Proceedings
100th Anniversary of Futurism in Japan
International Symposium
Futurism in Japan: F. T. Marinetti’s Perspective

Pierantonio Zanotti

Regarding his Japanese comrade of a season (1921-1922), the Japanese painter Seiji Tógó (1897-1978), what probably captured F. T. Marinetti’s indefatigable imagination most, was the former’s illustrious ancestry. According to the Futurist leader, Tógó’s “glorious grand-father” was none other than Admiral Heihachiró Tógó (1848-1934), the hero of the battle of Tsushima, which had taken place during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. Marinetti had mentioned this prestigious lineage not only while presenting the young Seiji to the audience of a Futurist serata at the Teatro Modernissimo in Bologna, on 21 January 1922. He also referred to it more than twenty years later, in Chapter 36 of Firenze biondazzurra sposerebbe futurista morigerato (Platinum-Blonde Florence Seeks Marriage with Prissy Futurist, 1944), a book of Futurist ‘memoirs’ co-written with Alberto Viviani (1894-1970), one of his most faithful disciples and friends, while he was living in Venice (then part of the Salò Republic). Marinetti was wrong in extolling the descent of his Japanese companion: Seiji was no relative of Heihachiró, although it seems that he never clarified this point with the Futurist leader (maybe out of shyness, maybe because of his underdeveloped command of French).

As a text that was only reprinted in Italy in 1992, Firenze biondazzurra has received very scarce critical attention. The city of Florence is the setting of what we could call a series of remembrances — or at least a Futurist version of them. In conformance with the Futurist passion for synthesis and simultaneity, the book covers a span of time that goes from the beginnings of the movement to its more mature phases, tracing a creative and unorthodox pseudo-history of Futurism in Florence. Along with other works from Marinetti’s final years (La grande Milano tradizionale e futurista, Una sensibilità italiana nata in Egitto, etc.), also unpublished until the critical revaluation of Futurism, Firenze biondazzurra represents, in the words of Luciano De Maria, a sort of “return of the repressed,” in the form of evocations of days past, whose nostalgic overtones are tempered and euphemized by the deployment of a virile flow of parole in libertà.

Leaving aside the topics of nostalgia and remembrance, it is worth noting that in Firenze biondazzurra a re-enactment of the history of Futurism takes place, in which events and people from different years and geographical zones freely intermingle. The tone is often convivial and carefree; the characters appear and disappear without much concern for historical accuracy. Among them is another Japanese character, “Tai Kambara”, who appears together with “Togo.” Like “Togo”, the character “Tai Kambara” is based on a real person, Tai Kanbara (1898-1997). This painter and poet had some contact with Marinetti during the 1920s and 1930s. However, as far as we know, not only was he no longer in touch with the leader of Futurism in the 1940s; he had also never set foot in Florence — a fact perfectly in tune with the debonair spirit of Firenze biondazzurra.

By virtue of occupying two brief chapters in this work, the adventures of Kambara and Togo in Florence probably represent one of the most (if not the most) conspicuous and sizeable deployments of Japan-related characters and tropes within Marinetti’s narrative and poetic œuvre. Therefore, I will start with the late fictionalization of these two characters in Firenze biondazzurra, and then trace back, as though in an anamnestic diagnosis, the roots of Marinetti’s involvement with “Japan” as a country inhabited by Futurist artists.

1944: Firenze biondazzurra

Marinetti and Viviani’s style is not conventional, for it juxtaposes, in the name of Futurist simultaneità, fictional accounts and real episodes from different periods of the history of Futurism. Within such a narrative frame, it is not easy to determine what really happened and what is transfigured or simply put together as a collage.
The narrative background of the episode in which Kambara and Togo appear for the first time, in Chapter 36 ("A Wall Soaked in Moonlight"), is rather vague. The "aeropoeit" Pino Masnata (1901-1968), who in real life was actually a surgeon, accepts the challenge of surgically restoring the beauty of Favolletta Dei Rivoli, whose face, after some accident that is not clearly explained, is "half-broken extremely torn."

Masnata calls the two Japanese men (no hint is given as to why on earth they are on the spot, which seems to be the ("Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova"), and especially Kambara, as witnesses and inspirers of his medical feat. This seems to work in the end, as he achieves a "very accurate very accomplished work."

The story notes the presence of the Futurist painters Tai Kambara and Togo: two square faces with slanting eyes yellowish pulsating with a menacing Asianism

Entering the surgeon Pino Masnata: majestic in his white coat ravished by the murmuring and chanting moonlight over there

PINO MASNATA Most probably her beautiful face irredeemably spoiled but I'm trying anyway the miracle and Kambara your advice will comfort me you who translated with acumen Marinetti's words-in-freedom and painted as a frontispiece to his works translated into Japanese the intoxication of a blossoming cherry tree and remember while I am working at restoring the Florentine profile of Favolletta that you can advise me in this extremely difficult job and you too Togo remembering your glorious grandfather who in Tsuscima [sic] with only a little gesture of his hand turned the flagship thus obstructing the advance of the Russian fleet then defeating it.

After his successful operation, Masnata declares that he can also treat Favolletta's vocal chords to keep them as "elastic and vibrating as those of Marinetti", and adds:

Or if anything I can veil those [vocal chords] with a melodious slight slight raucousness and I think of Utamaro's brush dear Kambara and becoming for a moment Japanese I can make her smoothness a little bit wild make her less porcelain-like just as if the raw wind had processed it a little.

