

1. Record Nr.	TD21002925
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Titolo	Writing and reading practices in fifteenth-century Chosŏn Korea: focusing on King Sejong's reign (1418-1450) and the invention of the Korean vernacular script (Hunmin Chŏngmŏm 訓民正音) [Tesi di dottorato]
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Tesi di dottorato
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note	diritti: info:eu-repo/semantics/openAccess In relazione con info:eu-repo/semantics/altIdentifier/hdl/11573/1437160
Sommario	Fifteenth-century Chosŏn Korea was characterised by a complex and interconnected system of writing practices that included literary Sinitic (hanmun 漢文), vernacular transcription systems, foreign languages, and, since the middle of the century, a new vernacular script. This new script was invented and promulgated during the reign of Sejong 世宗 (1418-1450) with the name of Hunmin Chŏngmŏm 訓民正音 (the correct sounds for the instruction of the people). Its invention allowed for the first time to transcribe the Korean language with ease and precision, opening new possibilities for larger sectors of the society to express themselves through writing and for written texts to reach a larger part of the population. Existing scholarship, however, does not seem to have devoted much attention to how, at a practical level, this was made possible. What seems to be often implied is that illiterate people could finally write with the vernacular script and read texts written with it. The present study, however, suggests that this vision of the vernacular script as aimed to increase the level of literacy

among the Korean population does not offer a complete understanding of the significance of its invention. Instead, it urges to place the invention of the vernacular script in the broader context of the writing and reading practices of the time, often characterized by oral and social uses of the written texts. Thus, it considers how early Chosŏn texts were also intended to be read aloud and, in some cases, memorized so that they could be mediated for an audience of listeners in specific contexts. The production of the early vernacular texts compiled during the reign of Sejong is thus analysed by considering the social dynamics at play during their reading and how their textual and linguistic features were linked to their use. By doing this, it is argued that the vernacular script did not simply make possible an increase of literacy but unlocked new possibilities for the vocalization and mediation of texts.

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