

Connected Philology: Introduction

The above print originates from a Chinese encyclopaedia of 1609 (Widmaier 2006a, 727). It is but one iteration of a very influential ensemble of symbols from early China: it depicts the hexagrams (*gua* 卦) used in the *Changes* (*Yi* 易) tradition, one of the five so-called “Confucian” classics.¹ Situated at the core of this canon is the *Classic of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經), which soon came to be accompanied by an abundance of other writings, including different types of supplements and commentaries. Originally a divination manual, the *Classic of Changes* was imbued with philosophical and metaphysical ideas. The hexagrams, consisting of changing combinations of broken and unbroken lines, illustrated the permutating constellations of the forces of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽.² They were used to tell the future by observing changes in these constellations. Numerology played an important role in this, as divination was carried out by counting yarrow (milfoil) stalks. Each hexagram was associated with a Chinese character describing an image (*xiang* 象), which was then explained in the *Classic of Changes* and its scriptural tradition. Symbols and written characters were thus combined to decipher the patterns of the universe and find guidance in the regularities of change that the hexagrams encoded. In this print, the sixty-four hexagrams are arranged in two ways and in varying sequence: once in a circle and, in its centre, as a square.³ This is the arrangement introduced by the scholar Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011–1077), invoking the mythical figure of Fu Xi 伏羲 as its purported inventor (Needham 1956, 341–342). His system posited the duality of *yin* and *yang* as encoding a binary sequence of the hexagrams.

The hexagrams and the Chinese characters denoting them were emblematic of textual wisdom⁴ that, despite (or precisely because of) its enigma, had had a pervasive cultural impact on Chinese mantic, cosmological, and philosophical thought long before the arrival of foreign observers. Through missionaries studying Chinese culture, (philologically curated) traditional wisdom first entered the awareness of European intellectuals. One of them, the French Jesuit Joachim Bouvet (1656–1730),⁵ attached this particular reproduction of the *Changes* hexagrams to a letter sent to the famous

1 For an introduction to the textual history of the *Changes* classic (*Yijing* 易經 or *Zhouyi* 周易), see Shaughnessy (1993). The term “Confucian” is considered misleading for early Chinese intellectual history, see Nylan (2001, 2–3).

2 For an introduction to the philosophical significance of the *Classic of Changes*, see Smith (2008).

3 This may echo the traditional Chinese idea that Heaven is round, and the earth is square.

4 For the concept of textual wisdom, see Assmann (1991).

5 For an introduction to the life and work of Joachim Bouvet, see von Collani (1985). For the influence of the Jesuits on the development of modern Sinology, see Mungello (1985).

German polymath Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) in November 1701.⁶ The hexagram constellations would greatly inspire the latter's binary arithmetic. In his letter, Bouvet connects the hexagrams with Leibniz's binary infinitesimal calculus⁷ and interprets these two as compatible mathematical doctrines that had simply arisen independently of each other (Bouvet to Leibniz on 4 November 1701, 334–338).

Leibniz had an avid interest in Chinese thought:⁸ he sought to utilise Chinese historical knowledge to evaluate the accuracy of the Greek Septuagint and the Hebrew Torah for the purpose of composing a Christian universal history. The comparison with Chinese traditional wisdom promised to help solve any discrepancies between the two (Leibniz to Bouvet on 12 December 1697, 138–144). Furthermore, Leibniz was motivated by the objective of cultivating a universal language through the use of typological comparisons of languages. This enterprise was driven by the goal to “depict not the word but the thoughts” (“peindre non pas la parole mais les pensees,” Leibniz to Bouvet on 15 February 1701, 316).⁹ In his letter, Bouvet endeavours to demonstrate the applicability of Leibniz's methodology of formulating a universal “language of thought” through a philological examination of a few Chinese characters, demonstrating how some of them are composed and how they were thought to have developed in the Chinese textual tradition (Bouvet to Leibniz on 4 November 1701, 338–356).¹⁰ For instance, he explains the etymology of the character *tian* 天 [Heaven] as consisting of *yi* 一 [unity] and *da* 大 [great], concluding that this related to “the lord of

6 The correspondence between Leibniz and Bouvet consists of a total of nine letters exchanged between 1697 and 1703. The starting point is Bouvet's reading of Leibniz's *Novissima Sinica* (Bouvet to Leibniz on 18 October 1697; cf. n. 8). After Bouvet had failed to receive one letter from Leibniz (Leibniz to Bouvet on 18 May 1703), the correspondence between the two scholars ceased (Widmaier 2006a, 733), possibly because Leibniz lost interest in hexagrams (Widmaier 2006b, civ). For a more detailed study of the exchange, see von Collani (2007).

7 Leibniz had framed his infinitesimal calculus to Bouvet as proof of the existence of the Christian God, since the binary representation of the progressive powers could be represented as divine unity (1) and nothingness (0); for Leibniz, it was evident that all phenomena are derived from these two principles (Leibniz to Bouvet on 15 February 1701, 304–312). To him, this demonstrated the pervasive influence that the notion of proselytising in China had on the correspondence as a whole. As early as 1698, Bouvet was convinced that proselytising could be facilitated via the parallel between “ancient Chinese philosophy” and Christian theology; he communicated this strategy to Leibniz (Bouvet to Leibniz on 28 February 1698, 170–172).

8 Leibniz wrote two treatises concerning China and its Philosophy (*Novissima Sinica*, 1697, and the *Discours sur la théologie naturelle des Chinois*, 1716), which demonstrate his deep and sustained interest in China. For Leibniz's contact with ideas of Confucianism, see Mungello (1977). For an introduction to Leibniz's engagement with China, see Perkins (2004).

9 For Leibniz's approaches to develop a universal language, see Strasser (1988, 234–246) and Blanke (1996).

10 In order to achieve this objective, Bouvet had previously provided an interlinear version of the *Lord's Prayer* in Manchurian, accompanied by a transliteration and a Latin translation (Bouvet to Leibniz on 28 February 1698, 172–175) in response to repeated requests by Leibniz (see Leibniz to Bouvet on 12 December 1697, 148; and Leibniz to Bouvet on 30 January 1698).

Heaven” (“Seigneur du ciel”), which to him appears compatible with Christian religion.

Regardless of whether their assumptions held true for Chinese culture, it is evident that both scholars sought to integrate Chinese thought into their world view. What is peculiar is their use of philological means to accomplish this. Written in French, Bouvet’s letter to Leibniz partially explained the role of hexagrams in the *Changes* tradition; for this purpose, Bouvet added the Greek words ἀνω [upwards] and κάτω [downwards] into the print to indicate the top and the bottom of the figure. Leibniz then numbered the matching hexagrams in the circle and the square and commented in Latin that the characters with a higher numerical value had been arranged closer to the margin of the circle.¹¹ It is evident that the discourse in the letters sought to reconcile the interlocutors’ own textual culture with what they found in the *Classic*, and vice versa.

The correspondence between Bouvet and Leibniz, as epitomised in their exchange on the *Changes* hexagrams, highlights three levels the different contributions presented in this volume focus on. Firstly, written artefacts – in this case the depiction of the hexagrams and corresponding Chinese characters with Greek and Latin annotations and the accompanying letters in French – emerge from transcultural contact and from interactions between different traditions and languages. Secondly, Bouvet and Leibniz integrated the Chinese scriptural tradition into their own thought by analysing it. In other words, there is a past discourse about such artefacts. Thirdly, the exchange between the French Jesuit and the German intellectual includes several domains of knowledge which today are attributed to a variety of seemingly disparate scientific disciplines, in this case including Theology, Mathematics, Philosophy, and Sinology, as well as French and Classical Philology. As a result, further examination of such artefacts and discourses also transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries. Driven by these insights, the present volume convenes interdisciplinary approaches to examples of transcultural encounters selected from across a broad range of historical contexts, textual materials, and actors involved. All these case studies occur within the medium of text and have been effectuated through philological practices. As such, they represent what we have termed *Connected Philology*.

¹¹ “As it becomes apparent, when comparing the signs of the circular and the square figure, in the circular, those [numbers] are higher which are found further away from the centre [of the page].” (“Ut apparet conferendo characteres circuli et quadrati respectu circuli superius est quod remotius à centro,” see Figure 1, bottom left); all translations are ours.

