

21st EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students
Sapienza University of Rome
27-29 August 2025

Reports by participants of the 21st EAJS Workshop for Doctoral Students

The 21st EAJS PhD Workshop in Rome was suggested to me by a senior student at Osaka University, who had participated in a previous workshop. At first, I was uncertain whether I wanted to take the tiring journey from Japan to Italy, but the prospect of meeting peers from around Europe and gaining valuable insight for my research won me over. In hindsight, I could not be gladder that I applied, and could not be more grateful that I was accepted.

The event was full of vivid discussions – even heated ones at times – and the two days felt intellectually rewarding throughout. In this aspect the tireless participation of our highly respected senior advisors cannot be overlooked. They had great insight and provided valuable feedback even in areas outside their expertise, setting an excellent example of scholarly engagement. I personally received some of the most appreciated input from unexpected directions. The schedule was tight, which made the event demanding, but the large number of participants and their diversity was rather something to be celebrated.

Listening to a wide array of research topics – from contemporary social sciences, religious studies, and medieval history, to media, law, and economics – was refreshing and enlightening. It helped me position and better understand my own research, while the presentation each participant was expected to hold gave me ample opportunity to present my work to an audience unfamiliar with my field of expertise. But quite possibly the most valuable part of my participation was the rich engagement with my peers; I will fondly remember the friends I made, the conversations I had, and the time spent in the most delightful company. My gratitude also goes to the organizers at Sapienza University, especially to Dr. Stefano Romagnoli and Dario Minguzzi, whose efforts ensured that our stay in Rome was just as pleasant as it was intellectually fruitful.

Filó Bence
Osaka University, Japan

On August 27-29th this summer, I had the honour of attending the 21st EAJS PhD Workshop – an experience both academically stimulating and professionally formative. I would like to thank the EAJS for making this enriching opportunity possible and for creating a platform that supports doctoral candidates in Japanese Studies at a crucial stage of their academic development.

The workshop offered a unique opportunity to engage in in-depth scholarly exchange with fellow doctoral candidates. Participating in discussions on other participants' projects provided me with valuable tools to reflect on and refine my own research outline and methodology. Several comments from our advisors proved particularly significant for my professional development. Insights on approaching presentations as forms of storytelling, as well as reflections on the structure of argumentation, enabled me to identify blind spots in my work. These perspectives broadened my understanding and will undoubtedly strengthen the methodological foundations of my dissertation.

Equally important was the emphasis on collegial exchange and the building of an academic network. Conversations with fellow doctoral candidates fostered a sense of shared purpose and opened possibilities for long-term connections, which I hope will develop into productive collaborations in the future. The active interest we took in each other's presentations was inspiring and motivated us to carry our research forward.

I also wish to acknowledge the warm hospitality in Rome, which provided an ideal setting for both formal academic dialogue and informal exchange. The supportive and collegial atmosphere encouraged openness, constructive critique, and genuine dialogue across different areas of Japanese Studies.

This workshop has been an invaluable experience that has expanded my scholarly network and inspired future directions. I once again extend my sincere gratitude to the EAJS for this opportunity and look forward to continuing the collaborations initiated here.

Oleksandra Bibik
University of Lille, France

As a history PhD student, presenting my work in Rome was a dream come true. Coming from the literature and area studies with a background in the TV industry, interdisciplinarity is a vital part of my research. The 21st EAJS workshop in Rome offered me a unique opportunity to share my project on post-war Japanese underground theatre and political movements with a diverse array of researchers from Europe.

I appreciate the advice I received from my adviser, Professor Aaron Moore. He gave me valuable feedback on my chapter on queerness and resistance in Japanese underground theatre, and I was able to share with him concerns about my theoretical framework. Professor Moore also kindly suggested books on family in Japan potentially useful for my research. I am no less grateful for the comments offered by other professors, especially Dr. Marta Fanasca's insightful comment that an academic presentation also needs to appeal to the audience as a form of storytelling. In this sense, the workshop helped me step outside the role of a researcher into that of a student, which is meaningful change in perspective for my future career development.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the EAJIS and the Sapienza University of Rome for their generous hospitality. Thank you for allowing us to experience the charm of this ancient city to its fullest. I will forever cherish the memory of traversing Rome at night, the Colosseum aglow in the lights while we rushed to a the deserted metro station trying to catch the last train; and lest we forget the beautiful sunset at Villa Torlonia. Those were magical experiences which made the workshop far exceed my high expectations. - Thank you for blending such a rich academic workshop with the unique cultural flavour of Rome. It allowed for a both fulfilling and simply unforgettable time.

