

FACOLTÀ DI STUDI UMANISTICI Lingue e Comunicazione

Lingua Inglese 2

LESSON 2

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What is a text?

Discourse Analysis



Language in Use

British D.A. was greatly influenced by the work of M.A.K Halliday's functional approach to language (1973). His framework emphasizes the social functions of language and the thematic and informational structure of speech and writing



Discourse Analysis is interested in the relationship between discourse forms (grammatical, lexical, phonological) and discourse functions.

Forms are the RAW materials which enable students to use language FUNCTIONALLY.

A **text** is "language that is functional", that is to say

"language that is doing some job in some context" (Halliday in Halliday & Hasan, 1985/ 1989: 10).

A text is a unit of language being used; it is not simply a grammatical unit, but a form of exchange, not a unit of form but of meaning, it is a dialogue, a meaning-creation interaction among speakers. (Halliday & Hasan 1976: 1-2, 1989: 11)

Text & Context

 Language is influenced by dynamic elements present in its socio-cultural context: participants in the speech act, topic & setting (together with the addressee's goal & communicative purposes)

Context

- A frame of reference
- How should we interpret "He delivered a punch?"
- Disambiguation* of textual elements as crucial to understand the whole text
- Co-text: con-text, the context of words and sentences that go with the text, an interrelationship and interaction between sentence elements, the linguistic context

^{*}In **linguistics**, **disambiguation** is the process of determining which sense of a word is being used in a particular context. Also known as lexical **disambiguation**.

Context - Co-text

Words do not occur in isolation. The words of a text are surrounded by their linguistic environment, called **co-text**; the text takes place in a broader environment, called **context**.

For example, the word *order* in the following sentence takes its meaning from its co-text, that is to say from the words that follow and precede:

YOUR ORDER WILL BE PROCESSED WITHIN 3-4 DAYS AFTER YOUR REQUEST IS SUBMITTED

It can be clearly understood that this sentence has been uttered or written within an event whose topic is a commercial transaction, and where the participants are the customer and the seller.

Context – Co-text

A different linguistic co-text of *order* would suggest a different context of situation as in the following example:

Excuse me, can we order, please?

However, there are also cases in which **the context** helps us disambiguate the meaning of a sentence:

The sentence *She is a baby* may refer either to a baby or to an adult who looks or acts as a baby. The two contexts and co-texts will help us understand the meaning of the following sentences:

- 1. Introduce your child to books when **she is a baby**
- 2. She shouldn't have a baby, because she is a baby herself

- Context of situation: the extra-linguistic context, the total environment beyond the text
- Example: ALT Halt or Stop? Same function of the text (warning, injunction) but diverse context and thus diverse translation
- Bronislaw Malinowski (1922) an ethnographic study on a group of a South Pacific islanders: intimate links to cultural background – "culture functions to meet the needs of the individual"
- how to render their texts in English? Free translation, literal translation, translation w/ commentary -> texts w/in their environment, -> immediate situation + cultural background
- He originated the school of social anthropology known as FUNCTIONALISM

Malinowski coined this phrase – context of situation - in 1923:

"Language is essentially rooted in the reality of the culture, the tribal like and customs of the people, and [...]it cannot be explained without constant reference to these broader contexts of verbal utterances [...] An utterance becomes intelligible when it is placed within its context of situation".

Furthermore: «the study of any language, spoken by a people who live under conditions different from our own and possess a different culture, must be carried out in conjuction with the study of their culture and of their environment» (1946: 306).

The next step, taken by Halliday in later years, was to see **language in action** (1985:6) with the message only clear to those who know what is going on. In such situations it is necessary to provide not only a description of what is happening, but also of the total cultural background, because all these play a part in the interpretation of meaning

- In this functional perspective, a text is therefore always seen as being strictly related to:
- 1- its **Context of Situation**, which is defined as the immediate social and situational environment in which a text is being realized,
- 2- the **Context of Culture** which is the 'outer', more external, or 'higher-order' context surrounding both the text and its specific Context of Situation.

