

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

# Artists and Intellectuals and the Requests of Power

## Scientific Report

Merano, Italy, 26 - 29 July 2007

Convened by:  
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### *I. Executive Summary*

The workshop was preceded on the day of arrival (26.8.) by a reception in the Academy in the presence of the head of the Academy and the German Consul General from Milan. Afterwards the participants were driven by bus to a welcome dinner in the mountains.

As regards the workshop proper, some alterations had to be made because of last minute renouncement by two participants. Thus the program of the first day (27.8.) began with a presentation of the ESF, its function and various programs by Prof. Gouliamos, which was very helpful for all, because we got a clearer picture of what could be the right program for us to choose for the follow-up research project.

The workshop proper began with an introduction by myself, in which I tried to outline the reasons for a classicist to choose this particular topic with its focus on a comparison between the Augustan period and the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I underlined particularly more general aspects of the topic, which show what we today can learn beyond the purely academic questions from closer research in this field. We then heard a lecture of Prof. Arnd Kerkhecker about Josef Liegle. Prof. Kerkhecker, who is in possession of the complete unpublished papers and the library of Liegle, presented the first volume of his edition that has already been published and subsequently outlined his further editorial plans. He also introduced the audience to the work and personality of Liegle.

The next two contributions were dedicated to two of the great philosophers of the last century, Martin Heidegger and Simone Weil. Prof. Fédier showed Heidegger's analysis of the political situation of modern times where the usual opposition between left and right, progressive and conservative has given way to a tripartite scheme of two totalitarian systems and a democratic one where there is no polarity any longer, but which can rather be seen as a circle. Later, Prof. Kühn gave a brief introduction to the thought of Simone Weil, which was a summary of the long article he submitted for publication in the planned volume.

Following this presentation, there was a very lively discussion, which also took account of Walter Biemel's paper, which had been made available to all participants; unfortunately, because of sudden illness Prof. Biemel could not present the manuscript himself.

The afternoon was dedicated, in its first part, to two of the great musicians of the last century. Dr. Hubert Eiholzer took a particularly important piano piece by Arnold Schönberg as a starting point to pose the question why politicians may be inclined to take a hostile attitude to certain kinds of music. Prof. Vogel gave a brief but very comprehensive account of the personality and the attitude towards society of Hans Pfitzner. The following discussion was very wide ranging and took account also of the philosophical aspects of the questions raised by Dr. Eiholzer and Prof. Vogel in relation to the matters discussed in the morning session. The fact that it had to be cut short because of lack of time showed particularly clearly the enormous potential of research the topic offers.

The afternoon session was completed by two lectures on East Asia. Prof. Hashi tried to show in a very detailed and well-informed lecture (and against widely held belief) the opposition of the Japanese philosopher Kitaro Nishida to the politics of war of the Japanese military regime. Subsequently, Prof. von Senger carefully analysed the attitude of Mao towards intellectuals and its personal and ideological background. He then described the treatment of intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution and ended with a overview of the attitude of the post-Mao era towards intellectuals.

The morning session of Saturday was dedicated to political poetry in the Augustan period and the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the first part, Prof. Fedeli gave a general picture of the situation and the attitudes of poets towards the Augustan regime. Then Dr. Reinhardt took Horace's Roman Odes as an example of how an Augustan poet integrated political analysis of events of his time into his poetry. In the second part of the morning, Prof. Rayfield introduced us to panegyric poetry in Stalinist and contemporary Russia, and the morning session ended by a lecture of mine on a modern Greek poet, Giorgos Seferis, who was at the same time a distinguished politician and one of the greatest lyric poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; in this lecture, I tried to show what Seferis meant when he stated that serious national poetry of high quality was still possible in modern times. Again, the discussion of the morning session was particularly lively and could hardly touch upon all the issues raised by the preceding lectures.