Shang Cheng
University of Oxford, United Kingdom

This workshop proved to be an immensely enriching and stimulating experience on multiple levels, held in a very welcoming and supportive environment. From an intellectual perspective, the workshop provided an opportunity to share and consolidate our own knowledge and present our research. At the same time, it allowed us to gain new insights thanks to the diverse perspectives offered in the fields of both history, literature, and beyond. This allowed for invaluable exchanges among doctoral students and the discovery of a wide range of research topics within Japanese studies.

Additionally, it also enabled us to reflect on the complementarities between different fields and how these could be applied depending on the research topics, thereby opening up further avenues of inquiry. The feedback we received from the supervising professors was particularly instructive and greatly appreciated, as their comments and questions helped clarify certain aspects and contributed to greater intellectual rigor. The discussions that followed, as well as the informal exchanges during breaks, were equally invaluable, allowing us to build meaningful connections and discuss potential collaborations.

On the organizational and interpersonal side, the team at the University of Rome provided outstanding support. They created a warm and caring atmosphere, ensuring both the smooth running of the workshop and the well-being of all participants. The organization was clear, structured, and designed to foster fruitful both formal and informal interactions.

Overall, this workshop has been an invaluable learning experience. I leave it sincerely delighted, intellectually invigorated, and deeply grateful for the opportunity to have met such wonderful and inspiring colleagues. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the University of Rome team and the professors, as well as to the EAJIS, the Toshiba International Foundation, and the Japan Foundation for their generous support, without which this enriching experience would not have been possible. My warmest thanks for this exceptional workshop.

Anais Cornier
Université Paris Dauphine-PSL, France

I applied to participate in the 21st PhD Workshop of the European Association for Japanese Studies with little expectation to be selected, as the topic of my research – poetry from the eighth century – tends to attract relatively little attention in broader academic contexts. It was therefore an unexpected pleasure to receive notification of my acceptance.

The workshop, as it turned out, brought together a wide range of disciplines and research interests, spanning from the social sciences to literary criticism, both modern and premodern. Getting to meet both experts and young scholars in fields so distant from my own and gaining exposure to methods and perspectives quite different from those I usually apply in my research: This diversity was the most rewarding aspect of the experience.

As an academic experience, the Workshop proved even more valuable than I had anticipated. My assigned advisor, Prof. Dr. Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt, despite coming from a different area of expertise, offered insightful suggestions on how to structure my arguments more effectively and engage more fruitfully with previous scholarship in my field. I am sincerely grateful for her advice, which I am determined to put to use in my future work.

The organizers' efforts to provide us with a fruitful and enjoyable experience were certainly successful. The sessions ran smoothly, and we also had the chance to enjoy Rome's beautiful sights and excellent foods during moments of leisure and conviviality. The overall atmosphere was one of cooperation, curiosity, and friendliness.

Marianna de Carlo
University of Naples, Italy

I was given the opportunity to participate in the 21st EAJS PhD Workshop at the Sapienza University of Rome from 27–29 August 2025. The program consisted of three intensive days of short presentations in which 20 people from different universities in Europe and abroad presented their PhD research progress to receive comments and advice.

I was very pleasantly surprised by how well the senior advisors handled the comments for all participants' presentations. In my specific case, I faced the challenge of presenting a topic not very well known (Shugendō in a remote region) and still received valuable advice from Professor Benedetta Lomi. While I prepared my presentation to make it easily understandable for a general audience, I was also worried that making it too general might prevent me from receiving more specific comments that would help me better develop my research. However, I found that this was the case for many of my colleagues as well.

I was highly impressed by the large variety of topics related to Japan that we covered during the workshop. Not just that: all my colleagues managed to present their work in a way that was accessible to everyone, while the senior advisors were still able to give each of us very specific

advice. For this I can only express my gratitude to the organizers who made such an environment possible in this year's EAJIS doctoral workshop.

