

## ERC Advanced Grant 2020 Part B2

### Section a. State-of-the-art and objectives

#### Project background

The Italian scholar Giuseppe Tucci (1894-1984) has often been described as an exceptional figure, especially for his remarkable talent with languages (he mastered Sanskrit, Tibetan, Hebrew, Persian, Chinese and Bengali, as well as Latin, Greek and major Western European languages). He was deeply interested in Buddhist philosophy and Indian Studies and spent five years in India where he dedicated himself to teaching at several Universities and to the search of the Buddhist civilisation that by then had disappeared from its land of origin. In his quest for Buddhist scriptures and art, he turned his attention to China and eventually Tibet, which became his main focus of interest.

Tucci's desire to follow the routes of Tibetan masters who travelled to India to collect Buddhist books, translate, and study them led him to organise several scientific expeditions exploring different areas of Tibet, Nepal, and northern India. Deeply aware that it was important to know the land and the people in order to understand Buddhist cultures, he organised 14 expeditions between 1926 and 1954 (Nalesini 2008), providing Western people with a wealth of new information on various facets of Tibetan culture. Results of the first seven explorations can be found in the seven volumes of his *Indo-Tibetica* (published between 1932 and 1941 and translated in many languages including Chinese).

He collected thousands of Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs, over 50 Sanskrit manuscripts (Sferra 2008), thousands of photographs of visited places and texts, and numerous art objects. In 1933 he established the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (IsMEO, later IsIAO), which became an international hub for research into Asian cultures. Tucci authored more than 350 publications (Petech & Scialpi 1984) and also produced documentaries related to his missions. Photographs and art objects collected by Tucci during his expeditions were preserved at the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale "Giuseppe Tucci", now Museo delle Civiltà (Nalesini 2012: 29).

#### Project Justification

Since May 2019 the Tucci Tibetan Collection is finally and concretely accessible to scholars after several years of impediments of various nature. Items previously preserved at the IsIAO Library are now available for consultation in a dedicated room called "Biblioteca IsIAO" – Sala delle collezioni africane e orientali, located at the Central National Library of Rome (BNCR).

The Collection includes about 2600 volumes and has been entirely catalogued by Elena De Rossi Filibeck (De Rossi Filibeck 1994, 2003, 2020).

A small number of works have been studied over the years by scholars across the world starting from Tucci himself (Clemente 2014). However, the majority of texts included in the Collection is hitherto unexplored. That is especially true for *Bon* texts (Rossi 2009). The *Bon* corpus includes 78 volumes (vols. 489-566) which correspond to 13.369 folios. The volumes were collected during the 1935 expedition: some were acquired from groups of *Bon* pilgrims who were circumambulating the sacred Mount Kailash; others were bought from a *Bon* master with whom Tucci established a relationship during his scientific mission in 1933 (Tucci 1937: 105, 129).

Textual scholarship has a long and rich history in the Tibetan culture and has been at the core of Tibetan studies. Hundreds of thousands of books have been produced, transmitted, and reproduced again and again over the centuries. In recent years we have been witnessing a growing interest in this field and an increasing attention to books, not only for their content but also for their physical features and their social life as objects (Almogi, Delhey, MacDonald & Pouvkova 2015; Almogi, Kindzorra, Hahn & Rabin 2015; Chayet, Scherrer-Schaub, Robin & Achard 2010; Clemente 2020; Diemberger 2012; Diemberger, Elliott & Clemente 2014). Issues concerning material and visual aspects of Tibetan book culture (codicology, paleography, writing materials, economical aspect of book production, networks of patronage, technology, craftsmanship and art) have come to the forefront of Tibetan Studies (Almogi 2016).

However, research conducted thus far mainly focused on Buddhist books. Codicological studies on *Bon* scriptures are limited to the recent pioneering research on the so-called *Mardzong manuscripts* ([http://mustang.uw.edu.pl/?page\\_id=7453&lang=en](http://mustang.uw.edu.pl/?page_id=7453&lang=en)), a Collection of 5.095 folios (Helman-Ważny 2018), and the *Drangsong Collection* ([http://mustang.uw.edu.pl/?page\\_id=7455&lang=en](http://mustang.uw.edu.pl/?page_id=7455&lang=en)), consisting of 2.900 folios, cards, and individual sheets of paper representing the ritual repertoire of the royal priests of Mustang, Nepal (Helman-Ważny & Ramble [forthcoming]).

The *Bon* corpus within the Collection is heterogeneous and includes several miscellaneous works belonging to different literary genres; a significant number of texts (fifty) belongs to the philosophical category of the *Great Perfection* (pr. dzogchen, Tib. *rDzogs chen*) which is revered as the most celebrated sapiential tradition in Tibet in that it embodies the epitome of esoteric principles and soteriologic advice (Rossi 1999).

From a codicological viewpoint, these books differ in size, layout, frontispiece, style of illuminations, scripts, and so on. Luxury manuscripts written with gold, silver, cinnabar, and lapis lazuli inks on black paper are also preserved in the Collection. Such lavish manuscripts can often be found in Tibetan Buddhist corpora, many of which have already been examined. On the contrary, such productions in the *Bon* cultural context have never been examined in detail thus far. The Collection also includes xylographs. While Tibetan Buddhism has a long and widespread tradition of xylographic textual reproduction, that has not been the case with *Bon*, which always favoured the use of manuscripts, partly because of lack of substantial patronage.

