

Foreword

It is our pleasure to invite potential readers to get acquainted with the contributions to Oriental studies included in the present volume. As its title suggests, research on the Oriental studies topics often requires the application of more than one methodology that creates challenges of an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approach. Disciplines such as literature, linguistics, cognitive science, cultural and religious studies, history, sociology, politics, and even economy are represented in the current volume. Likewise, the recent advances and developments in the field of Asian and African studies including new tools (digital philology, computational linguistics, etc.) opening new horizons in Oriental studies have been discussed.

The majority of the texts are based on papers read at the 8th and 9th International Conferences of Oriental Studies organized by the Committee of Oriental Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences in cooperation with the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the University of Warsaw on November 25–26, 2019, and December 5–6, 2020, and one contribution (by Zuzanna Nabalssi) was additionally included in the volume as thematically relevant.

The monograph opens with a paper by Nargiz F. Akhundova emphasizing the role played by beautifully illustrated best pieces of Persian-language literature, including *Shahnama* by Ferdowsi and *Khamsa* by Nizami, that used to be offered during diplomatic visits representatives of the Safavid ruler paid to the East and West.

A contribution by Ivan Andrijačić and Jacek Bąkowski that follows is the result of the international cooperation of scholars from the University of Zagreb and Jagiellonian University that can serve as an example of the application of the above-mentioned new tools in Oriental research. The General Imposters framework in stylometry has been applied here to the Indian medieval author Śankara and the literary works ascribed to him, with results which, compared to those obtained from the use of traditional methods of stylometry, turned out to be promising and encouraging further experiments with this method.

The next two papers pertain to the field of linguistics. Anna Borowiak discusses the significant increase of hybrid word formations in Korean under the influence of the emerging global communicativeness context. She identified and

characterized several processes of the formation of (post)isofixes in Contemporary Korean. International cooperation has proved successful in the other paper, an empirical inquiry of Taiwanese scholars, Man-ni Chu and Wen-Chia Chang, and a Polish Sinologist, Ewa Zajdler, into difficulties faced by the non-tonal Polish language speakers learning a tonal language, in this case, Mandarin Chinese. The conclusion is that the satisfying tone acquisition results will be possible after adequate training and practice by the students.

Comparative studies concern not only languages. Interesting observations can be made on certain aspects of different societies. Katarzyna Gryc presents the results of her studies on the term *jeong* ('a bond of a spiritual and mental nature, which is created unconsciously through prolonged direct or indirect contact') in the context of Korean society. The author explains how the emotion called *jeong* influences Korean society and its political culture. She argues that both of them should not be interpreted with the use of conceptual and terminological grid developed in the West but from the perspective of its own cultural features.

The specific meaning and usage of just one word, this time in the Japanese language, namely *dokoroka*, is also the subject of the next contribution, by Szymon Grzelak. His study not only shows the particular usage of the enumerative ("higher cardinality of arguments to the right of *dokoroka* corresponds to a higher level of granularity at which the speaker perceives the given situation..."), but also shares the author's observation that examples of the usage of *dokoroka* were easier to find in a spoken language than in its written register.

Words gain a prominent position when used in literary compositions. Kamila Hildebrand discusses Arabic poetry describing the development of the poem riddle genre from the ancient time until today with the focus on the modern spread of the riddles of Muḥammad Ibn Rāšid Āl Maktūm, their new form, as well as means of transmission through the festival and social media. Using examples from a poem riddle the author explains (referring to cognitive linguistics) the characteristics and meaning of this kind of poetry and underlines the popularity of riddle poems in Emirati society and the importance of this literary genre for maintaining political power in the United Arab Emirates.

The role of literature, this time folklore, and its impact on political power is also one of the subjects mentioned by Maheshwar P. Joshi who focuses on folk performers that played a key role in the traditional society of Central Himalayan polities of Doti, Kumaon, and Garhwal, transmitting the ideology of super humanness in royal lineages. The author emphasizes the sociological functions of folklore singers. He shows also how folklore has been re-set after the introduction of democracy as means of negotiating political power, on the example of Golū, the god of justice, and myths associated with him, and provides also an example from the 21st century of the role of the folklore singers in resolving modern judicial-cum-public disputes – the case of the ban on animal sacrifice.