In the afternoon, we gathered again in order to discuss how a follow-up research project might be structured and who would take part in it. I first outlined the general results of the conference, and we agreed that the scholarly network program of the ESF would fit our purposes best. Prof. Fedeli presented a concrete plan of how the classicists, i.e. he himself with his team, Prof. Kerkhecker and I with Ms. Chrysostomou, may work closely together on Augustan poetry and the history of scholarship on this topic. Prof. De Gennaro presented a plan for a philosophical

section in which also Prof. Kühn and other external participants might be integrated. Since Dr. Eiholzer had to depart before this session and Prof. Mitsou, who will participate in a future project, had to renounce participation because of sudden illness I briefly presented the plan I had worked out with Dr. Eiholzer and with Prof. Mitsou, whom I met in Munich the day before my arrival at Meran. Then Prof. Takayama declared that he was willing to initiate a Japanese partner project and suggested some topics he would be willing to consider. Prof. von Senger too promised his advice and participation. Thus, we concluded with an already rather precise plan of some participants to put together a research project, but decided to think also of further external participants in order to enlarge our project both in scope and geographically.

After dinner I gave a little concert in which the music of Pfitzner and Schönberg was presented to the participants (and the public) alongside pieces of the common repertoire.

On my way back to Freiburg I met and consulted again in Munich with Prof. Mitsou, who will be one of the major participants of the planned project together with Ms. Chrysostomou. In the two meetings we had, we discussed in detail how the three of us would collaborate in the future within the framework of the planned research network.

## *II. Scientific content of the event*

The topic of the workshop was treated by philosophers, students of modern literature, historians, classicists and musicologists. The juxtaposition of these different views on the problems of art/philosophy versus political power made it evident that such a comparative approach is extremely useful and enlightening. It proved also to be fruitful to focus on a concrete aspect of this vast topic, i.e., in our case, the comparison of the Augustan period with the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in order to keep a clear and distinct orientation. Beside the insights into well known questions of research – i.e., the question of the differences and points of contact between the situation in antiquity and modern times, the question of how political power responded to art in the totalitarian regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, etc. – the workshop opened up a great deal of new perspectives, connected with these questions, which deserve further investigation. In particular, a so to speak ‚philosophical‘ overall line became apparent, which could guide further research, namely the relationship of thinking/art and power in general, a topic which is bound to an investigation of what terms like ‚man, human‘ etc. mean today and how the individual corresponds to the collective.

The wide range and the importance of these questions, as well as the value of the approach taken in the workshop was documented in the very lively discussion, which almost always had to be cut short for reasons of time. The specific question that, implicitly and explicitly, animated the

discussion was precisely that of the *nature* of thinking and art (in their difference) and its relation to the *nature* of power. Can a panegyric on Stalin still be considered art? Can a thinking that is oriented towards the enhancement of power still be considered a genuine thinking? Why, on the other hand, does power see thinking and art – where they do not themselves become instruments of power – as a menace to its own purposes? Concerning these questions, it still proved difficult to clearly discern the specific character, respectively, of ancient and contemporary art and thinking. Thus, one of the guiding ideas of the workshop became palpable: in order to clarify these questions, which are crucial for our present and future self-understanding (European and global), it is necessary both to make accessible new sources (both antique and modern) and to reinterpret already available positions in the perspective of gaining new indications and insights on this point. Apart from the diachronic approach, which immediately proved its fruitfulness, the intercultural perspective showed to be most promising: during the workshop, we could really only allude to this comparative work, e.g. when Nishida's concept of "abstaining" (namely from active participation e.g. in political matters) came into play: this sole concept would have required the entire workshop in order to be somewhat explicated and related to similar attitudes in Western tradition.