By examining the xylographs included in the Collection from the codicological, material, artistic, and philosophical viewpoints, the Project will provide new insights on the realisation and use of tangible and intangible knowledge within the *Bon* tradition. The Project is groundbreaking because after decades of oblivion it will provide access, through an online Database and an in-depth Catalogue, to images, material analysis, codicological, philosophical, and semantic description of a unique textual corpus. The Project is a complete unit in itself but is conceived to be expanded to the whole Tibetan Collection in the long run.

## Project Objectives

The Project has three interconnected Objectives.

### OBJECTIVE 1: Digitise the *Bon* Collection and make it accessible online; provide an in-depth cataloguing of the texts; build a Database and a Website.

Objective 1 will be carried out by two scholars specialised in the *Bon* tradition (Researchers 1 and 2) and by an IT specialist (Researcher 3). Researchers 1 and 2 will firstly digitise the *Bon* collection, using a planetary scanner, with the assistance of Researcher 3. After completing this task, Researchers 1 and 2 will start working at the detailed cataloguing of the collection by studying each text and describing literary genre, author/editor/treasure discoverer, chapter titles, incipit, explicit, colophons. They will also provide information on possible further editions, translations, and studies undertaken on each text. A similar in-depth cataloguing of *Bon* texts has so far only been undertaken for the Tibetan Bonpo Canon (Martin, Kværne & Nagano 2003). The PI was among the scholars who achieved such result; she will therefore work at the cataloguing and supervise Researchers 1 and 2. Information obtained by this thorough study will be inserted into the Database and marked up to be easily searchable. The Database will be built by Researcher 3 by using an Open Source platform called xDams which allows to preserve, organise, and share images and information related to the Collection (see Section b, Methodology: WP1). In terms of text cataloguing, a Template will be developed in order to include all significant data to allow maximum fruition of the single texts. The Database will also contain codicological features, material analysis, conservation data, semantic and philosophical aspects as well as images of the texts. Images will be processed by Researcher 3, uploaded onto the Project Website and linked to the Database. They will also be uploaded onto an archival system for long-term storage. The Database will be accessible through the Website. The latter will be designed to be easily used by both scholars and general audiences. The organisation of the material according to several guided paths will lead users to discover different subjects related to the Collection such as for example *Bon* culture, *Bon* Texts (manuscripts, xylographs), Illumination and Illustrations, Materials (paper, pigments, ink, wood and other organic and mineral substances), Philosophy. Videos and pictures taken during fieldwork will be uploaded on the Website to show places where the *Bon* tradition still lives as well as paper, ink, pigments manufacture, document findings. That will make Project results not only accessible to academic audiences and *Bon* communities, who will be able to browse through the Database and see images of the texts, but also to a wider audience. Information on the Project will be accessible through the Website starting

from the second year. All events, lectures, workshops, and other types of outreach activities (see section b, Methodology: Dissemination) will be advertised on the Website.

**OBJECTIVE 2: Investigate the codicology of *Bon* manuscripts and xylographs; collect information on their production; identify materials used to make books; explore approaches and methods of conservation which respect the spiritual and environmental value of manuscripts and xylographs.**

Collected data will be compared with results of the analysis of *Bon* texts included in the *Mardzong* and *Drangsong* Collections. From research undertaken so far, there is compelling evidence suggesting that *Bon* followers developed a distinctive manuscript tradition (Agnieszka Helman-Ważny & Ramble [forthcoming]). Characteristic features may be found in abbreviations, scripts, symbols, decorations of the side margins of the folios, and other elements which rarely or not at all occur in Buddhist texts. The multifarious facets of the books will be analysed by a team of experts led by Dr. Michela Clemente (MC in the Work Plan), currently Researcher at "Sapienza" University of Rome, Dept. Italian Institute of Oriental Studies - ISO and Scientific Director of the Tucci Tibetan Collection ("Biblioteca IsIAO", BNCr). Examination will be focused on:

**A. CODICOLOGY.** Carried out by Dr. Michela Clemente in collaboration with R1 and R2. Codicological information related to format and layout, ornamentation, seals and signatures, *ductus* and orthographic peculiarities will be inserted in the Database, supplementing the in-depth cataloguing of each text carried out by R1 and R2. Dr. Clemente will study the contents in order to provide information on people involved in book production (authors, scribes, editors, illustrators, carvers, printers, proofreaders, donors), dating and provenance. Relevant information will be included in the Database and marked up for search. Information obtained from examination of the *Bon* corpus will be processed by taking into account available data related to the production of Buddhist books so as to understand differences and similarities (see Clemente 2018; De Rossi Filibeck 2006, 2007, 2014; Helman-Ważny 2014; Helman-Ważny & Van Schaik 2013; Scherrer-Schaub 1999; Scherrer-Schaub & Bonani 2002). Dr. Clemente will investigate additional *Bon* texts available in European libraries such as The British Library and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in order to compare data found during the examination of the Tucci Tibetan Collection. She will search for primary sources containing information on materials used in book production as well as on artists employed to create these literary artefacts. The study of the lives of people who produced manuscripts and xylographs, an art requiring sophisticated craftsmanship, is closely related to the social and religious aspects of materials. So far, we have scarce information on artists and their training; available data are only related to the production of Buddhist xylographs (see Clemente 2017; Clemente [in press]; Clemente & Lunardo 2017). One of the reasons for such limitation is due to the different Western concept of art contemplated by Western people and Tibetans who primarily value art for its religious purpose (Bentor 1996; Lo Bue 1990). Tibetan art is codified in iconographic manuals that artists must follow in performing their work, limiting their imagination to secondary details; for that reason works were not usually signed. That is why information on their lives and work is mostly unknown. The situation is completely different for craftsmen involved in the production of Buddhist works who are mentioned in colophons, biographies of religious masters as well as on woodblocks. Since *Bon* and the Buddhist tradition share the same cultural heritage (Kværne 1995: 9-11), it is likely that similar sources can be found in *Bon* literature as well. This kind of data will be extremely relevant to fully understand the process of book production; information on artists may help dating and locating the provenance of manuscripts and prints. This search will be carried out by Researchers 4 and 5 during fieldwork (see below: art-history and material analysis; cf. also section b, Methodology: WP2).

**B. ART-HISTORY.** Books will be examined by a Tibetologist with background in art history and experience in analysis of illuminated/illustrated books (Researcher 4) through: i) miniatures (arrangement, iconographic identification, stylistic analysis); and ii) fully decorated pages. Fully decorated pages are extremely rare in general; that notwithstanding, the *Bon* corpus contains numerous outstanding samples therefore providing an exclusive occasion to pursue this research track. The study will address stylistic analysis of the figurative representation and will examine the relationship between text and images; iii) frontispieces, with the aim of identifying typologies of drawn frames in order to locate the *scriptoria* and possibly narrowing down date of compilation and printing; iv) decorations on the side margins of the folios, which show distinctive patterns not found in Buddhist books. Study of the artistic production related to the *Bon* tradition is still in its infancy (Kværne 1995). Miniatures and illustrations found in *Bon* books have never been analysed so far and only few studies have been carried out on the subject vis-à-vis Buddhist manuscripts and xylographs (see De Rossi Filibeck 2002; Heller 2009; Jackson 1996; Lunardo 2020; Pal & Meech Pekarik 1988). At present, studies of frontispieces in Tibetan books have only been implemented on Buddhist xylographs produced in Mang yul Gung thang, South-Western Tibet (Clemente & Lunardo 2017). Consequently, research on frontispieces and drawings in the *Bon* corpus of the Collection will provide an

essential contribution to the research field. Iconographic and stylistic identification of the images will impact and contribute to the definition of the old tradition allowing better appreciation of contemporary *Bon* artistic production. Fieldwork in locations where *Bon* communities are established - namely the New Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India, which Library holds the largest *Bon* Collection in the world; the Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu (Nepal); Dolpo (Nepal); and Mustang (Nepal) - will be necessary to: examine manuscripts and xylographs preserved in local monasteries; discuss preliminary results with knowledgeable representatives of *Bon* communities and artists; investigate ancient traditions of book production and understand to what extent a revival of such traditions is ongoing, as is the case with Buddhist communities in Tibetan and Nepalese cultural areas (see Diemberger, Elliott & Clemente 2014). Fieldwork will also provide opportunity to search for *Bon* primary sources containing information on materials used in book production as well as artists employed to create manuscripts and xylographs. The study of these sources will be carried out by Researcher 4, Researcher 5, and Dr. Clemente (see above Codicology; section b, Methodology: WP2).

C. MATERIALITY. Material analysis of paper, pigments, ink, and wood samples taken from selected manuscripts and prints from the Collection will be implemented by a Tibetologist with background in biology and botany (Researcher 5), mostly using non-invasive analytical methods (see Boesi 2020; Ricciardi & Pallipurath 2016; cf. section b, Methodology: WP2: 2<sup>nd</sup> stage). The research will provide key information on paper, plants and ingredients used in paper production, mineral and organic components used for ink, pigments and binders, wood used for book covers, substances used to prevent wood from warping. Information will help identifying provenance of the books and their production process. By supplementing codicological data of manuscript and prints with material analysis and historical information, the Project will create the first ever Database on the production of *Bon* books. While a considerable amount of research has indeed been carried out on the materiality of the book in East Asia and on paper in particular, there is still much that needs to be done in relation to Tibetan books and especially *Bon* artefacts. Scriptures play a fundamental role in Tibetan socio-cultural traditions; production of books is extremely important and the material used to manufacture them must therefore be of the highest quality (Schaeffer 2009). By investigating the material composition of books, the Project will gather and disseminate information on the technical processes of production and also on the economic context and the cultural setting within which they were manufactured and circulated. Information on pigments used by Tibetan artists is particularly limited (Jackson & Jackson 1984) and mostly related to painted scrolls manufactured by Buddhists. The Project intends to analyse pigments of a selected number of illuminated manuscripts and xylographs. This will complement the codicological information on book production included in the Database which will be integrated by information on living traditions obtained from fieldwork and by historical information obtained from treatises on arts and crafts. Fieldwork will be conducted by Researcher 5 in the above-mentioned areas where *Bon* communities are established (see Art-history; cf. section b, Methodology: WP2) in order to gather information on book production, identify plant species used for paper (Boesi 2016), wood used for book covers and blocks (Boesi 2020), ink and pigment production, analyse paper, woodblocks still preserved in local monasteries. Identification of plant species and examination of paper will be carried out *in situ* thanks to already existing collaborations (see section b, Methodology: WP2). Results of studies on *Bon* Collections gathered so far are precious for the field but extremely limited; further data need to be gathered in order to progress and understand which kind of materials, technologies, and methods were used by *Bon* communities. Researcher 5 will also collect information on plants, paper, pigment, ink, and wood used for production of Buddhist books in the same areas, in order to understand differences and similarities between traditions living in the same territories.