I conclude my experience in this program with new insights for my own research that will allow me to keep working toward a stronger dissertation. I also leave it with many new friends and connections that I know will last, and the joy of having experienced the beautiful city of Rome.

Antonio Fernandez Caro
Tohoku University, Japan

The 21st EAJIS Workshop for Doctoral Students in Rome was an invaluable experience for me as a researcher working on law, society, and racialised hate speech in Japan. The workshop provided a rare opportunity to receive in-depth feedback not only from distinguished faculty but also from peers engaged in diverse disciplinary approaches to Japanese studies. It created a uniquely supportive environment in which rigorous critique was combined with collegial encouragement, enabling me to refine the clarity and originality of my arguments.

I particularly appreciated the interdisciplinary nature of the workshop, which broadened my perspective beyond the framework of my project. Discussions with colleagues in fields such as history, literature, anthropology, and cultural studies highlighted the importance of situating my work on international law within wider debates on Japanese society and culture. The comments I received also encouraged me to think more carefully about how to connect legal analysis with everyday practices and narratives.

Beyond the formal sessions, the workshop design fostered exchange and collegiality. Informal conversations over Italian meals and wine, as well as evening walks together in Rome provided moments of connection that helped deepen dialogue and build lasting networks of support. These interactions stressed the importance of conversations across disciplines and different stages of research.

For future workshops, a suggestion for improvement would be to allow more time for discussion after each presentation, as these exchanges were especially fruitful and sometimes had to be cut short. In addition, a concluding session drawing together common themes across projects, or a career advice session from senior scholars, might further strengthen the programme.

Overall, the workshop was both intellectually stimulating and personally motivating. I am sincerely grateful to the EAJIS, the Toshiba International Foundation, the Japan Foundation, Professor Stefano Romagnoli and the team at Sapienza Università di Roma, as well as all distinguished commentators and participants, for enabling this invaluable experience.

Ayako Hatano
University of Oxford, United Kingdom

Attending the EAJIS PhD workshop before starting the second year of my PhD studies was an invaluable experience. At this stage in my research, receiving constructive feedback was crucial before moving on to fieldwork, and the workshop provided the perfect environment for that. Presenting my work to researchers from across Japanese Studies, many working in fields different from my own, allowed me to gain fresh perspectives I would not usually encounter. The feedback I received for my written report and presentation was both supportive and rigorous, helping me to critically reflect on my theoretical framework and research design. I found the comments from Dr. Marta Fanasca, whose expertise in gender, feminism, and queerness made her perspective especially relevant, to be thorough and valuable. I plan to implement this feedback moving forward.

Beyond the comments, the atmosphere of the PhD workshop was highly supportive, making it an ideal space to build confidence in presenting. I also greatly appreciated the interactions with the senior advisors and fellow PhD students, with whom we had ample opportunity for exchange during breaks and dinners. This provided a chance to network and form meaningful connections. These discussions allowed me to exchange ideas, meet potential collaborators, and get to know colleagues from around the world. Ranging from AI to philosophy, it was inspiring listening to this wide range of presentations. It also encouraged me to think more broadly about positioning my work within Japanese Studies.

The organisation by Sapienza Università di Roma was excellent, and I would like to extend my gratitude to those involved, especially Dr Stefano Romagnoli. I am also grateful to the senior advisors who provided feedback, as well as to the EAJIS and the Toshiba International Foundation for making this PhD workshop possible. The location also made the experience memorable, as Rome's historic beauty added to the atmosphere.

Marie Khanova
The University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

Participating in the 21st EAJIS Doctoral Workshop was an invaluable experience for my academic and personal development. Having the opportunity to present my research results in front of an audience composed of scholars from diverse academic fields for the very first time allowed me to better understand both the strengths and the weaknesses of my work. This interdisciplinary setting provided me with new perspectives and helped me refine the scope of my project.

The feedback offered by Ms. Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt was particularly important, giving me a strong positive impulse for my future research, which itself is going to be developed within an interdisciplinary framework. Equally crucial was the presence of the other advisors, in particular Ms. Benedetta Lomi. I had never received feedback from the field of religious studies, and her comments opened up new avenues of reflection and enriched my approach to the material.

