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DE INVENTIO SARDINIÆ

THE IDEA OF SARDINIA IN HISTORICAL AND TRAVEL WRITING
1780-1955

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This is to declare that the thesis herewith bound, being my own work, has been composed by myself and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Sandro Corso

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the way the national identity of Sardinia was perceived in travel literature – and more particularly the way writing about travel experiences contributed to shape identity, both of the visited place and of its inhabitants.

The thesis draws from different sources (travelogues, *belles lettres*, history books); the work reflects therefore a rather eclectic panorama. For obvious reasons the research field has been circumscribed in time and space, but , but aims at drawing general conclusions, i.e. assessing whether national identities are the result of an endogenous process, or rather are influenced by exogenous elaborations.

As regards geographical delimitation we restricted our inquiry to the island of Sardinia for two main reasons: i) it is isolated not only geographically but also culturally and has never been a conventional destination along the *Grand Tour* routes; ii) up to the first half of the twentieth century the island had a reputation for being an “unknown” or “forgotten” land.

As regards time, the choice was to concentrate on modern times, that is approximately between the second half of the 18th and the first half of the 20th century. Thereafter, the coming of the post-industrial society, mass tourism, faster means of transport, the standardizing effect of globalization changed the idea of travelling, leading some to argue that the birth of post-modern tourism implied the end of travel, or at least a totally new attitude towards travel, that has been defined post-modern.

When D.H. Lawrence wrote that Sardinia had “no history, no date, no race, no offering” he was drawing from a consolidated image of the island as an unknown land rather than on its millenary history. The Nobel laureate Grazia Deledda challenged this idea in the first quarter of the 20th century by countering the codes elaborated in the island – namely the language code, the common law and the rustic life and passions – to the *civilized* way of life of industrialized European societies.

The thesis concludes that the making of the identity of Sardinia was the result of the interaction between these two views.

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INTRODUCTION

The corpus: general criteria

More than a concept which is objectively definable, identity – both of a place and a national community, and even a person – tends to be assimilated to an image and appears to be closer to myth than fact. Although it may appear obvious to all of us that we know what we are like, and the general characteristics of the people around us – in psychological terms as well as in terms of nationality – the perception of (national) identity varies considerably with the changing of an observer's point of view – both in terms of personal and cultural attitudes. As a provisional definition, identity appears to be the result of a complex dynamic between the inner characteristics of a person and the more or less stereotyped image others have of him/her. The two perceived identities may be strikingly different. This work studies the perception of (national) identity through travel literature, and in particular the way in which writing about travel experiences contributed to shape identity, both of the visited place and of its inhabitants; and aims at assessing whether national identities are the result of an endogenous process, or rather are influenced by exogenous elaborations.

As the subject of the search appeared from the very beginning too wide, the research field had obviously to be circumscribed in time and space, and the study perspective needed to be delimited and clarified.

As regards geographical delimitation we decided to circumscribe our inquiry to the island of Sardinia, for two main reasons: i) it is isolated not only geographically but also culturally, it has never been a conventional destination along the Grand Tour routes, and although in modern times has been part of Italy, it has preserved a specific language and cultural identity; ii) up to the first half of the twentieth century the island had a reputation for being an “unknown” or “forgotten” land. For these reasons it was thought to be an ideal object of study – bearing in mind throughout that the conclusions would be of a more general interest and would allow us to give them more general significance.

As regards time, the choice was to concentrate on modern times, that is between the second half of the eighteenth century – when, by general consent, travelling south following the Grand Tour itineraries had become a radically different phenomenon in Western culture because of the wider presence of the middle-classes and women – and the first half of the twentieth century. Thereafter, the coming of the post-industrial society, mass tourism, faster means of transport, and finally the standardizing effect of globalization changed the idea of travelling. Some argue that the coming of faster means of transport and globalized mass tourism led to the death of travel, or at least to a totally new attitude towards travel – I accept Kaplan's [1996] view that travel, too, is to be considered post-modern. The post-modern traveller (an example could be Bruce Chatwin's *The Songlines*, 1987) is likely to experience that even the remotest corners of the world have been contaminated by Western civilization.

Quite obviously, the concept of 'travel' varies considerably depending on the culture and time in which it is contextualized; it should therefore be made clear that our understanding of the word 'travel' will forcibly be *Eurocentric*, that is charged with the meanings the word has acquired within the spatial and cultural horizon of Europe.

Even before I started reading systematically we had to face a fundamental problem: the choice of our corpus. The problem obviously comes from the variety of definitions given to *travel literature*, which depending on the scholar can be a synonym of *travel writing* or *travel books*. Of course the problem is not a minor one as, on the one hand, it raises the question of what 'literature' and 'travel' really mean – this would go far beyond the scope of this study; but on the other hand the choice of a corpus makes it necessary to have a reasonable and objective criterion to include or exclude certain works rather than others. The criterion cannot quite obviously be a more or less subjective idea of *what* travel literature is. It appears therefore sensible that we devote to the discussion of these issues a preliminary discussion, focusing in particular on what to exclude.

Defining travel

Considering closely the concept of travel can lead to the conclusion that travelling is so much affected by time (in respect of practical considerations, e.g. the means of transport, but also for the ideological function of moving or crossing boundaries). Quite obviously the concept of travelling is closely related to moving in space/time, and it implies not only *leaving to a place*, but also *leaving behind* one's homeland and habits, and facing otherness. This is quite clear in English, but also if you refer to other languages: Fr. *partir* for example, and obviously It. *partire*, from Latin *PARS*, *PARTIS*, 'part'. The same verb is associated to 'a little death': an Italian proverb says that "Leaving is to die a little", and It. *dipartita* is 'death'. But, and this is a bit of a paradox, the related Latin verb *PARERE* 'part (from)' also generated It. *partorire*, 'giving birth'. So in the word for 'leaving' the concepts of dying and being (re)born (pain/pleasure; mourning/mirth) are quite curiously associated, though in the ideological horizon of the western Christian tradition this is after all not surprising, as death and suffering mark a necessary passage, in a religious and eschatological sense, to rebirth to a new/real life.

The word 'travel', moreover, which is nowadays associated with pleasure and leisure time, is etymologically related to suffering: the *tres palum* (three beams) was an instrument of torture, as still reflected especially in the Fr. and En. *travail*, It. *travaglio*, but also in Sp. *trabajar*, and Fr. *travailler*. These words can also be used to describe critical periods in life. Ben Jonson fuses the concepts when, talking about Aeneas in the lines he addressed to William Roe, wrote that he "passed through fire,/ Through seas, storms, tempests; and embarked for hell,/ Came back untouched. This man hath travailed well." Suffering – and particularly the suffering of giving birth – is associated to *travailling/travelling*.

Ger. *Reise* comes from germanic forms **raisō*, **reisō* (*Aufbruch*, "departure"), possible outcomes of indogermanic **rei* (*sich erheben*, "wake up", "stand up", "grow") and **er* (*sich bewegen*, "move"). Both in alt- and mittelhochdeutsch *reisa* and *reise* meant respectively *Zug* "passage", and *Aufbruch*. The word is therefore related to concepts of movement, as reflected in En. "rise" and "raise" [Köbler:1995], but it seems reasonable to conjecture basing on phonetic and

semantic vicinity, to a link to the idea of separation (Ger. *reißen*, althochdeutsch *reiza*, “to tear”).

In the Romance languages the word for travel (It. *viaggio*, Fr. *voyage*) was the result of synecdoche: it goes back to the Provençal Fr. *viatge*, from Latin *VIATICUM*, “the food to eat on the way”.

Returning is part of travelling, and its completion. Leaving to a place without coming back after a reasonable time would not be defined “travelling”. An impediment to return causes the melancholy feeling we know as homesickness, in Gr. *nostos-algia*, “pain due to the desire of coming back”. It appears therefore that the idea of travelling consists of three moments: leaving/parting from home, travelling/travelling (mainly due to the confrontation with otherness, as we will see soon) and finally coming back changed by the contact with otherness. The experience of travel changes the traveller’s view of the world, and the perception of his place in it. As Domenico Nucera puts it:

Il viaggiare è un atto potenzialmente sovversivo: ogni viaggio non può essere che la negazione della precedente visione del mondo, come della sua geografia fisica e umana. E’ qui il valore del ritorno: tornare da ogni viaggio con una ridefinizione e riorganizzazione dell’universo.¹

Travelling is a potentially subversive act: every travel is necessarily the negation of the previous view of the world, and of the related physical and anthropological geography. Hence the importance of coming back: returning from any travel implies a redefinition and a reorganization of the (personal) universe.

Another issue which should be raised is the so-called “end of travel”. This issue gained consistency in the 1950s, particularly with the very influential *Tristes Tropiques* by Claude Lévi-Strauss [1955], when, according to the French writer, travel was no longer able “to open magical boxes full of treasures”, and that there was on earth no place left to discover. In the following decades with the coming of mass tourism and globalization this feeling gained momentum: the idea that diversity

¹ *I viaggi e la letteratura*, in Gnisci et al., *Letteratura comparata*. (Roma:Sovera) 1995, p. 133.

has faded away, and with it the possibility of experiencing otherness and being affected and changed by it, has since become common place: one wonders whether it is still possible to talk about travel nowadays, when the so-called traveller is no longer an explorer or a person who has encountered - and has been changed or at least affected by - otherness, but rather someone who has been to many places. The era of exploration has come to an end, and so has the era of travel: we are in the era of tourism.²

Understanding travel in literature

As we have stated, the expressions ‘travel literature’, ‘travel writing’ and ‘travel books’ are used interchangeably not only by readers but sometimes even by scholars. Although we would all have in mind what a travel book is, it is rather difficult to define what could be objectively defined a model of “travel literature” (with the status we commonly recognise to literary works) or a less accomplished example of “travel writing” with no literary ambition (for example a travel guide); and what to include under this category and what to exclude. Preliminarily, we find it tempting to say that travel literature deals with a physical and cultural displacement of the self. But then we find a first problem: can Julius Caesar’s *De Bello Gallico*, Captain Cook’s *Journal of a Voyage round the World* and Baedeker’s guides be considered examples of travel literature? Given the difficulty of defining the characteristics of travel writing, many scholars reach the conclusion that travel literature is not a genre. Jan Borm,³ as a first example, after an excursus over the scholarly discussion, wonders whether by using a variety of definitions which apply to travel writing – travel book, travel narrative, journeywork, travel memoir, travel story, travelogue, metatravelogue, traveller’s tale, travel journey or simply travel – scholars refer to the same object. Given the variety of both fiction and non-fiction works which can fall under this category, it is apparent that travel literature cannot be considered a genre, but rather a hybrid collection of writings for which a least common denominator is barely found.

² See Corbin, A., *L’invenzione del tempo libero 1850-1960* (Bari:Laterza) 1996.

³ *Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology*, in Hooper, Glenn/Youngs, Tim (edited by), “Perspectives on Travel Writing” (Aldershot, Burlington:Ashgate) 2004, pp. 13-26.

Michael Hanne shows he has a very inclusive view of travel writing, since among the literary works dealing with travel which he scrutinises he also lists imagined travels or adventure stories, written by “armchair travellers”:

[...] the concept of the “armchair traveller” only became institutionalized in the nineteenth century [...] some European authors who wrote convincingly of far-off places, such as the Italian writer, Emilio Salgari, had no more direct experience of travel than most of their readers.⁴

Although this hypothesis cannot be excluded *a priori*, it raises a conceptual difficulty affecting the notion of travel itself, opening the door to a corpus which might dangerously coincide with the entirety of literary writing. Travelling, which by its nature deals with crossing cultural and psychological frontiers, is a powerful metaphor for the process of knowing oneself. Travels can be of course imaginary/metaphorical or real, but we assume that travel literature only applies to accounts of geographical journeys, and in particular to journeys in which there is, generally, a coincidence between the author and the protagonist who, because of his fictional authority, guarantees authenticity. Furthermore, travel implies crossing geographical/cultural boundaries – this attains to the very nature of the pact between the author and the reader. Without identifiable places, the crossing of boundaries can be questioned. An imaginary journey has imagined boundaries, not physical ones.

Tim Youngs⁵ rises other questions concerning the way travel writing is scholarly considered, stressing that travel writing criticism has become increasingly interdisciplinary and crosses the fields of various disciplines. Special attention is drawn to the problem of the *language of travel*, which involves the issue of translation: quoting Michael Cronin,⁶ who in his turn draws from Jakobson, there are three types of translation: the *intralingual* translation, or an interpretation of verbal signs using verbal signs of the same language; the *interlingual* translation, or an interpretation of verbal signs using signs of another language, and an *intersemiotic* translation, or an interpretation of verbal signs using signs belonging to a non verbal

⁴ Hanne, Michael, (edited by) “Introduction”, in *Literature and Travel* (Amsterdam:Rodopi) 1993, p.5.

⁵ *Where Are We Going? Cross-Border Approaches To Travel Writing*, *ibid.*, pp. 167-180

⁶ *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* (Cork: Cork University Press) 2002.

system. The traveller-translator “might range across all three lines in the act of travelling”. Referring to Chris Rojek and John Urry,⁷ he stresses the importance of keeping an historical perspective: “Linguists, archaeologists and classical historians can testify to a cultural travelling on a scale that might throw into questions some of the assumptions on modern globalization. A historical perspective should help us to qualify some of the claims that we make about modern travel and contemporary culture” [2002:174]. Finally the concept of the travel writer’s point of view is to be kept in mind “...mobile capital reminds us that it is not just individuals that travel: culture travels with them and – a fact that often gets missed out – people and their culture travel economically.” [2002:179]

Kristi Siegel [2002]⁸ observes that the variety of viewpoints from which travel writing is approached makes it difficult sharing a single model in travel literature theory, thus giving importance not only to the traveller’s viewpoint, but also to the traveller’s critic viewpoint in literary theory: “Those studying travel writing often use words from other disciplines, but give these a different ‘spin’”. In Cecilia Novero’s⁹ essay the theme of the way *the spirit* of a land is perceived is part and parcel of the observer’s culture. Looking at Italy from a German viewpoint, she shows that Italy becomes a *stereotype complement* of Germany, the opposite and/or completion of the way a German would perceive his own identity: Italy being “the power of the earth, nature, and the other side of the Spirit.”

Domenico Nucera [2002]¹⁰ acknowledges the difficulties of defining the domain of *letteratura di viaggio*. As the definition ‘travel literature’ itself seems to be vague and include a great variety of texts (according to a famous definition by Michel de Certeau “tout récit est un récit de voyage”) he accepts the definition proposed in Italy by Luigi Monga: *hodoiporikòs* (that which refers to travelling, from the Greek words

⁷ Chris/Urry, John, (ed. by) *Touring Cultures, Transformations of Travel and Theory* (London:Routledge) 1997.

⁸ Siegel, Kristi (edited by), *Issues in Travel Writing – Empire, Spectacle, and Displacement* (New York:Lang) 2002.

⁹ “Contemporary German Journeys to Italy”, *ibid.*, pp. 67-83.

¹⁰ Nucera, Domenico, *I viaggi e la letteratura*, in Gnisci et al., *Letteratura comparata* (Milano: Bruno Mondadori) 2002, pp. 127-153.

odòs, road, and *porèia*, journey). The word had the Latin form *hodoeporicon* (it was used in St. Jerome's letters and by the 8th century Anglo-Saxon traveller Willibald), but despite proposing translations to suit a number of languages (En. *hodoporicis*, Fr. *hodoporique*) it seems to have been accepted and used only by Italian scholars. Despite these difficulties in defining its domain, he considers *letteratura di viaggio* an autonomous genre, and refers to the comparative method as the most appropriate tool for the purpose of studying it:

La letteratura di viaggio è per sua natura abituata a valicare i confini. Anzi, è proprio questo il suo primo carattere: attraversare la frontiera per vedere cosa c'è oltre, confrontare l'interno con l'esterno, il qua con l'altrove, per raccontare il confronto, traducendo e interpretando l'incontro con l'altro. Andremo alla ricerca allora soprattutto di ciò che rappresenta il momento privilegiato del testo di viaggio, cioè l'incontro con l'altro e l'altrove. Questo aspetto costituisce infatti sia il fine del viaggio reale, il motivo per il quale il viaggio viene compiuto, sia il motivo per il quale esso viene raccontato. [2002:128]

According to Nucera, if we only consider the last twenty years of the past century, thanks to the perspectives opened by gender studies and cultural studies, travel books have been included in the cultural domain since they can reveal a complex ideological function, for example reveal a relation between a hegemonic- and a subculture. The study of travel literature abuts therefore the domains of postcolonial studies, of gender studies, of imagology, of studies in literary genre, of migration studies, and the study of national identities “[...] perché mostra come le culture siano rappresentate e definite non solo dall'esterno, ma anche dal loro interno, dal momento che attraverso le guide di viaggio sul proprio luogo si possono cogliere quegli elementi che, secondo l'autore che interpreta comunque una sensibilità comune, vengono ritenuti idonei a fornire un'immagine d'identità”. [2002:141]

Gérard Cogez [2004]¹¹ asks himself, too, whether travel writing may be considered a literary genre, and if so, what its distinctive features are. If we take “displacement” as a possible criterion, “où commence et où finit le réel dans un déplacement et surtout dans ce qui en sera rapporté? À partir de quels critères tranchera-t-on que tel récit de voyage peut être regardé comme un texte littéraire et tel autre décidément pas?” But

¹¹ Cogez, Gérard, *Les écrivains voyageurs au XXe siècle* ([Paris]:Seuil) 2004.

then he quite surprisingly concludes that “il reste que les lecteurs en général (et les lecteurs critiques en particulière) parviennent à identifier sans trop d’hésitation, ni excessive controverse, les textes qu’il convient de regrouper dans cette catégorie.” (2004:11) The subjective component of a critical judgement is therefore first denied, then asserted: it is “general critical consent” which builds up a corpus of ‘travel writing works’, by excluding others. And not much useful to this purpose is Coge’s idea that the “critic’s distance” adopted by a travel writer allows us to discern the characteristic of a real travel writer, as it “sera pour lui un peu comme la garantie de sa vigilance de témoin” (2004:28): even travel guides keep a distance from their object.

The difficulty of settling the question is apparent, as none of the solutions proposed to grouping texts under the label of “travel literary works” is shared. Nor does it appear reasonable to propose a tautological answer like “travel literature is what scholars think travel literature is”. In order to discriminate between that which can be part of our corpus of travel literature and that which is not, the idea of connecting the concept of *the search of the identity of the visited place* to travel literature appeared more productive to us.

Travel between modernity and post-modernity

The issues we have raised so far lead us into another problem. As we have given reason as to why we would choose some travel books rather than others, we should now define our perspective. When we refer to travelling, do we mean the same thing irrespective of the historical period in which the journey was made and described, or does the historical period affect the way the word ‘travelling’ is perceived? This question was raised by Caren Kaplan [1996], moving from the assumption that metaphors of travel and displacement vary significantly in time. We can see a clear passage from modernism (when the metaphor was the *exile*) to post-modernism (which has adopted the *tourist* as its most recognizable metaphor). Kaplan deals with various types of travelling (leisure travel, exploration, expatriation, exile, homelessness, immigration, colonialism, etc.), making a clear distinction between travel and displacement:

Travel is very much a modern concept, signifying both commercial and leisure movement in an era of expanding Western capitalism, while displacement refers us to the more mass migrations that modernity has engendered. While these terms cannot be viewed as opposites, it is also impossible to see them as referencing the same sites and situations.¹²

The difference between the metaphors of exile and tourism are further investigated in terms of coercion and freedom – although it could be argued whether personal choice can be defined as completely free in contemporary consumer society, to which tourism is related:

Exile implies coercion; tourism celebrates choice. Exile connotes the estrangement of the individual from an original community; tourism claims community on a global scale. Exile plays a role in Western culture's narratives of political formation and cultural identity stretching back to the Hellenic era. Tourism heralds postmodernism; it is a product of the rise of consumer culture, leisure, and technological innovation.¹³

Modernism has elaborated the concept of the author as *exile*, as shown by such authors as Nabokov, Borges, Svevo, Joyce, Conrad, T.S. Eliot, and Beckett, to name but a few. "In literary criticism, the model for the author or critic is the solitary exile who is either voluntarily expatriated or involuntarily displaced."¹⁴ The postmodern author is fundamentally different as he/she is characterized by historical relativity and the varying relation between Western and non-Western civilizations (Robert Young:1990), and also by a multiplicity of identities, at a time when "refugees have been created during ongoing territorial conflicts while stable notions of national and cultural identity are increasingly in flux. [...] just as the solid association between national spaces and identities becomes loosened and, in some cases, dissolves, the attribution of identity for subjects in modernity is uneven, increasingly differentiated, and, quite often, contradictory."¹⁵

¹² Kaplan, Caren, *Questions of Travel – Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham and London:Duke University Press) 1996, p.3.

¹³ Ibid., p.27.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.4.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.9

Identities – Kaplan says with reference to the post-modern city – are first imagined and then shaped, both in literature and in real life.

Bradbury imagines an ‘ideal distant city’ for his cosmopolitan subjects. Lifted out of the material political and social conflicts that generated so much displacement in the twentieth century, the exiles who come to live in Bradbury’s modernist sites are men without a country. [...] The modernist cities of Calvino, Cowley, Bradbury, Eco, Steiner, and others are fashioned more like medieval city-states built to shelter nomadic exiles than sprawling metropolises. That is, the difference between modernist and post-modernist imaginary geographies.”¹⁶

Quoting Harry Levin’s influential essay *Literature and Exile*, Kaplan sees a close link between literature, banishment and expatriation. References can be found in Plato’s expulsion of poets from his Republic, in Ovid and finally expatriation in modern times as the consequence of the “rise of nationalism, with its ensuing confusion of tongues.” [1996:37] Language, normally burdened with location, and the positioning of the writing subject, loses stability and acquires relativity. Not surprisingly for us: it is again the problem of identity coming back, since language is arguably the most powerful tract of shared identity.

The difficulty of settling the question is apparent, as none of the solutions proposed to grouping texts under the label of “travel literary works” is shared. Nor does it appear reasonable to propose a tautological answer like “travel literature is what scholars think travel literature is”. In order to discriminate between that which can be part of our corpus of travel literature and that which is not, the idea of connecting the concept of *the search of the identity of the visited place* to travel literature appeared more productive to me.

Travel in literature: the quest for identity

Over the last fifteen years symposiums and publications on the concept of identity have multiplied, mainly due to the pressure of problems following community integration in areas interested by immigration and globalization,¹⁷ leading to a

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 30-31

¹⁷ Two of the countries in which the question of the national identity attracted scholarly attention, for different reasons, are Israel (see Baruch Kimmerling’s *Clash of Identities: Explorations in Israeli and Palestinian Societies* [New York, Chichester:Columbia Un. Press] 2008) and France (see Ivan

rethinking of the complex matter. In recent years, the acquisition of an identity has been seen more and more as the result of a flexible and changing process – contrary to what had been assumed in the 19th-century, when the idea of nation was developed. We have all become aware, as Anne Kershen¹⁸ writes, that “What is evident in the quest(ion of) for identity, is the complexity of the construct. There are two major points to bear in mind [...]. Firstly, that identity is in a constant state of flux and can never, nor will ever, be static and secondly that identity is multifaceted and variable; [...] there is however a third point that requires consideration. [...] Without an 'other' to identify with or differ from, self-recognition would be impossible [1998:1-2] Kershen concludes that “new political, social, religious and even geographical forms are emerging demanding a constant reassessing and reconstructing of personal, political, social, economic and even gender identification” [1998:19]

Quite obviously, the variety of backgrounds in a globalized world makes it difficult to theorize a single set of identity markers (e.g. common views on history, or religion, or even language) which is likely to be meaningful for all people who live in the same political borders, and can serve as a common ground for a shared identity. Mass immigration and globalization have probably been lethal to national identities. In multicultural societies each individual has become the bearer of a combination of multiple identities which can be reconducted to very different backgrounds: markers such as social status, religion, culture, citizenship and even gender are not associated in a straight line.

We agree with Linda Alcoff's¹⁹ observation that in a globalized world the question is “whether [identities] should be acknowledged and legally recognised or simply ignored in the hope that they will disappear.” [2003:1]

The struggle to accept or resist an identity (which is imposed by sex, social status, education, etc.) is part and parcel of life in a complex and globalized world.

Rioufol's *La fracture identitaire* [Paris:Fayard] 2007).

¹⁸ Kershen, Anne. *A question of identity* (Aldershot:Ashgate) 1998.

¹⁹ Alcoff, Linda/Mendieta, Eduardo (ed. by). *Identities: race, class, gender and nationality*. (Malden, Mass., Oxford:Blackwell) 2003.

As identity is a changing and shifting concept, a multi-disciplinary approach is necessary :

[Identities] are both imposed and self-made, produced through an interplay of names and social rules foisted on us by dominant narratives together with the particular choices families, communities, and individuals make over how to interpret, and resist, those impositions ... But the social meanings attached to such things as skin colour and body shape, the hierarchies of language and differential roles in reproduction, and the very significance accorded (to) various identity markers, are firmly in place when a given individual is born, circumscribing the flexibility ... To understand identities, then, we need to study psychology, culture, politics, and economics, as well as philosophy and history.” (2003:3)

The debate on national identity has recently raised controversy in France, where the issue stirred public debate during the presidential elections in 2007. Noiriél's²⁰ essay is an interesting pamphlet on the political use of the expression national identity in the French presidential elections, and the establishment of a Ministry for the Immigration and the National Identity (*Ministère de l'Immigration et de l'Identité Nationale*).²¹

Noiriél argues that the expression existed before the 1970s, when the 1968 movement urged to recognise minorities in the nation. But in the new meaning, it was used during the campaign to create what we defined a functional opposition between 'us' and 'them'.

Paul Ricoeur simplified the problem explaining it in terms of *mêmeté* (In. *sameness*, Ger. *Gleichheit*) and *ipséité* (In. *selfhood*, Ger. *Selbstheit*):

La mêmeté indique que X est un idem de Y par opposition à Z. Dans cette perspective, une nation existe parce que ses membres possèdent des caractéristiques qui permettent de les distinguer des représentants des autres nations. L' ipséité désigne la conscience de soi. Elle suppose la continuité dans le temps, c'est-à-dire la mémoire.²²

²⁰ Noiriél, Gérard. *A quoi sert l'identité nationale?* (Marseille:Adone) 2007.

²¹ “cette expression a été utilisée, le plus souvent, pour stigmatiser les immigrés, en fabriquant un clivage artificiel entre 'eux' et 'nous!'.” (Noiriél, 2007:7).

²² Ricoeur, Paul, quoted by Noiriél (2007:114-115).

Ivan Rioufol²³ on the contrary complains that “une partie de la nouvelle France a pris un chemin que l'éloigne de la communauté nationale. Ca fait plus de trente ans que celle-ci se désintéresse de ses hôtes, tandis que l'intelligentsia se montre plus préoccupée de préserver l'identité des minorités que l'identité française. [2007:9] According to Riouful “il devient urgent de se revendiquer réactionnaire, puisque c'est ainsi que les proposés à la pensée lisse nomment ceux qui ne s'accommodent pas des mensonges.” [2007:170] The paths to follow are rejecting multiculturalism, going back to the common cultural roots inherited by Jerusalem, Athens and Rome, stopping giving way to needs of minorities and presumed victims of society, besides the automatic obtainment of the nationality.

The changing nature of the notion of national identity makes it difficult to understand it as it was understood until the advent of globalization. We agree with Régis Meyran that “la voie est désormais ouverte vers une anthropologie de la globalité, débarrassée du mythe de l'identité nationale.” [2009:169]

Of course this idea of travel is not alien from the concept of *displacement*, though they can refer to quite different experiences. It has been observed that culture is tightly related to place. Not only man is anthropologically determined by place – place shapes man both physically and mentally – but also culturally. If culture comes from the sedimentation of a number of *habits* shared by a social group, acquiring an identity (or for some, e.g. according to Heidegger,²⁴ acquiring *humanity*) is mediated by the concept of *inhabiting*. In Latin the word *HABITARE* (live in a place) was the frequentative form of the verb *HABERE* (have)²⁵ and the two concepts have kept a relation in many modern European languages (Fr. *habiter/habitude*; En. *inhabit/habit*; Ger. *wohnen/Gewohnheit*; It. *abitare/abitudine*). Being displaced implies changing, together with the place one *inhabits*, also the *habits* one shares with a social group, which are so strong as they are taken for granted and considered

²³ Rioufol, Ivan. *La fracture identitaire* (Paris:Fayard) 2007.

²⁴ We refer to the philosopher's idea that “a man's being is realized in inhabiting”, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, (Pfullingen:Neske) 1954.

²⁵ On this issue see Francesco Remotti, “Luoghi, costumi, cultura. Un'umanità trans-locale e transformativa”, in Pissarello, Giulia (a cura di), *D.H. Lawrence e la Sardegna: atti della giornata di studio, 21 gennaio 2000, Sassari*. (Sassari:Delfino) 2000.

natural. Crossing physical borders also implies crossing anthropological (and therefore cultural) borders, or in other words confronting a different *identity*.

Writing about a place that we perceive as alien implies a complex interaction between the extremes of *identifying* a place (approaching otherness, making it more similar to oneself, incorporating it in a system of values: in this case the consequence will be a reinforcement of the observer's cultural identity) or *understanding identity* (confronting/changing one's habits or accepted code of habits: in this case the consequence will be an alteration of the observer's cultural identity).

The two opposed attitudes of *identifying* and *understanding identity* can be described as incorporating a set of characteristics in a system of values, whereas understanding identity implies modifying a system of values to include diversity. The example can be a process of identification carried out by a bureaucratic body (a policeman in the street would assume knowing an individual after verifying name, surname, place/date of birth, nationality, address, sometimes ethnicity) as opposed to the search of identity a novelist would carry out, considering one's home, family, friends, language and convictions as far more essential to define identity.

As we stated in the opening paragraph, the word identity itself is quite ambiguous, and not only because the sense in which we understand the word *identity* acquires quite different meanings depending on how we use it. Sociology and psychology, for example, have elaborated quite different concepts, relating to an individual's or a social group's social and affective spheres respectively. As identity is rather evanescent, it appears to be defined *in contrast to* something which is thought to be its opposite. If we consider personal, social, cultural, ethnic, local-territorial and national identity, the basic opposition which defines identity can be schematised as follows:

<i>Identity type</i>	<i>Identity built by</i>	<i>Defining opposition</i>
Personal	Integrating body and mind in a coherent consciousness	me vs. you
Social	Integrating in a group by achieving or keeping a common status	us vs. them
Cultural/Religious	Integrating in a community which shares the same codified system of	own vs. alien

	values	
Ethnic	Integrating in a group which shares the same/similar genetic features	we vs. others
Territorial/local	Integrating in a group which shares the same place and habits	inner vs. outer
National	Integrating in a group which shares the same space and civilization	ours vs. theirs

The origin of the word identity (Fr. *identité*, It. *identità*, Ger. *Identität*) goes back to the Latin word *IDEM*, meaning ‘same thing’; the word appears to be a compound word from *IS* (third person masculine pronoun) and the suffix *-DEM* (Cortellazzo-Zolli: [1979] 1987), for which it seems also reasonable to propose the neuter third person pronoun *ID + AUTEM*. The word combined further with *ENS* (gen. *ENTIS*) expressing the modality of being or existing, as reflected in the word *essence*) to give identity, whose prime meaning appears therefore to be close on the one hand to ‘sameness’, on the other to the ‘essential features’: knowing the identity is knowing an object (i.e. *OB + JECTUM*, “cast before us”) as its Ger. equivalent *Gegenstand* also shows, in its otherness – other than the subject, and existing as an ‘itself’. Understanding identify and identification – as we put it – both refer to a procedure aiming at making the characteristics of an object explicit, and show the role of an agent: the etymology of these words (Lat. *IDENTITAS + FACERE*, ‘make’) shows that the process of identification requires a point of view to define both sameness and otherness, as both concepts are not definable in absolute terms, but only *in relation to*.

The word identity – which circulated among the learned and was popularized by Galileo, proving thereafter to be extremely useful in a number of contexts – has also acquired different meanings depending on the domain in which it is used.

According to Jonathan Culler there are four basic ways of understanding identity:

A lot of recent theoretical debate concerns the identity and function of the subject or self. What is this “I” that I am - person, agent or actor self – and what makes it what it is? Two basic questions underlie modern thinking on this topic: first, is the self something given or something made, and, second, should it be conceived in individual or in social terms? These two oppositions generate four basic strands of modern thought. The first, opting for the given and the individual, treats the self [...] as something inner and unique [...]. The

second, combining the given and the social, emphasizes that the self is determined by its origins and social attributes [...]. The third, combining the individual and the made, emphasizes the changing nature of a self, which becomes what it is through particular acts. Finally, the combination of the social and the made stresses that I become what I am through the various subject positions I occupy, as a boss rather than a worker, rich rather than poor.²⁶

Even if we do not consider Culler's combinations, there are obviously two fundamental ways of understanding identity. If we look at psychology the word would be related to the individual – Lat. IN + DIVIDUUM, i.e. 'undivided': that which cannot be divided as it would cease to be if its inner, homogeneous unity was altered. Expressions like 'identity crisis' can be only understood as the difficulty for an individual to recognise him/herself as such (in relation fundamentally to the self). If on the other hand we think to the understanding of the word 'identity' in sociology, we need the related concept of 'group': in this case identity can be only understood as the relation of an individual to others. The expressions national or political identity can be only understood in terms of *sameness* and *otherness* in a larger community. Unlike psychology, which seems to refer to a unique identity for the individual, associating a multiplicity of identities to personality disorder, individuals in complex societies seem to be entitled to different identities: the further we move from one-man-ruled societies which require integralism, and the closer we approach to complex societies based on the balance among a plurality of powers, national identity tends to include several identity markers (ethnic, social, opinion, etc.).

The relation between travel/displacement and identity has been considered by several authors, though from a variety of perspectives, which often differ from one another as well from the one I adopt here.

Katherine Turner moves from the assumption that travel literature is still underestimated ("due partly to the ambivalent status of the genre "is it really

²⁶ Culler, Jonathan D., *Literary theory: a very short introduction* (Oxford : Oxford University Press) 1997, p. 110.

literature?)” [2001:1]. Her essay sets a relation between the notions of national identity, gender and authorship to help redefine the function of genre.²⁷

The two concepts can be considered, though reductively, articulations of the *identity* concept, comprehensive enough to include them all. Obviously, the fact that we talk about commonplace ways of identifying oneself basing on social characteristics (e.g. national, class, gender) or psychological ones does not change the terms of the issue. We should bear in mind though that identity is a shifting concept which always needs to be clarified: Turner’s feeling that Mary Louise Pratt in her ground breaking book *Imperial Eyes* considered a European identity which existed only in theory is consistent, possibly due to underspecification.

Inger Birkeland’s²⁸ reflection moves from a feminist stand. It starts from a real life episode, that is a young Spanish woman who decided to leave her work and home to walk to North Cape, apparently answering a strong call to look for “her personal North”, i.e. her inner self through an interior walk projected into space, towards a mythical North to which generations of sailors had looked for orientation:

Sofia started walking in early spring 1997. [...] She walked about 30 kilometres a day for about six months with some short breaks along the way. [...] She hardly ever followed the main roads and avoided walking on the asphalt, choosing instead the small roads, crossing forests and small mountains. [...] She received help of several kinds during the weeks of walking, as well as free meals and accommodation. Each time she encountered a problem, a solution would come to her. Little by little, she realized that her mood was changing. Instead of feeling more and more tired and broken, she started feeling stronger and better, both physically and mentally. [2005:3]

Birkeland states that “a masculinist language has dominated historical and current discourse on the concept of place and geography”, mainly following Cartesian dualism which sees space as an object, therefore still dead matter. She aims at

²⁷ “Travel writing – the most consistently popular genre of the eighteenth century – [...] played a central role in developing formulations of national identity and comparative constitutional awareness.” Turner, Katherine, *British Travel Writers in Europe, 1750-1800: authorship, gender, and national identity*. (Aldershot:Ashgate) 2001:10.

²⁸ Birkeland, Inger J., *Making place, making self: travel, subjectivity and sexual difference*. (Aldershot:Ashgate) 2005.

defining a feminine perception of space, based on the concept of *chora*. *Choros* is the ancient Greek word for place which opposed to *topos*, space. We do make a difference – like people did in Ptolemaic times – between chorography (or description of place as it is seen from inland), and topography (or the knowledge of space through geometrical principles and geography), but since the rediscovery of Ptolemaic maps in the sixteenth century (combined with the influence of the Cartesian philosophy which “led to an eradication of place” through a view of space “as an abstract three-dimensional grid [...] dissociated from nature, place and the body” [2005:135]) the opposition between *choros* and *topos* (place and space) was forgotten. We tend to identify geography with the mere general knowledge and description of the earth as *space* rather than *place*. It is therefore necessary to reconstruct a notion that incorporates time, fluidity and movement. Birkeland concludes that “self is a place, a geographical place”. Quoting Luce Irigaray she stresses that “ it is necessary to rethink the concept of place on ethical grounds in terms of sexual difference. The sensible, the earth, the ground, and place must be connected with the transcendental. The construct of space must be reconceptualised, and its place in philosophy in terms of its double relationship to the immanent and the transcendental must be restored.” [2005:141]

Although it does not seem easy to define objectively travel writing as a literary genre basing of formal characteristics, an attempt can be made of defining a “mode” considering scope and reception. Going back to Cullen’s categories, we will draw from those works whose main scope is exploring the “identity of place”; and by this definition we refer to a synthesis between place and what the romantics called “spirit” – the complex of conventions and beliefs that cement a nation, or people. On these grounds we will include, as an example, Clüver’s description of Sardinia but not travel journals or travel guides in which the search for the identity of a place is absent, or not central.

Questions of method

Arguably no academic discipline has devoted so much scholarly attention to clarifying its own method of inquiry as Comparative Literature, in an effort to define and constantly update its epistemological groundings, besides its relation to contiguous humane sciences. Contributions have been particularly conspicuous in the English and French speaking areas, as a logical consequence of the political and cultural influence, on a world scale, of the chief imperial powers over the past two centuries.

This has led to the formulation of a half-sarcastic judgement – Comparative Literature as the eternal discipline to come. In fact, the comparativist method of study is more sensitive than others to the shifting meaning of such concepts as “identity”, “otherness” and especially “borders” (the latter are movable by definition). Over the past fifteen years or so the impact of large scale social changes such as multiculturalism [Bernheimer, 1995] globalization [Saussy, 2006] and arguably Sept. 11th [Spivak, 2003], besides the development of new approaches especially in the anglo-saxon world (Area Studies, Cultural Studies) has led to a complex rethinking of the discipline. The apparent weakness due to the instability of the epistemic ground of the discipline, though, is also its strength: comparative literature has developed a capacity to quickly adapt to changes in a global scale, today as quick and pressing as never before. As Robert Wenginger puts it,

Comparative Literature is neither in decline nor on the rise but simply changing and adapting to new circumstances and contexts, institutional, communicational, theoretical, methodological, disciplinary, literary. [...] Comparative Literature, in whatever constellation – with or without Cultural Studies, with or without Area Studies, within or without Translation Studies – provides a link between the disciplines, whether these be located in the humanities, the arts or the sciences. It is a space where these disciplines can creatively mingle and intersect, symbiotize, synergize, exchange, negotiate and bargain without immediately posing the risk of exclusion and banishment for the transgressional transdisciplinary practitioner.²⁹

However, looking back at scholarly contributions over the past forty years, Wenginger’s view does not appear to differ significantly from the ideas shared by academics well before the era of globalization. As early as 1978, Clements felt the

²⁹ Wenginger, Robert. *Comparative Literature at a Crossroads? An Introduction*, in “Comparative Critical Studies 3”, 2006, xi-xix.

need to make the soil under the comparatists' feet firmer by describing rather than define, as he insisted, the scope of the discipline by comparing definitions given in the previous ten years.³⁰ Also, he mentions five different comparative approaches: themes/myths; genres/forms; movements/eras; interrelations of literature with other arts and disciplines; the involvement of literature as illustrative of evolving literary theory and criticism. Finally, he lists three chief dimensions: the Western heritage (French-English, German-French, etc.), the East-West relation, and the World literature.³¹

The French comparatists, too, have devoted considerable attention to methodology. Comparative literature does not, as Pageaux³² reminds us, *compare* literatures. Rather than setting a relation between a work of art and the tradition which produced it, the comparativist critic looks for relations between texts or groups of texts, literatures and cultures. It opposes *enclosures* in literary criticism: "Le comparatiste a fait de 'généralités' sa specialization".³³

The comparative method, according to Pageaux, requires i) a careful planning, especially in choosing texts according to a thematic criterion; ii) analysing titles of a group of works, which are often revealing; iii) hard work devoted to extensive reading and preparation, since it is necessary to work both *on* the texts and *between* them. The spirit can be compared to Goethe's idea, around 1827, to write a

³⁰"Comparative Literature is the history of international literary relations. The comparatist stands at the frontiers, linguistic or national, and surveys the exchanges of themes, ideas, books, or feelings between two or several literatures. [Guyard, Marius-Francois:1969]. "[Comparative Literature] provides a method of broadening one's perspectives in the approach to single works of literature – a way of looking beyond the narrow boundaries of national frontiers [...] and to see the relations between literature and other spheres of human activities [Aldridge, Owen:1969]. "[Comparative Literature] is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression. [Remak, Henry:1970]. All quoted by Clements, Robert J., *Comparative Literature as Academic Discipline* (New York:The Modern Language Association of America) 1978, p.5.

³¹ However, the last chapter "The future of a Discipline", maintains that the ideal Ph.D. should be able to speak three foreign languages besides English (French, German, Latin) if he/she wanted to occupy a firm position in the job market. This appears excessively eurocentric today.

³² Pageaux, Daniel-Henry, *La littérature générale et comparée* (Paris:Armand Colin) 1994.

³³ Looking back at the history of comparative criticism, although very ancient examples can be found, Pageaux regards Madame de Stael's fundamental essays *De l'Allemagne* and *De la Littérature* the real milestones of comparative literature. The critic who should be credited with being the founder of the comparative method is Jean-Jacques Ampère at the Athénée in Marseilles, who had envisaged in 1830 "a comparative history of the arts and letters of all peoples". This definition still applies according to Pageaux to comparative studies. Talking about more recent contributions, he pays homage to Paul van Tieghem, who published for Colin *La Littérature Comparée* (1931), with the declared objective of joining the knittings of national literatures in order to make a universal history of literature.

Weltliteratur, to make poetry a “heritage of mankind”; or to Levi-Strauss, who states in *Race et histoire* that every national literature aims at a coalition with the others, without losing its peculiarities.” Ureña’s idea is not very different: the aim of every national literature is keeping its peculiarities, in a harmonious relation with the others.

The concept of linguistic, literary or cultural frontier is also crucial in comparative literature. What makes the basis of a national literature? Is it the presence of a nation state, the perception of sharing a common historical, social, political and ethical background? Brunel (*Précis de littérature comparée*, PUF 1989) refers to three principles to find texts suitable for a comparative study: *émergence* (looking for foreign revealing words); *flexibilité* (the resistance of the foreign element in the text); *irradiation* (the irradiation point of an element in a text).

In conclusion, the object of study for comparative literature does not belong to any cultural domain, but has relations with all of them. It is neutral, and its territory is *utopian*. Following the same line of thought, Tieghem proposed the term “mesology” or the study of something which is *in between*. In 1967 Pichois-Rousseau, again for Colin, published his manual of comparative literature, giving a famous definition: comparative literature is the “methodological art ... of setting relations between literatures and other domains of artistic expression or knowledge.” [p.12] Important contributions also came from Girmanounsky and Cornea-Datu in Eastern Europe; then Friederick Malone (*Outline of Comparative Literature*, 1954) and A.O.Aldridge in the U.S.; besides Cioranescu in Spain.

More recent contributions –following, as stated above, the changes on a global scale– have focused on the re-definition of such concepts as “otherness” and “boundaries”, rather than on the re-definition of the discipline. This has greatly affected the function of travel writing: it can be argued that multiculturalism, globalization and mass immigration on the one hand, and the coming of the so called post-colonial literatures, has made possible a direct confrontation with “otherness” in the Western World. The mediation of travel writers to understand identities has probably come to an end. According to Bessière and Pageaux’s re-formulation (*Perspectives*

Comparatistes, 1999) the object of study of Comparative Literature can be reduced to two basic points: “la reconnaissance du lieu de l’autre et le passage que suppose toute identité” [1999:13].

The comparatist perspectives nearest to the this work are to be found in the *imagologie littéraire*, as proposed by Jean-Marc Moura. The author admits a certain difficulty in finding an equivalent domain in other cultural areas: in the anglo-saxon world, in particular, the domain is part of Literature of Travel, a definition which he thinks is too general. *Imagologie* is defined as a *pratique de fait*, which precedes a definition. It studies images in a triple sense: “toute image étudiée est image *de...* dans un triple sens: image d’un référent étranger, image provenant d’une nation ou d’une culture, image créée par la sensibilité particulière d’un auteur” [184]. Moura asks himself whether it is possible to group diverse post-colonial literatures under the same label:

Quoi de commun entre la littérature algérienne en français, et la littérature antillaise en français ou en anglais, entre la littérature indienne anglophone et la littérature africaine anglophone, francophone ou lusophone? Précisément, l’imagologie permet de répondre. Ces œuvres ont très souvent pour centre le problème des représentations culturelles (de soi, de l’autre). Elles insistent ainsi sur la notion d’identité (culturelle ou nationale), à la fois aliénée et recherchée.³⁴

In this sense, travel writing performs a contrary and complementary function to post-colonial literatures: understanding the identity of a place *perceived as other, as seen* from the outside (chiefly through the European/Western eye). Following this line of thought, I regarded the presence of an effort to define/understand the otherness/identity of a visited place not as an element to impose the label of ‘travel book’ on a text, but rather as a mark of excellence in performing the cultural function assigned to travel literature in the relevant period of time.

Considering the reception of a work was also a principle I followed throughout. In Europe, particularly in France, studies in the *réception comparée* have a little niche in comparative literature, although the studies in this particular fields remain rare. As Claude de Grève puts it, the *réception comparée* deals with “l’accueil, la diffusion, le

³⁴ Moura, Jean-Marc, in Bessière, Jean/Pageaux, Daniel-Henri (ed. by) *Perspectives Comparatistes* (Paris:Honoré Champion) 1999, pp. 181-191.

succès ou le rejet, le silence même – ce qu'on peut aussi appeler une « réception zéro » -, l'évaluation, l'interprétation (comme discours critique et/ou comme appropriation créatrice) par le biais de l'édition et de la traduction, et de la complexité de relations qu'entretiennent ces composantes entre elles..."³⁵ This recommendation appeared sensible to me, especially if integrated with a reflection on the year/place of publication of a work, besides the historical context and circumstances in which the journey was conceived – before being received, a work has to be completed, proposed as an editorial project, printed and finally promoted, for a particular scope. These elements are meaningful *a priori*.

Further reflection was prompted by Spivak's provocative title, *Death of a Discipline*. It reflects a certain uneasiness with the traditional idea that Comparative Literature, after globalization, seems to believe that boundaries still exist:

The limit of that moving frontier of Area Studies/Comparative Literature [descends from it being] always a “discipline to come” through a type of language learning that fosters access to textuality. Part of this uncertain future is the growing virtualization of frontiers. What we are witnessing in the postcolonial and globalizing world is a return of the demographic, rather than territorial, frontiers that are larger than capitalism. [p. 14-15].

Spivak's criticism moves from the assumption that Comparative Literature has sprung from cultural colonialism, mainly Eurocentric. Area Studies, on the other hand, have been mainly centred on the US. The time has come to depoliticise this approach, and make the two disciplines work together to foster the development of marginalized literatures (e.g. in Africa or Asia) rather than absorb them. A merge of the two disciplines can be pursued by aiming at planetarity.

Another central problem is the redefinition of collectivities in an age of multiculturalism and globalization: “we have to ask the question of the formation of collectivities without necessarily prefabricated contents”, as “in order to assume culture we must assume collectivity” [2003:p. 26 and 27]. The way out, in Spivak's words, is a redefinition of collectivities de-othering them:

...anthropology is deflected through mere identity claims in a simulacrum of the project of other-ing the subject. For if anthropology classically studies the

³⁵ De Grève, Claude, *ibid.*, pp. 211-229.

other as community, Ethnic/Cultural studies cathects the community as “others”. But given the ruling ideology of “the authority of experience”, we may be in danger of seeking the community as no more than a collection of ourselves.

The emergence of new scholarly inclinations towards Cultural Studies and Area Studies (especially in the US) stir a redefinition of the subject.

I believe this is not enough, though, to proclaim the death of a discipline. As stated above, the re-assessing of the meaning and use of fundamental key-words (such as “otherness”, “national identity” and “boundaries”) does not undermine the epistemic grounding of the discipline. Perhaps Weninger is right, though, when he maintains that “there is no such thing as comparative literature”:³⁶ Citing Gadamer, the status of a science is not definable on the basis of the object of study, but by its method. In this sense, I believe a comparative method – or at least a comparative approach or mental habit – will exert a fundamental critical function as long as place and cultural otherness exists.