In Chapter 37 ("The Poet Surgeon on a Boat over the Arno with the Futurists Kambara and Togo"), Masnata boards a boat on the Arno River. Kambara and Togo, "with meticulous Asian steps", follow him to the boat, where he erupts in a love declaration to Favolletta:

PINO MASNATA Dear Futurists Togo and Tai Kambara I was looking at you while I was working [during the operation] and now I am tired and because of the effort my shoulders drop because I have to reveal to you my agonizing torture in front of that ideal beautiful girl that I was afraid of being unable to save from another aesthetic death nearly inevitable [...]

The surgeon weeps stroking with his religious hands the oar and trembling he adds panting "and I must confess that I madly love Favolletta my schoolmate and I would like to have her as my spouse and give her a portrait of herself painted by the two of you with that special art that condemns our vigorous syntheses and the penetrating character of Leonardo's brush and Michelangelo's devilish musculauty but is able with sketches of minuscule lines to signify many many impressions distances movements and in short Japanese Futurism is doing fine in its own way and better than Utamaro and Ukusai16 it wins the test And I remember sometimes with two dashes two splendid eyes Two dashes an unforgettable little nose two curves the voluptuous cheeks and one hundred and six dashes a river of boats in contemplation of the famous Japanese She TAI KAMBARA Her mouth is a strawberry of the kind that the Japanese grow on sunny terraces and ripen in winter boxed-in by little walls.

The historical accuracy of these episodes should certainly not be taken at face value. As research conducted both in Italy and in Japan has shown, there is no conclusive evidence that Kambara and Togō had ever been to Florence (much less together, or in the same year) before the Second World War, or that they had ever met people like Pino Masnata.13 As reported by Domenico Cammarota and Paolo Perrone Burali d'Arezzo, these two chapters were jointly written by Marinetti and Viviani.14 However, the insertion and treatment of these two Japanese characters should mainly be ascribed to Marinetti, who had contact with their real-life counterparts. If so, these chapters tell us, in a short-hand manner, something about the way he imagined Japan around the year 1944. In fact, Marinetti's treatment of these characters relies on trite, Orientalist and racialist traits ("two square faces with slanting eyes yellowish pulsating with a menacing Asianism", "meticulous Asian steps") as well as stock japonisme motifs (the image of "cherry trees", a geisha-esque portrait of Japanese femininity, and the mentioning of Utamaro and Hokusai, who are inserted in a short exposition on the nature of Asian painting). It also makes use of more recent militaristic tropes (the Russo-Japanese War) and, as an allusion to previous collaborations
that had almost attained the status of standard vignettes in the hagiography of the international success of Futurism, the definition of the two as "Futurist painters", who participated in a "Japanese Futurism" that "is doing fine in its own way." The two characters are invariably seen through the narrators' and the other Italian characters' Orientalist gaze. Togo is inarticulate and nearly deprived of agency, while Kambara is made to speak only once, for the sake of enunciating a stereotype of picturesque exquisiteness and dubious veracity, which merely echoes the sentiments previously offered by Masnara.

In short, these two chapters of Firenze biondazzurra represent summaries of some of the most cherished Japan-related tropes in Marinetti's writings, whose roots in some cases stretch back to decades before.

**Toward a Futurist construction of Japan**

As is widely known, a significant portion of Marinetti's literary production is marked by a strong Orientalist flavour. However, the essentialized and aestheticized Orient of Marinetti's works is not — and if so, only to a very small extent — represented by Far East fantasies and tropes, but rather by an imagined cultural geography that largely overlaps with the 'Orient' described by Edward Said in his classic Orientalism: that is, non-European Mediterranean countries and especially Egypt, where Marinetti was born in 1876 and where he lived until he was 18. I will not focus here on the many infections of this trope that appear throughout his work.

Building on extensive readings of Marinetti's prolific output, it is possible, on the other hand, to map out his construction of the "Far East", which comprises, as a significant sub-trope, Japan. Although Marinetti's interest in East Asia appears to be less distinct and detailed than that devoted to Africa and to the Near East, it is more manageable and can be studied more comprehensively.

Like many other thematic resources in Marinetti's literature, his use of Japan-related tropes seems, especially in its earlier stages, to be indebted to the Symbolist tradition that preceded the founding of Futurism. This tradition also included European japonisme, a set of discourses and practices of aesthetic consumption related to an exoticized and essentialized construction of Japan. Marinetti, a bilingual intellectual, was well aware of the international (especially French) incarnations of such discourses. This is particularly evident in his pre-Futurist literary œuvre written in French, where a number of unmistakable japonismes can be found.

Since Marinetti's interest in Japan appears to have remained relatively slight throughout his life, it may seem too fastidious to present clear-cut narratives about how his relationships with this Asian country, whether practical or symbolic, evolved during his life. However, for the sake of clarity, I suggest singling out three periods, whose thresholds roughly correspond to historically or biographically significant events:

a) until circa 1920, a period during which Marinetti's knowledge of Japan appears to be based mainly on second-hand sources, ranging from French and Italian japonisme to journalistic and diplomatic accounts;
b) from circa 1920, when traces of his relationships with Japanese intellectuals begin to appear in the Italian sources, to circa 1936-1937, the years of the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War and of the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact. The Italian-Japanese relations of the late 1930s sparked a renewed interest in Japan among those intellectuals who, like Marinetti, were supporting the Fascist regime;
c) from circa 1936-1937 to 1944, which includes the years of the Second World War and of the Italian Social Republic (RSI). During the latter, Marinetti and his wife Benedetta established a significant contact with Shinrokurō Hidaka (1893-1976), Japan's last ambassador to the Kingdom of Italy and to the RSI, a fact that seems to have spurred in the aging Marinetti a new interest in Japan.