The atmosphere throughout the Workshop was welcoming and pleasant, fostering open dialogue and genuine interest in the progress of everyone's research. We all felt at ease and encouraged to share our ideas freely. The organization and hospitality of the workshop were impeccable. Beyond the academic benefits, it was an inspiring experience to listen to current and future research themes being developed by my peers. On a personal level, I was fortunate to meet many incredible, intelligent, and warm-hearted people. These encounters led not only to meaningful professional exchanges, but also to genuine friendships that I am confident will continue well beyond our academic paths. I will never be grateful enough to the EAJS for giving me this opportunity. .

Francesca Romana Lerz
University of Trier, Germany

I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in the EAJS workshop 2025 held in Rome. As a PhD student still in the process of shaping my dissertation, being included in such a stimulating environment was a great learning experience. The organizers created a setting that fostered openness and collegiality, which allowed me to share my research in a constructive atmosphere.

One aspect of the workshop format that I found particularly beneficial was the opportunity to receive an individual comment from a senior researcher. Having my work read closely and reflected upon with such care provided me with concrete suggestions on how to further develop my chosen theoretical framework. This kind of detailed, personalized feedback is something that one rarely receives in larger conferences, and it gave me clarity on the next steps I should take in order to strengthen my argument.

Equally valuable was the chance to listen to the other participants' presentations and to follow the discussions around them. The wide range of topics, spanning literature, history, society, and politics, offered an impressive overview of the diversity of current Japanese studies. Hearing how senior researchers engaged with these projects helped me to better understand how my own work might be situated within the broader field. It was inspiring to see how different approaches and perspectives can enrich one another, and it encouraged me to think more carefully about my own positioning as a scholar.

Overall, I deeply appreciate having been part of this workshop. The experience has not only provided me with crucial academic input, but also strengthened my sense of belonging to a vibrant and supportive research community.

Mena Mesenhöller
Heinrich-Heine-University Duesseldorf, Germany

Held at Sapienza's historic campus in the heart of Rome, the 21st EAJS PhD workshop was designed to help doctoral candidates refine their research projects, clarify methodologies, and receive constructive feedback from both fellow participants and professors. What stood out to me most was the interdisciplinarity at play. Although our projects ranged from literature and linguistics, to history, politics, and anthropology, the common ground of Japanese Studies made the exchange fruitful. Furthermore, I found constructive criticism very helpful, as feedback was not limited to pointing out weaknesses but oriented toward helping us expand our perspectives. There was a balance between rigor and collegiality, in the sense that discussions were challenging and critical, yet always encouraging.

The sense of community was inspiring not only for the academic debates, but for the strong sense of belonging to a wider network of Japanese Studies scholars from different backgrounds, something I had always longed for outside my home country of Spain. As I am doing my Ph.D. part-time while working, I rarely have the opportunity to travel, engage with other students, or present my work at international events. For this reason, participating in the workshop was especially meaningful to me. Writing the project paper and presenting it to the group helped me clarify my research question and methodology, as I was encouraged to express my ideas more precisely. The suggestions and feedback I received highlighted angles I had not considered, particularly regarding the representation of children in war literature and films, and how these narratives intersect with broader questions of memory, trauma, and national identity. More importantly, it gave me the chance to share my research with international senior scholars and Ph.D. students from diverse disciplines coming from all over the world, which is something I had never experienced before.

In conclusion, the 20th EAJS Doctoral Workshop at Sapienza was more than just a training event. It was a space for growth, exchange, and inspiration that really contributed to the progression of my research. I left Rome with new ideas for my dissertation, fresh motivation, and a network of researchers who share the same passion for Japanese Studies. I could never be grateful enough to the EAJS, the Toshiba International Foundation, and the Japan Foundation for the privilege of engaging in such a valuable exchange. Lastly, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Stefano Romagnoli for his wonderful dedication and assistance to all of us before and during our stay in Rome.

Raquel Navarro Caparrós
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Just a few months before submitting my doctoral dissertation, participation in the 21st EAJS Doctoral Workshop at Sapienza University of Rome has been an invaluable experience.