³⁶ “Today I prefer to spare my breath, stating laconically, and citing Peter Brooks in the process, that Comparative Literature is the quintessential 'undisciplined discipline'. On occasion, I might even add, somewhat cheekily (and citing no one, I believe), 'there is no such thing as comparative literature.'” *Comparative Literature at a Crossroads? An Introduction*, in “Comparative Critical Studies 3, 1-2”, 2006, xi-xix.

Chapter 1

How Sardinia became “unknown” to Europe (Roman times to the early 17th century)

1.1. *Early maps of Sardinia*

In the seventeenth century Sardinia was much more unknown in Europe than it had been in Roman times. The most detailed map available in the Middle Ages shows the island somewhere in the Balearics, and not much bigger than Minorca. The image of the island scholars had, was evidently based on myth or ancient tales. Although the bases of cartography can be traced back to Babylonian times, Strabo (1st century B.C.) is credited with writing the first comprehensive descriptive work. Ptolemy in the 2nd century A.D. wrote a compendium of the geographical knowledge, making the first reticule and giving the co-ordinates for more than eight thousand places. But by the Middle Ages his *Geographia* (unlike his astronomical works) had been forgotten.

i) Medieval Maps

Medieval maps were not drawn according to a single model, but there was a great variety of forms. The Middle Ages had no word for ‘map’: of the two Latin words which were used at the time, *MAPPA* meant ‘cloth’ and *CARTA* simply meant ‘paper’, or more extensively ‘drawing’ or ‘document’, as the representation was frequently accompanied by a *DESCRIPTIO*.³⁷ According to Jeremy Black’s classification, the simplest maps of the world can be described either as T-O or Y-O, depending on whether they are obtained by inscribing a T or a Y in a O.³⁸ These are, however, stylized diagrams of the world rather than proper maps.

The *list maps*, as Blake defines them, contain place names and short descriptions, while the *zonal maps* present “the ancient Greek thesis, attributed to Parmenides c.

³⁷ “...this imprecision of language indicates to us that the visual representation of physical reality, so highly prized by ourselves, was perhaps less important to people of an earlier era”, Black, Jeremy, *Maps and history*. (New Haven: Yale University Press) 1997. p.2.

³⁸ The most well-known examples can be found in book XIV.2 of Isidore’s *Etymologies*.

515 BC, that the world is divided into five zones: two frigid at opposite poles, two temperate, and one torrid zone at the equator.” Finally, the *detailed maps* with the indication of a variety of cities, mountains, rivers, peoples “all allocated, however bizarrely, in accordance with some idea of spatial organization”: good examples are the Vatican map (800 AD) and the Albi map (ninth century).³⁹ It is in these maps that we can see the oldest representations of the island of Sardinia – actually so imprecise that one could hardly distinguish it from other islands, if the name was not printed on it.⁴⁰ The representation of the physical world, however, had to be reconciled with a literal reading of the Bible, and this caused certain problems to cartographers: references to “waters above the earth” (Gen 1.6) or to Jerusalem at the centre of the earth (Ez. 5.5) caused obvious difficulties. The most accurate medieval map of the world was actually produced in the Arabic world and reached Europe thanks to al-Idrisi, the famous geographer at Frederick II’s Norman court in Sicily, in the twelfth century.⁴¹

ii) Renaissance maps

Humanism brought an enthusiasm for the works of ancient authors. In the sixteenth century, with the development of trade and travelling both to the east and the west, large parts of the world, including of course Sardinia, had to be literally put on the map. When Holland became the centre for the production of geographical descriptions in the seventeenth century (often thanks to financing from the East India Company), quite accurate maps were produced, notably by Juan de la Cosa in 1500,

³⁹ Ibid., p.7.

⁴⁰ An example can be the map of the world in the *Polychronicon* by Ranulf Higden (British Library Royal MS 14.C.IX, fol. 2v), where an elongated rectangular drawing reads “Sardynia”. Curiously, the rectangular drawing which reads “Baleares” has roughly the same surface of Sicily and Sardinia together.

⁴¹ Abu Abdullah Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Ibn Idris Ash-Sharif (or more briefly, Al-Idrisi) was born in 1099 in Ceuta, Spain. He was educated in Cordova and travelled various distant places, besides Europe, to gather geographical data. Al-Idrisi's fame and competence eventually led Roger II, the Norman King of Sicily, to invite him to produce an up-to-date world map. Al-Idrisi made a ball of silver weighing approximately 400 kilograms and meticulously recorded on it the seven continents with trade routes, lakes and rivers, major cities, plains and mountains, and included distances. The globe was accompanied by his book *Al-Kitab al-Rujari* (Roger's Book), also called *Nuzhat al-Mushtaq fi Ikhtiraq al-Afaq*, (“The Delight of Him Who Desires to Travel Through the Climates”), a geographical encyclopaedia which contains detailed maps and information on Africa and Asia, as well as on European countries. Later, he compiled a more comprehensive encyclopedia, entitled *Rawd-Unnas wa-Nuzhat al-Nafs* (“Pleasure of Men and Delight of Souls”). He died between 1166 and 1180.

and by Pedro and Jorge Reinel in 1505. Also, in 1507 Martin Waldseemüller, basing on Ptolemy and Vespucci, drew a map of the world where America was named for the first time and in 1544 Sebastian Cabot produced his famous globe. Finally Ortelius⁴² (Abraham Oertel), with the co-operation of other geographers, published the first atlas (the *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, 1570), the first edition of which contained sixty-nine maps, including the New World, on fifty-three sheets, with textual descriptions in the versos. The adoption of a new reticule after the mathematical method introduced by Gerard Kreemer⁴³ meant that the commonly accepted representations of the world – including the seas – had to be revised. Between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries the world was put on paper following new patterns. Geography, in other words, had started again from where it had stopped, that is from the ancient maps and authors. Copies of Ptolemy's, Strabo's and Pausania's works were popularized in universities and new works – addressed to and often patronised by aristocrats – were produced. After Oertel's pioneering book, the publications of maps and atlases of the world increased considerably. The first accurate map of the island was drawn by the Sardinian lawyer and “heretic” theologian Sigismondo Arquer⁴⁴ for Münster's⁴⁵ *Cosmographia*

⁴² Abraham Oertel (Antwerpen 1527 - 1598) published his map of the world, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, in 1570, which included maps drawn by thirty-three cartographers, and eighty-seven geographers from all over Europe, who based on the acquisitions of recent explorations. In 1578 he published the *Synonima Geographica*, a table of correspondences between old and new place names.

⁴³ Gerard Kreemer (also known with his latin name, Mercatone) studied in Lovania and published several maps, starting in the 1530s. In 1541 made a terrestrial globe for the Spanish emperor Charles V, and in 1551 a celestial one. In Duisburg he continued drawing maps of Europe, editing Ptolomaeus's maps and writing a universal history (*Chronologia*, 1569); but his reputation rests on the use of isogonic projections in the making of maps, which allowed a critical revision of all existing maps.

⁴⁴ Sigismondo Arquer came from an aristocratic family (a member of his family was an advisor to Viceroy Cardona) and studied Law in Pisa and Theology in Siena. He contributed to Münster's *Cosmographia Universalis* with a *Sardiniae brevis historia descriptio*, which included a map of Sardinia and one of Cagliari. He was given a prestigious title by the Spanish crown (procurator fiscal for Sardinia), but his passion for geography was at the origin of his troubles. Rival families were successful in presenting him as a heretic due to his co-operation with the Lutheran Münster. He was tried in Madrid but acquitted in 1556; but after a second process in Toledo in 1563, in which new evidence was produced, the St. Office Inquisition condemned him. After being jailed and tortured for eight years, he was burned alive on June 4th, 1571.

⁴⁵ A Franciscan monk who accepted the Reformation after meeting Luther in Worms, he studied Greek, Hebrew and Mathematics at Basel University. He became professor of Hebrew and Eastern languages at Heidelberg. He published a *Germania descriptio* (1530), the *Novus orbis* (1532) and an edition of the Bible in Hebrew, with a Latin translation (1535), an edition of Ptolemy's *Geographia* (1540). His masterpiece was the *Cosmographia Universalis*, in six books with 471 engravings and 26 maps, which took him eighteen years of research and was published in Basel in 1544 and had about 50

Universalis.

Among the early cartographers who inserted Sardinia in their maps we can also mention Wilhelm and Joannes Bleau ⁴⁶

iii) Two 17th century cartographers

The two geographers who popularized an idea of Sardinia in modern times, however, were Pierre d'Avity⁴⁷ and Philip Clüver⁴⁸, who published their chief works in 1614 and 1619 respectively. The works are interesting for us, as the two geographers were not only concerned with the physical description of the land or with giving useful information to travellers, but also – and primarily – in giving a geo-political (as D'Avity) or geo-ethnographic account of the land. But although D'Avity and Clüver are contemporaries, and despite the fact that the time span between the works is only

editions in less than a century.

⁴⁶ Wilhelm Blaeu, after studying in Denmark, settled in Amsterdam where he published a *Nova Universi Terrarum Orbis Mappa* (1605), the atlas *Theatrum Mundi* (1619) and completing Ortelius's and Mercator's atlases with 103 new maps (*Appendix Theatri A. Orтели et Atlantis G. Mercatoris Continens Tabulas Geographicas Diversorum Orbis Regionum Nunc Primum Editas Cum Descripionibus*, 1631). He worked as a cartographer for the West India Company. His work was continued by his son Joannes, whose chief work was *Atlas Maior, sive Cosmographia Blaviana, qua solum, coelum, accuratissime describuntur* in eleven books (1662).

⁴⁷ Pierre d'Avity was born in Tournon in 1573. He had the reputation of being the best poet in the Ardeche region in south France, and was made Seigneur de Montmartin. His most influential work *Les Estats, Empires et Principautez du Monde*, was published in 1614, translated into English one year later, and re-published several times after that. He died in 1635. Victor Hugo drew from this work for his *Le Rhin*.

⁴⁸ Philip Clüver was born in Danzig in 1580, the son of a wealthy merchant, and died in Leiden in 1623. *Oratio in obitum clarissimi celeberrimique viri Philippi Cluverii geographi* by D.Hensius, a close friend of his, is the main source of information on his life. As a boy he studied foreign languages, and attended the king's court in Cracow and at the emperor's court in Prague. In 1600 he started his studies at the Academic Gymnasium, and continued them in Leiden, where he started reading law but soon turned to historic geography under the influence of Joseph Scaliger, the learned Italian –son of the famous philologist Giulio Cesare Scaligero- who after travelling in France, Germany, Italy and Scotland accepted the reformed religion and was called to teach at Leiden. After a journey round Europe, Clüver returned to Leiden, where in 1615 took Joseph Scaliger's post as a professor and published his first works: *De Tribus Rheni alveis atque ostiis, et de quinque populis quondam accolis* (Leiden:1611, in-4); *Germania antiqua, libri tres, nec non Vindelicia et Noricum* (Leiden:1616 and 1630, in-fol.); *Siciliae antiquae libri duo; idem Sardinia et Corsica* (Leiden:1619); *Italia antiqua* (Leiden:1624, in-fol.); *Introductionis in universam geographiam, tam veterem quam novam, libri sex* (Leiden:1629). This work, in particular, became a classic manual for about a century in Dutch and European Universities. He is thought to be the founder of historical geography. He is also credited with having demonstrated that the interpretation of ancient maps was impossible without personal observation of the present conditions.

five years, their views of Sardinia reflect a completely different approach, and ultimately a completely different view of the world.

1.2. *Pierre d'Avity (alias Davity) and his translators*

Pierre d'Avity's book was first published in 1614 with the title *Les estats, empires, et principavtez dv monde, representez par la description des pays, moeurs des habitans, richesses des prouinces, les forces, le gouvernement, la religion, et les princes qui ont gouverné chacun estat, avec l'origine de toutes les religions, et de tous les cheualiers et ordres militaires par le sr. D.T.V.Y. gentilhomme ordre. de la chambre du roy*⁴⁹. The work covers, apart from almost the whole of Europe, most of the Spanish dominions in America, Asia and Africa, the *estate* (state) of the Knights of Malta, and in the near East countries like Turkey, besides China and Japan in the far East.

The success and the prestige it enjoyed in Europe is confirmed by the fact that the following year it had its first English translation by Edward Grimstone (*The estates, empires, & principallities of the world. Represented by ye description of countries, maners of inhabitants, riches of prouinces, forces, gouvernement, religion; and the princes that haue governed in euery estate*), with a dedication to the Earl of Suffolk and an *Avthor's Preface to the Reader*. The work was immensely popular and until his death in 1635, Pierre d'Avity (alias Davity), continued to gather and add new data to the work, which continued to be published long after his death: by 1665, twenty-five new editions were published, often with a slightly different title to correspond contents. Notably in 1635 the title was *Estats, Empires, Royaumes et principavtez dv monde par le sr. D.T.V.Y. gentilhomme de la chambre du roy. Edition nouvelle reueüe et augmentee* (Paris:Olivier de Varennes) and in 1643, eight years after the author's death, the title was *Le Monde ou la description générale de ses quatre parties. Avec tous ses empires, royaumes, estats et republicues. Faicte par Pierre d'Avity*.

⁴⁹ [À.S.Omer:Chez Charles Boscard, imprimeur] 1614.

The former describes the land from a political point of view, rather than geographic; Sardinia is therefore dealt with in the Spanish Empire section, of which the island was part between 1420 and 1708. The latter includes a *Discours Universel* (pp. 1-358) which is a sort of *summa* of human knowledge before the collapse of the Ptolemaic system, which includes notions of science, philosophy, history, religion. Its parts include *Le monde* (which is to be understood as *The universe*) and its components: *Le Ciel* (Empire, Primum mobile, cercles celestes) and *Les Elements* (*feu*, which includes the description of the sun and such phenomena as meteors and volcanic eruptions; *air*, with the description of the winds; *eau*, with rivers and seas; and *terre*). The following sections include *l'homme* and the forces that control him: *le gouvernement* and *la religion*, including a long list of modern and ancient heresies. The second part starts with *Le Royome de France* (pp. 1-460), describing the physical and political characteristics and the economic conditions of each town and region.

The description of the island of Sardinia follows the pattern used to describe the other parts of the world, starting with measurements and then describing the *Qualité du Pays* (geography, flora and fauna), then the *Moeurs Anciennes* (history) and *Moeurs de ce Temps* (society), and finally *Richesses, Forces, Gouvernement, Religion* and *Princes*. The measurements shown are quite inaccurate in mathematical terms: “Les modernes luy donnent 240. milles de longueur, & 90. de largeur, & de tour cinq cens”; but the description of the country is even more generic, as it confuses north and south: “Cette isle est diuisée en deux regions ou parties, c’est à sçauoir au cap de Calaris, où elle est un peu montueuse, & au cap de Lugudor qui regarde l’Afrique” (1635:238). The mistake is passed on to the English translation, which also places Cagliari in the north and Logudoro in the south⁵⁰. The description continues mentioning the unhealthy air which was thought to produce the plague (probably to be understood as *malaria*, literally “bad air”) and fauna, following fantastic tales: “*Muscions qui ne se trouuent in nul autre lieu de l’Europe, & ressemblent fort aux cerfs*” (actually moufflons, similar to goats) are said to live

⁵⁰ This Island is diuided into two Regions or parts, That is to say, into the Cape of Calaris, which lyes towards Corsica, where it is somewhat rough and hillie: and into the Cape of Lugudor, which looks towards Africke” (1615:168)

there; there are no dangerous animals except for the fox and an unknown *petit animal semblable à l'araignée* (probably the little animal which was supposed to have a lethal bite, which is referred to in most ancient accounts of Sardinia, called *solifuga*). The only detail of its flora is that there is *vne herbe appellée Ranuncule, iadis Sardonique, qui fait retirer les nerfs de ceux qui en mangent, & les fait mourir en telle forte qu'ils semblent rire iusques au dernier soupir*. (1635:238) The *Moevrs de ce Temps* describe the inhabitants as *fort addonnez au travail & à la chasse, vsent volontiers de viandes grossieres, mais ils traictent courtoisement les estrangeres, & viuent paisiblement, combien qu'il y en a qui affeurent qu'ils sont plains de cruauté. Ils son fort addonnez à voler & à escumer sur la mer*.

The statement that the Sardinians were devoted to piracy is quite surprising, as historical chronicles tell a different story. The towns by the coastline were raided by North African pirates; in Spanish times an expedition led personally by king Charles V attacked and destroyed ships in Tunis in 1535, and his son Philip II reinforced the defence tower system all around the island. But this did not stop the towns along the coastline from being plundered by pirates, even as late as the eighteenth century. Concerning religion, d'Avity states that *Les Sardes sont Catholiques Romains & il y a des Inquisiteurs en ceste Isle, de mesme qu'en celle de Sicile*; and as regards its princes, the author states that the island was first Carthaginian, then Roman and finally occupied by *sarrazins* after the fall of the Empire. Then it was ruled by Pisa and Genoese families (which came to control the whole of the island thanks to a shrewd marriage policy), before the Pope took it from their hands and enfeoffed it to the Aragon king, thus forgetting a period of about seven hundred years in which it had autochthonous kingdoms, the four *Giudicati*.

This is the image of Sardinia to which Europeans had access thanks to translations. The English translation by Edward Grimeston is dedicated to *The most Noble and Worthie of all Titles, Thomas Earl of Syffolke, Lord High Treasurer of England*, and written after eight years spent in France, the Netherlands and Spain *for the publique seruice of this Estate*. The work can be read as independent, as the translator candidly says in his *The Translator to the Reader*:

I may not aduow it to be a mere translation, for I haue not tied my selfe strictly unto the lawes, but haue added vnto it in diuers places, wheras by my owne search and studie, I haue found somethings (happily not seene by him) which might beautifie the worke, and giue content vnto the Reader. I haue also in other places omitted some things, wherein my author had beene abused by the relations of others, and in some sort taxed the honour of some Nations, the which in my owne knowledge were mistaken [...] I haue also, treating of the Religion of euery State, bin forced to varie something from his phrase, but not from the truth of the subiect. (1615:s.p.)

These statements would perhaps disturb most contemporary theorists of translation; but in some parts the English version is actually more precise than the original. In many parts Grimeston adds to the information given by D'Avity, stating for example that "They haue store of cattle, and they send forth corne, hides, cheese, and they make excellent white wines". The rather imprecise information on the mouflons is edited as follows: "their skins and haire is like vnto the stagge, or as Strabo saith, a goat, and their hornes like to a sheepe, but bending backward: they liue in the mountains, and run verie swiftly, their skins being drest, are those which are called Cordouants. There are great store of wild Boares, Stages, and wild Goats for hunting [...]" (1616:169) The description of the general appearance and fortifications of towns is also amended:

There is also Oristagne, the which is not well peopled, by reason of the bad qualitie of the aire which growe, by the neerenesse of the fennes: it hath a port, and a riuier neere vnto it, which is the greatest of the whole Island. Then haue you Sassari, a towne of importance, where there is an Aqueduct to be seene which is twelve miles long. We may not omit Alghes-Bosa [actually two different towns], a good towne, a wholesome aire, and a fertile countrie, with a spacious hauen where the ships of Genoa and of Catalognia doe commonly lie. Besides this port which is six miles long, the Island hath two others able to receiue any armie, the one is that of Cape Gallea, and the other Carbonara, both defart. (1615:169)

1.3. *Philipp Clüver*

Cluverius had a solid humanistic culture, which he had acquired at the school of Joseph Scaliger; but he also had a critical approach, which we might call scientific, in analysing and discussing the sources. His *Sicilia antiqua, cum minoribus insulis, ei adjacentibus, item Sardinia & Corsica*, with an *Epistula dedicatoria* and a

Praefatio ad siculos [1619], consists of two books and two added chapters, the first of which devoted to Sardinia and the second to Corsica.

The author's sound humanistic culture is shown by the variety of the sources he uses, often quoted in the original Greek and translated into Latin, and by the attention to philological accuracy. A good example is the discussion of the origin of the ancient names given to the Island: Ichnusa, Sandalyon and Sardinia, implicitly stating that understanding the origin of the name of the island corresponded to understanding the origin of the peoples who inhabited it. The first reference is to myth: the Island of Sardinia was said to have been colonised by Sardus, one of Hercules' sons, who arrived from beyond the sea with a multitude of followers: "Sardinia Insula a Græcis dicitur Σαρδῶ, Sardo [...] Romanis vero Sardi. Nomen id unde originem traxerit, planè incertum est. Quidpe Græcorum fabulas sequi piget. Sic Martianus Capella, lib. VI: Sardinia à Sardo, filio Herculis adpellata. Et Solinus cap. X: Nihil attinet dicere, ut Sardus Hercule et Norax Mercurio procreati, quum alter ab Lybia, alter abusque Tartesso Hispaniæ, in hosce fineis permeassent, à Sardo terræ, à Norace Norae opido Nomen datum." [1619:477]; "Isidorus dicto lib. XIII cap. VI. Sardus, Hercule procreatus, cum magna multitudine è Lybia profectus, Sardiniam occupavit; et ex suo vocabulo insulæ nomen dedit." (481). The origin of the Greek names is traced back to the shape of the Island: *Sandalyotis*, meaning 'sandal', and *Ichnusa*, meaning 'footprint': "Plinius lib. III cap. VIII: Sardiniam Timæus Sandalio tin appellavit, ab effigie solæ, Myrsilus Ichnusam à similitudine vestigii. Martianus, dicto loco: Sardinia, à Sardo, filio Herculis, adpellata, habet formæ humanæ plantæ." [1619:477]

As regards the people, he quotes a long passage by Pausanias (2nd century A.D.) in which several colonizations are referred to: Sardus who came from Africa with his followers, then a group of Greek colonists who followed Aristæus, then Norax, Mercurius's son, the general from Hispania who founded Nora, and finally a bunch of Greek warriors who followed Iolaus (*Herculis ex fratre nepos*), who founded Olbia and gave his name to the *Ilienses*, one of the Sardinian peoples, which was forced to occupy the mountains under the pressure of an invasion of Carthaginians from the south, who had founded Caralis and Solci. But despite his respect for the

sources, Clüver's attitude is critical, and at the end of the presentation of the various accounts, he ponders the following solutions:

Hactenus variorum auctorum de priscis Sardiniae incolis attulimus narrationes, in quibus nonnullae inter se discrepant: aliae etiam minus probabiles videntur. Primum Pausanias saretur se nescire, quondam ab initio nomen habuerit insula apud primos indigenas [...] Quis igitur temere crediderit, Graecos, neglecta Sicilia, insula longe praestantiore, silique multo propinquore, evoluisse Sardiniam petere? Item, quomodo Sardus primum insulae nomen Ichnusa mutavit in Sardinia vocabulum; quando illud insulae non fuit proprium; sed tantum a Graecis mercatoribus inter Graecos usurpatum? [...] Hanc igitur Sili Pausaniaeque sententiam, ut plane absurdam atque ridiculam, merito quis damnaverit." [1619:484]

Then Clüver discusses measurements and distances, and the description becomes more scientific, though with an eye to ancient authors: "Plinii lib. III cap. VII: Sardinia abest Africae Caliritano promontorio ducenta millia" (492). Here the sources are mainly Ptolomaeus, with his *De Geographia libri Octo*⁵¹ and the *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti*,⁵² the Vatican copy of which Clüver had read. The latter is especially used for distances along the main Roman roads in the island, given in M.P. (*milia passuum*, thousands of steps; one thousand steps making a Roman mile) following the common way to measure distances: troops were asked to count the steps during their marches and tell geographers. Although it is not always clear which towns are referred to – all distances are taken from a town called Tibula, possibly but not certainly modern Castelsardo, in the north of the Island; locating

⁵¹ Ptolemy, who gave Greek astronomy its final form in the second century A.D., did the same for geography and cartography. His massive work on the subject summed up and criticized the work of earlier writers, offered instruction on how to lay out maps by three different methods of projection, provided coordinates for some eight thousand places, and dealt with such basic concepts as geographical latitude and longitude. In Byzantium, in the thirteenth century, Ptolemaic maps were reconstructed and attached to Greek manuscripts of the text. And in the fifteenth century, a Latin translation of this text, with maps, proved a sensation in the world of the book. A best seller both in the age of luxurious manuscripts and in that of print, Ptolemy's "Geography" became immensely influential. Columbus found inspiration in Ptolemy's exaggerated estimate of the size of Asia for his own fateful journey to the west. Ptolemy's "Handy Tables," intended for practical computation (edited by Theon of Alexandria in the fourth century A.D.) became, the basis of later astronomical tables in Greek, Arabic, and Latin. The "Handy Tables" allow the calculation of solar, lunar, and planetary positions and eclipses of the sun and moon far more rapidly than the tables included in the "Almagest."

⁵² The book, compiled in the 3rd century A.D. by an anonymous author and dedicated to Antoninus Augustus (probably the emperor known as Caracalla), has two parts: the former is a record of the Roman road network and the places to be found along it, the latter a list of harbours and coastline descriptions. It became therefore a reference book for travellers and sailors.

some of the places mentioned is a matter of inquiry for modern philologists: the *Itinerarium Antonini* is still the main source of information for historians. In Clüver's time some of the roads (especially those which were not paved) had disappeared, but he follows the Roman distances along the main itineraries, basically four.⁵³

In classical sources we sometimes find that Sardinia is bigger than Sicily, and that Corsica (of course incorrectly) is thought to be smaller than Crete, Cyprus and even Euboea: "Scylax: Maxima est Sardinia; secunda Sicilia, tertia Creta, quarta Cyprus, quinta Euboea, sexta Corsica, septima Lesbos" [1619:478] The economy of the island is again described by referring back to classical authors, who described its fertility and riches, and the common definition of "Rome's feeders" given to Sicily and Sardinia: "Valerius Maximus, lib VII cap. VI, Siciliam et Sardiniam benignissimas urbis Romanæ nutrices adpellat." [1619:479]

The description of the island's fauna and flora, though, mixes reality and imagination. Again, Clüver's ideas are not taken from observation, but from classical texts. After saying that in Sardinia there are no ferocious animals or poisonous snakes ("Serpentes certè neque hominum generi infensi neque venenosi, aut lupi, in ea insula gignuntur"), Clüver refers to plants and animals unknown to biology, but which were *known* to live in Sardinia: a plant which gave convulsions and made people die laughing ("una est herba perniciosa, apio persimilis, qui eam comederint, ridentes emoriuntur"),⁵⁴ and a poisonous spider which escaped the sun to live in the dark, and was therefore called *solifuga*.⁵⁵ The author quoted here is Isidorus:

In eâ neque serpens gignitur, neque lupo: sed solifuga tantùm; animal exiguum, hominibus perniciosum. Venenum ibi quoque non nascitur: nisi

⁵³ The first to the south-west and Sulci; the second across the plain of Campidano and to Turris Libisonis in the north west; the third along the east coast and to Tibula in the north east; and finally an unpaved one through the mountains in the centre of the island.

⁵⁴ Clüver did not probably read the "heretic" Arquer in his *Sardiniae brevis historia et description* (1534) had written: "Huius herbae Dioscorides quoque mentionem fecit, eamque ranunculi speciem esse dicit: et qua via posit ei succurri qui eam comederit docet. Certè ego nunquam eam vidi, nec homines unquam audivi ridentium more interire." in Cinzia Thermes (ed. by), (Cagliari: Gianni Trois editore) 1987, p. 21.

⁵⁵ Again, Arquer expressed his doubts: "Tradiderunt quoque veteres Solifugam exiguum et venenosum animal araneis seu formicis simile in ea insula inveniri: at ego nec animans istud nec homines eius veneno interemptos unquam vidi.", *ibidem*, p. 21.

herba, per scriptores plurimos et poetas memorata; apiastro similis, quae hominibus rictus contrahit; et quali ridenteis interimit. [1619:481]

The climate is mild, but the sun which makes her so happy is also the origin of its being malarial in the summer: “Strabo dicto lib. V: [...] At bonitate soli oppositum est vitium, quòd per æstatem insula morbosa est” (480). The idea that the air of Sardinia was poisonous persisted till the beginning of the twentieth century.

After giving his description, Clüver resumes the discussion about the name of the Island, and the succession of people who inhabited it: certainly the Greeks travelled to Sardinia to trade (*mercimonii causa*) though Clüver shows that he cannot answer some of the questions because of some mistakes; notably, that the Greeks travelled to Sardinia before Sardus:

Item, quomodò Sardus primum insulæ nomen Ichnusa mutavit in Sardinia vocabulum; quod illud insulæ non fuit proprium; sed tantum à Græcis mercatoribus inter Græcos usurpatum? Ut Trinacriæ nomen in Sicilia?”.

Chapter 2

The discovery of Sardinia: Nineteenth century travellers

The event which brought the island into a North-European orbit was the peace of Utrecht (1708), the series of treaties that put an end to the War of the Spanish Succession, marking the end of the French expansion and fostering the rise of the British Empire. As established by the treaty between England and France on 11th April 1713, Louis XIV recognized the English succession as established in the House of Hanover; the renunciation of the claims to the French throne by Louis's grandson, Philip V of Spain, was confirmed. Also, Spain gave Gibraltar and Minorca to Great Britain, and Sicily (exchanged in 1720 for Sardinia) to the Savoy house. The alliance between Britain and the Austrian Empire needed the help of the house of Savoy to keep the *status quo* between Austria and France; and the role of buffer state gave the Dukes of Savoy –whose ambitions of expanding to Milan and northern Italy grew after they put the Sardinian crown on their head – the opportunity to ask the superpowers conspicuous concessions in return for their role. In 1743 a *Definitive treaty of Peace, Union, Friendship and Mutual Defence between the crowns of Great Britain, Hungary and Sardinia* was concluded at Worms (2-13 September). The diplomatic tones are quite solemn in stating friendship, but establishes precise limitations to the ambitions of Sardinia: “George the Second, by the Grace of God, king of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, [...] and our good brother the King of Sardinia and of our good Sister the Queen of Hungary and Bohemia” concluded a treaty which regulated the ambitions of each State. Article III states that the Savoy King “renounces by name, and forever [...] to his pretended rights upon the state of Milan” (p.15). This promise was kept for a long time, but not for ever: Milan became Sardinian in 1859, just two years before Italy was unified under the Savoy rule. Also, it was agreed that the British keep a naval force in the Mediterranean Sea: “As long as it shall be necessary [...] and as long as the danger of the Allies, and of Italy, shall demand it, his Majesty the king of Great Britain engages to keep in the Mediterranean Sea a strong Squadron of Ships of War, and

bomb Vessels, and Fire-Ships. (p.17) All this led to an interest in Sardinia which was not only military, but also commercial: Lord Nelson, when in 1809 he was sent to watch the Sardinian coast for fear of a French invasion, repeatedly wrote to Lord Hobart, the British Minister of War, asking to start negotiations to purchase the island.

2.1. British Travellers

The interest of British authors in Sardinia dates from the end of the eighteenth century. A late translation of the Sicilian chapter of D'Avity's book shows not only that the fascination which the exotic Mediterranean Islands exerted had not died out, but also gives a rather obvious estimate of how profitable a purchase of Sardinia from the Savoy would be. In 1784 D.Macnab⁵⁶ wrote a translation from the French of D'Avity's classic, to which a description of Sardinia is added, and published it in Falkirk with Patrick Mair, at his own expenses. The book (*An Exact Description of the Island and Kingdom of Sicily, its provinces, Towns and Remarkable Places: As well as the Islands belonging to it. To which is added a short Narrative of the Island and Kingdom of Sardinia.*) is dedicated to His Mighty Highness, George III's son, to show his devotion and reveal some "intelligence". The author states that he is worried about what people say of the Prince in Scotland – as he had happened to hear in a coffee-house while he was reading the newspaper only a short time before. A man wearing most elegant green silk clothes (possibly someone the future George IV might have identified) said that the Prince was ready to take news from prejudice, "which [...] rendered your Highness an Antipode to common sense". He adds that the Prince was blamed for considering with indulgence "*seditions Libels and Pamphlets which fomented the unthinking multitude*" written by pamphleteers with the encouragement of Catholic Majesties then at war with Britain (the Prince Regent would secretly marry only one year later, in 1785, the Catholic widow Maria

⁵⁶ D.Macnab is unfortunately unknown to biographical dictionaries. He might be a Donald or a Duncan according to the family tree in the *Outline History of Clan Macnab and its Lands* published by the Macnab Memorial Trust in 2003. Mr. James Charles Macnab of Macnab, the current chief of the Clan, could only suggest it might be a member of the French branch of the family. An attempt to obtain information from the Paris Macnabs led nowhere.

Fitzherbert without his father's permission). After stating his love for the Prince, and his readiness “to risk [his] life upon honourable terms to serve [him]”, he recommends that the Prince “observe temperance and keep constantly a guard against the sensuality of the body.”

The description of the Island and Kingdom of Sardinia is interesting as it is written after previous authors; but it shows an interest in the economy and history of the island which reflects the interest of the British Hanoverian royals in establishing fruitful trade in the Mediterranean:

The Island of Sardinia is in shape like the sole of a shoe. [...] it gives a royal title to the Duke of Savoy, King of Sardinia. It was formerly annexed to the Crown of Spain; but by the peace of Utrecht, it was given to the Emperor, and in the year 1719, it was ceded to the House of Savoy.

The emphasis is on the Sardinian riches: the island is described as a land of abundance, and therefore attractive for traders. Some dangers are mentioned in passing: again the “rainincule or sardonicque herb”, together with the poisonous spider:

That part of the Country about e[sic] Capo Cagliari, is mountainous, better aired, and more conducive to health than any other part of the Island. [...] There are many Baths here, and the Island in general is very fertile in Corn, Wine, and Olives: And finally, in every kind of fruit. They likewise rear up great herds of cattle.

They have Gold and Silver mines; but there is a little Insect found here, called Solifuges, which is a kind of Spider, whose bite is venomous, who are so numerous, and so frequently found in the said Mines, that the Sardinians dare not dig for the treasures which their country freely offers to them, owing to these diminutive insects.

2.1.1. *John Galt*

A very similar view appears to have been shared by another Scotsman, John Galt, who is more reliable as he speaks from experience. John Galt⁵⁷ visited Sardinia in 1812, and his journey has remained famous for the presence of a unique companion:

⁵⁷ John Galt (1779-1839) born in Irvine, Ayrshire, entered a mercantile company and started writing articles for periodicals. After travelling in the Mediterranean, he was employed in a land company in the 1820s. He went to Canada and founded the town of Guelph in 1827. His works include *The Ayrshire Legatees* (1821), *a Life of Lord Byron* (1830) and *Autobiography* (1833).

The day was exceedingly sultry. The air was sickly; and if the wind was not a sirocco, it was a levanter – oppressive to the functions of life, and to an invalid denying all exercise. Instead of rambling over the fortifications, I was, in consequence, constrained to spend the hottest part of the day in the library; and while sitting there, a young man came in and seated himself opposite to me at the table. Something in his appearance attracted my attention.⁵⁸ [1830:57]

That man was George Gordon Lord Byron. John Galt, Hobhouse and Byron had met in Gibraltar, and the description of the days they spent together in Cagliari are some of the liveliest pages in the book. The description does not draw from old books, but for the first time tells of direct experience, sometimes coloured with fashionable romantic comments:

Strong north winds give them problems in tacking [...] but the next day they were safely anchored. They leave their cards for the ambassador, who invites them to dinner. Byron and Hobhouse dressed themselves as aid-de-camps [...] [1830:60]

Byron spent the nights on board, often sitting “amid the shrouds and rattlings, in the tranquillity of the moonlight, churning an inarticulate melody...” [1830:61]. After dinner they went to the theatre; “the royal family were present and the opera was performed with more taste and execution than I had expected to meet in so remote a place” (1830:63). At the theatre they noticed a disquieting member of the local nobility among the audience, who was said to be a bandit. Galt thinks he may have given Byron the idea for the corsair in *Lara*. But the impression this mysterious man had on the poet was not the only reason of his uneasiness: the following day Byron was indisposed, maybe owing to “the good things of the ambassadorial table” [1860:64].

John Galt’s best contribution to the popularization of the island of Sardinia remains a description of Mediterranean countries, written in 1812, with an eye quite explicitly turned to commercial profit.⁵⁹ The intention of John Galt is stated in the Preface⁶⁰;

⁵⁸ Galt, John, 1779-1839. *The life of Lord Byron* (London : H. Colburn and R. Bentley) 1830.

⁵⁹ *Voyages and travels in the years 1809, 1810, and 1811 : containing statistical, commercial, and miscellaneous observations on Gibraltar, Sardinia, Sicily, Malta, Serigo, and Turkey* (London : T. Cadell and W. Davies) 1812.

⁶⁰ “The Mediterranean affords access to the Atlantic Ocean to the finest countries in the world. [...] no other space of equal extent presents so many famous cities, such opulent and populous lands, as are

and the dedication is to a Mr Hill “our Envoy at the court of Cagliari” and a Mr Smith, “secretary of legation”: they assisted Galt in visiting the Island and describing the general state of the island, which he considers quite derelict:

The state of Society in Sardinia is probably not unlike what existed in Scotland about a hundred and fifty years ago. Family pride, a species of political scrophula, is in Sardinia particularly inveterate. But the exclusive spirit of the nobles begins to be counteracted by the natural disposition of the Sovereign to extend his own authority. Many parts of the country are in, what a politician considers only as an unsatisfactory state. [1812:8]

Galt goes on describing the administration of justice, with the island divided into prefectures: “Justice is distributed by the Prefects, whose functions seem to correspond in many respects with those of the Scottish Sheriffs; judges are given a small stipend from the king, but not enough to live, so that gifts are willingly accepted.” As regards the customs, he acknowledges the “venerable savage virtue of hospitality”, and admires a custom “formed with the purpose, as it were, of affording a possibility to humble-born genius to expand” [1812:11]: the children of peasant families were invited to attend school in Cagliari, serving in the family in return for food and lodging.

They are called Majoli, and wear a kind of uniform, with which they are provided by their friends. Some of the Majoli rise to high situations: the greater number, however, return back to the provinces [...]; but the effects of their previous instruction remains; and sometimes in remote and obscure valleys, the traveller meets with a peasant who, in the uncouth and savage garb of the country, shows a tincture of the polish and intelligence of the town.⁶¹

But Galt’s real interest is describing the economy. His views are quite modern when he argues that “agriculture is just a branch of commerce”. He estimates that the King’s revenue in 1811 was eighty thousand pounds sterling; but he argues profit could be higher. He criticises, for example, the fact that the exportation of wine and grain is limited to the real surplus, saying that encouraging exports “gives a motive for cultivating the country” [1812:12]; exports were limited to wheat (though in

comprehended in the sweep of the Mediterranean, from Gibraltar to Venice.” [1812:1]

⁶¹ Galt also published a short story set in Sardinia: *The Majolo: a Tale*, recently translated into Italian (Sassari : Condaghes, 1996).

considerable quantities) and wine: a white produced near Cagliari and a strong red which would be esteemed in England. Salt production, sheep breeding, tunny fishing and timber could be easily ‘turned to account by the merchant’. The conclusions are quite surprising:

It is regrettable that, in the present circumstances, no attempt has been made, on our part, to cultivate a more intimate connection with Sardinia. Except the facilities voluntarily afforded by Mr. Hill, our minister, nothing has yet been publicly done to encourage the British merchants to explore the abundant commercial resources of this Island. [...] It is plainly the policy of Britain to acquire an insular influence; an influence on the affections of these nations which she is able effectively to protect, and on which she has it in her power, from her commercial character, to confer the most essential benefits. [1812:14-15]

2.1.2. *William Henry Smyth*

Admiral William H. Smyth’s⁶² publications give a quite faithful picture of his interests over the course of his life: first an exclusive commitment to the Mediterranean islands, combined with an interest in history and foreign relations;⁶³ then a growing interest in astronomy and diverse topics, such as memories and antiquities.⁶⁴ In 1821 he was in Sicily on a British fleet to prevent a possible attack

⁶² William Henry Smyth (1788-1865), the son of American loyalists who emigrated to Britain after the American Revolution, joined the Royal Navy and served in the Mediterranean during the Napoleonic wars. In 1815 he married the Neapolitan daughter of T. Warrington, Annarella,; she assisted in all his scientific works. In 1817, during a hydrographic survey of Sicily, he met the Italian astronomer Giuseppe Piazzi, who in 1801 had discovered the first asteroid, Ceres. His interest in astronomy was greatly enhanced by a visit in his observatory, and his son was named Charles Piazza in his honour.

In 1825, Smyth retired from the Royal Navy and settled in Bedford, England, where he established a private observatory with a 6-inch refractor. In 1844 he published his observations on deepsky objects, including double stars, clusters and nebulae, in his still famous *Cycle of Celestial Objects*. This work was awarded with the gold medal of the Royal Astronomical Society and a presidency of this society for one two-years term. The second volume became known as the *Bedford Catalogue* and contains Smyth's observations of 850 deepsky objects (as well as comments of some more), a source of exhaustive information as it was available at his time.

In 1839 he moved to Stone, Aylesbury. His observatory was dismantled, the telescope sold to Dr. Lee and re-erected at the Hartwell House in a new observatory designed by Admiral Smyth, who managed to do a large number of astronomical observations in the time from 1839 to 1859. The astronomical community have honoured William Henry Smyth by naming a Lunar crater and a whole Mare after him, in 1935 (Mare Smythii, situated 1.1N, 87.5E, and measuring 373 km across).

⁶³ *The Hydrography of Sicily, Malta, and the Adjacent Islands; Surveyed in 1814, 1815, and 1816, under directions from the Right Honorable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty* (London Hydrographical Office, Admiralty) 1822, and *Memoir Descriptive of the Resources, Inhabitants, and Hydrography, of Sicily and its Islands* (London : John Murray) 1824.

⁶⁴ *Descriptive Catalogue of a Cabinet of Roman Imperial large-brass Medals*. ([S.l.] : [s.n.]) 1834; *The Mediterranean : A memoir physical historical and nautical* ([S.l.]:Parker and Son) 1854; *Aedes Hartwellianae*. ([S.l.]:Addenda) 1864; *The sailor’s word-book : an alphabetical digest of nautical*

by Joaquin Murat; in 1823 and 1824 he was employed by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for a maritime survey of the coasts of Sardinia, as Captain of the *Adventure* – a mission which can be considered an ideal follow-up to Horace Nelson’s relation with Sardinia, and his intuitions about its future role in the Mediterranean. The book Smyth wrote after a permanence of several months, *Sketch of the Present State of the Island of Sardinia* ([London:John Murray]1828)⁶⁵ was a much more exhaustive description of the Island than the title and the object of the mission suggest. The book is dedicated to Robert Saunders Dundas, Viscount Melville, with the declared intention of filling an empty space on the library shelves: compared to Sicily, Sardinia is “a widely different, though adjacent country”, that even the scrupulous compilers of the Universal History – as Smyth complains – have omitted it:

There appeared to be an urgent call for increasing this particular stock of knowledge – and more especially as there existed no tolerable description of this neglected region.⁶⁶

The *Sketch* follows the pattern of his Sicilian study: four chapters describing respectively the political history, the produce and resources, the inhabitants and finally the coasts (actually the towns and villages along the coastline). An appendix follows, with a list of Sardinian towns with the number of inhabitants and the definition of the ‘air’ (excellent, very good, good, salubrious, unwholesome, bad, very bad, etc.) for each of them; tables of the revenues of economic activities such as fishery, both in Sardinian lira and British pounds, and a list of public revenues from direct and indirect taxation for 1824 (customs, salt-works, tobacco, gunpowder, mines, fisheries, fines and casuals); an accurate ichtiological table with fish names in Sardinian, Italian and English; and the market prices in lira and pounds.

Smyth’s almost maniacal accuracy in compiling lists and tables on very heterogeneous aspects has led some scholars to express negative criticism (Alziator;

terms (London :Blackie) 1867.

⁶⁵ John Murray was the most famous London publisher at the time: besides publishing Byron’s works (he bought the royalties for the impressive sum of £ 24.000) he promoted prestigious reviews like the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review*. But the Murrays are especially reputed for inventing the *handbooks*: the first travel guides, written by people who had actually visited the places and were able to give minute descriptions on a variety of practical aspects.

⁶⁶ *Sketch of the Present State of the Island of Sardinia*. [London:John Murray]1828.

Cabiddu:1984)⁶⁷ for the poor literary qualities of the book. Brigaglia is quite right in observing that Smyth's task consisted, basically, in writing an accurate report rather than an impressionistic travel book;⁶⁸ however, I would point out that chapters three and four (dealing respectively with the inhabitants and the towns on the coasts) reveal in many pages the unmistakable traveller's eye, rather than a soldier's, especially when he describes minute accidents which occurred during his wanderings on horseback, following the road builders who in those years, "proceeded with spirit" in the making of the main communication routes:

In 1824 I went on a coach with [...] Signor Arsi and Captain Catella, the engineer, from Sassari as far as Monte Santo in the Meilogu, to the utter astonishment of the natives, as it was the first carriage that had ever passed in the interior of Sardinia. The mode of travelling for persons of all ranks and both sexes is either on horseback, or on oxen, with the baggage in a large wallet called "bertula" [...] a tax has been levied for roads and bridges, though neither could properly be said to exist. [1828:92]

In Sardinia, Smyth met Della Marmora and read his *Voyage in Sardaigne* [Paris:1826]; he praises his scientific attitude,⁶⁹ while he is rather critical of historians like Azuni and Mimaut, who do not appear to have conducted what we would define *field search*, travelling the country and verifying their hypotheses. The first aspect which attracts Smyth's attention is the dim historical information: Sardinia, in his words, "exhibits only scanty notices of names, facts and dates, broken by many a melancholy blank. [...] It is therefore difficult to assign a reason why an [sic] European country so admirably situated, possessing a fine climate and great fertility, should have remained through all ages so little known."⁷⁰ Smyth's

⁶⁷ See Brigaglia, Manlio, Prefazione a *Relazione sull'isola di Sardegna* (Nuoro:Illisso) 1998, p.8: "dai critici sardi si sono mosse osservazioni sulle scarse qualità letterarie del testo, che addirittura secondo Francesco Alziator sarebbe scritto «con un vero stile da rapporto all'Ammiragliato». Questo sbrigativo giudizio sul lavoro del "piccolo capitano" – che, come abbiamo visto, non era capitano e, soprattutto, fu tutt'altro che piccolo – è stato poi alleggerito in parte da Alberto Boscolo ed è stato corretto con il riconoscimento dell'importanza del testo, sia pure con l'accenno a dei "limiti", da parte di Miryam Cabiddu."

⁶⁸ "As I have been so scrupulously rigid in the search of truth, I may with propriety, though with all due humility, now entreat the reliance and candour of my reader." [1828:XI]

⁶⁹ "by its clearness and erudition [Della Marmora's *Voyage en Sardaigne*] offers a gratifying proof of the information we may expect in his future labours." [1828:x]

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

reconstruction of the political history starts from the remotest news about Sardinia,⁷¹ i.e. with the mythical king Phorcus, one of Noah descendants (around 1700 b.C.) to continue with Sardis [sic], the son of Theban Hercules (around 1200 b.C.); and then the Greeks Aristæus, who introduced, as legends have it, olive tree planting, bee rearing and cheese making, and Iolaus, Hercules's nephew who fled from destroyed Troy and landed in Sardinia following the advice of oracles; and finally Norax, the mythical Iberian warrior. With the arrival of new settlers who left archaeological testimony the historical picture becomes sharper, and the first dates appear: after a time of isolated settlements of Phoenicians, Lydians, Thracians, Rhodians and Cypriots following trade routes or seeking for asylum, in 530 b.C. the Carthaginian Machæus tried to conquer the island. Although the first attempt was unsuccessful, the Carthaginians were able to control large parts of the island by the end of the 6th century b.C., until they were defeated by the Romans in the Punic Wars, both on sea (in 259 b.C. Cornelius Scipio destroyed Hannibal's fleet in Olbia and in 238 the Romans did not have to struggle to take control of Carales as they took advantage of a rebellion of Punic mercenaries who – to make clear the Romans had nothing to fear from their resistance – nailed their general Hanno to a cross.) Thanks to written testimony the historical news become less scanty, and Smyth is able to give an account of the Roman, Vandal, Arab times; the Pisan-Genoese federation which defeated the Arab forces; the cession to the Aragonese crown and finally the Savoy rule. Smyth's sixty-five-pages historical outline is one of the clearest and least idealized accounts of the Sardinian past: he frequently discusses the sources and shows a correct perspective: the historical landmarks, especially as regards the times from the Carthaginian conquest onwards, do not differ substantially from what contemporary archaeologists and historiographers could find. The admiral concludes his review of historical facts by observing that "it is well known that the monarchs of Sardinia bear a close affinity with our own": Anna Maria, duchess of Savoy, was one of Charles I's granddaughters (more precisely, the daughter of Charles's fourth daughter, Henrietta Maria).

⁷¹ Smyth probably drew from the Sardinian historian Giovanni Manno, though he declares he had not read his books.