(Malinowski 1923)

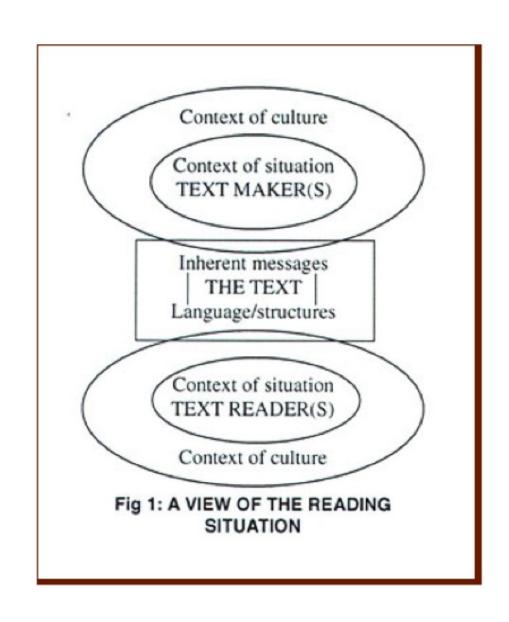
An example of **context of situation** could take place in a shop. ... The **context of situation** forms part of the **context of culture**.

By context of culture is meant the meanings and assumptions we share as a community of people.

Context of culture

- Awareness of cultural differences and similarities
- Culture: the personal development, the knowledge of a country's history & institutions, the sociolinguistic & anthropological sense: socially conditioned aspects of human life (Ulrich 71)
- The definition of the Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics (Sebeok 1986 in Ulrich 71)

"Culture is the totality of the signifying systems by means of which mankind, or a particular group, maintains its cohesiveness (its values and identity and its interaction with the world). These signifying systems comprise not only all the arts (literature, cinema, theatre, painting, music, etc.), the various social activities and behavioural patterns prevalent in the given community (including gesture, dress, manners, rituals, etc.), but also the established methods by which the community preserves its memory and its sense of identity (myths, history, legal systems, religious beliefs, etc.)"



A **text**, therefore, is basically made of meanings that, in order to be communicated, need to be encoded and expressed through a system of graphic, phonic or visual signs. As a thing in itself, it is a consistent semantic unit.

A text is both an object, a product of its environment, of its **Context of Situation** and **Context of Culture**, and an instance of social meaning in a specific situation.

The relation between **text** and **context** is a systematic and dynamic one:

- on the one hand, a text is the result of the context in which it is being realized and where language is being shaped to function purposefully;
- on the other hand, a context is then realized in turn by the text: through a text a context is being created.

(Halliday in Halliday & Hasan, 1985/ 1989: 10-11).

Context of Situation

- Language use/context of situation: J.R. Firth (1950s-1960s) -> linguistics as the study of meaning in terms of how lg functions in context
- ■Variables: the participants, the verbal and non-verbal action, other features, the effect of the verbal action

Context of Situation is seen as being comprised of 3 components, or values, or contextual dimensions of variation (contextual configuration, Halliday & Hasan 1985):

Field, Tenor and Mode (a set of values) or, respectively:

FIELD: what is going on?

TENOR: who is taking part?

MODE: how are the meanings being exchanged?

Register

- Halliday: language as the exchange of meanings in interpersonal contexts
- Language, a part of the social system and therefore subject to two types of variation: according to the <u>user</u> – in dialect characterized by regional and social variation, not entailing variation in meaning, and according to the <u>use</u>, which causes variation in meaning.
- Register: lexical and grammatical choices made by speakers depending on the situational context, the participants of a conversation and the function of the language in the discourse.

- Through register we relate the functions of language — ideational, interpersonal and textual — with those aspects of the situation in which it is being used, the structure of its context — the field of discourse, the roles of tenors, and the mode of communication.
- Different things and meanings according to the social activity
- Registers tend to reflect conventionallyaccepted types of discourse, which mainly differ in grammar & vocabulary

Metafunctions

Halliday's three broad metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual.

Each of the three metafunctions is about a different aspect of the world, and is concerned with a different mode of meaning of clauses.

