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The Bantu poetic traditions
Interfaces between language and versification

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The aim of this paper is to analyse the versification practices of four Bantu languages—Swahili, Tswana, Zulu and Chewa—in a comparative perspective. This comparison is based on the fact that the suprasegmental phonologies of these four languages share a common feature, penultimate lengthening. It will be claimed that penultimate lengthening is the main linguistic feature that organises the line in the poetic traditions taken into account. As a linguistic phenomenon, penultimate lengthening shows some variation in its function among the four languages: it will be shown that this corresponds to analogous variations in the versification practices. The ultimate aim of this paper is to encourage further research in the field of stylistics of Bantu poetic traditions, a domain where joint work between linguists and scholars in literary studies could lead to innovative and fruitful results.

Keywords: Bantu, poetry, stylistics, penultimate lengthening, literature.

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to start an investigative analysis in a field that has so far received relatively scarce attention, namely metre and stylistics in African Literatures. More specifically, the focus will be on the literary traditions of some Bantu languages, namely Swahili, Tswana, Zulu and Chewa. Studying the versification practices of these particular idioms and the related literatures is interesting for several reasons. For some of them, introductory investigations into the question of metre and prosody have already been carried out by scholars, but their results have received little attention and, unfortunately, have never been analysed collectively from a comparative perspective.

The four languages taken into account are geographically close to each other, being placed along or near to the East African coast: contacts between people in these zones have been widely documented, and will be briefly outlined in the first section of this paper. All these languages, moreover, share a prosodic feature, that Hyman (2009: 195) defines as 'penultimate lengthening' (PL). For the moment, this can be defined as a suprasegmental trait consisting in the lengthening of the

penultimate syllable of one or more domains (which, depending on the language, can be the word, the prosodic phrase or the utterance). PL as a shared linguistic phenomenon will be introduced in the second section; later, it will be dealt with in greater detail for each of the languages examined.

This article aims, more specifically, to discuss a hypothesis that I advanced in my PhD thesis (Minerba 2021: 155-156), where I presented my analysis of the metres of archaic Swahili poetry.[1] Briefly, my hypothesis assumes that the archaic Swahili metric system does not represent an isolated case, but can find correspondences in other languages presenting PL. I will give an outline of what we currently know about Bantu[2] versification practices, discussing whether and how further comparative research should be done to investigate their development.

The main topic of this paper, then, is the role of PL in the organisation of the line in four Bantu poetic traditions. It should be noted that the expression "organisation of the line" does not necessarily mean metre. The patterns of the lines in these texts often correspond to what I have named in my PhD thesis *distinct verse* (Minerba 2022: 73). By distinct verse I mean a kind of versification, different from both metrical and free verse, where line-boundaries are always marked by one or more linguistic devices, but it is not possible to know in anticipation which devices will be employed for any given line-boundary. This contrasts both with free-verse, where line-boundaries are not marked linguistically, and with metrical verse, where they are marked linguistically and it is also known by which devices they will be marked. For example, in the Swahili *utenzi* line-boundaries are always marked, and the linguistic marker is always predictable: the constant number of 8 syllables per line. This makes *utenzi* metrical.[3]

On this premise, it can be stated that the task of this investigation is to analyse the role of PL in the construction of distinct verse in the poetic traditions examined. This investigation must, naturally, start by an analysis of PL as a linguistic phenomenon, and then look at how its features are employed

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[1] That is, poetry dating back to the period before the strong literary influence of the Arabic poetic tradition,

[2] For the sake of brevity, in this paper I use the term "Bantu" in expressions such as "Bantu verse," "Bantu poetries" to refer in general to the stylistic and literary traditions observed in poems composed in the languages taken into accounts, all of them belonging to the Bantu family. It is, of course, a simplification at many levels; the existence of a Bantu family does not at all imply the existence in the past of one or more communities that identified themselves as "Bantu." I should also add that the results of this research could be generalised only to a subset of Bantu languages, those presenting PL; therefore, my work is not representative of the whole Bantu area even on a linguistic side. For these reasons, I invite the reader to take into account that here I use the term Bantu only to be linguistically more concise, and that none of the simplifications here mentioned is implied in this choice.

[3] For a more detailed explanation of this concept and its application, see Minerba (2022: 58-88).

in versification practices. This will be done from the third to the sixth sections of this paper, each one dedicated to a particular language.

2. Historical contacts

The investigation presented here started on the premise that the versification practices of Swahili, Tswana, Zulu and Chewa (and other Bantu languages) present such remarkable shared features that they could be historically interrelated. Tracing a parallel with historical linguistics, it is possible, in other words, that they derive from the same *Urform*. That said, if this *Urform* existed, it is in my opinion not yet possible to point out the exact historical moment in which it was used. Moreover, the fact that their poetries have been oral until recent times[4] makes it difficult to assign an exact date to each text.

Naturally, the first historical feature shared by these languages is their common Bantu origin. It is nevertheless impossible to think that a versification based on PL dates back to this period, since PL was not a trait of Proto-Bantu (Hyman 2009: 207). However, leaving this hypothesis apart, the four languages examined have been in reciprocal contact for long periods in the course of history.

Among the four languages, Swahili seems at first glance the most unlikely to have been in close contact with the others: as pointed out by Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993: 30), linguistic innovations mostly spread from north to south along the Swahili coast, and, given the cultural prestige of zones like Mombasa in the 16th century (Pouwels 2002: 425), and the northern archipelago later (Vernet, 2005:48–50), one could assume the same for literary innovation. Nevertheless, an earlier south-to-north direction of influence can not be excluded, if one considers the importance of the city of Kilwa before it was sacked by the Portuguese in 1505 (Vernet 2005: 62–70). Up to its destruction, Kilwa was an important Swahili trade centre, located on the southern coast of present-day Tanzania. Kilwa had strong trade relations with the Mutapa empire (which included the Tswana area) in Zambezia, and its hegemony covered a huge part of the Swahili-speaking population along the Mozambican coast: there is evidence of Swahili settlements up to Sofala (Da Costa e Silva 1992: 335–337). The Swahili were thus in contact with several Southern Bantu cultures, and Kilwa was the main node of these contacts. This

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[4] The oldest Swahili manuscript known to us, *Chuo cha Herekali*, dates back to 1728 (Bertoncini-Zúbková 2000: 20). Tswana written poetry seems to be more recent: Moloto (1970: 242-243) provides a survey of it, where all the written works of original poetry quoted date from the 1940s or later. The same period seems to have seen the development of Zulu written poetry (Cope, 1984: 13). Chewa written literature seems to be even more recent, if still in 2003 Kishindo (2003: 327-328) can observe that written Chewa poetry 'does not appear regularly.' The collection of poems that I have, *Akoma akagonera* (edited by Mvula), dates to 1981.

is witnessed, for example, by the structure of the gold trade. The paths of the sixteenth-century gold trade are well documented: gold reached the coast from the interior at the littoral city of Sofala (south of Kilwa), heading towards the Middle East and India. However, Sofala was too far south for ships to reach these destinations with one monsoon. Instead, gold was transported up to Kilwa by local Swahili sailors on dhows, and from there shipped across the Indian Ocean (Pearson 1998: 104–105). Kilwa was thus exposed to influences both from the northern Swahili coast and from the southern coast and hinterland; in the same way, it could spread these influences in other directions. Kilwa's hegemony in the Swahili world, as mentioned, ended abruptly in 1505; but, ironically, such a dramatic end could have given this city the opportunity of exercising an even deeper influence on the rest of the Swahili coast. According to Vernet (2005: 70), after the fall of the city many former inhabitants moved to other, more stable Swahili centres, mainly in the north. It is not unlikely that their arrival led to the spread of southern literary forms.

As already remarked, the position of Kilwa made it geographically near to the other languages taken into account here. It has been mentioned that this Swahili city used to have strong trade relations with the Mutapa Empire. The same is true of the Chewa population: in fact, it seems that the trade relations between southern Zambezia (the zone of the Mutapa empire) and southern lake Malawi increased significantly after their settlement in the region. The trade networks established by the Chewa made them able to import merchandise from Asia and Europe, such as glass beads, which reveals a connection with the Indian Ocean trade (Juwayeyi 2020: 186). Under emperor Muzura, in the seventeenth century, the Maravi state also had a strong influence on the territories along the left bank of the Zambezi up to the Mozambican coast (Juwayeyi 2020: 198-199): they are the same territories that were, just a century earlier, under Kilwa's hegemony.

The Mutapa Empire's language was Shona, a Southern Bantu language. Southern Bantu languages are a subset of the Bantu languages, corresponding to the zones of what are today Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe (Doke 1954: 20), and to group S of Guthrie's classification. Tswana (S31) and Zulu (S42) are part of this group (Van de Velde *et al.* 2022: 52). Southern Bantu languages are related not only linguistically: they share an important literary form, that of praise-poetry (Rycroft 1976: 155-159). It is plausible, therefore, that their versification practices share common features. The Swahili traders settled in Mozambique could have had contacts with the Southern Bantu communities: not only the Shona, but also the Tsonga (S52/S53), among others. There

are other possible points of contact, like the *mfecane*,[5] which interested all these communities more or less intensely, but which I consider too late with respect to the time this mutual literary influence must have taken place. For the sake of this preliminary investigation, one can conclude that there could have been mutual influence between Swahili, Chewa and Southern Bantu versification practices at some time in history.[6] The most evident result of this influence is the role accorded to PL in the building of the line. This fact, naturally, requires a first look at PL as a linguistic phenomenon.

3. Penultimate Lengthening

According to Hyman (2009: 195) PL is the lengthening of the penultimate syllable of a domain, which, depending on the language, can be the word, the prosodic phrase (PP) or the utterance. PL as such is a subset of a range of interrelated phenomena of "penultimate prominence," which affect a great number of Bantu languages. In Swahili, for example, one finds a fixed stress position on the penultimate syllable of a word or phrase (Tucker and Ashton 1942: 78). There can be, in addition, a lengthening of that syllable, but this is not phonematically distinctive and its presence depends on several factors, such as the tempo of the utterance (Tucker and Ashton 1942: 83). Concerning the domain this "penultimate prominence" applies to, Tucker and Ashton (1942: 83) note that, though Swahili has a word stress, 'in the middle of a phrase or sentence the penultimate syllables of words lose their length and very often their stress as well, unless there is a shifting of emphasis.' Therefore, in Swahili any (phonetic) word has a stress; in the utterance, stress tends to be more prominently realised at the end of a phrase.[7]

In other Bantu languages, however, the lengthening of the penultimate syllable is distinctive. Hyman (2009: 198) reports in several cases a situation similar to that of Swahili: namely, PL happens in first instance at word-level, but it is more prominently realised at a broader level, such as utterance (as

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[5] The *mfecane* (literally 'scattering') was a historical period of military conflict and migration that took place in Southern Africa in the first half of the 19th century due to the expansion of the Zulu nation under Shaka. See Eldredge (1992) for an introduction to and a critical reconsideration of this period.

[6] Naturally, at this point of the research the role that can be attributed to these contacts cannot yet be identified with scientific certainty and remains hypothetical. The same must be told of the role played by the structural similarities between the phonologies of these languages. Understanding whether and how each of these factors have contributed to shape, in the languages taken into account, metrical systems with a certain degree of similarity is one of the aims of this research in the long term.

[7] Since in the case of Swahili the lengthening of the penultimate vowel is not phonematically distinctive, one should not *stricto sensu* talk of PL in the definition given by Hyman, but generally of "penultimate prominence." However, for the sake of simplicity and since the two phenomena are interrelated, here the label PL will be used in reference to Swahili as well.

in Southern Sotho) or phrase (Chewa, Tumbuka, Makonde, Matengo). Hyman (2009: 198) continues noticing that in some languages, such as Tswana and Shona, the presence of two levels (word and phrase) produces two different degrees of PL: the word-penultimate syllable in the middle of the phrase is distinctively lengthened, but not as much as the phrase-penultimate one.

Thus, PL shows a considerable degree of variation in relation to the domains it affects (prosodic words, phrases, utterances). The features of PL in the languages considered here will be outlined in depth in the corresponding sections. As will be remarked, these variations correspond to different ways of organising the line.

4. Penultimate Lengthening in archaic Swahili poetry

As an introductory remark, I have observed that in several Bantu poetries lines are organised in such a way that each of them tends to have the same number of syllables with PL, and tends to have these syllables in the same positions. The occurrence of PL-affected syllables creates a sound recurrence that gives regularity to the composition. The first example that will be analysed here is that of Swahili archaic poetry. In my PhD dissertation (Minerba 2022: 27) I have defined, following Bertoncini's periodisation, the "archaic" period of Swahili literary history as the one preceding the beginning of the influence of Arabic poetry (which marks the beginning of the 'classical' period). Archaic Swahili poems, unlike classical ones, do not have a syllabic metre: each line can have a different number of syllables. However, I have demonstrated (Minerba, 2022: 116-175) that these poems are still metrical: they do not present syllabic metres, but rather syllabo-tonic ones. Küper (2011: 24) defines syllabo-tonic metres as metres where 'the number of metrical positions is constant while the number of stressed syllables is variable.' The examples that will be given here from Swahili archaic poetry will shed light on this definition.

Compared to the other cases examined here, Swahili PL has some linguistic peculiarities. As we have noted, the actual lengthening of the penultimate syllable is not constant, is not phonematically distinctive, and depends on many factors, such as the tempo of the utterance (Tucker and Ashton 1942: 83). Length, one should add, is not phonologically distinctive in any of the Sabaki[8] languages except Mwiini, which is a variety of Swahili (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 177). It is remarkable, however, that in Mwiini length contrasts appear only in penult or antepenult position, as noted by Nurse and

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[8] Here I report for Sabaki the definition given by Nurse and Hinnebusch (1993: 4): 'Sabaki, taken from the name of the Kenyan river entering the Indian Ocean between Malindi and Mambrui and thus approximately bisecting the Sabaki language area, is a purely linguistic label for six closely related languages of the East African littoral. The best known Sabaki language is Swahili.'

Hinnebusch (1993: 259): 'Not only can length contrasts only appear on the penult or antepenult of a P-phrase, not only is length reduced in antepenult position if the penult itself is heavy (i.e., has a branching rhyme), but conversely, a short final vowel will be lengthened if it stands in P-phrase antepenult or penult position (unless of course followed by a penult with a branching rhyme).'

The lack of tonal distinctiveness means we cannot study Swahili PL in relation to how it affects tonal patterning, as scholars have done with the other languages presented here. Instead, it is phonematically realised through stress. Despite this peculiarity, it has been linguistically proven that what should more exactly be called "penultimate stress" in Swahili derives from PL. Gérard Philippson has contributed to Nurse and Hinnebusch's *Swahili and Sabaki* with the chapter *Tone (and Stress) in Sabaki* (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 248-264). He states that, in Proto-Sabaki and in other proto-languages of the north-eastern coast, the Proto-Bantu tone contrast evolved into a pitch-accent system: unlike in tonal systems, in a pitch-accent system there can be only one tonal mark per morpheme (and, often, in the whole word; Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 262). From this stage, Proto-Sabaki and Proto-Seuta underwent a process of tone spread, by which a H tone can spread over one or more following syllables. Proto-Sabaki tone spread happened word-internally up to the penult syllable (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 263). Philippson calls this stage "Stage 1," adding that it is also the stage where Pokomo stopped. In "Stage 2" there was a further tone spread, this time up to PP boundaries. Philippson assumes that at this stage PP boundaries were marked by 'some kind of penult prominence,' which could have had vowel lengthening as marker. Consequently, he considers vowel length to be still distinctive at this stage for the whole Sabaki group (Nurse and Hinnebusch 1993: 264). In "Stage 3," a subset of the Sabaki languages (which included Swahili) no longer based the pitch-accent placement on syllable counting, but on constituent construction, always within the PP boundary. Again, the existence of PL might have played a role in this development. Modern Swahili (excluding Mwiini) represents an outcome of this stage, where the function played by pitch-accent has been taken over by stress.

In each archaic Swahili poem that I have analysed, all the lines are composed of the same number of feet. By *foot*[9] I mean a sequence of two to five syllables where two parts can be identified. The last part, the *rhythmic core*, is the one that contains the rhythmic unit of the metre: it consists of two syllables, the first stressed, the second unstressed. This rhythmic core can be (but is not always) preceded by the other part, that of the *auxiliary syllables*, consisting of up to three syllables that can be

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[9] I borrow the term "foot" from the Classical metrical terminology (see for example Boldrini: 35-38). It has been however employed also to refer to elements of other metrical systems: for example, in his work on the Classical Arabic metres, Paoli (2008: 95.98) employs the French term *pied* as translation of the Arabic *tafᶜīla.*

indifferently stressed or unstressed. A stressed syllable belonging to this part of the foot will not represent a rhythmical unit for the metre. This structure can be schematised as follows:

[x][x][x]óo

where the square brackets indicate an element that does not necessarily need to occur; *ó* and *o* represents respectively a stressed and an unstressed syllable; *x* a syllable indifferently stressed or unstressed. Thus, in this schema *óo* represent the rhythmic core and *[x][x][x]* the optional auxiliary syllables. The stressed vowel of the rhythmic core occupies a strong metrical position (SMP).

It is easy to derive the form of the rhythmic core from linguistic considerations: as remarked earlier, the stress in Swahili falls on word-penultimate syllables, and consequently any stressed syllable is followed by a word-final syllable, which is necessarily unstressed. One can therefore state that the archaic Swahili metrical foot is an example of metre based on PL.

It is worth looking at some examples of archaic Swahili metrical feet. The following are lines 3-5 of the composition *Uṯumbuizo wa Liyongo Fumo* (source text and translation from Miehe *et al.* 2004: 40; the symbol · indicates caesura and *|* foot boundary):

Text 1
*Muka**k'e**ṯi | **yu**u | la uli**li**ye · waku**sa**nya | wa**ṯe**zi | wa **ri**ngo*
*Waku**sa**nya | wa**ṯe**zi | hi**ya**ri · wayu**wa**o | ku**tu**nga | zi**fu**ngo*
*Wayu**wa**o | kufu**wa**sa | **zi**na · na ku**ṯe**za | kwa ku**mi**ya | **shi**ngo*

Take your places on the ceremonial *ulili*, you, who select the graceful dancers
you, who gather the best dancers, skilled in composing enigmatic verses,
those who are masters of the art of rhyme and who dance elegantly with swaying necks.

The syllables occupying a SMP are in bold. As one can see, there are 6 SMPs in each line (more specifically, 3 in each hemistich). In the case of this poem (but not in general for all archaic Swahili poetry) hemistichs also have the same number of syllables, 10, and the disposition of the SMPs is also almost constant: the first one contains the 3rd syllable, the second the 5th (*Mukak'eṯi yuu la uliliye*), 6th (*wakusanya waṯezi wa ringo*; this is also the most frequent case in the whole poem) or 7th syllable (*Wayuwao kufuwasa zina*), and the last the 9th syllable.

I have chosen these three lines as my first example because they represent the most simple case for metrical scansion: in them, stressed syllables occur in all the SMPs and only in SMPs.[10] This is also the most frequent case: in my analysis (from Minerba 2022: 136) I have calculated that, among all the hemistichs of the all lines in my corpus, 426 out of 616 (69.2%) present this pattern; 40 (9.2%) present one stressed syllable less than the number of SMPs; 113 (25.9%) have one stressed syllable more; finally, 27 (4.4%) present two stressed syllables more, and only 3 (0.5%) have three stressed syllables more. The statistics thus show that the basic tendency is to use stressed syllables for SMPs and only for them. However, it is worth looking at an example with more complex metrical scansions. The following are lines 1-7 of *Uṯumbuizo wa Kikowa* (source text and translation from Miehe *et al.* 2004: 36):

Text 2
Pijyani[11] ***p'e****mbe | vigoma**m**le | na ṯo**wa**zi*
Ṯ'e*ze | na **Mbwa**sho | na K'u**nda**zi*
*Pija mu**wi**wa | k'umbuke **mwa**na | wa sha**nga**zi*
*Yu wapi **si**mba | ezi li **ka**na | mṯe**mbe**zi*
*Fumo wa **Sha**nga |, sikiya, **sha**mba | mitaa **pwa**ni*
*Fumo wa **Sha**nga |, chambiya **Wa**ṯwa | fungi**ya**ni?*
Fu*mo | a**cha**mba | mfu**nge**ni*

Strike for me the horns, the long drums and the cymbals,
so that I may dance with Mbwasho and K'undazi.
Strike, you who owe a debt (of Kikowa), so that I may remember (my) cousin.
Where is the mighty lion? He is an inveterate wanderer!
Fumo of Shanga, reckon well, (roams) the land and the coastal areas.
Fumo of Shanga asked the Watwa people: 'Why are you putting me in fetters?'
Fumo (Mringwari) ordered: 'Tie him up!'

First of all, we notice in this poem that isosyllabism is not a constraint for Swahili archaic poems: as an example, the last two lines have respectively 14 and 9 syllables. Both of them, however, have the same number of SMPs. The disposition of the SMPs also has a larger degree of variation in this example. The basic pattern is a line of 14 syllables, with the SMPs containing the 4th, the 9th and the 13th syllables, as in lines 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6. It is worth noting that in these lines there are more stressed syllables than SMPs

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[10] The reader not competent in Swahili should consider that all the monosyllabic words occurring in the example (*la*, *wa*, *na*, *kwa*) are proclitic, and therefore do not have their own stress.

[11] *Pijiyani* in the text; however, synaeresis is allowed in Swahili poetry and changes such as *jiya → jya* are common.

to occupy, but the fact that the base pattern is respected allows the reader/listener to identify the ones occupying the SMPs. On the other hand, lines 2 and 7 are shorter and do not respect the basic pattern; nevertheless, there is the same number of stressed syllables and SMPs, so also here the parsing is unambiguous.

It is interesting to draw a parallel between the situation in lines 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and the behaviour of PL. As pointed out above, PL tends to work both at word level and at broader levels (phrase, clause, utterance), and this behaviour has been observed for Swahili. It is worth noticing that, where there are more stressed syllables than SMPs, the latter tend to correspond to syntactic boundaries. In line 1, *pijyani pembe* ('Strike for me the horns') is a verbal phrase, as well as *k'umbuke mwana* ('so that I may remember the son [of my aunt]'); before it, in the same line, *pija muwiwa* ('Strike, you who owe a debt') is a verb followed by a vocative. In lines 5 and 6 *Fumo wa Shanga* ('Fumo of Shanga') is a genitive construction. In line 6 the second foot, *chambiya Waṯwa* ('[he] asked the Watwa people') is again a verbal phrase consisting of a verb and one object. In line 5, second foot, we have a similar construction. In *sikiya, shamba* ('reckon well, [roams] the land') *sikiya* 'listen' is an incidental phrase, and *shamba* ('the land') the object of a dropped verb.

On the base of this evidence one could conclude that in archaic Swahili metres syntactic organisation is a constraint, but more attentive observation reveals that syntax plays only an indirect role. In the poem quoted, it seems that SMPs are marked by PP breaks, rather than syntactic ones. For example, it is true that line 1 consists of a whole verbal phrase, *pijyani p'embe | vigomamle | na ṯowazi*; the foot boundaries, however, fall between the adjuncts of the object noun phrase (*p'embe, vigomamle, na ṯowazi*), ignoring the syntactic break in the VP between the verb and the object. Syntactic breaks are therefore not systematically represented, whereas the PP breaks derived by asyndeton and coordinative conjunction in the object are: *p'embe | vigomamle | na ṯowazi* 'the horns, the long drums and the cymbals.' Moreover, there are syntactic units which are treated differently in the poem, such as the two genitive constructions *Fumo wa Shanga* ('Fumo of Shanga,' lines 5, 6) and *mwana | wa shangazi* ('the son | of the aunt,' line 3): the latter is split by a foot boundary, the former isn't. For this reason, I maintain that in archaic Swahili metres it is not syntactic organisation that marks the SMPs, but rather PL at word- and PP-level.

5. Tswana praise-poems

In versification in other Bantu languages, PL produces similar patterns. A suggestive example is that of Tswana. As remarked by Hyman (2009: 198), Tswana presents PL at two levels, word and phrase, the latter being more marked than the former. This peculiarity of Tswana was observed already in the

1950s by Cole (1955: 55); more recent research has confirmed this fact. The paper by Schubö, Bekker, Pretorius, Wagner and Zerbian (Schubö *et al.* 2022) provides a detailed quantitative investigation of PL in Tswana. In this article, PL is studied together with the other phenomenon of Final Lengthening, which consists of the lengthening of the final syllable before a PP boundary. The research questions that were to be answered included whether PL and Final Lengthening are interrelated phenomena or occur independently; to what extent they affect the length of the penultimate and final syllables (considering for each of them the length of the onset consonant and the vowel separately); and finally, whether PL affected also word-penultimate syllables in PP-medial position, and to what extent (Schubö *et al.* 2022). The results obtained are highly significant. First, they observed that in PP-final position both PL and Final Lengthening do occur. Moreover, in PP-final position Final Lengthening seems to be more marked than PL; this is in contrast to the fact that, while the former has received little or no attention by scholars, the latter has often been noted and reported. The authors explain this by remarking that the syllable affected by PL normally follows a much shorter syllable, the ante-penultimate, and due to this contrast PL is clearly perceived. The final syllable, however, follows a syllable which, due to PL, is only slightly shorter (62.2% instead of 62.3%), and consequently not easily perceivable as longer (Schubö *et al.* 2022: 29). The fact that the lengthening of penultimate and final syllables is quantitatively comparable leads the authors to state that PL and Final Lengthening are, in Tswana, two independent mechanisms. Tswana Final Lengthening, in particular, seems to correspond to patterns found in other languages (German, Japanese, Turkish, American English: see Schubö *et al.* 2002: 28-29): Final Lengthening, therefore, 'might be a universal phenomenon' (Schubö *et al.* 2002: 30). On the other hand, PL 'constitutes a language-specific mechanism that applies independently [of Final Lengthening]' (Schubö *et al.* 2002: 30).

Another result of this research is that the application of PL (but not Final Lengthening) at word level in PP-medial position is empirically confirmed. The investigation has pointed out that, in PP-medial position, the vowel in the penultimate syllable is on average 14% longer than that in the final syllable (Schubö *et al.* 2002: 28). This confirms the above-mentioned observation by Cole that Tswana PL operates on two levels (word and phrase) to two different extents (the latter higher than the former).

Concerning PL's influence on tonal pattern, Zerbian and Barnard (2010: 3) include it in their algorithm for deriving word-level tone in Sotho-Tswana languages. In particular, the Tswana word must respect the Finality Rule: PP-final syllables cannot be the target of High Tone Spread. High Tone Spread is another process affecting the formation of the lexical pattern: it consists in the extension of the high tone of a syllable to the following one, if this syllable is not itself followed by a high tone. For

the sake of clarity I report here the same example given in Zerbian and Barnard (2010: 3): the word *moₒtlwa* 'thorn' has an underlying tone (represented by underlining) on the second syllable *o*; the application of High Tone Spread adds a high tone on the following syllable, and consequently the final realisation is *moótlwá*. This, however, applies only when the word is not PP-final; in this case, the Finality Rule applies and High Tone Spread is prevented, the realisation becoming *moótlwa*. The Finality Rule, however, does not apply to words having a lexical High Tone on the final syllable.

A last, important remark needs to be made. Zerbian and Barnard apply this rule only for PP; they specify that at PP-level PL does not apply, whereas it occurs at Intonational Phrase (IP) boundaries, together with a falling tone. The fact that PL applies only at IP level, and not at PP, seems to contradict what has been stated so far. Indeed, in the paper by Schubö *et al.* (2022), which counts Zerbian among the authors, this view seems to be discussed:

> Zerbian (2007)[12] suggests the distinction between the Phonological Phrase and the Intonation Phrase in Tswana: the former shows partial reset of high tones across a boundary whereas the latter shows such a reset pattern in combination with a boundary tone and PL. [...] However, durational patterns have not yet been investigated empirically, and the very clear perception of PL on final words in declarative sentences might not contradict a lesser amount of PL on phrase-final words within utterances.

The observations so far outlined for Tswana PL can be resumed as follows:

- it may occur together with Final Lengthening, but the two phenomena are independent from each other;
- it occurs at two levels, word and PP, the latter being more marked than the former;
- it involves a tonal rearrangement (Finality Rule);
- according to recent research, it seems to apply at both IP and PP levels (albeit to a different extent)

Having outlined the linguistic features of Tswana PL, it is interesting to look at how it is used in versification. Schapera (1965: 16-17) seems to put PL at the base of the Tswana verse structure: he makes the following remarks about Tswana praise-poems (*mabôkô*):

> In Tswana the emphasis is produced by lengthening the appropriate vowel or syllabic consonant, and when the word comes at the end of a phrase the lengthening in the penultimate syllable is more marked than usual; that, and the brief pause, are in fact the clues that enable literate Tswana to divide a praise-poem into lines ("verses") when they record it from dictation.

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[12] The work quoted is Zerbian (2007).

[...]

A random sample of eight poems (two from each tribe), consisting altogether of 432 lines, showed the following distribution of words per line: two, 24; three, 188; four, 176; five, 42; six, 1; seven, 1. In all, 364 lines (84 per cent) consisted of either three or four words. This suggests that there is an optimum length to a line, which surely is not due solely to the necessity of pausing for breath.

Thus, on the base of Schapera's statistical analysis, the number of words per line is an important constraint; moreover, he explains this constraint on the base of the PL.

Compared to archaic Swahili poetry, the number of words per line seems to be a much stricter constraint in Tswana. This can be explained, in my opinion, by the fact that Tswana PL works also at word level, as mentioned above. Thus, in a versification based on PL, the Tswana word naturally becomes a bearer of rhythm. Later in this paper we will see that Chewa, a language where PL doesn't apply at word level, does not possess this tendency.

Schapera's observations have been further elaborated by Moloto (1970) in his PhD thesis, *The Growth and Tendencies of Tswana Poetry.* Moloto (1970: 26) states clearly that 'the balance of the praise-words is conveyed also by the matching length of the penultimate syllables.' Moloto adds some observations concerning the role of tone in Tswana versification. Regarding tone, Moloto (1970: 27) observes that 'the hightoned syllables are more prominent than the lowtoned,' and 'the long syllables are more prominent than the short'.[13] However, the occurrence of PL seems to be the only fundamental device in the patterning of the line: a regular disposition of high tones can be observed in certain cases, but it doesn't have the same importance (Moloto 1970: 27-28).

A last, important remark by Moloto (1970: 26) is that PL—both at phrase and word levels—is a linguistic feature of Tswana and not a performative device:

In fast declamation one who is uninitiated would probably only notice the length-bearing syllable that stands second last in a word-group or sentence, but this feature inheres to every second last syllable of every word and is clearly sensed by those who are versed in the language.

Moloto's assertion is relevant and can be applied to other Bantu contexts in analyses of the relation between versification and performance. An open debate among metricists is whether the linguistic devices that a metre is built upon need to be emphasised in performance. In the Tswana context, this

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[13] Here the reader should remember than in Tswana vowel length is not phonemic, and that lengthening occurs only due to PL and Final Lengthening (Schubö *et al.* 2022: 20).

point is supported by Shole (1981), who, commenting on Moloto's claims concerning the role of PL in Tswana versification, observes:

> Unfortunately in normal recital of the lines such nodes are not recognizable and he attributes this to speedy delivery of the poem. One is inclined to feel that any feature which is not recognizable once the poem is delivered as such, cannot be of any aesthetic significance.

In my opinion, however, Shole's view does not take into account that versification is a matter of language and not of music: a (more or less) regular line pattern builds its regularity on the arrangement of linguistic materials. These linguistic materials are recognised by the listeners independently of their rendering in performance, simply because the listeners know the language. As observed by Jakobson (1966: 51-22; translation mine) at the very beginning of his study on Serbo-Croatian verse:

> 1. That theory of verse that works with sounds as physical, physiological or sensory-psychological phenomena is misguided from the point of view of linguistic thought. It is not the acoustic sound, but the linguistic phone as such that is utilised as the basic unit of verse. What is relevant about phones is their phonological value, or in other words, those phonetic properties that can serve to differentiate the sense in a given language. It is this value that makes the sounds a part of the speech or the verse line.
>
> [...] The so-called ear-philology[14] remained insensitive to the linguistic values of phones. It did not understand the difference between the phoneme and its realisations and confused phonological problems with phonetic ones, verse theory with verse performance theory. It is typical of this approach to require from the verse theorist that he 'take the standpoint of the foreigner who listens to verse without understanding the language of verse'. But firstly, poetry reckons with people who understand the language of verse and consequently understand verse not phonetically but phonologically. Secondly, the foreigner mentioned is also a fiction [...].

Jakobson made these statements from his perspective, in which the *poetic function* is a function of a language, or part of the language (Jakobson 1979). Similarly, I maintain that versification is a feature of the text, and not of something, such as the performance of the text, which, despite being interrelated with it, is outside its scope.

On this premise, it is now possible to analyse some *mabôkô*. The following poem is the praise-poem of Molefe (source text and translation by Schapera 1965: 46):[15]

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[14] *Ohrenphilologie* in the original.

[15] Unfortunately, I have not been able to find transcriptions of Tswana poems where tone is marked. However, since PL in Tswana occurs regularly at word-level, and since the base of Tswana versification seems to be the number of words rather than tonal patterning, this issue should not affect our analysis.

Text 3

Lengana lethibêdi	Hookthorn that obstructs,
Rramathibêdi wadikgabo tsagae.	Obstructer for the Apes at home.
Megogolope yaMabulê yalwa;	The roosters of Mabule fought;
omotsho okobilê omohubidu,	the black one drove away the red,
waosutlhisa seêma kwamoragó,	pushing it through the back fence
waolebisa kwaborwa osianye.	and making it run to the south.

One can easily see that all the lines except the first one contain three words.

Looking only at this example, one would be tempted to define a metre for Tswana poetry, based on the constancy of words (or, equivalently, of occurrences of word-level PL). Other poems, however, present a more complex situation, which can be better described as distinct-verse poetry rather than metrical poetry. The following poem is the praise-poem of Pheto (source text and translation by Schapera 1965: 48-50):

Text 2

Rrammôpyane aBakgatla, tshukudu,	RaMmopyane of the Kgatla, rhinoceros,
tshukudu yagamphetêng, keêmê;	rhinoceros of 'Pass me by, and let me be;'
gê lesamphete letlhôla dillo,	if you don't pass me by you foredoom laments,
letlhôla bommaêno gobeolwa,	you foredoom your mothers to mourn,
letlhôla bommaêno golala balla,	you foredoom your mothers to weep all night;
babilê basenya matlhaku abatho,	they even spoil people's fences,
baagasa digôtlhôla lemamina.	bespattering them with mucus and phlegm.
Rrammôpyane kata samosubêlô,	RaMmopyane is a rag that plugs,
asubêtse mogatsa-mongwe gaatsale;	he plugged someone's wife and she is barren;
mogatsa-Legwale gaabône mosese,	Legwale's wife does not menstruate,
mogatsa-Legwale otshotse botlhoko,	Legwale's wife is afflicted with sorrow,
otshotse balegakabe lêlegolo;	inflicted by a big white-breasted crow;
obophutêtse kwaselemô otswang.	she got it where she came from in summer.
Tsibogô lebophalaphala;	The ford is a swelling flood;
bofêlêlê botsaya tshopya tsabatho,	in the end it takes people's hornless cattle,
botsêre tshopya tsôôNtaganyane aMokwêna.	it took the hornless cattle of Ntaganyane the Kwena.
Rrammôpyane osebô otshwaêtse;	RaMmopyane, do not follow others;
kgôsi gaetshwaêle, Rrasekakanyô,	a chief does not follow others, Debater,
gaetshwaêle, Rramosadiathêbê;	he does not follow others, RaMosadiathebe;
morêna keênê otshwaêllwang,	a chief is the one whom others follow,
morêna keênê, obolaya pele.	he is the chief, he kills first.

The number of words per line still tends to be 3, but there are several variations. Lines 4 and 5, *letlhôla bommaêno gobeolwa,/ letlhôla bommaêno golala balla,* contain 3 and 4 words respectively. Probably, this addition is not accidental but intentional, since it completes a syntactic parallelism that starts with an anaphora ('you foredoom your mothers to mourn, / you foredoom your mothers to weep all night). In this case, line boundary is not marked by the constancy of the number of words but by syntactic parallelism. In lines 8-10 the constancy of number of words is respected:

asubêtse mogatsa-mongwe gaatsale;	Legwale's wife does not menstruate,
mogatsa-Legwale gaabône mosese,	Legwale's wife is afflicted with sorrow,
mogatsa-Legwale otshotse botlhoko,	inflicted by a big white-breasted crow;

Each line contains 3 words, counting the compounds of *mogatsa* 'wife' as one. However, it is worth noting that all three lines contain a compound of *mogatsa*: in lines 9 and 10 it is the same compound that occurs at the beginning of the line, forming an anaphora. One could say that these two devices (occurrence of compounds with the same base and anaphora) are the main markers of the line boundaries for these three lines: the constancy of number of words is respected only if the compound words are treated as one. In lines 14-16 the constancy of number of words is again absent:

Tsibogô lebophalaphala;	The ford is a swelling flood;
bofêlêlê botsaya tshopya tsabatho,	in the end it takes people's hornless cattle,
botsêre tshopya tsôôNtaganyane aMokwêna.	it took the hornless cattle of Ntaganyane the Kwena.

In line 14 one word is missing; this is compensated by the number of 4 words each in lines 15 and 16. These two lines are also linked by a polyptoton of the verb *-tsaya* ('to take:' *botsaya* 'it takes,' then *botsêre* 'it took'[16]) and the repetition of the noun *tshopya* ('cattle'). From this example, one could say that constancy of number of words is the main linguistic device used in Tswana praise-poems for marking line-boundaries; however, it is not so regularly employed that it can be defined as a metrical constraint. It is more correct to consider Tswana versification as a form of distinct verse where word-level PL is the main linguistic device employed.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that allowing for variation is something that Moloto (1970: 28-29), too, observes (and defends). In fact, he thinks that the continuous variation of the versification

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[16] *-tsêrê* is a form of the perfective stem of *-tsaya*, alternative to the regular *-tsêilê* (Cole 1955: 226).

pattern (which is what characterises distinct verse) is a studied effect and a mark of poetic artistry: 'Indigenous *mabôkô* must not be criticised for lack of a persistently uniform system whereas they are intended to display a consistently uniform technique. It is the case of the irregularity which is a regularity.' Thus, variation (and distinct verse) is not a deficiency of Tswana versification: rather, it is its strong point, and it is evaluated as such.

6. Zulu poetry

In the case of Zulu (and other Nguni languages), as in the case of Tswana, PL has been a known phenomenon for long time, being quoted in Doke's *Textbook of Zulu Grammar*, first printed in 1927 (Aunio *et al.* 2023: 145). Systematic investigation of the phenomenon, however, is more recent. In a first stage, PL in Nguni languages has been an object of interest mainly as the marker of a prosodic boundary. As Aunio *et al.* (2023: 109) remark, it has been observed only in the binary opposition of presence/absence, and with the final aim of investigating the relation between prosodic and syntactic phrasing. PL was first analysed as a marker of prosodic phrasing in Xhosa by Jokweni in his PhD thesis, *Aspects of Isixhosa Phrasal Phonology*, in 1995 (Zerbian 2004: 72). His work has been referred to in a study of Zulu by Cheng and Downing (2007: 51), who state that Durban Zulu's prosodic patterning is substantially identical to that of Xhosa, with the exception of restrictive relative clauses (which constitute the topic of their study). Quantitative analyses of PL as a phonetic phenomenon appeared later: an interesting result is that, as in Tswana, in Zulu PL may also occur at different levels. In Zeller *et al* (2017) PL is studied together with tone patterning in the behaviour of three verb forms (present, past and future tense) in phrase-medial and phrase-final (but utterance-medial) position. Their result is that in the latter case verbs present a small but stable lengthening of the penultimate syllable, and they leave open for further research the question whether this lengthening 'is less salient than that found with sentence-final words' (Zeller *et al* 2017: 317). They add, moreover, than even if the lengthening of the penultimate syllable is not very salient in phrase-final and utterance-medial positions, it does affect tonal patterning in the same way sentence-final PL does (Zeller *et al* 2017: 317). It seems, in other words, that in Zulu, too, there are two degrees of PL: the higher degree is at utterance-level and the lower at PP level (unlike in Tswana). The study by Zeller, Zerbian and Cook is referred to in Aunio *et al.* (2023: 112-113), where evidence is offered concerning Ndebele of a three-level PL (utterance-final, phrase-final, phrase-medial, the last presenting no vowel lengthening at all; Aunio 2023: 112-113).

From the studies so far mentioned, we can assume that Zulu PL operates at two levels, as in Tswana; however, the lower level is the PP and not the word, and this difference probably affects

versification, too. The case of Zulu versification is indeed interesting not only for its similarities with Tswana (and Swahili) versification, but also because a theoretical reflection on the role of PL in poetry has already been made far before Moloto's investigation on the Tswana case. The paper by Vilakazi (1938) is very interesting in this respect. While one can hardly agree with his claims that many aspects of Zulu poetry, and the way people experience it, derive from "the untampered mind of [the] primitive Bantu man", which, as he states, quoting Lestrade, "is not analytical and not direct" (Vilakazi 1938: 109), this article is still today, as far as I know, the deepest analysis of Zulu stylistics.

Before reporting what Vilakazi says about PL in Zulu poetry, it is worth mentioning another point where, in my opinion, he falls into contradiction. In his study (Vilakazi 1938: 112) he states that a 'unit of poetry or verse in Zulu is a breath-group of words:'

> I have made the phonetic mouth-tracings of the whole poem, and divided it according to how the poem was recited to me with a slow movement. From the oral recitation of the poet I discovered that a unit of poetry or verse in Zulu is a breath-group of words. Allow the poet to recite slowly, and he will always breathe at certain intervals, and inhale before starting on another verse. But if you allow the poet to be carried away with ecstasy, he may take two verses in one breath. Further, if you notice very intently, you will detect in the middle of the verse a very short break, which I would mark with a caesura.

While it is definitely interesting that Vilakazi observed the division of the poem into verses or lines during performance, in my opinion he interprets his data wrongly when he states that this is merely explainable as a division into breath-groups. Rather, one should say that the performer is aware that in a certain position he/she needs to express a line boundary, and consequently takes advantage of that moment for breathing, in the same way a player of a wind instrument would adapt his breathing to the pauses in the melody played. The identification of lines with breathing-groups has been disproved in other Bantu languages, such as Tswana by Schapera (1945: 16-17). In the case of Zulu, Vilakazi contradicts his statement in my opinion when he observes how the timing of breathing changes according to the speed of performance. If he is able to say 'allow the poet to recite slowly, and he will always breathe at certain intervals, and inhale before starting on another *verse*' and then 'allow the poet to be carried away with ecstasy, he may take two *verses* in one breath,' this means that he is still able to identify the lines, and lines boundaries, independently of the breathing groups, otherwise he would have no ground to say that a different number of verses, i.e. lines, correspond to one breathing group.

Despite these critical remarks, Vilakazi's analysis is interesting for other reasons. Discussing the stylistics of Zulu poetry, he talks about its "rhythm" quality (Vilakazi 1938: 111), comparing it to the

rhythmic features of Greek and Latin quantitative metres. He then observes that Zulu poetry has no precise metrical pattern as in Greek and Latin, but that nevertheless there is a degree of constancy: naming hemistichs as poetic bars, he states (Vilakazi 1938: 112) that 'the Zulu poem is a series of poetic bars occurring in pairs as a verse,' so that each line contains a caesura in the middle, and that 'the rhythmic pattern of the poem rests on the regular arrangement of poetic bars on each side of the caesura' (Vilakazi 1938: 115). This rhythm is given by the disposition of "stresses" (that is the term adopted by him) along lines and hemistichs, as observable in the text, *Umcayi Kavuma* ('Mcayi the Daughter of Vuma') which Vilakazi himself reports, comments and provides a metrical parsing of (1938: 114; source text and translation by him). Here I give the text with the orthography adopted by Vilakazi, but with a different metrical notation, for the sake of readability. In its notation, Vilakazi distinguishes between what he calls "stressed" and "unstressed" syllables; actually, he refers to a quality of metrical prominence rather than to phonetic stress, so one should refer to them respectively as (metrically) *strong* and *weak* syllables (or of syllables in strong and weak metrical positions; for the sake of this article, the two formulations can be considered equivalent). I will mark the strong syllables with an acute accent diacritic ´; the weak syllables will be left unmarked; the sign for caesura will be the central dot ·. In the right column, I report in the format *n+n* the number of strong syllables that Vilakazi marks respectively in the first and second hemistich of each line:

Text 5

Úsijikáne · siyápha siyajíka	2 + 2
Síph'aɓaphándle · nábasendlíni	2 + 2
Únjiyanjiyán · 'esémva kwamadóda	2 + 2
Inyóka lé, · emqhím'esesangwéni	2 + 2
ivimb'él'izinkómo · námathóle	2 + 2
Úgagajáne · limɓála miɓíli	2 + 2
Liɓáng'uɓunkóne · laɓáng'uɓonála	2 + 2
Umyádl'ungcibá · záɓantwána	2 + 2
Nkóɓe zaphékw'edwaléni · zaxháphazéla	3 + 2
Zákhwezélwa yinsimángo · nensiyáthi	2 + 1 (*sic!*)
Yáth'imámba yéhla · ngokuziphákulúla	3 + 2

Isivánd'esilinywé · ngákwaɓoGéza	2 + 2
Láthi khon'igéza · liyákumphakuléla	2 + 2
Úmgunquɓézi · káMgunquɓézi	2 + 2
Nónembokódw'eɓuxhántaɓézi · angáwuxhantaɓéza	3 + 2 (*sic!*)
Malúme ziyamlúm · 'úmalokazána	2 + 2
Ziyamesáɓ · 'uɓusílw'esinoválo	1 + 2
Zesáɓ'umalokazána,	2
Zimesáɓa · náns'ingengéma	1 + 2

She's like a ball which rolls to and fro.
She's generous to strangers as well as family members

She is the strong woman who inspires men.

She is like unto a snake coil'd at the gate,
and denies entrance to cows and their calves.

She's the smart woman with a combination of two colours,
As she fights between the striped and the white.

She's as tall as legs of children.

Can mealies be boiled on rocks,
while fire is kindled by wild buck?

Even the mamba feared and slipped away cautiously from tree tops.

Her mealie-fields are ploughed near her lover's home
so that he should see and choose her.

She plays tricks upon tricksters:
let those who can tame her try to do so, even with grinding stones.

O, my uncle, the cattle hate the bride,
they fear she's a wild beast,
they fear the bride,
they fear her, behold here comes the mighty one.

This is Vilakazi's scansion. One can observe that he obtains a very remarkable result in terms of regularity: among 19 lines, 12 present a 2 + 2 scansion, 3 a 3 + 2 scansion, 2 a 1 + 2 scansion, 1 a 2 + 1 scansion, 1 a 2 scansion (no middle caesura). One can say, therefore, that this poem is an example of distinct verse where PL is the main linguistic device employed. Later I will argue that, on the base of the linguistic behaviour of PL, it is possible to achieve a higher level of regularity in this poem. First, however, it is interesting to look at how Vilakazi identified the SMP. He bases his considerations 'on the principle that Zulu words are disyllabic in nature, and that the stress [PL] falls on the penult' (Vilakazi 1938: 115). Using the metrical signs — for strong syllables and ˘ for weak ones, he states (Vilakazi 1938: 115-116) that:

- disyllabic words are always scanned as — ˘;
- trisyllabic words are always scanned as ˘ — ˘;

For longer words, he introduces the possibility of what he calls "secondary stress" falling on the first syllable. Therefore:

- tetrasyllabic words can be scanned either as — ˘ — ˘ or ˘ ˘ — ˘;
- pentasyllabic words can be scanned either as — ˘ ˘ — ˘ or ˘ ˘ ˘ — ˘;

Therefore, for Vilakazi syllables affected by PL are always strong; in words with four or more syllables the first one can be either strong or weak; in all the other cases a syllable is weak. Vilakazi's considerations of the role of the "secondary stress"[17] are interesting in a comparative perspective, because there is a similar pattern in archaic Swahili poetry. With Text 2. I have presented an example from Swahili archaic poetry where lines contained more stressed syllables than SMPs; in my corpus, however, a small number of lines (47) present one stressed syllable less than the number of SMPs. An example is *Uṯumbuizo wa Uchi na Embekungu* (Miehe *et al.* 2004: 50):

> Text 6
> *Ewe m**te**shi wa **u**chi · wa m**ba**ta u**li**o u**ṯu**ngu*
> *Nite**ke**ya wa kikasi**ki**ni · teshe**we**o ni m**ge**ma **wa**ngu*
> *Nite**ke**ya na wa kiṯu**pa**ni · uyayo**nga**o kwa **zu**ngu*

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[17] I put this expression in quotation marks to emphasise that it comes from Vilakazi's work, but I don't find it accurate. In my opinion, these syllables do not receive a phonetic stress, even if "secondary." I don't know any evidence of such a secondary stress in Zulu phonetics. What these syllables receive is metrical strength: this is a metrical device, and as such it doesn't belong to the phonology of the language.

*Nite**ke**ya u**li**o nyu**ngu**ni · ulo**pi**kwa kwa **k'u**ni na **nyu**ngu*

*K'ishi**ra**bu ni**ke**ma ku**we**wa · nili̱take embe**ku**ngu **la**ngu*

*Embe**ku**ngu la **ma**ni ya **chu**ma · mpiniwe **m**bwa ṯunguṯungu*

*Embe**ku**ngu k'a**ngi**ka cha**ngo**ni · pangi**kwa**po **si**wa na ma**vu**ngu*

*Pangi**kwa**po ma**go**ma ya **e**zi · na ma**wa**no ma**wa**no ya **ba**ngu.*

O, you, the server of pure palm wine,

serve me the one from the jar, tapped by my own tapster,

and that intoxicating wine, bring it in a little flask.

Pour for me also the one from the earthen pot, brewed and without its lees,

so that when I am well wined, I demand my old hoe.

The old heavy hoe, made of iron, whose handle is made of the mtupa-wood,

the old hoe that hangs on the peg where the royal siwa-horn and the quivers are also placed,

(and) where the royal drums and battle arms are kept.

As one can see, the general pattern of the hemistichs in this poem is 10 syllables, with three SMPs: these are the 3rd, the 6th, and the 9th syllables. However, three hemistichs contain only two phonetic stresses. They are the first hemistich in line 2 and both in line 3:

*Nite**ke**ya wa kikasi**ki**ni*

*Nite**ke**ya na wa ki̱tu**pa**ni*

*uyayo**nga**o kwa **zu**ngu*

Despite the lack of phonetic stress, however, these lines adhere to the pattern: in *Nitekeya wa kikasikini* and *Nitekeya na wa ki̱tupani* there are still two phonetic stresses, on the 3rd and the 9th syllables. The line *uyayongao kwa zungu* has two syllables less, but its two phonetic stresses are still on the 2nd and 5th syllables from the line end, as the last two stresses of the base pattern. It seems, therefore, that one can resolve this irregularity by placing a SMP exactly where it should fall following the metrical pattern, even if that place is occupied by a phonetically unstressed syllable:

*Nite**ke**ya wa **ki**kasi**ki**ni*

*Nite**ke**ya na **wa** ki̱tu**pa**ni*

***u**yayo**nga**o kwa **zu**ngu*

However, the scansion can be resolved in this way only if there is enough space (that is, a sufficiently long sequence of unstressed syllables) to reproduce the original disposition of the SMPs. This is

analogous to Vilakazi's statement that additional "secondary stresses" can be put only on the first syllables of tetra- or pentasyllabic words.

Coming back to Vilakazi's text, it is possible in my opinion to scan it in a more accurate way. While Vilakazi has been attentive enough to recognise the role of word-internal "secondary stresses" in versification, he has not taken into consideration that Zulu PL, which is the primary marker for metrically strong syllables, does not occur at word-level (as in Tswana) but at phrase and utterance-level, as previously mentioned. Let us reconsider in this light the "irregular" lines, that is, those which do not present a 2 + 2 pattern:

9	*Nkóɓe zaphékw'edwaléni · zaxháphazéla*	3 + 2
10	*Zákhwezélwa yinsimángo · nensiyáthi*	2 + 1 (*sic*)
11	*Yáth'imámba yéhla · ngokuziphákulúla*	3 + 2
15	*Nónembokódw'eɓuxhántaɓézi · angáwuxhantaɓéza*	3 + 2 (*sic*)
17	*Ziyamesáɓ · 'uɓusílw'esinoválo*	1 + 2
18	*Zesáɓ'umalokazána,*	2
19	*Zimesába · náns'ingengéma*	1 + 2

Concerning lines 10, 17 and 19, which present a 2 + 1 or 1 + 2 pattern, it is unclear to me why Vilakazi didn't apply the device of "secondary stress" that he himself had introduced to resolve this exception. It is possible that he was affected by his listening to the performance of the text, which unfortunately we don't dispose of. However, in all these three lines the defective hemistich consists of a tetrasyllabic word, parsed as ˘ ˘ — ˘, without the "secondary stress" on the first syllable; it is sufficient to add it to make these lines regular, as Vilakazi himself did with line 8: *Umyádl'ungcibá · zábantwána.* In line 10, first hemistich, Vilakazi marks three strong syllables in his own transcription of the text even if he reports two in his own counting: *Zákhwezélwa yinsimángo.* Since the first strong syllable derives from the application of "secondary stress," one can just drop it to make the line regular. The scansion of lines 10, 17, 19 then becomes (in bold my modifications):

10	*Z**a**khwezélwa yinsimángo · n**é**nsiyáthi*	2 + 2
17	*Z**í**yamesáɓ · 'uɓusílw'esinoválo*	2 + 2
19	*Z**í**mesába · náns'ingengéma*	2 + 2

Concerning the other exceptions, line 15 can be resolved in the same way, by deleting a "secondary stress:"

15 *Nonembokódw'ebuxhántabézi · angáwuxhantabéza* 2 + 2

Line 9 presents a more complex situation, since in the first hemistichs there are three word-penultimate "stresses:" *Nkóbe zaphékw'edwaléni.* This irregularity can be resolved by looking at how PL works at phrase level. Lines 9 and 10 form one sentence, where the word *nkóbe* 'mealie, maize,' is the subject of the independent clause and, presumably, also the topic:

Nkóbe zaphékw'edwaléni · zaxháphazéla   Can mealies be boiled on rocks,

Zákhwezélwa yinsimángo · nensiyáthi   while fire is kindled by wild buck?

As Cheng and Downing (2009: 226-227) show for Durban Zulu, topics in Zulu are left dislocated, as in this case, and followed by a prosodic break. Therefore, even if *Nkóbe zaphékw'edwaléni* contains three occurrences of word-level PL, the first and the last are more intense since they mark prosodic breaks: after the topic (*nkóbe*) and at the end of a clause (*edwaleni*). The middle occurrence marks no prosodic break and can therefore be ignored. One then obtains the regular scansion:

9 *Nkóbe zaphekw'edwaléni · zaxháphazéla*   2 + 2

Similar remarks apply to the first hemistich of line 11: *Yáth'imámba yéhla · ngokuziphákulúla.* Syntactically, the first hemistich is a verbal phrase followed by an embedded complementiser phrase: *Yáth'imámba yéhla* , literally 'they say that the mamba ran away.' Even here I tend to consider *imamba* as a topic, and therefore followed by a prosodic break. *Yathi* ('they say'), as a verbal form, introduces a complementiser phrase: in this case, no prosodic break is attested in Zulu (at least not in Durban Zulu: see Cheng and Downing 2007: 52). Therefore we can scan the line as:

11 *Yath'imámba yéhla · ngokuziphákulúla*   2 + 2

which is regular. Thus, a more attentive look at how PL shapes versification reveals an extremely uniform structure: all the lines except 18, for which I cannot see how to resolve the irregularity[18], have a 2 + 2 scansion.

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[18] It is possible that Vilakazi made an error in transcription and that lines 18 and 19 are actually two hemistichs of the same line. Then the scansion would be: **Zesáb'umalokazána, · Zimesába nans'ingengéma* 'they fear the bride, / they fear her, behold here comes the mighty one.' But having neither a recording of the performance of this text nor other transcriptions, I can provide no evidence for this hypothesis.

7. The Chewa *ndakatulo*

A last interesting case is that of Chewa *ndakatulo* poems. Unlike the cases discussed so far, this is a genre comparable to lyric poetry, as it often expresses the inner life of the author in his/her individuality (Wendland 1993: 82). Among the Bantu languages presented here, Chewa is the one that has received most attention in respect of phrasal prosody, with Kanerva's (1990) PhD thesis, which represents a milestone in this field, and Downing and Mtenje's (2017) monograph on the topic. In both these studies PL is strictly described as a PP level phenomenon; Downing and Mtenje (2017: 116-117), referring to it as "penult lengthening", define it in the following way:

> Penult lengthening: The penult vowel of a word is lengthened when it occurs in prosodic-phrase-final position. Words in isolation are, of course, in phrase-final position.

In another study, Downing (2008: 49), referring to prosodic phrasing in Chewa, Tumbuka and Durban Zulu, makes another interesting remark:

> In all three languages, lengthening of the phrase penult syllable is the easiest to identify – and most consistent—correlate of prosodic phrasing. (Parentheses in the data indicate prosodic phrasing.) Although this cannot be effectively transcribed, it should be noted that in all three languages, the penult of the sentence-final prosodic phrase is noticeably longer than the penults of sentence-medial prosodic phrases. That is, sentence penult vowels have culminative lengthening at the sentence level.

Thus, even in Chewa, prosodic lengthening happens at two levels, namely the PP and the sentence. There are, too, other relevant phenomena at narrower levels. Both Kanerva (1990: 38-44) and Downing and Mtenje (2017: 209-220) provide evidence for disyllabic minimality, that is, prosodic words need to be at least disyllabic. The two studies provide different interpretations of the phenomenon: Kanerva (1990: 44-54) sees it, together with PL, as evidence for the existence of a metrical foot in Chewa, while Downing and Mtenje (2017: 227) discard this assumption. It is, however, possible to say that, since every prosodic word in Chewa is at least disyllabic, then any PP can potentially undergo PL.

The analysis of *ndakatulo* poems reveals that PL plays a similar role in the organisation of the line. As remarked also by Kishindo (2003: 351), '[in Chewa poetry] the achievement of a rhythm effect must be based on different factors, such as a number of syllables, length of words, the penultimate length

characteristic of words or groups of words.' The example that will be presented here first is *Kutsanzika* ("Farewell"), by Sam A. Mchombo (in Mvula 1981: 31):[19]

*Pamasaya **o**nse tsopano mits**i**nje.*	On all the cheeks there are rivers now.
*Mis**o**zi yachita kusefuk**i**ra,*	Tears have been overflowing,
*kusefuk**i**ra mpaka m'mpenem**e**ne.*	overflowing for a week.
*Kul**i**ra ndi kudandaula mumt**i**ma.*	Crying is complaining in the heart.
*Mtima kulir**a**di ndi kuwaw**i**dwa,*	Crying of the heart is bitter,
*kuwaw**i**dwa pakuti uku nkusiy**a**na.*	bitter for being different.
*K**o**ma tisapitirize kulir**a**ku,*	However, let's not keep on with this crying,
*kudandaula ndi kuwawidwa moy**o**ku.*	complaining and suffering from this life.
*Moyo pamodzi ndi chik**o**ndi zilip**o**be.*	life and love still exist
*Kuchoka kw**a**nga mkos**a**ti*	Leaving my bride,
*kudtetsa mpat**u**ko nkusaon**a**na,*	bringing a separation means not seeing each other,
*ife ndi ul**i**mbo tingotam**u**ka.*	we are birdlime; we are just leaving.

I have marked in bold the vowels in the syllables that undergo PL. Here again, one can observe that each line has two syllables presenting PL: that means, each line has two PP boundaries, one regularly at the end of the line and one in the middle. The first line can be considered as an independent sentence beginning with locative inversion (*pamasaya onse* 'on all the cheeks') and with the implied verb *pali* 'there is;' in this case the preverbal locative forms a separate phrase, and therefore undergoes PL, whereas the subject is part of the verbal phrase (Downing 2017: 232). In line 2, the subject of the sentence, *misozi* 'tears,' forms a phrase separate from the VP as a marker of topicalisation. Regarding line 3, Downing (2017: 234) reports that one regularly finds a PP break before place and time adverbials, such as the PP *mpaka m'mpenemene* ('for six days'). The prosodic break before this PP causes PL on *kusefukira: kusefukira mpaka m'mpenemene*. In the same way, in line 6 one can place a middle caesura before *pakuti* 'where.'

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[19] The translation is mine. In the transcription of the original I render the grapheme *ŵ* ([β]) as *w*. See Downing and Mtenje's (2017: 44) critical remarks on the phonemic status of [β] (especially in contrast with [w]) in Chewa.

In lines 4, 5, 8 one sees the same syntactic construction: a topic, which can be a noun phrase (NP) (*kulira*, line 4; *kudandaula*, line 8; both of them are substantive infinitives) or a complementizer phrase (CP) (*Mtima kuliradi* 'Crying of the heart'), the copula *ndi*, expressing identity and features not subjected to change, and a predicate, which can be again a NP (*kuwawidwa* 'being bitter' line 5) or a CP (*kudandaula mumtima* 'complaining in the heart,' *kuwawidwa moyoku* 'suffering from this life'). Here again, the fact that the topic forms a phrase on its own triggers PL on it. A similar remark can be made for line 11 *kudtetsa mpat**u**ko nkusaon**a**na* ('bringing a separation means not seeing each other'), where the copula *ndi* has merged with the predicate: *ndi kusaonana → nkusaonana.*

In line 7 there is a verb phrase (VP) (*tisapitirize kuliraku* 'let's not keep on with this crying') preceded by a conjunction, *koma* 'but' (I have translated it as 'however' in the poem). It is unlikely, given the structure of this sentence and of the previous one, that *koma* here has an actual coordinative-adversative function: rather, it introduces a sense of general contrast between what has been so far told by the lyrical I and what follows. For this reason, I assume it is legitimate to regard it as a separate phrase. In line 9 the phrase break marks what is a hidden asyndeton. In the first part of the line, *moyo* 'life' (class 3) is introduced as topic and *pamodzi ndi chikondi* 'together with love' as comment. The second part of the line consists of the locative copula (*zilipobe* 'they still exist'), which is, however, in class 10: therefore, it is not in agreement with *moyo* but is a plural that refers generally to both *moyo* and *chikondi*. This reproduces a question-answer schema, which could be rendered as: 'Life together with love? There still exist,' and that is partially hidden from the asyndeton. The PP-break in correspondence with *chikondi*, is therefore necessary to make this structure evident.

In line 10 a PP break separates two noun phrases: *kuchoka kwanga* 'my leaving' and *mkosati* 'bride.' In line 12, one again finds an asyndeton marked by a PP break: (*ife ndi ulimbo*) (*tingotamuka*) '(we are birdlime;) (we are just leaving).'

8. Conclusion

The above analyses lead to interesting comparative remarks. First of all, the role of PL in the versification traditions examined has been found to be fundamental: in archaic Swahili poetry, Tswana and Zulu praise-poems and Chewa *ndakatulo* it seems to be the main linguistic device used to mark line-boundaries. Moreover, PL organises the line in a more or less regular pattern, based on the number and disposition of the SMPs marked by it. While many texts are not regular to the extent that it is possible to speak of metrical lines (as for example Text 2), one can definitely state that PL is the main device in the organisation of a distinct-verse style of composition in these poetries. Moreover, it has been observed that in the majority of the examples a more attentive analysis of how PL affects the line at

different levels (word, PP, utterance) reveals structures which have a regularity comparable to that of metrical verse.

Naturally, the way PL affects versification is not the same for all the poetic traditions examined, and this is also an interesting topic of analysis. The feature of Tswana of presenting PL both at word- and phrase-level, with full realisation of the lengthening only in the latter, corresponds to a line which is essentially based on word counting. Chewa lines, by contrast, can be said to be "PP-counting" lines. Swahili and Zulu are more innovative, since both of them seem to allow, albeit exceptionally, the instantiation of SMPs by syllables which are not word-penultimate, and therefore not affected by PL. Concerning the Swahili case, in my opinion this is due to the fact that the poems examined belong to a transitional phase of Swahili literary history, when the archaic, PL-based metrical system, was transitioning to the classical, syllabic one. The Zulu case seems to represent the transition to a syllabo-tonic organisation of the verse, rather than syllabic.

The data presented in this article are not representative of the totality of Bantu languages presenting PL: hopefully, this introductory investigation will encourage scholars to do more research in this field. At the moment, there are many open questions not only in Bantu versification *per se*, but also in the linguistic behaviour of PL and other suprasegmental phenomena in many Bantu languages. The stylistics of Bantu versification may be considered as a privileged area for encouraging collaboration between researchers in linguistics and literary studies. PL is not the only device employed in versification that could be the object of joint studies: syllabic metres are also a diffused phenomenon in Bantu poetries (classical Swahili poetry, Kinyarwanda pastoral poetry; Coupez and Kamanzi 1965: 12), as well as tonal patterning (tonal rhyme in Chiluba; Madiya 1975: 471-472[)], tonal patterns in Kinyarwanda dynastic poetry; Coupez and Kamanzi 1965: 14). Thus, this topic is a promising domain for further research.

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Deconstructing and reconstructing holy meanings

through an 'exegesis' of W. E. Mkufya's novels

Cristina Nicolini

This study introduces an original reading of William Mkufya's Swahili novels through an investigation of not only direct and indirect intertextual links from the sacred texts, namely the Bible and the Qur'an, but also explicit or implicit references to them.

Mkufya either refers to or critiques some religious prescriptions deconstructing and reconstructing meanings as an exercise to 'decolonise the mind' (Wa Thiong'o 1986). Beside this, Mkufya in his novels experimented with style and genre-blending to articulate plural philosophies and epistemologies.

This 'exegesis' of Mkufya's novels has been conducted through a combination of personal conversations with the author and in-depth textual analysis of the following novels: *The Wicked Walk* (1977) which Mkufya self-translated into Swahili as *Kizazi Hiki* ("This Generation," 1980), *Ziraili na Zirani* ("Azrael and Zirani," 1999), *Ua La Faraja* ("The Flower of Consolation," 2004) and *Kuwa Kwa Maua* ("The Existence of Flowers," 2019).

Keywords: Swahili novels, intertextuality, Bible, Qur'an, conceptual decolonisation.

1. Introduction[1]

This study represents an intra-textual and inter-textual reading of selected Swahili novels written by the Tanzanian intellectual and novelist William E. Mkufya. Particularly, this paper consists in a hermeneutics of Mkufya's novels through the 'exegesis' of intertextual connections to the holy books *i.e.* the Bible and the Qur'an.

The interest in this research was sparked by thorough textual analysis of Mkufya's novels, where not only extensive direct and indirect quotations from Christian and Muslim scriptures but also explicit or implicit references and allusions to them can be sifted. The reading was strengthened by interviews,

discussions and informal talks with the author, whom I acknowledge and with whom I am in ongoing conversation.

In addition to this, the idea of devoting a paper to this targeted investigation of Mkufya's novels was further encouraged by Diegner's statement on Mkufya's novel *Ziraili na Zirani* (1999) that displays: "a lot of intertextual links to religious texts" (Diegner 2005: 28).

Mkufya is a writer, translator, self-translator, and editor in chief at the Mangrove Publishing House in Dar es Salaam. He is a prominent author of Swahili philosophical novels,[2] appreciated by academics, but little-known among the wider public.

William Mkufya was born in 1953 to a Lutheran family of the Sambaa ethnic group from Lushoto (Tanga). He told me[3] that he had started examining religion from a young age. Mkufya especially criticises conflicts and violent reactions caused by religious differences. Then, he seems to have embraced a secular perspective as expounded in his novels.

The novels which have been selected for examination here are *The Wicked Walk* (1977), which Mkufya self-translated into Swahili as *Kizazi Hiki* ("This Generation," 1980); *Ziraili na Zirani* ("Azrael and Zirani," 1999); and the *Diwani ya Maua* ("The Poetry of Flowers"), consisting of two novels:[4] *Ua La Faraja* ("The Flower of Consolation," 2004) and *Kuwa Kwa Maua* ("The Existence of Flowers," 2019). I argue that the milestone novels are *Ziraili na Zirani,* an epic narrative adorned by poetry, and *Kuwa Kwa Maua*, a tragic drama implanted in prose. In both works, Mkufya's experimental aesthetic moves from a simple to a complex novelistic genre (Bakhtin 1981), which articulates plural beliefs, epistemologies and philosophies by experimenting with style and genre-blending (Nicolini 2022; Rettovà 2021 a, b).

2. Textuality and style

Since human understanding is always and inevitably interpretation (Gadamer quoted in Hallen 2002: 59), 'historical' texts need to be hermeneutically scrutinised (Gadamer 1981: 267).

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[2] Nicolini, Cristina. 'William Mkufya and his Flowers: An Intellectual Bio-Graphy,' paper presented at the international conference on 'The Intellectual Biography as an entry point for Literary and Epistemological Analysis,' which I co-organised at the University of Naples L'Orientale, 10-11 April 2024. The organisation of this conference was part of my postdoc research project funded by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung.

[3] Personal interview 17-11-2023.

[4] The third novel is forthcoming.

Methodologically, this study is based on the technique of "reading closely" text and textuality (Veit-Wild and Vierke 2017: ix, xiv). Since "reading is a process of moving between texts and intertext" (Allen 2000: 1), intertextuality (Kristeva 1986: 37; Allen 2019) will be used as a conceptual framework.

"Any text is constructed as a mosaic of citations; every text is the absorption and transformation of another text" (Kristeva quoted in Diegner 2005: 27; Allen 2000: 35-7). "The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (Barthes 1977: 146) offering "insights of person, community and cultural traditions" (Barber 2007: 205) "through its specific textuality, its specific way of being a text" (Barber 2007: 13).

Furthermore, 'entextualisation' is a process that "freezes" discourses into text but detached from their original context and recontextualised in a completely new context (Barber 2007: 22-3, 79). This process is especially applicable to the sacred texts that in order to be preserved and transmitted, it is not enough for them to be written down, but they need "to be doubly entextualised—first by being written, second by being taken out of normal textual transmission" (Barber 2007: 27).

Indeed, intertextuality also implies quotation between genres, "when one genre incorporates chunks of other genres and subsumes them to its own project—but in such a way that they retain recognisable features" (Barber 2007: 78).

Dealing with textual genre, novels are a 'heteroglot' and 'heterogeneric' "complex system of styles and dialectics" (Bakhtin 1981: 25), wher "social heteroglossia dialogised" (Bakhtin 1981: 273) structured in the "artistically organised system of novel" (Bakhtin 1981: 300). A 'polyphonic novel' is rich in "dialogic relationships and double voiced discourse" (Bakhtin quoted in Allen 2000: 24-5). The plurality of belief systems is expressed in the mouths of 'ideologues' (Bakhtin 1981: 333-5): all characters and narrators who possess their own discursive consciousness (Bakhtin quoted in Allen 2000: 22-3). Furthermore, the plasticity of novels can produce a "novelization of other genres" (Bakhtin 1981: 39), and/or "incorporation of other genres" (Bakhtin 1981: 320).

As I have argued elsewhere, "Swahili novels are a promising genre through which to develop and communicate philosophical elaboration of alternative epistemologies" (Nicolini 2022: 68), because of the plastic and inclusive nature of the prose which encloses and discloses a 'hetero-epistemic textuality' (Nicolini 2022: 263).

"It is intertextuality that creates the possibility of a dialogue between disciplines, dialogues between genres and dialogue between the split-self" (Kezilahabi 2012: 114). Therefore, Swahili 'post-realist' (Diegner 2018; Aiello 2015) 'experimental' novels (Bertoncini *et al.* 2009; Garnier 2013; Gromov 2019) led the evolution to the dialogic discourse of a polyphonic novel (Bakhtin 1981: 38), where "the clash between doxa and para-doxa" (Barthes quoted in Allen 2000: 92) is expressed through the stylistic

power of a post-structural text. Indeed, Swahili contemporary novels blur the conventional boundaries of genre through "metareferences to genre other than prose, especially drama and poetry" (Diegner 2021: 128; 2017), and by formulating 'inter-genre' sections, they insert poems or dramatic dialogues in the frame of the narrative prose (Diegner 2021: 132-133). Poetic elements and dramatic texts, woven into the narrative canvas, articulate alternative knowledge to that conveyed by the prose (Nicolini 2022; Rettovà 2021b), thus becoming the textual kernel.

3. The translations of the Holy Books into Swahili

The critique, as examination of validity (Wiredu 1998: 17), of monotheistic religions imported to Africa, Islam and Christianity, is an integral part of the discussion as well as the question "convert from/into what?" (P'Bitek 1986: 56, 65). In Tanzania, the "Cross and the Crescent" (Mbogoni 2004) are the main faiths co-existing together[5] and Swahili was adopted as a religious doctrinal language by both Christianity and Islam (Topan 1992: 342-3; Mazrui and Mazrui 1998; Chesworth 2022). Therefore, in the nineties, Swahili went through a process of 'secularisation,' because "the adoption of Swahili by Islam and Christianity gave it an ecumenical status, but the language was made to function in a way that suited the theological temperament of the respective custodians" (Topan 1992: 343; Mazrui and Mazrui 1998), as the use of passages from the Bible and the Qur'an in Swahili Muslim and Christian tracts demonstrated (Chesworth 2008: 3).

The translation[6] of both the Bible and the Qur'an into Swahili had a critical impact not only on indoctrination, but also on the standardisation and development of the Swahili language (Topan 2008a: 253-7).

The complete modern edition of the Swahili Union Version Bible (SUV) in standard Swahili, supervised by H.J. Butcher (The Church Missionary Society) and A.B. Hellier (The Universities' Mission to Central Africa), was published as *Maandiko Matakatifu ya Mungu Yaitwayo Biblia* ("The Holy Scripture of God, named the Bible") by the Bible Society of Tanzania and the Bible Society of Kenya in 1952 (re-edit 1997; Firsching 2015: 81; Cassuto *et al.* 2020: 84; Mojola 2017; Chesworth 2008; Mojola 2000). The

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[5] However, this co-existence has not always been peaceful over the centuries. Julius Nyerere, in the process of nation-building through his political ideology of *ujamaa* "familyhood," Tanzanian socialism, suggested a secularisation process that places religion in an individual and personal sphere (Nyerere 1979: 38). Indeed, Art. 33 of the constitution of the Tanzanian republic guarantees the right of religious freedom (Makulilo 2019: 137). Conversely, the 1990s was a period of religious controversies prompted by a radicalisation of both Islam and Christianity (Mbogoni 2004: 153-69; 171ff).

[6] For the history of the Bible and the Qur'an translations into Swahili see: Mojola (1999a; 2000; 2002; 2017), Chesworth (2008; 2022), Firsching (2015), Topan (1992), Vierke (2009), Pawlikova-Vilhanova (2006).

SUV became the most popular Bible, called the "King James Version equivalent of the Swahili speaking world" (Mojola 2000: 521; 2017: 42; Chesworth 2008: 140; Firsching 2015: 81).

The Swahili versions of the Qur'an recognised as adequate are both *Qur'ani Takatifu* ("The Holy Qur'an"), the translation by the Zanzibari Sheikh Abdullah Saleh al-Farsy[7] compiled between 1950 and 1967, and the translation by Sheikh Ali Muhsin Barwani, a Zanzibari as well, published in 1995 (van de Bruinhorst 2013: 206). However, the more established version is al-Farsy's[8] (Chesworth 2008: 150; Yusuf 1992).

The work of translation induced a process of 'enculturation' (Wafula 2017: 192) and 'hybridization' of languages and cultures (Mojola 2017: 52), as illustrated by the different translations in use for the concept of divinity.

The Swahili word *Mungu* "God" includes the characteristics of both the precolonial Bantu superhuman being and the monotheistic Abrahamic[9] divinity or the 'Supreme One' (Frankl 1995: 207; P'Bitek 2011). The Bantu noun in *m/mi* class, *mungu,* has as its plural *miungu,* showing that this 'Supreme Being' originally does not belong to a monotheistic culture but is part of a pantheon that includes plural "lesser divinities" (Mbiti 2011: 29). However, missionaries and Christian anthropologists started interpreting African deities in terms of the Christian God[10] as a 'High God[11]' and describing African people as immersed in religion (P'Bitek 2011: 22-7; Mbiti 2011: 15).

The most popular names of God that can be found in the translations of both the Bible and the Qur'an are *Mwenyezi Mungu* "Ruler of the Universe" (Frakl 1995: 209) and *Bwana Mungu* "Lord" (Cassuto *et al.* 2020: 94), which are used alternatively to the Swahili word *Muumba* "the Creator" (Frankl 1995: 208).

The Arabic loanword *Mola* in n-class is the Islamised monotheistic divinity as well as *Mawla* "Lord" (Frankl 1995: 203). Conversely, the Arabic lexeme Allah is seldom used in Swahili translations and is absent even in the Qur'an (Cassuto *et al.* 2020: 93; Frankl 1995: 202). Allah in Swahili was substituted by

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[7] https://archive.org/details/swahili-Qur'an-translation/00-Introduction-Utangulizi/

[8] According to Topan (personal communication 4-3-2024), nowadays the most popular version for an oral use is al-Barwani's and the more established version for a written use is al-Farsy's.

[9] *Mungu wa Israeli* "God of Israel" is also common; cf. *2 Sam* 23:3 SUV and choral trucks such as *Hallelujah, Mungu wa Israeli* by Michael Burkhardt (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkXrRult9ho).

[10] This provoked a significant controversy among historians of religion in the last century. For instance, Raffaele Pettazzoni's refutation (1957) of the theory of "primordial monotheism" (*Urmonotheismus*) previously postulated by Father Wilhelm Schmidt.

[11] Particularly, missionaries' translations of religious concepts appropriate words in African languages and interpret them according to Christian theology (Egeland 2024: 45; Topan 1992: 336, 340).

Mwenyezi Mungu, which is a combination of *mwenye* "possessor" + *-ezi* coming from an Arabic root meaning "might" and the Bantu *Mungu* "God:" The Almighty God (Topan 1992: 343).

Mkufya[12] started examining the Bible when he was a secondary school student and a thirsty reader in the Minaki school library; at that time, he also started writing his first novel. Then, he investigated thoroughly both the Bible and the Qur'an when he experienced a spiritual crisis in the period while he was writing *Ziraili na Zirani* (1980-1999). Mkufya told me that he did not translate himself the quotes from the Bible and the Qur'an in his works. Thus, from the literature examined, it can be determined[13] that Mkufya probably consulted the Swahili Bible Union Version[14] (SUV) (1952, 1997) and *Qur'ani Takatifu*, al-Farsy's translation.[15] Conversely, in English he consulted the King James Bible.[16]

4. A juvenile protest in prose

The *Wicked Walk* (WW) (1977/2012), and its Swahili translation *Kizazi Hiki* ("This Generation," 1980) are realist and postcolonial novels, which are part of the 'prostitute literature' trend of the 1980s (P'Bitek's "Song of Malaya," 1971; Senkoro 1982: 36-37).