The following chapter deals with what appears to be one of the most popular issues with British travellers: the Sardinian resources. It results quite obvious that Smyth's mission did not consist in a mere exercise of drawing maps of the coastline of the island, but especially to contribute to make trading routes safer and therefore more profitable – and possibly in assessing the general state of the island in view of an hypothetical acquisition. Smyth expresses informed opinions on the improvement perspectives, which do not differ substantially from the central thesis of most British authors, i.e. the island is backward, but one of the main causes is bad government:

Sardinia, geographically considered, is singularly favoured by its climate and position [...] why its present state does not correspond with these advantages must be attributed [...] to misgovernment, and its usual consequences: imperfect cultivation, and deficient population. [1828:65]

The natural resources (woods, water, a variety of minerals extracted from mines) are abundant, but the *air* is often unwholesome: “Exhalations, it appears, are the principal cause of intemperie [or malaria fevers], and it is evident they could be decreased by cultivating the macchie, draining the marshes, and confining rivers to their beds” [1828:85]. Smyth refers to official data to show, by the way, that the produce is not negligible in agriculture although the tools are archaic (e.g. the Roman plough and the full wheel), and in breeding, which in fact has a relevant place in conversations, some of which Smyth finds quite humorous:

I was once riding with Signor Mameli in the Campidano, we were met by an acquaintance of his, whose first inquiry, as usual on such meetings, were after the welfare of the cattle: “[...] Have you still got your large red horse?” “Yes.” “Has he taken the portante yet?” “No.” “Why then do you keep such a dolt?” [1828:99]

It is thanks to anecdotes like this that a military survey can be read as a travel book. Smyth, in his one year residence, travelled widely and took interest in a variety of aspects – including local language and literature, customs and religious beliefs– in a word, in the national tracts, constitutive of its identity.

An example is language, which is correctly described as different from Italian, but more archaic as it is closer to the common model, Latin:

The Italian language is spoken in most of the cities, and is also that of the public decrees. The native tongue is easy, and well adapted for poetry, from the

distinctness of its diction, and the facility of altering the collocation of its words. It differs essentially in the various parts of the island, and [...] if Latin was not the “sermo vulgaris”, or colloquial dialect of the whole people, it must have been very extensively spoken, as hundreds of words and many phrases remain entire. To prove this consanguinity, Padre Madao wrote several poems, selecting his words so that they can be read with equal facility, either by the Latin or Sard scholar... [1828:149]

The law code, as another example, is seen as part of an accepted order, though the stooping to revenge is deplored:

[...] in 1823 a feud was settled at the fair of Luogo Santo, which had continued upwards of thirty years, though both parties had entirely forgotten the origin of their dispute! These outlaws are not in the habit of molesting strangers, and one of them, on my inquiry if I could pass the haunt of his companions in safety, assured me of a free passage, as his brethren were not robbers, “but only assassins”, implying that they had murdered honourably for revenge, and not merely for profit. [1828:143]

Smyth lashes out at popular credulity, as a consequence of ignorance, though showing some sympathy for the victims:

In the country, the “Medico” has to perform all the various branches of the healing art. On my arrival in Iglesias, I found that an impostor had just visited the place, in the character of a first-rate dentist. He was a native of France, and boasted of three orders of knighthood, one of which, they assured me, was the “giarrettiera” [i.e. garter] of England [...] An old Dominican monk, anxious to regain a distinct articulation was well satisfied with having reduced the wonderworking mountebank’s charge from twenty dollars to five, for placing a substitute for four absent front teeth. The substitution, however, though properly curved on the outer part, was in one piece, and formed a chord across the inside, so that the poor man’s imprisoned tongue could not perform its office, notwithstanding the most persevering, though ludicrous, attempts. At length, the whole apparatus tumbling out of his mouth, with several similar failures, obliged the knight “of many orders” to decamp. [1828:167-168]

What Smyth does not show any sympathy for is superstition, which he scourges quite harshly especially for being bolstered by clerics:

Two or three years ago a nobleman of the highest rank in the island, hearing that a storm of locusts were devouring the harvest in his estate at Punta Carbonara, sent a priest to excommunicate them; and he was actually made to believe that, in consequence of the anathema, they precipitated themselves into the sea, and were drowned! [1828:203-204]

Admiral Smyth's *Sketch* is peculiar both as a travel book and as a soldier's report. The reader perceives that he accomplished his tasks with zeal, but also with pleasure: he did not merely look at the country from a coach window, and did not disdain mingling with people, to describe the motivations behind their behaviour.

The book attracted quite soon the attention of local translation. An aborted attempt to translate the book in Italian, attributed to a **Antonio Maria Ugo**, is conserved in manuscript form⁷² at the University of Cagliari.

2.1.3. *John Warre Tyndale*

John Warre Tyndale's *The Island of Sardinia, including Pictures of the Manners and Customs of the Sardinians, and Notes on the Antiquities and Modern Objects of Interest in the Island; to which is added some Account of the House of Savoy* (London:Richard Bentley) 1849, in three volumes, was conceived while travelling for the recovery of his health in the spring of 1843, and was induced by some friends to travel to Sardinia. It is uncertain (see Alberto Boscolo) whether this motivation is sufficient to explain Tyndale's interest; in fact one wanders whether Tyndale has some kind of governmental input to write this book.

This work is the best documented description of the Island, and the author quotes not only classical authors but also Sardinian authors both of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth (Arquer, Fara, Vico, Dexart, Vitale, Olives, Cetti, Gemelli, Gazano, Cossu, Madao, Azuni and Mameli) and of his day (Manno, Angius, Tola, Martini) besides the Piedmontese author and General Sardinian Commissioner Alberto Della Marmora. Volume 1 contains an introduction to the history of Sardinia, from antiquity to his day, and six chapters, each devoted to a region in northern Sardinia. Chapter 2 is entirely devoted to the *Noraghi* (sic). Volume 2 has eight chapters, devoted to the island's central regions. Vol 3 has six chapters, devoted to the southern regions, and an appendix concerning historical and social enquiries, such as the origin of the royal title of the *Giudici* in the middle ages, the general conditions

⁷² Manuscript 63, signed X.Y. and entitled *Abbozzo dello Stato presente dell'Isola di Sardegna*.

of the island and the abolition of feudalism by Charles Albert of Savoy. The books also contain engraved illustrations, maps (Della Marmora's Sardinia) and the genealogy of the Kings of Savoy, with their kinship with reigning houses in France, Spain, and England.

Tyndale, too, is surprised that the island, "within a few hours' sail, worthy to be explored, and from whence the monarch of all these fair possessions derives his regal title" [1849:2] is very little known. He starts discussing the news given by ancient authors, and argues that Sardinia is the largest island in the Mediterranean. An account of the history is given, with particular attention to the Savoy period, highlighting the merits but also the weakness and mistakes of the ruling house. In the account of the popular insurrection in 1794, for example, he accepts the justifications of Sardinian authors. In January 1793 Sardinia had been attacked and bombed from the sea by overwhelming French forces, but the invasion was stopped by an army of Sardinian volunteers, mainly from the populace. Despite this fact, honours and awards were given by the king only to Piedmontese officers, and the centralized policy was confirmed. On 28th April 1794 (which is today celebrated as *Sa die de sa Sardigna*, the Sardinian Independence Day) people suspected of liberal ideas, notably two affluent lawyers, were arrested in Cagliari, and this sparked riots which led to the eviction of all Piedmontese people except for the archbishop (about 530 in number). Tyndale observes that "The Piedmontese officials, far from endeavouring by moderate measures to calm the public mind, increased the irritation by every mark of contempt, insult and menace, – the Secretary of State having even the impudence to spread the report that the inhabitants of the kingdom were to be disarmed." [1849:33]

An accurate description of hunting and fishing is given, particularly of the Tunnara (tuna slaughter in a system of nets (the *madruga*) and the collection of the fish in a large ambiente with a thatched roof (the *marfaragiu*) for preparing the fish for sale and export. [1849:160-177] There are some funny anecdotes, one telling about the

reception a royal party (which included the Savoy king and the duke of Genoa) in Tempio, north Sardinia.

The guitar, which had five metallic strings, poured forth its harsh vibrations, and the poet, dictating the first stanza to the songstress, she “burst into song and loyalty.”

Never shall I forget that first outbreak! The room in which we were was small, the retinue of the king was small, and all was small, save the capacity of the voice of the singer. We did not hear the echo, but there is little doubt that Monte Rotondo, in Corsica, and Etna, in Sicily, reverberated with the song. [...] at the conclusion the king, with good sense, requested them not to indulge in such congratulatory adulatory odes, but to give a specimen of their natural talents of versification. [1849:272]

Poetry, or the so called poetic improvisations, generally lamentations or dialogues between lovers acted out in a *Graminatogiju*, a room in which people sat in circle, are praised and transcribed with a translation, as “however common place and ridiculous the ideas may appear to the ‘cold in clime and cold in blood,’ they have much warmth and tenderness when sung in the original language, with all the concomitants of the scene which has been described.” [1849:281]

2.1.4. Robert Tennant

Not much is found on Robert Tennant’s biography. We know, however, that he was a civil servant and travelled to Italy as a commissioner, where he was probably asked to give advice to the king of Sardinia. He seems to have published only a few works⁷³ besides *Sardinia and its resources* [1885], a book “respectfully dedicated to His Majesty the King of Italy by his most obedient and humble servant Robert Tennant” with an extensive description of the island. As the *Preface* points out, “the suggestion was made , that the materials were at hand for presenting to the Public some trustworthy descriptive particulars of a Country wich [sic] was a *terra incognita* almost, though one of the oldest and most interesting countries in the world”. The book has XVI chapters – not very well structured – with news about history (I-II), Geography and population (III-VI) Economy (VII-X) and Traditions (XI-XVI) – and thirteen engravings which aim at giving a thorough description of the island as well as of the customs of its inhabitants.

⁷³ *Wayside Musings* [1872] and *British Guiana and its Resources* [1895].

Tennant devotes a considerable part of the book to the discussion of the salubrity of the air, showing that this must have been a subject of concern. Unlike many of his predecessors, Tennant confutes the idea that the island was malaric. He starts by reporting that Lord Nelson “refers in several of his letters – official and private – to the general salubrity of that climate and specially mentions one occasion when stationed off Pula (which is classed amongst the most unhealthy districts in the South) that, out of four thousand Seamen who were sent on Shore, not a single case of illness was reported, that all were better for the change [...]” [1885:35]

Tennant still believes – quite surprisingly, as the true origin of the infection had been ascribed to some particular mosquitoes long before – that *malaria* (as the name suggests) is the consequence of malefic air; he recommends therefore that as well as drainage and cultivation, trees are planted:

“[...] the planting of eucalyptus, and other trees, which attract and absorb the deleterious vapours, and give back in exchange salubrious exhalations which can be perceptibly felt”. [1885:36]

In case illness is contracted,

“Quinine is the invariable specific, both on the first attack, and in cases of relapse; it is often taken as a precautionary measure, and is generally efficacious. It is however *never* taken when the fever is *on* the patient (excepting in very few cases), but when the temperature of the blood is at the lowest between one attack and the other. [...] in justice to Sardinia it may be fairly said that attacks of this fever are almost invariably the result of total disregard of those ordinary precautions, which even the Sardinians observe [...] viz.: to avoid excesses of all sorts, to live well but moderately, not to overfatigue oneself, not to travel before sunrise or after sunset, always to wear flannel, and never to get wet through.” [1885:37-38]

Another characteristic of the identity of the island is its language. Tennant quotes the Pater Noster, with a translation not only into English but also into Latin, to show how Sardinian sounded similar to the ancient Italian language. In this respect, too, Tennant seems very apologetic and aims at encouraging his readers to share a positive idea of the island by emphasising the similarities rather than the differences with a European substratum: “The Italian language however will no doubt very soon

take the place of all other languages in Sardinia. It is taught in all Schools, and is universally spoken and written by the higher classes, and in the large towns; and all official papers are now issued in that language [1885:68].

The most interesting part of the book, is devoted to traditional festivals, which are dealt with together with “superstitions” – possibly a consequence of a positivistic attitude. Tennant shows an original interest and curiosity in local traditions, and finds in them a distinctive mark of the identity of the island. He seems to regret he could not devote more attention to the matter, as “the catalogue of ceremonies customs and superstitions might be almost indefinitely extended, but sufficient [evidence] has been given to illustrate the general character and tendency.” [1885:191-2]

An example of Tennant’s sarcastic attitude towards local religious celebrations can be the description of the festival of St. Ephisius, whose coach is compared to the Mayor of London’s:

The ceremony very much resembles those of other feste, excepting that the journey to the place of assembly occupies two days, and that the grandest carriage in Sardinia is kept for the saint’s exclusive use on this occasion. The carriage is something like a small edition of our Lord Mayor’s coach, and the Saint is carried in it to Nora with as much pomp and display, as “his Worship” is conveyed in his state coach from the Mansion House to Westminster. At Nora (where in some years upwards of 25,000 persons are assembled) the usual religious ceremonies take place, followed each day by the usual festivities, and at the end of the week, the Saint is brought back to Cagliari in his own carriage and with the same pomp and ceremony as before. [1885:182]

2.1.5. *Thomas Forester*

The first edition of Forester’s *Rambles in Corsica and Sardinia* appeared in 1858; Chapters I-XXIV are devoted to Corsica and Chapters XXV-XXXVIII to Sardinia. The latter, with a very interesting introduction also published separately in 1861, reveals – as the very title shows: *The Island of Sardinia, with remarks on its resources, and its relation to the British interests in the Mediterranean* – an original perspective. The 1858 preface refers in rather general terms to the need of filling a gap in English literature as “Corsica was less known in England than New Zealand as it had not been described after James Boswell’s famous visit about a century

earlier". Forester aims at describing a country "romantic in its scenery and the character of its inhabitants; a very region of romance and sentiment; a fine field for the novelist and the dramatist; and to that class of writers it was abandoned" [xxiv]. Referring to Sardinia he quotes a few authors who had described it (A.Della Marmora, Admiral Smyth, W.Tyndale, father A.Bresciani), but for no purpose other than introducing himself as a Rambler rather than an author.

Unlike the preface to the first edition, the second is devoted entirely to Sardinia, and the spirit does not seem to be that of a simple Rambler. Forester aims at contrasting the idea that Sardinia's destiny is to become a dependency of the French empire, as rumours suggested: "in this view the island acquires a fresh interest, independent of that which [bestows] its romantic scenery, the singularly primitive character and usages of its inhabitants, and the unique features of some of its very ancient monuments, have lent to the traces of travel sketched in this present work. [1858: v] He comments on population statistics, stating that it was increasing slowly (at an estimated rate of 7% per annum). Quoting Arthur Young's *Travels in Italy*, Forester surveys the resources of Sardinia:

About one million of starelli, or 800,000 acres, are in tillage for corn, even under an indolent system of cultivation, averaging as much as nineteen bushels per English acre, while a bad harvest in Sardinia is of rare occurrence. The crops, after supplying the home consumption, leave a surplus, annually, of from 400,000 to 500,000 bushels of wheat of a superior quality, with half as much barley, for exportation. [Given] the predilection of the Sardes for the idleness and independence of a pastoral life, and their aversion to agricultural labour, it still appears that it is owing to the spontaneous fertility of the soil that there is any surplus produce at all". [1858:ix]

Also other products, like wine, oil, orchard fruits and tobacco, together with coral and tuna fishing, give surplus for export.

Sardinia, however, possesses an importance far beyond any estimate that may be formed of the value of her material wealth. The island must ever be a dependency of some great continental Power, [...] its commanding position and noble harbours give the island the utmost political value to any state aspiring to naval power in the Mediterranean. [1861:xiv]

Forester quotes several of Nelson's letters asking the government to take steps to purchase Sardinia:

God knows, if we could possess one island, Sardinia, we should want neither Malta, nor any other. This, which is the finest island in the Mediterranean, possesses harbours fit for arsenals, and of a capacity to hold our navy [...] I venture to predict that if we do not – from delicacy or consideration for the unfortunate King of Sardinia – the French will get possession of this island. Sardinia is very little known. It was the policy of Piedmont to keep it in the background, and [...] it seems to have been their maxim to treat its inhabitants with severity, in loading their produce with such duties as prevented their growth. [xv, To Lord Hobart, 22.12.1803]

Sardinia is the *summum bonum* of everything which is valuable for us in the Mediterranean. The more I know of it, the more I am convinced of its inestimable value, from position, naval ports and resources of all kinds. [xvii, To Lord Hobart, 22.12.1803]

The Sardinians, generally speaking, are attached to us, but there are French intriguers among them, and I understand they hope to bring about a revolution before the invasion. [To Mr Jackson, Minister at Turin, 29.12.1803]

The storm is brewing, and there can be little doubt that Sardinia is one of the first objects of its violence. We have a report that the visit of Lucien Bonaparte is to effect an amicable exchange of Sardinia for Parma and Piacenza. This must not take place.

I am told that the revenue, after paying the expenses of the island, does not give the King 5000*l.* sterling a year. If it is so, I would give him 500,000*l.* to cede it, which would produce him 25,000*l.* a year for ever. [To Mr Jackson, Minister at Turin, 10.02.1804]

Considering the situation in his day, Forester thought the possibility that the French set foot in Sardinia was not at all unlikely:

No one can doubt that the emperor Napoleon is fully sensible of the importance of the island of Sardinia as regards the great question of naval preponderance in the Mediterranean. Nor, at this moment, when it appears that the Emperor's attention has been turned to plans for extending the French possessions in Africa [...] The addition of Sardinia to the French island of Corsica and Algeria, would in effect extend the chain connecting Algeria with France to a point distant only eight or ten hours by steam from each continent [1861:xx]

Forester's concludes that steps should be taken by the British government to champion the Sardinian cause in its struggle to preserve independence from the French, and especially to establish a strong control of the Mediterranean Sea:

The indications of French designs on Sardinia may appear to some as yet too slight to merit serious notice. But the signs of the times are ominous. Similar schemes, stealthily planned though rapidly executed, might possibly have been nipped in the bud by timely efforts. The author may therefore be pardoned for taking the present opportunity of drawing public attention to a contingency which, in the event of it being realised, would, he considers, inflict a great calamity on the Sardinians, members as they are now of a free constitutional state, and, what is of infinitely more importance, would strike a fatal blow at British power in the Mediterranean. [1861:xxiv]

2.1.7. *Two British women travel writers: Mrs Gretton and Mary Davey*

Two works written by women on Sardinia are interesting for the very fact that they were written – women were not common among travellers, and being Victorians, they would be expected to devote their time to domestic spaces, not to wider perspectives.⁷⁴ In England, woman travel writers had given a solid proof of their skills in the eighteenth century with Jamima Kindersley (*Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, The Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies*, 1777), Anna Maria Falconbridge (*Two Voyages to Sierra Leone*, 1794), Mary Ann Parker (*Voyage round the world*, 1795), Janet Schaw (*Journal of a Lady of quality: being the narrative of a journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina and Portugal in the Years 1774-1776*), Mary Wollstonecraft (*A Short residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, 1796). Even earlier there had been a few examples of travelogues by women writers (e.g. Elizabeth Justice's *A Voyage to Russia*, 1739, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Embassy Letters*, 1763) but after 1775 the phenomenon becomes much more visible, and includes women authors with very different backgrounds: aristocratic women who travel with their husbands (for example Lady Wortley Montagu or Elizabeth Craven) and radicals like Mary Wollstonecraft and Helen Maria Williams.

⁷⁴ "A woman sees the world, as it were, from a little elevation in her own garden, where she makes an exact survey of home scenes, but takes not in that wider range of distant prospects which he who stands as a loftier eminence commands", Hannah More, *Strictures on Female Education*, 1799, quoted by Katherine Turner [2001:127].

Of course the emergence of women travel writers in England, starting in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, can be explained by the general increase of female literacy and consequently with female literary activity, but also with the conquest of a narrative space (like travelling) which had been an almost exclusive prerogative of men. And the conquest of the new territory brings a previously unknown tone and spirit to travel narratives. As Ann Miller put it,

[Travel writers] should be endowed with a certain vivacity of disposition, which may derive additional entertainment as well as instruction from the incidents that occur in their journey.⁷⁵

Although the number of women travel writers was tiny if compared to men, still the phenomenon is remarkable even in a sociological perspective, as women “were becoming beneficiaries of the enlarging possibilities for travel and tourism [...] and of the changing scope of travel narrative, away from erudite classical traditions in favour of more sociological, affective and miscellaneous preoccupations.”⁷⁶

Two works, written by Englishwomen at about the same time after journeys to the Sardinian States, are very interesting for the approach to travel writing and the understanding of the national spirit, which is found in scraps of conversation or small details of family life.

In her *The Englishwoman in Italy: impressions of life in the Roman states and Sardinia, during a ten years' residence*⁷⁷ Mrs Gretton describes life in families of the small aristocracy in Florence and Tuscany, Abruzzo (Ancona and Macerata) and Rome. She devotes only a few pages to the island of Sardinia, as she identifies the land with the kingdom, Savoy, and its capital Turin. But, though being mostly interested in capturing the picturesque and the colour of the Italian life, she gives some insight into the situation of Italy just before unification. She admires the house of Savoy, which she credits as being “the oldest reigning family in Europe” but does

⁷⁵ Quoted by Katherine Turner [2001:129]. See also Ezell, Margaret, *Writing Women's literary History*, 1993.

⁷⁶ Turner, Katherine, [2001:128].

⁷⁷ London:Hurst and Blackett [1860?].

not pass in silence over some of the darkest pages in their history, like the 1655 crusade against the Vaudois, which ended in a cruel massacre for which Milton wrote the ode “Avenge , o Lord, thy slaughtered saints”, and against which Cromwell vehemently protested. Also, she frankly admits what the Sardinian born members of parliament had maintained till the ‘perfect fusion’ with Piedmont in 1847, and more vehemently after the Italian unity in 1861: i.e. that after receiving Sardinia as a compensation for the losses in the Spanish succession war, and after being driven away from Turin under Napoleonic pressure only to be restored at the Vienna congress, the Savoy monarchs did very little to improve the conditions of the island, preferring to devote themselves to “the embellishment of Turin, the formation of a standing army, and the restoration of the finances of the State” [1860:330].

Mary Davey wrote what appears to be the book of a lifetime on Sardinia. The first book – her ambition, as stated in the Preface, is to write ‘a literary work [...] as a faithful sketch of the largest, and least known, of the sunny islands of the bright Mediterranean’ – is the novel *Iconusa, or Pleasant Recollections of a two Year Residence*;⁷⁸ the second, basically a shortened version, is entitled *Sardinia. An account of a Residence in Sardinia*,⁷⁹ published in London by “the Christian Knowledge Society, appointed for promoting Christian knowledge” [1874.] We know very little about her, apart what she tells us in her second book: “We were four in family –my father, mother, sister, and myself – and were full of joyous anticipations as we took possession of the state cabin of the little war steamer “La Gulnara”, bound from Genoa to Cagliari” [1874:3].

Both the facts that only few copies of the book survive and that Mary Davey’s name is not included in the Dictionary of National Biography show that her artistic reputation – today like yesterday – was less than robust. And if one looks for elements which allow one to argue that the result corresponds to the writer’s ambition of writing a literary work one is also likely to be disappointed. The author

⁷⁸ Bath:Binns and Godwin, 1860.

⁷⁹ Oxford:Clarendon for the Christian Knowledge Society, 1874.

does not hesitate to use the kind of stereotypes and generalizations which are likely to please an unsophisticated reader:

...if you were to go into the engine room you would find two honest, greasy Englishmen, using, perchance, certain English epithets about the slowness of the Italian stoker. [2]

Or as in the following, referring to a tempest which caught the ferry they were travelling in:

... a poor fellow, a shopkeeper of Cagliari [...] has been pitched headlong from his berth [...]; nothing can exceed his horror; mechanically, he rubs his poor limbs, screams, moans, and calls on all the saints in the calendar, to witness his vow of an offering at every shrine in Cagliari, if he may be spared [...]. A friend in the opposite berth shares his vows, and echoes his screams. In another part of the vessel see the stout-hearted English engineer; he uses promises and threats, kindness and anger, in turn, to induce the poor trembling Italian stokers to do their duty, and trust in God; - he is a noble fellow, and never for an instant has he lost the presence of mind on which so much depends. [315-316]

The sympathy of the writer goes occasionally to local characters, provided that they follow anglo-saxon behavioural patterns:

... look well at the fine countenance and noble bearing of the Piedmontese artillery officer, Captain Campo, [...] yes, scan him well! He is the true class of a type; a band of patriots; men of superior attainments, and superior character; of high principle, and cherishing liberal views; who take England for their model, and who would gladly spend the last drop of their life's blood for the freedom of the country they love so well. [8]

Although the novel seldom goes beyond colourful observations, its value as a document is relevant as *Incusa, or Pleasant Recollections of a two Year Residence* is one of the rare travel books on Sardinia written by a woman travel writer. Davey's attention focused in fact on aspects of the island which male travellers would neglect – if indeed notice at all. The descriptions of landscapes are scanty, for example, but Davey takes the reader inside private homes and reports, in occasionally witty dialogues, actual conversation she must have heard, with a special attention to their social and psychological implications.

A good example is the third chapter, devoted to the St. Ephisius festival in Cagliari. Here the most evident weakness – concentrating on the 'colour' of the events rather

than their significance – is at the end of the day also the interest of narration. Mary Davey concentrates on describing the details which caught her attention in the crowd waiting for the statue of the saint to pass by and form a procession. By sketching details like the attitude and clothes of people or the general atmosphere, she is successful in describing the life around the central event. As this festival has been held without interruptions for more than 350 years – and still enjoys great popular participation – it represents a rare source to ascertain differences between then and now. Davey's pages show people and situations which have now disappeared: middle-class men sitting at cafés sipping orgeat drinks, loafers who chat outside the same cafés or chemist shops, priests wearing three-cornered hats and red stockings and workers wearing their traditional costumes, like her local friend's fiancé, a butcher wearing his traditional costume “of tanned leather, wrought with the needle; his hair is wound round his red cap or fez, it is a very ancient style of dress, and, like others in the country, of Phoenician origin” [1860:64]; and a simple bread seller in the crowd: “She has the usual white lace kerchief round the well-kept glossy braids of blackest hair, and also an abundant supply of jewellery – the *cadenazzu*, or golden amulet, is suspended from her slender neck, but her dress is of pink muslin, hanging in small crimped plaits or folds, crisp, stiff, and fan-like, from the small waist to the well-turned heels.” [64-5]

Davey's eye seems to be attracted by everything she sees: busy priests with their three-cornered hats and purple stockings, the dignity of the aristocrats following the saint on horseback, but also the farmers who came from the country-side with their wives sitting on the back of the saddle, the processions where the women of higher standing stand side by side with the humblest farming girls, the red-capped town militia who appear to show off as they struggle to control their wild horses, while touching them with their spurs to scare the crowd. Although her characters are often caricatured rather than described, the conversation with an old tobacco-sniffing priest carrying a pink umbrella on his arm offers the opportunity for a vivid, lively sketch of an encounter which opposes different religious views. The priest is initially mocked for his simple-mindedness (he does not seem to be sure whether London is the capital of England or vice versa), but then he is looked at with humane sympathy

because of what seems to be an apology for his naivety, appealing to the writer's convictions: "better believe too much than too little".

2.2. *German travellers*

As we have seen, the treaties of Utrecht (1713), which put an end to the War of Spanish Succession, redesigned a balance between European powers which lasted, with some corrections, until the end of the Napoleonic wars; but also, due to the division of the Spanish Empire, the new order established a connection between the Austrians, the Prussians and Sardinia. The Savoy dukes received Sicily and small parts of the Duchy of Milan, while Charles VI of Austria acquired the Spanish Netherlands, the Duchy of Milan, the Kingdom of Naples and the Kingdom of Sardinia, which the Austrians had occupied since 1708 for the Grand Alliance. The Austrian rule was provisional and did not have lasting effects. In 1718, with the Treaty of London which once more brought together the great powers, Victor Amadeus II, duke of Savoy and Piedmont, was forced to yield Sicily to the Austrian Habsburgs and in exchange received Sardinia. This marked the definitive passage of the island from the Spanish influence sphere to the rule of the Italian Savoy house.

About a century later, however, Francis IV of Austria-Este (1779-1846) – the grandson of Marie Theresa of Austria and the son of archduke Ferdinand of Austria, governor of the Lombard territories of the Empire, and Maria Beatrice d'Este, Duchess of Massa and princess of Carrara – visited Sardinia and wrote a *Description of Sardinia*. Once again, this was not a disinterested journey. On invitation of King Victor Emmanuel I – during the Napoleonic occupation of Turin, the court had elected Cagliari as capital of the Sardinian states – he travelled to Sardinia in 1811, with the intention of marrying the Savoy princess Maria Beatrice Vittoria (the marriage was in fact celebrated in 1812), which implied acquiring the succession rights to the Sardinian crown. During his short visit of Sardinia he kept a diary with observations about the land, ranging from politics and customs to food, music and dances; but his perspective is especially political when he discusses the society and the problems of Sardinia. His solutions are clear-cut and resolute (as we would expect from a soldier) but sometimes a little hasty and vague. The forty-six chapters

of his book are rich with observations of the traditions (which he thinks are an obstacle to development) and the people, who are praised for their honesty and sense of hospitality.

The influence of the book on the reading public is, however, irrelevant as its circulation was limited to the court circle. Moreover, at the death of Victor Emmanuel I the Sardinian crown went to the Carignano branch of the Savoy house:⁸⁰ the book was given back to Italy after the Saint-Germain treaty and was edited and published by Giorgio Bardanzellu more than a century after it had been written (1934).

An interesting line of investigation to understand the way the idea of Sardinia was popularized in Germany are academic relations in the second half of the nineteenth century. Theodor Mommsen⁸¹ and his collaborators, Heinrich Nissen and Johannes Schmidt, travelled in Sardinia between 1866 and 1881 to find epigraphic documents for the tenth volume of the *Corpus Inscriptiorum Latinarum* (1883). Julius Euting, from Tübingen, visited Cagliari and Sassari in 1869 to study Phoenician inscriptions, and Wolfgang Helbig, the secretary of the Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica in Rome, was in Cagliari and Ploaghe in 1875.⁸² Although the interest of the journeys is marginal in this research, a reconstruction of the academic links between Sardinian

⁸⁰ This does not appear to be regretted too much by the Sardinians. During his rule of Modena, the Duke bloodily repressed all democratic aspirations of his subjects. The atrocities of the Ducal policies are illustrated in the book *Ciro Menotti e i suoi compagni* written by the Garibaldine officer Taddeo Gaddi in 1880.

⁸¹ Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903), one of the greatest classical historians of the nineteenth century, was born in Garding, Schleswig, the son of a Protestant minister. After reading law and classics at Kiel and spending a few years in France and Italy, he had a chair of law at the University of Leipzig. He was dismissed after taking part in the revolution of 1848-49. He held academic positions at the universities of Zürich and Breslau; then he was appointed to the chair of Ancient History at the University of Berlin (1858). In the 1870s he became a prominent member of the Prussian Parliament as a Liberal. Mommsen's writings (about 1,500) revolutionized the study of Roman history. He was the general editor and chief contributor to, the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, a collection of Roman inscriptions published by the Berlin Academy (1867-1959). This work laid the foundations for a systematic study of Roman government, administration, economics, and finance. Mommsen's books on Roman coinage and on Roman constitutional and criminal law are still classics. The incomplete *Römische Geschichte* (1854-55, 1885), for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1902, reflects his liberal ideas, showing contempt for the senatorial oligarchy and Cicero, as well as his unconditioned admiration for the statesmanship qualities of Julius Caesar.

⁸² The story of their visits was reconstructed through epistolary documents recently found in the *Staatsbibliothek* in Berlin, in the *Biblioteca della Provincia* and the *Biblioteca Reale* in Turin, in the *Biblioteca Universitaria*, the *Archivio Comunale* and the *Archivio di Stato* in Cagliari by Attilio Mastino *Il viaggio di Theodor Mommsen e dei suoi collaboratori in Sardegna per il Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* in 'Diritto e Storia', n. 3, 2004.

and German epigraphists throws some light on the circumstances in which Von Maltzan's *Reise auf der Insel Sardinien* was conceived.

The first scholar who arrived in Sardinia was Nissen who, following Mommen's advice, aimed at a re-interpretation of known inscriptions, and a search of new ones. The scholar was disappointed to find that both the University and the university library were closed (the summer vacations started on 1st May): all he could visit was the museum in Cagliari. Despite the adverse circumstances, though, he could propose a revised reading of the Esterzili bronze table, owned at the time by Giovanni Spano, containing an edict of the Roman proconsul L. Menenius Agrippa previously transcribed by Della Marmora and Spano. From Naples, he wrote to Mommsen on 10th July, 1866:

Den größeren Theil der dortigen Inschriften habe ich revidiert; des bedeutenden Geld- und Zeitaufwands halber habe ich auf die Revision der im Lande herum verstreuten Verzicht leisten müssen [sic]: so wünschenswert auch solche gewesen wäre, denn Lamarmora u. Spano haben zum Theil schauderhaft abgeschrieben.⁸³

The result was the publication of an article in the German archaeology journal *Hermes*. The article came out before Spano's discovery had been announced, and this caused a minor diplomatic incident. Mommsen had to intervene, recognising the paternity of the discovery to the Sardinian archaeologist and apologising for the incident.

The relations between Mommsen – who had become a prominent member of the Berlin Academy – and Sardinia were focused on the Arborea Papers, i.e. forty parchments, with genealogies of Sardinian kings allegedly written in the tenth century, and signed by an assumed notary. The papers had been presumed original and published by Antonio Martini. Although doubts had been raised, especially in Germany, epigraphists like Spano, Della Marmora, Baudi di Vesme and Von Maltzan were convinced the *Papers* were genuine – and the *Academie Royale* in Turin had accepted they were original. In 1869, to obtain a final declaration of authenticity, Baudi di Vesme sent the parchments to the Berlin Academy. On 30th

⁸³ Quoted by Mastino, cit., 2004

January 1870 the appointed commission⁸⁴ accepted Mommsen's brilliant *Bericht* which demonstrated the documents were fake. Although some epigraphists, notably Baudi di Vesme, continued to proclaim the authenticity of the papers, Spano himself accepted Mommsen's verdict.

After reading so much about Sardinia, Mommsen eventually visited the island. He arrived on 13th October 1877 and was received with all honours. He soon started to analyse Roman inscriptions and reached the conclusion that of 531 inscriptions that he had considered authentic in the second volume of the *Corpus*, 350 were actually forgeries (some have since been found to be authentic after all). In public speeches he expressed contempt for many inscriptions which were believed original, particularly those fabricated by friars in monasteries which he defined "factories of saints" (curiously, the same expression used by Joseph Fuos). This attracted the opprobrium of archaeologists and museum directors, but also the sympathy of a younger generation of scholars, as shown by newspaper articles. It appears sensible to conjecture that Giovanni Spano helped Baron von Maltzan in the writing of the *Reise auf der Insel Sardinien* to popularise the knowledge of his 'forgotten' fatherland, but also to claim recognition of his academic merits.

Virtually all books on Sardinia published in Germany – besides the German authors Fuos, von Maltzan and the anonymous author of the novel *Der deutsche Sergeant unter den Sarden*, there are also important translations of Azuni, Mimaut and others – were printed in Leipzig. If we add that also Mommsen held a chair there (1848-1851) and that Baedeker's influential guides to Sardinia came out in Leipzig (1869), the Saxon capital appears to be the first German centre for Sardinian studies.

2.2.1. *Joseph Fuos*

Joseph Fuos's *Nachrichten aus Sardinien von der gegenwärtigen Verfassung dieser Insel* (1780),⁸⁵ one of the books Francis IV of Austria-Este would consider in his

⁸⁴ The members of the commission, which was presided over by Theodor Mommsen and Moritz Haupt, were Philip Jaffé, Alfred Dove and Adolf Tobler. The counterfeiterers have been identified in Gavino Nino (1807-1886) e Salvatorangelo De Castro (1817-1880).

⁸⁵ We have few biographic details on Joseph Fuos (1739-1805). What we know comes essentially from his translator, Pasquale Gastaldi Millelire, who obtained them from the Stuttgart State Archive about a century after the book had been written. Born in the village of Krumschiltach, in 1769 Fuos was appointed chaplain of the Royal Allemand Regiment Von Ziehten. As the regiment was at the

Description of Sardinia (1812), is the first *modern* travel book on Sardinia. This epistolary work, consisting of thirteen letters to a Baron R. (by all appearances a fictional addressee) was published anonymously in Leipzig; it was ascribed to Fuos only a century later by his Italian translator. Each letter is devoted to an aspect of the island: history and archaeological remains, fortifications, the king's revenue, the administration of justice, the relations between State and Church, the state of science and so on.

*Nachrichten aus Sardinien*⁸⁶ is a peculiar travel book: not a single sentence is about travelling. Nothing is said about the features of the land, and few considerations on the cultural characteristics are relegated to the first two, and last two letters. The central part – letters five to ten – are entirely devoted to the abolition of the Society of Jesus and to the dispute between the Catholic Church and the Sardinian States, mainly concerning the appointment of abbots. The rest of the book is almost entirely devoted to the resources of the island; the last letter deals with lighter themes based on personal experience, or related by others. However, some of the anecdotes Fuos tells, probably to give a sense of exoticism to his book,⁸⁷ are frankly unbelievable: most of them are defined by his translator as “stories” or, in one case, as “the greatest lies ever written about Sardinia”.⁸⁸

The exoticism is anticipated by the author in his preface, where he advises:

Probabilmente alcuni si meraviglieranno che nella nostra incivilita Europa possa esistere ancora un così deplorabile ordinamento quale ha la Sardegna. Altri lo riterranno come più che inverosimile ed impossibile per l'eccellente e saggio governo, che già da lungo tempo godono gli Stati soggetti alla Casa Savoia, e forse ben mi accadde ciò che il già console inglese, signor Taverner, soleva dire così spesso: “se io in Londra alla borsa volessi raccontare ciò che io

service of the Sardinian king, he lived in Cagliari between 1774 and 1777. Back in Germany, he was appointed chaplain of the Stuttgart garrison and parson of Herlach. In 1785 he was appointed parson of Ebersbach in Göttingen. His book appears to have been published in a few copies, which did not circulate far beyond the family circle.

⁸⁶ I found no reprinted editions, and no copy of the original was available in the libraries I had access to. An Italian translation was therefore the only possibility of reading the book.

⁸⁷ “Ai suoi lettori Fuos vuole trasmettere sensazioni di lontananza e di estraneità, di disagio esotismo, di un luogo e di una gente strana, quasi di un altro mondo...” Giulio Angioni, *Preface* to J.Fuos, *Notizie sulla Sardegna*, translated by Pasquale Gastaldi Millelire, (Nuoro:Illisso) 2000, p. 6.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

ho veduto ed udito in Sardegna, sarei tenuto per il più grande bugiardo”. [1780, 1899, 2000:42]

The book opens with a subject which would probably appear quite exotic to Fuos’s enlightened readers: the first letter deals with the so-called “heaven’s mines” – i.e. the burial places of saints found especially at the beginning of the seventeenth century – and with the wonders which, according to what chronicles reported, accompanied the discoveries, including a very sweet smell that guided the Jesuits to the holy burials. Fuos observes, quite sarcastically, that the tombs could become mines of relics:

Io parlai ultimamente con un cittadino [...] Egli mi raccontò che una volta i Sardi si rivolsero a Roma per ottenere di là alcuni corpi; ma il Papa, quando ciò gli fu proposto, rispose con meraviglia: “Perché mai i Sardi possono rivolgersi a Roma per questo, giacché la loro isola è inaffiata dal sangue dei martiri? [1780, 1899, 2000: 50-51]

The second letter describes the archaeological findings, particularly the Carthaginian tombs and the Roman aqueduct, which at the time were virtually unknown in Europe. Letters three and four change the focus quite unexpectedly. Letter three deals with the organisation of the kingdom, with tables reproducing the number of villages in each region, the number of inhabitants for each of them and the name of the feudal lord. Then Fuos describes the Piedmontese administration, and the crown’s revenue, consisting of land taxes, the 16% toll on imported goods, the exportation of salt, corn and tobacco, the tax on coral and tuna fishing, and finally the mines. The author observes that the revenue could be higher if the resources were exploited better, and if the profits were invested in the island:

Ciò che porta poco utile al paese è non soltanto che il sovrano non vi risieda, ma che anche alcuni dei più ricchi gentiluomini non abbiano dimora nel paese, e costantemente soggiornano in Spagna, perché laggiù hanno ancora più grandi beni. In questa guisa la maggior parte del denaro esce fuori, ed il paese in tali circostanze rimarrà rifinito per più di una ragione. [...] Tutti gli impieghi che concernono unicamente l’amministrazione del paese sono occupati da Sardi: tuttavia anche alcuni Piemontesi si sono di soppiatto infiltrati nei più alti uffici. [1780, 1899, 2000: 78]

Letter four describes the judiciary organization, the civil law sources, the composition of the Parliament and its assemblies and the edicts of the Piedmontese government. The author gives a positive opinion on the judiciary system, although critical points are the long duration of processes and the little cooperation given by the Sardinians to repress crime: “Ella vede che in quest’isola non si manca di alcuna sorta di istituti per prevenire tutti i delitti, e per amministrare la giustizia.” [1780, 1899, 2000: 85-86]

Then Fuos illustrates the functioning of councils charged with the administration of towns. The revenue comes mainly from a percentage on the import tolls. The author provides a budget with a list of items of expenditure, and the exact amounts actually spent for each of them. A curious anecdote – which makes Fuos say that Sardinia is a happy island in this respect – is that the word ‘tax’ is virtually unknown to the common people.⁸⁹

Letter five is entirely devoted to the Society of Jesus, suppressed in 1773 by a brief of Pope Clement XIV. Although the German pastor shows no inclination towards the Jesuits, he is sympathetic with the members of the Society he has the opportunity to meet:

Parecchi giorni dopoché la notizia della soppressione era giunta, io andai nel Collegio della Santa Croce di qui: ed Ella può facilmente immaginarsi quale spettacolo colà trovai. Sbalordimento e pianto erano in tutti i volti; costernazione e vergogna in tutti gli animi; il mio buon amico, che io veniva a visitare, mi gridò con il più lamentevole accento : *Magni nos trucidarunt*, ed io stesso mi sentii commosso da un avvenimento che mi poneva dinanzi agli occhi uno dei più grandi esempi dell’umana umiliazione che il mondo abbia mai veduto. [1780, 1899, 2000:99]

What Fuos is not sympathetic towards is the choreography of religious festivals. In particular he criticises, in letter six, the processions led by oxen decorated with flowers and rosettes; the custom of playing music outside the doors of churches on the occasion of religious celebrations is also attacked:

⁸⁹ “...i Sardi quasi non sanno cosa sono le imposte, per lo meno essi non conoscono alcun nome nuovo delle medesime. Io volli poco fa informarmi da un cittadino di qui quale tassa egli pagava al Re ovvero alla città pel suo mestiere. Questa parola lo sorprese, ed egli mi chiese che cosa volessi dire.” Ibid., 1780, 1899, 2000:91.

Ma se io nondimeno volessi raccontare ad un tale cattolico che i buoi vanno così seriamente in processione dinanzi al santo, come i monaci; che nella maggior parte delle feste religiose sotto la porta della chiesa sta un uomo con il piffero in bocca, ed un piccolo tamburo, il quale in onore del santo [...] suona per l'intero giorno il comune ballo dei sardi, la qual musica è perfettamente simile alla danza degli orsi; che il primo maggio si conduce a passeggiare in vettura un certo Santo; [...] se io volessi dire queste cose a un sincero cattolico ultramontano, egli crederebbe con ogni probabilità, che io volessi con ridicolaggini apposta inventate prendermi gioco della sua religione. [1780, 1899, 2000: 108-109]

Letters seven to ten discuss the relations between Church and State. Letter seven, in particular, concentrates on the direct enforceability of Papal bulls or *Exequatur* edicts in the Sardinian states, the appointment of bishops, and the judiciary competence in case of various offences or crimes. This was a crucial matter: as a general rule, the Church had exclusive judiciary competence on religious matters (particularly if they were ascribed to its members) whereas the State had competence on common crimes. However, immunity – when it was advocated by someone who put himself under the protection of the Church or literally took refuge in a church if he happened to be accused of a crime – caused jurisdiction conflicts, which in 1742 were regulated by an agreement between the Pope and the Sardinian States. The King of Sardinia accepted that the Papal bulls had direct force in the kingdom without any need of his confirmatory edict; that bishops were appointed by the Pope, on the sole condition that they pay homage to the King and plead royal protection; that the Church had exclusive competence on matters of faith (e.g. heresy, sacrilege or adultery) even if committed by laymen, in which case the person found guilty had to be handed over to the secular judge. In exchange, the Pope accepted that some categories of criminals (including arsonists, kidnappers, poisoners, killers with premeditation, rapists, fraudulent bankrupts, or people accused of lese-majesty) could not be granted immunity.

Letters eight and nine concentrate on the dispute over the appointment of abbots, who were of course responsible for the managing of properties and profits of monasteries. According to a privilege conceded to the house of Savoy by Pope Nicolas V three centuries earlier – later extended to Piedmont and the Sardinian

territories – abbots were appointed with the Duke’s consent, or on his proposal. The privilege had been confirmed by various Popes, but at the end of the eighteenth century the relations became more strained over an edict of the Duke of Savoy, which imposed that no one could take holy orders without previous communication to the secular judge. The Pope refused to comply, and declared the privileges conceded by Nicolas V null. Both the Duke and the Pope kept their positions, and the efforts of diplomats to compose the dispute failed to reach a positive solution. The Congregation summoned by the Pope in 1702 considered excommunication, but eventually they merely sent the Duke paternal recommendations, which were ignored. The disputes continued till the death of Pope Clement XI, but his successor Innocent XIII started a new controversy over the acquisition of the Sardinian crown by the House of Savoy, which had not obtained his consent. The fact that the King’s consent on Papal orders or appointments was irrelevant went without saying.

With the accession of Pope Benedict XIII, the Roman Church hierarchies resolved to examine again the whole matter. The negotiators of the two Courts, cardinal Finy and the Marquis D’Ormea, reached an agreement about the confirmation of Pope Nicolas’s privileges to the Savoy states, and the payment of a compensation to the Pope. The Pope accepted the agreement and issued a brief in 1727 to enforce it, resisting the hostility of some of his cardinals. But under his successor, the party which opposed the agreement in Rome raised doubts about its validity, as the decision had been taken without a formal consultation of the Congregation. Clement XII asked therefore to re-negotiate the matter, and after a firm refusal from Turin he declared the agreement null. As a result, diplomatic relations were interrupted, but the *status quo* was not altered. Fuos concludes that the existence of a powerful *Cancellaria* at the Roman Court may contradict the dogma of the Pope’s infallibility. One wonders to what extent all this detailed information about the history of the diplomatic relations between the house of Savoy and the Papal Court could matter to an ordinary traveller. We suspect very little. The fact is, the *Nachrichten* is not a travel book written for travellers. Quite obviously it is addressed to readers who have at least some interest in administration or diplomacy: knowing about the relations between the Sardinian state and the Roman Church was crucial for the political

survival of a prospective ruler. With his book, Fuos filled the gap caused by the absence of a German diplomat in Cagliari, who could have provided similar briefings to his government. It is no chance that Francis IV of Austria-Este – who was preparing to rule the island – had the *Nachrichten* in his pocket when he visited Sardinia, and considered it in his *Description of Sardinia* (1812).

2.2.2. Johann Daniel Ferdinand Neigebaur

Neigebaur,⁹⁰ as his publisher's introduction to *Die Insel Sardinien* [1853] informs us, visited the island in 1851, in order to acquire a deeper and more personal knowledge of Italy. The result is a quite complete *Landeskunde* study, arguably the most accurate of his travel books.

He had tried his hand in the genre both in his youth (*Handbuch für Reisende in Italien*, 1826 and *Frankreich*, 1832) and in his mature years (*Beschreibung der Moldau und Walachei*, 1848; *Dacien*, 1851; *Die Südslawen*, 1851). *Die Insel Sardinien* is dedicated to Isabella Sclopis di Salerano, the wife of the Justice minister of the first constitutional king of Sardinia, Charles Albert of Savoy.

The book consists of 36 chapters and 12 engraved plates (mostly drawn by Caminotti in 1836), besides Della Marmora's map of the island. Chapters 2-7 are devoted to the

⁹⁰ Johann Daniel Ferdinand Neigebaur (Dittmannsdorf 1783- Breslau 1866) received his first education in his father's house, a village parson, then he attended the Gymnasium and finally the university of Königsberg, where he studied theology and Law. He was then employed as Assessor in Marienwerder. After joining the anti-Napoleonic movement known as the *Lützow'sches Freicorps*, he was taken prisoner in Lauenburg and then sent to a prison camp in Limoges. He started studying the French language and culture at the city university finally passed the baccalaureat exam. He risked being judged by a military court because of his involvement in an attempt to escape from the camp. This episode inspired his first book, *Briefe eines preußischen Offiziers während seiner Kriegsgefangenschaft in Frankreich* [1816-1818] and *Schilderung der Provinz Limousin und deren Bewohner. Aus dem Tagebuch eines preußischen Offiziers in französischer Kriegsgefangenschaft* [1817]. These works, rather than telling about personal experiences, reveal Neigebaur's original interest in the *Landeskunde* of the region, including statistics and local dialect word lists.