The ideational metafunction is about the natural world in the broadest sense, including our own consciousness, and is concerned with clauses as representations.

The interpersonal metafunction is about the social world, especially the relationship between speaker and hearer, and is concerned with clauses as *exchanges*.

The textual metafunction is about the verbal world, especially the flow of information in a text, and is concerned with clauses as *messages*.

Malinowski's influence seems clear here:

the ideational metafunction relates to the context of culture, the interpersonal metafunction relates to the context of situation, the textual metafunction relates to the verbal context.

Metafunctions

Through register we relate the metafunctions of language ideational, interpersonal and textual - with those aspects of the situation in which it is being used, the structure of its context – the field of discourse, the roles of tenors, and the mode of communication.

Field, Tenor and Mode.

Field – the nature of the ongoing <u>social speech event</u> and its <u>subject matter</u>, what is being spoken about;

Tenor – the human participants in the interaction and the relationship between them, involving their <u>status</u> and <u>discourse roles</u>, as well as the <u>attitude</u> they take towards the subject matter and their interlocutors,

Mode – the way that language is functioning in the interaction, which involves a series of features such as the <u>degree</u> to which the <u>process</u> of interaction is shared by the interlocutors, its 'channel', its 'medium' etc.

(see Halliday & Hasan, 1985/1989: 12)

The field of discourse

- What (event, activity), what the participants are doing with language (in space & time), what (the subject-matter) & what the participants know about it (shared/unshared knowledge)
- -> technical, scientific, legal, institutional registers
- Identification of the field of discourse through lexis & grammar

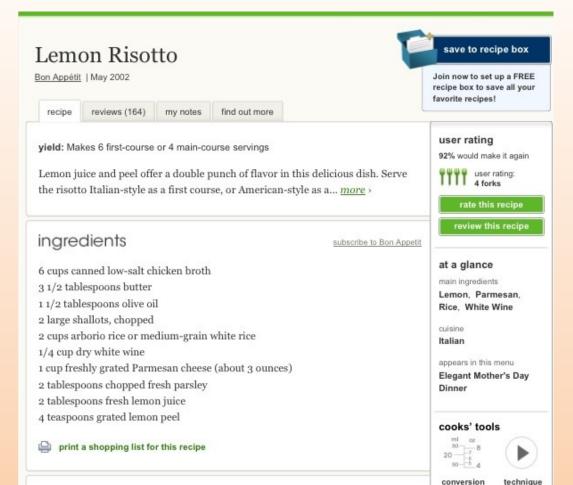
Field

- Field: what the text is about (science, education, war, medicine, sports, linguistics, tourism, and each one could be better detailed).
- Moreover,
- specialised vs. non-specialised (the vocabulary specific to the field, or the vocabulary common to other fields)
- Specialised vocabulary used in other fields but with a different meaning in the current field (e.g., a "constituent" in politics means member of a political unit, in linguistics a syntactic unit)

Field parameters

The ideational metafunction

- Experiential domain: types of texts
- Goal orientation: general v in-detail orientation towards categories of readers (websites v travel guides), when, where, how
- Social activity: a general or a particular reader



preparation

Bring broth to simmer in large saucepan over medium heat. Reduce heat to low; cover to keep warm. Melt 1 1/2 tablespoons butter with oil in heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Add shallots and sauté until tender, about 6 minutes. Add rice; stir 1 minute. Add wine and stir until evaporated, about 30 seconds. Add 1 1/2 cups hot broth; simmer until absorbed, stirring frequently. Add remaining broth 1/2 cup at a time, allowing broth to be absorbed before adding more and stirring frequently until rice is creamy and tender, about 35 minutes. Stir in cheese and remaining 2 tablespoons butter. Stir in parsley, lemon juice, and lemon peel. Season risotto with salt and pepper. Transfer to bowl and serve.

chart

videos

add your own note

We know this is a recipe, and not a research report, partly through the **field of discourse**. Within the context of situation, field refers to:

«what is happening, to the nature of the social action that is taking place: what is it that the participants are engaged in, in which language features as some essential component?» (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p.12)

We can divide field into three parameters:

- 1. experiential domain, or what the text is about. In the case of a recipe, it is about food and food preparation.
- **2. goal orientation**, or **what the text is for** in terms of both short-term and long-term goals. The short-term goal is obviously **to make** the recipe, but the long-term goal is a little more complicated. Why are we making this dish? Cultural differences? Context of culture? This in turn affects the last area:
- 3. social activity, or what the text is doing. The activity of cooking.

These three parameters together make up the field of discourse, which is expressed through the **experiential metafunction**: there are specialised lexical items, such as *broth*, *arborio* and *peel*, as well as material processes, like *simmer* and *stir*.

To a large degree, we also know that the above is a recipe thanks to *external features* such as *lay-out, pictures*, and the fact it says 'recipe'.

The tenor

- The role relationship between the participants in the communicative event -> level of language formality < social situation & status of the participants
- Joos's levels of formality (1961):
- Frozen (set phrases, conventional structures, wording, rhetoric, intonation/large audiences). Frozen is considered to be the most formal style with printed unchanging language, for instance the Bible. It often contains archaisms, features of writing that are no longer used.
- Formal (speaker/audience relationship, no interaction/interruption). Formal involves one-way participation and no interruption (wedding speech). This style often contains technical vocabulary. Exact definitions are highly important and the style includes introductions between strangers

The tenor

- The role relationship between the participants in the communicative event -> level of language formality < social situation & status of the participants.
- Joos's levels of formality (1961):
- Consultative (interaction: business, doctor-patient, tutor-student) is two-way participation. Feedback behaviour is used and interruptions are allowed.
- ➤ Casual (friends/social group, work, informal settings, colloquialism, interruptions). Common features are ellipsis, slang and interruption. No background information is provided.
- ➤ Intimate (husband and wife, family, close friends) is used in non-public situations. Intonation is highly important and private vocabulary is often used.

Tenor

- Tenor: relationship between participants
- > Power relations:
- Unequal: father/daughter, doctor/patient, teacher/student
- Equal: friend/friend, student/student
- Formality: formal/informal
- Informal: I handed my essay in kinda late coz my kids got sick.
- Formal: The reason for the late submission of my essay was the illness of my children.
- Closeness: distant/neutral/close

Tenor

The interpersonal metafunction

Three role relationships:

- Agentive roles or the institutional (or not) roles of the participants, such as doctor/patient, teacher/student, etc.;
- Social roles: or the power relationship between them which may be hierarchic or nonhierarchic and includes expert/novice and also conferred social status and gender, etc.;
- <u>Social distance</u> or the amount or the nature of contact the participants may have, which ranges from minimal (close friends) to maximal (formal settings).

- The dialogic dimension: "all language use is dialogic" and "writers engage in 'inner dialogues' in the process of planning, writing and editing text" (Bondi 1999: 40)
- Relationships built within the text, around the text (cultural and political orientation) or represented in the text (the use of personal pronouns):
- HelloSardinia.com allows <u>you</u> to organise <u>your</u> dream holiday from the comfort of <u>your</u> desk.", "Would <u>you</u> like to ..."; "The 7 regions presented for <u>you</u> here are ... (www.hellosardinia.com).

- > "for the tourists we are..."
- ➤ "All of a sudden <u>we</u> see again before <u>us</u> the terrifying ..." (Insight Guide 2001: 117), "<u>We</u> recommend visits to..." (www.hellosardinia.com)
- ➤ HelloSardinia.com is a unique reference tool for the "conscious" tourist, for those people who wish to embark on an intelligent holiday, a journey into a new culture and traditions, as well as for those who are simply looking for relaxation in the idyllic setting of the island with a thousand faces, Sardinia. (www.hellosardinia.com)

- ➤ "Where can you find transparent seas and uncrowded beaches, and spectacular Wild West landscapes dotted with hundreds of Bronze Age castles?" (Cadogan Guide, 2003: 12)
- Use of pronouns, interrogatives and imperatives, exhortative and laudatory lexis
- Metadiscourse markers (lexical resources that writers employ to organize their discourse and state their stance towards the content or the reader): connectives, code glosses, attitude markers, modality and commentaries

Connectives (and, but, therefore, since, as..)