It might be assumed that Marinetti's construction of "Japan" as a trope was at times parallel and at times alternative to the contemporary japoniste and post-japoniste discourses. The hybrid genealogy of this trope (comprising japoniste and racist discourses, journalistic accounts, direct communication with the locals or with Western 'insiders', Fascist and Japanese propaganda, etc.), contributed, in a way that was far from consistent or well planned, to the emergence of an alternative construction of 'Japan as a Futurist country.' As a result, Marinetti's texts appear to reflect, in some instances, an attempt to appropriate and colonize, on behalf of "Futurism", the territories of this imagined Japan.

In this paper, I will not focus on the evolution of "Japan" as a broad trope, but on the specific nexus between this country and Futurism as perceived by Marinetti. Therefore, I will only briefly refer to the first and third periods presented above.

As for the first period, according to the Japanese sources, a number of Japanese writers and artists had somehow established some contact with Marinetti or with his Edizioni Futuriste di "Poesia" before the First World War. They include Shōhachi Kimura (1893-1958), Yōjirō Uryū (b-?) and Kōtarō Takamura (1883-1956). However, as far as we know, these events did not find any echo in the Italian sources.
Moreover, during this phase, Marinetti still perceived Japan in a rather confused manner. In his writings of the 1910s, japoniste motifs coexisted with stereotyped and racially biased characterizations of Asians. On the other side, unverified anecdotal news and reports coming from the Russo-Japanese War shaped his image of Japan as a modern and militarily prepared country. His relationship with General Enrico Caviglia (1862–1945) played an important role in developing this perception. The alleged skill and valour of the Japanese troops during the Russo-Japanese War appear to have greatly impressed Marinetti’s imagination, to the extent that for many years he routinely associated Japan with the military exploits of Admiral Heihachirō Tōgō and his subordinates. This was still not enough to give more definite contours to his personal image of ‘Japan’: in what is one of the high points of this militaristic mythology, the famous interventionist manifesto “Sintesi futurista della guerra” (Futurist Synthesis of the War, 20 September 1914), Japan is still quite abstractly defined as one of the “poet-peoples” (popoli poeti) that fight against the Central Empires. Its characterization is still quite generic, as the paucity of its attributes (only three) shows: “agility”, “progress” and “resoluteness.”

To the Marinetti of the 1910s, Japan is, more than anything, “a terrifying collective entity, a poet-people” whose national essence matches some of the Futurist virtues. Because of its military history, Japan was a Futurist country despite the fact that, as far as Marinetti was aware at that time, it had no Futurist artists on its soil. This picture began to become more nuanced after the First World War and in the early 1920s.

1920–1936: “Futurism in Japan” takes human shape

The first half of the 1920s marked the high point of Marinetti’s relationships with Japanese intellectuals who sympathized with or were interested in Futurism. A number of documents trace the development of Marinetti’s image of Japan. It was no more (or at least not only) the land of faceless geishas or samurais, but a country populated by artists and intellectuals “of genius” who were engaged, with no less commitment than him, in the destruction of stale cultural institutions and in the creation of new and daring forms of art. A number of episodes from this fecund period have been identified and studied, and some are discussed in the other contributions to this book. Here is a list of the most significant:

1) Marinetti’s direct contact with Seiji Tōgō in 1921–1922; 20
2) Marinetti’s contact with Tai Kanbara, who also contributed to the Milanese newspaper L’Ambrosiano in 1924, and whose works were to some extent disseminated among the European Futurists; 21
3) Marinetti’s contact around 1922 with a number of Japanese artists operating in Germany (Tomoyoshi Murayama, Yoshimitsu Nagano and Tomoo Wadachi). There is some chance that Murayama and Nagano met Marinetti, but apparently they had less ephemeral contact with Ruggero Vasari (1898–1968), the Futurist lieutenant in Berlin. 22

The author and scholar Harukichi Shimoi (1883–1954), who was mainly active in Naples, had (mainly indirect) connections with Marinetti from around 1916 onwards, although he was not an avant-garde writer as such. 23 Both were on friendly terms with Gherardo Marone, editor of the Neapolitan literary magazine La Diana, and both participated in the First World War and in the occupation of Fiume in 1919–1920. 24

Since my narrative is focused on the Italian point of view, and since much valuable information on these contacts is given in the other contributions to this volume, I shall restrict myself in my essay to discussing Futurist images of Japan in Marinetti’s writings, especially two passages that testify to his renewed interest in Japan, as well as some other Italian sources.

The first one is the dedication which, as an epigraph, opens his political essay, Al di là del Comunismo (Beyond Communism, 1920): “To the Futurists in France, England, Spain, Russia, Hungary, Romania, Japan.” 25 This inclusion of Japanese artists as peers and comrades in the international struggle of Futurism against passésim chimes with an often-quoted passage in this pamphlet. After having expressed his delight in having learned “that Russian Futurists are all Bolsheviks and that for a while Futurist art was the official Russian art”, Marinetti concludes: “All the Futurisms of the world are the children of Italian Futurism, created by us in Milan twelve years ago. All Futurist movements are nevertheless autonomous. Every people has had, or still has, its passésim to overthrow.” 26 Certainly Japan was no exception to this state of affairs, as the epigraph of the book seems to confirm.