Interdisciplinary perspectives on transcultural encounters

The definition and concept of *philology* itself have been subject to lively debate in recent decades (Bremer and Wirth 2010, 43; Pollock et al. 2015; Dayeh 2016), widening the discourse to a global scale. This was not always the case. The history of philology has frequently been told as a history of a handful of institutions that were founded and developed mainly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, mostly limited to the Global North.¹² This narrow conception of philology has long hindered the potentially fruitful application of the term to describe the diverse scriptural traditions across the globe, which have persisted and thrived since the beginning of written culture over 5,000 years ago.¹³ To allow the concept of philology to transcend its “western” biases, it seems most productive to focus on the practices that constitute philological work in different cultures and throughout different periods.¹⁴ By focusing on the varied methods, techniques, textual devices, and scribal traditions rather than on institutional actors, philology becomes accessible in its most vibrant form (Pollock 2014, 11–23).

Therefore, we define philology as a set of practices devoted to taking care of texts,¹⁵ passing them on, understanding, and interpreting them.¹⁶ These practices include, but are not limited to, commenting, glossing, compiling, transcribing, translating, archiving, excerpting, or retelling.¹⁷ What distinguishes philological practices

¹² For the history of philology in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Turner (2014); for the critique of a Eurocentric perspective on philology, see Pollock (2009; 2014, 9–11).

¹³ The earliest evidence of human writing consists of clay tablets with cuneiform, dated c. 3200 BCE (Woods 2010, 34–35).

¹⁴ In this sense, Most (2018) described philology as social practice.

¹⁵ We adopt a broad conception of “text” here, which includes all forms of variance, such as the interactions with orality that Zumthor (1972, 65–75) termed *mouvance*. Moreover, we conceive text independently of its medium, understanding it as an expression of cultural self-description and description of others – a concept developed primarily through the interplay between literary and cultural studies, cf. e.g. Bachmann-Medick (2004).

¹⁶ Thus, we expand the narrow conception of philology limited to practices of textual curatorship, as proposed by Gumbrecht (2003, 2) and others. For broader conceptions, see e.g. Ette (2004) and Steinfeld (2004).

¹⁷ We are aware that this definition omits a certain philological tradition that focuses on the relationships between language and the individual, the philologist, and their *habitus*; see e.g. Hamacher (2009); Lepper (2012, 17–36). Another tradition treats philology as part of the storage and transmission of knowledge: see e.g. the volume *Philologie als Wissensmodell [Philology as a Model of Knowledge]* by Thouard et al. (2010). Other scholars shift the focus towards current philological practices: see e.g. Alt (2007, 28–29). With our definition, we deliberately want to reflect both on the philological practices evident in the examined texts and on our role as philologists.

from other forms of textual work is the engagement with texts for their own sake,¹⁸ as opposed to, for instance, reading for the purposes of exegesis or entertainment.¹⁹ When historians extract factual information from texts, or philosophers and theologians base their interpretation on the main idea presented in a text, they often display practices cognate or identical to those of expressly philological studies. The methodological boundaries between fields such as History, Philosophy, and Philology are thus fluid. However, the interest in engaging with the text itself – an act in which the text is simultaneously curated and used – might set philological practices apart from other approaches to working with texts.

Defining philology in terms of philological practices enables scholars to compare vastly different types of texts and literatures from various times and regions. This approach allows for the juxtaposition of different practices across their long histories, illuminating parallels, differences, and possible entanglements and reciprocal effects. In turn, philology, in the sense of recent and current research, takes on a broader focus when no longer viewed primarily as a discipline or a set of disciplines, but as the interdisciplinary inquiry into practices of working on or with texts. As the example of Leibniz and Bouvet demonstrates, such interdisciplinarity need not be limited to philological disciplines but can also include the likes of Mathematics, Philosophy, Religious Studies, or even Medicine.²⁰ This perspective permits comparisons with other social and academic practices (Daston and Most 2015; Martus and Spoerhase 2022).

18 Cf. the traditional definition of philology as the art of reading slowly, first coined by Nietzsche (1999 [1881], 17). This definition has persisted in academic discourse – likely due in part to Jakobson's use of it as an aphorism – as seen, for example, in Ziolkowski (1990, 6). De Man's postulate of a *Return to Philology*, combined with his call for *mere reading* without theory (1985), may also be regarded within this tradition of understanding philology as a special form of reading. Drawing on Peter Szondi, Banki and Scheffel also link their concept of philology to *Lektüre* ("reading"): "Philologie [. . .] ist ein Begriff für die Praxis der Lektüre" (Banki and Scheffel 2017, 2) [Philology [. . .] is a term for the practice of reading].

19 Roland Barthes (1973) examines the nature of reading purely for the purposes of enjoyment and pleasure. He posited this sometimes meandering, sometimes indulgent style of consuming a text by contrasting it to the reading habits prevalent within academia.

20 Interdisciplinarity not only comprises the connection of philology with other disciplines but also between and within philologies: the progressive isolation of 'newer' national philologies in the nineteenth century (Horstmann 1989, 561–567) ushered in an ever-increasing degree of specialisation, with the result that many researchers no longer mastered the languages required to study textual networks across linguistic boundaries. In addition to this disciplinary division, the twentieth century also witnessed the emergence of subdisciplines within literary studies, linguistics, and cultural studies. For instance, see Oesterreicher (2009, 89–96) with a focus on Romance studies; for the unification of Middle Latin studies in contrast to other philologies, see Stotz (2008); for a comprehensive analysis of the division of philological subjects in the twenty-first century, see Schaefer (2008) and Schwägerl-Melchior et al. (2017). Interdisciplinarity can thus also occur between and within different philological disciplines.

In addition to the definition of philology as a collective of practices outlined above, Connected Philology incorporates three established theoretical concepts: *transculturality*, *Connected History* (including the similar notions of *histoire croisée* and *Circulatory History*), and *World Philology*. The concept of transculturality, first coined by Ortiz in 1940,²¹ was redeveloped from earlier notions of inter- and multi-culturality from the 1990s onwards (Antor 2010). This renewal was largely driven by scholars building on the results of postcolonial studies and on the impressions of increased globalisation processes.²² Welsch's definitions have proved particularly influential.²³ He aimed to overcome the binary categorisation of cultures rooted in Herder's model of culture spheres, which imagined cultures as naturally separable entities (Merz-Benz 2007, 193–197). Instead, Welsch argued that cultures are inherently entangled. As a result, “cultural settings are characterised by interrelations and commonalities” (Welsch 2017, 12). This definition has been criticised for its implicit claim that all cultures are essentially uniform, as well as for assuming that cultural systems are clearly separable in the event of cultural contact (Merz-Benz 2007, 197–203). To address these criticisms, the concept of transculturality has since been refined: scholars have postulated differences between cultural systems as temporary conditions that are engendered through processes of change or (de)construction.²⁴ This approach is of particular significance to Connected Philology because it highlights that culture is constructed in intra- and interpersonal negotiation processes (Lösch 2005, 32–38). From a historical point of view, these processes can be analysed primarily in the form of texts that result from contacts between different cultural (sub-)systems. In light of this, transculturality relates not only to phenomena of difference but also permits scholars to focus on similarities.²⁵

Another important aspect of transculturality, according to Welsch, lies in focusing on the micro-level of individual contacts. This perspective is also evident in the parallel development of approaches within the historical sciences, which base the examina-

21 It seems particularly striking that, although the Cuban Fernando Ortiz had already created the term as a counter-concept to acculturation (1973 [1940], 129), his work is not consistently referenced in the transculturality debate. Given that scholars of transculturality see themselves as successors to postcolonial studies, it is irritating that they would only give limited attention to a stakeholder from the Global South.

22 Although the concept of transculturality emerged from analyses of globalisation in the twentieth century, it can also be applied to premodern times (Drews and Scholl 2016).

23 For Welsch's concept of transculturality, see Welsch (2005); for a summary of his research, see Welsch (2017, esp. 9–23).

24 Examples for such an approach are the concept of *transdifference* (Lösch 2005) and the concept of *figuration* and *de-figuration* (Onuki and Pekar 2006).

25 On similarity as a “counter-paradigm” to difference, see Bhatti and Kimmich (2015). The reflections of René Pérennec (2005) on contact poetics as an alternative to comparative differential analysis go in a similar direction. Cf. Bhabha's examination of Said's *Orientalism*: according to him, the construction of cultural differences through discourse is the main strategy of colonialism (Bhabha 1994, 70–84).

tion of larger systems on individual case studies. Examples of such approaches are Connected History (Subrahmanyam 1997), *histoire croisée* (Werner and Zimmermann 2006), and Circulatory History (Raj 2013), the latter of which foregrounds the history of knowledge.²⁶ For these approaches, concrete encounters become the starting point of examination. From a diachronic perspective, transcultural encounters are mainly preserved in texts that arise from individual contacts between different cultural (sub-)systems, such as translations, commentaries, or multilingual texts. In this regard, they are also the product of philological practices: on the one hand, philology here provides the medium of and facilitates transcultural encounters; on the other, philological practices are shaped by different requirements and conditions across cultures and their respective practices of working with texts.