The title itself, "The Wicked Walk," refers allegorically to *Psalm* 12:8. When evil-hearted people hold high rank and become the ruling class, wickedness will spread throughout the whole society. Especially, evildoers will deceive innocent people with flattering words, like the young protagonist Nancy, who dies during an abortion caused by the old patron of a factory. The victim is *Kizazi Hiki*, meaning "this generation," the title chosen by Mkufya for the Swahili version, which is also a quote from *Psalm* 12:7. 'This generation' stands for the younger people, and the working classes, who are the most vulnerable, but who are also those who have the right and duty to rebel and fight for social justice rather than passively succumb to injustice.

Psalm 12:7-8 is also inter-textualised in the prologue (Mkufya 1980: vii; Mkufya 2012: ii), and the whole *Psalm* 12:1-8 is quoted at length in the epilogue (Mkufya 1980: 134; Mkufya 2012: 100) of the novels.

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[12] Personal interview 17-11-2023.

[13] Mkufya was not sure about all the editions he consulted over the years.

[14] https://biblics.com/sw/biblia/swahili-union-version

[15] Mkufya directed me to buy al-Farsy's translation in the mosque at the city centre of Dar es Salaam in 2023.

[16] Mkufya personal communication 6-3-2024.

7 Thou shalt keep them, O Lord,	7 *Wewe, BWANA, ndiwe utakayetuhifadhi,*
Thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever.	*Utatulinda na kizazi hiki milele.*
8 The wicked walk on every side,	*8 Wasio haki hutembea pande zote,*
when the vilest men are exalted.	*Ufisadi ukitukuka kati ya mwanadamu.*
(A *Psalm* of David 12:7-8[17] quoted in Mkufya 2012: 100).	(A *Psalm* of David 12:7-8[18] quoted in Mkufya 1980: 134).

Deo, the male protagonist and a young revolutionary, opposes the message of *Psalm* 12:7, where King "David expresses assurance that God will intervene on behalf of the oppressed;"[19] he explains that people should not passively wait for God to save them, but must save themselves and fight for their rights through social revolution.

> *Sikubaliani tena na hii tabia ya wanadini ya 'kuumia kimya kimya' ama ya Wakristo ya 'kutoa shavu la pili lichapwe'. Ukumbukwe ya kwamba mtu waweza usikubaliane kabisa na Wakristo, lakini ukubaliane na machache yaliyozungumzwa kwenye Biblia. [...] Mimi nitasema ya kuwa 'umma utawafukuzilia mbali wanafiki wote na wakaidi'* (Mkufya 1980: 136)

> I am no longer tied to the Christian "suffer silently" business [or 'turn the other cheek to be hit']. One can be over with Christianity, but still follow some of the arguments in the Bible [...] I say, "the people shall cut off all hypocrites and saboteurs" (Mkufya 2012: 102)

Deo argues that people should detach from Christianity even though some teachings can be retained and applied in a secular way. Mkufya also inter-textualises in these novels the last stanza of Christopher Okigbo's poem *Heavensgate* (Okigbo quoted in Mkufya 1980: 114; Mkufya 2012: 85) in the chapter named "Labyrinths" (Mkufya 2012: 73), after Okigbo's homonymous poetry collection (*Labyrinth* 1970). When Deo is informed about the tragic death of his fiancée Nancy, who has been abused by his own employer, he reads Okigbo's poem as a hymn of the war that should be waged by oppressed young workers against the 'wicked' ruling class.

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[17] https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Psalms-12-7/

[18] https://www.bible.com/sw/bible/164/PSA.12.SUV

[19] https://www.bibleref.com/Psalms/12/Psalms-chapter-12.html

5. An adult intellectual and spiritual battle in epic and verse

The philosophical *Ziraili na Zirani* (ZZ) ("Azrael and Zirani," 1999) represents the phase of experimentation of 'new novels' (Gromov 2014; 2019; Khamis 2005, 2007). This polyphonic and 'polymorphic' novel (Wamitila quoted in Diegner 2005: 25), which has been defined as a "patchwork of genres" (Gromov quoted in Rettovà 2016a: 216), "rich in intertextuality" (Diegner 2005: 28), is designed as an epic[20] canvas, in which intervals of poetry and puns are entextualised.

Mkufya[21] differentiates between *utenzi*, the classic epic poem of the Swahili tradition, which was also used as a medium for "projecting Islam" (Topan 2001; Knappert 1967), and *epiki ya kifasihi* "a literary epic," such as novels and sagas, which he employs as a strategic medium to critique religion.

Furthermore, Mkufya created an intercultural kind of poem made up of three elements: Swahili modern free verse poetry (Topan 1974b); Greek dithyrambic poems, which were sung as hymns to praise the divinity of pleasure and wine Dionysus; both are spiced with the third element, Swahili *utani* "joking relations" (Kezilahabi 2015: 40). Mkufya calls this satirical and sarcastic kind of poem *ushairi wa ki-dithiramb-korofi* "the impertinent dithyramb," which plays the role of *korasi ya ki-korofi* "arrogant anti-chorus" (Nicolini 2022: 72) by challenging the classical function of the Greek chorus as *vijembe* (Sheik 1994), pungent commentaries.[22]

Mkufya[23]'s experiment aims to transform the dithyramb into a Swahili literary expression, and to make of it a laic expression to *kuiumbua dini*[24] "expose religion." Indeed, these poems are a device to examine religion: the divine, the human and their relationship.

This technique is an exercise in 'generic fracturing' (Rettovà 2021b:2): "intervals of heterogenous genres (commonly poetry into the novelistic prose) which fracture the prose of the novel" to introduce "alternative aesthetics, epistemologies and ontologies" (Rettovà 2021b: 3-4).

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[20] Mkufya's main sources are classic epic authors such as Homer, Virgil, but also Dante Alighieri's *La Divina Commedia* (1308 - 1320), which he called *Utenzi wa Pepo* (ZZ 4), Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) as well as Tanzanian authors such as Topan's *Aliyeonja Pepo* (1974) and Robert's *Kufikirika* (1967), in addition to *One Thousand and One Nights* (*Elfu Lela Ulela*, ZZ 1). Another influence could also be the *mi'raj* the Prophet's journey to Haven narrated by Swahili *utenzi* (Topan 2001).

[21] Mkufya, William. *Je Ziraili na Zirani ni Epiki?*, unpublished paper presented at the international conference on 'The Intellectual Biography as an entry point for Literary and Epistemological Analysis,' 10 April 2024, University of Naples L'Orientale.

[22] Mkufya, personal communication 28-11-2023.

[23] Personal conversations with Mkufya on 29-11-2023; 12-12-2023.

[24] Mkufya, personal communication 14-4-2024.

The allegorical epic battle, fought in people's minds, implies, by illustrating a clash of ideologies, an intellectual war waged by the "revolutionaries of manifestness" (*wanadhahara*) who represent positivism, materialism and atheism, and are supported by Lucifer and the demons who are the real philosophers advocating for relativism and pluralism (Rettovà 2021a; Nicolini forthcoming) against the Throne of Heaven including religious beliefs and idealism. However, when the Throne of Heaven is overthrown, the human warriors face the void. The mystery around God's existence remains unresolved, nevertheless thorough speculations on time, existence, free will, truth, and evil have been explored.

This novel was completed in a period of tension between Christians and Muslims in Tanzania; they competed with each other through "crusades," evangelisation campaigns (Chesworth 2022: 13), and Muslim *mihadhara* "public discourses" (Mbogoni 2004: 171). The novel was published a few years after the conflict known as the 'war of Mwembechai,' a neighbourhood in Dar es Salaam, where the Muslim community assaulted Christians' butcher shops because pork meat was sold,[25] and three Muslim brothers were killed in 1993 (Makulilo 2019: 131). Indeed, this novel criticises inter-religious conflicts.

Particularly, this epic criticises the lack of adequate representation of African protagonists in both the Scriptures and apologetic literature, especially Christian apologetics, which are mocked as: *Kwa ngano*[26] *tetere mwamtetea babu* "You are defending the old man with weak folktales"[27] (Mkufya 1999: 205).

Azazel: Kwa ngano tetere mwamtetea babu	Azazel: You are defending the old man with weak folktales.
Ila kwa kujaribu babu kaharibu	Though grandfather tried hard, he ruined [his creation]
Mtu kamwe asingebaki bubu!	A man would never remain silent![28]
(Mkufya 1999: 205)	

Mkufya explained that since in Africa there are no prophets recognised by the sacred texts or an institutionalised credo, African people seem to be doomed to darkness.[29] African historical figures are located in Hell, as *hawa wenye jadi ya kuzimu* "those whose traditions are doomed to hell" (Mkufya 1999:

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[25] Mkufya, personal interview 21-11-2023.

[26] The pun is based on the interplay of the polysemic word, *ngano* which means "wheat, fable, cackles" and particularly in this poem apologetic writings to defend the 'old man' (Abrahamic God).

[27] Apologetic literature.

[28] All the translations from Swahili to English are mine unless otherwise indicated. Emphasis mine.

[29] Mkufya, personal interview 8-12-2023.

188) or *massa damnata* (Dawson quoted in P'Bitek 2011: 2), because traditional African religions, which had existed long before Islam and Christianity, were denounced as animism, superstition, and fetichism by the colonisers: "Both Christianity and Islam employ all kinds of methods to reduce traditional religions to ashes and historical anachronism" (Mbiti quoted in P'Bitek 1986: 89; Kuykendall 1993).

Funguka pepo utukarimu	Open the Paradise to welcome us
Jema lako kwetu pia ni tamu	Whatever is good for you, it is also sweet for us
Sisi waovu wa kudumu	
Hata hawa wenye Jadi za kuzimu! [30]	We eternal sinners
(Mkufya 1999: 188)	And even they whose traditions are doomed to hell!

Besides, "a peculiar interpretation of Christianity became an institutionalized agency of colonialism" (Eze 2011: 69). Using selected passages from the Book of *Genesis*, "Christian missionaries refer to Africans as the cursed descendants of Ham" (Eze 2011: 68); thus, they justified colonialism as "a necessary evil in order to save the savages from the wrath of God and bring light and salvation to this cursed race of Africa" (Eze 2011: 68).

Mkufya describes historical figures such as the Nigerian poet Christopher Okigbo,[31] "the prophetic figure" (Mkufya 2005a: 59), priest of the Igbo divinity Idoto, who fought and died supporting Biafran Independence; and Kinjeketile[32] Ngwale, who, possessed by the spirit Hongo, communicated with the deity Bokero and led the *Maji Maji* revolt (1905-1907), which reunited the ethnic groups of South Tanzania against the German invaders through the symbol of water (*maji*; Mkufya 1999: 96-8). Okigbo and Ngwale are described as being prophets of equal values to those mentioned in the sacred texts.

The novel begins with a proem set in 1099, the year of the Siege of Jerusalem during the First Crusade, and it tells the story of both a crusader and a mujahid, departing from Rome and Baghdad respectively to fight for God (*kumpigania Mungu*, Mkufya 1999: 8). Jerusalem, the cradle of Abrahamic religions, symbolically connects all the holy books *i.e.* the Torah, the Bible, the Gospels, and the Qur'an that descended upon their prophets (Mkufya 1999: 6; cf. Tottoli 2021: 37). The first figures appearing in the protasis are protagonists of the Old Testament narratives that are parallel in the Qur'an and the Bible. The first figure mentioned is King David, the warrior king (the second Patriarch, son of Saul),

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[30] "The black humans with cultures of darkness" (Mkufya's translation).

[31] A character in Hell is the Nigerian poet Christopher Okigbo, who recites some of his own poems from the collection *The Labyrinth* (1971) translated into Swahili by Mkufya (Mkufya 1999: 90, 91, 92, 184, 200).

[32] Cf. Ebrahim Hussein's drama *Kinjeketile* (1969) and the homonymous English self-translation (1970).

leader of Israel and a "reconstructionist" of "post-fallen" humanity (Adamo 2018: 32), to whom many Psalms are attributed (*Zabur*, Mkufya 1999: 7). Indeed, David is a prophet in the chain of messengers "sealed" by Muhammad (Qur'an 33:40; cf. Tottoli 2021: 37-38), to whom the Book of *Zabur* was revealed (Qur'an 17:55; 21:105).

The protasis also features the image of Solomon's temple, one of the wonders of the world, erected to thank God for having granted him wisdom (Mkufya 1999: 8). Solomon (son of David and Betsabea, his abducted wife) is known for his extraordinary wisdom (II *Samuel*, I *Kings*, II *Chronicles*) and his knowledge of the language of all the animals, including birds and ants (Qur'an 27:15-19).

A quotation from *Matthew* 2:18 (quoted in Mkufya 1999: 9) stands at the beginning of the flashforward chapter when the war in Heaven is flaring up. The quotation refers to the massacre of the Innocents ordered by King Herod's edict commanding the execution of all male children, and it hints at the human tendency of self-destruction, which is often justified by religious wars.

Sauti ilisikika Rama, *Raheli akiwalilia Watoto wake* *Asikubali kufarijiwa, kwa kuwa hawako.* (*Matayo* 2:18 quoted in Mkufya 1999: 9)	In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.[33]

Mkufya uses both Biblical and Qur'anic appellations for God *e.g.* *Mungu* (ZZ 8) and *Muumba* ("The Creator" ZZ 8, 19), or *Mwenyezi (Mungu)* ("The Almighty God;" ZZ 8; Topan 1992: 343), *Maulana* (ZZ 18) and *Mola* (ZZ 51); the monotheistic God is also satirically called *radi* hinting at "Zeus thunderbolt" (ZZ 8). God never appears as a character and the Throne of Heaven is always described as empty; Heaven's representatives are the archangels Jibrail, Raphael, Mikhael, and Ziraili[34] (Azrael), the angel of death and collector of souls, who is described as the messenger of Abrahamic religions imported to Africa: *suriama wa Mzungu na Muarabu* "a mixed blood between a European and an Arab" (Mkufya 1999: 24).

The lord of darkness, *Ibilisi aliyeitwa Lusifa* "Iblis who is called Lucifer" (ZZ 46) is called with his Latin appellative throughout the whole novel as per *Isaiah* 14, which means "the light bringer" who brings *mwanga* "the light" of knowledge against superstition (Mkufya 1999: 38). The character of Lucifer, inspired by Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), is a hero in this novel, together with his emissaries,

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[33] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%202%3A18&version=KJV

[34] Cf. Ziraili in the play *Aliyeonja Pepo* ("A Taste of Heaven;" Topan 1974a), a powerful bureaucrat in an Islamic paradise who has a bottle of *wiski* on his desk (Topan 1974a: 15; cf. Kruisheer 1999).

the other fallen angels, who convey their messages through a complex and baffling language of poetry.[35] Their verses are aimed at "opening up the way to another concealed dimension of reality behind the phenomenal world and beyond human cognitive capacities" (Rettovà 2016a: 218).

The demons, who represent all human vices and embody the seven deadly sins, are protagonists in this novel, particularly Azazel, who appears in the form of an East African goshawk (*kozi*), Asmodeusi as a goat (Mkufya 1999: 12), Beelzeebu and Rahabu.

Azazel and Rahabu play complementary roles: Azazel defends humanity and their sins and tries to improve human creation by leading them to use their will power properly: *Shetani mja*[36] *twamtetea na dhambi zake twazisherekea!* "We Demons defend the servant of God, and his sin we celebrate!" (Mkufya 1999: 51). Conversely, Rahabu, a demon probably inspired by the homonymous prostitute heroine in *Joshua* 2:1, who in this novel represents the sin of lust along with Lilith (*Lilitu* ZZ 46), is the most cynical and sceptical demon towards human intellectual capacity that he mocks with cruelty as: *wajuzi [...] na kauli zao telezi!* "newborn creatures with their weak philosophy" (Mkufya 1999: 153). Likewise, the two demons, Asmodeus and his mistress Lilitu *wanapeana chambi* "sexually stimulate each other," while they were dancing *msapata*, a traditional dance performed by a man and a woman in a circle, which is described as an orgy (Mkufya 1999: 46), and their *ashiki* "sexual desire" is a satirical expression criticising the narrow-minded human beings who, deceived by religious influences, call sex adultery.[37]

Azazel, the demon who brings secret knowledge to humans in this novel, is a fallen angel in *the Apocalypse of Abraham* (23:6-11), the Book of *Enoch* (10:8) and Qur'an 23:7, where he appears as the tempting snake, and he is also the scapegoat in the prescription for the Day of Atonement (*Leviticus* 16:8, 10, 26; Pinker 2009: 2; Blair 2008: 24, 30; Helm 1994). Iblis as well as Azazel were the favourite angels, who refused to prostrate themselves in front of the human creation moulded from clay (Qur'an 2:34; 7:11), and for their arrogance were chased away from Heaven. Iblis decided to seek revenge against Adam and his progeny by tempting human beings so as to make them fall as he had fallen. However, why did the omnipotent God permitted Iblis to tempt humanity for centuries? That is the question Iblis asks himself in the play *Aliyeonja Pepo* (Topan 1974a: 23):

> *Mimi namkamilisha yeye na yeye, Mungu, ananikamilisha mimi. Ukamilifu wetu na mapenzi yetu ndiyo yanayoipa uhai dunia hii* (Topan 1974a: 25)

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[35] Cf. Hussein's play *Mashetani* ("The Devils," 1971), where the character *Shetani* "the demon" opens the play introducing himself through a free verse poem.

[36] *Mja* lit. "God's servant," a term usually used in the Islamic context to indicate human beings (Rettovà 2020: 35).

[37] Mkufya, personal communication 2-01-2024.

> I complement him and he, God, complements me. Our complementarity and our love are indeed what gives life to this world.

According to a reading of the Qur'an, the devil was allowed by God to tempt humanity and make some of them wrong (see also: Satan allowed to test Job in *Job* 1:6-22 KJV). Indeed, Iblis's monologue in this play was inspired by the *Surah al Saad* (the letter Saad 38:71-88) as Topan told me.[38]

> 82. (Iblīs) said: "Then, By Thy Power, I will Put them all in the wrong," —
>
> 83. "Except Thy Servants Amongst them, sincere and purified (by Thy grace).[39]"

Mkufya as well endorses the complementarity of evil and good that justifies temptation: *mbingu zilimruhusu shetani kumjaribu mtu na kumpotosha awezavyo* "the heavens gave permission to the Devil to test and pervert humanity as he could" (Mkufya 1999: 16).

Temptation started with the myth of Adam[40] and Eve who ate the forbidden fruit (*Genesis* 4-5; Qur'an 2:41-42). Azazel's poem tells that when Adam was endowed with reason and will power, the demons were put aside, so they are now avenging themselves by tempting humanity to put aside Heaven (Mkufya 1999: 12-13), hinting at the fall from Heaven as in *Genesis* 3:22-24 and Qur'an 2:34, 41-42:

Azazel: Pepo ilimtunuku Adamu kipaji cha tafakuri, sisi tukawekwa pembeni. Pepo ikamkabidhi Adamu Hawa. Sisi tuko pembeni. Nikamzuga hawa akanikumbatia pale mwembeni, yeye na mumewe wakawekwa pembeni. Sasa tafakuri na hiari ya mzao wao vyazichanja mbingu kwa nyembe. Popo tutaiweka pembeni! Pe!pe!pe! pembeni! Mbe![41]	Azazel: Heaven endowed Adam with intellect, and we were cast aside. Heaven entrusted Eve to Adam As we waited beside. I seduced Eve … Willingly, she embraced me …Under the mango tree, She and her husband were cast aside. Now human intellect in free will are tearing the heavens apart,
(Mkufya 1999: 12-3)	

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[38] Personal interview 5-11-2023, London.

[39] THE HOLY QUR'AN. Translation by A. Yusuf Ali: https://Qur'anyusufali.com/38/

[40] For the esoteric meaning of Adam's sin see Baffioni (2022).

[41] Azazel's Chagga sarcastic expression, meaning "My Lord" (ZZ 13), suggests a link to the Chagga scapegoat purification ritual, which is a case of parallelism with *Leviticus* 16:5-22 (Mojola 1999b).

> ...Either...
>
> Heaven or the Earth must be cast aside.
>
> What a score for a kingdom so proud!
>
> (Mkufya's translation).

In this epic novel, the demons convince human beings to destroy their own creator by waging war against Heaven, as in *Genesis* the snake tempts Eve.[42] Mkufya (personal communication) used Milton[43] as an intermediate source to refer to the Book of *Revelation* or the *Apocalypse of John* 12:7-10, the final book of the New Testament, where the fallen angels wage war against Heaven to take God's place. Likewise, Mkufya's demons enter human beings' minds and convince materialists and atheist thinkers, through mysterious verses that recall the allegorical language of the Apocalypse, to ally with Hell so as to overthrow Heaven and take the Throne:

Azazel: Unashangaa?	Azazel: Are you surprised? Are you
Unashangaa?	surprised?
Na mbinguni vita zimezagaa!	The war in heaven is spreading around.
(Mkufya 1999: 12,16)	

"And there was war in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon"[44] (*Revelation* 12:7).

Therefore, the sacred texts (*maandiko ya manabii* "the scriptures[45] of Prophets;" ZZ 14) descended upon the prophets: the Psalms on David, the Torah on Moses, the Qur'an on Muhammad, the Gospels and the Bible on Christ and the Bhagavad Gita for Hinduism, are seen on fire and are withdrawn from Earth by the angels (Mkufya 1999: 14). The descent of the holy books upon the prophets, which is told in *Surah Al-A'raf* 7:142-144, and the descent of the *Ten Commandments* upon Moses on Mount Sinai (*Exodus* 20:1-7; *Deuteronomy* 5:2-22) are events that—though none of these holy texts were revealed in sub-Saharan Africa, according to Mkufya should be interpreted as a message of inter-faith tolerance that did not last for long.

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[42] Cf. Milton's *Paradise Lost* Book IX: 1-23.

[43] Milton Book VI (The war in Heaven).

[44] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%2012%3A7-10&version=KJV.

[45] Cf. the Qur'anic expression *ahl al-kitab* "the People of the Book" (Hebrews and Christians; Tottoli 2021: 48).

Another text becomes a holy book in this novel, *Akirikifuk* (*kufikirika*[46] read backwards, Mkufya 1999: 59), which Mkufya translated [47] as *Ysatnaf/Fantasy.* The book was written by *mazimwi* "ghouls/ogres" and *Wazamzumi* (Zamzummim is the name given by the Ammonites to the giant inhabitants of the Transjordanian territory whom they dispossessed, *Deut.* 2:20), who left Heaven to move to the island of *Mwanga* (the "knowledge" or "light" of science dissipating religious obscurantism) in Hell. The book was written using as a source a page stolen from the book used by the two angels,[48] Hârût and Mârût, who, during the reign of Solomon, complained about human weaknesses and tempted humanity by teaching sorcery and black magic in the city of Babel: *Malaika wawili, Harut na Marut, katika (mji wa) Babil* (Qur'an 2:102 al-Farsy's transl. 1994: 25). The page was torn from that book and stolen by the evil spirits when Jibrail went in Babel to destroy the book. Hârût and Mârût and their teachings are described in Qur'an 2:102 (quoted in Mkufya 1999: 20, 82): "We are only for trial so do not blaspheme." [...] But they could not thus harm anyone except by God's permission."[49]

Thus, the word *Akirikifuk* became a spell used as a weapon during the war to destroy idealism and metaphysics (Mkufya 1999: 170) in favour of *udhahiri* "the ideology of manifestness of things" (Mkufya 1999: 68; Rettovà 2007: 251) and *uyakinifu* "cognitive materialism" (Nicolini 2022: 62).

In Hell, another symbol of witchcraft is *mizakumu* (Mkufya 1999: 88), Mkufya's original Swahili translation of the Zaqqum tree, *Euphorbia Abyssinica*, commonly known as the desert candle, which is the 'cursed tree' of Hell[50] mentioned in Qur'an 17:60 as *mti uliolaaniwa* (al-Farsy's transl. 1994: 379), and also in Qur'an 44:43, 49; 37:62-8; 56:52 as *mti wa Zakkum* (al-Farsy's transl. 1994: 677), whose fruits are demons' heads (Qur'an 37:65).

Wanadhahara "the revolutionaries of manifestness" (Mkufya 1999: 68) were invited by Lucifer: *Ole wako[51] roho yenye hiari!* "woe upon you soul with freewill!" (ZZ 15) and his delegation of demons representing the seven capital vices to a banquet to seal the war agreement (Mkufya 1999: 152-3). The

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[46] The palindromic word is an indirect quote from Robert's novel *Kufikirika* ("Thinkable," 1967) (Diegner 2005: 28).

[47] Mkufya completed the self-translation of this novel as *Pilgrims From Hell* in 2005; however, the manuscript is still unpublished.

[48] The angels in the Qur'an are usually mentioned in couples and to this evil couple is opposed the good couple of Jibraeel and Michael (2:97-8; Saccone 2011: 26).

[49] https://Qur'anyusufali.com/2/

[50] In the Bible the cursed tree is the fig tree mentioned in *Mark* 11:12-20 (cf. the fig tree in *Gen.* 3:7).

[51] Cf. Surah 75:34; *Ecclesiastes* 10:16; Milton Book I: 22 and Dante's Inferno (III:1-9): *Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate* ("abandon all hope, ye who enter").

banquet[52] symbolises the Last Supper (see Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians and Qur'an 5:114, where Jesus, son of Mary, announces a feasting table); indeed, the demons betrayed God by fixing an alliance with His creatures against Heaven's Throne.

Heaven's gate of religion and superstitious beliefs, where the *Akirikifuk* warning is posted, is eventually broken down by dinosaurs and east African Zinjanthropus, which are symbols of Darwinist evolution (Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* 1859) that destroys the religious myth of creation (*Genesis* 1:26-28[53]), as Samson killed all the Philistines (*Judges* 16:30):

> *Viumbe hao walijihami kwa mawe ya kuchonga, magongo ya miti na mataya ya mifupa kama ule Samsoni aliwoulia Wafilisiti* (Mkufya 1999: 176).

> The creatures armed themselves with carved stones, wooden clubs and jaw bones like Samson the one who killed the Philistines.

Heaven's armies are set to stop the invaders from Hell. The patriarch of all the Abrahamic religions is mentioned, Jacob, renamed Israel by God (Mkufya 1999: 194; *Genesis* 35:10 KJV; Qur'an 2:130). On the one hand, King David as the warrior king is leading Heaven's armies. King David is one of the patriarchs mentioned in the Books of *Kings*, *Deuteronomy*, *Chronicles*, *Samuel*, and especially in the *Psalms*. The Book of *Psalms*, *Zaburi* in Swahili (an Arabism), is described in the Qur'an as the holy book revealed to the prophet David after he has killed Goliath. The episode narrating David killing Goliath, or Jalout, is narrated both in *Samuel* I: 17:45-54 and in Qur'an 2:247-252. The Philistines, among them Goliath, worshipped a divinity called Beelzebub in the Bible (II *Kings* 1:1-18) or Ba'al in the Qur'an 37:123-132, who is a character among Mkufya's demons (Mkufya 1999: 206), and thus, they opposed the advent of the Abrahamic God:

Goliati: Sabaoth mtetezi wa taifa	Goliath: Sabaoth[54] the Defender of a cruel
dhalimu	nation
Kiburi, umewapa wana wa Ibrahimu,	Pride, you gave to Ibrahim's sons[55]
Twakukana kwa ngoma na baragumu	We are rejecting you with drum

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[52] Cf. Kezilahabi's collection of poems *Dhifa* ("the Banquet," 2008), which is an allegory for the principles of the *ujamaa* philosophy ravaged at the banquet of the bourgeoisie. In Mkufya's novel all religious principles of love and tolerance are eaten up.

[53] https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Genesis-1-26/

[54] *Yahweh ṣĕbā'ōt*, or "Tzevaot," "Lord of Hosts," lit. "Armies."

[55] Cf. *Revelation* 7:1-17, the twelve tribes of Israel (Jacob's descendants).

	and trumpet
Pepo yako tukiipangua kwa zamu!	Step by step, we will dismantle your
(Mkufya 1999: 206)	Paradise!

Then, the Christian army prays and *Psalm* 148, which is also paraphrased in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (*Adam and Eve's Morning Hymn,* Book 5), is quoted:

Mtukuzeni Mungu kutoka mbinguni,	Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord
msifuni kutoka vilele vya anga.	from the heavens: praise him in the
Msifuni, enyi malaika wake,	heights.
msifuni na nyinyi majeshi.	Praise ye him, all his angels: praise
Msifuni, enyi mbingu za mbingu	ye him, all his hosts.
Enyi nyamngumi na vilindi vyote	Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise
msifuni!	him, all ye stars of light.[56]
(*Psalm* 148 quoted in Mkufya 1999: 194).	

On the other hand, the four Rashidun Caliphs, namely Abu Bakr, Omar, Uthman and Ali, are named among other Muslim leaders and soldiers who died during the first great battles[57] of Islam (Mkufya 1999: 195; cf. Lo Jacono 2003: 25-77), "bearing witness to faith" (Haq 1984: 171). Then, the Testimony of Faith, the first pillar of Islam (*Shahadah*; cf. Ventura 2008: 120), is quoted:

Hakuna Mungu ila Yule pekee aitwaye Mola Na Muhammad ni mjumbe wake! (Qur'an 3:18 quoted in Mkufya 1999: 196)

There is no Lord but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah (Haq 1984: 171)

In contrast with the apostates' ideology, which, as postulated by Mkufya, appears as a form of African socialism and which is an aggregating factor teaching tolerance (Mkufya 1999: 187), different religious beliefs appear as a disaggregating factor. In fact, Heaven's armies fight together against the invaders but pray separately (Mkufya 1999: 210), as illustrated by the Islamic philosopher Averroes,[58] a fighter in Heaven's army: *Lakini kwa kuwa dua zetu zinapingana, kila moja asome yake peke yake* "since our prayers

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[56] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20148&version=KJV

[57] *Utenzi wa Vita vya Uhud* (Chum and Lambert 1962) was also one of Mkufya's sources.

[58] Ibn Rushd wrote *The Decisive Treatise* (1126–98) in which by criticising al-Ghazali he admits the possibility of connecting Islam and philosophy (Averroes 2006; Campanini 2007).

fight each other, each person will pray separately" (Mkufya 1999: 210). Averroes is located by Dante in the Limbo of unbaptised persons among 'great souls' such as Homer and other Greek and Arab philosophers: *Averrois, che 'l gran comento feo* "Averroes who made the great Commentary" (*Inferno* IV: 144); whereas Mkufya, criticising Christian apologetics, places him in a Paradise inclusive of Islam, Christianity and plural doctrines and beliefs.

> *Walimwengu wanahitaji tafasiri mpya ya Uungu, tafasiri pana na pevu zaidi inayothamini utu na uumbwa wa walimwengu wote. Tafasiri ambayo shina lake sio Ismail na Isaka peke yao. Tafasiri itakayoanza kutuita Walimwengu badala ya kutuita Bin Adamu* (Mkufya 1999: 9)

> The inhabitants of the universe need a new translation for Divinity, a more wide and mature translation that gives value to humanity and the creation of all inhabitants of the universe. A translation which root is not Ismail or Isaac alone. A translation which starts calling us Inhabitants of the Universe rather than Sons of Adam.

Indeed, Mkufya opposes the use of the Arabic loan term *binadamu*—the sons of Adam - as a symbol of cultural imperialism, because it attributes the origin of humanity to the Middle East and Judaeo-Christian culture. He believes, proudly, that the cradle of humanity resides in Olduvai in Tanzania, where the Germans have found important skeletons and archaeological remains.[59] Thus, he suggests using the holistic term of *walimwengu watu* "human world-dwellers." Mkufya transforms the pessimistic view of finitude and imperfection of "creation" (*viumbe*) into a much more optimistic approach towards humanity, introducing the neologism *vihai* "living beings" who inhabit the phenomenal universe (Mkufya 2019: 448).

In the end, after the world crumbles, Lucifer wants to exchange his evil role with the holy role of Jibril, the angel messenger of the "revelation" *wahyi* (ZZ 229) (*wahy:* inspiration; Tottoli 2021: 31) delivered to the Prophet Mohammad (Surah 42:51) for Islam, and who descended as *roho mtakatifu* "the holy spirit" (ZZ 229) for Christianity.

In fact, in the Bible, the Holy Spirit is translated in Swahili as *Roho Mtakatifu*, where *Roho* refers to a living being with its adjective in class 1 (Topan 1992: 342); whereas, in Qur'an 2:87, Jesus is strengthened by *roho takatifu* "a sanctified spirit or soul" in class 9 (Topan 1992: 342).

The archangel Gabriel or Jibril is the messenger of both the Annunciation and the first revelation to Muhammad. He is indeed the one who was sent to announce to Mary that she was pregnant with Jesus (*Luke* 1:26-38), and the one who let the revelation of the Holy Qur'an to descend upon the prophet

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[59] Mkufya, personal communication.

Muhammad with the words *Iqraa Bismi Rabik!* "Read in the name of Allah!" as explained in the *surat-al Alaq* 96:1[60] (quoted in Mkufya 1999: 229), the first surah revealed in Mecca to Muhammad.

Lucifer's wish to exchange his role with Jibril can also be interpreted as a parody of the religious interpretation of evil and goodness. Indeed, Devil and God are just roles performed on the stage of phenomenal life as well as good and evil are relative (Mkufya 1999: 110) and complementary concepts that make the world work (cf. Iblis's final monologue in Topan 1974a: 25: *Yeye anavuta kule, mimi navuta huku, na dunia inakwenda* "He pulls there, I pull here, and the world goes on").

6. Mature philosophical speculation through dialogues and sermons

The *Diwani ya Maua* "The Poetry of Flowers" speculates on the meaning of life in the face of HIV/AIDS and in connection with sexuality, death and religious beliefs. The philosophical speculations are enclosed in the poetic symbolism of flowers, which are a metaphor for the fragile human existence on earth and the existence of gracious but impermanent people like flowers.

The novels are a family saga that narrates the interlaced lives, disrupted by HIV/AIDS, of three families over many years and through two generations of characters. The trilogy consists in 'new/neo-realist' novels, where some experimental features can be sieved from an overall realist narration, which is sometimes blended with enchanted elements (Rettovà 2016b: 16, 24; Diegner 2017: 39; 2018).

I define *Kuwa Kwa Maua* (KKM) "The Existence of Flowers" (2019) as a philosophical treatise in the shape of a symbolist novel (Nicolini 2022: 201ff). The novel displays intervals of poetry and songs,[61] and a tragic Aristotelian-like drama is implanted in the half of the narration in prose; the narrative is divided into six act-like parts; then, from parts four to six, the subgenre of tragedy takes place (KKM 288-477).

Metatextual references to other genres (Diegner 2017; 2021; Fludernik 2003) are widespread throughout the narrative prose: poetic symbolism, children's songs,[62] lullabies and traditional songs in *Manyema* and *Sambaa*,[63] as well as religious hymns and gospel songs,[64] but above all the drama. The

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[60] Cf. Al-Farsy's Swahili translation: *Soma kwa Jina la Mola* (1994: 925).

[61] KKM 11, 27, 140, 282, 288-9, 443, 458-9, 464, 476.

[62] KKM 11, 27.

[63] KKM 140, 282, 443.

[64] Mkufya quotes some *nyimbo za injili* (cf. Mkallya 2016), gospel songs, especially songs by the Tanzanian singer Rose Mhando (KKM 312) and songs from the collection *Tumwabudu Mungu wetu* (no 301, 330, 377) from the Lutheran liturgy by the Lutheran Church of Tanzania (KKM 459, 464).

tragedy is introduced by a choral prologue where the spirits inhabiting the baobab cavities utter their prophecy and an owl chants a mysterious spell (Mkufya 2019: 288-9) to beseech *mahyuyu* "the mortal beings," which recalls the three witches' appearance and their spell in Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* (Act 1 scene 1; Act 4 scene 1).[65]

Mkufya in his maturity portrays an environment of tolerance and the co-existence of plural ideologies, especially through the mouths of the protagonists: Dr Hans, a virologist and a philosopher, advocates for an atheist, materialist and hedonist view of 'being' in this world through his dialogues and lectures; and his wife Kristina, a fervent Christian and an idealist, expresses herself through prayers and sermons.

In the end, Dr Hans finds meaning in life through procreation that overcomes death: *hakuna kufa* "death is nothing to us" (Epicurus[66] quoted in Mkufya 2019: 445), stating that Epicurus was a real prophet.

Since the *Diwani* is devoted to the search for meaning in life, the central reference is King Solomon and his preaching in the Book of *Ecclesiastes*: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (1:2 KJV). Mkufya's objective through his characters, both the atheist Dr Hans and the Christian Kristina, is to demonstrate the opposite: life has indeed a meaning: enjoy life and give birth to overcome death (Mkufya 2019: 445-8).

In the first novel of the trilogy, *Ua La Faraja*, the absurdist character Omolo reflects on the transience of life of *waja* "human beings who are coming and going on earth" (Mkufya 2004: 423).

Omolo's viewpoint collides with the absurdism of King Solomon as expressed in *Ecclesiastes* (1:3): "life under the sun is transient and vain;" thus, he is not annoyed by the idea of dying in itself, but he is more annoyed by the idea of dying from a shameful disease such as HIV/AIDS (*Ecclesiastes* quoted in Mkufya 2004: 342). Life on earth is described as "vanity" (*lahw*) and as "a game" (*la'b*) in contrast with the afterlife in several Qur'anic verses (6:32; 29:64; 47:36; 57:20; Corrao 2023: 4). Omolo's scepticism and agnosticism make him see life without a transcendental purpose as vain:

> *Mtu huzaliwa, huishi na kisha hufa. Hakuona faida yoyote ya kuwemo katika mzunguko huo. Aliona kama mchezo wa kitoto usio na maana yoyote* (Mkufya 2004: 113)

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[65] Mkufya was inspired by the Shakespearean dramas *Macbeth* and *Othello* while scripting some scenes of his tragedy (personal interview 18-12-2023).

[66] "Epicurus in Lucretius (1948), Nature of Things Book III: 806-834" quoted in Mkufya (2019: 445); cf. Milton book 5: 7.8.

> A person is born, lives, and then dies. He didn't see any advantage of being inside this compulsory circle He perceived [life] as a nonsensical/meaningless children's game.

The first chapter of the second novel, *Kuwa Kwa Maua*, is stylistically shaped as the protasis of an epic narration, which introduces the topic *i.e.* the search for meaning in life through wisdom that comes from extending human intellectual capacities, by means of an indirect biblical quote from Solomon, who asked God for "an understanding heart" (1 *Kings* 3:9). The baobab, which is the shelter for the spirits of the ancestors, extends its branches towards the sky as Solomon prayed God to receive wisdom; however, it does not need to ask for wisdom from a Christian God, since it already has its ancient wisdom (Mkufya 2019: 8).

> *[...] mithili ya mtu anayesali kwa kunyoosha mikono juu na kuzitazama mbingu kuzidai kipato, afya au hekima. Lakini mbuyu haukudai hekima kama Sulemani [Wafalme, 3:9-14] Alipoipewa akaiona batili [Mhubiri 1: 12-18].* (Mkufya 2019: 8)

> [...] like a person who prays by stretching his hands up, and looking at the heavens asks for income, health or wisdom. 'Yet the baobab did not claimed wisdom as Solomon did' (*1 Kings* 3: 9-14[67] quoted in Mkufya 2019: 8). When he was endowed by it [wisdom], he saw it [life] meaningless (*Ecclesiastes* 1:12-18 quoted in Mkufya 2019: 8)

The reference to King Solomon is also a strategy to link this novel to the protasis of *Ziraili na Zirani* where Solomon's temple is mentioned (Mkufya 1999: 8).

King Solomon, to whom the Book of *Ecclesiastes* (a translation from the Hebrew meaning "preacher") is attributed, once he obtained the gift of wisdom, embarked on a quest for the meaning and purpose of life. Since "For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (*Ecclesiastes* 1:18),[68] he discovered that if the meaning in life is solely connected with seeking material pleasure, all efforts are vain. "Life under the sun" (*Ecclesiastes* 1:3) is transient and if you do not prepare for an afterlife believing in God, it has no meaning. According to Kristina, life is meaningless because of its ephemerality, as she explains quoting from the Bible:

> *Mambo yote ni batili. Mtu ana faida gani ya yote ayafanyayo chini ya jua?'(Mhubiri 1:3) Lakini Sulemani aliona ubatili wa maisha yake aliyoishi kwa kuwa yanamalizika, hayadumu* (*Ecclesiastes* 1:3 quoted in Mkufya 2019: 200)

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[67] Cf. https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Kings%203%3A9-14&version=KJV

[68] https://www.bible.com/bible/1/ECC.1.KJV

'All is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?'[69] Solomon saw his life as meaningless because it was doomed to end.

Conversely, Mkufya, through Dr Hans (KKM 248), advocates for the opposite view: ephemerality is the feature that makes life more precious and valuable. Life indeed loses its value faced with the notion of an afterlife, because this idea either makes mortal beings afraid of dying and being judged, or humans, cheated by the promise of an eternal reward, are distracted from taking advantage of their sole, immanent life on earth. For instance, Dr Hans, quoting from the Bible, illustrates how King Solomon became an absurdist because, approaching death, he started fearing punishment in Hell.

> [...] *Nabii Suleiman (Mhubiri 1: 1-18) aliuona ubatili wa maisha kwa sababu alikihofia na kukijutia kifo kwenye uzee wake, pia alidhani akishakufa uwapo wake unaendelea kwenye uwapo mchungu kuzimu.* (Mkufya 2019: 451)

> The prophet Solomon (*Ecclesiastes* 1:1-18 quoted in Mkufya 2019: 451) felt the absurdity of life because he started fearing death while approaching old age, and he thought that his existence would continue afterlife in the bitterness of hell.

Dr Hans criticises the myth of Adam and Eve (Mkufya 2019: 426-8), which, as narrated by the monotheistic doctrines, both Islam and Christianity, and in contrast with scientific theories on reproduction, casts blame on sex as a sin to be severely punished (Tamale 2014: 161) or as a taboo to be concealed.

> *Hekaya hiyo imesababisha ngono, iletayo uzazi, ilaanike badala ya kutukuzwa. Ikaitwa aibu, ikaonwa kinyaa, ikawa majuto ya kukosa utiifu kwa Muumba kwa kuzini na hawara, aibu hiyo ikafichwa kwenye sehemu za siri.* (Mkufya 2019: 427)

> This tale has caused sex, which brings procreation, to be blamed instead of being glorified. It was called shame, it was looked down upon, it became regret for not obeying the Creator by committing adultery with a mistress, that embarrassment was hidden in private parts.

After having eaten the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve in the Book of *Genesis* (3:3-13) felt ashamed and started covering up with fig leaves from the garden. In Qur'an 7:19-22, the apple episode is clearly referred to an illicit sexual act, with the sexual outcome much more evident than in the Bible (Amoretti 2009: 214-215). However, in the Qur'an there is not the concept of original sin inherited by mankind,

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[69] *Ecclesiastes* 1:3 KJV. https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes%201-6&version= KJV.

rather the habit of covering up the body "to preserve their modesty" as explained in *Surah an-Nur* 24:30-31 (Amoretti 2009: 214-215).

The "veil" (*khimar*) in the Qur'an appears in 24:31 and a total body protection or "cloak" (*jalabib*) in 33:59 (Pepicelli 2018: 28), which find correspondence in 1 *Corinthians* 11:4 that also recommends women cover their heads with a veil in front of God.

Zinaa, adultery and fornication, is one of the seven deadly sins as illustrated in *Deuteronomy* 22:22, "they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman,"[70] and in Qur'an *Surah an-Nur* 24:2, "As for female and male fornicators, give each of them one hundred lashes."[71]

Therefore, people who grow up with religious education tend to be scared of sex, as explained by the character Asha Kabeya, who promotes instead the traditional initiation rites to adulthood as valid education about sexual and reproductive health:

> *[...] Watoto wanaogofywa mno kuhusu ngono. Kuna dhana zinazosema ngono ni kama uchafu, laana, najisi, matusi, dhambi ambayo wahalifu wake wanastahili kupigwa mawe hadi wafe!* (Mkufya 2019: 69)
> *[...] Ni ngariba pekee unyagoni au jandoni aliye na uhodari na namna za kufunda vijana bila kigugumizi.* (Mkufya 2019: 70)

> [...] Children are made to be scared about sex. There are beliefs stating that sex is dirty, blameful, impure, vulgar and sinful and the lawbreakers deserve to be lapidated to death!
> [...] Only the *unyago* or *jando* instructor, the *ngariba* has the ability and skill to teach the youth without stammering.

Nevertheless, for those who believe, faith can be a tool to give support to others, as demonstrated by Kristina, who prays to help her family and friends. For instance, when Grace loses both her husband and her daughter, she prays God to give her the strength of *Job*:

> *Imani ya Ayubu haikutetereka. Mpe Grace imara huohuo.* (Mkufya 2019: 419)
> Job's faith did not shake. Give Grace the same strength.

The story of *Job* (1:13-22) is a biblical myth meaning that there are no explanations for the evil and suffering in this world acceptable for human limited cognition. Job discusses with God the presence of evil in the world, which usually pushes people to choose atheism. Likewise, in Mkufya, when there is inexplicable evil such as in Grace's case, either faith can remain unshaken or, if both science and

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[70] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+22%3A+22%2C23+&version=KJV

[71] https://Qur'an.com/an-nur/2

religion fail, the supernatural intervenes. In fact, Grace and Omolo's progeny is hit by *kinda la mlapeke*, which literally means "a chicks who eats alone or a child who loves only himself;" this fictional curse or hereditary fatalism[72] describes someone whose existence destroys the existence of their close relatives (Mkufya 2019: 476). For instance, Omolo is an orphan, his daughter Tumaini kills herself, and his son Masumbuko, whose name means agony, kills his mother in childbirth (Nicolini 2022: 241-242).

Kristina's main arguments are delivered in the form of a sermon at Omolo and Tumaini's funeral (Mkufya 2019: 462-464), where she extensively quotes from the Bible: the Book of *Proverbs*, the *Psalms* and *Genesis*. Firstly:

> *Kumwogopa Mungu ndio mwanzo wa hekima na kumjua Mungu ni kufumbukiwa* (*Mithali* 9:10-11)"
> (*Proverbs* 9:10 quoted in Mkufya 2019: 462)

> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: And the knowledge of the holy is understanding.
> (The *Proverbs* of Solomon 9:10 King James Version)

Secondly:

> *Kumpendeza Mungu kwa mwanadamu ni kwa kumtafakari. Tangu zamani yamewahi kuchanua maua mazuri ya tafakuri ya Mungu, kama mfalme Solomoni, Daudi, watakatifu Agustino, Tomaso na wengine* (Mkufya 2019: 463) *[...] Uzuri wa ua liitwalo mtu ni kujitafakari ili limtafakari Mungu. Na Mungu siyo yule wa Waebrania pekee.* (Mkufya 2019: 464)

> Being devoted to God as human beings means to reflect upon Him. Since ancient times, beautiful flowers of God's contemplation have flowered, such as King Solomon, David, Saints Augustine, Thomas and others [...] The beauty of the flower called human being is to reflect upon himself so as to reflect upon God. Yet God is not only the Hebrew one.

In *Genesis* (*Mwanzo* 1:24-27 quoted in Mkufya 2019: 463), God creates humanity and endows humans with reason so they can reflect upon themselves and upon God.

Thirdly:

> *Nabii Daudi alituambia 'Mpumbavu kasema moyoni mwake, hakuna Mungu' (Zaburi 14). Lakini pia wasadikio bila kutafakari ni wapumbavu.* (Mkufya 2019: 464)

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[72] Inspired by both the Greek interpretation of adverse fate and the Yoruba myth of *Abiku* a child predestined to death (Mkufya personal communication 14-4-2024); see also Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* (1991).

> In the Psalms, the prophet David told us: "The fool hath said in his heart" (*Psalm* 14[73]); however, who believe without reasoning is a fool as well.

Since humanity has been gifted with reason, they must use it and show their love for God by reflecting upon him. This means that believing blindly without having reasoned about it is as foolish as rejecting faith. According to Kristina's idealism (KKM 202-4), the meaning of life is loving and acknowledging God, yet by means of a free exercise of reasoning and knowledge.

Kristina's prayer showing the meaning and purpose of human life on earth seems also to be a quote from *Matthew* 22:37:

> *Maana kuu ya maisha ya mwanadamu ni kumpendeza Mungu kwa kumfahamu na kumtafakari.* (Mkufya 2019: 204)
>
> Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (*Matthew* 22:37[74])

To sum up, Kristina quotes selected passages from the Bible for the following purposes: firstly, to encourage an environment of tolerance and peaceful co-existence between all human beings and the natural environment; secondly, to foster multiculturalism; thirdly, to highlight the meaning in life; and finally, to push people to reflect and make the most out of their intellectual capacities.

Furthermore, I argue that Mkufya enriches the novel with ecopoetic symbols (cf. Aghoghovwia and McGiffin 2023) so as to design a lyrical narrative where the poetic tradition, in the form of natural elements, intersects with the prose. In fact, Swahili poetry, both classic and contemporary, displays natural elements not only as a continuous sign of African cultures, but also as objectified metaphors of the dramatic state of the soul or *anima mundi* (Acquaviva 2016: 185, 197).

In the trilogy, the title itself, *Diwani ya Maua*, means the poetry or a collection of poems about flowers, the flowers symbolising the being/existence of kind-hearted and virtuous people. This narrative supports an ecocritical 'ecology of knowledge' (Santos 2007; 2014; Medina 2006; 2011) where humans and nature complement each other. Precisely, in the novel there appear many kinds of flowers: the rose (*waridi*) is a new-born baby (KKM 448); the hibiscus (*mjohoro*) hides a dangerous secret (HIV/AIDS) for Tumaini (KKM 15), whereas the mango tree (*mwembe*) is a simile for an adolescent boy like Haji, and the mango fruit (*embe*) is connected to the appealing body shape of an adolescent girl like Tumaini (KKM 210); the *mkole* tree represents the wisdom of an *unyago* instructor such as Asha Kabeya

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[73] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2014&version=KJV

[74] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2022%3A37&version=KJV

(KKM 135; cf. Swantz 1986), and *mkungu*, the Indian almond (*Terminalia catappa L. Combretaceae*), which in *Jeremiah* 1:11 symbolises waiting for fruit to mature to let a new era begin, in this novel symbolises the wise teaching passed on from old Dr Hans to the young Haji (KKM 245). Finally, the baobab (*mbuyu*) is the symbol of prophecy and the link to the realm of the spirits (KKM 288); the baobab cavity is inhabited by an owl (*bundi*), who in many African cultures is the symbol of witchcraft (Mkufya p.c) and in the Hebrew Bible is the avatar for the demon Lilith (Blair 2008: 24).

At the beginning of the novel, many prophetic symbols adorn the narrative. For instance, the young character Haji offers a flower of *mchongoma* to his friend Tumaini, but the flower has an insect inside which is an omen of the HIV virus that will ruin the lives of both the children and their relatives (KKM 18). *Mchongoma*, the Indian plum (*Flacourtia indica Burm.f. Merr - Selicaceae*), is quoted in *Ezekiel* 28:24 as a prophecy of Israel's liberation from 'thorns.' In Mkufya's reinterpretation thorns are a bad omen: the HIV virus, a bug that intrudes in characters' lives. Likewise, the *mjohoro*, iron wood (*Senna siamea Lam. Fabaceae*), represents the shadow, or the secret omen enclosed in the two children playing house (*kijumba*), where they were believed to have had sex, triggering the peripeteia of the tragedy. Additionally, Haji and Tumaini experience the loss of their pet goat (KKM 28), and to remember their departed friend, they often play *kibunzi*, a children's game that symbolises the circle of life and death and that is usually played dancing around the fake grave of a goat (Baringo 2005).

Mkufya, with the sacrificial goat *kibunzi* that is tragic omen announcing the illness of the two child protagonists, seems to play with an interesting parallelism. Indeed, a traditional Chagga (Bantu ethnic group from the Kilimanjaro region)[75] scapegoat purification ritual can be compared to *Leviticus* 16:5-22, where the prescription for the Day of Atonement (*Lev.* 16:8, 10, 26; cf. Helm 1994) and the ritual of the scapegoat to be offered to Azazel are described (Pinker 2009: 2). In fact, the demon Azazel, "a minion of Satan" (Mojola 1999b: 74) in the Hebrew Bible is "the goat that is sent off," the "go away goat" or "the scapegoat" (Blair 2008: 24, 30). However, the Chagga scapegoat purification ritual is pre-existent to Christianisation and thus not connected to the Scriptures as explained by Mojola (1999b: 79).

The hidden presence of Azazel highlights the links between *Ziraili na Zirani* and *Kuwa Kwa Maua*, where the aulic language of demons' poetries is translated into dramatic dialogues.

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[75] See: ISO 639: https://www.ethnologue.com/language/old/

7. Conclusions

Clashes of ideologies, between theism and antitheism, are conveyed by "double voiced discourses" (Bakhtin 1981) in Mkufya's *Ziraili na Zirani*, where the epic genre and apologetic literature constitute a Genette's hypertext (Allen 2000: 107-8). Moreover, the epic narration is 'fractured' by poetry (Rettovà 2021b) and 'entextualisation' (Barber 2007) of genres takes place.

The prose of *Kuwa Kwa Maua* is enriched by both metareferences to poetry and drama (Diegner 2021; 2017) and a "novelization of other genres" (Bakhtin 1981: 39), including poetic symbolism and a tragic drama incorporated into the narrative prose of the novel. Especially, the tragic drama inserted into the novel produces what I call inter-genre implementation, and the ideological clashes evolve into an environment of 'co-existence' (Nicolini 2022: 251).

A text and intertextuality not only "depict or disclose" reality, but they also "produce" it (Barber 2007: 106), by writing with 'différance,' which means to re-write a text with "difference" and "deferral of meaning" (Derrida 1978; 2016; Allen 2000: 65).

Just as, in Kezilahabi' s novel *Nagona* (1990), a mummified corpse holds the Bible in one hand and the Qur'an in the other (cf. Khamis 2003: 89; Diegner 2005: 30), as well as in Hussein's poem *Ngoma na Vailini* ("The Drum and the Violin," 1968), an oxymoronic combined identity wears "a Muslim kanzu and a Christian cross" (Topan 1974b: 180-1; Ricard 2000: 116; Gaudioso 2020: 17-20), Mkufya in his novels offers a *mchanganyodini*, intertextual intermingling of religions (cf. *mchanganyondimi* "intertextuality;" Khamis 2007: 51,57). This outlook is aimed at reassembling the "fragmentation of self-reflexive narrative" (Khamis 2003: 78) through Kezilahabi's "bifocal lenses" (Kezilahabi quoted in Lanfranchi 2012: 75), by exploiting awareness of the colonial past to overcome it 'decolonising the mind' (Wa Thiong'o 1986).

This study demonstrates the importance of two combined kinds of ethnography: the 'anthropology of text' (Barber 2007) and the 'anthropology of philosophy' (Kresse 2007).

The extraordinary potential of a hermeneutical close reading of Mkufya's novels, along with discussions and conversations with the author, have demonstrated how Mkufya has been able to conduct a religious examination and critique from the inside. Even though Mkufya supports a secular view, he postulates a landscape of pluralism, tolerance and inclusion for diverse ideologies and different beliefs as the main goal.

Furthermore, I have also highlighted how Mkufya's intellectual maturity is interconnected with the evolution of his characters' thought and the stylistic development of his novels. The characters who espoused social revolutionary ideologies have become messengers of a peaceful individual

enjoyment of life as well as the experimental prose has developed into a blended style, where realism and enchantment are stirred together.

Mkufya's novels tell a story that retells the Story. Indeed, the novels introduce an original new reading of the sacred texts by either criticising some doctrinal prescriptions or minding moral guidance but reinterpreted from a secular perspective. In fact, ethics detaches from religious morality to rediscover "*utu,* humanity or humanness" (Topan 2008b: 89) as "*kitendo*: performing good social actions" (Kresse 2007: 140; 2009) and "*utu bora*: the ideal personhood/humanity" (Robert quoted in Masolo 2019: 33). Therefore, the retold *ngano* "ancient tale," overcomes any religious conflict by encouraging an environment of intercultural and interreligious co-existence and tolerance.

To conclude, Mkufya's objective perfectly fits into the framework of Wiredu's 'conceptual decolonisation' (Wiredu 1995; 1998; 2002; 2004). Indeed, Mkufya's authorial role is to spread *ukombozi wa hekima,*[76] a "liberation of wisdom," by disentangling his readers' minds from imported cognitive patterns and by "divesting" (Wiredu 1998: 17) people's thoughts from any form of cultural imperialism while simultaneously fostering a multicultural approach.

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[76] Mkufya, personal interview 8-12-2023.

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A text on bees from James Bynon's Ayt Hdiddu Berber archives

Harry Stroomer and Simone Mauri

This paper contributes to advancing the knowledge of Moroccan Berber varieties from the Southern Middle Atlas. It focuses on one such variety, namely the one spoken by the Ayt Hdiddu people. It broadens the corpus of Ayt Hdiddu literature available to English-language readers by providing the translation and analysis of a text first appeared in its original Berber version in Bynon (2015). Centred on local beliefs about bees, the text offers ethnographic insights into the Ayt Hdiddu culture, including the notion of bees having a king rather than a queen. The paper also emphasises the value of Bynon's archives for both linguistic and cultural studies and contributes to the study of Berber ethnolinguistics, particularly within the Southern Middle Atlas region.

Keywords: Berber, traditional knowledge, folk literature, beekeeping, Morocco.

1. Introduction

The knowledge of Moroccan-Berber varieties remains uneven to date. This paper contributes to the study of one such variety, namely the one spoken by the Ayt Hdiddu people[1] of Morocco's central High Atlas. In particular, it aims to add to the growing corpus of Ayt Hdiddu Berber literature available in English translation. The Berber text provided in section 4 is text number 56 from one of the few existing works on Ayt Hdiddu, namely James Bynon's *Berber Prose Texts from the Ayt Hdiddu (Central Morocco), part 1: Transcriptions*, Köln (Rüdiger Köppe Verlag), 2015.[2] James Bynon's archives represent an important resource for the investigation of the Ayt Hdiddu culture and this contribution also aims to once again[3] emphasize their significance (see section 2).

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[1] *Ayt* is the Berber word for 'sons of' equaling *bani* in Arabic. For information on the Ayt Hdiddu, see Hadiddou (1999).

[2] The authors of this contribution are in the process of making a translation of this book.

[3] See Stroomer and Mauri (2018, 2020).

The Ayt Hdiddu people inhabit a wide area situated in the central High Atlas Mountain region. The best-known Ayt Hdiddu town[4] is Imilchil, which is renowned for its brides' market that takes place on the occasion of the annual fair in honour of the local marabout Sidi Hmad u Lemghenni. Together with the neighbouring Ayt Merghad, Ayt Izdeg and Ayt Ihya (among other groups), the Ayt Hdiddu tribe historically belongs to the Ayt Yafelmane, a tribal confederation that was formed in order to contrast the Ayt Atta (Hart 1984, 45). The Ayt Hdiddu speak a Southern Middle Atlas Tamazight dialect which is linguistically close to the varieties spoken by the Ayt Izdeg, Ayt Merghad and Ayt Ihya, as well as the Ayt Atta.[5]

Generally speaking, the Ayt Hdiddu tribe received considerable attention from anthropologists and scholars interested in customary law, as well as from film-makers interested in the Imilchil brides' market.[6] Much less attention was given to their language. James Bynon was the first European linguist to study the language and culture of the Ayt Hdiddu people, starting in the 1950s (see below). In more recent years, some French-language works documenting Ayt Hdiddu Berber were written by the Moroccan linguist Driss Azdoud. In particular, Azdoud wrote dissertations in 1985 and 1997 containing a vocabulary and a collection of interesting and well-transcribed texts.[7] In 2011, Azdoud published a *Dictionnaire berbère-français* which is essentially an Ayt Hdiddu dictionary.

2. James Bynon (1925-2017) and his Ayt Hdiddu studies

James Bynon devoted his life to the study of Berber languages and cultures. He had training in archaeology and cultural anthropology in Edinburgh. From an early age he took a special interest in photography and filming. His first stay in Morocco was in January 1951, when he was immediately fascinated by the Berbers and their culture. In the following years, he started linguistic fieldwork, photographing and filming the Ayt Hdiddu tribe. In 1957, he began to study Berber with Lionel Galand (*École nationale des langues orientales vivantes*, Paris), and Maghrebi Arabic with George S. Colin (Paris, Rabat). He gained his diplomas in Arabic and Berber. In 1961 he was appointed Research Fellow in

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[4] For the various Ayt Hdiddu regions and administrative centers, see Azdoud (2011: 3, fn. 4).

[5] Willms (1972) gives a survey of the Southern Middle Atlas dialects; this author treats a number of linguistic varieties of the Southern Middle Atlas and gives a parallel presentation of their linguistic data.

[6] A selection: Bousquet (1956), Denat (without date), Kasriel (1989), Kraus (1991, 2019a, 2019b), Kherdi (2012); films of the brides' market of Imilchil can be found on the Internet and on YouTube.

[7] The text materials of his dissertation (Azdoud 1985) have not been published so far.

Arabic and Berber at the *School of Oriental and African Studies* (SOAS) of the University of London. Under Galand's supervision he worked on his PhD on the Berber vocabulary of weaving, which he defended in 1963 at the *Sorbonne* in Paris. In 1964 he was given the position of Lecturer at SOAS, first in Arabic and Berber and later in Berber only. He remained at SOAS until his retirement in 1990. In his university career he developed into a great descriptive linguist with a deep interest in the role of language within tribal culture.

As for fieldwork, James Bynon's main focus was and remained the language and culture of the Ayt Hdiddu. He used a study leave in 1964 to deepen his knowledge of this tribe, working with a number of Berber native speakers. He worked most intensively with Zayd u Abbu, who also visited him in London over three extended periods where he acted as his Berber language assistant.

James Bynon died in July 2017. The authors of this contribution visited his archives at his home in Loughton in late November 2018. They were very warmly received by his widow Prof. Theodora Bynon and were given ample opportunity to see James Bynon's enormous archive, encompassing more than 30 years of intensive research with an impressive wealth of material: Ayt Hdiddu Berber folktales, ethnographic texts (descriptions of the daily life and the annual agricultural cycle), songs (for events such as marriage, rainmaking, sheep-shearing, grain-grinding), riddles, proverbs, children's games, etc. In short, a genuine treasure trove from both the cultural as well as the linguistic point of view.

July 2016 marked the appearance of his above-mentioned *Berber Prose Texts*. With the publication of that book, containing 163 Ayt Hdiddu Berber texts, James Bynon provided berberologists with the largest collection of Berber text material ever collected for any of the Southern Middle Atlas varieties, at the same time giving them a first glimpse of a part of the wealth of his archives. However, most of these 163 texts were left without translation, as James Bynon only translated eight of them. A few papers providing translations of individual Bynon's texts have been published in recent years (Stroomer and Mauri, 2018, 2020).

3. About the text

The text given in section 4 is about bees. The text is not entomological but ethnographical and its interest lies in the beliefs about insects rather than the scientific facts about them. Note also that James Bynon's informant Zayd (the narrator) is not a beekeeper and that beekeeping is not a tradition in the Ayt Hdiddu tribe. The text shows some interesting points, three of which are worth mentioning:

1. Bees have a king rather than a queen.
2. Bees stem from larvae that are found in, creep out of, or originate from honey.

3.   The bees owe their proverbial diligence to the fact that they live constantly in the belief that they have an appointment with Prophet Muhammaḏ to serve him a dinner.

The concepts given in points 1. and 2. are ancient and not limited to Berber literature, being found in Roman authors such as Virgil and Columella.

3.1. Transcription and other graphic matters

- the *j* is a voiced alveolar fricative
- the *š* is a voiceless alveolar fricative
- the *ḥ* represents a voiceless pharyngeal fricative
- the *ʕ* is a voiced pharyngeal fricative
- the *ġ* is a voiced uvular fricative
- the *x* is a voiceless uvular fricative
- superscript *w* indicates labialisation of the preceding consonant
- subscript dots under *d*, *l*, *r*, *s*, *t* and *z* indicate pharyngealisation of the consonant in question

Numbers between **< >** mark page number in the 2015 edition; numbers between **( )** correspond to the numbers of the text lines of the 2015 edition.

3.2. Translation

Our purpose in the translation (section 5) is to provide scholars of diverse backgrounds with an English version which is as close as possible to the original text. In other words, our priority is ease of access, with aesthetic concerns being as prominent as that priority allows.

4. Manimš nttggᵃ ad nənada tizizwa j ʕari

<177> tizizwa hyya yan wbaxxu nna yttarwn taməmt j ʕari d yġṛman, ar ysssar iġʷṛan ar ysssar iġṛman. j llun ns tja tawṛaġt ilin dik s ša n yinẓadn, adday tayll da ᵗttini 'bzzzz', ar ᵗttras xf ylǧǧijn ayd ġuṛ s yʕzzan, da ᵗttras xf kulši maš ilǧǧijn **(5)** a xf ᵗttras šijan. da ᵗttətt azušnni, asir, agʷltm, alili, ifssi, ilṭṭẓġi, ilǧǧijn n tuja, da ᵗttətt kull mayd yjan ššjṛt. adday tili

ġuṛ ša j taddart da tssšar iġʷṛan adday ggadynt, idd wr ylli xs

ywwt da tssšar iġṛman, awd adday tili j ʕari j tggudy da tssšar

iġʷṛan j ša j yfran. mayd yjan iġʷṛan, hyya da ᵗttddu ard taf

(10) yan yfri j ʕari nna yṛġan, j wr yttili wdfl, j ʕari nna ywʕṛn i

awd ywwn ad t ykk s wḍaṛ, iwa da ᵗttṛaʕa j yfri nnaġ ard taf

adġaṛ nna ytwaḍan, iwa ar dik s sḍuṛnt taməmt kull tnt j yan

wdġaṛ, iwa ar ᵗttjmaʕ taməmt nnaġ tqqim. iwa tajrst mš txxa

ad wr asnt tili tuja iwa ar ttawġnt j taməmt nnaġ nna jjmʕnt

(15) ar ṣṣif, idd wr txxi tjrst tqqim taməmt nnaġ imšinnaġ, iwa

ddunt imšinnaġ tasuta xf tsuta. adday tʕttṛ taməmt nnaġ s

lqqʷdra n Mulana ffġn d dik s ybuxxa umlil, iwa qqimin ar

ttəttan j taməmt nnaġ, ymiqq ar ttbddaln ard jin izazwn.

ibuxxa ttx nna d yttffġn j taməmt wr nssin mayd tn yttggan

(20) amm ybuxxa ttx nna d yttffġn j wksum adday yxʷmj, maš

taməmt wr da txʷmmj abadn, waxxa tufiḍ ibuxxa ajnsu n

taməmt n tzizwa da tnt ᵗttkksḍ tllġḍ taməmt hat thyya wr dik

<178> s ylli awd ymiḥ yšan ša. ibuxxa ttx da txlaqqn zy taməmt

amm wksum yxʷmjn s lqqʷdra n Mulana. iwa idd diġ tlla

(25) ġuṛ ša j taddart da yttqqima asggʷas s asggʷas ykks taməmt

ard wr asnt yuğği xs aynna ttəttant j tjrst mš txxa, idd wr txxi

tqqim diġ ar ymal xs mš yra ad yʕawd izazwn da yttağğa

taməmt n yan wsggʷas wr da ts yttkks ffġn d dik s izazwn

amm lqqaʕida. ylla wyllid ġuṛ tzizwa, ayllid nnaġ yla sin

(30) yxfawn, iwa wnna yumẓn ayllid nnaġ i tzizwa da t yggar j yat

tġanimt yqqn as aẓy ttx s taməmt yqqn as aẓy a, iwa ysrs t j

wdġaṛ nnaġ j tlla tzizwa j taddart ns. j ṣṣif a j tili tzizwa j ʕari,

iwa da nttddu s ʕari nmun d yširran nna aġ yujrn j lʕmṛ, iwa

ar nttnada iġṛman n tzizwa. da tbnnu iġṛman nnaġ ns s

(35) waluḍ da ᵗttggᵃ imšiddaġ n wfṛṛan n ššwi xs wnnaġ da

yttmẓiy. iwa da t tbnnu ard t thyya, iwa ar dik s tsḍuṛ, iwa

adday yʕmmṛ tqqn as imi s waluḍ tbnu diġ wayḍ tama ns

tzdy tn ard yili xmsa, ʕšṛa, ʕšriyn nġdd aynna yllan. iwa

adday yaf ša tizizwa wr yssin mani j as ylla yġṛm ns, iwa da

(40) ᵗttaylla nkk ḍaṛ as nḥḍu ts ar as nttini "ḥuḥ wubṛṛm llġġ aš t!

ḥuḥ wubṛṛm llġġ aš t!". iwa adday da as nttini ayttx iwa tddu

s aynna j as ylla yġṛm ns, iwa nḥḍu ts ard trras, iwa nddu nn

s adġaṛ nnaġ j trrus naf nn dik s iġṛm ns. iwa da nsššar ša n

ykšḍan nna s nttllġ iġṛman nnaġ, iwa nwt iġṛm nnaġ s ša n

(45) yslli amẓẓyan ard yṛṛẓ waluḍ, iwa tffġ d taməmt. iwa ar nttllġ

<179> nj as taḥanutt s taḥanutt ard ts akkʷ nllġ, iwa nənšr ar nttnada

wayḍ. iwa nddu imšinnaġ imšinnaġ ard nġġawn taməmt.

adday tili tuja d ylġġijn da nttllġ ard aġ thṛṛu j ymawn. wr da

yttllġ iġṛman n tzizwa xs yširran d tširratin, wma iryzn

(50) ixatarn wr da ttllġn aynnaġ. da yttqqima ša j yryzn ixatarn

yks, ymiḥ yaf iġṛm n tzizwa. iwa mš ylla ša n lɛil amẓẓyan

tama ns da as yqqṛa yini as "addu d, ha iġṛm n tzizwa llġ t!",

idd wr yanny aḍu da as yttasy timiryt mar ad as yɛqql s yan

wass yaḍn j ylla ša n lɛil ġuṛ s. iwa han imšinna nttggᵃ adday

(55) da nttnada iġṛman n tzizwa. twɛṛ tzizwa adday tjmɛ xf ša da

tnqqᵃ, maš wnna xf tjmɛ yazzl yḍṛ targʷa n waman nġdd asif.

da ttinin ma s txddm tzizwa amm ṣṣif amm tjrst nnan aš tɛṛḍ

Nnbi Syydna Muḥmmadin (taẓallitt ġif s abda!) tnna as

"addu d ad aš jġ imnsi!", ynnᵃ aš ynna as "waxxa, ha i ad d

(60) ɛaydġ iwa jjwjd!". iwa ynnᵃ aš yddu Syydna Muḥmmadin wr

yad d yaġul ymmt, iwa tqqim tzizwa ar txddm ar tjjwjad

imnsi i Syydna Muḥmmad wr tẓṛi is ymmut. nnan aš mr tẓṛi

tzizwa is ymmut Syydna Muḥmmad wr sar tnni ad tarw

taməmt wala txdm, maš tġal is wr ymmut ar txddm ar ᵗttini

(65) "ass ttx ad d yddu", "askka ad d yddu", iwa tddu imšinnaġ.

iwa han aynna ttɛawadn mddn xf tzizwa, han aynna ssnġ ġif

s, han imšinna as nttggᵃ, wssalam.

5. How we look for bees in the mountains

<177> Bees[8] are insects that produce honey in the mountains and villages. They make honey combs[9] and mud-cells.[10] As for their colour, they are yellow. They have some hairs on their body. When they fly they say *'bzzz.'* They settle on flowers that they like, (in fact) they settle on many things but on flowers **(5)** mostly. They 'eat'[11] thyme (*azušnni*), rosemary (*asir*), *agʷltm*[12], oleander (*alili*), *ifssi*[13], *ilṭṭẓg̣i,*[14] and 'flowers of grass' (*ilǧǧijn n tuja*),[15] they 'eat' all kinds of plants. When someone has them at home (i.e. next to one's house, in one's garden), they make honeycombs when the bees are numerous.[16] If it is only one, it makes mud-cells. Also, when they are in the mountains and when they are numerous, they make honeycombs in caves. What are honeycombs? Bees go until they find **(10)** a cave in the mountains that is relatively warm, where there is no snow, and (often) on mountains inaccessible to anyone who goes on foot. The bees look for a cave until they find a level (flat, horizontal) place. They 'lay'[17] their honey on it, all of the bees in one place. That honey forms a mass and remains. In winter, when the weather is so bad that there are no bee plants, bees feed on the honey that they collected **(15)** until the summer. If the weather in the winter is not bad, that honey remains like that. Bees go on like this generation after generation. When that honey has remained for a long time, by God's decision, larvae[18] come out of it. They start eating from that honey. After a while they change into little bees. As for these larvae that come out of the honey, we don't know whether they are **(20)** similar to these little

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[8] Note that the word *tizizwa* 'bees' is feminine singular collective in Ayt Hdiddu Berber (JB).

[9] *ag̣ʷṛi, ig̣ʷṛi*, pl. *ig̣ʷṛan* 'honey-comb' (JB), i.e. the honey-comb (made of wax) of wild or domesticated bees (HS).

[10] *ig̣ṛm*, pl. *ig̣rman* (1) 'village' (2) 'mud cell(s) made by bees and attached in groups on stones' (JB). The bees that make mud cell(s) may refer to (a species of) wild bees (HS).

[11] They 'eat,' i.e. they collect nectar and pollen from (plants) (HS).

[12] *agʷltm* 'arbrisseau à petites feuilles vertes au reflet légèrement brillant. Férule?' [Azdoud 2011: 35]. *Agultem (u-)*, pl. *igultmen* 'férule, genêt' [Taïfi 1991: 154]. As mentioned by an anonymous reviewer, Yaagoubi *et al.* (2023: 15) states that the feminine form *tagʷltmt* (spelled *Tagoultemt*) is an instance of 'Adenocarpus bacquei', a broom-like shrub found in North Africa.

[13] *Ifssi* 'armoise blanche,' on s'en sert comme combustible pour faire cuire les aliments [Taïfi 1991: 135]. We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out to us that *ifssi* is 'Artemisia mesatlantica,' a species of wormwood found in North Africa (originally mentioned in Yaagoubi *et al.* 2023: 15).

[14] The name *ilṭṭẓg̣i* (and its variant *ilḍḍẓg̣i* (JB)) refers to a plant which we were unable to identify. An anonymous reviewer hypothesizes that the name "might be a variant of *îrẓg̣i*, *îg̣ẓg̣i* (Imilchil), *îdẓg̣i* (Wawezguit), 'Ormenis Africana and Ormenis Scariosa' reported in Bellakhdar (1997: 201), namely a sort of Santolina common in Middle and High Atlas."

[15] Not clear whether it refers to a particular plant or it is literally 'the flowers of grass' (HS).

[16] Not entirely clear. Given the feminine plural verb *ggadynt* ('they are numerous'), the understood subject might be the word *tizazwin*, which is the plural form of the collective noun *tizizwa* [Azdoud 2011: 250].

[17] The verb 'to lay eggs (hens)' is used here (JB).

[18] *ibuxxa umlill* 'white insects' (JB).

white larvae that come out of meat when it is rotten.[19] But that honey is never rotten even if you find these larvae in bee honey. You remove them and then lick the honey. It is better that there **<178>** is not the least (pollution) in it.[20] These larvae develop out of honey, like (in) rotten meat, by the power of Our Lord. When someone has bees **(25)** near his home, he leaves them year after year and removes honey and only leaves for the bees what they will eat in winter if the weather is bad. If the weather is not bad, the honey also remains until the next year, unless the bee-keeper wants to increase the number of bees, in which case he leaves the honey of one year; he does not take it away and bees come out of it as usual (i.e. as we described).

Bees have a king[21] and that king has two **(30)** heads.[22] Someone who catches the king from the bees, places him in a tube of reed, blocks one side with honey as well as the other side.[23] Then he puts it at the place where the bees are (in the hives that stand) near his home.[24]

It is in summer that bees are in the mountains. Well, we used to go[25] to the mountains in the company of boys who were older than we were. Then we looked for the mud-cells of bees. They build these cells **(35)** with mud.[26] They make a kind of grill oven, but it is smaller.[27] They build it until it is good. Then they 'lay' honey in it. When the cell is full, they close its opening with mud and they build another next to it. They attach them together until there are five, ten or twenty or whatever number they are.

When someone finds bees and does not know where their mud-cells are, well **(40)** as soon as the bees fly, we follow them and watch them closely until we say: "Huh, turn round,[28] I lick the mud-cells for you! Huh, turn round, I lick the mud-cells for you!"[29] When we have said this to the bees, the bees

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[19] A possible analogy with the larvae originating from rotten meat is put forward, although the narrator clearly states that honey is never rotten. The idea of larvae of bees originating from rotting blood of dead bulls or from rotten meat was mentioned by the Roman author Virgil, *Georgics* (*Georgica*) 4, 282-316. Also, an anonymous reviewer pointed out that the Biblical episode of Samson (Judges 14) shows a similar connection between rotten meat and bees.

[20] *išan ša* 'there is something wrong with...' (JB).

[21] For the concept of bees having a 'king' rather than a 'queen', see the Roman author Columella, *De re rustica*, Book IX, ix.7-x.2 (HS).

[22] These heads are at opposite ends. Information given by a bee-keeper at Uttrbatt (JB).

[23] I.e. blocks it also with honey, so that each head can eat (JB).

[24] And leaves it in the tube (informant Zayd does not know why) (JB).

[25] Informant Zayd speaks of his own experience (JB).

[26] As suggested in earlier notes: the word 'mud' may suggest that the informant talks about a species of bees that is different from the domesticated bees where we would expect cells and lids of cells made from 'wax' (HS).

[27] It has the size of two peas (JB).

[28] 'Turn around (and show me where your mud-cells are)' (HS).

[29] In the phrase *ḥuḥ wubṛṛm llġġ aš t! ḥuḥ* is a call specially for bees; the *wu* part of *wubṛṛm* remains unexplained (JB).

go to the place where their mud-cells are. We watch them closely until they settle somewhere. Then we go to the place where they settle and find their mud-cells there. Then we make some little bits of wood[30] by means of which we lick those cells. Then we tap the lid of that cell with some **(45)** small pebble[31] until the mud is broken and then the honey comes out. Then we lick it and **<179>** proceed from cell to cell until we have licked all of them. Then we stand up and look for another one.[32] We go on like this, we go on like this, until we have had our fill of honey. When there are herbs and flowers we lick until it feels too sharp in our mouth.

Only boys and girls lick honey from mud-cells of bees. As for adult **(50)** men, they don't. Sometimes some adult man is a shepherd and finds a nest of bees. If there is a small child next to him, he calls the child and says: "Come here, there is a nest of bees, lick it!" If he does not see any child around, he makes a heap of stones, so that he remembers its position for another day when he does have a child with him. Well, this is what we do when **(55)** we look for bees' nests.

Bees can be dangerous when they gather on someone in numbers, they can kill someone. The one on whom bees gather runs and throws himself into an irrigation canal or into a river.

They say why bees work both in summer and in winter. Once upon a time they had invited the Prophet Muhammad (may prayer be always on him) saying to him: "Come, we will make a dinner for you." Then the Prophet answered: "Alright, I will **(60)** go and come back, prepare it." Then Muhammad went off and, before he could come back, he died. The bees started working and preparing the meal for Muhammad, they did not know that the Prophet had died. If the bees had known that the Prophet had died, they would no longer have produced honey, nor would they have continued working. But the bees assumed that he was not dead, so they kept on working saying: **(65)** "Today he will come," "Tomorrow he will come," and so on. Well, this is what people say about bees, this is what I know about them, this is how we do it. Greetings.