D. CONSERVATION. Approaches and methods of conservation of manuscripts and xylographs will be studied by a paper conservator with consolidated experience in treatments of Asian books (Researcher 6). S/he will also assess the condition of manuscripts and xylographs included in the Collection and provide suggestions on conservation treatments whenever needed. An appropriate conservation of manuscripts and xylographs is essential to keep scriptures alive so that they may continue to perform their key role in the lives of the Tibetan people. However, according to some Tibetans, scriptures are 'profaned' if restored which explains why book conservation has not yet developed in Tibet as a discipline (Helman-Ważny 2014: 201–206). Researcher 6 will therefore investigate approaches and methods of conservation respecting the sacredness of scriptures; sustain Tibetan craftsmanship traditions; and help preserving books and local manufacturing. Conservation practice will be carried through after a research on books to be treated has taken place in order to have full understanding of their structure, history, and use. Identification of materials and their adoption in the production of books as well as the study of their manufacturing process will be pursued. Raw materials employed for book production make paper, blockprints and woodcovers, inks and pigments extremely different in properties and aspect. Preparation methods too create different kind of

products. As a result, a rich selection of materials is generated and identification is relevant not only for conservation purposes but also to determine date and provenance of artefacts (Delia 2020). Papermaking process in the Himalayan areas has a millennial history (Hunter 1978; Laufer 1931); although papermaking tradition has recently been revived in those regions, paper has never been tested to verify its feasible utilisation in conservation; consequently, it has no official recognition and is not usually employed for mending tears and losses. Researcher 6, in collaboration with Dr. Clemente, R4, and R5, will technically assess the conditions of selected items, identify materials, and investigate experimental and innovative solutions for specific damages. Researcher 6 will explore the use of paper manufactured in the Himalayan areas with specific reference to paper produced by *Bon* communities and check for the feasibility of employing it in the restoration of necessitous items. Reconnecting literary artefacts to present-day traditions of craftsmanship, the Project will contribute to the preservation and development of local manufacturing. If the Project will prove that the use of Himalayan paper is effective for conservation purposes, there will be a momentous impact on Himalayan enterprises dedicated to ancient papermaking traditions. An exhibit of restored books will be organised during the final stage of the Project to illustrate methodologies to a wide audience and share innovative solutions with experts in the field (see section b, Methodology: WP2; cf. disseminations).

**OBJECTIVE 3: In-depth cataloguing of the 50 textual sources on the Great Perfection tradition already identified in the Collection; in-depth taxonomical analysis of the above-mentioned textual sources; in-depth hermeneutical analysis; search and comparison for those textual sources in other extant corpora in India and Nepal.**

Within the vast and profound ontological and soteriological landscape displayed by Buddhism in Asia throughout the centuries, the spiritual heritage of Tibet represents a significant and valued component. In that regard, the *Bon* tradition—with its transmission lineages and tenets—is reckoned as a multifaceted system and has been the object of international scholarly studies for more than fifty years so far (Karmay 2001, Smith 2001). *Great Perfection* (Skt. *ati yoga*, Tib. *rdzogs pa chen po*) doctrines and praxes play a crucial role in the history and development of the Old School (Tib. *rNying ma*), connected to the earlier spread of *Buddhadharma* in Tibet, and of the *Bon* tradition, where they are revered in equal measure as the highest path to liberation (Karmay 1988).

A great number of textual cycles pertaining to the *Old School* as well as those included in the *Bon Canon* (Martin, Kværne & Nagano 2003, Kværne 1974) are categorised as 'treasure texts' (*gter ma*) (Martin 2001), that is to say, texts that starting from the introduction and first spread of Buddhism in Tibet were concealed in different locations by influential masters to be subsequently retrieved (by masters called Treasure Revealers, *gter ston*) for the benefit of beings during future critical times or when adepts would have reached spiritual maturity to appreciate their doctrinal import. In this regard, eminent Tibetologists, such as Samten G. Karmay (1988), Per Kværne (1974, 1995), David L. Snellgrove (1967) as well as Giuseppe Tucci (Tucci and Heissig 1970), pointed out in various seminal publications the importance of a comparative study of the *Great Perfection* doctrines and associated 'treasure-text' tradition upheld by the *Old School* and *Bon* for discerning the implications of the socio-cultural and religious dynamics engendered by the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet from the 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Kapstein 2002).

This section of the Project is focused upon the critical study and analysis—based upon a philological and hermeneutical approach—of the 50 *Great Perfection* texts of the *Bon* Collection, with the overall aim of: i) contributing to the understanding of the specific field of inquiry represented by the above-mentioned doctrines; ii) verifying the existence of new doctrinal and topical emic traits or rubrics which may have contributed to the speculative development of *Great Perfection* doctrines in the *Bon* tradition; iii) complementing and refining our knowledge of *Great Perfection* tenets in the *Bon* tradition by making accessible a research product dealing with the Collection textual sources; iv) fostering further and more informed comparative studies with respect to the *Great Perfection* tenets cherished by the *Old School*, in order to improve our understanding of the dialectic relation between the two traditions and on the history of Tibetan esoteric Buddhism as a whole. The research has 4 aspects:

**A. CATALOGUING.** In-depth cataloguing of the 50 texts according to a devised Template which includes all possible relevant entries such as Language; Script; Script Sub-type; Literary Genre; Title; Marginal Title, Number of Folios; Chapter Titles; Author; Editor; Treasure Revealer; Incipit; Explicit; Colophon; Notes; Other collections; Publications; Translations; Studies.

**B. TAXONOMY.** Establish a taxonomy of the literary genres of the texts so as to address the following research questions: What is the overall theoretical challenge presented by the texts? What kind of exegetical considerations lie behind the arrangement of the texts in the Collection? Is there a philosophical or soteriological purpose or function for such an arrangement?

C. HERMENEUTICAL ANALYSIS. Establish a conceptual map vis-à-vis *Great Perfection* doctrines to tackle the following research issues: What are the main *Great Perfection* philosophical features displayed in the texts? What is the literary style with which *Great Perfection* doctrines are expounded and delivered? What are the ontological and soteriological values they intend to convey? How do they relate to the visionary message of the original founder of the *Bon* religion, the legacy of Treasure Revealers, and the distinctive transmission lineages? Do the texts introduce specific characteristics or differences, semantically and hermeneutically, with respect to the philosophical contents of already known *Great Perfection Bon* cycles?

D. COMPARISON. Search and comparison of the single texts within other corpora. The above-mentioned three steps of the research objective will allow a targeted search for the single textual sources in other corpora and existing libraries, especially the two most important ones established at the New Menri Monastery of Dolanji (India) and the Triten Norbutse monastic complex of Kathmandu (Nepal). Given the timeframe during which G. Tucci acquired the texts, it will be both challenging and significant to assess their existence in the other collections and compare them in terms of tangible and intangible traits and elements.

The doctrinal import of *Great Perfection* tenets in the Tibetan religious environment in general and in the *Old School* and *Bon* in particular is incontestable. Analysing and investigating their doctrinal perspectives through the Collection texts on issues which are fundamental for Buddhist studies, such as philosophical and metaphysical views about the nature of the Absolute, transmission of wisdom and methods, and the attainment of Buddhahood could yield an hitherto missing vantage point and provide an enhanced appreciation of the religious and cultural complexities characterising Indo-Tibetan Buddhism (Snellgrove 2013) and the historical origin and role of Tibetan 'treasure texts'.



Image from a *Great Perfection* Text (Volume Nr. 504)

## Section b. Methodology

The Project is divided into three Work Packages in reason of its complexity and the diversity of actions to be undertaken to achieve its objectives. A chart illustrating the Work Plan can be found after this section.

### Work Package 1 (WP1)

**Activities:** Digitising the *Bon* Collection; providing an in-depth cataloguing of the texts; building a Database and a Website; making research outputs available online (Years 1 through 5).

1<sup>st</sup> Stage: *Digitisation and in-depth Cataloguing:* Digitisation will be carried out by R1 and R2 with a planetary scanner (format A2), with the assistance of R3. Cataloguing of the *Bon* corpus will be undertaken by the PI, R1, and R2, who will also upload information onto the Database and mark up significant data (names, places, dates, technical terms, etc.) with the assistance of R3. Detailed cataloguing will be carried out by analysing each text in terms of literary genre, author/editor/treasure discoverer, chapter titles, incipit, explicit, colophons, and providing information on possible further editions, translations, and studies undertaken on such text.

2<sup>nd</sup> Stage: *Building of the Database and creation of the Website:* The Database will be built using xDams, an open source and web-based platform (<https://en.xdams.org/>). The platform was developed over 10 years ago and is now widely used in Italian libraries and archives. It utilises national and international standards and is highly versatile. It can easily be adapted to the specificity of the Collection. xDams is created to use the XML (Extensible Markup Language) format based on the TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) guidelines (<https://tei-c.org/>). This method allows mark-up of information which can be searchable by users. xDams provides a user-friendly front-end to facilitate data input. The activity will be carried out by Researcher 3 in consultation with the research team so as to create a Template for describing the specific features of Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs and to insert information taken from material analysis, art-historical investigation, and conservation treatments. R3 will assist team members, especially in the initial stage of data input, and will continue to update the devised Template. The Database will include all information gathered by researchers at the end of the Project; each team member will input data collected. Images acquired with the planetary scanner will be processed and linked to the Database. Copies of the images will also be uploaded to an archival system for long-term storage.

Researcher 3 will also create a Website which will be linked to the Database. Content of the website will be provided by all people involved in the Project according to their own expertise during the various stages of the research.

**Agents:** PI, R1, R2, R3.

**Results:** Digitisation; Online Catalogue (Database); Website.

### Work Package 2

**Activities:**

1<sup>st</sup> stage: *Examination of extant manuscripts and xylographs from a codicological viewpoint; input of data and study of primary sources on materials used in book production and artists employed to create relevant literary artefacts.*

Examination will be undertaken by Dr. Clemente and R4 in collaboration with R1 and R2. Books will be studied through format and layout (including size, number of leaves, foliation, margins, lines, guidelines, marginalia, binding), ornamentation (book cover, frontispiece, illuminations/illustrations, ornamentals signs and punctuation marks), seals and signatures, *ductus* and orthographic peculiarities. Information will be input in the database to help locating the origin and dating of books presenting similar features, thanks to the possibility of cross-checking data from colophons, descriptions and, when present, materials analysis. This action will also lead to the identification of *scriptoria*. Information will be supplemented by examining *Bon* books included in other Collections within European libraries, in particular, The British Library and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and by studying primary sources on materials used in book production and artists employed to create relevant literary artefacts. This investigation will be carried out by Dr. Clemente, R4, and R5. Information will be looked for in different kinds of literary genres such as biographies, collected works, books on *materia medica*, herbaria, and so on. Data on materials traditionally used in book production will be extracted from these sources, input in the database, and compared with information obtained from material analyses.

2<sup>nd</sup> stage: Examination of the materiality of manuscripts and xylographs.

Analysis of paper (about 40 samples), wood (15 samples), inks and pigments (non-invasive analysis on about 70 texts) will be carried out by R5 on selected material, using the following research methodologies and approaches:

**Paper:** Technological features of paper in books, such as papermaking sieve print type and fibre distribution, will be examined on a LED-light box. Independently of the techniques of sheet formation, any papermaking screen will leave a specific impression. Also, from the even or uneven distribution of the fibres it is possible to determine whether the fibres were poured into the floating mould and spread by hand or scooped by the mould from a vat. The aim of the procedure will be fibre identification to ascertain the raw materials used for paper production. This will be carried out by analysing collected specimens of paper using a transmitted light microscope with camera. The samples will be prepared into a fine suspension of individual fibres and placed on slides for observation at varying magnification from 50× up to 600× with both plain and polarized light. Attention will be paid to stain colouring, morphology of fibres, and other elements of the pulp. If needed, radiocarbon dating will also be applied by using milligram-size samples. This can be a valuable quantitative method for dating organic materials independent from textual studies (Helman-Ważny 2014). C14 analysis can provide the time-period when plant cellulose molecules in the paper's fibres were formed rather than when the paper was made. The papermaking process will sometimes have blended fibres from a wide variety of original sources. For this reason, some C14 analysis can be performed after fibre analysis in order to select most suitable samples (Helman-Ważny 2010). Paper samples will be examined with a transmitted light microscope and a scanning electron microscope at the Department of Biosciences, University of Milan. Samples of paper manufactured in the Himalayan areas will be also examined by R5 and tested by R6, to be used to restore selected items from the Collection.

**Pigments and Inks:** the materials will be analysed employing a range of non-invasive imaging and spectroscopic methods, including near-infrared (NIR) and ultraviolet (UV) imaging, reflectance spectroscopy in the UV-visible-NIR range and X-ray fluorescence. These methods have been successfully used in recent years to identify a large number of pigments, inks, and paint binders on Western European, Arabic, and Asian manuscripts (Panayotova, Jackson & Ricciardi 2016; Ricciardi, Pallipurath & Rose 2013; Ricciardi & Pallipurath 2016). Samples can be analysed at both the Department of Biosciences, University of Milan, and at the Central Institute for the Pathology of Archives and Books (ICPAL).

**Wood:** Small samples (about 1 cm) of wooden book covers will be examined in order to determine the plant species from which each item was produced. The identification process is based on the examination of the wood's anatomical structure, which is peculiar to each plant species. Certain fragile and small samples will be embedded in epoxy resin, which provides a firm and non-intrusive matrix for thin sectioning and well preserves the wood's characteristics. Wood samples will be examined with a transmitted light microscope and a scanning electron microscope at the Department of Biosciences, University of Milan.

3<sup>rd</sup> stage: Fieldwork to identify materials for book production, analyse manuscripts and xylographs, collect information on their realisation and reconnect literary artefacts to the living traditions of craftsmanship.