### *III. Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field*

Of course, not only the convenor, but several of the participants who had consulted with him, had, from the outset, a rather clear concept of the future perspectives of the workshop. During the event itself, the following points became clear: the information of Prof. Gouliamos given about the ESF showed us which type of future research project is the right one for us, i.e. the scholarly network program. We agreed in the final session, who of the participants would take a full part in such a future project and some participants already stated rather precisely what their research project would be, in particular the classicists, i.e. P. Fedeli, A. Kerkhecker, Th. Chrysostomou and I, and the philosophers, I. De Gennaro and R. Kühn. I also outlined briefly the musicological project of Dr. Eiholzer, who for urgent reasons had to depart early. After consulting on my way back to Freiburg Prof. Mitsou, we also agreed on a precise plan for the Modern Greek part (represented by her, A. Kerkhecker, Th. Chrysostomou and myself). In the course of the discussion of the final session, Prof. Takayama too agreed to set up a project connected to ours in Japan and offered some first thoughts on the topics he intends to handle. Prof. von Senger too promised his collaboration as a Sinologist.

Thus, the workshop provided a solid basis for an immediate application for a research networking programme at the next possible deadline. What remains to do is mainly to integrate the advice of Prof. Gouliamos on how to enlarge the project and define precisely how the core participants present at the workshop would collaborate with prospective further participants from outside.

#### *IV. Final Programme*

##### **Thursday, 26.07.07**

18h: Meeting at the Academy

19h: Departure for welcome dinner

##### **Friday, 27.07.07**

9h: Introduction by the ESF: K. Gouliamos

9h30: H.-C. Günther: Introduction

##### ***1) Thinkers of the 20th Century***

Chair: I. De Gennaro

10h-10h10: Introduction by I. De Gennaro

10h10-10h30: A. Kerkhecker: *Josef Liegle (1893-1945): A Forgotten Scholar and his Heritage*

10h30-10h55: F. Fédier: *Martin Heidegger*

10h55-11h10: Interval

11h10-11h35: R. Kühn, *Lektüre und Machtanalyse bei S. Weil*

11h35-12h35: Discussion

13h-14h: Lunch

##### ***2) Two Musicians of the 20th Century***

Chair: H.-C. Günther

14h30-14h55: H. Eiholzer: *Arnold Schönberg*

14h55-15h30: J.P. Vogel: *Hans Pfitzner, Genie und Gesellschaft*

15h30-16h15: Discussion

16h15-16h30: Interval

### **3) East Asia**

Chair: M. Takayama

16h30-16h55: H. Hashi: *The Philosophy of Nishida against the Phenomenon of World War II. Reflections on 'Problems of State Reason'*

16h55-17h20: H. v. Senger: *Mao und die Intellektuellen*

17h20-18h20: Discussion

19h30: Dinner

### **Saturday, 28.07.07**

#### **4) Poetry and Politics in the Augustan Period and in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Chair: A. Kerkhecker

9h-9h25: P. Fedeli: *La poesia politica degli Augustei*

9h25-9h50: T. Reinhardt: *Political analysis in Horace's Roman Odes*

9h50-10h05: Interval

10h05-10h30: D. Rayfield: *Poets' Panegyrics to Stalin and Putin*

10h30-10h45: H.-C. Günther: *Nationale Dichtung im 20 Jh.: Der griechische Dichter und Politiker Giorgos Seferis*

10h45-11h: Interval

11h-12h: Final Discussion

13h-14h: Lunch

#### **5) Final Session**

14h30-16h00: Chair and Introduction: H.-C. Günther, with presentations of follow-up research projects by P. Fedeli, A. Kerkhecker, T. Chrysostomou, I. De Gennaro, H. Eiholzer.

19h: Dinner

21h-22h30: Concert with works of Bach, Pfitzner, Schönberg, Couperin and Debussy.

#### *5) Statistical information on participants*

▶ Average age: 50 (max. 75, min. 23).

▶ Countries of origin: Cyprus (1), France (1), Germany (6), Greece (3), Italy (4), Japan (2), Poland (1), Romania (1), Russia (1), Switzerland (3), United Kingdom (1)

*6) Final list of participants*

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