The inclusion of Japan in this worldwide fervour and internationalist enthusiasm was still rather abstract in 1920, when Marinetti’s knowledge of the modern art of that country was nearly nonexistent. However, this wishful inclusion was soon corroborated by the discovery of a number of authors to be included in his grandiose vision of a “world-wide Futurism.” Together with the parallel calls to
internationalization enacted by such magazines as Ruggero Vasari’s Der Futurismus (1922) or Enrico Prampolini’s Noi (We, 1917-1920, 1923-1925). This internationalist vision reached its climax around 1924, the year of the presentation of the manifesto “Le Futurisme mondial: Manifeste à Paris.” Here, Marinetti lists the names of a number of “powerful spirits who collaborated with us, or who, far from us but in a parallel way, manifest the great religion of the new, against all steps back and against all pessimisms.” Presented as contributors to the “great FUTURIST PARIS, which changes its perspective every day”, the other “capitals of the universe” are listed together with the names of the members of their local contingents. Reproducing a Eurocentric imaginary geography, this “ridiculously inflated list” begins with Italy and, after mentioning nearly all the capitals of Western and Eastern Europe, crosses the Atlantic to New York and Chicago, and to the unspecified “capitals of South America.” Japan appears at the end, as the only Asian country. The Futurists in “Tokyo-Yokohama” are: “Tai Kambara, Togo, Hirato, Nagano, Murayama,” that is, all the Japanese artists whose existence had been to some extent discovered by Marinetti in the early 1920s. Apparently, there is no trace or memory of Marinetti’s previous contacts, such as Shōhachi Kimura. This may mean that Marinetti had simply forgotten about those episodes from about ten years before, or perhaps that he perceived his unsystematic contact with Japanese artists in the 1910s as something qualitatively different from his relationship with this new wave of Asian Futurists. The latter were part of a more conscious international avant-garde, and therefore worthy of inclusion in his recent canon of a “world-wide Futurism.”

One of the corollaries of this vision was the indisputable influence that Futurism exerted on the art in the Far East. One early instance of this conviction can be found in the autobiographical novel L’alcova d’acciaio (The Alcove Made of Steel, 1921). In the summer of 1918, during a leave from military service, the soldier Marinetti pays a visit to the salon of Maria Mazzoleni in Rome, a place where “the most significant and original people in the Capital” congregate. Among them are “diplomats, poets, artists, musicians, inventors, Indian princes, theatre celebrities, the most unexpected human products from the Far East, heroic officers, world record holders and beautiful ladies.” When the conversation shifts from politics to the arts and following a recitation of parole in libertà by Marinetti, “an attaché at the Chinese embassy tells us about the decisive influence of the painter Boccioni on the art of the Far East.”

As we shall see, in Marinetti’s view, this influence was to be confirmed by Tai Kambara’s books and, indirectly, by a speech delivered by Ikuma Arishima in Buenos Aires in 1936.

Marinetti’s interest in Japan climaxcd in 1924, and afterwards appears to have waned progressively. This may be related to a revival of the nationalistic cultural agenda of Fascism, a trait that seems to be in line with the polemics against xenophile trends and fashions in the Italian cultural world – polemics in which Marinetti himself engaged during the late 1920s and the 1930s. Accordingly, Marinetti’s activities in this period were more centred on Italy than before. With the sole exception of Kanbara, who seems to have remained in touch with Marinetti (although in a seemingly superficial way, as their communication might have involved only a periodic exchange of complimentary copies of their respective new publications), Marinetti’s relationship with Japanese intellectuals apparently came to an end, for either material or artistic reasons (e.g., Togó’s disenchantment with Futurism, which had matured by the end of 1922).

I would suggest that only in 1936, when Marinetti interacted with the Japanese delegation at the international congress of the PEN Clubs in Buenos Aires, significant contacts with Japanese intellectuals were re-established, although not necessarily with members of the avant-garde of that country. Of course, it is likely that Marinetti, due to his active social life, did come into contact with other Japanese nationals before 1936. In any case, it seems that significant traces of such contacts, if there were any, are still to be located in his writings.

Marinetti planned, or simply pondered over, a trip to Japan a number of times in his life. In the extant correspondence with Togó, this subject is broached as early as 1922. According to some Japanese sources, Harukichi Shimoj was somehow involved in the organization of a trip of the Marinettis to Japan, which was planned for 1925 but which never actually took place. According to Shinrokuró Hidaka, another trip was planned around 1935 but had to be postponed because of the beginning of the Italo-Abyssinian War. It may be that Marinetti had considered extending his South American tour of 1936 to East Asia. A letter of 1937 from the Italian “Ministry of the Press and Propaganda” preserved in the Marinetti Papers at the Getty Research Institute “regret[s]” that the Ministry is not “able to fund Marinetti’s trip to America, China and Japan.”

Marinetti’s work of the late 1920s and early 1930s does not make any significant use of Japan-related tropes. The most interesting case is perhaps Dramma di distanze (Drama of Distances, a “radio synthesis” first published in 1941 but conceived some ten years earlier), a montage of seven sound segments of eleven seconds each from seven different places across the world. Japan is represented by “11 seconds of a Japanese religious music played in Tokyo.”
While direct references to Japan were relatively scarce in Marinetti's published works, and while the correspondence to and from his Japanese contacts has yet to be located (with the sole exception of a group of letters by Seiji Tógó preserved at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, which have been published by Toshiharu Omuka), Marinetti’s unpublished papers may provide some interesting information.

