155–156.

[23] Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, *Başlangıçtan 16. yüzyıla kadar Anadolu Türk-İslâm mimarisinde sanatçılar*, Ankara 1989, p. 152.

[24] Albert Gabriel and Jean Sauvaget, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 322; Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, *Başlangıçtan 16. yüzyıla kadar Anadolu Türk-İslâm mimarisinde sanatçılar*, pp. 101–103.

question of whether the structure was built during the Artuqid or Ayyūbid periods. In other words, it is not possible to determine under which dynasty this craftsman was working for when he built the Zinciriye *madrasa* (late 12th to early 13th century). That said, it can be noted that the Ayyūbids attached great importance to the construction of *madrasa*-s, especially *šāfiʿī madrasa*-s. Albert Gabriel suggests that the Zinciriye *madrasa* was built during the reign of the Artuqid ruler Sukmān II[25]. Based on this assertion, he indicates that the aforementioned craftsman worked here during the Artuqid period, which is supported by the presence of the architect's name on the inscription of the Bāb al-Farağ gate. According to the inscription of Bāb al-Farağ, it is certain that ʿĪsā Abū Dirham worked during the Artuqid period and continued to serve the Ayyūbids thereafter. The situation of this craftsman is similar to that of Ğaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, who also worked on monuments for both the Artuqids and the Ayyūbids. The first inscription to mention ʿĪsā Abū Dirham dates from 595H/1198 at the Bāb al-Farağ gate, while his last known project was the construction of the tower in 634H/1236. In addition to the religious structure of the *madrasa* in Āmid, ʿĪsā Abū Dirham also constructed military buildings such as city towers and defensive gates.

Ğaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī stands out among the surviving craftsmen as his name appears in various works. His name appears in two inscriptions on the facades of the X and XI semicircular towers (**Images 5–6**) of the city walls in Āmid[26]. In his signature, his name is preceded by the term "*tarsīm*" (ترسيم), which means "plan" or "design"; this is the only example found in our study. The Arabic term suggests that this person was responsible for drawing up and designing the plans for the large basalt towers, specifically towers X and XI of the Āmid city wall. Ğaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī worked with two different architects in the construction of these towers. According to the two inscriptions, he drew the plans for tower XI with the craftsman Abū al-Farağ, and he also worked with ʿĪsā Abū Dirham on the construction of tower X. Thus, Ğaʿfar b. Maḥmūd can be characterised as the head architect of the Ayyūbid period. The inscriptions indicate that this work dates from 634H/1236, which corresponds to the reign of Al-Malik aṣ-Ṣālih. As his *nisba* (al-Ḥalabī) indicates, the craftsman was not from Āmid, but rather a Syrian from Aleppo. However, the researcher Güner İnal has noted that after the activities of Ğaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd, there are no further traces of Syrian architects in Upper Mesopotamia from the second half of the 13th century and the late 14th century[27]. This situation raises questions about the recruitment of local architects following the involvement of Syrians in construction in Upper Mesopotamia. Besides Ğaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd, other craftsmen of Aleppo origin are known to have worked for the Anatolian Seljuqs. Only the name of Abū ʿAlī Ibn Abī ar-Rağa al-Kattānī al-Ḥalabī has survived from an inscription found in the castle of Sinop

[25] Albert Gabriel and Jean Sauvaget, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 323.

[26] Max Van Berchem and Josef Strzygowski, *Amida: materiaux pour l'épigraphie et l'histoire musulmanes du Diyar-Bekr*, Paris 1910, pp. 105–106; Albert Gabriel and Jean Sauvaget, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 325.

[27] Güner İnal, 'Orta Çağlarda Anadolu'da çalışan Suriye ve Mezopotamyalı Sanatçılar/ Mesopotamian and Syrian artists working in Anatolia in the Middle Ages', *Sanat Tarihi Yıllığı* 11 (1981), p. 85.

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(612H/1215), one of the Seljuq cities in Anatolia that coincided with the Ayyūbid domination of Upper Mesopotamia. This person was the same architect who built the "Red Tower" in Alanya in 628H/1231[28]. The inscription is incomplete because other lines have been damaged, though it appears that the craftsman was an architect who worked under the Seljuq sultan ʿIzz ad-Dīn Kay Kāwūs. According to Scott Redford, this inscription emphasises the close links with the Ayyūbids in Syria more than other inscriptions in Sinop[29]. In addition, the name of Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd appears in the Al-Masʿūdiyya *madrasa*, located within the walls of Āmid. The inscription referring to him is located in the southern part of the courtyard of the *madrasa*, and he is referred to by the titles *tarsīm* and *al-ustāḏ*. In the inscription of the *madrasa*, Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd worked with *al-bannāʾ* Masʿūd[30]. In his identified inscriptions of Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, he always mentioned the names of the craftsmen with whom he worked. As seen in the previous examples of inscriptions, Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd participated in important local projects and contributed to group efforts, always mentioning the names of the craftsmen with whom he worked in his inscriptions. There is no example of an inscription in which only the name is mentioned without specifying the person. On the other hand, four other inscriptions found in the Al-Masʿūdiyya *madrasa* indicate that the building was constructed during the Artuqid period under Ayyūbid rule. Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī was commissioned to expand the *madrasa* in 620H/1223, a date that coincides with the reign of the Ayyūbid Al-Malik aṣ-Ṣālih. According to Güner İnal, Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī also worked on the construction of the Artuqid Palace in Āmid during the reign of Masʿūd Rukn ad-Dīn Mawdūd (619–629H/1222–1231), who lived during the Ayyūbid period[31]. The name of the craftsman who worked during the Artuqid period, before he began to serve the Ayyūbids, is also mentioned in the inscription on the Halilviran (Devegeçidi) bridge between Āmid and Eğil. According to the inscription, the bridge was built by Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd in 615H/1218 under the Artuqids. The architect is referred to here with the title *al-ustāḏ*[32]. The name of Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd also appears on the Ambarçayı bridge (early 13th century) between Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn[33]. According to this text, Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd worked alongside ʿUṯmān Ibn Tākāk, who held the title of *ġulām*. During the Artuqid period, this person is also referred to as *al-ustāḏ*. After the Ayyūbids completely took over the regions of Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn from the Artuqids, this architect continued to construct monumental buildings in the city of Āmid, including two towers. In his signature he is referred to by the title *Šuǧāʿ ad-Dīn*, which means "the brave of the faith". The construction

[28] Leo Ary Mayer, *Islamic Architects and their works*, pp. 35–36; Şakir M. Ülkütaşır, 'Sinofta Selçukîler Zamanina ait Tarihî Eserler', *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi* 5 (1949), pp. 119–120; Scott Redford, 'Sinop in the Summer of 1215. The Beginning of Anatolian Seljuk Architecture', *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 16 (2010), p. 6.

[29] Scott Redford, 'Sinop in the Summer of 1215', pp. 6–32.

[30] Hüseyin Karaçam, 'Artuklu kitabeleri (1102–1409)' (MA thesis, Marmara University, 2012), p. 123.

[31] Güner İnal, 'Orta Çağlarda Anadolu'da çalışan Suriye ve Mezopotamyalı Sanatçılar / Mesopotamian and Syrian artists working in Anatolia in the Middle Ages', p. 85.

[32] Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, *Başlangıçtan 16. yüzyıla kadar Anadolu Türk-İslâm mimarisinde sanatçılar*, pp. 132–139; Zafer Bayburtluoğlu, *Anadolu'da Selçuklu Dönemi Yapı Sanatçıları*, pp. 189–192.

[33] Albert Gabriel and Jean Sauvaget, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 341.

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date of the Halilviran (Devegeçidi) bridge is 615H/1218, which is the first work mentioned by this architect. The last structure he built were the towers in the centre of the city, dated 634H/1236. The inscriptions indicate that this architect was involved in the construction of two bridges, a *madrasa*, a palace, and finally the city towers. This indicates that he is one of the rare individuals who built both religious and military buildings as well as bridges. He is also the architect whose name appears on the largest number of surviving works, with more structures than other well-known architects in the region. Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī reached the highest level of architecture during the Ayyūbid period and held the most diverse range of titles and honours, such as *al-bannāʾ*, *al-ustāḏ*, *šuǧāʿ ad-dīn* and *tarsīm*.

The name Abū al-ʿAlāʾ Ibn Abī al-Fatḥ appears in an inscription on the keystone of the arch of the Qulfaḥ gate (**Image 7**), east of the city of Mayyāfāriqīn[34]. No descriptive titles such as *al-bannāʾ* or *al-ustāḏ* are used before his name. However, the use of the root عمل (*ʿamal*) indicates that he was the builder of this structure. The architect's signature is inscribed on a rectangular block of limestone carved in the shape of a *tabula ansata* at the centre of the arch. While the names of architects are usually included in inscriptions relating to construction and repairs, the independent mention of this individual's name on a single stone inscription is unusual. Moreover, this positioning suggests that he was one of the most important architects of the period. Just above the inscription bearing the architect's signature, there is another three-line Arabic inscription on the upper part of the Qulfaḥ gate. The date of this inscription indicates that the architect, Abū al-ʿAlāʾ, lived during the reign of Al-Malik al-Ašraf Muẓaffar ad-Dīn Mūsā (607–617H/1210–1220) and contributed to the construction works under his service. Zeki Sönmez mistakenly identifies this architect as one who worked under the Ayyūbid Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Sayf ad-Dīn Abū Bakr (588–595H/1193–1198)[35]. In addition, there is another inscription by Abū al-ʿAlāʾ Ibn Abī al-Fatḥ that has not been mentioned or noted by previous scholars; this inscription is located under the door frame of the Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī mosque (**Image 8**) in Mayyāfāriqīn. This information is found only in Gertrude Bell's photograph in 1911[36]. The inscription in the Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī mosque is the signature of an independent architect and contains phrases similar to those in the inscription on the Qulfaḥ gate. However, the materials and techniques of the two inscriptions are different. While the inscription on the Qulfaḥ gate is written in *nasḫī* script on carved limestone, the inscription on the Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn mosque is executed in a graffiti style. Unfortunately, the inscription bearing the architect's signature could not be found in situ in the mosque. According to another Ayyūbid inscription on the *miḥrāb* of the Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn mosque, the niche was added to the *qibla* wall of the mosque by Al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Šihāb ad-Dīn Ġāzī. It can therefore be presumed that Abū al-ʿAlāʾ Ibn Abī al-Fatḥ may have worked under the Ayyūbid sultans Al-Malik al-Ašraf (607–617H/1210–1220) and Al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Šihāb ad-Dīn Ġāzī (617–644H/1220–1247).

[34] Leo Ary Mayer, *Islamic Architects and their works*, p. 35.

[35] Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, *Başlangıçtan 16. yüzyıla kadar Anadolu Türk-İslâm mimarisinde sanatçılar*, p. 147.

[36] Viewed 5 October 2024, https://gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/p/gb-3-1-19-1-121.

In the mid-19th century, J. G. Taylor, visiting the region of Mayyāfāriqīn, read the name of a certain ʿUṯmān, without any lineage, on the inscription of the eastern facade of the Malābādī bridge, east of Mayyāfāriqīn. According to the British historian, the text contained the date 643H/1245, indicating that it dated from the Ayyūbid period; the remainder of the inscription had become illegible[37]. Almost a century later, Basri Konyar was able to observe this inscription on the Malābādī bridge and provided a description: the text was engraved on limestone in three or four lines, but was already quite damaged. Konyar was able to read the *basmala* introducing the text and the name of ʿUṯmān[38]. It is important to note that Konyar wrote down what he observed in Latin letters, and there is no Arabic version of the inscription. There is therefore no doubt that the inscription seen by Taylor is indeed the one identified by Konyar. Neither researcher has specified whether the ʿUṯmān mentioned had a title or professional designation. Unfortunately, the inscription is no longer visible. There is also no photograph of it. It is known that the bridge underwent several restorations during the 20th century, but no scholarship is available regarding when the Ayyūbid dedication was lost. If the bridge was built during the Artuqid period, the inscription identified by Taylor and Konyar refers to an old restoration that took place in 643H/1245 under one of the Ayyūbid rulers, Al-Malik al-Kāmil Naṣīr ad-Dīn Muḥammad II (r. 644–658H/1247–1260). No ruler named ʿUṯmān is known at this time. A few years earlier, another ʿUṯmān is mentioned in the inscription of another bridge: ʿUṯmān Ibn Tākāk. It is very likely that the two refer to the same person. The name of ʿUṯmān Ibn Tākāk also appears on a restoration inscription dated 620H/1223 on the Ambarçayı bridge (**Image 9**), which stands on the road linking Mayyāfāriqīn to Āmid[39]. Here he is referred to by both the titles *al-bannāʾ* and *ġulām* (غلام). The first term clearly identifies him as an architect, while the second indicates his bond of loyalty and affection to the Artuqid ruler of the time. Another architect, Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, who worked with him on the Ambarçayı bridge, is referred to by the title *šuǵāʿ ad-dīn* (شجاع الدين)[40]. In the context of Islamic production, the term *ġulām* has been known to refer to metalworkers[41]. Thus, if there is a consensus on the identity of the architect, the epigraphic data would suggest that ʿUṯmān Ibn Tākāk first carried out the restoration of the Ambarçayı bridge and later the restoration of the Malābādī bridge east of Mayyāfāriqīn during the Ayyūbid period. The quality of the second structure suggests that his experience had increased. ʿUṯmān worked with other architects involved in the Artuqid and Ayyūbid constructions in Āmid, such as ʿĪsā Abū Dirham and Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī[42]. Therefore, his title during the first part of his career under the Ayyūbids is not known, but it is known that he was called *al-bannāʾ* during the Artuqid period.

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[37] John George Taylor, 'Travels in Kurdistan with Notices of the Sources of the Eastern and Western Tigris, and Ancient Ruins in Their Neighbourhood', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 35 (1865), p. 25.

[38] Basri Konyar, *Diyarbakır Yıllığı*, Cilt III, Ankara 1936, pp. 322–325.

[39] Basri Konyar, *Diyarbakır Yıllığı*, Cilt II, Ankara 1936, pp. 142–143.

[40] Mehmet-Zeki Sönmez, *Başlangıçtan 16. yüzyıla kadar Anadolu Türk-İslâm mimarisinde sanatçılar*, pp. 142–144.

[41] Leo Ary Mayer, *Islamic Metalworkers and their works*, Geneva 1959, pp. 13–14.

[42] Sevay Okay-Atılgan, 'Ortaçağ Anadolu Türk-İslâm Mimarisinde Sanatçılar', p. 175.

The name Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn Abī Saʿīd appears in a two-line Kufic inscription on the first floor of the west facade of the "broken minaret" of the Ayyūbid Mosque outside the walls of Mayyāfāriqīn (**Image 10**). The mosque is commonly referred to as the "Broken Minaret" due to the damaged upper part of the minaret. Only the minaret of the mosque remains standing and preserved, and it is on this minaret, rich in decoration and inscriptions, that the artist's inscription is found. His name is preceded by the expression *ʿāmil al-ustāḏ* (عامل استاذ) together with the title *al-ustāḏ*. According to Aynur Durukan, those who bear this title are considered both practitioners and experts in the field of construction. In other words, Durukan suggests that this title designates the person responsible for all construction work[43]. As there is no date in the architect's signature, the names of the sultans on the minaret and the dates of other inscriptions suggest that he worked on the minaret between 1212 and 1260. Bülent-Nuri erroneously claimed that the name Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn Abī Saʿīd was also mentioned in the inscription of Al-Malik al-Ašraf Muẓaffar ad-Dīn Mūsā on the Qulfaḥ gate of the walls of Mayyāfāriqīn[44]. However, an examination of the inscription on the Qulfaḥ gate reveals that only the name Abū al-ʿAlāʾ Ibn Abī al-Fatḥ is mentioned, suggesting that these two architects are different individuals.

The name Muḥammad Ibn Tammām *al-Miʿmār* appears in a four-line Arabic inscription found in the Bazda quarry (**Image 11**) in the Tek Tek mountains of Ḥarrān[45]. The title *al-miʿmār* at the end of his name indicates that his father was an architect. It is very likely that Muḥammad Ibn Tammām continued in the profession of architecture. According to the date mentioned in the inscription, he was active in Ḥarrān in 649H/1251. At that time, the Ayyūbid emir Al-Malik an-Nāṣir Yūsuf II (r. 644–658H/1247–1260) ruled over Ḥarrān and its surroundings. Therefore, Muḥammad Ibn Tammām pursued his career during the reign of Al-Malik an-Nāṣir Yūsuf II. He was a craftsman who used the carved limestone from the caves of Bazda in Ayyūbid monuments. The inscription reads "for the sun/*šams*". The Bazda quarries were carved deeply and to great depths. It is believed that these areas were also used as living quarters, as they provided a cooler working environment for stonemasons and architects and protected them from the sun. Given that Ḥarrān was historically a very hot region, it is likely that this design was intentional and that the inscription was written inside the quarry for this reason. Most of the stone from these quarries was used in the construction of buildings in Ḥarrān and its environs. He is considered a rare example of an "architect" named in an inscription found in a quarry. However, he remains unidenfidied by modern scholars, as no inscription attributed to him has been deciphered. His name has only been found in the quarries mentioned above, with no other contextual references identified in the available sources.

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[43] Aynur Durukan, *Anadolu Selçuklu Sanatında Kurucular ve Sanatçıları*, Ankara 2002, pp. 39–40.

[44] Bülent-Nuri Kılavuz, 'Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi Minareleri', I (PhD diss., Van Yüzüncü Yıl University, 2005), p. 191.

[45] Mahmut Karakaş, *Şanlıurfa ve İlçelerinde Kitabeler*, p. 418; Neslihan Kaya, 'Émergence et développement de l'architecture Ayyoubide en Haute Mésopotamie (XII–XVème siècles)', p. 530.

Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān's name appears in a seven-line Arabic inscription in the Bazda quarry (**Image 12**) of the Tek Tek mountains of Ḥarrān[46]. His name is found on the third line of the inscription. The contents indicate that he commissioned a *sabīl* (fountain) and that it belongs to him. The part in front of his name and the part after it in the line of the inscription are not clearly legible. However, it is believed that he was either an architect or the owner of the quarry where the inscription was found. According to the date given in the inscription, this fountain was built in the Bazda quarry in 653H/1255, during the reign of Ayyūbid Al-Malik an-Nāṣir Yūsuf II over Ḥarrān and its surroundings. On the other hand, although the inscription refers to the fountain, its exact location has not yet been identified. It is hoped that future extensive archaeological studies will help to determine its exact location.

The name Muḥammad al-ʿAḏār[47] is found in the quarries of the Tek Tek mountains in Ḥarrān (**Image 13**). On the ceiling of one quarry, several metres high, an Arabic blessing inscription, engraved and painted in red, refers to Muḥammad al-ʿAḏār as *ṣāḥib* (صاحب), a term that can be understood as a manager or contractor in the quarry. Considering the elegance of the writing, the meticulousness of the engraving, the location of the inscription, and simply the importance of having an inscription, it can be inferred that this individual held an important status within the operation. He may have been a team leader and had some experience as a stonemason. There are two other inscriptions on the front face of the quarries in the Tek Tek mountains in Ḥarrān. One inscription reads "ʿAlī marches as a saviour", while the other bears the name ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Ḥakkārī/al-Ḥaqqārī. Since the texts consist of only a few words, the context surrounding these names remains limited. However, by examining the three inscriptions found in the Bazda caves, it can be concluded that both names probably belong to architects, stonemasons or owners of the quarries. It is important to note that it is unlikely that an ordinary person would have inscribed their name in these quarries. This suggests that these people had a significant professional or social status and played a crucial role in the activities of the quarries. Another possibility is that the phrase related to "ʿAlī" was written as a saying to encourage the workers in the quarry and keep their hopes alive[48].

In Upper Mesopotamia, in Hiṣn Kayfā, one of the last cities where the Ayyūbids lived for the longest time, the names of six craftsmen can be found. One of these craftsmen, Fārābī Ibn ʿUṯmān, is mentioned in the Arabic inscription of the minaret to the north-west of the Great Mosque of Ḥiṣn Kayfā (**Image 14**). There are no titles such as *al-bannāʾ* or *al-ustāḏ* before his name; instead, the verb عمل is placed before it. This indicates that the architect who built the minaret is Fārābī Ibn ʿUṯmān. The date in the inscription suggests that the minaret was built in 727H/1326[49]. Jean Sauvaget and Mayer L. Ary inaccurately

[46] Neslihan Kaya, 'Émergence et développement de l'architecture Ayyoubide en Haute Mésopotamie (XII–XVème siècles)', pp. 528–529.

[47] Ibidem, pp. 525–526.

[48] Ibidem, pp. 524–527.

[49] Hüseyin Yurttaş, 'Hasankeyf Yapılarının Sanat Tarihimizdeki Yeri', I (PhD diss., Erzurum Atatürk University, 1991), pp. 73–74; Gabriel Albert and Sauvaget Jean, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 306.

suggested that the minaret was built in 927H/1521[50], but this is incorrect. They also added *as-Saʿīd* to the artist's name, but this word does not appear in the inscription on the minaret. The architect mentioned on the wooden *minbar* of the same mosque is identified as Muḥammad al-Faqīr al-Qāḍī Ibn as-Saʿīd. It is thought that the two authors may have made a mistake here. The inscription does not mention the name of the reigning king, but the date of 727H/1326 suggests that Fārābī IbnʿUṯmān was involved in architectural work during the reign of the Ayyūbid ruler Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Muğīr ad-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 727–733H/1326–1333).

Muḥammad al-Faqīr al-Qāḍī Ibn as-Saʿīd aš-Šāfiʿī is the person who constructed the wooden *minbar* in the Great Mosque of Ḥiṣn Kayfā using the *kundakarī* technique. The *minbar* is currently preserved in the Batman Museum. According to the Arabic inscription on the *minbar*, the work was completed in 798H/1395[51]. At that time, the Ayyūbid ruler Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Faḫr ad-Dīn Sulaymān (r. 780–827H/1378–1424) was in charge of the administration of the city of Ḥiṣn Kayfā. Therefore, this person was a woodworker working in the service of Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Faḫr ad-Dīn Sulaymān. No title precedes his name in the inscription. However, the Arabic inscription clearly identifies this work as the work of Muḥammad al-Faqīr al-Qāḍī. The presence of Aš-Šāfiʿī at the end of his name indicates that he belonged to the Šāfiʿī *maḏhab*, which was adopted and gained prominence by Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī. Similarly, the date of construction of the Šāfiʿī *madrasa* in the Great Mosque of Ar-Ruhā serves as another example of the importance of the Šāfiʿī *maḏhab* during the Ayyūbid period. The construction of this *madrasa* and its inscription, which dates from the Ayyūbid period, is evident from the existing Arabic inscription.

On the left wall of the entrance to the Ar-Rizq Mosque in Ḥiṣn Kayfā (**Image 15**), there is a two-line Arabic inscription mentioning the names *al-ḥāğğ* Muḥammad and ʿUmar[52]. The inscription includes the Arabic expression أخيه, "his brother", indicating that they were brothers. The term عمل in the first line of the inscription indicates that they were involved in the construction of the mosque. We do not know for certain whether they were local artists, but the title *al-ḥāğğ* before *al-ḥāğğ* Muḥammad's name suggests that he was a Muslim craftsman who had completed the pilgrimage. His brother ʿUmar's name does not appear with this title. Although the inscription does not give a definite date, according to the inscription on the main entrance door of the Ar-Rizq Mosque, the door was built in 811H/1409. This suggests that the mosque was built around the same time. At that time, the Ayyūbid ruler of Ḥiṣn Kayfā was Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Faḫr ad-Dīn Sulaymān, so it is likely that the craftsman brothers worked in his service. Archaeological and historical texts confirm that Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil undertook numerous building projects in Ḥiṣn Kayfā. Prior

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Sauvaget incorrectly interpreted the minaret's date as 927H/1520 instead of 727H/1326, and failed to read the name of the architect.

[50] Gabriel Albert and Sauvaget Jean, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 306; Leo Ary Mayer, *Islamic Architects and their works*, p. 61.

[51] Gabriel Albert and Sauvaget Jean, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 306; Hüseyin Yurttaş, 'Hasankeyf Yapılarının Sanat Tarihimizdeki Yeri', pp. 75–76.

[52] Gabriel Albert and Sauvaget Jean, *Voyages Archéologiques dans la Turquie Orientale*, p. 307.

to the opening of the gates of the new Ḥiṣn Kayfā Dam, Ar-Rizq Mosque's minaret, rectangular main entrance door, prayer hall and entire southern wall were moved to the Archaeological Park in New Hasankeyf in 2018. In 2019, these structures were reassembled piece by piece, like a jigsaw puzzle, in their new location. The artist's inscription was also moved. However, other architectural remains of the mosque were submerged by the dam.

In Ḥiṣn Kayfā, on the banks of the Tigris, there is an Arabic inscription on the wall of the Ar-Rizq Mosque (**Image 16**). It is rectangular in form, written in three lines of *nasḫī* script, and mentions a person called ʿAlī Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn ʿIzz ad-Dīn. According to the inscription, water was brought to the mosque by ʿAlī Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn ʿIzz ad-Dīn. The word بانيها (*bānīhā*) is used in the middle of the second line of the inscription, indicating that he was a builder. Furthermore, it is assumed that the person responsible for bringing water to the mosque must have been an engineer in the city of Ḥiṣn Kayfā during the Ayyūbid period. There is no exact date in the inscription, but based on the style of writing, it is believed that he worked alongside other architects of the Ar-Rizq Mosque, such as *al-ḥāǧǧ* Muḥammad and his brother ʿUmar, during the reign of Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Faḫr ad-Dīn Sulaymān, which corresponds to the late 14th and early 15th centuries. In addition, the date 811H/1409 is inscribed on the door of the mosque. It is unclear whether ʿAlī Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn ʿIzz ad-Dīn was a local builder or someone from outside the region. However, the Chronicle of Ḥiṣn Kayfā states that in 731H/1331 the Ayyūbid emir ordered canal builders to be brought from Mosul to extract water from the citadel of Ḥiṣn Kayfā and build a canal[53].

The *nisba*[54] "Tawrīzī" has been identified on a medallion prominently displayed at the entrance to the *Koš* Mosque in Ḥiṣn Kayfā (**Image 17–18**), which is decorated with stucco. The figure's function is indicated by the presence of the Arabic verb *ʿamal* (عمل), suggesting that he was an expert in designing the stucco decoration at the mosque's entrance. Given the stylistic similarities, it is likely that he also designed the decoration of the *miḥrāb* on the *qibla* wall. This master plasterer has not yet been discussed in the scholarly literature, apart from the reading proposed by L. Kalus in 1992, based on a photograph provided by M. Meinecke, who interpreted the inscription as عمل توريزى[55]. Due to extensive damage to the inscription, the names of the individuals are not clearly legible, and the work is thought to have been made by a Tawrīzī craftsman. Examples of Tawrīzī craftsmanship can be found in various materials in other buildings in Anatolia, Syria and Damascus. For example, on the right side of the tile *miḥrāb* in the Yeşil Mosque

[53] Yusuf Baluken, 'Hasankeyf Eyyûbîleri (630–866/1232–1462) / The Ayyubids of Hasankeyf (630–866/1232–1462)', p. 333.

[54] The *nisba* "Tawrīzi" refers to individuals or craftsmen from Tabriz, Iran, a city renowned for its stucco artistry. In this case, the *nisba* not only indicates the origin of the craftsman but also links his special knowledge of stucco decoration to a well-established Tabriz tradition. The presence of the *nisba* in inscriptions within the structure suggests the importance of the craftsman's identity and origin in the context of the artistic decoration of the mosque. This detailed investigation provides a clearer understanding of the role and expertise of the craftsman, and how the *nisba* functions within the broader context of the inscription.

[55] Viewed 5 October 2024, https://www.epigraphieislamique.uliege.be/Thesaurus/User/EpigraphyDisplay.aspx?id=33228&pan=1&st=TURQUIE-Hasankeyf*&sc=5.