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[30] Of the size of a toothpick (JB).

[31] A small stone of the size of a chestnut in this instance (JB).

[32] I.e., another place where we would find mud-cells (HS).

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South-east Arabian inscriptions

The current state of research

Giuliano Castagna

The aim of this paper is to provide a description of the issues related to the numerous undeciphered inscriptions found in Dhofar, Oman, and to a lesser extent in the Yemeni governorate of al-Mahra, Soqotra, and northern Oman, on the walls of caves in the monsoon hills and on rocks and pebbles in the adjacent dry areas. Known as the *Dhofar Inscriptions*, they are re-labelled here as *South-east Arabian Inscriptions*, as the former definition does not account for the fact that they are found not only in Dhofar, but also in other geographical areas. As will be illustrated below, the presence of these inscriptions is consistent with the presence of speakers of the Modern South Arabian Languages (MSAL), either currently or historically. Their study has long been neglected, although their discovery on the part of western travellers dates back to the end of the 19th century. Whilst dealing with the history of scholarship concerned with these inscriptions, this paper also aims to present recent advances in the field. Its structure consists of five sections: The first one presents the script(s) and the context in which the inscriptions are found, as well as the challenges associated with their interpretation. A review of the relevant literature follows in the second section. In the third section, previously unpublished materials from a private image collection are presented. The fourth section is devoted to the presentation of results obtained by the radiocarbon dating of three inscriptions. The fifth section sets forth and discusses some research avenues in light of the facts presented in the preceding sections. Finally, the conclusions section provides remarks on future research in the field.

1. Introduction and presentation of the field of investigation

In southeastern Arabia, not differently from other parts of the Arabian Peninsula, it is possible to find numerous inscriptions and petroglyphs. The inscriptions in question, found mainly in the caves of the

monsoon hills of Dhofar and to a lesser extent in the Dhofari Negd, Soqotra,[1] Oman proper and the Yemeni governorate of al-Mahra, differ from the vast majority of the Arabian inscriptions in that, despite exhibiting a writing system that is unmistakably related to the well-known ancient Arabian writing systems (also known as South Semitic script), their contents cannot be readily deciphered. As for the nature of these inscriptions, Ali al-Shahri and Geraldine King stated that they are "tantalising and fustrating (sic) as the similarity of many of the letters to those occurring in other Semitic scripts, suggests that decipherment and translation should not be a difficult task. Such optimism, however, has proved to be unfounded" (al-Shahri & King 1993: 2). The inscriptions located in the monsoon hills and the dry areas of Dhofar were documented extensively by al-Shahri and King in 1991 and 1992.[2] Personal fieldwork in the monsoon hills, which was carried out in December 2017 and January 2018, and again in November/December 2018 and November/December 2019, revealed the existence of a number of petroglyphs and inscriptions which escaped these two excellent scholars. One could then surmise that there exists a far greater number of materials than has been documented. As for Soqotra and al-Mahra, the records are virtually non-existent. Al-Shahri and King assert that the script employed in these inscriptions can be found in two slightly diverging variants, which they label Script 1 and Script 2 (1993: 1). Two summarising tables of these scripts can be found in the appendices of their report (1993: 484-485). For the convenience of the reader, they appear here:

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[1] It is necessary to mention that recent epigraphic research in Soqotra highlighted the presence of other inscriptions in well-known scripts and languages, which do not fall within the scope of the present paper. See Strauch (2012).

[2] See also al-Shahri (1994).

APPENDIX 1

A HYPOTHETICAL REDUCTION OF THE NUMBERS OF LETTERS IN SCRIPT 1
        The square brackets indicate that there is little or no
evidence for the equation of the forms with each other.

```
1.    C    [ )    ⅃  u    ∪ ]
2.    <    [ >    V ]
3.    ₵
4.    ⊤    [ ⵜ    ⴹ  ⨅ ]
5.    t
6.    ⵜ
7.    ⴸ
8.    ⤙
9.    ⤛    ⴽ
10.   Ε    [ ⵯ ]
11.   Ε    ⴽ     [ Ε  ⴹ  ⴲ  ⵷ ]
12.   ⵘ
13.   O    [ ☐ ]
14.   ⵀ
15.   ⴱ
16.   ⵊ
17.   ⴾ
18.   ⵁ
19.   ⴹ
20.   ⴲ
21.   ⵗ
22.   ⵗ    [ ⵙ ]
23.   ⵝ
24.   •
25.   —
26.   |
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27.   ‖    [ =  ]
28.   ⦀    [ ≡  ≡ ]
29.   ⵔ    [ ⵔ ]
30.   ⊦    ⊣    ⊤
31.   H    [ I ]
32.   ╈    [ Ⅹ ]
33.   ⵋ
34.   ⵥ    ⵥ    [ ⵥ ]
35.   ⵤ
36.   ⵰    [ ⵔ ]
37.   ⵥ  (only 1 doubtful example)
```

The following are possibly variations of the forms listed:

```
Ε     Ϲ     ⵄ     ⵰     ⵙ     ⊕     ⴾ     ⵌ     ⵥ
ⵙ     ⵥ     ⵙ     ⵌ     ⵗ
```

Figure 1. The so-called "script 1."

APPENDIX 2

A HYPOTHETICAL REDUCTION OF THE NUMBER OF LETTERS IN SCRIPT 2
       The square brackets indicate suggested equations of the
forms with each other.

```
1.   ⋂   [ ∪ ]
2.   ⊏   [ ⊃ ]
3.   ∧   [ ∨ ]
4.   ⋒
5.   ⋔   [ ⋔ ]
6.   ⋔
7.   ⋔
8.   ⋏   Ⴤ
9.   Ⴤ   [ ⋏ ⋔ ]
10.  ⋔   [ ⋏ ]                    22.  ⋈
11.  ⋔   [ ⋔ ]                    23.  ⫴
12.  ⋏   ⋏                        24.  ↑   ↑  [ ⅂ ]
13.  ○   [ ◊ ]                    25.  H
14.  ▢   [ ▣ ▥ ]                  26.  +   [ X ]
15.  ⊖                           27.  Ӽ
16.  ⵗ                           28.  Ӡ
17.  ⵖ                           29.  Ӡ   �
18.  ⵔ                           30.  ⴡ   ⴡ        [ ⵏ ]
19.  ⴃ                           31.  ⴱ   ⵩        [ ⵙ ⵸ ]
20.  ⴅ   [ ⵰ ]                    32.  ⌂ [ ⴒ ⵀ ⵊ ⴍ ]
21.  ⵕ                           33.  ⴰ
```

Word dividers | [⁛]

The following are possibly variations of the forms listed:
⋒   ⊓   ⊕

The following are few in number and are possibly mis-readings:
⟩   ⵕ   ·   T   N   X

There is possibly an example of a form ⋔. see § 7.2.14.

Figure 2. The so-called "script 2."

A great majority of the inscriptions in the monsoon hills of Dhofar are painted in a black or, less frequently, a red pigment (al-Shahri & King 1993: 6). The composition of these pigments has not yet been ascertained, although their reaction to radiocarbon dating (see Section 4) proves that they are based on organic matter (plant, in all likelihood). Ali al-Shahri believes he has identified a way to reproduce these pigments at home (p.c.). However, he has not disclosed any details of this matter (al-Shahri 1994: 258-9). The inscriptions found outside the monsoon hills of Dhofar are pecked onto rocks,

and the above-mentioned authors state that these are "written with fairly shallow incisions and stray marks around the edge of the letters" and "they were inscribed by direct hammering rather than more accurate chiselling" (al-Shahri & King 1993: 6). The monsoon hills caves where inscriptions are found are generally very shallow, but vary in size, some being 100 metres long and 15 metres high, and others measuring only 4 metres in length and 1 metre in height (see below). Conversely, the inscriptions found in the Negd, are found on either loose boulders or the capstones of the so-called *triliths* (*Ibid.*).[3] The very few known inscriptions in al-Mahra, Soqotra and Oman are similarly found on loose rocks or stone walls.

As for the scripts, Ali al-Shahri and Geraldine King's 1993 report provides full details about their peculiarities and intricacies. In sum, the main difficulties stem from the interpretation of some of the signs, notably signs number 3, 13, 14, 25, 26, 27 and 28 in Script 1, and signs number 4, 23, 32 and 33 in Script 2 (Figures 1 and 2). The A-shaped signs (number 3 in Script 1, and number 4 in Script 2 bear a strong resemblance to the sign for /b/ in late Sabaic (al-Shahri & King 1993: 13). However, this sign is the most frequently occurring one in Script 1 (*Ibid.*), and this argues against its identification with /b/, as from a cross-linguistic perspective, one would not expect a bilabial stop to be the most common sound[4] of a language represented by a script that employs less than 40 signs and is therefore, in all likelihood, an *abjad* or alphabetic script. Additionally, there is, in both variants, a character which strongly resembles /b/ in the varieties of the Ancient South Arabian scripts other than late Sabaic (Ibid.: 12,44). This character also bears a resemblance, albeit with a different orientation, to the sign for /ṣ/ in some Ancient North Arabian scripts, namely Dumaitic and Taymanitic. Then again, one can hardly argue for /ṣ/, an "emphatic" sound, to be the most common sound of a language (see Section 2). The O-shaped signs (number 13 and 14 in script 1) are both known to represent /ʕ/, and occasionally /g/ or /ḍ/ in various Arabian scripts (Ibid.: 17-18). Evidence regarding these two signs, which differ from each other in that one of them has a dot in the centre, is often contradictory, as in certain patterns occurring several times in the corpus they appear interchangeably, while in other contexts they appear side by side (Ibid.: 32-33). In addition, assigning the value of /ʕ/ to the plain O-shaped sign would be problematic, as it often appears after the trident-shaped character (number 9 in both Script 1 and 2)

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[3] These structures, whose purposes are currently not entirely clear, are constituted by three long stones leaning onto each other vertically and capped horizontally by another stone, and are found in the dry areas of Dhofar as well as, to a lesser extent, in the Yemeni Mahra (Garba 2019; al-Shahri 1991b; 1994 *passim*). Ali al-Shahri argues that they should be named *tetraliths*, as they usually consist of four stones (1991b :188-194).

[4] Compare the quantitative analysis of the frequency of 34 consonant in the Swadesh lists for 6901 languages in Everett (2018): [b] ranks 12 out of 34, whilst sonorants and voiceless stops sit at the top 6 positions.

which is known to stand for /ḥ/ in practically all the other ancient Arabian scripts: this would produce a phonetically impossible sequence of a voiceless and a voiced pharyngeal fricative *[ħʕ] (Ibid.: 40). Al-Shahri and King suggest that the plain O-shaped sign may represent [g] and provide the reading of a portion of text which would yield a Safaitic name (*ibid.*). The relative rarity of /ḍ/ means that its identification with the above-mentioned sign, occurring a great number of times in Script 1, and 67 times in Script 2 (Ibid.: 18,47-48) is unlikely. The line-shaped signs (number 25, 26, 27 and 28 in Script 1, and 23 in Script 2) are problematic in that the frequency of their occurrence and their position within character sequences do not indicate that they could be numeral signs. With regards to the single vertical line-shaped sign, the authors affirm that it is likely word divider in Script 2 (Ibid.: 50,55). As for Script 1, they list what this character stands for in other ancient Arabian scripts without advancing any hypothesis (Ibid.: 21). The other line-shaped signs, namely the double and triple vertical and horizontal lines, are left unexplained (Ibid.: 21,51). Since the A-shaped sign and the various line-shaped signs are either unknown to other ancient Arabian scripts, or are far less frequent, they may be considered as "diagnostic" of the south-east Arabian scripts. It is important to point out that the issues related to the decipherment of these scripts are not limited to single signs. Additional problems include:

a. The cave walls onto which the inscriptions have been painted are often badly damaged by soot and water, so that whole portions of text might have been damaged beyond repair (al-Shahri & King 1993: 5), and those found in the dry areas are often weathered, so that their reading is difficult;

b. Apparently, there are no "familiar" Semitic hallmarks, such as *bn, bnt* or *ʾb* except in a few inscriptions found on pebbles and boulders in the Negd;

c. Very few commonly occurring patterns have been identified. See al-Shahri & King (1993: 27-31).

Although there is little doubt that the origin of the script(s) is Semitic, very little about them can be affirmed with an acceptable degree of certainty. It is, however, noteworthy that they can be found wherever Modern South Arabian languages are spoken at present (Hatke 2019: 9). This, of course, provides a clue as to where to look for decipherment aid, although other avenues, set forth in Section 4 below, should also be considered.

2. Previous scholarship

The first mention in the literature of a south-east Arabian inscription is found in Theodore and Mabel Bent's book *Southern Arabia* (1900). During their stay in Soqotra, they reported the existence of a large upright rock in the vicinity of the Qalansiyah (to be precise, near a village called Haida) on which a "Himyaritic" or "Ethiopic" inscription could be seen (Bent 1900: 351,438). The book contains a copy of

this inscription, which includes one of the "diagnostic" characters mentioned above, namely the vertical double line-shaped sign. In 1932, Bertram Thomas reported for the first time the existence of the triliths in Dhofar and published some inscriptions he found on their capstones (Thomas 1932: 126-128). These inscriptions contain both the line-shaped and the A-shaped signs. Similarly, Wilfred Thesiger reported the existence of inscriptions on the structures he, too, called triliths, although he did not publish any drawing or picture of them (1959: 90-91). In 1970 Brian Doe reported another inscription in Soqotra, in the vicinity of Eriosh, containing the A-shaped sign (Doe 1970: 5).

It is, however, not until 1991 that the inscriptions gained some degree of international recognition, when Ali al-Shahri published a paper entitled *Recent Epigraphic Discoveries in Dhofar* (1991a), in which he provided a brief description of the script and the sites. In the same year, al-Shahri published a paper concerned with the triliths and their epigraphic significance (1991b). This led the British epigrapher Geraldine King to join forces with him and carry out an extensive survey of the sites in the Dhofar monsoon hills and the adjacent dry areas, whose findings were subsequently published in the form of a report entitled *THE DHOFAR EPIGRAPHIC PROJECT: A Description of the Inscriptions Recorded in 1991 and 1992* (al-Shahri & King 1993). This report is to be considered, to date, the most complete description of these epigraphs and their scripts. The report first introduces the geographical and geological context of the sites, and reviews the very scant mentions of the epigraphic materials in question. Subsequently, the authors proceed to describing each sign of the two variants of the script: the vertical script (Script 1), which is the variety used in most inscriptions, and the horizontal script (Script 2), which, compared to Script 1, exhibits some differences in terms of stance and sign shape. In the third place, the patterns occurring more than once are reported, and a discussion about the possible values of the signs in context is offered. There follows a concise account of the differences between Script 1 and Script 2, and a description of the pictograms and petroglyphs found in the sites. A substantial part of the report is then devoted to the concordance of the inscriptions.

Lastly, a bibliography, an abbreviation list, the maps of the sites, and the facsimiles of the inscriptions and drawings are presented. During the last decade of the 20th century, some of the original pictures of the Dhofar inscriptions taken during the 1991-1992 expedition were published in al-Shahri's sizeable tomes (1994; 2000). These books, while concerned mainly with the Jibbali/Shehret language and the traditions and culture of its speakers, also contain a great deal of discussion about the Dhofar epigraphic materials, albeit from a rather personal perspective. In 2000, the British scholar Michael MacDonald mentioned the inscriptions in his paper entitled *Reflections on the linguistic map of pre-Islamic Arabia.* In this paper, he dismissed their importance by stating that "They are in a previously unknown form of the Arabian script and have so far defied decipherment but, even when eventually

they can be read, the short, informal nature of the texts suggests that they may not be particularly informative" (MacDonald 2000: 68-69). In 2001, the Indian epigrapher Muhamed Abdul Nayeem produced a book entitled *Origin of ancient writing in Arabia and new scripts from Oman* (Nayeem 2001), in which he claimed to have deciphered some of the inscriptions published by al-Shahri and King. This book is structured in two sections: the first one is an excursus on the history of writing systems in Arabia, while the second one is a description of Nayeem's interpretation of the inscriptions. Sadly, his claims fail to convince the reader for the following reasons:

a. He does not hesitate to resort to double readings of signs, in order to make sense of the inscriptions. For example, the A-shaped sign in the inscription KMG21 (al-Shahri & King 1993: 28; Nayeem 2001: 137-138) is assigned the tentative double reading /d/ ~ /ṣ/ (Nayeem 2001: 138). Given the high frequency of this sign, its identification with an "emphatic"[5] stop, seems unlikely. Quite predictably, he interprets the inscription in question as "First name and tribal name – seem to be a new name (sic)" (Ibid.). Elsewhere, the same sign is read as /m/, without any comment or explanation (Nayeem 2001: 142).

b. In his transliteration, he often assigns the value of /d/ to the double line-shaped sign (Nayeem 2001: 139,142). However, the rationale for this is not made clear.

c. In general, the author does not hesitate to resort to personal names recorded in ancient languages from all over the Arabian Peninsula in order to make some sense of the inscriptions: he identifies names of Safaitic, Lihyanitic, Thamudic, Minaic and Sabaic origin (Nayeem 2001: 135-145, passim).

In addition, that author proposes that the scripts be named Sa'kalhanic A and B, after the ancient Hadramitic name of the land roughly corresponding to present-day Dhofar (Nayeem 2001: 114). While the proposal does not seem unreasonable at first glance, one should bear in mind that the *-han* portion of the place-name *Sa'kalhan* is a definite article (Stein 2011: 1051).[6] Hence, labelling the script as Sa'kalhanic would be the equivalent of calling *Alyemeni somebody or something from Yemen, on the basis of the toponym *al-Yemen.* Moreover, growing archaeological and epigraphic evidence suggests that the inscriptions are also found in rather distant areas from the historical region of Sa'kalhan, and

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[5] "Emphasis" is an umbrella term which describes certain phonologically distinctive phenomena of secondary articulation in the Semitic languages. It is variously realised as pharyngealization or glottalization, according to the single subgroups and languages. In some cases, like in the Modern South Arabian languages, emphasis hesitates between pharyngealization and glottalization.

[6] Therefore, it would be best transcribed as Sa'kal^han.

aside from the great number of items found in the Dhofar hills, there is no evidence that the script originated there. Since the publication of the above-mentioned materials, these inscriptions have attracted very little interest in the otherwise productive field of Semitic epigraphy: An article written by David Insall (1999) presents two inscriptions found at Shenah, in north-eastern Oman, which are said to be comparable to those found in Dhofar: Geraldine King (1999) produced a short note which essentially confirms Insall's opinion. Much later, Paul Yule (2013) provided additional details of the above-mentioned sites and did not shy away from affirming that a connection with the Modern South Arabian languages is not to be ruled out (Yule 2013: 401; 2018). Angelo Fossati brought up again the subject in his rather technical paper which is, however, mainly concerned with the rock art of northern Oman (2017: 86-88). The US scholar William Zimmerle is known to be conducting research on the inscriptions, but apart from a photograph book (Zimmerle 2017), nothing has been published so far regarding their interpretation. Other recent studies include Le Quellec et al (2018) and al-Jahwari (2018). The former is concerned with novel recording technologies for painted inscriptions and shows how these can be applied to the south-east Arabian inscriptions of Dhofar.[7] The latter provides some details and images of an inscription found in northern Oman, in the Ja'alan Bani Bu Hasan area of the Sharqiyah governorate, which exhibits the typical traits of the south-east Arabian inscriptions, including the "diagnostic" signs mentioned above.

3. Previously unpublished inscriptions from Wadi Khurūt, al-Mahra, Yemen

The materials in this section of the paper are presented by courtesy of Dr Geraldina Santini, who kindly agreed to the publication of some of her photographs. The below images were produced during an archaeological survey of the Yemeni governorate of al-Mahra, in 1992. During an inspection of the wadi Khurūt, which lies to the north of the governorate capital al-Ghayḍa, Dr Santini's attention was drawn by some rocks on ground which bore various petroglyphs and inscriptions. She then photographed them. In the context of this discussion, three of her photographs have proved to be highly relevant, as the inscriptions depicted therein contain signs found in the other undeciphered south-east Arabian inscriptions. In particular, the third image presented below exhibits the "diagnostic" A-shaped sign. Although these materials have not been published so far, the existence in Yemen of a script comparable

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[7] The authors of this paper recently teamed up with other scientists to produce a description of the radiocarbon dating of a painted geometric pattern found in the eastern part of the Qara range. The four samples of black pigment analysed date roughly 1500 years BP (Rowe et al 2023). It is, however, disappointing that the team did not choose to date at least one of the inscriptions.

with that of the Dhofar monsoon hills was not totally unknown: al-Shahri and King mention a personal communication from Mikhail Piotrovsky regarding this issue (1993: 2).

Figure 3. Wadi Khurūt inscription 1.
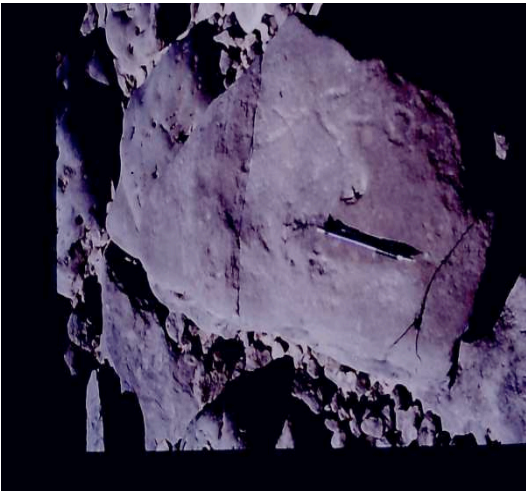
Figure 4. Wadi Khurūt inscription 2.
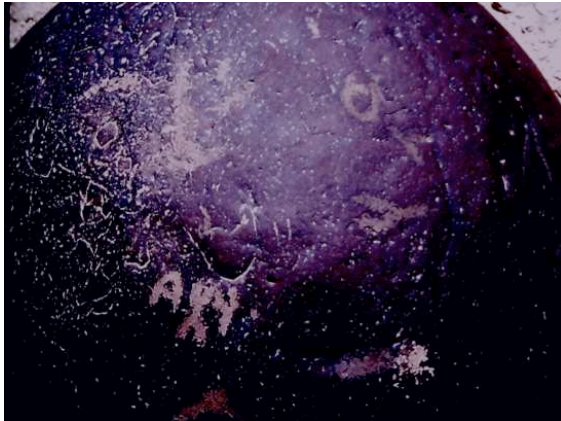
Figure 5. Wadi Khurūt inscription 3.

From a palaeographic point of view, the three inscriptions reported above exhibit strong similarities in terms of characters shape and orientation with those from the Dhofari Negd (al-Shahri & King 1993; al-Shahri 2000: 93-95).

4. Description and radiocarbon dating of three south-east Arabian inscriptions

Rock art is notoriously difficult to date, for a number of reasons: In the first place, it is often found in inhospitable environments. Secondly, pigments used in rock art are commonly derived from inorganic mineral matter, and thus not datable by radiocarbon analysis. It seems, however, that the pigment used in most south-east Arabian inscriptions is a black-charcoal paste. The less-often red pigment, whose exact composition is not fully understood to date, similarly is derived from organic matter,[8] given its reactivity to radiocarbon dating.

The first inscription analysed has been interpreted by previous scholarship as a sequence of three inscriptions in Script 1 and, as a consequence, assigned the three different sigla KMH[9] 19, KMH 20 and KMH 21 (al-Shahri & King 1993: 131). It is found in a shallow cave in the area of Agdirɔ́t, in the province of Rakhyut, western Dhofar, and the pigment used is a red plant-based dye.

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[8] See al-Shahri (1994: 258-9).

[9] KM stands for King Maḥāš (the latter is Ali al-Shahri's family laqab). The following letter (H in this case) stands for the area in which these inscriptions were found. See al-Shahri & King (1993: 4).
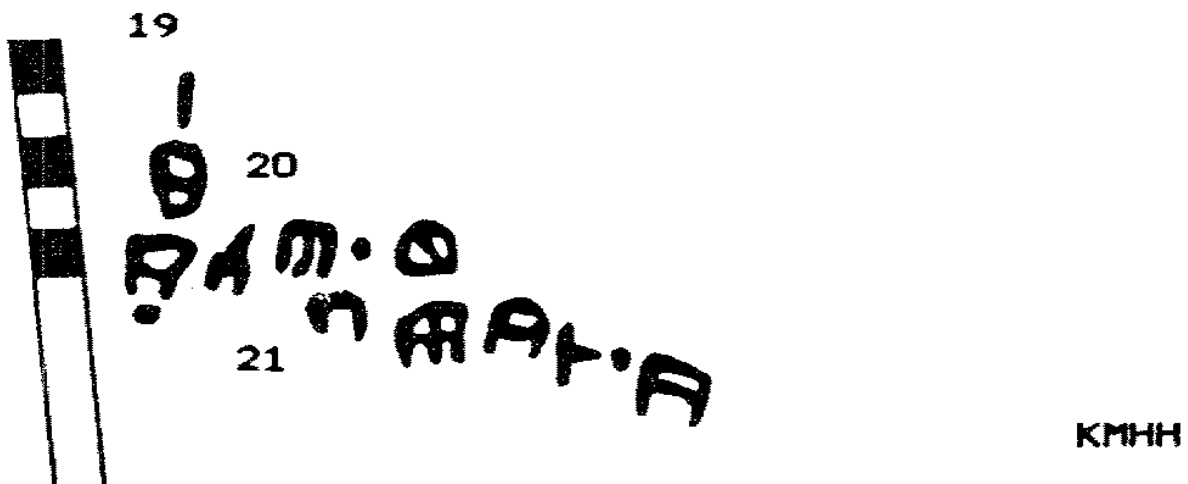
Figure 6. Inscriptions KMH 19-20-21.

The second inscription analysed in this paper similarly exhibits Script 1 and was made by applying the charcoal-black paste mentioned above to the wall of a shallow cave in Ittin, just outside Dhofar's capital Salalah.

Figure 7. Previously undocumented inscription from Ittin, Salalah.

The third inscription, an example of Script 2 having the siglum KMHH 9 (al-Shahri & King 1993: 133), is found in the same cave in which KMH 19, 20 and 21 are also found, and like the latter, was made by using a very dark red pigment.
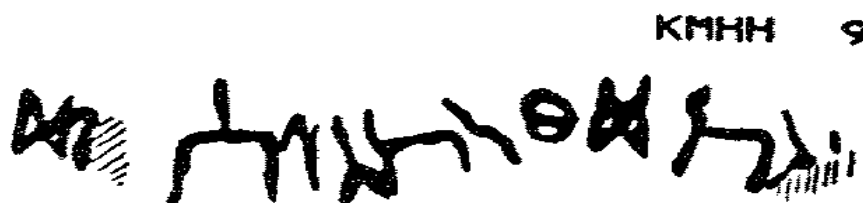
Figure 8. Inscription KMHH 9.

The samples were collected in December 2019 by the author of this paper, by scraping lightly around the outer rim of the characters, so as not to damage the inscriptions and hinder further analysis, using a sterile scalpel blade, and stored in sterile glass vials with a screw cap. The vials were subsequently stored in an anti-shock padded case until their delivery to the Mass Spectrometry Laboratory of the Center for Physical Sciences and Technology, Vilnius, Lithuania, in February 2020. The samples were then prepared using an Automated Graphitization Equipment AGE-3 (IonPlus AG) and analysed by a single stage Accelerator Mass Spectrometer (AMS) according to the following methods: IAEA C3 and IAEA C9. The results in radiocarbon years had then to be calibrated in order to account for the variability in the production rate of ^{14}C in Earth's upper atmosphere (Staff & Liu 2021: 507). This was achieved by using the OxCal computer software (Ramsey 1995) coupled with the latest atmospheric data of the IntCal20 calibration curve (Reimer et al 2020). The final results, expressed in years Before Present (BP), are calibrated in the figures 9, 10 and 11, with a 95.4% degree of probability at S2.
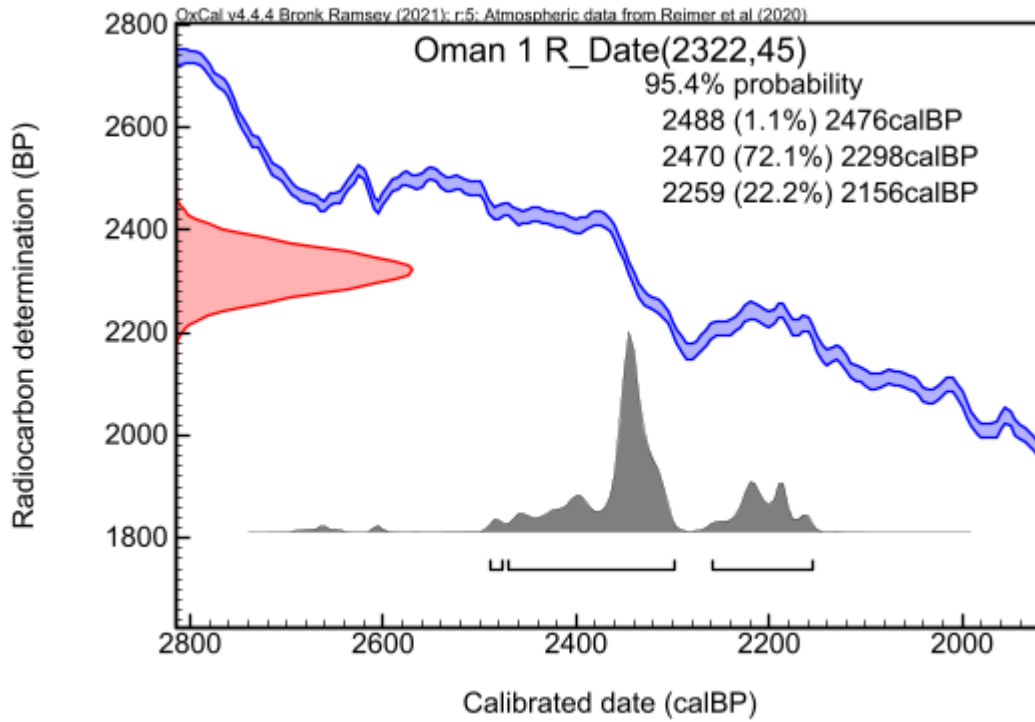
Figure 9. Calibrated radiocarbon analysis of inscriptions KMH 19-20-21.
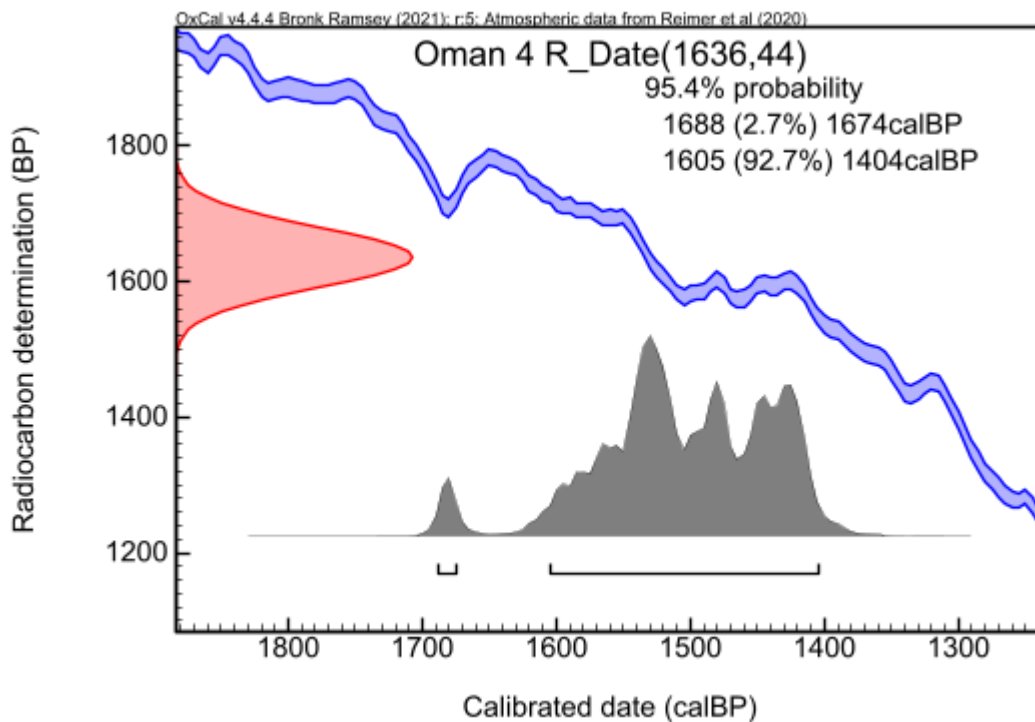
Figure 10. Calibrated radiocarbon analysis of a previously undocumented inscription from Ittin, Salalah.
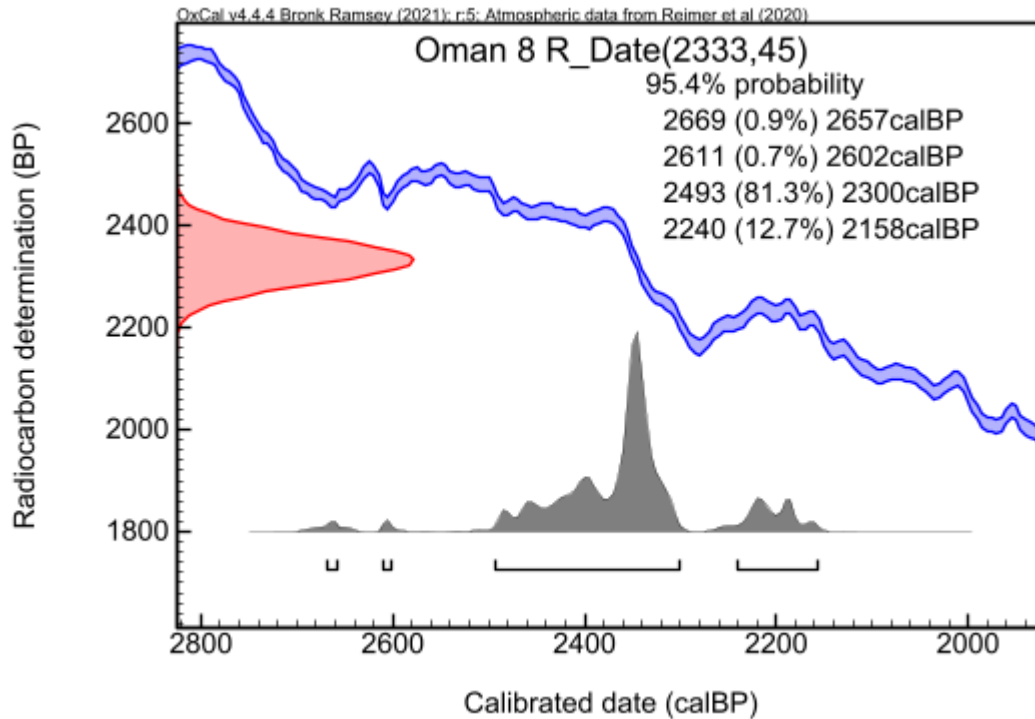
Figure 11. Calibrated radiocarbon analysis of inscription KMHH 9.

5. Discussion

Whilst most of the inscriptions in the ancient Arabian writing systems script can be interpreted to varying degrees of accuracy,[10] south-east Arabian inscriptions present the scholar with a peculiar problem: two closely related varieties of this well-known writing system which cannot be readily interpreted. The results from the radiocarbon analysis of a small number of items enable us to set a provisional *terminus post quem* at the 4th century BCE (inscriptions KMH 19, 20 and 21, and KMHH 9, figures 9 and 11), but this is likely to change if and when a large-scale study on these inscriptions is carried out. However, there being no scope for decipherment at present, one must limit oneself to the observation and description of some facts which, to date, have defied notice as much as the inscriptions themselves have defied decipherment. As has been stated in Section 2 above, earlier epigraphic literature has described the south-east Arabian inscriptions as informal and short texts, but a prolonged observation of the corpus and first-hand experience of the sites reveals a rather different scenario: It is true that a majority of the items are very short. However, it is not uncommon to

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[10] Although some varieties do call for a more in-depth interpretation. See al-Jallad (2018).

encounter longer texts which, moreover, appear to carry some degree of formality. Let us consider the following:
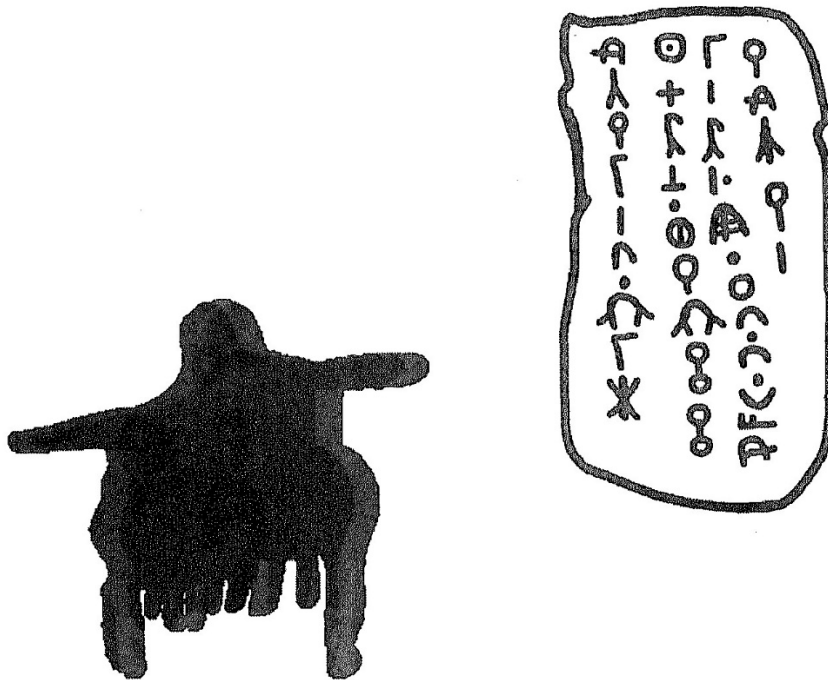
Figure 12. Inscription reported in al-Shahri's book "The Language of Aad" (al-Shahri 2000: 104).[11]

The number of characters in this inscription, the petroglyph depicting a head of livestock associated with it and the encircling of the text, point to a formal statement. Whether an ownership transfer agreement, a description and/or a warning to potential thieves, or a depiction of ritual significance, this epigraph and the accompanying image seem to be neither informal nor impromptu. Other items similarly do not fall neatly within the realm of informality:

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[11] The original inscription and the accompanying drawing are made with a red pigment.
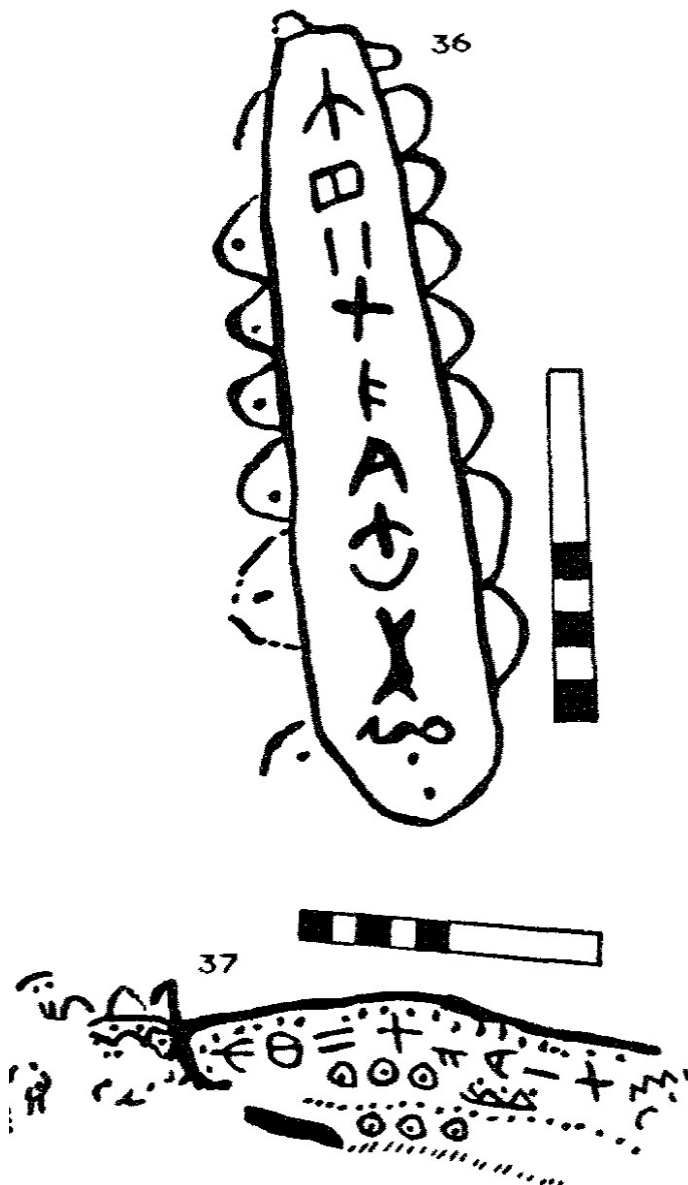
Figure 13. Inscriptions KMB 36 and KMB 37 (al-Shahri & King 1993: 65).

In regard to these items, al-Shahri and King state: "The inscription is written in a cartouche with loops attached" (1993: 65). Again, the encircling of the text, which in this case is complemented by an even more elaborate motif than that of figure 12, points to a planned action and a thought-out statement. In other cases, one encounters rather long texts exhibiting no visual traces of formality:
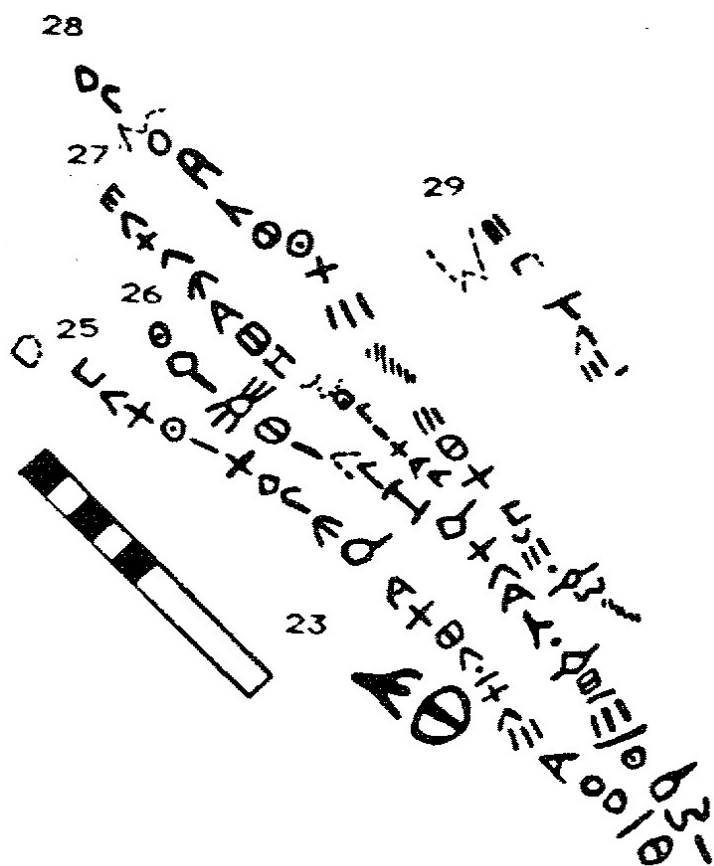
Figure 14. Inscription KMB 23 to 29 (al-Shahri and King 1993: 64).

Notwithstanding the likely informal nature of the above epigraph, one can hardly believe that such a long sequence contains only personal names. Nevertheless, as stated above (Section 2), earlier epigraphic literature expressed little interest in gaining an understanding of south-east Arabian materials, no doubt partly because of the challenges associated with their decipherment. It would, then, be tempting to point to some avenues to the solution of this issue. Difficult though this may prove to be, one can try to sketch a list of cultural and linguistic *milieux* which might be worth comparing with the epigraphic materials in question, without making any conclusive statements. The first and probably most likely such a *milieu* is the sub-group of Semitic languages known as Modern South Arabian languages, which have been spoken in the areas in questions since pre-documentary times. Gaining a full understanding of the movements of the MSAL-speaking people is an unfeasible endeavour due a dearth of attestation, but folk tales and traditions of these people, as well as a few mentions in the records of the old south Arabian kingdoms (Hatke 2019) point to a long presence in the region. Worthy of note is a 1940s travel account of the Mahra region of the then British federation of South Arabia written by a major in the British army, Tadeus Altounyan, which reports a conversation with the Sheykh of al-Ghayḍa (the capital of the present-day al-Mahra governorate, in Yemen), during

which the latter affirmed that the Mehri language[12] once had its own writing system, and subsequently lost it to the religious prominence of the Arabic script (Altounyan 1947: 238). Also, the affiliation of the south-east Arabian scripts to the ancient Arabian writing systems script might speak to the Semitic affiliation of the language(s) depicted. In any case, one must bear in mind that the areas in question, including Soqotra and Oman proper, have been involved in the millennia-old Indian ocean trade network. The area corresponding to present-day Dhofar in particular was (and still is) the frankincense-bearing region *par excellence*, and given the great socio-economic interest in acquiring the precious resin on the part of the Old World polities, the presence of one or more non-Arabian and non-Semitic ethno-linguistic elements should not be ruled out *a priori*.

In hypothesising that the language(s) represented by the south-east Arabian inscriptions may be of non-Semitic origin, one must search in several directions: It has been known for some years that the port settlement of Sumhuram[13] at Khor Rori, Dhofar, Oman, maintained direct trade with South Asia (Pavan 2016: 6) and was home, at some point during its history spanning the eight centuries between the 4th century BCE and the 4th century CE, to an expatriate community of Indians (Casson 1989; Lischi 2013). Among other artifacts unearthed during excavations which corroborate the above claim, archaeologists excavated a potsherd dated to the 1st century CE bearing an inscription representing a personal name in the Tamil Brahmi script (Ibid.: 233-234). This discovery proves that people of non-Semitic origin were living in the area in pre-modern times, and whilst we are unable to fathom the magnitude and social relevance of this community, the old Dravidian languages that were spoken in southern India at the turn of the Common Era would have to be taken into account in any future attempt at decipherment as, whilst it is true that these languages possessed a script of their own (Tamil Brahmi), we cannot assume that the native Indian community at Sumhuram used the same writing system, and although not extremely likely, a scenario in which these people resorted to an Arabian script to write their own non-Semitic language is not to be excluded.

Another historically possible source of non-Semitic peoples in the region is the Horn of Africa: In fact, the Russian linguist and Semitic scholar Alexander Militarev hypothesised the presence of a Cushitic lexical substrate in the MSAL (Militarev 1984). However, he later reanalysed the lexical items in question as a part of the wider Afro-Asiatic background of Semitic.[14] Notwithstanding, the movement of people across the waterway currently known as the Gulf of Aden is well documented

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[12] That is, one of the Modern South Arabian languages, along with Jibbali/Shehret, Soqotri, Harsusi, Bathari and Hobyot.

[13] Sumhuram has been identified as the *Moscha Limén* of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (Lischi 2013: 227).

[14] Personal Communication.

since ancient times (Hatke 2021), although no hard evidence of a massive Cushitic presence in ancient Arabia has been found to date. Interestingly, however, recent archaeological surveys in Somaliland carried out by local specialists revealed some inscriptions which bear a strong resemblance to the south-east Arabian inscriptions, including the "diagnostic" characters, and similarly to the Dhofar inscriptions, they are found in caves.[15] However, the current political situation in Somaliland and Somalia makes it difficult to carry out an extensive survey to ascertain how relevant these inscriptions might be to the interpretation of the south-east Arabian inscriptions.

Thirdly, it has been hypothesised, based on linguistic facts, that a pre-documentary phase of the Modern South Arabian languages might have been influenced by the Austronesian language variety at the basis of the Malagasy language (Castagna 2018): not only does Modern South Arabian exhibit a few loanwords possibly of native Proto-Malagasy origin related to the sea and the winds (a plausible semantic field), but it also features at least one plant-name of Malagasy origin, namely 'Baobab tree' in Jibbali/Shehret *enkiẑ́*, probably from the phrase **an kazo za* 'the *za* tree,' where *za* means Baobab[16] in modern Malagasy (Castagna 2022), which points to a counter-movement of Austronesian people out of Madagascar and into south Arabia. This seems to find a confirmation in a statement of the medieval traveller Ibn al-Mujawir (Smith 2008: 137-138), and in light of these facts, it seems reasonable to include the Malagasy language and its reconstructed unattested phases in the list of linguistic and cultural *milieux* mentioned above. However, one might regard the above statements as controversial, as a long chronology (i.e. before the mid-first millennium CE) for the Austronesian colonisation of Madagascar has been refuted on grounds that the Sanskrit loanwords in Malagasy, acquired through Old Malay and/or Old Javanese when the ancestors of the Malagasy were still in Borneo, have been shown to date from the 5th century CE (Serva & Pasquini 2020). Moreover, two out of three radiocarbon dates provided in this study show that the inscriptions are considerably older that the Austronesian colonisation of Madagascar. Whilst this study does intend to challenge the above-mentioned views, the author believes that entirely ruling out, on their basis, an at least partial proto-Malagasy influence on the language(s) of the south-east Arabian inscriptions would amount to disregarding the movements of the proto-Malagasy *before* the full-scale colonisation of Madagascar: it has been shown that the ancestors of the Malagasy knew the east African lands and, possibly, Madagascar itself long before they colonised it, at which point they must have been already an ethnically and genetically mixed group, having sojourned extensively in the region and travelled back and forth between the western and the eastern parts of

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[15] Some of these inscriptions can be viewed on the following website: https://africanrockart.org/somaliland/.

[16] The Baobab tree can be found in Dhofar in small and scattered pockets along the coast.

the Indian ocean, since the 3rd century BCE (Adelaar 2016). Moreover, it has been suggested that before the main colonisation event, Austronesians seamen followed, among others, a coastal route from Insular Southeast Asia to Africa which comprised southern Arabia, labelled "the Sabaean lane" (Beaujard 2019: 595). In spite of this, however, it is likely that these ancient Austronesians never gained a significant foothold in southern Arabia, and genetic evidence suggests that a more significant influx of people from Borneo in that region occurred after Madagascar was colonised (Brucato *et al.* 2019; Chambers and Edinur 2021: 257-258).[17]

Lastly, one must turn one's back to the sea and gaze inland. Yet, not in search of the Arabs (and the many meanings and peoples associated with this ethnonym: Retso 2003) but the non-Arab outcast ethnic groups that have lived in Arabia since time immemorial, like the Solluba,[18] who, before their assimilation into the Arab tribes during the first half of the 20th century, were believed to be found all over Arabia (Doughty 1936: 325) and have their own language which differed radically from Arabic (Jarvis 1938: 154). This is not a suggestion that the alleged Solluba language might have any connection with the language of the south-east Arabian inscriptions. Rather, it is a reminder that any attempt to decipher them should factor in the historical presence in Arabia of autochthonous non-Semitic (and perhaps non-Afro-Asiatic) languages, some of which might underlie some (or all) of the inscriptions: if this were the case, the lack of reference linguistic material would make deciphering them an arduous task at best.

6. Conclusions

The primary aim of this paper has been to review the available data on the study of the south-east Arabian inscriptions and, by providing the new (if modest) insight of the radiocarbon dating of three inscriptions, to kindle the interest of the scholarly communities in this neglected but fascinating and promising subfield of Arabian epigraphy. This study also aims to set forth a research agenda, which entails checking the south-east Arabian inscriptions against, at least, the following language varieties:

a. Old Tamil

b. Cushitic languages of the Horn of Africa (including their reconstructed past phases)

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[17] But long before the migration (and counter-migration) of Hadrami Arabs to south-east Asia.

[18] In regard to the origins of the Solluba, see Betts (1987) and Simpson (1994).

c.   Malagasy (including its reconstructed past phases)

In addition to the above, one might want to bear in mind the following facts:

a.   The inscriptions might conceal more than one language.

b.   It has been recognised that the MSAL exhibit a great number of lexical items which cannot be traced back to any known language family (Kogan 2015: 546). Thus, if assuming that the MSAL have been in contact with the language(s) of the inscriptions, or *are* the language(s) of at least some of the inscriptions, those lexical items must in the first place be singled out, documented and studied.

c.   In spite of the formal resemblance with the other ancient writing systems of Arabia, one should not take for granted that the characters of the south-east Arabian inscriptions have the same phonetic values as their well-understood counterparts from the rest of the Arabian Peninsula. One might compare the Cherokee syllabary, which incorporates some letter-shapes of the Latin alphabet and assigns them completely different phonetic values from their models (Hatke 2019: 10).

Although we should be ready to resign ourselves to either the impossibility of deciphering this epigraphic material or waiting for a south Arabian counterpart of the Rosetta Stone to come to light, we should do our best not to succumb to a tendency to self-referentiality which characterises a good number of studies in Semitic: as we deal with one of the most influential language families of the western hemisphere, we occasionally lose sight of the role of the many non-Semitic neighbours which influenced the noble objects of our studies. Nor should we shy away from this field of enquiry because of the many difficulties with which it confronts us: on the contrary, those who are interested in this issue and possess the necessary expertise should join forces and attract funding by developing a feasible research project. Whilst drawing conclusions on the study of the south-east Arabian inscriptions and their intricacies is beyond the scope of this paper, one can effectively conclude this excursus by citing a traditional Modern South Arabian proverb: *ɛ aġad yəḳɔ́ś ḥɔ́gət fɛlɔ́ yəšeṣɔ́fə* / *ḏ-yäsyūr, yḳayź ḥōjät w-lī yäššayf* 'He who travels about will gain wealth or knowledge' (Jibbali/Shehret and Mehri respectively) (al-Shahri 2000: 94,270; Sima 2005: 80-81).[19]

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[19] The concept of 'traveling about' is, according to al-Shahri, to be intended not exclusively as a physical action, but also as an intellectual endeavour.

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Further considerations on the verbal aspect in Arabic

Maurizio Bagatin

The verbal aspect is one of the thorniest issues that Arabists must deal with, both theoretically and pedagogically. If teachers do not pay extreme attention to words, sooner or later they will fall into glaring contradictions, to remedy which they must invent a series of exceptions. Intrinsic and extrinsic causes are at the origin of such a quagmire: on the one hand, the complexity of the topic, due to the difficulty of finding a definition of aspect, both as a semantic and grammatical category, valid for all languages; on the other hand, the opinion and approach divergence among scholars, who hesitate to recognize at the basis of the Arabic verbal system an aspectual or temporal opposition. Finally, it should be added that the whole debate is grounded on an idea of aspect mirroring the linguistic reality of Slavic languages and which, in hindsight, does not fit well with Arabic. In this contribution, a definition of verbal aspect will be proposed considering the remarks included in a classic of linguistic studies, Bernard Comrie's *Aspect*, and in a short, decidedly less well-known but very important article by the Romanian linguist Coseriu. What follows is an overview of how the topic is introduced within a number of grammars and theoretical texts, the purpose of which is to show the different interpretations given by Arabists regarding aspect and other related features of the verbal system. In the belief that verbal aspect does not constitute an independent grammatical category in Arabic, an interpretation of the system is given as being built on tense as a complex, multidimensional category. In addition to the deictic dimension, serving to situate events with respect to a time reference, Coseriu identifies a second temporal dimension, the 'plane,' by which events are presented, in relation with the speech act, as either fully real or placed on a line of diminished reality. By applying the notion of plane to Arabic, an attempt is made to justify certain uses of the so-called "perfect" without referring it to the category of verbal aspect.

1. Introduction

This article is aimed at providing some insights for a broader discussion and further research. Given the complexity of the topic and its numerous implications on different levels, there is no claim to be exhaustive nor to get to an overall and complete definition of the *status quaestionis*. The idea, rather the

need, to expose another point of view concerning the category of aspect within the Arabic verbal system has been stimulated by some observations regarding scholars' theoretical and methodological assumptions. Some didactic concerns have also contributed to making such a need more pressing. As for now, it is worth making clear that the arguments developed in the following pages refer to the classical language and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), especially in its literary register, which is typologically akin to the classical model. Therefore, pre-classical Arabic and the contemporary Arabic dialects, the so-called neo-Arabic, are excluded from the discussion.[1]

The first remark concerns the very definition of "verbal aspect," even before referring it to the Arabic language in a specific way. Compared to other linguistic categories or other verbal meanings, aspect seems less susceptible to receiving a universally valid definition. No one will question that tense is a grammaticalized way to express a relative notion with a deictic function, i.e. it serves to locate an event or situation[2] in time by presenting it as anterior to, contemporary with, or posterior to a point of reference. In the same way, no one will doubt that the different enunciation and utterance modalities are expressed through verbal moods, such as the subjunctive, the conditional and the imperative. Finally, it is generally acknowledged that the relationships between referential functions (agent, patient, primary participant, secondary participants) and syntactic functions (subject, predicate, direct object, indirect object, other types of determination) are expressed through the verbal voice or diathesis, that can be active, passive, reflexive, middle, etc. The same clarity of terms and convergence of opinions which applies to the aforementioned categories cannot unfortunately be found for aspect, which seems to be a more elusive notion.

This difficulty depends on the fact that the range of meanings labelable as aspectual is quite broad and their expression takes on several forms in different languages and even within the same language. Aspect can in fact show up as a part of the lexical content of a verb, and / or be grammaticalized in morphological forms by means of specific monemes,[3] as it happens in Russian and other Slavic

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[1] This exclusion is a first important limitation of which I am aware. An accurate and exhaustive description of the language, or of some of its features, cannot ignore the diachronic analysis, and the case of the Arabic verbal aspect is no exception. As a matter of fact, many an Arabist believe that the relation between the expression of an aspectual meaning and the expression of other verbal meanings, particularly the time reference, has undergone a change moving from one stage of the language to another. A detailed inquiry on Old Arabic and contemporary dialects will be therefore a necessary complement to this study.

[2] The words "event" and "situation" are used here with a generic meaning to indicate a single fact or a set of circumstances. These terms will occur whenever there is no need to refer to the type of meaning of a verbal lexeme, which in Arabic, as in other languages, can denote an action, a process, or a state / quality.

[3] The concept of moneme appears functionally more useful than that of morpheme, especially if applied to a language like Arabic, where signifiers corresponding to this or that meaning are very often discontinuous (Cf. Martinet 1985: 29 foll.).

languages, and / or be expressed through more or less constant periphrases, as in Romance languages.[4] However, from a general linguistics perspective, a definition of the verbal aspect cannot be inferred from its manifestation in a given language and subsequently be used to state whether this category does exist in other languages or not. A correct and satisfactory definition of aspect should be built on the assumption that it is a universal possibility of the language which can, but does not necessarily have to, be realized. A certain language may lack grammatical aspect, despite being able to express aspectual contents in its lexicon or by means of secondary uses of other grammatical categories (Coseriu 1980: 14).

As far as the Arabic language is concerned, we notice that there is no agreement among scholars about how its verbal system should be understood. A large number of Arabists and Semitists see in its two fundamental conjugations, the suffix conjugation or s-stem and the prefix conjugation or p-stem, respectively called *al-māḍī* and *al-muḍāriᶜ* in the traditional grammar, the opposite elements of an aspectual system, or at least originally aspectual. Other Arabists and Semitists instead see a time reference distinction. However, even for those scholars who consider Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) retaining the Classical Arabic (CA) dual aspectual system, the former would be more tense-specific, with clear division between past, present and future tense (Corriente 2002: 148; Ryding 2005: 439-440; Badawi-Carter-Gully 2016: 410). It has been argued that at a certain stage of its evolution, following the assimilation of Greek philosophy, especially Aristotelian logic, Arabic would have developed a system of three distinct grammatical tenses (Fleisch 1979: 204; Carter 2011). Such an interpretation, regardless of its accuracy, would imply at least a close connection between tense and aspect in Arabic. While admitting an original aspectual opposition, it would be necessary to establish how it was transformed into a tense opposition and to what extent it is still productive in MSA. How to explain, for example, that in some cases an aspectual distinction prevails, while in others tense overcomes aspect?

A twofold terminological problem must then be considered. In the Arabic grammatical tradition, we do not find any term with aspectual denotation to describe the verbal system, whereas Western Arabists and Semitists use terms such as perfect and imperfect, perfective and imperfective, *accompli* and *inaccompli*, etc. The temptation to which it is easy to succumb is to match terms referring to two

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[4] In French, for instance, the verb *aller* loses its meaning as a verb of motion and is used periphrastically to indicate an imminent situation in expressions such as *il va faire* or *il allais faire*, but it cannot be used with the same function associated with other tenses as in *il alla faire* or *il est allé faire*, where the verb *aller* regains its original sense. In Italian the periphrasis consisting of the verb *stare* followed by a gerund to express the progressive meaning is possible with some tenses but not with others: *sta / stava / starà leggendo* (the future here can imply a nuance of eventuality or probability), but one cannot say **stette leggendo, *era stato leggendo, *sarà stato leggendo* (Coseriu 1980: 17).

rather different representations of the verbal system, with pernicious effects from both a theoretical and pedagogical standpoint. Moreover, some scholars have pointed out that the words perfect(ive) and imperfect(tive) are used by Arabists in a way that is different from how these two terms are usually employed in general linguistics or in relation to languages provided with the grammatical category of aspect. Such use of technical terms could cause quite a few difficulties for students who want to learn Arabic and, for example, Russian, or who are simply trying to apply to the Arabic language the general principles they have assimilated during a linguistics class. For this and other reasons, it seemed appropriate to make a certain room for the issue of the grammatical aspect as it is dealt with in Arabic grammar textbooks and some works displaying a pedagogical focus.

2. How to consider verbal aspect

An old fashion to explain things, sometimes still employed with students with a maieutic aim, is by stating what they are not. Following this method as for verbal aspect, one could say it is a grammatical category whose content <u>is not</u> person, number, voice (or diathesis), tense, mood. Since stating that a certain word or expression does not designate this or that thing is not the same as saying what it corresponds to, scholars are required to take a second step. Within any science, the use of a word designating a given notion should be the result of a number of choices aimed at describing first the field to which that notion belongs, then its scope. That is to say, among all the potential meanings for that word, only one and always the same will be used relative to that field and with that scope. The consistent and simultaneous observance of these two parameters, the field and the scope, makes of that word a technical term. However, there is another issue that must be considered in this regard: «the meaning (or value) of a word is not the idea we attach with a sound, neither is the word just a label for an object. The meaning of a word emerges from the differences and oppositions between neighbouring terms in a linguistic system» (Nerlich-Clarke 2000: 129), as Saussure had already highlighted in his *Cours de linguistique générale.* Only as part of a whole the content of a lexical item is fully realized. To outline the scope of a given term, it must be seen in opposition to, but also in continuity with (i.e. as complementary to) that of other terms belonging to the same field.[5]

Regarding aspect as a linguistic notion, its field is located within the verbal system, more precisely in that part of the system that governs the connection between verbal lexemes and those grammatical

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[5] This assumption gave rise to various versions of what we could call, to cut it short, "semantic field theory" about which one can find good summaries in Lyons (1977: I, 250 ff.) and Nerlich-Clarke (2000).

categories, compatible with verbs, through which specific semantic features or values are added to the lexical content. Aspect can be described as one of such categories, although in many languages some aspectual features are included in the lexical meaning of the verb. Other similar categories are tense, mood and voice, whose values might be found variously combined or even overlapped in one single verbal form. This happens especially with tense and aspect contents, due to their link with time. One more reason for the need to establish the scope of both notions with the utmost accuracy.

Tense, as has been said, is a grammatical category with deictic function, in the sense that it locates an event or a situation as anterior, contemporary, or posterior relative to a point of reference. The latter can be primary, i.e. coinciding with the moment when communication takes place (the enunciation of that event or situation), or secondary, i.e. coinciding with some other event or situation presented as anterior, contemporary, or posterior relative to the primary reference.[6] Be that as it may, what distinguishes tense is the fact that it relates the time of a situation to another time-point.

There is, however, another, non-deictic way of connecting an event or situation to time, that is, looking at it from an internal point of view. The event can be presented, for instance, as momentary or lasting, having happened once or several times, oriented or non-oriented towards an aim or a point to be rejoined, completed or not completed, partial or global, seen in its beginning or end, in its various phases (including those preceding and following its development), in its positioning with respect to other events (Coseriu 1980: 15). This other way of dealing with time is what is meant here by aspect, in accordance with Comrie's statements (1976: 3, 5) that "aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation,"[7] and that the difference between aspect and tense is "one between situation-internal time (aspect) and situation-external time (tense)." Since the temporal constituency of an event or a situation—some would say the 'verbal action as such'—can be considered from different points of view, aspect should be seen as a complex or multidimensional category (Coseriu 1980: 15), meaning that the oppositions discernible in it are many. For this reason, any attempt to reduce aspect to a single dimension, for example the dimension of achievement by which completed situations are opposed to uncompleted ones, is misleading and should be refused.

Moreover, in a given language not all aspectual values exist and not all those actually existing must be conveyed by a specific grammatical category provided with a formal expression. Some

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[6] These two temporal references are what Comrie (1976: 2) calls respectively "absolute time reference" and "relative time reference."

[7] Comrie grounds his own definition of aspect on that given by Jans Holt (1943: 6): "les manières diverses de concevoir l'écoulement du procés même."

aspectual meanings can arise lexically, possibly through derivation (derivational morphology),[8] or periphrastically (Coseriu 1980: 16). As an example of the first possibility with regard to the durativity of a situation, let's consider the following couples of French verbs (very similar couples can be found in other Romance languages): *chercher* (to look for / to search for) / *trouver* (to find) and *disputer* (to compete) / *gagner* (to win); *sauter* (to jump) / *sautiller* (to skip) and *chanter* (to sing) / *chantonner* (to sing softly with frequent interruptions). The verbs *chercher* and *disputer* denote situations lasting for a certain period of time and involving more than a single act ('looking for something' includes moving through space, moving or removing objects, looking in different directions, etc.; similarly, 'competing' is made of acts such concentrating, making movements with the body, keeping the adversary under control, etc.). Conversely, the verbs *trouver* and *gagner* denote situations taking place in one moment, i.e. in one time-point, and this is why they are called punctual.[9] Finally, the verbs *sautiller* and *chantonner*, compared to *sauter* and *chanter* from which they are derived by means of verbal diminutives, describe iterative or intermittent-irregular actions. Such aspectual content of a verbal lexeme, totally independent from its time reference or from interaction with other verbal forms in the same utterance, is usually called 'lexical aspect,' 'objective aspect' (Coseriu 1980: 18-19; Larcher 2012: 133 n. 1)—in opposition to 'subjective aspect' or 'aspect' *tout court*, that is grammaticalized aspect—or *Aktionsart* (pl. *Aktionsarten*), a German word meaning 'type or mode of action.' Concerning aspect expressed periphrastically, the use of stable periphrases is extensive in languages like the Romance languages and English, inasmuch they lack aspect as an independent grammatical category, or at least as a fully grammaticalized category. Some examples can be given here to illustrate this use: Fr. *j'étais sur le point de*; It. *stavo / andavo dicendo*; Sp. *voy / cojo y escribe*; En. *I am writing*, *I used to write*.

Both Comrie and Coseriu, who authored their writings on verbal aspect more or less in the same years, have highlighted some ambiguities concerning the usage of *Aktionsart* by linguists. These ambiguities are due to the fact that the distinction between grammatical aspect and lexical aspect or *Aktionsart* was originally conceived by Agrell (1908) for Slavic languages and only subsequently applied by scholars to other languages, on the assumption that what is lexical in the former should be in the latter too: "Mais on ne peut pas de ce fait exclure en général les Aktionsarten de la grammaire [...] et les attribuer partout au lexique, sous prétexte qu'elles y appartiennent dans les langues slaves. D'autre

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[8] In the Romance languages, as in Arabic, it happens that the aspectual content of a verbal lexeme is associated with certain features of its derivational morphology, such as specific monemes added to the verbal stem or the verbal root (see below).

[9] These verbs always entail that there is one moment in which the action has not yet taken place, followed by the moment of its accomplishment, without any time passing between the two moments.

part, assez souvent entre Aktionsart et aspect il n'y a pas de différence de nature" (Coseriu 1980: 18). For his part, Comrie (1976: 6, footnote 4) remarks that such distinction can be sketched at least in two different ways. According to the first one, aspect is seen "as grammaticalisation of the relevant semantic distinctions, while aktionsart represents lexicalisation of the distinctions, irrespective of how these distinctions are lexicalised. This use of aktionsart is similar to the notion of inherent meaning." According to the second one, that is peculiar to Slavists, *Aktionsart* is viewed "as lexicalisation of the [semantic] distinction provided that the lexicalisation is by means of derivational morphology. […] This restriction of the use of the term 'aktionsart' in Slavonic linguistics was introduced by Agrell (1908)." For this reason, he prefers to avoid the word *Aktionsart*, that is replaced in his book by 'inherent meaning.'

What has been just said about *Aktionsart* and its distinction from grammaticalized aspect is indicative of a more general issue, whose relevance is fundamental for any study on the topic of verbal aspect. The whole discussion on aspect is affected by its interpretation referring to the Slavic languages. In other words, much of what has been stated concerning aspect in various languages, including Arabic, mirrors the functioning of this grammatical category in Russian and other Slavic languages. This fact is probably due to some reasons connected with the history of linguistic sciences. It is obvious that such a way to understand aspect may have generated some wrong or strained interpretations, when applied to other languages. Faced with this risk, we must be aware that in each language some aspectual values or 'dimensions,' as Coseriu calls them, may appear in one of the three aforementioned modalities and others in the remaining two modalities. Certain aspectual values can also combine with each other or with the values of other categories, prevailing on them or being prevailed by them, both semantically and grammatically. Aspectual oppositions, for instance, might be prior to temporal oppositions or, conversely, be a consequence of them. One should certainly take into account all these possibilities; however, our attention will focus above all on the analysis of grammaticalized forms. Dealing with grammar, there is one further assumption that we must keep in mind: the existence and effective operativity of a category in the grammatical system of a language depends on its autonomy, which is fully established when its oppositions are not reducible to other categories (Coseriu 1980: 17).[10]

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[10] We find the same assumption formulated in different terms by Kuryłowicz (1973: 79 foll.), when he states the difference between primary function and secondary function(s) of verbal forms, referring them to Semitic in general and to Arabic.

3. Convergence and divergence of opinions on the verbal aspect in Arabic

As mentioned in the introduction, the CA verbal system is built on the opposition of two fundamental conjugations. While in the Arabic grammatical tradition they are almost always designated by the same couple of words, i.e. *al-māḍī* and *al-muḍāriᶜ*,[11] Western scholars use a variety of expressions, such as past / present, perfect / imperfect, perfective / imperfective, whose number will increase, if we also consider their synonyms (in French, for example, both *accompli / inaccompli* and *achevé / inachevé* may occur). Moreover, the intrinsic ambiguity of terms such as 'perfect' and 'imperfect,' that have a different meaning if considered in relation to a specific European language or to the classical grammar tradition, rather than to the Arabic verbal system, should not be neglected. It is therefore undeniable that such terminological heterogeneity further complicates the task of stating the nature of the original opposition. Not even the apparent consistency of the Arabic metalanguage can help, given that, while *māḍī* denotes an evident temporal notion, *muḍāriᶜ* ('resembling') expresses an analogy between the verb and the agent noun (*ism al-fāᶜil*) in relation to their syntactic behavior and, therefore, is hardly interpretable as the second member of a temporal or aspectual opposition. In this respect, many a scholar has pointed out the 'surprising' asymmetry (Carter 2011) or heterogeneity (Larcher 2012: 12) of the Arabic terminology. However, assuming that in a closed system the meaning of a term is also determined by the meaning of the other terms in the system, especially those in direct opposition with it, it would be worth checking for other ways of correlating *māḍī* and *muḍāriᶜ*. Instead of limiting the analogy between the latter and the agent noun to syntactic compatibilities, one should consider it semantically. Actually, within the Arabic grammatical tradition we can find, alongside the well-known formalism due to the relevance attributed by grammarians to the desinential inflection (*ᵓiᶜrāb*) and what directly relates to it, a concern for the semantic analysis in general and of the verbal forms in particular. The two kinds of interests, the formal one and the semantic one, are not exclusive to each other but can coexist in the same stage of the tradition and even in the same scholar (Ayoub 2005: 387).[12] Thus, for instance, Rāḍī al-Dīn al-ᵓAstarabāḏī (d. 1287) explains the resemblance between

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[11] Since Sībawayhi's age, other words are occasionally found instead of the most common term, especially for *muḍāriᶜ*, as in the case of the well attested *ḥāḍir* (present) and *ḥāl* (concomitant present). This is true also for *mustaqbal* (future tense), that is sometimes replaced by *muntaẓar* or *mutawaqqaᶜ*, respectively translatable with 'awaited' and 'expected' (Carter 2011).

[12] It is my personal belief that the very metalanguage developed within the Arabic grammar tradition often reveals a semantic perspective. Many technical terms such as *fāᶜil / mafᶜūl*, *mubtadaᵓ / ḫabar*, *ᵓiᶜrāb*, *ᵓiḍāfa*, *ḥāl* can denote semantic or pragmatic functions to which specific morphological forms and syntactic constructions correspond. Formal variations due to the desinential inflection are considered by several grammarians closely related to variations in meaning. ᶜAbd al-Qāhir al-Ǧurǧānī (d. 1078) devoted many sections of his works, especially the *Dalāᵓil al-ᵓiᵓǧāz*, to demonstrating how syntactic variations

the noun and the *muḍāriᶜ* invoking their generic or undetermined referentiality due to the polysemy (*ištirāk*) peculiar to both. An isolated noun lacking any determination can't indicate a specific referent, but only an indistinct class of referents; in a similar way, a verb conjugated in the *muḍāriᶜ* applies to the present as like as the future tense. In both cases the undetermined referentiality can turn into a determined one only by means of an anteposed grammatical marker, i.e. the definite article *al-* for nouns and the preverb *sa-* for verbs.

’Astarabāḏī also draws on the principle of polysemy for the desinential variation in the *muḍāriᶜ*, to be correlated with the polysemy of the particles preceding it. The example he gives is that of the negation *lā*, which can be followed by the indicative (*rafᶜ*) or the apocopate (*ǧazm*). In other words, the same negation is to negate an utterance in the assertive or imperative modality, being able to express a negative assertion (*nafy*) or a prohibition (*nahy*). The ending of the *muḍāriᶜ* disambiguates the value of the negation, which in turn specifies the modal content of the verbal form (Ayoub 2005: 393-395). This semantic relationship between particle and verb, which would also exist in connection with other particles, leads to the conclusion that the *muḍāriᶜ* is itself neuter with respect to its temporal and modal content. Incidentally, such a neutrality concerning the time reference is a further factor of similarity with the *ism al-fāᶜil* (Anghelescu 1988: 348), which like the 'similar verb' takes its past, present or future meaning from the sentence context or from that of the communicative situation (Holes 2004: 219-220). We thus have a two-term verbal system in which one, the *māḍī*, would be temporally marked, while the other, the *muḍāriᶜ*, in addition to the lexical meaning of the verb, brings information only about the person, i.e. the agent (or the patient in the case of a passive voice).[13]

While Arab grammarians, as a rule, deal with the values of the two conjugations in temporal terms, most Arabists lean towards an aspectual interpretation of the verbal system of CA and, at least partially, of MSA, albeit with some distinctions in the terminology and methodology. By reviewing some Western grammars of Arabic and other didactic or descriptive works from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 21st, one can identify a few trends. Dealing with the binary verbal system of Arabic, some authors use perfect / imperfect (Fischer 1972: 90-94; Badawi *et al.* 2016: 410-419), *accompli /*

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have their semantic counterparts, a principle already known to Sībawayhi (d. 793) and his commentators (Giolfo 2014: 122). Although complex semantic analyses are more common in late grammarians, from the 11th century onwards, already in the introductory part of Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* we find the following statement about the similarity between the *muḍāriᶜ* verb and the agent noun: "[Similar verbs] are similar to the agent noun because they have the same meaning (*maᶜnā*)" (quoted in Ayoub 2005: 391).

[13] According to Kuryłowicz (1973: 91), the marked element of the system (*qatala*) is defined by its primary semantic function, while the unmarked element (*yaqtulu*), semantically empty or negative (i.e., 'non-past'), would be defined structurally by its noun-like inflection.

inaccompli (Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes 1975: 245-254; Fleisch 1979: 179 foll.; Larcher 2012: 11-12, 133-136, 141-145), *perfectivo / imperfectivo* (Corriente 2002: 148-149) or the neuter labels s-stem and p-stem (Holes 2004: 217-218) explicitly referring them to verbal aspect. At times they provide the reader with an explanation of how aspect must be intended, possibly relating it to the Semitic verbal system, or how it could be connected to tense. In some books (Wright 1896: II 1-44; Veccia Vaglieri 1937: I 110, II 90-94; Cantarino 1974: I 59-67) the terms perfect / imperfect are found without any explicit reference to aspect, which however might be inferred from the way the author outlines their values and uses. Sometimes perfect and imperfect are analyzed keeping separated their aspectual and temporal value (Fischer 1972; Corriente 2002). In only one case (Kuryłowicz 1973: 79-84) perfective and imperfective are understood as denoting *per se* a time content, as forms expressing anteriority and non-anteriority / simultaneity with regard to a time reference (not necessarily the moment of speaking).[14] Finally, few scholars use the terms past and present or the corresponding terms in other languages (Vernier 1891: I 37-44; Ryding 2005: 439-444).[15]

Fischer uses 'perfect' (*Perfekt*) and 'imperfect' (*Imperfekt*) referring to both tense and aspect. If related to aspect, which is considered an inherent meaning of the two conjugations, they are equated to the perfective and imperfective aspects (*perfektiver / imperfektiver Aspekt*), denoting a completed action and an uncompleted action in process respectively. If related to tense, they correspond to past and present-future. His description of the verbal system is generally focused on aspect (Fischer 1972: 90-91).

Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes make a clear distinction, without however considering all its implications, between absolute and context-conditioned values of what they call *accompli* and *inaccompli.* Even though this argument is integrated in the discussion from a diametrically opposite perspective, trying to demonstrate that the Arabic system is originally grounded on the opposition between aspects and only subsequently between tenses, it is the same kind of distinction proposed by Kuryłowicz regarding primary and secondary functions of verbal forms.

Fleisch, who credits Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes with recognizing aspect as the basis of verb organization in Arabic, devotes a section of his *Traité* to a number of studies on verbal aspect from 1924 to the early 1970s, especially those discussing verbal aspect in Arabic. In doing so, he shows

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[14] Kuryłowicz's use of these two terms is actually unrelated to any semantic implications and refers only to the morphological structure (Kuryłowicz 1973: 80, footnote 2; 83).

[15] This list of authors is purely indicative. Many other names could be added, as well as those indicated could be gathered differently, applying other criteria to establish affinities and differences. Cf. as an example what Eisele (2011) says in this respect.

awareness that "dans la tradition des études linguistiques, la notion d'aspect était généralement définie par rapport aux données slaves. C'est le verbe slave qui a fourni à la théorie de l'aspect son cadre et ses oppositions" (Fleisch 1979: 171). Among the studies mentioned, he openly disagrees with Kuryłowicz's, mainly for his peremptory statement that "verbal aspect as grammatical category does not exist in Semitic" (Kuryłowicz 1973: 83), from which he infers that, for the Polish linguist, the primary function is temporal, while aspectual considerations are secondary.[16] To Kuryłowicz's statement he replies affirming that in Semitic "l'aspect est une *corrélation*, et non une catégorie grammaticalisée ; de plus le modèle fourni par le verbe slave s'est montré d'un type exceptionnel, donc ici inadapté" (Fleisch 1979: 174). There follows a lengthy discussion from which emerges the difficulty of giving a single, universally valid definition of aspect. However, some ideas seem to bring what appears as a vague discourse onto a more solid ground: aspect has to do with the various ways of understanding duration, is objective and manifests itself through oppositions. Fleisch then starts to deal with aspect in classical Arabic, analysing how aspectual and temporal content interact in the *accompli* and *inaccompli*. For this purpose, he contrasts action verbs with stative verbs, making a further distinction within each group of verbs between *récit historique* and *discours*. In his exposition he tries to keep the two semantic contents (aspect and time) separate at all times, in order to check their degree of realization for each possible combination. With action verbs, the *accompli* of the *récit historique* expresses chiefly a time notion, while the aspectual content is minimized or neutralized. When used in the *discours*, it conveys equally a temporal and aspectual meaning: past tense and accomplishment, that often becomes resultative (Fleisch 1979: 181-182). With the *inaccompli* things are easier, because aspect and tense are always dissociated, being the "process" described by the verb always presented in its aspectual value, while the temporal denotation is derived from the sentence. At times, the aspectual content of the *inaccompli* gives the meaning of the verb a nuance of possibility: "l'inaccompli peut signifier la *possibilité* d'effectuer, l'*aptitude* à effectuer le procès" (Fleisch 1979: 184, 186). With stative verbs there is no correlation of aspects, since for both conjugations the aspectual content is lexicalized. Both the ongoing and the achieved / completed acquisition of a condition or quality are implicit in the verbal lexeme, the context being solely responsible for the emerging of one sense or the other.[17] This being

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[16] This claim of Fleisch is contradicted by Larcher (2012: 145), who states, regarding the same study by Kuryłowicz, that for the latter neither tense nor aspect are grammatical categories of classical Arabic.

[17] What Fleisch describes as "le devenir dans l'acquisition de la qualité" and "l'acquisition réalisée," i.e. the "verbe résultatif," is better labelled in linguistics as the 'ingressive' and the 'static' value of stative verbs. Whether in CA or MSA, such verbs can be translated in two ways: *qāma* (to stand / to be standing), *ǧalasa* (to sit / to be seated), *ḥazina* (to become sad / to be sad), *fariḥa* (to rejoice / to be happy), *qaruba min* (to become close to / to be close to), etc.

the case, it is a question of how the process is situated in time. The terms *accompli* and *inaccompli* are retained, although they are less appropriate for the discussion (Fleisch 1979: 193 foll.).

Corriente (2002: 148) speaks of *coordenadas aspect-temporales* of the finite forms of the verb, reflecting a basic opposition of objective time or aspect. When a situation (*proceso*) is conceived in its totality, the Arabic verb is put in its perfective form; when it is conceived as an ongoing or iterated situation, the verb appears in the imperfective form. A parallel opposition of subjective time, whose opposite terms are perfect (*perfecto*) and imperfect (*no-perfecto*), would have evolved from the original one.

Speaking of aspect and factuality, Holes (2004: 217-223), who puts the modern Arabic dialects next to CA and MSA in his discussion of the verbal system, observes that the notion of pastness is not central to the meaning of s-stem. This would be demonstrated by its use in conditional clauses, with verbs of emotion and cognition—referring to which he makes a relevant distinction between punctual / dynamic and durative / static value (Holes 2004: 218, 221)[18]—with performative verbs and in optative expressions involving exhortations to God. As for the p-stem, in all varieties of Arabic it marks the non-completeness of an action or situation. He concludes by affirming that "in the absence of other elements that make the relative timing of actions clear—time adverbials, the optional future markers *sa-* or *sawfa*, or dependent clauses (such as conditionals)—the only variety of p-stem or s-stem verb form that is intrinsically time marked is that of the s-stem of verbs with dynamic value, for example, *katabtu risa:latan* 'I wrote a letter.' Because the verb [...] (a) denotes a dynamic action and (b) is in the s-stem, indicating completion, it is necessarily understood as having occurred in the past relative to the time of utterance" (Holes 2004: 219-220).

For didactic clarity, Ryding prefers to present the Arabic verbal system as structured on the distinction of two basic tenses, past and present, from which all other tenses derive. At the same time, she states that "these tenses are also often referred to as perfect and imperfect, or perfective and imperfective, but those latter terms are more accurately labels for aspect rather than tense" (Ryding 2005: 439-440). Then she describes tense and aspect as "two different ways of looking at time," the former dealing with linear points in time, the latter with the degree of completeness of an action or a situation. Finally, she declares that 'past tense' and 'present tense' in her book will refer to "what is

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[18] Despite the apparent similarity, it is something different from the distinction between ingressive and static value of stative verbs. With the verbs of emotion and cognition the use of the s-stem has often «little or no implication of pastness. [...] The s-stem form is used not only when the sense is dynamic and the action is conceived of as having (just) occurred, but also when the sense is of an ongoing state» (Holes 2004: 218). The examples reported by Holes in this respect are dialectal, and as such are beyond our scope of interest, however they are not far from what might be found in CA and MSA.

also called the perfect, or the perfective aspect [...] and [...] the imperfect tense or the imperfective aspect" (Ryding 2005: 440).

The last two scholars who will be considered here are Kuryłowicz and Larcher, although their works are chronologically distant from each other and separate from some of the studies mentioned above. They have been placed at the end of this overview because, for different reasons, they stand out from the other authors. Kuryłowicz's standpoint can be considered basically opposite to that of the Arabists reviewed so far, which can be summarized, with some simplification, in Fleisch's approach. In other ways, it can be seen connected to that of Coseriu and Comrie, who wrote their works a few years after the publication of Kuryłowicz's book. As for Larcher, his work is an accurate and very detailed description of the CA verbal system from the morphological, syntactic and semantic perspectives. As he had stated in the preface to the first edition of *Le système verbal de l'arabe classique* (Larcher 2003), the various issues are debated as within a course; all the content of the book comes indeed from a course he taught for many years at the Université de Provence. This educational tone seems particularly suitable for our purposes, as we are going to see. Additionally, the sections of the book devoted to the verbal aspect stand in apparent continuity with what Kuryłowicz said on this regard.

Before approaching Kuryłowicz's interpretation of the CA verbal system (Kuryłowicz 1973: 79 foll.), it is opportune to recall some of his methodological premises. First, even if it were possible to establish an opposition of aspect between the imperfective *yaqtulu* and the perfective *qatala*,[19] such opposition should be seen in another sense than in Greek or in Slavic grammar, where it is active also in the different moods and in the nominal forms of the verb. Nonetheless the terms perfective and imperfective can be retained referring them to morphological structure. Secondly, for an opposition to be relevant, in the sense that it effectively contributes to determining the system, it must be established in syntactical or / and semantic slots where it is not affected by the context, i.e. where the opposed members are used in their primary function. In the third place, the various meanings attributed by Reckendorf (1921: 10-15) to the perfective and imperfective are to be reduced to the opposition between the neuter-negative member *yaqtulu* and the positive or marked member *qatala*. With regard to each member, one should consider the total meaning (*Gesamtbedeutung*), the primary meaning (*Hauptbedeutung*) and the secondary meanings (*Nebenbedeutungen*). The total meaning or 'value' is an abstraction indispensable in establishing the system (Kuryłowicz 1973: 80). Finally, these

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[19] Unlike other authors, Kuryłowicz always analyzes first the functions and meanings of the form *yaqtulu*, then he moves on to those of the form *qatala*. For this section of my article, I have chosen to follow the same order of his exposition.

forms are used in their primary function when they are related to the moment of speaking, in their secondary functions when they are related to a past or future moment.

By analyzing the examples collected by Reckendorf, Kuryłowicz comes to affirm that the total meaning of *yaqtulu* is non-anteriority / simultaneity, depending on whether it is taken as the neuter or negative member of the opposition. Its primary function is present, being the secondary functions future, i.e. simultaneity with a future moment, and preterite (*praesens historicum*), i.e. simultaneity with a past moment. The future or past moment must be mentioned immediately before or after the imperfective, or inferred from a broader context, e.g. narration:

أنا أبعث إليك بنيه يكونون معك في الرواق 1.

ʾanā ʾabʿaṯu ʾilayka banayhi yakūnūna maʿaka fī l-riwāqi

'I am sending/I shall send you his sons so they will be with you in the tent'

خرج بين رجلين يخط رجلاه الأرض 2.

ḫaraǧa bayna raǧulayni yaḫuṭṭu riǧlāhu l-ʾarḍa

'He emerged between two men, his feet trailing along the ground'

لما تقتلون أنبياء الله من قبل 3.

limā taqtulūna ʾanbiyāʾa llāhi min qablu

'Why did you kill God's prophets before?'

إني لأقودهما إذ رآه بلال معي 4.

ʾinnī la-ʾaqūduhumā ʾiḏ raʾāhu Bilālun maʿī

'I was leading both of them when Bilāl saw him with me'

In these examples the time exponents, in relation to which the imperfective forms express simultaneity, are, respectively, 1. *ʾabʿaṯu*, 2. *ḫaraǧa*, 3. *min qablu*, and 4. *raʾāhu*.

Another context-conditioned secondary function of *yaqtulu* is that of conveying shades of modality, as in:

أيقتله 5.

ʾa-yaqtuluhu

'May he/has he the right to kill him?'

فقلت يتمنى أمير المؤمنين ثم أتمنى 6.

fa-qultu yatamannā ʾamīru l-muʾminīna ṯumma ʾatamannā

'I said: "Let the Commander of the believers utter a wish, then will I utter a wish"'

Once again, the imperfective is neuter as regards modality, whose exponents are to be found in the context or in the speech situation. The general neuter character of *yaqtulu* leads us to recognize the tense and mood exponents of its secondary functions somewhere outside the verbal form itself.

As for the second member of the opposition, *qatala*, it is to be seen as preterite, i.e. an action prior to the moment of speaking, in its primary function, and as pluperfect or second future with relation to a past or future moment (secondary function). Furthermore, Kuryłowicz (1973: 82) sees as a consequence of the inherent anteriority of *qatala* the resultative effect of a previous action in expressions such as:

7. كفروا
kafarū
'They have given up true faith' > 'They are infidel'

8. بعتك هذا
biʕtuka hāḏā
'I sold this to you (= sold!)' > 'I sell / I'm going to sell this to you'

9. حلفت
ḥalaftu
'I swore' > 'I swear'

If this is true for 7., the other two expressions could instead be examples of the performative use of the *māḍī*, little known or ignored altogether by several Arabists and Semitists, as Larcher has pointed out (2012: 143). Another secondary function is the context-conditioned modality to express wish or irreality in conditional clauses, where nevertheless the distinction between *yaqtulu* and *qatala* rather corresponds to that between past tense and pluperfect in English and other Western languages:

10. يفدونني لو يستطيعون أن يفدوا
yufaddūnanī law yastaṭīʕūna ʾan yafdū
'They would ransom me, if they could ransom'

11. لو شاء الله لجعلكم أمة واحدة
law šāʾa llāhu la-ǧaʕalakum ʾummatan wāḥidatan
'If God had willed, he would have made you a single people'

To conclude, the semantic relation between *yaqtulu* (imperfective) and *qatala* (perfective) is grounded on a general, 'total' (in the sense of *Gesamtbedeutung*) opposition 'non-anteriority *versus* anteriority,'

where *yaqtulu* is the unmarked, neuter member and *qatala* the marked, positive one. Any other temporal, modal and even 'aspectual' distinction should be seen as a secondary function entailed by the primary relation and conditioned by the context. Within the secondary function, the originally neuter member *yaqtulu*, if opposed to *qatala*, becomes marked as negative, i.e. as 'simultaneous *vs.* anterior.' Moreover, what primarily expresses a relative deictic distinction may assume a more or less defined semantic content and be interpreted differently. Thus, the difference existing between, for instance, *kuntu ʾaktubu* ('I was writing;' Fr. *j'écrivais*; It. *scrivevo*) and *katabtu* ('I have written;' Fr. *j'ai écrit*; It. *ho scritto*) should be intended as a deictic opposition 'simultaneous with a past moment *vs.* prior to the moment of speaking;' only subsequently, and only as an effect of the context, it can be taken as the expression of an imperfective and perfective meaning. In other words, verbal aspect is subordinate to the deictic function and does not exist as an independent category.

After pointing out the substantial difference between the terminology of the Arabic grammatical tradition and Western terminology, and warning of the disastrous effects caused by their promiscuous use, Larcher defines the notions of time and aspect. The latter is said to be "la façon dont un procès se déroule dans le temps. Si le procès se déroule dans la période de temps concernée par l'énonciation, l'aspect est inaccompli [...] S'il est présenté comme la trace, dans cette période, d'un accomplissement antérieur, l'aspect est accompli" (Larcher 2012: 133). A concise and *tranchant* definition, one might say. The discussion keeps going with some remarks on the terms generally used by Arabists to translate *māḍī* and *muḍāriʿ*, then gets to the point by showing that, on the one hand, aspectual opposition does not exclude temporal opposition in CA; on the other hand, aspectual and temporal denotation cannot coexist in the same verbal form. The examples given to prove the thesis include the following:

12. رأى جاك فتاة جميلة تمر أمامه

raʾā ǧāk fatātan ǧamīlatan tamurru ʾamāmahu

'Jaques a vu (ou vit) une belle jeune fille qui passait (ou passer ou passant) devant lui'

'J. saw a beautiful young girl passing by him'

13. أجيئك إذا احمر البسر

ʾaǧīʾuka ʾiḏā ḥmarra l-busru

'Je viendrai chez toi quand les dattes auront muri'

'I shall come to you when the unripe dates ripen / have ripen'

14. لما تقتلون أنبياء الله من قبل.

limā taqtulūna ʾanbiyāʾa llāhi min qablu

'Pourquoi tuiez-vous les prophètes d'Allah auparavant ?'

'Why did you kill God's prophets before?'

According to Larcher (2012: 135), in 12. the verb *tamurru* denotes only the imperfective aspect (*inaccompli*), having no temporal content. This is so, because it is situated in the range of another verb, *rāʾa*, that implies only the past tense. If it were outside the range of that verb, it would only denote the non-past tense. In 13. the semantic content of the imperfective *ʾaǧïʾuka* displays only present-future tense, while the perfective *iḥmarra*, that does not refer to the time of speaking but to another temporal reference, i.e. the moment of coming, denotes only the perfective aspect (*accompli*). While in French the imperfect and future perfect (*future antérieur*) would mark, at the same time, past tense and imperfectivity and future tense and anteriority, i.e. perfectivity, in Arabic only one meaning can be realized in one verbal form, depending on the time-reference of the latter.[20] In 14. *taqtulūna* only indicates the aspect, being the tense denoted by *min qablu* (cf. the interpretation of the same example provided by Kuryłowicz).[21] When a verb refers directly to the time of speaking, that is «rien ne vient faire écran entre lui et le présent de l'énonciateur», it denotes tense; otherwise, if it is situated in the range of a second verb or another element denoting tense, as in the third example, it marks aspect.

What is surprising here is the shift from a temporal deictic function to an aspectual semantic function determined by context with no other implications. The opposition is no longer between two members of the same grammatical category, but between one member belonging to one category (tense) and one member belonging to the other category (aspect). This representation is completed by an additional consideration, which introduces a new element into the system, namely a modal opposition in the sense of 'necessary *vs* possible,' traces of which can be found in the Arabic grammatical tradition (Larcher 2012: 141-145; Anghelescu 1988: 349).[22] This modal opposition is first referred to the verbal forms *kāna* and *yakūnu*, then extended to the *māḍī* and *muḍāriᶜ* of other verbs, the only difference being that, while the modal value of *yakūnu* survives in MSA, the other cases pertain only to CA. Within the sentence:

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[20] Cf. the way Comrie (1976: 79) explains this example.

[21] Cf. above the interpretation of the same example provided by Kuryłowicz.

[22] Larcher quotes examples from two post-classical grammatical works: *al-Kāfiya* by Ibn al-Ḥāǧib and *Šarḥ al-Kāfiya* by ʾAstarābāḏī. From the latter he also quotes a fragment with the explanation for the *māḍī*'s performative use.

15. كان تكون ناقصة... وتكون تامة.

kāna takūnu nāqiṣatan [...] wa-takūnu tāmmatan

that literally means '[the verb] *kāna* is incomplete [...] and is complete,' *yakūnu* brings a sense of possibility, so that the final and correct translation is '[the verb] *kāna* can be incomplete [...] and can be complete.' The logical consequence of this fact is that by contrast *kāna*, deprived of any temporal and aspectual value, brings a sense of necessity, as in:

16. ما كان محمد أبا أحد من رجالكم ولكن رسول الله... وكان الله بكل شيء عليما.

mā kāna muḥammadun ʾabā ʾaḥadin min riǧālikum wa-lākin rasūla llāhi [...] wa-kāna llāhu bi-kulli šayʾin ʿalīmun (Q. 33, 40)

that Larcher (2012 : 142) translates 'Mahomet *n'est effectivement* le père d'aucun homme parmi vous, mais *il est effectivement* l'envoyé d'Allah [...] Allah *est nécessairement* de toute chose informé.' Related to this distinction between necessary and possible is to be seen the performative use of *māḍī* and what he calls *parfait de prophétie*, as in:

17. هل تبيع لي بكذا – بعت.

hal tabīʿu lī kaḏā bi-kaḏā – biʿtu

'Me vendrais-tu telle chose à tel prix ? - Je [te la] vende.'

'Will you sell me this thing for this price? – I will sell [it to you]!'

18. ونادى أصحاب الجنة أصحاب النار أن قد وجدنا ما وعدنا ربنا حقا.

wa-nādā ʾaṣḥābu l-ǧannati ʾaṣḥāba l-nāri ʾan qad waǧadnā mā waʿadanā rabbunā ḥaqqan (Q. VII, 44)

'Les élus crieront aux damnés : "nous avons constaté que ce que notre Seigneur nous avait promis est vrai."'

'The dwellers of Paradise will call out to the dwellers of the Fire: "We have indeed found true what our Lord had promised us"'

What in 17. has been translated with 'I will sell [it to you]!' could be better said by means of expressions such as 'sold!' 'agreed!' or 'done deal!,' given that, at the moment the answer is uttered, the sale is necessarily considered concluded. The situation described in 18. clearly refers to the Resurrection Day. The verb *nādā* therefore cannot be understood as past tense. It can neither be seen as perfective (*accompli*), for in such a case, the prerequisites for its perfectivity would be lacking (we have here the expression of a non-punctual event, situated in the future time and not representing the required condition for something). The only way to justify the *māḍī* in this context would be the necessity

inherent in God's prediction reported through the voice of the Prophet. This last example is particularly relevant because it portrays a case where the aspectual interpretation creaks the most, showing its weakness.[23] However, Larcher defines his own view of the Arabic verbal system as 'relativistic,' meaning that a verbal form has not temporal, aspectual or modal value but in relation to the context. It is precisely in this relativism that he recognises a link with the thesis outlined by Kuryłowicz.

This overview shows that while some scholars fully espouse the aspectual interpretation, others focus more on the tense distinction. However, most Arabists put themselves halfway between these two extremes, calling into question now the aspectual value and now the temporal one, often depending on the context. Such a divergence of opinions, which at times borders on contradiction, has two main reasons: the inconsistent use of terms designating the opposite members; the assumption that, in the case of the aspectual interpretation, the perfective / imperfective opposition should be understood in the sense of completed / uncompleted (achieved / unachieved) action, process or situation, as if the very notion of aspect must coincide with this type of distinction. The terms perfect and imperfect are sometimes used with aspectual denotation, sometimes with temporal denotation; in some cases, they are made to coincide with the couple perfective / imperfective, in others these two pairs of terms are kept separate. Referring to certain languages such as English, perfect seems to have a double denotation, temporal and aspectual. By indicating "the continuing present relevance of a past situation […] it expresses a relation between two time-points, on the one hand the time of the state resulting from a prior situation, and on the other the time of that prior situation" (Comrie 1976: 52). The relation between the two time points could be regarded as its temporal content, while the present relevance of a past situation as its aspectual denotation. It is opposed to non-perfect, that in English is expressed through the opposition between present perfect and past simple. In Arabic the resultative effect of a prior action or situation is expressed by means of the *māḍī*, the 'perfect,' but only with certain verbs, depending on their lexical meaning and / or the context. Such a perfect is not grammaticalized in Arabic, being opposed to nothing else. The opposition between perfect and imperfect has a completely different meaning and cannot be compared to the opposition perfect / not perfect of other languages.

As for perfectivity and imperfectivity, we have seen that aspect as a semantic category is concerned with different ways of viewing the internal constituency of a situation. If we consider the

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[23] That the Arabic perfect(ive) cannot be used for a future time reference had already been noted by Comrie (1976: 18, footnote 2).

opposition between perfective and imperfective as that by which the category of aspect is primarily characterized and on which a number of other oppositions depend, we can state that «perfectivity indicates the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation; while the imperfective pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation» (Comrie 1976: 16). This is something different from depicting an event or a situation as completed or not completed, in which case our attention would be focused on its end more than any other moment. Thus, of the two members, perfective could be considered as the unmarked one, denoting a situation with beginning, middle, and end without any possibility to distinguish them and without any further implication. [24] However, this different way of looking at perfectivity / imperfectivity contrasts with the Arabist tradition, and Comrie himself is aware of this fact. At the end of the section dedicated to Arabic, within a paragraph meaningfully titled *Combined tense / aspect oppositions* (Comrie 1976: 78-80), he concludes by stating that in Arabic the opposition between perfective and imperfective incorporates both aspect and relative tense.

4. Full reality *vs* diminished reality

We have seen above that a modal value has been related at times by some scholars to the s-stem or the p-stem or to their mutual opposition. So far, such modal content, which can be displayed in the expression of the desire, the possibility, the unreal condition and the opposition between what is necessary and what is possible, has been presented, as a rule, as a context-conditioned secondary function. There are, however, Arabists who ascribe a fundamental role within the framework of the verbal system to the expression of modality. The part played by the latter is seen basically in two different ways by scholars: as closely related to the semantic and grammatical categories of tense and aspect, in the sense that the expression of one of them conveys, as a secondary function, significations

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[24] According to this perspective, the suffix conjugation of classical Arabic would be the verbal form (*ṣīġa*) to represent perfectivity, i.e. an event or situation stripped of any idea of development or change caused by its unfolding over time, as well as of other temporal or modal implications. A very similar idea can be found in the *Natāʾiǧ al-fikr fī al-naḥw* by the Andalusian grammarian ʾAbū al-Qāsim al-Suhaylī (d. 1185), who acknowledges the *māḍī* for its function of representing the event (*ḥadaṯ*) in an absolute manner, without any temporal or circumstantial denotation (*ʿalā l-ʾiṭlāqi min ġayri taʿarruḍin li-zamānin wa-lā min ḥālin min ʾaḥwāli l-ḥadaṯ*) added to the expression of the agent. He exemplifies this function of the *māḍī* by referring it to the *mā al-ẓarfiyya* – the subordinating *mā* with the meaning of "as long as" – and to the speech act of equalizing two events with regard to their effect on the situation (*taswiya*). In sentences such as *lā ʾafʿaluhu mā lāḥa barqun wa-lā mā ṭāra ṭāʾirun* (I will not do that as long as a flash shines, nor will I do as long as a bird flies) and *ʾinna llaḏīna kafarū sawāʾun ʿalayhim ʾanḏartahum ʾam lam tunḏirhum lā yumiʾnūna* (Indeed, those who disbelieve - it is all the same for them whether you warn them or do not warn them, Q. II, 6), the *māḍī* implies neither the positioning of the event in a past time nor its completeness (Suhaylī 1992: 56).

of the two other categories (Anghelescu 1988); as the backbone of the system and the key to interpreting the opposition between the two types of conjugation, in the sense that the modal notions of certainty and uncertainty are what distinguishes originally the different uses of the *māḍī* and the *muḍāriᶜ*, especially in its apocopate form (Giolfo 2012; 2014). In both cases, the possibility that the suffix and prefix conjugations were initially opposed based on a specific aspectual content is ruled out.

To overcome the impasse of the aspectual interpretation of the two main conjugations of the Arabic verbal system and avoid resorting to a grammatical category other than tense, I propose to apply to that system the notion of 'plane,' as Coseriu describes it in his aforementioned article. According to the Romanian linguist, in fact, tense, like aspect, is to be considered a complex, multidimensional category, albeit to a lesser degree than the latter. He proposes to distinguish two possible[25] temporal values or dimensions, plane and perspective, that can be interconnected, like time and aspect, or like certain aspectual values with others. Of the two dimensions, the one with a deictic function is the perspective, which, however, will not be dealt with here. The plane is the dimension opposing *actuel*, i.e. the expression of a full reality, to *inactuel*, i.e. the expression of a diminished reality. In other words, certain events or situations are placed in direct relationship to the speech act as fully real, while other events or situations are placed on a line of diminished reality, in the background, so to speak, with a limited effectiveness, as in the case of conditions, circumstances, consequences of the fully real situations, hope, wish, etc. In Romance languages like French and Italian, such diminished reality of the action is often expressed by means of imperfect, which is to be considered in this respect the centre of the *plan inactuel*, and not a tense of the past. This function of the imperfect can be observed in various situations: *imperfait d'imminence* or imperfect of imminence (Fr. *Jean a dit qu'il venais immédiatement*; It. *Giovanni ha detto che veniva subito*), *imperfait de politesse* or imperfect of courtesy (Fr. *je voulais te demander un service*; It. *volevo chiederti un favore*), *imperfait préludique* or ludic imperfect (Fr. *alors, tu étais le gendarme et moi le voleur*; It. *facciamo che tu eri la guardia e io il ladro*), imperfect in the conditional clause (Fr. *ah! si mon père était riche!, si j'avais le temps, je passais te voir*; It. *ah! se mio padre era ricco!, se avevo tempo, passavo a trovarti*), etc.[26].

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[25] To be understood once more as possible universals, i.e. possibilities of language that can be realized in a specific language.

[26] A typical use of this type of imperfect can be found in many Italian police reports, where the situation is often described in the following way: *il furto veniva commesso nei pressi della fermata della linea 5; scesa dall'autobus, dopo pochi passi, la vittima era avvicinata da uno sconosciuto...* (the theft was committed near the bus stop of line 5; after getting off the bus, the victim was approached by a stranger a few steps later...). Relative to the speech act (or rather the act of writing), the situation is presented here in the dimension of a diminished reality, being the police report perceived not as the actual reality, but as a reconstruction of such reality.

At this point, one might assume that the role played in Romance languages by the imperfect, referring to the plane of reality, is played by the *māḍī* in Arabic. This means that for many of its uses, when it does not have a relative temporal value (anteriority), there would no longer be a need to invoke an aspectual connotation (perfectivity). There would no longer be any need to assume the existence of an independent grammatical category represented by its own oppositions not attributable to the effect of the oppositions of another category. Thus, in the example 11. God's will is presented through a conditional structure whose condition (protasis) is irreal and the apodosis impossible. The whole situation described in the two clauses is thus projected onto a plane totally separate from effective reality. In 13. the ripening of the unripe dates is set as a condition (if) or eventuality (in case). In other words, my coming (full reality) is subordinate to the circumstance of the ripening (diminished reality). The example 17., which Larcher explains by the performative function of the *māḍī*, could also be interpreted by assigning *biᶜtu* the role of representing a still slightly veiled reality: 'will you sell me this thing for this price? (full reality) – Sold! = consider it sold, as it were sold (diminished reality).' Beyond the legal value of the performative speech act (the finalisation of the sale), one could paraphrase the verb *biᶜtu* as follows: consider the sale a done deal, but to make it a reality, you still have to give me the money and I will hand over the object to you. The same can be said for example 9., insofar as an oath invokes, anticipates, conditions a reality that is not yet fully effective. However, the performative explanation is not to be dismissed a priori, as it is likewise free from aspectual implications. Some further research on cases of *māḍī* with possible performative value will help evaluate which interpretation is most suitable.

Finally, in 18. we have the more evident example of the inadequacy of a system built on an aspectual opposition. Although this is a quite rare case, it is of great interest because it leads us to exclude not only the aspectual interpretation, but also the temporal deictic one. The verb *nādā* cannot in any way denote anteriority, either with respect to the present or a future moment. As we have seen, Larcher's analysis of this sentence is grounded on a third modal opposition between necessary, expressed by the *accompli*, and possible, expressed by the *inaccompli*. Incidentally, according to him, the performative function of the *accompli* would derive from such opposition. There is no doubt that the situation described in Q. VII, 44 will necessarily take place, since it is the word of the Lord. Nonetheless, it is told in the form of a prophecy, that is, as an anticipation in the present of a reality that has not yet taken a concrete shape. It is as if we could see what will happen in our future life projected on a screen. The flowing images are true, but for the moment their reality stays on the screen (diminished reality). This is not the case for the other two verbs, *waǧadnā* and *waᶜadanā*, whose function is purely relative deictic.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, from this last perspective the CA and MSA verbal system would stand on a single autonomous grammatical category, which is tense. Its main functions are:

a.   to situate events with respect to a time reference point as anterior to, contemporary with, or posterior to that reference;

b.   to arrange events on the 'plane' of reality, which may be full or diminished at various degrees, in relation to the speech act.

This category includes two elements in mutual opposition, one of which is marked and usually called 'perfect,' while the other is unmarked and usually called 'imperfect.' The unmarked character of the latter should be seen not only relative to tense, but also to the possible aspectual and modal values it takes from the context (the sentence in which it is used or the speech situation). Even the perfect can in some cases be influenced by the context, thus showing its semantically neuter character. This means that aspectual values are not excluded from the two members, but they must be seen as depending on the lexical content of the verb, or as subsequent effects of the primary opposition. Putting it differently, they do not give rise to a category of their own. This being so, the use of terms such as perfect(ive) / imperfect(ive), *accompli / inaccompli* and the like can give rise to misunderstandings, if any semantic meaning is associated with them. It would be better to seek after less semantically oriented terms, or not at all oriented, knowing that, however, it is a difficult task finding a pair of words suitable for all situations and for the various European languages. Apparently, the only acceptable solution for the time being is to keep in use terms such as s-stem and p-stem, whose denotation is purely structural.

This hypothesis certainly needs further testing to be carried out on CA, MSA and modern dialects. Discussion with experts from various fields (Arabic grammatical tradition, Arabic dialectology, Semitic studies, general linguistics) is also desirable for a first assessment of its soundness, before moving on to more targeted research.

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The Rəḥjīta Arabic of Mosul

Qasim Hassan

The aim of the current study is to introduce a type of *qəlta* Arabic common to particular quarters in the Old City of Mosul on the right bank of the Tigris. This variety has emerged as a result of postmigratory interactions of Arab tribes with Mosul Arabic and is characterized by a simplified grammar, with less phonological and morphological features, when compared to the rest of the Tigris family. The discussion introduced henceforth is mainly based on fieldwork data collected on-site in 2023 in Mosul as well as on a text recorded in the speech of a seventy-four-year-old woman and her thirty-five-year-old daughter.

Keywords: Iraqi Arabic, *gələt/qəltu* Arabic, Tigris family, Mosul Arabic, Rəḥjīta Arabic.

1. Introduction

More than seven decades ago, Blanc in his *Communal Dialects* (1964) made pioneering statements on Mosul Arabic. He subdivided the population in Mosul according to what he labelled *communal affiliation* into Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities (1964: 10). As stated by Blanc (1964: 185, fn. 13), all communities in Mosul speak *qəltu* Arabic with some differences that do not correlate with communal affiliation but rather with differences between quarters.[1] This three-way split of the communities in Mosul differs, according to Blanc, from that he made for Baghdad where Jews and Christians speak a *qəltu* dialect and Muslims a *gələt* one. Later, Jastrow (2004, 2006, etc.) showed that there are differences between the speech of these three communities.

The present study introduces a type of *qəlta* Arabic common to a large segment of the Muslim community in certain quarters on the right side of Mosul, locally named *rəḥta w-jīta* 'I went and I came' after the Old Arabic (henceforth: OA) verbs *rāḥa* 'he went' and *jāʾa* 'he came' respectively, abbreviated henceforth as Rəḥjīta. The available historical data, also verbally transmitted, indicate that Rəḥjīta

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[1] Blanc surely means with 'quarters' those within the historical wall of Mosul in the Old City on the right bank of the Tigris, as the left right of Mosul was on its way to emerge in his time.

Arabic has evolved in stages from Mosul Arabic as a consequence of the large-scale migration movements of Arab tribes to Mosul. Needless to say, connections between the Arab tribes and the local Aramaic-speaking people in Mosul go back to the very early centuries, even before the coming of Islam (al-Ṭāī 2010: 23). The first tribe to arrive in Mosul was the tribe of Xazraj and other tribes like, among others, Taġlib, Rabīᶜa, and Tamīm settled later (al-Bakri 2011: 31).

Actually, migrations of Arab tribes to Mosul, mostly Shāwi, like among others, Baggāra, Ḥyāli, Nᶜēm, ᶜBēd, Mišāhda and ᶜGēdāt (Behnstedt 1992; Prochazka 2014, for these tribes) have continued up to modern times, a fact that led some people (Elyas 2013) to fear loss of the local dialects. At the beginning, these tribes resided in the grazing grounds on the outskirts of Mosul, viz. outside the historical wall of the Old City. At a later stage, however, the Old City has expanded and reached the quarters of the newcomers (al-Bakri 2011: 31; Khir 2011: 42-43), resulting in a polydialectal situation where different dialects coexist.

This contact situation pressed the newcomers to gradually level their speech toward the socially more prestigious elements of Mosul Arabic. Yet, it seems that the process of levelling has taken place only partially in these quarters, constructing a new dialect specific to them. It is noteworthy, however, that there are nowadays no more signs of current levelling in the direction of Mosul Arabic due, it seems, to two sociolinguistic factors. First, most, if not all, genuine non-Muslim *qǝltu*-speakers have left these quarters, or the country altogether, at an early stage of independent Iraq, as did other minorities elsewhere in the country (Jastrow 2006: 414; Holes 2007: 125). Second, there is today a tendency observable among Rǝḥjīta speakers to use their established dialect, or perhaps to switch to the 'manly' *gǝlǝt* Arabic, once they come into contact with the speech of the *gǝlǝt* population on the outskirts, due no doubt to the fact of being Mosul Arabic usually stigmatized as effeminate, especially at phonological level.

Another point of interest is that Rǝḥjīta Arabic itself has always been marginal due to social considerations and societal biases, namely to the lower social status of its Muslim speakers who, from the very beginning, worked in socially underrated sectors such as farming and animal husbandry. Currently, Rǝḥjīta Arabic represents the most widespread Muslim dialect on the right bank of the Tigris, both as concerns the number of speakers and the quarters covered, but it has unfortunately been totally excluded from the study of Mosul Arabic. The present study provides a discussion of the main linguistic differences between Rǝḥjīta Arabic and Mosul Arabic. The data used in this study are collected from various sources, including face-to-face interviews, phone and recorded interviews with natives in the Old City of Mosul.

2. Linguistic description of Rəḥjīta Arabic

As indicated above, levelling of linguistic differences within the quarters has taken place only partially due to the aforementioned sociolinguistic factors. The rest of this paper sets out to describe only salient differences in morphological and phonological inventories between Rəḥjīta Arabic and Mosul Arabic. The examples adduced are taken from the text in the chart below. The numbers in the parentheses refer to the numbers of the paragraphs in the text containing the example, e.g. (11).

2.1. Morphological differences

2.1.1. The pronominal suffix *-ta*

A distinctive feature of Rəḥjīta Arabic is the use of the pronominal suffix *-ta* instead of *-tu* to mark the first singular of the perfect, which is often seen as a target of ridicule outside the Rəḥjīta quarters. However, among the younger generation the preference is usually to the more prestigious suffix *-tu*, particularly among those who commute on a regular basis to the heart of the City of Mosul. This tendency is also clearly expressed by speaker (B), when she states in paragraph (11) that "…they elevate their stylistic level and say *jītu*." The following are a few examples:

Rəḥjīta Arabic		Mosul Arabic
ərkəb-ta	paragraph (3)	*ġəkəb-tu* 'I got into (the car)'
rəḥ-ta	paragraph (6)	*ġəḥ-tu* 'I went'
rajaˁ-ta	paragraph (7)	*ġəjəˁ-tu* 'I returned'
jī-ta	paragraph (12)	*jī-tu* 'I came'
kən-ta	paragraph (20)	*kən-tu* 'I was'
daxal-ta	paragraph (25)	*daxal-tu* 'I went into'

2.1.2. The pronominal suffix *-nu*

Rəḥjīta Arabic lacks the *-nu* suffix in both perfect and imperfect forms, but it elongates the final vowel, if there is any, which aligns well with the geographically remote dialect of al-Dōr (Hassan 2022: 615). Compare the following forms with their counterparts in al-Dōr Arabic and Mosul Arabic:

Rəḥjīta Arabic		al-Dōr Arabic	Mosul Arabic
šəftī	paragraph (1)	šəftī	šəftī-nu 'you [fem.sg.] saw him'
əġšəᶜtū	paragraph (2)	ġaytū	əġšəᶜtū-nu 'I saw him'
ᶜalē	paragraph (2)	ᶜalē	ᶜalē-nu 'on it/him'
'maᶜā	paragraph (2)	maᶜā	maᶜā-nu 'with him'

2.1.3. Gender distinction

Another feature in which Rəḥjīta Arabic differs from other dialects of the Tigris group is that gender distinction in the second singular form is realized by affrication of /k/ to /č/, just as in *gələt* Arabic.

Rəḥjīta Arabic		Mosul Arabic
xaṭab-əč	paragraph (4)	xaṭab-ki 'he engaged you' [fem. sg.]
ᶜamm-əč	paragraph (6)	ᶜamm-ki 'your [paternal] uncle' [fem. sg.]
axūt-əč	paragraph (23)	əxwat-ki 'your brothers' [fem. sg.]

In addition to this, the OA /k/ affricates into /č/ to mark the second singular feminine in prepositions. However, such gender marking always co-occurs with the feminine ending *-a*. The following are elicited examples from native speakers in the area:

ᶜalē-ča 'on you [fem.sg.]'	bī-ča 'in you [fem.sg.]'	mən-ča 'from you [fem.sg.]'

It is worth mentioning, however, that there is so far no such distinction attested inside the Tigris group, except for some cases in al-Dōr Arabic (Hassan 2022: 618).

2.2. Phonological Differences
2.2.1. Old Arabic /r/

Like in ᶜAqra and Arbīl (Jastrow 1990: 28) and Baᶜᶜāj (Talay 1999: 42), there is no *ġ*-realization of OA /r/ in Rəḥjīta Arabic:

Rəḫjīta Arabic		Mosul Arabic
rajjaʕni	paragraph (3)	ġajjaʕni 'he drove me back'
yəʕrəf	paragraph (4)	yəʕġəf 'he knows'
rəḫta	paragraph (7)	ġəḫ-tu 'I went'
al-ʕəmər	paragraph (9)	əl-ʕməġ 'lifetime, life'
ḥḏəri	paragraph (11)	ḥḏəġi 'urban'
rās	paragraph (13)	ġās 'head'
ġēr	paragraph (23)	ġēġ 'another, different'

The retention of the OA apical trill is also observed in Socin's (1882–1883) texts from Mosul, though there is no satisfactory evidence of their proficiency (Jastrow 2004: 140; 1979: 38, fn. 8; Blanc 1964: 186, fn. 32).

2.2.2. The *i*-conditioned *ʾimāla*

The *i*-conditioned *ʾimāla* is usually seen as a shibboleth of the Tigris family (Prochazka 2019, 248; Talay 1999: 42; Jastrow 1981: 376, 386). This is indeed the case in the Arabic of al-Dōr (Hassan 2022: 612), Tikrīt (Johnstone 1975: 91), Mosul (Jastrow 1979: 50), but absent from Rəḫjīta Arabic.

Rəḫjīta Arabic		Mosul Arabic
wāḥəd	paragraph (8)	wēḥəd 'one'
ḥwās	paragraph (17)	ḥwēs 'clothes'
sāknīn	paragraph (26)	sēknīn 'living'
ṯamānīn	paragraph (9)	ṯmēnīn 'eighty'
jawārəb	paragraph (16)	jwēġəb 'socks'

2.2.3. Vowel lowering

The lowering of /ū/ > /ō/ in the vicinity of emphatics and back consonants is absent in the speech of the elderly speaker (B), but sometimes apparent in the speech of the adult daughter (A) as in the form *yəḥkōn* in paragraphs (10, 12, 24), due, of course, to influence by prestigious Mosul Arabic.

Rəḥjīta Arabic		Mosul Arabic
mūṣəl	paragraph (7)	*mōṣəl* 'Mosul'
ʿas-sūq	paragraph (16)	*ʿas-sōq* 'to the market'
yrūḥ	paragraph (18)	*yġōḥ* 'he goes'
yərjaʿūn	paragraph (19)	*yəġjaʿōn* 'they return'

3. Lexical differences

As can be inferred from the text below, there are a few forms that are usually not features of *qeltu* Arabic. According to speaker (B), the form *ḥwās* is unusual for Rəḥjīta Arabic, and the form *əhdūm* in paragraph (17) is used for 'clothes.' The same is true for the *gələt* conjunction *lō* 'or' in paragraphs (4 and 5) and the particle *tara* 'otherwise' in paragraphs (13 and 25) as the counterparts of Mosul Arabic *əlla* and *kawi*, respectively. According to my informants, the conjunction *lō* is also heard in Mosul Arabic as well as in Bəḥzāni and Mērgī Arabic, though being *kawi* the more common form. Further few comments on some remarkable lexical forms in Rəḥjīta Arabic are given in the footnotes to the text in 4.

4. A text in Rəḥjīta Arabic

The text in the chart below is in the speech of a seventy-four-year-old Rəḥjīta female speaker (**A**) and her thirty-five-year-old daughter (**B**). Speaker (**A**) was born and grew up in Bāb əl-Bēḏ, the stronghold of Rəḥjīta Arabic on the right bank of the Tigris, while her daughter was born in a quarter on the left bank of the Tigris, where Mosul Arabic predominates. This is also why her Rəḥjīta Arabic is particularly contaminated by Mosul Arabic phonological and morphological forms, as will be shown in the text below.

My Wedding

A: *taᶜāly ḥajjīya,[2] ḥkēli, ḥkēli aššōn ᵊtᶜarrafti ᶜal-ḥajji aḷḷā yərḥamu.[3]* **B:** *əl-ḥajji[4] ḷḷā yərḥamu.* **A:** *wēṣaḅ šəftī awwal marra?* **B:** *əl-ḥajji kān əbən ᶜammi, əǧšəᶜtū əb-bāb əl-bēḏ̣, w-jā mən bāb əl-bēḏ̣ ᶜəddna.*

A: Come Ḥajjīya, tell me, tell me how did you met my father, may God have mercy upon him? **B:** The Ḥajji, may God have mercy upon him. **A:** Where did you see him for the first time? **B:** The Ḥajji was my cousin [on my father's side], I saw him in Bāb il-Bēḏ̣, and he came from Bāb əl-Bēḏ̣ to us.

A: *ʾawwal marra wēṣaḅ əǧšəᶜtī?* **B:** *ʾawwal marra ǧšəᶜtū bəs-sarəj xāna.[5]* **A:** *ʾaš-kəntəm ᶜad-təᶜməlūn əhnāk?[6]* **B:** *kənna ᶜan-nəssawwaq.* **A:** *w-mənu rajjaᶜkəm?* **B:** *huwwa rajjaᶜni, ərkəbta maᶜā bəs-sīyāra w-rajjaᶜni.*

A: Where did you see him for the first time? **B:** I saw him for the first time in *Sarəj Xāna*. **A:** What did you [both] do there? **B:** We were shopping. **A:** And who brought you back home? **B:** He brought me back home. I got into the car with him and he brought me back home.

A: *yaᶜni[7] yəᶜrəf ənti xaṭībətu lō-mā-yəᶜrəf?* **B:** *lā lā, yəᶜrəf ana xaṭībətu, ʾaxaḏni w-rajjaᶜni.* **A:** *mənu jā ᶜədkəm xaṭabəč awwal marra?* **B:** *jatt əmmu w-jatt əxtu, ʾawwal marra jō əxūtu w-jā ᶜammu w-baᶜdēn jatt əmmu w-əxtu.*

A: Did he know that you were his fiancée or not? **B:** No, no, he knew I was his fiancée. He picked me up and drove me back. **A:** Who came first to engage you? **B:** His mother came, and his sister came. First, his brothers came and his uncle came, and later his mother and sister came.

A: *ē.* **B:** *ē, w-ṣārat əl-xəṭba, w-jābūli əl-ḥalaqa, w-jābūli n-nīšān.[8]* **A:** *w-əᶜməlti zawāj lō-lā?* **B:** *lā, w-*

A: Yes. **B:** Yes. And then the engagement took place. And they brought me the engagement ring. And they brought me the Nīšān. **A:** And

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[2] A female pilgrim to Mecca.

[3] A polite phrase said when mentioning a deceased person.

[4] A male pilgrim to Mecca.

[5] A quarter in the Old City of Mosul.

[6] The form *əhnāk* is rarely used in Mosul Arabic, where *hnūk* predominates.

[7] A pan-Iraqi continuative that usually introduces an assertion.

[8] According to Woodhead and Beene (1967: 475), *nīšān* is a personal gift sent to a girl, the acceptance of which implies the consent to marriage.

ə‘məlna lēlət ḥənna,[9] wa-xaḏni ba‘dēn rəḥna ‘aš-šəmāl, w-raja‘na mn-əš-šəmāl əb-bēt ahlu.

A: mənu lə-kān sākən əb-bēt jəddu. B: əḥna qa‘adna b-baḥadna, rəḥta ‘ala bētna ʾana w-‘amməč azhar. A: ē. B: bēt əb-baḥadna, w-rəḥta ‘a-bēt ahli rəḥta zərta ‘ənd ahli ‘ašš tīyām, wa-būya ṭāni[10] haddīya ‘ēn māl abul-xamsa, w-jō əxūti w-kəl-man ‘aṭāni haddīya, w-rāḥ ṭala‘ ‘ala šəǵlu, ʾaḷḷā yərḥamu.

A: ʾaḷḷā yərḥamu. B: w-rəḥta ʾana l-bēt ʾahli, w-bēt axūya[11] ‘azamūni, w-rəḥta ‘ala-bēt axūya b-mūṣəl əj-jədīda, w-raja‘ta mən mūṣəl əj-jədīda, rajja‘ni axūya ‘ala-bēt ʾahli, w-jō ʾahli ‘məlnāləm ‘azīma, w-ə‘məlnā l-ʾarḅa‘ ʾayyām,[12] w-jō j-jamā‘a...

A: hāy suwāləf ʾahal qabəl əl-ʾarḅa‘ tīyām. B: ē, qabəl kānət arḅa‘ tīyām w- nīšān w-lēlət ḥənna. A: hassa xtəṣarnāha nīšān w-zaffa[13] b-yōm wāḥəd. B: w-zafni ‘a-s-sūlāf[14] bəš-šəmāl, w-raja‘ta mnəš-šəmāl, rajja‘ni ‘a-bēt ahlu.

did you then get married or not? B: No, and then we had a Ḥinna night. And after that he took me to the north [of Iraq]. And we came back from the north to his family's house.

A: Who lived in my grandfather's house? B: We lived alone. I went to our house with your uncle Azhar. A: Yes. B: [We had] a house of our own. And I went to my family's house, I visited my family for ten days. And my father gave me a gift, an eye amulet. And my brothers came and each of them gave me a gift. And he went [then] to his work, may God have mercy upon him.

And I A: May God have mercy upon him. B: went to my family's house. And my brother's family invited me [for a meal]. And I went to my brother's house in New Mosul. And I came back from New Mosul. My brother brought me back to my family's house. And my family came, we invited them [for a meal]. And we did the Four Days. And a group [of people] came...

A: These are the habits of people in the past, the four days. B: Yes, in the past there were the Four days, Nīšān, and a Ḥinna night. A: Nowadays, we reduced it, Nīšān and Zaffa in one day. B: And he escorted me to Sūlāf in the

[9] Cf. Grigore (2012: 21) for this stage of wedding.

[10] In Mosul Arabic the form ta‘āni is used instead of ‘aṭāni where emphatic /ṭ/ is realized as dental /t/.

[11] Intended meaning 'my brother's family.'

[12] A celebration that lasts four days.

[13] Escorting the bride or the bridegroom on the wedding night (Woodhead and Beene 1967: 204).

[14] A summer resort in north Iraq.

north. And I came back from the north, he brought me to his family's house.

A: You forgot [to mention] that his friend went with you. **B:** His friend went with us. We got married on the same day. He and his friend, the son of Rəyāḏ əš-Šāhīn, may God give him long life. And we came back from the north. And everyone went home. And I became pregnant and I got Ṃəḏar. After that, Ṃəḏar turned one year old, and I became pregnant and got Maha. And my mother prepared me for a male child. And they gave me a gift, a golden bell. They brought me a bell.

A: ʾənsīti kān ṣadīqu hamm ṭalaʿ maʿākəm. **B:** ṣadīqu ṭalaʿ maʿāna, ʾətzawwajna sawa, huwwa w-ṣadīqu əbən rəyāḏ əš-šāhīn, ʾaḷḷa yəṭṭī ṭōlt əl-ʿəmər,[15] w-rajaʿna mnəš-šəmāl, w-kəll-man rāḥ ʿala-bētu, w-əḥbəlta w-jəbta ṃəḏar, w-baʿdēn ṣār ʿəmər ṃəḏar sana, w-əḥbəlta jəbta maha, w-rāḥat əmmi jahhəzətni ləl-walad, w-jābūli hadīya ḏahab jaraṣ, həmma jābūli jaraṣ.

A: Mama, when did we move to al-Qadisiya? **B:** We moved to al-Qadisiya in eighty-five, you were born in ninety-one, and Fahad was born in eighty-three, and Maha in eighty-one, and Maha entered the college.

A: yōm, ēmati ṭhawwalna ʿal-qādəsīya.[16] **B:** ʾəthawwalna ʿal-qādəsīya sant əl-xamsa w-ṭamānīn, ʾənti jīti sant əl-wāḥad w-təsʿīn, w-fahad jā ṯalāṯ w-ṯamānīn, w-maha wāḥad w-ṯamānīn, w-maha daxaĺət kəllīya.

A: ʾahal bāb əl-bēḏ kamm lahja yəḥkōn? **B:** lahja wəḥda bər-rəḥta w-jīta, mā- yəḥkūn ġēr lahja. **A:** w-bēt əš-šāhīn lēš mā-yəḥkōn rəḥta w-jīta? **B:** bass ʿəndəm əḥna nqūl rəḥta, həmma yqūlūn kī-rəḥtu,[17] yaʿni šwayya yḥarfūha l-kəlma.

A: How many dialects do people speak in Bāb əl-Bēḏ? **B:** One dialect, the *rəḥta w-jīta* [dialect]. They do not speak another dialect. **A:** And why do not Bēt əš-Šāhīn speak *rəḥta w-jīta* [dialect]? **B:** But we say *rəḥta*, they say *kī-rəḥtu.* That is, they change the word a little bit.

A: hā ḥḏəri? **B:** ē, w-əḥna nqūl tara w-həmma yqūlūn kawi, ē həmma yqūlūn kawi, mənnəm yqūlūn kawi w-mənnəm yqūlūn tara, yqūlūn jīta, bass marrāt ʿa-ytaqfūn nafəshəm yqūlūn jītu, hāy əl-lahja māl bāb əl-bēḏ, lahja ʿāmmīya, mən bāb əl-

A: Aha, an urban [dialect]? **B:** Yes. And we say *tara*, and they say *kawi*. Yes, they say *kawi*. Some of them say *kawi* and some say *tara*. They say *jīta*, they elevate their stylistic level and say *jītu*. That is the dialect of Bāb əl-Bēḏ, a

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[15] A God-wish common to all Iraqi Arabic dialects.

[16] A quarter on the left side of the City of Mosul.

[17] Interestingly, the prefix *kə-* is a hallmark of Christian (Hassan 2024: 8) and Yazidi Arabic (Jastrow 1981: 374) in northeast Mosul, which usually marks the imperfect tense.

bēḏ lə-ḥadd bēt ahli nafs əl-lahja, mən təṭlaʿīn bāb əl-bēḏ xazraj[18] *təqləb əl-mōja ġēr ḥaki gāl w-gələt, əl-xazraj yqūlūn gāl w-gənna.*

A: *həmma əl-əbyūt əs-sākna ʿaš-šārəʿ əb-bāb əl-bēḏ lahjathəm rəḥta w-jīta, əlli bəḏ-ḏahar mā-yəḥkōn rəḥta w-jīta.* **B:** *əl-bəḏ-ḏahar wara bēt ahli məṭəl bāb jdīd*[19] *yəḥkūn ḥḏəri.*

A: *ē.* **B:** *bāb əl-bēḏ lahjatəm təxtələf ʿan jamīʿ ahl əl-mūṣəl, māku məṭəl lahjat bāb əl-bēḏ ʾabad, yaʿni wēṣaḅ təmši yqəllək ənti mn-ahal bāb əl-bēḏ, ʾahl əl-məšāhda lahjatəm šəkəl, ʾahl əl-xazraj lahjatəm šəkəl, ʾahl rās əj-jādda lahjatəm šəkəl.*

B: *bass bāb əl-bēḏ lahja wəḥda mā-tətġayyar ʾabad, ysammūha rəḥta w-jīta, hassa ṭələʿ hāḏa l-mūdēl*[20] *rəḥtu w-jītu, əḥna nqūl akalna w-əšrəbna w-rajaʿna w-jīna w-jatt ʿəndi əmmi w-jatt ʿəndi əxti, w-rəḥta ʿas-sūq w-əssawaqta w-jīta, wa-kān aḷḷā yuḥəbb əl-muḥsənīn.*[21]

A: *yōṃ, mənu kān yəssawwaqəlkəm mən kəntəm əzġār?* **B:** *əmmi aḷḷā yərḥamha təssawwaqənna, wa-būya yəštarīnna w-ərrūḥ ʿal-xayyāṭa w-mā-nqūl əḥwās, əhdūm ətxayyəṭənna lə-ḥwās ətxayyəṭənna lə-hdūm, w-təštarīnna w-ətlabəsna,*

colloquial dialect. The same dialect [is spoken] from Bāb əl-Bēḏ to my family's house. When you leave Bāb əl-Bēḏ, the Xazraj switch over to *gāl* and *gələt*. The Xazraj say *gāl* and *gənna.*

A: [People] in houses located directly on the street in Bāb əl-Bēḏ speak *rəḥta* and *jīta*, but those behind do not speak *rəḥta* and *jīta.* **B:** Those behind my family' house speak just like Bāb Jdīd, they speak an urban dialect.

A: Yes. **B:** The dialect of Bāb əl-Bēḏ differ from all [dialects] of the people in Mosul. There is no dialect like that of Bāb əl-Bēḏ. That is, no matter where you are, one says to you that you are from Bāb əl-Bēḏ. Məšāhda has a different dialect, Xazraj has a different dialect, Rās əj-Jādda has a different dialect.

B: But Bāb əl-Bēḏ has one dialect, it does not change. They call it *rəḥta* and *jīta.* Now we have the new tendency of *rəḥtu* and *jītu.* We say we ate and drank, and we came back, and my mother came to me, and my sister came to me, and I went to the market, and I shopped and came back, and Allah loves the gooddoers.

A: Mama, who did the shopping for you when you were little? **B:** My mother, may God have mercy upon her, does the shopping for us. And my father buys for us, and we go to the female tailor and she sews the dresses for us. We do

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[18] A quarter close to Bāb əl-Bēḏ named after the tribe Xazraj.

[19] A quarter in the Old City of Mosul.

[20] English 'model.'

[21] A classicism common to all Iraqi Arabic dialects.

w-ʿala kəll ʿīd əhdūm šəkəl w-xayyāṭa ətxayyəṭənna.	not say *əḥwās*, she sews the *əhdūm* for us. She buys for us and dresses us. And every feast we get different dresses, and a female tailor sews for us.
B: *w-abūya ḷḷā yərḥama kān yāxəḏna ʿala-bāta,[22] w-yəštari təkramīn[23] əl-aḥḏəya w-əl-jawārəb, kəlla abūya kān yəštarīnna huwwa.* **A:** *jəddu aḷḷā yərḥama sāʿa šqad kān yəṭlaʿ aš-šəǧəl.* **B:** *ʾabūya kān ləmmən yəṣalli ṣ-ṣəbəḥ yəṭlaʿ aš-šəǧəl, w-ʿammi ʿəmar mən əl-xamsa yəṭlaʿ, yrūḥ ʿala bāb əs-sarāy.[24]*	**B:** And my father, may God have mercy upon him, used to take us to Bāta and he buys shoes and socks. My father bought all this for us. **A:** At what time did my grandfather used to go to work? **B:** My father would go to work after the morning prayer. And my uncle Omar would go at five [in the morning]. He goes to Bāb əs-Sarāy.
A: *ēmati yərjaʿūn?* **B:** *ʾabūya mā-yərjaʿ, kān yəštəǧəl məqāwəl, mā-yərjaʿ ləl-maǧrəb ləmma yḥəlūn əl-ʿəmmāl wara ʾaḏān əl-ʿaṣər, ʿammi ʿəmmar kān yəṭlaʿ bəl-xamsa w-yərjaʿ bəl-ʿašra.*	**A:** When did they come back [from work]? **B:** My father does not come back; he was a contractor. He did not come back until sunset when the workers get off, after the call to afternoon prayer. My uncle Omar would go at five and would come back at ten.
A: *mənu kān yāxəḏkəm ʿalas-sūq ʿas-sīnama?* **B:** *nəḥna mā-kənna rrūḥ ʿas-sīnama, mā-yəqbalūn ərrūḥ ʿas-sīnama ʿēb əs-sīnama.* **A:** *yaʿni ma-kān marrētəm ʿas-sīnama?* **B:** *lā, waqt əl-əkbərna baqa rrūḥ bala ḥəss la-halna ʿas-sīnama, nənjəməʿ nəḥna l-banāt w-təji ʿamməti.* **A:** *yaʿni maʿa ʿammətəč.* **B:** *maʿa ʿamməti, ʿamməti tāxəḏna, ərrūḥ ʿas-sīnama, ē.*	**A:** Who took you to the market [or to] the cinema? **B:** We did not use to go to the cinema. They did not agree that we go to the cinema. A cinema [is considered] a shame. **A:** Does this mean that you never were in the cinema? **B:** No, when we grew up, we went to the cinema without knowledge of our family. We girls meet and my aunt comes. **A:** This means you were with your aunt. **B:** With my aunt. My aunt would take us, we went to the cinema, yes.

[22] A large shoe company which had in the past a branch in Mosul.

[23] A polite expression to the interlocutor when mentioning things that are considered religiously or culturally forbidden or unclean.

[24] A quarter on the right side of Mosul.

A: *ē.* **B,** *w-ṭalāl aḷḷa yǝrḥamu marrāt yfattǝnna mā-ynazzǝnna.* **A:** *ē.* **B:** *w-hāy hīya, šaku baʿad, w-kǝnna rrūḥ lǝ-bēt ʿammǝtač ʿallīya, marrāt tǝʿzǝmna, w-azhar mā-kān yxallīna nǝṭlaʿ bāb ǝl-ḥōš.*

A: *hā yaʿni ayyām mā-kǝnti ǝmzawwaja kǝnti tǝṭlaʿīn maʿa ʿammǝtač?* **B:** *ē, mǝn kǝnta bǝnǝt kānǝt ḥǝrrīti šwayya azyad, mǝn ǝzzawwajna ḏōla bēt ʿammi mǝtʿaṣbīn mā-yxallūn ǝl-ḥǝrma tǝṭlaʿ.*

A: *yaʿni tǝštǝrīn maʿa ʿammǝtač?* **B:** *ē, maʿa ʿammǝti, ē maʿa ʿammǝti aṭlaʿ, ǝmmi mā-kān yṣǝḥla tǝṭlaʿ, ǝnda wlād ǝnda šǝġǝl wa-būya mā-yxallīha.* **A:** *bala ḥǝss axūtač.* **B:** *bala ḥǝss axūti nǝṭlaʿ, ʾaxūti b-šǝġǝlhǝm, ʾāxǝḏ ʿammǝtač w-ǝrrūḥ.*

A: *sīnama sūq.* **B:** *sīnama sūq, bis-sana marra martēn, xō mū²⁵-kǝll mā-yǝji fǝlǝm ǝrrūḥ ʿalē.* **A:** *kǝll mā-yǝji fǝlm ǝjdīd.* **B:** *kǝll sana marra kǝll santēn marra, mā-rrūḥ azyad, bǝz-zawājāt kān yʿǝzmūnna ʿǝnd ǝl-aġawāt,²⁶ zawājāt ǝrrūḥ ʿǝndǝm, w-hǝmma yǝjūn ʿǝdna.*

A: *ē kǝntǝm jīrān.* **B:** *jīrān w-nasāba, ǝḥna w-bēt ḥamandi w-bēt šāhīn.* **A:** *kǝll wāḥǝd yǝḥki lahjǝtu šǝkǝl.* **B:** *lā lā.* **A:** *ǝl-aġawāt ǝšwayya...* **B:** *lā lā ǝl-aġawāt nafǝs ḥakīna, mā-ʿǝndǝm ġēr ḥaki.* **A:** *bala*

A: Yes. **B:** And Ṭalāl, may God have mercy upon him, would take us around [in his car], but he did not let us get out [of the car]. **A:** Yes. **B:** That it is. What else is there? And we used to go to your aunt ʿAllīya. Sometimes she invites us. And your uncle Azhar would not even let us go as far as the yard door.

A: Aha, this means before you got married you used to go out with your aunt? **B:** Yes. When I was virgin, I had a little more freedom. But when I got married, my husband's family are strict and they do not let a woman to go out.

A: This mean you go shopping with you aunt? **B:** Yes, with my aunt. Yes, I go out with my aunt. My mother was not able to go out, she had children, she had homework, my father did not let her [go out].

A: Cinema [or] market. **B:** Cinema [or] market. One or two times a year. Not every time when a film is released, we go [to watch it]. **A:** Every time when a new film is released. **B:** Every one year, every two years one time, no more. In weddings, the Aġawāt would invite us, we would go to their weddings, and they come to us.

A: Yes, you were neighbors. **B:** Neighbors and relatives by marriage, we and Bēt Ḥamandi and Bēt Šāhīn. **A:** Every one speaks his dialect in a different way. **B:** No, no. **A,** The Aġawāt a little

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²⁵ The negative marker *mū* is never used in 'pure' Mosul Arabic.

²⁶ A last name designating a big family in the Old City of Mosul, particularly in Bāb ǝl-Bēḏ.

aš-šōn lahjāt. B: bass ət-tu. A: ət-tu. B: ət-tu w-əl-kawi.

A: hassa bēt ʿamməti yaḥkōn ġēr lahja. B: ʾəʿrəbi yaḥkūn ʾahal xazraj, ʾəʿyāla kānət xazraj. A: ē, yaʿni həmma ʿašīra w-kəll waḥəd yaḥki lahja šəkəl. B: əl-aġawāt əs-sāknīn əb-xazraj yaḥkūn gāl w-gənna, w-əs-sāknīn bāb əl-bēḏ yaḥkūn məṯənna, walla nafs əl-ʿašīra, əlli qāʿdīn əb-bāb əl-bēḏ kəllem ḥakīhəm nafs əl-ḥaki.

A: ēmati daxalti madrasa w-ēmati baṭallti mnəl-madrasa? B: daxalta madrasa bəs-sant əs-sətta w-xamsīn w-baṭṭalta mən-madrasa bəs-sant əs-səttīn. A: yaʿni ʾənti muwālīdək əšqad? B: ʾana muwālīdi xamsīn, ʾana b-ṣaff ṯāləṯ w-baṭṭalōni ahli mnəl-madrasa, w-jā əbən ʿammi xaṭabni.

A: lēš baṭṭalti? B: baṭṭalta yəmma mašākəl ṣārat w-əl-bətt kānət mən-təkbar ybaṭṭlūha mnəl-madrasa, yzawjūha, yfaynūn ḥaḏha w-yzawjūha, mā-xallōni akamməl madrasa, zawwəjōni ʿaṭōni la-bən ʿammi. A: ʾənti zawwajti mā-zġayra. B: kənta maxṭūba ʿala-bən ʿammi l-lāx, əl-ḥamdu ləl-lā ʿala kəlli ḥāl.

bit... **B:** No, no, the Aġawāt speak just like we do, they do not have another dialect. **A:** Which [different] dialects? **B:** Only the [suffix]-*tu*. **A:** The [suffix] -*tu*. **B:** The [suffix] -*tu* and *kawi*.

A: Now, my aunt's family speak a different dialect. **B:** People in the Xazraj quarter speak rural, her husband's family come from Xazraj. **A:** Yes, this means they are from the same tribe, but still speak different dialects. **B:** The Aġawāt who live in Xazraj speak *gāl* and *gənna*, and those who live in Bāb əl-Bēḏ speak just like we do. All those who live in Bāb əl-Bēḏ speak the same [dialect].

A: When did you go to school and when did you leave the school? **B:** I went to school in fifty-six, and I left it in sixty. **A:** So, when were you born? I was born in [nineteen] fifty. I was in the third grade and my family let me leave the school. And my cousin came and has engaged me.

A: Why did you leave the school? **B:** I left the school because there were problems, and when a girl became [physically] mature, they let her leave the school, they marry her, they gave her hell. They did not let me continue my school; they gave me to my paternal cousin. **A:** You weren't little when you got married. **B:** I was engaged to my other cousin. Thank God anyway.

5. Conclusion

This paper introduced the Rəḥjīta Arabic of the large Muslim community in the Old City of Mosul on the right bank of the Tigris, known locally as *rəḥta w-jīta* dialect. It has been readily apparent from the

examples given throughout this paper that Rǝḥǰīta Arabic is enjoying a special position in the Tigris region. It lacks the most salient phonological and morphological features that are usually considered hallmarks of this area, a fact that clearly detach it from the rest of the Tigris family, especially when compared to Mosul Arabic.

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A dialect type of Eastern first-layer Maghrebi Arabic

Luca D'Anna

The present paper, building on the availability of new data concerning so-far undescribed varieties of Eastern Maghrebi Arabic, hypothesizes the existence of a dialectal sub-grouping of first-layer dialects stretching from Libya to Tunisia. New data from Libyan and Tunisian Judeo-Arabic varieties, in fact, present shared isoglosses that breach the traditional boundaries between Libyan and Tunisian Arabic. Most of such isoglosses, moreover, are also shared with Mahdia Muslim Arabic, a variety that so far represented an oddity in the panorama of Tunisian first-layer dialects. The hypothesized dialectal group would represent an older layer of sedentary Maghrebi Arabic, lacking some of the innovations that characterize urban dialects of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

1. Introduction: the current classification of first-layer Maghrebi Arabic

In recent years, the field of Maghrebi Arabic dialectology has witnessed important developments, as more and more data are being published which enlarge and deepen our knowledge of so-far understudied varieties. The new data, in turn, have started to question long-established classifications, calling for more in-depth analyses of both historical and linguistic facts. The reassessment of existing classifications, finally, has also been accompanied by theoretical reflections on the nature of our knowledge concerning (Maghrebi) Arabic dialects and its relation to Europe's colonial past.

In a seminal paper, Adam Benkato (2019) highlighted the colonial undertones of the traditional classification of Maghrebi Arabic dialects into pre-Hilali and Hilali, which ultimately dates back to William Marçais (1961), proposing the more neutral terms first- vs second-layer dialects. In an equally important paper, Alexander Magidow (2021) emphasized the necessity to evaluate the actual ancientness of the isoglosses we use to classify dialects, warning against the tendency to consider present-day linguistic situations as the unmodifiable reflection of a distant past.

Theoretical reflections on the nature of Maghrebi Arabic dialectology have been going hand in hand with studies concerning single isoglosses. Guerrero's (2021) paper on interdental fricatives proves that interdental phonemes have been preserved in a fair number of first-layer Maghrebi dialects, so

that their presence in most Tunisian urban varieties can no longer be considered as an exception. Souag's (2023) study of the influence of Berber on the so-called XI form (*ifʕāl*) in Maghrebi dialects describes a textbook example of contact-induced language change, as is the case with D'Anna's (forthcoming) reconstruction of the spread of *t-* passives with G-stem verbs.

As said above, the emergence of new data also called for a reconsideration of current classifications. In particular, the threefold classification of Maghrebi dialects into pre-Hilali, Hilali and village dialects (Mion 2018) and the category of village dialects (*parlers villageois*) more specifically, both going back to William Marçais (1950: 210-211), have been the object of several papers. Some of them (Mion 2015; Guerrero 2018) have shown the diverse nature of the dialects that were thought to belong to one and the same group, while others have stressed the importance of local histories to ascertain the exact nature of language contact in each different context (D'Anna 2020). More generally, pre-Hilali / first layer and Hilali / second layer refer to historical events that took place between the 7th and the 11th centuries CE. For this reason, Maghrebi dialectologists are in dire need of historical paradigms capable to account for events that occurred between that date and the beginning of the colonial period.

Apart from the broad classification of dialects into first- and second-layer, which is based on (mostly) solid isoglosses, no further internal classification or subgrouping exists which seems to hold up to scrutiny. As far as second-layer dialects are concerned, the classifications dialectologists have to work with label entire areas as Sulaymi, Hilali or Maʕqil, without specifying what makes a dialect Sulaymi vs Hilali and, above all, without any validation of the fact that tribes are linguistic units (Benkato 2019: 21). For smaller areas, such as Tunisia, more meaningful classifications, based on bundles of linguistic isoglosses, have been made available (Marçais 1950: 211-219).

Current classifications of first-layer varieties of Maghrebi Arabic are not in better shape, and leave much to be desired. In Versteegh's famous handbook of Arabic linguistics and dialectology, for instance, the following can be read:

Usually two groups are distinguished:

• the Eastern pre-Hilālī dialects, spoken in Libya, Tunisia and eastern Algeria; these dialects are characterised by the preservation of the three short vowels;

• the Western dialects of the pre-Hilālī group, spoken in western Algeria and Morocco; these have only two short vowels and have developed an indefinite article from the Classical Arabic numeral *wāḥid*, for example, in Moroccan Arabic *waḥd əl-mṛa* "a woman," always used in combination with the definite article, possibly in analogy to the construction of the demonstrative with the article (Versteegh 2014: 211).

This means that the existence of an Eastern first-layer group is based on a single isogloss, to which different counterexamples can be found, while the Western group merely adds another isogloss to the count.

The so-called Eastern pre-Hilālī group, which we will call Eastern first-layer, should include the sedentary Arabic dialects of Libya, Tunisia and Eastern Algeria, allegedly linked by one isogloss, namely the preservation of three short vowels. The idea of such a vast dialectal area bound together by a single isogloss is questionable in itself but, apart from this, it is worth mentioning that several dialects falling in that area, such as Tripoli Judeo-Arabic (Yoda 2005: 31), Yefren Judeo-Arabic (D'Anna 2021a: 17-18), Dellys (Souag 2005: 156) and Jijel (Durand 2018: 180), only have a single short vocalic phoneme, while Annaba has two short vowels (Guerrero and Abdessemed 2019: 9).

Pending a more convincing classification of first-layer Maghrebi Arabic as a whole, the present paper focuses on a specific group of Tunisian and Libyan sedentary dialects, suggesting the possibility that they belong to a so-far undescribed first-layer subgrouping.

In order to do that, it is worth mentioning some of the main isoglosses of Tunisian and Eastern Algerian sedentary dialects. Libyan first-layer dialects, on the other hand, were completely unknown until Yoda published his monograph on Tripoli Judeo-Arabic in 2005, and only recently have started to be investigated more in depth (D'Anna 2023; D'Anna 2024).

As far as Tunisia is concerned, Tunisian urban (first-layer) Muslim varieties are nowadays well represented by Tunis Muslim Arabic, whose main isoglosses include:

1. voiceless uvular realization of etymological /q/ → [q];
2. preservation of interdental fricative phonemes (/θ/, /ð/ and /ðˤ/);
3. closed realization of the etymological diphthongs /ay/ → [ī] and /aw/ → [ū];[1]
4. three short vowels (/a/, /i/, /u/);
5. presence of medial and final *imāla*;
6. loss of gender distinction in the plural and in the second person singular of verbs and pronouns (Gibson 2009).

These isoglosses are quite peculiar within the Maghrebi area, especially due to the preservation of interdentals in an otherwise sedentary dialect, which is by no means unique, but quite rare (Guerrero

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[1] In female speech, the etymological diphthongs have been preserved, at least in certain lexical items, until recently. This realization, however, was severely stigmatized, which accelerated its disappearance (Gibson 2009: 564).

2021). In Tunisia, the dialectal type of Tunis is represented in most urban varieties, such as Sousse (Talmoudi 1980) and Kairouan (D'Accardio Berlinguer 2024).

Sedentary dialects of Eastern Algeria, such as those of Constantine, Jijel and Dellys, present the following situation:

1. voiceless uvular realization of etymological /q/ → [q];

2. interdental phonemes are preserved, according to Marçais (Marçais 1977: 9), in Dellys [2] and Constantine, but lost in Jijel (Marçais 1952: 5-7);

3. closed realization of the etymological diphthongs /ay/ → [ī] and /aw/ → [ū];

4. short vowels have been reduced to one in both Dellys (Souag 2005: 156)[3] and Jijel (Durand 2018: 180);

5. presence of medial and final *imāla* (Souag 2005: 157);

6. gender distinction in the singular is lost in Jijel (Marçais 1952: 435), but preserved in Dellys (Souag 2005: 159-160).

A comparison between the six isoglosses presented above shows that, even in adjacent areas of the Eastern Maghreb, considerable variation occurs, which should push scholars to work on smaller areas, where more meaningful bundles of isoglosses can be found.

The situation of sedentary Tunisia, moreover, appears to me more homogeneous than that of Eastern Algeria, since the isoglosses observed in Tunis Arabic are the hallmark of basically all varieties of urban Tunisian Arabic, with a single exception.

2. The odd one out: Mahdia Arabic

Among Tunisian urban varieties, the dialect spoken in Mahdia stands out due to two unusual phonological traits, namely

1. loss of the interdental phonemes (/θ/, /ð/ and /ðˤ/), which merged with the corresponding stops (/t/, /d/ and /dˤ/);

2. prevalent open realization of the etymological diphthongs *ay and *aw ([ē] and [ō]), alternating with a minority closed realization [ī] and [ū].[4]

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[2] For a more recent account of interdentals in Dellys, see Souag (2005: 154-155).

[3] Souag (2005: 156-157), however, writes that older speakers retain diphthongs "in some words and contexts."

[4] As a matter of fact, the situation of diphthongs in Mahdia might be slightly more complex than we sketched it above. Yoda (2008: 485-486) mentions an open realization [ē] / [ō], while La Rosa (2021: 12) observes a prevalence of [ī] and [ū]. The nature

As far as loss of interdentals is concerned, in Tunisian Muslim Arabic the phenomenon only occurs in Mahdia and the neighboring dialect of Moknine (Mion 2014: 59), while it generalizes to all variety of Tunisian Judeo-Arabic of which we have knowledge (Cohen 1975: 19-20).

The open realization of etymological diphthongs, on the other hand, is more widespread in Tunisian Arabic, but not in the way it occurs in Mahdia Muslim Arabic. Second-layer varieties spoken in the Douz area, in fact, feature a conditioned realization of etymological diphthongs, which result in

1. [ē] / [ō] in an open syllable, e.g., *mšētu* "PFV.go:2.M.PL,"[5] *yōm-i* "day-1.SG;"

2. [ī] / [ū] in a closed syllable, e.g., *mšīt* "PFV.go:1.SG," *yūm* "day" (Ritt-Benmimoun 2014: 25-26).

Such conditioned variation does not exist in Mahdia, where we hear both *lēl* "night" and *lēla* "night:SGLTV" and, for those few words that have [ī] / [ū], both *l-yūm* "today" and *l-yūma* "today". The apparent irrelevance of the syllabic structure in Mahdia diphthongs, thus, leads us to think that the open realization is independent from what observed in Douz second-layer varieties and is not the result of Bedouin influence.[6]

In the area going from the Tunisian Sahel to Tripolitania, the peculiar situation of diphthongs did not escape William Marçais, who wrote what follows:

> Dans les parlers des bédouins en général, dans les parlers des ruraux tunisiens, et dans ceux de Libye, la situation apparaît particulièrement confuse, selon les parlers et, même, dans un parler donné, selon les milieux, allant jusqu'à varier selon les individus. Ce n'est jamais réduction totale ā, ū, ī ; mais hesitation entre conservation diphtonique ǒw, ěy et réduction partielle ọ̄, ẹ̄ ; les milieux féminins optant souvent pour la première solution. Mais, là encore, l'environnement consonantique peut jouer son rôle, favorisant l'état diphtonique : ṣǒwm "jeûne" (plutôt que ṣọ̄m) , ṣěyf "été" (plutôt que sẹ̄f) (Marçais 1977: 17).

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of La Rosa's data, partially coming from online sources and not only from the town of Mahdia, but also from surrounding areas, might explain the prevalence of [ī] and [ū]. Fieldwork conducted by the author revealed a prevalence of [ē] and [ō], but also the presence of specific lexical items, such as *l-yūm* "DEF-day" realized with [ū]. Interestingly, *l-yūm* is precisely one of the samples reported by La Rosa. The nature of such variation should be the object of further research. It might be a case of merger by transfer (Trudgill & Foxcroft 1978: 72) due to progressive levelling toward the prestigious dialect of the capital or, if our hypothesis is correct, an ancient phenomenon.

[5] In glosses, the Leipzig Glossing Rules (https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf) are used throughout.

[6] As far as Libyan Judeo-Arabic is concerned, D'Anna (2024) hypothesized that the variation between open and closed realization of diphthongs might represent a later stage of the situation found in dialects of the Egyptian Delta, such as ad-Daxīla and Burg Migīzil, where diphthongs are either retained or reduced to [ī] and [ū] according to different syllabic patterns.

More generally speaking, an open realization is not usually observed in first-layer Tunisian varieties,[7] so that the co-occurrence of a voiceless realization of etymological /q/, the loss of interdentals and the prevalent open realization of diphthongs really marks Mahdia Muslim Arabic as unusual in the context of the Eastern Maghreb. Possibly for this reason, William Marçais does not mention Mahdia in his famous overview of the linguistic situation of Tunisia (1950). It definitely is an urban, first-layer variety, yet it appears to belong to a distinct urban type than Tunis Muslim Arabic.

Isoglosses	Tunis MA	Mahdia MA	Douz MA
/q/	[q]	[q]	[g]
/θ/, /ð/ and /ðˤ/	[θ], [ð] and [ðˤ]	[t], [d] and [dˤ]	[θ], [ð] and [ðˤ]
*ay / *aw	[ī] / [ū]	[ē] / [ō]	conditioned

Table 1. A comparison between selected isoglosses in Tunis, Mahdia and Douz Muslim Arabic.