For instance, the Libroni preserved at the Beinecke Library contain some items that can help to shed light on Marinetti's contacts with Japan. This paper is too short to provide a full survey of these items, so I will focus only on the most significant among them.

Basically, the items related to Japan in the Libroni can be divided into two groups: those of Japanese origin, and those of Western (mainly Italian) origin.

The first group includes the following (of course, Marinetti was unable to read these materials, which in most cases were probably sent to him by Kanbara):

1) Newspaper clippings from the Yomiuri shinbun:

2) A copy of Renkichi Hirato’s leaflet Nihon miraiha sengen undō – Mouvement Futuriste japonais par R-Hyrate (late 1921). (GEN MSS 475/01579-01)

3) Four postcards with reproductions of paintings by Seiji Tógó: Parasoru saseru oflna (Woman with Parasol, 1916), Ušità poro (Water Polo, 1919), Kōjō (Factory, 1920), Pantomaimu (Pantomime, 1920). These are well-known postcards from the series printed in Japan by the Nikakai (GEN MSS 475/00672-01). Two of the same cards (Kōjō and Pantomaimu) can be found in the Mino Somenzi fund in the MART’s 'Archivio del'900” (Som VI.11.391-392). The cards in the Somenzi fund present on their back the following handwriting: "Futurista Togo nipote dell’ammiraglio Togo vincitore di Zuscíma" (Futurist Togo, grandchild of Admiral Togo, winner of Tsushima) (on the back of Pantomaimu) and "Togo futurista giapponese" (on the back of Kōjō).

4) Promotional card for an exhibition by Yosida Ken [Kenkichi Yoshida, 1897-1982]. 1924. Text by Tai Kanbara. Unfortunately, the text is almost unreadable. (GEN MSS 475/13514-05)

The second group is mainly formed by articles in Italian-language periodicals. Among them, the most significant are probably the following:


And:


Ikuma Arishima (1882-1974), an established art critic and author who played a remarkable role in the
cultural politics of Japan in the late 1930s and 1940s, was conversant in Italian. As an early presenter and translator of the European postimpressionist painters, he had also published in 1915 a chapter of Umberto Boccioni's *Pittura scultura futuriste*, which he translated directly from Italian. According to Seiji Tōgō's memoirs, when Tōgō met Marinetti in 1921, he carried with him a letter of reference from Arishima, who had been enlightening him on Italian Futurism since 1915, and to whom, in the early 1920s, Tōgō addressed some of his most significant letters from France. The mention of Arishima, therefore, leads us to the circumstances of his contact with Marinetti in the late 1930s. Their interaction appears to gravitate around the international activities of the PEN Clubs.

1936: The International Congress of the PEN Clubs in Buenos Aires

The fourteenth international congress of the PEN Clubs was held in Buenos Aires from 5 to 15 September 1936, amid controversies that reflected the rising political tensions among European powers. Despite the abundant press coverage of the event (Marinetti's *Libroni* contain more than one hundred clippings related to the congress), this episode has been little studied.

Marinetti participated as the president of the Italian delegation, which also included Giuseppe Ungaretti, Enzo Ferrieri and Mario Puccini. As is shown by the journalistic sources and the proceedings of the congress, Marinetti was among the most active delegates, especially because, in the absence of any representative of Nazi Germany, he was perceived by many participants as an advocate of the cultural politics of European Fascism. In the most climactic episode, the French delegate Jules Romains questioned a number of pro-war statements published by Marinetti in the previous months. Romains held that such stance, being contrary to the pacifist spirit of the PEN, made Marinetti unfit to preside over a session of the congress. Marinetti struggled to defend Italy and Fascism by claiming that the condition of the writers in his country was significantly different from Germany, and a heated debate ensued.

Whereas Marinetti spent most of his time in the spotlight, the same cannot be said of the Japanese delegation, whose members were characterized by their extremely inconspicuous and low-profile behaviour (their main goal was to bring home some assurance regarding Tokyo's bid to host the 1940 Congress). The Japanese delegation was formed by Tōson Shimazaki (1872-1943) and Ikuma Arishima, who then acted, respectively, as president and vice president of the Japanese PEN Club. Shimazaki was an established novelist who, before espousing Naturalist or semi-Naturalist poetics, had begun his career as a poet. He was far from being considered an avant-garde writer, and the proceedings record only one statement by him (that he uttered in Japanese, despite the fact that he was fairly conversant in French and English).

Arishima is a far more interesting character, if seen from Marinetti's point of view.

I don't know how many years ago in Buenos Aires I sarcastically challenged the French congressmen of the PEN Club who were accusing me of overconfident Italianess but sure they felt bemused when the Japanese writer Hirashiovara stood up to improvise a long praise of Italy in the Italian language.

*Una sensibilità italiana nata in Egitto* (An Italian Sensibility Born in Egypt, published posthumously in 1969), from which this passage is taken, is the conventional title of a semi-autobiographical work that, together with *Firenze biondazzurra* and other works, is quite representative of the last phase of Marinetti's literature. *Una sensibilità italiana* was composed between autumn 1943 and summer 1944, that is, shortly before or partly overlapping with *Firenze biondazzurra*, which was written between 20 July and 20 August 1944. It is quite likely that the "Hiraschivara" of this passage refers to Arishima, although it is not clear how his name was altered in this peculiar way. Since Arishima's speech is not recorded in the Buenos Aires proceedings, its exact contents, as well as its degree of support for Marinetti or Fascism, are left to speculation. Yuki Meno noted that similar events took place during the following PEN Congress, in Paris (20-27 June 1937). Under attack from the antifascist front within the executive committee of the PEN federation, Marinetti eventually had to resign from his position as president of the Italian PEN Club. On that occasion, Arishima, as the chief of the Japanese delegation, attended the meetings of the executive committee, and probably had some role in mediating, if not in supporting Marinetti and the Italian delegation.