Fieldwork will be carried out in places where *Bon* communities are established, namely, at the New Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India, at the Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu (Nepal), in the Dolpo (Nepal) area, and in Mustang (Nepal). Those locations are also significant for Buddhist book production and relevant centers for paper, ink, pigments and woodblocks manufacturing; for example in the Kathmandu Valley the art of making materials for book production using traditional methods has been recently revived. It will thus be possible to collect information on living traditions of craftsmanship as well. R4 will analyse manuscripts and xylographs preserved in local libraries from an artistic viewpoint; will discuss preliminary results with experts and artists in the *Bon* communities; will investigate ancient traditions of book production and assess the extent of the revival of such traditions. R6 will especially look for samples of paper produced by local enterprises to be tested for conservation purposes. R5 will identify and study plants species used for paper and pigments and gather information on book production. The study of paper plants will include the Collection of plant specimens on the field and preparation of herbarium samples and their botanical identification at specialised herbaria. Materials will be analysed and identified *in situ* at the National Herbarium and Plant Laboratories, Godawari (Kathmandu, Nepal) and/or at the Herbarium of the Botanical Survey of India at Dehradun (India). The project envisages 3 months a year of fieldwork for R4 and R5 for 4 years. R6 will travel 2 months in total.



4<sup>th</sup> stage: *Investigation of approaches and methods of conservation for books, examination of selected manuscripts and xylographs to be restored, treatments.*

Activities will be carried out by R6. Books already restored will be selected. Approaches and methods of conservation used in the past will be studied in collaboration with Dr. Clemente, R4, and R5. Potential items to be restored within the Tucci Collection will be selected by R6 with the approval of Dr. Clemente. Dr. Clemente, R4, and R5 will provide R6 with codicological, historical, literary, art-historical, and material information on the books, in order to endow her/him with full understanding of their history, materiality, structure, and damages. Innovative solutions to restore selected items will be explored by taking into account data gathered during fieldwork (see 3<sup>rd</sup> stage). Items will be treated by using paper manufactured in the Himalayan region according to the testing of samples made during the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage. An exhibit of these restored books will be organised concurrently with the final International Conference of the Project to illustrate methodologies to a wider audience and share innovative solutions with experts of the field.

**Agents:** Dr. Clemente, R4, R5, R6, in collaboration with R1, R2, R3, under the supervision of the PI.

**Results:** Restoration of selected items of the Tucci Tibetan Collection; 2 Open Access monographs, a co-authored book, a catalogue of the exhibit.

### **Work Package 3 (WP3)**

#### **Activities**

i) In-depth cataloguing of the 50 texts according to a devised Template which includes all possible relevant entries such as Language; Script; Script Sub-type; Literary Genre; Title; Marginal Title, Number of Folios; Chapter Titles; Author; Editor; Treasure Revealer; Incipit; Explicit; Colophon; Notes; Other collections; Publications; Translations; Studies.

ii) in-depth taxonomical analysis of the textual sources; texts will be analysed according to the traditional and scholarly recognised literary genres (Cabezón and Jackson 1996);

iii) in depth hermeneutical analysis of the texts; the analysis will be carried out following traditional contents identified in previous studies on relevant similar sources and scholarly debate on the subject-matter (Karmay 1988);

iii) search and comparison of the single texts within other corpora and cycles. The task will be carried out through two fieldwork in India and Nepal during Years 2 and 4.

**Agents:** PI

**Results:** Open Access monograph.

WORK PLAN	YEAR 1		YEAR 2		YEAR 3		YEAR 4		YEAR 5	
<b>WP1 OBJ 1 Actions</b>	<u>Stage 1</u> Digitise textual material	<u>Stage 2</u> Website creation; Implementation of template for Catalogue	<u>Stage 1</u> Detailed Catalog. & Data input	<u>Stage 2</u> Create Database; Process images (scans); Update Website	<u>Stage 1</u> Detailed Catalog. & Data input	<u>Stage 2</u> Develop Datab.; Upload, storage of images, (scans & material analysis), videos; Update Website	<u>Stage 1</u> Detailed Catalog. and Data input	<u>Stage 2</u> Develop Datab., Test Datab. for public access; Upload, storage images (material analysis, images from fieldwork) and videos; Update Website	<u>Stage 1</u> Detailed Catalog. and Data input	<u>Stage 2</u> Develop front-end for Database; Upload and store images etc.; Update Website; Assistance for Exhibition
<b>Agents</b>	R1 R2 R3	R3 +All team members	R1 R2+ PI+R3	R3	R1 R2+ PI+R3	R3	R1 R2+ PI, R3	R3	R1 R2 + PI+R3	R3
<b>Results</b>	<b>Finish Digitis.</b>	<b>Complete Website</b>						<b>Finish Database</b>	<b>Finish Catalogue</b>	
<b>WP2 OBJ 2 Actions</b>	<u>Stage 1</u> Examine books and Data input	<u>Stage 2</u> Material Analysis and Data input	<u>Stage 1</u> Examine books and Data input (IT); Compar. exam., search primary sources (UK)	<u>Stage 3</u> Fieldwork	<u>Stage 1</u> Examine books and Data input (IT); Compar. exam., search more primary sources (FR)	<u>Stage 3</u> Fieldwork	<u>Stage 1</u> Data elaboration; study of primary sources	<u>Stage 3</u> Fieldwork	<u>Stage 1</u> Data elaboration	<u>Stage 3</u> Fieldwork
<b>Agents</b>	MC R4	R5	MC R4+ R1 R2 R3	R4 R5 R6	MC R4	R4 R5 R6	MC R4 R5	R4 R5	MC R4 R5	R4 R5
<b>Results</b>					<b>Finish Exam. of Corpus</b>					
<b>Actions</b>	<u>Stage 4</u> Investigate approaches and methods of conservation; Selection of books to be treated		<u>Stage 2</u> Material Analysis and Data input	<u>Stage 4</u> Investig. conservat.	<u>Stage 2</u> Material Analysis, Data input	<u>Stage 4</u> Data elaborat.; Testing paper; Data input	<u>Stages 2 &amp; 4</u> Data elabor.; Testing paper; Data input	<u>Stage 4</u> Conservat. Treatment	<u>Stage 2</u> Elaborate Data	<u>Stage 4</u> Conservat. Treatment; Prepare Exhibit
<b>Agents</b>	R6+ MC R4 R5		R5+R3	R6+ MC R4 R5	R5	R5 R6 + R3	R5 R6	R6	R5	R6+ MC R4 R5
<b>Results</b>				<b>Finish Stage 4</b>	<b>Finish material examin.</b>		<b>Finish testing</b>			<b>Finish treatments Exhibit</b>