3. Neither one nor odd

In 2021, D'Anna (2021a) published a preliminary account of Yefren Judeo-Arabic, followed by a paper concerning the linguistic history of Libya (D'Anna 2021b). In the latter, he wrote that "From a typological perspective, this dialect group [i.e. the one to which Yefren Judeo-Arabic belongs] features very similar traits to pre-Hilali varieties of the neighboring Tunisian coast." In particular, and with reference to what has been said in § 2., Yefren Judeo-Arabic also features the three isoglosses that mark Mahdia Muslim Arabic and set it apart from the rest of Tunisian urban dialects, namely voiceless realization of the uvular /q/, lack of interdentals and prevalent realizations of etymological diphthongs as [ē] and [ō], with a minority presence of [ī] and [ū].

Yefren Judeo-Arabic belongs to the more archaic group of Libyan Judeo-Arabic,[8] including also Msellata and Khoms Judeo-Arabic (D'Anna 2024) and characterized as a whole (among other things) by the three isoglosses above. These dialects can be taken to represent the closest thing we have to Libyan first-layer Arabic, since Libyan Muslim dialects are all second-layer or, at best, mixed varieties. This

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[7] An open realization of diphthongs is also reported for Takrouna (Marçais and Guîga 1925: xxi-xxii) and Msaken (Bouhlel 2009: 128).

[8] As opposed to the dialects spoken in Tripoli and the surrounding communities, which are characterized by several innovations. See D'Anna (2024).

fact makes Mahdia Muslim Arabic far less unique but, above all, attests to the ancientness of the isoglosses it features.

Even though Judeo-Arabic varieties of the Eastern Maghreb are still understudied under many aspects, online repositories and documentation projects, such as *Leshon ha-Bayit*, have been providing us with more and more materials in the last few years. Such materials usually take the form of raw video or audio interviews, conducted with very old speakers, but they allow us to acquire a basic knowledge of varieties for which very few speakers are left. Using these data, and integrating them (whenever possible) with traditional fieldwork, we can investigate whether these three isoglosses co-occur together also in varieties of Tunisian Judeo-Arabic.

As a matter of fact, they do, in quite a few varieties. At the present state of our knowledge, such varieties include Moknine Judeo-Arabic, Nafta Judeo-Arabic and Tozeur Judeo-Arabic.[9]
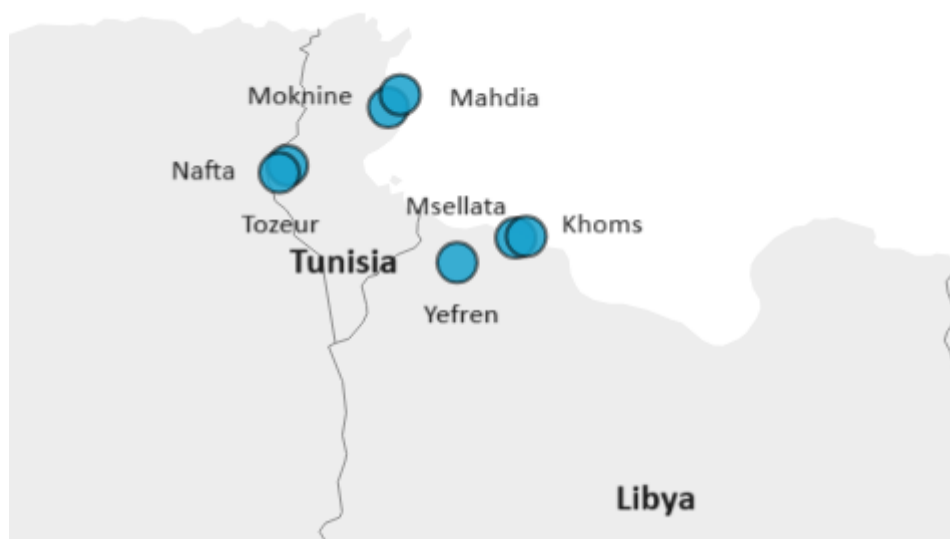
Figure 1. Distribution of possible new dialectal subgrouping.[10]

As evident from the map presented in Figure 1, the geographic distribution of the dialects featuring the three isoglosses is only partially homogeneous. It includes:

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[9] The situation of Sousse Judeo-Arabic is quite peculiar. The two informants recorded by the team of the *Leshon ha-Bayit Project*, in fact, present the three isoglosses featured in the dialectal bundle under analysis. The descriptions published by Lucienne Saada (1956; 1969) provide quite a different picture. Further research with surviving informants is needed to investigate the reasons behind such a difference.

[10] In Figure 1, Mahdia refers to the Muslim variety, the only one for which data exist, while the remaining sample points refer to Judeo-Arabic varieties.

1. all Libyan Judeo-Arabic dialects with the exception of Tripoli and the surrounding communities, whose history has been marked by profound influences from Western Maghrebi dialects (D'Anna 2024);[11]

2. two Tunisian dialects of the Sahel region, namely Mahdia Muslim Arabic and Moknine Judeo-Arabic;

3. the two Tunisian Judeo-Arabic varieties of Tozeur and Nafta, which were basically sedentary confessional varieties in an area characterized by the almost exclusive presence of Bedouin second-layer varieties.

Dialects on the Libyan and Tunisian sides of the proposed subgrouping are separated by a vast area, stretching from Tripolitania to southern Tunisia, in which mainly second-layer varieties are spoken, and where most of the Judeo-Arabic sedentary dialects for which we have data, such as Gabes, Zarzis, Matmata and Bengardane, showcase different features.[12]

It is, however, important to note that the seven dialects so far located do not necessarily represent the only members of the dialectal subgrouping we are proposing. The rural area surrounding Mahdia and, in general, the Tunisian Sahel represents a promising field of research, in which more specimens of this dialectal type might be located.

That said, it is clear that we are here dealing with a dialectal type that did not fare particularly well in the Eastern Maghreb. In Libya, sedentary dialects in general were obliterated by second-layer varieties that spread throughout the country, leaving only Judeo-Arabic as a witness of the linguistic past of the area. In Tunisia, the sedentary dialectal type represented by Tunis Muslim Arabic is by far the most common, and is relentlessly spreading due to the prestige of the capital. The areas in which our proposed subgrouping resisted are (so far) parts of the Sahel and remote first-layer islands in heavily Bedouinized areas, which probably served as a buffer against innovations spreading from other urban centers. An alternative view explaining the presence of shared isoglosses in the seven dialects under analysis would involve the spread of such traits from one area to the others. However, mountain Jewish communities such as those of Yefren and Msellata have no history of contacts with either Mahdia or the other areas in which the isoglosses are found, so that the most likely explanation is that we are here dealing with shared retentions.

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[11] Benghazi Judeo-Arabic should not be counted, since it is a direct offshoot of Tripoli Judeo-Arabic (D'Anna 2023).

[12] By "data" we here mean raw interviews drawn from the *Leshon ha-Bayit* project which have been investigated by the author. The situation of Djerba Judeo-Arabic appears to be more complex and necessitates further research.

4. Further isoglosses

Apart from the three phonological traits discussed above, the dialects that, according to our hypothesis, belong to a so-far undescribed subgrouping share more isoglosses that set them apart from other neighboring varieties.

4.1. Sibilant harmony

The first phonological isogloss shared by the seven dialects is the presence and, above all, the quality of sibilant harmony. With specific reference to Maghrebi dialects, Benkato (2023) describes in detail the two different phenomena of sibilant merger and sibilant harmony.

In the case of sibilant merger, the phonological distinction between sibilants is completely lost, yielding different results in different dialects. Sibilant merger is quite widespread in Tunisian Judeo-Arabic, being attested in Tunis, Gabes and Djerba, although with slightly different outputs (Benkato 2023: 15). No dialect featuring sibilant merger, on the other hand, has so far been described in Libya. Interestingly enough, none of the seven dialects that are part of the dialectal subgrouping we propose features sibilant merger, despite its frequency in Tunisian Judeo-Arabic and the prestige deriving from its being attested in the Judeo-Arabic dialect of the capital.

Sibilant harmony also features different possible outputs, all conforming to the "conditioned alteration *chuintant-sifflant*" described by Yoda (2005: 74). The conditioned alteration consists in the dissimilation of a pre-palatal fricative (*chuintant*) into an alveolar fricative (*sifflant*), or vice versa, whenever, irrespective of their order,

1. an alveolar and a pre-palatal fricative cooccur within a single word;

2. two pre-palatal fricatives cooccur within a single word, provided they are not the same (which means that one of them must be [ʃ] and the other one [ʒ]).

In the seven dialects under analysis, sibilant harmony consistently patterns as follows:

* [z] + [ʒ] results in [z] + [z], e.g., *zawǧ* *zōz* "two" (Yefren JA, Moknine Judeo-Arabic), *nuzawwiǧ* *nzawwəz* "IPGV.1:marry.SG" (Tozeur JA) ;

* [ʒ] + [z] also results in [z] + [z], e.g., TJA, YJA, BJA *ʕağūza* "old woman" → *ʕzūza* (Mahdia, Yefren Judeo-Arabic);

* [ʃ] + [s] usually results in [s] + [s], e.g., *šams* → *səms* "sun" (Khoms Judeo-Arabic), *nušammisu-hu* "IPFV.1:sun.dry.SG-3.M.SG" → *nsamms-u* (Yefren Judeo-Arabic);

- [ʃ] + [ʒ] tends to result in [s] + [z], e.g., *šaǧara "tree" → *səzra (Khoms Judeo-Arabic, Mahdia); Yefren Judeo-Arabic, however, we also find *šəžra* and *šaǧar → šəžər "tree.coll."

Phenomena of sibilant harmony tend to be more and more stigmatized by younger informants, at least in those dialects that are still currently spoken (Benkato 2014: 69-70). In Mahdia, for instance, younger generations use *šəzra* "tree", while older speakers still realize *səzra*. A certain instability of sibilant harmony, however, was already visible in Yefren Judeo-Arabic.

4.2. *Imāla*

The term *ʔimāla* is widely used by the medieval Arab grammarians to denote the fronting and raising of Old Arabic *ā* toward *ī*, and of the correspondent short *a* toward *i* (Levin 1992: 74). For the purpose of this paper, we will only consider final *imāla*. This trait is considered by Philippe Marçais as a hallmark of Eastern Maghrebi Arabic (Marçais 1977: 14-15). In Libyan Arabic, final *imāla* is not attested in Benghazi (Benkato 2014: 73-74), but present in Misrata Muslim Arabic (D'Anna 2017: 131), Tripoli Muslim Arabic (Pereira 2010: 33), Khoms Muslim Arabic (Benmoftah & Pereira 2017: 309), Jadu Muslim Arabic (Pereira 2012: 171-172) and in Fezzani Muslim dialects in general (Caubet 2004: 73). In Tunisian Arabic, *imāla* is present in both the Muslim (Gibson 2009: 564; Durand and Tarquini 2023: 4-6) and the Judeo-Arabic variety of the capital (Cohen 1975: 56), Kairouan (D'Accardio-Berlinguer 2023: 255), Sousse (Talmoudi 1980), Chebba (D'Anna 2020: 89), Mateur (Mion 2014: 59-60), Douz (Ritt-Benmimoun 2014: 31-32), Tozeur (Saada 1984: 32), Ben Gardane (Mion 2021: 111) and, generally speaking, in the vast majority of described varieties.

As evident from the following samples, none of the dialects under analysis, except Mahdia, features final *imāla*, despite it being one of the hallmarks of the whole area: *ḥna* "1.PL" (Tozeur Judeo-Arabic), *āna* "1.SG" (Moknine Judeo-Arabic), *mša* "PFV.go.3.M.SG" (Msellata Judeo-Arabic), *dwa* "PFV.speak.3.M.SG" (Yefren Judeo-Arabic), *kla* "PFV.eat.3.M.SG" (Khoms Judeo-Arabic).

Mahdia Arabic represents an exception to this trend, as it regularly features final *imāla*, e.g., *hne* "here", *ʕale* "on", *xde* ""PFV.take.3.M.SG" (La Rosa 2021: 145). Although this is only a hypothesis, however, the presence of *imāla* in Mahdia Arabic might not be an ancient trait. Moknine Judeo-Arabic, as we have seen, does not feature any kind of *imāla*. According to historical records, the Jewish community of Moknine originated from Mahdia. In 1550, when the Spaniards captured Mahdia, Jews fled to Moknine,

fearing religious persecution. Having obtained asylum there, they settled permanently in town.[13] This does not prove, of course, that Moknine Judeo-Arabic can give us a precise picture of Mahdia Arabic in the 16th century. However, we should at least entertain the possibility that Moknine Judeo-Arabic might include older traits later replaced in Mahdia Muslim Arabic, such as lack of final *imāla*.

4.3. Existential *famma* and other function words

The existential *famma*, or its less common variant *ṯamma*, is one of the most typical isoglosses of Tunisian Arabic (Gibson 2009: 566), while being completely absent from Libyan Muslim Arabic, where the existential is consistently *fī-(h)*. All the Libyan Judeo-Arabic varieties mentioned in this paper, however, employ *təmma* and not *fī-(h)*,[14] e.g.:

1. *təmma   ḥwāyž   tānyīn*   (Yefren)
   EXIST   thing.PL   second:M.PL
   "There are other things"

While this isogloss sets Libyan Judeo-Arabic apart from Libyan Muslim Arabic, another interesting trait is shared by two Libyan and Tunisian Judeo-Arabic dialects belonging to our group. In Yefren Judeo-Arabic, an interesting innovation was recorded, due to which *təmma* is transitivized and followed by suffix pronouns, as in the following sample from Yefren:

2. *təmmā   təmmā-ni   fi   [HEB]eret*
   now   EXIST-1.SG   in   land Israel[HEB]
   "Now here I am in Israel"

3. *u-l-yōm   təmmā-kəm   əntəm   u-d-daḥi   mā-ʕād-š   təmma*
   and-DEF-day   EXIST-2.PL.   2.PL.   and-DEF-egg.COLL   NEG-PFV.return.3.M.SG-NEG   EXIST
   "Now here you are and there's no more eggs"

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[13] http://archive.diarna.org/site/detail/public/394/, last accessed on July 10th, 2024.

[14] As a matter of fact, *təmma* (or the affricated version *čəmma*) is also employed in Tripoli Judeo-Arabic and neighboring varieties. These dialects were, however, heavily influenced by migrations from the western Maghreb (D'Anna 2024).

Such an innovation is not shared by Libyan Muslim dialects or any other Maghrebi dialect for which we have data.[15] It was only observed, interestingly, in Moknine Judeo-Arabic, e.g., *ma-təmmā-wū-š* "NEG-EXIST-3.M.SG-NEG."

As a matter of fact, Libyan Judeo-Arabic dialects as a whole share many lexical isoglosses with Tunisian dialects, including the presence of the suffix *-āš* in the interrogative adverbs *kīfāš* "how" and *waqtās* "when," which further strengthens the hypothesis that we are dealing with a distinct dialect group:

4. *ḥam-nəmši*   *nāra*   *kīfāš* *ən-nās*   *yərkbu*

   WANT-IPFV.1:go.SG   IPFV.1:see.SG how DEF-people IPFV.3:get.on:PL

   "I would go and see how people got on [the ship]"

5. *qbəl,*   *waqtāš* *iṭāru,*   *kəll*   *wāḥəd*   *yərfaʕ*

   before   when   IPFV.3:circumcise:PL   every   one.M.SG IPFV.3:bring:M.SG

   šwəyya   *šwəyya*   fi   *yədd-u*

   DIM.thing   DIM.thing   in   hand-3.M.SG

   "Before, when they circumcise, everyone brings a little in their hands"

5. Conclusions

In the previous sections, we have presented data from seven dialects of eastern Maghrebi Arabic, only one of which, i.e. Mahdia Muslim Arabic, has been partially known to scholars until recent times. The remaining six dialects are all Judeo-Arabic varieties that have been described in D'Anna (2021a; D'Anna 2024) or still lack a proper description, although interviews have been made available in online repositories.

A compared analysis of these dialects showed that the isoglosses that made Mahdia Muslim Arabic stand out within the panorama of Tunisian first-layer varieties are actually shared by other sedentary dialects, some of them located in Tunisia, such as Moknine, Tozeur and Nafta, some in Libya, such as Yefren, Khoms and Msellata. Upon closer scrutiny, these dialects appeared to share a number of other

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[15] Augmented forms of adverbial *təmma* are attested in Djidjel, e.g., *l-təmmītək, l-təmmīnātik* (Marçais 1952: 578), and in Moroccan Arabic, e.g., *l-temmak, l-temmaya* (Harrell 1966: 205). These are, however, augmented forms of adverbial, and not existential, *təmma*. What is more important, they only feature a distal deictic extension and not a properly inflected set of pronominal forms, which makes YJA *təmma* behave like a pseudoverb.

meaningful isoglosses, some of which, e.g., lack of *imāla*, are somewhat rare in the area they are located. The different extents to which the dialects under analysis are known limits the depth of our analysis. While the description of the three Libyan varieties draws upon corpora of acceptable size, considering the nature of the dialects in question,[16] more data would be needed for the three Tunisian Judeo-Arabic varieties and also for Mahdia. The addition of more data would hopefully allow us to go beyond phonology and a superficial analysis of lexicon and investigate shared isoglosses at the morphological and syntactical levels.

Even considering the data at our disposal, however, the possibility that the isoglosses presented are shared by these dialects by pure coincidence is quite remote. As said before, in fact, some of them, such as lack of *imāla*, are quite rare in the area, and at least two dialects, Yefren and Moknine, share a usage of *təmma* that has never been attested elsewhere.

Since the idea of a monogenetic origin of Maghrebi Arabic dialects appear more and more difficult to maintain, the dialectal bundle we are here dealing with would represent the offshoot of one of the varieties that reached the eastern Maghreb during the first wave of Arabization. This dialect bundle possibly stretched from Tripolitania to Mahdia, and its presence in inland Libya and Tunisia, as far as Yefren and Tozeur, indicates that it might have once been more widespread than it is today. One of its traits, i.e. the variable realization of diphthongs, appears to be an archaism, since it is shared with both extinct varieties, such as Siculo-Arabic (Avram 2017: 14-15; La Rosa 2019: 79), and dialects of the Egyptian Delta, although outputs are different (Woidich 1996). In contrast, sedentary Maghrebi dialects located further west have usually generalized the closed realization [ī] / [ū]. As we have said above, however, this dialectal type did not fare particularly well, neither in Libya nor in Tunisia. In the former case, it was almost completely ousted by second-layer dialects, resisting only as a confessional variety. In the latter, it lost ground to the more prestigious dialectal type of the capital, whose isoglosses are spreading as we speak and impacting also Mahdia Arabic, while all the Judeo-Arabic varieties here analyzed are no longer spoken in Tunisia.

The presence of a relatively important regional center, such as Mahdia, probably contributed to the partial preservation of this dialectal type in the Sahel region. All the other varieties observed, on the other hands, are dialect islands, confessional varieties surrounded by second-layer Bedouin dialects, which apparently screened them from external influence.

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[16] We are, in fact, dealing with severely endangered varieties that have now been spoken in diasporic contexts for over half a century. The number of first-generation speakers is, as might be expected, dwindling very rapidly and, despite some commendable attempts at language revitalization, it is unlikely that the dialects will survive past second or third-generation speakers.

Drawing from Mufwene's (2001: 4-6) account on restructuring and the formation of *koinés* and creoles, Benkato (2023) applies the tools of language evolution and new dialect formation to Maghrebi dialects. Within the specific context of a paper describing sibilant harmony in Maghrebi dialects, Benkato hypothesizes three input dialects, a feature pool where all variants are available to (second-generation) speakers and two output dialects, where the original traits have been randomly selected and stabilized into discrete new dialects.

> [...] we would assume that speakers of a number of Arabian dialects, each with various combinations of the features given in Table 4, comprised the group of speakers that moved into northern Africa during the "first wave". In so doing, the existing variants were combined, in a second generation, into a "feature pool" (Mufwene, 2001, pp. 3-6, 30). Then, koinézation took place and certain features were selected and focused, ultimately yielding new and stable dialects (Benkato 2023: 26).

It is important to note that the input dialects and feature pools are abstractions posited by Benkato for speculation purposes. The output dialects, on the other hand, represent actual Maghrebi dialects. The description of areal dialect bundles, from this perspective, greatly improves our chances to obtain a realistic picture of the original feature pool.[17]

In the light of the data presented in this paper, the presence of *imāla,* the preservation of interdentals and the realization of diphthongs might probably be added to the list of isoglosses featured in the input dialects hypothesized by Benkato. The output dialect we have just described, as a result, might be phonologically characterized as follows:[18]

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[17] The issue of successfully reconstructing the input varieties from feature pools, on the other hand, is a different matter, whose discussion lies outside the scope of the present work.

[18] Benkato (2023: 27) also includes the preservation or loss of /h/ among the input features. We are reluctant to do the same here, because Yoda (2017: 88) convincingly demonstrated that this evolution probably happened in recent times, and definitely after the *Umspringen*, i.e., the syllabic shift of CvCC patterns to CCvC.

Eastern first-layer Maghrebi

/q/ → [q]

/s/ / /ʃ/

ḍād → [dˤ][19]

/t/ → [t]

/θ/, /ð/ and /ðˤ/ → [t], [d] and [dˤ]

/ay/ / /aw/ → [ē] / [ō] ([ī] / [ū])

Imāla → no

First-layer dialects of eastern Tunisia and Libya appear to have much to say regarding the Arabization of northern Africa, yet they remain dramatically understudied. Further avenues of research, with specific reference to the subject of this paper, include both dialectological investigation in the areas where specimens of this dialectal group were located and the collection of additional ethnographic texts for the seven dialects so far identified, in order to better describe their features at the morphological and syntactic levels.

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[19] As opposed to the voiceless realization found in some first-layer dialects (Benkato 2023: 27).

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The first published vocabulary of Moroccan Arabic
A "re-edition" of Germain Moüette's 1683 *Dictionaire François-Arabesque*

Jairo Guerrero, Mike Turner, Montserrat Benítez Fernández and Araceli González Vázquez

The present paper is a "re-edition" of the earliest known vocabulary of Moroccan Arabic to be formally published, a pioneering work that constitutes the final chapter of Frenchman Germain Moüette's 1683 account of his captivity in Morocco. Captured by Barbary corsairs and sold into slavery in 1670, Moüette spent almost eleven years in several Moroccan towns, which allowed him to interact with fluent speakers of the colloquial language and eventually learn it himself. Moüette's *Dictionaire François-Arabesque* is a highly valuable source for the history of North African Arabic because it provides us with first-hand data from the Arabic varieties spoken in late seventeenth-century Morocco. In our paper, we have attempted to identify each of the 854 expressions in Moüette's *Dictionaire François-Arabesque*, provide them a more accurate transcription and English translation, and note associated linguistic features with implications for the historical study of Moroccan dialects.

Keywords: historical linguistics, Moroccan Arabic, Maghrebi Arabic, diachrony, lexicography.

1. Introduction[1]

In this paper we present a newly ordered and interpreted "re-edition" of *Dictionaire arabesque*, a French-Moroccan Arabic[2] wordlist compiled by Frenchman German Moüette and published in 1683 as the eighteenth and last chapter of his captivity account.[3] Moüette was nineteen years old when he embarked, along with a cousin and a friend, on a ship bound for the West Indies. Unfortunately, the vessel never made its way to the Caribbean, as it was attacked by Barbary corsairs off the coast of

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[1] Please note that examples taken from works and sources other than Moüette (1683) are given in our own system of transcription and translated into English.

[2] In this paper, the placename "Morocco" is employed in a broad sense to denote the territory occupied by modern-day Morocco (excuding Western Sahara). As regards "Moroccan Arabic," it refers to the vernacular varieties of Arabic that are or were spoken across the territory of modern-day Morocco.

[3] See Moüette, Germain, *Relation de la captivité du Sieur Moüette dans les Royaumes de Fez et de Maroc, où il a demeuré pendant onze ans*, Paris, 1683. A Dutch edition of this book was published in Leiden in 1707.

Normandy. As a result of this unlucky event, Moüette was taken prisoner and soon afterwards sold into slavery upon his arrival to the Moroccan harbour town of Sale on October 25th, 1670. After being bought and sold by several masters and having lived in multiple Moroccan cities (Meknes, Fes El-Bali, Ksar El-Kebir), he was eventually ransomed by Mercedarian Friars and left Africa on February 25th, 1681.[4]

Upon his return to France, Moüette composed a compelling narrative of his life in Morocco, in which he recounted his experiences as a captive in a world vastly different from his own. Navigating the intricate web of late seventeenth-century Moroccan society, the account provides invaluable insights into its customs, traditions, and way of life, and Moüette has been recognized accordingly as an early "historian" of the Alaouite dynasty.[5] However, the Arabic language content of the work has only recently been given scholarly attention.[6] The chapter devoted to the French-Moroccan Arabic wordlist runs from pages 330 to 362 and is entitled *Dictionaire arabesque*, although in the index it appears as *Alphabet des principaux termes de la langue arabesque dont on se sert dans le pays.* This glossary contains a total of 854 French lexical items and expressions that are listed in alphabetical order, with their corresponding translations into Moroccan Arabic given with ad hoc spellings in Latin script.[7] It includes terms from various semantic fields such as everyday objects, tools, parts of the body, animals, family, placenames, food, numbers, months, as well as short phrases essential to basic communication.

While there are earlier sources for the study of Moroccan Arabic,[8] Moüette's work is one of the earliest and largest Moroccan Arabic vocabularies among those that predate Lerchundi's 1892 *Vocabulario español arábigo del dialecto de Marruecos.*[9] The linguistic importance of the material under study lies also in its having been collected by someone with no previous knowledge of Arabic through "full immersion" in a vernacular Arabic-speaking environment over a period of almost eleven years.[10]

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[4] For a detailed overview on the life of Moüette and his works, see González Vázquez (2014: 65-73).

[5] See, e.g., Turbet-Delof (1976).

[6] See González Vázquez (2014) for an earlier description of the narrative and some of its Arabic linguistic content.

[7] It should be noted that alphabetical order is not always strict.

[8] The overwhelming majority of these sources consist of literary works, letters and notarial documents written in Middle Arabic. For a detailed list of these materials, see Vicente (2012) and Meouak (2023).

[9] The largest vocabulary of Moroccan Arabic to be published prior to Lerchundi's is that included in Dombay's (1800) grammar; see Dombay (1800: 53-136). Another late eighteenth-century source for the study of Moroccan Arabic's lexicon is P. Patricio de la Torre's *Vocabulista.* A linguistic analysis of this work has been conducted by Moscoso García (2017).

[10] It goes without saying that the non-scientific nature of Moüette's work mandates caution when dealing with the data he provides. His phonetic transcriptions are rudimentary and often inconsistent, and his translations are sometimes inaccurate. Despite that, Moüette's *Dictionaire* is one of the most detailed records available of what late seventeenth-century Moroccan Arabic might have sounded like.

The manner in which Moüette presents linguistic data suggests that he acquired basic Moroccan Arabic grammatical notions, and that he was able to communicate on at least a rudimentary level.[11] Moüette's *Dictionaire* is also of potential value to scholars of Early Modern French, as it yields interesting data about the spelling rules, the phonetics and the lexicon of this Romance language during the second half of the seventeenth century.

2. Preliminary dialectological observations

The main objective of this article is to "re-edit" Moüette's wordlist by identifying the Moroccan Arabic words it contains and providing them in a modern, semi-phonemic transcription. This endeavour is intended to lay the groundwork for future studies, which will be able to more easily draw from the wordlist, now reorganized with the Arabic entries in alphabetical order, to better characterize the state of Moroccan Arabic in Moüette's day. We offer here some preliminary remarks in support of those studies.

Moüette hardly gives any data about the linguistic varieties from which he drew the material for his vocabulary. He simply states that the terms included in his wordlist belong to "an Arabic language" (*langue arabesque*) that is used in the kingdoms of Fez, Marrakesh (*Maroc*) and Tafilalt (*Tafilet*)."[12] This statement is consistent with the composite nature of Moüette's vocabulary, in which several words seem to have been taken from different Moroccan varieties.[13] For instance, the word 'nerve/vein' arises both as <Laraig> (*la-ʕṛəg*) and <Laraeq> (*la-ʕṛəq*), each showing a different realization of the historical phomeme *q.[14] The same is true for the interrogative 'who,' which surfaces both as <Milhau> (*mənhu?* 'who is it?') and <Schon-hadac> (*škūn hādāk?* 'who is that?'). A likely explanation for this apparent phonetic and lexical variation is that the "dialect" at hand is a mixed one, where features from different

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[11] Moüette often uses spaces, apostrophes and hyphens in order to distinguish between word classes, e.g.: <L'fequia> *l-fākya* 'the fruits,' <Chal hadac chy> *šḥāl hādāk š-ši* 'how much does that cost?' <Atte-aloü> *ʕṭī-ha lu* 'give it to him.' Furthermore, he shows a certain familiarity with Moroccan Arabic nominal and verbal inflection, e.g.: <dielli> *dyāl-i* 'mine,' <diellec> *dyāl-ək* 'yours,' <diello> *dyāl-u* 'his,' <achabet> *āš ḥabbīt* 'what do you want?'

[12] See Moüette (1683: 330).

[13] These varieties could be those spoken in the places where Moüette lived. This hypothesis has already been put forward by González Vázquez (2014: 72-73).

[14] The velar voiced reflex of Old Arabic */q/ is generally regarded as a conspicuous phonetic feature of Bedouin varieties, whereas its voiceless counterparts are mainly attested in sedentary vernaculars, cf. Cantineau (1960: 68).

varieties combine and interwine.[15] Given that Mouëtte ultimately composed the vocabulary in Europe and seems to have been drawing from his own knowledge, it might be best to simply classify it as his own personal idiolect, albeit with primary input from the interior urban centers of northern central Morocco.

While the vocabulary cannot therefore be seen as a reliable account of any one variety of Moroccan Arabic, it is still viable as a record of extant features within a general region. It is a rich source for phonological information, as Mouëtte's Latin-script rendition of Arabic words makes clear certain phonetic features that may have otherwise been obscured had they been recorded in Arabic script. Morphosyntactic information is more limited, seeing as many entries give only single words (mostly nouns), but the presence of a few more complex phrases allows for some generalizations. Finally, there are several particularly well represented lexical domains that stand out beyond even the baseline lexicographic value of the work. A brief sketch of these features follows.

2.1. Phonology

- The phonemic status of short vowels in many words is unclear, and deserves focused study. We have opted here for a provisional representation that approximates likely surface vocalizations, be they phonemic or simply allophonic. Among these, we note the clear presence of a short /u/ vocoid in several items, which may be interpreted as either a vowel or consonantal labialization: <Lemouc> *l-muxx ~ l-məxxʷ* 'brain,' <Cubira beʃef> *kʷbīra bəzzāf* 'very big,' <Coutifa> *qʷṭīfa* 'high-quality wool rug,' <Coubaiʃʃy> *xubbāzi ~ xʷəbbāzi* 'baker,' <Couʃeba> *quṣba ~ qʷəṣba* 'kasbah,' <Lecolen> *lə-qʷlīn* 'rabbit,' <Lebouʃal> *lə-bʷṣəl* 'onion.'

- All instances of the etymological interdental fricatives */ṯ/, */ḏ/, */ḏ̣/ show a merger to stops /t/, /d/, /ḍ/, respectively: <**T**om> *tūm* 'garlic,' <Me**t**ecal-de **d**éheb> *mətqāl d-əd-dhəb* 'gold dinar,' <Le**t**énin> *lə-tnīn* 'Monday,' <Le**t**ele**t**a> *t-tlāta* 'Wednesday' <**T**eilg> *təlž* 'snow,' <**D**efar> *ḍfāṛ* 'nails,' <Leburgo**t**> *l-buṛġūt* 'fleas.'

- Etymological */q/ is most commonly indicated as a uvular stop /q/: <L'**c**ady> *l-qāḍi* 'judge,' <Lbou**c**ara> *l-buqṛa* 'cow,' <Le**qu**efel> *lə-qfəl* 'lock,' etc. However, in a few lexical items it is /g/: <Le**gu**emel> *lə-gməl* 'lice,' <**G**ré**g**a> *gəṛgāʕ* 'walnuts,' <le**g**amera> *l-gamṛa* 'full moon,' < Le **g**uemeg>

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l-gəmḥ 'wheat,' <Er**g**oud> *ṛgud* 'sleep!' This idiosyncratic distribution is similar to modern koine dialects.

- Similar to many modern-day dialects, the etymological phoneme */ǧ/ is realized as a stop prior to sibilants /s/, /z/, /ṣ/ and occasionally /t/: <**G**uaiſas> *gāyza* 'rafter,' <**G**ezira> *gzīra* 'island,' <**G**ous-t'ayb> *gūz ṭ-ṭīb* 'nutmeg,' <**G**uezers> *gzāyər* 'Algiers,' <**G**uelez> *gləs* 'sit down!,' <**G**uezery> *gəzzāri* 'butcher,' <L'**g**uibez> *l-gəbs* 'plaster,' <Lin**g**aſſe> *l-īngāṣ* 'pears,' <**T**echor> *tšūṛ* 'villages' (<*ǧšr).

- A few lexemes show interchange of the sibilants /s/ and /š/. The former becomes the latter in <**Ch**ereys> *šārīž* 'fishpond' (cf. *sārīž*) and <Atei**ch**> *ʕṭəš* 'he sneezed' (cf. *ʕṭəs*). In the opposite direction, we have <**S**equéma> *skīma* 'bridle' (cf. *škīma*), <La**ſ**efar> *sfəṛ* 'act of shaving (?)' (cf. *šəfṛa* 'razor'), and <**S**tha> *sta* 'rain' (cf. *šta*). The latter phenomenon is today strongly associated with the Muslim dialect of old Meknes.

- Some entries seem to indicate that the definite article *l-* does not assimilate to /ž/: <**L'g**éna> *l-žənna* 'heaven,' <**L'g**ire> *l-žīr* 'lime, whitewash.' But this is not conclusive, because Mouëtte does not generally represent the assimilated article, and terms such as <**G**edery> 'smallpox' could be read as either *žədri* or *ž-žədri,* and <**G**éma> 'mosque' as *žāmaʕ* or *ž-žāmaʕ*.

2.2. Morphology

- Several pronouns are given as their own entries: <Anan> 'I,' <Intinan> 'you' (glossed *Toy*), <Inan> 'you' (glossed *Vous*), <Oüman> 'they.' We interpret the final <n> in these entries as Mouëtte's attempt to represent an actual final vowel /a/ following a nasal consonant[16]. The 1SG *ana* and 2SG *ntīna* are clear, though also note the 2SG *nta* in the phrase <Qui-finta> *kīf nta* 'how are you?.' See the footnotes that accompany <Inan> and <Oüman> for discussion of these individually.

- Interrogative particles attested include < Ach...> *āš* 'what?,' <Milhau> *mənhu* 'who?,' <Schon> *škūn* 'who ~ which one?,' <Fen> *fāyn* 'where?,' <Qui-f...> *kīf* 'how?,' and <Chal> *šḥāl* 'how much?'

- Information on verbal inflections is limited. The 2SG perfective inflection is given inconsistently as -*t* in <Achabe**t**> *āš ḥabbīt* 'what do you want?' but -*ti* in <fen-con**tay**> *fāyn kunti* 'where were you?.'

- There is no trace of any preverbal durative marker such as *kā-* or *tā-* in the given verbal phrases, though this may simply be due to their limited number.

- Several items point to the addition of a suffix -*i* to common occupational patterns: <Guezer**y**> *gəzzāri* 'butcher,' <Sefar**y**> *ṣəffāri* 'boilermaker, coppersmith,' <bacal**y**> *bəqqāli* 'reseller, grocer' <Coubaiſſ**y**>

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[16] This is surely the case for the <n> in <Debanan> *dəbbāna* 'fly,' <Sequanan> *sxāna* 'warm weather,' <Zienan> *zīna* 'beautiful.'

xəbbāzi 'baker,' <Hededi**n**> *ḥaddādi* 'farrier, blacksmith,' <Zoüaqu**in**> *zuwwāqi* 'decorative painter.' However, other items such as <Quérez> *xəṛṛāz* 'shoemaker, cobbler,' <Lehaded> *l-ḥaddād* 'blacksmith, armourer' and <ercaſſe> *ṛəqqāṣ* 'courier' show the suffixless form of modern dialects.

- Many plural forms are attested in the list, e.g., <Lalouche> *la-ʕlūž* 'renegades,' <Lecodem> *l-xuddām* 'subordinate military officers,' <Louidin> *l-wīdān* 'streams, brooks,' <ʕenin> *snīn* 'years.' In some cases, Moüette includes a curious suffix <s> at the end of the plural; this is probably due to interference from French orthography, where the <s> would be silent, as is suggested when the same word is represented both with and without it: <Denoub**s**> *dnūb* 'sins' vs. <Sema-denoub-nan> *smaḥ dnūb-na!* 'forgive our sins!'[17] However, there are also some instances of apparently singular Arabic terms given with the final <s>, as in <Baháris>, which Moüette translates as the plural 'seamen.' These <s>-plurals may ultimately represent any combination of imperfect learning on Moüette's part, a pigdin-type feature in use among Romance-speaking captives, or a fully borrowed plural suffix used by Moroccans themselves.[18]

2.3. Syntax

- Many compound nouns incorporate the genitive particle *d*-: <Dras **de** lymin> *d-drāʕ də-l-īmən* 'right hand,' <Dras **de** lazar> *d-drāʕ də-l-ʕasri* 'left hand,' <Jege-**de**lma> *(d)žāž d-əl-ma* 'ducks,' <Metecal-**de** déheb> *mətqāl d-əd-dhəb* 'gold dinar,' <Malẽ-**de**l-benin> *mʕalləm d-əl-bni* 'master bricklayer' <Sora**de**l-boten> *ṣ-ṣuṛṛa d-əl-bṭən* 'navel, belly button,' <Oülets **de**l jeja> *wlād d-ə(d)ž-žāža* 'eggs,' <Frac-**de**l-hamẽ > *fṛax d-əl-ḥmām* 'squab, young pigeons,' <Lemelay **d**el barot> *l-məlḥ d-əl-bāṛūḍ* 'saltpetre,' <Serac-**de**lma> *ṣəṛṛāq d-əl-ma* 'syringe,' <**De**men-hadacchy> *d-mən hādāk š-ši* 'whose is this?.' There is no evidence of *mtāʕ*, the other widely used genitive particle in Morocco.

- The genitive *d-* has the form *dyāl* with pronominal suffixes, the full set of which is present: <**Diell**i> *dyāl-i* 'my,' <**Diell**ec> *dyāl-ək* 'your (sg.),' <**Diell**o> *dyāl-u* 'his,' <Di ell**a**> *dyāl-ha* 'her,' <Dienn**a**> *dyāl-na* 'our,' < **Diel**cum> *dyāl-kum* 'your (pl.),' <Di ell**um**> *dyāl-hum* 'their.'

- The negative copula is *mā-ši*, as in most modern varieties: <**Me**n**chi**na> *mā-ši hna* 'not here,' <**Ma**n**chi**-ʕeheg> *mā-ši ṣḥīḥ* 'not strong.'

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[17] Note also <Oület**s** del jeja> 'eggs,' <Temenia-hyem**s**> '8 days.'

[18] As a matter of fact, Spanish loanwords in some Northern Moroccan varieties can be pluralized with suffixes -*s* and -*ṣ* (Heath 1989: 134), e.g.: *byexos* 'elders,' *pāpōṛes* 'freighters,' *aletaṣ* 'flippers, fins,' cf. Guerrero (2015: 133). Interestingly enough, the use of these plural morphemes in Moroccan Judaeo-Arabic dialects is not restricted to Spanish loanwords and Arabic nouns can also take -*s* and -*ṣ* to form the plural, cf. Lévy (1991: 145-149).

- There is evidence of -*ši* as a postposed negator: <Mahab-**chy**> *mā-ḥābb-ši ~ mā-nḥabb-ši* 'I do not want,' <Manſemat-**chy**> *mā-sməʕt-ši* 'I did not hear,' <Matá-tar**chy**> *mā-tʕaṭṭəl-ši* 'do not delay!' However, some of Moüette's glosses hint that it may have retained a more nominal sense of 'a thing' than it does in modern dialects: <Man-di**chy**> *mā-ʕənd-ī-ši* 'I do not have anything,' <Man-gib**chy**> *mā-nžīb-ši* 'I will not bring anything' <Matarf-**chy**> *mā-taʕṛəf-ši* 'you do not know anything.' Contrast the less forceful <Mezel-méja> *mā-zāl mā-ža* 'he hasn't yet come,' which hints that -*ši* might have been more markedly emphatic in Moüette's day.

2.4. Lexicon

- Well attested here are the names of cultivated flora and their edible parts. Some of these are infrequent or variable in modern dialects: <Couſebar> *quṣbāṛ* 'chervil,' <Falанças> *flānṣa* 'watermelons,' <Gous-t'ayb> *gūz ṭ-ṭīb* 'nutmeg,' <Limas> *līma* 'lemon,' <Lingaſſe> *l-īngāṣ* 'pears,' <Nóar> *nwa* 'almonds,' <Ould-nóa> *wuld n-nwa* 'clove,' <Zaimbóa> *zənbūʕ* '(bitter) oranges.'

- Several animal names are given, both domesticated and wild. Less common lexemes include <Berugo> *bəṛṛūg* 'cockerel,' <Jege-delma> *(d)žāž d-əl-ma* 'duck,' and <Lin> *līyən* 'deer.' In several cases Moüette's glosses reveal an attempt to equate African fauna with European species (e.g., <Leguezel> *lə-ġzāl* 'antelope' is labeled as *Chevreuil* 'roe deer').

- Names of tools and implements abound, and speak to Moüette's familiarity with many forms of manual labor. Moüette (1683, 335) himself gives horse tack a dedicated subsection under the entry < Lehaſans> *lə-ḥṣān* 'horse.' The vocabulary is also valuable as a record of the weaponry in use at the time, and includes references to barreled range weapons: <Meucala> *mkuḥla* 'blunderbuss,' <Lamfat> *lə-nfāṭ* 'cannons,' <Lebarot> *l-bāṛūd* 'gunpowder,' <Lequebous> *l-kābūs* 'pistol.'

- Various pejorative or otherwise uncouth expressions relating to body parts, bodily functions, sexual behaviors, and poor social status are given: <Azac> *ḥzəq!* 'fart!,' <Bida> *bīḍa* 'testicle,' <Caran> *qaṛṛān* 'cuckold,' <Ben-caba> *bən qaḥba* 'son of a whore,' <Ben-queleb> *bən kəlb* 'son of a dog,' < L'čăábá> *l-qaḥba* 'whore,' <L'caoët> *l-qawwād* 'pimp,' <Lehachon> *l-ḥaššūn* 'vagina,' <Le queras> *lə-xṛa* 'shit,' <Tréima> *trīma* 'ass, buttocks,' <Zamel> *zāməl* 'homosexual,' <Zoub> *zubb* 'penis.'

- Several loanwords are attested, primarily from Spanish and Turkish: <Beſtion> *bəṣṭyūn* 'stronghold,' <Brocato> *bəṛkāḍu (~)* 'brocade,' <Couchina> *kuššīna* 'kitchen,' <Salten> *sāltān (~)* 'frying pan,' <Balé> *baġli* 'mortar,' <Temeg> *tmāg* 'ankle boots.' A special category of loans is month names, all twelve of which are given: <Ener>, <Hebrero>, <Marſo>, <Abril>, <Mayo>, <Iunio>, <Iulio>, <Agoſto>, <Setenber>, <October>, <November>, <December>. The degree of phonological integration of loans is hard to determine, so we provide only estimates unless there is a clear modern equivalent.

3. "Re-edition" of Moüette's Dictionaire François-Arabesque

We have chosen to rearrange Moüette's lexicographical work as a Moroccan Arabic-French-English wordlist instead of a French-Moroccan Arabic one, as is the case for the original version. In doing so, we mean to provide the researcher interested in Arabic dialectology with a full list of the Moroccan Arabic words given by Moüette in a way that will let them easily observe orthographical and transcription inconsistencies, as well as implied phonetic and lexical variation.

The lexicon is presented in a four-column format:

- The first column reproduces Moüette's original transcriptions of Moroccan Arabic terms and retains his spelling and capitalization.

- The second column provides a new, semi-phonemic transcription of each Arabic term in an attempt to more precisely reconstruct what Moüette might have heard. Our reconstructions are based on pronunciations in Present-Day Moroccan Arabic (henceforth PDMA) in the light of phonetic features and orthographic practices of late seventeenth-century French, which influenced Moüette's transcriptions.

- The third column reproduces Moüette's French translation of each Moroccan Arabic term as faithfully as possible, maintaining spelling conventions from late seventeenth-century French.

- The fourth column provides our own translations into modern English. In these we attempt to strike a balance between the likely meaning of the Arabic terms and Moüette's original translations, which are sometimes not literal or grammatically precise.[19]

In most cases, we have been able to identify the Moroccan Arabic terms in the first column with a high degree of precision. Those that remain in widespread use are given without comment, and those that are attested but somewhat less common are given further lexicographic references in the footnotes.[20] In other cases, identification of the terms is less straightforward, in which cases we have marked them as follows:

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[19] Often Moüette gives singular forms in Arabic but provides a plural translation in French, or vice versa. In these cases, we favor the apparent Arabic form. For instance, we translate <Baháris> as 'seaman' instead of 'seamen' (Moüette's *Mariniers*). The same holds true for <Cijds> 'noble' and <Jeeds> 'martyr.' In the few cases in which Moüette's meaning is substantially different than ours, we clarify by including his translation in parenthesis with the tag "M."

[20] We have also indicated sources of loanwords where possible. Source languages are given in the following abbreviated forms: Berber (Br.), Ottoman Turkish (O.Tr.), Spanish (Sp.).

- **(~)** indicates that an expression is clearly identifiable, but its precise pronunciation (particularly the realization of vowels or pharyngealization) may vary somewhat from our given interpretation. This is particularly true of loanwords.

- **(?)** indicates that the precise meaning or origin of an expression is unclear to us, but that we have attempted a plausible interpretation.

- The three expressions for which we cannot offer a plausible interpretation (<Lagécialogue>, <Romtondon>, <Zelele>) are indicated with **XXX**.

Term	Our transcription	Moüette's translation	Our translation
Abril	*ābrīl*[21]	Avril	April
Achabet	*āš ḥabbīt?*	Que veux-tu	What do you want?
Ach-quebar	*āš xbāṛ...?*	Quelles nouvelles	How are ...?
Adem	*Ādəm*	Adam	Adam
Affiom	*ʕafyūn*	Opiom	Opium
Affrit	*ʕafrīt*	Riche	Very smart; colossal, huge
Agoſto	*agosto (~)*[22]	Aouſt	August
Ajay-dria fiſſa fiſſa	*āži dəġya fisaʕ fisaʕ*	Viens promptement	Come quickly!
Ajay-el henan	*āži l-hna!*	Viens icy	Come here!
Ajay-oucan	*āži u-kān!*	Viens ſeulement	Just come!
Al'Inſeró-Sultan	*Ḷḷāh yənṣuṛ ṣ-ṣulṭān*	Vive le Roy	May God assist the sultan
Albrecoques	*l-bəṛqūq (~)*[23]	Prunes	Prunes
Alcayde	*l-qāyd*[24]	Capitaine de troupes	Captain; commander
Alcayde	*l-qāyd*	Gouverneur	Governor
Alcayde	*l-qāyd*	Juge civil	Caid; judge
Alla	*Ḷḷāh*	Dieu	God

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[21] PDMA *ābrīl ~ šhar ṛəbʕa.*

[22] Unattested. < Sp. *agosto.* PDMA *ġušt ~ šhaṛ tmānya.* On Spanish loanwords in Moroccan Arabic, see Moscoso García (2011).

[23] Cf. Sp. *albaricoques.* For further instances of a likely orthographic influence from Spanish spelling in Spanish loanwords, see below: <Alcayde>, <Alacran>, <Alcantara>, <Aſucar>, <Caſtanas>, <Meſquino>.

[24] Compare with Sp. *alcaide.*

Alla andcum	Ḷḷāh ʕənd-kum[25]	Dieu ſoit avec vous	May God be with you
Alla hoẽque[b]ar	Aḷḷāhu kbaṛ	O Grand Dieu	God is Great
Alla-aoüncum	Ḷḷāh yʕāwən-kum	Dieu vous aide	May God help you
Alla-ifta	Ḷḷāh yəftaḥ	Dieu vous beniſſe	God bless you
Alla-lequerim	Ḷḷāh l-krīm	Dieu Tout-puiſſant	Alla-lequerim
Alacran	l-ʕaqṛəb[26]	Eſcorpion	Scorpion
Almera	lə-mṛa	Femme	Woman
Alqantara	l-qanṭṛa	Pont	Bridge
Am / ſenin	ʕām / snīn	Année	Year / years (pl.)
Ama	ʕma	Aveugle	Blind
Ama	ʕamma	Tante	Paternal aunt
Amar-alla	amaṛ Ḷḷāh	Par permiſſion de Dieu	God gave (sb.) permission
Ambachador	bāšādūṛ[27]	Ambaſſadeur	Ambassador
Ambar	ʕanbaṛ	Ambre	Amber
Amel hadac-chy	ʕməl hādāk š-ši	Faire cela	Do that thing!
Amin	ʕamm-i	Oncle	My paternal uncle
Anan-ebdec	āna ʕabd-ək	Vôtre ſerviteur	I am your servant
Aoü-noü	ʕāwnu ~ ʕāwn-u!!	Aider	Help (pl.) ~ help him!
Aran	Hāṛūn	Aaron	Aaron
Arbi-nam	(ā) ṛabb-i [ā]na!	Mon Dieu	Oh my Lord!
Arby	(ā) ṛəbb-i!	Dieu	Oh my Lord!
Arby querim	ṛəbb-i karīm	Dieu miſericordieux	My Lord is gracious
Archy	[Mūlā-y] r-Ršī[d]	Xercés	Moulay al-Rashid ibn Sharif, sultan of Morocco from 1666 to 1672
Arian	ʕaryān	Nud	Naked
Arra	āṛa!	Donne	Give!
Arra-hadac-chy	āṛa hādāk š-ši!	Donne cela	Give [me] that thing!

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[25] To the best of our knowledge this expression is unattested.

[26] Compare with Sp. alacrán.

[27] < Sp. embajador. Outdated. PDMA sāfīr.

Arra-ʃoullilla	ṛāsūl əḷḷāh	Envoyé de Dieu	The Messenger of God
Arʃaʃʃe	ṛṣāṣ	Plomb	Lead
Aʃmec	āsm-ək?[28]	Comment t'appelle-tu	[What's] your name?
Aʃmec	āsm-ək?	Nom	[What's] your name?
Aʃucar	s-sukkāṛ[29]	Sucre	Sugar
Artal	ṛṭal	Livre de poids	Pound
Atache	ʕṭaš	Soif	Thirst
Ateich	ʕṭəš[30]	Eſternuer	He sneezed
Atte-dama	ʕṭi ḍ-ḍāmən!	Donner caution	Give [money as] a security!
Atte-aloü	ʕṭī-hā-lu	Donnez-luy	Give it to him!
Auchallek	w[ā]š ḥāl-ək?	A ton ʃervice	What do you need? (M: at your service)[31]
Aug-alla	wužh Ḷḷāh	Face de Dieu	God's face
Aujebou	ḥwāžb-u	Paupieres	His eyebrows
Aurec	wṛā-k	Derriere toy	Behind you
Aycha	ʕīša	Vie	Life
Ayman	yəmma	Mere	Mother
Azac	ḥzəq!	Petter	Fart! ~ he farted
Azery	ʕazri	Jeune	(Single) young man
Bábá	bāba	Pere	Father, dad
Bacaly	baqqāli[32]	Revendeur	Reseller; grocer
Bacha	bāša[33]	General d'Armée	Army general

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[28] Cf. Prémare (1995, vol. 7: 203).

[29] Compare with Sp. *azúcar*.

[30] < ʕṭəs.

[31] This phrase is also given in quoted dialogue on p. 196 of Mouëtte's narrative. It does not appear to literally mean 'at your service,' but is instead a deferential greeting.

[32] Unattested. PDMA *bəqqāl*.

[33] < O.Tr. باشا *başa* 'pasha.' On Turkish loanwords in Moroccan Arabic, see Procházka (2012).

Bachouda	*bāšŭda*[34]	Lieutenant	Military officer of a certain rank
Bagueda	*baʕd ġədda*	Aprés demain	The day after tomorrow
Baháris	*baḥri*	Mariniers (pl.)	Seaman (sg.)
Balé	*baġli*[35]	Mortier	Mortar (masonry)
Balga	*bəlġa*	Souliers	[A pair of] slippers
Batal	*bāṭal*	Neant	Vain, useless; iniquitous
Beimes	*bhāyəm*	Animaux	Beasts of burden
Belaan	*bəlʕān*	Gourmand	Glutton
Bellé	*bāli*	Vieille	Old; worn out
Ben-amin	*bən ʕamm-i*	Couſin	My paternal cousin
Ben-caba	*bən qaḥba*[36]	Fils de putain	Son of a whore
Ben-queleb	*bən kəlb*[37]	Fils de chien	Son of a dog
Benti	*bənt-i*	Fille	My daughter
Bequé	*bka*	Pleurer	Crying ~ he cried
Berima	*bərrīma*	Guinblet	Hand drill; corkscrew
Berugo	*bərrūg*[38]	Cocq	Cockerel
Beſtion	*bəṣṭyūn*[39]	Fortereſſe	Stronghold
Beteg	*bəṭṭīx ~ bəttīx*	Melons	Melons
Bida	*bīḍa*[40]	Teſticules (pl.)	Testicle (sg.)
Biot-delmarqué	*byuḍ d-əl-maṛqa* **(?)**	Poix noire	Bitumen, black pitch
Bledh	*blād*	Province	Country, region, land

[34] This word appears to be a metathesized form of O.Tr. اوطه باشي *odabaşı* 'barrack room chief,' or even a shortening of باش اوطه باشي *baş odabaşı* 'chief of barrack room chiefs,' but it may also simply hark back to O.Tr باش اوطه *baş oda* 'chief room; barrack room.' We thank Juliette Dumas for suggesting this possible etymology. It is worth mentioning that اوطه باشي *odabaşı* is also attested in Algerian Arabic, see Ben Cheneb (1922: 85).

[35] < O.Tr. *bağlı,* Prémare (1993. vol. 1: 272).

[36] PDMA *wəld l-qaḥba.*

[37] PDMA *wəld l-kəlb.*

[38] < Br. *abərrug* according to Behnstedt and Woidich (2011: 313). Also reported by Heath (2002: 103).

[39] Unattested. < Sp. *bastión* 'bastion.'

[40] In PDMA this word means 'egg' (which is instead given by Moüette as <Oülets del jeja>). On the sexual connotation of the term *bīḍ* in several Arabic dialects, see Behnstedt and Woidich (2012: 254).

Bourge	*buṛž*	Tourelle	Turret; tower
Bous	*būs*	Baiſer	Kiss!
Bouzoula	*bəzzūla*	Mamelles (pl.)	Breast (sg.)
Braham	*Bṛāhīm*	Abraham	Abraham
Breda	*bəṛṛāda*	Bouteille	Earthenware pitcher, gurglet
Brema	*bəṛma*	Coquemar	Kettle, boiler
Bréber	*bṛābəṛ*	Barbare (sg.)	Berbers (pl.)
Brocato	*bəṛkāḍu (~)*[41]	Brocard	Brocade
Cadera	*xaḍra*	Cru (masc.)	Raw (fem.)
Cafetan	*qafṭān*	Juſtacorps	Kaftan (a traditional Moroccan dress)
Cafila	*qbīla*	Tribu	Tribe
Calas	*Qāləṣ*	Cadix	Cadiz
Caliba	*klība*	Eſpagneux	Spaniel [dog] (dim.)
Califa	*xlīfa*	Vice-Roy	Vicegerent
Caloma	*qlūma*	Plume (sg.)	Quills (pl.)
Camiza	*qmīža (~)*[42]	Chemiſe	Shirt
Cancha	*xanša*	Sac	Bag, sack
Caran	*qaṛṛān*	Cornard	Cuckold
Carret	*kāġəṭ*	Papier	Paper
Caſtanas	*qaṣṭāna*[43]	Châtaignes	Chestnuts
Catay	*xt-i*	Sœur	My sister
Catme-cat	*qədd ma qədd* **(?)**	Egal	[It's the] same
Cebahya	*ṣəbḥīya*	Lampe de verre	Glass lamp
Cefellés	*flāləs*[44]	Poullets	Chicks
Celba	*səlba*[45]	Cable	Ladder rope; cordage

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[41] Cf. Prémare (1993, vol. 1: 204). Other vocalizations are possible.

[42] Cf. Sp. *camisa*.

[43] < Sp. *castaña*. PDMA *qaṣṭalla*.

[44] < Br. *afəllūs*, ultimately from Late Latin.

[45] Cf. Prémare (1995, vol. 6: 151).

Celila	*slīla*	Panier	Little basket
Celimen	*Slīmān*	Salomon	Salomon
Celom	*səllūm*	Echelle	Ladder
Celouguy	*slūgi*	Levrier	Greyhound
Ceroüel	*səṛwāl*	Calçons	Breeches, pants
Cevénia	*səbnīya*	Mouchoir	Scarf, headscarf
Chaar	*šʕaṛ*	Cheveux	Hair
Cháár	*šhəṛ*	Mois	Month
Chacor	*šāqūṛ*	Coignée	Huge axe
Chal hadac chy	*šḥāl hādāk š-ši?*	Combien cela	How much does that cost?
Chechia	*šāšīya*	Bonnet	Fez, kind of hat with a tassel
Chedidde	*šdīd*	Avare	Mean
Chéer	*šʕīr*	Orge	Barley
Chequara	*škāṛa*	Bource	Handbag
Cherob	*šṛub!*	Boire	Drink!
Chetoüá	*šətwa*	Hiver	Winter
Chéger	*šžəṛ*	Arbres	Trees
Chem	*šḥəm*	Suif	Fat, tallow
Chéma	*šəmʕa*	Cierge	Candle
Chemeg	*šməʕ*	Cire	Wax
Cher-alla	*šṛaʕ Ḷḷāh*	Juſtice de Dieu	God's law
Chera	*šṛaʕ*	Juſtice	Islamic law
Chereys	*šārīž[46]*	Vivier	Fishpond
Cherf	*šārəf*	Vieil	Old
Cherifs	*šrīf*	Princes (pl.)	Noble (sg.), a person descended from the family of the prophet Muḥammad

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[46] Cf. *šārīž* 'pool, pond,' Prémare (1995, vol. 7: 222).

Cheruil	*šərbīl*	Pantoufles	Babouches
Chimche	*šəmš*	Soleil	Sun
Chimechia	*šəmmāšīya*	Fenêtre	Stained-glass window; dormer
Chiuir	*šīyər* **(?)**	Palme de la main	He made a gesture with his hand **(?)**
Choüá	*šwa*	Rôty	Roast
Choué-choué	*šwāy šwāy*	Peu à peu	Little by little
Chouéchie	*šwāši*	Bonnets	Pl. of *šāšiya* (see Chechia above)
Choüerb	*šwārəb*	Les lévres	Lips
Chouery	*šwāri*	Joües[47]	Packsaddles
Chouméta	*šmāta*	Poltron	Coward
Cid / cedé	*sīd / sīd-i*	Monſieur	Lord, sir / my lord
Cid-na	*sīd-na*	Monſeigneur	His Royal Highness, His Majesty (Lit. our Lord)
Cidna-ayſa	*sīd-na ʕīsa*	Jesus-Chrît N.S.	Our Lord, Jesus Christ
Cijds	*sīyəd*	Saints (pl.)	Saint (sg.)
Ciny	*ṣīni*	Bronze	Yellow copper
Conſon	*qunṣu ~ qunṣūn*[48]	Conſul	Consul
Corchuf	*xuršūf*	Cardes	Artichoke thistle
Corteba	*Quṛṭba*	Cordoüe	Córdoba
Cot-aláquer, lafia	*qʕud* **(?)** *ʕla xīṛ! l-ʕāfya*[49]	Demeure en paix	Keep well! Goodbye!
Cot-allaquer	*qʕud* **(?)** *ʕla xīṛ!*	Adieu	Keep well!
Cot hadac-chy	*xūd hādāk š-ši!*	Tiens cela	Hold that thing!
Coubaiſſy	*xubbāzi*[50]	Boulanger	Baker

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[47] Cf. Fr. *joue* 'each of the two sides of an object,' see https://cnrtl.fr/definition/joue

[48] Cf. Prémare (1998, vol. 10: 437).

[49] PDMA *bqa ʕla xīr*.

[50] Unattested. PDMA *mūl l-fəṛṛān*.

Couchina	kuššīna[51]	Cuiſine	Kitchen
Coul	kūl!	Manger	Eat!
Coulchy	kull ši	Tout	Everything
Coulchy-beſef	kull ši bəzzāf	Abondance	[There is] an abundance of everything
Courſé	kursi	Banc	Bench, chair
Couſeba	quṣba	Château	Kasbah
Couſebar	quṣbāṛ[52]	Serfeüil	Chervil
Coutifa	qʷṭīfa	Tapis	High-quality wool rug
Coutlou	qutl-u! ~ qutlu!	Tuë	Kill him! ~ kill! (pl.)
Coüya / caiq	xū-ya / xā-k	Frere	My brother / your brother
Cromfel	qṛunfəl[53]	Oeillets	Carnations (fragrant flower)
Crujou	xuṛžu	Sortir	They went out ~ go out (pl.)!
Cubira beſef	kʷbīra bəzzāf	Extrême / tres-grãd	Very big
Dren-dren	ādrār n drən (?)[54]	Atlas	Atlas mountains
Daba-daba	dāba dāba	Bien-toſt	Right now
Daoüt / daoet	Dāwūd	David	David
Dar-ſcha	ḍāṛ s-səkka	Maiſon de la mõnoye	Mint (coin manufacturer)
Déar-ſultan	ḍyāṛ s-sulṭān	Serrail du Roy	Seraglio, the sultan's palace
Deba	ḍḅaʕ	Loup	Hyena (M: wolf)
Debebe	ḍbāb	Brune	Mist
Debenan	dəbbāna	Mouche	Fly

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[51] Compare with Sp. *cocina*.

[52] Unattested. Compare with *qaẓbūṛ* 'coriander.'

[53] In PDMA this term is used for 'cloves' (the spice), which is instead <Ould-nóa> here.

[54] The first term appears to be Br. *ādrār* 'mountain' or its plural *īdrārən*, perhaps followed by the Br. genitive particle *n*. The lattern term seems to be a generic term for the range, cf. *deren* 'the Deren mountain, a mountain range located on the northern side of the High Atlas' in Prémare (1994, vol. 4: 269).

Decan	*dəxxān*	Fumée	Smoke
December	*dsəmbeṛ (~)*[55]	Decembre	December
Déeb	*dhəb*	Or	Gold
Defar	*ḍfāṛ*	Ongles	Nails
Defunou	*dəfn-u! ~ dəfnu!*	Enterrer	Bury him! ~ bury (pl.)!
Dejeje	*žāž ~ ǧāž*	Verre	Glass (material)
Delel	*dəllāl*	Crieur	Auctioneer
Delliá	*dālya*	Vigne	Grapevine
Dem	*dəmm*	Sang	Blood
Dem-alcóa	*dəmm la-xwa*[56]	Sang de Dragon	Sap of Canary Islands dragon tree (*Dracaena draco*), used as a dye
Demen-hadacchy	*d-mən hādāk š-ši?*	A qui eſt cela	Whose is this?
Denoubs	*dnūb*	Pechez	Sins
Dequaicq	*dqīq*	Farine	Flour
Dereſſ	*dərrāz*	Tiſſerand	Weaver
Dib	*dīb*	Renard	Jackal, Rüppell's fox (M: fox)
Di ella	*dyāl-ha*	A elle	Hers
Di ellum	*dyāl-hum*	A eux	Theirs
Dielcum	*dyāl-kum*	A vous	Yours (pl.)
Diellec	*dyāl-ək*	A toy	Yours (sg.)
Dielli	*dyāl-i*	A moy	Mine
Diello	*dyāl-u*	A luy	His
Dienna	*dyāl-na*	A nous	Ours
Dima	*dīma*	Eternité	Always
Din	*dīn*	La Loy	Religion
Dinia	*dənya*	Monde	World
Doüá	*dwa*	Medecine	Medicine

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[55] PDMA *dūžānbīr ~ šhaṛ ṭnāš.*

[56] Cf. Boutrolle (2019: 4).

Doya	dwāya	Pipe à tabac	Bowl of a tobacco pipe
Draham	drāhəm	Monnoye	Silver coins; money
Dras de lymin	d-drāʕ də-l-īmən	Bras droit	Right arm
Dras de lazary	d-drāʕ də-l-ʕasri	Bras gauche	Left arm
Druge	dṛūž	Eſcallier	Stairs
Drobo	ḍurb-u ~ ḍurbu	Battre	Hit him! ~ hit (pl.)! ~ they hit
Drobo-quebella	ḍuṛb-u qbāla	Frapper fort	Hit (etc.) hard!
Durban	ḍuṛbān	Porc épic	Porcupine
Elcahiet	l-xayyāṭ	Tailleur	Tailor
El-ha-biba	lə-ḥbība	Mon bien-aimé	Darling; sweetheart
Elhamen	lə-ḥmām	Pigeons	Pigeons
Elma	l-ma	Eau	Water
Elmarquez	l-mərkəz ~ l-mərkāz	Pillon	Pestle
Elquedib	l-kādəb	menteur	Liar
Emin	āmīn	Amen	Amen
Emir	āmīr	Empereur	Prince
Ener	ānīṛ ~ ēnēṛ (~)[57]	Janvier	January
Eoüa	Ḥāwa	Eve	Eve
Eoüy-alla	w-yāḷḷa!	Allons	Let's go!
Ercaſſe	ṛ-ṛəqqāṣ	Courrier	Messenger
Erfet	rfəd!	Lever	Raise! ~ he raised
Erfet-hadac-chy	rfəd hādāk š-ši!	Porte cela	Pick that thing up!
Ergout	ṛgud!	Dormir	Sleep!
Erqueba	ṛ-ṛəqba	Col	Neck
Erquézou	rəkzu!	Piller	Drive it! [into the ground]
Eya	Yaḥya	Jean	John
Falanças	flānṣa	Melons d'eau	Watermelons
Fanal[58]	fnāṛ	Lanterne	Lantern

[57] Unattested. < Sp. *enero*. PDMA *yanāyər ~ šhəṛ wāḥəd.*

[58] Cf. Sp. *fanal.*

Fartas	*fəṛṭāṣ*	Teigneux	Bald; infected by the scalp ringworm
Fel ſoc	*f-əṣ-ṣūq*	Au Marché	At the market
Felouca	*flūka*	Chaloupe	Rowing boat
Felous / carat	*flūs / qəṛṭ*[59]	Denier	Money
Fen-kontay	*fāyn kunti?*	D'où viens-tu	Where have you been?
Fenoüá-l'triq	*fāyn hūwa ṭ-ṭṛīq?*	Où eſt le chemin	Where is the way?
Fenoüá-l'mdina	*fāyn hūwa l-mdīna?*	Où eſt la Ville	Where is the city?
Fenoüá-bebecq	*fāyn hūwa bābā-k?*	Où eſt ton pere	Where is your father?
Fenoüá-aymec	*fāyn hūwa yəmmā-k?*	Où eſt ta mere	Where is your mother?
Fequer	*fqīr*	Sage	Pious man, saint, marabout
Ferez	*fārəs*	Soldat à cheval	Horseman
Feuraon	*Fərʕūn*	Pharaon	Pharaoh
Filfin	*fəlfəl ~ fəlfən*	Poivre	Pepper
Firen	*fīrān*	Souris	Mice
Flaminc	*flāmīnk (~)*	Flamans	Flemish
Foucadou	*fʷxāḍ-u*	Cuiſſes	His thighs
Foul	*fūl*	Féves	Broad beans
Fouran	*faṛṛān*	Four	Oven
Frac-delhamẽ	*fṛāx d-əl-ḥmām*	Pigeonneau (sg.)	Squabs, young pigeons (pl.)
Francice	*fṛanṣīṣ*[60]	François	French
Gâchaichin	*ġaššāšīn*	Rebelles	Fraudsters, tricksters
Gandor	*ġənḍūṛ*	Vaillant	Daredevil, daring, reckless
Gedery	*žədri*	Galle	Smallpox; chickenpox
Géma	*žāmaʕ*	Temple	Congregational mosque
Genéma	*žāhənnāma*	Enfer	Hell

[59] Cf. *qəṛṭ ~ qṛoṭ* 'capital loss; ruin' (Prémare 1998, vol. 10: 291).

[60] < Sp. *francés.*

Genoa	*Žənwa*	Gennes	Genoa
Genon	*žnūn*	Eſprit folet	Elves, goblins
Geranat	*žṛānāt*[61]	Grenoüilles	Frogs
Gerara	*žəṛṛāṛa*	Poulie	Pulley, sheave, caster
Gery, gery	*žri! žri!*	Courir	Run! run!
Giffa	*žīfa*	Etouffer	The action of strangling
Gild	*žəld*	Peau	Skin
Ginbril	*Žəbrīl*	Gabriel	Gabriel
Gomia	*kūmīya*	Poignard	Curved-blade dagger
Gous-t'ayb	*gūz ṭ-ṭīb*	Noix de muſcade	Nutmeg
Gréga	*gəṛgāʕ*	Noix	Walnuts
Grenata	*Ġəṛnāṭa*	Grenade ville	City of Granada
Guaiſas	*gāyza*	Chevrons	Rafter
Guelez	*gləs!*	S'aſſeoir	Sit down! ~ he sat down
Guené	*ġənni!*	Chanter	Sing!
Guezers	*Gz[āy]ər*[62]	Alger	Algiers
Guezery	*gəzzāri*[63]	Boucher	Butcher
Guezira	*gzīra*	Iſle	Island
Guimbréa	*gəmbri*	Guitarre	Kind of three-string guitar
Hacera	*ḥṣīra*	Natte	Mat
Hacq-alla	*ḥaqq Ḷḷāh*	Verité de Dieu	Divine truth
Hajit	*ʕayyīt*	Las / laſſé	I got tired, I am tired
Halef	*ḥāləf*	Jureur	One who takes an oath
Halip	*ḥlīb*	Laict doux	Milk
Hamaco	*ḥmaq*	Fol	Mad, foolish
Hamda	*ḥāmḍa*	Aigre	Sour (fem.)

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[61] < Br. *agru.*

[62] PDMA *Dzāyər.*

[63] Unattested. PDMA *gəzzāṛ.*

Hamerzan	*āməẓṛāṛ*[64]	Pierriers	Gravel, scree
Hanut	*ḥānūt*	Boutique	Shop
Haramy	*ḥṛāmi*	Jaloux	Impish, rascal
Harcou	*ḥəṛq-u! ~ ḥəṛqu!*	Brûler	Burn it! ~ burn! (pl.)
Harque-bouc / mouc	*ḥṛəq bū-k / mm-uk*	Brûler pere & mere	To burn your father / mother
Hayt-lou	*ʕayyəṭ-lu*	Appellez-le	Call him!
Hebrero	*hēbṛēṛo (~)*[65]	Février	February
Hededin	*ḥaddādi*	Mareʃchal	Farrier, blacksmith
Hergelay	*r-rəžlī[n]*	Jambes & pieds	Legs and feet
Hergelac	*rəžla*[66]	Pourpier	Purslane
Heʃir	*āsīr*	Captif	Captive
Heulou	*ḥlu*	Doux	Sweet
Hor	*ḥuṛṛ*	Libre	Free
Iblis	*Iblīs*	Demon / Belʃebut	Devil
Ienenet	*žnānāt*	Jardin (sg.)	Gardens (pl.)
Inan	*[nt]īna (?)*[67]	Vous	You
Inchalla	*in-šā-ḷḷāh*	S'il plaî à Dieu	If God wills
Ingliche	*inglīš*[68]	Anglois	English
Injom	*n-nžūm*	Etoiles	Stars
Inʃan	*n-nsa*	Femelles	Women
Inʃibin	*nsībi*	Beaufrere	My brother-in-law
Intinan	*ntīna*	Toy	You (sg.)
Iulio	*yūlyu*[69]	Juillet	July

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[64] < Br., cf. Prémare (1995, vol. 5: 300).

[65] Unattested. < Sp. *febrero*. PDMA *šhəṛ žūž ~ fəbrāyər.*

[66] Cf. Prémare (1995, vol. 5: 67).

[67] Moüette's representation resembles the second-person singular *ntīna* (cf. <Intinan> below), but without the expected initial consonants *nt-*. We are not aware of any pronoun *īna* elsewhere and consider it unlikely here. Perhaps Moüette, having heard dialect variation between *nta* and *ntīna*, parsed the latter as *nta + īna* and associated the latter element with more polite or respectful speech, hence his gloss here 'Vous.'

[68] < Sp. *inglés.*

[69] PDMA *šhəṛ səbʕa ~ yūlyu.*

Iunio	*yūnyu*[70]	Juin	June
Izac	*Isḥāq*	Iſaac	Isaac
Hac-aneby	*[wa-]ḥaqq n-nbi*	Par ma foy	[I swear] by the Prophet
Jaoüy	*žāwi*	Encens	Incense
Jebel	*žbəl*	Montagne	Mountain
Jeben	*žbən*	Fromage	Cheese
Jedegh	*ždəʕ*	Bidet	Pony
Jeeds	*šhīd*	Martyrs (pl.)	Martyr (sg.)
Jege-delma	*(d)žāž d-əl-ma*[71]	Canars	Ducks
Jejas	*(d)žāža*	Poulles (pl.)	Hen, chicken (sg.)
Jelevia	*žəllābīya*	Capot	Djellaba
Jemel	*žməl*	Chameau	Camel
Jeü	*žūʕ*	Faim	Hunger
Jora	*žūḥṛa*	Perles (pl.)	Pearl (sg.)
Jud-Judec	*žədd žədd-ək*	Biſayeul	Your great-grandfather
Judec	*žədd-ək*	Ayeul	Your grandfather
Judéhá	*žəddā-ha*	Ayeulle	Her grandmother
L'aide	*l-ʕīd*	Pâque	Feast
L'ajel	*la-ʕžəl*	Veau	Calf
L'Aracq	*l-ʕṛəq*	Sueur	Sweat
L'arneb	*l-aṛnəb*	Lievre	Hare
L'aoüja	*l-wažh*	Viſage	Face
L'ayja	*l-ʕalža*	Renegate	Renegade (fem.)
L'bebe	*l-bāb*	Porte	Door
L'belot	*l-bəllūṭ*	Chaine	Holm oak
L'belot	*l-bəllūṭ*	Gland	Acorn
L'berd	*l-bəṛd*	Froid	Cold
L'cady	*l-qāḍi*	Juge de la Loy	Judge
L'caoët	*l-qawwād*	Maquereau	Pimp

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[70] PDMA *šhaṛ sətta ~ yūnyu.*

[71] PDMA *buṛk.* This item may be either *džāž* or *žāž.*

L'căábá	l-qaḥba	Putain	Whore
L'caſdir	l-qaẓdīr	Etaing	Tin
L'cobus	l-xubz	Pain	Bread
L'couba	l-qubba	Salle	Domed state room
L'coudiac	l-quḍyān (?)[72]	Pot de chambre	The act of evacuating stool (?) (M: chamberpot)
L'edella	ḍ-ḍlāſ	Côtes	Ribs
L'éla	lālla	Madame	Madam, lady
L'fem	lə-fḥam	Charbon	Charcoal
L'fequia	l-fākya	Fruits	Fruits
L'fetor	lə-fṭūṛ	Déjeûner	Breakfast
L'finita	lə-fnīta[73]	Epingle	Pin
L'garaf	l-ġaṛṛāf	Pot à l'eau	Water jug
L'géna	l-žənna	Ciel	Heaven
L'gire	l-žīr	Chaux	Lime, whitewash
L'guibez	l-gəbs	Plâtre	Gypsum plaster
L'hábel	lə-ḥbāl	Cordes	Ropes
L'háda	l-ſadda	Armes	Weapons
L'hajar	lə-ḥžəṛ	Pierres	Stones
L'halouf	l-ḥallūf[74]	Porc ſanglier	Wild boar
L'haoiche	lə-ḥwāyəž	Meubles	Stuffs, clothes
L'heut	l-ḥūt	Poiſſons	Fish
L'ingil	l-Īnžīl	Evangile	Gospel
L'migel	l-mīžāl	Temps	Deadline extension, alloted life span
L'quebeda	l-kəbda	Foye	Liver
L'queda N'goulec	l-ġədda ngūl-lək	Je te le diray demain	I will tell you tomorrrow
L'quehel	l-xəll	Vinaigre	Vinegar

[72] Cf. *quḍyān ḥāža* in Prémare (1994, vol. 3: 264). This word is problematic.

[73] Cf. Prémare (1998, vol. 10: 163).

[74] A possible borrowing from Br. *ilef* 'wild boar,' cf. Chaker (2019: 7208). PDMA *ḥallūf l-ġāba*.

L'quelem	*l-klām*	Parole	Speech, word
L'quetan	*l-kəttān*	Toile	Linen; cottonade
L'quetib	*l-kātīb*	Secretaire	Secretary
L'quetoüb	*lə-ktūb*	Livre à lire (sg.)	Books (pl.)
L'teig	*t-tāž*	Couronne	Crown
La	*la*	Non	No
Labroc	*l-buṛquʕ*	Coiffe	Headdress (clothing)
Lachia	*la-ʕšīya*	Soir	Evening
Ladar	*ḍ-ḍhaṛ* **(?)**	Epaules	Back (M: shoulders)
Ládem	*la-ʕḍəm*	Os	Bone
Ladeſſe	*la-ʕdəs*	Nantilles	Lentils
Laffia	*l-ʕāfya*	Paix	Peace[75]
Lagécialogue	***XXX***	Quereleux	Quarrelsome **(?)**
Lahády	*lā[yən] ġādi?*	Où vas-tu?	Where are you going?
Lahagéla	*l-ḥəžla*	Perdrix	Partridge
Lahiat	*la-ʕyāṭ*	Voix	Shout, cry
Laiday	*l-yəddī(n)*	Main (sg.)	Hands (pl.)
Lajaoura	*l-āžūṛa*	Brique	Brick
Lalla	*lālla*	Madamoiſelle	Madam, lady
Lajib	*la-ʕžīb*	Beau	Wonderful
Lalouche	*la-ʕlūž*	Renegat (sg.)	Renegades (pl.)
Lamfat	*lə-nfāṭ*[76]	Canons	Cannons
Laoüar	*la-ʕwəṛ*	Borgne	One-eyed man
Laoüda	*l-ʕawda*	Cavalle	Mare
Laſefar	*s-sfaṛ* **(?)**[77]	Barbe	Act of shaving **(?)** (M: beard)
Laſſen	*la-ʕsəl*	Miel	Honey
Laraeq	*la-ʕṛəq*	Nerfs	Nerve

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[75] Cf. Prémare (1996. vol. 9: 165). In PDMA *ʕāfya* mainly means 'fire.'

