Università di Firenze Dipartimento di Formazione, Lingue, Intercultura, Letterature e Psicologia

Corso di Traduzione in Lingua inglese John Gilbert

From *Seta* *(Silk)* (1996) by Alessandro Baricco

(…)

10.

 Baldabiou knew (about)/was familiar/acquainted with all these stories/tales. Above all he

/He especially knew/was acquainted with a legend which/that repeatedly/recurrently came

up/recurred/would come up over and over (again)/kept resurfacing/ continued to resurface in

 time and again

 It was said that

the stories/tales/accounts of those/the people who/that had been (over) there. It recounted

 had actually been there *(“****,*** *laggiù****,****”)*

/told how//said that the finest/most beautiful silk in the world was produced on that island.

 on that island they made the world’s most beautiful silk.

They had been doing it/this for over/more than a/one thousand years, according to/in accordance

 (making)

/conformity with/following rituals (not rites)/customs/practices and secrets which/that had

reached/achieved/arrived at/attained a (state of) mystical/(mystic?) precision/(exactitude?/exactness?)/(accuracy?).

 no legend,

What Balbadiou thought was that//Balbadiou thought that it was not a legend, but the pure(,) (and)

Baldabiou, however, thought that it was not a question/matter of the truth, plain and simple.

simple truth. Once he had held between/in his fingers a veil/some voile\* (which/that was) made

of/woven with threads of Japanese silk/Japanese silk thread(s). It was like holding nothing between/in

your/his/one’s fingers. So/Therefore, when everything seemed to be going to hell/ruin/the devil due to

 it seemed everything was going

/on account of/because of that problem of (the) pebrine/the pebrine problem and (the) diseased/infected eggs,

what he thought was:/, “That island is full of silkworms. And an island where/on which

for two hundred years not a Chinese merchant or an English insurance agent/(insurer?) has been able

 no Chinese merchant or English managed

 neither Chinese traders nor English

to arrive/set foot is an island where no disease will ever arrive./that no disease will ever reach.”

 He did more than just think so/it:

 He did not limit/confine himself to (just/only/merely) thinking it: he said it/as much to all the

 He did not only/Not only did he think so/it:

silk producers/manufacturers of/in Lavilledieu, after having convoked/convened/summoned them to/

/called/assembled/gathered them together at the café in Verdun/Verdun café. None of them had ever

heard (talk/tell) of Japan.

 “We are supposed to/should cross/go across the world to buy (some) (proper/decent) eggs

 “Are we supposed to… some really proper eggs/the best eggs ever

 “We have to

(the way they’re supposed to/should be) in a place where if they see a foreigner they hang him/them?”

(that are actually healthy) they hang every foreigner they see?”

 foreigners on sight?”

 “They used to hang/hanged/would hang him/them,” Baldabiou clarified/specified/corrected/rectified.

 They did not know what to think. Someone came up with an objection.

 There came to the minds of some people an objection.

 An objection came to mind in some people/to some people’s minds.

 “There must/has to be a reason if no one/nobody in the world has thought of/about/considered

going (over) there to buy eggs.”

 Pointing out that

 Balbadiou could have bluffed, (by) reminding them/recalling that in the rest of the world there

was no other Balbadiou. But he preferred to say/tell things as they were//to give a straight/frank answer.

 “The Japanese have resigned themselves/given in to selling their silk. But (not) the eggs, (no,)

not them/those. They hold/hang on tight to them/to them tightly. And if you try to take them away

 keep a tight grip on them/those.

from/out of/off the/that island, what you’re doing is a crime./you’re committing a crime.”

 The silk producers/manufacturers of Lavilledieu were gentlemen, some more than others/some

 , more or less,

more, some less, and never would they have/they would never have thought of breaking/infringing it would never have crossed their minds to break

a/any law in their own country. The hypothesis/prospect of doing it/so on the other side/in another part

of the world/at the other end of the world, however/nevertheless, appeared/seemed to them to be

 made reasonable sense to them.

reasonably sensible/judicious//fairly reasonable.

(…) \*voile: a sheer fabric of silk, cotton, rayon or wool used for making dresses, curtains, etc.