Code glosses (for example, for instance, e.g., infact, specifically)

Attitude markers (I agree, I disagree, fortunately, hopefully, interest, interestingly)

Modality markers (expressing the subjectivity of the speaker). Modal verbs, adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs + hedging (markers expressing caution, ambiguity, indecisiveness) Deontic modality may convey two kinds of social knowledge, i.e. obligation and permission. Obligation is concerned with 'what a person must do', whereas permission deals with 'someone's authority to permit somebody else to do something':

«You may go at 4 o'clock». «All programs should take place on schedule».

Epistemic modality deals with the possibility, probability or impossibility of a certain proposition.

«She may be in her office». (It is possible that she is in her office.)

"You've only just had dinner. You can't be hungry already". (It is impossible that you are hungry.)

 Writer's stance (assertive, tentative, committed, detached) expressed through attitudinal adverbs: admittedly, certainly, evidently, doubtfully, fortunately, frankly, obviously, naturally, surely, surprisingly, etc...

Mode

Mode: what part the language is playing in the interaction

Mode refers to:

what part the language is playing, what the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation: the symbolic organisation of the text, the status that it has, and its function in the context, including the channel (is it spoken or written or some combination of the two?) and also the rhetorical mode, what is being achieved by the text in terms of categories such as persuasive, expository, didactic, ecc.

Mode

Mode: what part the language is playing in the interaction

Role: Ancillary (language accompanying non-verbal activity, as when we talk as we cook together) or constitutive (the event is defined by the language, as in a speech).

Channel: written vs. spoken, or a combination

Projected channel: where the actual channel is not the intended channel: 'written to be spoken' (e.g., a speech), 'spoken as if written' (e.g., reciting)

A politician's speech, for example, would be *constitutive* (the language itself is the central focus), *spoken* (the politician is speaking) but *written* (it is generally prepared on paper).

- Directionality: <u>uni-directional channel or bi-directional</u> (unidirectional allows only monologue, while a bi-directional channel allows dialogue)
- Media: +/-visual contact (a telephone conversation, teams/zoom conversation); use of multimedia (blackboard, powerpoint, etc.)
- Preparation: spontaneous vs. prepared;
 rushed vs. time for reflection

Mode

- The textual metafunction: language roles in the interaction
- The relationship between text and images
- Textual and typographical features
- Intertextuality

Example

- A recipe in a cook book
- ➤ Field: cooking (ingredients and process for preparing food
- ➤ Tenor: expert writer to learner, learner is beneficiary of the advice
- ➤ Mode: written, prepared. Text often read as part of a process of cooking

from Teti-

Abini

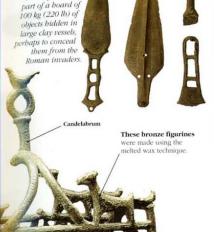
Prehistoric Sardinia

ALTHOUGH SOME stone tools found at Perfugas show that Sardinia was inhabited from the Paleolithic period (150,000 years ago), it was only around 9000 BC that the island began to be settled by populations from Asia Minor, the African coasts, the Iberian peninsula and Liguria. The fertile, mineral-rich land and the obsidian mines at Monte Arci were a major factor in the island's prosperity. By around 3000 BC the Sardinians had grouped into tribes. They lived in Bronze figure villages with thatched-roof huts and buried their dead in rock-cut tombs called domus de

janas (house of fairies). By about 1800 BC this rural society had evolved into the warrior nuraghic civilization, who built thousands of circular stone towers (nuraghi) across the island. Many of these remarkable prehistoric constructions are still visible.



This ornament was found in a tomb dating from 2000-1800 BC, the bell-shaped pottery era.



Bronze Artifacts

These spears were

from Abini

WHERE TO SEE PREHISTORIC SARDINIA

Pre-nuraghic ruins include a ziggurat at Monte d'Accoddi and rock-cut tombs (domus de janas) at Pranu Muteddu (Goni). Nuraghic villages survive at Su Nuraxi (see pp64-5), Serra Orrios (see p84), Tiscali (see pp104-5) and Abini. Burial chambers, or "Tombs of Giants", can be seen at places such as Sa Ena 'e Thomes, and holy wells can be visited at Santa Cristina (Paulilàtino) and Santa Vittoria (Serri).