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in Bursa (822H/1419–837H/1424) there is a single-line Arabic inscription that reads "The Work of the Masters of Tabriz". In addition, the wooden doors of the tomb in the Yeşil Mosque bear the signature of a craftsman who claimed to be from Tabriz: ʿAlī Ibn *ḥāǧǧ* Aḥmad al-Tabrīzī, who was undoubtedly a calligrapher[56]. Furthermore, the name of Ibn Ġaybī al-Tawrīzī appears on a plaque now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Finally, there is a mosque in Damascus called Ġars ad-Dīn Ḫalīl al-Tawrīzī[57]. The *nisba* "al-Tawrīzī" indicates that these individuals or their families came from the city of Tabriz in Iran; the name Tabriz is sometimes spelled Tawrīz/Tevriz in various languages. It is well known that Tabriz, like other Iranian cities, has developed a long tradition of stucco sculpture since the Sasanian period (3rd–7th centuries). Therefore, the Tawrīzī mentioned in the inscription of the *Koš* mosque entrance would have been a master stuccoer of Iranian origin from the first half of the 14th century, whose expertise warranted his name being mentioned on such a prestigious entrance. It is therefore highly probable that he was the creator not only of this composition but also of the *miḥrāb* in the mosque. During the same period, three other buildings in Ḥiṣn Kayfā were decorated with stucco: the dome of the sultan Sulaymān Mosque, the arch of the northern entrance of the Great Mosque, and the interior walls of the Small Palace. L. Kalus has only read the inscription of Tawrīzī, but by comparing it with other stucco decorations in Ḥiṣn Kayfā, it can be argued that, on the basis of stylistic similarities and the ornamental patterns of the period, stucco decorators from Tabriz, Iran, probably played a significant role in the interior decoration of Ayyubid mosques, madrasas and palaces in Ḥiṣn Kayfā during the same period. The other parts of the *Koš* mosque, which was part of a large architectural complex, were covered with concrete and completely submerged under the water of the dam in 2019. In the same year, a mosque similar to the original was built in the New Hasankeyf Archaeological Park. The original stucco *miḥrāb* of the mosque and the stucco door with the artist's inscription are exhibited in the Hasankeyf Museum.

Conclusion

To date, 27 artist names have been identified in the seven major Ayyūbid cities of Upper Mesopotamia. The *minbar* in the Great Mosque Siʿirt contains seven names, the highest number of names found in a single work. Given the length of Ayyūbid rule in Ḥiṣn Kayfā, it is not surprising that this city has the highest number of identified craftsmen (6). It is followed by Ḥarrān (5), Āmid (3), Mayyāfāriqīn (3), with Ar-Ruhā (2) and ʿAyntāb (1) trailing behind. The language of the inscriptions in these cities is Arabic. The predominance

[56] Savaş Yıldırım, 'Bursa Yeşil Camii Mihrabı', *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 47/1 (2007), p. 169; Khalida Mahi, 'Les Maîtres de Tabriz, céramistes dans l'Empire ottoman : Une mise au point sur leur identification', *Eurasian Studies* 15/1 (2017), pp. 40–41; Sandra Aube, *La céramique dans l'architecture en Iran au xve siècle : Les arts qarâ quyûnlûs et âq quyûnlûs*, Paris 2017, pp. 195–196.

[57] Patricia Blessing, 'Blue-and-White Tiles of the Muradiye in Edirne: Architectural Decoration between Tabriz, Damascus, and Cairo', *Muqarnas* 36 (2019), p. 120.

of Arabic in the inscriptions of Saladin, who is said to have been of Kurdish origin, can be explained by the political and religious ideals of the time. Saladin's goal of establishing a strong and tolerant Islamic state led to the perception of Arabic as a sacred language, as the Koran, the holy book of Islam, is in Arabic. Similarly, the preference for Arabic in the inscriptions of the Seljuqs and Artuqids, despite their Turkish origins, reflects the need to use this sacred language and the cultural unity of the Islamic world at the time. This situation suggests that the preference for Arabic in the architectural inscriptions of Islamic states may have been linked to the aim of establishing religious and political cohesion. However, according to Anne-Marie Eddé, Saladin's family and their close circle preferred to speak Kurdish[58], suggesting that he maintained his Kurdish identity in his personal life.

The fact that the Artuqids lived under the protection of the Ayyūbid state from 1183 to 1260 is evident in both political and economic contexts. For example, coins minted in Ḥiṣn Kayfā, Āmid, Mardin, Mayyāfāriqīn and Dūnaysīr show the names of Ayyūbid rulers on one side and the names of Artuqid rulers on the other, illustrating a balanced relationship between the two powers. However, the exclusive mention of Artuqid rulers in architectural structures signifies the tolerant and unifying policies of the Ayyūbids. This is in stark contrast to other states such as the Seljuqs, Timurids and Ottomans, where the inclusion of ruler's names in architecture was often mandatory, even in autonomous regions.

The Ayyūbids and the Artuqids used the same architects and engineers to construct buildings in Āmid and its surroundings. While the Ayyūbid patrons employed the skilled craftsmen of the period, they tolerated the involvement of these architects in Artuqid constructions, despite their authoritarian rule over the region. This reflects the Ayyūbids' tolerant and flexible attitude towards architectural activities. The names of the architects are sometimes found within a single inscription, along with additional information about their nationality, school of law and region. In some cases, it is clear that the profession was passed on from father to son, or that siblings worked together. In Siʿirt, Ḥiṣn Kayfā, and Āmid, inscriptions provide examples of fathers and sons, brothers, or apprentices working together on the same site. Architects and engineers usually worked only in their own cities, depending on whether they were stonemasons or carpenters. This is true of craftsmen such as ʿĪsā Abū Dirham, Ǧaʿfar Ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, and ʿUṯmān Ibn Tākāk, whose names appear in the inscriptions of monuments in Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn. The presence of these artisans' names in both regions during the Ayyūbid and Artuqid periods indicates that the Ayyūbids, having fully incorporated Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn from the Artuqids in Upper Mesopotamia, supported and protected their artists and allowed for their continued development.

In summary, Ayyūbid architects played a major role in the construction of monuments such as towers, mosques, *madrasa*-s and bridges in the major cities of Upper Mesopotamia, as well as wooden *minbar*-s and plasterwork. In addition to local craftsmen from the region, there were also non-local craftsmen from places such as al-Ḥalabī (Aleppo) in Syria, al-Mawṣilī (Mossoul) in Iraq and Tawrīzī (Tebriz) in Iran. This led to collaboration between local and foreign builders on Ayyūbid sites. Prominent architects such as

[58] Anne-Marie Eddé, *Saladin*, p. 37.

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Ǧaʿfar b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī were involved in the construction of bridges, *madrasa*-s, and city towers in Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn. Promisingly, the names of five individuals in the Ḥarrān region have been identified who are likely to be associated with the operation of the Bazda quarry. These names do not appear in public, religious and military monuments in other areas of Upper Mesopotamia. Thus, the presence of Ayyūbid artists' and quarry owners' names in these quarries reflects a phenomenon not commonly found in the Ayyūbid period or in other medieval Islamic states.

Table 1. List of Inscriptions and Translations

N°	Location	Arabic text	English translation
1	Šāfiʿī *madrasa, kulliya* Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī, Ar-Ruhā (**Image 1**); northern exterior wall	١- بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ٢- أمر بعمارة هذه المدرسة المبار ٣- كة العبد الفقير إلى رحمة ربه عمر إبن شاهان ٤- إبن أيوب رحمه الله تعالى وأمر ٥- بكمالها ولده المرابط المنصور ناصر الدين محمد بن عمر ٦- في دولة مولانا الملك صلاح الدين يوسف بن ايوب على اصحاب الامام الشافعي ٧- على يد الفقير إلى رحمة الله حمزة سنة سبع وثمانين وخمسمائة	1. In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 2. Ordered the construction of this blessed school, 3. the poor servant, seeking the mercy of his Lord, ʿUmar b. Šāhān, 4. son of Ayyūb. May God have mercy on him. And ordered 5. its completion his son, the guardian, the victorious, the supporter of the faith, Muḥammad b. ʿUmar, 6. during the reign of our lord, King Salāḥ ad-Dīn Yūsuf b. Ayyūb, upon the followers of Imam aš-Šāfiʿī. 7. At the hands of the poor servant seeking the mercy of God, Ḥamza, in the year five hundred and eighty-seven [AH].
2	ʿUmariyya Mosque, ʿAyntāb (**Image 2**); right side of the entrance	١- بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ رحم ٢- الله من عمر هذا في سنة سبع وستمائة عمله علي	1. In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, May 2. God give his mercy on the one who carried out this in the year six hundred and seven [AH], ʿAlī made it.
3	*Yeni* ʿUmariyya Mosque, centre of Ar-Ruhā (**Image 3**); southern entrance	١- بسملة عمر هذا المسجد المبارك الأستاذ محمّد بن أحمد لأجل إقامة الصلوة سنة عشر وستّمائة	1. In the name of God, this blessed mosque was built by *al-ustāḏ* Muḥammad b. Aḥmad for the purpose of establishing prayers in the year six hundred and ten [AH].

Table 1. (cont.)

N°	Location	Arabic text	English translation
4	Wooden *minbar* of the Grand Mosque, Siʿirt (**Image 4**); now exhibited in the Ankara Museum of Ethnography	[ا] ١- تاريخه الاصلى ٦١١ه ٢- عمرّه المتولى الحاجي عبد الفتاح ابن الحاجي اسماعيل ٣- ماشا الله ٤- وهو العلى العظيم. هذا ما تطوع بعمله الحاجي ٥- على بن أبو بكر والحاجي على ابن الاستاذ ٦- رحمهم الله واعمل الحاجي عمر والحاجي محمد أولاد ٧- الشيخ عثمان رحمهم الله تعالى بتاريخ [...] [ب]١- عمله ٢- ضيا الارضرومى ٣- إلياس الموصلي [ج]١- حرره المدرس ٢- يوسف الخيالي	[A] 1. Its original date is 611 [AH]. 2. Its renovator *al-ḥāǧǧ* ʿAbd al-Fatāh b. *al-ḥāǧǧ* Ismāʿīl. 3. Mā šā Allāh 4. And He is the Most High, the Most Great. This is the work he volunteered for, *al-ḥāǧǧ* 5. ʿAlī b. Abū Bakr and *al-ḥāǧǧ* ʿAlī b. al-Ustāḏ. 6. May Allāh have mercy on them, and the work of *al-ḥāǧǧ* ʿUmar and *al-ḥāǧǧ* Muḥammad, the sons of 7. *šayḫ* ʿUṯmān. May Allāh have mercy on them, on the date of […] [B] 1. The work of Ḍiyā al-Arḍurūmī [i.e. from Erzurum] and Ilyās al-Mawṣilī [C] 1. This has been written carrefuly by the teacher 2. Yūsuf al-Ḫayālī
5	Semicircular basalt tower (XI), between the gates of Harput (*Dağ*) and Urfa (*Ar-Ruhā*), Āmid, "Scorpio tower"; on the wall (**Image 5**)	١- بسم الرحمن الرحيم ٢- عز لمولانا السلطان الملك الصالح نجم الدنيا والدين سلطان الإسلام والمسلمين أبو(كذا) الفتح أيوب بن السلطان الملك الكامل أبو(كذا) المعالي محمد بن أبي بكر ابن أيوب ظهير أمير المؤمنين ٣- البناء أبو الفرج ترسيم شجاع الدين جعفر ابن محمود الحلبي وذلك في سنة أربعة وثلاثين وستمائة	1. In the name of the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 2. Glory to our master, Sultan, the righteous king, the star of the world and the religion, the Sultan of Islam and Muslims, Abū al-Fatḥ Ayyūb, son of Sultan Al-Malik al-Kāmil Abū al-Maʿālī Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr b. Ayyūb, supporter of the Commander of the Faithful. 3. The builder, Abū al-Faraǧ, the master architect Šuǧāʿ ad-Dīn Ǧaʿfar b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, (completed) this in the year six hundred and thirty-four [AH].

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N°	Location	Arabic text	English translation
6	Semicircular basalt tower (X) of the walls of Āmid; on the walls (**Image 6**)	١- بسم الرحمن الرحيم ٢- عز لمولانا السلطان الملك الصالح نجم الدنيا والدين سلطان الإسلام والمسلمين أبو الفتح أيوب بن السلطان الملك الكامل أبو المعالي محمد بن أبي بكر ابن أيوب ظهير أمير المؤمنين ٣- /البنَّا عيسى أبو درهم/ ترسيم شجاع الدين المقدّم جعفر ابن محمود الحلبي في سنة أربعة وثلاثين وستمائة	1. In the name of the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 2. Glory to our master, the Sultan, the righteous king, the star of the world and the religion, the Sultan of Islam and the Muslims, Abū al-Fatḥ Ayyūb, son of Sultan Al-Malik al-Kāmil Abū al-Maʿālī Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr b. Ayyūb, supporter of the Commander of the Faithful. 3. The builder, ʿĪsā Abū Dirham / the master architect Šuǧāʿ ad-Dīn Ǧaʿfar al-Muqaddam b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, completed this in the year six hundred and thirty-four [AH].
7	Bāb al-Farağ, Āmid (gate); on the walls	١- أمر بفتح هذا الباب المبارك مولانا الملك المسعود سلطان ديار بكر أبو المظفر سكمان بن محمد بن ارتق ٢- نصير أمير المؤمنين والبنَّاء عيسي أبو درهم بنَّاء الدر باب الفرج سنة خمسة و تسعين و خمسة مائة	1. Ordered the opening of this blessed gate, our master, King Al-Masʿūd, Sultan of the Diyār Bakir, Abū al-Muẓaffar Sukmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Artuq, the supporter of the Commander of the Faithful. 2. And the builder ʿĪsā Abū Dirham, builder of the gate Al-Farağ, completed it in the year five hundred and sixty-five [AH].
8	Zinciriye *Madrasa*, Āmid; Southern façade of the courtyard	البنَّا عيسي أبو درهم	The builder, ʿĪsā Abū Dirham
9	Al-Masʿūdiyya *madrasa*, Āmid; Southern part of the courtyard	١- البنَّاء مسعود ترسيم الأستاذ جعفر بن ٢- محمود الحلبي وذلك في سنة عشرين وستمائة	1. The builder, Masʿūd, designer master Ǧaʿfar b. 2. Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī, and this (was done) in the year six hundred and twenty [AH].

Table 1. (cont.)

N°	Location	Arabic text	English translation
10	Halilviran (Devegeçidi) Bridge, between Āmid and Eğil; Southern face	١- بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٢- تطوع بعمارة الجسر المبارك مولانا السلطان الملك الصالح العالم العادل المؤيد المظفر المنصور ناصر الدنيا والدين سلطان الاسلام والمسلمين ابى الفتح محمود بن محمد بن قر[ا] ارسلان بن ارتق نصير امير المؤمنين ٣- الاستاذ جعفربن محمود الحل[بى] ٤- وذلك في سنة خامس عشرو ستمائة	1. In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 2. He volunteered for the construction of the blessed bridge, our master, the Sultan, the righteous king, the just, the supporter, the victorious, the protector of the world and the religion, the Sultan of Islam and the Muslims, Abū al-Fatḥ Maḥmūd Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Qur[ā] Arslān Ibn Artuq, the supporter of the Commander of the Faithful. 3. The master, Ǧaʿfar b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥala[bī]. 4. And this (was done) in the year six hundred and fifteen [AH].
11	Ambarçayı Bridge, between Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn; destroyed (**Image 9**)	١- بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ تطوع بعمارة (هذا) ذلك الجسر وجدده طلب [...] ٢- العبده الفقير الى رحمة الله تعالى محمد ابن احمد الرا[...] الله المعرف بابن ٣- بأمره ولديه على واحمد رحمهم الله اجمعين ذلك في شهر رجب سنة عشرين وستمائة ٤- البنا عثمان بن طاكاك غلام الاستاذ جعفر بن محمود الحلبي	1. In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. volunteered for the construction of (this) that bridge and renewed it as requested […], 2. the poor servant seeking the mercy of Allāh, Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-[...] Allāh, known as Ibn al-[...] 3. By his command, and his sons ʿAlī and Aḥmad, may Allāh have mercy on them all, this was done in the month of Rağab, in the year six hundred and twenty [AH]. 4. The builder ʿUṯmān b. Ṭākāk, servant of the master, Ǧaʿfar b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī.
12	Qulfaḥ gate, Mayyāfāriqīn; keystone of the arch (**Image 7**)	١- عمل أبي ٢- العلاء بن ٣- أبى الفتح ٤- [كلمة] رحمه الله	1. Work of Abū 2. al-ʿAlāʾ b. 3. Abū al-Fatḥ. 4. May Allāh have mercy on him.

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N°	Location	Arabic text	English translation
13	Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī mosque, Mayyāfāriqīn; under the door frame (no more *in situ*) (**Image 8**)	عمل أبو العلاء بن أبى الفتح؟	Work of Abū al-ʿAlāʾ b. Abū al-Fatḥ
14	Malābādī Bridge, East of Mayyāfāriqīn; destroyed	?	1. In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. 2. […] Uṯmān 3. 643 [AH].
15	"Broken Minaret" of Ayyūbid Mosque, Mayyāfāriqīn; first floor of the Western façade (**Image 10**)	١- مولانا الامير فخر الدين امن الدنيا والدين ٢- عمل الأستاذ أبو الحسن ابن إبو سعيد	1. Our master, the Prince, Faḫr ad-Dīn, the protector of the world and the religion. 2. Work of the master (*al-ustāḏ*), Abū al-Ḥasan b. Abū Saʿīd.
16	Bazda quarry, Tek Tek Mountains, 40 km East of Ḥarrān; upper part of a wall about 6 metres high (**Image 11**)	١- بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ٢- فتح هذا العمل للشمس ٣- محمد ابن تمام المعمار رحمه الله ٤- سنة تسع وأربعين وستمائة	1. In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful 2. Opened this work to the sun, 3. Muḥammad b. Tammām *al-Miʿmār*. May Allāh have mercy on him. 4. The year six hundred and forty-nine [AH].
17	Bazda quarry, Tek Tek Mountains, 40 km East of Ḥarrān; upper part of a wall about 4 metres high (**Image 12**)	١- بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ٢- فتح هذا السبيل/العمل؟ المبارك؟ ٣- محمد بن عبد الرحمن الـ[...] ٤- وهذا السبيل/العمل؟ له، غفر ٥- [شفع] الله له ولجميع المسلمين ٦- في شهر ربيع الول ٧- سنة ثلاث وخمسين وستمائة	1. In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful 2. This blessed? path/work? was opened 3. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-[…] 4. And this path/work? is for him, may Allāh forgive him 5. May [intercede] Allāh for him and for all Muslims. 6. In the month of Rabīʿ al-Awwal, 7. year six hundred and fifty-three [AH].

Table 1. (cont.)

N°	Location	Arabic text	English translation
18	Bazda quarry, Tek Tek Mountains, 40 km East of Ḥarrān; on the ceiling (**Image 13**)	١- صاحب هذا الموضع ٢- محمد العذار ٣- رحم الله من ترحم على الفقير	1. The owner of this place 2. Muḥammad al-ʿAḏār 3. May God have mercy on those who show mercy to the poor.
19	Great Mosque, Hiṣn Kayfā; North-West of the minaret (**Image 14**)	١- سنة سبعة وعشرين وسبعمائة ٢- عمل أحوج الناس إلى الرحمن فربي بن عثمان رحمه الله	1. Year seven hundred and twenty-seven [AH]. 2. Work of the most in need to the Most Merciful, Farabī b. ʿUṯmān, may Allāh have mercy on him.
20	Wooden *minbar*, Great Mosque, Hiṣn Kayfā; currently in the Batman Museum	عمل في حجة ثمان وتسعين وسبعمائة باجتهاد محمد الفقير القاضي ابن السعيد الشافعي	It was done in the year eight hundred and ninety-eight [AH], by the efforts of Muḥammad al-Faqīr al-Qāḍī b. as-Saʿīd aš-Šāfiʿī.
21	Ar-Rizq Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā; Left wall of the entrance (currently in New Hasankeyf) (**Image 15**)	١- عمل الفقير إلى رحمة الله تعالى الحاج ٢- محمد وأخيه عمر رحمهم الله تعالى	1. Work of the poor, in need of Allāh's mercy, *al-ḥāǧǧ* 2. Muḥammad and his brother ʿUmar, may Allāh have mercy on them.
22	Ar-Rizq Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā; exterior of the prayer hall (**Image 16**)	١- خلد الله [...] تعالى ملك بانيها ويجل بالماء إليه العبد الفقير إلى الله ٢- تعالى على ابن الحسين ابن عز الدين تغمدهم الله برحمته	1. May Allāh eternalize [his memory]. Exalted is the King, the builder of it, and may the water flow to it through the servant, the poor one, to Allāh. 2. Exalted is ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿIzz ad-Dīn. May Allāh envelop them with His mercy.
23	*Koš* Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā; *miḥrāb* (currently in Hasankeyf Museum) (**Image 17–18**)	عمل توريزي؟	The work of Tawrīzī?

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Table 2. Architects, stonemasons and craftsmen of Ayyūbid monuments in Upper Mesopotamia: A Comprehensive List

N°	Name	Title	Verbal/ Nom. form	Profession	Monument/ Inscription	Inscription's dating
1	Ḥamza	No	على يد	Engraver, Calligraph or Architect?	Šāfiʿī *madrasa*, Ar-Ruhā (**Inscr. 1**)	587H/1191
2	ʿAlī	No	عمل	Engraver, or Architect?	ʿUmariyya Mosque, ʿAyntāb (**Inscr. 2**)	607H/1210
3	Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad	*al-ustāḏ*	عمر	Master Architect	*Yeni* ʿUmariyya Mosque, Ar-Ruhā (**Inscr. 3**)	610H/1214
4	ʿAbd al-Fattāh b. *al-ḥāǧǧ* Ismāʿīl	*al-ḥāǧǧ*	عمرّ	Craftman?	Wooden *minbar* of the Grand Mosque, Siʿirt (**Inscr. 4A**)	611H/1215
	ʿAlī b. Abū Bakr	*al-ḥāǧǧ*	تطوع بعمله	Craftman?		
	ʿAlī b. *al-ustāḏ*	*al-ḥāǧǧ*		Craftman?		
	ʿUmar b. *šayḫ* ʿUṯmān	*al-ḥāǧǧ*	اعمل	Craftman?		
	Muḥammad b. *šayḫ* ʿUṯmān	*al-ḥāǧǧ*		Craftman?		
	Ḍiyā al-Arḍurūmī	No	عمله	Craftman?	(**Inscr. 4B**)	
	Ilyās al-Mawṣilī	No		Craftman?		
	Yūsuf al-Ḫayālī	*al-mudarris*	حرر	Engraver/ calligraph	(**Inscr. 4C**)	
5	Abū al-Faraǧ	*al-bannāʾ*	No	Builder (Assistant architect?)	Tower XI, Āmid (**Inscr. 5**)	634H/1236

Table 2. (cont.)

N°	Name	Title	Verbal/ Nom. form	Profession	Monument/ Inscription	Inscription 's dating
6	ʿĪsā Abū Dirham	*al-bannāʾ*	No	Builder (Assistant architect?)	Tower X, Āmid (**Inscr. 6**)	634H/1236
		al-bannāʾ	بنّاء		Bāb al-Farağ, Āmid (**Inscr. 7**)	595H/1198
		al-bannāʾ	No		Zinciriye *madrasa,* Āmid (**Inscr. 8**)	Late 12th– early 13th C.
7	Ğaʿfar b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī	*Tarsīm, al-ustāḏ*	No	Designer/ Architect, Master Architect	Al-Masʿūdiyya *madrasa*, Āmid (**Inscr. 9**)	620H/1223
		Tarsīm	No		Tower XI, Āmid (**Inscr. 5**)	634H/1236
		Tarsīm	No		Tower X, Āmid (**Inscr. 6**)	634H/1236
		?	?		Artuqid Palace, Āmid	Between 619 and 629 AH (1222–1231 CE)
		al-ustāḏ	No		Halilviran Bridge (**Inscr. 10**)	615H/1218
		al-ustāḏ	No		Ambarçayı Bridge (**Inscr. 11**)	620H/1223
8	Masʿūd	*al-bannāʾ*	No	Builder	Al-Masʿūdiyya *madrasa*, Āmid (**Inscr. 9**)	620H/1223
9	Abū al-ʿAlāʾ b. Abū al-Fatḥ	No	عمل	Builder/ Assistant architect, or Architect?	Qulfaḥ gate, Mayyāfāriqīn (**Inscr. 12**)	Between 607 and 617 AH (1210–1220 CE)
		No	عمل		Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn mosque, Mayyāfāriqīn (**Inscr. 13**)	Early to mid-13th C.

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N°	Name	Title	Verbal/ Nom. form	Profession	Monument/ Inscription	Inscription's dating
10	ʿUṯmān b. Tākāk	*al-bannāʾ*, *ġulām*, *al-ustāḏ* No	No No	Builder/ Assistant architect	Ambarçayı Bridge (**Inscr. 11**) Malābādī Bridge (**Inscr. 14**)	620H/1223 643H/1245
11	Abū al-Ḥasan b. Abū Saʿīd	*al-ustāḏ*	عمل	Master architect	"Broken Minaret", Mayyāfāriqīn (**Inscr. 15**)	Between early to mid-13th C.
12	Muḥammad b. Tammām	*al-Miʿmār*	فتح	Architect/ Engineer	Bazda quarry (**Inscr. 16**)	649H/1251
13	Muḥammad b. ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān	*al-*[…]	فتح	Architect/ Engineer?	Bazda quarry (**Inscr. 17**)	653H/1255
14	Muḥammad al-ʿAḏār		No	Owner/ Manager?	Bazda quarry (**Inscr. 18**)	13th C.
15	Fārābī b.ʿUṯmān	No	عمل	Engraver, Calligraph or Architect?	Great Mosque, Hiṣn Kayfā (**Inscr. 19**)	727H/1326
16	Muḥammad al-Faqīr al-Qāḍī b. al-Saʿīd al-Šāfiʿī	No	عمل	Craftman?	Wooden *minbar* of the Great Mosque, Hiṣn Kayfā (**Inscr. 20**)	798H/1395
17	Muḥammad	*al-ḥāǧǧ*	عمل	Engraver, or Architect?	Ar-Rizq Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā (**Inscr. 21**)	811H/1409
18	ʿUmar	No	عمل	Engraver, or Architect?	Ar-Rizq Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā (**Inscr. 21**)	811H/1409
19	ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿIzz ad-Dīn	No	تعالى	Architect?	Ar-Rizq Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā (**Inscr. 22**)	731H/1331?
20	Tawrīzī?	No	عمل	Stucco expert?	*Koš* Mosque, Ḥiṣn Kayfā (**Inscr. 23**)	14th C.

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Images



Image 1. Arabic inscription found on the wall of the Šāfiʿī *madrasa*, Ar-Ruhā (N. Kaya, 2020)



Image 2. Inscription on the right side of the entrance to the ʿUmariyya Mosque, ʿAyntāb (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 3. Inscription on the southern entrance of the *Yeni* ʿUmariyya Mosque, Ar-Ruhā (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 4. Wooden *minbar* of the Grand Mosque of Siʿirt, with its inscriptions (nº 4–A, B, C); currently in the Ankara Museum of Ethnography (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 5. Inscription on the wall of the tower (XI) of the Āmid city walls (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 6. Inscription on the wall of the tower (X) of the Āmid city walls (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 7. Inscription on the keystone of the arch of the Qulfaḥ gate, east of the city of Mayyāfāriqīn (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 8. Inscription under the door frame of the Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyūbī mosque (Gertrude Bell, 1911)



Image 9. Inscription on the Ambarçayı bridge (Basri Konyar, 1936)



Image 10. Inscription on the first floor of the west facade of the minaret outside the walls of Mayyāfāriqīn (N. Kaya, 2019)



Image 11. Inscription with the name Muḥammad Ibn Tammām *al-Miʿmār*, Bazda quarry in the Tek Tek mountains East of Ḥarrān (N. Kaya, 2020)



Image 12. Inscription inside the Bazda quarry dated 653H/1255 (N. Kaya, 2020)



Image 13. Inscription with the name of Muḥammad al-ʿAḍār, Bazda quarry, Tek Tek mountains East of Ḥarrān (N. Kaya, 2020)



Image 14. Inscription on the minaret to the north-west of the Great Mosque of Ḥiṣn Kayfā (N. Kaya, 2017)



Image 15. Inscription of the Ar-Rizq Mosque of Ḥiṣn Kayfā mentioning the names *al-ḥāǧǧ* Muḥammad and ʿUmar (N. Kaya, 2017)



Image 16. On the wall of the Ar-Rizq Mosque, inscription mentioning a person called ʿAlī Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn ʿIzz ad-Dīn (N. Kaya, 2017)



Image 17. The *nisba* "Tawrīzī" on a medallion at the entrance of the *Koš* Mosque in Ḥiṣn Kayfā (33228 01 Archives M-Fondation Max van Berchem)



Image 18. Entrance of the *Koš* Mosque and its medallion (center) (N. Kaya, 2017)

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Hinduism in Zambia – Main Concepts of the Religion in Cognitive Perspective

In memory of Dr Suren Naicker

Abstract

There are approximately 4400 Hindus in Zambia, with five Hindu temples in Lusaka and two in Kafue. The majority of Zambian Hindus are descendants of people who migrated from India in the 20th century or from the boarder Indian diasporas. However, during our research temple priests and leaders said that there were about 60 indigenous Africans and 30 white[1] Europeans who embraced Hinduism in their pursuit of spiritual growth and the feeling of protection. They frequent some of the temples included in this study. The aim of this paper is to explain how Zambian Hindus understand the concept of God, the belief

[1] The denominations 'white' and 'black' are used without racial negative connotations in Southern Africa. In some countries they used in legal regulations, e.g. in South African in government BEE Programme. All our informants, no matter what ethnic group, used them on daily basis without meaning any disrespect. Hence, the usage in this article.

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in reincarnation and caste system, the extent to which Hinduism in Zambia is influenced by African Traditional Religions (ATR), and whether or not the Hindu community in Zambia deliberately engages in proselytising and converting the local populace. These issues are examined in an interdisciplinary approach. This paper uses two methodologies. While the first part uses the anthropological method, the second employs the cognitive approach (conceptual metaphor theory, CMT).[2]

Keywords: Hinduism, Zambia, African Hindus, cognitive metaphors analysis

Introduction

This paper examines how Zambian Hindus congregated in ISKCON Temple, Radhakrishna Mandir, Rama Krishna Vedanta Centre, BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir, and Hanuman Temple understand the principal tenets of their religion: the concept of God/gods, whether or not Hinduism is a polytheistic or monotheistic religion, the concept of reincarnation, and the caste system which still permeates the entire Hindu population in India. We also aim to establish the continuity and discontinuity between the Zambian and Indian forms of Hinduism resulting from and reflecting the African cultural context of the Zambian form of Hinduism, i.e. its interaction with African indigenous religions.

All our informants used metaphors to explain their idea of God and divinity. Consequently, we will employ the conceptual cognitive analysis theory to analyse our informants' perceptions of the concept of God. This is an appropriate tool for understanding the thinking patterns behind metaphors. To our knowledge, no similar study has been done so far. Therefore, this is a new addition to academic knowledge of Zambian Hindus and their religious beliefs.

We also sought to understand whether one becomes a Hindu through birth only (being born into the faith) or also through recruitment and conversion. If conversion is an open avenue for membership in Hinduism what recruitment strategies do Zambian Hindus employ? The question arose because in many countries, certain Hindu sects, especially ISKCON, actively proselytise, and in India there are ashrams and other religious centres which try to convert people from other competing faiths. When we spoke to ISKCON members in Poland, the United Kingdom and India, they all encouraged us to join their organisation, claiming that this was the purest form of Hinduism and the best form to praise God and stop the reincarnation cycle. This is the genesis of our interest in the proselytising aspect of Hindu temples in Zambia.

[2] The field studies in Zambia were supported by the Polish National Science Centre (Narodowe Centrum Nauki), Poland, project no. 2017/25/N/HS1/02500.

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Religious situation in Zambia

Zambia is a landlocked country in Southern Africa with a population of 19,610,769, a growth rate of 3.4% and an average household size of 4.8 people. Approximately 60% of the population lives in rural areas and 40% in urban areas.[3] With its 73 languages, Zambia is an ethnic melting pot. The dominant religion is Christianity, and the most popular forms of Christianity are Catholicism, Anglicanism, grass-root churches, mainly Pentecostal and Charismatic.

Religiously, Zambia is a tolerant country. Even though the constitution from 1991 (amended in 1996) calls Zambia a Christian country, Article 19 secures the freedom of faith and 'to manifest and propagate his [citizen's] religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance'.[4] Religion is taught at school as a core subject. Christianity is also accepted as a subject for university entrance, with various Christian denominations influencing the curriculum.[5] To make religious education more tolerant and open, other religions have, since 1984, also been included in the curriculum as a part of religious education (RE) classes. 'The junior secondary syllabus gave about 33 percent attention to Christianity, 17 percent to Traditional Religion, 16 percent to Islam and Hinduism, and 33 percent to life issues including Zambian Humanism'.[6] Carmody, citing Jackson, states that the curriculum 'has been crafted by Christians with minimal if any consultation' with other religions' representatives.[7] However, our Hindu informants do not find RE oppressive to Hindus because their religious activities are neither suppressed by the government nor local authorities.

Almost all of our informants were born in Zambia, educated in the local school system, and live harmoniously with other people within an environment of religious tolerance, mutual acceptance and freedom. Simuchimba points out that living in an environment of religious diversity results in reciprocal influence and the cross-fertilisation of ideas.[8] This reciprocal influence can be observed within Christian churches permeated by pre-Christian beliefs, e.g. in ancestral spirits.[9] Almost all of our informants were born in Zambia, educated in the local school system, and live harmoniously with others within an environment of religious tolerance, mutual acceptance and freedom. Simuchimba points

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[3] Zambia Preliminary Census 2022 Report, Viewed 27 April 2025, https://www.zamstats.gov.zm/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2022-Census-of-Population-and-Housing-Preliminary.pdf.

[4] Constitution of Zambia, Viewed 27 April 2025, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/26620/90492/F735047973/ZMB26620.pdf.

[5] Brendan Carmody, 'Religious Education and Pluralism in Zambia'. *Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association* 98/2 (2010), p. 151.

[6] Ibidem, p. 148.

[7] Ibidem, p. 152.

[8] Melvin Simuchimba, 'Religious Education in a 'Christian Nation': The Case of Zambia', *British Journal of Religious Education* 23/2 (2001), p. 109.

[9] For more see: Agnieszka Podolecka and Austin Cheyeka, 'Ng'anga – Zambian healers-diviners and their relationship with Pentecostal Christianity. The intermingling of pre-Christian beliefs and Christianity', *Journal for the Study of Religion* 34/2 (2021), pp. 1–30.

out that living in an environment of religious diversity results in reciprocal influence and the cross-fertilisation of ideas.[10] This reciprocal influence can be observed within Christian churches permeated by pre-Christian beliefs, e.g. in ancestral spirits.[11] Having noted how ATR has influenced Christianity in Zambia, we sought to find out the extent to which Zambian forms of Hinduism have been similarly affected. The influence of traditional African beliefs on Hindu traditions can also be observed, though much less than within Christianity.

Hinduism in Zambia

It is almost impossible to accurately establish how many Hindus live in Zambia because different sources give different data. There is no information about the Hindu population in the 2022 Census. According to the 2010 Census, 4,400 Hindus live in Zambia. The International Religious Freedom Report published by the United States Department of State in 2022 estimated the number of Hindus to be 10,000 persons in 2019, who live mainly in the Eastern, Copperbelt and Lusaka Provinces.[12] Phiri estimates that there are 15,000 Indians, 70% of whom are Hindu, and the rest are Muslim (Phiri 2001). The article 'Hinduism in Zambia' on Fandom Wiki reports 25,000 Hindus. Wikipedia is not a reliable source because it does not provide any references.[13] Our Hindu informants (especially priests and community leaders) agree with approximately 4400 Hindus. Their estimation is based on the number of people who attend and participate in Hindu religious festivals.

First and foremost, Hindus born in Zambia consider themselves Zambians.[14] Only after that do they describe themselves as Hindus, and last, as people of Indian roots. The young generation call themselves *mwenye*, a Bemba and Nyanja term for Hindus. Others call themselves Zambian Hindus.[15] Other researchers also emphasize a 'profound feeling'

[10] Melvin Simuchimba, 'Religious Education', p. 141.

[11] For more see: Agnieszka Podolecka and Austin Cheyeka, 'Ng'anga – Zambian healers-diviners and their relationship with Pentecostal Christianity', pp. 1–30.

[12] There is no information about the Hindu population in the 2022 Census report. Therefore, I use the data from the previous census (2010). International Religious Freedom Report for 2022 estimates the number of Hindus 10,000 in 2019, but my Hindu informants (especially priests and community leaders) estimate about 4000, like in the 2010 Census. Consequently, I use this number in the main body text. Zambia census 2010, Viewed 27 April 2025, https://www.zamstats.gov.zm/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2010-Census-of-Population-and-Housing-Administrative-Report.pdf. Zambia International Religious Freedom Report for 2022, United States Department of State, Viewed 27 April 2025, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/441219-ZAMBIA-2022-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf.

[13] Viewed 27 April 2025, https://religion.fandom.com/wiki/Hinduism_in_Zambia.

[14] Joan Haig, *Situating Strangers. Understanding Hindu Community Life in Lusaka* (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2010), p. 80.

[15] Ibidem, p. 81.

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of Zambian patriotism among these Hindus.[16] All our informants, except newcomers, also feel, first and foremost, as Zambians. They call themselves Hindus and Zambians, not Indians.[17] This shows a strong affiliation towards the country of residence. Some of them, especially those who have not lived in Zambia for long, feel an allegiance to Zambia and their country of origin.

The history of the early Indian diaspora in first Northern Rhodesia, later Zambia, can be recovered from the archives of the Oriental and India Office Collection. The India Office was created in 1858 and 'acted as an intermediary for the Colonial Office in London, the Governor's Office in Northern Rhodesia, and the Government of India in New Delhi'.[18] The records show the economic and social situation of Indians, both Hindu and Muslim, their place in the society, complaints against various forms of injustice and the refusal to grant entry to Indian authorities into Northern Rhodesia to assess the situation under British colonial rule. India Office Records actively collected information until 1947, when India gained independence and focused on internal affairs, not on the diaspora of Indians in African colonies. As a result, the India Office was closed. Independent India's politicians did not pay much attention to the Indian diaspora. For example, Prime Minister P.J. Nehru dismissively referred to Indians in Africa as 'guests' on the continent. Consequently, Indians were left to fend for themselves. After 1947, information concerning the affairs of the Indian diaspora comes mainly from British sources. Haig, citing Gerber, reports that 'the India Office Library and Records were siphoned into the Commonwealth Relations Office. In 1968 they were transferred to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and in 1982 were deposited with the British Library.' Data on the Indian diaspora 'after 1948 can be found in the Commonwealth Relations Office records and the Colonial Office records'.[19]

Hinduism arrived in Zambia in the early 20th century. Most Hindus came from India as indentured labourers, while others came from other colonies in Southern-Eastern Africa. Indians, both Hindus and Muslims, were allowed to become traders. Between 1931 and 1946, the number of Indians in Northern Rhodesia increased fivefold. The reason for this meteoric increase remains unexplained.[20] Some chose emigration to a different continent because of heavy taxation and subsequent poverty in colonial India. Others were actively encouraged by 'the colonial master to get better paid jobs in Eastern Africa. The ulterior motives of these western colonial masters was to create an extensive pool of cheap labour with which they planned to develop their colonies, such as in laying railway tracks and

[16] Kamini Krishna and Dorothy Mwansa, 'Indian Communities Experiences and Challenges in Zambia: Before and After Independence', *International Journal of Latest Research in Humanities and Social Science* (IJLRHSS) 3/08 (2020), p. 103.

[17] Interviews August 2021.

[18] Joan Haig, 'From Kings Cross to Kew: Following the History of Zambia's Indian Community through British Imperial Archives', *History in Africa*, 34/1 (2007), p. 56.

[19] Ibidem, p. 61.

[20] Floyd Dotson and Lilian O. Dotson, *The Indian Minority in Zambia, Rhodesia and Malawi*, New Haven 1968, p. 285.

on their sugar cane plantations. The 'import of cheap manufactured cotton material from British almost shut down the cottage industries' depriving people of income and forcing them to seek other life opportunities.[21] Dotson points out that Indians had to change their lifestyles and economic activities. Before coming to Africa, they were mostly farmers, and upon their arrival in Africa, they became industry workers or traders.[22] Haig claims that the Hindus who came directly to Northern Rhodesia instead of via South Africa were 'skilled artisans or [came] as commercially-driven Passengers'.[23] Hindus settled mainly in the mercantile business, even though British colonial regulations made their trade limited and difficult. Their rights were also restricted to where they were designated to live – in Lusaka's Second Class zone, where most Hindus still live and do their businesses and cultural activities today. The arrival of Indians, both Hindu and Muslim, in Zambia was not met with enthusiasm by the white population, especially merchants. Krishna et al. state that the majority of black people living in the area perceived the Indians as yet another group superior to them, alongside the white population. They viewed them as competitors for the limited, better-paying jobs in the country. In contrast to indigenous Africans, Indians gradually became involved in local politics during the colonisation, though their position was undoubtedly much lower than their white counterparts.[24]

In 1954, the British colonisers introduced a law that prevented new immigration, except for the immediate dependents, and the press published unfavourable articles about the Indian diaspora.[25] After gaining independence in 1964, the situation changed. India was and still is a critical economic player and its support for the newly liberated country was important. People of Indian origins played a significant role in trade and commerce and the newly independent government allowed their business to continue. Unfortunately for them, however, the situation deteriorated in 1970 due to the Zambian Government's Economic Reforms, which reserved retail and wholesale trade to African Zambians and forced many Indian traders (both Hindu and Muslim) out of business. With time, things gradually changed, and by the end of President Kaunda's era, people of Indian descent living in Zambia took a more active role in political parties and the economy.[26] Kaunda's philosophy of 'Zambian Humanism' (1967) included all religious beliefs and ethnic groups, and Hindus and Muslims could freely express their political and religious views and opinions.[27] Despite the social and political turmoil in Zambia during the 20th century, Hindus were allowed religious freedom and were not forced to convert to Christianity, the dominant religion in the country.

In the 2020s, when we conducted this research, Hindus continued to arrive in Zambia, but some also emigrated to other countries. Most Hindus who reside permanently in

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21 Kamini Krishna, Dorothy Mwansa, 'Indian Communities Experiences', p. 97.
22 Ibidem, pp. 96–97.
23 Joan Haig, 'From Kings Cross to Kew', p. 57.
24 Kamini Krishna, Dorothy Mwansa, 'Indian Communities Experiences', p. 97.
25 Floyd Dotson and Lillian O. Dotson, *The Indian Minority in Zambia*, p. 218.
26 Kamini Krishna and Dorothy Mwansa, 'Indian Communities Experiences', p. 97.
27 Joan Haig, *Situating Strangers*, p. 105.

Zambia do not have Zambian citizenship and hold passports from India, the UK, the USA and their countries of origin. This is primarily because of the cumbersome procedures for acquiring Zambian nationality.[28] Most Hindus live in the capital city of Lusaka, the Copperbelt, and Southern Provinces urban areas.[29] This fact was confirmed by our informants in 2021. The Hindu community is well integrated with the rest of society, though in 1996 'three days of rioting and looting occurred in Livingstone in which shops owned by the city's affluent Hindu (and Muslim) community were explicitly targeted. However, wealthy Hindu Zambians have contributed generously to famine relief, among other charitable deeds, and have played a role in the pro-democracy movement'.[30] Hindus helped to secure a trade deal with India in 2003 and now run successful businesses.

Methodological issues

Klostermaier emphasizes that even though India is a modern country, 'much of its ancient tradition is still alive'.[31] Hinduism in India is not a religion but a lifestyle. Religious beliefs permeate society, and even atheists must fit into social strata based on the caste system, in which elevation from lower to higher caste is virtually impossible. Ancient texts, art and customs form the way of life, and even though Hinduism has changed and adapted to modern times, tradition permeates the Indian society.

Hinduism is a complex religion, and it is comprehended in multiple layers: differently by well-educated people who treat the elaborate and expanded universe of deities in philosophical terms and differently by millions of uneducated people in India who understand the multiple gods and deities literally, and not as aspects of one superior God.[32] The following issues were discussed with our informants in Zambia: the caste system, arranged marriages and the concepts of divinity portrayed in pictures and sculptures. The latter was addressed in the context of the abundance of divinities and Hinduism and establishing if Hindus in Zambia consider their religion as monotheistic or polytheistic. As discussed below, these values are not as critical in Zambia as in native India. While our questions may arise from an academic perspective and interest, we are also mindful that our informants are ordinary practising Hindus. Their responses and explanations come from a confessional Hindu faith, not a Western scholarly perspective. We call our informants Hindus because this is what they call themselves. They are grouped around Hindu temples. This is why we consider them followers of Hinduism. Regardless of the great diversity within Hinduism, the pantheon of gods is as prevalent as the belief in reincarnation and other beliefs discussed by our informants. Hence our use of the term 'Hinduism'.

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[28] Ibidem, p. 110.
[29] Scott D. Taylor, *Culture and customs of Zambia*, Westport 2006, p. 36.
[30] Ibidem, p. 37.
[31] Klaus K. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism: Third Edition*, Albany 2007, p. 5.
[32] Ibidem, p. 36.

It is tough to talk about Hinduism as a whole. As Vishvanathan writes, "One of the most striking advances in modern scholarship is the view that there is no such thing as an unbroken tradition of Hinduism, only a set of discrete traditions and practices reorganised into a larger entity called 'Hinduism'".[33] India is a country that comprises many disparate regions, with different languages and different historical and cultural developments, plus diasporas in various parts of the world (UK, USA, Southern African countries and others). In each of them, the beliefs and behaviours recognised as Hindu look different, starting with the deity professed (Viṣṇu, Śiva, Goddess, local village deities) and ending with the rituals performed. However, a few fundamental elements can be identified that unite the followers of this protean religion.[34] These are: 1) the belief that the universe is permeated with the Divine, which is also present within the human soul and which manifests itself in material images through which it can be worshipped; 2) the belief that one is responsible for their actions, and not only in one life but also in subsequent lives, the shape of which depends on responsibility, 3) the belief that perfection can be attained by various means, both through love and devotion to God and active action in the world, as well as through renunciation of the world, 4) the conviction that one can only become a Hindu by birth and that everyone is born into a particular social group (a caste) whose precepts, both religious and social, apply throughout life. These include the recommendation of marriage within a particular caste and the performance of prescribed rituals and practices. Our examination of the Zambian form of Hinduism considered all these aspects.

The methodology adopted in this study is interdisciplinary. In the first part, the methodology was participant observation and in-depth, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews, which not only answered researchers' questions but also sparked additional spontaneous information. This interview data was then analysed using conceptual metaphor theory (CMT).

The interviews were conducted in August 2021 with the following informants: priest Popadhai Dhakar from Radhakrishna Mandir (Lusaka), monk Swami Guneshananda from Rama Krishna Vedanta Centre (Lusaka), priest Jaya Govind Dasa from ISKCON Hare Krishna temple (Lusaka), Priyank Patel from BAPS Swaminaraya Mandir (Lusaka), elders from Hanuman Temple (Kafue, there is no residing priest in the Kafue region), and 40 members of the congregations, half of them men and half women. All female informants were secular. They were chosen from supplicants who visited the temples during our research there. We also met them privately. Information was also gathered via e-mails. Names are used with informants' permission; otherwise, the words 'informant' or 'temple elder' are used. Where names are used in parentheses without dates, they indicate informants' names and quotations acquired in August 2021.

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[33] Gauri Vishvanathan, 'Colonialism and the Construction of Hinduism', in: Gavin Flood (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, Malden, Oxford 2005, p. 26.

[34] On various aspects of Hinduism, see, among others, Flood 1996, 2005, Sugirtharajah 2003, Rinehart 2004, Hawley, Narayanan 2006, Klostermaier 2007, Doniger 2014, Llewelyn 2014, Vemsani 2018, Tharoor 2019, Brekke 2019.

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To establish how Zambian Hindus understand the main concepts of their religion and if they believe this is the same Hinduism as in its native India, the following research questions were asked:

1. In Hindu temples, there are portraits of various gods. Does it mean that people worship different gods, or are these gods/idols the manifestation of a supreme God/deity/energy?
2. Is Hinduism in Zambia influenced by native African beliefs (e.g. by the reverence[35] of ancestral spirits), or is it the same as in India?
3. Does the Hindu community proselytise and convert people? Are there any native African people who converted to Hinduism?
4. Do Hindus in Zambia believe in reincarnation?
5. Is the caste system applied in Zambia?
6. How do you imagine God? What kind of entity is God? Can you describe God?

The article analyses the answers to the questions and shows Zambian Hindus' points of view and beliefs. The informants, both priests and secular, explained how they imagined God. The idols in temples are mere artistic images people do not worship. These images only enhance their concentration in prayers to God, the highest energy, represented by several gods.

During the description process of God, the informants used many metaphors, which authors interpret with the aid of conceptual metaphor theory. This theory was launched in 1980 by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their book *Metaphors We Live By*. Since then, the theory has been developed and elaborated within cognitive linguistics. The subject of research in cognitive linguistics is the relationship between a sign (linguistic and non-linguistic) and the mind on the one hand and experience on the other. The theory assumes that thinking is embodied and motivated by experience, both biological and cultural. Cognitive linguistics investigates three ways of thinking: conceptual metonymy, conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending. These processes are expressed in signs. Therefore, the study of signs allows for their reconstruction. Culturally specific metaphors show how deeply they are entrenched in tradition and how their logic governs the thinking and speaking of informants.

God, gods and idols

The concept of idols is described in Hindu sacred texts: *Vaiṣṇava* (Vishnu-centric form of Hinduism) and cultic scriptures. They present the belief that despite the transcendent form of divinity, God can be found in early representations like sculptures. 'In the Imminent form, God is present within us as the Indwelling self, while the idol is the most concrete

[35] One can encounter the term "ancestors' worship", but it is wrong. In Southern Africa, including Zambia, Africans do not worship ancestors; the worship goes to God if they are Christians or gods and deities if they practice ATR (African Traditional Religions). People speak to ancestors, offer them food, and sometimes sacrifice an animal, but do not pray or worship them. Hence, the term 'reverence' is more correct.

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of God's forms. It is called *arcāvatāra*, and the belief is that God descend into the idol and makes it divinely alive, so that he may be easily accessible to his devotees'; this is the reason for the importance of home shrines and altars with idols.[36] All our informants showed respect towards idols and even left some offerings like flowers or fruit, but at the same time, they said they left the gift offerings to God, not to the sculptures or paintings.

Asked about the numerous gods and idols, all our informants explained that Hindu gods and demigods represent one God, the divine energy that created the universe and everything in it. For them, the existence of these numerous deities is not a coincidence. Each representation and every incarnation of deities teaches people about the cause and the result in a unique and specific way. This attitude shows that they are well-educated and have a more philosophical attitude towards religion than people who treat myths and religious dogma literally. Our informants confirmed that the Hindu diaspora in Zambia is educated in the Western system while equally rooted in the Hindu religion.

Belief in one supreme God does not contradict the belief in multiple divine representations. For most contemporary Hindus in Zambia, the supreme deity is so omnipotent that the human mind cannot comprehend and process its complexity and wholeness. This is why they divide it into smaller parts to understand God and all its aspects. 'There are so many gods in Hinduism who represent and reflect the complicated human nature. Human beings are complex creatures God created in this way. Gods and deities help us understand our own complexity and that of the universe. God shows itself in such a multiplicity to help us understand the truth about creation and our place within it'.[37]

People go through many stages in their lives that make them need the multifarious aspects of God. Most secular female informants poignantly expressed this view in their discussions on the natural changes in their lives. For example, one informant stated: 'Teenagers have dreams and needs that differ from those of either single or married women or mothers. Therefore, their prayers are different and they expect different divine intervention'.[38] When people concentrate on a specific aspect of their life, they choose a representation of God to make thinking and praying easier. 'There is one God who created us all but it is easier to pray to the aspect that is closest to my heart at a particular moment. I pray to Parvati because she is the goddess of maternity and this is the most important thing in my life. I want the best for my children. I want them to grow up to be good people. So, Parvati is the one to whom I pray but I know she is a part of the supreme God like all other gods. I do not pray to her picture, I pray to her'.[39]

Male informants also said that people find themselves in multiple life situations somewhat similar to those experienced by divinities. The holy texts and epic poems depict the lives of deities in conditions that mirror human experiences (e.g. family quarrels). While some aspects of life are more pertinent and significant at a young age, others are

[36] Arvind Sharma, *Classical Hindu Thought: An Introduction*, New York 2000, p. 67.

[37] Elder of Hanuman Kafue Temple.

[38] Female informant, age 34, Lusaka.

[39] Female informant, age 34, Lusaka.

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more important at the end of life. Similarly, while some aspects of life are more important for women (e.g. taking care of children), others are important for men (e.g. participating in war). People seek solace in those forms of divinities which are closest to their hearts and life situations. This explains the existence of idols of disparate deities in temples and at the houses of devotees. 'We must also remember that we create gods ourselves – when we pray to Ganesha, we give power of our thoughts and energy to him, and he gives this energy back. Through prayer, food offerings and decorating paintings and sculptures, we show our respect to the gods and the God that created all'.[40] A congregation member explained: 'We have many idols in the temple but we know that each represents a different strength that humans need. Today I pray to Hanuman because it is Monday and it is his day. Every day is offered to a different god, not only days of the week but each day of the year. So I like to pray to the god of the day. I pray to Lakshmi because I need her wisdom and help in this stage of my life. I need to fix my finances and she is the goddess that represents wealth. I just feel that praying to her will bring help faster. But I know that when I pray to Hanuman or Lakshmi, I really pray to the omnipresent God in whom we all live'.[41]

Zambian Hindus do not perceive their religion as polytheism. They believe in one God. The fact that God has multiple manifestations and images does not make their religion polytheistic. Informants believe that God is in everything and everyone. So it does not matter to which representation people pray. A prayer directed to Vishnu or Lakshmi is equally addressed to the highest God, in the form the believers understand the best at a certain stage of life. 'The human mind is limited, so it is easier for people to pray to a certain aspect of divinity. Even if simple, uneducated people pray to an idol, they still pray to the highest God, because it (God has no gender) created the materials from which idols are made. But most people pray to the god represented by the idol, not to the idol itself'.[42]

People try to conceptualise God in ways that mirror their lives. This is unsurprising because images of God in many cultures and religious traditions are based on what the human mind can comprehend and associate with. In African pantheons, the God-creator is usually a distant figure who made the world and withdrew from it, thus becoming disinterested in the daily affairs of humanity. There are many lesser deities like water, fire, thunder and other elemental deities, but prayers and offerings do not go to them. Ancestral spirits are venerated by many indigenous Africans in Southern Africa, including many Christians. In Judaism and Christianity, God is a fatherly figure. Given the overt patriarchal nature of the ancient Jewish society, it is unsurprising that the Jewish Supreme Being ultimately emerged as a domineering Father figure (God, the Father). Once Christianity adopted this conception of God from the Jewish culture, Father God begot an equally powerful son to become the inheritor of his father's kingdom. This religious construction

[40] Male informant, age 44, Lusaka.

[41] Female informant, age 40, Lusaka.

[42] Dhakar, informant.

corresponds to social realities and power relations in most societies. As in other religions, Hindus transferred their life experiences to religion. They have created a pantheon that helps them understand life and social relations and find the sense of their existence. People with an unwavering faith in God firmly believe that God created them, not that people created God and religions in their images.

Zambian Hindus' image of God and its various forms extends to the changes people go through in their lives. As they believe that everyone evolves, becoming a better version of themselves during their lifetime and in the reincarnation process, they project this belief onto gods who are forms of God. 'Gods can incarnate to help people. For example, Krishna is the reincarnation of Vishnu. People can be incarnations of gods, and they can become gods. Sri Ramakrishna is a good example. Since childhood, he was very spiritual because of his previous incarnations. He worshipped the goddess Mother Kali most often and begged her to show him her true form. Kali appreciated his worship and manifested herself to him. This experience made him even more convincing, and he became a powerful teacher, followed by millions. We now worship him because he became one with God and his teachings help us become pure and enlightened and stop the reincarnation cycle.[43] Asked why Hindus dress idols for different occasions, the informant explained; 'this is our way of worship. When we dress the figures that represent gods, we offer them our admiration and adoration'.[44]

The only different answers come from ISKCON temple priest Jaya Govind Dasa. He explained that Krishna was the first God and that he was the highest divinity. He was before Rama, Shiva and Vishnu. Therefore, it is wrong to view Krishna as an incarnation of Vishnu. 'Krishna is the first and the highest God. His worldly life is the supreme representation of the highest God. Other gods are part of him, in the same way people are also part of him. The universe and all living beings were created for the pleasure of God. So, our task is to become better and evolve until we finally stop the reincarnation cycle, and become one with God. Krishna created himself, and then expanded himself to Lord Balaram, then to four Vishnus (Samkarshan, Anirudh, Badumana, Vasudara). Samkarshan expanded further as Mahavishnu, also called Karmadakshyi Vishnu, and then as Garbodakshai Vishnu, and from his navel a lotus flower grew, and from it Brahma was born. We can compare Krishna to milk that expanded into yoghurt: gods are yoghurt, they cannot become milk, but milk can always become yoghurt. Krishna is so omnipotent. You can also compare Krishna to a president of a country and other gods are like ministers. If you have a chance to speak to the president, you will not speak to ministers, so why pray to other gods when you can pray to Krishna. That is why conscious people pray directly to Krishna. However, if they pray to other gods and demi-gods whose pictures we have in our temples, they still praise the highest God. The pictures and sculptures help to pray but this is Krishna we pray to, not his statue'.[45]

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[43] Guneshananda, informant.

[44] Guneshananda, informant.

[45] Dasa, informant.

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All our informants are adamant that no matter how long they may live outside India or are born in Africa, their understanding of God is similar to that of Indian Hindus. God is omnipresent and omnipotent. God, the creator of the universe, is too great and complex for the human mind to comprehend fully. This is the reason for having multiple deities. They help people pray and make contact with God as much as it is humanly possible.

Is Hinduism in Zambia influenced by native African beliefs?

All our informants feel strongly that African indigenous religious beliefs have not influenced Zambian Hindu beliefs. Although Christian missionaries attempted to eliminate ancestral veneration, the practice remains prominent among Africans. Many Zambians from various ethnic groups believe in their ancestors' presence and intervention in the daily lives of the living. Some people view ancestral spirits in ways that resonate with the Roman Catholic Church's conceptions of saints, while others put them at par with ancient prophets who conveyed prayers to God.[46] There is a belief in ATR and Hinduism that ancestral spirits can help or harm their descendants. As a result, these spirits receive great respect. However, in Hinduism, they are often treated as deities or semi-gods, while in African beliefs they are not. Many African Christians also believe Jesus was a kind of Great Ancestor because he called everyone his brothers and sisters who had one father in heaven. Hence, spirits can communicate with Jesus and in this way help their families.[47]

Kumar and Cincala explain that for Hindus, ancestors are forever crucial because of the 'reverence, obedience, and the transmission of traditions/values from one generation to the next are some of the most profound responsibilities for families, clans, and tribes'.[48] This belief in ancestors' importance aligns with Southern African beliefs, but the practices differ. In Hinduism, the attitude towards ancestors is dissimilar because of the belief in reincarnation: people owe their physical birth to their lineage. This situation leads to the interchangeable use of the terms worship and veneration. In contrast to ART, Hindus have specific religious festivals dedicated to ancestors. They offer prayers called *pitrupaksha* for the repose of their souls. Also, devotees decorate small shrines at homesteads at stipulated moments of the year. The most important festival is *Pitru Paksha Shradh*, preceding the autumnal *Navratras*. Within ATR, contacts with their ancestors consist of

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[46] Agnieszka Podolecka and Austin Cheyeka, '*Ng'angas* – Zambian Healers-Diviners and their Relationship with Pentecostal Christianity: The Intermingling of Pre-Christian Beliefs and Christianity', p. 22.

[47] Ibidem. Such beliefs are not limited to Zambia. For more see: Agnieszka Podolecka, 'Spiritual healers in the Basotho society: An overview of traditional beliefs in the Christianised Lesotho', *Studies in African Languages and Cultures* 55 (2021), pp. 59–184; and: Agnieszka Podolecka and Peter White, 'The intersection of Indigenous African beliefs within Prophetic and Pentecostal African Christianity: a case study of the Owambo in Namibia', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 171 (2021), pp. 65–79.

[48] Santosh Kumar and Petr Cincala, 'Faith, Force, and Fear: Factors that Influence Ancestral Worship among Hindus', *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 16/1 (2020), p. 157.

daily practices such as offering good word, or a little food or drink. Supplicants do not celebrate their ancestors via festivals.

When asked about ancestral reverence in African tradition and its potential influence on Hinduism in Zambia, all our Hindu informants said they have their own beliefs and do not need African ones. 'Hinduism in Zambia is the same as in India or other countries. African beliefs in spirits do not permeate our belief in Krishna. When one dies, their soul goes on in the reincarnation cycle'.[49] 'We know that the belief in the spirits' help is strong in Zambia but it does not affect us. And if black Africans embrace Hinduism, they understand that the soul goes to the next life after the death of the body. We build little shrines for our ancestors to commemorate them. Although we believe their energy is with us momentarily, we don't pray to them. We don't ask for help from them because they cannot help us in any way. They are gone, their souls have passed on'.[50] 'Hinduism in Zambia is the same as Hinduism in India. There is no belief in spirits like African in India, and there is none in Zambia'.[51] None of our informants believed Hindus in Zambia mix Hinduism with African indigenous beliefs.

Do Hindus in Zambia proselytise and convert people?

Hinduism has no requirement for converting people of other religions to Hinduism. Holy texts do not require such actions, and in India, the fundamental belief in the responsibility for the previous deeds (*karma*) and the caste system attests that people are born to specific modes of life (including religion) as the result of their actions in previous lives. It is not forbidden to accept non-Hindus into Hinduism, to allow Europeans or Africans to change their beliefs, but it is also not expected from anyone to bring new believers to Hinduism.

There is no academic research that would show any active converting in Zambia. Even ISKCON, active in this field in other countries refrains from seeking new congregants among local people. They are open to receiving new believers, no matter their skin colour or background, but do not organise events or visit prisoners to find 'new souls'. There are several reasons for that: no tradition of such actions among Zambian Hindus, respect to their new country, focusing on Hindus (and taking believers over from one temple to another makes no sense as often people frequent two or three temples according to their needs). All informants state that there is no proselytisation in Zambia. 'We never convert people. God accepts reverence from every religion. It is important to be good and praise God to move up in the reincarnation cycle. There is no ritual that changes a Christian or Muslim into a Hindu. Everyone is welcome to the temple. I gladly speak to anyone who wants to learn but I never try to convert people'.[52]

[49] Dasa, informant.
[50] Female informant, age 40, Lusaka.
[51] Dhakar, informant.
[52] Dasa, informant.

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Priests are open, and the inclusiveness in some places attracts people to Hindu temples. In Rama Krishna Vedanta Centre, one can see a picture of Jesus and Mary hanging on the wall. 'We wish all the people the best. If they are good people practising Christianity, let them do it. It may be their way of connecting to God. Some people do it through Krishna, others through Jesus. We want them all to feel welcome in our temple. Converting is not a proper thing to do. Everyone should find their own religion and ways in life'.[53] As a result, the number of Hindu believers is stable, though some white and native Africans have joined congregations in recent years. They did it of their own accord rather than due to deliberate proselytization endeavours. All priests state that there are less than 100 native Zambian people who embraced Hinduism, probably 60–70 persons. Their reasons for changing religion are spiritual. Most of them just come to temples to find peace, meditate, and seek protection from God. They do not change religion because of marriage or for financial reasons. They merely seek spiritual growth – declared all priests.

Reincarnation as the central belief

Reincarnation (in Sanskrit: *saṃsāra*) forms the base of Hindu beliefs. In the oldest Indian texts (*Ṛgveda*, ca 13th century BC), there is evidence of rebirth within the same lineage.[54] The concept of reincarnation as we know it today only emerged around the 6th century BC in the Upanishads. Newer Buddhist and Hindu texts further elaborated the reincarnation theory. According to the new assumptions, the form into which a person reincarnated after death depended on the actions committed during life. This theory teaches that individuals are responsible for their actions and destiny. One's actions determine the shape of their future incarnations. Actions and responsibility for them are called *karma* (Sanskrit: *karman*). If actions are good, the future incarnation will be favourable. If they are bad, it will be unfavourable. The ideal incarnation is in human form, as humans possess all cognitive tools that allow for ultimate liberation from the cycle of rebirth, which is the highest goal of life.[55]

Therefore, whatever good or bad happens to a person untraceable to contemporary life must be the effect of the previous incarnation. On the one hand, the belief in the irresistible influence of the responsibility for the previous deeds (*karma*) and reincarnation explains the social system in India and a person's place within it.[56] On the other, reincarnation reflects people's belief in the possibility of change. If someone cannot achieve perfection during one lifespan, incarnating into a new life is the chance for redemption and improvement. Reincarnation has been the central religious idea in Hinduism and other religions that originated in India, such as Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. It is also prevalent in the

[53] Guneshananda, informant.

[54] Joanna Jurewicz, *Fire and Cognition in the Ṛgveda*, Warszawa 2010, pp. 305–309.

[55] Klaus K. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism*, p. 290.

[56] Arvind Sharma, *Classical Hindu Thought*, p. 98.

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indigenous beliefs of some African communities, although there are no traces of the belief in the reincarnation of deities in Southern Africa. It is a belief that a soul is an immortal entity that goes from one body to another. Therefore, death is only a passage to the next life rather than its end or the passage to some esoteric purgatory or hell.

There is no strict definition of a soul, even though Hindus believe in it. *Bhagavad Gītā*, the sacred Hindu text, describes the soul as something which cannot be destroyed, which is eternal, but describable: 'Never there was a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be. As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from childhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death'.[57] In most denominations of Hinduism, the soul is wholly or partly identical to God.

When asked about the belief in the concept of reincarnation, all priests and secular congregation members are adamant: there is no Hinduism without reincarnation. The idea of reincarnation equally applies to gods, even though they are particles of the supreme God. 'Even gods incarnate, people do as well. People can go back in the reincarnation cycle when they commit crime. They can also grow when they do good and practice spirituality. The aim of human existence should be perfection that ends the rebirth cycle'.[58] 'The great Trinity of Hinduism shows the wholeness of life: Rama is the creator, loyal husband and a good son who teaches people how to be good role models for everyone. Vishnu is a maintainer who comes to rescue when humanity is in danger. He incarnated nine times, and his final incarnation was lord Krishna. Shiva is a destroyer of evil. These deities are representations of one greatest divinity. When people finish their reincarnation cycle, they join this divinity and become one'.[59]

Also, secular Hindus believe that gods can incarnate and see no contradiction in the fact that gods are God, but in many forms. 'Your question how gods can incarnate is a typical European, non-Hindu question. Why should they not? Yes, they are part of God but God is energy, and it is not a person. We are created from this divine energy and we incarnate in any bodies. Why then could gods, who come from the same divine energy not incarnate?' – asked one of the congregants. His two friends nodded their heads and agreed with him. 'People come to the temple to praise gods. They know that gods also reincarnate, the most famous example is Krishna who is Vishnu's incarnation. If gods incarnate, so must do the humans. You cannot practice Hinduism, if you do not believe in reincarnation. Reincarnation is like changing clothes. Once they are used, you use new ones. Our souls do the same'.[60]

Zambian Hindus believe that religion permeates every aspect of life and revolves around reincarnation. All informants vehemently stated that reincarnation was at the centre of Hinduism. 'Truth is one, no matter which religion you follow, you will incarnate as long as it is necessary for you to become entirely pure and ready to become one with God.

[57] *Bhagavad Gītā* 2: 12.

[58] Dasa, informant.

[59] Elder of Hanuman Kafue Temple.

[60] Patel, informant.

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All Hindus know that. All people, who come to the temple, and call themselves religious, believe in reincarnation'.[61] Some informants were honestly surprised that a question about their belief in reincarnation was even raised. 'Of course we believe in reincarnation. It is the centre of our religion. You cannot be Hindu without believing in reincarnation' (male informant, age 50, Lusaka).

Caste system in Zambia

In India, reincarnation is the basis and explanation of the caste system. Both are fundamental tenets of the Hindu religion. Caste 'judgement' is a sort of evaluation of a soul, its current state and its progress in previous lives. Unless purified and released through extraordinary efforts, every soul must suffer the wanderings of transmigration. Its status in worldly life depends on the collected responsibility for the previous deeds (*karma*). There is a general belief in India that people get what they deserve, and if they are born into a low caste, they must have earned it in their previous lives. To change their life status, people must obey their caste's rules and obligations and accept their fate. They can only upgrade their caste by fulfilling their life's reason, doing good and change their karma into better.[62] Instruction how to live a good life, eliminate bad responsibility (*karma*) and collect a good one are given in holy texts, although they are usually addressed to men. Hindu society has always been patriarchal, hence the focus is on men.[63] However, Hindu literature provides ample examples of righteous women to follow. Also great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi 'not only defended the rights and dignity of women but found them valuable fellow fighters', a role that was previously assigned to men.[64] Women can also influence their deeds (*karma*), and hence, future lives.

Even though the caste system is a critical part of Indian Hindus' social life, it seems to have lost its power in Zambia. In the beginning, with first two generations, it played an important law. The immigrants fresh from India remembered the social structures of the old country perfectly and applied them to the new ground. This even caused problems for the leadership, as people from lower castes wanted to get rid of the problems of the old continent and truly start anew, on equal terms. With time situation changed. Dotson belies that it is the result of moving to a very different social structure than in India: it 'has been eroded by the status battle with Whites; (…) traditional patron-client relations are all but destroyed; joint family organizations have changed towards a more nuclear form'; also the smaller number of Hindus caused limited potential of marrying

[61] Guneshananda, informant.

[62] H.N.C. Stevenson, 'Status Evaluation in the Hindu Caste System', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 84 (1954), p. 47. Arvind Sharma, *Classical Hindu Thought*, p. 98.

[63] Klaus K. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism*, pp. 139, 177.

[64] Ibidem, p. 320.

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within the same caste.[65] The migration to Africa of the lower caste opened up new opportunities for them to better their lives elsewhere. When that opportunity presented itself, they seized it.

In 21st-century Zambia, neither does the caste problem exist nor a marriage system based on castes, family connections or dowries. These traditions are prominent in India. There are several reasons for this: many Hindus are Zambians in their third or fourth generation, and young people rebel against arranged marriages and want to find spouses themselves and form love relationships. Such practice would be difficult to enforce in Zambia among the 4400 Hindu minority comprising different castes. Also, newcomers from India must accept a reality in which Zambian Hindus do not know what caste their ancestors were when then they immigrated to Africa decades or even 100 years ago.

Some priests also reject the caste system because it is an affront to the modern ideals of a more inclusive and egalitarian society. In the case of ISKCON, such changes are inevitable because they have temples and devotees worldwide and from all races. In Zambia, they profess the idea of inclusiveness and openness. 'ISKCON is famous for inviting everyone. We are inclusive and have people of different races and backgrounds among us. We do not divide people. As a result, we do not uphold the caste system. In India, social tradition rather than religion divides people. This tradition was present in Zambia a few decades ago but no longer subsists. Young people choose their spouses themselves. They can marry a non-Hindu person since the caste system is no longer important'.[66] We encountered a similar sentiment in the Kafue community, where the temple is part of an agricultural and religious life. The leaders of the farming community, which consists of both Hindus and native Africans, are also the leaders in their agrarian enterprise. Community elders clearly stated: 'We do not have a caste system. Everyone is welcome to the temple, and we are very inclusive'.[67]

Informants admit that there are some remnants of the caste system among older people, 'but 90% of marriages are love marriages now. Our parents give us a choice. They do not demand dowry like in India'.[68] Our informants revealed the abandonment of the dowry tradition and cessation of arranged marriages, which we will explain later. The informant freely gave the information in the context of discussions on the caste system.

Priests state that although the caste system has been has been a feature of religion for thousands of years, it is not a spiritual or religious thing. 'It is a social custom that started thousands of years ago, to protect women. Traditionally, sons inherited land and real estate. Therefore, the reason for paying the dowry was to give women a share of the family wealth. Unfortunately, with time it lost its good intentions and became an abuse of women. The same applies to the caste system. It is a social invention that has

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65 Floyd Dotson and Lillian O. Dotson, *The Indian Minority in Zambia*, p. 94

66 Dasa, informant.

67 Elder of the Hanuman temple.

68 Female informant, age 30, Lusaka.

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nothing to do with God. Fortunately, in India it is slowly changing. Inter-caste marriages are becoming more and more common and popular. Here in Zambia, it does not really apply. Most parents allow their children a choice of a spouse. I believe that the more spiritual people become, the less the caste system will matter'.[69] '20–30 years ago some parents wanted their children to stay within their caste. But we are a small community here in Zambia, just several thousand people. And sometimes we do not know to which caste we belong. So, parents do not force this system on us anymore. We do not judge people by their birth but by their deeds, and how much we like each other. We choose our friends the same way as Europeans do, based on love and friendship'.[70] Zambian Hindus give themselves much more freedom than is possible in India, even though their religion is the same as in the country of their origins.

What is God like – cognitive analysis of metaphors used by informants

This part of the paper analyses the images and concepts the informants use to describe God. This analysis employs the conceptual metaphor theory. According to this theory, conceptual metaphor is a process of thinking which takes place between two concepts (called conceptual domains) during which one concept (called the source domain) maps part of its features and its basic logic onto another (called the target domain). Usually, the target domain is more abstract than the source domain, and its metaphorical conceptualization facilitates its understanding. Conceptual metaphors are activated either *via* verbal or non-verbal signs. This analysis of the signs allows us to reconstruct the mental processes which motivate them.

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) explain in their book *Philosophy in the Flesh*[71] that concepts which seem to us abstract and which philosophers commonly use evolved from metaphorical thinking. Among other things, they discuss metaphors, COGNITION IS SEEING, and COGNITION IS LIGHT Descartes used. These metaphors map the basic logic of the source domain onto the target domain, according to which we can see when it is light. When we can see, we can cognise. They strongly motivate Descartes' ideas, attested in his concept of the light of reason. Thanks to metaphors, COGNITION IS SEEING, and COGNITION IS LIGHT; the reader understands that reason functions like light, i.e. that it enables cognition. We treat the concept of 'the light of reason' as an abstract because the deep entrenchment of these metaphors in Western culture makes its target domain lose its connectedness with the source domain, except for its basic logic. Thus, to understand it, we do not need to refer to any other elements of the source domain. We use this kind of abstract metaphor in this part of the paper.

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[69] Guneshananda, informant.

[70] Female informant, age 30, Lusaka.

[71] For more see: George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh. The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*, New York 1999.

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Some metaphors are universal or transcultural (i.e. they can be found in many cultures), while others are culture specific. We will discuss more universal metaphors (Metaphor of Container, President-and-Country) and several culturally specific metaphors (Metaphor of Expansion, Lotus, Tree, Yoghurt, Play and Spectacle). We shall conclude with a fundamental metaphor rooted in the thought attested in the oldest Indian texts: the notion that knowledge precedes existence, and that a word, spoken at the appropriate time, in the appropriate place, and by the appropriate individual within the context of a ritual, possesses creative power – a metaphor of God-Creator-and-Being-Created.

Metaphor of Container

'He is here and now, in India and your country too (…). You cannot capture God because "he is all around and inside us. Even atheists have God inside them, even though they do not believe. (…) God encompasses the whole Universe. He is the Universe and everything inside it" (male informant, age 44, Lusaka).'[72] "He is outside and inside us. He is in every person, animal and plant" (Guneshananda). "God permeates everything. He is inside and outside" (Patel).

Most informants state that God is omnipresent. He is both inside and outside the cosmos and human beings. This metaphoric way of thinking about God uses an elemental concept of CONTAINER as its source domain. This concept belongs to the group of concepts called image schemas (Johnson 1990). Image schemas are pre-conceptual and pre-linguistic patterns of movements of our body, created in our very early childhood. The image schema of the CONTAINER is created when infants place something in their mouth and take it away from it (or not), throw toys out of the cot, and parents put them back there. Infants learn the three structural elements of a container: interior, boundary, and exterior.[73]

There is a simple logic inherent to image schemas. In the case of a container, an object is either inside or outside. It cannot be inside and outside the container at the same time. This logic negates the use of the image schema of the container as a source domain for conceptualizing God. Consequently, we imagine the cosmos and human beings in terms of the CONTAINER, but at the same time, we understand that God has a peculiar nature of being simultaneously inside and outside the cosmos. What is impossible in everyday human experience is possible for God. Thus, we understand that God is a reality entirely different from everything we know, capable of transcendence.

The image schemas are general, and often concretized in metaphorical thinking, as we will see below. The Container metaphor may symbolize a pregnant woman's womb (See Metaphor of Lotus below).

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[72] Secular male informant, age 50, Lusaka.

[73] Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*, Chicago 1990; George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*, Chicago 1987.

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Metaphor of President-and-Country

'You can compare Krishna to a president of a country and other gods are like ministers. If you have a chance to speak to the president, you will not speak to ministers. So why does one pray to other gods when they can pray to Krishna? This is why conscious people pray directly to Krishna' (Dasa).

One's relationship with God and other gods is modelled after and conceived in terms of the relationship between the President of a country, his ministers and ordinary citizens. The concept of a king and his people is used in early Indian philosophical thinking (beginning with *Upaniṣad*s) to conceive the relationship between the absolute Self (*ātman*) and other cognitive faculties. The gods are also seen as the cognitive faculties in the cosmos and other sentient beings (*Aitareya Upaniṣad* 1). Therefore, the metaphor the informant and the ISCKON Krishna temple priest evoke is more consistent than it appears at first glance. In the traditional metaphor SELF IS A KING, cognitive faculties are his people, and the dependence of cognitive faculties on the Self is highlighted. The informant highlights a hierarchy of power relations between manifestations of God and their possible acceptability.

Metaphor of Expansion

'Krishna created himself, then he expanded himself to Lord Balaram, then to four Vishnus (Samkarshan, Anirudh, Badumana, Vasudara). Samkarshan expanded further as Mahavishnu, also called Karmadakshyi Vishnu, and then as Garbodakshai Vishnu, and from his navel a lotus flower grew, and from it Brahma was born' (Dasa).

The creation of the Universe is conceived in terms of the expansion of God into his consecutive manifestations. As far as we know, no cognitive analysis of the Expansion metaphor has been carried out. However, based on Indian philosophy, the essential source domain of the expansion metaphor is the outflow of water (as during a flood or tide). The outflow of water is a complex concept with many features. Used as the source domain, it only maps its basic logic to expansion. Its strength, and to a large extent, its independence from human will, is life-giving. In these categories, world creation is an overwhelming manifestation of the only reality which gives life to everything. This way of thinking about creation is attested to in the oldest Sanskrit texts (*Ṛgveda*), in which the concept of water outflow as the source domain is explicitly mentioned.[74] The Sanskrit word *sṛṣṭi*, for 'creation', comes from the verb *sṛj*-, meaning 'to emit, pour forth, shed, cause to flow.'

Successive generations of philosophers have used this metaphor not only in relation to the creation of the world but also in relation to the mind. The use of this metaphor in relation to the mind is appropriate when one considers that the common belief in Indian

[74] Joanna Jurewicz, '*Tátah ksarati ákṣaram*. A history of a philosophical notion', *Indologia Taurinensia* 38 (2012), pp. 106–121.

philosophy is that the creative manifestation of God is the mind. The persistence of the oldest ways of thinking adopted at the dawn of culture is evidenced by the fact that, as Suren Naicker has shown, the Water metaphor is one of Swami Vivekananda's most important metaphors.[75] The fact that the concept of water outflow motivates thinking about the creation of the world is confirmed by the words of the informant that a lotus flower has grown out of Garbodakshai Vishnu's navel, and as experience shows, lotuses grow in the water.

If one perceives creation and God's omnipresence in terms of the outflow of water, i.e. that it can be inside and outside containers, this metaphor becomes problematic unless the boundaries of containers are not fixed. This scenario contradicts our sedentary everyday experience. We cannot imagine a container from which water leaks not in one place but through all its walls. Is it still a container or not?

Metaphor of the Lotus

The creation of the universe in which we live begins when a lotus appears in the navel of the last manifestation of God (Karmadakshyi Vishnu), from which Brahma is born. This metaphor is deeply entrenched in tradition. Already in the *Mahābhārata* (the turn of the eras, e.g. 12.175.15), the image of the lotus emerging from the navel of God appears, in which Brahma arises. Brahma is a manifestation of God within the cosmos that finalises, organises and creates perfection. Within the frames of this metaphor, God is conceived in terms of a pregnant female, who gives birth to her child. The umbilical cord is conceived in terms of the stalk of the lotus, a symbol of her womb from which Brahma ensues as her baby. This metaphorical thinking indicates that every person is as safe with God as inside the mother's womb. The concept of the mother's womb is specific instance of the image schema of a CONTAINER (Metaphor of Container).

To fully understand the metaphorical correspondences, it is necessary to delve deeper into the tradition where the source domain for understanding creation was the delivery of a calf or foal. In this case, the lotus is the amniotic sac (for more detail, see Jurewicz (2010)). Understanding creation in terms of childbirth agrees with the metaphor of water: after all, amniotic sac is filled with amniotic fluid. Therefore, the image of Brahma unites two metaphors, the source domains of which are a lotus growing from water and leading to childbirth. These source domains map their basic logic onto the target domain. The concept of growth of a plant gives the basic structure and scenario. The phenomenon of birth highlights the relationship between humans and the manifestations of God. In traditional Indian thinking, the son is his father's replica. Informants do not think about a real lotus that grows or how a real child is born. They do not believe either that the cosmos appeared from a lotus. However, they use this metaphor in this context to understand and explain the complex and abstract concept of the creation of the cosmos.

[75] Suren Naicker, A *Cognitive Linguistic Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors in Hindu Religious Discours With Reference to Swami Vivekananda's Complete Worlds* (PhD Thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2016).

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Metaphor of the Tree

'All gods and demigods are important but none as much as Krishna. Gods are like a tree, and what do you water when you want a tree to grow? The roots!. So Krishna is the root of everything. When you water Krishna with love and prayers, all the gods benefit like the trunk and branches of the tree. The gods then protect you' (Dasa).

The informant uses the metaphor of watering a tree to explain how worshipping God (Krishna) pleases the gods. He compares the importance of worship to water, without which a tree cannot grow. This metaphor highlights the essential role of water in the growth of the tree while intentionally ignoring other characteristics of trees that, though numerous, are not relevant to his current discussion.