Arishima had resided in Italy in 1905-1906 in order to, among other things, study the language, and was officially invited there in 1936 for about a year, immediately after the Argentinean PEN Congress. His activities during this sojourn in Italy and, more generally, during the late 1930s and the 1940s have only recently become the object of academic interest. As of now, it is not known if he had any contact with Marinetti after the PEN Congress in Paris.
1937-1944: From presence to memory

It appears that a connection can be drawn between the strengthening of diplomatic and political ties between Italy and Japan and a significant (however marginal in many respects) resurgence of Italian interest in the latter’s “culture”, manifested both in Italian academia and general media in the late 1930s and early 1940s. What Giuseppe Tucci (1894-1984) – one of the most prominent Italian Orientalists, and a member of the Royal Academy of Italy – wrote in 1943 about the “desire of providing Italian readers with a brief orientation to the spiritual complexity and richness of a people that today join their fate in arms with us” rings fundamentally true for a number of editorial and cultural initiatives that had begun to take place in the late 1930s.

Marinetti’s most significant involvement in this officially encouraged climate of Italian-Japanese friendship appears in the book Giappone: Volume dedicato all’amicizia italo-giapponese (Japan: A Volume Devoted to the Friendship between Italy and Japan, 1942). His contribution is represented by two writings: “Il futurismo e le avanguardie letterarie e artistiche in Giappone” (Futurism and the Japanese Avant-garde in Literature and in the Arts) and “Manifesto di Marinetti e degli aeroprotitori italiani ai futuristi giapponesi” (Manifesto by Marinetti and the Italian Aeroprotitors to the Japanese Futurists).

An analysis of these two pieces demonstrates clearly that Marinetti was mechanically recycling the information on Japan he had gathered in the early 1920s, with only minor additions. In particular, in the first piece, Yoshimitsu Nagano’s paintings and Tai Kanbara’s poem that had already appeared in Noi in 1923 are presented again, and Togo’s illustrious military ancestry is duly remembered. Perhaps the most recent event mentioned by Marinetti is the publication by Kanbara of a “great work on world painting [...] where French Cubism and the other European Futurisms appeared dominated by the Futurism of Boccioni Russolo Balla Severini Carrà and where sculpture was totally represented by the Italian genius of Umberto Boccioni.” This may be a vague reference to Kanbara’s *Futurizumu Ekusupuresshonizumu Dadaizumu* (Futurism, Expressionism, Dadaism, 1937), of which Marinetti was somewhat aware, as shown by the clippings in the Libroni mentioned above. In the same essay, Kanbara and Togo are described as the leaders of a “neatly patriotic Futurism that however respected the most important traditions of the old Japan”, and that has defeated the “few Communist Futurists influenced by Paris.” At this stage, Marinetti appears dramatically ignorant of the latest developments in the Japanese avant-garde, and completely isolated from the most advanced Japanese artists. The central actors in his narrative of the Japanese avant-garde are all projected into the past, while today’s “avant-garde innovators and Japanese Futurists”, ostensibly the addressees of his manifesto, remain nameless. The manifesto appears therefore to be largely fictional and even gloomily ritualistic.

After the Armistice of 8 September 1943, the Marinettis moved to Venice, where they struck up a friendship with Shinroku Hidaka, the Japanese ambassador to the Italian Social Republic. This camaraderie apparently spurred in Marinetti a renewed sense of familiarity with “Japan.” However, Hidaka’s accounts and the reports from the Pacific front of the war were rearticulated by Marinetti in writings that significantly departed from his former interest in the creative and artistic developments of Japanese “Futurism.” These writings have instead as their mythopoetic core an aestheticization of death and war so blatant that it surpasses even the most common stereotypes on the topic of “fascist aesthetics.” They include the ominous “Siluri umani giapponesi” (Japanese Human Torpedoes) and “Aeropoeema degli aviatori giapponesi” (The Aeropoeam of the Japanese Aviators), which prefigure respectively the *kaiten* suicide crafts and the kamikaze missions. Both texts are, together with their drafts, variants and re-usages, traceable to the first half of 1944.

In the same months, Marinetti was composing his recollections of his own life and of the history of Futurism. Together with a novel repertoire of Fascist and militaristic images of Japanese-ness, the new political and personal climate of the 1940s also produced in him a resurgence of his older memories connected to Japan (many dating back to the 1920s), with which he disseminated his very last memorial production. Despite the recent addition of more sinister overtones, “Japan” was still present in the mind of the aging Marinetti as a synecdoche for a Golden Age in which the international vocation of Futurism was triumphant. The persistence of such an image of Japan is clear in *Firenze biondazzurra* (July-August 1944). In this book of fantasized pseudo-memories written in the months of a painful retreat, the Japanese characters are somewhat symbols of an idealized past filled with optimistic energy.
In the conference transcript "D'Annunzio e il Futurismo" (D'Annunzio and Futurism), published in the Japan Foundation Japanese Studies Fellowship (Scholars and Researchers, Short Term). I wish to express my gratitude to the Japan Foundation for this opportunity. Günter Berghaus provided crucial information and suggestions during various stages of my research.