The nuraghic village of Serra Orrios is one of the best preserved in Sardinia. It consisted of about 70 dwellings (see p84).



The Montessu necrobolis bouses domus de janas of the Ozieri pre-nuraghic era

Earthenware

These jugs and vases were everyday objects used to store water and grain.



Monte d'Accoddi ruins

These traces reveal the ruins of a tiered, terraced construction, probably a temple, dating from the 3rd millennium BC. It looked remarkably similar to the famous ziggurat temples of Mesopotamia and the Aztec pyramids.

TIMELINE

6000 RC

6000 BC Sardinian peoples make tools and weapons from the obsidian found at Monte Arci



4000 BC

early Neolithic period

4000-3000 BC The age of the Bonu Ighinu culture – small communities living by raising sheep and goats. Distinctive, high quality grey pottery with incised decoration is produced

3000 BC Era of Ozieri Villages are established and the dead are buried in the domus de janas

Ex Voto with Deer Motif This ex voto lamp in the shape of a ship was one

of 70 or so found at Is Argiolas near Bultei. It dates

nuraghic age, Sardinians had a love-hate relationship

from the 8th-7th centuries BC, and is now in the

Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Cagliari. In the

with the sea, which ended with the arrival of the

Carthaginians, Romans and later conquerors, who

forced the local inhabitants to live in the interior.

Replica of the oddess Mater

2000 B

1800 BC Rise of nuraghio civilization, characterized by truncated cone-shaped mildious erected at the edges of upland plateaus

1000 BC Phoenician ships moor along coast

3000 BC

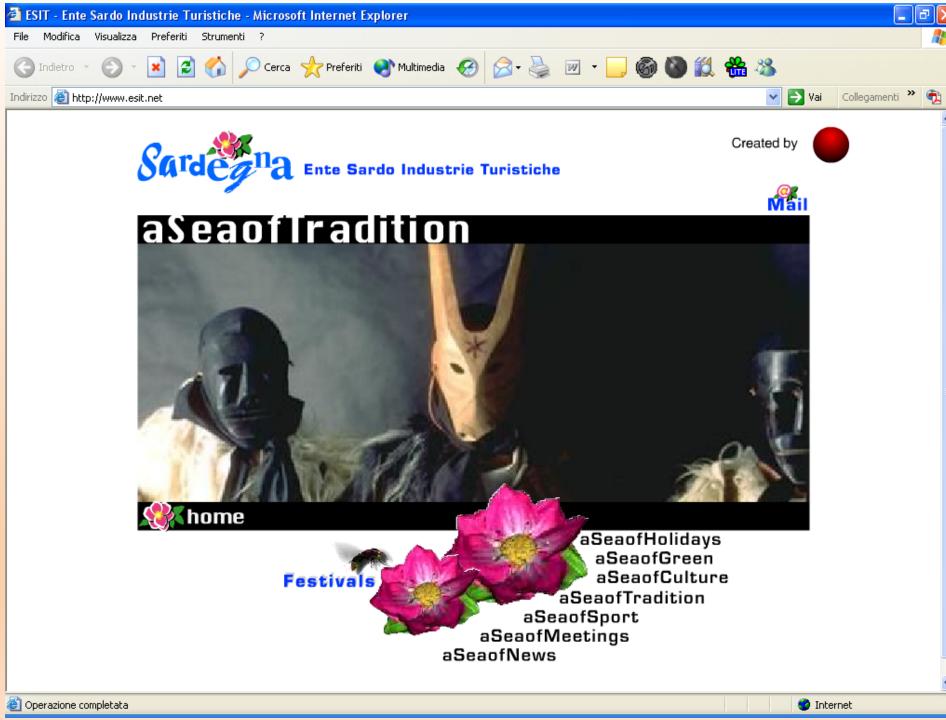
1000 BC

1500 BC The first





2000-1800 BC Civilization known for its bell-shaped pottery. Rectangular or round dwellings