Back in Germany, he served for about forty years in the administration of justice, first as *Präfekt* of Luxemburg and then as director of tribunals in the new provinces, which inspired several writings about reforms in the Rhein district, finally as general consul in the Donau Fürstentümer. In this period he published an impressive number of historical works, including *Geschichte der geheimen Verbindungen der neueren Zeit* [1831/34], *Ansichten aus der Kavalierperspective* [1835], *Memoiren eines Verstorbenen* (1835), *Tuttolasso's Wanderungen* [1839], *Der Papst und sein Reich* [1847], besides travel books like *Handbuch für Reisende in Italien* [1826] and *Frankreich* [1832]. He spent most of the last twenty years of his life travelling and compiling travel guides, namely on Sardinia, Sicily, Southern Russia and Dalmatia (*Beschreibung der Moldau und Walachei*, 1848; *Dacien*, 1851; *Die Südslawen*, 1851). *Die Insel Sardinia* drew so much from Della Marmora's work that readers felt it could have been written in a library.

Sardinian history from prehistory to the author's day, drawing mainly from Della Marmora and especially Manno; chapters 8-16 deal with a variety of aspects such as population, language, architecture, hunting, trade and the mineral kingdom; chapters 17-24 with the system of government, laws and the church; chapters 25-27 with the main towns; chapters 28-36 with literature and recent achievements in archaeology. An appendix deals with the notorious Arborea papers,⁹¹ which he believed to be original.

The approach is mainly historical. He quotes a variety of historians, especially Sardinian, like Spano, Manno, Martini, Fara, Vesme and Leo, but also Spanish historians like Francisco de Vico (*Las leyes y pragmaticas Reales del Rei de Serdenna*, 1680) and Dexart, and French authors like Mimaut and Della Marmora.⁹² The historical chapters do not tell anything new, but Neigebauer's approach is interesting as he considers Sardinia as a *nation*, although divided in separate kingdoms which – depending on contingent interests – sided with the Guelph or Ghibelline party in the long struggle which opposed the Pope and the German emperor Frederick II for prominence in Italy.

Chapter VI, in particular, focuses on the figure of Enzo of Hohenstaufen, who was married to the Sardinian *giudicessa* Adelasia (who had royal prerogatives in the north of the island) and thereafter proclaimed king of Sardinia by his father, emperor Frederick II.⁹³ Indeed, the marriage was a skilful move to subtract Sardinia from the

⁹¹ The *Carte d' Arborea* were fake medieval documents which were received with enthusiasm, and hastily thought to be original, as they filled a black hole in Sardinian history. They consisted in genealogies of kings, poems and various fragments written by an unknown hand on a pergamina replica bearing the fake signature of an alleged medieval notary. The Papers were circulated by the historian Pietro Martini starting in 1846. They became the object of an international academic dispute, with a confrontation between those who accepted the Papers as real and even used them in academic courses, and the sceptic. The Papers were certified real by the Turin Royal Academy, but after two decades of discussions they were dismissed as fake documents by the Berlin Academy, chaired by the historian and epigraphist Theodor Mommsen.

⁹² „So wie übrigens aus der Verwirrung der Völkerwanderung in Italien die Selbstverwaltung der Städte hervorging, so entwickelte sich auch ein ähnliches Verhältnis in Sardinien, allein wieder zu einer Zeit, aus welcher dem sorgfältigen sardinischen Geschichtschreiber Manno wenig Geschichtsquellen zugänglich waren.“ [1853:25]

⁹³ Heinrich or Heinz (Italianized as Enzo or Enzo) was the eldest of the natural sons of Frederick II by an Adelaide. He fought in the wars between his father, the pope, and the Northern Italian communes. When Ubaldo of Gallura died in 1238, the Doria family of Genoa, in order to secure the Sardinian Kingdom of Logudoro from Pisan domination, convinced the emperor to marry Enzo to Ubaldo's widow, Adelasia of Torres. By marrying her, Enzo acceded, *jure uxoris*, to about half of the island of Sardinia. He was knighted in Cremona and granted the title of King of Sardinia. He travelled to the

influence of Pisa (which had sided with the Pope) and consolidate Frederick's influence in the Mediterranean; but after his marriage king Enzo spent only a few months in the island before he left for good. The time was indeed too short to allow him play a role in the Sardinian politics; but the event states that the island had acquired as early as 1235 a relevant role in the European scene.

Chapter VII deals with the end of the four Sardinian kingdoms, and their attraction in the orbit of powerful foreign powers: first Aragon (1410) and then Spain, after the union of the Aragon and Castilian crowns (1479); finally, the passage of the island to the house of Savoy (1720). It is interesting to see that Neugebauer keeps an eye on the effects of every change in the social situation in the island, which he still considers a *nation* (both linguistically, culturally and socially, though not politically) despite the fact that its rulers progressively tried to erase the signs of its *national* identity. The author also challenges stereotyped ideas about the positive effects of the Savoy administration: although the Spanish period had destroyed any form of self-government in Sardinia, still the Sardinian parliament had kept the important prerogative of approving the donatives to the king, after he had read his expenditure plans in the island. The Savoy taxation system turned out to be more oppressive, as it reinforced the feudal obligations:

Früher wurden dergleichen Abgaben in Naturalien, wenigstens großen Theils, entrichtet; nunmehr mussten sie an den Staat in baarem [sic] Gelde gegeben werden, welcher die Feudalherren durch Staatspapiere viel zu hoch entschädigte. Auf diese Weise verloren die Feudalherren nur nichts, sondern sie gewannen; das Volk musste mitunter mehr bezahlen; allein es hatte seitdem nur Einen Herrn, den König. Gleichwohl waren die Feudalherren mit diesen Neuerungen sehr unzufrieden, und wenn Carlo Alberto nicht den guten Ruf hatte, den er verdiente, so was es die Schuld dieser Kaste! [1853:63]

island to marry Adelasia in October that year; but in July 1239, after being assigned as imperial vicar general in Lombardy, as well as General-Legate in Romagna, he left Sardinia never to return. He took part in several military operations in northern Italy: in 1241, he defeated the pope's fleet at Giglio Island in the Tyrrhenian Sea; then he led an army to occupy the town of Jesi, in the Marche. After his marriage was annulled (1946), his fortunes as military leader started to decline. He took part in the unsuccessful siege of Parma (1246) and continued to fight the Guelphs (the Pope's partisans) in Lombardy, Reggio and Parma. During a campaign to support the Ghibelline cities of Modena and Cremona against Guelph Bologna, he was defeated and captured on 26 May 1249 at the Battle of Fossalta. He was thenceforth kept prisoner in Bologna. His death in prison in 1272 marked the end of the Hohenstaufen house.

The issue is dealt with again in chapter XVIII, *Die Staatsverfassung Sardinien's*, where the author shows the struggle which opposed Sardinia to various dominations, not only in military terms but also as far as the constitution is concerned. Neugebauer states his viewpoint quite clearly:

Schwer hatte die Despotie der römischen Republik auf dem unterjochten Sardinien gelastet, aber die Insel sich wiederholt gegen ihre Unterdrücker erhoben, aber von Tib. Semps. Gracchus besiegt wurde. Denn die Republiken machen es wie Jeder, der im Besitz der Macht ist: er will das Recht für sich, aber nicht für den Andern.

In fact, Neugebauer shows that after the island's political independence had been lost – in 1355 the Aragonese control of the south of the Island was quite established, as shown by the fact that King Peter IV of Aragon opened the first Parliament in Cagliari, established following the Spanish model – the Sardinian common law gathered by Mariano IV of Arborea with the name of *Carta de Logu* was constantly under attack. The importance of the Charter – which was unique in Italy – is stressed by Neugebauer, as the chief emblem of its self determination.⁹⁴ The war to win the resistance of the Sardinian independent kingdom of Arborea lasted for almost seven decades and finished in 1421, but the Parliament (although it was seldom summoned) lasted till 1847, the year of the *Perfect Union* which marked the fusion between Piedmont and Sardinia, with the consequent abolition of the Sardinian Parliament.

Sometimes Neugebauer seems to have interest in tables and statistics for their own sake. This is when he writes about population, climate and trade. In chapter IX, for example, he provides tables (mainly after the national survey in 1846) giving information not only about population in towns, but also details about the number of men and women over the age of ninety and one hundred years in each town and province. In chapter XXII he provides barometer, thermometer and hygrometer

⁹⁴ „Der erste Theil dieser Statuten enthält das öffentliche Recht und das Vermögen der Stadt, der zweite das bürgerliche und das dritte das Strafrecht. In der 1395 von der Gesetzgeberin Eleonora von Arborea gegebenen Carta de Logu befinden sich viele aus diesen Statuten entnommene gesetzliche Bestimmungen. [...] Lange blieb dieses das einzige in Italien von eine Fürsten erlassene allgemeine Gesetz, bis der gelehrte Graf Sclopis eine Fürstin in Sardinien findet, welche ein Gesetzbuch verfasste, das seiner Zeit weit vauseilte.“ [1853:173-174]

measurements at 9 a.m, 12 noon and 3 p.m. for each day of January 1851. Even when describing towns he tends to rely more on figures rather than words:

Cagliari liegt nach dem geographisch-statistischen Handelslexikon von Goffredo Casalis, Turin 1836, unter dem 39° 13' der Breite und dem 9° 6' der Länge von Greenwich; der mittlere Barometerstand war im Jahre 1834 im Juni 75,94, im Dezember 75,87; der mittlere Thermometerstand im Juli 1834 26,30 und im Dezember 12,02. Jährlich laufen in den hiesigen Hafen gewöhnlich über 300 Schiffe ein, am meisten, von Genua und der Riviera di Ponente und der Levante, Marseille, Livorno, Neapel, Malta und Fiume; wenige kommen aus Schweden und Finnland, noch weniger aus Spanien. In Jahre 1829 betrug die Einfuhr 9,519,172, die Ausfuhr 7,126,001 Franken. [1853:226-227]

This is probably more than a tourist would expect to read, but certainly appealed to encyclopaedic readers.

2.2.3. Heinrich von Maltzan

Baron Heinrich von Maltzan⁹⁵ visited Sardinia in 1868, and the following year his *Reise auf der Insel Sardinien nebst einem Anhang über die phönizischen Inschriften Sardiniens* came out in Leipzig, where it had a good reception – the academic interest in Sardinia, stirred by the philological publications of Mommsen and his collaborators, had found an echo in the press and therefore in the general public.

Unlike most travel books, the *Reise* did not pass unnoticed in Italy: parts of the book were translated in 1875⁹⁶ and 1876⁹⁷ by an engineer in Cagliari, and in 1886 it was

⁹⁵Heinrich Karl Eckardt Helmut von Maltzan, Reichsfreiherr am Württemberg und Penzlin was born in a village near Dresden in 1826. At the age of three he was taken to his English uncle, Lord Sydenham; back in Germany as a teen-ager he completed school, then moved for his higher education to Heidelberg and Munich, where he studied law and learned oriental languages. He started travelling in 1850, when he visited England, France, Italy and Belgium. In 1852, following medical advice (he suffered from an unspecified “chest disease”), and thanks to the inheritance of the family fortune, he could spend long periods travelling in warm countries: that same year he visited Algeria, Morocco, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. This experience was described in *Drei Jahre im Nordwesten von Afrika* (1863). In 1860 he realised the most adventurous of his travels: in Arab disguise, with the complicity of a guide, he went on pilgrimage to Mecca where he could visit the sanctuaries and take part to religious ceremonies, which he described in his *Wallfahrt nach Mekka* (1865). In 1868 he spent several months in Sardinia (*Reise auf der Insel Sardinien*, 1869), and between 1869 and 1870 he visited again Tunisia, Tripolitania (*Reise in die Regenschäften Tunis und Tripoli*), and Aden, Massaua and south Arabia (*Reise nach Südarabien*, 1873). After suffering from neuralgia for several years, he committed suicide in Pisa in 1874.

⁹⁶ *Alcuni cenni sul libro Viaggi in Sardegna del barone Enrico di Maltzan e versione dell'intero capitolo sui nuraghi* dell'ingegnere G.C. Bertolini. (Cagliari : Tip. Timon) 1875.

⁹⁷ *Compendio della storia nazionale di Sardegna dal 687 al 1410 per Enrico barone di Maltzan, tratto dalla sua opera "Viaggi in Sardegna, con appendice sulle iscrizioni sardo-fenicie" e voltato in italiano dall'ingegnere G.C. Bertolini.* (Cagliari:Tip. di A. Alagna) 1876.

translated into Italian by the artillery captain Prunas Tola⁹⁸ with the help of his teacher of German, with the purpose of making Sardinia and its ancient history as known in Italy as it was in Germany, as the editors declare:

[Von Maltzan] non scrisse veramente un'opera sull'Italia: questo suo lavoro pregevolissimo riflette però una parte assai grande, bella ed importante della nostra patria – scrisse della Sardegna. Vorremmo ingannarci, ma forse, è questa la ragione della sua poca popolarità, perché quest'isola sfortunata non desta in noi quell'interesse che dovrebbe destare, e che a giusto titolo le compete. L'opera del Barone Von Maltzan invero, mentre ebbe in Germania accoglienza favorevole, o come si dice con frasi di moda, un esito brillantissimo, non trovò nel nostro paese neppure un traduttore...⁹⁹

And indeed the book surpasses ordinary travel works thanks to its scrupulous documentation and the seriousness with which von Maltzan attended to the elaboration of his judgement:

Non si tratta di uno dei soliti viaggi scritti correndo in ferrovia, di impressioni ricevute nel primo momento, tra un sigaro e l'altro, all'albergo – si tratta di un'opera fortemente studiata, profondamente meditata, seriamente scritta...¹⁰⁰

The book has twenty-four chapters. The first seventeen are devoted to the chief towns and their environs (Cagliari, Iglesias and its mines, Oristano, Torralba Sassari) and to the main archaeological sites in Cagliari, Sulcis, Cornus, besides the Nuraghes. Chapters 18 and 19 deal with the north and east coast respectively, the last five with popular poetry, history, geology, flora and fauna. Finally come an appendix with ancient Phoenician inscriptions, and a map of 'Sardinia Antiqua'.

In fact, Von Maltzan can be considered an encyclopaedist who draws information from the best sources available at the time: Alberto Della Marmora for geography and Giovanni Spano for history and *Landeskunde*. Besides geography and archaeology, he shows very good knowledge of mineralogy, zoology and botanics,

⁹⁸ *Il Barone di Maltzan in Sardegna: con un'appendice sulle iscrizioni fenicie dell'isola - traduzione dal tedesco con note del cavaliere Prunas Tola Giuseppe*. (Milano : Alfredo Brigola & C.) 1886.

⁹⁹ Von Maltzan, Heinrich Freiherrn, *Il Barone di Maltzan in Sardegna: con un'appendice sulle iscrizioni fenicie dell'isola / traduzione dal tedesco con note del cavaliere Prunas Tola Giuseppe*. (Milano:Alfredo Brigola)1886, p. 5-6

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p.7

and an excellent control of ancient Mediterranean languages. But the exposition is typical of a travel book. Not all the parts of the book, however, have the same interest today from a historiographic viewpoint. Chapter 4 is entirely dedicated with the Museum of Cagliari, especially its bronze statuettes, many of which were not authentic; chapters 10, 13 and 20 (respectively on the Roman ruins at Tharros, the Nuraghi and popular poetry)¹⁰¹ are mere transpositions of Spano's works; chapter 21 on the National history is based on the notorious *Arborea Papers*, which he supposed original. The pleasure of reading the sections about the places, people and situations he describes has, on the contrary, remained intact – especially when the author shows humour and irony.

Maltzan's *Reise* is the result of fortuitous circumstances. He arrived in Cagliari on 10th February 1868, after a 25-hour ferry journey from Palermo. Actually his final destination was Tunis, via Cagliari; but because of a delayed arrival he missed the ferry to Tunis and was therefore forced to stay in Sardinia and wait for the next ship, which would not leave for another eight days. During this time he visited the city for the first time. *Ex malum, bonum*: the Sardinian experience was a revelation. Von Maltzan appreciated the beauty of the Mediterranean harbours, as for example in the gulf of Palermo.¹⁰² But the discovery of Cagliari was revealing, due not only to its natural beauty. During his forced stay, he found the city so interesting that he decided to visit it again and spend several months there to get to know it better, and complete his journey through the inner regions of the island. Like many authors before him, and indeed many visitors of the island after him, the author is surprised

¹⁰¹ The chapter on Sardinian *Volksdichtung* is mainly devoted to the presentation of a religious play in two acts, each divided in twelve scenes, in four verses stanzas rhyming ABBC CDDE: *S'istoria de Juseppe Hebrew, Dramma Sardu*, telling about the biblical episode of the flight of Joseph To Egypt. This mystery play had been put on paper by Spano only a short time before Maltzan read it, reconstructing the text like a mosaic, basing on the memory of over 40 different people, who kept in their mind fragments of varying length of the play. Because of its originality Maltzan admires in particular scene 6 where "scheint eine echte national-sardinische Ruthat zu der biblischen Erzählung".

¹⁰² „Dieser Theil des Mittelmeeres, sonst im Winter der Schauplatz heftiger Stürme, hatte sich heute in sein Feiertagskleid gehüllt, ein öglatter Wasserspiegel gab die Bilder der malerischen Ufer des Golfes von Palermo mit völliger Deutlichkeit zurück; die Wasservögel ruhten schweigend auf dem befriedigten Element, welches der hellste Sonnenschein im Strahlenglanz seiner vollen Schönheit erscheinen ließ.“ [1869:1]

that so little is known about Sardinia in Europe.¹⁰³ Von Maltzan states that this is the main reason why he decided to publish his work on Sardinia:

Während eine bändereiche Literatur sich mit dem italienischen Festland beschäftigt, und selbst Sizilien in hundert Büchern besprochen worden ist, sehen wir die benachbarte Schwesterinsel, Sardinien, in unsrer deutschen Literatur so gut wir gar nicht vertreten, und selbst die italienischen, französischen und englischen Werke über dieselbe (meist aus dem ersten Viertel unsres Jahrhunderts stammend), müssen wir zum größten Teil als veraltet bezeichnen, da gerade die Entdeckungen der letzten zwanzig Jahre, namentlich auf archäologischem und geologischem Gebiete, diesem Lande ein ganz neues Interesse verliehen. [1869:Vorwort, s.p.]

No doubt the beauty of the places he visited and the excitement for the discovery of what he thought an unknown corner of the world contributed to make him forget about his sufferings – he complained that his chest pains prevented him from feeling well on even a single day. His relaxed prose, however, shows that he kept pleasant memories of his journey, which he recollected with humour even when describing little incidents which might have upset an ordinary tourist. An example is a literal assault of *facchini* (or porter boys) on his arrival, offering to carry his luggage and accompany him to a hotel. As people were generally of the opinion that all foreigners are English,¹⁰⁴ von Maltzan asks to be led to a hotel frequented by English people:

Das mich auf dieser Irrfahrt begleitende *facchino* war der Träger des Regenschirms, welchem nun zu dieser schweren Last auch noch meine kleine Reisetasche aufgebürdet würde. [...] Er brachte mich auch wirklich nach einer Art von Wirtshaus, das heißt in einer Matrosenkneipe, in der einige halb betrunkene gemeine Seeleute um ein gebratenes Spanferkel herumsaßen, vor dem sie sich ungeheure Stücke zu Gemüt führten. Das war nun freilich nicht ein Gasthof für jenes englische Federvieh. [...] Aber dennoch hatte mein Führer Recht gehabt. Die betrunkenen Matrosen, die das Spanferkel versehrten, waren wirklich Engländer. Jedoch sie waren eben nur Engländer der Nationalität nach und nicht in dem Sinne.[...]

¹⁰³ „Man mochte glauben, dass diese Insel gar nicht in Europa läge, so wenig fummelt man sich um sie. Namentlich in Deutschland scheint man dieses interessante Stück Erde sehr zu unterschätzen.“ [1969:7]

¹⁰⁴ „Mein Führer behauptete jedoch eines zu kennen, in welchem, wie er sagte, gewöhnlich die Engländer abzustiegen pflegten, denn natürlich gilt hier, eben so gut wie in Italien, jeder Fremde im Allgemeinen und die Deutschen im Besondern für einen *Inglese*, und auch ich konnte diesem Schicksal nicht entgehen. [1869:11]

Nun brachte mich mein Führer vor eine hohe, aber schmale palastähnliche Façade, auf welcher pomphaft der Titel *Albergo del Progresso* geschrieben stand. Dieser Fortschrittshotel, denn das bedeutet der Name, schien jedoch lediglich Façade zu sein, denn der Zimmer waren so wenige, dass man mir vorschlug, mich mit einer alten Dame aus Sassari, die am Fieber litt, zusammen zu logieren. [1869:11-12]

He eventually succeeded in finding a room at hotel *Concordia*, and the following day he started to visit the city. As he had not planned his visit, everything he saw had the taste of a discovery. And his enthusiasm was increased by the fact that he felt an unconventional tourist, almost an *antitourist*:

O ihr naiven Touristen, die ihr in den Ateliers der Genremaler in Rom das römische Nationalkostüm bewundert und dabei wähnt, etwas Naturwüchsiges zu sehen, während ihr in Wirklichkeit nur eine Maskerade vor Augen habt. Wolltet ihr einmal dieser Tradition der Mode entsagen, die euch nur Geheucheltes und Falsches bietet, und hierher kommen, dann würdet ihr sehen, dass es doch noch in einem zu Italien gehörigen Lande etwas Unverfälschtes gibt, welches noch nicht von Lohnbedienten und spekulativen Künstlern modgerecht zugestutzt ist. Aber freilich – ihr liebt mehr euer Rom oder Neapel und die anderen fünf oder sechs Städte, die im Baedeker als unvermeidlich beschrieben werden, ihr wollt lieber das zum tausend und ersten Mal sehen, was schon tausend Mal beschrieben worden ist, und solche Länder wie Sardinien liegen für euch außer der Welt. Und das ist vielleicht auch recht gut, denn es ist ein Glück, dass es noch interessante Gegenden in der Welt gibt, die noch nicht Mode geworden sind und noch nicht allwinterlich von so genannten Vergnügungszügen heimgesucht und von einem Schwarm der Touristen mit roten Büchern unterm Arm, von Stutzern und Modedamen und von ihrem Gefolge, den banditenhaften Kurieren und Lohnbedienten, überlaufen werden. Drum bleibt nur in Rom, ihr lieben Touristen, und verderbt mir solche Länder wie Sardinien nicht. [1869:8]

The problem of *identifying* Sardinia was soon central for the Baron, as everything he saw (the architecture, the costumes, the way of living) seemed to escape any categorization, suspended as it appeared to his eyes between Italy and the Semitic cultures¹⁰⁵. Especially the costumes showed the existence of what he calls the

¹⁰⁵ „Wenn wir zuerst die Art und Weise beobachten, wie die Sardinier den edelsten Teil des Menschen – das Haupt – verhüllen, so werden wir durch diese auffallend an orientalische Völker erinnert. Wie beim Orientalen, so ist auch beim Sardinier die Kopfbedeckung ein inhärenter Teil des Anzugs, der selbst im Hause niemals abgelegt wird. Auch in der Form trägt er einen orientalischen Typus und

Nationaltracht, despite the differences between the various parts of the island. Again and again Von Maltzan – dealing with different aspects of culture he considered – insists on the existence of a national distinguishing mark which differentiates the island both from the European and the Arab cultures.

The foreword contains a homage to two authors: Della Marmora for his geographical descriptions, and Giovanni Spano both for his archaeological findings and for deciphering ancient Phoenician inscriptions, and therefore contributing to the knowledge of that ancient language: “[der Mann] welcher für die Erforschung seines Vaterlandes allein mehr gethan (sic) hat, als ganze Generationen vor ihm.”

The turning point in his visit was in fact on the third day, when he had the chance of actually meeting Giovanni Spano¹⁰⁶ - this was also the beginning of a friendship which lasted till Von Maltzan’s death. The German visitor probably impressed the erudite Spano, as he showed great courtesy and consideration of the baron’s views. Every afternoon they met and visited archaeological sites in Cagliari, namely the Roman amphitheatre and the Roman necropolis; von Maltzan had asked the Rector’s help to gather materials for publications, and Spano was happy to help him spread news about Sardinia outside the national boundaries.¹⁰⁷

Von Maltzan was very grateful to his exceptional guide – whom he compares to Virgil in Dante’s metaphysical journey – during those archaeological walks, as he literally opened him the doors for the discovery of archaeological treasures: the Rector’s recommendations gave Von Maltzan the opportunity to see the best samples, both in museums and in private homes. His esteem is demonstrated by the fact that he dedicated his *Reise* to Spano – whose photographic portrait was inserted in the frontispiece of his book – and that he addressed to him three letters with the Phoenician heading *Hiss chacham min chol Sardin* – to the most learned man in

nähert sich am meisten demjenigen der so genannten phrygischen Mütze.“ [1869:58]

¹⁰⁶ Giovanni Spano (1803-1878), the Sardinian scholar who at the time was the University Rector, found and deciphered the Phoenician inscriptions in the so-called Gerrei tables, written in three languages. He even owned a bronze table which dated back to Imperial Rome, with engraved descriptions of ancient Sardinian populations. All these objects, when he had finished studying them, were given to the archaeological museum.

¹⁰⁷ “[Spano,] der als echt sardinischer Patriot es für wünschenswert hielt, dass sein geliebtes Vaterland auch in anderen Sprachgebieten allgemeiner bekannt werden möchte, als dieses bis jetzt der Fall gewesen ist“ [1869:Vorwort, sp]

Sardinia.¹⁰⁸ More than that, Spano's name often occurs in the *Reise*, making him the actual protagonist. This is how von Maltzan describes his guide and mentor:

...das Schicksal hatte mir einen besseren Begleiter vorbehalten als den toten Buchstaben, nämlich ein lebendiges Buch – einen Mann, in welchem die Archäologie Sardinien's gleichsam Fleisch geworden ist. [1969:93]

The disinterested generosity of the Rector is also praised:

Im Museum von Cagliari befinden sich vier große Schränke, ausschließlich mit dem von ihm gesammelten Antiken gefüllt, die er seiner Vaterstadt geschenkt hat. [...] Gewöhnlich ist jedoch Spano der erste Besitzer der wissenschaftlich wichtigsten in Sardinien entdeckten antiken Gegenstände. Er studiert sie, beschreibt sie, lässt Abbildungen oder Faksimiles von ihnen nehmen, und wenn er sie dann durch eine illustrierte Broschüre dem gelehrten Publikum bekannt gemacht hat, so schenkt er sie gewöhnlich dem Museum. [1869:94-95]

Some of Von Maltzan's contemporary Italian critics (like for example Brigaglia) devote too little attention to the sociological causes of the backwardness of Sardinia. The baron mentions the poor exchanges with the mainland and the poor links between towns in the island, natural calamities, banditry and the fact that Sardinia was considered a place of exile as the chief handicaps on the road to economic development; but he shows little interest in examining the matter in depth. However, we believe this would be asking too much of a travel book. The point is von Maltzan is totally absorbed by the research and interpretation of the most authentic distinguishing mark of the identity of the island, mostly through the interpretation of

¹⁰⁸ In the first letter, written from Sassari, thanks the Rector for his recommendations and asks his, on behalf of his friend Baron Reinsberg, a complete list of his works; he apologises about his Italian, which actually looks perfect and even very elegant. In the second letter, also from Sassari, he thanks Spano for the books he sent and talks about Reinsberg again: he was in Milan with his wife studying the Italian dialects, which appear to von Maltzan much less interesting than Sardinian. He proposes an interpretation of a difficult inscription on a stone found in Sulcis Spano had showed him. Von Maltzan thinks the language is Numidian, not Phoenician, and refers to a votive invocation to Isis. In the third letter, from Tunis, he pays homage again to Spano and announces he will print his portrait in the frontispiece of his book. "Resto meravigliato di vedere come si fanno sempre nuovi lumi sulle antichità sarde, e come si scuoprano (sic) nuovi popoli e nuove città: io non dubito che in grazia delle sue scoperte la Sardegna sarà conosciuta come stava anticamente." Also, he announces the finding of 150 new Phoenician inscriptions in Tunis, mostly votive formulae. For a reconstruction of the relations between Spano and von Maltzan see Cabras, Teresita, *Influssi di Giovanni Spano nell'opera sulla Sardegna di Enrico Barone di Maltzan*, in 'Studi sardi', n. 25, 1978, p. 337-361.

the most ancient historical news on Sardinia, in an effort of reconstructing the interrupted thread of collective memory.

2.3. *French travellers*

At the end of the eighteenth century Sardinia was a hostile land for the French, who had plans to occupy it following a strategy of naval control of the Mediterranean. Plans for annexing Sardinia were on the agenda of the French governments for a long time, and they were intensified after Corsica was ceded to France by the Genoese Republic in 1768, with the Versailles treaty. In 1793 an attempt to invade Sardinia, supported by a small number of local revolutionaries, was frustrated both in the North, where young Napoleon was pushed back by the Savoy artillery, and in the South, where the formidable fleet of Admiral Truguet, after the city refused to surrender, bombed Cagliari for two days from the sea. But his badly organized army of volunteer revolutionaries was repelled by a Sardinian popular army which had been hastily recruited to defend the capital. Despite the popular discontent about the Piedmontese rule, the Savoy propaganda and sermons in churches had been successful in instigating the belief that the French revolutionaries were notorious destroyers of churches, rapists and child eaters.¹⁰⁹

Until the Congress of Vienna, being French meant being a spy; and even after 1815 French traders had to suffer a humiliating quarantine on disembarking.

In 1860 there were rumours of an imminent cession of Sardinia to France. The fears had some factual basis. On May 22nd, 1860, the British foreign minister, John Russell, wrote to the ambassador in Turin, James Hudson, to demand the Piedmontese Prime Minister, Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, an official statement about the allegations, as a cession of Sardinia to France would be an element of perturbation in the balance between powers in the Mediterranean. On May 30th Cavour officially denied any intention to cede Sardinia, and in July the French foreign minister Thouvenel assured the British ambassador in Paris Cowley that the idea was absurd, as he would never risk to fight a war for an island that “had no

¹⁰⁹ A chronicle of those events was written by Maurizio Pugioni, *Memorie storiche della spedizione della gran flotta francese contro l'isola di Sardegna dell'invasione della città capitale e delle isole intermedie* [Bologna:S.Tomaso d'Aquino] 1793.

resources, and was so uncivilized that even Piedmont should be ashamed of ruling it”.¹¹⁰ Although all governments appeared to be satisfied, the rumours continued to find space in newspapers both in France, Britain and Italy;¹¹¹ the Sardinian MPs in Turin (Siotto Pintor, G.A. Sanna, G. Sanna and G. Asproni) were convinced that Piedmont secretly worked to cede Sardinia – an hypothesis they welcomed as an opportunity to separate the Sardinian crown from Piedmont, since the so called “Perfect Union” in 1847 had been, in their view, a calamity.

The book which contributed more than any other to popularise the situation of Sardinia in the first quarter of the 19th century was Jean Francois Mimaut’s *Histoire de Sardaigne ou la Sardaigne ancienne et moderne* (1825), written by a former French consul in Sardinia. The book was quoted both by della Marmora and Pasquin, the chief popularizers of Sardinia in France in the first half of the nineteenth century. In the second half of the century several books on *unknown Sardinia* come out in France – indeed of a rather inferior level if compared to the previous works. Nevertheless, the publication of these travel books is a clear sign that the island had started to exert a certain fascination, and had carved itself a niche in the reading public. This group of works includes Édouard Delessert’s *Six semaines dans l’île de Sardaigne* (1855), Emmanuel Domenech’s *Bergers et Bandits, souvenir d’un voyage en Sardaigne* (1867) and finally baron’s Roissard De Bellet’s *La Sardaigne à vol d’oiseau* (1884), all published in Paris. Gaston Vuiller’s *Impressions de l’île de Sardaigne* (1891) – the result of an accurate publishing project and in many respects the definitive travel book on Sardinia – bridges the gap between representations based on factual descriptions and the great idealistic visions of the twentieth century authors.

Some of the travel books on Sardinia published in France show traces of what the Piedmontese defined as “French propaganda” to attract Sardinia into its sphere of

¹¹⁰ Porceddu, Virgilio, *Le voci di cessione della Sardegna nel 'diario' Asproni e nella letteratura degli anni 1860-1861*, in *Atti Convegno nazionale di studi su Giorgio Asproni : Nuoro, 3-4 novembre 1979*. (Nuoro : Istituto superiore regionale etnografico), 1983, pp. 185-199.

¹¹¹ The rumours – despite being dismissed with energy – had a factual basis. The document *Note sur le projet de colonisation dans l’île de Sardaigne* (Turin : Imp. Nationale de G. Biancardi) printed in Turin in 1856 but not made public until 1932, contains a contract for the cession of 60.000 hectares in Sardinia to a society led by banker C. Bonnard, besides the letters addressed to the Prime Minister and members of the Senate. In change for the rights of exploitation (especially of mines) the society promised investments to develop infrastructures, notably the railway.

influence. Particularly the books published in the 1850s and early 1860s (i.e. at the time of the Italian unification, 1861) appear to take side with those who cultivated the hope of annexing the island to France by diplomatic action rather than force (see footnote 30). We have found sufficient evidence to maintain that the interest of the French authors in assessing the island's resources aimed at evaluating investments and implement development policies, in view of its acquisition.

2.3.1. *Antoine Claude Pasquin, alias Valéry*

Antoine Claude Pasquin¹¹² travelled in Sardinia in May 1834, as part of a Mediterranean tour which included the islands of Elba and Corsica. He sailed from Genova on a steam boat, the “Gulnare”, which was still being used for the sea passage between the mainland and Sardinia in 1875.¹¹³ He described his journey in *Voyages en Corse, à l'île d'Elbe et en Sardaigne*, in two volumes, published in Paris in 1837. Each chapter is devoted to a visit along the itinerary Pasquin followed (from North to south along the west coast and then south to north across the centre, with various diversions to places of interest). Due to his exceptional size, as he tells, he was unable to travel on horse back. After being spared the strict quarantine in La

¹¹² Antoine Claude Pasquin (alias Valéry, 1789-1847) entered the ranks of the French administration as a young man. However his love for literature led him to accept a post of librarian in Paris. In 1815 he was employed as librarian at the Saint Cloud castle by Louis XVIII; in 1822 he was given the prestigious post of *conservateur*, or curator, of the Louvre library, finally Louis Philip, in 1830, called him to Versailles to supervise and enrich the Royal library. A fervent royalist, he was a member of *salons littéraires* animated by aristocrats like Mme Duras, Mme Swetchine and Mme Récamier, and was a personal friend of many leading intellectuals of his time, including Chateaubriand, Mérimée, Stendhal, Sainte-Beuve and Xavier de Maistre. The high reputation he enjoyed among his contemporaries is mainly due to publication in Paris, between 1831 and 1833, of the five volumes of *Voyages historiques et littéraires en Italie*, which became a must for French romantic travellers in Italy. Apart from a novel, *Sainte Péline, souvenirs contemporains*, (1826) and the philosophical treaty *Études morales, politiques et littéraires, ou Recherche des vérités par les faits* (1829) his works are characterised by Italian subjects (*Voyages en Corse, à l'île d'Elbe et en Sardaigne*, 1837; *Voyage en Italie, guide du voyageur et de l'artiste*, 1838; *L'Italie confortable*, 1841; *La Science de la vie, ou Principes de conduite religieuse, morale et politique, extraits et traduits d'auteurs italiens*, 1843).

¹¹³ “Un excellent bateau à vapeur anglais, bâtiment de l'Etat, un des meilleurs de la Méditerranée, la Gulnare, qui part de Gênes tous les quinze jours, mène alternativement à Porto-Torres en vingt-quatre heures, pour soixante francs, et à Cagliari en quarante-deux heures, pour quatre-vingt. Malgré le confortable et le bon marché, la Gulnare ne transporte guère que des religieux ou des soldats envoyés dans l'île...”[1837:76] Named after a slave woman loved by Byron's Corsaire, the “Gulnare”, a 35 mts steam boat built by Blackwell and purchased by the Italian State in 1835, was used both for military and civil purposes. In 1848 it was in the Adriatic during the First Independence war; in 1850 in Alexandria to transport Sardinian troops; in 1852-1853 it was in the Bosphorus for the Crimean War; in 1860 it escorted Garibaldi's expedition to free Southern Italy during the third Independence War. In more peaceful periods it served as an ordinary passenger ferry between Genoa and Sardinia.

Maddalena thanks to the intercession of friends,¹¹⁴ the improved state of recently built roads – which he admired for the engineering and the quickness of its realization – allowed him to opt for a comfortable coach.¹¹⁵

Like many travellers before and after him, Pasquin was struck from the outset by the unaffected courtesy and hospitality:

Il m'est impossible d'oublier l'impression que j'ai reçu à mon arrivée sur la plage de Terra-Nova, à la vue des premiers Sardes que je rencontraï, et en me trouvant au milieu de cette population moins connue que certaines tribus sauvages de l'Amérique [...]. La mine rébarbative du campagnard sarde contraste véritablement avec son caractère, avec son extrême douceur trop ignorée et que j'ai été depuis à même d'observer. [1837:18]

Pasquin finds that in the manners of people – especially those of low social conditions – there is something which has been lost in the so called civilized world, although it must have existed in ancient civilizations:

J'ai essayé de peindre l'empressement, la grâce de l'hospitalité corse, et certes n'ai point envie de me dédire; mais il y a dans cette hospitalité quelque chose de la vanité française. L'hospitalité sarde a un tout autre caractère. Elle est, on peut le dire, plus primitive, plus antique, plus simple, plus universelle. La Sardaigne [...] conserve encore une multitude de traits caractéristiques qui rappellent les vertus et les mœurs des anciens peuples. L'hospitalité est à la fois une tradition, un goût et presque un besoin pour le Sarde. [1837:21]

The author advises in the foreword that he did not aim at writing an organic description of Sardinia, especially as regards history, and that the book should be read accordingly: *Ce livre a été écrit en partie à travers champs et à dos de mulet; il doit être lu à-peu-près de même.* The suggestion should be taken literally, as the work is far from providing a systematic exposition of the matter. In its 104 brief chapters, sometimes consisting of a single paragraph of some two hundred words, he gives interesting information on several aspects (state of the ruins he visited, history, people he met, prices, economy and so on), but historical references are mostly mere

¹¹⁴ “Sans la complaisance du commandant et des autorités de l'île, qui me permirent secrètement ainsi que mon brave et impassible compagnon de voyage, M. Piras, [...] j'aurais été, comme nos mariniens, contraint de passer, à bord de notre frêle barque et par la pluie, trois jours et deux nuits, ou de bivouaquer sous un rocher de la cote...” [1837:5]

¹¹⁵ “Je la parcourus paisiblement en six journées dans une grosse calèche de voiturin, avec les stations d'usage; et sauf les auberges qui n'existaient point j'aurais pu me croire sur une route d'Italie. Mais cette manière de voir ne pouvait me satisfaire, et je me remis depuis Cagliari à cheminer plus librement avec le *cavalcante*.” [1837:80]

anecdotes or curiosities, and his opinions seem to be stimulated by minute accidents rather than a structured planning. The book is always interesting and lively though, often animated by the pleasure of discovering aspects of an island that was unknown to most of his contemporaries. This spirit is apparent in the description of an orange grove in the small village of Milis:

C'est le premier jour du mois de Mai, par un temps magnifique, que je visitai les jardins ou plutôt la forêt d'orangers de Milis, l'ornement de la Sardaigne, qui compte au delà de cinq cent mille arbres, et dont l'approche me fut annoncée par une brise embaumée. Ce bois, ceint de collines qui l'abritent, et dont je parcourus pendant plusieurs heures les délicieux ombrages et les taillis touffus, était alors animé par le chant des oiseaux et le murmure des mille petits ruisseaux qui arrosent le pied de ces arbres toujours altères. Une couche solide de fleurs d'orangers jonchait le sol; je marchais, je glissais sur cette neige odorante. [...] L'abondance des fruits est prodigieuse: quelquefois de long bâtons de serments soutiennent les branches pliant sous le faix des oranges et des citrons [...] on est comme ébloui par tous ces globes rouges et dorés, ardente végétation suspendue en festons et en guirlandes. O ma chère orangerie de Versailles, monument du grand siècle, combien avec vos bassins de marbre [...] combien toute votre royale magnificence était loin des charmes prodigés par la nature à la solitaire vallée de Milis! (1837:110-111)

Despite the enthusiasm and the lyrical accents, though, one suspects his journey is not only, as he declares, a *voyage d'art, d'histoire et de littérature* (p.103). This is when he quite surprisingly suggests that the orange groves of Milis could be exploited with industrial processes rather than preserved, so that they bestow joys on future travellers:

La forêt de Milis est peut-être un des points de la Sardaigne qui appelle le plus l'exploitation d'industriels intelligents, soit pour la création de distilleries de fleurs d'oranger, soit pour celle de fabriques de produits chimiques, propres à l'impression des étoffes de soie, de laine et de coton. (1837: 111)

Similarly, Pasquin's considerations on the economic potential of the Sardinian mining industry appears to be likely to find more interested readers among his governmental relations in Paris rather than among common travellers or artists:

... le plomb excellent a été comparé à celui d'Espagne. La première qualité se vend en nature à l'étranger de quatorze à quinze francs le quintal, et l'extraction qui ne coûte que huit à dix francs, laisse une seconde et troisième qualité chargée de plomb qui se débite aussi; de sorte que le produit net se trouve de quatre-vingt pour cent. Il est regrettable et surprenant que les succès de la mine de Monteponi n'aient point excité à de nouvelles tentatives. Les mines de fer

surtout si négligées mériteraient une soigneuse exploitation. La Sardaigne achète pour trois cent mille francs de fer nécessaire aux besoins de sa marine, de son agriculture et de sa faible industrie, tandis qu'elle pourrait en exploiter abondamment et d'une qualité très supérieure à celle des pays dont elle s'est faite tributaire. (1837: 253-254)

Pasquin's *Voyage* enjoyed a high reputation and wide circulation in Europe: it became a standard reference for travel writers on Sardinia, as shown by the fact that he is quoted in most subsequent works¹¹⁶ on the subject. The reason why the book remains interesting today is the information about the state of the island and its society in 1835, deduced from the observation of the people he met or who gave him hospitality (there were no hotels apart from the few in the two main cities). Also, he anticipates one of the favourite themes of writers on Sardinia in the following century, that is the curative effects of a journey to pre-industrial Sardinia in reaction against the alienation of the industrial world. Curiously, Pasquin finds there is a relation between the level of industrialization and the number of the mentally ill:¹¹⁷

L'aliénation qui se multiplie avec les progrès intellectuels, le besoin des jouissances et les agitations diverses de notre civilisation, est beaucoup moins fréquente en Italie qu'en Angleterre et aux Etats-Unis. Le nombre des aliénés ne monte en Italie qu'à un sur quatre mille huit cent soixante-dix-neuf habitants, tandis que la même proportion est en Angleterre d'un sur mille trente, et aux Etats-Unis d'un sur mille neuf cent treize. Le chiffre de la Sardaigne encore au-dessus de celui d'Italie, et qui n'est que d'un fou sur six mille habitants, confirme la décourageante remarque de ce fait. (pp. 200-201)

2.3.2. Honoré de Balzac

Honoré de Balzac never intended to write a travel book on Sardinia. But his letters, gathered under the title of *Lettres à Madame Hanska*,¹¹⁸ tell the story of his adventurous Sardinian journey, in the hope of amassing a quick fortune with the extraction of silver from the scoriae of abandoned mines.

¹¹⁶ Notably Della Marmora, in his *Itinéraire de l'île de Sardaigne* [1860], pays homage to him.

¹¹⁷ For more information on this issue see AA.VV., *L'Italia terra di rifugio* (Moncalieri, Turin:Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerche sul Viaggio in Italia) 2009 (3 volumes).

¹¹⁸ Balzac's *Correspondence* was partly edited and published in 1876 by Callman-Levy; a new edition under the title of *Lettres à l'Etrangere*, compiled after the text copied from the originals by Viscount de Lovenjoul after the death of the addressee in 1882, came out in separate volumes between 1899 and 1950; then in 1960 Roger Pierrot who purged several alterations, and again in 1967 after a definitive philological examination of the manuscripts.

His journey appears to be motivated also by a desire to escape from a difficult situation, both financial and psychological, which made him waver between different ways of making money: start a business, or write for his *Comédie humaine*:

Voilà dix années de travail, sans aucun fruit, le plus certain est la calomnie, l'injure, les procès, etc. [...] vous ignorez l'étendue de mes souffrances, je ne devais ni ne pouvais les dire toutes, et je n'ai plus qu'à me procurer la tranquillité la plus absolue. J'ai donc formé deux ou trois plans de fortune; voici le premier; s'il échoue, j'irai au second; puis, après, je reprendrai la plume que je n'aurai cependant pas quittée.¹¹⁹

The preparations for the journey lasted a few months. In a letter dated 12th November 1837 he confided his plans for the first time to his friend,¹²⁰ probably implying he would not turn down the offer of a generous loan:

Moi, je vais partir pour Marseille, aller en Corse et de là en Sardaigne, et tâcher d'être revenue pour les 1rs jours de décembre, c'est une affaire de fortune de la plus haute importance qui m'y conduit, et je ne pourrai vous le dire que si elle manque, car, si elle réussit, je ne pourrai vous la conter que dans le tuyau de l'oreille. Voici 3 semaines que je pense à ce voyage, mais l'argent pour le faire me manque, et je ne sais où le trouver. Il faut environs 1200 francs ou cent vent ducats pour aller savoir un oui ou un non sur la fortune, mais la fortune rapide, en quelque mois.¹²¹

Actually he could not leave until March 1838 – in all likelihood putting the money together was more difficult than he expected. He used his time, by the way, to associate with the *beau monde* and make relations which might turn out useful for the accomplishment his plans (among others, Count of Brignola, the Sardinian ambassador in Paris.)¹²² But eventually he had to pawn the family jewels to get the financial means for his enterprise.

The French writer embarked in Marseille on 22 March, 1838 with the destination Corsica, then Sardinia. His idea consisted in obtaining a concession to exploit old

¹¹⁹ Honoré de Balzac, *Lettres à Madame Hanska*. (Paris: Editions du Delta) 1967, p. 593.

¹²⁰ Eve Hanska, born countess Rzewuska, corresponded with Balzac from 1832 to 1848. She agreed to marry him on 11 March 1850, five months before the author's death.

¹²¹ Honoré de Balzac, *Lettres à Madame Hanska*. (Paris: Editions du Delta) 1967, p. 561.

¹²² Pendant le peu de jours que je suis resté à Paris, j'ai eu mille difficultés à vaincre pour pouvoir faire mon voyage; l'argent n'en a été trouvé que très péniblement, car l'argent est très rare pour moi. Quand vous saurez que cette entreprise est un coup désespéré pour en finir avec ce perpétuel débat entre la fortune et moi, vous ne vous en étonnez pas; je ne risque qu'un mois de mon temps et cinq cent francs contre une assez belle fortune. (Ajaccio 26 Mars 1838, *ibidem*, p. 590)

abandoned Roman mines, at a site with a highly inspiring name: *Argentera* [sic, actually spelled *Argentiera*]. The idea seems to have been suggested to the author while, during one of his wanderings through Switzerland, Milan, Venice and Genoa, for unknown reasons he was detained in a lazaretto (“par une inadvertence”, he explains in a letter of 10th April, 1837 [1838,1967:487]), where he met a trader from Genoa, Giuseppe Pezzi. This acquaintance had told him that near the ancient Roman mines, exploited till the Middle Ages and since fallen into neglect, there were abundant hills of scoriae from which 10% lead could be extracted, and from lead about 10% silver. The journey was quite carefully planned, even on the diplomatic level. Balzac met the Count of Brignola, the Sardinian ambassador in Paris, who could ease the obtaining of concessions; and M. Carraud,¹²³ a captain and director of studies in the École militaire de Saint-Cyr, who supported and encouraged him. He was quite confident that his journey would be crowned by success and riches. The *Sardinian job* was quite simple:

Voici quel était mon raisonnement. Les Romains et les métallurgistes du moyen age étaient si ignorants en docimasié que nécessairement ces scories devaient, doivent contenir encore une grande quantité d’argent. Or, un ami de Borget, grand chimiste, possède un secret pour retirer l’or et l’argent de quelque manière et de quelque proportion qu’il soit mêlé à d’autres matières, sans grands frais. Ainsi je pouvais avoir tout l’argent des scories. Pendant que j’attendais les échantillons, mon génois se faisait concéder le droit d’exploitation. Et pendant que j’inventais cette ingénieuse déduction, une maison de Marseille venait à Cagliari essayer les plombs et les scories et sollicitait en rivalité avec mon génois à Turin. Un essayeur de Marseille amené sur le lieux à trouvé que les scories donnaient 10 pour cent de plomb, et le plomb 10 pour cent d’argent par les méthodes ordinaires. (22 avril 1838, p. 599)

The crossing from France to Corsica was quite adventurous. “La Méditerranée a été mauvaise – he complained with M.me Hanska – [...] pour risquer le moins possible , j’ai pris la route de Marseille et de Toulon, et à Toulon j’ai pris le bateau à vapeur qui porte le dépêches. Cependant j’ai horriblement souffert, et j’ai dépensé beaucoup d’argent.» He spent a week in Ajaccio, and despite the beauty of the country (“La

¹²³ M.Carrauds’ description is not very flattering: "comme il est un des plus grands savants qui ne font rien, ne publient rien, et vivent paresseusement, son opinion a été sans aucune restriction en faveur de mes idées." Ibid., p. 590

Corse est un des plus beaux pays du monde”, [1838,1967:p.594] he suffered because of the absence of distractions:

Il n’y a ici ni cabinet de lecture, ni filles, ni théâtres populaires, ni société ni journaux, ni aucune des impuretés qui annoncent la civilisation; les femmes n’aiment pas les étrangers, les hommes se promènent toute la journée en fumant, c’est une paresse incroyable, il y a 8 mille âmes, beaucoup de misère, une ignorance excessive des choses actuelles...[1838,1967:p.594]

His arrival in Sardinia was even more adventurous, as he crossed the channel to Alghero by rowing boat. There were five days of navigation, and for five more they had to wait in quarantine, on the small boat at anchor in the port of Alghero. These were sufficient to dampen the writer’s enthusiasm, which turned to utter disappointment. He wrote on 8th April:

Je suis ici, après cinq jours d’une navigation assez heureuse dans une gondole de corailleurs qui vont en Afrique; mais j’ai connu les privations des marins, nous n’avions à manger que les poissons que nous pêchions et que l’on faisait bouillir pour faire une exécration soupe. Il a fallu coucher sur le pont et se laisser dévorer par les puces [...] Enfin ici, nous sommes condamnés à rester encore cinq jours en quarantaine sur cette petite embarcation en vue du port, et ces sauvages ne veulent rien nous donner. [...] l’Afrique commence ici. J’aperçois une population déguenillée, toute nue, brune comme des Ethiopiens. [1838,1967:I, 596-7]

The journey had started under inauspicious circumstances, and the experience on the island, once they were allowed to disembark, was utterly disappointing. The dashing of his high hopes left no space to any sort of appreciation; the result of the disastrous, solitary expedition is a harsh denigration:

Je viens de faire toute la Sardaigne, et j’ai vu des choses comme on en raconte des Hurons et de la Polynésie, Un royaume entière désert, de vrai sauvages, aucune culture, des savanes de palmiers sauvages, de cystes; partout les chèvres qui broutent tous les bourgeons et tiennent tous les végétaux à hauteur de la ceinture. J’ai fait de 17 à 18 heures de cheval moi qui n’avait pas monté à cheval depuis 4 ans, sans rencontrer d’habitation. J’ai traversé des forêts vierges, penché sur le cou de mon cheval sous peine de vie, car pour la traverser il fallait marcher dans un cours d’eau, couvert d’un berceau de lianes et de branches qui vous auraient éborgné, emporté les dents, cassé la tête. [...] Rien à manger. A peine revenu de mon expédition, il a fallu songer à revenir, et sans perdre de repos, je me suis mis à cheval pour aller d’Alghiero [sic] à

Sassari, seconde capital de l'isle [sic] où il se trouve une diligence établie depuis deux mois qui devait me conduire ici où il y a un bateau à vapeur pour Gênes ; mais comme le mauvais temps nous retard, il faut rester ici deux jours. [...] Hommes et femmes vont nus avec un lambeau de toile, un haillon troué, pour couvrir les parties sexuelles. Aucune habitation n'a de cheminée, on fait le feu au milieu du logis qui est tapissé de suie. [...] Au milieu de cette profonde et incurable misère, il y a des villages qui ont des costumes d'une étonnante richesse. [1838,1967:I, 597-8]

The bitter disappointment left only a way out: a quick embarkation back to Genoa and Paris, via Milan. He still carried the samples of materials and still hoped to obtain a concession at the eleventh hour. But unfortunately the attempts were slowed down: the Austrian consul refused him a visa to cross the border with Milan; also, his friend Pezzi had disappeared and in addition it had become impossible for him to borrow more money for the first investments.

The disillusionment lasted for several years to come. On 22 February, 1842, he wrote to Mme Hanska, brooding over his Italian travels: "il en est un que j'ai fait pour sortir de ma torture, celui de Sardaigne, et vous savez quelle en a été l'issue."¹²⁴ And again on 19th March, 1843, Sardinia is still in Balzac's thoughts. He cautiously speculates about a new expedition: "mon repos, je l'utiliserais en tentant une seconde expédition de Sardaigne, mais bien plus loin."¹²⁵

2.3.3. *M. Gustave Jourdan*

Jourdan's account of the long period he spent in Sardinia is the most negative of all. The French writer seems to have in mind some books which had appeared shortly before, in particular Édouard Delessert's, *Six semaines dans l'île de Sardaigne* (1855) and Thomas Forester's *Rambles in Corsica and Sardinia* (1858) – which are very appreciative of the beauty of the island and openly invite their governments to take steps in order to negotiate its purchase from the Savoy house – besides Merimee's book on Corsica. In the preface to his *L'île de Sardaigne* [1861], the author states his intention to contradict the idyllic views provided by others:

On a dans ces derniers temps beaucoup parlé de l'île de Sardaigne et on en parlera probablement encore. Sera-t-elle annexée a la France? M. Roebuck dit oui

¹²⁴ [1838,1967:II,52]

¹²⁵ [1838,1967:II,179]

et le moniteur dit non. [...] nous avons [...] pensé que, dans ce conflit d'affirmations et de dénégations, le public indécis jetterait peut-être avec quelque intérêt un rapide coup d'œil à cette île de Sardaigne, devenue tout à coup, par la vertu secrète de la politique contemporaine, l'objet prétendu de tant de convoitises et tant de soupçons ...¹²⁶

Jourdan states his thesis very clearly since the very beginning with a rhetorical question:

“On comprend une oasis dans un désert, mais comment comprendre la barbarie dans la civilisation, comment expliquer la Sardaigne?” Jourdan – using defamatory language – lists a series of reasons why no nation should engage in the improvement of the island since its state of backwardness is hopeless: it is in the hands of priests and bandits (who according to Jourdan are often in a friendly relationship). The main reason why progress is hampered by delinquency is the fact that it has been very badly governed by the Piedmontese, like by many foreign rulers before them, and has never enjoyed of any form of self-government. Jourdan's view is very negative in most respects, even surprisingly so. The ruins of ancient temples are described as “a few stone steps” or “ruined walls”. Even the astonishing nuraghi are described as follows:

Ces ruines, ces débris rencontrés près des bords de la mer sur trois ou quatre points, ces Noraghes mystérieux et grossiers, s'ils sont une épreuve d'une domination subie, ne sont ni assez nombreux ni assez importants pour attester une civilisation déchue. [1861:3]

The author strikes the note of cultural backwardness, which he primarily ascribes to the excessive number of priests:

La première chose qui frappe en arrivant en Sardaigne, c'est le nombre considérable de prêtres: on les voit traîner en tous lieux leur oisiveté remuante; ils font cercle sur la place, se mêlent à tous les groupes, sont dans les rues, dans les cafés; ils battent les chemins à cheval, le fusil sur le pommeau de la selle. [1861:5]

But even more strikingly, the clergymen seem to be associated with bandits: he recounts that one day, while he was at an *armurier*, a country priest came in,

¹²⁶ Jourdan, M.Gustave, *L'Île de Sardaigne* (Paris:E.Dentu) 1861, p.1.

purchased powder and bullets and gave him a rifle to fix. To the writer's surprise, his friend explained:

Cet homme est de Osilo [...] le fusil qu'il m'a apporté pour que je l'arrange appartient à Campilorgiu. – A Campilorgiu? – Oui, cet homme fait ses commissions en ville.»

Or, voici ce que c'est Campilorgiu: condamné pour crime d'assassinat aux travaux forcés, il est allé, il y a une vingtaine d'années, au bagne de Gênes; il s'en est évadé, a vécu deux ou trois ans à Marseille, puis un beau jour il est tranquillement revenu en Sardaigne, où il a gagné la campagne qu'il bat depuis plus de dix ans. Ce bandit a été pendant longtemps la terreur de toute la contrée; il a tué de sa main plus que trente personnes, j'ose à peine le dire, tellement le fait sembler incroyable; ses amis sont nombreux, il a des espions partout, des protecteurs haut placés. [1861:12]

Jourdan's verdict is not less stringent when he comes to describe the clergy:

Le clergé sarde, violent jusqu'au ridicule, sordide jusqu'à l'usure, compromis jusqu'à la complicité, exerce dans l'île, par son ministère, par ses richesses, par son importance numérique, la plus détestable influence. [...] L'enseignement est-il au moins une barrière opposée à l'influence du clergé? Le gouvernement n'a pas osé le vouloir; il a institué deux prétendues universités, une à Cagliari, l'autre à Sassari, créé deux ou trois collèges, puis, comme Ponce-Pilate, il s'en est lavé les mains; aussi l'enseignement en Sardaigne est-il complètement nul. [Les professeurs], se faisant baiser les mains en forme de salut par leurs élèves, s'en vont marmotter devant quinze écoliers, en je ne sais quel affreux latin, une leçon qu'ils ont apprise par cœur et qu'ils font apprendre aux autres. [1861:24]

Not even bandits have a code of honour: in Corsica they became bandits after stooping to killing for revenge, but seldom 'celui qui, après avoir tue son ennemi, devenait bandit, mettait rarement son bras au service de la vengeance d'autrui', but in Sardinia it is different:

...le bandit n'est pas seulement celui qui a vengé l'honneur de sa sœur ou puni la trahison de sa maîtresse, il est tout individu qui pour un crime quelconque se dérobe à l'action de la justice. [10]

Bandits have such a control over the land that if a judge hears shootings, he locks his door; officers, if they really have to look for bandits in the countryside, make sure they do not meet them; magistrates abandon their cases as they are unable to find witnesses.

La nature s'est montrée prodigue envers l'île de Sardaigne; elle lui a tout donné: des montagnes et des plaines, des forêts et des rivières, des mines à enrichir un peuple, des golfes magnifiques, des mouillages à défier les tempêtes, tout, depuis le chêne jusqu'au palmier. L'homme seulement n'a rien fait pour elle; aussi, loin de devenir par le travail riche et belle, la Sardaigne, avec la fièvre et la paresse, est restée un désert. On dirait que la nature met un prix à ses dons: elle veut être aimée et vaincue; quand l'homme la dédaigne, elle se venge. [1861:18-9]

The description of cities and towns is no more inviting for prospective travellers:

Cagliari compte environ trente-cinq mille habitants. Les mœurs y sont plus douces et les habitudes moins rudes que dans le reste de la Sardaigne. On peut, à la rigueur, à Cagliari, si on n'y fait pas un trop long séjour, se croire presque en terre ferme. [...] La population de Sassari est aux deux tiers composée par des paysans des environs qui, vivant au jour le jour, lui donnent, par les mœurs violentes et leurs habitudes de paresse, la réputation méritée d'être le sentinelle de la Sardaigne. [...] Oristano ressemble à une ville abandonnée tant le nombre de ses habitants est peu en rapport avec son étendue ; on les voit jaunes et infiltrés se traîner avec peine à travers les rues désertes; ils parviennent à vivre, mais d'une vie éteinte [...] Tempio, Ozieri, Nuoro, Lanusei, Isili, Iglesias et Cuglieri, chefs-lieux de province, ont aussi la prétention d'être des villes; ils ne sont en réalité que des villages plus ou moins grands, plus ou moins laids et sales. [1861:23-25]

Jourdan does not cherish any hopes about the development of agriculture:

L'agriculture en Sardaigne est plus arriérée qu'on ne saurait croire. Les rapines et les dévastations qui désolent les campagnes, les envahissements des troupeaux, l'absence de voies de communication, et, plus que toutes ces causes, l'ignorance et la paresse du paysan sarde font l'obstacle à tout progrès agricole. [1861:25-6]

The conclusions are the logical sequence of a grim picture:

...colonie malheureuse, sans amour et sans haine, elle semble être devenue également incapable de se suffire à elle-même ou de servir ses maîtres. La superstition, l'ignorance, la paresse, la misère et la fièvre l'ont tuée. Pour lui rendre la vie, il faudrait lui en apporter tous les éléments du dehors et faire des efforts que non-seulement la monarchie piémontaise, mais aucun gouvernement raisonnable ne paraît être aujourd'hui en mesure de tenter. [1861:31]

2.3.4. *Emmanuel Domenech*

Domenech's¹²⁷ *Bergers et Bandits, souvenir d'un voyage en Sardaigne* [1867] adds indeed little factual information to what was already known thanks to Pasquin's and Della Marmora's *Voyages*. But in exposing the reasons why he has decided to visit the island, he refers to the same reasons advocated by previous travellers, and which appear to have become quite conventional.¹²⁸ Also, entire pages appear to have been influenced by previous works, like Pasquin's *Voyage* (1837) or Bresciani's *Dei costumi* (1850). One of the most obvious examples is Domenech's description of the orange groves in Milis. It is not unlikely that any traveller would be fascinated by the groves, but Domenech's description follows Pasquin's account so closely that one suspects plagiarism. Even Pasquin's observation about the possibility of exploiting them industrially is faithfully reported:

Le Jardin des Hespérides n'était rien en comparaison du Campidano de Milis. Mille petits ruisseaux s'échappent de ces montagnes et viennent arroser les trois cent mille orangers de la forêt de Milis. Quelques-uns de ces arbres ont de

¹²⁷ Abb Emmanuel Domenech (1826-1886) left native Lyon in 1846, before completing his seminary studies, in response to an appeal for missionaries of Texas. He completed his studies in St. Louis (theology, English and German) in May, 1848, he was assigned to the German settlement of Castroville in Texas. He later moved to Brownsville. The young priest had to cope with groups of Mexican bandits and rangers ravaging on both sides of the Rio Grande, outlaws of all sorts, hostile Indians constantly in the background, and a cholera epidemic. In 1850 he visited Europe and was received by the pope; in 1852 he returned to France due to bad health, where he was appointed canon of Montpellier. When the French troops were sent to Mexico in 1861 he followed the expedition as almoner to the army and chaplain to Emperor Maximilian. Back to France he devoted his remaining years to European travel, study, and writing. His vast literary production, ranging from travel to history and theology, includes *Journal d'un missionnaire au Texas et au Mexique* (Paris, 1857); *Voyage dans les solitudes américaines* (Paris, 1858); *Histoire du jansénisme; Histoire du Mexique* (Paris, 1868); *Souvenirs d'outre-mer* (Paris, 1884). His *Manuscrit pictographique américain* (Paris, 1860) a presentation of supposed Indian pictographs, arose some authenticity controversy; today it appears a gross hoax, probably to be ascribed to his credulity.

¹²⁸ Il n'existe pas de pays aussi près de nous, aussi curieux, aussi dignes d'intérêt et aussi peu connu que l'île de Sardaigne, l'Ichnusa des anciens Grecs. [...] Assise majestueusement au milieu de la Méditerranée ... la Sardaigne est entourée de petites îles gracieuses auxquelles elle semble adhérer ... Admirablement située pour le commerce entre l'Espagne, la France, l'Italie, l'Afrique et l'Orient, elle possède des golfes et des ports remarquables, creusés par la nature sur toutes les cotes de l'île. Son sol, fertile et parfaitement cultivé fournissait jadis à Rome de si beaux blés et en telle quantité que la Sardaigne était alors le grenier d'abondance de la capitale de l'empire romain. Aujourd'hui, c'est à peine si la vingtième partie des terres labourables est mise en exploitation. Les terres incultes, les landes et les maquis attristent partout les regards du voyageur. ... La Sardaigne, toujours négligée par son gouvernement, délassée des touristes, a conservé jusqu'à ce jour son caractère original, exceptionnel, sa physionomie orientale et primitive. ... Depuis longtemps elle ne cesse de protester contre l'étrange abandon dont elle est l'objet, et qui ferait supposer qu'elle est inculte, stérile, sans histoire et sans poésie. Peu de pays, néanmoins, ont coûté tant d'or et de sang. Les Carthaginois et les Romains, les Pisans et les Génois, les Espagnols et les Sardes se sont disputés pendant des siècles, les armes à la main, cette terre antique...[1867:1-3]

quinze à dix-huit mètres de hauteur, et leur grosseur est égale à celle des plus gros chênes de la Forêt-Noire. [...] A l'époque de la floraison l'air est embaumé, les parfums des fleurs envahissent l'atmosphère et se répandent à une grande distance au-delà de Milis. [...] Au point de vue industriel, il est à regretter qu'aucun distillateur - parfumeur ne soit encore venu s'établir dans cette localité. L'exploitation des violettes qui tapissent la forêt, des menthes douces et des fleurs d'oranges qui blanchissent le sol, produirait, je crois, des résultats très lucratifs. [1867 : 47-48]

Being an amateur ethnologist Domenech declares his intention to study traditional costumes and homes and to compare them to the ancient populations. Here the approach appears to be very similar to father Antonio Bresciani's *Dei costumi dell'Isola di Sardegna* (1850):

L'étude historique et psychologique des premiers peuples qui ont habité notre planète, a cela de bon, c'est qu'elle nous rend très modestes. Elle nous apprend que nous ne sommes pas des Titans, que nous avons inventé peu de choses et que nos races actuelles subissent encore bien des traditions des races éteintes depuis vingt siècles [...] Cette empreinte n'est point aussi effacée qu'on le suppose généralement. La Sardaigne est, à ma connaissance, le pays qui l'a mieux conservée [...] Frappé dans ma jeunesse de l'analogie des mœurs sardes, avec ce que j'avait lu dans la Bible et dans Homère, je résolus de retourner une seconde fois dans cette vieille Ichnusa [...] Je désirais, en outre, étudier plus minutieusement les monuments cyclopéens, disséminés dans l'île [...] et les comparer avec ceux des solitudes américaines, du Mexique et de l'Irlande. Une fois décidé je me mis à relire l'Odyssée, l'Illiade et la Bible, de manière à ce que mon voyage me devint ethnographiquement utile... [1867:17-18]

But his declared scientific purposes contrast with a strong inclination for the sensational, possibly to strike or impress his readers. Unfortunately some of the exotic stories he tells reach the effect of stimulating laughter, rather than interest or admiration. His most peculiar observations are in chapter 3, which deals with traditional costumes and homes. The dwellings he describes are unheard of, and probably more suitable for some children's book than an ethnographic work:

Du côté des montagnes de la Nurra des Sardes vivent sur des arbres, principalement des myrtes, dont le feuillage épais leur sert de toiture. Avec des planches plantées en terre, ils s'organisent de petites habitations aériennes qui ne manquent pas de confortables. Tout est original et bizarre en Sardaigne, et si jamais la science veut s'en occuper sérieusement, l'étudier à fond, elle y

trouvera la solution de maints problèmes qu'elle va chercher bien loin, et qui n'est qu'à deux pas du monde savant. [1867:41]

Nor his description of the way harsh controversies are sorted out in the northern mountainous regions of Sardinia appears to have any factual basis:

- « C'est toi qui l'a tue. »

- « Non, » répond ordinairement le prétendu coupable.

Sur cette réponse, les deux plaideurs sont éloignés du tribunal et leurs familles seules discutent devant les juges. Chacun parle à son tour ; donne, pour ou contre la culpabilité, toutes les raisons, même les plus éloignées du sujet, qui peuvent favoriser le succès de la cause. Quel que soit le sexe ou l'âge de l'avocat, il n'est jamais interrompu par la partie adverse.

Cette plaidoirie primitive et naturelle nous prouve que les plaideurs feraient de très mauvais députés en France ; car, chez nous, lorsqu'un orateur dit quelque chose qui ne plait pas à ses adversaires, tous l'interrompent et parlent à la fois, comme des gens peu versés dans la civilité puérile et honnête. [1867:107]

Domenech appears even less reliable in his description of the Sardinian customs. Some of his notes on Sardinian life are quite unlikely to have been drawn from personal observation. A passage on the Sardinian women, who are generally described as almost exclusively devoted to family life, tells about female shooters of rare ability. The fact that he reports the following story supports the idea that the abbot is to be counted among the most credulous ethnologists and travel writers:

Lorsque le roi Charles-Albert visita Tempio, les autorités de la ville réunirent les meilleurs tireurs du district des deux sexes et le firent tirer devant Sa Majesté. A cent mètres, pas un s'écarta, d'une ligne, du milieu de la cible. A la fin du tir, une femme vint planter un clou dans la cible et enfonça ce clou avec une balle tirée à cent cinquante mètres. Une autre femme cloua une petite planchette au-dessus de la cible, la perça, au milieu avec une balle tirée à cette même distance, puis, tirant une seconde fois, elle fit passer une seconde balle dans le trou de la première, sans l'élargir de plus d'un millimètre... [1867:34]

Chapters eight and nine deal respectively with "superstitions and customs" and "doctors and treatments". No clear distinction is set between medicine and superstition. The harsh censure of the doctors' ignorance reminds of Jourdan's invective:

L'ignorance des médecins est inouïe comme leur nombre. Ils sont nombreux parce qu'il y a beaucoup de malades; il y a beaucoup de malades parce qu'il y a trop de médecins. ... Ne connaissant ni les symptômes de telle ou telle maladie, ni les moyens de les combattre, ils tuent grands et petits, riches et pauvres sur une vaste échelle. [1867:56]

Probably the most entertaining pages in Domenech's book are those where he seems to forget about his scientific aspirations and follows his imagination, led only by the pleasure of writing. In his attempt to find the key to penetrate the mystery of the oldest surviving forms of human relations, for example, Domenech refers to symbols which may epitomize the essential characteristics of the Sardinian experience. One symbol is found in the oak tree, which typifies the communion of man and nature and accompanies important passages in life:

La chêne n'est pas vénéré par les Sardes comme une sorte de divinité occulte, mais il est instinctivement regardé comme un être bienfaisant, un témoin auguste de leurs actes les plus importants de la vie, et qui doit exercer une influence mystérieuse sur tout ce qui se passe sous son ombre.... Un chêne, l'air libre, la vue des champs, des montagnes, et le ciel bleu, valent bien la salle lugubre d'un tribunal, ornée de figures ridicules ou méchantes...[1867: 105-106]

2.3.5. Eugène Roissard de Bellet

In his *La Sardaigne à vol d'oiseau en 1882: son histoire, ses mœurs, sa géologie, ses richesses métallifères et ses productions de toute sorte* [Paris:1884] Baron Eugène Roissard de Bellet¹²⁹ – not unlike the authors about a century before him – justifies the publication of a new book with a commonplace: the imperfect knowledge of the islands his compatriots had:

C'est donc de son climat, de ses mœurs et surtout de ses productions qu'il va être question précisément, parce que, malgré son antiquité et les vicissitudes

¹²⁹ Eugène Roissard de Bellet (1836-1918), a conservative French politician who served as general councilor and MP during the third Republic, visited Sardinia in 1882. After studying Law at the University of Turin he took a post in the French administration, then he raised a small fortune as a banker. A landowner in the St-Martin-Lantosque region, he was elected *conseiller général* in the local council in 1871; in 1876 he was elected at the national parliament in the Nice-campagne constituency. In 1881 he did not stand for re-election and stepped back from politics.

par lesquelles l'île a passé, le nombre de ceux qui la connaissent est restreint, et que rares, très-rares sont les étrangers qui vont la visiter.

Et si dès ce début on nous autorisait à exprimer toute notre pensée, nous dirions qu'il est, sinon très-regrettable, tout au moins étrange, que l'île la plus grande en superficie de tout le bassin méditerranéen après la Sicile, placée à une distance relativement rapprochée de l'Espagne, de la France et de l'Italie, ne vienne exciter un sentiment de curiosité à notre époque où le goût des voyages est si répandu, et où les voies de communication sont si rapides et si commodes. Quelles peuvent être les causes de cette indifférence ? [1884:2]

De Bellet argues that published works on Sardinia were inaccurate. Being based on information that had not been updated for a long time, they failed to give an idea of the state of the island at that day:

[...] le dictionnaire du dix-neuvième siècle, si complet, que nous pouvons à juste titre considérer comme un monument littéraire remarquable, sous la rubrique "Sardaigne",

1° Ne fait pas mention de la création des chemins de fer exécutés et ouverts sur une partie de leur parcours dès 1872 ;

2° Fixe à 12 le nombre des mines en exploitation, alors que bien avant 1870, il y en avait plus de 57 qui étaient en activité, donnant une production moyenne de 12 millions de francs par an, en minerais à l'exportation ;

3° Passe sous silence l'existence de villes dont la population flotte entre 5,000 et 7,000 habitants, comme Quarto, Oristano, Laconi, Santo Lussurgiu, etc.

Nous avons pensé qu'il serait peut-être utile ou intéressant de combler ces lacunes... [1884 :27]

But despite the promising title and the aims he declares, *La Sardaigne à vol d'oiseau* is far from giving a thorough and effective description of the island. It misses the target of writing anything original and adds indeed little to the information available to the French people at the end of the nineteenth century. His attention, though, seems to concentrate on confuting the idea that Sardinia is not safe for foreigners because of the presence of bandits and thieves – this reputation had in fact been popularized by some of his compatriots, notably Delassert and Domenech:

Dans un pays montueux et difficile, où la population est si clair-semée, il peut facilement germer à l'esprit d'un étranger cette pensée que, en cas d'accident, il y a peu de secours à espérer, et de là à craindre un péril sérieux il n'y a qu'en pas ; une imagination un peu vive ou impressionnable le franchit volontiers. C'est le moment de rappeler ce que nous avons énoncé en commençant, qu'on peut voyager et habiter partout en Sardaigne avec sécurité et confiance; car les

conditions normales de sûreté sont excellentes depuis bien des années, et les quelques crimes ou délits isolés qui sont commis ne peuvent être considérés comme symptômes d'une situation qui tendrait à empirer – la masse de la population étant saine et honnête [...] La conséquence qu'on est amené à tirer de cet état de choses est concluante, car elle établit que les crimes où délits sont, proportion gardée, en nombre moins élevé que dans nos pays civilisés du continent ... [1884 :16-18]

Despite declaring that he aims at providing an exhaustive description of Sardinia and help his compatriots to acquire a more accurate knowledge of the island, though, De Bellet offers in fact a bird's eye view of the island, which rarely gives more than a very approximate description of it. His less naïve readers were probably disappointed that his book added little to what other French authors had written. The layout recalls encyclopaedic entries, but the contents are sometimes extremely vague, as the following passage shows:

Langage. – Nous n'avons habité la Sardaigne que l'espace de quelque semaines; il ne nous a donc pas été possible de nous initier à son langage suffisamment pour arriver à le comprendre. Il se divise au surplus en un certain nombre d'idiomes différents les uns des autres. Ce sont les renseignements de ceux qui nous ont accueilli d'une manière si gracieuse que nous allons reproduire du mieux que nous le permettent, et notre mémoire, et les notes que nous avons emportées.

Quoique le dialecte actuel sarde ne soit pas le même dans toute l'île, comme nous venons de le dire, il est certain qu'il provient de la langue romaine, à laquelle sont restes mêlés, comme dans tous dialectes, des mots appartenant à la langue des divers peuples qui ont occupé le pays, soit, en l'espèce, des mots dérivés du phénicien, du grec, de l'espagnol et de l'italien... [1884: 89]

2.3.6. *Gaston Vuiller*

Gaston Vuiller, a travel writer and illustrator,¹³⁰ sailed from Barcelona to the Andorres, Corsica and Sardinia in 1888 to gather materials to publish in the prestigious travel magazine *Le tour du monde*.¹³¹ *La Sardaigne, par M. G. Vuillier* was serialized in five issues of the magazine from September 19th, 1891. Two years later *Les îles oubliées, impressions de voyage illustrées par l'auteur* was published by Hachette. The fortune of the travel book was immediate, as appears from reviews in several newspapers (including the Sardinian paper *L'Unione Sarda* on 7th and 8th April, 1891) and translations both in Britain (*Forgotten Isles*, 1896) and, with delay, in Italy (Raimondo Carta Raspi, 1930).

The book marks a turning point in the history of travel writing to Sardinia we have outlined so far. The four long chapters of the pages devoted to Sardinia, which include sixty-eight fine etchings of sketches and portraits he realised from models, can be defined as the literary transposition of an impressionistic painting. Rather than providing exact descriptions of people and places, his aim appears to fix on paper the progress of a spiritual experience, and to communicate it to other travellers striking the emotional chord, rather than the common sense of the practical reader. His constant attempts to catch the essence of Sardinian identity, both in the description of places and people, links the “discovery” narratives of the nineteenth century with the literary reinventions of Sardinia in the twentieth century by D.H. Lawrence, Elio Vittorini and Ernst Jünger.

In the note to the reader, the French writer clarifies that his journey is basically a personal itinerary of salvation, or, as he puts it, an escape from an inner darkness to a *luminous peace*:

¹³⁰ Gaston Vuiller (1845?-1915), the natural son of Paul-Francois Vuillier who agreed to give him his surname in 1860, after a degree in law attended the *Ecole des Beaux Arts de Marseille* and later the studio of the French painter Emmanuel Lansyer in Paris, after a period he spent in Algiers in the French army. But it is thanks to friends he met in the Hachette circle (Edouard Charton) that he started to publish his Algerian sketches in magazines edited by Hachette, like *Le Magasin pittoresque* and *Le tour du monde*. Vuillier published various articles for the magazine, including *Andorre* (1860), *La Sicile. Impressions du présent et du passé* (1896) *La danse* (1898). *La Sardaigne, par M. G. Vuillier*. In 1898 he started buying land in Gimel, in the French Limousin region, and lived mainly there till his death. It is in the last period that he turned to the illustration of classics, like *Carmen* (1911) and *Colomba* (1913) by Mérimée, *Le dernier des Abencérages* by Chateaubriand (1912) and works *à la mode* like *La femme et le pantin* by Pierre Louys.

¹³¹ The magazine was published between 1860 and 1914, with articles by a number of travellers including Livingstone, Stanley, Scott, Amundsen and others.

Une nuit, par une tempête noir, le rocher de Formentara se dressa tout à coup, comme un fantôme, à l'avant du navire, et ce fut presque notre dernière heure. [...] je suivais du regard la longue, la monotone et la morne ondulation des rivages de la Sardaigne. Et dès lors, ces îles mystérieuses, lointaines, indécises, entrevues comme dans un flottant mirage, ne quittèrent plus ma rêverie. [...] Un jour vint où ma vie fut assombrie, et, m'enfuyant vers la paix lumineuse, je partis pour *les îles oubliées*... [1893:5-6]

Vuillier arrived in north Sardinia on 20th October, 1890, on a steamer which had left a quiet sea in Ajaccio only then to sail into a violent storm, most probably a fictional one to emphasise the travel/travail before the envisaged spiritual rebirth:

Dans l'horreur et l'épouvante de cette nuit, au milieu des rauques imprécations des airs et des flots, sur ce pont désert, je songe à cette île latine où je vais aborder après une tempête presque tragique. Elle est inconnue de l'Europe, peu connue de l'Italie même. Ne dirait-on pas que les voyageurs l'on toujours évitée! [1893:363]

He travelled from north to south, mainly by train, thanks to the recent completion of the Sardinian railway network,¹³² with excursions on horse back or in a coach to villages in the mountains. The predominant impression at the beginning of the journey is the sadness of the landscapes, resulting from the oblivion and decay in which the forgotten island has fallen. A line by the Latin poet Silius Italicus is quoted ("...tristis caelo et multa vitata palude", *Punica*, book XII, 1.70) and the word *sadness* occurs frequently, associated with the insalubrities of the air and streams. Porto Torres, the first village he visits, is defined as 'triste et pauvre' [364]; a lonely rider is 'triste et fier' [367]; the region of Nurra is defined 'la triste Nurra [qui] dresse au loin ses pics décharné' [394]; and the town of Torralba is described as a 'village d'une tristesse infinie' [414].

The emotions he gets from the Sardinian landscapes, incidentally, are ambivalent, varying between the polarities of sadness and joy. However, the impression of sadness is too persistent not to raise suspicion of being associated with a state of

¹³² The first 20 kilometres of the rail network had been inaugurated in 1871, and it was completed by 1881. It was realized by the Anglo-Italian *Compagnia Reale delle Ferrovie Sarde* after the plans of the Welsh engineer Benjamin Piercy.

mind of the author which clouds his vision. The impression of sadness is tempered by the gentle manners he finds in cities, particularly Sassari, by the lively colours of traditional costumes, by dances; but sadness is prevalent. As the following passage shows, there is a clear relation between Vuillier's perception of the outside world, particularly nature, and his state of mind, which produces *l'impression*:

Le soleil brillait ce matin sur le Campidano [...] maintenant des nuées livides courent dans le ciel; le vent, qui c'est levé, siffle et pleure dans les ruines, la plaine assombrie est d'une infinie tristesse. Je ne sais quelle angoisse, quel dénuement passent dans mon âme... [1893:430]

The allegedly unhealthy rivers and watercourses similarly seem to materialise unconscious fears:

Ah! Plus tard je ne les rencontrais qu'avec terreur ces eaux des fleuves sardes, ces distillatrices de poison qui déroulent lentement leurs ondulations de vipères... [1893:365]

Vuillier makes no reference to the resources of Sardinia, and it is obvious he has no interest in assessing the possibility of developing economic activities. Some of his critics point out that Vuillier does not provide a sociological analysis when he observes the way of life of the people he encounters, and that he remains at a superficial level of observation.¹³³ We do not think, though, that this is a defect. We would rather argue that Vuillier's perspective is simply different from the approach of the writers we have considered so far – his journey is a quest, a journey of salvation from convention and determinism. The emphasis is on the intensity of the emotions the author feels. The observation of nature, and the correlated emotions, cancel the boundaries between past and present.

Vuillier's journey has no pre-planned visits, and his literary sketches often result from casual circumstances. One of the most vivid descriptions he offers, a procession in the village of Sennori, is the result of an unexpected invitation of his host:

¹³³ See for example Antonio Romagnino: "...tale tematica tra l'altro non trattata con un taglio sociale ma quasi unicamente aneddotico, come appare caratteristico in uno scrittore più portato per la descrizione pura che per un'analisi od una riflessione approfondita sui fenomeni inerenti alla società con cui egli viene a contatto..." commentary to *Le Isole dimenticate: la Sardegna* [Nuoro:Illisso] 2002, p. 156-157

Un dimanche matin M. Mariani vint frapper à ma porte.

- Allons nous à Sennori?" me dit il gaiement.

- Qu'est-ce donc que Sennori? une montagne, une forêt, une ville, un village, un coupe-gorge? Au fait, que m'importe, je vous suis. [1893:380]

In Sennori, a joyous procession of young women is enough to make Vuillier forget about the sadness he had experienced the previous day:

Elles allaient, gracieuses, souriantes, un peu surprises à la vue d'étrangers. La couleur de leur vêtements, faits de blanc, de rouge et de bleu, leurs corselets d'or, les colliers et les boutons cisèles dont elles étaient ornées, la toile fine qui couvrait leur tête, rappelant les cornettes des sœurs de charité, l'expression chaste de leur visage tandis qu'elles allaient les seins à peine couverts d'une chemise légère, leur donnait un caractère singulier: elles étaient belles d'une beauté pure et troublante à la fois. [1893:382]

Vuillier mentions some friends and acquaintances who gave him information and letters of recommendation in order to find hospitality in private homes, like Signor Mariani in Sassari, or his compatriot Georges Chapelle in Cagliari. But he seldom follows a planned itinerary. He is especially attracted by people he encounters in the streets or country roads:

Sur la route on fait de belles rencontres. C'est un prêtre à cheval, le bréviaire à la main, le fusil en travers sur l'arçon de la selle, la bonne en croupe; puis une nuée de sombre cavaliers au capuchon noir passent et disparaissent bientôt dans un tourbillon de poussière; ensuite deux fiancées balancées au pas doux de la même monture, au bord du chemin, frôles par les branches des arbres, cheminent amoureusement. [1893:392]

The descriptions, particularly of villages and scenes of rural life, have a poetic quality which give them an *impressionistic* character, in the pictorial sense. The following description of the village of Aritzo is a revealing example:

Ce village, c'est un rêve d'artiste réalisé. Les maison bâties de lamelles de schiste ardoisé, sont comme pailletées d'argent, le soleil y allume des éclats diamantés, la tuile rouge des toits étincelle, des balcons en bois s'y accrochent comme des nids; on y entend de jolis gazouillements de jeunes mères et de petits enfants. [1893:450]

The results are even more evident if we consider style, and the sequence of narrative focuses: the impressionistic effect is achieved by a continuous shift from the descriptive level to the emotional one. Often the object he considers fades into the surrounding nature and its elements – a projection of his feelings – and finally to some incident in everyday life. The following passage shows the shift of Vuiller's eye from the cathedral of San Gavino to the landscape; an analysis of the impression it produces in him; and finally the incident which brings him back to reality:

Le palais du roi barbare, *Palazzo del re barbaro*, antique temple de la fortune, construit par le Romains, montre ses murailles écroulées à travers le raquettes des cactus. La basilique de San Gavino, antérieure à l'an 1000, remaniée en 1210 par un seigneur du Logudoro, couronne un monticule. Par delà les maisons, derrière ces monuments écroulés, des terrains aux lignes grandes et sévères ondulent jusqu'à l'horizon. Et, pendant les manœuvres d'arrivée, je considère ému ce rivage, ce ciel tourmenté, ces ruines et cette contrée pale, misérable et tremblant de fièvre. Le vent de l'ouest souffle avec fracas, les flot venus du large brassent la rade sans abri; aux pieds des fières tours de l'Aragon, des balancelles peintes de couleurs vives s'entre-choquent en gémissant. «La Sardaigne vous fait peur ou pitié, me dit M. Mariani en me tapent amicalement sur l'épaule. Je comprends que après une nuit pareille, et devant Porto Torres, vous soyez attristé; mais n'ayez crainte, je vous prédis de charmantes surprises» [1893:350]

The references to history are no exception. The evocation of an historical event is the opportunity to free imagination and increase, so to speak, the emotional perception of nature:

Qui peut dire que les choses n'ont pas aussi quelquefois leur langage, et si la nature, cette grande, cette éternelle impassible, ne garde pas comme une impression d'actes que l'on épouvantée? Le roi don Pietro II, il Cerimonioso, assiège la ville, occupée par le Génois. Après une résistance héroïque, les assaillants s'emparent et passent au fil de l'épée tous les Algherese, sans épargner ni femmes ni petit enfant. Serait-ce l'appel désespéré de ces victimes que j'entends se mêler au grondements de la mer? Les Génois sont morts, pas un n'a survécu à cette effroyable carnage, Alghero est désert. Mais des vaisseaux amènent une colonie de Catalans qui relèvent la ville de ses ruines, font bourdonner la guitare et dansent le joyeux fandango [...] Puis la lueur sanglante qui planait sur le ciel d'Alghero s'éteint, la nuit vient et toujours la sourde rumeur des vagues monte la mer inquiète.

Et je reviens lentement en ville.

The tension between the contrasting emotions of joy and sadness does not slacken till the end of the book. But with a final twist: the author has to be treated for a fever he caught, and his salvation journey *to* Sardinia changes into a salvation journey *from* the island:

Après avoir écarté tout danger par huit jours de traitement , le docteur m'enjoignit de m'enfuir de Sardaigne au plus tôt: «Sauvez-vous, sauvez vous: en cette saison l'île est empoisonnée, mais en avril et mai vous pourrez la parcourir toute entière impunément si le cœur vous en dit.» Ces accords joyeux mêlés d'un cri lamentable, n'est-ce pas là toute la Sardaigne? Enfin je quittai l'île Tyrrhénienne, terre douce et maudite à la fois. [...] Est il bien vrai que j'ai vu cette île gémissante et mélancolique en hiver, fiévreuse en automne et belle en tout temps? Est-il bien sur que je ne la reverrai jamais? [1893:497-498]

Les îles oubliées breaks with previous accounts of journeys to Sardinia. The author has no second thoughts besides travelling and experiencing salvation through the search of otherness, and obviously the literary communication of an inner journey. Unlike other nineteenth century authors, Vuillier shows no interest for military, political, commercial or even scientific matters. In this sense, *Les îles oubliées* is the first book of *travel for travel's sake* to Sardinia, and bridges the gap between the discovery travel to Sardinia in the nineteenth century and the invention travel to Sardinia in the twentieth century.

2.4. *Italian travellers*

To consider Italian travel writers on Sardinia as less *foreign* than other European travellers would imply a lack of historical perspective. The independent Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed in 1861 (the capital was Turin; for the annexation of Rome and the State of the Church we have to wait until 1870). In 1720 the Sardinian crown had been given to the Savoy dukes, who fulfilled their wish - which had lasted about eight centuries - to include a crown in their arms. But this does not mean that they felt Sardinian, or even Italian, in any way. Della Marmora, who wrote the definitive description of Sardinia for many years to come, was not different in spirit from the

ordinary European traveller – notably, although he was a Sardinian subject, his main language was French, and he used that language to write his *Voyage en Sardaigne* (1826).¹³⁴

Despite the fact that the number of published works on Sardinia appears conspicuous and that a generation of reputed Sardinian historians and archaeologists¹³⁵ had popularized the cultural peculiarity of the island (and therefore its *national* characteristics), Italian nineteenth century travellers show a surprisingly delayed interest in Sardinia, as a glance at the dates when the works were published will show. Apart from Della Marmora's *Voyage en Sardaigne*, all works were published in the second half of the century: Bresciani's *Dei costumi dell'Isola di Sardegna* in 1850 and 1872; Mantegazza's *Profili e paesaggi di Sardegna* in 1869; Corbetta's *Sardegna e Corsica* in 1877; Alete Cionini's *La Sardegna, note e impressioni di viaggio* in 1896.

This interest, moreover, seems to have been stimulated by practical reasons – especially the necessity, first for the Piedmontese Savoy rulers and then for the Italian Government, to familiarise themselves with the new kingdom, survey its resources, and improve the general conditions. This aim is reinforced by the political union of Italy in 1861. Mantegazza's and Corbetta's works were quite obviously stimulated by the parliamentary debate promoted by the Sardinian MPs Manno and Spano. In 1867 a series of natural calamities – a drought and an invasion of grasshoppers – had worsened the conditions of the farmers, who were obliged to butcher their cattle to survive. On 13 July 1867 MP Giorgio Asproni had officially asked the Parliament for immediate action to face the emergency, and work out a plan to counter the trend to impoverishment of the island. A parliamentary debate followed, but the measures were slow and insufficient. In 1868 the Prime Minister, Agostino Depretis, appointed a commission to investigate the matter and propose solutions. The members of the commission, presided over by Finance Minister

¹³⁴ He writes in the Preface to the *Voyage*: Puisse mon ouvrage présenter la Sardaigne sous son véritable point de vue [...] qui mérite assurément d'être mieux connue qu'elle ne l'a été jusqu'ici par une grande partie de l'Europe!

¹³⁵ Most authors quote, or report meeting, Giuseppe Manno (1786-1868, historian and senator), Pietro Martini (1800-1866, historian and epigraphist) or Giovanni Spano (1803-1878, archaeologist, linguist and senator).

Quintino Sella, were the physiologist and ethnologist Paolo Mantegazza, Mauro Macchi, Niccolò Ferraciu and Giovanni Battista Tenani. The commissioners asked each local council to fill in a form with their requests and proposals. When, on February 22nd, after a tempestuous journey lasting forty hours the commissioners touched the shores of Sardinia, they started to elaborate the information they had gathered. They travelled to all regions of the island, interviewing the local administrators and enjoying banquets and drinking organized by villagers following the canons of traditional hospitality. The practical result was unsatisfactory. On 3rd May, 1871, Quintino Sella addressed a detailed report to the Italian Parliament to describe the state of the island. This remains a fundamental document when constructing an image of the state of the island and its resources, particularly the mines. However, apart from providing some impulse to the mining industry, no important plans were implemented. Despite Asproni's insistence, Quintino Sella never found the time to publish the report, which was made public only in the following century.¹³⁶

However, this was the first time a thorough investigation was conducted into the matter, and a serious effort was made to put the state of backwardness of the island on the parliamentary agenda. Although it had little influence on a political level, the commissioners' journey is relevant to our perspective for its echo in the media and in published works it inspired: at least, it had the merit to make the island a little less unknown to the newly unified Italians, who were no more familiar with Sardinia than was the rest of Europe. Certainly the journey stirred a debate on the identity of Sardinia and its cultural otherness in the new nation.

2.4.1. *Alberto Della Marmora (alias La Marmora)*

¹³⁶ The events which led to the appointment of the commission are reconstructed by Paolo Manconi, *L'inchiesta Depretis*, in *Le inchieste della Sardegna dell'Ottocento* (Cagliari:Della Torre) 1984, pp. 7-31.

Alberto Della Marmora¹³⁷ wrote two fundamental books on Sardinia: *Voyage en Sardaigne, ou Description statistique, physique, et politique de cette île, avec des recherches sur ses productions naturelles et ses antiquités*, published by A. Bertrand in Paris in 1826, and *Itinéraire de l'île de Sardaigne pour faire suite au voyage en cette contrée*, published in Turin in 1860 by Fratelli Bocca.

Actually the two works do not look very much like travel books, except for their title. They were the result of several journeys over the course of the author's life, which amounted – as he himself estimated – to more than thirteen years. But Della Marmora's books became the definitive description of Sardinia in the nineteenth century. The works can be defined as documented treaties with historical, geographical, geological and administrative observations. The books, which can be considered in their entirety as they are part of the original plan, are an encyclopaedic work which would satisfy those who read for administrative purposes rather than the ordinary traveller, and especially not the rambler.

There is a considerable difference between the *Voyage* and the *Itinéraire* though, especially in the perspective. When Della Marmora wrote the *Voyage*, he was fascinated – like many Europeans – by *unknown* Sardinia,¹³⁸ which he aimed at

¹³⁷ Alberto Ferrero Della Marmora was born in 1789 in Turin, from a family of the high aristocracy (a member of the family had been appointed viceroy of Sardinia by the Savoy king between 1773 and 1777). He was educated first in Turin when Piedmont had been annexed to France, then at the military academy of Fontainebleau, becoming a lieutenant. At the time the study of geology and natural history were a necessary complement of an officer's education, and this is reflected in all his work. He travelled to Sardinia for the first time in 1819, led by rather conflicting interests: ornithology and hunting. Between 1820 and 1821 he visited the island again, this time with the purpose of exploring the land and learn about its archaeology and history. The following year, after becoming suspected of liberal sympathies in the eyes of the Piedmontese government, he was confined to Sardinia until 1832. As his military career had come to a standstill, he turned his eyes to studies in the land's morphology and geography, besides drawing a new map of Sardinia since those published by Rizzi-Zannoni and Tommaso Napoli were not exempt from mistakes. He completed his work with very little assistance or help, conducting all the fieldwork, setting surveyor's stakes (often a simple reed) at distances up to 50 km – only to find sometimes, after covering the distance in 3-day horse rides, that they had been destroyed. The publication of the map in two sheets, however, gave him international fame. In 1831 he was called back to Piedmont and elevated to the rank of colonel. His responsibilities included the command of the Royal Navy School in Genova; but he managed to travel to Sardinia for the continuation of his geographical research. In 1849 he was appointed Commissioner with full powers to Sardinia, but was relieved on his request in 1851. He retired and devoted himself to political life as a member of parliament, visiting Sardinia on several occasions. He died in 1869.