Professor Moore's comments provided fundamental insights into the general significance of my work for the field of Japanese Studies, its relevance to contemporary political developments, and the necessity of introducing more contextual explanations of the Showa economic depression in

my dissertation. The kind words from Dr. Lomi, Dr. Romagnoli, and my peers strengthened my confidence in my project and heightened my motivation for the final stage of my doctoral journey.

Connecting with young scholars from various European and Japanese universities was a chance to build bridges between our methodologies and research interests, and to initiate projects for future collaborative works. Antonia Vesting and Ayako Hatano's experiences with academic publishing, as well as Szimon Szeszula's experiences with post-doctoral job applications taught me important aspects of the academic career. Regarding my research, Anaïs Cornier's recommendations led me to consider more carefully the terminology I used to describe the Japanese cabinet system. The discussions I had with Francesca Lerz and Antonio Caro helped me further reflect on the advantages and limits of my comparative methodology. I am thankful for the opportunity to debate after the presentations, as well as for the more informal exchanges over meals and coffee breaks.

Due to the intensity of the activities, many participants, despite their efforts to remain fully involved in the discussions, seemed physically exhausted by the second day. To improve both smoothness and quality of exchanges during the entire workshop, my main suggestion would therefore be to divide the presentations into three days instead of two, and to allow some free time in the afternoons, while keeping the general structure of the workshop intact. I believe this would help young scholars stay focused during all the sessions.

Manon Ramos
Kyoto University, Japan

It was a privilege to take part in the 21st EAJIS Workshop for Doctoral Students at Sapienza University of Rome. The workshop brought together a diverse group of doctoral students focused on research related to Japan, and the few days we spent together allowed for open and constructive discussions.

I was especially fortunate to have Dr. Benedetta Lomi as my advisor. Her thoughtful feedback—ranging from broad observations to specific suggestions—gave me valuable insights into my project and helped me gain a clearer sense of how to present my research effectively. Sharing my work with scholars from different fields was both challenging and eye-opening, pushing me to reflect on how to express my ideas clearly and to engage with perspectives I had not considered before.

The workshop was memorable not only for the sessions themselves but also for the casual discussions over coffee, lunch, and dinner. They encouraged me to reflect on connections across different research areas and underscored the importance of dialogue in an informal setting. They also fostered a strong sense of community, making the workshop feel collaborative and supportive.

I am deeply grateful to the organising committee and the EAJIS for making the workshop possible, and to the Toshiba Foundation for their generous support. Special thanks also go to Dr. Stefano Romagnoli for his meticulous organisation and for taking such good care of all participants, as well as to the advisors who devoted their time to reading project reports and providing constructive feedback, and to everyone who helped run the event. Thanks to their efforts, and to the openness of my fellow participants, the workshop was not only a highly productive academic experience, but also one of the most memorable moments of my PhD journey.

Haruka Saito
SOAS University of London, United Kingdom

I had the privilege of presenting my research project at the 21st EAJIS Workshop for Doctoral Students. I was deeply moved and impressed by the supportive and informal environment at work there, which encouraged constructive dialogue, stimulating discussions, and deep interdisciplinary exchange. Presenting my research proposal was both exciting and challenging, and I was fortunate to have Prof. Dr. Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt as my senior advisor. Her thoughtful comments and valuable feedback on narrowing down my methodological approach gave me a fresh perspective and redirected my attention to areas I could sharpen my focus in. One of the greatest advantages of this workshop was also the opportunity to benefit from the perspectives and insights of the other senior scholars, as well as the comments from my fellow PhD students.

Listening to my colleagues' presentations, ranging from medieval rituals and early modern poetry to hate speech, migration, and gender issues in contemporary Japan, opened windows into ideas I might never have encountered otherwise, showcasing the vitality and variety of contemporary Japanese Studies.

Meeting my fellow PhD students, sharing meaningful conversations, engaging in lively discussions, laughing together, and getting to know one another during coffee breaks, lunches, evening walks through Rome, and over delicious Italian dishes – Those were the highlights of the entire experience. I am confident that many of these connections will grow into long-term friendships and future collaborations.