By adopting the micro-perspective of the historical approaches presented above, as well as of transculturality, textual artefacts take on a special significance in a diachronic perspective: they provide a means of tracing lines of development in history in general and in the history of philology in particular. However, the texts or textual networks resulting from transcultural encounters cannot be confined to one single discipline because they combine languages that nowadays belong to the domains of different, specialised departments. Consequently, they pose significant challenges to researchers who have been trained in the curricula of individual philologies, and a high degree of interdisciplinarity is often required to analyse such texts.²⁷ The more recent debate surrounding World Philology is the third approach informing our concept Connected Philology. In the edited volume *World Philology*, Pollock (2015, 1–2) first outlined the concept with the aim of increasing the significance of institutional philology. In general, the concept of World Philology seeks to shift the focus towards philological practices in different cultures at different times. Pollock (2015, 23) emphasises historical self-awareness, conceptual universality, and methodological pluralism as necessary foundations of philology in the future. One year later, Dayeh expanded the concept of World Philology by including approaches of the Berlin programme *Zukunftphilologie* [Future Philology], which advocated extending the focus of traditional philology to include cultures of the Global South (Dayeh 2016, 401–403). In addition, Dayeh demanded the examination of “the genealogies and genetic conditions of philological practice” (2016, 403). He thus widened the focus of World Philology by cham-

26 We would like to take this opportunity to thank Kapil Raj for the overview of the historical-theoretical approaches with which he provided us at the conference that preceded this volume, and which informed much of the theoretical discussions featured in this introduction.

27 On the history and perspectives of interdisciplinary cooperation in the humanities, see the anthology *Symphilologie. Formen der Kooperation in den Geisteswissenschaften* [Symphilology: Forms of Cooperation in the Humanities] (Stockhorst et al. 2016).

pioning the comparison of philological practices in combination with considerations of their development over time.²⁸

Both Pollock and Dayeh understand philology as “making sense of texts” within the history of human knowledge (Pollock 2015, 22; Dayeh 2016, 404), with their respective publications juxtaposing and comparing individual case studies. However, an interdisciplinary approach and a focus on transcultural encounters remain the exception rather than the rule. This is where Connected Philology comes in: for any comparison to be made, there must be a shared factor or point of contact between the compared entities. Only such a *tertium comparationis* [point of comparison] catalyses and enables a comparison in the first place.²⁹ In this sense, our introductory example stands out: Bouvet and Leibniz openly reflect on their sources and on how they use them. The transcultural contact through which Leibniz obtains the *Changes* hexagrams is well documented. In many other cases, however, such a connecting point needs to be identified first. Finding and analysing such connections helps us better understand the development of both differences and commonalities, enabling us to contextualise and draw inferences about the texts. Through the study of textual traditions in particular, we recognise this connection as lying within the philological practices used to generate, transmit, and understand texts across social and cultural boundaries.

Connected Philology

Our concept of Connected Philology touches upon concrete objects of study, but also encompasses a reflection on academic disciplines, and a consideration of methodological and epistemological problems. Firstly, Connected Philology focuses on transcultural encounters. Transregional, transcontinental, or even global connectivity is a recurring phenomenon in human history that produces diverse cultural connections, which can be traced through the study of textual traditions. The concept of transculturality suggests that the effects of such cultural contacts are by no means unidirectional (cf. e.g. Juneja and Kravagna 2013, 23–24). Connected Philology can show the impact on all cultures involved in these exchanges.³⁰ This necessitates both a historical contextualisation and a critical and accurate examination of the condition and

²⁸ An example of such an approach is the volume *Canonical Texts and Scholarly Practices*, edited by Grafton and Most (2016).

²⁹ For a critical reflection on the practice of comparison, see e.g. the volume *Practices of Comparing: Towards a New Understanding of a Fundamental Human Practice* (Epple et al. 2020).

³⁰ Thus, Connected Philology is also part of the post-colonial tradition following Said: using the example of European constructions of the “Orient,” Said (1978) showed how colonialist cultures construct the minority of other cultures with the aim of dominating them. Bhabha objected to critical theory for following similar mechanisms of othering and suggested a philological practice as a solution to the

form of the source material. In other words, detailed philological work on original sources, particularly those which remain unedited or lack editions that meet the standards of modern scholarship, is essential. Additionally, there is a need to critically assess existing editions and their biases. This approach involves studying the texts of different actors who connected their philological work to other persons or textual traditions. As such, Connected Philology is not only an analytical approach but also the object of investigation.