¹³⁸ "...le peu de place que l'histoire de cette île occupe dans les annales des temps mieux connus, ne lui permettent pas de figurer à coté de la Sicile ou de la péninsule d'Italie, si justement célèbre"
[1826:i]

discovering little by little, and especially through a careful observation of the island with an objective eye:

Si le lecteur été tenté de me comparer au voyager imaginaire crée par le célèbre Foé, je le préviens que mon intention a été acquérir un titre de plus à la confiance du public, en lui offrant dès l'abord une peinture naïve de tout l'attirail dont j'ai été obligé de me charger pour mieux remplir la tâche que je me suis imposé. [...] loin d'imiter ces écrivains qui, ne voyant dans ces mœurs antiques que de la barbarie ou qu'un vaste champ ouvert à la satire, ont voulu égayer leurs lecteurs aux dépens d'une nation entière, tout mes efforts, au contraire, ont eu pour but de présenter le choses sous le point de vue le plus impartial et le plus exact. [1826:iv-v]

According to some of his biographers Della Marmora's encyclopaedic spirit – and his social status which naturally predestined him to be given functions of high responsibility in the administration – prevented him from understanding the humanity of the people and the complexity of their relations.¹³⁹ But I would argue this judgement sounds ungenerous if we consider that bearing the discomforts and hardships of travelling in the island was not at all common for a person of his social status. This is how he describes in the *Itinéraire* his arrival in Cagliari:

Comme personne ne pourrait entrer en ville sans le *benepiacito* (consentement) de S.E. [Chevalier Thaon de Revel], j'avais dû, en débarquant, ainsi que mes compagnons de navigation, faire une station forcée de plusieurs heures dans un lieu dit *la Sanità*, maisonnette bâtie sur le bord de la mer et séparée de la ville par une cloison; espèce de Lazaret, à la fois sanitaire et politique, où l'on subissait une séquestration peu agréable, qui procurait au voyager une sensation intermédiaire entre les ennuis de l'embarcation et l'espoir d'une prompte liberté d'action. Cette liberté d'action ne lui était pas accordée qu'après plus d'une interrogation à travers un triple rang de gros barreaux en fer et l'exhibition des papiers qu'on prenait à travers les carrelages de ces grilles, au moyen d'une longue pincette de fer parfumée au vinaigre brûlé. [...] A mon arrivée au palais, S.E. vint à mon rencontre le bras ouverts, puis le fermant et joignant ses deux mains, en feignant la stupeur et la compassion,

¹³⁹ See for example Maria Grazia Longhi: "Rimane qualcosa d'incompiuto in questo edificante, monumentale studio dell'isola: della gente, della sua umanità, l'autore non ha saputo penetrare l'intimità, né abbracciarne la complessità dell'esistenza. Questa grande opera ha una struttura formale da enciclopedia, sostanzialmente nutrita di un ottimismo positivista, sostenuto a sua volta da una volontà più o meno latente, più o meno diretta, di appropriazione della natura e di conquista; lo scienziato viaggiatore descrive, valuta e spiega ogni fenomeno con la certezza dogmatica delle leggi del determinismo [...]: una sorta di super-io, anche politico, che si impone", Introduction to *Itinerario dell'isola di Sardegna* (Nuoro:Illisso) 1997, p. 10.

elle me dit en riant: Comment, mon cher, vous qui n’y êtes pas obligé!!
[1860:5]

But even after he was ashore, accomplishing the task he had imposed to himself had critical moments, when he could rely on the sole support of his love for science. As he put it, telling about the necessity of setting trigonometric points on top of the tower of Saint-Pancrace, which at the time was used as a prison:

Il me fallut subir d’abord bien de formalités pour y parvenir; car il s’agissait, non-seulement d’entrer dans un effroyable prison, mais je voulais aussi en sortir! Je dus ensuite passer de guichet en guichet, entendre fermer après moi plus d’une porte à triples verrous et à doubles tours de clefs, son toujours peu agréables pour les oreilles de qui que soit. Bien souvent, parvenu tout près du sommet de la tour, il m’est arrivé de devoir troubler le repos d’un condamné à mort, séquestré dans un étroit réduit, dit le secret, [...] en attendant l’heure de son supplice [...]. Il me fallut, je l’avoue, tout l’amour de la science et la conviction intime de l’utilité du travail que j’allais faire pour m’engager à retourner au moins sept ou huit fois, comme je l’ai fait, sur le sommet de cette tour. [1860:40]

It can hardly be denied, however, that the perspective he used when looking at the past is not always objective: dealing with the history of Sardinia, for example, he devotes several pages to the family vicissitudes of the Savoy rulers but a single sentence to a popular uprising on April 28th, 1794. The rebels forced the occupying army, and indeed all Piedmontese civilians, to leave the island on board a ship they had provided. Although the Sardinian parliament sent representatives to plead for forgiveness at the Savoy court a couple of days later, and obtained it after order was restored, the event is still celebrated as the Sardinian Independence Day. An event which would be devoted more attention by a disinterested historian than Della Marmora’s dry mention: “Le 28 avril 1794 une grande révolution populaire éclata à Cagliari.” [1860:25]

Although the title of the books – and indeed the author’s portrait in the opening pages of the *Voyage*, depicted as an eccentric character carrying a variety of curious objects including a butterfly nest, a rifle and a thermometer – seem to pay a tribute to the fashionable romantic traveller,¹⁴⁰ the key to understanding the spirit of his work is

¹⁴⁰ Definitely more appropriate appears the portrait in the *Itinéraire*, a reproduction of the bust in marble of the author “place dans le Musée R.I de Cagliari par décision du Muncipe de cette ville.”

the pursuit of *truth*. The adjectives “impartial”, “objective” and “truthful” are often used to describe his method:

Si quelque chose, dans mon livre, déplait à un seul habitant de la Sardaigne, je le prie de croire que ma plume n’a été guidée que par l’amour de la vérité et par un sentiment d’affection sincère [...] Je me rendrais coupable d’une noire ingratitude si je répondait différemment à l’accueil et la bienveillance dont toutes les classes de la société m’ont honoré [...] Puisse mon ouvrage présenter la Sardaigne sous son véritable point de vue [...] qui mérite assurément d’être mieux connue qu’elle ne l’a été jusqu’ici par une grande partie de l’Europe! [1826:ix]

The books were carefully planned. The first edition of the *Voyage* gave a sufficiently clear outline of the studies he proposed to write in the years to come: in book 1 “les anecdotes les plus remarquables”, “les principales notions sur les diverses natures des terrains”; in book 2 “les différents genres de culture”, besides a new map of the island, a little atlas and the description of the traditional costumes; in book 3 “l’histoire naturelle”, “des dessins d’animaux [typiques ou inconnus]”, “une carte géologique”, “une description des roches”; in book 4 “une comparaison avec la géographie ancienne”, “la position des villes anciennes”, “une carte avec les ruines des villes” “l’ancienne voie romaine” and last but not least “les noraghes”.

The *Itinéraire* was supposed to be the fourth book of the original Sardinian project, but the result has little adherence to the planned work. The times and spirit are completely different. The issue of the search for the original identity of the Sardinian people – and indeed the difficult reconstruction of the autochthon kingdoms whose historical memory had been wiped out by the Spanish rule from 1421 to 1708 – had kept busy the best minds of that generation, notably Giovanni Manno, Pietro Martini and Giovanni Spano. Della Marmora often quotes both Spano and Martini (who was one of his personal friends), but unfortunately most of his observations are to be rejected as they are based on fake documents (the *Arborea papers*, see footnote 35). As Della Marmora points out in his foreword, the conditions of the island – about thirty-five years after the *Voyage* came out – had completely changed; this is reflected in the new title: *Itinéraire* rather than *Voyage*. Della Marmora explains the reason for this choice:

À l'époque de la première publication de mon Voyage en Sardaigne , le laps du temps qui s'est écoulé depuis, a vu s'opérer bien de changements en cette contrée, par le moyen des bateaux à vapeur et plus tard par la télégraphie électrique sousmarine: de façon que cette île est aujourd'hui, de fait, tellement rapprochée de notre Continent, qu'une course en ce pays ne pourrait plus, sans exagération ni abus de langage, être qualifiée du titre de Voyage. [1860:viii]

Della Marmora had changed too. His liberal views, quite romantic in the *Voyage*, have evolved due to the responsibilities he had had in the government into the pragmatic vision of a political leader. He is still a liberal though, who sees history from a Sardinian viewpoint. He criticises his compatriots for not taking care of palaces in Sardinia as they had done in Nice and Chambery although they were not less important than those, and he even doubts that resisting the French attacks had actually brought advantages to Sardinia:

...si la Sardaigne fût restée, comme le Piémont, attachée pour quelques années à l'empire de celui qui a percé alors les routes du Simplon et du Mont-Cenis et qui a dicté le code Napoléon à une grande partie de l'Europe, y aurait-elle, dans le fond, beaucoup perdu? L'abolition des fiefs et des dîmes, la construction des routes, et tant d'autres avantages [...] auraient été depuis longtemps des faits accomplis. [1860:112]

The *Itinéraire* is more than 1,200 pages. The matter is organised in ten long chapters, the first devoted to Cagliari and the subsequent to excursions in the whole island. The main interest – as the author declared – was to be archaeology; but Della Marmora's encyclopaedic culture allows him to move with ease between geology, chorography (he is indebted to G. Fara's *De Chorographia Sardiniae*), town planning, geology, botany, anthropology. The book's illustrations and the documental material provided in the appendix would require a special study. Some of the material had been previously published in the *Voyage*, but the corpus was enriched on the one hand with chorographic drawings and sections of the geological structure of the soil, on the other with drawings of archaeological finds and Roman or Greek inscriptions. The appendices include various documental materials which attest to the accuracy of Della Marmora's research, and the vast experience he had accumulated during his office, though one doubts the practical use of this

information for a traveller.¹⁴¹ But probably the traveller Della Marmora had in mind was not a *tourist*, but rather someone with his culture and background.

Although Della Marmora's works may disappoint the contemporary traveller, it became a must for visitors to Sardinia for about three quarters of a century; he is quoted by virtually all travellers to the island, and one wonders whether without his influence books like *Les îles oubliées* by Vuillier or *Reise nach die Insel Sardinien* by von Maltzan would have ever been written.

2.4.2. Antonio Bresciani

Antonio Bresciani,¹⁴² a Jesuit father and philologist, visited Sardinia four times in the period 1843-1846, travelling on horseback through most of its regions and taking notes of his observations. The book *Dei costumi dell'Isola di Sardegna, comparati cogli antichissimi popoli orientali* is the result of his recollections in the tranquillity of his apartments in Rome and a villa in Frascati, when he was appointed rector of the Collegio della Propaganda Fide. He complained, however, that his labour was disturbed and indeed interrupted due to shootings during the events of 1848 that led to the establishment of a Roman Republic – which implied a forced exile for many “antipatriotic” Jesuits and to the expropriation of their residences.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Appendix 1 is a collection of medieval texts, mainly concerning land donations; appendices ii and iii contain genealogies of the Sardinian kings, or *giudici*, before the Spanish conquest, unfortunately largely based on the false *Arborea Papers*; appendix iv is an interesting report about the events which led to the so called ‘Perfect Union’ of Sardinia and Piedmont in 1847; appendix v is about land measurements for cadastre and taxation purposes, besides data about the increase in agricultural production, bank movements, import and export; appendix vi is the report of fires kindled by arsonists; appendix vii, finally, various tables, especially on population.

¹⁴² Antonio Bresciani (1798-1862) after taking the holy orders in 1821, joined the Jesuits in 1828. He was in several cities in Italy. In 1847 he was appointed rector of the Collegio Propaganda Fide in Rome, where he attended to the writing of *Dei costumi dell'Isola di Sardegna, comparati cogli antichissimi popoli orientali*. As a consequence of the republican revolution in Rome in 1848, he was forced to leave his residence and repair to the Neapolitan kingdom (Pope Pius IX himself was forced to flee to Gaeta). In the same year he was among the founding members of *Civiltà Cattolica*, a vehemently anti-republican journal which gained him the sympathies of conservative patrons but also the fierce hostility of liberals and, later, of socialist authors. Antonio Gramsci recognised the importance of the role he played in the development of Italian cultural awareness, but was very critical of the conservative ideas he popularised, which he defined as “brescianism” His works include novels serialized in *La Civiltà Cattolica* (like *L'ebreo di Verona*, *La Repubblica romana*, *Lionello o delle società segrete*) and various essays, including *Don Giovanni, ossia il benefattore occulto*, *Ammonimenti di Tionide*, *Avvertimenti a chi vuol pigliar moglie*, *L'armeria antica del Re Carlo Alberto*, *Viaggio nella Savoia, nel Fossigny e nella Svizzera*.

¹⁴³ Balzato anch'io lontano da' miei cari alunni di Propaganda, mi riparai qui in Roma in una cameretta in San Girolamo della Carità, ove da un anno vivomi solitario e romito [...] e contuttoché

The first two volumes were published in Naples in 1850 and dedicated to countess Eleonora Solaro della Margarita on occasion of her marriage to Giovanni Cantono di Ceva. The first volume was a description of the island and the second a survey of the customs he observed. Over the rest of his life he annotated and completed the text, writing the third and fourth book in the form of dialogues with four Jesuit brothers in the Montalto castle, near Turin. In 1872 the four volumes, with the same title, were published posthumously in Milan.

The 1872 edition has a long introduction which gives lots of information on the reasons which led him to Sardinia, on the difficulties he had to overcome to accomplish his task, and on his opinions on a variety of subjects, in particular his contempt for republican ideas.

Bresciani's publishers reported that the author considered *Dei Costumi* the best of his works. The book is notable, in fact, for the refined elegance of the language – which was praised by his contemporaries, although it appears somewhat too rhetorical today –, for the richness of his classical sources, and for the sincere love it demonstrates for the object of his study: prejudice against Sardinia and its people are constantly confuted, to the extent that the book looks excessively apologetic in some parts.

The refined elegance of the language, which is achieved through long, elaborate sentences, is quite unusual for an ethnologist. Consider for example the following passage, which stands comparison with Manzoni's opening passage in *The Betrothed*, commonly taken as the model of Italian prose writing:

Il golfo di Cagliari, il quale spiccandosi dal Capo di Sant'Elia gira a largo cerchio all'estrema punta di Pula, volge dalla parte di borea per seni e ridotti a piagge sabbiose insino alla lunga lista d'arena, che dallo stagno lo recide, e con esso poscia per varii canali si ricongiunge e l'insala; sinché, declinando per scirocco dalle costiere di capo di terra s'inarca e muove dolcemente per Nissa insino ad Orri. [1872:81]

non intralasciassi mai di pensare alla mia diletta Sardegna [...] vogando e arrancando contr'acqua con si fatta saldezza e ostinazione di cuore che al dì sedici Novembre fui colto scrivendo dal rimbombo delle archibugiate de' ribelli al palazzo del Papa. [1872:10]

The author was aware that his prose was so polished and classical – clearly reminiscent of Tuscan models – that it was difficult for common readers. Italy had not been yet politically unified and about 90% of the people spoke regional dialects. It is estimated that only 10% of the population was fluent in Tuscan Italian, used as *lingua franca* but far from being spoken in everyday situations. Bresciani feels committed to explain that using the classical Tuscan is the only way to achieve a double aim: using a linguistic tool that allows him to expound a matter precisely and clearly thanks to its richness and articulation, and to be understood in all parts of Italy, at least by educated people, because its prestige made it less local than any other dialect:

Se dovesse valere il lamento di chi non intende il denominativo d'un oggetto, egli si converria scrivere un bastardume di lingua che in luogo di render chiara e aperta la cosa ivi descritta, le torrebbe ogni luce e precisione; [...] Lascio pensare al discreto lettore che imbratto da appuzzar le carte ne uscirebbe egli mai. Ma dov'io assumessi le voci tecniche della lingua pura de' classici, quand'anco non intendessi che sorta di rete è la *sciabica*, il *giacchio*, la *vangaiola*, il *bertovello*, la *nassa*, la *rezza*, il *bucine*, se voglia mi prenda di saperlo, apro il vocabolario, e lo m'insegna. Dillo un po' in lombardo, in marsico, in veneto, in piemontese, se uno lo intenda, l'altro non ne coglie il senso per nulla, e però abbiatevi pazienza, e lasciatemelo dire del suo proprio nome toscano. [1872:73]

Assuming that the costumes and customs of the Sardinians have as much in common with ancient Greek and Middle Eastern populations as can be inferred from the Bible and Homer's works, Bresciani's central thesis is that the Sardinians are not an autochthonous population, but must have sprung from those ancient Mediterranean cultures. He is today criticised for providing little scientific evidence to support his thesis; however his views are supported by a solid knowledge of the Greek and

Roman sources on the subject. Bresciani,¹⁴⁴ as he admits,¹⁴⁵ is not a professional archaeologist. However, thanks to his vast culture and his elegant, erudite prose – often based on intuition rather than evidence¹⁴⁶ – *Dei Costumi dell'isola di Sardegna* makes for a pleasant reading. As Bresciani declares, his main purpose is entertaining the reader and contributing to God's greater glory rather than to the progress of science:

E a che dunque ti dai a fare un mestiere che non è il tuo? Così, per vaghezza, per amore de' Sardi, per innocente trastullo, per onorato esercizio. Non fosse altro per indirizzare i torti intendimenti di quei letterati, che abusano sì stranamente le recondite dottrine de' culti orientali [...] [1872:13]

Bresciani is at his best when he evokes the classical world in relation to usages in Sardinia. He is at his ease with the classic Greek and Latin writers and contextualises every manifestation of Sardinian popular culture by quoting passages from classical literature. In describing music, dancing and musical instruments, for example, he finds analogies with thirty centuries earlier:

Voi non leggete nella Bibbia e in Omero contingenza niuna, in cui s'accenni al suono delle tibie, che voi non la veggiate in Sardegna ancora in presente. Ed è a notare, che spesso van di concerto co' timpani, co' cimbali, co'sistri e coi tintinni, che vi parrebbe d'essere in tutto a trenta secoli addietro. [1872:24]

¹⁴⁴ His discussion offers a better historical perspective than Clüver's: he accepts that different settlers might have colonized different parts of the island. Quoting Pausanias he mentions the mythic heroes Sardus (one of Hercules' sons who came from Africa and started the conquest of the island from the South), Euristeus (son of Apollo and Cyrene, who settled in west and central Sardinia), Norax (son of Mercury, who came from the Iberian peninsula and settled in South and East Sardinia) and later Iolaus (one of Hercules' nephews, who settled in West and central Sardinia). Myth, Bresciani points out, hints at Phoenician, Greek and Iberian populations who settled in Sardinia at different times. The idea is not inconsistent with contemporary theories.

¹⁴⁵ Per naturale mio proprio e per diletto inclinai l'animo della prima giovinezza a studiare nelle abitudini e costumanze delle antichissime nazioni, mi valse quella riposta dottrina a conferire e riscontrare ne' costume de' sardi certe medesimezze con quelle dei primi popoli d'Asia, che non potrei dire quanto me ne sentii riscosso e stupito. [1872:8]

¹⁴⁶ His intuitions might prove true, however, if contemporary archaeologists succeeds in demonstrating that the original Sardinians settlers (that is, before the Phoenician and Punic colonization in the first millennium b.C.) were in fact the Shardana, a population from Asia Minor. Evidence remains thin, but these theories have been developed for example by Leonardo Melis, *Shardana, I popoli del mare* (2002), and Sergio Frau, *Le Colonne d'Ercole. Un'inchiesta. La prima geografia. Tutt'altra storia*, 2002.

In particular, the typical Sardinian woodwind instrument, the *launeddas* or *lioneddas*,¹⁴⁷ had no equivalent in his day:

... forse niun popolo ci rimane che abbia conservate intatte le tibie dispari colle misure de' calami, cogl'intonamenti delle pive, e le distanze e il numero de' fori come in Sardegna. [1872:27]

The author's erudition is shown in the discussion about the most ancient settlers in Sardinia, to whom he devotes the third chapter of part I, combining etymology, mythology and evidence from archaeological findings.

... se rivolgiamo gli occhi ai monumenti di bronzo negli idoletti che decorano il reale museo di Cagliari, troviamo in quella mirabile varietà gl'Iddii e i simboli del culto con che s'adoravano; il perché tutta la religione arcana de' popoli di quel primo Oriente vedesi trapiantata in Sardegna. Ivi il demiurgo con panteismo fenicio; ivi il dualismo adombrato nei scettri biforcuti; ivi la triade solare, e i Triopatores cabirici; ivi la Pentateide lunare, ovvero le sue quattro fasi congiunte con la stella canicolare; ivi nell'ovo d'Astarte l'anima del mondo; ivi il fallo il principio attivo dell'universo; nell'androginità il sole e la luna, o l'azione fecondatrice e la produttrice di tutte le cose ... (65)

Volumes 3 and 4 are an ideal follow-up of the first two, a sort of conversation novel with the Jesuit brothers Carminati, Paria, Boero and Nizzi. The tone is quite casual, but the style is refined. Volume 3 starts with a description of the beautiful environs of the Montalto castle, near Turin, and the mild September climate which favours polite conversations. The occasion that triggers the conversation is a malicious remark by one of the brothers who, knowing of Bresciani's love for Sardinia, insinuates that the Sardinians are not as civilized as the Father thinks. The author's reply is vibrant and resentful:

Paria mio; gli dissi così un po' velenosetto, che la stizza m'era già salita, se non al naso, almeno in sulla lingua; Paria mio, voi giudicate per udita, e purtuttavia siete un uomo da non istare all'altrui detto [...] senza veder prima cogli occhi vostri l'esempio degli autori, come vi basterebbe egli l'animo di portare sì rea sentenza d'una nobile nazione e averla in conto di cruda, inospita e scortese? [1872:II,122]

¹⁴⁷ The *launeddas* (triple clarinet or triplepipe) is polyphonic and is played using circular breathing. It dates back to at least the 8th century BC and is still played during religious ceremonies and dances.

The first part of the conversation is devoted to hospitality, which the traveller was generously offered in numerous occasions. The only analogy he finds is with passages from the Bible and Homer, concluding that the Sardinian customs are the most courteous, as unknown travellers are given hospitality without expecting any reward. Then the fathers discuss the traditional costumes, which are probably the oldest way of dressing on earth. The most interesting reflection on the national character of the island is in Volume IV, where ancient funerary customs are discussed. It is also the opportunity for the fathers to show their erudition, with a rich corpus of references to the classical world.

2.4.3. *Paolo Mantegazza*

In 1869 when the Italian Parliament appointed a commission to evaluate the economic situation of the island and propose solutions, an eclectic MP, Paolo Mantegazza,¹⁴⁸ visited Sardinia with the Depretis Commission. Each commissioner wrote a report for the Parliament: Mantegazza was a physician, and the object of his study, Sardinia, is compared to a patient. His report is entitled “I mali della Sardegna” and the diagnosis finds two diseases which account for the poverty of Sardinia: malaria and inertia. The island should not wait for somebody else’s help, but rather shake itself out of apathy:

Povero quel paese che dopo aver conquistata la propria libertà, affida tutte le proprie speranze al governo, quand’anche questo fosse il più liberale, e il più sapiente del mondo [...] La Sardegna non guarirà dalla sua febbre finché l’agricoltura non abbia trasformato in succo per le radici il miasma della

¹⁴⁸ Paolo Mantegazza (1831-1910) was a physiologist, an anthropologist, a novelist, a patriot and a member of the Italian parliament. As a teenager he took part with his mother, the philanthropist Laura Solera, in the insurrection in Milan which led to the liberation from Austrian rule. He took his degree in medicine at the University of Pavia and completed his studies in South America. Back to Pavia, he had the chair of General Pathology and established the first laboratory of Experimental Pathology in Europe. Later he taught Anthropology in Florence, where he established the Italian Society for Anthropology and Ethnology and the National Museum for Anthropology. He was one of the first popularizers of Darwin’s theories (he had regular epistolary exchange with him between 1868 and 1875). He conducted front line research on artificial fecundation, on the effects of drugs and the therapeutic use of cocaine, on hibernation. From 1865 he was a member of the Italian parliament. His works include travel and ethnology books (*Rio de la Plata e Tenerife*, 1867, *Un giorno a Madera*, 1868; *Profili e paesaggi della Sardegna*, 1869; *Studi sulla etnologia dell’India*, 1886); studies in medical sciences (*La fisiologia dell’amore*, 1873 *Igiene dell’amore*, 1877; *La fisiologia del piacere*, 1880, *Quadri della natura umana. Feste ed ebbrezze*, 1871; *Le estasi umane*, 1887; *Fisiologia della donna*, 1893); fiction (*L’anno 3000: sogno*, 1897; *Il dio ignoto*, 1876; *Testa*, 1887; *Bibbia della speranza*, 1908).

palude; finché non abbia con una chimica sapiente e quasi miracolosa cambiato il veleno in pane. Il piccolo drenaggio della zappa e dell'aratro; il gran drenaggio di larghe e profonde fosse devono asciugare i terreni [...] L'ossigeno deve essere portato dall'uomo nelle viscere del sottosuolo e bruciare i lenti miasmi; e una rigogliosa vegetazione deve sorgere sul suolo rinsanito.¹⁴⁹

After the journey he wrote *Profili e paesaggi della Sardegna* (Milano:1869) a book he defined as “uno scriterello tirato giù alla buona, più col cuore che con la squadra”. Initially conceived as an article to be serialised, it became an essay which was published by Brigola.

Although he states that Sardinia is *italianissima*, the commissioner's attitude is not very different from a foreign traveller's. He quotes von Maltzan's observation about the cultural otherness of Sardinia, and he finds the island looks more similar to far away countries than to Italy:

Io ho viaggiato gran parte del nostro pianeta e ho portato il piede in terre quasi ignote a calcagno europeo: eppure ho trovato in questa italianissima nostra isola molte cose nuove, belle e originali; e più d'una volta coi miei cari compagni di viaggio ho dovuto esclamare in coro: Oh perché mai gli italiani ignorano queste bellezze della loro patria? [1869:11]

The central point Mantegazza makes, i.e. the illness of Sardinia and its treatment, does not differ considerably from the report he read to the Parliament:

Nelle vene dei sardi, intelligenti e morali, serpeggia un veleno più infesto della malaria alla salute di un popolo, ed è l'inerzia [...] ma malattie curabili, perché l'organismo è robusto e, malgrado la ricca storia, ancor giovine. [1869:17-17)

The book is written in a captivating style: it is certainly entertaining but inconclusive. The diagnosis of a diseased Sardinia – malaria and inaction – is stated again and again, but the prognosis appears weak and vague. The five chapters are not in fact organic, and look rather like short essays that can be read independently. Chapter 1 deals with the cities, chapter 2 mainly with what Mantegazza calls nature, i.e. the agriculture and an ethnographic description of the inhabitants; chapter 3 with vices, virtues and customs described through proverbs; chapter 4 with poetry and chapter 5 with “who should save Sardinia”. The answer is that the Sardinians are ill but have

¹⁴⁹Paolo Mantegazza, *I mali della Sardegna*, in *Le inchieste sulla Sardegna dell'Ottocento* (Cagliari:Edizioni della Torre) 1984, pp. 445-458.

strong moral virtues, so they should rescue themselves – a bit like saying that the patient should jump out of bed and run around in the open air:

In Sardegna avete molti poveri, ma son quasi tutti proprietari di campi o di greggi, di una capanna o di un albero, ma questa povertà, che non li salva dalla fame, basta però per alzarli di cento gradini dal nostro colono che prima di nascere ha già debiti verso il padrone. [...] il pastore sardo rimane più volte due o tre giorni senza cibo, ma è un uomo libero. [1869:87-88]

Mantegazza declares that rather than describing Sardinia (he thought the literature on the subject was enough) he aims at expressing his love for the island, and making the Italians love a very beautiful but very unhappy island, “un'isola bellissima ed infelicissima, che noi italiani abbiamo il torto di dimenticar troppo e di amare troppo poco”.

Mantegazza's essay is the work of a politician but he shows sincere love for Sardinia. Despite underlining the links between Italy and Sardinia and the fact the island was an essential part of the nation, though it had been neglected, he stills points to its otherness. He feels the island can be the protagonist of its own development – in this we hear the member of the parliamentary commission speaking – on the condition that Italy and Sardinia forgive each other's wrongs:

Or conviene che isola e penisola si perdonino a vicenda i loro peccati, [...] e si preparino ai tempi nuovi, e si mettano con forze comuni a fecondare una terra quasi deserta e che ha dinanzi a sé un avvenire senza confini.

The description starts with Cagliari and Sassari, “the two Sardinian gems”,¹⁵⁰ then in contrast he describes the vast, lonely regions, where life is quiet, where the distances are not made shorter by railways, and the land is unploughed. He tells about the people, the variety of traditions and costumes, the mysterious women who still cover their heads with a shawl.

Finally, he addresses an appeal to the younger generations, who have the responsibility of finding in themselves the energies to bring about progress.

2.4.4. *Carlo Corbetta*

¹⁵⁰ “Cagliari e Sassari son le due gemme della Sardegna, e son gemme rivali, e di un'antica rivalità”, *Profili di Sardegna* (Milano:Brigola) 1869, p.17.

Carlo Corbetta's *Sardegna e Corsica* (1877) adds very little to the observations of the European travellers who wrote about Sardinia. But the perspective is quite original: the author adopts the point of view of a tourist, arguably the first Italian traveller who is aware of being one. He apologises in the introduction that his way of travelling can only be defined by a foreign word regrettably used in Italy (*touriste*, as it were).¹⁵¹

We understand that being a pioneering tourist did not imply at that time anything like travelling for pleasure. As Corbetta clarifies, the conditions were so hard as to discourage those who looked for rest or relaxation:

[I compagni di viaggio] e il capitano del legno non si capacitavano che io mi recassi in Sardegna solo per diporto, volevano che vi andassi per la caccia abbondantissima colà, tanto pochi o nessuno son quelli che vi si recano senza scopo o per determinato d'affari. [1877:202]

The reason why Sardinia is interesting to visit is not in its antiquities or in the traditions which had fascinated many European travellers, but a sort of curiosity to visit a place that “had not yet achieved the level of civilization of other Italian provinces”:

I suoi costumi primitivi e la sua proverbiale ospitalità, le sue miniere, la natura del suo suolo quasi africano, i suoi stagni salati pescosi, alcune vere lagune che spargono la malaria e la intemperie; i suoi villaggi, al sud di mota, immagine della caducità e brevità della vita, umana, che un acquazzone squaglia e mette in isfacelo [...] e soprattutto i nuraghes, questi enimmi archeologici che rimontano alle remote epoche preistoriche; infine il suo stesso grado di civilizzazione non ancora molto avanzato ed imperfetto, o per meglio dire che non ha ancora raggiunto lo sviluppo di altre province italiane... [1877:5]

Despite Corbetta states that his book consists of scattered notes and observations, he presents tables, figures and statistical data which makes one wonder whether his modesty is merely a pose. The book has a structure which shows the aim of writing an exhaustive geographical description, with two sections (Sardinia and Corsica) each consisting of two parts. The first part of the Sardinian section deals with a

¹⁵¹ “...solo vi troverete descrizioni ed osservazioni, forse poco coordinate fra loro da logico nesso, tratte dal mio giornale da *touriste* (perdonate la strana parola, ora consacrata dall'uso comune) abbracciate a casaccio, nei pochi momenti di riposo che il viaggiarvi faticoso permette, e notizie raccolte qua e là, o da compiacenti amici e conoscenti...” [1877:viii]

geographic description (Flora and Fauna, Population, Education, Religion and customs, Roads, Communications, Historic Monuments and History), and the second with the regions of the island. Although he states that his observations come from data gathered here and there, the author supports his observations with figures which are interesting to consider. In fact, his main interest – not unlike that of the rest of the Italian travellers – lies in reflecting on the social conditions of the island in relation to Italy. An example is provided by the careful discussion on education – not a common object of interest for a tourist, we may observe – to which he devotes an entire chapter. In a population of 636,660, (compared to the national figure of 26,801,154), the number of illiterate people is very high (71%), though not so surprising at that time if compared to Sicily (90%) and even to Tuscany, the cradle of Italian letters (45%). Similar conclusions can be drawn comparing illiteracy in towns: Cagliari (33,039 inhabitants), 62% illiteracy; Milan (199,009 inhabitants), 23%; Caltanissetta (26,156 inhabitants), 90%. Quite surprisingly, the corrective measures the author envisages are not promoting education by establishing new schools, but that the people should “work and study harder”.

Similarly, when he discusses the economic conditions of the island the analysis appears quite correct in pinpointing the insufficiency of cultivated land, but again the solutions he suggests, that is resorting to mass expropriation or making sheep-breeding illegal to encourage agriculture, sounds rather rushed:

Si tolga la pastorizia vagante con energiche leggi, che svincolano le terre dalle servitù di pascolo cui sono affette; vi concorra con forza di volere e fermezza di propositi la popolazione a farle eseguire; abbandoni essa la sua inerzia e lavori e studii e fatiche; si diminuisca, anche se occorre con espropriazione forzata e misure coattive di vendita e rivendita, il frazionamento delle terre, e allora, ma solo allora, rifiorirà l'agricoltura, e la terra darà quei frutti abbondanti cui dalla sua naturale fecondità è chiamata. E crescendo i prodotti crescerà la prosperità generale, e quindi come naturale suo effetto, la popolazione. Cresciuta la popolazione sentirà di avere bisogno di nuovo alimento, e dissoderà le lande incolte, e contenderà agli stagni ed alle paludi lo spazio necessario allo sviluppo dell'agricoltura, e farà le operazioni di drenaggio, di canalizzazione, di scolo, di bonifica, e quei terreni oltre a proficui diverranno salubri, e il clima in generale ne avvantaggerà. [1877:28]

Corbetta's book adds indeed very little to the knowledge of Sardinia which had been acquired in the course of the previous fifty years or so. The radical measures he proposes, besides being far from common sense, show a clumsy attempt to have a say in the fashionable *questione sarda*; but without Della Marmora's encyclopaedic culture, Bresciani's erudition or even Mantegazza's polished – though somehow simplistic – prose. Although he considers himself a *touriste*, he is far from the concept of modern traveller that the word contributed to define in the nineteenth century. In other words, he is still far from conceiving travel for its sake – moving across space as a metaphor of an itinerary of knowledge, either of otherness or of the inner self, through the mists of early history (like von Maltzan), or the personal consciousness (like Vuillier). Vuillier's journey, in particular, is only a step away from the literary idealizations of Sardinia in the twentieth century.

Chapter 3

Primitivism and the (re)invention of Sardinia: travellers in the first half of the 20th century

3.1. *Alfred Steinitzer, Karl Baedeker, Max Leopold Wagner, J.E.C. Fritch, D. Goldring, M. Le Lannou*

Although many books on Sardinia had been published over the nineteenth century, during the first quarter of the twentieth century the island had still a strong reputation for being a *forgotten* place. At the end of the nineteenth century Gaston Vuillier had included Sardinia in the number of *forgotten* islands¹⁵²; but even as late as 1924, Alfred Steinitzer entitled his book on Sardinia –a work which stands between a tourist guide and an ethnographic study- *Die Vergessene Insel: Sardinien und die Sarden*. The author explains why:

Es gibt in Europa kein Land, das eine so abgesonderte Geschichte hat und so gänzlich außerhalb der Entwicklung der allgemeinen Kultur und Zivilisation stand, wie diese Insel, auf der das Mittelalter erst mit der Einigung Italiens zu Ende ging. [...] Wir vermissen die Patina der zweieinhalbtausendjährigen Geschichte, die in den abgelegensten Orten Kontinentalen Italiens zu uns spricht. [...] Wir betreten dort einen Boden, der uns gänzlich fremd ist und innerlich auch immerdar fremd bleiben wird, weil jederlei Beziehungen fehlen. Auch den Kontinentalen Italienern ist Sardinien im allgemeinen eine unbekannte Grösse; wer beruflich dorthin versetzt wird, betrachtet sich als Verbannten. [1924:1]

The interest in ethnography and the original culture of Sardinia is reflected in the description of the Sardinian original verse, the *mutu* long poems written in the form of dialogues between man and woman and therefore definable as *Liebeslieder*, of which Steinitzer writes about 15 stanzas. The shortened form is called *muttettu* and consists of four line stanzas, compared to the variable length of five, six or seven lines of the *mutu*.

¹⁵² Vuillier, Gaston, *Les îles oubliées. Les Balears, la Corse et la Sardaigne* (Paris:[sn]) 1893. Translated into English as *The Forgotten Isles : Impressions of travel in the Balearic Isles, Corsica and Sardinia* ([s.l.]:Hutchinson) 1896.

The most influential of travel books on Sardinia is Karl Baedeker's *Southern Italy and Sicily, with excursions to Sardinia, Malta, and Corfu*¹⁵³. The guide – first published in Leipzig in 1869 (*Unter-Italien und Sicilien, nebst Ausflügen nach den Liparischen Inseln, Malta, Sardinien, Tunis und Corfu*) – in 1911 reached the 15th edition. It was regularly reprinted also in English: by 1912 the 16th revised edition had come out, and the 30th in 1929. The French version (*Italie méridionale, Sicile, Sardaigne et excursions a Malte, Tunis et Corfou*) also enjoyed great fortune: the 12th edition came out in 1900. The book (the 17th edition added Tripoli) became a faithful companion to most travellers and travel writers to Sardinia: Flitch, Goldring and even D.H. Lawrence make explicit reference to it.

It is unlikely that any traveller would venture on a journey to Sardinia without a guide which gave all necessary information – besides obviously hotels and restaurants – on transport from the main land, but also on facilities like post offices with opening hours or addresses for banks and travel agencies. Moreover, average prices are given for cabs and trams. Comparing the different editions gives quite an objective idea of travelling conditions and the facilities offered to travellers.

The first indication of the improvement of facilities is suggested by the number of pages devoted to Sardinia: 14 in 1869, 28 in 1930. The guides record a steady improvement both in number and in quality of hotels, restaurants and means of transport. In Cagliari the only hotel in 1869 was called *Concordia* and was located in the district S. Eulalia, near the port: it is defined as “tolerable”. The only restaurant was *Trattoria di Sardegna*, near the University, whose only merit is “a fine view from the back of the house”.¹⁵⁴ In Oristano only the *Locanda Mura* is mentioned, with the comment “infested by mosquitoes”; in Macomer the *Albergo Nazionale* is simply defined as being better than *Garibaldi* and *Italia*. In Sassari two hotels are mentioned: *Italia* in the Piazza Azuni and *Unione* in a street not very far from there. Hotel accommodation, we can easily infer, was small in number and of rather low quality. In the rest of the island the only opportunity to have a room for the night was

¹⁵³ We consulted Baedeker, Karl, *Southern Italy and Sicily, with excursions to Sardinia, Malta, and Corfu : handbook for travellers* (16th revised edition) (Leipzig:Karl Baedeker) 1912.

¹⁵⁴ The main attractions are the Castle, the University and its library of 22,000 books, the Roman amphitheatre, the Museum (with a section formed by La Marmora and one created by Giovanni Spano, the Cathedral, the Torre dell'Elefante, the Bonaria Basilica).

by presenting recommendation letters to private homes, or obtaining shelter in sheepfolds in the countryside. In this case the conditions are defined “unbearable” for a civilized traveller.

By contrast, in 1930 the number of tourists seems to have increased considerably. Transport includes daily steamers from the continent (although for embarking and disembarking passengers had to use a small boat to the steamer) and air connections at week ends. The most suitable season for visits is said to be from April to mid June, as in summer and autumn mosquitoes are numerous and mosquito nets are unobtainable. There are frequent motorbuses and well maintained roads which allow travellers to reach easily remote destinations. Rarely it is necessary to use diligences, two wheeled calashes or ride horses as was the case previously.

The 1930 edition shows that a consistent improvement had been achieved in transport as well as in public services. As regards hotels in Cagliari, six are mentioned, with a total of about 250 beds (Scala di Ferro, 80 beds; Moderno, 65 beds; Quattro Mori, 34 beds; Herbst, 10 beds; Giardino, 42 beds; and Risorgimento). The restaurants Baedeker recommends (besides those in the hotels) are *Firenze*, *Moderno*, *Toscana* and *Cagliari*. There are “numerous shops” in the main streets, and tramways to the most popular parts of the city and to the bathing beach, cabs and rentable motor cars for excursions, besides four theatres and even two travel agencies. The number of volumes in the University Library has increased to 105,000. Also the smaller towns have better hotels: the *Hotel della Stazione* in Oristano is defined as “very fair”; the *Hotel Bosa* is “well spoken of”; for hotels *Baggiani* and *Savoia* in Nuoro the comment is “good”.

Karl Baedeker's guides are an invaluable source of information, and occasionally go beyond the advice for travellers to provide insights into the nature of the people. The 1903 edition informs us that “the Sardinians' demeanour is grave and dignified compared to that of the vivacious Italians, and they are noted for their chivalric sense of honour and their hospitality”. [1903:386] the synthetic notes on the state of roads and the railway network are revealing of the difficulties travellers had to overcome:

The system of RAILWAYS has pushed its way into many districts formerly accessible only by carriage or on horseback. DILIGENCES run on the principal highroads daily but are not recommended; the excellent two-wheeled vehicles,

known as *Saltafossi*, are preferable. Small, docile riding-horses (2-3 fr.) are always to be had in the more remote districts. - The INNS are very mediocre and away from the railways are sometimes quite intolerable, but it is rarely necessary to bargain as to charges. [1903:386]

Max Leopold Wagner's *Reisebilder aus Sardinien* stands out for the originality of its approach to the definition of the identity of Sardinia. Wagner, one of the greatest philologists of the twentieth century, acquired a solid international reputation for his pioneering Sardinian studies. He visited Sardinia as a student in 1904, 1905 and 1906 whilst writing his dissertation on the Sardinian dialects at the University of Munich, which would award him the Döllinger Prize and 4000 Mark for his studies. In November 1904, when he arrived in Cagliari, he had read widely enough about the Sardinian dialects to be able to speak the main varieties, but knew very little about the land and culture of the island. He lived as a paying guest in a family whose members could of course speak Sardinian only. In his visit the following year, wishing to delve deeper into the links between language and the agricultural substratum which had produced it, he travelled the island on a bicycle and on horseback with a friend, Eugen Burger, concentrating his attention on smaller villages where traditions appeared to be more deeply rooted. During these *Streifzüge*, or rambles, he adopted a fresh principle which was to influence all his remarkable scholarly production: studying language by looking into life. As Giulio Paulis put it,

Senza questa simbiosi con un popolo che parla una data lingua senza conoscenza diretta ed esperienza della sua cultura, delle sue tradizioni, dei suoi monumenti e del suo territorio, al linguista rimane preclusa la comprensione di molti aspetti del suo oggetto di studio.¹⁵⁵

As a demonstration that his travels were an essential part of his studies, between 1907 and 1908 he published his *Reisebilder aus Sardinien* in the journal *Globus – Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde*, in which many of his views on the indivisibility of language, land and culture – which he developed mainly in *Das ländliche Leben Sardiniens im Spiegel der Sprache* (1921) and *Die sardische Sprache in ihrem Verhältnis zur sardischen Kultur* (1932).

¹⁵⁵ G.Paulis, Introduction to *Immagini di Viaggio dalla Sardegna* (Nuoro:Illisso) 2001, pp. 15-16.

In the *Reisebilder* Wagner concentrates his attention on rural Sardinia, which appeared more conservative both linguistically and culturally. Wagner's attitudes are made clear in chapter 1, when describing his first ramble to Carloforte. He notes:

Wir langweilten uns allmählich, da die Inselstadt [...] nichts Interessantes bot und in ihrem gemeinitalienischen Gewande für uns weniger anziehend erschien, als manches verlassene sardische Nest.¹⁵⁶

The rural varieties of the Sardinian language are defined again and again as more manly, pure and harmonious than the language spoken in towns, where the contamination of continental Italian had affected it. An example of Wagner's views concerning that inseparability is to be found in chapter 3, dealing with the Nuoro region:

Einfach und rau wie die Natur ist hier auch der Mensch geblieben, patriarchalisch die Sitten, konservativ die Sprache. [...] Der Sarde der Berge ist ein ganz anderer Geselle als sein Bruder von der Ebene. Während dieser von kleinem Wuchse, fahler Gesichtsfarbe und servilem Charakter und den spanischen Einschlag deutlich verrät, ist der Bergsarde hochgewachsen, das Blut schwillt und kocht in seinen Adern, er hängt an seinem ungebändigt freien Leben in der wilden Gottesnatur. [...] Auch die Sprache ist hier am schönsten und reinsten. Es ist eine männliche, klangvolle Mundart, mit schönen altlateinischen Resten und altertümlicher Syntax die [...] von Dorf zu Dorf wechselnden Schattierungen in diesen Bergen fortlebt. So ist es auch mit den Trachten, die man nirgends im Lande mehr hochhält und reiner bewahrt hat wie hier. Wie sich die Sprache von Ort zu Ort durch kleine lautliche Verschiedenheiten verändert, so hat hier jedes Dorf etwas besonders Charakteristisches in seiner Tracht, wiewohl der Gesamttypus derselbe bleibt. [1907,2003:pp. 73-74]

A demonstration of how language and culture are closely related is found in words which have survived in Sardinian only, simply because tools and agricultural methods have died out:

So ist es auch kein Wunder, dass das Dreschen des Getreides noch auf die bereits in der Bibel erwähnte Weise geschieht. Das Korn wird auf eine offene Tenne gebracht und dort ausgebreitet, darauf treibt man die Ochsen, welche oft schwere Steine nachziehen, um das Getreide zu entkernen. So ist es wenigstens in Busàchi und überhaupt in den Bergen der Fall. In der Ebene treten an die

¹⁵⁶ Max Leopold Wagner, *Reisebilder aus Sardinien* (Giovanni Masala:Stuttgart) 2003, p. 57.

Stelle der Ochsen Pferde, die in einer Reihe um einen zentralen Pfahl getrieben werden. Der Mann, welcher die Pferde oder Ochsen antreibt, führt auf der Insel noch den sonst meines Wissens nirgends erhaltenen lateinischen Namen *agaso* (Bitti: *agasone*, sonst *gasone*, *basone*; Campidano: *basòni*). [1907,2003:70-71]

Wagner's observations on the role played by land morphology in shaping a language betrays the influx of primitivism, as Giulio Paulis emphasises:

La rappresentazione della Sardegna, e in particolare della Barbagia e del Nuorese, offerta dai *Reisebilder* nasce da questa temperie segnata dalla categoria di primitivismo, cruciale nell'Europa a cavallo dei due secoli. Temperie della cui insorgenza importante è stata la parte spettante a Grazia Deledda.¹⁵⁷

Although the linguist's enthusiasm for a language and culture which has remained very close to ancient civilizations is stated again and again with reference both to language and culture,¹⁵⁸ the difficulty of coping with an archaic way of life is apparent:

Dann ging es ins "Bett", wie man in zivilisierten Gegenden zu sagen pflegt. Man wies uns auf eine etwas über dem Boden erholte Bretterlage, auf der der Hausherr aus besonderer Aufmerksamkeit für uns einige Schaffelle ausbreitete, und wünschte uns *sa bòna nòtti*. So versuchten wir denn, natürlich unausgekleidet, auf diesem primitiven Lager unsere Gliedmaßen unterzubringen. [...] Wir konnten allerdings trotz Müdigkeit und Hunger während der ganzen Nacht kein Auge zutun, denn kaum war die Talgkerze ausgelöscht, so stürzte ein Heer der Tierlein auf uns, deren nähere Bekanntschaft ich keinem Leser wünsche. [1907,2003:103]

Despite his enthusiasm, Wagner does not neglect to emphasise negative aspects of the Sardinian society as, for example, poverty:

Da leben sie oben in den Höhlen, Tag für Tag, beim spärlichen Lichte der Ölflamme, für den geringen Lohn von zwei Lire. Es sind lauter Sarden, da kein Festländer für diesen Preis für die Gesellschaft arbeiten würde. [1907,2003:60]

¹⁵⁷ G.Paulis [2001:15-16].

¹⁵⁸ See for example the following statement: "Es gibt in Europa schwerlich viele Gegenden, wo sich die alten Bräuche und Traditionen besser erhalten haben, und der schöne freie Menschenschlag entschädigt für alle Beschwerden" (*Reisebucher*, cit. p. 74)

Two British travel writers also confirm this idea that Sardinia had a reputation for being forgotten in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The former is Crawford Fritch, who writes, in pages curiously similar in spirit to D.H.Lawrence, the reasons which led him to travel in the Mediterranean:

In an English town I have the feeling that there is a silent conspiracy to deny the existence of one-half of their facts of life. I feel that they neither desire nor hate anything very strongly. And, indeed, they are so skilfully concealed that their existence almost begins to be a matter of doubt. In the streets I see a crowd of individuals, or rather of uniforms, beneath which individuality is hidden, directed by policemen, moving with a swift and single purpose, accomplishing the objects of their business and pleasure with a marvellous orderliness and precision, but without zest or delight or anger. In the working of this smooth machine I see no play or passion or emotion. Nature is so much overlaid that I come to believe that this race of city-dwellers is indeed some new order of being, not sprung from Adam...¹⁵⁹

The difference with the Mediterranean life as seen in Sardinia reveals an unsuspected modality of life: the traveller is shown both a fuller way of experiencing life, and an insight into history, as man has not lost there his continuity with the past:

They are unabashed at their own emotions. They express naked truth in naked language. There is nothing in human life that they shrink from. Their sensations are so simple and vivid, their expression of them so swift and direct, that on looking at this crowd I felt myself in some unaccountable way nearer to men and women of Shakespeare and Dante and the Bible, nearer to the endless tragedy of humanity. [1911:212]

One of the most prolific travel writers in his day, Douglas Goldring, visited Sardinia between 1928 and 1929, at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Upton Muir of Buon Cammino, Cagliari, “whose enthusiasm for their adopted home [was] infectious”. Although his does not reach the depth of Fritch’s judgement, being a professional travel writer Goldring is reliable: first his judgement always aims at being objective (mixing personal experience and facts in a Baedeker style), and secondly he was introduced to several local acquaintances, who gave him hospitality and were happy to make him visits places and experience situations which were not easily accessible

¹⁵⁹ Fritch, J.E.Crawford, *Mediterranean Moods* (London:[s.n.]) 1911, p.209.

to tourists. Goldring, too, stresses the fact that in some moments the traveller feels he is going back in history – despite the efforts of the Fascist government to modernise the nation:

The interest of Sardinia lies in its unexpectedness, its surprising contrasts, both racial and physical, its naturally morose but always varied beauty, its wealth of folklore, its simple but deeply rooted peasant culture, its habit of taking you back to several centuries and then sharply reminding you that you live after all in the seventh year of Fascist rule.¹⁶⁰

More prone to giving a scientific colour to a travel experience is “Sardinian Studies”, published after a journey to Sardinia by members of the Le Play Society in 1934. In his foreword the president of the society, Lord Merton, stresses that “Sardinia cannot be called remote [...] but some of us are discovering of how little we knew of it before we read this monograph”.¹⁶¹

An overview of the chief works which helped to popularise and indeed create an image of Sardinia in Europe would not be complete without mentioning Maurice Le Lannou’s *Pâtres et Paysans de la Sardaigne* (1941).¹⁶² Although not strictly a travel book, but rather a study in human geography, the interest of the book for our research lies in the perspective adopted by the geographer. As it appears simply reading the title, the object of the book is not a geographic description of the land, but rather an

¹⁶⁰ Goldring, Douglas. *Sardinia: the Land of the Nuraghi*. (London Bombay Sydney:G.Harrap & C.) 1930, p.112.