The image of a tree also appears in the *Ṛgveda*, which discusses the creation of the cosmos. In this metaphor, God is symbolically equivalent to the roots of a tree. The roots nourish and support the trunk and branches, the symbol of the cosmos in this context. According to the *Ṛgveda*, a great plant grows until it reaches the heavens, ultimately merging with the ocean wave. The moist soil in which this plant thrives highlights the importance of water as a symbol of the life that springs from God. Thus, this imagery illustrates and grounds the belief in the intricate relationship between God, the cosmos, and human existence (4.58.1).[76]

Metaphor of Yoghurt

'We can compare Krishna to milk that expanded into yoghurt. The gods are yoghurt. They, they cannot become milk, but milk can always become yoghurt' (Dasa).

The use of the imagery of the transformation of milk as the source domain in philosophical metaphors is as ancient as Indian culture itself. Composed by ancient warriors, cowherds and priests to capture thinking under the influence of hallucinogenic plant called Soma, this imagery features in the *Ṛgveda.* In later texts, like *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (ca 6 BCE), the concept of transformation of milk into cream is used to conceive the first creative manifestation of God identified with thinking Death (1.2.3).[77] The same concept is activated in the *Mahābhārata* (the turn of the eras) as the source domain of the complex creation of the nectar of immortality and other desired goods (1.1.15–17). In the classical philosophy of Sāṃkhya (ca 5 CE), the concept of transformation of milk into yoghurt is conventionalised when used to conceive the creative transformation of nature (called *prakṛti*). The main feature of this source domain transposed onto the target domain, is as follows: the creative transformation of one God who manifests as more perceptible and more material is seen in terms of transformation of milk into more solid

[76] For more see: Joanna Jurewicz, '*Tátah ksarati ákṣaram*'.

[77] Joanna Jurewicz, *Fire, Death and Philosophy. A History of Ancient Indian Thinking*, Warszawa 2016 (reprint: Delhi 2018), pp. 406–417.

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and thicker form, i.e. yoghurt. This source domain is conceptually connected with the source domain of the outflow of water, especially since water is often identified with milk in Indian traditional thinking (e.g. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.3). The informant highlights another feature of this transformation, i.e. the irreversibility of the process. While milk can become yoghurt, yoghurt can never become milk again. Thus, the gods are manifestations of God, but they cannot give up their divine bodies, unlike God, who exists both in its original pre-creation form (in terms of milk) and in its secondary form, the cosmos and its beings ('It does not matter which God you pray to because he or she is a part of the highest, ever-present God' said secular male informant in Lusaka). In this way, the existence of God again proves to be contrary to everyday experience; the logic of the source domain is not only mapped to the target domain but also split to express the sublimity and incomprehensibility of God.

The images of God are manifested and contained within the believers' perceptions of lesser deities and idols, highlighting God's presence through these forms. One informant poignantly captures this view thus: "God is in the idols we decorate and in you, and in me" (Dasa). God's omnipresence and ubiquitous presence in the created order justify image or idol veneration. Consequently, "Although they pray to other gods and demi-gods whose pictures we have in our temples, they still praise the highest God. The pictures and sculptures help to pray but it is Krishna we pray to, not his statue" (Dasa).

According to the logic of the source domain, the relationship between gods and God is similar to the milk-yoghurt relationship. It is a difference of degree and level rather than substance. The same is true for God's manifestation in human beings. "People can be incarnations of gods and they can become one with God, as exemplified by Sri Ramakrishna. The God we pray to is Swaminarayam, who used to be a living man. However, God blessed him and he evolved so much that he is God now. God is everywhere and if humans try, they can become God as well" (Patel). All our informants display a strong belief in reincarnation. Belief in reincarnation is crucial for understanding this metaphor because turning a person into God takes many lifetimes, just as milk does not instantaneously become yoghurt.

Metaphor of the Spectacle

'Reincarnation is like changing clothes. Once they are used, you use new ones. Our souls do the same' (Patel). Conceptualization of reincarnation in terms of changing clothes is explicitly expressed in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (2.22): 'As a person puts on new clothes, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones'. This text was composed approximately between the 2nd century BCE and the 2nd century CE; thus, the aforementioned metaphor is deeply rooted in tradition.

It is worth outlining a broader experiential context. Patel himself evokes the experience of changing clothes once they become worn out in the same way that, when the body

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ceases to function properly, it is replaced with a new one by our immortal essence, the soul – the same across successive incarnations and in all living beings. However, yet another experience might have shaped traditional Hindu thought, one closely tied to the metaphor of Play that will be discussed below. It is about watching a spectacle.

Within this framework, the cosmos is a stage upon which a performance takes place. Both the stage and the actors themselves are manifestations of the one divine reality, which is at the same time the spectator of the drama they enact. In everyday life, people forget this truth and live as if they were separate from one another and from the divine observer. Yet, from its perspective, it is the one who reveals itself to itself under various guises. Just as all actors eventually exit the stage when their roles conclude, so too does the divine reality, embodied in a particular human, cease its manifestation within them, only to change its costume and reveal itself anew. This absolute cognitive perspective is also accessible to human beings, notably through love and devotion to God.

Metaphor of Play

'The universe and all living beings were created for the *pleasure of God* so our task is to become better and better and finally stop the reincarnation cycle and become one with God' (Dasa).

The Metaphor of Play explains the creation and existence of the cosmos, which is viewed as a manifestation of God. This metaphor is prominently featured in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (1.4), although it is traceable back to earlier texts and oral traditions. Its most significant philosophical implication is that God does not depend on the world. As Huizinga and other play theorists have indicated, play is an autotelic activity that exists for its own sake.[78] It pleasures without external justification and occurs in a specific time and space governed by defined rules. Furthermore, only a free being willing to submit to its rules can engage in play. Play is repetitive and replicable.

These characteristics of play can mapped onto to God's creative activity. God freely participates in this play, limited only by His own will in His manifestations. Just as a human being is reborn after death, the cosmos cyclically arises and disappears. The goal of human life is to achieve perfection in this divine play, ultimately completing the cycle of reincarnation and becoming one with God. In this way, one participates in the play from the perspective of the whole of reality rather than from the viewpoint of a single manifestation.

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[78] The opinion was expressed by: Johan Huizinga, *Homo ludens. A Study of the Play-element in Culture*, London, Boston and Henley 2006 (first edition 1944); Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, Urbana and Chicago 2001 (first French edition 1958); Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: Experiencing Flow in Work and Play*, San Francisco 2000; Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, *Rules of Play. Game Design Fundamentals*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London 2004.

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Metaphor of God-Creator-and-Being-Created (CREATION IS COGNITION)

Male secular Informant from Lusaka explains that gods created people but they also create gods themselves: 'when we pray to Ganesha, we give power of our thoughts and energy to him, and he gives this energy back. Through prayer, food offerings and decorating paintings and sculptures, we show our respect to the gods and the God that created all'.

The above view reflects a conviction deeply rooted in Hinduism: that cognition expressed in words precedes existence, and that being is the creation of a word spoken at the beginning by the Creator, who transforms into the world. Man, in an appropriate state of consciousness and under the appropriate circumstances (ritual), enacts this principle on a microcosmic scale, transforming a mere image into a living manifestation of the Creator. This very metaphor – CREATION IS COGNITION – underpins the metaphors of Play and Spectacle, where the enactment of an activity is preceded by the assignment of roles to the participants and the provision of appropriate props.

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The analysis above highlights the significance of conceptual metaphors for Hindus in Zambia, including universal and culturally specific examples. One such metaphor is that of the Container, which is also prevalent in Christianity. In Christian thought, for example, the human body is a vessel for the soul or the Holy Ghost.[79] Christianity, as a dualistic religion, clearly distinguishes between the container and its contents. In contrast, Hinduism often presents fuzzier boundaries for this distinction.

The relationship between God and humanity, as well as the world, in both traditions, can be understood through metaphors of rulership, such as presenting God as a king or a shepherd, similar to depictions in Judaism and Christianity.

The metaphor of Expansion, particularly illustrated through the outflow of water, appears to be more culturally specific. However, there are parallels between this notion and the concept of emanation found in Neoplatonism and Sufism. Further investigation into these issues is still necessary.

The culturally specific metaphors identified by respondents demonstrate the resilience of cultural thinking, even among individuals raised in diverse social and cultural contexts. The motivation behind these metaphors is rooted in everyday experiences, reinforcing the enduring nature of these conceptual frameworks. The embodiment of cognition allows abstract thinking to be accessible through logic and scenarios derived from daily life. This context makes these ideas intelligible to respondents, as everyone is familiar with the growth and blooming of a lotus or other flowers, the appearance of trees, the process of making yoghurt, or the nature of a play or spectacle.

[79] 1 Corinthians 3: 16 reads; 'Do you not know that you are the God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you?'. See also: Timothy 2: 21, where Paul enjoins Timothy to become a vessel of gold and honour unto God.

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Conclusions

All informants clearly state that Hinduism in Zambia is the same as it is in India, although their attitudes toward the caste system and arranged marriages are generally more relaxed. Almost 100% of Zambian Hindus are of Indian origin. Even though some individuals are third or fourth-generation Indians born in Africa, they have not blended their beliefs with indigenous African religions, unlike in the typology of African Christianity.

The fundamental aspects of Hinduism have remained intact, including beliefs in the responsibility for the previous deeds (karma) and reincarnation, the concept of a multi-faceted omnipresent God with various representations, and the human duty to fulfil life's purpose to achieve a better existence in the next incarnation. Zambian temples structurally resemble those in India. They contain numerous idols representing various gods and pictures. All the essential sculptures are imported from India, while locally produced artefacts must adhere to specific specifications regarding colour and style to avoid any aesthetic discrepancies with the imported religious items. These images closely depict and maintain the essential attributes of the respective gods.

What sets Zambian Hindus apart from their Indian counterparts is their general disregard for the caste system, a sentiment shared by not only the more impressionable and rebellious youth but also mature, secular individuals and priests. Research indicates that although Zambian Hindus appear to be more progressive regarding social freedom, their religious belief systems align closely with Hinduism in India. They believe in an omnipresent God represented by various deities, reincarnation, and the cause-effect cycle of responsibility (karma), while their beliefs remain distinct from native African traditions.

Cognitive analysis reveals the durability of cultural concepts and models. The images invoked by informants to explain religious and philosophical issues are rooted in the Sanskrit tradition developed in India over 2,000 years ago and preserved through culture. These concepts are passed down from generation to generation, transcending geographical distances to enable a uniform conception in India and Africa. The cognitive tools used in this analysis have enabled the researchers to recognize the internal coherence and logic that facilitate a prolific articulation of complex ideas. Abstract thinking is grounded in simple experiential concepts such as the lotus flower or yoghurt-making. Furthermore, the metaphors based on image schemas reveal thinking patterns that extend beyond the boundaries of a single culture.

However, the purity of Hinduism in Zambia and its freedom from African beliefs' influence raises some doubts. In colonial times, society was divided but Indians could interact with Africans, they were allowed to intermarry, but they did not. In the 21st century post-colonial Zambian Hindus still keep to themselves. The group of newcomers is small and does not come from marriage, but rather from a fascination with this religion. A group of young female informants admitted that they came from India to marry in Zambia. These were partially arranged marriages: Zambian Hindu men asked for wives and Indian parents chose their daughters. It cannot be suspected that all Hindus deliberately pursue a strategy of isolating themselves from outside influences by avoiding marriage with

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white or black persons. Their relations with whites used to be limited by colonial social divisions, while relationships with Africans were usually good or neutral.[80] However, Hindus were more wealthy than black Africans, and often employed them as servants, they did not socialise.[81] Nonetheless, thanks to inter-marrying among themselves, Hindus have been keeping their religion pure from any outside influence. Also, the non-proselytization tactics impacts Zambian Hinduism and maintains its puritanism. And here logical questions arise: Did (and still do at least some Zambian Hindus deliberately isolate themselves, not wanting any influence from other peoples and religions? Did they keep away from non-Hindus and their influence because they were used to staying within their own group, like in their caste in India? If Africans became members of their society, would they not be treated as inferiors, would they not become a lower caste by default? Was not the isolation from African influences a transfer of caste thinking to African soil? The above questions will remain unanswered because all Informants are aware that the caste system is perceived by mostly Christian Zambians, both black and white, and those of mixed heritage, as unjust, backward, and unable to keep up with changes in the modern world. Also, within their own society, Zambian Hindus do not employ the caste system, all Informants were adamant that all Hindus are equal.

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[80] Haig 2010, p. 128.

[81] Garry Bridge, 'Gentrification, Class and Community: a Social Network Approach', in: Rogers, A. & Vertovec, S. (eds.) *The Urban Context: Ethnicity, Social Networks and Situational Analysis*, Oxford 1995, p. 281.

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The Political Success of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung During the Time of Political Unrest (1713–1762) in Central Tibet

Abstract

Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung Tshe ring dbang rgyal is well known among modern Tibetologists thanks to two biographies authored by him: the biography of his chief Pho lha Bsod nams stobs rgyas alias Pho lha nas called *Mi dbang rtogs brjod* (*The Biography of the Lord*) and his own autobiography, called *Bka' blon rtogs brjod* (*the Biography of the Minister*). At the beginning of the eighteenth century different political factions in Central Tibet, backed by Mongols and the Qing Manchu, continued their decades-long rivalry. Thus the political situation in the area was unstable and the livelihood of the ordinary people was far from satisfactory. Yet, surprisingly enough, Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung was able to maintain a political career regardless of the regime which came into power in Central Tibet. He was neither punished nor removed from his office as retribution for taking sides during the struggle of the various political factions. This article, by close study of his autobiography and related materials, will investigate the possible reasons for the author's successful career other than those explained in his autobiography. In the year 1713, when Lha bzang khan came to power, he was an eighteen years old young man and held a Tibetan government post for the first time. In 1717, when the Dzungars held power, he continued to hold his district governor position. In 1720, when Qing Manchu army approached Lhasa under the guise of escorting the 7th Dalai Lama, and established the first Amban office in Lhasa, he was able to maintain the government job as an accountant even though the power dynamic had shifted. In the end of 1720s, when the

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rivalry between Gtsang and Dbus political factions was at its height, he joined the military campaign of Dbus lead by three bka' blon [minister] against Gtsang pa political faction led by Pho lha nas. The conflict between the two ended with the victory of Pho lha nas of Gtsang who subsequently held power in Lhasa. Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, despite his allegiance to the opposition party, was not sentenced for his earlier behaviour and was instead assigned to the post of bka' blon in 1729.

Keywords: descendent, success, conflict, faction, punishment, rival, tribute, gratitude

Introduction[1]

There is no question that Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung Tshe ring dbang rgyal alias Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung (1697–1763) from Stag lung is one of the best-known Tibetan lay scholars of the eighteenth century. The word "*Mdo mkhar*" is a name of the place and "*zhabs drung*" indicates that he is a close relative of the high Tibetan lama.

Among his works on Tibetan literature,[2] there are two biographies; his own autobiography and the biography of Pho lha nas. They can be considered the two most valuable biographical works produced in eighteenth century Tibet. His fame among the Tibetan and non-Tibetan scholars, both inside and outside of Tibet, is due to two above mentioned biographies rather than his political career.

The biography of Pho lha nas was composed in 1733 after Pho lha nas had taken over power in the Tibetan government in 1728. This was a year and half after the carving of the first block print of Kanjur canon (*bka' 'gyur*) which Pho lha nas had designed and sponsored at Shel dkar, Tibet.[3] His own autobiography was composed in 1762, just a year before his death in 1763.[4] There are two varying accounts concerning Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung's death. In the autobiography of Rdo ring Btan 'dzin dpal 'byor,[5] it is said that when he passed away Bstan 'dzin dpal 'byor and his mother, a daughter of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, were at Rag shag house looking after his sick grandfather Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung and he died of natural causes.[6] Furthermore, Bstan 'dzin dpal 'byor stated that after passing away grandfather remained in meditation (*thugs dam*)

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1 All the Tibetan words are transliterated according to the Wylie Tibetan transliteration system.

2 His other works mentioned at the introduction of *Mi dbang rtogs brjod* (p. 8), are; *Gzhon nu zla med kyi rtogs brjod* (*Life Story of An Incomparable Young Men*) 1718, *Sangs rgyas kyi skyes rabs* (*Successive Life Stories of Buddha*) bilingual, *Nyer mkho'i brda' sprod gsal byed ka li'i 'phreng ba* (*A Requisite Grammar Commentary, Called "A Garland of Ka li*), bilingual.

3 Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, *Mi dbang rtogs brjod*, Chengdu 1981, pp. 739–745.

4 Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma, (BDRC W22715), p. 42, l.10.

5 Rdo ring Bstan 'dzin dpal 'byor was a nephew of Mdo mkhar zhabs drung.

6 Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, *Bka' blon rtogs brjod*, p. 20. In 1726, arranged by Pho lha nas, Justice Bon grong and Bag gro from Spro bde khang gsar he married to the daughters of Dol 'jo rab brtan and also received the Rag shag House property.

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for a week.[7] On the other hand, contrary to above statement, a descendent of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, Tsha rong Dbyang can sgrol dkar, claimed that he was assassinated.[8]

Despite Pho lha nas' power in the Tibetan government up until his death in 1747, and the fact that Mdo khar zhabs drung worked under him as minister (*bka' blon*), we do not have a complete account of the Pho lha nas' later life. Is it possible that both Pho lha nas and Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung did not see any importance in recording the entirety of Pho lha nas' political career? Though his biography does not cover his entire life it is a sociopolitical testimony of Tibet and Tibetans of that time. It encompasses the broad sweep of Tibetan life in that era from ordinary people to aristocrats and chieftains and is, in itself , an excellent example of the richness of Tibetan literature. It is worth quoting a text fragment from the preface of Phi lha nas' biography written by the twentieth century Tibetan scholar Dung dkar Lobsang 'phrin las (1927–1997). He said:

> "Though the main subject is the life of Pho lha, it describes the related society of that time, people's livelihood, the livelihood of different strata of society and a close oneness of the relationship between the Qing emperor of imperial China and the regional government of Tibet. In brief, it explains politics, economy, sciences, military power, the extent of religion and even physical exercises, publishing and traditional customs such as weddings, in detail."[9]

It is worth noting that these themes are not the only ones discussed in the biography. Dung dkar also praised Mdo mkhar zhabs drung's skill in the writing of traditional Tibetan poetry. He said that Mdo mkhar had studied the prosody used in early Tibetan translation such as the 'Dul ba lung sde bzhi (*The Four Classes of Vinaya Sutra*) and in the 'Rtogs brjod rgya pa (*A Hundred Life Stories*) that were translated in the time of King Khri song sde btsan. He had then used the best of these styles in his own traditional Tibetan poetry.

The two biographies are not only a significant contribution to Tibetan literature. They also provide an important insight into the socio-political situation and the unfolding of the history of Tibet in the beginning of the eighteenth century. From the history of Tibet composed by the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1643, until the beginning of the nineteenth century there were no Tibetan historical works written by Tibetan masters. There were the biographical works of Tibetan elites such as the two authored by Mdo mkhar zhabs

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[7] Rdo ring Bstan 'dzin dpal 'byor, *Dga' bzhi ba'i mi rabs kyi byung ba brjod pa zol med gtam gyi rol mo*, Lhasa 1988, 1988, pp. 96–97.

[8] Tsha rong Dbyangs can sgrol dkar, 2006, p. 27, l.1.

[9] Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, *Bka' blon rtogs brjod*, p. 9, l.15. *Nang don gtso bo Pho lha'i lo rgyus yin rung/ de dang 'brel ba yod pa'i skabs de'i spyi tshogs gnas tshul dang/ dmangs tshogs kyi 'tsho ba spyod stangs/ gral rim khag so so'i 'tsho ba'i gnas tshul/ skabs de'i ching rgyal rabs krung dbyang gong ma'i srid gzhung dang bod sa gnas srid gzhung bar gcig gyur gyi 'brel ba dam po yod tshul bcas/ mdor na chab srid dang/ dpal 'byor/ rig gnas/ dmag don/ chos lugs sogs kyi khyab khongs dang/ tha na lus rtsal dang/ par bskrun/ yul gyi srol rgyun/ gnyen sgrig gnas tshul sogs kyi thad du'ang rgya che zhing zhib mor bris yod stabs/*

drung, the autobiography of Zur khang Sri gcod tshe brtan mentioned by Erhard,[10] the biographies of the seventh Dalai Lama and Panchen Lamas of the eighteenth century and a brief history work by Ra stod rin po che. The above mentioned reality is confirmed in a Tibetan history account written in 1822 by Rag ra Ngag dbang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan. It says:

> *'di nyid brtsams pa'i dgos ched ni / deb ther dpyid rgyal du sngon byon rnams dang sa skya phag gru'i rabs rgyas mod / gong sa nyid phyin rnam thar rnams ma gtogs phyogs sdebs med pa dang / bar skabs snyan ngag tshigs bcad mang zhing blo dman rnams kyis rtogs dka' ba dang / rwa stod rin po che'i bka' 'bum na nyung ngu zhig 'dug kyang cung bsdus skyon dang sa bcad go rim 'khrug pa bcas/ 'di nyid bsgrigs pa'i ngal ba bgyis la/*[11]
>
> (The purpose of compiling this work is that in the annals "*The Queen of Spring* (*Dpyid rgyal*)" the ancient royal dynasties, Sa skya and Phag gru are discussed in detail. Yet, after the Dalai Lama, except for biographies there are not any compiled [historical] works. In recent years there have been many poems but these are difficult for ordinary people to understand. There is a short [work] by Ra stod Rinpoche included in his collected works, but it is bit too short and not in proper order. So I took the difficult task of compiling this work.)

The political state of the Tibetan government in the eighteenth century was complicated and problematic. And livelihood of people is saddening.[12] A well-known Tibetologist Petech has claimed that the political game played in those days shaped the future status of Tibet for more than two centuries.[13] In fact, the present-day political struggle of Tibetans to restore the freedom of their home land, and the challenges faced by Tibetans are, in a way, a consequence of the weakness of Tibetan elites and of the political repression on Tibetans by the Qing and the Mongols in that period. Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung concluded his autobiographical work with the note that the effort he had made to compose his life story is for the sake of his descendants and for others to make proper decisions in the future while understanding the past.

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[10] Franz Xaver Erhard, 'Aspect of Social Status in the Biography of Doring Paṇḍita', *Revue d'Etudes Tibetaines* 49 (2019), p. 93, ft. 2.

[11] Rag ra Ngag dbang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, in: *Gangs can rig mdzod*, Vol. IX., 1990, p. 391.

[12] The seventh Dalai Lama Skal bzang rgya mthso: in *'Phags bstod phan bde'i char 'bebs*, "*Stobs dang ldan rnams rang 'dod lhur len phan tshun rtsod cing dma' la 'tshe// dman pa rnams ni rtag tu 'khol zhing gyi na'i zas kyang rnyed par dka'*// (Authorities are focused on self-desire, quarrel between and harms ordinary people. Lower ones are always work [like] slave and difficult to find even a poor quality food). In the prayer book, *Nyer mkho'i zhal 'don kun phan nyi ma*, Dharamsala 2004, p. 89.

[13] Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early XVIII Century. History of the Establishment of Chinese Protectorate in Tibet*, Leiden 1972, p. 1.

The aim of this article is to provide a broader understanding of how Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung was able to hold his government post given the context, in his time, of the constantly changing ruling elites from different political factions. Due to the way his autobiography is narrated one might think that how Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung was very successful in retaining his government post in every power clash that took place at the beginning of the eighteenth century. To my knowledge, there is currently no research particularly concentrated on the Mdo mkhar's political career, except for the lengthy and detailed article on Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung and his autobiography by Hartley, published in 2011.[14] Therefore, I have endeavored to search in his autobiography for any factors, other than his knowledge on the Tibetan literature and his family background, which could have affected his political success.

Family origins

At the beginning of his autobiography Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung Tshe ring dbang rgyal emphasizes the importance of knowing one's ancestral background and quotes a phrase from the Rlabs gyi pu ti se ru[15] which says: "In general, one who does not know her or his ancestral story is similar to a forest monkey. A person who does not know the origin of one's mother is similar to a fake turquoise dragon. One who does not know the story of his or her father and forefather is similar to a stranger boy from the plains (*mon*)."[16] However, he did not explain his ancestral history in detail apart from stating that they were from the Ga zi clan.

Regarding the primary sources for the Stag lung Ga zi clan De R. Filibeck, in her article on the genealogy of Stag lung pa, mentioned the following works: *Dpal stag lung ga zi'i gdung rabs zam ma chad par byon pa'i rnam thar ngo mtshar nor bu'i do shal skye dgu'i yid phrog* by Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma chos kyi byung gnas 'phrin las, the 28th throne holder (*gdan rabs*) of Byang stag lung and a biography of Stag lung Thang chen po by Ngag dbang rnam rgyal.[17] De R. Filibeck stated these mentioned works are kept at the Is.M.E.O library in Rome and in the Rnying ma pa monastery in Delhi. There are two more works on the Ga zi family described in the autobiography of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung; the political career of Ma sangs Tshe dbang grags pa and the history of Ga zi family by Mdo mkhar's father Ngag gi dbang phyug tshangs pa.

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[14] Lauran R. Hartley, 'Self as a Faithful Public servant, The Autobiography of MDO MKHAR BA TSHE RING DBANG RGYAL (1697–1763)', in: *Mapping the Modern in Tibet*, Andiast 2011.

[15] Most common spelling variation of the word "Rlabs kyi pu ti se ru" is, "Rlangs gyi pu ti se ru".

[16] Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, *Bka' blon rtogs brjod*, p. 3. *lar skyes pa'i mis rang gi skyes rgyud ma shes na nags kyi spre'u dang 'dra// mi rang gi cho 'brang ma shes na g.yu 'brug zol ma dang 'dra// yab mes kyi yi ge'i tshang ma shes na mon phrug yul bor dang 'dra//*

[17] Ngag dbang rnam rgyal could be the 20th? throne holder, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, of the Stag lung monastery.

Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain the two works mentioned by Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung and it is uncertain whether they are at all preserved and available at any library today. Nonetheless, a manuscript on the Ga zi clan, called *Dpal stag lung pa'i chos srid byung tshul zur tsam brjod pa ngo mtshar kun gsal me long* by Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma,[18] which was composed in the Iron Tiger year of the fourteenth Rab 'byung cycle, 1830,[19] is kept at the Buddhist Digital Research Centre (here after, BDRC). It is accessible therefore I had a chance to study the work in detail. At the end of the work, we find a note by the scribe that the manuscript was copied true to the original text without any orthographical corrections.[20] Both texts, one mentioned by De R.Filibeck and the text found in BDRC, are recorded in the book by Martin.[21] Also the biography of Stag lung thang pa chen po by Ngag dbang rnam rgyal and the history of the later Stag lung Ya thang throne holders by Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyin ma are recorded in the catalogue of the historical works at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala.[22]

The author Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma claimed that there were not many biographies on the lay descendants of the Ga zi clan. Among the mentioned works on the Ga zi clan, the one explained by Filiback and the one found in BDRC vary though the initial parts of the author's names are identical and the year of composition seems to be the same. According to the author Ngag bstan pa'i nyi ma, the author of the text found in BDRC, his secondary names are Ngag dbang chos kyi dpal 'byor and Bkra shis chos kyi rgyal mtshan, but was never called Chos kyi byung gnas 'phrin las as the name of the author given by Filibeck in the article.[23] Moreover, the size of the two works differs; the manuscript found in the BDRC contains 54 pages while, according to De R. Filibeck, the manuscript kept at the Is.M.E.O library contains 442 folios.

The work, *Dpal stag lung pa'i chos srid byung tshul zur tsam brjod pa ngo mtshar kun gsal me long* is in Dbu chen manuscript and is copied from the original work. The author's main focus in the text is the history of the Stag lung Ya thang monastery throne holders. He classified them into three groups; the throne holders of early propagation (*snga dar*) who were from Khams, the throne holders of middle propagation (*bar dar*) who were from Dbus and the later propagations (*phyi dar*) concerning the incarnate throne holders. The manuscript begins with the explanation of the origin of the Ga zi clan, particularly about Stag lung Thang pa bkra shis dpal's father and grandfather. The dates of birth and death of the Stag lung throne holders and some of the religious activities related to the monastery are given precisely with their Rab 'byung cycle, animal signs (*lo rtags*) and elements (*lo khams*) of the year.

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[18] A throne holder of the Stag lung Ya thang monastery at the beginning of the 19th century.

[19] Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma, (BDRC; W22715), p. 46, l.13.

[20] Ibidem, p. 44, l.8.

[21] Dan Martin, *Tibetan Histories. A Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works*, London 1997, pp. 156–157.

[22] Shastri Jampa Samten, *Catalogue of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (manuscript section), Historical Works.* Vol. I, Dharamsala 1983, pp. 356–357.

[23] Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma, (BDRC; W22715), p. 53, l.9.

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Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma also discusses briefly the life and the political career of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, his sons and grandsons. At the end of the manuscript the author describes the incarnate Stag lung throne holders, including himself. Traditionally the Stag lung Ya thang throne was held by the descendants of Ga zi family for generations. This was unlike the general Tibetan monastic practice of ascending to the throne by reincarnation of the previous lama. However, after the death of Ga zi 'Od 'jo ba Bkra shis chos rgyal of the Stag lung in 1690 the throne of Stag lung Ya thang was held by the reincarnations of Ga zi 'Od 'jo ba Bkra shis chos rgyal with the author, Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma, being one of them. The reason for the changes in the tradition of throne holding was a conflict between a Ga zi uncle and his nephew (*khu dbon*). For about forty-two years, between the Earth Sheep year of the 11th cycle, 1679 till the Iron Mouse year of 12th cycle, 1720, the abbots of Stag lung Ya thang were assigned by the Tibetan government.[24] Before that, for seventeen years from 1640 to 1657, also as a result of the Ga zi family conflict, the Stag lung Ya thang throne remained without a throne holder (*khri pa*) and the monastery was administered by Mi dbang Dge legs rgya mtsho and Sde pa Bstan srung.[25]

Byang stag lung pa were followers of the Bka' brgyud tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, which is one of the eight minor branches of the Bka' brgyud tradition.[26] The founder of the Stag lung bka' brgyud was Stag lung Thang pa bkra shis dpal of the Ga zi clan (1142–1210). He was a disciple of Rje Phag mo grub pa Rdo rje rgyal po (1110–1170) and an ancestor of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung from Khams. The Ga zi clan is a descendant of the Dbra clan. This is one of the six clans of ancient Tibet[27] mentioned in Tibetan history accounts. Thang pa Bkra shis dpal was a son of Dgra mig pa 'debs alias Ga zi 'bar bo, the third son of Ga zi Yon chen bzang po. His mother was Brab shi gza' dge gsum khro mo from Khams. He had three brothers – Mgo yag, Mgo rgyal and Zla 'od from his stepmother and many cousins from his two uncles. The descendants of the Ga zi clan in Central Tibet begin with Yon bdag Ye shes rin chen, a son of G.yung drung skyabs, who moved to Central Tibet and settled in 'Phen po.[28]

The practice lineage of Thang pa bkra shis dpal was called Stag lung Bka' brgyud, owing to the name of the place called Stag lung where the tradition was first established at north of Lhasa, and the monastery was called Stag lung Ya thang. The second most prominent site of Stag lung bka' rgyud is called Stag lung ma thang Ri bo che monastery,

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[24] Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma, (BDRC; W22715), pp. 38–40.

[25] Ibidem, p. 35, l.11.

[26] The eight branches of Bka' brgyud school are; Stag lung bka' brgyud, 'Bri gung bka' brgyud, 'Brug pa bka' brgyud, Yel pa bka' brgyud, G.ya' bzang bka' brgyud, Khro phu bka' brgyud, Shug gseb bka' brgyud, Mar pa bka' brgyud.

[27] Known as six races (Mi'u gdung drug) of Tibet are; bSe, rMu, lDong, sTong, dBra and 'Bru. Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, 2009: Vol. II, p. 1452, The names of six Mi'u gdung drung in Dung dkar is different, they are; Bod mi'u gdung drung- 'Bri gung Skyu ru'i gdung, Stag lung Ga zi'i gdung, Sa skya 'Khon gyi gdung, Khyung po Bya'i gdung, 'Od gsal lha'i gdung, Sne'u gdong gong ma lha'i gdung.

[28] Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma, (BDRC; W22715), p. 16, l.2.

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established in 1276[29] in Khams. The monastery was established by Sangs rgyas dbon, the younger nephew of the 3rd throne holder of Stag lung Ya thang Sangs rgyas yar byon.

The author Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma states that earlier, when Stag lung bka' rgyud was flourishing in Central Tibet, the descendants of the Ga zi clan lived in different places such as Dar yul, Lhun rdzong, Rin brag, Phod mdo etc.[30] From this we can understand the power and prosperity of the Ga zi families. They were influential chieftains (*sde dpon*) in those areas till the estates of Stag lung pa were taken over by the Tibetan government in Earth Sheep year of 11th Rab 'byung, 1679.[31] The reason for losing these estates was a conflict between an uncle and a nephew (*khu dbon*), that was briefly discussed earlier. It was between Ga zi Zhabs drung Rnam rgyal legs grub and Ga zi Bkra shis chos rgyal, the throne holders of Stag lung monastery at the second half of the seventeenth century.[32] The author also pointed out that the conflict between the Stag lung pa uncle and nephew was to some degree instigated by the Stag lung Ya thang monks while Zhabs drung Rnam rgyal legs grub was on the throne.[33] Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung in his autobiography comments on this incident as well, claiming it to be a result of a conflict between leaders (*gtso bo rnams*) created by a few agitators having demonic motivation (*phra men gyi rig pa 'dzin pa*) and evil mouths (*bdud kyi kha drod can*).[34]

According to Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma, at the beginning of the eighteenth century the Mdo mkhar estate and Rag shag House in Lhasa were granted to Sde pa Bstan srung, the father of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, by Pho lha nas for his contribution in the military campaign against Bhutan in the Wood Horse year, 1714.[35] However, from the autobiography of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung we learn that the name of his father is Ngag gi dbang phyug tshangs pa, not Sde pa bstan srung. Further, Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma himself said, in his work, that between 1640 and 1657 Stag lung Ya thang monastery was administrated by Sde pa bstan srung along with Mi dbang Dge legs rgya mtsho.[36] Thus, Sde pa Bstan srung could be the grandfather or a granduncle of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, not the father. Therefore, the granting of Rag shag House and Mdo mkhar estate to Sde ba bstan srung as explained by Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma is misleading. Also, in *Mi dbang rtogs brjod* by Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung it is clearly said that his father took part in the military campaign against Bhutan in 1714 along with two other compatriots, Ba' ring Thai ji and Lha rigs Sa skyong ba, and marched toward the eastern part of Bhutan.[37]

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[29] According to the article by De R. Filibeck it was because of a conflict over the succession of Ya thang throne. Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma comment on this incident (p. 13, l.9) that was because of the karma of the disciples of Khams ri bo che has that been ripened (*gdul bya dus babs*) and established the monastery.

[30] Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma, (BDRC, W22715), p. 45.

[31] Ibidem, p. 40, l.9; Mdo mkhar zhabs drung, *Bka' blon rjogs brjod*, Chengdu 1981, p. 2, l.9.

[32] Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma, (BDRC, W22715), p. 38.

[33] Ibidem, p. 38.

[34] Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, *Bka' blon rtogs brjod*, p. 2, l.4.

[35] Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma, (BDRC, W22715), p. 44, l.9.

[36] Ibidem, p. 35, l.11.

[37] Mdo mkhar Zabs drung, *Mi dbang rtogs brjod*, p. 231, l.15.

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There are other more obvious variations in information about Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung in the work of Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma to those to be found in the autobiography. Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma explained that Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung held a minister (*bka' blon*) post for thirty-seven years instead of the thirty-five years that Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung stated in his autobiography. The author also said that Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung was adorned with the title "bka' blon (minister)" in the government decree (*she bam*) granted by the 7th Dalai Lama.[38] However, Mdo khar zhabs drung explicitly stated that the word "bka' blon" written in the draft (*bam 'bri*) of the government decree prepared by him was erased and replaced by the word "Byang stag lung pa" by the 7th Dalai Lama.[39] Does this mean that Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma did not gain access to the autobiography of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung or is it an error of editing work?

Political career

The political career of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung in the Tibetan government was successful and long. It was not however without its twists and turns. He first started his political career by taking a post of secretary (*drung 'khor*), later he became the governor of the Bsam grub rtse [*gzhis ka rtse*] district and ending his political career as the longest serving Tibetan minister (*bka' blon*) of that time. He concludes the autobiography by saying that the government posts he obtained are all by the order and decision of his highness priest and patron (*gong ma mchod yon*) and thanks to his honesty in fulfilling his duties.[40] In the main part of the autobiography the author consistently underlined his unwavering faith and loyalty to His Holiness the 7th Dalai Lama, his fairness to the people and to government properties. Perhaps, the author's self-presentation in the autobiography is the reason why R. Hartley named the article on Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung's autobiography, 'Self as a Faithful Public Servant, The Autobiography of MDO MKHAR BA TSHE RING DBANG RGYAL (1697–1763)'. A summary of his political career from 1713 till his last days in his ministerial post is given at the end of his autobiography.[41] Petech briefly describes the career of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung in his book about the aristocracy of Tibet and we can find there some information that is not mentioned in the autobiography of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung.[42] To give a clear picture of the progress of his political career; when and under which power he was appointed and when promoted to a post, I present below a chronological list of all the posts he held.

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38 Ngag dbang bstan pa'i nyi ma, (BDRC, W22715), p. 42, l.4; p. 48, l.7; p. 44, l.8.

39 Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, *Bka' blon rtogs brjod*, pp. 126–127.

40 Ibidem, pp. 127–128.

41 Ibidem, pp. 117–121.

42 Luciano Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet, 1728–1959*, Rome 1973, p. 70.

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Lhasang khan's period (1707–1717)

In the Water Snake year of the twelfth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1713; at the age of 18 his father Ngag dbang tshangs pa introduces him to Lhasang Khan.[43] Khan recruits him as one of the government secretaries (*drung 'khor*) in Lhasa.

In the Fire Monkey year of the twelfth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1716; at the age of 21 he is appointed as the tax collector of Bsam grub rtse district, present day Gzhis ka rtse.

In the Fire Bird year of the twelfth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1717; at the age of 22 he is appointed district governor of Bsam grub rtse.

Dzungars period (1717–1720)

In the Fire Bird year of the twelfth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1717; while he is in Bsam grub rtse, Lhasang Khan is killed by the Dzungars who proclaim victory. Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung immediately returns to Lhasa to pay homage to the Jungarian army chiefs. He returns to Bsam grub rtse and continues as district governor. However, when a Jungarian army chief visits Bsam grub rtse they put him in detention for a night. Later the situation is clarified and he remains in his post.

In the Earth Dog year of the twelfth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1718; at the age of 23 for his own safety he resigns his post as the district governor of Bsam grub rtse district and is transferred to the post of governor of Lcags rtse Gri gu rdzong.

In the year 1718/1719 he has an audience with the old regent appointed by the Dzungars, Stag rtse sde srid Lha rgyal rab brtan, at the Bsam yas monastery. Soon after that event he takes over the chamberlain and the secretary post of Stag rtse sde srid that had been previously held by his father.

Qing Manchu period
Khang chen nas Bsod nams rgyal po alias Daiching bhadur (1720–1727)

In the Iron Mouse year of the twelfth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1720; under the cover of escorting the 7th Dalai Lama Skal bzang rgya mtsho from Sku 'bum the Qing Manchu army along with the Mongols from Kokonor area march to Lhasa and take power in Tibet from the Dzungars. In the following year the regent Stag rtse sde srid and people closely related to the Dzungars are assassinated or punished. However, by the intervention of Pho lha nas Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung and his father Ngag dbang tshangs pa is spared from the punishment.

In the Water Tiger year of the twelfth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1722; he returns to Lhasa and becomes an ordinary secretary.

In the Water Rabbit year of the twelfth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1723; he is appointed a tax collector for Gzhis chen Gong ri dkar po.

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[43] 18 years old according to the Tibetan age accounting tradition.

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In the Wood Dragon year of the twelfth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1724; in absence of Pho lha nas he takes over responsibility as the head accountant (*rtsis dpon*) of the Tibetan government.

In the Fire Sheep year of the twelfth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1727; around this time, under the order of khang chen nas he marches with other companions toward the northern grassland [Gnam mtsho] area to repel the Mongol intruders. Later he takes a short break from his post and stays in Gzhis ka rtse.

Pho lha nas' period

In the Earth Monkey year of the twelfth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1728; he is appointed as the first rank officer (*Za sag rim pa dang po*) and holds the post of chief justice and the post of minister at the same time. It is unclear how long he holds both posts. He holds the bka' blon post till the death of Pho lha nas.

'Gyur med rnam rgyal's period

In the Fire Rabbit year of the thirteenth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1747; after the death of Pho lha nas his son Gyur med rnam rgyal resumes power and in 1750 Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung holds the post of ordinary secretary (*drung 'khor*).[44]

Dga' gzhi ba Dgon po dngos grub rab brtan's period

In the Iron Sheep year of the thirteenth cycle (*rab 'byung*), 1751; After 'Gyur med rnam rgyal's assassination by Ambans Dga' gzhi Paṇḍita Dgon po dngos grub rab brtan[45] becomes the head of the ministerial cabinet of the Tibetan government and Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung is again appointed to the post of minister and remains in that position until his retirement.

Success in spite of political unrest

After the collapse of the Tibetan empire and the disintegration of the Tibetan nation in the ninth century, the second most unfortunate political downfall of Tibet starts at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The conflict between Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho and Lhasan Khan, a grandnephew of Gushri Bstan 'dzin chos rgyal of the Mongols, opened the door for outside political forces to step into the Tibetan way of life. When Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung wrote his autobiography in 1763, at the very end of his life,

[44] Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, *Bka' blon rtogs brjod*, p. 62, l.15.

[45] Alias Gung Paṇḍita and Rdo ring Paṇḍita.

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the presence of the Qing power in the Tibetan politics was prominent and its influence is obvious in the narration of his autobiography.

Because of that the readers of his works should take into consideration the circumstances, the socio-political pressure and the influence of the ruling elites which all may have affected the composition of the two biographies. Assumptions could be made, but the evaluation of information found in the work is beyond the competence of the researchers. While reading the autobiography one may be under the impression that he was an intelligent politician who did not miss any opportunity to further his well-being, no matter to which political faction he belonged.

As already discussed earlier, Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung twice gives reasons for his selection as a government official. The first at the beginning of this autobiography when he is appointed as a secretary by Lhasang khan, and the second at the end where he writes a summary of his political career. When he was appointed secretary, he said that he was chosen for the post due to his family background and literary talent[46] and says later that all the posts he held had been given to him by the order of the leaders and his truthfulness for the government. However, through a careful reading of his autobiography we learn that besides his literary talent and his family background, there are other essential factors involved in his political success such as connections with the elites and the tributes while he was active in the government.

To start from the beginning, Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung's first step into Tibetan government service was through his father who introduced him to Lhasang khan. His father Ngag dbang tshangs pa was a military official under the rule of Lhasang khan and took part in the military campaign against Bhutan in 1714. Therefore, it is certain that his father was well acquainted with Lhasang khan, but was definitely not in good terms with Sde srid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, the opponent of Lhasang khan, whose government confiscated Stag lung pa's properties. From the above fact we learn that the family ties i.e. nepotism, was normal in Tibetan politics.

In general bribery is present in every political sphere, in the past as well as today. Tibet and Tibetan politics were not an exception in this regard. In Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung's autobiography we encounter text fragments that reveal the tributes, which he calls 'not small ones' (*mod mi dma' ba*), that are given to leading Tibetan officials. He performed various religious activities and judging by the circumstances of the offerings he made it could be seen as bribes in the guise of donations.[47] For example, in 1718 he made an offering to Sde srid Stag rtse ba Lha rgyal rab brtan at the Bsam yas monastery. Soon after that he becomes the secretary and the chamberlain of the Sde srid. In 1722 he offers a long-life prayer with abundant tributes to His Holiness the 7th Dalai Lama and his father, as well as to Pho lha nas and other ministers. Though earlier he has been a member of the Jungarian faction, he is granted the post of an ordinary secretary.

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[46] Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, *Bka' blon rtogs brjod*, p. 117, l.9.

[47] Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early XVIII Century*, p. 21.

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In 1735 when His Holiness the 7th Dalai Lama returned from Khams Mgar mtha he offered a long-life prayer to the 7th Dalai Lama and made an abundant offering to Pho lha nas. It seems the offering was made to prove that he was loyal and obedient to both leaders. In 1751, after the assassination of Wang 'Gyur med rnam rgyal in 1750, he also offered a long-life prayer with enormous offerings to His Holiness.[48] When we look thoroughly, all those tributes and offerings were made at the time of important political maneuvering and of power shifts in the Tibetan government.

Interestingly, we do not find a single word in Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung's autobiography about offering tributes to or taking presents from the Amban and the Qing emperors. Could it be true that Tibetan politicians did not or need not present gifts to the Amban for their posts and promotions? According to the autobiography of Rdo ring Btsan 'dzin dpal 'byor, the tradition of presenting a gift to the Ambans and receiving presents from the emperor existed.[49] In the same autobiography there is also an interesting story about the an Amban[50] trying to get a gilded copper (*gser zangs*) Maitriya Buddha statue from the Rong byams chen monastery by using his position and also about lamas and Ambans who were taking precious religious objects of Tibet to China.[51]

A crucial factor in his political success at the time of Qing Manchu era was his relationship with Pho lha nas. Under the protection of Pho lha nas, Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung was spared from punishment twice even though he had been a member of a rival faction.[52] There were two politically disadvantageous situations for Mdo mkhar Zhabs drungs; the first was when the Dzungars fell to the Qing Manchu and Pho lha nas mediated the case of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung to the Qing official explaining that he was young and innocent and not responsible for the deeds carried on by the Dzungars, The second was the time of the Ddus and Gtsang conflict when he was on the losing side, He was spared from the punishment that his other Dbus colleagues[53] went through after the triumph of Gtsang army, led by Pho lha nas, over the Dbus political faction.[54] It is beyond doubt that without his strong ties to Pho lha nas, Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung would not have been able to survive and retain his government positions.

In the latter part of his political career, after the death of Pho lha nas, his family ties with two key leaders of Tibetan politics certainly secured his position; in 1748, at the time of Wang 'Gur med rnam rgyal, the successor and a son of Pho lha nas, and secondly in 1751, at the time of Dga' gzhi Paṇḍita Mgon po dngos grub rab brtan who took the leading role in the Tibetan cabinet after the assassination of Wang 'Gyur med

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[48] Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, *Bka' blon rtogs brjod*, pp. 11–12, 14–15, 42, 72.

[49] Rdo ring Bstan 'dzin dpal 'byor, *Dga' bzhi ba'i mi rabs kyi byung ba brjod pa zol med gtam gyi rol mo*, pp. 1060–1061. Luciano Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet*, p. 72.

[50] Warren W. Smith, Jr., *Tibetan Nation – A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations*, New Delhi 1997, p. 126.

[51] Rdo ring Bstan 'dzin dpal 'byor, *Dga' bzhi ba'i mi rabs kyi byung ba brjod pa zol med gtam gyi rol mo*, pp. 385–390.

[52] Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, *Bka' blon rtogs brjod*, p. 14, 25.

[53] The Ddus political faction was led by three ministers, Nga phod, Lum pa and Sbyar ra nas.

[54] Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, *Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs*, Kalimpong 1976, Vol. 1, p. 539.

rnam rgyal. The family relation of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drungs with the two leaders, that is to say the two daughters of Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, Bde ldan sgrol ma and Rin chen skyid 'dzoms who were married to Wang 'Gyur med rnam rgyal and Dpal bzang tshe ring, a son of Dga' gzhi Paṇḍita Mgon po dngos grub rab brtan, respectively. Despite being a father-in-law of 'Gyur med rnam rgyal the relations between two were strained when 'Gyur med rnam rgyal held the power.[55] It would therefore seem that the above-mentioned circumstances and actions, not just his competence, promoted and secured his government post and political career for many years.

A few critical text fragments from the autobiography

In this part I would like to touch upon fragments of text found in the autobiography, not those concerning his political success, but ones which draw our attention to his attitude towards the rulers and the aggression of the Qing and the Mongol armies. It has been more than two hundred years since he wrote the autobiography and based solely on the text, and we cannot determine his general attitude whether he was or was not a patriotic or merely a self-serving politician. When we look at his work, he often glorifies the Qing emperor, using the honorific title "*Gong ma bdag po chen po* (Emperor-the Great Owner)" and expresses his gratitude to the emperor for granting him golden letters (*gser yig*) of nomination to the post of minister (*bka' blon*). Therefore, at the first glance, many readers, including myself, could have an impression that he was a wholehearted supporter of the Qing Manchu. Yet looking more closely at the text there are indications this was not the case.

Gratitude

His autobiography describes his life achievements from the age of eighteen until his retirement. Yet in the conclusion it is only the Tibetan government that receives credit. He is grateful to and acknowledges the kindness of the Tibetan government and does not mention or offer his gratitude to any other institution or person. Here follows the relevant text fragment, with a translation provided below:

> *'On kyang rang blo rang la lkog tu ma gyur pa'i snang tshul la / rang nyid gzhung sa'i thugs rje'i 'tsho ba'i mnga' 'bangs 'di phyi gtan gyi legs tshogs thams cad gzhung sa rin po che kho na la brten nas byung ba yin gshis gzhung don lar rgya'i skor la blo dang nus pa / shed shugs gang thon gyi sgo nas zhabs 'degs lhag bsam rnam dag kho na bsgrub pa las /*[56]

[55] Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, *Bka' blon rtogs brjod*, pp. 60–66.

[56] Ibidem, p. 122, l.2.

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(However, your mind is not a hidden phenomenon to yourself and with that understanding I am a subject who survives by the grace of the government. And all the positive things in my life, this life and for the purposes of future, were achieved solely because of the precious government. Therefore, truthfully and by all means of my intelligence and potential, I put my maximum effort to contribute to the government works).

Furthermore, it says:

Rnam pa kun tu gzhung sa rin po che'i thugs rje'i gzi byin kho na la rten nas lar rgya'i legs tshogs thams cad 'grub pa yin gshis gzhung don gtso bor bzung nas rang don shugs la 'byung ba'i blo rtse gtod rigs kyang /[57]

(All the prosperity, fame and wealth and whatever I have accomplished were just because of the magnificent kindness of the precious government. Therefore, one should concentrate to put the government work in the first place and then personal benefits will come alongside it naturally).

Interestingly in the dedication part of the acknowledgement there is no mention of the Qing Empire. The omission of the institution he intensely appreciated does not necessary mean he did not have any sense of gratitude towards the Qing Emperor personally. Nevertheless, the omission is striking.

Resentment

His dissension and dissatisfaction with the behavior of leaders, the Qing army and the Mongols, is not absent in the autobiography. It is suggested by the text fragment quoted below that the Qing and Mongol army were extremely violent. In his metaphoric poetry he advised the ruling elites and the nobles that they should understand the situation well and not allow things that break loyalty. Otherwise, consequences might be dire as it would be like hitting one's hand on the edge of a sword, banging one's forehead on a rock or trying to cut wood using an intellectual saw. In my view it is clear who represents the edge of a sword, the rock and the wood and it is certainly himself and people like him who represent the hand, the head and the intellectual saw. The text says as follow;

Rang nyid kyi ji ltar spobs pa'i drang tshugs bzung ste rgyal ba yab sras kyi zhabs 'degs dang gong ma'i bka' la bag zon gyi bya ba yin lugs su spyod pa las gzhan dag la 'di ltar 'doms pa la ni blo gros dang brtul zhugs dman pas / che drag dang bcas pa rnams kyis go bas blangs te

[57] Ibidem, p. 129, l.16.

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la rgya'i stor shing du mi 'gro ba zhig blor ma bcag na ral gri'i kha la khur tshur brdeg pa dang / ri la spyi bos brdung ba lta bu'i ngang tshul lam yid kyi sog le shing la mi 'gro ba'i dpe ltar btsan po rnams ni/ rang rang so so bag yang ci dgar spyod pa la bya thabs dben pa shes ldan kyi gzigs pas gsal ba ltar la /[58]

(With honesty, as much as I am able to be, I served and carried out actions accordingly to the victorious father and son and also I was vigilant for the emperor's orders (*gong ma*). With my ordinary wisdom and manner, in this way, I cannot advise others. Therefore, great and noble [people] should understand properly and keep in mind that it won't become a wooden cleaner (*stor shing*) of loyalty. Otherwise, [circumstances] are like "boxing on the edge of sword" and "hitting forehead on a rock" or as in proverb, "intellectual saw do not cut a wood" powerful ones behave carelessly and do everything they wish, yet [we are] helpless as you all reasonable people see it very clearly).

Furthermore, it says:

Gong ma'i mi dpon khag rnams btsan brjid che zhing shugs drags pa / jun gar ba rnams kyang gyong po sog le lta bu'i sems 'chang ba'i rlang[59] *spyod dang bcas / gcan gzan dang ri dwags mnyam du 'tshogs pa lta bu'i rigs mi mthun pa / don phra mo re la'ang rtsod pa can du byed pa sogs gang ci nas bya dka' ba'i gzhir 'gyur pa sha stag gis rang nyid la'ang mtho 'tshams bar chad ma 'tshal snyam du sems kyang /*[60]

(The officials of the emperor were aggressive and forceful. The Dzungars were very rude as having a saw heart with a bull behavior. Two completely different characters are like meeting wild beasts and prey. They quarrel about minor matters and things of little importance. Because of all that, they put [us] in a difficult situation, and sometimes even felt that one may experience trouble and be harmed).

Later he continued to say:

Slar yang rgya spyong rnams lha sa nas phyir ldog skabs nag chu'i bar du skyel mar dong ba bcas la / stobs po che dbang phyug btsan po / phan tshun gcig la gcig mi mthun pa'i mig gis blta zhing rtsub mo'i

[58] Ibidem, p. 124.

[59] Probably it should be spelled "glang".

[60] Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung, *Bka' blon rtogs brjod*, p. 51, l.14.

tshig sbyor gyis snying la tsher ma'i cho ga sgrub pa rnams kyi bar du bya dka' / byed gtad kyi rnam pa ci yang 'ong rigs su mchis kyang / de rigs med mar bde 'jags 'khon rtsod bral bar dga' bzhin spro bzhin rang rang gnas su bskyod..."[61]

(Again I went up to Nagchu to see off the Chinese army returning back to China. Those powerful oppressors stare at each other in an offensive manner and use harsh words like a thorn piercing into the heart. Between them one may face any kind of trouble at any time, yet it did not happen and without any quarrelling all returned to their own place joyfully).

Conclusion

To summarize: Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung's two biographical works are immensely valuable in helping us to understand the socio-political situation of Tibetan people of the eighteenth century. Though it is not a historical work its context is that of historical fact. A reader of biographies might feel that the elite politicians of Tibet in those days lacked patriotic sentiment. On the other hand, Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung said "an intellectual saw does not cut wood" and standing against the aggressive Qing and Mongol army was a threat to one's life. Hence, it seems, he and people like him were in a helpless position as it was effectively impossible for the Tibetan politicians to defeat or overthrow foreign forces who were more advanced militarily and numerically superior. And it seems Wang 'Gyur med rnam rgyal was a victim of such Tibetan national sentiment. He attempted to rule independently for a few years of his reign and in consequence was executed by the Qing Ambans. As Mdo mkhar Zhabs drung said in the autobiography that learn from the past for the benefit of future, he composed the autobiography so that future generations of Tibetan politicians could avoid repeating those past mistakes. Present day as well, we must similarly study the past history from which we can also learn important lessons for our future.