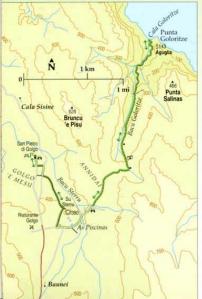


Walk 9: Circuit from San Pietro di Golgo via Cala Goloritze 85





Top: the Aguglia, a rock pinnacle above Cala Goloritze, popular with rock climbers; above: the idyllic setting of As Piscinas



MUSIC Sardinian music appears archaic and elaborate at the same time; strange harmonies of voices and changes in tempo are typical. Its floating approach and dving away and different kind of tonality appear very alien to our ears. Some songs are accompanied by launèddas, a woodwind instrument with three pipes. A lamenting recitative underlined by the sound of launeddas, with its mixture of droning, humming and rattling sounds appears very strange to us. The instrument must have been in use thousands of years ago on Sardinia, as it is depicted on a Nuragic bronze statuette. Learning to play the launèddas requires hard training, in which breathing technique is essential: the player breathes through the nose and uses the mouth as an air reservoir in order to create a constant air stream. The launeddas make intonation in several voices possible, although this was not vet known in classical antiquity. The large bass pipe (su tumbu) serves as an organ point, whereas the two other smaller pipes (sa mankosa and sa mankoseddu) supply a melodic accompaniment above the bass tone. The greatest challenge of a launèddas player is to fill a simple repertoire of melodic phrases (sas nodas) with his own

variations.

Turn your back to the entrance gate of the enclosure and go straight back in the direction from where you came by car. After about 100m/vds, go through the GATE in the stone wall and turn left. Turn right at the next fork, ignoring the signposted left turn to Cala Sisine, and follow the wide dirt road. Leave it after less than 200m/vds, where tracks fork off on both sides, and turn left. Goats and half-wild pigs roam around freely here. The countryside is dotted with pear trees which produce delicate white blossoms early in April.

Less than ten minutes later you reach a fork. Ignore the track rising to the right for the moment (you will be taking it later) and keep left on the level track for about 50m/yds, to reach the gaping cavity of Su Sterru (also called Voragine di Golgo; 15min). For safety reasons, this 300m/yds deep abyss is fenced in. Do not climb over the perimeter fence - there is sheer drop down into the abyss, concealed by bushes! (The cross here testifies to a fatal accident.)

Return to the fork, now turning left uphill. Soon you meet a T-junction and turn left. Almost immediately you pass a STONE PEN on the left. Hidden between dark basalt rocks, small pools (As Piscinas) can be seen between the trees and bushes on the left — an idyllic spot in spring. Reach a wide track junction in an open area and follow the track to the left. Stay ahead on this main track past several turns on the right, but bear right when you reach a Y-fork. After about 100m/yds the track leads to a small open space covered with gravel and used as a CAR PARK (30min). Follow the track through this space to the far end, but leave it after about 25m/yds, on a bend to the right (by a boulder with the inscription 'GOLORITZE'): climb the clear path here that begins to thread through the macchia.

After 20 minutes of climbing you cross the ridge of Annidai (50min). The path continues to wind more or less at an even contour through the macchia. Among the many plants are Phillyrea, mastic trees, strawberry trees and rockroses (Cistus monspeliensis). Soon rocks come into sight on the right, with a SHEPHERDS' SHELTER built into the side of them (1h). The path gradually begins to descend and you get a first glimpse of the sea. A sheer rock face flanks the left-hand side of the Bacu Goloritze ravine as you walk down. Pass another SHEPHERDS' SHELTER built into a rock. Ancient holm oaks of imposing size dot the landscape, specimens that were spared by the charcoal burners in the 19th century.

An old and crumbling stone-laid charcoal burners' trail joins from the right. Follow it as it winds down into the ravine. Further down the Aguglia comes into sight. Rising

Read:

pp. 69-71, 83-96 Ulrich 1992 Chapters 1, 3 and 4 Widdowson 2007