¹⁶¹ Walker, W.G. (ed. by) *Sardinian studies by members of the Le Play Society*. (London :The Le Play Society) 1938, p.5. The society owed its name to the 19th century French sociologist Frédéric Le Play. The society had geographers, historians and sociologists among its members, and their aim was «to understand the community and its inhabitants and their inter-relations». It is specified that members hoped «to make some small contribution at least – through getting to know individuals of other nations and learning to appreciate their points of view in study and social life – towards setting to right the social and economic chaos of the present world conditions» (p.2).

¹⁶² Maurice Le Lannou (1906 – 1992), a French geographer, studied at the École normale supérieure. In 1945 he was Professor of geography in Rennes University and then at Lyon University. From 1969 to 1976, he held a chair at the Collège de France where he taught European geography. In 1975 he was elected at the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques. He arrived in Sardinia when he was 25 on invitation of Jules Sion, and visited regularly the island between 1931 and 1937. In 1941 he published *Pâtres et Paysans de la Sardaigne*, which started his career. Other works include *La Géographie humaine* (Paris: Flammarion) 1949; *Le Brésil*, (Paris:Armand Colin) 1955; *Europe, terre promise* (Paris:Le Seuil) 1977.

inquiry on the influence the physical characteristics of the land exert in determining the character and the social relations of the people.

The aim of the study is made clear in the introductory essay, where the author explains his method of study. His aim is not *describing* the land, but *finding the essential nature* of it. He starts by isolating a few “basic traits” of Sardinia (i.e. the large extensions of uncultivated land, the small population – about 42 people per square kilometre in 1936 –, the rural character and the absence of important industrial activities, except for mining in the south-west). The combination of these traits results in a fundamental feature: archaism, which is to be found in all aspects of the social life in most parts of the island, with the exception of the two largest cities.

...l'archaïsme des aménagements humains, de l'outillage, des costumes, des coutumes, de la langue, des traditions agricoles, pastorales et hospitalières. Tous ces aspects antiques n'échappent pas à la géographie: ils ont leur importance dans les paysages et ils doivent permettre de jeter quelque lumière sur le rôle de l'insularité: Et surtout – je dois l'indiquer ici – ils ont rendu captivantes mes recherches dans ce monde si reculé, que j'ai passionnément aimé, comme on aime les choses menacées. [...] Les menaces qui pèsent sur ces tableaux très vieux – je serai souvent tenté de dire bibliques ou virgiliens – ne sont pas, comme en Corse, le fait du tourisme. [...] Les puissants attraits de la Sardaigne à cet égard, malgré les exemples de la Corse et de la Sicile, n'ont rigoureusement pas été exploités. Il ne vient pas ici 300 touristes par an, et la plupart sont des Italiens du continent en quête de belles chasses. On a calculé que le mouvement du tourisme étranger ne comptait, en Sardaigne, que pour la 500^e partie du mouvement de ce tourisme dans toute l'Italie. (pp.4-5).

The small number of tourists is reflected in the small number of hotels: only 80 in the whole island. Which is quite a small number if compared to about 600 in Sicily, or about 10,000 in Italy in the same years. The most striking feature Le Lannou considers, together with the archaic character of life, is *isolation*. Although one might observe that an island is quite obviously *isolated* from a mainland, Le Lannou's observation is quite subtle. He points out that the various centres of the island, and communities, are isolated from one another, and this accounts for the archaic character and the survival of very ancient traditions and ways of living, which sometimes differ substantially. In villages or towns that have had very little contact over the centuries despite being separated by a distance of a few kilometres, even

dialects can differ considerably. After discussing the physical characteristic of the land, which are the most powerful factor of isolation together with the insufficient road network and the slow rail connections (11 hours to cover a distance of 220 kilometres), Le Lannou points out that small communities had developed, so to speak, isolation strategies to be self-sufficient and reduce dependency upon the outside world:

La circulation intérieure est encore aujourd'hui, malgré les créations récentes, étonnement réduite, parce que de longs siècles d'isolement ont marqué de traits bien difficiles à abolir la constitution économique du pays. [...] L'outil essentiel, qu'est dans nos régions de l'Europe occidentale la voiture hippomobile, témoignage des multiples relations menues, n'existe pas ici. Le village, constitué pour vivre isolé se suffit à soi-même, et ne dépend jamais de quelque bourgade commerçante plus ou moins éloignée. (1941:19)

If this is a limitation for the development of society, Le Lannou argues that it is after all because of the organization of life and work to sustain isolation that features of archaic human activities and relations have survived intact:

L'isolement s'abolit par l'exercice de puissants moyens modernes de communications. Ce qui ne s'abolit pas si aisément ce sont ces conséquences: la disposition et la structure d'un peuplement, l'archaïsme des aménagements agraires, la médiocrité des aptitudes commerciales. [...] et en définitive, c'est dans l'éloignement des terres continentales et la rudesse des abords que nous devons saisir le facteur prépondérant de cette merveilleuse conservation. (1941:26)

In travel writing, the description of Sardinia has been frequently associated with Sicily. Sardinia has often been seen as a sort of appendix to descriptions of Sicily, as Philip Clüver shows. But on a closer look, the image of the two islands, from a cultural viewpoint, could not differ more. The eighteenth century did not discover Sicily, it couldn't: Sicily had already been, for a very long time, part of the European imagination.¹⁶³ But it discovered, or even invented, Sardinia. Ernst Jünger had a clear perception of that:

¹⁶³ For an analysis of travel writing on Sicily see Kanceff, Emanuele/Rampone, Roberta (edited by), *Viaggio nel Sud. Viaggiatori stranieri in Sicilia I* (Genève:Slatkine) 1991.

Trotz aller Vielfalt der Zeugnisse finde ich, daß die Geschichte sich hier diskreter vorstellt als auf Sizilien, wo das Heroische und das Tyrannische mächtige Spuren zurückließen. Der Unterschied bleibt unverkennbar, auch im Charakter der Bevölkerung. Sardinien ist eben, verglichen mit Sizilien, Nebenschauplatz...¹⁶⁴

Jünger's journey is of course reminiscent of the German tradition, and the habit of identifying Italy, following Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, as the garden of Europe – 'Das Land wo die Zitronen blühen' – though it also shows some implicit criticism of that journey.¹⁶⁵

3.2. Grazia Deledda: the (re)invention of the Sardinian identity from the inside

When Grazia Deledda started to write her novels, the image of Sardinia in Europe – which was sustainable enough to be considered its true identity – had been established by travel writers. According to Nicola Tanda Sardinia was seen as a mythic land that satisfied an aspiration to *primitivism*:

Il mito della Sardegna, era stato costruito dai viaggiatori settecenteschi, nonché dagli storici e dagli scrittori romantici e post-romantici, sulla scia inizialmente di Merimée, e successivamente del nazionalismo ottocentesco e dell'esotismo fine secolo, fino ad acquisire sempre più decisamente la connotazione del "primitivismo" novecentesco. La Deledda, che agisce all'interno di quella cultura e ne è parte, interpreta quel mito con gli strumenti delle scienze demologiche di allora e dal punto di vista della cultura osservata.¹⁶⁶

The image of Sardinia as a mythic, virgin, uncontaminated place was to be changed when the Grazia Deledda phenomenon swept the literary world. If one person can be credited with the creation of the Sardinian identity in the twentieth century it is the Sardinian born author who set all her works in Bargabia –the region the Romans called *Barbaria*, still nowadays the wildest part of Sardinia – describing the difficulty human nature has in coming to terms with the laws and conducts imposed by society. Deledda's Sardinia, rather than a virgin, unknown island waiting to be colonized, is an articulated cultural universe with its own language, laws and customs: a very ancient civilization which precedes Roman times. Thanks to the translations of the

¹⁶⁴ *Am Sarazenturm*, (Frankfurt am Mein: Vittorio Klostermann) 1955, p. 151.

¹⁶⁵ Moll, Nora [2002] p. 186.

¹⁶⁶ Tanda, Nicola, *Dal mito dell'isola all'isola del mito – Deledda e dintorni* (Roma: Bulzoni) 1992, p.58.

chief works of the Nobel laureate, the image of Sardinia in Europe was also to be affected.

On December 10th, 1927 Henrik Schück, who chaired at the time the Nobel foundation, delivered a speech on the motivations which had led the Swedish Academy to award the Prize for literature 1926 to Grazia Deledda. In a passage he stated that

She had [...] made a great discovery - she had discovered Sardinia. [...] The so-called «regionalist» school in Italian literature had had such notable representatives as Verga, in his descriptions of Sicily, and Fogazzaro, in his descriptions of the Lombardo-Veneto region. But the discovery of Sardinia decidedly belongs to Grazia Deledda.

This statement is surprising for a reason: Grazia Maria Cosima Damiana Deledda, born on September 27th, 1871, in Nuoro, Sardinia, is credited with discovering her native land. The statement makes sense, however, if we consider the context we described: when Deledda was born Sardinia was barely known to most Europeans, or indeed to most Italians. Henrik Schück went on in his speech to say that Grazia Deledda succeeded in defining a relation between the spirit of place and the spirit of people,¹⁶⁷ discovering or rather – as we prefer putting it, using a semantically and philologically related word¹⁶⁸ – *inventing* a new and credible image for the identity of her native island. Probably her description of Sardinia was no less mythical than the land described by travel writers; but the fact that she described Sardinia from *within*

¹⁶⁷ “[T]he nature which she describes has the simple, broad lines of ancient landscapes, as it has their chaste purity and majesty. It is a marvelously lively nature in perfect harmony with the psychological life of her characters. Like a truly great artist, she succeeds in incorporating her representation of people's sentiments and customs into her descriptions of nature. [...] In Grazia Deledda's novels more than in most other novels, man and nature form a single unity. One might almost say that the men are plants which germinate in the Sardinian soil itself.” The complete text can be read in the following Internet site: <http://nobelprize.org/literature/articles/deledda/index.html>

¹⁶⁸ Latin had only one word, *invenire*, for both ‘discover’ and ‘invent’.

was a sufficient guarantee of truth.¹⁶⁹ And – particularly after she was awarded the Nobel prize – nobody could ignore her views.

Despite defining Sardinian as “a dialect” of Italian, which is not the case,¹⁷⁰ Schück correctly stressed that Grazia Deledda came from a non-Italian community. Her first education was in fact at home, by means of storytelling by the smoking fire place in the middle of the room. She was specially tutored by her father, the landowner and miller Giovanni Antonio Deledda – a book lover and a poet, who once founded a printing office to publish a small newspaper and his own poems – and by her maternal uncle, the canon Sebastiano Cambosu, a learned clergyman who enjoyed conversing in Latin with foreigners. Although the language spoken in Grazia’s family was Sardinian, it is a myth that she learned Italian at school: she was taught privately¹⁷¹ and her literacy skills were sufficiently developed by the time she went to school as to allow her to skip the first grade. Her formal education lasted only four years though, allowing her to attain the primary school leaving certificate – a level which was considered more than enough for women at the time. As Deledda herself put it in her autobiographical novel *Cosima*, her stories were written ‘as if forced by a subterranean power’.

Indeed, her own family provided material for the description of human suffering. Her younger sister died as a child, during an exceptionally cold winter. Her older sister Vincenza (b. 1868) had a secret love, a disgrace to the family until a wedding was

¹⁶⁹ [Nelle opere mature della Deledda] La Sardegna non è più un riferimento realistico e naturalistico, è intanto metafora, è già un luogo dell’immaginario, uno spazio in cui collocare e rappresentare l’eterno dramma dell’esistere in senso mitico e non storico. [...] Era avvenuto lentamente e consapevolmente il passaggio dal mito dell’Isola all’Isola del mito, e nell’accezione propria della coscienza letteraria del Novecento. Nicola Tanda, , *Dal mito dell’isola all’isola del mito – Deledda e dintorni* (Roma:Bulzoni) 1992, p.70.

¹⁷⁰ A dialect is a derivation from a language. But as it is obvious Sardinian cannot be defined a dialect of the Italian language as it comes from Latin, not from the Florentine language (also a dialect of Latin) which became the core of the Italian language. “...nel Verga la questione si presenta in questa precisa maniera: rapporti fra la sua lingua letteraria italiana e il suo dialetto siciliano, che è anch’esso un dialetto italiano; nella Deledda invece la questione si presenta in maniera assai differente: rapporti fra la sua lingua letteraria italiana e il suo dialetto nuorese, che non è un dialetto italiano.” Pittau, Massimo, “La questione della lingua in Grazia Deledda”, in *Atti Convegno nazionale di studi deleddiani* (Cagliari:Fossataro) 1974, p.158.

¹⁷¹ Her teacher of Italian, who came from the mainland, left Nuoro unexpectedly, without saying good-bye or paying for his rent. He left some books behind though, which Grazia continued to read. The episode is quoted by Giovanna Cerina, in *Sardegna svelata* (Torino, Londra, Venezia, New York:Umberto Allemandi) 2004, p. 155 (153-168).

finally arranged. But Enza was found dead in a pool of blood in her bed, as a consequence of a miscarriage. Grazia had to close her eyes, clean the bed, and wash, perfume and shroud her body for the wedding bed. Her brother Andrea, once a promising student, stole money from his father to visit prostitutes in the neighbouring village of San Pietro, created a scandal by fathering a child with a neighboring girl, committed thefts and was imprisoned twice, finally squandering the family money inherited by his father. Another brother, Santus (b. 1864), was the opposite of Andrea, but he, too, would come to a bad end. An inventive young man, he successfully flew over Nuoro in a self-made silk paper hot-air balloon; but later he severely burned himself while performing experiments with fireworks, Santus started drinking and raving, failing to finish his studies. His mother believed that he was possessed by an evil spirit and soon sank into severe depression.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Deledda showed her gifts exceptionally early, and her career was very prolific. In 1887 she completed her first short story, *Sangue sardo* (Sardinian Blood) a story about a girl involved in a love triangle and ending in murder when the protagonist Ela pushes her sister's lover from the cliffs. She secretly mailed it to a fashion magazine in Rome, 'Ultima Moda', which published a selection of pieces of fiction. The story was not well received at home: her mother was attacked for being an irresponsible parent; village women burned a magazine and shouted their reproaches. Deledda went on publishing under pseudonyms - such as G. Razia or the biblical Ilia di Sant'Ismael or Remigia Helder - both tales (like the collection *Nell'azzurro*, 1890) and her first novels: *Memorie di Fernanda* (1888), *Stella d'oriente* (1890), *Amore regale* (1891), *Amori fatali* (1892), *Fior di Sardegna* (1892). But her reputation in Nuoro was still low: people continued to identify her stories of secret lovers on nightly errands with the author, and not even Signor Carlino's bookstore accepted her volumes. However she was building a reputation in the continent (as her people defined Italy): in her early twenties, she collected folklore as a scholar in collaboration with Angelo de Gubernatis and the *Rivista delle Tradizioni popolari Italiane* in a research project that resulted in publications such as *Tradizioni popolari di Nuoro* (1895). Besides novels like *Anime oneste*, (Honest Souls, 1894), and *La via del male* (The way of Evil, 1896). She would turn to explore human suffering as a result of moral conflict, the problem of will and destiny and the conflict between human nature and society. In *Elias Portolu* and *Cenere* (Ashes, 1903), *Nostalgie* (1905), *L'ombra del passato* (1907), *L'edera* (Ivy, 1908), *Colombi e sparvieri* (1912), *Canne al vento* (1913), *Le colpe altrui* (1914), *Marianna Sirca* (1915), *L'incendio nell'oliveto* (1918), *La madre* (1920) *Il segreto dell'uomo solitario* (1921) *Annalena Bilsini* (1927), *Il vecchio e i fanciulli* (The Old and the Young, 1928), *La chiesa della solitudine* (*The Church of Solitude*, 1936). She also wrote many articles, a few plays, an opera libretto, and poems. To these we should add the last of her manuscripts, which was found after her death in one of her drawers: *Cosima*, which was published posthumously as a novel. The eponymous heroine was Grazia Deledda herself (one of her middle names was in fact Cosima) and the novel tells of her life and education until the first train the author - aged twenty-nine - undertook to the capital Cagliari in southern Sardinia in 1899. She would marry the following year Palmiro Madesani, a civil servant, and follow him in Rome. The Nobel Prize in 1926 changed of course her life, but not her very reserved attitude. When she arrived in Stockholm, she felt completely lost; she attended very few ceremonies - the price of fame - and always looking embarrassed, as when, at the invitation of Benito Mussolini, she was presented with a framed photograph of the Duce, with a dedication: "For Grazia Deledda with profound admiration from Benito Mussolini." When Mussolini asked her if he could do anything for her; she asked him to release her fellow-countryman Elia Sanna Mannironi, imprisoned for anti-Fascist activities.

Deledda's achievement, however, does not consist in simply drawing from the family tragedies, but rather in showing the contrast between different codes: both the Italian vs the Sardinian linguistic code, and the Italian vs the Sardinian code of laws. We should not forget that Grazia Deledda lived the most important part of her life under Fascism, and that fascist language and cultural policies – implemented through Academies and the control of publishers, who had to obtain the consent of the Government before publishing a book – were not tolerant of minorities and regional identities.

The problem Deledda faced, i.e. writing in Italian to express Sardinian meanings, was solved by creating a new language, which was described by her first critics as a non-standard, regional Italian written by an author who was just over the threshold of illiteracy.

More recent critical studies (since the 1960s and 1970s) have pointed out that Deledda was bilingual, and what Pittau defines as *il sardeggiare linguistico* (“Deledda's *sardiniasing*”) is the result of choice, i.e. of style. Besides some typical expressions moulded on the Sardinian dialect (e.g. “Già arrivato sei?” instead of “sei già arrivato?” or “questo è così, non ci vado” per “visto che le cose stanno così, non ci vado” etc.), Sardinian words are frequently used (e.g. *córbula*, *bértula*, *tasca*, *leppa*, *leonedda*) besides truncated Christian names (e.g. *Anto'*, *Colu'*, *Zose'* etc) and entire Sardinian sentences (e.g.. ‘*a ti paret?*’, It. “*Ti sembra proprio così?*”) and non-perfect adaptations of Sardinian words to Italian, as for the Nuoro words *buttekeri*, *mastra'e partu*, *mastru 'e linna*, *malas fèminas* spelled *botteghiere* for It. *bottegaio*, En. ‘shop keeper’; *maestra di parto* for It. *levatrice*, ‘midwife’; *maestro di legno* for It. *falegname*, ‘carpenter’; *male femmine* for It. *donnacce*, ‘whores’.

In other words, Deledda makes a transposition of Sardinian words, rather than a translation into Italian; the use of these structures, especially in dialogues, is the result of literary choice. But if we were to judge Deledda's invention of one of the regional varieties of the Italian language from the number of Sardinian words she uses, we would likely be disappointed. If we consider, as an example, one of Deledda's most representative works, *L'edera* (1908), we find less than twenty

Sardinian isolated words and two nursery rhymes, which are typed in italics in the Italian text (the typing convention used for foreign words), and for which a translation is provided:

babbai , It. *babbo*, ‘dad’;

figlia d’anima , It. *figlia adottiva*, ‘adopted child’;

tanca , It. *podere*, ‘land’;

battorina , It. *quartina*, ‘quatrain’;

povero vergognoso, It. *povero pieno di vergogna*, ‘shameful poor man’;

ispassiosu, It. *che ama il divertimento*, ‘fun loving’;

mantenuta per l’anima, It. *allevata per carità*, ‘educated as a matter of charity’;

Pili brunda, (31) It. *bionda*, ‘blonde’;

mudòre , It. *silenzio*, ‘silence’;

ribu mudu tiratore, (31) It. *il fiume silenzioso e travolgente*, ‘silent and tyrannous river’ (proverb);

Anghelos santos!, It. *Angeli santi!*, ‘good angels!’;

Ocri madura, It. *dagli occhi grandi*, ‘big eyes’;

marengo, It. *piccola moneta*, ‘small coin’;

bajanas , It. *zitelle*, ‘spinsters’;

salto , It. *precipizio*, ‘slope’;

su re de sas concheddas, It. *il re delle grotte*, ‘the king of caves’;

Cuademi! (117) It. *Nascondetemi!*, *Mi nasconda!*, ‘hide me’.

Even if we add a few words which are not in italics in the text and sound Italian but are strongly regional (e.g. *stradale* ‘strada principale’, main road; *consentimento*, It. ‘consenso’, consent; *insoffribile*, It. ‘insopportabile’, unbearable; *linguacciuto*, It. ‘insolente’, cheeky) or misspelled because of the underlying Sardinian structures or hypercorrection (*roccie*, It. *rocce*; *quercie*, It. *querce*; *avoltoi*, It. *avvoltoi*; *laberinti*, It. *labirinti*) the percentage, in a novel of some 62.000 words, would be irrelevant.

The real key to understand Deledda’s language is to be found in the syntactic structures of sentences which are literally transposed from Sardinian into Italian. In

the table below we listed some phrases that would be incorrect in standard Italian, but are perfectly consistent with the Sardinian grammar:

<i>Grazia Deledda's phrase</i>	<i>Infraction of Italian grammar rules</i>
egli può comandare a tutti	polyvalent use of preposition 'a'
salute abbi!	syntactic inversion
neppure buono a scorticare un agnello	use of <i>buono</i> for <i>capace</i>
diventerai più abile di loro	use of <i>abile</i> for <i>bravo</i>
levatevi d'intorno	double object pronoun suffix tacked to an imperative form
Se sapevo non ti dicevo niente	use of the imperfect for the subjunctive
Annesa, demonia!	feminine form of 'demonio' does not exist in Italian
Nei nuraghes, che servivano di abitazioni	use of preposition <i>di</i> for <i>da</i>
Correva e saltava come una lepre che presente la pioggia	elliptical sentence
Ogni parola cadeva nel cuore di Annesa come pietra	omission of indefinite article

Indeed, rather than use the standard Italian language with a *flavour* of dialect (as Verga did), Deledda creates a *regional* Italian language.

Having said this however, it should be stressed that at very topical moments in Deledda's stories, when the dramatic *climax* is reached, the Sardinian identity of Deledda's characters comes out strongly. This is also the case with *L'edera*, (*The Ivy*), the defining nickname of Annesa, a servant girl who needs someone to cling to in order to be able to grow and live.¹⁷³ Annesa witnesses the progressive decadence of her masters' household while zio Zua – an elderly, rich, mean relative who is confined because of severe asthma to his bed and whom she assists – shows contempt and cruelty to her and the rest of the family, notably to Paulu, her masters' son, with whom she has an affair. The situation grows worse and worse until drama erupts: Annesa suffocates zio Zua using his own pillow.

When the *carabinieri* start investigating the circumstances of the suspicious death, her masters are arrested and Annesa is told that they want to question her. At that

¹⁷³ ...io sono come l'edera; come l'edera che si attacca al muro e non se ne distacca più, finché non si secca." (p.26)

moment she does what the Barbagia bandits do in similar circumstances: she leaves her home and community behind, looking for protection in the Sardinian thick bush (the *macchia*).

She meets an old shepherd, zio Castigu, nicknamed *su re de sas concheddas* ('the king of caves') and tells him she is afraid of being falsely charged with murder, finally asking him to help her find a hiding place:

...si aggrappò al vecchio e gli disse con voce sommessa:
"Cuademi! Cuademi! Per l'anima dei vostri morti, nascondetemi. Dove sono le grotte? Portatemi là. Bisogna che io stia nascosta, bisogna che nessuno senta la mia voce..."

[She clung to the old man and said in a low voice:
"Cuademi! Cuademi! For the sake of the soul of your dead, hide me. Where are the caves? Take me there. It is necessary that I am hidden, that nobody hears my voice..."]

The figure of the linguistic and dramatic texture is in the word *cuademi*, /ku'ademi/, 'hide me', which cannot be understood by Italian readers as it diverges etymologically from the Italian word, '*nascondimi*'. Deledda might have used the Italian expression *Nascondimi!*, but the use of a Sardinian word is crucial in the dramatic action which is unfolding. It gives a stronger dramatic intensity, taking the conflict from the personal level to a community level by stressing the belonging to the same ethnic community – establishing as it were a linguistic complicity with zio Castigu, whereas *they*, the representatives of law, are unknown strangers. The urging strength of Annesa's request, by means of this word, is much more compelling and zio Castigu, despite not being convinced that Annesa is telling the truth, eventually decides to help her.

Annesa morally absolves herself. She knows she has committed murder, but says to zio Castigu she is being *falsely* accused. By doing so she makes clear that her behaviour is not regulated by the common laws, but rather by a pre-Roman, pre-Christian code – the same code of behaviour which led to the romantic myth of the Barbagia bandit, the absconder who is banned from society but justified and indeed protected by the local community.

The Sardinian jurist Antonio Pigliaru, in his classic study *Il codice della vendetta barbaricina* (*The Code of the Barbagia Revenge*, 1959) argued that far from being led to crime by irrational reasons, the Barbagia bandits abode by a strict code which allowed – and indeed obliged – individuals to avenge the wrongs he or his close relatives had suffered. This is the reason why, in some cases, the bandit is condemned by law but absolved by the local community

Annesa, who has become an absconder, morally absolves herself because she has committed a crime not for personal profit, but because of her love of Paulo and her devotion to her masters. She has, in other words, performed the role of the *accabbadora* (from the Sardinian verb *accabbai*, ‘end’ or ‘terminate’) who performed a very sad task which was morally acceptable in ancient pre-Christian civilizations, including Sardinia. They no longer operate but, arguably, they were more persistent in the Barbagia regions than elsewhere as they still live in memory. They were humble people, generally elderly women living at the margins of society, who were hired by the family of irretrievably ill people to put an end to their sufferings. They did not use the techniques offered by modern medicine for euthanasia, but a small hammer to hit the dying person with a precise, deadly blow on his/her head. In this sense, Annesa absolves herself and is protected by zio Castigu as she has taken on herself the responsibility of putting an end to the life of rich zio Zua who, despite being confined to his bed, refuses to save the family from financial disaster.

We can conclude that, as is shown by the present generation of Sardinian writers¹⁷⁴ who for the first time since the death of Grazia Deledda have been able to present issues of Sardinian identity beyond the boundaries of the island, to Italy and to the

¹⁷⁴ Far from dying out with Grazia Deledda, the counter pointing between the standard Italian language and the minority Sardinian language is still alive in contemporary leading Sardinian authors – Sergio Atzeni (*Apologo del giudice bandito*, *Il figlio di Bakunin*, *Passavamo sulla terra leggeri*), Marcello Fois (*Falso gotico nuorese*, *L’anello mancante*, *Tavoli per due*, *Tamburini*), Maria Giacobbe (*Diario di una maestrina*, *Arcipelaghi*, *Maschere e angeli nudi*) Salvatore Niffoi (*Ritorno a Naraule*, *La leggenda di Redenta Tiria*, *La vedova scalza*) to name but a few, walk in Deledda’s linguistic footpath. The fact that the Barbagia writer Salvatore Niffoi was awarded the prestigious Campiello literary prize last year contributed to attract much critical attention to the issue. Of course comparisons with Grazia Deledda were put forward, as Niffoi and Deledda share the same linguistic and cultural background.

wider world, this little and apparently fragile Barbagia woman paved the road for their achievements.

3.3. *The European (re)invention of the Sardinian identity from the outside*

Sardinia became though, in the 20th century, an idealized land of refuge from the consequences of ‘civilization’ and ‘progress’, concepts that after the world wars were being questioned, calling for a quasi-mystic communion between Man and Nature. ‘Civilized’ Europe -which according to some had been brutalized by industry and rationalism (D.H. Lawrence), and by war (E. Jünger) did not seem to offer a valuable model for spiritual regeneration. Bearing in mind the obvious differences due to the artistic personality of the authors, the works we will concentrate on show a particular mark, which make the journey to Sardinia autonomous from the Grand Tour and the journeys to Italy. The journey to Sardinia is rather a *Grand Détour*, off the trodden paths of history and art itineraries to express a faith in the redeeming and liberating power of Nature. The authors we are considering show a fundamental scepticism in the optimistic view that man’s liberation will come with the technological progress. For D.H. Lawrence travelling to Sardinia meant a refusal of western rationalism, industrialisation and standardization; for Elio Vittorini, the discovery of innocence and for Ernst Jünger an emancipation from history.

The accounts of authors who visited the Island in the first half of the 20th century aim – in line with the ethnographic enthusiasm – not only at describing colourfully the ‘forgotten’ Island and its people to ‘civilized’ Europe, but to stress the feeling of spiritual regeneration. They also shape a new identity for the Island. The accent is not on the ancient, primeval social codes which had been popularised by Grazia Deledda, and on how they collide with newer models coming from the outside, but rather on how a land *outside the circuit of civilization* ¹⁷⁵ (as an enthusiastic D.H.Lawrence put it) could offer to man in terms of spiritual regeneration. The idea of Sardinia itself is affected and transformed: the ‘identity’ of Sardinia is no longer

¹⁷⁵ Niffoi’s books are less accessible to the Italian reading public than Deledda’s works. *La vedova scalza* (*The Barefoot Widow*, 2006), the book which earned Niffoi the Campiello Prize, reminds in fact of Deledda’s plots. It tells the story of the widowed wife of a local bandit (Micheleddu) who takes revenge on the ‘foreign’ *carabiniere* who has cruelly killed her husband. The widow has to leave her native community by expatriating, but knows that nobody would betray her.

seen as the result of a millenary history, but rather a virgin island of dream and desire whose truest image was in myth. This late “discovery” can be seen as the answer to a need to find a shelter from brutal reality, rediscovering childhood and innocence.

D.H. Lawrence, Elio Vittorini and Ernst Jünger – though they come from rather different backgrounds – show a similar leaning towards a literary primitivism, which develops in their execration of middle-class conventions and modernity, and in exalting nature and instinctual life.

3.3.1. *David Herbert Lawrence's Sea and Sardinia*

D.H. Lawrence travelled to Sardinia in 1921, and few books have enjoyed such popularity as *Sea and Sardinia* in Sardinia since its translation into Italian by Elio Vittorini in 1938. A number of new translations in recent years clearly confirm that the book is still appreciated. This is amazing, chiefly because it is not, as Anthony Burgess felt, a book on Sardinia, but rather a book on D.H. Lawrence himself.¹⁷⁶

People who read the work to learn something about Sardinia are likely to be disappointed, but it is a precious source of information on the author's intellectual biography at a crucial period of his life.¹⁷⁷ *Sea and Sardinia* is not a mere travel book, but much more. We know that the Italian years had been very productive, but more than that *Sea and Sardinia* shows his contact with the Italian cultural scene, and his contribution to the spreading of Italian works through translations, was more important than we generally assume.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Introduction to *D.H. Lawrence and Italy* [1972] (Harmondsworth: Penguin) 1985.

¹⁷⁷ In January 1921, when he travelled in Sardinia, he was by no means an inexperienced writer, since he had published such major narrative works as *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920); but a new five-year period in his life, *the savage pilgrimage*, was just starting, bearing the publication of his chief essays (*Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, 1921; *Movements in European History*, 1921; *Fantasia and the Unconscious*, 1922), and the writing of short stories included in *England, My England*, short novels like *St. Mawr* and *Ladybird*, *The Fox and The Captain's Doll*, novels like *Kangaroo* and *The Boy in the Bush*, the poems collected in *Beards, Beasts and Flowers*, and most of *The Plumed Serpent* and *Mornings in Mexico*. Finally, he translated Verga's *Mastro Don Gesualdo* (1923) and *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1925): a very productive period indeed.

¹⁷⁸ Lawrence translated into English *Mastro-Don Gesualdo* (1923), *Little Novels of Sicily* (1925) and *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1925) by G. Verga, and the *Story of Dr. Menante* (1929) by G. Grazzini. He also wrote an introduction to the English edition of *La Madre*, a novel by the Sardinian author Grazia Deledda, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1926. His translations are rather peculiar because he deliberately kept the syntactic structures of the Italian text.

Reading *Sea and Sardinia* as a travel book is restrictive, both because it is an invaluable source for understanding the genesis of many themes which were to characterize Lawrence's mature production, and because from a stylistic viewpoint it is a unique work, combining a variety of narrative modes ranging from descriptions of people and places to autobiography, from considerations on contemporary European history to symbolic representations of life: a perfectly balanced, multi-layered literary patchwork which offers a much deeper insight into the author's psychology than any travel book.

We know virtually everything about D.H. and Frieda Lawrence's journey to Sardinia. They were living in Fontanavecchia at the time, a small village near Taormina in Sicily, and Lawrence suddenly grew fed up with it.¹⁷⁹

As in 1919, when he had left England for good because he couldn't bear the standardization of individuals and the poor human relations in industrial England, in 1921 he found Sicily unbearable because of the Hellenic over-rationalism which characterized its inhabitants. As Lawrence puts it:

¹⁷⁹ He travelled to Italy for the first time in the spring of 1914, when he visited the Lake of Garda district with Frieda von Richthofen. The landscapes he saw and the people he met, especially in Veneto, were to produce a lasting impression on him, together with the feeling that the Italians had a completely different attitude to life and religion. He gave shape to these impressions in the travel sketches *Twilight in Italy* (1916), written during his "forced" stay in England during the war years: Frieda was a potential spy, as she was a cousin of the aviation ace known as *the Red Baron*. As soon as he was able to have his passport back, he left England with Frieda and returned only for short periods. Between November 1919 and February 1922 he lived in Picinisco (Abruzzo) and Capri. He finally settled in Fontana Vecchia, near Taormina, Sicily, whence he left for short journeys, notably to Montecassino, Fiesole, and finally Sardinia in January 1921. From an artistic viewpoint the Italian years were very productive: his *Italian works* include novels such as *Aaron's Rod* and *The Lost Girl*, travel books such as *Sea and Sardinia* and *Etruscan Places*, essays (*Fantasia of the Unconscious* and *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*), translations with introductions (*Mastro don Gesualdo* and *Cavalleria Rusticana* by Giovanni Verga), a collection of poems (*Beards, Beasts and Flowers*).

Italy provided him with invaluable material for the setting of his novels and the delineating of the psychology of his characters, always dissatisfied with their life and in search for themselves. Both his heroes and heroines, driven by a desire for drinking life to the lees, give the impression of finding an appeasement in Italy, particularly in the South. This region was in fact uncontaminated by industry and good manners, which in his opinion had tainted the soul of the English people, making them unable of immediacy and spontaneity in interpersonal relations. In *The Lost Girl* Alvina, fed up with her life in a narrow-minded middle-class town in the Midlands meets Ciccio Merasca, a young man from Abruzzo, and elopes with him though she is conscious of the troubles to come. *Aaron's Rod* also starts in the Midlands: oppressed by the mediocrity of his life and by the love of a possessive wife, Aaron, possibly Lawrence's alter ego, leaves to Italy where he lives in Novara and Florence, starting a new life and becoming increasingly persuaded of the superiority of the individual over the masses, a concept which would make Lawrence himself a sympathiser of Fascism.

Intelligent, almost inspired, and soulless, like the Etna Sicilians. Intelligent daimons, and humanly, according to us, the most stupid people on earth ... these maddening, exasperating, impossible Sicilians, who never knew what truth was and have long lost all notion of what a human being is.¹⁸⁰

After considering a few places which would be free from ancient Greek civilization they chose Sardinia:

Sardinia, which is like nowhere. Sardinia which has no history, no date, no race, no offering. Let it be Sardinia. They say neither Romans nor Phoenicians, Greeks nor Arabs ever subdued Sardinia. It lies outside; outside the circuit of civilization.¹⁸¹

In reality, Lawrence's information on Sardinia was rather incomplete. As we have seen, besides famous visitors such as Admiral Horatio Nelson and George Gordon Lord Byron, accounts by British travellers like John Galt's and J.W. Tyndale lively and quite accurate description of Sardinia had been published.¹⁸²

What Lawrence does not say, but becomes quite apparent reading the book, is that they were desperately looking for somewhere to start a new life. Frieda is quite explicit about the possibility of settling in Sardinia, and D.H. Lawrence represents her as always very positive about the idea of living in Sardinia - even when her husband was not. The fact that they considered the idea of living in Sardinia is beyond doubt, since several letters are quite explicit about this intention. The day before leaving, January 2nd, 1921, he wrote to Thomas Seltzer: "I'm going to make a

¹⁸⁰ *Sea and Sardinia* (New York: Thomas Seltzer) 1921 p. 14

¹⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 14-15

¹⁸² Admiral Nelson spent a couple of months on his *Victory* in Sardinian seas between 1804 and 1805, with a fleet of ten vessels and a few frigates. In his letters to Lord Habard and to Lord Harrowby (the latter served as foreign minister at the time) he insisted that the British government should make any effort to purchase Sardinia from the Savoy king. He was struck by the beauty of its coastline, by the favourable strategic position right in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, which would turn very useful in case of conflict with the French fleets. John Galt published a description of Sardinia which is read nowadays especially because of his travel companion, Lord Byron. J.W. Tyndale, who spent six years writing *The Island of Sardinia*, a remarkable work in three volumes which alternates landscape descriptions with lively reports on the nature of people, somehow supports Lawrence's idea that average Sardinians were «far from the circuit of civilization»: one could not believe that the English people were ruled by «a female» (i.e. Queen Victoria) and another refused to believe that the English people were so crazy as to sail as far as India to import dried leaves – that's what he called tea. An introduction to British travellers in Sardinia can be found in M. Cabiddu, *La Sardegna vista dagli Inglesi – Viaggiatori dell'800*, [E.S.A. Quartu S.E.] 1982.

little dash to Sardinia to see if I should like to live there”. And soon after he was back there are several references to this attempt in his letters: to Ada Clarke on January 14th, 1921: “We went to Sardinia to see if we liked it to live in – love it, but decide to keep Fontana Vecchia for another year”; and to Eleonor Farjeon January 20th, 1921,; “We made a dash to Sardinia – like the island very much – but it isn’t a place to live in. No point in living there. A stray corner of Italy, rather difficult materially to live in.” And again to F.Brett Young January 27th, 1921, “We made a little dash to Sardinia: sailed from Palermo via Trapani to Cagliari: fun: I like Sardinia. I wanted to see if I could live there. But no. I won’t make any more attempts in Europe.”¹⁸³ But the short travel to Sardinia was to produce not only a strong artistic impression (as shown by his incessant work to finish the book¹⁸⁴), but a turning point in his life.

The Lawrences’ journey to Sardinia is arguably the shortest journey which resulted in an outstanding literary work: only four nights and five days.

We can summarise Lawrence’s “dash to Sardinia” as follows: After a long journey (three days just to go to Palermo on the train, and as much as thirty-two hours to cross the sea, after a stop over in Trapani) the couple finally arrived in Cagliari at about lunchtime on Thursday, January 6th, 1921. They went through customs, which is no longer on the same spot, and then up Viale Regina Margherita, which has also radically changed. They took rooms at the Hotel Scala di Ferro, which was pulled down in 2001 after a long controversy to host the premises of the local police prefect. In the afternoon they went to visit the old town, now a rather lower-class district still called “The Castle”, where he was struck by the elegance of middle-class people, visited the medieval cathedral where he was not at all impressed by its magnificent baroque interiors, then went to the Café Roma on the sea-front, where he first saw the peasants in the traditional black and white costume he was very fond of, and the children in carnival masks. The next morning they visited the market – which no longer exists – where he described in a lively way both the abundance and variety of

¹⁸³ All quotes from *The Letters of D.H.Lawrence*, vol.3 (Cambridge:Cambridge Un.Press) 1984, pp.647-665.

¹⁸⁴ A letter to Jan Juta, the painter who gave him six beautiful drawings, of 12th October, 1921 “I’ve nearly finished the Sardinia.”

food and the multi-coloured costumes of peasant women. Early in the afternoon they took a steam train - a very slow one, which is still used today especially for tourist purposes - to Sorgono. He watched the rather barren, flat land to Mandas, where they spent the night and had a curious conversation with three weary railway workers. The next day they travelled on the same train to Sorgono, D.H. Lawrence was fascinated by the wild woods the train went through – the wilderness has remained absolutely unaltered – but was enraged at the shabbiness of the only guest-house they found. On Sunday 9th they took a bus to Nuoro, with a stopover in Tonara where they saw a religious procession with women wearing their traditional costumes. In the evening they saw carnival masks in Nuoro and spent the night at a hotel. The next morning they visited the town and finally took a bus to Olbia (Terranova Pausania): the bus conductor talked to him a lot and eventually asked his help to get a job in London, and a young boy demanded a generous tip to carry his “sack” to the port. In the evening they took the ship to Civitavecchia, near Rome, where they arrived early the next day.

This is roughly all the material the author had in his hands – or in his mind, if it is true, as he maintained in conversations, that he took no notes.¹⁸⁵ This was enough to produce *Sea and Sardinia*.

As regards the language spoken by D.H. and Frieda Lawrence, they did use Italian. This is quite obvious if we consider the Italian words in the text, generally in italics (in a recent edition, Mara Kalnins provides a seventy-seven word English glossary), but a stronger influence can be seen in the use of an Italian syntax mould. David Brett feels some of Lawrence’s sentences (especially in reported speech) are strongly influenced by the original Italian and make sense only if they are translated back.¹⁸⁶ Sometimes the sentences seem to be intended at giving a particular flavour of Italian to the text, by moulding the syntactic structure and even word order of Italian, in sentences like “Comes a carriage with two fat bay horses” (p.57) or “Arrived a primrose brocade beau” (p.58). In some other cases, bad English grammar is used to

¹⁸⁵ Edward Nehls, 1957. *DHL: A Composite Biography* (Univ. Of Wisconsin), quoted by J.Frank, Introduction to *Sea and Sardinia*, (Harmondsworth:Penguin) 1981, p. xvii.

¹⁸⁶ Examples include “It’s lost nothing”, (non si è perso niente) ; There isn’t it anymore (Non ce n’è più) God’s love, don’t start (Per amor di Dio non partire; Oh Cagliari pleases me (Cagliari mi piace), *D.H.Lawrence’s Sea and Sardinia: What language is it then?* in Pissarello, G. (ed. by), 2000.

create a mocking effect. The bus conductor Lawrence does not sympathise with – and who presumably spoke a broken Italian – is reported criticising the fact that Italy joined World War I in 1915 with the following sentence: “Italy had come in. For why.” There is evidence that Lawrence was even influenced by dialect forms which he heard: he says for example “francs” for “lira”, obviously influenced by the fact that the Sardinian word for “lira” is “francu”.

Industry and rationalism

After rejecting industrial England, on the grounds that industry had standardized human beings and deprived them of their individuality, making them incapable of feeling the instinctual drives, in *Sea and Sardinia* D.H. Lawrence rejects the Hellenic rationalism represented by Sicily (one of the chief Greek colonies before the Romans took over) inaugurating the five years of *savage pilgrimage* which took him to Ceylon, Australia and New Mexico. D.H. Lawrence considered Sardinia as an eligible residence as it was free from the forces which had enslaved Western man: industry and rationalism. D.H. Lawrence is one of the two non-native authors who has a plaque in Cagliari (the other one is Cervantes), a tribute to a writer who wrote immortal pages on Sardinia. In reality, he wrote some of the most flattering – but also some of the least flattering things ever written on Sardinia. His report shows a progressive awareness that, though fascinating as an idealistic aim, living in a pre-industrial world would be impossible for him. His quest for a pre-industrial life started, as it were, with a defeat.

Quite surprisingly, D.H. Lawrence appreciated in Sardinia especially the things he didn't expect to find. In Cagliari – a town which during that period, under the enlightened mayor Ottone Bacaredda, was enjoying a remarkable development – he admired the elegance of the middle class young ladies and the children showing off in the town squares with papa and mama (“Better than Kensington Gardens very often...Who would have expected it”?, [1921:106]), and the variety of food displayed in the market in those post-war days, which made Frieda exclaim: “I must come and live in Cagliari, to do my shopping here ... I must have one of those big

grass baskets ... if I don't live in Cagliari and come and do my shopping here, I shall die with one of my wishes unfulfilled". [1921:118-119]

The rest of the journey is the chronicle of disillusionment: the dream of living in an innocent, primeval society, unaffected by class distinction and hypocrisy, proves pure illusion. Cultural and social barriers prove insurmountable, as shown also in a short story written at the end of 1925 which might ideally close the *savage pilgrimage* period, *Sun* (1926).

In the central part of Sardinia he found the society which any sensible traveller would reasonably expect to find in a pre-industrial agricultural country. He saw simple and sincere interpersonal relations, which he admired, as shown in the passage below:

It is extraordinary how generous and, from the inside, well-bred these men were. To be sure the second conductor waved his knife and fork and made bitter faces if one of us took only a little bit of the lamb. He wanted us to take more. But the *essential* courtesy of all of them was quite perfect, so manly and utterly simple. Just the same with the q-b. They treated her with a sensitive, manly simplicity, which one could be but thankful for. They made none of the odious politenesses which are so detestable in well-brought-up people. They made no advances and did none of the hateful homage of the adulating male. They were quiet, and kind, and sensitive to the natural flow of life. [1921:235]

But more often the people he met became caricatures and were mocked, in some cases even violently attacked if they failed to conform to the image he had of them.

On January 7th he arrived in Mandas, where he had a conversation with three local workers, bored to death with their life in a solitary station. He laughs at their simplicity, and one of them, who looked like a little pig, is reported saying "At Mandas one does *nothing*. At Mandas one goes to bed when it's dark, like a chicken. At Mandas one walks down the road like a pig that is going nowhere. At Mandas a goat understands more than the inhabitants understand. At Mandas one needs socialism..." [1921:144]) The mocking intention through hyperbolic distortion of the character's words is quite obvious.

Even the slow journey by train, which had appealed to his imagination so much, is in the end too boring:

Oh, twisty, wooded, steep slopes, oh, glimpses of Gennargentu, oh, nigger-striped cork-trees, oh, smells of peasants, of wooden, wearisome railway carriage, we are sick of you! Nearly seven hours of this journey already: and a distance of sixty miles. [1921:168]

On January 8th he arrived in Sorgono, which has been for a very long time the farthest village reached by the railway. It is not by chance that in Sardinia people still say, as a half-serious curse “*anku t’iskudighide in Sorgono*” that is “May you find yourself after sunset in Sorgono”, meaning that nobody would offer you shelter. But D.H. Lawrence didn’t know that few Sardinians would have expected to be made welcome in that village; forgetting he has reached one of the farthest outposts of civilization, he gives a grim description of what he found there:

We pass into a big dreary bar, where are innumerable bottles behind a tin counter. Flutter-jack yells: and at length appears mine host, a youngish fellow of the Eskimo type, but rather bigger, in a dreary black suit and a cutaway waistcoat, and innumerable wine stains on his shirt front. I instantly hated him for the filthy appearance he made. He wore a battered hat and his face was long unwashed.

Was there a bedroom?

Yes.