[76] Cf. Dozy (1927, vol. 2: 704); also *nfūṭ* 'peashooter, blowpipe' (Prémare 1999, vol. 11: 428).

[77] Cf. PDMA *šəfṛa* 'razor.'

Laraig	*la-ʕṛəg*	Veine	Vein
Larar	*l-ʕaṛʕāṛ*	Romarin	Juniper
Larba	*l-aṛbaʕ*	Mercredy	Wednesday
Larby	*l-ʕarbi*	Arabe	Arab
Laroʃʃa	*la-ʕṛūṣa*	Nopces	Bride
Larʃa	*l-ʕarṣa*	Clos	Enclosed plot of land
Lart	*l-aṛḍ*	Terre	Ground, earth
Latela	*l-ʕatla*	Pince	Lever; hoe
Latrous	*l-ʕatṛūs*	Bouc	Billy goat
Láütat	*l-ūṭa*	Vallée	Plain
Layon	*la-ʕyūn*	Fontaine	Springs
Layné	*l-ʕīnī[n]*	Oeil (sg.)	Eyes (pl.)
Layneib	*l-ʕīnəb*	Raiʃins	Grapes
Lázéba-Mariẽ	*l-ʕazba Maryam*	La Vierge Marie	The Virgin Mary
Le biot	*l-byuḍ*	Blanc	White
Le calb	*l-qalb*	Coeur	Heart
Le candé	*l-qandīl*	Lampe de terre	Oil lamp
Le canjar	*l-xanžaṛ*	Dogues	Dagger
Le canut	*l-qənnūṭ*[78]	Cheminée	Long tube, tunnel vault
Le caʃʃe	*l-xaṣṣ*	Laittües	Lettuce
Le fom	*l-fumm*	Bouche	Mouth
Le Forcan	*l-Furqān*[79]	Alcoran	The Qur'an
Le gorfa	*l-ġurfa*	Chambre	Room
Le guemeg	*l-gəmḥ*	Bled	Wheat
Le Haquem	*l-ḥākəm*	Juge de Police	Local government official; police officer
Le heind	*l-hənd*	Acier	Steel
Le Marjen	*l-məṛžān*	Coral	Coral

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[78] See Prémare (1998, vol. 10: 439).

[79] See Dan (1649: 267) for a roughly contemporary mention of "Alfurkan" as a North African term for the Qu'ran at large.

Le méjoub	l-māžən (?)[80]	Citerne	Cistern
Le queras	lə-xṛa	Chier	Shit
Le Querif	l-xrīf	Automne	Autumn
Le zarque	lə-zṛəq	Bleuf	Blue
Le-cora	l-kūṛa	Balles	Ball; Bullet
Lebac	l-baqq	Punaiſes	Bedbugs
Lebacora	l-bākūṛa	Figues	Breva fig
Lebahar	lə-bḥaṛ	La Mer	Sea
Lebarot	l-bāṛūd	Poudre	Gunpowder
Lebarqua	l-baṛka	Benediction	Blessing
Lebé-au	l-bīʕ	Vendre	Sale
Leben	lbən	Laict de beurre	Buttermilk
Leber	l-bəṛṛ	Royaume	Land, country, continent
Lebera	l-bāṛəḥ	Devant hier	Yesterday
Lebermil	l-bəṛmīl	Barils (pl.)	Barrel (sg.)
Lebire	l-bīr	Puis	Well
Leboucara	l-buqra	Vache	Cow
Leboul	l-būl	Piſſer	Pee
Lebouſal	lə-bʷṣal	Oignons	Onions
Leburgot	l-buṛġūt	Puces	Fleas
Lecába	l-kaʕba	Tentes / Pavillons de guerre (pl.)	Tent, pavillion (sg.)
Lecadem	l-xādəm	Negreſſe	Black female servant
Lecadum	l-qādūm	Herminette	Adze
Lecahier	l-xyāṛ	Concombres	Cucumbers
Lecahiet	l-xayṭ	Fil	Thread
Lecala	l-xla	Campagne	Countryside
Lecarmoud	l-qəṛmūd	Thuiles	Roof tiles
Lecarmous	l-kəṛmūṣ[81]	Figues ſeches	Figs

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[80] Cf. Ben Sedira (1910: 766).

[81] Compare PDMA šrīḥa 'dried figs,' whereas kəṛmūṣ usually refers to only fresh ones.

Lecaſſa	*l-xaṣṣa*	Fontaine de marbre	Fountain
Lecat	*ləqqāṭ*	Tenailles	Pliers, pincers
Lecatem	*l-xātəm*	Bagues	Ring
Lecodem	*l-xuddām*	Archers[82]	Subordinate military officers
Lecolen	*lə-qʷlīn*	Lapin	Rabbit
Lecommice	*lə-xʷmīs*	Jeudy	Thursday
Lecorfa	*l-qurfa*	Canelle	Cinnamon
Lecoſt	*l-Quds*	Jeruſalem	Jerusalem
Lecoub	*l-qubb*	Seau	Bucket
Lecoudemy	*l-xudmi*	Coûteau	Knife
Lecréché	*l-kərš ~ l-krīša*[83]	Ventre	(Little) belly
Lecrom	*l-ḳṛumb*	Choux	Cabbage
Lecron	*l-qṛūn*	Cornes	Horns
Lecoufara	*l-ġuffāṛa*[84]	Manteau	Overcoat
Ledar	*ḍ-ḍāṛ*	Maiſon	House
Ledehor-loully	*ḍ-ḍhuṛ l-lūli*	Midy	Noon [prayer]
Lefar	*l-fāṛ*	Rat	Rat, mouse
Lefarcha	*l-fəṛša*	Le lit	Mattress, bed
Lefigil	*lə-fžəl*	Raves	Radish
Lefil	*l-fīl*	Elephant	Elephant
Lefoud	*lə-fwād ~ lə-ffʷād*	Poulmons	Entrails, bowels
Legaba	*l-ġāba*	Foreſt	Forest
Legamera	*l-gamṛa*	La lune	Full moon
Legem	*lžəm*	Bridde	Bridle
Legong-ie-fout	*l-gunfūd*	Heriſſon	Hedgehog
Legorob	*l-gāṛəb*	Galere	Galley

[82] 'Officier subalterne armé d'une épée, d'une hallebarde et dans la suite d'une arme à feu, chargé de maintenir l'ordre des villes et d'y exercer la justice,' cf. https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/archer.

[83] The latter interpretation would be a diminutive.

[84] Cf. Prémare (1996, vol. 9: 396).

Legorof	l-[mu]ġruf[85]	Cuillier	Spoon, ladle
Legueda	la-ġədda	Demain	Tomorrow, the next day
Leguemel	lə-gməl	Poux	Lice
Legueras	l-graʕ	Citroüilles	Pumpkins
Leguerbel	l-ġərbāl	Crible	Sieve
Leguezel	lə-ġzāl	Chevreuil	Antelope (M: roe deer)
Lehabibous	lə-ḥbību	Amans	Lover (dim.)
Lehachon	l-ḥaššūn	Matrice	Vagina (vulgar)
Lehacq	l-ḥaqq	Verité	Truth
Lehaded	l-ḥaddād	Armurier	Blacksmith; armourer
Lehafa	lḥāfa	Matelas	Mattress
Lehafef	l-ḥaffāf	Barbier	Barber
Lehaïque	l-ḥāyk	Voile / manteau de femme	Haik
Lehait	l-ḥaḍḍ	Dimanche	Sunday
Lehájt	ləhyat[86]	Menton	Beard
Leharer	la-ḥrīr	Soye	Silk
Lehart	l-ḥāṛət	Laboureur	Ploughman
Lehama	l-ḥumma	Fiévre	Fever
Lehamar	lə-ḥmāṛ	aʃne	Donkey
Lehamára	lə-ḥmāṛa	aʃneʃʃe	Female donkey
Lehamen	lə-ḥammām	Bain	Bath
Lehancha	l-ḥanša	Couloeuvre	Colubrid snake
Lehaʃans	lə-ḥṣān	Cheval	Horse
Lehaouly	l-ḥawli	Agneau	Lamb
Lehazem	lə-ḥzām	Eʃcharpe	Cummerbund, waist sash
Lehebus	lə-ḥəbs	Priʃon	Jail
Lehedit	lə-ḥdīd	Fer	Iron
Lehem	lḥəm	Viande	Meat

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[85] PDMA l-muġruf.

[86] ləḥya 'beard' when in construct state. Cf. ḏaqn 'chin,' which has the meaning of 'beard' in some Arabic dialects.

Lehem-dillilla	l-ḥamdu lī-Llāh	Graces à Dieu	Thank God (lit. Praise be to God)
Lehémens	l-[mə]hmāz	Eſperons	Spurs
Leherech	la-ʕṛəž	Boiteux	Lame man
Lehéri	lə-hri	Grenier	Granary
Leibit	l-ʕbīd	Négre (sg.)	Black slaves (pl.)
Lehind	l-Hind	Indes	India
Lemahaſtra	lə-mxadda (?)	Oreiller	Pillow
Lemarjaud	l-maṛžūʕ[87]	Serviteur	Servant, houseboy
Lemarja	l-maṛžūʕa	Servante	Servant (fem.)
Lemarſa	l-maṛṣa	Havre / port de mer	Harbour, port
Lemaſſa	lə-mḥassa	Eſtrille	Currycomb
Lemaſſar	l-Māṣāṛ ~ l-Maṣṛ	Grand-Caire	Egypt
Lemel beſef	l-māl bəzzāf	Beaucoup de biens	A lot of goods
Lemelay	l-məlḥ	Sel	Salt
Lemelay del barot	l-məlḥ d-əl-bāṛūḍ	Salpeſtre	Saltpetre
Leméia	l-maʕza	Chevre	Goat
Lemeqaſſe	lə-mqaṣṣ	Sizeaux	Scissors
Lemeſarn	lə-mṣāṛən	Tripes	Intestines, guts
Lemet	l-mīyət	Mort	Dead
LEmin	l-āmīn	Maître major	Supervisor
Lemouc	l-muxx	Cerveau	Brain
Lemouca	l-mūka	Hibou	Owl
Lemouche	l-mušš[88]	Chat	Cat
Lemous	l-mūs	Raſoir	Razor, knife
Lemulut	[ḥabb] lə-mlūk	Ceriſes	Cherries
Lenár	n-nāṛ	Feu	Fire
Lequebel	lə-kbāl[89]	Chaîne de fer	Shackles

[87] Cf. Prémare (1995, vol. 5: 63).

[88] < Br. amšīš.

[89] Cf. Prémare (1998, vol. 10: 518).

Lequebous	*l-kābūs*	Piʃtolet	Archaic pistol
Lequecheb	*lə-xšəb*	Bois	Wood, timber
Lequedra	*l-qədṛa*	Marmite	Cooking pot
Lequefel	*lə-qfəl*	Serrure	Lock, padlock
Lequeleb	*l-kəlb*	Chien	Dog
Lequemar	*lə-qmāṛ*	Dez	Gambling
Lequemera	*lə-xmīra*	Levain	Leaven, yeast
Lequetib	*l-kātīb*	Ecrivain	Writer
Lequetran	*l-qəṭṛān*	Goudron	Tar
Lequibiche	*l-kəbš*	Mouton	Ram
Lequibrit	*l-kəbrīt*	Souffre	Sulphur
Lequijl	*l-kīl*	Meʃure	Unit of capacity
Leteleta	*t-tlāta*	Mardy	Tuesday
Leténin	*lə-tnīn*	Lundy	Monday
LeTard	*t-tʕaṛṛəḍ*	Guerre	War
Leutet	*l-wtād*[90]	Chevilles	Dowel
Lémen	*n-nməl*	Fourmis	Ant
Liache	*līyāš?*	Pourquoy	What for? Why?
Liacot	*l-yāqūt*	Diamans	Gem
Libra	*l-ībra*	Aiguille	Needle
Lichboa	*Līšbūwa*	Liʃbone	Lisbon
Licher	*l-yəššīr*[91]	Garçon	Boy
Lihoudy	*l-īhūdi*	Juif	Jew
Lijara	*l-īžāṛa*	Payer	Remuneration, salary, wage
Lilla	*līla*	Nuit	Night
Limas	*līma*	Citrons (pl.)	Lemon (sg.)

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[90] Cf. Prémare (1999, vol. 12: 135).

[91] < Br. *iširri*, cf. Prémare (1999, vol. 12: 318).

Lin	*līyən*[92]	Cerf	Deer
Lingaſſe	*l-īngāṣ*	Poires	Pears
Liom	*l-yūm*	Jour	Today
Liptf	*ləft*	Navets	Turnips
Loa	*lūḥ*	Ais	Board, plank of wood
Loarca	*l-waṛqa*	Feüille	Sheet of paper
Loüard	*l-waṛḍ*	Roſes	Roses
Loüba	*l-wba*	Peſte	Plague
Loüet	*l-wād*	Riviere	River (tributary)
Loüet-elcubar	*l-wād l-akʷbəṛ (~)*	Fleuve	River (mainstem, emptying into sea)
Louidin	*l-wīdān*	Ruiſſeaux	Streams, brooks
M'caba-aoüjoü	*mxabbaʕ wužh-u*	Le viſage couvert	He is hiding ~ has hidden his face
Magáyor	*mġayyəṛ*	Triſte	Saddened, distressed
Mahab-chy	*mā-ḥabb-ši ~ mā-nḥabb-ši*	Je ne veux pas	I do not want
Mahâla	*mḥalla*	Armée	Army
Malẽ-del-benin	*mʕalləm d-əl-bni*	Maître maſſon	Master bricklayer
Malem ſenáa	*mʕalləm ṣənʕa*	Maître d'ouvrages	Master builder
Man-dichy	*mā-ʕənd-ī-ši*	Je n'ay rien	I have nothing
Man-gibchy	*mā-nžīb-ši*	Je n'apporte rien	I will not bring anything
Manchi-ſeheg	*mā-ši ṣḥīḥ*	Foible	Not strong
Mandou-ſebar	*mā-ʕənd-u ṣ-ṣbaṛ*	Impatient	He has no patience
Manſemat-chy	*mā-sməʕt-ši*	Je n'entends pas	I did not hear
Maráchx	*Mṛṛākəš*	Maroc	Marrakesh
Marbot	*maṛbūʕ*	Cizeau	Wood chisel
Maret	*mrīḍ*	Malade	Ill
Marſilla	*Māṛsīla (~)*	Marſeille	Marseilles

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[92] Cf. Dozy (1927, vol. 2: 563).

Marſo	*māṛsu (~)*[93]	Mars	March
Matá-tarchy	*mā-tˁaṭṭəl-ši*	N'arête pas	Do not delay!
Matarf-chy	*mā-taˁṛəf-ši*	Ignorant	You do not know anything
Matemora	*maṭmūṛa*	Baſſe-foſſe	Dungeon; silo
Mayo	*māyu (~)*[94]	May	May
Me hároc	*maḥṛūq*	Brûler	Burnt
Mecémar	*mṣāməṛ*	Clous	Nails
Mechar	*mənšāṛ*	Cie	Saw
Mechemeche	*məšmāš*	Abricots	Apricots
Mechoüar	*məšwəṛ*	Palais	The sultan's audience hall, the sultan's palace complex
Mecora	*nuqra*	Argent	Silver
Mecouſoub	*məksūb*	Eſclave	Already purchased slave
Medebaû	*mədbūḥ*	Egorger	Slaughtered (by throat cutting)
Medina	*mdīna*	Ville	City
Meheréz	*məhrāz*	Mortier à piller	Mortar
Mehéry	*məhri*	Dromadaire	Dromedary
Meheya	*māḥya*	Eau-de-vie	Fruit brandy
Mejerau	*nžəṛṛ-u ~ nžərru*	Treſner	I drag it ~ we drag ~ they were dragged
Mejouge-inti	*mžūwəž nti?*	Eſt-tu marié	Are you married?
Melbar	*mwubbəṛ ~ mən-l-ūbəṛ*	Velours	Velvet
Meléa	*mlīḥ*	Bon	Good
Melecas	*mlāyka*	Anges	Angels
Meleſſa	*məllāsa*	Rabot	Plane (tool)

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[93] < Sp. *marzo*. PDMA *māṛs ~ šhaṛ tlāta*.

[94] < Sp. *mayo*. PDMA *māy ~ šhaṛ xamsa*.

Melf	*məlf*	Etoffe / Draps	Bed linen
Melfeʃeche	*bəlləfsəž*	Violette	Violet (flower)
Men-bled foulany	*mən blād fūlāni*	De tel païs	From the country such-and-such
Menchina	*mā-ši hna*	Il n'y eſt pas	[He] is not here
Mendil	*məndīl*	Serviette	Towel
Mengil	*mənžəl*	Faucille	Sickle
Menʃara	*n-nṣāṛa*	Chrétiens	Christians
Menʃara	*n-nṣāṛa*	Infideles	Christians (M: infidels)
Menʃch-calec	*mā-ši šuġl-ək!* *(?)*	Qu'en as-tu affaire	It is not your business! / What do you have to do with it?
Mensʃerany	*n-nəṣṛāni*	Chrétien	Christian
Mequedelf	*məqdāf*	Rames	Oar
Mera	*məṛṛa*	Amer	Bitter (fem.)
Merara	*mṛāṛa ~ məṛṛāṛa*	Fiel	Bile
Meré-hia	*mrāya*	Miroir	Mirror
Merqueb	*mərkəb*[95]	Eſtrier	Stirrup
Meʃaha	*məsḥa*	Hoüe	Hoe
Meʃim-alla	*bə-smi Llāh*	Au Nom de Dieu	In the Name of God
Meʃquino	*məskīn*[96]	Pauvre	Poor
Meʃʃeria	*məṣrīya*	Cabinet	Waiting room in a house
Metara	*mṭāṛəḥ*	Lieux communs	Common spaces (for storage)
Metarca	*mṭaṛqa*	Marteau	Hammer
Metecal-de déheb	*mətqāl d-əd-dhəb*	Ducaton d'or de deux écus	Gold dinar
Meucala	*mkuḥla*	Fuſils	Blunderbuss (type of musket)

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[95] Cf. Prémare (1995, vol. 5: 196).

[96] Compare with Sp. *mezquino.*

Mezel-méja	*mā-zāl mā-ža*	Il n'eſt pas venu	He has not yet come
Mezerac	*məẓṛāq*	Pique	Iron pike
Micaël	*Mīkāyīl*	Michel	Michael
Mida	*mīda*	Table	Small table
Milhau	*mənhu?*	Qui eſt à la porte	Who is there? Who is it?
Mizan	*mīzān*	Balance	Weighing scale
Mizel / Céma	*mənzəh* **(?)** / *ṣəmʕa*	Tour	Tower, minaret
Mocfia	*muxfiya*	Plat	Large hollow tray
Morabitte	*mṛābəṭ*	Hermitte	Hermit
Morfa	*muṛfāʕ*[97]	Truelle	Trowel
Mouchy	*Mūše (~)*[98]	Moïſe	Moses
Mouley	*mūlā-y*	Maître / seigneur	My master, my lord
Mouley-lemel	*mūla l-māl*	Tréſorier	Treasurer
Mouleytna	*mūlāt-na*	Maîtreſſe	Our mistress, our lady
Mouſtar	*mustāṛ* **(?)**[99]	Vin	Wine
Mouzouna	*mūzūna*	Monnoye de 3. ſols	Silver coin weighing 1.2 gr. approximately
Müel	*[Ṣa]mūyīl*	Samuël	Samuel
Mufta	*muftāḥ*	Clef	Key
Mufty	*mʷfətti* **(?)**[100]	Eunuque	Eunuch
Muſulmin	*msəlmīn*	Fideles	Muslims
N'acacis	*l-qəṣṣīṣ* **(?)**[101]	Religieux	Islamic notary
N'caf-alla	*nxāf Ḷḷāh*	Craindre Dieu	I fear God
Nafa	*nāfəx*	Réchaux	Portable stove

[97] Unattested, but transparently following the instrumental pattern. Compare with Modern Standard Arabic *mirfāʕ* 'load-lifting device.'

[98] PDMA *Mūsa*. The name here seems to more closely reflect the Hebrew pronounciation *Moshe*.

[99] Since *məstāṛi* designates a certain variety of figs (cf. Prémare 1999, vol. 9. 191), it might be a kind of fig wine. Compare also with Spanish *mosto* 'must' and consider an orthographic interference with French *moutarde* 'mustard,' which is believed to hark back to Latin *mustum ardens* 'burning must.'

[100] Unattested, but might be a participle form sharing a root with with *fityān*, a term that has the meaning of 'eunuchs; slaves' in Andalusi Arabic, cf. Corriente (1997: 390) and Meouak (2004, *passim).*

[101] Absent from modern sources, but cf. the <Kaziz> described in Dapper (1668: 190).

Namâ	*nʕāma*	Auſtruche	Ostrich
Naqueré	*mnāxr-i*	Nez	My nostrils (= my nose)
Nar-gémá	*nhāṛ ž-žəmʕa*	Vendredy	Friday
Nebias	*[ā]nbya*	Prophetes	Prophets
Nedoüá	*nədwa*	Roſée	Dew
Néhab-alla	*nḥəbb Ḷḷāh*	Aimer Dieu	I love God
Néhes	*nḥās*	Cuivre	Copper
Néjar	*nəžžāṛ*	Charpentier	Carpenter
Némour	*nmūṛ*	Tigre (sg.)	Tigers (pl.)
Néſir	*nsər*	Aigle	Eagle
Neucal	*nəxxāl*	Son	Bran
Nif	*nəff*[102]	Tabac en poudre	A dose of snuff
Nil	*nīl*	Indigo	Indigo
Nó	*Nūḥ*	Noé	Noah
Nóar	*nwa*	Amandes	Almonds
Noára	*nūwāṛa*	Fleurs (pl.)	Flower (sg.)
Nora	*nāʕūṛa*	Roüe	Waterwheel
Noud	*nūḍ!*	Leve-toy	Get up!
November	*nūfəmbəṛ (~)*[103]	Novembre	November
October	*oktobəṛ (~)*[104]	Octobre	October
Once-lilla	*nuṣṣ l-līl*	Minuit	Midnight
Once oqûin	*nuṣṣ wqīya*	Demie-once	Half ounce
O'quia	*wqīya*	Once	Ounce
Oüa	*hūwa*	Luy	He
Ould / ben	*wuld / bən*	Fils	Son
Ould-nóa	*wuld n-nwa*[105]	Clous de girofle	Clove

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[102] Cf. *nəffa* 'snuff' and *nəff* 'to take snuff' in Ben Sedira (1910: 780), as well as PDMA *nəfḥa*. Mouëtte may have associated this term with *nīf* 'nose,' another possible reading of his transcription.

[103] PDMA *nowānbəṛ ~ šhəṛ ḥḍāš.*

[104] PDMA *oktōbəṛ ~ šhəṛ ʕašṛa.*

[105] Unattested elsewhere. Lit. 'the almond's son.' PDMA *qrunfəl.*

Oülets del jeja	wlād d-ə(d)ž-žāža[106]	Oeufs	Eggs
Oülla	wa-Ḹāh	Pardieu	[I swear] by God
Oüman	hūma[107]	Eux	They
Ourdou-l'haſãs	wəṛṛdu l-ḥṣān!	Abbrever un Cheval	Water the horse! ~ they watered the horse
Peris	Pārīs	Paris	Paris
Portegais	poṛtgīz	Portugais	Portuguese
Quader	xḍəṛ	Vert	Green
Quáifer	kāfəṛ	Payen	Unbeliever
Quantal	qənṭāṛ[108]	Quintal	Quintal (weight)
Qudemec	qəddām-ək	Devant toy	In front of you
Queel	kḥəl	Noir	Black
Quefif	xfīf	Leger	Light
Quérez	xəṛṛāz	Cordonnier	Shoemaker, cobbler
Quetata	qəṭṭāt ~ qəṭqāṭ ~ qṭa (?)	Pic	Egyptian plover ~ lapwing ~ pterocles
Quezou	xīzzu	Carottes	Carrots
Qui-finta	kīf nta?	Comment te porte-tu	How are you?
Quingiber	[s]kənžbīr	Gingembre	Ginger
Ragel	ṛāžəl	Homme	Man
Raha	ṛḥa	Moulin	Mill
Rahaouy	ṛəḥwi	Meûnier	Miller
Raſſe	ṛāṣ	Tête	Head
Ray	rīḥ	Vent	Wind
Rays-courſant	ṛāyəs quṛṣān	Capitaine Corſaire	Pirate captain
Real kubir	ryāl kʷbīr	Ecu d'argent	A certain silver coin

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[106] Literally 'children of the chicken.' PDMA has bīḍ, which for Moüette is testicles (see <Bida>), so this is a likely case of taboo avoidance.

[107] It is unclear whether or not the final -n represents a true consonant or is simply Moüette's perception of final -a (as in <Sequanan> sxāna 'heat' and <inſan> nsa 'women,' among others). Some first-layer North African varieties do have hūmān 'they' and ntūmān 'you (pl.); see, e.g., Marçais (1902: 120).

[108] Cf. Sp. quintal.

Rebéa	*ṛbīʕ*	Herbe	Grass, weeds
Rebebe	*rbāb*	Violon	Bowed lute
Rebeh	*ṛbīʕ*	Printemps	Spring
Recam	*ṛxām*	Marbre	Marble
Réfel	*Rafāyīl*	Raphaël	Raphael
Regina	*ṛžĭna*[109]	Poix-raiſine	Pitch (resin)
Requeba	*rəkba*	Genoüil	Knee
Retach	*ṛtāḥ!*	Repoſer	Rest! ~ he rested
Réy	*ṛāʕi*	Paſteur	Shepherd
Rezama	*rzāma*	Maillet	Wooden mallet
Richats	*rīšāt*	Plumes	Feathers
Rip	*ṛāyəb*	Laict caillé	Curdled milk
Roa	*hwa*	Air	Air
Roba	*ṛbāʕa*	Quarteron	Group, gang
Roho	*ṛūḥ-u*	Ame	His soul
Romadin	*ṛmādi*	Gris cendré	Grey
Roman	*ṛmʷa*[110]	Soldat (sg.)	Marksmen (pl.) (M: soldier)
Romanat	*ṛummānāt*	Grenades fruit	Pomegranates
Romel	*ṛməl*	Sable	Sand
Romtondon	***XXX***[111]	Rome	Rome
Ronda	*ṛūḍa*	Chapelle	Tomb of a saint
Ros	*ṛūz*	Ris	Rice
Roüa	*ṛwa*	Ecurie	Stable
Sáá-ſáá	*sāʕa sāʕa*	Heures	Every now and then
Sabat	*s-səbt*	Samedy	Saturday
Safá	*səḥfa*	Terrine	Clay vessel

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[109] < Sp. *resina*.

[110] Cf. Prémare (1995, vol. 5: 216).

[111] Unattested. This could be a blend word combining Italian *Roma* and *tondo* (pl. *tondi*), a work of art painted or sculpted on a round support which became very popular during the Italian Renaissance. As these works of art were numerous in Rome, it is not unlikely that some visitors associated the name of this city with the *tondi*.

Safina el quéla	sāfina l-qlāʕ[112]	Navires & voiles	Sailing boat
Sahá	ṣaḥḥa[113]	Grand-mercy	Health (= thank you)
Sahab	sḥāb	Nuées	Clouds
Sahab-nâs	sḥāb n-nās	Compagnons	Comrade; friend
Saháá-allaquer	təṣbaḥ ʕla xīr	Bonsoir	Good evening
Saháby	ṣāḥbi	amy	My friend
Salten	sāltān (~)[114]	Poîle	Frying pan
Sam	ṣəmm	Sourd	Deaf
Saqui	sxi	Liberal	Generous
Sara	sāṛa	Promener	He walked (sb. or an animal)
Scandria	[l-]Īskandarīya	Alexandrie	Alexandria
Scharlat	šəṛlāṭ	Ecarlatte	Scarlet
Schon bledec	škūn blād-ək?	De quel païs	What is your country?
Schon-hadac	škūn hādāk?	Qui eſt-là	Who is there? Who is that?
Sebáá	ṣbāḥ	Matinée	Morning
Sebáá-allaquer	ṣbāḥ l-xīr	Bonjour	Good morning
Sebá-hay	sbaʕ (~)[115]	Lion	Lion
Seboüay	ṣbūʕa	Doigts	Fingers
Sebour-Daüt	ẓābūṛ Dāwūd	Pſautier de David	The Psalms of David
Secran	səkṛān	Yvrogne	Drunk
Sedéry	ṣədr-i	Eſtomac	My chest (M: stomach)
Sefar	ṣfaṛ	Jaune	Yellow
Sefary	ṣəffāṛi[116]	Chaudronnier	Boilermaker, coppersmith
Seféha	ṣfīḥa	Fers	Horseshoe

[112] Ungrammatical in PDMA and perhaps shows imperfect learning on Moüette's part.

[113] Compare with PDMA yaʕṭī-k ṣ-ṣaḥḥa 'may God give you [good] health (= thank you; bravo!)' and Algerian Arabic ṣaḥḥīt / ṣaḥḥayt 'may you be in health (= thank you).'

[114] Unattested. < Sp. sartén 'frying pan.'

[115] Moüette's transcription suggests a final vowel -i (səbʕi?), but we cannot identify any such word.

[116] PDMA ṣəffāṛ.

Sefinche	*sfənž*	Baignets	Fritters
Seheg	*ṣḥīḥ*	Fort	Strong
Seindoc	*ṣəndūq*	Coffre	Box, case, chest
Sela	*Sla*	Salé	Salé
Selé	*ṣla*	Oraiʃon	Prayer
Selib	*ṣlīb*	Croix	Cross
Selbou	*ṣəlbu[-h]*	Crucifié	He was crucified (lit. they crucified him)
Sema-denoub-nan	*smaḥ dnūb-na!*	Pardonnez nos pechez	Forgive our sins!
Semac	*ṣmaq*[117]	Ancre	Ink
Semainé	*smaʕ-ni*	Ecoûte	Listen to me!
Seméin	*Smāʕīl*	Iʃmaël	Ismael
Semen	*smən*	Beurre ʃalé	Fermented butter
Sen	*[l]sān*	Langue	Tongue
Senáá	*ṣənʕa*	Métier	Craft, profession
Senen	*snān*	Dents	Teeth
Sepharhan	*fəṛḥān*	Joyeux	Glad, happy
Sequana	*sxāna*	Chaleur	Heat
Sequanan	*sxāna*	Beautemps	Heat
Sequéma	*skīma*[118]	Licol	Halter
Sequeq	*səkkāk*	Orphévre	Goldsmith, silversmith
Sequin	*səkkīn*	Sabre	Horseman's sabre
Serac-delma	*ṣəṛṛāq d-əl-ma*	Seringue	Syringe
Serere	*srīr*	Echaffaux	Bricklayer's scaffolding
Serge	*səṛž*	Selle	Saddle
Serraca	*ṣəṛṛāqa*	Voleurs	Thieves
Setenber	*setenber (~)*[119]	Septembre	September

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[117] Cf. Prémare (1996, vol. 8: 104).

[118] < *škīma*.

[119] PDMA *šhaṛ təsʕūd*.

Sevilla	*Sevīya (~)*[120]	Seville	Seville
Sif	*ṣīf*	Eté	Summer
Sif-tou	*ṣīfṭu ~ ṣīfṭ-u!*	Envoyer	They sent ~ send it ~ send (pl.) !
Som	*ṣūm!*	Jeûner	Fast!
Soradel-boten	*ṣ-ṣuṛṛa d-əl-bṭən*	Nombril	Navel, belly button
Soubo / amel	*ṣuwwb-u / ʕməl*	Faire	Do it ~ do!
Soüery	*swāri*	Pilliers	Pillars
Soute-Ráys	*ṣūt ṛ-ṛāyəṣ*	Liuetenant corſaire	Quartermaster (lit. the captain's voice)
St'amboul	*Ṣṭanbūl*	Conſtantinople	Istanbul
Staferla-aoüdy	*staǵfəṛ Ḷḷāh ā wədd-i!*	A Dieu ne plaiſe	Ask God for forgiveness![121]
Stata	*šəṭḥāt (~)*	Danſer	She danced
Statob	*sṭāṭṭu (~)*[122]	Tamis	Sifter, sieve
Stéla	*sṭīla*[123]	Chaudiere	Cauldron
Stha	*sta*	Pluye	Rain
S'fergil	*sfəṛžəl*	Coins	Quinces
S'pagnol	*ṣpānyūl (~)*	Eſpagnol	Spanish
Sultan	*sulṭān*	Roy	Sultan, king
Sultana	*sulṭāna*	Reine	Sultana, queen
T'fern	*tfaṛ*[124]	Potence	Crupper strap
Tabaco	*ṭābāqo*[125]	Tabac	Tobacco
Tabal	*ṭbəl*	Tambour	Drum
Taca	*ṭāqa*	Trou	Niche; skylight
Táchá	*tʕašša*	Soupper	He had dinner ~ have dinner!

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[120] PDMA *Šbīlya.*

[121] This expression is said to someone who has just uttered a blasphemy.

[122] Cf. *šṭāṭṭu,* see Prémare (1995, vol. 7: 103). Compare with Sp. *cedazo* and Italian *setaccio.*

[123] Dimunitive of *ṣṭəl.*

[124] Cf. Prémare (1993, vol. 2: 60).

[125] < Sp. *tabaco.*

Tafetan	*tāfəṭṭa (~)*[126]	Tafetas	Taffeta (fabric)
Tague	*ṭāġi*	Superbe	Preeminent
Talb-macho	*ṭāləb mʕāš-u*[127]	Bourreau	Day-laborer (M: executioner)
Talbe	*ṭāləb*	Prêtre	Muslim cleric
Talla-lilla	*tā-Ḷḷāh lī-Llāh*	Amour de Dieu	I swear by God (M: love of God)
Tarcha	*ṭaṛša*	Souffleter	Slap (in the face), smack
Taros	*ṭāṛūṣ*	Mâtins	Mastiff
Tayb	*ṭāyəb*	Cuit	Cooked
Tében	*tbən*	Paille	Straw
Tebibe	*ṭbīb*	Chirurgien	Doctor
Techor	*tšūṛ*[128]	Village (sg.)	Villages (pl.)
Tefahá	*təffāḥa*	Pommes (pl.)	Apple (sg.)
Tefel	*tfəl!*	Cracher	Spit! ~ he spat
Teger	*tāžər*	Marchand	Merchant, trader
Téham	*ṭīḥān*	Ratte	Spleen
Teifor	*ṭīfūṛ*[129]	Baʕʕin	Vase or plate (used to carry a bride's gifts)
Teilg	*təlž*	Neige	Snow
Tela	*ṭlaʕ!*	Monter	Go up, rise up! ~ He went up, rose up
Temar	*tmaṛ*	Dattes	Dates
Temeg	*tmāg*[130]	Bottes	Ankle boots
Temenia-hyems	*tmānya īyām*[131]	Semaine	Week

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[126] Cf. Prémare (1993, vol. 2: 14). It may more closely reflect Sp. *tafetán*.

[127] *ṭāləb maʕāš-u* 'Jack-of-all-trades; a day laborer with no fixed profession,' cf. Prémare (1996, vol. 8: 319). Moüette's French gloss is literally 'executioner,' perhaps implying that the violent job was hired out to any taker.

[128] Devoicing from *dšūṛ*; attested in PDMA in the north.

[129] Cf. Prémare (1996, vol. 8: 408).

[130] < O.Tr. *ṭomaq* 'riding boot,' cf. Prémare (1993, vol. 2: 92).

[131] Unattested. Lit. 'eight days.' PDMA *sīmāna / žəmʕa*.

Tereza	*tārāza*[132]	Chapeau	Hat
Téxer	*təqšīr*[133]	Bas	Sock, stocking
Tirelir	*ṭīr l-līl*	Chauve-Souris	Bat
Tiren	*tīrān*	Boeuf (sg.)	Oxen (pl.)
Tiren	*tīrān*	Torreau (sg.)	Bulls (pl.)
Toleta	*Ṭūlīṭa (~)*[134]	Tollede	Toledo
Tom	*tūm*	Ail	Garlic
Toret	*Tūṛāt*	Bible	The Torah, the Pentateuch
Trabolis	*Ṭṛābuləs (~)*[135]	Tripoly	Tripoli
Trap	*ṭṛāb*	Terre	Soil
Tréima	*trīma*	Feſſes	Ass, buttocks (dim.)
Trementina	*ṭəṛmənṭīna (~)*[136]	Terebentine	Turpentine
Tremetou	*ṭṛəmt-u*	Cul	His ass, buttocks
Tric	*ṭrīq*	Chemin	Path
Turqui	*tuṛki*	Turc	Turkish, Turk
T'caf	*txāf*	Craindre	You fear ~ she fears
Uzir	*wzīr*	Miniſtre d'Etat	Minister
Yacot	*Yaʕqūb*	Jacob	Jacob
Yé	*yīh*	Oüi	Yes
Yuſeph	*Yūsəf*	Joſeph	Joseph
Zafran	*zaʕfṛān*	Safran	Saffron
Zaimbóa	*zənbūʕ*	Oranges	(Bitter) orange
Zamel	*zāməl*	Bougre	Homosexual (derogative)
Zanca	*zənqa*	Ruë	Street
Zebeda	*zəbda*	Beurre frais	Butter
Zébibe	*zbīb*	Raiſins de Damas	Raisins

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[132] < Br. *tār āzāl*, cf. Prémare (1993, vol. 2: 8).

[133] < O.Tr. *çakṣır* 'long hoses, stockings,' cf. Procházka (2012: 211).

[134] Compare with Andalusi Arabic *Tulayṭula.*

[135] PDMA *Ṭṛābləs.*

[136] < Sp. *trementina.*

Zebibi	*zbībi*	Violet	Purple
Zeizon	*z̆īz̆ūn*	Muet	Deaf-mute
Zel	*[n]zəl!*	Descendre	Get off! ~ he got off
Zelat	*zullāṭ*	Bâton	Cane, stick, rod
Zelefa	*zəllāfa*	Eʃcuelle	Bowl
Zelele	**XXX**	Couverture	Riding blanket **(?)**[137]
Zeras	*zṛəʕ*	Grains	Grains
Zienan	*zīna*	Bien belles (fem. pl.)	Beautiful (fem. sg.)
Zit	*zīt*	Huile	Oil
Zitonnas	*zītūna*	Olives (pl.)	Olive (sg.)
Zôâg	*z̆āwəg*[138]	Argent vif	Quicksilver
Zorby	*zuġbi*	Miʃerable	Wretched, miserable
Zoüaq	*zwāq*	Peinture	Decorative painted ornament
Zoüaquin	*zūwāqi*	Peintre	Decorative painter
Zoub	*zubb*	La verge	Penis (vulgar)
Zoul-dem	*zūwəl d-dəmm!*	Seigner	Bleed (sb.)!
Zouleiges	*zullīž*	Carreaux	Tiles

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[137] This term appears in the "horse tack" section and must refer to some sort of riding implement.

[138] Cf. Prémare (1995: vol. 5: 417).

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The voices of Morocco: linguistic variation in Moroccan radio speech

Davide Bazzi

By analysing a corpus of approximately two hours of radio news bulletins and call-in programs from three Moroccan radio stations (MFM, MED Radio and Radio Atlantic), a number of phonetic, morphologic and morpho-syntactic features are identified as relevant to the will of the speaker to adopt a more formal or less formal speech style. The variation of said variables are thus analysed in the different communicative contexts (News, call-in monologues and dialogues with experts, dialogues with audience on the phone) in order to determine the level of formality of such contexts.

Moreover, the aim of the paper is to apply the concept of functional diglossia, (Albirini 2011) to the Moroccan environment, to try and determine whether the presence of features of more formal and less formal speech styles can be interpreted by means of the will of the speaker to perfrom a determinate communicative function (as lending a tone of seriousness to what is being said, giving explanations, performing an indirect quote).

Linguistic variation is thus inquired giving more attention to individual varieties than to a theoretical framework that assumes discrete boundaries between one variety and another, focusing instead on the relationship between the individual variants selected by speakers and the meaning these choices have at the sociolinguistic level.

1. Introduction[1]

This paper analyses sociolinguistic variation in Moroccan radio broadcasts by transcribing and analysing news bulletins and call-in programmes, in order to describe a limited set of phonetic, morphological and morpho-syntactic variables used by the speakers to signal their will to adhere to a more or less formal speech style. Speakers' behaviour is thus studied with the main aim of determining how variation reflects

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[1] My most sincere gratitude to the two anonymous reviewer who spent their time reading this paper and providing a great number of extremely valuable advice and suggestions.

the speaker's wider representation of how they think they should speak in order to communicate in a certain variety of the language.

Moreover, the present paper aims at applying to the Moroccan linguistic environment the concept of *functional diglossia* as discussed by Abdulkafi Albirini (2011) showing the consistent use of both Standard and Dialectal Arabic in the same context, the selection of one or the other depending solely on the communicative function the speaker wants to perform. More precisely, speakers would use Standard Arabic to signal the transition to a light to a more serious tone, to adopt a pedantic style, to communicate pan-Arab of Muslim identity or in idiomatic expressions (Albirini 2011: 541). Dialectal Arabic, on the other hand, would be used to minimise a segment of speech, for indirect quotations, explanation and exemplification or the shift to a lighter tone (Albirini 2011: 547).

The aim of this paper is then twofold: firstly, to determine whether there is a limited set of variables that are used by the speaker to recur to a more formal or less formal speech style in radio broadcast, and what these variables are.

Secondly, to determine whether the presence of features of both the speech styles in the same utterance signals the will to perform a determinate communicative function, according to Albirini.

In the next paragraphs, a brief discussion of the evolution of studies on Arabic diglossia will be provided (2.1 and 2.2); 2.3 is concerned with the brief exposition of the concept of *funtional diglossia* as intended by Abdulkafi Albirini (2011); 2.4 summarises the main features of Moroccan Spoken Arabic, while the following section 3 introduces the methodology and dataset used for the present study. Section 4 concernes the findings and discussion, and in section 5 conclusions are drawn.

2. State of the art: some theoretical tools

2.1. Charles Ferguson and the concept of diglossia

The first tool is the concept of diglossia, as applied to the context of Arabic by linguist Charles Ferguson in 1959. The term indicates "one particular kind of standardisation where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play" (Ferguson 1959: 325).

The central point of this concept lies in the characteristic roles of the two varieties, called H and L[2] and constituting two poles of the diglossic axis; the selection of one or the other is dictated by the

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[2] 'High' and 'Low;' 'Standard' Arabic occupies the H pole in Ferguson's work, while colloquial Arabic forms the L pole.

communicative context and the content of the message itself (Ferguson 1959: 328). The H variety (in the present case the *fuṣḥā* language) pertains to more solemn and formal spheres, and is the only one used in the sphere of writing; the L variety (the 'dialect'), on the other hand, is only used in the domestic sphere, of affection and of everyday, informal communication. The contents of Ferguson's essay formed the basis for subsequent critiques and in- depth studies on the issue of Arabic diglossia.

One central point of said studies is the lack of clear boundaries between varieties, and how to place such varieties along the Diglossic axis: while in *Diglossia* Standard Arabic was considered the most prestigious one (Ferguson 1959: 329-330), many subsequent studies (see Palva 1982 and Ibrahim 1986) have problematised this point. In fact, there is often "a prestige variety of L, the identity of which depends on many geographical, political and social factors within each country, and which may influence speech" (Bassiouney 2020: 19).[3] This point is of great importance in delineating the deep and dynamic reality of Arabic orality.

2.2. "There is no third pole:" towards the linguistic *continuum*

The article published by Charles Ferguson in 1959 led to a rich debate, and to the progressive zooming in on the diglossic axis, describing the linguistic variation in terms of intermediate varieties. Many studies have focused on the description of these intermediate levels, naming and numbering them variably (Blank 1960, Badawi 1973, Meiseles 1980), without however really succeeding in proposing a valid alternative to Ferguson's original description. The author of *Diglossia*, in a 1996 article in which he reacts to the critiques towards his seminal article, states in fact

> I recognised the existence of intermediate forms and mentioned them briefly in the article [Ferguson 1959], but I felt then and still feel that in the diglossia case the analyst finds two poles in terms of which the intermediate varieties can be described; there is no third pole. Also, the users of the language in a diglossia situation typically deal with it attitudinally as a two-term relation and use metalinguistic labels that refer to the two poles and 'mixed' or 'in- between' varieties (Ferguson 1996: 59).

The direction taken by *post-diglossia* research in fact often describes linguistic reality in terms of intermediate levels or mixed styles (Mejdell 2006), thus implicitly referring to the poles outlined by

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[3] With regard to this point, however, it is necessary to specify that in his essay Ferguson envisages the possibility of 'the adoption of H or one form of L as the standard', thus admitting the possibility of a high prestige variety that is different from *fuṣḥā*.

Ferguson, which seem to be undeniable; however, subsequent studies have increasingly moved towards the *continuum* view, with interesting results.

Among the most significant works is the analysis of El-Said Badawi (1973), who identifies five levels "ranging from 'pure' *fuṣḥā* to plain ʕ*āmmiyya*" (Mejdell 2006: 51) without, however, presenting them as discrete elements, i.e. adopting the aforementioned linguistic *continuum* perspective. As pointed out by Mejdell, anyway, it is not clear in Badawi's work "what exactly are the linguistic elements that are perceived to affect the change of level" (Mejdell 2006: 52). In fact, levels are in fact in Badawi largely overlapping, and some traits are not exclusive to one variety, but shared between the two adjacent ones. There is therefore no clear-cut boundary between them. Despite these shortcomings, indeed Badawi's work is of great interest as it proposes that the shift between levels, although linked to the communicative context (there are certain levels that are used in both writing and speaking, i.e. *fuṣḥā al-ʕāṣr* and fuṣḥā al-*muṯaqqafīn*), are realised through the selection of linguistic traits that shared between varieties or 'levels,'[4] loosening the tight separation proposed in Ferguson's *Diglossia*, although not quite yet going beyond its view of *high* and *low* variety.

In other words, some contextual distintion of use of each variety still exists in Badawi's study, but such compartmentalisation can be seen not in terms of a formal and abstract distinction, but in its realisations in living linguistic reality, "pinpointing the mechanism through which language codes are organised in the brains of bilinguals" (Albirini 2016: 216). In other words, the manifestation of linguistic variation can be seen as an effect of what variety speakers assess as appropriate in a certain context and realise through the selection of variants that they consider more adherent to said variety. In so doing, "speakers negotiate the mapping of a linguistic system of representation onto the real world" (Brustad 2000: 9). The idiosyncratic nature of such evaluation is realised (also) in the commonality of traits found by Badawi at the boundaries of the intermediate levels he describes, "allowing room for speaker variables to determine where between the S[tandard] A[rabic] and QA [Colloquial Arabic] poles a certain word, sentence, or piece of discourse may fall" (Albirini 2016: 24).

2.3. Abdulkafi Albirini's Functional Diglossia

Albirini's (2011) study considers linguistic variation no longer as linked to context, but by assigning Standard Arabic and dialectal Arabic precise communicative functions, which guide speakers'

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[4] In contrast to the strict separation in the contexts of use of H and L described by Ferguson in *Diglossia*.

selection. His work is based on "thirty-five audio and video recordings in the domains of religious lectures, political debates, and soccer commentaries" (Albirini 2011: 537).

As a starting point, we consider that "S[tandard] A[rabic] is used to lend a tone of seriousness and importance to the topic, whereas D[ialectal]A[rabic] is used for narration and giving concrete examples" (Albirini 2011: 539). Developing this point, Albirini identifies eight communicative functions performed by Standard Arabic, among which are the use of idiomatic expressions, signalling the transition from a light to a more serious tone, the production of rhythmic speech, the adoption of a pedantic style and the communication of pan-Arab or Muslim identity (Albirini 2011: 541). Dialectal Arabic, on the other hand, is associated by Albirini with parenthetical phrases and fillers, the minimisation of a segment of speech, indirect quotations, explanation and exemplification, the transition to a lighter or comical tone, the treatment of taboo subjects, the introduction of sayings related to everyday life and, finally, to bring personal attacks and insults (Albirini 2011: 547). What the study shows is the consistent use of both Standard and Dialectal Arabic in the same context, the selection of one or the other depending solely on the communicative function the speaker wants to perform. What is not explicitly stated in the study, however, is the rationale followed in assigning each linguistic trait the H or L label.

Below are some phonological and morphosyntactic traits from the examples proposed by Albirini's study as evidence of code-switching towards the standard variety (SA). Although Albirini's data come "from educated speakers of the Egyptian, Gulf, and Levantine dialects of Arabic" (Albirini 2011: 540), it is worth analysing the examples provided in his study in order to understand which linguistic traits are the most likely to signal the switch between Standard Arabic and Dialectal Arabic, taking them as the starting point to the study of linguistic variation in Moroccan Arabic. The numbering adopted by Albirini in *The Sociolinguistic Functions of Codeswitching* (2011) is maintained.

At the phonological level, the main trait is the retention of *hamza*, as in example 11 [...]*man yaṣnaʕūnʔ inǧāzāt əl-kura s-suʕūdiyya*[...] (Albirini 2011: 545-546).

As far as morphology is concerned, the use of *ʔiʕrāb* is limited to example 10 (Albirini 2011: 545), which reports the oral recitation of a poem, and example 5, where the use of *tanwīn fatḥa* can be noted: *naḥnu lam na-ḏbaḥ farrūžan wa lam naksur zužāžan* (Albirini 2011: 543); the verbal morphology of *muḍāriʕ*, moreover, corresponds to the standard, including the construction of the subordinate sentence through the use of *ʔan* followed by *manṣūb* in example 3 ([...] *ʔan tuʕallima l-qurʔān li-ġair-ik* [...]; Albirini 2011: 542).

With regard to the dialectal variant, the realisation of the uvular occlusive /q/ is reported in its two variants [g] and [ʔ]. Regarding phonology, deletion of *hamza*—with the sole exception of the first-

person singular pronoun ʔana (in example 19)—is found, as much as the monophthongalisation of the diphthongs /aw/>[ō] and /ay/>[ī], and the use of variants for the third person singular masculine suffix pronoun; one has /hu/>[a], >[u] or >[h].

Moving on to considering the examples provided by Albirini and concerning the switch towards Dialectal Arabic, a comparison will be provided between the outcomes drawn from said examples and the patterns of variation of the same variables in Moroccan Arabic. The variables gathered through the analysis of Albirini's work constitute here the possible relevant features of linguistic variation in contemporary Morocco: the hypothesis here is that the variables involved in the switch in Albirini's study will also be involved in switch in Moroccan Arabic.

Realisations of /q/ are attested in Moroccan Arabic as [q], [g] or [ʔˤ] (Hachimi 2011: 30); monophthongalisation results in /aw/>[ū] and /ay/>[ī], but diphthongs are attested mostly among Berber-influenced Moroccan speakers (Caubet 2008: 276). Also at the phonological level, the loss of the interdental *ṯ* (in the *kaṯīr>ktīr* realisation) and *ḏ* (in *naḏbaḥ>dābḥīn*; Albirini 2011: 542), and several occurrences of short vowel deletion in unaccented syllables, are found; both traits are common, in general, to Moroccan speakers (Caubet 2008: 275). Finally, since Albirini's study includes data from Egyptian Arabic speakers, it is not surprising to find several occurrences of /ǧ/>[g], typically Cairene but also found in Morocco (Caubet 2008: 275). Unknown to Moroccan phonology, on the other hand, is the retention of the interdental emphatic *ḏ̣* ([...] *bi-taḫayyul l-ʔaḫīra di muš wighit-naḏ̣ar-i* [...]; Albirini 2011: 543), the latter converging into *ḍ* in said dialect (Durand and Ventura 2022: 15). It must be noted, though that the retention of *ḏ̣* is equally uncommon in the varieties analysed by Albirini.

Regarding morphology, there is an almost total absence of *ʔiʕrāb*, with the sole exception of example 26 (Albirini 2011: 552), reporting nevertheless a lexicalised adverbial element. The use of non-standard aspectual particles can also be noted, i.e. the imperfective prefix *bi-* and the future particle *rāḥ*; Moroccan Arabic uses similar tools: aspectual prefixes such as *ka-* or *ta-* and the particle *ġādi* to indicate the future.

As far as syntax and lexicon are concerned, an obvious aspect is the use of the pseudo-verb *bidd*, not common in Moroccan Arabic, where the verb *bġā* and, albeit less frequently, *ḥəbb* (Durand and Ventura 2022: 191) are found instead. The circumfixed negative structure *ma-š* signalled in Albirini's examples are also found in Moroccan Arabic (Durand and Ventura 2022: 200).

Another relevant syntactic structure is the realisation of juxtaposition hypotaxis, as in example 16 (Albirini 2011: 248): *ma bəd-na-š nə-nsa*; the same structure is found in Moroccan Arabic. Non-standard use of demonstratives and pronouns is also found: the relative pronoun is realised through the indeclinable *lli/illi*, also common in Moroccan Arabic, as is the particle *wāḥəd* used as a

marker of indefiniteness (Brustad 2000: 20). The use of *wāḥed is* also attested in the Egyptian and Levantine areas, but in these areas its usage differs from Morocco, where it is usually followed by a definite noun, e.g. in *šrā-w wāḥed d-dār* (Durand and Ventura 2022: 95).

From a lexical point of view, the verb *ʔaʕmal* and the related *maṣdar ʔiʕmāl* used with the meaning 'to do' instead of the standard *faʕala* are found.

2.4. Colloquial Moroccan Arabic

Colloquial Moroccan Arabic indeed possesses a great degree of differentiation; however, in this paper reference will be made to the attempted description of a koine reported in the *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* (Versteegh *et al.*: 2006).

The koine described in the *Encyclopaedia* (Versteegh *et al.* 2006: 273-278) mainly refers to Casablanca speech. Its phonology shows the shift of interdental fricatives, towards occlusives (/t̠/>[t] and /d̠/>[d]); the uvular occlusive is realised as a velar occlusive (/q/>[g]). Also, pharyngalisation (also referred to as 'emphasis') extends to phonemes that lack it in *fuṣḥā* (/ ḷ/, /ṃ/, /ḅ/ and /ẓ/), both as an independent feature or as a result of assimilation. Other common cases of assimilation regard sibilants /s/ and /z/ in proximity to palato-alveolar affricates /dʒ/ (e.g. the root z-w-ž, from which the term 'pair,' *zawž>žūž* 'two' is derived as a result of this phenomenon). The affrication of the phoneme /t/>[ts] is also widespread. As far as the vowel system is concerned, the most characteristic feature is the monophthongalisation leading to the realisation /aw/>/ū/ and /ay/>/ī/.

At the morphological level, an interesting trait is the presence of particles indicating 'intermediate' degrees of determination: beside the presence or absence of the determinative article, the use of the particle *ši* and *wāḥəd* is in fact attested. These are not, however, exclusive features of Moroccan Arabic. On the contrary, "Moroccan and Syrian employ the particle /šši/ *some*, and all four dialects [Moroccan, Egyptian, Syrian and Kuwaiti] permit limited use of the article /wāḥid/ (Moroccan /wāḥed l-/ 'one,' and a 'potential' article /šī/ 'some'" (Brustad 2000: 20).

Other recurring features in Moroccan Arabic concern the realisation of the genitive construct by means of the particle *dyāl*, also realised as *d-*, the use of *kāyn/kāyna* as existential particles, and the *ma-š* negation structure (e.g. *ma keyn-š* 'there is no'). Finally, verbal morphology admits the use of the particle *ġadi/ġa-* to indicate the future, while the prefix *ka-/ta-* is applied to the *muḍāriʕ*.

3. Data and methodology: the voice of Morocco

3.1. Why radio data?

Data acquired through radio broadcasts made it possible to test what previously discussed regarding the works by Badawi (1973) and Albirini (2016: 23) through the study of linguistic variation through the identification of variables used by the speaker to indicate the use of more or less formal speech, and the variants associated with said speech style.

Alongside the structural perspective, we would then like to test the further hypothesis that the possible co-presence of standard (*MSA*) and dialectal (*dāriža)* realisations in the same context (e.g., the news) can be explained according to Albirini's *functional diglossia.* This will be done by trying to identify any association between the choice of a particular variant and the communicative function (e.g. the sudden recourse to *fuṣḥā* features corresponding to an increased seriousness of tone, as stated by Albirini 2011: 537).

3.2. Preparation of the analysis

The recording, transcription, annotation, translation and analysis of broadcasts from several Radio stations in the area of Casablanca constitute the dataset of this study. The complete dataset is constituted by approximately two hours of material, and includes recordings from *call-in* programmes and news broadcasts. Focussing on broadcast stations based in Casablanca is linked to its closeness to the above discussed role of koine (Caubet 2008: 273) of the city's spoken variety.

This paper presents excerpts coming from two of the three radio stations that compose the dataset.

The first one is Radio Atlantic. This station features economic-financial programmes such as *nwaḍaḥ līk* ('let's make things clear'), where listeners can intervene and benefit from experts' advice. Atlantic Radio also hosts programmes dealing with more generalist topics: civic initiatives, health, sports but also cultural news, using a language "between modern standard Arabic and Darija" (Zaid and Ibarhine 2011: 6).

The second broadcaster is Med Radio. This radio's programming is also quite varied with regard to social and relational issues, including topics such as mental health and marriage.

One of the programmes dealing with these topics is *naṣīḥat ʾamal* ('Amal's advice'), which deals with mental health in the usual call-in format. Some of the topics covered in the programme concern depression, self-esteem and panic attacks.

3.3. Methodology: the theoretical framework

The analysis of the linguistic features of news broadcasts is aimed at describing the speech style used in a formal broadcasting setting. At the same time, the choice of call-in programmes aims at describing how the speech style varies in a dialogical context and what variables are the most affected. Attention is dedicated mainly to those linguistic features identified in Albirini (2011) and discussed previously. Finally, an attempt is made to connect linguistic choices to the communicative functions identified by Albirini. The hypothesis is that linguistic variation is connected to the communicative function of the utterance, thus admitting the co-occurrence of *fuṣḥā* and *dāriža* in the same context following Albirini's claim that the choice of *fuṣḥā* and *dāriža* is driven by a functional division "by designating issues of importance, complexity, and seriousness to C[lassical] A[rabic] and aligning less important, less serious, and accessible topics with D[ialectal] A[rabic]" (Albirini 2011: 537).

The data here presented were retrieved by listening to various radio stations via the Radio Garden website, an online resource that allows to tune in to numerous radio stations by selecting the geographical area of interest (in this case, the city of Casablanca). The data were recorded using *Audacity*, a freeware that allowed basic audio manipulation.

A quantitative method is adopted for the analysis: occurrences of each variant of the linguistic variables discussed in 2.3 and 2.4 are counted in order to determine which variants characterise news broadcast speech style. The same analysis is then carried out for data pertaining call-in programmes, both for monologues (mostly introduction speech given by hosts) and dialogues with listeners and the experts).

4. Discussion

This chapter will finally put into practice what has been discussed so far. After examining the language of news broadcasts, attention will be dedicated to *call-in* programmes. Due to space limitations, only a few excerpts exemplifying the elements surveyed are given in this chapter.[5] The tabular data instead refer to the entire database analysed.

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[5] Each line of the excerpts is numbered in order to allow readers to better locate the discussed linguistic element in the text. Numbers in square brackets indicate the line where the discussed element(s) or occurrence(s) are found in the excerpt under scrutiny.

4.1. News reports

Arabic radio news contains realisations associated with both *MSA* and *dāriža*. In this sense, it is perhaps useful—for terminological clarity—to define the variety of news Arabic as H-radio, borrowing Ferguson's terminology. Broadly speaking, H-radio would be "the formal speech adopted in radio broadcast:" the oral realisation of higher adherence to the standard, as described by Mejdell (2006: 33), but not completely matching the structure of MSA, as it also encorporates *dāriža* features.

4.1.1. *MED Radio* news

An example of such co-presence occurs in the following excerpt:[6]

    1. *ṣaḥiyyatan la-kum ā mustaməʕīna ahlan bi-kum fi mužazī-na li-ahāmmi l-anbāʾ*

    2. *yušariku l-maġribu ilā žānibi l-ūlāti l-muttaḥida l-amerikīya wa-ḥamsāʕisrīna*

    3. *dawlatan uḥra fi munawarāti l-ḥaṣṣa dyəl mutāhib at-tamrināti l-ʕaskarīya*

    4. *s-sanawīya llati taḥṣaḍinu-ha l-urdun fi mažali mukafaḥati l-irhāb*

Greetings, and welcome to our summary of the most important news. Morocco is participating alongside the United States of America and twenty-five other states in the manoeuvres concerning the preparation of annual military exercises held by Jordan as part of the fight against terrorism.

From a phonetic point of view, the retention of short unstressed vowels is found in [1], [2], [4] in accordance with Albirini's data; on the other hand, we find the realisation /ǧ/>[ž] in [1], [2], [4] absent in Badawi and Albirini's profiling[7] but found in the phonologic inventory of the *Dāriža* language compiled by Durand and Ventura (2022: 2), as well as in the notes published by Aguadé (2003: 2).

    Turning to morphology, the retention of *ʾiʕrāb* is worth mentioning: it is found in the first instance as an indeterminate accusative in the initial greeting formula (*ṣaḥiyyatan*) in [1] and in the second case as the object of a numeral (*dawlatan*) in [3]. While the first is identifiable as a fossilized form, instead of living use of *ʾiʕrāb*, the second one raises some questions. It is assumed here that the use of *ʾiʕrāb* here is more tied to rules concerning numerals than to actual selection of case endings.

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[6] All the following excerpts report a phonetic transcription.

[7] The absence of this trait from the profiling of the two scholars should not be surprising, however, given the different areas covered by their studies. As mentioned, certain specificities of Moroccan speech (and, in the specific case of the affricate realisation of ǧ, of North Africa in general) are necessarily outside the scope of the works considered and must be included *ex novo.*

Different is the case with the apparent *ʔiʕrāb* use after verb forms (both *muḍāriʕ* conjugations found in lines [2] and [4] seem to have the ending vowel *-u* of the *marfūʕ*) and in nouns, where the word-final *-u* is interpretable as case-ending (*yušariku l-maġribu*) and several *-i* endings indicating the genitive case.[8]

A quick view at verbal morphology confirms its adherence to *MSA* norms, with the use of the verbal prefix *yu-* (*yušariku*) in the *muḍāriʕ* without the additional prefix *ka-/ta-* that characterises Moroccan Arabic.

Finally, syntax shows the use of the pseudo-preposition *dyāl* ([3]) in *munawarāti l-ḥaṣṣa dyəl mutāhib*, a distinctive feature of Moroccan Arabic which often substitute Standard Arabic *ʔiḍāfa*, while as far as morphosyntax is concerned, the use of the standard relative pronoun *(a)llati* (line [3]) is found (Moroccan Arabic uses instead the invariable form *(a)llī*).

Turning to the following extract:

5. *Fāza farīqun min al-madrasati l-maġribīya li-ʕulūmi l-muhandisa allati tumaṯṯilu*

6. *l-mamlakata fī maʕridi Isṭanbul ad-dawlīy li-l-iḥtiraʕāt bi-midalyateyni dahabīya*

7. *wa-mdālya fəḍḍīya bī-l-iḍāfa ʔilə l-žāʔiza l-kubrā li-afḍal iḥsərāʕi d-dawlīy*

8. *tusēllamu min qibali l-ittiḥādi d-dawlīy li-žāmiʕīyati l-muḥsariʕīn wa-yušāriku fī had*

9. *al-ḥadaṯ al-ibtikārīy fī turkia akṯar min arbaʕina dawlatan wa-ʔazəd min ʔalf iḥtirāʕ*

A team from the Moroccan Institute of Engineering Sciences, which represented the Kingdom at the Istanbul International Inventional Fair, won two gold medals and a silver medal, in addition to the first prize for the best international invention, received from the International Federation of Inventors' Associations. More than forty countries and more than a thousand inventions participated in this innovative event in Turkey.

In this further extract, retention of unstressed vowels ([5], [6]) is once again found, as well as several interdental realisations in *tumaṯṯilu* ([5]) and *ḥadaṯ* ([9]). In other instances of the same extract, however, unstressed vowels are elided, as in *mdālya* ([7]) or more frequently neutralised, as in *iḥsərāʕi* ([7]) and *ʔazəd* ([9]). Still on phonetics, a few word-final vowels can be categorised as phenomena of

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[8] One possible interpretation is to assume that such vowel realisations are conditioned by the contact with *alif waṣla*, thus driving the presence of the final vowel as an epenthetic vowel, and not as *ʔiʕrāb* proper.

epenthesis ([5], [8]) as discussed above (see note 8), while initial *hamza* is deleted in *akṯar* ([9]) but maintained in *ʔalf* and *ʔazəd* ([9]).

Turning now to morphology, we again find the presence of *ʔiʕrāb* ([5], [6])*.

Finally, the verbal voices: both the sentence-initial *māḍī* (*fāzā*) and the two instances of *muḍāriʕ* ([5], [8]) follow the *MSA* morphology.

4.1.2. *Atlantic Radio* news

1. *Fi nhayat hadihi an-našra ižrātu taḥfīf al-quyūḍ aṣ-ṣaḥḥiyya awqafat aṣ-ṣīn al-yōm*
2. *əl-ʕamal bi-taṭbīqi l-mustaḥdam li-tatabuʕ ay ṯharrukāt is-sukkān w-taʕaqqud min*
3. *ʕada l-mužūdīn fi məntaqati intašad-u iṣābātin bī-l-kōrōna at-taṭawwur*
4. *w-šaklu-h ḥuṭwa žadīda fī-h atari l-ḥurūž w-istrātīžiyāt ṣefr kuvid*

Concluding this bulletin are the relaxation of the health restrictions. China today suspended the operativity of its citizens movements tracking app, and the return of those who are in the area where Covid infections are spreading is becoming more difficult. The development and its modality are a new step that has implications for expatriation and the 'zero Covid' strategy.

Dropping of unstressed short vowel is found at the beginning of the extract ([1]) alongside a dental realisation of the phoneme /ḏ/, which converge into a voiced dental occlusive in the demonstrative *hadihi* ([1]). Here the speaker uses dialectal phonology inside a morphological environment that is substantially *MSA*: the *dāriža* repertoire would in fact realise the feminine singular proximity demonstrative as *hādi.*

Interdental convergence is also found in the word *atari* (standard *ʔaṯār*) ([4]), showing /ṯ/>[t]. We also note, again at line [1], the reduction of the diphthong into *yawm>yōm.*

4.2. General summary of news speech data

The following table presents all occurrences of the variables most likely to be involved in *fuṣḥā-dāriža* codeswitching, as discussed above (see 2.3. and 2.4.). The results drawn from this table will give a description of what has been previously defined as "H-radio."

Short unstressed vowels		hamza	
Maintained	18	Maintained	30
Neutralised	24	Deleted	11
Deleted	5		
Total	47	Total	41

/ṯ/, /ḏ/		/ǧ/	
[ṯ], [ḏ]	16	[ǧ]	0
[t], [d]	3	[ž]	22
Total	19	Total	22

ʾiʿrāb		Suffixed pronouns	
Grammar[9]	60	*MSA*	9
Crystallised	3	*Dāriža*	3
Epenthesis	43	Relative pronouns	
Absent	32	*MSA*	5
Absent (female)[10]	27	*Dāriža*	1
Total	165	Total	18

Diphthongs		Verbal morphology	
Maintained	2	*MSA*	15
Simplified[11]	6	*Dāriža*	0
Total	8	Total	15

Table 1. News speech data

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[9] 'Grammar' here refers to the realisation of ʾiʿrāb bearing the proper case ending, whereas 'crystallised' refers to its realisation in formulas. Finally, all the occurrences in which a final vowel is found in contact with ʾalif waṣla and not bearing the proper case ending is listed among 'Epenthesis.' Therefore, 'grammar' ʾiʿrāb only include occurrences of proper case ending, whether in contact with ʾalif waṣla or not.

[10] The absence of ʾiʿrāb in context of contact between a feminine term and ʾalif waṣla is signalled for the sake of precision, and included in the count of absence of ʾiʿrāb. In such contexts, in fact, it would be impossible to determine whether a word-ending *a* be in place of epenthetic ʾiʿrāb or if given a similar context—contact between a masculine term and ʾalif waṣla – epenthetic ʾiʿrāb would be found.

[11] The term here refers to monophthongisation of diphthongs, regardless of the resulting vowel.

Based on the data summarised here, it is possible to try and briefly describe H-radio.

H-radio favours the maintenance of *hamza* and interdental phonemes, and admits the neutralisation of short unstressed vowels, which are nevertheless rarely deleted. As for morphology, the maintenance of *ʔiʕrāb* is attested, with word-ending vowels coherent with standard grammatical rules but occurrences strongly influenced by the presence of *alif waṣla*. The role of *ʔiʕrāb* in this variety is therefore mainly epenthetic. H-radio also shows the exclusive use of standard verbal morphology. The collected data do not allow any final conclusion about the pronominal repertoire and the realisation of diphthongs, given the small number of occurrences. Finally, the data show a clear tendency towards the maintainance of interdentals *t̠* and *d̠*, and the realisation of *ǧ* as *ž*.

4.3. *Call-in* programmes

The type of data examined in this part includes monologic and dialogic speech. In this second category are interviews with guests and interaction with listeners on the phone.

4.3.1. *Radio Atlantic*

The first text presented comes from the 19 January episode of Nwaḍeḥ lī-k, and offers clarification and advice regarding the working sector.

4.3.1.1. Introductory dialogue

1. *Šurūq: ʔdən nəbda ʔ mn eyna ntəhey-na l-ḥalqa l-māḍīya w-kēn bzəff*
2. *dyēl l-meʕlumāt l-mušir lə-ha w-hadi furṣa tafaḍḍal kul ma kəyrtabaṭ bi-l-ʕuqūbāti*
3. *l-basīṭa wə-l-žəsīma w-mēda naqṣəd bi-masʔalāt at-tadarruž fi-l-ʕuqūba*
4. *wa-eyna tabda ʔ wa-tantahi sulṭat al-mušaġ̌ġil wa-dawr w-ʔahammīyēt*
5. *taʕāmul ayḍən f-kull ma kərtabaṭ bi-l-ʕaməl l-ʕāžir w-ʔədē ʔ al-ʕamal w-šǧul*

Šuruq: So, I'll start from where we ended the last episode. There is a lot of information mentioned, and this is an occasion. Please tell us about everything related to light and serious sanctions, what is meant by the issue of gradualness of sanctions and where the power of the employer begins and ends, and the role and importance of relations with co-workers and also in (everything) related to paid employment and work performance.

Some systematicity can be drawn in the host's speech. The phonology shows a clear tendency towards vowel retention or neutralisation, while cases of deletion are much rarer: two cases are *mn* ([1]) [(1)] *and* *šǧul* ([5]). *Hamza* is also retained in almost all cases ([1], [3], [4], [5]), with only one deletion at the standard

particles *ʾayna* ([1], [4]) and *ʾayḍan* ([5]). The presence of standard particles constitutes an interesting point: *ʾayna* in its variant *eyna* ([1], [4]), *māḏā* realised as *mēda* ([3]) and *ʾayḍan>aydən* ([4]) are standard elements realised following the phonology of *dāriža*. Besides that, the frequent use of standard verbal conjugation, counting for four instances out of seven in the present excerpt ([1], [3], [4]) makes room to the *dāriža* verbal system in several occasions ([1], [2], [4]). Finally, the pseudo-preposition *dyāl* ([1]) and the adverb *bzəf* are also part of the *dāriža* repertoire.

From a functional point of view, the use of the above-mentioned standard particles ([1], [3], [4], [5]) realised following the phonology of *dāriža* can be interpreted as the will of the speaker to use a formal style mitigated by a phonetic realisation conforming to a lighter speech, as is the dialectal one, according to Albirini (2011: 547). It can be assumed that such a style, corresponding to the use of standard grammatical material with *dāriža* phonetic realisation, is used to mediate between the required formality of H-radio and the will to present the topic in a light-hearted way.

4.3.1.2. Intervention of the listener

The transcript of the live intervention of a listener follows.

1. *Šurūq: naḥdu selwa l-ʾēn tfaḍḍli selwa anti mubašara f barnāmaž nwdəḥ lī-k alo*

2. *Selwa: alo w-ʕley-kum s-salām w-raḥmatu l̩l̩āh*

3. *Š: marḥban tafaḍḍal swwēl-ik*

4. *S: suʾal dyīl-ni hwa ʾanna kəntʕ ḥddāma f wāḥd la klīnīk*

5. *kandīr fī-h stāž l-mudd stt šhōr*

6. *bġət ġīr nsəwwl wēš l-mudda l-qānūnīya lī-ha ḍarūri tkūn stta šhōr awla aqall*

7. *w-wəšʕnd-i š ḥaqq f-dīk l-wəqt yʕṭaw-ni šī sālēġ w-la fhəmti*

8. *ḥīt mlli dərt s-stāž tmma ṣāfi gālw lī-ya səri tnʕīṭw lī-k w-ṣāfi*

9. *mā bqāw-š ʕīṭw w-mā ʕṭū-nī-š ḥtta ši ḥēža*

Šurūq: Let's hear from Selwa now, please Selwa, you are live on the programme Nwḍəḥ lī-k. Selwa: Hello good morning, may God's mercy be with you.

Š: Please proceed with the question.

S: My question concerns the fact that I worked in a clinic where I did an internship lasting six months. I just wanted to ask whether the legal duration [of the internship] should be six months or less, and whether I am entitled to a salary for that period of time. Do you understand? Because when I did the internship, I was told, "OK, go until we call you" and then that's it. They never called me again and they didn't give me anything.

The first relevant features here are vowel maintenance in *raḥmatu ḷḷāh* ([2]), and *ʔiˤrāb* (one instance, line [2]); these are the only standard variants (also present in H-radio). These realisations can be interpreted in a functional sense, since the listener realises crystallised expressions of greeting that, in line with Albirini's theorisation, require the use of the H variant (Albirini 2011: 541). Except for the above-mentioned points, the listener's speech is substancially dialectal. More specifically, there are several cases of deletion of short unstressed vowels ([4], [5], [6], [7], [8], [9]) and *hamza* ([4], [5], [6], [8], [9]). Further dialectal features are the realisation /q/>[g] found in line [8] and the monophthongalisation *ay>ī* in the term *ġayr* in line [6].

The verbal morphology is fully *dāriža* ([5]); even when no *ka-/ta-* preverb is found in the *muḍāriˤ*, the preceding verb *bġa* ([6]) signals projective function ([7], [8]); in other cases, circumfixed negation leads to interpreting the verb conjugation as coming from the *dāriža* grammar ([9]).

Several dialectal morphosyntactic elements are also found: pronouns and particles ([4], [6], [7], [8]), the usual pseudo-preposition *dyāl* ([4]) and lexical elements and dialectal expressions such as *ṣāfi* ([8, [9]]) ('enough') and *ḥatta šī ḥēža* ('nothing'); the use of *ġayr>gīr* with the meaning 'only' ([6]) is also reported. Also at the lexical level, there are numerous terms borrowed from French ([4], [5], [7], [8]). These are relatively common and hint at the sociolinguistic meaning of interlinguistic codeswitching between Arabic and French; an issue that goes beyond the scope of this work.

The next excerpt shows more clearly the diversity in language choices made by the host, the listener and the guest (ˤAdil).

10. *Šurūq: idən taqrībīy dəkrī-ni šḥāl qḍīti f-t-tdrīb*

11. *Selwa: stt šhōr*

12. *Š: sittat ašhōr ˤinda-k lī-ha ši swwēl hna*

13. *ˤAdil: w-mn bəˤd gēlw misˤēl al-ˤaqdi*

14. *wāš ˤṭō-k ˤaqd dyēl fatrat iḫtibār*

15. *S: la mā keyˤṭō-k la ˤaqd w la*

16. *qālw īla bġīti təḫdim maˤ-na ġədūzi wāḥd l-muddati l-tadrīb sī mwā [six mois]*

17. *w-mlli tkmli ˤād ngūlw ilē-k waš tbqi w-la tmšī*

Šurūq: so, remind me more or less how long was the internship you did? Selwa: Six months.

Š: Six months. Do you have any questions here [ˤAdil]?

ˤAdil: Did they tell you about the contract issue afterwards? Did they give you a certificate for the internship?

S: No, they don't give you a certificate or anything. They told me, "If you want to work with us you have to do a six-month internship and when you finish it, we tell you whether you stay or leave."

A more formal speech on the part of the host (Šurūq) and the expert (ʿAdil) than the listener is signalled by the general tendency of the two speakers to retain short unstressed vowels ([10], [12], [13], [14]). Lines [11] and [12] greatly show this difference: the strong vowel elision characterising the listener's speech is contrasted by the more controlled elocution of the host: the utterance *stt šhōr* by the intervening listener is repeated by the expert (ʿAdil) as *sittat ašhōr*. This passage can be interpreted from a functional perspective: the fact that what the listener says in a very colloquial speech is repeated by the host in a more formal style can be traced back to the desire to emphasise the importance of the passage itself, in accordance with Albirini (2011: 539; see 2.3.). Still from a functional perspective, the quotation at lines [16] and [17] is realised with formal variants: above all, line [16] shows several instances of vowel maintenance (*maʿ-na*, *muddati*, *tadrīb*) and neutralisation (*təḫdim*, *ġədūzi*). This is consistent with Albirini's theorisation that direct quotes are realized by means of the formal variety (Albirini 2011: 543). On the other hand, though, in the very next line and during the same direct quotation, the speech returns more markedly dialectal, with frequent vowel deletions and the presence of particles from the *dāriža* grammar; some examples are the adverb *mlli* 'when' and the generic interrogative particle *wāš* [17]. On this basis, then, it remains unclear whether there is a systematic shift to a more formal register for direct quoting.

Finally, it is noted here that the French term stage, pronounced several times by the listener in the previous excerpt [5]] and [8], is replaced by the Arabic tadrīb after the latter term is used by the programme host in [10]. Again, though, interlinguistic switching is not considered in the present study.

4.3.2. Some final comparisons

4.3.2.1. H-radio features in *call-in* programmes

Table 2. summarises all data collected in the area of monologic and dialogic speech in *call-in* programmes that involved anchors' speech.

Short unstressed vowels		*hamza*	
Maintained	65	Maintained	61
Neutralised	33	Deleted	31
Deleted	45		
Total	143	Total	92

/t̠/, /d̠/		/ǧ/	
[t̠], [d̠].	0	[ǧ]	0
[t], [d].	10,8	[ž]	36
Total	10,8	Total	36

ʔiʕrāb		Suffixed pronouns	
		MSA	2
Grammar	0	Dāriža	10
Crystallised	8	Total	12
Epenthesis	6	Relative pronouns	
Absent	130	MSA	0
		Dāriža	7
Total	144	Total	7

Diphthongs		Verbal morphology	
Maintained	3	MSA	14
Simplified	6	Dāriža	25
Total	9	Total	39

Table 2. Anchors' speech

The data reported in this table will now we compared with those of Table 1 (see 4.2.) in order to highlight similarities between what has been defined as 'H-radio,'[12] and the speech in call-in programmes, in order to define whether the same set of variables constitute a shared repertoire of tools used by speakers to engage in functional code-switching, i.e. the systematic recourse to a more formal variety (H-radio in the context of this study) or a less formal one, dipending on the communicative function of the utterance, as described by Albirini and previously discussed (see 2.3.).

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[12] The Fergusonian-like labelling is not intended to imply any claim to identify any new "in-between" variety whatsoever: the description of H-radio only serves to identify which linguistic variables are subject to variation in the act, on the part of the speakers, of realising a formal radio style, and which variants are preferred.

The first major difference concerns the presence of *ʔiʕrāb*: while this phenomenon characterises H-radio in 106 cases (65%), its presence is completely negligible in call-in programmes, where 8 instances (5%) are found in correspondence with crystallised expressions, against 3 (2%) in H-radio, and 6 cases (3%) are linked to epenthetic phenomena—against 43 (27%) in H-radio. Another significant finding is the total absence of "grammatical" *ʔiʕrāb*[13] in *call-in* programmes, in contrast to its significant percentage of realisation in H-radio, amounting to 60 instances (36%).

A second observation regards the retention of short, unstressed vowels: in H-radio, this marker shows 29 instances (61.7%) of retention, on a total of 47 occurrences. As far as call-in programmes speech style is concerned, data show 65 occurrences of retention (45,5%) on a total of 143 occurrences. It seems therefore quite safe to affirm that vowel retention or elision/deletion constitute a relevant variable in linguistic variation of radio speech in Moroccan Arabic.

A similar observation can be made with regard to *hamza*, the retention of which is shown in H-radio in 30 instances (73%), while decreasing to 60% (61 instances) of call-in programs realisations. On the other hand, the realisation /ǧ/>[ž] in almost all instances and in both contexts considered is completely identical. The only divergent phonetic indicator concerns the realisation of the interdentals /t̠/ and /d̠/:[14] a strong tendency to maintain them in H-radio is found, whereas call-in programmes records present a systematic shift to occlusive [t] and [d].

Except this last indicator, anyway, the phonetics of the two varieties is fundamentally the same, albeit with a more pronounced predilection for more formal variants. This could be interpreted as an actual lower degree of formality in the monologic and dialogic speech adopted in the call-in programmes seeking closeness to the everyday speech of the listeners.

Moving on, observations become more interesting: apart from the common tendency towards the simplification of diphthongs, realised as long vowels in 6 instances (75%) in news programmes and 6 cases (67%) in call-in programmes,[15] the choices regarding morphology are in fact clearly divergent.

As far as the remaining morphological markers are concerned, call-in programmes show a strong preference for pronominal *dāriža* suffixation: 10 cases (83%) against 3 (25%) in H-radio. Moreover, a more composite behaviour with regard to verbal morphology can be noted, drawn from the dialectal

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[13] I.e. *ʔiʕrāb* used according to standard grammar, with case endings and *tanwīn*, as opposed to fossilised forms.

[14] The exclusion of /d̠/ from the analysis is linked to the very limited number of instances recorded, which showed a sistematic confluence towards /d̠/.

[15] However, the limited number of occurrences recorded suggests caution in drawing conclusions concerning this feature.

repertoire in 25 cases (64%) while H-radio excludes it completely. Finally, as far as relative pronouns are concerned, the number of tokens is not sufficient to draw reliable trend lines.

What emerges, in conclusion, are clear differences between H-radio and the speech of anchors and experts in call-in programmes. The latter can be described by the absence of grammar *ʔiʕrāb*, the use of *dāriža* verbal morphology as well as an increased use of *dāriža* pronominal suffixation. As far as phonology is concerned, call-in programmes speech style presents a more marked tendence towards deletion or neutralisation of short, unstressed vowel and increased *hamza* deletion with respect to H-radio. It can thus be affirmed than the linguistic variables described in this last paragraph are all relevant markers that can signal the switch towards a less formal radio speech style.

Albirini's categories suggested in the ramework of *functional diglossia* are again useful to try to explore such switch in more detail: he sets up his study on the premise that, in general, topics of greater importance, seriousness and complexity are realised through the use of the more formal variant (Ferguson's *H* pole), whereas speech associated with more accessible topics is realised through a dialect variant, ideally comparable to Ferguson's *L* pole (Albirini 2011: 537). This provides a generic formal structure: it is possible to associate radio news speech with the character of seriousness and importance that the use of more formal speech requires. On the other hand, however, the monologic and dialogic speech of call-in programmes often deals with topics of moderate importance and complexity: the partial overlapping of *fuṣḥā* and *dāriža* linguistic choices by the hosts and guests of such programmes is thus read here as a desire to maintain a controlled but not overly formal linguistic style, as demonstrated by the presence of dialectal phonetic realisations (vowel and *hamza* deletions, merging of interdental fricatives into occlusives). These choices are decidedly more pronounced in morphology, without however going so far as to make *dāriža* variants completely exclusive.

As noted during the qualitative analysis, moreover, in realising communicative functions (see above 2.3.) both phonetic (mainly vowel and *hamza* maintenance) and morphological variants (mainly verbal morphology and *ʔiʕrāb*) are relevant.

In conclusion, this initial comparison shows how linguistic variation in radio involves both phonetics and morphology structurally and functionally. Since the communicative functions recorded in the examined data were mainly realised by means of vowel and *hamza* maintenance and the use of *ʔiʕrāb* and verbal morphology, the conclusion is that these are the main phonetic and morphological markers of code-switching in the context of call-in programmes. These same markers, then, constitute the elements generally most used by hosts to realise controlled but not overly formal speech.

4.3.2.2. The listeners

Finally, a summary table containing the speech data of the recorded live interventions of listeners is presented.

Short unstressed vowels		hamza	
Maintained	20	Maintained	4
Neutralised	2	Deleted	15
Delete	47		
Total	69	Total	19

/ṯ/, /ḏ/		/ǧ/	
[ṯ], [ḏ].	0	[ǧ]	0
[t], [d].	1,0	[ž]	1
Total	1,0	Total	1

ʔiʕrābˤ		Suffixed pronouns	
		MSA	0
		Dāriža	6
		Total	6
Grammar	0	Relative pronouns	
Crystallised	1	*MSA*	0
Epenthesis	0	*Dāriža*	1
Total	1	Total	1

Diphthongs		Verbal morphology	
Maintained	0	*MSA*	0
Simplified	11	*Dāriža*	17
Total	11	Total	17

Table 3. Audience speech

As can be seen from the table, most of the phonetic and morphological indicators report the exclusive presence of *dāriža* variants, with the exception of 22 cases of short, unstressed vowel retention (32% of tokens) and 4 cases of *hamza* retention (21%). These data describe a less controlled speech compared to that of hosts and guests in call-in transmissions; for instance, the total absence of *MSA* verbal morphology and the exclusive presence of *dāriža* pronominal suffixation can be noted; the percentages for short vowels and *hamza* also decrease compared to the data shown in the previous section. The analysis thus shows the relevance of phonological and morphological variables as markers of linguistic variation. The measurement of these traits in three different contexts of use (radio news, monologue/dialogue in call-in programmes and listeners' speech on the telephone) made it possible to show how these three communicative contexts stand in order of decreasing formality. In addition, different realisations of functional variation realised by the speakers through the selection of different variants of one or more of the considered variables were found. Linguistic variation in Moroccan radio speech thus showed a systematicity in variation: call-in programmes demonstrated the existence of their own ideal register, which mixes *H* and *L* features in functional perspective through the variation in the selection of very specific phonetic and morphological traits: vowel and *hamza* maintenance or their deletion, use of *ʔiʕrāb* and variation in verbal morphology.

5. Conclusions

In spite of the limited number of occurrences of some variables, it was possible to detect a small number of markers in which linguistic variation is appreciable. As evidenced by the data, these markers are used by speakers both in the more general realisation of a more or less formal style of orality as deemed appropriate, and to realise different communicative functions as described by Albirini in a functional perspective. Some examples of such 'functional variation' are the will to present a topic in a light-hearted way, thus adopting a less formal speech style (4.3.1.1.) or communicating the importance of a piece of information (4.3.1.2.). Besides that, a partial correspondance with Albirini's theorisation was found regarding direct quotation, realised with both *H* and *L* features (4.3.1.2.). It can thus not be affirmed, on the basis of the data analysed, whether this function complies with Albirini's theorisation when tested on Moroccan Arabic.

In spite of the detected systematicity, however, one must always consider an inescapable idiosyncratic element: that is, the speakers' choices are not always ascribable to the same system and the same perception of speech: there is inevitably a pragmatic dimension that has a reflection in the

selection made by the speakers regarding certain linguistic variables. However, much remains to be said about the systematic nature of such selections, which cannot be detected through a structural approach alone, but must be investigated in the perception that speakers have of each variant, according to the perspective of *perceptual linguistics.* In addition to providing useful information about how speakers 'feel' different regional varieties of Arabic, as noted in the excellent work of Hachimi (2015), such perspective can be of great use in the detection of any variables that carry particular pragmalinguistic value, and whose variation serves speakers to communicate different attributes of their orality.

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Dubbing in Moroccan Arabic
or when sound engineers become sociolinguists

Jacopo Falchetta

Dubbing soap-operas in an uncodified language variety, such as Moroccan Arabic vernacular, raises the issue of which language norms should be followed in writing the scripts. Added to that, Moroccan dubbing professionals cannot resort to a single dialect variety that is unanimously recognised as the national 'standard dialect,' unlike e. g. their Egyptian colleagues who can rely on Cairene. Since 2009—when the first series dubbed in Moroccan Arabic was launched—this has presented the staff of Morocco's first dubbing studio, Plug-In, with the remarkable challenge of creating *dārīža* dialogues for foreign soap-operas while at the same time dealing with diatopic and diastratic linguistic variation. On the basis of direct observations and interviews carried out at the studios, this paper shows with which criteria this work of linguistic management is brought forth, and to what extent it can be compared to traditional processes of (e.g. European) language standardisation. First of all, several examples of linguistic choices made by sound engineers and voice actors are reported and explained, usually through the words of the staff themselves. For the sake of exposition, such choices are grouped according to their aim: avoiding varieties other than *dārīža*, discarding features that index negative qualities and increasing the realism of language. Subsequently, a comparison with the traditional standardisation process, as described by Haugen, shows how Plug-In's work of linguistic selection does not reach complete standardisation, especially as regards selection, codification and elaboration. While this is an expectable result, it is interesting to underline that this incompleteness is ultimately due to the purpose of dubbing, which is commercialising a show to a national audience; it is therefore suggested that the three cited aspects of standardisation are, in the case of dubbing in *dārīža*, subordinated to the fourth remaining aspect, i. e. acceptance.

Keywords: language standardization; Darija; Arabic media; linguistic variation; audiovisual translation

1. Introduction[1]

Dubbing audiovisual media in a language other than the original one always implies the abidance by language standards. When the target is an official national language, the standard model is clearly delineated by language authorities. Conversely, when the text is translated into an uncodified vernacular, the problem of norms emerges: how should variation be managed? How should key rules—such as pronunciation and grammar—be set and by whom? Which language model is to be followed? This paper will deal with this issue in reference to the dubbing of soap-operas in the Moroccan Arabic vernacular (henceforth referred to with the local name *dāriža*). More precisely, it will discuss to what extent the linguistic work underlying the writing of the Moroccan Arabic version of the dialogues resembles a traditional standardisation process. To do this, it will use a corpus of observations and acts of language editing which I collected at the most ancient dubbing studio in Morocco, i.e. Plug-In, located in Casablanca.

First of all, the issue will be contextualised in the double framework of the koineisation of spoken Moroccan Arabic and of previous sociolinguistic studies of dubbing in this vernacular; this will be done in section 2. After that, in section 3, the fieldwork and the data collection will be presented globally. In section 4, the criteria with which linguistic choices are undertaken in the dubbing studios will be grouped under different categories, and several examples will be provided for each of them. In section 0, a comparison will be made between the informal process of standardisation to which these choices give way and the traditional standardisation model described by Haugen (1966). Finally conclusions will be drawn on the reasons behind the peculiarity of the standardisation-through-dubbing work, and future developments will be envisaged for research on the subject.

2. Koineisation and media standardisation

In several Arabic-speaking countries, modernisation-related phenomena such as internal migration, urbanisation, improvement of transportations and mass schooling have led to the nation-wide or region-wide spread of the dialect of a main city, usually the capital (Miller 2007). This often ends up being considered as a sort of 'national dialect,' to the point that, even at the scholarly level, it is somewhat oxymoronically defined as 'standard:' e.g. 'Standard Gulf Arabic' (Ingham 1986: 282) or

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'Standard Egyptian Arabic' (Woidich 2007: 679). As a consequence, when dubbing is done in an Arabic vernacular, the main city's variety is customarily employed, such as Cairene for Egyptian (Gamal 2008: 9) or Damascene for Syrian Arabic (Berlinches Ramos 2022: 162). When it comes to Morocco, a different situation can be observed, as there is no general agreement on which variety may stand out as being 'pan-Moroccan.' This is not to say that convergence phenomena have not taken place: in fact, most recent works on Moroccan Arabic dialectology agree on the fact that a 'modern koiné' (Heath 2002: 10) is spreading across Morocco, replacing local dialects. This variety supposedly prevailing on the others has generally been described as a mix of features of different origins (pre-Hilali/Hilali, urban/rural etc.) which has taken shape in the urban areas of central Morocco (cf. Caubet 1993: VII; Lévy 1998: 23; Heath 2002: 8-10). As a socio-historical background to this phenomenon, authors usually mention increased mobility due to internal migration and improvement of transportations, as well as urbanisation and mass schooling (on the socio-demographic context of similar phenomena across Arabic-speaking countries, cf. also Miller 2007). However, the idea that a single koiné is actually spreading from the centre to other regions of Morocco presents some problems. First of all, its source cannot be clearly identified, as no uniform dialectal variety is spoken in the places that are generally seen as its origin (Casablanca, or the conurbation the latter forms with Rabat).[2] Secondly, since movements of population have marked most of the history of Arabic-speaking Morocco (as illustrated, for example, in Lévy 1998), several features may have spread inter-regionally since before the above-cited modernisation phenomena (i.e. before the 20th century). By comparing dialectological data from three Moroccan towns, Falchetta and Guerrero (2023) explicitly question the 'modern koiné' theory by showing that, while convergence is certainly taking place, it is not necessarily unidirectional or towards a single common variety.

Since language norms are so unstable, it is interesting to look into dubbing as a type of one-way communication in which media professionals address all members of a national community. In doing this, they will have to deal with linguistic variation without being able to rely on a single dialect which is universally recognised as the 'national standard dialect'—as is the case in Egypt and Syria. Few works have looked into language use in non-standard media Arabic in Morocco: three of them focus on dubbed soap-operas (Bensoukas and Blila 2013; Ziamari and Barontini 2013; Hickman 2023) one on

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[2] While old centres like Rabat used to be characterised by their own local urban varieties, the latter have receded over the last 100 years due to immigration fluxes from other, especially rural regions (Caubet 1998; Messaoudi 2001; 2002; El Himer 2015).

original Moroccan series (Benítez-Fernández and Guerrero 2022) and one on both (Falchetta 2022).[3] The focus of this article will be on the dubbing of soap-operas into *dārīža* because of the salience of the language-ideological activity that lies behind it. In the second half of the 2000s, Turkish soap-operas dubbed into the Syrian vernacular achieved resounding success at the pan-Arab level (Buccianti 2010); before that time, dubbing had been mainly in *fuṣḥā* (Maluf 2005), with some notable exceptions such as children's cartoons (Gamal 2008: 9). Very few years later, in 2009, the national Moroccan channel 2M launched *Las dos caras de Ana,* the first (Mexican) telenovela dubbed into the Moroccan vernacular. Success at the national level was comparable to that of Syrian-dubbed series at the pan-Arab scale, and more soap-operas were dubbed in the Moroccan *dārīža* resulting in excellent audience ratings. Nevertheless, several critiques also addressed the show(s), including as regards the type of language chosen, which was rejected for being too close to the Casablancan dialect or for resembling 'street language,' *lūġət z-zənqa* (Miller 2012).

As Bensoukas and Blila (2013), Ziamari and Barontini (2013) and Falchetta (2022) have shown, dubbing professionals attempt to create a more or less uniform *dārīža* by selecting among alternative forms in writing the dialogues. The features involved in this process of selection can be expressions, lexemes, morphemes or even phonemes. Sometimes it is a matter of language variety: e.g. a French or *fuṣḥā* form is chosen because no *dārīža* counterpart exists or, if it does, it carries negative indexations. This work is reminiscent of three of the four stages that, according to Haugen (1966), are typical in the traditional process of language standardisation: selection, codification and elaboration of the variety to be standardised.[4] However, the fact that state authorities are not the ones dictating the linguistic choices to be made in the dubbing (or at least not directly) has an impact on the smoothness of the standardisation process, as will be shown below.

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[3] The only other works that can be said to deal with this topic are Youssi's, particularly those concerning what he calls arabe marocain moderne ('Modern Moroccan Arabic'). He describes this as a mixed standard-vernacular variety commonly used in oral, erudite communicative contexts. Among these, he gives special prominence to "la présentation spontanée et/ou la diffusion de programmes de vulgarisation technique et scientifique," i.e. "The spontaneous hosting and/or technical and scientific popularisation in radio and TV programmes" (Youssi 1992: 25). The issue of sociolinguistic variation within arabe marocain moderne is not as stressed as in the other cited works; nevertheless, its use on Moroccan media is clearly underlined.

[4] The fourth stage envisaged by Haugen, first called 'acceptance' and then 'implementation' (Haugen 1983), is not encompassed by the dubbing work, as professionals do not actively ensure that the features they select are also employed in the community's actual language practices. However, as will be shown, predictions on the audience's acceptance still play a major role in the dubbing professionals' linguistic choices.

3. The data collection

During a six-month research stay in Morocco (January – July 2023), I carried out fieldwork in the Plug-In dubbing and post-production studios in Casablanca.[5] This is the same company that dubbed the first soap-operas in *dārīža* (including the above-mentioned *Las dos caras de Ana*) and is therefore to be considered a pioneer in this field.[6] Their only customer for *dārīža* voice-over is the national TV channel 2M (the same that launched the first dubbed telenovelas); apart from that, they also work with French dubbing. During the time I attended the studios, the *dārīža* branch was involved with the dubbing of three soap-operas, all Turkish.[7] Each soap-opera is managed as a single project, to which seven or eight staff members are devoted: three or four translators—who work remotely—and four sound engineers—who work in the studios. Among the latter, two also work as project manager and assistant project manager respectively. I had the opportunity to pay ten visits to the studios, during which I was allowed to sit with any of the twelve sound engineers, each of whom works in their own recording booth, and to take notes and interview them and the voice actors.

My written observations and questions focused on the linguistic editing of the scripts sent to the studios after being translated to *dārīža*, as well as on the general criteria followed by the staff in this endeavour. Since translators work remotely, I could not interview them during my visits; however, three of them were reached by telephone or e-mail.[8] The post-translation linguistic editing of the script of an episode happens in three rounds, i.e. first recording, mixing and modifications.

- the *first recording* consists in each voice actor dubbing the lines of their character separately with one of the engineers; in this process, both of them may suggest modifications to the translator's copy, with the engineer having the final word in the choice;

- the *mixing* consists in the integration and sound balancing of all the lines of each character appearing in a given episode, and is undertaken by either the project manager or her/his assistant. In completing these tasks, the mixer usually requests that the engineers re-record some of the lines by editing the wording;

[6] Other companies now exist that dub series in dārīža for other channels, e.g. the pan-Arab MBC5.

[7] For a discussion of the success of Turkish soap-operas in the Arabic-speaking world, cf. Buccianti (2010).

[8] The English translation of all the staff's comments and answers reported here is mine. All the exchanges in the studios were in *dārīža,* including those involving me, while all interviews with translators were carried out in French.

- the *modifications* are the implementation of the changes requested by the mixer in the previous phase. This happens, again, in the recording booth with an engineer requesting the voice actor to re-record the lines that need to be changed.

My fieldwork was aimed at understanding which criteria were followed in discarding certain linguistic features to the advantage of others. This was done by writing down every linguistic choice that was made during the sessions I joined, and by directly asking the engineer or the voice actor why it had been made. This allowed to identify different types of choices according to the linguistic-ideological criterion that guided them. In the following section, a tentative classification of these types of choices is given.

4. Criteria for linguistic selection

4.1. What makes a choice 'linguistic'

Before detailing the motivations behind the dubbing professionals' linguistic choices, which acts of selection and rejection are considered as having a 'linguistic' nature should be specified in the first place. By the term 'linguistic choice,' I mean that a specific form is being approved or discarded only because of its intrinsic linguistic qualities, e.g. its meaning (referential or indexical),[9] its transparency, etc. Conversely, changes aimed at adjusting the length of the translated lines to the duration of the lip movement were not considered as 'linguistic.'

In what follows, linguistic choices will be classified according to the epilinguistic comment[10] that supported them or, more rarely, to the interpretation I give on the basis of linguistic considerations (when I take these as being self-evident enough). The types of choices identified are the following:

- *variety-based,* i.e. when a given form was judged because of its belonging to French, *fuṣḥā, dārīža* or other Arabic varieties;[11]

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[9] By 'indexical meaning' I intend the non-referential value that a given semiotic (including linguistic) sign-in-use acquires as a consequence of its contextualization as well as of the ideological framework; cf. Silverstein (1976; 2003).

[10] By 'epilinguistic comments' I mean "tout discours autonome ayant pour objet 'les lectes ou l'activité de langage (de soi ou des autres)'" ["every case of self-supporting discourse about 'lects or (one's own or other people's) language as an activity"] (Canut 1998; in Bennis 2001: 637).

[11] For an account of the sociolinguistic status of, and ideologies associated with, local and foreign language varieties in Morocco, cf. Benítez-Fernández *et al.* (2013) and Pellegrini (2019).

- *quality-based,* i.e. when it was judged because of some quality (indexical meaning) explicitly attributed to it;[12]

- *realism-based,* i.e. when it was judged because of its plausibility in the context of the communicative exchange taking place in the scene.

4.2. Variety-based choices: avoiding French

A general concern of the studios, and one of the few explicit instructions given by 2M, is to avoid French forms as much as possible. I will exemplify such concern by reporting the occasion in which I first became aware of this general linguistic policy. The translator's copy of an episode of the soap-opera *Zalim Istanbul* contained the word لاتراس, i.e. the French loanword *la trace* 'the trace.'[13] As soon as the sound engineer SE1[14] read it, he interrupted the recording to take a screenshot and send it to the chief translator through a chat shared with other staff. In his message, he suggested replacing the loanword with *l-ʔātāṛ*, the corresponding Standard Arabic form phonologically adapted to *dārīža*.[15] After the recording session had finished, I asked him why he had done so, since *dārīža* speakers normally code-switch with French at will.[16] SE1's answer was that a) *dārīža* changes according to the region, which means not everyone uses or understands French, and that b) it is the management's explicit policy to reduce French as much as possible in the dialogues.

In fact, this one was the only discussion I witnessed in the studios which involved the choice of a French form. Nevertheless, comments provided by sound engineers and translators alike suggested

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[12] While indexical meaning definitely plays a role in all types of linguistic choice made in the context of dubbing, it was not always made explicit in the staff's epilinguistic comments.

[13] Translators' copies are always written in Arabic letters; consequently, translators' choices are reported here the way they were originally written (except when I failed to copy them on my notebook for time constraints). Since I did not report the original (English) copy from which the translation is done, the English corresponding forms that I write here in quotation marks are only to be intended as my own translation of the form employed by the staff member.

[14] Staff members are identified by a one- or two-letter code indicating their profession, plus a progressive number indicating the order in which they are first mentioned in this paper. SE stands for 'sound engineer,' T for 'translator,' VA for 'voice actor/actress.' Therefore, e.g., SE4 means 'the fourth sound engineer mentioned.' Only members responsible for any of the changes reported here are coded.

[15] At the end of my fieldwork, I was allowed to watch the final versions of some episodes, some of which had not been broadcast yet. I could thus verify that the engineer's suggestion, l-ʔātāṛ, was kept. In what follows, I will indicate every time I could check if the edit made it to the finalised episode; if this is not specified, then it means I did not have this opportunity.

[16] Moroccan Arabic-French code switching is a common practice and has been described in a great number of studies, e.g. Abbassi (1977), Bentahila and Davies (1983; 1995), Lahlou (1991), Ennaji (2005), Ziamari (2007; 2009; 2018), Post (2015), Falchetta (2024) to cite just a few.

that it was an important subject of discussion that framed the studios' general translating policy. The three translators interviewed (among whom was the chief translator, who coordinates all the translators' work) all confirmed this point, specifying that only two types of French lexemes are admitted in the scripts: those for which no counterpart exists in Arabic (e.g.: *arobase* 'at symbol') and those of very common use. Even so, they underlined that, in the latter case, a *dārīža* pronunciation should be maintained (e.g. [tilifun] rather than the French-sounding [telefɔn] for 'telephone'). One of the translators, T1, suggested that the use of French forms "depends on the country's political trend," According to her, while it was more frequent in the past to admit loanwords, these are now more restricted because of the dominant political ambition to give priority to English over French. Since no other staff member supported this explicit political reading, it remains unclear whether it should be seen as this translator's personal view or as a well-founded remark on the state's actual politico-linguistic agenda.

4.3. Variety-based choices: avoiding *fuṣḥā*

Fuṣḥā is a language entity enjoying prestige in the Moroccan and in other Arabic-speaking societies because of the religious, literary and cultural heritage to which it is indissolubly linked. Nevertheless, just as it is considered inadequate in certain domains of communication—usually those related to all things not erudite or formal—it can also, in other contexts, be considered inappropriate if mixed with *dārīža* speech. This explicitly emerged in at least four cases, three involving lexical variation and one involving syntax and morphology.

The first two were noted in the same recording session. One involved the translator's rendition of 'fault' with the word خطيئة, which SE2 asked the voice actress to change to *dənb* because the former sounded too '*Ar-risālah*-like' to him. The reference is to the 1976 movie (English title: 'The message') chronicling the prophet Muhammad's life and the revelation of Islam. Like all historical and religion-related movies, it is obviously in *fuṣḥā*—indeed, it is the utmost *fuṣḥā* movie, as SE2's comment seems to imply. The second targeted word was نار, the *fuṣḥā* word for 'fire,' which was changed to its colloquial counterpart ʕāfīya, again upon SE2's request.[17] Interestingly, both of SE2's changes have been reversed in subsequent stages of the editing work, as the translator's initial choices are actually heard in the aired version of the episode. In the third occasion, a voice actress, VA1, suggested changing the

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[17] No comment was given on this choice. The use of ʕāfīya (originally 'health') for 'fire' is a well-known case of euphemism that established itself in the colloquial Moroccan Arabic lexicon.

translator's سحبتهم for *ḫarražt-hum* "I withdrew [the money]." The engineer, SE3, subsequently explained to me that سحبتهم "is *fuṣḥā*" to motivate her change (however, they eventually agreed on recording the line twice with both options, unsure about which word the mixer would consider more appropriate).

In the fourth case, a discussion arose between voice actor VA2 and engineer SE4 on the sequence ما دام انت, composed of ما دام (literally the particle ما—*mā maṣdariyya ẓarfiyya* according to Standard Arabic grammar—plus the verb دام 'to last,' used in a fixed invariable form, which is an option available in *dāriža* but not in *fuṣḥā*), meaning 'while,' and of the 2nd person feminine singular isolated pronoun انت [18]; in English, ما دام انت would therefore be translated roughly as 'while you...' While reading this line, VA2 felt ما دام انت should be corrected to *ma damti*. SE4, in turn, corrected this further to *ma dumti*. The latter, incidentally, is the correct form that Standard Arabic would prescribe, with the verb *dāma* 'to last,' agreeing with the 2nd person feminine singular subject. Probably for this reason, VA2 criticised SE4's suggestion saying *verbatim*: "You're speaking *fuṣḥā*."[19] While SE4 and VA2 eventually agreed on keeping the translator's ما دام انت, a different engineer-voice actor couple did not correct the translator's ما دمتي (the *fuṣḥā*-like version of this construction) found in another script.

The editing cases described above explicitly attest to a concern for avoiding the use of *fuṣḥā* and preserving the '*dāriža*-ness' of the scripts. Another case that was not commented by the decision-maker and could be interpreted in this sense was noted when engineer SE5 asked to replace فـ [20] with *ʔīdān*: while both are resultative conjunctions recently borrowed from *fuṣḥā*, the latter is of much more common use. However, none of the changes aiming at the avoidance of a perceived *fuṣḥā* form reflected a unanimous agreement among the staff; I even observed some occurrences of the conjunction فـ (*fa*) in the finalised episodes, which means not everyone finds *ʔīdān* to be more *dāriža*. Therefore, the red line to be traced between *fuṣḥā* and *dāriža*—or, from another point of view, between admissable and non-admissable *fuṣḥā* forms—remains ambiguous most of the times.

Nevertheless, specific reasons may push to the choice of a *fuṣḥā* form instead of a non-*fuṣḥā* one even if the former is not of common use. In the case of SE1's replacement of the French لاتراس with the *fuṣḥā*-borrowed *l-ʔātāṛ*, the reason is that the alternative to the standard would be a word (perceived as) borrowed from French, and therefore undesired. Apart from the attempts to curb French forms,

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[18] The gender of the pronoun is inferred from the context, as the utterance is adressed to a woman in the scene at hand.

[19] Given this comment, it may be guessed that VA2's preference for *ma damti* was its greater closeness to the *dāriža* form *ma dəmti*. Also, since I did not use an audio recorder in my observations at the studios, I may have incorrectly noted *damti* instead of *dəmti*; the latter would make VA2's stance linguistically more coherent. In either case, what I am concerned with here is VA2's metalinguistic comment rather than the exact vowel he suggested using.

[20] The *fatḥa* was indicated on the script.

fuṣḥā may sometimes also function as a safe haven to express culturally sensitive words or concepts, according to the translators interviewed.[21] A well-known case, already mentioned by Ziamari and Barontini, is the use of the verb *rqəṣ* instead of *šṭəḥ* 'to dance:' the former results from the attribution of a *dāriža* morphology to the borrowed standard triliteral root *r-q-ṣ*, while the latter represents the most commonly used form for this semantic meaning. For *Ana*, the first soap-opera dubbed in Moroccan Arabic, the two authors report a clearly prevailing use of the form with the borrowed root, and posit that the other form may be judged as "potentiellement [choquant] ou pouvant heurter la sensibilité des téléspectateurs," i.e. "potentially shocking or at risk of offending the viewers" (Ziamari and Barontini 2013: 124).[22] Other examples are when بليد is used for 'stupid'[23] or دارت إجهاض for 'she had an abortion.'[24] Talking about the restrictions imposed by 2M, T1 explains that "sometimes there are simple words that have no taboo meaning, but a clean language close to *fuṣḥā* is what is aimed for." As for the chief translator, she maintained that "we try to obtain a standard way of speaking that is more oriented towards classical [i.e. standard] Arabic." However, these top-down indications are sometimes resisted. Talking about the *rqəṣ ~ šṭəḥ* 'controversy,' she recalled how she once clinged on having *šṭəḥ* accepted on her scripts, as she categorically refused an artificial form such as *rqəṣ* to appear on them. Indeed, observed language editing practices in the studios suggest that the staff has now become more akin to allow *šṭəḥ* to reach the viewers' ears.

4.4. Variety-based choices: avoiding other Arabic varieties

A common stereotype widespread across Arabic-speaking communities (including in the *Maġrib*) is that dialects spoken in the *Mašriq* are closer to *fuṣḥā* and, therefore, both more intelligible and more

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[21] Code-switching with Standard Arabic or French may have this function even in spontaneous, non-mediated communication; cf. Falchetta (2024: 55-56).

[22] The social sensitivity towards dancing is probably due to its association to the work of the *šīḫa* 'chanteuse-danseuse professionnelle qui récite des vers et chante à l'occasion des noces et des fêtes familiales à l'intérieur des maisons' ('professional female singer-dancer who recites verses and sings at weddings and family feasts in indoor spaces') or 'chanteuse de café-concert' ('live-entertainment bar female singer') (de Prémare 1995: 255). As bars are seen as promiscuous places in the Moroccan society, these artists do not enjoy good reputation and are often marginalised.

[23] A more common *dāriža* equivalent would be *mkəlləḫ.*

[24] This expression is composed of the vernacular verb دار 'to do,' and the standard إجهاض 'abortion.' In an internal glossary aimed at giving indications of 'proper language use' to the staff, this expression is indicated as preferable to طيحات الولد, literally 'she dropped the child.' The verb ṭiyyəḥ is reported in de Prémare (1996: 394) with the meaning faire avorter, lit. 'to cause to have an abortion.'

authentically 'Arab' than *Maġribi* varieties.[25] This has been referred to as 'the Maghreb-Mashreq ideology' (Hachimi 2013). While none of the comments collected in the studios supported or countered this stereotype, at least two acts of linguistic selection made clear how *Mašriqi* varieties are conceived as being fundamentally extraneous to Moroccan *dārīža* (a *Maġribi* vernacular). The first such act saw engineer SE6 ask a voice actress to reintegrate the etymological glottal stop (*hamz*) into a verb which the translator had written as كيطمن ('he makes / is making sure'), so as to pronounce it *kā-yṭmaʔann*. He gave a number of reasons for this choice: a) the *hamz*-less variant is regional, b) it is less common, c) it is how it is pronounced in the *Mašriq* and, in any case, d) one had better avoid dubious decisions (*šubha*). Engineer SE7 allegedly had a similar preoccupation concerning نقضي 'take revenge,' in the utterance غادي نقضي عليكم كاملين 'I'll take revenge on all of you,' which she asked the voice actress to change to the semantically equivalent *ġādi nəntāqəm ʕlī-kum kāmlīn* (with *nəntāqəm* being the replacing word). She then asserted that "*naqḍi* [the verb the translator had chosen] is used in *fuṣḥā* and in the *Mašriq*, whereas *nəntāqəm* is *dārīža*".

Besides extra-Moroccan dialects, the linguistic trimming visibly leads professionals to also discard features associated with marked Moroccan varieties. More precisely, I took note of two epilinguistic comments indicating the staff's concern with avoiding rural (*ʕṛūbi*[26]) forms. The source of the first one was the executive head of the company. The Plug-In management rarely intervene in the language editing work, which is normally done in the recording booths (to use SE7's words, "the company management *kā-təbqa bʕīda ʕlī-na,* i. e. "lies far from us"). If they do intervene, it means that the acceptability of the whole product is at stake. In one occasion—the executive reported to me—upon hearing a character say *sūrət l-bāb* ("lock the door"), she immediately asked the staff to re-dub the line getting rid of the verb *sūrət* 'to lock,' which she associated with rural speech. She therefore had the line changed to *sədd l-bāb* ('close the door'), as she found associating a Turkish actress with a *ʕṛūbi* voice preposterous.

The second comment came, indirectly, during the same recording session in which SE4 and VA2 debated the *ma damti / ma dumti* issue—quite an animated session indeed. The object of discussion was the /q/ ~ /g/ variation—a phenomenon of phonologic alternation involving Arabic lexemes that present an etymological /q/, e.g. *qəddām ~ gəddām* 'in front of.' In Moroccan urban areas, including Casablanca (where most staff members come from and live), use of /g/ where /q/ would or could be

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[25] Mašriq and Maġrib are essentially two geographical denominations referring, respectively, to the eastern and western parts of the Arabic-speaking world. They are often used to refer to culturally and linguistically defined regions as well.

[26] The equivalent of 'bumpkin.'

expected often indexes the rural origin of the speaker (Caubet 1993: 12; Hachimi 2005; 2007; 2011; 2012). This partly matches the actual distribution of /g/, which is more frequent in the rural areas of the north-east, centre and south of the country (Heath 2002: 141–147). In a previous study of soap-operas dubbed in *dārīža* (also by the Plug-In studios), I observed what appears to be the general policy regarding lexemes that vary between these two phonemes in common use: all the words concerned are invariably read with /q/, except for *gāl* 'to say' which is the only one never pronounced as *qāl* (Falchetta 2022: 221).[27] Contrary to this policy, VA2 (perhaps accidentally) read *tqūl* while acting; SE4 promptly replied *tgūl*, implying she was asking him to re-record the line replacing *q* with *g*. Before complying, VA2 jokingly said to her: "What? You speak like a ʕṛūbīya [i.e. a bumpkin girl]?" SE4 wittingly played along the joke by saying *verbatim: l-ʕṛūbīya hūwa tta!*, i.e. 'You are the bumpkin girl!' The core of SE4's joke is lost in translation, as she pronounced *tta* 'you' with nasal assimilation (the usual pronunciation in dubbings is *nta*), which is precisely a feature generally ascribed to ʕṛūbi people (cf. Hachimi 2005: 45; 2018: 19). This exchange of wits therefore reconfirmed the inconvenience of speaking ʕṛūbi in dubbings; however, the inter-lexical distribution of the two phonemes was also reconfirmed since, joking aside, SE4 eventually had VA2 re-record the same line with *tgūl*. May this indirectly suggest that ʕṛūbi is not the only (stereotyped) speech that is stigmatised? Again, Hachimi (2005; 2007; 2011; 2012) shows how some Casablancan women of Fessi origin, while predominantly avoiding /g/ whenever they can, prefer *gāl* because they think Fessis saying *qāl* sounds funny and overblown.

So what variety of *dārīža* is 'suitable' for the dialogues of soap-operas? None of the professionals ever mentioned spontaneously a model of *dārīža* while attending to their language editing work. However, when questioned, sound engineers (all from Casablanca) described such variety as '[geographically] centralised *dārīža*,' 'monitored *dārīža*,' '*dārīža sui generis*' and 'Casablanca *dārīža* but modified for everyone to understand it.' The interviews with the translators (also from Casablanca) provided even more detail to these characterisations. Below I report two statements, respectively by the two translators T1 and T2, who gave them in answering the question: "Do you translate the way you speak or do you follow a different model?"

> We try to keep as close as possible to our spoken *dārīža,* but are given many limitations [...] We have to restrict ourselves to the *dārīža* spoken in Casablanca and Rabat: this is the standard, the *dārīža* spoken in this region. (T1)

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[27] Several works on dialect contact in Moroccan urban centres (Hachimi 2007; 2011 and others; Falchetta and Guerrero 2023) show a similar trend in speakers' actual language use, with gāl prevailing over qāl and /q/ over /g/ in all other lexemes.

> When translating a script, I choose a standard and everyday *dārīža,* avoiding all words and terms specific to a region. (T2)

As can be seen, both agree on regionally marked features having to be avoided. Indeed, the regional marking of an aspiring translator's speech may be a hindrance to their recruitment, according to the chief translator (who is also in charge with the job interviews):

> We start conversing in *dārīža* with them to see if they use strange words. When we find someone who has a regional colloquial Arabic, such as from Fes [it's problematic]. It's not a matter of accent, that does not affect the script. It's a matter of words, because they can never be totally filtered and the translator does not accept to change them. They need to have a standard regional Arabic. The aim of these shows is to standardise Moroccan Arabic, it's an avowed goal.

4.5. Quality-based choices

Several features are discarded not because they are seen as belonging to some variety other than ('standard') *dārīža*, but because they are considered as inappropriate to be used on the screen. These are not limited to more or less taboo words, such as insults or terms referring to sex, sexuality, death etc., but also include forms that are branded as harsh (*qāsəḥ*) or indexing other negative qualities. Two revealing examples are words referring to parents and the prefixes *kā-* and *tā-*.

In Morocco, it is commonly understood that calling one's father and mother respectively *ḅāḅa* and *ṃāṃa* "dévoile l'appartenance à une classe aisée" (Ziamari and Barontini 2015: 583), i.e. discloses the speaker's belonging to the upper class. Conversely, forms such as *ḅḅa* and *ṃṃ-i*, or *l-wālīd* and *l-wālīda*, are known to bear a working-class connotation. Similar associations appear to be reproduced at Plug-In: a project manager once sent a line back to the recording studios because *ḅḅā-k* 'your father' (consisting of *ḅḅa* plus the 2nd person singular suffix pronoun *–k*) had been used, requesting it be corrected to *ḅāḅā-k.* SE3 was charged with re-recording the line, so I asked him what he thought was the reason for that request.[28] He answered that *ḅāḅā-k* is nice (*zwīn*) and may be used with a stranger (i.e. is formal), unlike *ḅḅā-k* which is *qāsəḥ* and "a mum says it to her child when she is angry." A reported anecdote further proved that, if a feature of speech is enregistered (Agha 2005) as associated with an undesired stance or social type, it can indeed be hard to have it authorised by the management: the

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[28] I rarely attended the mixing sessions, as few linguistic changes are decided during this process compared to the first recording phase. The downside of this choice was that I had to ask the sound engineer rather than the project manager why the latter had decided that a given form should be discarded. While this prevented me from hearing the main decision-maker's opinion, I still considered the engineer's answer valid as it reflected the company's general policies on language appropriateness.

chief translator recalled her struggle, while translating the scripts of an old soap-opera, to be allowed to make a scoundrel speak in a way reflecting his social characterisation, including calling his mum by *l-wālīda.* She eventually succeeded.

The morphemes *kā-* and *tā-* are prefixed to an imperfective (p-stem) verb form to signify a progressive, habitual or gnomic aspect. From the diachronic and diatopic perspectives, *kā-* is predominant in non-*Hilāli* varieties and in northern cities (Aguadé 1996: 198–199), while *tā-* is more frequent in *Hilāli* varieties and in southern areas (Aguadé 1996: 200–201).[29] However, in areas of strong internal immigration such as Rabat and Casablanca, both seem to be used interchangeably and no previous dialectological study has found any linguistic or non-linguistic factor causing the use of either variant. Nevertheless, when SE2 found himself working with a script full of prefixes *tā-* during one of his sessions, he regularly corrected all of them to *kā-* (when the voice actor did not do it himself). Overwhelmed by the abundance of *tā-*'s, he ended up commenting *verbatim: hād ḫū-na mūl s-skrīpt kā-ydīr t-'tā' bəzzāf!* (i.e. "This script guy goes with *'tā'* a lot!"). I asked two sound engineers *and* the translators T1 and T2 how they thought these two forms differed, as it was completely opaque to me. Without ambiguity, engineer SE8 asserted that *tā-* is *qāsəḥ* and *ʕṛubi.* A lengthier explanation—which nevertheless did not contradict SE8's point—was provided by SE7, who was also assistant project manager:

> In *dāriža* we use both *kā-* and *tā-,* but *tā-* is when one speaks with their friends, it is common language (*lūǧət l-ʕāmma*); *kā-* means politeness (*ṣwāb*), it suits dubbing, is more elegant. (...) However, I may leave some *tā-*'s when mixing, so as to vary a bit. It also depends on the verb.

As for the translators, both of them declared to prefer using *kā-* in their scripts due to it being the prefix they use in their everyday speech; however, they also stated that both forms are correct. Neither of them attributed any specific quality to either form which could affect its suitability to be heard on the screen.

One last, interesting case deserves to be mentioned. A project manager asked SE7 to have the voice actress change *ši luqma* (lit. 'a morsel') to *ši ḥāža* (lit. 'something') to signify 'something to eat.' The

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[29] Non-Hilāli include pre-Hilāli and Andalousi varieties. The former were brought by the early Arab Muslim conquerors in the so-called 1st wave of Arabisation (7th-8th centuries); the latter are linked to the continuous migrations of Arabic speakers from the Iberian peninsula (i.e. from Al-Andalous) in various moments between the 8th and the 15th century (Vicente 2000: n. 3). The Hilāli varieties are those brought in the 2nd wave of Arabisation, which consisted in the migration of several Arab tribes (including the Banū Hilāl) to the Maghreb in the 11th century (cf. Marçais 1960). The idea that the validity of this diachronic distinction is still valid for today's taxonomy of dialect varieties has been put into question e.g. by Benkato (2019).

discarded *luqma* specifically indicates a small quantity of a semolina- or barley-based meal made into a ball to be eaten. SE7 justified the mixer's decision by explaining that *luqma* 'is too *dārīža*.' Therefore, despite the fact that certain choices (particularly variety-based ones) seem to indicate the staff's preoccupation for the dubbing to be in 'pure' *dārīža,* this comment reveals that an excessive amount of '*dārīža*-ness' may also cause a feature to be discarded.

4.6. Realism-based choices

I will end this section by mentioning those cases in which linguistic choices were declaredly or implicitly aimed at increasing the naturalness or likeability of an utterance. I have already mentioned the chief translator telling about her past struggle to have a scoundrel talk like a working-class person by saying, among other things, *l-wālīda.* In the studios, I could witness at least three more cases in which realism was at issue. In the first of these, voice actress VA4 spontaneously decided, while acting, to replace the conjunction العوض لي with *f ḅḷāṣt ma* (both meaning 'instead of'). Apparently, her choice was due to her perceiving the latter form as more colloquial, since her own comment was that "*SaSdīya* [the character she was dubbing] is a servant, a simple person."[30] The second case involved engineer SE5 asking to change the sentence مستعدة نهضر معاك "I'm ready to talk to you" to *wāš təbġi nhaḍru āna w-ǝyyāk* "Do you want to talk to me?" (lit.: "Do you want you and me to talk?"); according to her, the new sentence was more 'realistic' in that "it gives the idea of a reciprocal relationship." A final, clear example of this kind of change was given by voice actor VA5, who autonomously changed the translator's فالحقيقة to *ṣ-ṣārāḥa* (both meaning 'actually / in fact,' but the second being of much more common usage).

5. Discussion

The mere fact that, being a vernacular, *dārīža* is an uncodified variety by definition engenders the absence of a unified norm at multiple levels: phonetic realisation of phonemes, phonologic assignment of lexemes, morpho-syntactic constructions, appropriate vocabulary, loanwords etc. The examples of linguistic choices reported in the previous section show how the professional staff at Plug-In studios attempt to manage such normative instability in order to create *dārīža* dialogues for originally foreign

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[30] It may be observed that العوض لي, however vocalised in *dārīža,* recalls the *fuṣḥā* equivalent *Siwaḍan San.* As for *f ḅḷāṣt ma,* it contains the old Spanish loanword *ḅḷāṣa,* which is by now of very common use in Moroccan Arabic. Therefore, while the former choice is also employed in *dārīža,* it would bring the utterance closer to Standard Arabic.

soap-operas. To what extent can all this linguistic work be compared to a traditional process of language standardisation? It may be remembered that, after explaining how the *dārīža* of aspiring translators is tested in interviews, the chief translator concluded with this straightforward statement: "The aim of these shows is to standardise Moroccan Arabic, it's an avowed goal." By looking at Haugen's definition of selection, codification and elaboration, we will now discuss how much of this is attained.

What I call variety-based choices most directly correspond to his "*selection* of some kind of a model from which the norm can be derived" (Haugen 1966: 932, author's emphasis): each variety (French, *fuṣḥā*, *mašriqi* and marked Moroccan Arabic dialects) that is branded as extraneous to the 'desired' language is a language model that is discarded. This means it is mostly a negative kind of selection: rather than picking a dialect and electing it as the chosen norm, the staff single out undesired language models and discard the features associated with them.[31] The fact that some of them, when asked, identify (positively) the resulting *dārīža* with 'modified Casablanca' or 'central Moroccan' speech was not reflected in the comments supporting the linguistic choices made in the studios: in other words, nobody declared to prefer a form to another by virtue of it being 'more' or 'truly Casablancan' or similar. Quality-based choices could also more or less implicitly contribute to this type of negative selection. In at least two of the three cases presented (parents-referring words and verbal prefixes), the staff's concern for language appropriateness may be legitimately suspected of hiding an actual concern for discarding regionally or socially marked speech—which would mean these, too, could be considered variety-based choices. This been said, even when this negative selection aims at excluding varieties that are unanimously perceived as extraneous to *dārīža*, i.e. French and *fuṣḥā*, it is not always easy to draw a clear separating line: the debate on the acceptability of every single French borrowing and the lack of agreement on the admissibility of forms that (a part of the staff believe they) belong to *fuṣḥā* are both evidence of these blurred language borders.

Both variety- and quality-based choices also serve the purpose of *codification*, i.e. reaching "*minimal variation in form*" (Haugen 1966: 931, author's emphasis). When basic language levels such as phonology and morphology are involved, variation is easily reduced as the number of variants is often limited to two: the 2nd person pronouns are always pronounced *nta / nti / ntūma* and the assimilated *tta / tti / ttūma* are never heard; /q/ and /g/ are split between two well-defined groups of lexical items; *tā-* is replaced with *kā-* etc. When the choice is between lexemes, the most semantically broad one

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[31] This from the staff's perspective. Conversely, a scientific analysis encompassing different texts and genres does allow the identification of a specific register, and even of a social type associated with it, which dubbing privileges through linguistic selection (Falchetta 2022).

seems to win (ḥāža 'thing' instead of luqma 'morsel,' sədd 'to close' instead of sūrət 'to lock') so that it could be argued that the lexical repertoire tends to be impoverished; however, a wider study of lexical choices made in the dubbing work is needed to appreciate the truth of this statement. Nevertheless, not only is variation never completely eliminated (as also happens in traditional standardisation) but codification is always in the process of being negotiated. This was shown above in reference to the blurred inter-variety borders. To this can be added the chief translator's struggle to use šṭəḥ insted of rqəṣ for 'to dance,' the lack of constance in replacing the conjunction fa with the grammatically equivalent ʔīdān and the unstable phonetic realisation of several words (e.g. zūž ~ žūž 'two') which was occasionally observed in several recording sessions.

The third process, *elaboration*, is defined by Haugen as aiming at *"maximal variation in function"* (Haugen 1966: 931, author's emphasis). In the limited context of dubbing, 'variation in function' can almost exclusively mean adjusting language to the type of character or staged situation. Therefore, if one has to judge from the resulting texts, professionals appear to be less concerned with elaboration than with selection and codification, as also emerged in the analysis I previously carried out on language use in the soap-operas (Falchetta 2022). It actually seems that, when someone attempts typifying a character linguistically, they are met with significant opposition from project managers— as occurred to the chief translator when she tried to have a scoundrel say *l-wālīda*. Nevertheless, what I call 'realism-based choices' are evidence that the staff are, indeed, concerned with the functional diversification of the language of dubbing: see, e.g., VA4's spontaneous adjustment to a more ordinary register to dub a servant. In general, all the choices of this type are indicative of a search for naturalness and, as such, arguably prove that the staff—or at least a part of them—do wish to reproduce the situational and social diversification of real-life *dārīža*—and actually try to move in that direction. SE7 confirmed this when, as a comment to VA4's register adjustment, she declared that the linguistic typification of characters is actually part of the dubbing work: "We dress characters with words, they are like their signature." Thus, if such typification eventually has a limited impact on language diversification—as emerges from linguistic analyses—it is because of the same preoccupation that blocks project managers and executives from admitting words such as *l-wālīda, šṭəḥ* or insults: offending the most sensitive viewers of the soap-operas through the use of an excessively familiar parlance.

6. Conclusion

The picture that emerges from the analysis is one of incomplete language standardisation, a conclusion similar to that reached by Bensoukas and Blila (2013) in the analysis of another series dubbed in Moroccan Arabic. On the basis of the data collected through detailed observations and interviews *in*

the dubbing studios, we can now explain why this process does not reach completion. First of all, no officially recognised institution supports it. Secondly, the linguistic work underlying the dubbing of soap-operas is an instance of language standardisation for commercial purposes, which dictates certain constraints: not offending the audience's morals, being understandable to all Moroccans and, at the same time, creating an aesthetically nice product. Such constraints directly impact on each of the three aspects of standardisation analysed in the previous section, since they prevent:

- the selection of a best vernacular, which would not be accepted by speakers of other varieties
- the settlement of fluctuating choices, as achieving total linguistic homogeneity is ultimately not the studio's top priority, and
- stylistic diversification, as some socially characterised registers may offend the public

In sum, linguistic concerns are totally subordinated to the audience's acceptation of the whole soap-opera product—including their language. In this sense, one could say that the fourth goal of traditional standardisation, which in the first version of Haugen's theory was called *acceptance*, gets the better of the other three in the context of dubbing. In traditional standardisation, where state institutions support the linguistic work (which is usually done by academics), the state not only seeks the national community's acceptance from a more powerful position than dubbing studios, but also simultaneously imposes the standard in public domains, such as school and administration.

Several questions are raised by the Plug-In studio's management of language variation, but answering them would excessively extend the length of this paper and are thus left for subsequent publications: is there a social or regional dialect which resembles the *dārīža* of soap-operas? Through which semiotic processes do the selected and discarded forms end up indexing the qualities that dubbing professionals attribute to them? And what can be said on the reception of these dubbings by the public? In order to provide a fuller picture of processes of informal standardisation in Moroccan Arabic, further research should also be dedicated to the language policies of other dubbing studios, as well as to how variation is managed in other types of media product. This would help understand how the language ideologies at work in the Plug-In studio are actually relevant at the national level, and how criteria vary according to genre, audience and medium.

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Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ and Leonardo Sciascia

Between social and institutional justice

Mahmoud Jaran and Asef Khaldi

This comparative literature study investigates the concept of justice in the works of Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ and Leonardo Sciascia. Both novelists, throughout their extensive careers, obsessively explore the fundamental concept of justice in both their literary and non-literary works. Beginning with the historical context, the article examines the political transformations that occurred in Egypt and Italy during the lifetimes of these writers. These transformations significantly impacted the judicial system and social life in each country. While Maḥfūẓ focused on justice in its social context and the Sciascia in its institutional context, both explore through their literary texts and cultural-political commitments the intricate relationship between political power, the legal system, and organized crime. The article addresses the methodological differences in the authors' styles and their approaches to the concept of justice, as well as the similarities in their attempts to find alternatives to the absence of justice through aesthetic-literary compensation and, subsequently, through a metaphysical dimension. The article demonstrates how Maḥfūẓ and Sciascia's exploration of justice evolves from a rational critique of societal and institutional failures to a metaphysical contemplation, where the concept of 'death' becomes central to understanding justice.

Key words: comparative literature, intercultural studies; social justice in Egypt; social and institutions in Italy; Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ; Leonardo Sciascia; Sufism; metaphysics

1. Introduction

Strikingly, there is a scarcity, or perhaps a complete absence, of comparative studies directly examining the literary works of Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ (1911-2006) and Leonardo Sciascia (1921-1989). This absence is particularly surprising given the numerous similarities between the two authors across several dimensions[1]. These similarities include not only the historical period during which both writers

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1 However, there are those who perceive parallels between Maḥfūẓ and another Sicilian writer, Giovanni Verga (see Waly 2023: 153).

lived, but also the parallels in the historical context they experienced, which was marked by significant political transformations (from monarchy to republic in Egypt in 1952 and in Italy in 1946); the transition from a microcosmic setting to a national or global one (Maḥfūẓ's Cairo and Sciascia's Sicily); the themes addressed by the two writers, particularly in relation to the parallel world of organized crime (the urban rabble and the Mafia). Furthermore, both Maḥfūẓ and Sciascia were deeply engaged with the political and social realities of their times. This engagement made their pens bold witnesses to contemporary events, reporting them outside official narratives (the assassination of Anwar al-Sādāt in *The Day the Leader Was Killed* by Maḥfūẓ, and the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro in *The Moro Affair* by Sciascia). However, the most significant thematic parallel, which will be examined in some aspects in this article, is their obsession with the concept of justice. Both authors grapple with issues of state and societal injustice, and the potential of literature to challenge these injustices. This "aesthetic compensation", as it may be termed, reflects their belief in the power of literature to expose and critique social ills.

While many critical studies have acknowledged the significance of human and existentialist themes in Maḥfūẓ's works due to their engagement with 'universal themes' (Sutanto *et al.* 2017: 69), the issue of justice in its various forms has remained a central focus in his writings. This emphasis led the academic critic and former Egyptian Minister of Culture, Jaber Asfour, to summarize Maḥfūẓ's literary legacy as a humanistic vision centered on the human individual's quest for social justice amidst the struggles against time and surrounding circumstances (Asfour 2010: 34). His exploration of justice was not limited to literary works, but also extended to journalism; an important activity shared by the Egyptian and Sicilian writers. In his articles, Maḥfūẓ frequently linked justice to democracy, economic conditions, and labor productivity, aiming to create a society that "enjoys equality of satisfaction and not equality of needs" (Maḥfūẓ 2020: 53). Sciascia, unlike Maḥfūẓ, transcended the focus on justice in its social dimensions, by addressing the issue from a purely institutional perspective. This allowed him to conceptualize a distinction between 'law' and 'justice' on one hand, and between 'justice' and 'truth' on the other. This approach is reflected in the diverse audience drawn to Sciascia's work, which exceeded literary scholars and critics to encompass judges, jurists, and even politicians (Guaricci 2022: 322).

There is another distinction between the two writers related to 'how' they are regarded as global authors. It appears that mere engagement with universal concepts is insufficient for a writer to achieve global recognition. In this respect, the contrast between the two wordsmiths is stark and, in certain aspects, antithetical. If the realistic depiction of Cairo's neighborhoods, with their poverty and wealth, and the separate laws governing the powerful and the powerless, led Maḥfūẓ to the Nobel Prize—by

"forming of an Arabian narrative art that applies to all mankind" (Award Ceremony Speech 1988)—then Sciascia, conversely, drew inspiration for 'his universality' from the outside world and transplanted it to his Mediterranean island setting. To achieve this, as Italo Calvino (2000) astutely points out, Sciascia armed himself with French Enlightenment, the relativism of Pirandello and Gogol's influence through Brancati, all while maintaining the historical continuity of Spanish-Sicilian traditions (Calvino 2000: 829).

This article adopts a comparative literature approach grounded in the concept of comparative literature, as articulated by Massimo Fusillo (2020), who emphasizes the need for 'multiple mirrors' in this discipline (Fusillo 2020: 13). Fusillo's perspective reflects an understanding that comparative literature must increasingly engage with a dynamically interwoven world, where the shared values of diverse cultures propel a global literature. This world literature functions both metaphorically, as it generates parallel worlds, alternative visions of reality, and utopias, and concretely, by connecting disparate contexts through universal human concerns (Fusillo 2020: 15). Although the historical and cultural backgrounds of Maḥfūẓ and Sciascia differ, their works intersect in realms of political activism and the cosmopolitan, universal dimensions of human thought, particularly regarding justice. Justice, central to this article, is ultimately an intrinsic human value that transcends individual cultures, resonating across boundaries as a universal moral quest. Furthermore, this study builds on George Steiner's (2012) insight into analogy as an intrinsic element of comparative literature (Steiner 2012: 218), particularly valuable when exploring the interactions between literature and other domains like law and religion. In Western traditions, these intersections—between literary expression, judicial systems, and religious ideologies—have long nurtured a fertile discourse on justice. This inquiry underscores the enduring significance of literature's engagement with justice as a means to critique and reimagine societal structures. The analysis thus emphasizes how the works of Maḥfūẓ and Sciascia explore justice not merely as a thematic concern but as an ethical endeavor that merges aesthetics with profound cultural commitments.

2. Historical overview

> "Of the powers above mentioned, the judiciary is in some measure next to nothing"
>
> Montesquieu

When the 1919 Revolution occurred in Egypt, marking a new era of Egyptian consciousness across popular, elite, and social spheres under the monarchy and British presence (Whidden 2013: 15), Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ was seven years old. In an interview with writer and journalist Mohamed Salmawy (1997),

Maḥfūẓ recalls, "I witnessed the birth of the 1919 Revolution and saw men and women in the streets shouting slogans that I did not understand at the time" (Salmawy 1997: 10).

Later, Maḥfūẓ witnessed the 1952 Revolution, which differed in its causes from that of 1919, as it overthrew the monarchy in Egypt and declared the birth of the republic. By the age of forty, and despite having lived through numerous experiences between the two revolutions, the author and novelist had not yet developed firm convictions from these experiences. Instead, he was filled with doubts that resonated in the social and historical novels published during that period. Matti Moosa (1994) offers insights into this period, saying:

> The fact remains that in many of his novels Maḥfūẓ appears to be a perplexed person who has not yet found a satisfactory answer to the complex realities of life in this world and beyond ... Although the revolution's leaders advocated socialism, Arab nationalism, and democracy, he says true socialism and democracy have not been realized in Egypt. In order for these objectives to be achieved, it is imperative that freedom first be established and respected (Moosa 1994: 14).

This situation prompted the writer to focus on the concept of social justice in its various embodiments, perceiving it as the true measure of revolution's success. Nevertheless, he soon adopted the position of an observer, choosing to remain silent for five years (from 1952 to 1957) as he granted the revolution the opportunity to fulfill his dreams of social justice. The revolution, however, ultimately disappointed him. Rather than assuming that he had nothing left to say, he realized that he was incapable of expressing his thoughts (El-Enany 1993: 25). Thus, he resumed writing, defying the revolution's failure to achieve its proclaimed goals.

To understand the situation in Egypt after 1952 in terms of the relationship between politics and legal institutions, Tamir Moustafa (2008) describes how the Free Officers' coup, which brought Gamāl ʿAbd an-Nāṣir to power, led to a significant institutional and political overhaul, moving away from the prior liberal-democratic structure. The new regime swiftly dismantled the existing political system, nullifying the constitution by decree in 1952 and banning all political parties shortly afterward. This transition weakened Egypt's legal institutions as well, with prominent figures like the legal scholar 'Abd al-Raziq al-Sanhūri, who had written the Egyptian civil code, facing intimidation and being forced to resign. High-ranking members of Egypt's supreme administrative court, the Maglis al-Dawla, were similarly pressured. In its consolidation of power, the regime established exceptional courts—such as the Court of the Revolution in 1953 and the People's Courts in 1954—that operated without standard procedures or rights to appeal, filling these positions with loyalists, often from the military. Nāṣir also redirected Egypt's economic policies, implementing significant land redistribution and nationalizing

foreign companies, especially after the 1956 Suez Crisis. Moustafa's analysis highlights how these changes marked a shift toward a highly centralized, authoritarian state (Moustafa 2008: 133).

Maḥfūẓ often uses political events as symbolic backdrops in his literary works, drawing plots from significant moments in Egypt's history (Myers 1986: 93). He believed that literature has a role in expressing reality with artistic integrity, serving as a form of social critique. Many of his works thus act as warnings to humanity about the dangers of injustice, addressing issues that both religious values and political movements may overlook. He sought to expose the negative consequences of the absence of the desired justice. This thematic focus was reflected not only in his literary works set in contemporary settings but also in his historical novels and non-fictional writings, including essays.

The transformation undergone by Italy in the post-World War II period was no less significant than the political shift in Egypt in 1952. Following the end of the Fascist era and the beginning of democratic governance, the republic was established through the 1946 referendum, marking the end of the monarchy. The Italian Constitution was created in 1948, indicating that the political transformation also entailed a shift in the concept of justice. The preceding era was characterized by the intertwining of the concepts of 'justice' and 'repression' throughout the stages shaping the political system, encompassing its rise, consolidation, and eventual crisis. Although the historical narrative often emphasizes repression as the sole instrument molding the idea of justice under the Fascist totalitarian regime, this does not negate the fact that the institutional concept of justice was also partially subjected to propaganda in both official and cultural dimensions. Moreover, it was partly linked to the fragile historical roots of the principle of legality in the liberal State (Lacchè 2015). The fusion of repression and institutionalized justice led to several pivotal shifts within the legal system: from the Rocco Code to the establishment of the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State, from the reinstatement of the death penalty to the promulgation of Racial Laws in 1938, which were met with applause and enthusiasm by many members of the judiciary in their interpretive practices and methodological approaches (Modona 2019: 241). Undoubtedly, over the course of two decades and through the imposition of its ideologies and practices, the totalitarian regime succeeded in presenting a comprehensive image of the concept of justice according to a model fundamentally based on 'repression' to consolidate its rule. It is equally evident that with the end of the fascist era, this concept had to be completely overturned.

In the aftermath of World War II, the concept of justice underwent significant changes in Italy—along with Germany and Japan—relegating the dictatorial past and its associated human rights violations to a seemingly forgotten era. It was natural for these nations, Italy foremost, to implement a system that closely monitors governmental and legislative actions, ensuring that the constitution,

with its provisions safeguarding individual and societal rights, would not be reduced to mere empty slogans as had been the case in the *ventennio.* This necessitated the translation of the overarching notion of justice into a concrete political reality, subject to practical application within the relevant legal institutions. Mauro Cappelletti (1978) views these changes across three dimensions: constitutional, global, and social, recognizing that while these dimensions are firmly established in the present, their roots extend back to the previous era. The constitutional dimension is deeply embedded in the attempt to transcend the historical clash between the principle of equality and law, as well as between 'natural law' and 'positive law.' Global justice represents humanity's collective attempt to transcend nationalities and absolute sovereignties, challenging the concept of the nation-state as the exclusive source of law and authority. Social justice, on the other hand, emerges as a response to the traditional understanding of justice as mere individual freedom and purely formal equality, and as a natural evolution of this concept. Simultaneously, social justice also represents an effort to overcome the most pressing political and ideological challenges of our time (Cappelletti 1978).

Sciascia's engagement with the transformations of justice throughout his career—spanning years of fascist repression, constitutional reform, and the evolution of judiciary democracy—was not merely observational but deeply introspective. Shortly before his death, the Sicilian novelist stated at a conference held in his hometown of Racalmuto that the absence of justice had been an obsession that accompanied him throughout his life (Sciascia 1986). Since the exploration of justice as a 'value' and the verification of its presence or absence cannot be conducted through abstraction alone, but rather through concrete examination that renders it a practical 'value,' Sciascia endeavored to draw upon facts, events, and characters without neglecting social and political institutions. This approach bridges the gap between the 'theoretical' and the 'phenomenological,' bringing the 'abstract' closer to the 'tangible.' In his novel *Porte aperte* (1987; English title: *Open Doors*), Sciascia presents a reality-inspired story set in Fascist-era Sicily. The narrative revolves around a man who commits a triple murder and confesses his crime. The judge finds himself under pressure from state officials to impose the death penalty on the accused. However, he exerts all his efforts to avoid this sentence and instead sentence him a life imprisonment. Opposing the state and resisting its will in interpreting the law will cost the 'little judge' his career. This unfortunate event helps him realize that he has achieved the highest point of honor—of his whole life. The novel's title itself is laced with the author's satire directed at Fascist bureaucracy, deeply immersed in superficiality and hypocrisy in its understanding and application of justice. At that time, Fascist propaganda emphasized that this understanding and application, particularly of the death penalty, allowed Italians to 'sleep at night with their doors open,' a phrase uttered by the judge in one of the novel's dialogue scenes. Regardless, the author's intentions in this

novel extend beyond a mere discussion of historical details surrounding the death penalty during the Fascist era. His aims encompass the historical context in which the novel was written, namely the 1970s and 1980s, when the debate over reinstating the death penalty as a response to terrorist activities resurfaced (Francese 2017: 775-798).

In the post-World War II period and during the years of transition, Sciascia was keenly aware of the inextricable link between the evolving concepts of justice at its three previously mentioned levels: constitutional, global, and social. He frequently sought to draw comparisons between Italy and other nations regarding criminal law and its interpretations. More importantly, he focused on the complexities of procedures and practices leading to its application, particularly in light of the dubious relationship between organized crime and state apparatuses, a topic that the Sicilian author consistently focused on and investigated. Consider an excerpt from his masterpiece *Il giorno della civetta* (English title: *The Day of the Owl*, set in the 1950s) and the internal monologue of Detective Bellodi during a brief break from his interrogation of Don Mariano. He says: "In any other country in the world a tax-evasion like this one, of which I have the proof, would be severely punished; here Don Mariano just laughs, knowing how little it will take to confuse the issue" (Sciascia 1987: 101).

In any other country in the world a tax-evasion like this one, of which I have the proof, would be severely punished; here Don Mariano just laughs, knowing how little it will take to confuse the issue.

Sciascia's critique of the absence of justice and the inefficiency of the judicial system would persist into the subsequent period, marked by fluctuating relations between the judiciary and democratic values during the widespread turmoil of the Years of Lead in the 1970s and 1980s. Nevertheless, the hidden relationship between the state and organized crime was not the sole factor contributing to the decline of justice; another factor lays in the mechanics of legislative power, which occasionally resulted in the inertia and slowdown of the judiciary, even when confronted with supposedly urgent and pressing amendments like those addressing Fascist racial laws. Guido Neppi Modona (2019) remarks:

> Le leggi contro gli ebrei emanate dal 1938 al 1943 erano peraltro talmente numerose e pervasive che trascorsero più di quaranta anni dopo la Liberazione e furono necessarie ben ottanta leggi (l'ultima del 1987) per depurare l'ordinamento repubblicano dalla vergogna delle leggi razziali[2]. (242)

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2 The anti-Jewish laws enacted between 1938 and 1943 were so numerous and pervasive that more than forty years passed after the Liberation and no fewer than eighty laws (the last in 1987) were required to purge the Republican legal system of the shame of the racial laws.

Added to this are, of course, the challenges and obstacles that judges and investigators face due to the absence of a modern legal system that organically aligns with the constitution. In the novel *Il contesto* (1971, English title: *The Equal Danger)*, a group of judges is assassinated and transformed into 'illustrious corpses' (as the title of Francesco Rosi's film adaptation suggests). The investigation of these assassinations is assigned to Rogas, who finds himself torn between the logical investigative path dictated by reason and evidence, and another path imposed by decision-makers within the institutional authority in collaboration with senior judiciary officials. This ethical dilemma leads to a tangled web of escalating suspicions, followed by further murders involving politicians, secret agents, and influential figures. A statement worthy of mentioning is the one made by an Italian Communist Party leader at the end of Rosi's film: 'The truth is not always revolutionary.' This sentiment clearly alludes to the silence of the opposition in the face of the rampant corruption of the 1970s, which often went unpunished. The implicit reference is to the loss of one of the most famous principles established by the Communist Party's founder, Antonio Gramsci, at the beginning of the last century, which stated that telling the truth 'is a revolutionary act' (Gramsci 1919), and an emphasis on Montesquieu's description of the judiciary as the weakest and least influential of the powers.

3. Social justice and institutional justice

Again, there is no liberty if the judiciary power be not separated from the legislative and executive.
Were it joined with the legislative, the life and liberty of the subject would be exposed to arbitrary control; for the judge would be then the legislator.
Were it joined to the executive power, the judge might behave with violence and oppression.

Montesquieu

3.1. Social injustice in three novels

Nearly a decade following the July 1952 Revolution, Maḥfūẓ published the novel *The Thief and the Dogs* (1961) which stood as a clear lament for justice at the time. The protagonist, Saʿīd Mahrān, is released from prison on Revolution Day: "We said from the heart he would be released on Revolution Day," (Maḥfūẓ 2005: 16) only to find his wife married to his former partner in crime. Desperate to secure a future for his young daughter, Saʿīd attempts to intimidate his former partner, but is met with indifference and a suggestion to seek legal recourse instead. Having lost faith in justice, Saʿīd decides to seek help from his journalist friend Ra'ūf Ilwān, who was once his criminal mentor and who previously used the same revolutionary rhetoric. Now a respected journalist and businessman, Ra'ūf

opposes Saʿīd and refuses to support his transformation from a thief to a journalist like himself. This enrages Saʿīd, who believes that his release from prison has brought him no justice. He is confronted with the reality that the wealthy, the thieves, and the beneficiaries of the system, who were never prosecuted like him, will not allow him to live justly in society. Forced to accept the *status quo* and remain an outcast, Saʿīd feels betrayed and plunges into a state of extreme confusion. His primary motivation becomes vengeance, and he unleashes a relentless assault on the world around him.

The following year, the novel *Autumn Quail* (1962) was published, in which the author's portrayal of injustice becomes even more pronounced. Through the protagonist, ʿIsa, a prominent and qualified party member with a distinguished national record and popular trust, the novel highlights the efforts of the post-1952 revolution government to marginalize this class from positions of power. ʿIsa, feeling wronged by this systematic exclusion, serves as a poignant embodiment of the author's critique. Egyptian literary scholar Rasheed El-Enany (1993) comments on this, stating:

> Underlying the political alienation and personal resentment at loss of office and power of the protagonist, 'Isa al-Dabbagh, is a rebuke of the revolution for its banishment from public life of a vastly popular political force and only one with accreditable national record in the generation preceding the revolution (El-Enany 1993: 105).

In *Miramar* (1967), Maḥfūẓ presents a narrative set in a small hotel in winter-stricken Alexandria, owned by a European whose Egyptian guests represent the different attitudes and social classes in the years following the revolution. The narrative presents the dilemma of the wealthy, the educated, the peasant, and the journalist, who collectively depict a fragmented picture of an uncertain future. Despite their aspirations, the protagonists of the novel achieve neither their personal nor their social goals, encountering unjust conclusions and an ambiguous trajectory ahead. Additionally, relationships between the characters, each symbolizing a different ideological strand, reflect the strained dynamics between modern Egypt, the former Wafd bourgeoisie, Nasserism, religious movements, and the darker aspects of the 1952 Revolution. Egypt in *Miramar* stands at a historical juncture, characterized not only by transformation but also by mistrust, resentment, and friction between key political and social realities (Jaran 2014: 52).

Maḥfūẓ's exploration of injustice in these novels operates on three levels: individual, political, and social. In *The Thief and the Dogs*, Maḥfūẓ portrays injustice on an individual level through Saʿīd Mahrān's personal betrayal and disillusionment with those closest to him. Saʿīd's inability to secure justice for himself, despite being released on Revolution Day, reflects a profound individual struggle against a society that marginalizes him. Politically, the novel critiques the failure of revolutionary ideals to protect or rehabilitate individuals who fall outside the elite, showing that political power often

disregards the common person it claims to serve. *Autumn Quail* brings this political critique into sharper focus by presenting 'Isa as a victim of institutional exclusion after the revolution, depicting how power structures systematically marginalize even the most qualified individuals who once had influence. This political alienation reflects the broader failure of post-revolution governance to uphold genuine justice. In *Miramar*, Maḥfūẓ extends this critique to the social level, using a diverse cast of characters to represent different social classes and ideological perspectives. Through their interactions and unfulfilled aspirations, Maḥfūẓ highlights the social fragmentation and unresolved tensions post-revolution, suggesting that the revolution's promises of equity and justice have not materialized on a societal level. Thus, across these novels, Maḥfūẓ examines how injustice permeates individual experiences, political structures, and social realities, ultimately reflecting a disillusionment with revolutionary promises. Drawing upon his experiences with the end of the monarchy and the establishment of the republic through the revolution, the author argues, viewing from a literary and narrative perspective, on these three novels—which can be complemented by other works such as *The Beggar* (1965) and *Karnak Café* (1974)·to argue that justice, if not achieved within various institutions and through democratic authority, will not be realized on a social level where individuals are left to devise their own laws based on their needs and aspirations. These individuals, who may even hold positions of power within institutions, represent themselves rather than the justice that stems from the common good, which may be manifested through democracy, participation rights, equal opportunities, and other ideas that Maḥfūẓ clearly expressed in his non-fiction works and in numerous interviews conducted with him. As he stated in one interview, "I have always posed this question to the revolutionaries: You have achieved the nation's independence, but why have you not granted the people their own independence as well? Why have you not encouraged the people to actively participate in the political process? ... The dictatorial nature of the revolutionary regime was the cause of all the setbacks we experienced" (Salmawy 1997: 66-67). Since the beginning of his literary career, this sentiment had been a central concern for Maḥfūẓ, as he envisioned political changes in Egypt to be the starting point for social, economic, and political reforms that would not leave individuals to their fate—becoming torn apart by injustice, indifferent to it, or benefiting from it in the absence of a genuine democratic political project.

3.2. Beyond the labyrinth of the courtroom

Sciascia's concept of justice does not differ significantly from that of Maḥfūẓ, and more importantly, it aligns with Maḥfūẓ's exploration of legal variations and forms. Just as Maḥfūẓ distinguishes between the official state law and the private law of urban rabble (in *The Harāfīsh*) and Saʿīd Mahrān (in *The Thief*

and the Dogs), Sciascia similarly differentiates between the administrative law governing the judicial system and the law governing the world of organized crime. Furthermore, Sciascia recognizes an internal classification that distinguishes between law born out of rationality and irrational law occasionally created by the authority of those responsible for justice, such as judges, marshals, or investigators. Additionally, there are instances where justice is conceived by an individual or a small group of individuals, as exemplified in the proposal made by the painter and protagonist of *Todo Modo* (in English *One Way or Another*) to Don Gaetano (see also Alida Poeti 1998: 59).

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The geographical and social factors specific to Sciascia's Sicily—the corruption of the judicial system by the mafia and the distortion of law by organized crime—are in many ways comparable to the dynamics in Maḥfūẓ's Cairo, particularly the *Futwāt* system in the old *Ǧamāliyya* neighbourhood. In both cases, we witness a parallel undercurrent of unofficial, alternative systems of law that operate outside the bounds of state authority. The *Futwāt*, a form of gang-based justice administered by groups of youths, serves as a counterbalance to the official legal system, with its own set of rules and enforcers. This parallel is more than just structural; it touches upon a shared thematic concern about the distortion of justice in environments where power is held not by formal legal institutions but by extrajudicial entities. The *Futwāt* system, as a central element in Maḥfūẓ's creative imagination, mirrors the mafia's impact on Sicily's legal fabric, underscoring how both writers critique the failure of state-run justice systems to deliver equitable outcomes. Maḥfūẓ's *Futwāt* system, much like Sciascia's mafia-influenced judicial reality, is a product of a world in which informal systems of power replace the ideal of legal fairness, continuing to haunt both societies long after their depiction in the works of these two authors.

When considering the geographical and historical factors specific to the milieu that Sciascia employed in most of his novels, one finds that this diversity in the understanding of law is logical and,

to some extent, interconnected. In his book *Sicilia come metafora* (1997), Sciascia mentions that the Sicilians' passion for the law had been shaped over the centuries, necessitating their engagement with a vast corpus of laws and decrees from which privileges are derived (Sciascia 1997: 59). He further asserts that the legal identity in Sicily is historically complex, fundamentally constituted by the eternal blend of Roman and Arab spirits. He emphasizes that the Arab spirit left a more profound social impact than its Roman counterpart, particularly in shaping the Sicilians' collective imagination (Sciascia 1997: 44). This is evident in the folk tales inherited by Sicilians, which contain numerous references to *One Thousand and One Nights*, as well as oral narratives centered on the character Giufà. Sciascia recalls a famous folk tale that portrays the Sicilian Giufà face-to-face with justice, specifically before a judge. Due to a misunderstanding, Giufà strikes and insults the judge without facing any repercussion. This is a characteristic of this multifaceted character whose actions oscillate between intelligence and foolishness, experience and naivety, honesty and deception, etc. Sciascia's fascination with this tale lies not merely in Giufà's contradictory nature but rather in his precise function: executing social revenge against a representative of authority. Giufà, who "rappresenta il sogno dell'impunità" (Sciascia 2001: 17), embodies a figure who challenges the established order and acts without consequence. Although Sciascia identifies in the tale an individual behavior (contrasting with the Tuscan folk tale), he also recognizes within it the seeds of a collective yearning for genuine, informal justice, which centuries later found one of its expressions in organized crime—the mafia (Sciascia 1997: 60).

