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2025 KYOTO LECTURES

Tuesday, June 20th, 18:00h

Antonio Manieri SPEAKER

“Everyday Uncertainties”

Sharing and Learning
Terminologies in
Eighth-century Japan

Some bilingual Sinitic-Japanese dictionaries dating back to the early eighth century, and collectively known as *kangoshō* (lit. ‘notes on Chinese words’), are now lost and survive only in indirect transmission thanks to quotations in the later *Wamyōruijushō* (Categorized Notes on Japanese Nouns, ca. 934). The reconstruction of these dictionaries shows that they were likely organized into categories, they collected *hapax*, or words rarely attested in refined literature, and they were useful for “dispelling everyday uncertainties.”

This talk will investigate the actual usage of vernacular terminologies (hippology, carpentry, craftsmanship) recorded in *kangoshō* within practical documents (transit permits, registers, budgets) written in Sinitic on wooden tablets or on paper, regardless of the availability of equivalent Sinitic terms. Specifically, it will explore the factors that motivated such departures from established norms and their implications for the communicative efficacy of the documents in question. In addition, particular attention will be devoted to the process of sharing and learning terminologies among different actors of the eighth-century code-based state, such as professional groups, clerks, and scholars charged with compiling dictionaries.

Antonio Manieri received his PhD from Daito Bunka University (Tokyo) in 2012, thanks to a MEXT scholarship. Currently, he is a Senior Assistant Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Naples L’Orientale (Italy). His research interests focus on lexicography and encyclopedism, legal texts, and practical/technical knowledge in ancient Japan. His most recent article, entitled “Technical Education in Nara Japan: Text and Context of the *Yōshi kangoshō* (ca. 720)”, was published in the 2022 issue of *Annali – Serie Orientale*.

This lecture will be held on Zoom (meeting ID: 824 6462 2137).

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