WP3 OBJ 3	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
<b>Actions</b>	In-depth Cataloguing of WP3 Textual Sources	In-depth Taxonomical Analysis of WP3 Textual Sources; Search for WP3 Textual Sources in other Corpora; Fieldwork	In-depth Hermeneutical Analysis of WP3 Textual Sources	Compare WP3 Textual Sources with those found in other Corpora; Fieldwork	Systematise Results of Stages 1 through 4
<b>Agent</b>	PI	PI	PI	PI	PI
<b>Results</b>	<b>Finish Cataloguing</b>	<b>Finish Taxonomy</b>	<b>Finish Analysis</b>	<b>Finish Comparison</b>	

### Dissemination:

Considerable effort will be devoted to the production of outputs for both academic and non-academic audiences:

- creation and long-term maintenance of the Project Website
- an online Catalogue of the *Bon* texts of the Collection with relevant interfacing Database
- organisation of a final International Conference with leading specialists in the last year of the Project with publication of the *Proceedings*\*
- an Exhibit to be held concurrently with the final International Conference featuring workshops for children and adults on Tibetan calligraphy, traditional papermaking, and pigments manufacture
- a Catalogue of the Exhibit
- Guided visits to the Tucci Tibetan Collection
- Four Open Source monographs: 1) a monograph on codicology; 2) a monograph on art-historical aspects of *Bon* manuscripts and xylographs; 3) a co-authored volume on the materiality and conservation; 4) a monograph on the *Great Perfection* texts of the Collection
- team participation to the Seminars of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (IATS) for presentation of the Project (Year 2) and for presentation of groundwork Project results (Year 5, with publication of the Proceedings on a specialized online *Review*)
- individual participation in conferences
- individual articles for peer reviewed online journals

\*Major publications are scheduled to appear after completion of the Project.

### Ethical issues

The Project does not entail ethical issues. The PI is aware of and will comply with European and national legislation and fundamental ethics principles. She will strictly verify that Researchers too are aware of and will comply with European and national legislation and fundamental ethics principles. Environmental issues will be carefully assessed; no protected or endangered plant species will be collected.

### Project Risks Assessment

The main risks for the Project are related to Fieldwork, in that certain locations may present unforeseen logistic impediments. For that reason, fieldwork will be accurately planned with special attention to the best possible weather conditions and targeted locations will be monitored vis-à-vis current or ongoing political contingencies. In order to address risks of fieldwork impediments the Project has purposely envisaged fieldwork in 4 different areas which are all equally eligible for their long-standing tradition of *Bon* manuscripts.

## Advisory Board

The Project has secured the competence of renowned Tibetologists who will serve as members of the Advisory Board:

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8. Prof. Charles Ramble, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences Historiques et Philologiques; East Asian Civilisations Research Centre (CRCAO) (Charles.Ramble@ephe.psl.eu)

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Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma

(<https://abaroma.it/>)

Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford (Oriental Institute Library)

(<https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/oil>)

Bon Dialectic School, The New Menri Monastery, Dolanji, India

(<https://ybmcs.org/bon-dialectic-school/>)

The British Library

([www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk))

Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC)

([www.tbrc.org](http://www.tbrc.org))

Central National Library of Rome (BNCR)

(<http://www.bnrcm.beniculturali.it/>)

Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS, Paris)

(<http://www.cnrs.fr/>)

Charles University, Faculty of Arts, Institute of South and Central Asia, (Prague)

([https://www.ff.cuni.cz/home/research/departments\\_research\\_profiles/department-south-central-asia/](https://www.ff.cuni.cz/home/research/departments_research_profiles/department-south-central-asia/))

East Asian Civilisations Research Centre (CRCAO, Paris)

(<http://www.crao.fr/?lang=en>)

École Pratique des Hautes Études

(<https://www.ephe.psl.eu/en>)

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(<https://www.wdib.uw.edu.pl/en/home>)

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