



Kerwan

International Journal of Afro-Asiatic Studies

24/2

2020

KERVAN - International Journal of Afro-Asiatic Studies

KERVAN is an international and multidisciplinary discussion platform, dealing with the history, politics, economics, sociology, geography, visual culture, languages and literatures of Asian and African countries. KERVAN publishes theoretical studies, reviews and surveys, as well as detailed empirical studies, critical editions of texts and translations, by both young researchers and established scholars.

KERVAN is published under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

All **submissions** to KERVAN undergo double blind peer-review.

KERVAN's Policies and Code of Ethics are available [here](#).

KERVAN is listed in [ERIH PLUS](#) and indexed in [SCOPUS](#).

Since 2016 KERVAN is rated **Class A** journal for the Italian National Scientific Qualification (ASN, disciplines 10/N1 and 10/N3).

Scientific Director:

Mauro Tosco

Steering Committee:

Esterino Adami · Alessandra Consolaro · Francesco Grande · Daniela Moro · Stefania Stafutti

Scientific Board:

Graziella Acquaviva · Nadia Anghelescu · Lucia Avallone · Maurizio Bagatin · Francesca Bellino · Tommaso Bobbio · Marco Boella · Matteo Cestari · Emanuele Ciccarella · Gianluca Coci · Pierluigi Cuzzolin · Monica De Togni · Andrea Drocco · Veronica Ghirardi · Barbara Leonesi · David Neal Lorenzen Sbrega · Matthew Morgenstern · Marco Moriggi · Lia Ogno · Ongaye Oda Orkaydo · Paola Orsatti · Luca A. Patrizi · Alberto Pelissero · Gianni Pellegrini · Stefano Piano · Nikolay Samoylov · Maurizio Scarpari

Contact:

mauro.tosco@unito.it

ISSN:

1825-263X

Cover by Marta Tosco

Kervan

24/2

(2020)

Table of Contents

A word from the editor ix

Mauro Tosco

Articles

Traducir y reinventar leyendas: una copia lisboeta del *Itinerarium* de Alejandro Geraldini y las riquezas del fabuloso reino del Preste Juan etíope 3

Daniele Arciello

Terminologia del corpo ed estensioni metaforiche: swahili e zulu a confronto 33

Rosanna Tramutoli

From Andalusia to Yemen: The origin of the Swahili stanzaic metres 63

Emiliano Minerba

Exploring Haji Gora Haji's poetics in his collection *Shuwari* 89

Flavia Aiello

Analisi letteraria delle canzoni di Remmy Ongala e delle loro tradizioni testuali 115

Roberto Gaudioso

Cultural changes and their influences on medical practices among the Kwahu people of Ghana (c. 1700-2019) 143

Samuel Adu-Gyamfi, Benjamin Dompok Darkwa, Dennis Baffour Awuah, and Lucky Tomdi

Grammaticalisation et transcatégorialité : le verbe <i>qim-le</i> en soureth	177
<i>Roula Skaf</i>	
Yazdandukht and Mar Qardagh: From the Persian martyr acts in Syriac to Sureth poetry on YouTube, via a historical novel in Arabic	199
<i>Alessandro Mengozzi</i>	
Paretymologies in the <i>Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam</i> in the light of Ibn Arabi's hermeneutic principles	231
<i>Federico Salvaggio</i>	
How much Arabic? The speech of second-generation Moroccan children in Turin	249
<i>Giulia Ventura</i>	
Les emprunts au français dans l'arabe de Jordanie : origines, typologie et sémantique	279
<i>Mousa Awwad</i>	
<i>Filumena Marturano:</i>	301
Language and culture in Standard Arabic and Egyptian vernacular translations	
<i>Lucia Avallone</i>	
La dinastia Kalacuri e il tempio delle 81 dee di Bherāghāt	321
<i>Chiara Policardi</i>	
Politizzazione del sacro e identità in Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950)	359
<i>Marco Castagnetto</i>	
No Sex and the Paradise City: A critical reading of Murata Sayaka's <i>Shōmetsu sekai</i> (2015)	373
<i>Anna Specchio</i>	

- Profilo sociale dell'emigrazione urbana giapponese nella Manciuria coloniale: 397
il caso della città di Fushun

Filippo Dornetti

- Dalle piazze a Twitter contro l'egemonia di Abe: 415
La strategia comunicativa del Partito democratico costituzionale alle elezioni del 2017

Marco Zappa

Documents

- Biographical and scientific notes about Mark Lidzbarski (1868-1928): 443
A translation from Ludmila Hanisch, *Aufzeichnungen von Mark Lidzbarski (1868-1928)*,
edited by Pierre Motylewicz and Ute Pietruschka. Halle-Wittemberg:
Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, 2015

Marco Moriggi

Reviews

- Graziella Acquaviva. *Leggere il teatro: l'esperienza swahili* (2019) 461

Flavia Aiello

- Teasing Clues of Life [review of: Chittaranjan Misra, Jaydeep Sarangi and Mona Das. 465
Resonance: English Poetry from Poets of Odisha (2019)]

Sutanuka Ghosh Roy

A word from the editor

Five year plans and new deals

Wrapped in golden chains

(John Fogerty, *Who'll Stop the Rain?*, 1970)

In these dire times—times of systemic deception and institutionalized violence, of beheaded statues and belittled and beleaguered opposing voices—at *Kervan* we dare to think differently.

We saw the contagion spread from a country once held as a beacon of freedom; caught in awe and bewilderment, we witnessed madness engulf universities and centers of learning, then cross the ocean and spread further, closer.

Countless, unknown colleagues have been and are harassed, ostracized, silenced or fired for expressing their views and opinions in the face of violent mobs—and, all too often, of complicit and obliging faculties and trembling, self-serving academic authorities. Or for not kneeling fast and convincingly enough to the self-styled guardians of a new orthodoxy. Or still, for being branded with the *suspicion* of harboring dangerous, free ideas. Cowed by fear, they wait their turn to be scrutinized for correctness, knowing all too well that any word may be wrong and that few will be saved.

The example has been set, and many others—befuddled, bewitched, bereft of hope—will now obediently bow to the anointed and to a new faith begotten by laughingly preposterous ruminations made into nonsensical—but highly remunerative—theories. Whole academic fields happily teach that facts do not matter and history is a discourse, that truth is an opinion and lies in the eye of the beholder, that languages, like reality, are just a figment of imagination. And that guilt is collective and never ending.

Many will cheer in a false belief to have been set free and will eagerly dance to the music of their new masters.

Again, at *Kervan* we think and write differently.

Mauro Tosco

mauro.tosco@unito.it

Articles

Traducir y reinventar leyendas

Una copia lisboeta del *Itinerarium* de Alejandro Geraldini y las riquezas del fabuloso reino del Preste

Juan etíope

Daniele Arciello

Of all extant copies of the *Itinerarium ad regiones sub aequinoctiali plaga constitutas* written by the 16th century Italian bishop Alessandro Geraldini, there is one that is preeminently relevant which is held in the National Library of Portugal. According to what the copyist, Pompeo Mongallo, stated in his work, it can be dated to 1565. However, it is probable that the text kept in that library is a copy of the 16th century document due to a watermark which would suggest 1601 as the date of composition. What is significant about the manuscript is the addition of some chapters extracted from a book written in Portuguese and translated by Mongallo. The author of that work was João Bermudes, a doctor and cleric who travelled to Ethiopia as a member of a 1520 expedition guided by Captain Rodrigo de Lima. The main purpose of the journey was to meet the leader of the Ethiopian people in order to obtain a new ally against the numerous enemies of the Portuguese Crown. Thus, Bermudes decided to write a report of what he saw and knew: the *Breve relação da embaixada que o patriarcha d. João Bermudes trouxe do imperador da Ethiopia, chamado vulgarmente Preste João*. The title itself reveals the imaginary elements that characterise the text, since Preste João or Prester John was a legendary Christian king whose principal fictional qualities derive from medieval folklore. This article aims to underline the connection between *Itinerarium*, *Breve relação* and the figure of Prester John, as well as the ability of Mongallo as the translator of the above-mentioned chapters. Moreover, some literary features related to the marvels and riches described by Bermudes will be highlighted.

Keywords: 16th century Italian literature; 16th century Portuguese literature; Alessandro Geraldini; *Itinerarium ad regiones sub aequinoctiali plaga constitutas*; João Bermudes; Pompeo Mongallo

1. Introducción¹

1.1 Notas sobre el autor del *Itinerarium*

El viaje que emprende el obispo Alejandro Geraldini² (1455-1524), zarpando de las costas ibéricas para arribar a las orillas africanas y visitar la parte interna del enorme continente, es una invención casi total del propio prelado. La mayor parte de las cosas narradas en la crónica que redactó — los encuentros con los nativos, los monstruos divisados en mares borrascosos y desiertos tórridos, etc. — son una versión epitomada de las lecturas más conocidas en aquella época. A través de las palabras que van engarzando los acontecimientos fantásticos se crea un entramado diegético complejo, que aspira a suponer que el protagonista realmente viera aquellas criaturas fabulosas. No es de extrañar que aparezcan nuevas versiones manuscritas de su obra en los siglos sucesivos, ya que con independencia de su veracidad el texto resulta muy sugerente y entretenido.³ Su autor, tal y como lo subraya Paniagua Pérez (2009: 9) al presentar la obra, representaba aquella categoría de humanistas italianos que recibían buena acogida en la corte española y daban lugar a una relación de beneficio recíproco. Lo que le permitió destacar durante su larga carrera al servicio de los Reyes Católicos fueron sus grandes conocimientos del latín; su introducción en los ambientes de la nobleza castellana se debió a los méritos de su tío, el obispo Angelo Geraldini y, sucesivamente, a su hermanastro Antonio. Angelo brilló por sus cualidades de buen consejero en la corte de Fernando de Aragón; sucesivamente, Sixto IV le convocó en Roma para desempeñar varias embajadas hasta su fallecimiento, en 1486. En cuanto a su sobrino Antonio y hermanastro de nuestro autor, tuvo el gran mérito de ser uno de los importadores en España del pensamiento humanista italiano, merced a sus conocimientos de los textos clásicos latinos. Pudo ampliar su formación al entrar en contacto con otros letrados de su nación de origen durante algunos viajes que el rey promocionaba para que se pusiera de manifiesto su presencia simbólica en las altas esferas sociales de Roma. Al parecer, Alejandro, que mantuvo a lo largo de toda su existencia un fuerte vínculo de amistad con Antonio, aprovechó aquellas embajadas para entablar relaciones amistosas con eruditos, especialmente con Ugolino de Verino. Durante una de aquellas visitas a Italia, Antonio tomó

¹ Mis agradecimientos van dirigidos a Zineb El Hakkaoui, experta en traducciones, por sus valiosos consejos en materia de léxico árabe-bereber.

² Su apellido en los manuscritos presenta, en ocasiones, la variante “Geraldino”. Tal vez esto se deba a que, en época medieval, los apellidos italianos que terminaban en “o” indicaban al individuo como tal y los apellidos en forma plural, que culminaban en “i”, se referían al conjunto de los familiares. Cabe precisar que se trata de una mera conjetura que merece investigaciones ulteriores.

³ Motivación mucho más plausible es la de Manfredonia (2017: 81-83), según la cual la difusión de aquellas copias respondía a la intención del descendiente del obispo, Onofre Geraldini de Catenacios, de conferir un mayor crédito y fama a su familia.

la decisión de establecerse definitivamente en España, pasando sus bienes al hermanastro. Así, con esta nueva red de amistades entre humanistas destacados, se constituyó en Castilla un grupo de intelectuales provenientes de Italia del que formaba parte también Pedro Mártir de Anglería, el autor del *De Orbe Novo decades octo*, el cual iba a ser gran amigo de los Geraldini. En cuanto a la nueva vida en la corte de los Reyes Católicos, Alejandro disfrutó del patrocinio de Antonio para tener un rol relevante y ponerse en contacto con los intelectuales de la época; fue preceptor de latín de las infantas María y Catalina, lo que le permitirá gozar de cierto prestigio y protección durante muchas décadas. Puede que incluso pudiera influir en la decisión de la familia real para aceptar el proyecto de Cristóbal Colón (González Vázquez y Paniagua Pérez 2009: 13-21).

En 1496, recibió por sus méritos el obispado de la diócesis de Volturara-Montecorvino. Sin embargo, no pudo dedicarse a las obligaciones derivadas de su cargo durante muchos años, dado que, entre otras varias cosas, debió acompañar a la princesa Catalina de Aragón a Inglaterra para el matrimonio con el príncipe Arturo, hijo y heredero del rey inglés Enrique VII. El desposorio se celebró en Londres en noviembre de 1501. La muerte de Arturo un año después dio lugar a un debate que contrapuso, por un lado, a los que creían que el matrimonio se consumó y, por otro, a los que lo negaban. Geraldini era de los que sostenían la consumación frente a Elvira Manuel, dama de Catalina, que afirmaba lo contrario. Sus palabras tenían gran influencia sobre la princesa, lo que dio lugar a que el padre de la princesa le obligara a regresar a España. Aquel asunto había enfriado la relación entre Catalina y el obispo, y este a partir de 1517 ya no volvió a verla. A mayor abundamiento, quedó abierta la cuestión del pago por sus servicios de preceptor durante su estancia en Inglaterra, que nunca se le abonó a pesar de las numerosas peticiones que se leen en las cartas que enviaba a los monarcas. Su situación económica se hizo aún más precaria porque, al margen de que su diócesis en Apulia producía pocos ingresos, perdió una cantidad considerable de dinero que dejó en manos de un mercader italiano. Puede que sea este uno de los motivos clave de su petición para obtener el obispado de Santo Domingo, además del resentimiento por no haber obtenido lo que reclamaba. Antes de él, fueron nombrados varios prebendados para aquella diócesis, que habían de abordar la evangelización en aquella isla, pero ninguno de ellos quiso cruzar el océano. Puede que Geraldini en un principio tuviera la intención de no arriesgar su vida en un viaje peligroso y llegar a tierras desconocidas, prefiriendo disfrutar de las rentas desde Europa, como habían hecho todos sus predecesores. El caso es que en 1517 se aprobó su solicitud, pero decidió zarpar de las costas españolas solo dos años después, tras llevar a cabo numerosos cargos como embajador, lo cual induce a pensar que no desease realizar una travesía que le alejaría de la comodidad de una corte europea. Paniagua Pérez defiende dicha tesis, facilitando datos esclarecedores respecto de una práctica común de la época:

Es probable que en realidad no pensase pasar nunca a su diócesis y que solo pretendiese obtener las rentas de la misma, como había sido habitual con los obispos americanos que se habían nombrado hasta ese momento [...] Preocupado por sus rentas, hizo que le precediesen en el viaje su sobrino Nuflo Onofre Geraldini, que ya había sido su vicario en el obispado de Volturara-Montecorvino, y su camarero Diego del Río, al que el propio Geraldini reconoce haber educado desde la niñez. Ambos llevaban poder del prelado, firmado en Roma el 2 de diciembre de 1516, para que tomaran posesión en su nombre. ¿Esperaba alguna recompensa entre tanto que evitara su viaje? Con todos los servicios que había prestado a la Corona y al Papado es probable que pensase incluso en un capelo cardenalicio, que nunca obtuvo, ni siquiera un rentable obispado en Europa. Todo hace pensar, por tanto, que había caído en desgracia, al menos ante los ojos del Emperador (2015: 39).

Carlos I, pues, fue quien le obligó a abandonar Europa y emprender su último viaje.⁴ La situación en la isla era muy problemática por varios motivos. En primer lugar, el número de nativos era ya escaso en aquellas fechas y hubo una eclosión de viruela poco antes de su llegada, por lo que se planteó la propuesta de importar más esclavos negros para realizar las numerosas tareas que todavía no se habían llevado a cabo. Lo cierto es que las rentas episcopales eran pocas y era acuciante la edificación de una catedral en la cabecera de la diócesis, hasta esos momentos la principal ciudad de las Indias. De acuerdo con las fuentes y los testimonios de la comunidad religiosa que acogió al obispo, este recibió muchas críticas por su labor, que se consideró muy perjudicial. Tal vez esas declaraciones tuvieran cierta validez, teniendo en cuenta que Geraldini ya había superado el umbral de los 60 años y que posiblemente estuviera decepcionado por cómo se concluyó su experiencia en la corte castellana.

A pesar de haber manifestado reiteradamente su intención de regresar a Europa, murió en Santo Domingo un año después de que empezaran las obras de la catedral, en 1524 (González Vázquez y Paniagua Pérez 2009: 22-51). Con todo, se ha puesto en tela de juicio la ineptitud de un hombre que, en consideración de las epístolas que escribió en Sevilla antes de emprender el viaje a las Indias, había expresado su deseo de llevar a cabo una serie de reformas tanto en lo material, como la construcción de dicha catedral, como en lo espiritual, presionando al papa para obtener mayor autoridad eclesiástica.⁵ Se supone que, una vez llegado a La Española, tuvo un enfrentamiento con el juez de

⁴ Tisnés hizo de contrapunto a esta hipótesis y consignó que, pese a sentirse impelido por la voluntad de empezar el proyecto de adoctrinamiento, “no fue falta suya dicha tardanza en arribar a su sede, sino por culpa de sus compromisos en Europa y las misiones diplomáticas que León X le confió” (1993: 114).

⁵ El corpus de los documentos con los que el prelado carteaba con eminencias religiosas y laicas se ha editado y comentado en una publicación que ha salido a luz recientemente (Geraldini Amerini 2018).

residencia de Santo Domingo, Rodrigo de Figueroa, quien no acogió favorablemente la interferencia religiosa en sus asuntos políticos y económicos, por lo que la famosa frase que empleó para juzgar los actos de su rival en una carta que envió a Carlos I — “Este obispo Geraldini, que acá está, es del todo punto inútil, no tiene más entendimiento que un niño” (en Oliva 1993a: 439; González Vázquez y Paniagua Pérez 2009: 41) — tal vez fuera el fruto de una propaganda en contra de las intromisiones de la autoridad eclesiástica (Oliva 1993a: 436-439). Sea cual sea la verdad, no cabe duda de que la resonancia histórico-filológica del prelado amerino radica en haber sido un excelente latinista y en ser el primer obispo que emprendió el viaje a su diócesis dominicana. Sus dotes de escritor se vislumbran al analizar el manejo de fuentes literarias y orales que le sirvieron para componer el *Itinerarium ad Regiones sub Aequinoctiali*, relación aparentemente autobiográfica de su viaje por África antes de arribar a las costas de Santo Domingo.⁶ Si bien el contenido ficcional de la obra desmiente las frecuentes declaraciones de veracidad que Geraldini intercala tanto en los libros como en la parte paratextual del *Itinerarium*, son precisamente aquellas anécdotas vinculadas con lo maravilloso pagano y cristiano las que contribuyen a captar la atención de potenciales lectores y de muchos filólogos e historiadores de diferentes épocas. Baste como ejemplo la revisión bibliográfica hecha por Petersohn (1996) en los años 90 del siglo anterior, que en cierta medida rectifica las preocupaciones de Kaiser (1972: 429-432) cuando, en su artículo, lamentaba el estado de abandono en el que se encontraban las investigaciones sobre el manuscrito de Geraldini.

1.2. Reflexiones en torno a su obra

La creación más conocida del obispo se escribió en latín, acorde a la ideología humanista aragonesa, que consideraba la lengua de Cicerón como medio de difusión internacional. Por añadidura, su hermanastro Antonio, con el que siempre tuvo una relación de gran amistad, había redactado todas sus obras en aquel idioma. Como hemos comentado en el apartado anterior, aquello que diferencia el *Itinerarium* de otras narraciones afines es el hecho de que todo lo contado es pura invención. El obispo jamás recorrió aquellos territorios y si presenta elementos reales o acontecimientos que verdaderamente ocurrieron se debe a que el autor utilizó una gran cantidad de fuentes clásicas, de las que sobresale la *Historia naturalis* de Plinio. A ello se ha de añadir que Geraldini pudo acceder a más

⁶ González Vázquez (2013: 306-307) ratifica la tesis según la cual la obra se inspiraría tanto en los testimonios medievales, que contemplaban la relación de experiencias que el lector jamás pudiera vivir, como en los viajes ficticios, que estructuralmente se asemejan a los primeros. Por tanto, el *Itinerarium* sería un compendio de ambas categorías narrativas. Snyder (1980: 25) postula que se trata de una ficción utópica híbrida, en la que se dan cuenta de hechos reales.

información escuchando los relatos de los viajeros que acudían a la corte; de los textos de su época, en el que más se inspiró fue el que redactó el veneciano Cadamosto, quien al servicio de los portugueses realizó una exploración por las zonas costeras de África, ignorando la parte interior del continente porque a la Corona lusitana le interesaba ante todo los enclaves costeros que atrajesen el comercio. Otra fuente posible es el conjunto de relatos orales de los esclavos negros con los que se relacionaba en Santo Domingo. El talante ficcional de la obra se infiere del cálculo de los días de navegación necesarios para llegar a La Española. Del análisis de las fechas que se tenían en la época se sabía que el viaje duraba en torno a 40 días, lo que también coincidiría con lo expuesto por González Fernández de Oviedo en su *Historia General de las Indias*. Sin embargo, la descripción muy amplia de zonas y poblaciones africanas conllevaría una estancia de al menos cien días, causando una discrepancia temporal tajante.⁷

Otro elemento que avala la falsedad de lo relatado en la obra es la cantidad abrumadora de epígrafes que supuestamente Geraldini encontraría en muchas áreas del continente africano. Resulta ser una novedad del texto en cuestión, que lo diferencia de los diarios de Colón y de otras crónicas de la época, amén de demostrar que el obispo se vinculaba a la tradición clasicista que valoraba las antigüedades, dándoles el mismo valor de información que la experiencia directa. La credibilidad de la fuente epigráfica se refuta por la ausencia de alfabetos en las áreas donde teóricamente se situarían los restos arqueológicos.⁸ Hay otra reflexión que formular respecto a la falsedad narrativa en el *Itinerarium*: es el hecho de que no hay ningún traductor que permita a Geraldini comunicar con todas aquellas poblaciones que se mencionan en el texto, lo cual resta verosimilitud al mismo de manera contundente. Conviene preguntarse, pues, por qué decidió escribir algo que, en buena medida, fue fruto de su imaginación o de la de otros autores. Es presumible que haya querido emular a un autor que fue su amigo ya desde sus viajes a Italia y cuyas obras tuvieron un gran éxito en los ambientes cultos de medio continente. Se trata del milanés Pedro Mártir de Anglería, con el que mantuvo una intensa actividad epistolar (González Vázquez y Paniagua Pérez 2009: 53-77). Por ende, la composición del *Itinerarium* se adscribiría a la tradición de humanistas que plasmaban mundos imaginados, fascinados por lo exótico y lo extraordinario.

⁷ Ya en el XVII se tachaba la obra de fraude, opinión compartida por el bibliotecario del cardenal Mazarino, Gabriel Naudé (González Vázquez 2013: 301).

⁸ En un trabajo cuyo tema medular es el análisis de las inscripciones africanas se incide en que, aunque quepa la posibilidad de que Geraldini dispusiera de un traductor etíope, “la estructura regular de las inscripciones, la coincidencia argumental, la extensión de las mismas, los topoi repetidos, las imprecisiones” (González Vázquez y Hoyo Calleja 2010: 2276) inducen a desconfiar de las palabras del obispo.

Onofre Geraldini de Catenacios, en Roma (1631) publicó en la imprenta Facciotti la primera edición del *Itinerarium*, cuyo título completo es *Itinerarium ad regiones sub aequinoctiali plaga constitutas Alexandri Geraldini Amerini, Episcopi Civitatis S. Dominici apud Indos Occidentales*. Se dedicó al Cardenal Barberini, mecenas y literato. Presenta muchas interpolaciones y estilos distintos, de mayor elevación al principio de cada libro. No se conoce la copia-modelo de la que se ha realizado la edición; se han aventurado dos hipótesis: viene del manuscrito Ottoboniano o del Borghese (Manfredonia 2017: 70). Incluso podría provenir de más de un códice (González Vázquez y Paniagua Pérez 2009: 91-93).

A través de un esmerado análisis, se ha deducido que el proceso de composición se realizó de la siguiente manera: “Geraldini tomó notas durante su viaje en una suerte de diario de navegación que fue completando con información anexa procedente de múltiples y variadas fuentes orales y escritas, para cuya redacción final utilizó los volúmenes de su extensa biblioteca, con la cual viajó” (González Vázquez y Paniagua Pérez 2009: 81). Aunque no se conserva ningún original, existen tres manuscritos en la Biblioteca Vaticana:

- Ms. Serie I, N. 215 Borghese. Contiene prefacio y 19 cartas escritas por el autor entre 1515 y 1522. Escritura bastarda italiana, pero más cursiva y fluida. Es de finales del XVII. La edición de 1631 de Catenacios contiene también dos prefacios, uno dirigido al Cardenal Barberini y otro al lector, la carta de Inghirlano al lector y unos *carmina* que no aparecen en el Borghese.
- Ms. 2198, Ottoboniano, de 68 folios r-v, en papel y encuadernado en pergamino, escritura bastarda italiana, presenta un estado de conservación peor. Faltan el epistolario y los poemas. Preceden al *Itinerarium* dos misivas, de Fernando II, rey de Aragón, no relacionadas con la obra en cuestión. Es probable que sea una copia del Borghese, fechable entre finales del XVI y principios del XVII, pero el *Itinerarium* es de finales del XVI y posiblemente constituyera un códice aparte.
- Ms. F. 20 Boncompagni Ludovisi. En buen estado, consiste en 127 folios y no contiene otros textos que no sean el *Itinerarium*. Debido al gran número de tachaduras, es probable que sea una copia de otro original anterior. Escritura bastarda italiana, por lo cual es fechable a finales del XVI.

Hay otro manuscrito que la edición de González Vázquez y Paniagua Pérez no recoge: es el ms. Serie IV, 740, conservado en el Archivio di Stato di Firenze, las denominadas Carte Stroziane. Presenta una conmixión de documentos y el *Itinerarium* no tiene prefacio. Hay muchas palabras mutiladas con huecos evidentes en la escritura. La cursiva bastarda es más homogénea, por lo que posiblemente se feche primeros decenios del XVII. El fondo pertenecía a Tommaso Strozzi (1587-1671), un literato al servicio del Gran Duque de Toscana que tuvo el encargo de recaudar y ordenar el enorme caudal

documental de la República (Manfredonia 2017: 71-72).⁹ Existen también dos manuscritos traducidos al italiano; sendos vienen de un original de Pompeo Mongallo de Lionesa, anterior a la edición de Catenacios. Son:

- Ms. Lisboa *Fundo Geral* 11169. Versión italiana, presumiblemente vulgarizada por Pompeo Mongallo, Presenta una marca de agua: “tres medias lunas en diagonal que parten de la esquina superior izquierda dentro de un escudo coronado” (González Vázquez y Paniagua Pérez 2009: 84), lo que llevaría a suponer que sea fechable en 1601 y que, por ende, sea una copia de otro manuscrito.¹⁰
- Ms. Londres *Harley Manuscripts* 243566. Parece una copia del ms. de Lisboa. Posiblemente se sitúe cronológicamente entre finales del siglo XVI y principios del XVII.

Es un dato interesante porque demostraría la difusión de los manuscritos antes de la primera edición, posiblemente encuadrados en el proyecto de afirmación cultural de la familia Geraldini.

Todos estos manuscritos presentan numerosas lagunas, y es probable que ninguno de ellos sea copia directa de los otros. Lo más probable es que procedan de dos arquetipos, y los errores son relativamente pocos. Ottoboniano y Borghese presumiblemente tiene más elementos en común entre sí que con respecto al Boncompagni y a las Carte Stroziane. Dicha consideración es fruto de un riguroso análisis paleográfico hecho por Manfredonia (2017: 69-72). La versión impresa presenta características similares.

A todo ello, hay que añadir la publicación de cuatro ediciones en estos dos últimos siglos, que utilizan la edición de Catenacios. Las publicaciones de 2009 y de 2017 (véase la bibliografía final) son las que realizan un estudio crítico exhaustivo y tienen más relación entre sí respecto de los comentarios tanto sobre la vida de Geraldini como sobre la composición de los manuscritos, formulando opiniones en las que no siempre los editores italianos coinciden con los españoles.¹¹ Las otras dos ofrecen más bien una presentación de la obra y su función primordial es promocionar el *Itinerarium* entre los lectores hispanohablantes y hablantes de italiano. La primera (1977) la editó Rodríguez Demorizi, junto con Balbuena y Seco, y se publicó en Santo Domingo. La segunda es un homenaje que un descendiente homónimo del obispo, el conde Alessandro Geraldini (1991), ha querido dedicarle a su antepasado.

⁹ La recopilación de estos datos reanuda la labor pionera que llevó a cabo Oliva (1993b) con exhaustividad.

¹⁰ Kaiser (1972: 432) fechó el original del manuscrito en Lisboa entre 1565 y 1578. De la misma opinión Sensi (1993: 75-76), al hilo de lo afirmado por Tenneroni (1895). Opinión afín es la de Oliva (1993b: 192). Todos hacen referencia a la afirmación de Mongallo.

¹¹ Sobre todo, en lo que respecta a la cuestión antiespañola, que aún precisa de estudios profundizados y que supondría un análisis poco pertinente en este trabajo.

Presenta una breve introducción compuesta en colaboración con Ferro y Tavani y el texto contiene algunas notas explicativas a pie que corroboran la finalidad meramente divulgativa de la edición.

2. El anexo con partes traducidas

Sin embargo, a la luz de nuevas consideraciones acerca de estos textos, resulta dudoso que los originales que poseemos los haya compuesto el obispo, dado que las interpolaciones, junto con las muchas reflexiones contradictorias en torno al gobierno de la Corona española, hacen intuir que tal vez no haya ningún autógrafo de Geraldini y que los copistas manejasen documentos compuestos por otros autores. A este respecto, el manuscrito de Lisboa *Fundo Geral* 11169, presenta características similares, con consideraciones introductorias de Pompeo Mongallo de Lionesa — erudito cuya familia proviene de la provincia de Rieti y cuya biografía aún necesita de muchas investigaciones —¹² y varios pasajes que se redactaron con grafías diferentes.¹³ Sobre todo, lo más llamativo es la agregación de algunos capítulos traducidos al italiano de una crónica portuguesa que hacen alusión directa a *Presbyter Iohannes*, o Preste Juan. Antes de examinar la labor de traductor de Mongallo, no es baladí un esbozo del surgimiento y difusión de una leyenda tan significativa que ahonda sus raíces en las cruzadas medievales.

2.1. La leyenda del Preste Juan desde los tiempos medievales hasta la Edad Moderna

His kingdom was the land where dreams come true [...]

It was the earthly paradise that no man has yet found

(Sanceau 1944: 4)

¹² Unos fragmentos de su biografía se pueden inferir de la labor que llevaron a cabo algunos investigadores. Verbigracia, en un *comunicato* decimonónico se alude a Mongallo y a su estrecha relación con los Geraldini, un hecho que se comenta en la parte introductoria de su manuscrito. Incluso se alude a una hipotética actitud arrogante por parte de Catenacios, al comentar este que nadie se había ocupado antes de él de los cartapacios del obispo en los que se hallaba el *Itinerarium*, lo cual contradecía el descubrimiento de aquellos “*fogli di carte spezzate*” (folios dispersos. Traducción nuestra). Consúltese el Itinerario di mons[igno]re Alessandro Geraldino Vescovo di San Domenico città dell’Isola Spagnola, ove si descrivono cose stupende dell’Etiopia, non più da altri conosciute, ms. Lisboa Fundo Geral 11169: 1r. A partir de las siguientes notas, se citará el manuscrito del siguiente modo: ms. 11169. El hallazgo fue de Mongallo en el siglo XVI (Tenneroni 1895: 156-157). En una publicación mucho más reciente se describen los componentes de la familia Mongalli que residían en Leonessa, cuyas primeras noticias documentadas se remontan a 1500. Figura un tal Pompeo Mongalli, quien se nombró postulador de la Archicofradía de la Santísima Trinidad de los Peregrinos en 1575 (Frezza 2011: 110-111). Sobre la oscilación de los apellidos italianos en “o” e “i”, como en este caso, véase la nota 1 de este trabajo.

¹³ Tenneroni se preguntó incluso si el ms. 11169, al componerse cincuenta años antes de la edición prínceps, no derivase de un original en italiano, pero Kaiser (1972: 433) refutó esta teoría, puesto que el prelado redactó un corpus muy extenso en latín, nunca en italiano o en castellano.

Sabido es que la figura del legendario monarca formó parte del acervo de historias imaginadas durante la Edad Media. En concreto, se cita por primera vez en 1145, en la *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus* de Otón de Freising, un obispo e historiador que era tío del emperador germánico Federico I. En ella, se habla de un cristiano nestoriano¹⁴ que gobernaba la parte oriental de Persia y que tenía la intención de llegar a Tierra Santa, replicando la visita que hicieron los Reyes Magos cuando nació Jesús. Puede que el dato sea parcialmente cierto, puesto que coincidiría con la victoria de los Kara Kithai, población de la zona central de Asia, contra a los selyúcidas, lo que podría suponer la presencia de alguien preparado para aliarse con los cristianos occidentales.¹⁵ A la vista de la alarmante eventualidad de un ataque definitivo liderado por los enemigos de la fe cristiana, la idea de un rey sacerdote cristiano y muy poderoso suponía “un bálsamo para el malestar que atenazaba la Europa de la época” (Martín Lalanda 2004: 9). La propia esencia de este soberano irreal encarnaba la esperanza de poder contar con un baluarte que sirviera de barrera contra el peligro musulmán y, al mismo tiempo, el deseo de que se cumpliera aquello que los teóricos medievales teorizaron y que Erasmo retomaría en sus escritos, es decir, el irenismo ecuménico. En un mundo fracturado e incomprensible, el Preste Juan ofrecía cohesión y paz duradera desde los territorios remotos de un lugar indefinido en el Lejano Oriente. A continuación, dos cartas apócrifas se enviaron a Manuel Comneno y a Federico Barbarroja, y es posible que el original se remonte a los años de sus gobiernos, entre 1155 y 1180, con una respuesta por parte de Alejandro III que escribió una misiva en 1177. Aquel proceso creador que generaba relaciones epistolares ficticias y figuras imaginadas reflejaba una coyuntura de sucesos nefastos que afectaron a la confianza hacia los monarcas y sus juegos de poder, que involucraban tanto a laicos como a religiosos. La intrincada relación entre papado e imperio, los conflictos teológicos y el fracaso de las operaciones militares para la liberación del Santo Sepulcro describen una situación nada alentadora para los cristianos más devotos.

¹⁴ Es una doctrina que se remonta a los siglos IV y V d. C., cuyo fundador Nestorio “patriarca de Constantinopla [...] afirmaba que la persona humana de Jesucristo le era propia, mientras que la divina sólo se había encarnado en él [...] Sus seguidores, luego de ser perseguidos en el Imperio Bizantino, se instalaron en Persia [...] A ello se debe, desde el Patriarcado de Bagdad, fundado a finales del siglo VIII, la cristianización de Asia Central y de la India, al menos de la costa de Malabar” (Martín Lalanda 2004: 11).

¹⁵ Córdoba Zoilo (2005: 507) ventila la eventualidad de que “la corrupción del título real de las estepas, “jan”, transmitido de unos a otros, derivara en la leyenda de un rey-juan, que se creía – se necesitaba creer – cristiano”. Zaganelli (1990: 202) propone una opinión diferente y cita las interpretaciones de variados autores, según los cuales podría derivar de “Zan”, nombre de los curas etíopes; de la alteración fonética del título chino “Wang”; o, según la propia autora, de una referencia al Apocalipsis.

En cuanto a la difusión, reelaboración y fama de la *Carta*, Ramos sugiere que Juan sea una figura estrechamente ligada a la de Cristo; son varios los aspectos que inducen a creer que el *rex et sacerdos* se aproxime a la imagen del último rey, piadoso e invencible, que liberaría Jerusalén con la ayuda de un monarca occidental. Sobre todo, representa el cumplimiento de una visión escatológica¹⁶ acorde con la cosmogonía medieval, amén de vincularse con la creación de una nueva Jerusalén celeste. Se revelaría, pues, una concepción cronológica cíclica que afectaría a la lineal, que es la típica del cristianismo europeo (Ramos 1997a: 40). Si en las interpretaciones sucesivas, que abarcan un periodo de más de cinco siglos, la figura del Preste Juan va alterándose y en muchas ocasiones descreditándose, esto se debe a que la escatología milenarista y la derrota de los infieles perdieron su impacto en la mente de los europeos y solo quedaría la búsqueda de las riquezas fabuladas en la *Carta*. Las nuevas exploraciones hacia el Oriente, a la postre, han restado sentido a la creencia en un lugar mítico en aquellas tierras. En palabras de Hamilton, refiriéndose a la repartición de África, América y el océano Índico entre España y Portugal, “The West no longer stood in need of help from oriental Christian rulers. The age of crusading was drawing to a close and there was no place for Prester John in the world of Tridentine triumphalism” (Hamilton 1996: 257). El consiguiente desplazamiento hacia África comportó una degradación de Juan a rey herético y su tez oscura se asoció a las estirpes malignas, al menos en conformidad con la ideología jesuítica del siglo XVII (Ramos 1997a: 40).

Durante la Edad Media, en cambio, se implementó la producción de tratados, crónicas, cartas y relatos cuyos autores trazaban en sus páginas rasgos escriturales que recuerdan el modelo literario más reciente de la utopía. Valga como ejemplo la inaccesibilidad de aquellos lugares idealizados, así como el sinfín de virtudes que constelan la sociedad en el reino del Preste Juan; todo ello se contrapone a los vicios y crímenes que caracterizaban el mundo occidental, al margen de la corrupción y la codicia que involucraban a las altas esferas eclesiásticas. No obstante, las prácticas creativas de los medievales discrepaban del canon utópico al evitar la eliminación de factores perjudiciales en las sociedades imaginadas. Al parecer, la literatura de aquellos tiempos anhelaba un equilibrio entre el bien y el mal, una convivencia de poblaciones caníbales y monstruosas con gentes edénicas muy evidente en la *Carta*, que no tiene cabida, por ejemplo, en el texto genérico por antonomasia, *Utopía* de Tomás Moro (Chimeno del Campo 2010: 122-127). Asimismo, otros escritores de los siglos XIII y XIV forjan la figura del nestoriano ajustándola a sus pretensiones creadoras. Marco Polo en su relato lo relaciona con el

¹⁶ Dicha concepción se fundamentaba en creer en la llegada de “a “Last World Emperor” who would crush all unbelievers and establish a universal kingdom of peace and justice under the banner of the Christian religion just before the End of Times” (Giardini 2019: 58).

líder mongol Gengis Khan, afirmando que existían dos dinastías y que la descendencia del Khan consiguió subordinar a la del Preste Juan. Este recurso ficcional se emplea porque, de esta manera, “el veneciano desmitifica al personaje y lo utiliza para aumentar el prestigio de los emperadores mongoles” (Chimeno del Campo 2007: 424-425).

Baranda Leturio también incide en el trato degradante que sufre el Preste Juan en la obra de Marco Polo, que se tradujo al castellano por Rodrigo de Santaella en 1503 (Baranda Leturio 1992: 360). En otros textos, en cambio, se le confería al contenido de la *Carta* gran relevancia científica, tal y como aparece en una crónica manuscrita de Rodríguez de Almela, quien cuenta cómo Enrique II enviaba caballeros al Preste Juan, o Gómez de Figueroa, que en su *Alcázar imperial de la Fama* hace mención de los reyes vasallos de Juan. La fuente más fantásica es la del *Blasón de las armas o armería en el qual se ponen las armas de muchos reinos e ymperios*, de Juan de Cuero (siglo XVII), donde se explica el nacimiento de la dinastía de los *reges et sacerdotes* con el casamiento entre un cardenal romano llamado Juan y una princesa de la India (Baranda Leturio 1992: 361-362).

Respecto de la literatura del Siglo de Oro, el preste es aludido por muchos personajes de comedias y novelas, tales como el *Burlador de Sevilla* o el *Quijote*. La mención adquiere connotaciones burlescas, jocosas, de exageración o de elogio, dependiendo de los contextos y de las intenciones de cada autor. Se aprecia, asimismo, la existencia de dos perspectivas distintas, una popular y otra erudita, cuyo origen de ambas radica en el pensamiento medieval, que solía combinar realidad con imaginación vinculada con lo lejano y desconocido (Baranda Leturio 1992: 362-363).

Volviendo a las centurias anteriores, en el ámbito español los libros cuyos protagonistas encarnan el arquetipo de *homines viatores* se leen con mucho interés, pero habrá que esperar mucho tiempo antes de que se conviertan en medio de información útil, dado que la situación política en España era aún fragmentaria y las campañas militares concernían casi exclusivamente a la Península. Es la familia real de Aragón en el siglo XV la que valora esas lecturas, por sus planes de expansión hacia el Oriente (Popeanga Chelaru 2000: 155). En general, muy pocas son las versiones latinas o traducidas de la *Carta* en España; sobre todo, si se comparan con las de otros países europeos.

En lo que atañe a Portugal, al contrario de lo acontecido con los mencionados jesuitas, se observa un gran anhelo por localizar en un punto del mapa africano las posesiones del Preste Juan. De variada naturaleza son las motivaciones de la búsqueda por aquel continente: como consecuencia de las aspiraciones expansionistas de la monarquía portuguesa y la resultante necesidad de nuevos recursos;

por la posibilidad de establecer rutas comerciales con un reino poderoso y cristiano;¹⁷ en función de la exploración casi completa de los territorios donde se suponía se situase la corte del Preste Juan en Asia y, por ende, el abandono de la esperanza de encontrarla en aquel continente. Con todo, cabría matizar este último punto, ya que la borrosidad de los confines geográficos y la indefinida extensión de las tres Indias originó muchas confusiones y conjeturas; de ahí que Etiopía se considerara parte de la India en algunos mapas.¹⁸ Los límites difusos entre sendos continentes justificó el desplazamiento de las exploraciones en busca del fabuloso reino a la zona central de África (Relaño 2019: 51-53).¹⁹ Sobre todo, el término “Etiopía” no se refería a un lugar concreto, sino que su significado oscilaba dependiendo del punto de vista de los autores, y a menudo se confundía con “Nubia” (Giardini 2019: 60-61). De todos modos, la lectura de la *Carta* ya no atraía como antes a los soberanos europeos por razones espirituales, sino por la enorme cantidad de riquezas descrita en aquel documento.²⁰ En particular, Europa despertó su interés por el Preste Juan cuando en 1523, en Roma, el árabe de origen judío David Reubeni se presentó como emisario de su hermano Joseph, rey de dos de las doce tribus de Israel, cuyo deseo era aliarse con los líderes europeos para derrotar a los otomanos y liberar Jerusalén. Esto ocurrió en concomitancia con la nueva amenaza turca representada por Solimán I (Marcocci, 2012: 177). En Portugal, Manuel I, poco antes de morir, apelaba a que se prosiguiera la guerra contra a los musulmanes pidiendo la ayuda del Preste Juan. Durante las primeras décadas del gobierno de Juan III pervivió el interés por aquel monarca, aunque ya despojado de toda carga simbólica mesiánica (Marcocci, 2012: 179).²¹ Ya había noticias acerca de aquel personaje en la “Etiopía” que datan del siglo XIV y algunas fuentes lo dotan de gran autoridad, considerándolo el dominador de Etiopía y Nubia (Giardini, 2019: 59-

¹⁷ El entusiasmo por la eventualidad de aliarse con algún monarca prestigioso se armoniza con la consciencia de formar parte de una nación escasamente poblada y territorialmente débil en comparación con el resto de Europa y las dominaciones islámicas. Véase Beckingham (1996c: 207).

¹⁸ Bar-Ilan nos aclara que una consulta cabal de la versión judía de la epístola proporcionaría una prueba concluyente de que es imposible que el Preste Juan no fuera de la India, por lo que los escasos conocimientos geográficos de los europeos alimentaron las esperanzas de encontrarlo en África (Bar-Ilan 1995: 291-293).

¹⁹ Era esencial para la yuxtaposición de áreas asiáticas y africanas la convicción de que el río Senegal fuera un afluente del Nilo, que a su vez nacería del Paraíso Terrestre y constituiría el núcleo hidrográfico de África. Esto “implica que todas as regiões a oriente dos rios que desaguam no Atlântico possam ter sido tomadas como «terras do Preste João»” (Ramos 1997b: 168-169).

²⁰ Es significativa la exposición de las riquezas del Preste Juan en el canto trigésimo tercero del Orlando Furioso (1532) de Ludovico Ariosto. Nos lo recuerdan Beckingham y Bernard Hamilton (1996: XII). También habla de él Torquato Tasso en *Gerusalemme liberata*, canto XII. En ambos casos, dicho personaje se identifica con el nombre de Senapo (Martín Lalanda 2004: 73).

²¹ El menguar de su trascendencia como salvador de la cristiandad se atribuye también a su doctrina reputada de herética, al descubrir que no era nestoriano, sino monofisita (Giardini, 2019: 62). Véase también Martínez D’Alòs-Moner 2011: 6-7) y Beckingham (1996a: 22).

60), aunque es oportuno recordar la vaguedad de las coordenadas geográficas de su reino. Las expediciones por aquel continente fueron numerosas y la más famosa de las anteriores a 1500 fue la embajada de 1306; a pesar de la penuria de datos sobre aquella empresa diplomática, es posible que contribuyera de forma decisiva a la “common identification of Prester John with the Emperor of Ethiopia, which became generally accepted in the sixteenth century, so that the Portuguese commonly called the Emperor *Preste João*, or *o Preste*” (Beckingham 1996b: 197-201).

Desde los albores del siglo XVI, los portugueses iban reemplazando a los italianos como el contingente humano europeo más numeroso en Etiopía. El primer grupo lo lideraba el enviado de Juan II, Pero da Covilhã, quien visitó al *negus* Naod y permaneció en sus tierras el resto de su vida (Martínez D’Alòs-Moner 2011: 4-5). Irónicamente, los intentos de hallar a un potente aliado produjeron un efecto contrario. De hecho, el *negus* que recibió la embajada de 1520, Lebnä Dengel, pidió auxilio a los portugueses para enfrentarse a la arrolladora yihad del sultanado de Adal. Quien se encargó de comunicar la noticia en Portugal fue João Bermudes, que regresó a Europa en 1535. Este médico había residido en Etiopía durante varios años, mientras que la expedición capitaneada por Rodrigo de Lima, de la que formaba parte, ya había regresado a la metrópoli en 1526. Su capellán, Francisco Álvares, compuso la *Verdadeira informação das terras do Preste João* en 1540,²² y Bermudes escribió una relación que trataba sobre asuntos parecidos.

A continuación, se destacarán los aspectos histórico-biográficos en relación con este influyente personaje, además de exponer brevemente algunos de los pasajes que tratan sobre riquezas y poder.

2.2. La traducción de algunos capítulos de la *Breve relação* y las riquezas descritas en ella

Retomando el discurso de la composición del *Itinerarium*, es sorprendente que, en una obra que se escribió en conformidad con la tendencia literaria de las narraciones sobre viajes por tierras exóticas, falten referencias a aquel conjunto de creencias sobre la existencia de lugares maravillosos que habían originado numerosos proyectos de navegación hacia lo desconocido. En palabras de González Vázquez y Paniagua Pérez, “[el autor] ha eliminado del conjunto ciertos mitos que en su época aún tenían cierta vigencia, como el del Paraíso Terrenal, Ofir o el del Preste Juan, entre otros” (2009: 55). Curiosamente, parece que también Mongallo se percatara de ello y quiso complementar la obra con una traducción de una relación de padre João Bermudes y que dedicó al rey de Portugal. El autor es aquel cirujano y clérigo

²² Estas vicisitudes se recogen en Martínez D’Alòs-Moner (2011: 5-6).

que formó parte de la embajada de Rodrigo de Lima, y la tituló *Breve relação*²³(1565). Mongallo indica con claridad la fecha de composición de una relación que, según Chaîne, se convierte en una auténtica autobiografía elogiosa, en la que el autor gallego pone de relieve el hecho de haber sido el primer patriarca de las Indias Orientales (Chaîne 1909: 323-3251).²⁴ En efecto, su regreso a Portugal al que hemos aludido antes fue triunfal, en sintonía con la relevancia de su título — tan solo el hecho de formar parte del séquito del rey legendario no pasaba desapercibido — aunque esto diera lugar a muchas polémicas. El autonombramiento, junto con la contradicción que residía en las argumentaciones que él alegó para ratificar el patriarcado, dio lugar a una relación conflictiva entre el *negus* y la corte portuguesa. Al agravarse su situación, el pseudo-patriarca se vio obligado a denostar al *negus* para granjearse la aprobación de la regencia portuguesa, y su comportamiento suscitó un escándalo que indignó a las autoridades católicas.²⁵ Para el sucesor de Lebnä Dengel, el segundogénito Gelāwdēwōs, el retorno de Bermudes a Etiopía supuso un problema evidente de intereses religiosos, pues las pretensiones del enviado de Portugal socavaban la autoridad regia. La preocupación del monarca africano se tradujo en el carteo entre Gelāwdēwōs y rey João III. En particular, en una epístola el monarca portugués explica de manera clara su desaprobación respecto de la actitud del neo-patriarca, declarando que no sabía nada de los poderes concedidos a Bermudes, a quien tacha de “clerigo simpres”, si bien desaconseja condenarlo a muerte e induce al destinatario a perdonarlo, acorde con los sagrados dogmas de la fe cristiana.²⁶ A la luz de ello, se colige que la *Breve relação* se manejó como una suerte de manifiesto político para que las alegaciones de Bermudes cobrasen más efectividad al ratificar su nuevo estado religioso, pese a la aversión que manifestaban aquellos que tuvieran que ratificar su título.

Los capítulos que Mongallo traduce son del XLIX al LIII. A diferencia del original, los números de los capítulos se escriben aplicando la numerología arábiga y no figuran los títulos de los mismos. Las glosas son pocas y concisas si las comparamos con las del viaje geraldiniano. Las razones por las que Mongallo dedicó sus esfuerzos a la ampliación del manuscrito son desconocidas; quizás haya querido

²³ El título completo de la obra es *Esta he hu[m]a breue relação da embaixada q[ue] o patriarcha dô João Bermudez trouxe do Emperador da Ethiopia chamado vulgarmente Preste Ioão, ao christianissimo, & zelador da fee de Christo Rey de Portugal dom Ioão o terceiro deste nome: dirigida ao muy alto & poderoso, de felicissima esperança, Rey ta[m]bem de Portugal dom Sebastião o primeiro deste nome. Em a qual ta[m]bem conta a morte de dom Christouão da gama: & dos sucessos que acontecerão aos Portugueses que forão em sua companhia.*

²⁴ Por su parte, Sanceau (1944: 111) insistió con mayor énfasis en el egocentrismo de Bermudes.

²⁵ Para un resumen pormenorizado de los actos de Bermudez, consúltese Almeida (1999: 273-278). Un examen minucioso de su engaño se puede leer en Pennec (2010: 19-25).

²⁶ Carta recogida en Freire de Andrade (1835: 443).

acomodarse a aquella política de promoción y difusión de las obras de la familia Geraldini, con el objeto de otorgarle mayor fama a la dinastía de Umbría. A confirmación de ello, no hay que olvidarse de que Pompeo Mongallo vivió en territorios cercanos a la ciudad natal del obispo, Amelia, y que casi seguramente recibió por los descendientes de Alejandro el encargo de dar a conocer su *corpus*. Por ende, podríamos aventurar dos suposiciones al respecto, o bien el anexo le confirió un mayor prestigio al *Itinerarium*, abordando argumentos muy interesantes para las Coronas europeas, o bien Mongallo deseó dotarle de una mayor veracidad a la obra. Esto parece confirmado por el íncipit, en el que aclara que proporciona información “de la vera e compiuta notizia di quei regni e di quelle innumerabili che sono intorno alla fonte del Nilo e alla sua corrente fino all’Egitto, e anco sulla spiaggia del mare oceano, con le stupende meraviglie delle miniere d’oro e altre infinite ricchezze che in quei spaziosissimi paesi si ritrovano”.²⁷ Al parecer, se sigue adoptando el patrón literario de las misivas apócrifas, tal y como apreciamos en la *Carta del Preste Juan* medieval, con una exaltación hiperbólica en términos de número y cantidad de poblaciones y riquezas.²⁸

Avanzando con la lectura, nos cercioramos de un aspecto filológico revelador; el escritor de Lionesa, poco antes de empezar con la traducción de los capítulos de la obra de Bermudes, apunta que “è da notare che il il s[igno]r cristiano dell’Etiopia ora è nominato imp[erato]re, ora re e ora Prestegianni, e da noi italiani viene detto Prete Gianni, e dagli abissini è più propriamente chiamato Giovanni Belul, cioè Giovanni Prezioso, ovvero alto”.²⁹ Ahora bien, esta aclaración es probable que ya formara parte de la tradición manuscrita e impresa de los cronistas y viajeros de la época de Mongallo. Primero entre ellos fue Damião de Góis, quien en su *Fides, religio, moresque Aethiopum sub Imperio Preciosi Ioannis (quem vulgo Presbyterum Ioannem vocant) degentium* (1540) esclarece el malentendido gracias a la información que le facilita el eclesiástico Sagga Zaab, precisando que Preste Juan es la versión vulgar del verdadero nombre del gobernante etíope, Jan Belul o Bellul. El correspondiente latín de *belul* es *preciosus* o *altus* (venerable) (Martínez D’Alòs-Moner 2015: 22-23). Dicha elucidación léxica es índice del rebajamiento de la figura mitificada de Presbyter Johannes y es fruto de las frecuentes incursiones en Etiopía que los portugueses llevaron a cabo durante aquel periodo y de la consiguiente demarcación de

²⁷ “La verdadera y completa noticia de aquellos reinos y los innumerables pueblos que viven en los alrededores de las fuentes del Nilo y su curso hasta Egipto y las orillas del océano, con las grandes maravillas de las minas de oro y otras riquezas que se encuentran en aquellos amplísimos países”. Ms. 11169, 82r. Traducción nuestra.

²⁸ En efecto, Bermudes escribe su obra a tenor del estilo de sus contemporáneos, quienes exageraban las posesiones y los bienes de aquel soberano etíope. Véase Beckingham (1996c: 207).

²⁹ “Cabe notar que el señor cristiano de Etiopía a veces se le llama ora emperador, ora rey y ora Preste Juan, que nosotros italianos le llamamos *Prete Gianni*, pero los abisinios le llaman con acierto *Giovanni Belul*, en otras palabras, Juan Precioso, es decir, alto [venerable]”. Ms. 11169, 82r. Traducción nuestra.

un reino que de fabuloso ya no tenía nada (Martínez D'Alòs-Moner 2015: 23).³⁰ De la misma forma, es un dato que acentuaría la diferencia cultural entre Bermudes y Mongallo, pues este último, al consultar fuentes coetáneas, también demuestra ser consciente de las propensiones políticas y religiosas vigentes. De todos modos, esto podría llevar a una trampa interpretativa o por lo menos a extender el ya amplio abanico de hipótesis vinculadas con el manuscrito. O bien el italiano poseía un conjunto de saberes laicos y religiosos notables que superaban los límites nacionales, abarcando incluso el ámbito lusitano, o bien se trató de un simple copista que transcribió el contenido de un original ya perdido.

Con independencia de ello, el comentario sobre Belul, que inserta en las anotaciones introductorias elaboradas a modo de prefacio, pone de realce cierta cultura, casi como si él quisiera destacar su erudición respecto de los temas tratados y que, por ende, se considerara lo suficientemente calificado como para traducir y comentar parte de la *Breve relação*. En ella, Bermudes tematiza la expedición militar de Cristóvão da Gama — cuarto hijo de Vasco de Gama — a partir de su llegada a Massawa en 1541 y las estrategias diplomáticas del narrador (Pennec 2010: 15); en cambio, el anexo de Mongallo se centra en la magnificencia y la opulencia de las tierras que el patriarca contempla durante su viaje por el sur de Etiopía. Estos pasajes parecen un añadido que adolece de inverosimilitud, puesto que el autor sostiene haber utilizado entre diez o doce meses de exploración, tiempo durante el cual Miguel de Castanhoso, compañero de Bermudes y luego su acérrimo rival, volvía a Etiopía con cartas del rey João III para que castigaran al patriarca a causa de la apropiación ilegítima de su título. En suma, sería absurdo que viajara en compañía de quien le acusaba de crímenes tan graves.³¹ Por su parte, la especialista que tradujo la *Breve relação* para una edición moderna en francés hace hincapié en la peculiaridad de los capítulos 49-52; en consonancia con su argumentación, es posible que aquellas páginas denoten un afán por la literaturización de la narración más marcada que en otros pasajes de la obra. La envoltura literaria que delinea la descripción de aquellas aventuras, pues, se aproxima al género de los *mirabilia* y las frecuentes alusiones a autores clásicos y medievales jalonan la estructura de esos capítulos (Rodrigues Oliveira 2010: 28-29).

Si le damos crédito a la opinión de la traductora, la inclusión de dichas páginas tanto en la *Breve relação* como en el anexo italiano del *Itinerarium* responden a un criterio de cohesión no solo estructural, sino también ideológico. Bermudes ha de persuadir al lector y lo hace mediante el principio literario del *delectare et prodesse*, si bien la funcionalidad didáctica queda supeditada a una voluntad de

³⁰ Zaganelli (1988: 260) precisó que las exploraciones de los portugueses marcaron de forma decisiva la etapa final de la leyenda del Preste Juan.

³¹ Es el juicio de un miembro de la Academia Real das Ciências, en una nota de la edición decimonónica (Bermudes 1875: 100).

persuasión, mientras que Mongallo parece sugestionar a quien consulte el manuscrito, con el objetivo de hacer atractiva la lectura y, tal vez, para proporcionar alguna enseñanza. Al fin y al cabo, los numerosos comentarios abreviados al margen que figuran en todos los libros del viaje de Geraldini sugieren una finalidad aleccionadora que, junto con una aspiración hipotética al ensalzamiento de la familia amerina,³² determinaría la realización de la copia en italiano. Aun así, se ha subrayado precedentemente que en la parte traducida hay un número inferior de escolios. Quizás esto se deba a que, como ya se había dado a la prensa la relación de Bermudes, la anexión de muchas glosas explicativas resultaría superflua.

Lo que llama la atención es que el trabajo de traducción es muy fiel al original, con numerosos cultismos, conforme al estilo del *Itinerarium*, y un sugerente uso de léxico italiano para transcribir algunos de los términos que empleó Bermudes, lo cual podría significar que el autor fuera un hombre con una buena formación, que dominaba tanto el latín como el portugués. Sus conocimientos le permiten distinguirse del autor del original, cuyo nivel cultural básico delata una procedencia social baja. Irónicamente, su ambición logró que su estatus mejorara, consiguiendo una renta vitalicia y la oficialización de la investidura de patriarca, reiterada en su tumba en la iglesia lisboeta de São Sebastião da Pedreira (Rodrigues Oliveira 2010: 29).³³ Esto podría ser un indicio elocuente del valor de sus acciones. Volviendo a Portugal en calidad de representante del poder temporal y espiritual etíopes, logró que se fortalecieran las relaciones entre sendos monarcas y que se fomentaran las exploraciones y expediciones hacia África Oriental; se trata de un mérito que pone en duda su fama de hombre egocéntrico y arribista tan asentada en la historiografía tradicional (Martínez D'Alòs-Moner 2015: 28-29).

La terminología que adopta sigue los cánones de las crónicas de viajes, y Mongallo la ajusta al léxico italiano, con traducciones bastante apropiadas y en ocasiones cultas. Es el caso de “muito gasalhado” (Bermudes 1565: 65r), cuando se refiere a la acogida obsequiosa que el reinante cristiano de

³² A este respecto, D'Angelo propone aglutinar el manuscrito a los *corpora geraldiniana*, término este que deriva del que adoptó Oliva (1993b: 199). Dichas recolecciones de copias del *Itinerarium* y epístolas entrarían en la lógica de una, en palabras del investigador, “política editoriale geraldiniana” que evidencia el cambio político al que las familias de Umbría tuvieron que enfrentarse. La consolidación de los Estados Pontificios reconfiguró la estructura de los poderes más fuertes, por lo que los Geraldini participaron, junto con otros nobles de Italia central, en esta valoración de su estirpe y, por supuesto, de las acciones de sus antepasados (D'Angelo 2019: 216-217).

³³ Con todo, dicho título posiblemente no fuera suficiente para un hombre que, según Martínez D'Alòs-Moner (2003: 65), ansiaba el dominio de todo el imperio. Su sustitución por el nuevo metropolitano copto aniquiló sus ambiciones y le impulsó a abandonar Etiopía.

Oggy,³⁴ fray Miguel,³⁵ les dio a los miembros de la expedición. Mongallo lo traduce con “molte carezze”, término este que describe poéticamente el acto de recibir a alguien con mucha benevolencia. El *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (1612: s. v.) recoge la definición “Far carezze, vezzi, vezzeggiare [regalar]” en la voz sinonímica *careggiare*.

En otros casos, la trasposición al italiano implica una labor de adaptación en el ámbito de la terminología faunística exótica. Por ejemplo, *leonza*, en el cap. XLIX, es la traducción de *onça*, que figura entre los tributos que los habitantes de Goráñez le debían a su rey:

Pagano i Goraguesi al suo re ciascun anno tributo di due leoni d'oro, tre cagnoli, una leonessa e certe galline con i suoi pulcini parimenti d'oro, che tutto pesa quanto otto uomini possono portare. In oltre, gli danno sei somme d'ariento basso. Paganli ancora mille vacche vive e molte pelli di leoni, di leonze e di danti. Trovasi in questa provincia molto zibetto, sandalo, ebano e ambra.³⁶

Este es el original en portugués:

Pagão os Goragues a seu rey de tributo em cada hum anno dous liões douro, & tres cachorros douro, & huma onça douro, & certas galinhas douro, com seus pitaos tambem douro. O que tudo pesa quanto oito homens podem levar. & he este ouro fino & bom. Pagão lhe mais seis carregas de bufaros de prata baixa. Pagão lhe tambem mil vacas vivas; e muitas pelles de liões, & onças & antas. Ha nesta terra muita algalea, & sandalo, pao preto, & ambre (Bermudes 1565: 65r-65v).

Ahora bien, hay cierta ambigüedad semántica debida a la multitud de variantes del nombre de dicho animal, dado que a menudo su naturaleza fluctuaba entre lo real y lo fantástico y la desinformación contribuía a generar más confusión. De ello ya se había percatado Covarrubias Horozco, quien en la voz *Onça* de su *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611) consigna que es

³⁴ Se suele identificar con sinónimos más conocidos, como *Wed* (Bermudes 1875: 101) o *Wadj* (Bermudes, 1902: 231). Braukämper (2004: 43) precisa que la confusión de nombres es causada por la nutrida cantidad de sinónimos referidos a dicho estado: *Wäg, Wage, Vague, Voge, Hage* etc.

³⁵ Whiteway en su edición (Bermudes 1902: 231) supuso que el nombre Miguel fuese una interpretación errónea del nombre *Faniel*, que formaba parte de aquel gobierno.

³⁶ “Los habitantes de Goráñez pagan a su rey cada año un tributo de dos leones de oro, tres perros pequeños, una leona y algunas gallinas con sus polluelos igualmente de oro, que todo pesa el equivalente de lo que pueden llevar ocho hombres. Además, le entregan seis sumas de plata de baja ley. Le pagan también con mil vacas vivas y muchas pieles de león, de panteras y de dantes. Se encuentran en esta provincia mucha algalia, sándalo, ébano y ámbar”. Ms. 11169, 83v. Traducción nuestra.

animal fiero conocido, cuya piel está manchada de varios colores. El macho vulgarmente se llama pardo, *lat. dicitur panthera*. Díjose onza, *quasi* leonza, por ser en talle y fiereza semejante a la leona. Quitáronle la *le*, como si fuera artículo, engañados, pensando sería artículo, la onza (2006: s. v.)

Corominas y Pascual (1984: s. v. *lince*) sostuvieron que dicha deglutinación que sufriría el término *leonza* fue opinión asentada en la época. Se hacía derivar del latín *lūncea*, que comparte el mismo étimo que *lince*, y de la errónea eliminación del artículo derivaría *onça*. Sin embargo, el origen del nombre es incierto y no es fruto de un error de interpretación. En las fuentes italianas también se aprecia una heterogeneidad léxica que principia en las postrimerías del siglo XIII, cuando el que redactó el *Bestiario Toscano* registró que “Loncia è animale crudele e fiera, e nasce de coniungimento carnale de leone con lonça o vero de leopardo con leonissa, e cussì nasce lo leopardo”.³⁷ *Loncia* sería, pues, progenie de un león que se empareja con una *lonza*. En el *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (1612: s. v.), cuya primera edición se dio a la imprenta un año después del *Tesoro*, *lonza* es sinónimo de pantera; el diccionario moderno del Istituto Treccani confirma el escepticismo respecto de la hipótesis de la deglutinación en *onza*, define *lonza* un animal que antiguamente se consideraba muy feroz y que genéricamente podía referirse a la lince, al leopardo o al guepardo, y la *leonza* sería otra alimaña que podía ser sinónimo de leona, de *lonza* o de otros felinos afines.³⁸ Aquello que une a todas las definiciones es acentuar la ferocidad del animal, y no es casual que se utilice en ocasiones como sinónimo de leopardo o de pantera, cuyo étimo griego indica que representa la ferocidad por antonomasia, conforme a la descripción de Covarrubias Horozco (1611: s. v. *panthera*).³⁹ La afinidad semántica de *leonza* y vocablos similares se evidencia con la traducción de “huma onça” con “una leonessa [leona]”, utilizando luego *leonze* para referirse a las pieles de *onças*. A la vista de todo ello, es posible que Mongallo quisiera intensificar el aspecto fiero y exótico de las pieles que se donaban a aquel rey, traduciendo *onza* por *leonza*. En el caso del hispanismo *dante*, se asiste al fenómeno contrario, la aglutinación. En origen, era *ante* o *anta* (se contemplaban ambas posibilidades) y, por el frecuente uso de la expresión medieval “adarga d’ante”, se ha convertido en *dante*. El correspondiente árabe sería *lamt*, fruto de la aglutinación, en este caso, del artículo (Corominas y Pascual 1984: s. v. *ante*). El *Diccionario de la lengua*

³⁷ La *loncia* es un animal cruel y feroz y es fruto de la unión carnal entre un león y una lonça o de un leopardo y una leona, y así es como se ha generado el leopardo”. Traducción nuestra. La entrada del bestiario se ha consultado en la página web del *Tesoro della lingua Italiana delle Origini (TLIO)*: <https://bit.ly/2y5ZUS5>. Acceso el 26 de marzo de 2020.

³⁸ Istituto Treccani (2019: ss. vv. *leonza*, *lonza* y *onza*): <https://bit.ly/3dqKKqO>. Acceso el 26 de marzo de 2020.

³⁹ *Onza* como sinónimo de pantera se lee también en el vocabulario bilingüe del hispanista Franciosini (1620: s. v.).

española (DLE) señala que procede del arabe hispánico *lámt*, y presume que sea de derivación bereber.⁴⁰ Es posible que, en origen, significara animal en bereber, pero la ausencia de documentos escritos en dicho idioma perjudica la búsqueda de una definición acertada. En la *Relação* figura *anta*, y de dicho rumiante cérvido, que con frecuencia se identificaba con el alce, el antílope, el búbalu o el búfalo, se valoraba su piel por ser excelente materia prima para realizar protecciones en cuero.⁴¹ De modo que en el *Tesoro* se da una explicación de su nombre que se relaciona con su uso en el campo militar, además de presentar otra teoría de tipo topográfico:

Cuera de ante, es la piel del búfalo aderezada, en forma que el hierro no la puede pasar si no es con gran dificultad; y llamáronse de ante, porque se ponen delante del pecho, que es lo que principalmente se guarda; otros dicen que está corrompido de Nantes, ciudad de Flandes o Francia, adonde quieren que se haya hallado el tal adobo (Covarrubias Horozco 1611: s. v.).

Se trata de pieles valiosas, que añaden prestigio al monarca etíope que recibía como tributo objetos de gran valor. Los editores de las publicaciones modernas inglesa y francesa eligieron para *onças* y *antas*, respectivamente, *leopards* y *antelope* y *onces* y *tapirs* (Bermudes 1902: 232; Bermudes 2010: 159). Por otro lado, “huma onça” no se ha interpretado de forma parecida a la traducción de Mongallo en la edición inglesa, pues se propuso *ounce* que sería en español *onza*, fracción de una libra. En la francesa, *once*, que puede referirse tanto a la unidad de peso como al animal africano. Consideramos muy pertinente en aquel contexto la trasposición de Mongallo, dado que *onça* se inserta en un listado de animales de oro y no de cantidades del precioso metal.⁴²

Una síntesis de las variantes la podemos consultar en el siguiente esquema:

Bermudes (1565)	Mongallo (finales del XVI/principios del XVII)	Whiteway (1902)	Pennec y Rodrigues de Oliveira (2010)
huma onça	una leonessa	an ounce	une once
onças	leonze	leopards	onces
antas	danti	antilope	tapirs

⁴⁰ Real Academia Española (2019: s. v. *ante*): <https://dle.rae.es/ante?m=form>. Acceso el 26 de marzo de 2020.

⁴¹ Una descripción en portugués exhaustiva tanto del animal como de su uso en el ámbito de la curtiembre de pieles se puede leer en Bluteau (1712: ss. vv. *anta* y *couro*).

⁴² En portugués, *onça* puede referirse a la moneda también, pero es evidente que en este caso se refiere al animal.

Tab. 1. Variantes de traducción en las tres versiones de la *Breve relação*

En general, los pocos folios que articulan los capítulos hasta el LIII se caracterizan por la técnica de la *enumeratio* para proporcionar un listado de aquello que el autor había contemplado (supuestamente) con sus propios ojos, suscitando así maravilla en el lector. Las cifras que se indican son muy precisas, lo cual da más verosimilitud al relato y a la vez intensifica la idea de poder que se refiere a aquellas poblaciones. Todo rey o jefe de tribu que se mencione es súbdito del Preste Juan, otro aspecto este que se asimila al modelo literario medieval. Aspecto medular del capítulo L es la glorificación de las hazañas de los portugueses, al encararse a un reino que se murmuraba fuese de fe judía y muy rico en oro y tejidos: el de los gafates. Bermudes introduce un elemento fantástico, al relatar un rumor según el cual en aquellas tierras existiera un tipo de madera que hacía a los hombres invisibles: “Dizem que ha nesta terra hum pao invisivel & que faz os homens invisiveis” (Bermudes 1565: 65v-66r). Hemos de destacar que en el manuscrito italiano esta afirmación se omite. Puede que sea un dato relevante, si lo adscribimos a la lógica de una obra didáctica en la que toda alusión a lo inverosímil se suprime. Quizás esta metodología se adopte en sintonía con una censura religiosa que sugeriría la incorporación de Mongallo a alguna cofradía, como se ha señalado en una nota de este trabajo. Asimismo, la acreditación de una familia ambiciosa no puede perjudicarse a causa de una narración fabulada. Si trazásemos una línea diegética que conectara todos los capítulos que configuran el anexo podríamos comprender con facilidad la otra omisión importante en el manuscrito que constituye la conclusión del LI en Bermudes:

Porem crea vossa alteza, que com rezão se chama a Affrica mãy de monstros, porque assi o he sem duvida, em especial naquelle sertão interior junto da ribeira do Nilo, onde ha serras, ribeiras, & lugares desertos com muita desposição da terra, & favor do ar & do ceo pera criar o que quiser.⁴³

La idea de que el continente africano fuese una fragua de seres monstruosos tal vez no se considerara lo suficientemente edificante como para enseñársela a un alumno y/o a un feligrés.

Los capítulos LI y LII son los que contienen mayoritariamente elementos vinculados con las maravillas de aquellos reinos. Ejemplo de ello es Damute, tierra repleta de oro y de piedras resplandecientes. Sin embargo, no son solo los metales y las joyas que definen su encanto. La lista de animales criados y su docilidad innata, las especias que se destinan al comercio con otras comunidades,

⁴³ “Sin embargo, créame Vuestra Alteza que con razón África es llamada madre de los monstruos, puesto que lo es sin duda. Sobre todo, en las montañas interiores cerca del Nilo y los lugares desérticos, porque existe una gran disposición de la tierra, del aire y del cielo a producir de todo.” (Bermudes 1565:70r. Traducción nuestra).

las plantas con dotes prodigiosas o que rebozan veneno mortal producen gran asombro. A medida que el explorador se acerca a la parte central del reino de Juan, van aumentando las riquezas y el poder de sus tributarios. De igual relevancia es la descripción de un río fabuloso. Después de contar sobre algunas serpientes enormes y famélicas, el escritor nos informa de una orilla desértica en la que hay un tipo de arena rojiza que contenía

due parti d'oro e una di terra, e così riesce nel fonderlo, di che sono nel paese molti maestri, come di qua ferrieri, e qui perché chi là è più oro, chi di qua ferro. Non consentono i signori che in quel fiume siano ponti né barche, affinché non vi sia facile passaggio a quelli che volessero andare all'altra banda a prendere oro.⁴⁴

Seguidamente, pasa a describir cómo se trasladaba el metal de una orilla a otra:

Il modo di passarlo è questo. Hanno bufali, e quando vogliono passare all'altra banda li mandano innanzi e essi vanno attaccati alle corde e così a nuoto passano dall'altra riva, dove empiono di quel sabbione una valigia di cuoio che portano, e nel tornare indietro l'accomodano sopra il collo, e nel medesimo modo ripassano il fiume. Dimodoché il passaggio non è comune a tutti, e quando passano sono obbligati a fondere l'oro che portano nelle fonderie di Akgace per pagargli i loro diritti.⁴⁵

Por medio de una gradación aumentativa, la suma de oro pasa a ser incalculable, ya que el príncipe Akgace declaraba que la cantidad de aquel metal resplandeciente no era comparable con una montaña enorme que se hallaba en sus dominios y estaba hecha en su totalidad de oro. Esta es la última referencia a riquezas despropositadas, pues en los pasajes sucesivos se habla de otro tipo de maravillas: las geográficas. Ejemplo de ello es la muy caudalosa cascada Catadupa; las aguas del Nilo caen desde un alto escollo, de casi media legua de alto, hasta un lago profundo y estrecho entre altísimas montañas.

⁴⁴ “Dos partes de oro y otra de tierra, y en ese país hay muchos maestros que saben fundirlo, que aquí llaman herreros, y esto porque allí hay más oro y aquí más hierro. Los señores no consienten que en aquel río haya puentes ni barcos, con el fin de no facilitar el paso a aquellos que quieren ir a la otra orilla para coger el oro”. Ms. 11169, 85r-85v. Traducción nuestra.

⁴⁵ “Esta es la manera de transportarlo. Tienen búfalos, y cuando quieren pasar a la otra orilla los envían delante y atados a unas cuerdas, y así nadando llegan a la otra orilla, donde llenan de aquella arena una petaca de cuero que llevan encima, y al regresar se la acomodan sobre el cuello, y de la misma manera vuelven a cruzar el río. De esta manera, el paso no es accesible para todos, y cuando pasan tienen la obligación de fundir el oro que llevan en las fundiciones de Akgace para pagarle sus derechos”. Ms. 11169, 85v. Traducción nuestra.

Es digno de mención que esto ya se había comentado en el Sueño de Escipión, de Cicerón, y el autor no deja de enfatizarlo.⁴⁶

3. Conclusiones

La originalidad de aquello que anexó Mongallo no reside en el propio contenido, teniendo en cuenta que la obra que traduce ya se había publicado en Portugal. Lo que podría resultar digno de mención es el probable éxito que supuso la difusión de la *Breve relação*, ya que, pese a las controversias de cara a las pretensiones del autor, su obra aportaba información complementaria a la que se podía consultar en la obra de Álvares. De modo que un escritor italiano consideró el texto tan significativo que podía merecerse el privilegio de constituir el colofón literario del itinerario geraldiniano. En cuanto a la búsqueda de motivaciones más concretas de su aditamento, hemos propuesto diferentes teorías a lo largo de este trabajo, todas ellas formuladas a partir de los pocos datos disponibles en torno al autor de Lionesa y a su relación con los Geraldini. Con todo, de la labor de traslación se entrevé la intención de instruir, de asombrar, de entretener o de manipular al lector.

De igual importancia es el hecho de que, a la hora de pasar muchos lusitanismos al italiano, el traductor recurriera a un léxico culto y bastante acertado, según hemos observado en el caso de *onça o anta*. La parte fabulada, presentada como veraz, recuerda mucho las ya mencionadas inscripciones en latín de Alejandro Geraldini, además de que ni el obispo ni el patriarca realmente vieron las maravillas que ambos sostuvieron haber encontrado en África. Todo ello indica que el aporte de Mongallo encaja de manera eficaz con el viaje de Geraldini, añadiendo, así, más interés en la obra misma. La compaginación temática se torna aún más patente al apreciar que los episodios narrados por Bermudes son posteriores a la llegada del prelado de Amelia a Santo Domingo. De ahí que la decisión de insertarlos al final dé la idea de una prosecución de la narración: mientras el pontífice italiano seguía su camino hacia el Nuevo Mundo, tras haberse adentrado en buena parte de los territorios africanos, otro religioso penetraba en la parte oriental del continente.

Es palmario que la gran diferencia entre el *Itinerarium* y la relación de Bermudes estriba en el registro que emplearon para novelar los acontecimientos que atestiguaron. Frente a la abundancia de citas literarias, de referencias a los textos clásicos y a las fuentes contemporáneas que se interpolan en la obra de Geraldini, amén de un irrefutable dominio del latín, el estilo de Bermudes aparenta una carencia de cultismos, de expresiones complejas o de una formación como clasicista. Sin embargo, la

⁴⁶ Véanse Bermudes (1565: 70v) y su traducción al italiano, Ms. 11169, 86r-86v.

combinación de aspectos imaginarios en aquellos capítulos parece proceder del caudal legendario relativo a la figura del Preste Juan; en especial, la litología taumatúrgica es una clara alusión a las cartas apócrifas medievales.

Todo ello nos induce a seguir indagando no solo las motivaciones por las que Mongallo añadió esa parte del libro de Bermudes, sino también los elementos que conectan lo maravilloso medieval con estas composiciones del siglo XVI, de los que hemos resaltado solo algunos entre los más sugestivos. Es indudable que dicha literatura verosímil merece la atención de aquellos que quisiesen ahondar en las cuestiones histórico-culturales tanto de África como de Europa.

Bibliografía

- Zaganella, Gioia (a cura di). 1990. *La lettera del Prete Gianni*. Parma: Pratiche Editrice.
- Accademia della Crusca. 1612. *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*. Venezia: Giovanni Alberti.
- Alexandri Geraldini Amerini. 2018. *Variae epistolae XXVI necnon orationes IV*, editado por Edoardo D'Angelo. Roma: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo.
- Almeida, André Ferrand de. 1999. "Da demanda do Preste João à missão jesuíta da Etiópia. A Cristandade de Abissínia e os portugueses nos séculos XVI-XVII." *Lusitania Sacra* 11: 247-294.
- Bar-Ilan, Meir. 1995. "Prester John: Fiction and History." *History of European Ideas* 20/1-3: 291-298.
- Baranda Leturio, Nieves. 1992. "El espejismo del Preste Juan de las Indias en su reflejo literario en España." En: *Actas del X Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, Barcelona 21-26 de agosto de 1989*, vol. 1, coordinado por Antonio Vilanova, 359-364. Barcelona: Promociones y Publicaciones Universitarias.
- Beckingham, Charles F. y Bernard Hamilton. 1996. "Editors' Preface." En: *Prester John. The Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, editado por Charles F. Beckingham y Bernard Hamilton, XI-XIV. Aldershot: Variorum.
- Beckingham, Charles F. 1996a. "The Achievements of Prester John." En: *Prester John. The Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, editado por Charles F. Beckingham y Bernard Hamilton, 1-22. Aldershot: Variorum.
- Beckingham, Charles F. 1996b. "An Ethiopian [sic] Embassy to Europe c. 1310." En: *Prester John. The Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, editado por Charles F. Beckingham y Bernard Hamilton, 197-206. Aldershot: Variorum.
- Beckingham, Charles F. 1996c. "Prester John in West Africa." En: *Prester John. The Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, editado por Charles F. Beckingham y Bernard Hamilton, 207-211. Aldershot: Variorum.
- Bermudes, João. 1565. *Esta he huma breve relação da embaixada que o Patriarca dom Ioão Bermudez trouxe do Imperador de Ethiopia, chamado vulgarmente Preste Ioão...* Lisboa: Francisco Correa.

- Bermudes, João. 1875. *Breve relação da embaixada que o patriarcha d. João Bermudez trouxe do imperador da Ethiopia, chamado vulgarmente Preste João, dirigida a el-rei d. Sebastião*, editado por S. T. Lisboa: Academia Real das Ciências.
- Bermudes, João. 1902. "This is a short account of the embassy in which the patriarch D. João Bermudez brought from the Emperor of Ethiopia, vulgarly called Prester John..." En: *The Portuguese Expedition to Abyssinia in 1541-1543, as Narrated by Castanhoso, With Some Contemporary Letters, the Short Account of Bermudez, and Certain Extracts From Correa*, editado por Richard Stephen Whiteway, 127-257. London: Hakluyt Society.
- Bluteau, Rafael. 1712. *Vocabulario Portuguez e Latino*. Coimbra: Collegio das Artes da Companhia de JESU.
- Braukämper, Ulrich. 2004. *Islamic history and culture in southern Ethiopia. Collected essays*. Münster: Lit.
- Chaîne, Marcel. 1909. "Le Patriarche Jean Bermudez d'Éthiopie (1540-1570)." *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 14: 321-329.
- Chimeno del Campo, Ana Belén. 2007. "El reino del Preste Juan y los viajeros de la Alta Edad Media." En: *Actas del XI Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval*, vol. 1, coordinado por Armando López Castro y María Luzdivina Cuesta Torre, 423-429. León: Universidad de León.
- Chimeno del Campo, Ana Belén. 2010. "La "Carta del Preste Juan" y la literatura utópica." *Hesperia. Anuario de filología hispánica* 13/2: 117-135.
- Corominas, Joan y José A. Pascual. 1984. *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico*. Madrid: Gredos.
- Corpus Lexicográfico do Português (CLP)*, <https://bit.ly/3bvdH3c>. Acceso el 30 de marzo de 2019.
- Córdoba Zoilo, Joaquín María. 2005. "En época del Medioevo." *Arbor* 180/711-712: 507-513.
- Covarrubias Horozco, Sebastián de. 2006. *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, editado por Ignacio Arellano y Rafael Zafra. Madrid: Iberoamericana/Vervuert.
- D'Angelo, Edoardo. 2019. "Corpora Geraldiniana. Collezioni d'autore e collezioni di famiglia tra Medioevo ed Età moderna." En: *Collezioni d'autore nel medioevo. Problematiche intellettuali, letterarie ed ecdotiche*, editado por Patrizia Stoppacci, 201-230. Firenze: SISMELE.
- Franciosini, Lorenzo. *Vocabulario español e italiano aora nuevamente sacado á luz, y compuesto por Lorenzo Franciosini, Florentin. Segunda parte*. Roma: Giovanni Angelo Ruffinelli, 1600.
- Freire de Andrade, Jacinto. 1835. *Vida de D. João de Castro, quarto visorrey da India*, editado por Francisco de S. Luiz. Lisboa: Academia Real das Ciências.
- Frezza, Igea. 2011. "I Mongalli. Bevagna - Leonessa - Spoleto". En: *Gente d'Umbria: uomini d'arme e di penna*, 109-118. Perugia: Morlacchi.
- Geraldini, Alessandro. 1977. *Itinerario por las regiones subequinociales*, presentación de Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi, traducido por Paulino Balbuena y Alejo Seco. Santo Domingo: Editora del Caribe.
- Geraldini, Alessandro. 1991. *Viaggio di Alessandro Geraldini di Amelia vescovo di Santo Domingo alle regioni sub-equinoziali*, traducido por Alessandro Geraldini, prefacio por Paolo Emilio Taviani e introducido por Gaetano Ferro. Torino: Nuova ERI.

- Geraldini, Alejandro. 2009. *Periplo hasta las regiones ubicadas al sur del Equinoccio*, editado por Jesús Paniagua Pérez y Carmen González Vázquez. León: Universidad de León.
- Geraldini, Alessandro. 2017. *Dall'Umbria al Mediterraneo e All'atlantico. Alessandro Geraldini. Itinerarium ad regiones sub Equinoctiali plaga constitutas*, editado por Edoardo D'Angelo y Rosa Manfredonia. Genova: Università di Genova.
- Geraldino, Alessandro. *Itinerario di mons[igno]re Alessandro Geraldino Vescovo di San Domenico città dell'Isola Spagnola, ove si descrivono cose stupende dell'Etiopia, non più da altri conosciute*, Ms. Lisboa Fundo Geral 11169.
- Giardini, Marco. 2019. "The Quest for The Ethiopian Prester John and Its Eschatological Implications." *Medievalia* 22: 55-87.
- González Vázquez, Carmen y Javier del Hoyo Calleja. 2010. "Inscripciones africanas traducidas al latín en el *Itinerarium ad regiones sub aequinoctiali plaga constitutas Alexandri Geraldini*." En: *Humanismo y pervivencia del mundo clásico. Homenaje al profesor Antonio Prieto. IV*, coordinado por José María Maestre Maestre, Joaquín Pascual Barea y Luis Charlo Brea, 2271-2280. Alcañiz/Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas.
- González Vázquez, Carmen y Jesús Paniagua Pérez. 2009. "Estudio introductorio." En: Alejandro Geraldini, *Periplo hasta las regiones ubicadas al sur del Equinoccio*, editado por Carmen González Vázquez y Jesús Paniagua Pérez, 11-93. León: Universidad de León.
- González Vázquez, Carmen. 2013. "Stories at the Royal Court, or *mirabilia* in Alessandro Geraldini's Humanistic Conception of History." En: *Historiographie des Humanismus. Literarische Verfahren, soziale Praxis, geschichtliche Räume*, editado por Johannes Helmrath, Albert Schirrmeister y Stefan Schlein, 301-320. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Hamilton, Bernard. 1996. "Continental drift: Prester John's progress through the Indies." En: *Prester John. The Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, editado por Charles F. Beckingham y Bernard Hamilton, 237-269. Aldershot: Variorum.
- Istituto Treccani. *Vocabolario della Lingua Italiana online*, <https://bit.ly/3dqKKqO>. Acceso el 26 de marzo de 2020.
- Kaiser, Leo M. 1972. "The Earliest Verse of the New World." *Renaissance Quarterly* 25/4: 429-439.
- Manfredonia, Rosa. 2017. "La tradizione manoscritta dell'*Itinerarium*." En: *Dall'Umbria al Mediterraneo e All'atlantico. Alessandro Geraldini. Itinerarium ad regiones sub Equinoctiali plaga constitutas*, editado por Edoardo D'Angelo y Rosa Manfredonia, 69-83. Genova: Università di Genova.
- Marcocci, Giuseppe. 2012. *A consciencia de um imperio. Portugal e o seu mundo (sécs. XV-XVII)*. Coímbra: Universidad de Coímbra.
- Martín Lalanda, Javier. 2004. "Introducción". En: *La carta del Preste Juan*, editado por Javier Martín Lalanda, 9-83. Madrid: Siruela.
- Martínez D'Alòs-Moner, Andreu. 2003. «The Jesuit Patriarchate to the Preste: Between Religious Reform, Political Expansion and Colonial Adventure». *Aethiopica* 6: 54-69.

- Martínez D'Alòs-Moner, Andreu. 2011. "Early Portuguese Emigration to The Ethiopian Highlands: Geopolitics, Missions and Métissage." En: *Reinterpreting Indian Ocean Worlds: Essays in Honour of Kirti N. Chaudhuri*, editado por Stefan Halikowski Smith, 2-32. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Martínez D'Alòs-Moner, Andreu. 2015. *Envoys of a Human God: The Jesuit Mission to Christian Ethiopia, 1557-1632*. Leiden – Boston: Brill.
- Oliva, Annamaria. 1993a. "Alessandro Geraldini, primo vescovo residente della diocesi di Santo Domingo." En: *Sardegna, Mediterraneo e Atlantico tra Medioevo ed età moderna. Volume terzo. Cristoforo Colombo e la sua epoca*, editado por Luisa D'Arienzo, 419-443. Roma: Bulzoni.
- Oliva, Annamaria. 1993b. "Alessandro Geraldini e la tradizione manoscritta dell'*Itinerarium ad regiones sub aequinoctiali plaga constitutas*." En: *Alessandro Geraldini e il suo tempo. Atti del Convegno storico internazionale. Amelia, 19-20-21 novembre 1992*, editado por Enrico Menestò, 175-209. Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo.
- Paniagua Pérez, Jesús. 2009. "Presentación." En: Alejandro Geraldini, *Periplo hasta las regiones ubicadas al sur del Equinoccio*, editado por Jesús Paniagua Pérez y Carmen González Vázquez, 9-10. León: Universidad de León.
- Paniagua Pérez, Jesús. 2015. "Introducción." En: *Crónicas fantásticas de las Indias*, editado por Jesús Paniagua Pérez, 22-226. Barcelona: Edhasa.
- Pennec, Hervé. 2010. "Introduction." En João Bermudes, *Ma géniale imposture. Patriarche du Prête Jean*, traducido por Sandra Rodrigues de Oliveira e introducido por Hervé Pennec, 5-25. Toulouse: Anacharsis.
- Petersohn, Jürgen. 1996. "Amelia, Roma e Santo Domingo. Alessandro Geraldini e la sua famiglia alla luce di un convegno recente e di fonti contemporanee." *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 76: 253-273.
- Popeanga Chelaru, Eugenia. 2000. "La carta de Preste Juan: las versiones catalana y castellana." *Cuadernos de filología italiana* extra 1-2: 149-160.
- Ramos, Manuel João. 1997a. "Origen y evolución de una imagen Cristo-mimética: el Preste Juan en el tiempo y el espacio de las ideas cosmológicas europeas." *Política y Sociedad* 25: 37-44.
- Ramos, Manuel João. 1997b. *Ensaio de mitologia cristã. O Preste João e a reversibilidade simbólica*. Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim.
- Real Academia Española. 2019. *Diccionario de la lengua española (DLE)*. <https://dle.rae.es/>. Acceso el 26 de marzo de 2020.
- Relaño, Francesc. 2019. *The Shaping of Africa: Cosmographic Discourse and Cartographic Science in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Rodrigues Oliveira, Sandra. 2010. "Notice de la traductrice." En João Bermudes, *Ma géniale imposture. Patriarche du Prête Jean*, traducido por Sandra Rodrigues de Oliveira e introducido por Hervé Pennec, 27-29. Toulouse: Anacharsis.
- Sanceau, Elaine. 1944. *The Land of Prester John*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

- Sensi, Mario. 1993. "La famiglia Geraldini di Amelia." En: *Alessandro Geraldini e il suo tempo. Atti del Convegno storico internazionale. Amelia, 19-20-21 novembre 1992*, editado por Enrico Menestò, 55-85. Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo.
- Snyder, Martin D. 1980. "Bishop Geraldini's Itinerarium of 1522." *Terrae Incognitae* 12/1: 21-35.
- Tenneroni, Annibale. 1895. "Il testo volgare dell'Itinerarium di Alessandro Geraldini d'Amelia." *Bollettino della Società Umbra di storia patria* 1: 156-157.
- Tesoro della lingua Italiana delle Origini (TLIO)*, <https://bit.ly/2vVOJeg>. Acceso el 26 de marzo de 2020.
- Tisnés, Roberto M. 1993. "Alessandro Geraldini e la difesa degli "indios"." En: *Alessandro Geraldini e il suo tempo. Atti del Convegno storico internazionale. Amelia, 19-20-21 novembre 1992*, editado por Enrico Menestò, 99-124. Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo.
- Zaganelli, Gioia. 1988. "Le lettere del Prete Gianni. Di un falso e delle sue verità." *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Schriften* 33/5: 243-260.

Originally from Salerno, Italy, Daniele Arciello obtained a degree in Foreign Languages and Cultures at the University of Salerno in 2014. He then moved to Spain at the same year, and he received a Master's Degree in Spanish and Comparative Literature from the University of León in 2015, and a Master's Degree with distinction in European Culture and Thought from the same university in 2019. He is a PhD student in "Mundo hispánico: raíces, desarrollo y proyección", and after a two-years fellowship at the Instituto de Humanismo y Tradición Clásica (IHTC) at the University of León he collaborated with the Library of the same university on a bibliometrics project. His areas of interest are Spanish and South American 17th century picaresque literature, comparative and contemporary literature and Italian Literature. He has published articles and delivered many papers and some key-note speeches at international conferences and symposiums concerning the preceding topics, in addition to having been a member of organizing committees of many conferences and seminars regarding the same. He can be reached at arciellod@gmail.com. ORCID: 0000-0003-0754-6527

Terminologia del corpo ed estensioni metaforiche

Swahili e zulu a confronto

Rosanna Tramutoli

The aim of this study is to analyse Swahili and Zulu body terminology and conceptualization through the description of linguistic structures, polysemous words and metaphorical extensions. Cross-linguistic studies have shown that the body represents a template for the conceptualization of emotions, topological relations, and object descriptions. This study will analyse examples of body terms and metaphorical extensions in two Bantu languages (i.e. Swahili and Zulu) in the framework of the conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

It has been shown that body lexicon represents the main source of conceptualization in the description of topological relations in most African languages. However, apart from some anthropological studies on the body in the context of traditional medicine, there are very few specific studies on body terminology and conceptualization in Bantu languages.

This analysis describes common linguistic patterns of body metaphorical expressions in Swahili and Zulu: body terms followed by a modifier, usually a connective (-a) and the metaphorical target term; copulative constructions, idiomatic expressions with polysemous verbs followed by body terms. It has been shown that, although Swahili and Zulu speakers use similar morphological strategies, some body parts (e.g. joints or articulations, arms, fingers and toes) have different categorizations and paronomies. In both languages body parts which are semantically related, are morphologically marked through different noun class assignment. While Swahili body nomenclature includes a great number of compounds or derived terms constructed on the basis of semantic features (e.g. spatial contiguity, shape and structural similarity), Zulu tends to use basic terms or deverbative nouns to refer to specific body parts.

Data were collected both through monolingual and bilingual dictionaries (Swahili-English; Zulu-English) and through interviews with mother tongue speakers.

Keywords: body terminology; Bantu languages; metaphor; semantics

1. Il corpo e la metafora

La teoria dell'*embodiment* si basa sull'assunto che la realtà è modellata nel modo in cui il corpo e il cervello degli esseri umani la percepiscono. Il corpo non è solo un "mediatore" tra noi e il mondo ma

costituisce esso stesso la nostra esperienza, dunque ogni capacità cognitiva umana è strutturata innanzitutto a partire dal corpo e dalla sua interazione col mondo circostante:

The centrality of human embodiment directly influences what and how things can be meaningful for us, the ways in which these meanings can be developed and articulated, the ways we are able to comprehend and reason about our experience, and the actions we take. Our reality is shaped by the patterns of our bodily movement, the contours of our spatial and temporal orientation, and the forms of our interaction with objects. It is never merely a matter of abstract conceptualizations and propositional judgments (Johnson 1987: 17).

Come sottolinea Cardona, “il corpo umano, nelle sue articolazioni e nella sua topografia, può costituire un modello a cui riferire e in base a cui caratterizzare fatti linguistici di vario ordine” (Cardona 2006: 91).

Da un punto di vista linguistico cognitivo, la metafora costituisce una strategia linguistica che consente ai parlanti di associare un termine concreto ad un significato astratto relativo ad un diverso campo semantico. Questo processo, noto come ‘estensione metaforica’, consiste nell’associare delle caratteristiche di un campo linguistico d’origine (*source domain*), generalmente legato all’esperienza, ad un dominio di riferimento (*target domain*), di solito più astratto e lontano dall’esperienza reale (Foley, 1997: 182). Tuttavia, occorre precisare che quando parliamo di ‘uso metaforico’ dei termini del corpo non è sempre facile distinguere quale sia il termine *source domain*, soprattutto quando non esiste un termine alternativo riferito al *target domain* (Goschler 2005: 44). Molto spesso infatti un termine usato per indicare parti del corpo umano è lo stesso che si usa per indicare parti del corpo degli animali, o parti delle piante. L’associazione di significato è costruita sulla base di parametri culturali comuni che gli individui hanno rispetto ad una specifica categoria concettuale. A partire dagli anni ottanta, lo studio delle attività linguistiche e dei nessi metaforici e metonimici, e in particolare la tematica del corporeo, ha avuto grande fioritura nel campo della linguistica cognitiva e studi compiuti su varie lingue, hanno dimostrato che è possibile individuare principi universali di categorizzazione e nomenclatura; in particolare, è frequente l’uso del lessico del corpo nella descrizione delle relazioni topologiche, nell’espressione delle emozioni e nella descrizione di oggetti inanimati.

Studi compiuti sulla lingua italiana (Pannain 2008; Cuturi 1981; Masella and Portner 1981), ad esempio, hanno permesso di individuare associazioni metaforiche su base metonimica tra le parti del corpo dedicate alla fonazione e le attività linguistiche. Molte espressioni si riferiscono all’azione della metonimia concettuale ‘parlare è usare la bocca’, ovvero ‘mettere bocca in qualcosa’, ‘aprire bocca’, ‘chiudere la bocca’, ‘tenere la bocca chiusa’ (Pannain 2008: 317).

Nell'espressione inglese 'the heart of Europe', 'the heart' (il cuore) è usato per indicare 'the centre' (il centro); allo stesso modo, altri campi semantici (ad esempio persone, macchine, piante, strumenti tecnologici) possono costituire *source domain* nella descrizione di parti e funzioni del corpo (Goschler 2005: 37-38).

Sulla base della teoria dell'*embodiment*, che considera il corpo come un "modello universale," ci aspetteremmo di trovare corrispondenze tra le parti del corpo più comuni (es. mano, braccio, piede, gamba, testa etc.) e i loro significati in lingue diverse.

Altri studi compiuti su varie lingue (Brown 1976; Andersen 1978) hanno dimostrato che esistono principi universali di categorizzazione del lessico e ciò è particolarmente evidente nel campo semantico del corpo, come osserva Andersen (1978): "the body part domain is promising because it is one for which we can assume a common perceptual reality-human bodies are structurally the same, no matter what the culture" (Andersen 1978: 346).

Secondo la classificazione partonomica di Andersen, è possibile individuare principi universali di categorizzazione e nomenclatura del corpo (in base alla forma, alla misura e alle categorie spaziali). In tutte le partonomie anatomiche umane esiste un termine per riferirsi al 'corpo', così come esiste un termine (lessema primario o secondario) per indicare 'braccio/mano'; 'dita delle mani/dita dei piedi'. Nonostante in tutte le lingue sia possibile riconoscere alcuni lessemi primari, il modo in cui parlanti di lingue diverse suddividono queste parti del corpo e le definiscono non è universale. Infatti, poichè la categorizzazione linguistica del corpo dipende anche da criteri culturali specifici, dall'analisi della categorizzazione delle parti del corpo in lingue diverse (vedi Enfield *et al.* 2006), è emerso che non è sempre possibile individuare categorie universali per i lessemi considerati "primari"; ad esempio, in alcune lingue non esiste un termine generico distinto per "corpo" "braccio" o "bocca":

Many distinctions are made across languages with reference to the same perceptible discontinuities (e.g. joints such as shoulders or knee). At the same time, there are terms whose semantic and referential range differ across languages (Enfield *et al.* 2006: 145)

Inoltre, esperimenti psicolinguistici compiuti su lingue non correlate (es. olandese, giapponese e indonesiano), (Majid and van Staden 2015), hanno posto l'accento sulla relazione tra la percezione del corpo e la sua rappresentazione linguistica (nomenclatura del corpo), dimostrando che la segmentazione delle parti del corpo (e dunque cosa costituisce una "parte" del corpo) non sempre può essere spiegata sulla base di "principi universali" quali forma, dimensioni, orientamento e, soprattutto, discontinuità visiva (Andersen 1978; Brown 1976):

There cannot be a one-to-one mapping between lexical representations and the body structural representation. If that were true then we would be forced to the conclusion that the body structural representation is different for speakers of different languages, and therefore culturally relative (Majid and van Staden 2015: 586).

Sebbene, dunque, la rappresentazione strutturale del corpo non sia determinata dalla rappresentazione linguistica, non si può considerare quest'ultime come completamente indipendenti (Majid and van Staden 2015: 587). L'esperimento compiuto su olandese, giapponese e indonesiano, ha infatti, dimostrato che "body part terms are certainly not fixed, but they do share at least one structural property—that is, sensitivity to perceptual discontinuity" (Majid and van Staden 2015: 588).

I risultati di questo esperimento hanno dunque messo in luce che un sistema semantico si distingue sulla base di diverse rappresentazioni del corpo ("rappresentazione visiva" vs "rappresentazione motoria") (Majid and van Staden 2015: 590). Lingue come swahili e zulu, ad esempio, mostrano una diversa segmentazione degli arti. A differenza dello zulu, in swahili la presenza di termini del vocabolario di base come *mkono* e *mguu*, che eliminano la distinzione mano-braccio e piede-gamba, potrebbero essere motivati da criteri semantici basati sul sistema motorio piuttosto che sul sistema visivo.

Dagli studi compiuti sulla fraseologia in lingue diverse è emerso che, al di là delle differenze di significato, esistono criteri linguistici comuni, tra i quali, la 'polilessicalità' e 'fissità'; la metafora; il legame stretto tra cultura ed espressioni idiomatiche, che tendono ad essere costruite sulla base di immagini, tradizioni o costumi (Colson 2008: 193). Non è facile, tuttavia, stabilire il confine tra immagini relative ad aspetti universali della mente umana e caratteristiche di una cultura specifica (Colson 2008: 193). Inoltre, nonostante vi sia un legame evidente tra metafora ed espressioni fraseologiche, l'approccio cognitivista non sempre riesce a dare risposte esaustive per l'analisi delle espressioni idiomatiche:

In the first place, not all set phrases correspond to metaphors. Most pragmatic or communicative set phrases such as routine formulae are not metaphorical. On the other hand, many metaphors are closely related to set phrases and there are numerous borderline cases (Colson 2008: 195).

Come osserva Stern (2008: 266), il confine tra valore pragmatico e semantico della metafora non è sempre netto; poichè il significato della metafora non può prescindere dal contesto, non è facile discernere se si tratti di un fenomeno pragmatico legato all'uso o piuttosto di una questione semantica

relativa al tipo di significato. Nell'analisi del significato metaforico occorre dunque tener presente la dipendenza dal contesto, senza oscurare il valore linguistico del significato letterale:

[...] we must take seriously context and, specifically, the contribution of extra-linguistic presuppositions and beliefs, in metaphorical interpretation. But it is as important, when we build context into semantics, that we must respect the distinction between the linguistic and extra-linguistic (Stern 2008: 266).

Studi linguistici basati sull'analisi di corpora sembrano suggerire che le estensioni semantiche "universali" sono più frequenti rispetto a quelle con significato "culturale" specifico, per ciò che concerne la fraseologia del corpo e la frequenza nel testo (Kraska-Szlenk 2020: 85); tuttavia sarebbero necessarie ricerche più approfondite per poter corroborare questa ipotesi:

It would be a challenge to examine how much of body part terms' semantic development follows "universal" paths with their "parameters" and how much of it is conditioned by individual conceptualization patterns and reflected in language idiomatic expressions (Kraska-Szlenk 2020: 85).

Lo studio di Ning (2008), basato sull'analisi contrastiva di metafore relative alla 'faccia' in inglese e cinese, ha fatto chiarezza sul rapporto tra corpo e cultura nelle metafore concettuali, spiegando che, mentre il corpo rappresenta un potenziale dominio sorgente universale, la cultura interviene come filtro interpretativo nell'espressione di alcuni concetti astratti:

While body is a potentially universal source domain from which bodily-based metaphors emerge, culture serves as a filter that only allows certain bodily experiences to pass through so that they can be mapped onto certain target-domain concepts (Ning 2008: 249).

Tenendo conto della relazione tra principi di universalità e di relativismo culturale che riguardano le concettualizzazioni metaforiche del corpo, questo studio propone una comparazione tra due lingue bantu (i.e. swahili e zulu) con l'obiettivo di descrivere la relazione tra strutture linguistiche e concettuali nella nomenclatura e nella fraseologia del corpo.

2. Studi sul corpo nelle lingue africane

Secondo la teoria della metafora concettuale (TMC), che considera le metafore come un meccanismo cognitivo fondamentale, il corpo è da considerarsi “un contenitore” delle emozioni, le quali a loro volta “sono contenute” nei liquidi corporali (Foley 1997: 187).

La teoria dell'*embodiment* presenta apparentemente degli aspetti contraddittori in quanto cerca di spiegare allo stesso tempo l'universalità e la specificità culturale delle metafore concettuali, spesso dando risalto agli “schemi universali”. Tuttavia, in risposta a queste criticità, Kövecses (2008) sottolinea che occorre riconsiderare l'idea di *embodiment* pensando al corpo come ad un insieme di elementi diversi che ogni cultura mette in risalto in maniera differente (Kövecses 2008: 177).

Se pensiamo, ad esempio, all'idea di *embodiment* che sta alla base di alcuni concetti ed espressioni relative alla ‘rabbia’ in diverse culture, da un alto troveremo molte metafore che ricorrono secondo schemi concettuali universali, motivate da una base fisiologica comune (es. aumento della temperatura corporea, aumento della pressione sanguigna, velocità del battito cardiaco), dall'altra noteremo come diverse lingue e culture basano il concetto di rabbia su elementi diversi dell'*embodiment* dando risalto ad aspetti diversi dell'esperienza (Kövecses 2008: 178).

Tuttavia, le manifestazioni linguistiche non sempre sono sufficienti per dimostrare la presenza di metafore concettuali nella mente umana e gli schemi metaforico-concettuali sono in grado di spiegare solo parzialmente significati figurativi specifici (Gibbs 2011: 544). Per spiegare come avviene il processo di creazione e interpretazione di metafore concettuali nella mente umana, occorre considerare una nuova visione della teoria della metafora concettuale, basata su una prospettiva dinamica:

A given conceptual metaphor is not just activated, and employed as a single entity, to help interpret a metaphorical utterance. Instead, multiple conceptual metaphors, which may have arisen to prominence at a specific moment in time, given the particular dynamics of the system at that moment, may collectively shape the trajectory of linguistic processing so that no one conceptual metaphor has complete control over how an utterance is interpreted (Gibbs 2011: 553).

Nonostante le criticità dell'approccio cognitivo, il modello di metafora concettuale resta un riferimento valido per spiegare la funzione del corpo nella descrizione di categorie semantiche complesse, quali la codifica delle emozioni e degli stati d'animo e la descrizione delle relazioni spaziali. Il campo d'indagine dell'espressione delle emozioni associate alle diverse parti del corpo è stato oggetto di ricerche su diverse lingue africane (Batic 2011; Ameka 2002; Kraska-Szlenk 2014). Come sottolinea Ameka (2002: 1), “the emotions and the body parts that are thought to be their locus and the kind of activity associated

with these body parts vary cross-culturally”. Ogni lingua ha un modo diverso di parlare delle emozioni riferendosi alle parti del corpo, tuttavia è possibile distinguere alcuni universali linguistici in riferimento alle emozioni dal momento che, ad esempio, ogni lingua è in grado di parlare di sentimenti che richiamano i concetti di ‘felicità’, ‘tristezza’, ‘gelosia’. Wierzbicka (1999:294) osserva che “*in all languages one can talk about ‘emotions’ by referring to externally observable bodily events and processes understood as symptoms of inner feelings*”. Ad esempio, ‘gelosia’ ed ‘invidia’ sono associate agli ‘occhi’ in molte culture. In Maa, lingua nilotica, una persona è invidiosa se ha ‘gli occhi neri’, mentre in Ewe una persona invidiosa ‘ha gli occhi rossi’ (Ameka 2002). Nella comunità swahili di Mombasa l’invidia è associata all’occhio, ma anche la lingua e il cuore sono coinvolte:

A shared understanding [...] among Old Town Mombasa Swahili community members is that envy begins in the eyes that see what is desirable, is experienced and inflamed in the heart where the desire to have what the other has is produced, and may find expression through the tongue thus spreading and increasing the envy (Swartz 1998: 31).

Inoltre, dall’analisi di concetti spaziali (ON, UNDER, FRONT, BACK e IN)¹ in diverse lingue africane, è emerso che esistono due domini sorgente (*source domain*) principali per descrivere lo spazio: i riferimenti geografici (*landmarks*) ad es. ‘cielo’ e ‘terra’, e le parti del corpo (*body-parts*), quali ‘testa’, ‘petto’, ‘addome’ e ‘schiena’ (Heine 1989: 88). Gli studi compiuti sulle lingue africane (Heine 1989; Heine and Kuteva 2002; Mous and Carlin 1995) hanno dimostrato che la maggior parte dei termini relativi alle indicazioni spaziali e temporali derivano da termini del corpo e in misura minore da altre fonti: “*it is well known that many African languages and indeed not only African languages - use nouns, and in particular those denoting body parts, to express orientation in space where European languages use prepositions*” (Mous and Carlin 1995: 121).

Sebbene il corpo umano sia da considerarsi come modello di riferimento universale per l’orientamento nello spazio, le basi per la concettualizzazione dello spazio nelle diverse lingue dipendono anche da principi di relativismo linguistico (Foley 1997: 216). In swahili, ad esempio, il suffisso locativo *-ni* (‘dentro’) deriva dal termine *ini* (cl. 5/6, plurale: *maini*) ‘fegato’ (Heine and Kuteva 2002: 199); i termini *nyuma* (dietro) e *chini* (fondo, sedere), usati come avverbi o preposizioni, sebbene a livello sincronico non mostrino alcuna somiglianza con altri lessemi, tuttavia sono storicamente derivati da lessemi Proto-Bantu, rispettivamente **-nùmá* ‘schiena’ e **-cí* (con il suffisso locativo **-ni*) ‘terra, suolo’ (Heine 1989: 89).

¹ Riporto i concetti in carattere maiuscolo come indicato nella fonte originale (Heine 1989: 88)

Un modello alternativo per la descrizione dello spazio è quello animale (*pastoralist model*), tipico delle società pastorali dell’Africa orientale e che si ritrova in molte lingue nilotiche e cuscitiche. In Iraqw, ad esempio, lingua cuscitica della Tanzania, il termine *gurù* (‘stomaco, pancia’) è giustapposto a *bará* (‘giù, basso’) per indicare ‘dentro’ mentre *afá* (‘bocca’) è giustapposto a *dír* (‘posto’) per indicare ‘a fianco, a lato di’ (Mous and Carlin 1995: 212).

In molte lingue il corpo umano può rappresentare un modello per la descrizione di parti del corpo di animali anche se molto diverse o viceversa può avvenire che termini relativi al mondo animale siano utilizzati per riferirsi a parti del corpo umano, spesso con significato peggiorativo o giocoso (Kraska-Szlenk 2020: 81).²

La terminologia del corpo è utilizzata anche nella descrizione di parti di oggetti inanimati. In questo caso l’associazione di significato può avvenire sulla base di criteri di somiglianza di forma o di funzione dell’oggetto, come in Hausa, dove il termine *ciki* ‘stomaco’ ha anche il significato di ‘tasca’ (*pocket*), ‘scomparto di una borsa’ (*compartment of a bag*; Batic 2006).

L’uso di termini del corpo nella descrizione di oggetti e relazioni spaziali è fenomeno comune anche in molte lingue mesoamericane e austronesiane (Levinson 1994; Cablitz 2006; Cuturi 1981). In Tzeltal, lingua maya, si è osservato che i parlanti descrivono gli oggetti inanimati secondo una complessa classificazione delle forme, in cui la maggior parte dei termini utilizzati sono termini relativi alle parti del corpo (Levinson 1994: 93).

Nel suo studio sulle relazioni topologiche in Marquesan, Cablitz (2006) individua diversi usi (*denotational domains*) dei termini relativi alle parti del corpo associati a diverse costruzioni morfosintattiche: per denotare esseri umani e animali; per denotare le parti degli oggetti; nelle costruzioni locative, per specificare un’area dell’oggetto (Cablitz 2006: 311). La descrizione degli oggetti rappresenta uno stadio intermedio nel processo di estensione semantica delle parti del corpo nelle relazioni spaziali: “the semantic extension to the denotational domain ‘object parts’ is the intermediate stage and crucial ‘bridge’ from the domain OBJECT to the domain SPACE” Cablitz (2006: 311).

Questi studi mostrano che le metafore relative alle parti del corpo non sono elementi accessori della lingua, bensì modelli fondamentali per la comprensione di concetti complessi (coordinate spazio-temporali, emozioni, stati d’animo etc.). Tuttavia, fatta eccezione per alcuni studi antropologici sulla concezione del corpo nel contesto della medicina tradizionale (Ngubane 1997; Swartz 1992), pochi studi si sono concentrati sulla descrizione linguistica della terminologia del corpo e dell’uso metaforico in

² In swahili, ad esempio, *mkono* ‘braccio/mano’ può riferirsi anche al ‘tentacolo’ del polipo o alla ‘proboscide dell’elefante’ (Kraska-Szlenk 2020: 81).

lingue bantu. Tra questi possiamo menzionare lo studio sulle estensioni semantiche delle parti del corpo in swahili (Kraska-Szlenk 2005, 2014) e in Kifipa (Lusekelo and Kapufi 2014), l'analisi sintattica delle parti del corpo in Haya (Hyman 1996).

3. Metodologia

Il presente studio si basa su dati raccolti attraverso interviste con parlanti madrelingua (swahili e zulu) e dizionari monolingui, bilingui e specialistici (TUKI 2001; Mohammed 2011; Doke *et al.* 1999; Merlo-Pick 1978; Nyembezi and Nxumalo 1996). Per la raccolta dei dati ho utilizzato soprattutto elicitazioni dirette partendo da una lista di riferimento costituita da termini ed espressioni riferite al corpo e contenente una glossa in italiano e/o in inglese.³ I dati in lingua swahili si basano su interviste svolte nel 2013 con parlanti madrelingua residenti in Italia e in Tanzania (Dar es Salaam);⁴ per la lingua zulu le interviste sono state svolte con due parlanti madrelingua durante un periodo di ricerca a Durban (Sudafrica) nei mesi di Febbraio-Marzo 2020.⁵

In una prima fase della ricerca, durante le interviste ho chiesto ai parlanti di verificare la possibile traduzione in inglese e/o in italiano⁶ di ogni termine presente nella lista di partenza cercando di esplicitarne il significato con definizioni ed esempi.

I termini ricavati dalle interviste sono stati organizzati in base ai diversi campi: il termine swahili/zulu, la classe nominale corrispondente, la categoria grammaticale, una possibile glossa in italiano e/o inglese, un esempio (collocazioni, espressioni idiomatiche, proverbi) un commento, la fonte. In alcuni

³ La lista si basa su un glossario di termini del corpo swahili-italiano (Tramutoli, 2013). Il glossario è stato compilato partendo da una prima lista di riferimento di termini del corpo italiano-swahili realizzata da Maddalena Toscano in collaborazione con Fatuma Tandika.

⁴ Ringrazio di cuore i parlanti madrelingua swahili e zulu che hanno preso parte a questa ricerca. In particolare, due persone hanno collaborato con interviste svolte in forma di conversazione informale: Fatuma Tandika, lettrice di swahili all'Università l'Orientale di Napoli, residente in Italia da più di dieci anni, con buona padronanza dell'italiano e dell'inglese (scritto e orale); Angela Lyimo, cantante tanzaniana originaria di Moshi (Arusha), residente in Italia da circa quattro anni, con buona padronanza dell'italiano orale e dell'inglese (scritto e orale). Altre persone hanno collaborato con interviste svolte tramite posta elettronica: Dr. Mwenda Mukuthuria, docente di lingua e linguistica swahili all'università di Chuka in Kenya; Niwaeli Kimambo, dottoranda in letteratura swahili all'Università di Dar es Salaam; Dr. Mussa Mohamed, docente di sintassi swahili all'Università di Dar es Salaam; Dr. Angelus Mnenuka, docente di letteratura swahili all'Università di Dar es Salaam.

⁵ Un ringraziamento speciale va a Mongezi Bolofo, studente di laurea magistrale e tutor per l'insegnamento della lingua zulu presso l'Università del KwaZulu-Natal (Durban), per la sua attiva e preziosa collaborazione. Ringrazio inoltre Zama Mlaba, studentessa di laurea magistrale in letteratura zulu presso l'Università del KwaZulu-Natal (Durban) per il suo contributo nell'ultima fase di questa ricerca.

⁶ Con Fatuma Tandika e Angela Lyimo, madrelingua swahili con buona padronanza dell'italiano, ho potuto verificare le glosse in italiano. Le interviste con tutti i parlanti madrelingua swahili sono state svolte comunque interamente in swahili.

casi, ho chiesto ai parlanti di commentare o verificare alcune definizioni o esempi ricavati precedentemente dai dizionari monolingui e bilingui.

Le interviste mi hanno consentito di comprendere come i parlanti swahili e zulu concettualizzano alcune parti del corpo, al di là dei singoli termini e delle glosse e di individuare alcune differenze tra la lingua parlata e le definizioni ed espressioni riportate nei dizionari. Si può notare, ad esempio, come alcuni termini attestati nei dizionari non corrispondano alla concettualizzazione paronomica dei parlanti. In particolare i termini relativi ai dettagli delle orecchie (es. ‘lobo’, ‘padiglione auricolare’) e alle parti interne dell’occhio risultano sconosciuti, in quanto si utilizzano soltanto termini generici. Inoltre, è emerso che in swahili i termini relativi alle articolazioni delle mani e dei piedi sono poco usati e appaiono difficili da distinguere per un parlante, in quanto il polso e la caviglia sono concettualizzati piuttosto come parte integrante della mano e del piede (es. *saa ya mkononi*, ‘orologio da polso’ lett. ‘orologio da mano’). In zulu invece, come in italiano o in inglese, esistono termini specifici utilizzati comunemente per riferirsi alle articolazioni delle mani o dei piedi (*isihlakala* ‘polso’, *iqakala* ‘caviglia’). Alcuni termini di uso arcaico presenti nei dizionari, sono stati riconosciuti dai parlanti zulu solo come parte di alcune espressioni idiomatiche o modi di dire poco comuni, ad es. il termine *incele* “*loose flesh below the buttocks*” (Doke 2008: 529) è stato associato all’espressione idiomatica *ukuhlala ngencele* ovvero ‘cercare di star seduti su una sedia troppo piccola’. Il contributo dei parlanti madrelingua è stato fondamentale per distinguere il registro d’uso di alcuni sinonimi e arricchire il lessico del corpo con termini e metafore d’uso quotidiano non presenti nei dizionari, come ad esempio l’espressione zulu *unekhwapha* ‘ha l’amante’ (lett. ‘ha l’ascella’) o il termine swahili *kionjamchuzi* ‘peli della barba sotto il labbro inferiore’ (dal verbo *-onja* ‘assaggiare’ e *mchuzi* ‘salsa’).

In una fase successiva, per confrontare le due lingue ho creato un nuovo database in cui ho inserito definizioni ed esempi in entrambe le lingue, prendendo come riferimento la glossa in inglese e/o in italiano. Occorre tener presente che in questo studio la traduzione inglese e/o italiana dei termini non rappresenta lo scopo principale della ricerca, ma piuttosto uno strumento di confronto e analisi della terminologia nelle due lingue.

4. Termini appartenenti a più classi nominali

Nelle lingue bantu una stessa base lessicale può essere preceduta da classificatori nominali indicanti diverse caratteristiche morfologiche e semantiche:

Nouns are derived from nouns by shifting them from one class(gender) to another [...]. It is this derivational or “autonomous” use of noun class assignment which most clearly

shows (some of) the semantic content of Bantu nominal classes” (Shadeberg and Bostoen 2019: 190).

Osservando alcune basi lessicali swahili e zulu nel campo semantico del corpo, notiamo che queste assumono significati diversi, anche se semanticamente correlati, a seconda della classe nominale di appartenenza. In alcuni casi sembra infatti difficile distinguere se si tratti di un processo derivazionale o flessionale dal momento che, da un punto di vista semantico, le classi nominali sono formate per derivazione alterando alcuni tratti semantici, mentre dal punto di vista sintattico il processo che avviene ha le caratteristiche di una flessione grammaticale: “*on a semantic side, the assignment of a noun to a specific class looks like a derivational process, because a shift of a root from one class to another class implies a change in the semantic traits and in the sub-categorization frame*” (Castagneto 2017: 86).

Come dimostra l’analisi quantitativa condotta sul sistema nominale in Lusoga, lingua del gruppo bantu, il legame tra classi nominali e categorie semantiche non è affatto casuale: “[...] *most if not all classes and genders attract roots and stems, with which new nouns with new non-random meanings are formed*” (De Schryver and Nabirye 2010: 114).

Dagli esempi swahili e zulu che seguono si può notare che i termini del corpo appartengono per lo più alle classi 3/4, 5/6, 7/8, e 11/10. Nonostante esistano opinioni divergenti sulla possibilità che le classi nominali nelle lingue bantu seguano un criterio semantico, è stato tuttavia dimostrato che, in base a dei criteri semantico-cognitivi, è possibile individuare relazioni di significato anche tra nomi apparentemente non correlati ma appartenenti ad una stessa classe:

It has been argued that membership in a given linguistic category (for example, a noun class) may be based on multiple criteria, including ‘family resemblances’, metaphor, and metonymy, and that linguistic categories may exhibit an internal structure in which some members of the category are more central, or prototypical, and others are more peripheral (Contini-Morava 1994)⁷.

Analizzando gli esempi proposti, è possibile riscontrare alcune corrispondenze tra la categorizzazione delle parti del corpo swahili e zulu e la struttura semantica delle classi nominali proposta da Contini-Morava (1994): in classe 3 (*entities with vitality > active body parts > extended body parts*) troviamo diverse parti dello scheletro, faringe, vene e nervi; fanno parte della classe 7 (*small entities in general > small body parts*) parti del corpo di dimensioni molto ridotte quali ‘pomo d’adamo’, ‘ugola’, ‘capezzoli’; in classe 5

⁷ < <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/swahili/sect2.html#2-0> >

(*plant offsprings > curved tridimensional objects*) rientrano nomi che indicano parti del corpo dalla forma arrotondata quali ‘glutei’, ‘bacino, anca’, ‘pancia’, ‘mammelle’; in classe 11/14 (*essences > long thin flexible things > non solid but cohesive substances*) nomi di sostanze, liquidi corporali (‘bava’, ‘midollo’), parti del corpo dalla forma allungata e sottile (‘scheletro’, ‘intestino’, ‘lingua’, ‘rughe della fronte’), concetti astratti, malattie, stati fisici (‘tigna’, ‘tubercolosi, asma’).

Di seguito osserviamo esempi di termini del corpo in swahili e zulu con significato diverso a seconda del classificatore nominale.

Swahili⁸:

<i>koromeo</i> (5/6)	gola, laringe, esofago	<i>kikoromeo</i> (7/8)	pomo d’Adamo, bronco
<i>paji</i> (5/6)	fronte	<i>kipaji</i> (7/8)	talento
<i>gego</i> (5/6)	gengiva	<i>kigego</i> (7/8) ⁹	bambino che alla nascita ha già i denti superiori
<i>matako</i> (6)	glutei, sedere	<i>kitako</i> (7/8)	fondo
<i>ubavu</i> (11)	fianco, lato	<i>mbavu</i> (10)	costole
<i>mfupa</i> (3/4)	osso	<i>ufupa</i> (11/10)	scheletro, ossa, carcassa
<i>mate</i> (6)	saliva	<i>ute</i> o <i>uteute</i> (11/10)	bava
		<i>ute wa mgongo</i>	midollo spinale
<i>tumbo</i> (5)	pancia	<i>utumbo</i> (11)	interiora, stomaco,
		<i>mautumbo</i> (6)	intestino, budella
<i>ndevu</i> (10)	barba	<i>kidevu</i> (7/8)	mento
<i>ulimi</i> (11/10)	lingua	<i>kilimi</i> (7/8)	ugola
<i>kope</i> (10)	ciglia	<i>ukope</i> (11)	occhiolino
		<i>kikope</i> (7/8)	congiuntivite, orzaiolo, infiammazione agli occhi ¹⁰

⁸ Tranne dove diversamente indicato, gli esempi swahili provengono da Tramutoli (2013).

⁹ “Bambino difettoso (e considerato di cattivo augurio: che mette prima i denti superiori, che nasce in modo anormale, che perde i denti, che si sviluppa in modo anormale”; Merlo-Pick 1978: 138-139). In senso figurato *kigego* può indicare anche una persona ostinata (Mohamed 2011: 316).

¹⁰ Merlo-Pick (1978: 143-144)

Zulu¹¹:

<i>insini</i> (9/10)	gengiva	<i>isisini</i> (7/8)	spazio tra i denti
<i>udevuvu</i> (11)	labbro (superiore)	<i>amadevu</i> (6)	baffi
<i>umbombo</i> (3/4)	dorso del naso	<i>ibombo</i> (5/6)	linea verticale che divide a metà il viso
<i>umhlathi</i> (3/4)	mascella	<i>isihlathi</i> (7/8)	guancia
<i>ubuhlathi</i> (14)	mandibola		
<i>uhlonze</i> (11)	ruga	<i>inhlonze</i> (9/10)	pelle spessa, pelle rugosa, ruga della fronte
<i>inyonga</i> , pl. <i>izinyonga</i> (9/10)	femore	<i>inyonga</i> , pl. <i>amanyonga</i> (5/6)	osso dell'anca, bacino; persona claudicante
<i>isibele</i> (7/8)	capezzolo	<i>ibele</i> (5/6)	mammella
<i>umphimbo</i> (3/4)	gola, faringe	<i>iphimbo</i> (5/6)	voce
<i>isifuba</i> (7/8)	petto, torace, sterno	<i>ufuba</i> (11)	asma, tubercolosi
<i>isithembuzane</i> (7/8)	tigna, macchie (della pelle)	<i>ubuthembuzane</i> (14)	tigna (malattia, condizione)
<i>umuzwa</i> (3/4)	nervo, emozione	<i>inzwa</i> (9/10)	sensazione, percezione
<i>udebe</i> , <i>izindebe</i> (11/10)	labbra	<i>ilebe</i> , <i>amalebe</i> (5/6)	labbra (della vagina)

Dagli esempi elencati si può osservare che in entrambe le lingue esiste una relazione metonimica di contiguità spaziale tra termini appartenenti a classi diverse e indicanti parti del corpo adiacenti: “spatial contiguity is involved when the same or related terms refer to body-parts that are anatomically adjacent to one another” (Andersen 1978: 357). Alcuni esempi in swahili sono *koromeo* (5/6) ‘gola, laringe, esofago’, *kikoromeo* (7/8) ‘bronco, pomo d’Adamo’; *ulimi* (11/10) ‘lingua’, *kilimi* (7/8) ‘ugola’;

¹¹ Tranne dove diversamente indicato, gli esempi zulu provengono dalle interviste con Mongezi Bolofo (Durban, Gennaio-Febbraio 2020). Cfr. par. 3 (*Metodologia*)

mfupa (3/4) ‘osso’, *ufupa* (11/10) ‘scheletro’. In zulu si riscontrano relazioni metonimiche simili tra termini indicanti parti del corpo contigue, ad esempio *insini* (9/10) ‘gengiva’, *isisini* (7/8) ‘spazio tra i denti’; *isibele* (7/8) ‘capezzolo’, *ibele* (5/6) ‘mammella’; *umhlathi* (3/4) ‘mascella’, *isihlathi* (7/8) ‘guancia’.

Alcuni termini sono correlati in base ad un rapporto di significato concreto - astratto, ad esempio in swahili *paji* (5/6) ‘fronte’, *kipaji* (7/8) ‘talento’; *gego* (5/6) ‘gengiva’, *kigego* (7/8) ‘bambino che ha già alla nascita i denti superiori. Notiamo esempi simili in zulu, dove diversi classificatori nominali possono indicare una parte del corpo, una malattia, uno stato di salute o un concetto astratto: *isifuba* (7/8) ‘petto, torace, sterno’, *ufuba* (11) ‘asma, tubercolosi’; *isithembuzane* (7/8) ‘tigna, macchie (della pelle)’, *ubuthembuzane* (14) ‘tigna (malattia, condizione)’; *umphimbo* (3/4) ‘gola, faringe’, *iphimbo* (5/6) ‘voce’.

Inoltre, come mostrano gli esempi zulu riportati in Tabella 1, in base alla classe nominale, distinguiamo le basi lessicali riferite al corpo umano da quelle che indicano il corpo di un animale, generalmente in classe 5/6.

TC ¹² zulu (+ umano)	TC zulu (+animale)	Glossa in italiano
<i>udebe, izindebe</i> (11/10)	<i>isilebe, izilebe</i> (5/6)	labbra
<i>indlebe, izindlebe</i> (9/10)	<i>idlebe, amadlebe</i> (5/6)	orecchio
<i>uzipho, izinzipho</i> (11/10)	<i>izipho, amazipho</i> (5/6)	unghia, artiglio
<i>uzwani, izinzwani</i> (11/10)	<i>izwani, amazwani</i> (cl.5/6)	dita
<i>ibele, amabele</i> (5/6)	<i>umbele, imibele</i> (3/4)	mammella

Tab. 1. Termini zulu indicanti parti del corpo umano e animale

5. Termini di origine comune

Dall’analisi dei due corpora terminologici emergono molti termini che presentano la stessa etimologia e significato simile. In Tabella 2 ho riportato i termini swahili e zulu aventi la stessa radice lessicale e la glossa corrispondente in italiano.

TC swahili	TC zulu	Glossa in italiano
<i>kwapa</i> (cl.5)	<i>ikhwapha</i> (cl.5)	ascella
<i>mdomo</i> (cl.3)	<i>umlomo</i> (cl.3)	bocca

¹² L’abbreviazione TC indica i “Termini del Corpo”

<i>nywele</i> (sg. <i>unywele</i>) (cl.10)	<i>izinwele</i> (sg. <i>unwele</i>) (cl.10)	capelli
<i>kope</i> (sg. <i>ukope</i>) (cl.10)	<i>izinkhophe</i> (sg. <i>ukhophe</i>) (cl.10)	ciglia
<i>utumbo</i> (cl.11)	<i>ithumbu</i> (cl.5)	intestino
<i>nyongo</i> (cl.9)	<i>inyongo</i> (cl.9)	bile, cistifellea
<i>jino</i> (cl.5)	<i>isinyo</i> (cl.7)	dente
<i>mafuta</i> (cl.6)	<i>amafutha</i> (cl.6)	grasso
<i>ulimi</i> (cl.11)	<i>ulimi</i> (cl.11)	lingua
<i>kifua</i> (cl.7)	<i>isifuba</i> (cl.7)	petto, torace
<i>kizazi</i> (cl.7)	<i>isizalo</i> (cl.7)	utero
<i>uso</i> (cl.11)	<i>ubuso</i> (cl.14)	viso
<i>mate</i> (cl.6)	<i>amathe</i> (cl.6)	saliva
<i>kidevu</i> (cl.7)	<i>isilevu</i> (cl.7)	mento
<i>nyonga</i> (cl.9)	<i>inyonga</i> (cl.5)	anca

Tab. 2. Termini del corpo swahili e zulu di origine comune

Nonostante le differenze fonologiche, dal punto di vista morfologico i termini seguono la stessa classificazione nominale. Si può osservare che, come nella maggior parte delle lingue bantu, termini in classe 6 indicano liquidi o masse (es. *mate/amathe* ‘saliva’, *mafuta/amafutha* ‘grasso’), (Van de Velde, 2019:242); termini che non si riferiscono a organi simmetrici sono assegnati alle classi 11 e 14 (es. *ulimi/ulimi* ‘lingua’, *uso/ubuso* ‘viso’); nomi collettivi ricorrono in forma plurale in cl. 10 (es. *nywele/izinwele* ‘capelli’, *kope/izinkhophe* ‘ciglia’).

Gli esempi seguenti mostrano che, in alcuni casi, il significato di due termini fonologicamente simili non è equivalente sebbene siano semanticamente correlati sulla base di una relazione contiguità spaziale:

Swahili		Zulu	
<i>mkono</i> (cl.3)	braccio, mano	<i>umkhono</i> (cl.3)	avambraccio
<i>mshipa</i> (cl.3)	nervo, vena	<i>umsipha</i> (cl.3)	muscolo, tendine
<i>unyayo</i> (cl.11)	orma, pianta del piede	<i>unyawo</i> (cl.11)	piede
<i>mimba</i> (cl.9)	feto	<i>inimba</i> (cl.9)	placenta
<i>ndevu</i> (cl.9)	barba	<i>amadevu</i> (cl.6)	baffi

In swahili esiste un unico termine (*mkono*) per indicare la parte del corpo che corrisponde agli arti superiori (braccio, avambraccio, mano), mentre in zulu, quest'area è suddivisa in *ingalo* 'braccio e avambraccio', *umkhono* 'avambraccio' e *isandla* 'mano'. In base al principio di simmetria sul piano verticale (Andersen, 1978:342), la stessa partonomia si applica anche agli arti inferiori dove il swahili usa lo stesso termine per gamba e piede (*mguu*), mentre in zulu distinguiamo *umlenze* (gamba) e *unyawo* (piede); in swahili, il termine *unyayo* indica esclusivamente la 'la pianta' o 'l'orma del piede'.

Altri termini, semanticamente correlati sulla base di una somiglianza di forma, rappresentano una classificazione partonomica differente nelle due lingue. Ad esempio, in swahili *mshipa* indica il 'nervo' e la 'vena'; l'equivalente zulu (*umsipha*) si riferisce al 'muscolo, tendine', mentre *umthambo* e *umuzwa* sono utilizzati rispettivamente per 'vena' e 'nervo'.

Altri esempi mostrano che esiste una relazione semantica tra due lessemi simili indicanti parti del corpo distinte ma contigue: *mimba* 'feto', *inimba* 'placenta'; *ndevu* 'barba', *amadevu* 'baffi'.

Alcune somiglianze tra basi lessicali simili nelle due lingue si possono spiegare attraverso l'analisi di processi di estensione semantica a livello diacronico. In swahili, la preposizione *mbele* 'davanti, prima' deriva dalla grammaticalizzazione della base lessicale proto-bantu *-bɛdɛ* 'petto, seno, mammelle' con prefisso locativo *mu-* (cl.18; Heine and Kuteva 2002: 62). In zulu, termini derivati dalla stessa radice (*-bɛdɛ*) indicano parti del corpo dell'area anteriore, ovvero *ibele* (pl. *amabele*) 'mammelle, seno'; *isibele* (pl. *izibele*) 'capezzolo'; *umbele* 'capezzolo, mammella (di animale)'. Un altro caso evidente di grammaticalizzazione è rappresentato dal suffisso locativo *-(i)ni*, utilizzato in swahili e in zulu con funzione di preposizione (in, nel, dentro, a, al). Come dimostrato dagli studi sulla grammaticalizzazione (Heine 1989; Heine and Kuteva 2002), "*the Proto-Bantu noun *-jini 'liver' appears to have given rise to an inessive marker *jini 'in(side)', and eventually to a general locative suffix in many eastern and southern Bantu languages*" (Heine and Kuteva 2002: 199).

6. Relazioni partonomiche: termini semplici e termini composti

L'analisi di termini del corpo appartenenti a più classi nominali ci ha permesso di notare che termini derivati dalla stessa base lessicale possono indicare diverse parti del corpo, correlate semanticamente in base ad una relazione di contiguità spaziale.

Nella maggior parte delle lingue i termini del corpo più comuni hanno forma semplice, monomorfemica e fortemente polisemica, con un significato di "base" immediato; al contrario, termini riferiti a parti del corpo più specifiche e con bassa frequenza d'uso tendono ad essere codificate con termini composti o estensioni metaforiche (Kraska-Szlenk 2020: 86).

In questa sezione descriveremo i termini ‘composti’, ovvero termini generici seguiti dal prefisso pronominale e dal marcatore “connettivo” (o “associativo”) con funzione di modificatore (Van de Velde 2019: 256)¹³.

In swahili le articolazioni sono descritte con termini composti derivati per analogia semantica dal termine base *kiwiko* ‘gomito’, vale a dire *kiwiko cha mkono* ‘polso’ (lett. ‘gomito della mano’) e *kiwiko cha mguu* ‘caviglia’ (lett. ‘gomito del piede’). Altri termini composti utilizzati per riferirsi alle articolazioni delle mani e dei piedi sono *kifundo cha mkono* ‘polso’ (lett. ‘articolazione della mano’) e *kifundo cha mguu* ‘caviglia’ (lett. ‘articolazione del piede’), dove *kifundo* è un termine generico col significato di ‘giuntura, articolazione’.¹⁴ Una classificazione simile si può osservare in hausa, dove le articolazioni sono descritte utilizzando termini derivati sulla base di una somiglianza strutturale, ad esempio *wuyarhannu* ‘polso’ (lett. ‘collo del braccio/mano’) e *gwiwar hannu* ‘gomito’ (lett. ‘ginocchio del braccio’), (Andersen, 1978:355). Da questi esempi si evince un processo terminologico basato sulla concettualizzazione del corpo stesso: certi termini vengono riutilizzati per definire parti diverse rispetto a quella primaria che si presta ad essere metaforizzata (Cuturi 1981: 27).

In zulu, a differenza del swahili, esistono termini semplici, con significato univoco, per riferirsi alle articolazioni delle mani e dei piedi: *isihlakala* ‘polso’ e *iqakala* ‘caviglia’.

L’uso di termini composti è molto frequente in swahili soprattutto per riferirsi alle parti del corpo simmetriche, ad esempio *mdomo wa chini* ‘labbro inferiore’, *mdomo wa juu* ‘labbro superiore’; *meno ya chini* ‘dentatura inferiore’, *meno ya juu* ‘dentatura superiore’.

Nella descrizione delle dita delle mani e dei piedi, mentre il swahili utilizza molti termini composti, in zulu esistono termini semplici specifici spesso derivati da una radice verbale.

Swahili	Zulu	
<i>kidole gumba (cha mguu)</i> (cl.7)	<i>ubhozo</i> (cl.1a) or <i>uqukulu</i> (cl.1a)	alluce
<i>kidole cha mguu</i> (cl.7)	<i>uzwani</i> (cl.11)	dito del piede
<i>kidole gumba (cha mkono)</i>	<i>isithupha</i> (cl.7)	pollice
<i>kidole cha shahada</i> (cl.7)	<i>isikhombisa</i> (cl.7) or <i>injumbane</i> (cl.9)	(dito) indice

¹³ Il rapporto tra due termini o concetti (“di”) si esprime con la radice pronominale -A preceduta dai concordi (alcuni di essi vengono modificati davanti alla radice) e seguita da un sostantivo o da un verbo (Bertoncini 2009: 27).

¹⁴ Un sinonimo di *kifundo* è il termine *kiungo* ‘articolazione, giuntura, parte del corpo’ che ricorre nelle espressioni *kiungo cha mwili* ‘membro del corpo’ e *kuachana viungo* ‘riposare le membra’ (Merlo-Pick 1978: 165)

<i>kidole/chanda cha kati</i> (<i>kidole umunwe ophakathi</i> (cl.3) <i>kikubwa</i>)		(dito) medio
<i>kidole/chanda cha pete</i> (cl.7)	<i>uthembisile</i> (cl.1a)	anulare
<i>kidole kidogo</i>	<i>ucikicane</i> (1a)	(dito) mignolo

Dagli esempi proposti, osserviamo che in swahili i nomi delle dita sono composti derivati dal termine generico *kidole* (dito) seguito dal connettivo (-a) con funzione attributiva, ad es. *kidole gumba* (*cha mguu*) ‘alluce’, *kidole gumba* (*cha mkono*) ‘pollice’; *kidole/chanda cha pete* indica l’‘anulare’ (lett. ‘dito dell’anello’), mentre l’equivalente zulu *isithembisa* (lett. ‘dito della promessa’) è un nome derivato dalla radice verbale -*themebisa* ‘promettere’ (forma causativa di -*themba* ‘sperare’).

In base alla classificazione di Andersen (1978:353) osserviamo che, mentre il swahili presenta un solo termine base per riferirsi alle dita delle mani e dei piedi, lo zulu segue una categorizzazione meno comune, utilizzando diversi termini semplici per le categorie FINGER e TOE,¹⁵ ovvero *umunwe* (dito della mano) e *uzwani* (dito del piede); i termini *isithupa* ‘pollice’ e *isikhombisa* ‘indice’ (derivato dal verbo -*khombisa* ‘indicare’) indicano metonimicamente anche i numeri ‘sei’ e ‘sette’. Quest’associazione analogica non è inusuale dal momento che i numerali, come lo spazio, rappresentano una categoria grammaticale derivata per estensione metaforica dalla terminologia anatomica delle mani; in alcune lingue, infatti, il lessema ‘mano’ rappresenta la base grammaticale da cui derivano i numeri ‘cinque’ e ‘dieci’ (Heine 1997: 21).

Per riferirsi al ‘dito medio’ entrambe le lingue utilizzano un termine composto formato da un lessema generico e da un modificatore che ne specifica la relazione spaziale-anatomica: in zulu *umunwe ophakathi* (lett. ‘il dito di mezzo’) e in swahili *kidole cha kati*. Il termine swahili *kidole* ‘dito’ è un lessema polisemico che viene riutilizzato nel composto *kidole-tumbo* ‘appendice’ (lett. dito dell’intestino), composto formato sulla base di un’analogia di forma (Andersen 1978: 354).

Altri termini composti swahili sono utilizzati per descrivere le diverse parti dello scheletro, dove il termine generico *mfupa* (o *fupa* in forma accrescitiva) ‘osso’ è seguito da un modificatore con funzione di specificazione, ad esempio *fupanyonga* ‘cintura pelvica’, *mfupa wa bega* ‘clavicola’, *mfupa wa kidari* ‘sterno’. In zulu esistono, invece, termini semplici per indicare diversi tipi di ossa, ad es. *umgogodla* ‘spina dorsale’ (in swahili *uti wa mgongo*); *ingqwababa* ‘clavicola’; *iphhe* ‘sterno’; *iphango* ‘costato’; *inyonga* ‘femore’ (in swahili *fupa la paja*, lett. ‘osso della coscia’). ‘Femore’ e ‘anca’ sono indicati in zulu dalla stessa base lessicale con diversi classificatori nominali: *inyonga* (cl.5) ‘anca’; *inyonga* (cl.9) ‘femore’.

¹⁵ Il carattere maiuscolo è una convenzione per indicare una categoria concettuale negli studi di linguistica cognitiva.

Anche per le parti interne, il swahili riutilizza termini polisemici per indicare concetti correlati in base ad una somiglianza di forma; ad esempio *mshipa* può essere di due tipi: *mshipa wa damu* ‘vena, arteria, vaso sanguigno’ (lett. ‘vena del sangue’) e *mshipa wa fhamu* ‘nervo’ (lett. ‘vaso della conoscenza, percezione’), in zulu indicate da due termini semplici, rispettivamente *umthambo*¹⁶ e *umuzwa* (derivato dalla base verbale *-zwa* ‘sentire, percepire’).

Altri esempi di polisemia motivata da una somiglianza strutturale riguardano la descrizione degli organi interni femminili. Ad esempio, il termine swahili *kibofu* indica in swahili due tipi diversi di vescica, quella biliare (*kibofu cha nyongo*) e quella dell’urina (*kibofu cha mkojo*), mentre in zulu si utilizzano i termini *inyongo* e *isinye*. La zona in corrispondenza dell’‘utero, grembo materno’ viene descritta in swahili con una costruzione metaforica basata su un’associazione di forma, ovvero *mfuko wa uzazi* (lett. ‘borsa, tasca della fertilità’) o *chupa ya uzazi* (lett. ‘bottiglia della fertilità’); in zulu si utilizzano, invece, due termini derivati dal verbo ‘generare’, *isizalo* (da *-zala*) e *isibeletho* (da *-beletha*), entrambi di classe 7.

Tra i termini riferiti alle sostanze e ai liquidi in swahili notiamo *usaha* ‘siero, pus’ che indica il liquido presente in una ferita (*usaha wa kidonda*, lett. ‘pus della ferita’) ma anche il cerume (*usaha wa masikio*, lett. ‘pus delle orecchie’). Un termine zulu dal significato simile è *umantshu* riferito al siero di una ferita e, per estensione metaforica, all’albume di un uovo marcio *umantshu weqanda* (lett. ‘siero dell’uovo’).

Il midollo spinale, in swahili *ute wa mgongo* (lett. ‘la sostanza liquida della spina dorsale’) è indicato in zulu dal termine *umnqonqo* e se ci si riferisce al ‘midollo di animale’ si utilizza invece il termine *umnkantsha*.

Notiamo dunque che, a differenza dello zulu, in cui prevale la tendenza a derivare termini del corpo da basi verbali, il swahili, in particolare nella descrizione di parti del corpo specifiche, tende a riutilizzare lessemi primari per formare termini composti. Tuttavia, sebbene meno numerosi, anche in zulu troviamo termini composti nella descrizione di parti del corpo specifiche e di piccole dimensioni, ad es. *izinyo langaphambili* ‘incisivi’ (lett. ‘denti anteriori’); *izinyo lomhlathi* ‘molari’ (lett. ‘denti della guancia’); *inhlamvu yeso* ‘pupilla’ (lett. ‘seme dell’occhio’), simile al swahili *mboni ya jicho* (lett. ‘seme dell’occhio’); *isiyinge seso* ‘iride’ (lett. ‘il cerchio dell’occhio’); *ilunga lomunwe* ‘falange’ (lett. ‘parte del dito’). Anche il termine *inkwethu* ‘forfora, pelle morta’ è riutilizzato nei termini composti *inkwethu olimini* ‘puntini bianchi sulla lingua, lingua bianca’ (lett. ‘pelle morta della lingua’) e *inkwethu emehlweni* ‘cataratta’ (lett. ‘pelle morta sugli occhi’).

¹⁶ *Umthambo* ‘vena, vaso sanguigno’, cfr. con *ithambo* (cl. 5) ‘osso’; *inthambo* (cl.9) ‘corda, filo’ (Doke et al. 2008: 783)

Inoltre, alcuni composti sono termini scientifici introdotti come calco semantico dell'inglese, come ad esempio i termini utilizzati per indicare i diversi sistemi anatomici: in swahili *mfumo wa mzunguko wa damu* (sistema circolatorio) o in zulu *uhlelo lwemizwa* (sistema nervoso).

7. Processi polisemici: metonimie e metafore corporali

Studi su diverse lingue (Kraska-Szlenk 2014; Ameke 2002; Batic 2006; Dingemanse 2006; Cuturi 1981) hanno dimostrato come il corpo rappresenti uno dei domini semantici con più estensioni di significato. I termini del corpo più comuni sono fortemente polisemici e la maggior parte delle estensioni di significato ad essi correlate sono presenti in molte lingue del mondo (Kraska-Szlenk 2014). In swahili e zulu riscontriamo infatti molte espressioni in cui un termine del corpo è utilizzato con significato metaforico in un sintagma nominale, nella maggior parte dei casi seguito da un aggettivo o da una costruzione genitivale con funzione attributiva. Ad esempio, in zulu sono frequenti espressioni metaforiche quali *unwele olude* 'lunga vita!' (lett. 'capelli lunghi'), *ubambo lwami* 'la mia anima gemella' (lett. 'la mia costola'), *mehlo madala* 'non ti vedo da tanto tempo!' (lett. 'occhi vecchi!').

In swahili il termine *kichwa* 'testa', seguito da un'espressione attributiva, è usato metonimicamente per descrivere il modo di essere, il carattere e l'intelligenza di una persona in espressioni come *kichwa kigumu* 'testa dura' o *kichwa chepesi* 'persona sveglia, intelligente' (lett. 'testa leggera'). In zulu l'espressione *ikhanda elinamanzi* sta ad indicare una 'persona che si emoziona facilmente' (lett. 'testa piena d'acqua') (Doke 2008: 378). Il significato figurato si basa, infatti, su una funzione metonimica frequente in molte lingue: "[...] *the head stands out as a prominent part of the physical appearance of a person which triggers a cross-linguistically common metonymy: HEAD FOR PERSON*" (Kraska-Szlenk 2014: 119).

I termini relativi alla bocca, in swahili *mdomo* (bocca) e *ulimi* (lingua), sono associati all'atto del 'parlare', come avviene anche in italiano, dove molti termini relativi agli organi fonatori sono usati in espressioni metonimiche (Pannain 2008). Ad esempio, in swahili una persona può avere *mdomo mzuri* 'bocca bella' or *mdomo mbaya* 'bocca brutta' e le sue parole (belle o brutte) possono attirare buona o cattiva sorte. L'espressione zulu *limi mbili* (lett. 'due lingue' cfr. italiano: 'lingua biforcuta'), simile al swahili *ndimi mbili*, sta ad indicare un bugiardo. Allo stesso modo, in zulu si può dire di qualcuno che 'ha la bocca larga', *unomlomo omude* 'è malizioso', o che 'ha la bocca cattiva', *unomlomo omubi* 'è offensivo' (Doke et al. 2008: 463).

La bocca rappresenta metonimicamente anche un'apertura, un ingresso, un orifizio, ad es. in zulu *umlomo wesibhamu* 'bocca della pistola', *umlomo wentunja* 'bocca di una caverna' o *umlomo wesigubu* 'bocca di un recipiente' (Doke et al. 2008: 463). In swahili troviamo esempi simili quali *mdomo wa barabara*

‘imboccatura della strada’ (lett. ‘bocca della strada’), *mdomo wa mto* ‘foce del fiume’ (lett. ‘bocca del fiume’), *mdomo wa gilasi* ‘bordo del bicchiere’ (lett. ‘bocca del bicchiere’), *mdomo wa chupa* ‘imboccatura della bottiglia’ (lett. ‘bocca della bottiglia’). Il termine ‘tacco, calcagno’, in swahili *kisigino* (*cha mguu*) e in zulu *isithende*, indica per metonimia anche ‘il tacco della scarpa’: *kisigino cha kiatu* e *isithende sesicathulo*.

Possiamo osservare che costruzioni genitivali con termini anatomici ricorrono nelle due lingue in espressioni in cui una parte del corpo è associata per analogia alla parte di un oggetto, ma anche al mondo vegetale (pianta, fiore, frutti) e animale, a concetti astratti quali emozioni, caratteristiche o capacità di una persona. Il termine swahili *mkono* ‘mano, braccio’, è usato metonimicamente per indicare il manico di un oggetto, come nell’espressione *mkono wa kikombe*, ‘manico della tazza’, dove *mkono* (*source domain*) è riferito a *kikombe* (termine target di riferimento) tramite il connettivo dipendente *wa* (accordato al termine *mkono* di classe 3). Come osserva Talento (2014), si tratta di un *transfer* di significato in cui una parte del corpo è associata ad un oggetto in base a caratteristiche di forma e alla sua funzione:

What occurs is a conceptual transfer that moves on a concrete-concrete level as well as a concrete-abstract level by means of a transfer of both shape and function properties, enabling the definition of both concrete and figurative meanings (Talento 2014: 265).

Costruzioni dello stesso tipo sono presenti in zulu, dove, ad esempio, il termine *ingalo* ‘braccio’, nell’espressione *ingalo yomthetho* (lett. ‘il braccio della legge’), assume un significato figurato associato al potere di un’ autorità alla quale non è possibile sottrarsi.

Vi sono poi alcuni termini polisemici di significato generico che possono riferirsi metaforicamente ad altri elementi sulla base di una somiglianza di forma. In entrambe le lingue è facile incontrare termini del corpo il cui uso si estende al mondo vegetale; in zulu il termine *ilunga* ricorre in diverse collocazioni: *ilunga lomunwe* (lett. ‘parte del dito’) ‘falange’, *ilunga lomndeni* ‘membro della famiglia’, *ilunga lomoba* ‘pezzo, nodo della canna da zucchero’. Un esempio simile è *inhlamvu* che può indicare sia la pupilla (*inhlamvu yeso*, lett. ‘seme dell’occhio’) che il seme di un frutto, *inhlamvu yomango* ‘nocciolo del mango’, associato metaforicamente alla pupilla per forma e dimensioni. Anche il swahili descrive la pupilla come *mboni ya jicho* (lett. ‘seme dell’occhio’), dove *mboni* può indicare anche ‘il nocciolo di un frutto’ (*mboni ya tunda*); inoltre, il termine *fuu* ‘cranio’ indica la ‘noce di cocco’ (*fuu la nazi*). In zulu, *insunsumba* indica una piccola escrescenza della pelle (‘pustola, brufolo’) ma anche ortaggi o cibi di dimensioni molto ridotte, ad esempio *izinsunsumba zikatamatisi* ‘pomodori piccolissimi’ (lett. ‘brufoli di pomodori’); *izinsunsumba zamagwinya* ‘frittelle piccolissime’ (lett. ‘brufoli di frittelle’).

Molti termini del corpo si riferiscono anche al mondo animale: in swahili *gamba* ‘pelle morta, crosta della pelle’ indica le ‘squame del pesce’ (*gamba la samaki*) e la ‘pelle di serpente durante la muta’ (*gamba la nyoka*). Il termine *gamba* ha anche il significato di ‘buccia, scorza’ di un frutto (*gamba la ndizi*, ‘buccia di banana’) o ‘corteccia’ di un albero (*gamba la mti* ‘corteccia dell’albero’). In zulu, *isikhumba* ‘pelle’ non si riferisce solo al corpo umano ma anche ad animali e vegetali, ad esempio *isikhumba sikatamatisi* ‘buccia di pomodoro’ (lett. ‘pelle di pomodoro’), *isikhumba senyoka* ‘pelle di serpente’, *isikhumba sengwenya* ‘pelle di coccodrillo’.

Infine, vi sono termini del corpo che possono assumere un significato astratto, ad esempio l’ombelico rappresenta metonimicamente ‘il centro di qualcosa, l’origine, la fonte’ e ricorre in espressioni swahili quali *kitovu cha kiistoria*, ‘l’origine storica’ o in zulu, *inkaba yAfrika* ‘il centro dell’Africa’ (lett. ‘l’ombelico dell’Africa’). Alcune espressioni zulu si basano su metafore spaziali, ad esempio *inhloko yomnyango* (lett. ‘il capo della porta’) può riferirsi ad una persona che riveste una carica importante, ad es. il capo di un dipartimento, mentre l’espressione *ikhala lempi* (lett. ‘il naso del reggimento’) indica metaforicamente i soldati in prima linea in una strategia militare.

8. Metafore corporali ed espressioni idiomatiche

Molte espressioni idiomatiche sono costituite da costruzioni copulative con funzione predicativa in cui un termine del corpo assume un significato metaforico, indicando qualità, capacità della persona, stati fisici, concetti astratti.

Come in molte lingue, espressioni idiomatiche di questo tipo rispecchiano lo schema concettuale HUMAN EMOTIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS ARE HUMAN ORGANS: ad esempio, in zulu *unesibindi* ‘ha coraggio’ (lett. ‘ha fegato’)¹⁷, *unenhliziyo* ‘è gentile, ha volontà, passione, dedizione’ (lett. ‘ha cuore’), (Hermanson 2006: 79). Mentre in zulu il coraggio è associato al fegato, in swahili è rappresentato metonimicamente dal cuore nell’espressione *-wa na moyo* (lett. ‘avere cuore’) ‘avere coraggio’ o anche ‘avere volontà’.

Tra i termini del corpo che presentano un maggiore uso figurato, il cuore ha sicuramente un ruolo di rilievo in molte lingue, dove viene associato metaforicamente ad altri campi semantici: emozioni, tratti caratteriali, personalità, interiorità, razionalità, etc. (Kraska-Szlenk 2005, 2014; Ning 2007; Berendt and Tanita 2011). Nelle costruzioni copulative il cuore compare spesso seguito da un attributo

¹⁷ Cfr. con l’italiano: ‘avere fegato’ (De Mauro 2016: <https://dizionario.internazionale.it/parola/fegato>); ‘coraggio’: lat. **coraticum*, der. di *cor* «cuore» (Vocabolario Treccani: <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/coraggio/>)

(Hermanson 2006: 79): *unenhliziyo enhle* ‘è buono, generoso’ (lett. ‘ha un cuore bello’)¹⁸, *unenhliziyo omhlophe* ‘è onesto’ (lett. ‘ha un cuore bianco’), *unenhliziyo ende* ‘è molto paziente’ (lett. ‘ha un cuore lungo’). Espressioni simili in swahili sono, ad esempio, *ana moyo mzuri* ‘è buono, generoso’ (lett. ‘ha un bel cuore’), *ana moyo mweupe* ‘è buono, gentile, affettuoso’ (lett. ‘ha il cuore bianco’), *ana moyo mkubwa* ‘ha il cuore grande’. Al contrario, per descrivere caratteristiche negative di una persona si può dire in zulu *unenhliziyo embi* ‘è una cattiva persona’ (lett. ‘ha un cuore cattivo’), simile al swahili *ana moyo mbaya* o *ana roho mbaya* (lett. ha un’anima cattiva).¹⁹

Oltre che rappresentazione metonimica delle caratteristiche della persona, il cuore è la sede delle emozioni e degli stati d’animo e compare in diverse espressioni idiomatiche: *-phula inhliziyo* ‘spezzare il cuore’, che corrisponde al swahili *-vunja moyo*; *-qeda inhliziyo* ‘scoraggiare’ (lett. ‘finire, completare il cuore’), in swahili *-shuka moyo* ‘essere scoraggiato, depresso’ (lett. ‘cadere il cuore, essere con il cuore giù’). In zulu il cuore è associata al colore rosso nella concettualizzazione della rabbia, infatti una persona ‘dal cuore rosso’ (*-nhliziyo bomvu*) è una persona ‘arrabbiata, irascibile’ (Taylor and Mbense 1998: 202-203).

Nell’espressione *-jua kwa moyo* ‘imparare a memoria’ (lett. ‘conoscere con il cuore’), simile all’inglese *learn by heart*, notiamo che il swahili estende il significato di *moyo* non solo alla sfera emozionale ma anche al campo semantico della memoria, mentre in zulu queste facoltà cognitive sono associate alla ‘testa’: *-funda ng-ekhandla* vuol dire infatti ‘imparare a memoria’ (lett. ‘imparare con la testa’).

Analizzando gli esempi presentati, notiamo quindi che molte espressioni idiomatiche hanno una struttura predicativa, in cui il verbo, seguito da un termine del corpo, assume un significato metaforico. Verbi ad alta frequenza d’uso riferiti ad azioni concrete come ‘prendere, afferrare, colpire’ sono utilizzati con significato metaforico. L’atto concreto di ‘stringere la mano’ rappresenta metaforicamente un accordo, un incontro tra due persone, descritto in zulu come *-bamba isandla* (lett. ‘afferrare la mano’) o *-bamba ithambo* (lett. ‘afferrare l’osso’), che corrisponde al swahili *-shika mkono* (lett. ‘afferrare la mano’) o *-unga mkono* (lett. ‘unire la mano’, in senso figurato ‘essere d’accordo’).

In zulu un’altra struttura idiomatica ricorrente consiste nel verbo *-shaya* ‘colpire’ seguito da una parte del corpo: *-shaya izithupha* ‘schiazzare le dita’ (lett. ‘colpire i pollici’), utilizzata anche con il verbo

¹⁸ Il concetto di generosità, in zulu è anche associato alle ‘spalle’: *unegxalaba elibanzi* ‘è paziente, disponibile, generoso, responsabile’ (lett. ‘ha la spalla larga’). Cfr. italiano: “avere le spalle larghe i.e. essere una persona forte spec. moralmente” (De Mauro 2016: <https://dizionario.internazionale.it/parola/avere-le-spalle-larghe>).

¹⁹ Per le espressioni swahili riferite al ‘cuore’ (*moyo*), vedi Tramutoli (2019).

in forma applicativa se l'azione è diretta verso qualcuno, ad es. *-(mu)shay-el-a izithupha* 'parlare impulsivamente e in maniera aggressiva' (lett. 'colpire qualcuno con i pollici'), simile all'espressione inglese *shooting from the hip*; *-shaya emakhanda* 'vincere' (lett. 'colpire sulle teste'); *-shaya amakhala* 'puzzare' (in senso fig., lett. 'colpire i nasi'), riferito a una situazione losca, poco chiara, simile all'inglese *there is something fishing*. Anche in swahili notiamo molte espressioni polirematiche con il verbo *-piga* 'colpire', associato a diverse parti del corpo: *-piga miguu* 'andare a piedi' (lett. 'colpire i piedi'), *-piga magoti* 'inginocchiarsi' (in senso fig. 'mostrare rispetto, chiedere perdono'; lett. 'colpire le ginocchia'), *-piga kisogo* 'voltare le spalle' (lett. 'colpire la nuca').

In swahili, dove non esiste un modello dualistico con netta separazione tra facoltà dell'intelletto e stati emotivi, la testa (*kichwa*) diventa sede di preoccupazioni, ansie, disturbi emotivi e luogo della ragione, come osserviamo nelle espressioni *unaniumiza kichwa* 'mi fai arrabbiare' (lett. 'mi fai male alla testa') o *-taabisha kichwa* 'stancare la testa (con i pensieri, le preoccupazioni)' (Kraska-Szlenk 2014: 122; 2019: 143). In zulu la testa rappresenta anche l'atto del pensare, come è evidente nelle espressioni *-dla amathambo engqondo* or *-dla amathambo ekhanda*, 'spremersi il cervello (o le meningi), pensare intensamente' (lett. 'mangiare le ossa del cervello' o 'mangiare le ossa della testa').

Oltre che alla sfera cognitiva, la testa è metaforicamente associata agli stati d'animo, alle emozioni negative, ad esempio *-gibela ekhanda* (lett. 'salire sulla testa [di qualcuno]'), equivalente al swahili *-panda kichwani*, significa 'essere sfrontato, irriverente'.²⁰

L'uso di termini relativi ai liquidi corporali rivela nessi metaforici simili nelle due lingue; in particolare, il termine swahili *nyongo* (bile) e il suo equivalente zulu *inyongo*, sono la rappresentazione fisica di stati emotivi negativi. Come sottolinea Kraska-Szlenk (2014: 169)

While 'heart' may imply positive feelings, negative emotions, such as envy, malice, bitterness, are cross-linguistically linked to two other inner organs, liver, in which bile is secreted, and gall-bladder, in which it is stored. The folk thinking is not without a medical substantiation -long-termed stress and negative emotions indeed badly affect these organs.

La bile viene metonimicamente associata ad emozioni negative, quali risentimento, rabbia, amarezza, ostilità. In swahili l'espressione *ana nyongo* (lett. 'ha la bile') significa 'è amareggiato', mentre l'immagine *-tumbukia nyongo* (lett. 'cadere nella bile') indica 'perdere l'attrattiva' (Merlo-Pick 1978:

²⁰ Cfr. italiano "mettere i piedi in testa: sopraffare" (De Mauro 2016: <https://dizionario.internazionale.it/parola/mettere-i-piedi-in-testa>)

306)²¹; in zulu la metafora *-phuza inyongo* (lett. ‘bere la bile[di qualcuno]’) è la rappresentazione di un atteggiamento irriverente.

9. Conclusioni

L’analisi della nomenclatura del corpo in swahili e zulu ha messo in luce le diverse strutture linguistiche e concettuali che queste due lingue utilizzano per descrivere, categorizzare e rappresentare il corpo. La comparazione tra le due lingue ha permesso di riflettere sulla relazione che esiste tra le strutture linguistiche (morfologiche e semantiche) e la concettualizzazione del corpo in due lingue geneticamente affini. È stato dimostrato che il sistema di classi nominali consente di categorizzare le parti del corpo in base a diverse caratteristiche semantiche: contiguità spaziale, somiglianza strutturale, relazione concreto-astratto. Ciò è evidente nel confronto tra termini simili dal punto di vista etimologico, che, al di là delle diverse sfumature di significato, seguono la stessa classificazione nominale basata su una rete di rappresentazioni concettuali.

Nonostante swahili e zulu utilizzino strutture morfologiche simili per descrivere il corpo, sono emerse alcune differenze nella descrizione partonomica e nell’uso metaforico dei termini. Mentre la nomenclatura del corpo swahili è ricca di termini composti derivati in base ad analogie di forma e alle relazioni di contiguità spaziale, in zulu riscontriamo molti termini semplici con significato univoco, spesso derivati da radici verbali.

Dagli esempi analizzati si evince che le metafore relative ai termini del corpo sono pervasive in più campi semantici. Le estensioni metaforiche sono state descritte in base alle proprietà semantiche e alle strutture linguistiche ricorrenti. L’uso della terminologia del corpo in costruzioni genitivali con connettivo dipendente (-a) seguito dal termine *target* della metafora, ricorre generalmente nella descrizione di oggetti inanimati; parti del corpo di animali; elementi del mondo vegetale e concetti astratti.

Molte espressioni metaforiche ricorrono in costruzioni copulative in cui un termine del corpo, seguito da un attributo, indica il modo di essere, il carattere, la personalità o rappresenta metonimicamente un’azione correlata.

Dall’analisi e dal confronto di espressioni idiomatiche è emerso che molte di esse si basano sulla concettualizzazione metaforica di alcuni organi interni (ad es. il cuore e la bile) come sede delle emozioni e degli stati d’animo.

²¹ Es. *safari imetumbukia nyongo* “Il viaggio è stato guastato (da qualche accidente ecc.)” (Merlo-Pick 1978: 306)

Il confronto tra le due lingue ha dimostrato che i termini del corpo swahili e zulu fanno parte di un sistema concettuale metaforico che va da un livello concreto ad uno sempre più astratto che interessa diversi aspetti della descrizione del reale e permette di categorizzare costruendo relazioni analogiche complesse.

Bibliografia

- Ameka, Felix K. 2002. "Cultural scripting of body parts for emotions. On 'jealousy' and related emotions in Ewe." *Pragmatics & Cognition* 10/1: 27-55.
- Andersen, Elaine S. 1978. "Lexical universals of body-part terminology." In: *Universals of Human Language*, edited by Joseph H. Greenberg, 335-368. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Batic, Gian Claudio. 2011. *Encoding emotions in African languages*. Munich: Lincom Europa.
- Batic, Gian Claudio. 2006. "Towards a Hausa Metaphorical Lexicon: Body Part Nouns." In: *Annali dell'Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale."* *Rivista del Dipartimento di Studi Asiatici e del Dipartimento di Studi e Ricerche su Africa e Paesi Arabi* 66: 17-41.
- Berendt, Erich A. and Keiko Tanita. 2011. "The 'Heart' of Things: A Conceptual Metaphoric Analysis of Heart and Related Body Parts in Thai, Japanese and English." *Intercultural Communication Studies* 20: 165-78.
- Bertoncini, Elena Z. 2009. *Kiswahili kwa furaha: corso di lingua swahili*. Roma: Aracne.
- Brown, Cecil H. 1976. "General principles of human anatomical partonomy and speculations on the growth of partonomic nomenclature." *American Ethnologist* 3: 400-424.
- Cablitz, Gabriele H. 2006. *Marquesan: A grammar of space*. Berlin-New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Cardona, Giorgio R. 2006 [1976]. *Introduzione all'etnolinguistica*. Torino: UTET.
- Castagneto, Marina. 2017. "Noun classification in Kiswahili. Linguistic strategies to intensify or to reduce." In: *Exploring Intensification. Synchronic, diachronic and cross-linguistic perspectives*, edited by Maria Napoli and Miriam Ravetto, 79-97. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Colson, Jean-Pierre. 2008. "Cross-linguistic phraseological studies." In: *Phraseology: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Sylviane Granger and Fanny Meunier, 191-206. Amsterdam: Benjamins
- Contini-Morava, Ellen. 1994. "Noun Classification in Swahili." (= Publications of the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, Research Reports, 2nd Series.) Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia < <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/swahili/swahili.html>> [Web: Maggio, 2020]
- Cuturi, Flavia. 1981. "Metafore, proiezioni e rideterminazione della terminologia anatomica." *La Ricerca Folklorica* 4. *Antropologia simbolica. Categorie culturali e segni linguistici*, 25-32.
- De Mauro, Tullio. 2016. *Nuovo vocabolario di base della lingua italiana*.
<https://dizionario.internazionale.it/> [Web: 17 Giugno 2020]

- De Schryver, Gilles-Maurice and Minah Nabirye. 2010. "A quantitative analysis of the morphology, morphophonology and semantic import of the Lusoga noun". *Africana Linguistica* 16: 97-148.
- Dingemanse, Mark. 2006. *The body in Yoruba*. Leiden: Leiden University. Tesi di Dottorato (https://pure.mpg.de/rest/items/item_60271_6/component/file_60272/content).
- Doke, Clement M., Benedict W. Vilakazi, Malcolm McK.Daniel and J. M. A. Sikakana. 1999. *Zulu-English/English-Zulu Dictionary*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University.
- Enfield, Nick J., Asifa Majid and Miriam Van Staden. 2006. "Cross-linguistic categorization of the body: Introduction." *Language Sciences* 28: 137-147.
- Foley, William. A. 1997. *Anthropological linguistics: an introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Gibbs, Raymond W. 2011. "Evaluating Conceptual Metaphor Theory." *Discourse Processes* 48/8: 529-562.
- Goschler, Juliana. 2005. "Embodiment and Body Metaphors." *Metaphorik.de*: 33-52.
http://www.metaphorik.de/sites/www.metaphorik.de/files/journal-pdf/09_2005_goschler.pdf
[last access: 16.6.2020]
- Heine, Bernd and Tania Kuteva. 2002. *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heine, Bernd. 1997. *Cognitive Foundations of grammar*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Heine, Bernd. 1989. "Adpositions in African Languages." *Linguistique Africaine* 2: 77-127.
- Hermanson, Eric A. 2006. *Metaphor in Zulu. Problems in the translation of Biblical Metaphor in the Book of Amos*. Stellenbosch: SUN PRESS.
- Hyman, Larry M. 1996. "The syntax of body parts in Haya." In: *The grammar of inalienability. A Typological perspective on the body-part terms and the part-whole relation*, edited by Hilary Chappell and William McGregor, 865-892. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Johnson, Mark. 1987. *The body in the mind: the bodily basis of meaning, imagination and reason*. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kövecses, Zoltán. 2008. "Conceptual metaphor theory: some criticism and alternative proposals." *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 6/1: 168-184.
- Kraska-Szlenk, Iwona. 2005. "Metaphors and metonymy in the semantics of body parts: A contrastive analysis." In: *Metonymy-Metaphor Collage*, edited by Elżbieta Górka and Gunter Radden, 157-176. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Kraska-Szlenk, Iwona. 2014. *Semantics of Body Part Terms: General Trends and a Case Study of Swahili*. Munich: Lincom Europa.
- Kraska-Szlenk, Iwona. 2019. "Metonymic Extensions of the Body Part 'Head' in Mental and Social Domains." In: *Embodiment in Cross-Linguistic Studies. The 'head'*, edited by Iwona Kraska-Szlenk, 136-154. Leiden: Brill.
- Kraska-Szlenk, Iwona. 2020. "Towards a semantic lexicon of body part terms." In: *Body Part Terms in Conceptualization and Language Usage*, edited by Iwona Kraska-Szlenk, 77-98. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 2003 [1980]. *Metaphors we Live by*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Levinson, Stephen C. 1994. "Vision, shape and linguistic description: Tzeltal body-part terminology and object description". *Linguistics* 32(4/5): 791-856.
- Lusekelo, Amani and Daudi Isaac Kapufi. 2014. "An analysis of metaphoric use of names of body parts in the Bantu language Kifipa." *Internationa Journal of Society, Culture and Language* 2/1: 106-118.
- Majid, Asifa and Miriam Van Staden. 2015. "Can Nomenclature for the Body be explained by Embodiment Theories?". *Cognitive Science* 7: 570-594.
- Masella, Aristide B. and I. A. Portner. 1981. "Body Language" in Italian. *Italica* 58/3. *Pedagogy*, 205-213.
- Merlo-Pick, Vittorio. 1978. *Vocabolario Kiswahili-Italiano e Italiano-Kiswahili*. Bologna: Editrice Missionaria Italiana.
- Mohamed, A. Mohamed. 2011. *Comprehensive Swahili-English dictionary*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.
- Mous, Maarten and E. B. Carlin. 1995. "The 'back' in Iraqw: Extensions of meaning in space." *Dutch Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures (Rugtitel: DS-NELL)* 2: 121-133.
- Ngubane, Harriet. 1977. *Body and mind in Zulu medicine. An Ethnography of health and disease in Nyuswa-Zulu thought and practice*. London: Academic Press.
- Ning Yu. 2008. "Metaphor from body and culture." In: *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, edited by Raymond W. Gibbs, 247-261. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ning Yu. 2007. "Heart and cognition in ancient Chinese philosophy." *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 7: 27-47.
- Nyembezi, Sibusiso and O. E. O. Nxumalo. 1996. *Inqolobane Yesizwe (The Storehouse of the Nation)*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter Publishers.
- Pannain, Rossella. 2008. "Attività linguistiche e parti del corpo in italiano: nessi metonimici e metaforici." *Annali dell'Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale"*. *Rivista del Dipartimento del mondo classico. Sezione Linguistica* 27: 315-332.
- Shadeberg, Thilo C. and Koen Bostoen. 2019. "Word Formation." In: *The Bantu Languages*, edited by Mark Van de Velde, Koen Bostoen, Derek Nurse, and Gérard Philippson, 172-203. London: Routledge.
- Stern, Joseph. 2008. "Metaphor, Semantics, and context." In: *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, edited by Raymond W. Gibbs, 262-279. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Swartz, Marc. J. 1998. "Envy, justified dissatisfaction, and jealousy in Mombasa Swahili Culture". *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere* 53: 27-36.
- Talento, Serena., 2014. "What hands/arms can say: a corpus-based analysis of the Swahili body-part terms *mkono* and *mikono*." In: *The body in language: comparative studies of linguistic embodiment*, edited by Matthias Brenzinger and Iwona Kraska-Szlenk, 260-283. Leiden: Brill.

- Taylor, John R. and Mbense G. Thandi. 1998. “Red dogs and rotten mealies: How Zulus talk about anger.” In: *Speaking of emotions. Conceptualization and expression*, edited by Angeliki Athanasiadou and Elżbieta Tabakowska, 191-226. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Tramutoli, Rosanna. 2019. “*Kwa moyo wote*” (con tutto il cuore): metafore del cuore in swahili e italiano. In *Lugha na fasihi. Scritti in onore di Elena Bertoncini Zúbková*, edited by Flavia Aiello and Roberto Gaudio, 491-510. Napoli: Unior Press.
- Tramutoli, Rosanna. 2013. *Prima indagine sulla terminologia del corpo in lingua swahili* (Tesi di Laurea magistrale, non pubblicata).
- TUKI. 2001. *Kamusi ya Kiswahili-Kiingereza* [Dizionario swahili-inglese]. Dar es Salaam: Institute of Kiswahili Research
- Van de Velde, Mark. 2019. “Nominal morphology and syntax.” In: *The Bantu Languages*, edited by Mark Van de Velde, Koen Bostoen, Derek Nurse and Gérard Philippson, 237-269. London: Routledge Language Family Series.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1999. *Emotions Across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Universals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosanna Tramutoli is a Post-Doc research fellow at the University of Naples “L’ Orientale.” Her research focus is Bantu lexical analysis and a comparison of Swahili and Zulu body terminology. In 2018 she completed her PhD at the University of Naples “L’ Orientale,” in a cotutelle programme with the University of Bayreuth, with a dissertation on the linguistic encoding of emotions in Swahili. Among her main research interests are cognitive linguistics, semantic analysis, anthropological linguistics and lexicography. She has published contributions on *RAL (Research in African Literatures)*, *Africa* and *Swahili Forum*. She can be reached at: rtramutoli@unior.it

From Andalusia to Yemen

The origin of the Swahili stanzaic metres

Emiliano Minerba

In this paper I will propose a prosodic analysis of three important metres of the Swahili literary tradition, which are *utenzi*, *shairi* and *wimbo*. Despite the great difference between them concerning usage and context of composition, in fact, their metrical and prosodic features show that they have a common historical development. The origin of these three metres is to be found in the Arabic poetic tradition of *ḥumaynī* poetry, a Yemeni development of the genre of *muwaššaha*, that was developed in the Omayyad Andalusia and then spread all over the Arabic world. Some common features between *ḥumaynī* poetry and the three aforementioned Swahili metres will be outlined, concerning both the prosody of the verses and rhyme patterns: in conclusion of the analysis, I will claim that *utenzi*, *shairi* and *wimbo* are the result of an hybridization between the forms of *ḥumaynī* poetry and the local, and probably pre-existent, prosodic tradition of *utumbuizo*, carried out willingly by the intellectual class of the beginnings of the classical period of Swahili literature.

Keywords: Swahili, poetry, *utenzi*, *shairi*, *wimbo*, prosody, Yemen, *muwashshaha*, *utumbuizo*, *humayni*

1. Introduction

In this paper the expression stanzaic metre is used as a wrapper expression for those structures of Swahili poetry which present not only a definite stanzaic structure, such as *shairi*, *utenzi* and *wimbo*, but also a definite metre, based on the number of syllables in each verse (this is less valid for *wimbo*, which nevertheless retains isosyllabism as a fundamental feature in any of its variants).

Aim of this paper is to investigate the origins of the three aforementioned Swahili stanzaic metres.¹ These genres² are different from each other in many ways, including from an etymological point of view: the word *shairi* clearly derives from the Arabic word *šī'r* “poetry,” while *wimbo* (literally “song”) is a Bantu-derived word, related to the Swahili verb *-imba* (“to sing”), like *utenzi* which is related to verb *-tenda* “to act.” One could assume, then, that *shairi* as structure and genre derives from the Arabic tradition, while *wimbo* and *utenzi* are indigenous elaborations. However, the conclusions we reach from these etymological considerations are contradicted by the historical data: in fact, *wimbo* has often been the base stanza of popular compositions, while *utenzi*, despite the non-Arabic origin of the name, is the metre of the great Islamic epics. On the other hand, *shairi* has always been part of the high tradition of Swahili poetry, since the father of this genre, Muyaka (c. 1776-1840), is considered one of the greatest authors of Swahili literature (Abdulaziz 1979: ix); but this metre is also used in popular compositions and it is the most common in Swahili poetry (Bertoncini 2000: 9).

A prosodic analysis can shed light on the development of these metres, demonstrating that, despite the great distance between them in usage, they share a common origin, which can be traced back to *ḥumaynī* poetry. This is a genre of popular and vernacular poetry which originated in Yemen between 1200 and 1400 (Wagner 2009: 11-13), and is remarkable because its stanzaic forms are almost identical to those of Swahili classical literature. A further step back in time can be taken by assuming that *ḥumaynī* poetry is derived from the poetic genre of *muwaššaha*, a genre of strophic poetry that developed in Islamic Andalusia in the late 9th century (Meisami and Starkey 1998: 563). Even if developed as a single genre, *muwaššaha* spread all over the Arabic world already in its early stages (Meisami and Starkey 1998: 565), evolving into a great variety of derived genres and metres. The derivation of *ḥumaynī* poetry from *muwaššaha* has been theorized by several scholars, such as Wagner (2009: 11-13), but here this idea will be considered as a hypothesis rather than a fact, as will be explained later. The Andalusian *muwaššaha*, however, will be mentioned and employed for comparison purposes, together with *ḥumaynī* poetry, given the possibility of this connection.

¹ It is true that the two other great metres of Swahili classical literature, namely *ukawafi* and *kisarambe*, match as well as the others the definition of “stanzaic metre” that I have given; however, they will not be included in this analysis, since I suppose that they have a different historical origin than that of *shairi*, *utenzi* and *wimbo*. I plan to present my theory on the historical development of *ukawafi* and *kisarambe* in a future publication.

² Swahili poetry allows for interchangeable use of the concepts of *metre* and *genre*. Each metre is usually employed for a specific range of topics and arguments: religious lyrics are often in *ukawafi* and *kisarambe* (Bertoncini 2000: 3-5), but narrative and epic poetry is in *utenzi* (Bertoncini 2000: 6); *wimbo* is the genre of popular compositions (even if this term also has the broader sense of “song”); while *shairi* is the genre of lyric poems about any topic, from love to politics (Bertoncini 2000: 9). Thus, in Swahili literature each metre corresponds to a specific subgroup of poetry and to a specific expertise.

In the first section of this paper, the structure of *muwaššaha* as it originated in Andalusia will be described; then the derived genre of popular Yemeni poetry, the *ḥumaynī* poetry, will be presented. My hypothesis is that *ḥumaynī* poetry is the variety of *muwaššaha* that arrived on the Swahili coast and was re-elaborated in the genres of *wimbo* and *shairi*. After presenting these metres, I will give a brief overview of the structures of *shairi*, *wimbo* and *utenzi* in the second part of the first section. In the second section, I will link the previously presented structures of the Swahili stanzaic metres to those structures of *ḥumaynī* poetry that I assume they are derived from. This section will be divided into two subsections: in the first, I will analyse the rhyme pattern of *wimbo* and *shairi*, while in the second, the metres, and in particular their syllabic length, will be analysed.

2. Stanzaic structures in Arabic and Swahili literatures

Even if the contacts between Swahili and Arabic speakers have involved above all the Arabs of the Gulf, the great extent of cultural and politic interrelations between the various parts of the Arabic and Islamic world in history have made it possible for literary traditions from any zone to circulate and spread in the rest of the world. A good example of this is the diffusion of the Andalusian genre of *muwaššaha*, whose spread and development from al-Andalus reached North Africa and the Middle East in the mid-twelfth century (Menocal *et al.* 2006: 166).

2.1. The development of *muwaššaha*

Arabic tradition claims that *muwaššaha* was invented by Muqaddam ibn Mu‘afa al-Qabrī in the late ninth century (Meisami and Starkey 1998: 563). Although many celebrated poets are known to have composed *muwaššaha* poems, such compositions are not included in their collections: as a post-classical innovation, *muwaššaha* was not thought to share the same space and prestige as the *qaṣīda*, and was intended mainly for oral performance and for publication in specific collections (Meisami and Starkey 1998: 563).

A *muwaššaha* composition is usually composed of five stanzas. Each stanza was composed of two parts: the *ḡuṣn*, a group of rhyming verses, and the *simṭ* or *qufl*, a couplet which concludes the stanza. The *qufls* of all the stanzas rhyme with each other. The *qufl* of the last stanza, in particular, has a distinctive name and role: it is the *ḥarḡa* (literally “exit”) and, differently from the other parts of the composition which were in Classical Arabic, was composed in colloquial Arabic or in Romance dialects. Often the poems could also be opened with a couplet similar to the *qufls* in both metre and rhyme: this

segment is called *maṭlaʿ* (“beginning”). Here is a schema of the structure (Meisami and Starkey 1998: 563):

..... ab	<i>maṭlaʿ</i>	First to fourth stanza
..... c	<i>ḡuṣn</i>	
..... c		
..... c		
..... ab	<i>qufl</i>	Last stanza
..... g	<i>ḡuṣn</i>	
..... g		
..... g		
..... ab	<i>ḥarḡa</i>	

The *ḥarḡa* is considered the nucleus of the composition, since it resumes in two lines the content of the poem as a sort of refrain (Meisami and Starkey 1998: 563). Ibn Sanāʾ al-Mulk (d. 608/1211) defined the *ḥarḡa* as the most remarkable feature of the *muwaššaha* (Rosen 2000: 168). The genesis of this peculiar feature is at the centre of a great debate: some scholars, such as García Gómez (1956: 314), have theorized that the *muwaššaha* itself was born as a genre in order to enframe (*encuadrar*) Romance *ḥarḡas* alien and anterior to it. Others, such as Abu-Haidar (2001: 112-113) claim instead that *ḥarḡa* was an external feature added to the original structure of *muwaššaha*, in order to introduce an element of humour and merriment (*hazl*) into a high genre, written in Classical Arabic (and therefore defined *muʿrab*), in a process that has often taken place in Arabic literature and that is called *iḥmāḍ*. Its importance as stylema in the frame of *muwaššaha*, however, is generally accepted (Meisami and Stark 1998: 564-565).

A similar strophic structure was that of the *zaḡal*, which also originated in Andalusia. *Zaḡals* can have the same organization of *muwaššaha* or a simple form, in which the two lines of the *maṭlaʿ* rhyme and the *qufls* of the stanzas are composed of just one verse, rhyming with the *maṭlaʿ* (A,A b,b,b,A c,c,c,A

d,d,d,A)³. More important differences are that the *zağals* often contain more than five stanzas and, above all, that they are composed entirely in vernacular Arabic (Meisami and Starkey 1998: 818).

While possessing a strict stanzaic structure, *muwaššaha* presents a huge variety of prosodic forms. The metre of these compositions does not conform to the Ḥalīlian prosodic system, which was adopted in the major genres of Classical Arabic poetry. The origin of this metre is still under debate: some scholars suggest that it is based on syllabic-stress patterns, and thus propose an Ibero-Romance origin, while others see it as an extension of al-Ḥalīl's system (Meisami and Starkey 1998: 565). A third, and much debated, interpretation is that of Corriente (1982: 76): he states that the prosody of *muwaššaha* is a re-elaboration of the Ḥalīlian system based on syllabic stress and no longer on syllable length. Such re-elaboration is due to the choice of vernacular Arabic as the language of composition: in fact, Andalusian Arabic, as well as other Arabic dialects, substituted a quantitative distinction between vowels with syllabic stress, and this compelled poets to adapt the Ḥalīlian prosody to their new linguistic context.

Both *muwaššaha* and *zağal* developed in Andalusia as a consistent tradition; however, when they spread to the other zones of the Arabic world, they underwent several modifications, giving birth to a variety of local traditions. This is particularly evident for the *zağal*: nowadays, in many Arabic-speaking countries this term refers generically to colloquial poetry (Meisami and Starkey 1998: 819). Poetic genres referred to as *zağal* in the Arabic world can thus be very different in metre and structure, both from each other and from the Andalusian *zağal*. In several cases, however, derivation of these genres from the classical *zağal* is evident. This is the case of the Yemeni genre of *šīr ḥumaynī* (“*ḥumaynī* poetry”).

The genre of *ḥumaynī* poetry is thought to have been born between the 13th and 14th centuries in Rasūlid Yemen. Rasūlids, originally slave soldiers of the Ayyūbid dynasty ruling in Egypt, established a culturally efflorescent court in Lower Yemen. Their cultural link with Egypt was probably the channel through which Andalusian strophic genres arrived and were taken up by Yemeni *hommes de lettres* (Wagner 2009: 11-13): *muwaššaha* and *zağal* were certainly known in Egypt, where Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's (d. 608/1211) work *Dār al-Ṭirāz* can be considered a poetics of the genre (Meisami and Starkey 1998: 564). Like *zağal*, *ḥumaynī* poetry is composed in vernacular Arabic (Wagner 2009: 14), although its language is far from pure dialect, being rather a variety of middle Arabic (Dufour 2012: 2).

³ In this and the following rhyme schemas I will use the slash (/) to separate stanzas, and the comma (,) to separate verses. If two or more letters are attached, this means that they represent the rhymes of different cola of the same verse.

Stylistically speaking, *ḥumaynī* poetry presents two distinct strophic structures: *mubayyat* and *muwaššah*. The *mubayyat* is a composition of quatrains (*bayt*) with a rhyme scheme “a,a,a,a/b,b,b,b/a/c,c,c,a...” (similar to the rhyme scheme of *musammaṭ*⁴); its lines however can be bipartite, and consequently the rhyme scheme becomes “ab,ab,ab,ab/cd,cd,cd,ab/...” or even “aa,aa,aa,aa/bb,bb,bb,bb/...”. An example of *mubayyat* of the first kind is reported in Dufour (2012: 19; translation into French by Dufour, *ibidem*). Here I report it showing its rhyme scheme:

<i>Fadayt° rūḥvk bi-rūḥī °ayyuhā l-fattān</i>	<i>a</i>
<i>Matā tazūr fi maqām al-rawḥ° wa-l-rayḥān</i>	<i>a</i>
<i>Matā °a stami° mink° naǧmah tuzriy al-°alḥān</i>	<i>a</i>
<i>Matā tabāt lī nadīm fi ġaflat al-ḥurrās</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>Matā °uṣāhid ġabīnvk fi l-maqām yazhar</i>	<i>b</i>
<i>Wa-°ant° ka-l-badr° bayn al-ka°s° wa-l-mizhar</i>	<i>b</i>
<i>Ṭamil tu°arbid °alayyā ṭarfvk al-°aḥwar</i>	<i>b</i>
<i>Našwān° ya°qud lisānvk salsabīl al-kās°</i>	<i>x</i>

Text 1. *mubayyat* of the base type

Je donnerais ma vie pour la tienne, tentatrice.

Quand me rendras-tu visite là où sont le zéphyr et le basilic ?

Quand t'entendrai-je chanter un air qui éclipse toutes les mélodies ?

⁴ *Tasmīṭ* or *musammaṭ* developed as an innovation of the *muḥdaṭūna* (“modern”) Arabic poets of the Abbasid period. It consists in the expansion of the classic verse in a structure formed by more than two cola: all the cola except the final one rhyme, while the last colon rhymes with all the last cola of the other stanzas. Once *tasmīṭ* is applied, therefore, verses become actual stanzas, and cola can be considered as the lines of the composition (Ferrando 1999: 78). *Tasmīṭ* as a poetic form spread in all the Islamic countries, from Persia to Andalusia (Zwartjes 1997: 25 and Ferrando 1999: 80), and it has been suggested that it might be the ancestor of Andalusian *muwaššaha* and *zaǧal* (Meisami and Starkey 1998: 563).

⁵ Dufour (2012: 1, note 1) explains his orthography of the *Ṣanʿānī* dialect as follows: “le signe ° note la voyelle de disjonction; la lettre v note une voyelle dont la nature est douteuse mais dont la scansion révèle la présence ; par convention, et pour faciliter la lecture, on a ici ailleurs qu’en finale de mot suivi la vocalisation de l’arabe classique dans la mesure où cela ne perturbait pas la métrique, bien que la prononciation moderne du *ḥumaynī*, au moins dans le chant de Sanaa, diffère sur certains points de cette notation.” While avoiding using special markers such as ° and v, I have used the same approach to vocalization in the texts mentioned in this paper which are not reported by Dufour, but come from other sources in Arabic script.

Quand passeras-tu la nuit en ma compagnie, trompant la vigilance des gardiens ?

*Quand verrai-je ton front briller en notre séjour...
Comme la pleine lune entre la coupe et le luth,
Enivrée, tes grands yeux sombres me cherchent des noises,
Grisée, la langue alourdie par la liqueur du hanap.*

And, for the bipartite kind, one finds an example in Ġānim (1987: 227; my translation):

<i>Maʿšūq al-ġamāl</i>	<i>nahab fuʿādī ġamāluh</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>bayt</i>
<i>fi haġrī aṭāl</i>	<i>wa-aḍāba qalbī miṭṭāluh</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	
<i>lā kāna ʿl-miṭṭāl</i>	<i>li-mah taqūlū aṭāluh</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	
<i>abadi li ʿl-milāl</i>	<i>waylāhu min dā amāluh</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	
[...]				
<i>Qalbī multahib</i>	<i>yā fātinī min ḥiġābak</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>bayt</i>
<i>damʿi munsakib</i>	<i>min yawm fātin ġinābak</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	
<i>yā qalbī ʿktasib</i>	<i>wa-šbir ʿalā mā ašābak</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	
<i>wa-qnaʿ bi-l-ḥayāl</i>	<i>in kāna yanfaʿ ḥayāluh</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	
<i>Ṭūlat al-biʿād</i>	<i>al-Lāh baynī wa-baynak</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>bayt</i>
<i>qalbī fi ʿttiqād</i>	<i>yā qalb ġarrayt ḥaynak</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	
<i>ġāwabanī l-fuʿād</i>	<i>mā qātīlī ġayr ʿaynak</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>	
<i>qāla ṭarfī muḥāl</i>	<i>ʿinda l-qadar ayš ḥāluh</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	

Text 2. mubayyat with bipartite lines

<i>He who is beloved for his beauty, he has abandoned me for long may the absence not last! It is eternal tiredness for me [...]</i>	<i>his beauty has ransacked my heart and my heart pines away for its long absence Why do you all say that he himself is making it such long? troubles come from that hope.</i>
<i>My heart is burning my tears are poured out my heart, fight for and be content of your fantasy</i>	<i>oh my seducer through your veil since the day of His Lordship and endure for what has befallen upon you if the fantasy of Him is of benefit.</i>

The distance has been made long, God is between me and you
 my heart is in a burst oh, heart, you attire your own destruction
 my heart answered me: “Nothing kills me but your eye.”
 and said: “My gaze is impossible, before the Doom everything is subjugated”

In *ḥumaynī* poetry, *muwaššah* is a more complex stanzaic structure: each stanza is formed by a *bayt* quatrain, then by a *tawšīḥ* (a sequence of three simple or bipartite lines, often shorter than those of the *bayt*) and finally by a *taqfil* (a section formed by half the verses of the *bayt*, but with the same metre and rhymes of its last verses). The general schema of a *muwaššah* with bipartite lines is therefore “ab,ab,ab,ab, c,c,c, ab,ab/de,de,de,ab, f,f,f, ab,ab”. It is worth noting that also in *muwaššah* there is a rhyme shared by all the stanzas (Wagner 2009: 311). Such a scheme is employed, for example, in a *muwaššah* by Ibn Šaraf al-Dīn (938/1532-1010/1601) from his *dīwān* titled *Mubayyatāt wa-Muwaššahāt* (which is our most comprehensive source for ancient *ḥumaynī* poetry; Dufour 2012: 6), quoted by Dufour (2012: 17; in this particular stanza, the rhyme of the *tawšīḥ* coincides with that of the first hemistichs of the *bayt* and the *taqfil*):

Šaqīq al-qamar ʾasfar	bi-dayğūr° faynānvh	a	b	bayt
Ġamaʿ ḥaddvh al-ʾazhar	min al-zahr° ʾalwānvh	a	b	
ʾAmūt kull°mā fattar	wa-ḥawwam bi-ʾağfānvh	a	b	
Fa-subḥān° man ṣawwar	ğamālvh wa-man zānvh	a	b	
Yu[ğ]āzil bi-ṭarf° aḥwar		a		tawšīḥ
Wa-yaftarr° ʿan ġawhar		a		
Nabat fi ʿaqīq ʾaḥmar		a		
ʿAğab mantiqvh yaṣḥar	kamā taṣḥar ʾaʿyānvh	a	b	taqfil
Wa-mā nağmat al-mizhar	siwā rağʿat ʾalḥānvh	a	b	

Text 3. *ḥumaynī* poetry: *muwaššah*

La sœur de la lune a paru dans la nuit de sa chevelure.
 De toutes fleurs sa joue éclatante a fait un bouquet de couleurs.
 Je meurs à chaque fois qu'elle cligne de ses paupières alanguies.
 Gloire à Celui qui a créé tant de beauté et d'atours !
 Elle envoûte de ses yeux noirs,

*Son sourire révèle des pierreries
Apparues parmi la cornaline.
La merveille de sa voix ensorcelle autant que ses yeux ont de charmes,
Et le son du luth n'égale pas le refrain de ses mélodies.*

An important element for comparison with Swahili prosody is metre. Differently from Andalusian *muwaššah* and *zağal*, *ḥumaynī* poetry follows strict prosodic rules in versification (Dafari 1966: 302). Among the metres of Classical Arabic poetry, the most frequently used is *basīṭ*, followed by *rağaz* and *sarīʿ* (Wagner 2009: 313). These three metres present the following basic structures:⁶

<i>basīṭ</i>	– – U – – U – – – U – – U – – – U – – U – – – U – – U –
<i>rağaz</i>	– – U – – – U – – – U – – – U – – – U – – – U –
<i>sarīʿ</i>	– – U – – – U – – – – U – – U – – – U – – – – U ⁷

Rağaz also has a reduced version, in which the two cola of the verse are composed of two feet instead of three; however, it can also be used in its base form. The form shown here for *sarīʿ* is purely theoretical, since in versification the last feet of both the cola of this metre are reduced to three, more rarely two, syllables (possible forms are – U –, – –, – – –).

Dufour (2012: 14-15) reports many examples of metrical structures of *ḥumaynī* composition, noting that one poem can present more than one metre in its stanzas; in particular, in each poem the *bayt* sections, the *tawšīḥ*s and the *taqfīl*s can each have their own prosodic scansion. He reports the following examples:⁸

<i>bayt</i>	– U – – U – U – – U – –	<i>ḥafīf sālīm</i>
<i>tawšīḥ</i>	– U – – U – U –	<i>ḥafīf mağzūʿ</i>
<i>taqfīl</i>	– U – – U – U – – U – –	<i>ḥafīf sālīm</i>

⁶ In the following schemas, U stands for a short syllable. For a long one, a single vertical bar | separates two feet from each other, and a double vertical bar || indicates an internal caesura of the verse.

⁷ The schemas are given by Frolov (2000: 178), who, noticing a great degree of similarity between these three metres, theorizes a common ancestor in what he calls the “archaic *rağaz*” (*ibidem*). Another related metre is *muğtatṭ*, which is mentioned later in this section.

⁸ In the third column of the following tables, I give the name of the Ḥalilian metres which these prosodic sequences can be traced back to. While the succession of short and long syllables is copied from Dufour’s work, I have added the separations between feet (|) for scansion purposes, referring to al-Ḥalil’s theorization.

Here the *bayts* and the *taqfils* are composed of an “entire” (*sālim*) *ḥafif*, that is, a *ḥafif* metre which presents all the three feet of its base form, whereas the *tawšīḥs* are in the “cut off” (*mağzū*) form of the *ḥafif*, since their last foot is dropped. The only difference between these forms of *ḥafif* and the metre as theorized by al-Ḥalīl is that the second foot of the verse is U – U – instead of – – U –; the shortening of the first syllable is a variation occasionally permitted in the Ḥalīlian system, but not a normative form as here (Capezio 2013: 159).

A second example from Dufour (2012: 15) is the following:

<i>bayt</i>	– – U – – U – – – – U – – U – –	<i>muğtatt</i>
<i>tawšīḥ</i>	– – U – – – U – U – –	<i>sarīʿ/rağaz</i>
<i>taqfīl</i>	– – U – – U – – – – U – – U – –	<i>muğtatt</i>

The only noticeable difference between this scansion and al-Ḥalīl’s system is that here the verses of the *tawšīḥ* can be scanned either as *sarīʿ* or as *rağaz* verses. This is not uncommon in *ḥumaynī* poetry, where several patterns can be considered as belonging to more than one metre (Dafari 1966: 338-339). Such ambiguity is due to the ending of this verse pattern with a foot of structure U – –. This form is not possible in the scansion either of *rağaz* or of *sarīʿ* in al-Ḥalīl’s theory. The closest Ḥalīlian form to this is – – –: here one notices a shortening of the first syllable that would not be normative in the theoretical form, similarly to what is observed with *ḥafif* in the preceding example.

A last example from Dufour (2012: 15) is:

<i>bayt</i>	– – U – – U – – – – U – – U – –	<i>muğtatt sālim</i>
<i>tawšīḥ</i>	– – U – – U – – – U – – U –	<i>basīṭ</i>
<i>taqfīl</i>	– – U – – U – – – – U – – U – –	<i>muğtatt sālim</i>

Here, too, we can observe a *tawšīḥ* that is prosodically shorter than the *bayt* and *taqfīl*; we can scan it as a particular form of *basīṭ*, presenting just four feet instead of eight. This variety is not envisaged in the classical Ḥalīlian system, but it has been observed in *ḥumaynī* poetry (Dafari 1966: 345).

Another scholar who has extensively investigated *ḥumaynī* poetry is Dafari. His PhD thesis includes a section where the metres used in this genre are listed. In Appendix I report only those that Dafari (1966: 342-366) notes as “very popular.” For our analysis, however, it is useful to remark that all

these metres are constituted by trisyllabic or tetrasyllabic feet: out of a total of 178 feet, just 8 (4%) are bisyllabic, while 108 (60%) and 62 (34%) feet are trisyllabic and tetrasyllabic respectively.

Dafari also notes further features of the relationship between the metres of the verses and the stanzaic structures in *ḥumaynī* poetry. Among the *mubayyat* poems, he identifies three categories of prosodic organization. A *mubayyat* poem can thus have:

- verses whose hemistichs belong to the same metre and are equal in length (Dafari 1966: 321);
- verses whose hemistichs belong to the same metre, but are not equal in length (when the base verse is composed of four feet, the preponderant tendency is to drop half of the second hemistich: Dafari 1966: 322);
- verses whose first hemistich is composed of just one foot (Dafari 1966: 325).

Muwaššah poems, instead, present some metrical variations in the *tawšīḥ*. In fact, while *bayt* and *taqfil* are always identical in metre (Dafari 1966: 326), *tawšīḥ* can be patterned in several ways. In the first of the categories listed earlier (that is, when a *muwaššah* poem presents verses in its *bayts* whose hemistichs are of the same metre and equal in length), each of the three verses of the *tawšīḥ* can be patterned as follows:

- reproducing entirely the prosodic structure of one hemistich of the *bayt* (Dafari 1966: 326);
- reproducing partially (especially half of) the prosodic structure of one hemistich of the *bayt* (Dafari 1966: 327);
- presenting a totally different metre from that of the *bayt* (Dafari 1966: 328).

In the second category (namely, where the *bayts* of the poem are composed of hemistichs of the same metre but of unequal length), each of the three verses of the *tawšīḥ* can be patterned as follows:

- reproducing only one of the forms of the hemistichs of the *bayt* (Dafari 1966: 330);
- more rarely, presenting a totally different metre (Dafari 1966: 328)

In the third category (that is, in poems whose *bayts* present the two hemistichs of each verse composed of two different metres), the usual practice is to reproduce one of them, wholly or partly, in each hemistich of the *tawšīḥ* (Dafari 1966: 331-333); less frequently, the *tawšīḥ* can have a different metre (Dafari 1966: 333).

Some points of similarity between the stanzas of *ḥumaynī* poetry and the Swahili stanzaic metres are probably already noticeable. At this point a brief summary of the structures of *utenzi*, *shairi* and *wimbo* may help to reconstruct their links with this Yemeni genre.

2.2. Swahili stanzaic metres

The structure and employment of the three Swahili metres in which we are interested have been widely debated by scholars; here I will just outline the principal prosodic features in order to make my exposition clearer.

It will be useful to give the definition of some elements that are common to all three genres: the first is *mizani* (from the Arabic term *mīzān*, “measure”), which in Swahili prosody refers to syllables.⁹ Swahili classical metres are all based on *urari wa mizani*, namely isosyllabism: each verse of a poem as a definite and not variable number of syllables. The second element to be mentioned here is *kina* “rhyme:” differently from both the Western and the Arabic traditions, in Swahili rhyme is defined as the identity, between two verses or cola, of their last syllables. Words such as *paka* “cat” and *toka* “go out”, for example, rhyme, even if this would not be considered a rhyme in other traditions (such as the Italian one).

The first metre to be examined is *utenzi* (or *utendi*, in Northern Swahili dialects). *Utenzi* compositions are formed by an indefinite number of *baiti* or *ubeti*, a recurrent structure that has been seen by Western scholars as a stanza. A *baiti* is divided into four *kipande* (“piece”, equivalent to lines) of eight *mizani* each. These four *kipande* are usually grouped in two couples called *mshororo*: the first *mshororo* of a *baiti* contains its two first *kipande*, while the second *mshororo* is formed by the last two (Vierke 2011: 25). It is worth noting that the equivalence *baiti* = stanza and *kipande* = verse, even if affirmed today in modern Swahili editions of *utenzi* poems in Roman script (Vierke 2011: 26), was not that of the classical period: in the manuscripts written in *ajami* (Swahili in Arabic script), each *baiti* was written on a single row as a line (in fact, the word itself comes from the Arabic term *bayt* “verse”), and the four *kipande* were considered as four cola of the line, separated by internal caesurae (that are rendered graphically: see Vierke 2014: 327). However, both descriptions are practically equivalent when it comes to prosodic and metrical analysis.¹⁰ A fundamental feature of *utendi* is its rhyme pattern: a,a,a,x/b,b,b,x/.../n,n,n,x. Namely, the first three *kipande* of each *baiti* rhyme with each other, while the final *kipande* of all the *baiti* within the composition share a separate rhyme. Vierke (2014: 329) gives an

⁹ Such is the definition of *mizani* provided by Amri Abedi (1953: 1) in his book *Sheria za Kutunga Mashairi na Diwani ya Amri* (“Rules of composing poems and collection of Amri”), which is still considered a reference book for Swahili prosody: *Kila silabi moja ni mizani moja* (“Each single syllable is a single *mizani*”).

¹⁰ In order to avoid confusion, I shall use here the Swahili terms for the parts of the *utenzi* composition, namely *baiti* (or *ubeti*), *mshororo* and *kipande*. In representing the rhyme schemes of *utenzi* “/” will be used as a separator between *baiti*, while “,” will be employed for separating *kipande*.

example of the *utenzi* stanza (#122 from the *Utendi wa Haudaji* “*Utenzi of the Palanquin*”) written in both scripts (her translation):

	مُحَمَّدٍ مَفْطَأً	كُونُومِ وَنَبِيَّ	مَكَ كِتْ نِمِغِي	أُوْبِي نِمِغِي
<i>Uwambie, nimekuya</i>		<i>a</i>		<i>baiti</i>
<i>Maka kwethu nimengiya</i>		<i>a</i>		
<i>kwa utume wa nabiya,</i>		<i>a</i>		
<i>Muhamad¹¹i mfadhaa</i>		<i>x</i>		

Text 4. *utenzi* stanzaic structure

*Tell them, that I have come
I have entered our home Mecca,
on an errand of the prophet,
the excellent Muhammad*

The graphical layout of the two versions shows the two different conceptions of *utenzi* stanzaic structure.

Shairi is similar to *utenzi* in several aspects. Even if the term is different from *ushairi* “poetry”, it shares with it a common etymology, being derived from the Arabic *šī‘r* (“poetry” or “poem”), probably because of its great popularity. The base form of a *shairi* stanza is that of a quatrain of verses of sixteen *mizani* separated into two cola of eight syllables by an internal caesura (Knappert 1979: 59). This is the most common form (Shariff 1988: 49), but there are other varieties of *shairi* verses that are not of sixteen syllables, or are not divided internally into two equal halves. Examples are the 6+6 verse (that is, verses whose first colon is of six syllables, as well as the second one), the 4+8 verse and the 6+8 verse (Shariff 1988: 50-51).

The Swahili term for the quatrain is again *ubeti* or *baiti*; each of the four lines of the *ubeti* is a *mshororo* (Shariff 1988: 49). *Shairi* has developed several rhyme patterns (Shariff 1988: 49-50), for example:

¹¹ In some Swahili dialects (such as Kiamu, the dialect of the *Utendi wa Haudaji* – see Vierke 2011: xiii) the graphemes *t* and *d* represent respectively the voiceless and voiced retroflex plosive consonants. Differently from Standard Swahili, they are phonematically distinguished from the correspondent dental plosives, which are usually transliterated in Latin script as *t̪* and *d̪* (Vierke 2011: 478). In Swahili texts, therefore, *t̪* and *d̪* must not be read as interdental fricatives as is the case for the Arabic transliteration adopted here, but as simple dental consonants.

1. ab,ab,ab,bx/cd,cd,cd,dx/.../yz,yz,yz,zx. As with *utenzi*, a final rhyme is shared by all the last *mshororo* of each *baiti*;
2. ab,ab,ab,ab/ab,ab,ab,ab/.../ab,ab,ab,ab;
3. ab,ab,ab,ba for each *baiti*;
4. ab,ab,ab,ab/cb,cb,cb,bb/.../yb,yb,yb,ab. The last *mshororo* of each *baiti* is a refrain (*mkarara* or *kipokeo*) that is repeated throughout the poem.

It is worth noting that in all these rhyme schemes, the last *mshororo* of each *ubeti* are linked together at least by a final rhyme; in rhyme scheme 4. all the last verses are identical, constituting a refrain; there are, however, also cases in which the last verses share only one identical colon (Abedi 1953: 6).

The presence of a refrain can be considered a prestigious stylistic feature, because it has been employed since Muyaka bin Hajj al-Ghassaniy (1776-1840), the father of the genre and one of the most celebrated poets of Swahili classic literature (Abdulaziz 1979: ix). One of his most known and imitated poems is *Kimya* (“Silence”), which reproduces the rhyme scheme 4 (Abdulaziz 1979: 194; his translation):

<i>Kimya mshindo mkuu</i> ¹²	<i>ndivyo wambavyo wavyele,</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>baiti</i>
<i>Kimya chataka k'umbuu</i>	<i>viunoni mtatile,</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	
<i>Kimya msikidharau</i>	<i>nami sikidharawile.</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	
<i>Kimya kina mambo mbele</i>	<i>tahadharini na kimya!</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>x</i>	
<i>Kimya ni kinga kizushi</i>	<i>kuzukia wale-wale,</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>baiti</i>
<i>Kimya kitazua moshi</i>	<i>mato msiyafumbule.</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>b</i>	
<i>Kimya kina mshawishi</i>	<i>kwa daima na milele;</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>b</i>	
<i>Kimya kina mambo mbele</i>	<i>tahadharini na kimya!</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>x</i>	
<i>Kimya vuani maozi</i>	<i>vuani maṭo muole!</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>baiti</i>
<i>Kimya kitangusha mwanzi</i>	<i>mwendako msjikule;</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>b</i>	
<i>Kimya chatunda p'umuzi</i>	<i>kiumbizi kiumbile.</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>b</i>	
<i>Kimya kina mambo mbele</i>	<i>tahadharini na kimya!</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>x</i>	

Text 1. shairi stanzaic structure

*Silence makes a mighty thump, that's what the elders say.
 Silence warns that you tie your girdles
 Silence do not belittle it, and I won't ignore it either
 Silence presages much, beware of it.*

*Silence is a sudden rocket, appearing unexpectedly.
 Silence raises smoke, so that you can't keep your eyes open.
 Silence always makes you uneasy.
 Silence has big affairs, beware of it.*

*Silence! Open your eyes wide so that you may see...
 This silence will spark off a fire, do not be overconfident.
 Silence is taking a deep breath, the war game is at its height.*

¹² In syllable counting, the reader must take into consideration that in some cases the consonants *m* and *n* have a vocalic value and thus form an independent syllable: this is the case in this hemistich, which must be scanned as “*ki-myā m-shi-ndo m-ku-u*”. In Abdulaziz’s version, this half-verse is *Kimya kina mshindo mkuu* (literally: “Silence has got a mighty thump”). This form would be prosodically incorrect, since it would count ten syllables instead of eight. I asked the Swahili poet Abdilatif Abdalla about this irregularity on 15/06/2019, and he explained it as a mistake in the editing process, specifying that the correct version is *Kimya mshindo mkuu* (“Silence is a mighty thump”).

Silence has big affairs, beware of it.

Among the stanzaic metres taken into consideration, *wimbo* is probably that with most variations. Shariff (1988: 45) defines this structure on the basis of the only common feature these compositions share: a *wimbo* is a composition whose stanzas (*baiti*, or *ubeti*) are composed of three lines (*mshororo*). *Mshororo* may or may not have internal caesurae. The commonest form of *mshororo* is again that of 8+8 syllables. Other forms are 4+8, 8+4, 6+6, 2+8, 6+4, 8+5 Shariff (1988: 45-47). In *wimbo*, all the first cola of each verse rhyme, as well as the second ones and all the others up to the last. Shariff (1988: 46), gives among various examples one of a *wimbo* with lines of 4 + 8 syllables:

<i>Sina hali</i>	<i>moyo wangu nidengene</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>baiti</i>
<i>Sihimili</i>	<i>wala sipendi mngine</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	
<i>Tafadhali</i>	<i>nakuomba tuonane</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	

Text 2. *wimbo* stanzaic structure

<i>I have no rest</i>	<i>I have cheated my own heart</i>
<i>I can't resist</i>	<i>and I don't love anyone else</i>
<i>Please</i>	<i>I beg you, let us meet</i>

The points of contact between these structures and the forms of *ḥumaynī* poetry are in many cases evident, especially with regard to the stanzaic structures. They are the subject of the next section of this paper.

3. Swahili stanzaic structures as developed from *ḥumaynī* poetry

This section will attempt to demonstrate that the three Swahili stanzaic metres discussed above derive from a decomposition of the *ḥumaynī* structure of *muwaššah*. This process had already started in Yemen, with the form of *mubayyat*, but it seems to have continued independently in the Swahili world. The evolution of the Arabic metres in verse patterns with different numbers of syllables and cola, on the other hand, is a more delicate matter to investigate, and requires a confrontation with the verse forms of *utumbuizo*, which were probably pre-existent.

3.1. The decomposition of *ḥumaynī muwaššah*

The perception of stanzas in Arabic poetry as a composition of distinct elements is common in the traditions developed from *muwaššaha*. The Andalusian type presented itself as a combination of more elements, namely *ḡuṣn* and *qufl*; the derived, homonymic *ḥumaynī* structure is composed of *bayt*, *tawšīḥ* and *taqfil*. A constant in the history of classical Arabic literature is that innovation in poetry has always been achieved by isolating and recombining the basic elements of the pre-existing form. The pre-Islamic genre of *qaṣīda* was a poem composed of many sections: a *nasīb* (the separation of the poet from his lover, due to the nomadic migration of their tribes), then a *raḥīl* (an account of the poet's travels), a section that can contain several descriptions (*waṣf*) of the desert landscape. Finally, the praise (*madīḥ*) of an eminent person to whom the poem is dedicated concludes the poem (Amaldi 2004: 21-22).¹³ In the Omayyad period, and above all in the Abbasid period, many of these sections developed into independent genres, and love poems (*ḡazal*), descriptions (*waṣf*), and poems on wine (*ḥamriyya*) became independent compositions (Amaldi 2004: 87).

Such re-elaborations also occurred in the stylistic domain, for example in the aforementioned case of *musammaṭ*. Therefore, it is not unexpected that in Yemen *mubayyat* developed as an independent genre from *ḥumaynī muwaššah*, since *bayt* was originally just the first of the three parts of the *muwaššah* stanzas. The hypothesis sustained here is that the Swahili genres of *utenzi* and *shairi* are direct developments of the *ḥumaynī mubayyat*. Several considerations serve to support this theory: first of all, the identity of the stanzaic structure of the *mubayyat*'s *bayt* and *shairi*'s and *utenzi*'s *baiti*¹⁴. The simplest form of *mubayyat*, a,a,a,x/b,b,b,x/c,c,c,x/.../z,z,z,x, corresponds exactly to the *utenzi*'s rhyme scheme, while its bipartite form, ab,ab,ab,ab,/cd,cd,cd,ab/.../yz,yz,yz,ab is a possible rhyme scheme for *shairi*. The similarity between these stanzaic structures is evident if one compares the rhyme schemes of the texts numbered 1 and 4 in this paper, on the one hand, and 2 and 5 on the other. The other rhyme

¹³ According to Jacobi (1996: 22-23) two main theories have been advanced to explain the polythematic nature of the *qaṣīda*: the first claims that the original examples from pre-Islamic production have been lost, and only fragments have survived up to our time, while the second assumes that *qaṣīda* pieces were remodelled in the Islamic period in a more regular form. Jacobi (*ivi*) advances a third theory, arguing that the polythematicity of *qaṣīda* is the result of a long process of historical development which was already in an advanced state at the end of the pre-Islamic period.

¹⁴ The term *baiti* is clearly a loanword based on *bayt*; the fact that it possesses a variant, *ubeti*, showing the evolution of the diphthong *ay to e, characteristic of several dialects in the Arabian Peninsula, witnesses to the participation of the vernacular language and literature in this cultural exchange. Concerning the realization of diphthongs in Arabic, Swahili was exposed to a range of different influences from the Peninsula: diphthongs are conserved in the Yemeni dialects such as that of Ṣan'ā' (Watson 2002: 22), but underwent monophthongization in the Omani linguistic area (Edzard 2011: 479). Contacts with the whole southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, involving the territories of present-day Yemen and Oman, took place before the advent of Islām (Collins and Burns 2014: 99), so that influence from a plurality of Arabic dialects is not astonishing.

schemes mentioned for *shairi* were probably local innovations: it is likely that the Swahili poets who received these metres from the Arabic world had a great knowledge of Arabic language and culture; they would have known that these poetic forms had a colloquial and vernacular dimension, and therefore allowed innovations and changes more easily than high poetry.

There are several reasons why we can exclude the idea that these forms came from other traditions that were different from *ḥumaynī* poetry. Knappert (1979: 61), for example, sees in the Persian stanza of *rubāʿī* the origin of *shairi*. However, the only common feature that he sees between *shairi* and *rubāʿī* is that their stanzas are quatrains; but *rubāʿī* verses are not bipartite, nor do they have an internal rhyme, and the final rhyme shared by all the stanzas of the composition is not in the fourth line, but in the third. On the other hand, it is true that the Andalusian *muwaššaha* could present internally divided verses, but this happened most frequently in the *qufl* and *ḥarǧa*; the *ǧuṣn* was sometimes divided into two segments, but not as frequently as in Yemeni *mubayyat* (Meisami and Starkey 1998: 564).

With regard to *wimbo*, I maintain that this stanza of three rhyming verses originated from the *tawšīḥ* of the *ḥumaynī muwaššah*, taken from the original structure as an independent element. The rhyme scheme of *wimbo* is *a,a,a/b,b/b/c,c,c*, which matches perfectly that of *tawšīḥ* (for an example of confrontation, see text 6 and the *tawšīḥ* in text 3). In this case, too, for several reasons I tend to exclude the idea that, despite the etymology of its name, *wimbo* has an origin other than the tradition of *ḥumaynī* poetry, such as a Bantu origin. The fact that *utenzi*, a metre clearly derived from the Arabic tradition and devoted to the narration of Islamic epics, has a Bantu name is in my opinion a good example of how the Swahili poets who received these stanzaic structures were interested in remaking them as a local tradition: etymological considerations, therefore, are surely of use in this investigation, but they cannot be taken as direct evidence. Besides, a stylistic comparison of *wimbo* and *utumbuizo*, the metre of Fumo Liyongo's saga, whose origin probably dates back to before the development of Swahili classical prosody, shows that these two metres are not interrelated. Some of the basic prosodic features of *utumbuizo*, with some exceptions probably due to further modifications, are that *utumbuizo* compositions are never stanzaic and, even when composed of verses with internal caesurae, normally do not present internal rhyme (Miehe *et al.* 2006: 24), in contrast to *wimbo*. *Utumbuizo*, moreover, is not subjected to the constraint of isosyllabism (Miehe *et al.* 2006: 24), while in *wimbo*, as for the other classical metres, all the verses have the same number of syllables and caesurae always fall in the same positions. A third remark concerns the position of the internal caesura in the verses: even if *utumbuizo* lines are not subjected to maintaining a fixed number of syllables, one can observe that in general the verses with one internal caesura have the second colon either of equal length or longer than the first

(as in the poems contained in Miehe *et al.* 2006, *passim*). This can also happen in *wimbo*, but this metre presents cases of verses of 8+4, 8+4 or 6+5 syllables that find no equivalent in *utumbuizo*. It is customary, instead, for *humaynī* poetry to shorten the second colon of the verse to a half, as seen above. Further differences between *utumbuizo* and *wimbo* are strictly in the domain of metrics, and will be discussed in the next subsection, where the metrical patterns employed in the constructions of the verses (*mshororo* for *wimbo* and *shairi*; *kipande* for *utendi*) will be analysed.

3.2. Tetrasyllabic feet: an Arab heritage

An important common point between the three Swahili metres studied here is that their syllabic length is often a multiple of 4. The *kipande* of *utenzi* has 8 syllables, while the *shairi* presents a redoubled form of the *kipande* of the *utenzi* itself, so that they are both based on the number four (in the line as whole and in each colon); in the case of *wimbo*, not only the length of the verse is a multiple of four, but also the caesura falls in a position that strengthens this division, forming an 8+4 or 8+4 syllable structure. It is true that each of these stanzaic metres allows variations which do not depend on the number four as a multiple: in these cases, one can observe the pre-eminence of the number six in syllable counting. These minority cases are discussed below.

In the survey of the metres of *humaynī* poetry in the previous section, we noted that, of all the feet that compose them, 60% are trisyllabic, while 34% is tetrasyllabic. And of the 35 metres listed, 4 are entirely composed of tetrasyllabic feet, while 10 have only trisyllabic feet. Unlike the patterns with quantitative schemes, which are not reproducible in Swahili since it does not distinguish between short and long vowels, the foot was in all likelihood an easily receivable element for Swahili poets at the beginning of the classical period.

In her work on *utenzi*, Vierke (2011: 28-32) shows that the eight-syllable structure of the *kipande* of *utenzi* can be split into two segments, or feet, depending on the position of the two principal stresses in the verse. Since in Swahili stress always occurs on the penultimate syllable, the second of the two principal stresses of a *kipande* always falls on its seventh syllable, which must be the stressed syllable of the last word; the metrical effect of this stress, therefore, is to generate a rhythmic core formed by the last two syllables of the *kipande*, namely the seventh, stressed, and the eighth, unstressed. The other principal stress of the *kipande*, the first one, has a variable position, as it may fall on any syllable from

the first to the fifth of the *kipande*, forming another rhythmic core, built on a stressed syllable and the following unstressed one. These combinations are possible¹⁵:

$\Sigma \sigma \sigma \sigma \sigma \Sigma \sigma$	<i>póza la nafusi yángu</i>
$\sigma \Sigma \sigma \sigma \sigma \Sigma \sigma$	<i>Kitúzo cha maṭo yángu</i>
$\sigma \sigma \Sigma \sigma \sigma \sigma \Sigma \sigma$	<i>nambiáni, nambiáni</i>
$\sigma \sigma \sigma \Sigma \sigma \sigma \Sigma \sigma$	<i>ya mfalúme mkúu</i>
$\sigma \sigma \sigma \Sigma \sigma \Sigma \sigma$	<i>kuṭowakhalífu móya</i>

Thus, in any *kipande* of *utenzi* we can identify two feet, of variable length (but always such that their total length is eight syllables), each ending with a rhythmic core built on the sequence of a stressed syllable and the unstressed one which follows.

Vierke (2011: 35) goes on to make an important remark: even if all the previous listed forms are possible and acceptable for a *kipande*, the ideal prosodic pattern in *utenzi* is that of the four-syllable foot ($\sigma \sigma \Sigma \sigma | \sigma \sigma \Sigma \sigma$), because of its symmetry and balance. She defines it the *Grenzschema* of *utenzi* lines.

The absence of this *Grenzschema* in *utumbuizo* compositions is in my opinion an interesting element of comparison. In a forthcoming paper on the prosodic patterns of *utumbuizo*, I have noted that the foot described by Vierke, based on a rhythmic core which involves its two last syllables, is also the prosodic base of the *utumbuizo* verse and cola, with the fundamental difference that *utumbuizo* is constrained neither to isosyllabism nor to the fixed number of two feet per verse. I have come to this conclusion by analysing the eighteen compositions included in the work *Nyimbo za Liyongo* (Miehe *et al.* 2006), which is one of the richest collections of *utumbuizo*, and admirable for its detailed philological criticism of the texts. It is worth noting that, after scanning the verses of these compositions to identify their rhythmic cores and feet, we see that the majority of them are of four and three syllables. In particular, if we group all the feet by their syllabic length, we obtain these numbers:

¹⁵ In the following schema, the lower-case sigma “σ” indicates an unstressed syllable, and the upper-case correspondent “Σ” a stressed one; the vertical slash “|” indicates a boundary between feet; the letters in bold are the syllables that form the rhythmic core. The examples are from Vierke (2011: 28-32).

tetrasyllabic feet:	553
trisyllabic feet:	542
bisyllabic feet:	299
pentasyllabic feet:	110

Thus, feet of three and four syllables are the most frequent, similar to *ḥumaynī* poetry. However, it is rare in *utumbuizo* for a colon or verse to be entirely formed by tetrasyllabic feet: the only example of this is the fragmentary poem *Uṭumbuizo wa Kumwawia Liyongo* (Miehe *et al.* 2006: 46), which contains only two verses of 8 + 8 syllables and a third one of 916. In all the poems there are only 42 occurrences of two tetrasyllabic feet next to each other (with the exception of the aforementioned composition *Uṭumbuizo wa Kumwawia Liyongo*, all of them are part of verses or cola of more than two feet). On the other hand, there are 252 occurrences of two trisyllabic feet next to each other, among which 124 pairs form independent cola. It is thus clear that verses formed by adjacent tetrasyllabic feet were not the norm in the Swahili pre-classical literary tradition that is represented by *utumbuizo*, differently from the case of Arabic literature. Metres with tetrasyllabic feet can be found not only in the *ḥumaynī* prosodic tradition, but also in classical literature: many popular metres, such as *rağaz* and *ramal*, are composed of tetrasyllabic feet. *Rağaz* in particular, known in the pre-Islamic period as a metre for popular poetry, had gained itself a higher position in the Omayyad and Abbasid periods, being used for didactic poems, such as Ibn Mālik's (d. 1274) Arabic grammar, the *Alfiyya* (Amaldi 2004: 123); in all likelihood the intellectual class of Swahili poets that was entering into contact with the Islamic world at the beginning of the classical period knew these works and studied them. It is therefore probable that the adoption of a metric pattern based on tetrasyllabic feet for the new classical metres of *utenzi*, *shairi* and *wimbo* was not due to the adoption of a particular metre (that was impossible to reproduce in Swahili, due to the absence of distinction between long and short vowels), but to perception of the metric patterns based on tetrasyllabic feet as having an Arabic "flavour." The *Grenzschema* of *utenzi* therefore, and the fact that the cola of *shairi* and *wimbo* lines are multiples of 4, are the historical consequence of an original perception of these metres as being composed of tetrasyllabic groups. The

¹⁶ Two other cases are the poems *Uṭumbuizo wa Dhiki* (Miehe *et al.* 2006: 34) and *Uṭumbuizo wa Kumwongo Mtoto* (Miehe *et al.* 2006: 44), which present verses of three cola each, where the second one is composed of just one foot of four syllables. In my forthcoming study of the prosody of *utumbuizo*, I argue that that colon, which is shown as such in the graphical layout of the poems, is actually the first foot of the original second colon of the verse (which grouped what in the graphical layout are two different cola). I have therefore not taken these two poems into account here.

fact that, in the less frequent variants of these metres, cola of 6 syllables are pre-eminent, probably indicates that in the past other compromises between the Arabic and the Swahili traditions were attempted, such as the usage of six-syllable cola that can be scanned as a sequence of two trisyllabic feet (or of a bisyllabic foot and a tetrasyllabic one), being closer to the *utumbuizo*, together with the Arabic rhyme schemes. The historical datum is thus that, in the classical period of Swahili literature, the tetrasyllabic foot finally became the mainstream option.

4. Conclusion

In this study, the structure of Swahili “stanzaic metres,” namely metres that are characterized both by a definite metric pattern and a fixed rhyme pattern, are analysed, with the aim of reconstructing their historical development. In particular, the three metres of *utenzi*, *shairi* and *wimbo* have been taken into consideration. The starting assumption is that such metres derive from an Arabic prototype, linked to the literary tradition of Andalusian *muwaššaha*, which spread all over the Arabic world. More specifically, this prototype has been identified in the Yemeni tradition of *ḥumaynī* poetry, derived from *muwaššaha*, which, among its different stanzaic structures, developed some that were practically identical to the Swahili *utenzi* and *shairi*. I have demonstrated that the stanzaic structure of *wimbo*, far from being of Bantu origin, is also derived from this literary tradition.

Beside the stanzaic structures and rhyme schemes, an element inherited from Arabic literature (in this case including not only *ḥumaynī* poetry, but also, in all likelihood, other literary dimensions, such as poetry in Classical Arabic) is the verse composed of tetrasyllabic feet. These feet, despite being abundant in *utumbuizo* production, rarely occurred next to each other, and were almost never used alone to build an entire verse or colon. The stanzaic metres of *utenzi*, *shairi* and *wimbo* present a contrasting situation, since their internal division into cola whose syllabic lengths are multiples of 4 suggest that they were originally thought as of sequences of tetrasyllabic feet. The explanation that has been advanced here is that this recurrence of tetrasyllabic feet is not a direct heritage from a particular Arabic metre, but the reproduction of a structural type that was perceived as generically and exotically Arabic.

In conclusion, we can say that these genres, especially in prosody, show several levels of compromise with the prosody of *utumbuizo*, suggesting that the Arabic poetic forms were received in East Africa by a class of literates already existent and developed, with great expertise in their own poetic tradition. This class of poets must necessarily have had a minimal theoretical training, since they must have been able to scan the verses they composed into prosodic feet, in order to adapt them to the new structure. So, for them the structure of the poem was independent of, or at least not totally

dependent on, performance, which, as in the case of *utumbuizo*, we can assume was musical (Miehe *et al.* 2006: 24): the development of *utenzi*, *shairi* and *wimbo*, then, was the result of an active process of hybridization of Swahili and Arabic traditions, performed by an intellectual class conscious of its literary heritage.

Appendix: the most popular metres in *ḥumaynī* poetry (from Dafari 1966: 342-366)

In the following table I italicize only the names of metres that are not among the fifteen described by al-Ḥalīl. When the same verse has several variants, its name is written with a different number for each variant.

<i>bālbāl</i>	– U – – U – – – U – – U – – U – – – U –
<i>basīṭ-1</i> ¹⁷	– – U – – U – U – – – – U – – U – U – –
<i>basīṭ-2</i>	– – U – – U – – – U – – U –
<i>mustaṭīl-1</i>	U – – – U – – U – U – – – U – – U –
<i>mustaṭīl-2</i>	U – – – U – – U – – – U – –
<i>mumtadd</i>	– U – – U – – – U – – U – –
<i>hazaġ-1</i>	U – – – U – – – U – – U – – – U – – – U – –
<i>hazaġ-2</i>	U – – – U – – – U – – – U – – –
<i>mustadrak</i>	– U – – U – U – – – U – – U – U – –
<i>raġaz-1</i>	– – U – – – U – – – – – – U – – – U – – – –
<i>raġaz-2</i>	– – U – – – U – U – – – – U – – – U – U – –
<i>raġaz-3</i>	– – U – – – U – – – U – – – U –
<i>raġaz-4</i>	– – U – U – – – – U – U – –
<i>mudrak-1</i>	– U – – U – – U – – – U – – U – – U – – U – – – U –
<i>mudrak-2</i>	– U – – U – – U – U – – – U – – U – – U – U – –

¹⁷ This particular form of *basīṭ*, not envisaged in the classical Ḥalīlian system, is called *muḥallaʿ al-basīṭ* or *basīṭ makbūl*, and was very popular in Andalusian *muwašṣahāt*. Alternative last feet for the cola of this metre are U – or U – – – (Dafari 1966: 344-345).

<i>al-ṭawīl</i>	U – – U – – – U – – U – – –
<i>mustaṭrad</i>	– U – – U – U – – – – U – – U – U – – –
<i>sarī^c</i>	– – U – – – U – – U – – – U – – – U – – U –
<i>ramal-1</i>	– U – – – U – – – U – – U – – – U – – – U –
<i>ramal-2</i>	– U – – – U – – – U – – – U – –
<i>ramal-3</i>	– U – – – U – – U – – – U –
<i>duwayni</i>	– – U – – U – – – – – U – – U – – –
<i>munbaṣiṭ-1</i>	– U – – – U – – U – – U – – – U – – U –
<i>munbaṣiṭ-2</i>	– U – – – U – – U – – – U –
<i>munbaṣiṭ-3</i>	– U – U – – – U – U – –
<i>muḡtaṭṭ</i>	– – U – – U – –
<i>mutaqārib-1</i>	U – – U – – U – – U – – U – – U – – U – – U – –
<i>mutaqārib-2</i>	U – – U – – U – – U – – U – – U – –
<i>mutaqārib-3</i>	U – – U – – – U – – U – – –
<i>mutaqārib-2</i>	U – – U – – U – – U – –
<i>murtaḡaz-1</i>	– – – U – – U – – – – – U – – U – –
<i>murtaḡaz-2</i>	– – – U – – – – – U – –
<i>murtaḡaz-3</i>	– – – U – – – – U –
<i>mutadārik-1</i>	– U – – U – – U – – U – – U – – U –
<i>mutadārik-2</i>	– U – – U – – U – – U –

References

- Abdulaziz, Mohamed Hassan. 1979. *Muyaka. Swahili popular poetry*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- Abedi, Kaluta Amri. 1953. *Sheria za kutunga mashairi na Diwani ya Amri*. Dar es Salaam: Eagle Press.
- Abu Haidar, Jareer Amin. 2001. *Hispano-Arabic Literature and the Early Provençal Lyrics*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Amaldi, Daniela. 2004. *Storia della letteratura araba classica*. Bologna: Zanichelli.

- Bertoncini-Zúbková, Elena. 2000. *Poesia Classica Swahili*. Napoli, unpublished ms.
- Capezio, Oriana. 2013. *La metrica araba. Studio della tradizione antica*. Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari.
- Collins, Robert O. and James M. Burns. 2014. "East Africa and the Indian Ocean World". In: *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa*, edited by Robert O. Collins and James M. Burns, 96-113. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Corriente, Francisco. 1982. "The Metres of the Muwaššah, an Andalusian Adaptation of 'Arūḍ: A Bridging Hypothesis." *Journal of Arabic Literature* 13: 76-82.
- Dafari, Ja'far Abduh. 1966. *Ḥumaynī poetry in South Arabia*. PhD Thesis presented at the University of London.
- Dufour, Julien. 2012. "«J'ai oui chanter l'oiseau»: Musique, chant, danse et poésie ḥumaynī." *Quaderni di studi Arabi. Nuova Serie* 7: 11-46.
- Edzard, Lutz. 2011. "Omani Arabic." In: *The Encyclopedia of Arabic language and linguistics*, vol. 3, edited by Kees Versteegh et al., 478-491. Leiden: Brill.
- Ferrando, Ignacio. 1999. "Andalusi musammaṭ. Some remarks on its stanzaic and metrical structure." *Journal of Arabic Literature* 30: 78-89.
- Ġānim, Muḥammad 'Abduh. 1987. *Ši'r al-ġinā' al-ṣan'ānī*. Beirut: Dār al-ʿAwdah.
- García, Gomez. 1975 [1956]. *Las Jarchas romances de la serie árabe en su marco*. Barcelona: Seix Barral.
- Jacobi, Renate. 1996. "The origins of the Qasida form." In: *Qasida poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa. Volume one: classical traditions and modern meanings*, edited by Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle, 21-34. Leiden: Brill.
- Knappert, Jan. 1979. *Four centuries of Swahili verse*. London: Heinemann.
- Meisami, Julie Scott and Paul Starkey (eds.). 1998. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature. Volume 2, K-Z*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Menocal, María Rosa et al. 2006. *The literature of Al-Andalus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Miehe, Gudrun et al. 2006. *Nyimbo za Liyongo. Poems attributed to Fumo Liyongo*. Dar es Salaam: TUKI.
- Rosen, Tova. 2000. "The Muwashshah." In: *The Literature of Al-Andalus*, edited by María Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin and Michael Sells, 165-189. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shariff, Ibrahim Noor. 1988. "Tungo zetu. Msingi wa mashairi na tungo nyinginezo." Trenton: The Red Sea Press.
- Vierke, Clarissa. 2011. *On the Poetics of the Utendi*. Berlin: Lit Verlag.
- Vierke, Clarissa. 2014. "Akhi patia kalamu: Writing Swahili poetry in Arabic script." In: *The Arabic script in Africa*, edited by Meikal Mumin and Kees Versteegh, 319-339. Leiden: Brill.
- Wagner, Mark S. 2009. *Like Joseph in Beauty. Yemeni vernacular poetry and Arab-Jewish symbiosis*. Leiden: Brill.
- Zwarties, Otto. 1997. *Love songs from al-Andalus: History, Structure, and Meaning of the Kharja*. Leiden: Brill.

Emiliano Minerba graduated at the University of Naples “L’Orientale” and is currently working at his PhD research on the comparative historical analysis of Swahili and Wolof metrical systems. Besides Swahili and Wolof prosodies and classical literatures, his other research interests are modern Swahili literature, particularly theatre.
He can be reached at: emi.nerba@gmail.com

Exploring Haji Gora Haji's poetics in his collection *Shuwari*

Flavia Aiello

This article has its roots in a project carried out with Irene Brunotti (University of Leipzig), the result of which was the publication of a bilingual Swahili-English edition of the latest collection of poems by Haji Gora Haji, a well-known Swahili poet from Tumbatu, entitled *Shuwari* ("The calm;" Buluu Publishing, 2019). The aim of the paper is to analyse the poetry of Haji Gora Haji with a focus on this latest anthology, dwelling in particular on the great originality of his handling of the Swahili language, cultural repertoires and natural imagery, all essential elements of the poet's long-lasting dialogue with other Swahili poets and with the readers of/listeners to his poetry.

Keywords: poetry, Swahili, Tumbatu dialect, Zanzibar, Tanzania

1. Introduction

This analysis of the poetry of Mzee¹ Haji Gora Haji, an elderly, locally well-known poet from Tanzania, is based on work which was carried out in collaboration with Irene Brunotti, lecturer in Swahili language at the University of Leipzig, and resulted in the bilingual Swahili-English edition of Haji's *Shuwari* ("The calm"), his latest poetic anthology (*diwani*).² Along with the poems and their translation, carried out in collaboration with Nathalie Arnold Koenings,³ the volume offers two prefaces by well-known scholars of Swahili language and literature (preface I is by Sauda Barwani and Ridder Samsom,

¹ Old person, name of respect given to a man.

² The project was funded by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation in 2016. The fieldwork, carried out during the summer of the same year, was devoted to the review and analysis of the poems with the author, and to the videos of Haji Gora Haji reciting selected poems, shot and edited by Yann Labry and Jakob Zeyer, founders of '5 o'clock creativity,' a start-up film production collective based in Leipzig.

³ Nathalie Arnold Koenings (Associate Professor, Zayed University, UAE) is an anthropologist, translator of Swahili literature, and novelist. We are also thankful to Bwana Ahmed Mgeni Ali, retired teacher of English in Zanzibar and Swahili writer of short stories, for having reviewed the first draft of our translation, adding some important suggestions.

while preface II is by Abdilatif Abdalla), some analytical insights by the editors into Haji Gora Haji's artistry and a link to videos of the poet himself performing nine of his poems.⁴

Haji Gora Haji, born in 1933 on Tumbatu, a tiny island in the Zanzibari archipelago, was sent at the age of four to live in Mkunazini, a neighbourhood of Stone Town (in Swahili Miji Mkongwe), the historic centre of the capital city on Zanzibar island (in Swahili Unguja). There he received his education at a Qu'ran school, but did not have the chance to attend a state school since he had to start working at a very young age. He has worked as a fisherman, a dhow sailor and a porter for most of his life. Since his childhood in Tumbatu, Haji Gora Haji has been involved in *ngoma*⁵ contexts, which are characterised by competition features, not only in terms of the lyrical composition, but also of the performance itself. Since then, he has never ceased composing (Samsom 1999: 26). He has developed his career as a successful composer of poems and song lyrics (not only for *ngoma*, but also for *taarab*).⁶ Since the 1950s, Haji has been cooperating with different *taarab* clubs ('Michenzani,' 'Malindi/Ikhwan Safaa,'⁷ 'Culture' and 'Mlandege' among others) in Zanzibar, writing some very popular hits such as *Kimbunga* ("The hurricane"), performed by 'Malindi.' This latter lyric gave the title to his first collection of poems, edited by Tigiti S. Y. Sengo and published in 1994 by TUKI (Taasisi ya Uchunguzi wa Kiswahili), the Institute of Kiswahili Research at the University of Dar es Salaam. For some time partly included in A-level school curriculum, the *Kimbunga* collection made Haji Gora Haji extremely famous in Tanzania and East Africa. In 2001, during the celebration of 'Kiswahili day' in Dar es Salaam, he was honoured by the National Swahili Council (BAKITA, Baraza la Kiswahili la Taifa) for his literary work and contribution to the growth of Kiswahili. This was the last of a series of awards he received from BAKITA, which he was also a member of from 1980 to 1982. The poet was also member of BAKIZA (Baraza la Kiswahili Zanzibar, Zanzibar Swahili Council) between 2001 and 2003 (Aiello and Brunotti 2019: 138).

⁴ Playlist at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQn7q4TYUk8&list=PLSY1pFhtGnT3ot_Kn2TQIou1Nl2lfvLKH

⁵ *Ngoma* (a Swahili word which literally means 'drum') are happenings during which music, dance and song act together to create performances relating to the most important rites in the cycle of social life – birth, female and male initiation, marriage, the celebration of female purity before weddings and death (Brunotti 2005).

⁶ *Taarab* is a genre of Swahili sung poetry with an accompanying music marked by Arabo-islamic, African and Indian traditions. According to local accounts, *taarab* developed in Zanzibar at the end of the XIX century as a musical entertainment for the family and guests of Sultan Seyyid Barghash, and later, in 1905, the first *taarab* club, 'Ikhwan Safaa', was founded by a group of young men of Yemeni origins. In the 1920s and 1930s, this elite musical form started to be practiced in the Ng'ambo neighbourhoods, giving voice to the protests against the social injustices suffered by the lower classes and particularly by women, with the support of the colonial judiciary system, like in the songs (*nyimbo*) performed by the famous singer Siti binti Saad (Aiello 2006).

⁷ After the revolution of 1964, the oldest *taarab* club in the islands 'Ikhwan Safaa' was renamed Malindi Branch because of the neighbourhood in which the closest ASP (Afro Shirazi Party) was located (Fair 2002: 64).

In spite of his age, Haji Gora Haji has continued to contribute to the contemporary cultural scene, to reflect on present society and to express himself creatively. Besides poetry, he has written one short novel, *Siri ya Ging'ingi* ("The secret of Ging'ingi," 2009), an unpublished autobiography entitled *Maisha Yangu. 1993-2001* ("My life. 1993-2001"), and some children's books which were published in Tanzania with the support of the Children's Book Project (in Swahili *Mradi wa Vitabu vya Watoto*), launched in 1991 and financed by a number of international donors such as CODE (*Canadian Organisation for Development through Education*), SIDA (*Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency*), British Council, etc. (Aiello Traore 2013: 50). Haji's children's works include, among others, *Nahodha Chui* ("Captain leopard;" Oxford University Press, 2004), *Ujanja wa Sungura* ("The cunning of the hare;" Oxford University Press, 2004), *Kunganyira* (E&D, 2004), *Jogoo na Kanga* ("The cock and the guinea fowl;" E&D, 2003).

Haji Gora Haji is also the author of a Tumbatu-Swahili lexicon (*Kamusi ya Kitumbatu*, Haji 2006) and collaborated with lexicographers on the publication of *Kamusi la Lahaja la Kitumbatu* ("Dictionary of the Kitumbatu dialect," 2012), published by *Baraza la Kiswahili la Zanzibar* (Zanzibar Swahili Council).

Irene Brunotti and I had already had the opportunity to meet the poet because of our previous doctoral research, respectively on ngoma and taarab performances, and therefore, when we heard about Haji Gora Haji's wish to publish his latest collection of poems entitled *Shuwari* ("The calm"), we decided to prepare the above-mentioned publishing project.

During the process of editing and translating *Shuwari*, the aspect that I found amazing and challenging in his poetry was the extreme originality of his handling of the Swahili language, cultural repertoires and natural imagery, all elements which are essential parts of his long-lasting dialogue with other Swahili poets and with the readers/listeners of the poems, as I will elaborate in the following pages.

2. Language use in *Shuwari*

In his compositions, Haji Gora Haji displays a distinctive combination of *Kiunguja* (Unguja dialect) and a number of vernacular features deriving prevalently from *Kitumbatu*, the dialect spoken on his native island of Tumbatu. Only one poem, *Ukulivu* (in standard Swahili *uvivu* "laziness"), is written entirely in *Kitumbatu*.

Kiunguja is a variety of Swahili, a Southern dialect with a Northern dialect overlay (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 12) that is spoken in Zanzibar town and in the surrounding area of Unguja,⁸ the main island in the Zanzibari archipelago, which is formed of Unguja, Pemba, Tumbatu and some other small islets. During colonial times, it was chosen by the East African Swahili Committee as the basis for the development of a standard form of Swahili (*Kiswahili sanifu*; Whiteley 1969: 79-80).

Despite being the basis of Standard Swahili (SS in short), the Unguja dialect presents some specificities which are displayed in many poetry and prose works by Zanzibari authors. These include the insertion or deletion of the semi-vowels *y* and *w*, the frequent elision or contraction of vowels, the use of *-engine* (SS *-ingine* “another, other”), the generalisation of the relative particle *-o-*, the marker of the relative future *-ta-* (SS *-taka-*), the marker of the negative future *-to-* (SS *-ta-*), etc. (Bertoncini Zúbková 1987: 134-5). All these characteristics can be found in the *Shuwari* collection, starting with the insertion of the semi-vowel *y*, especially in the verbs ending with *-ia* and *-ea* in SS. For instance, in the poem *Mapishi 1* (“Cookery 1;” Haji 2019: 42), we find, among others, the forms *kutokeya* (SS *kutokea* “to appear”), *alofikiya* (SS *aliyefikia* “who arrived”) and *zilotimiya* (SS *zilizotimia* “which are accomplished”). The addition of the semi-vowel *w* between two vowels (of which one is *u* or *o*) can also be noticed in many cases, for instance in the forms *rajuwa* (SS *rajua* “hope”), *asotambuwa* (SS *asiyetambua* “who doesn’t recognize”) and *kilopunguwa* (*kilichopungua* “which has decreased”), which appear in the poem *Afrika* (“Africa;” Haji 2019: 34). In some of the above-mentioned examples, two other characteristics of the Unguja dialect can be noted, in particular the use of the general relative particle *-o-* instead of the specific class agreements and the loss of the vowel preceding the relative. Additional instances of these co-occurring phenomena may be found throughout the poetic collection, for example, we find *niloziandika* (SS *nilizoziandika* “which I wrote”) in the poem *Mwiba* (“Thorn;” Haji 2019: 76) and the forms *yasokuwa* (SS *yasiyokuwa* “which are not”) and *yasoidadika* (SS *yasiyoidadika* “which are not numerable; innumerable”) in *Bahari* (“Ocean;” Haji 2019: 90). The vowel *u* is frequently deleted, in forms like *kunifatafata* (SS *kunifuatafuata* “to follow me insistently”) in the poem *Hunipati* (“You don’t catch me;” Haji 2019: 53), *kifatilie* (SS *kifuatilie* “follow it”) in the poem *Asili yako ni bora* (“Your heritage is best;” Haji 2019: 87), etc. The use of *-engine* (SS *-ingine*) can also be found in the *diwani*, in forms like *mwengine* (“another person”), for instance in *Kila Kunguru Moga* (“Every cautious crow;” Haji 2019: 48) and *Si*

⁸ The Unguja dialect was originally spoken in Zanzibar town and its environs. With the rise of Zanzibari political and economic power in the 18th and 19th centuries, it spread widely across central Zanzibar island, Pemba, southern Mafia, Kilwa and the adjoining mainland coast. Subsequently, it was carried much farther across the mainland to trading centres such as Tabora, Mwanza and Ujiji (currently in Tanzania), and into areas which are now a part of DR Congo (Kivu and Maniema; Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 12).

makofi na viboko (“Not slaps and whips;” Haji 2019: 85), or *kwengine* (“somewhere else”) in *Hupendwa Baada ya Kufa* (“Loved after dying;” Haji 2019: 93).

The specificities of the future tense in the Unguja dialect are also present in the *Shuwari* collection, i.e. the marker of the relative future *-ta-* (instead of the SS *-taka-*), which appears in forms like *wataosimama* (SS *watakaosimama* “those who will stand”) in the poem *Tuwasomeshe watoto* (“Let’s educate the children;” Haji 2019: 37) and *ataokweleza* (SS *atakayepanda* “who will climb”) in the poem *Siku ya kifo cha nyani* (“The day of the baboon’s death;” Haji 2019: 78). Furthermore, the marker of the negative future *-to-* (instead of the SS *-ta-*), is recognisable in forms like *sitokataa* (SS *sitakataa* “I will not refuse”), which appears in the poem *Kwa kila kunguru moga* (Haji 2019: 48), and *hutonipata* (SS *hutanipata* “you will not catch me”) in the poem *Hunipati* (Haji 2019: 53).

In his poems, Haji Gora Haji intermingles the use of *Kiunguja*, whose principal peculiar differences from Standard Swahili were presented above, with some elements of his mother tongue *Kitumbatu*, a Southern dialect of Swahili which is mainly spoken on Tumbatu island (off the north-west tip of Unguja/Zanzibar island) and on the adjoining parts of Zanzibar island around Mkokotoni bay (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 11). There are also Tumbatu speaking migrants in Zanzibar Town, on southern Pemba, on Mafia and on the mainland coast north of Tanga. Influences of the Tumbatu dialect can be found in the *Shuwari* collection at various linguistic levels. The most striking phonological characteristic of *Kitumbatu* which appears in the poetic collection is that the SS sounds *th*, *dh* and *gh* (/θ/, /ð/, /ɣ/), of Arabic origin, are pronounced respectively as *s*, *z* and *h* (Bakari 2015: 59). In the *Shuwari* anthology, many examples of this phenomenon can be discovered, like *mazara* (SS *madhara* “damage”), *-sibitisha* (SS *-thibitisha* “confirm”), *-zuru* (SS *-dhuru* “to hurt”), *hasiya* (SS *ghasia* “chaos”).⁹ Another example of this is the following stanza from the poem *Mwiba* (“Thorn;” Haji 2019: 72-73; English translation: 201-202), where we find forms in *Kitumbatu* such as *zihaka* (SS *dhihaka*) and *mzarau* (SS *mdharau*):

<i>Mguu huota tende, si kwa kua ni zihaka</i>	The leg gets badly swollen, and this is not a joke
<i>Penye mwiba usitende, unyayo kuubandika</i>	Where there is a thorn, do not set your foot
<i>Utakuhasiri punde, ubaki kuyayatika</i>	It will hurt you at once, leaving you writhing

⁹ Respectively in the poems *Sidumbe* (“Don’t agree”), *Ukalyiona Bwaa Hono Bwe* (“If you see *bwa*, you won’t see *bwe*”), *Kwa herini* (“Goodbye”), and *Mazimwi* (“Ogres;” Haji 2019: 65; 61; 64; 78).

Kila mzarau mwiba, mguu huota tende

Whoever ignores a thorn gets a badly
swollen leg

Otherwise, the poet closely follows *Kiunguja* phonology and there are only traces of other typical traits of *Kitumbatu* in *Shuwari*, such as the palatalisation of *s* (*sh*)¹⁰ in the word *shindano* (SS *sindano* “syringe”) in the poem *Miujiza* (“Miracles;” Haji 2019: 92), or, at a morpho-phonological level, the loss of the class 5 prefix *ji-* (Bakari 2015: 66), for instance in the form *bwe* (SS *jiwe* “stone”) in the poem *Ukaliyona Bwaa Hono Bwe* (“If you see *bwa*, you won’t see *bwe*;” Haji 2019: 61).

With regard the verbal morphology, it is also possible to identify some typical forms of *Kitumbatu* which diverge from *Kiunguja*, such as *satumia* (SS *nitatumia*, “I will use”), which appears in the third stanza of the poem *Kwa kila kunguru moga* (“Every cautious crow”) (Haji 2019: 48; English translation: 176):

Cheo changu satumia, kwa jamii kuifunza

My status I use, to instruct the
community

Pawe na kuiteteya, na hilo nitafanyiza

It needs to be defended, and this I will do

Wengine wakikosea, katu sitawaneneza

If others err, never will I advise them

Kwa kila kunguru moga, hukimbiza ubawawe

Every cowardly crow, its wings would
protect

The verbal marker for the future in *Kitumbatu* is *-cha-* (SS *-ta-*). For instance, the conjugation (1st, 2nd and 3rd person singular and plural) of the future tense *kuja* (“to come”) is the following (Bakiza 2012: IV): *miye sakuja, weye uchakuja, veye kachakuja, suye tuchakuja, nyuye mchakuja, veo wachakuja* (SS *mimi nitakuja, wewe utakuja, yeye atakuja, sisi tutakuja, nyinyi mtakuja, wao watakuja*). It can also be seen that the subject prefix of the third person is *ka-*, a characteristic which it shares with other Southern dialects (including *Kipemba*) (Bertoncini Zúbková 2000: 53), and that the personal pronouns are different from Standard Swahili. The pronoun *veo* (“they,” SS *wao*) appears once in the collection, in the poem *Hodi* (“May I come in?” – when entering a house; Haji 2019: 61).

Another phenomenon which differentiates *Kitumbatu* from *Kiunguja* is the first person singular in the narrative past, where the combination of the subject prefix *ni-* with the verbal marker *-ka-* generates *ha-*, as in the form *hasafiri* (SS *nikasafiri* “and I travelled”), in the poem *Hodi* (Haji 2019: 60) or

¹⁰ Much evidence of this phenomenon can be found in the dictionary of *Kitumbatu* (BAKIZA 2012), in entries such as *shikio* (SS *sikio* “ear”), *shirikali* (SS *serikali* “government”), etc.

hafika (SS *nikafika* “and I arrived”), which appears in the first stanza of the poem *Ukaliyona Bwaa Hono Bwe* (“If you see *bwa*, you won’t see *bwe*,” Haji 2019: 61):

<i>Niliifanya ziara, kisiwa Ndeme hafika</i>	I made a visit, and arrived in Ndeme ¹¹
<i>Nyazili Kidikobera, Gomani haizunguuka</i>	I started in Kidikobera, and went round Gomani
<i>Uvivini henda mara, nilipokwisha henda Chwaka</i>	To Uvivini I went, and then to Chwaka
<i>Kuonana na wakubwa, wakanambiya niseme</i>	To meet the elders, who told me to speak

In the same poem, another dialectal feature of *Kitumbatu* (which is shared by some varieties of *Kipemba*; Bertoncini Zúbková 2000: 54) can be found, namely the construction of the negative conjugation of the present tense through vowel harmony, displayed in the verbal form *hono* (SS *huoni* “you don’t see”), first person singular of the negative present tense of the verb *-ona* (“see”).

Finally, at the level of the lexicon, we find numerous *Kitumbatu* words which are not present in Standard Swahili, such as *-firimba* (SS *-vuruga* “disarrange”), *-dumba* (SS *-kubali* “accept, agree”), *msururu* (SS *safu* “row”), *-danda* (SS *-choma* “pierce, burn”), *vukuto* (SS *joto* “heat”), *uyada* (SS *utamu* “good taste”), *-soza* (SS *-maliza* “finish”), *-yayatika* (SS *kulia sana kwa sababu ya maumivu* “to cry loudly because of pain”).¹²

The above-mentioned vernacular features may even be difficult for many Swahili-speaking readers. Therefore, when editing the poetry collection, a glossary (*sherehe*) including both *Kitumbatu* and some non-standard *Kiunguja* forms as they appear in the collection *Shuwari*, was inserted after the poems.

Furthermore, it should be stressed here that the poet does not use *Kitumbatu* forms in a schematic, predictable way. Rather, they may be regarded as variations which are combined with *Kiunguja* forms for artistic purposes, in order to better fit the “soundscape” and/or the rhyme pattern of the poems, and sometimes to emphasise the local dimension of the discourse, something that will be elaborated upon in the following pages.

¹¹ Old name of Tumbatu island (BAKIZA 2012: 90).

¹² Respectively in the poems *Shuwari*; *Afrika* and *Sidumbe*; *Honywa Honywa*; *Jua ladanda*; *Hapana*; *Yasoza Hayako Tena* (and others); *Sinda*; *Mwiba* (Haji 2019: 33; 34/65; 40; 44; 45; 47; 58; 72).

3. Language, poetry and cultural identity

The language variety presented in the previous section is a fundamental part of Haji Gora Haji’s rich poetic language, which also includes other features of Swahili poetry, such as the deletion of the subject marker¹³ (like *u-* in the second person of the subjunctive), the choice of rare/poetic terms such as *ja* (“like”), the contraction of nouns with possessives, like *sikuye* (*siku yake*), *maanaye* (*maana yake*), *neemaze* (*neema zake*)¹⁴, and the use of the old *ile*-perfect deriving from the poetic tradition of Northern Swahili dialects. These traits were stylised and popularised in the 1950s by Kaluta Amri Abedi in his manual of poetic composition for a wider audience, *Sheria za kutunga mashairi na Diwani ya Amri* (1954: 16-43), which was written in response to the widespread publication of poetry in newspapers and books in order to instruct the would-be poets.

As Mohamed Hassan Abdulaziz (1979: 86) pointed out in his study on the verses of Muyaka bin Haji, the skilful exploitation of the language – including the use of archaisms, different varieties of Swahili and foreign words, as well as the flexibility of the syntactic order – can be regarded, to some degree, as a resource employed by Swahili poets in order to counterbalance the rigidity of meter and rhyme structures. Furthermore, the *mashairi* genre¹⁵ invented by Muyaka, which constitutes the bulk of the *Shuwari* collection (and of modern Swahili poetry in general), a more secular form as opposed to the Swahili poetry prior to the nineteenth century, fully manifests the original, symbiotic relationship between orality and writing in Swahili poetry by incorporating many features of oral poetry, namely the use of colloquial and idiomatic language and the creation of euphony through various stylistic means such as lexical repetition, sound repetition, alliteration and rhyme (Khamis 1993: 724-726), as is shown henceforth through some examples from the compositions of Haji Gora Haji. For the poet, this playing with language represents not only a manifestation of the poet’s virtuosity, but also, very importantly, his commitment to preserving the range of people’s linguistic repertoires, since “your language is a richness” (*Lugha yako ni mali*; Interview with the poet, July 29, 2016). The use of the *mashairi* form in its most widespread typology, i.e. stanzas composed of four lines which are composed of two

¹³ For instance, *sije* instead of *usije* (“don’t come”) in the poem *Muhadhari* (“Be cautious of him”), and *sione* instead of *usione* (“don’t see”) in *Ukalyona Bwa Hono Bwe* (Haji 2019: 41; 59).

¹⁴ In Standard Swahili this process happens almost exclusively with kinship terms (Bertoncini Zubkova 1987: 48).

¹⁵ Following a definition which also takes into account possible variations, the *mashairi* are poems made of at least two stanzas, which are composed of an equal number of lines (usually four) divided into two parts, with the same internal and external rhymes (not forcefully central) in three first lines, and varying patterns of the last line. The number of syllables is commonly eight plus eight (with a caesura in the middle), but it can be slightly different, for instance six plus six or four plus eight (Shariff 1988: 49). This type of poetry is extremely popular: *mashairi* appear regularly in Swahili newspapers and radio programmes are devoted to them in Tanzania and Kenya (Topan 1974: 176).

eight-syllables hemistiches rhyming at the middle and at the end, with multiple variants concerning the last line (Amri Abedi 1954: 16-19), is not perceived by the poet as an artificial restriction of his artistry, but as an incentive for new verbal creations. According to him, “the responsibility of the poet implies some important things, first of all the language and the moulding of the words so that they lay well in rhyme and meter structures. That’s how it is” (*Wajibu wa mshairi kuna vitu muhimu awe navyo: kwanza lugha, na ufinyanzi wa maneno yaka vizuri kwenye vina na mizani. Hiyo ndo hali*; interview with the poet, July 30, 2016).

With regard to the rhyming schemes, Haji Gora Haji mainly employs two patterns: the scheme AB/AB/AB/BX, where X frequently coincides with A in the first stanza, and the last line often constitutes a refrain (sometimes with slight word variations), such as in *Honywa Honywa, Muhadhari, Mapishi I/II, Jua ladanda, Ulimi, Sinda, Ndege mjanja, Hodi, Kwaherini, Binadamu*, etc.; and the scheme AB/AB/AB/CD, where rhyme B is the same in the whole poem, and the last line is repeated in every stanza (occasionally with slight variations), such as in *Shuwari, Afirika, Tuwasomeshe Watoto, Ukulivu, Kila kunguru mwoga, Hakuna mganga huyo, Kero la binadamu, Sidumbe*, etc. In two poems, *Kinoo cha akili* and *Nena*, the last line is made up of 8 syllables and the scheme is AB/AB/AB/X.

Indeed, language is a fundamental concern in Haji Gora Haji’s poetics and a recurrent topic in his poems, amongst others *Ulimi* (“Tongue”), *Utamaduni hazina* (“Culture is treasure”), *Zambi za mdomo* (“The sins of the mouth”), *Nena* (“Speak;” Haji 2019: 46; 69; 96; 98). It is conceived of as both a means of communication to be handled with awareness and care (“Speak with care, sifting through words;” first line of the poem *Nena*), and as a vector of cultural identity, not merely conservative, but functional within the expression of the individual’s multiple identities, here exemplified by his personal way of interweaving varieties of Swahili, since “standard [Swahili] and dialect are like nose and mouth;”¹⁶ in other words, they are two things which are close to each other, diverse yet complementary. Haji Gora Haji has lived for many years in Zanzibar town, where he has been a witness to how the use of dialects tends to decline in an urban context, even amongst *Kitumbatu* speakers (BAKIZA 2012: iii), and especially amongst the younger generations (Bakari 2015: 52), to whom he addresses his warning in the poem *Ukaliyona bwa hono bwe* (“If you see *bwa* you won’t see *bwe*;” here the sixth stanza):

Kitumbatu nawe chako, kupokeya hukutaka

Your own Kitumbatu, you did not want
to learn

¹⁶ “*Sanifu na lahaja pua na mdomo.*” Interview with the poet, 29 July 2016. It should be clarified here that when Haji Gora Haji speaks of Standard Swahili (*sanifu*), he is actually referring to *Kiunguja*, as he has made clear in many conversations.

<i>Hukufikiya kiliko, kwako kilipeperuka</i>	You did not get to where it is, it just fluttered by you
<i>Utabaki pwekopweko, hili na lile kubaka</i>	You’ll stay lonely lonely, understanding only this and that
<i>Ukalyona bwa hono bwe, naapa si paka shume</i>	If you see bwa you won’t see bwe, ¹⁷ I swear it’s no male cat

His sense of responsibility with regard the preservation of language variety on the Islands has also been a prompt to Mzee Haji Gora Haji’s keen interest in lexicography, as seen in the introduction, leading to the publication of his Tumbatu lexicon and his participation in the lexicographic work of BAKIZA (acknowledgment in BAKIZA 2012: vi).

Furthermore, his attitude to the language is also deployed in the frequent use of idioms and, especially, of sayings and proverbs from the Islands. These are quoted/evoked in the title and/or in the refrain of numerous poems, like *Kwa kila kunguru moga* (“Every cautious crow”), *Ndege mjanja* (“The cunning bird”), *Dua ya kuku* (“The chicken’s prayer”), *Siku ya kifo cha nyani* (“The day of the baboon’s death,” Haji 2019: 48; 60; 75; 78), etc., where they constitute the lyrical nucleus and are present in many others. The statements are often associated with the wisdom of the *wahenga* (“ancestors:” “The ancestors are the experts, in sayings that are wise” - *Wahenga ndio viranja, kwa semi zenye upevu*, first line of the poem *Ndege mjanja*; Haji 2019: 60) and, thus, with the kind of knowledge transmitted by the elders, which can be useful in orientating people’s behaviour within the community. However, the didactic use of Swahili sayings and proverbs is never simplistic nor straightforward (Lodhi 1990: 113) since the elliptical and metaphorical shape of this verbal genre can be dynamically adapted to various situations and communicative functions. This is even more evident in literary forms such as poems,¹⁸ where sayings and proverbs can be further moulded by the poet in the course the stanzas and enriched by different figurative expressions. For instance, in the poem *Ulimi* (“Tongue”), the poet starts by paraphrasing a well-known saying *Kheri kujikwaa kidole kuliko kujikwaa ulimi* “Better to stumble over your toe than to stumble over your tongue” (see BAKIZA 2010: 479), in order to advise people to use language cleverly and ethically, and then goes on by making use of two devices, i.e. a personification

¹⁷ *Bwa* is the Tumbatu word for SS *mbwa* (“dog”), *bwe* is in SS *jiwe* (“stone”).

¹⁸ According to Lodhi (in Kalugila and Lodhi 1980: 77-83), the ancient verbal art of Swahili proverbs (*methali/mithali*) has a deeply rooted interconnection with poetry, since most proverbs show a metric structure of 6, 8, 12 or 16 syllables (*mizani*), not uncommonly with a caesura (*kituo*) marked by internal and final rhyme, and have been used by poets within the Swahili tradition for a long time. This, the author exemplifies through many examples, from *Al Inkishafi* to poems from Ustaadh Bhalo, Mathias Mnyampala, D. P. Massamba, and A. Abdalla.

(as the tongue “has kicking and blows”) and a sensorial metaphor (“if you give it a taste of aloe,” if you let it be bitter, harsh), which reinforce his message by underlining the equivalence between words and (potentially dangerous) actions. The personification is continued in the last stanza (“when it slips”) and other sensorial metaphors are added, this time including olfactory and tactile aspects (“it will cause you to stink;” “pushing you to lay down in the sand”):

<i>Kukwaa wako ulimi, bora ukwae kidole</i>	To stumble with your tongue, better stumble with your toe
<i>Wahenga kwa zao semi, hukutungukiya ndwele</i>	The ancestors through their sayings, would heal illness
<i>Ukafikwa na mughumi, na kuliya kwa kelele</i>	When you are caught up in confusion, and are sobbing out loud
<i>Ulimi uuhofile, una mateke na ngumi</i>	Be afraid of the tongue, it has kicking and blows
<i>Kwa kalamu nakariri, ya ulimi niwambile</i>	In pen I insist, on telling you about the tongue
<i>Kutumia vizuri, hilo sheti utambule</i>	To use it well, this you must know
<i>Kiurambisha sibiri, utajutiya milele</i>	If you give it a taste of aloe, you will regret it forever
<i>Ulimi uuhofile, una mateke na ngumi</i>	Be afraid of the tongue, it has kicking and blows
<i>Ulimi hukupandisha, cheoni unyanyukile</i>	The tongue can elevate you, enhancing your status
<i>Unapoutelezesha, hukunukisha ukele</i>	When it slips, it will cause you to stink
<i>Punde hukuteremsha, penye mchanga ulale</i>	Suddenly pushing you to lay down in the sand
<i>Ulimi uuhofile, una mateke na ngumi</i>	Be afraid of the tongue, it has kicking and fists

In this poem, we can also find some alliterations, such as “*kuliya kwa kelele*” (“sobbing out loud”) and “*Kwa kalamu nakariri*” (“in pen I insist”). The perceptual, sensorial dimension which characterises the whole poem is amplified through the creation of phonic associations, for instance the noun *kelele* (“noise, din”) is connected, through the repetition of the consonants *k* and *l* and of the vowel *e*, to *ukele* (“stink, nauseate”). In this way, the poet reinforces the relationship between two ideas, namely regret

after having talked badly and haphazardly and the unpleasant personal and social implications of this, and made them very physical by involving two sensorial abilities, i.e. the auditory and the olfactory. From this perspective, it can be seen that the lexical choices of Haji Gora Haji with regard to Swahili varieties, i.e. the use of *Kiunguja* or *Kitumbatu* forms (like *mughumi*, *ukele*, *sibiri* etc.), are not fortuitous, but respond to specific poetic exigencies in terms of phono-symbolic and aesthetic effects of the text. Vowel homophony also recurs through the poem and, in particular, can be noticed in the refrain “*Ulimi uuhofile, una mateke na ngumi*,” where the repetition of the sound *u* transmits to the reader the association between the language (*ulimi*), its fearfulness (*uuhofile*) and its potential violence (*ngumi*).

The repetition of sounds is also part of another typical poetic device which is often employed by Haji Gora Haji, i.e. the duplication of words (for instance, opening and closing a stanza with the same word, like in *Mapishi I*, or repeating the last hemistich of one stanza at the beginning of the following one, like in *Kwa kila kunguru moga* and of lines (in the refrains). Moreover, as is visible in poems such as *Hodi*, *Sidumbe*, *Nena*, *Sinda* and *Zambi za mdomo*, the poet often makes use of a kind of poem with repetitions (*mashairi ya takariri*) which is very popular in Swahili poetry¹⁹, i.e. poems based on anaphora, in other words the repetition of the first word of the poem (often in an emphatic position) in all the lines of the stanza (or of the whole poem; see Bertoncini Zúbková 2000b: 12), thus creating a repetitive, insistent rhythm like in the poem *Zambi za mdomo* (Haji 2019: 96; English translation: 222):

<i>Mdomo mazambi yake, mtiririko mzima</i>	The sins of the mouth flow and flow
<i>Mdomo faraja yake, ni kule kusemasema</i>	What makes the mouth happy, is to keep on talking
<i>Mdomo ifahamike, ndilo dimbwi la nakama</i>	Let it be known that the mouth is a source of devastation
<i>Yateuwe ya kusema, una asari mdomo</i>	Choose your words carefully, the mouth makes an impact
<i>Mdomo hautambuwi, lipi ovu lipi jema</i>	The mouth doesn’t recognize what’s evil, what’s good
<i>Mdomo hauteuwi, lipi la kuweka nyuma</i>	The mouth doesn’t choose what to hold back
<i>Mdomo hausitawi, bila kutowa kalima</i>	The mouth doesn’t thrive without

¹⁹ Anaphora is also often used by the Swahili poets to illustrate the different meanings of homonym words (Bertoncini Zúbková 2000b: 12).

	producing words
<i>Yateuwe ya kusema, una asari mdomo</i>	Choose your words carefully, the mouth makes an impact
<i>Mdomo hauzarau, ya masikiyo kugema</i>	The mouth doesn't ignore what the ears glean
<i>Mdomo hautambu, kutenda zake huduma</i>	The mouth doesn't recognize, how to serve its purpose
<i>Mdomo ukinukuu, nao hutangaza hima</i>	If you repeat what you've heard, another's mouth will publicize it fast
<i>Yateuwe ya kusema, una asari mdomo</i>	Choose your words carefully, the mouth makes an impact
<i>Mdomo ujuwe nao, una uovu na wema</i>	You should know that the mouth has its malice and goodness
<i>Mdomo tambua nao, hukuchimbiya kisima</i>	The mouth, know it too, digs a well you'll fall into
<i>Mdomo waubezao, kwa ghafula wanazama</i>	Those who scorn the mouth will suddenly drown
<i>Yateuwe ya kusema, una asari mdomo</i>	Choose your words carefully, the mouth makes an impact
<i>Mdomo huliwafiki, lile ambalo lavuma</i>	The mouth accepts the rumors that fly
<i>Mdomo kwa marafiki, wengine huwa si wema</i>	Use your mouth with friends, not with others who aren't kind
<i>Mdomo hukuhiliki, hunusuriki daima</i>	The mouth can destroy you, you will never be saved
<i>Yateuwe ya kusema, una asari mdomo</i>	Choose your words carefully, the mouth makes an impact

Moreover, the quite obsessive rhythm of the verses is emphasised by rhyme, by the presence of an identical refrain (Haji Gora Haji uses a refrain with variations in other poems), by word duplication (*kusemasema; lipi - lipi*) and sound repetition, such as the *l* alliteration in *lile ambalo lavuma*, the *u* homophony in *una uovu na wema* (the *w* of *wema* is pronounced [u]) and the vowel series in the refrain (alternance of “a” and “u”), where the poet condenses his didactic warning about the individual and social impact (*asari* in *Kitumbatu*, *SS athari*) of human verbal expression (and gossiping).

4. Relationality and dialogicity in H. Gora Haji’s poems

The poet’s self-perception as an educator, as observed in the previous pages, originates in his strong commitment “to piercingly reflect and debate on human behavior using a variety of images and imageries that address the audience, disturbing it as much as waking it up” (Brunotti 2019: 241). Thus, Haji Gora Haji’s poems always have a strong relational dimension, since, in the words of Abdilatif Abdalla on poets’ sense of belonging, “when he/she speaks about him/herself, the poet is at the same time addressing his/her community and would like what he/she says to be the breath of his/her community.”²⁰

Furthermore, Haji Gora Haji’s poems are meant not only to be read/listened to and interpreted by the audience,²¹ but often also to elicit poetic answers/reactions and to engage in a sort of discursive “duel” with other poets, a feature which characterises Swahili poetry and has been given different terms, such as *malumbano*, *kujibizana* or *mashindano* (see a.o. Shariff 1988; Bierstecker 1996; Samsom 1996). This form of challenging composition, which is shared with a number of poets from different places (Zanzibar, Kilwa, Dar es Salaam, etc.), is very explicit in those *mashairi* which raise a question, such as *Bata - swala* (“The duck – a question;” Haji 2019: 55), and also in those poems which propose a riddle or enigma,²² such as *Honywa Honywa*²³ (Haji 2019: 40) which was replied to by Amiri Sudi Andanenga, also known as *Sauti ya Kiza* (“The voice of darkness”). This latter poem was answered by a poet from Donge (in the northern region of Zanzibar Island; Haji Gora Haji no longer remembers this poet’s name), and solicited a further comment from Haji Gora Haji: *Bata - jawabu* (“The duck – a reply”) (Haji 2019: 57). A number of poems in this collection are essentially comments or replies to other poems. In some cases, the author openly cites the poet to whom he is addressing his poem, such as in *Hapana* (“There’s none;” Haji 2019: 45), which is a response to Hashil’s poem *Nani wa kuvishwa taji, shehe mume na jambazi* (“Who is worthy of the crown, the shehe, the husband or the robber;” Hashil 2009: 57), or in *Siirushie matope* (“Don’t defame;” Haji 2019: 94), which answers the poem *Wapenda mishikaki*

²⁰ “[...] azungumzapo jambo la nafsi yake, mshairi huyo yataka wakati huo huo awe yuwazungumza na nafsi ya jamii yake, na ayasemayo yawe ni pumzi za jamii yake hiyo” (Abdalla 2011: xxvii).

²¹ Many of Haji Gora Haji’s compositions were meant to be sung at *ngoma* or *taarab* performances; some of them also appear in this collection, such as *Ukulivu*, *Hunipati*, *Pendo la kulazimisha*, *Bahari*. It should also be remembered here that Haji Gora Haji, especially in his youth, was also a well-known author and performer of *ngoma* (Samsom 1999: 26).

²² This is a very old tradition in Swahili poetry. *Mashairi* which present an enigma, “tying up an animal and untying it” (*kufunga na kufungua nyama*) have probably originated in Lamu, where they were recited during the *gungu* ceremonies (Abdulaziz 1979: 51).

²³ In *Kitumbatu* the word *honywahonywa* means “someone with a big, but weak body” (*mtu mwenye umbile kubwa lakini mwili wake mregevu*) (BAKIZA 2012: 40).

(“Those who love shish kebabs”) by Amri Haji. The poet can sometimes be quite sharp, like in *Kilikoliya king’ora* (whose refrain is: *Kwenye ramani ya tungo, Mwinyi akujua nani?* “In the world of poetry, who knows you Mwinyi;” Haji 2019: 77) or in *Si makofi na viboko* (“Not slaps and whips”), where he contradicts the very same poet, Sheikh Mwinyi Avumaye from Dar es Salaam, who wrote the poem *Pigo la mke si vazi* (“The punishment for a wife is not a cloth”):

<i>Ni makofi na viboko, pigo la mke si vazi</i>	It’s slaps and whips, the right beating for a wife is not clothing
<i>Kusudia nite nyoko, na kunitusi wazazi</i>	She intends to insult me and offend my parents
<i>Halafu nimpe heko, kwa doti mekuwa chizi</i>	Should then I congratulate her, drive her crazy with a <i>kanga</i> ? ²⁴
<i>Pigo la mke si vazi, ni makofi na viboko</i>	The right beating for a wife is not clothing, it’s slaps and whips
[...]	
<i>Mke hupigwa na fimbo, na makofi jozi jozi</i>	A wife is beaten with a cane, and slap after slap
<i>Tena akizidi mambo, nyoka achanike ngozi</i>	If she exaggerates, let’s cut the skin off the snake
<i>Siyo kanga za mafumbo, bangili na podozi</i>	Not with <i>kanga</i> , bracelets and cosmetics
<i>Pigo la mke si vazi, ni makofi na viboko</i> ²⁵	The right beating for a wife is not clothing, it’s slaps and whips ²⁶

²⁴ *Kangas* are sold as a pair called *doti*. “The *kanga* is a widely spread printed cloth, mainly used by women as a dress the cloth measures ca 110 cm in height and 150 in length. It is defined by a border (*pindo*), a central field (*mji*) and usually contains on the lower third a printed proverbial inscription (*jina*). We know that it was “invented” around the 1880s in Zanzibar and imported from Europe in this form, i. e. already imprinted with patterns and inscription. It played an important role in the emancipation of slaves and their integration into the Muslim Swahili community of the East African coast. [...] the *kanga* allows for the communication of the unspeakable, whereby the interactants cannot be held responsible for their interaction. [...] the *kanga* may be an expression of the difficulties of a society that feels threatened from within by the power of the powerless. [...] provocatively one may say that it is a specific feature of this society that it cannot resolve this threat, but rather “invents” a communicative genre that establishes and enacts the conflict between social power and powerlessness.” (Beck 2001: 157, 166 and 167)

²⁵ First and third stanza of the poem. The text was provided by Haji Gora Haji (his handwritten copy).

²⁶ My translation.

Haji Gora Haji openly criticises Sheikh Mwinyi Avumaye (Haji 2019: 84-85; English translation: 217-218):

<i>Shehe Mwinyi Avumaye, siwafiki wazo lako</i>	Sheikh Mwinyi Avumaye, I disagree with your idea
<i>Kwa kila aolewae, makofi silo tambiko</i>	For every bride, slaps are not the proper offering
<i>Pigo la mke avae, vizuri kila aliko</i>	The right beating for a wife is being wonderfully dressed, wherever she is
<i>Si makofi na viboko, pigo la mke kivazi</i>	Not with slaps and whips, the right beating for a wife is clothing
<i>Mke hupigwa kwa kanga, na kila yanayo heko</i>	A wife is beaten with a gift of <i>kanga</i> , and everything delightful
<i>Ni vizuri kumjenga, kwa mazuri matamko</i>	It’s good to treat her, with pleasant speech
<i>Utapomuengaenga, hatamani kwa mwenzako</i>	Once you pamper her, she won’t desire anything from another man
<i>Si makofi na viboko, pigo la mke ni vazi</i>	Not with slaps and whips, the right beating for a wife is clothing
<i>Hata kama hukutusi, muoneshe mema yako</i>	Even if she offends you, show her your mercy
<i>Matumizi na libasi, umpe kwa ongezeko</i>	An allowance and garments, give her more and even more
<i>Ukimueleza basi, yabaki manung’uniko</i>	If you chide her, let it be with grumbling
<i>Si makofi na viboko, pigo la mke ni vazi</i>	Not with slaps and whips, the right beating for a wife is clothing
<i>Pindi ukifumaniya, aucheza mdundiko</i>	If you ever catch her dancing the <i>mdundiko</i>
<i>Ujue kakusudiya, kuirusha roho yako</i>	Know what she intends, to hurl your soul away
<i>Usije mng’ang’aniya, mwache ende atakako</i>	Don’t go clinging to her, let her go where she will
<i>Si makofi na viboko, pigo la mke ni vazi</i>	Not with slaps and whips, the right beating for a wife is clothing

<i>Makofi jozi kwa jozi, mbali ngumi na viboko</i>	Slap after slap, not to mention fists and whips
<i>Mwanamke kumuhizi, unaikiuka miko</i>	By disgracing a woman, you break a taboo
<i>Hata punda mchukuzi, hapewi hivyo vituko</i>	Even a donkey carrying loads, isn't treated in this way
<i>Si makofi na viboko, pigo la mke ni vazi</i>	Not with slaps and whips, the right beating for a wife is clothing
<i>Kwa zilivyo dasturi, ndani ya mtiririko</i>	With customs as they are, in the flow of things
<i>Haitokuwa fakhari, kumpiga mke wako</i>	There will be no pride, in beating your wife
<i>Na iwapo hakukiri, duniani wanaliko</i>	And if she doesn't accept you, in the world there are still others
<i>Si makofi na viboko, pigo la mke ni vazi</i>	Not with slaps and whips, the right beating for a wife is clothing
<i>Siwafundishe vijana, yasokuwa na mashiko</i>	Don't teach young people, things with no sound basis
<i>Katu sio uungwana, kuendeleza vituko</i>	It is never decent, to go on with misdeeds
<i>Akiwa ni wako mwana, huwaje moyoni mwako</i>	How would you feel in your heart, if it were your own child
<i>Si makofi na viboko, pigo la mke ni vazi</i>	Not with slaps and whips, the right beating for a wife is clothing
<i>Shehe watangaza vita, kuwachongea wenzako</i>	Sheikh you are declaring war, endangering others
<i>Waume wenye matata, kwa maelekezo yako</i>	Troublesome-men, according to your instructions
<i>Wake zao watajuta, kwa kupata masumbuko</i>	Their wives will lament, for the misery they face
<i>Si makofi na viboko, pigo la mke ni vazi</i>	Not with slaps and whips, the right beating for a wife is clothing

<i>Shehe unategemewa, mwambao na kwengineko</i>	Sheikh, people rely on you, on the coast and elsewhere
<i>Kila unalotongowa, kwa mwengine ilimiko</i>	Everything you say, others take as knowledge
<i>Jaribu kujikosowa, kwenye yako matamko</i>	Try to identify the errors in the statements that you make
<i>Si makofi na viboko, pigo la mke ni vazi</i>	Not with slaps and whips, the right beating for a wife is clothing

In this case, Haji Gora Haji answers Sheikh Mwinyi Avumaye very explicitly, naming the poet in the very first stanza. He uses a *shairi* with the same rhyming pattern employed by Sheikh Mwinyi Avumaye, i.e. the scheme AB/AB/AB/BX,²⁷ and plays with the source text in order to attain an efficacious message. Indeed, the poet overturns the refrain by reversing its two hemistichs (*Pigo la mke si vazi* and *ni makofi na viboko*) within his composition and by switching *ni*, the affirmative, and *si*, the negative copulas. Furthermore, Haji Gora Haji makes many precise references to Avumaye’s text in his quatrain, echoing his lexicon (words such as *heko*, *kanga*, *kusudiya*, *kutusi* etc.) and sometimes quoting the hemistichs literally, as in “*Makofi jozi kwa jozi*” (“Slap after slap”), or by modifying them, for instance “*Mke hupigwa kwa kanga*” (“A wife is beaten with a [gift of] *kanga*”) instead of “*Mke hupigwa kwa fimbo*” (“A wife is beaten with a cane”). He replies to the aggressiveness of Avumaye’s text, underlined by the use of crude language (the vulgar term *nyoko* “your mother”) and violent imagery, like in *nyoka achanike ngozi* (“let’s cut the skin off the snake”), by utilising a gentle, elegant language. In contrast to Avumaye, who sees the relationship with a wife in terms of rewarding (*Ama panapo furaha, doti nne kila mwezi*²⁸ “if there is joy, four *doti* every month”) and punishing (*lakini penye karaha, kanga sio uamuzi* “but when there is disgust, a *kanga* is not the right decision;” *mke hupigwa kwa fimbo* “a wife is beaten with a cane,” etc.), Haji Gora Haji uses soft paternalism and openly criticises the instigation of violence against women, particularly by a poet who should be aware of the impact of his words (*Siwafundishe vijana, yasokuwa na mashiko* “Don’t teach young people, things with no sound basis”) and remember that every mistreated wife could be his own child. Moreover, he states that treating a wife well can prevent her disaffection, but if she prefers someone else, *Usije mng’ang’aniya, mwache ende atakako* (“Don’t go clinging

²⁷ The last line of each stanza (BX) constitutes the refrain in both compositions. In the poem of Sheikh Mwinyi Avumaye X coincides with A in the first stanza.

²⁸ First line of the last stanza of Avumaye’s poem (in Haji’s manuscript), the following quotation is the third line.

to her, let her go where she will”). Here, the poet refers to betrayal via the metaphor of local *ngoma* dancing, *mdundiko*.

In other cases, as in *Mapishi ndani ya chungu* (“*Chungu*²⁹ cooking;” Haji 2019: 73), which answers the question raised by Hashil Seif Hashil in the poem *Mapishi yepi matamu, sufuria au chungu?* (“What makes tasty food, the metal or the clay pot?” Hashil 2009: 61), texts do not make any open reference to the poem which elicited the response or, alternatively, are just allusive, as in *Kila Kunguru moga*, where he refers in the fifth stanza to another poet/poetess who irritated him:

<i>Kuna mwengine jueni, haraka alichomoza</i>	Know that another suddenly appeared
<i>Kama bwengo wa mavani, sauti akaipaza</i>	Like a <i>bwengo wa mavani</i> , ³⁰ and raised his voice
<i>Anachokoza nini, nibaki kujiuliza</i>	What does he aim to stir up, I keep asking myself
<i>Kwa kila kunguru moga, hukimbiza ubawawe</i>	Every cowardly crow guards its wings

As emerges from the above quotations, Haji Gora Haji’s poems stir up readers’ emotions and curiosity by combining plain and enigmatic language. In his compositions, Haji widely employs metaphors and allegories, mostly drawn from the rich local repository of proverbs and sayings, as seen above, and from the natural and cultural contexts of the Islands. Instances of this can be found in references to the environment of the Indian ocean in poems such as the *taarab* love lyrics *Bahari* (“Ocean;” Haji 2019: 90), *Sinda* (an edible sea creature which irritates the throat; Haji 2019: 58), *Ya meli si ya jahazi* (“What pertains to a ship is not for a dhow;” Haji 2019: 93), the cooking traditions of the Islands, as in *Mapishi 1* and *Mapishi 2*, *Mapishi ndani ya chungu*, the local *ngoma* varieties named in various poems, etc. As observed by Vierke (2012: 5-6), “poetic metaphors differ qualitatively from other metaphors, whose cognitive function of constructing analogies can be found in daily speech. These metaphors surprise because they have never or seldom been used before, and/or are placed in a collocation that is not expected, thus resulting in enigmatic imagery (*mafumbo*), which requires interpretation, but escapes easy understanding.” In Swahili verbal culture, and particularly in poetry, it is the artistically veiled, indirect message, which is particularly appreciated, not only because it protects the respectability of its producer (and in some instances even his/her security) and of the recipient, but precisely because

²⁹ *Chungu* is a clay pot, metal pots are called *sufuria*.

³⁰ Graveyard spirit.

of its allusiveness (Vierke 2012: 9), which allows it to tease and to stir people’s feelings, thoughts and reactions.

Since the publication of the collection *Kimbunga* (“The hurricane,” 1994), Haji Gora Haji has manifested in some of his poems a unique style of poetic imagery that is based on discordant elements (Sansom 1999: 28). This can be seen in *Kimbunga*, the homonym poem which opens the collection, where the hurricane uproots the baobabs yet leaves the palm trees, makes the big ships sink while saving the canoes and blows away the palaces, but leaves the huts in peace:

<i>Kimbunga mji wa Siyu, kilichowahi kufika</i>	A hurricane once arrived, in this town of Siu
<i>Si kwa yule wala huyu, ilikuwa patashika</i>	Not only for this person nor for that, it was chaos
<i>Kimeing’owa mibuyu, minazi kunusurika</i>	It uprooted the baobabs, but left the palm trees
<i>Nyoyo zilifadhaika</i>	The hearts were troubled ³¹

The kind of discordance which is presented by the author is a very peculiar one, as the poetic image is built upon metaphors where the analogue is not found in the state of /relations between natural elements, as is usual in Swahili poetry, but rather in their subversion, in their defamiliarisation. This poetic procedure has been continued into his subsequent production. In *Shuwari*, the poem that gives the title to the present collection, the calm wind between the changing monsoons has a huge destructive force, to the point of flattening the mountains:

<i>Shuwari ya maleleji, imeshangaza wahenga</i>	The calm of the changing winds has stunned the ancestors
<i>Kimya wake uvumaji, tafauti na kimbunga</i>	Its subdued murmur differs from the hurricane’s
<i>Lakini popotowaji, kutokana zake kunga</i>	But it brings destruction, given its hidden arts
<i>Iporomoshia milima, kugeuza tambarare</i>	It devastates the mountains making them flat lands
<i>Ilizuka aridhini, kuzagaa kwenye anga</i>	It rose up from the earth, to spread

³¹ Translation by R. Stephens, in Haji (1999: 2).

	across the sky
<i>Ushabihi wa tofani, kila kimoja kugonga</i>	Like a typhoon that hits everything
<i>Sinini wala sinini, hakuna kisichotinga</i>	Neither this nor that, nothing was unswayed
<i>Iporomoshha milima, kugeuza tambarare</i>	It devastates the mountains making them flat lands
<i>Haipulizi vuvuvu, ja kusi na mwanashanga</i>	It does not fiercely blow, like the south and the west winds
<i>Bali chake kinyamavu, sio mzaha naronga</i>	But its silence is no joke, I say
<i>Kimeleta uokovu, na kupeperusha janga,</i>	It has brought salvation and blown away disaster
<i>Iporomoshha milima, kugeuza tambarare</i>	It devastates the mountains making them flat lands
<i>Kwa kote ilifirimba, pwani na kwenye viunga</i>	It wrought destruction everywhere, along the shores and on the outskirts
<i>Ikavurugika myamba, na mawe yakawa unga</i>	It crushed the boulders, reducing rocks to dust
<i>Utahisi kama kwamba, kilobomowa mizinga</i>	You'd think cannons had dismantled them
<i>Iporomoshha milima, kugeuza tambarare</i>	It devastates the mountains making them flat lands

The poem very interestingly makes an intertextual allusion to the poem *Kimbunga* in the second line of the first stanza. Thus, the poet builds a sort of self-dialogue, since the poet enters into dialogue with his own composition and, at the same time, extends the discourse with his addressees by hinting that these two poems may be closely connected.³² Indeed, partially thanks to the rhyme which connects the words *maleleji*, *uvumaji* and *popotowaji*, the calm between the changing winds is associated here with

³² It should be remembered here that the text of *Kimbunga* (which circulated as *taarab* sung poetry before the publication of the homonymous collection) was interpreted politically by many Zanzibari people. As R. Samsom and S. Barwani (2019: 147) recall: "There was a time when "Mzee Kimbunga," as some people used to call him, was interrogated by the Department of Culture of the Government of Zanzibar, which tried to make him agree that the poem *Kimbunga* is about the event of 1964 known as the "revolution." Yet, the poet himself intensely refused to agree with them, stating: "This is how you read it and interpreted it, I personally didn't say that, I won't agree nor will I deny, all that I want to say is in my poems, I have nothing more to add."

what should naturally be its opposite, the hurricane, through its manifesting the same violence. The second stanza demonstrates this equivalence explicitly through a simile, *Ushabihi wa tofani, kila kimoja kugonga* (“like a typhoon that hits everything”), intensifying the destructive force of the typhoon through the rhythm created by the alliteration using *k* (and the repetition of the final vowel *a*) in the second hemistich. Moreover, this correspondence of destruction and immobility is beautifully condensed within the refrain *Iporomoshwa milima, kugeza tambarare* (“It devastates the mountains, making them flat lands”).³³

Furthermore, the two poems have not only their textual reference and ambiguous relationship of antonymy/identity in common, but also the very essence of their imagery: in both cases, meteorological phenomena are presented in a completely denaturalised form which generates a sense of confusion (“The hearts were troubled”) and astonishment (“[The calm] has stunned the ancestors”). We find the same kind of unfamiliarity in other poems in the *diwani*. In *Jua ladanda* (“The sun shines”) (Haji 2019: 44; here the first stanza), although the sun has set, it continues to burn people’s heads.

<i>Ni magharibi jioni, mchana umeshakwenda</i>	It’s sunset now, and the afternoon has gone
<i>Jua limezama chini, na kufikia mfunda</i>	The sun has gone down, reaching the horizon
<i>Japo halionekani, lakini kali ladanda</i>	Though not visible, still shines bright
<i>Kote kunako mawanda, latuunguza vichwani</i>	Wherever wide plains are, it burns our heads

³³ In local speeches, the poem is sometimes interpreted in reference to Amani Karume, President of Zanzibar from 2000 to 2010, for instance in the locally printed leaflet *12 Poems by Haji Gora Haji*, which presents Haji’s selected poems in English translation, made by Said el Geithy and Judith Riddell (2014: 9). Since the transition to multipartyism in 1995, the Zanzibari elections, which take place every five years, have been characterised by aggressive confrontations, violent riots, political exclusion and suppression. The lack of good governance, together with the excessive use of force, lobbied for an accommodation through reconciliation agreements: from 1999 to 2007, three accords (*Muwafaka wa Kwanza, wa Pili, wa Tatu*) were signed by the two competing parties, but they have never been implemented. Thus, a new reconciliation process (beginning in 2009) was embraced on the basis of narratives of peace, stability and development, clearly addressed by the leaders, Amani Abeid Karume for the CCM, and Seif Sharif Hamad for the CUF, in their relationship with the citizens (Brunotti 2019: 280-281). This process of political reconciliation (*maridhiano ya kisiasa*) led to a Government of National Unity (ratified by a previous referendum), with Dr Ali Mohamed Shein, the winner, as President, and his opponent, the CUF leader Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad, as First Vice President.

In the *wimbo*³⁴ *Miujiza* (“Miracles”), other surprising events occur (Haji 2019: 99; first two stanzas):

<i>Ulifika mwujiza, wake Ilahi Karima</i>	A miracle happened, brought by the Most Bountiful
<i>Mwituni kanaswa pweza, pwani kavuliwa kima</i>	An octopus caught in the forest, a monkey fished at the coast
<i>Lipi mnatueleza, enyi wetu maulama</i>	Which do you explain, you our <i>maulama</i> ³⁵
<i>Waso mbawa wanaruka, warukao kuwatama</i>	Those without wings fly, those who fly sit down
<i>Ukuti kuvunja shoka, nini kama si nakama</i>	A coconut frond breaks an axe, what is it if not devastation
<i>Dagaa kameza paka, kuna lipi la kusema</i>	A whitebait has swallowed a cat, what is there to say?

The poem continues telling us that “A chick eats a hawk,” “A chameleon outpaces a car,” and so on and so forth. While the non-natural, fantastic events are textually related to God’s intervention (“A miracle happened, brought by the Most Bountiful”) in the poem *Miujiza*, no explanation, not even a supernatural one, is given in the other above-mentioned poems for such extra-ordinary facts. This lack of elucidation greatly enhances the sense of unfamiliarity and ambiguity, while simultaneously underlining the poem’s fictionality. This technique of generating “irrealia” in Haji Gora Haji’s poems is very striking and acts as an embodiment of the creative power of language, especially of poetry and literature as a whole, which has the capacity of dismantling conventional, “reassuring” representations, thus demanding the active interpretation of the readers/listeners.

The “voice” of the text is very important for Haji Gora Haji in the fruition of poetry.³⁶ During the revision of his diwani, he asked us (the editors, Brunotti and me) to read every single poem aloud, and sometimes, when not satisfied with the textual phonic substance, he decided to change a word or a

³⁴ *Wimbo* is a type of poem whose stanzas are made up of three lines of various lengths, with a final rhyme and one or more caesuras (Shariff 1988: 45).

³⁵ *Ulemas* “The learned.”

³⁶ The recitation or singing of Haji Gora Haji’s compositions is linked not only to live performances, but also to forms of “secondary orality”. He himself used to recite his poems for radio programmes (as witnessed by the poem *Redio Nuru*; Haji 2019: 192-193), and performances by different groups of his *taarab* songs have been recorded by Radio Zanzibar and various producers of CDs (Barwani and Samsom 2019: 149).

line. Moreover, Haji Gora Haji’s poetic experience adapts to different receptive contexts, for instance during the shooting of the video of his reciting the poem *Shuwari*, he made some changes in the course of the live performance, i.e. he eliminated the third stanza, he alternated the initial refrain with a slight variation, *Ilivuruga milima, kugeuza tambarare* (“It destroyed the mountains making them flat lands”), which appears in the second and fourth stanza, and added a final stanza:

<i>Hiki ni kitandawili, ambacho nasimulia</i>	What I’m telling you is a riddle
<i>Wateguzi mbalimbali, jawabu kunipatia</i>	Riddle-solvers everywhere, give me an answer
<i>Nimefunga kufuli, mfunguzi nangojea</i>	I locked it well, I’m waiting for who can unlock it
<i>Ilivuruga milima, kugeuza tambarare</i> ³⁷	It destroyed the mountains making them flat lands

5. Conclusion

In this article, an investigation of Haji Gora Haji’s poetics as manifested in his latest poetry collection, *Shuwari*, shows how the poet’s original handling of two varieties of Swahili (*Kiunguja* and *Kitumbatu*) is an artistically complex process which involves the phonic substance and rhyming metres of poetry as well as cultural and identity issues of contemporary Zanzibar. Furthermore, the relational link to his readers/listeners, which includes a, sometimes sharp, dialogue with his fellow poets, has emerged as a fundamental element of Haji Gora Haji’s poetry: a form of indirect or direct interaction with the audience he intends to stir, educate and challenge, often through enigmatic imagery, and an experience which is always open to new ideas.

References

- Abdalla, Abdalla. 2011. Utangulizi. In: *Kale ya washairi wa Pemba – Kamange na Sarahani* (poems collected by Abdurrahman Saggaf Alawy and Ali Abdalla El-Maawy), edited by A. Abdalla, xxv-xxxi. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota.
- Abdulaziz, Mohamed H. 1979. *Muyaka. 19th century Swahili popular poetry*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.

³⁷ <https://vimeo.com/groups/476995/videos/199861998>; the translation is from the English caption (of the editors).

- Abedi, Kaluta A. 1954. *Sheria za kutunga mashairi na diwani ya Amri*. Dar es Salaam: East African Literature Bureau.
- Aiello, Flavia and Irene Brunotti. 2019. "Introduction (of the editors)." In: Haji Gora Haji, *Shuwari*, 135-139. Paris: BULUU Publishing.
- Aiello Traore, Flavia. 2013. *Children's books and African languages: Swahili literature for younger readers*. Roma: Aracne.
- Aiello, Flavia. 2006. *Taarab iko wapi? La poesia cantata taarab a Zanzibar in età contemporanea*. Soveria Mannelli: Iride edizioni (Rubbettino).
- Bakari, Bakari K. 2015. *Ulinganishi wa kiisimu kati ya lahaja ya Kipemba na Kitumbatu*. Unpublished MA thesis, Open University of Tanzania.
- BAKIZA 2012. *Kamusi la lahaja ya Kitumbatu*. Zanzibar: Jamana Printers.
- BAKIZA 2010. *Kamusi la Kiswahili fasaha*. Nairobi: Oxford University.
- Barwani, Sauda and Ridder Samsom. 2019. "Preface 1." In: Haji Gora Haji, *Shuwari*, 142-150. Paris: BULUU Publishing.
- Beck, Rose M. 2001. "Ambiguous signs: the role of the *kanga* as a medium of communication." *Swahili Forum* 8: 157-169.
- Bertoncini Zúbková, Elena. 2000. *Dialetti swahili*. Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale (unpublished manuscript).
- Bertoncini Zúbková, Elena. 2000b. *Poesia classica swahili*. Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale (unpublished manuscript).
- Bertoncini Zúbková, Elena. 1987. *Kiswahili kwa furaha*. Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale.
- Biersteker, Ann. 1996. *Kujibizana. Questions of language and power in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century poetry in Kiswahili*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Brunotti, Irene. 2019. "Cyberbaraza: Sociability and Identity (Trans)Formations in Contemporary Zanzibar." In: *Lugha na Fasihi. Scritti in onore e memoria di/Essays in honour and memory of Elena Bertoncini Zúbková*, edited by Flavia Aiello and Roberto Gaudio, 275-306. Napoli: Unior Press.
- Brunotti, Irene. 2005. *Chake/Wete in Ng'ambo: ngoma e costruzioni identitarie a Zanzibar in età contemporanea*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Istituto Universitario Orientale.
- Fair, Laura. 2002. "It's Just no Fun Anymore: Women's Experiences of Taarab before and after the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35/1: 61-81.
- Haji, H. G. 2014. *12 Poems by Haji Gora Haji* (retranslated by El Geithy, S. and Riddell, J.). Zanzibar: Hashil Elhamdan, Zanzicom Print.
- Haji, Haji Gora. 2019. *Shuwari* (edited by Flavia Aiello and Irene Brunotti). Paris: Buluu Publishing.
- Haji, Haji Gora. 2006. *Kamusi ya Kitumbatu*. Zanzibar: Express Printing Services.
- Haji, Haji Gora. 1999. *30th Poetry International Festival* (translated by R. Stephens). Rotterdam: BGS Graphische Group.
- Haji, Haji Gora. 1994. *Kimbunga* (ed. by T. S. Y. Sengo). Dar es Salaam: TUKI.

- Haji, Haji Gora. 1933 – 2001. *Maisha yangu* (unpublished manuscript).
- Hashil, Haji S. 2009. *Kurunzi*. Uppsala: Swahili Consult.
- Kalugila, Leonidas and Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi. 1980. *Swahili proverbs from East Africa*. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.
- Khamis, Said A. M. 1993. "From oral to written form: a tentative study of the development of swahili poetry." *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology (Osaka)* 18/4: 697-733.
- Lodhi, Abdulaziz Y. 1990. "The poetics of Swahili proverbs." *Lugha* 4: 113-118.
- Sansom, Ridder H. 1999. "Tungo za Mzee Kimbunga: Haji Gora Haji." *Swahili Forum* 6: 21-33.
- Sansom, Ridder H. 1996. "Tungo za kujibizana: kuambizana ni sifa ya kupendana." *Swahili Forum* 3: 1-10.
- Shariff, Ibrahim N. 1988. *Tungo zetu. Msingi wa mashairi na tungo nyinginezo*. Trenton: The Red Sea Press.
- Topan, Farouk. 1974. Modern Swahili Poetry. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 37/1: 175-187.
- Vierke, Clarissa. 2012. *Mafumbo: considering the functions of metaphorical speech in Swahili contexts*. In: *Selected proceedings of the 42nd Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, edited by Michael R. Marlo et al., 278-290. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project (www.lingref.com, document #2776).
- Whiteley, Wilfred. 1969. *Swahili: the Rise of a National Language*. London: Methuen.

Flavia Aiello works as an Associate Professor at the University of Naples "L'Orientale" (Department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies). She is the author of numerous publications on Swahili oral and written genres and of translations of modern Swahili literature. She has produced for the Italian-reading audience *Separazione* ("Detachment," Soveria Mannelli, Irìde Edizioni, 2005) – a translation of the Swahili novel *Utengano* by Said Ahmed Mohamed – and, together with Roberto Gaudio, *Ushairi na Uhuru: poesie scelte di Abdilatif Abdalla e Euphrase Kezilahabi* ("Poetry and Freedom: selected poems by Abdilatif Abdalla and Euphrase Kezilahabi," Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale," 2017). She can be reached at: faiello@unior.it

Analisi letteraria delle canzoni di Remmy Ongala e delle loro tradizioni testuali

Roberto Gaudio

In this article, I analyse some texts of the Congolese songwriter Remmy Ongala. I outline his biography and career from Kindu and Kisangani (Democratic Republic of Congo) to Songea and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania). My analysis is focused on style of his texts: through a comparative approach between his textual traditions, I propose a reading of his poetic conception and its contextualization as verbal art, that means focussing on the aesthetics of text.

Keywords: Oglala, songs, lyrics, poetics, Congo, Swahili

1. Introduzione

In questo articolo tento di sintetizzare il mio lavoro di ricerca¹ e di analisi sul cantautore Remmy Ongala compiuto negli ultimi anni. A differenza di studi su Ongala concentrati su aspetti extra-testuali (Hilhorst 2009, Kirkegaard 2004, Perullo 2011, Sanga 2010), il mio lavoro consiste in un approccio testuale, stilistico e letterario ai testi di Remmy Ongala, in linea con Karin Barber (2007: 13):

Texts, very often, reflect upon themselves. In this way they offer a unique insight into their own operations as acts of cultural instauration. [...] They are set up to be interpreted: as a challenge, a puzzle or a demand. And the means to interpret them – the repertoires of arguments, analyses, explanations, expansions and intertextual linkages – are themselves a tradition, and one that can be just as important and revealing as the textual tradition itself, with which it is symbiotically linked. The exegesis is part of the process by which

¹ La ricerca è stata finanziata dal Progetto di Rilevante Interesse Nazionale (PRIN) “Mobilità-stabilizzazione. Rappresentazioni congolese e dinamiche sociali, in Congo e nello spazio globale”. Il PRIN, finanziato per il triennio 2017-2020, è stato proposto da quattro unità di ricerca: Università della Calabria (coordinatore nazionale Rosario Giordano), Università degli Studi di Milano (responsabile Silvia Riva), Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale (responsabile Flavia Aiello), Università di Lubumbashi (responsabile Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu). Il progetto propone un'indagine transdisciplinare sulle dinamiche di destrutturazione e riconfigurazione politica, sociale e culturale nella RDC e della dimensione globale che tali dinamiche assumono attraverso la mobilità dei congolese.

the text is established; and because it is explicitly analytical and interpretative, it has the capacity to reveal something of the inner processes of instauration.

In questo senso il lavoro di ricerca sul campo è stato utile per approfondire le tradizioni testuali a cui Ongala appartiene. Parte importante di tale lavoro sono state le interviste che mi hanno permesso di avere testimonianze dirette (famiglia e quanti hanno lavorato con lui) al fine di delineare aspetti della sua vita e della carriera che sono rilevanti per identificare le sue tradizioni testuali. D'altra parte l'analisi focalizzata sul testo e sulla sua estetica permette di mettere in dialogo e comparazione tali testi al di là di un approccio deduttivo. La comparazione focalizzata sull'estetica del testo consente di valutare la trasmissione e il contatto di vari testi in modo induttivo, delineando così la poetica complessiva di un autore. L'analisi testuale e comparativa, infatti, permette di delineare la poetica di Ongala quale basata sul testo e sui richiami intertestuali nella sua stessa opera, non sull'intenzione dell'autore, né delimitata dalla cultura di appartenenza. In questo articolo, quindi, dopo aver delineato brevemente la biografia² di Ongala, mi occuperò delle sue tradizioni testuali e nell'ultima parte dell'analisi letteraria di alcune sue canzoni. I risultati di tale analisi e l'interpretazione mostreranno come questi testi siano a pieno diritto lavori letterari e necessitino quindi anche di un'analisi letteraria, in linea con quanto affermano Gaski (1999), Bicknell (2005), Valdés Miyares (2016) e Yoka (2018) che propongono di integrare la letteratura con questi testi che hanno una forte componente performativa come le canzoni, e con quanto è già stato proposto da Aiello e Gaudio (2019).

2. Biografia di Remmy Ongala

Ramadhani Mtoro Ongala nasce nel 1947 a Kindu, attuale provincia del Maniema, Repubblica Democratica del Congo, allora Congo Belga. Mtoro è il nome suggerito da un guaritore al quale la mamma di Ongala si era rivolta dopo che aveva perso due bambini al momento del parto. Il guaritore

² Per le notizie biografiche su Remmy Ongala ho utilizzato diverse fonti, quali il documentario *Bongo Beat* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqC14rhBTy4&t=762s>) e le mie interviste alla famiglia e ai musicisti che hanno lavorato con lui. Voglio qui ringraziare: Mzee Makassy, Mzee Chuki (Laurence Libanga) e la famiglia Ongala: la moglie Toni e i figli Aziza, Jessika, Kali e Tom. La memoria della moglie Toni mi è stata particolarmente preziosa per confrontare diverse fonti biografiche e dinamiche lavorative. Tom mi aiutato a contattare i musicisti che hanno collaborato col padre ed è stato di grande aiuto per la trascrizione dei testi. Aziza ha dato vita all'annuale *Ongala Music Festival* che si tiene nel mese di agosto tra Dar es Salaam e Bagamoyo e che per me è stato fondamentale per incontri e interviste. Inoltre, grazie ad Aziza ho avuto accesso ad un libro stampato una volta sola nel 1984, in poche copie e non risulta presente né nella Biblioteca Nazionale di Dar es Salaam né in quella universitaria. Mi riferisco alla biografia *Remmy Ongala Bob Marley wa Tanzania* di Ben Mtobwa. Questa biografia è particolarmente importante perché è basata su interviste dirette a Ongala e, seppur brevemente, ripercorre la sua vita dall'infanzia fino al 1984, quando Remmy decide di tornare all'Orchestra Makassy, dopo averla lasciata per i Matimila di Songea).

le dice che non si trattava di bambini diversi, ma dello stesso bambino che scappava, quindi avrebbe dovuto chiamare il bambino Mtoro, da *kutoroka* (scappare, correre via). Il guaritore le suggerisce di non andare in ospedale per il parto, ma in una foresta. Così nacque Ramì, come lo chiamavano allora in Congo e successivamente nella comunità congolese di Dar es Salaam. I genitori muoiono molto presto, il padre quando Ramì aveva sei anni e la madre quando ne aveva nove. Ramì, lasciato a prendersi cura dei fratelli, abbandona presto la scuola e inizia a suonare per strada. Grazie al suo grande talento come musicista e compositore di testi, dopo qualche esperienza in piccole bande locali, riesce a lavorare con Rachid King che dal 1968 al 1981 era sulla cresta dell'onda nel nord est del paese, denominato nel 1971 Zaire. Rachid King (scomparso nel 2013) era di etnia Kisu, come Ongala ma proveniente da Kibombo (Maniema). La band è di base a Kisangani e Ramì lavora con lui fino al 1978, quando Kitenzogu Mpolitiki Makassy (detto Mzee Makassy, Bukavu 1942), leader dell'orchestra Makassy, ritorna in Congo per cercare cantanti per la sua band, che dal 1975 aveva sede a Dar es Salaam. Ongala verso la fine del 1978 arriva a Dar es Salaam per lavorare con l'Orchestra Makassy. Qui, passando da un contesto francofono a uno anglofono, diventa Remmy: il nome non porta più alla sua radice musulmana di Ramadhani, del resto anche per il suo aspetto, i suoi capelli rasta, mal si integra sia con l'*allure* internazionale di Makassy, sia con l'immagine del musicista locale³ della costa. Infatti, il romanziere Ben Mtobwa (1954-2008) scrive una biografia su Ongala che intitola *Remmy Ongala. Bob Mareley wa Tanzania* (Remmy Ongala. Il Bob Marley della Tanzania, 1984). Nella metropoli tanzaniana inizia a diventare famoso per il suo canto e per la composizione delle canzoni tanto da attirarsi le antipatie degli altri musicisti dell'orchestra. Tra i grandi musicisti di questa band c'era anche Mose Se Fan Fan (1945-2019). Fan Fan prima di trasferirsi in Kenya e raggiungere il successo a Londra nel 1983, all'inizio degli anni '80 lascia l'Orchestra Makassy per l'Orchestra Matimila con sede a Songea. Anche Remmy fa lo stesso⁴. Mtobwa scrive una biografia ricca di spunti, in poche righe iniziali riesce a sintetizzare elementi importanti di Ongala e della sua poetica.

Un giorno mentre cantava una canzone tradizionale, del proprio gruppo etnico [*kusu*], all'improvviso smise di cantare e iniziò a piangere. Molte lacrime bagnarono il suo viso. Degli amici che lo stavano cercando lo trovarono in questo stato. Con stupore chiesero: "Perché piangi fratello?", "Non lo so", "Non lo sai" si meravigliarono. Anche il bambino che piangeva si meravigliò. Ed era vero che a quel tempo non sapeva cos'era che lo faceva piangere così. Né sapeva quando pianse la prima volta così. Succedeva di tanto in tanto, quando aveva desiderio di cantare queste canzoni. Le canzoni che amava cantare quando era da solo. "Ora so cosa mi faceva piangere" mi spiegò suonando. "Non è un segreto,

³ Con locale intendo sottolineare che Ongala era estraneo a questo contesto, non sto sottolineando un'opposizione reale tra locale e internazionale; bisogna ricordare, oltre al successo internazionale, che fenomeni locali swahili sono proiettati immediatamente in un contesto transnazionale grazie alla diffusione della lingua.

⁴ Qui i racconti differiscono, quasi sicuramente Ongala e Fan Fan non sono andati insieme, ma non sono in grado di risalire alla dinamica dell'abbandono dei due musicisti.

ancora oggi piango di tanto in tanto. Ogni volta che canto una canzone che mi strega piango.”⁵

Queste poche righe colgono un aspetto caratterizzante non solo di Remmy Ongala in quanto uomo e artista, ma anche della sua estetica. Queste righe ci danno un indizio del gap che c’era tra il performer brillante che amava provocare, che veniva accusato di essere un *mhuni* (“perdigiorno”),⁶ e il compositore attento, emotivo e amante della solitudine. Non a caso nella sua canzone *Muziki asili yake wapi* (“Dove l’origine della musica”) canta: *Muziki maombolezo kilio/Msione nikiimba/Mkadhani ninayo furaha?/Kumbe ninayo huzuni moyoni* (“La musica è un lamento funebre/mi vedete cantare/pensate sia felice?/Invece ho tanta tristezza nel cuore”; in Ongala 1989, *Song for the Poor Man*). Questa miscela avrà un enorme successo in Tanzania. Così riporta il primo album inciso di Remmy Ongala *Nalilia Mwana* con la WOMAD di Peter Gabriel nel 1988. Remmy era ormai famosissimo, era diventato il Doctor Ongala.

Known as the ‘Doctor’. Remmy Ongala is based in Dar es Salaam with his band Orchestre Super Matimila. In Tanzania Remmy’s popularity amongst the people, particularly the young, is unrivalled – only the President is better known. His reputation as a singer, writer and performer precedes him even in the remotest parts of the Tanzanian bush.

Da questo momento la carriera di Ongala continua in modo prospero con la sua band *Super Matimila*, registra diversi album in Europa e in Africa fino al 2000. In questo periodo, se da un lato Ongala è l’idolo del popolo tanzaniano (la fermata dell’autobus di fronte casa sua venne chiamata *kwa Remmy* (“da Remmy”) quando era ancora in vita e ancora oggi mantiene quel nome), dall’altro il potere politico cerca di contenere la sua libertà artistica minacciando lui e la sua famiglia di rimpatrio⁷; infatti Ongala ottiene la cittadinanza tanzaniana solo nel 2005, ovvero solo cinque anni prima della sua morte e quando era considerato inoffensivo. Nel 2001, infatti, inizia a star male, ed è quasi un lungo addio al palcoscenico, interrotto solo da una registrazione poco prima della morte. In questa registrazione

⁵ Tutte le traduzioni, se non diversamente indicato, sono mie. *Alikuwa akiimba moja kati ya nyimbo kadhaa za kiutamaduni. Wimbo wa kikabila. Ghafla alijikuta kaacha kuimba na kuanza kulia. Machozi mengi yalimtoka na kuulowesha uso wake. Ndugu zake ambao walikuwa wakimtafuta walimkuta katika hali hiyo. Wakaduwaa. “Unalia nini kaka?” mmoja wao alikumbuka kumwuliza. “Sijui.” “Hujui!” Wakashangaa. Mtoto huyu pia alishangaaa. Ni kweli kabisa kuwa wakati huo hakujua ni kitu gani kilichokuwa kikimliza. Wala haikuwa mara yake ya kwanza kulia. Alikuwa akijikuta akilia hivyo mara kwa mara, kila alipopata hamu ya kuimba nyimbo hizo. Nyimbo ambazo alipenda kuziimba hali kujitenga na watu. “Sasa nafahamu kilichokuwa kikiniliza, “aliniyeza huku akicheza “Wala sio siri kuwa hata sasa bado nina tabia hiyo ya kulia mara kwa mara. Kila ninapoimba wimbo unaonivutia hujikuta natokwa na machozi.”*

⁶ Interviste alla famiglia Ongala febbraio e marzo 2018, Dar es Salaam. Inoltre, nella sua canzone *Muziki asili yake wapi* (“Dove l’origine della musica?”) replica alle critiche *muziki sio uhuni* (“la musica non è qualcosa da perdigiorno;” Ongala 1989).

⁷ Ongala aveva passaporto della Repubblica Democratica del Congo; la moglie è inglese.

Remmy presenta nuovi brani e alcuni vecchi con qualche modifica testuale, se il suo stato di salute e la lunga assenza dal palcoscenico pesano sulla sua voce, la sua capacità compositiva resta intatta, è ancora il Remmy degli inizi con l'Orchestra Makassy che quando iniziava a cantare i suoi testi, nonostante la musica allegra, da ballo, le persone si fermavano e si facevano più vicine al palco per ascoltare meglio le sue parole.⁸ Remmy muore il 13 dicembre del 2010 a Dar es Salaam.

3. Da Remi a Remmy: lingue e testi

Uno degli scopi della ricerca è stato rintracciare una linea testuale congolese nella produzione di Ongala. Per questo motivo mi sono concentrato su due canzoni di cui secondo Ben Mtobwa, che intervista personalmente Remmy Ongala (Mtobwa 1984: 15), Remmy si sarebbe attribuito la paternità: *Siska* e *Sukuma*. Queste canzoni sarebbero state scritte in lingala e registrate a nome di Rachid King. Non ho trovato canzoni con questo titolo, probabilmente per quanto riguarda *Sukuma* si riferisce a *Sukuma yembe* (“Vai a zappare”) che è effettivamente una famosa canzone di Rachid King, ma in swahili congolese, come già appare dal titolo (*yembe* (zappa), in swahili standard è *jembe*). Dalle mie ricerche non è emersa alcuna registrazione di Ongala intitolata *Sukuma* o *Sukuma yembe*, però una delle prime canzoni registrate da Ongala con la sua band è *Mwanza* (Ongala 1995)⁹ che presenta nel testo una ripetizione della parola *sukuma* molto simile alla canzone *Sukuma yembe*¹⁰ registrata da King, con un'unica differenza: in *Sukuma yembe* la parola *sukuma* è un verbo e vuol dire *spingi*, sia nel senso fisico sia in quello più metaforico di darsi da fare, produrre cambiamento, mentre in *Mwanza* la parola *sukuma* è riferita al nome della popolazione della città, per l'appunto i Sukuma. Per quanto riguarda la canzone *Siska*, probabilmente si riferiva a quella che è stata registrata come *Ciska*, che però a differenza di quanto affermato non l'ho trovata registrata da Rachid King, ma da Makassy e Fan Fan. *Ciska*, è stata registrata nel 1982 dall'Orchestra Makassy e indica Makassy come unico autore, mentre nel 1994 Fan Fan registra *Ciska* ed è indicato come unico autore. Riporto qui la trascrizione e la traduzione del brano.¹¹

*Yo siliki na likambo ya pamba
Na ko loba nini “dis oh Siska”*

*Tu t'es fâchée pour si peu
Que veux-tu que je dise oh Siska*

⁸ Le notizie biografiche sono tratte soprattutto dalle interviste alla famiglia Ongala, mentre le notizie sulla ricezione del pubblico sono tratte dalle interviste ai musicisti. Queste interviste sono state condotte tra gennaio a marzo 2018 a Dar es Salaam.

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJ2vjogglvA>

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zkT9AlCo6k>

¹¹ Ringrazio per la trascrizione e traduzione dal lingala Yvette Kaby e Germain Bassimba.

Yo tomboki kasi na motema na zali kotanga se
kombo na yo

Na bondeli, o boyi koyoka
Decision nini yo Siska?

Yo o lingaka te mobali a pekisa yo

Soki a pekisi yo, wana yo o tomboki
Ngai pe na boyaka mwasi a yokaka te

Ata ko na lingi yo, sala nioso yo o lingi

Na regretter maloba na ngai na lobaki, e leki
na mopepe

Likambo te, kende malamau
Decision na yo nioso na ndimi
Ata ko na ko tiola
(bis)

(O linga ka te ba bondela yo mama !)
(Libala se libala !)

Yo siliki na likambo ya pamba
Na ko loba nini “dis oh siska”?
Yo ‘tomboki, kasi na motema na zali kotanga
se kombo na yo
Na bondeli, oboyi koyoka
Decision nini yo Siska !

Yo o lingaka te mobali a pekisa yo

Soki a pekisi yo, wana yo o tomboki
Ngai pe na boyaka mwasi a yokaka te

Ata ko na lingi yo sala nioso yo o lingi

Na regretter maloba na ngai na lobaki e leki na
mopepe

Likambo te, kende malamau
Decision na yo nioso na ndimi
Ata ko na ko tiola

Siska oh Siska, Yo kaka momie na nga

Tu es fâchée, mais dans mon cœur, je prononce
ton nom

Je te supplie, tu refuses d’écouter
C’est quelle décision ça, oh Siska ?

Toi tu n’aimes pas que ton mari t’interdise (des
choses)

S’il t’interdit (une chose), là tu te fâches
Moi non plus, je n’accepte pas une femme qui
n’écoute pas

Même si je t’aime, fais tout ce que tu veux

Je regrette les paroles que j’ai proférées et qui
se sont envolées

Pas de problèmes, va en paix
Je m’incline totalement devant ta décision
Quoique je fasse
(bis)

(Tu n’aimes pas qu’on te supplie maman !)
(Le mariage c’est le mariage !)

Tu t’es fâchée pour si peu
Je dirai quoi oh Siska ?
Tu es fâchée, mais dans mon cœur, je suis en
train de prononcer ton nom
Je te supplie, tu refuses d’écouter
C’est quelle décision ça oh Siska !

Toi, tu n’aimes pas que ton mari t’interdise
(des choses)

S’il t’interdit (une chose), tu te fâches
Moi aussi je n’accepte pas une femme qui
n’écoute pas

Même si je t’aime, fais tout ce que tu veux

Je regrette les paroles que j’ai proférées et qui
se sont envolées

Pas de problèmes, va en paix
Je m’incline totalement devant ta décision
Quoique je fasse

(Son prénom) Toi seule es ma nana

<i>Siska oh Siska, O sili bande na nga</i>	<i>(Son prénom) Tu as épuisé ma bande</i>
<i>Siska oh Siska, Siska Fikiri na nga</i>	<i>(Son prénom) Siska, Tu es ma Fikiri</i>
<i>Tika ngai nalela mama (ter)</i>	<i>Laisse-moi pleurer maman (mis pour Siska)</i>
<i>Nazali kobeta mondengè (bis)</i>	<i>(bis)</i>
<i>Ba mbanda ba léli</i>	<i>Je suis en train de faire un pari (bis)</i>
	<i>Les rivaux/rivales sont en pleurs</i>
<i>Eloko nini o lingi? Lobela nga na ko pesa</i>	
<i>(repeat)</i>	<i>Que veux-tu? Dis-moi que je te le donne</i>
	<i>(repeat)</i>

Non è mia intenzione aprire un dibattito sulla proprietà intellettuale del brano. Remmy non l'ha mai registrato. Il testo non è molto lontano dai numerosi testi che Ongala ha dedicato a delle donne (*Karola, Pamella, Mariam wangu, Amisa*, ecc.). *Ciska* potrebbe essere la prima testimonianza registrata di un testo di Ongala e il primo di un testo di Ongala dedicato a una donna. Inoltre, potrebbe essere interessante per futuri studi sulla tradizione testuale lingala in Ongala. In questo caso e come vedremo anche per la canzone *Kipenda Roho*, si può ipotizzare che la composizione sia avvenuta a più mani. Se da un lato questo fenomeno è tutt'altro che raro nella composizione delle canzoni (testo, arrangiamento, musica spesso indicano autori diversi, in alcuni casi più di uno per il singolo elemento), dall'altro, seguendo l'analisi letteraria, potrebbe spingerci a riflettere sulla letteratura scritta e quella orale. Dobbiamo pensare a quanto sia stata enfatizzata come caratteristica della letteratura orale la nonautorialità o la multiautorialità: come dobbiamo intendere la multiautorialità in ambito dei testi per musica? Si pensi oppure all'enfasi sui *media* (mezzo): una canzone registrata può essere considerata orale o scritta? Se il fatto che la performance sia nata per essere registrata o che sia prevista la registrazione nell'idea del o degli autori rappresenta una differenza decisiva rispetto ai cantori locali, qual è allora la differenza tra i cantori tradizionali e Ongala fin quando le sue canzoni non erano registrate? Qual è la differenza tra le sue canzoni registrate e quelle non registrate? Dal punto di vista testuale qual è la differenza in termini testuali tra cantore tradizionale e Remmy Ongala? Qual è la differenza di una canzone impressa su un disco e una che resta orale? La risposta più ovvia e che vale anche per l'esperienza artistica di Ongala è che durante la performance il testo subisce alcune modifiche date dall'interazione col pubblico e dal luogo in cui si trova. Tuttavia, come fa notare Barber (2007: 22) è caratteristica fondante di ogni testo la decontestualizzazione da un determinato tempo e spazio e dal discorso quotidiano.

Discourse is the unremarked and unrepeatable flow of utterances in which most human activities are bathed. Text is created when instances of discourse, by being rendered detachable from their immediate context of emission, are made available for repetition or

recreation in other context of emission, are made available for repetition or recreation in other contexts. In other words, they are stretches of discourse which can be reproduced and thus transmitted over time and space. Detachability, according to the studies in Silverstein and Urban's groundbreaking edited volume, is achieved by a variety of devices. It can of course be achieved by writing a stretch of utterance down – which is what the early anthropologists meant by creating texts – but it can also be achieved wholly within an oral context. Proverbs are a classic case of entextualisation: succinct, patterned and pithy, available by definition for application to multiple alternative contexts, they are made to be quoted. Proverbs are explicitly recognised by users as pre-existing the context in which they are currently being deployed.

La performance è sempre esecuzione di qualcosa e le canzoni di Remmy, seppure differenti tra esecuzione dal vivo e registrazione, erano sempre riconoscibili per lui, i musicisti e il pubblico. In questo senso i testi orali sono pienamente testi, e nel caso di testi artistici è mia convinzione che si dovrebbe analizzare tali testi per come sono costituiti (stilistica) e per la logica artistica cui soggiacciono (estetica)¹². La questione è soprattutto rilevante rispetto al dibattito sull'oralità. Per quanto approcci multidisciplinari siano importanti – se non fondamentali soprattutto in questo campo – bisogna pur constatare che l'attenzione al testo (ovvero alla parola in quanto composizione e in quanto emessa oralmente), sia sempre venuta in secondo piano rispetto agli elementi extratestuali o dell'attenzione alla performance nel suo insieme. Bisogna constatare, in accordo con Barber che gli studi e le evocazioni dell'oralità hanno preso un carattere piuttosto vago (1995: 8) e che lo studio sui fenomeni orali sia stato caratterizzato da una lotta di posizioni espresse da una lotta lessicale¹³. Recentemente, infatti, anche Ruth Finnegan (2005: 173-176) ha ripreso in considerazione la differenza tra oralità e scrittura.

First, the simplified contrast between performance – multisensory, dynamic, emergent – and written text – one-line, linear, fixed – misses the equally important fact that writing too is multimodal and contextualized. The multisensory characteristics of writing are often invisible to those brought up with the model of “written word” as something abstract, mental, and context-free, another facet of the powerful model of literate

¹² L'estetica è la disciplina filosofica che si occupa dell'arte, faccio riferimento soprattutto al padre di questa disciplina filosofica, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (2000: 27), che la intende come logica e conoscenza sensibile.

¹³ ‘Hostility to “reified,” “object-centered” notions of performance, text and context is almost universal among present-day scholars of oral verbal art, and it is easy to see why. But the argument has often taken on the appearance of a war of vocabulary – elegantly summarized by Dwight Conquergood – in which “objectification” and “reification” automatically appear among the enemy lexicon, along with “fixity,” “structure,” “system,” “distance,” and “detachment,” in opposition to “improvisation,” “flow,” “process,” “participation,” “embodiment,” and “dialogue” (Barber 1999: 18).

rationality as prototypical of the high culture and destiny of the West. But a growing number of crosscultural studies of literacy have been challenging this ethnocentric myth to bring out the multimodality and materiality of writing. [...]The two dimensions overlap and intersect. The abstracted externalized text, detached from the immediacy of the temporal and personal present, carries the potential of meaning precisely insofar as its user has the experience to activate it here and now, while even in the midst of performance the experience is likely to be imbued with memories and connotations beyond the immediate moment.

Finnegan qui riassume chiaramente le semplificazioni che hanno afflitto la disciplina finora. Non solo i recenti studi mostrano come alcune caratteristiche presupposte dell'oralità appartengano anche alla scrittura, ma anche (e in accezione transculturale) come la letteratura, come fenomeno esclusivamente scritto, sia stato in occidente un fenomeno relativo al massimo ad un paio di secoli (si veda per esempio Frasca 2005). Qui Finnegan non ritiene che la differenza sia da fare tra oralità e scrittura, ma tra letteratura e performance. Sostiene infatti che non abbiamo bisogno di inserire la performance negli studi letterari (2005: 182) creandone una fattispecie particolare, ma abbiamo bisogno di strumenti che possano analizzare la performance come insieme o interazione di varie arti. È necessario, quindi, riportare al centro delle nostre ricerche e analisi dei fenomeni artistici il prodotto artistico stesso – quindi sia la performance nella sua interezza, ma anche il testo come prodotto compositivo – e comprenderne la portata estetica.

Per questo credo sia necessario analizzare i testi di Ongala, in modo da comprendere e analizzare la sua poetica. A tal fine, in questa sezione, seguendo il concetto di *textual tradition* (Barber 2007: 13) citato in introduzione, rintraccerò elementi testuali congolese e tanzaniani, e nella prossima sezione proporrò un'analisi testuale delle sue canzoni. In entrambi i casi sarà utilizzato un approccio comparativo sia perché la comparazione permette di leggere insieme diversi testi (fondamentale per definire la sua *textual tradition*) sia per definire la sua poetica¹⁴. Dal punto di vista dell'*entextualisation* e della *textual tradition* i testi di Remmy Ongala sono particolarmente interessanti perché attingono a tradizioni testuali – di cui i proverbi sono i più visibili in quanto spesso citati senza alcuna modifica – non solo tanzaniane ma anche congolese. Una delle sue canzoni più famose, per esempio, è *Kipenda Roho*. Questa, come ci dice già il suo primo verso, si riferisce al proverbio swahili *Kipenda Roho hula nyama mbichi*. Abel Mkota (2014: 214) afferma che questo proverbio è usato quando qualcuno ama tanto qualcosa o qualcuno, tanto da fare azioni che non sono comuni. Infatti, in questa canzone Ongala descrive la forza inesorabile dell'amore e della passione:

¹⁴ Per un approfondimento su questo approccio si veda Gaudioso (2019: 76-107).

*Kipenda roho hula nyama mbichi
Kipenda roho haoni wala hasikii
akipenda anapenda akipenda hasikii
kipenda roho
penzi halijui mdudu
wala penzi halijui mnyama
samaki baridi wanazaana
kunguru ukiona jioni wanapita kwa wingi
wanafunga ndoa*

*penzi lingelikuwa na ubaguzi
penzi lingelikuwa na ubaguzi
sisi wabaya tungelia
sisi wabaya tusingepata kitu
sisi viwete tusingesema tena
lakini penzi halina ubaguzi
mbele ya mapenzi kiwete anatembea
mbele ya mapenzi kiwete anapakatwa
halafu unashindwa na mshangazo
kiwete ana mtoto
halafu unashindwa na mbumbuwazi
kichaa ana mimba
amepata mshikaji wapi
kipenda roho
penzi halijui mlakole
penzi hajali umeokoka*

*wewe unasema umeokoka
hata una mke na watoto
wale watoto umezaaza vipi?
mama watoto usiku mh mh mh*

*kipenda roho
jamani siku hizi mapenzi yameogopewa
ukimwi umeota mzizi kwa mapenzi*

L'anima amante mangia carne cruda
L'anima amante non vede e non sente
se ama ama se ama non sente
anima amante
il desiderio non discrimina l'insetto
né discrimina l'animale
i pesci si accoppiano
i corvi che vedi di sera passare a stormi
vanno a sposarsi

se il desiderio discriminasse
se il desiderio discriminasse
noi brutti piangeremmo
noi brutti non otterremmo nulla
noi zoppi non parleremmo più
però il desiderio non discrimina
di fronte all'amore lo zoppo cammina
di fronte all'amore lo zoppo è sollevato
poi ti stupisci
che lo zoppo ha un bambino
poi sei perplesso
la pazza è incinta
dove ha trovato il tuo amante
anima amante
il desiderio non conosce redenzioni
al desiderio non importa che ti sei salvato
l'anima

tu dici che sei redento
ma hai una moglie e dei bambini
quei bambini come l'hai generati?
Ma moglie la notte mh mh mh

anima amante
amici in questi giorni l'amore spaventa
l'AIDS ha messo radici sull'amore

<i>kutongoza tunaogopa</i>	abbiamo paura a corteggiare
<i>hata kupenda tunaogopa</i>	abbiamo paura d'amare
<i>ukimwi umeota mzizi</i>	l'AIDS ha messo radici
<i>siku hizi hakuna tena mapenzi</i>	oggi non c'è più amore
<i>siku hizi mapenzi yamekufa</i>	oggi l'amore è morto
<i>mama yako ameolewa na baba yako</i>	tua madre ha sposato tuo padre
<i>na mapanga na mikuki</i>	con coltelli e lance
<i>lakini wasichana wa Daresalama wanataka</i>	ma le ragazze di Dar es Salaam vogliono i
	soldi
<i>kipenda roho</i>	anima amante

Ho deciso di mantenere una traduzione piuttosto letterale¹⁵ per rendere le immagini dell'originale. *Kipenda roho* è utilizzato da Ongala come metonimia, per significare colui che ama, questo diventa particolarmente chiaro nel secondo e terzo verso. Tuttavia una traduzione più letterale del proverbio, isolandolo da questo testo, mi porterebbe a tradurre come *Se si ama lo spirito si mangia carne cruda*, perché sottolinea meglio l'inesorabilità dell'amore. Tuttavia, per l'enfasi sul soggetto data dalla ripetizione di *kipenda roho* e per mantenere uguale la traduzione della ripetizione *kipenda roho* con l'inizio del proverbio, l'ho tradotto come "anima amante"; ma come vedremo una traduzione possibile potrebbe essere anche "testa dura". Per quanto riguarda *penzi* e *mapenzi*, considerando anche che la canzone parla di amore fisico ho tradotto *penzi* con desiderio e *mapenzi* con amore; confortato anche dal dizionario *Kamusi Kuu ya Kiswahili* (2015: 584, 854), anche se desiderio in swahili sarebbe in primo luogo *matamano*. È bene ricordare che anche se *mapenzi* è la forma plurale di *penzi*, non è un vero plurale, quanto più una forma più generale, ha un'accezione anche fisica e non solo di amore in astratto, ma *penzi* è definitivamente più fisico. Tuttavia la traduzione di *penzi* è molto insidiosa, perché, se da una parte è traducibile come amore, dall'altra sta a significare l'atto sessuale. Inoltre, va anche notato, ed è particolarmente interessante in questa canzone, che *penzi* è una forza incontrollabile – si badi bene,

¹⁵ Per una traduzione letterale faccio riferimento a Antonie Berman (2003). Egli dà indicazioni anche per quanto riguarda la traduzione dei proverbi: "Nel suo romanzo *Io il Supremo*, Roa Bastos cita questo proverbio: *A cada día le basta su pena, a cada año su daño*. Si potrebbe probabilmente cercare un equivalente francese. Ma io ho scelto una traduzione al contempo letterale e libera: *À chaque jour suffit sa peine, à chaque année sa déveine* [Ad ogni giorno basta la sua pena, ad ogni anno la sua sfortuna] Il doppio gioco allitterativo dell'originale, *día/pena, año/daño*, sparisce, ma per essere sostituito con un'altra allitterazione, *peine/déveine* [...] Poiché cercare degli equivalenti non significa solo stabilire un senso invariante, una idealità che si esprimerebbe nei diversi proverbi da lingua a lingua: significa rifiutare di introdurre nella lingua traducibile l'estraneità del proverbio originale" (2003: 14). In questo senso Berman ci invita a non cercare equivalenti, ma a seguire la lettera dell'originale e accettare di poter esprimere l'estraneità nella lingua di arrivo.

non per questo vuol dire che sia solo una *voglia*, questo in swahili è reso con *hamu* – mentre *mapenzi* è più legato alla volontà, si pensi alla volontà di Dio (*mapenzi ya Mungu*)¹⁶, quindi forza che dipende dalla volontà, dalla consapevolezza. Da questo punto di vista è molto puntuale il lessico usato da Ongala: quando parla di salute, di AIDS, non usa più *penzi*, ma di *mapenzi*; come a dire: è bello abbandonarsi al volere dell'amore, ma per quanto riguarda la salute c'è bisogno della nostra volontà. C'è una canzone precedente intitolata *Kipenda Roho* che pare, però, avere un senso totalmente diverso, giocata tutta su proverbi che criticano la società¹⁷.

<i>Kipenda roho hula nyama mbichi</i>	Chi ama lo spirito ¹⁸ mangia carne cruda
<i>ninavyoelewa wewe ni rafiki wa siku nyingi</i>	come capisco mi sei amico da tempo
<i>pilipili shambani hukuichuma</i>	il peperoncino dai campi non l'hai
	raccolto
<i>ya kuwashia nini mengi umesema</i>	per far bruciare cosa, tutto quello che hai

¹⁶ Per quanto riguarda gli usi di *mapenzi* si veda Rosanna Tramutoli (2015). Tramutoli (2015: 75), inoltre, fa notare come l'amore di Dio si reso con *upendo wa Mungu*, ovvero con una forma meno fisica rispetto a *mapenzi*: *upendo* indica infatti l'amore in generale, mentre *mapenzi ya Mungu* indica il volere di Dio.

¹⁷ Il testo è tratto da YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vV-WiTOv8s4&t=2531s>), minuti 37:24 – 43:31. Questa registrazione inserisce un ulteriore elemento di cui nessuno degli intervistati mi ha parlato e le discografie di Remmy Ongala non parlano, eccezion fatta per questa registrazione su YouTube e del blog musicale <http://www.muzikifan.com/tanz.html>, che infatti scrive *Orch Super Matimila were often called Talakaka, so presumably it is basically the same band. Ongala later said he had no idea this ever came out or who got paid for it.* È strano anche che Ongala, prendendo per buone queste parole, non sappia nulla di questa registrazione. Nella didascalia della registrazione YouTube questa canzone è attribuita a Tschibanda, che allora era uno dei componenti della band. Tuttavia, che questo testo sia del solo Tschibanda o composto in collaborazione con Ongala, è comunque in forte continuità con la poetica di Ongala e rappresenta una risorsa di ispirazione per le successive canzoni di Ongala. Inoltre, questa registrazione può avere la sua importanza perché potrebbe segnare il passaggio del nome Orchestra Matimila a Super Matimila e dalla leadership di Fan Fan a quella di Remmy Ongala. Tuttavia Mtobwa (1984:36) scrive che alla fine di maggio del 1984 Ongala ritorna nell'Orchestra Makassy; il suo libro esce in quell'anno e Makassy mi ha detto nell'intervista che Ongala è tornato solo per pochi mesi prima di ritornare con i Super Matimila. Non è chiara la storia dei Matimila: se Fan Fan va via prima del 1983 e Remmy ne diventa leader perché nel 1984 se ne va? Purtroppo questa fase della carriera di Ongala è molto confusa, le interviste che ho condotto si contraddicono tra loro e a loro volta sono in contraddizione con la biografia scritta da Mtobwa. Ho raggiunto telefonicamente (23/3/2020) Mzee Chuki (il batterista che dall'Orchestra Makassy seguì Ongala ai Matimila), mi ha detto che in quel periodo, prima di chiamarlo Bongo Beat, chiamavano così il loro stile Talakaka e che era una parola in una lingua dello Zaire e che vuol dire "lascia perdere" (consultando dei parlanti lingala mi hanno riferito che la traduzione sarebbe "ora stai a guardare"). Chuki mi ha detto che allora la band era per lo più costituita da musicisti provenienti dallo Zaire. Mi ha inoltre spiegato che quando Ongala lasciò l'Orchestra Matimila per tornare da Makassy, Fan Fan era già via e i Matimila continuarono senza Fan Fan e senza Remmy. Quello che è certo è che dopo meno di un anno Remmy tornò dai Matimila e divennero i Super Matimila. Inoltre, Chuki ritiene che Ongala lavorò con Tschibanda alla composizione di questa canzone.

¹⁸ Non essendoci ripetizioni da dover rendere all'interno della canzone, ho deciso qui di tradurre in maniera più letterale.

		detto
<i>mitaani mpaka migahawani</i>	dai quartieri ai bar?	
<i>naelewa wala si utani</i>	ora capisco e non è una giocosa	provocazione
<i>nia na madhumuni yako</i>	la tua intenzione e il tuo scopo	
<i>kunikosanisha na mpenzi wangu</i>	far litigare me e il mio amore	
<i>kikulacho ki nguoni mwako</i>	ciò che ti mangia è nei vestiti	
<i>kula nae sio kufa nae</i>	mangiare insieme non è morire insieme	
<i>kumbuka mwanzo nilivyosema</i>	ricorda come ho detto	
<i>ukiwa mkimya watu watakuonea</i>	se non parli sarai maltrattato	
<i>nimeona kweli ukicheka sana we muhuni</i>	ho capito che se ridi molto ti chiamano	
	<i>utaitwa</i>	perdigiorno
<i>dunia tambara bovu kweli halikawii</i>	il mondo è uno straccio, non tarderà a	
	<i>kuchanika</i>	stracciarsi

Questo componimento porta la firma di Tschibanda, però è legato alla produzione di Ongala in più modi. Prima di tutto il penultimo verso è ripreso, anche se in maniera differente, nella canzone di Ongala *Muziki asili yake wapi* (Dove l'origine della musica?): *Muziki maombolezo kilio/Msione nikiimba/Mkadhani ninayo furaha?/Kumbe ninayo huzuni moyoni [...] Muziki sio uhuni* ("La musica è un lamento funebre/mi vedete cantare/pensate sia felice?/Invece ho tanta tristezza nel cuore [...] la musica non è qualcosa da perdigiorno"; in Ongala 1989, *Song for the Poor Man*). Inoltre, l'uso dei proverbi come elemento costitutivo dell'intera canzone — com'è dal punto di vista semantico anche per *Kipenda Roho* e dal punto di vista metrico e semantico per la canzone *Ndumila Kuwili* che sarà analizzata successivamente — è una delle caratteristiche della poetica di Remmy Ongala. Questi elementi di contiguità tra questa canzone attribuita a Tschibanda e gli altri testi di Ongala da una parte sembrano mostrare l'importanza di questo componimento nella poetica successiva di Ongala, quindi Ongala sarebbe stato influenzato da Tschibanda. D'altra parte questi elementi contigui potrebbero, invece, dimostrare quanto Chuki sostiene, ovvero che Ongala avrebbe collaborato alla stesura di questo testo. In questa versione di Tschibanda, il proverbio che dà il titolo sia a questa che alla canzone di Ongala, a differenza della versione di Ongala sembra perdere la sua centralità e soprattutto non sembrano centrali l'amore e il desiderio. La canzone è quasi interamente costituita da proverbi swahili:

- *kipenda roho hula nyama mbichi* "chi ama lo spirito mangia carne cruda";

- *pilipili shambani hukuichuma ya kuwashia nini* “il peperoncino dai campi non l’hai raccolto/per far bruciare cosa”. Mkota (2009: 456-457) riporta le seguenti varianti: *Pilipili usiyoila yakuwashiani?*, *Pilipili usiyoila yakuwashia nini?*, *Pilipili iliyo shamba yakuwashiani?*, *Pilipili usoila yakuwashiani?* Il proverbio è utilizzato per persone che si occupano di questioni o che non le riguardano o che non conoscono;
- *kikulacho ki nguoni mwako* “ciò che ti mangia è nei tuoi vestiti”, ovvero “chi si approfitta di te è una persona a te vicina (anche un parente)”;
- *kula nae sio kufa nae* “mangiare con lui non è morire con lui”. Mkota (2009: 332) riporta: *Mla nawe hafi nawe ila mzaliwa nawe* (“colui che mangia con te non muore con te, ma colui che è nato con te sì”); il proverbio è utilizzato per dire che chi è con te nei tempi buoni, non sarà con te in quelli negativi e – nella versione di Mkota – che chi ti sarà vicino sarà la famiglia;
- *dunia tambara bovu halikawii kuchanika* “il mondo è uno straccio, non tarderà a stracciarsi”. Mkota (2009:116) riporta *Dunia tambara bovu*; *ukivuta utachana* (“il mondo un cencio; se tiri si strappa”); si utilizza per chi si aspetta (o pretende) una ricompensa o un risultato positivo per le sue azioni, ma ciò che accade al mondo non è prevedibile e non è per forza giusto.

Tra la ricchezza semantica di questi proverbi la centralità del desiderio e dell’amore si perde. È vero che nella prima strofa possiamo ipotizzare che l’obiettivo di chi vuol far litigare i due amanti sia la brama per uno dei due, ma nel complesso la canzone non parla del desiderio d’amore, ma del tradimento di un amico, in modo molto simile alla canzone *Ndumila Kuwili* (in Ongala 1988), analizzata successivamente.

Per quale motivo allora la canzone ha titolo *Kipenda roho*? La ragione si scopre nel significato di *kipenda roho* nello swahili della Repubblica Democratica del Congo: vengono così chiamate le persone che non amano ascoltare consigli, teste dure e teste calde troppo in balia delle loro emozioni¹⁹. Prendendo in considerazione questo elemento la canzone s’arricchisce di significati: non solo l’amico bramante che si occupava di affari non suoi e vuole far litigare la coppia, ma l’amico cocciuto, che non ascolta i consigli, quindi l’io lirico gli canta i suoi consigli, i proverbi, e lo ammonisce di non aspettarsi un risultato sperato per le sue azioni; infatti chiude col proverbio *dunia tambara bovu* che sta a significare che il risultato delle azioni non è prevedibile, quindi di non aspettarsi una ricompensa. Quest’ultima interpretazione non solo chiarisce la canzone dal punto di vista del significato, ma ci dà

¹⁹ Devo ringraziare per questa informazione il professore dell’Università di Lubumbashi George Mulumbwa.

ragione di una canzone tutta costruita sui proverbi quasi senza attinenza l'uno all'altro, quasi come un *divertissement*. Solo prendendo in considerazione il significato di *kipenda roho* come testa dura possiamo comprendere che il significato stesso del pronunciare i proverbi è quello di consigliare la testa dura. Inoltre, considerato come appellativo nel Swahili congolese *kipenda roho* (testa dura), la ripetizione *kipenda roho* nel ritornello della canzone precedente non è più da considerarsi solo come l'uomo che ama, ma anche come una testa dura, in preda al desiderio. Considerare questo elemento mette ulteriormente in evidenza l'insegnamento che custodisce il testo di Ongala e che diventa esplicito solo alla fine come abbiamo visto con l'introduzione del termine *mapenzi*.

C'è un altro elemento testuale che porta verso il Congo e che è costruito attorno al proverbio *kipendacho roho hula nyama bichi*. *Kipenda-Roho le démon-vampire* è un fumetto scritto da Kamatenda Djungu-Simba (2007) e disegnato da Saye Lepa-Mabila. Il racconto è tratto da una storia orale Lega, una popolazione del Sud Kivu. Una comunicazione personale di Djungu-Simba (gennaio 2020) mi conferma che questa storia è molto diffusa nell'area swahilofona del nord est Congo; presumibilmente Remmy Ongala, originario del Maniema, ne era a conoscenza (non conosco invece la regione di provenienza di Tshibanda). Il racconto narra di come Kipenda-Roho, un ragazzo giovane arrogante, molto bello e dalla testa dura, decide di intraprendere un viaggio per trovare la donna da sposare, nonostante le proposte delle ragazze del suo villaggio e contro il parere degli anziani. Kipenda-Roho dice che è in cerca di una donna col suo stesso nome e che sia il suo sosia femminile. Trovata la sua omonima, una ragazza molto bella in un villaggio al di là del fiume, decide di sposarla e quindi intraprendono il viaggio per ritornare al suo villaggio. Arrivati al fiume, Kipenda-Roho-ragazza sale sulla schiena di Kipenda-Roho-ragazzo per attraversarlo, ma attraversato il fiume Kipenda-Roho-ragazza decide di non scendere più dalla schiena di Kipenda-Roho-ragazzo. Arrivati al villaggio, gli abitanti cercano di aiutare Kipenda-Roho-ragazzo a farla scendere, ma invano. Si avvicina allora un guaritore e chiede una confessione pubblica al giovane e le scuse agli anziani. Kipenda-Roho, ragazzo pentito, fa le sue scuse; a questo punto il guaritore butta a terra alcuni frutti e subito Kipenda-Roho-ragazza balza a mangiarli e si mostra per quello che è: un vampiro. Scesa dalla schiena, viene uccisa. La pelle incancrenita della schiena di Kipenda Roho ragazzo si rigenera e lui si sposa con la figlia del guaritore.

Sarebbe molto interessante analizzare questo racconto, ricco di elementi presenti anche in altre tradizioni testuali – penso ai rimandi al doppio, all'arroganza del bello, agli amanti legati alla schiena, al mostro che non si stacca dalla schiena – che senza un'analisi approfondita trovo anche nel *Simposio* di Platone e nei Racconti delle *Mille e una notte*, nella *Bibbia* e nel *Corano*. Sarebbe molto interessante, inoltre, capire la storia di questo proverbio swahili, la connessione tra *hula nyama bichi* (“mangia carne cruda”) e il demone-vampiro: si tratta di una connessione tutta congolese o legata a un'interpretazione

più antica e letterale del detto swahili (e che poi nelle costa swahili – luogo di origine – e nell’area continentale di Kenia e Tanzania ha subito un’evoluzione)? Quanto antico è il racconto? È nato collegato al proverbio swahili o il proverbio swahili si è innestato su un racconto precedente? Queste domande resteranno qui aperte; per quanto riguarda la nostra analisi è interessante notare come nel racconto *Kipenda-Roho* sia un demone-vampiro che sta sulle spalle del protagonista e come la canzone *Kipenda roho* di Tschibanda sia legato al proverbio *kikulacho ki nguoni mwako*, ovvero “ciò che ti mangia, che ti consuma, è nei tuoi vestiti”, ovvero ancora ti sta addosso. Tuttavia un’ipotesi può essere formulata. Non vorrei spingermi in un’interpretazione fantasiosa senza un’analisi più approfondita, ma questo racconto che mette in gioco il doppio e l’omonimia e che ritiene questa unione mostruosa sembra far riferimento al tabù dell’incesto; potrebbe quindi essere addirittura precedente dell’arrivo del swahili in quell’area del Congo (XIX sec.). Inoltre, sarebbe interessante capire se il demone-vampiro nel racconto *Kipenda-Roho* è chiamato vampiro perché succhia, come nella tradizione occidentale, il sangue dal collo, perché in questo caso potrebbe avere a che fare con un uso arcaico di *roho*. La parola *roho*, infatti, oltre al significato di “spirito”, può significare anche “gola”, per esempio *-kaba roho* vuol dire “afferrare qualcuno per la gola”. Confrontando il racconto di *Kipenda-Roho* con il senso letterale del detto swahili *Kipenda roho hula nyama bichi* (è bene ricordare che tutte le raccolte di proverbi e tutti i miei informanti riportano il significato di questo proverbio alla forza inesorabile del desiderio amoroso) mi sono chiesto se *roho* nella sua accezione di “gola” (in swahili standard *koo*) potesse essere legato agli appetiti e al gusto, come in italiano. Solo Sacleux (1939: 779), che essendo frutto di una ricerca degli inizi del secolo scorso è una fonte importante per l’etimologia swahili, riporta questo significato: “*Gosier, gorge (koo). -mkata mtu 1’, couper la gorge à qqn. [...] Presse de la faim (cf. lldzaa) , faim extrême; voracité, glotonnerie, avidité*”. Questo mi porta ad ipotizzare che l’attestazione più continentale del proverbio, quindi geograficamente più lontana dall’origine costiera dello swahili, conservi il significato più arcaico e letterale, tradurrei quindi *Kipenda roho hula nyamba bichi* con “Ciò che fa gola è carne cruda”.

4. Divenire il dottor Ongala: l’arte come cognizione

I proverbi, quindi, sono stati motivo di ispirazione per Remmy Ongala. Per esempio, la canzone *Ndumila Kuwili* (“Orbettino dalle due bocche”, presente nell’LP *Nalilia Mwana WOMAD*, 1988) prende ispirazione

dal proverbio *Nyoka wa nduma-kuwili, huuma akivuvia* (“Il serpente²⁰ dalle due bocche mozzica mentre soffia”), che potrebbe corrispondere al detto italiano “quando il diavolo ti accarezza vuole l’anima”.

<i>Awali sisi rafiki maisha yetu pamoja</i>	Prima eravamo amici la nostra vita era
<i>tuliishi kama ndugu mivutano ni ishara</i>	insieme abbiamo vissuto come compagni i
<i>nashangaa sana ndugu usiwe ndumila kuwili</i>	contrastati ne erano un segno mi meraviglio tanto compagno, non
<i>kutenga watu wawili fitina sio adili</i>	essere un serpente dalle due bocche dividere due persone, la calunnia è
<i>na lilo jambo dalili lipi utaumia mwenzangu</i>	immorale e questo è certo, dove ti farai male amico
<i>unapotaka kusema dunia yako hekima</i>	mio. se pretendi che il tuo mondo sia la
<i>neni liwe la heshima ni mbalimbali matusi</i>	saggezza allora sia la tua parola rispettabile e
<i>ndugu acha wivu ndugu acha ufitina.</i>	lontani gli insulti compagno, abbandona l’invidia compagno, abbandona la calunnia.

Alla luce di *Kipenda roho* di Tschibanda, dell’utilizzo dei proverbi nelle canzoni di Ongala, e della mia analisi precedente, mi sento di correggere in parte l’interpretazione che ho dato nel mio primo articolo su Ongala (Gaudio 2019a), dove ipotizzavo che la struttura di questa canzone potesse essere influenzata da quella dello shairi. Attualmente mi sembra da scartare l’idea che sia una forma ricalcata dallo shairi e mi sembra più probabile il voler ricalcare la struttura del proverbio swahili. I proverbi swahili, infatti, sono costruiti per lo più su strutture cantabili come argomenta dettagliatamente Jan Knappert (1979: 46-50), che mostra come il ritmo dei proverbi segua quello delle poesie e sia caratterizzato da una divisione bipartita in egual numero di sillabe che può a sua volta essere divisa in due.

Quando si è detto che Remmy per questa canzone ha preso ispirazione dal proverbio swahili *Nyoka wa nduma-kuwili, huuma akivuvia* non si intendeva soltanto il contenuto, ma anche la forma. Sia il proverbio che la canzone utilizzano il metro della poesia classica swahili *shairi* di sedici sillabe con cesura sull’ottava sillaba, quindi due emistichi da otto sillabe. La canzone di Remmy imbastisce una

²⁰ Traduco qui “serpente” perché in swahili il detto è letteralmente “il serpente orbettino” (*nyoka wa nduma*); l’orbettino (*Anguis fragilis*) tuttavia non è un serpente ma una lucertola priva di arti; anche questo è significativo: il calunniatore non è serpente, ma solo una lucertola.

fitta rete irregolare di rime e assonanze: i primi emistichi del secondo e terzo verso presentano omoteleuto di *ndugu*; i secondi emistichi del terzo e quarto verso e i primi del quarto e del quinto presentano un omoteleuto in *-ili*, che si estende alla terminazione *-wili* per il secondo emistichio del terzo verso e il primo di quello successivo. Il suono *li* inoltre si ripete per tutta la lunghezza del quinto verso, formandone la rima interna tra emistichi e rappresentando in aggiunta la prima sillaba del secondo emistichio; non solo rimano, ma hanno tutte le vocali uguali, *hekima* e *heshima* rispettivamente al secondo emistichio del sesto verso e al primo di quello successivo. Questa struttura non è un casuale adattamento alla forma del proverbio, che anzi qui resta non citato. Il ritmo, quindi, non è stato composto ad orecchio, ispirato dal primo verso (il proverbio in questo caso), ma da una consapevole maestria compositiva. Ciò è prova della volontà di Remmy di adattarsi alla tradizione testuale tanzaniana costiera, dove viveva (e da dove proveniva il proverbio). Ne sono ulteriore prova sia la seconda versione della canzone *Kipenda-Roho* – che concorda più con il senso tanzaniano che non con quello congolese del proverbio *Kipenda roho hula nyama bichi*, come è stato visto nella sezione precedente – sia il cambio del nome del proprio stile: dal lingala *Super Talakaka* al swahili *Bongo Beat*.²¹ Una struttura del genere non è affatto meno complessa di una poesia. Se riportiamo questo componimento all'interno del dibattito²² letterario swahili questa forma ci appare essere una forma ibrida, perché presenta una notevole relazione con la tradizione (sia per l'uso del proverbio che per la struttura metrica). Anche nella canzone tradizionale swahili *taarab* l'elemento metrico è piuttosto regolare. Said Ahmed Khamis (2001: 146) afferma che spesso i testi delle canzoni vengono composti separatamente dalla musica e che sono composti seguendo la prosodia araba. Negli anni '80, probabilmente sotto l'influenza della musica da ballo (*muziki wa dansi*; Khamis 2001: 149), la musica e i testi del *taarab* iniziano a cambiare, nasce il *taarab mipasho*, entrano gli strumenti elettrici e i testi diventano metricamente più liberi (Khamis 2001: 148). Nel *taarab* quindi, con un dibattito e senza spaccature così profonde come nella letteratura, avviene ciò che succede precedentemente nella poesia swahili. In termini testuali il processo è molto simile, ma non molto trasparente a causa della cristallizzazione del dibattito letterario come opposizione tra versi classici e versi liberi²³. In realtà, così

²¹ Bongo è una parola swahili che indica il cervello e l'intelligenza-furbizia. Sta a indicare la Tanzania urbana, in particolare Dar es Salaam, dove una parte della popolazione vive di espedienti.

²² Dalla fine degli anni '60, con le prime pubblicazioni di Ebrahim Hussein e Euphrase Kezilahabi, si apre un dibattito intorno ai versi liberi in swahili che dura ancora oggi.

²³ Infatti, Aiello (2004: 75) sostiene: "The amazing success of Zanzibari modern taarab is in my view not simply a "teenagers phenomenon", "dance" and "obscenity" imported from Dar es Salaam or from the global music market, but the peak of this complex reorganisation, the novelties of this style being linked to trends already existent in Zanzibari taarab, especially in women's taarab, but difficult to decode in a different and ever-shifting setting."

come nel *taarab*, i nuovi testi poetici non erano totalmente liberi e senza relazione col passato²⁴, i poeti innovatori non rifiutavano la poesia classica swahili, anche se non provenivano dalla costa²⁵. Infatti, alcuni studi hanno mostrato come i testi dei due tra le figure più prominenti della poesia in versi liberi swahili siano non totalmente liberi ma ibridi (Njogu 1994 per M.M. Mulokozi e Gaudio 2020 per K. Kezilahabi). Infatti Alimin Mazrui (2007: 54) afferma che questo dibattito – ancora oggi vivo – ha incentivato gli studi verso la letteratura orale e una fusione stilistica di diversi elementi.

Perhaps as a result of the debate between conservationist and liberalists, Swahili free-verse poets have also been under pressure to pay greater attention to the indigenous and oral poetic heritage of Bantu-speaking communities in East Africa. The resulting product has again been a poetic syncretism that is uniquely Swahili, a new fusion of the stylistics of orality and those of the written word.

Ongala arriva in Tanzania nel 1978, quindi in tempo per assistere a cambiamento della musica Taarab, il testo di *Ndumila kuwili* potrebbe essersi ispirato alla nuova musica Taarab, tuttavia come succede nella letteratura swahili il cambiamento della forma corrisponde ad un cambiamento tematico e ad una visione del mondo più laica. Per esempio, il più innovatore dei poeti swahili Euphrase Kezilahabi (Ukerewe 1944 – Dar es Salaam 2020), scrive nel suo secondo romanzo *Kichwamaji* ([1974] 2013: 141):

un campo da calcio io
l'erba non cresce su di me
ogni giorno calpestata
ogni giorno battuta
loro passano e via
come nuvole di pioggia
Qui giaccio
consumata dai giorni.

²⁴ Per un'analisi degli elementi di continuità con la tradizione della poesia in versi liberi di Euphrase Kezilahabi si veda Gaudio (2020).

²⁵ La maggior parte dei poeti che si cimentarono in forme nuove di poesia swahili provenivano da contesti dove la prima lingua non era lo swahili.

“Poesie del genere non sono adatte” disse. “Perché?” domandai. “Prima di tutto sono offensive, seconda cosa non hanno né metro né rima”. Non volli rispondere, perché ogni parola che aveva detto era l’opposto dei miei pensieri sulla poesia.²⁶

Queste righe sintetizzano come fu recepita sia dal punto di vista formale sia contenutistico la produzione di Kezilahabi²⁷, e infatti la rivista *Zinduko* del 1974 addita lo scrittore come nemico della morale pubblica. Kezilahabi e Ongala in modo pionieristico per la cultura tanzaniana e swahili hanno iniziato a mettere in poesia (dalla fine degli anni ‘60) e in musica (dalla fine degli anni ‘70) in modo laico e schietto questioni relative al corpo, alla politica, alla religione, alla sessualità e libertà con un linguaggio accessibile a tutti. Il loro esporsi, il loro essere schietti, fu aspramente criticato dai tradizionalisti e moralisti. Loro rispondevano con una critica radicale - ritenuta fondamento sano del possibile cambiamento: criticavano la doppia morale, il bigottismo e la mancanza di libertà. Questo è riscontrabile già nelle canzoni sopracitate di Ongala, ma diventano emblematico nella canzone *Mambo kwa Soksi* (“Questioni per un calzino”). In questa canzone Ongala usa la metafora del calzino per parlare del preservativo e incentivare al suo uso per proteggersi dall’AIDS. Nonostante la metafora del calzino per non nominare il preservativo, nella versione originale della canzone, non quella registrata per l’album²⁸ che presenta molte parti in inglese, ma quella in swahili,²⁹ Ongala decide di usare un linguaggio piuttosto volgare, creando quasi un dialogo teatrale tra lui e un altro musicista, parlano apertamente di come indossare e usare il calzino, delle misure. Perché allora usare una metafora per il preservativo? Perché entrare così nei dettagli? Perché rischiare di essere censurati e di essere mira dei moralisti? Kezilahabi e Ongala utilizzano un linguaggio semplice, spoglio e privo di metafore soprattutto quando il loro scopo è didattico. Vogliono colpire le persone, spingerle ad una seria riflessione e ad un cambiamento nella loro vita. È questo che fa Kezilahabi nel suo romanzo *Rosa Mistika* (1971), dove manifestava la necessità dell’educazione sessuale, o nella poesia *Bikiri Mwenye Huzuni* (“Vergine addolorata”, 1974: 3), dove criticava il taboo del sesso prematrimoniale, ed è quello che fa Ongala in *Mambo kwa Soksi* e con i continui rimandi all’AIDS anche in canzoni nelle quali il tema principale non è il sesso o l’amore.

²⁶ *Mimi uwanja wa mpira/Kwangu majani hayaoti/Kila siku kukanyagwa/Kila siku kufinyangwa/Wanapita na kwaheri/Kama mawingu ya mvua/Mimi hapa nimetulia/Nikilika na siku. “Mashairi kama hayo hayafai,” alisema. “Kwa nini?” nilimwuliza. “Kwanza ni matusi, pili hayana vina wala mizani.” Sikutaka kumjibu, kwani maneno yote aliyosema yalikuwa kinyume cha mawazo yangu kuhusu mashairi.*

²⁷ Per un’analisi più approfondita della poetica e della filosofia di Kezilahabi si veda Gaudio (2019).

²⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjCBF2qhuvU&t=331s>

²⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aj3fOA9CwEA>

La responsabilità e la conoscenza vanno di pari passo con l'emancipazione e la libertà. Kezilahabi, per esempio, è uno strenuo difensore della donna, dei suoi diritti, ma non si pone mai in modo paternalistico: piuttosto incoraggia le donne a vivere con libertà e responsabilità. Ciò è evidente nel suo componimento *Wimbo wa Unyago* ("Canzone dell'iniziazione femminile"; 2008: 17):

<i>Ishi kijana ishi, ishi maisha yako</i>	Vivi giovane vivi, vivi la vita tua.
<i>Wazee waliishi yao</i>	Gli anziani vissero la loro
<i>Sasa yamebaki kwako.</i>	adesso resta a te.
<i>Ukabila ni utumwa</i>	Tribalismo è schiavitù
<i>Olewa msichana olewa</i>	sposati ragazza sposati
<i>Olewa chaguo lako [...]</i>	sposa la tua scelta [...]
<i>Asifuye miguu yako</i>	chi loda le gambe tue
<i>Ataka usitembee[...]</i>	vuole che stia ferma [...]
<i>Ee mama mwenye rutuba</i>	Eh signora feconda
<i>Zaa, zaa kwa mpangilio,</i>	genera, genera con progetto
<i>Si kufyatua matofali.</i>	non per sfornare mattoni.
<i>Zaa ukichunga afya yako.</i>	Genera secondo la tua salute.

Si noti che questa poesia ha per lo più una struttura ripartita in due, propria dei proverbi, come descritto da Knappert; nei versi citati: il primo è bipartito al suo interno a metà, il secondo col terzo, il quarto di otto sillabe con cesura al mezzo, il quinto col sesto, il settimo con l'ottavo.³⁰

Anche Ongala si occupa spesso della condizione femminile, la canzone *Karola* ne è un esempio; e, come Kezilahabi, non lo fa mai in modo paternalistico o moralista, ma mettendo sempre in primo piano la libertà e la responsabilità, il libero arbitrio e le conseguenze di scelte che non rispettano in primo luogo se stessi.

<i>Ukiwa mtenda mabaya wewe mwenyewe hujijui.</i>	Se fai del male allora non ti conosci
<i>Ukiwa mtenda mabaya kila siku unasema unaonewa.</i>	Se fai del male, ogni giorno ti lamenterai di essere oppressa
<i>Ukiwa mtenda mabaya huko unakokwenda pia ni pabaya.</i>	Se fai del male, dovunque andrai sarà un brutto posto

³⁰ Ho citato qui parte della poesia, ma questa struttura è largamente presente in tutto il dettato poetico originale, tende ad una forma breve, enfatica e perentoria come quella dei proverbi. Per un'analisi si veda Gaudio (2019b:232-234); al link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NX3y5xsAxI> è possibile ascoltare una versione musicata ed è possibile sentire il ritmo di questa struttura. Si noti bene che il fatto che sia musicata e che sia in versi liberi è rilevante all'interno del dibattito sui versi liberi swahili, perché i detrattori ritengono che i versi liberi non siano cantabili.

*Ukiwa na roho mbaya kweli tutakuogopa.*³¹

Se avrai un'anima cattiva davvero ti temeremo.

Anche qui c'è una forma bipartita in ogni verso, anche se non è regolare come nei proverbi o nella poesia di Kezilahabi su menzionata. Tuttavia la forma ipotetica col marcatore verbale *-ki-* e la bipartizione (*se...allora*) tende a dare ai versi un tono perentorio e didattico non lontano da quello dei proverbi.

Le poetiche di Ongala e Kezilahabi sono in continuità con quei cambiamenti che avvenivano in Tanzania negli anni '70, mi riferisco soprattutto alle idee progressiste e laiche di quegli anni. Lo sforzo dei progressisti è notevole, tuttavia è recepito per lo più come posizione antagonista alla tradizione. Le poetiche di Kezilahabi e Ongala (sia per le forme che per le idee) si scontravano con ogni forma consolatoria della società, al fine di spingerla alla riflessione, alla conoscenza – non alla celebrazione identitaria. Non era una lotta contro la tradizione, ma un rifiuto di vedere in questa i limiti dell'esperienza artistica e umana. Non rifiutavano la tradizione, l'uso di forme tradizionali (seppur riscritte). L'uso dei proverbi, per esempio, stava a mostrare come la saggezza popolare e orale non fosse un'ideale privo di contraddizioni, un'idealizzazione di un'identità comunitaria, ma una saggezza storicamente acquisita dalla quale attingere e spingere verso il presente e il futuro venturo.

Le similitudini tra Ongala e Kezilahabi, però, non sono solo date dal contesto generale, ma come abbiamo visto brevemente anche le loro scelte stilistiche sono simili. E' la loro poetica, infatti, ad avere diversi punti di contatto. Remmy esprime la propria nella canzone *Muziki Asili yake Wapi?* ("Dov'è l'origine della musica?", nell'album *Songs for the Poor Man* del 1989, Realworld and Virgin records): *Muziki asili yake wapi ee?/ Muziki ni wa nani ee?/ Muziki hakuna mwenyewe/ Muziki ni mwito/ Muziki ni fundisho* ("Dov'è l'origine della musica?/ Di chi è la musica?/ Nessuno possiede la musica/ La musica è un richiamo/ La musica è un insegnamento"). Anche Kezilahabi esprime questa idea di arte universale,

³¹ *Karola* è dedicata a Carola Kinasha, una cantautrice tanzaniana di lingua swahili che ha all'attivo due album e la cui ricerca musicale unisce per lo più la musica tradizionale tanzaniana (in particolare della zona di Dodoma – lei è Maasai) e il soul (ispirandosi soprattutto a Miriam Makeba, ma anche ad Aretha Franklin). Remmy, probabilmente affascinato dalla sua voce profonda, chiese a Carola di cantare questa canzone che fino ad allora era intitolata *Ukiwa mtenda mabaya* ("Se fai cose cattive"). Carola mi ha raccontato (intervista a Dar es Salaam, 14/8/2018) che era molto emozionata e imbarazzata di cantare per un personaggio così famoso, allora sul palco improvvisarono un ritornello di incoraggiamento *Karola wee, Karola wee* che è rimasto alla fine della canzone e che da quel giorno prese il titolo di *Karola*. Con Carola Kinasha ho avuto una lunga conversazione, abbiamo parlato anche dell'esperienza estetica e intellettuale di Kezilahabi e di Ongala, e di come il loro lavoro possa essere esempio per le nuove generazioni di artisti. Carola stessa riconosce la loro grandezza e il loro sforzo critico per la società. Ella mi ha raccontato che ha letto il romanzo censurato di Kezilahabi *Rosa Mistika* (1971) e che ha imparato da Remmy ad avere una posizione ferma e ad occuparsi di chi non ha voce.

durante la mia intervista a Kezilahabi (luglio 2015, Gaborone) ha infatti affermato: *Ushairi ni ukweli ambao unavuka mipaka ya kushikika na kuharibika na pia mpaka wa lugha yenyewe* (Poesia è verità che attraversa i confini di ciò che può essere bloccato o rovinato e della lingua stessa). Questa prospettiva è molto vicina a quella dell'antropologo Jean-Loup Amselle (2007: 131). Amselle ritiene che, nonostante la globalizzazione e le teorie che enfatizzano l'ibridizzazione, la maggior parte dei critici e delle teorie attuali diano per scontato che ogni atto artistico sia direttamente associato a un'identità culturale, etnica o nazionale. Questo, argomenta l'antropologo, limita la libertà dell'artista e l'universalità che è propria di ogni espressione artistica. Questa concezione estetica anti-essenzialista è espressa anche nella poesia *Fasihi* ("Letteratura", in *Kichomi* "Dolore dilaniante", 1974: 14), che è la sua dichiarazione di poetica: *Maneno yangu kumeza tena sasa siwezi./ Lakini kuonyesha ukweli na kuutafuta/ Nitaendelea* ("Parole mie inghiottire più non posso./ Ma a mostrare la verità e ricercarla/ continuerò"). Per Kezilahabi, quindi, letteratura, poesia e arte in generale (Gaudio 2019) sono esse stesse ricerca e disvelamento di questa verità attraverso l'uso del *tonicum*, della forte medicina amara che spinge il lettore alla riflessione (Gaudio 2019). Anche Remmy afferma *To be a musician demands courage, music is research* (Graebner 1989: 247).

Per Remmy e Kezilahabi la critica non era fine a se stessa. Per Kezilahabi, richiamandosi al filosofo tedesco Martin Heidegger (Kezilahabi 1985: 167), considera la verità coincidente con la libertà e la letteratura stessa evento vivente verso queste (Kezilahabi 1985: 221, Gaudio 2019). Sebbene Remmy si considerasse un giornalista (intervista in Sanga 2010: 66), non si abbandonò mai all'aspetto cronachistico, ma inseriva l'evento narrato nella sua poetica in modo spesso provocatorio, facendo spesso emergere gli aspetti più forti che dovevano spingere gli ascoltatori alla riflessione. In questo senso fu chiamato "dottore": Ongala accoglieva tutti a casa sua, e tutti andavano a raccontargli la loro vita, trovandovi ascolto e comprensione, la sua musica era medicina tesa a denunciare e spronare gli ascoltatori. È questo il punto di contatto tra la poetica di Kezilahabi e Ongala.

5. Conclusioni

Si è visto come la poetica di Remmy Ongala abbia relazioni con diverse tradizioni testuali, quella di Kindu (Repubblica Democratica del Congo) da cui proviene e quella swahili tanzaniana (tradizionale e non). Abbiamo visto come la storia e le modalità di composizione dei due testi registrati *Siska* e *Kipenda Roho* ricordano molto le modalità della letteratura orale primaria, ovvero l'incerta attribuzione

dell'autore e/o le modifiche testuali³² nel passaggio da autore a autore (o interprete a interprete), così come le varie realizzazioni e l'intertestualità transmediatica (orale, scritta) e oltre i generi (canzone, poesia (moderna o tradizionale), proverbio). Questo potrebbe spingerci a considerare il cantautorato o l'esperienza di Ongala in Tanzania negli anni '80 e '90 come un fenomeno a metà strada tra scrittura e oralità, oppure ad interrogarci sugli strumenti finora utilizzati per analizzare i testi orali e più in generale sulla differenza tra oralità e scrittura da un punto di vista letterario. Inoltre, abbiamo visto come la poetica di Ongala sia tutt'altro che quella di un perdigiorno, ma sia paragonabile a quella di uno degli scrittori più virtuosi dal punto di vista filosofico della letteratura swahili, nonostante la mancanza di un'istruzione formale. Questo potrebbe portare a riconsiderare la distanza tra arte d'élite e popolare, saranno necessari maggiori e ulteriori studi, però ripartire induttivamente dai testi, anziché dai generi, classificazioni o teorie, potrebbe rivelarci contiguità e dialogicità non emerse finora sia tra arti e generi differenti, sia tra tradizioni testuali lontane nel tempo e nello spazio.

Questa analisi dell'estetica di Ongala, infatti, si basa soprattutto sui testi, contribuendo a riportare al centro il testo (approcci extra-testuali ne avevano fatto pre-testo) che per un autore è caratterizzante, anche qualora si trattasse solo di testi orali. Attraverso questa attenzione ai testi e con un approccio comparativo sono emersi due significati differenti di uno stesso proverbio swahili ed è stato possibile ipotizzare che la forma congolese arrivata probabilmente in quell'area nel XIX sec. registri il significato letterale e più antico del proverbio, mentre nelle zone di prima lingua swahili, il significato del proverbio si sia modificato attraverso un processo di astrazione. In questa discrepanza di significato l'artista crea, componendo una canzone lessicalmente molto precisa e puntuale, quasi come un linguista o un filologo, come si è visto con l'uso di *penzi* e *mapenzi*, con l'uso consapevole delle diverse sfumature di *kipenda roho*. In questo studio sono stati analizzati i testi di Ongala con un focus sull'estetica del testo allo scopo di farne emergere la poetica. Infine, trattandosi di un'analisi dello stile

³² Si noti bene le aggiunte ai testi non sono un fenomeno esclusivo della letteratura orale, prima dell'uso di massa della stampa era un fenomeno comune che il testo subisse modificazioni ad opera dei copisti. Grazie ai recenti studi di Karin Barber (1995, 2007) e Gabriele Frasca (2005) è stato possibile riconsiderare la distanza con la quale erano stati trattati i testi orali e scritti. Mi riferisco alla critica di Barber alle vaghezze con le quali è stato trattato spesso il fenomeno dell'oralità (1995: 8), al concetto di "entextualization" (testualizzazione; Barber 2007: 22-23) che è presupposto di ogni performance in quanto la performance è sempre performance di un determinato (spesso e in grande misura predeterminato) testo. Afferma (ivi: 4-18), anche se da un punto di vista antropologico, che un testo va trattato in quanto testo ponendo l'accento sulla struttura del testo. Inoltre, il saggio di Gabriele Frasca (2005) offre un'analisi estremamente interessante e originale sulla letteratura e i suoi media, mostrando come la letteratura occidentale si sia accompagnata da sempre a diversi media e soltanto per pochi secoli sia stata esclusivamente scritta.

e l'estetica testuale, potrebbe contribuire a futuri studi sull'estetica in generale (performance, abiti, danze, ecc...) dell'artista Remmy Ongala.

Album

Remmy Ongala & Orchestre Super Matimila, 1988. *Nalilia Mwana*. Real World.

Remmy Ongala & Orchestre Super Matimila, 1989. *Song for the Poor Man*. Real World. Realworld and Virgin records.

Remmy Ongala & Orchestre Super Matimila, 1995. *Sema*. Real World.

Bibliografia

Aiello, Flavia. 2004. "Continuity and Change in Zanzibari *Taarab* Performance and Poetry." *Swahili Forum* 11: 75-81.

Aiello, Flavia e Roberto Gaudio. 2019. "Sando Marteu: il cantore di Lubumbashi." *Kervan* 23/1: 7-28.

Amselle, Jean-Loup. 2005. *L'art de la friche. Essai sur l'art africain contemporain*; trad. italiana di Littardi, F. 2007. *L'arte africana contemporanea*. Torino: Boringhieri.

Barber, Karin, 1995. "African-Language Literature and Postcolonial Criticism." *Research in African Literatures* 26/4: 3-30.

Barber, Karin. 1999. "Quotation in the Constitution of Yorùbá Oral Texts". *Research in African Literatures* 30/2:17-41.

Barber, Karin, 2007. *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baumgarten, Alexander Gottlieb. 1750-1758. *Æsthetica*. Frankfurt a. d. Oder; trad. italiana di Caparotta, F., Li Vigni, A., Tedesco, S., a cura di Tedesco, S., 2000. *L'Estetica*. Palermo: Aesthetica.

Berman, Antoine. 1999. *La Traduction et la lettre ou l'Auberge du lointain* (trad. italiana a cura di Giometti, G. 2003. *La traduzione e la lettera o l'albergo nella lontananza*. Macerata: Quodlibet).

Bicknell, Jeanette. 2005. "Just a Song? Exploring the Aesthetics of Popular Song Performance." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 63/3: 261-270.

Finnegan, Ruth. 2005. "The How of Literature". *Oral Tradition* 20/2: 164-187.

Frasca, Gabriele. 2005. *La lettera che muore. La "letteratura" nel reticolo mediale*. Roma: Meltemi.

Gaski, Harald. 1999. "The Secretive Text: Yoik Lyrics As Literature and Tradition". *Nordlit* 3/1: 3-27.

Gaudio, Roberto. 2019a. "La pensée poétisante swahili du docteur Ongala." *Africa e Mediterraneo* 90: 63-67.

Gaudio, Roberto. 2019b. *The voice of the Text and its Body. The Continuous reform of Kezilahabi's Poetics*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

- Gaudio, Roberto. 2020. "This is not free verse! A stylistic study of Kezilahabi's poems". *Africa. Rivista semestrale di studi e ricerche* 2/2 (in corso di stampa).
- Graebner, Werner. 1989. "Whose Music? The Songs of Remmy Ongala and Orchestra Super Matimila." *Popular Music* 8/3: 243-258.
- Hilhorst, Sean. 2009. "Remmy Ongala: Capitalist transition and popular music in Tanzania 1979-2002." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 21/2: 105-126.
- Kezilahabi, Euphrase. 1971. *Rosa Mistika*. Dar es Salaam: East African Literature Bureau.
- Kezilahabi, Euphrase. 1974. *Kichomi*. Nairobi: Heinemann Educational.
- Kezilahabi, Euphrase. 1985. *African Philosophy and the Problem of Literary Interpretation*. University of Wisconsin – Madison: unpublished PhD thesis.
- Kezilahabi, Euphrase. 2008. *Dhifa*. Nairobi: Vide~Muwa.
- Kezilahabi, Euphrase. 2013 [1974]. *Kichwamaji*. Nairobi: Vide~Muwa.
- Khamis, Said. 2001. "Redefining Taarab in relation to local and global influences". *Swahili Forum* 8: 145-156.
- Kirkegaard, Annemette. 2004. "Remmy Ongala – Moderating through Music". In: *Sound of Change – Social and Political Features of Music in Africa*, edited by Thorsen Stig-Magnus, 57-69. Stockholm: Sida Studies.
- Knappert, Jan. 1979. *Four Centuries of Swahili Verse*. London: Heinemann.
- Mazrui, Alamin, 2007. *Swahili beyond the boundaries*. Athens (Ohio): Ohio University Press.
- Mkota, Abel. 2014. *Kamusi ya Methali. Maana na Matumizi*. Nairobi: Vide-Muwa.
- Mtobwa, Ben. 1984. *Remmy Ongala "Bob Marley wa Tanzania"*. Dar es Salaam: African Publication Limited.
- Njogu, Kimani. 1995. "Poetic Serialization: Kiswahili Metapoetry on Prosodic Knots". *Research in African Literatures* 4: 138-150.
- Perullo, Alex. 2011. *Live from Dar es Salaam*. Indiana University Press.
- Sacleux, Charles. 1939. *Dictionnaire Swahili – Français*. Paris: Université de Paris.
- Sanga, Imani. 2010. "Postcolonial Cosmopolitan Music in Dar es Salaam: Dr. Remmy Ongala and the Traveling Sounds". *African Studies Review* 53/3: 61-76
- Tramutoli, Rosanna. 2015. "'Love' encoding in Swahili: A semantic description through a corpus-based semantic analysis". *Swahili Forum* 22: 72-103.
- Valdés Miyares, J. Rubén. 2016. "Breaking Joy Division's 'Glass': Reading Song Lyrics as Literature", *Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies* 38/2: 161-168.
- Yoka, M. Lye. 2018. "La littérature musicale congolaise: la fête des mots". *Afrika Focus* 31:2: 165-171.
- Zinduko – Kongamano la Kiswahili juu ya "Uhuru wa Mwandishi". 1974. Dar es Salaam: Chama cha Kiswahili Chuo Kikuu Dar es Salaam.

Roberto Gaudioso is a researcher who focuses on poetry and song lyrics in African languages. He carried a post-doc research on Swahili Literature of DR Congo at the University of Napoli “L’Orientale.” His PhD thesis is on the poetics and philosophy of Euphrase Kezilahabi (University of Napoli “L’Orientale” and University of Bayreuth). He has written on: Euphrase Kezilahabi, Ebrahim Hussein, Ingeborg Bachmann and Giacomo Leopardi, whom he has translated into Swahili. His research interests include the literatures in African languages (in particular Shona and Swahili), comparative literature, the theories and practices of translation, the aesthetics of literature.

He can be reached at: roberto-lumuli.gaudioso@gmail.com.

Cultural change and medical practice among the Kwawu people of Ghana, c. 1700-2019

Samuel Adu-Gyamfi, Benjamin Dompfeh Darkwa, Dennis Baffour Awuah, and Lucky Tomdi

The cultural values of any group of people correlates with their practice of medicine. Cultural values in the Kwawu community and the world at large has gone through a cornucopia of changes over time. In this vein, the practice of medicine and healing in the Kwawu community which are embedded and constructed culturally have experienced some changes or gone through metamorphosis. Although the values of culture -on their own- changes overtime, this paper relates most of the changes within the community to the European domination of the African continent. Factors such as Christianity, formal education, individualism, urbanization and others as discussed in this empirical research, have served as the major drivers of social change; the combination of which have served as social forces impacting the nature of medical practices among the people of Kwawu. Using a qualitative research approach, the study accounts for the changes in culture and how it has influenced the medical practice of the Kwawu people of Ghana. The current contribution concludes, among other things, that the youth are the major exhibitors of social change. Practitioners and clients (patients) have therefore recognized the need to use up-to-date technology and skills to meet the changing needs and preference in the area of healthcare and medicine.

Keywords: culture, medical practices, change, traditional medicine, biomedicine, Kwahu, Ghana

1. Introduction

The practice of medicine has been an integral part of humanity and has gone through a cornucopia of changes over time. Globally, people have shown resilience in their fight against anything that has the potential of threatening their existence including diseases. As a result of this, societies have over the years, developed various approaches towards the definition, control and protection of themselves against ailments. Landy (1977) has argued that every cultural setting has its unique explanations attached to the etiology and effects as well as the approaches towards the healing process. Culture has been an effective tool which defines the kind of medical practice as well as the medical systems available in every society. With medical practices having had long established ties with the way people

live (Adu-Gyamfi 2016), societies have, through various phases, developed their own institutions of medicine needed to address the burdens of diseases (Twumasi and Bonsi 1975: 340). Since pre-modern era, questions on the construction of diseases and illness have been central and universal to the social praxis of the cultural setting of the society in question (Langdon and Wilk 2010). In essence, whether or not a person contracts a sickness; the kind of disease he acquires, and the kind of treatment he receives depends immensely upon the social, cultural and psychological as well as biological factors of the society (Landy 1977).

Since time immemorial, the tendency of associating diseases to evil spirits in Africa has been very paramount across societies (Adu-Gyamfi and Adjei 2017). To that extent, diseases in Africa in the pre-modern era –and still in contemporary times– are associated with the demeanor of a person or persons and deviations at both personal and social levels (Adu-Gyamfi 2016). Partially, the attribution of the etiology of diseases to one's misconduct served as a measure of social control as individuals who lived in the pre-colonial era resorted to putting up good behavior within their societies (Landy 1977). Thus, in Africa, the social construction of the various diseases that befell the people and their responses accorded them were in relation to the overall social structure and maintenance of same (Langdon and Wilk 2010; Landy 1977).

Culture encompasses the arts, customs, lifestyles, background and habits exhibited by people of a particular nation or society (Acerbi and Parisi 2006; Akuoko 2008). Banks and Banks (2009: 33) defined the term as, “consisting primarily of the symbolic, ideational, and intangible aspects of human societies.” This implies that the quintessence of culture features more on the immaterial social components of society such as values, symbols, interpretations and practices as opposed to artifacts, tools, instruments and other material or tangible aspects of human societies (Akuoko 2008; Banks and Banks 2008). Culture virtually rules all facets of human life. It is examined in totality to include every aspect of life including religion, eating habits, recreational activities and fashion among many others, of a group that share them. To that extent, it is instructive to argue that, the construction of disease, health and illness as well as treatment of same cannot be dissociated from the discourse on culture (Langdon and Wilk 2010). Over the years, anthropologists have argued that the concept has been dynamic, undergoing changes overtime. Essentially, the cultural factors of Africans have been shaped immensely with their interactions with the West.

Similarly, the approaches for the treatment of diseases have not been static but have equally responded otherwise to the various social changes. Scholars of medical anthropology and especially those that are interested in medical practices have reported among other things that, response to changing cultural practices have revealed that the evolution of health related issues cannot be

overlooked when one is dealing with the general concept of social change (Lieban 1973; Landy 1974; 1977; Fiereman 1985; Langdon and Wilk 2010). As healthcare systems are culturally construed (Dunn and Janes 1986), pre-historic people of Africa relied on the best remedy they could think of based on their knowledge (Kelly 2009). This notwithstanding, the colonial era marked a turning point in the (medical and cultural) history of Africa and Ghana in particular. The era under review introduced new forms of cultural practices coupled with medical values which have since then affected the indigenous African practices (Nukunya 2003; Adu-Gyamfi and Anderson 2019). Significantly, the era was much influential as it began to alter the belief system of the people of Ghana and Kwawu in particular (Twumasi 1975). To stretch the debate, the literature on African medical systems contend that the African encounter with the West, and especially, Europeans greatly affected the indigenous medical practices and practitioners in general (Abdullahi 2011). It has further been reported in the literature that, the latter's form of education provided a sense of resistance against indigenous cultural practices including the practice of medicine (Twumasi 1975). Particularly, scholars are of the view that colonialism introduced a new form of medicine reckoned widely as scientific, orthodox or biomedicine (Twumasi 1975; Adu-Gyamfi 2010; Asante and Avornyo 2013; Adu-Gyamfi and Adjei 2017). Within the discourses of this kind of medical system, attention shifted from the definition of diseases as supernatural to diseases being the effects of physiological or biological defects in or on the body of an organism (Landy 1977; Adu-Gyamfi and Adjei 2017). Healing was to be in consonance with the new paradigm as there was the need to justify the science in the treatment of all afflictions (Brenya and Adu-Gyamfi 2014).

The foundation that was laid in the colonial era has found its way into the post-colonial period with social change still affecting the practice of medicine. Among other things, the changes in culture has made healers adaptive to these changes (Landy 1974); the escalation of trans-local connections within Ghana and Africa in general has made traditional healers position themselves strategically in the pluralistic and globalized medical arena (Van der Geest and Krause 2014) and the choice for a particular therapy has been dependent on such factors as education, mobility, religious belief system as well as economic well-being. With the inevitable changes in societal norms and values, the roles of traditional healers have also changed overtime. For example, the whole thesis of Landy (1974) is positioned around the relationship between this changing society and the role of traditional healers. Landy further reports that indigenous healers have adapted to their changing societies to avoid extinction. Similarly, culture, regardless of its dynamism, has underpinned the actions and inactions of the Kwawu people since the pre-colonial, colonial, through to the post-colonial eras.

The discourse above is a prove that the subject under review is not a recent phenomenon as scholars and the literature have paid particular attention to the changing nature of both medicine and culture through time. Notwithstanding the above, the attention of scholars have not reflected the dynamic relationship between changes in cultural factors and medicine. As reported by Lieban (1973), the relationship between diseases and cultural factors have been a relatively neglected theme by scholars in history and anthropology. Essentially, the attention of most scholars have not been directed toward the extent to which the relationship between culture and medical practices affect each other. Scholars have partially addressed the level to which these social changes (in culture) affect the practice of medicine in some parts of Africa with little or no emphasis on the Kwawu people of Ghana. The current research addresses such a hiatus. The main objective of this empirical research is to ascertain the level to which the changing phases of culture affect the practice of medicine and vice versa. Again, this study is geared towards revealing such courses of actions that have influenced the medical culture of the people of Kwawu in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

Geographically, the locale of this research is Kwawu, an area which is found in the Eastern part of Ghana. The area shares boundary with Asante Akyem South in the north, Atiwa District to the south, Birim North to the west and the shores of Lake Volta to the east (Adonteng 2009). As a territory known widely for its activeness in trade, the community has witnessed a plethora of interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds. Historically, it has been reported that, the inhabitants of Kwawu have been migrating to occupy places across Kwawu and even beyond the shores of Ghana to engage in different economic activities (van der Geest 2007; Bartle 1997). According to scholars, the emigration of the Kwawu people to various places outside Ghana, stabilize the local economy of their families in the Kwawu community. Among other things, these travelers contribute to the family income by establishing businesses for their relatives, pay school fees, funeral bills, and medical expenses among others (van der Geest 2007). As a territory that mostly witness emigration and immigration, it is instructive to argue that such community will not be devoid of the infusion of various cultural practices. This makes Kwawu a suitable place for a study on cultural change and how the same affects medical practices.

2. Methodology

The study used a qualitative research technique based on information gleaned from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data include oral interviews and participant observations; they are sources that are closely related to ethnography. The semi- structured interview format was employed with a sample of fifty (50) participants; some of whom hail from Kwawu while others are non-native

residents. The key informants were above seventy years. The researchers adopted the stratified random sampling technique and stratified the population based on their respective ages (i.e., children, the youth and the aged). Participants were randomly selected from each age group and interviewed to glean information on the subject matter. Essentially, narratives on the indigenous cultural and medical practices that have shaped the living patterns of the people through time were obtained from the elderly within the community. It should be noted that, participants agreed that their names should be acknowledged in the research, where necessary. With no equivocation, the researchers have duly acknowledged respondents. The youth included in this study were mainly interviewed to ascertain whether their cultural values have been altered following the changes in culture and medical practices. Based on participant observation, a member of the research team –being a resident of the area - studied the real life experiences of persons and their medical choices in relation to their exposure – contact with formal education, urbanization, Christianity and economic activities.

The secondary sources consulted were books, reports, journal articles and online materials. These materials were particularly contacted due to the relevant information they possess on the subject matter. Information from earlier scholars on the discourse under review served as a basis for take-off in this current study. Significantly, these secondary data have also been used to corroborate the primary data and vice versa. We have duly acknowledged and further referenced the various literature that we contacted in piecing the current empirical study. The information gleaned from these sources have been presented thematically to reflect our discourse on cultural change and medical practice among the Kwawu people of Ghana.

3. Results and Discussions

All cultural settings have through time developed their own ways of defining the etiology, pathogenesis and the approaches in responding to diseases (Ackerknecht 1945: 428). The findings of this study postulate that several factors have resulted in the rapid changes in culture among the Kwawu people. In view of these alterations, the medical practices of the people have also been affected positively and adversely. The various factors which have resulted in these changes are thoroughly discussed below. In the first instance, we pay attention to the origins and ethnography of Kwawu. Then we focus our attention on the significant factors that have shaped the discourses on the medical culture of the people within the period under review.

3.1. History and Ethnography of Kwawu

The people of Kwawu are part of the larger Akan group who also speak the “Twi” dialect, like the Asante, Akuapem, Akyem, and Denkyira. Like her fellow Akan groups, Kwawu is made up of different people originating from different backgrounds. Many of the people who are inhabiting the present day Kwawu lands do not have a common ancestral history (Achempong 2010). Presently, there are Ewes, “Northerners,” Hausas and Krobos occupying the area of Kwawu. Oral traditions suggest that the first inhabitants of the region migrated from Asante in their quest to escape from hostilities that were ongoing within the Asante Empire (Queenmother of Nkawkaw-Asubone Traditional Area, interview, April 1 2019). This fact has been confirmed by scholars such as Perregaux (1903), Wallis (1953) and Kyeremateng (2000). According to Perregaux (1903: 445), the land hosted people prior to the hostilities that ensued among Asante and Denkyira, which forced both Osei Twum and Ampong Agyei to migrate to the Kwawu Mountains. He further reports that the name Kwawu appeared in an old book published in Amsterdam long before these hostilities (Perregaux 1903). In support, Acheampong’s study in 2010 on Kwawu reported that a “Dutch Map of 1629 mentioned two Kwawu (Quahoe) states with the following descriptions: “Quahoe – rascal people” and “Quahoe rich in gold” (Acheampong 2010: 40).

Irrespective of the above, both scholars and oral traditions trace the origin of Kwawu to Adanse and Asante Mampon in the present day Asante Region of Ghana. It has been reported that, around 1700, there were three brothers of the Royal family in Adanse, namely; Frempong Manso, Osei Twum and Ntim Gyakari - who later became the tyrannical ruler of Denkyira (Perregaux 1903). Long before the commencement of the Asante-Denkyira clash in 1699-1700, the whole Adanse country had been troubled with hostilities (Wallis 1953). In their quest to escape from these hostilities, Nana Osei Twum and Frempong Manso together with some of their (*nkoa*) slaves and nephews fled from the cruelty of their brother- Ntim Gyakari. In the course of the journey, Frempong Manso decided to settle at “Oda,” a small village closer to the Kwawu Mountains. Osei Twum however decided to travel a bit further and discovered a big and tall mountain with his servants. They started to build a village on top of the highland to house themselves. They first settled at Bukuruwa and later moved to Mpraeso through their explorations (Perregaux 1903).

The next wave of migration traces the origin of the Kwawu people to Asante Mampong. With this narrative, oral tradition makes reference to Ampong Agyei who was a relative of Esono Gyima of Asante Mampon. Both Perregaux (1903) and Wallis (1953) point to the fact that between 1700 and 1720, a civil war broke out between the villages of Ampong Agyei and a certain Osei of Dwaben. After the defeat of Agyei, he escaped punitive tendencies of his opponents, which could have been death. He eventually chose the mountains of Kwawu as a habitat with his slaves. On the mountain, Ampong Agyei instructed

one of his slaves – *Odiabene* – to clear a portion on the mountain to spy on potential intruders. After the death of the slave, the family of Agyei moved to the portion of the land he inhabited and named the place *Abene* in remembrance of his slave.

However, oral tradition presents a slightly different narrative on this wave of migration. Some informants argue that Ampong Agyei was rather chased out of Asante Mampong by his uncle, Esono Gyima who was then the head of the royal family. The main reason behind the chase was that Ampong Agyei refused to help the family in a war. Agyei was thus, compelled to migrate to occupy what was to become the stool land of Kwawu–*Abene*.

There have been several narratives on how the name Kwawu was adopted. Perregaux (1903) mentions throughout the exploration of Osei Twum and his family, his nephew embarked on a journey with one of their most loyal slaves. Upon their exploration the *akoa* (“slave”) died so the nephew of Twum ran home to break the news. According to Perregaux (1903) upon hearing the sad news, Osei Twum exclaimed in astonishment: *O! akoa wu ui* and from that time the whole country was referred to as *Okwa-U* (Kwawu; Acheampong 2010: 40).

In contrast, some informants make it clear that the etymology of Kwawu has its root from cautions which were given to people in the local adage as *ko wu*, meaning “go and die” (Queenmother of Nkawkaw-Asubone Traditional Area interview, April 1 2019). This caution was in twofolds; one, it was a caution given to people in the past whenever they planned to migrate and settle on the mountain to endure the cold and unfavorable weather conditions on the highlands (Queenmother 2019). Secondly, the caution was given to prospective intruders who made plans to fight the people on the mountains of Kwawu. Closely related to this was what the people of Kwawu adopted as defensive mechanism against their enemies. As put forward by one participant, “our forefathers resorted to the act of rolling stones to kill the enemies that came closer to the mountain” (Queenmother, interview, April 1 2019). In this sense, *ko wu* became what was known later as *kwa-wu* and was rendered by Europeans as Kwahu, its current form.

The political authority of the whole Kwawu rests in the hands of the *Kwawumanhene* (paramount chief) who doubles as the Kwawu *Abenehene*. As the Paramount Chief of the Kwawu traditional area, he is linguistically referred to as *Daasebre*. The *Omanhene* of Kwawu is selected from the *Bretuo/Tena*, the clan which is believed to have first inhabited the area (Bartle 1973). Aside the paramount chief, there are other chiefs who head the various towns which are organized into chiefdoms. The area called Kwawu after its first unification started with seventeen (17) towns. At the apex of these towns were Chiefs who wielded both legislative and judicial powers with their respective elders.

Economically, the people of Kwawu believe the idea of trade is inborn. Garlick traces the motive that underpin the establishment of numerous businesses by the Kwawus in Ghana's capital Accra and other parts of the country. According to Garlick (1967), trading has been part of the socialization process in the family. Significantly, it has been reported that historically, when the *Prah* deity asked the various Akan groups to channel their desires for redress, Asante opted for food, while the Kwawus chose trade. Garlick further hints that Obomeng, Obo and Twenedurase actively engaged in slave trading aside from flourishing in the trade in cloths and fish. Also, they engaged in the sale of kolanut for cowries with the Hausas and the Dagombas. More importantly, it is recorded that while the rich indulged in rubber trade, the poor in the community took to other commodities (Garlick 1967). In contemporary times, the the people of Kwawu are well-known for their business and trading activities. Significantly, the trading tradition of the Kwawu people and the search for economic opportunities have seen the establishment of businesses across the country, particularly in the country's capital (Garlick 1967).

Like all Akan groups, the people of Kwawu are also organized and divided primarily along family, lineage and clan ties (Akuoko 2008). Among the people of Kwawu, the family has been and continues to be the basic unit of socialization. From the pre-colonial days till date, the people of Kwawu take much pleasure in the extended family system. This family system consists of the nuclear family together with aunts, uncles, grandparents, nephews and cousins. It is -or was- not only by birth that one could become a member of a particular family; through other modes such as marriage and adoption, people outside the family could be integrated as active members of the family. Similar to other Akan groups, the people of Kwawu are also organized along the eight known clans among the Akans namely; *Aduana*, *Asakyiri*, *Ekuaona*, *Bretuo*, *Asene*, *Agona*, *Asona* and *Oyoko*. The people trace their lineage through the matrilineal side assigning any individual a sense of belongingness and inheritance traits (Nukunya 2003). Prior to European influx, evidence shows that properties were owned communally by all family members who maintained equal rights in utilizing them. Although still prevalent, property is rarely owned by the large family system; most inhabitants acquire properties for themselves and their nuclear family with disregard for the large extended family system.

In the pre-historic era, the only religion that was available and known to the people of Kwawu remained the African Traditional Religion, where the Supreme Being locally known as *Onyankopon* was worshipped through local deities (Bartle 1973). This rehashes the argument that the idea of the Supreme Being was not brought about as an achievement of the introduction of either Christianity or Islam into the area, but has been prevalent since time immemorial among all generations in the community. Aside from the Supreme Being, the people of Kwawu also believe in the existence of deities,

popularly referred to as *abosom* in their local dialect. Among the powerful deities include *Buruku*, *Tigare*, *Atia Yaw*, *Asubone*, and *Nansing* among many others who were, and are still consulted in times of crises, epidemics and festivities (Bartle 1973). Earlier scholars and oral traditions have provided evidence on how these gods shaped the notion of health and healthcare among the people of Kwawu. According to oral tradition, the deity, *Atia Yaw*, communicated to the people through the traditional priests, whenever there was going to be a disaster or a misfortune. It is reported that the deity further gave directions on how to curb same (Amofah, interview, 2019).

There is also the belief in ancestors among the Kwawu. Inferences from the narratives of the interviewees revealed that the people of Kwawu regard ancestors as those people who lived exemplary lives and died *owu pa* – natural or proper death. Ancestors are believed to provide protection for their lineages and family members against all forms of evil to which diseases are no exception. In the course of pouring libations, reference is made to the ancestors as *Nananom nsamanfoɔ*. Closely related to the above is funeral rites, which is considered as the main ritual sanctioned for the dead. Significantly, it is believed that when one dies, the spirit visits the house on the fortieth day. To that extent, the family adds no footwear to the dead in the hope to curb noise making as the spirit visits on the stipulated day (Amofah, Interview, 2019).

The belief in life after death is yet another intricate religious belief of the people. The people of Kwawu, like majority of the African ethnic groups, regard death as a mere transition from the physical stage to the spiritual world. From the various responses, the researchers acknowledged that if a person dies without fully completing his or her mission on earth, s/he returns to fulfill the mission through the concept of reincarnation.

Annually, the people celebrate festivals to portray togetherness and unity. Among these festivals include all the *Adae* festivals. In Kwawu however, they take pleasure in only celebrating the *Adae Kese* (*Big Adae*) with disregard for the other *Adae* festivals. During the celebration of festivals in Kwawu, prayers are always said in the form of pouring libation to deities and ancestors. While praying for successful year ahead of them, prayers are also said to relieve the people from all forms of calamities, including diseases and epidemics. In the observance of these traditional festivals, the people of Kwawu exhibit their rich culture in the form of dressing and dancing. Among the traditional dance performed during these festivities include *kete*, *adoa*, *adankum* and *aboma*.

Today, Easter - mainly a Christian festival - is the most popular of all festivals celebrated in Kwawu. The celebration of Easter has advertised the Kwawu community across the borders of Ghana including Africa and publicized the country to foreigners from other continents. In the course of the Easter celebration, foreigners and native Kwawu travelers both from within and outside the country march

to Kwawu to partake in the Easter celebrations (Bartle 1997). Among the activities observed are paragliding, health walks, street jams including other programmes organized to educate the people.

One distinct thing among the Kwawu is their marital system. Earlier literature like Bartle (1997) has extensively discussed the marital dynamics and patterns among the Kwawu people. Bartle reports that residing together as husband and wife (neo-local marriage) was not a central element of the community's social structure. Historically, when couples travelled to satellite villages to farm, they resided together and returned to their separate lineage houses when they returned back home to the Kwawu community. During the colonial era, when rural-urban drift saw many people travelling to cities and even overseas, the same pattern prevailed; husbands and their wives lived neo-locally while away from the area and duo-locally; temporarily, when they returned home for occasions such as funerals and Easter (Bartle 1997). Irrespective of changes that the modern community has witnessed, the above social functions and organizations persist among the people of Kwawu.

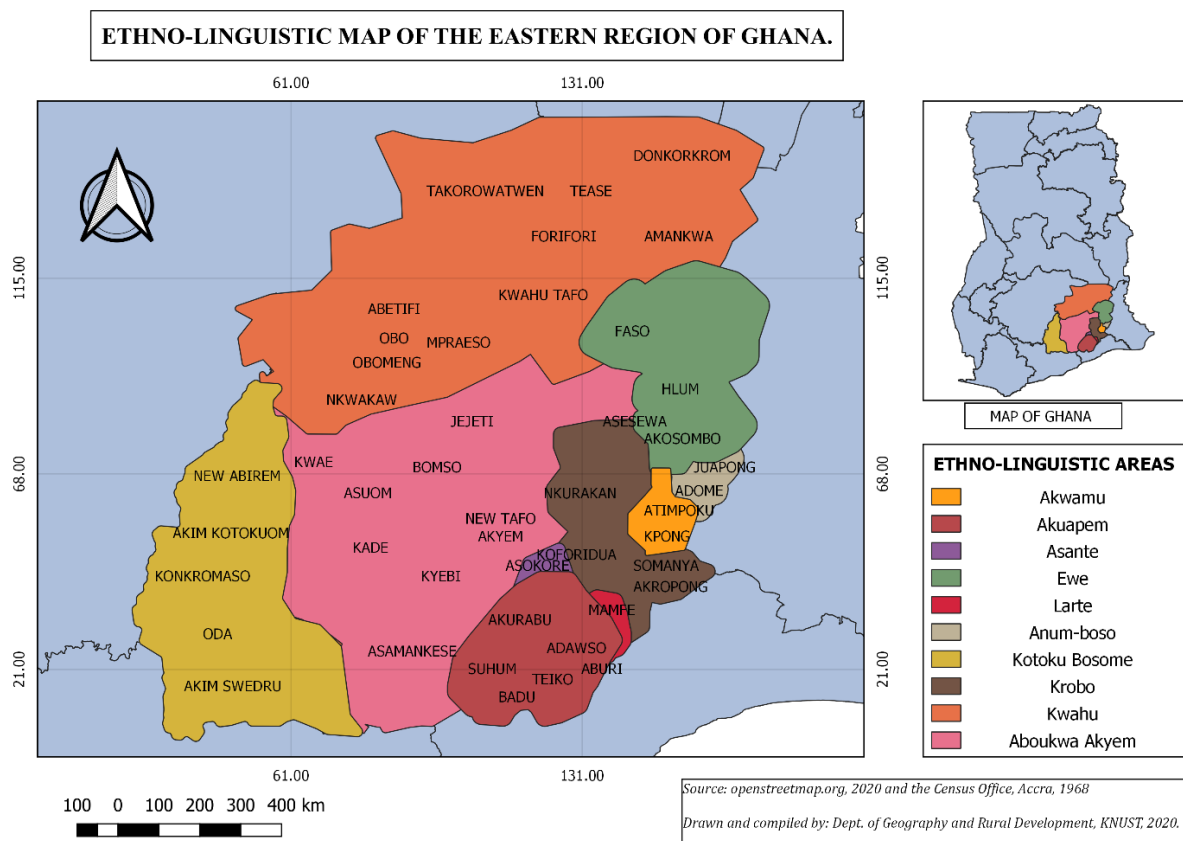
Essentially, since medical and healthcare systems are embedded in every cultural setting (Langdon and Wilk 2010; Landy 1974), it is a disservice to treat cultural features without making recourse to the practices of medicine among the people. Culturally, the people regard all those preventive and curative practices that serve as protectors and providers of health care needs as medical practices. The inhabitants of Kwawu rely on both spiritual and physical means to meet their health needs or challenges. As will be shown elsewhere in this study, the people had a popular medical substance for the treatment of their tropical infections. This was referred to as *dudo*.

Linguistically, there is a multidimensionality in the usage of the name Kwawu. It is significant that Kwawu is an ethnic identity on one hand, but also the place and the lands of Kwawu on the other (Bartle 1973). Currently, the area is made up of more than 20 towns and villages including Abetifi, Pepease, Obo, Obomeng, Mpraeso, Atibie and Nkawkaw, with the latter noted for serving as a midway between Accra and Kumase (Bartle 1973). As at 2019, the Kwawu traditional area, covering an area of 7312.3sq.km, had a population of 565, 318 (GSS 2019).

Table 1. provides information on the demography of the area and Map 1. shows the ethno-linguistic situation of the Eastern Region of Ghana.

District	Population	Land Size
Kwawu Afram Plains North	126,248	2341.3km ²
Kwawu Afram Plains South	142,762	3095km ²
Kwawu East	95,040	860km ²
Kwawu South	85,953	602km ²
Kwawu West Municipal	115,315	414km ²
Total	565, 318	7312.3km²

Table 1. The population and land size of the Kwawu traditional area by District (source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2019; Eastern Regional Coordinating Council, 2018).



Map 1. Ethno-linguistic map of Eastern Region of Ghana (source: openstreetmap.org, 2020 and the Census Office, Accra, 1968)

The climate of the Kwawu area is relatively cool “with nights as cool as May nights in Europe,” as noted by the Basel Missionaries in 1885. The Missionaries once termed one of the towns in Kwawu (Abetifi) as the Switzerland of West Africa (Adonteng 2009). Located on mountains, the present location of the Kwawu people has influenced the kind of diseases they contracted as well as the responses and remedies provided to same. Historically, their location on the mountain has been reported as a hideout

and a defensive mechanism against intruders. It has been reported that prior to the rise of Asante, the earliest settlers of Kwawu lived in caves (Bartle 1973). Over the years, their interactions with the outside world has contributed immensely to the changes in their social activities and medical culture in particular. Factors contributing to this are discussed below.

3.2. Factors that shaped the medical culture of the people

Various factors have altered and affected the social construct of Kwawu. This has resulted in the transformation of thoughts and beliefs including medical or healing practices among the people through time. We discuss the various factors that shaped the medical culture of the people under the following themes: assimilation of European culture; introduction of modern hospitals; the influence of pecuniary economy on health; how urbanization leads to the neglect of indigeneous values; individualism, science and technology and the conclusion of the research.

3.2.1. Assimilation of European culture

The development of taste for western goods in Ghana has its roots from the 15th century when Europeans started trading with the people of the Gold Coast (presently Ghana). Europeans exported goods such as cotton, cloth, ivory and beads to be exchanged with gold and other precious ornaments with the Gold Coasters (Rodney 1969: 13). This practice has developed over time and has resulted in indigenous population showing preference for Western costumes and diet among other values. In many areas in Ghana, including Kwawu, the youth have resorted to the use of anything foreign than upholding their own locally produced goods. By accommodating these eurocentric values, they sideline the indigenous practices of the community. As hinted by a respondent:

“[...] the youth are now copying everything European into our town. It sounds uninteresting to them whenever the topic of culture is brought up. They think they do not need anything from the past to inform their present. To them, following the lifestyle of the white people is better. This act of the youth has led to the overall deterioration of our cultural values” (Interview with Agya Amofa, April 2019).

As revealed in the study, reports from majority of the respondents indicated that they had embraced eurocentric ideas with little knowledge about indigenous cultural practices. As pointed out by a youth, the times of our grandparents were *gagya* (a jargon word used among some youth of Kwawu to denote “uncivilized”); that is, they did not know what was good. This act of acculturation has as well had

tremendous impact on the practice of medicine among the people. Following the evolution of biomedicine/scientific medicine, people have neglected the use and practice of indigenous medical practices and adapted to the western medical system. In Kwawu, people in the pre-colonial era relied on the indigenous practitioners (herbalists, traditional birth attendants and indigenous priest healers) for their medical needs. Aside the provision of medical needs, these healers provided social and emotional support which were in essence related to the community rules (Abdullahi 2011). This notwithstanding, the utilization of these traditional medical systems began to fall as the indigenes started developing the taste for scientific medicine. In view of this, the term “*dudo*” (herbal concoction mostly taken early in the morning and in the evening by indigenous people to ensure good health and generally prevent diseases) and considered to be a powerful and efficacious therapy consumed for both curative and preventive purposes has lost its value. Today, the notion of this therapy has reduced as majority of the youth in Kwawu are not even conversant with what the term *dudo* means.

3.2.2. Introduction of modern hospitals

The present day scientific hospitals have their roots from charitable guesthouses where care was initially administered to the poor in the form of feeding, providing clothes and offering hospitality to strangers. At the end of the nineteenth century, hospitals were redefined with scientific medicine being incorporated into its system (Risse 1999: 145). Prior to colonization in Ghana and Kwawu in particular, hospitality which focused on the care for the sick and the injured was primarily administered by Indigenous Priest Healers (IPHS). The European construction of hospitals in Ghana and Kwawu in particular affected the various practices of medicine among the indigenous people. It was not until 1878 that the colonial administration built its first civil hospital at Accra to cater for the health needs of the European population (Addae 1996). In Kwawu, the earliest hospital constructed in the area include the Kwawu Government Hospital and the Holy Family Hospital in Kwawu Atibie and Nkawkaw respectively. With the alarming perception that everything of western root or orientation is superior to anything of African source, the general population promptly acknowledged the logical restorative practices brought into the nation by the Europeans.

Prior to the European introduction of dispensaries and hospitals into the territory referred to as Kwawu, medical knowledge was commonly transmitted from one person to another within the family or kin group. Responses from participants point to the fact that all the members of the Kwawu community, especially the young ones, were required to learn and know the effectiveness of the medicinal plants and leaves around them. The knowledge concerning these medicinal products were acquired through active interactions with the family members and the elders of the community. In

view of this, some of the youth found opportunities in traditional medical practice. As hinted by a healer,

“I learnt a lot about herbs through the support of my paternal grandfather. He sent me regularly on errands and I always acted exactly as I was directed. I never knew it was a form of training. When he was about to die, he taught me how, when and the need to plug leaves and apply them on sick people. He finally blessed the act for me as a “gift” before his death” (Nyame, interview, April 1, 2019).

Findings from this research suggest that since family members transmitted knowledge to their young ones, it was common to see family practitioners who besides meeting the health care needs of the family, also extended their services to the community. This practice persisted from the pre-colonial times to the present.

Like other societies elsewhere, due to modernity, the people of Kwawu considered receiving care at the hospitals rather than from indigenous medical practitioners. This change is as a result of the polluted perception of etiologies among the local people. Previously, the people regarded most diseases as supernatural ailments (Twumasi 1975). This is not however to conclude that the people in the pre-colonial era had no knowledge about natural causes of diseases; they knew the impact of the environment on man (Brenya and Adu-Gyamfi 2014: 89-90). With the advent of colonial rule in Africa, biomedicine came in with a different form of theory for defining the etiology of diseases. Under this theory, attention was duly given to the impact of microbes on the body (Lieban 1973). This idea has undoubtedly been accepted by the people as they visit the hospitals with any form of ailments before sometimes enlisting or resorting to indigenous practitioners. In their quest to serve the medical needs of those that still prefer indigenous drugs compared to the consumption of modern medicine, several practitioners have considered the building of herbal hospitals where they use scientific methods to administer herbal medicine to some indigenes. Popular among these herbal hospitals in Kwawu include the *Soafa Scientific Herbal Hospital*, *Ofa Kissi Herbal Home* and *Dr. Dei Herbal Clinic*. The existence of these herbal hospitals in addition to the biomedical/orthodox ones have lessened the popularity of the indigenous healers within the Kwawu vicinity. Thus, it could be said that the introduction of modern hospitals and scientific medicine in Kwawu, and Africa at large, have undermined the practice of indigenous medicine (Abdullahi 2011). Among the Kwawu people, the evolution of scientific hospitals and biomedicine in particular have rendered the family practitioner moribund. Aside the negative connotation associated with scientific hospitals and medicine by practitioners of indigenous medicine, Asante and Avornyoo are of the view that the introduction of scientific medicine and modern hospitals

have helped to decrease the death rate and resulted in the improvement of life expectancy among the people of Ghana (Asante and Ayornyo 2013: 256). Respondents are of the view that, aside their medical care, hospitals also give health and health care education including preventive measures and expert advice to their patients. In an interview, one participant explained that since hospitals (scientific and modern) are now readily available to deliver health care that is particularly more reliable compared to the services of traditional healers, it is rather favorable for most of the people -except those who find it difficult to pay for their medical bills (interview, Adomaa, 2019). However, in Ghana, the challenge to healthcare financing has been partly resolved by the National Health Insurance Scheme (Adu-Gyamfi 2019). A respondent hinted: “I do not waste time visiting these traditional healers while the hospital is available; my children would not even allow me to patronize the services of traditional healers” (Queenmother of Nkawaw-Asubone Traditional Area, interview, April 1 2019).

3.2.3. The influence of formal education on the indigenous medicine and the culture of Kwawu

Education has been part of the cultural values of the people of Ghana and Kwawu in particular. Prior to the influx of Europeans into Ghana, education was informal, children were required to learn the skills of adulthood from virtuous elders within the community (Higgs 2012; Fafunwa 1974). This form of education ensured the transmission of cultural values among generations with the basic aim of instilling virtue into the learners (Bloch *et al.* 1998). According to Fafunwa (1974), children and the youth were trained for immediate induction into the society. As part of the transmission of cultural values, medical knowledge was also transmitted to the younger generation. The missionaries however introduced formal education where students were required to attend classes regularly to learn European culture (Nukunya 2003: 123). According to Nukunya, the primary reason for the introduction of formal education by the missionaries was to facilitate missionary works by helping to curb the issues of language barriers (Nukunya 2003: 124). Consequently, children who were enrolled in the schools spent more hours in school than in the house. Eventually, accommodation was provided in schools to house children which meant students had to spend months in schools and only return to the house for short breaks. According to the historical evidence gathered, this act through time has served as a major impediment to the transmission of cultural and medical knowledge as the tendency of interacting with elders is reduced (Amofah, interview, April 25, 2019). In Kwawu, most of the youth respondents confirmed that they have never had such interaction with regard to indigenous cultural and medical knowledge with their parents or any other elder in the community. In his *Medical Systems in Ghana* (1975), Twumasi argued that education of this nature turn the youth away from their cultural values. It has also been reported that people who get exposed to this form of education are forced to develop the

love for the music, dance, foods, habits and dressing of the Europeans (Nukunya 2003). To that extent, formal education and schooling serve as the basis of rebellion against anything inherent in traditional knowledge (Twumasi 1975).

Findings from the study suggest that those who have been educated in the formal setting frown on most of the indigenous cultural practices. It is imperative to also note that in Ghana, the term modernity was introduced into many communities due to the inception of formal education. This resulted in most people especially the educated elites referring to the indigenous medical practitioners as barbaric, savage and uncivilized and thus not worth practicing their indigenous knowledge and techniques (Amofah, interview, April, 25 2019). In schools, a retired teacher reports that, “many of the indigenous beliefs are termed as superstitious.” In view of this, the people – especially the formally educated – do not respect the taboos and traditional rules set out in the traditional community (Fori, interview, April 19, 2019).

Aside from these factors, western education on one hand has made tremendous impact on both the cultural and medical practices of the people of Kwawu. With the introduction of formal education, school leavers have developed the taste for European way of life and certain indigenous practices have been modified to compete with western practices (Bonsi 1980; Adu-Gyamfi *et al.* 2016). Historically, following the attempt by the colonial administration in the first half of the twentieth century to modernize indigenous therapies or remedies as well as validate them by modern procedures, it became necessary for indigenous healers to obtain license to legitimize their practice. The quest for acknowledgment and the requirement for indigenous healers to enhance their practice required the development of conventional healers' affiliations or associations like the Society of African Herbalists, which was formed at Sekondi on 12th December, 1931. Its first president was Aaba. Their motivation was to raise the neighborhood routine with regards to “Therapeutic or Medical Herbalism” to a high and refined standard and to look for a free and unhindered practice for its members (Osseo-Asare 2014). This influenced some indigenous practitioners who modernized their practices to suit the changing times. Indigenous specialists like bonesetters started using X-ray reports to enable them to decide the course of the treatment or the edge from which the bone was to be set. The study also revealed that some indigenous practitioners also encouraged their patients/clients to use paracetamol and other modern drugs to help ease their pain in the course of their treatment. Our research in the Kwawu community has revealed that indigenous practitioners who have not been able to modernize their practices have -and are- gradually moving into oblivion. The issue of cleanliness has also been given avowed interest in the practices of traditional healers among other related practitioners. As part of its mandate, the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) in Ghana, inspects the practices of indigenous

practitioners to ensure conditions that are captioned under their constitutions are met before issuing license to traditional and/or herbal practitioners (FDA report, 2013). Also, the Traditional Medicine Practice Council (TMPC), a sub-group of Ghana's Ministry of Health, in their hope to achieve integration and to change the misconceptions surrounding indigenous medical practice, checks the actions and inactions of traditional medical practitioners to ensure that they conform to best practices (TMPC 2018). Among other conditions, these stakeholders ensure the delivery of quality products while ensuring proper hygienic standards in their practices (FDA report 2013; TMPC 2018).

It is instructive to see that issues concerning dosage among traditional healers and traditional medical consumers have over the years been a major challenge to the stakeholders of traditional medicine. Specifically, discourses on traditional medicine have brought to the fore, that, there still remain questions concerning the lack of standardized dosage of indigenous medicines in Africa and Asia (Abdullahi 2011; Teng *et al.* 2016). Again, concerning education, questions relating to prescriptions have been partially taken care of in Kwawu. The producers of traditional drugs now indicate how the therapy is to be consumed. Problems associated with overdose and abuse of certain traditional drugs have thus been attributed to the perceptions of the indigenous rural communities. A respondent exclaimed that, "If you follow the prescription well, you would not experience any side effect of the therapy" (interview with Ama Anyei, April, 25 2019). In this vein, education is very paramount in encouraging the use of proper prescription of drugs especially within the herbal milieu.

From the ongoing discussion, it can be inferred that people who had had formal education due to their exposure to other cultures are more likely to abandon certain lifestyle like the practice of indigenous medicine. In Kwawu, a close observation could lead to an inference that Christians have keenly supported scientific medical practitioners by condemning the activities of local healers. According to a participant, when a person from a household gets sick, it is recommended that he or she visits the hospital. Also, when the particular disease or sickness is considered spiritual, prayers are offered and nothing else. The local spiritual healers are consulted but seldomly. Due to the "new orientation", several people see indigenous healers as primitive, with their practices mostly considered as superstitious (Hawa, interview, 2019). Some are also of the view that science has an antidote to all manner of ailments. In Kwawu, the assimilation of the cultural values of the Europeans and the transfer of eurocentric- ideas to the community has been a major challenge to indigenous spiritual healers since it has undermined their activities.

3.2.4. The influence of pecuniary economy on health in Kwawu

Prior to the influx of Europeans, the people of Ghana engaged in trade internally and with the outside world through the system of barter and the use of different currencies during different epochs in history. It is reported that, at the dawn of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Europeans exchanged rum and tobacco for slaves in Africa (Doortmont and Smit 2007). By the turn of the nineteenth century, however, the West African economy became monetized, with gold dust and cowry shells being the major medium of exchange (Doortmont and Smit 2007; Issawa 1982). Among the Kwawu, it has been reported that the people hunted, killed and traded in elephant tooth with Europeans (Konadu and Campbell 2016). The other currencies of trade and exchange included; iron, brass, gold and silver coins (Nukunya 2003; Lentz 2006). The reliance on the above as means of exchange did not come without significant impediments. Therefore, being aware of the unstable currency and system of trade as a challenge to business activities, European trade with the indigenous people promoted currency in the form of papers and coins (Nukunya 2003; Issawa 1982).

The introduction of pecuniary economy brought changes to the social lives of the people. As the need to acquire more money arose, people took to jobs that would increase their income and that of their families. The findings of this study corroborates the argument that prior to the colonial era, healers did not take money; they relied on voluntary gifts from their clientele (Brenya and Adu-Gyamfi 2014: 89). In Kwawu, the social system was built on the belief that when healers charge the patient for the services rendered to them, the efficacy of their services could reduce. It was thus not recommended for healers to charge the people. After recovery, the client supplied items such as domestic animals and food items to show appreciation of the services that was rendered to them. Due to the inevitable changes in their social system however, the traditional healers in Kwawu gradually commercialized their activities by taking monetary payments. However, these charges are relatively less as compared to that of the biomedical practitioners and facilities. A healer hinted that:

“[...] our (healers in Kwawu) services are affordable and normally we charge small fees. One reason is that most of the people who rely on our services are paupers; the rich people, except few, and the middle-class mostly visit the hospitals. Also, the herbs are readily available and are easy to come by. On this note a healer who is filled with empathy does not have to charge the sick for his/her services; sometimes we prescribe therapies for the sick for free. Some return to show appreciation whiles other do not.” (Anyei, interview, April 25, 2019).

Similarly, earlier sources indicate that clients incur relatively lesser cost by enjoying more benefits from contacting indigenous healers than visiting hospitals (Mahomoodaly 2013; Kpobi and Swartz 2019;

Nxumalo *et al.* 2011; Adu-Gyamfi and Adjei 2017). While the charges for the latter is deemed costly, it has been reported that payment for the services of indigenous healers is flexible (Adu-Gyamfi and Adjei 2017). They may accept their reward or payment either in cash or in kind – acceptance of livestock, eggs and foodstuffs among others. In Kwawu, however, findings from the current study suggests that the cost for indigenous healing practices could sometimes be free, with the healers accepting appreciation as their reward. Information from both the literature and the current study on Kwawu indicate that, the utilization of indigenous medical practices is a direct reflection of a person's income (Adu-Gyamfi and Adjei 2017; Oyebode *et al.* 2016). It is thus, imperative to report that, in contemporary times, it is very unlikely for high income earners in Kwawu to adopt indigenous medical practices and vice versa. In contrast to the above, Nxumalo *et al.* (2011) argue that payment associated with visiting traditional healers costs households in South Africa more than ten percent of their expenditure and has subsequently, influenced the declining utilization of indigenous medical practices.

The current study has also revealed that the love for money and unemployment have led to the rise of fake practitioners in Kwawu. These fake healers produce and sell fake traditional drugs through hawking. The feature of prescribing fake drugs is not a recent phenomenon. Adu-Gyamfi (2015) is of the view that, to solve, or at best, to control the proliferation of quackery, the colonial administration resorted to the registration of indigenous practitioners and subsequent formation of associations to accentuate their quest for recognition and acceptance from European officialdom. In the 21st century, the situation has become alarming. In spite of the efforts put in place by the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) and such health-related bodies to curb this act, it still persists due to the alarming rate of unemployment among the people. This act of hawking which has seen the proliferation of quack drugs has also led to a plethora of the indigenous people shifting to consume orthodox medicine rather than traditional medicine. As reported by a respondent:

“[...] I do not consume traditional drugs again. This is because, in the past, I bought them whenever I heard the advertisement from the information centers and radio stations. They had proven very useful for a very long time. One day, I woke up only to realize my body has swollen. I was sent to the hospital and after diagnosis, I was informed that the traditional drugs that I have been taking caused me that harm” (Adomaa, interview, April, 26 2019).

In support of the above, some respondents hinted that the introduction of the pecuniary economy has resulted in the proliferation of quack drugs due to hawking – especially by the Fulani who have migrated into the community - and this act is believed to deter several indigenes from consuming

traditional drugs. This notwithstanding, several bodies have been charged with the responsibility of checking the proliferation of fake drugs in Ghana and Kwawu in particular.

Findings suggest that the most effective procedure used to check the activities of fake practitioners remain the attachment of legal considerations towards health related issues. Public education has tooled or informed people about their health and they rely upon legal grounds to ensure their medical or health needs are met. As hinted by a participant:

“[...] I know numerous drugs that can be used to treat various diseases. I can provide a ‘one-touch’ traditional drug for someone with fibroid but I am afraid. The reason is simple; when the blood that has formed the fibroid starts to come out and the woman is sent to the hospital because of the bleeding, the doctors will trace and arrest me. You see, those doctors are jealous of us and are trying any means necessary to condemn the practices of traditional medicine because they think they suffered before gaining their medical knowledge and certificates” (interview with a former practitioner, March 2, 2019).

The above expresses the avowed interest in attaching legal considerations or influence to health issues. This has been seen as the most effective tool among all those put in place for checking the activities of fake practitioners. In contemporary times, health laws have been enacted to protect patients’ right to proper healthcare (Ghana Health Service, 2017). The various laws on health protection enlist a cornucopia of principles by which healthcare providers are guided. Key among these include; the principles of accessibility, efficiency, continuity, fairness, comprehensiveness, quality and safe health treatments (Laws on Health Promotion, 2017). Across the globe, and in Kwawu in particular, these principles help to shape healthcare provision by increasing the possibility of positive outcomes while decreasing healthcare risks and medical errors. It is instructive to state that in Kwawu, most indigenous healers have not been recognized as healthcare providers; healthcare workers only point to the few orthodox practitioners. To that extent, any indigenous practitioner who erroneously treats a patient is deemed a culprit subject to punitive measures. By this, it is believed that quack practitioners are deterred from their act of hawking fake drugs. Previously, when nothing of this sort existed, healers were autonomous. Today, they (healers) are critical in the course of their work, especially when administering care to their clientele who are being protected legally. This has strengthened healthcare provision and further limited the autonomy of healthcare providers.

3.2.5. The role of Christianity in transmitting western culture to the Kwawu community

Christianity has contributed immensely to the changing patterns in the Kwawu society. Concerning the people of Kwawu, almost everything they did in the past was rooted in their cultural construct. With the continuous competing interest of traditional religion and Christianity, the religious beliefs of the people of Kwawu have been altered. The people also believe that Christianity has rendered the existing taboos in the Kwawu area ineffective. As indicated by Opanin Amofah:

“[...] previously, our chiefs made taboos to help keep the society in order. Among these taboos were days set to prohibit farming activities. On taboo days, the people seized the opportunity to participate in communal labor. These days, as a result of Christianity, no one follows these taboos. They break them anyhow and in Kwawu here, people rarely participate in communal labor” (Amofah, interview, April 25, 2019).

The tenets of Christianity run counter to everything related to traditionalism (Nukunya 2003: 114). Significantly, the principles of Christianity continuously impact the medical practices of the people of Kwawu. The people of Kwawu who have been Christianized associate traditional medicine and traditional healing with evil practices. Earlier research have argued that the campaign of Christians is geared towards condemning traditional practices among the indigenous people (Twumasi 1975: 42; Kiringe 2005; Adu-Gyamfi and Adjei 2017). According to Adu-Gyamfi and Adjei (2017), Christians preach against the practices of the Indigenous Priest Healers (IPHs). They define the latter as evil, barbarous and superstitious.

With its Christianized nature today, one aspect of healing that has been acutely affected in Kwawu is spiritual or faith healing. Faith or Spiritual healing “[...] is the kind of healing which no logical or rational explanation can be adduced to” (Adu-Gyamfi 2016: 39). In essence, spiritual or faith healing involves the spiritual interventions given to people who are suffering from diseases that have no logical explanation in science. Prior to the introduction of Christianity into the Kwawu area -and even after its introduction till today- this art of healing has persisted among the indigenous people due to their belief in diseases as afflictions caused by malevolent spirits or forces. Thus, spiritual healing is not dissociated from the religious beliefs of a people. This has been the case since time immemorial (Adu-Gyamfi, 2016: 39). In the pre-colonial era, spiritual healing remained the vocation of the IPHs.

The influx of Christianity was accompanied by the evolution of some spiritual churches like the Pentecostal and Zionist Aladura and other syncretic churches within the period under review (Adu-Gyamfi 2016). The belief in evil and harmful spirits have been upheld in the cultural values of the Kwawu people. With the introduction of these spiritual churches, attention has thus been shifted from

the IPHs to churches that offer prayers to heal the sick. This massive shift is due to the fact that, these spiritual churches are confined within Christianity; their services are seen to be compatible with the doctrines of their new found faith as compared to that of the IPHs. This notwithstanding, the services of these local spiritual healers are still prevalent in the twenty-first century. As people still contract sicknesses that are deemed as spiritual and irrational within the confines of science, reliance on these healers subsists. Illnesses that are regarded as supernatural like madness, and are caused by ‘*dua-bo*’¹ and ‘*aduro-toɔ*’² are reserved for indigenous healers while those that are caused by microbes are treated by modern physicians (Landy 1974: 106-7). Although both the spiritual churches and the IPHs provide spiritual interventions, the activities of the former is believed to be dissimilar from the IPHs with respect to healing. The activities of such cults namely ; *Atia Yaw Shrine, Tigare Shrine, Nansing Shrine, Ofa Attah Spiritual Center and Okomfo Adama Spiritual Center* are very notable for delivering incessant spiritual interventions for the indigenous people of Kwawu. In Kwawu, almost all the spiritual healers double as herbalist. Aside the use of incantations and spell-casting, they also prepare some potions with some herbs (Adu-Gyamfi 2016: 42). This is consistent with the findings of Adu-Gyamfi (2016: 45) whose argument is that some spiritual healers in Asante also function as herbalists. Our interactions with the Kwawu people revealed that Christians and -to a lesser degree- Muslims have changed the perceptions and philosophies of the people of Kwawu concerning several things that existed in their culture. Significantly, people who still live by the dictates of the African Traditional Religion are treated with contempt and are regarded as “uncivilized” (Twumasi 1975).

A close study of the Kwawu society has shown that Christians have played leading roles in ushering in western culture into the community. It is rare today to see Christians visiting IPHs for treatment. They either rely on hospitals or prayers offered by spiritual churches. However, when they find it necessary to visit IPHs, they do so secretly in order to avoid excommunication from the church (Adu-Gyamfi and Adjei 2017: 49).

¹ *Duabo* is a local term which connotes the invocation of gods to cause harm and sometimes death to a victim and/or his family members. It is mostly prevalent in situation that causes pain to a person; wrong accusations, twisted facts. Also, the bearing of false witness could cause one to rely on *duabo*. Literally translated as grievance imprecation, *duabo* in all the Akan towns, and Kwawu in particular is a taboo which can call for punitive measures for the invoker (Agyekum 1999).

² *Aduro-toɔ* also involves the use of a deity to cause ill health to a victim. Unlike *duabo*, *aduro-toɔ* can be sanctioned to both innocent individuals and culprits. Specifically, the deity can be in a form of powder sprinkled on the path of the targeted individual.

3.2.6. How urbanization leads to the neglect of indigenous values

As people move from their traditional communities to relatively developed towns with denser population, their daily activities and interactions are likely to have bearing on their indigenous cultural and medical practices. Nukunya (2003) has argued that urbanization was in existence prior to colonialism. Through trade, people moved from both within and outside of Kwawu to trade in major towns and eclectic communities. However, urbanization was on the rise during the colonial era as Europeans started developing the areas they settled (Nukunya 2003). Toward this end, the growth of towns has brought numerous changes in the social lives of the people.

Like other parts of Ghana, the Kwawu people emigrate from their homes to relatively urbanized areas within and outside of Ghana for reasons such as education and the search for new economic opportunities (Bonsi 1980; Tabi *et. al.* 2006). The presence of industries, companies and schools in Accra, Kumase, Cape Coast and other important towns have made these towns epicenters for emigrants. As the indigenous people embrace this form of migration, there is the likelihood for people to neglect their indigenous values as the heterogeneity of people leads to the adoption of new cultural values. These people who emigrate from their various towns learn many cultural values from the major cities and transfer them into their communities (Queenmother of Nkawkaw-Asubone Traditional Area, interview, April 1 2019). As urbanization exposes emigrants to new habits and cultural patterns, there is the tendency for loss of indigenous cultural norms, religious customs and social support system (Bhugra and Becker 2005).

Also, the Kwawu community has over the years existed as an important center for trade, education and medicine. People from neighboring towns and villages like Oda, Abepotia, Pankese and others immigrate to the township. Trading remained, and still remains, the most prestigious among the economic activities in Kwawu. Among the Kwawu, young men look for legitimate means they could, to save the necessary capital to establish shops. An enquiry into the explanation behind the power of the Kwawu among the biggest business people follows the historical backdrop of British-Asante War of 1874, when the Kwawu split far from the Asante Confederacy. The Kwawu exchange with the north in slaves was supplanted by the versatile trade, which proceeded until 1914. Fish, salt, and imported wares and other items were sold on their arrival from the north (Garlick 1967: 478). Aside its neighboring residents, immigrants from as far as the northern parts of Ghana and other places come into the community to settle and engage in other economic activities. Among other things, the immigrants from the northern part of the country have grabbed opportunities in the community as they continually migrate to undertake duties including, head portorage, cleaning and restaurant attendants among other important and menial tasks (Opare 2003). Another factor that attracts people to the

community is the celebration of Easter festivities. Annually, when the stipulated time for the celebration of Easter is due, people within Ghana and even beyond, travel to the community to take part in the various activities that herald the celebration of Kwawu Easter.

All the migration patterns discussed above have resulted in the intermingling of people from different backgrounds, which further results in the exchange and transmission of cultural and medical knowledge. Essentially, the emigrants develop the insatiable taste for different cultural and medical practices within the place they settle (Opare 2003). During their regular visits to Kwawu, they contribute to the changing nature of culture by introducing those values which have shaped their lives in the cities including their taste for biomedicine or orthodox medicine.

3.2.7. Individualism

The shift from communalism – whereby people in the pre-colonial era in particular came together to pursue common interest – to focus on individual quest for things and ambitions has adversely affected the cultural practices of the Kwawu community within the period under review. The individualism construct de-emphasizes the role of children, parents, grandchildren and the extended family care. The role of grandparents was highly recognized in the past. As clearly reported by an informant:

“[...] previously, our children made their kids available to us for them to run errands for us during our old age. These days, you rarely see your grandchildren unless during special events and festivities like Easter. This has made it difficult to even get someone to run errands for us, the older people. As a result, the children are not able to imbibe cultural and medical values of our community. They only rely on schools for ‘school ideas which are derived from European ways of life; these ideas lack relevant information concerning the cultural values of Kwawu” (Amofah, interview, April, 25 2019).

Prior to colonialism, the culture of the Kwawu people was built on a foundation where members of each nuclear family played different roles in their respective lineages. When someone fell sick in the Kwawu area, the family members communally cared for the health needs of the patient by performing or providing their support (Abena Kuru, interview, 2019). When asked about the nature of health care in the pre-colonial era, a participant hinted:

“When someone became ill in the (pre-colonial) era, everyone in the community –and not the family members alone- had a duty to perform. Since it was relatively a small community, everyone knew everyone in the area and the news of a member of the community being sick was easily communicated within the community. As the family

members catered for the health needs by employing every means possible, members of the community contributed to the healing process by paying regular visits to the patients and also suggested new therapies which could also be helpful. The kind of love and gesture the members of the community showed toward the patient during their regular visits could even heal such patient from emotional and psycho-social stress” (Nyame, interview, April 13, 2019).

With the introduction of western forms of education and religion, there has been a consequent weakening of the family structure and kinship ties hence, individuals focus on their own interest paying little or no attention to the extended family system (Landy 1974; Pouter 2016). The concept of individualism is mostly prevalent in the urban areas and Kwawu is not an exception. In contemporary times, individuals lean on their innate abilities and knowledge to consult and make a determination for their own health and wellbeing. This is detached from the traditionalism from which they evolved (Bonsi 1980). Thus, the pre-colonial concept which ensured that all members of the community were responsible for the care of the sick person within the wider community and the family in particular has eroded to self-actualization which ensures that individuals pursue medical interest or make choices, mostly on their own.

3.2.8. Science and technology

Advancement and improvement of medical infrastructure in Africa and Ghana in particular remains at a crawling state. The literature argues that the development of Ghana’s medical services and the health sector in particular has been at a slower pace with some projects halted for years (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.* 2019). This notwithstanding, the country has witnessed healthcare innovations that hinge on science and technology to improve the provision of healthcare. There is the belief – factually obvious – that the introduction of science and technology have helped to make complex activities easier (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.* 2019). In the area of healthcare delivery in Kwawu, science and technology have been able to aid the delivery or provision of medical care. Among other things, the community has witnessed an improvement in their medical practices. With the increasing interest in science and technology, several research have been conducted to ascertain the real etiologies of diseases as well as their impacts on human health. In his work, Adu-Gyamfi (2016) revealed that, with the invention of microscope and antibiotics, there has been several innovations in the practices of medicine. Essentially, the inclusion of science and technology in healthcare delivery has been reported to reduce the complications of human and medical error. In Kwawu, over the years, innovations in science and technology have led to a reduction of the workload on health workers. A participant hinted that:

“The medical practices of this community has witnessed profound innovations. In the past when we were sick, we only relied on our knowledge and that of our healers to ascertain the particular etiology as well as the cure for such ailment. Due to civilization and science and technology, doctors use various devices to ascertain a disease, the causative agent and support the course of treatment” (Adomaa, interview, 2019).

In a similar manner, a woman reported that:

“What is the essence of relying on herbalists in this modern era while computers can be used to ascertain the causes of diseases and show you the cure for your ailment? For my family, we all visit the hospital to receive treatment because the technological advancement in the hospital enhance health delivery. It seems technology has been added to every bit of health in the world and our community in particular. These innovations are even prevalent in those small herbal clinics; the drug sellers in this community even check your temperature before prescribing drugs for you” (Hawa, interview, 2019).

The reliance on science and technology has overturned the medical culture of the people of Kwawu by curbing the typical imaginative guessing that was attached to unfamiliar diseases that were reported to healers. For a long time, malaria was associated with the in-take of bad air by the Europeans during the early days of colonialism (Addae 1986). It was thus, not until science and technology were able to define the real etiologies that the Europeans in the colonial Gold Coast became aware of the anopheles mosquito and its impact on humanity (Addae 1986). The work of laboratorians and other health workers including general physicians and other specialists have been enhanced due to the changes in medical culture and approaches towards cure in particular (Adu-Gyamfi *et al.* 2019: 3). Today, the development of antibiotics for treatments is being intensified with the production of new ones to fight bacterial-causal diseases (Wittebole, De Rook and Opal 2014). In contemporary times, some of the various traditional medical practitioners (TMPs) have applied knowledge in science and technology in order to modernize and enhance their practices (Asante and Avornyo 2013: 263). In addition, advances in research and new findings have enhanced the practices of practitioners today. It has also modernized their medical practice by keeping it up to date.

In Kwawu, herbal hospitals such as *Doctors Dei*, *Soafah Scientific Herbal Home*, and *Ofa Kissi Herbal Center* have modernized their practices by using machines to prepare drugs. Aside this invention, these hospitals use machines to detect the causes, effects and treatment of certain diseases. They also resort to laboratory tests to ascertain the type of disease patients are infected with to ensure a better course of treatment. The inclusion of science and technology have advanced health care delivery in the

Kwawu community. Using these medical equipment, practitioners are able to produce herbal medicine in bulk for sale. Soafa Scientific Herbal Home for example produces herbal tea which is believed to be effective for the prevention of several diseases that are endemic in the Kwawu area and Ghana in general. The findings from the field also suggest that, herbal medicine, which is obviously the oldest of all medical sciences, are now generally dispensed in pills, syrup, tablets or capsules due to technological advancement.

4. Conclusion

The cultural values of any society have ties with its medical practices. People make their medical choices based on their culture and, generally, their beliefs. The study has shown the interrelationship between culture and medical practices with emphasis on the extent to which cultural changes influence the medical practices of the Kwawu community and Ghana in general. This paper argues that the belief system, availability of medical hospital, cost, the type of diseases and the knowledge on medical technology as well as geographical placement are the basic factors that affect a patients' choice for a particular medical practice to proffer solutions to his or her ill health.

In pre-colonial Kwawu, the people solely relied on traditional forms of healing which incorporated the cultural values of the people. They patronized the services of the traditional healers like the herbalists, traditional birth attendants (TBAs) and indigenous priest healers (IPHS). During this era too, the reliance on herbs and spiritual healing became paramount; the African population relied on this kind of medical system to meet their health needs.

Colonialism brought new forms of medical as well as cultural practices. Through the introduction of new paths such as literacy and numeracy, Christianity, rapid growth in urbanization, individualism and scientific medicine; the traditional life of the people of Kwawu has been altered massively. The impacts of these already stated factors saw the weakening of the traditional society and societal values in particular. As this era sought to condemn traditionalism, the alterations in cultural values impacted the healer and healing in general. Healers have been influenced as they are now trying to be adaptive to some principles of science and technology to enhance their practice and sustain their relevance in the fast changing society. Christianity and education have on their part shifted the people from their cultural values by tagging some traditional healers and their practices as heathen. The rise in urbanization has resulted in the intermingling of people to further exchange cultural values amongst these heterogeneous people. The invention of technology and the addition of same to aid health care delivery has had the potency of revealing the real etiology of certain diseases. Here, the insistence on preventive rather than curative measures is of interest to the Kwawu today.

As western culture has gained much footing in Africa and Ghana in particular, the taste for European goods and ideas over the traditional ones has developed among the people of Kwawu with the youth leading the charge as major exhibitors of same. Social change has instigated cultural change and has eventually affected the indigenous medical practices which are in sync with cultural practices. In essence, the analysis of this study emphasizes that exposure to Christianity, urban life, formal education, science and technology, and individualism among others have the propensity to shape individual's choice for a particular medical orientation. Today, the modern and urban Kwawu people are more likely to choose the hospital as their first point of care by frowning upon the indigenous medical practices, especially those that are believed to be tied with superstition. It can be surmised that, since culture has links with medicine, changes in the values of the former would as well affect the practice of medicine among any people or group. In essence, as culture has a direct relationship with medicine, so does changes in cultural values inform the indigenous medical practices. This notwithstanding, a significant number of the people still rely on the services of indigenous healers. The services of indigenous priest healers (IPHs) in particular persist even in contemporary times.

Among the Kwawu people of Ghana, there is a maximum appreciation for the contribution of scientific medicine since its introduction into the traditional community. There is the belief that biomedicine has helped to decrease mortality and improved the life expectancy of the people (Asante and Avornyo 2013: 256). It is however noteworthy that in Kwawu, the pre-colonial people who relied solely on traditional medical practices lived relatively longer than the present generation, who are increasingly developing their taste for biomedical care due to social and cultural change. The paradox associated with this dilemma has not been resolved. It is useful to do further studies concerning increasing death rates due to cultural change and technological advancement in communities which hitherto had high life expectancy within the colonial and immediate post-colonial periods.

References

- Abdullahi, Ali Arazeem. 2011. "Trends and Challenges of Traditional Medicine." *African Journal of Traditional, Complementary and Alternative Medicines* 8/5: 115-123.
- Acerbi, Alberto and Domenico Parisi. 2006. "Cultural Transmission Between and Within Generations." *Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation* 9/1: 1-16.
- Acheampong, George Kwame. 2010. "Marriage among the Migrant Kwahu Community in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area." Unpublished MPhil Thesis. Cape Coast: University of Cape Coast.
- Ackerknecht, Erwin. 1945. "On the Collecting of Data Concerning Primitive Medicine." *American Anthropological Association* 47/3: 427-432.

- Addae Stephen. 1996. *History of Western Medicine in Ghana 1880-1960*. London: Durham Academic Press.
- Adu-Gyamfi, Samuel. 2015. "British Colonial Reforms of Indigenous Medical Practices amongst Asante, Gold Coast (1930- 1960)." *African Journal of History and Culture* 7/2: 57-63.
- Adu-Gyamfi, Samuel. 2016. "Spiritual and Indigenous Healing Practices among the Asante People of Ghana: A Testimonial from Twenty-First Century Practitioners and Recipients in Kumasi." *Journal of Basic and Applied Research International* 12/1: 39-50.
- Adu-Gyamfi, Samuel. 2019. "From Present African Health Care Systems to the Future: Health Financing in Ghana and Rwanda." In: *Epidemics and the Health of African Nations*, edited by Mazibuko Zamanzima, 316-349. Johannesburg: Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection.
- Adu-Gyamfi, Samuel and Richard Adjei. 2017. *Traditional Medicine: Narratives from an Indigenous Population*. LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.
- Adu-Gyamfi, Samuel and Eugenia Ama Anderson. 2019. "Indigenous Medicine and Traditional Healing in Africa: a Systematic Synthesis of the Literature." *Philosophy, Social and Human Disciplines* 1: 69-100.
- Adu-Gyamfi, Samuel, Donkoh Wilhemina Joselyn and Addo Anim Adinkrah. 2016. "Educational Reforms in Ghana: Past and Present." *Journal of Education and Human Development* 5/3: 158-172.
- Adu-Gyamfi, Samuel et al. 2019. "Science and Technology as Factors Advancing Ghana's Healthcare: Past And Present." *Romanian Scientific Journal* 2: 78-87.
- Africa in the Nationaal Archief, 1593-1960s*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Agyekum, Kofi. 1999. "The Pragmatics of Duabo 'Grievance Imprecation' Taboo Among the Akan." *International Pragmatics Association* 9/3: 357-382.
- Akuoko, Kofi Osei. 2008. "Traditional Values, Socio-Cultural Factors and Human Resource Management Practices in Public Sector Organization in Ghana." *Journal of Science and Technology (Ghana)* 28/3: 58-69
- Asante, Emmanuel and Raphael Avorny. 2013. "Enhancing Healthcare System in Ghana through Integration of Traditional Medicine." *Journal of Sociological Research* 4/2: 256-272.
- Banks, James and Banks Cherry McGees (eds.). 2009. *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. United States of America: John Wiley & Sons.
- Bartle, Phil. 1973. "Kwawu Migration Patterns: A Demonstration Model." *Manpower and Unemployment Research in Africa* 6/1: 23-38.
- Bartle, Phil. 1997. "Urban Migration and Rural Identity: An Anthropology of a Kwawu Community." Unpublished PhD Thesis. Legon: University of Ghana.
- Bhugra, Dinesh and Matthew Becker. 2005. "Migration, Cultural Bereavement and Cultural Identity." *Journal of the World Psychiatric Association* 4/1: 18-24.
- Bloch, Marianne, Josephine Beoku-Betts and Robert Tabachnick (eds). 1998. *Women and education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Power, Opportunities, and Constraints*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

- Bonsi, Stephen. 1980. "Modernization of Native Healers: Implications for Health Care Delivery in Ghana." *Journal of the National Medical Association* 72/11: 1057-1063.
- Brenya, Edward and Samuel Adu-Gyamfi. 2014. "Interest Groups, Issues Definition and Politics of Health Care in Ghana." *Public Policy and Administration Research* 4/6: 88-96.
- Doortmont, Michael and Jinna Smit. 2007. *Sources for the Mutual History of Ghana and the Netherlands: An annotated guide to the Dutch archives relating to Ghana and West*. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers & Nationaal Archief.
- Dunn, Frederick and Janes Craig. 1986. "Introduction: Medical Anthropology and Epidemiology." In: *Culture, Illness and Healing*, edited by Margaret Lock and Allan Young, 3-34. Boston: Reidel Publishing Limited.
- Eastern Regional Coordinating council. 2018.
Available at: <http://easternregion.gov.gh/index.php/Kwawu-south/#>
- Fafunwa, Babs. 1974. *History of Education in Nigeria*. New York: Routledge.
- Fiereman, Steven. 1985. "Struggles for Control: The Social Roots Health and Healing in Modern Africa." *African Studies Association* 28(2/3): 73-147.
- Food and Drugs Authority. 2013. Annual Report. Available at fdaghana.gov.gh (accessed April 2019).
- Garlick, Peter. 1967. "The Development of Kwawu Business Enterprise in Ghana Since 1874—An Essay in Recent Oral Tradition." *The Journal of African History* 8(2): 463-480.
- Ghana Health Service. 2017. The Patient Charter. Accessed on June 20, 2020 at: <https://ghanahealthservice.org/ghs-subcategory.php?cid=2&scid=46>
- Ghana Statistical Service. 2019. Population by Region: Eastern Region. Available online at: <https://statsghana.gov.gh/regionalpopulation.php?population=MTM5ODc0NTI3OS45NTQ1&&Eastern®id=5>
- Higgs, Philip. 2012. "African Philosophy and the Decolonisation of Education in Africa: Some Critical Reflections." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 44(S2): 37-55.
- Interview with Agya Amofah at his residence at Kwawu Abetifi on April, 25 2019.
- Interview with Akua Nyame at her residence at Kwawu Abetifi on April, 13 2019.
- Interview with Ama Anyei, at her residence at Abetifi, Kwawu on April, 25 2019.
- Interview with Maame Abena Kuru at her residence in Kwawu-Nkwatia. April 25, 2019.
- Interview with Madam Kate Adomaa, at her residence at Abetifi, Kwawu April, 26 2019.
- Interview with Mama Ansomaa Hawa at her residence in Atibie-Kwawu. April 25, 2019.
- Interview with Obaahemaa Nana Serwaa, Queen Mother of Nkawkaw-Asubone Traditional area on April 1, 2019, at her residence (Nkawkaw).
- Interview with Opanyin Kofi Fori, retired Teacher at Abetifi M/A primary school, at his residence, Kwawu on April, 19 2019.
- Interview with Opanyin Yaw Mensah, Bone Setter on March 30, 2019 at his residence, Obomeng-Kwawu.

- Issawa, Charles. 1982. *An Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kelly, Kate. 2009. *Early Civilization: Prehistoric Times to 500 C.E.* New York: Facts on File.
- Kiringe, John Warui. 2005. "Ecological and Anthropological Threats to Ethno-Medicinal Plant Resources and their Utilization in Maasai Community Ranches in the Amboseli Region of Kenya." *Ethnobotany Research and Application* 3: 231-241.
- Konadu, Kwasi and Clifford Campbell. 2016. *The Ghana Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Kpobi, Lily and Leslie Swartz. 2019. "Indigenous and Faith Healing in Ghana: A Brief Examination of the Formalising process and Collaborative Efforts with the Biomedical Health System." *African Journal of Primary Health Care and Family Medicine* 11/1. <https://doi.org/10.4102/phcfm.v11i1.2035>
- Landy, David. 1974. "Role Adaptation: Traditional Curers under the Impact of Western Medicine." *American Ethnologist* 1: 103-127.
- Landy, David. 1977. *Culture, Disease and Healing*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc.
- Langdon, Esther Jean and Wilk Flavio Blaune. 2010. "Anthropology, Health and Illness: An Introduction to the Concept of Culture Applied to Health Science." *Rev. Latino-Am Emfermagem* 18(3). 459-466.
- Law on Health Promotion. 2017. *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, No. 43/2015.
- Lentz, Carola. 2006. *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana*. London: Edinburgh University Press.
- Lida Teng, Qiang Zu, Gangzhou Li, Tian Yu, Kathleen M Job, Xiaoyan Yang, Liuqing Di, Catherine MT Sherwin and Elena Y. Enioutina. 2016. "Herbal medicines: challenges in the modern world. Part 3. China and Japan." *Expert Review of Clinical Pharmacology* 9/9: 1225-1233. DOI: 10.1080/17512433.2016.1195263
- Lieban, Richard. 1973. *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology*. Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co.
- Mahomoodally, Fawzi. 2013. "Traditional Medicines in Africa: An Appraisal of Ten Potent African Medicinal Plants." *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* 2013: 1-14.
- Nukunya, Godwin Kwaku. 2003. *Tradition and Change in Ghana- an Introduction to Sociology*, 2nd edn. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.
- Nxumalo, Nonhlanhla, Alaba Olufunke, Harris Bronwyn, Matthew Chersich and Jane Goudge. 2011. "Utilization of Traditional Healers in South Africa and Costs to Patients: Findings from a National Household Survey." *Journal of Public Health Policy* 32/1: 124-136.
- Opare, James Adu. 2003. "Kayayei: the Women Head Porters of Southern Ghana." *Journal of Social Development in Africa* 18/2: 33-48.
- Osseo-Asare, Abena Dove. 2014. *Bitter roots: The search for healing plants in Africa*. University of Chicago Press.

- Oyebode, Oyinlola, Kandala Ngianga-Bakwin, Peter Chilton and Richard Lilford. 2016. "Use of traditional medicine in middle-income countries: a WHO-SAGE study." *Health Policy and Planning* 31/8: 984–991. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czw022>
- Perregaux, W. 1903. "A Few Notes on Kwawu ('Quahoe,' a Territory in the Gold Coast Colony, West Africa)." *Journal of Royal African Society* 2/8: 445-446.
- Poulter, Saila. 2017. "From citizenship of God's Kingdom to liberal individualism? A critical historical analysis of Finnish Religious Education." *British Journal of Religious Education* 39/2: 187-206. DOI: 10.1080/01416200.2015.1110113
- Risse, Guenter. 1999. *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls: A History of Hospitals*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rodney, Walter. 1969. "Gold and Slaves on the Gold Coast." *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 10: 13-28.
- Tabi, Marian *et al.* 2006. "Use of Traditional Healers and Modern Medicine in Ghana." *International Council of Nurses* 53: 52-58.
- Traditional Medicine Practice Council. 2018. "Integration of Herbal Medicine in Ghana's Healthcare Program." Available online at: <https://tmpcghana.org/2018/02/05/integration-of-herbal-medicine-in-ghanas-healthcare-program/>
- Twumasi, Patrick Adubofour and Stephen Bonsi. 1975. "Developing a Health Care System in Ghana." *Journal of the National Medical Association* 67/5: 339-344.
- Twumasi, Patrick. 1975. *Medical Systems in Ghana: A Study in Medical Sociology*. Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation.
- van der Geest, Sjaak and Krause Kristine. 2014. "Introduction: Studying Health and Health Care in Ghana." *Ghana Studies* 15/16: 7-39.
- Van der Geest, Sjaak. 2007. "Fifty Years in Kwahu-Tafo: Memories and Reflections of an Anthropologist." *Ghana Studies* 10: 65-88.
- Wallis, J. R. 1953. "The Kwawus - Their Connections with the Afram Plains." *Transactions of the Gold Coast and Togoland Historical Society* 1/3: 10-26.
- Wittebole, Xavier, Sophie De Roock and Steven Opal. 2014. "A historical Overview of Bacteriophage Therapy as an Alternative to Antibiotics for the Treatment of Bacterial Pathogens." *Virulence* 5/1: 226-235. DOI: 10.4161/viru.25991.

Samuel Adu-Gyamfi, Ph.D is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of History and Political Studies of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi-Ghana. He is a Senior Editor of *Cogent Arts and Humanities Journal* (History). His research focus is in Applied History, Asante History, Medicine, Culture, History Education, Health Policy, Social Policy, Social Medicine, Societal Studies and Social Change. Through Applied History, he makes explicit attempt to illuminate current challenges and choices by analysing historical precedents and analogues. He has over seventy publications in peer reviewed journals.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0193-867X>

He can be reached at: mccgyyamfi@yahoo.com

Benjamin Dompok Darkwa holds a BA in History and is currently an MPhil History candidate at the Department of History and Political Studies of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi-Ghana. Benjamin primarily focuses his research on the History of Medicine, Environment and Culture. Specifically, his interest is linked to how the discourses of Medicine, Health and Culture have been shaped throughout History.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1662-9789>

He can be reached at: darkwa687@gmail.com

Dennis Baffour Awuah is an MSc History Candidate at the Department of History, Illinois State University, USA. His research focus is on Health Systems particularly in Africa, Health policy within the Ghanaian and African context, and History of Medicine.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0203-0081>

He can be reached at: awuahdennis53@yahoo.com

Lucky Tomdi is a Master of Arts Candidate at the Department of History, University of New Brunswick, Canada. His research interest falls in the areas of Social History of Health and Medicine, Economy and African Diaspora. He makes use of historical approaches, methods and analysis to demonstrate the value of history in policy making.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0463-5797>

He can be reached at: tomdilucky14@gmail.com

Grammaticalisation et transcatégorialité

Le verbe *qim-le* en soureth

Roula Skaf

This paper develops a morphosyntactic description of a verb of movement and position having a particular functioning in several varieties of Northeastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA). The verb found par excellence in our corpus is that which comes from the root *qym* “to rise / to stand up”. It works as well alone as predicate of an utterance, as a so-called “auxiliary” verb in a periphrastic structure. It is semantically characterized by a “concrete” meaning denoting a change in positioning. The basic semantism can be subjected to an abstraction process which allows the verb to combine with any verb in an asyndetic construction. It thus functions as an auxiliary. In addition, the semantic abstraction of this verb tends to grammaticalize it more with a discursive function.

Keywords: grammaticalization, transcategoriality, aspect, inchoative, Sureth, movement verbs, enunciative particle

1. Introduction

De nombreuses études linguistiques, notamment en syntaxe et en sémantique, se sont intéressées aux verbes de déplacement/mouvement (Jackendoff 1983 et 1990). En outre, la question de l’expression du déplacement dans une langue a fait l’objet d’un nombre important d’analyses. Ces dernières ont eu deux portées : une portée large, à travers la comparaison, dans un cadre typologique, de différents moyens syntaxiques et sémantiques mis en place pour décrire le déplacement (par ex. Bowerman et al. 1995, Stosic 2002, Kopecka 2006, Grinevald 2006, Levinson et Wilkins 2006) et une portée spécifique sur des langues particulières (sur le français : Vandeloise 1988, Asher et Sablayrolles 1995, Boons 1987, Borillo 1998, Lamiroy 1983, Laur 1991, Sarda 2006, Aurnague 2004, 2008, 2009, 2011, Aurnague et Stosic 2019, Moline et Stosic 2016). Ces travaux ont mis en lumière, à travers une riche terminologie, les notions sémantiques qu’une langue retient pour décrire le déplacement ainsi que les catégories et structures syntaxiques à travers lesquelles les éléments de sens sont encodés.

D'autres études parallèles se sont focalisées sur les phénomènes de grammaticalisation et de transcatégorialité. Elles ont été initiées par Meillet (1912) qui décrit la désémantisation d'un terme lexical par grammaticalisation, suivi par, entre autres, Givón (1979) qui parle de "décoloration" du signifié (*bleaching*). D'autres linguistes ont œuvré dans ce domaine, Heine et Reh (1984), Hagège (1993), Bybee et al. (1994), Lehmann (1982, 2002), Hopper et Traugott (2003), Rubin (2005), Eades 2012, etc. Les analyses avaient un aspect plus diachronique que synchronique surtout pour les langues indo-européennes. Cependant, cette distinction entre diachronie et synchronie a été dépassée par une nouvelle approche qui analyse le fonctionnement particulier de certains morphèmes dans une langue, leur diversité d'emploi et leur flexibilité syntaxique et sémantique qui s'insèrent dans le fonctionnement normal de la langue, i.e. dans le système de la langue. Ce point de vue a permis "de passer d'une étude de la grammaticalisation en diachronie à l'analyse de la transcatégorialité en synchronie" (Robert 2003). Je ne veux pas m'attarder sur les cas de grammaticalisation et de transcatégorialité qui ont été révélés à travers les diverses études, mais je vais mettre en lumière un type de grammaticalisation d'un terme qui passe d'abord d'une catégorie (les verbes) à une sous-catégorie (les auxiliaires), puis d'une catégorie à une autre.

Le verbe soureth, au centre de cet article, est celui qui vient de la racine *qym* "se lever/se mettre (debout)". Après l'avoir présenté à la section 4, sa désémantisation et la perte de ses propriétés prédicatives seront en question dans les sections suivantes (5 et 6) permettant une grammaticalisation maximale avec une fonction discursive (section 7).

2. Aperçu sociolinguistique

Le soureth est une langue de la branche orientale de l'araméen, une langue sémitique appartenant au groupe des langues sémitiques du Nord-Ouest.

Historiquement, les communautés araméophones se trouvaient dans le nord de l'Irak, le sud-est de la Turquie, le nord-est de la Syrie et le nord-ouest de l'Iran. Depuis le début du 20^e siècle, il y a eu de grandes vagues d'immigration dans le monde entier, notamment vers l'Europe, les USA et l'Australie. Les locuteurs typiques de soureth sont multilingues dans la mesure où ils parlent souvent arabe, turc, kurde, hébreu et les langues de leurs pays d'accueil. Le nombre de locuteurs serait, selon les sources, de 355 000 (Poizat 2008) à 500 000 (Alichoran et Sibille¹ 2013).

¹ Merci à Jean Sibille pour ses remarques sur le soureth.

3. Méthode

L'analyse est basée sur deux sources de données : d'une part, grâce à l'accès facile aux données, sur un corpus d'histoires éditées de la variété vernaculaire du néo-araméen des juifs qui vivaient dans la région d'Erbil située au nord de l'Irak (Khan 1999)² ; d'autre part, sur des données spontanées que j'ai déjà enregistrées. Ce travail prend en considération les variétés des araméophones³ (assyro-chaldéo-syriaques) vivant en France, mais originaires de la région de Ninive (notamment de Bartella) et du nord de l'Irak (notamment de Zakho et Duhok).

Les différentes variétés décrites montrent peu de différences par rapport aux points grammaticaux dont il est question dans cet article. Les données ne sont pas exhaustives, elles devraient être élargies ultérieurement sur d'autres verbes de mouvement et de position. Le choix de ce type de verbes a été privilégié ici à cause de sa grande fréquence dans le corpus comme auxiliaire et aussi comme marqueur discursif. Ce qui n'exclut pas par ailleurs l'emploi d'auxiliaires pour les autres verbes.

4. Verbes de mouvement en soureth

Les verbes de mouvement et de position en soureth peuvent être utilisés seuls (ex. **Error! Reference source not found.**) ou suivis de syntagmes prépositionnels (ex. 2., 3. et 4.) :

VM seul

1. *šme-le* *qala qim-le* *u-zil-le dahude*
entendre\ACC-3SG.M voix se_mettre_debout\ACC-3SG.M et-aller\ACC-3SG.M vite
"Il a entendu un bruit, il s'est levé et il est vite parti" (Zakho) (RS⁴)

VM + S.Prép

2. *awwagora* *qim-le* *m-dukt-eh*
ce_homme se_mettre_debout \ACC-3SG.M de-place-3SG.M
"Cet homme se leva de sa place" (Bartella) (RS)

² Cela est avant de partir s'installer en Israël, en grande majorité, dans les années 1949-1952.

³ Merci à Joseph Alichoran, locuteur et chargé de cours de soureth à l'INALCO-Paris, d'avoir relu tous les exemples soureth et vérifié les gloses. Merci encore à mes locuteurs, Raad et Behnam, pour leur contribution.

⁴ Les exemples tirés de mon corpus sont désignés par mes initiales.

3. *qiṭār mṭe-le l=maḥaṭa*
train arriver\ACC-3SG.M DIR=gare
“Le train est arrivé à la gare” (Bartella) (RS)

4. *zil-le talmiḍa lgebād-astaḍ-eh*
aller\ACC-3SG.M élève chez-professeur-3SG.M
“L’élève est allé chez son professeur” (Bartella) (RS)

Deux types de relations spatiales existent dans les langues naturelles (Borillo 1998 cité par Bessière 2008) :

- des relations spatiales statiques. Elles décrivent la position occupée par un objet ou une entité localisée (la cible) par rapport à un autre objet ou lieu de référence (le site) ;
- des relations spatiales dynamiques. Elles déterminent le fait spatio-temporel qu'est le mouvement.

Le mouvement est, par opposition à l'état statique, un procès dynamique qui ne mène pas obligatoirement à un changement de lieu. Il peut parvenir uniquement à un simple changement de posture ou de position. Des verbes comme “se lever” ou “s’asseoir” se réfèrent à des mouvements circonscrits au cadre que détermine l'entité (Aurnague 2008 : 1906), tout en ayant un repère sur un axe topologique sur-sous, haut-bas, devant-derrrière, c'est-à-dire un changement de posture (ou de position) n'impliquant pas le changement de lieu. L'entité permet ici, reprenant les termes d'Aurnague (2008 : 1908), “d'établir l'existence d'un possible changement de relation” élémentaire par rapport au site éventuel.

En soureth, le verbe qui vient de la racine *qym* a deux sens. D'une part, il possède un sens statif *qā'im* “être debout” qui exprimait dans un état antérieur de la langue un présent actuel comme **qā'im kātib* “il est en train d'écrire”; réduit à un simple préfixe *ke/ k-/g-*, il exprime dorénavant un présent générique indicatif “il écrit” (Pennacchietti 1994 : 145, 1997 : 477 et repris par Rubin 2005 : 34). D'autre part, ce verbe a un sens dynamique *qā'im* “il se lève” qui a donné une valeur temporelle de futur imminent *qāym-in 'āz(l)-in* “je vais (y) aller” (Pennacchietti 1994: 145)⁵.

Ayant un fonctionnement particulier, ce verbe entre dans une construction à deux verbes *qim-le zil-le* “il est parti” et mérite d'être pris en considération dans la description du système verbal du soureth.

⁵ Voir M. Cohen (1924 : 59-60) et aussi Fassberg (2015 : 173-174 et 177).

Ce type de construction a influencé d'autres variétés soureth comme celle du néo-araméen de Challa en Turquie (Fassberg 2010 : 126) où la construction la plus fréquente en narration comporte *qym*, en général au subjonctif, suivi d'un autre verbe également au subjonctif.

Le verbe en question sera étudié ici avec sa valeur d'accompli : *qim-le* "il s'est levé/s'est mis debout"⁶. Ce verbe fonctionne comme un verbe plein, mais aussi, il entre avec valeur d'auxiliaire dans des périphrases verbales exprimant l'inchoativité (il s'est mis à faire ...). Au terme d'un processus de grammaticalisation, il assume une fonction discursive.

5. Désémantisation du verbe *qim-le*

L'apport sémantique du verbe *qim-le* n'est pas fixe. Le verbe peut indiquer un vrai mouvement fait par le sujet comme il peut désigner un simple changement de relation élémentaire. Dans les deux exemples suivants, le verbe garde son sens dynamique "se lever" qui pourrait être parfois révélé à travers l'usage de la préposition *tad* "pour" séparant deux événements "se lever pour adresser une salutation" (cf. ex. **Error! Reference source not found.**).

5. *ʔiyyá kābrá qim-le, tára ġliq-le-lleu⁷*
 ce homme se_mettre_debout \ACC-3SG.M porte fermer\ACC-3SG.M-3SG.M
 "(A heifer came inside and) the man arose and closed the door;" Khan 1999 : 422-423,
 n° 5)
6. *qim-le (tad) dar-e šlama*
 se_mettre_debout \ACC-3SG.M pour adresser \INAC.3SG.M salutation
 "Il s'est levé pour adresser une salutation" (à comprendre comme : "pour saluer")
 (Duhok) (RS)

Le verbe peut s'éloigner du sens plein en prenant un sens dérivé. Sur le plan syntaxique, l'abstraction du sémantisme verbal a lieu lorsque le verbe est suivi d'un syntagme prépositionnel contenant un nom abstrait comme "sommeil" (ex. 7., 8., 9.) et "aurore" (ex. **Error! Reference source not found.** 10.), ou bien un adverbe de quantité comme "peu" (ex. 11.). Le sens originel de *qim-le* change. Il signifie ainsi "se réveiller" dans ces exemples. Cependant, le verbe est partiellement désémantisé. En effet, il

⁶ La forme de citation du verbe est la 3ème personne du singulier de l'accompli suivant la tradition grammaticale sémitique.

⁷ Les exemples de Khan (1999) ont été pris tels qu'ils ont été édités. Les gloses sont fournies de ma part après vérification auprès de M. Khan que je remercie.

garde les caractéristiques de base du procès en décrivant la manière de se mouvoir, c'est-à-dire le mode de réalisation du procès. Le sème de “changement” du sémantisme de base “changement de posture” est conservé.

7. *qim-le* *m-šant-eh* *qallula*
 se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M de-sommeil-3SG.M tôt
 “Il s’est réveillé tôt” (Bartella) ou “Il s’est réveillé rapidement” (Duhok) (RS)

8. *ega-da-šme-le* *qala t-telefon* *qim-le*
 lors-que-entendre\ACC-3SG.M voix de-téléphone se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M
m-šant-eh
 de-sommeil-3SG.M
 “Lorsqu’il a entendu le son du téléphone, il s’est réveillé” (Bartella) (RS)

9. *har-qim-le* *min-šindèu*
 quand-se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M de-sommeil.3SG.M
 “As soon as he arose from his sleep” (Khan 424-425 : 29)

10. *qim-la* *m-xuška qalula*
 se_mettre\ACC-3SG.F de-aurore tôt
 “Elle s’est levée tôt le matin” (Bartella) (RS)

11. *xanči* *dmix-le,* *xanči* *qim-le*
 peu dormir\ACC-COP.3SG.M peu se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M
 “(The child did not cry any more. He sat down.) He slept a little and got up a little.”
 (Khan 442-443: 92)

6. Perte des propriétés prédicatives dans un processus d’auxiliarisation

Le phénomène connu de grammaticalisation des verbes de mouvement et de position dans les langues du monde (Heine et Kuteva 2002) aboutit à des valeurs aspecto-temporelles, valeur de futur, de progressif, de continu et de duratif (Bybee *et al.* 1991, 1994 ; Newman 2002). Cette tendance avait été signalée dans les langues sémitiques, notamment en arabe, par Marcel Cohen dès 1924 et a été étudiée sur plusieurs variétés arabes (au Yémen : Watson 1993, Naïm 2009 ; en Arabie de l’Est : Holes 2001 ; au Moyen-Orient dans les parlers irakiens : Abu-Haidar 1991), en hébreu biblique (Polak 2009, 2011 et Dobbs-Allsopp 1995), et aussi sur plusieurs variétés dialectales du soureth dont la

construction qui forme un futur imminent s’est développée éventuellement suite au contact d’une construction arabe vernaculaire similaire (Coghill 2010).

Dans les langues sémitiques, le verbe possède des marques morphologiques qui l’identifient sans ambiguïté en tant que forme issue d’un lexème verbal pouvant fonctionner comme un noyau prédicatif dans une phrase. L’emploi assez fréquent et concomitant de *qim-le* (V1) avec d’autres verbes (V2) incite à examiner si le V1 garde sa vraie valeur de prédicat et si cet emploi avec V2 n’est pas le signe du passage d’une valeur prédicative à un *état d’auxiliaire*. Une forme verbale composée est identifiée dans un processus d’auxiliarisation lorsque “un des deux fragments (l’auxiliaire) a au moins partiellement les caractéristiques morphologiques d’une forme verbale indépendante mais ne manifeste pas de comportement prédicatif (c’est-à-dire n’intervient pas dans la sélection de tel ou tel type formel de complément et l’assignation de rôles sémantiques au sujet et aux compléments), tandis que l’autre fragment (l’auxilié) se présente formellement comme une forme verbale dépendante (infinitif, participe, etc.) et constitue l’élément prédicatif (...)” (Creissels 1998 : 251-252).

La structure soureth V1+V2 *qim-le mzabone* de l’exemple suivant forme une unité sémantique que l’on peut traduire par “il a vendu”, voire “il s’est mis à vendre”. On peut supposer que la construction V1+V2 est une construction verbale de type auxiliaire (V1) + auxilié (V2).

12. *yaqo xser-(r)e ma-d-it-wa-le*
 Jacob perdre\ACC-3SG.M quoi-REL-EXIST-ANT.3SG.M-DIR.3SG.M
u-ma-iweḏ-le qim-le mzabone kətyate
 et-quoi-faire\ACC-3SG.M se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M vendre\INF poulet.PL
 “Jacob a perdu tout ce qu’il avait, et qu’a-t-il fait ? il s’est mis à vendre des poulets”
 (Bartella) (RS)

Le soureth utilise certains verbes qui fonctionnent aussi bien seuls comme prédicats d’un énoncé (“aller”, “venir”...) que comme verbes dits “auxiliaires” dans une construction périphrastique. La structure d’auxiliarité se caractérise par le fait que ses éléments forment une unité morphologique, sémantique et syntaxique. En se basant sur D. Cohen (Simeone-Senelle et Vanhove 2003), plusieurs critères, sémantiques et fonctionnels, interviennent pour déterminer le statut d’auxiliaire, le statut exact du verbe *qim-le* au sein de la structure périphrastique.

6.1. Critères sémantiques

Dans une unité sémantique, l'élément auxiliaire est caractérisé en général par un trait d'abstraction. Il peut être joint au plus grand nombre possible de verbes ou du moins à des classes entières de verbes.

En soureth, *qim-le* "il s'est levé / s'est mis debout" s'adjoit à des verbes appartenant à des classes différentes "vendre", "travailler", "voir", etc. Il existe une nuance sémantique entre les phrases qui contiennent le verbe de mouvement seul (ex. **Error! Reference source not found.**) et celles dont les verbes sont accompagnés de *qim-le*. Lorsque l'on dit littéralement "il s'est levé/s'est mis debout (à) vendre..." dans **Error! Reference source not found.** (repris sous **Error! Reference source not found.** pour plus de commodité), cela ne renvoie pas au véritable mouvement qu'exprime le sens premier de *qim-le* "se lever" ou "se mettre debout", mais signifie tout simplement un changement de situation en ayant le sens approximatif de "il s'est mis à vendre". D'où l'importance de voir le passage de la notion de changement de relation de base vers le champ sémantique de l'aspectualité (voir Coghill 2010 sur le verbe de mouvement *zi(l)*-).

Le rapport sémantique des verbes principaux (V2) agit sur le degré de désémantisation de V1. Ce dernier n'ajoute, hormis le commencement d'un procès, aucune autre nuance sémantique. Le sens de la construction V1+V2 est réellement exprimé par V2 qui est le vrai prédicat, car il apporte, à lui seul, tout le sémantisme lexical, alors que V1 permet, de son côté, d'apporter la valeur aspectuelle d'inchoativité. Le V1 est présent pour désigner le fait que le procès du V2 est à sa phase initiale. Il pourrait même être remplacé par un verbe venant de la racine *šra* "commencer" ou d'une autre racine ayant le même sens (ex. 15.)⁸.

Prédicat véritable :

13. *ʔiyy'a kābrá qim-le, tára ġliq-le-lleu*
 ce homme se mettre debout\ACC-3SG.M porte fermer\ACC-3SG.M-3SG.M
 "(A heifer came inside and) the man arose and closed the door." (Khan 1999: 422-423, n° 5)

14. *qim-le w-zil-le l-'od-u*
 se mettre debout\ACC-3SG.M et-aller\ACC-3SG.M DIR-chambre-3SG.M
 "Il se leva et alla dans sa chambre" (Bartella, Zakho) (RS)

⁸ Voir plus loin l'exemple 26.

Verbe auxiliaire :

15. *yaqo xser-(r)ema-d-it-wa-le*

Jacob perdre\ACC-3SG.M quoi-REL-EXIST-ANT.3SG.M-DIR.3SG.M

u-ma-iweḏ-le **qim-le** **mzabone** *kətyate*

et-quoi-faire\ACC-3SG.M se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M vendre\INF poulet.PL

“Jacob a perdu tout ce qu’il avait, et qu’a-t-il fait ? Il s’est mis à vendre des poulets”
(Bartella) (RS)

Le sens inchoatif apparaît encore plus clairement lorsque l’action verbale du V2 est rendue par un nom d’action (ou infinitif selon les termes européens) précédé de la préposition *b-* qui permet d’entrer dans l’action, comme dans les exemples suivants où la personne se met à l’exécution de l’action de pleurer (ex. 16.) ou de celle de manger (ex. 17.) :

16. Bartella: *awa yala zora ega d-xze-le* *lo'bət-eh. twerta*
ce garçon petit lorsque-voir\ACC-3SG.M jouet-3SG.M cassé.F
qim-le **be-bxaya**
se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M en-pleurer\INF

16'. Duhok: *awa yala zoraega d-xze-le* *ta'alt-eh twerta*
ce garçon petit lorsque-voir\ACC-3SG.M jouet-3SG.M cassé.F
qim-le **be-bxaya**
se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M en-pleurer\INF
“Dès que ce petit garçon a vu son jouet cassé, il a commencé à pleurer”
(RS)

17. *kpen-li* **w-qim-li** **b-ixala**
avoir_faim\ACC-1SG et-se_mettre\ACC-1SG en-manger\INF
“J’ai eu faim et j’ai commencé à manger” (Duhok) (RS)

Lors du processus par lequel un lexème passe d’une catégorie à une autre, certaines des propriétés sémantiques du terme de base sont maintenues alors que d’autres sont abandonnées. De ce fait, on peut évoquer un processus d’abstraction pour les auxiliaires par rapport aux verbes de sens plein correspondants (Simeone-Senelle et Vanhove 2003 : 126). En effet, l’auxiliaire issu du verbe de mouvement en soureth a conservé un trait sémantique du verbe d’origine. Il n’y a pas eu une rupture

totale avec le sens de départ, seulement un affaiblissement de sens, voire une désémantisation partielle. *qim-le* “se mettre à”, auxiliaire inchoatif sémantiquement parlant, a retenu la notion de changement de position “assis” → “debout” du verbe d’origine “se lever/se mettre (debout)”. Ce qui permet de préciser que le sémantisme du lexème de base influe sur celui de la forme grammaticalisée.

Néanmoins, les critères sémantiques ne sont pas suffisants pour décider de l’état d’auxiliarité. De ce fait, nous aurons recours aux critères fonctionnels à la section suivante.

6.2. Critères fonctionnels

6.2.1. Critère paradigmatique

Le critère paradigmatique est lié au critère sémantique. L’opération de commutation ne s’applique que sur un seul constituant de la structure périphrastique, en l’occurrence l’auxilié. Ce qui a pour conséquence que l’autre élément, l’auxiliaire, a un sens différent lorsqu’il est utilisé seul.

En effet, cela s’applique entièrement à *qimle* (lit. : “il s’est levé”) qui, étant seul, a un sens différent, comme on vient de voir. Quant à la structure à deux verbes, V2 commute facilement, en fonction de l’objectif du locuteur et du contexte, avec un autre prédicat verbal sans changer le V1 *qimle*. Le V1 n’est pas autonome et ne peut se passer de V2. La forme verbale est une forme complexe avec un V1 grammaticalisé, et, suivant la position de Bybee et alii (1994), il nous est possible de parler même de “constructions (et non des unités) qui se grammaticalisent” (cité dans Robert 2003 : 259) afin de désigner “un changement de situation” ou “une prise de décision pour agir” ou même entrer dans un nouvel état.

18. *men-baṭər la-pləx-le* *ṭawa qim-le* *palex*
 de-après non-travailler\ACC-3SG.M bien se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M travailler\INAC.3SG.M
w-zil-le *l-qama*
 et-aller\ACC-3SG.M vers-avant
 “Après avoir échoué, il s’est mis à travailler sérieusement et aller de l’avant”
 (Duhok) (RS)

19. *m-baṭər ma-wid-la* *ʔamaliya qim-la* *xzaya*
 de-après quoi-faire\ACC-3SG.F opération se_mettre\ACC-3SG.F voir\INF
 “Après l’opération, elle a commencé à voir” (Zakho) (RS)

20. *qim-le* *mṣawore* *l-baxt-u*
 se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M insulter\INF DIR-femme-3SG.M

“Il s’est à mis à insulter sa femme” (Zakho) (RS)

6.2.2. Critères syntaxiques

- Les deux formes verbales doivent constituer une structure asyndétique. Elles ne peuvent être liées ni par une coordination qui les positionnerait sur un même plan syntaxique ni par une conjonction de subordination.

Nous avons bien vu qu’en soureth les deux formes verbales V1 (*qimle*)+V2 (autre verbe) sont juxtaposées, avec un V2 à l’inaccompli sous une forme conjuguée *qim-le palex*, ou une forme d’infinitif *qim-la xzaya*, *qim-le mšawore*, *qim-le mzabone*. L’expression du temps est conservée par V1, qui pourrait aussi éventuellement se mettre à l’inaccompli pour désigner le présent/futur ; comme on le voit à partir des élicitations auprès d’un locuteur (Raad, CP).

21. *qayem* *maḥdər* *ta-gwara*
 se_mettre\INAC.3SG.M préparer\INF pour-mariage
 “(à la fin de cette année) il se met à préparer le mariage” (Zakho) (RS)

Un lien de coordination entre les deux verbes rendrait la structure inacceptable :

**qim-le w-palex*
 se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M et- travailler\INAC.3SG.M

**qim-la u-xzaya*
 se_mettre\ACC-3SG.F et-voir\INF

**qim-le u-mšawore*
 se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M et-insulter\INF

**qayem u-maḥdər*
 se_mettre\inac.3sg.m préparer\inf

- Le sujet doit être identique pour l’auxilié et pour l’auxiliaire. La morphologie du soureth est assez explicite de ce point de vue. L’indice personnel du sujet apparaît sur l’auxiliaire et sur l’auxilié, s’il s’agit d’une forme conjuguée.

- Quant à l'objet, s'il y en a, il doit être celui de l'auxilié et jamais celui de l'auxiliaire. En effet, Creissels le confirme en soulignant que si un verbe s'auxiliarise, alors il « cesse de participer à la sélection de compléments et à l'attribution de rôles sémantiques au sujet et aux compléments. S'il continue de présenter une marque de la relation à un sujet, il ne fait que transmettre à ce sujet un rôle sémantique entièrement déterminé par l'auxilié » (Creissels 1998 : 252).

C'est le cas dans les structures soureth étant donné que V1 que l'on étudie est à la base un verbe de mouvement intransitif, et le rôle sémantique et syntaxique de l'objet est bien déterminé par l'auxilié V2.

Après avoir étudié le passage de l'état prédicatif à l'état d'auxiliarité du verbe en question, un autre état de grammaticalisation a été repéré dans d'autres contextes, ce qui fera l'objet de la section suivante.

7. Emploi discursif de *qim-le*

On a observé une fonction discursive des verbes de mouvement dans plusieurs langues sémitiques (au Moyen-Orient, en syro-libano-palestinien: Blau 1960, Fischer 2002, en syro-libanais : Versteegh 1984, Talay 2003 et dans le parler de la Haute Jézireh syrienne : Bettini 2006 ; au Yémen: Simeone-Senelle 1996 ; en Egypte : Woidich 2002 ; au Maroc : Caubet 1995 et 1996 ; et en Mauritanie : Taine-Cheikh 2004, 2011, 2018).

En soureth, le sens inchoatif exprimé par le verbe de mouvement *qim-le* pourrait cacher un autre emploi, assez répandu, de ce verbe. La grammaticalisation de “se lever” est si banale qu'elle finit par faire ressentir le V1 (ou son signifié) comme une partie intégrante du V2 (ou de son signifié). Bien qu'il s'agisse de constructions à deux verbes où V2 est le seul verbe à sens plein, le V1 s'inscrit dans un emploi à valeur discursive avec des propriétés distinctes de l'état d'auxiliarité vu jusqu'à présent. Son emploi comme connecteur narratif se produit dans un contexte où deux verbes partagent les mêmes propriétés modales et aspectuo-temporelles (TAM) qui sont, en l'occurrence, à l'accompli dans notre corpus.

22. *xat-i zurta qim-la imer-(r)a ta-yemm-i kul mendi*
sœur-1SG petite se_mettre\ACC-3SG.F dire\ACC-3SG.F chez-mère-1SG tout chose
“(Mes deux sœurs se sont disputées,) du coup ma petite sœur a tout raconté à ma mère” (Bartella) (RS)

S'il n'était pas précisé dans la phrase 22. qu'on avait affaire à une dispute entre deux sœurs, on aurait pu penser que la bonne traduction était : "elle s'est levée, elle a tout dit à ma mère". Par ailleurs, il ne pouvait pas s'agir d'un *qimla* inchoatif car cette interprétation aurait impliqué que le verbe plein V2 soit à l'inaccompli comme vu précédemment.

Il en est de même pour les autres exemples suivants. Du point de vue morphosyntaxique, il y a juxtaposition (rendue éventuellement par la présence d'une virgule, comme le fait Khan) ou coordination de deux formes verbales conjuguées à l'accompli (voir aussi D. Cohen 1984 : 487). La construction est donc comparable à celle de deux propositions (d'où la présence possible d'expansions entre les deux). Du point de vue sémantique, la grammaticalisation de V1 se manifeste par une quasi perte du sémantisme propre du verbe de mouvement. Celui-ci peut cependant être rendu par des adverbes exprimant l'enchaînement (ou la soudaineté) comme "ensuite...".

23. *qim-le,* *zil-le,* *škè-le* *geb-David*
 se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M aller\ACC-3SG.M se_plaindre\ACC-3SG.M chez-David
 "He went and complained to David" (Khan 1999: 428-429, n°99)

24. *qim-le,* *xa-nót* *hiw-le* *bāq-i, ?ot-?isrā dinārē*
 se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M un-billet donner\ACC-3SG.M à-1SG GEN-dix dinar.PL
 "(so I said to him 'We have nothing in the house'.) Then he gave me a ten-dinar note." (Khan 1999: 444-445, n°113)

Par ailleurs, la juxtaposition n'est pas un critère exclusif dans ce type d'emploi. Les deux verbes peuvent, même si ce n'est pas très courant, être coordonnés en disant *qimla w-imera* "elle s'est levée et a dit" (voir ex. 22. ci-dessus). Cela représente un critère supplémentaire qui exclut la présence d'un auxiliaire inchoatif, premier élément d'une structure caractérisée par la juxtaposition des deux verbes.

Le marqueur discursif est là pour structurer le récit en donnant le sens de soudaineté "du coup/alors". Il attire l'attention sur un événement particulier. Il n'apparaît que dans certaines productions langagières, notamment la narration (fait observé par Khan 2008: 671 et aussi par Taine-Cheikh 2018 : 21).

Outre la valeur discursive du marqueur *qim-le* accompagné parfois d'une pause, une phrase interrogative pourrait être émise de la part du narrateur *ma wil-le/ma wəd-le* "qu'a-t-il fait ?" pour faire progresser une narration et captiver l'interlocuteur. Elle met l'accent sur une nouvelle information qu'on va annoncer. Elle peut précéder *qim-le* (ex. 25.) comme elle peut le suivre afin de

donner le sens “alors qu'a-t-il entrepris” (ex. 26.). Le fait de séparer *qim-le* du reste prouve que V1 ne dépend plus de V2 et qu'il ne s'agit plus de forme verbale complexe.

25. *b-xa yoma ma-iwāḏ-le qim-le zwān-ne xda skina*
 en-un jour quoi-faire\ACC-3SG.M se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M acheter\ACC-3SG.M 1.F couteau
 “Un jour, qu'est-ce qu'il a fait ? Il a acheté un couteau” (Duhok, Bartella) (RS)

26. *?iyyá kābrá qim-le, mà wil-le? bdé-le*
 ce homme se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M quoi faire\ACC-3SG.M commencer\ACC-3SG.M
bi-klālē zabin, xānči ?izzé zwin-ne
 en-poulet.PL vendre\ACC.A.3SG.M peu chèvre.PL vendre\PTCP-3SG.M
 “What did this man do ? He began selling the chickens and bought a few goats” (Khan 1999 : 426-427, n°69)

Voici un autre exemple où le marqueur discursif est répété deux fois pour ajouter un élément d'énergie et de rapidité dans la suite des actions :

27. *rbiḥ-le l-loto qim-le ma-wid-le*
 gagner.ACC\3SG.M DIR-loto se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M quoi-faire\ACC-3SG.M
qim-lezwin-ne beta
 se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M gagner\ACC-3SG.M maison
 “il a gagné au loto, du coup qu'est-ce qu'il a fait ? il a acheté une maison” (Zakho) (RS)

La grammaticalisation de ce verbe est rendue plus explicite encore par la présence des deux occurrences dans une même phrase, comme dans les exemples suivants, mais dans deux contextes différents correspondant à des valeurs distinctes: la première valeur est narrative et la seconde ne peut avoir que le sens du commencement d'un procès, i.e la valeur inchoative. Dans l'emploi narratif, *qim-le* grammaticalisé n'est pas traduit et la traduction était limitée au verbe plein (comme l'ex. 23.) à la différence de V1 auxiliaire inchoatif.

28. *kul mendi mefet-le qim-le ma-wid-le*
 tout chose perdre\ACC-3SG.M se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M quoi-faire\ACC-3SG.M
qim-le mزابone ezze
 se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M vendre\INF chèvre.PL
 “il a tout perdu, du coup qu'est-ce qu'il a fait ? il a commencé à vendre des chèvres.”

(Zakho) (RS)

29. *rbiḥ-le l-loto qim-le ma-wid-le*
 gagner.ACC\3SG.M DIR-loto se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M quoi-faire\ACC-3SG.M
qim-le bi-zwana baytane
 se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M en-acheter\INF maison.PL
 “Il a gagné le loto, du coup qu’a-t-il fait ? il a commencé à acheter des maisons”
 (Zakho) (RS)

30. *yaqo xser-(r)e ma-d-it-wa-le u-qim-le*
 Jacob perdre\ACC-3SG.M quoi-EXIST-ACC.3SG.M-à.3SG.M et-se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M
ma-iwed-le qim-le mزابone kətyate
 quoi-faire\ACC-3SG.M se_mettre\ACC-3SG.M vendre\INF poulet.PL
 “Jacob a perdu tout ce qu’il avait, et qu’a-t-il fait ? il a commencé à vendre des poulets” (Bartella) (RS)

La grammaticalisation de ce verbe ne se produit pas uniquement dans ces variétés dialectales du soureth. Dans le dialecte de Barwar (Khan 2008 : 669) par exemple, “le verbe initial d’une suite [d’événements] est souvent soit un verbe de mouvement soit le verbe *qym* “se lever”, qui dans la narration perd souvent sa signification originale et est utilisé simplement pour marquer le début d’un nouvel événement”⁹. Ce verbe n’est pas toujours interprété comme dénotant l’acte physique de “se lever”. Il est utilisé, par exemple, avant des verbes désignant “le fait de s’asseoir” (Khan 2008 : 937).

31. *qime-la tiwe-la, wiḏe-la təgbir*
 se_mettre\PTCP-COP.3PL s’asseoir\PTCP-COP.3PL faire\PTCP-COP.3PL projet
 “They sat down and made a plan.” (Khan 2008 : 937, A26: 2)

8. Conclusion

Le verbe de mouvement et de position “se lever/se mettre (debout)” n’est certainement pas le seul en soureth à avoir été grammaticalisé, le verbe *zil-le* “aller”¹⁰ semble avoir eu le même sort, mais tout

⁹ “The initial verb in the chain is often a verb of movement or the verb *qym* ‘to arise’, which in narrative frequently loses its original meaning and is used simply to mark the onset of a new event”.

¹⁰ Ce verbe est bien repéré chez mes locuteurs de Bartella et de Duhok :

zil-la imer-(r)a kul mendi

cela fera l'objet d'une étude beaucoup plus large qui regroupera d'autres verbes dans une optique de typologie dialectale.

Cette étude a démontré une dérivation intercatégorielle (à l'intérieur du système verbal) et transcatégorielle (le passage du système verbal à une particule énonciative) du verbe de mouvement "se lever". La portée syntaxique hétérogène constitutive de la transcatégorialité s'accompagne d'une homogénéité sémantique en conservant le signifié de départ.

L'emploi concomitant d'un lexème verbal, dans une même langue, comme verbe autonome avec un sens plein et comme verbe auxiliaire s'inscrit, en synchronie, dans le cadre de l'intercatégorialité. Les caractéristiques du lexème verbal *qym* justifient son interprétation comme auxiliaire aspectuel. La structure V1+V2 est une forme périphrastique, constituée du regroupement de deux verbes, auxiliaire et auxilié. Le premier influence la signification du procès du second.

La grande fréquence de *qim-le* a largement contribué au blanchiment de son sémantisme de verbe plein. Ayant pris une valeur de marqueur discursif, il peut être employé dans des contextes très divers comme particule énonciative. Sa place n'est pas figée devant le verbe. Le sémantisme originel de la base verbale est fortement réduit même si dans le sens métaphorique de la particule subsiste la notion de dynamisme, de changement de statut que contient le verbe "se lever". Ce qui lui permet d'être utilisé comme marqueur de passage à de nouvelles actions, à de nouveaux cadres narratifs dans l'énoncé.

Liste des abréviations

A	actif
ACC	accompli
ANT	antérieur
CP	communication personnelle
DEF	définitude
DIR	directionnel
EXIST	existentiel
F	féminin
INF	infinitif

aller\ACC-3SG.F dire\ACC-3SG.M tout chose

"... alors elle a tout raconté" (Bartella, Duhok) (RS)

M	masculin
PL	pluriel
PTCP	participe
REL	relatif
SG	singulier

Références

- Abu-Haidar, Farida. 1991. *Christian Arabic of Baghdad*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Alichoran, Joseph et Jean Sibille. 2013. "L'araméen". In: *Histoire sociale des langues de France*, 869-875. Rennes : Presses universitaires de Rennes. Accès en ligne [hal-00952422](#)
- Asher, Nicholas et Pierre Sablayrolles. 1995. "A Typology and Discourse Semantics for Motion verbs and Spatial PPs in French". *Journal of Semantics* 12/ 2: 163-209.
- Aurnague, Michel. 2011. "How motion verbs are spatial: The spatial foundations of intransitive motion verbs in French.". *Linguisticae Investigationes* 34/1: 1-34.
- Aurnague, Michel. 2009. *A cet endroit vs. dans un tel endroit: Ce que a nous dit d'endroit et viceversa*. *Langages* 173: 34-53.
- Aurnague, Michel. 2008. "Qu'est-ce qu'un verbe de déplacement ? : critères spatiaux pour une classification des verbes de déplacement intransitifs du français". <http://dx.doi.org/10.1051/cmlf08041>.
- Aurnague, Michel. 2004. *Les structures de l'espace linguistique : Regards croisés sur quelques constructions spatiales du basque et du français*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Aurnague, Michel et Dejan Stosic. 2019. *Recent advances in the study of motion in French*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Bessiere, Katarzyna. 2008. "Quelques remarques sur la sémantique des verbes de mouvement en polonais". *Dialogues interlinguistiques, Université Paris Sorbonne*: 1-14. Accès en ligne [halshs-01076032](#).
- Bettini, Lidia. 2006. *Contes féminins de la Haute Jézireh syrienne. Matériaux ethno-linguistiques d'un parler nomade oriental*. Firenze: Università di Firenze.
- Boons, Jean-Paul. 1987. "La notion sémantique de déplacement dans une classification syntaxique des verbes locatifs". *Langue Française* 76 : 5-40.
- Borillo, Andrée. 1998. *L'espace et son expression en français*. Paris: Ophrys.
- Bowerman, Melissa, Lourdes de León and Soonja Choi. 1995. "Verbs, particles, and spatial semantics: learning to talk about spatial actions in typologically different languages". In: *Proceedings of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Child Language Research Forum*, edited by Eve V. Clark, 101-110. Stanford, CA: CSLI.

- Bybee, Joan, Revere Perkins and William Pagliuca. 1994. *The Evolution of Grammar: Tense, Aspect and Modality in the Languages of the world*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bybee, Joan, William Pagliuca and Revere Perkins. 1991. “Back to the Future”. In: *Approaches to Grammaticalization*, edited by Elizabeth Traugott and Bernd Heine, 17-58. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Caubet, Dominique. 1996. “gālās kayxdəm, xāyəd kayxdəm : approche sociolinguistique de l’expression de la concomitance en arabe marocain”. *Estudios de dialectología norteafricana y andalusi* 1: 87-100.
- Caubet, Dominique. 1995. “ža, élément narratif dans le récit familial en arabe marocain”. In: *Dialectologia Arabica - A collection of Articles in Honour of the Sixtieth Birthday of professor Heikki Palva*, 41-48. Helsinki: Finnish Oriental society.
- Coghill, Eleanor. 2010. “The grammaticalization of prospective aspect in a group of Neo-Aramaic dialects”. *Diachronica* 27/3 : 359-410.
- Cohen, David. 1984. *La phrase nominale et l’évolution du système verbal en sémitique. Etude de syntaxe historique*. Paris, Société de Linguistique de Paris [LXXII].
- Cohen, Marcel. 1924. *Le système verbal du sémitique et l’expression du temps*. Paris, Ernest Leroux.
- Creissels, Denis. 1998. “Auxiliaires et auxiliarisation : l’exemple du tswana”. *Faits de langues* 11-12: 251-265.
- Dobbs-Allsopp, Frederick William. 1995. “Ingressive *qwm* in Biblical Hebrew”. *Zeitschrift für Althebräistik* 8/31-54.
- Eades, Domenyk (ed.). 2012. “Grammaticalization in Semitic”. *Journal of Semitic Studies* 60/1: 281–282.
- Fassberg, Steven E. 2015. “The Origin of the Periphrastic Preterite *kəm/qam-qāṭalle* in North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic”. In: *Neo-Aramaic and its Linguistic Context*, edited by Geoffrey Khan and Lidia Napierkowska, 172-186. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press.
- Fassberg, Steven E. 2010. *The Jewish Neo-Aramaic dialect of Čalla*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Givón, Talmy. 1979. *On understanding Grammar*. New York: Academic Press.
- Grinevald, Colette. 2006. “The expression of static location in a typological perspective”. In: *Space in languages: linguistic systems and cognitive categories*, edited by Maya Hickmann and Stéphane Robert, 29–58. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Heine, Bernd and Tania Kuteva. 2002. *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heine, Bernd and Mechthild Reh. 1984. *Grammaticalization and Reanalysis in African Languages*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske.
- Holes, Clive. 2001. *Dialect, Culture and Society in Eastern Arabia*. Vol. 1. Glossary. Leiden: Brill.
- Hopper, Paul J. and Elizabeth Closs Traugott. 2003 (2ème éd.). *Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jackendoff, Ray. 1990. *Semantic structures*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Jackendoff, Ray. 1983. *Semantic and cognition*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Khan, Geoffrey. 2008. *The Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Barwar*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Khan, Geoffrey. 1999. *A Grammar of Neo-Aramaic. The dialect of the Jews of Arbel*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Kopecka, Anetta. 2006. "The semantic structures of motion verbs in French". In: *Space in languages: linguistic systems and cognitive categories*, edited by Maya Hickmann and Stéphane Robert, 83-101. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Lamiroy, Béatrice. 1983. *Les verbes de mouvement en français et en espagnol*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Laur, Dany. 1991. *Sémantique du déplacement et de la localisation en français : une étude des verbes, des prépositions et de leurs relations dans la phrase simple*. Lille: A.N.R.T.
- Lehmann, Christian. 2002 (1st edition: 1982). *Thoughts on Grammaticalization*. Munich: Lincom Europa.
- Levinson, Stephen C. and David Wilkins (eds). 2006. *Grammars of space: Explorations in cognitive diversity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Meillet, Antoine. 1982 (1st edition: 1912). "L'Evolution des formes grammaticales", 130-148. In: *Linguistique historique et linguistique générale I*. Paris: Champion.
- Moline, Estelle et Stosic, Dejan. 2016. *L'expression de la maniere en francais*. Paris : Ophrys.
- Naïm, Samia. 2009. *L'arabe yéménite de Sanaa*. Leuven et Paris: Peeters.
- Newman, John. 2002. "A cross-linguistic overview of the posture verb 'sit', 'stand', and 'lie'". In: *The Linguistics of Sitting, Standing, and Lying*, edited by John Newman, 1-24. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Pennacchietti, Fabrizio Angelo. 1997. "On the Etymology of the Neo-Aramaic Particle *qam/kim*". *Massorot, Studies in Language Tradition and Jewish Languages* 9-11: 475-480.
- Pennacchietti, Fabrizio Angelo. 1994. "I preverbi del passato in semitici". In: *Sem Cam Iafet. Atti della 7a Giornata di Studi Camito-Semitici e Indoeuropei (Milano, 1 giugno 1993)*, a cura di Vermondo Brugnatelli, 133-150. Milano: Centro Studi Camito-Semitici.
- Poizat, Bruno. 2008. *Manuel de soureth. Initiation à l'araméen d'aujourd'hui parlé et écrit*. Paris: Geuthner.
- Polak, Frank. 2011. "Etymology, Bleaching and Discourse Structure". In: *Tradition and Innovation in Biblical Interpretation: Studies Presented to Professor Eep Talstra on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, edited by Wido Th. Peursen and Janet Dyk, 379-398. Leiden: Brill.
- Polak, Frank. 2009. "Verbs of Motion in Biblical Hebrew: Lexical Shifts and Syntactic Structure". In: *A Palimpsest: Rhetoric, Ideology, Stylistics, and Language Relating to Persian Israel*, edited by Ehud Ben-Zvi, Diana Edelman and Frank Polak, 161-197. USA : Gorgias Press.
- Robert, Stéphane (éd.). 2003. *Perspectives synchroniques sur la grammaticalisation*. Louvain et Paris: Peeters.
- Rubin, Aaron D. 2005. *Studies in Semitic Grammaticalization*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- Sarda, Laure. 2006. *Contribution à l'étude de la sémantique de l'espace et du temps : analyse des verbes de déplacement transitifs directs du français*. Accès en ligne <https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-00067804>

- Simeone-Senelle, Marie-Claude. 1996. “Le fonctionnement des verbes de mouvement dans des dialectes de la Tihama du Yémen”. In: *2nd AIDA Conference. 10-14 sept. 1995*, édité par Clive D. Holes, 227-235. Trinity Hall. University of Cambridge. Angleterre: Faculty of Oriental Studies. University of Cambridge.
- Simeone-Senelle, Marie-Claude et Martine Vanhove. 2003. “Transcatégorialité, auxiliarité et auxiliarisation”. In: *Perspectives synchroniques sur la grammaticalisation. Polysémie, transcatégorialité et échelles syntaxiques*, édité par Stéphane Robert, 123-126. Louvain et Paris: Peeters.
- Stosic, Dejan. 2002. *Par et à travers dans l’expression des relations spatiales : comparaison entre le français et le serbo-croate*. Lille : Atelier national de reproduction des thèses.
- Taine-Cheikh, Catherine. 2018. “La (poly)grammaticalisation des verbes de mouvement et de position en arabe. Tendances générales et faits spécifiques”. In: *Fonctionnements linguistiques et grammaticalisation*, édité par Sylvie Hancil, 219-248. Limoges: Lambert-Lucas.
- Taine-Cheikh, Catherine. 2011. “Faits de grammaticalisation et processus narratifs. Les verbes ‘se (re)dresser’ et ‘prendre’ dans l’arabe mauritanien”. In: *A festschrift for Nadia Anghelescu*, edited by Andrei A. Avram, Anca Focseneanu and George Grigore, 490-518. Bucuresti: Editura Universitatii din Bucuresti.
- Taine-Cheikh, Catherine. 2004. “Le(s) futur(s) en arabe. Réflexions pour une typologie”. *Estudios de Dialectología Norteafricana y Andalusí* 8: 215-238.
- Talay, Shabo. 2003. *Der arabische Dialekt der Khawêtna. Teil II: Texte und Glossar*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Watson, Janet C. 1993. *A Syntax of Ṣanʿānī Arabic*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Woidich, Manfred. 2002. “Verbalphrasen mit asyndetischem Perfekt im Ägyptisch-Arabischen. *Estudios de Dialectología Norteafricana y Andalusí* 6: 121-192.
- Vandeloise, Claude. 1988. “Les usages spatiaux statiques de la préposition à”. *Cahiers de Lexicologie* 53: 119-148.
- Versteegh, Kees. 1984. *Pidginization and Creolization: The case of Arabic*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Roula Skaf (a.k.a. Rola Skaff) received her PhD in linguistics from INaLCO - Sorbonne Paris- Cité University and the University of Turin. A specialist in Semitic and especially Syriac, she is also interested in Neo-Aramaic. She is in now postdoc attached to LACITO-CNRS-UMR 7107 and she collaborates in the translation and editing of texts from Syriac manuscripts at *Sources Chrétiennes*, CNRS (HiSoMA, UMR 5189). She can be reached at: roula250@yahoo.fr

Yazdandukht and Mar Qardagh

From the Persian martyr acts in Syriac to Sureth poetry on YouTube, via a historical novel in Arabic

Alessandro Mengozzi

Videos posted on YouTube show how stories of East-Syriac saints have found their way to a popular web platform, where they are re-told combining traditional genres with a culturally hybrid visual representation. The sketchy female characters Yazdandukht and Yazdui/Christine and the fully developed epos of Mar Qardagh, who belong to the narrative cycle of the Persian martyrs of Erbil and Kirkuk, inspired an Arabic illustrated historical novel, published in 1934 by the Chaldean bishop Sulaymān Ṣā'igh. A few years after the publication of the novel, a new cult of Mar Qardagh was established in Alqosh, in northern Iraq, including the building of a shrine, the painting of an icon, public and private rites, and the composition of hymns. In 1969 the Chaldean priest Yoḥannan Cholagh adapted Ṣā'igh's Arabic novel to a traditional long stanzaic poem in the Aramaic dialect of Alqosh. The poem *On Yazdandukht*, as chanted by the poet himself, became the soundtrack of a video published on YouTube in 2014.

Keywords: Hagiography, Persian martyr acts, Arabic historical novel, Neo-Aramaic, Classical Syriac

*Non esiste una terra
dove non ci son santi né eroi.
E. Bennato, L'isola che non c'è*

Social networks and mass media technologies offer various easily accessible and usable multimedia platforms to produce and reproduce cultural products, usually playing on the interaction of texts, music and images, and multiply the performance arenas in and for which these products are conceived. This results in a living process of hybridization of media, genres, repertoires and cultural contents and an acceleration of the processes of revitalization and transformation of a traditional culture, exposed to the influence of contents and aesthetics of the dominant culture.¹

¹ This paper is part of an on-going research project on the vitality and circulation of East-Syriac culture on YouTube (Mengozzi-Ricossa 2013a and 2013b, Mengozzi-Pastore 2017). The web, in general, allows minority cultures a wide circulation

In the present paper I intend to address these cultural and semiotic processes as concerns videos of hagiographic content posted on YouTube in the last years. They show how stories of East-Syriac saints have found their way to a popular web platform, where they are re-told combining traditional genres with a culturally hybrid visual representation. Before reaching the web, these stories were conveyed by traditional media of transmission and an attempt will be made to reconstruct their pre-mass media history philologically, which shows that cultural hybridization and revitalization characterize textual traditions well before the digital era and the accelerating factor of information and communication technologies. Stories manage to survive and re-propose traditional values thanks to processes of transformation that affect the choices of language, genre and medium of transmission to adapt to new contexts of reception and ensure their semiotic efficacy over time.

The history of tradition thus comes to encompass the dynamicity of the transmission process usually studied under the blanket terms “reception” or “fortune” of a text. Texts become songs, they are copied, read, performed, recorded, used as sound tracks for videos. Texts become images and cult practices that in their turn nourish textual traditions, characterized by the re-writing and translation of texts through different genres and languages. The history of East-Syriac liturgical and hagiographical texts may be instructive in this connection.

Looking at the dramatic and accelerated processes of transformation that texts undergo when they adapt to different media confirms the validity of a philological approach that clearly distinguishes the various stages of adaptation and places texts as precisely as possible in their contexts of production and use.

1. Yazdandukht and her narrative avatars

Three Persian saints will be considered here, two women and a man, who can pride themselves on a more than respectable pedigree within the East-Syriac tradition. Their identities and deeds are legendary and they belong as major or minor characters to the narrative cycle of Shappur II's (309-379) great persecution.² In the latest stage of the process of transmission and hybridization, the face of the

and a high level of visibility. In the case of Syriac Christians, it enhances contacts between the communities in the Middle East and the vast majority of them, who live in the worldwide diaspora, and in the meantime creates non-traditional channels of preservation and transformation of their cultural heritage.

² Stories of Christian martyrs under Zoroastrian rule probably quite soon became subject of literary compositions that transformed historically plausible figures of heroic converts to Christianity to models of enduring faith in times of persecution. On the corpus of acts and their various degrees of reliability as sources of historical information, see Vööbus 1983. A wider description of the phenomenon of Christian persecutions in various periods of Persian history is available in

male saint comes to overlap with that of a young champion of chastity, whose identity is rather vague, since his character appears to be tailored out of the hagiographic text. As we shall see, his figure is outlined only thanks to the literary and pedagogical functions it has within a fable-like narrative that does not claim to be historical.

The first East-Syriac saint destined to enjoy great popularity in the 20th-21st centuries is a charitable woman known by the clearly Persian name of Yazdandukht, which is translated into Syriac *ba(r)th alāhā* ‘daughter of God’ at its only occurrence in the *passio* of the one hundred and twenty martyrs of Seleucia Ctesiphon.³

The story says that in 345 AD one hundred and eleven men and nine women—priests, deacons, monks and nuns being among them—were collected from various places and imprisoned in Seleucia. “There happened to be a great woman—blessed be her memory—whose name was Yazdandukhti and can be translated as ‘daughter of God.’ She was from a place in Adiabene, from the town of Erbil.”⁴ During the six months of prison, she looked after the prisoners, providing them with whatever they needed. “When the day of the king’s order arrived, it was said to that woman believer, secretly, by a believer who loved her, that the martyr saints would be killed in the morning of the following day.” She did not say it to them in the evening, but prepared for them a sumptuous dinner, exhorted them to pray and read the Bible for them. In the morning, she revealed that on that day they would receive the crown of martyrdom and asked them to pray their Lord for her, a sinful woman, so that one day she could join them in heaven. They answered that their God would certainly grant her all goods and blessings since she had taken care of them in His name and she had asked them a prayer with faith

the online version of the *Encyclopædia Iranica*, with updated bibliography and an overview of text transmission in Armenian, Greek and Syriac (Jullien 2008).

Between 2009 and 2017, various scholars published six Syriac acts, with critical introduction and English translation, in the series *Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac: Text and Translation*, of Gorgias Press (Piscataway, NJ). The first volume contains a *Guide to the Persian Martyr Acts* by S. Brock (2008: 77-125). Smith (2016) challenges the traditional view, ultimately deriving from Greek and Syriac sources of later periods, that the persecution of Christians in the Sasanian Empire was triggered by Constantine’s alleged conversion to Christianity.

On Jewish-Christian interaction and the interaction of Jews and Christians with Zoroastrianism as the dominant religion in the Sasanian Empire, see Herman (2015) and Herman (2018).

³ The Syriac text was first published and translated into Latin by Assemani (1748, vol. 1: 104-110). An English rendering of the story can be found in Butler 1821, vol. IV, 60-62. The Syriac text was included in Bedjan (1891, vol. II: 291-295). Bedjan (1912: 334-338) authored also a Sureth (Christian North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic) version of the text.

⁴ In the footnotes, Bedjan (1891, vol. II: 291) gives Yazdandukht and Yazdandukhti as variants of the name and explains that Yazd or Yazdin is one of the Zoroastrian gods, whereas *dukht* or *dukhtar* means ‘daughter’.

(Bedjan 1891, vol. II: 293-294). When they went out to be put to death, she kissed them one by one and, once they were dead, she wrapped their bodies with fine linen, put them in coffins and buried them.⁵

In the *passio* of the bishop ‘Aqevshmā (Acephsimas; Bedjan 1891, vol. II: 351-396 and 1912: 410-423), his companions, the priest Yawsep and the deacon Aythilāhā, meet a character with an analogous narrative function, possibly the very same charitable woman: “There was in that town [Erbil, 379 AD] a woman, a great believer—blessed be her memory—whose name we have mentioned in another of our discourses.” As in the story of the one hundred and twenty martyrs of Seleucia the blessing formula “blessed be her memory!” accompanies her mention as a formal signal that links the two stories and in the meantime shows that the charitable woman is a supporting character, with a secondary role in the main plot of a *passio* that is not devoted to her. Her *dukhrānā*, that means both ‘memory’ and ‘memorial, commemoration feast’, does not generate a text entitled with her name and must be overtly mentioned within the text to receive due blessings from readers and hearers.

In a footnote, Bedjan (1891, vol. II: 379) accepts the identification of the two Erbilian women suggested by the text. So does the Bollandist Paul Peeters (1925: 292) in his *Passionnaire d’Adiabène*, but with the conviction that rather than a historical figure, this lady is nothing but a “figure cyclique en voie de formation,” that is, if I understand him correctly, a narrative *topos* in its germinal form.⁶ The character plays a specific role in the narrative—a noble, charitable woman who assists the Christians in prison—and can show up in different stories so as to create a kind of intertextual web that helps give a certain uniformity to a corpus as a collection of stories related to a narrative cycle and therefore substantiates an envisioned historical context.⁷

⁵ Concerns about the burial of martyrs would seemingly allude to the necessity of protecting their bodies from the Iranian Zoroastrian practice of exposure (see Herman 2010, Payne 2011: 91, and Briquel Chatonnet 2012: 9-10). Francisco (2016) finds the emergence of the motif in Jewish Hellenistic exegesis as a way to stress “the wicked nature of the persecutors who denied the saints proper burial” and critically discusses its relationship with the *inventio reliquiarum* and the legitimation of Christian sanctuaries as places of worship.

⁶ Jean Maurice Fiey, OP (1914-1995), one of the best connoisseurs of history and geography of East-Syriac communities, seems to be less skeptical than Peeters about the historical identity or at least plausibility of Yazdandukht (Fiey 2004: 194).

⁷ The charitable woman who generously takes care of Christian prisoners can be seen as a variant of the *topos* of the good jail keeper, as we know from a Talmudic story (*Ta’anit* 22a-b) that also appears to have or have acquired strong Persian connotations. Herman (2012: 121-29) presents the episode as an “example of the intermediary position of the BT [Babylonian Talmud] that draws upon Palestinian tradition, reworking it under the inspiration of contemporary Persian literature”. Different versions of the story are known from Procopius of Caesarea (6th cent.) and the Arabic work of the Persian historiographer al-Ṭabarī (839-923), where it has a rather clear Persian setting and the female character has a more adventurous role in comparison with the pious women of the Syriac stories. Pretended menstrual impurity is a key narrative detail in the Talmud and in al-Ṭabarī’s version, whereas it is totally foreign to the Christian texts. I am grateful to Simcha Gross for drawing my attention to this *topos* in Sasanian-related Jewish and Christian sources.

Another woman may be a narrative avatar of Yazdandukht in the corpus of Persian martyr acts. She is known by her Persian pagan name Yazdui or the name Christine, indeed as Christian as possible, that she adopted after her conversion from Zoroastrianism. The only source of information we have about her is the second part of a composite text ascribed to the authority of Babai the Great (ca. 551-628).⁸ In Bedjan's edition, what remains of the life of the saint occupies one and a half pages, a good half of which contains rather generic praises of the saint and her virtues. Five and a half pages of theological reflection on Christ and the Cross precede the two remaining paragraphs of the life proper.

Mathias Binder (2012) translated the text into German and studied it, concluding that the contents of the long theological introduction are compatible with the attribution to Babai. According to Binder, the author refers to the killing of Khosrow II in a polemical passage against heathen kings who persecute Christians, but in the end fail and lose their position. Since Khosrow II was killed in the same year 628 when Babai died, the text would be a very late composition of the East-Syriac author. The vivid condemnation of persecution, the reflection on Christ's Cross and the martyrdom of a convert from Zoroastrianism makes it possible that the text was written during the late Sasanian period.

Binder goes so far as to hypothesize that Yazdui suffered martyrdom during the reign of Khosrow II, which would explain the harsh criticism of the author as an eye-witness of Khosrow's persecution. However, albeit very scanty and possibly re-arranged for literary purposes, the information on Yazdui's origin and family is rather precise and could point to an earlier date for the life and martyrdom of the saint. She was a Magian (Zoroastrian) of the region called in Syriac Beth Garmai and from the town of Karkha d-Beth Slokh, today Kirkuk in northern Iraq. She was the daughter of a certain Yazdin and belonged to a family of notables linked to the royal family. Her grandfather Miharzbirui "was appointed *marzbān* of Nisibis and she was married to a noble of Karkha [d-Beth Slokh], who was himself..." Here the text breaks off and we do not even know whether the author insisted on the noble descent, as Binder thinks, or rather the religious affiliation (Zoroastrianism) of her husband. Fiey (2004: 59) observes that her grandfather's appointment as governor of Nisibis must have happened after 363, when the city fell under Persian rule, which is a rather early *terminus post quem*.

⁸ The text is partly preserved in one manuscript (Diyarbakir 96) and was published by Bedjan (1897, vol. IV: 201-207). Only the life, without the theological introduction, is translated into Sureth in Bedjan (1912: 428). The ms. Diyarbakir 96 (Baumstark 1922: 138 n. 6) is a collection of hagiographic texts once belonging to the Church of Mar Pethion in Diyarbakir and then moved to Baghdad during the First World War. It reached the West thanks to a copy made in 1869 in Mosul. According to the dealer who provided the copy to the Bollandist Jean Baptiste Abbeloos the original manuscript was as old as 7th or 8th century. Unfortunately, it is now missing (Reinink 1999: 173 n. 13 and Walker 2006: 17).

This kind of information possibly had a function in the following narrative, which is probably irremediably lost. The noble lineage and the high social rank in the Zoroastrian community are *topoi* that serve to stress how much the saint has to lose from his or her conversion. The name Yazdui and especially the patronym ‘Yazdin’s daughter’—here given only in the Syriac form *ba(r)thēh d-yazdin*—suggestively sounds very much like that of the Erbilian Yazdandukht we know from the *passio* of the one hundred and twenty martyrs of Seleucia.

Peeters (1910: 45) does not list Yazdandukht in his *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis*. However, in the entry on Christine/Yazdui he would seem to suggest, in brackets and with an interrogative dot, that the patronymic “Yazdin’s daughter” may be shared by the two—or three—ladies and may thus formally tie together their stories into a web of intertextual references: “Christina quae et Iazdoi, Iazdin filia (Iazdinducht ?) v.m. [virgin and martyr] in Perside”. Nevertheless, even if the character and/or her name were invented to become part of a narrative cycle, the author of the story of St. Christine seemingly wanted to link her name with a religion, a specific place and family and therefore a given historical context, which can be the late fourth century, as hypothesized by Fiey, or the early seventh, as hypothesized by Binder.

In all likelihood, these stories are part of the great narrative cycle of the Christians who suffered persecution and martyrdom in the fourth century and have later received an oral and/or written form, more or less fictional, when memories of the first Zoroastrian persecution, the “great massacre” of Shapur II (Walker 2006: 10), served to strengthen and encourage the almost constantly persecuted or discriminated East-Syriac communities and provided them with a glorious past upon which they could build a communal identity. Charitable women, who assisted the martyrs in their last moments and buried their bodies, as well as noble converts belonging to families at the highest levels of Sasanian society, especially in the frontier buffer provinces, where loyalty towards neighboring empires could often change direction and intensity, did most probably play a historical role during the various waves of persecution and memories of them may have been long preserved and transformed in oral and written traditions.

2. Mar Qardagh, a frontier hero of Assyrian descent

Another legendary Persian martyr of the narrative cycle on the fourth-century persecution, Mar Qardagh, has enjoyed a remarkable revival during the 20th century, fictionally associated with the figure of Yazdandukht. As Fiey hypothesizes for Yazdui/Christine’s life, the author of the text that narrates Qardagh’s glorious deeds is probably a contemporary of Khusrow II (d. 628), whereas the story is set during the persecution of Shapur II (d. 379). The text has been translated into English and his

legend has been thoroughly studied and commented in an excellent monograph by Joel Walker (2006: 1), who points out that “while the story of Mar Qardagh’s “heroic deeds” preserves few, if any, reliable details about the fourth century, the legend presents an extraordinary window into the cultural world of seventh-century Iraq.”⁹

Mar Qardagh is a noble young man of Assyrian royal descent. His father is said to descend from “the household of Nimrod,”¹⁰ his mother from Sennacherib. His beauty, physical strength, heroism (*gabbāruthā*) and skills in archery, hunting and polo—the most appreciated martial art and sports of Sasanian society—conquer Shapur II who appoints him as *marzbān* of Nisibis, precisely like Yazdui’s grandfather. A series of miracles performed by the holy man ‘Abdisho’ and supernatural visions convert Qardagh to Christianity and make of him a military champion of the faith, who fights against both Roman (Byzantine) and Persian invaders to defend his territory and family. Saint Sergius, himself a frontier hero, appeared to Qardagh twice, first to prophesy his martyrdom and then to exhort him to fight as a hero (*gabbārā’ith*) for the sake of Christ.

Fiey (1965, vol. I: 205-206) accepts Peeters’ negative evaluation on the historicity of the story and compares Qardagh to other figures of charming young princes who steered the imagination of storytellers and audiences, in the Middle East as well as in Europe, and nourished popular piety:

Tous ces jeunes princes charmants, Behnām d’Āthōr, Gufrashnasp d’Adiabène, Abaï de Qulleth ici Qardāgh de Malqi ont offert un thème trop tentant à l’imagination et à la piété populaire. L’historien parcheminé comme ses «peaux mortes» peut bien se renfrogner encore et crier au blasphème, mais tous ceux qui ont été émus par la *Chanson de Roland* ou par le drame de *l’Aiglon* goûteront, dans leur genre littéraire, ces épopées naïves où apparaissent des archanges fulgurants et où Sapor parle comme *le Livre des Rois*.

Like Qardāgh, Behnām is of royal Assyrian descent, being the son of no less than “Sennacherib, king of Nimrud”. Amir Harrak (2001: 182) observes that Assyrian ancestry is a *topos* in North-Mesopotamian martyrological literature that should be systematically investigated. Helen Younansardaroud (2002:

⁹ Walker’s book is methodologically groundbreaking in that it posits the study of the acts of the Persian martyrs at the crossroads of three different research fields, that seldom combine and dialogue with each other: Syriac literature, Sasanian-Zoroastrian studies and the study of late antiquity, the latter being too often confined to or focused on Greek sources (see especially Walker 2006: 5-10).

¹⁰ Nimrod, mentioned in the Bible as king of Shinar/Mesopotamia, “was frequently incorporated into Iranian mythical history” (Payne 2012: 207 and 219). According to West-Syriac historiography, the impious giant Nimrud had a central role in the construction of the Tower of Babel and we find echoes of these stories in a Kurdish tale collected by Prym and Socin (1887: 12) from the mouth of an illiterate Suryoyo informant (Tardieu 2007-2008: 437).

188-191) tries to explain the apparent anachronism and suggests that local traditions may have brought together the story of Sennacherib's murder, the ruins of the Assyrian town Kalkhu—today called Nimrūd—near Mar Behnām's monastery and the legendary story of the noble prince and his sister Sara. Similarly, Walker (2005-2006) places Qardagh's Assyrian genealogy in a complex web of local traditions of Biblical and popular origins and links the martyr's story with an Assyrian and Zoroastrian cult site near Erbil.

In the region that encompasses historical Adiabene and Beth Garmai, with Arbela and Karka d-Beth Slokh—Erbil and Kirkuk in today's northern Iraq—as their capitals and metropolitan sees of the Church of the East,

there was a significant sub-current of local self-identity among Christians (but by no means confined to them)... there was some continuing awareness of the past Assyrian empire, and the terms *Athor*, *Athorāyē* (Assyria, Assyrians) are sometimes used (in a purely geographical sense) in preference to the names of current administrative usage, whether ecclesiastical or secular.¹¹

More recently, Richard Payne (2012: 2012-11) has demonstrated that Assyrian identity has no national connotations—anachronistic, by definition—in late antique Mesopotamia, as argued by Brock (1982, 16), but neither has it “a purely geographic sense.” It is part of a complicated process of literary (re)invention of local identities and noble lineages, according to a pattern of appropriation of the past that is probably shared by East-Syriac hagiography and Sasanian mythical historiography. Both history and geography are social and cultural constructions that are typically subject to manipulation by power elites and are constitutive of their ideological bias.¹²

It is in the light of the often interrelated categories of locality and nobility, rather than categories of ethno-religious difference, that we can apprehend the significance of the appropriation of the ancient past in Northern Mesopotamian hagiography for Christians endeavoring to define as lofty a place as possible for themselves within the Sasanian empire (Payne 2012: 214).

¹¹ On the re-appropriation of the glorious Assyrian past in northern Mesopotamia under Parthian rule, as opposed to the oblivion of the Babylonian and Chaldean past in southern Mesopotamia, Brock quotes Crone and Cook (1977: 55; on “Assyrian” Adiabene, see especially 189-190, n. 89).

¹² A discussion of this subject falls beyond the scope of the present article. I thank the anonymous reviewer for her/his suggestion to refer to Anderson (1991) in this connection.

Adam Becker (2008: 398) proposes seeing the appropriation of the Assyrian past as a learned trend in Syriac culture, deriving from scriptural and historical sources rather than local, traditional self-identification, and calls it “Assyrianization”, by which he means

the process whereby Syriac-speaking Christians in Mesopotamia employed the Assyria they found in the Bible as well as in Greek sources translated into Syriac as a model for understanding themselves and their place in the world.

According to the Syriac *Chronicle of Arbela*, Gufrashnasp of Adiabene was a fervent Zoroastrian who revolted against the Sasanian king in the last decades of the 3rd century and, like Qardagh, had to defend his citadel from the attack of the royal army. Rather than a historical model for the legend of Mar Qardagh, Walker thinks that Gufrashnasp’s story might be a forgery composed by Alphonse Mingana, born Hurmiz (1878-1937), the modern editor of the *Chronicle*, “based on his familiarity with the Qardagh legend”.¹³ A discussion on the contested authenticity of the *Chronicle* and the manuscript used by Mingana falls beyond the scope of the present study. From a literary point of view, however, a possible early-20th century forging of such a character as Gufrashnasp, on the model of Mar Qardagh, by or for a Syriac scholar of East-Syriac origin, is *per se* a very interesting phenomenon.

Whatever the roots of these “naïve epic sagas,” as Fiey calls them, may be—historical facts, more or less reliable historical sources or local oral traditions—Fiey is correct when he says that the charm of these young heroes and their stories full of supernatural appearances and heroic military deeds will probably meet the literary taste of readers accustomed to European medieval epic or later romantic drama. Considering the dynamic aspect of tradition, what matters is precisely this literary potential of the stories of Persian martyrs and saints and the ways they have been revived in modern times and in popular devotion, i.e., Fiey’s “piété populaire.”

Qardagh’s military skills and attitude do not change after his conversion. Hard and strikingly violent fighting in the name of Christ is not only accepted but even encouraged by God and saints in the story. Fiey is once again right in suggesting a similarity of Mar Qardagh’s story to the Roland Romance epic. Qardagh shares with western Roland or eastern Digenes Akrites the role of frontier warrior and his story has been interpreted as a foreshadowing of other holy wars of defense and conquest.

¹³ Walker (2006, 289-90), with bibliographic references on Mingana and the *Chronicle of Arbela*. See also Kawerau (1991) and Kiraz (2011).

The figure of Mar Qardagh may be read as one possible imaginative intermediary between mounted martyr saints such as Sergius, whose cult was so crucially important in the Syrian borderlands between Rome and Persia, and the mounted Muslim heroes of the conquest era, those saintly monk-raiders whose acts of martial valor manifested the will of the god of Abraham on the dusty plains of the Syrian steppe and the Iranian plateau (Key Fowden 1999 and Sizgorich 2009).

3. An illustrated historical novel

In the magmatic sea of the acts of the Persian martyrs, somehow canonized in Bedjan's editions,¹⁴ we thus find Yazdandukht of Erbil, who plays her role of charitable woman in the *passiones* of the one hundred and twenty martyrs of Seleucia and Acespimas of Kirkuk and his companions. In the same corpus, and related to the same region—today northern Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan— we find a few lines of praise and genealogical information on a noble woman of Kirkuk who converted from Zoroastrism and became a martyr for Christianity and whose name Yazdui may be related to Yazdandukht, and the epic heroic deeds of the noble Mar Qardagh, warrior for Christ of Assyrian descent, based in Erbil, on the eastern border of the Christian world in late antiquity.

Sureth¹⁵ versions of all these stories—martyrs of Seleucia, Acespimas, Yazdui and Qardagh— have been available since 1912.¹⁶ Paul Bedjan translated them into Sureth, together with many Classical Syriac lives of saints and acts of martyrs, and significantly contributed to mold the vernacular(s) of East-Syriac Christians into an elegant literary language for hagiography and Catholic popular devotion. It is difficult to say to what extent his books, luxuriously printed in Paris, were accessible and actually

¹⁴ Binggeli 2012 is an excellent overview of the manuscript transmission of Syriac hagiographic literature: see especially Binggeli (2012: 63-65) on the Persian martyrs. Brock (2008: 87-90) describes the transmission of the Persian martyr acts and reconstructs the manuscript sources used by Paul Bedjan.

¹⁵ Sureth is the autoglottonym used among other names – (Vernacular or Modern) Aramaic, (Modern) Assyrian, Chaldean (vulgar), (Vernacular or Modern) Syriac— for North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA) varieties that were and are spoken and occasionally written by Christians of various denominations—especially Assyrians, Chaldeans and Syrian Catholics—in today's northern Iraq, south-eastern Turkey, Syria and north-western Iran. The term derives from *surā'ith* "in Syriac" and has a strong confessional connotation, since the corresponding ethnonyms *surāyē* or *suryānī* mean simply "Christians" in various languages of the region.

¹⁶ One hundred and twenty martyrs of Seleucia (Bedjan 1912: 334-338), Acespimas (410-423), Yazdui/Christine (428), Mar Qardagh (364-374; Classical Syriac Vorlage in Bedjan 1891, vol. II: 412-507). The Classical Syriac text of Mar Qardagh was published twice in 1890: Abbeloos (1890, with Latin transl.), and Feige (1890, with German transl.). On the Persian Lazarist Paul Bedjan (1838-1920) as a Syriac scholar and Sureth author, see Murre-van den Berg (2011), with bibliography.

circulated in the East. However, many prayer books and a 1937 collection of hagiographical stories, including Mar Qardagh and Mar Behnam, contain handwritten copies of his works.¹⁷

A few decades after Bedjan's publications, the sketchy female character(s) and the fully developed epos of Mar Qardagh inspired an Arabic novel descriptively and programmatically entitled *Yazdāndukht al-sharīfa al-irbīliya: riwāya qaṣaṣiyya ta'rikhīya tatanāwalu ḥuqban min ta'rikh al-'irāq wa-tabḥathu fi shu'ūbi-hī wa-'aḥwāli-hī al-iḡtimā'iyya fi 'ahd dawla al-fars al-sāsāniyīn* 'Yazdandukht the noble Erbilian. Historical novel (lit. 'fictional narrative') with a portrait of a period of the history of Iraq, its peoples and social life under the rule of the Persian Sasanians.' Interestingly the female saint is chosen as main protagonist, whose Erbilian origin and life time allow the author to combine her story with the story of Mar Qardagh, as *marzbān* of Nisibis and then pugnacious convert to Christianity.

Yazdandukht the Noble Erbilian (Fig. 1) should be studied in the context of the global fortune of the historical novel as a genre and its Iraqi manifestation, to understand its relationships with Western and Arab models and its own original contribution to the history of Iraqi fiction.¹⁸ It is in fact a historical novel and thus belongs to a specific literary tradition, both at the global level, where the historical novel is a hallmark of European modernity that spread and became popular in the Arab world especially during the Nahḍa, and at the regional level, since historical narrative inspired the development of Iraqi modern fiction that is essentially a 20th-century phenomenon (Allen 1995: 17).¹⁹

¹⁷ Many manuscripts in various languages—Classical Syriac, Arabic, Garshuni (Arabic in Syriac script), Sureth, and Turkish Garshuni—belonging to Chaldean and Catholic collections, especially of the plain of Mosul and the surrounding region, are becoming available in digitized copies thanks to the tireless and praiseworthy work of Father Michael Najeeb, superior of the Dominicans of Mosul, and the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML), at the Benedictine Saint John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, MN (www.hmml.org).

The Sureth ms. 135 (1937) of the Chaldean Church of the Sacred Heart of Telkepe contains 19 lives of martyrs and saints, the *Story and proverbs of Aḥiqar*, and *Story of Sayf al-Masīh* (Arabic for 'Christ's sword'). The latter is a fable-like frame tale that includes series of riddles of Biblical and theological contents and turns out to be a re-writing of the *Story of the duenna and the prince* (Sureth text Lidzbarski 1896, vol. I: 328-43; German transl., vol. II: 267-279). At least 13 of the 21 texts included in the 1937 manuscript were directly copied from Bedjan 1912 (kind information of my MA student Samuele Baracani).

Bedjan's Sureth works and especially his books inspired by European Catholic devotions—rosary, prayer during the Mass, visits to the Eucharist, spiritual meditations, etc.—, such as *Le manuel de pitié* (Paris, 1886) or *Mois de Marie* (Paris-Leipzig, 1904), were very much appreciated by the Chaldeans of Iran and northern Iraq. Some of the Sureth prayer books listed in the provisional database of HMML may very well be copies and dialectal adaptations of Bedjan's books.

¹⁸ See Allen 1995 on the Arabic novel in general and Bahooora 2017 on Iraqi novel (*Yazdandukht* is cursorily mentioned on p. 251).

¹⁹ On the emergence of the Arab historical novel, with the Lebanese Christian author Jurji Zaydan (1861-1914), during—and as an essential component of—the Nahḍa, see Moosa 1997, 197-218.



Fig. 1 – Title page of the novel *Yazdāndukht al-sharifa al-irbiliya* (1934)

Perhaps a little too enthusiastically, *Yazdandukht* was celebrated as the first Iraqi historical novel during a conference on the contribution of the Syriac Christians to Iraqi culture, held in the autumn of 2012 in Erbil (Shammāsh 2012). In fact, the anonymous Arabic translation of *Justice is the Basis for Monarchy* (published in 1919) on the life of King Henry IV and Sulaymān al-Dakhīl’s novel *Nāẓim Pāshā* (1911), which—very much like the hint at the social life of Sassanid Persia in the subtitle of *Yazdandukht*—“claims to be a literary, historical, social, and political story” (Allen 1995, 47), are examples of Iraqi historical fiction that shortly precede the publication of *Yazdandukht the noble Erbilian*.

Two editions of the novel are known, published in 1934 and 1953, by the Maṭba‘at al-nağm al-kaldāniya in Mosul. A 2003 reprint is now available, by the publishing house Dār adī shīr li-l-nashr wa-l-’a’lām of Erbil, in which the subtitle *riwāyā ta’rikhiya muṣawwara* ‘illustrated historical novel’ stresses the double medium dimension of the book.

As stated in the first paragraph of the preface (Şā’igh 1934, Erbil reprint of 2003, 17), the author’s intent is clearly pedagogical, following a trend that is well attested in both European and Arab (historical) fiction: facts and truth can be transformed in narration or even made up so as to teach, instruct and morally edify audience or readership. The first part of the novel is a long historical introduction on the eastwards spread of Christianity and its diffusion in the “idolatric” Sasanian Empire. It is written in the language and with the methods of Western historiography and the author adds bibliographic footnotes, sometimes containing excerpts of Classical Syriac sources.

Besides the *Chronicle of Arbela*, as edited by Mingana, and Bedjan’s *Acts of martyrs*, the author mentions among his sources East-Syriac works of historical content,²⁰ more or less contemporary French historians (Labourt 1904, Huart 1952, Nau 1933), a manuscript *Life of Bar Ēdtā* (Scher 1906-1907,

²⁰ *The Historia Monastica of Thomas, Bishop of Marga, A. D. 840* (Budge 1893) and *Synodicon Orientale* (Chabot 1902).

Baumstark 1922, 203 and 351), unidentified works by Rubens Duval (1839-1911) and Addai Scher (1867-1915), an English translation of Ammianus Marcellinus and the Bulāq editions of 13th-century Muslim authors such as ‘Alī ibn al-Athīr (*Al-kāmil fī al-ta’rikh* ‘The Complete History’) and Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (*Mu‘jam al-buldān* ‘Dictionary of Countries’; Šā’igh 1934, Erbil reprint of 2003, 15).

The novel fictionalizes characters and stories of the manuscripts and of Bedjan’s books that regard the Sasanian period. More precisely, the author stretches the role that Yazdandukht played as a “figure cyclique” in the Persian martyr acts so as to insert her as a more or less active character or witness of stories in which she was not involved in the martyrological literature. In this way, she becomes a kind of “frame character” that sets the stage for other stories and characters of the Persian martyr acts, such as, e.g., Mar Miles (Fig. 2) and Mar Qardagh (Fig. 3).

The style of the illustrations reminds one of the wood engravings that illustrate martyr and romance narratives in Europe, from Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* onwards. Their sources, iconography and technique should be carefully studied, especially in comparison with the lithographed illustrations of Persian and perhaps Egyptian books.²¹ Like in the tradition of European orientalist painting, oriental details surface in clothes, headgear, furnishings and architecture. Fictionalization and auto-orientalizing figural representation serve the pedagogical and moral purpose of the author of *Yazdandukht*, who combines history and hagiography more or less as history and love romance are the constitutive ingredients of Jurji Zaydan’s novels (Almarsa News 2017; on Zaydan see Moosa 1997, 199).

²¹ Lithography was introduced to Persia through Russia in the nineteenth century (Marzolph 2009). “Allowing adherence to the Arabic standards of calligraphic beauty through the use of skilled scribes, lithography was adopted in some Muslim countries in the nineteenth century – mostly India, East Asia, Iran, certain parts of North Africa, and to some extent Egypt” (Ayalon 2016: 14); see also Green 2010 and Messick 2013. I would like to thank Francesca Bellino and an anonymous reviewer for drawing my attention to this phenomenon and providing me with relevant bibliographical information.



القدّيس مار ميلس في غرفة المريض

Fig. 2 – Mar Miles visits the sick Sultan. Yazdandukht and her nanny stand behind his bed (Şā'igh 1934, Erbil reprint of 2003, 51)



القسّيس مار قرداغ على سطاح قصره

Fig. 3 – Mar Qardagh defends his fortress from the troops of the Zoroastrian emperor (*ibidem*, 320)

4. 20th-century Chaldean perceptions of Assyrianization and Assyrianism

The author of the novel *Yazdandukht the noble Erbilian* is Sulaymān Şā'igh (Mosul, 1886-1965) who was ordained a priest of the Chaldean Church in 1908 and bishop of Mosul in 1954. Besides Arabic, he was fluent in both English and French, which gave him first-hand access to European literary and historical sources. In 1923 he published the first volume of his monumental *Ta'riḫ al-Mawṣil* 'History of Mosul', commissioned by King Faysal I. The second and third volumes were published in 1928 and 1956. In 1928 Şā'igh founded the monthly journal *Al-Nağm*, where he worked for fifteen years. He wrote various dramas on moral, Biblical and historical subjects: *Al-Amīr al-Ḥamdānī* (1928), *Mashāhid al-ḥaḍīra* 'Scenes of virtue' (1931), *Zenobia* (1933), *Joseph the Upright* (1935) and *The Dove of Nineveh*, which was put on stage in 1947 and has Semiramis as its protagonist. In 1952 he translated Corneille's *Horace* for Arabic audiences.²²

The Persian rather than Christian name of the protagonist Yazdandukht and the reference to the broader scenario of Sasanian Persia explicitly declares the fictional agenda of the author, who emphasizes the connection of the Christian martyrs to the Iranian world in which the Church of the East emerged and developed as a distinct—yet transnational and multiethnic, in anachronistic modern terms—, Christian community. Yazdandukht's Erbilian origin is in line with the Iranian setting, but it

²² A bio-bibliography is published in the introduction of the 2003 reprint of the novel *Yazdandukht* and a short autobiography has been found among his charts (Ḥaddād 2012, Sa'īd 2012, Arabic Wikipedia 2019). On Şā'igh and criticism by his contemporaries, see Sako 2019.

also hints at a local context, the region of northern Iraq to which the author and his Chaldean community now belong. The stories refer to a specific geographical region and create a historical, cultural and social landscape,²³ in which author and envisioned readers may find and perceive themselves as discriminated or even persecuted minorities under Islamic rule, in the eastern borderland of Christianity and Christian modernity.

The title suggests at least two possible closely intertwined readings of the novel: a search for the glorious—Assyrian and Persian—past of the Chaldean community and—more in general, but through the decisive contribution of the Christian community—of modern Iraq, and a projection in the past of the contemporary condition of a persecuted Christian minority. Both interpretations circulate among Chaldean readers of today.

In his eighth lesson “against illiteracy for those who ignore the history of the Chaldeans in nationalism”,²⁴ which is devoted to the spread of Christianity at the very beginning and in late antiquity, ‘Abdalmasiḥ Būyā Yaldā presents the stories of Mar Qardagh and Yazdandukht, as they are known from the Persian martyr acts and Ṣā’igh’s novel respectively, as main sources for the history of the Chaldeans in late antiquity. In Būyā Yaldā’s reconstruction of Chaldean history, Yazdandukht is the rather anachronistic granddaughter of Abrasam, minister during the reign of Ardashir I (180-242), founder of the Sasanian Empire, she received a Christian education from her nanny Bā’ūth, met Mār Qardāgh and died around the year 370. The character of the nanny Bā’ūth²⁵ would thus seem to migrate rather straightforwardly from the realm of fiction—the historical novel—to a highly ideological, popularized version of history. As we shall see, this is not the only wonderful transformation induced by Ṣā’igh’s novel.

²³ See “the ability of literary specialists to reinvent an imagined landscape on the basis of available textual resources” that Payne (2013, 208) attributes to the authors of the Persian martyr acts.

²⁴ Būyā Yaldā 2013 would seem to be a Chaldean chauvinist and the title probably refers to the ignorance on Mesopotamian history deriving, in his opinion, from (Assyrian) nationalism. In the harshly polemical premise of each lesson, he specifies that “Assyrians (Nestorian Chaldeans)” are not entitled to comment on the lessons “since they are not Iraqis” (my translation). The old problem of denomination is a hot issue in the current cultural and political debates and has been touched in an official statement of the Synod of the Chaldean Church Bishops held in Rome, 4-8 October 2017, under the chairmanship of the Patriarch Louis Raphaël I Sako: “As a genuine Chaldean people, we officially reject the labels that distort our Chaldean identity, such as the composite name “Chaldean Syriac Assyrian” used in the Kurdistan Region, contrary to the name established in the Iraqi constitution. We call upon our daughters and sons to reject these labels, to adhere to their Chaldean identity without fanaticism, and to respect the other names such as ‘Assyrians’, ‘Syriacs’, and ‘Armenians’.” (saint-adday.com/?p=19632, Mey 2020).

²⁵ A certain Bā’ūthā, “a noble laywoman from Karka d-Beth Slokh [Kirkuk], was put to death outside her castle at the orders of the Mobed Adurgushnasp” (Brock and Harvey 1987, 77), but she can hardly be identified with Yazdandukht’s nanny, who seems rather to be a purely fictional character.

Not only in modern Arabic literature does history offer motifs and themes and historiography text-types and narrative models to historical fiction as “effective means of portraying the otherwise inexpressible.” The historical novel allows authors to narrate the past speaking of the present and especially “to point to the exercise of power in the contemporary Arabic-speaking world” (Allen 1995, 256). According to a contemporary Chaldean reader, the novel *Yazdandukht* gives expression not only to the pure love (*ḥubb ṭāhir*) of the pious protagonist, but also to the timeless condition of “a lost fatherland (*waṭan muḍī*), a land taken from its native population, the Chaldeans, since their political defeat in the fifth century BC and given to the plundering of invaders and other foreign peoples—Greeks, Persians, Turkmans and Kurds—until today” (Fatūḥī 2012, my transl.). The past of Mar Qardagh and *Yazdandukht* is the present of Iraqi Chaldeans.

From the contents the novel as well as a drama like Semiramis’ tragedy in *The Dove of Nineveh*, it is clear that the author and his readers are in line with the process of cultural appropriation of the Assyrian and, more in general, Mesopotamian past that Becker calls “Assyrianization” or, better, they try to find a Catholic Chaldean declination of or alternative to a very modern form of it, which with Edward Odisho (2001, 139) we can label “Assyrianism”:

...the view of virtually all of modern Assyrians, both educated and uneducated, initiated and spearheaded by the traditional scholars – or *Rabis* for more accuracy – of what I identify as the modern Assyrian Reawakening extending from the middle of the nineteenth century up to the 1960s. All modern Assyrians emotionally espouse the connection as a pillar and extension of their national and historical identity in the form of a nationalistic movement known today as *Aturayuta* (Assyrianism).

Assyrianism emerged as an (East-)Syriac nationalistic view among Urmi intellectuals of the 19th century and, precisely between the world wars of the 20th century, when Sulyamān Ṣā’igh was particularly active as an author and his novel was published, it gained growing popularity among Syriac Christians of all denominations.²⁶

In fact, the titles of Ṣā’igh fictional writings reveal a cultural agenda that surpasses both traditional Assyrianization and contemporary Assyrianism. The historian, familiar with modern Western history and historiography, seeks a “place in the world”²⁷ for the Chaldeans in a wider scenario. The homeland of the Chaldean people goes beyond first millennium BC Mesopotamia as

²⁶ On the term “Assyrian” in Syriac and the adoption of the Assyrian identity among modern (East-) Syriac Christians, see Butts (2017). On the role of the American evangelical mission in Persia in the development of modern cultural and religious ideas and practices among the Assyrians, see Becker (2015).

²⁷ See Becker’s definition of “Assyrianization,” as quoted above.

mediated by Biblical narrative and exegesis and moves to the western fringes of the Sasanian Empire, on the Byzantine border, as narrated and thus fictionalized in the Persian martyr acts. His historical horizon stretches from the ancient Nineveh of Semiramis to more recent periods of Islamic history. The adoption of typically western, and modern, genres such as drama²⁸ and historical novel is crucial in his ambitious intellectual plan of cultural modernization and fictionalization of Iraqi national history.

5. A shrine and an icon

From the same year 1934 in which the novel *Yazdandukht* was published, the main male character of the novel started to visit the Chaldean village of Alqosh in the plain of Mosul (Fiey 1965, vol. II: 396). In the summer of 1936 a beautiful man appeared to a woman while she was sleeping and promised her that had they built a *kūkh* 'hut' in his honor, in the place he was showing to her, the recurrent measles outbreaks would have immediately ceased to kill the children of the village. He said his name was Mar Qardagh, but the woman did not know that there was a saint with this name. He continued to appear to other Alqoshians in the following months. They built a small cube building in the place indicated by the saint and there were miraculous healings, not only among the children. No less than four children were healed in the month of February of 1937. In the following years, a number of boys of Alqosh were christened with the beautiful name of Qardagh.²⁹

It is difficult to ascertain what role the novel has played behind these miracles. However, the fourth-century hero of the borderland between the Byzantine and Sasanian empires and glorious defender of Christianity, even against his own pagan family, became in the thirties of the 20th century a fighter against the measles virus—*ḥuṣaba* in Arabic and *zāṭē* in Sureth—and other pathogenic invaders. Both at the personal and collective level, fictionalized history became spiritual experience and celebration of the wonderful deeds of the hero.

²⁸ In 1914, slightly before Šā'igh's floruit, a certain deacon Paul wrote a play in Sureth about King Nebuchadnezzar, based loosely on the narrative of the book of Jeremiah. Act II (2v) and III (7v) are preserved in the ms. 698 of the Dominican Friars of Mosul.

²⁹ Edmond Lasso (2012, 33-42) has collected a number of local documents on the miracles and on the construction of Mar Qardagh's shrine. He describes in detail the area that hosts the shrine, the church and other buildings linked to his cult in Alqosh and lists a number of other churches and monasteries dedicated to the saint in the region, belonging to the Chaldean Church as well as to the Church of the East (*ibidem*, 45-81).



Fig. 4 – The shrine of Mar Qardagh (1937; photo by A. Mengozzi, September 2012)



Fig. 5 – Martyrdom of Mar Qardagh (1937) by Şabiḥ Na‘āma (cover Ḥaddād 2011a and Lasso 2012)

A new shrine was built in 1937, a cube mausoleum surmounted by a dome (Fig. 4),³⁰ which is still visible in the place of the original ‘hut’, at the corner of the court garden that separates it from the big new church of Mar Qardagh, built in 1990. A new building has been added after 2007 near the shrine, to host a hall for meetings and receptions, especially on the occasion of funerals. Since 1936 a pilgrimage to the shrine has been held on the last Friday of summer, with a solemn procession. The ill and the needy visit the shrine during the whole year and enrich its décor with ex-votos.

On the altar of the new church, a modern icon represents the stoning of Mar Qardagh (Fig. 5). The saint rises for the third and last time, his feet still buried in a pile of stones, sword and helmet on the floor at his right hand. An angel lets the flower crown of martyrdom float over his head, while Qardagh’s father is ready to hit him from behind with the fatal blow. It measures 70×100 cm and was painted in 1937 for Mar Qardagh’s shrine by Şabiḥ Na‘āma (1913-1999) in a style that recalls 19th-century Catholic devotional art. Except for the helmets of two Persian soldiers who are stoning the saint, nothing is intentionally “oriental” in the clothes that, together with the arch and columns in the background, give instead a Neo-Classical flavor to the scene. The figure of the saint is oversized and his arms open and stretched towards heaven mark the St. Andrew’s cross-shaped structure of the composition, with the left-to-right diagonal pointing to the angered face and gesture of the father.

³⁰ Only the cross on the top of the dome distinguishes this type of building as a Christian cenotaph. The structure is similar to a small Islamic *mazār*. Any cultural expression of Iraqi Christian minorities—language, literature, art, architecture—reflects their position in or, better, their acculturation into the Islamic world.

The story of a saint, perhaps via a modern historical novel, has become cult practice and inspired a new image of the martyr, here resembling a muscular Roman soldier, with the seraphic gaze of a baroque Spanish or Italian saint, rather than an Iranian archer.

6. Sureth poetry on YouTube

A heroic life told in venerable books and in a modern illustrated novel, miracles, a shrine, an annual solemn pilgrimage, and a martyr with two different iconographies set the narrative and visual frameworks of a new cult of the Erbilian saint in Alqosh, a small all-Christian town 50 km north of Mosul, which has been the spiritual and cultural headquarters of the East Syrians at least since the 16th century and the cradle of Christian Neo-Aramaic religious poetry.³¹ Hymnography and poetry soon followed, contributing to the musical and aural dimension of the cult. Edmond Lasso gives a couple of verses of twelve poems dedicated to Mar Qardagh (Lasso 2012, 88-89):

1. An epic poem (Arabic *malḥama shi'rīya*) of 211 quatrains of seven syllable lines in Sureth by Francis Butrus Karmo (1937).
2. Eight quatrains of eight syllable lines in Sureth by the priest Francis Ḥaddad (1938). A handwritten copy is reproduced in facsimile in Ḥaddād (2011a, 71-73).
3. A long poem in Sureth by the priest Yawsep 'Abbaya of Alqosh (1937).³²
4. Twenty four quatrains of eight syllable lines in Sureth by Yawsep 'Abbaya (1942). A handwritten copy is reproduced in facsimile in Ḥaddād (2011a, 73-80), where the poem is however dated 1937.
5. A long poem in Classical Syriac by Yawsep 'Abbaya (1950), that consists of 50 pages of eight syllable lines. The genre is called '*onithā* in Classical Syriac (see Mengozzi 2011) and *tarnīma* in Arabic.
6. Epic poem of 1070 quatrains of seven syllable lines in Sureth by the priest Yoḥannan Cholagh (1969).
7. Epic poem of 262 couplets of dodecasyllables in Classical Syriac by the priest Ibrahim Yoḥannan (1984).

³¹ The nearby monastery of Rabban Hormizd was the see of a patriarchal line of the Church of the East from the 16th to the 18th century and became a center of cultural irradiation. Moreover, from the 16th century, Alqosh families of scribes created a system of hereditary monopolies and sustained a remarkable flowering of scribal and literary activities (Murre-van den Berg 2015, esp. 185-223).

³² The poem numbers more than 200 quatrains of seven syllable lines in the ms. 110 of the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon, copied in Alqosh in 1940. See below, n. 42, on Yawsep 'Abbaya as a Sureth poet.

8. Epic poem of 256 quatrains of seven syllable lines in Sureth by the writer Benyamin Ḥaddad (1985). A handwritten copy is reproduced in facsimile in Ḥaddād (2011a, 1-70).³³
9. Poem of eight quatrains of dodecasyllables in Sureth by the poet Samīr Mikha Zori (1991).³⁴
10. *Turgāmā*³⁵ of 22 couplets of dodecasyllables, with alphabetic acrostic, in Classical Syriac by Samīr Mikha Zori (2001).
11. Eight couplets in Sureth by Hadīl Kuza (2001).
12. Poem of 51 dodecasyllables in Syriac by the poet Laṭīf Pola (2003).³⁶

As far as can be seen from Lasso's short anthology, almost all these poems explicitly refer to the cult of Mar Qardagh in Alqosh. In the last verses of his long poem on Mar Qardagh, Benyamin Ḥaddad (no. 8 in the list) narrates the construction of the shrine, thus including the modern continuation of the story within the epic narrative of the saint. However, Mar Qardagh inspired poets also outside Catholic Chaldean Alqosh. For example, the Erbilian martyr is mentioned in a Sureth lullaby from the more southern Karemlash, together with St. Barbara and Mar Behnam (Lasso 2012, 99).³⁷ A story in Sureth verses of the martyr Mar Qardagh, composed in 2001 by the priest Thomas Avraham, can be found on YouTube, sung and recited in 2012 and 2013 by the choir of the Church of Mar Qardagh in Baghdad, Assyrian Church of the East.³⁸

The 1969 poem listed as no. 6 in Lasso's list is in fact a poetic rewriting, in the most traditional form of Sureth poetry, of Ṣā'igh's Arabic novel *Yazdandukht the Noble Erbilian*. The author of the rewriting is the Chaldean priest Yoḥannan Cholagh, who was a gifted poet and singer, appreciated

³³ Benyamin Ḥaddad is a linguist and fine author of Alqosh. Among other things, he authored a dictionary of verbal roots of the Neo-Aramaic dialect of Alqosh (Ḥaddād 2011b).

³⁴ An interview with the poet and calligraph Samīr Mikha Zori by the Assyrian Ishtar.TV can be seen on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LZZagnI038). All mentioned YouTube videos have been accessed in May 2020.

³⁵ A *turgāmā* is a hymn chanted at Mass before the reading of the Gospel on special occasions (Mengozzi and Pastore 2017).

³⁶ In 2013, Emad Rammo published a number of poems by Laṭīf Pola on YouTube, including a long epic poem (*malḥama*) on *Mar Behnam and His Sister Sara* (2003; www.youtube.com/watch?v=mehPEi4foil_57T8PlMuy84).

³⁷ The monastery of St. Barbara faces the main entrance of the Chaldean village of Karemlash, some 30 km south-east of Mosul. The Syriac Catholic monastery of Mar Behnam and his sister Sarah is close to the town of Qaraqosh (Syriac Baghdēdhā, Arabic Bakhdīdā), 32 km south-east of Mosul. In 2014, this territory, its population and monuments were tragically affected by ISIS's offensive.

The lullaby quoted by Lasso has the introducing formula ("May he/she/they protect you!") and the structure of other Jewish and Christian Neo-Aramaic lullabies coming from the same region (Talia 2011a).

³⁸ www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LNK5MWF5Ro (part 1), [=JOWcjLeMR34](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOWcjLeMR34) (part 2), [=DvBCsB8OCcg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvBCsB8OCcg), and [=idlnbOaYB-c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idlnbOaYB-c).

interpreter of the Alqosh tradition of chant.³⁹ Three of his original poems in Sureth are available on YouTube: the poem *On Exile* (1970)⁴⁰ and two long “epic poems”, as Edmond Lasso would probably call them, that have holy women as their protagonists: *On St. Genevieve*⁴¹ and *On Yazdandukht* (1969).⁴²

The recordings of Cholagh’s performances were posted on YouTube in the years 2013-14 by Shatha Nona, a Chaldean lady of Detroit, MI, who also created the Facebook page of “Father Youhannan Jolagh”.⁴³ Shatha Nona has combined the original audios with images, as in slow slide presentations. The resulting videos are interesting because they reveal the YouTuber’s fondness for Father Cholagh’s poetry and voice and her attempt to bridge the gap between the traditional imagery associated with these texts and an imagery that derives from contemporary TV and media culture.

Shatha Nona’s technique is rather sophisticated. As Father Cholagh opened the audio recordings announcing the title of the poem he was about to sing and sometimes the place and date of the performance, Shatha Nona opens her videos always with photos of Father Cholagh himself (see, e.g., Fig. 6), in a kind of visual translation of the name of the author on the front page of a book or the singer on the cover of a disc. Stories and songs are thus immediately associated with the author or the voice that performs them.

In the video *On Yazdandukht* the YouTuber uses all the iconographic material available in the illustrated historical novel by Šā’igh. Yazdandukht, Mar Qardagh and other characters have the rather

³⁹ Yoḥannan Cholagh was born in Alqosh in 1935, studied in Mosul and was sent to Paris to study theology, where he remained only one year. He was ordained a priest in 1961 and taught for a certain time in the seminary of Mosul. He was then assigned to the parish of his native Alqosh as a pastor. From 1974 he was the pastor of Mar Ishaya in Mosul, where he died in 2006. He was buried in the beautiful church of Mar Mikha in Alqosh on the right side of the altar.

Many of his performances were recorded on audiotapes. They include all the liturgical melodies (*resh qālē*), the holy Mass, many traditional hymns and modern poems, composed by himself or contemporary poets.

⁴⁰ The poem has been published by Talia 2011b, with English transl., and on YouTube as chanted by the voice of the author: www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGPjvPHXrBI.

⁴¹ Two recordings of the poem *On St. Genevieve* by Yoḥannan Cholagh are available on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=XW5TzN1TNyE (part 1), =7_wqb9Zfohs (2), =0eXHw0EhY_k (3), =uiMoQK64HYM (4), =McnQxUC6xTM (5), =r3s4pJYfLV4 (6), =lcmx2CgjVig (7), =16ty3QxipZM (8), =didtQ83ZbtY&t=18s (9), =d4UsaTPO4HQ (10), =f73klyb7X_0 (11), =QmJesdWCGI8 (12), =9IK44MxUYXI (13), =nl7xXvWD3I8 (14; chanted by the author according to various melodies) and www.youtube.com/watch?v=du8dy_dcej4 (chanted by George Yaldā; the video lasts two and a half hours and contains an Arabic translation of the text).

The story of the French saint enjoyed a certain popularity among Iraqi Chaldeans in the 20th century. The mss. 573 (Alqosh, 1952), 124v-150v and 638 (Alqosh, 1967) of the Dominican Friars of Mosul contain Sureth prose stories and a ms. of a private collection (PLK_YSH 3 in HMML database, dated Alqosh 1941), contains a Sureth poem on St. Genevieve.

⁴² www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBd_D7Vmewc (Part 1), =KrK2EtNBxKQ (2), =Cka1uRQgHaU (3), =rTKLvs6rikg (4), =IZLaX486NRg (5), =ToM0thsmeccs (6), =mmpIpcYKDCM (7).

⁴³ www.facebook.com/youhananjolagh. Last post September 2016.

static outlook they have in the black and white, auto-orientalizing illustrations of the book of 1934. The literary source of Cholagh's verses becomes the main source for their visual representation. Mar Qardagh is thus the Persian archer behind the Gothic-arched merlons of his fortress, probably intended as oriental—Assyrian or Persian—architectural details (Fig. 3). However, when the poems describe him as a handsome young man, Shatha Nona chooses the picture of a Brad Pitt-like male figure (Fig. 7) that in her eyes probably updates the saint's face to more current, global standards of beauty.

Shatha Nona implicitly recognizes that the beautiful young prince is a *topos* in martyrological literature and, once she has found a face that fits the role, she uses it for all Sureth poems in which a beautiful prince plays a role. The same face of Mar Qardagh (Fig. 7) is used for the protagonist of the video that translates into images the poem *On the solitary monk* by the priest Yawsep 'Abbaya of Alqosh, active in the first half of the 20th century. The text narrates the story of a beautiful prince who becomes a monk and learns from a hermit the art of basket weaving.⁴⁴ The literary *topos* of the beautiful prince is signaled at the visual level in a rather mechanical, but coherent, process of semiotic translation.

⁴⁴ The *Story of the solitary monk* (1912) has been published with the title *On the Hermit Barmalka*, from the ms. Habbi 3 (Braida 2011). The ms. Habbi 3 (Alqosh, 1933) is one of the most important and complete collections of Sureth poetry and is more or less contemporary to the historical novel *Yazdandukht*. Its content is described in Ḥabbi 1978. A photographic reproduction of the ms. is listed as no. 584 of the collection of the Dominican Friars of Mosul. The ms. was printed in facsimile in San Diego, CA, in 1977.

Four other manuscript copies of the *Story of the Solitary Monk* have become available: ms. 799 (20th cent.) of the Dominican Friars of Mosul, 21v-27r (where it is entitled *Zambilfrosh*, that is 'basket seller' in Kurdish) and three copies made and signed by Elias Stephan Madalu, mss. 298 (1989) and 299 (1988) of the Chaldean Patriarch of Baghdad, and 610 (1989) of the Dominican Friars of Mosul.

Two performances are available on YouTube: the one used by Shatha Nona is entitled *Qeşsettā d-Rabban Zambil* (lit. "Story of the monk Basket") and is sung by Yoḥannan Cholagh (www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiO_joR5-6k), whereas the other is sung by another voice (George Yaldā?) and was published by George Mikho in 2015 (www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibspjuixsSU, with Arabic translation in the video).

Besides the three hymns on Mar Qardagh mentioned in Lasso's list (above) and the *Story of the Solitary Monk*, Yawsep 'Abbaya authored at least three other liturgical texts: a *Hymn for the feast of the Holy Cross* (1912; ms. 76, 159v-162r of the Chaldean Archdiocese of Mosul), an *Invocation of the Virgin* (1926; same ms., 162r-169r), and a *Hymn on St George* (1925-26, ms. 323 of the Dominican Friars of Mosul).



Fig. 6 – Detail from the cover image of www.facebook.com/youhananjolagh.



Fig. 7 – Face of Mar Qardagh and the Hermit Barmalka in Shatha Nona's YouTube videos.

The protagonist of *On the solitary monk* does not have the respectable literary pedigree of Mar Qardagh. In fact he does not even have a name. He embodies two hagiographical *topoi*: the beautiful young man and the noble rich hero who chooses the chaste, poor and simple life of the hermit. In the rubrics and in the text, he is just *Barmalkā*, Classical Syriac for ‘the prince’, or Prince as a proper name, whereas his female antagonist, the woman who repeatedly and unsuccessfully attempts at his virtue, is *Khātūn* ‘the princess’ or Princess. The characters are deprived of any historical and personal identity and are almost pure narrative functions in the text that is explicitly described by the author in the concluding verses as a kind of fable for children, a pedagogical story to teach asceticism and chastity as moral values.

Wikipedia or social networks such as Pinterest or DeviantArt are the repositories from which Shatha Nona draws fitting images to give a visual translation of traditional Sureth poems. The royal palace mentioned at the beginning of *On the solitary monk* is a black and white detail of the picture of the Château de Saumur in France, as it appears in English Wikipedia.⁴⁵ When the text mentions the protagonist *Barmalkā* a charming prince on a horse appears: he is Prince Arthur of the BBC series *Merlin*, broadcast between 2008 and 2012, whereas evil *Khātūn* has the face of the German Turkish actress Meryem Uzerli, who plays the role of a sexy provocative woman in the Turkish series *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* ‘The Magnificent Century’ (2011-2014) on the life of Sulayman the Magnificent.

⁴⁵ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Château_de_Saumur.

The two heroes of more or less traditional hagiography, Mar Qardagh and Barmalkā, share the face of Bradley James, the actor who plays the role of Prince Arthur in the BBC *Merlin*. In contrast with the Roman soldier and western saint of the Alqosh icon (Fig. 5) and as an integration of the Persian archer of the illustrated novel *Yazdandukht* (Fig. 3), the new, digital icon of Mar Qardagh (Fig. 7) is a reworking, available online, of Bradley James alias Prince Arthur.

What American Chaldean Shatha Nona does on YouTube is probably a creative updating and an attempt at revitalization of her Iraqi Syriac tradition. Her commitment to tradition and identity led her to visual art and online entertainment. Yazdandukht and Mar Qardagh must have a digital afterlife and, in the perception of a Chaldean living in the diaspora, contamination of cultural repertoires appears to be instrumental for the survival and revival of their stories, chanted in a language and by a voice that come from far away. Persian martyrs and Syriac saints can survive, quite far removed from their homeland, if they find a place in the global village of pop culture.

7. Conclusion in the form of a summary

The revival in modern times of the stories of Yazdandukht and Mar Qardagh shows the complexity of the dynamic process of linguistic, literary and semiotic translation that usually goes under the label of fortune of a text.

Classical Syriac hagiographical stories, traditionally preserved in manuscripts, received a first stabilizing form in the 19th century text editions. Paul Bedjan, the editor of six volumes of *Acta martyrum et sanctorum* (1890-1897), published in 1912 a Sureth—i.e., Christian North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic—translation of a selection of the lives of saints and acts of martyrs, including the epic deeds of the frontier hero Mar Qardagh of Erbil, two stories in which Yazdandukht, a charitable noble lady of the same town, is involved, and the short biographic information on Yazdui of Kirkuk, who converted from Zoroastrianism and was called St. Christine.

Thanks to Paul Bedjan, the corpus of Persian martyr acts became available in book form, both in Classical Syriac and Sureth, as a source to (re-)construct the historical past and therefore the cultural identity of a specific geographic region. Historian and Chaldean bishop Sulaymān Ṣā'igh published in 1934 the illustrated historical novel *Yazdandukht the Noble Erbilian*, in Arabic. He chose genre and language according to canons and costumes of Arab modernity. In the novel the protagonist Yazdandukht functions as a frame character that sews and holds together as a unified narrative saga a

compendious Christian doctrine, Iraqi history and the stories of various (semi-) legendary⁴⁶ Persian saints and martyrs. For pedagogical purposes, the modern author exploits to the extreme the character of a pious Erbilian lady that has been interpreted as a *figure cyclique*, possibly together with Yazdui/Christine, and was probably meant as a unifying narrative device already by the author(s) or redactor(s) of the Persian martyr acts.

The re-use of *topoi* and narrative devices is paralleled by the persistence of ideological and cultural agendas over time and across different genres. As the appropriation of the Assyrian and Iranian pasts in the Syriac acts of martyrs of today's northern Iraq served for the preservation of local identities and the construction of provincial noble lineages in late Sasanian society, the author of the modern Arabic novel combines the stories of martyrs and saints to construct a more or less coherent historical and hagiographical narrative, that stresses the contribution of the Christians to Iraqi history.

As an Iraqi Chaldean intellectual, Ṣā'igh implicitly reacts to 20th-century Assyrianism, when it claims that (East-)Syriac Christians are the only heirs to the mythologized glorious past of the Assyrian empire. Instead, according to him, the Chaldean community is part of a broader historical scenario, from ancient Nineveh to medieval Islam, that forms the historical past of modern Iraq as an emerging nation-state with historically important religious minorities and inspires his fictional works as an Iraqi novelist and author of dramas in Arabic.

The hagiographical part of the novel probably had a much greater impact than what the author had imagined. Mar Qardagh, one of his main characters and a prominent figure of the Persian martyr cycle, appeared to some Chaldean faithful in Alqosh and asked them to build a shrine. Again, as the Persian martyr acts functioned as textual supports in the invention of relics and the creation, consolidation or Christianization of local cult sites, the story of Mar Qardagh, circulating in oral form, through Bedjan's Syriac and Sureth books or in the powerful and authoritative form of an illustrated Arabic novel, crossed the permeable border between literary fiction and cultu(r)al practice. The appropriation of the cult of the Erbilian martyr by Alqosh in the thirties of the 20th century shows how fast the process of formation of a local cult may be, including miraculous healings, the building of a shrine and a church, the painting of an icon, the establishing of public and private rites, a summer procession, and the composition of hymns.

The local character of the new cult of Mar Qardagh in Alqosh is stressed by the flourishing of poems on or in honor of Mar Qardagh, composed in the literary variety of the local Neo-Aramaic dialect (Sureth) and in the traditional form of the stanzaic poem that has been characteristic of Sureth poetry

⁴⁶ See Brock (1982, 16), precisely on Mar Qardagh.

since the emergence of Alqosh Neo-Aramaic as a written literary language in the late 16th century. One of these poems is the translation of Ṣā'igh's novel *Yazdandukht* in Sureth verses, composed in 1969 by the Alqoshian Chaldean priest Yoḥannan Cholagh. Sureth vernacular poetry (re-)absorbs a traditional story and the modernizing ambitions of an Arabic historical novel.

Father Cholagh's poem was recorded on audiotapes, as chanted by the author's voice, and a lady of the Chaldean diaspora decided to digitize and publish it in 2014 in the form of a YouTube video, in which Yazdandukht and Mar Qardagh, besides the faces and poses of the auto-orientalizing illustrations of Ṣā'igh's novel, present updated outlooks deriving from online repositories of digital images. Mar Qardagh, together with another young prince of a Sureth poem chanted by Father Cholagh, has the face of British actor Bradely James, who plays the role of Prince Arthur in the BBC series *Merlin*. The author of the video shows how local Sureth lore can be mediated by the global language of mainstream pop culture.

The visual representation of Sureth poems on YouTube makes blatantly evident mechanisms and purposes of a process of semiotic translation and cultural hybridization that started long before, when probably oral traditions on Persian martyrs were written down in Syriac with a precise ideological agenda, in the form of semi-epic accounts of the glorious deeds of frontier warriors of Assyrian and Iranian descent. In the 20th century, the Persian martyr cycle inspired a modern historical novel and, perhaps through it, the establishment of a local cult.

Stories survive and, indeed, revive only if they are told in different languages and genres, if they acquire and generate new imagery and meanings, adapting to the literary and ideological agendas of new authors and readers.⁴⁷

References

- Abbeloos, Jean Baptiste. 1890. "Acta Mar Qardaghi." *Analecta Bollandiana* 9: 5-105.
- Allen, Roger. 1995. *The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

⁴⁷ Research for the present paper was financed by the Department of Humanities, University of Turin. A previous version was presented at the seminar *Storie di sante e di santi* (Turin, 10 March 2016), organized by prof. Anna Maria Taragna for the students of Byzantine Philology and Semitic Linguistics. In the academic year 2015-2016, Syriac and Sureth texts on Mar Qardagh were read in the courses of Semitic Philology at the University of Turin. I wish to express my gratitude to my colleague and students for their stimulating comments on texts and topics we dealt with in class and in joint sessions.

- Almarsā News. 2017. “Sulaymān Ṣā’igh rā’id al-riwāya al-ta’rīkhīya fī al-‘irāq 1886-1991.” March 10, 2017. <https://www.almarsa-news.com/سليمان-الصانغ-رائد-الرواية-التاريخية/>. Accessed May 2020.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.
- Arabic Wikipedia. 2019. “Sulaymān Ṣā’igh.” ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/سليمان_صانغ. Last updated September 5, 2019. Accessed May 2020.
- Assemani, Stephanus E., ed. 1748. *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium*. Rome: J. Collini.
- Ayalon, Ami. 2016. *The Arabic Print Revolution. Cultural Production and Mass Readership*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bahoorā, Haytham. 2017. “Iraq.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Arab Novelistic Traditions*, edited by Wail S. Hassan, 247-64. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baumstark, Anton. 1922. *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*. Bonn: Weber.
- Becker, Adam H. 2008. “The Ancient near East in the Late Antique near East. Syriac Christian Appropriation of the Biblical Past.” In: *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World*, edited by Gregg Gardner and Kevin L. Osterloh, 394-415. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Becker, Adam H. 2015. *Revival and Awakening. American Evangelical Missionaries in Iran and the Origins of Assyrian Nationalism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bedjan, Paul, ed. 1891. *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*, vol. II. Paris-Leipzig: Harrassowitz.
- Bedjan, Paul, ed. 1897. *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*, vol. IV. Paris-Leipzig: Harrassowitz.
- Bedjan, Paul, ed. 1912. *Vies des saints*, Paris – Leipzig: Harrassowitz.
- Binder, Matthias. 2012. “Mart Christina. Eine Märtyrerin am Ende des Sassanidenreichs.” In: *Geschichte, Theologie, Liturgie und Gegenwartslage der syrischen Kirchen*, edited by Dorothea Weltecke, 13-26. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Binggeli, André. 2012. “Les collections de Vies de saints dans les manuscrits syriaques.” In: *L’hagiographie syriaque (Études syriaques 9)*, edited by André Binggeli, 49-75. Paris: Geuthner.
- Braida, Emanuela. 2011. Yawsep ‘Abbaya of Alqosh, “On the Hermit Barmalka.” In: *Religious Poetry in Vernacular Syriac from Northern Iraq (17th-20th Centuries). An Anthology*, edited by Alessandro Mengozzi (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 627), 83-98 (Sureth text) and vol. 628, 95-108 (introduction and Engl translation). Leuven: Peeters.
- Briquel Chatonnet, Françoise. 2012. “Christian martyrs in Arabia.” *Journal of the Canadian Society for Christian Studies* XII: 3-15.
- Brock, Sebastian P. and Susan Ashbrook Harvey. 1987. *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient*. Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Brock, Sebastian P. 1982. “Christians in the Sasanian Empire: A Case of Divided Loyalties.” *Studies in Church History* 18: 1-19.
- Brock, Sebastian. 2008. *The History of the Holy Martyr Mar Ma’in*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press.

- Budge, Ernest A.W., ed. 1893. *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas, Bishop of Marga, A. D. 840*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.
- Butler, Alban. 1821. *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs and Other Principal Saints*, vol. IV. Dublin: J. Duffy.
- Butts, Aaron M. 2017. "Assyrian Christians." In: *A Companion to Assyria*, edited by Eckart Frahm, 599-610. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell.
- Būyā Yaldā, 'Abdalmasiḥ. 2013. *Durūs maḥū al-ummiya li-man yağhalu ta'riḫ al-kuldān fi l-qawmiya*. 8. *Intishār al-masiḥiya*, Kaldaya.net. April 22, 2013. www.kaldaya.net/2013/Articles/04/Apr22_DrAbdulmaseehBoya.html. Accessed December 2017.
- Chabot, Jean-Baptiste, ed. 1902. *Synodicon Orientale ou Recueil des Synodes Nestoriens*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.
- Crone, Patricia and Michael Cook, *Hagarism. The Making of the Islamic World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fatūḫī, 'Āmir Ḥanna. 2012. "Yazdāndūkht qiṣṣat ḥubb ṭāhir... am waṭan masrūq?" October 5, 2012. <http://kaldany.ahlamontada.com/t2701-topic>. Accessed May 2020.
- Feige, Hermann. 1890. *Die Geschichte des Mār 'Abdišō und seines Jüngers Mār Qardagh*. Kiel: Haesler.
- Fiey, Jean Maurice. 1965. *Assyrie Chrétienne*. Beirut: Librairie orientale.
- Fiey, Jean Maurice. 2004. *Saints syriaques*, posthumously edited by Lawrence I. Conrad. Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press.
- Francisco, Héctor R. 2016. "Corpse exposure in the acts of the Persian martyrs and its literary models." *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* XIX/1: 193-235.
- Green, Nile. 2010. "Stones from Bavaria: Iranian Lithography in its Global Contexts." *Iranian Studies* 43/3: 305-331.
- Ḥabbi, Yusuf. 1978. "Udabā' al-sūriḥ al-awā'il." *Mağallat al-mağma' al-'ilmī al-'irāqī. Al-hay'a al-sūryāniya* IV: 97-120.
- Ḥaddād, Benyāmīn. 2011a. *Humāsā d-sāhdhā ēthlēṭā Mār(y) Qardāgh*. Duhok: Bethmardootha.
- Ḥaddād, Benyāmīn. 2011b. *Gazzā d-mellāthā b-le'zā (')suryāyā d-Alqosh*. Duhok: Bethmardootha.
- Ḥaddād, Buṭrus. 2012. "Al-sīra al-dhātiya li-l-maṭrān Sulaymān Ṣā'igh." *Al-Madā*, May 23, 2012. www.almadasupplements.net/news.php?action=view&id=4727.
- Harrak, Amir. 2001. "Tales about Sennacherib: The Contribution of the Syriac Sources." In: *The World of the Arameans*, edited by Michèle Daviau, Michael Weigl and John W. Wevers, 167-189. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Herman, Geoffrey, ed. 2015. *Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press.
- Herman, Geoffrey. 2010. "'Bury my Coffin Deep!': Zoroastrian Exhumation in Jewish and Christian Sources." In: *Tiferet leYisrael: Jubilee Volume in Honor of Israel Francus*, edited by Joel Roth, Menahem Schmelzer and Yaacov Francus, 31-59. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary.

- Herman, Geoffrey. 2012. "One day David went out for the hunt of the falconers: Persian themes in the Babylonian Talmud." In: *Shoshanat Yaakov: Jewish and Iranian Studies in Honor of Yaakov Elman*, edited by Shai Secunda and Steven Fine, 111-136. Leiden: Brill.
- Herman, Geoffrey. 2018. "The Syriac World in the Persian Empire." In: *The Syriac World*, edited by Daniel King, 134-145. London – New York: Routledge.
- Huart, Clément. 1925. *La Perse antique et la civilisation iraniennne*. Paris: La renaissance du livre.
- Jullien, Christelle. 2008. "Martyrs, Christian." *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Last updated December 15, 2008. www.iranicaonline.org/articles/martyrs-christian.
- Kawerau, Peter. 1991. "Chronicle of Arbela." *Encyclopædia Iranica* V/5, 1991: 548-549. Last updated October 18, 2011. www.iranicaonline.org/articles/chronicle-of-arbela.
- Key Fowden, Elizabeth. 1999. *The Barbarian Plain: Saint Sergius Between Rome and Iran*. Berkeley-Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Kiraz, George A. 2011. "Mingana, Alphonse." In: *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, edited by Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz and Lucas Van Rompay, 292-93. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press. <https://gedsh.bethmardutho.org/Mingana-Alphonse>.
- Labourt, Jérôme. 1904. *Le christianisme dans l'Empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide (224-632)*. Paris: Lecoffre.
- Lasso, Edmond. 2012. *Mār Qardāgh al-shahīd*. Sharafiya, Nineveh: Nusaybin.
- Lidzbarski, Mark. 1896. *Die neu-aramäischen Handschriften der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*. Weimar: Felber.
- Marzolph, Ulrich. 2009. "Lithography, iv. Lithographed illustrations." *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Last updated August 15, 2009. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/lithography-iv-lithographed-illustrations->.
- Mengozi, Alessandro and Danilo Pastore. 2017. "The Late East-Syriac Genre of the Turgāmā: Forms, Function, Vitality in the Liturgy." *Христианский Восток* 8 (XIV): 171-186.
- Mengozi, Alessandro and Luca B. Ricossa. 2013a. "The Cherub and the Thief on YouTube: An Eastern Christian Liturgical Drama and the Vitality of the Mesopotamian Dispute." *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 73/1-4: 49-65.
- Mengozi, Alessandro and Luca B. Ricossa. 2013b. "Folk Spontaneity and Pseudo-Teretismata in East-Syriac Soghyāthā: Resurrection, Joseph and His Mistress, 'Tell me Church!', Moses and Jesus, and Great Rome." *Христианский Восток* 6 (XII): 162-180.
- Mengozi, Alessandro. 2011. "Onithā." In: *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, edited by Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz and Lucas Van Rompay, 318. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press. <https://gedsh.bethmardutho.org/Onitha>.
- Moosa, Matti. 1997. *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*, 2nd edition. London: Three Continent Press.
- Messick, Brinkley. 2013. "On the Question of Lithography." In: *The History of the Book in the Middle East*, edited by Geoffrey Roper, 299-317. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

- Murre-van den Berg, H.L. 2011. "Bedjan, Paul." In: *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, edited by Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz and Lucas Van Rompay, 65-66. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press. <https://gedsh.bethmardutho.org/Bedjan-Paul>.
- Murre-van den Berg, H.L. 2015. *Scribes and Scriptures. The Church of the East in the Eastern Ottoman Provinces (1500-1850)*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Nau, François. 1933. *Les Arabes chrétiens de Mésopotamie et de Syrie, du VIIe au VIIIe siècle*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.
- Odisho, Edward. 2001. "The Ethnic, Linguistic and Cultural Identity of Modern Assyrians." In: *Mythology and Mythologies: Methodological Approaches to Intercultural Influences*, edited by Robert M. Whiting, *Melammu Symposia 2*, 137-148. Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.
- Payne, Richard E. 2011. "The Emergence Of Martyrs' Shrines In Late Antique Iran: Conflict, Consensus And Communal Institutions." In: *An Age of Saints? Power, Conflict and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity*, edited by Peter Sarris, Matthew Dal Santo and Phil Booth, 89-113. Leiden: Brill.
- Payne, Richard E. 2012. "Avoiding Ethnicity: Uses of the Ancient Past in Late Sasanian Northern Mesopotamia." In: *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World*, edited by Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner and Richard Payne, 201-221. London-New York: Routledge.
- Peeters, Paul. 1910. *Bibliotheca hagiographica orientalis*. Brussels [Beirut: Imprimerie catholique].
- Peeters, Paul. 1925. "Passionnaire d'Adiabène." *Analecta Bollandiana* XLIII: 261-304.
- Prym, Eugen and Albert Socin. 1887. *Kurdische Sammlungen. Erzählungen und Lieder in den Dialekten des Tûr 'Abdîn und von Bohtan, A. Die Texte*. St Petersburg: Eggers.
- Reinink, G.J. 1999. "Babai the Great's Life of George and the Propagation of Doctrine in the Late Sasanian Empire." In: *Portraits of Spiritual Authority: Religious Power in Early Christianity, Byzantium, and the Christian Orient*, edited by J.W. Drijvers and J.W. Watt, 171-195. Leiden: Brill.
- Şā'igh, Sulaymān. 1934. *Yazdāndukht al-sharīfa al-irbīliya*. Mosul: Al-Nağm (reprint Erbil 2003).
- Sa'īd, Samir Ilyas. 2012. "Al-maṭrān Sulaymān Şā'igh." ankawa.com, October 22, 2012. www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php?topic=617488.msg5798564#msg5798564. Accessed May 2020.
- Sako, Louis Raphaël. 2019. "Al-maṭrān Sulaymān Şā'igh (1886-1961)." Official Website of the Chaldean Patriarchate of Babylon, July 12, 2019. <https://saint-adday.com/?p=33478>. Accessed May 2020.
- Scher, Addai. 1906-1907. "Analyse de l'histoire de Rabban Bar 'Edta, moine nestorien du VIe siècle." *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* II/XI: 403-423 and II/XII: 9-13.
- Shammāsh, R. 2012. "Al-maṭrān Sulaymān Şā'igh rā'id al-riwāya al-ta'rīkhiya." *Şawt al-ākhar* 413, December 5, 2012. <http://www.sotakhr.com/2006/index.php?id=17630>. Accessed August 2, 2016.
- Sizgorich, Thomas. 2009. "Sanctified Violence: Monotheist Militancy as the Tie That Bound Christian Rome and Islam." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* LXXVII/4: 895-921.
- Smith, Kyle. 2016. *Constantine and the Captive Christians of Persia. Martyrdom and Religious Identity in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley-Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

- Talia, Shawqi N. 2011a. “Neo-Aramaic Lullabies from the Plain of Nineveh.” *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* XI: 44-54.
- Talia, Shawqi N, ed. 2011a. Yoḥannan Cholagh, “On Exile.” In: *Religious Poetry in Vernacular Syriac from Northern Iraq (17th-20th Centuries). An Anthology*, edited by Alessandro Mengozzi, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, vol. 627, 121-127 (Sureth text) and vol. 628, 133-141 (introduction and Engl. transl.). Leuven: Peeters.
- Tardieu, Michel. 2007-2008. “Histoire des syncrétismes de la fin de l’Antiquité. Coutumes et légendes de la Haute-Mésopotamie d’après les recueils de contes syriaques.” *Annuaire du Collège de France 2007-2008. Résumé des cours et travaux 108e année*, 435-444.
- Vööbus, Arthur. 1983. “Acts of the Persian Martyrs.” *Encyclopædia Iranica* I/4: 430-431. Last updated July 22, 2011. www.iranicaonline.org/articles/acts-of-the-persian-martyrs.
- Walker, Joel Th. 2005-2006. “The Legacy of Mesopotamia in Late Antique Iraq: The Christian Martyr Shrine at Melqi (Neo-Assyrian Milqia).” *ARAM* XVIII-XIX: 483-508.
- Walker, Joel Th. 2006. *The Legend of Mar Qardagh. Narrative and Christian Heroism in Late Antique Iraq*. Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California.
- Younansardaroud, Helen. 2002. “Die Legende von Mar Behnam.” In: *Syriaca*, edited by Martin Tamcke, 185-195. Hamburg: LIT.

Alessandro Mengozzi, PhD Leiden University, is professor of Semitics at the University of Turin, where he teaches Semitic Philology and Syriac Language and Literature. His main research interests are Neo-Aramaic languages and literatures and Syriac poetry of the Mongol period.
He can be reached at: alessandro.mengozzi@unito.it

Paretymologies in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* in the light of Ibn ‘Arabī’s hermeneutic principles

Federico Salvaggio

In the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* Ibn ‘Arabī presents us with several linguistic explanations about the meanings of specific words and expressions (mostly Koranic occurrences). From a contemporary linguistic perspective, many of those explanations would be classified within the category of paretymologies or folk etymologies. In the present contribution we will examine the paretymologies in Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* against some aspects of the Islamic linguistic thought, as specifically developed by Ibn ‘Arabī, and try to make explicit the epistemological and theoretical framework standing behind those disputable etymologies. In so doing we will attempt to show how, far from simply being the product of popular fantasy or fanciful speculations, Ibn ‘Arabī’s semantic explanations appear as highly sophisticated hermeneutic practices, grounded in a thorough knowledge of various language-related branches of Islamic science, and consistent with the metaphysical vision of language emerging from the Andalusian master’s speculations on the nature of the sacred text and on the linguistic structure of revelation.

Keywords: Arabic linguistic tradition - Islamic linguistic thought - Koranic Hermeneutics - Akbarian studies

1. Introduction

Paretymologies are a universal pre-modern linguistic practice of semantic interpretation of a term that does not take into account the actual history of the word but rather relies on superficial analogies (usually at the phonetic level) with other words from the same language (very often etymologically unrelated) thus establishing a false lexical and semantic connection that leads to misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the original meaning of that word (Bronkhorst 2001: 147). Despite neglecting the historical and diachronic dimension (paretymologies usually operate at the synchronic level) involved in the process of word-formation and word-derivation and despite being based on wrong linguistic assumptions, paretymologies, from a cultural and semantic standpoint, may carry valuable

information in that they throw light on perceived and associated meanings related to a certain term in a given cultural and historical context. Since they are frequently associated with popular explanations, paretymologies are often referred to by the term ‘folk etymologies.’¹

The resort to semantic interpretations reminiscent of the methods of folk etymologies within the works of some of the great authorities of the past² such as Plato, the great Greek philosopher, Isidore of Seville (d. 636), *Doctor Ecclesiae* and revered theologian (author of the *Etymologiae*), or, as in our case, Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1240), *al-šayḥ al-’akbar* ‘the Greatest Master,’ has caused bewilderment among scholars.

In the case of the paretymologies in Plato’s *Cratylus*, for instance “to explain the resort to seemingly folk etymologies on the part of a philosopher whose teachings can be hardly considered popular,” two contrasting hypotheses, that epitomize the intensity of the academic debate, have been postulated. Baxter (1992) posits that the etymological section of the *Cratylus* should be read as a parody by which Plato aims at ridiculing the attitude of some Greek poets and intellectuals towards their language. On the other hand, Sedley (2003) not only argues that the etymologies in the *Cratylus* were taken seriously by Plato but also maintains that their inclusion in the work is to be interpreted in relation to the main topic of the dialogue, namely the discussion about the natural (φύσει) or conventional (θέσει) origin of language, and to Plato’s own position on the matter. Thus, according to Sedley, the resort, on Plato’s part, to this peculiar ‘etymological’ practice must be seen as an indication of the specific vision and conception of language endorsed by the Greek philosopher.

Similarly Bronkhorst, commenting on the presence of numerous paretymologies in the Vedic *Brāhmaṇas*, convincingly argues that when investigated in the light of the epistemological framework of Hindu thought those semantic explanations result largely consistent not only with the Vedic approach to language but also with Vedic *Weltanschauung* in general:

the etymologies of the *Brāhmaṇas* fit in with other aspects of the religion that expresses itself through these texts. [...] Nor is the idea of a network of connections only noticeable where the *Brāhmaṇas* present **etymologies**. In short, all the characteristic features that reveal themselves in our study of the etymologies are also found in other aspects of the religion of the *Brāhmaṇas* (Bronkhorst 2001; 156; bold in the text).

¹ The two terms are best kept separate (the first being more general and the second applying to a particular context). Paretymologies and folk etymologies have recently been the object of reevaluation also in the field of proper etymological studies (Durkin 2009: 202-206).

² In this case ‘learned paretymologies’ would probably be a more appropriate definition.

In line with these remarks, in the present contribution by examining the paretymologies in Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* against some aspects of the Islamic linguistic thought, as specifically developed by Ibn ‘Arabī, we will try to make explicit the epistemological and theoretical framework standing behind those disputable etymologies.³ In so doing, we will attempt to show how, far from simply being the product of popular or intellectual fantasy, Ibn ‘Arabī’s semantic explanations appear as highly sophisticated hermeneutic practices (grounded in a thorough knowledge of various language-related branches of Islamic science) and consistent with the metaphysical vision of language emerging from the Andalusian master’s speculations on the nature of the sacred text and on the linguistic structure of revelation.

2. Linguistic explanations in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*

Scholars of Ibn ‘Arabī have frequently underlined the abundance of Koranic quotations in his works (Chodkiewicz 1992: 40-41) and posited that Ibn ‘Arabī’s entire production is “essentially Koranic hermeneutics” and is “nothing if not commentary upon the Holy Book” (Chittick 1989: XV-XVI). One should not then be surprised to find in his works several explanations about the meanings of specific words or expressions used in the Koran.

Many of these linguistic elucidations line up with the principles, methods, and terminology of the Arabic linguistic tradition. As noted by Bausani, in relation with the phonetic domain, Ibn ‘Arabī’s linguistic insights sometimes can even be ahead of the common knowledge of his time on the matter and carry an appreciable scientific value also from a contemporary linguistic perspective (Bausani 1979: 201-202).

This notwithstanding, many other of his explanations are far more problematic and less conventional from the standpoint of the mainstream Arabic linguistic tradition and would definitely be classified within the category of paretymologies from a contemporary linguistic perspective. In this connection with reference to the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, in the introduction to his translation of the work, Austin comments:

In addition to the general lack of organization, the reader is also likely to be sorely tried by the devious and tortuous methods Ibn al-‘Arabī employs in commenting on and

³ Disputable, as discussed below, not only from the point of view of modern linguistics but also from that of the mainstream Arabic linguistic tradition.

interpreting not only material from the *Qur’an* and elsewhere but also the associated meanings of the Arabic words themselves (Austin 1980: 20-21; italics in the text).

On the whole, linguistic explanations in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* can be divided into the following groups dealing with different linguistic aspects:

- grammatical rules and terminology;
- etymologies and paretymologies;
- polysemy and enantionymy of words;
- anthroponyms and toponyms.

In the present contribution we will content ourselves with the analysis of some examples from the first and the second group. The third group of explanations, dealing with polysemy of words would deserve a study on its own. The identification of the polysemic dimension of some terms (and especially Koranic terms) plays a key role in Ibn ‘Arabī’s hermeneutic approach and should be investigated from the perspective of the relation between form and meaning in the Akbarian linguistic thought (see Section 5). Moreover, Ibn ‘Arabī seems particularly concerned with a peculiar case of polysemy: enantionymy. The fact that some Koranic terms may have opposite meanings bears a special significance to him and has to be correlated with his metaphysical conception of *coincidentia oppositorum* (Chittick 1989: 375). The last group presents us with Ibn ‘Arabī’s interpretation of the meaning of some anthroponyms and toponyms which include the prophets’ names *Šīt* (Seth), *Šu‘ayb*, *Dāwud* (David), *Yaḥyà* (John), *Mūsà* (Moses), and *Muḥammad* and the toponym *Lubnān* (Lebanon).

3. Grammatical explanations

Despite the above mentioned harsh judgement by Austin on the methods employed by Ibn ‘Arabī in his linguistic interpretations in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, more often than not Ibn ‘Arabī’s observations are anything but “devious” or “tortuous” (at least not from the point of view of the linguistic tradition he belonged to) and reveal a confident use of grammar terminology and a thorough knowledge of Arabic grammar rules.⁴

In the Chapter of Zechariah discussing the word *raḥīm* Ibn ‘Arabī suggests that it should be considered as an active participle since, he argues, both *rāḥim* and *raḥīm* belong to the category of *’ism*

⁴ On Ibn ‘Arabī’s linguistic and literary training and acquaintances within the literary milieu of the time see Addas (1993: 100-102).

al-fā'il (*Fuṣūṣ*, 178).⁵ As noted by Wright, while *fā'il* is the principal form for active participles derived from a verb of the first form (*raḥīma* in our case), “there are other verbal adjectives derived from the first form of the verb” which Arab grammarians call *ṣifāt muṣabbahah bi-ʾasmāʾ al-fā'il wa-l-maf'ūl* ‘adjectives assimilated to active and passive participles’ and which include the form *fā'il* (Wright 1967: 133).⁶

In the Chapter of Jesus commenting on the Koranic expression *ʾin tuʿaddib-hum* ‘if you punish them’ (Koran 5, 118) Ibn ʿArabī points out that the suffix pronoun *-hum* ‘them’ is a third person pronoun and, in doing that, employs the technical term used in the Arabic linguistic tradition, *ḍamīr al-ġāʾib*, which literally means ‘the pronoun of what is absent or hidden.’ Then, building on a symbolic interpretation of the meaning of this conventional grammatical term, he provides us with a much less conventional reading of the Koranic verse by stating that the ‘pronoun of the absent’ has here been chosen as an allusion to veil that conceals from God (*al-Ḥaqq*) those who are to be punished (*Fuṣūṣ*, 148-149).

In the Chapter of Muhammad another third person pronoun attracts Ibn ʿArabī’s attention. This time he notices an ambiguity in the reference of the suffix pronoun *-hu* in the expression *bi-ḥamdi-hi* in the Koranic verses: *wa-ʾin min ṣayʾin ʾillā yusabbiḥu bi-ḥamdi-hi* (Koran 17, 44). The pronoun is generally understood as referring to God (cfr. Arberry 2008) and the verses interpreted as: ‘There is nothing that does not glorify Him by His praise.’ Ibn ʿArabī points out that a different reading is also grammatically possible here. He interprets the pronoun as referring to the word *ṣayʾ* (a masculine) and reads: ‘There is nothing that does not glorify Him by its praise.’ The praise of the thing, he explains, means that one only praises the God of his own belief and connects himself to that particular conception of God (*Fuṣūṣ*, 226).

A last example of how Ibn ʿArabī uses precise grammatical observations as a starting point for his own metaphysical speculations is provided in the same chapter where he discusses a *ḥadīṭ* attributed to the Prophet. In the famous *ḥadīṭ*, the Prophet mentions three things that have been made beloved to him: women, perfume, and prayer. Ibn ʿArabī remarks that the grammatical form for the numeral three used in the *ḥadīṭ* is the masculine one (*ṭalāt*). He then mentions the custom of the Arabs (*ʿādat al-ʿarab*) according to which, as far as gender is concerned, in a mixed group of words the masculine

⁵ Page numbers of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* refer to Affifi’s edition (see references). We would like to express our gratitude to Dr. Marco Aurelio Golfetto, University of Milan, who kindly made available to us, for comparison purposes, a copy of his forthcoming critical edition of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* based on a different and autograph manuscript (see references).

⁶ Moreover, the replacement of the form *fā'il* by *fa'il*, with an active meaning, is particularly common with verbs with specific semantic value or form (cfr. Manca 1999 :221).

prevails over the feminine even when there is only one single masculine element among several feminine elements. Hence, since two of the counted objects are feminine (*nisā* ‘women’ and *ṣalāh* ‘prayer’)⁷ and one masculine (*ṭīb* ‘perfume’), the group mentioned in the *ḥadīṭ* has to be considered masculine. Consequently, because of the rule, in the Arabic language, of inverted agreement between numerals and counted objects, the Prophet should have used the feminine form of the numeral three, that is to say *ṭalāṭah* instead of *ṭalāt*. What Ibn ‘Arabī brings up is, needless to say, a very sensitive issue. The Prophet, from an Islamic perspective, is considered as a model of perfection also from the linguistic point of view and regarded as the most knowledgeable of all Arabs about the Arabic language. Ibn ‘Arabī explains that the Prophet’s deviation from the rule was no mistake at all. It was an intentional rhetorical choice to bring out the importance of the feminine element over the masculine in the specific context of this prophetic teaching (*Fuṣūṣ*, 214–220).

All the examples illustrated above show what a careful observer of formal linguistic phenomena Ibn ‘Arabī can be and how well acquainted he is with the Arabic linguistic tradition and its terminology. Even when such observations lead him to a metaphysical domain that has little to do with *stricto sensu* grammar, the linguistic considerations illustrated so far are not per se particularly problematic from the perspective of the Arabic linguistic tradition. In the next section we will illustrate some linguistic explanations that not only would very likely fall, from a modern linguistic perspective and to quote the title of a volume edited by Auroux *et al.* (1984), into the category of “la linguistique fantastique” but that would also have looked as much disputable and unconventional to the eyes of mainstream grammarians of Ibn ‘Arabī’s time.⁸

4. Etymologies and paretymologies

As demonstrated by the very etymology of the word etymology, the role of Greek and Latin as donor languages in the formation of the religious, philosophical, scientific, and technical vocabulary of most European languages (for instance all the languages that, in various forms, have adopted the Greek *ἔτυμολογία*: English, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, etc.) is so essential that, without relying

⁷ Ibn ‘Arabī distinguishes here between the feminine gender of a word like *nisā*, which he calls *ta’niṭ ḥaqīqī* ‘authentic feminine’ (we would say feminine by natural gender), and the feminine of the word *ṣalāh* which he defines as *ta’niṭ ḡayr ḥaqīqī* ‘non-authentic feminine’ (we would say feminine by grammatical convention).

⁸ We are referring to a volume on the history of linguistic ideas that, as we will see in the next section, includes an article by Versteegh on the notion, within the Arabic linguistic tradition, of *al-iṣṭiqāq al-kabīr* ‘great etymology,’ an ‘etymological’ practice playing a key role within Ibn ‘Arabī’s hermeneutic approach. On Versteegh’s own position on the appropriateness of the definition of “fantastique” with respect to *al-iṣṭiqāq al-kabīr* see Section 5.

on the knowledge of Greek and Latin lexicon, the vast majority of the educated vocabulary of those western languages could not be properly interpreted and analyzed. This historical and diachronic dimension is therefore a key element of the contemporary and western concept of etymology.

Conversely the Arabic word that is usually translated as ‘etymology,’ *ištiqāq*, “n’a pas la connotation de la reconstruction d’un procès historique : au contraire, c’est un procédé entièrement synchronique” (Versteegh 1984: 45). Unlike the way etymology is applied today (but perhaps not so differently from how it was exercised by Isidore of Seville) the traditional Arabic *ištiqāq* practice in order to elucidate the meaning of a word looked at its semantic relations with related terms (or so deemed) from a synchronic and not from a diachronic perspective and confined itself to the boundaries of a single language: Arabic. In this connection, it is worth mentioning, that, in the case of Arabic the need to resort to the knowledge of external or older languages to understand the morpho-semantic structure of its cultivated and erudite vocabulary appears as far less significant than in the above-mentioned case of several European languages.⁹ This aspect of the Arabic language may be regarded among the factors that account for the general character of self-referentiality of traditional Arabic etymologies.¹⁰

As to question of when, from the standpoint of traditional Arabic etymology, two or more words are to be considered as ‘etymologically’ related, three different levels of *ištiqāq* must be distinguished. For the first level, *al-ištiqāq al-ṣaġīr/al-ʾaṣġar* ‘minor etymology,’ words are connected if they share the same root, like in *kitāb*, *kutub*, *kātīb*, *maktaba*, *kuttāb*, etc. (Baalbaki 2014: 234). For the second level, *al-ištiqāq al-kabīr* ‘great etymology,’ words that share the same radical letters can still be considered related even if the order of those letters is not the same: *klm*, *mkl*, *kml*, *lkm*, etc. For the third level, *al-ištiqāq al-ʾakbar* ‘greater etymology,’ a relation between two words may be established also in the case in which they only have two radical letters in common (Versteegh 2014: 123).¹¹ While the first level of *ištiqāq* is widely accepted within the Arabic linguistic tradition, the other levels, although mentioned

⁹ To find in the Islamic world an equivalent of the influence of Greek and Latin on western languages, one should look at the role played by Arabic and Persian in shaping the morpho-semantic composition of abstract, elevated, and symbolic terms in the so-called Islamic languages (on the notion of ‘Islamic languages’ see Bausani 1981). For instance, in Urdu, to understand a common word like *ḥabardār* ‘caution’ from a phonological, morphological, and semantic standpoint one needs to recognize the meaning and function of the Arabic element *ḥabar* and the Persian suffix *-dār*.

¹⁰ Moreover this Arabic-centric approach should be put in relation to the concept of sacredness of the Arabic language that, within the Islamic linguistic thought, holds a central position and which in itself acts as a hermeneutic principle (cfr. Salvaggio 2008: 77-90).

¹¹ For the use of the term *al-ištiqāq al-ʾakbar* by Ibn Ğinnī (d. 1002) in relation to what has been described above as the second level of *ištiqāq* see Baalbaki (2014: 281).

by authorities such as Ibn Ğinnī (d. 1002), al-Rāzī (d. 1209) and al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505) never really gained popularity among grammarians (Versteegh 1984: 48). From the point of view of contemporary western linguistics, only the first level of *ištiqāq* can be, broadly speaking, accepted as a valid procedure for the identification of etymologically related words.¹² As for the other two levels, in the vast majority of cases, the etymological connections provided through the methods of the *ištiqāq kabīr* and *’akbar* would be inevitably regarded as paradigmatic instances of paretymologies.¹³

In the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* several examples of *ištiqāq* of the first and third level can be found. In the Chapter of Abraham, the epithet of *al-ḥalīl* ‘intimate (of God)’ traditionally attributed to the patriarch, is explained by juxtaposition to the form V verbal noun *taḥallul* ‘permeation’ since, Ibn ‘Arabī clarifies, that title was chosen as a reference to Abraham’s permeation of all the attributes of the Divine Essence (*Fuṣūṣ*, 80). In the Chapter of Muhammad the expression *qurrat al-‘ayn* ‘delight of the eye, solace’ mentioned by the Prophet¹⁴ with reference to the fact that “his solace was placed in the prayer,” is interpreted by Ibn ‘Arabī in relation to the form X verb *istaqarra* ‘to settle down, to be fixed’ for, he points out, the eye comes to rest (*tastaqirru*) only when it gazes at the beloved and does not look at anything else (*Fuṣūṣ*, 224-225).

In the Chapter of Jesus the word *bašar* ‘human being’ is understood in connection with the form III verbal noun *mubāšarah* ‘direct contact’ since, Ibn ‘Arabī states, man is called *bašar* because he was created by direct contact of God’s hands (*Fuṣūṣ*, 144). A last example of first level *ištiqāq* is provided by the Chapter of Hūd. Here commenting on the Koranic verses “a wind (*rīḥ*) in which is a painful punishment (*‘aḍāb*)” (Koran 46, 24), to make his point about the ambivalent nature of God’s punishment, which is at the same time a chastisement and an act of mercy, Ibn ‘Arabī associates the word *rīḥ* ‘wind’ with the word *rāḥah* ‘rest’ (both from the root *rwh*) for he says God wanted to make the wind an indication of the comfort therein. Moreover, he strengthens his argument by relating the word *‘aḍāb* ‘punishment’ to the form X verb *ista‘ḍaba* ‘to find sweet or pleasant’ and remarks that there was *‘aḍāb* in that wind, i.e. something that they would find sweet (*yasta‘ḍibūna-hu*) after tasting it (*Fuṣūṣ*, 109).¹⁵

¹² Provided of course that certain linguistic conditions are met and that, for instance, in the root examined did not merge different and unrelated roots.

¹³ They may though suggest a real historical process of metathesis of radical letters (to be verified through the methodology of scientific etymology) or bear an interest within the contest of bi-radical theories (cfr. Bohas and Dat 2007).

¹⁴ In the already mentioned *ḥadīṭ* of the three things that have been made beloved to the Prophet (see above Section 3).

¹⁵ As mentioned in Section 2, enantionymy, as in the case exemplified here of the root *‘ḍb*, plays a fundamental role within the Akbarian hermeneutic approach.

If the etymologies considered so far reflect the conventional application of *ištiqāq* as understood within the Arabic linguistic tradition and accepted by most grammarians, in the following examples not only Ibn ‘Arabī resorts to the controversial third level of *ištiqāq* but in doing that, in some cases, he pushes himself far beyond the limits of this already disputable practice (disputable, as already stated, also from the standpoint of mainstream Arabic grammarians).

In the Chapter of Aaron commenting on the saying attributed to Jesus “the heart of each man is with his treasure (*māl*)” (cfr. Matthew 6, 21), Ibn ‘Arabī glosses the word *māl* ‘treasure, wealth’ (from the root *mwl*) by relating it to the verb *māla* ‘to incline’ (from the root *myl*) since he explains *māl* is so called because hearts incline (*tamīlu*) to it in worship (*Fuṣūṣ*, 192). In the Chapter of Noah illustrating the double nature of the Koran, inclusive and discriminative, and the relation between these two aspects, Ibn ‘Arabī states: *al-qur’ān* (the Koran in its inclusive aspect) *yataḍammanu* (includes) *al-furqān* (the Koran in its discriminative aspect). An implicit correlation is thus suggested between the word *qur’ān*, from the root *qr’* ‘to recite, to read,’ and the verb *qarana* ‘to join, unite,’ from the root *qrn* (*Fuṣūṣ*, 70). It should be noticed that the final *nūn* in the word *qur’ān* is not one of the radical letters (it is part of the suffix *-ān*) but, this notwithstanding, plays a fundamental role in producing an assonance between the terms *qur’ān* and *qarana*.

Conversely, to establish an assonance with another word, in the next example, a radical letter is removed from the term discussed by Ibn ‘Arabī. In the Chapter of Moses, examining the Koranic verses “I will surely place you (*la-’aǧ’alanna-ka*) among those imprisoned (*al-masǧūnīn*)” (Koran 26, 29), Ibn ‘Arabī clarifies that the *sīn* in the word *siǧn* ‘prison’ (related to *masǧūnīn* ‘those imprisoned’), despite being part of the root, for apparently inexplicable reasons, must be considered a redundant letter (*min ḥurūf al-zawā’id*) and removed from the word.¹⁶ Thus, he adds, the verse should be interpreted as *la-’asturanna-ka* ‘I will surely cover you’ implying, in this way, a correlation between the verb *satara* ‘to cover’ and the verb *ǧanna* which has a similar meaning (*Fuṣūṣ*, 209). It is important to remark here that the passage from *siǧn* to *ǧanna*, through the elimination of the *sīn*, can be easier understood by considering the written form of the two words and the rules of the Arabic writing system according to which short vowels are normally omitted and double consonants are only written once: جن > سجن.

In the following example where, in the same chapter, Ibn ‘Arabī interprets a single word as a whole sentence, taking into account the written form of the word is even more essential to understand his reasoning. Discussing the word *minhāǧ* ‘method, way, path’ in the context of the Koranic verse “for each of you (*li-kullīn*) we have made a law (*šir’atīn*) and a method (*minhāǧīn*)” (Koran 5, 48), he explains

¹⁶ For an interpretation of this passage in relation to the science of letters see next section.

that the word *šir‘ah* here means a path and the word *minhāġ* indicates that each one came from that path *min-hā ġā’* ‘from it he came’¹⁷ (*Fuṣūṣ*, 201). To see the relation between *minhāġ* and *min-hā ġā’* both orthographic and pronunciation rules have to be taken into account. The word *minhāġ* occurs in the Koran in the indefinite accusative case *minhāġ^{an}* and thus according to Arabic orthographic rules takes an unpronounced final ‘*alif*’ (منهاجا). Moreover according to Koranic recitation rules when a word ending by the indefinite accusative is read in pause, *-an* is pronounced *-ā* and so the word *minhāġ^{an}*, in pause, is pronounced *minhāġā* (in the exact way as it is actually written).¹⁸ In addition to that if we compare the way in which *min-hā ġā’* and *minhāġ^{an}* are written in Arabic (respectively منها جاء and منهاجا) we will notice that the sentence *min-hā ġā’* is made up by two words *min-hā* (preposition plus suffixed pronoun) and *ġā’* and separated by a space that indicates the word boundary. In the word *minhāġ^{an}* a space (although smaller) is also found in the correspondent position after the first ‘*alif*’ because this letter is one of the six letters of the Arabic letters that cannot be joined to a following letter. The two expressions are therefore extremely similar both in their visual and auditory form, the only difference between them being the *hamzah* at the end.¹⁹

5. Epistemological and hermeneutic framework

Despite its traditional and etymological meaning of ‘search for the true meaning of a word’ (from the Greek *ἔτυμον* ‘true or inner meaning’) the way the term is used today betrays less metaphysical aspirations. Contemporary western linguistics conceives of etymology as the study of the history of a word and the investigation of its phonological, morphological, and semantic evolution. As remarked by Bronkhorst if we were to decide which of the two, traditional etymology or modern historical etymology, “should most appropriately be called etymologies, there can be no doubt that the historical linguist would have to search for another term” (Bronkhorst 2001: 151).

Between traditional (and traditional Arabic) etymology and modern scientific etymology thus rather than teleological development and continuity what we observe is a veritable epistemological rupture. In other words, in the process of establishing itself as a discipline, modern linguistics (starting

¹⁷ The feminine suffix pronoun *-hā* agrees with *šir‘ah* and the verb *ġā’*, in the masculine singular form, with *kull*.

¹⁸ It is worth mentioning that when reciting the Koran one can stop in the way described above only if that is indicated by a specific sign in the text and that in both *warš* and *haṣṣ* recitation styles a pause mark is found after the word *minhāġ* and so one is indeed authorized to pronounce it *minhāġā* (on rules for stopping during Koranic recitation see Crescenti 2005: 111).

¹⁹ Although we were unable to find any Koranic recitation rules that allow the dropping of the *hamzah* in this specific case (and therefore could perhaps justify neglecting the *hamzah*), the possibility of dropping a final *hamzah* in pause is certainly enumerated among the *ḍarūrāt al-šīr* ‘poetic licenses’ in traditional Arabic metrical norms (cfr. Capezio 2013: 65-66).

from the second half of the 18th century) sets its new scientific boundaries and inevitably ends up considering what is left outside those boundaries as sheer fantasy and part of what Foucault calls the “teratology of knowledge:”

A l’intérieur de ses limites, chaque discipline reconnaît des propositions vraies et fausses ; mais elle repousse, de l’autre côté de ses marges, toute une tératologie du savoir. L’extérieur d’une science est plus et moins peuplé qu’on ne croit : bien sûr, il y a l’expérience immédiate, les thèmes imaginaires qui portent et reconduisent sans cesse des croyances sans mémoire ; mais peut être n’y a-t-il pas d’erreurs au sens strict, car l’erreur ne peut surgir et être décidée qu’à l’intérieur d’une pratique définie (Foucault 1971: 35).

Thus ultimately the difference between proper etymology and paretymology comes down to the “mesure d’acceptation dans la communauté linguistique” (Versteegh 1984: 44)²⁰ as well as to the epistemological principles endorsed by a certain linguistic tradition or within a particular linguistic thought.

The examples illustrated in the previous section show how Ibn ‘Arabī in order to prove his speculations stretches the limits of already non-mainstream etymological practices such as the *ištiqāq al-ʾakbar* by adding letters to word roots (or discarding letters from the root). Needless to say, those are nonetheless, at least according to his linguistic vision, real etymologies (in the traditional sense of ‘search for the truth’ illustrated above) and not the result of arbitrary associations of words based on superficial homophony or homography.

A deeper look into the a priori assumptions and principles that inspire Ibn ‘Arabī’s vision of language and regulate his hermeneutic approach can perhaps help us better understand his peculiar etymological practice. As shown above Ibn ‘Arabī very often builds his linguistic explanations on the auditory or visual form of words. The relation between form and meaning in his metaphysical vision of language is indeed a fundamental key for the understanding of his etymological practice.

As stated by Asín Palacios, despite the unequivocal passage of the Koran where God directly teaches Adam all the names (Koran 2, 31), within the Islamic civilization the great theologians, in relation to the debate about the nature of language, by divine institution (*tawqīf*) or conventional agreement (*ištiḷāḥ*), adopted “la ecuánime y escéptica actitud de considerar la cuestión como libremente discutible” (Asín Palacios 1939: 259). Sometimes they even hold different positions on the

²⁰ In the same passage Versteegh adds: “La notion de « fantastique » devient alors une expression purement quantitative, à savoir : « accepté par une ou plusieurs personnes » par opposition à la notion de « normale », c’est-à-dire « accepté par le groupe le plus prestigieux »”.

basis of the more doctrinal or more pragmatic perspective they adopted from case to case (see Shah 1999 and 2000). As for the *šayḥ al-‘akbar* according to Gril:

Ibn ‘Arabī ne se pose pas la question classique de l’origine du langage, produit d’une institution divine ou d’une convention humaine, car pour lui tous les noms sont le Noms de Dieu, tous les êtres sont Ses parole inépuisables (Gril 2008: 196.)

Whatever secondary causes intervene in the production of language the first cause, for Ibn ‘Arabī, remains always God. In Chapter 73 of the *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah* where he answers the questions posed by al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidī (d. ca. 900) a few centuries before,²¹ in response to question number 141, Ibn ‘Arabī discusses the order and the shape of the letters of the Arabic script and specifies that there is an instruction (*tanbīh*) in the way letters have being put down by the human hand, even if those who actually did that were not necessarily aware of the implications of their choices. He adds:

we only look at things from the perspective of their having been set down by the Creator (*min ḥaytu ‘inna al-bārī wāḍi‘u-hā*) and not from the point of view of the human hand from which they came into sight (*lā min ḥaytu yad man zaharat min-hu*) and therefore [in the appearance of things] there must be a purpose (*qaṣd*) and a specification (*taḥṣiṣ*) (*Futūḥāt* II, 162).

Thus everything in language has essentially got a providential nature. If this applies to language in general, it *a fortiori* holds for Arabic and the linguistic form and structure of the revelation:

The revealed Book is the actual, true, authentic embodiment of God’s Speech. Its every letter is full of significance, since the book manifests the divine realities in both its form and meaning (Chittick 1989: XV).

The form of God’s speech therefore “n’est pas seulement l’expression la plus adéquate de la Vérité : elle est la Vérité ; elle n’est pas seulement porteuse de sens, elle est le sens” (Chodkiewicz 1992: 45; italics in the text). This principle lies at the very core of the Akbarian hermeneutic approach and explains why Ibn ‘Arabī “displays tremendous reverence for the literary text” and why in his interpretations “the linguistic form of the text takes precedence over all else” (Chittick 1989: XVI). For him the linguistic form of a word is under a certain perspective more important even than its meaning. In the

²¹ On this peculiar literary dialogue, across time, between two influential Sufi scholars see Sviri (2019).

Chapter of Noah in the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* Ibn ‘Arabī illustrates this idea when he states that sacred scriptures are to be interpreted at different levels and, while common people (*al-‘umūm*) may only see the apparent meaning of a word, the elite (*al-ḥuṣūṣ*) can understand all possible meanings conveyed by that linguistic form according to the rules of that specific language (*Fuṣūṣ*, 68). Thus, it is uniquely in the form of a word that all possible meanings are encompassed and preserved, whereas a particular meaning, however elevated, only remains one single conceivable meaning. Moreover, it is precisely the fixed form of the sacred word that allows the constant flow of its inextinguishable meanings, constantly renewed at every instant and perpetually revealed hic et nunc during each recitation of the Koran:

Le Coran perpétuellement révélé est à la fois rigoureusement identique à lui-même [...] et à chaque instant inouï : aux cœurs préparés à le recevoir il apporte sans cesse des significations nouvelles, dont aucune n’annule les précédentes et qui toutes étaient dès l’origine inscrites dans la plénitude de sa lettre (Chodkiewicz 1992: 45; italics in the text).

The meanings that may be unclosed to the prepared hearts for Ibn ‘Arabī also include the meanings of the single letters that make up the words. According to his linguistic thought letters and not words (nor morphemes) are the minimal meaningful units of language:

We may think of letters as inert things, bereft of meaning, while words and sentences convey meaning. [...] For Ibn ‘Arabī, however, letters are living creatures with their own qualities, not simply phonologically, but visually (how they appear in writing), grammatically, numerically etc. They are the living roots of all words and meaning (Hirtenstein 2015: 48).

Such considerations are directly related to the *‘ilm al-ḥurūf*, the Science of Letters extensively represented within the Islamic civilization, before, after, and by Ibn ‘Arabī (see Lory 2004 and Gril 2008), and to which the Andalusian master dedicated some short treatises and the entire second chapter of his *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah* (*Futūḥāt* I, 55-102). As suggested by Dagli (2004: 269), it is precisely from within the symbolic framework of this ‘science,’ that we should look at cases like the one discussed above of the elimination, on Ibn ‘Arabī’s part, of the letter *sīn* from the word *siġn*, to penetrate its authentic and hidden meaning (a paradigmatic case of etymology in its etymological sense one would be tempted to say).

6. Conclusions

As noticed by Scholem, mystics have constantly moved from the concept of the language of revelation, *die Sprache der Offenbarung*, to the concept of language as revelation, *die Sprache als Offenbarung* (Scholem 1987: 9). Ibn ‘Arabī is no exception to the rule. For him the Arabic language is a pansemiotic reality where everything is purposeful and all the elements are interrelated through meaningful and multiple connections in the same way as things are interconnected in the external world. Consistently with the overall Islamic Weltanschauung, a parallel is thus established between the word and the world:

La manifestation universelle est le déploiement des *âyât Allâh*, des « signes de Dieu » (mais également des « versets », le mot *âyât* ayant l’une et l’autre signification). Ces *âyât* sont constituées de « paroles », *kalimât*, lesquelles à leur tour sont constituées de lettres, *hurûf* qui sont en quelque sorte les particules élémentaires du Livre de la création comme du Livre révélé²² (Chodkiewicz 2008: 52; italics in the text).

In the same way as Vedic etymologies were “just one more way of establishing the links that according to Vedic religious understanding link different objects belonging to this and the other world” (Bronkhorst 2001: 158), Ibn ‘Arabī’s etymologies seek, from the synchronic and intralinguistic perspective that is typical of the traditional Arabic practice of *istiqāq*, to unveil underlying existing connections between words as a way to penetrate their inner meaning (or rather multiple meanings). Such connections are revealed, to the prepared hearts, ears, and eyes, by means of the hints provided by assonance, homophony, and homography among words as well as by the hidden proprieties of the constitutive elements of language: letters.

At the same time, and given these premises quite unexpectedly, because of Ibn ‘Arabī’s reverence for linguistic forms, to prove his etymologies he does not fancifully introduce ad hoc language rules or come up with invented words. As illustrated in the case of his interpretation of the word *minhāj* (see Section 4), where he takes into account orthographic and grammar rules, Koranic recitation and metrical norms, and script peculiarities, his hermeneutic approach, though not conceivable as a reproducible method, stems from a thorough knowledge of various language-related branches of Islamic science. Rather than as just imaginary linguistic practices Ibn ‘Arabī’s (par)etymologies should be looked at as hermeneutic keys that grant us access to his “metaphysics of imagination” (Chittick 1989) and to his imaginal (*ḥayālī*) conception of the word and the world.

²² On letters as elementary particles cfr. Greek στοιχείον ‘letter and element’.

References

- Addas, Claude. 1993. *Quest for the Red Sulphur. The Life of Ibn 'Arabī*, translated by Peter Kingsley. Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society.
- Arberry, Arthur J. 2008. *The Koran*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Asín Palacios, Miguel. 1939, “El origen del lenguaje y problemas conexos, en Algazel, Ibn Sīda e Ibn Ḥazm.” *Al Andalus* 4/2: 253-281.
- Auroux, Sylvain, Jean-Claude Chevalier, Nicole Jacques-Chaquin, and Christiane Marchello-Nizia, eds. 1984. *La linguistique fantastique*. Paris: Éditions Joseph Clims Denoël.
- Austin, Ralph J. W. 1980. *Ibn al-'Arabi. The Bezels of Wisdom*. Ramsey, NJ: The Paulist Press.
- Baalbaki, Ramzi. 2014. *The Arabic Lexicographical Tradition. From the 2nd/8th to the 12th/18th Century*. Leiden: Brill.
- Baxter, Timothy M. S. 1992. *The Cratylus: Plato's Critique of Naming*. Leiden: Brill.
- Bausani, Alessandro. 1979. “Note su alcuni aspetti «scientifici» delle *Futūḥāt Makkiyya* di Ibn 'Arabī.” *Rivista degli studi orientali* 52/3,4 (May): 199-215.
- Bausani, Alessandro. 1981. “Le lingue islamiche: interazioni e acculturazioni”. In: *Il mondo islamico tra interazione e acculturazione*, edited by Alessandro Bausani and Biancamaria Scarcia Moretti, 3-19. Rome: Istituto di Studi Islamici.
- Bohas, Georges and Mihai Dat. 2007. *Une théorie de l'organisation du lexique des langues sémitiques : matrices et étymons*. Lyon: ENS Éditions.
- Bronkhorst, Johannes. 2001. “Etymology and magic: Yāska's Nirukta, Plato's Cratylus, and the riddle of semantic etymologies.” *Numen* 48: 147-203.
- Capezio, Oriana. 2013. *La metrica araba. Studio della tradizione antica*. Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari.
- Chittick, William C. 1989. *The Sufi Path of Knowledge. Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Chodkiewicz, Michel. 1992. *Un océan sans rivage. Ibn Arabī, le Livre et la Loi*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Chodkiewicz, Michel. 2008. “Une introduction à la lecture des *Futūḥāt Makkiyya*.” In: *Les illuminations de la Mecque*, edited by Michel Chodkiewicz, 13-75. Paris: Éditions Albin Michel.
- Crescenti, Carmela. 2005. *La ricerca della perfezione nella recitazione coranica. Trattato sulla scienza del tajwīd*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore.
- Dagli, Caner K. 2004. *Ibn al-'Arabi. The Ringstones of Wisdom (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam)*. Chicago: Kazi Publications.
- Durkin, Philip. 2009. *The Oxford Guide to Etymology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1971. *L'ordre du discours*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Gril, Denis. 2008. “La science des lettres.” In: *Les illuminations de la Mecque*, edited by Michel Chodkiewicz, 163-282. Paris: Éditions Albin Michel.

- Hirtenstein, Stephen. 2015. “Reviving the Dead: Ibn ‘Arabī as heir of Jesus.” *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society* 57: 37-56.
- Ibn al-‘Arabī. (forthcoming). *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam wa-Khuṣūṣ al-Kalim. A Critical Edition Based on the Autograph*, edited by Marco Aurelio Golfetto. Leiden: Brill.
- Ibn ‘Arabī. 1980. *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. Edited by Abul Ela Affifi. Bayrūt [Beirut]: Dār al-kitāb al-‘arabī.
- Ibn ‘Arabī. 2008. *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah*. Volumes I, II, III, IV. al-Qāhira [Cairo]: Dār al-kutub wa-l-waṭā’iq al-qawmiyya.
- Lory, Pierre. 2004. *La science des lettres en Islam*. Paris: Éditions Dervy.
- Manca Agnese. 1999. *Grammatica (teorico-pratica) di arabo letterario moderno*. Roma: Associazione nazionale di amicizia e di cooperazione italo-araba.
- Salvaggio, Federico. 2008. *Insegnamento della Lingua Araba e trasmissione di saperi islamici. Il caso dell’Università al-Da‘wah al-Islāmiyya di Tripoli*. Palermo: Accademia Libica in Italia.
- Scholem, Gershom. 1987. *Judaica III. Studien zur Jüdischen Mystik*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Sedley, David. 2003. *Plato’s Cratylus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Shah, Mustafa. 1999. “The Philological Endeavours of the Early Arabic Linguists: Theological Implications of the *tawqīf-iṣṭilāḥ* Antithesis and the *majāz* Controversy. Part I.” *Journal of Quranic Studies* 1/1: 27-46.
- Shah, Mustafa. 2000. “The Philological Endeavours of the Early Arabic Linguists: Theological Implications of the *tawqīf-iṣṭilāḥ* Antithesis and the *majāz* Controversy. Part II.” *Journal of Quranic Studies* 2/1: 43-66.
- Sviri, Sara. 2019. “Questions and Answers. A Literary Dialogue between al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī and Ibn al-‘Arabī.” In: *Studies in honor of Shaul Shaked*, edited by Yohanan Friedmann and Etan Kohlberg, 141-157. Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.
- Versteegh, Kees. 1984. “La « grande étymologie » d’Ibn Ḡinnī.” In: *La linguistique fantastique*, edited by Sylvain Auroux, Jean-Claude Chevalier, Nicole Jacques-Chaquin, and Christiane Marchello-Nizia, 44-50. Paris: Éditions Joseph Clims Denoël.
- Versteegh, Kees. 2014. *The Arabic Language*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Wright, William. 1967. *A Grammar of the Arabic Language. Translated from the German of Caspari and edited with numerous additions and corrections. Volume I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Federico Salvaggio holds a PhD in Arabic Linguistics from the University of Genoa and is currently a Lecturer in Arabic Language and Translation at the University of Trieste and a Research Fellow in Linguistics at the University of Udine. His research interests focus on the ideological and symbolic dimension related to linguistic knowledge and its transmission within the Arab and Islamic world. His publications mainly deal with Arabic language pedagogy and the religious and cultural influence of Arabic on other Islamic Languages.

He can be reached at: federico.salvaggio@uniud.it

How much Arabic?

The speech of second-generation Moroccan children in Turin

Giulia Ventura

This article provides an analysis of Moroccan Arabic-Italian codeswitching, starting from a selection of texts by a group of second-generation Moroccan children living in Turin. The aim of this research is to explore the language proficiency of second-generation children and to find out how much of their heritage language actually remains in their everyday speech. In order to do so, codeswitched utterances will be interpreted both from a grammatical and a sociolinguistic point of view.

1. Introduction

This article aims at analyzing the language of second generation Moroccan children living in Turin on the basis of a corpus of Moroccan Arabic-Italian texts collected over a seven-month period from a group of children attending a Moroccan cultural association based in Turin. A total of ten informants were involved, aged from 6 to 10 years, following only two selection criteria: the informant must fit the second generation category as theorized by Rumbaut (1997); the informant's first language (meaning here the language learned from the parents) must be Moroccan Arabic (thus Berber-speaking Moroccans were excluded). The data collection was based on interviews held during the breaks from the association's activities and resulted in a 40 minute long corpus of data (approximately 20000 transcribed words) which had to be cut down to 30 due to audio imperfections and/or lack of codeswitched items.

Over the years, the research on codeswitching has revolved mostly around the formulation and discussion of syntactic constraints. Nevertheless, as it has been proved by many more recent works (Owens 2005b, Nortier 1995, Boeschoten 1990) including the present research, syntactic constraints are violated so often that codeswitching can no longer be accounted for in terms of syntax alone. Thus, in this article I will show that the sociolinguistic profile of the speaker producing a codeswitched utterance plays a very important role in determining his/her linguistic choices and thus the linguistic products that emerges from this contact. Especially when dealing with the language of the second generations, the role played by both the languages known to the speaker must be investigated, analyzing the range of practical use they have in the speakers' everyday conversation

together with the “emotional value” they carry, meaning the attitude that the speakers show in regards to each language. In order to do so, data were collected through recordings of interviews and dialogues of the children attending the association’s activities. Before the interview, the children were encouraged to present themselves, describing their family and the level of proficiency they think they have in the two languages they use every day. Every interview has been recorded with a digital recorder so that everyone was aware that they were being taped. Children were encouraged to tell a story or an anecdote or to roleplay with their friends: in both cases, they were requested to try to speak as much Moroccan Arabic as they could, which would not have happened spontaneously.

2. The informants and their background

It became evident during the research that there is a clear difference in terms of proficiency in Moroccan Arabic among children from different age groups. Peer to peer interaction seems to play an important role in the everyday use of the children’s two languages: children who recently entered school, and thus have just started interacting with their Italian peers, seem to refrain from showing their Moroccan identity, preferring a larger use of Italian (not only, as it would be obvious, with Italian monolinguals, but with Moroccan bilinguals too). Bilingual teenagers seem to be more familiar with the Moroccan Arabic language and use it more often with their Moroccan peers. According to Noura Amzil,¹ second-generation Moroccan children would go through two main phases in the development of their community identity. During the first phase children tend to not exhibit their Moroccan identity, in the attempt to get closer to their Italian friends thus avoiding the use of Moroccan Arabic; in the second phase, through adolescence, a desire to reconnect with their community emerges with the Moroccan language gaining a new role and starting to be used again in an efficient way.

Before formally analyzing these children’s language products we need first to examine their degree of language proficiency in both Italian and Moroccan Arabic language and to clarify which role the two languages are assigned in their everyday speech. The first language that these children acquire is Moroccan Arabic. Speaking here of second-generation children, thus children born in Italy or who came to Italy before age 3, Moroccan Arabic remains the only language known to them until

¹Lecturer in Moroccan Arabic at the University of Turin. In order to better understand the dynamics of a group of young bilingual immigrants, I often engaged in personal communication with monolingual experts such as Noura Amzil. Her opinion is reported because, interestingly, it is in line with what I could empirically observe in my informants group; nevertheless, it has never been subjected to testing or peer review and has no scientific value.

they reach school-age. This can nevertheless change if the family includes older brothers or sisters who start using Italian with the younger sibling, anticipating its learning. Starting from school-age the dominant language, that is the language used in the most functions, will be represented by Italian² while Moroccan Arabic will be used only in those situations where the child is interfaced by Moroccan monolinguals. With his/her peers, other Moroccan-Italian bilinguals, the language used will mostly be Italian. This results in Italian being the best-known language, since the child learns how to use it in both informal and formal contexts, while Moroccan Arabic, used now only in the domestic domain, will be mastered mainly for in-home use only.

What follows is a brief presentation of the informants' sociolinguistic traits and those of their parents. The participants belonging to the same family will be presented at the same time in order to avoid redundant information.

- F is eleven and has an older sister, S, who is thirteen. They were both born in Turin and go to school as all of the other participants presented below, in the multicultural Turin neighborhood of *Barriera di Milano*. When asked about their proficiency in the Moroccan language, they both showed a certain hesitation, especially at the production level. At home, the girls speak mostly Italian with their parents, who communicate with them in a mixed Moroccan Arabic-Italian register. What emerges from their interviews is that they have a mostly passive knowledge of Moroccan Arabic, since they showed much insecurity at the production level.
- M is eight and she has two siblings, D who's nine and L who's six. They were all born in Italy in a Moroccan Muslim family but they do not attend Classical Arabic classes. All three of them have showed among the interviewees one of the best levels of proficiency in Moroccan Arabic. They only use Italian when speaking among themselves but, clearly, they receive a certain amount of daily input from the first language, enough to allow this level of competence.
- I is eight and was born in Casablanca, homeland of her parents who moved to Italy when she was three (thus allowing her to fit the second generation category as theorized by Rumabaut). She has a six years old sister R, with whom she speaks exclusively Italian, while she uses mostly Moroccan Arabic with her parents. She attends Classical Arabic classes where she stands out from both a production and comprehension perspective, but shows a certain lack of confidence when it comes to producing in Moroccan Arabic: her speech is often interrupted by hesitations and interferences from Italian.

² Piedmontese [ISO 639-3: pms], Turin's local language, does not play a role, having to all practical extents almost disappeared in town, and especially so in our area of interest, the highly multicultural neighborhood of *Barriera di Milano*.

- A is ten and she was born in Italy. She has a seven-year-old sister, Z, with whom she only speaks Italian, which is also the language most used with her parents, especially the mother. When asked about her Moroccan proficiency, she claimed that she is capable of participating in an everyday conversation, but she is also not able to tell a story, due to her lack of lexicon.
- H is six and was born in Italy. She is an only child and she too showed many deficiencies in the correct use of certain grammatical items, in particular in the proper use of prepositions.

To sum up, each one of these children grew in a rather similar environment. They all belong to the second generation of the Moroccan community in Turin, they all go to school in a multicultural neighborhood, their parents were born in Morocco and they all use Italian for in-group conversation. Nevertheless, as it will appear clear below, they appear as a pretty heterogeneous group, with children who have a very good Moroccan Arabic proficiency (both active and passive) and children who struggle in production even in a basic conversation.

3. Theoretical framework

According to the influential Myers-Scotton's *Matrix Language Frame* model (Myers-Scotton 1993b) codeswitching is described as "a selection by bilinguals or multilinguals of forms from an embedded language in utterances of a matrix language during the same conversation" (1993a: 4). The Matrix Language (: ML) is defined as (1993B: 4) "the main language in CS utterances" and the Embedded Language (: EL) as "the other language which participates in CS, but with a lesser role." The Matrix Language Frame model distinguishes between system morphemes (grammar morphemes) and content morphemes (lexical morphemes) and states that only the ML provides the system morpheme, while the EL can only provide some content morphemes (the so-called "ML hypothesis"). Nevertheless her approach has been criticized over the years by many authors (Li Wei 1994, MacSwan 2000, Bentahila and Davies 1983, Aabi 1999), so that she was forced to review some of her claims redefining the notions of ML and that of EL islands. According to MacSwan (1999: 146), "nothing constrains code switching apart from the requirements of the mixed grammars." The result of such a claim is that, in order to account for the grammaticality of mixing two languages in discourse, a third grammar derived from the proposed constraints is no longer needed: what is allowed in monolingual grammar will also be allowed in code-switching. Nevertheless, by following this model, one has to assume that the grammars of two languages involved in the interactions have both been perfectly acquired by the speakers. As we will see below, this cannot be said about our informants, whose Moroccan speech shows many gaps at the production level.

Examples of codeswitching involving Arabic have often played an important role in testing the model's claims, but they also forced Myers-Scotton to later reconsider some of the model's statements. Bentahila and Davies (1983) were in fact forced to reject the ML hypothesis when they found in their corpus sentences such as “*wāḥad le liquide*,” where the first part of the double determiner is provided by the EL (here Moroccan Arabic), thus violating the hypothesis' main claim.

Owens (2005), on the other hand, argues that some examples of codeswitching just can't fit the MLF model. In particular, Arabic seems to have acted as a correction tool for models trying to explain codeswitching in terms of constraints. On the frequent use of bare nouns in codeswitched utterances, Owens (2005B) argues that factors such as language proficiency and the differing social statuses of the languages involved may influence the choice. Thus concentrating only on formal features of this phenomenon may mislead one's analysis which should rather focus on sociolinguistic aspects too. Especially when the speech community analyzed is formed by children, it appears evident that each language is linked to its environment, forming a binary opposition which separates the school domain from the home one. The linguistic development of most second-generation speakers usually involves two phases in which first the heritage and then the socially dominant language act as the dominant language: “while the heritage language is almost exclusively spoken at home during early childhood, in fact, second-generation speakers gradually shift to the socially dominant language when they start school and consequently expand their social network” (Luca D'Anna 2020). Here, the concept of language dominance can help our analysis. Different from social dominance, meaning the social and political status of a language (Van Coetsem 1988: 13), the notion of linguistic dominance as used by Van Coetsem (2000) is based on a psycholinguistic criterion: a bilingual speaker is dominant in the language in which he is most proficient and which is not necessarily his or her first/native language. In this view, “a linguistically dominant language does not automatically correspond to a socially dominant language since speakers can be linguistically dominant in a socially subordinate language” (Manfredi 2017). This goes against Lucas (2015: 525) who sees “dominance as equivalent to nativeness in all cases.” The approach for determining language dominance was theorized in Weinreich (1953) according to the following criteria:

- a. relative proficiency;
- b. mode of use;
- c. first learning;
- d. usefulness in communication;
- e. emotional involvement;
- f. function in social advance;

g. literary-cultural value (Weinreich 1953: 75-82).

Determining dominance is thus fundamental when analyzing bilingual speech. As discovered in Genesee, Nicoladis and Paradis (1995), mixing is strictly related to language dominance: children would tend to codeswitch more when using the non-dominant (psycholinguistically speaking) language. According to Bernardini and Schlyter (2004), children would develop the two languages differently: one will be developed as a SL (strong language), thus at a monolingual level, while the other one, the WL (weak language) will be acquired at a slower and more gradual pace. Syntactic development of each language will be linked to the amount of input the child will receive from each language. That is why codeswitching in children often appear as unidirectional, due to the poor lexical development of the WL.

4. Codeswitching

In the following sections, the morphological and syntactic analysis of the data from the corpus will be carried on. The data collected are in a Moroccan Arabic matrix (produced by explicit request; the informants in fact, interacting with a non-Arab speaker, would not have produced such utterances naturally) with elements inserted from the embedded language, Italian. First, the insertion of nouns and noun phrases will be analyzed, followed by the treatment of lexical complements of verbs and prepositions. The Moroccan Arabic verb form itself doesn't seem to be affected by any phenomenon in particular and has always been used correctly, while the treatment of the prepositions following the verbs and their complements provided a more interesting opportunity of analysis.

4.1. Insertion of Italian nouns: grammatical gender

This paragraph deals with the use of Italian noun phrases as embedded elements inside a Moroccan Arabic matrix sentence. The next sections will deal with treatment of grammatical gender, number and definiteness of code-switched items inside the corpus. Data from the corpus will be reported with the initials of the child who produced the utterance.

Both Italian and Moroccan Arabic have a two-gender based system. In Moroccan Arabic feminine and masculine gender often correspond to the natural gender of animate beings; for inanimate beings, the gender is assigned arbitrarily (the same thing happens with Italian). Plural has no gender distinction, so nouns, pronouns and plural adjectives agreement will always be the same regardless of gender. Finally, many Moroccan dialects have lost the gender distinction for the second-person

sigular pronoun and verb, which is a feature often maintained in other dialects (Simone Bettega, p.c.). In Italian instead, gender distinction is expressed by suffixes: nouns ending with *-o* are generally masculine, while nouns ending with *-a* are generally feminine (there are various exceptions in both cases).

1) *māmā šrət* la torta (A)³

mom buy-PST.3F DET-cake

“mom bought the cake”

2) *had l-ḥafla* è durata quattro ore (A)

DEM DET-party last-PST.3F four hour-PL

“this party lasted four hours”

(3) *microfono ḥāda?* (H)

microphone DEM

“is this a microphone?”

(4) *tendīr* la *ramadān* (I)

ASP-1SG-do DET-ramadān

“I do ramadan”

(5) *tānšuf* la tivu *mša uxtī* (I)

ASP-1SG-watch DET-TV with sister-POSS.1SG

“I watch TV with my sister”

The previous examples show that articles, demonstratives and verbs gender agrees with the one of the inserted Italian noun. In example (4) we find an interesting phenomenon found in other codeswitching corpora, that is the insertion of one single item from the EL in a completely Arabic

³The bracketed letters after each example stand for the informant’s initial name, as detailed in section 2. above.

sentence. This goes against the predictions made by the Myers-Scotton MLF model since *ramaḍān* is a masculine noun in Italian⁴ and would thus require a masculine article (the Italian article *la* is to be used on feminine nouns only) or the invariable Arabic article *al-*. This phenomenon remains here unexplained but we may suppose that this speaker, while addressing a non-Moroccan interlocutor, has been drawn to use an Italian article. This article in fact follows a noun which has been phonetically produced in Italian, that is, without the pharyngealization of the /d/. Thus the speaker, having never heard this word used in an Italian context, mistakenly uses it with a feminine article. This article then must have acted as a *trigger* for the next noun to be pronounced in an Italian contour.

4.2. Number

Both Italian and Moroccan Arabic nouns may be either singular or plural, with the latter having also a dual form for a limited number of nouns. Plural nouns may either have a sound form (marked by the suffix *-at* for the feminine and *-in* for the masculine) or a broken form (marked by one of the many patterns of internal vowel change). Italian nouns can instead be divided into three classes: (1) both masculine and feminine nouns ending in *-a* which form the plural in *-i* if masculine and in *-e* if feminine; (2) feminine and masculine nouns ending in *-o* and forming plural in *-i*; (3) masculine and feminine nouns ending in *-e* which form the plural in *-i*.

Below some examples showing that Italian plural nouns agree in plural with the rest of the Moroccan Arabic sentence. Italian plural articles are often maintained, since there is not a Moroccan article for the expression of the plural category only:

6) *l-luwwāl xəššna nəšri le carote (H)*

DET-first have to-ACT.PTCP.1PL buy-PRS.1PL DET.F.PL carrot-F.PL

“first we have to buy the carrots”

⁴In Italian, borrowed items are generally assigned the unmarked gender, masculine whenever they cannot follow any of the gender assignment criteria. These criteria are: the phonologic rule, which assigns the feminine gender to nouns ending in *-a* (“la tequila”); the semantic rule which assigns gender through analogy to its hypernym (the English borrowing “station wagon” will be feminine since it refers to the feminine hypernym “car”)

(<https://accademiadellacrusca.it/it/consulenza/genere-dei-forestierismi/1229>)

- (7) *la, āna bġit l-patate (R)*
 no I want-PRS.1SG DET-potato-F.PL
 “No, I want potatoes”

We may also find in the corpus examples like the one below, where the noun is used without article. The omission of the article (whose use in Italian is necessary) while code-switching is very frequent in this corpus; this phenomenon will be further explored below.

- (8) *Lā, āna bġit caramelle (L)*
 no I want-PRS.1SG candy-F.PL
 “no, I want candy”

While the article often agrees with the noun in code-switched sentences, the corpus also shows us examples proving that linguistic dominance doesn't belong to the matrix language, but to the embedded one:

- (9) *nəmšī n-nṣās alle... l-ṣašra (I)*
 go-PRS.1SG sleep-PRS.1SG at-DET.F.PL... DET-ten
 “I go to sleep at ten”

In Moroccan Arabic, time is expressed through the feminine form of the cardinal number, since it implicitly agrees with the noun *sāʿa* (“hour”). In Italian instead, the cardinal number needs to be preceded by a preposition (“a”) attached to the feminine definite article, which will be singular for “one o'clock” (“*all'una*”) and plural for the other numbers (“*alle dieci*”). Here we can see that Italian dominance of the speaker is signaled by the prepositional article required by Italian; short after she realizes her mistake, she changes with the appropriate Arabic article.

4.3. Definiteness

Definiteness of Moroccan Arabic nouns is marked through the invariable article *l-*. Indefiniteness is instead marked by: (1) the double determiner *wāḥad l-*; (2) the article *šī*; (3) the zero article. The prefix *l-* is assimilated with the first consonant, if solar, of the following noun. This assimilation leads to the

production of a double consonant, which is often hard to tell from a non-double consonant and can cause problems during the analysis.

Before dealing with the treatment of the definite article, as either part of the double determiner or used alone, we first need to discuss a certain phenomenon with a high frequency in codeswitching corpora dealing with Moroccan Arabic in contact with another language: the omission of the definite article *l-*.

4.4. The omission of the definite article *l-*

Among the studies that focus on the analysis of codeswitching involving Arabic a phenomenon found by many authors (Nortier 2000, Bentahila and Davies 1983, Boumans 1998, Aabi 1999) has raised particular interest: the omission of the Moroccan Arabic definite article when preceding foreign nouns. This omission is often found when the article is followed by indefinite non-Arabic nouns, as well as when it is part of the double determiner *wāḥad l-*, or the demonstrative *had l-*. In all the cases above, the presence of a definite article is always required in Moroccan Arabic. In particular, we will focus on the treatment of the double determiner, since the language in contact with Moroccan Arabic here, Italian, only uses one element to express indefiniteness. Below, we will focus on the analysis of the previous literature regarding this phenomenon, particularly when Moroccan Arabic interacts with the French and the Dutch languages.

4.4.1. Why the omission of the definite article?

Among the Moroccan Arabic-French corpora, the one produced by Bentahila and Davies (1983) leads the authors to the formulation of the subcategorisation constraint which specifies (1983: 329): “all items must be used in such a way as to satisfy the (language-particular) subcategorisation restrictions imposed on them”. According to this theory, examples such as (10) are not acceptable since the demonstrative *hādūk* needs to be followed by a definite article. Instead we may find examples such as (11) which satisfy the selectional requirements of the prefix *wāḥad*.

As already specified, Moroccan Arabic indefinite form is given by a compound formed by *wāḥad* (numeral “one”) and *l-* (definite invariable article). This form, when interested by codewitching, may be found in sentences such as (11) which follows a Moroccan Arabic syntax, that is satisfying the selectional requirements of the prefix *wāḥad*:

(10) *hādūk* problémes (Bentahila and Davies 1983)

DEM- problems

“Those problems”⁵

(11) *xdām-t f- wāḥad* la société d’assurances (Heath 1989)

work-PST.1SG in-INDF DET- insurance company

“I worked in an insurance company”

The analysis of this phenomenon is also carried on by Aabi (1999), defending the FPC model against Myers-Scotton’s MLF (1993b). The author criticizes Myers-Scotton’s constraint according to which switches of a morpheme system in the EL are considered not valid: the example (12), which would be seen as incorrect by this model, is accepted in the FPC:

(12) je vais te dire que *l-* medecin peut faire... (Aabi 1998)

I go 2SG-tell that DET-medicine can do

“I tell you, medicine can do...”

According to this model, based on the “no constraint” theory by MacSwan (2000), the notion of a third grammar or other restrictions are no longer needed: as long as language specific features are respected in the course of derivation, any case of code-switching should be allowed. Thus any switch involving a double determiner (between the determiner and its complement) should be allowed as long as the selectional requirements of its functional head (the determiner) are satisfied. Aabi (1999) considers double determiner as two separate functional categories since each element can assume a grammatical function without the other; therefore, each functional category must have its selectional requirements satisfied: the example (11) is considered acceptable since the determiner *wāḥad* requires to be followed by another determiner which has to be definite and singular, while the determiner *l-* requires to be followed by a noun.

A recent attempt at validating the MLF model has been made by Ziamari (2018): the author tries to explain the use of the determiner in the French-Moroccan Arabic corpora by denying the most

⁵For cited examples the glossing method of the original is maintained; examples from this corpus are instead glossed following the Leipzig Glossing Rules (see List of abbreviations).

recent linear approaches. According to the MLF model, Moroccan Arabic-French codeswitching may produce three different nominal structures: a NP called mixed constituent (where Moroccan Arabic provides the determiner while French provides the noun) (13); internal EL islands⁶ (where the NP is French) (14); and full French NPs (15):

(13) *dāk at-* tension (Ziamari 2018)

DEM DET-tension

“this tension”

(14) *wāḥad la* pression (Ziamari 2018)

INDF DET-pressure

“a pressure”

(15) *xayba l'* indifference (Ziamari 2018)

horrible DET-indifference

“indifference is horrible”

In a revision of her model, Myers-Scotton (2002:119) states that “embedded language determiners (French here) can appear if they show sufficient congruence with their ML counterparts at all three levels of the abstract grammatical structure”. The high frequency of this structure in the Moroccan Arabic-French corpora would be justified by the congruence between French and Arabic determiners at three levels of Myers-Scotton’s “abstract grammatical structure”: lexical-conceptual structure, predicate-argument structure and morphological realization patterns (2002). Since they share sufficient congruence, system morphemes can thus be provided by both French and Moroccan Arabic. Internal EL islands would thus be much more frequent than mixed constituents since French articles have three salient features (definiteness, gender and number) while Moroccan articles only have one, definiteness. Thus when a French noun is selected at the lemma level, the article is

⁶ Defined as “intermediate constituents within a larger mixed constituent which is a maximal projection within the ML” (Myers-Scotton and Jake 2000: 100). In a noun phrase we may find a noun complement provided by the ML and a noun preceded by a determiner from the EL. (14) is an example of internal EL island since “*wāḥad*” is a noun complement from the ML, while “*la pression*” is a DET+ noun from French.

activated as well, but since there is insufficient congruence between the two languages, the French noun, since gender and number are non-existing feature in the ML determiner, will appear with the agreeing article.

If we look at other corpora such as the Moroccan Arabic-English, we see that the double determiner *wāḥad l-* is much more frequent since it is the Moroccan article the one who has “the largest array of uninterpretable features” (Chomsky 2000)

(16) *dad 'ta-ni wahed al- book mazinu* (Benchiba 2007)

dad give-3SG-1SG INDF DEF-book nice

“dad gave me a nice book”

According to this model, a masculine noun will have more chances to appear with *wāḥad l-* (Ziamari 2018):

(17) *wāḥad l- psychiatre* (Ziamari 2018)

INDF DET-psychiatrist

“a psychiatrist”

Nortier (1995), while analyzing codeswitching between Moroccan Arabic and Dutch, finds that the subcategorisation constraint can't be applied to her corpus. Here we can find the double determiner 49 times, of which 17 where codeswitching took place after the Moroccan Arabic definite article while 32 where the definite article is deleted.

The FPC model can't be applied to Nortier corpus since the selectional requirements of the first function head of the double determiner are not satisfied:

(18) *wāḥad gesprek* (Nortier 1995)

DET- conversation

“a conversation”

Nortier thus turns to the concept of neutrality as found by Muysken (1987) and defined as a strategy facilitating codeswitching when the languages involved have few or no equivalence. According to Muysken (1987) neutrality can be reached though suspension of grammar, a strategy found by

Boeschoten (1990). Another concept applied by Nortier is the one of convergence as described by Clyne (1987): “the syntactic system of L1 in many individuals converges towards L2 and syntactic convergence in specific sentences often accompanies code-switching” (1987: 750). Although Dutch is not a pro-drop language, Clyne finds examples where the subject pronouns is deleted when in a switched sentence. According to the author “subject pronouns are sometimes dropped where they are at the boundary of a switch and Dutch and English word order are different” e anche “syntactic convergence will take place around the switch, apparently IN ORDER to ease code-switching” (1987: 753).

Thus the deletion of subject pronouns and definite articles, being an example of violation of grammar, would be justified by the mean of facilitating codeswitching. Nortier (1995) finally explains the omission of the definite article in terms of “neutrality strategies, of which suspension of syntax is an example, leading to convergence in order to ease codeswitching.” (Nortier 1995: 89).

Still, the reasons why Dutch and French act so differently in such similar contexts remain unknown. Certainly we can suppose that the phonetic form of this determiner may have eased its retention. There is, in fact, a significant overlap between Moroccan and French allomorphs in the singular forms, leading to a set of forms where we cannot easily distinguish between codeswitching and borrowing. As Heath (1989) states, any French singular noun beginning in a vowel will have a *l-* article, whether it is a stabilized borrowing or codeswitching. This equivalence between French articles and the Moroccan one could explain its high frequency in these contexts: they would be so similar that speakers would use one phonetic form referring to both French and Moroccan, while the grammatical intention would be only Moroccan. This explanation is of course a valid one, but cannot be considered as the only one: we know in fact from Bentahila and Davies (1983: 323) that speakers are able to distinguish between Moroccan *l-* and French *le*:

(19) *had le truc* (Bentahila and Davies 1983)

DEM- DET thing

“this thing”

In the example above, *le* is unequivocally French, as, if not, we would have found something like “*had t-truc*”. Phonetic similarity cannot thus represent the only explanation to this phenomenon. According to Bentahila and Davies (1983) definite article cannot be separated from nouns in their corpus because Moroccan speakers tend to learn new vocabulary together with the corresponding

articles. This would lead speakers to maintain articles also in everyday speech, but we know from Nortier that Moroccan-Dutch speakers also learn Dutch nouns together with their articles.

Considering that in telegraphese style it is permitted, if not obligatory, to omit any redundant information, Nortier leads a comparative study of the usage of articles in both French and Dutch newspapers. Her expectation was to find that articles in Dutch telegraphese would be used much less than they are in the “normal” style, which she indeed finds. French on the other hand, keeps almost all of its articles, leading the author to state that French article would act like that because of their clitic nature, and thus inseparable from the nouns they agree with. Plus, according to Nortier, psycholinguistic consideration should also be kept into account, since the main function of codeswitching should be easing the conversation, allowing the speaker to express him/herself as appropriately and economically as possible.

Also in Boumans’ Moroccan Arabic-French corpus (1998) we find the deletion of the Moroccan articles when preceding Dutch nouns. According to Boumans this loss may also be “a feature of the monolingual language or an idiosyncratic speech variety.” Nevertheless, given the high frequency of this phenomenon in different corpora involving different languages, it would appear reductive to explain it as a simple idiosyncrasy; an attempt at producing a new analysis seems more appropriate.

4.4.2. Data from the Turin corpus

From the corpus produced here, interesting data seem to emerge about the treatment of this element by Italian bilinguals. The treatment of the articles preceding definite Italian nouns shows a slight oscillation, but with a tendency to maintain it (on the total of the determiner+Italian noun structures found, 62% maintain the article while 38% delete it):

(20) əl- ḥdāš dicembre mama šrət la torta (A)

DET-eleven December mom buy-PST.3F DET.F.SG- cake

“on eleventh December mom bought the cake”

(21) Ana fi domenica tamšī fi- s- sūq (H)

I in Sunday go-ASP.1SG in- DET- market

“On Sunday I go to the market”

Double determiners, on the other hand, have been treated similarly to the ones found in the Dutch corpus, but not in the French one:

(22) *Nəmši naxəd wāḥəd libro* (S)

Go-PRS.1SG get-PRS.1SG INDF- book

“I go get a book”

(23) *wāḥəd n- nhār āna ho visto wāḥəd struzzo* (I)

INDF- DET-time I see-PAST.1SG INDF- ostrich

“Once I saw an ostrich”

Here, as in Nortier (1995), we find that both the subcategorisation constraint and the FPC model can't fit the data. Examples like (22) and (23) don't satisfy the selectional requirements of the prefix *wāḥəd* as do the examples from the Bentahila and Davies (1983) corpus. FPC model too can't be applied here since selectional requirements of the functional head, here the determiner, are not satisfied.

Nortier's theory, according to which these phenomena would be explained in terms of neutrality strategies in order to avoid “surface structure equivalence problems”, may fit our data. Nevertheless, according to Clyne (1987), omission happens when the languages in contact have a different word order. Anyway both Italian and Moroccan Arabic are SVO languages and they both are distinguished by a certain degree of flexibility when it comes to word order. Also, Italian doesn't use the same structure as Moroccan Arabic to express indefiniteness, but uses instead an indefinite article preceding the noun with whom it agrees in gender and number. When resorting to a mixed sentence, the informants here thus haven't produced structures like “*wāḥəd il libro*” or “*wāḥəd un libro*”, but rather “*wāḥəd libro*”. A valid alternative would be represented by the use of the Italian indefinite article, found only once:

(24) *w mən- baʕd... una persona xəlla ʕalina* (M)

and PREP- after... INDF.F.SG-person let go-PST.3SG PREP-1PL

“and later a person let us go”

Nevertheless, as we can clearly see in the corpus, these children are able to produce a correct Moroccan indefinite form:

(25) *mšīt mŕā l-bābā wāḥad l- blāsa* (F)

go-PST.1SG with DET-dad INDF- DET-place

“I went with dad to a place”

(26) *wāḥad n- nhār āna w-axtī kenna mšīna l-bār* (M)

INDF- DET-time I and-sister-POSS.1SG ASP.1PL go-PST.1PL DET-bar

“Once my sister and I went to a bar”

Thus by forming sentences such as (22) and (23) they violate Moroccan Arabic grammar rules. Clyne would explain this violation in terms of strategy used in order to ease codeswitching: its use would, in his opinion, lead to a communication produced as economically as possible. Having no proofs here against this proposal, we may maintain it in the course of our analysis. The same cannot be said about the clitic nature of articles, which would justify the treatment of articles in Moroccan Arabic-French corpora: in fact, Italian articles are also clitic.

If we ask the community about this phenomenon their answer seems, one again, quite interesting: French language would be such a growing influence in the everyday Moroccan Arabic speech that the frequent mixing of these two varieties would produce its own register, characterized, among other things, by these phenomena of article mixing. Thus if Moroccan speakers tend to maintain the French article while codeswitching between NPs it's because this fusion has become part of their everyday speech register and making this phenomenon into a new norm. On the other hand, the contact between Italian and Moroccan Arabic is much more recent and codeswitching is a strategy applied mostly by the younger generations, whose parents often don't have the Italian proficiency needed in order to codeswitch. So if the younger generations will keep on using this phenomenon long enough we can suppose that it will become a stable norm even in the speech of future generations, as happened with French.

This theory is very interesting but when dealing with second generation Moroccan bilinguals shifting the focus on the concept of dominance could be helpful. If we apply the norms introduced by Weinreich (1953) and if we determine which language has the largest array of functions in their communicative context, the dominant language of these children will appear to be Italian. Thus we may suppose that these children could interpret *wāḥad* as a direct equivalent of the Italian indefinite articles, and so the use of a double determiner would seem redundant to them. In Italian,

indefiniteness is expressed by the juxtaposition of two elements, the indefinite article followed by the noun. Children may thus make a calque of the Italian structure and, when speaking in a mixed register, would form structures like “*wāḥad libro*.” In the French-Moroccan corpora seen above, case studies took place among the Moroccan community in Morocco, a community with a high rate of bilingualism due to the growing use of French in many spheres of the public life. Our corpus, on the other hand, was collected among a second generation Moroccan community based in Italy, and this consideration deserves an important distinction: the subjects analyzed here are children whose mother tongue (that is, first language) is Moroccan Arabic, the language of a minority community in an Italian environment, while their dominant language is undeniably represented by Italian. As already stated, Italian is the variety used in the largest array of functions, whose frequent use may also be driven by a generational reason. As Appel and Muysken (1987: 41) notice, “the younger group often wants to claim social status different from that of their parents' generation. Therefore, younger people choose another language as their regular medium of communication”. So in this case it would be more appropriate to focus not as much on the use of matrix and embedded language, but rather on the concept of language dominance. As we can see from the corpus, even when the informants are asked to use Moroccan Arabic as much as possible, their dominant language, Italian, will still influence syntax and structures.

5. The treatment of prepositions and verbal complements

As for the definite prefix *l-*, also the preposition *l-* indicating movement is often omitted in the corpus. When it precedes Italian nouns it often disappears, sometimes together with the definite article *l-* (31). This mainly happens after the verb *mšā* “to go to”. Also in this case we find a match with the Moroccan-Dutch corpora:

(27) *mši-t* – kleuterschool (Boumans 1998)

go-1SG-PST nursing school

“I went to nursing school”

(28) *kənnə mšīna- l-bagno āna w- uxtī* (M)

ASP-1PL go-PST.1PL DET-bathroom I and sister-POSS.1SG

“My sister and I went to the bathroom”

This happens also with *ǧadi* as a movement verb:

- (29) *Āna ġadi l- bagno* (D)
 I go-ACT.PTCP.1SG DET-bathroom
 “I’m going to the bathroom”

In (30) the speaker switches between the verb and its complement. Here the selectional requirements of the verb *mšā* are satisfied with a completely Italian structure. The noun “scuola” doesn’t have an article because it is not required in Italian, but had it been said in Moroccan, the article would have been necessary (*mši-t li-l-madrassa*):

- (30) *Āna mši-t a scuola* (S)
 I go-PST.1SG PREP- school
 “I went to school”

In (31) the omission of the preposition leads to the omission of the definite prefix as well. Here this absence can’t be justified with the use of an Italian noun:

- (31) *mši-t doposcuola* (H)
 go-PST.1SG after-school program
 “I went to after-school program”

In (32) a speaker tries to tell a story using Moroccan Arabic using the verb “to go to” followed by an Italian noun preceded by an Italian definite prefix; later on she uses the same noun preceded by an Italian articulated preposition:

- (32) Cappuccetto rosso *mši-t il bosco [...] mši-t nel bosco* (A)
 Little Red Riding Hood go-PST.3M DET.M.SG- woods [...] go-PST.3M in-DET.M.SG-woods
 “Little Red Riding Hood went to the woods”

In (28) we found the omission of the preposition *l-*, which has a high frequency in the corpus, while the definite prefix is maintained. The same speaker later produced the example (30) switching between the verb and the preposition, expressed in Italian. Here the speaker respected the selectional requirements of the verb *mšā*, which requires a preposition before the noun. We need to

keep in mind that the preposition does not assimilate to the first consonant of the noun, as the definite prefix does. Thus in (31) the preposition is clearly missing, while whether or not the article was used depends from the pronunciation of the *d-*, whether it is pronounced as a double consonant.

The preposition *mšā* as well (indicating in general a complement conveying company) disappears frequently, particularly when used to express time. Time in Moroccan Arabic is expressed through the preposition *mšā* followed by the definite article and the numeral: *žīt mšā-əl-ħdāš* “I arrived at eleven” (Caubet 1993: 209). Examples like (33) replace *mšā* with the Italian preposition followed by the article, resulting in a double article:

- (33) *ġadi-namši n-našs alle... l- ššara* (A)
go-FUT.1SG sleep-PRS-1SG at-DET.F.PL... DET-ten
 “I go to sleep at... ten”

This phenomenon may be explained by the hesitation of the speaker in finding the right words to use in a Moroccan sentence. She firstly resorts to an Italian articulated preposition because it is the most easily available to the speaker. Then, when she realizes her mistake, she corrects starting from the prefix+ numeral in Moroccan Arabic, as if the function expressed by the Italian preposition had already been satisfied. Here too we find a match with the Dutch-Moroccan Arabic corpora:

- (34) *ne-mši-w acht uur dreëntwintig* (Boumans 1998)
1-go-PL eight twenty-three
 “We’ll go at eight twenty-three”

Locative prepositions *f-* and *b-* appear stable in use, except when used with *mša* where still we find uncertainty in the use of the proper preposition:

- (35) *āna mši-t fi -l- žārda* (S)
1SG go-PST.1SG to-DET-park
 “I went to the park”

This uncertainty was found particularly in six years old and younger children. This phenomenon would be frequent in many monolingual children as well, but in bilingual children this confusion is

found also in older speakers, as in (36). The speaker here is ten years old but her uncertainty about the use of the proper preposition is such that she produced a speech where she turns to three different solutions to express the same meaning:

(36) *ǧadda ǧadi-ənfaq mən- t- tmənya* (A)

tomorrow wake up-FUT.1SG PREP- DET- nine

“Tomorrow I’ll wake up at nine”

(36a) *ǧadda ǧadi-əntǧādda l-wāhda* (A)

tomorrow have lunch-FUT.1SG DET-one

“Tomorrow I’ll have lunch at one”

(36b) *ǧadi-nəmši n-nafs alle... l- ʔašra* (A)

go-FUT.1SG sleep-PRS.1SG PREP-DET.F.PL... DET-ten

“Tomorrow I’ll go to sleep at ten”

The speaker firstly uses *mən*, a preposition mainly used to signal an origin, a starting point in space or time (Caubet 1993). In (36a) she turns to the numeral preceded by the definite article while in (36b) she hesitates between the Moroccan form (still without the proper preposition) and the Italian one.

6. Language shift or language stagnation?

As noticed above, second generation Moroccan children tend to rely on strategies of reduction and simplification of certain structures. This linguistic behavior could be a sign of a developing linguistic register simplified in both lexicon and syntax. From here the concepts of language shift and language stagnation may come in handy.

By language loss we mean “a form of language change that causes potential communication problems between individuals and the community of which they consider themselves a member” (Jaspaert and Kroon 1989: 80). On the other hand, language shift occurs when a language used by a community is replaced by another, usually more prestigious, language. Language shift is often regarded as a consequence of restriction in domains of use of a minority language, particularly when a majority language is used in most domains, including the home (El Aissati 1996). Studying the

language of second generation Moroccans in the Netherlands, El Aissati (1996) finds that this group is gradually adjusting to communicative strategies that are typical of Dutch monolinguals, while tending to cling to a small set of generalized strategies of the Moroccan Arabic language. This generalization of strategies is seen as “paradigmatic leveling” (El Aissati 1996: 75) that is when irregular paradigms become regularized or reduced to fewer paradigms. Such levelling is seen as the result of restricted input and would characterize situations of language shifts and language loss. Another typical characteristic of this process is a frequent confusion in phonetics at a production level: according to El Aissati, speakers would often mistake between oppositions like /h/ e /ħ/ and between /q/ e /k/. According to the above-mentioned informant Noura Amzil, a certain confusion in phonetic production would appear also in younger Moroccan monolinguals, but Moroccan bilinguals would face a delay in the correct acquisition of these pronunciations. If a Moroccan child living in Morocco learns how to distinguish between /h/ e /ħ/ when he/she is 4, an emigrate counterpart will learn it when he/she is 6. This is very interesting and does not clash with data from previous studies signaling this delay in the acquisition of the entire phonology. It seems that at a perception level second generation children don't face any particular problems with the phonology, while at a production level it is evident that they have difficulties compared to their monolingual counterpart.

The group here analyzed reveals to be pretty heterogeneous when it comes to phonetic production: if some children show a frequent uncertainty, others, supposedly more exposed to the Moroccan language don't reveal any particular problems.

It still remains unclear whether these children are indeed losing some of the traits of the Moroccan language or if they are just acquiring it at a slower pace compared to their monolingual counterpart: in the latter case one can rather speak of “language stagnation” (El Aissati 1996, Verhoeven and Boeschoten 1986). These children, because of the reduced input from their first language against the abundance of the ones from Italian, will eventually reach a comprehensive competence of Moroccan Arabic, but at a slower pace compared to their monolingual peers. If this equalization never happens, then we can speak of language loss. It's not easy to predict which scenery will eventually come true since there are other social factors playing a role in this evolution such as the language attitude.

Language attitude has been told to be the main factor determining the maintaining or the loss of a language in a given community of speakers (Albirini 2018). A positive attitude toward one's heritage language often translates into increased efforts to acquire it and keep it alive in the life of the community. Still, language attitude and the sense of community identity would be linked to the amount of input speakers receive on a daily basis. The asymmetric proficiency of different heritage

speakers would be caused by their different commitment to the Arabic language, due to their divergent sense of Arab and Muslim identity. It is certainly soon to interrogate these children about their attitude, but from what emerged by the corpus and by conversation with the parents, their attitude seems to be very positive. For the children's parents the conservation of their Arab and Muslim identity is fundamental, as proven by the success of the Arabic language classes held by the women of the association.

As uneasy as it is to predict the linguistic future of these generations, it is still undeniable that right now their linguistic development is facing a dynamic process of change and fusion among the first language and the dominant language. The language of the second generation as we see it now appears as a language with a reduced lexicon and broken syntax. In fact, as also shown by previous studies (Albirini and Benmamoun 2014) the first cause of codeswitching among children of an immigrant community would be a lack of lexicon.

7. French influence

A particular case of codeswitching is found in a speaker who has a good Moroccan Arabic proficiency, such that she is familiar with that Moroccan-French mixed register discussed earlier.

(37) *sāddinā al- bāb w- batt- bloquinā* (M)

close-PST.3PL DET-door and get- stuck-PST.1PL

“We closed the door and we got stuck”

Bloquinā here is a loan from the French verb “*bloquer*.” As Heath (1989) states, French verbs ending in *-er* have two possible outcomes when brought into Moroccan Arabic: (1) the root is imported adding an ending *-i*; (2) the root is imported with no added ending. The verb *bloquer* will thus become *bloqui* in Moroccan Arabic, resulting in *bloqui-nā* in first person plural. The use of such verb shows that this speaker receives frequent input of Moroccan Arabic from people belonging to the first generation, who have developed a good bilingual French proficiency in their homeland.

Just like young Moroccans living in Morocco, the emigrated Italian counterpart too reveals a French influence in everyday speaking, especially when dealing with the language of technology. This type of language shows in this corpus a French origin, often without any adjustments:

- (38) il download? Ka -n- gul- hom ka- y- dāšārža (D)
DET.M.SG-download? ASP .1SG- say- 3PL ASP-3SG-download
“il download? Dico loro che si scarica”

The example above comes from a discussion between two speakers about the use of the verb “to download” in Moroccan Arabic. If the first speaker turns to a solution expected for a Moroccan Arabic speaker, that is a French loan, the second speaker offers a much more creative solution:

- (39) Io dico che tə-t-scarica (Z)
I say that ASP-3F-download
“I say that tə-t-download”

This speaker here prefers the use of a (his words) “Moroccanized Italian,” thereby creating new solutions to fill the gap of a specialized Moroccan vocabulary. He uses the Italian verb “scaricare” together with a Moroccan verbal prefix that indicates verbal aspect.

It is therefore evident that French is part of the language proficiency of these children, even at a very superficial level. Here a French proficiency seems to be an index of a higher Moroccan Arabic proficiency. Those who showed such features are in fact the speakers most familiar with Moroccan Arabic. This can be seen as a result of a good amount of inputs from the first language, as much that it made them familiar with that French lexicon used in everyday conversation by their parents.

The choices these speakers make are in fact derived exclusively by what they learn from their parents and by how much they keep on using French in the country of emigration. If these inputs are missing, the easiest solution would then be resorting to the most common English form or, as in (38) a mixed Italian structure. If after the establishment of a community in Italy input from French start disappearing, these phenomena may become much less frequent. We can thus suppose that the use of French in these speakers’ everyday interactions is bound to disappear both for children and their parents, who will thus only resort to Italian or English vocabulary.

8. Conclusions

In this article I tried to examine the products of Moroccan Arabic in contact with Italian attempting to explain the difference between this codeswitching and two other language pairs: Moroccan Arabic-French and Moroccan Arabic-Dutch codeswitching. In order to do so, I compared the data from my

corpus with the ones found in corpora from previous studies, focusing on formal aspects of the phenomenon but explaining them from a more sociolinguistically-oriented approach.

It must be stressed that this study refers to the Turin Moroccan community only, a tight-knit community known among Italian Moroccan people to be one of a kind. According to Noura Amzil, the Turin community cannot be compared to other Italian communities such as the Genoa or the Milan based ones. Having settled mostly in one single district, *Barriera di Milano*, the Turin community would have managed to keep a genuine Moroccan identity: its culture and traditions remained very faithful to the original, while the same cannot be said for the other Italian communities. Turin Moroccan people would thus be characterized by features that immediately give away their origin to other communities. According to Noura Amzil, the *Barriera di Milano* community has created a so-called “ghetto,” where Moroccans live among themselves just like in their homeland and this would lead to a easier conservation of their mother tongue, that here is also able to reveal even its “rural” traits, something that rarely happens in other cities. The inner strength of this group would thus allow its second generations to maintain a good proficiency in their first language and a bigger hope of transmission to the next generation. Since this study focused exclusively on said community, its findings must be applied to the young Moroccan bilinguals of Turin. In describing the data from my corpus, I started by depicting a model of the Moroccan bilingual children of Turin, describing their language proficiencies and formally analyzing their language products. My theoretical framework was based on studies about Moroccan Arabic codeswitching and their revise of the Myers-Scotton MLF model. I also based my research on studies that discuss the existence of restrictions when codeswitching is produced by children; in this regard, I took into account MacSwan’s theory (2000: 146) according to which “nothing constrains code-switching apart from the requirement of the mixed grammars.” Nevertheless, since we are here discussing the language of children whose parents speak the same language, which is not the country’s majority language, one can wonder if they have actually ever achieved an equal competence and knowledge of the grammar of the two languages. If codeswitching in children is said to be more frequent when they are speaking the non-dominant language, then the fact that in this corpus codeswitching only happened from Moroccan Arabic to Italian and never viceversa should be enlightening.

By formally analyzing the codeswitched structures of the corpus we can clearly see that Italian plays an important role in the young informants’ language: the influence of the majority language on the Moroccan one has been made evident by the treatment of the category of gender and number. In the course of the analysis I have also isolated one of the most frequently mentioned discrepancies between the Moroccan Arabic-French corpus and the Moroccan Arabic-Dutch one, the omission of

the definite article in codeswitching environments. An important analogy was found in this regard within the Dutch corpora; Dutch studies explain this discrepancy with the clitic nature of the French article which, unlike the Dutch one, cannot be separated from its noun. Nevertheless, this theory doesn't fit the data found here since Italian articles are clitic too. In this matter, it would rather be more appropriate to focus not as much on the grammatical features of the two languages but rather on their different sociolinguistic environments. Both the Dutch and the present study focus on an immigrant community whose language represents the one of a minority group. If the Moroccan Arabic-French corpora provides a sample of the widespread bilingualism of the people of Morocco (whose dominant language is still Moroccan Arabic) the corpus here reflects a community of children whose dominant language is not Moroccan Arabic, whose use is mostly confined to only one domain, the domestic one. All other domains belong to Italian, the language used for every out-group interactions. Basing our study on the opposition between the ML and the EL does not seem as appropriate as exploring the group's language dominance and unequal proficiency in the two varieties. The language found here appears reduced in syntax and lexicon: features such as phonetic reduction, a redundancy of independent pronouns and preposition misuse are so typical of these children's speech that it may signal a dynamic process of language evolution. This process may be recognized as a process of language shift or language loss, which would traditionally manifest itself through some of the features expressed above, such as phonetic reduction and morphological simplification – the so-called “paradigmatic leveling”. As seen above, second-generation children may often manifest a certain delay in the acquisition of phonetics or in the correct use of prepositions. If they eventually acquire the same traits known to their non-immigrant counterpart, only at a slower pace, then one can rather speak of language stagnation. Still, it is not easy to predict the future of these generations, whether they will acquire a level similar to the one of their peers in the country of origin, since there are different sociolinguistic factors determining this process, first of all “language attitude.” The community analyzed here seems to have a very positive attitude toward their mother language and shows all the right premises to its fruitful conservation. Still, the fact that the language of the second generation is facing a period of change and mixing between the two languages remains undeniable. Starting from this, we may suppose two possible future scenarios:

- The first language is going through a language stagnation phase: its acquirement is slowed down by the hegemony of the majority language, but it will eventually be spoken at a monolingual level.

- The majority language replaces the first language in every domain, leading to an increasingly weak proficiency: the speakers will increasingly become unable to use it, establishing its death by the next generation.

I think that embarking on a study of the same group after they reach adult age would help evaluate the hypothesis and could shed some light on the language of the generations next to the second. According to many studies (Berruto, Moretti and Schmid 1988 in Moretti and Antonini 2000: 60; Versteegh 2014), the mother tongue is doomed to disappear after the third generation of immigrants. A study of this same community could thus be helpful to analyze the possibility of the first language to survive even in the next generation. Plus, in consideration to what said above about the peculiarity of the Turin Moroccan community, a study of a different community may help to clarify the in-group differences that may be caused by a different immigration environment.

Abbreviations

1, 2, 3	first, second, third person		
ACT.PTCP	active participle	M	masculine
ADJ	adjective	NEG	negation
ADV	adverb	PASS	passive
ASP	aspect	PL	plural
DEM	demonstrative	POSS	possessive
DET	determiner	PREP	preposition
F	feminine	PRS	present
FUT	future	PST	past
IMP	imperative	REFL	reflexive
INDF	indefinite article	SG	singular
INF	infinitive		

References

- Albirini, Abdulkafi. 2018. "Heritage Arabic speakers in the United States: a sociolinguistic profile." In: *The Routledge Handbook of Arabic Linguistics*, edited by Elabbas Benmamoun and Reem Bassiouney, 263-282. Abingdon - New York: Routledge.
- Benchiba, Najat. 2007. "Language and Grammatical Gender in Moroccan Arabic and English codeswitching: A leveling phenomenon." In: *International Perspectives on Gender and Language*,

- edited by José Santaemilia, Patricia Bou, Sergio Maruenda, Gora Zaragoza, 233-248. Valencia: Valencia University.
- Bentahila, Abdelali and Eirlys E. Davies. 1983. "The syntax of Arabic-French code-switching." *Lingua* 59: 300-330.
- Bernardini, Petra and Suzanne Schlyter. 2004. "Growing syntactic structure and codemixing in the weaker language: the Ivy Hypothesis." *Bilingualism* 7/1: 49-69.
- Boeschoten, Hendrik. 1990. "Asymmetrical code-switching in immigrant communities." In: *Papers for the Workshop on Constraints, Conditions and Models*, edited by Georges Lüdi, 85-101. Strasbourg: ESF.
- Boumans, Louis. 1998. *The syntax of Codeswitching: Analysing Moroccan Arabic/Dutch conversation*. Tilburg: Tilburg University Press.
- Caubet, Dominique. 1993. *L'arabe marocain I: Phonologie et morphosyntaxe*. Paris-Louvain: Peeters.
- Caubet, Dominique. 1993. *L'arabe marocain II: Syntaxe et catégories grammaticales. Textes*. Paris-Louvain: Peeters.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2000. "Minimalist inquiries: the framework." In: *Step by Step: Essays on Minimalist Syntax in Honor of Howard Lasnik*, edited by Roger Martin, David Michaels and Juan Uriagereka, 89-155. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Clyne, Michael. 1987. "Constraints on code-switching: how universal are they?" *Linguistics* 25: 739-764.
- Comrie, Bernard M., Martin Haspelmath and Balthasar Bickel. 2008. "The Leipzig Glossing Rules: Conventions for interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses." Department of Linguistics of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology & the Department of Linguistics of the University of Leipzig.
- D'Anna, Luca. 2020. "Arabic in the diaspora." In: *Arabic and contact induced change*, edited by Christopher Lucas and Stefano Manfredi (eds), 303-320. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- El Aissati, Abderrahman. 1996. *Language Loss among native Speakers of Moroccan Arabic in the Netherlands*. Nijmegen: University of Nijmegen.
- Genesee, Fred, Elena Nicoladis and Johanne Paradis. 1995. "Language differentiation in early bilingual development." *Journal of Child Language* 22: 611-631.
- Heath, Jeffrey. 1989. *From code-switching to borrowing: foreign and diglossic mixing in Moroccan Arabic*. London- New York: Kegan Paul International.
- Liceras, Juana M., Kenton T. Spradlin and Raquel Fernández Fuertes. 2005. "Bilingual early functional-lexical mixing and the activation of formal features." *International Journal of Bilingualism* 9/2: 227-252.
- Lucas, Christopher. 2015. "Conduct-induced language change." In: *The Routledge Handbook of Historical Linguistics*, edited by Claire Bowen and Bethwyn Evans, 519-536. Abingdon - New York: Routledge.
- Jaspaert, Koen and Sjaak Kroon. 1989. "Social determinants of language loss." *TTL Review of Applied Linguistics* 83/84: 75-98.

- Manfredi, Stefano. 2017. "Arabic as a contact language." In: *The Routledge Handbook of Arabic Linguistics*, edited by Elabbas Benmamoun and Reem Bassiouney, 407-420. Abingdon - New York: Routledge.
- MacSwan, Jeff. 1999. *A Minimalist Approach to Intrasentential Code Switching*. New York: Garland.
- MacSwan, Jeff. 2000. "The architecture of the bilingual language faculty: evidence from Intrasentential Codeswitching." *Bilingualism* 3/1: 37-54.
- Muysken, Pieter. 1987. "Neutrality in code-mixing." In: *Eigen en Vreemd: Handelingen van het 39e Filologencongres Amsterdam*, 359-373. Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit.
- Myers-Scotton, Carol. 1993a. *Duelling languages: grammatical structure in codeswitching*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Myers-Scotton, Carol. 1993b. *Social motivations for codeswitching: evidence from Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Myers-Scotton, Carol and Janice L. Jake. 2000. "Testing the 4-M model: An introduction." *International Journal of Bilingualism* 4/1:1-8.
- Nortier, Jacomine. 1995. "Code Switching in Moroccan Arabic/Dutch vs. Moroccan Arabic/French language contact". *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 112: 81-95.
- Owens, Jonathan. 2005a. "Hierarchicalized matrices: Codeswitching among urban Nigerian Arabs." *Linguistics* 43: 957-993.
- Owens, Jonathan. 2005b. "Bare forms and lexical insertions in codeswitching: A processing-based account." *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 8: 23-38.
- Rumbaut, Rubén G. 1997. "Assimilation and its discontents: between rhetoric and reality." *International migration review* 31/4: 923-960.
- Van Coetsem, Frans. 2000. *A general and unified theory of the transmission process in language contact*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Verhoeven, Ludo e Hendrik Boeschoten. 1986. "First language acquisition in a second language submersion environment". *Applied Psycholinguistics* 7: 241-256.
- Wei, Li. 1994. *Three Generations, Two Languages, One Family: Language Choice and Language Shift in a Chinese Community in Britain*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters
- Weinreich, Uriel. 1953. *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*. New York: Linguistic Circle of New York.
- Ziamari, Karima. 2018. "Determiner phrase. how specific is it in Moroccan Arabic-French codeswitching?" In: *Arabic in Contact*, edited by Stefano Manfredi and Mauro Tosco, 295-231. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Giulia Ventura received her BA degree in Languages and Cultures for Linguistic Mediation at the University of Salento; she continued her studies with a MA in Languages and Civilization of Asia and Africa at the University of Turin with a thesis on the language of the second-generation Moroccan children in Turin. She can be reached at: ventura-giulia@virgilio.it

Les emprunts au français dans l'arabe de Jordanie

Origines, typologie et sémantique

Mousa Awwad

This study shows the influence of French on Jordanian Arabic, which may seem to be hardly visible because of the geographical and historical distance between France and Jordan. The present article first addresses the reasons why French loan words can be found in Jordanian Arabic. Secondly, it describes and analyzes the typology of these loans. Finally, it shows the semantic changes that these loans have undergone in the borrowing language.

Keywords: loan words, Jordanian Arabic, semantic change, typology of loans

1. La rencontre entre le français et l'arabe de Jordanie

Dans cette étude, nous allons essayer de montrer l'influence du français sur l'arabe de Jordanie, influence pour certains peu visible en raison de la distance géographique et historique entre la France et la Jordanie. Une telle recherche étudie dans un premier temps les raisons pour lesquelles des lexies françaises peuvent se trouver dans l'arabe de Jordanie (désigné AJ). Dans un deuxième temps, elle décrira et analysera la typologie de ces emprunts. En troisième temps elle montrera les changements sémantiques que ces emprunts ont connus dans la langue emprunteuse.

Par ailleurs, l'emprunt français en arabe de Jordanie n'a pas été étudié de façon approfondie. Nous ne trouvons que l'étude de Yousef Bader (1990), qui ne le traite que du point de vue sémantique. D'autres études ne le mentionnent que de façon très superficielle (Al-Saidat 2011 ; Abu Guba 2016 ; Al-Khatib et Farghal 1999).

L'étude de Butros (1963) considère 45 emprunts français dans l'arabe de la Palestine et de la Jordanie ; certains sont le résultat d'un contact direct ; les autres ont été transmis indirectement à ces deux dialectes. Selon notre corpus, l'arabe de Jordanie comprend à peu près 300 mots d'origine française. Pour constituer ce corpus, nous nous sommes basés sur notre observation des médias jordaniens, de la télévision, des conversations et des paroles quotidiennes des Jordaniens, ainsi que sur notre connaissance personnelle du dialecte en tant que locuteur jordanien.

La question qui a accompagné cette observation – non seulement nous mais aussi tous ceux à qui nous avons parlé à propos de ce sujet – est la suivante : comment un tel nombre de mots français a pu pénétrer dans le dialecte jordanien malgré la distance géographique et historique entre les deux pays ? C’est ce que nous allons voir dans les pages suivantes. Par ailleurs, parlant de l’impact du français sur les dialectes arabes, nous verrons qu’il est de moins en moins fort quand nous suivons ces dialectes vers l’est et le sud-est du Monde Arabe. Par exemple, dans une étude sur les emprunts dans le dialecte de Hadramaout, le chercheur ne mentionne qu’un seul emprunt au français tandis que les emprunts anglais, hindis et malais sont dominants dans ce dialecte (Al-Saqqaf 2006 : 90-93). Dans une autre étude sur l’emploi des emprunts dans l’arabe des émirats-arabes, les chercheurs n’en citent que six emprunts sur un corpus de cinquante mots étrangers (Abdul Salam Alnamer et Sulafah Al Namer 2018). Il en va de même dans une troisième étude sur les emprunts en arabe de la Mecque où le français est presque absent dans le corpus constitué (Alahmadi 2015). Par contre, les mots français sont beaucoup plus présents dans les dialectes arabes du Maghreb et d’autres pays méditerranéens comme l’Égypte et le Liban.

A travers l’histoire, le contact entre le français et l’arabe de Jordanie ne se faisait la plupart des cas que de façon indirecte. Ce sont les dialectes syro-libanais comme le beyrouthin, le damascain et le dialecte égyptien, qui ont joué le rôle d’intermédiaires entre les deux langues concernées, ou encore d’autres langues comme le turc et l’anglais. La langue turque, qui était la langue officielle et administrative de la région jusqu’à 1916, a joué un rôle principal dans cette transmission des mots vers l’arabe de Jordanie et de Palestine comme langue intermédiaire (Butros 1973, Barbot 1961). Des emprunts tels que /mārka/ *marque*, /rutūš/ *retouche* et /mūdel/ *modèle* ont connu leur chemin vers l’AJ par l’intermédiaire du turc (Butros 1973). Pour une vue plus profonde sur le rôle du turc comme intermédiaire entre les langues intéressées, nous avons consulté *An English and Turkish dictionary* de James William Redhouse, réalisé en 1856 ; cette enquête nous a permis de trouver des emprunts utilisés en turc avant 1856, et ils sont utilisés de nos jours en AJ. Parmi ces emprunts, citons : /munāwara/ *main œuvre* (Redhouse 1856 : 199) qui est aussi en emploi en arabe standard, /bālon/ *ballon* (Redhouse 1856 : 29), /malyon/ *million* (Redhouse 1856 : 1050), /bābūr/ *vapeur* (Redhouse 1856 : 342), /qunṣul/ *consul* (Redhouse 1856 : 64), /karavān/ *caravane* (Redhouse 1856 : 44) dont la langue intermédiaire peut être l’anglais ou le turc.

Dans les deux dictionnaires, *Dictionnaire Portatif Turc-Français* de R. Youssouf et *Kamus-i Firansavi* et le *Dictionnaire turc-français* de Şemseddin Sâmî, publiés respectivement en 1890 et 1883, on constate la présence de certains emprunts français. Ces derniers sont transmis via le turc à certains dialectes arabes y compris l’AJ. On y trouve, entre autres, les emprunts /kabūt/ *capote* et /kabsūli/ *capsule*

(Youssouf 1890 : 286), les emprunts /bālṭū/ *paletot* et /banṭlon/ *pantalon* (Youssouf 1890 : 462), /ṣālon/ *salon* (Youssouf 1890 : 496), /ḥarṭūš/ *cartouche* (Sâmî 1883 : 458), /šik/ *chic* (Sâmî 1883 : 658), /kanabi/ (*canapé*) (Sâmî 1883 : 804), /ʾamirāl/ (*amiral*) (Sâmî 1883 : 38).

Par contre le nombre de mots transmis via le turc reste limité par rapport à ceux transmis via l'anglais. Ce dernier était dans la plupart des cas de l'emprunt, au français en AJ, le pont sur lequel sont passés les mots. Ce rôle s'aperçoit aux traces phonétiques, morphologiques et syntaxiques de cette langue dans les mots empruntés comme : l'emprunt /kantīn/ *cantine* est emprunté sous sa forme anglaise *canteen*, il en va de même pour l'emprunt *carbone* où la forme arabe /karbon/ *carbone* dont la réalisation phonétique est plus proche à celle du mot anglais *carbone*, les emprunts /ṣāntimitir/ *centimètre* et /kelomitir/ *kilomètre* sont aussi influencés phonétiquement par les mots anglais *centimeter* et *kilometer*. La prononciation anglaise du phonème [y] par le phonème [u], dans les deux mots *parachute* et *brochure*, laisse ses traces respectivement dans les deux formes arabes /bārašūt/ et /brošūr/ ; la prononciation anglaise du phonème [u] par le phonème [o], dans le mot *cours*, a laissé ses traces dans la forme arabe /kors/, le *t* final dans *paquet* (ang. *packet*) est bien prononcé dans la forme arabe /bāket/. L'intermédiaire anglais peut remarquablement déformer l'emprunt français. Cette déformation crée un signifiant débarrassé de son signe de son origine, selon les exemples suivants : l'emprunt /faltar/ (ang. *filter*) découle à son tour du mot français *filtre*, l'emprunt /minyu/ (ang. *menu*) du français *menu*, /mubāyl/ (ang. *mobile*) du français *mobile*, /warnīš/ (ang. *varnish*) du mot *vernis* et /rol/ (ang. *roll*) est du français *roule*.

Dans certains cas, on parle de double étymologie pour le même emprunt. On trouve alors deux réalisations phonétiques pour le même emprunt : une proche de l'anglais et l'autre du français, ce qui nous indique que cet emprunt est lié phonétiquement à ses deux origines étymologiques, anglaise et française. Prenons à titre d'exemple les mots empruntés suivants :

Emprunt	Réalisation phonétique anglaise	Réalisation phonétique française
<i>Grippe</i>	/grip/	/grīp/
<i>Hydrogène</i> ¹	/hāydrogīn/	/hīdrogīn/
<i>Mayonnaise</i>	/mayonīz/	/māyonez/
<i>Nitrogène</i>	/nāytrogīn/	/nitroḡen/
<i>Oxygène</i>	/oksiḡīn/	/oksiḡen/
<i>Parfum</i>	/pārfyum/	/pārfān/
<i>Commission</i>	/kumišīn/	/kumisyon/

Tableau 1 : Les doubles origines des emprunts

L'arabe de l'Égypte à son tour a transmis beaucoup de mots en AJ. Ce sont surtout les médias et le cinéma égyptiens qui ont contribué d'une façon remarquable à cette transmission. La consultation d'*An Arabic English Vocabulary of the Colloquial Arabic of Egypt* (Spiro 1895) daté de 1895 nous a permis de trouver certains emprunts au français en arabe dialectal de l'Égypte. Ces emprunts sont employés jusqu'à nos jours dans les dialectes jordaniens et égyptiens. Ce dernier est leur premier récepteur pour être un pont vers l'AJ. On peut compter les emprunts suivants : l'emprunt /bukli/ *boucle* (Spiro 1895 : 55) qu'on trouve sous la même forme en AJ, l'emprunt /asmant/ *cément* qu'on trouve en AJ sous la forme /ismint/. Un autre emprunt observé dans le dictionnaire de Spiro est le mot /ḥaṭrūš/ *cartouche* (Spiro 1895 : 167) qui a la même forme en AJ, la liste comprend aussi les emprunts /ʾantīka/ (*antique*) (Spiro 1895 : 21), /gāzoz/ *gazeuse* (Spiro 1895 : 91), /karton/ *carton* (Spiro 1895 : 515), /kanaba/ *canapé* (Spiro 1895 : 527), /tiligrāf/ *télégraphe* (Spiro 1895 : 82) et /tilifon/ (Spiro, 1895 : 83) *téléphone* qui est réalisé phonétiquement de deux façons en AJ, /tilifon/ et /talafon/.

Certains emprunts sont disponibles dans le dictionnaire de Spiro et en AJ mais les formes dans les deux dialectes ne sont pas similaires. Ainsi, l'emprunt *capsule* est noté /kabsūna/ (Spiro 1895 : 509) en arabe de l'Égypte et /kabsūla/ en AJ. La forme de l'AJ est plus fidèle à celle de la langue d'origine. En plus, le pluriel de ce mot, en AJ, est /kabsūlāt/ par contre il est /kabsūn/ en arabe de l'Égypte. Ceci nous montre que l'arabe de l'Égypte n'avait pas de rôle dans la transmission de ce mot mais c'était plutôt l'anglais ou le turc. Le dictionnaire note aussi le mot *passport* mais sous la forme /bāsabot/ ou /pāzaport/, un emprunt à l'italien *passaporto*, les locuteurs jordaniens utilisent, mais d'une façon très

¹ On trouve aussi cette double étymologie dans /Maḡmūʿat al-muṣṭalaḥāt al-ʿilmiyya wa-l-fanniyya ʾaqraraha maḡmaʿ al-luḡa al-ʿarabiyya/ (« Les termes scientifiques et techniques arabisés » par l'Académie de la langue arabe au Caire). La forme /ʾidroḡīn/ est observée dans le tome numéro 1 (1957 : 177) et la forme /hāydroḡīn/ dans le tome 21 (1979 : 45).

rare, cet emprunt sous la forme /bāsbor/ ou /pāspor/ qui n'a aucun rapport avec celle de l'arabe de l'Égypte.

Le dictionnaire de Spiro n'est pas notre seul critère pour tester l'arabe de l'Égypte comme intermédiaire entre le français et l'AJ. Ainsi, le mot *chic* n'y est pas noté mais il est utilisé dans le parler de l'Égypte. D'autre part, la mémoire des jordaniens garde des souvenirs des films égyptiens des années 1940, 1950 ... où cet emprunt est prononcé par les acteurs égyptiens. Comme l'emprunt *chic*, l'emprunt *cinéma*, qui n'a certainement connu son chemin vers l'AJ que par l'arabe de l'Égypte, est absent dans le dictionnaire de Spiro, mais son absence est attribuée au fait que le mot n'est apparu qu'en 1890 à la suite de l'invention de l'appareil cinématographique des frères Lumière. L'emprunt *cinéma* ne peut pas être indirect via l'anglais ou l'arabe de la Syrie pour plusieurs raisons : le cinéma, dans le monde arabe, a vu le jour en Égypte et non pas en Syrie ou Liban ou ailleurs dans le Monde Arabe. En 1896 apparaît le premier film égyptien, en 1929, le premier film libanais et en 1927, le premier film syrien. De plus, la réalisation du dictionnaire de Spiro a précédé l'apparition de cinéma en Égypte.

Si on parle de double étymologie, on peut parler aussi d'ambiguïté étymologique. Dans certains cas, la langue ou le dialecte intermédiaire n'est pas précis, tout est imaginable, ça peut venir du nord (la Syrie) comme de l'ouest (l'Égypte). C'est le cas de l'emprunt *caféine* dont l'origine et le transmetteur intermédiaire ne sont pas précis pour Butros (1963 : 110) :

CAFFEINE kafeyi:n. n.m., no pl. Difficult to tell whether the word is of an English or a French origin; the probability is that the word came in from Egypt or Syria, in which case it would be of French origin ». Cette ambiguïté étymologique est quelquefois partagée entre trois langues : « CANASTA kanasta. n.f., no pl. A variety of rummy; difficult to tell whether the word has come in from English, French or Italian.

Ce qu'on peut reprocher à l'étude de Butros (1963) est le fait de marginaliser le rôle de l'arabe standard dans l'emprunt lexical vers l'arabe de Jordanie et de Palestine. Ce rôle peut se traduire par les efforts des savants et des intellectuels dans le contact entre les langues pour produire des emprunts de nature spéciale, « les emprunts savants » (Deroy 1956 : 255). Ainsi, le mot *caféine* mentionné ci-dessus appartient proprement au domaine de la chimie et de la pharmacie, et il ne peut voyager vers les dialectes arabes que dans une atmosphère scientifique et que par des « transcodeurs » (Quemada 1971 : 142-143) aussi scientifiques. On parle ici des chimistes et des pharmaciens dont la langue, surtout celle employée dans la rédaction des recherches à côté de l'anglais, est l'arabe standard. Le rôle d'intermédiaire s'est joué aussi par ce dernier en donnant quelques emprunts français à tous les dialectes arabes y compris le jordanien. Les « transcodeurs » dans cet emprunt sont surtout les

écrivains, les auteurs et les artistes arabes qui se sont inspirés de la littérature et de l'art européens. Ces derniers domaines ont donné à l'arabe et ses dialectes des emprunts tels que *caricature* /kārīkāter/, *cliché* /kīlīše/, *tabou* /tābū/, *comédie* /kūmīdya/, etc. D'autre part, les « transcodeurs » dans les domaines scientifiques ont aidé à transmettre certains emprunts par l'intermédiaire de l'arabe standard. On parle ici des chimistes, physiciens, ingénieurs, médecins, etc. Les emprunts *glucose* /ğlokoz/, *glycérine* /glisirīn/, *nicotine* /nicotīn/, *nitrogène* /nitroğen/, *oxygène* /oksiğīn/, *paraffine* /parafīn/, *pasteur* /bastara/, *pétrole* /bitrol/, *plastique* /blāstik/, *télégraphe* /tiligrāf/, *logistique* /loğisti/, *hectare* /hektār/, *kilo* /kīlū/, *mètre* /mitr/, *milliard* /milyār/, *million* /malyon/, etc. étaient tous des emprunts savants au point qu'ils n'étaient utilisés que dans des langues spécialisés liées à des domaines techniques et que par les spécialistes de ces domaines dont le jargon et les recherches sont caractérisés par l'emploi de l'arabe standard à côté de l'anglais.

2. L'emprunt direct et l'emprunt indirect

Il semble que les études faites sur l'emprunt dans le dialecte jordanien, ainsi que dans d'autres dialectes arabes, ne font pas de distinction entre l'emprunt direct et l'emprunt indirect. La langue prêteuse, selon ces études, est la dernière qui a donné l'emprunt sans mentionner quelle était la langue d'origine du terme concerné. Du coup la langue intermédiaire est présentée comme langue donneuse au lieu de « langue intermédiaire ». Cette erreur est perçue dans quelques études : Al-Saidat (2011 : 69) et Bader (1990 : 38) présentent le mot *cassette* comme un emprunt venant de l'anglais sans aucune mention de la langue d'origine, le français. Ils présentent également le mot *doctor* comme un emprunt anglais sans aucune mention du français. Al-Saqqaf (2006 : 90-93) cite le mot *reverse* comme un emprunt anglais dans le dialecte de Hadramaout sans rappeler l'origine, le français. Dans certains cas où l'origine de l'emprunt est ambiguë, les auteurs notent toutes les origines probables de cet emprunt comme le fait Bader (1990 : 38) en citant les emprunts *blouse* et *tabac* en AJ : « blūzah (from French or English blouse) [...] JA tumbāk (probably taken from english tobacco or french tabac) ».

Ces exemples et d'autres nous montrent l'absence de la dimension diachronique dans les études des linguistes arabes sur l'emprunt dans leurs dialectes et dans l'arabe standard. Cette dimension offre une perspective selon laquelle on peut observer et suivre le voyage des mots et le rôle de chaque langue dans ce voyage. Cette absence peut causer ainsi des problèmes dans l'étude de l'intégration ou du changement linguistique de l'emprunt sous tous ses types. Ainsi, dans l'étude de Bader (1990 : 38), l'ignorance du rôle du français dans le voyage de l'emprunt *cassette*, et le fait de comparer son sens anglais à son sens arabe, ont abouti au fait que cet emprunt a reçu une restriction sémantique dans la langue receveuse. Ce qui n'est pas le cas si l'on compare son sens avec celui qu'il a en français.

3. La typologie des emprunts français en arabe de Jordanie

Selon notre corpus, l'arabe de Jordanie comprend à peu près 300 mots d'origine française. Pour constituer ce corpus, nous nous sommes basés sur notre observation des médias jordaniens, de la télévision, des conversations et des paroles quotidiennes des Jordaniens, ainsi que sur notre connaissance personnelle du dialecte en tant que locuteur jordanien. Cette observation s'est faite sur 4 ans pour aboutir à une liste dont nous n'avions pas prévue sa grande taille. Pour classer ces emprunts selon une typologie, nous avons recours à *Termium Plus*, la banque de données terminologiques et linguistiques du gouvernement du Canada. Elle compte près de quatre millions de termes tant généraux que spécialisés et propose pour chacun des équivalents dans les deux langues officielles du Canada et parfois même en espagnol ou en portugais.

Par ailleurs, il arrive qu'un emprunt, ayant un sens dans sa langue d'origine, connaisse une restriction ou une déviation sémantique dans la langue emprunteuse. Par exemple, parmi tous les sens que l'emprunt *cartouche* porte en français (munition de chasse ou d'arme de guerre, recharge d'encre pour stylo et munition de chasse ou d'arme de guerre), aucun n'est présent en AJ. Dans ce dernier, *cartouche* n'est employé que pour désigner le fusil de chasse. Le domaine selon lequel l'emprunt *cartouche* est classifié, est *arme et chasse* et les autres domaines sont exclus. Il en va de même pour tous les autres emprunts qui ont connu une restriction ou une déviation sémantique. C'est pourquoi nous avons pris comme critère à côté *Termium Plus* les sens que certains emprunts ont reçus dans la langue emprunteuse, en particulier ceux qui ont rencontré une restriction ou une déviation sémantique.

Le corpus que nous avons constitué comprend presque tous les domaines de la vie quotidienne. Ce qui nous montre bien la présence du français comme langue prêteuse dans le parler des Jordaniens dans tous les domaines. Dans cette typologie, nous pouvons rencontrer des emprunts en deux grandes catégories : emprunts en rapport avec les articulateurs du discours et emprunts en rapport avec la vie socioculturelle. En plus de ces deux catégories, s'ajoutent les noms propres. Par ailleurs, ces emprunts appartiennent aux deux types de langage, général et spécialisé. Du premier, nous pouvons trouver des mots comme *chance*, *madame*, *chic*, *sauvage*, *sympathique*, *tante*, *pipi*, *cliché*, *cadre*, etc., et du deuxième, des termes empruntés appartenant à la chimie, la physique, la santé, la route, le transport, l'automobile, la musique, le cinéma et la télévision. Globalement, les emprunts français dans l'AJ, directs et indirects, peuvent être répartis en 32 domaines et sous-domaines comme suit :

- Administration et gestion : poste /bost/, secrétaire /sukirter/, cadre /kādir/, routine /rotīn/ ou /rutīn/, logistique /loğisti/.
- Architecture / construction : niche /nīš/, abat-jour /ʔābāğor/, ascenseur /ʔassnsēr/ ou /ʔaşanşēr/, balcon /balakoni/, salon /şālon/, terrasse /taras/, accordéon /ʔakurdyon/, panel

/banel/, parquet /bārke/, béton /bāton/, banquette /banket/, corniche /kūrneš/ ou /korneš/, ablocage /ʾablokāğ/.

- Arme et chasse : cartouche /ḥarṭūš/ ou /ḥarṭrūš/, manœuvre /munāwara/, commissaire /kumiser/, dynamite /dīnāmīt/.
- Automobile : chauffeur /šūfer/, limousine /limuzīn/, motocyclette /motocīkl/, bougie /būğyeh/, caoutchouc /kawšūk/, carburateur /karbūretar/, châssis /šasi/, distributeur /distribātor/, frein /farāmil/, guidon /gādon/, jante /ğanṭ/, mécanique /mikanīky/, moteur /mātor/, radiateur /rodetar/, revers (indirect, via l'anglais *reverse*) /lafirs/, rondelle /rondeli/, tableau /tāblū/, valet /valet/.
- Chimie : benzène /banzīn/, carbone /karbon/, collagène /kolāğīn/, glucose (indirect, via l'anglais *glucose*) /ğlokoz/, glycérine /glisirīn/, nicotine /nicotīn/, nitrogène /nāytroğīn/ ou /nitroğen/, oxygène /oksiğīn/ ou /oksiğen/, paraffine /parafīn/, pasteur /bastara/, pétrole /bitrol/, poudre /bodara/, urée /yorya/, cristal /kristāl/, essence /ʾasans/, gel /ğil/.
- Coiffure et cosmétologie : mèche /meš/, pince /banci/, coiffeur /kwāfer/, mousse /mūs/, contour /kuntūr/, maquillage /makyāğ/, masque /māsk/, mat /māt/.
- Couleurs : beige /beğ/, carreaux /karūhāt/ ou /karohāt/, chrome /krom/, mauve /mūv/, rouge /roğ/.
- Cuisine et alimentation : béchamel /bašāmil/, biscuit /basket/, bonbon /bonbon/, champagne /šambānya/, gâteau /gātū/, granite /grānīt/, chalumeau /šalamoni/, gazeuze /gāzūz/ ou /gāzoz/, chocolat /šūkūlāṭa/, mayonnaise /mayunīz/, nougat /noga/, parmesan /bārmīzān/, petit four /bitī for/, roule (indirect, via l'anglais *roll*) /rol/, salé /sāle/, sauce /šos/, sauté /sote/, sorbet /sorbe/, soupe /sūb/, tarte /tārt/, chef /šef/, cordon bleu /kordinblū/, crêpe /kreb/, croissant /korwāson/, danette /dānet/, filet /file/, flute /flūt/, salmon /salamon/, ananas /ʾanānās/, fraise /frez/.
- Décor : décor /dīkor/, bouquet /būke/ ou /boke/.
- Economie et commerce : boutique /būtīk/, caisse (indirect, via l'anglais *cash*) /kāš/, commission /kumīsyon/, coupon /kobon/, marque /mārka/, nouveauté /nūvūte/ ou /novūte/, occasion /ʾocāzyon/, souvenir /suvunīr/ ou /sufunīr/, carte /kart/, banque /bank/, cheque /šek/, police /bulīša/.
- Electricité : prise /ʾibrīz/, automatique /ʾutomātīk/, batterie /baṭṭāriyyih/, fiche /fiš/, dynamo /dīnāmo/, séchoir /sišwār/.
- Enseignement / pédagogie : baccalauréat /bakāloryus/, course /kors/ (indirect, via l'anglais *course*), docteur /doktor/ (indirect, via l'anglais *doctor*), licence /lisāns/, professeur /brofisor/.
- Hébergement (Tourisme) : chalet /šāle/, hôtel /ūtel/ ou /otel/, garçonnière /garsonera/, studio /studyo/, caravane /karavān/.

- Hôpital et médecine / traitement : ambulance /imbalans/ ou /imbalanş/, capsule /kabsūli/ ou /kabsoli/, massage /masāğ/, régime /ruğīm/ ou /roğīm/, rhumatisme /romātizm/, biberon /babroni/.
- Hygiène et soins corporels : toilette /twālet/, pipi /pīpi/, tampon /tāmbon/, lotion /lošin/, manucure /manākīr/, siphon /sifon/, douche /duş/.
- Indicateurs de marques de civilités et appellatifs : madame /madām/, mademoiselle /madmwazel/, papa /bābā/, tante /taṅṅ/.
- Littérature et arts du spectacle / langage : caricature /kārīkāter/, cliché /kīlīše/, signé /sīnye/, tabou /tābū/ (indirect).
- Mathématique et unités de mesure : code /kod/, douzaine /dazīni/, galon (intermédiaire) /galan/, hectare /hektār/, kilo /kīlū/ ou /kelo/, mètre /mitr/ (indirect, via l'anglais *metre*), milliard /milyār/, million /malyon/, once /ʔoṅṣa/, paquet /bāket/, pouce /būṣa/, tranche /tranšāt/, chiffre /šīfrā/, ampère /ʔamber/.
- Mobilier et équipement et fournitures de bureau : canapé /kanabi/, mobilier /mūbilya/, moquette /mūket/, vitrine /batrīna/ ou /vatrīna/, carnet /karne/, classeur /klāsor/, dossier /dossiī/, bureau /bīrū/, cabinet /kābīni/, pendule /bandūl/.
- Mode et vêtement / tissus : mohair /muher/, parfum /bārfān/, accessoire /ʔaksiswār/, balai /bale/, perruque /bārūka/, béret /bure/, blouse /blūzi/, boucle /bukli/, bretelle /brutel/, broche /broš/, brochure /brošūr/, caleçon /kalson/, capote /kabūt/, collant /kolon/, cravate /grāfi/, crochet /kroše/ ou /kruše/, écharpe /ʔašār/, gilet /ğile/, jaquette /ğaket/, jupe /ğībi/, maillot /māyoh/, mannequin /manikān/, manteau /māntū/, médaille /madālyi/, mini-jupe, /miniğib/, mode /moḏā/, model /mūdel/, paletot /bāltū/, pantalon /banṭlon/, papillon /bābyoni/, polaire /būler/, retouche /rutūš/, robe /rob/, sabot /sabāt/, sandale /şandal/, soirée /swāre/, soutien-gorge /sityāni/, style /stāyl/, tunique /tūnīk/, turban /tūrbān/, veste /fest/, veston /fustān/, chic /šyāki/, tricot /trikū/, chiffon /šifon/, satin /sātān/, georgette /ğorget/.
- Mots de fonctions diverses : chapeau /šāpo/, merci /mircī/, plastique /blāstik/, vernis /warnīš/ (indirect, via l'anglais *varnish*), fabrication /fabraki/, chance /šans/, sec /sek/, sympathique /sambātīk/, bonde /bund/, filtre (indirect, via l'anglais *filter*) /fīltar/, Artois /irtiwāzi/, sauvage /sovāğ/, carton /karton/, vapeur /bābūr/, turbine /turbīn/ ou /torbīn/.
- Muséologie et patrimoine : archive /ʔaršīf/, portrait /portre/, atelier /ʔatulye/.
- Musique et chant : disco /dīscu/ ou /dīsko/, cassette /kāset/, chorale /korāl/ ou /kurāl/, clarinette /klārinet/, guitare /gītār/, orgue /ʔorg/, trompette /trumbīt/.
- Nom propre : gauloise /gūlwāz/, gitane /gītān/, kiri /kīrī/, la vache qui rit /lāvāšķirī/, mirage /mīrāğ/, moulinex /mūlinīks/, tefal /tīfāl/.
- Photographie : négatif /nīgatif/.

- Politiques et relations sociales : passeport /bāsbor/, protocole /brotocol/, parlement /barlamā/, liberal /libirāli/, idéologie /ʔaydyoloḡiyyi/, bourgeoisie /burḡwāzyyi/, etiquette /ʔitiket/.
- Restauration / hôtellerie : garçon /garson, menu /minyu/ (indirect, via l'anglais *menu*), marmiton /marmaṭon/, buffet /būfe/ ou /bofe/, cabaret /kabāre/, cafétérie /kaftīrya/, cantine /kantīn/.
- Route et transports : garage /karāḡ/, ticket /tikit/ (indirect, via l'anglais *ticket*), taxi (indirect) /taksi/, métro /mitrū/, tramway /trāmwe/, automobile /ʔotomubīl/, asphalte /ʔazfalt/, boulevard /būlivār/.
- Spectacles de variétés / loisirs : cirque /sirk/, piscine /bisīn/, plage /plāḡ/.
- Sport : bicyclette /busiclet/, acrobate /ʔakrubāt/ ou /ʔakrobāt/, capitaine /cabten/, marche /mārš/, médaille /madālyi/, mondial /mundyāl/, parachute /bārāšot/, parcours (sport) /pārcūr, stade /stād/, traceur /trāsor/, ballon /bālon/.
- Télécommunication et communication : antenne /ʔantīn/, central /sintrāl/, radio /rādyū/ ou /rādyo/, télégraphe /tiligrāf/ ou /telegṛāf/, mobile (indirect, via l'anglais *mobile*) /mubāyl/, téléphone /tilifon/ ou /talafon/, journal /gurnān/.
- Télévision et cinéma : cinéma /sīnimā/, comédie /kūmīdya/, couplet /kūble/, coulisse /kawālīs/, doublage /dūblāḡ/, doublure /dūbler/, effet /ʔiffe/, film /film/, mixage /miksāḡ/, montage /mūntāḡ/, plateau /blāto/, télévision /tilifizon/, tragédie /trāḡīdya/, satellite /satalāyt/.

4. Changements sémantiques

4.1. Péjoration

La péjoration qu'un emprunt a dans sa langue d'origine peut l'accompagner dans la langue receveuse comme l'emprunt sauvage (un snobisme) qu'on utilise en AJ pour décrire une personne dont le comportement est farouche, rude, grossier, inculte voire brutal. En revanche, certains emprunts ne désignent une connotation péjorative que dans la langue emprunteuse comme par exemple tante, caleçon, champagne, collant et garçon. Le mot tante donne un exemple des plus intéressants. Cet emprunt fait son chemin vers l'arabe de Jordanie par le biais de l'arabe de l'Égypte dans lequel il signifie, comme en français, la sœur du père ou de la mère, mais aussi avec une extension sémantique en arabe de l'Égypte comme un appellatif affectueux que l'on utilise pour s'adresser à toute dame âgée. Cet emprunt n'était employé que par les citoyens d'une couche sociale spéciale, les riches et les gens qui essayent de suivre un mode de vie très à la mode ou occidentalisé. La façon de parler de cette couche sociale, surtout chez les hommes, est vue comme cherche à se distinguer de la façon générale du parler des Egyptiens. Ainsi, venu de l'étranger, le terme est devenu pour ces gens un synonyme de « personne

gâtée, douce » (TLF). Le parler de cette couche sociale est caractérisé par l'emploi de quelques emprunts comme entre autres tante, anti, papi, mami, etc. Mais l'emprunt tante est utilisé plus tard pour désigner non seulement un homme gâté ou doux mais lâche, dénonciateur ou mouchard.

Un autre exemple d'emprunt caractérisé d'une connotation péjorative dans la langue emprunteuse est /kalson/ (caleçon). Ce mot, pour le locuteur jordanien, est en rapport direct avec des tabous corporels ; son emploi est mal vu. Il en va de même pour l'emprunt *collant*. Comme ces emprunts sont peu appréciés socialement, le locuteur recourt à des euphémismes dont le plus employé est l'emprunt anglais *underwear*. D'ailleurs, la connotation péjorative de certains emprunts trouve ses origines dans la culture religieuse des Jordaniens utilisant ce mot, l'Islam ou la *charia*. Ainsi l'emprunt /šambānya/ (champagne), boisson alcoolisée ne convient pas aux principes de l'islam et est interdit socialement dans les sociétés musulmanes.

Un dernier exemple connoté péjorativement dans l'AJ est l'emprunt garçon. Ce mot est utilisé, comme en français, sous la forme d'un appellatif s'adressant à un serveur de café ou de restaurant. L'utilisation de l'emprunt garçon a été restreinte d'abord aux restaurants et cafés puis il fut étendu pour qu'il soit utilisé dans quelques contextes comme un appellatif ironique s'adressant à une personne qui sert de repas et boisson. Ce dernier emploi a donné à garçon son sens péjoratif.

4.2. Du nom propre au nom commun

Ce processus consiste à transmettre les noms empruntés comme des noms propres pour devenir des noms communs dans la langue receveuse. Dans la plupart des cas, ces emprunts se réfèrent à des noms de marques ou à des produits commerciaux. Parmi les emprunts de notre corpus, trois ne désignent pas, dans la langue receveuse, des noms propres spécifiques mais des noms génériques : Tefal, Classeur et Moulinex. Le comportement linguistique de ces emprunts, surtout syntaxique, a changé après le transfert de leur catégorie nominale. Cette généralité peut se voir à leur compatibilité avec l'absence d'article défini /el/ :

/ištaret tifāl/ j'ai acheté un Tefal

/ʕindak klāsor ?/ vous avez un classeur ?

/badawir ʕala mūliniks/ je cherche un Moulinex

Les trois emprunts sont en même temps utilisés comme des noms propres. À cet effet on peut opposer :

a. Tefal comme nom propre : /ištaret ʕanğaraTifāl/ j'ai acheté une casserole Tefal

b. Tefal comme nom commun introduit par le classificateur /ṭaṅğara/ (casserole) : /ištaret ṭaṅğara tifāl wala grānīt ?/ vous avez acheté une casserole en téflon ou en granite ?

Dans (a), le mot /tifāl/ désigne le nom d'une marque française de l'électroménager, c'est un nom propre, tandis que /tifāl/, dans (b), est un nom commun qui correspond à la classe des objets /ṭaṅğara tifāl/ *casserole en téflon*. /tifāl/ est comparé avec une autre classe d'objets, le /grānīt/ *granite* ; cette classe d'objets peut être classificateur pour tous les autres noms de produits des autres marques (Askaval, Fagor, Porthos, etc) ; /ṭaṅğara X/ *une casserole X* et /ṭaṅğara Y/ *casserole Y* peuvent être /ṭaṅğara tifāl / *casserole en téflon* :

/ištaret ṭaṅğara tifāl mārkit Porthos/ j'ai acheté une casserole en téflon marque Porthos

Steuckardt (2008 : 13) considère que la libération syntaxique de la référence étrangère ou l'extension de cette référence peut être une intégration qui fait sortir le mot en question de la catégorie du xénisme. Elle prend comme exemple le mot *diktat* qui n'était employé auparavant qu'avec l'article défini ; le groupe nominal renvoie étroitement au Traité de Versailles imposé aux Allemands en 1919. Plus tard, ce mot a pu, par métaphore, être employé avec un article indéfini et renvoyer à des référents autres que ceux de la langue d'origine.

4.3. Du nom commun au nom propre

A l'inverse du phénomène sémantique précédent, les emprunts *Gauloise*, *Gitane*, *Kiri*, *La vache qui rit*, *Danette* et *Mirage* ont connu un changement dans l'autre sens. Tous les mots en question sont des noms de marques qui sont à l'origine, dans la langue prêteuse, de noms communs et qui ont déjà acquis la valeur de noms propres dans cette même langue. Ce transfert nominal peut être observé depuis le comportement syntaxique (Petit 2006 : 691) de ces emprunts dans la langue emprunteuse. Ces noms de marques peuvent constituer un groupe nominal sans déterminant :

a. /ğitān'aḥsan min winstun/ (Gitanes est meilleure que Winston)²

b. /-šū bitdaḥin ? - gulwāz/ (- Qu'est-ce que tu fumes ? – Gauloise)³

² La traduction présentée est une traduction littérale, en français on aurait dit : Les Gitanes sont meilleures que les Winstons.

³ Qu'est-ce que tu fumes ? – Une Gauloise.

Ils peuvent former un groupe prépositionnel, toujours sans déterminant :

- a. /irbaḥ ḡawāʾiz ktīri ma^c danet/ (Gagnez beaucoup de prix avec Danette)
- b. /tbadil winstun bi-ḡitān/ (Tu changes Winston contre Gitanes)⁴

Ils ne peuvent pas être dénombrables comme les noms communs :

*/iṣṭarīt talāt danetāt/ ou */iṣṭarīt talāti danet/ (J'ai acheté trois danettes).

Ajoutons à cela l'impossibilité de regrouper ces noms avec /ḡamāʾir al-mulkiyya/ (adjectifs possessifs) :

*/hāy danetī/ (c'est ma danette).

4.4. Extension sémantique

L'extension est un phénomène sémantique propre à une grande partie des emprunts de notre corpus. Les exemples sont nombreux ; prenons l'emprunt biscuit dans le domaine de l'alimentation ; cet emprunt désigne en français toute pâtisserie cuite au four, composée d'un mélange de farine, d'œufs et de sucre. En AJ, cet emprunt est employé comme un nom générique qui peut désigner une grande partie des épicerie sucrées (biscuits, confiseries, chocolats, bonbons). Dans le domaine des vêtements, l'emprunt blouse ne renvoie en français, selon le TLF, qu'aux « vêtements de grosse toile en forme de chemise portés autrefois dans leur travail quotidien par les gens de la campagne, les ouvriers, les marchands », tandis qu'en AJ, une blouse peut être une blouse, un tee-shirt, un pull ou un sweat. Dans le domaine des meubles, l'emprunt canapé à son tour a connu une extension sémantique ; selon le TLF, ce mot signifie « siège à dossier, pourvu d'accoudoirs, où plusieurs personnes peuvent s'asseoir, pouvant aussi servir de lit de repos pour une personne ». Le sens de ce mot en AJ s'est élargi pour intégrer d'autres types de siège comme par exemple le fauteuil, le clic-clac ou la banquette. Ainsi, en AJ, le sens du mot chauffeur n'est pas limité à « celui qui conduit un véhicule automobile, à usage personnel ou dans le cadre de sa profession » (TLF), mais à toute personne qui conduit un véhicule automobile à tous les usages.

⁴ Tu changes des Winston contre des Gitanes.

4.5. Restriction sémantique

Nous partons de l'hypothèse que la majorité des emprunts au français en AJ a connu une restriction sémantique. Ceci contredit les propos de Bader (1990 : 40) qui note dans son étude : « Instances of narrowing are less common in JA loanwords from english and french than cases of widening ». Cette proposition peut s'accueillir si l'on parle des emprunts anglais mais il n'en va pas de même pour les emprunts français dont, selon notre corpus, les significations ont été réduites pour la plupart. La restriction sémantique peut être différente d'un emprunt à l'autre. Cette restriction peut être complète dans la mesure où tous les sens d'un emprunt peuvent être réduits à un seul sens dans la langue emprunteuse. Par ailleurs, cette restriction peut être partielle quand l'emprunt perd un seul sens et garde tous les autres. Ainsi, l'emprunt /iksiswār/ (pl. /iksiswārāt/) (accessoire) a gardé en AJ tous les sens qu'il possède en français à l'exception d'un seul, sa sémantique voyant une restriction partielle comme le montre le tableau ci-dessous :

Sens français (Larousse 2015)	Disponibilité du sens français dans l'AJ + exemple
a. Ce qui n'est pas essentiel ; chose secondaire : laissons l'accessoire de côté.	✓ /el-muhim el-ʿasāsiyyāt wel-bagi kulu iksiswārāt/ : <i>les principaux sont les plus importants, tout le reste est accessoire.</i>
b. Objet, instrument, appareil destiné à compléter un élément principal ou à aider au fonctionnement d'un appareil dans les diverses circonstances de son utilisation : accessoires d'automobile, de robot électrique.	✓ /iksiswārāt issiyyāra/ : <i>les accessoires de la voiture.</i>
c. Élément variable qui complète la toilette (foulard, ceinture, sac, etc.).	✓ /el-fuṣṭān w-iksiswārātu/ : <i>la robe et ses accessoires.</i>
d. Objet complétant le décor d'un spectacle ou servant aux acteurs (meuble, arme, ustensile quelconque).	✓ /iksiswārāt el-masrah/ : <i>les accessoires du théâtre.</i>
e. Droit : bien indissociable d'un bien principal au regard de la propriété (édifice construit sur un terrain, par exemple).	X

Tableau 2 : La restriction sémantique partielle de l'emprunt /iksiswārāt/ "accessoires".

En revanche, l'emprunt *boucle* n'est accompagné que par un seul sème ; il a perdu tous les autres sens de la langue prêteuse. Par conséquent, sa sémantique est caractérisée par une restriction complète comme le montre le tableau ci-dessous :

Sens français (Larousse 2015)	Disponibilité du sens français dans l'AJ + exemple
a. Anneau ou rectangle de métal avec traverse portant en général un ou plusieurs ardillons, qui sert à assujettir les deux extrémités d'une courroie, d'une ceinture, etc.	✓ /buklit šaʕr/ (pince à boucles de cheveux)
b. Mèche de cheveux roulée sur elle-même.	✗
c. Fil en forme d'anneau, lien roulé, ligne courbe qui se referme sur elle-même : <i>Les boucles d'un lacet.</i>	✗
d. Partie arrondie et allongée de lettres manuscrites.	✗
e. Méandre accentué d'un cours d'eau.	✗
f. Synonyme ancien de looping.	✗

Tableau 3 : La restriction sémantique complète de l'emprunt /bukli/ "boucle".

La restriction porte sur la sémantique de plusieurs emprunts français en AJ. Les exemples sont nombreux : le mot gâteau qui désigne en français tout type de pâtisserie à base de farine (far, flan, galette, pâtisserie, bavaroise, brioche, croissant, chou, feuilleté, meringue, madeleine, tarte, gaufre, nègre, etc.) ne se réfère en AJ qu'au gâteau qui prend la forme de celui que l'on sert aux mariages et anniversaires.

Cette réduction s'explique selon Winter-Froemel (2014 : 73) par le contexte lié à la réception du mot en question. Un seul sens contextuel intéresse l'emprunteur : « Dans la situation du contact linguistique qui représente l'origine de l'emprunt, le locuteur utilise la forme de la langue d'origine dans certaines significations (contextuelles), et les autres significations de cette forme ne sont pas directement pertinentes ». Ainsi, les emprunts suivants ne sont utilisés en AJ que dans des significations contextuelles limitées par rapport à celles de la langue d'origine :

Emprunt	Sens réduit par la langue emprunteuse	Domaine réduit
Béret	Coiffure large et plate que portent les hommes dans l'armée	Armée
Boucle	Pince à boucles de cheveux	Bijoux
Bouquet	Assemblage de fleurs généralement réunies en faisceau de façon à composer une harmonie de formes, de couleurs, de parfums	Décor
Bougie	Dispositif d'éclairage électrique comprenant un fourreau en porcelaine ou en autre matière ininflammable, et muni d'une douille à vis du modèle réduit	Électricité
Buffet	1. Meuble, le plus souvent à deux corps, destiné à recevoir la vaisselle, le linge, le service de table 2. Table à étagère d'un restaurant où sont présentés les plats proposés aux clients	Cuisine
Capote	Manteau	Vêtements
Capsule	Enveloppe soluble qui enrobe certains médicaments dont le goût est désagréable	Pharmacie et chimie
Carreaux	Dessin de forme carrée servant de motif décoratif sur les vêtements	Vêtements
Châssis	Armature métallique rigide supportant le moteur, la carrosserie d'un véhicule, d'une machine.	Automobile
Chef	Personne qui dirige les cuisiniers d'un restaurant	Restaurant

Tableau 4 : La restriction contextuelle (domaines) des emprunts.

4.6. Déviation sémantique

En général, lors de leur passage à la langue d'accueil, les emprunts suivent l'un des chemins suivants : ils gardent la même sémantique que celle de la langue donneuse, au moins une partie de sens originel, d'où une restriction sémantique ; de nouveaux sens peuvent s'ajouter à tout ou partie de ces sens originaux ; ils reçoivent une extension sémantique différente de celle de la langue donneuse, d'où une déviation sémantique. Dans ce dernier cas, la déviation peut venir du fait qu'un mot est emprunté depuis longtemps dans une langue donnée, alors qu'il connaît plus tard une déviation dans sa sémantique et une déformation dans sa forme. La déviation et la déformation vont donner à ce mot un sens et une forme qu'il n'avait pas dans sa langue d'origine. Un mot qui peut servir d'exemple à ce type de changement est le mot *cartouche*. Son sens et sa forme ont connu un changement radical en AJ. Au niveau de la forme, le phonème vélaire [k] est devenu le phonème vélaire [ħ] et le phonème alvéodental [t] est devenu le phonème alvéodental [ṭ]. Ces changements ont donné la forme /ħaṭrūš/ ou /ħaṭūš/. La déformation joue par rapport à la forme d'origine à partir de laquelle sont nées les deux formes. Au niveau sémantique, parmi tous les sens que l'emprunt *cartouche* porte en français (munition de chasse ou d'arme de guerre, recharge d'encre pour stylo et munition de chasse ou d'arme de guerre), aucun n'est présent en AJ. Dans ce dernier, *cartouche* n'est employé que pour désigner le fusil de chasse. Donc du point de vue de la déviation sémantique, les sèmes que porte l'emprunt dans sa langue d'origine sont totalement absents dans la langue receveuse, et un nouveau sème apparaît.

7. Métaphore

Un autre type de changement linguistique que les emprunts peuvent recevoir dans la langue réceptrice est le fait qu'un emprunt reçoive un sens figuré. On parle alors de métaphorisation de l'emprunt. La métaphore est une étape très avancée de l'intégration sémantique de l'emprunt linguistique. Elle consiste ainsi à un emprunt interne selon lequel le mot est pris d'un contexte pour être utilisé dans un autre contexte avec un nouveau sens. Selon Assal (1994) :

La métaphore terminologique est loin d'être une simple façon de parler, elle est essentiellement une façon de penser. Certes elle est un emprunt imagé, mais une fois que cet emprunt est réinvesti dans une pratique sociale, une fois que sa signification est réglée par les acteurs agissant dans le cadre de cette pratique, elle devient l'expression d'un nouveau concept.

Nous pouvons donc remarquer que les emprunts métaphorisés connaissent deux transferts lexico-sémantiques, un premier, d'une langue à une autre, et un deuxième, d'un domaine ou d'un contexte social ou terminologique à un autre dans la langue emprunteuse. Le deuxième transfert (la métaphorisation) ne pourrait être réalisé sans que le premier soit complet surtout au niveau sémantique.

Commençons par l'emprunt /antīn/ *antenne*, dans le domaine de la télécommunication, utilisé par les locuteurs jordaniens comme une métaphore à connotation péjorative. Ainsi, on entend par un Jordanien : /huwi mrakib antīn/ *il porte une antenne* pour dire qu'un homme n'est pas jaloux pour son épouse ou sa sœur face à tout préjudice venant de la part d'autrui. Dans le domaine des automobiles, les locuteurs jordaniens ont métaphorisé l'emprunt /kawšūk/ *caoutchouc* pour être lui aussi un mot connoté péjorativement. Dans ce cas, il ne peut être syntaxiquement qu'un attribut : /huwi kawšūk/ *il est caoutchouc* pour dire de quelqu'un qu'il est très avare. Un autre emprunt métaphorisé dans le domaine des automobiles est l'emprunt *châssis*. À côté du sens que porte ce mot, « cadre de forme généralement rectangulaire en bois, en métal ou en pierre qui sert à enchâsser ou à supporter un objet, une surface de nature variée » (TLF), il porte en AJ d'autres sens figurés. Dans un contexte d'ironie, un Jordanien qui dit /šaṣīh maftūl/ *son châssis est déformé ou abimé*, se moque de lui pour lui signifier qu'il ne marche pas bien. Un autre exemple, toujours dans le domaine des automobiles, c'est l'emprunt *rondelle* qui désigne en français, parmi d'autres sens, une « couronne métallique de faible épaisseur que l'on place entre un écrou et la pièce à serrer » (TLF). Il arrive que des Jordaniens utilisent ce mot dans des phrases comme /huwi wala rondeli/ *il n'a aucune rondelle* pour dire que quelqu'un est stupide ou fou. Les Jordaniens ont même fait dériver un participe passé de ce nom, /mrandel/ *celui qui est en rapport avec la rondelle*, pour donner le même sens : /huwi mrandel/ *il est mrandel* pour dire aussi qu'il est stupide ou fou.

8. Conclusion

La marginalisation de l'emprunt français ressort dans les ouvrages des linguistes jordaniens qui ne réservent que peu de place à ce phénomène. Dans les ouvrages des linguistes, l'emprunt français est toujours traité comme un emprunt secondaire. C'est pourquoi notre travail cherche à montrer l'influence du français sur un dialecte de l'arabe oriental, une influence qu'on pensait toujours marginale et invisible. Le corpus, constitué de près de 300 emprunts dans 32 domaines, nous montre que cette influence mérite bien d'être étudiée et analysée ; une étude dans les origines de cet emprunt nous révèle qu'à travers l'histoire, le contact entre le français et l'AJ, dans la plupart des cas, n'avait

lieu que d'une façon indirecte. Quatre acteurs principaux ont joué le rôle d'intermédiaire entre le prêteur et l'emprunteur. Le premier acteur est l'anglais dont les traces phonétiques et graphiques sont fort présentes dans les emprunts français en AJ. Le deuxième est représenté par trois dialectes, le beyrouthin et le damascain comme dialectes syro-libanais, et le dialecte égyptien, qui étaient en contact direct avec le français plus que le dialecte jordanien. Le troisième acteur dont le rôle était moins visible est le turc, ce dernier profitant de son rôle administratif et politique fort du seizième jusqu'au vingtième siècle pour prêter à l'arabe un grand nombre de ses mots et pour être un pont entre l'arabe et les autres langues. Le quatrième acteur est l'arabe standard dont le rôle est exécuté par les « transcodeurs ».

À un autre niveau, les emprunts, dans la langue receveuse, peuvent connaître plusieurs types de changement ou plutôt d'adaptation. Parmi ces changements, cette étude a abordé les changements sémantiques qui ont caractérisé les emprunts français en AJ. La sémantique de la grande partie de ces emprunts a été réduite soit de façon complète dans la mesure où tous les sens d'un emprunt peuvent être réduits à un seul sens dans la langue emprunteuse, soit de façon partielle quand l'emprunt perd un seul sens et garde tous les autres. Si on parle de restriction, on peut aussi parler d'une extension sémantique mais d'un volume moindre. Certains emprunts ont désigné une connotation péjorative dans la langue emprunteuse comme par exemple *tante*, *banque*, *caleçon*, *champagne*, *collant* et *garçon* alors qu'ils ne sont pas connotés de la même façon dans leur langue d'origine. D'autres emprunts ont connu un changement dans leur catégorie nominale : des noms propres devenus noms communs comme *Tefal*, *Classeur* et *Moulinex*, par contre des emprunts comme *Gauloise*, *Gitane*, *Kiri*, *La vache qui rit*, *Danette* et *Mirage* ont connu un changement dans l'autre sens. Il nous reste d'étudier les autres types de changements et adaptations linguistiques que les emprunts au français peuvent rencontrer dans leur voyage vers l'AJ, ces emprunts ont forcément connu des adaptations et des changements phonétiques, morphologiques et syntaxiques.

Références

- Abu Guba, Mohammed. 2016. *Phonological Adaptation of English Loanwords in Ammani Arabic*. Doctoral dissertation. Salford: University of Salford.
- Al-Khatib, Mahmoud and Farghal, Mohammed. 1999. "English Borrowings in Jordanian Arabic: Distribution, Functions, and Attitudes." *Grazer Linguistische Studien* 52: 1-18.
- Al-Saqqaf, Abdullah Hassan, 2006. "The Linguistics of loanwords in H'ad'rami Arabic." *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 9/1: 75-93.

- Alahmadi, S. D. 2015. "Loanwords in the Urban Meccan Hijazi Dialect: An Analysis of Lexical Variation according to Speakers' Sex, Age and Education." *International Journal of English Linguistics* 5/6: 34-58.
- Alnamer, Abdul Salam and Al Namer, Sulafah. 2018. "The use of loanwords in Emirati Arabic according to speakers' gender, educational level, and age." *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature* 7/4: 158-176.
- Assal, J. Ph. 1994. "La métaphorisation terminologique." *Terminologie et traduction* 2: 235-242
- Bader, Y. 1990. "Semantic change in Arabic loanwords from English and French." *Abhath Al-Yarmouk: Literature and Linguistics Series* 8/2: 33-48.
- Barbot, M. 1961. "Emprunts et phonologie dans les dialectes citadins syro-libanais." *Arabica* 8: 174-188.
- Butros, A. J. 1963 *English loanwords in the colloquial Arabic of Palestine (1917-1948) and Jordan (1948-1962)*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. New York: Columbia University.
- Butros, A. J. 1973. "Turkish, Italian, and French loanwords in the colloquial Arabic of Palestine and Jordan." *Studies in Linguistics* 23: 87-104.
- Deroy, Louis, 1956. *L'emprunt linguistique*. Paris : Les belles lettres.
- Dictionnaire Larousse. 2015. Paris : Edition Larousse.
- Emad M. Al-Saidat, 2011, "English loanwords in Jordanian Arabic: gender and number assignment." *Language Forum* 37/1: 59-72.
- Madkūr, Ibrāhīm et al. 1957. *Mağmū'at al-muṣṭalahāt al-‘ilmiyya wal-fanniyya al-lati ‘aqraraha mağma‘ al-luğa al-‘arabiyya* 8. Cairo: Amiri Press.
- Madkūr, Ibrāhīm et al. 1979. *Mağmū'at al-muṣṭalahāt al-‘ilmiyya wal-fanniyya al-lati ‘aqraraha mağma‘ al-luğa al-‘arabiyya* 21. Cairo: Amiri Press.
- Petit, G. 2006. "Le nom de marque déposée : nom propre, nom commun et terme." *Meta* 51/4: 690-705. <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/014335ar>.
- Quemada, Bernard. 1971. "A propos de la néologie. Essai de délimitation des objectifs et des moyens d'action." *La banque des mots* 2:137 150.
- Redhouse, Sir James William. 1856. *An English and Turkish dictionary: in two parts, English and Turkish, and Turkish and English*. London: Bernard Quaritch.
- Şemseddin, Sâmi. 1883. *Kamus-i Firansavi : Dictionnaire turc-français*. Constantinople: Imprimerie Mihran.
- Spiro, Socrates. 1895. *An Arabic English Vocabulary of the Colloquial Arabic of Egypt*. London: Bernard Quaritch.
- Steuckardt, Agnès. 2008. "L'emprunt : un événement linguistique ? Présentation." *Neologica: revue internationale de la néologie* 2: 9-18.
- Termium Plus, La banque de données terminologiques et linguistiques du gouvernement du Canada. <https://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2alpha/alpha-fra.html?lang=fra>
- Trésor de la langue française. <http://atilf.atilf.fr/>.

- Winter-Froemel, Esme. 2013. “Formal variance and semantic changes in borrowing: Integrating semasiology and onomasiology.” *New perspectives on lexical borrowing: onomasiological, methodological and phraseological innovations*, coll. “Language Contact and Bilingualism.” 7: 65-100.
- Youssef, R. 1890. *Dictionnaire Portatif Turc-Français, de la Langue Usuelle en Caractères Latins et Turcs*. Constantinople: Imprimeur de la société Impériale de Médecine.
-

Dr. Mousa Awwad is an associate professor at the University of Jordan. He teaches French and French linguistics in the French department at the Faculty of Foreign Languages since 2018. He specializes in lexicology and syntax. His fields of research relate to the lexical borrowing, lexical borrowing theories, neologism, language contact and syntactic theories. He completed his Ph.D at Lyon 2 University with a thesis entitled: *La confrontation au système de la langue française des emprunts lexicaux à l'arabe dans le domaine de la finance islamique : étude graphique, morphosyntaxique, morpho-lexicale, sémantique et syntaxique*. He can be reached at: Mousa.Awwad@ju.edu.jo

Filumena Marturano

Language and culture in standard Arabic and Egyptian vernacular translations

Lucia Avallone

The translation of theatrical works in which dialects are present is a delicate process of mediation requiring a careful valuation of formal and communicative textual aspects. For mediating between two different universes the translator must firstly choose whether to transmit the original text language variation – through the strategies available in the target language – or whether to ignore it, transferring the script into the standard target language. Accordingly, both the source oriented and the target-oriented translations are possible and produce results worthy of being examined, from the perspective of a wide interdisciplinary area including linguistic and cultural studies. Arabic versions of Italian theatrical and narrative works, originally characterized by the use of dialects, show a variety of solutions to the problems arising while translating, which are interesting for reflecting on the general decision-making process of translation and on the language choices adopted in a given target culture. My contribution aims to present the outcomes of a comparison between the original text of *Filumena Marturano* (1946), one of the comedies written by the Italian dramatist Eduardo De Filippo, and both the standard Arabic translation (2006) and the Egyptian vernacular script of its stage representation (1998). In the source text there are many Neapolitan vernacular expressions, as dialect is a major feature in typifying characters and environment, but the translations resort to a general neutralization of the foreign culture, through standardization or homogenization with the Egyptian culture.

Keywords: translation, dialect, theatre, source language, target language

1. Introduction¹

This article deals with the issue of translation into Arabic of literary texts originally written in a foreign dialect; specifically, I have chosen to compare an Italian Neapolitan² theatrical text, *Filumena*

¹ I thank my colleague and friend Silvana Bebawy for her precious advice in analyzing some passages in Egyptian Arabic.

² Neapolitan is here defined as a dialect according to a sense widely shared by the national speech community, which considers the non-standard languages locally spoken as dialects of the Italian language and not as autonomous varieties. On

Marturano,³ to two translations of it, one into standard Arabic and the other into the Egyptian vernacular.⁴

Translation is a delicate process of mediation in which both formal and content aspects must be carefully evaluated together with the pragmatic ones, as a variety of translations is possible and it depends on the approaches the translator chooses in mediating between two different universes and, at the same time, comparing cultures, as “translators interpret source-culture phenomena in the light of their own culture-specific knowledge of that culture” (Nord 1997: 34).

Therefore, approaching a source text typified by language variation, translators can choose to transmit this feature, through the strategies available in the target language, or to ignore it, transferring the script into the standard (or the vernacular) target language, namely they can carry out a source-oriented translation or a target-oriented one (Nord 1991: 1997). It is a challenging process for both translators and scholars, as the cultural transfer involves choices, strategies, and

the basis of considerations of mutual intelligibility, and not taking into account the speakers’ opinions and attitudes in respect to non-standard languages, the International Organization for Standardization recognizes Neapolitan (autonym: *napulitano*) as a group of languages (ISO 639-2: *nap*) spread over a wide area of Southern Italy <https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/code_changes.php>. It is worth noting that there is no standard Neapolitan commonly used by the population or by literary authors and that Eduardo’s comedies mostly present “a speech that oscillates between dialect and language,” which is difficult for translation into a foreign language (Rotondi 2013: 209-210), as several studies on the English translations of Eduardo’s texts show (in this regard see Romanelli 2002; De Martino Cappuccio 2010, 2011; Rotondi 2012, 2013; Vincent in De Blasi and Sabbatino 2015).

³ My contribution is mainly addressed to the analysis of some linguistic aspects and not to literary criticism - an extensive critical literature on Eduardo’s theatre has been already developed, and a thorough study on the reception of the comedy in Egypt would require a specific field research, as the available resources on the Web are quite sparse. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning a short article published on 26th November 1998 in the Italian daily *Il Tirreno*: “Eduardo de Filippo does not fail to tear tears and applause even in Cairo, where for the whole month of November the first edition in Arabic of “*Filumena Marturano*,” directed by Mariano Rigillo, is staged at the National Theatre, at the invitation of the Italian Cultural Institute. Played by two vedettes of the Egyptian prose theatre, Yehya El Fakharany (Domenico Soriano) and Dalal Abdel Aziz (Filumena), the comedy is a great success with the public (the theatre was 70% full every night, say the impresarios) and critics. “It is free from the vulgarity typical of certain Egyptian comedies,” wrote Abla Rwini in the columns of *Al Akhbar*, while for Nabil Badran, critic of the weekly *Akher Saa*, “The ability of the director Rigillo was to have adapted perfectly the spirit of the drama to the emotions of our people.” The three Egyptian actors who play Filumena’s children perform in a Neapolitan repertoire (*Funiculi funiculà*, *Munasterio e’ Santa Chiara*, *’O Sole mio*) with Arabic accents, and get open stage applause, as well as some gestures of the interpreter of Filumena, which sometimes seem to be traced to those of Titina de Filippo, Pupella Maggio or Sofia Loren, three Filumenas that have gone down in history” (my translation, from: “*Filumena Marturano all’ombra delle Piramidi*”, *Il Tirreno*

<<https://ricerca.gelocal.it/iltirreno/archivio/iltirreno/1998/11/26/LT306.html?ref=search>>).

⁴ In this article, standard Arabic is transliterated according to writing, while the Egyptian vernacular is transliterated to reproduce the pronunciation, including combinatorial changes, such as phenomena of assimilation, dissimilation, contraction, fall of sounds, and monophthongization of descending diphthongs.

tools that can lead to severely “neutralize the alterity of the foreign text and to bring it closer to the expectations of the receiving audience” (De Martino Cappuccio 2011: 47) or, on the contrary, to transmit the source text culture’s values and aspects, two methods defined by Lawrence Venuti (1995) as “domestication” and “foreignization.”

In Eduardo’s theatre there are many elements that feature characters, places, and behaviours as Neapolitan, but the universality of the message emerges as a prevalent trait, like Ardito argues in his introduction to four plays translated into English: “Eduardo offers a natural mix of Italian and easily accessible Neapolitan in most of his plays. Their success in Italy and indeed in translation and performance throughout the world is a measure of the universality of his means of expression” (De Filippo, Ardito and Tinniswood 1992: xi). Moreover, Ardito quotes the playwright’s words about the choice of using Neapolitan dialect in his works: “I use dialect as a means of expression, and nothing more. Just as I use standard Italian. The content of the play is what matters, not the words. Devoid of content all we’re left with is a mass of inanimate sounds, and if they happen to be in dialect it would just be so much folklore, which I detest” (De Filippo, Ardito and Tinniswood 1992: x). Despite this assertion, language plays a fundamental role: the author of *Filumena Marturano* makes the main character of his play speak in a language that signals not only the link with the city of Naples, but also social belonging. Indeed, authorial choices concerning language varieties and registers provide the text with social and cultural connotations, which in translation risk being neutralized or modified. We will see how the dramatic text is adapted to standard Arabic, a language that Arabs do not speak in ordinary life, and to the Egyptian vernacular, the common people’s language, without encompassing the use of sociolects.

2. Drama plot

Filumena Marturano is one of the most famous dramas the Italian playwright, art director, and actor Eduardo De Filippo⁵ (1900-1984) wrote, inspired by a real story. It was staged for the first time at the

⁵ Eduardo De Filippo is regarded as one of the greatest playwrights of the 1900s and as the creator of a unique and distinctive style, in the dialect comedy, that took the name of “The Theatre of Eduardo,” starting from the 40s, when he emerged with some memorable works such as *Napoli milionaria!* (“Millionaire Naples,” 1945), *Questi fantasmi* (“These Ghosts,” 1946), *Filumena Marturano* (1946), and *Le voci di dentro* (“Inner Voices,” 1948). His career as a writer of comedies, begun in the 20s, was recognized with national and international awards, Nobel nomination included, and his social and political commitment, impressive in most of the dramas he wrote, was fulfilled in the Italian Parliament too, when in 1981 President Sandro Pertini nominated him senator for life. Eduardo’s comedies were collected by the author himself in *Cantata dei giorni pari* (“Cantata of the Even Days,” comedies written between 1920 and 1942) and *Cantata dei giorni dispari* (“Cantata of the Odd Days,” comedies written between 1945 and 1973), both published by Einaudi.

Politeama Theatre in Naples on 7th November 1946 and it was the basis for several adaptations, among which a first film version in 1951, starring Eduardo and his sister Titina,⁶ who had acted *Filumena* in the first theatre performance too, and a second one titled *Matrimonio all'italiana* (“Marriage Italian style”) in 1964, starring Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni. Its dramatic text has been translated into more than seventy languages.

In short, it is the story of a woman who, pretending to be dying, manages to get married to her partner. Although on first reading the drama merely seems to portray a former prostitute who wants to tighten the bond of marriage in order to protect her and her three children, it encompasses a series of motives denouncing the state of loss and the lacerations of the Italian society derived from the Second World War⁷. In this perspective the characters do not only represent themselves, but also different layers of society: the intellectual class (Umberto), the working class (Michele), and the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie (Riccardo), initially in conflict with each other but then collaborative in the construction of a new united family/nation symbolized by *Filumena*’s role: *Filumena* dreams of bringing together all her family as much as Italy aims to gather its citizens under a single flag so that they can feel united again. The husband and father, Domenico Soriano, represents instead an unscrupulous capitalism⁸: he fights to know which one is his legitimate son, so to favour him, but in the end he surrenders before the insistence of *Filumena* on considering all three equal (Ubbidiente 2010: 135-139).

3. The Arabic *Filumena*

Filumena Marturano’s script is mainly written in Neapolitan dialect (Naples variety), with some dialogues in Italian. The play text reflects a complex sociolinguistic situation in which code-switching

⁶ Titina had previously acted minor roles in the comedies of her brother, who finally created a character especially made for her: *Filumena*. The first performances of the play did not garner the great success which Eduardo was accustomed to, but when Eduardo decided a new rehearsal before the debut in Rome, Titina asked him to allow her to decide for herself how to play the role. Thus, after twenty-five repeat performances in Naples, the drama was a great success and Titina was recognized as an exceptionally good actress (Fischer 2007: 68). In 1962 Eduardo took the comedy on tour to Poland, Hungary, Austria, and the Soviet Union.

⁷ Different readings of the play’s message can be given, but Eduardo himself provided this key to interpret the play, during a dialogue-interview with Zeffirelli, on the eve of the London performance. He highlighted the symbolic value of *Filumena Marturano*’s characters and situations in the aftermath of a long war whose destruction and divisions had to be overcome with the moral and civil reconstruction (Ubbidiente 2010: 135-136).

⁸ Domenico Soriano is portrayed not as a self-made man, but as a rich confectioner who inherited his wealth, which he handles unscrupulously, and who is used to commanding other people, including *Filumena* (Ubbidiente 2010: 137).

and code-mixing phenomena occur: Italian, a language dominant on social and cultural levels, contrasts with Neapolitan, perceived as subordinate. High and popular contexts intertwine; implicit and explicit contents are exploited by Eduardo to typify the drama's characters and plot, generating humour and emotional involvement.

It is the most widely performed Eduardo's play, both in Italy and abroad. Thanks to the actor and art director Mariano Rigillo⁹ it was staged in Cairo too, at the National Theatre,¹⁰ encountering the audience's enthusiastic reception,¹¹ in 1998, the same year in which the most recent English version,¹² starring Judi Dench, was performed. The play was acted by an Egyptian troupe and needed a careful work of translation into the Egyptian vernacular.

⁹ Rigillo was born in Naples on September 12th 1939 and established himself as a theatre actor in the 60s, both in classical and modern repertoire, after studying at the National Academy of Dramatic Art with Orazio Costa and Sergio Tofano. In 1969 he made his debut in the cinema with *Metti una sera a cena* (Giuseppe Patroni Griffi, 1969), followed by other films, such as *Bronte: cronaca di un massacro che i libri di storia non hanno mai raccontato* (Florestano Vancini, 1972), *Regina* (Salvatore Piscicelli, 1987), *Il postino* (Michael Radford, 1994), *Un uomo per bene* (Maurizio Zaccaro, 1999). He started later to work on television acting in *Il Mulino del Po* (Sandro Bolchi, 1971), *La morte di Danton* (Mario Missiroli, 1972), *La trilogia della villeggiatura* (Mario Missiroli, 1975) etc. At the theatre he performed *Masaniello* (Elvio Porta and Armando Pugliese, 1974), an interpretation considered as his greatest success. In 1981 he staged *Pescatori*, and in 1993 *Zingari*, by Raffaele Viviani. He currently directs the Acting School of the Teatro Stabile in Naples.

¹⁰ *Filumena Marturano's* performance took place in the oldest Egyptian theatre, the National Theatre (*al-Masrah al-qawmi*), built in 1870, one year after the construction of the Khedivial Opera House, which was destroyed in 1971 by a devastating fire. Both theatres were built at the time of Khedive Ismail, on the occasion of the Suez Canal inauguration, to host the performances of the Comédie Française, in al-'Azbaqiyya area, where Bonaparte's troops had already been entertained with theatrical performances. The National Theatre, so called only after the 1952 Revolution, was then known as the al-'Azbaqiyya Theatre and since 1885 it hosted Egyptian troupes (El-Aref 2014; <<https://www.cairoopera.org/museum.php>>). In 2008 also this building was seriously damaged by a fire; in 2014 the reconstruction works were completed and the theatre reopened.

¹¹ An interesting account of this experience was given by Rigillo in a Conference titled "Eduardo De Filippo e il teatro del mondo," held at the University of Naples "Federico II" on October 23rd and 24th 2014, for the 30th anniversary of Eduardo's death. The video, whose script is quoted in this article as De Filippo and Rigillo 1998, is available at the following link: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yg80x-RNSvE>>. A chapter of Sabbatino and Pasquale 2015, entitled "Eduardo e io al Cairo!" also testifies to this experience.

¹² There are a few English translations of Eduardo's comedy, among which the following are mentioned by Jocelyne Vincent in De Blasi and Sabbatino (2015): Carlo Ardito's version (first edition in 1976) broadcast at BBC Radio 4, starring Billie Whitelaw as Filumena (1988); Waterhouse and Hall's version (1978), staged at the Lyric Theatre in London and directed by Franco Zeffirelli, with Joan Plowright as Filumena; Maria Tucci's version (1996), staged in Williamstown and New York in 1997/98, performed by the translator herself; Timberlake Wertenbaker's version (1998), staged at the Piccadilly Theatre, starring Judi Dench as Filumena.

It had already appeared in standard Arabic in 1981,¹³ translated by Salama Muhammad Soliman¹⁴ and edited by the Italian Cultural Institute in Cairo, but without being performed in such a version. Even in Italy there had been attempts to translate into standard Italian – to “Italianize” – some of De Filippo’s most important works, but the character of Filumena thoroughly convinces only if she speaks in Neapolitan¹⁵ and many dialogues are built on linguistic games, which in the original text are based on dialect in contrast to standard Italian.

When Rigillo agreed to direct the stage representation,¹⁶ the colloquial quality was considered fundamental for the good result of transposition. That is why it was decided to translate the text into the vernacular variety, an operation conducted by four translators¹⁷ working determinedly for more than a month; in this way the fundamental feature of the play text, of being written and recited in

¹³ This translation of *Filumena Marturano* falls within the context of Italian literature translated into Arabic. Indeed, in the last century, thanks to a good number of Italianists, some classics of Italian literature have been published in Arabic; among them only a few examples are here mentioned: *Fontamara* (Muṣṭafā Kāmil Munīb, 1941), *Pinocchio* (Ṭāhā Fawzī, 1949), *Cuore* (Ṭāhā Fawzī, 1957), *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* (Muḥammad 'Ismā'il Muḥammad, 1960), *I promessi sposi* (Ṭāhā Fawzī, 1968), and *Il Gattopardo* (ʿĪsā al-Nā'urī, 1973). Works by authors such as Moravia, Calvino, Deledda, Gadda, Tobino, Fenoglio, Buzzati, Brancati, Fo, Eco, and Tabucchi have been translated too.

¹⁴ Salama Muhammad Soliman was a Full Professor at the University of Ayn Shams, Faculty of Languages (*al-'Alsun*). An Italianist and translator of important literary works, including many comedies by Eduardo De Filippo, he received a special award from the Italian Ministry of Cultural and Environmental Heritage. Among De Filippo’s works, he translated: *Natale in casa Cupiello*, 1931 (ʿĪd Milād fī bayt Kūbiyillū, 1982), *Napoli milionaria!*, 1945 (*Nābūlī malyūnirā*, 1986), *Questi fantasmi*, 1946 (*al-'Ašbāh*, 1980), *Filumena Marturano*, 1946 (*Filūminā Mārtūrānū*, 1981 and 2006), *Le voci di dentro*, 1948 (ʿAšwāt al-'a'māq, 1983), *Mia famiglia*, 1955 (ʿĀylat-ī, 1980), *Il sindaco del rione Sanità*, 1960 (ʿUmdat ḥayy Sānitā, 1997), and *Il contratto*, 1967 (*al-'Aqd*, 1997). Soliman devoted himself also to the translation of other Italian theatrical works such as Carlo Goldoni’s *Trilogia della villeggiatura*, 1761 (*Tulāṭiyyat al-iṣṭifāf*, 1981), Ugo Betti’s *Corruzione al Palazzo di giustizia*, 1944 (*Inḥirāf fī qaṣr al-'adāla*, 1984), and *La signora è da buttare*, 1967 (*al-Sayyida lā taṣluḥu 'illā li-l-ramy*, 1998).

¹⁵ Note that the vernacular spoken by Filumena is perceived both as a regionalect and a sociolect, and identifies the character as living in Naples and belonging to a low social class, in a certain sense as the Cockney is connected to a specific area of London and to the working classes.

¹⁶ The idea of staging *Filumena Marturano* in Egypt came from a previous experience (1996) of Mariano Rigillo who was invited to Nairobi by the ambassador Roberto di Leo to supervise the mise-en-scène of that play, translated into English and performed by a Kenyan company. The performance was echoed in Cairo, where, the following year, Rigillo participated in the International Experimental Theatre Festival in Cairo as a guest star. For the interest of the Italian Cultural Institute in Cairo and the Egyptian National Theatre, this masterpiece of the Edwardian dramaturgy was brought to an African stage again, but this time in a local language, the Egyptian vernacular Arabic.

¹⁷ In De Blasi and Sabbatino (2015) Rigillo mentions that two of the translators not only spoke Italian perfectly, but also studied at the “Silvio D’Amico” National Academy of Dramatic Arts in Rome.

dialect, apparently would have been maintained, contrary to the translation into standard Arabic which seems to convey only the story.¹⁸ But did it really happen?

4. Varieties in contact

The first matter to consider before discussing form and content of this drama's translations is that Egyptian Arabic, specifically the Cairo variety, is a mother tongue shared by a large community, an urban vernacular that has become a sort of "national standard dialect,"¹⁹ whereas the Neapolitan dialect is limited to a narrower speech community, although it has a recognised cultural status.²⁰

In the source text dialect conflicts with Italian, the national language, creating the effect of two cultural realities, while in the Egyptian Arabic version, where the vernacular is taken as the basic code of dialogues, translators chose to emphasize Filumena's speech not by resorting to a sub-variety of the urban vernacular or to another diatopic variety as it could be expected, but by using non-sense utterances to fill her linguistic gaps with invented and incomprehensible words. Likewise, the choice of translating into standard Arabic, sometimes switching to another diatopic variety (Upper Egypt dialect – Saidi Arabic, ISO 639-3: aec) and sometimes using solecisms, does not attain the goal of maintaining the sociolinguistic pattern of Filumena Marturano as diglottic. In addition, the use of the Upper Egypt dialect instead of an urban vernacular (the translator could have used a variety typical of the poorest strata of the population) makes the character associated with traditional life in the countryside, a choice that seems to reflect the Egyptian cultural contrast between centre and periphery, modernity and tradition. In a certain way, this can be considered a strategy of

¹⁸ We have to take into account that translation concerns the equivalence of linguistic content but also involves cultures which are matrices of extra-linguistic information important for readers/audience; thus, "the translation of non-standard language is a problem since it clearly also involves culture" and "translators should not only be aware of the issues involved in non-standard usage but also of the linguistic resources at their disposal to achieve an 'equivalent effect' in their translation" (Lung 2000: 267). *Filumena's* translators tried to reproduce the oral quality of the play, its performability, by using a non-standard language, "which in the source text shape[s] dramatic characterization and position[s] the character within a certain community or group and within a specific linguistic tradition" (Perteghella 2002: 45), but this process resulted not sufficient to transfer to the target text the original social connotations.

¹⁹ The Cairene vernacular has acquired a prestigious status (linked to the concepts of modernity, new media, education, cultural environments) and it is recognized as such by the whole community of Egyptian speakers.

²⁰ The Neapolitan vernacular, which is spoken by a relatively small community of people living in or linked to Naples, has an unquestionable place in the Italian culture, namely in poetry, narrative, theatre, and song. Not only is it a means of communication but it has also a symbolic role, "an emblem of the city and its culture: indeed, this dialect refers to a precise and often stereotyped cultural universe, with the consequence that through identification with the dialect one identifies with the values it conveys" (Di Salvo, Matrisciano and Maulella 2018: 78, my translation). Add to this that dialect can also be associated with a low level of education and/or to a location within neighbourhoods tending to preserve traditions, ways of life and linguistic uses (De Blasi 2002).

domestication, but not a way “to localize a dialect or slang into another specific to the target-language frame”²¹ (Perteghella 2002: 50). Indeed, the Arabic version of Eduardo’s comedy signed by Soliman undergoes a general standardization procedure, exceptionally introducing elements suitable for dialect localization.

5. Strategies in translation: switching from a variety to another²²

The analysis of the following excerpt will show some strategies the translators have used to emphasize the contrast among the different language varieties spoken by characters in the source text where the use of Neapolitan dialect helps to link action to a particular place and a specific popular culture.

DIANA E... come sta?... Sempre in agonia? ... È venuto il prete?

FILUMENA (*dominandosi con affettata cortesia, s’avvicina lentamente alla giovane*): Il prete è venute...
(*Diana sorpresa si alza e indietreggia di qualche passo*) ...e *confromme* ha visto che stavo in agonizzazione... (Felina) Lèvate ‘o càmmese!

DIANA (*che veramente non ha compreso*): Come?

FILUMENA (c.s.): Lèvate ‘o càmmese!

²¹ In this regard, it is worth mentioning that among Eduardo’s comedies, *Napoli milionaria!* stands out for the language choice of its English translator, Peter Tinniswood, who drew on a variety of English spoken in Liverpool. In the note on his adaptation, he explains: “I’ve done this adaptation of Eduardo’s play in the accents of my native city. Not its dialect. I’m not keen on dialect writing in English. It relies too much on a heavily-coated treacled ear and too little on love and sympathy and affection. [...] I’ve tried to catch the rhythms and rhymes and the lilt and the swagger that reflect the verve and vigour of my native city” (De Filippo, Ardito and Tinniswood 1992: 248). But above all it is the English adaptation of *Natale in casa Cupiello* (*Ducking Out*) that shows an interesting language choice. The events are “transferred” to a town in West Lancashire, Stott’s homeland, during the 80s (Eduardo’s play debuted in 1931), the characters belong to the working class and their language is full of harsh and slang expressions (De Martino Cappuccio 2011: 59). This strategy is what Perteghella defines as dialect localization, namely “to localize a dialect or slang into another specific to the target-language frame. Often, characters proper names are changed. Setting, topical, and cultural references are changed to target ones. This is very much a domesticating, acculturating strategy, which borders on adaptation and version” (Perteghella 2002: 50). About Perteghella’s study on translating dialect and slang for the stage, it is useful recalling the “five strategies for theatrical transposition of dialect and slang” she has defined: 1. dialect compilation; 2. pseudo-dialect translation; 3. parallel dialect translation; 4. dialect localization; 5. standardization.

²² In the English versions of Eduardo’s play Neapolitan is translated into standard English and therefore the code-switching phenomena, significant in the original work, are avoided, as well as dialect expressions are removed. Accordingly, it would be of no use to quote here one of the translations made for the British or American stages; I have decided to personally translate into English the passages analysed, trying to make their contents as clear as possible to readers who are not familiar with the Italian language and in particular the Neapolitan dialect. I hope they will forgive me for the length of the notes which are intended to help a comparison among Eduardo’s text, Soliman’s translation, and Rigillo’s script.

ROSALIA (*s'accorge che Diana neanche questa volta ha compreso e per evitare il peggio, le consiglia prudentemente*): Levatevi questo. (E su se stessa scuote, con due dita, la camiciola del suo abito, perché, finalmente, Diana possa comprendere a volo che Filumena allude al càmicce d'infermiera).

Diana, con timore istintivo, si toglie il càmicce.

FILUMENA (*che ha seguito il gesto di Diana, senza staccarle gli occhi di dosso*) Pòsalo ncopp' 'a seggia... Pòsalo ncopp' 'a seggia.

ROSALIA (*prevedendo l'incomprensione di Diana*) Mettetelo sopra la sedia.

Diana esegue.

FILUMENA (*riprende il tono cortese di prima*): Ha visto che agonizzavo e ha consigliato a don Domenico Soriano di perfezionare il vincolo in estemità. (Allude al prete. Diana per darsi un contegno, non sapendo che fare, prende dal «centro» una rosa e finge di aspirarne il profumo. Filumena la fulmina con il tono opaco della sua voce) Pos' 'a rosa!

ROSALIA (*pronta*) Posate la rosa²³. (De Filippo 1951: 21-22)

ديانا .. كيف حالها؟ .. ألا زالت تحتضر؟ .. هل جاء القسيس؟
 فيلومينا (تقترب من الفتاة مسيطرة على أعصابها وفي رقة مفتعلة) جاء القسيس... (ديانا تؤخذ على غرة فترتد إلى الوراء خطوات عدة)... «واذ لما» رأى أنى «أستحضر» وفي (خشونة)، «اجلعي البانتو»
 ديانا (التي لم تفهم حقا ما قالتها) ماذا؟
 فيلومينا (كالسابق) «اجلعي البانتو»!
 روزاليا (ترى أن ديانا لم تفهم في المرة الثانية أيضا فتتصحبها بحذر لتتمتع تدهور الموقف) اخلعي هذا (تمسك طرف الباطو بإصبعين وتهزهما مرات عديدة فتدرك ديانا أخبرا أن فيلومينا تعني بالطو التمريض)
 ديانا تخلع الباطو بخوف غريزي
 فيلومينا (التي تتبعت حركة ديانا دون أن ترفع عينها) «حطيه فوج الكرسي» ... «فوج الكرسي»
 روزاليا (متوقعة ألا تفهم ديانا) ضعيه فوق المقعد.
 ديانا تنفذ

²³ “Diana: And how is she?... Still close to death?... Has the priest come?/ Filumena (dominating herself with affected courtesy, she slowly approaches the young woman): The priest came ... (surprised, Diana gets up and backs away few steps)... and as soon as he saw that I was in my last hours of life... (catlike) Take the white coat off!/ Diana (who hasn't understood): Pardon./ Filumena: Take the white coat off!/ Rosalia (realizes that Diana has not still understood and, in order to avoid the worst, prudently advises her): Take this off (she shakes her shirt so that, finally, Diana can immediately understand that Filumena alludes to the nurse's white coat)./ Diana, with instinctive fear, takes the white coat off./ Filumena (who follows Diana's gesture, without taking her eyes off her): Put it on the chair... Put it on the chair./ Rosalia (preempting Diana's incomprehension): Put it on the chair./ Diana does so./ Filumena (going back to the polite tone of before): He saw that I was close to death and advised Don Domenico Soriano to honour the bond at the end. (She alludes to the priest. Diana, who doesn't know what to do, takes a rose from the vase smelling its perfume. Filumena strikes her by the low tone of her voice) Put the rose down!/ Rosalia (immediately): Put the rose down” (my translation).

فيلومينا (تعود الى اللهجة الرقيقة المفتعلة) رأى أنى «أستحضر» فنصح دون دومينكو سوريانو أن يسمو بعلاقتنا، ويتزوجني زواج «الرمح الأخير». تلمح الى القسيس. (ديانا تحاول أن تتخلص من حرجها فلا تدرى ماذا تفعل سوى التقاط وردة من فوق المائدة وتتصنع أنها تشم رائحتها. فيلومينا تسحقها بلهجة بصوتها الغامض) «رجعي الوردة»!

روزاليا (على الفور) ضعي الوردة²⁴.

(De Filippo and Soliman 2006: 30-31)

DIANA Hiyya 'amla 'eh dilwa'ti? Lissa barḍuh bi-t-ṭalla' fi r-rūḥ? Wi-l-'asīs gīh wala lā'?

FILUMENA Lā', gīh, ya ḥabibt-ī. La'ā-ni lissa b-aṭalla' fi r-rūḥ... Isla'i r-rūb wi-s-saltu baṭāṭa, is-saltu baṭāṭa!

ROSALIA Bi-ti-'ūl-l-ik ya 'uḥt: iḥla'i l-baltū.

FILUMENA Suti ḥilba su fulla is-surs karawya. Suti ḥilba su fulla is-surs karawya.

ROSALIA Bi-ti-'ūl-l-ik ḥuṭṭi-h fō' il-kursi.

FILUMENA 'Akammil-l-ik ba'a ya ḥabibt: lamma gīh il-'asīs yiṭalla' ir-rūḥ, naṣaḥ is-sayyid Domenico 'inna-hu ... il-'ilā'a illi bī-na wi-yitgawwiz-ni zawāg. [...] Gawāz yirudd ir-rūḥ ya 'uḥt. Sagga'i illi surdawawa. Sagga'i illi surdawawa.

ROSALIA Bi-ti-'ūl-l-ik ya-ḥt-i ragga'i l-warda. 'Inti 'eh? 'Inti miš bi-tifhami 'arabi?²⁵ (De Filippo and Rigillo 1998)

This is an interesting example of short circuit in communication.²⁶ The characters involved are three: Filumena, her servant Rosalia, and the nurse Diana, who has an affair with Domenico. Diana enters

²⁴ “Diana: ... How is she doing? ... Is she still dying? Did the priest come?/ Filumena (approaching the girl, controlling her nerves in false tenderness): The priest came... (Diana is taken by surprise, and she moves back several steps) ... When he saw that I “was calling for” and (roughly) Take the white coat off./ Diana (who has not really understood what she said): What?/ Filumena (as before): Take the white coat off!/ Rosalia (realizing that Diana did not understand for the second time, she carefully advises her to prevent the situation from worsening): Take this off (she holds the extremity of the white coat with two fingers and shakes it several times, so Diana realizes that Filumena means the nurse’s white coat)./ Diana takes the white coat off with instinctive fear./ Filumena (who follows Diana’s gesture, without raising her eyes) “Put it on the chair” ... “On the chair”./ Rosalia (expecting Diana not to understand): Put it on the chair./ Diana does so./ Filumena (returning to her soft, false tone of voice): He saw that I “was calling for” and advised Don Domenico Soriano to honor our relationship and to marry me “in extremity”. She alludes to the priest. (Diana tries to get rid of her embarrassment. She does not know what to do except to pick up a rose from the table and smell it. Filumena crushes her through the tone of her low voice): “Move the rose back!”/ Rosalia (immediately): Put the rose” (my translation).

²⁵ “Diana: How is she doing now? Is she still dying? Did the priest come or not?/ Filumena: No, he came, dear, and found me still dying... take the white coat off, blah, blah, blah!/ Rosalia: She’s saying, sister: “take the coat off”/ Filumena: Blah, blah, blah. Blah, blah, blah./ Rosalia: She’s saying to you: “Put it on the chair!”/ Filumena: I finish, dear: when the priest came, as my soul was going to meet its maker, he advised Mr. Domenico to [...] the relationship between us and he married me. The marriage gave me back the soul, sister. Blah, blah, blah./ Rosalia: She’s saying: “Move the rose back”. What’s on you? Don’t you understand Arabic?” (my translation).

²⁶ The lack of communication among different social layers is one of the aspects emerging from the drama; Filumena is typified as “the Neapolitan”, as a woman of the people, contrasting with the higher cultural status represented by other characters (Domenico, Diana, the lawyer Nocella).

the scene speaking to Domenico, without realising that Filumena and Rosalia are there, in a corner of the room. The three female characters have different language skills: Diana speaks and understands only Italian; Filumena speaks only Neapolitan and does not understand a high level of Italian; Rosalia claims to speak Italian but her speech presents deviances from Italian, strings which are technically ungrammatical but intelligible.

In Soliman's translation standard Arabic is the matrix variety,²⁷ while the Cairene vernacular and a generic Upper Egypt vernacular are embedded with some short utterances. The outcome is a very funny dialogue in which Filumena speaks in dialect and Rosalia tries to translate into a "special kind" of standard language to make Diana understand.

A comparison among source text and target translations shows the following features.

5.1. Source-text

In Neapolitan, the sentence "Lèvate o càmmese" is pronounced twice by Filumena, because Diana does not understand Filumena's order which corresponds to the Italian "Levati il camice" [take the white coat off!]. Also the command to put the white coat on the chair is not understood, being given in strict Neapolitan dialect – "Pòsalo ncopp' 'a seggia... Pòsalo ncopp' 'a seggia" – as well as the following one to set down a rose "Pos' 'a rosa!"

5.2. Target translation 1 (Standard Arabic)

In standard Arabic the translator highlights some clues by quote marks and resorts to improper sentences, e.g. *iġla'ī al-bāntū* (اجلعي البانتو), a deviance from the grammatically correct form *iġla'ī al-bāltū* (اخلعي البالطو) [take off the over-dress/white coat]. The comic effect is amplified by the

²⁷ The strategy of standardization is especially "suitable for scholarly editions of drama, but also for productions that universalize some of the issues or ideals in the foreign play" (Perteghella 2002: 51). It is worthy of remark that the translator maintains some foreign cultural items and explains them in the footnotes. For instance, the term *basso* is translated into Arabic as *badrūm* and further described in a footnote (p. 11); a note at p. 41 is devoted to the Roman Catholic festivity of All Souls' Day; in three notes (p. 30, p. 40, p. 71) Soliman specifies that Filumena and Alfredo are speaking in the Neapolitan vernacular (at p. 30 the translator argues that he has chosen the Saidi dialect to translate Filumena's funny way of mixing Neapolitan with incorrect forms of Italian); a note at p. 40 explains the idiomatic expression "nu pòlice c' 'a tosse" (literally translated, though not with the same comic effect) and another note at p. 42 reveals the translator's awareness of the impossibility of finding a standard Arabic/Egyptian vernacular correspondence to the utterance "e terno 'e tre", typical of the Lotto's (an Italian lottery) jargon. In the English version by Wertebaker (1998) it is translated as "makes three, bingo!", drawing on the target culture, while in Soliman's text there is only a reference to "good fortune": *yā li-ḥazzik bi-him!*, that means "how lucky you were with them", alluding to the death of Rosalia's husband and parents.

interposition of Rosalia that emphatically says *iḥla'ī hādā* (اخلعي هذا), touching the white coat.²⁸ In addition, the unfitting use of a verb, *'astahḍir* (أستحضر) [I call for], instead of *'uḥtaḍar* (أحتضر) [I agonize], incorrect on the semantic level, results appropriate to show Filumena's incompetence at speaking a 'proper' language.

Another strategy to epitomize Filumena's speaking as harshly popular is employed: the translator turns to an Upper Egypt²⁹ pronunciation of the preposition *fawqa* (فوق), so resulting *fōg* (فوج). In the sentence *ḥuṭṭīh fōg ik-kursī ... فوج الكرسي ... فوج الكرسي* [put it on the chair! on the chair!] all the items are Egyptian vernacular. That is why, to make Diana understand, they are translated by Rosalia into the standard, saying: *ḍa'īh fawqa l-miq'ad* (ضعيه فوق المقعد) [put it on the chair!].

Finally, when Filumena orders Diana to set down the rose, she uses the verb *ragga'ī* (رجعي) that exists in both standard Arabic and Egyptian vernacular, with the meaning of “move back”, but does not usually occur as “set down”. The expression closest to the Italian utterance would be *ḍa'ī l-warda* (ضعي الوردة) [set down the rose], that is indeed Rosalia's translation for Diana.

5.3. Target translation 2 (Egyptian Arabic)

In the Egyptian vernacular version some non-sense expressions occur, e.g. Filumena's cue *isla'ī r-rūb wi-s-salṭu baṭāṭa, is-salṭu baṭāṭa!* [take the white coat off, blah blah blah] which Rosalia translates for Diana into *bi-ti-'ūl-l-ik ya 'uḥt: iḥla'ī l-balṭū* [she's saying, sister: “take the coat off”]. No deviance from *bāltū* into *bāntū*, as seen in the Target translation 1, occurs. Worthy of mention is Filumena's use of an improper imperative, *isla'ī*, which recalls the correct forms of *i'la'ī* and *iḥla'ī* [take off].

The following unintelligible cue *suti ḥilba su fulla i-surs karawya. suti ḥilba su fulla i-surs karawya* is a non-sense tongue-twister in which the only comprehensible words are *ḥilba* [fenugreek] and *karawya* [chamomile]. I suggest that a strategy of phoneme substitution is again carried out: *suti* instead of *ḥuṭṭi*, *surs* instead of *kurs*; *fulla* could be a deviance from *fō'* (*fawqa*). This considering Rosalia's

²⁸ Gestural language helps to convey the meaning. In the original text Rosalia uses a courtesy form (second plural person) and, like in standard Arabic, she substitutes the word 'cammese' with a deictic, lacking the Italian/Arabic word to refer to the object.

²⁹ In a footnote, the translator explains that “Filumena bonds the Neapolitan dialect to Italian, creating expressions and words that arouse laughter” and underlines his willingness to translate these sentences into the dialect of Upper Egypt which is considered less prestigious than the Cairene urban vernacular. In this regard, the excerpt shows another example worthy of mention, the locution *al-ramaq al-'aḥīr* (الرمق الأخير) [last breath > in extremity] that is graphically rendered with *al-ramag al-'aḥīr* (الرمج الأخير), reflecting a phonological deviance typical of Upper Egypt variants /q/→/g/.

translation in the subsequent cue. Non-sense utterances seem to be used to emphasize the communication short circuit between Filumena and Diana, that causes a second intrusion of Rosalia who translates into a comprehensible Egyptian Arabic.

In the same excerpt the non-sense utterance *sagga'i illi surdawawa*. *Sagga'i illi surdawawa* occurs too, showing a possible substitution of *ragga'i*³⁰ with *sagga'i*, and of *wardāya* (*warda*) [rose] with *surdawawa*.

6. Rhetorical devices, lexical and phraseological features

Among the different strategies adopted by the translators, with the aim of trying to be faithful to the source text *skopos*,³¹ the use of rhetorical devices plays a momentous role, like in the passage in which Domenico is talking to himself regretting not having understood that people have long been mocking him.

DOMENICO [...] Io songo n'ommo 'e niente! Io m'aggia mettere nanz' 'o specchio e nun m'aggi' 'a stancà maie 'e me sputà nfaccia (*Con un lampo di odio negli occhi a Filumena*). Vicino a tte aggio iettata 'a vita mia: vinticin'anne 'e salute, 'e forza, 'e cervella, 'e giuventù! E che ato vuò? C'ato t'ha da da' Domenico Soriano? Pure 'o riesto 'e sta pelle, che nn'avite fatto chello ch'avite voluto vuie? (*Inveendo contro tutti, come fuori di sé*) Tutti hanno fatto chello che hanno voluto! (*Contro se stesso con disprezzo*) Mentre tu te credive Giesù Cristo sciso nterra, tutte quante facevano chello ca vulevano d' 'a pella toia! (*Mostrando un po' tutti, con atto d'accusa*) Tu, tu, tu... 'o vico, 'o quartiere, Napule, 'o munno... Tutte quante m'hanno pigliato pe' fesso, sempe! [...]³². (De Filippo 1951: 8-9)

أنا تافه! يجب أن أقف أمام المرأة، ولا أكف عن البصق على وجهي. (محدثاً بيريقي من البغض في عيني فيلومينا) بجوارك.. أفنيت حياتي بجوارك.. أفنيت خمسة وعشرين عاماً من الصحة والعافية والعقل والشباب! ماذا تريدون غير هذا؟ ماذا أيضاً يجب أن يعطيك دومينكو سوريانو؟ أتريدون ما تبقى من لحمي الذي فعلت به ما شئنت؟ (صارخاً في الجميع كمن طاش لبه) كلهم فعلوا ما أرادوا (إلى نفسه في ازدراء) أما أنت فكنت

³⁰ This possible meaning makes us turn to the standard Arabic translation where *ragga'i* stays for *ḍa'i*.

³¹ "Purpose", as defined by Vermeer (1978), quoted in Nord (1997: 29): "Each text is produced for a given purpose and should serve this purpose. The *skopos* rule thus reads as follows: translate/interpret/speak/write in a way that enables your text/translation to function in the situation it is used and with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function".

³² "Domenico: I'm a nobody. I must stand in front of the mirror to spit, and spit again, at myself (looking at Filumena with a flash of hatred in his eyes). I threw my life away together with you: twenty-five years of health, strength, mind, and youth. What more do you want from me? What more can Domenico Soriano give you? Do you want the remains of my skin? You, all, already did what you wanted of it. (Inveighing against everybody, out of his mind) Everyone did what they wanted! (Against himself with contempt) You thought you were Jesus Christ on earth, while everyone were doing what they wanted with your skin. (Pointing at everyone, with indictment) You, you, you... the alley, the neighbourhood, Naples, the world... Everyone have always taken me for a stupid!" (my translation).

تحسب أنك المسيح على الأرض.. كلهم فعلوا ما أرادوا بلحمتك! (مشيرا إلى أحدهم بإصبع الاتهام في كل مرة)
أنت، أنت، أنت... الحارة، الحى، نابولي، الدنيا كلهم ضحكوا علي³³!

(De Filippo and Soliman 2006: 13)

DOMENICO 'Ana tāfih, tāfih. Kull yōm iṣ-ṣubḥ lāzim 'abuṣṣ fi l-mirāya w-'atiff 'ala wišš-i. Tfūh. 'Ašān 'aṣḥa 'afū' mi-l-ḥaṣal-li, ma'ūl, 'ana miš 'ādir 'aṣaddi' [...] ḥamsa wi-'iṣrīn sana 'addīt-ik ṣiḥḥat-i, 'afyat-i wi-ṣabāb-i. 'āyza 'ēh 'aktar min kida? [...] 'āyza ti'kul-ni laḥm w-tirmī-ni 'aḍm. Kull in-nās kānu 'arfīn 'inn-i muḡaffal. 'Ana l-waḥīd illi fāhim nafs-uh il-Masiḥ 'ala l-'arḍ. Kullu-hum hina wi-hināk fi Nābuli, id-dunyā kulla-ha ḍaḥikīl 'ala Domenico Soriano³⁴. (De Filippo and Rigillo 1998)

The rhetorical devices employed in translating into Egyptian Arabic are: repetition, when Domenico echoes the cue 'ana tāfih [I'm insignificant] iterating the adjective; onomatopoeia, using *tfūh*, which imitates the sound of spitting, for indicating disgust; parenthesis, to explain the character's mood, when Domenico says 'ašān 'aṣḥa 'afū' mi-l-ḥaṣal-li, ma'ūl, 'ana miš 'ādir 'aṣaddi' [in order to awake, to return from what happened to me... is it reasonable? I can't believe]; emphasis, through the introduction of a derogatory mark, *muḡaffal* [dumb], which is not explicitly expressed in the source text but only implied; hypernymy, by using *id-dunyā kulla-ha* instead of listing the parts of the environment surrounding him which are named in the standard Arabic translation ('anta, 'anta, 'anta... al-ḥāra, al-ḥāyy, al-dunyā kullu-hā).

In both versions, translators face the challenge of a cross-cultural transfer; the source text contains motives and concepts which need to be domesticated for the receiving audience. In this regard, some lexical and phraseological examples seem to me significant. In standard Arabic "e sta pelle" [this skin] is translated with *laḥm-ī* [my flesh] and in Egyptian Arabic the sentence "Pure 'o riesto 'e sta pelle, che nn'avite fatto chello ch'avite voluto vuie? [the rest of this skin, that you made what you want of it] results as *ti'kul-ni laḥm w-tirmī-ni 'aḍm* [you eat me and throw me out when I am a

³³ "Domenico: I'm insignificant! I should stand in front of the mirror, and never stop spitting in my face. (Staring with a flash of hatred in Filumena's eyes) Next to you... I destroyed my life next to you... I destroyed twenty-five years of health, wellness, mind, and youth! What do you want more? What else should Domenico Soriano give you? The remains of my flesh of which you did what you wanted? (Crying out to everyone as if someone has betrayed him) All of them did what they wanted (to himself in contempt). As for you, you thought you were Christ on earth... all of them did what they wanted with your flesh! (Pointing at everyone, each time to accuse them with his finger) You, you, you... the alley, the neighborhood, Naples, the whole world laughed at me" (my translation).

³⁴ "Domenico: I'm insignificant, insignificant. Every day in the morning I should look at myself in the mirror and spit in my face – puah! – in order to awake, to return from what happened to me... is it reasonable? I can't believe [...]. Twenty-five years! I gave you my health, wellness, and youth. What more do you want? [...] Do you want to eat my flesh and throw my bones away? Everyone knew I was dumb. I was the only one to think myself Christ on earth. Everyone here and there in Naples, all the people laughed at Domenico Soriano" (my translation).

skeleton], meaning “you use me when I had something to offer and threw me out when I was finished” (Badawi and Hinds 1986: 783).

A mitigation process is carried out translating the cue “m’hanno pigliato pe’ fesso” [they used me as a patsy] that is rendered in standard Arabic with *al-dunyā kullu-hum ḍahikū* ‘alay-ya and in Egyptian Arabic with *id-dunyā kulla-ha ḍahikit* ‘ala Domenico Soriano, both meaning “all laughed at me/Domenico Soriano” and expressing the man’s feeling of deceit, but in a softer way with respect to the original sentence that is more severe.

Another passage shows a cross-cultural transfer achieved through rhetorical devices.

FILUMENA (*ironica*) Quanto me faie ridere! E quanto me faie pena! Ma che me ne mporta ‘e te, d’ ‘a figliola che t’ha fatto perdere ‘a capa, ‘e tutto chello ca me dice? Ma tu te cride overo ca io ll’aggio fatto pe’ te? Ma io nun te curo, nun t’aggio maie curato. Na femmena comm’ a mme, ll’he ditto tu e mm’ ‘o stai dicenno ‘a vinticin’anne, se fa ‘e cunte. Me sierve... Tu, me sierve! Tu te credive ca doppo vinticin’anne c’aggiu fatto ‘a vaiassa vicino a tte, me ne iervo accusi, cu’ na mano nnanze e n’ata areto³⁵? (De Filippo 1951: 13-14)

فيلومينا (ساخرة) كم يضحكني كلامك! كم أشفق عليك! تسألني فيما تهمني أنت وتهمني تلك البنية التي أفقدتك رشذك إلى آخر ما تقول؟ أتعتقد حقا أنني فعلت ما فعلت من أجلك؟.. أنت لا تهمني ولم أهتم بك أبدا. امرأة مثلي، كما قلت وكما تردد بعد خمسة وعشرين عاما لها أن تسوى حسابها. أنت تلزمني... تلزمني! أتعتقد أنني بعد خمسة وعشرين عاما قضيتها كالغجر بجوارك كنت سأخرج من المولد بلا حمص³⁶.

(De Filippo and Soliman 2006: 20)

FILUMENA Hā, hā, hā! Ḍahikta-ni! Wa-llāhi huwa ṣa‘bān ‘aliy-ya! Law ‘inta fākir ‘inta tihimmi-ni fi hāga ‘inta wi-li-l-bint illi fi l-murā‘a bit‘at-ak? Law ‘inta fākir ‘innu kull illi ‘amalt-uh da, ‘amalt-uh ‘ašann-ak

³⁵ “Filumena (ironically): How you make me laugh! I’m so sorry for you! Why do I care about you, about the girl who made you lose your senses and about your words? Do you really think that I did it for you? I don’t care about you; I never did care about you. But a woman like me, as you said before and have been saying for twenty-five years, begins to make plans. You’re useful to me... you, are useful to me! Do you think that after working as your kitchen-maid for twenty-five years I’m just going to get up and leave this house naked as the day I was born?” (my translation).

³⁶ “Filumena (ironically): How your words make me laugh! I feel so sorry for you! You ask me if I care about you, about that girl who made you lose your senses, and about your words? Do you really think that I did what I did for you? I’m not interested in you and I never was. A woman like me, as you said and repeats after twenty-five years, has to make her plans. You’re useful to me... you are useful to me! Do you think that after twenty-five years that I spent like a servant near you I would leave the fair without any chick-peas?” (my translation).

*'inta, la' ya-ḥū-ya, bas lāzim 'a'id ḥisābāt-i wi-la 'āyz-ni ba'da l-'umr da kull-uh 'aṭla' min il-mūlid bala ḥummuṣ*³⁷. (De Filippo and Rigillo 1998)

In the Egyptian text a resonant onomatopoeia introduces the cue, a hearty laugh instead of saying “how you make me laugh!”. A change of subject modifies the ironic sentence “e quanto me faie pena!”, corresponding to the standard Arabic *kam 'ašfaq 'alay-ka* [I feel so sorry for you], into *huwa ṣa'bān 'aliy-ya* [he's sorry for me].

A series of ellipsis occur in the Egyptian Arabic translation, omitting the following utterances: “e tutto chello ca me dice?” [and all you tell me?]; “ma io nun te curo, nun t'aggio maie curato. Na femmena comm' a mme, ll'he ditto tu e mm' 'o stai dicenno 'a vinticin'anne, se fa 'e cunte” [I don't care about you, I never did care about you. But a woman like me, as you said before and have been saying for twenty five years, begins to make plans]; only the utterance “se fa 'e cunte” is translated into standard Arabic, as *tusawwī ḥisāba-hā* [she makes her plans], and, with a change of subject, into Egyptian Arabic, as *lāzim 'a'id ḥisābāt-i* [it is necessary that I make my plans]. It must be said that the source text meaning is transmitted and not lost in translation, thanks to some implicit suggestions, though the omission of the utterance “me serve... tu, me serve!” [you are useful to me... you, are useful to me!] in the vernacular version, deprives the dialogue of expressive force.

A noteworthy translation of the utterance “tu te credive ca doppo vinticin'anne c'aggiu fatto 'a vaiassa vicino a tte, me ne iervo accussi, cu' na mano nnanze e n'ata areto?” [do you think that after working as your kitchen-maid for twenty-five years I'm just going to get up and leave this house naked as the day I was born? / with one hand in the front and another behind?] is given in both Arabic versions: in standard Arabic as *'a ta'taqidu 'ann-ī ba'da ḥamsa wa-'iṣrīna 'āman qaḍaytu-hā ka-l-ḡaḡari bi-ḡiwāri-ka kuntu sa-'aḥruḡu mina l-mawlid bi-lā ḥummuṣ?*; in Egyptian Arabic as *law 'inta fākir 'innu kull illi 'amalt-uh da, 'amalt-uh 'ašann-ak 'inta, la' ya-ḥū-ya, bas lāzim 'a'id ḥisābāt-i wi-la 'āyz-ni ba'da l-'umr da kull-uh 'aṭla' min il-mūlid ba-la ḥummuṣ*. The same phraseological solution is chosen, the image to go away from a party (*al-mawlid/il-mūlid*) without having enjoyed it (eating at least a chick-peas) [Leave the fair without any chick-peas].³⁸

³⁷ “Filumena: Ha, ha, ha! How you make me laugh! For God's sake, he's sorry for me! Do you think I'm interested in something of you and the girl you care about? Do you think that I did what I did for you? No, my brother, instead it is necessary that I make my plans and I don't want, after an entire life, to leave the fair without any chick-peas” (my translation).

³⁸ It is said of one who gets nothing out of an affair from which he might expect to profit.

Finally, it is interesting to notice a case in which translators do not resort to a local idiomatic expression to mean “a coughing flea” (an insignificant being that makes noise)³⁹ and retain the same style and expressivity in the target language. Soliman inserts a footnote to explain the utterance, but it is to be supposed that the Egyptian audience can easily comprehend it, as the same solution is chosen for the stage performance.

ALFREDO Rosali', ched'è... he perza 'a lengua?

ROSALIA Nun t'aggio visto.

ALFREDO Nun t'aggio visto? E che sso' nu pòlice ncopp' 'a sta seggia?

ROSALIA (*ambigua*) Eh, nu pòlice c' 'a tosse⁴⁰. (De Filippo 1951: 28)

الفريديو روزاليا، ماذا جرى؟ هل فقدت لسانك؟
روزاليا (في عدم اكتراث) لم أرك.
الفريديو لم أرك؟ أبرغوث هذا الجالس على المقعد؟
روزاليا (في غموض) أبرغوث يكح⁴¹.

(De Filippo and Soliman 2006: 40)

ALFREDO 'Ēh ya sitt Rosalia, ma fiš šabāh il-ḥēr?

ROSALIA Ma šuft-ak-š.

ALFREDO Ma šuft-ak-š. Lēh? Barḡūt 'ayd 'ala l-kursi?

ROSALIA 'Aywa. Barḡūt wi-bi-yikuḥḥ.⁴² (De Filippo and Rigillo 1998)

Similarly, in the English versions the same passage is mostly translated maintaining the image of the “flea,” except in De Filippo, Waterhouse and Hall 1978 where the translators resort to the idiom “to be part of the furniture,” that means “something or someone so familiar that you no longer notice it, him, her” (Cambridge Dictionary 2020).⁴³ While De Filippo and Tucci 2002 (first edition in 1996) and De Filippo and Wertenbaker 1998 use a standardization strategy, De Filippo, Waterhouse and Hall

³⁹ The expression derives from the Italian proverb “anche le pulci hanno la tosse” [even fleas have a cough].

⁴⁰ “Alfredo: Rosalia, what’s going on? Lost your tongue?/ Rosalia: I’ve not seen you/ Alfredo: I’ve not seen you? And what am I? A flea on this chair?/ Rosalia (*ambiguously*): Yes, a flea with a cough” (my translation).

⁴¹ “Alfredo: Rosalia, what happened? Lost your tongue?/ Rosalia (*absently*): I’ve not seen you/ Alfredo: Haven’t you seen me? Is this, sitting on the chair, a flea?/ Rosalia (*ambiguously*): A flea with a cough” (my translation).

⁴² “Alfredo: Lady Rosalia, no good morning wish?/ Rosalia: I’ve not seen you./ Alfredo: You’ve not seen me. Why? Am I a flea on the chair?/ Rosalia: Yes, you’re a flea with a cough” (my translation).

⁴³ <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>>.

1978 prefer to domesticate the text, reducing “the foreign text to target language cultural values” (Venuti 1995: 15). Indeed, in their translation the image of the “flea” is replaced as follows:

ALFREDO You didn't see me? What did you think I was? Part of the furniture? Where've you been?

ROSALIA To Mass, of course. Where do you think?

7. Conclusion

Assumed that the translation of a theatre script, which is generally conceived to be performed on the stage, is “an act of cultural appropriation of the source text by the receiving culture” but also “a means to introduce the Other into a given culture” (De Martino Cappuccio 2011: 49), the Arabic translators of *Filumena Marturano* can be considered as failing to represent Eduardo's language choices that have a crucial role in depicting characters and events according to the social context of their time. A general neutralization of the foreign culture, through standardization or homogenization with the Egyptian culture, emerges from the two translations. Although the standard Arabic version – an accurate work made by a scholar who introduced Eduardo's theatre into the Arabic readers' milieu – maintains at least a subtle bond to a dichotomist perspective of the speech community, the Otherness is largely reduced, except for keeping some Neapolitan words and idiomatic expressions or clichés, otherwise lacking correspondence with the source language skopos. As to the Egyptian Arabic translation – the work of a group of translators aiming at making the play enjoyable to the theatre audience – the target culture preconceived ideas affect the process of translation, making the text more familiar to Egyptians and distant from Eduardo's language and minimalist style, with the effect of weakening the originally embedded cultural message.

References

- Badawi, El-Said and Martin Hinds. 1986. *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*. Cairo: Librairie du Liban.
- De Blasi, Nicola and Pasquale Sabbatino (eds.). 2015. *Eduardo De Filippo e il teatro del mondo*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
- De Blasi, Nicola. 2002. “Per la storia contemporanea del dialetto nella città di Napoli.” *Lingua e Stile, Rivista di storia della lingua italiana* 1: 123-160.
- De Filippo, Eduardo and Mariano Rigillo. 1998. *Gawāz ṭalyāni*.
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNNLWks5ty0>>
- De Filippo, Eduardo and Salama M. Mohamed Soliman. 2006. *Filūmīnā Mārtūrānū*. Cairo: Quaderni dell'Istituto Italiano di Cultura.

- De Filippo, Eduardo and Maria Tucci. 2002. *Filumena: A Marriage Italian Style (Filumena Marturano)*. Hanover: Smith and Kraus.
- De Filippo, Eduardo and Timberlake Wertenbaker. 1998. *Filumena*. London: Methuen Drama.
- De Filippo, Eduardo, Carlo Ardito and Peter Tinniswood. 1992. *De Filippo Four Plays: The Local Authority; Grand Magic; Filumena; Marturano*. London, New York: Bloomsbury.
- De Filippo, Eduardo, Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall. 1978. *Filumena: A Play. English version by Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall*. London: French.
- De Filippo, Eduardo. 1951. *Filumena Marturano*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi.
- De Martino Cappuccio, Alessandra. 2010. *Translation of Dialect and Cultural Transfer: an Analysis of Eduardo De Filippo's Theatre*. PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, Department of Italian.
- De Martino Cappuccio, Alessandra. 2011. "Translating Neapolitan dialect in theatre: Problems of cultural transfer." *Translation Studies Journal* 3/1: 47-63.
- Di Salvo, Margherita, Sara Matrisciano and Margherita Maulella. 2018. "Il dialetto napoletano in prospettiva lucana. Varietà di prestigio o inesistente nell'immaginario collettivo dei lucani?" *Lingua e Stile, Rivista di storia della lingua italiana* 1: 75-104.
- El-Aref, Nevine. 2014. "Dilemmas of Egypt's National Theatre", *ahramonline*
<<http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/114505.aspx>>
- Fischer, Donatella. 2007. *Il teatro di Eduardo De Filippo: la crisi della famiglia patriarcale*. London: Routledge.
- Lung, Rachel. 2000. "Non-standard Language in Translation." *Perspectives* 8/4: 267-74.
- Nord, Christiane. 1991. *Text Analysis in Translation. Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-Oriented Text Analysis*. Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi.
- Nord, Christiane. 1997. *Translating as a Purposeful Activity Functionalist Approaches Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Perteghella, Manuela. 2002. "Language and Politics on Stage: Strategies for Translating Dialect and Slang with References to Shaw's Pygmalion and Bond's Saved." *Translation Review* 64/1: 45-53.
- Romanelli, Giuseppina. 2002. *Le sfide di Eduardo: la traduzione per il teatro con analisi de 'Le voci di dentro' in inglese ed in tedesco*. Trieste: EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste.
- Rotondi, Armando. 2012. *Eduardo De Filippo tra adattamenti e traduzioni nel mondo anglofono*. Napoli: Edizioni scientifiche italiane.
- Rotondi, Armando. 2013. "Tradurre il dialetto teatrale: Eduardo in inglese." *Stratagemmi* 27: 207-213.
- Ubbidente, Roberto. 2010. "E figlie so' piezz' 'e core, ovvero l'utopia sociale di Eduardo De Filippo alla luce di Filumena Marturano." *Scienza & Politica. Per una storia delle dottrine* 14/26: 131-144.
- Venuti, Lawrence. 1995. *The Translator's Invisibility: a History of Translation*. London, New York: Routledge.

Lucia Avallone, PhD University of Naples “L’Orientale,” is Researcher in Arabic Language and Literature at the University of Bergamo where she teaches Arabic language to undergraduate and graduate students. Her main research interests are language variation in Arabic literature and political discourse analysis. She can be reached at: lucia.avallone@unibg.it

La dinastia Kalacuri e il tempio delle 81 dee di Bherāghāt

Chiara Policardi

At the heart of Madhya Pradesh, in Bherāghāt, near Jabalpur, rises a temple with characteristics unusual for the Indian architectural landscape. Located on the top of an isolated hill overlooking the river Narmadā, it is circular and hypaethral, namely open to the sky. The entire interior perimeter of the circular walls is sectioned by a series of niches that house sculptures of goddesses. These face towards the courtyard, where there is a small shrine in traditional style, with *śikhara* and *maṇḍapa*, dedicated to Śiva.

This temple is not an isolated case, since some similar architectural structures, circular and open-air, have been found in different places of India, in an area that extends from Madhya Pradesh to Odisha, with evidence as far south as Kāñcīpura in Tamilnadu. These are dedicated to a group of goddesses or semi-goddesses called *yoginīs*, whose cult flourished around the 7th-8th century in traditions related to the god Śiva and closely associated with the tantric phenomenon. These female figures, subject of Indological studies only since relatively recent times, play a decisive role in various texts of the ancient Śaiva tantric literature. However, the cult was not confined to esoteric domains, but from the end of the 9th century it assumed importance in the wider Hindu religious landscape, even in court contexts. Thanks to sovereign patronage, a number of stone sanctuaries dedicated to *yoginīs* were erected between the 10th and 13th centuries; these are for us monumental attestations of the importance and breadth of the phenomenon.

The paper deals in particular with the *yoginī* temple of Bherāghāt, which, although belonging to the peculiar architectural typology, appears as a unicum under different respects. Various inscriptions indicate that it was commissioned by a king of the Kalacuri dynasty, and it was probably a royal chapel, a cultural place especially reserved to members of the ruling family. Indeed, the shrine represents a shining example of the typical alliance between *yoginīs* and royal power.

Keywords: *yoginī* cult, Tantric Studies, Kalacuri, śaiva traditions, śākta traditions, Hindu iconography, therianthropy, animal masks

1. Introduzione

Nel cuore del Madhya Pradesh, vicino a Jabalpur, presso il sito di Bherāghāt, si trova un tempio dalle caratteristiche inusuali nel panorama architettonico indiano. Si staglia sulla cima di una collina che

domina il fiume Narmadā e si presenta a pianta circolare e privo di copertura alla sommità. All'interno, l'intero perimetro delle mura è scandito da una serie di nicchie che ospitano sculture femminili, affacciate verso l'ampio cortile a cielo aperto. Leggermente discosto rispetto al centro della circonferenza sorge un piccolo santuario in stile tradizionale con *śikhara* e *maṇḍapa* dedicato a Śiva.

Questo tempio non rappresenta un caso isolato, in quanto alcune strutture architettoniche analoghe, circolari e ipetre, sono state rinvenute in diverse zone dell'India, in un'area che si estende dal Madhya Pradesh all'Odisha, con attestazioni a sud fino a Kāñcīpura in Tamilnadu. Sono dedicate a un gruppo di dee o semi-dee chiamate *yoginī*, il cui culto fiorì attorno al VII-VIII secolo nell'ambito di tradizioni legate al dio Śiva e strettamente associate al fenomeno tantrico. Tali figure femminili, oggetto di studi indologici solo da tempi relativamente recenti, rivestono un ruolo decisivo in diversi testi dell'antica letteratura tantrica śaiva. Il culto non rimase tuttavia confinato ad ambiti esoterici, ma dalla fine del IX secolo assunse rilievo nel più ampio panorama religioso hindu, anche in contesti di corte. Proprio grazie al patrocinio dei sovrani, tra X e XIII secolo furono eretti i peculiari santuari in pietra, che costituiscono per noi monumentali attestazioni della rilevanza e dell'ampiezza del fenomeno. Si tratterà qui in particolare del tempio delle *yoginī* di Bherāghāt, che, pur appartenendo alla tipologia architettonica delineata, si caratterizza come un unicum sotto vari aspetti.¹

2. Le *yoginī* e il culto templare

Nella storia delle religioni indiane il termine “*yoginī*” è stato impiegato per indicare figure diverse, arrivando ad assumere accezioni in varia misura discordanti, ma pregnanti nello specifico contesto. Ovvero, il vocabolo indica una gamma di figure femminili. Svareti studi (tra cui Keul 2013: 12-14) hanno tuttavia chiarito che non si tratta di un caso di omonimia – in cui i termini presentano accidentalmente la medesima forma ma nessuna relazione semantica tra i loro significati –, ma di un caso di polisemia: i diversi significati sono tra loro interconnessi, a vari livelli.

L'interpretazione più immediata intende per *yoginī* la controparte femminile di uno *yogin*: così come è definito *yogin* un uomo che pratica lo yoga come disciplina fisica e spirituale acquisendo determinate capacità, allo stesso modo colei che segue la via dello yoga è chiamata *yoginī*. Tali praticanti femminili, tuttavia, differiscono dalle *yoginī* della tradizione tantrica śaiva: nell'ambito di quest'ultima sono infatti descritte come potenti figure divine nei testi e rappresentate spesso come dee nei templi a

¹ Per una più ampia disamina sulle *yoginī* e il loro culto, di cui si riassumono qui i tratti generali, si veda Policardi (2020); la descrizione delle sculture al paragrafo 4 riprende alcune notazioni formulate in quella sede.

loro dedicati. Già il primo pioneristico studio sul fenomeno (Dehejia 1986) ha stabilito che i santuari delle *yoginī* si inscrivono in una corrente religiosa eterodossa, la scuola tantrica nota come Kaula, su cui si tornerà fra breve.

Nondimeno, se il termine che definisce queste figure femminili è, dal punto di vista grammaticale, chiaramente un derivato di “yoga”, una logica elementare suggerisce che debba sussistere una connessione tra esse e la dimensione dello yoga. Storicamente, tale molteplicità di dee è stata chiamata anche con altri nomi, come *ḍākinī* e *śākinī*; tuttavia, successivamente, *yoginī* emerge come il più importante nelle fonti śaiva, ragione per cui è generalmente adottato nella letteratura secondaria. A mio avviso il termine potrebbe essere stato scelto, per così dire, per selezione naturale proprio per la sua intrinseca capacità di abbracciare un ampio spettro semantico in virtù del suo legame con lo yoga.

Comunemente, l'idea di yoga è connessa a meditazione, concentrazione, ascetismo e manipolazione corporea; tuttavia, recenti ricerche hanno sottolineato come nella storia della tradizione indiana dello yoga i poteri straordinari abbiano rappresentato un tratto altrettanto rilevante e distintivo della categoria.² I testi tantrici ritraggono *yoginī* dotate di facoltà quali il volo, il movimento illimitato, la capacità di mutare forma, di entrare nei corpi altrui, di ottenere successi marziali e così via; la possibilità per l'adepto di ottenere questa varietà di poteri era un aspetto fondamentale del culto. La figura della *yoginī* rappresenta precisamente questa concezione dello yoga come dimensione di potere. Pertanto, “yoginī” si riferisce a figure divine dotate di maestria nello yoga o che possiedono il dominio sullo yoga, intendendo con “yoga” appunto una dimensione di facoltà straordinarie. Le *yoginī*, sia come divinità sia come adepte femminili, sono quindi coloro che padroneggiano i segreti delle pratiche magico-religiose. In sintesi, credo sia possibile intendere *yoginī* come “le potenti”.

Come si è accennato, il culto esisteva già da molto tempo quando furono edificati i templi. Le *yoginī* si affermarono in primis, eminentemente, come una concezione śaiva, che trovò espressione in una serie di testi principalmente di carattere esoterico. Nei secoli tra il VI e il XII lo śivaismo, comprese le correnti tantriche, dominava il paesaggio religioso dell'India. Fonti testuali, epigrafiche e materiali permettono di tracciare l'ascesa e l'affermarsi di questa tradizione, che arrivò gradualmente a rappresentare la fede preponderante in varie aree del subcontinente indiano e oltre, e assunse la forma di religione di stato in diversi regni regionali hindu. Sanderson (2009) ha infatti definito questa fase storica come “l'età śaiva”. Il fenomeno delle *yoginī* si iscrive in questo quadro: la diffusione di tali divinità nell'India medioevale avvenne con tutta probabilità sulla scia della dilagante ondata śaiva.

² Si veda ad esempio la ricca raccolta di saggi incentrati sul tema dei poteri yogici edita da Jacobsen (2012).

Il culto delle *yoginī* si può più precisamente definire di natura śākta, in quanto al principio divino femminile (*śakti*) è riconosciuta centralità cultuale e, in alcune scuole, anche teologica. Le tradizioni śākta sembrano essersi sviluppate in seno alle correnti della devozione a Śiva: lo śāktismo condivide infatti la maggior parte degli elementi di base con la visione śaiva, sicché i confini tra le due sfere appaiono essenzialmente sfumati.

Essenzialmente, dunque, le *yoginī* appartengono al regno śaiva e, al suo interno, al dominio śākta. In questo territorio, si presentano come divinità decisamente tantriche.³ Del resto, i Tantra *par excellence* sono fortemente orientati in senso śākta e la divinizzazione del femminile è al centro del fenomeno tantrico. Le *yoginī* hanno probabilmente avuto un ruolo fondamentale nella formazione stessa di quest'ultimo. Secondo Padoux (2011: 70), “[...] le credenze, le speculazioni e le pratiche tantriche risalgono senza dubbio a un fondo originario di credenze legate ai culti di divinità terrifiche, delle Yoginī in particolare, e dunque fin dal principio sembrano essere state essenzialmente śivaite”.

I culti delle *yoginī* si attestano dunque alle radici dello śivaismo tantrico, per cui la loro fioritura segue l'evoluzione storica della corrente śaiva stessa. Lo śivaismo tantrico, detto ‘Mantramārga’ in termini emici, comprende una serie di sistemi distinti ma storicamente interrelati che si sviluppano in successive fasi cronologiche, a partire dal V secolo circa.⁴ Il Mantramārga si suddivide, alla base, in due principali correnti, lo Śaivasiddhānta e i Bhairavatantra, i quali a loro volta si diramano in scuole differenti. Lo Śaivasiddhānta, imperniato sul culto della divinità maschile Sadāśiva, è una tradizione dualista, che si caratterizza come una forma di tantrismo temperato, in quanto le pratiche non sono quasi mai trasgressive, le offerte rituali sono vegetariane e senza alcol; in breve, in linea di massima lo Śaivasiddhānta non viola l'ortodossia brāhmaṇica. I Bhairavatantra comprendono invece le scuole śaiva più propriamente tantriche e le più estreme.

La tradizione testuale dei Bhairavatantra si divide fondamentalmente in due rami, detti Mantrapīṭha e Vidyāpīṭha. La fase più antica ed esoterica del culto delle *yoginī* appartiene a quest'ultima corrente, che si caratterizza per un pantheon prevalentemente, quando non esclusivamente, femminile. Infatti, qui il termine *vidyā* assume la specifica accezione di ‘mantra femminile’ e in particolare definisce mantra concepiti come dee. Risalenti al VII-VIII secolo, i Tantra del Vidyāpīṭha prescrivono rituali essenzialmente trasgressivi, che implicano di regola la manipolazione di sostanze comunemente ritenute impure quali alcol, carne, prodotti dell'unione sessuale, ecc. Ciò che è

³ Per possibili risposte su cosa significhi definire una divinità, un rito o un concetto come tantrico e per una panoramica delle fondamentali dottrine, pratiche e culti tantrici, si vedano, tra gli altri, Flood (2006) e Padoux (2011).

⁴ Si veda Sanderson (2014: 4-12).

contaminante è percepito in ambito tantrico come potenzialmente pericoloso, ma allo stesso tempo come più potente, più efficace e, quindi, più rapidamente trasformativo. Il concetto è che “[...] maggiore è l’impurità, maggiore è la trasgressione e quindi la potenza messa in gioco”.⁵

La tradizione delle *yoginī* è fortemente influenzata dall’immaginario degli asceti Kāpālika, i “Portatori di Teschio”, e appare quindi connessa in particolare a una forma di impurità, la più forte secondo la visione brāhmaṇica: la morte. Nelle rappresentazioni iconografiche, queste dee sono caratterizzate da elementi mortuari quali teschi, ornamenti fatti di ossa e bastoni sormontati da un teschio (*khaṭvāṅga*). Secondo le descrizioni testuali si radunano infatti in luoghi liminali, tra i quali massima importanza assume il campo di cremazione (*śmaśāna*). Inoltre, al centro del loro cerchio, sia nelle descrizioni testuali sia nelle configurazioni templari, si staglia Bhairava, la forma terrificante e travolgente di Śiva, di solito ritratto come un asceta portatore di teschio (*kapālin*). Alcuni Tantra descrivono esplicitamente l’uccisione dell’adepto da parte delle *yoginī*. Si tratta in realtà di un atto iniziatico, che prelude alla liberazione: le *yoginī*, uccidendo simbolicamente l’adepto, attivano per lui lo stato più elevato. Infatti, Kṣemarāja, commentando *Netrat Tantra* 20, glossa la forma verbale *upahāranti*, ‘esse uccidono’ – soggetto sono le *yoginī* – come ‘esse liberano’, e osserva che l’intervento delle dee è infatti da intendere come liberazione e non come uccisione.⁶

Nelle prime fasi della tradizione il rituale era fortemente orientato all’ottenimento di un incontro (*melaka, melāpa*) con le *yoginī*. Interagendo con queste figure divine in luoghi particolari e in specifici momenti di tempo, l’adepto poteva sperare di ottenere i poteri straordinari desiderati (*siddhi*), la conoscenza esoterica e talvolta persino la liberazione in un brevissimo arco di tempo.

Il culto delle *yoginī* subì significative trasformazioni con l’affermarsi del movimento Kaula, intorno all’VIII-IX secolo. Le pratiche efferate e la dimensione mortuaria andarono gradualmente sbiadendo, mentre assunsero sempre più rilievo rituali yogici ed erotici finalizzati a esperienze estatiche. Le figure di *yoginī* rimangono di importanza cruciale nei testi Kaula: se le più antiche fonti su queste dee appartengono al Vidyāpīṭha, la maggior parte della letteratura śaiva relativa alle *yoginī* si iscrive in varie tradizioni Kaula, dove queste divinità vengono definitivamente associate al numero 64.

Dopo la metà del IX secolo il fenomeno delle *yoginī* assunse proporzioni notevoli, come attestano due diversi ordini di testimonianze: da un lato queste dee furono assimilate nel corpus purāṇico, dall’altro in loro onore furono edificati svariati templi in pietra. Come è noto, mentre i Tantra sono testi originariamente destinati a iniziati, i Purāṇa sono opere composte per i laici, facilmente accessibili

⁵ Padoux (2011: 157).

⁶ Si veda Serbaeva (2010: 88).

e rispecchianti la visione culturale e religiosa dominante al tempo. La tradizione purāṇica ha avuto un ruolo chiave nella strategia brāhmaṇica volta a far convogliare le *yoginī*, figure originariamente esoteriche, nell'induismo *mainstream*, spesso reinterprestandole come aspetti della Devī o come attendenti della Devī. L'integrazione delle *yoginī* nei testi purāṇici, infatti, segna l'ingresso di queste dee in una dimensione religiosa più ampia; uscendo così dai confini delle correnti più trasgressive, sono introdotte negli ambienti di corte, e i sovrani iniziano a patrocinare i santuari in pietra a loro dedicati. Come illustrato da Dehejia (1986), templi e collezioni scultoree, alcune non più *in situ*, ammontano attualmente a una quindicina in totale.

Cronologicamente, la costruzione dei templi delle *yoginī* abbraccia il periodo che va dall'inizio del X secolo – con una possibile datazione lievemente anteriore in un caso – sino al XIII. Geograficamente, i santuari conservatisi si collocano principalmente nelle attuali regioni del Madhya Pradesh e dell'Odisha. Tuttavia, nel medioevo, l'estensione del culto templare doveva essere maggiore, come attestano ulteriori materiali scultorei, archeologici ed epigrafici rinvenuti. Queste fonti tracciano un'area che si estende da Hinglajgadh, al confine tra Madhya Pradesh e Rajasthan, all'Uttar Pradesh, sino alla costa dell'Odisha, cui si aggiungono testimonianze in Bengala e a sud fino a Kāñcīpura in Tamilnadu: i santuari dovevano quindi essere molto più numerosi degli edifici conservatisi. È possibile affermare che il culto delle *yoginī*, per alcuni secoli, fu un fenomeno pan-indiano.⁷

Prevalentemente circolari e invariabilmente ipètri, i templi delle *yoginī* si stagliano come strutture uniche nel panorama architettonico dell'India medioevale. Sono costituiti essenzialmente da massicce mura, appunto circolari, che racchiudono un ampio cortile a cielo aperto, a cui si accede da un ingresso generalmente rivolto a est (fig. 1). Come si è accennato, il perimetro interno si articola in una serie di nicchie, ciascuna delle quali ospita una scultura di *yoginī*. Al centro della circonferenza, un piccolo santuario, di regola rettangolare, contiene un'immagine di Śiva usualmente nell'aspetto di Bhairava. Le figure scolpite allineate in questi templi sono per lo più caratterizzate da splendidi corpi femminili, ma mentre alcune hanno volti graziosi, finemente delineati, che si intonano alle proporzionate forme corporee, altre mostrano espressioni terrifiche e molte altre presentano volti dalle fattezze chiaramente non umane, ma di varie specie animali.

⁷ Per attestazioni relative alle *yoginī* nell'India meridionale si veda Dehejia (1986: 82-85).



Fig. 1: Tempio delle yoginī di Bherāghāt, presso Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, fine X-inizi XI secolo. Foto: Chiara Policardi.

In ciascun tempio il gruppo di *yoginī* si caratterizza come una composizione unica: le tipologie di figure – benevole, terrifiche e dal volto animale – e la loro posizione lungo la circonferenza variano distintamente da un santuario all’altro. Solamente le immagini delle sette Madri (*saptamātrī*) e delle *dinmātrī*, le controparti femminili dei guardiani delle direzioni (*dikpati*), ricorrono con una certa frequenza. Sulla base di questi dati e di altri elementi, Dehejia (1986: 5, 93-94) e Donaldson (2002: 2.658) sostengono che ogni tempio di *yoginī* rifletta una tradizione diversa, locale e autonoma, ancorché connessa a un fondo di credenze comuni.

Come si è detto, i testi tantrici śaiva relativi al culto delle *yoginī* circolavano già prima della costruzione dei templi. Continuarono a essere composti, tramandati e insegnati durante i secoli in cui i santuari dedicati a queste dee furono teatro di riti e culti. Tuttavia, in che modo esattamente testi e monumenti interagissero nell’India medioevale è questione che rimane aperta su molti fronti. In ambito tantrico porre in dialogo i due tipi di fonti, testuali e visive, risulta difficile per due principali motivi. La costruzione dei templi, l’iconometria e l’iconografia e, soprattutto, i riti di installazione (*pratiṣṭhā*) sono temi caratteristici di un particolare corpus testuale noto come *Pratiṣṭhāntara*; si tratta di opere solo parzialmente edite e, in generale, sino a oggi poco studiate.⁸ Ma, soprattutto, i tentativi degli studiosi di individuare correlazioni si scontrano con la natura che i Tantra si attribuiscono: questi

⁸ Il lavoro di Elizabeth Mills (2019) rende per la prima volta disponibili sezioni testuali relative alla costruzione dei templi tratte da sei diverse scritture śaiva pre-XII secolo appartenenti alla categoria dei *Pratiṣṭhāntara*. Cinque di queste opere si inscrivono nell’ambito dello Śaivasiddhānta, mentre una, il *Piṅgalāmata*, ha natura mista. Si veda anche Sanderson (2014: 26-27).

testi dipingono sé stessi come rivelazioni divine e senza tempo. Le origini, il luogo e la data di composizione delle scritture tantriche sono in genere deliberatamente omessi dagli autori.⁹ Inoltre, i testi tantrici, come molti altri trattati religiosi in India, hanno carattere prescrittivo, in quanto mirano essenzialmente a insegnare “cosa fare e cosa pensare”.¹⁰ Nelle più antiche fonti sulle *yoginī*, tali prescrizioni riguardano in gran parte rituali esoterici individuali, non connessi a strutture templari. La successiva letteratura del corpus Kaula racchiude varie descrizioni iconografiche di *yoginī* che sembrano suggerire l’uso di rappresentazioni figurative; tuttavia non è possibile stabilire un’esatta, inequivocabile corrispondenza tra questi testi e materiali storico-artistici conservatisi.

In maniera analoga, la forma circolare dei templi delle *yoginī* non trova alcuna esplicita spiegazione nelle scritture; in particolare, nessun testo pare riferirsi specificamente a questi santuari. La pianta circolare è menzionata solo come possibilità teorica in alcune opere che contengono sezioni dedicate all’architettura templare, quali la *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, l’*Agnipurāṇa* e il *Devyāmata*. Le classificazioni presenti in questi testi includono la categoria delle strutture architettoniche circolari, ma la storia dell’arte indiana mostra che tale forma raramente trova applicazione concreta. I templi delle *yoginī* sono i principali rappresentanti conservatisi di questa peculiare tipologia.¹¹

Ma grande interesse assume un altro genere di fonti, che sembra far luce su tale conformazione circolare: in tutta probabilità, questi santuari possono essere visti come monumentali sviluppi dello *yoginīcakra* tantrico. Dipinti su carta o su stoffa o disegnati sul terreno con polveri colorate, *cakra*, *maṇḍala* e *yantra* rappresentavano strumenti per la venerazione delle *yoginī* e supporti alla meditazione, specialmente nelle prime fasi del culto.¹² Dehejia (1986: 2) riporta vari esempi di *cakra* dipinti in cui il cerchio è suddiviso in 64 sezioni, ognuna contrassegnata con il nome e talvolta con il disegno di una *yoginī* (fig. 2). Verosimilmente, nel periodo più antico, delle immagini venivano installate in *cakra* tracciati all’aperto in occasione di speciali rituali. I passi successivi che condussero all’edificazione dei

⁹ Si vedano, ad esempio, i problemi concernenti la datazione e la collocazione geografica del Brahmayāmala in Hatley (2018: 71-76 e 128-137).

¹⁰ Si veda Sanderson (2014: 91).

¹¹ In particolare, il *Devyāmata* illustra la struttura circolare del tempio in 88.2-3; si veda Mills (2019). Si vedano anche Dehejia (1986: 42); Hatley (2014: 206). Quanto si è detto in merito all’uso della pianta circolare in contesto hindu trova parziale eccezione in un gruppo di templi del Kerala, caratterizzati da mura circolari che racchiudono un *garbhagrha* quadrangolare. Costruiti dal IX secolo in avanti, sono situati soprattutto nella zona meridionale dello stato, ma esempi si trovano anche a nord, nella zona del Malabar: si tratta qui chiaramente di un tipo di linguaggio architettonico regionale, che adotta la forma circolare con tutta probabilità per influenza delle strutture buddhiste; si vedano, ad esempio, Vatsyayan (1997: 82-92) e Remya (2014: 2, 11).

¹² Si veda Dehejia (1986: 76, 85).

templi si lasciano facilmente supporre: i *cakra* videro un'evoluzione in strutture dedicate al culto realizzate con materiali deperibili e, in un secondo momento, grazie al prezioso patrocinio delle dinastie regnanti, queste furono tradotte in edifici circolari di maggiori dimensioni, costruiti in pietra.¹³

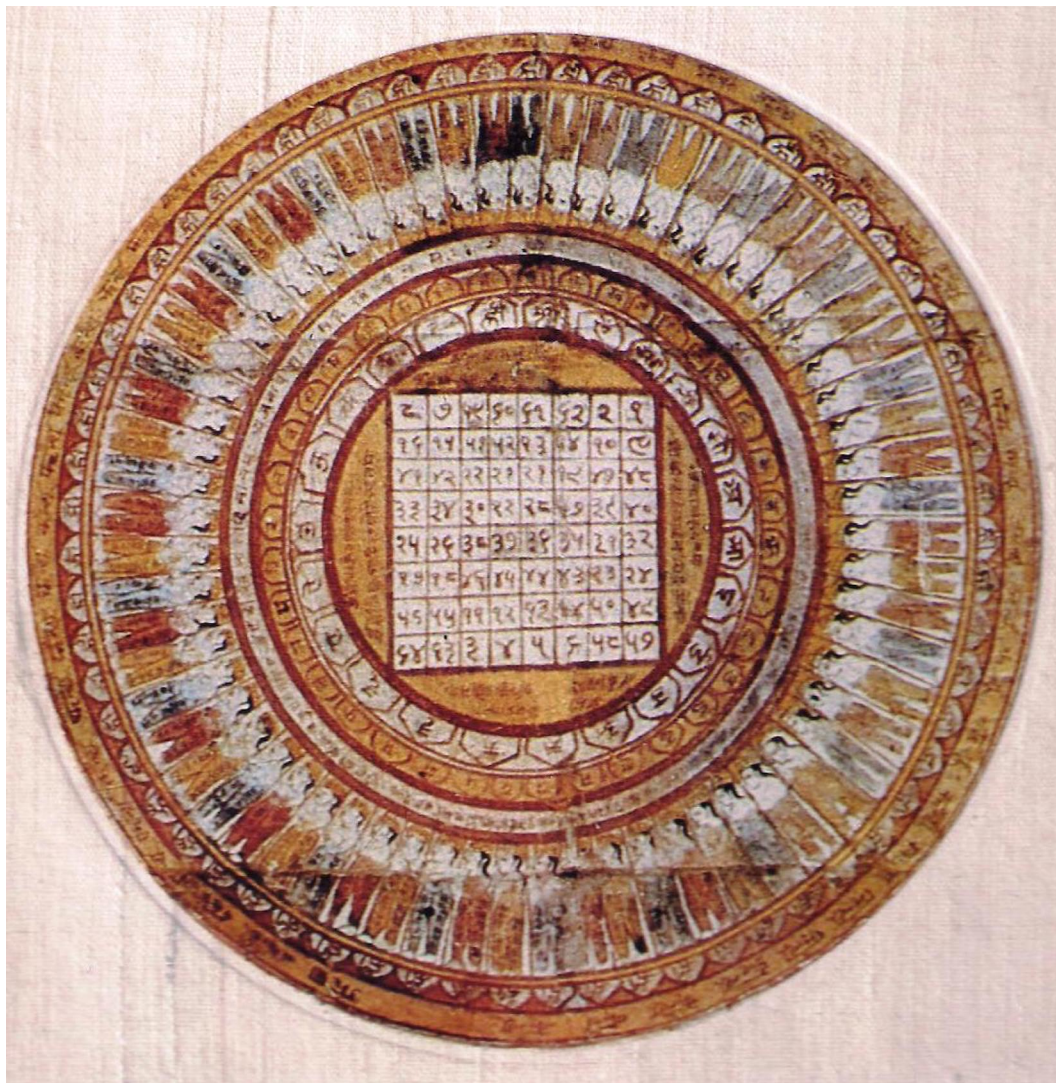


Fig. 2: Cakra di 64 yoginī dal Rajasthan, dipinto su tessuto, XVIII-XIX secolo. Foto: Dehejia 1986, copertina.

In diverse tradizioni il cerchio è notoriamente considerato simbolo pregnante, in quanto è la forma che esprime nel modo più efficace i concetti complementari di completezza e separazione: un cerchio è completo in sé stesso e al contempo separato da tutto ciò che gli è esterno; oppone la superficie interna definita a quella esterna infinita. Una circonferenza sacra ha, infatti, in genere la funzione di concentrare entro i propri confini l'energia divina e allo stesso tempo di separare due spazi eterogenei.

¹³ Si vedano Dehejia (1986: 2, 85, 185-186); Hatley (2014: 204, 207, 216-217).

Questa idea, già insita nell'immagine del *maṇḍala*, era probabilmente in gioco nella concezione dei templi delle *yoginī*.¹⁴

Inoltre, la conformazione architettonica di questi templi può esprimere, tra i vari livelli di significato, anche una metafora sessuale, in particolare attraverso l'evocazione della forma della *yoni* (le mura circolari perimetrali) che abbraccia un simbolo di Śiva (racchiuso nel santuario centrale). Il tempio delle 64 *yoginī* di Hīrāpur presenta eccezionalmente un'entrata aggettante rispetto alle mura circolari: la proiezione, rivolta verso est, conferisce alla pianta esattamente la forma di una *yoni* quale piedistallo del *liṅga*.

I ritrovamenti archeologici mostrano chiaramente la predilezione per la pianta circolare, ma si segnalano alcune eccezioni. I resti di un tempio a Badoh, nel Madhya Pradesh, e le caratteristiche di una collezione scultorea rinvenuta a Rikhiyan, in Uttar Pradesh, suggeriscono che un tempo in entrambi questi luoghi sorgevano santuari rettangolari di *yoginī*, mentre l'unico tempio non circolare sopravvissuto si trova a Khajurāho. Quest'ultimo, situato a parte rispetto al gruppo principale di templi Candella, è costituito da sessantacinque piccoli santuari individuali affiancati in una formazione rettangolare; tuttavia, nessuna scultura di *yoginī* è conservata nelle celle.¹⁵

Non si riscontrano invece eccezioni al carattere ipètro dei templi. L'idea di *cakra* alla base della concezione di tali edifici può aver determinato sia la forma circolare sia l'assenza di copertura alla sommità. Simile struttura rimane tuttavia enigmatica in termini di funzione rituale. Può forse spiegarsi in connessione a riti scanditi dalle fasi lunari, poiché le mura circolari, racchiudendo uno spazio a cielo aperto, consentono alla luce della luna di riversarsi nell'arena esposta.

In tale caratteristica conformazione dei templi potrebbe aver avuto un ruolo anche il principale potere attribuito alle *yoginī*, la facoltà del volo (*khecaratā*). Infatti, tra i diversi tipi di poteri straordinari, che le *yoginī* possiedono e possono elargire agli adepti, quest'ultimo è considerato il più importante e il più ambito dai praticanti. Nell'iconografia, le dee sono raffigurate accompagnate da cavalcature di vari tipi, tra le quali gli uccelli sono particolarmente frequenti, ma nelle fonti testuali sono spesso descritte come capaci di muoversi nell'aria grazie al proprio potere. Invero, tra le varie tipologie di *yoginī* la più potente è considerata la *khecarī*, 'colei che si muove nel cielo'. Per l'adepto maschile, il potere del volo si traduce nella possibilità di unirsi al gruppo delle *yoginī* appunto nel loro movimento attraverso il cielo. Secondo i testi, il *sādhaka* che abbia raggiunto un certo livello di perfezione spirituale assume il ruolo di Bhairava al centro del cerchio di *yoginī*, ascendendo al cielo con le dee, come guida della loro

¹⁴ Si veda Dehejia (1986: 39).

¹⁵ Sul tempio delle *yoginī* di Khajurāho si veda Dehejia (1986: 115-117).

schiera. Si potrebbe interpretare tale volo come un'esperienza estatica, ovvero potrebbe essere inteso come un volo mistico.¹⁶ Si può quindi ipotizzare che i templi delle *yoginī* fossero aperti verso il cielo in quanto simbolicamente luoghi di ascesa per le dee e i gruppi di adepti.

La maggior parte dei santuari delle *yoginī* probabilmente ospitava gruppi di 64 figure; analogamente, anche in testi sia tantrici sia purāṇici successivi al X secolo le *yoginī* sono in genere numericamente concepite come otto al quadrato. Infatti, secondo le fonti testuali, ciascuna delle otto dee note come 'Madri' (*aṣṭamātrī*) emanerebbe otto *yoginī*: si forma così la configurazione di 64 dee, che rimane caratteristica distintiva delle *yoginī* sino a tempi moderni. Come si è detto, tali figure femminili erano originariamente venerate attraverso dei *cakra*: potenzialmente occupavano tutti gli infiniti punti della circonferenza, delimitando e definendo uno spazio sacro – lo stesso si può dire, analogamente, per le 64 sculture di *yoginī* allineate lungo le mura circolari nei templi a loro dedicati. Il santuario di Bherāghāt, che comprendeva 81 sculture, come si vedrà più nel dettaglio fra breve, rappresenta una delle principali eccezioni a questo tipo di raggruppamento.

Chi fece costruire questi inusuali templi? La concezione degli edifici è probabilmente da ascrivere a seguaci della tradizione Kaula, ma la loro costruzione, che indubbiamente richiese spese non indifferenti, fu possibile solo grazie ai sovrani. Tuttavia, la documentazione al riguardo è esigua o di difficile interpretazione, sicché committenti e costruttori dei templi delle *yoginī* possono essere identificati con precisione soltanto in pochi casi. Nondimeno, è possibile tratteggiare un quadro storico generale, dal quale emerge chiaramente come culto delle *yoginī* e potere regnante fossero strettamente interrelati.¹⁷

A livello politico, l'arco cronologico in cui furono costruiti i templi fu caratterizzato da una situazione di estrema instabilità. Una pluralità di stati e domini era in costante lotta per la supremazia; regni indipendenti sorgevano e declinavano rapidamente, ridisegnando continuamente i confini di una fluida mappa politica.¹⁸ Il clima di incessante conflitto e generale incertezza fu probabilmente uno dei fattori che portarono i membri delle famiglie reali a volgere la loro devozione alle *yoginī*, patrocinando un tempio. Cercavano la protezione e l'alleanza di queste potenti dee, non da ultimo per ottenere successo nelle azioni militari e stabilità dinastica. Contribuirono così in maniera decisiva all'affermarsi del culto.¹⁹

¹⁶ Si veda Hatley (2007: 14). Sul volo delle *yoginī* si veda anche White (2003: 188-218).

¹⁷ Si veda Dehejia (1986: 85-90).

¹⁸ Si veda Singh (2009: 550-573).

¹⁹ Si veda Dehejia (1986: 89-90).

In particolare, come rileva Dehejia (1986: 86), otto tra i siti che conservano santuari o in cui sono stati rinvenuti gruppi di sculture si trovavano in territori nella sfera di influenza dei sovrani Candella, controllati direttamente da tale dinastia o governati da loro vassalli. Si tratta dei siti di Khajurāho, Dudāhī, Badoh, Hinglajgadh, Naresar e Mitauli nel Madhya Pradesh, cui si aggiungono Lokhari e Rikhiyan nell’Uttar Pradesh. La dinastia Candella rappresentò un potere di spicco nell’India medioevale, mantenendo la supremazia nella zona centrale del subcontinente dall’inizio del IX secolo alla fine del XIII. Khajurāho fu probabilmente la più antica capitale di questi sovrani.²⁰ Secondo Dehejia (1986: 88), è possibile che gli stessi Candella fossero patroni della corrente Kaula, per cui anche le celebri sculture erotiche sui principali templi di Khajurāho potrebbero essere spiegate alla luce di tale affiliazione.

A un livello più generale, nei secoli del medioevo indiano la regalità indiana era frequentemente associata al culto della divinità femminile, come pone in evidenza lo studio di Sarkar (2011) sulla base di una serie di fonti letterarie, epigrafiche, storico-artistiche e folkloriche.

By worshipping a goddess and sating her and her fierce allies, it was believed that she, along with other demons, would not hover threateningly over an urban space, but rather would be converted to work in its favour, using her great powers for the defense of the realm (Sarkar 2011: 141).

La stretta relazione tra *yoginī* e potere regnante può essere letta alla luce di questo più ampio fenomeno definito “śāktismo eroico”.

A questo quadro bisogna aggiungere, come tinta di sfondo ma senza dubbio determinante per la resa della generale atmosfera, la profonda influenza delle tradizioni tantriche hindu sulle concezioni medioevali della regalità. Come diversi studi sottolineano,²¹ nei regni regionali post-Gupta, il sovrano veniva spesso consacrato per mezzo di rituali tantrici. Il culto di una dea come protettrice del regno fu in molti casi incorporato nell’ambito di un’ideologia di regalità divina: il monarca era concepito come manifestazione di una divinità ed era simbolicamente sposato con la dea stessa. Il potere del re trovava affermazione anche grazie a riti tantrici, eseguiti non da ultimo per favorire l’allontanamento o annientamento dei nemici del regno. Nei suoi compiti, il sovrano era affiancato da uno speciale sacerdote (*purohita*) tantrico, ma soprattutto era istruito da un *rājaguru* tantrico, ovvero un officiante śaiva consacrato che operava come suo maestro: mentre il *purohita* era subordinato al re, il guru, in

²⁰ Si veda Singh (2009: 568).

²¹ Si vedano, tra gli altri, Padoux (2011: 38-42); Flood (2006: 76-81).

teoria, era il suo precettore spirituale e quindi suo superiore. L'intero regno era immaginato come un *maṇḍala*, al cui centro risiedeva il monarca, visualizzato con dee tantriche al suo fianco, spesso dee guerriere erotiche e violente. Questa concezione di regalità capillarmente impregnata di elementi tantrici, in una sorta di “set” in cui il re era il primo “attore”, indica una dimensione più ampia e in certa misura pubblica del fenomeno tantrico. Ovvero, vi era un livello del fenomeno più esterno, visibile e manifesto cui sottostava il nucleo di tradizioni esoteriche.²²

Il grado di separazione tra domini tantrici esoterici ed essoterici è questione rilevante in riferimento ai templi delle *yoginī*. Ci si è infatti chiesti se questi santuari fossero frequentati esclusivamente dagli iniziati Kaula: molti sorgono in cima a colline, in luoghi originariamente isolati, alla periferia delle città o dei villaggi. Tuttavia, secondo Hatley (2014: 215), nonostante fossero collocati in posizioni appartate o su un'altura, i templi delle *yoginī* apparivano in generale come monumenti prominenti e visibili da lontano, e non è da escludere che conoscessero anche una dimensione “pubblica” di riti e culti.

Come si è detto, nessun testo descrive esplicitamente il funzionamento di un tempio delle *yoginī*; tuttavia, narrazioni, allusioni e accenni presenti in varie opere²³ lasciano presumere che il culto in questi edifici fosse praticato almeno su due livelli. Un tipo di devozione laica che onorava le dee attraverso riti essenzialmente di carattere purāṇico, consistenti principalmente in *pūjā* e *homa*, si alternava verosimilmente con una prassi più segreta ed esoterica messa in atto dagli specialisti Kaula. Questi ultimi facevano forse uso dei cosiddetti *pañcamakāra*, le note cinque sostanze inizianti per “m” considerate tipiche della pratica tantrica. Tradizionalmente consistono in *madya*, ‘alcol’; *māṃsa*, ‘carne’; *matsya*, ‘pesce’; *mudrā*, ‘semi (?)’ e *maithuna*, ‘unione sessuale’.²⁴ Si può supporre che, a seconda dei visitatori, i templi delle *yoginī* fossero adibiti a usi differenti, funzionando quindi come spazi culturali con una doppia valenza, alternativamente essoterica ed esoterica.

La caratteristica al contempo più enigmatica ed eclatante di molte sculture di *yoginī* è l'aspetto ibrido: il programma iconografico dei templi e le collezioni scultoree comprendono infatti invariabilmente svariate figure caratterizzate da splendido corpo femminile ma volto animale. L'iconografia composita umano-animale delle *yoginī* è stata in precedenza poco indagata nella sua singolarità e nelle specifiche valenze che esprime. Un recente lavoro monografico di chi scrive

²² Si veda Padoux (2011: 39-40).

²³ Per dettagli sui testi che indirettamente alludono a rituali eseguiti nei templi delle *yoginī* si veda Hatley (2014: 210-215).

²⁴ Questo elenco di cinque elementi compare in realtà in un secondo momento: i testi più antichi citano soltanto *madya*, *māṃsa* e *maithuna*. Inoltre, che cosa si intenda esattamente con *mudrā* in contesto tantrico śaiva rappresenta questione problematica. Si veda, tra gli altri, Padoux (2011: 157).

(Policardi 2020) rappresenta il primo studio sistematico sulla natura duplice, “teriantropica”, delle *yoginī*. Fonti di carattere sia testuale sia iconografico mostrano che la componente animale rappresenta un elemento chiave per comprendere le valenze e le funzioni di queste divinità nell’ambito dello śivaismo tantrico.

I significati veicolati dalle *yoginī* teriantropiche derivano essenzialmente dalla coesistenza delle due nature, quella umana e quella animale, in una singola figura. Non è infatti solo l’animalità della figura a essere rilevante, ma anche la sua dualità e ambiguità, ovvero la sua natura che al contempo oppone e sintetizza due diverse categorie di esseri. In tal modo, anche opposte categorie concettuali sono rese contigue, quali cultura-natura, domestico-selvaggio, razionale-irrazionale e simili. In diversi contesti religiosi, le figure umano-animali, come tipologia di esseri i cui elementi non sono né separati né unificati sono spesso circondate da una densa ambivalenza nel mito e sono frequentemente associate a riti di transizione e liminalità, come ad esempio riti di iniziazione.²⁵

Da un lato, le *yoginī* sono esseri potenzialmente avversi e temibili, d’altra parte, in determinate circostanze, possono permettere al praticante di raggiungere la più alta realizzazione spirituale e sono in grado di esaudire tutti i suoi desideri entro un brevissimo arco di tempo. A mio avviso, in tale caratteristica ambivalenza le *yoginī*, e in particolare le *yoginī* teriantropiche, condividono il principio stesso alla base dell’idea di trasgressione e di uso di sostanze impure. Analogamente a questi comportamenti, le *yoginī* sono percepite come pericolose, ma allo stesso tempo come estremamente potenti, efficaci e rapidamente trasformative. Ciò che è considerato convenzionalmente negativo dalla visione hindu *mainstream* diventa in contesto tantrico una potente espressione della possibilità per l’adepto di trasformarsi e di raggiungere un più elevato livello spirituale. Travalicando un cruciale confine tra due diversi regni del vivente nella loro stessa morfologia, le figure di *yoginī* esprimono l’idea di esplorare territori normalmente preclusi agli umani. Infatti, secondo i testi, la più importante funzione delle *yoginī* è, appunto, la trasformazione del praticante.

L’analisi delle singole sculture rivela che in alcuni casi la testa è interamente teriomorfa, mentre in svariate occorrenze il volto animale si combina con altre componenti del capo, come i capelli e le orecchie, di aspetto chiaramente umano. In altri termini, solo la superficie facciale più esterna è raffigurata come animale. Diversi esempi presenti in templi e collezioni scultoree suggeriscono così l’idea di una maschera animale. Le attestazioni che sembrano puntare in questa direzione sono non solo notevoli e numerose, ma si collocano anche in luoghi geografici relativamente distanti (Odisha, Madhya Pradesh e Uttar Pradesh) e tra esse in alcuni casi intercorrono dei secoli (dal IX all’XI secolo):

²⁵ Si veda Walens (2005).

quindi, non si tratta di una particolarità legata a una singola tradizione locale o presente solo in un tempo specifico. Presumiamo quindi che le fattezze animali con caratteristiche simili a maschera nelle raffigurazioni di *yoginī* non siano da intendere come un semplice espediente artistico, ma come un tratto significativo.

Come discusso in altra sede (Policardi 2020: 250-257), queste sculture di *yoginī* rappresentano forse simultaneamente divinità dal volto animale e donne che indossano maschere in contesto rituale. Nelle pratiche connesse alle *yoginī*, una maschera animale potrebbe avere avuto la funzione di innescare un assottigliamento dei confini. Le donne indossavano forse maschere animali per assumere l'identità delle *yoginī* intese come dee dal volto animale. La maschera potrebbe essere intesa come uno strumento per facilitare la trasformazione sia delle donne sia del praticante maschile. Nella tradizione delle *yoginī*, quindi, l'animale, presumibilmente – e i testi sembrano consentire questa interpretazione – non era visto come “altro” negativo, come una minaccia di perdita dell'identità umana, ma come un'alterità che permetteva una ridefinizione e una ricostruzione di una nuova, espansa identità.

Il programma iconografico del tempio di Bherāghāṭ si presenta di grande interesse anche per la presenza di figure teriocefale, che saranno analizzate nel prosieguo.

3. Il tempio di Bherāghāṭ

Il tempio di Bherāghāṭ, con un diametro di circa 40 metri e mura perimetrali alte quasi due metri, è il più grande e imponente santuario dedicato alle *yoginī* tra quelli conservatisi. Il sito di Bherāghāṭ si trova alla confluenza tra il fiume Narmadā e una corrente di modesta portata che si snoda oggi attorno alle rovine di Karanbel; presso quest'ultima città il corso d'acqua è detto Bāwangaṅgā, ma laddove si immette nella Narmadā è chiamato Sarasvatī. Com'è noto, in India ogni confluenza di fiumi è considerata sacra: Bherāghāṭ è pertanto ritenuto luogo particolarmente propizio in cui compiere un bagno purificatore. L'immissione si verifica nelle vicinanze delle cosiddette Marble Rocks, rocce che si elevano per 32 metri in strati verticali e presso le quali la Narmadā si esibisce in una maestosa cascata.²⁶ Nell'incavo della biforcazione formata dalla piccola Sarasvatī e dal fiume principale si erge una collina; in cima a quest'altura sorge il tempio dedicato alle *yoginī*. Collocato così nel punto più elevato della zona, si staglia in posizione dominante e particolarmente suggestiva. Una lunga serie di gradini grossolanamente squadrati conduce direttamente dal letto del fiume al tempio. Il visitatore si trova

²⁶ Si vedano Cunningham (1879: 60) e Sharma (1978: 1-2).

dinnanzi a massicce mura di forma circolare, alle quali si accede attraverso l'ingresso rivolto a sud-est. Una seconda entrata, posta a nord-ovest, è invece collegata con la strada da un'altra lunga scalinata.

All'interno, lungo il perimetro circolare, corre un porticato provvisto di due file di pilastri: una prima serie è disposta adiacente alle mura, mentre la seconda è situata più internamente, a una distanza di un metro e mezzo circa. Disposti così in due cerchi concentrici, i pilastri, di forma quadrangolare e con semplici decorazioni sul fusto, sostengono una copertura piatta, trabeata. A coronamento della trabeazione, una grondaia piatta e aggettante protegge le sculture dagli agenti atmosferici. Il porticato è infatti suddiviso dai pilastri in 81 nicchie, ciascuna delle quali doveva ospitare una scultura di *yoginī*. Al riparo dalle intemperie, queste figure femminili hanno tuttavia sofferto di razzie e vandalismi: attualmente diverse celle si presentano vuote o contenenti solo il piedistallo con inscritto il nome della *yoginī*; poche sculture rimangono nella loro originale posizione all'interno della circonferenza e molte appaiono gravemente danneggiate – con la testa spezzata o la parte superiore, dalla vita in su, completamente mancante. Alcuni pilastri del porticato sono nel tempo crollati, portando con sé porzioni di tetto: questi sono stati sostituiti successivamente da pilastri lisci e il tetto è stato riparato.

Come osserva Dehejia (1986: 127), otto figure di *mātr* appartenenti a un precedente edificio furono portate in questo santuario e collocate nelle nicchie vacanti. A queste si aggiungono una scultura di Gaṇeśa danzante e due figure maschili chiaramente connotate come śaiva che occupano tre delle 81 celle: poiché lo stile appare del tutto affine a quello delle restanti sculture di *yoginī*, è possibile che queste immagini appartenessero all'originario santuario centrale. Infatti, analogamente ad altri templi di *yoginī*, all'interno della circonferenza, con tutta probabilità, doveva sorgere un tempo un santuario di piccole dimensioni forse contenente l'immagine di Bhairava. Al posto di questo edificio è stato costruito in epoca successiva un tempio in stile tradizionale con *śikhara* e *maṇḍapa*.

Particolare nel santuario di Bherāghāt è il numero delle *yoginī*, che sono (o meglio erano originariamente) appunto 81 e non 64; nondimeno, il tempio è spesso comunque indicato, a livello popolare e anche da alcuni studiosi, come Cauṃsaṭha (o Chausath) Yoginī Temple, ovvero 'Tempio delle 64 Yoginī'. La denominazione si spiega con la tipica associazione numerica tra *yoginī* e otto al quadrato, che in questo edificio trova tuttavia eccezione. Perché tale variazione nel numero delle *yoginī*? Secondo Dehejia (1986: 125, 129), una plausibile spiegazione è indirettamente offerta da un passo dello *Śrīmatottaratantra*, scrittura appartenente alla corrente tantrica Kubjikā. Quest'opera si presenta come una versione arricchita e ampliata del testo radice di tale tradizione, il *Kubjikāmatatantra*.²⁷ Il capitolo

²⁷ Lo *Śrīmatottaratantra* è ancora inedito; è citato sia da Dehejia (1986) sia da Heilijgers (1994) sulla base di due diversi manoscritti. Dehejia fa riferimento al manoscritto in Devanāgarī n. 4 / 2506, National Archives of Kathmandu, mentre

27 descrive una particolare formazione di *yoginī*, detta *Mūlacakra*, ‘*cakra* radicale’, che ha origine da nove *mātr* in luogo delle usuali otto dee. Alle sette note figure delle *saptamātr*, ovvero *Brāhmī*, *Māheśvarī*, *Kaumārī*, *Vaiṣṇavī*, *Vārāhī*, *Aindrī* e *Cāmuṇḍā*, si aggiungono *Caṇḍikā* e *Mahālakṣmī*. Considerata esplicitamente come *yoginī*, ciascuna delle nove raccoglie intorno a sé altre otto figure, formando così a sua volta un gruppo di nove: nove gruppi di nove dee costituiscono quindi una formazione di 81 o *ekāśīti yoginī*.²⁸ Ognuno dei nove indipendenti raggruppamenti concede benefici specifici, quali sconfitta dei nemici, ottenimento di un regno, successo militare e acquisizioni territoriali. La natura della maggior parte di questi esaudimenti suggerisce che le 81 *yoginī* fossero adorate specialmente da esponenti delle famiglie regnanti: si tratta infatti di benefici che per lo più non interessano l’uomo comune. L’associazione tra il numero 81 e la regalità è attestata anche nella letteratura relativa all’architettura templare, dove una pianta basata su un *maṇḍala* di 81 quadrati è considerata particolarmente adatta per le costruzioni reali.²⁹ Questi dati portano a ipotizzare che il tempio di *Bherāghāt*, con le sue 81 nicchie, sia una fondazione reale.

La costruzione di questo santuario è con tutta probabilità da attribuire infatti ai sovrani *Kalacuri*, in particolare al ramo della dinastia che aveva come capitale la città di *Tripurī*, l’attuale *Tewar*, sita a una distanza di soli sei chilometri circa da *Bherāghāt*.

Secondo alcuni studiosi i *Kalacuri*, noti anche come *Cadya*, ‘Signori del Regno di Cedi’, o *Haihaya* e suddivisi in vari rami, sono stirpi non originarie dell’India, che giunsero nel subcontinente al seguito degli *Hūṇa* e dei *Gurjara*.³⁰ Dopo varie vicende e un periodo di relativa oscurità, si stanziarono nella regione di *Jabalpur*, affacciandosi alla ribalta della storia nel IX secolo. La carriera dei *Kalacuri* di *Tripurī* ha inizio con il re *Kokalla* o *Kokkalla I*, che nella seconda metà del IX secolo fece della città la capitale del cosiddetto *Ḍāhalamaṇḍala* o regno di Cedi. Il dominio, secondo l’iscrizione di *Malkāpuram*, era compreso tra il Gange e la *Narmadā*: quindi con *Kokalla* i *Kalacuri* si imposero nettamente nell’equilibrio di poteri dell’India settentrionale.³¹ Da quel momento, la dinastia mantenne un dominio

Heilijgers si basa sul manoscritto in *Newari* n. 2-220 / 1548, datato N.S. 729 (= 1608-1609 e.c.) della stessa collezione nepalese. Oltre trenta manoscritti dello *Śrīmatottara* sono presenti solo negli Archivi Nazionali di Kathmandu. Si veda Heilijgers (1994: 8-12).

²⁸ Si veda Dehejia (1986: 51).

²⁹ Si veda Dehejia (1986: 50-51).

³⁰ Si veda Bhattacharyya (1977: 186).

³¹ Si veda Bhattacharyya (1977: 186). Secondo *Mirāshi* (1955: lxvii), due iscrizioni in particolare farebbero risalire l’inizio del regno dei *Kalacuri* di *Tripurī* ad alcune generazioni prima di *Kokalla*; nondimeno, quest’ultimo sovrano è esplicitamente menzionato in testa all’elenco genealogico della linea dinastica *Kalacuri* nella cosiddetta iscrizione di *Bilhāri* (*Mirāshi* 1955:

ininterrotto nella regione per circa quattro secoli, come attestano numerose iscrizioni. Da queste ultime emerge che i sovrani avevano adottato un particolare sistema di datazione, noto come “era Kalacuri-Cedi”: sebbene il calcolo del preciso momento iniziale di tale epoca e altri aspetti del sistema calendariale rimangano problematici, è stato possibile determinare approssimativamente la corrispondenza con il calendario gregoriano grazie a correlazioni tra iscrizioni così datate e iscrizioni in cui si fa uso dell’era Vikrama. *Ça va sans dire*, il corpus epigrafico risulta estremamente prezioso per ricostruire e datare una serie di avvenimenti storici occorsi nella regione.³²

Fu verosimilmente il re Yuvarāja II, che governò negli ultimi decenni del X secolo, a voler fare edificare un tempio dedicato alle *yoginī* a poca distanza dalla capitale del regno.³³ Il santuario di Bherāghāt era con tutta probabilità una sorta di cappella reale, un luogo di culto riservato specialmente ai sovrani. Yuvarāja II volle far costruire questo tempio in quanto aspirava ad acquisire stabilità dinastica: è noto che salì al trono in circostanze critiche, succedendo al fratello più anziano Śaṅkaragaṇa III, ucciso in battaglia da un principe Candella.³⁴ Noto come Cedīcandra ‘Luna del Paese di Cedi’, Yuvarāja pare perseguì una politica di pace, in quanto non rimangono tracce di particolari iniziative militari intraprese durante il suo regno. Cercò di migliorare la sua posizione politica attraverso alleanze matrimoniali: sua sorella Boṅṭhadevī fu data in sposa a un re della dinastia dei Cāḷukya occidentali.³⁵ I sovrani Paramāra, che governavano il confinante regno del Mālava, non gradirono questa alleanza in quanto sembrava disturbare l’equilibrio di poteri. Il re Paramāra di Dhārā, di nome Vākpatirāja, decise dunque di sferrare un attacco prima che Yuvarāja II potesse accentrare troppo potere nelle sue mani: invase il territorio Kalacuri e si spinse sino alla capitale. La città fu presa d’assalto e molti comandanti delle truppe di Yuvarāja furono uccisi. Si legge infatti nella *praśasti* di Udaipur, secondo la traduzione di Bühler (1892: 237; strofa 15): “Who (Vākpatirāja) conquering Yuvarāja (Yuvarāja II) and slaying his generals, as victor, raised on high his sword in Tripurī”.³⁶ Il sovrano stesso verosimilmente trovò la morte nell’atto di difendere la capitale del regno.³⁷

204-224, Plate XXXV) e in due epigrafi rinvenute a Vārāṇasī (Mirashi 1955: 236-250, Plate XXXVIII): pertanto, al suo regno fu chiaramente attribuito valore fondativo.

³² Si vedano Mirashi (1955: i-cviii) e Salomon (1998: 184-186).

³³ Si veda Dehejia (1986: 138-139). Mirashi (1955: lxxxiv) attribuisce invece la costruzione dell’edificio al re Yuvarāja I, che governò nella prima metà del X secolo.

³⁴ Si veda Mirashi (1957: 486).

³⁵ Secondo Banerji (1931: 13) si tratta di Vikramāditya IV, mentre Mirashi (1957: 487) identifica lo sposo con Tailapa II, il fondatore dei cosiddetti Cāḷukya posteriori di Kalyāna.

³⁶ Si vedano anche Banerji (1931: 13); Mirashi (1957: 487).

³⁷ Si veda Mirashi (1957: 487).

Cunningham (1879, 71-73), sostenuto da Banerji (1931, 68-69), osserva che lo stile architettonico del tempio, semplice e non particolarmente ornato, potrebbe appartenere a un periodo compreso tra il 900 e il 1200 e.c., tuttavia una datazione più precisa si può ricavare sulla base di diversi documenti epigrafici e del confronto paleografico.

La serie di iscrizioni di maggiore interesse è rappresentata dai nomi delle *yoginī* incisi sui piedistalli delle sculture, ognuno dei quali identifica una singola figura. Questi appellativi sembrano rispecchiare una tradizione regionale e locale.³⁸ Elenchi di nomi di *yoginī*, le cosiddette *yoginīnāmāvalī*, sono presenti in svariati testi, specialmente nei Purāṇa. Queste liste hanno ricevuto grande attenzione da parte di alcuni studiosi,³⁹ ma sono in realtà da considerare di valore relativo: da un lato non coincidono quasi mai l'una con l'altra, e i tentativi di analizzarle si scontrano infatti con l'alto grado di variabilità che presentano, dall'altro non concordano con le iscrizioni sui basamenti delle sculture templari, né corrispondono con regolarità alle caratteristiche iconografiche delle immagini scolpite.⁴⁰

Nel santuario di Bherāghāt le incisioni sui piedistalli sono molto simili, nello stile e nei tratti, a iscrizioni provenienti da altri siti e ascrivibili alla fine del X secolo; in particolare, la peculiare forma della sibilante palatale appare identica a quella dell'iscrizione di Candrehe dell'asceta śaiva Prabodhaśiva, datata all'anno Kalacuri-Cedi 724, ovvero al 973.⁴¹ Sulla base dell'analisi paleografica, Dehejia (1986: 138) ipotizza che il tempio di Bherāghāt sia stato costruito tra il 975 e il 1025 e.c.

Secondo Cunningham (1879: 71-73), il santuario era inizialmente un semplice recinto circolare, contenente le statue di *yoginī* corredate da iscrizioni, e le mura perimetrali erano della medesima altezza delle statue. Tale originaria minore elevazione delle mura si dedurrebbe dalla differenza di costruzione tra la porzione inferiore e superiore: la prima, che si attesta a livello delle sculture, è costituita da larghi massi di pietra squadrati, disposti in maniera regolare e con incastro studiato, mentre la sezione superiore consta di pietre di dimensioni inferiori e di forma irregolare e non combacianti accuratamente, con interstizi riempiti da pietrisco. Questa fascia superiore, inoltre, comprende varie pietre decorate, appartenenti a precedenti edifici smantellati. Anche i materiali con cui sono costruite le scale che portano in cima alla collina sono tratti da rovine di altre strutture. Cunningham (1879: 72-73) ritiene che l'innalzamento delle mura e il porticato coperto siano stati

³⁸ Le 81 iscrizioni sono riprodotte da Cunningham (1879: 63-65 e Plate XVI); si veda anche Dehejia (1986: 129, 138-139).

³⁹ Tra cui ad esempio Das (1981, 1997).

⁴⁰ Si veda Dehejia (1986: xi, 5-6).

⁴¹ Si veda l'utile prospetto paleografico in cui Dehejia (1986: 138-139) pone a confronto la forma dei grafemi di nove diverse serie di iscrizioni; si veda anche Banerji (1931: 78). L'iscrizione di Prabodhaśiva è discussa, riprodotta e tradotta da Mirashi (1955: 198-204, Plate XXXIV).

commissionati dalla regina Alhaṇadevī nel XII secolo; secondo Banerji (1931: 69), la regina si sarebbe impegnata in quest'opera di ricostruzione del più antico santuario durante il regno di suo figlio Narasiṃhadeva. I due studiosi si basano su un'iscrizione attribuita appunto a quest'ultimo sovrano e datata all'anno Kalacuri-Cedi 907, ovvero al 1155. Il testo afferma che la madre di Narasiṃha, la regina Alhaṇadevī, vedova di Gayakarṇa, fece costruire il tempio di Śiva Vaidyanātha, e anche un monastero e un edificio per lo studio.⁴² Tuttavia, come osserva Dehejia (1986: 137-138) l'incisione non è stata trovata all'interno del tempio, bensì su una lastra di pietra isolata che non ha connessione con l'edificio; anche il contenuto dell'iscrizione non sembra direttamente collegabile con il culto delle *yoginī*.

Un'altra epigrafe assume invece particolare interesse: si trova sul lato destro dell'ingresso dell'attuale santuario centrale ed è attribuita al sovrano Kalacuri Vijayasīṃha. Il testo, in quattro righe, proclama la devozione della regina Gosaladevī e dei suoi due figli, Vijayasīṃha e Ajayasīṃha, nei confronti del dio Bhagnakhidra, il 'Distruttore delle Malattie', a cui è verosimilmente dedicato il piccolo tempio.⁴³ L'epigrafe non riporta alcuna data, ma poiché il nome del regnante precedente a Vijayasīṃha è legato alla data del 1189, con tutta probabilità l'iscrizione è da attribuire all'ultimo scorcio del XII secolo e così anche la costruzione dell'edificio: verosimilmente, a seguito della guarigione della regina o di uno dei principi da una grave malattia, i regnanti vollero far sostituire o ricostruire l'edificio che doveva originariamente sorgere all'interno del tempio delle *yoginī*.⁴⁴

Collocato leggermente discosto rispetto al centro della circonferenza, questo santuario sarebbe composto, secondo Cunningham (1879: 61) e Banerji (1931: 68-69), da una porzione inferiore più antica, che si può presumere appartenesse al precedente edificio, mentre sarebbero state aggiunte in una fase cronologicamente successiva la sovrastruttura, il *maṇḍapa* antistante alla cella e il piccolo padiglione contenente un'immagine di Nandin collocato sulla medesima piattaforma.

Solo questo tempio interno è ancora oggi sede di un culto. È chiamato Gaurī-Śaṅkar sulla base di un gruppo scultoreo presente nella cella, formato dalle figure della dea Pārvati (nella sua forma Gaurī) e del dio Śiva, seduti a cavalcioni sul toro Nandin. Quest'ultimo è ritratto stante e rivolto verso destra, mentre Śiva tiene il tridente nella mano destra e Pārvati, sempre nella destra, uno specchio; sulla lastra di sfondo un'ampia aureola circonda le teste delle figure. La scultura, che è ad oggi il principale oggetto di venerazione, corrisponde come dimensioni alle figure di *yoginī* collocate nelle nicchie perimetrali e

⁴² L'iscrizione è discussa, riprodotta e tradotta in Mirashi (1955: 312-321, Plate XLIX).

⁴³ L'iscrizione è discussa, riprodotta e tradotta in Mirashi (1955: 363-364, Plate LVIII); si veda anche Banerji (1931: 68, 142).

⁴⁴ Si veda Dehejia (1986: 138).

poggia analogamente su un piedistallo. Secondo Cunningham (1879: 61-62) doveva originariamente occupare una delle nicchie; ma è possibile che fosse ospitata nell'originario santuario centrale.

4. Le sculture; figure dai volti animali

Le *yoginī* di Bherāghāṭ differiscono dalle snelle fanciulle degli analoghi templi in Odisha, a Hīrāpur e Rānīpur-Jharia: di dimensioni lievemente maggiori rispetto alla grandezza naturale, sono caratterizzate da corpi sensuali e maestosa sicurezza, evocando una bellezza matura. Mentre in Odisha le dee sono ritratte stanti, a Bherāghāṭ predominano figure che con portamento regale siedono su troni intarsiati, con solo poche immagini in posizione eretta. Inoltre, ogni *yoginī*, riccamente scolpita con elaborati dettagli, è provvista di un'aureola e di un numero di braccia che varia da quattro a diciotto, a indicare il suo status divino. Come vuole la convenzione dell'arte indiana, ciascuna è ritratta nuda dalla vita in su, mostra seni prosperosi, ed è adorna di svariate collane, bracciali e orecchini; adagiata bassa sugli ampi fianchi, una cintura-gioiello sorregge una veste, resa come fosse di tessuto impalpabile che avvolge le gambe fino alle caviglie, talvolta rivelandosi solo per la linea dell'orlo in rilievo poco sopra le cavigliere, talvolta formando piccole pieghe. Figure di attendenti circondano la dea, apparendo sia ai suoi piedi sia alla sommità, in volo. L'intera lastra scolpita è collocata su un piedistallo modanato che la solleva dal suolo e, come si è detto, lungo il basamento è presente un'iscrizione che riporta il nome della *yoginī*. Secondo Dehejia (1986: 138), confrontando queste sculture con le figure presenti sui templi di Khajuraho emerge una notevole somiglianza nello stile, nelle caratteristiche dell'abbigliamento e degli ornamenti; si conferma così la datazione proposta sulla base delle iscrizioni, ovvero la fine del X secolo.

Nondimeno, anche qui, dove il linguaggio scultoreo diventa più raffinato ed esuberante, è presente il tipo iconografico dal volto animale. Sei *yoginī* di Bherāghāṭ sono teriocefale. Possiamo tuttavia plausibilmente supporre che l'originale programma iconografico ne comprendesse di più, dal momento che solo ventiquattro degli 81 volti si trovano in uno stato di conservazione tale da poterne discernere la natura umana o animale. Nel prosieguo l'attenzione si concentrerà sulle *yoginī* dai volti animali conservatesi.

Per comprendere i significati e le valenze delle iconografie teriantropiche è, a mio avviso, tutt'altro che secondaria l'identificazione delle specie animali rappresentate. Per stabilire nel modo più accurato possibile quali animali fossero coinvolti nei ritratti di *yoginī*, mi sono basata su uno studio autoptico, prendendo al contempo in considerazione precedenti ricognizioni riportate in pubblicazioni

accademiche.⁴⁵ Inoltre, mi sono confrontata con Alexandra van der Geer, le cui competenze abbracciano gli ambiti della paleontologia, biogeografia e indologia – le discipline della zoologia e dell’indologia, in particolare, si sposano nel suo monumentale lavoro sui mammiferi scolpiti nell’arte dell’India (van der Geer 2008). Discutendo insieme le sculture di *yoginī* dal volto animale (comunicazioni personali intercorse nel 2017), sono emerse da parte della studiosa solide osservazioni e preziose ipotesi basate su analisi e confronti zoologici, cui farò riferimento nella disamina che segue.

⁴⁵ Le sculture di Bherāghāt sono descritte singolarmente da Banerji (1931), Sharma (1978), Das (1981, 1997).



Fig. 3: Yoginī No. 7, dal volto di maiale o cervo, tempio di Bherāghāṭ. Foto: Chiara Policardi.

Il volto della *yoginī* No. 7 manca della parte inferiore per via di un evidente danno, sicché è possibile ravvisarvi diverse specie animali. Secondo studi precedenti (Banerji 1931: 90, n.75 e Sharma 1978: 59, n.7) la *yoginī* avrebbe volto di leone. Secondo van der Geer, il muso ha una generale forma tubolare, che può suggerire un bufalo d'acqua o una vacca, ma, poiché non presenta corna, queste opzioni sono da scartare. Il tondeggiate orecchio animale destro potrebbe indicare un orso; tuttavia, l'orecchio sinistro ha un profilo diverso, allungato e ovale, che non corrisponde alla distintiva forma delle

orecchie di orso. Tale notevole differenza tra un orecchio animale e l'altro è probabilmente dovuta al danno: in origine l'orecchio destro era presumibilmente identico all'orecchio ovale sinistro. Pertanto, le ipotesi più verosimili rimangono un volto di maiale, sebbene van der Geer ritenga che il muso appaia piuttosto corto per una simile identificazione, e un volto di cervo. Il *vāhana*, sebbene mutilo, a giudicare dal tronco, potrebbe essere un maiale o un erbivoro come una vacca, un bufalo o un cervo.

Interessante notare che questa scultura presenta due paia di orecchie: una coppia teriomorfa nella parte superiore della testa e una coppia umana, con orecchini, più in basso. Questo peculiare tratto è più chiaramente visibile negli altri casi discussi di seguito.



Fig. 4: Veduta delle yoginī lungo il portico coperto, con Śrī Eruḍi in primo piano e la yoginī No. 7 alla sua destra, tempio di Bherāghāt. Foto: Chiara Policardi.



Fig. 5: Śrī Eruḍi, No. 8, dal volto di cavallo, tempio di Bherāghāt. Foto: Chiara Policardi.

Tra le *yoginī* teriocefale di Bherāghāt, Śrī Eruḍi è l'unica in condizioni quasi intatte. Non vi è tuttavia unanimità riguardo all'identità del volto animale, che è stato interpretato come muso di cinghiale

(Banerji 1931: 89, n.74; Sharma 1978: 60, n.8), di vacca (Das 1981: 53, n.52; 1997: 461) e di cavallo (Dehejia 1986: 128).

Secondo van der Geer, le orecchie animali, allungate e ovali, indicano un cavallo, sebbene non siano del tutto realistiche, poiché non presentano un'estremità appuntita e prominente; del resto, in generale, le orecchie nettamente a punta sono rare in scultura. La striscia sagittale in rilievo sul muso può forse essere intesa a rappresentare un motivo di colore sul mantello, probabilmente la macchia bianca sul muso di razze equine quali il Kathiawari. Śrī Eruḍi, quindi, ha verosimilmente volto di cavallo, come conferma la vista laterale della figura (fig. 4): il profilo diritto con minima convessità è tipico dei cavalli. Il *vāhana* può essere un ruminante (un bufalo o una vacca) o un cinghiale o un maiale; le ultime due opzioni appaiono più probabili considerando gli zoccoli posteriori, che sembrano mostrare zoccoli laterali più corti tipici dei suini e assenti nei bovini.

Grazie al relativamente buono stato di conservazione, questa scultura mostra chiaramente la simultanea presenza di due paia di orecchie: orecchie da cavallo nella parte superiore della testa e orecchie umane a livello inferiore. La collocazione del paio animale permette una doppia lettura: le orecchie potrebbero essere intese come parte del diadema, ovvero sarebbero congiunte all'ornamento che cinge la testa, oppure potrebbero dipartirsi direttamente dal muso di cavallo, per cui il diadema sarebbe posizionato subito dietro le orecchie animali. La coppia umana, situata ai lati della testa in maniera anatomicamente realistica, presenta massicci orecchini a forma di ruota ad adornare i lobi allungati. Evidentemente umani sono anche i capelli, arrangiati sopra la testa in un *jaṭāmukūṭa* che fissa i riccioli con fili ingioiellati. L'elaborata ornamentazione indica lo status distinto e divino della figura.

La scultura si caratterizza quindi come una combinazione non solo di un corpo femminile con un volto animale, ma anche di tratti umani e ferini a livello della testa: tale giustapposizione richiede una spiegazione. Se la *yoginī* ha volto animale, in questo caso di cavallo, perché presenta un ulteriore paio di orecchie, chiaramente umane, con gioielli? Questa peculiare modalità di rappresentazione potrebbe essere indicativa di una maschera animale.



Fig. 6: Śrī Vārāhī, No. 11, dal volto di cinghiale, tempio di Bherāghāt. Foto: Chiara Policardi.

Sebbene il viso di Śrī Vārāhī sia sfortunatamente mutilo della parte inferiore, è stato unanimemente interpretato come muso di cinghiale, come indica anche il nome della *yoginī* inscritto sul basamento.⁴⁶

Secondo van der Geer, le orecchie ovali e allungate e l'arrotondamento tra gli occhi, da cui si dipartiva il muso, non rappresentano tratti realistici dei suini. Tuttavia, figure di Varāha con orecchie eccessivamente lunghe e forma del muso non aderente al vero sono attestate nella scultura indiana. Il *vāhana*, sdraiato sotto il seggio, non lascia dubbi: come indicano gli zoccoli fessi, provvisti di piccoli zoccoli laterali, e il muso tubolare, è chiaramente un suino. Le orecchie somigliano a quelle della *yoginī*. Pertanto, lo stesso animale appare qui sia come volto della *yoginī* sia come sua cavalcatura; tale corrispondenza non rappresenta un caso isolato.

Anche Vārāhī presenta due paia di orecchie: animali in alto, che si dipartono chiaramente dal volto animale e non dal diadema, e umane a livello inferiore, adorne di orecchini circolari. L'elaborata pettinatura appartiene senza dubbio al lato umano della *yoginī*.

⁴⁶ Si vedano Banerji (1931: 89, no. 71); Sharma (1978: 63, no. 11); Das (1981: 53, no. 46) e Das (1997: 459-460).



Fig. 7: Śrī Jāmvavī, No. 16, dal volto di orso?, tempio di Bherāghāṭ. Foto: Chiara Policardi.

Il volto di Śrī Jāmvavī, purtroppo ampiamente danneggiato, è descritto come muso di cinghiale dalla maggior parte degli studiosi,⁴⁷ a eccezione di Cunningham (1879: 68-69), che lo interpreta come orso, notando che il nome della dea, riportato nell'iscrizione, potrebbe essere connesso a Jāmbavat. Quest'ultimo è un personaggio che appare nell'epica e nei Purāṇa; in particolare nel *Rāmāyaṇa* assume ruolo di rilievo come alleato di Rāma, ed è dipinto alternativamente con sembianze di scimmia e di orso (ad esempio in *Rām.* V, 1.47-53; VI, 53.18-24), mentre successivamente sarà immaginato principalmente con testa d'orso.⁴⁸

Secondo van der Geer, in questa scultura la sporgenza del muso, arrotondata alla radice, suggerisce una scimmia o un orso labiato; la forma piuttosto allungata potrebbe indicare una specie di macaco, ma non esclude l'opzione dell'orso. Le orecchie, non corte e terminanti in una punta arrotondata, si confanno a una figura di scimmia, ma non di orso. Tenendo in considerazione il nome della *yoginī*, è possibile che il volto fosse inteso a rappresentare un orso, con le orecchie rese non realisticamente. Curiosamente, nel complesso questa scultura rivela la medesima ambiguità tra scimmia e orso che circonda il personaggio letterario di Jāmbavat, ed è difficile valutare se si tratti di mera coincidenza o se siano da ipotizzare connessioni più complesse. Il *vāhana*, gravemente mutilo, è stato identificato come cinghiale (Sharma 1978: 69); tuttavia, non presenta zoccoli, bensì chiaramente zampe che possono indicare ad esempio un leone.

Analogamente a Eruḍi e Vārāhī, anche Jāmvavī ha due paia di orecchie, animali e umane, e il capo è coronato da un alto e torreggiante *jaṭāmukuta*.

⁴⁷ Si vedano Banerji (1931: 88, no. 66); Sharma (1978: 69, no. 16); Das (1981: 54, no. 64); Das (1997: 463).

⁴⁸ Cfr. Mani (1975: s.v. Jāmbavān).



Fig. 8: Śrī Pīṅgalā, No. 28, dal volto di pappagallo, tempio di Bherāghāṭ. Foto: Chiara Policardi.

Nessuno degli studiosi che si sono occupati del tempio menziona il volto animale della scultura indicata come Śrī Piṅgalā.⁴⁹ Tuttavia, a mio avviso, sebbene parzialmente sfigurata, la *yoginī* presenta chiaramente lineamenti non umani, e in particolare aviformi. Van der Geer concorda con questa lettura, osservando tuttavia che nel caso in cui l'elemento immediatamente sopra l'orecchio umano sinistro sia un orecchio animale, essendo di dimensioni ridotte e di forma circolare, suggerirebbe un orso; la collocazione appare però inusuale, poiché le altre *yoginī* teriocefale mostrano orecchie ferine posizionate più frontalmente, in continuità con il muso animale. Questa protuberanza laterale ricorda nel profilo gli ornamenti a lato del diadema indossato da una *yoginī* presente nel tempio di Hīrāpur in Odisha (la No. 11). La forma tondeggiante degli occhi di Piṅgala suggerisce una figura di uccello; non compare tuttavia alcuna linea di separazione tra la fronte e la sporgenza del becco, che è un tratto caratteristico dei volatili. D'altra parte, anche il veicolo, chiaramente un uccello, manca di tale demarcazione. In particolare, quest'ultimo presenta un becco ricurvo, nessuna cresta sul capo e manca della coda. Potrebbe trattarsi di una specie priva di ornamenti, come ad esempio una varietà di pappagallo. In sanscrito, *piṅgala* significa 'fulvo, giallo, color oro', che sarebbe una designazione adatta per una figura dal volto di uccello quale un pappagallo: la fisionomia della *yoginī* potrebbe in effetti corrispondere ai tratti tipici di tale volatile. È possibile quindi che anche in questo caso vi sia una corrispondenza tra volto animale e *vāhana*.

A supporto di questa identificazione, si può osservare che, in generale, i lineamenti della scultura somigliano a quelli di una *yoginī* dal volto chiaramente di pappagallo proveniente da Naresar⁵⁰ e di una scultura su un portale di Dabhoi, anche questa con fisionomia di uccello.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Si vedano Banerji (1931: 86, no. 54); Sharma (1978: 86, no. 28); Das (1981: 55, no. 76); Das (1997: 465).

⁵⁰ Si veda Policardi (2020: 194-195, fig. 4.37).

⁵¹ Si veda Policardi (2020: 196-198, fig. 4.40).



Fig. 9: Śrī Aiṅgiṇī, No. 41, dal volto di elefante, tempio di Bherāghāt. Foto: Chiara Policardi.

Dal volto indubbiamente di elefante, la *yoginī* detta Śrī Aiṅgiṅī potrebbe rappresentare la forma femminile di Gaṇeśa, ma, come nel caso delle sculture con analogo volto animale a Hīrāpur e Rānīpur-Jhārial, l'identificazione della dea come Vaināyakī lascia un margine di dubbio.⁵² È accompagnata, verosimilmente in qualità di *vāhana*, da una figura maschile con volto parimenti di elefante che siede sotto il trono della dea e sostiene con una mano la gamba sinistra piegata di questa.

A entrambi i lati della testa di Aiṅgiṅī, davanti alle ampie e distintive orecchie di elefante, sono visibili due piccole sporgenze tondeggianti: si tratta di orecchie umane o di una sorta di anello appartenente al tessuto delle orecchie di elefante? Non è del tutto chiaro; tuttavia, solitamente, le sculture di Gaṇeśa non presentano simili segni circolari alla radice delle orecchie.⁵³ Certamente umana è la torreggiante acconciatura sopra la testa.

Oltre a queste sei sculture teriocefale, anche Śrī Simhasiṃhā (n. 2), nome che in sostanza significa 'Leonessa', potrebbe avere avuto volto animale. Benché i lineamenti non siano più visibili a causa della frattura del volto, il nome della *yoginī* e il *vāhana* che l'accompagna, dalla testa di leone, lasciano supporre che la scultura avesse volto leonino.⁵⁴ Infatti, come notato, in alcuni casi si riscontra una corrispondenza tra il volto animale della dea e la sua cavalcatura, correlazione che apparentemente non si verifica mai a Hīrāpur, ma ricorre anche a Lokhari e in altri esempi scultorei.

5. Conclusioni

Il tempio di Bherāghāt può essere letto come un fulgido esempio della tipica alleanza tra *yoginī* e potere reale. Le testimonianze epigrafiche indicano che il santuario fu commissionato dalla dinastia regnante nella regione, i Kalacuri, i quali furono verosimilmente anche tra i principali attori nei rituali che avevano luogo nel tempio. Si può supporre che avessero aderito alla corrente Kaula. Infatti, a differenza delle più antiche tradizioni Vidyāpīṭha, che richiedevano osservanze "terribili" e un'adesione totale a uno stile di vita anticonvenzionale, la scuola Kaula permise ai praticanti di mantenere la propria identità, il proprio status, relazioni di parentela e persino, verosimilmente, di professare esteriormente l'affiliazione a un diverso e più ortodosso credo, eseguendone i rituali specifici, mantenendo però un'intima aderenza alle dottrine Kaula. Presumibilmente gli adepti Kaula arrivavano così a vestire

⁵² Si vedano Banerji (1931: 85, no. 41); Sharma (1978: 103, no. 41); Das (1981: 53, no. 54); Das (1997: 461).

⁵³ Si vedano ad esempio le sculture di Gaṇeśa riprodotte nelle figure 53-63 in van der Geer (2008).

⁵⁴ Si vedano Banerji (1931: 90, no. 80); Sharma (1978: 50, no. 2); Das (1981: 55, no. 71).

multiple personalità, adottando un codice di comportamento racchiuso in un aforisma spesso citato nei Tantra: “Segretamente Kaula, esternamente śaiva e vaiṣṇava tra gli uomini”.⁵⁵

Sebbene il programma iconografico del tempio non sia più leggibile nella sua interezza, le sculture conservatesi annoverano esempi finemente delineati di *yoginī* teriocefale. Di grande interesse è qui il modo di combinare tratti teriomorfi e antropomorfi, che potrebbe essere indicativo di una maschera animale.

Si potrebbe ipotizzare che i membri della famiglia reale indossassero maschere animali quando partecipavano ai rituali tantrici che si svolgevano nel tempio, per due principali motivi. Il mascheramento rappresenta sia uno strumento di trasformazione sia una modalità di occultamento. Nelle diverse tradizioni indiane, così come in altri ambiti culturali, la maschera, in quanto temporanea alterazione dell'apparenza fisica, facilita la presa di distanza dal tempo ordinario e favorisce l'ingresso in una diversa dimensione. Nei contesti rituali, la maschera è un modo privilegiato per accompagnare il passaggio da una determinata condizione del soggetto a un'altra. Secondo Tonkin (1979: 242-243), le maschere sono usate:

[...] to transform events [...] or mediate between structures. That is why they so often appear in rites of passage. In particular they are often conductors, exemplars and operators in those innumerable initiation sequences which enact the death of the old self and the rebirth of a new one. [...] The mask carrier is said to assume power, the aim of a Mask cult is to channel, elicit or transmit power.

Possiamo aggiungere una sfumatura citando Shulman (2006: 20): “[...in masking], in general, there is a sense of exchanging and expanding, let us say, a human persona to the point where it assimilates or appropriates a divine (or demonic) existence”. In altre parole, indossare una maschera equivale a varcare una soglia: il mascheramento è una delle più immediate modalità per farsi “altro” da sé. Nel caso dei regnanti, una maschera animale avrebbe al contempo permesso loro di occultare la propria identità ponendosi così, nello spazio rituale, a livello degli altri iniziati.

⁵⁵ *Kulārṇavatantra* 11.83ab: *antaḥ kaulo bahiḥ śaivo janamadhye tu vaiṣṇavaḥ*. Ma il verso si trova variamente declinato in diversi testi tantrici. Jayaratha nel commento al *Tantrāloka* cita il verso senza attribuzione; *Tantrālokaviveka* a 4.251ab: *antaḥ kaulo bahiḥ śaivo lokācāre tu vaidikaḥ*. Si veda *Tantrāloka*, ed. Dwivedi–Rastogi (1987, Vol. 3: 893-894).

References

- Banerji, Rakhil Das. 1931. *The Haiyayas of Tripuri and Their Monuments. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*. No. 23. Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch.
- Bhattacharyya, Pranab Kumar. 1977. *Historical Geography of Madhya Pradesh from Early Records*. Delhi–Patna–Varanasi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Bühler, Georg. 1892. “The Udepur Prasasti of the Kings of Malva.” *Epigraphia Indica*, Volume 1: 222-238.
- Cunningham, Alexander. 1879. *Report of a Tour in Central Provinces in 1873-74 and 1874-75*. Volume IX. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India.
- Das, Harish Chandra. 1981. *Tāntricism. A Study of the Yoginī Cult*. Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Das, Harish Chandra. 1997. *Iconography of Śākta Divinities*. 2 Vols. Delhi: Pratibha Prakashan.
- Dehejia, Vidya. 1986. *Yoginī Cult and Temples. A Tantric Tradition*. Delhi: National Museum.
- Donaldson, Thomas Eugene. 2002. *Tantra and Śākta Art of Orissa*. 3 Vols. Delhi: DK Printworld.
- Dwivedi Ramacandra–Rastogi Navjivan, eds. 1987. *The Tantrāloka of Abhinavagupta, with the Commentary of Jayaratha*. 8 Vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. Ristampa dell’edizione KSTS con introduzione e note.
- Flood, Gavin. 2006. *The Tantric Body. The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion*. London–New York: I. B. Tauris.
- Gorresio, Gaspare. 1843-1850. *Ramayana. Poema indiano di Valmici. Testo sanscrito secondo i codici della scuola gaudana*. Per Gaspare Gorresio. 5 Voll. Parigi: Stamperia Reale.
- Hatley, Shaman, ed. and transl. 2007. *The Brahmayāmalatantra and the Early Śaiva Cult of Yoginīs*. Tesi di dottorato inedita (supervisor H. Isaacson). University of Pennsylvania.
- Hatley, Shaman. 2014. “Goddesses in Text and Stone: Temples of the Yoginīs in Light of Tantric and Purāṇic Literature.” In: *Material Culture and Asian Religions. Text, Image, Object*, edited by Benjamin J. Fleming, Richard D. Mann, 195-225. London–New York: Routledge.
- Hatley, Shaman, ed. and transl. 2018. *The Brahmayāmalatantra or Picumata, Volume I. Revelation, Ritual, and Material Culture in an Early Śaiva Tantra: Chapters 1-2, 39-40, and 83*. Collection Indologie, no. 133 (Early Tantra Series, no. 5). Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry/École française d’Extrême-Orient/Asien-Afrika-Institut Universität Hamburg.
- Heilijgers-Seelen, Dorothy. 1994. *The System of Five Cakras in Kubjikāmatatantra 14-16*. Groningen: Egbert Forsten.
- Jacobsen, Knut A., ed. 2012. *Yoga Powers. Extraordinary Capacities Attained through Meditation and Concentration*. Leiden: Brill.
- Keul, István. 2013. “Tracing Yoginīs – Religious Polysemy in Cultural Contexts.” In: *‘Yoginī’ in South Asia. Interdisciplinary Approaches*, edited by I. Keul, 1-17. London–New York: Routledge.
- Mani, Vettam. 1975. *Purāṇic Encyclopedia. A Comprehensive Work with Special Reference to the Epic and Purāṇic Literature*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Mills, Libbie, ed. and transl. 2019. *Temple Design in Six Early Śaiva Scriptures. Critical Edition and Translation of the Prāsādalakṣaṇa-portions of the Br̥hatkālottara, Devyāmata, Kirāṇa, Mohacūrottara, Mayasaṃgraha*

- & *Piṅgalāmata*. Collection Indologie, no. 138. Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry/École française d'Extrême-Orient.
- Mirashi, Vasudev Vishnu. 1955. *Inscriptions of the Kalachuri-Chedi Era. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*. Vol. IV. Ootacamund: Government Epigraphist for India.
- Mirashi, Vasudev Vishnu. 1957. "The Kalacuris." In: *A Comprehensive History of India. Volume 4, Part I (A.D. 985-1206)*, edited by Ram Sharan Sharma, 486-509. New Delhi: People's Publishing House.
- Padoux, André, 2011. *Tantra*, a cura di R. Torella, trad. it. C. Mastrangelo, Torino: Einaudi.
- Policardi, Chiara. 2020. *Divino, femminile, animale. Yoginī teriantropiche nell'India antica e medioevale*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso.
- Remya, Vechiledath Peethambaran. 2014. "Architecture of Kēraḷa Temples." *Pragmata: Journal of Human Sciences*, Vol. 2. Issue 2, June 2014: 152-165.
- Salomon, Richard. 1998. *Indian Epigraphy. A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sanderson, Alexis. 2009. "The Śaiva Age: The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism during the Early Medieval Period." In: *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, edited by Shingo Einoo, 41-350. Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, Institute of Oriental Culture Special Series, 23.
- Sanderson, Alexis. 2014. "The Śaiva Literature." *Journal of Indological Studies* (Kyoto) 24, 25 (2012–2013): 1–113.
- Sarkar, Bihani. 2011. *The Heroic Cult of the Sovereign Goddess in Mediaeval India*, tesi di dottorato inedita (supervisor A. Sanderson). University of Oxford.
- Serbaeva, Olga. 2010. "When to Kill Means to Liberate: Two Types of Ritual Actions in Vidyāpīṭha Texts." In: *Grammar and Morphology of South Asian Rituals*, edited by Axel Michaels, 71-90. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Sharma, Rajkumar. 1978. *The Temple of Chaunsāṭha-Yoginī at Bheraghat*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan.
- Singh, Upinder. 2009. *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India. From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*. Delhi: Pearson.
- Shulman, David. 2006. "Towards a New Theory of Masks." In: *Masked Ritual and Performance in South India Dance, Healing, and Possession*, edited by David Shulman, Deborah Thiagarajan, 17-58. Ann Arbor: Centers for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan Press.
- Tonkin, Elizabeth. 1979. "Masks and Powers." *Man*, New Series 14/2: 237-248.
- van der Geer, Alexandra. 2008. *Animals in Stone. Indian Mammals Sculpted through Time*. Leiden: Brill.
- Vatsyayan, Kapila. 1983. *The Square and the Circle of the Indian Arts*. New Delhi: Roli Books International.
- Walens, Stanley, 2005. "Therianthropism." In: *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by Lindsay Jones, 2nd edition, 15 Vols., 9155-9156. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 13. Prima edizione 1987.
- White, David Gordon. 2003. *Kiss of the Yoginī. "Tantric Sex" in Its South Asian Contexts*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chiara Policardi is currently postdoctoral researcher at the University of Milan, with a research project called “Of Deities and Animals. The Rise of Therianthropic Deities in Gupta India”. In her PhD thesis she dealt with *yoginīs* of mediaeval Śaiva traditions, investigating, in particular, the peculiar therianthropic representation of these figures, which usually combines an animal face with a feminine body. She has recently published the monograph *Divino, femminile, animale. Yoginī teriantropiche nell’India antica e medioevale* (Alessandria, 2020; in Italian). Indeed, her main research interests concern, in general, on the one hand Hindu feminine deities, on the other hand the important and multifaceted role of animals in Hindu culture, which finds a particular expression in composite animal-human deities. She can be reached at: chiara.policardi@unimi.it

Politicizzazione del sacro e identità in Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950)

Marco Castagnetto

The present contribution analyzes the political thought of philosopher and revolutionary Aurobindo Ghose in the wider scenario of Indian nationalism, highlighting the peculiar hermeneutics of *hindū* philosophical and religious tradition that he expressed through many articles on the main nationalist magazines. Furthermore, Aurobindo's thought analogies and differences with the main exponents of anti-British interventionism will be contextualized. Some peculiar interpretations of the broad philosophical and religious tradition of India as theorized by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar are particularly relevant, ideas through which an attempt was made to create a form of religiously legitimated ethno-nationalism stressing on the cultural, ethnic and spiritual primacy of *hindū* population. Finally, the paper will briefly discuss the influence of Aurobindo Ghose's legacy on *Rāṣṭrīya Svayamśēvaka Saṅgha's* political perspectives and on current Indian Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi's agenda.

Keywords: Aurobindo, nationalism, *hindutva*, colonialism

1. Bande Mataram

La parabola umana e intellettuale del filosofo bengalese Aurobindo Ghose (Kolkata, 1872 – Pondicherry, 1950)¹ è idealmente scandita in tre archi temporali che ne distinguono tanto l'opera quanto la sua ricaduta politica, spirituale e sociale. Al primo periodo si ascrive la diffusa attività pubblica che ne fece una delle figure cruciali dell'indipendentismo indiano e il teorico di una risoluta azione nazionalista, un attivismo che non lesinò l'aggressione armata espressa da società segrete come l'*Anushilan Samiti* e il suo ramo bengalese *Jugantar*.² Nella seconda fase della sua vita, a partire dal 24 novembre 1926, Aurobindo si ritirò nel suo studio di Pondicherry, cuore dell'enclave francese in cui il filosofo aveva

¹L'opera omnia di Aurobindo è attualmente disponibile nelle edizioni del 1972 (Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, 30 voll.) e del 1997 (The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, 37 voll., ristampata nel 2002), entrambe curate dallo *Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department*. Per le citazioni in questo articolo ci si è riferiti alla seconda edizione.

²Haldar (1972: 56) definì Aurobindo un "apostolo del nazionalismo", sintetizzando efficacemente la peculiare dialettica tra discorso politico e immaginazione religiosa che costituisce la cifra più evidente dell'opera del bengalese.

creato il proprio *āśrama*: non ne sarebbe più uscito fino al giorno della sua morte, dopo aver composto le sue opere fondamentali e aver designato alla guida del crescente numero di discepoli la franco-egiziana Mirra Alfassa (Parigi, 1878 – Pondicherry, 1973). Un ritiro spirituale certamente rigoroso, tuttavia distante dal radicale abbandono mondano – almeno immaginato – dei più noti *saṃnyāsin* indiani: lo sguardo di Aurobindo, infatti, rimase acutamente vigile sulle trasformazioni dello scenario nazionale e sui profondi sconvolgimenti che avrebbero insanguinato il mondo negli ultimi anni della sua vita.

Il terzo importante segmento cominciò all'indomani della sua morte, con la costruzione della cittadina sperimentale di Auroville a pochi chilometri da Pondicherry, una *utopian community* fortemente voluta da Mirra Alfassa in cui l'iniziale impulso filosofico e spirituale avrebbe lasciato il passo alle istanze sociali ispirate ai modelli dell'inclusività, della sostenibilità ambientale e della creatività etica e religiosa.³

La formazione politica del filosofo bengalese si definì compiutamente in seguito a due ragioni scatenanti. In primo luogo, il giovane Aurobindo fu trasferito dal padre Krishna Dhun in Inghilterra per ricevere un'educazione che fosse il più possibile scevra da qualsiasi influenza *hindū*. Membro dell'organizzazione riformista *Brahmo Samāj*,⁴ Krishna Dhun era stato un profondo ammiratore della cultura britannica, percepita come intrinsecamente superiore e, quindi, foriera di una società più moderna e razionale. Tuttavia, durante gli anni degli studi Aurobindo maturò una prospettiva ferocemente critica nei confronti della cultura inglese, tale da motivarlo a tornare in India per poter contribuire concretamente al risveglio del sentimento anti-coloniale. In secondo luogo, l'incontro a Baroda con Keshavrao Ganesh Deshpande, amico di Aurobindo dai tempi degli studi a Cambridge, gli permise di scrivere i primi articoli politici sulle pagine inglesi dell'*Indu Prakash*, il settimanale bilingue di cui Deshpande era diventato direttore.

Nella serie di dieci articoli che compongono la raccolta *New Lamps for Old*, pubblicati anonimamente, Aurobindo tratteggiò una critica radicale al Congresso, identificandolo come

³ Fondata nel 1968, la comunità di Auroville è stata voluta da Mirra Alfassa e progettata dall'architetto francese Roger Anger. Negli intenti della fondatrice, Auroville avrebbe dovuto costituire il nucleo di una spiritualità universale priva di distinzioni di credo, sesso, etnia e ceto economico, sebbene la divaricazione tra i cittadini occidentali e i vicini tamil sia attualmente molto evidente (Namakkal 2012).

⁴ La Società del Brahman è un'organizzazione hinduista riformista in senso monoteistico che ha esercitato una forte influenza su tutto il cosiddetto rinascimento bengalese (Kopf 2015). La dottrina della Società ha assorbito profondamente gli orientamenti del credo protestante.

l'espressione di una *middle class* adagiata sul modello inglese e, in quanto tale, inadeguato a rappresentare la voce popolare dell'India:

For it is really from this class that the Congress movement draws its origin, its support and its most enthusiastic votaries. And if I were asked to describe their class by a single name, I should not hesitate to call it our new middle class. For here too English goods have driven out native goods: our society has lost its old landmarks and is being demarcated on the English model (Aurobindo 2002, vol. 6-7: 24; originale: (1893), *New Lamps for Old*, III)

Tra queste merci d'importazione, Aurobindo annoverava quanti erano cresciuti sotto l'egida del dominio britannico: giornalisti, avvocati, dottori, ufficiali e mercanti che avevano rapidamente costituito una nuova classe media allineata ai gusti e agli imperativi dell'autorità coloniale (Aurobindo 2002, vol. 6-7: 25). Il filosofo bengalese sapeva bene che il malcontento popolare nei confronti del Raj britannico tendeva a smorzare le proprie velleità quando si scontrava con il notabilato locale di *bhadralok* che il governo coloniale aveva reso più mansueto grazie all'elargizione di privilegi non indifferenti (Jaffrelot 2007: 7 e sgg.). Per sollevare gli umori discontinui che alimentavano il dissenso anti-coloniale, Aurobindo cominciò a riferirsi all'India come alla Madre (Aurobindo 2002, voll. 6-7: 68-69; originale: (1901-03), *Unity. An Open Letter to Those who Despair of their Country*), un argomento retorico che assunse maggior vigore dopo la proposta di Lord Curzon sulla divisione del territorio bengalese.⁵

La formula acquista compiutezza nell'importante *Bhawani Mandir*, pubblicato come *pamphlet* nel 1905 e tradotto in maraṭhi sul quotidiano *Kesari* nello stesso anno. Si tratta di un momento cruciale per comprendere la *religione politica* di Aurobindo perché contiene i semi del processo che lo condurrà dapprima a interpretare i *corpora* dottrinali *hindū* in prospettiva nazionalista e, in un secondo momento, a teorizzare per l'India e per sé una missione spirituale universale (Sartori 2013: 50). Nelle pagine di *Bhawani Mandir*, la nazione come Madre è assimilata alla *śakti* e interpretata come l'unità delle forze individuali di tutti i suoi figli, spronati ad assumere la responsabilità di riscattarne la grandezza:

India cannot perish, our race cannot become extinct, because among all the division of mankind it is to India that is reserved the highest and the most splendid destiny, the most essential to the future of the human race (Aurobindo 2002, voll. 6-7: 84; originale: (1905), *Bhawani Mandir*).

⁵ Il 19 luglio 1905, il viceré dell'India Lord George Curzon (1859-1925) annunciò la partizione del Bengala tra le aree a maggioranza hinduista e quelle in prevalenza islamiche. Il nuovo Bengala Orientale riguadagnò l'Assam, che era stata resa una provincia separata a partire dal 1874.

L'identità tra l'obiettivo spirituale della liberazione e la necessità della sovranità nazionale si compie tra le pagine di *Bande Mataram*, il periodico fondato da Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1932) attraverso cui furono veicolati i temi più importanti del movimento *svadēśī*. Aurobindo ne fu l'editore tra il 1906 e il 1908, sebbene l'incarico non fosse stato ratificato ufficialmente quanto piuttosto assegnato per l'autorità di cui il filosofo godeva presso i colleghi (Heehs 2008: 121).

Nell'articolo *Swaraj* del 18 febbraio 1908, Aurobindo afferma "social freedom was part of the message of Buddha, Chaitanya, Nanak and Kabir and the saints of Maharashtra; political freedom is the last word of the triune gospel." (Aurobindo 2002: voll. 6-7: 875; originale (1908), *Swaraj*). Sottolineando il ruolo decisivo della compassione nella ricerca di un'emancipazione che non può essere soltanto personale (non può sfuggire l'implicito riferimento al ruolo del *bodhisattva* nella dottrina del buddhismo *mahāyāna*), Aurobindo dispone la libertà politica come *conditio sine qua non* del progresso spirituale del popolo indiano (Aurobindo 2002: voll. 6-7: 875; originale (1908), *Swaraj*). In *The Divine Birth and Divine Works*, un saggio compreso nei commenti alla *Bhagavad Gītā* scritti tra il 1916 e il 1929, il filosofo identifica nella manifestazione di Kṛṣṇa uno scopo contemporaneamente spirituale e politico:

The outward action of the Avatar is described in the Gita as the restoration of the Dharma; when from age to age the Dharma fades, languishes, loses force and its opposite arises, strong and oppressive, then the Avatar comes and raises it again to power [...], to relieve the seekers of Dharma who are oppressed by the reign of the reactionary darkness and to destroy the wrong-doers who seek to maintain the denial of the Dharma (Aurobindo 2002: vol. 19: 169; originale: (1916-1918), *The Divine Birth and Divine Works*).

Non furono soltanto gli inglesi i colpevoli dell'affievolirsi del *dharma*: Aurobindo sottolineò a più riprese come i sentimenti più diffusi presso la popolazione indiana, prima del movimento *svadēśī*, fossero l'apatia e la convinzione che non potesse nascere alcun rinnovamento se non per mano straniera (Aurobindo, 1907, *Nationalism is 'Religion'*, in Habib 2017: 184.).

Tuttavia, già durante gli anni in cui visse a Kolkata, tra il 1906 e il 1908, Aurobindo teorizzò la necessità di una rivolta armata. La complessità intellettuale che aveva cercato di veicolare tra le pagine di "Bande Mataram" gli era apparsa insormontabile per una popolazione che doveva misurarsi quotidianamente con le ristrettezze di una vita ordinaria che lasciava poco spazio alla riflessione teorica.⁶ Ma gli articoli di "Bande Mataram" non passarono inosservati. Il magistrato Douglas Kingsford

⁶ È di qualche interesse notare come l'appoggio teorico alla causa armata maturò all'indomani della partecipazione al National Council of Education del 1906 e dopo aver conosciuto Subodh Chandra Mallik (1879-1920). Questi, erede di una famiglia di

fu incaricato di dimostrare che Aurobindo, fino ad allora ufficialmente un autore tra i tanti della redazione, ne era invece il direttore. Barindra Kumar (1880-1959), fratello minore di Aurobindo e tra i più convinti sostenitori dell'azione armata, fu tra gli organizzatori di due attentati falliti: il primo contro Kingsford e il secondo contro Léon Tardival, sindaco dell'enclave francese di Chandernagore. La gravità dei fatti condusse all'arresto degli esecutori materiali dell'attentato al magistrato, Prafulla Chaki e Khudiram Bose,⁷ oltre che di Aurobindo e del fratello in qualità di ispiratori e mandanti delle due azioni. Entrambi i Ghose entrarono nella prigione di Alipur il 2 maggio del 1908: Aurobindo raccontò di numerose esperienze spirituali vissute durante il periodo carcerario e tali da influenzare radicalmente la sua vita a seguire. La più importante di queste fu il *contatto interiore* con il mistico Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886), il cui messaggio spirituale, insieme a quello del suo discepolo più noto Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), fu determinante per la definizione dello *yoga integrale* di Aurobindo. Scarcerato nell'agosto del 1909, riprese l'attività editoriale fondando il settimanale *Dharma*, ma un decreto dell'anno successivo che vincolava la stampa a rendere noti i propri editori lo costrinse a porre fine agli scritti politici.

A suggello dell'esperienza rivoluzionaria di Aurobindo rimane il breve scritto significativamente intitolato *Spirituality and Nationalism*, pubblicato ancora su *Bande Mataram* il 28 marzo 1908. In queste poche righe, il filosofo bengalese cercò di condurre a unità le istanze della propria attività politica e quell'impulso spirituale che andava facendosi sempre più prioritario:

The East alone has some knowledge of the truth, the East alone can teach the West, the East alone can save mankind. [...] This is the reason of India's resurgence, this is why God has breathed life into her once more, why great souls are at work to bring about her salvation, why a sudden change is coming over the hearts of her sons. The movement of which the first outbreak was political, will end in spiritual consummation (Aurobindo 2002, voll. 6-7: 978-979; originale: (1908), *Spirituality and Nationalism*).

2. Il nazionalismo indiano e il lessico religioso

Nella prima metà del XX secolo, il legame profondo tra il nazionalismo indiano e il sostrato filosofico-religioso del sub-continente germogliò in una pluralità di indirizzi eterogenei. Tuttavia, il fulcro

armatori, aveva donato una somma ingente per l'edificazione del Bengal National College e aveva proposto ad Aurobindo la carica di rettore (Castagnetto 2020: 53).

⁷ Khudiram, appena diciottenne, fu condannato a morte e giustiziato l'11 agosto 1908, mentre Prafulla si suicidò prima dell'arresto (Guha 1971: 130 e sgg).

comune alle visioni più radicali sembrò assestarsi sull'idea di una comunità *hindū* organica che si sarebbe costituita agli albori della storia indiana, unita da un'essenza spirituale capace di resistere inalterata, con fortune alterne, alle trasformazioni sociali e alle dominazioni straniere (Graham 1990). Le voci che espressero le prospettive più vicine agli intendimenti di Aurobindo furono quelle di Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966) e Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar (1906-1973), nelle cui opere si assiste a una *politicizzazione del sacro* che andrà a forgiare l'arsenale ideologico della rete nazionalista indiana. Una rete frammentata in gruppi e movimenti privi di una direzione unitaria (Gould 2004, Castagnetto 2020) e che, in qualche modo, era divenuta consapevole di questo limite strutturale. Se l'interpretazione della letteratura religiosa e filosofica indiana ha costituito uno strumento comune ai diversi indirizzi del nazionalismo, gli esiti e gli scopi hanno evidenziato, tuttavia, orizzonti diversi. Il nazionalismo bengalese di cui Aurobindo fu una voce potente operò in chiave prettamente anti-britannica, identificando nel giogo coloniale l'impedimento più grave al compiuto sviluppo culturale e morale della nazione indiana (Lorenzo 1999: 57), mentre il più ampio perimetro della destra nazionalista radicale assunse una funzione anti-musulmana. Si tratta di una differenza prospettica fondamentale che non legittima l'ipotesi di un'affinità degli obiettivi, ma entro la quale è possibile strutturare una comparazione semantica tra le diverse pratiche di assimilazione ideologica della letteratura religiosa messe in opera dagli esponenti citati.

Aurobindo conobbe Tilak nel dicembre del 1902, durante la diciottesima sessione dell'*Indian National Congress*. Membro dell'*Ārya Samāj*⁸ e promotore di una corrente anti-islamica opposta al Congresso, Tilak si fece portavoce della cosiddetta *Arctic theory*, una dottrina che identifica nella regione polare l'origine del primordiale ceppo etnico che si sarebbe differenziato nei diversi popoli indo-europei all'indomani dell'ultima glaciazione. In questa traiettoria teoretica, i testi vedici vengono collocati lungo un orizzonte atemporale che ne legittima il valore meta-storico e l'efficacia tradizionale, avallando esplicitamente la preminenza civilizzatrice e culturale della razza ariana:

The very fact that after compulsory dispersion from their mother-land the surviving Aryans, despite the fragmentary civilization they carried with them, were able to establish their supremacy over the races they came across in their migrations from the original home at the beginning of the post-Glacial period, and that they succeeded, by conquest or assimilation, in Aryanising the latter in language, thought and religion under circumstances which could not be expected to be favorable to them, is enough to prove

⁸ Fondata da Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) nel 1875, l'*Ārya Samāj* fu la prima organizzazione a introdurre il proselitismo nel contesto *hindū*. Come nel caso del *Brahmo Samāj*, anche questa organizzazione si orientò al monoteismo, sebbene professasse una rigorosa aderenza all'autorità vedica.

that the original Aryan civilization must have been of a type far higher than that of the non-Aryan races, or than the one found among the Aryan races that migrated southward after the destruction of their home by the Ice Age (Tilak 1956: 409).

Ma è nel suo lavoro più compiuto, il *Bhagavadgītā-Rahasya*, che Tilak elabora i cardini definitivi del suo nazionalismo religioso. In questa glossa sugli aspetti esoterici della *Bhagavad Gītā*, l'autore esprime una dottrina in cui l'azione (*karma*) deve essere preferita alla non-azione (*akarma*) per la sua possibilità di condurre gli uomini sulla via della liberazione, restituendo dignità al mondo naturale e implicando la responsabilità dell'azione politica e patriottica come concreto compimento etico del *karma-yoga*.

Gli scritti introduttivi alla prima edizione in due volumi del *Bhagavadgītā-Rahasya*, datata tra il 1924 e il 1926, comprendono alcune prefazioni scritte da intellettuali che hanno celebrato il valore spirituale della *Bhagavad Gītā*. Tra questi, interessa notare l'ampia citazione tratta da *Pocket Gita* della teosofa inglese Annie Besant (1847-1933),⁹ un'inclusione che evidenzia come la Società Teosofica e la dottrina delle razze propugnata dalla sua fondatrice Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891) abbiano svolto un ruolo non indifferente nello sviluppo teorico del nazionalismo indiano. Ma di rilievo maggiore è l'inclusione di un lungo scritto di Aurobindo in cui il filosofo magnificò i meriti di Tilak e della sua opera, sottolineando come la preminenza della giusta azione sia la chiave di volta della *Bhagavad Gītā* e del fare politico dell'India a lui coeva.¹⁰

Su traiettorie analoghe ma significativamente diversificate, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar fu un veemente sostenitore dell'*hindū rāṣṭhra*, la nazione indiana intesa come unità etnica, religiosa e culturale. In questa prospettiva formulò la definizione di *hindutva*, con cui volle indicare l'elemento etno-culturale comune ai popoli arii che migrarono nel sub-continente e alle popolazioni dravidiche ivi stanziatesi. Sebbene fosse un razionalista di natura tendenzialmente atea, Savarkar non esitò a costruire il proprio impianto teorico rielaborando il passato spirituale dell'India (Graham 1990: 44-45). Utilizzando disinvoltamente i valori semantici di razza e *jāti* come sinonimi, Savarkar indicò nel sistema castale il fulcro culturale dell'*hindū rāṣṭhra*, eleggendo la discendenza a criterio primario della definizione identitaria:

And speaking relatively alone, no people in the world can more justly claim to get recognized as a racial unit than the Hindus and perhaps the Jews. A Hindu marrying a

⁹ Annie Besant fece parte della Società Teosofica a partire dal 1890. Fu inoltre fondatrice di una loggia dell'ordine massonico internazionale *Le Droit Humain*, membro del direttivo della marxista *Social Democratic Federation* e promotrice dell'*Hyderabad National Collegiate Board* di Mumbai.

¹⁰ Aurobindo, cit. in Tilak (1924-1926, vol. 1: xvii-xxiii).

Hindu may lose his caste but not his Hindutva [...] because the most important essential which determines it is the inheritance of the Hindu blood (Savarkar 1969: 90).

Nel pensiero di Savarkar, dunque, è il sangue a determinare l'identità *hindū*, mentre le determinazioni sociali e religiose assumono una relatività dovuta alla loro contingenza: ma il sangue cui riferisce l'autore, prima ancora del suo valore fisiologico, rappresenta l'adesione radicale al sistema valoriale della tradizione indiana, canone dirimente dell'identità *hindū*. Tuttavia, l'elaborazione della grande storia religiosa indiana è un tema centrale nella sua opera. Innanzitutto perché è proprio dal contrasto religioso che nasce l'*Akhil Bhāratīya Hindū Mahāsabhā*, l'organizzazione nata in reazione alla formazione della *All India Muslim League* nel 1906 per difendere gli interessi della comunità hinduista e di cui Savarkar fu presidente. In secondo luogo, il teorico dell'*hindutva* elaborò una precisa critica all'universalismo buddhista,¹¹ rivendicando quei valori della cultura vedica che interpretò come tratto caratterizzante dei nativi del sub-continente indiano.

Relativamente distante dalla sintesi spirituale – eminentemente teoretica – elaborata da Aurobindo, Savarkar vede nella pluralità delle esperienze religiose l'espressione della relazione tra i popoli, il loro sangue e la loro terra (Battaglia 2015), secondo una prospettiva non dissimile al sintagma *blut und boden* in uso presso i movimenti *völkisch* tedeschi.¹²

Infine, Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar fu il secondo presidente della *Rāṣṭrīya Svayamśēvaka Saṅgha* (RSS), l'Organizzazione Volontaria Nazionale fondata nel 1925 dal medico maraṭhi Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889-1940) e associazione di riferimento del nazionalismo paramilitare indiano. Anche Golwalkar espresse l'idea dell'originale unità *hindū*, ma ne declinò l'identità secondo un orientamento etico e culturale che avrebbe differenziato il popolo indiano non tanto per il sangue come in Savarkar, quanto per il *dharma*. La grande tradizione spirituale indiana diviene così la manifestazione etica e metafisica di uno *spirito della razza* in cui risuona, ancora una volta, l'idea tedesca di *volksgeist* (Jaffrelot 1998, p. 57). In un passo di *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, la sua opera più influente, Golwalkar sostiene:

Our Race-spirit is a child of our Religion and so with us culture is but a product of our all-comprehensive Religion, a part of its body and not distinguishable from it [...], a Nation,

¹¹ Savarkar considerò il buddhismo come una temporanea eclissi dei valori vedici e il momento in cui le sue aspirazioni universaliste minacciarono l'identità *hindū*; tuttavia cercò di ricondurlo etnicamente nell'alveo *hindutva* una volta ribadita la preminenza dell'autorità razziale indiana (Savarkar 1969: 35 e sgg.).

¹² Savarkar appoggiò apertamente il fascismo e il nazismo, paragonando gli attriti tra hinduisti e musulmani in India alla situazione tedesca che vedeva la maggioranza tedesca opposta alla minoranza ebrea (Casolari 2000). Tuttavia, non sostenne mai il genocidio, proponendo piuttosto l'assimilazione pacifica (Egorova 2008).

does profess and maintain a National Religion and Culture, these being necessary to complete the National idea (Golwalkar 1939: 22).

Tanto in Aurobindo quanto in Golwalkar, il *dharma* riflette la sua normatività sul piano socio-politico, motivando dapprima la lotta indipendentista contro i colonizzatori inglesi – forze disgregative della legge naturale *hindū* – e in secondo luogo la piena assunzione della consapevolezza etnica e nazionale.

La critica storica alla moderna elaborazione identitaria della nozione di *dharma* è stata ampiamente affrontata da numerosi studiosi che hanno interpretato il processo come il risultato dell'influenza culturale coloniale, cristiana *in primis* (Oddie 2003; Halbfass 1988; Young 1981; Bloch *et al.* 2010). Nella prospettiva di Aurobindo, di Tilak e di Golwalkar, tuttavia, l'autorità del dato storico è sottoposta al contenuto spirituale e, quindi, i contenuti metafisici e pratici del *dharma* si presentano come un fiume carsico ideale, riemergendo nel flusso della storia attraverso il proprio valore di perennità.

Il dettato teorico della *Rāṣṭrīya Svayaṃsēvaka Saṅgha* cercò di accorpare la nozione originale di *hindutva*, plasmandone i confini secondo mire anti-coloniali e anti-islamiche (Ansari 2016), la semantica dell'antico *dharma* e l'idea di un ruolo etico e politico dell'India che aveva trovato la sua espressione più compiuta nell'opera di Aurobindo (Kelkar 2011). Ma il ruolo politico di Aurobindo sembrò sfumare dietro le quinte di Auroville. La nuova cittadina sperimentale nel Tamil Nadu, forte del *maquillage* universalista abilmente impresso da Mirra Alfassa e del suo ecumenismo *new age*, sembrò eclissare il passato nazionalista del filosofo bengalese. Tuttavia, il suo impulso politico non rimase inascoltato da parte di Narendra Damodardas Modi, l'attuale Primo Ministro indiano.

3. Conclusioni: ciò che resta di una battaglia

Dai suoi primi anni di vita, la *Rāṣṭrīya Svayaṃsēvaka Saṅgha* si è trasformata rispondendo alle diverse sfide della contemporaneità. Le sue prospettive fondamentali sono state accolte dal *Bhāratīya Janatā Party* (BJP) e, al netto di uno scenario internazionale profondamente mutato, sono riconoscibili nell'agenda politica dell'attuale Primo Ministro Narendra Damodardas Modi (n. 1950), eletto nel 2014 con il forte supporto della RSS (Battaglia 2015).

In occasione delle celebrazioni per il cinquantenario di Auroville nel febbraio del 2018, Narendra Modi ha fatto visita allo *Sri Aurobindo Ashram* di Pondicherry e alla comunità sperimentale fondata da Alfassa, offrendo fiori alla tomba del filosofo. La cerimonia è stata inaugurata proprio dal Primo Ministro che ha versato acqua del Gange nel pozzo sotto la cupola geodetica del *Matrimandir*, il tempio

della madre che costituisce il cuore della comunità.¹³ Inoltre, Modi ha omaggiato la statua di Aurobindo presso la sede parigina dell'UNESCO durante la sua prima visita europea nel 2015,¹⁴ un'ammirazione che il Primo Ministro ha spiegato in un *tweet*, definendo Aurobindo “a prolific thinker and exceptional philosopher whose ideals inspire millions. He emphasised on human dignity and equality. Sri Aurobindo was also a devout nationalist who had grand dreams for our nation.”¹⁵ Un'operazione di appropriazione dell'opera del filosofo bengalese che non è certamente nuova nell'itinerario politico di Modi, determinato a rileggere il pensiero delle voci intellettuali indiane più stimate per legittimare un'agenda controversa e autoritaria.

Durante il mandato del Primo Ministro gujarati, la sterminata opera letteraria di Aurobindo ha conosciuto una nuova fioritura che ha privilegiato i temi nazionalisti e sociali, ma che ha anche posto l'attenzione su alcuni scritti meno noti del bengalese. Si tratta degli studi sulle teorie dell'*Aryan Migration* e dell'*Aryan Invasion* in cui Aurobindo espresse posizioni elaborate in seguito da autori vicini all'ideologia *hindutva* come David Frawley (n. 1950) e Michel Danino (n. 1956), entrambi legati al filosofo di Pondicherry¹⁶. Sebbene Aurobindo non avesse teorizzato la suddivisione delle antiche popolazioni indiane nella componente aria a Nord e in quella dravidica a Sud, i due studiosi hanno sostenuto la cosiddetta *Out of India Theory*, una teoria alternativa al modello migratorio che ha interpretato la civiltà dell'Indo come una cultura integralmente vedica e ne ha dedotto, quindi, l'origine indigena dei popoli Arii.

Si tratta di una prospettiva che implica un evidente richiamo a quell'unità di suolo, etnia e cultura che rappresenta il *leitmotiv* del nazionalismo di marca *hindutva* e che ha fruttato a Frawley e Danino il riconoscimento ufficiale del *Padma Bhushan* e *Padma Shri* rispettivamente¹⁷.

Le peculiarità del *nazionalismo religioso* indiano si sono strutturate in un insieme composito di voci che esprimono sintonie e divaricazioni importanti, attraversate dal comune tratto dell'ermeneutica ideologica del sacro. L'interpretazione del *corpus* tradizionale cui Aurobindo diede forma negli anni del suo attivismo politico, la radicalizzazione dell'opera di Tilak, Savarkar e Golwalkar e, di contro, la

¹³ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/puducherry/auroville-golden-jubilee-celebrated-with-meditation-music-memories/articleshow/63117790.cms>

¹⁴ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/puducherry/How-PM-Modi-connected-to-Pondy-from-Paris-via-Unesco/articleshow/46893833.cms>

¹⁵ Dalla pagina ufficiale Twitter di Narendra Modi, 15/08/2019.

¹⁶ Si vedano Frawley (1991) and Danino and Nahar (2001). Heehs (2003) ha espresso una decisa critica all'opera di Frawley e alla sua interpretazione delle teorie di Aurobindo.

¹⁷ Si tratta di riconoscimenti nazionali conferiti per meriti scientifici, culturali e sociali dal Ministero degli Interni indiano. Sono consultabili presso il sito ufficiale <https://www.padmaawards.gov.in>

nomenclatura gandhiana della non-violenza come valore universale disegnano una cornice di ipotesi identitarie conflittuali e a tratti aggressive che mostrano come la complessità indiana non si possa ridurre al *feticcio democratico* in cui l'Occidente ha cercato di circoscriverla. Come specificazione dell'etno-nazionalismo (Smith 2009; Leoussi, Grosby 2007), l'elaborazione nazionalista del lessico religioso è un fenomeno presente a qualsiasi latitudine culturale e coinvolge temi di grande delicatezza come l'identità, la legittimità dello Stato-Nazione, il concetto di *limes* e la sua dialettica tra interpretazione sacrale e determinazione geo-politica arbitraria.

In conclusione, piace ricordare brevemente il pensiero del monaco dell'Uttar Pradesh Svāmī Karapātrī (1907-1982), discepolo dello *śaṅkarācārya* di Jyotirmath e fondatore nel 1948 dell'*Akhil Bhāratiya Rām Rājya Pariṣad* (RRP), il partito che cercò di esprimere una destra indiana orientata secondo una più rigorosa ermeneutica vedica. Nel suo *Rāṣṭrīya Swayamsevak Sangh aur Hindu Dharma* (1953), Karapātrī operò una critica sistematica dell'interpretazione vedica che l'RSS aveva costruito, accusando l'organizzazione di avere strumentalizzato i testi sacri per imbastire uno stato-nazione simile al Leviatano teorizzato da Hobbes (Chhibber and Verma 2018; Gabin 2010). Secondo questa prospettiva, le derive del nazionalismo indiano espresse dalla RSS, piuttosto che rappresentare una genuina applicazione politica del *sanātanadharmā*, non costituirebbero altro che l'innaturale forzatura del deposito spirituale *hindū* nelle maglie di un particolarismo ideologico estraneo al suo portato metafisico.

Riferimenti bibliografici

- Ansari, M.T. 2016. *Islam and Nationalism in India. South Indian Contexts*. New York: Routledge.
- Battaglia, Gino. 2015. *L'altro fondamentalismo. India, nazionalismo, identità*. Napoli: Guida Editori.
- Bloch, Esther; Marianne Keppens and Rajaram Hegde (eds.). 2010. *Rethinking Religion in India. The Colonial Construction of Hinduism*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Casolari, Marzia. 2000. Hindutva's Foreign Tie-Up in the 1930's: Archival Evidence. *Economic and Political Weekly* 35/4: 218-228.
- Castagnetto, Marco. 2020. *Il loto e la spada. Il pensiero di Aurobindo Ghose e la sua ricezione in Occidente*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Chhibber, Pradeep and Rahul Verma. 2018. *Ideology and Identity. The Changing Party Systems of India*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Danino, Michel and Sujata Nahar. 2001 [1996]. *The Invasion That Never Was*. Mysore: Mira Aditi Centre.
- Egorova, Yulia. 2008. *Jews and India. Perceptions and Image*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Frawley, David. 1991. *Gods, Sages, and Kings. Vedic Secrets of Ancient Civilization*. Twin Lakes: Lotus Press.

- Gabin, Jean-Louis. 2010. *L'Hindouisme Traditionnel et l'Interprétation d'Alain Daniélou*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf.
- Ghose, Aurobindo. 1972. *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*. 30 voll. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department.
- Ghose, Aurobindo. 2002. *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*. 37 voll. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department (prima edizione: 1997).
- Golwalkar, Madhav Sadashiv. 1939. *We or Our Nationhood Defined*. Nagpur: Bharat Publications.
- Gould, William. 2004. *Hindu Nationalism and the Language of Politics in Late Colonial India*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Graham, Bruce Desmond. 1990. *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics. The Origins and Development of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Guha, Arun Chandra. 1971. *First Spark of Revolution. The Early Phase of India's Struggle for Independence, 1900-1920*. Mumbai: Orient Longman.
- Habib, Syed Irfan. 2017. *Indian Nationalism. The Essential Writings*. New Delhi: Aleph Book Company.
- Halbfass, Wilhelm. 1988. *India and Europe. An Essay in Understanding*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Haldar, M.K. 1972. Political Thought of Aurobindo Ghosh. *Indian Literature* 15/2: 56-67.
- Heehs, Peter. 2003. Shades of Orientalism: Paradoxes and Problems in Indian Historiography. *History and Theory* 42/2: 169-195.
- Heehs, Peter. 2008. *The Lives of Sri Aurobindo*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. 1998 [1996]. *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. (ed.). 2007. *Hindu Nationalism. A Reader*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kelkar, Sanjeev. 2011. *Lost Years of the RSS*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Kopf, David. 2015. *The Brahma Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Leoussi, Athena S. and Steven Grosby. (eds.). 2007. *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism. History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Lorenzo, David J. 1999. *Tradition and the Rhetoric of Right. Popular Political Argument in the Aurobindo Movement*. Cranbury: Associated University Presses.
- Namakkal, Jessica. 2012. European Dreams, Tamil Land. Auroville and the Paradox of a Postcolonial Utopia. *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 6/1: 59-88.
- Oddie, Geoffrey A. 2003. "Constructing 'Hinduism:' the Impact of the Protestant Missionary Movement on Hindu Self-Understanding." In: Frykenberg, Robert E. (ed.). *Christians and Missionaries in India. Cross-Cultural Communication since 1500*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 155-182.

- Sartori, Andrew. 2013. “The Transfiguration of Duty in Aurobindo’s Essays on the Gita.” In: Kapila, Shrutu and Devji Faisal (eds.). *Political Thought in Action. The Bhagavad Gita and Modern India*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, pp. 48-65.
- Savarkar, Vinayak Damodar. 1969 [1923]. *Essentials of Hindutva*. Mumbai: Veer Savarkar Prakashan.
- Smith, Anthony D. 2009. *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism. A Cultural Approach*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Tilak, Bal Gangadhar. 1924-26. *Bhagavadgītā-Rahasya or Karma-Yoga-Śāstra* (English Translation). 2 voll. Poona: Tilak Bros.
- Tilak, Bal Gangadhar. 1956 [1903]. *The Arctic Home in the Vedas. Being Also a New Key to Interpretation of Many Vedic Texts and Legends*. Poona: Tilak Bros.
- Young, Richard F. 1981. *Resistant Hinduism. Sanskrit Sources on Anti-Christian Apologetics in Early Nineteenth-Century India*. Vienna: De Nobili Research Library.

Sitografia

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/puducherry/auroville-golden-jubilee-celebrated-with-meditation-music-memories/articleshow/63117790.cms>

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/puducherry/How-PM-Modi-connected-to-Pondy-from-Paris-via-Unesco/articleshow/46893833.cms>

<https://twitter.com/narendramodi>

<https://www.padmaawards.gov.in>

Marco Castagnetto Alessio is a PhD Student in Sociology of Religions at the Link Campus University in Rome. His research focuses on political interpretations of religious doctrines, with peculiar attention to Indian nationalism and new European right-wing groups. Among his main interests are the soteriological philosophies of India (especially *advaita vedānta* and *mahāyāna* buddhism) and the Western revival of pre-Christian polytheism. In 2020 he published in Italian *Il loto e la spada. Il pensiero di Aurobindo Ghose e la sua ricezione in Occidente* (Milano: Franco Angeli). He can be reached at: marco.castagnetto@gmail.com

No Sex and the Paradise City

A critical reading of Murata Sayaka's *Shōmetsu sekai* 消滅世界 (2015)

Anna Specchio

Murata Sayaka is a controversial story writer who questions Japanese current values of love, sex, and the nuclear family, pivoting on issues like gender and power. In her novel *Shōmetsu sekai* (Dwindling World, 2015), she depicts a parallel Japan where sex has disappeared, and modern birth control technology is used by the population. Thus, the novel has been labelled as dystopic, and Murata's readers think of her literary world as disturbing. In the *Shōmetsu sekai* scenario, gender-based social differences disappear for the community wellbeing, and the new biotechnology is used to improve social conditions. Therefore, should it be considered simply a dystopian work of fiction? By approaching the text from the perspective of gender, feminist and posthuman studies, and contextualizing it within Japanese society and Murata Sayaka's literary framework, I argue that it is possible to consider *Shōmetsu sekai* as an example of utopic feminist (or LGBTQ+) work of fiction and that the neutralisation of sex as we know it today should be intended as a means of social improvement.

Keywords: Murata Sayaka, Contemporary Japanese Women's Writing, Posthuman Convergences, Reproduction Technology, *Shōmetsu sekai*, *Konbini ningen*, *Seimei shiki*, *Seiketsuna kekkon*

Communication technologies and biotechnologies are the crucial tools recrafting our bodies
(Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, 1991: 164)

1. Introduction

A girl named Amane is bullied by her classmates when they discover that she was conceived by her parents having sexual intercourse. This was considered incestuous, although they were neither siblings nor relatives: they were just a married couple, but a married couple in the novel *Shōmetsu sekai* ("Dwindling World", 2015) by Murata Sayaka (b. 1979), a speculative fiction set in near-future Japan where sex had disappeared and "humans are the only animals that reproduce through scientific

coupling” (Murata 2015: 13).¹ As a consequence of World War II, a high percentage of the male population had died, and the birth rate had significantly dropped. Men dispatched for war began to donate semen which their wives used to become pregnant in their absence, thus giving birth to their offspring. Assisted reproductive technology (ART) studies were then implemented, and from postwar onwards, pregnancies by artificial insemination exceeded the number of natural pregnancies, which along with sex, disappeared completely, as new birth control technologies were being implanted in the uterus after the first menstruation – hence, women had complete control of their reproduction.

Murata Sayaka has been defined as “formidable” and “frightening, merciless and disgusting” (Fujita 2013: 278) for the excessive crudeness in her description of certain scenes, for her strange plots and ambiguous characters. She was nicknamed “Crazy Sayaka” by her colleagues Nishi Kanako (b. 1977), Katō Chie (b. 1982), and Asai Ryō (n. 1989). In her works of fiction, mainly set in a future or parallel Japan, she repositions female subjects and all subjects belonging to social minorities, from the periphery to the centre of a post dialectic, posthuman universe and questions Japanese current values of love and family addressing issues such as gender and power. In an article published in *The New York Times* in 2019, she declared that she often imagines a future where sex does not exist. Indeed, the absence of sex is one of the main *topoi* on which her narrative is based.

Many people seem to think this is weird, but for me, it’s a world that feels wonderfully nostalgic [...].

‘Sayaka, you’re so young, that’s why you’re writing this stuff. Once you experience true ecstasy, we’re sure you’ll stop writing this kind of story. You’re still young and ignorant’, a couple of Japanese women said to me in exasperation. Both of them were in their late 50s.

‘It’s appealing. You’re writing this kind of story, but what will you do if sex really does disappear from this world?’. This was from a man. I’ve also had people say to me: ‘You’re writing these things because you’re bitter about the world, aren’t you?’. Or, ‘Did something happen to you when you were little?’.

That’s when I understood. Many people, in many ways, were scared. They wanted to be reassured, and so insisted on having stories they could understand about things that were impossible to understand. (Murata 2019b)

¹ All translations from Japanese and other languages are mine unless otherwise stated. This paper is written in British English, as well my translations from other languages. However, there are some references written in American English, which I couldn’t change due to copyright. Here the italics is mine and stresses the use of *katakana* in the original.

For all her unusual stories where the absence of sex is a recurring theme, it is evident that Murata Sayaka is not bitter about the world, neither did anything strange happen to her when she was a child. Born in the Chiba prefecture at the end of the Seventies, she is rather the portrait of a generation that had grown up during the Eighties and Nineties – that is, during the Bubble Era and its collapse, when media dictated images of beautiful, perfect women who still had to adhere to standardised gender norms and roles and ‘a lot of girls were into “bodycon”² (Murata 2017) – who voiced her fantasies through the creative process of writing, offering figures of hybrid characters that blur categorisation, and function as new models for women living in the present day.

After winning the 155th Akutagawa Prize with the bestseller *Konbini ningen* (*Convenience Store Woman*, 2016) – which, translated into more than ten languages, soon gained international attention and was nominated one of the best books of 2018 by *The New Yorker* – in 2016 Murata Sayaka shot to the top of the Japanese literary scene, and listed as one of the “women of the year” by Vogue Japan.³ One of the reasons of *Convenience Store Woman*’s success can be identified in its *sui generis* setting: despite the almost linear plot, centred around the everyday life of a thirty-six-year-old clerk named Keiko who has never felt the need of, nor had, any sexual experience, the story is set in one of the many convenience stores which constellate Japan, a place immediately familiar to the reader. Moreover, the fact that Murata Sayaka herself had worked part-time in a convenience store was well known and a curiosity that had attracted the interest of critics, often more than the actual novel (which represents a critical commentary on Japanese society and gender roles).⁴ Yet, beyond the pleasant smiling face used for customers, there is an impressive world of shocking stories dealing with young girls at their coming-of-age or adult women facing problems related to their identities, sex and sexuality, loneliness and marginalisation, discomfort with the concept of womanhood and the inability to adapt to gender roles

² The *wasei eigo* (Japanese-language expression based on English words) term “bodycon” refers to a young women’s subculture emerged between late 1980s and the first half of 1990s. The main feature of this subculture was wearing one-piece clothes that fit perfectly to the body, so as to emphasize its silhouette (‘body-conscious’ dresses). For further information Japanese fashion styles in the postwar period and the ‘bodycon’ subculture see Narumi (2010).

³ The news is available at the URL <https://www.vogue.co.jp/woty/2016/winners/> (2019-12-10).

⁴ In particular, *Convenience Store Woman* “highlighted to international audiences the intersections of gender and precarity in Japanese working cultures” (Coates *et al* 2020: 5); Saitō Minako cites *Convenience Store Woman* as an example of new *labour novels* (*rōdō shōsetsu*) emerged during the 2010s alongside with Oyamada Hiroko’s *Kōjō* (*The Factory*, 2013), Masuda Aoko’s *Sutakkingu kanō* (*Stacking Possibility*, 2016) – just to mention a few (Saitō 2018: 226-29). For further information on *Convenience Store Woman* and its implication with precariat and gender issues see also Iida (2019), Specchio (2018a: 98; 2018b) and Scrolavezza (2018).

imposed by society – that is, young or adult women whose feelings can be summarised by the Japanese term *iwakan* (Miyachi and Murata 2011; Ichikawa 2011; Kurihara 2013; Enami 2013; Iida 2019).

However, the sense of *iwakan* which most of Murata Sayaka’s characters feel towards their bodies and identities is not perceived in Sakaguchi Amane, *Shōmetsu sekai*’s protagonist. On the contrary, Amane feels more inappropriate for having been generated by normal sexual intercourse in a world where social norms as we know them today had been dismantled and sex for reproductive purposes had disappeared. As she starts questioning current society values, she and her second husband decide to take up residence in the experimental city of Chiba where a new high-tech society system called Eden controls every aspect of the social, individual, and reproductive life of its inhabitants in a similar way to a totalitarian regime. For this reason, *Shōmetsu sekai* has been labelled by Japanese critics as a dystopian novel (Itō 2015; Sakuma 2016); in particular, Saitō Minako quotes it as an example of a reproductive dystopian novel (Saitō 2018: 255), a subgenre of dystopian novels emerged in Japan during the last decade as a consequence of the traumatic experience of the 3/11 – decade that she defines as “the era of the dystopian novel” (2018: 222).

In my opinion, however, the vision of society that emerges in *Shōmetsu sekai* should not be interpreted as merely dystopian. Conscious of the narrow and permeable boundary existing between dystopia and utopia, I assume that “even if technological imagination plays a role in all the dystopian visions, dystopian visions are not about technology at all, but about the use of technology. [...] Dystopia is not about technology, but just like utopia, about the human condition” (Heller and Mazzeo 2019: 47).

By analysing the use of contraceptives and ARTs as well as the structure of the Eden System through the perspectives of posthuman and feminist studies, and contextualising the work within current Japanese society and the framework of Murata Sayaka’s literary oeuvre, I aim to illustrate how *Shōmetsu sekai* can and should be interpreted as an example of feminist SF utopia, or since it also depicts a gender-free space (The Eden City), a queer or LGBTQ+ SF utopia.

In my PhD dissertation, written in 2018 and discussed in 2019 (Specchio 2019)⁵, which represents the starting point of this *on-going* research, I argued that Murata Sayaka’s intent as she depicts near future societies is to free people, women in particular, from contemporary gender role based norms in Japanese society – and that in order to do so she make use of artificial reproduction technology and other technologies. In a 2019 article, Iida Yūko discusses the gender queer elements in Murata Sayaka’s works and expresses a point of view similar to mine. In particular, she points out that “in the works which portrait near future societies, are depicted worlds where gender roles, from sexual activity to

⁵ Unpublished work.

reproduction, have been reconfigured and destroyed, and there are gender-free places where the identity of ‘humans’ has been dismantled. Future worlds which resonate with the term gender queer as sharp aggression against norms and the creation of alternatives” (Iida 2019: 50). This statement is, of course, applicable also to *Shōmetsu sekai*.

As I shall explain, sex in *Shōmetsu sekai* is being neutralised not only as reproductive sexual intercourse (sex as a *sexual act* has been “neutralised”, that is “abolished”) but more importantly, also as the source of gender-based differences in society (sex as *gender*; in this case, I mean that biological sex has been “neutralised” as it has ceased to have any effect on society).

2. It’s a sexless world

I wrote earlier that *Shōmetsu sekai* is speculative fiction set in a near-future Japan where sex has been neutralised, and the human being is the only living animal that perpetuates the species through ARTs. In this paragraph, I shall try to disambiguate and contextualise the phrase ‘sex has been neutralised’ in the sense of ‘been abolished’ as a reproductive act.

In recent times, it is not uncommon to encounter the adjective “sexless” when referring to Japanese society. The 15th Japanese National Fertility Survey conducted by the Kokuritsu shakai hoshō jinkō mondai kenkyūjo (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research) on a sample group of individuals aged between 18 and 34 years, published at the end of March 2017, revealed that more than forty percent of respondents said they were still virgin and more than a fifty percent of married couples declared that they had not had sex in the previous six months.⁶ In the wide opinion of critics and scholars, the results are related to the long working hours of men and the drastic decrease in fertility rate (Allison 2013; Gotō 2015; Moriki *et al.* 2015; Aoki 2016; Yuyama and Nimura 2016; Castro-Vázquez 2017; England 2017; Manzenreiter and Holtus 2019).

I will return to the low fertility rate later, as my intention here is to focus first on what has been addressed as the cause of “sexless marriages”, that is men’s long working hours. In this regard, I agree with Tsuji Rika as she affirms that men’s libido cannot be addressed as a root cause of the sexless condition of married couples. Indeed, Tsuji points out that even if the absence of men from home may have affected the frequency of sexual activities within the couple, it has not affected the extramarital sex, which has interestingly increased between 2000 and 2012 (Tsuji 2018: 7). Rather, she argues, the

⁶ The survey is available at the URL http://www.ipss.go.jp/ps-doukou/e/doukou15/Nfs15_gaiyoEng.html (10-12-2019).

sexless condition of married couples can and should be seen as a political action women take which “resists the constructed social norms that signify women only in relation to reproduction, motherhood, and androcentric values” (Tsuji 2018: 2). Tsuji proposes a historical analysis of the discourse on gender and sexuality in Japan and asserts that

Viewed in light of Butler’s account, Japanese sexless marriages can be seen as one way in which the possibilities for women in Japan might be expanded. The choice to resist having sex is becoming more available to those who feel *mendōkusai* about sexual activity. This resistance reveals gender performativity in Japan, in which institutional power privileges marriage for the sake of reproductive sex. (Tsuji 2018: 8)⁷

The longstanding issue of sex for reproduction in contemporary Japan is enrooted in the postwar period, when society first faced the problem of a declining birthrate invoking a feminist call to a society where women were not forced to but rather wanted to give birth (*umitai shakai*), preferably not bound to the nuclear family (Bullock 2010; Kano 2016 and 2020). Yet, as Kano explains, “the low birthrate since the 1980s points to a society in which many women do not feel they can or want to give birth” (Kano 2000: 34). According to Tsuji, sexless marriages should be interpreted as a consequence of Japanese government politics that encouraged married women to have babies to cope with the decreasing fertility rate – as if women were the main actors able to “‘rescue’ society on the verge of financial collapse due to depopulation” (Castro-Vázquez 2017: 48). When in 2007 the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, Yanagizawa Hakuo, defined women as “baby-making machines”, his declaration generated a backlash, as the majority of women felt (legitimately) more offended than encouraged, and even though the Japanese government proposed alternative solutions to the low birthrate problem, none of them changed women’s feelings of pressure to marry and have children (Seaman 2017: 1-4).

Therefore, in this light, it can be argued that sex within marriage had already started disappearing from Japan, and it is not surprising that Murata Sayaka also deals with the subject, even though she has repeatedly affirmed that her inspiration comes from real life rather than from social issues and that a lot of her friends rarely want to have sex with their partners (Murata [2016] 2018; 2017) – probably because, borrowing Tsuji’s words, they feel “*mendōkusai* about sexual activity” as they perceive it as a marital duty. As a consequence, Murata Sayaka’s choice of setting *Shōmetsu sekai* in a near-future/parallel Japan where an alternative society has been developed can be interpreted as her proposal of an imaginary scheme of social improvement for women where they do not feel *iwakan*

⁷ The Japanese term *mendōkusai* translates “troublesome,” “bother,” “difficult,” “serious.”

towards the idea of growing up and having sex or becoming a woman as a gendered category in the current society.

By contrast, the only taboo in the imaginary society of *Shōmetsu sekai* is sex within marriage. When the protagonist Sakaguchi Amane discovers that she was conceived through a love affair between her mother and father, she is shocked, and not less when her mother urges her to oppose the current social norms and search for sex and love. Yet, when her classmates discover she was born from what is called an ‘incestuous relationship’ they begin bullying her:

I discovered that I was born from a rather strange method of fertilization when I was in fourth grade, during a sex education class.

As in the next day we would have sexual education class, one day my mother had shown me an old book with a yellowed cover and, with her finger pointed at the drawings, she explained me how I came out from her and my father [...].

However, the next day, during the lesson, they taught us a completely different story. They showed us a DVD that revealed the great mystery of life linked to the birth of children through the artificial insemination system. At first, I thought my mother told me a lie: the teacher couldn't have said the wrong thing. Curious, after class I tried to ask the teacher a few questions, secretly from my classmates. She was the one who told us that we could ask her anything if we didn't understand it.

But after listening to what I had to say, the teacher contracted her face in a puzzling grimace.

‘Yes, a long time ago a lot of people got pregnant like that. I'm sure your mother only wanted you to study the history and progress of science’[...].

But when during the interview my mother told the teacher that I was born after a sexual relationship, she was so amazed that she immediately talked about it with her colleagues [...].

In no time at all, my story had become public knowledge, and my classmates were bullying me with offensive words.

‘Hey, loser, you were born ‘cause your mom and dad fucked, huh? It's called incest, you know?! Ew, disgusting!’ (Murata 2015: 11-2)

The sexual act in *Shōmetsu sekai* is neutralised to the point of disappearing within marriage, in total contradiction with the social norms of contemporary Japan. In this dwindling world, all adults of whatever gender, have the right to ask for a divorce if the partner proposes sexual intercourse – Amane herself gets divorced once for this reason. However, although the sexual act is not contemplated within the family, which remains an undefiled entity, it is permitted in extramarital relations, where, thanks to the use of internal contraceptives, women avoid unwanted pregnancies. As a consequence, in

Shōmetsu sekai a sharp division can be observed between sex as an act of lust allowed only outside marriage, and reproduction only within marriage where husbands are semen donators and women conceive by ARTs (fertilisation).

The *topoi* of sexless marriage, sex as an act of pleasure and fertilisation, are not new in Murata Sayaka’s works. The first time the concept of sex as pleasure, or, using Mizuta Noriko’s words, sex as a “celebration of life” (1995: 88) appears in 2013 in her short novel *Seimeishiki* (The Ceremony of Life, recently published with other stories in a collection under the same title in 2019).

Seimeishiki is set in a near future (thirty years ahead) and depicts a Japan where, to cope simultaneously with the decreasing birth rate and issues related to food production and consumption, funerals have been replaced by a new ritual called the “Ceremony of Life”. According to custom, the flesh of the deceased is cooked by his/her next of kin and served at a banquet after which, to compensate the death of a member of society, during the ceremony men and women are called on to copulate in public to generate new lives – however, it never becomes an orgy nor acquires erotic connotation: every person chooses one partner and concludes the ritual. In this instance, it is important to notice that the sexual act is not called sex: Murata’s characters refer to it as *jusei*, *fertilisation*, a term that immediately gives a nuance of artificiality to what should be considered the carnal act par excellence:

In the last thirty years we have undergone a slow process of transfiguration. Nowadays, few say the word ‘sex’ as it has become common practice to speak of ‘fertilization’, that is, copulating for reproductive purposes only. (Murata 2019a: 12)

From the onset, Murata presents, through the words of the main character, a world where the sexual act has disappeared in favour of what seems to assume the characteristics of a sacred, constructed ritual, a sort of artificial sex. In a society called to face both food and depopulation crises, perpetuating the species becomes the priority. Although human reproduction in *Seimeishiki* is called *fertilisation*, it still takes place through the union of two people, and without the aid of ARTs – the fertilisation of the woman still depends on biological factors. Nevertheless, unlike sexual reproduction in current society, *fertilisation* is a widespread practice that occurs outside the couple and marriage, with casual partners, being in this way reallocated within a ritual that concerns the community as a whole and not the individual family.

The theme of fertilisation and sexless marriage is also developed in *Seiketsuna kekkon* (*A Clean Marriage*, 2014b), where there is a new division between sex as an act of lust and sex for reproductive purposes, respectively outside and inside the institution of marriage. *A Clean Marriage* narrates the story

of a man and a woman who, despite having decided to pursue an unusual *modus vivendi*, banning sex from their lives, are willing to have children to create a family:

My husband wanted to ban all sex from our home. That was fine by me.

‘As far as I’m concerned, sex is an act you indulge in alone in your own room, or deal with outside.[...] I want to be able to turn my sexual desires on and off when I please, and to keep the switch off at home.’

‘That’s precisely what I think. I’m relieved to know I’m not the only one who’s abnormal.’

And so from the start ours was a completely sexless and sex-free marriage, but somewhat inconveniently we both wanted children. (Murata 2014b: 12)

The couple in the story believe that sex is an unclean and biased act, banned in the home; a mere “medical treatment” (Murata 2014b: 13) for the sole purpose of having children – therefore they undergo the *Clean Breeder*⁸ procedure which is not an assisted reproduction technique but consists in stimulating the male genital organ through external aid and “connecting” the two partners immediately before the ejaculation.

It is not surprising, therefore, that, in *Shōmetsu sekai* – which follows these two short stories – sex as a reproductive act is being neutralised permanently from the world. By stating that “Love and sexual desire are, certainly, something like excrements to be evacuated outside the home” (Murata 2015: 86), Sakaguchi Amane seems to reconfirm the idea of sex as an impurity.

With this background, it can be argued that sex in Murata Sayaka’s works appears hostile, uncomfortable, refractory, and as Enami reminds us, unlike the sex described in the works of Yamada Eimi or Matsuura Rieko, to mention just two of the writers Murata Sayaka affirms to have been influenced by,

the sex described by Murata Sayaka does not produce in its readers even a little of the sensuality, dependence, attraction and obscenity possessed by the word *eros*. (Enami 2013: 166; emphasis mine)

Murata’s *eros* is a sort of “aseptic sexuality”, totally unrelated to carnal pleasures and passion; this is probably the reason why some readers got scared when they read *Shōmetsu sekai*. In my opinion, however, as sex, intended as the sexual act, remains in the extramarital domain, when Murata Sayaka asserts that she frequently imagines a future with no sex, she intends a future where sex is not bound

⁸ In the note at the translation, Ginny Tapley Takemori explains that: “Actually, the original was ‘Clean Breed’, but I preferred to avoid what I felt could, for native English ears, have unintentional echoes of birth selection” (<https://granta.com/a-clean-marriage/>; 2019-12-10).

to reproduction and women are free to choose whether to have children or not by removing their contraceptive devices. Therefore, the use of birth control technology in this novel, should not be interpreted as dystopian.

There are, however, another two aspects of *Shōmetsu sekai* which still may be considered as “scaring” as they dismantle the androcentric heteronormative Japanese society as we know it today. The first is related to sexual intercourse, as people in the parallel world of *Shōmetsu sekai* can have sexual relations with men, women, or objects; the second is related to the issue of the low fertility rate and the neutralisation of sex as a root of differences (that is, *sex* as *gender*) which I have already mentioned. In the next paragraph, I shall examine the first, arguing how the “aseptic sexuality” of the protagonists affects the sphere of intimacy and affectivity.

3. Posthuman affectivity

In the last chapter of his *The Rise and Fall of Modern Japanese Literature*, John Whittier Treat cites the popular belief that

From the rewriting of its wartime history as make-believe to the notion that Japanese men have sexual relationships with computer games, life-sized dolls, or even just *dakimakura* (love pillows) [...], Japan is a wonderland of stories with little relationship to lived experience [...]. (2018: 277)

What is interesting in this conviction, is that it mentions Japanese *men* but not Japanese *women*, as if sexual relations with something *other* than a human being were the prerogative of men, and that the *other* should be identified with gendered objects, as though sexual orientation and sexual preferences were fixed and associated with a specific gender. Yet, thanks to gender studies we are now aware that gender should not be intended as solely binary or inherent to biological sex (my reference here goes primarily to Donna Haraway’s cyborg able to blur any dichotomy and deconstruct gender essentialism, 1991: 150; then to Butler’s theory of performativity that challenges the concept of gender as natural, 1990), and that we should not intend sexuality as an immutable attribute of the person (Vincent 2016: 69; Lunsing 2016: 9). For as Rosi Braidotti states “sexuality may be caught in the sex-gender binary but is not reducible to it [...]. As a life force, sexuality provides a nonessentialist ontological structure for the organization of human affectivity and desire” (2017a: 36). At the same time, the posthuman turn, after the recent interconnections established between human life and machines (Wolfe 2010; Braidotti 2013), replaces subjects in a post-dialectical discourse which reorganises the ultimate shape of

everybody and everything in a new mimetic ontology that has changed and is still changing our relation to others.

Concerning such reassessments, Murata Sayaka subverts what Judith Butler calls the “heterosexual matrix” (1990: 35) of present time society, that is, the invisible norm which defines every-one/thing as heterosexual and cisgender until differently proved and explains that our assumptions are made on what we see, and places her protagonists in a reality where they can recognise new standards of gender intelligibility as well as new objects of desire other than *men* (intended here as an adult, heterosexual male human being recognised by anthropocentrism as “the humanistic measure of all things”; Braidotti, 2017a: 26). In her first short novel collection *Junyū* (*Breastfeeding*, 2003), both in the story that gives the name to the collection and in *Koibito* (*The Lover*), there are two teenager protagonists (both women) who seem to release their sexual impulses exclusively on objects

which have been previously torn away from the presumed superiority given by being men.
(Enami 2013: 167)

The first is a twenty-eight-year-old professor, hired as a private teacher, whom the protagonists think of as “*mukishitsu*” (*inorganic*; Murata [2003] 2010: 40; even if he is still a man, he is deprived of his subjectivity and agency, and is rather represented as an object), the latter is a soft toy cat – the *Koibito* of the title (intentionally written in *katakana*). The affection of the two protagonists eventually results in sexuality that deviates from the norm and may be interpreted as the result of their *iwakan* towards their changing bodies as young women and the idea that in the future they might both become wives and mothers embodying a model of femininity uncongenial to them. Or, borrowing Takii’s words, it can be argued that

Sympathising with partners who do not let their sexuality be perceived, it is as if the protagonists refuse to be women in the flesh. (2010: 230).

This is undoubtedly because the stories are both set in present-day Japan where the ‘heterosexual matrix’ is the norm and love affairs are supposed to be between human beings.

Despite this, in *Seiketsuna kekkon*, written ten years later, Murata introduces a protagonist who takes for granted that a partner does not have to be a man or even a human being:

‘Sexual orientation is becoming much more diverse,’ she went on. ‘Is a man attracted to young girls going to get an erection with his thirty-five-year-old wife? Can a woman who only gets aroused by two-dimensional men have sex with a living three-dimensional man without pain? Nowadays, your partner is not necessarily a sex object – this is a wonderful advancement. It means you can choose to have a family by rational means, thinking with your head, not with your loins.’ (Murata 2014b: 14).

Although in *A Clean Marriage* sexual relations with objects or two-dimensional characters are acceptable, Murata Sayaka fails to provide concrete examples of relationships between human and posthuman characters, in my opinion, that true “wonderful advancement” only arrives with *Shōmetsu sekai*, where the author eliminates every distinction between human/posthuman partners and reality/fiction and describes human/posthuman relations. In the near future where the story is set, not only has sex disappeared from the world (for the human species), but affectivity has changed and all kinds of relationships are possible, creating what Rosi Braidotti defines as a “transversal alliance between humans and other species” (2017a: 33). As a lived experience, regardless of gender.

One may fall in love with characters in *anime*, *manga* and books, or with people, but it’s basically the same. (Murata 2015: 13; emphasis mine).

The main character Sakaguchi Amane reports that during primary school most of her classmates were in love with boys or girls in *anime* or *manga* and that she was no exception. Her first love is an anime character called Lapis who looks like a fourteen-year-old boy but who is a seven thousand-year-old immortal alien. The first time Amane masturbates, she does it thinking about Lapis and, as far she is concerned, she thinks she is having sex with him, feeling happy at the idea he cannot touch her body (Murata 2015: 18). Moreover, as the story develops, Amane becomes friends with Mizuuchi, a middle-school classmate who is also in love with Lapis and makes no effort to deny his feelings. Love and affectivity in *Shōmetsu sekai* are thus dislocated from the embodied person and can be addressed to everything in the world, even fictional characters. When Amane finds out that Mizuuchi is in love with Lapis, she feels neither jealousy nor hostility; rather, she is amazed to the point that she establishes a ‘threesome relationship’ with both Mizuuchi and Lapis, creating a new type of relationship which involves three different persons of three different genders and sexual orientations: a biologically female person loving a two-dimensional male-looking character, a biologically male person loving the same two-dimensional male-looking character and a male-looking two-dimensional character who is

never depicted as sexualised or having sexual desire. They never have a proper threesome sexual act,⁹ although Amane and Mizuuchi try to unite their genitals and masturbate together thinking about Lapis.

Consequently, not only affectivity becomes disconnected from organic life and involves two-dimensional characters and objects, but it also has a strong impact on society. Amane starts thinking about creating a family with some-one/thing who/that is not human (Murata 2015: 21), and she can do it because, since the only social taboo is sex within marriage, its coordinates are dictated by new cardinal points that allow her to look in a different direction, not characterised by the “heterosexual matrix” – although she eventually becomes able to love humans, a surprise also for her friends (Murata 2015: 122).

4. Beyond gender is the new Eden

As I explained in the second paragraph, sexless marriages are related to the increasing low birthrate and the subsequent aging population (Allison 2013; Castro-Vázquez 2017; Seaman 2017). Even if Tsuji underlines that the sexless condition of married couples should be seen as a political action women take against androcentrism and gender imbalances, Castro-Vázquez reminds us that

the script that identifies reproduction and childcare as women’s main ‘duty in life’ remains heavily entrenched in Japanese society. [...] Women are therefore paradoxically often depicted as the main actors, who could be directly ‘responsible’ for the economic and population conundrum by postponing or neglecting marriage and childbearing. Needless to say, under present circumstances the relevance of any technology that could help boost the chances of impregnation appears undeniable. (Castro-Vázquez 2017: 48)

On the grounds of this assumption, it is not surprising that in recent years several works of fiction focused on these topics have been and continue to be published: *Akagami* (The Red Letter Project, 2016) by Kubo Misumi, *Rirīsu* (Release, 2016) by Koyata Natsuki, two titles listed in Saitō Minako’s selection of reproductive dystopia¹⁰ subgenre emerged in the last decade alongside Murata Sayaka’s *Shōmetsu sekai*.

⁹ Three-people relations are not new in Murata Sayaka’s fictional world. In *Mausu* (Mouse/Mouth, 2014), a short novel settled in near future included in the collection *Satsujin shussan*, three young teenagers (two boys and one girl) have a love affair and they try to have a sexual relation. However, far from being a sexual act characterised by penetration and other erotic features, their sex is regulated by unusual rules and assumes the shape of a mechanical and schematic ritual.

¹⁰ The world depicted by Kubo Misumi shows some analogies with Murata’s *Shōmetsu sekai*, for within the future Japan of the novel (which is set in 2030) people who have never experienced sex can choose to participate to the so-called ‘Red Letter Project,’ a system in which the government, thanks to an advanced database, matches up men and women considered

These novels, Saitō argues, share the vision of a country where the government controls the population (Saitō 2018: 255). I would add: Kawakami Hiromi’s *Ōkina tori ni sarawarenai yō* (Don't Get Carried Away by a Big Bird, 2016)¹¹ and Murata Sayaka’s *Satsujin shussan* (The Birth Murder, 2014a), as they have some features in common with the above-mentioned novels. Substantially, all of these works: are set in a future or a parallel society; deal with the issue of decreasing population and propose a solution to the problem; make (different) use of reproduction technologies; are set in *semi*-totalitarian social regimes.

However, though *Satsujin shussan* presents a disturbing, frightening social regime with a new police force responsible for arresting fleeing dissidents, as occurs in other works canonised as international examples of dystopic novels such as George Orwell’s *1984* or Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Murata Sayaka has declared that her first intent while writing the story was to create a utopian society (Sakuma and Murata 2016). As I argued in a previous publication (Specchio 2018a), *Satsujin shussan* represents an attempt to create an imaginary society where the idea of womanhood as synonymous with motherhood and gender-based social differences disappear for the sake of repopulation. In this regard, *Shōmetsu sekai*, published a year after *Satsujin shussan*, can be interpreted as a more mature and developed proposal of a post-gender society.

Alongside the dwindling metropolis of Tōkyō, where the first part of *Shōmetsu sekai* is set, Murata Sayaka flanks an innovative city which, due to the total neutralisation of sex and gender, and,

compatible and assigns them all benefits to live together and foster procreation. However, sex or coupling in *Akagami* has not disappeared: natural pregnancies are the norm, but the newborn are taken away from their families by the government to repopulate the country after the increased suicide rate, consequence of a scientific paper published in 2020. On the contrary, Koyata Natsuki’s *Rirīsu* describes controlled repopulation from the point of view of a heterosexual male protagonist. In Koyata’s future Japan, same-sex marriages have been regulated under the active role of a female prime minister and there are no gender-based social differences. Moreover, sperm donation is managed by a state-administrated ‘spermbank’ and every applicant can have a child at any time. But a revolution starts as Takinami Bona, a college student, refuses to donate his sperm and accuses the prime minister of having raped him.

¹¹ Kawakami Hiromi’s *Ōkina tori ni sarawarenai yō* is another example in which the author pivots the plots on issues that arise from the fear of extinction, typical of the era of Anthropocene – which in the Japanese context the critique has also recognized as a consequence of the triple catastrophe of 11th March 2011. In the collection, Kawakami Hiromi proposes one gentle story entitled *Katami* (“Memento”) which is worth mentioning. The title refers to the bones kept in memory of the deceased which symbolically serve as relics of existence. These relics are not worshipped but represent the existence of life. *Katami* is set in a distant future where the geography of the whole world has changed. Cities have been replaced by small isolated towns built around special factories that produce everything for the natural world as we know it and its inhabitants are extinct. In these factories, everything is produced: tools, houses, streets, food, plants, animals and... children. Thus, in this short novel both sex and reproduction by artificial insemination have completely disappeared from the world and the creation of new lives is completely managed by suspicious factories spread all around the globe which make use of different raw materials selected randomly to create children ex novo: “Some are made from cattle, others from whales, others from rabbit” (Kawakami 2016: 10).

subsequently, their relative power hierarchies, appears as a Paradise. It is the Experimental City built on the area of Chiba New Town, where human beings do not have hegemonic power and a new computer system called the Eden System is the motor of social evolution and human reproduction. Within this microcosm, all adults regardless of gender can become mothers thanks to artificial uteri, and children born from artificial insemination (which, outside the Experimental City of Chiba, is solely allowed for women) are entrusted to a Centre where they are raised by all the inhabitants as *kodomochan*, “little children”, similarly to what happens in *Seimeishiki* and *Satsujin shussan*. The Experimental City of Chiba is a sterile environment created for the preservation of the human species – as in the outside world, typical of the era of Anthropocene, there is a ubiquitous fear of extinction. Readers learn about the Eden System from a reporter when Amane and her husband Saku are watching television:

As you all know, there is no ‘Family System’ in the Experimental City of Chiba. In its place there is the new system studied in every psychological and biological aspect in which all adults raise children together creating new life bonds.

Every year, on 24th December, the server randomly selects a population sample for simultaneous artificial insemination. The fertilized-to-be people are monitored by the server, which for the selection considers both their state of health and the number of past pregnancies. The system controls the number of births perfectly, preventing both an excessive increase or decrease in the population.

Men are fertilized through artificial internal uteruses [...]. Expectations for next year are high, everyone is looking forward to seeing the first baby born from a man!

The children born from assisted fertilization are left in the care of the Centre, which becomes their tutor, taking care of all the food, health and clothing expenses. They are sent back to society at the age of fifteen, when they are considered adults and able to be fertilized in turn.

In this world, all adults are mothers of children. Their task is to take care of children, passing on to them the love they need.

The first children born with artificial insemination are now eight years old, and studies have shown that compared to children born within the ‘Family System’ they have received more love, are more emotionally stable and are superior both physically and intellectually. Thanks to the new system, no child will ever suffer from the loss of the family, as everyone grows up loved by all adults. If this is not the Garden of Eden! For this very reason it has been decided to name it ‘Eden System’. (Murata 2015: 11-2)

The technologically mediated microcosm of the Experimental City of Chiba represents thus a post-gendered system capable of blurring all dichotomies and allows a new assessment of values. Far from being the “monstrous world without gender” (Haraway 1991: 181) some people in present times seem to fear, it is due to the total absence of social and gender differences, and the way children are raised

by all adults, that the Experimental City of Chiba is presented as a true Paradise on Earth. However, it is not the pure and uncontaminated Biblical Eden of Christianity, a place devoid of mortality. On the contrary, Murata Sayaka's Eden is the opposite of Christian Heaven, it is a place invaded by technology that isolates and excludes its inhabitants from the rest of humanity. Here, original sin is represented by the act of having a traditional, nuclear family with natural children raised mainly by women. Inhabitants of the Experimental City of Chiba have abandoned any family aspirations and sought “a way out of the maze of dualism in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves” (Haraway 1991: 181), opposing the myth of the origins and becoming, according to the concept of Donna Haraway, real cyborgs – who “would not recognize the Garden of Eden” (Haraway 1991: 151) of Christianity.

In this new Paradise City, there is neither sex nor traditional mothering; yet, thanks to genetic engineering and artificial insemination, the absence of sex is compensated with a more balanced system of reproduction by which the “biblical curse imposed on Eve to bear children in pain and be the only sex able to gestate the foetus inside her womb [... is] lifted” (Ferreira 2015: 15) and men can experience what is traditionally considered the women's main physiological experience.

Murata's Eden is an experimental, state-city surrounded by a dwindling world oppressed by the effects of colonialism and imperialism, and the computer system responsible for remodelling the new society delineates a posthuman scenario where men can give birth to children by the use of internal uteri of animal origin combined with medical devices. Nevertheless, *Shōmetsu sekai* is not the first novel in which Murata Sayaka chooses to talk about artificial reproduction capable of blurring “the categorical divide between sexes” (Braidotti 2017a: 35). In the short novel *Satsujin shussan*, she depicts

a future in which the Japanese government adopts a new social system from abroad [...] which allows one person to kill any other person if s/he becomes an *umihito*, a ‘breeder’, and gives birth to ten healthy children [...]. In order to allow men to participate in the system, they are implanted artificial uteri. Thus, the “birth-murder system” guarantees equal opportunities for both women and men. (Specchio 2018: 95).

In *Shōmetsu sekai* there is no reference to murders being committed as an “award” for having become a successful *umihito*, neither is there a maximum limit of ten pregnancies per person or the social category of *umihito*. Every adult inhabitant of the Experimental City of Chiba can become a mother,

breaking the Japanese cultural construct of motherhood as inherent to women.¹² However, where in *Satsujin shussan* the choice of becoming a *umihito* depends on the individual, in *Shōmetsu sekai* the system (artificial intelligence) which administrates the city randomly selects eligible specimens, cancelling the individual self in favour of a collective self. However, as the entrance into the Experimental City of Chiba is strictly controlled and ruled by immigration procedures (these take place in Narita as if people migrating to the new Promised Land were emigrating from Japan), men entering Eden are well aware of the possibility of being chosen by the system and, as a consequence, entering the city involves signing an agreement to participate in the selection. The Experimental City of Chiba represents the constitution of a new relation of power and role organisation where the individual gender and self are annihilated for the community's sake, in a new ontology where humans are ruled by human-made machines and thus “it is not clear who makes and who is made” (Haraway 1991: 177).

Moreover, people living in this hyper-technological Garden of Eden are guaranteed equal opportunities, hence the question of taking leave from work for pregnancy or other issues bound to normative, gendered pregnancy do not represent a social problem. Accordingly, as in the Experimental City of Chiba, there is no gender dissymmetry, and any adult despite biological sex plays a productive and reproductive role. It can be argued that Murata Sayaka is suggesting that to create an ideal society it is necessary to go beyond gender-based social differences and neutralise biological determinism – thus, it can be said that Murata aims for an LGBTQ+ or gender-free race/society (Iida 2019). In this perspective, making positive use of ARTs, Murata Sayaka has successfully managed to create the technological utopian dream of the feminist scholar Shulamith Firestone, who, in her 1970 essay *The Dialectic of Sex*, advocated the use of biotechnology to suppress gender inequality in society at the root of which she saw the biological body of women, considered, in a dualistic vision of gender, as the only human being capable of reproduction – indeed, as in *Shōmetsu sekai*, womanhood is not equated to motherhood, none of the female protagonists feel *iwakan* towards being a woman. As Rosi Braidotti reminds us, Firestone promotes women's liberation to “the realisation of a new humanity technologically enhanced and freed from natural needs” (Braidotti: 2017b). Firestone and Murata share the vision of a society where women's duty to biblically procreate and educate children vanishes; they both advocate the positive use of ARTs to dismantle the nuclear family system and allow the creation of a shared society without discrimination. The main difference between the ideal society schemes

¹² It is important here to specify that in *Shōmetsu sekai* men do not even perform a surrogate maternity, as it might be argued in regards of *Satsujin shussan*. Although in *Satsujin shussan* children are then taken into a center and the adopted by other families, as long as in *Shōmetsu sekai* the ‘Family System’ has been banned and all inhabitants live together in a community, I argue it is not proper to refer to men's role as breeders as surrogate mothers.

imagined by the two lies in the fact that Firestone asked for the use of external artificial uteri for women while Murata Sayaka introduces the use of internal uteri for men.

Moreover, the scenario depicted in *Shōmetsu sekai* lays the cornerstone also for a Marxist approach to the text. Being a shared community without social or biological differences where, rather than talking about human reproduction, it would be more fitting to talk about human production, arguing that the Eden System replicates a “commodification process [... that] reduces humans to the status of manufactured and [...] technologically mediated objects” (Braidotti 2013: 106), the city is constituted as a real “childbirth factory” (*kodomo no seisan kōjō*, Saitō 2018: 255).

Returning to the plot of *Shōmetsu sekai*, as the protagonist Amane decides to ask for residence in the Experimental City of Chiba with her husband Saku, both are selected from the server to receive artificial insemination, and unlike Amane who has a miscarriage, Saku successfully manages to give birth to a child, becoming the first biological male mother of the community. Motherhood has been raised to a public mediatic event in Japan since the debates on depopulation gained media attention (Allison 2013; Castro-Vázquez 2017; Seaman 2017; Saitō 2018), but in the Experimental City of Chiba the issue has been extended to male pregnancies and Saku’s pregnancy is followed by millions of viewers. Husband and wife are reminiscent of two modern Adam and Eve, or techno-Adamo and techno-Eva, who, by artificial insemination and an internal artificial uterus, contribute to repopulating Japan as perfect inhabitants of the new Eden. The Experimental City of Chiba becomes, for all those who aspire to the abolition of social norms and gender binarisms, a true Paradise City that, depriving parents of the natural bond with their children and creating a new collectivity, seems to link each individual to a distant place, a universe, or universal womb.

5. Final remarks

In *Shōmetsu sekai*, Murata Sayaka postulates a near-future Japan where an alternative society has developed after the acute drop in population caused by the effects of World War II. Within this society, all women are provided with internal contraceptives and all reproduction occurs through ART, hence women have control over their bodies and pregnancies. Interestingly, the new ethic has resulted in the transformation of intimacy, eros, and reproduction politics. Moreover, the Eden System has created a community where all adults are urged to contribute to repopulation and economic growth. This reference reminds us that in actual postwar Japan, only women “were urged to perform similar roles in the service of economic growth” (Bullock 2010: 18), a tendency that, as I have demonstrated in the previous paragraphs, seems to be still well-rooted in contemporary Japanese society.

In this regard, Murata Sayaka's speculative fiction illustrates a sort of dream come true for those who aim to build a more equal society, even if that utopian dream requires intensive investment in economic, scientific, and political terms, and the loss of the self for the community.

At a certain point in the narration, the television announcer claims that future society will be similar to the micro-cosmos created in the Experimental City of Chiba:

In a not too distant future, humanity will cease to reproduce within the 'Family System' and will do so exclusively within this new 'Eden System'. (Murata 2015: 117)

Is it possible to define the Experimental City of Chiba as a 'Paradise City'? Is it desirable to imagine a future where human-technology interrelation will affect our way of conceiving relationships, both marital and parent-child, and subsequently, to consider *Shōmetsu sekai* a feminist SF utopia or LGBTQ+ utopia? Although the idea of an artificial intelligence controlled community may be frightening, because the use of technology within the Eden System had been conceived for social improvement, considering gender balance and the possibilities women have in that community, it may be argued that yes, the scenario depicted in *Shōmetsu sekai* represents innovation and a step ahead from the gendered and conservative society of today. Indeed, despite the fact that at a first glance the vision of the Eden City as a "childbirth factory" (*kodomo no seisan kōjō*, Saitō 2018: 255) might be interpreted as dystopic, and, as a consequence, one could say that it is the reason why the work cannot represent a utopia, I argue that the scenario described in *Shōmetsu sekai* is not inherently dystopic. Firstly, people asking for residence in Eden City and participating in the human (re)production project do it voluntarily. Secondly, taking into account the complexity of posthuman convergences, I would state that I do not intend that the idea of "human production" is not "frightening;" rather, I suggest that it must not be misunderstood as inhuman behaviour or a disposition. I marry Rosi Braidotti's posthuman approach to the subject, as she reminds us that posthuman convergence is a matter of complexity which consists of "and-and", not "either-or" relations, as within posthuman critical thinking two contradictory terms can be true at the same time (Braidotti 2019). As a consequence, *Shōmetsu sekai* can be interpreted as simultaneously dystopic and utopic (*ustopic*, to borrow Margaret Atwood's definition of this convergence), depending on the approach to the text: the prior does not exclude the latter. However, I advocate an analysis conducted through the lens of posthuman, feminist, and gender studies, and, in regards to the society in Eden City, I would argue that from this perspective it *does* represent a techno-feminist or LGBTQ+ or genderqueer utopia since the use of technology in this work aims to free women from the Japanese current concept of womanhood as bound to compulsory motherhood and allow men to actively participate in human (re)production.

Despite her novels often deal with women struggling in the current society, Murata Sayaka has never defined herself as a feminist, nevertheless, her narrative frequently develops in what might be considered utopian for most women. Indeed, I agree with Leo Lewis who states that

Murata’s writing is not overly feminist, but her laser-targeting of the Japanese female condition makes her one of the most powerful de facto critics of Japan’s contemporary gender imbalance. (2018)

I have underlined that most of Murata’s works are set in the future. In his abovementioned work, Treats quotes that a recent study points out that contemporary literature is interested in the development of the future scenario of Tōkyō and mentions Takahashi Gen’ichirō and Furukawa Hideo arguing that for the first author the “future is now *sōteigai* (unforeseeable)” while for the latter it contains a representation of his daily life, and that, as a consequence, the future “is not Murakami’s ‘end of the world’ [... as] it is never really the end” (Treat 2018: 293). Including Murata Sayaka in the debate, it could be argued that future Tōkyō might be a dwindling city but full of hope. Hope for a blur in all dichotomies, a city where humans would live with technology and would recraft their ontology – as experimented in the Eden City of Chiba.¹³

Therefore this would not be a society where sex has disappeared – sex intended as the biological matrix of discrimination and sex finalised to procreation. Sex would be substituted by new politics of labour and reproduction which will influence the new values of the members of that society. It may be frightening for people who defend the androcentric power hierarchies and the heterosexual matrix rooted in Japanese society. But, at least, asexual people who have never had any sexual experience and do not feel the urge to marry, like Keiko the protagonist of *Convenience Store Woman*, will not be judged strange or eccentric and will not be required to act like a woman or perform undesired roles.

References

- Allison, Anne. 2013. *Precarious Japan*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Aoki, Mizuho. 2016. *In sexless Japan, almost half of single youth men and women are virgins: survey* [online]. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/09/16/national/social-issues/sexless-japan-almost-half-young-men-women-virgins-survey/#.XvG_-2gzaUk (23.06.2019).
- Braidotti, Rosi. 2013. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

¹³ As a possible future development of this research, I shall also include a deeper analysis of the urban spaces in this and other novels.

- Braidotti, Rosi. 2017a. “Four Theses on Posthuman Feminism”. In: *Anthropocene Feminism*, edited by Richard Grusin, 21-48. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Braidotti, Rosi. 2017b. “Il postumano nella teoria femminista”. *DWF - Donnamanfamme* [online]. <http://www.dwf.it/il-postumano-nella-teoria-femminista/> (12.08.2020).
- Braidotti, Rosi. 2019. *Posthuman Knowledge*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Castro-Vázquez. 2017. *Intimacy and Reproduction in Contemporary Japan*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Coates, Jennifer, Lucy Fraser and Mark Pendelton (editors). 2020. *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Enami Amiko 江南亜美子 2013. “Mukitekina karada: Murata Sayaka to/no erotishizumu” 「無機的な身体—村田沙耶香と／のエロティシズム」. *Yuriika* 『ユリイカ』 45/9: 166-171.
- England, Charlotte. 2017. *Half of Japanese couples in ‘sexless marriages’* [online]. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/japan-couples-sexless-marriages-half-low-birth-rate-long-working-hours-family-planning-children-a7581061.html> (23.06.2019).
- Ferreira, Aline. 2015. “Beyond the womb? Posthuman Parturitions in Joanna Kavenna’s ‘The Birth of Love.’” *La camera blu* 11. DOI 10.6092/1827-9198/3665
- Firestone, Shulamith. 1970. *The Dialectic of Sex*. London and New York: Verso.
- Gabel, Aja. 2019. *A Cure to Feeling Like You Need to Be Cured: Talking to Sayaka Murata in Tokyo* [online]. <https://catapult.co/stories/books-belonging-talking-to-sayaka-murata-author-of-convenience-store-woman-in-tokyo-aja-gabel> (10.12.2019).
- Gotō Yuriko 後藤百合子 2015. *Fūfu no 55% wa sekkusuresu! Syōshika no mottomo shinkokuna gen'in?* 夫婦の55%はセックスレス！少子化の最も深刻な原因？[online] <https://news.allabout.co.jp/articles/d/77005> (23.06.2019).
- Haraway, Donna J. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association
- Heller, Agnes; Mazzeo, Riccardo. 2019. *Wind and Whirlwind. Utopian and Dystopian Themes in Literature and Philosophy*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Ichikawa Makoto 市川誠; Murata Sayaka 村田沙耶香 2011. “Intabyū. Murata Sayaka: shōsetsu o kaite ‘kaihō’ e mukau” 「インタビュー。村田沙耶香—小説を書いて「解放」へ向かう」. *Subaru* すばる 33: 322-335.
- Iida Yūko 飯田祐子 2019. “Murata Sayaka to jendā kuia – *Konbini ningen, Chikyū seijin*, sono ta no sōsaku” 村田沙耶香とジェンダー・クィア : 『コンビニ人間』、『地球星人』、その他の創作. In Nagoyadaigaku daigakuin hito bungaku kenkyū-ka fuzoku chō-iki bunka shakai sentā 名古屋大学大学院人文学研究科附属超域文化社会センター(edited by), *JunCture: Chōikiteki nippon bunka kenkyū* 10 *JunCture : 超域的日本文化研究* 10: 48-63. (DOI 10.18999/juncture.10.48)
- Itō Akari 伊藤朱里 (2016). “‘Kimochi warui’ e no shinshina teikō” 「〈気持ち悪い〉への真摯な抵抗」. In *Shinchōsha Shinchō* 新潮社新潮 3/2016 [online]. <https://www.bookbang.jp/review/article/511238> (22.06.2020).

- Kano, Ayako. 2016. *Japanese Feminist Debates: A Century of Love, Sex and Labor*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Kano, Ayako. 2020. “Debates in Japanese feminism”. In: *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, edited by Jennifer Coates, Lucy Fraser and Mark Pendelton, 31-39. London & New York: Routledge.
- Kawakami Hiromi 川上弘美 2016. “Katami” 「かたみ」. In Kawakami Hiromi 川上弘美 *Ōkina tori ni sarawarenai yō* 『大きな鳥にさらわれないよう』. Tōkyō 東京: Kōdansha 講談社 6-17.
- Kubo Misumi 窪美澄 2016. *Akagami* 『アカガミ』. Tōkyō 東京: Kawade shobō shinsha 河出書房新社.
- Kurihara Yūichirō 栗原裕一郎 2013. “Murata Sayaka to Murata Sayaka ikō: hatashite ‘sei’ wa henshin saretaka?” 「村田沙耶香と村田沙耶香 以後 果たして「性」は更新されたか」. *Yuriika* 『ユリイカ』 45/9: 157-165.
- Lewis, Leo. 2018. *Sayaka Murata: ‘My Parents don’t want to read my books’* [online]. URL <https://www.ft.com/content/b38bd728-68aa-11e8-b6eb-4acfcfb08c11> (10-12-2019).
- Lunsing, Wim. 2016 [2001]. *Beyond Common Sense. Sexuality and gender in contemporary Japan*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Manzenreiter, Wolfram and Barbara Holtus (editors). 2017. *Happiness and the Good Life in Japan*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Miyauchi Chiwako 宮内千和子; Murata, Sayaka 村田沙耶香 2011. “Tokushū: Murata Sayaka *Hakobune intabyū*” 「特集—村田沙耶香『カボヌネ』インタビュー」. In: *Shūeisha hen* 集英社編 (edited by) *Seishun to dokusho* 『青春と読書』 46/11, N. 424/2011/11, pp. 14-19.
- Mizuta, Noriko. 1995. “Women’s Self-Representation and Transformation of the Body.” *Josai International Review* 1/1, pp. 86-102.
- Moriki, Yoshie, Hayashi Kenji and Matsukura Rikiya. 2015. “Sexless Marriages in Japan: Prevalence and Reasons.” *Low fertility and Reproductive Health in East Asia – International Studies in Population* 11, edited by Naohiro Ogawa and Shah Iqbal H., 161-185.
- Murata Sayaka 村田沙耶香 2010 [2003]. *Junyū* 『授乳』. Tōkyō 東京: Kōdansha bunko 講談社文庫.
- Murata Sayaka 村田沙耶香 2014a. *Satsujin shussan* 『殺人出産』. Tōkyō 東京: Kōdansha bunko 講談社文庫.
- Murata, Sayaka. 2014b. “A Clean Marriage”. English translation of *Seiketsuna kekkon* 「清潔な結婚」 by Ginny Tapley Takemori. In: *Granta. The Magazine of New Writing. Japan*, V. 127. London: Granta Publications, pp. 7-24. The original can be found at: Murata, Sayaka 村田沙耶香 (2014). In *Satsujin shussan* 『殺人出産』. Tōkyō 東京: Kōdansha bunko 講談社文庫, pp. 159-190.
- Murata Sayaka 村田沙耶香 2015. *Shōmetsu sekai* 『消滅世界』. Tōkyō 東京: Kawade shobō shinsha 河出書房新社.
- Murata Sayaka 村田沙耶香 2016. *Konbini ningen* 『コンビニ人間』. Tōkyō 東京: Bungei bunshun 文芸文春.

- Murata, Sayaka. 2017. *Someone who appreciates rules* – Interview. Translated from Japanese to English by Ginny Tapley Takemori [online]. URL <http://www.zoomjapan.info/2017/06/06/no51-society-someone-who-appreciates-rules/> (10.12.2019).
- Murata, Sayaka. 2018. *Convenience Store Woman*. New York: Grove Press. English translation by Ginny Tapley Takemori.
- Murata Sayaka 村田沙耶香 2018 [2016]. “*Tayasuku kawariyuku sekai no ibitsu de junsuina hito o egaku* – Interview.” *Shūkan dokushonin* 3122, 08.01.2016 [Also available online] <https://dokushojin.com/article.html?i=3726> (10-12-2019).
- Murata Sayaka. 2018. *La ragazza del convenience store*. Roma: Edizioni E/O. Italian translation by Gianluca Coci.
- Murata Sayaka 村田沙耶香 2019a. *Seimeishiki*. Tōkyō: Kawade shobō shinsha.
- Murata Sayaka 村田沙耶香 2019b. *The Future of Sex Lives in All of Us*. English translation by Ginny Tapley Takemori. [online]. URL <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/02/opinion/future-sex-society.html> (10.12.2019).
- Narumi, Hiroshi. 2010. “Street Style and its Meaning in Postwar Japan.” *Fashion Theory. The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture* 14/4: 415-438.
- Sakuma Akayo 佐久間文子; Murata Sayaka 村田沙耶香 2016. *Shōmetsu sekai (Murata Sayaka) ga egaku shakai no mirai to wa? Disutopia o kaita shōsetsu to hyōsa reru koto mo oī, mirai shakai o kaita 1-saku. Sono sōsaku no haikai to wa? Chosha ni intabyū.* 『消滅世界』 (村田沙耶香) が描く社会の未来とは? ディストピアを描いた小説と評されることも多い、未来社会を描いた1作。その創作の背景とは? 著者にインタビュー。 *Josei seven 女性セブン*, 11.02.2016 [online]. URL <https://pdmagazine.jp/today-book/book-review-42/> (22.06.2020).
- Saitō Minako 斎藤美奈子 2018. *Nihon no dōjidai shōsetsu* 『日本の同時代小説』. Tōkyō 東京: Iwanami shinsho 岩波新書.
- Seaman, Amanda. 2017. *Writing Pregnancy in Low Fertility Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Scrolavezza, Paola. 2018. “Da Murata Sayaka, il ritratto di una donna al di là dell’empatia.” *Alias*, 9/9/2018, available at: <https://ilmanifesto.it/da-murata-sayaka-il-ritratto-di-una-donna-al-di-la-dellempatia/> (21.06.2020).
- Specchio, Anna. 2018a. “Eutopizing the Dystopia. Gender Roles, Motherhood and Reproduction in Murata Sayaka’s *Satsujin shussan*.” *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory* 4/1: 94-108.
- Specchio, Anna. 2018b. “Ciò che conta è diventare un ingranaggio.” *L’indice dei Libri del Mese* 12. <https://www.edizionieo.it/review/8464> (14.09.2020).
- Specchio, Anna. 2019. *Technologizing womanhood*. Corpo e identità nella letteratura giapponese femminile in epoca digitale. Unpublished Phd Thesis – Discussed on May 27th 2019.
- Takii Asayo 滝井朝世 2010. “Kaisetsu” 「解説」. In: Murata, Sayaka 村田沙耶香. *Jyunyū* 『授乳』. Tōkyō 東京: Kōdansha bunko 講談社文庫, pp. 238-235.

- Tsuji, Rika. 2018. “Sexless Marriage in Japan as Women’s Political Resistance.” *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics* 2/2: 1-10.
- Vincent, Keith J. 2016. “Queer reading and modern Japanese literature.” In: *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese Literature*, edited by Rachel Hutchinson and Leith Douglas, 69-82. London and New York: Routledge.
- Wolfe, Cary. 2010. *What is Posthumanism? Posthumanities Series*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Yuyama Reiko 湯山玲子; Nimura Hitoshi 二村ヒトシ 2016. *Nihonjin wa mō sekkusu shinaku naru no kamoshirenai* 『日本人はもうセックスしなくなるのかもしれない』. Tōkyō 東京: Gentōsha 幻冬舎.

Anna Specchio is Research Fellow in Japanese Language and Literature at the University of Turin – Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures and Modern Cultures. Her research deals with contemporary Japanese Women’s Literature with a focus on the relationship between women and technology and women’s subjectivity in contemporary literature and media, that she analyses using a feminist and posthuman studies approach. She is also interested in the intersections between manga and literature, and in literary translation. She has written papers on Murata Sayaka, Hayashi Mariko and Ogawa Yōko.

She has translated into Italian novels by Higashino Keigo (“La colpa,” Atmosphere Libri, 2016); “Sotto il sole di Mezzanotte,” Giunti, 2018), Iwaki Kei (“Arrivederci, arancione,” Edizioni E/O, 2018), Kawamura Genki (“Se I gatti scomparissero dal mondo,” Einaudi, 2019), Sakuraba Kazuki (“Red Girls,” Edizioni E/O, 2019), Hayashi Mariko (“L’ultimo volo per Tokyo,” Atmosphere Libri, 2020), as well as different manga, among which works by Shinkai Makoto, Nishi Keiko, and Anno Moyoko.

She can be reached at: anna.specchio@unito.it

ORCID: orcid.org/0000-0002-0027-0954

Profilo sociale dell'emigrazione urbana giapponese nella Manciuria coloniale

il caso della città di Fushun

Filippo Dornetti

Making sense of the spectacular performance of postwar Japanese economy is one of the central issues in Japanese contemporary history. Recently, economic and business historians are debating on the role of the colonial experience in respect of the Japanese postwar economic boom. In the light of this new issue, the analysis of life histories of Japanese commoners who migrated in the colonies is gaining relevance. This paper attempts to contribute to this debate focusing on 69 Japanese who lived Fushun in the first four decades of the 20th Century. Fushun, the “city of coil” of Manchukuo, was a medium-sized company town created by the South Manchurian Railway Company around the local coil mines. The main source of the paper is the biographical annals of notable Japanese people in Manchuria (*Manshū shinshiroku*), recently collected in a volume by Takenaka Shin'ichi. The evidence gathered for this contribution suggests that Fushun was as a city quite selective towards highly skilled Japanese migrants, and that not a few people had the chance to collect professional experience in Fushun, which could have been an important asset after the war. My analysis was focused on a small sample of male self-employed, employed in small firms, or public servants in Fushun. I plan to extend this survey in a new article considering also a sample of the numerous Railway Company employees in the same city.

Keywords: Japanese Empire, Manchuria, migration, colonialism, life histories

1. Introduzione

La presente ricerca propone un quadro delle molteplici forme di migrazione giapponese nei centri urbani della Manciuria coloniale, attraverso il caso della città di Fushun, utilizzando come base

documentaria 69 biografie presenti negli annuari biografici di giapponesi celebri residenti in Manciuria¹ (*Manshū shinshiroku*).

Recenti articoli sull'Impero giapponese apparsi in Italia sono stati incentrati sui problemi di memoria e riconciliazione del passato coloniale nipponico (Cuscito 2018: 197-203; Fiori 2018: 227-234). Queste ricostruzioni sono senza dubbio utili strumenti per comprendere i termini delle controversie sul risarcimento delle vittime di violenza perpetuata da organizzazioni o istituzioni legate al colonialismo nipponico, che ancora oggi influenzano le relazioni diplomatiche tra il Giappone e i paesi ex coloniali.² Rimane ancora da fare però una riflessione sul significato del passato coloniale nella storia contemporanea del Giappone. Una valutazione generale deve partire da alcuni dati di fatto. L'Impero coloniale nipponico, cominciato con l'annessione di Taiwan nel 1895 e conclusosi con la sconfitta nella Seconda guerra mondiale, costituì la cornice politica e giuridica che rese possibile lo sfruttamento delle risorse coloniali a beneficio del Giappone. Nel dopoguerra il Giappone dovette fare i conti con la definitiva perdita di queste risorse (Nakanishi 2017: 274-276). Inoltre, studi recenti sembrano indicare che le colonie furono anche dei "laboratori professionali" dove almeno una parte degli emigrati giapponesi poté accumulare esperienze e conoscenze tecniche utili anche nel dopoguerra, contribuendo così alla ripresa economica.³ Le colonie sarebbero state luoghi di formazione per tecnici (Sawai 2015), burocrati, politici e *policy makers*⁴ che fecero tesoro dell'esperienza coloniale per l'attività svolta nel Giappone del dopoguerra. È a quest'ultimo filone di studi che il presente studio intende dare un contributo, seppur circoscritto. Appare opportuna la scelta di un caso-studio nel territorio mancese, dato che fu l'area dove si concentrò il maggior volume di investimenti tra le colonie giapponesi,⁵ nonché il luogo in cui soprattutto alcuni cosiddetti "nuovi *zaibatsu*", assieme ad altri gruppi industriali

¹ Per Manciuria intendo il territorio entro i confini dello stato fantoccio del Manchukuo, corrispondente grosso modo alle tre province di Liaoning, Jilin e Heilongjiang, conosciute in cinese come la regione di *Dongbei*, o nordest della Cina.

² L'ultimo caso è il verdetto della corte suprema della Corea del Sud che richiede alla Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal di risarcire quattro sudcoreani mobilitati nel sistema di coscrizione del lavoro (*chōyōkō*) in atto durante l'occupazione (Takeda 2018).

³ Sul significato dell'esperienza professionale nelle colonie per l'attività lavorativa nel secondo dopoguerra, Yanagisawa e Kimura hanno offerto due punti di vista contrastanti (Kimura 2016; Yanagisawa 2016). Tra le ragioni della spettacolare performance economica nipponica nel secondo dopoguerra, sono state identificate la diffusione della conoscenza tecnologica e l'alto grado di formazione del lavoro accumulati nel corso degli anni precedenti (Miyazaki, Itō 1989).

⁴ Kobayashi sostiene che la Sezione Ricerche della Società Ferroviaria della Manciuria Meridionale (*mantetsu chōsabu*) fu un *think tank* molto influente nell'amministrazione delle colonie giapponesi in Cina; secondo lo storico giapponese i membri della Sezione avrebbero mantenuto anche nel dopoguerra la grande considerazione di cui avevano goduto in epoca coloniale (Kobayashi 2005). La tesi è stata oggetto di contestazione (Matsumura, Yanagisawa ed Eda 2008).

⁵ Nel 1945 gli investimenti giapponesi nelle colonie presentavano la seguente distribuzione territoriale: 34% in Manciuria, 31% in Corea, 18% nella "Cina continentale", 10% nelle colonie del sudest asiatico, 7% a Taiwan (Sugiyama, 2012).

nipponici, aprirono all'industria pesante, contribuendo così a modificare la struttura produttiva del Paese (Sugiyama 2012: 400-406, 434-435).

È bene distinguere tra la migrazione rurale, cioè diretta verso aree agricole, e quella urbana, diretta verso le città, poiché erano regolate da politiche e istituzioni diverse, riguardavano gruppi sociali diversi e comportarono esperienze migratorie molto differenti. Caratteristico della migrazione rurale, divenuta di massa tra il 1937 e il 1941, è la dimensione organizzata e collettiva degli spostamenti. Gli studi precedenti ne hanno analizzato soprattutto i fattori di spinta, e il ruolo progettuale e organizzativo del Ministero degli Affari Coloniali (*Takumushō*), coadiuvato dalle amministrazioni locali e dal Ministero dell'Agricoltura (*Manshū imin kenkyūkai* 1976). Più di recente è stato sottolineato il ruolo delle reti sociali famigliari e di conoscenti nella scelta individuale verso l'emigrazione, e il ruolo attrattivo svolto da aziende statali in quanto datori di lavoro nelle colonie (Araragi 2013). A differenza di quella rurale, la migrazione urbana si presentò in forme meno organizzate e fu per lo più individuale o famigliare. Per questo tipo di migrazione sono stati sottolineati i fattori attrattivi della Manciuria: *in primis* il mito della frontiera, che riuscì a mobilitare molte coscienze (Young 1998). In Giappone gli studi di storia aziendale hanno avuto il pregio di mettere in relazione lo sviluppo dell'immigrazione urbana nelle colonie a quello delle aziende private giapponesi attive in loco. Importanti inoltre gli studi sulle camere di commercio, che promossero efficacemente lo spostamento nel continente attraverso la raccolta e pubblicazione di informazioni sul mercato locale (Yanagisawa, Kimura 2004). Su una diversa scala di studio, la migrazione urbana è stata studiata in relazione allo sviluppo delle città coloniali, nel contesto del crescente volume del commercio intraregionale dell'Impero. L'inurbamento della città portuale di Dalian ad esempio, oltre ad ospitare grandi società commerciali internazionali, attirò anche molte piccole e medie manifatture e attività commerciali condotte da coloni giapponesi (Yanagisawa 1999). Questi studi però, lasciano inevase alcune domande importanti. In primo luogo, la scelta di aziende e esercizi commerciali come oggetto d'analisi trascura categorie lavorative e aspetti del processo migratorio non direttamente utili a capire la vita dell'azienda. È possibile vedere più da vicino l'identità, il percorso scolastico e professionale di coloro che decisero di emigrare nelle città mancesi? Qual era stato l'itinerario di viaggio che li ha portati nel continente? Quale il peso di legami famigliari e di conterraneità nella scelta dell'espatrio? E soprattutto, come valutare l'esperienza mancese dal punto di vista della loro carriera professionale?

In secondo luogo, nonostante di recente alcuni saggi abbiano allargato lo sguardo ad altre città, come Changchun e Harbin, il dibattito sulla migrazione urbana nella Manciuria coloniale rimane ancorato alle maggiori città mancesi, ovvero Dalian e Shenyang (Yanagisawa 2013). Tuttavia, è bene ricordare che il territorio urbano di quest'area era composto anche da piccole città, molte delle quali

costruite *ex novo* durante la dominazione coloniale, tipicamente localizzate nei pressi di aree adibite allo sfruttamento di risorse minerarie. Si trattava di città aziendali (*company town*), città costruite e amministrare dalla Società Ferroviaria della Manciuria Meridionale (*Minami Manshū tetsudō kabushikigaisha*, in breve *Mantetsu*).⁶ È possibile identificare caratteri peculiari nei processi migratori verso le città di piccole dimensioni?

Queste le domande che hanno indirizzato la presente ricerca allo studio di biografie di emigrati giapponesi a Fushun. Essa può considerarsi il prototipo delle città aziendali mancesi: fondata nei pressi dell'omonima città storica e amministrata dalla *Mantetsu*, in origine quartiere dormitorio per i dipendenti dell'azienda ferroviaria impegnati nelle locali miniere di carbone, conobbe un processo di differenziazione economica importante, seppur contenuto, tra gli anni Venti e gli anni Trenta del Ventesimo secolo. L'approfondimento del fenomeno migratorio verso Fushun, colto in modo dinamico in relazione all'urbanizzazione di questa città, può essere un utile strumento per approfondire il quadro dell'immigrazione urbana nella regione.

Nel caso di Fushun, considerata la posizione dominante dell'industria del carbone nella città,⁷ uno sguardo limitato a questo settore produttivo finisce per non cogliere la crescente complessità del panorama produttivo della città: è il limite che si nota ad esempio nel lavoro di Limin Teh (Teh 2012: 69-90). L'articolo si propone quindi di descrivere tipologie migratorie di soggetti attivi in ambiti diversi rispetto all'industria carbonifera. Questa scelta premetterà di verificare se e in che misura aziende indipendenti dalla *Mantetsu* svolgessero un ruolo di attrazione per i migranti giapponesi.

Gli annuari biografici di giapponesi celebri residenti in Manciuria (*Manshū shinshiroku*) rappresentano la base documentaria principale del lavoro. Ho utilizzato le voci nel corposo volume di Takenaka che raccoglie 14 annuari usciti tra il 1908 e il 1942 (Takenaka 2012). Pregio di questo libro è l'indicizzazione delle 10 mila voci biografiche in esso raccolte: ciò ha reso possibile l'individuazione di

⁶ La *Mantetsu* fu una società per azioni fondata nel 1906 con capitale versato di 200 milioni di Yen, di cui il Governo giapponese era azionista di maggioranza, costituita per esercitare la gestione delle ferrovie e delle miniere di carbone sul territorio mancese, ottenute dall'Impero giapponese come concessioni secondo il trattato di Portsmouth (1905). L'azienda si occupava altresì dell'amministrazione di città, porti, e di una serie di altre attività sul territorio. I profitti della Società, che nell'anno della fondazione ammontavano a oltre tre milioni di Yen, nel 1911 superarono i 10 milioni (Myers 1989: 101-132; Okabe 2007: 22-23).

⁷ Nel 1921, a distanza di quattordici anni dalla sua occupazione da parte dei giapponesi, a Fushun esistevano solo 12 aziende giapponesi su più di 47 mila abitanti (1920). Nel 1920 il 48% del totale degli occupati della città (22.703 dipendenti su un totale di 47.235 occupati) era costituito da dipendenti della *Mantetsu* (Suzuki 2007).

69 biografie di giapponesi residenti a Fushun nel momento della rilevazione, che non erano occupati nell'industria mineraria.⁸

Gli annuari erano volumi pubblicati sporadicamente in Manciuria. Ogni voce contiene informazioni su data e luogo di nascita, notizie sul percorso formativo, carriera lavorativa in Giappone, data di emigrazione e attività professionale in Manciuria, con note sui luoghi di spostamento, attraverso i quali si possono ricostruire le rotte migratorie. Questa tipologia di fonte è in uso da decine d'anni dagli studiosi di storia d'impresa e di storia urbana. Tuttavia, lo studio sistematico di biografie in ambito coloniale è ancora nella fase iniziale. Attualmente il maggiore studio in questo campo è quello di Kazuo Komine, che ha raccolto dagli annuari circa 400 voci di coloni stabilitisi nei maggiori centri urbani del Manchukuo, divisi in quattro coorti, ovvero i nati rispettivamente prima del 1857, tra il 1858 e il 1868, il 1869 e il 1879, dopo il 1880 (Komine 2010). Come afferma lo studioso, questi dati possono essere considerati una inchiesta a campione, che non copre però l'intera gamma di stratificazione sociale dei giapponesi presenti in Manciuria. Si tratta infatti di membri delle *élites*, imprenditori, o quadri tecnico-amministrativi di aziende private o pubbliche; di questo gruppo ristretto gli annuari hanno la tendenza a prediligere le storie di successo. I dati hanno delle limitazioni: sono escluse le biografie di donne; non abbiamo importanti informazioni sul ciclo vitale di queste persone. Nonostante ciò, nell'attuale stato dell'arte degli studi sulla migrazione coloniale, le voci degli annuari rimangono fonti imprescindibili. Esse sono importanti tessere che, se avvicinate le une alle altre, possono farci cogliere alcune tendenze significative di un segmento importante della migrazione coloniale giapponese. Per poter caratterizzare meglio l'immigrazione giapponese a Fushun, i dati raccolti per questo articolo verranno confrontati sistematicamente con il quadro generale offerto dallo studio di Komine sopracitato.

L'articolo prosegue con due sezioni principali. La prima è una sintesi delle caratteristiche e delle fasi di sviluppo urbano e economico di Fushun, con una particolare attenzione al processo di differenziazione economica della città. Nella seconda sezione si passerà all'analisi delle biografie, considerando in particolare le regioni di provenienza, le professioni, l'età di arrivo, la formazione scolastica, il tipo di mobilità.

⁸ Ho utilizzato le biografie di persone appartenenti a organizzazioni le cui denominazioni cominciano con Bujun (ovvero la pronuncia giapponese di "Fushun"), escludendo coloro che erano impiegati nell'industria del carbone al momento della rilevazione biografica, dall'indice analitico allegato al volume di Takenaka.

2. Urbanizzazione di una città aziendale

Posta a 45 km da Shenyang, antica capitale del popolo mancese, Fushun si trovava fuori dall'arteria della rete ferroviaria mancese, che da Dalian a Chanchung passando per Shenyang collegava la Manciuria settentrionale al Mar Giallo.⁹ Anticamente avamposto militare a difesa della capitale, con l'intervento della *Mantetsu* Fushun divenne il maggiore centro carbonifero della Manciuria. La Fushun moderna sorse con i primi insediamenti giapponesi nei pressi dei giacimenti di carbone dell'omonimo distretto, occupati dalle truppe nipponiche durante la guerra russo-giapponese e divenuti di proprietà giapponese col trattato di Portsmouth nel 1905. Completato l'allacciamento ferroviario di Fushun a Shenyang, la Sezione Miniere di Fushun (*Bujun tankō*) della *Mantetsu* curò l'amministrazione dei territori ad esso limitrofi, opportunamente integrati con ulteriori terreni acquistati dall'azienda. In questi territori la *Mantetsu* sviluppò in senso moderno il processo di sfruttamento delle miniere di carbone, e al contempo il Dipartimento Affari Generali della Sezione (*Bujun tankō shomuka*) si occupò della gestione della città fino al 1938, quando fu ceduta all'amministrazione locale del Manchukuo. Il Dipartimento fu altresì responsabile dell'erogazione di servizi di base per i suoi dipendenti: istruzione, servizi sanitari, edilizia e pianificazione urbana, organizzazione del tempo libero. In pochi anni il distretto industriale di Fushun divenne il centro da cui era estratta la maggior quantità di carbone mancese.¹⁰ Lo sviluppo dell'industria di carbone fu uno dei fattori determinanti del veloce processo di urbanizzazione di Fushun.

I dati demografici relativi a Fushun testimoniano un veloce e intenso processo di inurbamento: dai 4 mila abitanti registrati nel 1906 la popolazione urbana superò i 100 mila nel 1935, una crescita rapidissima che si comprende anche nel contesto dell'abolizione delle restrizioni sull'immigrazione dei cinesi *han* verso la Manciuria nel 1906. La comunità cinese *han* rappresentava quasi i tre quarti della popolazione. Nonostante un così notevole aumento demografico, se confrontata con Dalian e Shenyang, che presentavano una popolazione rispettivamente di 350 mila (1935) e 860 mila (1939), Fushun rimase negli anni Trenta una città di medie dimensioni nel panorama mancese (Koezawa 1978: 145).

A Fushun sono riscontrabili due caratteristiche che ne differenziano la struttura produttiva da quella delle maggiori città della regione, a più chiara vocazione commerciale. Il primo punto riguarda

⁹ Per un approfondimento dell'urbanizzazione e del processo di differenziazione economica di Fushun, con maggiori dettagli sulle fonti utilizzate, mi permetto di rimandare a un mio precedente articolo (Dornetti 2018).

¹⁰ Nel 1937 a Fushun si estraeva oltre il 70% dell'intero prodotto carbonifero mancese; nello stesso anno, il trasporto del combustibile da Fushun al porto di Dalian rappresentava il 40% dei profitti della *Mantetsu* (Matsumura 2002: 291, 293).

proprio le esigue dimensioni del commercio urbano. Nella struttura occupazionale di Fushun (1938), oltre alla già citata preponderanza del settore minerario, che occupa il 29,8% della popolazione, risalta il basso numero degli addetti nel settore commerciale, che rappresentavano solo l'8,6% degli occupati (Bujun shōkō kōkai. 1938).¹¹ Il secondo elemento, collegato al primo, è la relativa debolezza dell'industria alimentare e chimica, che comprendeva la lavorazione della soia, il principale bene commerciale della regione. In altre parole, a Fushun erano particolarmente deboli i settori produttivi dove tradizionalmente si concentravano le piccole e medie imprese e, nel caso dei commercianti al dettaglio, gli occupati con minore specializzazione professionale. Queste caratteristiche erano dovute alla localizzazione della città, troppo lontana dalle arterie distributive principali dell'area, e troppo vicina a Shenyang, con cui si spartiva il mercato agricolo locale. La componente attiva della comunità nipponica della città era occupata per lo più in livelli tecnico-amministrativi superiori del settore impiegatizio, mentre il lavoro manuale era lasciato alla forza lavoro locale (Matsumura 2002: 297).¹² Questa stratificazione etnica delle mansioni lavorative era riprodotta anche nell'organizzazione urbana: le residenze dei giapponesi infatti erano localizzate nei quartieri più alti della città (Dornetti 2018: 65).

Lo sviluppo urbanistico di Fushun conobbe un punto di svolta nel 1919: prima di quella data infatti gli insediamenti originari della città si erano concentrati nei pressi del villaggio Qianjinzhai, mentre dal 1919 cominciò la fondazione di Nuova Fushun (*Shin Bujun*) sul lato sudoccidentale della città, e il trasferimento della popolazione nel nuovo sito, per fare spazio agli scavi delle miniere a cielo aperto (Koezawa 1986a: 40-55; Koezawa 1986b: 24-43). Caratteristico del primo periodo è uno sviluppo urbano per accumulo, senza una chiara pianificazione. La costruzione di Nuova Fushun fu caratterizzata invece da una più chiara opera di pianificazione approntata dalla Bujun tankō. L'azienda in questo periodo si impegnò a fornire un'ampia gamma di servizi per i dipendenti, tra cui, come si vedrà, scuole.

Si possono identificare tre cicli principali nello sviluppo economico regionale applicabili sostanzialmente anche all'andamento economico di Fushun: un ciclo di crescita dallo scoppio della Prima guerra mondiale al 1920, un secondo ciclo negativo negli anni Venti, e un terzo periodo di crescita negli anni Trenta. Durante la prima guerra mondiale e negli anni immediatamente successivi, conosciuti come gli anni della “bolla mancese”, numerosi giapponesi, attratti dall'aumento delle

¹¹ Dalla stessa rilevazione statistica del '38 scopriamo che il resto dei giapponesi occupati a Fushun si divide nei seguenti settori: manifattura (23,3%), agricoltura (8,4%), costruzioni (5,4%), altro (24,5%).

¹² Nel 1943 il 91% dei 9645 dipendenti giapponesi della Bujun tankō era rappresentato da impiegati amministrativi; specularmente, solo il 6% degli 84046 dipendenti cinesi era composto da impiegati: la maggior parte di essi infatti erano operai e minatori.

esportazioni giapponesi sul mercato internazionale e rassicurati dall'aumento dei profitti, trasferirono parte dell'attività, o decisero di cominciare una nuova carriera nei territori mancesi concessi all'Impero giapponese a seguito del trattato di Portsmouth (Suzuki 2007: 66-67; Kaneko 1991: 192-203). A Fushun questo periodo coincise con lo sviluppo di nuovi quartieri residenziali dei dipendenti della *Bujun tankō* a Qianjinzhai, e per questo furono soprattutto le aziende legate al settore edilizio a crescere. Si diffondono commercianti al dettaglio alternativi al sistema distributivo aziendale della Mantetsu. La crescita del settore alimentare, soprattutto la lavorazione della soia e del riso, si era verificata nel contesto della crescita di Fushun come mercato di raccolta di prodotti agricoli che interessava non solo l'omonimo distretto, ma quelli vicini di Tonghua e Xingjing.

Negli anni Venti si aprì un ciclo negativo per l'economia giapponese che interessò anche le imprese giapponesi aperte nelle colonie (Caroli, Gatti 2006: 408; Kaneko 1991: 338-352; Sugiyama 2012: 315-316). La Manciuria, inoltre, fu colpita dalla crisi del mercato della soia dal 1927 (Okabe 2008: 61-62). La difficile situazione fu ulteriormente aggravata a Fushun nel 1928 dalla costruzione della linea Fengtian-Hailong, che ridimensionò notevolmente il ruolo della città come centro di raccolta di prodotti agricoli. La crisi pertanto si fece sentire a Fushun nel settore commerciale, dove si registrò un forte calo nel numero delle attività del settore: tra il 1922 e il 1932 il numero delle attività commerciali giapponesi con sede centrale a Fushun passò da 72 a 53 (Kawamura 1923: 14-32; Manshūkoku tetsuro sōkyoku 1933: 283-286).¹³ Nella manifattura della città ad essere colpite furono soprattutto le piccole imprese legate alla lavorazione della soia, settore che nei successivi venti anni non si sarebbe più risollevato. Tra il 1922 e il 1931, in concomitanza con la costruzione di Nuova Fushun, sorsero le prime aziende in città nel settore dell'abbigliamento, degli accessori, della fibra, della carta, e nel settore farmaceutico. Il trasferimento della popolazione di Qianjinzhai e la fondazione di Nuova Fushun funsero da volano per la domanda nel settore edilizio e diedero nuovo impulso all'industria alimentare. Gli anni Trenta, videro un nuovo boom di investimenti giapponesi a Fushun e nelle maggiori città mancesi (Suzuki 2007: 66-67). Dal 1936 il Manchukuo passò a un sistema economico pianificato, che promosse lo sviluppo del settore alimentare e dell'industria pesante legata alla domanda militare. In questo periodo a Fushun si assistette alla trasformazione della sezione Miniere di Fushun della *Mantetsu* in complesso industriale che comprendeva anche industrie chimiche e del settore

¹³ La diminuzione degli esercenti tra il 1922 e il 1932 è in parte motivata anche dal trasferimento della popolazione urbana a Nuova Fushun, che nel 1932 non era ancora terminata.

meccanico (Matsumura 2002: 290-291). Nel settore alimentare il numero totale delle aziende giapponesi aumentò da 18 a 48 tra il 1930 e il 1939 (Minami manshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha keizai chōsakai 1934: 80-89, Minami manshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha shinkyō shisha chōsashitsu 1996: 1-29). Tuttavia, la trasformazione della soia e del riso non riuscì a trarre vantaggio dalle politiche di promozione produttiva. Le aziende di Fushun che si occupavano della lavorazione della soia passarono da 17 nel 1930 a 8 nel '39 (Minami manshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha keizai chōsakai 1934: 80-89, Minami manshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha shinkyō shisha chōsashitsu 1996: 1-29). Le riserie della città passarono dal 1931 al 1939 da 22 a 13 aziende (Minami manshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha keizai chōsakai 1933: 114-115. Minami manshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha shinkyō shisha chōsashitsu 1996: 17).

3. Biografie

3.1. Regione di provenienza e parentela

Come nei casi raccolti da Komine (2010, p. 32-40), anche a Fushun si nota una preponderanza di giapponesi provenienti dal Giappone occidentale: quasi la metà (31 su 69) sono nati nel territorio comprendente l'isola del Kyūshū e la provincia di Yamaguchi. Alcuni di essi in Manciuria erano membri di associazioni di conterraneità, tuttavia i dati raccolti negli annuari biografici di Takenaka (Takenaka 2012) non permettono di ricostruire reti sociali significative su tale base. Troppo pochi sono i dati sulla famiglia di partenza per una discussione approfondita sul ruolo della parentela nel processo migratorio. Si notano comunque alcuni casi in cui figli primogeniti seguono il padre a Fushun per succedergli nell'attività imprenditoriale, secondo le pratiche consuetudinarie della famiglia multipla allargata (*stem family*), all'epoca egemonica in Giappone. Esemplificatorio è il caso di Junji Fujii, originario di Sekigahara: trasferitosi in Corea col padre Takejirō per aiutarlo nel ristorante di proprietà, dopo la guerra russo-giapponese, dal 1906 padre e figlio si dedicarono, a Fushun, alla direzione dell'Hotel Toyo. Nel 1917 il padre aprì in città il ristorante *Shokudōraku Fujiiya*, alla cui gestione succederà Junji nel '30 (Takenaka 2012: 1246).¹⁴ Specularmente, si trovano casi di figli non primogeniti che, costretti secondo la stessa consuetudine a lasciare il focolare domestico, si trasferiscono in Manciuria per costruirsi una carriera autonoma. È il caso di Shichirō Katsura, sesto figlio di un medico

¹⁴ Anche Hatsuichi Koga, persona di spicco nell'agricoltura locale, amministratore e dirigente di aziende agricole e di una riseria, era il primogenito di Komakichi, con cui si trasferisce a Fushun per aiutarlo nell'attività di immobiliare (Takenaka 2012: 567).

di Fukuoka. Shichirō, dopo un anno di lavoro in un ospedale nella provincia d'origine, seguendo l'esempio di due fratelli maggiori, si trasferisce nelle colonie per continuare la pratica medica: Shichirō scelse Fushun, mentre i fratelli andarono in altre località in Manciuria e in Corea (Takenaka 2012: 391).

3.2. Professioni

Tra i 69 soggetti presi in esame ci sono due categorie lavorative che emergono dal gruppo: la prima è quella degli amministratori d'azienda, tra i quali ho raggruppato sia proprietari sia manager salariati, sia membri a vario titolo di consigli di amministrazione (29 su 69, sono il 42%). La seconda categoria è rappresentata dagli insegnanti (circa il 30%), compreso anche qualche dirigente scolastico. I rimanenti (27,5%) sono professionisti, amministratori pubblici, dipendenti pubblici e privati. Rispetto ai dati di Komine (Komine 2010: 57-73), nelle voci riguardanti Bujun risalta l'alto numero di insegnanti censiti, e la quota relativamente limitata di imprenditori e dipendenti.¹⁵

Approfondiamo la categoria degli amministratori d'azienda. È interessante notare che i soggetti con esperienza di impiego nella Sezione Miniere di Fushun sono 14 (circa il 20% sul totale di 69), e rientrano tutti nella categoria di amministratori d'azienda. Citiamo ad esempio Kōtarō Inaba, che un anno dopo il diploma superiore da Ōsaka si trasferì a Fushun, per essere assunto nella Sezione Miniere; nel '29 aprì l'Officina Meccanica Inaba, occupandosi con un certo successo di progettazione e assemblaggio di componenti meccanici (Takenaka 2012: 153-154). Analogamente al caso di Inaba, sui 29 manager censiti a Fushun, sono ben 19 coloro che negli anni Venti in Manciuria arrivarono a ricoprire un ruolo dirigenziale partendo da una posizione di dipendenti d'azienda. Per esempio Shikazō Okuda, dipendente in una fabbrica di mattoni in Giappone, nel 1908 a 24 anni si trasferisce a Fushun, assunto come dipendente dell'azienda di laterizi *Bujun Yōgyō*. Dopo diciassette anni di lavoro, nel '25 apre in città una propria fabbrica di mattoni, ricoprendo anche il ruolo di amministratore delegato nel c.d.a. dell'azienda *Bujun mujin* (Takenaka, 2012, pp. 1333). Non è possibile confrontare queste informazioni col quadro generale offerto da Komine, che ha affrontato in modo diverso il tema delle carriere lavorative dei migranti giapponesi. Questi dati comunque sembrano esprimere un certo grado di dinamicità che esisteva nel pur piccolo mondo degli affari durante costruzione di Nuova Fushun. La maggior parte di coloro che si sarebbero messi in proprio (22 su 29) arrivarono a Fushun tra il 1904 e il 1919, furono testimoni quindi del trasferimento della città, vi fecero “la gavetta” da dipendenti per

¹⁵ I dati di Komine riportano il 63,1% di amministratori, 33% di dipendenti (di cui gli insegnanti sono solo il 3%), 13% altre professioni (Komine 2010: 58-59).

diversi anni prima di aprire la propria attività.¹⁶ Tra di essi ci sono 5 amministratori di imprese legate allo sviluppo urbanistico della città: imprese di costruzioni, falegnamerie, imprese di laterizi, che contribuirono allo sviluppo urbano della città rispondendo alle commesse della *Mantetsu*. Per esempio, Kihei Kawaji di Kagoshima, arrivato in Manciuria nel 1904 a 19 anni come militare, nel 1908 è assunto come dipendente alla Sezione Miniere a Fushun; 12 anni dopo, nel 1920, divenne amministratore delegato della già citata *Bujun Yōgyō*, di cui diventerà il dirigente nel 1933 (Takenaka 2012 : 446). Vi sono anche casi di imprenditori che negli anni del “boom mancese” tentano la fortuna a Fushun, o decidono di allargare l’impresa in questa città. Per esempio, Kenzō Hirao, dopo aver aperto una merceria di prodotti giapponesi a Dalian nel 1904, ne aprì una filiale a Shenyang (1907), e l’anno successivo un’altra a Fushun, dove si trasferì e continuò l’attività di grossista e dettagliante (Takenaka 2012: 1208).

Dei 21 insegnanti censiti, solo uno non arriva a Fushun negli anni Venti. Tale compattezza temporale ci suggerisce il motivo della notevole attenzione di cui gode questa categoria lavorativa nelle voci degli annuari biografici dedicate ai residenti di Fushun. Gli anni Venti infatti sono il periodo in cui l’offerta scolastica nei territori occupati in Manciuria si amplia sensibilmente, in parte nel contesto del generale aumento dei flussi migratori, in parte, particolarmente a Nuova Fushun, per effetto della svolta di questo centro urbano verso un modello di città più attenta all’erogazione dei servizi, come già sottolineato.¹⁷ Il “regolamento sul percorso scolastico nei territori amministrati dalla *Mantetsu*” (*Mantetsu fuzokuchi kōgakudō kisoku*) (1914) aveva già introdotto il percorso scolastico per i piccoli giapponesi dalle elementari alle superiori, dando il via alla costruzione di numerose scuole. Durante la costruzione di Nuova Fushun negli anni Venti l’afflusso migratorio di nuclei familiari crebbe notevolmente, facendo accrescere la popolazione infantile della città.¹⁸ Di conseguenza, si procede all’ampliamento degli edifici delle scuole elementari, già presenti dai primi anni di occupazione, e alla costruzione di nuove scuole. Nel 1922 l’azienda ferroviaria aprì la scuola media superiore femminile, e l’anno successivo la scuola media (*Bujun chūgakkō*, 1923), in parte frutto della pressione politica esercitata dalla comunità colonica giapponese. Inoltre, in pochi anni, nella prima metà degli anni Venti, fu inaugurato un istituto scolastico per gli immigrati coreani (*Futsū gakkō*), seguito da una scuola per i

¹⁶ Nei dieci casi in cui si è potuto ricostruire con precisione la carriera lavorativa, ve ne sono sei di imprenditori che aprirono una propria attività dopo oltre 10 anni di apprendistato in aziende di Fushun, e quattro con un apprendistato tra i 5 e i 9 anni.

¹⁷ Da sottolineare che la maggior parte degli insegnanti inclusi in questa ricerca sono presenti in un annuario che ha dato particolarmente spazio a questa categoria. Si tratta di *Manshū nippōsha rinji shinshiroku hensanbu* (1929). *Manmō nihonjin shinshiroku fu Manmō ginkō kaisha yōran*. Dairen: Manshū nippōsha.

¹⁸ Dal 1920 al 1927 il numero di bambini giapponesi in età scolare a Fushun crebbe da 427 a 1000. (Minamimanshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha chihōbu zannu seiri iinkai 1977: 966).

figli dei dipendenti cinesi (*Kōtō gakkō*); gli istituti tecnici e commerciali comparvero alla fine degli anni Venti e Trenta (*Minamimanshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha chihōbu zannu seiri iinkai* 1977: 966-983). Sebbene la *Mantetsu* avesse organizzato dei corsi di formazione per insegnanti dalla fine degli anni Dieci, il reclutamento avveniva per lo più direttamente in Giappone. A differenza dei manager presi in esame, la maggior parte degli insegnanti trasferitisi a Fushun continuò a esercitare la stessa professione (pochi sono i casi di insegnanti divenuti dirigenti scolastici). La decisione di trasferirsi a Fushun derivava forse dalla curiosità, o dalla volontà di sottrarsi alla progressiva perdita di potere d'acquisto in madrepatria per la caduta dei salari reali negli anni Venti (Bassino, Ma, Saitō 2005: 357).¹⁹ Satō Jūzō, diplomatosi all'Accademia Militare di Toyama nel '13, vi insegnò educazione fisica e arti marziali per otto anni. Dopo quattro anni di insegnamento a Pechino e a Ōsaka, nel '24 vinse il concorso per insegnante della nuova scuola media a Fushun, dove si trasferì (Takenaka 2012: 668). Interessante il caso di Kyūsaburō Kawamura, della provincia di Yamaguchi: laureato all'Università di Kyoto nel '26, dopo aver lavorato per due anni in scuole medie a Fukuoka e a Niigata, nel 1928 si trasferì a Fushun per lavorare alla scuola media locale (Takenaka 2012: 458).

3.3. Età

La presenza di giapponesi a Dalian si attesta già alla fine dell'800, dopo la vittoria nella Prima guerra sino-giapponese,²⁰ mentre i primi arrivi a Fushun cominciarono durante la guerra con la Russia. È forse questo ritardo di circa dieci anni una delle ragioni per la quale gli emigrati a Fushun selezionati sono in media di generazione più recente rispetto alle coorti studiate da Komine (Komine 2010: 30-31). Infatti nei dati riportati dallo storico giapponese la metà dei migranti erano nati negli anni Settanta dell'Ottocento, e un quarto negli anni Sessanta. Invece tra gli immigrati a Fushun presi in esame in questo articolo, più del 70% erano nati tra gli anni Ottanta e Novanta; i rimanenti erano nati tra gli anni Cinquanta e Settanta, e nella prima decade del XX secolo. Come si vedrà, questo fattore generazionale ha implicazioni importanti sul livello di scolarizzazione dei soggetti.

L'età media di arrivo a Fushun dei migranti studiati è alquanto avanzata: 32 anni.²¹ Come si vedrà nel paragrafo sulla mobilità, ciò si spiega in parte perché molti di loro (43,4%), oltre a godere di alta

¹⁹ Gordon riporta una vivida testimonianza delle difficoltà finanziarie di un'insegnante di scuola elementare giapponese in madrepatria nel 1918 (Gordon 2003: 158).

²⁰ La società commerciale giapponese *Mitsui Bussan* aprì la prima filiale a Dalian nel 1895 (Suzuki 2007: 510-511).

²¹ Komine non affronta il tema dell'età di arrivo in Manciuria, quindi non disponiamo di un quadro generale con cui confrontare i dati degli immigrati a Fushun.

formazione, ebbero una storia migratoria e di residenza in altre città in Manciuria, prima di arrivare a Fushun, o in altre colonie prima di arrivare in Manciuria (17,3%). Se consideriamo che in Giappone nel 1920 l'età media del matrimonio per i maschi era di 25 anni (Jinkō mondai shingikai 1988: 26), è ragionevole pensare che questi uomini arrivassero a Fushun per lo più già sposati e padri di figli.²² È interessante notare che l'età di arrivo a Fushun delle persone selezionate nelle biografie è in costante aumento dagli anni Dieci agli anni Quaranta; ciò è dovuta alla particolare composizione di ciascuna coorte. Nel gruppo degli arrivi a Fushun negli anni Dieci infatti figurano due giovani uomini sotto i 25 anni, alcuni dei quali impegnati in Manciuria come militari durante la guerra russo-giapponese. Uno di essi è Kiichi Shimizu, originario della provincia di Niigata, dopo la laurea all'Università Waseda, a 23 anni entra nell'ufficio contabilità della Sezione Miniere; si trasferisce in altri uffici (stipendi, centro di ricerca), per scegliere la carriera militare dopo esser stato richiamato al servizio militare. Nel '29 è sergente maggiore di fanteria dell'esercito (Takenaka 2012: 719). Negli anni Trenta e Quaranta l'età degli arrivi a Fushun si alza a 42 anni. Ciò è dovuto in parte alla presenza di un individuo che arriva a Fushun a 63 anni: Kōzō Fukui, nato nel 1879, laureato all'Università imperiale di Tokyo. Dopo l'esperienza come amministratore delegato di due imprese di costruzioni, nel 1942 si trasferì a Fushun per diventare dirigente del cementificio *Bujun Semento* (Takenaka 2012: 1249). Quello di Fukui non è un caso isolato: altri individui arrivati a Fushun negli anni Trenta sono burocrati e amministratori pubblici trentenni e quarantenni (un dirigente del distretto locale di Polizia, due dirigenti dell'ufficio imposte del Manchukuo, un sindaco). Tenendo comunque presente i limiti delle fonti, l'itinerario di Fukui esemplifica una nuova tipologia migratoria che comincia dopo la fondazione del Manchukuo: dal 1938, quando la gestione territoriale di Fushun fu ceduta all'amministrazione locale dello stato fantoccio, nuovi funzionari furono chiamati in città per sostituire gli amministratori della *Mantetsu*.

3.4. Scolarizzazione

Caratteristico dei 69 immigrati studiati è l'alto tasso di scolarizzazione, e una presenza molto importante di alti titoli di studio. Nei casi studiati da Komine, più della metà (56,6%) non aveva carriera scolastica o essa non era specificata, mentre i rimanenti avevano almeno la licenza elementare (Komine 2010: 46-57). Questo campione presenta di per sé un tasso di scolarizzazione molto alto rispetto alla media nazionale: nel 1873 i bambini iscritti alle elementari sono il 28%, nel '77 sono il 40%.²³ Invece nei

²² Abbiamo già visto come l'aumento dei bambini giapponesi frequentanti scuole a Fushun sarebbe stato uno dei motivi dell'aumento degli insegnanti negli anni '20.

²³ L'obbligatorietà della licenza elementare comincia nell'89 con il *shōgakkō rei* (Takahashi 2007: 29).

dati relativi all'immigrazione a Fushun di cui dispongo, solo 13 persone (il 18,8% del totale) non hanno un titolo di studio o esso non è specificato: in altre parole, oltre l'80% di essi aveva almeno la licenza elementare, e la quota di persone senza carriera scolastica è in costante diminuzione. Inoltre, a Fushun i laureati sono più di un quarto dei casi (27,5%, 19 casi) rispetto al 2,3% (9 casi) dei dati di Komine (Komine 2010: 50-51), e sono in costante aumento.

Come già accennato, la differenza con i dati di Komine deriva dal fatto che il campione degli immigrati a Fushun sia formato da generazioni più recenti, le quali quanto più erano nuove, tanto più potevano beneficiare dell'istruzione obbligatoria e in generale di maggiore accesso alle istituzioni scolastiche. La notevole incidenza di alti livelli di istruzione si spiega anche dalla composizione del mercato del lavoro giapponese di questa città, caratterizzato da un lato da una limitata quota di settori professionali a bassa qualificazione, come la distribuzione al dettaglio, e che d'altro canto richiedeva personale particolarmente qualificato. In particolare, l'industria mineraria di Fushun, richiama personale tecnico-amministrativo giapponese molto specializzato, soprattutto dagli anni Dieci.²⁴ Dal 1911 infatti la Sezione Mineraria aprì il reclutamento a nuovi dipendenti specializzati destinati all'ambito amministrativo, e dal '15 negli uffici delle miniere a cielo aperto (Mantetsukai 2007: 54). Inoltre, l'aumento dei laureati negli anni Venti nel campione studiato è dovuto anche alla maggiore incidenza della quota degli insegnanti, molti dei quali erano laureati.

3.5. Mobilità

Pochissimi sono i casi di uscita da Fushun tra le biografie studiate: in altre parole, la quasi totalità dei soggetti che arrivano a Fushun vi si stabiliscono senza ulteriori spostamenti, almeno fino alla data del rilevamento degli Annali. Questo è un dato interessante, anche se non è confrontabile col quadro generale della migrazione urbana offerto da Komine, che non ha studiato la mobilità territoriale. Tra i pochissimi casi di persone che lasciano Fushun c'è Nobuyuki Arai, nato nel '93 nella provincia di Toyama. Dopo aver insegnato per dieci anni in un istituto magistrale della provincia di origine, si trasferì a Fushun, dove fu impiegato per quattro anni in una scuola elementare locale; successivamente lasciò l'impiego per una cattedra in una scuola elementare nella provincia mancese di Heilongjiang (Takenaka 2012: 49). Molti (il 43,4%) di essi non arrivavano direttamente a Fushun, ma avevano esperienza di lavoro in altre città mancesi, specialmente Dalian e Shenyang: sono per lo più dirigenti

²⁴ I cinque ex dipendenti della Sezione Mineraria giunti negli anni '00 non erano laureati, mentre quelli arrivati negli anni dieci erano tutti laureati.

d'azienda (13 su 29). Un sesto dei soggetti con storia migratoria in altre città mancesi hanno in passato lavorato in altre colonie. Questi due elementi ci suggeriscono come Fushun non fosse una città di transito per i migranti giapponesi, ma per molti la meta definitiva, almeno fino alla data di rilevazione. Tolta l'eccezione degli insegnanti negli anni Venti, la percentuale dei soggetti direttamente in arrivo a Fushun è in calo con l'avvicendamento di nuove generazioni. Inoltre, negli ultimi arrivi negli anni Trenta e Quaranta, non ci sono storie di esperienze di lavoro alla *Mantetsu*, mentre si nota il crescente ruolo di mediazione svolto dall'amministrazione centrale e locale del Manchukuo, che richiamava in città giapponesi per incarichi di gestione amministrativa. Riportiamo per esempio il caso di Gen Takano, classe 1902, che, dopo sei anni di esperienza di pubblico ministero in Giappone, nel 1936 decise di continuare la professione a Fushun (Takenaka 2012: 821).

4. Conclusioni

Amministratori d'azienda, insegnanti, e, in misura minore, funzionari e professionisti: queste sono le categorie professionali che emergono dalle 69 biografie di giapponesi residenti a Fushun, non occupati nella locale industria di carbone. Esse rappresentano un segmento significativo delle *élites* presenti in città.

Fushun è stata la meta finale per molte delle storie migratorie selezionate, una città molto selettiva nei gruppi in arrivo, elemento che traspare della struttura occupazionale della città, e che ritroviamo nelle biografie proposte. Questa alta selettività si spiega per la struttura di Fushun in quanto città aziendale: infatti molti servizi che in altre città erano offerti da categorie lavorative meno specializzate, come la piccola distribuzione, a Fushun appaiono poco sviluppati. Tuttavia, esistevano anche ragioni storiche e geografiche alla base dell'alta selettività migratoria di Fushun: non bisogna dimenticare che si tratta di una città di limitate dimensioni e opportunità lavorative, con una storia recente, posizionata in un territorio che negli anni Venti perse rilevanza nei flussi regionali delle merci.

La sostanziale marginalità di Fushun nelle reti migratorie giapponesi in Manciuria determinò in modo decisivo il tipo di migrazione in questa città. Infatti, protagonisti di questa ricerca sono uomini che giunsero a Fushun con alle spalle una carriera lavorativa importante, che rispondevano alle esigenze di una città in veloce via di sviluppo, in particolare nel settore edilizio e nell'istruzione, con la prospettiva di migliorare la propria posizione sociale (gli imprenditori) oppure richiamati dal mito della frontiera, o dalla speranza di un tenore di vita migliore (gli insegnanti).

Motivi familiari e legami di conterraneità non sembrano cause determinanti molto diffuse nella scelta dell'emigrazione in questa città. Piuttosto, fu la Sezione Miniere della *Mantetsu* a svolgere un ruolo essenziale di intercettazione delle rotte migratorie coloniali, anche nei settori non direttamente

legati alla produzione del carbone, come dimostra il sistema di ingaggio degli insegnanti, condotto dall'azienda direttamente in Giappone. Tuttavia questo ruolo svolto dalla *Mantetsu* sembra progressivamente diminuire soprattutto con i nuovi gruppi che arrivano in città negli anni Trenta. Questo è dovuto da un lato alla progressiva differenziazione dell'economia cittadina, avviata già negli anni Venti, in cui si vede l'entrata di nuovi soggetti economici indipendenti dall'azienda ferroviaria. D'altro canto, essa è frutto della progressiva riduzione della presenza dell'azienda ferroviaria nella vita della città negli anni Trenta.

Per molti degli imprenditori studiati, la scelta di mettersi in proprio avvenne dopo diversi anni di lavoro dipendente a Fushun. La “città del carbone” quindi fu per qualcuno un banco di prova dove poter mettere in gioco la propria intraprendenza e accumulare nuove esperienze nella carriera lavorativa. Questo sembra supportare l'ipotesi che descrive le colonie come luoghi di formazione professionale, anche se solo per una ristretta cerchia di persone.

Le conclusioni qui esposte andranno ridiscusse alla luce di un campione di analisi più ampio. In una prossima ricerca, sarà mia cura riesaminare questi spunti di riflessione ampliando l'analisi alle biografie dei dipendenti della *Mantetsu* residenti a Fushun, presenti nel volume di Takenaka. Inoltre, continuerò la ricerca documentaria per le molte categorie escluse dagli annuari biografici.

Bibliografia

- Araragi Shinzō. 2013. “Sengo nihon wo meguru hito no idō no tokushitsu – Okinawa to hondo no hikaku kara”. In: *Sengo niho shakai no rekishi*, vol. IV, a cura di Yasuda Tsuneo, 42-71. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.
- Bassino, Jean-Pascal, Debin Ma and Osamu Saitō. 2005. “Jisshitsu chingin no rekishiteki suijun hikaku, Chūgoku nihon nanō, 1700-1920”. *Keizai kenkyū* 56/4: 348-369.
- Bujun shōkō kōkai. 1938. *Bujun shōkō yōran* [Sommaro delle attività manifatturiere e commerciali di Fushun]. Fushun: Bujun shōkō kōkai: 11-13.
- Caroli, Rosa e Franco Gatti. 2006. *Storia del Giappone*. Bari: Laterza.
- Cuscito, Giorgio. 2018. “Per Pechino il Giappone è il nemico necessario”. *Limes*, febbraio 2018: 197-203.
- Dornetti, Filippo. 2018. “Fushun-mi: urbanizzazione coloniale e sviluppo del distretto risicolo nella contea di Fushun (Provincia Liaoning, Cina) 1907-1938”. *Storia urbana* 159: 55-81.
- Fiori, Antonio. 2018. “Lo stretto di Corea è sempre più largo”. *Limes*, febbraio 2018: 227-234.
- Gordon, Andrew. 2003. *A modern history of Japan, from Tokugawa times to the present*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jinkō mondai shingikai. 1988. *Nihon jinkō nihon no kazoku*. Tokyo: Tōyō keizai shinpōsha.
- Kaneko Fumio. 1991. *Kindai Nihon ni okeru tai Manshū tōshi no kenkyū*. Tokyo: Kondō shuppansha.

- Kawamura Yoshio. 1923. *Bujun yōran*. Fushun: Bujun annaisha.
- Kimura Kenji. 2016. “Nihonteikoku ken he no imin to hikiage go no dōkō”. In: *Nihon teikoku kōkaiki hikiage no hikakukenkyū*, a cura di Yumiko Imaizumi, Asobu Yanagisawa e Kenji Kimura, 271-294. Tokyo: Nihon keizai hyōronsha.
- Kobayashi Hideo. 2005. *Manshū to Jimintō*. Tokyo: Shinchōsha.
- Koezawa Akira. 1978. *Shokuminchi Manshū no toshi keikaku*. Tokyo: Ajia keizai kenkyūjo.
- Koezawa Akira. 1986a. “Bujun toshi keikaku (1905-1945 nen), aru shokuminchi no keikaku to kensetsu (I)”. *Chiiki kaihatsu* 266: 40-55.
- Koezawa Akira. 1986b. “Bujun toshi keikaku (1905-1945 nen), aru shokuminchi no keikaku to kensetsu (II)”. *Chiiki kaihatsu* 267: 24-43.
- Komine Kazuo. 2010. *Manshū shinshiroku no kenkyū*. Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan.
- Manshū imin kenkyūkai (a cura di). 1976. *Nihon teikokushugika no Manshu imin*. Tokyo: Ryūkeishosha.
- Manshū nippōsha rinji shinshiroku hensanbu. 1929. *Manmō nihonjin shinshiroku fu Manmō ginkō kaisha yōran* [Elenco di giapponesi importanti, banche e aziende giapponesi presenti in Manciuaria e Mongolia]. Dairen: Manshū nippōsha.
- Manshūkoku tetsuro sōkyoku. 1933. *Shingai tetsuro haikōchi no keizai jijō* [Lo stato dell'economia dei nei territori lungo la linea ferroviaria Fengtian-Hailong]. Shenyang: Manshūkoku tetsuro sōkyoku.
- Mantetsukai (a cura di). 2007. *Mantetsu shijūnenshi*. Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan.
- Matsumura Takao. 2002. “Bujun tankō”. In: *Mantetsu rōdōshi no kenkyū*, a cura di Takao Matsumura, Guangrui Zhao e Kenji Eda, 285-330. Tokyo: Nihon keizai hyōronsha.
- Matsumura Takao; Yanagisawa Asobu ed Eda Kenji. 2008. *Mantetsu no chōsa to kenkyū: sono shin'wa to jitsuzō*. Tokyo: Aoki shoten.
- Minami manshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha keizai chōsakai. 1934. *Manshū keizai tōkei nenpō* [Annuario statistico dell'economia mancese]. Dalian: Minami manshū tetsudō: 72-73.
- Minami manshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha chihōbu zanmu seiri iinkai. 1977. *Mantetsufu zokuchi keiei enkaku zen shi*, vol. III, Tōkyō: Ryūkeishosha.
- Minami manshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha keizai chōsakai. 1933. *Manshū sangyō tōkei* [Annuario statistico dell'industria in Manciuaria]. Dalian: Minami manshū tetsudō: 114-115.
- Minami manshū tetsudō kabushiki gaisha shinkyō shisha chōsashitsu. 1996 (ed. or. 1940), *Manshū kōgyō tōkei sokuhō* [Rapporto statistico sulla manifattura in Manciuaria]. Tokyo: Hon no tomo sha: 1-29.
- Miyazaki Masayasu; Osamu Itō. 1989. “Senji sengo no sangyō to kigyō”. In: *Keikakuka to Minshūka, Nihon keizaishi*, vol. VII, a cura di Takafusa Nakamura, Takafusa, 192-220. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.
- Myers, Ramon H. 1989. “Japanese Imperialism in Manchuria: The South Manchurian Railway Company, 1906-1933”. In: *The Japanese informal empire in China, 1895-1937*, edited by P. Duus, Ramon H. Myers, Mark R. Peattie. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Nakanishi Satoru (a cura di). 2017. *Keizaishakai no rekishi*. Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai.
- Okabe Makio. 2008. *Minami Manshū tetsudō kabushikigaisha no kenkyū*. Tokyo: Nihonkeizai hyōronsha.

- Sawai Minoru. 2015. *Teikoku nihon no gijutsushatachi*. Tokyo: Yoshikawa.
- Sugiyama Shinya. 2012. *Nihon keizashi*. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.
- Suzuki Nario. 2007. *Manshū kigyōshi kenkyū*. Tokyo: Nihonkeizai hyōronsha.
- Takahashi Yasutaka. 2007. *Gakkō seido to shakai*. Tokyo: Tamagawa Daigaku shuppanbu.
- Takeda Hajime. 2018. “Moto chōyōkō he no baishō meirei”. *Asahi shinbun*, 31 ottobre 2018.
- Takenaka Shin'ichi. 2012. *Jinmei jiten, Manshū ni watatta ichiman nin*. Tokyo: Kōseisha.
- Teh, Limin. 2012. “From Colonial Company Town to Industrial City: The South Manchuria Railway Company in Fushun, China”. In: *Company Towns, Labor, Space, and Power Relations across Time and Continents*, a cura di Marcelo Borges e Susana Torres, Susana, 69-90. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Yanagisawa Asobu. 1999. *Nihonjin no shokuminchi keiken: Dairen nihonjin shōkōgyōsha no rekishi*. Tokyo: Aoki shoten.
- Yanagisawa Asobu e Kenji Kimura (a cura di). 2004. *Senjika Ajia no Nihon keizai dantai*. Tokyo: Nihon keizai hyōronsha.
- Yanagisawa Asobu, Kenji Kimura e Shinji Asada (a cura di). 2013. *Nihon Teikoku seiryokuken no higashi Ajia toshi keizai*. Tokyo: Keiō gijuku daigaku shuppankai.
- Yanagisawa Asobu. 2016. “1940 nendai kōhanki Dairen eigyōsha no shokugyō ‘fukk’”. In: *Nihon teikoku kōkaiki hikiage no hikakukenyū*, a cura di Yumiko Imaizumi, Asobu Yanagisawa e Kenji Kimura, 295-326. Tokyo: Nihon keizai hyōronsha.
- Young, Louise. 1998. *Japan's total Empire: Manchuria and the culture of wartime imperialism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Filippo Dornetti (PhD) is visiting researcher at Keio University, in Tokyo, where he also teaches Italian language and Japanese economic history. His main field of research is social history of Japanese colonialism in Northeast China. He is interested also in comparative and transnational history of rural societies in China, Japan and Italy. He can be reached at: filippodorn@gmail.com

Dalle piazze a Twitter contro l'egemonia di Abe

La strategia comunicativa del Partito democratico costituzionale alle elezioni del 2017

Marco Zappa

Japan ranks second in the world in terms of the number of Twitter users. Since 2009, under the Democratic Party's 3-year permanence in power, politicians and administrators have turned to Twitter massively to build a direct communication with their constituency. It was, however, only in 2017 that Twitter has become a propaganda tool and a locus of political debate among Japanese politicians and netizens. The Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) is an exemplary case of this transition. Born a few weeks before the vote of 22 October 2017, it managed to get attention and consensus, also thanks to a massive use of social networks, and, finally, to confirm itself as the first opposition party. A year after its foundation, however, it has failed to broaden its electoral base and consolidate itself locally. However, the article aims to identify the factors behind its swift success: on the one hand the role of the leader Edano Yukio and on the other the construction of a "counterhegemonic" narrative (though short-lived) capable of obtaining consensus in the immediacy of the election. This analysis intends to use the textual material available online (for example: tweets more relevant from a political-programmatic point of view) to identify the narrative framing of the political campaign, regularities and innovations within it to enlarge the CDP's chances to gain at the ballot. In addition, the article intends to assess the role of social networks such as Twitter for politicians even in a seemingly neutral web space such as Japan's.

Keywords: Japan, 2017 elections, Constitutional Democratic Party, Edano Yukio, Abe Shinzō

1. Introduzione

Nell'ultimo decennio,¹ l'utilizzo dei social network (SNS) per scopi politici *tout court*, dall'organizzazione di eventi pubblici nell'ambito di campagne elettorali fino a manifestazioni di massa e movimenti politici extraparlamentari ha attirato notevole attenzione dal punto di vista accademico (Curran 2012; Fenton 2012; Gil de Zúñiga and Shahin 2015; Ziccardi 2019).

¹ Si ringraziano Alessandro Mantelli (Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia) per il contributo offerto per l'analisi quantitativa; Tamara Fuchs, Ayaka Lösckke e Fabian Schäfer (Universität Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg) per gli utili spunti.

Tramite i social network, infatti, l’attore politico ha maggiore possibilità di “prendere parola” in qualsiasi momento, su qualsiasi argomento stabilendo un rapporto “personale” con i propri *follower*, quasi *intimo* perché *non mediato* da soggetti terzi accelerando la compenetrazione tra politica, tecnologie di comunicazione e tecniche di marketing per la raccolta del consenso a cui Rodotà si rifà con il termine *tecnopolitica* (Rodotà 1997 [2004]). Il risultato più evidente di tale trasformazione è la semplificazione del linguaggio (in modo che sia più immediatamente comprensibile a un pubblico vasto e sempre meno “attento”) e una tendenza a creare vere e proprie “storie” atte ad attirare i favori del pubblico (Bentivegna 2015).²

Tali dinamiche sono emerse prepotentemente nel corso della campagna elettorale per le elezioni anticipate per la Camera bassa della Dieta giapponese (*sōsenkyo*) dell’autunno 2017. Date le tempistiche ristrette (passò meno di un mese dal decreto di scioglimento della Camera alle elezioni), i nuovi partiti formati in vista dell’appuntamento elettorale ricorsero ai social network (SNS) per meglio raggiungere il proprio elettorato. Tra questi merita attenzione il caso del Partito democratico costituzionale (Constitutional Democratic Party, CDP), in grado di conquistare, anche grazie all’uso dei suoi canali Twitter, Line e Youtube, consensi da zero diventando primo partito d’opposizione e affermandosi come unico vincitore *de facto* delle elezioni stesse (Igarashi 2018). Il presente contributo, prendendo le mosse dalla recente letteratura sull’uso politico dei SNS in Giappone, intende analizzare la strategia linguistica e discorsiva adottata dal CDP su Twitter, servizio che conta 49 milioni di iscritti (Statista 2020) e accessi mensili tra i 35 e i 45 milioni di utenti (Twitter Japan 2018; Shiraishi 2018),³ rispondendo alla seguente domanda di ricerca: *In che modo Twitter può aver contribuito a diffondere una narrazione politica controegemonica efficace? In quale misura la piattaforma è stata utilizzata allo scopo di costruire un framing alternativo a quello dell’LDP?*

Nella prossima sezione dopo una breve rassegna della letteratura verranno introdotti i principali concetti teorici adottati nel contributo.

2. Politica e social media in Giappone

Nel caso giapponese, il ricorso alle piattaforme sociali tra i rappresentanti politici aumentò esponenzialmente a partire dalla fine del dominio politico del Partito liberaldemocratico (Liberal Democratic Party, LDP) e con l’insediamento di un governo del Partito democratico del Giappone

² Quelle di Barack Obama (2008) e Donald Trump (2016) rappresentano, seppure agli opposti, dei modelli globali di campagne elettorali di successo sostenute da un uso esteso delle reti sociali (Ziccardi 2019).

³ Dopo gli Stati Uniti, il Giappone è il secondo paese al mondo per numero di utenti Twitter.

(Democratic Party of Japan, DPJ) nel 2009. Per gli strateghi del DPJ, l'utilizzo di uno strumento di comunicazione diretta con il pubblico avrebbe reso gli stessi processi decisionali interni al governo più trasparenti e segnato una cesura con il regime del LDP. Ciò avrebbe risposto alle richieste dal basso di informazioni in tempo reale e non filtrate attraverso i kisha club legati a ministeri, partiti politici e grandi gruppi editoriali (Tsuda 2012: 223-230).

Twitter è una piattaforma ideale per intrattenere discussioni in tempo reale o meno, permettendo ad esempio di “menzionare” un altro utente in un tweet in modo da coinvolgere questi e i follower di chi scrive e di chi riceve il tweet (Wired 2018; Twitter n.d.). Nonostante la crescita nell'uso degli SNS da parte di soggetti politici (partiti e singoli parlamentari), in generale, i social network sono rimasti strumenti politicamente “neutri”. La gran parte degli utenti di Twitter scrivono e riprendono contenuti che parlano della sfera privata, di eventi sportivi o, genericamente, di questioni legate al Giappone. Si tratta soprattutto di utenti abituali che postano in media un tweet al giorno. Appena un utente su trecento al giorno scrive di argomenti politici citando il nome del primo ministro o di un qualsiasi partito politico (Ōkuma e Satō 2015: 48).

Le discussioni di ambito politico assumono rilevanza online in occasione di elezioni o voti popolari, un fenomeno, questo, piuttosto recente e favorito da un emendamento alla Legge sull'elezione ai pubblici uffici del 2013 che ha di fatto liberalizzato le campagne elettorali online con potenziali effetti sulla mobilitazione di volontari e sulla raccolta fondi in Rete sul modello americano (Williams 2017; Yuasa 2014).⁴ Ogawa *et al.* hanno dimostrato che nelle discussioni di ambito politico su Twitter gli utenti tendono ad rafforzare le proprie posizioni di partenza interagendo principalmente con persone appartenenti alla loro stessa “bolla” ideologica (2014: 490; 2017: 7). Dal punto di vista dei principali partiti politici, Twitter è luogo poco adatto a discussioni “di contenuto”, ma strumento ideale a scopo informativo e organizzativo per segnalare cioè comizi e interventi dei candidati sui media (Uenohara 2014). È però opportuno sottolineare come ad una maggiore attività sui SNS dei partiti attraverso i loro profili ufficiali non corrisponda necessariamente l'ottenimento di un buon risultato elettorale. A un'efficace strategia online deve comunque corrispondere una e altrettanto efficace offline: i follower su Twitter sono infatti solo potenziali sostenitori e non sostituiscono i tradizionali gruppi di sostegno e finanziamento (*kōenkai*; Williams 2017: 90-91).

⁴ Nello specifico, la riforma ha dato la possibilità ai partiti di acquistare spazi pubblicitari online (*banner*) e inviare email promozionali. In generale, il provvedimento ha offerto maggiore libertà di azione (anche per quanto riguarda la gestione dei dati personali dei cittadini) ai partiti rispetto ai singoli candidati e cittadini cui resta vietato acquistare spazi pubblicitari a pagamento a fini politici e diffondere messaggi propagandistici via email (Williams 2017; Yuasa 2014).

Tuttavia, soprattutto nel caso di partiti “nuovi” senza la cosiddetta massa critica di relazioni interpersonali che garantiscano finanziamenti alle attività di partito, una strategia che sfrutti il potenziale dei social network può risultare utile, soprattutto se mirata a persone che si percepiscono come “escluse” dai processi politici per lo stesso linguaggio utilizzato nelle discussioni politiche riportate da giornali e tv (Tsuda 2012: 11; 230). In questo senso, appare utile il riferimento al concetto di controegemonia nel senso gramsciano del termine, ovvero a un esercizio filosofico di confutare il pensiero dominante o egemonico. Tale scontro non si limita alla sfera delle idee ma si trasforma in azione. I movimenti controegemonici adottano due strategie: una guerra di posizione (che prevede una disseminazione di informazioni che minano l'autorità del soggetto egemone) e una guerra di manovra (che prevede azioni dirette contro le forze egemoniche spesso combinate a campagne mediatiche). In questi termini, è fondamentale per un soggetto controegemonico mobilitare forze diverse e variegate per contrastare strutture tradizionali di potere (Cox and Schilthuis 2012: 2-3).

In funzione di una strategia controegemonica contemporanea, le nuove tecnologie di comunicazione rivestono quindi un ruolo fondamentale proprio perché strumenti indispensabili per diffondere informazioni e sensibilizzare il pubblico. In quella che Manuel Castells chiama “società globale delle reti” (*global network society*), i nuovi media permettono di operare selezione e sottolineatura di alcuni aspetti di eventi o questioni specifiche, e la conseguente creazione di connessioni tra loro in modo da favorire una particolare interpretazione, giudizio o anche un'eventuale soluzione a un determinato problema (*framing*). Di conseguenza, per giustificare la propria posizione o radunare consensi, un attore politico deve ricorrere a materiali culturali, come idee e valori, per costruire significati condivisi attraverso un processo comunicativo (Castells 2009: 12). Tali valori e idee devono rispondere a specifiche caratteristiche ma soprattutto ai valori dell'uditorio a cui esso si rivolge. All'occorrenza, l'attore politico deve tagliare i propri messaggi su misura per determinare un legame più favorevole tra sé e l'elettorato, facendo leva sulle emozioni, elementi sui quali viene a costituirsi una cornice di significati condivisa da attore politico ed elettore (Castells 2009: 205).

The most powerful symbols [...] are found in pictures and sounds that tap into primary group experience of things that promote pride or satisfaction or tap into reservoirs of fear or revulsion. Meaning is invested with emotion. (Castells 2009: 191)

Il fattore della “commensurabilità esperienziale e culturale” è fondamentale nella costruzione di un frame di successo. La cornice narrativa su cui l'attore politico costruisce il proprio ruolo di guida di un partito o di un movimento sociale deve avere una risonanza di fondo con le esperienze e con la cultura delle persone che chiama all'azione. Una volta trovato il messaggio, attenzione va dedicata a come

questo debba essere articolato, quale interpretazione dargli e quali concetti, quali temi, una volta messi in evidenza, possano favorire l'amplificazione della cornice (Benford and Snow 2000: 621-623).

3. La narrazione politica online

Per rispondere alla domanda di ricerca sopra esposta, l'analisi è stata condotta in due fasi. In primo luogo, sono stati presi in considerazione studi già disponibili eseguita sull'occorrenza di alcuni termini specifici nei discorsi di Edano Yukio fondatore e presidente del CDP, nel corso della campagna elettorale (NHK 2017b).

In secondo luogo, è stata condotta un'analisi contenutistica del pamphlet elettorale del CDP. Il pamphlet è stato sottoposto ad un'analisi tematica e contenutistica che ha portato all'individuazione delle parole chiave della campagna elettorale del partito.

Successivamente, si è cercato di verificare l'occorrenza dei termini chiave dei discorsi e del pamphlet nei messaggi diffusi dallo staff del partito su Twitter. In particolare, sono stati presi in considerazione i tweet (piccoli messaggi di massimo 280 caratteri diffusi sulla piattaforma sociale online Twitter), pubblicati sul profilo ufficiale del CDP tra il 2 ottobre (data di annuncio della formazione e delle candidature del partito alle incombenti elezioni) e il 22 ottobre, data delle votazioni.

A questo scopo, è stato scelto di procedere utilizzando un codice "JavaScript", uno dei linguaggi di programmazione utilizzato sul lato "client" per favorire l'interazione con l'utente attraverso un browser, nella console del browser. Più nello specifico, facendo riferimento alla libreria jQuery che semplifica l'analisi e la gestione di elementi html (W3Techs 2019; jQuery 2019),⁵ è risultata utile la funzione "length" che permette di identificare il numero di elementi all'interno dei quali compare una specifica sequenza di testo. Ad esempio, per ottenere il numero di tweet in cui compare la parola minshu (democrazia) è stata utilizzata la seguente stringa:⁶

```
> $ (".tweet-text: contains (民主)"). length  
< 183
```

⁵ Oltre a Twitter, la libreria jQuery è utilizzata in numerose pagine web, tra cui Google (v. W3Techs 2019).

⁶ In seguito all'aggiornamento di Twitter di luglio 2019, la stringa JQuery sopra citata non offre più la possibilità di effettuare ricerche sulle occorrenze nei tweet. La funzione di ricerca può comunque essere svolta, seppure in modo parziale rispetto alla versione precedente, dalla seguente stringa inserita in console: let b=0; for (const a of document.querySelectorAll("article")) { g = a.innerText; b=b+g.split("民主").length }. Una guida per un conteggio delle occorrenze usando Python si trova a questo indirizzo: <https://www.earthdatascience.org/courses/use-data-open-source-python/intro-to-apis/calculate-tweet-word-frequencies-in-python/>

Una volta identificato il numero di tweet in cui compariva un termine o una sequenza specifici è stata condotta una semplice ricerca sul numero effettivo di occorrenze di queste con la funzione di ricerca del browser. Infine, è risultato utile un confronto con i sondaggi effettuati prima e in seguito alle elezioni per determinare se il successo elettorale del CDP poteva essere in qualche modo prevedibile.⁷

4. Il *framing* del CDP

4.1. *Background*

Il 25 settembre 2017, il primo ministro Abe Shinzō annunciò lo scioglimento della Camera bassa procedendo all’indizione delle elezioni anticipate. Le elezioni apparvero come una “scommessa” di Abe per rinsaldare la maggioranza e proseguire sul percorso di riforma in materia fiscale e di sicurezza nazionale.⁸ Prima delle elezioni, il tasso di approvazione del governo era crollato sotto il 50 per cento a causa di due scandali sulla vendita di terreni dismessi a due operatori scolastici privati associati al primo ministro e alla First Lady Akie (Hodō Station-TV Asahi 2020). Proprio questo calo di popolarità avrebbe spinto Abe a ricorrere prima a un rimpasto di governo e alle elezioni anticipate (Maeda 2018).

L’LDP lanciò il programma intitolato “Non smettiamo di difendere il Giappone” (*kono kuni o mamorinuku*), in cui oltre a misure in materia di difesa, trovarono spazio misure per la riduzione del divario tra aree urbane e aree rurali, e a favore dell’istruzione infantile gratuita. I presupposti di questo programma furono:

- la creazione di una minaccia pressante alla sicurezza nazionale (la Corea del Nord);
- la percezione di un’economia in crescita;
- la decisione di aumentare la tassa sui consumi (i cui proventi sarebbero andati a finanziare nuovi asili e borse di studio universitarie).

Pochi giorni dopo lo scioglimento della Camera bassa, con una mozione del presidente Maehara Seiji, il Partito democratico (*Minshintō*, DP) fu sciolto e parte dei suoi parlamentari confluirono nel *Kibō no tō*

⁷ In particolare, al fine di una triangolazione efficace dei dati, sono stati presi in esame gli studi JESVI (2017) e JES V (2014) sulle intenzioni di voto e sul grado di informazione circa i temi della campagna elettorale condotti periodicamente dal *Center of Civil Society - Inter-university Consortium for Social Sciences* (CCS-ICSS). Si veda a proposito Iida (2016).

⁸ Dal 2014 in poi, il governo a guida LDP ha approvato misure tese a favorire una maggiore elasticità per l’impiego delle Forze di autodifesa nazionali dall’estero in risposta ad eventuali improvvisi mutamenti negli scenari geopolitici asiatici, con l’obiettivo ultimo di emendare la costituzione postbellica in modo da riconoscere formalmente le Forze di autodifesa nazionale.

(Partito della speranza, KNT) nuova formazione creata dalla governatrice di Tokyo Koike Yuriko, in quel momento all'apice della propria popolarità. Koike impose delle barriere ideologiche all'ingresso dei parlamentari del DP accogliendo solo l'ala conservatrice (a favore cioè della riforma della costituzione e delle politiche di sicurezza sponsorizzate anche dal governo Abe) escludendo così i "riformisti", tra cui Edano Yukio. Lo scioglimento del DP diede un indubbio vantaggio alla maggioranza che si trovò senza un vero avversario (Igarashi 2018: 3).

Il CDP nacque in questo contesto per iniziativa dello stesso Edano. Subito dopo l'annuncio della formazione del partito il 2 ottobre, vennero aperti un profilo Facebook, un profilo Twitter, un profilo Line e un canale Youtube. Alla luce del programma pubblicato nelle stesse ore, il CDP si posizionò in netta opposizione alla maggioranza e al KNT. In particolare, la critica del CDP si rivolse ai provvedimenti promulgati dall'attuale maggioranza LDP-Kōmeitō (KMT), in termini di politiche economiche-fiscali (l'aumento della tassa sui consumi) e di sicurezza nazionale (riforma costituzionale) come da grafico sottostante, rielaborato a partire dal modello di Eysenck.⁹

⁹ A partire da dati ricavati principalmente dallo studio condotto dall'Asahi Shimbun e Università di Tokyo (2017), si è scelto di identificare il posizionamento dei singoli schieramenti politici presentatisi alle elezioni generali di ottobre 2017 come segue (Fig. 1). Sui due assi del grafico sono state posti i temi più discussi della campagna elettorale: da una parte, le riforme costituzionali e le leggi antiterrorismo (asse delle x) e, dall'altra, le proposte della maggioranza di governo legate alla nuova tassazione sui consumi (asse delle y). Il sostegno e, viceversa, l'opposizione alle politiche di cui sopra sono identificate in una scala di valutazione compresa tra i valori -5 e 5. La dimensione delle sfere è proporzionale alla rappresentanza in termini di seggi nel primo ramo della Dieta. Asahi-Tōdai (2017).

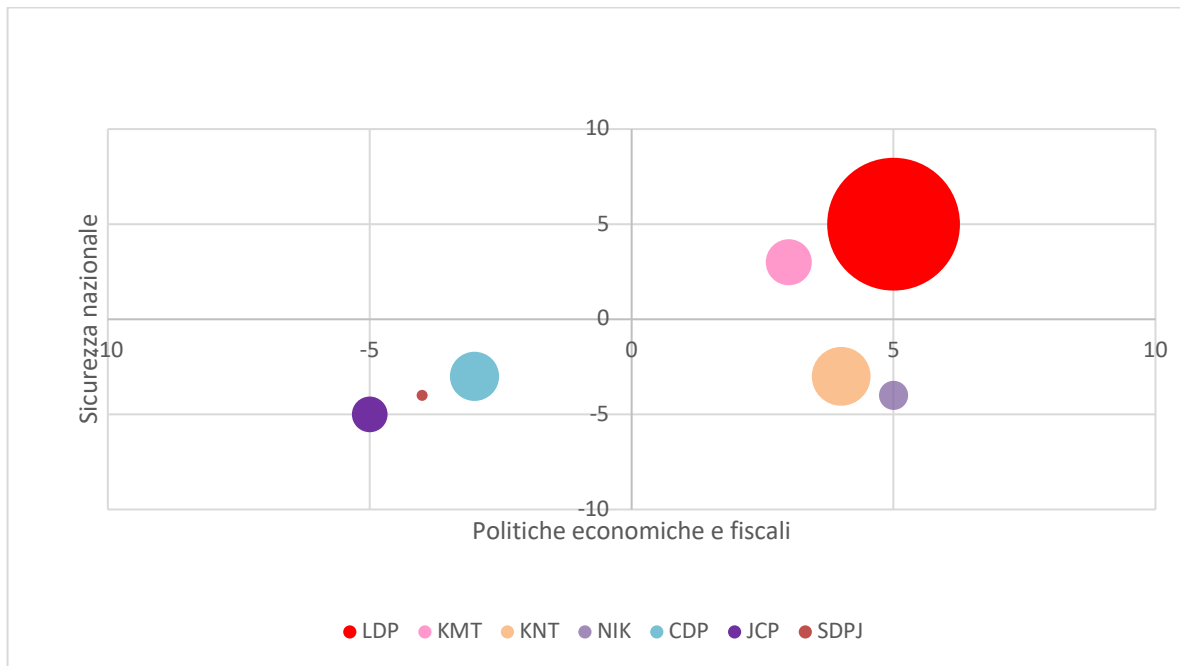


Figura 1 - Lo spettro politico giapponese (ottobre 2017). Fonte: Asahi-Tokyo University.

LDP=Liberal Democratic Party; KMT=Kōmeitō; KNT=Kibō no tō; NIK=Nippon ishin no kai; CDP=Constitutional Democratic Party; JCP=Japan Communist Party; SDPJ=Social Democratic Party;

Come indicato dal nome stesso del Partito di Edano (“costituzionale”), il partito si caratterizzò come difensore della Costituzione postbellica del 1947, che all’articolo 9 impone la rinuncia totale alla guerra e forti limitazioni al mantenimento di forze militari. In questo senso, il CDP fu critico degli emendamenti alle leggi per la difesa nazionale del 2015 (*heiwa anzen hōsei*), che estendono i margini di manovra delle forze di autodifesa giapponesi nell’impiego di missioni internazionali.

Rispetto alla visione promossa dall’LDP circa una ripresa economica, il CDP denunciò la creazione nuove divisioni all’interno della società a causa di politiche tese a favorire i profitti delle grandi imprese invece di garantire il reddito delle famiglie e dei lavoratori. In particolare, l’emendamento alla legge sul lavoro somministrato (*haken hō*), che nel 2015 abolì per certi settori produttivi il limite triennale di impiego per i lavoratori somministrati dalle agenzie incaricate, divenne oggetto della critica del partito di Edano. Al contempo, sull’onda lunga dello scalpore suscitato dal blog *Hoikuen ochita Nippon shine!!!* il CDP criticò l’assenza di politiche a favore della maternità e del ritorno delle giovani madri sul posto di lavoro.¹⁰

¹⁰ il blog, il cui titolo icastico significa: “Mio figlio è stato rifiutato dall’asilo, muori Giappone!!!” fu compilato da una donna anonima che a nome di centinaia di migliaia di donne lavoratrici richiedeva maggiori investimenti pubblici nell’assistenza diurna per le madri lavoratrici. La questione è stata portata all’attenzione del Parlamento giapponese e del primo ministro

Infine, punto fondamentale del programma fu quello di riportare i cittadini (*kokumin*) al centro della politica garantendo maggiore trasparenza nel rapporto tra questi e le istituzioni.¹¹ Il riferimento, anche se non esplicito, è, da una parte, alle politiche per prevenire la fuga di notizie “sensibili” (*tokutei himitsu hogo hō*) con pene fino a 10 anni di reclusione per i giornalisti; dall'altra, agli scandali che coinvolsero il governo nel corso del 2017 che hanno visto il coinvolgimento diretto, o solo ipotizzato, del premier Abe e di alcuni ministri dell'esecutivo, su cui però nonostante le interrogazioni parlamentari il primo ministro e i diversi funzionari ministeriali implicati non furono in grado di fornire spiegazioni soddisfacenti (Maeda 2018; Reed e Carlson 2018a). Di qui il richiamo a una politica “sincera e pulita” (*mattōna seiji*).¹²

4.2. L'analisi NHK sui discorsi di Edano

A partire da un'analisi condotta dall'emittente radiotelevisiva pubblica NHK sui discorsi pubblici di Edano, è possibile risalire ad alcuni temi portanti della contronarrativa del CDP (NHK 2017b).¹³ Di seguito vengono presentate le parole chiave tenuti a Sendai il 10 ottobre, a Tokyo il 14 e a Osaka il 20. I risultati confermano quanto emerso dall'analisi qualitativa del pamphlet. Le parole chiave del primo comizio sono *seiji* (15 occorrenze), *kurashi* (8) e *kokumin* (7), alla pari con *mattō* (7), come da Tabella 1.

Abe da Shiori Yamao, parlamentare dell'allora Partito democratico, oggi anche lei nei ranghi del CDP. L'attenzione mediatica suscitata dal blog ha portato, inoltre, alla nomina dell'espressione *Nippon shine* tra i dieci neologismi dell'anno. Si veda: “Nihon shine”, Hatena Keyword, al link: <http://d.hatena.ne.jp/keyword/%C6%FC%CB%DC%BB%E0%A4%CD> e Minshintō kōhō kyoku (2016). “Hoikuen ochita Nippon shine!!!” shingo-ryūkōgo daishō toppu 10 iri de Yamao giin ga jushō. 1/12/2016 disponibile al link: <https://www.minshin.or.jp/article/110505>.

¹¹ In particolare, il programma risente qui dell'influsso della *Civil Alliance for Peace and Constitutionalism* (*Shimin Rengō*, in giapponese), associazione nata a fine 2015 su iniziativa di diversi gruppi di cittadinanza attiva (tra cui il gruppo studentesco SEALDs, l'assemblea delle madri contro gli emendamenti alle leggi di sicurezza nazionale e altre sigle pacifiste) e studiosi. In occasione delle elezioni del 2017, l'organizzazione ha fatto principalmente opera di sensibilizzazione e informazione dell'elettorato anche online, dichiarando il proprio sostegno ai tre partiti dell'opposizione “riformista” e in particolare al CDP (v. Fig. 1).

¹² Oltre agli scandali Moritomo e Kake occorre ricordare anche le dimissioni di due membri del governo. Ad aprile 2017, il primo ministro Abe ha chiesto le dimissioni del ministro per la ricostruzione Imamura, che durante un incontro pubblico aveva sostenuto che era stata una coincidenza “fortunata” che il terremoto e tsunami del 2011 avessero colpito l'area del Nordest del paese invece di un'area a maggiore densità abitativa. Pochi mesi più tardi, invece, a finire al centro delle critiche è la ministra della Difesa Inada Tomomi, inizialmente nominata durante le testimonianze del caso Moritomo come consulente legale di Kagoike Yasunori, presidente dell'azienda di Osaka, durante un processo di giustizia amministrativa, poi coinvolta nello scandalo della “sparizione” dei registri della missione delle Forze di autodifesa in Sud Sudan e infine attaccata per avere fatto campagna elettorale a favore del suo partito durante una visita alle forze armate.

¹³ L'analisi, partito per partito, è consultabile al link: <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/special/enzetsu2017/>. Ultimo accesso: 29 aprile 2019.

Parole chiave per la campagna elettorale	Numero di occorrenze
政治 seiji	15
暮らし kurashi	8
国民 kokumin	7
まっとう mattō	7
立憲民主党 rikken minshutō	5
社会 shakai	5
仲間 nakama	5

Tabella 1 – Parole chiave nel comizio di Sendai (10 ottobre 2017). Fonte: NHK 2017b

A Tokyo, invece, Edano sceglie di puntare su concetti ed emozioni diverse. La parola *shakai* è la più usata con le sue 22 occorrenze seguita da Nihon con 14. In secondo ordine parole chiave della campagna del CDP come *seiji* e *minshushugi* (13). Edano riserva comunque spazio notevole a termini come *issho* “insieme” (8) che ricalcano l’ideale di politica “dal basso”, nonché la vocazione all’inclusione e al rispetto della diversità interna alla società giapponese, portati avanti dal CDP. I risultati sono riassunti nella Tabella 2.

Parole chiave per la campagna elettorale	Numero di occorrenze
社会 shakai	22
日本 nihon	14
政治 seiji	13
民主主義 minshushugi	13
政権 seiken	9
一緒 issho	8
豊か yutaka	8

Tabella 2 – Parole chiave nel comizio di Tokyo (14 ottobre 2017). Fonte: NHK 2017b

Qualche giorno più tardi, a Osaka, Edano sceglie una strategia linguistica più simile al comizio di Sendai. In particolare, torna a insistere sul concetto di politica (*seiji*) e cittadini/popolo (*kokumin*). Nihon viene usata 10 volte come *shakai*, mentre per 9 volte Edano fa nomina la parola *kakusa*, disuguaglianze

socioeconomiche, che compare una sola volta nel pamphlet e non rintracciabile sul profilo Twitter del partito. In Tabella 3 sono evidenziate le altre parole più ricorrenti.

Parole chiave per la campagna elettorale	Numero di occorrenze
政治 seiji	20
国民 kokumin	15
立憲民主党 rikken minshutō	13
民主主義 minshushugi	11
日本 nihon	10
社会 shakai	10
格差 kakusa	9

Tabella 3 – Parole chiave nel comizio di Osaka (20 ottobre 2017). Fonte: NHK 2017b

La presenza di un termine connotato come disuguaglianze (*kakusa*) in questo discorso è un punto di originalità rispetto agli altri discorsi ed è un tentativo di stabilire quel rapporto di “commensurabilità esperienziale e culturale” discusso da Castells. Il leader del CDP qui è abile nel mostrarsi consapevole del fatto che negli ultimi cinque anni, infatti, nella prefettura di Osaka si è registrato un aumento del tasso di povertà relativo (Tanabe e Suzuki 2018).¹⁴

4.3. Il programma elettorale: un’analisi contenutistica

Lo slogan presentato sul pamphlet pubblicato con il lancio del partito è “Una politica pulita” (*mattōna seiji*; CDP 2017)¹⁵. Come appare chiaro da una prima analisi, la “cornice narrativa” proposta dal partito di Edano è quella della sfiducia nei confronti di un governo accusato di pratiche corrotte e di

¹⁴ Dallo studio emerge che un trend generale di aumento della povertà in tutte le unità amministrative giapponesi. In particolare, il tasso medio di povertà nella provincia di Osaka tocca il 15%, secondo solo a Okinawa (18,8; Tanabe e Suzuki 2018: 51).

¹⁵ Tutti gli elementi di analisi presentati in questo paragrafo sono ricavati dal pamphlet elettorale, intitolato simbolicamente “Il patto con i cittadini” (*kokumin to no yakusoku*), disponibile in versione digitale in 4 pagine non numerate. Per convenienza verrà utilizzato il riferimento (CDP 2017) e indicato il numero di pagina della versione digitale.

favoritismo le cui iniziative hanno portato non a una crescita come nella narrativa dell’LDP, ma ad una crisi sociale.

Questi principi vengono riassunti nell’estratto riportato di seguito:

La società giapponese è nel pieno di una crisi. La politica crea divisioni ed esclusione. Il costituzionalismo è violato. La diversità sociale minacciata. Le informazioni importanti per i cittadini nascoste. È ormai rampante un modo di fare politica arrogante, dominato da un manipolo di persone che decide senza consultare gli elettori. La politica però non è per i politici o i partiti. La politica è per i cittadini. (CDP 2017: 1)

Anche in questo senso, appare coerente il richiamo al “pluralismo” e alla “diversità” dei singoli (*tayō na hitori hitori*) con i quali entrare in contatto per definire una base elettorale. Emerge qui una contrapposizione tra un elettorato vario (fatto da giovani e non residenti nelle aree urbane e aperto alle cosiddette “minoranze” sessuali) e l’elettorato tradizionale dell’LDP (tendenzialmente radicato nelle aree rurali o nelle associazioni di quartiere e maggiormente conservatore sui temi sociali).

Sempre nella prima pagina del documento, si legge:

Vogliamo costruire una società in cui tutti possano vivere a seconda delle proprie aspirazioni attraverso un dialogo con molte persone, ognuna diversa dall’altra, che vivono in questo paese. (...) Realizzeremo una politica dal basso, radicata nella vita quotidiana e nei racconti di vita vera di tutti i cittadini. (CDP 2017: 1)

Occorre qui notare come la ripetizione di termini riferibili alla “realtà quotidiana” (in particolare, gli aggettivi *nichijō*, *riaru* e *gamba*) siano utilizzati in modo strategico per presentare una maggiore vicinanza del nuovo partito ai suoi potenziali elettori. L’attenzione al “sociale” va a rispondere a richieste provenienti effettivamente dal basso. Chiaro è infatti il rimando alla questione dell’assistenza diurna ai bambini per le madri lavoratrici. Merita attenzione anche la frase conclusiva dell’introduzione al pamphlet, attribuita allo stesso Edano, atta a descrivere l’orientamento politico del partito: “né a destra né a sinistra, ma avanti” (*migi demo naku, hidari demo naku, mae e*; CDP 2017: 1).

Tale affermazione bene introduce il programma del partito in cui si nota una commistione tra idee conservatrici e riformiste. Esso è articolato in cinque “pilastri”. Il primo, convergente con i programmi dei partiti conservatori riguarda l’aumento dei redditi delle famiglie, attraverso politiche a sostegno degli stipendi minimi e dell’equo compenso nonché programmi di investimento nel welfare pubblico. Altro punto in programma, seppur condiviso con la maggioranza, quello di maggiori investimenti da parte dello stato nel supporto allo studio.

Il secondo, invece, in netta cesura con i conservatori, riguarda il futuro energetico del paese-arcipelago. Con il ricordo dell'incidente nucleare di Fukushima ancora vivo nella mente del suo leader e di alcuni suoi membri, il CDP richiede la fine del nucleare e il passaggio a fonti rinnovabili di approvvigionamento energetico, in rispetto degli Accordi di Parigi sul clima. Più nello specifico, il programma del CDP insiste sulla necessità di una transizione energetica come forma di responsabilità nei confronti delle persone interessate dall'incidente nucleare di Fukushima del 2011. Inoltre, si fa riferimento ad una roadmap per la gestione del combustibile nucleare stoccato all'estero e potenzialmente utilizzabile per la costruzione di ordigni nucleari (CDP 2017: 2).

Nel terzo, vengono illustrate le politiche sociali. In primo luogo, il CDP si presenta come difensore delle diversità, richiedendo il rispetto dei diritti individuali e promuovendo un'idea di società inclusiva e plurale. Gli obiettivi di questo pilastro sono: a) la lotta alle discriminazioni di genere, attraverso, tra l'altro, l'approvazione di una legge per il mantenimento del cognome da nubile per le donne sposate; b) la lotta alle discriminazioni basate sull'orientamento sessuale con l'istituzione di centri di sostegno per le donne vittime di violenza e campagne sensibilizzazione verso i diritti delle cosiddette "minoranze sessuali"; b) il supporto ai portatori di handicap; c) la riduzione del tasso di suicidi; d) politiche a contrasto della povertà infantile; e) l'opposizione a politiche potenzialmente "dannose" a livello sociale, come ad esempio la concessione di licenze per l'apertura di casinò (CDP 2017: 3).

Il quarto pilastro della campagna elettorale del CDP riguarda invece la trasparenza delle informazioni e la creazione di un nuovo concetto di "pubblico". "La conoscenza, la discussione e il poter esprimere la propria opinione sono le radici della democrazia", si legge nel programma. Per rivitalizzare la democrazia giapponese, dunque, il CDP propone di abolire la legge sul segreto di stato, nel tentativo di rendere la politica e l'operato governativo più trasparente, la riduzione del numero di parlamentari e, contestualmente, l'abolizione dei contributi politici da parte di aziende a favore di contributi individuali. Inoltre, il CDP propone un maggiore sostegno pubblico all'operato dei corpi intermedi della società (con particolare attenzione alle organizzazioni no profit) e una legge contro la corruzione che regolamenti il fenomeno del cosiddetto *amakudari*, ovvero il reimpiego in posizioni manageriali presso aziende private di ex burocrati ministeriali di alto livello (CDP 2017: 3).

Il quinto pilastro, punto fondante del programma del partito, è infine dedicato alla difesa della costituzione. In particolare, viene qui rivendicata la contrarietà a tutte le forme di violazione dell'articolo 9 della Costituzione giapponese postbellica, tranne per la difesa del territorio, rivendicando l'importanza della diplomazia pacifica (CDP 2017: 4).

4.4. Analisi quantitativa: Twitter

Come evidenziato in precedenza, Twitter è gradualmente assunto, in particolare dopo la liberalizzazione del 2013, al ruolo di agorà digitale. Appare chiaro, infatti, che il social network ha assunto un ruolo non trascurabile nel mettere in contatto e connettere l’organizzazione politica con sostenitori, seguaci, avversari e osservatori (come giornalisti e ricercatori).

Dopo avere evidenziato i termini chiave, ovvero le keyword, dello storytelling del CDP, in questo paragrafo verranno presentati i risultati dell’analisi quantitativa delle occorrenze sul profilo Twitter del partito tra il 2 e il 23 ottobre 2017. In particolare, verranno identificati i termini più ricorrenti nella strategia “linguistica” del partito di Edano sul social network e ne verrà verificata la coerenza con i discorsi e il programma ai fini della costruzione di una narrazione controegemonica.

A una prima analisi della *timeline* del profilo ufficiale del CDP (@CDP2017), appare chiaro il carattere della pagina come strumento di condivisione e amplificazione di informazioni e notizie relative alle attività del partito e del suo leader. La maggioranza dei tweet è dedicata infatti a informare i seguaci della pagina rispetto a eventi pubblici (in particolare comizi), interviste ai responsabili della formazione (al presidente Edano Yukio in primis, e, in misura minore, al segretario generale Fukuyama Tetsurō) e rispetto a eventi atmosferici potenzialmente disastrosi (tifone Lan). In questo senso è possibile identificare due fasi dell’attività dei gestori del profilo sul social network: a) costruzione e consolidamento dell’audience (tweet tra il 2-22 ottobre 2017) e b) comunicazione all’audience dei risultati dell’attività (23-24 ottobre).

Per quanto riguarda il contenuto dei tweet, il grafico riportato in Figura 2 offre alcune indicazioni.

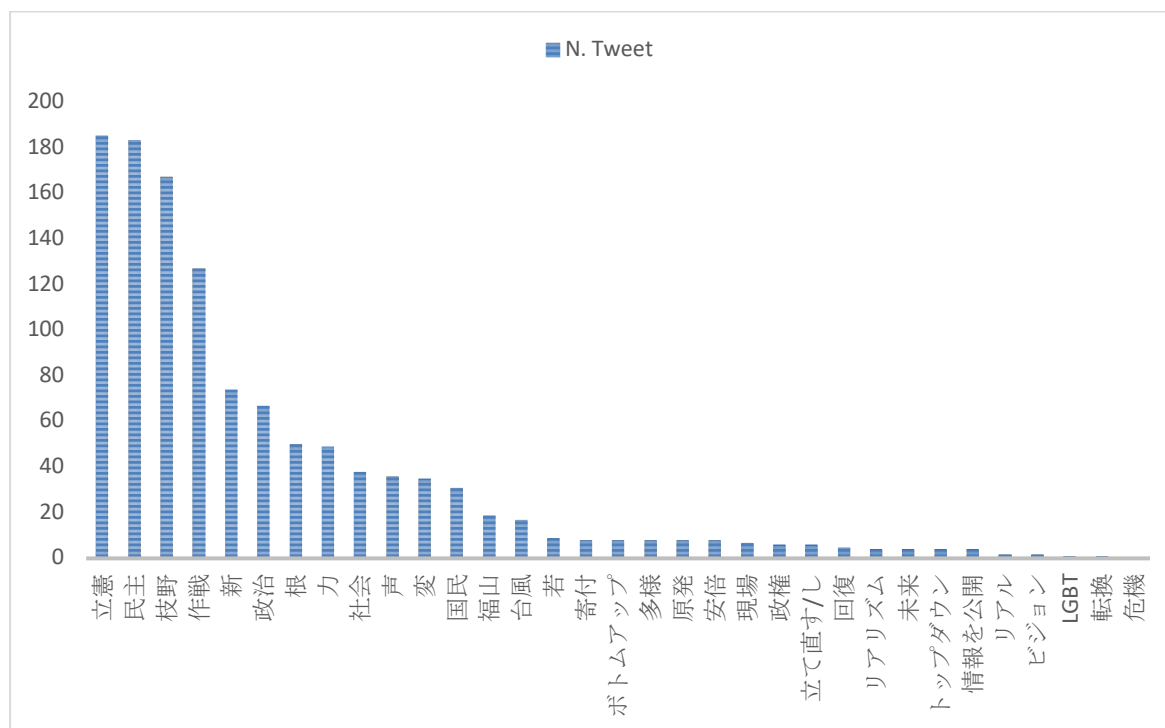


Figura 2 – I temi della campagna del CDP per numero di tweet. Fonte: Twitter @CDP2017 (2017)

Su oltre 410 tweet presi in esame, i termini *rikken* (立憲, costituzionale) e *minshu* (民主 democratico, democrazia) compaiono rispettivamente in 185 e 183 messaggi. La ragione è di facile comprensione: nella gran parte dei tweet esaminati, i due termini compongono il nome del partito. Quest'ultimo viene inserito poi nel corpo del tweet come argomento principale del tweet stesso (soprattutto nei messaggi di notifica circa eventi o iniziative organizzate dal CDP), come citazione di un brano di un articolo di stampa rilanciato dal profilo Twitter del CDP, oppure ancora come tema al centro di un frammento del discorso di uno dei suoi rappresentanti (Figura 3).

立憲民主党@CDP2017 – 18 Oct 2017

枝野代表「イデオロギーとか主義主張ではありません。立憲民主党はリベラルな勢力と新聞で描かれたりしていますが、私は、自分は保守だと思っています。日本の歴史と伝統とふるさとを大事にする。守らなければならない。そういう立場の政治家だと思っています。」

関東みちのく大作戦 1017

«Il presidente Edano: “Non ci facciamo guidare da nessun tipo di ideologia. I giornali scrivono che il CDP è un partito liberale, ma io mi ritengo un conservatore. Sono un politico che parte da presupposti precisi: valorizzare la storia, la tradizione e i luoghi d’origine del Giappone. Abbiamo il dovere di proteggerli.”»

Figura 3 – Esempio dell’uso dei tre termini più ricorrenti: Rikken, Minshu ed Edano. Fonte: Twitter, @CDP2017

Se l’ampio uso di *rikken* (立憲 “costituzionale”) e *minshu* (民主 “democratico, democrazia”) non sorprende a fini della presente analisi, è invece interessante notare l’elevato numero di occorrenze del nome del fondatore e presidente del partito, Edano Yukio. Il suo nome compare in 167 tweet e, in totale, nel periodo preso in considerazione, 244 volte. La maggior parte delle occorrenze è relativa all’annuncio di eventi pubblici (comizi, in particolare) a cui prende parte il leader del partito e di cui viene dato conto sulla pagina ufficiale del partito. Alle occorrenze del nome si aggiungono poi 15 occorrenze dell’hashtag Edano tatsu (#枝野立つ, “Edano si alza”, traducibile anche come “Edano c’è”) e quattro menzioni all’account personale del politico.

Nonostante la preponderanza del nome del leader di partito nella tabella delle occorrenze di Tabella 5, le menzioni dirette al profilo personale di Edano (contraddistinte dal simbolo @) sono appena quattro. Allo stesso modo, altre figure di riferimento del partito, come il segretario generale Fukuyama, o gli stessi candidati nei singoli seggi uninominali sono nominati ma non menzionati sul profilo ufficiale del CDP. È possibile avanzare almeno due ipotesi. La prima: lo staff del partito è poco avvezzo all’utilizzo del social network. La seconda: la quasi totale assenza di citazioni dirette sulla pagina ufficiale del partito può essere interpretato come un modo di tutelare i candidati e la loro privacy.

Sempre da un punto di vista quantitativo, occorre sottolineare la presenza del termine di ambito militare *sakusen* (strategia, operazione) che accompagna, anche sotto forma di *hashtag*, i tweet dedicati alle uscite pubbliche dei politici del CDP a livello cittadino (ad esempio *Tōkyō daisakusen*, cioè “la grande operazione per Tokyo”) e provinciale (ad esempio *Kansai daisakusen*).

Trova poi spazio il carattere *shin/ni/atara/arata* 新 “nuovo”, che compare in 74 tweet. non sempre il pittogramma ricorre nel campo semantico della novità. Esso appare anzi in molti tweet in combinazioni quali *shimbun* 新聞 “quotidiano”, o toponimi come Shinjuku 新宿 o ancora Niigata 新潟.

Di molto inferiori (9 tweet per ciascuno) le occorrenze dell'aggettivo *atarashii* 新しい “nuovo” o della combinazione *shintō* 新党 “nuovo partito”.

A seguire, l'analisi ha evidenziato il ricorso al termine *seiji* 政治 “politica” presente in 67 stringhe di testo, al carattere 根 “radice”, presente in espressioni come *kusa no ne* (“dal basso”), *nezasu* (“radicarsi”) e *chikara*, 力 “forza” inseriti rispettivamente in 50 e 49 tweet. Per quanto riguarda il termine *chikara*, in particolare, questo ricorre in uno degli slogan della campagna di Edano, che recita: *watashi ni wa anata no chikara ga hitsuyō* (“ho bisogno della tua energia”).

Sotto i 50 tweet, invece, termini come *shakai* “società”, *kokumin* “popolo” o “cittadini”, *hen/ka* significante per “cambiamento”, *gempatsu* “energia nucleare” e *bottom up*, che invece sono posti in evidenza nel pamphlet elettorale e negli interventi pubblici di Edano Yukio. Questo ridimensionamento non è un fatto isolato: l'aggettivo *mattō*, presente nel principale slogan elettorale del CDP (*mattōna seiji*) compare appena in nove tweet, poco più dell'altro pilastro del programma politico del partito, ovvero la costruzione di una società plurale (*tayō*). In questo senso, occorre peraltro notare l'assenza di ogni riferimento al concetto di *kiki* “crisi”, elemento portante della narrazione politica presentata nel documento analizzato nella sezione precedente.

Scarsi anche i riferimenti al sistema di raccolta dei contributi per il partito (*kifu*) rilevati in soli otto tweet. La Tabella 4 offre ulteriori dettagli sulle occorrenze reali dei termini sopra elencati e di alcuni loro composti sulla timeline del profilo Twitter del CDP.

Radice	Derivato	N. tweet	N. occorrenze
民主		183	860
	民主主義	35	50
立憲		185	844
	立憲主義	16	26
枝野		167	244
	枝野代表	96	99
	#枝野立つ		15
	@edanoyukio		4
作戦		127	155
政治		67	104
新		74	103
	新党	9	18
	新しい	9	14
社会		38	65
	ともに支え合う	5	5
力		49	60
声		36	54
根		50	52
	草の根	45	47
国民		31	49
変		35	40
	変え	15	17
	変わ	10	12
	変えたい	3	3
福山		19	24
台風		17	28
まっとう		9	15
寄付		8	14
ボトムアップ		8	11
多様		8	11
	多様性	4	7
若		9	10
原発		8	15
安倍		8	9
現場		7	8
政権		6	8
立て直す/し		6	6
回復		5	5
リアリズム		4	6
未来		4	5
トップダウン		4	4
情報を公開		4	4
リアル		2	3
ビジョン		2	2
LGBT		1	1
転換		1	1
危機		0	0

Tabella 4 - Le parole chiave della campagna del CDP su Twitter per numero di tweet e occorrenze. Fonte: Twitter @CDP2017 (2017)

5. Conclusioni

Nonostante i tempi ristretti dell'organizzazione di una piattaforma politica, alle elezioni di ottobre 2017, il CDP è riuscito a intercettare consensi creando una narrativa controegemonica in grado cioè di smentire i discorsi diffusi come verità dal governo, attraverso canali diversificati (sia online sia offline). In questo modo ha ottenuto il 19,8 per cento dei voti e si è confermato primo partito d'opposizione nell'attuale Camera bassa della Dieta.

L'analisi che ha preceduto questo paragrafo ha portato alla luce i temi principali e discusso le *keywords* intorno alle quali si struttura la cornice narrativa della campagna elettorale del CDP. La vicinanza ai cittadini, la pluralità e la trasparenza delle informazioni, in particolare, sono emersi come elementi portanti della narrazione d' "opposizione" al governo Abe e alla maggioranza conservatrice al governo che, invece, ha incentrato la sua campagna su temi quali la sicurezza nazionale e l'economia, nel tentativo di sviare l'attenzione dell'opinione pubblica da scandali che hanno riguardato alcune personalità del governo. La cornice narrativa lascia comunque una certa libertà al candidato di "diversificare" il proprio linguaggio in funzione del pubblico che si trova di fronte, a dimostrazione di come la raccolta del consenso dipenda fortemente da logiche legate alla realtà locale. Il fenomeno della formulazione del messaggio politico sulla base del pubblico di riferimento rivela la tendenza dei politici nell'era della comunicazione alla ricerca del "consenso ad ogni costo" (Rodotà 2004: IX).

Gli elementi inseriti nel programma del CDP non sono certo del tutto innovativi né originali rispetto agli altri partiti in gara: molti degli elementi cardine nel programma del CDP sono riconducibili a concetti quali la politica autonoma da ingerenze della burocrazia (*seiji shudō*); la centralità della sovranità popolare (*kokumin shuken*) e delle autonomie regionali (*chiiki shuken*); e il taglio agli sprechi (*muda dzukai o issō suru*) già inclusi nell'agenda politica del DPJ nel 2009 (Hatoyama 2009). Se i legami con l'indirizzo politico del DPJ non stupiscono, più sorprendenti sono invece le affinità con il programma del KNT, diretto concorrente del CDP. Il partito di Koike Yuriko ha articolato il suo programma intorno alla promessa di "resettare" il sistema di comando incentrato su un unico uomo (il primo ministro Abe) e ridare Speranza (*kibō*) ai suoi concittadini, sul piano politico, economico e sociale. Per fare ciò, nel programma elettorale si leggono promesse di "apertura" delle informazioni al pubblico (*jōhō kōkai*) e di abbattimento di quelle barriere "sociali" (*shigarami*) che impediscono la partecipazione alla vita politica ed economica del paese a tutti i cittadini (Kibō no tō 2017).¹⁶

¹⁶ I concetti sono riassunti nello spot elettorale diffuso proprio sulla pagina Twitter del partito e visibili al link: <https://twitter.com/kibounotou/status/917940710355038208?s=20>

Rispetto alla vaghezza del termine *kibō*, il richiamo ai valori incarnati dalla costituzione e dalla democrazia del CDP è stato politicamente più efficace soprattutto verso un elettorato deluso dall’operato del governo. Il risultato elettorale appare infatti in linea con quanto rivelato da alcuni sondaggi preelettorali, secondo i quali circa il 20 per cento degli aventi diritto non avrebbe votato per l’LDP (CCS-ICSS 2017).¹⁷ Come confermato da sondaggi precedenti e dallo stesso sondaggio sopra citato, le proposte in termini di politiche nazionali e territoriali sono il principale fattore d’interesse nei confronti di un partito (Okamoto 2003: 190; Akarui Senkuyo Ishin Kyōkai 2017: 9). Secondo un sondaggio eseguito a seggi chiusi tra 3,150 aventi diritto, per gli elettori giapponesi, la riforma costituzionale difesa da LDP-KMT e KNT giungeva sesta nell’ordine di priorità dei temi politici (Akarui Senkuyo Ishin Kyōkai 2017: 59).

Di conseguenza, il leader del CDP avrebbe avuto successo nel creare un “populismo” riformista, forte anche dei modelli euroamericani forniti da Bernie Sanders negli Stati Uniti e Jean-Luc Mélenchon in Francia, opposto al populismo “leggero” di Abe e a quello conservatore del KNT (Igarashi 2018: 12). Guardando, tuttavia, alla composizione dell’elettorato, poi, nonostante il 40,8 per cento degli elettori del CDP si sia dichiarato “di centro” (contro il 28,1 per cento degli elettori dell’LDP e 43 del KNT), appena il 34,2 si è dichiarato riformista e il 16,2 per cento “abbastanza conservatore” (Akarui Senkuyo Ishin Kyōkai 2017: 56). Interessa notare qui anche la distribuzione geografica dei successi del CDP: il partito è riuscito ad avere più voti nell’area di Tokyo per l’elezione ai seggi uninominali, del Kantō, Hokkaidō e in parte nel Kinki, per l’elezione ai seggi proporzionali (NHK 2017a).

Tuttavia, il CDP non ha saputo trasformare questa spinta iniziale in un consenso stabile e diffuso. Da un iniziale tasso di approvazione vicino al 20 per cento, un anno dopo il tasso di approvazione si attesta sotto il 9 (si veda Figura 4).

¹⁷ Secondo il sondaggio JESVI infatti, è emersa l’impossibilità per gli elettori di valutare positivamente o negativamente il lavoro del governo Abe. In particolare, appena il 4,6 per cento degli intervistati ha dichiarato di valutare positivamente le politiche economiche del governo di coalizione LDP-Kōmeitō mentre il 3,8 per cento ha dichiarato di valutare positivamente le sue politiche fiscali. (CCS-ICSS 2017).

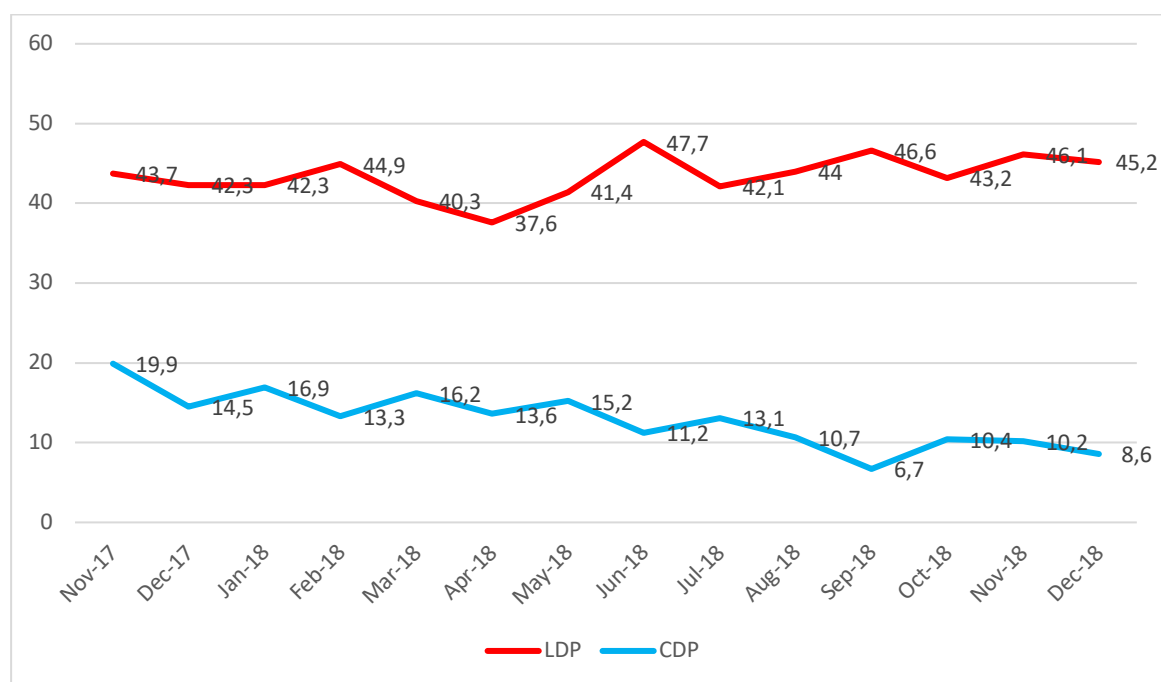


Figura 4 - Tasso di approvazione di LDP e CDP (novembre 2017- dicembre 2018). Fonte: Hodō Station/Tv Asahi (2020)

In questo senso, l'analisi quantitativa dei tweet pubblicati dal profilo ufficiale del partito (riportate in Tabella 1) è di supporto nel dimostrare quanto fin dagli esordi, il partito sia fondamentalemente legato alla figura e alle attività del suo leader. Ad un confronto preliminare, la strategia di comunicazione online del CDP incentrata su Edano risulta in realtà simile a quella utilizzata da altri partiti (LDP-Abe o KNT-Koike) negli stessi giorni. Emerge, anche in questo caso, un fenomeno comune nella politica contemporanea, cioè quello della personalizzazione e presidenzializzazione dei partiti politici, per il quale la figura del leader di partito ha più importanza del corpo intermedio che lui/lei rappresenta (v. Passarelli 2015).

Bibliografia

- Akarui Senkyo Ishin Kyōkai. 2018. *Dai 48 kai shūgiin giin sōsenkyo, zenkoku ishiki chōsa: chōsa kekka no gaiyō* (“Risultati del sondaggio d’opinione sulle 48esime elezioni per la Camera bassa della Dieta”). Tokyo: Kōeki Zaidan Hōjin Akarui Senkyo Ishin Kyōkai.
- Asahi Shimbun. 2018. “Sandāzu-shi to “Kusa no ne minshushugi” kaidan – Rikken: Edano-shi” (“A colloquio con Sanders per parlare di democrazia dal basso: Edano, Partito democratico costituzionale”). *Asahi Shimbun*, 14/8/2018
- <https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASL9G323HL9GUTFK005.html> Ultimo accesso: 28/04/2019.

- Asahi Shimbun, Tokyo University. 2017. *2017 shūinsen: Seisaku kadai kōhōsha no stansu - Asahi-Tōdai Taniguchi Kenkyū Shitsu Kyōdō chōsa* (“Elezioni camera bassa 2017: le questioni politiche e le opinioni dei candidati Sondaggio collaborativo Asahi-gruppo di ricerca del professor Taniguchi, Università di Tokyo”), 18/10/2017 <http://www.asahi.com/senkyo/senkyo2017/asahitodai/>
- Benford, Robert D. and David A. Snow. 2000. “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 611-639.
- Bentivegna, Sara. 2015. *A colpi di tweet: la politica in prima persona*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Carlson, Matthew and Steven Reed. 2018a. “Scandals During the Abe Administrations.” In: *Japan Decides 2017: The Japanese General Elections*, edited by Robert J. Pekkanen, Steven R. Reed, Ethan Scheiner and Daniel M. Smith, 109-126. New York: Palgrave.
- Carlson, Matthew and Steven Reed. 2018b. *Political Corruption and Scandals in Japan*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Castells, Manuel. 2009. *Communication Power*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cox, Robert H. and Albert Schilthuis. 2012. “Hegemony and Counterhegemony.” In: *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Globalization*, edited by George Ritzer, 923-927. Boston, MA: Wiley Blackwell.
- Curran, James, Natalie Fenton and Des Freedman (eds.). 2012. *Misunderstanding the Internet*. Abingdon-New York: Routledge.
- Center of Civil Society, Inter-university Consortium for Social Sciences (CCS-ICSS). 2017. *JES VI dai ichi ha chōsa (2017 nen shūin jizen intānetto paneru chōsa) kōdo bukku* (“Codebook JES VI, primo sondaggio (panel-survey in vista delle elezioni 2017)”). CCS-ICSS.
- Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP). 2017. *Kokumin to no yakusoku*. Tokyo: CDP. Scaricabile al link: <https://cdp-japan.jp/about-cdp/yakusoku>.
- Hayashi, Kouki, Ogawa, Yuuki and Umehara, Eiichi. 2017. “Analysis of twitter messages about the Osaka metropolis plan in Japan.” Paper presented at the *2017 IEEE International Conference on Big Data*. December 2017.
- Hodō Station. 2020. “Yoron chōsa: naikaku shiji ritsu suii gurafu.” *Tv Asahi*. https://www.tv-asahi.co.jp/hst/poll/graph_naikaku.html
- Hodō Station. 2020. “Yoron chōsa: seitō shijiritsu suii gurafu.” *Tv Asahi*. https://www.tv-asahi.co.jp/hst/poll/graph_naikaku.html
- Igarashi Jin. 2018. “2017 shuinsen no bunseki to kongo no tatakai” (“Le elezioni per la Camera bassa del 2017 e le prossime sfide”). *Gekkan Zenroren* 2018.2: 1-12.
- Iida, Takeshi. 2016. “Surging progressives in the conservative mood: The conditional effects of income and urbanism on vote choice in the 2014 Japanese Lower House election.” *Asian Journal of Contemporary Politics* 1/1: 6-24.
- JQuery. 2019. ‘What is jQuery?’ *jQuery.com*. <http://jquery.com/> Ultimo accesso: 30/04/2019.
- Kibō no tō (@kibounotou) Twitter. <https://twitter.com/kibounotou> Ultimo accesso: 10/09/2020.

- Krauss, Ellis and Robert Pekkanen. 2015. "The Partial Presidentialization of Parties in Japan." In: *The Presidentialization of Political Parties: Organizations, Institutions and Leaders*, edited by Gianluca Passarelli, 196-214. Basingstoke, NY: Palgrave.
- Maeda, Yukio. 2018. "Public Opinion and the Abe Cabinet: Alternating Valence and Position Issues." In: *Japan Decides 2017: The Japanese General Elections*, edited by Robert J. Pekkanen, Steven R. Reed, Ethan Scheiner and Daniel M. Smith, 127-147. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Manabe, Kōki. 2016. "Torampu, Sandāzu genshō ni tsūtei suru mono" ("Il fenomeno Trump è collegato al fenomeno Sanders"). *Webronza* 26/2/2016. Disponibile al link: <https://webronza.asahi.com/national/articles/2016022200005.html>.
Ultimo accesso: 10/09/2020.
- NHK. 2017a. "Shūinsen 2017: Kaihyō kekka" ("Elezioni camera bassa 2017: i risultati del voto"). NHK Senkyo Web 22/10/2017
<https://www.nhk.or.jp/senkyo/database/shugiin/2017/index.html> Ultimo accesso: 10/09/2020.
- NHK. 2017. "Shuinsen 2017: tōshu enzetsu o bunseki" ("Elezioni camera bassa 2017: l'analisi dei discorsi dei leader di partito"). NHK
<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/special/enzetsu2017/> Ultimo accesso: 10/09/2020.
- Shiraishi Takeshi. 2018. "Tsuittā, gekkan riyōsha 100 man nin gen fusei sakujo de" ("Twitter: meno 1 milione di utenti mensili, cancellati profili illegali"). *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* 29/7/2018
https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXMZ03353675028072018000000/?n_cid=SNSTW001. Ultimo accesso: 10/09/2020.
- Nishida, Tetsushi, James Pick and Avijit Sarkar. 2014. "Japan's prefectural digital divide: A multivariate and spatial analysis." *Telecommunications Policy* 38/11: 992-1010.
- Okamoto Hiroki. 2003. "Seitō uebusaito no kōkokukōka: Intānetto yūzā chōsa ni motodzuku jisshō bunseki" ("Gli effetti delle campagne elettorali sui siti web dei partiti politici giapponesi"). *Japanese Journal of Electoral Studies* 18: 190-202.
- Ogawa Yūki. 2014. "Twitter ni okeru iken no tasūhaninchi to pāsonaru nettowāku no dōshitsusei ga hatsugen ni ataeru eikyō: denshi ryoku hatsuden o sōten to toshita Twitter jō de chinmoku rasen no kenshō" ("L'influenza della percezione di appartenere alla maggioranza e dell'omogeneità della propria rete personale sulle espressioni su Twitter: studio sulla spirale del silenzio su Twitter sulla questione della produzione di energia"). *Jinkō chino gakkai ronbun shi* 29/5: 483-492.
- Ōkuma Shingo e Satō Kō. 2015. "Soshāru yoron no keikō – tsuittā bunseki o moto ni" ("Le tendenze dell'opinione sui social media sulla base di un'analisi di Twitter"). *Seisaku to chōsa* 9: 35-50.
- Passarelli, Gianluca (edited by). 2015. *The Presidentialization of Political Parties: Organizations, Institutions and Leaders*. Basingstoke, NY: Palgrave.
- Rodotà, Stefano. 2004. *Tecnopolitica* (edizione ampliata). Bari: Laterza.
- Rikken Minshutō (@CDP2017) Twitter.

[https://twitter.com/search?q=\(from%3Acdp2017\)%20since%3A2017-10-02%20until%3A2017-10-24&src=typed_query](https://twitter.com/search?q=(from%3Acdp2017)%20since%3A2017-10-02%20until%3A2017-10-24&src=typed_query) Ultimo accesso: 10/09/2020.

Tanabe Kazutoshi e Suzuki Takahiro. 2018. “Toshufuken no sōtaiteki hinkonritsu no keisoku to yōin bunseki” (“Tendenze e analisi delle cause della povertà relativa nelle prefetture giapponesi”). *Nihon rōdō kenkyū zasshi* 692: 5-58.

Tsuda Daisuke. 2012. *Web de seiji o ugokasu!* (“Scuotiamo la politica con il web”). Tokyo: Asahi Shinsho (Digital edition).

Twitter. n.d. “About replies and mentions.” <https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/mentions-and-replies>. Ultimo accesso: 10/09/2020

Twitter. 2019. “Release Notes: July 15th 2019.” https://twitter.com/i/release_notes. Ultimo accesso: 10/09/2020

Uenohara, Hideaki. 2014. “2013 nen sangiin senkyo ni okeru social media: kōhosha tachi wa nani o ‘tsubuyaita’ no ka” (“I social media nelle elezioni per la camera alta del 2013: cosa hanno ‘mormorato’ i candidati”). *Japanese Journal of Electoral Studies* 30/2: 116-128.

W3Techs. 2019. “Usage of side programming language”. *W3Techs-Web Technology Surveys* https://w3techs.com/technologies/overview/client_side_language/all. Ultimo accesso: 29/04/2019.

W3Techs. 2019. “Usage of JavaScript libraries for websites.” *W3Techs-Web Technology Surveys* https://w3techs.com/technologies/overview/javascript_library/all. Ultimo accesso: 29/04/2019.

Williams, Joshua A. 2017. *Electoral Campaigning and the Internet in Japan in the 2010s* (Doctoral dissertation) University of Washington.

Wired. 2018. “How To Use Twitter: Critical Tips for New Users.” *Wired* 29/08/2018 <https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-setup-twitter-search-hashtag-and-login-help/> Ultimo accesso: 29/04/2019.

Yuasa Harumichi. 2014. “Intānetto senkyo undō to kōshiki senkyo hō” (“La campagna elettorale online e la legge sull’elezione ai pubblici uffici”). *Japanese Journal of Electoral Studies* 30/2: 75-90.

Ziccardi, Giovanni. 2019. *Tecnologie per il potere: come usare i social network in politica*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.

Marco Zappa is Assistant Professor at the Department of Asian and North African Studies, Ca' Foscari University of Venice where he teaches Japanese Language, History and International Relations. His research focuses on Japanese international assistance to developing Asia in the fields of human resource development and energy. He can be reached at marco.zappa@unive.it

Documents

Biographical and scientific notes about Mark Lidzbarski (1868-1928):

A translation from Ludmila Hanisch, *Aufzeichnungen von Mark Lidzbarski (1868-1928)*, edited by Pierre Motylewicz and Ute Pietruschka. Halle-Wittenberg: Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, 2015

Marco Moriggi

In 2015 Ludmilla Hanisch published a study featuring the outcomes of a survey she had conducted in the legacy of Mark Lidzbarski. This legacy is housed in the archive of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* in Halle/Saale (Germany) and includes documents and evidence related to both the personal life and academic research of the renowned Semitist. In a terse and fluent style, the author provides an overview of the contents of the legacy interweaved with the life of Lidzbarski. The present translation aims at making this important contribution accessible to a wider audience and represents a tribute to the author, who passed away before it was published.

*Es ist nicht genug, zu wissen,
man muß auch anwenden;
es ist nicht genug, zu wollen,
man muß auch tun.*
J.W. von Goethe

[p. 6]

Preface by the author¹

The legacies of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* [henceforth DMG] in Halle include preparatory work and print templates of publications by Mark Lidzbarski, which the internationally renowned

¹ The original German version is published under Creative Commons Licence 3.0 in: <http://menadoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/urn:urn:nbn:de:gbv:3:5-89711>. Square parentheses show the original numeration of pages and footnotes. The present translation covers pages 6-28 of the German original. Images of pages 8, 10, 14, 19, 28 in the German original are not reprinted here. Some corrections and integrations to page numerations in original references were provided by the translator. This work was conceived and could be completed thanks to the research fundings allocated by the Università di Catania by means of the *Progetto Prometeo 2019-20, Linea 3*: “Transnational Intellectual Networks between the Franco-Prussian War (1870) and the End of the Cold War (1989)” - Principal Investigator: Prof. Dr. Stefano Rapisarda. The author wishes to thank Dr. Ute Pietruschka (Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen) for kind advice on the German version of the book, Prof. Dr. Walter Slaje (Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg; Erster Vorsitzender, *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*) and Laila

Semitist and epigraphist bequeathed to the DMG. Like the scholarly correspondence that Lidzbarski exchanged with his colleagues, they reflect his broad-ranging interests. Copies and word-indexes of manuscripts from today's Staatsbibliothek in Berlin formed the basis for his two-volume work *Die neu-aramäischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, published in 1896.²

Reproductions and photos of inscriptions and prints of seals in various Semitic languages formed the basis for Lidzbarski's *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik*,³ a seminal work which did service to generations of Semitists. In his *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*,⁴ which he founded, Lidzbarski presented new finds of inscriptions and discussed previously published texts. The correspondence he exchanged with scholars such as Theodor Nöldeke (1836-1930), Arthur Ungnad (1879-1945) or Enno Littmann (1875-1958) – to name but a few – provides an excellent insight into Lidzbarski's work processes. The correspondence kept in the library of the DMG is not yet accessible; hopefully, the plans to digitize this legacy will be realized in the near future to make these interesting documents available to a wider public.

[p. 7]

Another focus of Lidzbarski's research were the language and literature of the Mandaean. Here, too, copies and photos of manuscripts can be found in the legacy, which formed the basis for the scientific disclosure and publication of important texts of Mandaic literature and thanks to which Lidzbarski was able to give a great impulse to Mandaic studies.⁵ A card index for a dictionary of the Mandaic language is also kept in the DMG library. At the request of Rudolf Macuch (1919-1993), professor Johann W. Fück (1894-1974) from Halle had it copied and made it available to the authors of the *Mandaic Dictionary*.⁶

In this publication, Lidzbarski's autobiography – the print template of which can be found among the bequeathed papers – is dealt with first. From the correspondence, a letter from Theodor Nöldeke

Guhlmann (Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg; Fachreferentin Bibliothek der *Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*) for kind assistance and willingness. Prof. Dr. Alessandro Mengozzi and Prof. Dr. Mauro Tosco (University of Turin; Kervan) deserve a thankful thought for precious suggestions and support. The translation was duly and promptly revised by CSE 92 (Rome). Any misreading is the solely responsibility of the author.

²[4] Lidzbarski (1896).

³ [5] Lidzbarski (1898).

⁴ [6] Three volumes, published at Gießen: Töpelmann: 1900-1915 (Lidzbarski 1902-1915). In the same printing house Lidzbarski's memories were also published.

⁵ [7] Reference may be made to the following publications: Lidzbarski (1905/1915); Lidzbarski (1920); Lidzbarski (1925).

⁶ [8] Drower-Macuch (1963: V).

was selected, with whom Lidzbarski engaged in an intense correspondence.⁷ The letter vividly illustrates the research topic to which Lidzbarski devoted himself, particularly towards the end of his life.

[p. 8] = Image

[p. 9]

Childhood memories

Mark Lidzbarski, who has contributed significantly to research on the Mandeans and whose epigraphic works have set standards that are still considered valid today, travelled an unusual route in his life, which led him from his small home town of Płock, in what was then Russian Poland, to an important professorship at a renowned Prussian university. The title of his memoirs, which he published over eight decades ago, indicates how strenuous this path must have seemed to him.⁸ Both his difficult material situation and the circumstances of his life form an important *topos* in the obituaries published for him.⁹

In his memoirs, he provides a detailed description of his deeply religious upbringing and the one-sided cognitive stimuli of his childhood and adolescence. To this day, they make for a striking example of how the introduction to religious literature and the value system of a religion can develop an adolescent's capabilities.

[p. 10] = Image

[p. 11]

In this case and in these historical circumstances, family expectations and early childhood education seem to have been a positive contribution to his intellectual development. Moreover, the author, through his descriptions, created a memorial for a milieu that did not undergo gradual change, but

⁷ [9] The legacy of Lidzbarski in Halle contains several letters from Nöldeke; together with the legacy of Nöldeke in Tübingen, which comprises 24 letters by Lidzbarski from the years 1900-1928, a large share of the correspondence might doubtless be restored (<http://kalliope-verbund.info/de/ead?ead.id=DE-611-HS-557696>).

⁸ [10] The memories were published anonymously with the title *Aufrauhem Wege* (Lidzbarski 1927). An Italian translation was published in 1988 (Lidzbarski 1988). This edition includes a preface by Giorgio Pasquali and an epilogue by Marino Raicich.

⁹ [11] See Littmann (1928) and Baumgartner (1968). Only A. Kronthal (1928), a follower of liberal Judaism, put the description of Lidzbarski's materially difficult situation into perspective.

suddenly disappeared when the Jewish inhabitants of the town were violently expelled, or even murdered, by the German occupiers during the Second World War.

Lidzbarski has left a vivid account of the customs and conventions in the Jewish community of the town of Płock during his childhood and adolescence. This community is considered one of the oldest in Poland. His family belonged to the Hasidic movement, itself a minority group within the Jewish community of Płock. In around 1890, Jewish residents accounted for about 25% of the population, while only 3-10% of the Jews were Hasidic.¹⁰ They were a minority in the whole of Eastern Europe, even though they were considered as *pars pro toto* of “Ostjudentum” or East Jewry.¹¹ This mystical tradition placed the Kabbalah, not the Torah, at the core of its doctrine. Their rivalry with the Mitnaggedim declined in importance from the middle of the 19th century, with the advance of the Haskala in Poland.¹² The author already mentions some of the differences; more recent evidence-backed representations facilitate the understanding of the connections against the background of historical developments taking place in Poland.¹³

[p. 12]

The differences were clear to everyone in clothing. For the faithful Hasidim, clothing played a central role in their approach to God, in addition to everyday actions. External symbols were so important to them that they even paid a clothing tax to the state at times to show themselves dressed on the street in accordance with their regulations.¹⁴ His family's opposition to letting him to carry a satchel to school, as recounted by Lidzbarski, should be understood against this background.¹⁵ He did not omit the strict rituals and superstitious tendencies of his surroundings in his memoirs, but described them with retrospective distance and without condescending undertones. Since he was destined for a spiritual profession, during his childhood he received a primarily religious instruction. Already at the age of three, he attended private classes and showed great talent.

Over the next decade, Lidzbarski concentrated intensely on mastering the spiritual works, with the help of various teachers. The reverse side of these inflexible

¹⁰ [12] According to an estimate by Wodziński (2005: 104-7).

¹¹ [13] See the elucidation of the situation in Lidzbarski's memories (Lidzbarski 1927: 82).

¹² [14] Guesnet (1998: 263).

¹³ [15] Wein (1989). See also n.a. (2007).

¹⁴ [16] Somogyi (1982: 44-45).

¹⁵ [17] Lidzbarski (1927: 9).

[p. 13]

learning goals were the missed opportunities to play with his peers, which he was later to regret. His sisters went to a public school and, in addition to a general education, also learnt modern foreign languages. Unlike their brother, they were allowed to spend their free time playing games.

The son received Russian lessons for a short time, which can be explained by the forced integration of the country into the Tsarist Empire. The increasing use of Russian in schools and the judicial system, from 1866, is documented by the birth certificates of the children of Moszek and Cwetla Lidzbarski, Mark Lidzbarski's parents.¹⁶ While his birth was still registered in Polish, under the name Abraham Motel Lidzbarski, the birth certificates of his later-born sisters were already issued in Russian.¹⁷ The double date of birth for the boy, born in late 1867 and/or early in 1868, reflects the discrepancy between the Julian calendar, which was still followed in the Russian Empire, and the Gregorian calendar, which had long since been adopted in Poland. Alignment with Russian legislation did not necessarily mean an improvement in the legal status of or educational opportunities for the country's residents.

[p. 14]

Access to Russian universities continued to be problematic for Jewish students from all parts of the empire. Even if they did manage to qualify for admission, in 1887 a *numerus clausus* was introduced for these "martyrs of education."¹⁸ It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Berlin University saw a significant rise in the number of students from Russia in the last decade of the 19th century.

[p. 15]

Year after year, the enrolment register for each semester features about a hundred students from Russia, with numbers increasing significantly after the turn of the century. However, since religious affiliation was not recorded at enrolment, it can only be surmised that many Jewish students took

¹⁶ [18] Lidzbarski had three sisters: Fala (*1869), Ruchla Łaja (*1871), Chaja (*1873).

¹⁷ [19] The birth of the sisters was registered in Russian. See *Archiwum Państwowe in Płock. Unikat Akta stanu cywilnego gminy wyznaniowej*, Nr. 65, 1866 od No 808 do No 1092 za 1867-1868-1869-1870-1871; 1872 od No 1 do No 63.

¹⁸ [20] Dubnow called young men, who wanted to bypass the barriers through private lessons and studying abroad, "martyrs of learning." Dubnow (1918: 351).

advantage of this opportunity to attend various German and other European universities.¹⁹ In view of the requirements of a high school diploma in a foreign language, this path would probably have been taken only in special circumstances. For obvious reasons, Jewish students from West and East Prussia and Silesia enrolled primarily at German universities; they did not have to overcome such great obstacles, since they more often than not had a German school education or even a high school diploma from a German Gymnasium.²⁰

[p. 16]

In the case of the young Lidzbarski, contact with adherents of and admiration for the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment) movement apparently played an important role, in order to strive for training in Prussia, regardless of the difficulties. The so-called “free spirits” appeared to him as those to whom the gate to the world had opened. The representatives of the Enlightened trend of Judaism had gained influence in the Jewish communities under Prussian administration. They received state support both there and beyond the Prussian border because they had a reputation not to refrain from assimilating to their context. Despite the fact that it was initially considered a reform movement from the West, the Haskalah was able to gain an increasing foothold in the eastern regions.

After crossing the border with Germany at the age of fourteen, in April 1882, and turning his back to the Tsarist empire, Lidzbarski observed the intense process of Germanization taking place in the Prussian-administered areas, during his school years in Poznan; the Polish language being pushed more and more into the background in high schools.²¹

In Poznan, the adolescent Lidzbarski attended the Protestant Friedrich-Wilhelms-Gymnasium, the high school from which he graduated. In the meantime, he also attended the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, in Berlin, for two years, to find what he lacked at high school.²²

¹⁹ ^[21] *Amtliches Verzeichnis des Personals und der Studirenden der Königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin*. Lidzbarski is registered there from first semester 1889 as Russian citizen. In the second semester 1889 there were 116 students from Russia. See Ivanov (2001: 43); Wertheimer (1987: 63-71).

²⁰ ^[22] One example is the Semitist Eugen Mittwoch (1876-1942) from Schrimm, near Posen. Hartwig Hirschfeld can also be included. For the significance of the multilingualism of students of Jewish faith, including Lidzbarski, see: Trautmann-Waller (2002: 81-92).

²¹ ^[23] Bilingualism was legally recognized in the Prussian province of Poznan until 1850, after which, and especially from 1871, the school system was gradually Germanized. In 1887, there were only 3-5 hours of Polish per week in the curriculum. Balzer (1990: 152-153).

²² ^[24] See above Kronthal (1928). Thanks are due to Marek Dzekian (Warsaw) for his information on the history of the Poznan Gymnasium, which also saved me from incorrect spelling of the Polish sources.

[p. 17]

During his stay in Poznan, the orientalist Hartwig Hirschfeld introduced him to Arabic, in addition to school lessons.²³ Besides an interest in the inscription of Mesa [of Moab], which he emphasized in his memories, the conversations with his teacher certainly influenced his later choice of studies.²⁴ After all, the Jewish elements in the Koran formed a focus of interest for Hirschfeld, who later taught in England.²⁵

Lidzbarski would later enter into a scholarly correspondence with Hirschfeld's mentor, Theodor Nöldeke, testimonies of which can be found in the archives of DMG [see below]. After graduating from the Gymnasium he returned to his hometown for a short time. His youthful memories end when he leaves once again for Berlin, to begin his studies of Oriental philology.

[p. 18]

Scientific career

Mordechai Lidzbarski, as he still called himself that year, enrolled on December 3rd, 1889, at the Philosophischen Facultät of the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin.²⁶ After having completed his work on the Arabic prophetic legends (*Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā*), the doctoral examination was held in February 1893, under the tuition of the Orientalists Eberhard Schrader (1836-1908) and Eduard Sachau (1845-1930).²⁷

This work was published in Leipzig, in 1893, under the title *De prophetis, quae dicuntur, legendis Arabicis*. On May 17th that same year, Lidzbarski, who had meanwhile converted to Protestantism, left

²³ ^[25] Lidzbarski did not mention the name in his memoirs. It is mentioned in the letter from the Dean of the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Kiel of February 24th, 1896 to the Prussian Ministry of Culture. GSTA-I HA, Rep. 76, Va, Sekt. 9, Tit. 4, No. 2, Bl. 139.

²⁴ ^[26] Graetz (1902).

²⁵ ^[27] Hartwig Hirschfeld (1854, Thorn-1934, London). Hirschfeld was a student of Theodor Nöldeke (1836-1930) and completed his doctorate in Strasbourg, in 1878, on Jewish elements in the Koran. In 1889 he emigrated to England and worked as a Professor of Hebrew at Montefiori College in Ramsgate and London.

²⁶ ^[28] He received the immatriculation number 2159. He declared that his father's profession was "landlord". See *Archiv der Humboldt-Universität Berlin*, Rektoratsakten 2159/80.

²⁷ ^[29] Eduard Zeller (1814-1908) tested him in philosophy. The examination protocol can be found in doctoral file no. 315, *Archiv der Humboldt-Universität Berlin*. He dedicated the dissertation to Sigismund Lissner, (†November 5, 1892). Lissner was the owner of a tobacco factory in Poznan and Lidzbarski was a friend of his son, Julius Lissner.

his Alma Mater as a Doctor in Oriental Philology. Then, through the intermediation of Eduard Sachau, he was commissioned to catalog the new Aramaic manuscripts of the Königlichen Bibliothek in Berlin.²⁸

[p. 19] = Image

[p. 20]

Three years later, Lidzbarski earned his Habilitation at the University of Kiel. His inaugural lecture was on “das Himjarenreich in der arabischen Literatur.” The Sanskritist Hermann Oldenberg (1854-1920), a member of the examination board, emphasized that the factual interest of the newly qualified professor was in “oriental fairy tales and narrative literature and the derivation of their materials and motifs.”²⁹ Thanks to the financial support of the Neuschassischen Stiftung (Kiel), he was able to travel to other European countries and study manuscripts and inscriptions in Paris, Oxford and London, in 1899 and 1905. One result of his trip to Paris appeared under the title “Eine Nachprüfung der Mesainschrift.”³⁰ This review was carried out with René Dussaud (1868-1958).

Epigraphic interests shaped the coming years of his scientific activity. He engaged in a lively exchange with his Strasbourg colleagues Julius Euting (1839-1913) and Theodor Nöldeke, in particular, on issues surrounding the deciphering of inscriptions.³¹ The letters document the acknowledgement of their mutual achievements and, at the same time, show that Lidzbarski was more inclined to focus on factual issues rather than personal communications.

[p. 21]

His first appointment was in 1907, succeeding Wilhelm Ahlwardt (1828-1909) at the University of Greifswald. The faculty there was looking to recruit a scholar to continue the Arabist work of his predecessor and also take into account the needs of historians and theologians. In addition to his epigraphic publications, Lidzbarski's work-appointment proposals highlighted religious-historical

²⁸ ^[30] See above notes 2-3 [4-5].

²⁹ ^[31] „Bericht Hermann Oldenbergs vom 24. März 1896.“ In *Auftrag des Dekans der Philosophischen Fakultät über die Habilitation Lidzbarskis in Kiel*, GSTA – I HA, Rep. 76, Va, Sekt. 9, Tit. 4, Nr.2, Bl. 139.

³⁰ ^[32] See Lidzbarski (1902: 1-9).

³¹ ^[33] Lidzbarski dedicated the *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik* to Theodor Nöldeke and Julius Euting. The letters to Julius Euting are in the Julius Euting legacy, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire Strasbourg, Ms 3800. I would like to thank the staff of this library, and Daniel Bornemann in particular, for making the documents available to me.

works on the Mandaeans.³² He had just published his two-volume work *Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer*.³³ In the summer of 1909, he set out from this city, in Western Pomerania, to embark on his first and only journey to the Orient, to study manuscripts in Constantinople and Beirut. Due to an outbreak of cholera, from Constantinople he was only able to travel as far as Ḥamā, in modern-day Syria.³⁴

In 1917 he was called to the chair of Semitic Philology at Göttingen University, previously held by Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) and then briefly by Enno Littmann (1875-1958). He had already had an academic exchange with some of the chair holders at the university there for many years. In addition to Julius Wellhausen, with whom he had already corresponded from Kiel, since 1900, he had also exchanged letters with the scholar in Iranian studies Friedrich Carl Andreas (1846-1930), who held the chair in West Asian languages from 1904.³⁵

[p. 22]

His former colleague from Kiel, the Sanskritist Hermann Oldenberg, worked next to him in the city on the Leine river until 1920. At the Georg August University, where he was to remain until the end of his life, he found a “satisfactory sphere of work” in scientific terms, as remembered by the Göttingen theologian Walter Bauer (1877-1960).³⁶ After the First World War, he was able to rent a house in Herzberger Landstrasse 66, which belonged to the Göttinger Universitätsbund.³⁷ Lidzbarski had been a corresponding member of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences since 1912, and in 1918 he was accepted as a regular member.

³² ^[34] „Berufungsvorschläge der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Greifswald vom 8.7.1907,“ GSTA Berlin-Dahlem, I HA, Rep.76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit 4, Nr. 22, Bd.17, Blatt 163.

³³ ^[35] See above note 5 ^[7].

³⁴ ^[36] Postcard from Lidzbarski to Julius Euting, from Constantinople, of 29.11.1909 (Nachlass Julius Euting, MS 3800, no. 328).

³⁵ ^[37] Letters to Julius Wellhausen of 31.01.1899 and 5.11.1899, Handschriftenabteilung der Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen, 8 Cod. Ms. Hist. Ref. 41 g: 1: sheets 33-34 and sheets 35-38; Legacy of F. C. Andreas, *ibid.* I would like to thank Helmut Rohlfing (SUB Göttingen) for references to the materials.

³⁶ ^[38] So Walter Bauer in his detailed necrology (Bauer 1928/1929).

³⁷ ^[39] I would like to thank Christian Wagenknecht (Göttingen) for pointing out the involvement of the Göttinger Universitätsbund in the construction of the house in Herzberger Landstrasse.

[p. 23]

Scientific interests

Lidzbarski had dealt with the legends of the prophets in his dissertation and continued to focus his interest as a young scholar on the transmission of religious texts in different religions and epochs. An illustrative example of this is his essay “Wer ist Chadir?” which appeared shortly after his doctorate.³⁸ In the preface to the catalog of Neo-Aramaic manuscripts, he emphasized how he had been obliged to forgo his project on “The Biblical History by the Arabs”, for the time being, in order to focus on the manuscripts, despite having already collected the literature.³⁹ The subject of the transfer of religious texts and legends accompanied him throughout his scientific life, although he was unable to devote more time to it, along with his other tasks. When he made arrangements for his library, at the end of his life, he mentioned this interest and drew attention to the books he had bought on this topic. He announced to his colleague, and later Prussian Minister of Culture, Carl Heinrich Becker (1876-1933) that the “Midrashic literature” from his library should be handed over separately.⁴⁰

[p. 24]

The letters to C.H. Becker give the impression that he was unable to find sufficient time to dedicate to this area of interest. Whether inner motives also played a role in this abstinence can only be the subject of speculation, because of his sparse statements about his research.⁴¹

The reputation he gained in the academic world was based primarily on his epigraphic works.⁴² Apparently, the Semitist had already impressed his colleagues with his knowledge of this field on his

³⁸ [40] Lidzbarski (1892).

³⁹ [41] In the introduction of the manuscript catalog, Lidzbarski expressed a certain distance from Eduard Sachau. This impression is reinforced by the fact that he dedicated the catalog to his teacher Eberhard Schrader on his 60th birthday. See Lidzbarski (1896: XV-XVI).

⁴⁰ [42] Letter of 28.10.1928 to Carl Heinrich Becker, REM 4901/old, R 21, No. 11080, Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde. The University of Göttingen received the private library as it was in 1922, when the agreement was made. Later purchases went to other addressees. Memorandum of the University of Göttingen, dated November 27.11.1928, which occurred a few days after Lidzbarski's funeral.

⁴¹ [43] See the obituary by Walter Bauer quoted above, who conjectured that his conversion to the Evangelical faith was the reason behind his abstinence from “rabbinical literature”.

⁴² [44] His *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik* was indicated as a fundamental work by Wellhausen (1899: 603-608). Walter Baumgartner (1968) cited the manual for northern Semitic epigraphy as Lidzbarski's most important achievement.

trips to Paris and London.⁴³ Despite over more than a century having passed since the publication of the inscriptions, they are still not considered outdated.

[p. 25]

Many of his investigations into epigraphic issues appeared as reprints after the Second World War.⁴⁴ His strong interest in the Mandaean, which has largely passed into the hands of religious scholars today, was another area to which he made great contributions. The faculty emphasized this interest when it proposed Lidzbarski for the Greifswald chair. The colleagues there described his “actual life’s mission: shining a light into the darkness surrounding Mandaic literature, which is particularly important for the history of religion.”⁴⁵ His editions of Mandaic texts, on which he worked continuously throughout his scientific life, are considered exemplary by specialists in the field, ranking immediately after Nöldeke’s *Mandäische Grammatik*. He has the merit of having given a philologically secure basis to the branches of the late antique Gnosis. Lidzbarski’s most significant achievement for Mandaic literature is the translation of the *Ginza*.⁴⁶ Various colleagues who dealt with the literature and language of the Mandaeans drew from his collections of Mandaic words.

His research into the writings of the Mandaeans, which found a number of editors, especially in the first three decades of the 20th century, suggests that Lidzbarski, thanks to his thorough training in religious scriptures, was able to dedicate himself to this ancient religious movement with meticulousness and knowledge.

[p. 26]

In any case, his previous philological knowledge and experience will have made it easier for him to separate the wheat from the chaff, to search for important texts and to process them thoroughly. In this perspective, the memories may be read as a pointer to the genesis of his scientific meticulousness and his interest in knowledge. The differences and tensions among the followers of the Jewish religion,

⁴³ ^[45] René Dussaud (1929) reports in his necrology about Lidzbarski's visit to Paris in 1898/1899 and the shared reading of the stela by Mesa. Stanley Arthur Cook (1929) also remembered him in an obituary.

⁴⁴ ^[46] Reproductions of the epigraphic works: *Mandäische Liturgien* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms: 1971); *Altaramäische Urkunden aus Assur*, (Osnabrück: Otto Zeller: 1970); *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms: 1962 and 1969); *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms: 1962).

⁴⁵ ^[47] *Berufungskommission der philosophischen Fakultät Greifswald*, GSTA: I HA, Rep. 76 Va, Sekt. 7, Tit. 4, No. 22, Vol. 17, sheet 163.

⁴⁶ ^[48] Rosenthal (1939: 237).

which he experienced first hand as an adolescent, shaped his sensitivity for variants and differences in the faiths. In addition to that, he learned the philological methods for this during his school years and his later studies. The break with his original religion, which is sometimes addressed in the obituaries, can possibly also be traced back to experiences from childhood and adolescence. Despite his failure to fulfil his family's expectations and pursue a religious vocation, which he later regarded as a burden for his personal development, he nevertheless succeeded in building on this experience to the advantage of his scientific work. This also includes the no longer pursued topic of the transmission of myths, as well as narrative and sagas, in various religions and epochs.

His death in 1928 saved him from being expelled from office, or worse, by the Third Reich, against which his conversion to Protestantism would have been of no avail.⁴⁷

[p. 27]

Nothing is known about the fate of his younger sisters who remained in Poland.⁴⁸ When the Nazis came to power, they destroyed part of his life's work. However, neither his publications nor his material collections, which were kept in the archives of the DMG in Halle, were affected, unlike his Foundation for the promotion of Oriental studies, which was financed from his assets. The Foundation promoted Semitic research, particularly in the fields of religious studies and antiquity, excluding purely Assyriologic, Jewish and Islamic topics.⁴⁹ Outstanding orientalists are awarded a gold medal or prize money at international orientalist congresses. The founder's intention was to promote international cooperation and to make it easier for younger colleagues to take the "rough road" he himself had experienced.⁵⁰ Until the Nazis came to power, the Prussian Ministry of Culture had the role of trustee of the Foundation's capital. The Foundation's funds were eventually transferred from Switzerland to Berlin by the Reich Ministry of Education, founded in 1934, and finally embezzled.

A striking example is the prize awarded, in 1938, to the young orientalist Franz Rosenthal (1914-2003) who submitted a work on Aramaic research since Theodor Nöldeke's publications.

⁴⁷ [49] Marino Raicich mentions this aspect in the epilogue to the Italian translation of the memories. Lidzbarski (1988: 241).

⁴⁸ [50] Memories of the Jewish inhabitants of Płock are included in Lapiere (1989).

⁴⁹ [51] The will, the copy of which is kept in the DMG archive, is quoted by Rosenthal (1998: 362-363).

⁵⁰ [52] Hanisch (2004: 333-344).

[p. 28]

However, since he was of Jewish origin, like Lidzbarski, he was denied the prize money.⁵¹ Sixty years after this episode, Franz Rosenthal noted, in a contribution in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, that, based on the history of the Foundation, “a commentary on the entire history of our century” could be written.⁵² The Lidzbarski Foundation has survived the Second World War and the gold medal is now awarded at the *Deutscher Orientalistentag* and financed by the DMG.

Bibliography

- Balzer, Brigitte. 1990. *The Prussian Poland Policy 1894-1908 and the attitude of the German conservative and liberal parties, with special attention to the Province of Poznan*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Bauer, Walter. 1928/1929. “Mark Lidzbarski.” *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften in Göttingen - Geschäftliche Mitteilungen 1928/1929*: 71-77.
- Baumgartner, Walter. 1968. “Mark Lidzbarski.” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 14th July: 51.
- Cook, Stanley A. 1929. “Mark Lidzbarski.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 4: 872-874. [https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/3E6EAC6C8736D0A868C5B14F918DF52D/S0035869X0007009Xa.pdf/mark_lidzbarski.pdf]
- Drower, Ethel S., Rudolph Macuch. 1963. *A Mandaic Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dubnow, Simon. 1918. *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland: from the earliest times until the present day*. II (1825-1894). Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America [translated from the Russian by I. Friedlaender]
- Dussaud, René. 1929. “Mark Lidzbarski.” *Syria* 10: 182-184. [https://www.persee.fr/doc/syria_0039-7946_1929_num_10_2_8202?h=lidzbarski]
- Graetz, Heinrich. 1902. “Der Mesa-Stein oder die moabitische Inschrift von Dhiban.” In Idem, *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, II.1, 387-392. Leipzig: Leiner.
- Guesnet, François. 1998. *Polnische Juden im 19. Jahrhundert: Lebensbedingungen, Rechtsnormen und Organisation im Wandel*. Köln: Böhlau.
- Hanisch, Ludmila. 2003. *Die Nachfolger der Exegeten: Deutschsprachige Erforschung des Vorderen Orients in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Hanisch, Ludmila. 2004. “Nachwuchsförderung in den Zeiten der Cholera: Zur Geschichte der Lidzbarski-Stiftung.” In: *Sprachen, Mythen, Mythizismen: Festschrift Walter Beltz zum 65. Geburtstag*. Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientwissenschaft 32, edited by Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan, Jürgen

⁵¹ [53] About this process, see Hanisch (2003: 129).

⁵² [54] Rosenthal (1998: 364).

- Tubach, and Mohsen Zakeri, II: 326-344. Halle/Saale: Institut für Orientalistik – Martin Luther Universität.
- Ivanov, Anatolij E. 2001. “Die russländische Studentenschaft an den deutschen Hochschulen Ende des 19. und zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts. Kulturhistorische Fragestellungen.” In: *Schnorrer, Verschwörer, Bombenwerfer? Studenten aus dem Russischen Reich an deutschen Hochschulen vor dem 1. Weltkrieg*, edited by Hartmut Rüdiger Peter, 33-49. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Kronthal, Arthur. 1928. “Abrahams Lebensweg.” *Posener Heimatblätter – Organ des Verbandes Posener Heimatvereine* 11: 1-5.
- Lapierre, Nicole. 1989. *Le silence de la mémoire: à la recherche des juifs de Plock*. Paris: Pion.
- Lidzbarski, Mark. 1892. “Wer ist Chadir?” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* 7: 104-116.
[<http://menadoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/dmg/periodical/titleinfo/117476>]
- Lidzbarski, Mark. 1896. *Die neu-aramäischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*. I-II. Weimar: Emil Felber.
[I= https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_HpZwIQ3FTLAC/mode/2up;
II = <https://archive.org/details/dieneuaramaeisc00staagoog/page/n8/mode/2up>]
- Lidzbarski, Mark. 1898. *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik*. I-II. Weimar: Emil Felber.
[I= <http://menadoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/urn/urn:nbn:de:gbv:3:5-28710>;
II = https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_UzZbAAAAQAAI/page/n53/mode/2up]
- Lidzbarski, Mark. 1902-1915. *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik*. I-III. Gießen: Töpelmann.
[I (1902) = <https://archive.org/details/ephemerisfrsemi00lidzgoog/page/n6/mode/2up>;
II (1908) = <https://archive.org/details/ephemerisfrsem02lidzuoft/page/n5/mode/2up>;
III(1915)=<https://archive.org/details/32882013556066-ephemerisfursem/page/n8/mode/2up>]
- Lidzbarski, Mark. 1905/1915. *Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer*. Gießen: Töpelmann.
[<http://menadoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/urn/urn:nbn:de:gbv:3:5-32660>]
- Lidzbarski, Mark. 1920. *Mandäische Liturgien*. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung.
[<https://archive.org/details/mandaschelitur00lidzuoft/page/n4/mode/2up>]
- Lidzbarski, Mark. 1925. *Ginzā: der Schatz oder das große Buch der Mandäer*. Göttingen-Leipzig: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht-J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung.
[https://archive.org/details/MN41563ucmf_2/page/n5/mode/2up]
- Lidzbarski, Mark. 1927. *Auf rauhem Wege*. Gießen: Töpelmann.
[[https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.\\$b386257&view=1up&seq=1](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.$b386257&view=1up&seq=1)]
- Lidzbarski, Mark. 1988. *Ricordi di giovinezza di un professore tedesco*, edited by Marino Raicich, translated by C. Brunelli and L. Gattischi. Firenze: Passigli.
- Littmann, Enno. 1928. “Mark Lidzbarski (1828-1928).” *Deutsches Biographisches Jahrbuch* 10: 154.
- n.a. 2007. “Mitnaggedim.” In: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, edited by Fred Skolnik et al., XIV: 371. Farmington Hill (MI): Thomson Gale.

- [<https://ketab3.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/encyclopaedia-judaica-v-14-mel-nas.pdf>]
- Rosenthal, Franz. 1939. *Die aramaistische Forschung seit Theodor Nöldeke's Veröffentlichungen*. Leiden: Brill.
- Rosenthal, Franz. 1998. "Die Lidzbarski-Goldmedaille." *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 148: 361-366.
- [<http://menadoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/dmg/periodical/pageview/141289>]
- Somogyi, Tamar. 1982. *Die Schejnen und die Prosten: Untersuchungen zum Schönheitsideal der Ostjuden in Bezug auf Körper und Kleidung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Chassidismus*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.
- Trautmann-Waller, Céline. 2002. "L'enfance juive multilingue comme origine d'un projet scientifique: récurrences d'un modèle autobiographique." *Revue germanique internationale* 17: 81-92.
- Wein, Abraham. 1989. "Plock." In *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*. IV: 358-71. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem. [translation from *Pinkas Hakehillot Polin* by M. Gradel; https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol4_00358.html]
- Wellhausen, Julius. 1899. "Besprechung über Lidzbarski (1898)". *Göttingischen Gelehrten Anzeigen* 161: 602-608.
- Wertheimer, Jack. 1987. *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany*. Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wodziński, Marcin. 2005. *Haskalah and Hasidim in the Kingdom of Poland: a History of Conflict*. Oxford-Portland (OR): The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.

Marco Moriggi, Ph.D. (2003) Semitic Linguistics (Florence), is Associate Professor in Semitic Philology at the University of Catania. He has published on various Aramaic varieties, including Syriac. His latest titles include: *Aramaic Graffiti from Hatra. A Study based on the Archive of the Missione Archeologica Italiana* (with Ilaria Bucci, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2019), "And the impure and abominable priests fled for help to the names of the devils.' Amulets and magical practices in Syriac Christian culture between Late Antiquity and the modern world," *Hugoye* 19/2 (2016): 371-384. He can be reached at: nabarzaduk@gmail.com

Reviews

Graziella Acquaviva. 2019. *Leggere il teatro: l'esperienza swahili* ("ATrA Aree di transizione linguistiche e culturali in Africa" 6). Trieste: Trieste University Press. ISBN 978-88-5511-115-7; eISBN 978-88-5511-116-4. 146 pages.

This work, the title of which translates into English as "Reading the theatre: the Swahili experience," is a monography on the development of Swahili-language written drama in Eastern Africa, available online (open access) from the OpenstarTs¹ digital archive, which presents both a historical outline of Swahili drama and selected analytical perspectives. The author, Graziella Acquaviva, researcher and lecturer of Swahili language and literature at the University of Turin, has here synthesised her long-standing critical readings of Swahili drama, a genre which she also effectively employs as a didactic tool for her courses by staging new workings of excerpts of Swahili works with the students.²

This volume consists of a foreword by the author, three main sections, a rich bibliography and two useful appendices: the first appendix is an updated list of Swahili plays (not only those discussed in the volume), while the second presents the Swahili terminology relating to drama and its criticism.

The first introductory section (*Introduzione*) is composed of two parts. In the first part, entitled "From tradition to modernity: origins and development of drama in Kenya and Tanzania" (*Dalla tradizione alla modernità: origini e sviluppo del teatro in Kenya e Tanzania*), the author retraces the origins of Swahili drama back to the colonial and missionary context. This period was characterised by a process of acculturation which implied, on the one hand, an attempt to assert control (in terms of censorship or even eradication) over local performative arts, in primis the *ngoma*, performances relating to the most important rites in the social life of East African communities, and, on the other hand, the introduction of (British) drama into East Africa, together with the building of theatres. At this time, the first Swahili-language written plays were composed, by Graham Hyslop, who became the British music and drama officer in colonial Kenya in 1956, and by his Kenyan pupils, Henri Kuria and Gerishon Ngugi. The second part of this section, called "Theatre and independence" (*Teatro e indipendenza*), is in turn split into two sub-divisions, namely "Development of drama in independent Kenya" (*Sviluppo del teatro*

¹ <https://www.openstarts.units.it/handle/10077/29416> (last access on 25/05/2020).

² For example, *Nirudi kwangu* ("Coming back to myself"), staged at the Araldo theatre in Turin on the 19th June 2012 by the students of Swahili Language and Culture of the Università degli Studi di Torino under the direction of their lecturer Acquaviva, with the collaboration of: Università degli Studi di Torino, Centro Piemontese di Studi Africani and Comitato Collaborazione Medica. <http://musica.istruzioneepiemonte.it/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Swahili-al-teatro-Araldo.pdf> (last access on 25/05/2020).

nel Kenya indipendente) and “Tanzania: the re-adapted tradition” (*Tanzania: la tradizione ri-adattata*). The first of these outlines the growth of Swahili drama in post-independence Kenya; plays which mainly deal with social, family and ethical conflicts, especially in an urban context, while also handling political themes. Since the Arap Moi era, Kenyan authors, such as Khaemba Ongeti, Kimani Njogu, Kyallo Wamitila, have increasingly denounced the corruption, avidity and authoritarianism of African leadership in disguised, symbolic forms, often by drawing upon imagery and devices from the oral tradition. The second sub-division focuses on post-independence Tanganyika and Zanzibar, which formed the United Republic of Tanzania after the Zanzibar Revolution, under the leadership of Julius Nyerere and Abedi Karume. This context was greatly influenced by the ideology of Nyerere, who considered the Swahili language to be a fundamental medium for the project of *ujamaa* (African socialism) and the building of a Tanzanian national identity. Nyerere’s government promoted the development and re-evaluation of local performative arts, such as *ngoma* and *ngonjera* (dialogued and dramatised poetry), which were used for political divulgation (in Swahili) during public and school events. The same happened to the *vichekesho* (comic sketches), which developed in colonial times. As remarked upon by Acquaviva, these genres were also often re-adapted by Swahili playwrights, such as Ari Katini Mwachofi, Penina Muhando, Farouk Topan and many others.

The second section, “The myth of ‘resistence’” (*Il mito della ‘resistenza’*), is articulated in four parts: “Myth – Revolution – Drama” (*Mito – Rivoluzione – Dramma*), “The myth of unity in Kinjeketile and Mkwawa wa Uhehe” (*Il mito dell’unità in Kinjeketile e Mkwawa wa Uhehe*), “The tragedy of resistance in Kenya” (*Il drama della resistenza in Kenya*), and “Not only heroes: the dramatic figure of the female combatant” (*Non solo eroi: la figura drammatica della combattente*). In the first part, the author underlines how the relationship between literature, history and ‘revolution,’ in other words writers’ commitment to social change, is particular vivid in drama, due to its double, written and performative, nature, and was therefore chosen by many East African authors in order to artistically recreate individual and collective memories of the liberation movements for the audience. In the second part, Acquaviva provides a detailed analysis of two plays based on historical figures who led anticolonial struggles, namely *Kinjeketile* by Ebrahim Hussein (1969), about Kinjeketile Ngwale, the diviner who became a leader in the Maji Maji war, the first cross-ethnic rising by the peoples of southern Tanganyika against the Germans colonialists (1905-1907), and *Mkwawa wa Uhehe* (1979) by Mugyabuso Mulokozi, about Chief Mkwawa, who led the Hehe resistance against the Germans (1891-1898). *Kinjeketile* and *Mkwawa* are both presented as forerunners of the independence movements and nation building, as tragic, misunderstood characters who convey a sense of unity conceived of in terms of inter-ethnic dialogue and, especially in *Kinjeketile*, sustained by critical thinking (as exemplified by *Kinjeketile*’s doubts after

his own prophecy). In the third part, the focus is on Kenyan Swahili historical plays, the topics of which range from the old Mombasa under Portuguese rule, in Rocha Chimerah's *Mnara wawaka moto* ("The burning minaret," 1998), to the memory of recent inter-ethnic violence in *Maua kwenye jua la asubuhi* ("Flowers in the morning sun," 2004) by Kithaka wa Mberia. A central theme, which has inspired many Kenyan literary works (the most well-known of which are those by Ngugi wa Thiong'o), is the anticolonial resistance of the so-called 'Mau Mau' fighters (and the contemporary betrayal of their ideals of freedom and equity), in such plays as Farouk Muslim and Said Mzee's *Mkuki wa moto* ("The burning spear," 1980) and Njiru Kimunyi's *Upotovu* ("Decadence," 2000). The final part of the second section analyses how some Swahili playwrights have represented the great contribution made by women to East African liberation movements, both as fighters and/or supporters (of money, food, guns), by depicting courageous female heroes, such as Mtage in Mulokozi's *Mukwawa wa Uhehe* and Tsitsi in Emmanuel Mbogo's *Tone la mwisho* ("The last drop," 1981), a work set in Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe) during the liberation struggle against the regime of Ian Smith.

The third section, "Itineraries in theatre" (*Percorsi teatrali*), is divided into two parts, i.e. "Women's writing and popular theatre" (*Scrittura femminile e teatro popolare*), and "Mobile trajectories: Ebrahim Hussein" (*Traiettorie mobili: Ebrahim Hussein*). In the first part, Acquaviva focuses on the emergence of a number of East African women playwrights and activists, such as Angelina Chogo Wapakabulo, Amandina Lihamba, Ari Katini Mwachofi and Penina Muhando, who conceive of their works as a means of popular mobilisation and social development, with special attention to the condition of women, by promoting their rights while recognising the necessary process of social negotiation between tradition and modernity, often within the multifaceted female world. Moreover, their *engagé* theatre, frequently meant to be staged in local, sometimes rural, communities during social campaigns (on education, health etc.), often draws upon ethnic repertoires by creatively incorporating elements of the oral tradition (often defamiliarised *à la Brecht*), such as songs, *ngoma* dances, the narrator figure (*mtambaji*) etc. in order to enhance communication with the audience, especially in the works by Penina Muhando and Amandina Lihamba. The second and final part of this section is devoted to Ebrahim Hussein, born in Kilwa in 1943, and among the most famous Swahili playwrights, not least due to his translating *Kinjeketile* into English (1970), and its then being performed at the 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (Lagos 1977) and included in many reference works on African theatre. The author presents a multifaceted reading of Hussein's works, dwelling on selected long excerpts from the texts (in both the original language and translation). Her analysis includes and moves beyond the common socio-political interpretation, which partially overshadows the complex language, imagery and symbolism of Hussein's works. Acquaviva identifies in the concepts of 'time' and 'doubt' the generative

topoi of Hussein's writing of both drama and poetry, two genres that he has practised separately and even mixed in his most experimental plays, namely *Jogoo kijijini* and *Ngao ya jadi* ("The village rooster," "The ancestors' shield;" 1976).

To conclude, on account of its well documented historical overview and analytical contents, enriched by the two (bibliographical and terminological) appendices, this book represents a valuable Italian-language resource for both students of Swahili language and literature and scholars investigating modern Swahili drama.

Flavia Aiello

University of Naples "L'Orientale"

faiello@unior.it

Teasing Clues of Life

Review of: Chittaranjan Misra, Jaydeep Sarangi and Mona Das. 2019. *Resonance: English Poetry from Poets of Odisha*. New Delhi: Authors Press. ISBN: 978-93-89615-03-6 (Hardbound). 187 pages. Price: INR 300.

Indian English poetry is no more a toddler: it now has reached its heyday of youth. One can hear its resonance from the poets of Odisha. *Resonance English Poetry from Poets of Odisha*, edited by Chittaranjan Misra, Jaydeep Sarangi and Mona Das ushers in a mood of enchantment, whilst the poets of this anthology grab attention with their poise and expression. In this volume, the expression Indian English Poetry “can be viewed as an ongoing juxtaposition of conflicting ideas related to ‘cultural diversity’ of the country and ‘cultural difference’ as a globally accepted marker of identity” (6). In the Introduction, the editors write: “Poetry from Odisha can be seen as an attempt at a metonymic exposition to Indian English Poetry seed of this idea has resulted in this anthology. Odisha as a state remains fairly low-key not only outside India but also within India. There is no understood Odia identity say in the manner of a Bengali or Punjabi stereotype, which almost defines an Indian due to a lack of any other established identities. In a way, this benefits the Odia poet or to be more accurate, the poet from Odisha, to maintain a neutral gaze and bringing objectivity to their writing” (7).

The sense of location that the Odisha English-language poets construct is about cultural specificity refracted through the poets’ sensibility and power of fashioning imagery. Since many of these poets are bilingual authors writing in Odia as well as English, their works in both languages signify a rootedness, while opening out to the world. The anthology also adds established and new voices from Odisha, and outside the state and the country too. Most of the poets here have been published widely and have earned an international reputation. The editors have gracefully added a few poems in memory of those they have lost.

Bibhu Padhi is one of the most formidably intellectual poets of his generation, with outstanding achievements. His poems “Night sounds”, “And then Darkness,” and “Trust” straddle a mind-boggling canvas. In “Finding and Losing”, he writes: “I’m alone, and the usual doors / of escape are shut and sealed, / as though they were meant /for somebody else’s life” (26). Here each word is a world that resonates and leaves a fine aftertaste. “Guitar” by Bipin Patsani reminds one of David Russell playing the guitar live, as the poet writes “Are you not a meeting place of voices? / In you I hear the roar of the sea / And the quiet storms above; / In you only, in unlimited space I move/ And meet eternity” (28). Deba Patnaik’s “Death is not Dying” tugs a chord in the heart. He explores memory and desire through

the lens of loss and despair. The grief is beyond personal: “Who says death is lonely? / Living is” (36). “Memory is a treacherous rainbow-arch /to blind alleys – unending, serpentine. / Memory is a shadow-play tricking us into believing.” This approach aims to arrive at propositions that locate poetry as an archive for memory. Chittaranjan Mishra’s “Winter” bridges the past and present memories. The technique of the movements in the poem is melodious, innovative and touches the readers with beautiful oscillations of keynotes “I never thought / This rustle of leaves / Would remind me / Of their absence [...] “I never thought / This winter/ I would trail/ My wild shadows/ On the moonlit shore” (43). “Self” turns out to be a many-layered conversation in which the poet explores an audacious range of virtuositities, his curiosity about various aspects of self stirred by intense exchanges and his understanding of melody, rhythm and movement of life/lives enhanced by the interface.

Chinmoy Jena in “October” writes about light, shadows and simplicity of life. Dilip Mohapatra in “Suffering” writes “Pain defines and claims its territory /sometimes overtly/ sometimes surreptitiously/ through pangs of labour [...] “Suffering is only the/ flip side of joy /and bliss /just like the flowers and the thorns/ bitter and sweet coexist” (55-56). In suffering, there is no firm figure, nor a clear ground. Suffering remains as a nagging thorn in one’s life. Durga Prasad Panda in his poem “Today” leaves teasing clues of the role played by media and its aftermath. “Strangely no one was hacked / to death/ despite speaking the truth fearlessly /. Today was a perfect day /. Today/, the newspapers of the country / were on a day’s token strike” (61). Itishri Sarangi dedicates her poem “The Catharsis” to the it will be gang-rape victims, she writes: “My innocence is killed, my femininity stripped / Crumbled and trashed / The evil destroyed me” (65). The poem is textured by a smart weave of verbal and physical play. It opens up possibilities of finding a new vocabulary for the mutilated gendered body.

Jayanta Mahapatra has made Cuttack in Odisha (Orissa) a significant place on the national literary scene, which dates back to his publication of *Gray Book* and *Chandrabhaga*.¹ Being the first Indian poet to receive the Sahitya Akademi Award for his *Relationship* in 1981, he is an iconic Indian poet. He has received global attention for his inimitable style in the use of English. In “The Road”, he speaks of a journey he undertook to have a handle on some of the unknown dynamics of life. The road, however, has changed: “It’s not the road anymore / along which my mother sent me on errands [...] The one I have taken now /appears to fill me with purpose and strength /. But I do not know if it is the happy

¹ *Chandrabhaga: a Magazine of Indian writing* (2000-) is an online magazine which appears twice a year (Summer and Winter). Jayanta Mahapatra is the Editor and Rabindra K. Swain the managing editor.

one” (67). The poet heaves as he stands in front of a monumental gateway of the temple of life, and he thinks of ‘home:’ “Something slithers past as I watch /, from the garden someone left behind in my heart /. I try to think of home./ I come upon tracks of tall pylons in the dust” (67). Jaydeep Sarangi weaves an arboreal yarn around Jhargram with its dense forest and red soil. As one reads the lines, the mind is full of tranquillity and calm and is far from the maddening crowd of the suffering city. “I’m from that forest land. / My laurels are made of leaves. /I am fast losing my green leaves / Or only coming to what is really my own. / Jhargram – /This is where everything ends in love”(69). “Another day in Kolkata” deals with the fast-changing demography of Kolkata: “Chances are she’ll lose the dream / Settle for fast-growing metro links, high sky rises. / Knight Riders fan the tempo, / The fire of Bangla poems doubles the impact” (70). Kumerandra Mallik instead describes sleepwalkers ‘looking for the roadside to divinity’ (76).

Mamata Dash beautifully pens the life journey of a girl who has travelled alone on a luxury boat waiting to sail to the other side in “Alone on a Luxury Boat” (78-79). Mona Dash’s concern in “Language” is to dredge out if possible, the ‘truth’ of ‘identity,’ a ‘truth’ manifested in trauma and desire, a truth that baffles the symbolic order of language itself. “We made our changes, we learnt our lessons, /our tongues remained the same / foreign words our own” (90). Nandini Sahu in “Who Says Death is the Only Truth” critiques those who wait only for death, and questions whether people can make their music of life or how capable are they in augmenting the civilization. In “Bridge-In-Making”, she writes “Poetry in English is like a passion for empire building /. It’s the subaltern speaking /the words pleading to be universally, intently heard” (99). She reflects upon her past, in the light of which she tries to illuminate the present. A very important *modus operandi* adopted by Sahu to solve the resistances of her cultural third space is, therefore, to decipher her present predicament of anxiety with the help of her mnemonic reservoir to find a real identity. Namita Rani Panda as a woman gazes back and reclaims the space that is denied to a ravished woman/en to burst the bubble around toxic male hegemony in “The Plead of A Corpse” (107).

Niranjan Mohanty is in search of a stony blueprint which mesmerized the world long ago and is continuing to do so in “The Sun Temple at Konark” (109). Prabhanjan Kumar Mishra also speaks of the wonder called Konark. Pradip Kumar Patra wants to “walk towards the horizon / With the quest of our own” (124). Professor Himansu S. Mohapatra in his essay “Showcasing Odia-English Verse: Pitfalls and Prospects” affirms: “from Jayanta Mahapatra and Bibhu Padhi to Shanta Acharya and Rabindra K. Swain have paid attention to the diction of their poetry. They have perfected idioms that are supple and resonant.” Saroj K. Padhi in “Daughter” speaks of how a daughter can with her Midas’ touch transform

the angst, worries, pain and sufferings into tranquil gold. Swapna Behra in “My Sagacious Dreams” glides nimbly over the frets of life sans any kind of visible effort or scrapping.

Resonance: English Poetry from Poets of Odisha looks far beyond geographical boundaries and extend the field of vision to include resonance of life. The hope is that the researchers, scholars and readers gain fresh vestiges of poetic perception through the anthology.

Sutanuka Ghosh Roy

Tarakeswar Degree College, The University of Burdwan

ghoshroy_sutanuka@hotmail.co.in