1. Some of the materials presented in this paper were collected during a stay in Japan in June and July 2012, financed by the Japan Foundation Japanese Studies Fellowship (Scholars and Researchers, Short Term). I wish to express my gratitude to the Japan Foundation for this opportunity. Günter Berghaus provided crucial information and suggestions during various stages of my research.


7. Ibid., p. 155.

8. Ibid., p. 151.

9. Ibid., p. 152.

10. The two artists had appeared with the same spelling in a passage of Marinetti's Taccuini (Notebooks) reporting his meeting with Enrico Caviglia, an Italian general who was also a connoisseur of things Japanese. See Marinetti: Taccuini, pp. 235-236 (5 May 1918).


12. This is certainly confirmed in the case of Kanbara, who never travelled to Europe before the Second World War. As for Tōgō, he reported in his post-war memoirs that he visited Florence and Rome during his trips to Italy in 1921-1922. See Tōgō: "Dadaizumu to miraiha", p. 71; "Taishōki no shinkō bijutsu undō wo megutte (3); Nikakai ni okeru shinkō bijutsu no ugoki: Tōgō Seiji-shi ni kiku (2)"; "Watashi no rirekisho", p. 244.

13. On 21 January 1922, works by Tōgō and Matsunaga were exhibited in the Teatro Modernissimo in Bologna (as mentioned above, Tōgō took part in the ensuing serata). However, it is not known if the two men were met in person.


15. Preliminary investigations in this direction have been conducted in Tommasi: "Il Giappone di Marinetti: L'Estremo Oriente nei testi del padre del Futurismo."


18. Caviglia distinguished himself during the First World War, when he probably made the acquaintance of Marinetti, who, as is well known, was at the front as a volunteer. In 1920, Caviglia commanded the Italian troops who ended D'Annunzio's occupation of Fiume. He is mentioned in Marinetti's Taccuini, just as Marinetti and his wife Benedetta are mentioned in Caviglia's published diary, which covers the years from 1925 to 1945. Caviglia: Diario 1925 - 1945, pp. 59, 229-230, 333, 365, 365. Among his former duties, Caviglia had acted as the Italian military attaché in Tokyo and Beijing from 1904 to 1911. In this faculty, he followed the military evolution of the Russo-Japanese War; back in Italy, where he was considered for many years as an expert on the "Far East", he wrote extensively on this and other topics related to East Asia.


20. For further details and bibliography see Omuka: Taishōki shinkō bijutsu undō no kenkyū, chap. 2, and Nishino: "Avangarudo shi shi kō (9): Tōgō Seiji no miraiha = "A/Z on Avant-garde Magazines (9): Seidži Togo the Futurist."

21. For further details and bibliography see Takaoka: "Kanbara Tai bunko ni yoseter Miraiha hen."

22. Omuka: Taishōki shinkō bijutsu undō no kenkyū, chap. 6, especially pp. 376-386.

23. Research on Shimoi has witnessed significant developments in the last decade, both in Italy and Japan. See Di Russo: "Harukichi Shimoi, il giapponese amico di D'Annunzio"; Italia-Giappon: 450 anni, pp. 380-404 (contributions by Isabella Brunetti, Felicita Valeria Merlino, Marisa Di Russo); Ouchi: "Itaria ni okeru Shimoi Harukichi no katsudō"; Doi: "Shimoi Harukichi e due riviste napoletane"; Fujikawa: "Shimoi Harukichi to Itaria fashizumu: Dannuntsu, Musoririn, Nihon."


27. The references to Japan in Noi are listed in Chikako Takaoka's contribution to this volume. The digitized version of Noi is available in the "C.I.R.C.E." database (Università degli Studi di Trento), http://circe.lett.unitn.it/ (consulted 05/11/2012).


32. Ibid., pp. 138-139.

33. At present, the correspondence between the two seems to have been dispersed or destroyed. Two of the most reliable sources for determining when the contact between Kanbara and Marinetti ceased are Kanbara's Futurist fund in the Ōbara Museum of Art in Kuraashiki and Marinetti's *Libroni*. As for the first, Chikako Takaoka effectively listed those items that show explicit traces of an interaction between the two, such as handwritten dedications on complimentary copies of books. The most recent of these items seem to be two copies of *Gli aeropieti futuristi dedicano al Duca Il poema di Torre Viscosa*. Parole in libertà futuriste, published in September 1938 (F-227, F-228) (Takaoka: "Kanbara Tai bunko ni yosete", pp. 221-222). The *Libroni* contain at least two clippings from Italian newspapers of 1937 that report the publication of a book that can be identified as Kanbara's *Fūchūrīzuzu Eikusupāresōnīzuzu Dadai'izuzu* (see below).

34. For instance, the contact between the Italian Futurists (among them Enrico Prampolini) and the modernist photographer Iwata Nakayama (1895-1949) during his stay in Paris around 1926-1927, as well as the role possibly played by Tógō as a go-between, probably requires further investigation. See Lista: *Cinema e fotografia futurista*, pp. 269-270.

35. It may be useful to compare this situation to the Japanese contacts that Gabriele D'Annunzio had in those years, as illustrated in Muramatsu: "La fortuna dannunziana nel primo Novecento: Studi dei documenti giapponesi nell'Archivio del Vittoriano degli Italiani."