And he led the way down the passage, just as dirty as the road outside, up the hollow, wooden stairs also just as clean as the passage, along a hollow, drum-rearing dirty corridor, and into a bedroom. Well, it contained a large bed, thin and flat with a grey-white counterpane, like a large, poor, marble-slabbed tomb in the room’s sordid emptiness; one dilapidated chair on which stood the miserablest weed of a candle I have ever seen: a broken wash saucer in a wire ring: and for the rest, an expanse of wooden floor as dirty-grey-black as it could be, and an expanse of wall charted with the bloody deaths of mosquitoes. The window was about two feet above the level of a sort of stable yard outside, with a fowl-house just by the sash. There, at the window flew lousy feathers and dirty straw, the ground was thick with chicken droppings. An ass and two oxen comfortably chewed hay in an open shed just across, and plump in the middle of the yard lay a bristly black pig taking the last of the sun. Smells of course were varied. [1921:170-171]

D.H. Lawrence gets literally furious:

“Dirty, disgusting swine!” said I, and I was in a rage.
I could have forgiven him anything, except his horrible shirt-breast, his personal shamelessness. [...]
I attacked the spotty breast again.
Could I have milk?
No. Perhaps in an hour there would be milk. Perhaps not.
Was there anything to eat?
No – at half-past seven there would be something to eat.
Was there a fire?
No – the man hadn’t made a fire. [1921:175]

No doubt that would have made anyone lose his temper – even the rest of Sardinians, I imagine. But D.H. Lawrence was in a country village *outside the circuit of civilization*, where proximity between man and beast was to be expected. Even the queen bee, Frieda, is surprised at his anger:

And the q-b was angry with me for my fury.
“Why are you so indignant! Anyone would think your moral self has been outraged! Why take it so morally? You petrify that man at the inn by the very way you speak to him, *such* condemnation! Why don’t you take it as it comes? It’s all life.”
But no, my rage is black, black, black. Why, heavens knows. But I think it was because Sorgono had seemed so fascinating to me, when I imagined it beforehand. Oh, so fascinating! If I had expected nothing I should not have been so hit...I cursed the degenerate aborigines, the dirty-breasted host who *dared* to keep such an inn, the sordid villagers who had the baseness to squat their beastly human nastiness in this upland valley. All my praise of the long stocking-cap – you remember? – vanished from my mouth. I cursed them all, and the q-b for an interfering female... [1921:176-177]

He speaks to a bus conductor, who scribbles his most deep-felt aspiration on a piece of paper: “You will find me a post in England, when you go in the summer? You will find me a place in London as a chauffeur...!” [1921:292] Lawrence answers politely, but can’t help having a patronizing and mocking attitude:

The bus-mate climbed in and out, coming in to sit near us. He was like a dove which has at last found an olive bough to nest in. And we were the olive bough in this world of waste waters. Alas, I felt a broken reed. But he sat so serenely near us, now, like a dog that has found a master. [1921:295]

In reality, he finds this bus-mate an intruder and escapes from acquaintances that risk becoming, as it were, too intimate:

I told the bus-Hamlet, who was abstract with nerve fatigue, please to tell his comrade that I would not forget the commission: and I tapped my waistcoat pocket, where the paper lay over my heart. He briefly promised – and we escaped. We escaped any further friendship. [1921:298]

Here the intellectual posing has completely vanished, together with the illusion of having found a suitable world in which to live. When eventually he arrives in Civitavecchia, how excited he is to meet at the railway station in Rome some compatriots who speak animatedly about their recent journeys! Sardinia and its pre-Christian spirit is quickly gone:

Once more we knew ourselves in the real active world, where the air seems like a lively wine dissolving the pearl of the old order. I hope, dear reader, that you like the metaphor. Yet I cannot forbear repeating how strongly one is sensible of the solvent property of the atmosphere...and in one hour one changes one's psyche. The human being is a most curious creature. He thinks he has got one soul and he has got dozens. I felt my sound Sardinian soul melting off me, I felt myself evaporating into the real Italian uncertainty and momentaneity. So I perused the "Corriere" whilst the metamorphosis took place. [1921:313]

And in the last chapter, where he gets so excited at watching a marionette show, where he enjoys "the hot southern blood, so subtle and spontaneous, that asks for blood contact, not for mental communion or spirit sympathy." [1921:355] A final confession which seems to circle back to the first chapter: "...let me confess, in parenthesis, that I am not at all sure whether I do not really prefer these demons to our sanctified humanity." [1921:14]

Pre-hellenism

Some of the most typical themes in D.H. Lawrence's work are clearly expressed in *Sea and Sardinia*. As a first example, the quest for a pre-industrial, even pre-Christian and pre-Apollonian society, in which man would be free from the psychological manacles of Western rationalism and Christian self-restraint, for which

Lawrence seems to be indebted to Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*, (1872), is to be found in several passages:

One sees a few fascinating faces in Cagliari: those great dark unlighted eyes. There are fascinating dark eyes in Sicily, bright, big, with an impudent point of light and a curious roll, and long lashes: the eyes of old Greece, surely. But here one sees eyes of soft, blank darkness, all velvet, with no imp looking out of them. And they strike a stranger, older note: before the soul became self-conscious. before the mentality of Greece appeared in the world. Remote, always remote, as if the intelligence lay deep into the cave, and never came forward. One searches into the gloom for one second, while the glance lasts. But without being able to penetrate to the reality. It recedes, like some unknown creature, deeper into its lair. There is a creature, dark and potent. But what? [1921:123]

And again:

They have no inkling of our crucifixion, our universal consciousness. Each of them is pivoted and limited to himself, as the wild animals are. They look out, and they see other objects, objects to ridicule or mistrust, or to sniff curiously at. But "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" has never entered their soul at all, not even the thin end of it. They might love their neighbour with a hot, dark, unquestioning love. But the love would probably leave off abruptly. The fascination of what is beyond them has not seized on them. Their neighbour is a mere external...One feels for the first time the real old medieval life, which is enclosed in itself and has no interest in the world outside...They are not going to be broken in upon by world-consciousness. They are not going into the world's common clothes. Coarse, vigorous, determined, they will stick to their own coarse dark stupidity and let the big world find its own way to its own enlightened hell. Their hell is their own hell, they prefer it unenlightened. [1921:162]

Another theme, which is to be found in all of Lawrence's works, is the search for individuality, the desire to escape from the standardization of a homogeneous world, which deprived people of their natural freedom:

I am glad that the era of love and oneness is over: hateful homogeneous world-oneness. I am glad that Russia flies back into savage Russianism, Scythism, savagely self-pivoting. I am glad America is doing the same. I shall be glad when men hate their common, world-alike clothes, when they tear them up and clothe themselves fiercely for distinction, savage distinction, savage distinction against the rest of the creeping world: when America kicks the billy-cock and the collar-

and-tie into limbo, and takes to her own national costume...The era of love and oneness is over. The era of world-alike should be at an end.... Men will set their bonnets at one another now, and fight themselves into separation and sharp distinction. The day of peace and oneness is over, the day of the great fight into multifariousness is at hand. Hasten the day, and save us from proletarian homogeneity and khaki all-alikeness. [1921:164]

The responsibility of depriving man of his individuality and of the capacity of enjoying life is attributed both to democracy and socialism, between which he seems to make no difference:

...the peasants of the South [of Italy] have left off the costume. Usually it is the invisible soldier's grey-green cloth, the Italian khaki. Wherever you go, wherever you be, you see this khaki, this grey-green war clothing...It is symbolic of the universal grey mist that has come over men, the extinguishing of all bright individuality, the blotting out of all wild singleness. Oh, democracy! Oh, khaki democracy! [1921:130]

Lawrence's anti-feminism, possibly a consequence of his essential misogyny, is quite evident in the description of the old witch in the marionettes show:

The old witch with her grey hair and staring eyes, succeeds in being ghastly. With just a touch she should be a tall, benevolent old lady. But listen to her. Hear her horrible female voice with its scraping yells of evil lustfulness. Yes, she fills me with horror. And I am staggered to find how I believe in her as *the* evil principle. Beelzebub, poor devil, is only one of her instruments...But behold this image of the witch. This white, submerged *idea* of woman which rules from the deeps of the unconscious. [1921:353]

According to Lawrence the battle of sexes is not concealed by good manners in Sardinia:

They are amusing, these peasant girls and women: so brisk and defiant. They have straight backs like little walls, and decided, well-drawn brows. And they are amusingly on the alert...and you feel they would fetch you a bang over the head as lief as look at you. Tenderness, thank heaven, is not a Sardinian quality... When the men from the country look at these women, then it is Mind yourself, my lady...Man is going to be male Lord if he can. And woman is not going to give him too much of his own way either. So there you have it, the fine old martial split between the sexes. It is tonic and splendid, really... [1921:121]

Reaction to Tradition

In *Sea and Sardinia* there is an absent theme: history and art. This is a meaningful omission. We have seen already that Lawrence says that Sardinia has no history, and no doubt he thinks the same about its artistic heritage. This is obviously not true: history has left its mark for about five thousand years. The *nuraghi* (there are about seven thousand of these conic towers built between 3000 and 500 BC, spread all over Sardinia) are maybe the most striking example of integrated defence system in the Mediterranean Sea; Cagliari has the second most important Punic necropolis after Carthage and a big Roman amphitheatre as well as very fine examples of Spanish baroque, to mention only the most outstanding features. None of these treasures was even visited (the Lawrences must have known about them because they were travelling with a Baedeker at hand). The only monumental work of art he mentions, apart from a breath-taking square described as “a strange place called the Bastions”, is the Cathedral of Cagliari:

The Cathedral must have been a fine old pagan stone fortress once. Now it has come, as it were, through the mincing machine of the ages, and oozed out Baroque and sausagey, a bit like the horrible baldachins in St Peter’s at Rome. None the less it is homely and hole-and-cornery, with a rather ragged high mass trailing across the pavement towards the high altar, since it is almost sunset, and Epiphany. It feels as if one might squat in a corner and play marbles and eat bread and cheese and be at home: a comfortable old-time churchy feel. There is some striking filet lace on the various altar-cloths. And St Joseph must be a prime saint. He has an altar and a verse of invocation praying for the dying. [1921:106]

It is true that the cathedral was not in the fullness of its splendour – the beautiful baroque facade had been pulled down by an engineer who thought he would find the medieval facade underneath – but no doubt Lawrence’s description is rather thin for a 12th century cathedral literally packed with works of art, especially if you think that he devoted some three pages to the description of a fruit and vegetable market, and some two to the discussion of prices in Sardinian coaches.

Since it is quite unlikely that Lawrence did not know all this, the meaningful silence on history and art might be the consequence of a repulsion for art and antiquities

which was quite widespread in those years in Italy. This followed the publication of the *Manifesto of Futurism* in a French leading newspaper, *Le Figaro*, by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (who, incidentally, visited Cagliari only weeks after Lawrence) in 1909. The movement, which was to attract painters and authors, gained popularity thanks to its bombastic and aggressive propaganda. Here are a few extracts from Marinetti's startling Manifesto:

We want to glorify war – the only hygiene of the world – militarism, patriotism, actions to destroy libertarians, beautiful ideas for which one dies and the contempt for women.

We want to destroy museums, libraries and any sort of academies; fight militarism, feminism and any opportunistic or utilitarian cowardice.

[...] It is from Italy we launch to the world this Manifesto...because we want to free our country from the fetid gangrene of professors, archaeologists, know-alls and antiquarians.¹⁸⁷

Futurism was one of the first modernist movements in Europe, and maybe the most militant (Marinetti officially supported fascism) and influential (through the technical treatise which proposed artistic principles such as the abolition of adjectives, adverbs and syntax in literature, and the representation of movement and the interpenetration of spaces in visual arts. Spread by the 1912 Paris exhibition organized by Boccioni, they influenced the Paris cubists, Russian constructivists and British vorticists). Lawrence's prediction that a dictator would rule Italy in the next decade, an event he welcomes (Mussolini was to march on Rome and take power in October 1922, even earlier than he expected) shows a similarity with futurist ideas. As regards style, however, Lawrence's rich adjectivation and frequent *-isms* especially when dealing with contemporary political issues does not make one think of an acceptance of futurist suggestions, but rather of an influence of the most successful Italian master of diction and rhetoric of the time, both as a novelist and a campaigner: Gabriele D'Annunzio.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ *Manifesto del Futurismo*, articles 9, 10, 14 (my translation).

¹⁸⁸ Francesco Alziator, the Sardinian author and reviewer of *Sea and Sardinia* defined Lawrence "a kinsman", wrote that "we may find clear suggestions of the Italian prose of the time ... the exuberant adjectivation shows traces of D'Annunzio's style..." In *Il Convegno*, anno 8 n.1, Cagliari, 1955, p.3.

3.3.2.. *Elio Vittorini's Sardegna come un'infanzia*

Unknown Sardinia, being for centuries outside the circuit of Italian culture – it is one of a few Italian regions which was unaffected by the Italian Renaissance in the 15th and 16th century – was generally seen as not a part of Italy by 19th century travellers. Non-Sardinian Italian authors appear to share the views of 20th century European authors. Among them, the most original voice was certainly Elio Vittorini's, who wrote in 1932 a literary diary which was to be published in 1952 with the title *Sardegna come un'infanzia* (not translated into English, the title would be *Sardinia, like a Childhood*).

His journey to Sardinia was the consequence of casual circumstances. In 1931 Vittorini was a “leftist Fascist” who had become suspect in the eyes of the regime and had been barred from publishing in national newspapers by Mussolini's Press Office for a 1929 article in which he criticised the “provincialism” of Italian culture.¹⁸⁹ Thanks to friends in the *Solaria* circle he had found a job as a proof-reader at the Florence newspaper *La Nazione*, making ends meet with some difficulty. He was also teaching himself English, relying on Mr. Chiari, a typographer at *La Nazione*, as a peer tutor. He never succeeded in being able to speak English, but is credited (together with Cesare Pavese) with being the chief popularizer of English and American literature in Italy: he translated *Robison Crusoe* and works by D.H. Lawrence, E.A. Poe, W. Saroyan, W. Faulkner, J.C. Powys, J. Steinbeck, Caldwell, only to name some; he also enjoyed some international fame when the book which made him famous, *Conversazione in Sicilia* (1941) was translated into English by Ernest Hemingway as *Conversations in Sicily*.

On May 8th, 1932, a weekly literary journal, *L'Italia Letteraria*, proposed a contest for the best diary of a journey to Sardinia. The programme, for the modest price of 650 lire, included a coach tour and receptions with various authorities (especially fascist *Podestas*) that culminated in a party in Arborea (a town which at the time was

¹⁸⁹ For Vittorini's difficult relations with the Fascist authorities see Guido Bonsaver, *Fascist Censorship on Literature and the Case of Elio Vittorini*, in *Modern Italy*, no. 8, November 2003, 165-186.

called Mussolinia).¹⁹⁰ Elio Vittorini won the first *ex aequo* prize of 5,000 lire with Virgilio Lilli (the Sardinian Nobel laureate Grazia Deledda was in the jury), with a diary entitled *Quaderno sardo*, later published as *Nei Morlacchi. Viaggio in Sardegna* (1936) and then in 1952 with its final title.

The book is the best example of Vittorini's experimental style, and his artistic aim: revealing the truth of the essence of things, and at the same time enjoying them (the book opens with the sentence "I know what being happy in life is"). The result is a lyrical prose that melds together journey and memory, reality and dream, and uses a symbolic key in comparing travelling to death/rebirth and coming back to a reunion with a changed self.

D.H.Lawrence's influence

Vittorini had quite obviously read Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia* (he translated it into Italian with the title *Pagine di viaggio*, then *Mare e Sardegna*, which would first come out in 1938). Reminiscences of Lawrence's Sardinia are quite obvious, stylistically and in the use of images. In a way we can say that *Sea and Sardinia*, rather than Grazia Deledda's novels, shaped Vittorini's vision. The chapter on Cagliari, in particular, opens with a reference to Jerusalem which is the same metaphor D.H.Lawrence had used:

La città ci è apparsa sopra un monte metà roccia e metà case di roccia, Gerusalemme di Sardegna. Cagliari è una città assai diversa da qualsiasi altra. E' fredda e gialla. Fredda di pietra e d'un giallore calcareo africano.¹⁹¹

Also the references to Cagliari as a "cold" town – it is actually quite hot, especially at the time of the year when Vittorini visited it, i.e. early summer. The metaphor appears therefore a quotation, rather than a statement coming from experience. The reference is Lawrence's description, who visited the town in winter.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ For a full account of the planned journey see Manlio Brigaglia, in Lilli, Virgilio, *Viaggio in Sardegna* [1933] (Sassari:Carlo Delfino) 1999, pp. 19-32.

¹⁹¹ *Sardegna come un'infanzia* [1952] (Sassari:La Nuova Sardegna) 2004, p.77.

¹⁹² Here's D.H.L.'s passage: "And suddenly there is Cagliari: a naked town rising steep, steep, golden looking, piled naked to the sky from the plain at the head of the formless hollow bay. It is strange and rather wonderful, not a bit like Italy. The city piles up lofty and almost miniature, and makes me think of Jerusalem: without trees, without cover, rising rather bare and proud, remote as if back in history,

We may also consider also the following passages, referring to the mystery behind some of the impenetrable Sardinian faces. The following passage:

...è un vecchio dalla barba incolta, bianchissima, e col capo tra le mani medita. Tutti sono assorti, meditando. Ma su che cosa? [1952, 2004:62]

is clearly reminiscent, also structurally, of D.H. Lawrence's words:

One searches into the gloom for one second, while the glance lasts. But without being able to penetrate to the reality. It recedes, like some unknown creature, deeper into its lair. There is a creature, dark and potent. But what?

But in a way the book aims at rivalling *Sea and Sardinia*. The main theme is, as in Lawrence, the search for regeneration, for a primeval Eden in which to start a new life shaking off from himself the chains of culture. For this reason *Sardegna come un'infanzia* marks, like *Sea and Sardinia*, the discovery of an original geographical and cultural *topos* together with the discovery of a new self. The passage from a symbolic death to rebirth is described in the Cagliari chapter – not only the town where the bus journey ends and the sea journey starts, but a symbol of death for the old self and birth of a new one: after experiencing the sepulchral whiteness of the bare buildings in Cagliari and again on the ferry, “one takes contact with another possibility of wonderful life” [1952, 2004:87]

Memory and desire

Sardegna come un'infanzia starts with the recollection of a feeling of detachment from reality, in a language with a strong poetic flavour:

[...] in una sabbia sentirsi screpolare e crollare infinita esistenza di sabbia; o nel mondo popolato di galli levarsi prima dell'alba e nuotare, solo in tutta l'acqua del mondo, presso a una spiaggia rosa. E io non so cosa passa sul mio volto in quelle mie felicità, quando sento che si sta così bene a vivere [...] il mondo è deserto attorno e in quell'aria creata appena tutto è diverso da ieri, ignoto a me, e una nuova terra m'assale. [1952, 2004:7]

like a town in a monkish, illuminated missal" (ch.2).

Unknown Sardinia is an indefinite memory of something which was there before the author saw it, but he knew it, a sort of *déjà vu* in which memory and desire (the presage of a mythical nature of the land) mix: "...una vela passa a fianco del piroscifo [...] e ricorda secoli di esistenza primitiva; ciò mi dà il primo certo presagio del carattere di questa terra." [1952, 2004:13-14]; and it's the indefinite memory of a time before civilization – which rhymes in this case, also so to speak in meaning, with *colonization*: "Al di là di quanto è stato Spagna, al di là di quanto è stato colonia, ogni cosa nella vita diventa immemorabile e rimonta alla creazione della terra."

Vittorini's journey starts, ideally, where Lawrence's journey had ended: in Terranova (now Olbia). The first perceptions are light and blurred, like the perception of its inhabitants:

Ed ecco una fila di donne, cinque o sei, se ne va strisciando lungo i muri. In fila indiana, serrate in scialli neri, con le lunghe gonne toccano il suolo appena svoltano in una via traversa, come volpi in fuga. [1952, 2004:16]

People who, like *nuraghi*, can be only watched from the outside. Men "wear black, serious clothes, and a hooded mantle which makes their face even darker." [1952, 2004:28] A place where even elements of nature seem to be lonely:

...questa solitudine d'ogni cosa, d'ogni rupe che par chiusa in se stessa, meditando, e d'ogni albero e viandante che s'incontra, e per questa luce, e per quest'odore di mandrie in cammino, assai al di là nell'orizzonte..." [1952, 2004:33]

Death/rebirth

Vittorini's novel can be read as a symbolic death and rebirth.¹⁹³ This is suggested by the reference to archetypal images and by the itinerary itself. Unlike Lawrence's journey – from the south to the north, Vittorini's has two distinct phases: a land journey from north to south and a sea journey along the west coast to the north.

¹⁹³ The metaphor of the journey to Sardinia as death/rebirth appears to have been shared with Virgilio Lilli, who wrote in his diary: "La partenza da Civitavecchia per Terranova è una sorta di gioco di parole. Lo stesso orario, con quel principiare del *vecchio* e quel finire al *nuova*, assume il valore d'una allegoria. E' come se si morisse un poco, per rinascere", *Viaggio in Sardegna* [1933] (Sassari:Carlo Delfino) 1999, p. 36.

Cagliari, where the land journey ends and the sea journey starts, is a zero point of death of the ancient self and the birth of a regenerated one. As Domenico Nucera points out, the Italian word for ‘leave’ (It. *partire*, Fr. *partir*) is etymologically related both to the idea of separation (from Latin *PARS*, *PARTIS*, ‘part, fraction’) and to ‘giving birth’ (see p. 3). The idea is reinforced by the crisis which precedes a change which affects one’s identity, in Italian *travaglio*, both a period of psychological turmoil and the phase immediately before the act of giving birth, which is reflected in the English word ‘travel’, which shows the same origin of ‘travail’, and Sp. *trabajo*, Fr. *travail* (‘work’ but also a condition of uncertainty).¹⁹⁴

The experience of death and rebirth is hinted at through a symbolic whale. When the bus on which the party Vittorini was travelling with arrives at Cagliari, it is associated with a whale which has finally “emptied itself” of its passengers: “...sfiatava acqua come un capodoglio, per la stanchezza forse, caro torpedone, vuoto per sempre di noi.” [1952, 2004:77] Like in the biblical book of Jonah (2,1) (besides the most well-known of all Italian *Bildungsromane*, Carlo Collodi’s *Pinocchio*)¹⁹⁵ a permanence in the belly of a *great fish* induces new life. The town is initially associated with a sepulchral beauty, with images of death:

Sopra i bastioni pare una necropoli: e che dalle finestre debbano uscire corvi, in volo. I tetti sono bianchi, di creta secca. Da qualche muro spunta il ciuffo nerastro, bruciacchiato, d’un palmizio. Ma non è Africa.
E’ ancora più in là dell’Africa, in un continente ulteriore, dove sia città essa sola. Attorno la terra sfuma in nulla; logora di stagni e saline che sembrano spazi vuoti, spazi puri. E il mare, al di là dal cerchio delle gettate, anche lui è di nulla; d’una bianchezza di mare morto. [1952, 2004:78]

¹⁹⁴ “Le sovrapposizioni tra *travel/travaglio* e *partire/partorire* creano paradossi linguistici, ma in realtà costituiscono un nucleo concettuale intorno al quale si organizza l’esperienza del viaggio: che è quella della *ri-nascita* in una forma diversa, data dall’esperienza dell’altrove e dall’incontro con l’altro”, Nucera, Domenico, *I viaggi e la letteratura*, in Gnisci et al., *Letteratura comparata* (Milano: Bruno Mondadori) 2002, p. 131.

¹⁹⁵ Puppet Pinocchio—at the end of an itinerary in which he experiences the consequences of not being plain and honest- starts a new life after being transformed into an ass. He is also thrown in the sea when he is believed to be dead and therefore useless, is ingested by a great shark, he meets his old father in its belly, and finally is vomited with him in a beach, no longer a puppet but finally a wise boy.

But the vision of stillness, obviously associated to death, contrasts with a burst of vitality, like a mad dance:

...uscendo dall'albergo sull'or di notte mentre s'accendono i lumi, mi trovo dentro a una folla singolarmente vivace, in un brulichio di folla, che non è di gente che cammina e s'incontra, come dovunque, ma quasi di gente che rotèi intorno a se stessa. [1952, 2004:78]

Tutte le strade che risalgo, verso gli sfavillanti bastioni della città alta, brulicano allo stesso modo del lungomare; con più festa anzi... [1952, 2004:79]

Also, the bastion esplanade is "thick with a multicoloured crowd" which "moves with the usual vermicular movement, without a direction, nervous, irrational, exclamatory; almost childish" [1952, 2004:79]

And when the protagonist yields to the need to leave, the sense of having turned over, of having started a new life is apparent:

...siamo a bordo e non so cosa è più forte in me, la gioia d'essere a bordo, o il rimpianto di lasciare Cagliari [...] Ho l'impressione che un anno e un continente siano passati via dall'approdo a Terranova, e una possibilità di vita stia per cadere, forse di una meravigliosa vita, senza che io abbia tentato di farla mia [...] Per me comincia un'altra realtà, un'altra maniera e un'altra gioia di esistere; da domani un'altra Sardegna. [1952, 2004:85]

And new life leads to a savage happiness, after a childish swimming to a beach eluding the advice of the ferry crew, of moments of intimate friendship and close contact with nature, and the impression that those moments will never end:

Noi siamo rimasti in due, ci siamo avvolti dentro coltri azzurre e sdraiati sul legno del ponte ci lasciamo spruzzare dalle ondate, aspettando che venga buio. Poche volte nella mia vita sono stato così felice. Così dentro a una realtà che dura. Troppo vera; un di più che non mi lascia pensare che finirà. [...] Davvero credo che non finirà, che andremo all'infinito con questa lentezza, con questa calma verità di vita, a toccare tutti i porti e le isole della terra. [1952, 2004:98]

Contempt for civilization; Nature source of joy

A desire for drinking life directly from its spring leads to the refusal both of tradition and of any form of organized society. Another of Lawrence's themes, the indifference towards culture, is reflected in this reference to *nuraghi*:

...abbiamo visitato il nuraghe Lose. Dicono: il più antico meglio conservato di tutta la Sardegna. Ma io non lo descriverò. Tutti i nuraghi che ho visto, per me non hanno interesse interno. Piuttosto presenze misteriose, nella campagna, ho sentito il loro fascino... [1952, 2004:68]

It is also echoed in Vittorini's intolerance of the stale taste of official commemorations at the tomb of the hero of the Italian independence wars, Giuseppe Garibaldi:

...davvero non interessa la tomba di granito, e stona, direi, come mi ripugna il museo di boccettine, capelli, e autografi che i figli e i nipoti hanno organizzato. C'è una decrepita bionda a far gli onori di casa e delle signorine tipo partita di beneficenza. Al diavolo! Ma c'è anche un intenso odore di basilico, nella terra bagnata, e un filo di fumo nell'aria su da un comignolo, e voci di bimbi all'agguato e buon odore d'aragosta che bolle. [1952, 2004:107]

The contrast between the stale taste of official commemorations and Nature is rather obvious: the Garibaldi relics are unbearable, the smell of Nature awakes the senses. As is often to be found in Vittorini, the joy Nature gives is not mediated by the intellect, but is purely sensuous, instinctive and irrational: *the doors of perception* coincide absolutely with the five senses, which allow the fullest experience of life: perceive the ultimate truth of Nature and at the same time enjoy it. Here are some examples:

Smell:

Nell'aria ce n'è l'odore: di sole. Di fuoco puro, privo d'ogni acredine di combustibile. E di pietra secca. Ma di brughiera anche. E di spoglie di serpi. Odore di Sardegna... [1952, 2004:19]

Hearing:

le donne [...] strepitano con uno strepito da bambine, senza risa [...] Hanno tremanti voci, anche se gridano, d'un tono mite e denso, come d'olio, e scorrono

una sull'altra. Voci cantanti. Da fanciulle di sedici anni; le vecchie pure. [1952, 2004:57-58]

Touch:

[Due vegliardi] nell'oscurità che li avvolge non battono palpebra. Approvano con un bisbiglio la serva che offre in giro. Sono di nuvola. E con un passo di nuvola la serva cala su di me, a porgermi qualcosa, le mani. [1952, 2004:65]

The awakening of the senses leads to a childish, almost animal happiness, like the feeling after plunging from a boat and swimming:

Ho voglia di tuffarmi. Né appena l'ho detto che altri corrono a spogliarsi. In calzoncini ci buttiamo nell'acqua di menta azzurra. Gelida. [...] E grondando risaliamo ad asciugarci, al sole del ponte, ridendo di nulla, arrampicandoci anche, su per le gomene, con una gioia tutta di gambe e di braccia: da scimmie. [1936, 2004:90]

Even the symbol of the most ancient sign of the cultural heritage, the *nuraghi*, are of any interest:

...abbiamo visitato il nuraghe Lose. Dicono: il più antico meglio conservato di tutta la Sardegna. Ma io non lo descriverò. Tutti i nuraghi che ho visto, per me non hanno interesse interno. Piuttosto presenze misteriose, nella campagna, ho sentito il loro fascino... [1952, 2004:68]

Nobility of the poor

The dislike of society and "civilized" human relations leads to an idealized view of the natural happiness of people. This is not exactly Rousseau's image of the good savage, or the essential happiness of men who live following the laws of Nature, but a sort of kingly state, the inebriating feeling of freedom, of a dominant position in the universe regardless of the social status, as the effects of social hierarchy are reduced to a minimum (D.H.Lawrence, too, had been surprised that the servants sat at the same table of masters in public bars) :

...un doganiere vestito di verde legge beato in un libro molto vecchio, qualche libro di viaggi, allungandosi su un cumulo di sacchi. -E' incantato dalla verità del suo far nulla [...] godendosi la sua meravigliosa eternità. Senz'altro è il re del luogo. E riesco a capire perché la Sardegna è stata per lungo tempo la terra dove

un qualunque patrizio pisano o genovese poteva venire a farsi un regno e chiamarsi re. [...] Questo doganiere è re su questa spiaggia; chi potrebbe metterlo in dubbio? [1952, 2004: 96-7]

Back to reality

The ferry which takes the party home seals the end of a dream. Like Lawrence, who is attracted by the news of the *Corriere della Sera*, Vittorini describes the end of the magic with the metaphor of a bunch of school boys coming back home after a trip: “...everyone has lost something; one has had a sprained wrist, another has broken his belt, a third complains about a temperature and sneezes” [p.107]. The dream has vanished, like childhood: “...I understand that Sardinia is finished for me, I will never seize it again, it is lost forever in the time of my existence. Like a childhood. And it is now part of my childhood, of that nothingness, of that tale.” [1952, 2004:109]

3.3.3. *Ernst Jünger's Am Sarazenturm*

Ernst Jünger's early life¹⁹⁶ was characterized by a need of, and escape to, freedom, probably the consequence the various boarding schools he attended, whose stuffy discipline contributed greatly to his desire for autonomy and escape. Nature seems to have represented two things: the thrill and self-assertion involved in the hunt, and the experience of a vital space unrestricted by the constraints of contemporary society.

¹⁹⁶ Born in Heidelberg on 29th March 1895, the son of Dr. phil Ernst Georg Jünger and Lily (Karoline). His father made sufficient money for the family to move to Rehburg in the Lower Saxon countryside in 1907. As a child, Ernst was fascinated by nature: his passion for entomology started at this time, encouraged by his father. His joining the *Wunstorf Wandervögel* in 1911 with one of his brothers, the poet and writer to be Friedrich Georg, was the act of rebellion of a disaffected middle class youth. The next stage – which sounds consistent with the thoughts he expressed in *Am Sarazenturm* – would be to leave home against his father's will to go to Africa. Joining the French Foreign Legion, in 1913, was quite opportunistic. Jünger had been developing a passionate interest for the 'Dark Continent', fuelled by Stanley's accounts of his travels in Africa. Jünger's search for a more vital, more authentic Other in both literature and Nature led him to focus on the vitality of Africa, where, he envisaged, he would be able to live a more exciting and dynamic life, with much greater potential for self-fulfillment. Jünger abandoned Germany for the primitivist Other of his imagination. The semi-autobiographical novel *Afrikanische Spiele* (1936) relates how he left Germany for Verdun, enlisted in the French Foreign Legion, was sent to Algeria, tried in two unsuccessful attempts to make his way to central Africa's 'vital heart' before his father managed to secure his return via the offices of the *Auswärtiges Amt*. On his return, Ernst made a pact with his father whereby he would complete his *Abitur* before participating in a properly organized expedition to Kilimanjaro. The coming of the First World War in August 1914 provided the opportunity for self-realisation, through a new escape: it is hardly surprising that Jünger volunteered as soon as the Kaiser ordered the mobilization: „Ich faßte wie Hunderttausende in dieser Stunde den Entschluß, mich als Freiwilliger zu beteiligen.“ (*Kriegsausbruch 1914* [1934] p. 542).

Am Sarazenturm preserves the original form of the author's travel notebook, in which he carefully entered his observations from May 6th to June 2nd, 1954, that is from the day he took the ferry from Civitavecchia to the day he was back in Lugano. Like *Sea and Sardinia* and *Sardegna come un'infanzia*, the description of the Sardinian experience is framed – maybe to stress the distance from the continent – in a sort of introduction and a conclusion: the opening and closing chapters show a presence of the sea, which gives the sense of distance, not only physical but also cultural, from the main land.

An important difference between Jünger's journey, compared to Lawrence's and Vittorini's, is that the German's is not a journey *through* Sardinia, but a journey *to* a small village in Sardinia and a residential holiday in a guest house, in a small village. *Am Sarazenturm* – as the title preposition hints at – is an experience based on the close examination of a portion of the land to disclose the essence of it. *Am Sarazenturm* is not the description of a longitudinal crossing of the Island (Lawrence's) or a crossing and circumnavigation (Vittorini's): in Jünger there is not an itinerary, but only short movements to a part of the village to another, and a few wanderings in the immediate neighbouring area.

The village name (Villasimius) is changed into 'Illador' probably to make the experience more universal. As Jünger's aim does not seem to understand Sardinia, but rather to capture the uniqueness of the spirit of the place, to see how it contributes to a universal *Geistesgeschichte*. Jünger's account and speculation aim to drive us out from history, rather than take us inside it.

Modernity vs archaic

Jünger was quite obviously trying to be as far as he could from the "civilized" world, and chose to stay in one place in the most desolate part of Sardinia. In concentrating on one place he can see Sardinia through a magnifying glass, watching all aspects which caught his curiosity (anthropological, botanical, zoological, linguistic, social, etc.). The period he stayed at Illador was indeed crucial, as the town still retained its archaic nature, but progress was going to take over: electrical lighting and running

water were about to be introduced, replacing candle light and water jugs carried by women from fountains or wells.

The contrast between old and new is given through the introduction of characters in a book which is halfway between a journal and a philosophical essay. The inn-keepers where Jünger stayed as a boarder (Signor Carlino and Signora Bonaria) are the link between two different worlds: one populated by members of the traditional, archaic society (shepherds, servant boys, stonebreakers who make a living by smashing granite, a shoemaker) and the new professions of the new world (the workers charged with bringing electricity to Illador, a customs officer, scuba divers). There were no cars, people used horses or donkeys (sometimes bicycles) for short distances. Women went to take water at fountains and brought it back, walking with jugs on a rolled cloth on their head. But it is the images of a world of which he predicts the disappearance:

Nun kam die Serva mit dem Wasser zurück. Sie trug den rotbraunen Krug auf dem Kopfe, so daß er fast an die Füllung der Türe stieß. Diese Art, Lasten zu tragen, hat etwas Freies und Majestätisches; sie hebt wie eine Maskierung das Individuum über sich hinaus. [...] Auch dieser Anblick wird mit der Zahl der Anschlüsse, in diesem Falle der Wasserhähne, seltener. In Orten, wo entfernte Brunnen aufzusuchen sind, versammeln sich noch immer die Mädchen abends zum Wasserholen [...] Darunter pflegen eine oder zwei das Polster so zu tragen, daß der Krug ein wenig schräg steht: das sind die Übermütigen. [1955:128-9]

Society is described as being on the verge of progress, by means of simple observations. Signor Rossi, a neighbour, has a clever system for watering his orchard: an ass walks around a well, setting a wheel in motion, with jugs which are filled as they are dipped into the water, and emptied in the orchard furrows. A sleepy servant boy has the task of kicking the ass when it stops walking. The man dreams of buying an electric pump: the following year, when electricity has been brought to the village. But Jünger does not welcome this; it will mean to sparing the ass its toil – but only to be made into salami.

Jünger is fascinated by those aspects of life which have survived since the most ancient Mediterranean civilizations, such as the *lardiri* (actually *ladiri*) bricks of clay and straw which were covered with a layer of plaster or stucco as his friend Eckhard

Unger had described in the great work *Babylon* (1931); but also the persistence of two fundamental concepts: *Familie und Eigentum*, family and property, which find a synthesis in the landowner, who has a network of poorer relatives who help him keep and increase the land. This shows how the most ancient societies were organized. The element of patriarchalism is very strong, and the women appear impersonal and absent in society:

Man ist da unter Labans Töchtern, im alten Gesetz. Nur die ganz alten machen eine Ausnahme, erwidern das Lächeln, beantworten den Gruß. Sie haben den Bann gebrochen, sind die Sybillen, die Urahen. [1955:104]

If there is a difference between Rousseau and Jünger as regards the view of Man, it is that Jünger thinks that man in Nature is no less vicious than in cities, and children are not better than adults: but certainly both adults and children are happier in Nature: “Der Mensch ist ein Wesen, das von Natur aus lacht und singt und das Glück im Dasein genießen kann, wie die Pflanze die Sonne genießt. In Maße, in dem das Leben künstlich, die Nahrung verfälscht wird und die Sitten verflachen, verbreitet sich die Traurigkeit.“ [1955:106] Joy in Nature is spontaneous; and this is why the archaic life, closer to Nature, is linked to poetry and in particular to singing, the most spontaneous of the representations of life. But when he looks at the progress of modernity, pessimism seems to be prevalent, as progress is seen as a destroyer of life:

Wegen unserer Wissenschaft, die mörderische Züge trägt. Hierher gehört die Massenschlachtung aller großen, schönen und edlen Tiere in unserer Zeit. Den Gipfel dieser Greuel stellt die unbarmherzige Verfolgung der Wale mit Flugzeugen, Radarstrahlen, und schwimmenden Fabriken dar. [1955:81]

Jünger thinks that the traditional, archaic world will be buried by technological advancements (even though his pessimistic prophecy seems to contrast with the optimistic one in 1955:40, see *infra*):

Die Analphabeten werden verschwinden, die Nahrung wird reichlicher, die Kleidung besser werden, aber zugleich wird die Unzufriedenheit wachsen und der Gesang verstummen, wie er jetzt von den Mähern und Fischern herauf zur Düne bringt. [1955:135]

The ultimate mystery of Nature

The general feeling at arriving in Sardinia is given in the beginning: like in Lawrence and Vittorini, the feeling of a close, privileged relation with Nature caught in its awakening:

Schön ist bei solcher Südfahrt, wie auch im Innern der Winter schwindet und sich die Welt erneut. [1955:9]

But the observation of Nature yields much more, as behind any aspect which catches his eye Jünger sees the essence, the disclosure of the mysterious laws which rule life. Vittorini's description of nature is synthetical, as it catches with a single look the essential meaning of it. Jünger's is rather analytical, picking one by one the single species which make the common Sardinian bush, and observes it closely as if he kept in the palm of his hand: the thorny opuntia, the twisted convolvulus, the delicate aloe; and also the shrubby mugwort, the wild fennel, the blue-grey rue: the more he watches, the more he finds:

Der Strand liegt eine halbe Stunde weit. Wenn man Pflanzen und Tiere betrachtet, dauert's länger und wird kurzweiliger. Auf den Feldern ist das Getreide schon gelb; das Kraut der dicken Bohnen ist verdorrt. Sie sind durch hohe Opuntienhecken eingeschlossen, die das Weidevieh besser abhalten als jeder Zaun. [...] Man könnte den Tag versäumen vor den grelldunklen Wänden und hätte doch die Bilder nicht erschöpft. [1955:19-20]

But his is only the beginning of the observation; because the botanist's eye is only a way to approach, not to understand. Jünger's intellectual eye goes farther: just as history is only a pretext to consider what was before history started, the contemplation of Nature fosters the vision of the mystery behind the laws that rule it:

Den schweren Pflanzen haftet auch Vorweltstimmung an. [...] Das Vorweltliche der Gruppe verbirgt sich auch in Chemismus, im Wabennetz der Formeln, in Drogen, die über die meßbare Zeit hinausführen, in Einsamkeiten jenseits des Berges Kaf. [1955:21]

The reference to the mountain of Kaf – which marks the outer space in the *Tales of the Thousand and one Nights* - pushes the imagination not only outside history, but

to a realm where science is not separated from myth and poetry. It is a view of Nature as it was perceived before its laws were investigated, the mystery guessed but not explained: the unachievable meaning of life which can only be expressed by poetry, or a *Lied*. The *Schicksalslied* echoing Hölderlin's *Hyperions Schicksalslied* which Brahms set to music:

...einmal ritt ein Hirt vorüber, der ein Gewehr auf der Schulter trug. Sardische Erde, rot, bitter, männlich, mit einem vielsternigen Teppich überwebt, seit fernsten Zeiten in jedem Frühling unvermindert blühend, uralte Wiege – ich fühlte, wie sie leise im Meere schaukelte. Inseln sind Heimat im tieferen Sinne, letzte irdische Sitze, bevor der kosmische Ausflug beginnt. Die Sprache wird zu Ihnen nicht gerecht, eher ein Schicksalslied, das auf die See herüberklingt. [1955:124]

Thus, understanding the essence of Nature is understanding the essence of poetry, and he who knows the secret song of Nature is the shepherd:

Wie der Hirt in der Ferne sang und die Herde vorbeizog: das ist wirkliche, bleibende Macht, und der Hirt wird die Herde einst auch über unsere Städte dahintreiben. [1955:40]

The mystery of the ultimate meaning of Nature cannot be understood, but only perceived, and hinted at by using powerful archetypal symbols. These are basically two: the falcon and the serpent.

It is by the Saracen tower that Jünger sees the falcon: the apparition opens a crack in Nature, from which a glance can be cast to the unattainable mystery of being:

Er [Angelo] kletterte hinauf und rief "falco" [...] dahinten stand das zierlich-stolze Falkenweibchen an die Wand gedrückt. Zuweilen lugen wir, wie hier durch diese Scharte, in die Werkstatt des Universums und ihre Bildungen. [...] Wie Macht ein Schlüssel, so ist Glück ein Aufzuschließendes, ein Schatz [...] Das eben bestätigt die Erscheinung eines solchen Tieres; wir fühlen: es ist nicht nur herrlich, er muß auch glücklich sein. [...] Daher trägt es die Zeichen dieses Standes; es ist schön, stark und liebeskräftig wie am ersten Tag. Über die Hieroglyphe dieser Landschaft steht es als einer der Punkte, die auf ihr Geheimnis hinweisen. [1955:80-81]

But once the meaning of Nature is perceived, it wraps so to speak in itself, becomes ambiguous and shifty: the reference to reality as *ein Abgeteiltes* which needs

otherness (*ein Anderes*) to yield its meaning hints at double-faced Janus, the god who opened the doors of the year (January is its month), personification of the ambiguity of reality. But the observer is satisfied:

Da ahnt der Geist für eine winzige Sekunde die ideale Werkstatt, die Heimat der Bilder, den Schöpfungsgrund. Dort brennt ein Feuer, das nie verglüht. [1955:82]

History

A closer look at the essence of Nature also reveals the meaning of History: understanding Nature is also understanding history because it springs from Nature, not from man.

Das rührt ein Thema an, mit dem ich mich in der letzten Zeit nicht selten beschäftige: den elementaren Einschluß in das historische Gewebe und seine musterbildende Kraft. Wir sind ja stets umringt, umschlossen von unsichtbaren Fäden und Fadenbahnen, die wir ebenso wenig in ihrem Sinn und ihrer Gefahr erkennen. [1955:54]

The bare day shelter of a shepherd reveals the very roots of civilization, the oldest structures which judge man:

Auf den Boden dieser halboffenen Höhlung hatte der Hirte sein Lager eingerichtet, eine Schicht von Binsen, die kaum den nackten Stein verbarg. [...] Ich stand lange davor, mit Ehrfurcht, denn es war die älteste Wohnung, die ich jemals gesehen hatte, und älter kann keine sein. Sie war längst vor den Steinzeithöhlen und Pyramiden, vor Ilions Mauern und Agamennons Palast. Sie war, ehe an die Nuraghen und Großsteinbauten gedacht wurde. [...] Zuweilen wird der Mensch in Schicksalszwange aus den Palästen der Geschichte vor diese seine erste Wohnung geführt und gefragt, ob er sie wiedererkennt, ob er ihrer noch gewachsen, ob er ihrer noch würdig ist. Hier wird er gerichtet und ausgerichtet vom Unveränderlichen, das der Geschichte zugrunde liegt. [1955:74-75]

Like Nature, from which it springs, history too is regulated by mysterious, eternal laws – fundamentally natural – which are stronger than man's will, and are more commanding. Eternity, like Nature, is a gentle mother which heals what history may damage:

Nicht, daß nicht überall die Spuren von Kämpfen eingezeichnet wären, aber man spürt die heilende, narbenbildende Kraft. Ein stiller Glanz zieht über den Ruinen auf. Wir sollten uns zuweilen Rechenschaft darüber geben, wie aus dem Nacheinander ein Nebeneinander wird. Geschichte wird zu Geschichtem. Die zeitliche Folge wird zum räumlichen Bild. Im Plan der Städte und Landgemeinden summieren sich Epochen, die nun im Augenblick sich offenbaren, als Konstellation, als Webmuster. [1955:147]

If the falcon is the figure which can reveal the mystery of Nature – there again simply showing, not explaining its undecipherable ambiguity – the snake is even more powerful, being a synthesis of life and death, and neither:

Daß man der Schlange gegenüber nicht neutral bleiben kann, ist ein Zeichen tiefgründender Macht. [...] Daß Furcht, Bewunderung, Abscheu, Zauberbann sich durchdringen, ist Wirkung des geoffenbarten Geheimnisses. Ist es der Tod, „la Toute-Puissance du N’ant“, wie Valery es nennt [...]? Ist es das Leben [...]? Oder ist es ein Drittes, Mächtigeres, von dem die beiden Kräfte wie Licht und Schatten, wie positiver und negativer Strom sich abspalten? Die Frage bleibt für uns im Subjektiven. [1955:122]

Answering these questions would mean receding in time, overcoming history and subjectivity, which appears beyond man’s possibilities. If the hawk hints at the mystery of life by the *coincidentia oppositorum* it represents by its simple being, the snake adds the perspective of time, the ring joining together Nature and History. The questions it raises cannot be eluded and continue to hover eternally, perceivable but unapproachable:

Das bleiben Perspektiven; sie ändern sich mit den Räumen, den Kulturen, den Zeitaltern. Zur Grundmacht dringen wir nicht vor. Aber die Grundmächte erscheinen, etwa in der Meditation oder der Ekstase, im Maße, in dem die Zeitmächte zurücktreten. So ist es auch mit der Schlange; sie ruht unter der Schwelle der Zeitalter. [1955:123]

Conclusions

The short history of travel writing on Sardinia we outlined shows that the role travel writers played in the shaping of the identity of the island goes far beyond what one might assume. Travel writing – i.e. the travel books selected according to the criteria we listed and the time range we pointed out in our introduction – cannot be reduced to a mere aim to satisfy a desire for exoticism, but performs the function of understanding the essence of the visited place, contributing to shape its identity.

We restricted our inquiry to the island of Sardinia for two main reasons: i) in the period we considered, it was isolated not only geographically but also culturally, and was not a conventional destination for travellers along the Grand Tour routes; ii) up to the first half of the twentieth century the island had a reputation for being an *unknown* or *forgotten* land.

As regards time, the choice was to concentrate between the second half of the eighteenth century (when travelling for leisure was spreading through the middle classes) and the first half of the twentieth century. The *ante quem non* date was 1780, when Fuos's *Nachrichten aus Sardinien* was published in Leipzig. The *post quem non* date was 1955, when Jünger's *Am Sarazenturm* was published and Claude Lévi-Strauss claimed (*Tristes Tropiques*) that as there were no unknown places left on earth, travel had died. We assumed that the coming of post-industrial society, mass tourism, faster means of transport and the standardizing effect of globalization have led to the end of the travel era, or at least to a totally new attitude towards travel, that can be defined as post-modern.

The travel books on Sardinia appear to have a set of common features. Firstly, the presentation of the island as *unknown*. The example of Sardinia is telltale in this respect: although the island had been very well known to Mediterranean sea travellers since the dawn of history (documentary evidence shows that the island has been on the map since three thousand years b.C.) it was commonly defined,

in the rest of Europe, as an *unknown* or *forgotten* land till the first quarter of the twentieth century. Secondly (and consequently) the announcement of its *discovery*. Of course, that which is unknown needs to be discovered. Most European travellers refer to a sense of discovering Sardinia, which is not only the result of personal experience. Discovery provides authors with a justification for publishing a travel book, i.e. spreading the knowledge about a *terra incognita* to the general reading public. Thirdly, the *invention* of a credible image of the island, through the intermediate steps of trying to understand its essence and proposing a new identity. The reputation of Sardinia as an unknown land was so deeply rooted in industrialized Europe that the motivations of the Swedish Academy for awarding the Nobel price for literature to Grazia Deledda refer to the fact that she had discovered her native country, which sounds like a paradox.

Actually, the fact that Sardinia and its civilization had been forgotten is less than surprising. As early as Phoenician, Greek and Roman times at least, and through the middle ages, the island offered secure harbours along the Mediterranean trade routes. But the shift of the main trade routes from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic – after the discovery of the Americas and through the sixteenth and seventeenth century, besides the tea trade routes to India and the east in the eighteenth century – resulted in the marginalization and oblivion of the island in industrialized Europe.

The European discovery of Sardinia was chiefly carried out in the nineteenth century, and it is mainly due to British, French, German and Italian travelling authors. More specifically, the cities in which most travel books were published are London, Paris, Leipzig and Turin. It appears that there are distinctive features in the books published in each country which reflect the author's national character, or even themes which were on the political agenda at that time. The British seem to focus on utilitarian purposes, i.e. on the possibility of establishing trade links with the island and exploit its position for military purposes; the French appear to insist on exploring the possibility of developing political relations and maybe annex the island to France; the Germans on philological and

archaeological studies; the Italians on the necessity of acquiring knowledge for geographical and administrative needs.

The invention of Sardinia - that is the effort of capturing, as it were, the essential significance of its history and culture, or, as we put it, of inventing an identity and finding a collocation which was coherent with industrial Europe - was anticipated by Vuiller's *Les îles oubliées* (1897) and achieved by D.H.Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia* (1921), Vittorini's *Sardegna come un'infanzia* (1936, 1952) and Junger's *Am Sarazenturm* (1955).

In 1921, when D.H. Lawrence wrote that Sardinia had “no history, no date, no race, no offering” he was drawing from a consolidated image of the island as an unknown land rather than on its millenary history. But Grazia Deledda challenged this idea by counter pointing the codes elaborated in the island – mainly the language code, the common law and the rustic life and passions – to the “civilized” way of life of industrialized European societies. After the first quarter of the twentieth century Sardinia could no longer be described as an unknown land; it had become virtually impossible for anyone who wrote about Sardinia (including Vittorini and Jünger) to ignore Deledda’s views on the island.

The reputation of Sardinia of being, even after Deledda, maybe not an unknown land, but still a *mysterious* place, appears to be the result of the complex interaction of two opposed views: the European view of Sardinia as a *terra incognita* and Deledda’s view of the island as the seat of a pre-industrial civilization.

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