I am deeply grateful to the wonderfully friendly and welcoming Dr. Stefano Romagnoli, as well as to the Sapienza University team for their warm and impeccable organization. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to the EAJIS and the Toshiba International Foundation for making this invaluable and memorable experience possible. I returned home with renewed energy, valuable feedback, and the joy of knowing I am part of such a supportive community.

Stefani Silli
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Kicking off on the evening of September 27 with a relaxed dinner near the Colosseum in Rome, this year's EAJS workshop for doctoral students offered both food for thought and stimulating interactions. Over the course of two and a half days, participants not only received feedback on their own research projects from experienced scholars, but also gained insights into the approaches, perspectives, and challenges of their peers.

Early the next morning, we launched into the students' presentations – a struggle after the late-night dinner spent getting to know each other. Despite the dense schedule and wide range of topics, the sessions were well structured, and each provided valuable takeaways. This was due in no small part to the open feedback sessions following each presentation. This setup allowed for an interdisciplinary learning experience through bringing answers to questions and problems the individual presenter might have quarreled with before yet were not included in the submitted report. This format would certainly benefit future workshops as well.

While the generous amount of time between the last sessions and dinners were a welcome opportunity to freshen up and rest, it might be of benefit to adjust this and instead start the program a little later in the day. Another practical suggestion would be to establish a group chat or mailing list at the outset of the workshop. Conversations flowed easily, and it was all too easy to forget to exchange contact information in the moment.

Overall, participation in the workshop was a wonderful and enriching experience, bringing not only new scholarly insights but also budding friendships with it. I am deeply grateful for having had the opportunity to participate in it. .

Anna-Maria Stabentheiner
University of Vienna, Austria

Participating in the EAJS Ph.D. Workshop was highly rewarding for my scholarly development. I presented my paper “Historical and Spatial Effects of Korean Migration on Postwar Japanese Politics” and benefited greatly from the constructive feedback I received. Senior professors offered clear suggestions for strengthening the logic and structure of my arguments, including those to sharpen the causal pathway and to tighten the scope. Fellow doctoral students also provided concrete advice on refining the historical timeline and periodization of my cases. I plan to incorporate these insights through revised sections, improved data notes, and additional revisions.

Beyond the intellectual feedback, the workshop substantially expanded my academic network. I was delighted to exchange ideas with colleagues from diverse subfields, which broadened my understanding of current debates in Japanese Studies and affirmed the relevance of my own approach. While most papers at the workshop were primarily qualitative, I was the only participant adopting a quantitative design. This contrast enriched our discussions, and it also revealed a practical opportunity for future events: it would be helpful to include at least one

advisor with a quantitative background, or to schedule a panel devoted to quantitative or mixed-methods projects. Such balance would deepen methodological dialogue and provide more targeted feedback for students working with statistical analysis or spatial data.

Overall, I am grateful to the convenors, advisors, and peers for fostering a collegial yet rigorous environment. I will use the comments I received to further refine my dissertation, and I look forward to continuing the conversations and collaborations initiated during the workshop.

Chenyang Sun
Freie Universitaet Berlin, Germany

The 21st EAJIS Ph.D. Workshop in Rome proved to be an immensely rewarding occasion to exchange ideas and engage in thoughtful debates with fellow researchers in Japanese Studies from across Europe.

Each participant was allotted sufficient time to present their research in detail, which in turn facilitated substantive and stimulating exchanges during the Q&A sessions. Senior scholars provided comprehensive and constructive feedback tailored to the specific projects being discussed. Their supportive and engaged attitude ensured that all comments were of genuine value, drawing on their broad expertise and contributing to a collegial and productive atmosphere. Particularly instructive for me were the more general reflections on the methodological and disciplinary challenges inherent in conducting research in Japanese Studies.

A notable feature of the workshop was the sense of community established from the outset. It provided a setting where academic critique was combined with constructive dialogue. The organizers ensured smooth proceedings and addressed participants' individual requirements, including dietary needs, thereby contributing to the overall effectiveness of the event.

I would wholeheartedly recommend this workshop to any Ph.D. student in Japanese Studies. The energy of the discussions, the quality of the feedback, and the overall spirit of the event make it an invaluable experience for anyone seeking both academic development and personal growth. I am especially grateful to Professor Stefano Romagnoli, whose passion for his work and dedication to the organization of such events made this workshop exceptionally fruitful.

Szymon Szeszula
Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

I am deeply grateful to the EAJIS, Toshiba Foundation, Sapienza University for making possible this year's Doctoral Workshop. At the halfway point of my PhD, the senior scholar in my field, Prof. Dr. Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt, provided me with a fresh perspective on the ideas I had been developing for the past two-and-a-half years. Having her question aspects of my research I had taken for granted was a deeply pleasurable and stimulating experience. Her comments were

also a reminder that style and form—not just content—are important aspects of the final product. I am very insecure, and this tends to be reflected in my writing. The fact that she pointed this out to me not only challenged me to have more confidence in myself and my work, but also inspired me to pay more attention to the writing itself.

Presenting and receiving feedback in such an intimate setting inevitably establishes a bond between people. I found this sense of community very enjoyable, and I hope to stay in touch with the people I met this summer and to see them again someday.

About the organization I have nothing but praise. The only thing I might consider doing differently is the size of the report. For me 5000 words was a difficult length. Either I would have preferred something shorter that would only focus on the main points, or something longer that would have allowed me to use a case study to illustrate my point.

To conclude, this workshop has had an invaluable impact on my PhD and my development as a scholar. I am immensely thankful to all the participants, the organizers, Professor Iwata-Weickgenannt, and the other senior scholars.

Daphne van der Molen
Leiden University, Netherlands

First of all, I would like to thank the EAJS Office, the Toshiba International Foundation, and the Japan Foundation, and, most importantly, the local organizers at Sapienza University of Rome, for making this workshop possible. The workshop organizers at Sapienza University created a warm and welcoming atmosphere in which we could present our research and exchange thoughts and suggestions freely - And I felt very welcome.

In my opinion, the EAJS PhD Workshops provide a valuable and scarce opportunity to meet Japanese Studies PhD students from all over Europe. Moreover, attending such a workshop broadens one's perspective, as it once more becomes clear from how many different angles and disciplines Japanese Studies can be conducted. The difficulty of bringing together 20 very different PhD projects with four senior advisors is obvious; however, gaining feedback from scholars of other disciplines can prove to be very fruitful and broaden the horizon of one's own research approach. I gained many valuable insights from the feedback and discussions with the senior advisors and my peers, which I will now reflect on and incorporate into my thesis, as well as into the plan for my next round of fieldwork.

Apart from Rome being a wonderful place for attending a workshop, the setting provided ample opportunities for networking and exchange with peers and senior advisors - at coffee breaks, lunch, aperitivo, and dinner. If I had a suggestion for improvement, I would propose that, in addition to the presentations and large group discussions, there should be an opportunity for smaller group discussions with the respective senior advisors and peers in order to be able to talk about the reports and presentations in more detail.

Thank you again for this wonderful opportunity. I hope there will be plenty of chances to meet again.

Antonia Vesting
Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany

The three days I spent in Rome were an invaluable experience. The feedback and questions I received from advisors and fellow participants were highly beneficial, and the very process of preparing my report and presentation in the first place in order to make it accessible to scholars from different research backgrounds greatly contributed to refining my project, deepening its significance, and sharpening its academic value.

Throughout the workshop I was in constant exchange with advisors and fellow participants. I gained unexpected perspectives, new insights, and hints for my research from these casual conversations and informal exchanges. Above all, I was particularly inspired by the opportunity to connect with peers from diverse backgrounds who nevertheless share the same objective of completing their doctoral theses. I am confident that this experience will serve as a lasting source of motivation for my future academic career.

Including the social gatherings such as dinners, the workshop schedule was highly intense, keeping us engaged from morning until evening. The distance between venues also required frequent walking, which, while physically demanding, provided further opportunities for valuable discussions during transit. As a result, although it lasted only three days, the workshop was intellectually and physically challenging in the best sense. The only regret is that, in addition to the accumulated fatigue from the workshop, the difference in temperature between Rome and the UK caused me to catch a cold while traveling onward to participate in a conference there.

I sincerely hope that all of us will successfully complete our dissertations, and that we will continue to meet and exchange ideas in various capacities as researchers in the future.

Chihiro Watanabe
University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany
