Challenges to Univocal Scripts

Emotions in Visual and Acoustic Sources

by Karsten Lichau and Parand Danesh

Univocal emotional scripts, crafted by dominant institutions, often seek to reaffirm the power they emanate from by sidelining alternative emotional undercurrents. Emotions embedded in unsanctioned expressions can challenge these narratives, unveiling more nuanced emotional experiences. To explore such challenges, this article draws on visual and acoustic source materials, namely unofficially painted murals of so-called "martyrs" in Tehran and official recordings produced during the First World War from the Berlin Lautarchiv. Tracing the place of emotional scripts, emotional landscapes, and emotive artifacts in two distinct contexts, the article attempts to show how non-textual sources can be unlocked to historically explore the potency of emotions.

Univocal scripts authorized or even produced by dominant institutions – whether in state politics, academia, or the arts – aim to reaffirm the power they emanate from, and thereby also their own power. However, these scripts can be interrupted or challenged by unofficial or unscripted interjections that articulate the emotional valence of other, non-official or unsanctioned aesthetic, epistemic, or memory claims. By following the traces these moments of challenge or interruption sometimes left in historical sources, historians might account for forms of documented memory developed from below. In their deviation from the usually univocal record, these traces provide a counter to the fervent desire for historical determination and to the dominant scripts of power. In this essay, we take up the concept of challenges to univocal state and scientific scripts in visual and acoustic materials in two case studies in order to analyze the emotional resonance of unofficial or unscripted emotional expression in contexts of state-imposed hegemony. The first case – examined by Parand Danesh, a political scientist with a background in art history – is a curated collection of photographs of unofficial (that is, not state-sponsored) murals depicting "martyrdom" in post-revolutionary Iran, which form part of a broader artistic project called *Zamânshoor*.[1] The second case – explored by Karsten Lichau, a cultural historian focusing on the body, emotions and the senses – stems from the Berlin Lautarchiv (sound archive), one of the oldest

1 *Zamânshoor* itself actually encompasses multiple projects, featuring different collections of images. For the purpose of this article, I focus on the archive of photographs of unofficial "martyr's" portraits.

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collections of sound recordings from the first decades of the twentieth century.

Visual and aural sources are not only distinct from traditional textual ones in terms of the senses they privilege – vision and sound – but also because of the precise ways in which visual and aural cultures make possible sensory articulations of emotion that are at odds with, or can run counter to, dominant emotional frameworks. *Zamânshoor* is a photographic record of 1,400 unofficial mural portraits of fallen Iranian soldiers, taken by Alirezâ Mohammadi, a Tehran-based visual artist. Over the past decade Mohammadi has been photographing the obsolescence and decay of amateur mural portraits of ordinary figures (mostly, but not only, of soldiers who fell in the Iran-Iraq War from 1980–88) who are styled as religious "martyrs." The portraits themselves exist in various states of decay all over Iran. The photographic record kept by the artist has never been exhibited, and is only viewable via a video hosted online.[2] The Berlin Lautarchiv, which dates back to the early twentieth century, was originally intended as a database for linguistic research.[3] The core and most important part of the Lautarchiv's holdings consists of recordings made during the First World War with inmates in German prisoner-of-war (POW) camps. Due to the ethical issues that its history poses to its present use, it is conceived of as a "sensitive collection."[4] Its recordings therefore are both a challenge and a treasure-trove for archival or historical research, not least because they contain traces of emotions which articulate the experience of violence inflicted upon men who were subject to military, scientific, and – for many – colonial hierarchies (since a significant number of them had fought as colonial soldiers in the British, French, or Russian armies). Both our case studies, in privileging raw expressions of emotion "from below," help reframe dominant narratives established by an authoritarian state, by a scientific paradigm, or by colonial rule, subverting, on the one hand, the official claim by the authoritarian political regime of Iran for martyrs' eternity, as in the case of *Zamânshoor,* while challenging, on the other hand, the colonial and military power inherent to the scientific episteme of the Lautarchiv.

2 In 2019, faced with the difficulty of exhibiting the series of 1,400 photographs in print form due to their sheer number, Mohammadi decided to turn the portraits into a video, edited to the rhythm of an alternative instrumental track composed by the band Saint-Abdollâh. Alirezâ Mohammadi, *Zamânshoor*,S04. September 2019, https://www.aparat.com/v/cHa4B. Though most of the 1,400 amateur portraits depict war martyrs, several hundred portray revolutionary martyrs as well as the Supreme Leaders and figures from religious and political circles, such as former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989–1997), the reformist Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, the architect of the post-revolutionary constitution Mohammad Beheshti, former president Abolhassan Bani Sadr (1980–1981), and the sociologist and revolutionary theorist Ali Shariati.

3 See the Lautarchiv's website: https://www.Lautarchiv.hu-berlin.de/en/sound-archive/.

4 Cf. Margit Berner et al., Sensible Sammlungen. Aus dem anthropologischen Depot, Hamburg 2011.

In order to unlock the mechanics of these attempts at subverting and challenging the respective authorities, we draw upon the close intertwinement of emotional and sensory practices. Encompassing activities "such as speaking, gesturing, remembering, manipulating objects, and perceiving sounds, smells, and spaces,"[5] they are structured by socially established scripts. Such scripts interact with overarching narrative frameworks, as argued by Latinist Robert A. Kaster in his study on emotions in Ancient Rome. He introduced the notion of "emotional scripts" to go beyond the mere

> concern with lexical meaning or equivalence […]: any emotion-term is just the lexicalized residue of what happens when the data of life are processed in a particular way – through a sequence of perception (sensing, imagining), evaluation (believing, judging, desiring), and response (bodily, affective, pragmatic, expressive) – to produce a particular kind of emotionalized consciousness, a particular set of thoughts and feelings.[6]

For Kaster, "emotion properly understood," as a "little narrative or dramatic script," transmits in "often unreflecting and unarticulated ways" the over-arching political, scientific, ethical, or aesthetic narrations and norms enforced upon and incorporated by subjects in a given society.[7] Critically drawing on Kaster, we will show how emotions might conform to and thereby affirm dominant rules and narratives. But "the little scenarios that we play out – as sequences of cause and effect, of perception, evaluation, and response – when we experience an emotion"[8] might also challenge, subvert, and renegotiate the narrative and normative frameworks from which they emerge.

The visual and acoustic sources provided by *Zamânshoor* and the Lautarchiv capture and preserve emotional responses to historical events beyond the bare visual or written record. Our aim is to formulate an immersive account of two distinct histories that could otherwise be overlooked as univocal and devoid of insights into the sensible lives of the varied subjects they document. To this end, the remainder of our analysis is organized as follows: In Part I we present the respective features of the visual and acoustic materials we focus on, comparing their emotional dimension. Following this, in Part II we explore what we describe as the sources' emotionality. In so doing we demonstrate how the history of emotions is a vital part of projects of historical recovery.

5 Monique Scheer, Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion, in: History and Theory 51. 2012, pp. 193–220, here p. 209.

6 Robert A. Kaster, Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome, Oxford 2005, p. 8.

7 Ibid., p. 8 and p. 4.

8 Ibid., p. 29.

I. Navigating the Emotional Landscapes of Sensory Sources

1. *Zamânshoor:* Ruin and Genesis of an Archive

Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, Iran's urban landscapes have been dramatically transformed by an extensive urban "beautification" initiative[9] with a clear political aim: to enable the regime's complete control over social interactions and to promote the "Islamization" of public space (specifically through forced compliance with the mandatory hijab rule),[10] in order to reshape the nation into a unified Shia entity. Mural paintings of fallen soldiers from the Iran-Iraq War were a crucial part of this visual campaign (Fig. 1), and official murals started being commissioned immediately following the war by local municipalities under the supervision of the central state authority. Their main objective was to create the visual atmosphere of a perpetual war to be fought against clear enemies (namely Western imperialism, secular democracy, and domestic political pluralism).

Today, more than three decades after the war's end, these murals continue to populate the urban landscape, showcasing the cult of the "fallen soldier," which has been studied in the European context by George L. Mosse[11] and Reinhart Koselleck[12], and reflecting concepts such as the "lieu de mémoire" as developed by Pierre Nora[13] to describe the symbolic significance of certain sites where memory crystallizes and secretes itself. In the Iranian context, murals of fallen soldiers memorialize individuals who have sacrificed their lives, thereby becoming a symbol of broader themes such as national identity, selflessness and collective pride. These murals exist in varying states of preservation: some have been preserved or restored, others have been painted over with new images, and the rest have been destroyed – either by the ravages of time or the demolition of the buildings they adorned to make way for new constructions. The majority of these murals, however, remain, and continue to occupy public spaces, where the ever-growing population can observe them.

9 There exists an extensive body of literature on this topic at the crossroads of art history, political science, and cultural sociology. For an introduction, see Christiane Gruber and Sune Haugbolle, Visual Culture in the Modern Middle East. Rhetoric of the Image, Indiana 2013.

10 "Even the bodies of citizens who cross the city create an ideological space. Bearded men and women dressed in black create the necessary appearance of an Islamic state and strengthen the relationship between belief and vision." Roxanne Varzi, Warring Souls. Youth, Media, and Martyrdom in Post Revolution Iran, Durham 2006, p. 112.

11 George L. Mosse, Fallen Soldiers. Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars, New York 1991, p. 276.

12 Reinhart Koselleck et al., Les monuments aux morts comme fondateurs de l'identité des survivants, in: Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale 1. 1998, pp. 33–61.

13 Pierre Nora, Entre mémoire et histoire, la problématique des lieux, in: Nora (ed.), Les lieux de mémoire, vol. 1: La République, Paris 1984, pp. xvii–xlii.

Fig. 1: A mural painting in Tehran representing portraits of the Sarajian-Gharzadeh brothers, martyr siblings who died in combat during the Iran-Iraq War. 2012, Tehran (Iran). Source: By courtesy of the author Parand Danesh.

The generation born immediately after the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988) are now old enough to have their own children; neither they nor their offspring experienced the war firsthand. Yet they have been educated to relate to its core principles: Islamic patriotism and the safeguarding of the revolutionary heritage. Over the past four decades, these younger generations have regularly encountered the visual and spatial presence of martyrs in their daily lives through street names and murals. The purpose of the latter is to underscore that those who died did not do so "in vain." Instead, as the state claims, they "sacrificed themselves" for a greater cause: the preservation of an Islamic nation and the reinforcement of the nation-state's legitimacy, marked by its exclusive authority and monopoly to confer the title of martyr on those who serve its political interests.[14]

During the war, the families of fallen soldiers often received the news of their loved one's death with the bittersweet phrase *"Tabrik o Tasliat"* (تبریک و تسلیت), which means "congratulations and condolences" in Farsi. This expression was used by state authorities to acknowledge both sorrow for the lives of loved ones lost during the conflict (soldiers and civilians alike) and pride or congrat-

14 Ravinder Kaur, Sacralising Bodies. On Martyrdom, Government and Accident in Iran, in: Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society 20. 2010, no. 3, pp. 441–460, here p. 441.

ulations for the sacrifice they had supposedly made.[15] The phrase thus served as an articulation of the complex mix of grief over a personal calamity and admiration for steadfastness or triumph amid hardship. Official martyr portraits, which are often larger-than-life and gaze down on passersby in the streets and avenues of both bustling cities and distant provinces, materialize this psychological conflict, which I label one of cognitive – and emotional – dissonance. William Reddy's notion of "emotional regimes," which refers to how individuals can actively engage in shaping their emotional experiences, can help us better understand the perceived dissonance toward a challenged dominant script. Specifically his concepts of "emotional suffering"[16] (the distress experienced when one's internal emotional state conflicts with societal emotional norms) and "emotional refuge"[17] (spaces where individuals can express their true emotions freely, away from societal constraints) can help us better understand the complex interplay of individual emotional experiences and broader societal norms that govern the emotional expression triggered by official martyr's portraits.

The state narrative, conveyed through carefully curated and formulaically stylized symbols and images meant to glorify sacrificial death as triumphal, seeks to evoke a uniform emotional response from its political subjects – a blend of pride, reverence, and unity converging in a feeling of collective debt toward the dead. This narrative advances a homogenized version of history and identity in a country radically reconfigured by the cultural revolution of 1979 and the ravages of the war that quickly erupted in the following year. By confronting the public with the notion of a debt owed to those who died in sacrifice, while simultaneously lauding such deaths as emblems of resistance and national pride, the state-sponsored portraits urge people to publicly display pride and gratitude while keeping their grief private. In essence, the official martyrs' iconography acts as a highly emotional moral paradigm. In post-war Iran, this state-endorsed iconography serves as a powerful moral archetype. It has a pervasive and compelling presence, honored as a national heritage within an overarching hegemonic discourse. This sentiment of reverence and mourning for "war-martyrs" transcends individual political ideologies and regime support, reflecting a collective reverence regardless of one's personal convictions.

In 2015, I was assisting in the editing of a monograph dedicated to unpublished images, photographs, and posters from the Iran-Iraq War, drawing, at the time, on my expertise as an art historian specializing in the official iconography of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its impact on the alternative

15 Amélie Chelly, Iran. Autopsie du chiisme politique, Paris 2017, pp. 185–196.

16 William M. Reddy, The Navigation of Feelings. A Framework for the History of Emotions, Cambridge 2001, pp. 122–130.

17 Ibid.

art scene in the capital, Tehran.[18] Midway through the first editorial team meeting for the book project, the series of photographs by Alirezâ Mohammadi (Fig. 2) appeared on the screen. The photographer, a thirty-year-old independent artist, was born and raised in an apolitical and secular family from Tehran. He completed his artistic education at the Najaf Abad University of Isfahan – initially with a degree in tapestry – before returning to the capital to pursue a career in the alternative art scene mainly focused on performance art, installations, and photography. The effect of his images on me was immediate and profound.

Fig. 2: Early unofficial mural creations commemorating war-martyrs photographed by artist Alireza Mohammadi in Ahvaz (top left); Dezful (top right); Shushtar (bottom left); Tehran (bottom right). Untitled, photograph, 2014.
Source: By courtesy of the artist Alireza Mohammadi.

I only saw a few photographs from the series of 1,400 that day, most of which captured the remnants of martyrs' portraits created by ordinary people, which Mohammadi had been photographing for over ten years. These images were particularly notable for being produced outside of the official iconography,

18 The editorial project spearheaded by the Paris-based publishing house Zamân was intended to be a continuation of the exhibition on modern and contemporary Iranian art, "Unedited History. Iran 1960–2014," held from 16.5.–24. 8. 2014 at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, under the joint curatorship of Catherine David and Morad Montazami. However, the book project ultimately did not materialize.

thus evading state sponsorship and control. The murals, I would later learn from conversations with the artist, had been produced in the early days of the war, most likely by relatives of the martyrs, all of whom were clearly amateurs. These unofficial murals adorned the facades of buildings, probably at the last known addresses of the conscripted soldiers before they headed to the front. Although these likenesses imitated the official portraits of Iran-Iraq War fighters, they differed from the official imagery in terms of scale (they were painted at eye level as opposed to covering the entire facade of a ten-story building), urban distribution (they were mostly found in the alleys of less privileged residential neighborhoods rather than on main avenues), and overall political intent (without denying some degree of political intention behind them, it is nevertheless difficult to assign them the same motives as those developed with regard to the urban beautification plan).

While both the state's beautification program and these independent murals aim to reshape collective memory by fostering an emotional community centered around the concept of sacrifice, there is a distinct difference in their underlying motives. One represents a dominant state archive with a clear political agenda, while the other reflects a citizen's attempt to reclaim the very essence of martyrdom by emphasizing the unique identity of each individual who consented to perish for "a greater cause." This cause may have been religious and/or patriotic, but it was not necessarily in support of the establishment of an authoritarian state or the current government.

I was intrigued by both the fragile banality and the complexity of the mural portraits captured by Mohammadi. They required a layered reading, if not an archaeological approach, due partly to the passage of time and partly to acts of vandalism that had altered the portraits, sometimes to the point of completely erasing their anatomical features.[19] In one of the images, red coloring has been applied to the lips of the depicted individual, an amateur attempt at the restoration of an essential facial feature, in a hue reminiscent of anti-rust treatments – signaling the mundane materials available to whoever attempted the "alteration." But the hybrid iconology also evokes the blood shed by most of the portrayed, and is therefore reminiscent of what is usually washed off and not depicted in the sanitized (official and amateur) versions, thereby transforming the character into a revenant. Another reconstructed portrait showed only dots and lines re-drawn with spray paint where the eyes, nose, and mouth had previously been. These crude alterations highlight the physical accessibility of the portraits: Unlike the monumental scale of official state-sponsored paintings, these murals were all at eye level and easily reachable by hand, facilitating both acts of vandalism and belated attempts at care.

19 Parand Danesh, Martyr Iconography in Postwar Iran. When Public Memorialization Leads to Grieving Obstruction, in: Nilufer Göle (ed.), Public Space Democracy. Performative, Visual and Normative Dimensions of Politics in a Global Age, London 2022, pp. 245–258.

Motivated to learn more about these intriguing amateur martyrs' portraits, I contacted the artist and arranged a meeting in September 2018 as I was preparing for my second fieldwork trip to Tehran. Our meeting took place soon after at his workspace, Studio Bon-Gah in Keresht, a village in Pardis province, about ninety minutes from central Tehran. I began our conversation with two questions: How did he come to develop an artistic project around martyrdom, and what did *Zamânshoor* mean? He explained that *Zamânshoor* (زمانشور) was in fact a neologism he invented himself in order to combine the word *zamân* (زمان), meaning time, and the word *shoor* (شور), meaning washed or washer. Thus, it could refer to the simple notion of time passing and to the abstract idea of something that, as a witness to the passage of time, traverses it, passes and fades through it, in a certain way "washes itself" within it. *Zamânshoor* also conjures an association with similar sounding compound expressions such as *zamin-shoor* (floor cleaner or sweeper) or *morde-shoor* (mortician or mortuary attendant), whose meanings (cleansing, ritual washing of corpses) somehow influence the imagery evoked by the artist's series. Mohammadi coined the term in 2012 shortly after he began photographing amateur murals during his travels across the capital. In June 2016, he decided to traverse Iran in search of new portraits to photograph, which led him to visit more than twenty cities in 25 days, photographing 1,400 portraits, equipped only with a tent and his camera.

Over the course of our conversation, Mohammadi spontaneously mentioned a rather ordinary family photograph that had been haunting his memory for several years. It was a small landscape photograph (10 x 15 centimeters) of three people. On the right, his maternal uncle, on the left his mother, and in the center stood his mother's maternal uncle, whom he had never met and whom he called *dâii* Abbâs (uncle Abbâs, actually his great uncle). Mohammadi never met *dâii* Abbâs – to whom his mother was very close – because he had died as a martyr in the summer of 1984, three years before Mohammadi's birth. Like hundreds of thousands of other conscripted soldiers who took up arms without much prior experience, Abbâs had volunteered for the Iran-Iraq War and lost his life on the front lines. Abbâs, a professional carpenter who specialized in kitchen cabinetry was, according to his family, not particularly religious and likely had not taken up arms to defend the values of Islam embodied in the revolutionary ideology of the time, but rather to honor what he believed to be his duty as a patriot. In Mohammadi's exact words, he had gone to war to defend *melat o mihan:* the nation and the homeland. At every visit to his great-grandmother's, Mohammadi would come face to face with a commemorative photographic portrait of his great uncle hanging high on the living room wall, signaling how Abbâs remained simultaneously absent and present. The practice of hanging formal portraits in prominent parts of the family home upon the death of a beloved relative, especially a family patriarch, is common throughout the region. Mohammadi told me that in those moments he himself felt observed; sitting under Abbâs's fixed gaze, he stared back at

Abbâs. As he grew older, he learned about the circumstances of Abbâs' death, and the mental picture he formed of him became part of the constellation of martyr's portraits he would later start collecting as part of the *Zamânshoor* project. In his own accounting, Mohammadi was haunted in his formative years by the spectral memory of his great-uncle Abbâs, a figure who seemed vivid despite his physical absence.

2. The Lautarchiv: Hi-Fi Phonetics, Lo-Fi Emotions

Dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century, the Berlin Lautarchiv began as an educational project spearheaded by Wilhelm Doegen, a Berlin-based English teacher who had studied at Oxford University with Henry Sweet, the so-called "father of phonetics." Doegen was enthusiastic about the idea of using the new sound recording devices of his time to create an acoustic archive of languages and dialects, and to deploy this for the better (that is, phonetical) learning and teaching of foreign languages.[20]

After struggling for some time to secure state funding, in 1915, after the outbreak of the First World War, Doegen had no qualms about exploiting a situation that meant misery and suffering to the subjects who were supposed to contribute to his project. When "the first transports with war prisoners brought a variety of prisoners to Germany […] I felt that such an ideal opportunity was, in all probability, never to return."[21]

Together with musicologist and psychologist Carl Stumpf, who assumed the role as its director, Doegen finally succeeded in creating the Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission (Königlich-Preußische Phonographische Kommission, hereafter PK), a research institution working in secret, and comprised of about fifty professors and researchers from the fields of linguistics, anthropology, musicology, and various language departments. The PK recorded a large variety of languages and dialects in 31 of the more than 100 POW camps across Germany.[22] Among these recordings were 1,651 shellac

20 This article owes much to what I learned about the Lautarchiv from my exchange with Britta Lange, and from her pioneering research on the Lautarchiv. For a comprehensive study of its history and holdings as well as a methodological reflection on how to approach it, see her seminal Captured Voices. Sound Recordings of Prisoners of War from the Sound Archive 1915–1918, Berlin 2022; see also Monique Scheer, Captive Voices. Phonographic Recordings in the German and Austrian Prisoner-of-War Camps of World War I, in: Reinhard Johler et al. (eds.), Doing Anthropology in Wartime and War Zones. World War I and the Cultural Sciences in Europe, Bielefeld 2010, pp. 279–309.

21 Deutsches Historisches Museum [hereafter DHM], Personenkonsolut Doegen, Do2 98/2154, Wilhelm Doegen, Manuskript des ersten Kapitels der Autobiographie von Professor Doegen (mit Fotos), Berlin 1965, p. 5 [all quotes from sources by Doegen trans. by Karsten Lichau].

22 On anthropological research in POW camps, see Johler, Doing Anthropology; Anette Hoffmann et al., Was wir sehen. Bilder, Stimmen, Rauschen. Zur Kritik anthropometrischen Sammelns, Basel 2012.

discs (which would later form the core of the linguistic branch, the Berlin Lautarchiv), and 1,020 wax cylinder recordings (which became part of the musicological branch, the Berlin Phonogrammarchiv).[23]

If *Zamânshoor,* by capturing and archiving the gradual disappearance of mural portraits, features the decay of visual media over time, the Lautarchiv owes its existence to a double enterprise in countering disappearance. First, the PK subscribed to the "salvage paradigm" of early twentieth-century anthropology, and its mission to preserve cultures deemed "authentic," "weak," and under threat of extinction due to dominant Western modernity.[24] Second, the Lautarchiv originated from the technical innovations brought about by the new sound recording devices of the phonograph and the gramophone, the invention, commercialization, and worldwide spread of which were closely linked with the promise of making sounds perdure: the transient, fleeting sound of the human voice – that hitherto could not be captured in its individual or collective distinctions – was now to become immortal and audible beyond its owner's death. This was, at least, the vision behind the marketing of the "Victor Talking Machine." In an early version of Francis Barraud's famous gramophone publicity ad featuring dog Nipper listening to "His Master's Voice," (see fig. 3) the dog sits on a shiny wooden surface that has been interpreted as a coffin lid (in the later version that became world famous, the lower part has been cut).[25] The immortality of voices, turned into acoustic portraits recorded on disc, became an omnipresent trope in the marketing and use of gramophones around 1900.[26]

In order to capture and preserve the acoustic quality of the recorded voices with the highest possible fidelity, the PK established a highly elaborated procedure – which was almost exclusively geared toward the phonetic sound of language – to exclude or minimize possible interferences of any sort. Thinking

23 These were essentially two competing technologies: the phonograph, invented by Thomas Edison in 1877, which inscribed the vibrations received through a membrane and transferred to a stylus into spiral grooves on a rotating wax cylinder; and the gramophone, in which the grooves were recorded on an original wax disc from which shellac copies could be made (a process by which the original wax version was destroyed).

24 Though the research of the PK was primarily classified by ethno-linguistic distinctions, these clearly operated against a backdrop of racial categories and characterizations. There was also an additional quite literal background: The personnel forms were printed on yellow paper for speakers of various Indian languages, and on brown paper for those simply classified as "Africans." Cf. DHM, Personenkonvolut Wilhelm Doegen Do2 98/2157, Wilhelm Doegen, Bericht über mein Wirken und Schaffen in der Preussischen Phonographischen Kommission, Berlin 1919, p. 7.

25 Cf. Jonathan Sterne, The Audible Past. Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction, Durham 2003, pp. 287–334.

26 Yet in reality, the voices continued to be threatened by slow decay, and accidental destruction – just as photos and mural paintings are. The brittle, easily breakable shellac from which the discs were made was not made for eternity (as evidenced by the numerous entries in the Lautarchiv's catalogue referring to lost or broken discs).

Fig. 3: Advertisement for Victor Gramophones, from "The Theatre," colour lithograph by Francis Barraud, c. 1910.
Source: By courtesy of Archives Charmet / Bridgeman Images.

of Kaster's emotional scripts, we might conceive of this as of an "acoustic script," though in this case, the script only refers to a scientific community and their "objects," not to society at large: It comprises a textual script – in the literal sense – as well as a variety of other bodily, logistic, and communicative practices, as will be outlined in the following.

Doegen, the PK's chief commissioner for organization and technical operations, established meticulous procedures for choosing the speakers, and for preparing and conducting the recording sessions. Before a PK team visited a camp, suitable candidates were (pre-)selected by means of lists sent by the camp officers, the main criteria being the rareness of the languages and dialects they spoke, and the absence of possible influence from modern Western culture, which was considered contaminating with respect to linguistic value.

Upon arrival at the camps, speakers were prepared for their recording sessions according to a detailed protocol. Speakers had to audition their text first in front of the commission, then write it down for the recording. If a candidate was illiterate, a linguistic expert or translator produced a written text from what the speaker said – the latter then had to learn the text by heart (or was sometimes fed his lines). It was crucial that the spoken and recorded text corresponded word-for-word to the version of the text written down

beforehand. Ideal was to have three written versions of the texts for each recording: one in the original language, a transcription in phonetic signs, and a translation (into German or English). In addition, a standard documentation form was created, indicating additional information the researchers deemed of importance. At the end of this form, and after the recording, two experts evaluated the quality of the recorded speech.

Whereas this procedure was to be strictly and closely followed, the choice of the genre of text was entirely at the speakers' disposal. They could opt for one of two standard texts (a list with common words from everyday life, or the "Parable of the Prodigal Son" from Luke 15:11–32), or they were free to tell a traditional tale from their culture, recite a poem, or simply talk about their own life, their home, their war experiences, their capture, and even the situation they encountered in the camps.[27] Those who opted for the latter often produced recordings charged with memories of home and dear ones, or with feelings of hope, distress, anger, sadness, or homesickness. While personal accounts of the war and the camps usually did not get past the harsh censorship to which soldiers' or prisoners' letters were subject, censorship rules did not apply to the recordings made by the PK, or at least not as strictly as in other cases (since they were not addressed to anyone and were never actually sent to a recipient but only produced for scientific study).

In another measure to guarantee acoustic quality, several rehearsals took place before the recording in order to prevent the speakers from speaking too quickly or too slowly and to "free the recording [i. e. the speaker], first of all, from so-called 'funnel fever': familiarization with the various, unknown impressions from the setting and treatment upon recording work."[28] In addition, the speakers' bodies were subject to scrupulous medical examinations: "it was exactly checked if the speech tools were conforming to the norm, if lips, teeth, tongue, palate, vocal chords, the form of the nose (nasal bone) and the nasal area were developed in a natural, normal way."[29]

For the scientists, the voices of the individual prisoners were precious acoustic "objects." Thus the "acoustic script" was almost exclusively geared toward recording phonetic sound in the highest possible quality. This is evident from Doegen's 1919 report on his work in the PK, in which he emphasized the scope of his endeavor:

> the sound recordings provide absolute fidelity as regards the fixing of all voiced phonemes, except for the s-, th-, f-, and p-phonemes […], the pitch, the duration and volume of the phoneme, the speech pauses, the metre of speech, and furthermore the study of the whole melody of speech and sentence, as well as […] the animate live recitation captured on the disc (the speaker's perception and sentiment) [*des beseelten lebendigen Vortrages (Auffassung*

27 For more detailed case studies accounting for these testimonies see Lange, Captured Voices.

28 Doegen, Bericht, p. 24.

29 Ibid., p. 21.

und Empfindung des Sprechers)] – something that no phonetic alphabet, be it as accurate as possible, can do.[30]

Sound and phonetics took center stage. The stories the POWs told and the messages they sent – which testified to their unfortunate destinies, conveyed accounts of misery, suffering, disease, and sometimes even hinted at untimely death –[31] as well as the narrative or poetic value they were laden with, were of no interest to the linguistic researchers and were therefore only captured in passing.
The same goes for the emotional practices. Even if the acoustic script was not interested in them, it did not entirely exclude them – as Doegen's mentioning of the "sentiments" in the recitation proves. And yet, emotional practices were not the focus of this script. One could even argue that their performance was hampered, or limited to a rather narrow part of the emotional spectrum. Any kind of expressive, agitated, or outrageous emotional expression was impossible if the speakers were to adopt the rigid posture imposed on their bodies in order to achieve the best possible acoustic fidelity of the recorded language, as specified by Doegen:

Usually, my left hand bolstered him up at the spine, while my right hand gently touched [*berührte leise*] the speaker's chest. I paid special attention to always keep, once adjusted, the vertical position, and the distance in front of, and from the funnel, which differ for each speaker and singer, also depending on the articulation of speech; this was to precisely fix the natural degree in volume of the phonemes. [...] If he read his text, I held the sheet for him. By no means was the speaker or singer allowed to hold the sheet himself, during the recording. It had to be assured that the natural position was not interfered with, and modified by any sort of muscular tension, which would have impeded the speech flow, and the unconditional concentration of the thoughts on the sole content.[32]

This immobilization hindered bodily movements – an essential part of emotional practice that enables many emotions to arise (to be felt in the process of being produced, and expressed) in the first place – leaving space only for interiorized, restrained, or repressed feelings.[33] Expressing emotions under such conditions in a way that left enduring traces on the discs was anything but easy, and indeed was not something the speakers were expected to do. Those who did so nevertheless ended up introducing into the recordings

30 Doegen, Bericht, pp. 15 f.
31 Cf. on the history of POWs in the First World War, Uta Hinz, Gefangen im Großen Krieg. Kriegsgefangenschaft in Deutschland 1914–1921, Essen 2006; Annette Becker, Oubliés de la Grande Guerre. Humanitaire et culture de guerre, 1914–1918, Populations occupés, déportés civils, prisonniers de guerre, Paris 2003.
32 Doegen, Bericht, pp. 23 f.
33 "The imparting of the desired emotional response involves imparting the requisite bodily disposition, for example in the silent, reverent postures and minimal movements that support interiorization." Scheer, Are Emotions, p. 216. See also Helmut Lethen, Cool Conduct. The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany, translated by Don Reneau, Berkeley 2002, on emotional attitudes produced by culturally restricted bodily schemes.

an archival dissonance that subverted or defied the colonial, military, and scientific regime that ruled over the sound recordings made by the PK, as well as its acoustic script.

II. The Manifestation of Hidden Voices

1. From Amateur Portraits to Alternative Emotional Scripts

In post-revolutionary Iran, the figure of the official martyr,[34] someone whose death is sanctified by the state, corresponds exactly to the definition of a dominant archive. The word martyr (in both the original Greek and in Farsi) means witness, in addition to indicating someone who died for a cause. In other words, a martyr is in essence the embodiment of proof of a certain moral, religious, or political truth. Furthermore, the body of the martyr itself is the material representation of a set of otherwise mostly intangible beliefs. However, martyrdom also contains a paradox due to the polysemic nature of the mortal but symbolically charged body that attests to it. By dying, the individual ceases to exist on a physical level but simultaneously ceases to be perishable on a symbolic level because through his martyrdom, the higher values for which he gave his life are immortalized. In the Iranian context, the martyr's corpse, monumentalized in the grave that marks it or the tomb that houses it, will continue to play a key role in substantiating to his martyrdom. At the same time, however, his supposedly imperishable enduring image is susceptible to compromise due to the corrosive effect of the passage of time and as a result of a potential change, loss, or weakening of the collective beliefs that determine the martyr's legitimacy in the first place.

In the case of *Zamânshoor's* unofficial murals, the state's official narrative of martyrdom looms: Not only does it dictate what Iranian citizens should know about martyrdom, but it also seeks to circumscribe how they ought to feel about that knowledge. Official emotional scripts are the result of the societal and cultural rules that dictate appropriate emotional responses. An emotional regime, as articulated by Reddy, refers to a mental representation of emotionally charged events that aim at reinforcing cultural norms. As a collection of informal commemorative portraits, Mohammadi's photographic series, therefore, represents more than merely a selection of amateur artistic works. Rather, it is a record of deliberate acts of emotional and historical reclamation and rehabilitation of the memory of the dead through portrait painting. Following Reddy's conceptualization of "emotional refuge" cited earlier, *Zamânshoor* portraits appear to be micro-spaces of subjective grief

34 I deliberately use the masculine pronoun throughout the article because, although in the Shiite tradition martyrdom could be the prerogative of both men and women, the title of war-martyr during and after the Iran-Iraq War has been predominantly associated with men.

within a public space heavily censored and monopolized by state authorities that promote their own official narrative. Therefore, *Zamânshoor* amateur portraits could be perceived as sanctuaries that shelter their creators as well as the passerby from the pressure of conformity to the official martyr narrative as well as from the burden of "collective debt." These emotional refuges could also, to some extent, harbor Reddy's notion of "emotional suffering" by making possible the expression of "personalized grief" within the very public space that fosters official archetypes of behavioral and emotional norms for the population to integrate.

The state-sponsored emotional script embodied by the portraits of "fallen soldiers" associates collective pride and shared sorrow with virtuous behavior and patriotic conduct that stem from a sense of modesty and reverence inspired by sacrificial death. For over four decades, official martyrs' portraits have been used to configure and to contain the emotional horizons of Iran's citizens, dictating how they should feel about their past, present, and future while restraining or exacerbating social behaviors around mourning in public space.[35] In contrast to this official repertoire, this series from *Zamânshoor* dives into the more nuanced terrain of individual emotional expression, personal or more individualized processes of mourning, and less stylized versions of commemorative art. Mohammadi's documentation of these amateur portraits (in addition to the original production of the art itself) challenges the narratives that, at the hands of the state, are heavily imposed on the social consciousness in contemporary Iran. In an authoritarian context, such narratives often serve to uphold the state's power by standardizing emotional responses to its national myth-making project.

While it is impossible to ascertain a single coherent counter-narrative from the 1,400 images Mohammadi has preserved in his photographs (since they were produced at different moments by amateurs who remain unknown), taken together, both their existence and their subsequent documentation expose the cracks in the emotional "mold" the state has crafted through official martyr portraiture. By documenting these time-ravaged unofficial portraits, the material from *Zamânshoor* reveals the spaces of ruin, erosion, and decay from which nevertheless have merged numerous personalized, ordinary and therefore more subjective expressions of grief. Scheer's exploration of "emotional practices"[36] has elucidated how individuals can, through various practices like sensory perception, cognition, and memory activation engage in shaping their emotional experiences and thereby possibly distance themselves

35 "Through martyrs the state tries to acquire longer arms. Through their eyes the domain of state surveillance is expanded; from their mouth its messages are spoken; by means of their ears deviant ideas are detected and eliminated." Shahla Talebi, From the Light of the Eyes to the Eyes of the Power. State and Dissident Martyrs in Post-Revolutionary Iran, in: Visual Anthropology 25. 2012, pp. 120–147, here p. 134.

36 Scheer, Are Emotions.

from dominant scripts. Mohammadi's art captures this emotional agency, documenting and preserving how subjective emotions and intimate memories have been expressed and rendered visible within public space.
Finally, it is worth pausing to consider whether the images in *Zamânshoor* represent a coherent alternative emotional script, one that itself would be apt to uniformly challenge, inhibit, and limit Iranian's feelings of pride and guilt associated with an official iconography eaten and washed away by time. I suggest that the series fails to offer a singular cohesive script but invites us instead to re-examine the emotional landscape of the past, delivering no single preconceived notion of how or what one should feel when asked to measure oneself against the state-sponsored archetype of "the perfect man."[37] In spite of its amorphous (by virtue of being unregulated, unofficial, and informal) character, the portraits in *Zamânshoor* challenge state-imposed emotional conformity and create space for diverse emotional experiences and interpretations of the past. This interplay of art, emotion, and history underlines the transformative power encapsulated in Mohammadi's work, which exists as an art practice, an emotional practice, a historical testimony, and a pivotal force in the reclamation of both another, perhaps more dissonant, historical truth and emotional agency.

2. Unheard(-of) Emotions

Just like sounds, emotions are fleeting, transient phenomena. Intrinsically tied to bodily processes – from physiological arousal states and inner feelings involving cognition or memory to outward expression – they become manifest in a moment, and have passed in the next. Yet, unlike for sounds, there is no technical media device to transcribe and capture emotions. Historians therefore have to rely on sources, mostly textual, that at least preserve some traces of the practices of which emotions are made. In what follows, I will explore how the intertwinement of sounds and emotions can help us to unlock the Lautarchiv's recordings and to learn something about their emotional dimension, even if there is no proper emotion medium, and despite the restrictions imposed on emotional expressions by the PK's acoustic script.
In order to become sensitive to dimensions not targeted by the PK's scientific approach but nevertheless captured via the recorded sounds, cultural scholars Britta Lange and Anette Hoffmann introduced the method of "close listening" to the Lautarchiv recordings.[38] They wanted to grasp not only the texts that the

37 Alice Bombardier, The Mystical Notion of the Perfect Man. Discourses of Iranian Revolutionary Painters and the Portrayal of Martyrs, in: Sasha Dehghani and Silvia Horsch (eds.), Martyrdom in the Modern Middle East, Würzburg 2014, pp. 117–140.
38 Britta Lange, Sensible Sammlungen, in: Berner, Sensible Sammlungen, pp. 15–40; Annette Hoffmann, Introduction. Listening to Sound Archives, in: Social Dynamics. A Journal of African Studies 41. 2015, pp. 73–83. Cf. also Laura Kounine's reflections on Carol Gilligan's Listening Guide method of psychological inquiry, in this issue.

prisoners spoke (or sometimes sung) into the funnel device, but also the "noise" that was captured by the recording machine, other sounds in the room, and any interruption or disturbance by non- or paraverbal utterances. In short, they sought to attune themselves to "all those other dimensions of the audible that surround and interrupt" the text.[39] Both drawing upon and critical of Gayatri Spivak's famous claim that the "subaltern cannot speak" (because their voice is not listened to),[40] Lange has emphasized the futility of any attempt to give *the* voice back to the recorded subjects – given that this voice did not matter to those who recorded its acoustic traces – but still, she attempts to tune her ears to the few traces of the subjects that remain on the recorded discs.[41] I will extend the close listening approach by exploring its emotional dimension in an empirical case study. Though emotions are not absent from Lange's approach, nor from the literature inspired by her pioneering work, they have still not been systematically analyzed until now.

One of the most outstanding and best-known Lautarchiv recordings, the discs labeled PK 648/PK 649, have attracted attention from researchers and artists alike.[42] There are not many things we know about Chote Singh, an Indian prisoner at the Half Moon camp, whose voice is captured on these as well as a few other recordings. The personnel form says he was aged 29 at the time of the recordings (3 and 5 January 1917); that he was a peasant *(Landmann)* stemming from Kaundar village in the Fatehpur district; that he was Hindu; that his mother tongue was Hindi; and that he was literate. If we listen to PK 648 and PK 649, we can hear him speak and sing: in this particular case, the same text was both sung (PK 648, PK 649) and spoken (PK 649). After finishing his song version of a story about Rama and Jatayu however,[43] Chote Singh departed from the prescribed text that had been noted down. He can be heard exclaiming: "Soldier Chote Singh. District Fatehpur. Village Kaundar. I am a prisoner in Germany from the war of 1914. Brother, I live with pride. The German King keeps me with great happiness and Jai-ho! Jai-ho! Jai-ho! Hahahaha, hahahaha, hahahaha."[44] What does this recording and the

39 Lange, Captured Voices, p. 30.

40 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Can the Subaltern Speak?, in: Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.), Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, Urbana 1988, pp. 271–311.

41 Cf. ibid., p. 296.

42 For a close listening to PK 648/649 cf. Lange, Captured Voices, p. 315–334. PK 648/649 also figure prominently in Philip Scheffner's important filmic exploration of the Lautarchiv in his documentary The Halfmoon Files. A Ghost Story, Germany 2007, as well as in Friedrich Balke, Rete mirabile. Die Zirkulation der Stimmen in Philip Scheffners *Halfmoon Files*, in: Sprache und Literatur 40. 2009, pp. 58–78, here p. 71.

43 The story actually describes two traits characteristic of its protagonists: Rama's modesty (as opposed to the pride of the princes) and Jatayu's bravery.

44 Lautarchiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Chote Singh, Gesang, PK 649, transl. Anandita Bajpai. Readers can listen to the audio recording here: https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.25578015 (Source: By courtesy of Lautarchiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin).

deviation from the script – in this case both literally from the textual script and from the performative script of acoustic and emotional practices – tell us about Chote Sing's emotions, or about those it evoked in the PK's experts, and staff?

On the recording, emotions are referred to, or even performed at two levels: through language and meaning as well as through para-verbal bodily gestures. The former comes into play when Chote Singh speaks of his own pride, and "the great happiness" in which the German king (actually, the emperor) kept him. While there is an ironic intimation to the monarch's alleged happiness – bolstered by the exclamation "Jai-ho, Jai-ho, Jai-ho," which was a call for victory that Indian soldiers used when fighting for the British – the pride evoked by Chote Singh can be understood as an "emotive," meant to produce the claimed feeling by naming it.[45] This naming would preserve the POW's honor against all odds in a situation that could be perceived as humiliating to him or other POWs, although it is not easy to know what the recording sessions meant to Singh. The overall situation of POWs in the camps was ambivalent at best. On the one hand, they were freed from the daily menace of being killed at the front and the treatment in some of the camps was reported to be – at least officially – respectful, or even sympathetic. Indian POWs of a variety of religious backgrounds were provided with the food their religion required, and indeed the first mosque ever built in Germany was constructed at Wünsdorf, in the Half Moon camp.[46] On the other hand, these measures were not philanthropic gestures but clearly served propaganda aims (both outward and inward): German military leaders hoped that these prisoners would be susceptible to changing sides, and thus to being mobilized against British or French colonial rule. What's more, there is also historical evidence that reality differed greatly from the picture painted by official German sources. Though there is no official testimony in the sound archives to hunger, disease, or death, these were companions to the prisoners, too.[47] Some of the prisoners of war were in fact sick with, or even died from, tuberculosis. We do not know if this was the case with Chote Singh, but Doegen's assessment of the acoustic quality of the recording may hint at such an interpretation: "Voice has become hoarse, often interrupted through pathological coughing."[48] With regard to material rewards or other benefits, Doegen claimed the participants were offered

45 Reddy, Navigation of Feelings, pp. 96–110.

46 Cf. Doegen, Manuskript, pp. 23 f.

47 Cf. on Indian colonial soldiers in German POW camps, Franziska Roy et al. (eds.), Soldat Ram Singh und der Kaiser. Indische Kriegsgefangene in deutschen Propagandalagern 1914–1918, Heidelberg 2014; Santanu Das, Indians at Home, Mesopotamia and France, 1914–1918. Towards an Intimate History, in: Das (ed.) Race, Empire and First World War Writing, Cambridge 2011, pp. 70–89; David Omissi (ed.), Indian Voices of the Great War. Soldiers' Letters, 1914–18, London 1999.

48 Doegen, PK 649.

tobacco and sweets, but also books, only rarely money.[49] At the very least, they were released from work during the sessions. At the same time, they were confronted with a situation that clearly mirrored their subordinate position as colonial others, enemies of war, and objects of science. The recording sessions thus confronted them with a dynamic that was as precarious, or even humiliating, as their overall condition.

Yet Chote Singh does not only evoke emotions with words, but also through his acoustically performed laughter. Assessing its acoustic qualities through a close listening, we might perceive a whole slew of entangled emotions in it: sarcasm, bitterness, even disillusionment, but also something that oscillates between hilarity, mockery, jeer, or scorn for the weird scientists. But is this what he actually felt and wanted to express with his laughter? We have to concede that we cannot know. Even if we could retrieve the cultural contexts and gestural codes that would have allowed fellow countrymen of his time to decipher these emotional nuances from the acoustic features of how he laughed (the sound of mocking laughter is subject to changes over time as well as across national or regional cultures), what historical actors felt still hinges on the subject's individual history, a caveat that historians of emotion should be mindful of.

There is a way to further unlock this "unheard(-of)" emotion, though: by analyzing the laughter as an intervention that defied the proscribed acoustic script and the emotional script of restraint it implied, namely the restricted emotionality it imposed on the speakers. Chote Singh's laughter challenged the scripts he was meant to follow, and thereby the position he was attributed by colonial, military, and scientific power hierarchies. His laughter was an emotional practice "unheard(-of)" in a double sense: it was transgressive in the sense of being outrageous, and it was captured acoustically, yet remained largely unheard.

In his later sketches for an autobiography (dated 1965), Doegen describes the emotional encounters with the prisoners according to the emotional script of *Völkerverständigung* (international understanding), and hospitality. He constantly refers to the mission of the PK as one of "brotherhood and reconciliation among peoples," and the second chapter, which is dedicated to his crucial role in establishing the PK, is entitled "How it came to the sound recordings in the German prisoner-of-war camps (1915–1918), in which brotherliness and reconciliation among peoples were lived [*Wie es zu den Lautaufnahmen in den deutschen Kriegsgefangenenlagern kam (1915–1918), in denen Brüderlichkeit und Völkerversöhnung erlebt wurden*]".[50]

There is good reason to question this narrative. First, Doegen himself, in his earlier 1919 report, casts doubt on the innocent gestures of reconciliation and reciprocal gratitude when alluding to the prisoners' displeasure and refusal,

49 Doegen, Bericht, p. 40.
50 Doegen, Manuskript.

which often forced him to cancel, at the last minute, recording sessions he had been preparing for days: "Many a time those involved [i. e. the PK's linguistic experts] had to be telegraphically informed to abstain from the expedition, and not to come. The reasons were either the outbreak of diseases, or the soldiers' ill humour, or even refusal."[51]

Of course, that prisoners were reluctant, if not disinclined or even hostile to participating in the PK recording session, is not only suggested by the latter's restrictive emotional scripts, but also by the POW's disconcerting situation more largely, which heavily resonates with the script. It was not that they were naïve or stupefied by the new "Western" sound recording technologies, as the PK would sometimes claim. Among Indian prisoners in particular, many were familiar with the new devices. Due to its role in the global shellac industry, India in general and Kolkata in particular[52] had become one of the international hubs of the growing sound recording industry as early as 1900. In addition, gramophones were also used by soldiers during wartime, and even by POWs during their transfer.[53]

But if they were familiar with the technical devices, their overall condition was hardly one of hospitality or mutual understanding, brotherliness, and reconciliation. The speakers were being held captive in a POW camp, asked to speak to an "audience" who were unable to understand their words, and transmitting a message that would not be sent to an addressee, but kept in an archive. Were they aware that no one would be listening to *what* they said? Did they know that their words, their poems, tales, and personal accounts would only be heard by a few scientists interested in *how* they spoke? Even if they did know, would they not still have hoped that someone would listen to their acoustic "message in a bottle,"[54] to their wishes, laments, desires, or fears; to the longings for home, or to the desperation evoked on numerous recordings? In all likelihood, this highly precarious and unsettled situation made some of the POW's inclined to resist and defy the emotional script imposed by the PK, and its underlying military, political, and scientific hierarchies.

Yet, in the case of Chote Singh's laughter, it is not only these situative contexts that suggest hearing it as an emotional practice that challenges the emotional script of restraint from expressive emotions and the latent violence it was laden with; there is also empirical evidence that comes from the sources. The sound was not only captured on the recording. It left two material traces in the archive that I will conclude my exploration with: a handwritten note and a very telling silence.

51 Doegen, Bericht, p. 10.
52 Calcutta until 2001.
53 Cf. Lange, Captured Voices, p. 297.
54 This is the picture Britta Lange uses to overcome the notion of the speakers' voicelessness, cf. Lange, *Poste Restante*, and Messages in Bottles. Sound Recordings of Indian Prisoners in the First World War, in: Social Dynamics. A Journal of African Studies 41. 2015, pp. 84–100.

First of all, the above-cited words and shouts that Chote Singh exclaimed after the end of his song, before dissolving into laughter ("Brother, I live with pride. The German King keeps me with great happiness and Jai-ho! Jai-ho! Jai-ho!"), were not noted down in the transcription made after the recording, as was usually prescribed by the acoustic script. Nor was his laughter. The official documentation has only kept the beginning of the not-agreed-upon supplement: "Soldier Chote Singh. District Fatehpur. Unit Kaundar."[55] The rest of Singh's personal account, in which the voice introduces a subject positionality when alluding to his emotion of pride, and his emotionally expressive laughter, were silenced in writing, but silenced in a way that clearly speaks, and conveys meaning. The erasure marks the limits of what was acceptable to the acoustic and emotional script – and what was not: the transgressive, outrageous, unheard-of.

Furthermore, while the laughter did not appear in the official transcript, it did so on the back of the documentation sheet with the native Devanagari text. There, Wilhelm Doegen himself noted in handwritten letters: "Chote Singh laughs because he is happy about the good food + the emperor will be happy if he eats it."[56] If we listen closely to the recording, to the unheard(-of) sound of Chote Singh's laughter, Doegen's interpretation referring to the narrative of "brotherhood and reconciliation among peoples" becomes more than dubious. This does not sound like the laughter of happiness and gratitude, it is not laughter that unites, but one that marks a dissonance and articulates a break with the PK's univocal emotional script through an emotional practice out of place.

III. Conclusion

In this article, we explored visual and acoustic sources as a means to unlock the emotional dimension in historical testimony. Often providing a key element of emotional practices – understood as the complex interconnection between inner arousal and assessment, evaluation, and expression of feelings – the production and perception of pictures and sounds contribute to introducing, establishing, and reaffirming the narratives, norms, and emotional scripts that underpin the political power of military, state, academic or artistic institutions. Yet, visual and acoustic sources can also provide traces of attempts to challenge this power.

Such attempts might be of particular impact when they refer to the very images affirmative of hegemonic power structures yet apply a different visual strategy to them, as in the case of the photographs collected in the *Zamânshoor* project, which make the decay and decomposition of mural paintings portraying

55 PK 649, handwritten translation into German by unknown author.
56 PK 649, handwritten note by Doegen.

Iranian martyrs visible – a process that official institutions do their best to conceal. By visually preserving and presenting the damaged, crumbling, or tagged portraits, *Zamânshoor* defies the dominant narrative of martyrdom's eternity and the emotional script of pride and gratitude it enforces on citizens. But most importantly, the series invites us to grasp the extent of the journey – both intimate and collective – that led the artist to create visual material that would document the ruin of an iconography intended to reclaim the very notion of collective grief in the broader context of the national monopolization of mourning.

In the case of the Lautarchiv, the sound of laughter recorded on a shellac disc now kept at the Berlin Lautarchiv challenges the acoustic and emotional script established by the Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission. Aimed at capturing the phonetic sounds of language with the best possible acoustic fidelity, this script limited the emotional practices of participants' bodies to a set of restrained, immobile gestures, and expressions. The unheard-of sound of POW Chote Singh's loud, expressive laughter at the end of the recording not only breaks with the scripted performance of the recording session, but also laughs at the colonial, military, and scientific regimes the recording is supposed to serve.

Both cases show that, and how, visual and acoustic sources help to unlock but also reveal emotions, and their crucial role in questioning and further challenging sources that have been initially claimed and showcased by state and scientific institutions as apparently univocal records.

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