The power of word utterance is well known from Indian examples. In her paper focused on the analysis of *R̥gveda* 3.62 Joanna Jurewicz explores methods of cognitive linguistics to prove the coherence of the poet's thought in the famous mantra *Sāvitrī* contained in the hymn. She analyses how the poet invokes gods – Indra and *Varuṇa*, *Br̥haspati*, *Pūṣan*, *Savitṛ*, *Soma*, *Mitra*, and *Varuṇa* – in the order which reflects his cognitive abilities in accordance with the morning transformation of the cosmos. According to Jurewicz, “the well-thought composition of the hymn could be the important reason for the great role of *Sāvitrī* in the later Indian tradition.”

India is home to many languages. Some of them have not been studied until recently. Anastasia Krylova and Evgeniya Renkovskaya reveal the first digital corpus of texts in three Koraput Munda languages: Sora (Saora, Savara), Gutob (Gadaba), and Bonda (Remo) compiled by them in 2020 and based on the material gathered during four expeditions to the state of Odisha in 2016–2018. Intended not only for the preservation of cultural heritage and making the rare material accessible to linguists and anthropologists but also to be useful for teaching, the corpus includes oral and written texts, poetry and prose, religious, folklore, and traditional everyday content, with Russian and English translations. The focus of the paper is placed on the relevance and innovativeness of the corpus creation, including sociolinguistic and ethnolinguistic approaches, as well as difficulties they faced.

The problem of language, identity, and the use of New Media is in the focus of Zuzanna Nabalssi's study of the Egyptian linguistic separatism on the example of the Wikipedia *Maṣrī* established in 2008, explaining its roots in the ideology of Pharaonism as well as the contribution made to it by the Coptic community. The author dwells on the problem of the official recognition of the Modern Egyptian language and its consequences, especially with the rapid development of New Media and the digitization of the mundane.

Another example of the application of digital tools used in Oriental studies is to be found in Amir Najafi's paper describing methods of the Structural Topic Modeling and applying them in discussing the Iranian movies of 1980–2019. Najafi finds out the latent topic trend in them as “war and foreign threats,” and concludes that since the film industry in Iran is dependent on government investment and censorship, the results of his research may point to the government's interest in this topic.

Culture and business are likewise the subjects of Malay Patel's contribution focusing on the religious group of Jains from the region of Gujarat to show that in the Indian context entrepreneurship is based on many factors, including religion, culture, occupation, joint family system, etc., that made some groups in India being especially inclined towards mercantile ethos. Patel compares briefly Jains with several other business communities of Gujarat, such as Hindus,

Muslims, and Parsis, using several Western methods. He explores as well the theory of Indian ethos. Finally, he notices the individualistic culture of the Jains and its affiliation with their religious practices concerning mercantile behavior.

Religious studies are the core of methods applied by Alevtina Solovyeva who investigates multiplicity of religious offer and ways of its perceptions and evaluations of different religious traditions in Mongolian society on the basis of the field-work data collected in various parts of rural and urban Mongolia between 2007 and 2020. While the main religions remain Buddhism and shamanism, Solovyeva observes interactions between various ritual and spiritual practices, as well as the production of new forms, which meet the current conditions and needs of Mongolian communities.

One of the concluding papers, which pertains to the Annals of the Academia, is an anniversary essay by Danuta Stasik, long time (2003–2016) Editor-in-chief of the journal *Przegląd Orientalistyczny / Oriental Review*, who covers briefly seventy years of the journal's activity describing its beginnings and the development until 2019. She underlines that it has been “the only nationwide Polish-medium periodical concerned with research on Asia and Africa” and notices “openness of the journal's editors to varied disciplines, such as literature, language, culture, religion, political and social sciences, history and history of science, including cross- and transdisciplinary approaches characteristic of research conducted in the field of Oriental studies”.

Finally, the impact of the recent events of the COVID-19 pandemic that affected the whole world found its partial coverage also in the present volume in the paper by Marcin Styszyński demonstrating the outcome, rich in reports and statistical data, of the project labeled *Social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Middle East*, coordinated by Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. The paper includes an analysis of health conditions during the pandemic in the Middle East and preventive measures implemented by local authorities. Moreover, it documents recent social and political changes in the region as well as tensions caused by the pandemic there.

The sixteen contributions included in the present volume cover a vast area of Oriental studies topics and show different approaches and methodologies applied by the authors. It is hoped that it will contribute to a better understanding of the new phase of Oriental studies.

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On behalf of the editors, conference organizers,
and the Committee of Oriental Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences