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Senses, Religion, and Religious Encounter

Literature Review and Research Perspectives

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ABSTRACT An overview of the senses in the study of religion and religious encounter is provided, along with reflections on the ways in which various specific senses were imagined to serve as modes of communication between human beings and between humans and transcendent beings. How the individual case studies collected in this volume inform such a project and further research on religion, the senses, and the role of the senses in religious encounter is a core concern of this introductory essay. We end by suggesting new directions for additional research for an integrated and systematic examination of how senses shape and are used in human encounters with the transcendent and the (human) religious Other.

KEYWORDS senses, taste, olfaction, smell, touch, visual, hearing, grammar, language

Introduction

In his *Scented Ape*, David Stoddart has argued for an integrative approach to the study of smell, combing biology and anthropology, as he explored the functions of smell, ranging from practical communication regarding sexual readiness to the use of perfume to allure and incense to express worship of the divine. As such, his study shows that smell is an element in most forms of human and non-human interaction (Stoddart 1990). It is this communicative function, not merely of smell but of most of the senses, on which we intend to focus in this volume. Each sense on the one hand roots humans in their corporeal existence, while on the other provides the means, both literally and also within the symbolic imagination, of creating [1]

bonds and boundaries between other humans on a variety of social, political, personal, and religious levels. They also serve to link and demarcate between the human and the spiritual realm. In various religious systems, the latter has often been conceived as being outside the physical realm, or of being able to don or shed physicality at will, very often in order to interact/communicate sensorially with humans. Human rituals prompt sensorial experiences in order to shape these interactions, even as they become the foundation of symbolic communication within the religious imagination.

[2] There has been an increasing amount of scholarship on 'religion and the senses' during—at least—the last 20 years. Respective research is related to the body,[1] religion and aesthetics (German: *Religionsästhetik*[2]), and 'material religion.'[3] It is impossible to give a representative overview on the topic. With this introduction to the special issue of *Entangled Religions*, we, however, intend to stress some aspects with reference to the connection between senses and religion in general (1) as well as to religious encounter in particular (2), and raise some research questions (3) before introducing the contributions (4). By reviewing relevant literature, we tried to consider a broader spectrum of research on various religious traditions in different times and regions—however, without claiming representativeness.

Religion and the Senses

[3] When comparing religions diachronically and synchronically, it becomes obvious that taxonomies of the senses greatly differ in the history of religions.[4] While some scholars address the senses as a broad category for the analysis of religious experiences and practices (Promey 2014; Fishman 2014; Hallett 2013; Boer and Göttler 2013; Keane 2008; Barna 2007; Gavrilyuk and Coakley 2012; Fraigneau-Julien 1985), others have chosen to focus on one sense in particular within a specific religio-cultural sphere, or a specific aspect of religious experience. *Smell*, for instance, is a prominent topic within the research on religion and the senses (Bradley 2015; Detienne 1972; Thurlkill 2016; McHugh 2015, 2012; Green 2011; Harvey 2006, 2001; Milburn 2016). According to Alfred Gell, smelling "is the nearest an objective reality can go towards becoming a concept without leaving the realm of the sensible altogether" (Gell 1977, 29). The elementary character has "led to the association of fragrant smells and perfumes not only with magic and dreaming, but also with transcendence and with rituals aimed at communicating with the divine" (Hamilakis 2013, 77). In the history of religions, smell is often associated with incense, which becomes a mediator between sensual perception and the transcendent realm (Nielsen 1986; Kenna 2005; Detienne 1972, xii, xviii–xxxi, 30–34, 38–40; Green 2011, 73–78, 117; Harvey 2006, 76–90, 92–95). The contribution to this

1 See the articles related to religion in Turner (2012) and the overview by Karstein and Burchardt (2017).

2 See the 'classical' article by Cancik and Mohr (1988); more recently Münster (2001).

3 See the programmatic articles by Meyer et al. (2010) as well as Meyer and Houtman (2012). Also see Plate (2014).

4 E.g., "discussions of the Yogācāra often make reference to its eightfold model of consciousness, which adds the store consciousness (*ālayavijñamna*) and the afflicted mind (*kliṣṭa-manas*) to the standard six consciousnesses of Buddhism (viz., the visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental)" (D'Amato 2003, 191). For the different ways of conceptualizing the senses in Early China, see Geaney (2002, 16–49). See also Slingerland's arguments against the holistic interpretation of sensory experience in the early Chinese context (Slingerland 2018, 36–43). Modern neuroscience also argues against the restriction to the Aristotelian concept of five senses (taste, sight, touch, smell, and sounding); see Jarrett (2015, 235). For an attempt to create a hierarchical taxonomy of senses, with an emphasis on smell, within the Indian context, see McHugh (2007).

volume by Paolo Santangelo on olfaction in Chinese literature demonstrates that within the Chinese context, incense was not only a means to communicate with deities but other spirits as well. Furthermore, incense served to convey emotion, such as satisfaction, veneration, or mourning/sadness, either to the other-worldly being to whom it was an offering, or to other humans, or both. Nor was incense the only way in which scent was imagined to converse between realms. Santangelo shows that in the Chinese novels he examined, as in many cultures, bad smell serves as a warning of evil or danger, just as pleasant smell is a marker of goodness/holiness (Cuffel 2007, 63–67, 128–37, 143–45; Harvey 2006; Boyarin 1992). Yet scent could convey more complex messages, such as alerting the living to a wrongful death, or, faced with the inability to speak, become the means of communication by ghosts.

[4] *Tasting* is another sense that strictly embodies religious meaning (Detienne 1972; Hecker 2005; Fulton 2006b; Brubaker and Linardou 2007; Bynum 1987; Sterckx 2005a, 2011; Freeman 2015; Rubel 2015). Eating and drinking play an important role in the history of religions (Flood 2014). This covers ritual meals and banquets on certain occasions, e.g., the death of a person (Smith 2003; van Gelder 2000; Kleeman 2005; Draycott and Stamatopoulou 2016). The Christian Eucharist is a prominent example for the ritual development of theophagy, which is one of the most striking forms of religious embodiment (Smith 1922; Nieber 2017). Often however, discussions of the role of food and eating focus on with whom one eats and the ritual status of what is eaten, rather than on the taste of the food (Freidenreich 2011). James Watts, in his contribution to this volume, points out that analyzing the taste of food in the context of ritualized eating is rare. Nevertheless, while modern Christians may not discuss the 'bouquet' of the Eucharist wine, in earlier expressions of Christianity taste was very much part of the semiotics of religious sensorial experience. In the Middle Ages, the *taste* of the Eucharist—whether it tasted of flesh and blood or not, or of honeyed bread, or of a nauseating substance—served as evidence of the reality (or lack thereof) of the divine presence within the bread and wine, and by extension, of the incarnation itself (Cuffel 2007, 113–14, 150; Rubin 1991, 115, 118–19; Bynum 1987, 117–18, 153–54). The changing flavor of the Eucharist could likewise signal a moral failing on the part of the one eating it, prompting repentance (Rubin 1991, 115). The idea that one could 'eat God' and thereby taste divinity was satirized by Muslims, although at the same time, converts were asked if they had "tasted the sweetness of Islam" (van Gelder 2000, 82–83). Thus, not merely the act of eating but the *flavor* becomes a means of communicating religious truths, at least within medieval Christianity and its opponents. Similarly, Santangelo, in his contribution, pairs the moral communication of smell with that of taste, showing how pleasant taste was likewise attached to lovely fragrance as a moral marker in Chinese novels. In early Chinese philosophical writings, taste reflected spiritual and physiological transformation, and the ability to appreciate delicious food was an indication of good morals (Sterckx 2005a). Turning to this issue in Judaism, Joel Hecker, while refuting Gershom Scholem's contention that Psalms 34:9 ("Taste and see that the Lord is good") was a metaphor for mystical experience within Judaism, argued that: "…to be able to *taste* that the Lord is good is to experience bodily the nature of Divinity […]. It touches on the bodily transformation of the individual, representing him as a living expression of the Torah, having literally ingested the Torah and feeling fully satiated as a result" (Hecker 2005, 57). Similarly, Bynum has shown that tasting and eating was associated with knowledge of the divine. In tasting, a believer could distinguish the 'flavor' and nature of the trinity, or taste Jesus' suffering. Within such an understanding of eating, by ingesting the Eucharist, a Christian was literally being filled with God—among medieval Christians (Bynum 1987, 151–

60). Thus, while eating may be an act of incorporation, and transformation, the flavor itself is what communicates the nature of this transformation and contact between the spiritual and human realm.

[5] Not only humans, but goddesses and gods also need food and therefore have to be fed, for instance, through sacrifices and libations (Herrmann 1960; Graf 1980). In a number of cultures, however, it is not the physical food or its taste that matters, but rather its fragrance (Sterckx 2011, 85; Detienne 1972, 38–40). Objects and practices of tasting include alcoholic liquids and (ritual) intoxication through drugs (Gladigow 1993; Leuba 1917). Being 'high' or drunken (taken literally or metaphorically) is often a medium of individual ecstasy as well as of—what Émile Durkheims calls—"collective effervescence" (Shilling and Mellor 2011, 2011) and might be charged with religious meaning. Religious experience is also linked to the—partial or total, ritual or ascetic—renunciation of eating and drinking; fasting (Möller 2005) and vegetarianism (Broy 2016) are examples.[5] Thus, the choice of what a devotee ate was part of what prepared the body for approaching the divine, even as it also signaled to other people (and the gods) an individual's level of devotion.

[6] Next to smelling and tasting, *touching* also tightly connects religious meaning with sensual perception. It is not by accident that religious imagination needs embodiment through touching (Brown 2009; Witte 2015). This activity is a mutual one. Human beings can come into contact with the transcendent by touching statues, books, or relics (Vikan 1987, 5; Boustan 2015, 77; Most 2005).[6] However, transcendent beings or forces are also depicted as touching humans, sometimes mediated through laying-on-of hands by a religious expert, or other conduits (Witte 2011).[7] In some cases, it is not clear who or what initiates the touching, but proximity or direct physical contact with a holy or evil person, living or dead, or an object or space associated with them, may convey blessing (*baraka,* within the Judeo-Muslim tradition), torment within the grave, or death, in the case of unfriendly spirits (Meri 1999; Horowitz 1999; Cuffel 2008).[8] "[T]o talk of 'being touched' can extend the vagaries of touch even wider into the emotional, the intangible and the metaphoric" (MacKian 2012, 253). Within thermoception, which is related to touching, thermo-receptors detect both hot and cold, among other things letting bodies adjust to temperature change in their environment. In the history of religions, hell and fire, for instance, are related to thermoception (Bernstein 1993). Kissing might be considered as a special form of touching and is often parts of religious rituals—e. g., as the *osculum pacis* (kiss of peace) in Christian liturgies (Danesi 2013, 3).

[7] Within this volume, the contributions of James Watts and Ophira Gamliel explore touch in considerable detail, both as part of the language of ritual. Watts argues that the modern production of bibles with leather or leather-like covers is designed to make handling the bible a sensual, intimate experience. That said, he underscores the ways in which ritualized touching

5 For an overview, see Davidson (2003). For dietary regimes in medieval Daoist narratives, see Campany (2005).

6 "[T]the Early Byzantine pilgrim went to *touch,* to venerate" (Vikan 1987, 5). Besides the veneration of icons, relics have been and still are objects of touching veneration. In the Mediterranean world in Late Antiquity, "forms of embodied action—bowing, touching, embracing, and kissing—were not reserved for icons nor did they develop only with the full flourishing of the cult of icons in the byzantine world, but were already a fully articulated aspect of the veneration of relics from the late fourth to early seventh centuries" (Boustan 2015, 77). The motif of 'Doubting Thomas' is prominent in Christian art (see Most 2005).

7 For psychological explanations, see Hohwy and Paton (2010).

8 See also Santangelo in this volume. Within the Chinese novels that he analyzes, being touched by a ghost does not necessarily cause death, but is nevertheless harmful.

often avoids the actual sensation of touching, by touching a holy book through the medium of another physical object, rather than with human flesh. The avoidance of direct contact communicates respect, presumably to both the other human participants and to the divine, whereas participants also hope for blessing to be granted them through indirect touch. Tibetan rituals may not eschew direct contact with the ritually significant book or written word; however, Watts notes that again the effect rather than the sensation of contact is emphasized. In both cases, contact and identification with a particular set of scriptures and interaction with the physical form(s) of those scriptures signals the religious identity of the one doing the touching. As such, books as objects communicate religious meaning through ritual, independent of their written message. Gamliel elaborates on the linguistic character of ritual and, within that framework, touching. She argues that ritual, as a language, conveys meaning in two ways: 1) lexical-semantically and 2) functional-syntactically. When believers touch objects or a doorway in an Indian temple, synagogue, or mosque as a marker that the ritual is completed, the touching constitutes a functional-syntatic usage of touch, namely to indicate the completion of the ritual. A lexical-semantic form of touching would be in rituals where touching conveys blessing or healing, much like the *baraka* in Jewish and Muslim thought and ritual, discussed above. In both of these contributions, physical sensation, in this case touch, in ritualized context, is a language with its own grammar. It serves to communicate with other members of the religious community and between the spiritual and physical world.

[8] *Feeling* as mental associations and reactions to emotions is divided into many variations—depending on different cultural patterns in general and religious configurations in particular. It is evoked by different senses. The most prominent feelings include love and hate (Santangelo and Guida 2006). In the history of religions, feelings oscillate between ecstasy and serenity (Eskildsen 2015). Human feelings can be evoked and articulated through religious imagination and practice, but goddesses and gods have feelings, too; they can, for instance, be incensed (Asan 2014). Nociception, i.e., the sense that allows feeling pain, evokes a strong feeling. Religions try to overcome pain and suffering (Koslowski 2001) and evoke it at the same time. In the history of religions, pain is relevant, e.g., in the shape of martyrdom (Afsaruddin 2013; Cormack 2002), asceticism (Kroll and Bachrach 2005), and self-flagellation (Bräunlein 2010), but also as part of public events (Merback 1999). Like intoxication, pain can evoke extreme forms of religious experience (Fischer and Xygalatas 2014).

[9] Most of the contributions to this volume deal with feeling, both in the sense of physical sensation and of emotion, to one degree or another. In her article in this volume, Linda Zampol d'Ortia is primarily concerned with clothing as a visual signifier; however, she also demonstrates that the texture of clothing—silk vs. rough cloth appropriate for an ascetic—and the beauty or plainness of Jesuits' attire evoke a variety of emotions both within the Christian community, to which the Jesuits belong, and among the Japanese, whom the Jesuits are attempting to missionize. Santangelo provides evidence that in the Chinese literary tradition, often there is no distinction between physical feeling and mental feelings, i.e. emotions. Likewise, in her contribution to this volume, Ines Weinrich details the ways in which music in the medieval Islamic tradition was explicitly designed to affect human emotions, mental states, and physical well-being, all of which were understood to be inextricably linked within the musical-medical understandings of the Islamicate world.[9] She shows that these linkages were essential in various forms of religious communication, such as preaching, calling to prayer, the recitation of holy material, and singing or playing instruments. Watts mirrors her obser-

9 She points out that these understandings were, at least in part, drawn from Greek theories of music.

vations regarding the link between sound and feeling/emotion in a more general way within Islam, and points to similar phenomena within Christianity.

[10] The *sense of balance*, scientifically known as the vestibular sense or equilibrioception, is involved during standing, moving, or lying. Certain postures—such as genuflection prescribed at various points of the Roman Rite liturgy—are easily charged with religious meaning. In the history of religions, examples for the metaphorical use of the sense of balance being at work while moving or in certain postures are דרך (derekh; literally: way) and can be found in the Hebrew Bible (Zehnder 1999). In the Daoist classic *Laozi* 老子 (or *Daodejing* 道德經, the *Classic of the Way and Virtue*), the imagery of the Way (*dao* 道) is linked to the root metaphor of water and was rendered by means of the "wheel" simile ("thirty spokes are united in one hub. It is in its [space of] emptiness, where the usefulness of the cart is.") that conflated the ideas of motion and stillness (Allan 1997, 66–70; Moeller 2011, 27–36).[10] The conflation of motion and stillness was, on the one hand, the primary characterization of the cosmic 'matrix' called *dao* (the Way) and, on the other, exemplified the soteriological path of early (and late) Daoists: to be clear and quiet amidst the turmoil of changes and transformations. More specifically, clarity and stillness (*qingjing* 清靜) were to be achieved through specific meditative practices that were often described by means of bodily language.[11] For instance, one had to "align" (*zheng* 正) the body in order to acquire (*de* 得) the Way, to grasp, embrace, and hold the One (Roth 1999, 114–18, 148–50). Furthermore, religion is related to *seeing* (Morgan 2012, 2005; Classen 1998; Williams 2015). The language of sight—and its auditory counterpart (hearing)—is in many ways a primary code of religious communication. Besides being probably one of the most 'intellectual' linguistic images—not only in the Platonic and Neo-Platonic tradition (Reding 2004, 143–56)—sight is basically a metaphor for truth, or the grasping of ultimate reality, with the lack of light (or blindness or obscurity) working as metaphors for misconceiving or intellectual/religious failure to understand.[12] Hence, ordinary seeing and religious visualizing/realization turn into opposites.[13] Unsurprisingly, the sight metaphor seems to be quite ubiquitous in the layers of religious semantics. Religious 'seeing' may refer to the soteriological target of the believer (nirvana or awakening); it may be related to the inner gaze, dream, and vision.[14] Dreams and visions, however, not only pertain to soteriology. They might become media of divination or revelation (McNamara 2016).

[11] The semantic field of sight greatly affects the ways in which religions are rooted in the material world, since religion is—to a great extent—'visible religion.' Since the transcendent cannot be seen, it has to be made visible through objects (Meyer 2015). Objects of religiously attributed seeing include statues, reliefs, images, relics, frescos, buildings, symbols (like the Christian cross, the Jewish menorah, or the Muslim half-moon), clothes, and—in modern

10 On the relevance of the semantic field of water in the early Daoist conception of the Way, see Allan (1997, 66–70). On the wheel simile, see Moeller (Moeller 2011, 27–36).

11 For the ideal of Clarity and Stillness, see the entry by Miura Kunio in Pregadio (2008, 799–800).

12 As Blumenberg noticed, the dichotomy light/obscurity is "unparalleled. From its beginnings, the history of metaphysics has drawn from these characteristics to adequately reference its ultimately intanglible issues" (translated by authors; German original: "…unvergleichlich. Von ihren Anfängen an hat die Geschichte der Metaphysik sich dieser Eigenschaften bedient, um für ihre letzten, gegenständlich nicht mehr faßbaren Sachverhalte eine angemessene Verweisung zu geben"), Blumenberg ((1957), p. 432); see also Bultmann (1948); Colpe (1965); Chidester (1992).

13 "When a man rightly sees, he sees no death, no sickness or distress. When a man rightly sees, he sees all, he wins all, completely" (Olivelle 1998, 273).

14 "*Uidere* [seeing] with God as its object is clearly a metaphor of cognition" (Finney 1994, 279). Regarding Buddhism, see McMahan (2002). With regard to China, see Santangelo (1998) for the role of dream in late imperial literature and Lin (1995) for a catalogue of dream visions in Daoism.

times—photos, videos, and films (Morgan 2005). Some of these objects can 'look back' and transform the beholder (Gifford 2011). Sometimes, statues of gods and goddesses are considered to have emotions and agency of their own (Chaniotis 2017; Bremmer 2013). For instance, Orthodox "icons and their use belong to a visual paradigm of 'seeing into being,' where what one puts before one's eyes has profound effects on the kind of person one becomes and the reality one lives in" (Luehrmann 2016, 238). And according to the Hindu concept of *dársan* (seeing), "[t]he central act of Hindu worship, from the point of view of the lay person, is to stand in the presence of the deity and to behold the image with one's own eyes, to see and be seen by the deity" (Eck 1998, 4).

[12] In the history of religions, the identification of the object with the transcendent, i.e. the "conflation of sign and signified," (Freedberg 1989, 32) and concepts of representation oscillate (Graf 1997, 947).[15] There are at least aspects of representation in reflected concepts of iconic veneration. A good example is the invisible *uṣṇīṣa*, the fleshy protuberance on the top of the Buddha's head in Buddhist iconography.

> [13] We are told that this *uṣṇīṣa* remains invisible because no one can look down on the Buddha. On the one hand, it is but one of the thirty-two signs that configure the Buddha's body, obfuscating it while revealing it. On the other hand, it is a paradoxical, formless sign that implies its own negation. […] The *uṣṇīṣa* is the unseen top of the Buddha icon, symbolizing its *nirguṇa*, or unqualified aspect, the paradoxical quality of the supramundane or transcendent Buddha (Faure 1998, 789).

[14] Yet there is another aspect to the visual, besides the embodiment, or at minimum, the evocation of the unseen and transcendent, through which the worshipper may contemplate and even be seen by holy beings. Visual stimuli and symbols also serve to communicate concepts, status, and aspirations within a religious community and to those outside of it. The visual quality of objects imbued with religious meanings are also frequently designed to provoke emotional reactions based on the aesthetic values of the culture from which they come. Watts, in his article for this volume, calls attention to the creation of visually beautiful books in order to convey messages of political and religious status, all without requiring the viewer to read the book at all; while not negating their written meaning, much of their signifying power lies in their aesthetic impact as a visual object. Such objects obtain other, often non-religious meanings as displays within museums.[16]

[15] Not only books, images or sculptures serve to communicate visual messages. In her essay, Linda Zampol d'Ortia analyzes in detail the visual meanings of clothing, in terms of color, texture, and form within both early modern Catholic and Japanese culture. Parallel to the Watts and Gamliel's assertion that ritual is a kind of language, Zampol d'Ortia carefully chronicles the ways in which Jesuits had to learn and accommodate the Japanese 'language' of clothing in order to communicate effectively on other levels, such as preaching. The Jesuits could not be heard without first addressing the disparity between the Japanese visual language of clothing and their own. That the difference in visual culture both within and outside of a

15 Regarding the Hindu concept of *darśan*, see Eck, 1998: 4: "Since, in the Hindu understanding, the deity is present in the image, the visual apprehension of the image is charged with religious meaning. Beholding the image is an act of worship, and through the eyes one gains the blessings of the divine."

16 The enduring religious meaning of objects displayed within museums and the negotiations between museums and the communities from whom the objects came has become an increasingly complicated issue (see, for example, Sullivan 2015; Paine 2012; Duncan 1995).

religious context represented such a powerful barrier to other forms of communication regarding religion is a testimony to the power of the visual, not merely between the human and the transcendent, but also between human beings themselves. Nor is this peculiar to the Japanese-European encounter. Elisheva Baumgarten has amply demonstrated that hairstyle, the choice of hats, stitching, material, and color of clothing served as visual signifiers to members of the medieval Jewish communities of Northern Europe. However, these signs were also in dialogue with Christian symbolic understandings of clothing, so that clothing in all of its variations became a way of communicating both intra- and inter-religiously, much as it did in early modern Japan. In both contexts, clothing was an expression of piety and thus also communication directed toward God (Baumgarten 2014, 172–96).

At times, these various functions—the embodiment of the unseen transcendent, the provocation of emotion, and the communication with both the divine and the human—coincide. For example, Carol Duncan has shown that among spiritual Baptist women in Toronto, clothing variously calls down and 'embodies' spiritual power in(to) the wearer, serves to communicate religious, historical, ethnic, social, and spiritual status to those who understand how to 'read' the clothing and other visual signs of the community, and of course, also constitutes an expression of worship of the divine (Duncan 2008). [16]

Hearing (with speaking or singing as its counterparts) is a further significant sense in the history of religions. It is relevant in recitation, prayer, auditions, hearing voices (McCarthy-Jones, Waegeli, and Watkins 2013), and oral communication (Wilke and Moebus 2011; Staal 1986; Elson 2004; Denny 1989; Wild 2006), as well as in performance (Brown 2008; Cupchik 2015) and music (Chen 2001; Harris and Dawut 2002; Sterckx 2000; Shannon 2004; Belzen 2013; Guzy 2008; Hoffman and Walton 1992; Wuthnow 2003; Hirschkind 2006; Laack 2015). Rhythm, especially, can evoke sensual states of transition (Needham 1967). Like seeing, hearing bears an 'intellectual' dimension, because it is easier to charge religiously, especially when it is evoked by speaking and recitation. Thus, hearing—and deafness as its opposite—is easily metaphorized (Graham 1987; Tournay 1991; McDermott 2013). Despite this 'intellectual dimension,' the emotive, sensual and extremely physical sensations provoked by music need to be taken into account as equal, and sometimes more powerful, partners in conveying religious messages through sound, as Ines Weinrich abundantly demonstrates in her essay. [17]

Among those scholars who have attempted to take a systematic approach, examining the role of multiple senses within a given religious tradition, some have attempted to provide a hierarchy of senses and the religious meanings assigned to them in that tradition (McHugh 2007); others focus on synesthesia. David Chidester, for instance, highlights the significance of a "pattern of synæsthetic events" in the Christian tradition: "The most important manifestations of the sacred in the tradition were symbolically structured by the convergence or interpenetration of visual and auditory modes" (Chidester 1992, 21). [18]

Certain *religious activities* evoke or accompany the mentioned senses. Rituals are prominent among them (Bull and Mitchell 2015). Many rituals are designed to evoke certain sensory experiences (e.g., the multifarious effects of a given type of sensory input such as sound in the lives of members of a given community) or concentrate on the symbolic meanings attributed to a sense in a given group's conceptualization of holiness, the divine, or evil (Thurlkill 2016; Hallett 2013; Morgan 2012; Green 2011; Pentcheva 2010; Morrison 2008; Harvey 2006, 2001; Fulton 2006a; Shannon 2004; Chen 2001; Sterckx 2000; Lewisohn 2008; Detienne 1972; Fraigneau-Julien 1985). Ritual action is "thick with sensory meaning" (Grimes 1982, 545), including smell (Howes 1987), sound, and body movement. Ritual sounds are of at least two [19]

varieties, namely human-made and not human-made, and the two can be further subdivided in speech and musical sounds (Jackson 1968). Other activities stressing the senses include performance, sacrifice, liturgy, praying (Fulton 2006a), and sexual intercourse (Roper 1994).

Senses in Religious Encounter

[20] Surveys of international trade in Antiquity and the Middle Ages shed considerable light on the ways in which the circulation of goods affected premodern cultures.[17] It is certain, for instance, that China began to develop its role as part of the Eurasian trade in the second century BCE, when models of Middle East incense burners arrived to the capital Chang'an. In the first centuries CE, the development and blossoming of the Silk Road was to definitively transform the sociocultural landscape of the Middle Kingdom (Milburn 2016, 444–45).[18] Rarer are investigations of the role of the senses, in their plurality or individually, in religious encounter, whether in the form of polemic and other methods of demarcation/*Othering* processes, or in processes of transfer, adaption, or resistance. One notable exception to this lacuna is the visual, which is the one field where long-standing and substantive research has been done on its functions in interactions between different religious communities. Much of this research has been dedicated to the area of visual polemics, where the field of medieval Jewish-Christian visual polemics is especially rich (Lipton 2014, 1999; Epstein 2011, 1997; Shalev-Eyni 2010; Harris and Dawut 2002; Higgs Strickland 2003; Mellinkoff 1993, 1999; Block 1995). The role of visual and material culture in the transfer of religious ideas and symbols has also garnered considerable interest, however. Scholars of religious and cultural interaction in pre-modern India are particularly notable in this regard, although this is certainly not the only region for which such research is being undertaken (Owen 2012; Pons 2011; Flood 2009; Mollier 2008; Allsen 2002). Sometimes examinations of intercultural and interreligious exchange have been combined with explorations of visual polemic, as scholars increasingly consider representations from both cultures/communities, rather than focusing on one alone.

[21] Yet, visual polemic is not merely confined to artistic productions. For example, in times of war or as political or moral statements, it was often common to publically display the 'mutilated' bodies of opponents, criminals, or hated religious minorities. Such displays were very much intended to assault the visual experience of passers-by (Egmond 2003; Merback 1999; Cohen 1993; Kisch 1943). The physical appearance of humans is frequently imbued with religious meaning (Kopelson 2016; Hochman 2014; Resnick 2012). While old age, disease, and infirmity often characterize the religious other in polemic, emaciated ugliness might be seen as a marker of holiness within an ascetic context (Bynum 1987). By contrast, well-fed youthful male beauty in certain Sufi circles was an impetus to divine contemplation (El-Rouayheb 2005; Kugle 2007). Characterizations of the religious other in terms of what a given culture or religious traditions considers ugly, sinful, or holy serves as another way of marking the religious Other or individuals within a religious community as outsiders or otherwise undesirable. An example for this would be the ways in which elderly women were sometimes associated with the evil eye or witchcraft in general in late medieval and early modern Europe (Karlsen 1987).

[22] Another way in which the visual functions as a marker of Otherness is through sumptuary laws. During the Middle Ages in the Islamic, Byzantine, and Western, Latin Christian-

17 On religion and trade, see, for instance, Wick and Rabens (2013).
18 For the role of trade in the eastwards expansion of Buddhism, see Neelis (2011).

dominated world, religious minorities were sometimes required to wear clothing or some other form of decorative item which distinguished them from the majority. Sumptuary codes continue to delineate boundaries between class, gender, as well as religious affiliation from the early modern era to the present day (Garber 2011, 21–40; Killerby 2002). This requirement was extended to prostitutes in parts of Western Europe, and this tactic was later adopted by the Nazis in World War II (Caplan 2010, 86). Yet the marking of otherness through clothing is more complicated than a one-to-one identification of an undesirable via regulated dress. Sara Lipton has shown that the European Christian iconography of Jewish sumptuary difference changed substantially as the culture of looking/seeing shifted during the Middle Ages (Lipton 2014). The study of Linda Zampol d'Ortia for the current volume shows how early modern European sumptuary regulations within the Jesuit order were challenged by the very different dress-codes of Japanese society, so that to fit in and communicate across religious boundaries, Jesuits had to 'dress up." Here, the work of Johann Huizinga may provide useful clues for new ways of thinking about clothing and the visual as an element in cross-religious encounter and interaction. He posited that play and ritual were manifestations of the same impulse, and that integral to both was the breakdown of hierarchy and disguise (Huizinga 1950, ix–x, 8–27). In the case presented by Zampol d'Ortia, it is not so much the disintegration of hierarchy, but rather the attempt to refashion oneself to fit into another hierarchy to disguise or camouflage oneself as a member of the new religious Other. The Jesuits 'cross-dressed," to use Garber's broad understanding of the term, in order to facilitate encounter. Such a strategy needs to be seen in conjunction with sumptuary laws, for it was precisely out of fear of religious 'transvestism' that Muslims and Christians sought to regulate the clothing of the religious Other, lest the boundaries between communities become lost.

[23] One has seen a curious reversal of the impulse to keep religious minorities distinct in modern Europe. Instead of requiring members of a religious minority, in this case Muslims, to set themselves apart from members (at least nominally) of the religious majority, Muslims have faced pressure to abandon religiously distinct clothing in favor of the styles current among the majority population (Amer 2014). Here the emphasis is on fear of difference and the implied challenge presented by the conscious choice of a religious group to not 'disguise' themselves, i.e. adopt the habitus with which non-Muslim Europeans are accustomed. In both efforts to impose distinctive clothing and to prohibit it, one sees religious anxiety and questions of inclusion vs. identity focused on a very clear visual marker, namely clothing. The reversal raises questions of how Western Europeans' strategies for coping with difference have changed over time. It should be noted, however, that positive connotations may be attached to distinguishing dress as well; for example, in the ways that members of religious orders, Christian and Buddhist monks, or Sufis choose to adopt a particular garb which clearly signals their religious vocation. Again, clothing becomes the visual clue, par excellence, of religious belonging, even as clothing can evoke more than mere seeing, in the religiously sensual experience of the wearer.

[24] A final way in which the visual is significant in religious encounter has to do with its capacity to inspire religious awe in the members of the community, on the one hand, and to potentially attract individuals outside that community, on the other. James Watts has already alerted us to the importance of beauty as a tool in religious ritual and display. However, this beauty can have a more active role in the context of religious encounter, namely to attract members of the religious Other. For example, Muslims from the Umayyad and Abbasid period praised the visual (and other sensory) delights of Christian monasteries and alluded to their

resultant religious pull (Zakharia 2001–2002; Kilpatrick 1999, 2003; Fowden 2007; Campbell 2009; Troupeau 1975). Very often the capacity of the visual to successfully lure members of the religious Other to holy spaces or rituals also comes from successfully engaging a common visual symbolic language which one or more neighboring communities share. Ophira Gamliel focuses on the ritual grammar of touch in her contribution to this volume; however, as she mentions in her article, this method could be applied to the ways in which various religious communities in South India use other sensual, including visual, elements in their rituals which serve to distinguish a community but remain comprehensible enough to outsiders to allow easy participation. Presumably much the same principle is at work with the transfer and transformation of visual religious symbols, such as the representation of various goddesses, St. Sebastian, or the Virgin Mary, from one religio-cultural milieu to another. Thus, having a common sensual 'vocabulary' and 'grammar' becomes fundamental for creating a milieu in which shared practices between multiple religious groups may take place.

[25] While scholarship on the role of the visual in religious encounter may be the most developed, many of the same patterns apply to other sensory realms. A number of scholars has focused on the role of sounds as a religious demarcation strategy. Alain Corbin has discussed the control of church bells in marking religious festivals in the phase of the French Revolution (Corbin 1994). Nicholas Jaspert and Olivia Remie Constable have explored the role of religious sound such as the Muslim call to prayer and church bells and the attempt to control religious noise as an integral part of Christian-Muslim encounter in the Middle Ages; this continues to be relevant in Muslim-Christian relations in the modern period (Jaspert 2009; Constable 2010; Harris and Dawut 2002). Music, more aesthetically attractive than mere talking, further serves as a venue for both polemic and/or missionizing, whether in medieval Jewish or Christian liturgical songs or in modern hip hop (LeVine 2008; Aidi 2014). In her essay for this volume, Weinrich, while less focused on sound as factor in direct Muslim/non-Muslim encounters and relations, also notes the importance which Muslims from the Abbasid period placed on the quality of voice, modulation in tone, and the spacing of words for effective preaching. Presumably, such expectations would be all the more important in luring non-Muslims to Islam. The beauty of certain types of religious noise, such as that of the Qur'an being recited, is sometimes portrayed as having the potency to inspire religious outsiders to convert. In considering sound and its religious meaning, it is important to grasp sound as a medium unto itself: sometimes it can convey verbal meaning, as when a particular song is sung. Alternatively, specific sounds may be imbued with religious meaning, often through ritual —that of a bell, or tune, or even the recitation of a text—to provoke religious experiences in the hearers or producers (i.e. singers, chanters, etc.), regardless of whether they understand the verbal, narrative component of the sound. In the instance of a religiously plural society, sounds having a common, or at least recognizable, religious significance across multiple communities or religious traditions would be quite powerful as potential attractors from one religion to another. As for the visual, one may consider the impact of a common auditory symbolic vocabulary between communities and the degree to which such commonalities might foster shared religious practices or conversion.

[26] As already mentioned earlier, in a number of cultures, pleasant fragrance or the lack of smell served as a marker of holiness and spiritual accomplishment, whereas foul smell was an indicator of false religion, heresy, and the demonic, respectively (Green 2011; Sizgorich 2008; Harvey 2006; Cuffel 2007; Halevi 2011; Kugle 2007, 65; Tolan 1998; Classen, Howes, and Synnott 1994, 52; Brown 1988, 5–8, 26–28. 85-86, 92-102, 293-303). Such a schema

lent smell an obvious role in religious polemic. Much foul smell as polemic sprang not from actual smell but described or imagined smell within written texts, so that attributing foul smell to a person, place, or animal was to mark it as evil or, at the very least, religiously defective. Therefore, the production of pleasant scent in a religious context could serve as an olfactory witness to the 'truth' of a given religious tradition, holy person, etc. As with seeing and hearing, having a common 'language of odors' would potentially facilitate shared rituals or even conversion from one tradition to another. The examples from Chinese literature presented by Santangelo in this volume challenge scholars who wish to explore the role of smell in religious polemic and encounter to consider a more complex system of meanings than the neat dichotomy of foul vs. fragrant present in Chinese, European, and Middle Eastern cultures.

[27] As briefly noted above, while taste certainly can carry religious meaning, in terms of the dynamics of religious interaction, what matters more than taste per se is eating, cooking, and the manners of eating. The establishment of specific food laws, different from the surrounding cultures, served to create a distinguishing religious identity, even as mocking those who failed to follow these laws established further borders between religious groups (Freidenreich 2011). Yet demarcation often does not end with official regulations. Regularly in religious texts, the adoption or retention of foodways that are technically not forbidden yet still associated with the practices of members of another religious community are censured. Here, rather like the modern argumentation regarding Muslim women's clothing, foodways which are not the same as those practiced by the groups in power are seen as threatening or problematic (Cuffel 2017).

[28] Assigning transcendent meaning to food, drink, or the act of eating a particular substance or at a particular time—for example, the Christian Eucharist or a Hindu Puja—creates a powerful, physical path to the divine for the participant, but also becomes a potent form of exclusion of the Other—not merely from a given religious community, but, symbolically, from the transcendent yet embodied encounter with the holy. Accusing the religious Other of eating the wrong food is a further form of exclusion, increasingly so when the 'Other' is accused of cannibalism, as were the early Christians, or of eating or drinking a foul substance, for there, the religious Other becomes not merely 'Other', but monstrous.

[29] Touch can be imbued with religious meaning through expectations that sanctity, and with it healing and blessing, may be transferred through direct contact. While in few traditions one could directly, physically touch God, once could touch the holy man or woman. Failing that, a garment or other object that had come into direct contact with the holy man/woman or grave space, etc., all have the ability to transfer sanctity and healing (Brogan 2015; Meri 1999). The hope of such blessing and healing often serves as a powerful draw to members outside of a given religious community to the holy person or site (Mayeur-Jaouen 2012; Poujeau 2012).

[30] Unpleasant touch, and resulting emotions, also served as a tool in the rhetoric and physical manifestations of religious encounter. In particular, pain, especially the pain of martyrdom, is frequently perceived as sanctifying (Glucklich 2001). The description or witnessing of pain endured for the sake of God, in turn, becomes a way of creating religious identity by provoking awe and empathy on the part of the viewers/readers, and by denigrating the religious outsiders who inflicted such pain (Einbinder 2002). Demarcation through touch was and is often an imaginary or metaphorical one, such as imagining that witches had sexual intercourse with the devil (Roper 1994). Witchcraft trials or inquisitional trials of Jews or Muslims who had converted to Christianity and were suspected of 'regressing' to their former beliefs and

practices as a kind of ritual, particularly when they involved public executions, presents a powerfully negative example of senses and religious encounter. In such situations, in which the 'heretics' were burned, multiple senses were recruited in a moment of violent religious demarcation—the pain of the one being burnt, the smell of smoke and burning wood and flesh, the screams of the ones suffering, and of course the visual spectacle, which such an execution displayed for all present.

Research Perspectives

Research on religion and the senses has to consider the facts that a) there is no direct access to sensual perception and b) sensual perception can have various meanings, among them religious ones. None of the senses or activities which evoke sensory experiences are, in and of themselves, 'religious.' It is the religious context which makes them so, even as it is context which frames evocations of senses in efforts to create or dismantle boundaries between religious communities or individuals. That being said, the senses are no less vital for our understanding and analysis of religion, for not only are they that which allows us to interact with the physical world but they become the symbolic building blocks for human imagining about the divine and demonic world, and, it seems, the religious Other. [31]

If sensual perception is only a socio-cultural issue that needs specifically charged meaning, the crucial question with regard to the topic of religion and the senses is: How does religion make sense of the senses? Not all of the research on religion and the senses considers the mentioned conditions. Furthermore, how do the senses, and religious meanings assigned to them, make sense of religious encounter? How does the relation between objects (including their affordances and agency) and sensual perception work? The direction of getting an answer is shown by Edwin Hutchins. He characterizes physical objects as "material anchors" for conceptual blends (Hutchins 2005; Korsvoll 2014). [32]

Very often, scholars focusing on one or more of the senses, or on an activity which *per se* is intimately involved with sensory experience (for instance, eating and/or fasting), address the tension between embodiment and existence in the physical world and aspirations to come into contact with a largely transcendent, disembodied divine sphere or being (Hecker 2005; van Gelder 2000; Bynum 1987). This issue refers to the metaphorical use of the senses in religious communication. For instance, smell has to be referred to metaphorically (Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1999) and, vice versa, can serve as a metaphor, and food can be both metonymy and metaphor for religiously attributed emotions (Toomey 1990). When are the senses referred to metonymically, when and with which consequences metaphorically? A hint to answering the question why religion makes metaphorical use of the senses might be what Hartmann Tyrell calls "sociomorphic implicatures" in religious communication (Tyrell 2008). [33]

Another research question concerns the alternative between affirmation and rejection of sensual perception, e.g., the (ritual) rejection of eating (Germano 1997), sounding (Chen 2001), or of sensing at all (Wasserstrom 2000), for instance, through meditation (Franco 2009). Asceticism versus libertinism (Jonas 1958) or the Byzantine iconoclastic debate (Brubaker 2012) are prominent examples for the oscillation between affirmation and rejection of sensual perception in the history of religions. [34]

Last, but not least: How does religious encounter affect the use of and reference to senses? During the early Byzantine period, for instance, parts of Judaism were increasingly interested in images—due to the contemporaneous Christian intensification of the cult of images and [35]

preoccupation with the nature of religious images (Neis 2007). Paying greater attention to various forms of visual polemic—on public buildings, in manuscripts, on the internet—is one obvious area which would benefit from deeper, more systematic research. In such investigations, however, other forms of public display, such as executions, punishment, couture, and rituals, need to be regularly incorporated into any examination of the role of the visual in religious encounter. Furthermore, while it is clear certain eating regulations might help to demarcate one religious tradition from another (Freidenreich 2011; Johnson et al. 2011), *taste,* as opposed to just eating, as a mediator or demarcator of religious boundaries has not been explored sufficiently. Additionally, the discrepancy between the role of taste in the Eucharist during the Middle Ages vs. James Watts' observations of Christian de-emphasis of taste in the modern ritual highlights the need to consider how the significance of certain senses change over time in a given culture.

[36] The recent debates regarding the regulation, or rather prohibition, of the Muslim call to prayer in modern Europe and its parallels in medieval Europe have obscured other ways in which sound can and has played a role in religious encounter. For example, Ines Weinrich notes that al-Ghazālī discusses the tone and rhythm appropriate for songs and music of warfare. This special category of music raises the question of how music and other sounds from armed combat served to incite or demarcate. Was/is there a difference in the 'sound' of religious warfare as opposed to that belonging to warfare which has not been assigned religious meaning, not only in Islam but in other cultures as well? Finally, in some constellations of religious encounter, the senses are in a competition with each regarding the question which one leads to God and salvation, e.g., hearing and seeing during the times of the Protestant Reformation. Why and how are certain senses stressed in different constellations of religious contact? How are different senses made to work together in moments of cross-religious communication? For example, Nathanael Andrade has argued that the fifth-century Christian leader John Chrysostom used the public performance of Christian processions and hymns in imitation of and competition against similar displays by other imperially sanctioned cults in Roman Constantinople as a way to Christianize public buildings and space (Andrade 2019). Here, the visual and auditory are combined in a provocatory act designed to demarcate between Christian and non-Christian space while at the same time co-opting imperial religious space for Christianity. The contributions of James Watts and especially Ophira Gamliel invite us to think about other ways in which multiple senses may be evoked simultaneously in rituals, though not always in a directly confrontational fashion like the one analyzed by Andrade. If the symbolic meanings attributed to various senses, and the mode of their evocation, constitute a 'language' complete with its own 'grammar', then future examinations of the senses in religious contexts will involve an exploration of both the semantic and functional/syntactic uses of all senses within specific cultural-ritual contexts and how a culturally shared grammar of the senses facilitated both intra- and inter-religious communication. What happens, as in the case-study by Zampol d'Ortia, when cultures having very different grammars of the senses attempt to communicate would be a fruitful further area of research. Finally, as indicated in the beginning of this essay, senses are not inherently 'religious'; rather, they are assigned religious meaning in specific contexts. Thus, how non-religious meanings and uses of the senses related to their religious constructions in any given culture and, in turn, how the interplay of religious and non-religious meanings and functions of the senses were transformed in instances of religious encounter all remain desiderata for further investigation.

Contributors

Ines Weinrich, in her "Sensing Sound: Aesthetic and Religious Experience According to al-Ghazālī (d. 1111)," places al-Ghazālī's book on the etiquette of sound, *Kitāb Ādāb as-samāʿ wa-l-wajd*, in the broader context of Islamic musicological, theological, medical, and philosophical discussions regarding the power of music. She notes the ways in which al-Ghazālī and his contemporaries expanded upon Greek musical theory, but focuses most particularly on the ways in which, according to al-Ghazālī, music could serve to guide the hearer in a variety of ways to a salvific experience, in part because of its transformative power over the body and soul. [37]

Paolo Santangelo, in "Olfaction and Other Senses in Chinese Culture: A Comparative Analysis, with Special Attention to the Use of the Term *Xiang*," underscores the importance of literary texts for understanding religious meanings attributed to smell and the function of olfaction in various forms of religious encounter in Buddhist, Dao, and Confucian thought. Notable in his findings are the extent to which smell, whether disgusting or lovely, serves as a mode of communication between the living and the dead, as well as between the human and the divine. He argues that smell, especially (but not exclusively) smell emanating from incense, was powerful not merely for its effect on the physiological sensation of smelling, but because of its capacity to provoke and express strong emotion. [38]

In "The Dress of Evangelization: Jesuit Garments, Liturgical Textiles, and the Senses," Linda Zampol d'Ortia examines the Jesuit Catholic efforts to accommodate Japanese values placed on modes of dress, including color, type of cloth, and cut of clothing. Clothing, according to her, constituted a kind of non-verbal communication. Jesuits had to learn to 'communicate' in the Japanese style before being able to effectively convey verbal clarifications of their religious belief. At the same time, this accommodation came into conflict with European expectations of humble dress appropriate to Jesuits and other religious orders. She shows that attempts to reassert these European expectations of proper dress on Jesuits working in Japan mostly undermined Jesuit effectiveness and attempts to be accepted within early modern Japanese society. [39]

Focusing primarily, though not exclusively, on the sensual function of books in religious rituals, James Watts in his "Sensation and Metaphor in Ritual Performance: The Example of Sacred Texts" provides a broad overview of how the five senses function or do *not* function in religious ritual. He argues that rituals in fact deemphasize the sensual aspect of acts such as touching and tasting. On the other hand, at times sensual experience is used even when it is not explicitly evoked, for example in the creation of leather-bound bibles, which create a sense of intimacy with touch. The aesthetic quality of beautiful books has functions which have little to do with written content; these may have to do with prestige, or evoking awe. The sensorial meanings and functions of books have power to communicate that is powerful and different than their lexical content. [40]

Ophira Gamliel, in her "Syntactic Roles of Touch in Shared Festivals in Kerela: Towards an Analysis of Ritual Categories," argues that rituals constitute a language of their own, and may be analysed both for their semantic and syntactical roles. Drawing from linguistic theory, Gamliel provides a detailed examination of how touch functions in Hindu, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish rituals in Southern India, both in terms of its symbolic meanings but also in its power to signal various transitional moments within given rituals. While she concentrates on touch, she shows that having commonly understandable symbols and syntactical/practical [41]

functional roles empowers senses to draw members of various religious communities to the rituals of others.

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Sensing Sound

Aesthetic and Religious Experience According to al-Ghazālī

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ABSTRACT The Muslim theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) is one of the most often cited authors when it comes to "music and Islam." His "Book on the Etiquette of Listening and Ecstasy" (*Kitāb Ādāb as-samāʿ wa-l-wajd*), translated into English more than a hundred years ago, is widely circulated among Muslims in the East and West, in Arabic and English, in print and on the internet. This paper re-examines the text against the background of Arab musical theory of the time when it was written, and analyses selected technical terms that allude to concepts rooted in Late Antique musical philosophy and also become tangible in the Qurʾān. al-Ghazālī recognises both aesthetic pleasure and the transformative power of sounds and gives guidance how to channel the hearing perception into a salvific experience.

KEYWORDS Islam, music, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, sonic dimensions, Muslim ritual

Introduction

[1] The Muslim theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) is one of the most cited authors with regard to the role of music in Islamic culture. During my fieldwork on contemporary religious chanting in Syria and Lebanon, his statements were recurrently present in conversations and religious speeches or lessons. The frequent reference to his arguments is the reason why I chose his *Book on the Etiquette of Listening and Ecstasy* (*Kitāb Ādāb as-samāʿ wa-l-wajd*, see below) for a close reading. That al-Ghazālī, like many of his colleagues before him, built partially on categories that came down with the reception of Greek philosophy is a recognised fact (Griffel 2009; Kukkonen 2015). However, his book on listening has not been the subject of further research in this respect. It was taken foremost as a text voicing the permissibility of using music—mainly in the form of sung poetry—both in general and, more specifically, within Muslim religious practice. This paper is a first attempt to examine al-Ghazālī's classification of sounds and of music's functions in different religious and non-religious contexts within the framework of musicology. It will show that some of his arguments only become clear

in the light of Arabic musical theory, which had appropriated Greek musical philosophy. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean his arguments are understood and used today in the same way they were in the twelfth century. This paper focuses on the evolution of his arguments against the backdrop of Arabic musical theory at his time. The presence and understanding of his arguments in contemporary Muslim practices will be examined in a second paper (Weinrich forthcoming).

[2] 'Aesthetic experience' is based on Erika Fischer-Lichte's concept of aesthetic experience as a liminal experience. It is characterised by a transition that comprises physiological, energetic, affective, and motoric changes (2004, 305–14, 2008, 174–80). Aesthetic experience can work as a mediator of religion, but not all aesthetic experiences are necessarily religious. The latter is the case if the goal is directed towards initiating a relation to the Divine. Aesthetic experience is a useful category here because al-Ghazālī understands structured sound in relation to human conditions. He sees beautiful sound as a source of pleasure and, more importantly, music as a tool to incite emotions, and describes how it may be used as a religious tool. It is important to note that the text under study is not an abstract elaboration on beauty but deals foremost with aesthetic experience.[1] Accordingly, the terms *jamāl* or *jamīl* ('beauty' or 'beautiful,' typical for the abstract theory) do not figure prominently in his vocabulary. Instead we find the terms *ṭīb* and *ḥusn* and their respective adjectives *ṭayyib* and *ḥasan*, meaning 'good,' 'pleasant,' and, as a consequence, also 'beautiful.' In addition, al-Ghazālī uses *ladhdha* and *mustalidhdha* (and occasionally *ṭarab* and *muṭrib*), i.e. 'delight' and 'causing delight.' It shows that he is mainly concerned with sensations and processes that are triggered through listening. These processes, or selected parts of it, become channelled as religious experiences. It is this last part which constitutes the focus of the present paper: how, in al-Ghazālī's conceptualisation, is listening and its impact conceived as a religious experience?

[3] I must start by saying that I am mainly interested in the effects of listening as described in a non-Sufi context. This may seem odd, dealing with al-Ghazālī, who is often primarily taken as a representative and defender of Sufism. But, in fact, he also treats the religious function of music in a non-Sufi context. In al-Ghazālī's time of living and writing, the power of music was a well-acknowledged fact. The *Epistle on Music* (*Risāla fī l-mūsīqī*) by the so-called Brethren of Purity (Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ) describes the effect of music on human beings and how it can be found in all domains of life, regardless of class or nation. The Brethren of Purity is the name used by a group of authors of a large encyclopaedic work consisting of about fifty epistles on various sciences that are addressed to a fictive "brother" and written in the tenth century.[2] They write:

> [4] […] the art of music has differing effects on the souls of the listeners […]. Because of this, all nations of humankind make use of it, as do many animals also. A demonstration that it has effect on the soul is that people sometimes use it when there is rejoicing and pleasure at weddings, feasts, and invitations, sometimes when there is sadness, grief, and tribulation, and on occasions of mourning [*maʾātim*], some-

1 For an assessment of al-Ghazālī on beauty, see Puerta Vilchez (2017, 738–55). Puerta Vilchez' seminal study covers a large part of Arabic writing on sense perception until the fourteenth century. It focuses on al-Andalus but also includes some major thinkers in the East. However, when it comes to concrete examples of sense perception, the visual sense clearly dominates.

2 On the Brethren of Purity, see DeCallataÿ (2013) and El-Bizri (2008); especially on their writing on music, see Wright (2008) and Wright (2010). I use the Arabic edition and English translation by Owen Wright; the epistle on music had been studied by Amnon Shiloah and translated into French (1965) and English (1978); on these and the new edition and translation, see Wright (2010, 1–15).

> times in houses of worship and on feastdays, sometimes in the marketplace, at home, when travelling and when settled down, at times of ease and at times of weariness, in the assemblies of kings and the dwellings of commoners. It is used by men and women alike, by young and old, by the learned and the ignorant, by artisans and merchants, and by all classes of people (Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ 2010, 12–13 Arab., 80–81 Engl.).

In the following, I will give a short outline of al-Ghazālī's writing on listening and highlight the different domains and functions of listening the author describes. I will explore some of his technical terms in the light of musical terminology. Given the fact that a large part of the ideas on the effects of sound was shared by Jews, Christians, and Muslims, the paper finally asks about specific Muslim interpretations in this context. [5]

The Author and his Book

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (ca. 1056–1111) was born in the district of Ṭūs in Khorasan, near the modern Mashhad.[3] He became a professor at the famous Niẓāmīya Madrasa in Baghdad in 1091, but after a couple of years he withdrew from teaching, facing a personal crisis. He travelled and studied for a period of eleven years before he finally returned to teaching at the Niẓāmīya. Within the scope of this article, it is not possible to give a full account of al-Ghazālīs's teaching and writing. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the image which dominated Western scholarship on al-Ghazālī in the twentieth century has been re-evaluated recently. This regards mainly two issues: the perception of al-Ghazālī as taking up a hostile position against philosophy (*falsafa*), and even being responsible for a 'decline' of philosophy instead of a naturalisation of philosophy into Islamic theology (*kalām*); and the portrayal of his crisis as a turning point that would also include the change of certain theological positions.[4] [6]

In the following, I will focus solely on his writing on listening to music and singing (*samāʿ*). It has become habitual to take these writings as a main reference for the defence and the permissibility of music.[5] I would like to take a different path and elaborate mainly on two aspects: first, on music as a practice and not as an abstract concept which should be permissible or not; and second, his differentiation between the various functions and impacts of different sounds. [7]

The main source cited with regard to music is al-Ghazālī's *Book on the Etiquette of Listening and Ecstasy* (*Kitāb Ādāb as-samāʿ wa-l-wajd*), which is part of his monumental *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm ad-dīn*). In a modern print, it comprises four volumes of 1.500 pages (al-Ghazālī, n.d.).[6] In short, it represents an ethical guide for Muslims for all aspects of life. Its four sections treat devotional practices (*ʿibādāt*), social customs (*ʿādāt*), things that lead to perdition (*muhlikāt*), and things that lead to salvation (*munjiyāt*). Frank Griffel characterises the *Revival* as follows: [8]

> *Revival* was an unusual book for its time. It was conceived as a work on the 'knowl- [9]

3 For a detailed account of his life, see Griffel (2009, 19–59).

4 For a comprehensive reassessment, see Griffel (2009).

5 For instance, Bruns (1995, 96); Gribetz (1991); Shannon (2006, 114); Shehadi (1995, 115–31). In addition, searching for 'al-Ghazālī' and 'music' in any search engine online will bring about innumerable examples.

6 I also consulted the Cairo print by Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlāduh, 1347–48/1928 and have checked important passages against the commentary by Zabīdī ([1414] 1994). For the problems related to the *editio princeps* and modern prints of *Revival*, see Griffel (Griffel 2009, 15–16).

> edge (or: science) of human actions' (*ʿilm al-muʿāmala*) and not on the 'knowledge of the unveiling' (*ʿilm al-mukāshafa*). It wishes to prove that type of knowledge that prompts humans to act rightfully, staying clear of knowledge that has no consequences for human actions. The religious knowledge that al-Ghazālī wishes to revive is 'the jurisprudence of the path to the hereafter.' *Revival* creates a new genre of literature by combining at least three earlier ones: the genre of *fiqh* books on the individual rulings (*furūʿ*) of Shari'a, the genre of philosophical tractates on ethics and the development of character […], and the genre of Sufi handbooks […] (Griffel 2009, 48).

The *Book on the Etiquette of Listening and Ecstasy* was translated by Duncan B. MacDonald under the title "Emotional Religion in Islām as Affected by Music and Singing" in 1901/02 (1901a, 1901b, 1902). The translation has its merits but is only of limited use. The reason lies not so much the old-fashioned, sometimes stilted language; most importantly, it is—naturally—not up to date with our state of knowledge on the musical terminology al-Ghazālī uses. This applies to a number of musical instruments, such as *shāhīn* or *ṭabl* (n. 15), and, more importantly, to the term *ṭuruq* (sg. *ṭarīqa*) for musical modes, which are, as I will show, perceived as evoking different states in the listeners. In the following, I will present a short overview of the text's general structure and content before elaborating on the aspects that are relevant for this paper. [10]

Ādāb as-samāʿ wa-l-wajd: Outline of the Contents

In his general introduction to the book, the author describes the ear as the interface, which is only the entrance point of the sound. The real effect of listening happens in the heart (*qalb*). The main function of listening with intent, according to al-Ghazālī, lies in revealing the secrets which are hidden in the heart. [11]

> Infolded in them [hearts] are their jewels like as fire is infolded in iron and stone, and concealed like as water is concealed under dust and loan. There is no way to the extracting of their hidden things save by the flint and steel of listening to music and singing (*samāʿ*), and there is no entrance to the heart save by the ante-chamber of the ear. So musical tones, measured and pleasing (*an-naghamāt al-mawzūna al-mustalidhdha*), bring forth what is in it and make evident its beauties [in the sense of 'good qualities' (*maḥāsin*)] and defects. For when the heart is moved there is made evident that only which it contains like as a vessel drips only what is in it. And listening to music and singing is for the heart a true touchstone and a speaking standard; whenever the soul of the music and singing reaches the heart, then there stirs in the heart that which in it preponderates (MacDonald 1901a, 199; al-Ghazālī, n.d., pt. 6, p. 1120).[7] [12]

At this point, some explanation on the term *samāʿ* and its translation is needed. *Samāʿ* literally means 'listening'; MacDonald translates generally as "listening to music and singing" (MacDonald 1901a, 236n1). Although he mainly states the Sufi perspective as a reason for his choice, it is indeed an appropriate translation in this context: when talking about *samāʿ*, [13]

7 I use MacDonald's translation in this example to give an impression of his language. Technical terms in brackets are my addition. All translations from Arabic in the following are mine, if not indicated otherwise.

the author foremost refers to the performance of poetry but occasionally also to the sounds of instruments and sounds in nature. Nevertheless, as al-Ghazālī focuses on the listener's perspective and the different impacts of, and responses to, listening, I will translate *samāʿ* in many cases merely as 'listening.' In the course of history, *samāʿ* has, on the one hand, become synonymous with music in general. On the other, it developed into a technical term for listening with spiritual intent in Sufi ritual practice. In the time of al-Ghazālī, the Greek-derived term *mūsīqī* (later becoming *mūsīqā*) denoted primarily the musical theory, whereas for the musical practice, *ghināʾ* ('singing') and more specific genre names were used. al-Ghazālī hardly uses *mūsīqī* in his text but occasionally refers to *ghināʾ*.

[14] The main text of the book is divided into two parts. The first part treats the different opinions (*ikhtilāf al-ʿulamāʾ*) regarding the question of permissibility (*ibāḥa*) of listening. The second part discusses the different effects and the etiquette of listening. Each part is subdivided into steps (*darajāt*) or stages (*maqāmāt*), and these are often further subdivided.

[15] al-Ghazālī starts with presenting traditions (*aḥādīth*, sg. *ḥadīth*) and scholarly opinions against and in favour of listening. He then enumerates "Proofs that show that listening to music and singing is permissible" (n.d., 1124). Like sight, smell, taste, or touch, hearing engages with either pleasant or unpleasant sensations that occur in nature.[8] Listening to a beautiful voice (*aṣ-ṣawt al-ḥasan*) is permitted because God has bestowed this quality upon his creatures. The author here follows one exegetical line of interpreting the Qurʾānic verse "He adds to his creation what he wills" (Q 35:1) as referring to the beautiful voice. He further quotes various traditions underlying that the beautiful voice is part of God's message to humankind, most prominently "God did not send a single prophet without a beautiful voice" (n.d., 1125).

[16] The beautiful measured sound (*aṣ-ṣawt aṭ-ṭayyib al-mawzūn*),[9] the author continues, cannot be forbidden, because it is part of God's created nature. As the prohibition of certain things and practices occurs contextually, one cannot generalise and argue for a general prohibition of the beautiful measured sound. "Measured," here, means "with well-proportioned structures" (*mutanāsiba li-l-maṭāliʿ wa-l-maqāṭiʿ*) that may also be found, for instance, in the singing of birds (n.d., 1126), and thus refers to a rhythmical structure in the widest sense. The author then turns to poetry (*shiʿr*), introduced as "measured (i.e. with a metre)" (*mawzūn*) and "with a meaning" (*mafhūm*). As both rhythm and meaning are not forbidden, both occurring together cannot be forbidden, he argues (n.d., 1128).

[17] He then moves on to an argument he already alluded to in his introduction. Listening is a mover of the heart (*muḥarrik li-l-qalb*), he explains, but it can only move what is already inside the heart (n.d., 1131). This way of argumentation is not exclusively used by al-Ghazālī but typical of early Islamic mystical thought. al-Ghazālī quotes a statement by Abū Sulaymān ad-Dārānī (d. c. 830): "Listening does not produce in the heart what is not in it, but it stirs up what is in it" (n.d., 1133). It seems that the argument in his time was used in both ways: as a licence and, importantly, also as a warning and an argument for prohibition under certain circumstances.[10] This discussion in general reflects a main issue Muslim scholars had to deal with, namely the unquestioned power of music, which showed in various ways in daily experience, and how to integrate it into religion. al-Ghazālī brings examples of a baby that

8 al-Ghazālī also enumerates 'reason' (*ʿaql*) along these senses, defining the respective opposite experiences as 'knowledge' and 'ignorance' (n.d., 1125).

9 *Ṣawt* means both 'sound' and 'voice.' Here, 'sound' is meant, because al-Ghazālī also discusses 'wordless' sound.

10 The argument was often used in conversations during my fieldwork; it was emphasised mainly as an argument for the justification of religious chanting.

stops crying when listening to something beautiful, and he quotes numerous anecdotes how humans and animals respond to different kinds of sounds and rhythms. Arabic literature is indeed full of such examples.[11]

In this section, his fourth argument in favour of listening, al-Ghazālī describes seven purposes in which the chanting of rhymed measured words (*at-tarannum bi-l-kalimāt al-musajjaʿa al-mawzūna*) is of good use, and continues by enumerating five circumstances in which listening to music and singing is not permissible. He ends with a refutation of the arguments by those who consider listening as not allowable. [18]

The second part of the book treats the effects and etiquette of listening. The term the author uses for 'effect' is *taʾthīr*: he speaks of different impacts (*āthār*, sg. *athar*) listening has for the individual. *Ādāb*, here translated as 'etiquette," refers not only to refined behaviour but carries the notion of socially and ethically approved behaviour, i.e. the knowledge about right and wrong; one could also translate 'codes of behaviour,' or 'behavioural norms.' [19]

This part is subdivided into three stages (*maqāmāt*) of listening, the first of which is understanding (*fahm*). Understanding, al-Ghazālī argues, varies as the conditions of the hearer vary (n.d., 1153). In his elaboration, he starts with listening in general and ends with Sufi listening, in particular. He describes the four different states (*aḥwāl*) of the listener as follows: [20]

First, finding pleasure in the rhythms and melodies. For the author, this represents the lowest form of listening. Nonetheless it is allowable, as finding pleasure in appealing sounds lies in the nature of living creatures. [21]

Second, listening with understanding, but applying it to a concrete creature (*ṣūrat makhlūq*), be it an individual person or not. The author characterises this as the listening of the young, dominated by lust (*shahawāt*), and therefore so low that it is not worth being discussed. [22]

Third, applying what one hears to the stages of one's soul in one's interaction with God (*an yunazzila mā yasmaʿuhu ʿalā aḥwāli nafsihi fī muʿāmaltihi li-llāhi taʿālā*, n.d., 1153). This desirable form of listening denotes the listening of the religious seeker (*murīd*). al-Ghazālī gives a wide variety of examples of how verses of poetry can be applied in different ways, least with a literal understanding. Today, the ambivalence of some kinds of poetry performed during religious occasions is echoed, for instance, in worries like those expressed by Nadhīr Maktabī, who wonders how listeners might know that the *khimār* (lit. a woman's veil) in a certain verse refers to the Kaaba (Maktabī 2000, 144–45).[12] [23]

Finally, the listening of the one who has passed beyond all states and stages (al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1158); in Sufi terminology, he explains, this is the one who "has annihilated himself" (*qad faniya ʿan nafsihi*, n.d., 1159).[13] [24]

The second stage, after understanding and applying (*fahm* and *tanzīl*), treats the phenomenon of ecstasy (*wajd*). The author explains the relation between listening and the soul (*munāsabat as-samāʿ li-l-arwāḥ*) and elaborates on two different kinds of ecstasy, one that immediately comes over the listener, the other as the result of a process (*hājim* and *tawājud*). It is indeed the second type, which I term 'induced ecstasy,' that is of interest for the author. If it is forced or feigned for the sake of hypocrisy, it is blameworthy; if it is acquired and induced through, and with, noble intentions, it is praiseworthy. [25]

The third stage deals with the etiquette of listening, encompassing inner attitudes as well as outward behaviour (*ādāb as-samāʿ bāṭinan wa-ẓāhiran*). al-Ghazālī discusses praiseworthy [26]

11 See Blum (2013, 105–06) for a brief classification and Neubauer (1990, 227–29) for examples.

12 Maktabī strongly advocates unambiguous texts, not open for symbolic interpretations, whereas al-Ghazālī sees no problem with ambiguous texts for experienced listeners.

13 For al-Ghazālī's understanding of annihilation, see Griffel (2009, 254–55).

and blameworthy reactions and gives five rules (*jumal*) of appropriate behaviour (*ādāb*). The author ends with a short conclusion which summarises the circumstances, functions, and effects of listening in legal terminology.

[27] From this short outline, it becomes clear that al-Ghazālī describes not only two but three domains of listening: a non-religious context, a general religious context, and the specific Sufi context. These should not be understood as clear-cut separate realms but rather as stringed on a continuous line leading from non-religious to Sufi listening. We will now zoom into the text at several points where he writes about these domains in more detail.

The Purposes of Listening

[28] In the section on how listening moves the heart, al-Ghazālī discusses the seven purposes (*aghrāḍ makhṣūṣa*) of chanting in rhymed measured words. He starts with the singing of the pilgrims (*ghināʾ al-ḥajīj*) (al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1133). From his short remark we can conclude that before or during the pilgrimage people were singing poems containing descriptions of the pilgrimage sites, accompanied by drums (*ṭabl*) and fifes (*shāhīn*).[14] This singing has a positive outcome, he states, because it instils longing to perform the pilgrimage.

[29] The author is clearly aware of the different effects that different types of sounds have on listeners. The effect of sound can be amplified through various means, which he lists as follows (n.d., 1133):

[30]
- *sajʿ*: rhyme
- *wazn*: poetic metre
- *ṣawt ṭayyib*: beautiful voice
- *naghamāt mawzūna*: rhythmic melody
- *ṭabl* or *īqāʿ*: membranophones and idiophones that produce a rhythm[15]

[31] By excluding wind instruments and strings (*mazāmīr* and *awtār*), he leaves the level of musical argumentation and moves towards a contextual argument: the last category of instruments is not forbidden because of the effect they have on the human body but because they are associated with forbidden practices, like wine drinking or sexual overtones not covered by the law. Wind and string instruments were played in wine taverns by singing girls and effeminate singers. These instruments were thus 'occupied' by other social spheres, and this association was so strong that the instruments were of no use for the religious milieu. Nevertheless, in a later passage of his book, al-Ghazālī acknowledges, or rather meditates on, the delightful effect of string instruments.

[32] Further purposes of singing and chanting are:

[33]
2. To incite to warfare (*ghazū*); these poems should be in different musical modes (*ṭuruq*

14 Farmer (1929, 16, 47, 74, 154–55) takes *ṭabl* as generic name for any drum; Wright (2010, 24) suggests that in the tenth century, it was a generic term for a double-headed drum beaten with a stick. The *shāhīn* is still unknown to the translator (see MacDonald 1901a, 214n1). According to Farmer (1929, 34), it is a fife. Apparently it was played with one hand while the other hand was used to beat a drum ("shāhīn", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, Glossary and Index of Terms*).

15 As an idiophone, al-Ghazālī names the *qaḍīb*. *Qaḍīb* gives the translator a headache, as he cannot find it in the lexica and it was wrongly described by early musicologists such as Laborde, Kiesewetter, and Sachs (MacDonald 1901a, 210n2). It is a "wand or stick for beating the rhythm or īqāʿ pattern" and appears in the tenth-century anthologies *Kitāb al-aghānī* and *al-ʿIqd al-farīḍ* as well as in the writings of the Brethren of Purity; see Faruqi (1981, 251). Wright (2010, 25) assumes that it nevertheless belongs to an earlier stage of musical practice than the tenth century.

alḥānihim) than those for pilgrimage, he remarks.

3. Verses in the *rajaz* metre to encourage fighting; this refers back to the ancient Arab warfare custom when poetry was recited before entering the battlefield.
4. Songs and melodies of lamentation (*aṣwāt an-niyāḥa wa-naghamātuhā*).
5. Listening to music and singing on occasions of joy to incite and amplify joy.
6. Listening of the lovers (*ʿushshāq*) to intensify desire and love (with the restriction that it is permissible only if the object of love is lawful).
7. Listening of the one who loves God and longs for him.

The last part (7) describes listening in the Sufi context: this condition Sufis would call (*bi-lisān aṣ-ṣūfīya*) ecstasy (*wajd*) (n.d., 1139). al-Ghazālī claims: "[T]he knowledge about why souls are affected by sounds belongs to the most subtle knowledge whose revelation the Sufis are granted (*wa-maʿrifatu s-sababi fī taʾthīri l-arwāḥi li-l-aṣwāti min daqāʾiqi ʿulūmi l-mukāshafāt*, n.d., 1139f.). [34]

Yet, this paper asks about what the author has to say on the religious use of musical sound in contexts other than Sufism. This would apply, for instance, to the first example of his enumeration, the singing of the pilgrims. Among the occasions of joy, al-Ghazālī names both religious and social occasions: the canonical feasts (*ʿīd*), having completed the memorisation of the Qurʾān, the return of a long-time absentee, a wedding, a banquet, or a birth (n.d., 1135). The most interesting example, nevertheless, comes in the context of lamentation. There are two kinds of sorrow (*ḥuzn*), he explains: praiseworthy and blameworthy sorrow. On the basis of Qurʾān 57:23, he shows that excessive sorrow about loss and death is blameworthy. Praiseworthy sorrow, on the other hand, is "the sorrow of the human being about his own shortcomings in religious matters, the weeping over his own faults; and weeping and induced weeping (*al-bukāʾ wa-t-tabākā*) and sorrow and induced sorrow about this is praiseworthy" (n.d., 1134). He then continues: the preacher (*wāʿiẓ*) with a good voice may "chant from the pulpit poems that incite sorrow and soften the heart (… *an yunshida ʿalā l-minbari bi-alḥānihi l-ashʿāra l-muḥazzinata l-muraqqiqata li-l-qalb*)" (n.d., 1135). He further continues: "… and he may make cry and induce crying in order to affect the others to cry and to bring about sorrow (… *an yubkā wa-yatabākā li-yatawaṣṣala bihi ilā tabkiyati ghayrihi wa-ithārati ḥuznihi*)" (n.d., 1135). [35]

To fully grasp the meaning and operational mode behind this example of praiseworthy sorrow, we need to explore the further background of the described incident. al-Ghazālī's terminology is very much in line with appraisals of highly popular and successful preachers at that time.[16] Softening the heart, evoking humbleness, and to making one cry (*tarqīq*, *takhshīʿ*, and *tabkiya*) figure as key terms for the successful performance of a preacher. [36]

Crying is an appropriate and desired response to Qurʾānic recitation as well as to religious speech and chanting in the wider sense. It is already mentioned in the Qurʾān (e.g. Q 5:83), and al-Ghazālī refers back to this issue in a later passage of his text (n.d., 1167). "He cried and made others cry" figures, for instance, as the positive valuation of a preacher from Murcia by his contemporary Ibn al-Abbār (d. 1260) (Jones 2012, 232). [37]

The 'soft heart' is an antithesis of the 'hard heart'; the hard heart would not be able to receive or accept the divine message. We find this pairing more than once in the Qurʾān, like in the following verse: "So is one whose heart God has expanded to [accept] Islam and he walks upon a light from his Lord. Then woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance [38]

16 See descriptions in Ibn al-Jawzī (1971); Ibn Jubayr (1959); Jones (2012).

of God. Those are in manifest error“ (Q 39:22). The equivalent for the soft heart, in this verse, is the heart which God has expanded (*sharaḥa ṣadrahu*). This phrasing refers to the earlier Sure 94, which starts with, “Have we [God] not expanded your [Muḥammad’s] breast? / And lifted from you your burden / Which weightened upon your back?” (Q 94:1–3). Angelika Neuwirth understands the expanded breast as “a metaphor of a psychic experience that would be best interpreted as a newly achieved ‘opening up for God’s presence’ ” (2011, 1:90, my translation). This interpretation is in line with the traditional exegetical literature. Scholars explain the breast expanding both as an experience of relief and easing as well as an almost physical widening, like a vessel, to receive knowledge, certitude, obedience, and understanding.[17] In later passages, al-Ghazālī also speaks of the hard heart: in his elaborations on Sufi listening, he describes the one who is not able to receive the different impacts (*taʾaththur*) of listening as “frozen and hard of heart (*al-jāmid al-qāsī l-qalb*)” (al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1140, see also 1178 for another example).

[39] To soften the heart, that is, to enable it to receive the divine message and to make the listener aware of God’s presence, is the task of the preacher. The “preaching superstar” (Dorpmüller 2016, 173) of twelfth-century Baghdad, Ibn al-Jawzī, refers to preaching as “evoking the fear that softens the heart (*wa-amma l-waʿẓ fa-huwa takhwīf yariqqu lahu l-qalb*)” (Ibn al-Jawzī 1971, 11 Arab., 97 Engl.). We know from various accounts that he was indeed successful in achieving this goal.[18]

[40] But it is not content (alone) which has this effect. Describing the performance of young preachers during Ramadan evenings in late twelfth-century Mecca, the traveller Ibn Jubayr emphasises that a successful preacher needs more than religious knowledge. He also needs rhetorical skills, comprising eloquence and voice modulation. He explains: “([…] if the religious admonition (*tadhkira*) comes from the tongue [alone], it does not reach further than to the ear” (1959, 128). This means: if the words are simply produced by the vocal apparatus, they lack any impact. Religious admonition needs an appealing sound, produced by the skilful use of the voice and the rhythm and sound of “measured words,” in al-Ghazālī’s terms, to reach the heart of its listeners. al-Ghazālī thus relates here to concepts that are rooted in the Qurʾān and became further elaborated in Islamic homiletics.

[41] Regarding the interpretation of sorrow (*ḥuzn*), it is worth noting that it does not designate a mere sentiment of sadness. Referring to the deficiencies of the human being vis-à-vis God’s magnificence, it rather describes a dialogical relation. The religious specialist is aware of these deficiencies, and he/she should make others aware of it, that is, evoke sorrow. Whether preaching or chanting is successful or not is revealed in the behaviour of the listeners, because to feel *ḥuzn* leads to specific responses. Tears and other forms of behaviour are regarded as external markers of an inner state of humbleness and repentance. Typical responses to recitation and preaching become part of the relevant reports. From the twelfth century onwards, we find colourful descriptions of how listeners in pious gatherings burst into tears, sob, cover themselves with dust, or offer their forelocks to be cut.[19]

17 See the commentaries by az-Zamakhsharī, ar-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Fīrūzabādī, Ibn Kathīr, aṭ-Ṭabarī, and al-Bayḍāwī. A few authors, such as ar-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, and al-Bayḍāwī, additionally offer the story of the prophet’s breast-opening as an act of purification.

18 For instance, Ibn Jubayr (1959, 195–200); Ibn al-Jawzī (1971, 145 Arab., 231 Engl.).

19 In addition to the already mentioned sources, see also Katz (2015); Talmon-Heller (2007), especially chapter 4. It should be noted, however, that scholars also set limits and reproach excessive reactions, feigned weeping, or putting up a ‘show.’ This applies to both sides, performers and listeners. See, for instance, Ibn al-Jawzī (1971, 93–97 Arab., 171–76 Engl.).

The 'Greek Link': Themes, Types, and Terms

[42] Certain vocabulary in al-Ghazālī's text shows confluences with ancient Greek musical philosophy, such as 'measured speech,' 'moving the soul,' or references to harmonious proportions. Some common ideas of Greek musical writing that were taken up in later Arabic writing can be summarised very broadly as follows: In Greek theory, music and dance both depict and produce different states of the soul. Appropriate musical modes generate order and harmony and may counterbalance disequilibrium. The structure (in the sense of: sequence of intervals) and consequent ethos of musical modes generate different qualities accordingly. Plato viewed the Dorian mode as the best mode, since it generated manly qualities such as courage, self-containment, and endurance. By contrast, many other modes were not to be used, since they were considered to generate female, soft, and licentious qualities. The classification of musical modes is based on Pythagorean concepts of numerical relationships. Harmonic proportions are reflected in the ratios of intervals, the most stable intervals being the fifth (3:2 with regard to the length of a string), the fourth (4:3), and the octave (2:1). Harmonic proportions were set in relation to cosmological theories, most notably by Aristides Quintilianus and Ptolemy. Instrumental timbre, rhythmic cycles, and the size of intervals were held responsible for the different effects of music, with a prominent role of the tetrachord in both Greek and Arabic theory. Much writing was devoted to the astronomic and humoral-medical allocations to tones and strings, most often the zodiac, planets, elements, humours, scents, days of the week, hours of the day, or body limbs.[20] In the following, some important Arabic-writing scholars and their works are listed, without claiming to give a complete overview.

[43] The musical theory of ethos—according to which certain musical modes affect and move the soul in a specific manner—was common knowledge in Late Antiquity in the Eastern Levant and Persia (see Neubauer 1990, 228–29; Kazemi 1999, 103). In the late eighth century, Arabs started to translate, amongst other sciences, treatises of Greek musical philosophy. The centre of these activities was Baghdad, the newly founded capital of the Abbasid caliphate.[21] One of the most active translators was Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (d. 873), an East Syriac Christian scholar and physician.[22] He was a contemporary of Yaʿqūb ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī (d. 861–866) (Endress and Adamson 2012, 99), a polymath who wrote several influential treatises on music. These include an elaboration on various aspects of the Pythagorean-platonic theory of ethos, such as in the *Book on Stringed Instruments from One to Ten Strings* (*Kitāb al-Mutaṣawwit al-watarīya min dhāt al-watar al-wāḥid ilā dhāt al-ʿasharat al-awtār*), in *On Musical Composition* (*Risāla fī Khubr taʾlīf al-luḥūn*), and in "On Modes and Tones" (*Risāla fī l-Luḥūn wa-n-nagham*). The latter contains a chapter on the musical styles of different peoples and regions at his time (see below).[23]

[44] Likewise, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 950) wrote important musical treatises, most notably the *Great Book on Music* (*Kitāb al-Mūsīqī l-kabīr*) and his studies on rhythm (*Kitāb al-Īqāʿat* and *Kitāb Iḥṣāʾ al-īqāʿāt*), which all had a great impact on musical theory in the following cen-

20 See Blum (2013); Haas (2006); Kazemi (1999, 15–105); Neubauer (1998); West ([2005] 2016). See also below for the elaboration on selected aspects.

21 For more on the so-called translation movement, which included Middle Persian, Greek, Syriac, and other languages, see Gutas (1998).

22 On him, see Strohmaier (2017).

23 For a comprehensive account of al-Kindī's work, see Endress and Adamson (2012); on his musical writing, see Blum (2013, 108–11); Endress and Adamson (2012, 115–17); Haas (2006, 661–68); Neubauer (1990, 234–35); Neubauer (1994, 378–79, 381–88, 398–404); Shehadi (1995, 15–33).

turies.[24] He wrote his *Great Book on Music* upon the request of the vizier of the Abbasid caliph ar-Rāḍī bi-llāh (r. 934–940), al-Karkhī, and included not only, as requested, the Greek theorists but also the theories of al-Kindī and the Mawṣilī school.[25]

[45] The aforementioned Brethren of Purity were familiar with the Greek musical philosophy, which shows clearly in their epistle on music. Both al-Kindī and the Brethren used a treatise by a certain Būlos, most probably Paul of Aegina (d. after 642), one of the earliest Arabic texts on the theory of ethos. Paul of Aegina was a physician who spent most of his life in Alexandria. One of his medical works was translated by Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, which makes it possible that the book on music was also translated either by him or his son Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn (d. 910).[26] We furthermore find passages from a collection of gnomologia with the title *Aphorisms of the Philosophers* (*Nawādir al-falāsifa*), attributed to Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, both in the works of al-Kindī and the Brethren of Purity and also in the book by Būlos. These passages, centring on the ethic and therapeutic effects of music, are by no means fully identical; they rather show the wide circulation and popularity of such writings.[27]

[46] Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), known in the West as Avicenna, devoted several chapters and passages of his work to music, most importantly in *The Book of Healing* (*Kitāb ash-shifāʾ*).[28] Ibn aṭ-Ṭaḥḥān (d. after 1057), the famous musician at the Fatimid court in Cairo, may serve as a last example. His two-part *Compendium of the Arts to Comfort the Sad* (*Ḥāwī l-funūn wa-salwat al-maḥzūn*) on the history of Arab music and singers and the musical practice in his era includes a wide range of aphorisms and anecdotes. One chapter titled "Aphorisms of the Philosophers" ("Fī jawāhir kalām al-falāsifa") contains music-related sayings by Greek philosophers, starting with Plato (Ibn aṭ-Ṭaḥḥān 1976, 13). By naming some of these influential authors on music, I do not intend to postulate a chronological line of transmission but to show that this knowledge of musical philosophy was translated, studied, and re-appropriated.[29] It is apparent that certain categorisations and topics in al-Ghazālī's writing on listening is owed to his acquaintance with some of these works.

[47] al-Ghazālī speaks of different types of sound in a manner very similar to the classification given by the Brethren of Purity, which encompasses animate and inanimate sources of sound, such as living creatures and instruments. With respect to animate sources, he differentiates between humans and animals, and he further distinguishes wordless sound and sound with a

24 For an overview and further reading, see Sawa (2015a); see also Haas (2006, 682–97) and Fārābī (n.d.).

25 Ibrāhīm and his son Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī were gifted authors and musicians. In contrast to al-Kindī, their school focuses on musical practice. For more, see below and Neubauer (1994, 382–403).

26 *The Nature of Music* (*Kitāb ʿUnṣur al-mūsīqī*). For an edition of the Arabic text with a German translation, commentary, and introduction, see Kazemi (1999); on the authorship, Būlos/Paul, Kazemi (1999, 117–19); on the question of the translator, Kazemi (1999, 116–17, 119); on al-Kindī and the Brethren of Purity using the text, Kazemi (1999, 105).

27 On *Nawādir al-falāsifa*, see Gutas (2012, 466–68); Kazemi (1999, 111–17, 122–24).

28 The chapters in his *Kitāb an-Najāt* and *Dānesh-nāma-ye ʿalāʾī* do not differ considerably in content from the chapter in *Shifāʾ*, see Wright ([1987] 2011); Wright (2004–2005); Shehadi (1995, 66–80); on al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, see also briefly Blum (2013, 112–15).

29 The transmission and re-appropriation of Late Antique musical philosophy by Arab authors is far from fully researched. In fact, much of musical writing is still unexplored. Since many authors likewise worked in the fields of philosophy, medicine, mathematics, and music, Western scholarship paid least attention to music. George Sawa's statement on al-Fārābī holds true for other authors as well: "Regrettably, Middle Eastern specialists in fields other than music view him [al-Fārābī] only as a political philosopher and logician; musicologists who deal with mediaeval Western music are unaware of his contributions to music theory and his useful commentaries on the treatises of ancient Greek music theorists" (Sawa 2015a; see also Haas 2006, esp. 637–40, 652–56). A notable exception is van Gelder and Hammond (2008), who include musical writing, mostly by al-Fārābī and al-Kindī, with respect to image evocation in Arabic poetry. The studies named in the preceding footnotes show that authors like al-Kindī, the Brethren of Purity, and al-Fārābī treat various aspects of musical theory quite differently.

meaning (*mafhūm*). He does not give a separate classification like the Brethren do but occasionally refers to this system (al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1124, 1126; for the Brethren of Purity, cf. Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ 2010, 22–25; cf. also the table in Wright 2008, 226). In the greater part of his book, however, al-Ghazālī treats sound with meaning, i.e. poetry.

[48] In the section on ecstasy, the author does not argue along theological lines but starts with a discussion of the relation between listening and the soul (*munāsabat as-samāʿ li-l-arwāḥ*), referring to sayings by Sufis and sages (*al-ḥukamāʾ an-nāẓirīn*). As the briefly presented works on music show, aphorisms are typical of many works that were translated from Greek into Arabic. Indeed, this type of writing—and reading—enjoyed great popularity.[30] al-Ghazālī quotes one of the sages with the following statement: "in the heart lies a noble property that speech is not able to elicit, but the soul can do it with music (*fī l-qalbi faḍīlatun sharīfatun lam taqdir quwwatu n-naṭqi ʿalā ikhrājihā li-l-lafẓ fa-akhrajathā n-nafsu bi-l-alḥān*)" (al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1161).[31] This saying is, with minor modifications, also to be found in the gnomologia that are included in the works of al-Kindī, the Brethren of Purity, and Ḥunayn (Kindī 1962, 107; Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ 2010, 167–68).[32] It furthermore echoes the descriptions by Ibn Jubayr who remarks that by speaking alone (i.e. using the normal speech voice) the admonition lacks its effect (see above).

[49] After enumerating citations and anecdotes by famous Sufi figures, al-Ghazālī quotes unnamed sages who describe different effects of listening. He states that listening arouses or strengthens states such as longing, fear, sorrow, or joy. We will now examine some elements related to these processes against the background of musical philosophy and musical theory in more detail.

Moving the Soul and Producing Emotions: *taḥrīk*, *taʾthīr*, and *ṭuruq*

[50] The process of how human beings actually respond to rhythmic musical compositions and how different emotional impacts are produced is governed by three technical terms: *taḥrīk*, *taʾthīr*, and *ṭuruq*. Like Būlos and al-Kindī, al-Ghazālī speaks of the soul that is moved by specific sounds (melody and rhythm) in a specific manner. The term the Arabic texts use is a form of root *ḥ-r-k*, 'to move.' al-Ghazālī chiefly uses the causative form II or V (to move somebody or something), either as verbal noun, participle, or verb.[33] He does not give a detailed description of this process but rather takes it for granted, so to speak as a natural fact, in accordance with then current theories. Commenting on the addition of a third parameter to a binary classification of higher/lower pitch or longer/shorter length of a tone, Stephen Blum expounds:

> [51] This is the fundamental structure of the doctrine of the *ēthos*, which may well

30 See Gutas (2012, esp. 463–65); for the context of music, Kazemi (1999, 122–24); Wright (2008, 233); also Blum (2013, 105–06). For an illuminating example of the integration of such material into the Arabo-Islamic court culture, see Biesterfeld (2017) on Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 934).

31 As *alḥān* carries rhythmic as well as melodic aspects, I translate it here simply as 'music.' See also below for the discussion of *laḥn* (pl. *alḥān*).

32 Wright points out that a version is included in the collection *al-ʿIqd al-farīd* and in the *Murūj adh-dhahab* by al-Masʿūdī (Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ 2010, 162n317). The saying shows conformances in vocabulary and content but also significant differences. There is not enough textual evidence in form of editions and manuscripts available to me at this time to draw any further conclusions.

33 For instance, *taḥrīk* (al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1120, 1162), *muḥarrik* (n.d., 1124, 1131), *taḥarraka* (n.d., 1120).

> antedate the Greek writings that were the main sources for its subsequent development in the Muslim world and the Latin West. Kindī describes three species (*anwāʿ*, sing. *nauʿ*) of composition (*taʾlīf*) with Arabic equivalents for the tripartite classification of ēthos given by Cleonides and Aristides Quintilianus and presumably reproduced in the Byzantine and Arabic writings that were available to Kindī: *al-basṭī* 'the expansive' for *diastaltikon* 'stimulant'; *al-qabḍī* 'the contracting' for *systaltikon* 'depressant'; and *al-muʿtadil* 'the temperate' for *hēsychastikon* 'calming' […]. To arouse the appropriate movement of the soul (*ḥarakat al-nafs*), verses adorned with a melodic framework (*laḥn*) of one species should be set to the corresponding metric cycle or 'meter' (*īqāʿ*, pl. *īqāʿāt*): quick (*khafīfa*) to inspire delight, slow (*thaqīla*) for melancholy, moderate for a sense of the sublime, the munificent or the beautiful (Blum 2013, 108).

It should be stressed, however, that al-Kindī's focus was devoted to theoretical systems of classification (for instance, Kindī 1962, 83–85) and does not necessarily reflect musical practice. The three-fold system of musical effects, however, was common among theorists. [52]

As becomes clear from the title of the book's second part, *Fī āthār as-samāʿ wa-ādābihā* (On the Effects and Etiquette of Listening), the main term for denoting the different effects of listening to music and singing is *taʾthīr* and its related forms.[34] *A-th-r* in form II means to affect, to produce an effect, or to induce. Referring to the impact (*taʾthīr*) listening has on the soul/heart, al-Ghazālī names recurrently different emotions, most often joy, sorrow, and longing (*faraḥ*, *ḥuzn*, *shawq*) (e.g. al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1131, 1139, 1162 [as *aḥwāl* that are produced or strengthened through listening]). [53]

The most palpable somatic response comes along with these three emotions: "and it [measured tones] produces [in the soul] longing, joy, and sorrow, as well as ease and anxiety (*wa-taʾaththuruhā bihā shawqan, wa-faraḥan wa-ḥuznan, wa-nbisāṭan wa-nqibāḍan*" (n.d., 1139). These last two responses illustrate the binary of relaxation and contraction which marks the rhythm of life and thus has a prominent role in musical theory as well: "Kindī's terms for expansive and contracting melodic frameworks connect musical experience with rhythms on which human life depends—the dilation (*inbisāṭ*) and contraction (*inqibāḍ*) of heart and lungs—and with processes that are fundamental to the entire created order: 'God brings about contraction and dilation' " (Blum 2013, 108).[35] The polarity of hard/soft is typical of Greek and Arabic musical writing. The described processes have last but not least a concrete musical equivalent, as the musical pitch of a string is altered by increase and release of its tension. It is not surprising that we find a variation of this pairing in a vivid description of a somatic response to the Qurʾān, given in the Qurʾān itself: "The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver at the mention of it [the book], then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance of God (*taqshaʿirru minhu [ḥadīth kitābin] julūdu lladhīna yakhshaʿu rabbahum thumma talīnu julūduhum wa-qulūbuhum ilā dhikri llāhi*)" (in Q 39:23). One could also translate this as 'the skins become coarse and then become soft,' as the overall physical process described is the succession of tension and relaxation: the skin becomes coarse (like gooseflesh)/shivers as an indicator of tension, and then becomes soft/relaxes. Skin is a synecdoche for the complete body; therefore, in the second sentence, not only the skin but also the hearts relaxes. [54]

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34 E.g. 1132, 1139 (also, *taʾaththur*), 1153 (also, *āthār*), 1174, 1133 (*āthār*), 1140 (*taʾaththur*), 1152 (*yuʾaththir*).

35 *Wa-llāhu yaqbiḍu wa-yabsuṭu* (It is God who holds back and gives in abundance, Q 2:245). The overall context of the verse is the uneven distribution of property in this world, set in contrast to the accumulation of good deeds, which is what counts after death.

al-Ghazālī furthermore refers to emotions in an indirect way. By naming the responses that are caused by listening, e.g. laughter (as a result of joy), sleep (as a result of serenity), or movements (as a result of either joy or energetic stimulation), he denotes the symptoms of emotions, such as in the following quote: [55]

> To God the Exalted belongs a secret regarding the relationship of measured tones to the soul; they do have on the soul a remarkable effect: some make to rejoice and some to grieve, some put to sleep and some cause laugh and delight, and some bring forth movements of the limbs according to their measures, with the hand, the foot, and the head. And this does not happen due to the poem's meaning but is caused by the strings (*li-llāhi taʿālā sirrun fī munāsabati n-naghamāti l-mawzūnati li-l-arwāḥi ḥattā innahā la-tuʾaththiru fīhā taʾthīran ʿajīban fa-mina l-aṣwāti mā yufriḥu, wa-minhā mā yuḥzinu wa-minhā mā yunawwimu wa-minhā mā yuḍḥiku wa-yuṭribu wa-minhā mā yastakhriju mina l-aḍāʾi ḥarakātin ʿalā waznihā bi-l-yadi wa-r-rijli wa-r-raʾs; wa-lā yanbaghī an yuẓanna anna dhālika li-fahmi maʿānī sh-shiʿri bal hādhā jārin mina l-awtār* (al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1131). [56]

In a second quote, he explicitly refers to dancing within the context of joy: "it [joy] is expressed in verses, melodies, and dance, as also movements are praiseworthy (*iẓhāruhu [surūr] bi-sh-shiʿr wa-n-naghamāt wa-r-raqṣ, wa-l-ḥarakāt ayḍan maḥmūd*)" (al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1135). Naturally, this issue becomes further elaborated in the passages on etiquette in the Sufi context of listening: what kind of movements, to what extent, and out of which motives movements are praiseworthy is then discussed in detail. [57]

Again, al-Ghazālī presents no elaborated theory on how different emotions are evoked. The way Owen Wright (2008, 240) characterises similar statements by the Brethren of Purity also applies in our case: what is important about music, he writes, is "its potential to affect the soul in an ultimately functional way within a predetermined scheme of causality (…)." In his insightful study on "moral psychology," that is the dynamics of the soul and its different qualities in al-Ghazālī's theology, Taneli Kukkonen (2015, 140) similarly comments: "there is much that al-Ghazālī takes for granted, and many important features to which only passing reference is made." He explains this handling with his primary interest in action, which is also the case in our context. However, despite the lack of an elaborated theory, some remarks and technical terms used by al-Ghazālī indicate that specific emotions are connected to specific musical modes. [58]

The Importance of *ṭuruq*

In direct relation to *taʾthīr* stands the term *ṭuruq* (sg. *ṭarīqa*). The impact varies according to the different *ṭuruq*, al-Ghazālī states (al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1174). This term, which the translator, more than one hundred years ago, quite refreshingly commented with, "I leave it untranslated, as the meaning is obscure to me" (MacDonald 1901a, 220n1), becomes clear against the background of musical theory. [59]

In the seventh century, two elaborated musical systems existed in direct proximity to the Arab musical system, that of Persian court music and that of Syrian-Byzantine church music.[36] Both systems were named after the number of modes that constituted the basis for musical [60]

36 The following two paragraphs are mainly based on Neubauer (1994).

structures and, as common in the Ancient Orient, were set in relation to extra-musical elements. These were the Seven Royal Ways (Arab. *aṭ-ṭurūq al-mulūkīya*) of Persian-Sasanian music, on the one hand, and the Eight Modes (*oktōēchos*) of Syrian-Byzantine church singing, on the other. The *oktōēchos* can be traced back to the eighth century (Jeffery 2001); John Damascene (d. c. 749) is considered to have contributed importantly to its development. In Arabic, *oktōēchos* became *al-alḥān al-usṭūkhusīya* or *usṭūkhūṣīya*, translated as *al-luḥūn* or *al-alḥān ath-thamānīya* (the eight modes or melodic types) (Neubauer 1994, 377). In his treatise *On Modes and Tones*, al-Kindī states that all sounds, including those by animals, can be traced to the Eight Modes (Kindī 1965, 26–27; Neubauer 1994, 378–79). al-Kindī equates *ēchos* (voice) with *laḥn* (intonation, melody). *Laḥn* in the Qurʾān (47:30) refers to intonation, i.e. the melodic aspect of verbal utterance, and later becomes the common term for 'melody'; *laḥn* is also the technical term for (linguistic) error. Manfred Ullmann (1979, 15) states that *laḥn* as a musical term in the sense of 'melody' can be traced to Greek influence. Eckard Neubauer (1994, 377) agrees but suggests that this happened earlier than assumed by Ullmann. Based on the Arabic title of a book ascribed to Ptolemy as *Kitāb al-Luḥūn ath-thamānīya* (The Book on the Eight Modes), which is mentioned in a fragment of a treatise by Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 819 or 821), he reckons that *laḥn* as a musical term was already in use among multi-lingual Christians in Syria during the eighth century.

[61] al-Kindī's musical writing is primarily devoted to theoretical allocations and speculative systems and less concerned with practical usage. This was different with Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī (d. 804) and his son Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī (d. 850), who was, like al-Kindī, employed at the caliph's court in Baghdad. Both father and son were gifted musicians and had a genuine interest in describing musical practice (Neubauer 1994, 381–403). Their school formed an important contribution to the development of Arab musical theory. In contrast to Greek musical theory, which was based on the lyre, the Arabs based theirs on the lute: a tone (*nagham*) was defined by the position of the fingers on the lute's frets. The lute usually had four strings that were tuned in fourths. Both the Mawṣilī school and the system of the *oktōēchos* used a seven-tone scale as musical material for the different modes; also, both systems consisted of eight modes that were divided into two groups.[37] But whereas the Greek and Byzantine systems defined their modes according to melodic modes, the Mawṣilī school defined musical modes according to the musical metre (*īqāʿ*), combined with melodic modes.

[62] The combined definition of mode, referring to the rhythmic aspect of a melody, was named in the Mawṣilī school *ṭarīqa* (way, method) (Neubauer 1994, 388). Songs in collections were accordingly titled with the following information: *fī ṭarīqat ath-thaqīl al-awwal* (in the way of the first heavy, or slow, [metre]) (1994, 389). Rhythm was the primary marker of a mode, which was supplemented with further information on the tones. In the well-known tenth-century compilation *Book of Songs* (*Kitāb al-aghānī*), the *ṭarīqa* of a song is indicated by a combination of rhythm (*īqāʿ*), the position of the finger on the lute's string (*iṣbaʿ*), and melodic course (*majrā*), either by giving all three markers or a combination of rhythm and one of the two melodic markers (Sawa 2015b, 324–25). The combined definition of mode, marked by metre and tones, with the term *ṭarīqa* is also found in the eleventh-century treatise by al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Kātib and with the aforementioned Ibn aṭ-Ṭaḥḥān (Neubauer 1994, 389, 404–07; Ḥasan 1975, esp. 112–17; Ibn aṭ-Ṭaḥḥān 1976). Hence, al-Ghazālī's use

37 In the *oktōēchos*, the two groups consisted of the authentic and plagal modes; in the Mawṣilī system, the modes were grouped along the melodic course that included either a minor or major third or second (*majrā*) (Neubauer 1994, 393n72).

of the term *ṭuruq* points to musical theory as it was used in the Eastern Mediterranean and Iraq in the tenth and eleventh century. His plural form is not exactly typical, though. In early writings we observe the form *ṭurūq*, which could well be, as Neubauer (1990, 376n6) suggests, a form built in analogy to *luḥūn*; in later treatises, *ṭarāʾiq* is the common plural form (see also Neubauer 1998, 420). This notwithstanding, it is important to note that al-Ghazālī is not simply referring to a 'way' of how a musical piece is sung or played in the sense of an individual style. Instead, he is referring to a technical term within a theory that differentiates between different musical modes and sets these in relation to specific emotional states.

[63] al-Ghazālī himself names some of these modes: with regard to pilgrimage songs and those in the context of warfare, he speaks of modes that stir up longing (*ṭuruq mushawwiqa*) and those that incite strength, courage, and enthusiasm (*ṭuruq mushajjiʿa*) (al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1134). One could add the mode that evokes sorrow (*muḥazzin*), as he mentions measured tones that have the effect of producing sorrow (*yuḥzinu*, 1131, cf. the quote above) and speaks of chanted poems that incite sorrow and soften the heart, which the preacher may chant (*al-muḥazzina al-muraqqiqa*, 1135, see quote above).

[64] This matches some of the modes and their impacts which the Brethren of Purity enumerate. They list two of them with identical names (*al-muḥazzin*, *al-mushajjiʿ*) and describe the rest through their effects and use. Not surprisingly, in their classification *al-muḥazzin* is also used for prayer and recitation and *al-mushajjiʿ* for war. They further speak of a mode that is used in hospitals to comfort the sick in pain and that may cure illness. Another mode, they write, is used in times of affliction and loss for consolation and relief. A fifth mode is used during heavy physical work. Finally, the Brethren refer to a mode well known and widely used in their time (*fī zamāninā hādhā*). This is a mode for joyous occasions like weddings and banquets. Most Arab and Persian theorists have a classification of musical modes grouped around three main qualities and corresponding effects, in general delight, sorrow, and strength. The number of six is unusual, although one may trace some overlaps in the described functions (Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ 2010, 17–19).

[65] In our context, it is sufficient to notice that the correct mode gains the quality of a precondition of its usage. With respect to warfare, al-Ghazālī states: "their poems and their musical modes should be different from the poems of the pilgrimage and their musical modes (*yanbaghī an tukhālifa ashʿāruhum wa-ṭuruqu alḥānihim ashʿāra l-ḥajji wa-ṭuruqa alḥānihim*)" (al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1133). The fact that al-Ghazālī does not simply speak of 'melodies' (*alḥān*) but uses 'musical modes' (*ṭuruq alḥānihim*) shows that he speaks of specific musical modes that are related to specific bodily and emotional states.[38] He further explains: "and the emboldening rhythmical modes are different from those that evoke longing (*wa-ṭuruqu l-awzāni l-mushajjiʿati tukhālifu ṭ-ṭuruqa l-mushawwiqa*)" (n.d., 1134). Thus, his following verdict has not only moral and social but musical connotations: "but this [if *samāʿ* is allowed or not] depends on the conditions and on the persons and on the respective musical modes that are used (*bal yakhtalifu dhālika bi-l-aḥwāli wa-l-ashkhāṣ, wa-khtilāfi ṭuruqi n-naghamāt*)" (n.d., 1132). In other words, the occasion of listening, the motivation and abilities of the individual listener, and the correct mode in relation to the music's function are the criteria of using musical sound in an acceptable or even desirable way that may lead to religiously meritorious results.

38 Like in the writings of al-Kindī and the Brethren of Purity, the meaning of *laḥn* oscillates between rhythm and melody. Melody foremost refers to the organisation of pitch, but in the Arabic theory was also defined by the succession of tones of different lengths and of pauses—one cycle of these would make up the metre (*īqāʿ*). I translate '(musical) mode' here to avoid a purely melodic association.

Aesthetic, Religious, and Muslim Experience

Making use of the emotive powers of musical modes was not limited to Muslim practices. It was also not perceived as exclusively Muslim, as the following quote, again by the Brethren of Purity, shows: [66]

> With regard to the use of music by the custodians of divine ordinances in temples and places of worship, when reciting [*qirāʾa*] during ritual prayer [*ṣalāh*], at sacrifices, when praying [*duʿāʾ*], supplicating, and lamenting, as the prophet David used to do when reciting his psalms, and as the Christians now do it in their churches and the Muslims in their mosques, with sweetness of tone [*naghma*] and a melodic form [*talḥīn*] of recitation—all that is used for hearts to be softened (*riqqat al-qulūb*) and souls to be humble (*khuḍūʿ an-nufūs*), submissive (*khushūʿihā*), and obedient to the commands and prohibitions of God Almighty, to turn to Him in repentance for their sins, and to return to God, exalted be He, by adopting the practices of His ordinances as they have been prescribed (Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ 2010, 13–14 Arab., 81–82 Engl.).[39] [67]

Some very brief comparative remarks pertaining to the idea of ethos shall be added here. Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scholars participated in the transmission and dissemination of Late Antique musical philosophy. This has already been demonstrated by the interpretation of the Syrian-Byzantine *oktōēchos* and the works by Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq. The aforementioned *Aphorisms of the Philosophers* also circulated in Jewish milieus, not least because of its Hebrew translation by Yehuda al-Ḥarīzī (d. 1235) (Gutas 2012, 467).[40] Another prominent example is the case of Saadiya Gaon (d. 942), whose *Book on Doctrines and Beliefs* (*Kitāb al-Amānāt wa-l-iʿtiqādāt*) contains a lengthy paragraph on music.[41] Here, Saadiya Gaon briefly refers to all five senses and then turns to hearing. The overarching topos with all senses is the creation of a harmonious blend within each one (e.g. through the mixing of colours or the mixing of scents) to create a positive effect on human conduct. The main part on music is devoted to the description of eight rhythmic patterns that consist of various combinations of moving and quiescent beats. These are set in relation to their effects: the first two stimulate blood and incite the wish to rule; the third stimulates yellow bile and incites courage; the fourth stimulates phlegm and incites submission; the last four stimulate black bile and incite at times joy and at times sorrow. Again, the overall aim is to achieve an equilibrium of all the described temperaments: [68]

> It is in the habit of kings to blend them [i.e. the various modes] with each other until they are in a state of equilibrium. As a result, the change [lit. motion] produced in their characters when they listen to them will be beneficial to their souls, which will thus be suitable to conduct the affairs of government. They will then [69]

39 Additions in square parentheses/[…] in the original, additions in round parantheses/(…) are mine.

40 A version of the Hebrew text with an English translation is provided by Werner and Sonne (1942–1943, 513–32). For more communalities in Greek, Jewish, and Muslim perceptions on music and its effect, see Shiloah (2000); and, on a broad basis of sources, though outdated in some aspects, Werner and Sonne (1941); Werner and Sonne (1942–1943).

41 For the complete treatise in English translation, see Saadia Gaon ([1948] 1976). The passage on the senses, and especially music, is on page 401–04. Shiloah (2004, 269n5) points to the problematic translation of the musical passage and provides the passages discussed by him in their original languages and his English translation (272–76).

> not be unjust, evincing either excessive clemency or excessive harshness, nor will they show undue courage or cowardice, nor excessive or too little joy and gladness (Saadiya Gaon, transl. by Shiloah 2004, 276).

In the passage on music, there are close resemblances to the description of rhythmic modes by al-Kindī.[42] Amnon Shiloah, however, points out that there are also considerable differences: Unlike al-Kindī's passage on rhythmic modes, Saadiya Gaon's expositions are not part of a treatise on musical theory but are embedded in religious philosophy, and here in a chapter on ideal human conduct. There are also significant terminological differences. For instance, Saadiya Gaon uses *naghma* (tone) instead of *naqra* (beat), used by al-Kindī to describe the patterns. al-Kindī's terminology points to the short-necked lute (*ʿūd*), whereas Saadiya Gaon deliberately avoids any allusion to this instrument which could be taken as referring to the ludic character of music. Shiloah sees precisely the religious context as responsible for these differences (2004, 279–83). Christian interpretations applied the theory of ethos exclusively within the religious field, for instance, ascribing the different modes and their effects to different liturgical times and acts throughout the year (Nieten 2005, 279–81).[43] This is different from the case of al-Ghazālī, who discusses a wide variety of occasions, religious and non-religious, with regard to the different modes. [70]

To recapitulate his arguments, we need to return to the context of al-Ghazālī's *Revival of the Religious Sciences*. al-Ghazālī's main concern in *Revival* is to show how Muslims can live a good life that will lead to salvation in the hereafter. Therefore, he is concerned, on the one hand, with questions of what Muslims should refrain from doing. Applied to the topic of music, the answer pertains to its correct usage: modes that cause a specific emotional state should be used in the corresponding context. For instance, modes that evoke longing may not be used for warfare. Furthermore, the object of longing should be lawful. Instruments associated with forbidden practices, like wine drinking or unlawful sexual relationships, should not be used (al-Ghazālī, n.d., 1133, 1139). [71]

On the other hand, al-Ghazālī is interested in how to make use of the power of musical sound in the religious context. Therefore, he only briefly refers to those forms and contexts of lawful listening whose consequences could be described as 'neutral,' as it has neither positive nor negative consequences. This relates to the context of joy, warfare, and lovers. The most noble form of listening is to apply it in one's relationship to God. The author treats this aspect exhaustively in his elaborations on Sufi listening. Sufis, for al-Ghazālī, are the most experienced listeners and thus may listen to almost anything. Their religious training enables them to apply everything they hear to God. He describes in great length how poetic verses lead to quite different understandings, according to the state of the listener. In the last part of the book, the author elaborates on concrete physical reactions, such as raising one's voice, moving the extremities of the body, or tearing up clothes, and which of these are socially approved. [72]

Yet, beside this Sufi context, al-Ghazālī relates to a religious use of, and experience caused by, listening that is available to everybody within regular religious rites, such as attending Friday prayer or preaching assemblies on any other day. Preaching assemblies were quite popular. Not only were some attended by thousands of listeners (Ibn al-Jawzī 1971, 26, 253) but [73]

42 al-Kindī, *Risāla fī ajzāʾ khabariyya fī l-mūsīqī* (On Parts of Scientific Knowledge on Music), quoted in Shiloah (2004, 272–73, Arabic next to Saadiya Gaon's text).

43 This handling corresponds to the Christian authors who chose to transmit only those aphorisms that were consistent with Christian beliefs (Gutas 2012, 263).

Daniella Talmon-Heller (2007, 119) reports that given high levels of demand, there could have been many more assemblies in Iraq, if only there had been enough Qurʾānic reciters whose readings commonly opened such assemblies. The key term in this context is sorrow (*ḥuzn*). Listeners will experience sorrow—but this sentiment is a dialogical one, as it characterises the acknowledgment of human shortcomings vis-à-vis God's magnificence and magnanimity. Moreover, as we know from depictions of preaching and writings in Islamic homiletics, sorrow becomes closely linked to the soft heart, which is opened up for the divine message, to humbleness and, finally, repentance by the divine message. Repentance in the Islamic context is channelled into asking for forgiveness (*istighfār*), and the merciful God will forgive the sinner (*al-ʿāṣī*, lit. the disobedient). This is one step in the process that ultimately leads to salvation, that is, to the gratification of entering paradise at Judgement Day. This link adds the religious surplus value and explains the cathartic experiences depicted by many authors.

Conclusion

Although a large part of al-Ghazālī's writings on the effects of music and singing is devoted to listening as a Sufi practice, there are several passages which treat listening in a general sense and the religious use of sound in a non-Sufi context. This appears in the seven purposes of listening, in his comments on the preacher who is to use chanting, and in his general elaborations on the relation between sound and the human soul. It is understandable why his arguments are popular for those who seek to rationalise the use of musical sound in religious practice. He takes into consideration (1) the aesthetic quality and emotive power of rhythm, resonance, and rhyme; (2) a classification of different sounds and instruments and their effects; and, finally, (3) listening experiences and self-preparation as a decisive factor for the effect on the individual. [74]

The affinity to musical philosophy and musical theory can be traced in his classification of sounds and instruments, in his mention of all three arts that are treated in Greek musical philosophy (i.e. the art of measured words (verse), the art of tones, and the art of dance), and in the prominence of strings, although stringed instruments were not used in the religious context. Finally, the licence of listening to music and singing in relation to musical modes (*ṭuruq*) is governed by notions rooted in ethos theory. [75]

By contrast, the notion that music created by human beings is an only imperfect reflection of the perfect sound in the celestial spheres, which figures prominently in the epistle by the Brethren of Purity, is only faintly present in al-Ghazālī's book in the passage on longing for God evoked by wordless music. al-Ghazālī is not overtly interested in theoretical musical background. We find no exploration on mathematical ratios, on the division of strings and musical intervals, or on the relation of musical attacks and duration that are typical of al-Kindī, the Mawṣilī school, al-Fārābī, and others. There are also hardly any references to cosmology. Instead, we find allusions to a backgrounded system which relates musical modes to emotional states, but which is not explained in detail. It becomes tangible in his ideas on the functions of listening, in the rules on how to apply musical sounds and rhythms correctly, and in his terminology of *taḥrīk* and *ṭuruq mushajjiʿa*, *mushawwiqa*, and *muḥazzina*. [76]

That we cannot expect more details on how *ṭuruq* work lies, on the one hand, in the time of his writing. The practical application of music in the field of medicine and musical therapy developed only after al-Ghazālī's death with the inclusion of a wider musical, especially melodic, framework into the theoretical system of allocations to extra-musical elements. Musical ther- [77]

apy, comprising both dietary and therapeutic aspects, became a fully elaborated system in the thirteenth century (Neubauer 1990, esp. 233–35). On the other hand, al-Ghazālī is chiefly concerned with the application of sound in his own context, that of a Muslim scholar who seeks to advise believers in their actions that lead to salvation. He thus translates the theoretically described effects into concrete social situations. He differentiates between different contexts, personal experiences, and purposes of listening.

[78] With respect to aesthetic experience, al-Ghazālī recognises both the aesthetic pleasure and transformative power of beautiful sounds. They create delight, joy, longing, sorrow, physical strength, or movement of the limbs. He ultimately relates all beauty to God's creation but does not perceive all listening activities as experiences with a religious goal. He does not choose or exclude particular emotions but treats all effects. However, he focuses on one effect as especially relevant for common religious practice. He opens up the musically created emotion of sorrow for the listener's interaction with the divine and thereby channels it into a personalised experience that can be furnished with salvific qualities.

[79] The appropriation of Greek musical philosophy is evident in various domains of Arabo-Islamic culture, such as in speculative music theory (*ʿilm al-mūsīqā*) or in the aphorisms and gnomologia that formed a popular part of edifying entertainment in court culture. The "Book on the Etiquette of Listening and Ecstasy" by al-Ghazālī constitutes a long-lasting effort to integrate existing musical culture into religious practice. From an intra-religious perspective, we can discern a continuous line, from general listening to Sufi listening, which anybody may achieve with the relevant training. From an inter-religious perspective, much of his elaborations are rooted in a common heritage of the culture of Antiquity that moved across languages and religions.

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Olfaction and Other Senses in Chinese Culture

A Comparative Analysis, with Special Attention to the Use of the Term *Xiang*

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ABSTRACT The article analyses information on religious elements in the representation of senses in literary sources of late imperial China. The Introduction presents psychological and social functions of olfaction with reference to China. The second part deals with the concepts of *xiang*, especially in the meaning of incense, but also the supernatural and symbolic aromas and the pollutant load of its antonym *chou*. The third part offers a survey of other bodily sensations in relation to religion.

KEYWORDS Olfaction, religion, incense, aroma, stench, ritual, worshipping

Introduction

This paper focuses on olfaction, and marginally on other senses in Chinese culture, to offer a documented overview of the ways in which senses directly or indirectly contribute to religious experiences. The main hypothesis at the basis of this inquiry is that bodily sensations are not limited to the 'physical' body but—through culture, beliefs, and imagery—extend to the entire personality, and beyond it, to social order. The article intends to verify this hypothesis in the Chinese context. Multifaceted religious experience is an example of this 'extension' of sensory perception toward supernatural powers and/or communion with other beings and the universe. [1]

Thus, the first purpose is to present and discuss a few selected cases concerning sensory experiences that are directly or indirectly related to religion. Examples will be analysed and organized according to the role they play in religious experience and, at the same time, in other aspects of social, cultural, and inner life. For an enquiry into the past we interrogate remaining traces, such as written sources, iconographic materials, musical compositions, traditional customs, and ceremonies. I chose literary texts as they are rich in descriptions of everyday life, with more details on emotions and sensorial perceptions than any official historical sources. If one does not enquire into any specific school of thought, literary works [2]

are even more reliable than religious and moral treaties. They reflect the feelings and mentality of the authors and readers of the time and offer a rather rich material of analysis. The study takes advantage of a textual analysis project on emotions and states of mind which I am conducting for late imperial China. Besides the specific religious vocabulary, the lexicon that, according to the context, may have religious implications reflects the entanglement of the sacred with the social and emotional spheres. In this perspective, the contribution will bring to light the overlapping of the religious realm with the broader social landscape and mentality. The material presented is not only useful from a linguistic point of view, but confirms the peculiar way beliefs are professed and religions are followed in traditional China. The syncretic attitude is particularly witnessed in literary sources.

[3] Religion was not limited to the worshipping of some deities, but was framed in a holistic perception of the cosmos, from the microcosm of the body to the macrocosm of the universe; the ideas of nature, state, and the body were so interdependent that they are best considered a single complex (Sivin 1995, 5). Thus we cannot examine only some rituals to understand religious sentiments and practices. This is the reason why a lexical analysis of literary texts may contribute to understanding some aspects of the sensory dimension of Chinese religions.

[4] As individual religious experience cannot be separated from personal psyche and biography, so from an anthropological perspective the sacred is deeply intertwined with social and cultural elements. In fact, there are three fields in which a rich information can be collected from literary material:

[5]
1. Everyday life and material culture;
2. Everyday religious thought and practice and collective imagery;
3. Representations of everyday emotions and the sensory dimension.

[6] The most lively and detailed descriptions of everyday life and of private history can be found in fiction. Novels and sometimes dramas and poems offer some aspects of life that no other sources can present. Thus, literary sources are precious sources on religious life, practices, attitudes and interreligious entanglement, contacts, and transfer. Many of the *xiaoshuo* stories present religious elements and witness popular beliefs.[1] A literary work is influenced

1 The term *xiaoshuo* 小說 (lit.: small talk)—originally used in a derogatory way for a minor, unofficial, inferior discourse or history—means any kind of narrative fiction, from novels to short stories. This article mainly refers to the "Dream of the Red Mansion," "JinPingMei," the three collections (*Sanyan*) in vernacular and the "History of Love" by Feng Menglong, "Destiny of the Flowers in the Mirror," "Unofficial History of the Forest of the Literati," the *mirabilia* "Strange Tales from the Leisure Studio," and "What the Master Would Not Discuss." Other literary works examined here are the "Mountain Songs," the drama "Peony Pavilion," and "Remembrances of Zhang Dai's Dreams."

The "Dream of the Red Mansion," *Hongloumeng* 紅樓夢, was composed in vernacular Chinese by Cao Xueqin in 80 chapters; in the middle of the eighteenth century, it circulated in manuscript copies with various titles until it was printed by Gao E in 1791, who added 40 chapters to complete the novel. It tells the story of the young unconventional protagonist Jia Baoyu, born with a magical piece of jade in his mouth, and his unlucky love with Lin Daiyu (Cao and E 1998).

"JinPingMei" 金瓶梅, also called "The Golden Lotus," the name of the female protagonist, is the most famous erotic novel of the late Ming dynasty; composed in vernacular Chinese during the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644) and circulated in manuscript at the end of the sixteenth century, it was first printed in 1610. The most famous edition was published with commentaries by Zhang Zhupo in 1695 (Chongzhen 崇祯本[±1600] 1990).

The *Sanyan* (三言, "Three Words") are three collections of short stories in vulgar style edited by the writer Feng Menglong (1574–1646). The first compilation is the *Gujin Xiaoshuo* (古今小說, "Ancient and Modern Tales," or *Yushi Mingyan* 喻世明言, "Stories to Enlighten the World"), published in 1620; it was followed by the *Jingshi Tongyan* (警世通言, "Common Words for Warning the World"), published in 1624, and by the *Xingshi hengyan* (醒世恒言, "Stories to Awaken the World"), published in 1627 (Feng 1991b, 1991a).

by one or more doctrines, even if it does not present a conscious and coherent system of thought. Some works, such as the "The Journey to the West," *Xiyouji* 西遊記, are allegories of alchemic and Buddhist self-cultivation (Yu 1983, 202–30). The "Dream of the Red Mansion", *Hongloumeng,* might be read as the path of the pilgrim's progress. The "Destiny of the Flowers in the Mirror", *Jinghuayuan* 鏡花緣, opens with the punishment of the Spirits of Flowers, banned to the world below to live as mortal girls. As other novels, it combines Confucian morality with Dao-Buddhist beliefs, so that "the great good is able to change the disaster into good fortune, and the great evil to change the good fortune into disaster" (天下事非大善不能轉禍為福，非大惡亦不能轉福為禍; Li [1828] 1979, 12:46).

[7] Besides novels with a plot based on Buddhism or Daoism and poems inspired by them, generally speaking, the whole literary production is a treasure house of data on pluralistic religions that reflects a practical attitude in everyday life. Ideologies, theories, beliefs, and assumptions circulating among the population emerge as people's simplified interpretation of them in narrative discourse. Novels let us understand what the educated strata and common people have filtered and reinterpreted regarding the theories elaborated by the great thinkers. It is sufficient to thumb through the "Dream of the Red Mansion," or the "Unofficial History of the Forest of the Literati" to enter into the intellectual and religious world shared by the common people and the upper strata. Novels reveal a sense of the sacred among people, the different sense of identity built on more religious systems, the tolerance or intolerance of other beliefs. In particular, in the *zhiguai* genre 志怪 (accounts of anomalies), Buddhist and Daoist elements are often mixed with orthodox tradition, and the main dynamics of the stories lie in the constant rule of retribution, in this life or after, with an apparent acceptance of the supernatural and the presence of spirits, ghosts, and gods (Teiser 1995, 1996).[2] The encounter with the supernatural is often possible thanks to extreme mental conditions—possession, trance, coma—or oneiric status. Therefore, through the analysis of the development of the plot of tales, their language and their comparison, it is possible to understand many aspects of the holy and of a society's popular religious world.

[8] Novels, generally speaking, offer a description of the fundamental syncretic attitude of the Chinese population, the often proclaimed orthodox Confucianism notwithstanding, and it is not by chance that it is a melting pot of religious beliefs and practices, as in the couplet: "Born from an embryo, born from an egg, born from liquid and born from transformation, the cycle

The "History of Love," *Quingshi Qingshileilüe* 情史類略 (the full title being "The History of Love Categorization Sketch"), edited by Feng Menglong in 1630, is an anthology of short stories in classical Chinese, most of which are borrowed largely from previous collections, biographies, and historical works. Thanks to the encyclopaedic structure of the work, it is a precious documentation of the categorisations and representations of love of the time (Feng 1986).

"Destiny of the Flowers in the Mirror," *Jinghuayuan* 鏡花緣, completed in 1827, is a novel in 100 chapters on the adventurous travels of Tang Ao and the merchant Lin. "Unofficial History of the Forest of the Literati," *Rulinwaishi* 儒林外史, is a satirical novel on the life of scholars in vernacular style, completed in 1750. "Strange Tales from the Leisure Studio," *LZZY* 聊齋誌異 (Pu [1679] 1978), and "What the Master Would Not Discuss," *Zibuyu* 子不語 (Yuan 1993), are two collections of stories of the *mirabilia* genre, respectively composed by Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640–1715) and Yuan Mei 袁枚, (1716–1797).

The "Mountain Songs," *Shan'ge* 山歌, is a collection of folk songs edited, rewritten, or created by Feng Menglong, mostly in the Suzhou dialect, aimed at "borrowing the true feelings of man and woman and uncovering the falseness of Confucianism" (Feng 1986). The drama "Peony Pavilion," *Mudanting* 牡丹亭, written by the famous dramatist Tang Xianzu in 1598, extols the love story between Du Liniang and Liu Mengmei (Tang 1998). "Remembrances of Zhang Dai's Dreams," *Tao'an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶, is a collection of autobiographic records in the *biji* (筆記 "notebook") style (Zhang 1982).

For references to ancient texts and Classics, if no mention is given of specific editions, see Chinese Text Project, online http://ctext.org/ (last accessed November 19, 2019).

2 For Western literature see Todorov (1975).

of birth is endless. The way of Heaven, the way of Earth, the way of humans and the way of ghosts, the ways are infinite" 胎生卵生濕生化生，生生不已; 天道地道人道鬼道，道道無窮 ("Crane Carrying a Carriage" 仙鶴扛車 in Santangelo and Beiwen 2013, 444–45).[3]

[9] In contrast to vernacular fiction, classical *xiaoshuo* present rich information on beliefs as well as interaction between supernatural and human worlds and respond to appeals for justice (Hammond 2008, 85–88). In the case of collections of stories such as *Zibuyu* or *Liaozhai zhiyi*, tales might come from different sources, and some of them are not the creative product of the author in the modern sense; thus, they may present contradictory attitudes. And yet, although the narrative discourse cannot be examined as a logical reflection of an author's philosophical theory, it still testifies themes of the debates of the period as well as the author's attitude toward everyday life and segments of reality. As literary sources are neither theoretical nor moral treaties, they are particularly suitable to discover the common acceptance of certain beliefs, of religious practices, and of longings for protection, transcendence, and consolatory answers, better than any other source.[4] Moreover, several stories of *Zibuyu* witness the conflict between state control over the communication with spirits and local cults, telling cases of destruction of statues or temples of heterodox spirits by officials or common people.[5]

[10] The first part of the paper is dedicated to a short presentation of olfaction in order to frame the meaning of odours in late imperial Chinese society. The main part focuses on the two Chinese antonyms *xiang* and *chou* and their polyvalence, from concrete to symbolic, religious, and vitalistic meanings.

Cultural Meanings of Odours

[11] Whenever we react to a smell and evaluate it, this representation implies several elements constructed in our own culture and personal experiences, and above all associates this feeling with several other hints, values and disvalues, prejudices and memories.[6] Henri Bergson emphasized the relation between beliefs, sensations, images, emotions, tendencies, intellectual functions, and will (1902, 529–33).[7] The body is the means by which human beings

3 The story "Neither Buddha Nor the God of Literature Would Receive Him" 儒佛兩不收 of the same collection (*ZBY* 8) offers an unusual look at adhesion to two religions and religion identity: the protagonist, Yang Zhaonan, is devoted to both Confucianism and Buddhism; this was a very common phenomenon in China, but here it is sarcastically dealt with as a complicated affair. After death, Yang appears to his wife in a dream and confesses that, as a Confucian, he was examined by the God of Literature, who did not accept him, and then was refused by Buddha, too. Thus, the soul of Yang could not be classified and had no place to rest. Reincarnated as a boy, his option to be a Buddhist fails, too, for the inability to be vegetarian, and suffers from infantile convulsion. It seems that one cannot simultaneously be a good Buddhist and a good Confucian.

4 There are many studies on Chinese syncretism and on the practical interaction of the Tree Doctrines. See, for instance, Brook (1993, 13–44).

5 For instance, "Destruction of the Temple in Honour of Chen Youliang" 毀陳友諒廟 (*ZBY* 10), "Prince Lie Jie" 烈傑太子 (*ZBY* 3), "Wutong God Treated People Differently" 五通神因人而施 (*ZBY* 8). Only one story ("No Guandi Temple in Lü City" 呂城無關廟, *ZBY* 8) presents the victory of a locality god over any attempt to build a temple in honour of Guandi, as the latter was an historical enemy during the Three Kingdoms period. On the conflict between the hegemony of imperial control on the communication with spirits and local cults, see Goossaert (2009); Zito (1987, 333–71); Wang (2007); Zhao Xianhai (2002, 28–33); Zhao Kesheng and Yu Haiyong (2003, 146).

6 As Uri Almagor (1990, 253–74) notices, the olfactory system is directly and intimately tied to the part of our brain most involved with memory and emotion, and odour is often the mechanism which triggers (and leads to) changes in our moods, behaviour, and thoughts.

7 As far as sensations are concerned, Bergson states: "Il y a d'abord une croyance qui s'attache à la *sensation*. Elle dépend de l'intensité de cette sensation, de sa netteté, et aussi de la cohésion des éléments qui la composent. Elle est peut-être moins forte pour les sensations visuelles que pour les sensations tactiles,

experience life, health, decadence and death, and perceive the external world. It is this structure that orients humans towards certain pleasures and pains. But the body is also a cultural construction itself, with its categories, boundaries, and representations. From a psychophysical perspective, physiological perceptions and reactions are closely related to the affective world: physical experiences involve the entire personality of the body. From an anthropological point of view, sensory experiences are deeply permeated by cultural constructions. Especially in Chinese culture, the somatisation of emotions is manifested not only in medical discourse but in many symbolic expressions in language (Santangelo and Middendorf 2006, 2–7, 41–63, 281–312). Religious and symbolic implications of olfaction have been studied less compared to other senses. For instance, the taste of food has been object of several research works, including from cognitive, symbolic, ritualistic, moral, and social status perspectives. Some of these studies may help us in analysing the meaning of odours for the analogies between taste and olfaction.[8] Olfaction seems difficult to categorise, except for the dichotomy of 'attractive' or 'repellent' odours.[9] It is not by chance that there are no 'five smells,' like "five colours" (*wuse* 五色) , "five tastes" (*wuwei* 五味) or "five notes" (*wuyin* 五音). As Le Guérer notes, "[t]he olfactory sense is the prime means we employ for discriminating between the pleasant and the unpleasant, the known and the unknown. It can inspire either recognition or rejection" (quoted in Lai 2008, 186).[10] Smells directly provoke our reaction, and thus are crucial in keeping boundaries between social groups; familiar smells connect to the old things of our childhood, and unfamiliar smells to strangers. Odours play an important role in human life and human relations, and thus may have significant effects concerning the religious and interreligious spheres.

[12] By cultural mediation, the immediate physical reactivity of odours can be extended to objects or subjects we intend to venerate or exclude and avoid. This means that our ladder of values can be influenced, strengthened or symbolized by odours, and, vice versa, it can influence our perception of odours. Odours can become metaphors of strong feelings toward others or other groups. Closely involved with memory and emotion, odours are often mechanisms which trigger changes in moods, behaviour, and thoughts.[11] Odours cross various fields of human experience, from natural and physiological to social, from symbolic to religious levels.

[13] If we consider the three main functions—as cognitive, semiotic, and ritual—all of them may concern the religious and interreligious spheres.

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moins forte pour les sensations reçues passivement que pour les sensations que nous soulignons par des mouvements. Notre activité joue donc ici un rôle important, peut-être le rôle principal. Et il ne s'agit pas seulement de notre activité musculaire, mais de notre réaction générale à la sensation et de l'attitude que nous adoptons vis-à-vis d'elle" (1902, 530).

8 For social and cultural implications that might be analogous with odours, see also Korsmeyer (2005), with important contributions such as by Jack Goody and Pierre Bourdieu. On taste as an expression of morality and aesthetic refinement, see Garson (2007), a study conducted on Victorian novels.

9 There are several rival or complementary theories to explain the mechanism of odour perception and its classification in the brain (Necmi 1968). Smells are usually described as belonging to the subject or substance that produces them, 'the smell of …' as if they have no self-existence. The scarce olfactory hierarchic categories and the difficulty of application of the prototypes for odours have been studied in some essays, see Dubois and Rouby (1997, 9–20, 1996), Holley (1999, 128–39). On olfactive vocabulary and related bibliography, see Manetta et al. (2007, 479–97).

10 For alien odours, see Paul Lai's review (2008, 167–87) of the novel *Salt Fish Girl*. Lai explores the figure of the alien in snake, fruit, fish, and human forms: Miranda's durian stink and Evie's fishy scent challenge the modern deodorised world and interacts with the mythical figure of the snake-goddess Nüwa 女媧, reborn in a small Chinese village as a girl with a stink of fish.

11 Several studies have demonstrated that the olfactory system is directly tied to the part of brain most involved with memory and emotion. For a general survey of physio-psychological aspects of olfaction, see Engen (1982). On the complexity of this experience, see also Classen (1993); Smith (2007, 59–74);

The *cognitive* dimension was strictly connected to the motivational dimension in the olfaction of animals for the necessary information and the consequent incitation of the fulfilment of the vital functions of nutrition,[12] reproduction, and avoiding dangers. In humans, this cognitive function remains but changes its fields of action, as the relation with the world has become increasingly mediated by symbolic systems. [14]

Sensorial sociology enquires into the function of natural or symbolic odours in classifying people, animals and plants, groups, space, and territory[13] and in establishing group identity.[14] Olfactory symbolism is used to express themes of identity and difference in diverse cultures, because body odours can differ from culture to culture. They can symbolise not only the qualities of others, but also the ability of the 'Other' to disrupt one's order (Classen 1992, 160). Thus, the sensory function works as medium of intercultural, interethnic, or interreligious demarcation. For example, in China certain 'barbarians' were described starting from their bad odours, discrimination based on culture rather than religion. Typical in recent European history is the so-called "bourgeois deodorisation" and the contemporary odorisation of individuals (perfume industry). A further process is establishing a relation between the value system and olfactory symbolism, and attributing a moral hierarchy to different beings or conditions, such as illness and one's life-cycle. Thus, odour may become one of the basic attributes for discrimination and for cultural identity: it transfers the ideological or social distinctions to a visceral level, often to physical repulsion. It is not by chance that moral symbolism is often expressed in terms of olfactory imagery.[15] [15]

The *semiotic* function concerns the communication of messages and signs through odouriferous substances, such as incense for communicating with spirits or perfumes to attract a potential partner or establishing exchange relations with other persons and groups (see Sperber 1975; Gell 1977, 25–38; Hold and Schleidt 1977, 225–38; Howes 1986, 29–45). Smells may be used for defence, including repelling enemies, animals or, evil spirits. [16]

The *ritual* function is no less important and mainly responds to religious and aesthetic demands. It is connected to the two previous functions, linking odours with value orders and symbols:[16] the sensorial dimension of rites is demonstrated by the importance of odours, sounds and colours in many ceremonies. Ritual is a performance that—with its symbolic bod- [17]

Almagor (1990, 253–74); Corbin (1986); Synnott and Yáñez (2003, 431–64); Vernet-Maury et al. (1999, 725–36).

12 A certain cognitive ability among hunters is mentioned in a story of *Zibuyu* (10:184, "King Yu's Stele Swallows the Snakes" 禹王碑吞蛇): "There was a strange book handed down from my ancestors that taught us how to catch the wind and sniff (抓風嗅鼻) it in order to tell what kind of animal was approaching. I too learned such skills when I was young." Contemporary neuro-gastronomy has demonstrated the fundamental role, in association with taste, of both orthonasal and especially retronasal odorant identification in the inhalation and exhalation phases (see Shepherd 2012).

13 See Largey and Watson (1972, 1021–24), Corbin (1986), and Jenner (2000).

14 On the anthropological perspective on self-representation, among numerous essays, see Müller et al. (2013), Lock (1993, 133–55), Kilp (2001, 197–222), Classen (1992, 133–66), and Schlicht et al. (2009, 687–709). There is a useful survey on different positions concerning the self, from those who negate its reality (Metzinger 2003) to those who assert a multiplicity of dimensions, including interpersonal, conceptual, remembered, and private ecological selves (Neisser 1988, 37–59). Others state it is a useful fiction (Dennett 1991) or a cultural construction (Markus and Kitayama 1998, 63–87). Starting from the hypothesis that the self-conscious cognitive system represents itself, the article deals with various levels of self-representation.

15 On physical and cultural elements (concerning interpersonal contamination and socio-moral violations) that elicit disgust, see the seven categories that include food, animals, body products, sexual deviance, body-envelope violations, poor hygiene, and contact with death (see Haidt et al. 1997, 107–31; Synnott 1991, 437–59, 1993). Worthy of notice is Wang Yangming (1472–1529), who explains his theory of the so-called unity of 'knowledgeaction' and innate conscience by the allegory of the man who, smelling a stink, immediately notices the disagreeable odour and simultaneously dislikes it and avoids it.

16 One may think of the *odor suavis and odor suavitatis* in theological discourse.

ily actions—aims at union with the sacred and enables participants to obtain special powers or revelation, and odours play an important role in this (Tambiah 1979, 113–69). In a state of contact with the Holy, besides *odor sanctitatis* and *dulcedo*, purification may be performed through odours in ritual and practical contexts.[17] The fragrance believers perceive coming from the bodies of saints is a source of consolation, admiration, and surprise regarding their miraculous power and the presence of the divine. Thus, the *odor suavitatis eflagravit a corpore* (sweet smell coming from the body [of the ascetic Pelagius]) is often contrasted with the stench produced by sinners: the former is attractive while the latter is repellent.[18] Like in the rich documentation collected about the European Middle Ages, perceptions of miraculous scents can be found in various cultures. In China, the use of aromas also accompanies rituals for various festivals, is blessed and auspicious for worshippers, and exalts their filial piety and fraternal engagement. In his mystical poems, the Chinese scholar Shao Yong 邵雍 (1012–1077) refers to "heavenly perfume," *tianxiang* 天香, and to flowers' perfume, a term we find again even in the *Mudan ting* 牡丹亭 ("Peony Pavilion") by Tang Tianzu 湯顯祖 (1550–1616).[19] Incense and other aromas are employed in rituals of transition, weddings, and funerals, or for generating special experiences (dreams, trance). Other smells are necessary in other ceremonies, such as exorcisms, *yan* 厭, to control or dismiss bad spirits using onions and garlic 以蔥蒜厭之 (see "Feng Shiyu Had a Light Body" 馮侍禦身輕, *ZBY* 21, 400). With the analogy of the so-called "moral tastes," many of the above perfumes may be included in the category of 'moral smells,' a reliable sign of moral sensitivity, social and cultural quality, filial virtue, and ethical refinement.

[18] Finally, healing and various kinds of aromatherapies are performed using curative smells or by creating a pleasant olfactory environment for the patient (see Classen, Howes, and Synnott 1994; Harvey 2006).[20] In Chinese traditional medical documents, smelling is suggested as a means of diagnosis (Cullen 2001, 297–323). Zibet, for instance, was supposed to have medical qualities, protect from pestilences and bad humours, and possess aphrodisiacal faculties. Every reader of the famous novel "The Dream of the Red Mansion" will remember the seductive environment of the Qing Keqing's 秦氏 (可卿) room, before his sexual initiation, and the intoxicating perfume (*tianxiang xiren* 甜香襲人) that assailed Jia Baoyu's 賈寶玉 nostrils (*Honglou meng*, 5:82 in Cao 1973, 1:126–127).

Xiang and *Chou*[21]

[19] The fragrance of perfumes—especially incense—in China as well as in other societies from Antiquity onwards is associated with the Holy and used in ceremonies and rituals. It is not by chance that *xiang* 香, in Chinese, means both incense and perfume, a polysemous basic term which—according to the context—can be rendered as 'incense,' 'fragrance,' or 'beauty.'

17 On the use of balsams in Medieval Christianity, see Albert (1990).

18 Martin Roch's essay (2009, 433–63) deals with the relation between emotion and sensorial perception in the case of "l'odeur de sainteté," where the religious and emotional meanings are immortalized by the hagiographic reports.

19 Respectively the poems "Mudan yin" 牡丹吟 and "Jian nianlao fengchun shi" 箋年老逢春詩 (*Yichuan Jirang ji* 伊川擊壤集, quoted in Arrault 2002, 242–43).

20 See also http://www.david-howes.com/senses/Consert-Odor.htm (last accessed October 14, 2019).

21 The analysis of a concept elaborated in another culture incurs evident risks. In order to cope with some of them, it would be more productive to monitor its lexical fields in relation to the polarities of its category. For polarities and the major polar structures, see Benjamin Schwartz (1959, 50–62); Chenshan Tian (2005, 33–40); Cheng Chung-ying 成中英 (2006, 25–59).

Thus it is very significant as it is related to olfaction, and in most cases it concerns rituals and religious performances.[22] I analysed about 300 samples, including significant compounds, collected from various sources—mainly literary works—of the last two Chinese dynasties (see Appendix). It is difficult to make a clear classification of the meanings of *xiang*, because their semantic values may overlap in various cases. Incense itself is not only a ritual tool but also contains the idea of perfume; similarly, the fragrance of flowers may be used as alluding to the beauty of a woman or as symbolism for beauty and love. Again, some terms that we might consider as metaphors for love in fact mean scent-fragrance or hint at female beauty. Thus, they may be translated either as symbolic or odour words, and their classification may change if we emphasise the alternative meaning. I analysed these cases by considering the main sense of a term in its concrete context.

[20] From the overall analysis, the most common meaning of *xiang,* in almost half of the analysed occurrences, is incense. In China, incense is variously composed of camphor, benzoin resins, sandalwood, and other vegetal scenting ingredients. Traditionally it is used in temples and other places of ceremony for worshipping divinities in honour of ancestors, or swearing fidelity, or for medical purposes. Incense is mostly used in shrines or in front of sacred images, the statue of Buddha, local divinities, the three gods Guan Yu 關羽 (Guandi 關帝), Zhang Fei 張飛 and Liu Bei 劉備 (for instance in *ZBY* 10:192, “Lü Mao Guai” 綠毛怪),[23] the gods in the netherworld, or the bodily remains of a deceased. “Burning incense every morning” (朝必香) expresses one’s mourning for somebody (see *LZZY*, 3:294, “Daughter of Mr. Lu” 魯公女). Burning incense is generally an expression of a straight and direct religious attitude, which respects a common and simple ritual accompanied by the gestures for worshipping the divinity. Picking up incense to burn it (拈香), offering (奉香火，供香火，進香，上香), and burning incense (焚香, 燒香, 行香) are very common practices, as we can see even now in any Chinese temple. The first offering in the morning (上頭香) is particularly appreciated: “The incense offered when the rooster first crowed was considered the first incense” (以雞鳴時即上殿拍香者為頭香; *ZBY* 06:118, “Filial Daughter” 孝女); “determined to burn the first incense in the city god temple, […] he lit the incense and bowed before the statue of the god (必欲到城隍廟燒頭香，[…] 點香下拜; *ZBY* 19:371, “Burning the First Incense” 燒頭香). It is the “incense in hand, while praying to the heaven (持香禱于天; *ZBY* 11:213, “Feng Shuike” 風水客), or “each monk venerated the Buddha with a stick of incense in his hands” (各持香一炷禮佛畢; *ZBY* 23:457, “Monks Shi Kui and Di Hui” 石揆諦暉); again “she closed the door to light joss sticks and sat down chanting Buddhist scriptures” (閉閣焚香，坐誦佛經; *JSTY* 10:309); “he burned incense and kowtowed” (焚香叩頭; *ZBY* 5:087, “Wu Sanfu” 吳三複); “She burned some incense to bow and kowtow before the Buddha” (至佛前焚香叩拜; *LZZY* 12:1695, “Fang Wen Shu” 房文淑); “worshipping him with burning incense and burying him in Linggu Temple” (奉香火，舁靈谷寺塔之; *TAMY* 1:1, “Bell Mount” 鐘山); “to bend knees before the image of the worshipped deity for the length of time burning a stick of incense. This was called ‘kneeling to incense’ ” (視香炷爲度，名曰跪香; *LZZY* 6:748, “Yun Cuixian” 雲翠仙).

[21] Thus, burning incense accompanies prayers (焚香而祝; for instance *LZZY* 11:1470, “Qingwa Shen-Another” 青蛙神·又) and offerings: “I feel satisfied enough to burn the incense and make

22 According to the *Xiang cheng* 香乘 by Zhou Jiazhou 周嘉胄 (1582–1658), a common sentence says “burning incense repels evil” (燒香拒邪), and “aromatic gum resin (安息香, *Styrax*, benzoin or Persian incense) in the bedroom repels vapours with impure smells and polluted fogs” (安息膠香於寢所拒濁臭之氣卻邪穢之霧). See *Xiangcheng* 香乘, *juan* 11.

23 ‘Burning incense’ 燒香 is an important practice, together with ‘chanting incantations’ 念咒, ‘exorcising with the use of spells’ 厭以符咒, and ‘writing a spell and burning it’ 書符燒之, while ‘performing magic’ 作法, planchette divinations 扶乩, and other Daoist ceremonies (Santangelo and Beiwen 2013, 41–47).

offering to" (焚香供之，足矣; *LZZY* 10:1315, "A Goddess" 神女), or "seeking divine guidance by drawing lots" (求簽). Not only common people but high officials, too, practiced such rituals, sometimes for themselves, sometimes as their official duty: "The provincial governor of Hunan used to worship Guandi with offerings. Every New Year's Day, he would go to Guandi Temple to burn incense and pray to be told what the new year had in store for him" (湖南巡撫某，平時敬奉關帝。每元旦，先赴關廟行香求簽; *ZBY* 21:401, "The Edge of the Eighteenth Beach" 十八灘頭).

[22] This ceremony may be accompanied by a purification act: "Suddenly one day, he got up early, burned incense and had a shower" (忽一日早起，焚香沐浴; *ZBY* 19:366, "Chen Zishan" 陳紫山); "promptly rinsing her hands, she walked in and burnt incense and worshipped Buddha" (忙盥手进去焚香拜佛; *HLM* 18:280). Often, paper money is burned at the same time: "she prepared offerings and burnt incense and paper money" (即具酒食、燒香紙; *ZBY* 03:045, "Scholar Qiu" 裘秀才). This action is an expression of an emotional engagement directed at worshipping a divinity or an ancestor. So it is used as a paradigm to signify total dedication to a person: "If I can live again, I will serve you respectfully as venerating Buddha with flowers and incenses" (倘得再生，香花供養有日耳; *LZZY*, 8:1041, "Zhong Sheng" 鍾生).

[23] In other cases, incense prepares and accompanies the solemnity of a promise, a pact, or an oath: "Youyu burned incense with Zeng brothers, and let them make a pledge" (友于乃與兄弟焚香約誓; *LZZY* 11:1585, "Zeng Youyu" 曾友于).[24] Incense is also the protagonist of any vow: "swearing to burn incense someday in the temple" (香願; *SG* 9:234); "to burn incense in fulfilment of vows" (還香願; *SG* 9:234). Burning incense also celebrates the solemn establishment of a special relation, pact of brotherhood, friendship, marriage, or any oath of alliance, as in "they burnt incense to become sworn brothers" (焚香爲昆季之盟; *LZZY* 6:721, "Ma Jiepu" 馬介甫); "Panpan lighted a joss stick and swore to the heaven" (盼盼焚香指天誓; *JSTY* 10:304); "Don't you remember the pledge of being together with each other forever at the time of our marriage?" (此時香火之誓，君寧不憶之耶?; *LZZY* 8:1116, "Lü Wubing" 呂無病). 'Close friends' is also rendered with "incense friends" (香火情; *ZBY* 07:130, "Li Zhuo" 李倬). Thus, the oath of eternal love or close engagement was always accompanied by this ceremony, which in fact was called "incense for the pact" (盟香; *MDT* 32:189).

[24] As any religious manifestation, burning incense can be more or less deeply felt, based on habit or on personal new experiences. It may aim at receiving a favour, as in the close contact between the devotee and the divinity (see *LZZY* 10:1320, "A Goddess" 神女). This act, which seems so exterior and repetitive, may include a personal inner relation with the supernatural. The religious bond between incense and religious spirit is internalised in a significant metaphorical sentence to express religiosity: "This offering of incense to Buddha burns in my heart, these waxen candle tears flow from my eyes as a libation to Heaven" (心香奉佛，淚燭澆天; *MDT* 25:152). We can say that the incense aroma gives the sensorial perception of the intense emotion felt during the religious ceremony. A well-known neo-Confucian glossary gives an exemplary description: "As the masses burn incense daily and pray to it, it acquires a spiritual power. The spiritual power is that of the creature itself and has nothing to do with spiritual beings" (衆人朝夕焚香禱祝，便会有靈。其靈乃此物之靈，非關那鬼神事; Ch'en 1986, 162).

[25] There is also an economic aspect of burning incense and religious devotion: the related

24 Other examples where swearing or vowing are accompanied by burning incense are numerous. See, for instance, "The mother bade the two young women to burn incense and swear never to regret it" (母令姊妹焚香，各矢無悔詞; *LZZY* 11:1503, *Chen Yunxi* 陳雲棲).

monks' ability to attract devotees and the consequent growth (*sheng* 盛) and decline (*shuai* 衰) of temples is examined by Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716–1797), in his *Zibuyu* 子不語. He describes the increasing volume of business that follows a miraculous event, or the 'marketing' campaigns in the religious field. The practice of *xianghuo* is a symptom of the flourishing of a religious place (香火極盛) and is expressed by its financial fortune and fame.[25] Among these stories I will quote the following, "Poisoning a Man to Get Incense Offering," as it ingeniously illustrates some degenerations in such competitions:

> [26] A Daoist named Liao Ming of Hangzhou collected the money to build a statue of Guandi for the Guandi temple. On the day of the consecration ceremony, the pious men and women of the country all gathered in the temple to offer incense. Suddenly a rascal came and sat upright and unafraid beside the statue of Guandi. He pointed to the statue and insulted and abused it. All the people bitterly persuaded him not to do so, but the Daoist said: "Never mind, just leave him to himself. He would certainly receive his retribution." Not after long, the rascal fell down to the ground and shouting he had got a stomache-ache. He rolled about ceaselessly and died afterwards. Blood flowed out of his seven apertures in the head. The people were terrified, thinking that Guandi had shown his power. From then on, the burning incenses were ceaseless and the Daoist made a big fortune by it. Next year, as the members of the Daoist party quarrelled for the inequality between the shares of the money, someone of them reported what they had done to the government, saying: "Last year, it was the Daoist who bribed the rascal to ask him to insult the statue. The Daoist had asked the rascal to drink the poisonous wine at first while the rascal didn't know that." The government asked an official to dig out the rascal's corpse and found it was actually blue and black [which was the sign of the death by poison]. The Daoist was so sentenced to death and the burning incenses of Guandi temple also declined (Santangelo and Beiwen 2013, 727).

[27] Concerning the economic aspects of religious practices and incense offering, sometimes a private villager may compete with temples and become rich: "The villagers began to worship it, calling it the 'powerful coffin'. Huo's 霍 family did collect the money that the villagers spent on incense offered up to the coffin, therefore amassing a large fortune" (材民奉之若狂，呼為"靈棺材"。霍家取香火錢，因以致富。; *ZBY* 12:234, "Deaf Ghost" 聾鬼). In the collection of love songs by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1646), two songs play on incense, joking about the relation between the hollow incense stand and the incense stick.[26]

[28] Finally, burning incense was also an act for high appreciation of something precious: "Returning home with his [precious] stone, Xing wrapped it in brocade and stored it in a chest. On the occasions when he took it out to appreciate it, he always lit rare incense first" (邢得石歸，裹以錦，藏櫝中，時出一賞，先焚異香而後出之。; LZZY 11:1577, "Shi Qingxu" 石清虛).

25 *ZBY* 03:050, "The Earth God Brings a Lawsuit" 土地神告狀; 07:136, "The Fox Spirit Who Pretended to Be Guanyin for Three Years" 狐仙冒充觀音三年; 08:151, "The Earth God Suffering Hunger" 土地受餓; 08:161, "Xiang Yu Shows His Power" 項王顯靈; 09:169, "Wronged Case of Putian" 莆田冤獄; 10:1306, "A Cloth Merchant" 布商; 12:234, "Deaf Ghost" 聾鬼; 13:249, "The God with the Ox Head" 牛頭大王; 14:264, "Poisoning a Man to Get Incense Offering" 鴆人取香火; 17:325, "Cool Old Man" 清涼老人; 18:336, "Bai Tiande" 白天德; 18:351, "The Stone Lion Begs for Help" 石獅求救命; 19:362, "Rabbit God" 兔兒神; 23:452, "Double Flower Temple" 雙花廟; 23:456, "Monks Shi Kui and Di Hui" 石揆諦暉.

26 The second song says: "My secret lover is like an incense stand: / Beautiful on the outside but hollow inside. / He is a red joss-stick and dives into my hole. / My eyes cloud over before the incense even begins to burn" (*SG* 6:152 A., see Ōki and Santangelo 2011, 234).

Whenever there is the need to attribute decorum and respectability to an act, incense is used, and it prepares and accompanies the solemnity of a promise, a pact, or an oath. Thus, burning incense also celebrates the solemn establishment of a special relation, pact of brotherhood, friendship, marriage, or any oath of alliance.

[29] Moreover, a relatively large amount of fragrances were supposed to have a supernatural origin or were related to the sacred.[27] The most evident cases are the aromas which are given off by the body of a dead saint or sage: his/her virtue or spiritual excellence prevented the decomposition of the corpse and produced a celestial scent. This phenomenon, which is common to many cultures, is described in some Chinese stories.[28]

[30] Another important case of the connection between scent and the supernatural can be found in the cult of passions in literature through a kind of sublimation of desire. Fragrance may be sent out by a goddess or other supernatural powers.[29] In the drama "Peony Pavilion," the sanctification of love passion let the loved Du Liniang 杜麗娘 take the place of a saint, and after she dies she is resurrected with her body intact and fragrant.[30] Here, love is intended as a religious experience. The atmosphere around her is influenced by this passion, and "heavenly fragrance," *tianxiang,* is purposely evoked ("Heavenly fragrance blew from the highest heaven" 天香雲外吹; *MDT* 39:21, see also 50:273). Several female immortals in *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋志異 have a rare fragrance which derives from their supernatural condition; however, it is evident that at the same time their fragrance reflects the desire and admiration that they provoke in men who deal with them.[31] This sacralisation of desire can also be found in the famous novel "The Dream of the Red Mansion," where Lin Daiyu's 林黛玉 aroma is perceived by Baoyu (聞見你的香氣); the subtle scent which emanates from her sleeve, her extraordinary and delicate fragrance (異香, 幽香), when inhaled, inebriates Baoyu's soul, melting the marrow

27 In Buddhism, for instance, the term *xiangxiang* 香象 "odorous elephant" or "bull elephant in musth" (Skt. Gandhahastin) is used as a metaphor to designate the pursuit of Buddhahood by a great bodhisattva (see Eichman 2018, 150).

28 See, for instance, *LZZY* 8:1117, "Lü Wubing" 呂無病: "One day Wang said that she would die on such and such a day, but Sun didn't believe her. She prepared the coffin herself and on that day, she changed her clothes and went into the coffin, dead. Her face was as good as alive and an extraordinary fragrance filled the whole room. Only after she had been buried than the fragrance gradually disappeared" (一日曰："妾某日當死。" 孫不信。婦自理葬具，至日，更衣入棺而卒。顏色如生，異香滿室；既斂，香始漸滅。).

29 In the following example: "She got up to the bed and sat on An's thigh, pressing her fingers on his temple. An felt that there were extraordinary fragrance of musk going through his nose to his bones" (乃登榻，坐安股上，以兩手爲按太陽穴。安覺腦麝奇香，穿鼻沁骨。; *LZZY* 5:637, "Girl Hua" 花姑子).

30 Meaningful are also the following passages: "(All): Elder master, tell us what does the consecrated vase represent, and what does the fading plum blossom represent? (Sister Stone): Within the hollow of this vase is held the mortal world. Her body is like the fading plum blossom, watered but without her roots, still brings a lingering fragrance to our senses. (All): Oh, young lady, may you accept this offering, your body will be cooled, and your soul will be fragrant. Will you be willing to return to this world, and live again in this canopy of plum blossoms?" ((眾) 老師兄，你說淨瓶象什麼，殘梅象什麼? (淨) 這瓶兒空象，世界包藏。身似殘梅樣，有水無根，尚作余香想。(眾) 小姐，你受此供呵，教你肌骨涼，魂魄香。肯回陽，再住這梅花帳?; *MDT* 27:160); "(Liu helps Liniang up when he see her) (Liu): Ah, the lady is right here. An extraordinary fragrance greets me, her gentle posture is just as before. Oh heavens, you see, though lid be stained with clay, no ant has entered crack or crevice. These four pieces of splendid wood kept warm her delicate fragrance, carried her lovely form as a couch toward the Yellow Springs, and the rouge-like earth nourished her flower-like body." (（生見旦扶介)(生) 咳，小姐端然在此。異香襲人，幽姿如故。天也，你看正面上那些兒塵漬，斜空處沒半米蚍蜉。則他暖幽香四片斑爛木，潤芳姿半榻黃泉路，養花身五色燕支土。; *MDT* 35:202).

31 For instance: "One day Chang went walking. Deep in a grove he suddenly met her face to face. Fortunately no one else was there. In great happiness Chang threw himself to the ground before her. As she came close to help him up, he smelled a rare fragrance suffusing her body. He grasped her jade-liked wrist and pulled himself to his feet. The skin of her fingers had a soft sleekness that made his joints go limp." (一日行去，忽於深樹內覿面遇女郎，幸無他人，大喜投地。女郎近曳之，忽聞異香竟體，即以手握玉腕而起，指膚軟膩，使人骨節欲酥。; *LZZY* 10:1437, "Gejin" 葛巾).

of his bones (聞得一股幽香，卻是從黛玉袖中發出，聞之令人醉魂酥骨; *HLM*, 19:302). And again in the *Peony Pavilion*, when Liniang scattered the petals of plum flowers on the altar where the nun performed a ceremony for her, she said that in the small perfume of each petal her passions were mixed with the fragrance of the flowers: "To each fragrant petal cling myriad loving thoughts" (抵甚麼一點香銷萬點情; *MDT,* Act 27). Liniang appears to Liu Mengmei 柳夢梅 as the scented bloom under the dim moon (銜幽香一陣昏黃月; *MDT* 32:190–191; 35:202; 27:160), with her fresh fragrant flesh and skin ("My cold fragrant flesh has been warmed by your embraces" 俺冷香肌早偎的半熟。; *MDT* 32:191).

[31] Thus, from the male author's perspective, an aroma is fitting to symbolically contain a person's erotic feelings. In a declaration of love, the suitor implores: "I wish I could transform into a butterfly, and fly to your skirt. It is sweet even I die if I can ever smell the remaining aroma of yours" (但願化爲蝴蝶去，裙邊，一嗅餘香死亦甜; *LZZY* 9:1223, "A Girl of Weaving" 績女). Again, the identification of arousal with aroma can be seen in the same story: "When the old woman touched her arm, she felt her arm was as smooth as greases and a hot aroma was sprayed (熱香噴溢). As soon as the skin of the girl touched her, she felt a comfy experience of the skin." Fairies, fox spirits, and female immortals in *Liaozhai zhiyi* have an extraordinary beauty and belong to a supernatural kind, and consequently they effuse a divine fragrance:

[32]
> He then sat there quietly and noticed, however, that the room was fragrant with a delicious perfume; his viscera seemed to be removed from his body, by which his intellectual faculties were much increased; and every one of his veins and arteries could be easily daunted. […] Shortly afterwards, while Jia was sitting there, a beautiful young girl came in, suffusing an exquisite musk fragrance around;[32] and going up to the couch where Jia was, she bent over him and whispered, " Here I am." Her breath was like the sweet odour of perfumes.[33]
> 因即寂坐，但覺清香滿室，臟腑空明，脈絡皆可指數。… 又坐少時，一美人入，蘭麝撲人，悄然登榻，附耳小言日："我來矣。" 一言之間，口脂散馥。(*LZZY* 10:1362, "Jia Fengzhi" 賈奉雉)

[33] The last passage mentions three perfumes: the first is the pure scent of Daoist perfection (清香), while the second and third are the tempter fragrances coming from the body and the mouth of the beauty (蘭麝, 馥). These supernatural beings, in the fiction narration, seduce or attract the protagonists of the stories, and the aroma emitted by them is the sign of their non-human nature and of their seductive power. They may "exhale breath like orchid scent" (吹氣如蘭; *LZZY* 10: 1438, "Ge Jin" 葛巾),[34] diffuse wonderful and rare aromas (異香; *LZZY* 9:1264, "Princess Yunluo" 雲蘿公主), and "make their room fragrant with a delicious perfume" (清香滿室; *LZZY* 10:1362, "Jia Feng Zhi" 賈奉雉).[35] One can object that these attributes are created by the mere fantasy of the writer and do not belong to any religious belief. However, it is worthy of note that even in the imagery, scent acquires a supernatural aura of both sanctity and charm.

32 *Lanshe* 蘭麝: Orchid, *lanhua* 蘭花 and musk *shexiang* 麝香, the fragrance of female cosmetics.

33 Again the seductive effects of smell are reconfirmed here with the expression *kouzhi sanfu* 口脂散馥, the fragrance spread by the girl's breath.

34 See also: "Her jade flesh was instantly revealed, and warm scent exuded from her. At the touch when they embraced, no breath no perspiration from her he sensed was not fragrant" (玉肌乍露，熱香四流，偎抱之間，覺鼻息汗熏，無氣不馥; 10:1439).

35 See also "When the girl took off her dress, the room was filled with an extraordinary aroma" (異香滿室; *LZZY* 9:1221, "A Girl of Weaving" 績女); "Her jade flesh was instantly revealed, and warm scent exuded from her" (*LZZY* 10:1439, "Ge Jin" 葛巾).

Sometimes fragrance is even specifically referred to as a part of a lady's body, like shoulders (香肩; "The fragrance of my shoulders", *MDT* 12:66), breasts (香乳),[36] or cheeks (香腮; *LZZY* 8:1083, "Zhu Sheng" 褚生; *HLM* 26:397). As the female beauty in the writers' perception was related to love and sexuality, the bed of the loved girl is described as sweet-scented,[37] fragrant is the silk handkerchief given as a token of love (香羅帕; *JPM* 8:98), and fragrant is the mysterious and ineffable peak of love (美滿幽香), rain and clouds (雨香雲片; *MDT* 10:57), and the love dream (香夢),[38] as well as the soul of the maiden in love, or the loving souls (香魂).[39] [34]

Especially women used to apply perfumes to be more attractive and increase their charm.[40] In fact, sometimes *xiang* is used as synonym of beauty.[41] As it is said in the popular song edited by Feng Menglong, "Perfumes of her powder and rouge are so attractive; as if they were musk or orchid" (粉香脂氣，分明是麝蘭; *SG* 9:234). In fact, many references to aromas are symbolically used to hint at female beauty and its fragility (see "The perfume that vanishes" 香銷; *MDT* 28:167). Smell is not only an olfactive phenomenon but has a psychological dimension: "smiles emanate perfume" (笑生香; *MDT* 29:173–174). It is not surprising that the magical atmosphere of love passion is presented as the manifestation of a supernatural power. As I mentioned with regards to some descriptions of the supernatural aroma of a beauty, this olfactive property was often nothing but the reflection of the admirer's perception and infatuation, which can be summarised in the line composed by a lover "smelling the remaining aroma of yours" 嗅餘香, already mentioned. [35]

The fragrance of various kinds of pleasant smells and perfumes occupies the second most frequent category of meanings of *xiang*.[42] Here we should remark that some terms have a double valence, like plum or fading flowers with their original floral meaning and their allegoric reference to female beauty, or those about perfumes which have a supernatural valence. [36]

36 "The lady opened her silken gown, and uncovered her exquisite, flawless and fragrant breasts. He fondled and kissed them for a while" (婦人一面攤開羅衫，露出美玉無瑕、香馥馥的酥胸，緊就就的香乳。; *JPM* 19:237).

37 "The lady turned around and looked at her maid with a smile. Then she ordered Guo go to her bedroom where a bed-curtain adorned with tassels and embroideries were set, and the beddings were sweet-scented and silken." (女顧婢微笑，便命移席臥室。室中流蘇繡帳，衾褥香軟。; *LZZY*, 9:1279, "Tian Gong" 天宮).

38 "Then it was the sweetest moment that we knew perfect mystery of ineffable joy. And when my dream had reached the summit of delight, there came flower petals scattering down!" (好一會分明，美滿幽香不可言。夢到正好時節，甚花片兒掉下來也！; *MDT* 12:66). For the love dream, see *MDT* 27:160.

39 MDT, 12:67, 27:160, 28:167, 44:240, 54:296, 55:306. See also "The fragrance of the plum juice" (香生梅唾; *MDT*, 30:179).

40 For homoerotic practice, see "Imitating female fashions, both of them put on perfume, shaved their faces and wore short-sleeved gowns, to the point where it was hard to tell whether they were male or female" (*ZBY* 23:452, "Shuang Hua Miao" 雙花廟). See also the nickname 'Sweetie' (香憐; *HLM*, 9:156). In some way related to this is the habit of including *xiang* in female names, or adding *xiang* as a respect prefix in referring to a lady or a daughter. Daiyu calls her tears as "fragrant tears" 香痕 (*HLM* 34:505).

41 For instance, "delicate and fragrant" 嬌香 (*MDT* 20:110), "extraordinary fragrance" 驚香 (*MDT* 36:205), "ravishing beauty" 狂香 (*MDT* 28:169, quoting Han Yu 韓愈); "pure fragrance" 清香 (*SG* 10:245); "a hot aroma was sprayed". 熱香噴溢 (*LZZY* 9:1222, "A Girl of Weaving" 績女), "living pretty face" 生香面 (*MDT* 28:165); "her delicate face with a sleeping look" 睡揾香腮 (*JPM* 25.325); "her warm and fragrant body" 温香 (*MDT* 53:287); "the hair fragrance" 髮甚香 (*ZBY* 14:268, "A Spirit Pretends to be People's Father" 怪詐人父) ; "tender, fragrant, beautiful and pure as jade" 温香艷玉 (*MDT* 32:189); "to smell her aroma (to enjoy her beauty)" 聞香 (LZZY 9:1280, "Tian Gong" 天宮); "Whole-heartedly I shall appreciate all your beauty, your tenderness, your fragrance and your charm with my complete sincerity" (把他艷软香嬌做意儿耍; *MDT* 28:168). In a passage is mentioned the fragrance of the old water caltrop (沙角菱), but in fact female beauty is hinted (*SG* 4:104).

42 At the beginning of chapter 80 of *Honglou meng*, a discussion on the perception of flowers' perfumes witnesses the aesthetic enjoyment of flowers, their aromas together with the pure pleasure that derives from the contemplation of their beauty, the colours of the petals and leaves, the form of the branches and trunks (*HLM* 80:1035).

Sources mention all kinds of scents, especially from nature, flowers, and vegetables.[43] Some smells have special effects, like the aphrodisiac perfume used by Empress Wu (Wu Zetian 武則天),[44] the scenting bath with the seven aromas (七香湯) that will recover the resurrected Du Liniang (*MDT* 35:203), or the mentioned fragrant healing potions. Fragrance may be emitted by a god or goddess or other supernatural powers, as in the following examples:

> The point of his clothes where they were beaten by the washing stick, was like brocade in bizarre red and had a rare fragrance (視衣上著杵處，異紅如錦，有奇香。; LZZY 12:1709, "A Beggar Immortal" 丐仙); [37]

> Zhao went onto the sedan and it went much more quickly than a galloping horse. Soon they went into the hills and Zhao smelt a whiff of extraordinary fragrance that going through his bones (趙乘之，疾于奔馬。俄頃入山，但聞奇香沁骨。; *LZZY* 8:1148, "Lu Yaguan" 陸押官); [38]

> Later [Yao] realised it was a dragon. The spots where [Yao']s hands had touched the mucus gave off a fragrance that didn't go away for several months. Whenever he picked medicinal herbs with his own hands, his patients would be cured immediately after taking the medicine (始知乃龍也。兩手觸涎處，香數月不散；以之撮藥，應手而愈。; *ZBY* 03:046, "A-Tai Who Touched the Dragon" 摸龍阿太). [39]

Finally, in many cases smell interacts with taste and is mainly associated with delicious foods, wine, and tea:[45] so, to say "his nostrils were still full of the smell of wine", Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640–1715) combines palate and olfaction (鼻口醺醺).[46] Dishes may be the appetising taros (熱芋甚香; *ZBY* 17:326, "Xu Yake" 徐崖客), roasted spare ribs (骨炙兒; SG, 5:128), delicious vegetarian noodles (素面; *ZBY* 18:348, "Borrowing the Silk Wadding for the Coffin" 借絲綿入殮), or more generally the sweet fragrance and tasty foods (香甜; *HLM*, 40:595, *SG*, 2:65), or the smell of meat dishes (肴香; *LZZY* 12:1708, "A Beggar Immortal" 丐仙). The fragrance of wine (酒香, 香甜, 芳香) is praised in many passages,[47] even the *vin brulé* (煮酒; *TAMY* 7:42, "The Fishfarm of Pinshan Pavilion" 品山堂鱼宕). For tea, a sophisticated competence is shown in the refined circles of Jiangnan, as documented by Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597–1684) in *Tao'an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶 (*Dream Reminiscence of Tao'an*).[48] Several metaphorical and idiomatic [40]

43 See *HLM* 17:252; *TAMY* 7:42, "The Fishfarm of Pinshan Pavilion" 品山堂魚宕; 4:19 "Shelters along Qinghuai" 秦淮河房, and 8:47-48, "Fan Yulan" 范與蘭; *ZBY*: "*Words of the Planchette*" 乩言, 19:374, "Li Xiangjun Recommends the Examination Paper" 李香君薦卷, 3:60, "The Bodhisattva in Reply to A Prayer" 菩薩答拜, 21:419, "The Middle India" 中印度, 21:419; *SG* 4:103 and 5:137; *MDT* 15:82.

44 See *ZBY* 24:489, "Two Accounts from the Secret Records of Konghe Residence" (控鶴監秘記二則): "The houses were painted by gold and the steps were made of white jade. The empress lit a stick of rare incense and put down the bed curtain decorated with pearls. She slept together with Changzong" (后爇奇香，擁真珠帳，幸昌宗。).

45 We find also the case *contra naturam*, due to the metamorphosis from human being to dog: "When he grew elder, seeing excretion he still knew it dirty; yet smelling it he felt it tasty. However, he was resolute not to eat such things. He had been a dog for a few years and was often so indignant that he wanted to die at once" (稍长，见便液，亦知秽；然嗅之而香，但立念不食耳。为犬经年，常忿欲死; *LZZY* 1:73, "San Sheng" 三生.

46 *LZZY* 5:621, "Fox in the Dream" 狐夢. Sweet and fragrant are combined in "There were many chestnuts and bamboo shoots on the peak or at the foot of the mountain, they were incomparably sweet and fragrant" (山上下多西栗、邊筍, 甘芳無比; *TAMY* 2:12, "The Mountain Hut of Goulou" 岣嶁山房). *Xiang* may be used for taste as "roasted spare ribs grow in savor when you bite them" (骨炙兒牙得裏頭香; *SG* 5:128).

47 *TAMY* 5:28, "The Tangerines of Chen Family of Fanjiang" 樊江陈氏橘; *JSTY* 11:325; *LZZY* 12:1656, "Scholar Ji" 姬生; *LZZY* 7:914, "A Licentiate Guo" 郭秀才; *HLM* 18:278.

48 *TAMY* 2:10, "Biaosheng Monastery" 表勝庵; 3:14, "Orchid-Snow Tea" 蘭雪茶; 3:15-16, "The Tea of Master Min" 閔老子茶.

sentences demonstrate how the shift from literary to symbolic meaning is tiny. For instance, *xiangbobo* 香餑餑 literally means "fragrant cake," and thus it is often used for a 'favorite' person. An analogous process has been seen for the symbolic use of olfactive terms for love and beauty.

[41] In conclusion, we have seen some of *xiang*'s meanings: a) incense, b) perfume, c) symbolism for beauty and love. The most common is incense, which is used for religious purposes and ritual ceremonies, the worship of divinities and supernatural powers, or the funerary ceremonies for the deceased, an ancestor, or a revered saint. Incense also plays an important role in the rituals to solemnise a pledge, a pact of brotherhood, friendship, marriage, or any oath of alliance. Thus, incense is mainly the manifestation of a religious attitude, and can also be indicative of the charisma of a monk or a magician as well as the volume of affairs of a monastery: the efficacy in answering the requests of the devotees and the miraculous power (*ling* 靈) demonstrated by the divinity or the saint are proportional to the fame and wealth of the sacred place (see Santangelo and Beiwen 2013, 20–22). Moreover, a relatively large amount of fragrances are supposed to have a supernatural origin or to be related to the sacred. However, as in the "Peony Pavilion," the sanctification of love passion let the loved Liniang's body take the place of a saint's relics, and thus she dies and is resurrected whole, and the mixture of the sacred and eroticism is expressed by "heavenly fragrance," *tianxiang*. Analogously, several female immortals in *Liaozhai* have a rare fragrance which derives from their supernatural condition, while it is evident that their sweet smell reflects the desire and admiration that they provoke in their lovers or in men who deal with them.

[42] A few elements are very interesting for understanding religion in this context. Although religiosity in China is different from other areas, and the ritual aspects are often dominant, we can notice both inner fervour and a kind of personal relationship with gods and spirits. We can understand how the religious attitude is expressed in its consolatory function, devotion for begging favours, worshipping the supernatural entity, and concentrating on an act that is the manifestation of an inner state. The metaphor of incense burning in the heart (心香奉佛) expresses the deep attitude of the devotee. The ceremony centred on burning and offering incense is often accompanied by other acts, like purification, sacrifices, and prayers, and opens a special dimension in the inner experience of the devotee. Incense discloses the way of communication between a human being and the supernatural world: "If she is a goddess, then when I beg her for something and burn incense to beg for in a place with nobody else, she would know herself" (如其神，但有所須，無人處焚香以求，彼當自知; *LZZY* 10:1320, "A Goddess" 神女). This condition is so special and important that it is borrowed even for giving solemnity to a human pact or interrelation.

[43] In order to complete this part, I try to consider the religious or pseudo-religious elements of olfaction in relation to various kinds of odours: How is olfaction related to the sacred or supernatural located on the map of other olfactive experiences in Chinese imagery? Broadening the research to various terms on olfactory experience, including bad and good smells, I have selected about two hundred samples: *qi* 氣 is generally used as a neutral term for odour if not accompanied by attributes, while *xiang* 香 is used for pleasant aromas (90) and *chou* 臭 for disgusting stenches (90). This confirms that the main and first distinction is between attractive and repulsive smells, on the basis of their hedonic valence, which is, however, twice moralised as sign of refined education and as final retribution.[49]

49 For instance, Zhang Dai contrasts the stench of feces with the perfume of beauties: "Smoke is retribution for my eyes and feces for my nostrils—in revenge for the fragrant beauties [of my youth]" (*TAMY* 1, "Preface"

Consequently, our analysis of the pleasant aromas focuses, besides on the use of incense we have already examined, on the perfume of sandalwood (旃檀之氣) or a rare fragrancy. They are clearly of supernatural origin and expression of sanctity: [44]

> Three days before her death, she asked for a basin to wash her feet in. The slave girl fetched her the [usual] wooden basin. She told the girl: "Not that one. This time I will walk across lotus flowers. You must bring me the bronze basin which I use to wash my face." After a while, the scent of sandalwood wafted through the air as she sat up cross-legged and passed away. Even though she was dead, the smell of sandalwood lingered for over three days and nights till it finally faded away (*ZBY* 21:410, "The Bodhisattva in Reply to A Prayer" 菩薩答拜). [45]

> Suddenly, a rare fragrancy came wafting out from Xiugu's bedroom and blew straight out onto the street. The passersby [smelling it] became dazed and simply stood there staring at each other. Yan Hu learned of the strange phenomenon and placed foul things like dead cats and dogs outside Li's house in order to overpower the flavour. However, the fragrance only grew stronger. A policeman working under the Chief of Police happened to pass by and [getting a whiff of it] sensed there was something strange about the scent. He inquired with the neighbour and found out that Xiugu had died with a grievance. Hence, he reported the case to the magistrate and Yan Hu was subsequently sentenced to death (*ZBY* 15:289, "Two Stories of Fragrance of Corpse" 尸香二則). [46]

This miraculous aroma may be a mysterious device which draws the attention of people or an official to discover and punish a crime.[50] In other examples, a fragrant potion has miraculous healing properties and the odour is still remarkable, even if maybe secondary in its medical effects: "Guo unclosed the pot and tried to have a smell, a piercing fragrance sent out. He drank the wine and suddenly he fell into a big stupor" (揭尊微嗅，冽香四射，遂飲之。忽大醉; *LZZY* 9:1278, "The Palace of Heaven" 天宮).[51] The supernatural and sacred are also expressed in other olfactive experiences, like in the following examples: [47]

> Wang kept the dragon's claw, which was as big as a buffalo horn. It smelled like ambergris and whenever he hung it up, even the mosquitoes and flies would stay well clear if it (*ZBY* 9:181, "Daoist Lü Drives away the Dragon" 呂道人驅龍). [48]

> Zhou walked so quickly across the yellow sand that her feet didn't even touch the ground. She looked around: there was no one else there. She looked into the [49]

自序). The whole work smells the refined aromas of various kinds of tea and wine, flowers and delicacies. Exceptions in the natural perception of smells can be seen in two passages from "Peony Pavilion" (*MDT* 8:41) and from *Liaozhai* (*LZZY* 1:73, "Three Reincarnations" 三生). The former presents the possible change of the evaluation of smells under the subjective perspective, like the stench of manure (粪臭。父老呵，他却不知这粪是香的) or the aroma of rice and other food (馔玉炊金饱即妨。直到饥时闻饭过). The latter deals with the already mentioned case of the reincarnation of a man as a dog, with the consequent change in tastes (然嗅之而香). Finally, the wine has the most fragrant odour (*JSTY* 11:325) but may also leave a horrible smell (*LZZY* 6:868, "The Eighth Prince" 八大王).

50 It is interesting that the story ends with the decomposition of the corpse after the injustice is settled.

51 See also: "The old matron laughed, took the crock and left. The scholar found the potion fragrant and cooling; it did not at all seem to be poison. Soon he felt an expansiveness in his chest and a bracing clarity in his skull. A mellow feeling came over him, and he fell asleep. When he awoke, red sunlight filled his window" (嫗笑接甌而去。生覺藥氣香冷，似非毒者。俄覺肺膈寬舒，頭顱清爽，酣然睡去。既醒紅日滿窗。; *LZZY* 10:1437, "Gejin" 葛巾). Here the fragrance, besides its association with taste, also has medical effects.

> distance and saw a house with walls that were all white. The house was very spacious and Zhou went in. Inside there was a table on which sat a stick of incense. The incense had five different colours and was as long as the arm of a steelyard. A flame was burning at its tip. […] The old woman asked Zhou if she wanted to go back. She answered: "I most certainly want to return, but I can't." The old woman said: "Smell the incense, then you will go back home." Zhou smelled the incense and it felt as if a rare fragrance were spreading throughout her brain. She woke up with a start to learn that she had been lying rigid on her bed for three days. Somebody who heard Zhou's story said: "That incense is most likely the Soul-Returning Incense from Juku Mountain" (*ZBY* 19:361, "Soul Return Incense" 返魂香).[52]

> The Daoist then took some pills out of his bag and the strong aroma assailed Zhu's nostrils. […] The Daoist gave Zhu ten pellets of medicine and, before leaving, made an obeisance by cupping one hand in the other before his chest. Zhu's whole family worshipped the pills as if they were gods and paid respects to them day and night (*ZBY* 3:061, "Daoist Comes to Fetch the Gourd" 道士取葫蘆). [50]

> Suddenly a servant came running in to say that, at that moment, the lake was a perfect mass of lotus flowers. Everyone was surprised and looked out of the window. Sure enough, they saw a boundless mass of green dotted here and there with lotus flowers. The thousands of flowers bloomed almost simultaneously. And in another minute the fragrant perfume of the flowers refreshed their brains through the icy wind. All the guests thought it was strange. The officials sent off servants in a boat to collect the lotus seeds. Though the men were seen to go deep into the mass of the flowers and row back, they returned empty-handed. On being questioned how it was, they said," When we were rowing out, we saw the flowers were far away on the northern side. But as soon as we were approaching the northern shore, they had already shifted to the southern side." The Daoist laughed and said: "These are visionary flowers in your visional dreams which have no real existence" (*LZZY* 4:0580, "Lotus Blossoming in the Winter" 寒月芙蕖). [51]

In the first of the four quotations, the magic object smelled like ambergris 嗅作龍涎香, in the second it was a rare fragrance 異香 spreading throughout the protagonist's brain. The strong aroma assailed Zhu's nostrils 芬芳撲鼻 and the fragrance of the visionary lotus flowers, respectively in the third and fourth examples, are caused by the magic power of Daoist monks. If aroma assumes a supernatural dimension, it can be associated with the idea of immaculate [52]

52 Some special aromas are traced back to legendary phenomena, such as the "resuscitating-the-dead incense", *fanhunxiang* 返魂香, mentioned together with the geographical name of the place where it is supposed to be produced: "In the Western Ocean there is the Juku Continent. In the Shenwei area a big tree grows, which is similar to maple. The fragrance which emanates from its leaves can spread several hundred miles far. This tree is called 'Soul Return Tree' […] This is a miraculous plant! Its fragrance can be felt several hundred miles far, and an inearthed corpse can perceive it, and soon come back to life" (聚窟洲在西海中。申未 (來) 洲上有大樹。與楓木相似，而葉香，聞數百里。名此為返魂樹。。。斯靈物也，香氣聞數百里，死屍在地，聞氣乃活。(《十洲記》); *Taiping Guangji* 414:1). See also *Taiping Yulan* 太平御覽 j. 952, and *Xiangbenji* 香本紀, "Preface" 有序, in *Xiangyan congshu* 香豔叢書, wuji 五集 3:18 (1389). Now the term *fanhunxiang* is used for a medical plant, *Boswellia serrata* (Family: *Burseraceae*), a deciduous middle sized tree, which is mostly concentrated in tropical Asia and Africa. It has long been used in Ayurvedic medicine, and recommended for osteoarthritis, and juvenile rheumatoid arthritis.

purity, like the scent of incense that purifies the night,[53] or the chaste Buddhist relationship, "as a sweet and undefiled Buddhist companion" (香潔道伴; *LZZY* 11:1546, "Yue Zhong" 樂仲).

[53] Descriptions of the aroma of charming and often supernatural girls have been examined as a symbol of their otherness and their seductive attraction to men. If these aromas, in many cases, can be called 'smells of love,' we can contrast them with the 'smell of death,' like the stink presented in a nightmare by Pu Songling: "The female ghost smelled the man's face with her snout, including his cheek, nose, brows, forehead, everywhere. The man felt her mouth was as cold as ice, with her frozen breath penetrating up to his bones" (女子以喙嗅翁面，顴鼻眉額殆遍。覺喙冷如冰，氣寒透骨; *LZZY* 1:20, "Biting the Ghost" 咬鬼).

[54] Repulsive smells may derive from physical conditions, such as dirty or rotten foods, wounds and sickness,[54] feces, and a dirty environment.[55] Of more concern for the religious sphere are causes associated with the idea of death, such as cadavers, blood, ghosts, malevolent spirits, and animals, such as snakes. The common element of all stench cases is a kind of pollution, by polluted and polluting things, especially those that imply a metaphysical or magical significance.[56] We can see a few examples on disgusting stench from cadavers and blood:[57]

> [55] Then Wang saw a lot of jumbled houses, which sent out a rotten stinking smell (穢臭熏人). When the ghost in the garden saw the light, they gathered around the light and all of them were headless or footless, which was too hard to endure to see. Wang turned around and wanted to go away, but he saw a cadaver lying under the wall. Having a close look, he found the flesh and blood of the cadaver was scattered about in a mess (*LZZY* 12:1685, "Jinse [Zither]" 錦瑟).

> [56] The woman held something in her sleeve and before she entered, she drew it out and hid it under the doorstep. Chen was puzzled as to what she'd put there, and soon he discovered it was a bloodstained rope exuding a foul smell. Immediately, he realised that she must be the ghost of a woman who had hanged herself. He pulled out the rope, hid it in his shoes, and sat down again (*ZBY* 4:073, "Chen Qingke Pushes Away the Ghost by Breathing on it" 陳清恪公吹氣退鬼).

> [57] He tripped and fell into a pool of water as hot and red as blood. It had a foul odour. (水紅熱如血，其氣甚腥; *ZBY* 19:370, "A Hunter from Daizhou" 代州獵戶).

> [58] Grasping the ghost's remains in his left hand, with his right hand he took a torch off one of his servants and set the silk floss on fire. As it crackled, fresh blood spurted out, letting off a foul smell that was almost unbearable. At dawn, Wang's

53 "The sounds of *Sheng* and *Huang* are echoing around the shrine in the breeze. The Rainbow Skirt hangs cold in the green mist. From the depth of the lotus pond, a scent of incense purifies the night. Mortals easily age, plans face many obstructions, and dreams can't last long. What deep feelings of love one has had, now lie beneath three feet of soil. A slanting sun shines over the vacant ground" (*MDT* 33:195).

54 For instance *ZBY* 07:135, "Mr. Wu Didn't Return" 吳生不歸. See the stink may emanate from a cankered body (*LZZY* 11:1560, "Wang Shi" 王十), from a sore (*LZZY* 12:1706, "A Beggar Immortal" 丐仙), and from bromhidrosis (*LZZY* 3:355, "Little Hair Bun" 小髻).

55 *SG* 1:29 (bad-smelling mud), *ZBY* 23:460, "The Tool of Love" 風流具 (dirty toilet); *TAMY* 3:15, "Yanghe Spring" 陽和泉 (feces).

56 On more details on pollution, filth and death, see Santangelo (2012, 442–48, 2015, 77–115; 2013, 1:127–140).

57 Other examples are the "unbearably foul smell of blood" 血臭不可耐 (*ZBY* 05:086, "King Wenxin" 文信王), or the stench of the dead 死人臭 (*TAMY* 7:38-39, "The Incense Market at Xihu" 西湖香市).

> neighbours all crowded around in surprise, covering their noses to protect their nostrils from the stench. On the floor the blood was an inch thick, smelly and greasy like sticky rubber (*ZBY* 05:100, “Catching the Ghost” 捉鬼).

The second passage also evokes to the woman’s suicide, and, like all other examples, includes the presence of ghosts. In fact, in about twenty cases, ghosts and their stench (鬼氣; *LZZY* 12:1699, “Qin Hui” 秦檜), evil spirits, and animal-spirits bring an unbearable stink, which is not only a natural phenomenon but a sign of terrible pollution, a herald of disasters and death: [59]

> Zhao Yiji said: “Each type of ghost has its own odour. Ghosts who died in water smell like mutton (羊臊氣). Ghosts who died on the shore smell like paper ash (紙灰氣). If earthlings get a whiff of these kinds of smells, they must stay well away” (*ZBY* 9:169, “Water Ghost Afraid of the Word ‘Clamour’ ” 水鬼畏囂字). [60]

> The ghost was unable to reply and instead went straight up to Zhang, opened his mouth and breathed out onto him. Zhang felt a foul-smelling swirl of mist as cold as ice caress his face (一條冷氣如冰，臭不可耐; *ZBY* 16:303, “Crooked Mouth” 歪嘴先生). [61]

> After midnight, he heard some footsteps and then he saw a woman dressed in red walk upstairs and into the room Lin was staying in. She bowed to the statue of the Buddha before turning to Lin and smiling. Lin was not fooled by her smile, and soon in fact the woman loosened her hair and opened her eyes wide. She walked straight towards Lin, about to attack him. Lin grabbed a tea table and threw it at her. The woman leaned to one side, dodging the table; then she reached out to take hold of Lin. He grasped the woman by the hands, which were as cold and hard as iron. The woman couldn’t move since Lin was holding onto her, so she breathed out towards him: the odour was unbearably foul 臭氣難耐. To avoid the smell, the only thing Lin could do was turn his head the other way [as she continued to breathe on him]. But he still held fast to the woman’s hands, not loosening his grip until the rooster crowed. At that point, the woman fell to the ground and Lin realised it was a stiff corpse (*ZBY* 23:450, “Ghost Blows Towards Someone, Making Their Head Crooked” 鬼吹頭彎). [62]

> Usually the intrusion of death is accompanied by dangerous, noxious phenomena, such as a cold and evil wind (惡風, 陰風颯然),[58] or a foul smell: “At the second watch, the evil wind rustled and the lamplights turned greenish” (至二鼓，陰風颯然，燈火盡綠), or “They could all feel cold air blow across their faces. […] a faint smell of sulphur rose out from the case” (面目模糊，冷氣襲人 […] 有硫黃氣自匣中起), or again “hearing wind gusting up from under the bed” (聞床下颯然有聲; *Zibuyu* 1, “A Stone Box in Prison” 獄中石匣). [63]

Besides death, the repulsive odours may be associated with the discrimination of ‘the en- [64]

58 In *Zibuyu,* the phenomenon of cold wind is frequently described in relation to the presence of ghosts and other monsters: “The Assistant Minister felt a cold vapour travel through his five internal organs” (侍郎覺冷氣一條直逼五髒; “The Strange Dream of an Assistant Minister” 某侍郎異夢, 5); “A cold wind crept up to the bed-curtain” 冷氣漸逼 (“Cherry Tree Ghost” 櫻桃鬼, 6); “She opened her mouth and in Chen’s direction blew a gust of icy wind” (聳立張口吹陳，冷風一陣如冰; “Chen Qingke Pushes Away the Ghost by Breathing on It” 陳清恪公吹氣退鬼, 4); “A gust of evil wind blew” 陰風颯然 (“Ma Panpan” 馬盼盼, 2).

emy' or 'the other.' As the repulsion for spoiled food or excrement stink touches the vital drives, any association of puritanical worries with religious and racial elements may become an explosive, and effective tool for discrimination and persecution. The process of socialisation implies the internalisation of general categories, knowledge, and values. The role of odour as a marker of social identity and difference has been stressed for provoking affinities and antipathies as an important means of group preservation (Corbin quoted in Classen 1992, 133–66). The impact and effects of the odour-identity binomial is different in various cases, and a kind of quality leap happens when it is associated with the religious and medical experience: odour itself is not a direct cause of ethnic and religious discrimination, and it rather reflects habits acquired in the first part of life. It is rather a symptom of a mental and emotional attitude, but might become a deep stimulant of hate and intolerance when it is associated with fear or a sense of insecurity concerning health and vital safety. Historians have noticed religious persecution in the occasion of epidemics in Middle Age, and psychologists discuss the "behavioural immune system."[59] In Europe, for instance, the so called *Foetor Judaicus,* a denigratory term for the supposedly unpleasant smell of Jews, was the slanderous epithet started by the Roman poet Martial (*Epigrams* 4, 4) and carried through the Middle Ages, accompanied by the legend on the dissemination of the cholera, up to the racist elaboration of the Theologian Johann Jacob Schudt (1664–1722).[60] Thus I think that the study of olfaction may be very important for understanding the phenomenon of religious and interreligious intolerance that involves deep feelings of health dangers together with the 'absolute' beliefs. For instance, in Italy some movements now play on such fears to instigate hostility against immigrants.

[65] Worth of note regarding Chinese sources, the equivalents of 'stinky' are very common denigratory and insulting appellations for individuals as well as for groups especially in the category of nomadic 'barbarians.'[61] The contempt against them was often exemplified with the description of their stink, or of smelling of mutton (腥膻). Reflecting such ideas, in late Ming times, Tang Xianzu, in the 46 act of *Mudanting*, is very clear in the laments of the official Du 杜 of the Song 宋 dynasty (960–1279), when differences in smells and foods are mentioned:

59 The "behavioural immune system" consists of psychological mechanisms that allow detecting the potentially infective presence of disease in other individuals and preventing contact with those objects and individuals; see Schaller and Lesley (2007, 293–307). For a modern case based on prejudices, see Dutta and Rao (2015, 36–47).

60 Largey and Watson (1972, 1021–34) also mention the moral pollution in Arthur Schopenhauer. For the "stench" of Africans, see Corbin, quoted in Classen (1992, 134). According to Howes and Lalonde, the symbolic importance of smell tends to increase when social boundaries are perceived as being threatened (1991, 125–35).

61 A tacit *conventio ad excludendum* can be inferred in the term *huchou* 狐臭 (variant 胡臭) as "fox stench" or "barbarian stench." *Huchou* originally refers to a supposed disease, and first appeared in biological and medical textbooks in the early twentieth century, during the Republican era, when some Chinese sought to modernize traditional concepts by incorporating them in pseudoscientific terms. It can be traced back to "animal stink," *chousao* 臭臊 from the "Core Classic of the Yellow Emperor," *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經. According to the legend, the fox spirit, *hulijing*, sneaks into the lives of unsuspecting subjects in the guise of an innocent attractive maid, hiding the original stink, which eventually may be revealed. It combines the wild odour of the fox with its pollution tied to its nefarious aims to traffic in sex and death, with its double reference to "barbarians' odour" and to the female "demonic allure." For some literary examples, see "stinker slave" 臊奴 (*MDT* 47:253) or "stinking ruffian" 臭賊 (*SG* 8:227), 臭小厮 (*HLM* 56:861). However, the case of Emperor Qianlong's fragrant Uyghur Muslim concubine, Xiangfei 香妃 seems to move into an opposite direction. The *xiang* in her name is not just given as a female name, but because her body was said to emit a mysterious fragrance without recourse to perfumes or powders. This legend witnesses the Qing tendency to exoticise the bodies of Uyghur women through body and smell (Millward 1994, 427–58; see also Zhu 2017, 159).

> What purpose has Heaven in this when no light of sun moon or stars suffices to distinguish Chinese from Tartar but rank stanch [sic] of sheep and goat blows throughout mortal world [sic] and central lands are turned to a desert of yellow sand? 問天何意？有三光不辨華夷，把腥膻吹換人間，這望中原做了黃沙片地？[62] [66]

An aroma of incense expresses and induces the communion with the sacred, the solemnity of an important act; a stink may recall the netherworld and death or the Other, while another smell may recall life and love, resurrection and the fragrance of flowers, and is the sign of the incorruptibility of the body of the saint. These are a few examples of the representation of the senses in direct or indirect relation with the religious sphere, especially in the description of extreme experiences, but the penetrating power and emotional impact of odours, together with the association of smell, breath, and cosmic energy, allow scent to assume vital and religious values. Worthy of note is the syncretic attitude of the characters in novels and dramas, often influenced by popular beliefs of mixed Dao-Buddhist origin, with the exception of some references to olfaction and other senses specifically recalling the reincarnation doctrine and Buddhist festivals. Discrimination on the basis of olfaction marks rather a cultural identity toward the Other, 'barbarians,' or fear for pollution (death, sickness). Sensorial feelings, either imagined or not, take part in the virtual reality human beings share with other members of their community, and often become a language that communicates consolatory or alarming messages, self-identity, or aggressive emotions. [67]

Extended Survey to Other Bodily Sensations

And now a few comments on the entire spectrum of sensorial reactions analysed in the same literary sources. I have selected 2540 terms concerning sensory experiences, classified according to context. In every language, the lexicon of bodily sensations is rather rich, as it includes sensorial faculties (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching), their objects (sight, sounds, smells, tastes, pain, heat, pressure, etc.), as well as different physical conditions and other bodily feelings (wellbeing, tiredness, feeling (sexually) aroused, itchy, painful, sleepy, hungry, thirsty, deafened, warm, cold, etc.).[63] [68]

As I mentioned, physiological perceptions and reactions are closely related to the affective world: physical experiences involve the whole body-personality, as they are permeated by cultural constructions. Thus, physical pain is not just an 'objective' or 'mechanical' reaction of the human body or its parts: it was understood not only as a physical phenomenon, but also as involving the whole body-mind-heart system, while moral suffering was also related to the body. For instance, in Chinese, the notions 'five viscera' (*wuzang* 五臟) and 'four limbs' (*sizhi* 四肢) are more than just a rhetorical expression, as they maintain the relation between the state of mind and body. Cognitive factors involve the roles of values in the emotional process [69]

62 Act 46 of *Mudanting* (Tang 1998, 258, transl. by Cyril Birch). Tang Xianzu in the same 46 act, quoting a line from the Tang poet Gao Pian 高駢, hints that the barbarians are so horrible that even animals avoid them: "No single bird flies in the thousands miles of sky on barbarian's realm" (萬里胡天鳥不飛). In act 47, the Jin general is insulted with the denomination of *saozi* 臊子 'foul smell,' 'fetid thing.'

63 Psychologists consider bodily sensations as experiences due to stimulations of sensorial organs. They distinguish 'general' from 'specific' sensitivity, according to either its distribution in the whole body ("superficial") or its concentration in certain organs ("deep"); see Schmidt (1978); Ludel (1978). Among physical feelings, specialists investigate, in particular, tactile perception for the sense of pressure, thermoception for the sense of heat, nociception for the sense of pain, and equilibrioception for the perception of balance. In our database, we collected a large quantity of examples from Ming and Qing sources concerning such concepts.

and in the evaluation and perception of bodily sensations. This meant that psychological and cultural factors are fundamental even in physical perceptions (Santangelo 2014, 36–52). In the Chinese language, *gan* 感 and *jue* 覺 as well as the modern compound *ganjue* 感覺 may be considered almost similar to "feeling," making no distinction between mental and physical feelings.[64] Xunzi 荀子 (300–230 BC), in his contribution to understanding the basic functions of the sensory organs and sensation—which are considered as organs of appetite—states the close relation between *qing* and sensory feelings.[65] Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619–1692) and Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724–1777) have emphasized the unity of different functions in human beings. Wang Fuzhi, for instance, refers to senses and virtues as examples of the unity of the body:

> Heaven creates human beings through the five phases of *yin* and *yang* energies. Then the principle is located in man, and concentrated as his human nature. Consequently, [through his senses] sounds and images, smells and tastes enrich man's life, as well as the four cardinal virtues of humaneness, justice, ritual propriety, and wisdom correct his morality, so that everything is suitable to principle. If senses follow their way, they are not in contrast with cardinal virtues, and rather both mutually cooperate in the body (Wang 1975, 3:79).[66]
> 天以其陰陽五行之氣生人，理即寓焉而凝之為性。故有聲色臭味以厚其生，有仁義禮智以正其德，莫非理之所宜。聲色臭味順其道，則與仁義禮智不相悖害，合兩者而互為體也。 [70]

Religious feelings are among the most common emotions. They cope with several spiritual needs, like the sense of justice, the search for inner or outer transcendence, and their social, ritualistic, consolatory, and aesthetical functions; they sublimate everyday worries and hopes, repentance and a sense of guilt with the worship of various divinities, fears of their malevolence or anger, supplication for help and protection. In the literary materials I have checked, I found little on sensations related to inter-religious as well as intra-religious relations. Something can be seen in the *zhiguai* 志怪 genre—narratives of strange phenomena—that uncovers many hidden experiences that are not reported in any other sources. Hallucinations, spirit possessions, and nightmares are all subconscious reactions that project inner contradictions into a supernatural world. In these extreme experiences, senses play an important role, as they seem to confirm the reality of the subjectivity of virtual impressions. The virtual reality and the extreme experiences represented in these tales often present bodily sensations that are caused by guilt and a sense of shame, religious beliefs in spirits and god, miracles, intimate relation, and communication with the holy world. Fear is one of the most frequent emotions, but effective sensations are felt, too. [71]

I mentioned various cases of olfactory experiences, the fragrance emanated by supernatural beings, the body of saints, the sanctified and sublimated projections of one's desires, as well as the stink of death produced by personages from the underworld. In a Daoist vision, a multisensorial experience is described: "Not long after, celestial music resounded in his ears and [72]

64 *Ting* 聽 (lit.: listen; hear; obey) and *wen* 聞 (hear; smell) may be used for "feeling," also as in "But suddenly she felt a slight gust of wind, and she felt chilled to the bones" (忽聽一陣微風，只覺侵肌透骨; *Honglou meng* 45:673).

65 As Nylan (2001, 94) notices, "Given that the evaluative impulses are endowed at birth, the self inevitably seeks that which it accounts as satisfaction, supplying what it perceives itself to lack. A human has no 'value-free,' 'neutral' response. Instead, a preliminary assessment of a particular phenomenon's value to the self disposes the person to want to secure or to shun the phenomenon. These dispositions are classified by level of intensity: if a person finds a particular phenomenon pleasing, he/she may feel a liking or preference (*hao* 好) for it, a frisson of delight (*xi* 喜), or a more lasting sense of pleasure (*le* 樂). On the other hand, if the phenomenon fails to please, he/she may feel dislike or distaste (*wu* 惡), a spurt of anger (*nu* 怒), or a

an unusual fragrant scent wafted into his nose. Two cranes flew in carrying a crystal carriage in which sat a king, who looked like the Fragrant Boy in the drawings in the world of the living” (*Zibuyu* 7:132, “Crane Carrying a Carriage” 仙鶴扛車). Other hallucinatory experiences are the pain attributed to persecution by and the haunting of ghosts and evil spirits.

Besides all pains from supposed beatings and bad health caused by supernatural beings, other sufferings can come from acute repentance and a sense of guilt. The somatisation of self-punishment is evident in this surrealistic passage from Pu Songling: [73]

> Once he recalled a meritorious deed, his heart was peaceful and clear; when a bad action, he became regretful and worried, as if he were being put in a caldron with boiling oil. The suffering was unbearable and indescribable. He still remembered that when he was seven or eight, he once took a bird-nest and killed the squabs. Merely thinking of this act, his heart burnt with a hot tide of blood, and this feeling passed after a short moment. When finally all the deeds he had done in his life had passed through his thoughts, it was like the high tide was over.
> 如一善，則心中清淨寧帖；一惡，則懊憹煩燥，似油沸鼎中，其難堪之狀，口不能肖似之。猶憶七八歲時，曾探雀雛而斃之，只此一事，心頭熱血潮湧，食頃方過。直待平生所爲，一一潮盡 (*Liaozhai zhiyi* 3:326, “Mr Tang” 湯公). [74]

It is not by chance that these pains are very similar to the punishments in the Buddhist Hells. Images and descriptions from temples and religious texts could help give shape to such sufferings. [75]

Apparently, Yuan Mei—another famous writer of the same genre—is not a religious writer, and, on the contrary, he is often irreverent and sarcastic with monks, people’s beliefs, and divinities. However, his stories move all around the “terrible mystery of the sacred.”[67] The [76]

more profound and lasting sense of pain and loss (*ai* 哀). These six basic dispositions (*qing* 情), endowed at birth, represent the initial, unmediated inclinations to act.”

66 Wang Fuzhi’s thesis is framed in the long debate on the distinction or identity of the “ordering principle” (*li* 理) and “energy” (*qi* 氣), or an original moral and psychophysical nature.

67 For the concept of *mysterium tremendum*, see Otto (1923). In Otto’s analysis, the Holy fascinates and terrifies at the same time: “The daemonic-divine object may appear to the mind an object of horror and dread, but at the same time it is no less something that allures with a potent charm.” Yuan Mei deals with extraordinary and invisible powers and popular belief, and his recourse to hallucination, deliria, dreams, and ghosts is more than a narrative device, for he is well aware that this is the dark zone which is not a usual field of enquiry. The way Yuan Mei presents this anomalous dimension—either pathological or redemptive—in his stories is meaningful: it is in fact a religious experience, the “creatural” attitude, prophecy of death and salvation, that generates alarm and perturbation in the reader, stupor and estrangement for reconsidering reality. *Zibuyu*’s stories present how human life is full of portents and miracles, but also remind people that portents, miracles and premonitory dreams may be unreliable and misleading. Basically, the powers of ghosts and gods are dependent on human belief in order to have any effect. But because such feelings corresponded to the need of safety and consolation, these beliefs could not be suppressed by authority, as they would resurface again and again. Religious feelings appear in the indignation for a wrong to be redressed, in the sense of human weakness in the face of disasters, sickness, and death, in the fear of the unknown and of what lies ahead, and in the naïve hope that salvation can be obtained through somebody else. All these states of mind are tensions that come together to produce a powerful energetic effect. No matter how subjective these religious experiences may be, they are nonetheless a reality. In actual fact, beliefs and illusions are more real than we might like to think, and their impact on private and historical scenes is fundamental, even if their interpretation is not univocal. Moreover, beliefs and hopes do not need to be proved or disproved. We have no solid evidence whether or not Yuan Mei’s objective acceptance of credence was fundamentally based on his tolerance for human illusions and weaknesses. From a reading of his narrative work, it appears he was well aware of how individuals and societies were affected on a practical level by ideologies and beliefs: the consolidation of the empire and local communities, the mourning elaboration, as well as the justification of personal and social interactions through the manipulation of behaviour, memory, and feelings such as regrets and hopes.

mystery of pollution of death and sexuality recalls the profound religious and emotional meaning of mortuary rituals and sexual taboos. This attitude depends not only on the place and actions—netherworld and spirits—but on the questions and themes which are behind the plots. Religious phenomena start from a sense of inadequacy in the face of unpredictable changes, the search for protection, miracles, and consolation. They may also respond to forms of legitimation of power and social order. Even in Confucianism, there are several religious practices, such as the emperor's offerings at the Altar of Heaven to Heaven-God (*haotian shangdi* 昊天上帝拉), the imperial officer's sacrifices, the worship of Confucian sages held in Confucian Temples and academies, as well as the cult of ancestors at the family level. A popular religion dominant in traditional China syncretically consists of practical beliefs in a pantheon which includes animistic spirits of natural elements, Buddhist bodhisattvas, and Daoist saints.[68] This practical attitude of popular believers is mainly interested in the miraculous efficacy (*ling* 靈) of any power for help, healing, or imploring favours or male offspring. Individuals and organizations respond to these requests, satisfy them, canalise them, and exploit them. Monks, magicians, and fortune-tellers took such a function. As a scholar, Yuan Mei is sceptical regarding any supernatural phenomena and miracles,[69] and his stories present unreliability, corruption, and greed even in the netherworld and among spirits.[70] Yet he is conscious of the impossibility of repressing and eradicating beliefs, as they are born from the human condition. Furthermore, he does not deny the extraordinary powers that are produced by religious tensions.[71]

Various sensations are mentioned in the interaction with the supernatural world. We start with the feeling of *burning*: [77]

> A Long was in coma and refused to eat. Han asked a witch[72] to diagnose his disease. [78]

68 Many temples combine Buddhist deities and Daoist liturgy. Animal sacrifice is allowed in Confucian rites but forbidden by both Buddhist and Daoist doctrines. Each temple may contain several cults to different divinities. The most popular practices were held at the local temples in honour of heroic tutelary saints that fulfilled the function of territorial protection against demons who caused calamities and diseases, or that were dedicated to devoted to immortals who had cured the sick and the suffering (Meulenbeld 2012).

69 In one of his letters, he explicitly states his natural loathing for Buddhism, Daoism, and Neo-Confucian orthodoxy: 僕生性不喜佛、不喜仙、兼不喜理學。(*Xiaocang shanfang chidu* 小倉山房尺牘 7, "Da Xiang Jinmen" 答項金門; see also Gōyama 1990, 137). Notwithstanding his Buddhist influences (Huang 2009, 79–81), he is particularly critical of Buddhist theories and practices, as they do not appreciate the taste of life, do not understand the difference between life and death, are full of absurd superstitions (see Huang 2009, 138–40), and repress human desires. No less harsh is his criticism against Daoism as well as popular beliefs in spirits and other religious practices, such as magic arts, fortune-tellers, and geomantic performances for selecting gravesites (see Huang 2009, 140–42). He ridicules the Thunder God in *Stealing the Thunder God's Awl* (偷雷錐, 8) and *Deputy to the Thunder God* (署雷公, 5) and mocks credulity in *The Earth Goddess Blackmails People* (土地奶奶索詐, 7), where the wife of the locality god cheats people by frightening them in dreams in order to obtain sacrifices and devotional activities.

70 The netherworld mirrors the world of living people, with all vices and virtues, bribes and flattery, bureaucracy and imperfect administration of justice (see Hammond 2008, 90–94).

71 Yuan is convinced that the ultimate source of their power is actually the human mind, which is constantly looking for such interlocutors to project evil onto and seek protection and solace from: "However, the powers of ghosts and gods are dependent on human belief in order to have any effect" 然鬼神力量，終需恃人而行。(*Nangnang* 囊囊, 3). This is in conformity with the argument presented in the second part of one of his essays, that "Fake will not triumph on truth. Spirits and ghosts are born in human mind" 邪不胜正. 神鬼生于人心. See *Suiyuan suibi* 隨園隨筆, "Jottings from the Garden of Contentment" 28:10 (Yuan 1995). More ambiguous is the position of Pu Songling, who is cautious with magicians and diviners, but firmly believes in universal justice and retribution. Even officials who publicly advocated the orthodoxy and supremacy of the Confucian tradition were often involved in Buddhist, Daoist, or local religious practices like most other people (Meulenbeld 2012, 136–37).

> The witch said: 'Fetch the magistrate's red brush used in interrogation and write the character '*zheng*' [right] on the patient's heart, and the character '*dao*' [knife] on his neck, then two '*huo*' [fire] on his palms. He will be saved then.' Han did as taught. When he wrote till the character '*huo*,' A-Long opened his eyes and shouted out: 'Don't burn me! I will leave.' From then on, the monster didn't appear again. 阿龍癡迷不食，韓氏召女巫胗之。巫曰："取縣官堂上朱筆，在病者心上書一'正'字，頸上書一'刀'字，兩手書兩'火'字，便可救也。" 韓氏如其言。書至左手"火"字，阿龍張目大叫曰："勿燒我！我即去可也。" 自此怪遂絕 (*Zibuyu* 1, "A Long" 阿龍).

A sense of *suffocation* may be attributed to a ghost's persecution: "After Du died, he attached his soul to his wife's body. Every time the woman wanted to eat, he would throttle her throat, cry sadly and say: 'Against my will!'" 工部卒後，附魂于夫人之體，每食，必扼其喉，悲啼曰："舍不得。(*Zibuyu* 1, "Master Du of the Ministry of Public Works" 杜工部). [79]

And again, obsession with sexuality can be felt as a sorrowful experience of persecution by a devil, as it is presented in many stories by elements that reflect conscious and unconscious taboos: A girl in the neighbourhood was haunted by a monster. The monster looked hideous and wicked and was flocky all over its body, part of which seemed to be covered in feathers. Every time it had sex with the girl, the girl would feel an unbearable pain in her private parts and so she would plead for sparing her life (*Zibuyu* 3, "Nangnang" 囊囊). For another woman who was the tormented victim of rape by a monster, there were obviously neither natural feelings nor pleasure, but only pain and terror: "A monster that looks like a black sheep comes to my room every night. It speaks like a human being. Its penis is like a hairy bodkin and when it makes love to me, it's excruciating." 夜有怪，狀如黑羊，能作人語。陽具如毛錐，痛不可當。(*Zibuyu* 19:363, "Yumei" 玉梅). [80]

However, pain and tumescence may be the correct heavenly punishment for a corrupt official: [81]

> Less than a decade later, the magistrate was transferred to Songjiang. One day, he was sitting in his office having lunch. His servant watched a young man enter through the window, went straight for the magistrate and slapped his back three times before fleeing. Soon the magistrate felt a sharp pain in his back and stopped eating. His back had swollen out about a foot, in the shape of two mounds divided by a small crevice, just like buttocks. [82]
> 。未十年，令遷守松江，坐公館，方午餐，其僕見一少年從窗外入，以手拍其背者三，遂呼背痛不食。已而背腫尺許，中有界溝，如兩臀然。(*Zibuyu* 16, "Quan Gu" 全姑).

In contrast, a magic pill may cure a long-time disease and finally stop an old, frequent pain. Zhou had eaten an iron needle by mistake in his youth and he thus often felt a faint pain in his stomach. When he swallowed the pill, the pain went away (*Zibuyu* 8, "Mysterious Lady in the Ninth Heaven" 九天玄女). [83]

Conclusion

As the article concerns religion and sensory perception, I could mention only a small part of examples concerning the encounter with the 'supernatural' presented in late imperial Chinese [84]

72 The *wu* 巫, or a kind of shaman, from ancient China, has magic abilities to remove evils, and also medical powers. On the multi-dimensional and cross-cultural dimension of *wu*, see Yen Ping-chiu (1990, 85–124).

fiction. Numerous cases where odours accompany a religious experience are not limited to the encounter with the supernatural but include tales that concern love feelings and other individual or social acts which are performed with sacral and solemn devotion, with a kind of religious attitude. The first part of the essay dealt with the universal phenomenon of olfaction and some specific aspects within the Chinese culture. In the next part, I focused on the emblematic term of *xiang,* its concrete meaning of incense, then of perfume and other symbolic extensions, its use and various semantic implications, and its collocation in the dialectical relation of the two polarities of fragrance and stink. The reader who had the patience to follow the dispersive path of this paper might agree with the *leitmotiv* that any religion with its many beliefs and myths cannot but recall other religions and be linked with them. Moreover, the sacred is never cultivated as a pure entity, but it is deeply rooted in cultures and in the vitality of bodies. The section dedicated to the analysis of *xiang* is an attempt to offer the kaleidoscopic manifestation of the sacred, from material culture to the social dimension and vital drives. Following the contradictory, complex variety of meanings, references, implicit and explicit hints, as well as double entendres may seem to distract from the focus on religion but, in fact, helps to better understand the concrete location of the holy in the contemporaries' mentality. Finally, I presented some examples of other sensorial feelings involved in religious beliefs and practices.

[85] The article is based on reading representative literary works and a short analysis of specific terms. The lexicon offers concrete examples of the perceptions of sensory organs through the various modulations of the use of words related to them. Olfaction and other faculties are not limited to a physical reaction concerning bodily organs. The physical reaction activates emotions and intentions, or it is also provoked by passions and desires. This survey may appear dispersive and maybe some analyses deserved a closer attention, but this is a preliminary approach attempting to stress the broad implications of bodily feelings that link olfactory and other sensory organs to the highest symbols: the religious sphere is variegate, beliefs and doctrines are often combined, and they are rooted in the mystery of life and death.

Abbreviations

GJXS: *Gujin xiaoshuo* 古今小説 (*Yushimingyan* 喻世明言), "Ancient and Modern Tales"
HLM: *Hongloumeng* 紅樓夢, "The Dream of the Red Mansion"
JPM: *JinPingMei* 金瓶梅, "The Golden Lotus"
JSTY: *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言, "Common Words for Warning the World"
LZZY: *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋誌異, "Strange Tales from the Leisure Studio"
MDT: *Mudanting* 牡丹亭, "The Peony Pavilion"
QS: *Quingshi Qingshileilüe* 情史類略, "History of Love"
SG: *Shan'ge* 山歌, "Mountain Songs"
TAMI: *Tao'an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶, "Remembrances of Zhang Dai's Dreams"
ZBY: *Zibuyu* 子不語, "What the Master Would Not Discuss"

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Appendix

Terms and expressions including *xiang*	
香	45
[奉/供] 香火 [錢/情/緣/之誓]	32
[沐手] 焚香 [沐浴/拜佛]	27
燒 [頭] 香 [紙]	27
異香 [撲鼻/蓬勃]	19
進 [頭] 香	13
行香	9
香魂	6
香氣 [酷烈/逼人]	5
拈香 [拜佛]	5
[美満] 幽香	4
偷香竊玉/竊玉偷香/偷 [韓掾之] 香	4
奇香 [沁骨]	4
香願/還香願	4
香甜/香甘	4
持香	4
[睡搵] 香腮 [带赤]	3
憐香惜玉/惜玉憐香	3
温香 [艷玉]	2
香潔	2
香軟	2
上 [頭] 香	2
清香	2
天香	2
熱香 [噴溢]	2
分香賣履/賣履分香	2
粉香脂氣/脂香酒氣	2
盟香	2
餘香/作餘香想	2
點香	2
荷香	2
爱香	1
暗香	1
一瓣之香	1
雨香雲片	1
香羅帕	1
狂香	1
驚香	1
香餑餑	1
香花供養	1
香滑	1
香痕	1

Terms and expressions including *xiang*	
香魂	1
香臭	1
香生梅唾	1
香美	1
香菱	1
香風洋溢	1
香撲烈	1
香盆	1
香盟	1
香冷	1
香憐	1
香梦	1
香洌	1
香艷	1
香銷	1
香閨女	1
香馥馥	1
撮土為香	1
七香	1
拾翠尋香	1
笑生香	1
色聲香味	1
心香	1
生香面	1
朝必香	1
頂香	1
頭香	1
肉香	1
粉蝶探香	1
芳香射鼻	1
悶香	1
洌香四射	1
嗅之而香	1
嬌香	1
熏香	1
跪香	1
Total	291[i]

i The list includes all terms. In the same cell, all compounds and variants of the basic term (in bold) are combined. This list is based on Chinese characters and compounds.

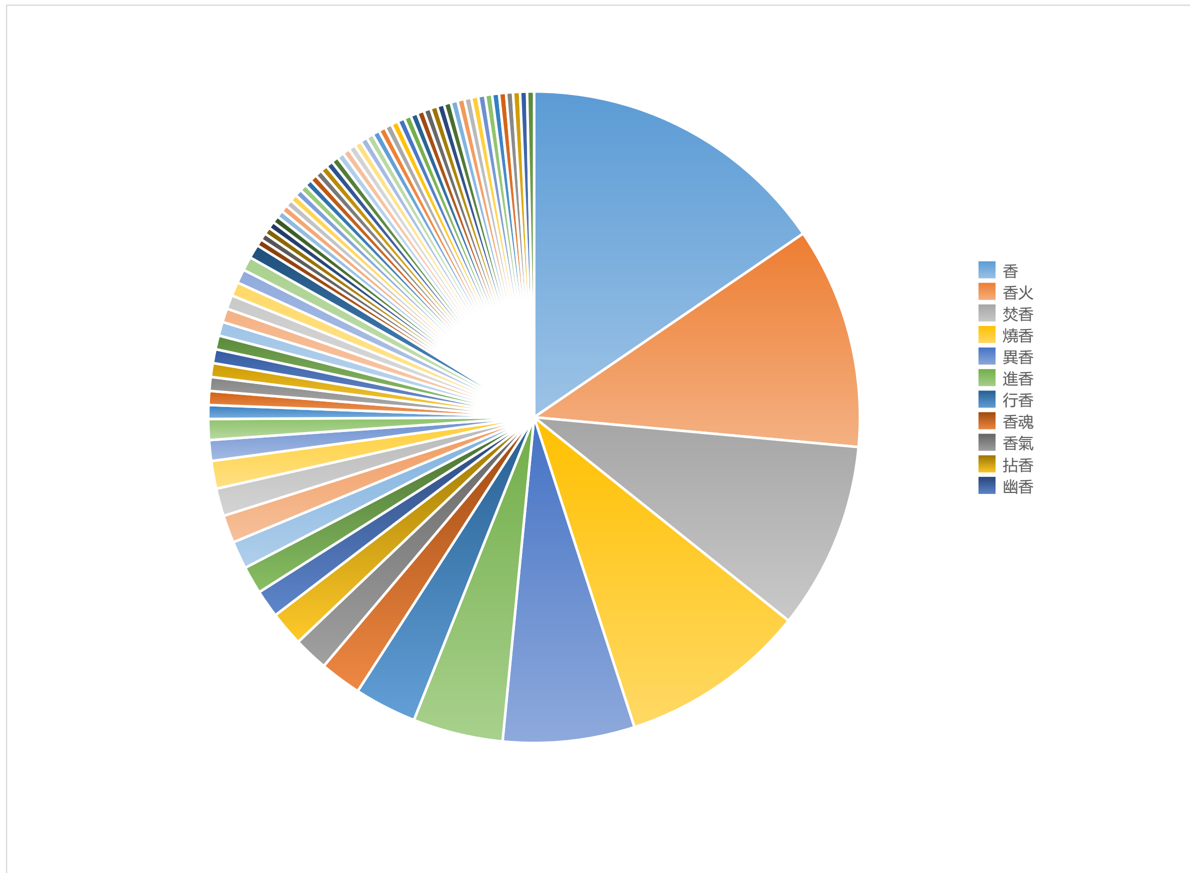

Figure 1 Terms and expressions including *xiang*

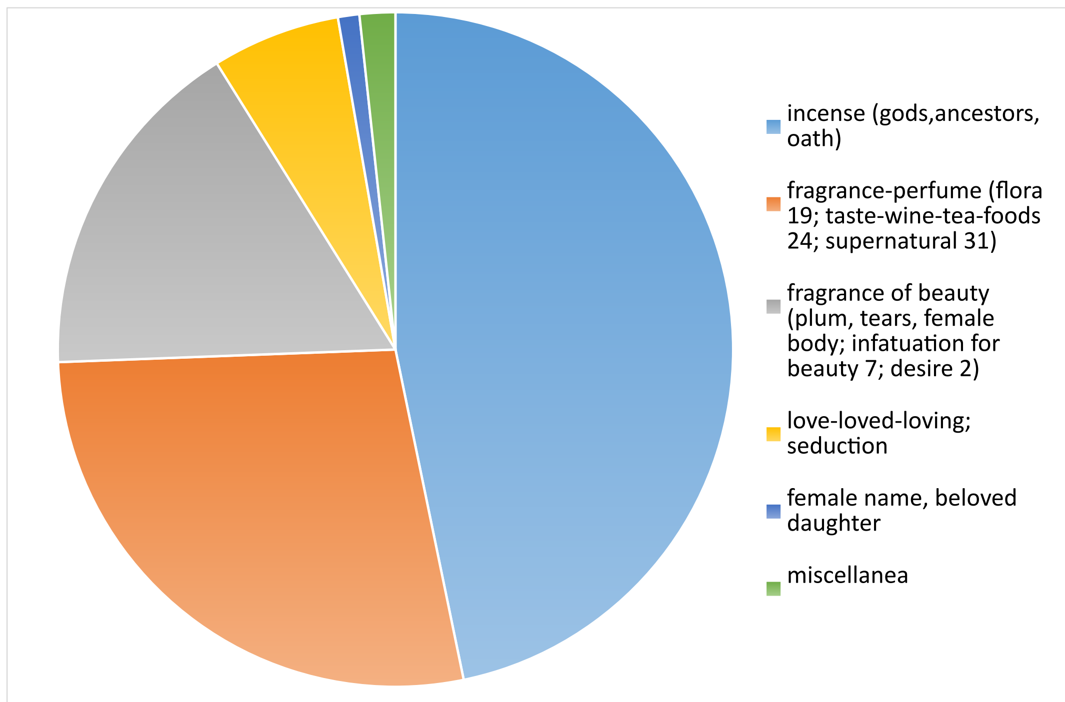

Figure 2 English equivalents

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The Dress of Evangelization

Jesuit Garments, Liturgical Textiles, and the Senses in Early Modern Japan

LINDA ZAMPOL D'ORTIA

ABSTRACT The present article analyses the use of clothing in the Jesuit sixteenth-century mission in Japan by applying dress theory. It investigates Jesuit garments and other perceptible elements of dress by understanding them as nonverbal communication. Texts by missionaries such as Francis Xavier (1506–52), Francisco Cabral (1533–1609), Luís Fróis (1532–1597), and Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606) are scrutinised to establish the content of the messages they meant to convey through Jesuit dress. The range of modifications that dress imposed on the bodies of the missionaries is examined to determine the limits within which the missionaries operated and how these boundaries came to be. Through an historical overview, the missionaries' strategies are examined to show how such messages were fine-tuned through the manipulation of dress, and to what extent they represented responses to the specific context of Japan. Anti-Christian polemical texts supply information on the Japanese's reception of these messages. The article explores Jesuit assumptions about the dress policies' impact on their souls through the senses and on their work of evangelization as well.

KEYWORDS Society of Jesus, Jesuit missions, Japan, Early Modern Catholicism, liturgical textiles, religious dress, senses

Introduction

This article considers the use of textiles for evangelization in the Catholic sixteenth-century mission carried out in Japan by the Society of Jesus, focusing in particular on clothing by applying the theoretical underpinnings of the concept of dress.[1] It analyses Jesuit garments and textiles by framing them as nonverbal communication, establishing what type of meaning they were meant to carry. It also attempts to establish whether this message was received, how it was interpreted, and how it was then fine-tuned in accordance with the specific context in [1]

1 All translations in this paper are by the author, except where otherwise stated. Biblical citations are from the NRSV-CE. The edition of the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus (*Cons.*) used is Ganss (1970), that of the *Spiritual Exercises* (*Exx.*) is Ganss (1991).

which communication took place. The modifications performed on the bodies of missionaries by way of dress are examined in order to establish their effectiveness as well as the level of influence that they were held to have on the soul, through the senses.

[2] The term "dress" is to be understood as indicating the totality of modifications carried out upon the body. Among these modifications, garments are the most common, but by no means are they the only ones: tattoos, perfumes, cosmetic surgery, and hairdos are included as well. Culture governs dress, not only through the establishment of the forms it can take, but also by attributing meaning to them. The modifications done to the body, just like the body itself, carry symbolic values. Thus, dress provides immediate information about a person, becoming an act of (chiefly nonverbal) instantaneous communication (Damhorst 2005b, 2–5; Arthur 1999, 2–3).

[3] Physically speaking, this type of communication is carried out through specific channels, corresponding to the five senses. The channels of sight and touch stand out as the most important in regard to dress; but smell and hearing, too, contribute (the sound made by heels, the smell of perfume); whereas taste ranks last in importance (Damhorst 2005a, 70). Aside from the immediate elements provided by the senses (shape, colour, texture, etc.), the other core traits of dress relevant to this study are those that fall under the rubric of the condition of the material: ripped, pristine, threadbare, etc. Surrounding the key characteristics of dress lies an array of elements that provide the context in which they can be interpreted, in a way that deeply influences communication. An example is the kinetic interaction (movement of the dressed body), but also the group association (organization, peers, etc.) that the dress highlights. All these characteristics, from the core ones to the accidental, ultimately fall in the wider framework set by culture: the rules of fashion, those of aesthetics, the trends of history, etc. As a result, the elements that compose dress, and their combinations, collected through the senses and inserted in their context, can refer to an array of meanings much wider than their material reality (Damhorst 2005a, 72–75).

[4] Due to the instantaneous quality of this type of communication as well as its implicit dependence on specific cultural contexts, its meaning is not universal. Still, this does not prevent the creation of some kind of message all the same, even if the dependence on context of appearance-based communication can sometimes go unnoticed:

> [5] A wearer puts clothing, hairdo, accessories, and grooming together to produce an appearance and may assign meanings to that assembled appearance. Each observer of that appearance may agree on some meanings but may also have a unique interpretation of the appearance […] Disagreement does not [necessarily] mean that communication stops or fails. It is the sum of how wearer and observer interact (or do not interact) on the basis of appearance that produces meanings for the wearer and the observer. (Damhorst 2005a, 69)

[6] The intersection of different meanings becomes particularly important in the case of intercultural messages, as is the case in the present study.

[7] The same attempts at control of the body exerted by religious regulators are extended to its modifiers. Thus, religion has always played its part in the creation of the meaning of dress. Regarding religious conformity, for example, Linda B. Arthur writes:

> [8] Through conformance to a strict religious value system, the most conservative of the religious social bodies exert control over their members' physical bodies […]

> The internal body is controlled, in that emotion is restrained, voices and laughter are muffled and appetite for food, knowledge and sex are constrained. The external body, however, is more visibly restrained. Strict dress codes are enforced because dress is considered symbolic of religiosity. Hence, the dress becomes a symbol of social control as it controls the external body. While a person's level of religiosity can not be objectively perceived, symbols such as clothing are used as evidence that s/he is on the 'right and true path.' (Arthur 1999, 1)

From the outset, the Church's regulations of the garments are to be contextualised within the relationship existing between the external and internal aspect of the person—that is to say, the body and the soul. Early Christian teachings promulgated the idea that the appearance of a person (and therefore not only one's body, but also one's dress) mirrored the conditions of their soul (Ribeiro 2003, 13). This attitude towards garments opened the way for various rhetorical uses. For example, Paul's writings spoke of conversion to Christianity as a change of clothes (Col. 3:9–10). From this concept, Clement of Alexandria depicted baptism as the start of "a new life that is expressed in clothing both metaphorically and literally," where the catechumen, having "stripped off the garments of wickedness," can "put on the immortality of Christ" (Maier 2013, 75–76). [9]

At the same time, while the state of one's garments communicated the state of one's soul to others (making it visible, in a manner of speaking), such garments were also held to have a direct influence on it. For instance, sackcloth was not only a symbol of penance but became part of the very process of penance itself, as its harshness contributed to the mortification of the flesh. On the other hand, soft clothes were believed to make the soul "soft" (Twomey 2007, 123). If silk highlighted the sensual (rather than devotional) inclination of the wearer, this sensuality allowed the suggestion of sin to reach and imperil one's soul. It could be said, after all, that Adam and Eve fell precisely in this way (Classen 1998, 3). The debates on the status of the five senses in relation to the divine (and thus of the body in relation to the soul) therefore represent the widest context that informs the interpretation of dress. Additionally, liturgical textiles, too, as a specific category of devotional items, are characterised by these tensions. On the one hand, they are interpreted as a conduit for grace; on the other, they carry the dangers of idolatry and excess. [10]

Just as it is not possible to speak of a single Christian interpretation of garments throughout history, different bodies were restricted by different rules according to their social standing. As dress expressed the social role of the wearer (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1992, 5), the rules that bounded such dress were far from homogenous; rather they were subject to different contextual needs. The social role of a priest, for example, was not that of a hermit, although they were both religious specialists, and this needed to be made manifest by their garments. Different prescriptions, in turn, created different meanings that could be recontextualised and appropriated in different ways. [11]

Considering their importance in communication and spirituality, garments became, not surprisingly, an important aspect of the Jesuit strategy of accommodation in the Asian missions. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) adopted mandarin garments in China; Roberto Nobili (1577–1656) used the garments of Indian renunciants in the mission of Madurai; Ippolito Desideri (1684–1733) adopted the habit of Tibetan monks (Sanfilippo 1997; Pavone 2013; Brockey 2016). Among these instances, the history of garments in the Japanese enterprise is a peculiar one. Arguably due to its earlier start, greater dimensions, and longer duration, various tensions regarding garments began to surface and even shaped numerous debates that would help [12]

make explicit the missionaries' expectations, the principles governing dress in Europe, and the possibilities regarding their adaptation to Japan.

[13] The Jesuit mission to Japan was founded by Francis Xavier (1506–52) in 1549. It survived the vicissitudes of the end of the Sengoku period (1467–1573) and the prohibition of missionary activity by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598) in 1587; but it officially met its end after the Tokugawa shogunate's ban of Christianity in 1614.[2] Once in the country, Xavier became convinced that the Japanese showed great potential in terms of conversion as they were somehow influenced by long-lost memories of Christianity,[3] and hence began investigating the beliefs and practices of the Japanese infidels, as he defined them.[4] He painted most Buddhist monks negatively,[5] but attempted to relate them to Catholic religious specialists by way of their garments: "There are among these monks some who carry themselves like friars, who wear brownish-grey habits, [and are] all shaved;" others instead were dressed "like clerics," that is, with a black overgarment that covered the whole body (*koromo*).[6] Xavier clearly knew the importance of dress when it comes to self-presentation and, once he understood that his appearance was not conducive to obtaining permission to preach, he manipulated his dress to reach his objectives (Curvelo 2008, 112–13).

[14] Unaware that the figure of the Emperor did not hold any political power over the country, as it had been divided by civil wars, Xavier initially attempted to obtain an official sanction from Emperor Go-Nara (1495–1557) to preach in Miyako (Kyoto). The Emperor however did not grant audience to the poorly dressed foreigner, especially since he did not bring any gifts, as was the custom. For the same reasons, the monks of the temple complex of Mount Hiei, whom Xavier had identified among the country's main religious authorities, refused to dispute with him, let alone grant him their approval (Schurhammer 1973, 4:197, 200).

[15] Xavier then opted for a change of strategy as he came to perceive a strong inclination towards ceremony in Japanese culture. He requested an audience with the ruler of Yamaguchi, the powerful *daimyō* Ōuchi Yoshitaka, who was interested in creating a lasting relationship with Portuguese merchants. To better convey his status of ambassador to the viceroy of India, Xavier changed the manner in which he presented himself. He supported his claim with two diplomatic letters, beautifully adorned and originally destined to the Emperor. To further impress Yoshitaka, Xavier offered him many beautiful, expensive, and unusual presents. This decision not only took advantage of the appreciation his host displayed for unfamiliar and exquisite objects, but also complied with Japanese social rules of gift giving (Fróis 1976, 1:39; Pitelka 2016, 67–68).

[16] How precisely Xavier changed his appearance is not known; the extant sources all point towards a manner of dress that aimed to be acceptable to Japanese taste and etiquette.[7] Xavier's

2 The most detailed publication on Francis Xavier's life is by Schurhammer (1973). An overview of the history of the Japanese mission is provided by Boscaro (2008), while a detailed reconstruction of the initial years of the mission is in Bourdon (1993).

3 Nicolao Lancillotto, "Information on Japan," Cochin, 28 December 1548 (Ruiz de Medina 1990, 1:54–55).

4 Francis Xavier to the Jesuits of Goa, Kagoshima, 5 November 1549 (Ruiz de Medina 1990, 1:142).

5 The term *bonzos (bonzes)*, used by the Jesuits, is defined as "those [men] that they here have as priests" (Ruiz de Medina 1990, 1:145–46).

6 On Japanese Buddhist garment *koromo*, see Matsuo (2007, 26–27). On the *kesa*, the coloured robe worn over the shoulder, see Kennedy (1989) and Riggs (2004).

7 Schurhammer (1973, 4:216–17) lists the sources that mention both Xavier's visit and his change of garments. As noted by Schurhammer, the earliest mention of Xavier's garments during this visit appears to be Valignano's 1583 *Historia del principio y progresso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias orientales* (Valignano 1944). However, there is another source that could have appeared earlier: a dialogue written by Edmond Auger, where Xavier is depicted donning beautiful "regalia of silk" (Schurhammer 1973, 4:216; Auger 1960, 291). As Schurhammer suggested, Auger might have collected the information for the dialogue in

use of non-verbal communication to establish his status (and by extension, that of Christianity) among his interlocutors was not limited to the physical elements of his dress alone; Xavier also manipulated his clothing context through group association. His message was supported by the presence of the retinue of merchants that accompanied him (Brockey 2016, 186). To reinforce their respect for Xavier in front of other *daimyō*, Portuguese merchants would also spread their cloaks on the floor for the missionary to sit on.[8]

[17] The visit to Ōuchi Yoshitaka is also present in the *Historia de Japam*, a detailed history of the Jesuit enterprise in Japan written approximately between 1585 and 1594 by veteran missionary and interpreter Luís Fróis (1532–1597). This account, however, omits mention of Xavier's garments. The *Historia* purposefully underscores not only the appreciation attributed to the Japanese for richly decorated and formal ceremonies, but also for devotional items.[9] The following passage highlights the early emergence of the missionaries' conclusion that Japanese culture held a special inclination towards the sensual, which extended to devotional objects and practices:

> [18] [Xavier] showed [Yoshitaka] a rather ornate and distinguished Bible, ancient and illuminated, and a very beautiful Glossa Ordinaria, new and well decorated, telling him that in those books there was the entirety of our holy Law. The King[10] wanted to see a garment of brocade that the Father carried with him, and then asked the Father to wear it. It looked so well to him that he clapped his hands. (Fróis 1976, 1:40)

[19] This encounter then becomes an opportunity for Xavier to catechize some monks of high status, who were assisting to the scene. The success of Yamaguchi therefore cemented for the missionaries the idea that they could open the country to evangelization by arousing Japanese curiosity and appreciation of beautiful and unfamiliar objects, including garments. Adopting appropriate dress during audiences, for the act of precious gift-giving, then, was an attempt to fit to the expectations of the Japanese regarding people of status. In Yamaguchi, the Jesuits seemed to be successful to some extent, as they received from Yoshitaka a patent for preaching, and an old temple to use as headquarters. Another accomplishment was obtaining access to the court, and therewith the possibility of preaching to the *daimyō* and his entourage.

[20] The impact of Xavier's initial strategy becomes evident when considering the approach of his successors. If Ignatius of Loyola represented the Jesuit in his perfected form, to be imitated by all Jesuits (Levy 2011, 127–29), the missionaries in Japan looked to Francis Xavier as well.

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the mid-1550s, from a Japanese eyewitness, Bernardo (d.1557) (Brown 1994, 886), who travelled to Lisbon. This would explain how and when European Jesuits learnt of Xavier's change of garments. If the dialogue is a later creation and was composed around 1588–91 (Auger 1960, 249), the first printed mention of Xavier's garments would instead be Giovanni Pietro Maffei's 1588 *Historiarum Indicarum*, where Xavier has "magnificent garments" prepared for the visit (Maffei 1605, 398). Maffei's source was Valignano himself (Moran 1993, 33), who in turn quoted the *Historiarum Indicarum* word by word in his second recounting of the event, *Principio y Progresso de la religion christiana en Japón* (1601–1603) (in Biblioteca da Ajuda, 49-IV-53, 267r–268r). In time, the story acquired more embellishments and, by 1660, Daniello Bartoli's *Il Giappone* depicted Xavier wearing "a silk gown and velvet slippers" (Sciolti 2013, 85).

8 Aires Brandão to the Jesuits of Coimbra, Goa, 23 December 1554 (Ruiz de Medina 1990, 1:496). Francis Xavier visited the *daimyō* of Bungo, Ōtomo Yoshihige, too, before leaving Japan; Xavier's wearing of liturgical garments in this occasion, as is written in some later hagiographies of his, appears to be a fictitious detail from Fernão Mendes Pinto's *Peregrinaçam* (Schurhammer 1973, 4:249; Brockey 2016, 186).

9 On the Japanese understanding of Christian devotional objects as invested of special powers, see Higashibaba (2001, 43–48).

10 Ōuchi Yoshitaka. The Jesuit sources refer to the *daimyō* of Japan with the title of "king."

For this reason, his change of approach in Japan, and the differences in how he was depicted by fellow Jesuits, return as central in the discussion of Jesuit dress.

[21] This article will analyse how the dress policies of the missionaries of the Society of Jesus in Japan strove to appeal to the perceived preferences of the Japanese, and how these policies were limited by the contemporaneous European attitudes. It will show how, since the beginning, the Jesuits identified the figure of the Buddhist monk as an equivalent to that of the Christian missionary, and how they sought to imitate the dress of such monks in their own. The article will also explore the strategies initially employed by the missionaries to cope with the economic constraints on their choices in clothing, and how, once more funding was obtained, their dress was changed into silk kimono, in imitation of monks of rank. It will then analyse the ban of silk clothes by mission Superior, Francisco Cabral (1533–1609), highlighting his manipulation of the image of Francis Xavier and his creation of new knowledge on Japanese culture, to support his decision. A subsequent change of policy, initiated by Visitor Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606), maintained the well-established exclusion of silk while imitating other aspects of the figure of the monk to appeal to Japanese people by promoting instead clean and presentable garments. To conclude, Japanese perceptions of Jesuit dress, as they appear in polemical texts, are analysed in the final section.

Christian Liturgical Splendour and its Denunciation

[22] During the initial four centuries of the history of Christianity, no clothing of specific cut or material was codified for clerics to use during rituals. Some common rules regarding garments recommending modesty, simplicity, and cleanliness were requested by earlier ecclesiastical documents, in imitation of the images of the Apostles provided by the Gospels (De Santi 2004, 69–71). This use was in accordance with the perceived correspondence between the inner and outer state of a person. In the writings of Church Father Jerome (347–420), clean garments went together with moral innocence (Hillerbrand 2004, 642).

[23] While a distinction between the garments worn in church and those for everyday use was requested of all attendants, it is possible to identify tensions surrounding the introduction of specialized garments for clerics. The colour white had been favoured for ritual purposes ever since Roman and Greek cultures associated it with purity. By the fifth century, the *tunica alba*[11] had become a specifically clerical garment, although another century was needed before the clerical dress proper appeared (Norris 2002, 34–35; Miller 2014, 17–24).

[24] Notwithstanding the frequent denunciations against decoration, clerical garments became richer and more complex with time; meanwhile, precious objects and textiles began appearing in church buildings with greater regularity. Two reasons can be identified behind this trend: the first was the new sacrality attributed to clerical garments; the second concerned the temporal power that the institution of the Church had assumed over time. Common belief held that clerical garments dated back to Biblical times; for this reason, they were associated with relics and received similar worship. As their decoration and elaboration evolved into more complex and extravagant forms, clerical garments therefore became devotional objects themselves, endowed with sacred and mystical qualities. This connection insured a certain protection from accusations of excess, as richness was not interpreted as personal vainglory but in honour of God (Mayo 1984, 27; Van Wyhe 2013).

11 The *tunica alba* was a long white shirt, probably made of linen, or wool in the case of the higher ranks (Mayo 1984, 15–19).

This was also true of the devotional objects that accompanied liturgy or that decorated holy spaces. Their refinement could be interpreted as evidence of their holiness; and their sensual, instantaneous quality was believed to affect especially the souls of illiterate devotees (Eco 2012, 45; Melion 2013, 83–84). Such devotional objects also had an economic value that contributed to the overall perception of holiness (Eco 2004, 99–104). A connection between sanctity and silk, for example, had emerged from the use of placing this cloth on relics in the sixth century. The expensiveness and rarity of this material would highlight the sanctity of such relics, while the silk itself would acquire a certain sheen of sacredness. The richness of the silk was understood to augment the faith of the people watching the rites as well, not to mention impress any non-Christians in attendance (Liu 1998, 114–18). Overall, holiness and goodness were often depicted as beautiful, while evil was considered ugly.[12] [25]

Despite representing an ample tradition, the interpretation of luxury as sacred was not universally accepted. Many Fathers of the Church, among whom Tertullian, Cyprian of Carthage, and Clement of Alexandria, adhered to the Biblical rejections of luxury (often in the form of rich and colourful garments) and proposed an ascetic lifestyle instead (Kuhns 2003, 58–61). The use of beautiful and rich objects for worship was denounced in a vitriolic manner in the High Middle Ages as well. Ornately decorated churches and their accoutrements were censured, as they were viewed to be a scorn to poverty and as distracting to the faithful from pious veneration, leading to accusations of favouring beauty over holiness (Eco 2012, 34–36). The worldly orientation of some members of the Church hierarchy created internal tensions with those elements that prioritized holy poverty, and would result in difficult contentions (Goody 2006, 342).[13] [26]

Exhortations against luxury were part of an already existing tradition of contempt of the world, but it was only in the twelfth century that an actual textual genre emerged. The expression *contemptus mundi* signalled a desired indifference towards worldly things. The term came to indicate a wide corpus of literature dedicated to denouncing the world and actively positing it as opposite to the Church, because it contained all that was evil, corrupted, and mutable (a category to which beauty belonged) (Howard 1966, 65–66). If this framework rejected sensual excesses as dangerous for the soul, it interpreted objects and images of worship as useful only to beginners (McGinn 2012, 192).[14] [27]

Garments, too, were objects of discussion in the *contemptus mundi* genre. While colours were being codified for the vestments of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the founder of the Cistercian Order, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), contested the use of luxurious and dyed garments in the Church as part of his campaign to present an appearance that was consistent with the clerics' inner devotion (De Santi 2004, 77; Jones 2013). An anonymous text, long attributed [28]

12 Jesuit churches often contained depictions of instances of the cosmic struggle between good and evil, where they were shown as beautiful and ugly respectively (Smith 2002, 32–33, 71). In the influential "Meditation on the Two Standards" of his *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius Loyola depicted the armies of Satan and Christ, preparing for Armageddon: the first is "seated on a throne of fire and smoke, in aspect horrible and terrifying;" the latter "takes his place… in an area which is lowly, beautiful, and attractive" (*Exx*. 140; 143). At the same time, the connection was not so direct as initially presented, as illustrated by Loyola's vision of the beautiful flying serpent, a temptation that required a more advanced spiritual experience to discern (Melion 2013, 82–83; Boyle 1997, 107–10).

13 The excesses of the clergy, according to some, could prompt God to chastise them and their people, such as the eighth-century Viking rides through Northumbria, interpreted as divine punishment of the kingdom for the rich and pagan-influenced garments of the local clergy (Ribeiro 2003, 32).

14 The faithful were divided, spiritually speaking, into beginners, proficient, and perfect; each category needed distinct manners of teaching (Cfr. 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, as referred to in the prologue of the Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*).

to him, accuses soft clothes of having a direct effect on the soul of the wearer whereby the soul came to take on a deleterious softness itself (Twomey 2007, 123). Soft clothes were associated with a courtly environment,[15] and were made from refined, and therefore expensive, textiles. A further influential condemnation of soft and colourful garments ("mollibus vestimentis et coloratis") as used by religious practitioners comes from the 1223 *Regula* of the Franciscans (Rouchon Mouilleron 2014, 3). This points to the fact that the suspicion with which luxurious clothing was viewed was broad.

[29] The theology that underpinned *contemptus mundi* influenced the Society of Jesus, too, as it shaped important moments of Ignatius of Loyola's life. When leaving the courtly environment of his youth to dedicate his life to religion, Loyola imitated the lives of saints by donating his garments to the poor. In the attempt to rid his soul of sin, he engaged in the mortification of the body by wearing a rough sackcloth, eating poor food, and letting his hair and fingernails grow. Even with such a harsh life, he only felt the scruples of conscience grow and grow; only when he refused this behaviour as vainglorious and moved onto a life of moderation did he feel his spiritual growth to begin in earnest. A book that helped him in this process while in Manresa was *De Imitatione Christi*, a text in the genre of the *contemptus mundi*.

[30] Still, Loyola and his few companions soon came under the suspicion of the Inquisition for the reason of their garments of sackcloth, among other things. Loyola obeyed their injunction to dye his clothes black; after that he adopted the black attire used by the students of Alcalá de Henares where he was studying. When the time came to decide what garments the newly founded Society of Jesus would use, Loyola did not dwell too much on colour or its shape[16] but defined it as: proper [*honestus*]; "conformed to the usage of the region where one is living;" and not breaking the Jesuit vow of poverty, as would any silk or other expensive cloths (*Cons*., [577]).

[31] "Honest" (intended to mean decent, proper) was a term that expressed the idea, already mentioned, of a necessary correspondence between the interior piety of the cleric and his external appearance. According to this definition, a clerical garment needed to be long enough to cover the clothes underneath it, and not richly lined down to the hem. Silk and use of colours were similarly banned. Overall, this garment should edify whoever gazed upon it (De Santi 2004, 81–82). From this point of view, it held a role similar to that of devotional objects.

[32] The black cassock, used already in the twelfth century as common clerical dress, answered the Jesuits' needs.[17] It had proved so successful that it had been adopted by various categories of workers (lawyers, physicians, clerks, teachers, and students) to indicate their sobriety and professionalism (Harvey 2013, 97). As the Jesuits planned to work among the laity at all levels of society, the popular acceptance of this garment, whether secular or clerical, arguably helped its adoption. Jesuit garments, therefore, while changeable according to the context, in practice tended towards the cassock, made of simple cloth (generally wool) and cheaply dyed to "honest" black (O'Malley 1993, 341–42).

15 This is an allusion to Matthew 11:8, where Jesus quotes hermit John the Baptist: "What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces."

16 The exact appearance of the habit might seem a secondary question in the establishment of a religious order, but to contextualize their importance in the early modern period, consider the nearly contemporary debates on this topic in the Franciscan order (Elbel 2010).

17 The cassock was "an ankle-length sleeved tunic which can be held at the waist by a narrow belt, or buttoned from neck to foot [...] the Roman Catholic cassock or soutane is usually single-breasted with a row of many buttons down the centre front" (Mayo 1984, 140).

Japanese Monks and Jesuit Missionaries

Francis Xavier had already determined in 1550 that, if their message was to be welcomed, the Jesuits should aim to obtain the same (if not greater) respect afforded to Buddhist monks (Schurhammer 1973, 4:156–57). The years after his death saw different attempts by his fellow missionaries to follow his instructions[18] through different approaches that aimed to imitate elements of the monks' visual presentation while keeping themselves distinct in the eyes of the Japanese.[19] [33]

As shown, Buddhist monks (and nuns) had been linked by Xavier to Catholic religious orders through their garments, starting with his first observations on Japan. During the initial years of the mission, the Jesuits exploited this visible connection by adopting the monks' dress. The unfortunate state of their finances prevented the missionaries from replicating the Buddhist style of luxurious garments and ceremonies,[20] so they chose a less expensive option. The following passage from a letter of Brother Luís de Almeida (1525–83)[21] describes his travel *kosode*: [34]

> The way in which I travel through this land and I speak with these noblemen is in the manner of their monks: with shaved head and beard, which you have to do every time you go to visit a nobleman, in lands where we are not well known. The clothes [I wear] are like a gown, a bit shorter, except for the fact that they have much larger and very short sleeves. Everybody wraps themselves with their belts and, on top, wears a black veil. I dress like this when I see it is necessary, because if the local people see our clothes, which they never saw before, they never leave us [alone], nor have that regard [that is] proper of those who enjoy receiving the law of God from us. In this manner we go among friends and enemies, preaching the law of God in every place we find ourselves. And they respect this habit so much that everywhere the laity makes way for you.[22] [35]

Imitating the clothing of Buddhist monks allowed the Jesuits to communicate instantly to the Japanese their belonging to the category of religious specialists; this granted them access to people of status even when wearing inexpensive garments. The missionaries thus capitalized on the widespread misconception among the Japanese that they were Buddhist monks from India (App 1997). Such attire therefore gained them the "regard [that was] proper" for people of their (religious) station, and additional safety, while having the advantage of catering to the Jesuits' spiritual needs, thanks to its inexpensive cloth. [36]

In 1559, tasked with the founding of a new mission in the capital city, Father Gaspar Vilela [37]

18 Aside from gaining the cooperation of Japanese rulers, Xavier planned to send some of his best men to study in the most famous Buddhist temple complexes, so that they could debate and win the monks (and their religious authority) over for Christianity. Xavier also decided to fund a mission in China, since the Japanese wondered why the Chinese had not heard of Christianity (Zampol D'Ortia 2016a).

19 They were often not successful; on the roots of this misunderstanding, see App (1997).

20 On the poverty that characterised the beginnings of the mission, see Bourdon (1993, 374–76). An overview of the relationship between Buddhism and splendour is in Covell (2005).

21 Luís de Almeida was born in Lisbon to a Jewish family who had converted to Christianity. He travelled to India in 1548, and then on to Japan where he entered the Society of Jesus in 1555. He worked in the Jesuit hospital as a surgeon until 1560, while also being responsible for the mission's finances. He covered Torres' duties, too, when the latter became too old or sick to perform them. Almeida sailed to Macau in 1579 to be ordered as priest and died in 1583 in Japan (Hesselink 2016).

22 Luís de Almeida to the Jesuits in Europe, Yokoseura, 25 October 1562 (Ruiz de Medina 1990, 2:565–66).

(1526–72)[23] travelled to Miyako disguised as a poor Buddhist monk on pilgrimage; he shaved his head and his beard, and wore a poor kimono (Fróis 1976, 1:138). However, the capital city's distance from most Jesuit residences, located in southern Japan, gave Vilela the possibility to purposefully reimagine his evangelisation, including his clothes. Already in the fifth century, Pope Celestine I had noticed that clerics of isolated parishes had a tendency of taking liberties with their garments (Miller 2014, 20). In this case, though, Vilela's aim was to better fit into Japanese society: answering to the perceived needs of Japanese culture could be a means to obtaining access to its centres of power, a necessary step to enact the Jesuits' top-down conversion strategy. Dress represented an important part of this process (Ribeiro 2007, 22).[24]

[38] For example, the missionaries learnt that the official visits to one's social superiors for the New Year (*shōgatsu*) represented an important moment of the Japanese year, especially in the capital city where the monks could have access to the Shōgun. The local converts counselled Vilela to respect this tradition, and to wear appropriate garments (Fróis 1976, 2:13). However, since the missionaries in the capital were isolated from the support of the Portuguese merchants who traded in the south, they had very little funding. Wishing to display his status in front of the Shōgun yet unable to buy silk clothes, Vilela wore liturgical vestments such as a stole and a cope (Zampol D'Ortia 2016b, 153). When Luìs Fróis joined him in the capital, they both rode in litters, each with a retinue of fifteen or twenty Christians carrying precious gifts for the Shōgun, including a European wide brimmed hat (Fróis 1976, 2:13–14).[25]

[39] The financial state of the mission improved in the mid-1560s thanks to the investment of the sum Almeida had donated when entering the Society in the silk trade with Macao (Hesselink 2016, 54). The Jesuits seemed now to prefer avoiding liturgical garments other than for the officiation of rites, a practice that had attracted Papal censure already in the fifth century (McCloud 1948, viii).[26] Their dress of choice became instead the silk kimono. A later testimony by some Japanese Christians and Spanish merchants confirms that:

> [40] at the beginning the [Jesuit] fathers, to please the Japanese, wore the [Japanese] habit […] Some of the undersigned […] saw them about with the habit of Japan, but inside their houses they wore the habit of the Society (Valignano 1954, 231n10)

[41] The belief that "[fine clothes] would reflect better credit and reputation on the Christians" (Fróis 1976, 2:13), contextualised into the wider interpretation of Japanese culture as being inclined towards luxury and pomp, prompted the Jesuits to begin to use silks when outside the residences instead of reserving them for visits to rulers. This would explain the widespread

23 Gaspar Vilela was born in 1526 near Evora, Portugal. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1553, and the following year left for Japan. There, he was the founder of the mission of Miyako and others in the region, consecrating the first church of Nagasaki in 1569. In 1570, recalled by the Visitor, Gonçalo Álvares, he left for India, and later died in Goa (Ruiz de Medina 1990, 1:41*).

24 Vilela displayed a tendency for excessively showy behaviour, judged later by his superiors in Goa to be unworthy of a Jesuit. This attitude, eliminated from the printed editions of his letters, together with his use of silk might have been the reasons behind his recall to India (Hesselink 2016, 53, 234).

25 See *Cartas* (*Cartas* 1598, 1:178v), where Fróis is described wearing a *kimono* in 1565 instead of a cassock with Chinese slippers of twisted sewing silk.

26 They would still show Western liturgical garments to powerful *daimyō*, such as Fróis did in 1569 during his visit to Gifu castle, when Oda Nobunaga requested to see him wearing a cope of brocade of Hormuz (Fróis 1976, 2:281).

use of silk in quotidian situations, incognito travel included, substituting or coexisting with the poor monk's disguise such as that described by Almeida.

[42] That a certain level of uneasiness surrounded this practice becomes evident particularly in texts written after the silk ban of 1570. On occasion of their celebrated visit to Gifu castle in 1569, warlord Oda Nobunaga (1534–82) gifted to Fróis and Japanese Brother Lourenço (1525–1592) a colourful lined kimono made of silk (*awase*), a translucent white linen garment, and a fine white tunic. Nobunaga, famously in conflict with Buddhist organizations to obtain control of the country, was pleased to notice that the missionaries wearing his presents appeared on level with the most important monks of Japan (Fróis 1976, 2:312). On their side, by wearing the garments gifted to them, the Jesuits communicated their appreciation of Nobunaga's efforts to welcome and support them, and their willingness to respect his rule. Still, it is possible to deduce from the long passage in question Fróis' uneasiness with the frequent contact with the court and its gifts. Additionally, Nobunaga's court, being gentile, could arguably soften the soul even more easily than the courts of Christians. The enjoyment of courtly things by the Jesuits, "who are men who profess the disdain of the world, the true imitation of Christ, and the abandonment of all honours and temporal things," is interpreted as a specific necessity of Japan where it would be impossible to create a thriving mission without the support of the *daimyō*. This concise description of the Jesuit policy for Japan attempts to grapple with the contradictions and tensions that some of the missionaries perceived and anticipated in their readers. The use of "human means" is thus justified by the specific context of Japan, the Japanese disposition towards ceremonies, and the militancy of Buddhist monks and other so-called enemies of Christianity (Fróis 1976, 2:313–14).

[43] Meanwhile, the use of liturgical garments during rituals was a different matter. With the growth of the Christian communities, the Jesuits indeed strove to assume the role of local secular clergy (Valignano 1954, 134*), and they dressed as required when carrying out such duties during worship and religious processions. The liturgical garments represented the institution of the Church and highlighted this further social role of the Jesuits (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1992, 5–6). The opulence of their clothes demonstrated the Church's spiritual and earthly powers (Goody 2006, 342; Renne 2010).

[44] Ecclesiastical garments were generally provided to Japan by Goa (Fróis 1976, 1:60). In 1554, the mission received a good amount of them: a full set of pontifical vestments of gold cloth (comprising a dalmatic, chasuble, stole, maniple, and high collar), with rich brocade orphreys;[27] another set of vermilion damask; a "very rich" set of liturgical garments made of brocade, and one of white velvet; a cope of crimson velvet,[28] with orphreys and a cowl of brocade, and another made of silk from Mecca.[29] The first set was specially made so that

> [45] "in Japan, not only with inspiration and grace Our Lord will move the hearts of those peoples, not only with the example [of the missionaries] and the doctrine, but with the veneration of the visible divine cult as well, they will be invited to

27 Orphreys are a "highly elaborate embroidery work, or a piece of such embroidery. More specifically orphrey is an ornamental border, or embroidered band, especially as used on ecclesiastical vestments. Orphreys often utilized cloth of gold, gold trimming, or gold and silk weft, or filling. They were frequently woven several bands wide and then cut apart" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014).

28 Also known as pluvial, a cope is a "ceremonial version of an outdoor cloak worn during the latter days of the Roman Empire. It is basically a semi-circular piece of cloth held together at the front by a clasp or a 'morse.' The cope is worn at non-Eucharist ceremonies (i.e. baptism, marriage and procession) in the place of the chasuble" (Mayo 1984, 146).

29 "Inventario del bagaje de la expedición de 1554 a Japón," Goa, April 1554 (Ruiz de Medina 1990, 1:480).

> accept the truthful Law. And [the Japanese] are so attentive to these matters that they are very much moved by fine appearance."[30]

As was shown in the previous section, "moving the hearts" through the use of sacred beauty was not a concept exclusive to the Asian missions, but again the Japanese appeared as especially influenced by it. Lavish devotional objects were used to sensually enhance rituals and to provoke pious emotions in those in attendance; such feelings were considered the work of divine grace upon their hearts (Melion 2013). In this way, the Jesuits hoped to edify the Christians and attract the Japanese whom they wished to convert. The devotional weeping that would accompany these ceremonies was interpreted as the visible sign of such work. The missionaries indeed recorded the converts' (actual or rhetorical) tears as an external confirmation of conversion given the impossibility of ascertaining it in other ways (Vélez 2016; Száraz 2017). This confirmation was particularly important in the case of the Japanese who were believed to keep their feelings and thoughts secret.[31] [46]

In order to better meet and adapt to their own purposes the expectations of the Japanese, the Jesuits incorporated aspects of Buddhist rituals and aesthetics. There was also the perception on the part of the missionaries that funerals, being especially meaningful in Buddhism, needed special consideration (Vu Thanh 2014b). For example, when a Christian nobleman of Miyako died in 1565, his status made necessary in the eyes of the Japanese "a very solemn burial and a funeral of grandiose ceremony." Vilela, therefore, attended in a red lacquered palanquin, [47]

> "[wearing] a cope of brocade and [accompanied by] many shaved Christians who looked like monks, some with surplices, others with albs;[32] some, instead of the stole worn by monks over the shoulder,[33] wore a superfrontal.[34] To make a greater display, they carried a raised cross[35] with torches, a small ringing bell, the missal with its cover, a small aspersorium of holy water, an aspergillum, another small cross for the tomb, a reredos[36] of the Saviour with lit candlesticks in front, many silk banners with scenes of the Passion, and other similar things that, placed at a certain distance one from the other, created a great display along the streets […] Since Miyako is very keen to see novelties, there was a great turnout of men, women, children, and monks […] The Christians prayed, declaring the doctrine with loud voices, which amazed even more the gentiles, because hearing prayers recited so well in Latin was for them such a new and extraordinary thing. (Fróis 1976, 2:104–05) [48]

The keenness "to see novelties" of the Japanese was another trope of Jesuit literature. Won- [49]

30 Melchor Nunes Barreto to the General, Ignatius Loyola, April 1554 (Ruiz de Medina 1990, 1:448).

31 See, for example, Luís de Almeida to Antonio de Quadros, Funai, 1 October 1561 (Ruiz de Medina 1990, 2:380); Giovanni Battista de Monte, Miyako, 1 September 1580 (*Cartas* 1598, 1:480r); and Valignano (1954, 30).

32 The alb and the surplice are white tunics worn over the cassock during mass, both deriving from the Roman *tunica alba* (a white long shirt, probably made of linen or wool) (Mayo 1984, 15–19, 174–75).

33 This "Buddhist stole" is the *kesa* (derived from the Indian *kāshāya*), a coloured robe worn over the left shoulder, over the *koromo* (Kennedy 1989).

34 "A covering for the top of the altar, which commonly hangs down about six inches all round, and is fringed. It is ordinarily made of silk velvet, satin, or damask, and is placed over the three white linen cloths which customarily cover and preserve the altar slab" (Lee 1877, 390).

35 A cross raised on a pole, generally at the head of a religious procession (Ruiz de Medina 1990, 2:431).

36 A reredos is "an ornamental screen or partition that is not directly attached to the altar table but is affixed to the wall behind it" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014).

der was one of the emotions that the missionaries hoped to use to further evangelization, as it was considered "the best way to grab the attention of the soul" already by Thomas Aquinas (Bynum 1997, 10). Certainly, the Japanese appeared very curious towards exotic objects of European production, including liturgical garments, as is demonstrated by the passion for wearing European clothes displayed by the elites as early as 1577 (Simões 2012, 58).

[50] Whenever possible, the practice of organizing such rituals, that were as rich in complexity and preparation as they were in paraphernalia, was followed until the ban of Christian evangelization.[37] The Jesuits used liturgical garments as part of the ritual splendour to their full extent. An Easter procession of 1580, for example, is described thusly:

> [51] All the Christians participated with paper lanterns, painted and very well made, which testified to the happiness of that day and of the glorious Resurrection of the Lord. Everything was organized so perfectly, and beautifully, that everybody was amazed by the order, the ceremonies, and by the rich ornaments of the Father [Alessandro Valignano]. They were of carmine velvet, with orphreys made of silk, gold, white satin; others were purple with their copes, and capes, altar clothes and canopies, all of them decorated so that the Christians were happy and very satisfied with what they saw.[38]

[52] Although it was part of accepted Catholic practice and considered efficient in the specific context of Japan, liturgical luxury still created a certain tension with Catholic beliefs on the relationship between the bodies and the souls of the missionaries,[39] and came under scrutiny, for example, during the General Consultation of the Jesuit Vice-Province of Japan of 1590 (López Gay 1970, 4–5). Overall, though, since the use of dress during liturgy was codified, the missionaries' rich garments did not meet intense resistance from other Jesuits, nor from other Christians. As the next section will consider, the same cannot be said for their silk Japanese clothes.

The Ban on Silk

[53] The use of silk kimono by the missionaries did not go unnoticed among the Portuguese merchants whose "whisperings" reached Goa some time before 1566.[40] In that year, a visitor, Pedro Ramírez, had been dispatched with orders to send the funds of the Japanese mission back to India where they could be invested in purchasing land to rent. This was a more traditional way of economic support and it would avoid giving the impression that "the missionaries [in Japan] were living off trade."[41] Ramírez, however, died in a shipwreck near the

37 See, for example, *Cartas* (*Cartas* 1598, 1:291r), Fróis (1976, 3:271–72), and the detail (top right corner) of the mass from the *nanban* screen of the Kobe City Museum, with a priest in rich liturgical garments and the decorated altar (https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/namban-screens-right-hand-screen-kan%C3%B4-naizen/CAEfKzD1vqAV8A).

38 Lourenço Mexia to the General of the Society of Jesus, Japan, 1580 (*Cartas* 1598, 1:465v).

39 For some context, see Vu Thanh (2014a) and Marino (2014). Even before the Reformation, the relation between the divine and the senses had been controversial (de Boer and Göttler 2013, 8–9).

40 Francisco Cabral to the Diego Mirón, Nagasaki, 6 September 1571, in Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (hereafter cited as ARSI), *Jap.Sin.* 7, I, 23v.

41 Gonçalo Álvares to General Borja, Goa, [December] 1568 (Wicki 1948, 7:578). While this trade could certainly be a source of scandal, it is also true that it had been a necessity for many missionaries in India before the arrival of the Jesuits who, thanks to the better support received from the Crown, could afford to avoid it (Borges, Costa, and Menezes 2016).

gulf of Thailand (Romo 2002, 1063) and, in his stead, Provincial Antonio de Quadros sent Portuguese Francisco Cabral.

[54] Cabral was born around 1533 in São Miguel (Azores), to Aires Pires Cabral, a royal judge (*desembargador do Paço*), and Francisca Nunes de Proença. He studied Humanities in Coimbra before leaving for India as a soldier in 1550. In 1554, he petitioned to enter the Society of Jesus in Goa, where he studied Logic under Quadros. After two years of Theology, he was sanctified a priest in 1558. Cabral rose fast through the ranks of the Indian Province, purportedly thanks to his leadership qualities and virtues (and probably to his birth, too): he was master of novices until 1560, preacher and teacher of Theology in Goa, then rector of Vasai (Baçaim) from 1562 to 1566. That year, he became rector of the house of Kochi (Cochim), and later of the college of Goa. In 1568, Provincial Quadros ordered him to make a visitation of the Jesuit missions of Malacca, Macao, and Japan (Schütte 1980, 1:188–92).

[55] As mentioned above, Cabral's task was to return Japan's funds to Goa and reduce the profit from the silk trade to an acceptable level until the mission could fully sustain itself on the Indian rent. Likely during his long voyage to Japan (where he arrived in 1570), he received the additional order to ban all use of silk from the first Jesuit Visitor to Asia, Gonçalo Álvares (1527–73).[42] This instruction, issued without having any knowledge of the country, confirmed Álvares's tendency of following the Institute of the Society of Jesus without reflection (Schütte 1980, 1:213).[43] He displayed a similar attitude when, for instance, he ordered all the Jesuits in India to always wear knee-length socks and boots outside the house, a regulation that clearly did not take into consideration the local climate (Osswald 2011, 506).

[56] Upon landing in Japan in 1570, Cabral called the missionaries of southern Japan to Amakusa for a conference to inform them of the policy changes that would be implemented (Schütte 1980, 1:203–04). Although Cabral presented the banning of silk as an order coming from above, and over which he had no control, it was evident that he supported it out of concern not only for the spiritual repercussions he believed silk had on Jesuits, but also for the loss of reputation it was causing among the Portuguese merchants whose support was crucial to the Indian mission as a whole. Still, his reform was met with resistance from most of the missionaries in Japan, who maintained that he lacked practical experience of Japan and thus was not qualified to take such a drastic decision. This represented a strong point against him that, had it reached the General, could have compromised the reform of the missionary policy.[44] Thus, in Cabral's eyes, an equally strong counterpoint to present to the General and other superiors was needed. To collect enough evidence to support his position, Cabral carried out some small experiments that, in his mind, should have answered the objections raised. So if the missionaries feared for their safety, Cabral would take a stroll through a crowded city dressed in black to show that the cassock would attract, at most, the curiosity of passers-by (Zampol D'Ortia 2016b, 143–44, 150–51).

[57] Additionally, regarding the concern that the Japanese of status would avoid them, Cabral interviewed a number of eminent old converts on the matter. Once they confirmed their acquiescence, he used this support to buttress his own argument. For instance, he conferred with the "most important Christians of Sakai," and they all concurred that it would take some

42 Francisco Cabral to the General, Nagasaki, 5 December 1571 (Schütte 1958, 1, Teil 2:465). This plan did not come to fruition because, as Cabral later claimed, the Indian mission kept for itself the rent of the four villages of Vasai that had been bought with Japanese funds (Francisco Cabral to the General, Everard Mercurian, Kuchinotsu, 1 September 1577, in ARSI, Jap.Sin. 8, I, 136v).

43 As seen above, the *Constitutions* of the Society explicitly forbade wearing silk (*Cons.*, [577]).

44 On the authority that experience granted in matters of policymaking in the Japanese mission, see Zampol D'Ortia (forthcoming).

time for the Japanese to become familiar with the cassocks but that in the end they would accept it.[45] In Iimori (Kawachi), Cabral also consulted with a very old convert:

> I asked [Sangadono][46] to tell me explicitly […] what he thought about the change of clothing, because if leaving the silks meant a difficulty for the service of God and the expansion of His Law, I would suspend it until informing our superior in India. He answered that we should leave the silks and let ourselves be known as religious [of the Society of Jesus], and we should not pay attention to the scorn we feared the gentiles would have towards us. He justified this by saying that he and the other Christian gentlemen cared very much to be recognised by everybody as Christians: for this [reason] they searched for the biggest bead rosaries they could find, and wore them in front of their lords, even if they were scorned and ridiculed. He added: 'If we, who were gentiles yesterday, did this and want to be recognised as Christians, even if we are mocked, the more you who are religious, and whose example we have to follow, should not refuse your specific clothing and to be recognised as [Jesuits]. And about your fears that it could be an obstacle to [evangelization], because the Fathers could be honoured less than [when they wore] silks, there is nothing to fear, because you have already seen how Miyoshidono[47] and the other lords honoured you, even if you wore cloth, more than any father dressed in silks, and any monk.' He also gave me other reasons that supported my intentions.[48] [58]

The image of Jesuit missionaries that appeared in Cabral's correspondence was therefore of men who hid behind the excuse of imperilling the acceptance of the Gospels, when in truth they simply feared being mocked for Christ. By returning to the black cassock, the Jesuits would instead show their dedication to the diffusion of Christianity above their concerns for their lives, and would not refuse to submit to being humbled or mocked if that was God's will. Regarding Buddhist monks, Cabral added that not all wore silk; and those who chose to wear black or white cotton or linen were respected all the same (Zampol D'Ortia 2016b, 145). [59]

The second major point expounded by Cabral was that silk represented a betrayal of all missionaries who had come before them. Unsurprisingly,[49] in his writings, Francis Xavier's change of garments during his visit to Yoshitaka does not appear. Cabral's account was this: [60]

> with much effort and poverty, many hungers, colds, and persecutions, [Francis Xavier and his companions] founded the mission […] they were much persecuted by the gentiles, and suffered poverty, because they did not have more than the alms given to them by the [Portuguese] carracks that came here, which were one or two at that time.[50] And in this poverty, Our Lord granted them much mercy, [61]

45 Francisco Cabral to Antonio de Quadros, Nagasaki, 23 September 1572, in Real Academia de la Historia (hereafter cited as RAH), *Cortes* 9/2663, 90r.

46 Sanga Sancho, the head of the Christian community of Iimori.

47 Miyoshi Yoshitsugu, *daimyō* of Kawachi province.

48 RAH, *Cortes* 9/2663, 94v–95r.

49 As mentioned, the earliest written reference to this fact appears to be by Valignano in 1583. Even in the event that Xavier's change of garments might have been known in the form of oral history, as it did not fit the image sketched by Cabral of the founder of the mission living in poverty, it would have made little sense to include it.

50 Cabral would refer to the profits of the trade with Macau as "the alms of the carracks" even when speaking about his own tenure as superior, without showing much concern on the topic, probably in the understanding that the profits were destined for augmenting the glory of God.

> and thanks to Him many were converted. […] [the other Jesuits refused to] accept [my] reasons, and trust in the virtue of obedience that ordered it; and in the path that Christ taught, of humility and poverty; and [to believe] that he who had the hearts of men in his hands would change them and propitiate them, if only we would conform to the rule that he taught and we profess; and to consider the thousands of Christians converted by the Apostles and other saints, without wearing silks, but instead torn [clothes] and in indigent poverty.[51]

According to Cabral, therefore, wearing silk represented a break with tradition that could not be easily justified especially once he recruited to his side influential Japanese to serve as witnesses to his opinions. He believed instead that it would be the respect of holy poverty, in imitation of Francis Xavier and of Christ, that would assure missionary success and the long-awaited conversion of the country. [62]

As he himself informed the General, Cabral's expectations were realized in 1571. During a meeting with the Shōgun, Ashikaga Yoshiaki (1537–1597), the Jesuits presented themselves dressed in black cassocks. Initially, as described in a letter by Cabral, their new clothes were not considered fit to be admitted into the palace. However, in the end the Shōgun was very respectful since, in Cabral's words, "the virtue of holy obedience and the poverty of Christ were more powerful," than any "secular silk."[52] Cabral also recounted the following scene: asked by the Shōgun why he had changed his shaved head and silk clothes, Luís Fróis replied that that had been an initial strategy to avoid shocking the Japanese in the manner of "a hunter dressed in green to catch his prey." The Shōgun commented that it was more probable that since their superior was present the missionaries did not dare to dress differently from him.[53] This remark shows a less friendly aspect of the conversation.[54] Still, the visit was presented as the pinnacle of Cabral's strategy, who attributed its favourable outcome to the "great honour Our Lord wanted to bestow upon our new poor clothing, to show that it is only He who can move the hearts, not the silk."[55] Cabral here reiterated an idea that he often expounded, namely that human means could only support divine intervention, not substitute it. [63]

During the same trip, Cabral visited Oda Nobunaga who at the time held the capital. The *daimyō* was a somewhat peculiar and volatile character whose disregard for the rules of etiquette saw him ban all silk from his court. He himself preferred to wear a tiger skin tied around the waist—which was used as a carpet when he sat (Fróis 1976, 2:244). Cabral attributed Nobunaga's silk ban to the latter's fear that if his generals and soldiers wore clothing that was too fine they would become effeminate.[56] While he did not comment on the matter, [64]

51 Francisco Cabral to the General, Nagasaki, 5 September 1571 (Schütte 1958, 1, Teil 2:465–66).

52 RAH, *Cortes* 9/2663, 95v. It is possible that the gifts the Jesuits brought also helped them gain access to the Shōgun: ten quires of paper, a golden fan, an oxtail, a cloth of damask, and a small trinket made of gold. While the worth of the presents is due to the rank of the host and to the fact that it was Cabral's first visit, it is interesting to note that with time the Jesuits would greatly reduce the quantity and quality of their gifts, under the orders of Cabral himself.

53 The Shōgun also showed interest in the features of the new garments of the missionaries: he had Luís Fróis remove his cloak to better see his cassock and studied its buttons attentively. The scene is strongly reminiscent of a late seventeenth-century Shōgun, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, asking VOC merchants to take off and put back on their outerwear to show him the use of the buttons (Carlotto 2013, 11–12).

54 The words are censored in the copy of the College of Alcalá de Henares conserved in the RAH, that was likely read for edifying purposes during meals.

55 RAH, *Cortes* 9/2663, 97r.

56 *Ibid.*, 99r. Cabral does not mention that, to honour him during his visit, Nobunaga ordered his attendants to dress with their best garments (Fróis 1976, 2:360–61).

the simple fact that Cabral mentioned it suggests that he saw some sort of connection with the problems he himself was facing. If Nobunaga kept his generals distant from the negative influence of silk, it is understood by reading between the lines that Cabral could not be wrong in doing the same thing regarding his Jesuits. In this picture, the powerful warlord served as another witness to Cabral's reform; he also provided evidence for the idea that not all Japanese people of status approved of silk.

[65] Regardless of how many achievements Cabral listed in his letters, including a steep rate of growth in the number of Christians in the country, in the end he believed that silk was the undoing of the mission. In his reading of events, the senses were the origin of that dangerous temptation. Fine cloth had softened the souls of the missionaries, and this had made them capitulate to sin: "[the use of silk garments and bedclothes] required, for conformity, [also] abundant food, a couple of servants, little work and prayer, etc. […] In Japan a priest resembled more a lord, than a Jesuit of the Society." Thus, according to Cabral, silk had opened the way for lust to pollute the mission through exaggerated love of clothes, of eating, and laziness. In time, this suggestion of the senses had become a desire for power. The refusal to respect holy obedience demonstrated that it had then developed into the worst of sins, pride.[57] The Jesuits were breaking their three solemn vows by ignoring the basis of *contemptus mundi*.[58] Their bodies, lacking the required restraint provided by honest garments, became evidence that they had left "the right and true path" (Arthur 1999, 1).

[66] In Cabral's understanding, the missionaries' desire for the greater glory of God, which was the reason adduced by the Jesuits to wear these garments, was only a pretext (or, better, a cloak), with which the devil hid the terrible consequences of the use of silk.[59] This manner of operating by the enemy of Christianity was detailed by the Fourth Rule of the Second Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* (*Exx*. 332): "[the evil angel] brings good and holy thoughts attractive to such an upright person and then strives little by little to get his own way, by enticing the soul over to his own hidden deceits and evil intentions." Cabral hoped to implement the solution prescribed in *Exx*. 334: "examine immediately the whole train of the good thoughts which the evil spirit brought to the soul […] and finally brought it to his evil intention." Reasoning such as this was arguably behind his first deed as superior of the Japanese mission as he led all missionaries in doing the Exercises.

[67] Still, Cabral had already shown his favour towards liturgical splendour in India (Schütte 1980, 1:191). A curious incident indirectly points to how he maintained such an attitude in Japan, too. In 1574, in the fortress of Takatsuki, after the baptism of a number of noblemen, an old convert approached Cabral to ask to be baptised again. When rebuked that he should know that baptism was received only once, the old man replied:

> [68] Now that I see this altar, so ornate, this cope you are wearing, and these items for the baptism that are so lustrous and rich, I was envious of these gentlemen and I wondered if, because of the poverty in which the Father [at the time] found himself, lacking all these things, I was baptised or not; but now that you calmed

57 In addition to the explicit refusal to obey the ban of silks, Cabral identifies another cause of disobedience in the officially sanctioned luxuries and honours, such as the provision that two boys were to escort each Jesuit when he visited Christians. Since there were often not enough boys for this task, the missionaries had a justified reason to refuse going on mission endeavours when sent by their superiors (Francisco Cabral to the General, Macao, 20 November 1583, in ARSI, *Jap.Sin.* 9, II, 187v).

58 On the evolution of the doctrines on process that leads to sin, to arrive at *contemptus mundi* and a possible link to the three traditional vows of religious life, see Howard (1966, 43–70). Arguably, the fourth vow (obedience to the Pope regarding missions) was compromised together with obedience.

59 Cabral to Francisco de Borja, September 10, 1573, in ARSI, *Jap.Sin.* 7, I, 166Av.

> my fears, I am very thankful to God Our Lord to have let me live long enough to see these solemnities (Fróis 1976, 2:415).

While this instance is arguably retold to highlight again the fundamental importance of ceremonial beauty for the Japanese,[60] Cabral is here represented as rebuking the old convert and curbing his apparent inclination of overestimating the importance of luxury. At the same time, this incident confirms that Cabral officiated at least some important rituals with a certain pomp—with rich liturgical garments to match. It is likely that this aspect of the public face of Jesuit activity is what led the Japanese to stereotype them as extremely rich.[61] [69]

Cleanliness as a Solution

The second Jesuit Visitor to Asia, Alessandro Valignano, reached Japan in 1579. Born to a distinguished family of Chieti (Italy), Valignano had studied law in Padua and entered the Society of Jesus in 1566. In Rome he studied Philosophy and Theology and held the post of master of novices, later becoming rector of the college in Macerata. While still relatively young, in 1573 he was chosen for the role of Visitor by General Everard Mercurian and left for India the following year. He arrived in Japan six years later only to find the mission there in an unsatisfying state (Moran 1993, 20–23). Cabral too never felt that his missionary policy was successful; and in time, defeated by practical problems and his own spiritual aridity (or "thinness," as he put it), he came to believe that the enterprise was doomed (Zampol D'Ortia 2017, 281–86). However, among the causes of the mission's setbacks, Valignano identified Cabral's refusal to adapt to Japanese culture. This had estranged not only the Japanese workers of the mission, but the powerful converts among the *daimyō*, too, as they felt offended by the Jesuits' refusal to abide by Japanese etiquette (Schütte 1980, 1:251–60; Valignano 1954, 235–40). [70]

Valignano took the matter into his own hands by completely reorganizing the missionary policy for Japan. He promoted an approach of generalized accommodation towards Japanese culture according to which the missionaries learnt the etiquette of the country, adapted their daily life to that of the Japanese, opened colleges for European Jesuits to learn the language, and accepted Japanese novices in their novitiates and, later, in the Society of Jesus. These points were discussed in a number of consultations held between 1580 and 1581 that highlighted the many problems of the mission and suggested solutions (Schütte 1980, 1:369). Given liberty by Mercurian to decide if the silk trade with Macao was necessary, recognised as essential if regrettable by all missionaries, Valignano chose to continue the practice (Valignano 1954, 42*–50*). A similar consensus was recorded during the First General Consultation in regard to Question 19 ("On the garments we must use"): [71]

> The second point, on which everybody agreed, was that our dress should be all black and without silk […] The third point, and everybody concurred again, was [72]

60 The same event, described by Fróis in a letter dated 9 September 1577 (*Cartas* 1598, 1:392v), has Cabral wearing a surplice, and possibly a stole, instead. This printed version of the letter downplays the luxury described by the old man and highlights instead the solemnity of the rite, probably following the custom of giving priority to the edification of the readers.

61 This was a common Japanese perception, as will be seen below. To avoid the same problem in China, Matteo Ricci was ordered to limit the use of rich liturgical objects and substituted his silver chalice for one in lead and tin alloy, see Matteo Ricci to the Visitor, Alessandro Valignano, Shaozhou, 9 September 1589 (Ricci 2001, 146).

> that the ordinary and common garment should be the cassock and the dobuko with a raised collar in the manner of cloaks, with a round cap and tabi,[62] for this is commonly our habit and is accepted in Japan.[63] (Valignano 1954, 247)

[73] It appears, therefore, that at the beginning of the 1580s the missionaries unanimously supported the banning of silk in regard to their garments. Although he did endorse a policy of accommodation towards Japanese culture, it would have been difficult for Valignano to support a return to silk clothes even if he had wanted it.[64] He therefore approved of those clothes as described by the Consultation; this ensured that the Jesuit dress in Japan remained the black cassock.[65]

[74] Still, Valignano managed to delineate rules that would result in a different manner of control over the dress, and, by extension, the bodies of the missionaries. His approach is reflected in the way in which he presented the figure of the founder of the mission, Francis Xavier, which differed from that of Cabral. Valignano summarized in this way Xavier's breakthrough in Yamaguchi, framing the change of garments with skilful attention towards the potential problematic association of a religious man with luxury:

> [75] [Xavier] had discovered through experience that presenting himself so badly dressed and worn out, and behaving with such contempt of himself, not only did not help, but even hindered what he aimed to do in Japan for the glory of God. This because the Japanese were so inclined to many ceremonies and visible pomp, that they did not know modesty, nor similar mortifications. He thus decided to dress and behave in a different way in the future, demonstrating in this that he truly despised himself, and that with his actions he only desired the glory of God, for which he made use, at the appropriate times, of honours and scorn [alike]. And in this way, dressed better and accompanied by two or three servants, they returned immediately to Yamaguchi, with the letters of the Viceroy and the Bishop and the gifts […] The King, seeing the Fathers visit in another dress, with so many gifts so novel and worthy, showed his happiness with the presents, expressing to his councillors that the Fathers were men of higher regard than what they had believed until then, and treated them with more respect than before. (Valignano 1944, 176)

[76] The change from the depiction of Xavier made by Cabral, while not extreme, is certainly evident. While Xavier's clothing is referenced, not one detail of it is made explicit, not even the type of fabric. Instead, the attention is placed mostly on his behaviour and his gifts. This

62 A *tabi* is "a sock with a separate section for the big toe" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2014), that the Jesuits wore with *shikirei* (sandals).

63 See the group of Jesuits depicted in the *nanban* screen of the Kobe City Museum, in the lower right corner (https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/namban-screens-right-hand-screen-kan%C3%B4-naizen/CAEfKzD1vqAV8A, accessed April 19, 2020). The Jesuits seem to be wearing the dress of important occasions (black *dobuko* or cloaks over their cassocks, round cap, and slippers instead of *shikirei*), while some possibly hold a stole. The light-coloured clothes might indicate *dōjuku*, who wore light blue garments and black garments.

64 In addition to this factor, and the necessity to avoid scandal among the Portuguese merchants, Valignano's regulations were to be submitted to Rome, and often General Claudio Acquaviva asked for additional restrictions or clarifications that had significant impact (Valignano 1946, 37–55). As a result of these exchanges, for example, the use of fans was forbidden among the missionaries (Valignano 1946, 75n2).

65 He also specified that gowns and *kimono* could be used interchangeably as long as the latter had long sleeves and the correct neck (Valignano 1954, 248).

depiction of Xavier came close to the image that Valignano had for the Jesuits and their evangelization policy in Japan; it also served as a support to Valignano's reforms, centred as they were on etiquette.

[77] The strategy implemented by Valignano is delineated in a substantial corpus of rules for the mission. The *Sumario de las cosas de Japón* (1583) contained a general outline of the courtesies that needed to be followed by the missionaries to avoid offending the people among whom they worked.[66] Among them, the disgust that the European diet provoked in the Japanese came through: not only did Buddhist monks not eat meat or fish, Jesuit houses were dirty with live animals and grease from the meat. Therefore, the Japanese apparently held the opinion that the Jesuits were "dirty, lowly, and vile," which reflected negatively on the Christian religious message (Valignano 1954, 243). To correct this problem, Valignano ordered his fellow Jesuits to adapt to Japanese food and table manners, banning Western high tables and meat (1954, 243). Dietary restrictions commonly coincide with modesty of dress, for both have as their aim the control of the body and soul (Arthur 1999, 1; Campbell 2017, 138). Still, meat remained a common staple of the diet in those Jesuit colleges of Asia that could afford it (Osswald 2011, 505).[67] Valignano also instructed the Jesuits to keep their houses and garments clean at all times:

> [78] The first [guideline] is to live with cleanness,[68] acting cleanly, in [the Jesuits'] houses, in its furniture, in eating, in their garments and in the clothes of the people of the house, and in all the house's utensils, following in everything the cleanness and the neat manner used in Japan. This is so necessary that nobody tolerates its lack […] it is offensive to [the Japanese who come to visit] not to present the house very clean and ordered in their manner, and not to receive them with clean and fresh clothes […] Since they love cleanness very much, and the monks especially take great pains with it, it is not possible to ignore it. And for this reason, at the beginning, [the missionaries] dressed in silk to gain some acceptance among the Japanese, but later abandoned it, and now they wear a cassock and a cloak (or dobuko), which is a kind of long robe with sleeves, as it is used in Japan, all black, without any silk, although it must be clean and fresh. (Valignano 1954, 230–32)

[79] Together with the directive to model the manners of behaviour on Buddhist monks, the text also reiterated the reasoning that, while the possible humiliation of the missionaries by the Japanese was not a preoccupation in itself, it would mean a loss of prestige for the mission and with it their message. Valignano took advantage of the greater leeway granted to Christians regarding cleanliness (of bodies, garments, and buildings) over the rules surrounding expenditure for cloth and decorations.[69] In this manner, according to Valignano, being clean

66 Valignano explained it thus: "If everywhere it is necessary to make converts and be esteemed, to be able to accommodate to the manner of life of the land, so it is much more so in Japan, where it is not possible to live at all without respecting their rules. Because without respecting them we either humiliate and insult them, which they cannot suffer; or it is [the Jesuits] who are offended and downcast which results in the offence and reduction of our Christian religion, and in the loss of credit of our [religious] Law and of the converts. And for these reasons the [missionaries] need necessarily to adhere, in their lifestyle, to these guidelines" (Valignano 1954, 230).

67 As seen above, the serving of "abundant food" had been one of the criticisms that Cabral moved against the Japanese mission, together with silk garments and servants.

68 *Limpieza* also holds the meaning of "honesty" of the spiritual kind. As Valignano is discussing objects and dwellings, though, he is likely talking of the external appearance of the Jesuits and the monks rather than their spiritual and moral standing.

69 For instance, washing one's body was not considered negative (Archibald 2012; Wogan-Browne 1994, 29). Still, Valignano's allowance for washing every fifteen or eight days (in winter and summer respectively)

in one's daily life achieved the same objective that the use of silk garments had previously; it made the Jesuits socially acceptable in Japanese eyes. What is more, it represented a far more workable option.[70]

[80] Efforts to create equipollence between Catholic missionaries and Buddhist monks are found in another of Valignano's rulebooks, the *Advertimentos e Avisos acerca dos costumes e catangues de Jappão (1581)*. This text established the correspondence of rank between the abbots (*chōrō*) of the Zen Gozan temple system and the Catholic priests for purposes of etiquette:

> [81] Initially, one has to know that, among both monks and laity, there are different degrees of status and dignities […] For this reason, for the Fathers and Brothers to know how they have to behave, a first step is necessary: to determine and know well which is their dignity and at which level it corresponds with the dignities and honours of the monks, so that they can deal with them and the Japanese lords. Due to this, it seems that it is convenient, for the Fathers and Brothers, who are the monks of the Christian religion, to be at least at the rank of the monks of the Zen sect, which among all is considered principal, and has the most communication with all kinds of people in Japan. Among them, the principal heads are called Tōdō or Chōrō, which is the same thing; and even if they are many, among them there are the Chōrō of the five temples of Gozan, which are in Miyako, and among these five, there is one more important and who is like the head of all, called Nanzenji no Incho. So all the Fathers will be the same rank of the Chōrō, and those who are Universal Superiors will be the rank of the five Chōrō of Gozan, and the Superior of Japan will be the rank of Nanzenji no Inchō. (Valignano 1946, 123–26)

[82] Although this explicit standardizing of the ranks of monks and Jesuits worried Cabral, who from his new post in Macao feared the re-introduction of the use of large retinues, litters, and silk clothes among missionaries,[71] these elements of the dignity of *chōrō* were not permitted to the missionaries (or limited to special occasions). The Visitor's regulations were very explicit that no Jesuit was to wear silk (Valignano 1954, 232–33). Moreover, while creating an equivalence between a monk and a missionary was convenient when delineating the rules of etiquette regarding the latter, Valignano insisted that "there is no comparison between the monks […] and us regarding the truthfulness of the Law and interior virtue" (Valignano 1954, 246).

[83] The matter of garments came under scrutiny once more during Valignano's second visitation to Japan in a manner that is worthy of attention. The acts of the Second General Consultation (1590) discussed, for example, the matter of the cloth of Portugal (*pano de Portugal*). This material, while cheap in Europe, acquired greater value in Asia and was "deemed precious in Japan." Some young missionaries with rich families had cassocks made of this material; older or poor Jesuits wore cassocks of *canga*, a simple Chinese cloth made of heavy cotton, such as canvas. Inexpensive in Europe, the cloth of Portugal was not subjected to any restrictions under the regulations of the Society. However, in Japan "it was possible to reasonably say that it [was] precious and not convenient to our profession and to the order of our *Constitutions*."

was much less than the Japanese common daily use of the bath (Valignano 1954, 231n8). Additional preoccupations, such as the concern for decency, were cause for the complete ban on swimming in India (Osswald 2011, 508).

70 In 1592, however, he was worrying about the great costs of maintaining the Jesuit houses in line with Japanese standards (Valignano 1954, 462–63).

71 Francisco Cabral to the General, Macao, 20 November 1583, in ARSI, Jap.Sin. 9, II, 186r–188v.

Additionally, its use highlighted differences among the missionaries in a way that was not acceptable (Valignano 1954, 621–22). The decision of the Consultation to ban a cloth that had been considered "honest" in Europe shows how the concept of *honestus* could, and would, be adapted into the Asian context.

Polemical Representations of Garments

The distance that the Jesuits strove to create between themselves and the monks, while at the same time imitating their hierarchical structures and their countenance, becomes evident in Luís Fróis's *"Tratado em que se contem muito susinta e abreviadamente algumas contradisões e diferenças de custumes antre a gente de Europa e esta provincia de Japaõ"* (1585; henceforth: *Treatise*).[72] Many of the couplets of this text deal with garments, highlighting again their importance during intercultural encounters: the first chapter is titled "Concerning men, their persons, and their clothing" and the second "Women, their persons and customs." [84]

The *Treatise* does not linger on many details or explanations regarding Japanese culture since it was as a small reference book for new missionaries. It presents its information on everyday life as matter of fact, and mostly avoids judgements or commentary (Fróis 2014, 18). An example from the chapter on men is: "In Europe it would be considered effeminate for a man to carry and use a fan; in Japan a man always carries a fan in his belt and he would otherwise be considered base and wretched" (Fróis 2014, 51). [85]

The relatively balanced presentation of Japanese culture ends abruptly with the chapter on Buddhist monks. This section presents a very idealised picture of the religious people of Europe, and a very negative picture of those in Japanese. In Fróis's couplets, it is suggested that the moral deficiency of the Buddhist monks is made evident by their garments: "Among us, religious do not wear silk clothing out of contempt for the world; all the bonzes who can, wear silk to better display their pride and vanity before the world" (Fróis 2014, 95). In the text, wearing silk was the concrete antithesis of the Christian precepts of *contemptus mundi.* It represents a window through which the worldly sins of arrogance and vainglory could be "seen" in the wearer (the monks). [86]

The *Treatise* provides more specific examples of these sins. The monks in the text do not shy from using liturgical garments to obtain worldly benefits. "Our priests wear a stole to administer the sacraments;" writes Fróis, displaying a somewhat selective memory. "The bonzes wear one as a refinement when they go out to make their visits" (Fróis 2014, 104). When the practices of Catholicism and Buddhism regarding the sanctity of clothes and their efficacy in the afterlife are too similar to find any substantial difference to call attention to, Fróis accuses the monks of being interested only in their own profit: [87]

> The Franciscan friars bestow their order's habit on some deceased [non-members] at no charge; the bonzes compel men and women, while they are living, to acquire some light paper garments [catabiras] with the Lotus Sutra [Hokkekyō] written on them, so that they can be worn when they die, in order for the bonzes to thereby profit. (Fróis 2014, 106) [88]

Fróis illustrates the link between the concept of "honesty" and the clothed body of the [89]

72 "Treatise containing in very succinct and abbreviated form some contrasts and differences in the customs of the people of Europe and this province of Japan." All translations of the *Treatise* are taken from Fróis (2014).

religious as well:

> Our religious place great value on decency [*honestidade*] and setting a good example; the bonzes always walk around with their legs exposed, and during the summer they wear robes that are so thin that they show everything, which they do not find the least bit embarrassing or shameful.[73] (Fróis 2014, 100) [90]

According to the Jesuits, the evil nature of the Buddhist monks could not be masked; in the same way, in the *Treatise* the monks' body parts that the Europeans regarded as shameful would not be hidden by their clothing. Whenever the monks were successful in presenting a façade of decency and beauty, it was considered a thin disguise of their true character. This interior ugliness was made a foil to the interior honesty of the Jesuits, which was considered more important: "Our religious focus their principal efforts on interior purity and cleanliness; the bonzes keep their dwellings, gardens and temples extremely clean, but keep their souls abominable."[74] Given this formulation, it follows that in the Jesuits' understanding, by imitating Japanese cleanness the missionaries were finding an external expression of their own real, inner cleanness, not just expressing a preoccupation with external and impermanent beauty, like the monks were. [91]

Although less systematically than in Fróis' *Treatise*, clothing appears in Japanese polemical descriptions of Jesuit missionaries, too. After the ban of Christianity and the final expulsion of the Jesuits from the country by the shogunate, there emerged a substantial genre of popular anti-Christian literature that, while not directly supported by the shogunate, furthered its propaganda with exotic narratives of "blood, brocade, and gold" (Elison 1988, 213).[75] Not much remains of Jesuit visual clues in these *Kirishitan Monogatari* of the mid-seventeenth century. The missionaries (*bateren*) are depicted as monstrous creatures, similar to *tengu*, incredibly tall and with long noses (Elison 1988, 321). The first of them to land, Urugan (a name fashioned after Italian Jesuit Organtino Gnecchi-Soldo), is described as "dressed in a garment called *habito*, which looked somewhat like a piece of felt carpet; it was mouse-grey in color, with long sleeves and the skirts slit. Wearing this garment he looked for all the world like a bat spreading his wings" (Elison 1988, 325). The name and description of the clothes suggests more a Franciscan habit than a Jesuit cassock. [92]

Two elements define the characters of the *bateren* in these texts, and in so doing come to define Christianity as well: their use of magic and their riches. Urugan, in his poor and ugly dress, brought rich presents to Oda Nobunaga: "ten muskets, far-seeing and near-seeing spectacles, […] some thirty yards of *oragoutang* [red woolen cloth]" (Elison 1988, 327).[76] His assistant, Fabian, carried out debates dressed in magnificent garments; his defeat came at the hands of a Buddhist hermit, in pious hempen clothing (Elison 1988, 215, 341). The ample funds of the *bateren* are said to come from the King of South Barbary, ostensibly because he pitied the Japanese, who did not know Deus, but with the actual objective of conquering the country (Elison 1988, 337, 355). Special amulets with small images of Deus and one in the form of a cross are given to their followers. The splendour of the *Kirishitan* temple is dazzling, with many icons. A Room of Mystery contains "an image of Deus, fashioned in the [93]

73 See also number 37, which condemns them for the use yellow, an "indecent colour" (Fróis 2014, 107).

74 It is rather probable that Fróis, by calling the monks' souls "abominable," is referring to the accusations of sodomy that the Jesuits often held against them (Fróis 2014, 98).

75 All translations of the *Kirishitan Monogatari* are taken from Elison (1988).

76 See the depiction of the rich gifts (but not the bat-like dress) in the *Kirishitan Taiji Monogatari* (Main Library, Kyoto University): https://rmda.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/item/rb00012882.

most gruesome manner, hanging upon a cross. This appears to be a device to extract tears of emotion from their sectarians, by showing off this figure of agony and mortification" (Elison 1988, 329).

[94] These *monogatari*, while polemic in nature, present information that gives insight into how the Japanese saw the missionaries. They confirm what the Jesuits had already realized, that the popular perception was that the mission was extremely rich: "Not only are we not known as poor among the Japanese, both gentile and Christian alike; but we are considered to be very rich, and cannot afford to put an end to this impression" (Valignano 1954, 461).[77] The Christian use of rich liturgical and devotional items and images, especially those gifted to eminent Japanese converts, had certainly not escaped the attention of the Japanese. By the same token, they had not failed to notice the expectations of the Jesuits with regard to the ability of such items to produce emotional reactions in the faithful.

Conclusions

[95] This article has analysed the nonverbal communication that the Jesuit missionaries engaged in through the use of dress in Japan. Their experimentations and the considerations they made about clothing were interrupted by the 1587 ban on evangelization. Eventually, the expulsion of the missionaries from Japan in 1614 put an end to most of the visible signs of Christian presence. Most Jesuits left the country and those who remained went underground with their communities of converts. Just as they had to abandon and destroy their devotional objects in Nagasaki (Hesselink 2016, 156–61), the Jesuits left behind their cassocks as well. In 1618, a missionary in Nagasaki informed Rome that

> [96] the common dress that we now use here is what is considered most accommodating to help Christians in such troublesome times. Some of the European Fathers go about the city [dressed] like the Portuguese who come with the carrack from China and many others, who live here and are married, but do not carry swords. Some of the same Fathers, all the Japanese Fathers from here and other places, and I wear the dress of the Japanese shaved [monks]. This is: shaved head and beard, and some clothes down to the knee, proper (honestos) ones. Some Fathers too, in other kingdoms, dress like the secular Japanese, with their sword, and sometimes even a sabre, at the belt, according to the use in the land.[78]

[97] As the presence of the Society of Jesus in Japan came to an end and the support of the Portuguese trade waned, the persecuted missionaries again sought refuge in the safety that Japanese garments purportedly granted, both "proper" garments of monks and less so those of secular Japanese. Already in the 1590s, Rome had granted exceptions to the use of the black cassock during persecutions (Valignano 1946, 76n2).

[98] Since the arrival of Francis Xavier, the Jesuit mission of Japan had been engaged in finding the most successful way to communicate their religious message to the Japanese. Dress represented an important element of the nonverbal aspect of this dialogue since it conveyed

77 Valignano had established an expensive policy of gift-giving that peaked with the 1591 embassy to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, organized with the aim to lift his ban on Christianity, and cost approximately six thousand *ducados* (Massarella 2005, 347–49; Hesselink 2016, 88–89). Their links with the trade of exotic and expensive wares and foods also made them appear wealthy, as seen in the polemical descriptions in the seventeenth-century biography of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the *Taikōki* (Valignano 1954, 55*).

78 Matteo Couros to the General, Nagasaki, 25 February 1618 (in Schütte 1975, 773).

important information about the wearer and his social status; and, as the missionaries soon realized, correctly manipulated it could help obtain the desired reactions in the interlocutor. Although the initial economic hardships of the mission restricted the type of clothing that could be used, the similarities perceived between Christian priests and Buddhist monks facilitated the imitation of the latter's garments among the Jesuits.

[99] Gaspar Vilela and Francisco Cabral represent two different understandings of beauty and luxury, but also of the relation between human and divine means in the success of missionary endeavours. For Vilela, manipulating his dress to make a statement of prestige was a way to obtain access to people of rank and to further the evangelizing project of the mission. Cabral, in contrast, believed that clothing should be used to foster closeness with holiness, and that only God's favour, obtained through the respect of the vows of the missionaries, would grant the conversion of the whole country of Japan. Notably, each party provided witnesses that declared each approach compatible with Japanese customs.

[100] Following a different approach, Alessandro Valignano preferred to adopt a regime of control of the religious body in a manner intelligible to both Europeans and Japanese. He ordered the use of garments that, according to European perceptions, were proper for a religious practitioner, avoiding silk, bright colours, and revealing clothes. The experience gained by the missionaries regarding garments, as expounded during the consultations, was likely a critical factor in this decision. At the same time, Valignano's strategy held as essential the mission's cultural context. This meant adopting the same attitudes that the Japanese held towards the religious body. He implemented not only Japanese standards of cleanness and tidiness for the garments; he restrained the missionaries' movements and emotional expressions as well, which are elements of the kinetic interaction of dress.

[101] The Jesuit missionaries whose work has been analysed in this article appear aware of the importance of the role of dress in nonverbal communication. At the same time, not all of them granted it a particularly important function in the intercultural contacts of the mission. Vilela's mission of Miyako displayed an innovative approach to dress combining whatever was available to create a suitable appearance. Cabral, too, in his effort to have the mission return to the black cassock, displayed an understanding of dress by not dismissing the problem outright but going instead to some lengths to interview Japanese Christians on the matter. In Cabral's case, however, the spiritual role he attributed to clothing in the end prevailed over their human, communicative aspect. Valignano, acute observer and organizer, focused on those elements of dress that went beyond the materiality of the garments. Together with other aspects of the daily life of the Jesuits, these elements were regulated to communicate the missionaries' honesty and respectability to their Japanese interlocutors.

[102] This research shows not only that dress is a direct and immediate form of nonverbal communication, but that it is an unavoidable one as well. Dress appears to always be in the act of communicating something to both the wearers and their interlocutors. The debates internal to the Japanese mission highlight the Jesuit efforts to regain control of the messages conveyed by their own dress, whose meaning became altered when it was translated into the Japanese context. The analysis of such Jesuit strategies displays the range of potentiality held by dress in creating and transmitting meaning. The materiality of dress is just one element of this process, as its group association, kinetic interaction, and other characteristics contribute to the creation of meaning as well. The study of intercultural encounters can contribute significantly to bringing the various elements that compose creation and conveyance of meaning by dress to the fore, making explicit its inner workings, and analysing its geographical and temporal

variations. In turn, the study of dress can significantly enhance the understanding of intercultural encounters by contributing to the analysis of nonverbal manners of communication, translation, and miscommunication.

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Sensation and Metaphor in Ritual Performance

The Example of Sacred Texts

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ABSTRACT Rituals obviously utilize the human senses. Theological and mystical interpretations frequently comment on sensation as a source of metaphors for religious experience. However, the discourse used in religious rituals themselves usually avoids using the normal vocabulary appropriate to particular sensations, while focusing on ritual performance instead. This raises the question of whether it is generally the case that ritualizing sensation diverts attention from sensation to ritual behavior, and whether ritual interpretations usually divert attention from the sensation to its metaphorical meaning. This essay addresses these questions with the analytical tools of metaphor theory and ritual theory. To test and apply these theories, it focuses on one kind of ritual practices, those that involve written texts, especially books of scripture, and how they use the senses of sight, hearing, and touch.

KEYWORDS ritual, metaphor, senses, sensation, books

Introduction

Augustine, in his *Confessions*, wrote about his conversion to Christianity this way: [1]

> These were my words, and in grief of heart I wept bitterly. And look!—from the house next door I hear a voice—I don't know whether it is a boy or a girl—singing some words over and over: "Pick it up and read it, pick it up and read it!" ["tolle lege, tolle lege."] Immediately my expression transformed. I started to ask myself eagerly whether it was common for children to chant such words when they were playing a game of some kind. I could not recall ever having heard anything quite like it. I checked the flow of my tears and got up. I understood it as nothing short of divine providence that I was being ordered to open the book and read the first passage I came across…In great excitement I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting, for when I stood up I had put down a volume of the apostle there. I snatched it up, opened it, and read silently the first chapter that my eyes lit [2]

> upon: "Not in partying and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and shamelessness, not in fighting and jealousy, but clothe yourself in the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh concerning its physical desires [Romans 13:13–14]." I neither wanted nor needed to read further. Immediately, the end of the sentence was like a light of sanctuary poured into my heart; every shadow of doubt melted away (Augustine 2014, Book Eight, Chapter 12, paragraph 29, 409–10).

This famous passage describes an immaculate conversion. I call it 'immaculate' because it is, by Augustine's account, unmediated by any human testimony or evangelist. His conversion is mediated only by the miraculous intervention of overheard voices and the apostle's written text. Augustine interprets the children's yells as a divine command to read the text, and the sacred text acts on him independently of any human intervention or direction. [3]

Augustine's description lingers over the children's voices, but gives no details at all about the written text. Is it a scroll or a codex? Is it in Latin or Greek? Is it only Romans or a collection of all of Paul's letters? *The Confessions* gives us no hint. Augustine's actions—to randomly open and read a sacred text as a divine message intended immediately for himself—is a well-known and widely practiced ritual of divination: *sortes Biblicae* or, in current Christian slang, "bible dipping" (Malley 2013, 332).[1] But Augustine provides no description of what he saw with his eyes or felt with his fingers, as if the text communicated its message unmediated by any sensation whatsoever. [4]

That is typically how people describe messages they find in books. It is also typical of how they describe participating in a wider variety of rituals. Rituals obviously utilize the human senses, either by engaging them with art, music, and incense, for example, or by depriving them, such as in silent meditation. Mystical interpretations frequently comment on sensation as a source of metaphors for religious experience. However, the discourse around the practice of religious rituals usually avoids using the normal vocabulary appropriate to a particular sensation. For example, the rich vocabulary for describing the taste of wine does not seem appropriate for describing the wine of Christian ritual. After receiving Communion, it would sound strange to comment on the wine's quality and 'bouquet.' [5]

Rituals use sensations, but rarely focus participants' attention on the sensation itself. Rituals focus on the actions or behaviors that produce the sensation, and so redirect attention from the experience of sensation to the experience of ritual action instead. Ritualizing sensation seems to *divert* attention from sensations to ritual actions and their metaphorical meanings. [6]

There is, therefore, a three-way divergence between (1) the sensations promoted by rituals, (2) ritual discourse that focuses on ritual actions rather than sensation, and (3) second-order metaphorical rhetoric about ritual effects. Ritualizing sensation diverts attention from the sensation to focus attention on key ideas and the participants' acceptance of those ideas and the ritual's significance for their relationships to each other. When it comes to interpreting rituals, sensation gets replaced by metaphors for sensation. [7]

In what follows, I defend these claims by discussing theories of ritualization and of metaphor and how they apply to one kind of ritual action. I begin by reviewing contemporary ritual theories. But ritual theory has not consistently engaged the relationship between sensation and metaphor. So I review theories of metaphorical meaning and place them in dialogue with ritual theories of performance. Then I test both sets of theories against a particular kind of [8]

1 As Malley pointed out, such divination was commonly practiced in classical Antiquity with the works of Homer or Virgil. See also Van der Horst (1998); Parmenter (2013, 85). For similar practices among Sikhs, see Myrvold (2013, 273–74).

ritualized action. This essay focuses on the kind of ritual practice at work in Augustine's account of his own conversion, namely, rituals using written texts, especially books of scripture. Rituals with iconic books have been the subject of much of my own research. I will discuss how ritualizing scriptures engages people's senses of sight, hearing and touch in ways that divert attention from aesthetic appreciation of these senses. I suggest that the tendency to use metaphors in ritualizing texts also appears in many other kinds of rituals as well.

Ritual Sensation and Performance

The subject of ritual has played an increasingly prominent role in the modern study of society, culture, and religions (for a detailed survey, see Bell 1997, 1–83). For present purposes, it is enough to review this literature for comments on metaphor and sensation in ritual performance. [9]

For many years, modern theories of ritual focused attention on the ritual's role in maintaining social order and hierarchy (e.g. Smith [1889] 1907; Durkheim 1912; Douglas 1966; Geertz 1973) and on the patterned structure of ritual activity (e.g. Freud 1907; Van Gennep 1909; Lévi-Strauss 1971). The linguistic turn of the 1960s and '70s brought serious consideration of metaphors into ritual studies. Stanley J. Tambiah (1968) normalized "magical" language by pointing out that its use of metonymy and metaphor resembled their function in everyday language. Metaphors function in ordinary ways in magical and religious rhetoric. Edmund Leach, drawing on the linguist Roman Jakobson (1956), argued that many types of behavior, including rituals, establish metonymical relationships, in which a part represents the whole, but their meaning lies in their metaphorical representation of something else entirely. Ritual, then, is one of many kinds of social behavior that generate such metaphors (Leach 1976). [10]

Ritual studies took a new and decisive turn in the 1980s, when attempts to define rituals gave way to more performative approaches to the topic, anticipated by the anthropological work of Victor Turner (1969). Ritual studies became a distinguishable academic field (Grimes 1990, 1995), and refocused academic analysis on processes of 'ritualizing' and their social effects. Catherine Bell classified ritual activities under categories that included formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism, and performance (Bell 1997, 138–69). Jonathan Z. Smith, drawing on older observations by Freud (1907) and Lévi-Strauss (1971), analyzed the essence of ritualizing as focusing people's attention by turning ordinary activities into special ones (J. Z. Smith 1987a, 193–95, 1987b, 103). Ritualizing everyday routines, such as walking into a room, eating a meal, and even breathing, turns them into meaningful practices by focusing attention on them, by formalizing them, and often by dictating how they should be done. Rituals, then, distinguish themselves from ordinary activities by drawing attention to the performance of these activities. [11]

In particular, ritualizing serves to index participants and call attention to a social or religious ideology, according to Roy Rappaport (1999, 145). By "indexing," Rapport was utilizing C. S. Peirce's ([1867] 1982) language of signs to describe the social identities and relationships created and maintained by rituals. Funerals, weddings, and graduation ceremonies, for example, index the relationship between the principal ritual actors and with the audience. But rituals may also index someone's relationship to doctrine or ideology. Taking communion in a Catholic mass may index one's acceptance of Catholic dogma—or maybe not. At this point, different interpretations of ritual significance can generate controversy. [12]

Ritualizing necessarily involves bodily sensations: the sights and sounds of walking in pro- [13]

cession, the taste of food and drink, the feel of inhalations and exhalations. Ronald Grimes described how different rituals organize the sensorium differently. He distinguished between traditions of ritual on the basis of their gestural metaphors:

> Gestures are metaphors of the body; they display the identifications one makes and therefore is.…Sitting and eating are not just activities of Buddhists and Christians; they are stylistic aspirations. Hence, they tend to modify, adverbially as it were, related actions in the same ritual system and sometimes even actions outside the system. Not only do paradigmatic gestures lead to, or reinforce, particular values, liabilities, and lifestyles, they generate corresponding thought and feeling patterns (Grimes 1995, 101–2). [14]

On the basis of these ritual theories, we might be tempted to say that ritualization calls attention to sensation. But is it really sensation on which ritualizing focuses attention, or something else associated with the sensation by metaphor? [15]

Rhetoric about rituals tends to name the rituals and evaluate them in emotional language (‘It was a beautiful wedding’; ‘the sermon was very moving’; ‘I felt so proud to see you graduate’). These evaluations focus on what the ritual does and how well it was performed, that is, on action rather than immediate sensation. That tends to be the case even in meditation exercises that call explicit attention to the sensation of breathing by focusing on inhalation and exhalation. The instructions for such exercises usually equate breathing with emotion or make analogies between the sensation of breathing and other senses. They may equate exhalation with relaxation, with releasing stress, with letting go of preoccupying thoughts, and maybe with ‘centering’ oneself. Or attention to the feeling of breathing leads to reclassifying it as “inner sight,” on analogy with another sense entirely (see, for example, Zarrilli 2015, 122). The rhetoric around breath in meditation turns the sensation of breathing into a metaphor for another sensation or an emotion. [16]

Ritual rhetoric in this way treats sensation like other kinds of media. Birgit Meyer observed that, rather than calling attention to how they use media, many contemporary rituals convey technologically mediated experience as the real experience itself: “These media rather seem to vest the mediation in which they take part with some sense of immediacy.…Practices of religious mediation appear particularly able to invoke a sense of the immediate presence of the divine” (Meyer 2011, 25–26; citing Luhmann 1997). She developed the theoretical category of “sensational forms” that “invoke sensations by inducing particular dispositions and practices towards these forms” and “which govern a sensory engagement of humans with the divine and each other” (Meyer 2009, 13). Meyer therefore stressed that sensation plays a vital role in religious experiences that seem immediate but are always culturally, materially and bodily mediated. [17]

Verbalizing the sensory experiences produced by religious rituals requires translating them into ideas and therefore regularizing them by prevailing doctrines. Those doctrines include conventional descriptions of the senses themselves, which vary from one culture to another (Howe 2015). Mystical writings do not escape this problem of how to translate sensory experience into language, and the academic study of religion has now inherited this conundrum. [18]

Ritual Sensation and Metaphor

Whereas ritual theory is a product of the interest of recent decades in performance, ritual [19]

spaces, and the bodies that perform rituals, theories of metaphor have their roots in the ancient and continuing discipline of rhetoric. Rhetoric naturally draws attention to words, so metaphors and other symbols have traditionally been treated in theories of language. Aristotle already discussed metaphors in both his lectures on *Rhetoric* and on *Poetics* (Aristotle 1954, 1404b, 1411b–1413a, 1457b), and regarded their use as reflecting education and intelligence: “It is characteristic of a well-directed mind to observe the likeness even in things very different.” He added that keen observations and witty comments “come through metaphor and from an added surprise” (Aristotle 2007, 223). Discussions of metaphor as well as metonymy remained a staple topic for ancient rhetorical theorists (see Lausberg 1998, 250–64). Similarly, Kenneth Burke, a major influence on the twentieth-century revival of rhetorical studies, defined proverbial metaphors as a “strategy for dealing with a situation” (Burke 1957, 256).

It is not quite correct, however, to locate ritual metaphors just in the verbal instructions or interpretations of ritual actions. The association between a ritual sensation and its analogy in emotion or belief may be embodied rather than verbalized. Developments in metaphor theory over the past forty years have shown that bodily experience generates the metaphors that underlie almost all thought. [20]

The theoretical discussion of metaphors has become a rich interdisciplinary discussion over the past half-century, with major contributions from anthropologists, philosophers, linguists, and cognitive psychologists. One significant strand of this enlarged discussion has challenged whether symbols, and especially metaphors, work only at the linguistic level. These theorists have suggested that, in one way or another, sensory and social experiences generate metaphors directly. There has been a gradual epistemological shift in recent decades away from theories of ritual and metaphor based on linguistic theories, such as those of Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), to theories that emphasize performance and experience, which frequently invoke the semiotic theories of C. S. Peirce instead ([1867] 1982; see Drucker 1994; Keane 2003; Engelke 2007, 29–33; Boivin 2009, 280). [21]

An early proponent of this shift was the anthropologist Victor Turner. On the basis of ethnographic fieldwork among the Ndembu of Zambia, Turner described symbols as simultaneously conveying two kinds of meaning: the “ideological pole” of conscious norms and ideals and the “sensory pole” of sensory and emotional associations. The sensory pole brings together “the grossly physical and the structurally normative, the organic and the social. . . . Norms and values, on the one hand, become saturated with emotion, while the gross and basic emotions become ennobled through contact with social values” (Turner 1967, 29–30). Turner noted that verbal explanations, both by members of the culture and by outside observers, emphasize the ideological pole of a symbol’s meaning but struggle to comprehend and express the sensory pole. Rituals may regularly evoke emotions such as joy, pain, fear, and rivalry that are plain to participants and observers, even though their verbal expressions do not take them into account (Turner 1967, 39). [22]

Other anthropologists also drew conclusions about metaphor from ethnographic research. James W. Fernandez, through his analysis of Fang culture and religion in Western Africa, distinguished rhetorical metaphors, used for persuasion, from performative metaphors that direct behavior. Thus, he concluded that “rituals are the acting out of metaphoric predication” (Fernandez 1972, 56). Similarly, Frederick Barth, on the basis of fieldwork with the Baktaman people of New Guinea, argued that rituals make use of inherent connections between forms and meanings which are not necessarily internally coherent or consistent. Barth observed that “the essence of metaphor is the use of the familiar to grasp the elusive and unrecognized, [23]

rather than the mere ordering of phenomena by homology" (Barth 1975, 199; Boivin 2009, 275–77).

[24] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, a linguist and philosopher, respectively, developed a far-reaching theory that metaphors constitute almost all human thought (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 1999). This "cognitive science" reduced the most basic forms of human reasoning and sensory analysis to underlying metaphors rooted in bodily and social experience. Lakoff and Johnson attributed these basic metaphors to the physiological structure of the brain. Neurons that customarily fire at the same time develop physical connections. They argued, therefore, that analogies generated by simultaneous experiences actually become hard-wired in human brains (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 256). This theory maintains that, though cognition is largely determined by culture, it is based in bodily metaphors generated by common experiences, such as humans' erect stance that conditions us to think of "up" and "erect" as positive and healthy (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 14–17). Most attempts in the last thirty years to theorize metaphor have taken Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive theory as a starting point (Schmitt 2014, 15–16).

[25] Other theoretical traditions have joined and reinforced this focus on embodied metaphors. Matthias Junge (2014), for example, applied to metaphor theory the dramaturgical theories of sociologist Erving Goffman (1959), who distinguished social actions that take place "on stage" from what goes on "behind the stage." This distinction between what one says and what one means emphasizes that social actions as well as statements are in fact metaphorical actions because they presuppose the difference between statement and meaning, and also their connection. Junge (2014, 277) generalized this point to assert that, from a sociological perspective, all social actions are metaphorical actions. Affect theory, developed out of a very different intellectual tradition, also joins cognitive science in emphasizing that culturally conditioned affects rise from embodied experiences, which are common not only to humans but to many animals as well (Schaefer 2015, 39, 56–57).

[26] In another development, the archeologist and anthropologist Christopher Tilley extended the reach of metaphors from human bodies to human artifacts. He suggested that speech itself is an artifact:

> [27] Cognition is essentially a process of seeing something *as* something and this is the core of metaphorical understanding. Seeing something as something is grounded in culturally mediated bodily experiences. … By taking metaphor out of language and into artefacts, we may hope to appreciate its significance in a rather different manner (Tilley 1999, 34–35).

[28] Tilley applied these insights to both ethnography and archeology.

[29] Nicole Boivin concluded from such studies as well as her own ethnographic fieldwork that material metaphors address "a non-linguistic side to understanding" (2009, 280–81). She argued that material culture and ritualization both generate metaphors that shape human thought and "enable bodily understanding." Language, of course, plays an important role in propagating metaphors, but

> [30] ritual activity and material culture are able to evoke such comparisons at a deeper and more physical level that seems to enable elusive concepts to be understood, and cosmological belief systems to be felt rather than just understood. Ritual and material culture … probably better address the somatic experiences of pain, grief, confusion, and joy (Boivin 2009, 283).

Like Lakoff and Johnson who explored the metaphorical underpinnings of science and mathematics, Tilley, Boivin, Junge, and Schaefer found that embodied metaphors shape the most developed forms of human thought, including cosmologies. [31]

These studies show that embodied metaphors get generated by ritual experiences, among other things. Rituals produce repeated sensations that create a *gestalt*, a group of metaphors associated by common and repeated experiences (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 234). Rituals also attach particular metaphors to people and things that they then carry with them into other social situations (Reul 1987, 111; Junge 2014, 279). These observations allow us to reformulate our initial observations about ritualizing the senses. Sensory experience lies behind metaphors, but sensations get processed consciously and unconsciously through their regular association with other experiences. In the same manner as many other bodily and social experiences that are repeated regularly, rituals focus attention not on the sensation itself but on its metaphorical associations. [32]

Reading Books without Seeing Them

The analysis of book rituals illustrates the implications of theories of embodied metaphors for understanding how rituals use sensation. Now, books may seem like a strange choice to show the non-verbal role of sensation and metaphor in ritual. Books, after all, are verbal objects. They are defined by the written language they contain. [33]

Books, however, do not just consist of language. Unlike verbal language, they are also material artifacts. Certain books, such as many religious scriptures, are widely recognized ritual objects. These sacred texts often take stereotypical forms, get manipulated in religious rituals and secular ceremonies, such as taking oaths of office, and are depicted frequently in art and other visual media. Books therefore regularly engage three human senses (sight, hearing, and touch, in the conventional Western enumeration of the senses) rather than just hearing, as verbal language does, and they sometimes engage smell and taste as well (see the essays in Watts 2018b). Books are also very common. Most people will be familiar with at least some ritual uses of them. So books and other written texts provide a common sensory experience upon which to reflect about the role of sensation in ritual. [34]

Reading depends on the sense of sight and often touch, when we hold a book or other kind of text. Normal reading, however, sublimates sensation to meaning by taking no conscious notice of the look of the signs or the feel of the book. Instead, we have been trained by years of literacy education to focus on the meaning of the words alone. [35]

This tendency has been reinforced by the conscious labors of type designers. Over many centuries, they have worked to make printed text virtually invisible while readers pay conscious attention to only the words and ideas it conveys (Bringhurst and Chappell 1999; Plate 2013, 121). Their achievements perfect the original genius of writing, which is to convey immaterial ideas and oral language by means of visual signs. Written texts work by drawing attention away from their visual appearance to their semantic meaning instead. Reading, then, is a paradigmatic example of how technology and socialization encourage us to ignore sensation and to concentrate instead on the action of reading and the immaterial ideas that arise from it. To paraphrase Birgit Meyer's words, books mediate a sense of immediacy. [36]

Textual rituals, however, call attention to sensory input that normal reading leaves subconscious. Ritualizing books draws attention to the sight of handwriting and printed type, to page layouts and the shapes of scrolls and codices, to the sounds of recitations, and to the [37]

social processes of interpretation. Each of the three textual dimensions (iconic, expressive, and semantic) gets ritualized in different ways (Watts 2013). While ritualizing the semantic dimension through preaching and commentary reinforces a focus on meaning rather than sensation, ritualizing the expressive dimension draws attention to the sound of the words,[2] while ritualizing the iconic dimension draws attention to visual and tactile interactions with books.

Viewing Books without Reading Them

[38] Let me give some examples. Elaborate bindings (e.g. medieval jeweled Gospel covers), fanciful scripts (e.g. Arabic decorative calligraphy), and beautiful illustrations (e.g. Renaissance Books of Hours) all draw attention and elicit a great deal of admiring commentary about how they look. Such aesthetic commentary, and its contribution to the increased prestige of books and their owners, might seem to be the purpose of such decorations. That is certainly the case in exhibits of books created by libraries and museums, which use them to increase attention to their institutions. They can also use the aesthetic appeal of beautiful books to convey explicit religious and political messages.

[39] For example, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, book displays became a prominent means for positively comparing religious traditions. The attacks in New York on September 11, 2001, and the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq beginning in 2002, fueled fear and distrust of Muslims in Western countries. To counter these prejudices, libraries created exhibits portraying the common cultural heritage of books and scriptures in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. In 2005, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris staged "Torah, Bible, Coran: Livres de parole" (Berthier and Zali 2005). In 2007, the British Library in London exhibited "Sacred: Discover What We Share" ("Sacred: Discover What We Share." n.d.). Then, in 2010, the New York Public Library staged "Three Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, Islam" ("Three Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, Islam" n.d.). All three exhibits placed medieval and early modern Torah scrolls and codices, copies of the Qur'an, and gospels and bibles next to each other to show how the three religions adopted common strategies for decorating and venerating the iconic dimension of their scriptures. All three exhibitions were overtly intended to promote pluralism and religious tolerance in twenty-first-century societies.

[40] There can be no question that these displays drew attention to visual sensation. The books could not be touched in their display cases, and most viewers could not read much, if any, of the scripts of these Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, and Latin books. Nevertheless, the exhibits depended on implicit sensory metaphors. The libraries' museum-style exhibits ritualized the books' iconic dimension through the aesthetic conventions of art museums. These cultural conventions depend on the root metaphor that beautiful objects are good and valuable objects, and that comparable beautiful objects in different religious cultures show the equivalent value of them all.

[41] Such exhibits clearly emphasize and utilize the aesthetics of visual sensation—more so than does the typical ritualization of scriptures by religious congregations and individuals. Comments about rich visual sensation belong to library displays, museums, and religious sites

2 The expressive dimension was called the "performative" dimension in Watts (2013). However, that terminology risks confusion with theories of performativity that describe all kinds of ritual behavior and much else besides (see below). The "expressive" dimension points more narrowly to the ways in which we express the contents of texts through reading aloud and silently, and through song, art, theater, and film.

functioning as tourist attractions, more than in religious congregations. Within a sacred text's ritual context in a religious community, however, the same decorative script and stereotypical book-forms do not usually draw as much commentary about aesthetic sensation. Instead, their distinctiveness and beauty are aesthetic metaphors for their truth, their religious value, and their sacred status.

[42] Apart from that ritual context, they may not evoke the same veneration. For example, Natalia Suit observed that the staff of a Cairo library treated beautiful old manuscripts of the Qur'an with less care than Egyptian Muslims commonly treat their scriptures. After being moved to a museum, the manuscripts were preserved and displayed better, but now as objects of aesthetic appreciation (Suit 2013, 193–94). Mass-produced copies of the Qur'an are not as rare or distinctive, but in the hands of devout Muslims are more likely to be regularly ritualized in their iconic, expressive, and semantic dimensions as scripture. Their ritualization in all three dimensions gets reflected in language as the piety of devotional actions. The language of aesthetic visual appreciation does not belong here, but only in a museum or private rare book collection.

Singing Books without Hearing Them

[43] Within religious congregations, ritualizing the expressive dimension of sacred texts by hearing the sounds of scripture readings, recitations, cantillations, and songs is more likely to provoke aesthetic commentary than is the iconic dimension. Participants may remark on the beauty of the performance and the emotional impact of hearing the scriptures recited or sung. Here, even though congregations may frown on paying too much attention to the performers, aesthetic appreciation is sometimes barely forestalled. For example, applause for performers is becoming more common in American Christian churches (James 2018, 106, 312). In other congregations, applause can be controversial, though perhaps allowed after the worship service has concluded.

[44] In Western culture, this tendency to aestheticize the performance of scriptural texts has become institutionalized by the performance of religious music in concert halls. It has led to the composition of musical scores with scriptural texts intended primarily for concert hall performances. A famous example of this trend is Georg Frideric Handel's oratorio, *The Messiah*. With a libretto consisting entirely of biblical texts, it premiered in 1742 in a concert hall, not a church (Jacobi 1982). Such concert settings continue to ritualize scriptural texts in the expressive dimension, but unaccompanied by religious interpretation or any visible sign of the Bible itself. Like museum exhibits of old manuscripts, the words of such concert performances ritualize only one of the three textual dimensions. The text continues to inspire in this context, but no longer as a fully functioning scripture (Watts 2017, 154–55). Congregations, however, have adopted *The Messiah* and other concert music with scriptural and religious themes to perform in churches, where they are reinforced by the ritualization of scripture in the other dimensions as well.

[45] Some other religious communities have traditionally called attention to the aesthetic sensation of hearing the words of scripture. The beauty and emotional intensity of Qur'anic recitations has been widely celebrated since its origins (Graham 1987, 85–112; Rooke 2006, 219). Similarly, commentary on the cosmic power of the sounds of Vedic recitations has played a decisive role in the development and continuing power of South Asian religious traditions (Coburn 1984; Graham 1987, 70–71). Ritualizing the expressive dimension inspires listeners

and performers, and they tend to project this experience of inspiration onto the text itself, which they regard as supernaturally inspired (Watts 2013, 22). Ritualization of the expressive dimension is therefore more likely to inspire verbal statements of aesthetic appreciation of sensation than are the other two dimensions of scriptures. That is because the performers can be singled out to praise their aesthetic skills, while the scripture is celebrated for its spiritually inspiring and even cosmic, but not sensory, effects.

Touching Books without Feeling Them

[46] The aesthetics of touch is less commonly discussed than that of the other senses. It has, until recently, been precluded from the aesthetic practices and commentary traditions of concert halls and art museums (Ganz 2018, 84–85). There are exceptions: some museums invite visitors to feel the touch of blank parchment sheets to compensate for the fact that their exhibits prevent visitors from touching medieval books in the normal way (Watts 2018a, 179). The religious effects of touching scriptures do not receive much attention from traditional scholars within religious traditions either, except to prohibit misusing the sacred texts (Wilkens 2018, 121–27). The sensory effects of touching sacred texts remains restricted to the religious practices of devout individuals and congregations. In that sphere, however, they are quite common and widely practiced.

[47] Examples of touch as a means of connecting with scriptures range from people reaching out to touch a book of scripture as it is processed in synagogues and churches to the widespread practice of carrying a volume of scripture and displaying it in homes and religious buildings. Even more widespread in many cultures around the world is the practice of touching and wearing amulets containing scriptural texts. The rhetoric around such practices does not emphasize sensation (e.g. how the book feels) but rather its effects (e.g. the blessing desired by making contact with the holy object). Touching scriptures functions religiously very much like touching other kinds of holy objects, such as icons and relics (Parmenter 2013, 63–67, 81–84; Watts 2013, 12, 28–30).

[48] This tendency to divert attention from the sensation of touch to the religious transaction indexed by touching is emphasized, for example, by the Jewish tradition of mediated touch (Green 1999, 1304; Schleicher 2018, 49–51). Readers use a pointer rather than their finger to direct their eyes to the correct line in a Torah scroll so as to avoid touching the sacred letters. When members of a congregation reach out to the passing Torah scroll, they touch it with the tassels of their *tallits* (prayer shawls) or their *siddurs* (prayer books), rather than with their fingers. Thus, in these traditional practices, there is little *sensation* of touching the books themselves, but that does not interfere with the hope that the scripture's power to bless functions through mediated touch.

[49] Touching books also plays a major role in Tibetan Buddhist rituals. Touching a sutra to one's head or forehead indicates respect, and also is believed to convey blessings or consecration (Cantwell 2018, 145). A lama may place a tantric text or written mandala on a student's head, throat, or heart to imbibe the Buddha word. A sutra or collection of sutras may be processed around a village and its fields to invoke fertility, health, and prosperity (Cantwell 2018, 147). Tibetan Buddhists understand these practices as transmitting the Dharma, the essence of Buddhist teachings.

[50] As in these examples, touching and holding scriptures generally does not evoke the language of sensation. When someone holds a book of scripture, we do not usually ask, 'How does the

book feel?" Instead, we ask about the feelings evoked by the ritual's purpose, whether its purpose is devotion, inspiration, conversion, divination, ordination, or inauguration. Thus, in the example quoted at the beginning of this article, Augustine did not report the sight or feel of the book when describing his conversion to Christianity by reading Paul's letter to the Romans. He instead described an internal sensation, "a light of sanctuary poured into my heart, every shadow of doubt melted away."[3] This sensory analogy mixed the feeling of drinking a hot liquid that spreads its warmth through his body with seeing the light of dawn spread across a landscape. Augustine evoked and mixed two common metaphors of reading as consumption and reading as enlightenment. The book acts on the passive reader like drink acts on the human body and like light affects the eyes.

[51] A modern example of how sensory impulses generate ritual practices with scriptures appears in the bindings and covers for bibles. Distinctive bible bindings and covers in leather or cloth cultivate the sense of touch as much as sight. To ask about the meaning of leather bindings for bibles or other books makes the mistake of thinking meaning must reside in verbal formulation. Christian tradition provides no verbal interpretation of the meaning of leather-bound bibles because the meaning lies in the sensation itself. The leather-bound book does not *represent* intimacy. Rather, the touch of skin to skin *feels* intimate. In the same way, handling a leather- or cloth-bound Bible does not represent intimacy with the divine. It enacts intimacy with the divine through its material manifestation—for many (Protestant) Christians in the only material object that they regard as holy. Holding the Bible enables one to touch the divine. But putting it into these words immediately sounds wrong, because it is not a verbal experience, but rather a sensation. Therefore Christian practices and rituals do not verbalize this analogy, but leave it to function at the sensory level alone. This sensory metaphor is nevertheless culturally shaped: the touch of leather can provoke a very different reaction in cultures that regard dead skin as unclean.

[52] Touching scripture, whether mediated or not, also functions as a means of indexing one's religious identity by identification with the scripture. This is most obvious in religious art and portraiture, which often depict people holding a scripture to represent their piety, orthodoxy, and scholarship. Common metaphors for the effects of reading books speak about touching—but not about people touching books, rather about books touching people (Watts 2018a). In common language, reading books leads to the books' influence on the reader, rather than the other way around. Religious language amplifies this effect through beliefs that a deity or ultimate reality can influence readers by means of sacred texts (e.g. Augustine).

Conclusion

[53] Ritualizing books as scriptures thus utilizes sight, sound, and touch to reinforce people's religious identity. Ritualization diverts the sensation of seeing, hearing, and touching the book into feelings of inspiration and legitimacy (Watts 2013). Scriptures are symbols of their religious tradition. Touching and holding them can establish your place within that tradition, both to yourself and to anyone else who sees you do it.

[54] Book rituals therefore do not really call attention to the sensations of seeing, hearing, and touching sacred texts. They instead focus attention on performing ritual actions by viewing, listening, and touching scriptures. And they allow devotees to feel in contact with the divine by making contact with a sacred book.

3 "Luce securitatis infusa cordi meo omnes dubitationis tenebrae diffugerunt."

[55] The use of theories of ritual and metaphor to analyze book rituals vindicates the observation that rituals choreograph, schematize, and dogmatize the senses,[4] but with an important qualification. Ritualized sensations are usually expressed by metaphors. To summarize in the terms of cognitive metaphor theory, we can say that religious rituals reorient participants' attention from the more elaborate metaphors of doctrine and mysticism to more basic metaphors grounded in bodily sensation and the immediate social setting of the congregation. In the end, they usually aim to return attention to verbalized instructions for belief and practice. Rituals serve to ground that discourse in embodied experiences by focusing attention on metaphors of ritualized sensations. However, as is always the case with metaphors, only part of the experience gets employed by the analogies to which they contribute. Left unstated verbally are the sensations themselves, through which people *feel* the metaphors that identify them with their fellow congregants and, perhaps, with the religion, or with God, or with the cosmos. They are likely to verbalize that feeling of identity, but not the bodily sensations that give rise to the metaphor of identity.

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4 See https://khk.ceres.rub.de/en/research/focus-groups-old/ritual/ (accessed September 25, 2019).

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The Syntactic Roles of Touch in Shared Festivals in Kerala

Towards an Analysis of Ritual Categories

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ABSTRACT The following discussion of touch as a syntactic-semantic unit in ritual structures is based on an analogy of ritual and language postulating a 'deep structure' or a 'universal grammar' for rituals as presented by Frits Staal, Axel Michaels, and Naphtali Meshel. Following E. Thomas Lawson and Robert N. McCauley in their cognitive approach to ritual competence and in identifying actions as building blocks in ritual structures, I propose an analysis of ritual events as a category with distinctive semantic and syntactic properties and within the framework of ritual communication and ritual competence. I extend Martina Wiltschko's universal spine hypothesis for linguistic categories to the language-ritual analogy in the domains of semantics and syntax. The viability of this analytical framework is demonstrated by categorizing touching events in rituals in shared festivals in Kerala. I conclude the discussion by hypothesizing universal categories for ritual events and entities, and universal structural patterns partially analogous (perhaps even homologous) to categories and patterns used in Wiltschko's universal spine hypothesis.

KEYWORDS ritual, linguistics, senses, *bhakti*, Kerala, shared festivals

Introduction: Touching Events in Shared Festivals

[1] This essay explores sensory engagement in rituals and its implications for interreligious contact based on participatory observation of shared festivals in Kerala (South India). Kerala festivals embed ritual complexes shared by practitioners of religions other than the one celebrated at the festival venue. This phenomenon of sharing sacred spaces and festivals is, of course, not uniquely South Indian. Sacred spaces celebrated by multireligious communities are common elsewhere in Asia, in the Muslim world, and beyond, often surviving national conflicts and geo-political changes (Gottschalk 2012; Cormack 2012). Such festivals often (if not always) involve sensory religiosity that readily translates from one socioreligious context

Figure 1 Teyyam oracle blessing touch (Kuttiyur, February 2016)

into another. Ostensibly, this powerful tool in interreligious communication relies on religious polysemy of sensory religiosity.

[2] Take, for example, ritual-touching during diverse religious occasions with meanings ranging from blessing (Fig. 1),[1] to healing (Fig. 2), to acquiring merit (Fig. 3), to merely signifying passages between ritual procedures (Fig. 4). These meanings are not inherent in the form (ritual touching) but are rather *assigned by convention* of all festival participants regardless of religious differences. It may be the case that the same ritual-touching is perceived differently by each religious group.[2]

[3] Postulating ritual as a system of (inter)religious communication calls for developing a framework for description and analysis of ritual typologies beyond the shared festivals in Kerala, with its remarkably lush multireligious landscape.[3]

[4] Sacred spaces in Kerala are normally restricted to members of their respective religious communities; most temples do not allow non-Hindus, some mosques restrict non-Muslims

1 Unless otherwise stated, all images are mine.

2 I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer, who provoked the question: “What is the relation between form and meaning for the simple building blocks of rituals such that cross-religious communication can take place?” The polysemy of meaning of ritual events—in this case ritual touching—is suggestive of an arbitrary relation between the form and meaning.

3 For the history of religious diversity in Kerala, see Narayanan (1972); Narayanan (2013, 336–65). For the emergence of Hindu temples in South India, see Gurukkal (2010, 295–305); Veluthat (2009, 61–82). An excellent study on mosques in Kerala is Shokoohy ([2003] 2013, 137–246, see also 139–41 and 219–21, for synagogues, temples and churches located near Muslim mosques in Chendamangalam and Cochin, respectively). For the architectural history of churches in Kerala, see Panjikaran and Vedamuthu (2013); Edward (2014); Perczel (2016). See also Visvanathan (1993, 91–101) for an ethnographic study of the churches in Kottayam. For the study of Kerala synagogues, see Bar-Giora (1958); Amar (1997–1998). I am unaware of any study specifically dealing with typological or spatial intersections of sacred spaces of different religious groups in localities in Kerala.

Figure 2 The healing touch of oil in the church lamp (Kanjoor, January 2016)

Figure 3 Touching arrows for merit (Kanjoor, January 2016)

Figure 4 Touching consecrated substances upon exiting the temple (Parappuram Vettingakav Temple, February 2016)

from entry (e. g. Mamburam Mosque), and the Paradeśi synagogue in Cochin is limited to Jews whenever there are enough Jews to perform religious holidays. Even churches that do permit non-Christians to enter are usually frequented by Christians alone.[4] However, during the dry season, from January-February to April-May, temple, mosque, and church festivals are celebrated at each locality with their own ritual complex variety. These festivals are shared inclusively regardless of religious affiliation, acting as bridges across religious communities.

[5] The participants are not merely being entertained in the ritual complex; by way of representing various religious or caste affiliations, they are allotted specific ritual roles.[5] In such roles, Hindus, for example, are in charge of providing oil for the elephant lamp in St. Mary's Forane Church in Kanjoor (Fig. 5); or applying oil to the ceremonial cannons at the onset of the festival of the mosque of Kondotty (Fig. 6); or paying homage to the Muslim hunter saint Vāvar as part of the ritual complex of pilgrimage to the Ayyappan temple at Sabarimala (Fig. 7).

[6] It is in the context of interreligious contact that sensory religiosity is translated, so to speak, across mythologies and theologies, with otherwise identical ritual procedures acquiring polysemic meanings. I focus on ritual touching for the present study somewhat arbitrarily, aiming at a structural analysis to account for other types of sensory engagement in rituals. Instances of ritual touching facilitate socioreligious communication during festivals that, like pilgrimages and processions, constitute public rituals (Michaels 2016, 211–27). Participant communities, regardless of their verbal *intrareligious* discourse, communicate their respective religiosities relying on the ritual complex of the shared festival as a platform for non-verbal *interreligious*

4 I use the term 'sacred spaces' in this article in its broadest possible sense to include any place of worship or assembly for religious purposes.

5 The borderlines between ritual and performance are not always clear-cut (Schechner 2002, 52ff.; see Gamliel 2016).

Figure 5 A Hindu donating oil to the elephant lamp of the church (Kanjoor, January 2016)

discourse. Ostensibly, the shared festivals form a mechanism that is instrumental in balancing religious diversity with cultural cohesion. Kerala has done exceptionally well in this respect.

Religious Diversity in Kerala History

Since at least the ninth century, Kerala has been a central juncture of maritime trade between West and East Asia. Its location on the southeastern shores of the Arabian Sea attracted a steady influx of traders and seafarers since times of Antiquity (Gurukkal 2016). Trade was an important source of income for land owners and ruling elites, who encouraged Arabs and Persians to establish market towns adjacent to ports. From the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onwards, diaspora communities of itinerant traders evolved into indigenous monotheist castes (Narayanan 1972, 2013, 277–84; Wink 1997, 275–80; Gamliel 2019). [7]

By the time transregional contacts with Arab and Persian traders were forming, Kerala emerged as a regional entity distinguished from Tamiḻakam, the historical 'macro region' entity of Tamil Nadu (Veluthat 2009, 295–311; Gurukkal 2010, 242–54). As the sociocultural identity of the Malayalam-speaking region was crystallizing, foreign traders surfaced in the history of the Malabar Coast (Narayanan 2013, 94; see Gurukkal 2010, 261). It seems to me that the regional identity of Kerala owes its emergence, at least to some extent, to these transregional encounters. After all, the earliest document attesting transregional traders in Kerala, namely the Kollam Copper Plates (849 CE), is also the oldest document attesting an early stage of administrative interaction in Old Malayalam (Sekhar 1951, 5; Narayanan 1972, 32–37, 2013, 313–17). [8]

Of course, Kerala is not unique in its religious diversity; multicommunal societies feature prominently elsewhere in India. *Diversity in unity* is a slogan in modern India, which prides itself in its plurality of languages, traditions, and customs. Similarly, shared festivals might [9]

Figure 6 Hindus apply oil to the canons of the mosque (Kondotty, February 2010)

Figure 7 The Vāvar Mosque with a small Ayyappan shrine facing it (Source: Wikimedia, Licence: CC-BY-SA 2.0 Generic)

very well be instrumental in maintaining socioreligious coherence in multireligious societies elsewhere in Asia, as suggested above. In India, however, sensory religiosity classified as *bhakti* underlies coherent ritual communication across religions especially in the context of shared festivals.[6] The density of localities celebrating shared festivals and the myriad forms of performances exhibiting *bhakti* religiosity are remarkably prominent in Kerala.

[10] By contrast, Axel Michaels (2016, 313) denies the role of *bhakti* in ritual theory, arguing that "rituals are rule-governed […,] public and suitable for an ostentative demonstration of social coherence. […] This is, for instance, different from love, modern art, or faith, including *bhakti* where besides orthopraxis, a lot of individual, 'mental' (*mānasa*) authenticity is demanded." I find his argument less than convincing when measured against the ritual practices associated with *bhakti* religiosity (Ramanujan 1981, 103–69; see also Cort 2002, especially 85–6). Moreover, if sensory religiosity indeed underlies ritual communication, as I hope to demonstrate convincingly below, *bhakti* ideology cannot be disassociated from ritual and confined to the sphere of individual religiosity, as Michaels suggests.

[11] That said, *bhakti* religiosity, in its social and political respects, regulates and maintains the boundaries between communities and castes in South India in general and in Kerala in particular. Though *bhakti* conforms to the social norms customary within the Hindu caste system (Burchett 2009), its ideology involves a radical rejection of caste hierarchy and social order, perceived as mundane differentiations obstructing the encounter with the divine. According to A. K. Ramanujan (1999, 327), *bhakti* "is necessarily an illegitimate relationship, illegitimate from the point of view of law and social order; it is an act of violation against ordinary expected loyalties, a breakdown of the predictable and secure". It is therefore less than

6 The term *bhakti* (devotion, love towards a deity) is derived from the Sanskrit root *bhaj*, denoting sharing in the concrete sense of dividing something or, metaphorically, in the sense of experiencing and feeling. In both senses, *bhakti* refers to Hindu worship (sharing in the sense of offerings to deities and experiencing love and devotion towards certain deities), particularly associated with the historical emergence of temple organization and courtly culture (Klostermaier 2007, 181–97; Veluthat 2009, 61–82).

surprising to find *bhakti*-oriented ideologies and practices across diverse religious communities, as demonstrated in several studies concerning *bhakti* among Jains, Sikhs, 'untouchables,' Christians, and Muslims (Burchett 2009, 2012, 230–46; Doyle 2009; Behl 2007; Cort 2002; Dobe 2010). It remains to be explained, however, how *bhakti* practices channel interreligious communication and how sensory religiosity is utilized across religious ideologies otherwise exclusive of each other.

I therefore approach ritual as a system of communication with underlying sensory semiotics. This approach requires a linguistic analytical framework that is attempted in the following sections. The following section surveys ritual theories based on the analogy between language and ritual, relying mainly on Axel Michaels (2016) and Naphtali Meshel (2014). In "Units of Ritual and Universal Categories in Linguistic Terms", I turn to Martina Wiltschko's linguistic universal spine hypothesis (2014) for identifying universal categories of ritual events, while drawing upon E. Thomas Lawson and Robert N. McCauley's ritual action representation theory (2002b, 2002a). The section "Ritual Events as a Category" categorizes 'ritual events' by drawing on linguistic approaches to event structures especially in regard of the semantic-syntax interface between lexical properties of events and their functions in phrasal (or ritual-procedural) combinations. The section "Ritual Competence in Shared Festivals in Kerala" deals with ritual competence as realized in shared festivals, and "Touching Events: Description and Analysis" examines touching events in shared festivals of Hindus, Christians, Muslims, and Jews from a comparative perspective. In the sections "Touching Events and Religions in Contact" and "Sensory Ritual Events and Socioreligious Communication," I examine emic categories of ritual events in shared festivals in Kerala in relation to ritual events analysis. The latter concludes with a rough sketch of ritual categories, ritual-specific categories, and the prospect of a universal spine of ritual categories. The final section summarizes the discussion with preliminary conclusions suggestive of directions for further research on ritual as a system of non-verbal communication. [12]

Ritual as Language

The analogy between language and ritual is based on the assumption that generative rules and deep structures apply for both. This analogy can be traced back to ancient Indian grammarians and ritual theories (Hastings 2003; Meshel 2014, 1–5; Michaels 2010, 2016, 74–77). Grammar in ancient India has evolved out of the need to theorize and systematize Vedic ritual (Kiparsky 1995, 59–60), which may be the reason that South Asianists like Fritz Staal (1979), Richard K. Payne (2004, 2016a, 2016b), and Axel Michaels (2010, 2016) are spearheading 'grammatical' theories of ritual. The ritual theorists E. Thomas Lawson and Robert N. McCauley (2002a), too, resort to the language-ritual analogy in formulating a cognitive approach to ritual studies. Their perspective, however, is inclined towards generative linguistics (rather than towards Indic ritual theory and linguistics) in comparing ritual competence with linguistic competence (2002a, 4–6). The language-ritual analogy stems, at least in some respects, from understanding ritual as a system of communication (Edmund Leach, quoted in Michaels 2016, 77–80). Communication necessarily involves various modes of signification, be they verbal or not. The question is to what extent, if at all, linguistic signification is analogous to ritual signification. [13]

At least two studies profusely examine the language-ritual analogy. The first is Axel Michaels' monumental work on Hindu ritual, *Homo Ritualis* (2016), and the second is Naph- [14]

tali Meshel's (2014) minute study of the 'grammar' of Biblical sacrifice. Michaels (2010, 2016, 74–117) tests the ritual-language analogy against various models of ritual theories based on years of collaborative research in the Heidelberg School of Ritual Dynamics.[7] Unlike Meshel, Michaels deals with rituals that are both a living tradition and an indigenous intellectual heritage of ritual theories traced back to Vedic rituals of the second millennium BCE (2016, 293–308). Meshel, on the other hand, deals with the Biblical sacrificial tradition that became obsolete in the remote past. Biblical sacrificial texts and their commentaries exclusively deal with inventories of food offerings to one specific deity in the Israelite temple in Jerusalem before its final destruction in 70 AD. By contrast, the Hindu rituals that Michaels deals with are modular ritual structures across places, periods, and religious traditions (2016, 4 and 25–27). Both studies, notwithstanding these significant differences, share a similar approach to ritual theory based on the language-ritual analogy. Both studies are, therefore, germane to approaching ritual as a system of communication even though both are eventually dismissive of the language-ritual analogy.

[15] Michaels distances his analytic framework from linguistics. He states right at the outset that "a one-to-one mapping of the morphology, syntax, pragmatics and semantics of rituals in a manner *analogous* to linguistic analysis is, to some extent, inadequate" (2016, 94, emphasis added). At the same time, he does promote the language-ritual analogy in stating that "description and analysis of these structures and rules [of Hindu ritual] are nothing else than a grammar, the "'grammar' of rituals" (2016, 94). Meshel, too, finally 'sacrifices' the grammar of rituals, noting that "little evidence has been found that would justify a high resolution analogy between language and ritual" (2014, 206–9). On the other hand, in his introduction he goes even further than Michaels to suggest a language-ritual *homology* as the "organizing principle" for his book (2014, 2), while noting the distinctive nature of operative categories in both systems (2014, 2–3, 18–19).

[16] Meshel uses the terms analogy and homology interchangeably, notwithstanding the substantially different types of similarity denoted by each term. This terminology, it should be noted, is borrowed into religious studies from evolutionary biology, where the term "analogy" points at genetically-unrelated structures resembling each other, whereas "homology" denotes the similarity of structures of common descent (Smith 1990, 47–48n15; Campany 2018, 335). Therefore, a ritual-language analogy postulates accidental resemblance of structural patterns with no theoretical implications beyond, perhaps, borrowing terms from linguistics to ritual studies. A ritual-language homology, on the other hand, has far-reaching implications for understanding both systems as derived from shared origins. In many respects, it is the latter case that justifies speculations on the 'deep structure' and 'universal grammar' of ritual; the abstract structures of language and ritual might indeed have a shared cognitive substratum.

[17] Both Michaels and Meshel follow previous ritual theorists (e.g. Staal 1979; see Penner 1986) in their approaches to the language-ritual analogy. Neither of them claims that language and ritual structures are of common descent, understandably so. The hypothesis of ritual-language homology is unlikely to be proven or refuted, for tracing an ur-language (or an ur-ritual) would risk involving far-fetched speculations. Yet, the communicative function of and the competence required for both languages and rituals point at a common socio-cognitive 'deep structure,' which can be supported by identifying commonalities of structural patterns.[8] Ritual

7 See https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/ritualdynamik/index (last accessed June 13, 2019).

8 I use the term 'socio-cognitive' to refer to both communication (a social function) and competence (a cognitive faculty) as interrelated and interdependent.

studies based on the ritual-language analogy provide a good starting point for this type of investigation.[9]

[18] Michaels (2016, 80–87) surveys approaches to ritual "building blocks," seeking to differentiate between rites that are structures and rites that are sections or sub-sections that he terms "ritemes," "ritual elements," "actions," and, following Meshel, also "atomacts" (2016, 82–83). Meshel, too, systematically classifies units, though he further distinguishes between "grammatical" and "ungrammatical" combinations (2014, 132), applying to his analysis tests of syntactic rules commonly used in transformational linguistics. However, Meshel's inventory of forms relies solely on limited diachronic data,[10] whereas transformational-generative grammar is based on synchronic data drawn from an ever-expanding inventory of forms and structures (see Michaels 2016, 80n13). Michaels, on the other hand, does consult both diachronic and synchronic data, but merely loosely refers to generative-transformational grammar in applying the terms "deep structure" and "universal grammar" to rituals (2010, 10, 2016, 80). Arguably, there is much more a ritual 'grammarian' can derive from theoretical linguistics.[11] Above all, it seems to me, it is the identification of universal categories across ritual structures that is crucial in the quest after an abstract, 'deep' structure of rituals.

Units of Ritual and Universal Categories in Linguistic Terms

[19] Admittedly, an exhaustive classification of universal categories of ritual lies beyond my present research scope. However, I suggest two analytical tools as a way forward to identifying the 'deep structure' of rituals. The first is the distinction between lexical and functional structural units, and the second is the postulation of ritual event structure. In this, I aim to step back from ritual typologies and zoom in on the micro-level of ritual structures, similar to the micro-analysis of sentence structures in generative linguistics.

[20] While descriptive grammars of natural languages provide abundant data for language typologies,[12] they are insufficient in and of themselves for identifying or, alternately, ruling out language universals. The problem, according to Martina Wiltschko (2014, 23), is that typologies yield evidence for both the universality of categories and for variation in the inventories of categories in diverse languages. To resolve the tension between universality and variation, Wiltschko (2013, 2014, 23–29) postulates a universal spine of categories divided between verbal and nominal domains. If we apply the same method of categorical classification to ritual typologies such as those in Michaels (2016), Payne (2004, 2016a, 2016b), and Meshel (2014), we may identify universal as opposed to ritual-specific categories. Importantly, as Wiltschko argues for language categories, the variation in ritual-specific categories does not, in and of

9 From the perspective of systems theory, the study of religion resorts to evolutionary biology as well as communication theory in triangulating the empirical investigation into the emergence of religion as a *sui generis* phenomenon (Krech 2018).

10 For Meshel, it should be acknowledged, the priestly texts dealing with sacrificial rules and regulations can be extended to a single ritual system continued until Maimonides (2014, 22).

11 Richard K. Payne (2004) does attempt drawing "syntax trees" for comparing the Japanese Shingon *homa* ritual with the Vedic Agnihotra ritual (see also Payne 2016a, 2016b). Nevertheless, apart from borrowing the tree-diagram tool, with ritual replacing sentence at the highest hierarchical position, the lower positions remain short of syntactic analysis that may be comparable to verb or noun phrases (for example). Moreover, it seems to me that the resolution of Payne's tree diagrams is too low; he positions R (ritual) at the top of the tree diagram, which would be equivalent to syntax trees representing complex paragraphs or full texts, instead of sentences, by tree diagrams.

12 See *The World Atlas of Language Structures* (http://wals.info/; last accessed October 30, 2019)

itself, rule out the possibility of identifying abstract, generic patterns underlying variation and diversity.[13]

[21] Ostensibly, the category of 'ritual actions' is the most likely candidate for constituting a universal category. I would, however, rather use the term 'ritual events,' for reasons explained in the following section. This category is evident in Michaels' survey of several ritual typologies highlighting ritual event as a recurring category across the board from ritual action in Lawson and McCauley (2002b) to atomact in Meshel (2014, 130). For Michaels, this is perhaps the most evident category, as he has at his disposal a rich inventory of emic categories derived from verbal nouns (e.g. *saṃkalpana* or *saṃkalpa*, resolution, *sambodhana*, addressing), or from nouns implying actions (e.g. *pradakṣiṇā*, circumambulation, and *dakṣiṇā*, sacrificial payment; Michaels 2016, 43, 96–97; see Payne 2004, 2016a, 2016b).

[22] While many ritual traditions develop a metalanguage to refer 'grammatically' to ritual categories, they do not necessarily *categorize* ritual events in a similar manner and to the same extent that the Indic ritual tradition does. However, event categories can be postulated for any given ritual tradition, just as grammatical categories can be postulated for any given language, regardless of whether the speech community has its own indigenous grammatical tradition or not. Wiltschko's two propositions underlying her universal spine hypothesis are enlightening in this regard. She states as follows (2014, 24):

[23]
(i) Language-specific categories (*c*) are constructed from a small set of universal categories *K* and language-specific UoLs [Units of Language]
(ii) The set of universal categories *K* is hierarchically organized where each layer of *K* is defined by a unique function.

[24] The first proposition (i) can account for ritual categories; it can be assumed, at least tentatively, that ritual-specific categories are constructed from a set of universal categories underlying ritual-specific elements, such as those listed and described in ritual typologies. The second proposition (ii), too, can be applied accordingly to ritual theory, though we still need to identify the set of universal categories of ritual to work with.[14] To develop a tentative set of universal ritual categories, I take cues from both linguists and ritual theorists and suggest the category of 'ritual event' as a tentative universal category of ritual.

Ritual Events as a Category

[25] Thomas E. Lawson and Robert N. McCauley (2002b, 2002a) identify the categories "action," "agent," and "patient" in their *theory of action representation* system underlying the cognitive and psychological bases of religious rituals.[15] They state that actions constituting ritual structures are familiar, even trivial, actions in the sense that they require the perception of agents and patients. Ritual actions, however, while involving agents and patients, are "inevitably connected sooner or later with actions in which CPS [culturally postulated supernatural] agents

13 Meshel (2014, 27–28), for example, categorizes zoemics, jugation, hierarchies, and praxemics that are ritual specific, and, therefore, do not necessarily account for universal categories.

14 Note that the hierarchies in this regard (of universal categories) cannot be derived from hierarchies of ritual-specific units (see Meshel 2014, 28).

15 Lawson and McCauley are careful to designate their subject for analysis as "religious ritual," an attribute which I retain here to remain faithful to their reservations about the topic "ritual" (2002b, 155). Notably, for my concern in event categories, the distinction between 'religious' and 'secular' rituals is irrelevant.

play a role" (2002a, 159). While the role of CPS agents may be challenged (Keane 2008, 115), the analytical model of the *action representation system* is germane to approaching ritual structures for their 'grammar' and, in particular, for identifying ritual event categories. Lawson and McCauley maintain that "the representation of religious rituals requires no special cognitive apparatus beyond the garden-variety cognitive machinery all normal human beings possess for the representation of agents and their actions" (2002a, 11). Basing ritual cognition on a par with human cognition of agents and actions is suggestive of a cognitive core underlying both ritual and language categories of agents and actions. In other words, Lawson and McCauley's theory supports the hypothesis of language-ritual homology.

[26] Lawson and McCauley's analysis seeks to "capture familiar presumptions about the internal structures and external relations of actions too […]. [W]hile cognitive scientists have proposed interesting accounts of our understanding of agency, they have had much less to say about our understanding of actions" (2002a, 11–12). Nevertheless, linguists do propose detailed and rich analyses of actions, or, more accurately, 'events'. In linguistics, the notion of an action requiring an agent is but one sub-category of 'events.' The category of 'event' embraces a broader range of categories besides agents, patients, and objects, extending to modifiers such as temporal and spatial adverbs. Events in linguistics are further analyzed for their lexical properties (e.g. volition, motion, stativity, causativity, passivity), argument structure (e.g. agent, theme, patient, instrument), and temporal and spatial properties (e.g. tense, aspect, deixis, prepositional phrases). Event categories can even be grammaticalized to modify other events and to function as light verbs or auxiliary verbs.

[27] Arguably, ritual events contain these four characteristics of lexical properties, argument structures, temporal/spatial properties, and auxiliary functions (acting upon other ritual events). It is this characterization of ritual events that the present discussion relies on in support of the language-ritual analogy; the phenomenon of event-modifying verbs is of particular interest here as it hinges on a universal pattern of multi-functionality, which is, as an anonymous reviewer noted, a diagnostic tool for relating language-specific categories to a universal structure. Event-modifying verbs, namely auxiliary verbs, exemplify multi-functionality according to Martina Wiltschko (2014, 3).[16]

[28] At this point, a few words on the distinction between lexical signification and syntactic function are in order. Consider a simple referential statement like "the cat sits on the mat." The words 'cat,', 'sit,' and 'mat' signify; they have lexical properties that denote perceptible objects (nouns) and occurrence (verb). But these three units—two nouns and a verb—cannot refer to any actual situation in the real world without the *non-lexical* segments—the articles, preposition, and tense marker; these sentence segments relate the three lexical units to a specific situation denoted by the complete utterance. Without these function words, the sequence of the lexical words 'cat,', 'sit,' and 'mat' would fail to communicate a situational meaning. This basic distinction between lexicon and grammar and, consequently, between lexical and functional units is essential for identifying categories and sub-categories of linguistic units.

[29] The Piercean categories of symbols and indexes are useful in applying the lexical-functional distinction to ritual theory. Clearly, ritual signification lacks audible phonetic substance

16 For auxiliation and its related process of grammaticalization, see Kuteva (1999, 2001); for the semi-lexical category of light verbs (in Indic languages), see Butt and Gueder (2001); for verbal modification in Romance languages, see Laca (2004); for a comparative study of verbs modifying events in Hebrew and Arabic, see Gamliel and Mar'i (2015).

(words and morphemes) but rather operates within non-verbal semiotic systems.[17] In other words, ritual events can be conveniently divided between symbols and indexes in parallel to the division between lexical content words and grammatical function words. A ritual event is functional when it modifies another ritual event, similar to auxiliary verbs such as 'have' and 'be' that modify the event structure of main verbs. Ritual communication, too, relies on various combinations of these two types of symbol and index signification. As demonstrated below ("Touching Events: Demonstration and Analysis"), functional ritual events (indexes) derive from content events (symbols) by shedding off certain lexical properties of the latter, namely, by way of semantic 'bleaching.' This distinction between lexical and functional ritual events facilitates the structuring of rituals, just like content and function words structure utterances. It parallels the pattern of contrast (Wiltschko 2014, 6–10) alongside the pattern of multifunctionality, calling for further engagement with the ritual-language analogy.

[30] Lawson and McCauley address the lexical-semantic unit of ritual (action) but leave out the functional-syntactic one: "many actions [i.e. ritual events] that religious persons repeat in religious ceremonies (such as everyone standing at certain points in a religious service) will not count as rituals" (2002a, 14). While indeed not all events that occur during rituals belong to the ritual structure, it seems to me that "standing at certain points in a religious service" signifies precisely what I would categorize as a ritual event, a ritual standing-event. It remains to be asked, however, what precisely its internal structure is and how it relates to the ritual structure as a whole (as index or symbol). To my understanding, this distinction is necessary for analyzing ritual as a socio-cognitive system of communication.

Ritual Competence in Shared Festivals in Kerala

[31] Lawson and McCauley (2002a, 4–6) convincingly argue for incorporating the notion of competence in ritual theory, yet again resorting to a concept developed in linguistics, "because of the striking similarities we noted between speaker-listeners' knowledge of their languages and participants' knowledge of their religious ritual systems." Ritual competence in shared festivals, though, is not confined to the religious ritual system of a certain group; it is rather manifested by participants of different religious affiliations. It thus facilitates the mechanism balancing socioreligious diversity with communal segregation. Presumably, ritual competence can also facilitate other, less benign forms of interreligious (mis)communication, which need not concern us here.

[32] The shared festivals examined in the present study demonstrate a non-verbal discursive competence between otherwise segregated religious communities. If ritual events are the conveyors of meanings, whether lexical or functional, then it is their differentiation from 'real world' events that enables this multireligious sort of ritual communication.[18] Presumably, the sensory semiotics typical of *bhakti* religiosity underlies the ritual competence that allows for this sort of communication. However, as I argue below, the semiotics of sensory religiosity is often, perhaps even mostly, derived from a generalized religious engagement far from confined to South Asian religiosity. Ritual competence is an intuitive capacity to differentiate between a 'real life' sensory event and its ritual parallel, for example eating an apple as op-

17 For non-verbal semiosis, see Barthes ([1967] 2000, 23–34). For a non-verbal semiosis in theatre, see Eco (1977); Elam (1980, 32–97); Aston and Savona (1991, 120–22); Alter (1990, 91–120). For an analysis of content units as opposed to markers in Kūṭiyāṭṭam (Kerala temple theatre), see Gamliel (2016).

18 For differentiation in the context of systems theory, see Krech (2018, 28).

posed to eating a consecrated substance, even if the observer is clueless about the religion of the participants in the ritual event. An analysis of sensory semiotics in rituals should, therefore, be based on an analysis of the internal structure of ritual events.

[33] The internal structure of ritual events is described and analyzed in more detail below, focusing on ritual events of touching.[19] The analysis of ritual touching events is based on the context, content, and function as well as on the lexical properties and argument structure of each touching event. Presumably, sensory semiotics is constantly employed in ritual signification across religions,[20] rendering ritual competence analyzable regardless of religious and cultural boundaries (Lawson and McCauley 2002b, 176, 2002a, 10; Barrett 2000, 33).[21] Therefore, ritual events based on sensory semiotics are the best-fitting for a preliminary examination of their lexical as opposed to functional properties.

Touching Events: Description and Analysis

[34] The touching events demonstrated above (Fig. 1–4) are revisited below for scrutinizing their lexical versus functional properties. The touching event presented in Fig. 4 is, as stated above, commonly observed by devotees upon exiting the temple.

[35] Every devotee touches substances—water, powders, ashes, and flowers—consecrated earlier to the temple deities and presented at the spot near the temple doorway just before leaving the temple grounds. This touching event is a functional unit marking the completion of the temple worship. Therefore, I term it 'completive,' compared with the 'accomplishment' aspect for its temporal properties of telicity, duration, and dynamism (see Smith 1999, 481). In terms of its argument structure, this 'completive touching' event has the devotees themselves get in touch with the ritual substances, with no direct involvement of other entities such as the priest or deity. Moreover, the touching is disassociated with attributions such as healing, blessing, etc. that are typical of content units. In other words, the functional-syntactic units of ritual undergo semantic bleaching.

[36] Touching events of the lexical-semantic type, unlike the functional-syntactic, contain semantic content by way of attribution of ritual efficacy such as blessing, healing, merit acquisition, and so forth. The attribution of ritual efficacy in these cases is provided by an etiology linking each touching event with its respective ritual efficacy. Thus, in Fig. 1, the Teyyam oracle features a deity called Toṇṭaccan (Namboothiri 2005, 15–16). As a rule, Teyyam oracles are apotheosized low-caste persons who died a violent death at the hands of oppressive upper-caste people. As a result, they become fierce and dangerous deities, threatening to consume the health and prosperity of the oppressor's clan. To avert the danger, the landlord and his clan perform an annual possession ritual featuring the apotheosis story in song and dance that invokes the deity through the oracle dressed in an elaborate, heavy costume (Menon 1993; Freeman 2005; Vadakkiniyil 2010). In Fig. 1, the oracle has just finished dancing with fire;

19 The description is based on participation in shared festivals in Kerala during several periods of fieldwork between 2005 and 2016.

20 This might be the reason for branding ritual-oriented religiosity as "low" (Meyer 2010, 743–45; Houtman and Meyer 2012, 4–13).

21 It should be emphasized that the basis for the present discussion relies more on linguistic analysis than on sociological semiosis. An integration of the two disciplines will undoubtedly contribute to a better understanding of ritual communication.

it is past midnight. The members of the extended family funding the ritual line up to receive personal blessings for a prosperous year.[22]

[37] As the touching event in Fig. 1 signifies blessing, a content unit of ritual, it can be analyzed for its lexical (rather than indexical) properties. Firstly, it is a volitional and transient touching event; its argument structure has an intentional agent (the oracle) and a recipient or object of the blessing (the devotee). Secondly, the argument structure requires two entities (comparable to noun phrases in linguistic analysis). Thirdly, the aspectual properties (*aktionsart*) of the blessing-touching event are comparable to the completive touching event; they are dynamic, telic, and durative.

[38] It is possible to further analyze this blessing-touching event to derive a higher resolution of the ritual-specific properties involved. Thus, for example, this blessing-touching event has constituent 'phrases,' such as an exchange of a currency note from the devotee for a flower plucked out of his belt by the oracle. Such constituents are ritual-specific categories comparable to the language-specific categories that constitute phrases in linguistic structures. However, for the present discussion I prefer focusing on a comparative analysis of the rough contours of touching events under consideration for the sake of an overarching classification of the contrast between indexical and content units.

[39] The touching event depicted in Fig. 3 is a lexical-semantic unit in an extensive ritual complex—the ten-day annual festival honoring St. Sebastian in the St. Mary's Forane Church in Kanjoor (Central Kerala). As the story of St. Sebastian's violent death is well known, it need not be repeated here. What is less known, perhaps, is the power attributed to golden arrows (associated with the saint's martyrdom) to transmit merit upon touch. Decorated paper plates with a golden arrow and cross (Fig. 8) are presented on long tables at the entrance to the church. The devotees pick up a plate and circumambulate the stone-cross pillar facing the entrance to the church, while holding the plate in their left hand and touching the arrow with their right hand. According to the local tradition, this is an offering beneficial to any person (regardless of caste and religion); it helps with getting married, begetting children, passing exams, getting a good job, buying land, and curing terminal diseases. In terms of ritual efficacy, the meritorious power of the arrow originates in the Christian theology of martyrdom. But it is polysemic, as the martyrdom of the saint in the context of Kerala is readily translatable into the apotheosis of Teyyam deities, where weapons are transferred to the oracle during the dedicatory rites, serving as props all through the possession ritual complex.

[40] In terms of event structure, touching the arrow is a state; it is durative, static, and atelic, for the merit gained is indefinite. It is a complex event subordinating another event of circumambulation. It is volitional and intransitive; the devotees intentionally *get in touch with* the arrow rather than touching an object arrow.

[41] But there is, I believe, an additional and less obvious significance underlying the tangible contact with the arrow. The festival features two ritual events with the arrow as a 'constituent' phrase; one is the arrow-offering circumambulation (*ambə eḻunnuḷḷikkal*) shown in Fig. 3, and the other is the adorning of St. Sebastian's idol with arrows and crown made of gold in a ritual event called *ambum muṭiyum cārttal*, 'arrow-crown ornamenting' (Fig. 9). This type of contact between consecrated objects and an idol is an empowering one, signifying the onset of immanence, as if waking up the latent presence of the saint from a frozen state of transcendent

22 I am grateful to Premalatha Narayanan, who invited me to her family ritual once in February 2007 and then again in February 2016. The story told by her and her family members differs significantly from the story as told by Namboothiri (2005, 15–16). They regard Toṇṭaccan as their family patron and an incarnation of the Hindu deity Śiva, who migrated along with their family ancestor from a different place.

Figure 8 St. Sebastian's arrow

slumber for actively moving across the town in processions during the major festival days (January 19 and 20).

[42] Empowering by getting divine entities in contact with consecrated weapons (normally, swords and daggers) is common in possession rituals in Kerala.[23] Weapons are thus incorporated into sensory religiosity. In the Kondotty mosque festival, a ritual event called *tōkk-eṭukkal*, 'canon firing,' is performed at an open ground near the mosque, signifying the beginning of the festival processions (*peṭṭi-varavə*). Before the canons are carried to the open ground, they are placed near the entrance gate of the *takkiyāvə*,[24] where devotees gather around to smear the cannons with oil donated by groups of various religious affiliations (Fig. 6). This is a touching event signifying the inception of the cannon-firing ceremony. The devotees touch the object of veneration (the canons) using consecrated oil for the instrument. It is an inceptive touching event with a ditransitive argument structure, and dynamic, durative, and atelic temporal properties.

[43] The cannons have historical, religious, and social significance; they were abandoned at the battlefield by the army of the Zamorin of Calicut, after his defeat in the battle of 1791 (Dale and Menon 1978, 531; Sattār 2009, 28). The cannons are attributed with ritual efficacy, as people attribute healing power to the cannon-oil, believed to cure skin problems. The social significance of the cannons is manifested through the allotment of ritual roles to Muslims and Hindu Dalits in polishing, carrying, and firing the cannons (Thangal 2009, 35–36; Sattār 2009, 28). In terms of universal categories as opposed to ritual-specific categories, weapons as an

23 Deity possession transmitted via weapon reception and wearing headgear can be seen in the Muṭiyēṟṟu ritual, as in the video https://archive.org/details/mudiyettu1 (filmed in April 2005).

24 In Kondotty, the term refers to the complex around the *dargh* (tomb) of the founding father of the mosque, Muhammad Shah. The term *takkiyāvə* is borrowed from Turkish *tekke* (Esposito 2003; see also Dale and Menon 1978, 529 and n14).

Figure 9 Adorning St. Sebastian with arrows and crown

argument in ritual-event structures can be construed as a ritual-specific category in shared festivals in Kerala.

[44] Similarly, applying oil to a consecrated object and collecting oil from the same object is a common constituent in touching events. During the St. Sebastian Feast, oil enacts a historical bond between the local Hindu and Christian communities in causative relationship with enhanced valency. Hindu participants continuously pour oil over the elephant lamp (Fig. 5), and devotees continuously gather it from the lamp, after it passes through the bronze elephant and the two figures riding on it.[25] The Hindus pouring oil thus act as agents in a causative healing touch; they cause the oil poured over the lamp (instrument-argument in syntactic terms) to get in touch with the devotees. The elephant lamp thus signifies the historical Hindu royal patronage over the Christian church.

[45] Like the cannons in Kodotty, the elephant lamp in Kanjoor is associated with a local historical account. According to one version of the story (there are quite a few), King Śaktaṉ Tamburāṉ (Rama Varmman IX, 1751–1805) once visited the Bhagavati temple Putiyeṭam Kovilakam, located within earshot from the church.[26] At the time, the Feast of St. Sebastian was celebrated. The king, disturbed by the sound of exploding fireworks, ordered his men to confiscate the church's fireworks and throw them into the river. As the saint is so powerful, the river could not contain the fireworks, which surfaced afloat. Soon after, a terrible headache seized the king. Realizing that the saint was offended, the king's Brahmin minister advised him to appease him. So the king offered the elephant lamp (Fig. 10) to the church

25 The Hindus pouring oil over the lamp belong to a certain community related to the Hindu temple nearby. Though non-Christians living in the vicinity join the festival and the various entertaining activities, the role of pouring oil into the elephant lamp is assigned by tradition.

26 The Hindu and Christian inhabitants of Kanjoor and the neighboring areas consider the Goddess as the sister of the saint. The sibling relations between Christian saints and local goddesses are a common trope in South India, and in Kerala in particular (Dempsey 1998).

Figure 10 The Elephant Lamp with the king and his minister seated on its back

and was cured of his headache. Ever since then, the oil poured into the lamp is attributed with the ritual efficacy of healing, specifically bodily pain. Touching the oil poured over the elephant lamp is, therefore, a lexical-semantic type of ritual touching events. Unlike the inceptive touching event in Kondotty, the healing touch of the elephant lamp in Kanjoor does not signify any other event during the festival; people continue pouring the oil, touching it, and collecting it all through the festival days. It is thus a durative, atelic, and dynamic event with enhanced valency.

Touching Events and Religions in Contact

[46] The touching events discussed above demonstrate how sensory events in rituals readily adjust to varying religious contexts and channel interreligious communication. The contact with certain objects, like the Kanjoor elephant lamp and Kondotty cannons, triggers historical interreligious bonds. But some ritual events also *enact* these historical interreligious bonds. An example for a touching event that enacts a Hindu-Muslim bond is the ritual event called *candanakkuṭa*, 'sandal-paste pot' or *candanam-eṭukkal*, 'carrying the sandal paste.'[27] In Changanssery (South Kerala), the procession with the sandal-paste pot proceeds from the mosque towards the neighboring church and temple, honored by dignitaries of all the neighboring communities as it passes by (Haneefa 1999). Rahman Thangal (2009, 35–36) describes the 'carrying the sandal paste' procession (Fig. 11) as follows (the superscript letters represent word origins from Arabic^{A}, Persian^{P}, Turkish^{T}, Sanskrit^{S}, and Malayalam^{M}):

27 This ritual event was typical of mosque festivals (*nērcca*) in Kerala as well as in mosque festivals (*urs*) in Tamil Nadu. For the sandal pot procession at the *nērcca* of Changanassery, see Haneefa (1999, 116–17); for Kondotty, see Rahman Thangal (2009, 37–38); for the sandal-pot procession at the *urs* of Nagore Shaul Hamid, see Mohamed (2007, 227–8).

> The rite (*caṭaṅṅə*^{M}) called "*candanam*^{S}-*eṭukkal*^{M}" is the most important one. It is perfused with *bhakti*^{S} and highly nuanced. The sandal paste of the utmost quality, especially ground on the foundation stone of the mosque, and a food offering (*prasādam*^{S}) called *marīda*$^{P?}$,[28] which will later be distributed in the mosque, are placed into special vessels. The chief Thangal (*taṅṅaḷ*^{M})[29] and his representative carry [these vessels] on their heads and bring them over to the mosque (*khuba*^{A}, قبة), walking barefoot. This is the ritual (*karmmam*^{S}) called *candanam-eṭukkal*. They set forth from the chief Thangal's thatched shed, uttering a special prayer in the *takkiāvə*^{T}. They first take the sandal paste and the *marīda* from the old storeyed house of the Thangal's family to the base of the flagstaff and place it there for some time. They chant some Qurʾān verses and sprinkle rose water over the disciples standing in front of them. Thereafter, the chief Thangal and his representative, carrying the sandal paste and the *marīda* on their heads, proceed to the mosque in an ambience saturated with *bhakti*, along with a retinue of disciples and soldiers, who chant Arabic poetry (*bayyittə*^{A} بيت), *maulid*^{A} songs and praise (*madh*^{A} مدح *gānam*^{S}) songs.[30] At that time, the Thangal and his representative must not put on shoes. They are being venerated with royal parasols. At the entry gate of the mosque, specifically ordained heads of families (*kāraṇavanmār*^{M}) receive the sandal paste and the *marīda* and take it into the mosque. It is only after washing their feet (*vuḷəhə*^{A} وضوء *eṭuttə*^{M}), that the Thangal and his representative enter the mosque. While the chief Thangal and his disciples go forward for lifting the sandal and the *marīda* and enter the mosque, the big drum called *nakāra*^{P} (نقاره) is beaten. During that time, the soldiers stand put at the entry gate of the mosque. It is in the tomb (*khabaṟə*^{A} قبر) of Hazrat$^{P/A}$ Muhammad Shah^{P} [the founder of the mosque] inside the densely crowded mosque that the immediately following rituals take place. [47]

What is striking about Rahman Thangal's description is the rich and complex structure of the touching event *candanam-eṭukkal*, involving diverse entities and "arguments" (agents, patients, objects, places, times) as well as sub-events. Contact with the consecrated sandal paste ignites, so to speak, a complex web of interreligious and cross-cultural contacts, as the multilingual nomenclature combining Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, and Malayalam words suggest. [48]

The *canadanam-eṭukkal* of Kondotty is in fact a relatively small and quiet procession, especially in comparison with the procession immediately preceding it, the *taṭṭāṉ-peṭṭi varavə*, 'the jeweler-box procession' (Figs. 11 and 12), which is the grandest procession of all the processions (*varavə*) celebrated throughout the week of the festival. Similarly to the role of the Hindus pouring oil into the elephant lamp in the St. Sebastian festival in Kanjoor, in Kondotty, too, Hindus are assigned an active role during the mosque festival. The jewelers' (*taṭṭāṉ*) participation in the Muslim festival is attributed to a time when the Jewelers were hit [49]

28 This sweetmeat is unique to the Kondotty festival. Similar offerings in Muslim festivals are normally called *chīrni* (from Persian (شیرنی); see Muneer (2015, 15). The term *marīda* might be traced back to the Persian term *mālīda*, a sweetmeat (see Platts 1884, 1067).

29 Thangal (taṅṅaḷ) denotes the "head-priest in each mosque" (Gundert [1872] 2011, 418). It seems to be acalque translation of the Sanskrit term svāmi, Brahmin priest, as both terms are derived from the reflexive pronouns tāṉ (in Malayalam) and sva (in Sanskrit), signifying mastership or lordship.

30 For a short video (37 seconds) documenting this procession, see https://archive.org/details/KNIIMovie3 (last accessed November 27, 2019).

Figure 11 Rahman Thangal K. T. and his representative carrying the sandal pot (courtesy: Hashim Haroon, 2010)

by a plague and cured by the first Thangal's healing powers. The jewelers' historical gratitude is marked by an object of silversmith craftsmanship carried through the procession—silver banners (Fig. 12) that are displayed near the tomb of the first Thangal of the mosque, Hazrat Muhammad Shah.[31] This procession includes typical Hindu festival performance arts, such as procession dancers and drummers (Fig. 13), as well as several types of touching events, such as self-immolation touch (Fig. 14) and healing touch (Fig. 15), possibly reflecting well-known Shiʿa practices.

[50] Before concluding this section on touching events, an example of a touching event in the Kerala Jewish festival is in order, for what makes Kerala's diversity remarkably unique is its sustenance of a small Jewish minority for a few centuries prior to the colonial period (Gamliel 2018b, 2018a; see Wink 1987; Segal 1993; Katz and Goldberg 1993). Though the Malayali Jewish community is almost completely gone, the celebration sealing the high holidays, Simḥat Torah, 'Feast of the Torah,' was miraculously kept alive even as late as 2016 (Rajoo 2016). As the only synagogue in Kerala to maintain the celebration is the Paradeśi synagogue in Mattancherry, my description and analysis of the touching event and its significance in interreligious communication rely on the celebrations I witnessed there in 2004 and 2007.

[51] The Jewish Holidays are not a shared festival in and of themselves. On the contrary, non-Jews are forbidden from entering the synagogue during prayers and holidays. In the past, there used to be a Jewish festival in a sacred place that is still remembered among Kerala Jews in Israel by the name *nērcca*, which is the same term used by Muslims in Kerala to refer to their mosque festivals. The Jewish *nērcca* used to be celebrated around the tomb of Nāmya Mutta, a poet-saint of the sixteenth century (Walerstein 1987, 95–113, 2006). This

31 Neither of these mosque festivals is currently performed annually. My analysis relies on documentation and participation in the Kondotty festival in 2010 and on interviews with Rahman Thangal and his family members in 2016. Some written sources related to mosque festivals in Kerala are also helpful (Haneefa 1999; Thangal 2009; Sattār 2009).

Figure 12 Jeweler-box procession

Figure 13 Jeweler-box procession, 2010 (courtesy: Hashim Haroon)

Figure 14 Self-immolation touch (courtesy: Hashim Haroon)

Figure 15 Healing touch (courtesy: Hashim Haroon)

nērcca must have been an occasion of interreligious sharing of the sacred, for the tomb is still preserved and honored (by lighting candles) by the Muslim, Christian, and Hindu neighbors living around it (Fig. 16).

[52] Since we have no detailed ethnographic descriptions of the Nāmya Mutta *nērcca*, it is impossible to identify the 'building blocks' of the ritual structure of this festival, let alone describe and analyze touching events therein. However, hints regarding the interreligious significance of touching events in Jewish festivals in Kerala can be found in Simḥat Torah, as it ends in a celebration shared with the non-Jewish neighbors of the community. Despite the fact that the Paradeśi synagogue remains closed to outsiders all through the High Holidays, once the last round of circumambulations with the Torah scrolls ends, the women enter the main prayer hall (normally reserved for men alone), and the gates of the synagogue's compound are opened, inviting non-Jewish neighbors to enter and watch from the windows and women's gallery as the completive ritual of entering the Torah scrolls back into the ark takes place. It is this final ritual that involves a touching event; the women of the community line up before the ark to touch each scroll with hands and lips (Fig. 17). After this ritual touching, the men close the ark and swiftly start dismantling the *maṇāṟa* (literally, wedding chamber), decorated with jasmine flower garlands, silk garments, and shining lights.[32]

[53] This ritual touching is a completive event; it signifies the completion of the Jewish holiday, marking a passage to a shared celebration which the non-Jewish neighbors are invited to join. A tree-shaped lamp (*āl-viḷakkə*) is lighted outside the main gate of the synagogue compound, and the Jews go out in a jolly procession accompanied by their non-Jewish neighbors. They all walk to the house of the eldest male member of the community, the *mutaliyār*, for food and drinks until the late-night hours. It is perhaps due to this type of ritual sharing that the non-Jewish neighbors of the last Jews of Cochin still strive to maintain the Simḥat Torah celebration.

[54] In 2008 and 2009, I took part in the Simḥat Torah celebrations in Mesilat Zion, one of the villages of Kerala Jews and their descendants in Israel. The same customary concluding rituals are still practiced there, though there is no occasion for interreligious contacts in the predominantly Jewish state of Israel. Nevertheless, the feast concluding the High Holidays is still celebrated, and its categorization differs slightly from the one used in the Paradeśi context. The Malayalam-speaking Jews in Israel refer to the eldest male member by the term *onnāṉ-kārṇōrə*, 'foremost male elder,' rather than *mutaliyār*, 'leader.' This is significant because the term *kārṇōr* (<*kāraṇavar*) is typical of the matrilineal kinship system in premodern Kerala, predating the term *mutaliyār*. The latter title was bestowed by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) on the leader of the Paradeśi community in the late seventeenth century. Thus, the *onnāṉ-kārṇōrə* feast bears testimony to a past of shared festivities shaped by interreligious contacts. Remarkably, even in Israel the completive touch is still performed just before the congregation exits the synagogue to celebrate the *onnāṉ-kārṇōrə* feast (Fig. 18).

Sensory Ritual Events and Socioreligious Communication

[55] The description and analysis of touching events in the previous section is aimed at investigating sensory religiosity in ritual. But not all ritual events are based on sensory engagement, even though most of them, at least in the context of shared festivals in Kerala, engage the

32 For ethnographic descriptions of the Kerala Jewish customs for Simḥat Torah, see Walerstein (1987, 126–55); Daniel and Johnson (1995, 170–73); Katz (2010, 94–95).

Figure 16 Nāmya Mutta's tomb (April 2016)

Figure 17 Touching Torah scrolls (Cochin 2007)

Figure 18 Completive touch, Israel 2008

senses to varying degrees. Moreover, touching events is an analytic category that only partially overlaps with emic categories, and even then, the emic categories are classified differently. That said, the category 'ritual event' subsumes emic categories, such as those attested in leaflets for or oral descriptions of shared festivals. The organizing committees of festivals often produce leaflets with a timeline of events for each festival, listing event categories like 'flag-raising' and 'canon-shooting." These are ritual-specific events with terms conventionally used within the community.[33] The leaflet in Fig. 19, distributed among participants of the Kanjoor Church festival, is an example for such indigenous typology of ritual events.

[56] Upon close examination, the ritual events outlined in the leaflets are, in most cases, complex events; they can be 'parsed' into smaller units of event categories and 'glossed' accordingly (e.g. blessing, healing, inceptive, completive). Recall that a unit—whether lexical or functional—is an event containing at least one entity.

[57] Michaels (2016) and Payne (2004) recognized certain structural patterns of rituals that are evident also in the Malayalam leaflet (Fig. 19), for example repetition, as with the special mass (*viśeṣaṇa kurbbāṉa*). The special mass is repeated every morning, but the pattern of repetition is not a structural unit; the special mass is a complex ritual event that needs to be further analyzed for its subordinate event categories. Some of these subordinate events are listed as well, like the novena prayer (*novēṉa*^PO^) and the sermon (*prasaṃgam*^S^).[34] Other subordinate events are known by convention, like eating rice grains (*prasādam*^S^)[35] offered at the entrance and the Eucharist (*kurbāṉa*^SY^) offered during the mass.

[58] Leaving aside the lexical meanings of each subordinate event, the sensory quality of many of the ritual events becomes obvious. Thus, the first two ritual events (novena and sermon) constitute a hearing event, whereas the *prasādam* and the Eucharist constitute a tasting event. The special mass concludes with the sacristan (*kārmmikaṉ*^S^) crossing his chest with his fingers, while chanting *eppōḻum*, *ippōḻum*, *ennēkkum* (any time, even now, forever), lowering the pitch of the last syllable of each word. This concluding gesture is a passage to the specific ritual events scheduled for each of the ten festival days (January 17–27 annually). Notably, the special mass is 'vernacularized' by juxtaposing ritual events such as *prasaṃgam* and *prasādam* with the pan-Catholic categories of novena and the Eucharist respectively.

[59] Some of the festival days (January 17–21 and 26–27) are particularly important; festive processions and rites follow the daily special Masses. One such rite is the *koṭikayaṟṟam*, 'flag-raising,' scheduled for January 17. It marks the beginning of the festival like in many other shared festivals in Kerala.[36] It is, therefore, an inceptive event marking the onset of the ritual complex.[37] Notably, the leaflet also lists the ritual entities participating in the events, in

33 At least in one case, a detailed description of the categories 'flag-raising' and 'cannon-shooting' is given in an ethnographic essay by Rahman Thangal K. T. (2009), the hereditary head of the mosque in Kondotty. As Axel Michaels demonstrates (2016, 112–17), taxonomies for the 'building blocks' of various ritual complexes (e.g. weddings, ancestral worship) are well-established in oral and textual traditions alike, and may even be traced back to the remote past of Hindu ritual theory.

34 The terms are marked for their languages of origin: PO = Portuguese, S = Sanskrit, SY = Syriac, M = Malayalam.

35 *Prasāsadam*, a Sanskrit term, refers to food offerings that are returned to the devotees after being offered to the deity. Remarkably, whereas *prasādams* tend to be edible (and in most cases also sweet and soft), the church *prasādam* is constituted of uncooked rice grains differentiating the Christian *prasādam* from the Hindu one.

36 The event of raising the flag is important enough to become a local news item, as in the headline on the flag-raising event announcing the famous Tṛśśūrpuram festival (Manorama online: https://www.manoramanews.com/news/kerala/2018/04/19/trissur-pooram-started.html; last accessed June 24, 2018).

37 Compare this functional event with the framing event (*saṃkalpana*) discussed in Michaels (2016, 43–69).

Figure 19 Leaflet presenting the timeline of the Kanjoor Church festival

this case the name of the officiating priest (*vikāri*^{PO}) in charge of the litany (*ladīññə*^{PO}) that follows the flag-raising event.[38] Once more the analysis of the ritual event structure reveals the fusion of Kerala-specific and Christian-specific ritual categories. Seen from this perspective, the shared festival is structured like a hybrid language register, which possibly emerged alongside hybrid linguistic registers like Maṇipravāḷam and Arabic-Malayalam.

[60] Similarly, the Kondotty mosque festival (*nērcca*) is announced by a flag-raising event (*koṭiyēṟṟam*). It is an elaborate event branching into several rites and rituals as described by Rahman Thangal K. T. (Thangal 2009, 34–35):

> [61] The beginning of the rites starting the *nērcca*^{M} is flag-raising. This rite would be announced around the harvest season, attracting the disciples (*murīd*^{A}) and devotees (*bhakta*^{S}) of Thangals from faraway regions to the Thangal of Kondotty. It is only then that the date of the *nērcca* is fixed. The flag-raising is on the tenth of an Arabic month. Once this is done, the *nērcca* starts on the thirteenth of the next [Arabic] month. On the afternoon of the flag-raising day, there is a special prayer (*prārthana*^{S}) at the mosque (*khubba*^{A}). The disciples and regional representatives proceed from the revenue-office building to the mosque in a procession (*ghōṣayātra*^{A}), carrying white flags. After praying there, they proceed to the *takkiyāvə*^{T}. Then, the senior Thangal and his attendants go to pray in the mosque, return to the *takkiyāvə*^{T} and return with the procession retinue to the flagstaff (*koṭimaram*^{M}). At the flagstaff base, they first sign a letter of invitation to the *nērcca*^{M}. Copies of this letter are sent to business leaders, disciples, and community leaders. The Thangal dips his hands in sandal water and impresses them on two flags. On one flag [he impresses] thirty-five [hand imprints] (for the shaikhs [*mashāyikh*^{A} مشائخ] of the order [*tvārīkhattə*^{A} طريقة]); on the other [flag, he impresses] eleven [hand imprints] (for the Islām اسلام and *īmān*^{A} امان articles of faith). As soon as the Thangal goes to the mosque for a prayer (*duʾāʾ*^{A} دعاء) and upon his return, they beat the *nagāra*^{P} drum. After that, people especially assigned [for this task] raise the white flags on the flagstaff. On the next day, during daytime, they raise the flag on a small flagstaff behind the mosque. On the days immediately following, they distribute the imprinted flags to be raised in the nearby places Kanjiraparambu, Nambolamkunnu, Melangady, and Kaloth.

[62] Compared with the Kanjoor Church flag-raising event, the Kondotty mosque flag-raising is an elaborate complex event. Particularly noteworthy is the touching event of imprinting flags with sandal water as if in anticipation of the sandal-paste pot procession concluding the festival. Despite the high degree of variation between the church and the mosque festivals, both flag-raising events are similar in function (inceptive), with religion-specific categories (*ladīññə*, *duʿāʾ*) and sensorial engagement (beating drums, dipping hands in sandal liquid) featuring important religious officials as syntactic arguments embedded in the event structure.

[63] To summarize, the constituents of ritual-specific events like the special mass and flag-raising are subordinate events with their own event structures, often involving sensory religiosity. In order to approach the structure of rituals as a non-verbal linguistic structure, the level of the single ritual event structure is the best-fitting for analysis, especially if we wish to derive a sound socio-cognitive analysis of ritual structures.

38 Both terms, 'vicar' and 'litany,' are of course derived from Latin. However, they were adapted into Malayalam via the Portuguese: vikāri is derived from vigario (Gundert [1872] 2011, 942), and ladīñña from ladainha.

From Ritual-Specific Categories to Categorical Hierarchies

Several preliminary conclusions can be drawn at this stage. Firstly, it is possible to generalize ritual-specific events (e.g. blessing, praying, divination, healing, offering) based on patterns of multi-functionality and contrast (see Wiltschko 2014, 3–10). Secondly, at least one category of sensory events (e.g. touching events) can be construed religiously as ritual-specific events. Thirdly, at least two universal ritual categories, events and entities, can be identified as the 'building blocks' of ritual units across religious traditions. Unlike Lawson and McCauley (2002a, 8–11), however, I do not postulate agency as a prerequisite to ritual events but rather assume event structures, some of which may not have an agent in their argument structure. Fourthly, ritual event structures, as suggested above, can be analyzed for their respective argument structures, lexical properties, and temporal-spatial properties. Fifthly, the attribution of ritual efficacy to 'real-life' events results in construing the same events—along with their internal structural constituents—as ritual-specific categories. [64]

As linguists show, the event structure, in terms of its lexical properties, involves all the elements, including the arguments, modifiers, and temporal properties (Verkuyl 1989; Pustejovsky 1991; Rappaport-Hovav, Doron, and Sichel 2010). Likewise, in ritual event structure analysis, events encompass arguments, modifiers, and temporal properties, as in "walk X times around Y" (e.g. circumambulation, *pradakṣiṇa*), or "eat Y at time of X" (e.g. the Eucharist, *prasādam*). Notably, the structure of ritual events is necessarily bound to ritual-specific times and places. All the touching events examined above, for example, are bound to predetermined and fixed spatial arguments within the ritual complex. Every ritual complex, with all its constituent events, is thus bound, differentiating in this way its event 'system' from its non-religious event 'environment' (see Krech 2018). It is, therefore, evident that identifying spatial and temporal properties is a prerequisite to ritual structure analysis. This differentiation explains to a certain degree the process of attributing ritual efficacy to otherwise 'real-life' events. [65]

Admittedly, the present discussion can only go as far as to suggest that universal categories of ritual structures exist in the same way they exist for languages. I propose a universal category of ritual events underlying specific-ritual categories identified on the basis of multi-functionality and contrast following Martina Wiltschko's (2014, 3–10) approach to identifying linguistic categories. Furthermore, I propose to approach rituals as a complex of event units, some of which may subordinate smaller event units, and to zoom in on the smallest possible units of ritual events in order to identify and classify their constituents and internal event structures, as is done for 'real-life' events in lingusitics (see Butt and Gueder 2001; Laca 2004; Verkuyl 1989; Pustejovsky 1991; Rappaport-Hovav, Doron, and Sichel 2010). Extensive typologies of ritual structures may thus be tested for universal categories based on syntax theory and generative linguistics. Further research in this vein may reveal a deeper socio-cognitive analogy (perhaps even homology) between language and ritual. [66]

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