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Women, Mothers, Wombs and Ghosts: an Interdisciplinary Reflection on the Novel *Jinhui* 锦灰 (Sheng Keyi, 2018) and Its Resemantization of the Feminine

It has often been said in different ways, that people live and give their lives,
not for objective certainties, not for things, houses, wealth, but for opinions,
for the imaginary, secret bond which links and bonds the world
and things deep in the consciousness, thus giving a meaning to death.
Not only do people live and die for ideas,
but the deaths of people are absolved by images.

(Gilbert Durand, *The Anthropological Structures of the Imaginary*, 1963)

做一个活在书里的女鬼, 挺有意思的。

(盛可以, 锦灰, 2018)

Being a ghost woman living in a book is extremely interesting.

(Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, 2018)[1]

[1] Sheng Keyi 盛可以, *Jinhui* 錦灰 (Jinhui), Taipei 2018 (eBook), p. 105; all translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

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Abstract

This paper analyses the novel *Jinhui* 锦灰 (2018) by Sheng Keyi 盛可以 (born in 1973). Its protagonist, Yao Minzhu, is a female journalist with a fondness for metaphors. She is confined to a clinic to treat "rhetorical disorders," but refuses treatment and falls victim to therapeutic doggedness. The narrative seems to begin with her death, or the loss of consciousness preceding it, and tells a dreamlike journey through the places and stories of Fuyinzhen (Gospel Town). For Yao Minzhu, this journey is an opportunity to reappropriate her memories and reimagine those of her parents. As for Sheng Keyi, it is a chance to construct new and powerful metaphors of Chinese history and to question the position of women – both in the recent past and in today's society – through the resemantization of their bodies and roles.

The textual analysis includes two complementary methodological paradigms: an anthropological one, based on archetypal structures of the Chinese imaginary as identified by Sun Chaoying in the wake of Gilbert Durand's studies, and a psychoanalytic paradigm, infusing reflections by Massimo Recalcati regarding the concepts of taboo and *lalangue*. With this dual approach, the analysis shows how Sheng Keyi's use of metaphor allows her narrative to deviate from (yet still reference) reality more directly, free from symbolic mediation. This technique is considered the *sine-qua-non* of the aforementioned resemantization.

Keywords: Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, archetypal imaginary, taboo, *lalangue*, resemantization

1. Sheng Keyi's Literature: A New Interpretive Approach

Sheng Keyi (1973–), originally from the Yiyang Prefecture (Hunan), moved to Shenzhen in the 1990s, then eventually to Beijing. She began writing in the early 2000s and has published numerous short stories and novels since then. *Beimei* 北妹 (*Northern Girls*, 2004) marks her debut both in long fiction and in international literature due to a successful English translation by Shelly Bryant (*Northern Girls*, Penguin, 2012). Her main works include: *Shuiru* 水乳 (*Lotion*, 2003), *Daodesong* 道德松 (*Praise to Morality*, 2007), *Siwang fuge* 死亡赋格 (*Death Fugue*, 2013), and *Yeman shengzhang* 野蛮生长 (*Wild Growth*, 2015). Additionally, she's written the *Zigong san bu qu* 子宫三部曲, her so called "womb trilogy," which includes the following books: *Jinhui* 锦灰 (*Brocade Ash*, 2018), *Zigong* 子宫 (*Uterus*, 2019) and *Nüyong shouji* 女佣手记 (*The Maid's Notes*, 2020).[2]

[2] These publications dates refer to first editions. It should also be noted that *Siwang fuge* and *Jinhui* are not available in mainland China. However, the availability of eBook versions has facilitated their circulation even among PRC readers. The novel *Zigong* was released in China under the title *Xirang* 息壤 (*Fertile Soil*).

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Sheng Keyi's works are often autobiographical or largely shaped by her personal experience. This includes her life as a migrant, her former job as a journalist, and a brief position at a birth control clinic. Her books explore the actual freedoms and confinements of contemporary women, considering both external constraints and internal inhibitions. In addition to reworking historical memories and contemporary news, which are often used as backgrounds in her stories, the theme of the body is a more frequent topic: naked, obscene, sexualized, impalpable, virtual, or unattainable. In her writing, the female body never actually belongs to women and is rarely a source of pleasure for them. Instead, the female body becomes a place in which every erogenous zone is violated or resisted, female conditions are denounced, and women are reduced to machines, tools or property of the State.

In fact, the main themes in Sheng Keyi's work – women, the body, the subaltern classes, and the contrast between rural and urban settings – are also the main focus of most literary studies regarding her writing.[3] However, these papers rarely explore the disturbing intensity of her writing stemming from both its content and form. While some studies vaguely nod to her "courage," and Western publishing mentions her "dissidence," this article rather interprets and analyses said intensity through the concepts of "metaphorical deviance" and "resemantization." What does Sheng Keyi deviate from? And what kind of resemantization does she ensue?

As regards the first question, it is undeniable that Sheng Keyi's literature deviates from China's dominant narrative of this country's history and contemporary society. As Lingchei Letty Chen aptly explains, "to reestablish and maintain social equilibrium after Mao's death, the Communist Party sought carefully to manipulate and control public mnemonic discourse," but Sheng Keyi's literature clearly deviates from this kind of manipulation.[4] As a matter of fact, some of her works are banned in mainland China and are commonly described as politically militant. However, Sheng Keyi's literature should not be simplified into mere political interpretation or dissidence. This interpretation is refuted by her own words, as she clearly outlines in *Jinhui's* afterword that reality is only one possible lens through which to interpret the novel.[5]

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[3] There are several studies in English and Chinese dedicated to Sheng Keyi's literary production. On only the CNKI database, there are almost 340 studies dating between 2003 and 2024, Viewed 16 July 2024, http://www.cnki.com.cn/index/.

[4] Lingchei Letty Chen, *The Great Leap Backward. Forgetting and Representing the Mao Years*, Amherst, New York 2020, p. 8.

[5] In an interview with Griffith Review, Sheng Keyi also explains that she is not very interested in politics, but in the imaginative possibilities, or the "space of dislocation," that fiction writing offers her (Anna Georgia Mackay, 'Interview with Sheng Keyi' *Griffith Review* 49 (2015), Viewed 15 June 2024, https://www.griffithreview.com/articles/interview-with-sheng-keyi/. Literature as a "space of dislocation" is a common thread in the author's literary production. Consider novels and novellas such as *Jinhui* (2017), *Siwang fuge* 死亡赋格 (2013), *Fudi* 福地 (2016), and more. In these works, the invention of a parallel world allows for represent memories and truths that can't be universalized with a purely realistic narration.

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Actually, Sheng Keyi's metaphorical deviance not only subtly criticizes the government but also broadly challenges the *status quo* in various ways, including:

1. **Subversion of the literary genre.** Sheng Keyi's literature – using *Jinhui* as an example – often exceeds the boundaries of realism, although it can't quite be defined as fantastic or science fiction. It reworks history, but is not historical. It puts women at the centre of the story, but it is not feminist. It explores the body in an obsessive and unprecedented way, yet it doesn't overlap with the "body writing" genre proposed by other post-Seventies writers, such as Mian Mian 棉棉 and Wei Hui 卫慧.[6]
2. **Subversion of roles.** The heroes in her works are more often women, not men. The characters and narrators are not necessarily human or anthropomorphic. In *Jinhui*, for example, the testimonies of the living, the dead, humans, and animals are all equally reliable. The main character is often the author's alter ego, meaning the character is a writer. The reader is often involved in the story via a second-person narrative, thus transformed into a direct witness of the story itself.
3. **Subversion of the reader's expectations**, through frequent narrative changes and a disorienting intermittency of past and present, creating both a dreamlike dimension and reality.
4. **Subversion of the canonical language**, such as betraying and/or transcending semantic boundaries of images and words by using metaphors, which will be outlined later in this paper.
5. **Subversion of the dogma of subversion itself**, by breaking the implicit rule against alluding to taboo historical events or social issues. Instead, she uses these taboos as an "experience of the limit and a drive to its transcendence," or an "unresolved dialectic […] which properly defines human nature."[7]

To illustrate Sheng Keyi's metaphorical deviance and how it can spark resemantization of the feminine, this article closely examines excerpts from her novel *Jinhui*.

The term "resemantization" is borrowed from the fields of linguistics and semiotics, where it often appears alongside the concept of "desemantization." In linguistic studies, these processes refer to the ways in which words can shed old meanings or adopt new ones. Beyond verbal language, desemantization and resemantization can also apply to other forms of communication, including architecture, objects, visual arts, and texts in general. For instance, resemantization can be observed when old buildings are repurposed for new uses or when the functionality of objects changes.[8]

In this article, "resemantization" specifically refers to the transformation and expansion of meaning that Sheng Keyi's narrative evokes in relation to key concepts such as "woman" and "mother." The focus will not be on the semantic aspects of these terms, but rather on

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[6] Giulia Rampolla, *Stridente armonia. Tre generazioni di scrittori cinesi de XXI secolo a confronto*, Napoli 2016, pp. 96–98.

[7] Massimo Recalcati, *I tabù del mondo*, Torino 2017 (eBook), p. 1.

[8] For an exhaustive discussion of resemantization and desemantization in the linguistic and semiological fields, see: Alice Giannitrapani, 'Itinerari del senso,' *Versus, Quaderni di studi semiotici* 1 (2022), pp. 3–22, doi: 10.14649/104497.

their psychological and social significance. What do we mean by "woman" and "mother"? This article argues that *Jinhui*'s narrative reshapes and broadens our understanding of these concepts.

The representation of women who transgress or transcend the dominant canon of femininity, and the problematization of motherhood are undoubtedly topics explored by other contemporary Chinese writers. However, as Nicoletta Pesaro explains, many of these authors "fail to convey the more intimate and complicated aspects of female subjectivity, […] the problematic issue of women's right to bear children or not, and to personally control their own sexual life, by freeing themselves from longstanding and devastating psychological, cultural, family, social and political shackles." Examples of this include Ma Jian's 马建 (1953–) *The Dark Road* and Mo Yan's 莫言 *Frog*.[9] In other terms, the "representation" from these authors is not followed by the process of "resemantization" that occurs in Sheng Keyi's literature. Resemantizing, or giving existing terms and concepts ("woman," "mother," "womb," "body," "kinship," etc.) new meanings, requires the intuition or imagination of other perspectives, and therefore a shift aimed at reaching them.

To demonstrate how Sheng Keyi's novel enables a resemantization of the feminine, the analysis of excerpts from *Jinhui* will primarily employ two interpretative frameworks. First, an anthropological approach based on the archetypal structures of the Chinese imagination, as identified and described by Sun Chaoying on the basis of Gilbert Durand's studies; and second, a psychoanalytic approach inspired by Massimo Recalcati's ideas about taboo and *lalangue*.

Jinhui can certainly be read as a critical allegory of the Cultural Revolution, the Great Famine of the Maoist era, or more generally, the Chinese Communist Party and its actions.[10] Both in spite of and due to the fantastical elements throughout the writing, the references to historical-political realities are undeniable and noteworthy.

As Giulia Rampolla argues, "[the post-Sixties] authors are able to relate to the Cultural Revolution as a historical fact," while the post-Seventies "operate in a changing environment" in which "their perception of reality and memory is fragmentary and elusive."[11] Yet, this "fragmentary and elusive" condition fuels Sheng Keyi's desire to reappropriate and repeat that memory in the Lacanian sense, constantly reaching for a reality that is either chronically missed or legally forbidden. And she does this as an attempt to position herself in a true chronology and authentic space where she can receive

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[9] Nicoletta Pesaro, 'Men control our vaginas; the state controls our wombs. Sheng Keyi's Novel *The Womb* (Zigong) and the representation of the female reproductive body', *DEP. DEPORTED, EXILED, REFUGEES* 47 (2021), p. 29.

[10] "|Jinshu jiedu | Yu Jie: bu shi Fuyinzhen, er shi gongchanguo – Sheng Keyi *Jinhui*" 禁书解读 | 余杰:不是福音镇, 而是共产国-盛可以《锦灰》(Interpretation of banned books | Yu Jie: It is not "Gospel Town", but a communist country – Sheng Keyi's "Jinhui"), 2020, *RFA*, Viewed 16 July 2024, https://www.rfa.org/mandarin/pinglun/wenyitiandi-cite/yj-10152020155243.html.

[11] Giulia Rampolla, *Stridente armonia*, pp. 41 and 43. The so-called "post-Sixties" authors (*liulinghou* 60后) are Chinese authors born in the 1960s, whereas the "post-Seventies" (*qilinghou* 70后) are those born during the 1970s.

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recognition and legitimacy. As for the protagonist of *Jinhui*, "it is suffering and memory that make a person's soul heavy. And it is only thanks to the weight of their soul that people can walk on the ground."[12]

Hence, Sheng Keyi's narration, is not an act of political militancy, because it arises first and foremost from a deeply personal need for historicity and legitimacy. Official history simply proves to be incomplete to her, contradictory or insufficient in reconstructing individual identity and legitimizing her existence. For example, how can Yao Minzhu 姚皿珠, the protagonist of *Jinhui* and daughter of a protester who died on 4th June, 1989, understand her own existence if the official narrative denies the circumstances and reality of her father's death? If her father never died, he never existed. Thus, how could his daughter exist? In the end, Sheng Keyi, much like many protagonists in her stories (e.g., Yao Minzhu in *Jinhui*, but also Yuan Mengliu 源梦六 in *Siwang fuge*), does not deviate from official history out of militancy, but out of a human need to find, or at least re-imagine, the necessary pieces to understand and legitimize her own existence.

Additionally, merely interpreting *Jinhui* from a historical-political viewpoint would also overlook the transnational significance of this work and the dialogue it weaves with world literature. Sheng Keyi draws inspiration from the novel *Pedro Paramo* (Juan Rulfo, 1955), demonstrating a literary background that includes international works and is no way limited to influences from Chinese literature. Furthermore, *Jinhui's* reader base is not only Chinese or Sinophone, but rather global. Hence, by using the aforementioned approach, this article offers a new perspective of *Jinhui*, one which may do justice to its transnational and transcultural value, particularly to the very important resemantization of the feminine that Sheng Keyi hereby offers to her international audience.

2. *Jinhui*: Synopsis and Themes

Yao Minzhu is a metaphor-loving journalist born on a historically taboo date in contemporary China. Her father, a poet, died on the same day. His name, never stated, has been locked in a box of oblivion. But his wife, Yao Minzhu's mother, has learned his verses by heart and Yao Minzhu herself never fails to quote them throughout her articles. Her father has disappeared, but his metaphors are everywhere:

> There was a time when my passion for metaphors absorbed me to the point of making me negligent in my work as a journalist. The boss […] told me that if I couldn't let go of metaphors, I'd better turn to fiction. At the time, I did not grasp the warning that was hidden in those words. In fact, my mania for metaphors became even more unbridled, I started using at least one per paragraph, but soon I switched to one per sentence. Finally, every single word became metaphorical in some way, and so

[12] Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, p. 159.

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> did the punctuation marks. […] "Your articles give off a bad smell," the editor said with a shrug, "and I'm not going to attract flies." […] One day some strangers came to pick me up […] I vaguely remember that the place [where they took me] resembled Kafka's castle, or Borges' labyrinth, immersed as it was in fog; […] the only sound I heard was the metallic clang of a gate that was opened and closed.[13]

Yao Minzhu is imprisoned in a clinic to treat "rhetorical disorders," such as her metaphoromania. The centre hosts intellectuals, artists, and people working with language, like Yao Minzhu. Here, metaphors are eradicated by pharmacological means, audiovisual materials and targeted readings, such as speeches and essays written by political leaders. Patients must listen to these readings several times so they can recite them later. Refusing the therapies results in surgical intervention to physically eradicate your metaphors from the areas of the brain where they have slowly developed together with memories. What remains, Yao Minzhu testifies, is a white hum and losing the ability to form a phrase, let alone a metaphor. The mind, she says, becomes murky water, with metaphors becoming uncatchable fish.

Instead, fellow patient and lawyer Gu Xiang 顾乡 undergoes indoctrinating therapies and memorizes what is necessary to save himself from surgical operation. Yao Minzhu and the lawyer have an affair inside the clinic, which they later discover to be the result of an artificially-induced attraction. It is a scientific experiment to distract their minds from metaphorical activity through romantic love and sexual attraction. Their authentic feelings remain a mystery, but the lawyer is secretly transferred elsewhere. Later on, Yao Minzhu likely dies, and spiritually leaves in search of her former life partner, though she can't recall if they were married.

This man, artist Zhou Mi 周密[14], recently left for an experimental town, Fuyinzhen 福音镇 (Gospel Town). In fact, following a fortuitous gold discovery, the economic and social life of Fuyinzhen was completely revitalized to implement a collective search for the precious metal. Under the banner of a new ideology called "new altruism," Fuyinzhen has been transformed into a so-called "New Paradise," a promise of universal prosperity. The town's thirteen ethnic groups have been merged into a single group with one creed. Traditional costumes and furnishings have been relegated to the local museum. The old church has been repurposed, its cross removed as the inhabitants were converted to Buddhism.

"I have to go and paint those minorities before they disappear," Zhou Mi explained to Yao Minzhu, justifying his decision to leave for the "New Paradise." Consequently, the journalist's journey becomes an attempt to follow in the footsteps of her former partner, who may also be the father of a son Yao Minzhu does not remember having.

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[13] Ibidem, pp. 86–87.

[14] This name means "careful; attentive to every detail," and was also the name of a literate living during the Yuan Dynasty period.

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Much like Juan Preciado, the protagonist of *Pedro Paramo* (Juan Rulfo, 1955), Yao Minzhu's journey is thus an expedition in search of the "truth."[15] The "truth" is represented by several elements throughout the story: a missing companion or son, a mystery surrounding the existence of a tree-spirit woman, a collection of personal notes (a bundle of letters sent by Zhou Mi? A travelogue written by Yao Minzhu herself? A novel within the novel?). The "truth" is also the voices of people, as well as of ghosts, or the improbable testimonies of Yama (the king of the Underworld), and of various animals, such as a fish, a dog, a pig and a snail. These creatures, much like humans (and sometimes more reliably than humans), experience the vicissitudes and failures of the "New Paradise" on their own skin, but they also survive; thus, they bear witness.

In fact, the heart of the narrative is not the clinic itself, but Yao Minzhu's journey. Her erratic movements throughout Fuyinzhen's times and places shatter into continuous changes of focus and narrative voice, yet blend into a single hallucinatory simultaneity. Thanks to an eye solution administered to her by the sorceress Wei Yifeng 魏一凤, Yao Minzhu can see past and present simultaneously, allowing her to meet and hear the stories of the dead.

From the old tailor Pi 皮, to the clever dog Duole 多乐 who avoids being eaten due to his intelligence, everyone in Fuyinzhen seems eager to share their stories. They were waiting for her, they explain to Yao Minzhu. They knew she would come. So what do these characters have to tell? What have they experienced and what are they still experiencing under the visionary eyes of the journalist?[16]

The answer is a hunt for a non-existent gold mine, fuelled by the propaganda of a shared but illusory dream of wealth, promising that all the inhabitants of Fuyinzhen would benefit from the mining industry and leave behind every hardship. For the local government, realizing this dream entails unifying cultures, even down to clothing, and erasing all ethnic and interpersonal differences. It begins with a carnivalesque period of great and even lethal binges, fuelled by the belief that gold discovery (perhaps an allegory of the steel "discovered" during the Great Leap Forward) would increase the village's economy beyond measure. However, an invisible insect soon damages crops and makes them sterile, eventually causing a famine (an obvious allegory of the "Great Chinese Famine"). Regardless, the village's men tirelessly continue to pierce the soil of nearby mountains in search of gold. No one listens to the warnings of Wei Yifeng, the sorceress, or madwoman, who invokes respect for the earth and the divine inspiration dwelling in it. Instead, they break the glass ampoules in which she breeds her magical insects and let her fall victim to their poison. The people use whatever they can find as fertilizer in vain hopes of revitalizing productive land: human and animal corpses,

[15] Regarding Sheng Keyi's admiration for Juan Rulfo's book and its significance in the conception and elaboration of *Jinhui*, I've utilized information obtained by the writer herself by means of a private interview, carried out by e-mail on March 6, 2020.

[16] The figure of the journalist as a receptacle and compiler of testimonies is a type of character that Sheng Keyi had already tested in the novel *Yeman shengzhang* 野蛮生长 (2015), a partially autobiographical family story.

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excrement, hair, dirty water from foot baths, and bricks of specially demolished houses. Beyond this, people are obligated to hand over a certain amount of faeces every day, and to produce these excrements they are forced to eat the only (non-)food left: the "earth of Guanyin" (*guanyintu* 观音土, lit. kaolinite).

While the situation escalates, Fuyinzhen's government stands firm. The Bodhisattva has been promised a golden statue, and one must keep one's word.[17] Failure to honour this commitment would mean "losing their face." In other terms, the "New Paradise" experiment must be carried out. Gold must be found! The circus caravan temporarily stationed in Fuyinzhen could possibly conceal the answer: Jin Shengsheng 金生圣, alchemist and member of the circus company, is secretly hired to chemically produce the much-desired metal.[18] Jin Shengsheng, however, falls in love with Chang Duoxi 常多喜, the tree-spirit woman, and this unrequited love leaves him helpless, in a state of inactivity and constant waiting.

Hence, gold is not found nor obtained by transmutation. Large provisions hidden by chiefs go rotten, the common people are increasingly tired from the absurd tributes, and many succumb. Everyone seeks real food of subterfuge, but any attempt to cheat is promptly punished. Every act of humanity is banished, and every possible meal is consumed, resulting in cases of cannibalism, necrophagy, and coprophagy.

The population is halved, although the official numbers are promptly burned. Duole, the dog, provides this information. The plan for constructing "New Paradise" is thus suspended, but without any admission of defeat. After all, if someone is responsible for what occurred, it's a shared responsibility. And if a scapegoat is needed, it is certainly not sought among politicians with simulated good intentions, but rather among marginal and discordant voices. For example, it may be Wei Yifeng's responsibility. She's a female medium and environmentalist publicly disagreeing with implemented policies. It was she, they say, who brought bad luck upon Fuyinzhen. She is therefore the rightful person to seal its atonement.

> "We have no meat left to eat, how could it be?"… "Because we've previously killed too many pigs, eaten too much meat, and wasted too much grain."… "And who is to blame for that?"… "The inhabitants of the New Paradise! They were the ones who ate and wasted so much." … "I got it, basically the New Paradise shouldn't have been created."… "Ah, don't ever say that, Uncle Gui! Words like that could cost you your life!"[19]

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[17] Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, p. 29.

[18] The figure of the alchemist belongs to an imaginary sphere that Durand refers to as the "nocturnal regime," evoking the transmutation myth of base metals into gold. This can be interpreted as a metaphor for Fuyinzhen's experiment: the thirteen ethnic-cultural variants originally present in town are to base metals as the unifying experiment of the New Paradise (an ethnicity, a religion, a culture) is to gold, in which every difference is destined to merge.

[19] Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, p. 100.

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The authorities put on an innocent facade and quickly announce a new plan for repopulating the city. They sign agreements with Yama, the king of the Underworld, to allow ghost women to offer the use of their wombs at the "womb rental" counter. Under the new laws, women are required to have children based on their age, and men must follow strict rules about their sex lives. Contraceptives, abortion, masturbation, and homosexual sex, among other things, are all prohibited.[20]

However, the dreams of the townspeople, regularly inspected by "dream catchers," reveal a great hunger rather than a genuine passion for the imposed indoctrination. The authorities focus on promoting poetic production (referencing the poetry produced during the Great Leap Forward), creating cohesion among people and distracting them from constant hunger.[21] Yet, when sleeping, no one dreams of this poetic activity, highlighting the glaring falsity of this top-down mandate.

Nevertheless, people remain confident about the new measures from the local government. The authorities assure they have a plan to help them, believing conditions will soon get better. One of the most convinced villagers is Feng Er 冯二, the driver that escorted the journalist to the village's threshold at the beginning of the novel, where the search for her companion and artist Zhou Mi began.

But what happened to Zhou Mi? What happened to Gu Xiang, the lawyer with whom Yao Minzhu had a love affair inside the clinic? Perhaps, the journalist reflects in a sudden moment of clarity, it was Gu Xiang himself who mentioned Fuyinzhen to her. Gu Xiang was originally from Fuyinzhen and had embarked on his law career precisely to return to his hometown and fight the human rights violations perpetrated there. Speaking with a couple who initially intended to cook her, Yao Minzhu discovers that Gu Xiang now has an established business of producing and distributing poisonous insects with magical-aphrodisiac properties. As for Zhou Mi, she concludes he's likely never been to Fuyinzhen, nor has he written her any letters. Nonetheless, after seeing and hearing the stories of the village, looking for him seems meaningless.

After discovering she's already dead, mirroring Juan Rulfo's work, Yao Minzhu finally returns to Wei Yifeng's home. It is the same place where the driver Feng Er had left her on her first day in the village. Yao Minzhu can't recall how long it's been since her arrival, but she notices that in the Wei household, there is the same portrait that hung above her bed at the clinic. It features a leader with a mysterious "Mona Lisa" smile. Yao Minzhu had once turned it upside down to make it face the wall, but after waking from surgery, she found it facing her again, mocking her with a smile.

As she gradually reads notes and listens to Gu Xiang and Wei Manyi (Wei Yifeng's son) speak nearby, Yao Minzhu begins to transmute into her final metaphor:

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[20] Ibidem, p. 208.

[21] S.H. Chen, 'Multiplicity in Uniformity: Poetry and the Great Leap Forward', *The China Quarterly* 3 (1960), pp. 1–15.

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> My vision is getting more and more hazy. The characters [that I am reading] float as if immersed in water, swim like tadpoles, […] the writing completely disappears from the book, and finally the book disappears as well, leaving only my hands in the act of holding it. Then the bent fingers, phalanx after phalanx, incinerate, one by one they detach and fall apart like cigarette ashes. In an instant, it is the whole arm that crumbles, the whole body… [Yao Minzhu] became a heap of ashes and particles; the cone of light under the lamp refracting their colors like a crystal. "I'm a fistful of brocade ashes": that's my last metaphor.[22]

The expression *yi dui jinhui* 一堆锦灰, translated in this context as "a fistful (lit. a heap) of brocade ashes," doesn't actually refer to fabric reduced to dust. Instead, it refers to a traditional artistic technique called *jinhuidui* 锦灰堆, (lit. "pile of brocade ash") or *bapotu* 八破图 (the "eight destroyed images" technique). Similar to patchwork, the *jinhuidui* technique uses various fragments of artworks, texts, relics of historical and cultural value. When they're scattered onto a new surface seemingly randomly, it creates the impression of "rubbish spilled from a basket." In the novel's afterword, Sheng Keyi explains the image of *jinhuidui* is thus well-suited to summarize the main themes of the novel: exuberance, arrogance, crumbling, and finally, ashes.

This crumbling can be interpreted as a generational *topos*, where the post-Seventies generation "grew up on the rubble of history, […] on the unravelling of an order."[23] However, the way Sheng Keyi uses metamorphosis for characters and metaphor for language in *Jinhui* allows her to offer an unprecedented and unique resemantization of that history. Instead of presenting history as a coherent memory, she re-envisions it as an emotional space that can be newly explored and experienced. This is the very principle of *jinhuidui*, which resemantizes its "destroyed images" by transforming them into a new artistic product, thus creating a new semantic space.

The very structure of the novel also reflects this artistic technique. The plot is "shattered" into forty-six chapters, each with unique content, style and language. For example, there are interpolations in the Yiyang dialect often accompanied by footnoted Chinese translations. Additionally, one will find frequent use of different fonts, recalling the heterogeneous and chaotic nature typical of *jinhuidui* and adding to the novel's visual diversity. Instead of using fragments of ruined papers to create something new, *Jinhui* assembles bits of conversations, readings, dreams, memories, and glimpses of both the human and inhuman worlds. They're shuffled in the "basket of cards" and finally dropped into a new frame: Yao Minzhu's dreamlike journey.

Consequentially, "I am a fistful of brocade ashes" is not a declaration of defeat, but rather an announcement that new work was born from this collage of relics, saved from the fire of oblivion. Perhaps it is the same novel that Yao Minzhu herself would like

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[22] Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, p. 226.

[23] Giulia Rampolla, *Stridente armonia*, p. 41.

to write.[24] Thus, the victory is not forgetfulness, censorship or the system that scorches a journalist and reduces her to dust. The victory is her metaphorical deviance, transforming oblivion into a new semantic space or into a newly significant space.

In conclusion, the journalist Yao Minzhu embodies what Agamben would call a "complete witness." In fact, thanks to the magic expedient of the ocular solution, she is able to (re)live firsthand both the past and present of the "New Paradise." But she is also destined to (re)die from it, thus offering an integral testimony of the inhumanity perpetrated in Fuyinzhen.[25] Differently said, the destruction of her physical body is the proof of her existence. Her dreamlike delirium reveals the atrocities she experienced. Her absence highlights the presence – or rather, the permanence – of unspoken stories. And by metaphorically recalling these stories, Yao Minzhu doesn't merely recover them, but she gives them new, liveable meanings.

3. Text Analysis: the Resemantization of the "Mother"

A *close reading* of certain excerpts illustrates the key images that Sheng Keyi uses to create her metaphorical deviance. These excerpts focus on taboo spaces which, when re-imagined through her writing, become spaces of freedom and research, and ultimately, as the forthcoming paragraphs are to illustrate, an opportunity of resemantization.

The first and fundamental resemantization hereby analysed is that regarding the mother figure. For Yao Minzhu, as for any other human being, the mother is the first source of both taboo and freedom, as she is the one who first raises the question of identity. The mother is our first Other, the first dialectical boundary of our existence: both the limit that hinders us and the perimeter that draws us as individuals. Additionally, Yao Minzhu's mother represents the historical Other: the past that Yao Minzhu cannot fully grasp because it is not her present. The memory the mother passes on to her daughter is thus a taboo inheritance: a post-memory destined to remain as a partial testimony. In other words, Yao Minzhu could not find her own identity because she could not reconstruct her past. She could not reconstruct the past because she has no way to relive her mother's memories. She has no way of re-living them because she did not experience herself. Rather, her mother did.

However, this taboo regarding memory drives its own resolution. Because of Fuyinzhen's dreamlike space and the magical solution that allows Yao Minzhu to see the past, she can concretely relive the inherited memory and thus become a legitimate witness. In other words, this space makes up for the inadequacy of reality. This concept is illustrated in the following excerpt from the first chapter of *Jinhui*:

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[24] Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, p. 112.

[25] Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, New York 1999, pp. 150–151.

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> My mother instilled in my blood the genes of her thinking. The only difference between me and her is that she has broken the eggshell of history to look outside, while I am outside and peek inside: the information received does not match; each of us does see different things. My mother always wanted me to go into the shell, but there was no place for me in there. When she left […] I looked at myself in the mirror and I was as she had wanted me to be: a serious face, an absorbed expression, not the slightest interest in worldly things; I lived in an ideal, but I could not say what exactly this ideal was, perhaps just a kind of structural incompatibility with reality.[26]

This passage highlights the *topos* of the matrilineal inheritance of testimony and transgression. Echoing the beginning of Pedro Paramo, this motif recurs throughout *Jinhui*, not only through flashbacks about the relationship between Yao Minzhu and her mother, but also through a constellation of characters evoking the mother figure and the atavistic imagery of the "nocturnal regime." In China, as Sun Chaoying explains, this *yin*-related nocturnal/feminine regime does actually represent "une *dualitude* et non pas une *dualité*" with the structures of the "day regime."[27]

For example, the medium Wei Yifeng provides the journalist's ghost with a *different look* at Fuyinzhen's story (i.e. the ocular solution to see the past). Then there is the "dolphin-woman," whose body has been disfigured and whose son has disappeared. Both are women and mothers. "If the 'truth' is something as important [as you claim]," the dolphin-woman says to Yao Minzhu, "then, for me, to find the truth is to find my son."[28] And in moments of fleeting lucidity, Yao Minzhu herself manages to recall vague memories of her parental experience.

All of these characters are diverse. Some are biological mothers, others adoptive; some live to find their child, others barely remember giving birth to one. Yet, they are all united by traits of strength and volition, and by an aura of "nocturnal" darkness, possessing hidden truths that contrast with the dominant, masculine narrative. They are "mothers" not merely "reproductive tools" or generators of human bodies. They are parents who raise questions about identity, reality and relationship, or "kin," as Haraway would say.[29]

So, to conclude, in Sheng Keyi's resemantization, the mother figure shifts from being defined by her ability to generate bodies to becoming a parent of ideas. She instils doubt, allowing (hi)story to develop. The maternal figures in *Jinhui* represent the existence of the *otherness* and offer a different testimony. This testimony is not a *dissident* but

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[26] Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, p. 6.

[27] Sun Chaoying, 'Structures de l'imaginaire chinois', in: Gilbert Durand, Sun Chaoying (eds.), *Mythe, themes et variations*, Paris 2000, p. 58.

[28] Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, p. 124.

[29] "[Chinese] policymakers continue to view women primarily as reproductive tools to realize the nation's development goals." (Leta Hong Fincher, *Betraying the Big Brother*, London and New York 2018, p. 15); Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble, Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Durham and London 2016.

a *transgressive* one, witnessing an alternative *within* – and not *detached from* – their living reality.[30] The parts of this passage that I have graphically underlined precisely illustrate this *dualitude* between reality and *other* reality, between dominant narrative and subterranean truths. Also, they exemplify how that "structural incompatibility with reality" is essential for Yao Minzhu's research and Sheng Keyi's literature, enabling their "deconstruction" and resemantization of language.[31]

History is like an eggshell: a fragile, ephemeral membrane. Truth, the "historical datum," is a matter of perspective. The memory of those who experienced events firsthand and look back on them is inherently different from the post-memory of those, like Yao Minzhu, cannot but reconstruct the past from the outside. Yao Minzhu's world exists in a time that is both connected to and distinct from the past. It contains the egg of the past, but also encompasses the space around it, filled with semantic dust waiting for significance.

The final underlined parts from the previous excerpt concern the element of the mirror. According to Foucault, the mirror is a unique heterotopia: "in the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface." However, he continues, it also develops "a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze […] from the ground of this virtual space […], I come back toward myself; I begin again […] to reconstitute myself there where I am."[32]

Yao Minzhu looks at herself in the mirror in the same way Sheng Keyi mirrors herself in her literature: not with the pretence of seeing her true self, but attempting to relocate herself where the reflected gaze confirms her existence. In other words, the search for truth – which for Yao Minzhu includes the dreamlike reworking of maternal post-memory, and for Sheng Keyi involves the literary reworking of historical and/or autobiographical data – is not a quest aimed at an attainment, where the individuals discover themselves at the moment they reach the goal. It is a search that holds value in itself and identifies the individual as "the one who seeks [herself in the mirror]," that is, as the subject of a gaze. Hence, Yao Minzhu's gaze at the end of the mirror, as serious as her mother wanted, looks at her metaphor-loving self on this side of the mirror, making her feel *seen* and therefore *existing* where she really is: outside the mirror, outside the "eggshell," outside her social role as a journalist, and even outside her role as a dead woman.

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[30] For a discussion of the concept of "transgression" in art, as an attitude contrary to "mediocrity" and therefore a harbinger of awareness, see the following article by Sheng Keyi: Sheng Keyi, 'Yongren qi shi yishu gexing zui da de laolong' 庸人气是艺术个性最大的牢笼 (For an artist, mediocrity is the most harmful cage), *Xin Qingnian*, January 7, 2018, p. 5.

[31] Regarding Sheng Keyi's strategies to "deconstruct" the language, see: Nicoletta Pesaro, 'Men control our vaginas; the state controls our wombs', p. 30.

[32] Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias' (Translated from *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* 5 (1984), pp. 46–49), *Foucault.info*, Viewed 16 July 2024, https://foucault.info/documents/heterotopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en/.

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Death is simply the pretext to imaginarily escape from the clinic and subvert its repetitive order of treatments, routines, and propaganda text reciting. This order prevents the subject from deviating and self-inventing, denying its existence as a subject *tout court*. Whereas death constitutes the ineluctable subversion of this order. Death is the surface of the mirror. It represents the chance to deviate from what life has counterfeited as "history" or "reality." In other words, death represents liberation from the physical body and, consequently, from Yao Minzhu's various roles as a journalist, daughter, wife, and mother. This liberation is essential for her genuine quest for self-discovery and the resemantization of her female identity.

Therefore, the metaphors of the egg and the mirror that Sheng Keyi develops in this passage have a resemantizing power precisely because they function like Foucault's heterotopias. Said heterotopias "have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspend, neutralize, or *invert* the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect."[33] Similarly, the rhetorical device of metaphor, which both the protagonist of *Jinhui* and the author passionately cultivate, acts like a mirror. The first gaze becomes aware of its own existence as a seeing subject, precisely and paradoxically becoming *the object* of the reflected gaze.[34] In the metaphor, the similarity between the two elements compared remains silent, just as the surface of the mirror remains invisible. This is why, unlike a comparison, a metaphor creates a closer connection between the two elements at play, causing their semantic fields to interact. If "metaphor means […] transformation, transfer [of meaning], to lead elsewhere, to carry beyond," Sheng Keyi *leads* the reader to the mother's (mirroring) gaze. This "mother" is not merely a reproductive machine or a definitive truth. She is a doubt, a question, and a desire to seek truth, embodying a desire for life itself. Sheng Keyi's resemantized mother figure no longer just generates life but instils the *desire for* life.[35]

4. The Temple, the Vase and the Grave: The Resemantization of the Superhuman as Superfeminine

Another process of resemantization in *Jinhui* concerns characters straddling the human and superhuman worlds, such as the medium Wei Yifeng and Yama, king of the Underworld, who shares his perspective as the ruler of Fuyinzhen's underworld. These characters do not have any salvific or messianic roles, but act as (counter)parts of Fuyinzhen's apparent "reality." They become the *other* witnesses of its "New Paradise" project. Instead of being only subjects of beliefs and superstitions, they question the dominant narrative and any definitive idea of "reality."

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[33] Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias'.

[34] On Sheng Keyi's statements about her own "metaphor-addiction" see *Jinhui's Afterword*: Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, p. 227.

[35] Grazia Vittigni, 'Metafora e Psicoterapia', Viewed 16 July 2024, http://www.isfo.it/files/File/Segnalazioni/Metafora%20e%20psicoterapia.pdf, p. 2.

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To explore this process of resemantization, I will draw on observations by French anthropologist Gilbert Durand. He identifies many images as "psychologically synonymous" with universal archetypal solidarity, such as the temple, the vase, and the grave.[36] These recurring and unsettling motifs are prominent in *Jinhui*, driving the resemantization process. In *Jinhui*, the temple, vase, and grave no longer symbolize concrete forms, solid walls, or unshakable truths. Instead, they are depicted in states of crumbling, melting, and dissolving, transforming into doubts or taboos and becoming thresholds of the knowable – or its fiction.

[The archetype of the temple] For example, a Buddhist temple is featured prominently in the novel's opening nightmare: at the centre of the shrine is a golden statue of a Bodhisattva, surrounded by the continuous murmur of prayers. However, suddenly the gold starts to melt. The statue turns into a man, and Yao Minzhu wakes up in her clinic room.[37] Another crumbling temple is the ruined church of Fuyinzhen. Initially dismantled and repurposed as a Buddhist place of worship (as Buddhism is the only religion allowed after the implementation of the "New Paradise" project), it is eventually converted into the "Womb Rental Office" after the project fails. Here, the women of Fuyinzhen – both the living and the dead – have their uterus exploited to repopulate the town as quickly as possible.

The metamorphosis of this temple space – from a Christian church into a Buddhist temple and finally into a "Womb Rental Office" – is a significant detail because it highlights a transcultural patriarchy and reveals its biopolitical functioning. This temple's transformation shows how patriarchy is rooted in the submission and control of women's reproductive lives, thus their bodies, reducing them to merely the use of their wombs. In Christianity, a male God uses the womb of a virgin to give birth to his beloved son – a male.[38] Not even Maya, Buddha's mother, conceives her son by her own will. She is impregnated by an elephant in a dream and dies seven days after giving birth, her worldly role fulfilled. It is thus unsurprising, rather even fitting, that the Christian-Buddhist temple is eventually transformed into an office for womb exploitation. Man continues to exert his power by subsuming women's reproductive faculties. The metamorphosis of the temple strips away the religious metaphor, revealing the male deities as men who maintain power by subjugating women.

It is no coincidence that the town Yao Minzhu visits is called Fuyinzhen, or "Gospel Town." This "gospel" is revealed to be not "the word of God," but "the word of men," or the dominant discourse (i.e. the patriarchal narrative). Sheng Keyi's depiction of the temple's transformation resemantizes religious stories as expressions of patriarchal biopolitics.

This process of resemantization is further exemplified with extreme consequences when Sheng Keyi sets the scene of a repeated rape in the aforementioned church,

[36] Gilbert Durand, *The Anthropological Structures of the Imaginary*, Brisbane 1999, p. 246.

[37] Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, p. 5.

[38] Regarding the "secondary role" of Virgin Mary in the Christian narrative, see: Silvia Tubert, *Deseo y representación: Convergencias de psicoanálisis y teoría feminista*, Madrid 2001, p. 165.

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connoting the violence suffered by the abused woman with terms evocative of Jesus Christ's passion:

> Men take turns entering and leaving the church. Chang Duoxi never resists. It seems she has been sent by God. The abuse she suffers is a crown of thorns, and the men who mount her body rely on her to wash away the dirt and cruelty they carry in their hearts.
> […] [Wei Manyi, entering the ruined church and addressing Chang Duoxi:] "My mother is dead."
> […] [Chang Duoxi:] "Your eyes betray you: in the left there is pride, in the right there is joy. You have no time to regret your mother."[39]

[The archetype of the vase] As explained by Sun Chaoying, the archetype of the vase in Chinese culture is "incontestablement représenté par le *Tao*, *Grail* chinois possédant des caractères thaumaturgiques." This connection between the Latin term "uter" (meaning wineskin or goatskin) and the term "uterus" (the womb, which is the source of all human life) is significant. Just as the never-filled vessel of the Tao is the origin of all things, the womb is the origin of human life.[40] The Great Wall itself can able be considered a reflection of this archetype ("le plus grand contenant chinois […] est *la Grande Muraille de Chine*!"). Similarly, the "New Paradise" is a delimited universe that can certainly participate in this concept of the "vase" with its inherent taboo: the impossibility of containing anything. The Tao is never full, and the Great Wall, like Fuyinzhen's porous borders, witnesses both escapes and returns. This illustrates the paradox of the vessel being both a container of life and a place of dispersion. Here's an excerpt from *Jinhui*, describing a vase (or basin) of water that Yao Minzhu encounters:

> The two goldfish painted at the bottom of the basin swim following the ripples of the water. […] I lower my head, and watch them chasing each other, turning and swimming faster and faster, the water swirling, until the fish turn into two people, sitting on the surface of a river.[41]

In this context, the container blends in with its contents. The decorated basin is one with the water it collects. The womb is one with the life it brings. Similarly, Fuyinzhen's dreamlike boundaries are one with Yao Minzhu's impossible quest. These boundaries represent the edges of death, or the space where death intersects with life, which allows Yao Minzhu to escape the confines of the clinic and reconnect with memories of her loved ones. Essentially, the vase symbolizes the paradox of storytelling itself: it embodies the challenge of creating fiction to capture the essence of life's mysteries, even though fiction can never fully encompass them.

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[39] Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, p. 115.
[40] Sun Chaoying, 'Structures de l'imaginaire chinois', p. 62.
[41] Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, p. 25.

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[The archetype of the grave] One final archetype worth discussing is the grave. The grave in *Jinhui* is a negative presence. It stands out for its violation, its emptiness, and thus for the absence it represents.

On one hand, a tomb is the origin of the euphoria, fanaticism and eventually tragedy overwhelming Fuyinzhen. It is while digging the grave for a burial that the first and only trace of gold is found in the town, hence the quest for finding the precious metal and transforming the local economy. On the other hand, though, this tomb is destined to remain empty. It is a mere pre-text, a never-ended ritual.

The insatiable land of Fuyinzhen is never fully satisfied. Any element used as fertilizer is destined to disappear into the land without actually nourishing it. Instead, the earth is dug out everywhere in search of gold. In the case of the "earth of Guanyin," it is even devoured. This results in the ghosts being unearthed rather than the dead being buried. In fact, even when they do get buried, fresh corpses are often unearthed to monstrously compensate for the lack of real food, highlighting the town's desperate need to self-sustain.

In *Jinhui*, there is a notable absence of traditional funerals and burials. Yao Minzhu's death is shrouded in mystery: was it a heart attack, or a drug-induced death? The pig Yongsheng 永生 is exhumed as a carrion and is eventually eaten after being slowly cooked. The tailor Pi is thrown into the river and consumed by fish. A young woman, Bai Huaiyu 白怀玉, is torn to pieces and devoured. These examples show that the novel does not include any proper funerals or burials. Instead, the land of Fuyinzhen is portrayed through Yao Minzhu's eyes as a place of loss and emptiness – like a stolen tomb would be to a delayed archaeologist. As Yuan Bianhua tells Yao Minzhu, "You arrived late. Now there is nothing left here. Just ashes."[42]

In conclusion, then, the empty tomb of Fuyinzhen – or rather, Fuyinzhen as an empty tomb – does not symbolize a resurrection heralding salvation. It instead symbolizes a collective catastrophe lead by a collapsing patriarchy. This collapsing system betrays itself in the end, resulting in losing its mask (revealing its own hypocrisy) instead of "losing face."

Conclusions: Metaphorical Deviance as a Practice of Resemantization

As Foucault explains, "history is not possible if it is not based on an absence of history." In other words, history requires space that is "empty and populated at the same time, by all those words without language which make anyone who listens hear a dull noise from beneath history, the stubborn murmur of a language which would speak by itself – without a speaking subject and without an interlocutor […], collapsing before having reached any formulation."[43]

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[42] Ibidem, p. 21.

[43] Michel Foucault, 'Préface' in: *Folie et Déraison. Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* Paris 1961, pp. I–XI, consulted through: Viewed 16 July 2024, http://1libertaire.free.fr/MFoucault155.html.

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In fact, the testimonies of ghosts and animals in *Jinhui* aren't *really* collected by Yao Minzhu, as she herself has already disappeared, becoming a kind of "empty space" without language. However, if it is true that these characters "collapse" before "having reached any [real] formulation," since their testimonies are delivered to Yao Minzhu after they themselves have already died, their spectral formulations still create a form of "noise," a "stubborn" presence that readers can distinctly perceive. This "noise" represents the memories and truths that persist beyond Yao Minzhu's and her interlocutors' disappearance, and continue to impact the living world.

Among Chinese post-1970s authors, such as Sheng Keyi, Li Yiyun 李翊雲 (1972–), Guo Xiaolu 郭小櫓 (1973–), A Yi 阿乙 (1976–) and many others, language challenges are widely addressed and creatively explored. It's common to overcome aphasia by embracing new styles or approaches, such as A Yi's experimental narrative structures and nearly expressionist use of language, or by writing in a second language – a phenomenon known as exophony, as exemplified by Li Yiyun and Guo Xiaolu. The Chinese language and literature are thus experiencing a multifaceted reinvention, letting go of the Maoist jargon and enriching themselves with foreign contaminations and new contemporary perspectives. One shift theorized by Li Zehou 李泽厚 is aptly expressed in terms of "getting out of the language and back to the essence."[44]

In her literature, Sheng Keyi uses a variety of techniques to create new forms of expression. Her dialogues often include dialect, for example. This approach reflects a broader trend among contemporary writers, who are experimenting with "abstract, evocative, and flexible" language, "fast-paced storytelling," and a "polyphonic narration" that blends multiple voices and perspectives, creating their own unique literary strategies.[45] And Sheng Keyi's unique literary strategy is what I hereby describe as "metaphorical deviance."

So, how does this metaphorical deviance practically work? How does it manage to influence literary language to the point of activating the aforementioned processes of resemantization? Of course, these questions go beyond the literary text's function and expand to the human minds of both of the author and the reader. Consequently, any attempt to answer them will necessarily imply borrowing categories and suggestions from psychoanalysis.

The novel's synopsis showcases the desire for research in both *Jinhui* and its model, *Pedro Paramo*. Yao Minzhu's desire for search originally stems from a promise she made to her mother: she won't forget her father's poetry and will act on her opinions rather than blindly following others. And this mirrors the promise Juan Preciado makes to his mother to look for his father, Pedro Paramo. This fundamental desire to respond to a request from one's mother, to receive her primal acknowledgement and recognition, is what drives the characters' research and their respective narratives. At the same time, however, this desire also stimulates the reader's interest in following the story, in retracing the footsteps of

[44] Giulia Rampolla, *Stridente armonia*, p. 117.

[45] Ibidem, pp. 113–120, 259.

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their protagonists, and in reconstructing the plot (with them and through them). Indeed, it is through readers that these characters complete their very own research, because, as Peter Brooks *docet*, it is reading a narrative that "animates its sense-making process."[46]

In *Jinhui*, this "sense" is a journey of rediscovery and understanding, or a *returning-to-understand*: thorough her dreamlike journey to Fuyinzhen, Yao Minzhu, retraces her mother's (post-)memories, compelled by a need to uncover the truth about her relatives' lives and, ultimately, her own. It is no coincidence that the Chinese word for "ghost" (鬼, gui) is a homophone of "return" (归 gui). Nor is it by chance that, in *returning* to the *ghostly* Fuyinzhen in her search for truth, Yao Minzhu does actually end up (re)dying: the beginning and end of the story represent two different yet same forms of death. The first death is the physical one of the journalist trapped in the clinic. The final death, her dissolution into "brocade ashes," is the loss of her conscious soul and narrative voice, which signifies the end of the novel itself. As Brooks explains, this concept illustrates Todorov's idea of "narrative transformation," where the beginning and the end reflect a same-but-different relationship.[47] Between these two points, there is a crucial space – the plot – that connects them. Thus we must accept this space as "necessary."[48] So, what is the "necessity" of the plot that Sheng Keyi creates between Yao Minzhu's physical death and her final, complete disappearance?

"For as long as I can remember," Yao Minzhu says, "there have always been strangers who would hang around our house and follow my mother wherever she went, as if they were bodyguards. […] My mother claimed that I had inherited my father's literary talent and that the pen was a weapon in its own way. […] Others would have thought of their children's safety and happiness, but she urged me to seek freedom and truth even at the cost of my life. […] When I was little and I was lying in my mother's arms, her gentle breath was the whole world to me. Since I lost my memory, I don't remember her face, so [now], every time I think of her, I am reminded of that photograph of Qiu Jin 秋瑾 clutching the dagger."[49]

The therapies of "detoxification from metaphors" are invasive to the point of eroding even the mother's memory, a figure now remembered only passively: the object chased by mysterious strangers, a staring gaze that Yao Minzhu's muddled mind can only confuse with that of the feminist martyr Qiu Jin (1875–1907). The mother's words, however, have not vanished. The memory of her breath remains equally intact. Contrasting the Qiu Jin-style pose, her breath is described as *wenrou* 温柔, or gentle, lukewarm, and light. It quietly blows on Yao Minzhu's childhood, providing her with what Recalcati calls the very "first language:"

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[46] Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, New York 1984 (eBook), p. 48.

[47] Tzvetan Todorov, 'Les Transformations narratives,' in: *Poétique de la prose*, Paris 1971, pp. 225–240.

[48] Ibidem, pp. 37–38, 268.

[49] Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, pp. 121–122. Qiu Jin – revolutionary, feminist and writer – was born in Xiamen (Fujian) in 1875 and died in Shaoxing (Zhejiang) in 1907, after participating in a failed uprising against the Qing dynasty and being sentenced to beheading. The photograph mentioned by Sheng Keyi is probably the most famous portrait of hers.

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> The first language is not the national language, the one established by the language code, but a language […] made up of confused sounds, affections, emotional states, disjointed letters, mixtures of phonemes and spasms of the body, […] where the signifier does not convey the meaning, but is one with the body of the speaker. […] We have a clear example of this in the child's lallation or in the preverbal signs that characterize his first affective exchanges with his Other. […] Lacan baptizes it with the term *lalangue*, "la langue" [in French, "the language"] all attached, precisely to indicate that absence of symbolic spacing, or, the lack of articulation characterizing it.[50]

Thenceforth, what makes the plot of Yao Minzhu's journey to Fuyinzhen so "necessary" is the desire to re-learn this very first language and respond to the maternal stimulus. It is a fundamental and impossible desire, connecting all human beings, of perpetual return to the mother's womb,[51] to the eggshell, to a duality that has not yet been split. It is that "absence of symbolic spacing" between parent and child, between self and Other. This is why the deviance of Sheng Keyi's language hinges on the use of metaphors. The metaphor, connecting its terms without any "symbolic spacing", allows a (re-)fusion between them, which is productive of infinite and reciprocal resemantizations.[52]

Recalcati observes that "books are written in the language established by the codes of the national languages. And yet *lalangue* remains their silent ember." This is why "reading always contains the mysterious possibility of feeling to be read [by the books themselves]." This is how Sheng Keyi realizes this possibility through her use of metaphors. Sheng Keyi "reads" her readers, resemantizing the words in which they articulate their lives.[53]

By staging metamorphoses and speaking in metaphors, *Jinhui* thus becomes a meta-space (a journey between life and death) and a meta-novel, projecting its resemantizations directly outside the text and into the language of reality. This happens not only in Chinese and not only with female readers, but also with international readers, to whom Sheng Keyi offers *renewed* words, capable of expressing and shaping renewed and *necessary* ways of living in our contemporary societies.

In conclusion, it is therefore evident that declaring herself a writer uninterested in politics does not mean Sheng Keyi leads an impossible existence outside the *polis*. Actually, it means calling herself and her Other (i.e., the character, the reader) *within* the *polis*, but deviating from those prejudgmental superstructures (ideologies, systematic interpretations, Orientalisms or Westernisms of any kind) that monopolize its borders, thus obscuring the *polis'* plural truths, its different stories and their real transformative power.

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[50] Massimo Recalcati, *I tabù del mondo*, pp. 108–109.

[51] Ludovica Grassi, 'Nostalgia', *SpiWeb Società Psicoanalitica Italiana*, Viewed 16 July 2024, https://www.spiweb.it/la-ricerca/ricerca/nostalgia/.

[52] The term *biyu* 比喻 itself, which means "metaphor," occurs in *Jinhui* about a hundred times.

[53] On the "mysterious possibility of feeling to be read," see Massimo Recalcati, *I tabù del mondo*, p. 109.

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"What I fear is that cataract affecting the soul…," says journalist Yao Minzhu, or perhaps Sheng Keyi herself through her. "Yes, exactly, the cataract of the soul, that's the disease… If a simple article will not be enough to cure it, it will at least have served to reveal its existence."[54]

Hence, to paraphrase this meaningful passage, even if literature cannot directly alter reality – for example, it may not directly impact the disadvantage and subjugation that women, not only in China, still frequently endure in contemporary societies – it can nonetheless act as a powerful space for raising awareness. When this awareness permeates language, resemantizing it, our understanding of concepts shifts, enabling us to use old words to express and bring about new ideas. For instance, we might redefine "mother" not as one who gives birth to bodies but as one who inspires a desire for life, and we can believe in Mayas and Virgin Marys who do not give birth to male gods, but to human kinship.

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[54] Sheng Keyi, *Jinhui*, p. 144.

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