37. See "Miraitha no e wo tazusaer Sōshisha "o S"-shg" myóshun raichó; Danunchio.shi wa taisakuchú to; Kaetta Shimoi-shi ga Ikoku no tayorti" (Will Carry with Him Futurist Paintings: The Founder of Futurism, Mr. S, to Come to Japan Next Spring; Mr. D'Annunzio Currently Working on a Magnum Opus: A Correspondence from Italy by Mr. Shimoi Who Has Come Back to Japan) in the *Yomuri shinbun* of 14 December 1924. In this article Marinetti's name is misspelled as "Sukenitté."


39. As described in the collection inventory, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti correspondence and papers, 1886-1974 (bulk 1900-1944), Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Accession no. 850702. Series I, Box 2, Folder 28 (1937 Apr - Dec). I haven't inspected this item directly.


42. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti *Libroni on Futurism*. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/digitallibrary/libroni.html (consulted 04/11/2012).


44. Also reprinted in KSGS-SZ, vol. 6 (1925-1926), p. 249.

45. The original can also be retrieved in the digital library of the Biblioteca Provinciale Italiana Claudia Augusta (Bolzano), http://www.bpi.claudiaaugusta.it/en/laprovinciadibolzano.cfm (consulted 05/11/2012).

46. Meno: "Shōwaki ni okeru Arishima Ikuma shiron."

47. Omuka: *Taisboki shinkō bijutsu undo no kenkyū*, p. 105. It is not clear whether this letter was specifically addressed to Marinetti, and whether Arishima had had previous contacts with the Futurist leader.


50. XIVe Congrès international des P.E.N. Clubs, p. 10.


52. XIVe Congrès international des P.E.N. Clubs, pp. 72-73.

53. Marinetti: *La grande Milano tradizionale e futurista, Una sensibilità italiana nata in Egitto*, p. 323.


55. It should be remembered that *Unà sensibilità italiana*, like many other works of Marinetti's last years, was mainly dictated by the author to his daughter Vittoria or other collaborators.
56. Arishima recollected these events when interviewed in “L’influenza dell’arte occidentale su quella giapponese” (see above), confirming that he had spoken in Italian during the debate.

57. Meno: “Kimyōna toshi: 1937nen Pari no Arishima Ikuma ni tsuite”, pp. 30-34, 37. See also XVe Congrès International de la Fédération P.E.N. Paris 20-27 juin 1937. As in Buenos Aires 1936, the proceedings contain only the transcripts of the plenary sessions.

58. Besides the studies by Meno, already mentioned, see Meno: “Senzenki Nihon Pen kurabu setsuritsu wo meguru kokusai jōsei”, pp. 111-112.

59. As noted by Omuka (Tuisboki shinkō bijutsu undō no kenkyū, p. 120, n. 7), Arishima’s visiting card in the Marinetti Papers in Yale can be dated to his Italian sojourn of 1936-1937.

60. It should be remembered that a “Japanese-Italian cultural agreement” (Nichii bunka kyōtei) had been signed in March 1939.


62. The first page of the “Manifesto” is reproduced in Granieri: “L’aura futurista in Giappone”, p. 137.

63. Marinetti: “Il futurismo e le avanguardie letterarie e artistiche in Giappone.”


65. As Günter Berghaus brought to my attention, in the “Panorama sintetico di tutti gli inventori dell’arte moderna” (Synthetic Overview of All the Inventors of Modern Art), a somewhat up-dated version of “Le Futurisme mondial” that was published in Artecrizia in January 1939, “the architects of the Public Works Office in Tokyo [Ufficio Lavori Pubblici di Tochio]” and “Bunzō Yamaguchi” are mentioned as Japanese representatives of non-Jewish modern art. This attestation is extremely interesting, for it does not list the usual canon of Japanese artists (Kanbara, Tōgō, etc.), while focusing, as for the other countries, on architects instead. This fact is perhaps to be attributed to the architects Alberto Sartoria and Giuseppe Terragni, whose signatures, together with Marinetti’s, seal this document.


62. This "宣言" (宣言) has no English translation. Granieri: "Laura futurista in Giappone", p. 137.

63. Marinetti: "Il futurismo e le avanguardie letterarie e artistiche in Giappone."

64. Marinetti, et al.: "Manifesto di Marinetti e degli aeropieti aeropitori italiani ai futuristi giapponesi", 266.

65. The Futurist's letter to his All about the future of Japan, as quoted in Granieri: "Laurafuturista in Giappone", p. 137.

66. Marinetti: "I futurismo e le avanguardie letterarie e artistiche in Giappone.""Un manifesto di Marinetti e degli aeropieti aeropitori italiani ai futuristi giapponesi", 266.


72. "'未来派の絵を携へ 創始者のス氏が明春来朝 ダヌチオ氏は大作中と 間錦の下位氏が伊国 の便り' 1924年12月14日。


主要参考文献


- "'未来派の絵を携へ 創始者のス氏が明春来朝 ダヌチオ氏は大作中と 間錦の下位氏が伊国 の便り' 1924年12月14日。


- Un libro giapponese sul Futurismo.” La provincia di Bolzano. 10 December 1937.


45


Filippo Tommaso Marinetti correspondence and papers, 1886-1974 (bulk 1900-1944). Getty Research Institute, Research Library.

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti Libroni on Futurism. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/digitallibrary/libroni.html (consulted 04/11/2012).

図版-2 東郷青児による1920年作の絵画《ハントマイム》と《工場》の転写書、各宛名面の手書きのメモ
トレント・ロヴェレット近現代美術館、アーカイブ900ミーノ・ソメンテ文庫（Som VI.11.391-392）