Secondly, we seek to connect separated philological fields and academic disciplines. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the reorganisation of academic institutions led to the formation of distinct (national) philological disciplines (Turner 2014, 231–380). By contrast, philology can be seen as a methodology that unites various humanities such as cultural studies, historical studies, literary studies, and linguistics. To investigate the transcultural encounters as described above requires the (re-)unification of isolated disciplines, for which philology can serve as a common ground. Only through interdisciplinary considerations and knowledge of the different languages involved in transcultural contacts can the necessary contextualisation and groundwork with the sources be accomplished. In doing so, “connecting philologists” must be aware of the biases of their own discipline – biases rooted in nationalistic formation processes and shaped by hegemonial global structures, which persist even today.³¹ To overcome these inherited biases, self-reflection and a reorientation of our respective disciplines are unavoidable. This necessitates a critical investigation of the history of philology in particular, as well as its connections to the humanities in general.

Thirdly, Connected Philology critically examines the conditions under which conclusions and insights are reached. A recurring epistemic issue that arises in the study of transcultural encounters is that the texts resulting from these contacts often themselves reflect underlying power dynamics and the interests of a hegemonic culture. Scholars trying to trace cultural influences will thus frequently find that definitive proof of particular encounters is elusive. This lack of evidence points to a broader epistemological problem in philology. Since the nineteenth century, the (often polemical) rhetoric of *Editionsphilologie* [editorial philology] has demanded positive proof for the methods applied.³² Although this expectation still persists in contemporary philology, the field has never actually been able to supply such definitive evidence

continuous “western” academic appropriation of “other” cultures, namely that of translation (1994, 31–39).

³¹ For a critical examination of the colonialist character of philology as a discipline, see Ahmed (2018, esp. 17–50).

³² This tendency resulted from the ‘scientification’ of the subject and the desire to distance it from the strongly subjective divinatory methods of editing that still dominated philology at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Bremer and Wirth 2010, 16–20).

but rather works towards establishing plausibility.³³ In this sense, philology is no exception within the humanities. However, by investigating transcultural encounters and reflecting on the limitations of knowledge production, Connected Philology can challenge this positivist bias and contribute to the epistemology of the humanities as a whole by shedding light on the conditions of transcultural contacts and their wider methodological implications.

To summarise, we propose to consider the objectives of Connected Philology in light of three dimensions: we aim, firstly, to examine connections between different cultural spheres by scrutinising the texts that resulted from their interactions; secondly, to connect different disciplines to overcome “academic nationalism”; and thirdly, to reflect on the epistemological problems of drawing these connections. By focusing on transcultural encounters, we hope in particular to encourage further investigations of texts that have tended to be neglected by their disciplines, following the example of many of the contributions convened in this volume. These contributions look at texts that have often been excluded from the canons used to construct national identities; texts written in several languages, one hybrid language, or a *koiné* language, for example, were considered unsuitable for nationalist purposes (as well as defying the modularity of individual philological disciplines). In some cases, they have even been exposed to censorship or have been modified to enforce an alignment with ideological desiderata. By consciously examining such material, Connected Philology can highlight the dynamic nature of cultural exchanges, especially challenging the persistent notion of unidirectional influences from hegemonial cultures. This volume demonstrates that cultural contacts are very much reciprocal: transmitted cultural traits, ideas, or artefacts are not simply passively received but actively reshaped and reinterpreted to suit their new cultural environments, where they are acculturated and integrated. Connected Philology furthermore addresses the inherent structure of academic disciplines. By shedding light on intersections and overlaps between different spheres of philology, the contributions gathered in this volume demonstrate the potential of combined approaches, each linking two or more disciplines.³⁴ Connected Philology thus invites scholars to explore necessary interdisciplinary approaches in their work. Detailed expertise remains essential for rigorous academic inquiry. Nevertheless, the strength of Connected Philology lies precisely in bringing together a range of different fields of knowledge. As a result, different textual cultures across the globe and various historical periods are connected in research.

³³ In reference to the human sciences (and implicitly the humanities), Carlo Ginzburg (1986 [1979], 165) speaks of the epistemological model of the “*paradigma indiziario*” [paradigm of circumstantial evidence] for the development of different strategies to generate plausibility, see Förster and Schwandt (2024). Even in the context of editorial philology, the subjective element of textual construction can never be completely eliminated, as recent reflections on editorial practice have also shown (see Martens 1991, esp. 19–26).

³⁴ Cf. n. 20.

In developing Connected Philology, we have profited immensely from the inspiring insights and spirited discussions provided by our contributors, who actively engaged this concept and helped us substantiate it. Their contributions to this volume, which we will outline below, attest to the manifold ways in which this approach can be conceived and applied in concrete studies. Thus, Connected Philology not only ties together the individual voices in this volume but reflects our shared goal to contribute to an interdisciplinary approach that combines different traditions of knowledge and modern reflections on philology.

The chapters in this volume unite a common perspective that is directed towards the examined materials instead of being organised chronologically or according to regional or thematic aspects. The chapters of the first section, *Single Words in Cultural Transfer Processes*, adopt a micro-perspective and are therefore linked by their methodological focus on individual words or syntagmata. In situations of contact, foreign concepts are either expressed in another language, or existing word meanings are reconceptualised. In these inter- and intralingual translations,³⁵ philological analysis can reveal the effects of transcultural encounters on a linguistic level. In undertaking this task, the chapters in this section do not merely present certain linguistic or cultural translations; rather, they meticulously trace how specific new impulses in the translation process give rise to new, independent texts through connotations, which are able to perform different functions in their new context. It is through the utilisation of this “classical” philological lens that new outcomes emerge during the analysis of dictionaries, translations, and rewritings.

Federica Venturi examines the methods of the Capuchin Francesco Orazio della Penna (1680–1745), who compiled a Tibetan-Italian-Tibetan dictionary. Venturi analyses how Della Penna ventured to translate unfamiliar cultural concepts he encountered in his mission to Tibet into the linguistic conventions of Christian Europe by adapting Tibetan Buddhist expressions. Merging the fields of history and philology, Venturi thus highlights the reciprocal nature of cultural exchange. **Chia-Wei Lin** investigates the rendering of Buddhist concepts into Arabic and Persian. Her linguistic analysis of the Buddha’s biography translated in Rašīd al-Dīn’s *Ġāmi’ al-tawārīḥ* shows how the text was adapted to make it accessible to a Muslim audience. This *interpretatio Islamica* testifies to multilingual, intercultural exchanges involving sources from Tibetan, Chinese, and Uyghur-Mongolian Buddhist traditions. While the first two chapters in the section thus adopt a historical perspective, **Jonas Müller** focuses on the construction of identity within the biblical New Testament. He examines how the apostle Paul created a new Christian identity by drawing on narratives of Abraham, the ancestor of the Israelites. In his analysis, Müller highlights how individual words that convey social, religious, cultural, or gender distinctions are combined to establish a unified Christian identity, accommodating both the cultural preconditions of Paul’s

35 Cf. the classification of translations by Jakobson (1959, 233).

audience as well as his articulation of Christ as both object and subject of cultural transfer. This study shows how the representation of cultural encounters can be used to construct new identities by drawing on and redefining pre-existing philological traditions.

The chapters of the second section are marked by their focus on the pivotal role of *Textual Networks and Transcultural Encounters*. Here, in contrast to the first section, the authors do not emphasise the transformation of individual words and concepts. Instead, the chapters demonstrate how transregional textual networks evolved in different periods between and within (sub)continents. This approach thus transcends individual connections. A particular challenge is that, in addition to written traditions, oral traditions can also be translated, reformulated, and combined in the process of retextualisation, with intermediate versions being lost in the process. Additionally, texts are often transmitted centuries after they were actually written. The outcomes of transcultural encounters make it particularly clear that specific texts can be regarded as nodes in these textual networks.

Andrea Acri examines Old Javanese Śaiva literature to trace transregional textual connections between the Indian subcontinent and the neighbouring islands of Java and Bali. By analysing allusions to and citations of Sanskrit texts in the Old Javanese writings, Acri reveals the networks that linked these regions, as well as evaluating the depth of Indian literary knowledge in Java and Bali. While the Sanskrit texts were frequently adapted to suit their new textual environment, their inclusion into Śaiva literature could also entail normative influence. Advancing scholarly self-reflection, **Max Deeg** addresses the epistemological problems behind the analysis of transcultural encounters. He investigates the manner in which the Chinese monk and traveller Xuanzang 玄奘 (600/602–664) not only translated Indian Buddhist texts but also constructed a vision of India in his *Record of the Western Regions of the Great Tang* (*Da Tang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記). Deeg notes that such acts of translation involve a “hermeneutic double bottom,” as two cultural contexts (in his case, those of India and China) are superimposed in one text. According to Deeg, Connected Philology must therefore address both contexts in order to grasp the philological practices underlying these textual traditions. This also requires strictly dividing the examined discourses into emic and etic levels. The third chapter in the section shifts the focus to Europe in the Middle Ages: **Korinna Gonschorek**’s study delves into the interplay between Celtic mythology and Christian adaptation, analysing the depiction of male fairies in medieval literature across Old French, Anglo-Norman, and Middle English. Combining philological disciplines (English and Romance Studies), she highlights both similarities and differences that emerge from networks of knowledge, which can only be grasped through their manifestation in literary texts.

The third section, *History and Politics of Connected and Connecting Philology*, focuses on (in these cases more recent) interactions between individual actors, their philological practices, and society. Here, the political dimension of philology in transcultural contacts becomes evident. Philological practices cannot be regarded in

isolation from their socio-historical contexts. In line with this, the chapters in this section demonstrate that philological practices leave traces on a personal and trans-individual level. They are a central component of social interaction and social discourses, including disputes, oppression, censorship, and other conflicts. Additionally, the chapters highlight that philology establishes connections between individuals and groups, thereby facilitating social innovation.

Delving into the history of science, **Nikola Wenner** examines the contact between two scholars in the early 1930s: the Egyptologist James Henry Breasted (Chicago) and Assyriologist Bruno Meissner (Berlin) represented different institutions with distinct aims regarding the development of their Assyrian dictionaries. Although their exchange at first did not culminate in cooperation or collaboration, the connection they established served to support each other's lexicographical works. In this regard, Wenner understands Connected Philology in the literal sense of two connected philological projects. Using three examples from Soviet and Dutch resistance literature, **Natalia Kamovnikova** shows how writing against a regime channels collective and individual trauma. She combines Comparative Literary Studies, (Psycho)Linguistics, and Psychology – an example of interdisciplinarity, showing how philology makes the unspeakable apparent. Kamovnikova also reevaluates cultural hegemony: resistance and trauma literature emerge as cultural subsystems that deconstruct dominant cultural narratives, even as these narratives are constructed within the literary text. This demonstrates that transcultural encounters exist within cultural systems that might initially appear monolithic, such as “the Soviet Union of the 1960s.” Focusing on the institution of theatre, **Mert Morali** uses the introduction of Brecht's epic theatre to Türkiye in the 1950s and 1960s to point out how specific stakeholders played a decisive role in the gradual establishment of a new dramatic tradition. Morali uses Even-Zohar's concept of the polysystem to provide a micro-perspective on translation history, illustrating that the translation and the source text can fulfil different functions in cultural contact situations. He further notes that Turkish theatre drew on the older Ottoman tradition of puppet theatre, blending influences from the hegemonial “western” culture with traditional cultural techniques to create a new hybrid form. By analysing various paratexts, Morali also demonstrates how the philological practices of translation, commentary, and rewriting were used to establish a new genre while also serving as a means of political expression.

With this volume, we are honoured to present a wide range of interdisciplinary studies covering topics of great diversity regarding both the cultural and temporal spheres. Though much work remains to be done in connecting philologies,³⁶ we are

³⁶ It remains to be acknowledged that many cultural spheres are left untouched by the specific contributions of this volume. Trying our best to break up the hegemony of Eurocentrism in a field that emerged and was originally developed in France and Germany, we have unfortunately been unable to include contributions on African, Oceanic, and South American philological practices. These fields are generally and structurally under-represented in the study of textual cultures, and future studies

thankful to our contributors for their hard work in establishing the first test cases of this approach. We are thankful to our contributors, who face the challenge of reconciling the requirements of their respective disciplines with interdisciplinary comprehensibility. The chapters in this volume show how the focus on philological practices can help us understand transcultural encounters and reconsider their academic investigation. The present volume may thus provide a model for the practical implementation of Connected Philology in research regarding aspects of diversity and accessibility. We hope this will spark fruitful discussions, sustaining the “new popularity” that philology has gained in recent decades.

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on Connected Philology should aim at changing this tendency, as the lack of insights derived from such cultures is by no means due to a lack in features of interest.

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