Sciascia's interest in justice and its intricacies extends beyond theoretical discourse and knowledge of its historical foundations, drawing deeply from his practical experience and personal testimonies within judicial institutions. This aspect, perhaps more than any other, brings Sciascia closer to Maḥfūẓ, particularly in their non-literary writings. Both authors held public office for a period of time (Maḥfūẓ as a parliamentary secretary in the Ministry of Islamic Endowments, and Sciascia in the Ministry of Education, then in the Municipality of Palermo, and in the European Parliament). Among the testimonies Sciascia recounts, based on his direct personal experience, is the account of two trials that occurred on the same day. In the first, a farmer was convicted for failing to deliver a negligible amount of wheat to public warehouses. In the second, a high priest was acquitted despite hoarding a far greater quantity of wheat. Sciascia commented on this incident, noting that two contradictory verdicts for the same crime, issued on the same day by the same judges, lead one to believe that *privilegium fori* have not yet ceased to exist, despite the supposed equality of all citizens before the law (Sciascia 1997: 61). This incident appears to have had a profound impact on Sciascia, not only on a personal level but also in terms of his literary experience, particularly in his meticulous and precise selection of characters he would create in his detective novels.

In this regard, Sciascia diverges somewhat from Maḥfūẓ shifting the protagonist role to figures od authority: monks, judges, investigators, and police officers. Benefiting from a more democratic atmosphere compared to Maḥfūẓ's Egypt, Sciascia boldly exposes the intricate and enduring relationship between the organs of power and organized crime. This relationship often impedes the main characters from enforcing the law, let alone uncovering the truth. Consequently, Sciascia's narrative oscillates between three key concepts that may initially appear synonymous but, upon closer examination, are not: law, justice, and truth.

It is well-known that Sciascia traces the roots of these concepts to Enlightenment and rationalism. This is evident not only in his characters' pursuit of truth armed with 'rationality,' but also in his frequent comments on his personal influence by the French Enlightenment, particularly Montesquieu and Voltaire. He views Voltaire as a model of a clear, direct, concise, intelligent, and satirical writer (Sciascia 1997: 57), preferring him over Rousseau, whom he considers the source of modern evils (Sciascia 1997: 58). However, the prevailing Enlightenment belief in the justice of the law and its perpetual capacity to govern did not greatly appeal to Sciascia, who did not hold an optimistic view of law and did not find it capable of bridging the gap between the ideal system and reality (Tiberi 2023: 125). This stance has led some critics to label him as a "half-Enlightenment thinker" (Amodio and Catalano 2022: 41). Even when it is a product of reason, Sciascia does not perceive the law as inherently capable of avoiding injustice, abuse, and the absence of fairness. While, from an Enlightenment perspective, law deserves trust for its pursuit of freedom and equality among humans, this does not mean that it is immune to misapplication by those responsible for justice, especially under pressure from powerful circles (Tiberi 2023: 126). On the contrary, law can sometimes present itself as a form of pain, the pain that forces Captain Bellodi in *Il giorno della civetta*, for example, to remain bound within the limits of the law, leaving him only with the futile attempt to interpret it or identify loopholes within it.

This pessimism persists throughout Sciascia's subsequent novels: In *A Man's Blessing*, the law fails to follow its course. In *Il contesto* there is no clear explanation for the murders; the novel is constructed in a way that prevents the reader to grasp the dynamics of the facts and their motivations, but rather deliberately presents the confusing and contradictory over any coherent and consistent truth, brilliantly reflecting the socio-political climate of Italy between the 1960s and 1970s. In *Todo modo*, Sciascia tells us that the truth is in plain sight, but that is also what prevents everyone from seeing it. In *A Straightforward Tale*, as in *Todo modo*, Sciascia portrays clergymen (who should embody values of justice and morality) as the main supporters of corruption. In *Porte aperte*, the judge's professional life is ruined solely for his adherence to his principles and his opposition to the orders of the bureaucratic

elites. And in *Il cavaliere e la morte* (English title: *The Knight and Death*), the protagonist ends the novel with these words: "He thought: What confusion! But it was now, eternally and ineffably, the thought of the mind into which his won had dissolved" (Sciascia 1992: 74).

In light of the shortcomings of Law, Sciascia turns to the 'sense of justice' as the 'individual' human factor that measures the law, yet potentially contradicting both it and 'justice' as an institutional system (Perrino 2022). This emphasis on 'individual' human factor arises because Sciascia does not theorize in his works about the individual as a 'public, mass individual,' but rather as an individual with his own uncertainties and weaknesses (Musarra 2001: 24). This explains, according to Franco Musarra, the existence of two parallel paths of investigation in all of Sciascia's detective stories: the official and institutional path, and the 'individual' path adopted by the protagonist, even though the latter path ultimately dissolves under external pressures into the former (Musarra 2001: 17). As an alternative to the law, the 'sense of justice' motivates characters such as Bellodi, the 'little judge,' and Rogas. Conversely, it also motivates the Mafia (or even Saʿīd Mahrān and the criminals in Mahfūẓ's novels) who justify their actions with an internal sense of justice. Just as "every society produces the particular kind of imposture that suits it best" (Sciascia 1988: 144), as De Blasi tells us in *Il consiglio d'Egitto* (English title: *The Council of Egypt*), each party involved in the crime creates its own 'sense of justice.' Perhaps this explains why Sciascia's characters are less concerned with revealing the truth than with demonstrating their passion for seeking the truth—a truth related to investigations, which is methodical and realistic (Pietrapaoli 1997: 246).

Going even further, we discover that the truth Sciascia seeks in historical research, detective investigations, and within the ideological framework of the French Enlightenment is, ultimately, a literary truth inextricably tied to writing. Sciascia himself remarks,

> Tutto è legato, per me, al problema della giustizia: in cui si involge quello della libertà, della dignità umana, del rispetto tra uomo e uomo. Un problema che si assomma nella scrittura, che nella scrittura trova spazio e riscatto[3] (Sciascia 1989: xiii).

Beyond the confines of the courtroom and the labyrinth of events, and beyond the justice that aims to be realized alongside the discovery of truth, Sciascia's literary world rests on the belief that literature is the realm where truth occurs. This happens through finding meaning in reality by analyzing coincidences and connections between facts and events, according to his literary background (Serrano-

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3 For me, everything is connected to the issue of justice: which encompasses freedom, human dignity, and respect between human beings. A problem that is summed up in writing, which finds space and redemption in writing.

Puche 2010: 95). Alternatively, it involves assigning literature an instructive function that makes it converge with truth (Squillacioti 2021: 148). This not only brings Sciascia closer to the Egyptian Nobel laureate in literature but also aligns him with Antonio Tabucchi, who distinguishes literature from philosophy in a way that one might suggest to Sciascia, replacing the word "philosophy" with "Enlightenment." The author of *Pereira Declares* states: "Philosophy appears to concern itself only with the truth, but perhaps expresses only fantasies, while literature appears to concern itself only with fantasies, but perhaps it expresses the truth." (Tabucchi 1996: 17-18) Similarly, what Sciascia does not find within the ideological framework of the French Enlightenment, he inevitably finds in literature.

4. Justice and death between the Sufism of Maḥfūẓ and the metaphysics of Sciascia

"Law should be like death, which spares no one"

Montesquieu

Undoubtedly, the shared obsession of Maḥfūẓ and Sciascia with justice as a fundamental pillar for achieving freedom and democracy propelled them to the forefront of inquiry in both historical and contemporary contexts. Inevitably, this humanistic and universal quest carried both writers at some point from an initial phase of excessive realism grounded in rationality and logical coherence to another, more mature and complex phase, represented by the Sufi tradition in the case of Maḥfūẓ and the metaphysical stage for Sciascia. This transition does not necessarily represent an abandonment of reason for the two writers; rather, it constitutes, to a certain extent, a methodological and interpretive rebellion against rational tools in an attempt to resolve the investigative tension that drives them to the most enigmatic aspects of the human experience.

Unlike Sciascia, whose metaphysical journey began with *Il consiglio d'Egitto*, Maḥfūẓ's Sufi commenced in his early works and accompanied him in almost all his novels to varying extents. This experience deepened significantly in his later works, particularly in *Echoes of an Autobiography* (1994). This unique journey has prompted numerous critics to explore this aspect of Maḥfūẓ's legacy in detailed studies, perhaps the most important and famous being George Tarabishi's *God in Naguib Maḥfūẓ's Symbolic Journey* (1988). Interestingly, the issue of social justice remained parallel to Maḥfūẓ's Sufi sensibility and accompanied it even in his realistic works. In his analysis of one of the characters in the *The Cairo Trilogy*, Ziad Elmarsafy (2012) observes:

> In the rest of the Trilogy, Kamal is spurred by his predicament: it is important and inevitable that
> the world not contain him, that he connects with something beyond its human boundaries. Far

from being an apolitical gesture, Kamal's endless self-questioning is related to the issue of social and political justice (Elmarsafy 2012: 24).

What Elmarsafy means by connecting "with something beyond its human boundaries" is a purely Sufi connection, idealistic and recurring in Maḥfūẓ's later works. This state is not limited to mere situations but extends to specific 'Sufi characters,' such as those found in *The Thief and the Dogs*, *The Harāfīsh*, and *The Beggar*, among others. These characters are united by their attempt to reclaim the self, besieged by social and political corruption and, consequently, by injustice. In *Echoes of an Autobiography*, one of Maḥfūẓ's most Sufi-infused works, the writer narrates a deep dialogue in the chapter titled 'Justice' between an accused and his defense lawyer. Despite the rationality and realism of the scene, the author ultimately succeeds in linking justice with madness and irrationality (Maḥfūẓ 1988 41). This theme of irrationality often manifests through intoxication, suicide, or dreams (Jaran 2014: 47). Similarly, dreaming is associated with this type of writing in some of Sciascia's works, such as *Todo modo*, which Pier Paolo Pasolini describes as a 'metaphysical detective story' (Pasolini 1975). However, the factor connecting Maḥfūẓ and Sciascia here is not the extent to which Maḥfūẓ's Sufism is close to Sciascia's metaphysics in their direct relation to justice, but rather how these dimensions serve as a bridge for the narrative to explore, beyond rationality, the concept of death.

Certainly, the concept of death in this context does not refer to the murders investigated by the characters or the politically motivated assassinations inspired by the contemporary history of Egypt and Italy, which were literary subjects in Maḥfūẓ's novel *The Day the Leader Was Killed* (alluding to the assassination of Anwar al-Sādāt, the architect of the 'opening the door' policy which was accompanied by widespread social and economic unrest) and Sciascia's book *The Moro Affair*—which, along with *Atti relativi alla morte di Raymond Roussel* and *The Mystery of Majorana*, forms a stream in which the Sicilian writer employed "fictional and non-historically verified additions in order to provide answers, to solve the mystery behind the final days of men who, each one in different circumstances, had been left alone and isolated" (Costagnino 2014: 62). Rather, death is meant as a metaphysical state antithetical to life in its realistic sense, and as a narratable idea through the use of tools that allow the authors, each according to their cultural background, to control and present it as an ultimate truth to the reader.

Maḥfūẓ's 1983 novel, *Before the Throne* represents a culmination of his exploration of justice, surpassing the temporal dimensions of his earlier works. Despite being published after a rich literary journey of social inquiry, which had not yet earned him the Nobel Prize, *Before the Throne* showcases a maturity that suggests it stands as the pinnacle of his contemplation of justice. The novel revolves around a trial conducted by the gods of ancient Egypt, who begin interrogating and prosecuting the rulers of Egypt from the Pharaonic era to the time of President Anwar al-Sādāt. With a clear and almost

direct timeline, Osiris, the god of resurrection and the judge of the afterlife court, emerges as a clear symbol that justice can only be found in the realm of the dead. This implies an implicit pessimistic message that justice, in both individual and societal spheres, will never be realized. The passage of time, with its events, the changing of leaders, men, and systems within state institutions, has led to a level of deterioration that convinces the author that justice, which in this instance may equate to truth, can only be reached by the deceased. Is this despair or maturity? Maḥfūẓ, the author, leaves the answer to the character of the goddess Isis in the final pages of the novel, who calls upon the leaders of twentieth-century Egypt to pray for the country:

> 'May the Divinity be implored … to invest the folk of Egypt with the wisdom and the power to remain for all time a lighthouse of right guidance, and of beauty.' All opened their palms in supplication, absorbed in prayer (Maḥfūẓ 2012: 144).

With this statement, the solution is relegated to the realm of the unseen, as portrayed by Maḥfūẓ, the writer who stood firmly on the ground of realism throughout his literary career, of which this novel marks one of the endings.

Although every novel by Sciascia addresses the theme of death, his internal dialogue with this idea began with *Il consiglio d'Egitto*, matured in *Todo modo* and concluded in *Il cavaliere e la morte*. What prompts the author to declare his desire to "narrate death, death as an experience" (Casalino 2020: 56) is his intention to adopt a new style capable of examining death from within, in a manner that allows the investigation of crime and 'metaphysical anxiety' to coexist within the same narrative space (Boesso 2020: 9). Interestingly, Sciascia himself explains and supports this shift with humanistic justifications that encompass literary, philosophical, and even biological dimensions. He states:

> A cinquant'anni non c'è soltanto la vita, ma, diciamolo chiaramente, c'è anche la morte. Ci sono altri pensieri, ci sono le tentazioni metafisiche. E questo è umano. Bisogna riconoscere a ognuno il diritto di avere le proprie inquietudini. (At the age of fifty, there is not only life; let's say it clearly, there is also death. There are other thoughts, there are metaphysical inclinations. This is human. We must recognize the right of every individual to have their own obsessions) (as cited in Boesso 2020: 10).

It seems that Sciascia, like Maḥfūẓ, was acutely aware of the inadequacy of realistic narrative description and Enlightenment rationality in shaping the ultimate frameworks for any societal or political reform. The defeat of reason, not its triumph, is the true interpretive key to Sciascia's thought in the three novels. Similarly, death is the key to solving the mystery of life, not the other way around. Sciascia conveys this with utmost clarity in *Il cavaliere e la morte*, devoid of the ambiguity and confusion

that often accompany discussions of death. In words that encapsulate Sciascia's mature thought, almost akin to a last will, the novel describes the protagonist's illness, which symbolizes the rampant disease afflicting society and the state:

> The weary appearance of Death had always unsettled him, as if it implied that Death arrived on the scene wearily and slowly at the point when people were already tired of life. Death was weary, his horse was weary, both a far cry from the horses of the *Triumph of Death* or *Guernica*. Death, the hour-glass or the menacing pinchbeck of the serpents notwithstanding, expressed mendacity rather than triumph. 'Death is expiated by living.' A beggar from whom alms are begged. As for the Devil, he was so weary as the rest, too horribly demonic to be wholly credible. A wild alibi in the lives of men, so much so that they were moves afoot at the very moment to restore to him all his vigour: theological assault therapies, philosophical reanimation techniques, parapsychological and metaphysic practices. But the Devil was tired enough to be content to leave it all to mankind, who could manage everything better than him. And the Knight ... Perhaps what Durer had placed inside the armour was the real death, the real devil: and it was life which, with that armour and those weapons, believed itself secure in itself (Sciascia 1992: 56-57).

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of Maḥfūẓ and Sciascia's literary engagement with justice reveals a notable progression from social critique toward a metaphysical inquiry that bridges cultural boundaries. Both authors initiate their exploration within the tangible, pressing concerns of their societies—Maḥfūẓ focusing on the socio-political life of Egypt and Sciascia on the institutional frameworks of Italy. However, as their works mature, they move from realist portrayals of injustice to deeper investigations into the limits of rationality, converging on a shared realization: justice may be ultimately unattainable within the confines of human institutions. Maḥfūẓ's gradual shift towards a Sufi-inspired metaphysical perspective enables him to address justice as an existential ideal, inseparable from the human pursuit of both personal and societal redemption, even as he maintains a foundation in social realism. For Sciascia, this shift emerges through the metaphorical and allegorical layers of his later works, where justice becomes elusive and truth increasingly complex—emerging through the intertwined themes of life and death. In their respective approaches, both writers employ death as a narrative lens to critique the insufficiencies of human institutions and the moral failings that foster societal and political corruption.

Ultimately, Maḥfūẓ and Sciascia each recognize that justice, far from being merely a social construct, is bound to universal truths and individual conscience. They perceive literature as a form of 'aesthetic compensation' capable of challenging and exposing the injustices embedded in human existence. Thus, while their approaches to justice diverge in method and cultural context, they converge in a reflective, perhaps pessimistic view: true justice remains beyond human reach, attainable only in a transcendent or post-mortal sphere. Through this shared perspective, Maḥfūẓ and Sciascia

leave a legacy that continues to engage readers, inviting them to confront the enduring enigmas of justice and the human condition.

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Vegetarianism in Modern Arabic literature

Aldo Nicosia

If it's so rare to see vegetarian characters in the international fiction, it's even rarer in the contemporary Arabic narratives. Yet it's common to find them in classic Sufi and religious literature (al-Rūmī, al-Ma'arrī, Iḫwān al-Ṣafā') and collections of tales. After a historical survey about the Prophet's and Sufis' positions on vegetarian food, excerpts from *Kalīla wa Dimna* and other fables, we start with Maḥfūẓ's *Bidāya wa Nihāya* ("The Beginning and The End;" 1949), where vegetarianism comes "from necessity," is marginal and treated with humour. The real focus of this article is the novel *Nazīf al-ḥaǧar* ("The Bleeding of the Stone;" 1991), by the Libyan writer Ibrāhīm al-Kawnī. From Sufism it draws its themes and suggests sustainable models for human interactions with nonhuman animals and environments. This novel helps us to link ecocriticism, in its vegetarian/vegan declinations, with decolonial or postcolonial theory. Apart from that, it can be analyzed through the lens of eco-feminism, human-animal studies and biopolitics approaches. To better understand the context that underlies vegetarianism in the Arabic literary arena, I try to analyze two other contemporary novels that offer interesting insights and perspectives, even if they don't present this theme as pivotal. *Min ḫašab wa ṭīn* ("Made of wood and clay;" 2021) by the Moroccan writer and poet Muḥammad al-Aš'arī, suggests a selective vegetarianism, connected to a perspective of ecocritical philosophy of life, adopted by two socially different characters. The last text to be analyzed in this article, *Krīsmās fi Makka* ("Christmas in Mecca;" 2019), by the Iraqi writer Aḥmad Ḫayrī al-'Umarī, carves a young vegan character to shed light into issues of social identity in the Western countries diaspora.

1. Introduction: vegetarianism and the ecocriticism field

Despite the abundance of novels focusing on dystopian environmental catastrophes, Arabic literature remains still at the margins of the global dialogue on ecological and environmental concerns in literary

studies.[1] Ecocriticism has been defined as "the study of explicit environmental texts by way of any scholarly approach, or conversely, the scrutiny of ecological implications and human-nature relationships in any literary text" (Slovic 2000: 160).

In recent years, theories of ecocriticism have been applied to a number of Arabic literary texts (Elmusa 2013; Sinno 2013; Fouad and Alwakeel 2013; Ramsay 2014).

These theories are used to a certain extent in studies of Arabic speculative fiction (Rooke 2017), as well as novels that focus on encounters between humans, animals and the land (Olszok 2020), but Arabic ecocriticism needs to be explored further.[2] Inside this specific area, vegetarianism in modern and contemporary Arabic literature lies in a waste land, without any specific research.

In *Postcolonial Ecocriticism,*[3] Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin examine relationships between humans, animals and the environment in postcolonial texts, such as the politics of eating and representations of animality and spirituality, and the place of the human and the animal in a 'posthuman' world.[4]

To better understand the cultural context in which the very few contemporary Arabic literary texts are inserted, it seems necessary to provide a short overview of vegetarian practices from ancient times and the Islamic background.

Nazīf al-ḥağar ("The Bleeding of the Stone;" 1991)[5] by the Libyan writer Ibrāhīm al-Kawnī[6] seems not disconnected from this cultural heritage, and it still represents a very rare, if not unique, case in

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[1] It's worth mentioning that the 15th EURAMAL (European Association of Modern Arabic Literature) conference, hosted by Charles University in Prague, in May 2024, had the title 'Ecocritical Approaches and Environmental Issues in Modern Arabic Literature.'

[2] In the introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996), Cheryll Glotfelty stresses the need to open up to a realm beyond Anglophone literatures, including languages such as Arabic. See the brand-new essay by Savvas (2024).

[3] Divided into two sections, the first one considers the postcolonial from an environmental and the second a zoocritical perspective.

[4] Postcolonialism is often seen as anthropocentric, primarily concerned with social justice and emphasising concepts such as hybridity and displacement. Ecocriticism, on the other hand, is often considered to be earth-centred, primarily concerned with animal rights and environmental conservation, emphasising natural purity and 'belonging.' Postcolonial writers and activists were focusing on the environment long before ecocriticism as a field had developed. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin demonstrate the complementarity of these two fields in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment.*

[5] When not otherwise specified, translations from Arabic are mine.

[6] Born in 1948 in Libya's Fezzan region, he learned to read and write Arabic only at the age of 12. Later, he went to Moscow to study comparative literature and worked as a journalist. Since 1993, he has been living in Switzerland. He has written over 80 books, including novels, short stories, poems and aphorisms. His works have been translated into more than 35 languages.

the Modern Arabic Literature. Its story offers a perfect example of representation of a specific environment (the Sahara desert) that might deeply affect both the cultural and material relationships between human and non-human animals. Even our complicated socio-political relationships with other humans as well as with the environment, tend in fact to reflect such complexity in the treatment of non-human animals.

The novel suggests in an effective way that speciesism,[7] the belief that humans have the right to use non-human animals in exploitative ways, also tends to endorse racist, sexist, and other prejudicial views, which arrive to justify systems of inequality and colonial oppression, or horizontal colonialism.

Derrida (1991) coined the term 'carnophallogocentrism' to identify the social, linguistic, and material practices that imply being a meat eater, a male, and an authoritative speaking self.

The biopolitics perspective foregrounds that biopower, relying on the species divide, symbolically 'animalizes' different social groups to provide ethical justification for their exploitation.[8] Therefore, it affirms a connection between human and animal exploitation. The message of the novel, supported by on Sufi and ethical religious principles as a form of affirmative biopolitics, can challenge the present cultural system and even break the epistemological categories that legitimise both forms of exploitation.

2. The road to vegetarianism, from the Prophet Muḥammad to Sufism

Although the majority of Muslims are meat eaters and vegetarian philosophy finds difficulties to open its way in the Arab world, the Prophet's earliest biographies showed his universal compassion for all the creatures. He spoke out against the mistreatment of camels and the use of birds as targets of marksmen. Muḥammad was said to prefer vegetarian foods, such as milk diluted with water, to eat only pomegranates, grapes, and figs for weeks at a time. Some sayings attributed to the Prophet concern this theme. One of these says: "Do not allow your stomachs to become graveyards!"

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[7] Philosophers and animal rights advocates state that speciesism plays a role in the animal–industrial complex, factory farming, animal slaughter, blood sports, taking of animals' fur and skin, and experimentation on animals. For further insights into speciesism see many essays by Donna J. Haraway, in particular *When Species Meet* (2008).

[8] Michel Foucault was the first to theorize biopolitics, in the final part of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1978), entitled "Right of Death and Power over Life."

This was considered a *ḥadīṯ*,[9] but the attribution is uncertain and devoid of a chain of narration (*isnād*). Others maintain it's a saying of his cousin 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.[10] At another time, when his companions asked him: "Shall we be rewarded for showing kindness to the animals also?" Muḥammad said "A reward is given in connection with every living creature."[11]

Sufis believe that by pledging allegiance to Muḥammad spiritually they may connect with God and purify their heart. Rumi attributes his self-control and abstinence from worldly desires as qualities attained by him through the guidance of Muḥammad.

Apart from their strict observance of Islamic law, Sufis have also developed a detailed system of food practices and etiquettes, since eating is both an intimate and social activity.[12] Restricting their food intake was therefore seen as a very practical step in order to prepare the body and soul to approach the divine. Prescribing abstinence from the pleasures of food at the beginning of the Sufi path is almost universal in the early sources. The addiction to meat is even compared to that to alcohol at times (Karamustafa 2007: 40; Abuali 2022: 56).[13]

Rumi was a staunch vegetarian, even vegan, shunning milk and dairy products. He believed that all lives are sacred and therefore refrained from sacrificing animals on religious feasts. He was convinced that what we eat directly influences our thinking. If we eat an animal, its blood and gore would make us act like a slaughterer.

If we consider only two excellent examples of classic popular literature, we may quote *The Animals' Lawsuit Against Humanity,* and one story of *Kalīla wa Dimna*.

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[9] Muhammad al-Munawi, Fayd al-Qadīr. *Sharh al-Jami' as-Saghīr* 2/52

https://islam.stackexchange.com/questions/47165 (assessed June 2024).

[10] Mohammad Nasr ad-Dīn Muhammad 'Uwaida, *Fasl al-Khitāb* 2/526, quoted from source identification – What is the authenticity of the hadith "do not make your stomach a graveyard of animals"? • Islam Stack Exchange.

[11] Literally for "every animal having a moist liver," quoted from Riyad as-Salihin 126 – The Book of Miscellany, in:

http://sunnah.com/riyadussalihin:126.

[12] Food is one of the most commonly mentioned themes in Sufi biographies and hagiographies The bodily practices that govern eating, from the tools that are required during meals, to the way in which people sit around a table-spread, and to the order in which food items are consumed, serve to reshape the experience of eating into an expression of belonging to a community. For further studies, see Blankinship (2019).

[13] The same issue is discussed in the Libyan novel here discussed. Sufis looked upon excessive eating and copulation as the major media of distraction. In *Kasr al-šahwatayn* ("Curbing the Two Appetites"), al-Ġazālī (1058-1111), the leading theologian and synthesizer of Sunni and Sufi perceptions of Islam, gives us the key on how to fight the urge to indulge food and sex. See Salamah-Qudsi (2019: 420).

In the first text, an ecological fable by one member of the *Iḫwān al-Ṣafā'* ('The Brethren of Purity'), written in the tenth century, representatives of all members of the animal Kingdom come before the respected Spirit King to complain of the dreadful treatment they suffer at the hands of humankind:

> Sheep jumped in, adding: "If you could see with your own eyes, our Lord and King, how they steal our infants and young, separating mother from child in order to drink our milk; and how they bind up the legs of our children and carry them away to be killed; how our young are beaten and left hungry and thirsty, crying and moaning in suffocating fear. If you could see how we are slaughtered and our skins stripped away and our bodies cut open... Then in their markets, there are merchants selling meat cooked in pots, meat roasted on spits, meat baked in ovens or fried in pans!" (*Iḫwān al-Ṣafā'* 2005: 4)

The antecedents of this tale are thought to have originated in India, exactly like the collection of *Kalīla wa Dimna*, following a long tradition of animal fables used for didactic and religious purposes. Here one can detect Buddhist influences, or it's likely that Indians selected and modified it from other fables, in order to illustrate the virtues observed by the Buddha in each of his lives, on his road to enlightenment. The (tenth) story recounts of a lioness that went out hunting. While she was gone a horseman, armed with bow and arrow, killed and skinned her cubs. When the lioness came back and saw them she wept and wailed. When the jackal, that was close to her, heard the lioness' story, instead of sympathizing, told her that the action of the horseman was no different to her own actions, as her prey also had parents who grieved the loss of their children. The easy moral is sinthesized in the ending lines of the story:

> ولما علمت اللبوة أن ذلك بما كسبت يدها من ظلم الوحوش رجعت عن صيدها وزمت نفسها وصارت تقنع بأكل النبات وحشيش الفلوات[14].

> When the lioness knew that this (the killing of her cub) was due to the injustice she had caused to the wild beasts, she stopped hunting and restrained herself and began to be content with eating plants and wild grass (*Kalīla wa Dimna*).[15]

Abū'l-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī (973-1057), syrian philosopher and poet, the most famous vegan of his time, advocated for the protection of animals in his works. In a couplet he wrote: "People catch the flea and

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[14] مكتبة الشاملة – ذَهَبِ – نفحة اليمن فيما يزول بذكره الشجن – 186 - صفحة (thahabi.org)

[15] The story has a sequel: "One day, two doves approached her and scolded her for eating all the fruit, thus depriving many animals of their daily food. The lioness profusely apologised and from that day on only ate grass and plants."

kill in; with the other hand they give alms to the poor. Better it is to free the flea (and not to kill it) than to give alms to the poor."[16]

The real reasons for his behaviour towards animals are clearly exposed in his epistles and even in his *Luzūmiyyāt.* He renounced meat out of pity for the animals[17] and urged people to treat them well and protect them.

The influences which led al-Maʿarrī to asceticism and, in particular, to veganism, can be situated mainly in Hinduism and Greek philosophy. Many had attributed his veganism to the influence of Brahmanism. Laoust has pointed out that Hindu ideas were so widespread that he could have been inspired by them. According to others, the ideas of the Greek philosophers such as Pythagoras and Diogenes the Cynic, had been transmitted to the Islamic world through Arab translators and commentators. Some even claim that in the *Luzūmiyyāt* one could find the influence of the doctrine of the Stoics, Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus (Ghali 1981: 102).

3. *Bidāya wa Nihāya:* vegetarianism out of necessity

Reflection about vegetarianism in a completely different atmosphere is present in the novel *Bidāya wa Nihāya* ("The Beginning and The End")[18] by Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ (1949).[19] The treatment of the theme is limited to only one scene, where the writer mentions the Syrian philosophy al-Maʿarrī, and the general tone is very humouristic. It's a vegetarianism out of necessity, for people who could not afford buying meat, in other words a synonim of poverty.[20]

In Cairo, a petty bourgeois family in the early thirties of the last century suddenly became poor after the death of the father. Ḥasan, the eldest son, complained about the monotony of the poor food they are obliged to eat:

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[16] Quoted from World Vegetarian Congress 1957 (www.ivu.org)

[17] "Yet he believed that well that God has given man the freedom and power to treat animals as he pleases" (Blankinship 2019 and Ghali 1981).

[18] The novel tells the woes of a petit bourgeois family, sort of microcosm of the Egyptian nation's, during the third decade of the XX century. When the father dies, the economic stability collapses and one of the sons gets involved in drugs and illicit sex. Even Nafīsa, the only daughter, falls prey of prostitution and pays for that sin, prompted by one of her brothers, to save the family honour.

[19] The English translation is referred to by BAE all throughout this text.

[20] In the Egyptian dialect the word *qurdaḥī* stands for a 'simple food, without meat' (Badawi and Hinds 1986: 692).

"الفول غذائي الوحيد، فول، فول !الحَمير تجد شيئًا من التنويع"

(Maḥfūẓ 1965: 118)

"I eat nothing but beans. Beans. Always beans. Even donkeys get a change in diet" (BAE 1989: 137).

The suggestive and humorous link between fava beans, humans and animals,[21] will remain a common denominator in many Egyptian novels and films.

In a later scene of the same novel, an exciting dialogue takes place when Ḥasan unexpectedly visits his family after a long break, with a purse in his hand. Ḥasan asks them:

"متى أكلتم اللحم آخرَ مرة؟"

فيرد حسين ، أحد الإخوة ، ساخرًا :" الحقُّ أنَّا نسينا، دعني أتذكَّر قليلًا .. تتخايلُ لعيني شريحةُ لحم في ظلام الذكريات، ولكن لا أدري أين ولا متى؟". ثم يضيف ضاحًكا " نحن أسرةٌ فلسفية على مذهب المعرّي".

فيتساءل حسن: " ومَن يكون المعري هذا؟ .. أحد أجدادنا؟"

" كان فيلسوفًا رحيمًا، ومن أي رحمته أنه امتنَع عن أكل اللحوم رحمةً بالحيوان!"

(Maḥfūẓ 1965: 164)

"When did you last eat meat?"

"To tell you the truth, we've forgotten. Give me a moment to try to remember," Hussein said sarcastically. "If I draw on obscure memories, I'm able to visualize the last slice of meat I've eaten. But I don't remember when or where. We're a philosophical family. Following the principles of al Maarri," he added with a laugh. "Who is this Ma'arri? One of our forefathers?" Hassan inquired.

"A merciful philosopher. So merciful toward animals that he abstained from eating their flesh" (BAE 1989: 194).

Ḥasan's conclusion is: "Now I understand why the government opens schools. It does this to make you hate eating meat so as to have all the meat for itself" (BAE 1989: 194). It is functional in that scene to expand its humourous mood, moving directly to a socio-political issue, stressing with a strong irony the invalidness of culture and education in Egypt, and suggesting that the parallel humans/ animals springs from the food that they are obliged to eat: in common people's minds *fūl* (fava beans) is supposed to devaluate the person and reduce a human to an animal condition, specially a donkey.

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[21] We will find the same theme at the beginnings of the Iraqi novel of which we will write in this article, as vegan food is described by the protagonist's mother as 'not human.'

4. Nazīf al-ḥaǧar [22]

There is not an animal on the earth, nor a flying creature on two wings, but they are peoples like unto

you.

The Koran (Sura 6, vs. 38)

It's not by chance that the first epigraph chosen by al-Kawnī to start his novel is taken from the Koran, since the intimate religious spirit that overwhelms it can give a key to understand many nuances of the whole text. Neither is casual the choice of the main character's name, Asūf, that means in 'mankind' or 'solitude,' in the writer's Tuareg mothertongue. Another strange coincidence is the writer's surname, al-Kawnī, means also 'universal' in Arabic. His birthplace, which forms the geographical center of this fictional universe, is situated between two diametrically opposing social and philosophical forces.

Southern Libya is a desertic world of myth, magic and superstition. The Northern area, including many Arab cities of the coast, is a place associated with mechanized technology and warfare. The cultural gap between the natives of the Sahara and the northern Libyan ones is huge, due to the presence of foreign colonizers.

The diegetic time of the novel is not so clear, but can be situated between the Italian conquest of Libya and the Fascist defeat of the Second World War.

The protagonist Asūf not only guards the *waddān* (the mouflon), around which humans weave myths of sacredness, magical abilities, ferocity and superb meat, but is also spiritually united with the desert and its creatures (Colla 2018).

Asūf's father once made a vow that he would not hunt *waddān*, because it saved his life. As a true Sufi, he used to admire the beauty of the gazelle. But to feed his family, during a famine, he broke his vow and killed a *waddān*. Then he was killed by another *waddān*, as atonement for his sin. One day, after his father's death, Asūf sees him through the eyes of the *waddān*.

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[22] Asūf is a young Bedouin who lives in the southern Libyan Desert, tending to his goats. His father taught him that the *waddān* (mouflon), a type of wild sheep, is the spirit of the mountains of Massak Satfat. Asūf's father, while hunting the animal, finds himself in a perilous situation, hanging between life and death. A *waddān* rescues and saves him, causing him to vow to never hunt or go near the animal again. However, after years of harsh drought, he has to break his vow and hunt for food. Eventually, a *waddān* kills Asūf's father. Since only Asūf knows exactly where the *waddān* is to be found, two ruthless Arab hunters (Cain and Mas'ud) ask him to find the *waddān* for them, but he refuses to give them any information. When they return from their search, Cain ties Asūf up, drags him to a rock and kills him.

Al-Kawnī calls here and in many other writings (al-Kawnī 1999: 40) for a spiritual relationship and understanding between man and eco-system, made of respect, reverence and balance for a harmonious existence. One of the main devices used in the novel is the blurring of line between human and the non-human. And even the forementioned quote from Koran highlights the oneness between man and the non-human world.

The writer points out how nature's balance is broken due to the humans' selfishness. Al-Kawnī wrote a sort of ecological fable "teeming with mythical and mystical undertones and a celebration of traditional, intuitive practices in preserving the desert and its inhabitants against systems of corruption instigated by modern (Western) technology" (Almwajeh and Neimneh 2022: 121).

4.1. Virility and vegetarianism

In one of the first dialogues between Asūf and one of two Arab hunters (interestingly, the narrator doesn't reveal his name, then the reader discovers he is Cain, son of Adam), when Asūf get bewildered by his craze for meat, he gets his immediate answer:

<div dir="rtl">

و هل في الدنيا ألذ من اللحم؟ كل شيء يبدأ و ينتهي باللحم. المرأة أيضًا لحم. هل سبق لك و ذقت لحم المرأة؟

هز أسوف رأسه بالنفي ، و تألقت عيناه بالقلق، فأضاف الرجل ضاحكًا:

ـ أنت مسكين إذن. لم تأكل لحم المرأة. إنه ألذ اللحوم، باستثناء لحم الغزلان، باستثناء لحم الخرفان، باستثناء لحم الودان. ها . ها. كل اللحوم لذيذة. هل تذوقت لحم ال   ؟

صرخ أسوف في هلع :

ـ لا لا أنا لم أذق اللحم . أنا لا آكل اللحم.

ـ لا تأكل اللحم؟ و ماذا تفعل بحياتك إذن؟

تفكر الرجل قليلاً ثم قال:

ـ و لكن معك حق. من لا يأكل اللحم لا بد أن يبتعد عن الناس. ليس من العبث أنك اخترت الحياة في هذا الخلاء الخالي. لأن من لا يأكل اللحم لا يحيا. أنت لست حيًا. انت ميت.

(al-Kawnī 1999: 20)

</div>

"Is there anything in the world tastier than meat? Everything begins and ends with meat. Woman's meat too. Have you ever tasted a woman's meat?"

Asūf shook his head, the anxiety shining in his eyes.

"You're a poor devil, then," the man went on, laughing. "You've never enjoyed a woman's meat. It's the tastiest of all. Apart, that is, from gazelle's meat and lamb's meat and the meat from the waddan." He laughed again. "Every sort of meat's tasty. Have you ever eaten?"

"No," Asūf cried out, dismayed. "No! I haven't had any sort of meat. I don't eat meat."

"You don't eat meat? What sort of life's that?"

The man reflected for a while.

> "Well," he said finally, "it makes sense. If you don't eat meat, then you have to live apart from other people. I see now why you've chosen to live in this empty wilderness. If a man doesn't eat meat, then he doesn't live. You're not alive at all. You're dead!"
>
> (BOS 2002:14)

In her seminal text, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Carol Adams addresses the cultural and epistemological structures that connect the literal use of animal bodies for meat and the cultural representation of women's bodies as meat. When feminists protest that women are treated like animals, or like pieces of meat, such as in the case of the abovementioned passage, she emphasizes the analogies between women and animals, that , according to her "far from being harmless wordplay, reflect and reinscribe the lowly status of both" (Adams 1991: 42).

Asūf 's case can be clearly described by her words: "Men who decide to eschew meat eating are deemed effeminate" (Adams 1991: 34). To be more precise, "in a sexist society that symbolizes woman as meat, as a sexually consumable object, the man who declines to eat [her] is effectively announcing his failure as heterosexual" (Bailey 2007: 44, 45). As Bailey remarks, "if eating meat itself has been regarded as a masculine activity,[23] then the animal lover is a sissy, contemptibly weak, feminine, with all of the qualities that entails, including being overly emotional" (Bailey 2007: 46).

So far the narrator hasn't revealed why Asūf is vegetarian, and that choice seems very rare in a environment like the desert, devoid of natural vegetal resources.

4.2. Reincarnations

Asūf's mother has warned him to stay away from the *waddān* and reminds him of his father's fate. At first, Asūf follows his mother's advice, but eventually he forgets it. He feels a strong compulsion to hunt, without any apparent reason. He thus experiences many dangerous and critical situations, that makes him change his food habits. One day, in the dimness of the dawn, in a state between life and death, he sees his father in the eyes of the great *waddān*.[24]

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[23] While meat eating has long been considered a sort of brain food, necessary for intellectual beings, people of color were thought to be able to get along with very little. One late nineteenth-century medical doctor concluded that "savages" could live without much animal protein because they are "little removed from the common animal stock from which they are derived. They are much nearer to the forms of life from which they feed than are they highly civilized brain-workers, and can therefore subsist on forms of life which would be most poisonous to us" (quoted in Adams 1991: 31).

[24] Towards the ends of the novel, even Cain sees in the eyes of the gazelle a human being, but "that night Cain, Adam's son, is not satisfied with killing 'his sister,' but he also eats her flesh.

بعدها عاف اللحم كل اللحوم. لاحظ هذا التغير أول مرة عند موت جدي، فوجد أمه تقوم بطبخه في القدر عند مدخل الكهف.
عاد من الرعي، فغزت الرائحة أنفه من مسافة بعيدة . شعر بالدوار والغثيان، وأفرغ أمعاءه الخاوية في العراء عدة مرات قبل
أن يبلغ البيت . أصبحت اللحوم تثير تقزّزه واندهش كيف كان يستطيع أن يستطعم أكل اللحم . كيف يستطيع المخلوق أن يأكل
لحم مخلوق؟ ما الفرق بين لحم الحيوان ولحم الإنسان؟ من يقدر أن يأكل لحم الودان يقدر أن يأكل لحم الإنسان أيضاً. لقد حل
الأب في الودان، والودان حل فيه .هو والمرحوم والودان العظيم الآن شيء واحد. لن يفصل بينهم شيء

<div align="right">(al-Kawnī 1992: 75)</div>

> After this he felt an aversion to meat, to meat of all kinds. He noticed the change first when a small kid died and he found his mother cooking it in the cauldron at the mouth of the cave. He'd returned from herding, and the smell assailed him far off. He felt fizzy and nauseous, and retched repeatedly before finally arriving home.
>
> Meat aroused his disgust now. He was astonished he'd once been able to enjoy it. How could one creature eat the flesh of another? What was the difference between the flesh of an animal and that of man? If someone could eat the flesh of the *waddān,* then he could eat human flesh too. Had his father come to dwell in the *waddan,* and the *waddan* in his father?[25] He, his father, and the mighty *waddān* were one now. Nothing could separate them (BOS 2002:65-66).

Metamorphosis (*masḫ* in Arabic) is considered in the orthodox Islam a kind of divine punishment in which a person is transformed into an animal. The human identity is not lost, while its appearance changes into an animal figure. The title of the chapter, in the original *al-Taḥawwul*, has been translated as "transformation," while the French translation uses the term *La Mètamorphose,* but I didn't find that change till the end of the novel, when he is transformed not only into a waddān, but also a "sacrifical animal" (McHugh 2019: 107).

In the abovementioned passage the writer uses the verb *ḥalla,* to stand for 'reincarnation:' actually his died father reincarnated in the *waddān,* and this reincarnated in Asūf, so they become only one. The novel emphasizes the strong bond that exists between humans and animals, a unique bond that, according to Fouad and Alwakeel is to be found "at the intersection between religion and mythology" (Fouad and Alwakeel 2013: 50). It seems to me that al-Kawnī goes beyond the monotheistic religions limits, since the communion and oneness between animals and humans in the novel is shown to be intimate in a way that would eventually lead to reincarnation. This explains clearly why he becomes unable to palate meat and remains vegetarian for the rest of his life (Mchugh 2019: 109).[26]

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[25] It should be more correct to translate "and the *waddan* dwelled in Asuf," so that it makes sense that they are three in one, unseparable. I'd also cancel the question mark of this phrase, that doesn't exist in the original.

[26] Porphyry's treatise *De abstinentia* offers, among various arguments to adopt a Vegetarian diet, the transmigration of the soul, that is a belief common in Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism.

4.3. Post-colonial issues

The novel is set in a period where Libya is under colonial powers, first Italian then Anglo-American. The narrator writes: "The foreigners seem to have beaten us everywhere in the desert. Wherever we've been, we've found they were there before us. These foreigners are devils" (BOS 2002: 12). But woes come also from insiders: the two arab hunters, Cain (Qābīl) and Mas'ūd, work at the service of the Italians so that they can help him to satiate his voracity for the riches of his country, and he is ready to offer his country to the Italians occupiers, the Americans and their companies in search of oil" (al-Ǧābir 2023).

Cain's hunting skills are improved when he meets John Parker, an American army captain, after he quotes from an obscure Sufi traveler these words: "In the gazelles God placed the secret and sown the meaning. For him who tastes the flesh of this creature, all impotence in the soul will be swept away, the veil of separation will be rent, and he will see God as He truly is" (BOS 2002: 106).

The fact that he misunderstands Sufi teachings on the oneness of existence (*waḥdat al-wuǧūd*)" (Wiesberg 2015: 49), and convinces the Arab-Muslim Cain of that, can symbolize the incapacity of those co-nationals to interpret their culture, letting others and foreigners do this job for them.

Asūf, who, through the vision of the meat-crazed hunter Cain, emerges through the second half of the story as his 'mirror-opposite,' is not the only vegetarian in the novel. Also Šayḫ Ǧallūlī, who is called a "heretic dervish" (BOS 2002: 110) , doesn't eat meat and lives on only barley's bread.

The mystical union, according to this wise man, cannot happen through ingesting the flesh of other creatures, which necessarily entails violence and domination, but through a metaphysical bonding that can occur when one is spiritually open to it. And when Parker asks if God dwells in gazelles and he answers: "God dwells in all souls. To limit it to gazelles is heresy" (BOS: 108).

John Parker also provides Cain with Land Rover and an automatic rifle, two tools that upset the balance of nature. The process of every form of decolonization can be triggered by the respect of the animals. It's a cultural process towards postcolonialism, to pass beyond the phase when previously subjugated individuals want to assert control over their own coniationals and style of life, with the help of new forces, symbolized by Parker.

Cain and Parker are the new wicked forces of misguided neo-colonialism anchored in Western ideas of values that put humans at the top of the chain making them blind to the laws of nature.

Cain, with his addiction to meat, stands as a symbol of limitless consumption associated with modern forms of life. The big issue at stake is the extinction and depletion of natural resources, so the novel "seeks to warn us of the environmental threats emanating from governmental, industrial,

commercial and neo-colonial forces" (Sharmilla 2018: 323). The novel signals a possible way of overcoming colonialism, and even new forms of domination or subordination.

4.4. Asūf as a new Francis of Assisi or Rābiʻa al-ʻAdawiyya

When Asūf is obliged to accompany the two hunters to the mountainous area of the desert where the *waddān* is supposed to live

في تلك اللحظة حدث ما خشي منه أسوف طوال النهار. من خلف صخرة، أمامه بالضبط، أطل ودان، ووقف يتفرج على حركتهم في الوادي. (...) أحس بأن الحيوان لا يزال يقف خلف ظهره،، ويراقبهم من التجويف الصخري. لقد اشتم المسكين رائحته فاطمأن إلى الضيوف. أصبح الودان ينقاد إليه ويرتع بجواره في قطعان كبيرة منذ أن توقف عن أكل اللحم (...) تجيئه القطعان في المرعى تختلط بالماعز، وتقبل نحوه ذكورها تشمشم ثيابه بخياشيمها وتتأمله بعيون وديعة غامضة، تنطق بألف لغة، وتتحدث بألف لسان دون أن يصدر عنها صوت، ثم تمضي لترتع في الأحراش. في البداية كان يخرس، وتنتشل أطرافه من الدهشة. ومع الوقت تعود، وأصبح يداعبها، ويحادثها، ويقص عليها الحكايات،

(al-Kawnī 1992: 88)

"… what Asūf had been fearing all day happened. From behind a rock, just opposite him, a *waddan* peered out, following their movements in the wadi. (…) He sensed the animal was still there behind him, watching them from the hollow in the rock. The poor beast had scented his presence and felt safe from the guests for the *waddan* had begun to trust him now, grazing close to him in large herds. Ever since he'd stopped eating meat. (…) The herds came to him in the pastures, mixed with the goats. The males came right up to him and snuffled his clothes, gazed at him with meek, mysterious eyes that conversed in a thousand languages, spoke with a thousand tongues, without making so much as a sound, then went off to graze among the thickets. At the start he'd been struck dumb, paralyzed with amazement. With time, though, he'd grown used to them, and begun playing and speaking with them, recounting stories to them" (Al-Koni 2002: 78-79).

This excerpt reminds us of what the religious tradition says about the mystic Rābiʻa al-ʻAdawiyya (d. 801): she was supposed to live in harmony with nature and wild animals, loving and respecting them, so that she is considered "an ecofeminist before her time" (Ghosn 2022). Many historians attribute to her a complete abstinence from the consumption of animal products. One story about al-ʻAdawiyya goes that as she was climbing a mountain, gazelles gathered around her without showing the slightest fear, apparently feeling safe. But when her friend Ḥasan al-Baṣrī came to join her, the animals ran away. He asked her:

> "How come the gazelles are running away from me and not from you?"
> "What did you eat today?," Rabi'a replied.
> "A dish cooked with a piece of fat," Hasan said.
> "How can they not run away from you when you eat their fat?" she retorted (Ghosn 2022).

Beyond its historical reality, this story indeed reveals a benevolent respect for all creation, the same that displayed Francis of Assisi (1181-1226). In Thomas of Celano's *Vita Prima* his encounters with nonhuman animals open, as Pratt (1992) has demonstrated, a 'contact zones' between human and nonhuman animals that challenge traditional social hierarchies. Asūf's, Rabia's and Francis's actions towards animals reimagine horizontal relationships between human and nonhuman animals.

Their alternative ways of communicating with them can reshape relationships between God's creatures, breaking down the hierarchical chain of beings.

5. Selective vegetarianism in *Min ḫašab wa ṭīn*

Ecocriticism, primarily concerned with animal rights and environmental conservation, emphasises natural purity and belonging. We can detect this element in *Min ḫašab wa ṭīn* ("Made of wood and mud;" 2021),[27] by the Moroccan writer and poet Muḥammad al-Ašʿarī (1951), who criticizes the values of the decadent technological and individualistic civilization, invoking a return to the values of the collective interest. This apparently realistic novel with fairy-tale and Kafkaesque elements, undoubtedly inspired by Kalīla wa Dimna, intends to denounce in a more provocative way the distancing of man from the laws of nature.

While al-Kawnī tries to reshape the relationship between man, animals and nature in the desert, here in al-Ašʿarī's novel, the forest is the protagonist and the raw materials of the title 'wood and clay' that should be used to build a house, recall the prophet Ibrāhīm (or Abraham for Jews and Christians) who with his house begins a new phase of relationship with the Creator.

One day Ibrāhīm, a former bank clerk, comes across a wounded hedgehog in a forest, and is ready to have it cured at a veterinarian. At that moment a herdsman asks him, with trepidation clearly evident on his face, if he would have eaten it. Ibrahim is terrified at the idea and remembered that he knew the hedgehog for months. He admired the way it ran, its young body and cunning looks, and he feels to be bound to it in a sort of silent friendship, a 'brotherhood in the forest' (*uḫuwwa fī l-ġāba)*.

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[27] Ibrāhīm, in the midst of an existential crisis, decides to leave a career as a banker to go and live in the forest Maamoura. One day he comes across a seriously injured hedgehog and decides to make him cured by a French veterinarian. A love story is born between them, breaking the mold of tradition. In the forest he is arrested by mysterious police forces and spends almost six months in a secret prison. In the meantime, the members of the urban community organize the reconciliation with his wife, the return to the bank and the divorce from the French.

<div dir="rtl">

لقد أصبح إبراهيم جزءًا من حياة الغابة . و لا يتصور أن يخذل شريكًا له في هذه الحياة، مثلما لا يتصور و لو للحظة واحدة أن شخصًا

سويًا يستطيع أن يقتل كائنًا بهذه الغموض و الهشاشة بغية طبخه و أكله.

</div>

(al-Ašʿarī 2021: 8)

> Ibrahim had become a part of the forest life. He could not imagine disappointing a partner of that
> life, as he could not have imagined, not even for a single instant, that a normal person could kill a
> being so mysterious and fragile to cook and eat it.

The herdsman implores Ibrāhīm to free the hedgehog telling him that the souls of the Ait Mimoun tribe
would be be satisfied with him, because he had abstained from eating the animal, because his tribe's
members were milk brothers with hedgehogs.

A double selective vegetarianism is at stake in this novel: from one side the new perspective of an
ecocritical philosophy of an ex banker, who sees in the hedgehog of the forest a new brother in a new
life; from the other side, the herdsman, that is the original dweller of the area and sees in the hedgehog
a 'milk brother' (*aḫ raḍāʿa*), according to a legend of his tribe. In a similar way, his colleague Asūf
followed the teachings and pieces of advice of his parents.

6. Veganism and a developing identity in *Krīsmās fī Makka*

In the Egyptian novel, we saw that abstinence from meat was not a choice. After more than a half
century, food choice can be a way for people to express their ideals and identities in *Krīsmās fī Makka*
("Christmas in Mecca," 2019), by the Iraqi writer Aḥmad Ḫayrī al-ʿUmarī. Undoubtedly the choice of a
plant-based diet shapes one's personal and social identity and is likely to influence values, attitudes,
beliefs, and well-being, but this choice is also the result of strong beliefs and values. When Wright
argues that meatless diets are always situated at the social margins and have "never been the dominant
ethical and dietary position in any culture at any time" (Wright 2015: 6), maybe she has not in mind
the Hinduist and Buddhist strong traditions, but for sure vegans and vegetarians in the Arab world,
who are still object of derision and stigmatization, Exactly like in *Bidāya wa Nihāya* they are even
deprived of humanity, so closer to animal world that the common idea is that "their diet is not
considered of humans beings" (al-ʿUmarī 2019: 3): this is the opinion of the protagonist's mother.

The young Mariam, the novel's narrator in first person, is an Iraqi expat who lives in the United
Kingdom with her mother, after her father was killed in a confessional murder in Iraq.

A trip to Mecca to perform the *ʿumra*, the small pilmigrage, during Christmas period, turns into a
journey to know her family, origins and religion. It's not sure whether she will accept her Iraqi

relatives, considering that she has absorbed many prejudices on Muslims and Arabs. No doubt that this journey will leave an impact on everyone.

In the first chapter of the novel, Miryam's mother seems anyhow open to new life styles, in comparison with the old generation. She warns her daughter:

إياك أن تخبري جدتك.. كل شيء فيغان، لن ترحمني.. دولمة وكبة بلا لحم؟.. ستنشرني على حبل الغسيل في كل مجموعات الواتس التي تتصدرها.

(al-'Umarī 2019: 5)

Don't tell your grandmother that everything is vegan, she won't have mercy on me. Dolma and Kebbeh without meat? She will mortify me in all the WhatsApp groups that she tops.

Her mother tries to indulge her daughter. But even in Iraq habits and mentalities are changing and it seems that internet groups of Vegans are widespread even there. The paradox I notice is that her grandmother 'tops' many groups in WhatsApp, but is very rigid about food choices. Maryam's monologue explains the stressful situation she lives at home, in the Western diaspora, because of her veganism, but she is confident in the future scenario:

منذ أن "تحولت" قبل ثلاث سنوات إلى اليوم (...) واجهت كل أنواع الضغوطات العاطفية وغير العاطفية لكي أعود إلى تناول المنتجات الحيوانية. واليوم أمي تتابع حسابات الإنستغرام الفيغان وقنوات اليوتيوب الخاصة بوصفاتها. لن أستبعد أن تتحول هي أيضاً عن قريب.

(al-'Umarī 2019: 5)

Since I 'transformed' three years ago till now (...) I faced all sorts of emotional and unemotional pressures to go back to eating animal products. Today, my mother follows the vegan Instagram accounts and YouTube channels with their recipes. I wouldn't rule out that she will transform soon, too...

Here the trasformation to which she refers (*al-taḥawwul*) has a very different meaning from that one of the chapter title of al-Kawnī's novel, since it just refers here to a changing of food habits, i.e. becoming vegan.

In the novel the writer doesn't explain why she became vegan. Veganism has been suggested to constitute an 'emergent identity' which develops through the interaction of various internal and external factors (Rosenfeld ands Burrow 2017): maybe the fact of living in a Western country, or an unconscious or semi-conscious marker of civil progress. The big surprise happens at Christmas:

سأعد مائدة الكريسماس، وستحتوي على الديك الرومي. أنا النباتية التي لا تقرب أي منتج حيواني، سأكسر هذا المبدأ، وأقدم ديكاً
رومياً، مسكيناً ولا ذنب له، على عشاء الكريسماس الذي أعده للعائلة. الكريسماس الوحيد الذي يمكنني أن أقضيه مع جدي وعمي.
قررت التضحية بمبادئي – وبالديك الرومي - من أجل العائلة. فاتحت أمي أولاً بإمكانية تقديم "البدائل الفيغان ويكون تغييراً أيضاً
عما تعودوا أكله". لكن أمي قالت إن أي وجبة "نباتية" ستعامل في بغداد كإهانة – أو نكتة في أحسن الأحوال

(al-'Umarī 2019: 201)

I will prepare the Christmas table, and it will include turkey. I, the vegetarian who does not eat any animal products, will break this principle and serve a poor, sinless turkey for the Christmas dinner I prepare for the family. The only Christmas I could spend with my grandfather and uncle. I decided to sacrifice my principles—and the turkey—for the sake of family. I approached my mother first about the possibility of offering "vegan alternatives that would also be something different from what they are used to eating." But my mother said that any "vegetarian" meal would be treated in Baghdad as an insult—or a joke at best.

Maryam decides to sacrifice her veganism to cook a turkey. That seems to be a clearly contradictory behaviour, but in her mind it's justified 'for the sake of the family.' The writer himself declares that it should be seen as a part of Maryam's double identity, as we can even ascertain from the title of the novel.[28]

7. Conclusions

Derrida, Agamben, Butler, Adams, among others, explained the way in which carnivorism operates as an ideology of violence, and explored the processes of humanization and animalization, to denounce the power hidden behind the bar of the human/animal dichotomy, still considered "natural" and, as such, immune to critical thinking. The role of fiction writer seems even more effective than that of the essayists to convey the same message by building stories and new characters who can help changing human habits or just caring indifference.

The focus of al-Kawnī's and al-Aš'arī's novels on kinship between humans and animals reminds me of the wolf's call to the Little Prince of Antoine de Saint'Exupery to be 'tamed.' Here 'taming' means a slow process of establishing mutual respect and trust.

The Egyptian novel, written in a period of time where even the term *nabatī* as vegetarian was not known, and the Iraqi one, share the function of vegetarianism/veganism as a marker of social identity. Vegetarianism of necessity in the first case, implemented by a family that lives in distress, while it's a

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[28] Declarations of the writer in an interview of mine. It's worth mentioning that the title of the novel aroused a lot a protests and bans by Saudi Authorities, who imposed a new one in the version for their internal market, canceling "in Mecca."

choice in the Iraqi's novel where the young protagonist wishes to express her belonging to a culture distant from her Arabo-islamic roots.

In this quantitatively poor literary context *Nazīf al-ḥaǧar* seems an unparalleled and courageous novel that, according to Ramsay "helps to instill and reinforce human concern about the importance of adapting lives and policy to life-styles which (...) strive towards ecological harmony" (Ramsay 2014: 171).

In al-Kawnī's novel animals represent potential human beings, and their transmutation, or reincarnation, seems crucial for the sake of salvation from the cruelty of the wars and new dominations. McHugh stresses that "desert-born but oasis-raised Cain relentless hunting strictly to feed his craving for meat appears to be a retrograde turn, as it leads to the destruction of humans and animals, and along with them of intrahuman and human-animal relationships" (McHugh 2016).

The Libyan writer defies some principles of Islam that contradict Sufi views, in particolar the separation of humans' from animals' sphere, a strong anthropocentrism which also characterizes the other two monotheistic religions, Judaism and Christianity, source of immense suffering for sentient beings, according to Schopenhauer.[29]

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[29] Shapsay (2017) writes that animals in general play a pivotal role in Schopenhauer's philosophical system and in his ethical thought in particular, offering a less anthropocentric approach to ethics.

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Prolegomena to the analysis of *deśī* words in Hemacandra's *Deśīnāmamālā*

Andrea Drocco

The purpose of the present paper is to offer the necessary theoretical and methodological considerations for undertaking the analysis of the typology of the *deśī* class of Prakrit words starting from Hemacandra's *Deśīnāmamālā*, the most important lexicon, and almost the sole one, dealing with these specific words. The issues concerned the *deśī* words in Prakrit, as well as *tatsama* and *tadbhava* words, will be illustrated and analysed beginning with offering a review of the various scholars' position on this topic. At the same time, and this is the main goal of the paper, the typology of *deśī* words will be investigated, this in order to understand how the heterogeneity of this specific class of Prakrit words is constructed. In this manner, we will have the opportunity to see that the scope of the tripartite classification of Prakrit words in *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī* is to give a tool in the hands of Indian medieval authors for comparing/understanding and/or for teaching the words used in Prakrit by means of Sanskrit words. Thanks to the proposed analysis, we will have a clearer idea of what Prakrit really was and how the perspective on considering it changed at the beginning of the first millennium in India.

1. Introduction[1]

During the second stage of development of the Indo-Aryan (IA) languages, normally known as Middle Indo-Aryan (MIA) and lasting around sixteen centuries (c. 600 BCE-1000 CE),[2] we can witness a number

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[1] This paper is the English and totally revised and updated version of Drocco (2006), in Italian.

[2] Chatterji (1926: 17-20; 1960) divides the whole MIA period into four stages:

1. a first stage (600-200 BCE), represented by the MIA administrative language of the Aśoka edicts and by the language of the Therevāda Buddhist canon (Pāli);

2. a second stage (200 BCE-200 CE), understood as transitional and represented by the inscriptions composed in MIA language varieties and written in the Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī scripts;

3. a third stage (200-600 CE), represented by Prakrit (i.e. Mahārāṣṭrī) and Prakrit viarieties (i.e. Śaurasenī, Māgadhī, Paiśācī) used in dramatic literature and by the Ardhamāgadhī variety of the Jain Canon; and

of linguistic varieties being adopted as religious, administrative, scholarly and literary vehicles. In particular, certain varieties of MIA were chosen as religious languages for the canonical and extra-canonical Buddhist and Jain texts (cf. Pischel 1965: 11-25; Norman 1993; Ghatage 1996-: Vol. I, *1-*25, i-xxxiii). Other varieties were chosen as administrative languages for the court in some of the most important Indian kingdoms in the period just before and immediately after the beginning of the Christian era (Lienhard 1984: 82-83; Deshpande 1993: 15, 92; Ollett 2017) and thus can be seen used in the texts of some of the edicts and inscriptions found in a number of places across the Indian sub-continent (Hultzsch 1924; Mehendale 1948; Bloch 1950; Salomon 1998). Lastly, some varieties are known for their particular use in works that form part of Indian *kāvya* literature and classical drama (Katre 1964; Lienhard 1984; Boccali 2000).

While it is correct to say that some of these MIA varieties, and their corresponding textual traditions, were strongly influenced by Sanskrit, it is also true that some others—especially those whereby the large number of Jain MIA works has been composed—constitute an interesting source for the study of the linguistic peculiarities that substantially deviate from those forms normally considered as 'close' to the Sanskrit language. Interestingly, only the latter are described in grammars pertaining to one of these varieties, thus attributing to at least one of them the status of standard form (Bhayani 1988e: 155, 1988f: 219-222; Balbir 1989; Bhayani 1998b: 13, 23). As I will have the opportunity to show, this variety, and only this, is called 'Prakrit' by Prakrit grammarians and Prakrit/Sanskrit authors of rhetorical treatises. Traditionally, the anomalies of Prakrit that are not 'close' to Sanskrit are referred to as *deśī/deśya/deśaja* (hereafter simply *deśī*). They have been explained on the basis that the language of certain works is heavily characterized by a tendency to absorb words, forms and uses from the many spoken dialects (cf., for example, Alsdorf 1935-1937; Balbir 1989), which is exactly the situation with the texts written, especially, by the Jain authors. Consequently, these particular MIA texts—probably because they are dedicated to a broader audience—offer an unparalleled source for knowledge and insight into the *deśī* lexical material attested in Prakrit (Bhayani 1988e, 1988f, 1998a, 1998b; cf. also Salomon 1989: 285).[3]

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4. a fourth stage (600-1000 CE), represented by the various forms of Apabhraṃśa. Masica (1991) adds as well to the second stage the MIA language of the Ceylon inscriptions and that linguistic variety known as 'hybrid Buddhist Sanskrit,' "[...] a Middle Indo-Aryan dialect in Sanskrit garb, vehicle of Mahayana Buddhist literature [...]" (Masica 1991: 52-53).

[3] I called here, provisionally, *deśī* the lexical material of the varieties of literary MIA other than Prakrit, even though, strictly speaking, this category of words is functional only for Prakrit. As regards the abundant use of non-standard vocabulary in Jain Sanskrit, a particular form of Sanskrit considerably influenced by literary MIA, see Sandesara and Thaker (1962).

As for the meaning and use of the term *deśī* in first millennium India, it is certainly true that Bühler's (ed.) (1878) acute, and in many respects pioneering, argumentations and recent works help us to improve our understanding of what this and other technical terms mean in the context of Prakrit grammatical tradition.[4] However, many aspects still remain to be studied regarding Prakrit *deśī* words. Among the most important I can mention:

1. the typology of *deśī* words;

2. the correct classification of a word as *tatsama* or *tadbhava*, originally reported in a Prakrit text and then used in a Sanskrit one, thus the biunivocal—and not univocal as normally thought[5]—relationship and influence between Sanskrit and Prakrit in pre-modern India (cf. Bubenik 1998, 2011; Kulikov 2013; Houben 2018);

3. the correct spelling and meaning of *deśī* words in different Prakrit texts;[6]

4. the possible evolution of *deśī* words in New Indo-Aryan (NIA) languages, with all the aspects related to the reasons of their evolution in some languages but not in others.

Therefore, as far as the points just listed are concerned, it is correct to argue that the Prakrit *deśī* class of words is partly an unexplored area of study. This can be the result of the fact that this kind of Prakrit words constitute still a complicated area of research. Indeed, despite their importance, since the observations of Bühler (ed.) (1878), Pischel (1877-80, 1880), Beames (1872-79), Hoernle (1880), and Bhandarkar (1914), to name only the best known, these words have been scarcely studied (Bhayani 1988a, 1998e: 143). Bhayani's work (1988a, 1998b, 1998c, 1998d, 1998f) represents an important exception in this respect, at least as regards point 3. above. The reason behind this state of things is that most of Prakrit texts are still subject to the analysis required to ascertain and authenticate the form and meaning of the *deśī* words reported in them, and to identify those recorded in other texts. This task is arduous, since most of the editions of Prakrit texts published so far do not include any word index.

When it comes to the study of the issues relating to the *deśī* element in Prakrit, the *Deśīnāmamālā*—the Prakrit lexicon drawn up by the Jain monk Hemacandra—undoubtedly represents an essential

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[4] See, for example, Drocco (2012) and Ollett (2017) as regards *deśī*; Kahrs (1992) with respect to the term *tadbhava*.

[5] In this respect it should be noted that Prakrit *tatsama* words are understood, almost always, as borrowings from Sanskrit (cf., e.g., Pollock 2007), not taking into account, consequently, the possibility that a *tatsama* may also be a loan from Prakrit (see below).

[6] On this matter see Pollock's important remarks (2006: 403).

source. Indeed, it is the most important lexicon of *deśī* words now available (Ramanujaswamy 1938: 6; Pischel 1965: 48-50; Shriyan 1969: 25-32; Upadhye 1978: 182; Bhayani 1988e: 162; Tieken 1992: 221; Ghatage 1996-: Vol. I, *2-*3). In most of his studies, Bhayani put forward the idea that a critical examination of the headwords recorded in this lexicon might lead on to several valuable lines of investigation. For this reason, starting from the analysis of the *Deśīnāmamālā*, the main aim of this study is to offer, on the one hand, a detailed overview of the studies regarding this text and the analysis of the meaning of the grammatical/lexicographical technical term *deśī* in the wider context of the traditional grammars of Prakrit in general, and of Hemacandra's works on Prakrit grammar and lexicography in particular, this, especially, in the face of the recent studies already mentioned (see note 4). On the other hand, the present study wants also to shed light on the typology of *deśī* words, that is to say on how the heterogeneity of this class of Prakrit words is composed. Following this kind of analysis, this will allow us to understand the possible consequences arising from the wrong interpretation of the meaning of the tripartite terminology in *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī* in establishing the reciprocal influences between Sanskrit and Prakrit and between these two literary languages and the other languages—not only those used for cultural purposes—throughout the MIA period. I think that, as a result, we will have a clearer view of the history of the Sanskrit language and of the various MIA administrative, religious and literary varieties, among the latter, in particular, of Prakrit.

I add that in one of my previous papers (Drocco 2012) I tried to understand and to account for the tripartite classification of Prakrit in *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī* according to the view of Sanskrit as an eternal language.[7] The goal of some of the ensuing sections is to start again and to continue part of the discussion, in order to give additional proofs and arguments. For this reason, I needs to go through again some of the considerations which I have already addressed in the above said paper.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the meaning of the Sanskrit word *prākṛta* and its use to designate 'Prakrit' as one form of literary language during the second diachronic phase of IA linguistic evolution. Section 3 explores the relationship of this language to the Sanskrit language; in this section I also unpack the tripartite classification of Prakrit words as *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī*, focusing mainly on the latter. Section 4 presents Hemacandra's *Deśīnāmamālā,* describing the configuration of the *deśī* words in the text here examined (section 4.2). Section 5 explain the tripartite classification in *tatsama, tadbhava* and *deśī* as a tool for comparing Prakrit with Sanskrit. Section 6 is devoted to describe how the heterogeneity of *deśī* words is constitued, therefore to present the various neologisms constituting this specific class of words of Prakrit lexicon. Finally, after providing two

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[7] On this topic, see Deshpande (1993), Bronkhorst (1993), Aklujkar (1996), and the paper collected in Houben (ed. 1996a).

important remarks as proofs of my discussion (section 7), in section 8 the conclusions of the present study are advanced.

2. "Prakrit" as a specific literary variety among other Middle Indo-Aryan literary varieties

Although early Jains and Buddhists used various varieties of MIA to draw up their canonical texts, and starting from the reign of Aśoka Maurya (c. 268-232 BCE) we have a vast number of inscriptional records in MIA, the first grammatical descriptions that we have of any of these varieties used as literary, religious or administrative languages only stem from the beginning of the first millennium. It is important to note, as I have just remarked above, that these descriptions only concern one particular scholarly variety of MIA (i.e. Prakrit), and that they are present, to begin with, only in specific types of works, Sanskrit works on performing arts and poetics (Scharfe 1977: 191).[8] According to these works, Prakrit had to be learnt through formal instructions, and thus, following on from the first early descriptions just mentioned, further manuals of Prakrit grammar were composed at intervals (Bhayani 1988c: 155).[9]

The fact that out of the different varieties of MIA used for cultural purposes only one is described through a grammatical analysis, and that this analysis, in any Prakrit grammar we are in possess, is strictly linked to Sanskrit, can seem quite strange. This situation can only be understood by taking into account the particular use of the term 'Prakrit' to refer to this specific South Asian literary language of the first millennium CE and the meaning of the tripartite classification of Prakrit words into *tatsama*, *tadbhava*, and *deśī*. These topics have already been discussed in the past by some scholars,[10] and Ollett (2017) recently offered an interesting and detailed analysis on both of them. However, some questions still remain to be clarified. This is even more true taking into account the fact that although the meaning of the terms *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī* now is, according to some, clear to almost all scholars,[11] many of them continue to use 'Prakrit' to refer to the entire MIA or even just to all its religious,

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[8] On Harivṛddha, as a possible author of a Prakrit grammar composed in Prakrit see Pollock (2006: 102, note n. 61) and Ollett (2017). Pollock (2006: 102, note n. 61), following Nitti-Dolci (1972: 209) and von Hinüber (1986: 55), adds that "The prototype of Caṇḍa's grammar may also have been in Prakrit."

[9] On the works of Prakrit grammarians see, especially, Nitti-Dolci (1972).

[10] As for the use of the term "Prakrit" see, for example, Pisani (1957) and the works mentioned by Ollett (2017: 11-12). The meaning of the terms *tatsama*, *tadbhava*, and *deśī* according to modern scholars and traditional Indian grammarians and authors is the object of the subsequent sections.

[11] This is the view of one of the anonymous reviewers of this paper. Even though I fully agree with him, see my remarks in what follows.

administrative and literary varieties (see, e.g., Hock 2021 and in part also Hock 2016; Balbir 2017; Houben 2018). In doing so, not only the meaning and the purpose of the tripartite classification, but also the close interconnection between the latter and Prakrit is completely obscured, just as what the Indian grammarians actually understood by 'Prakrit' in first millennium India is obscured (for this last consideration see Ollett 2017: 13-14). In my opinion this is the result of the fact that even if the meaning of *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī* is clearer with respect to the past, the relevance of its correct interpretation to understand the relationship and coexistence of Sanskrit and Prakrit in first millennium India and the role of the tripartite classification of Prakrit words in shaping this relationship and in excluding some MIA varieties from the denomination of Prakrit' (as, for example, Ardhamāgadhī, at least in the case of Hemacandra and Trivikrama; see Drocco forthcoming) are still not totally clear, this even taking into account the important works of Hock and Pandharipande (1976, 1978), Ollett (2017), Houben (2018) as well as those of Salomon (1989), Bubenik (1996, 1998) and Kulikov (2013).

In the light of these preliminary observations, it is correct to say that, as is well known, the English term Prakrit, as the proper name for a specific MIA literary variety, derives from the Sanskrit adjective *prākṛta* 'connected with an origin'—used as a proper noun—itself in turn derived from the Sanskrit noun *prakṛti* 'origin, base, nature' (see Monier-Williams 1899: 703). However, it is not so well known that although the adjective *prākṛta* generally carries a clear and precise meaning, this leads, as Norman pointed out (1996: 23-24), to a double interpretation.[12] Thus while *prākṛta* can mean 'having the nature of an origin' or 'original, natural,' it can also be understood as 'derived from an origin' or 'secondary.' In explaining his argument, Norman clearly follows Woolner (1928: 3), who recognized that two meanings could be attributed to the term *prākṛta*:

1. a precise meaning, referring to something that derives from one *prakṛti*, its basic, original form,

2. a more generic meaning, indicating all that is 'natural, vulgar, ordinary, provincial.'

Initially, according to Woolner (1928: 3), the term *prākṛta* was used with the second meaning to indicate the spoken language,[13] in contrast to the elaborate (*saṃskṛta*) and codified language, Sanskrit. However,

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[12] On this topic see also Pollock (2006: 91) and the references of the primary sources he gives (2006: 91, note n. 38).

[13] Even though Woolner does not give evidences to his statement, it is a fact that Prakrit words appear more 'natural' (*prākṛta*) (see what mentioned in the next note) and, according to some Sanskrit authors, also 'vulgar,' 'corrupted' (*apabhraṃśa/vibhraṣṭa*, see below the correspondence of the two terms *vibhraṣṭa* and *tadbhava* in the context of the tripartite classification of Prakrit words), thus having a negative connotation, despite being part of a literary vehicle such as Prakrit. On this issue see also the conclusion of this paper.

the same scholar also highlights the fact that the position taken on this subject by the Prakrit grammarians was entirely different. By attributing to the term *prākṛta* its more accurate and original meaning as 'derived from an origin' and therefore 'secondary,' the grammarians thought that Sanskrit was the original form (*prakṛti*), from which Prakrit originated.[14] This idea—to be discussed in detail in this paper—is reflected in a statement by Hemacandra in his important Prakrit grammar:[15]

> *prakṛtiḥ samskṛtam / tatra bhavam tata āgatam vā prākṛtam [...]*
> *Siddhahemaśabdānuśāsana* I, 1   (Vaidya (ed.) 1980)

> 'Sanskrit is the base; what originates in it or comes from it is base-derived.' (transl. Pischel 1965: 1)

It is perhaps for these reasons—that is, because of its literary use alongside Sanskrit and, theoretically, its strict dependence/connection on/with it—that Prakrit was described using clear grammatical rules to explain how the Prakrit words and the Prakrit grammatical features used in the literature are connected to their corresponding Sanskrit words and Sanskrit features, respectively. That is why, starting from the fact that it is this variety of MIA, among the others used for cultural purposes, that is commonly referred to as 'Prakrit' by traditional Indian grammarians and authors of rhetorical treatises, I am quite convinced that the term 'Prakrit,' in its narrow sense (as defined by Ollett 2017: 14), must be considered a technical term of the Indian grammatical tradition and Indian rhetorical works exactly like the terms *tadbhava* and *deśī* with whom it is tightly associated because only this sense "[...] maps closely onto what premodern Indians meant by the word." A word whose appearance "[...] as a language name and the literature it designates marks a major turning-point in the cultural history of language in India—*a turning-point that is completely obscured if we continue to equate 'Prakrit' with 'Middle Indic.'*" (Ollett 2017: 14, emphasis added).

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[14] For the different position taken by the Indian poet Vākpati (VIIIth century CE), who considers Prakrit to be the mother of all languages, including Sanskrit, see Scharfe (1977: 191). Similarly, it is well-known Namisādhu's view (Namisādhu was a Jaina Śvetāmbara author) commenting Rudraṭa's *Kāvyālaṃkāra*, where he clearly states that Sanskrit is derived from Prakrit (see, for example, Bronkhorst 1993).

[15] For other statements similar to that of Hemacandra, and for the identity of the languages normally included under the name *prākṛta* (i.e., Prakrit), see Pischel (1965: 1-3), Scharfe (1977: 191) and Nitti-Dolci (1972).

3. Prakrit and the tripartite classification in *tatsama, tadbhava* and *deśī*

Taking into consideration, on the one hand, the traditional interpretation of the term *prākṛta* to mean one definite MIA scholarly variety, and, on the other, the use of Prakrit as a literary language alongside Sanskrit, it is easier to understand (but see below) what is known in the literature as the tripartite classification of the Prakrit lexicon employed by Indian grammarians and authors of rhetorical works.

To be more precise, with regard to the vocabulary and grammar of Prakrit, Sanskrit works on poetics and the Prakrit grammars made in fact a three-fold classification of the words and grammatical features of the linguistic variety that they described (see Pischel 1965: 7, among others). The explicit goal of these works is to explain Prakrit starting from Sanskrit. Then, starting from the knowledge of Prakrit, they explain other varieties, which must be considered indeed as varieties, perhaps regional, of Prakrit and not as different Prakrits (but see Ollett 2017: 135-139).

Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, in chapter XVII, provides us, perhaps, with the oldest pieces of Prakrit grammar, dealing, in the first fragment, with phonemic rules for the conversion of Sanskrit words into Prakrit (Pischel 1965: 40-41; Nitti-Dolci 1972: 61; Scharfe 1977: 191). In addition to these rules, it is possible to say, from the sources now available, that Bharata is the first author to divide Prakrit words into the aforementioned three classes:

> *trividhaṃ tac ca vijñeyaṃ nāṭyayoge samāsataḥ /*
> *samānaśabdaṃ vibhraṣṭaṃ deśīgatam athāpi ca //*
> *Nāṭyaśāstra* 17.3   (Joshi (ed.) 1984)

> 'And it (i.e., Prakrit) should be known in a summary manner in connection with the dramatic representation, as being of three kinds:
> [that consisting of] words common [with Sanskrit], [that having] corrupt words, or [that with the words of] indigenous origin.' (transl. Nitti-Dolci 1972: 71)

According to Nitti-Dolci, the adjectives *samāna*, *vibhraṣṭa* and *deśī* used by Bharata should be understood as the equivalents of the three categories of words named *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī/deśya*, respectively. In fact, compared to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the terms employed by the majority of Prakrit grammarians and/or by the authors of Sanskrit/Prakrit rhetorical treatises are slightly different.[16]

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[16] Both Pollock (2006) and Ollett (2017) translate *vibhraṣṭa* as 'Sanskrit-derived.' Even though Prakrit *vibhraṣṭa* words can be considered the future *tadbhava* words, actually they are proto-*tadbhava* words only as regards their form and meaning. As a matter of fact, the judgment, negative, given to the *vibhraṣṭa* words by Sanskrit authors like Bharata is different from that, positive, given to the *tadbhava* words by Sanskrit authors like Daṇḍin. On this topic see my conclusions to the present paper.

More specifically, in accordance with these authors, a Prakrit word could be (Beames 1872-1879; Pischel 1965: 6-7; Chatterji 1926, 1960, 1983: 98-100; Bhayani 1998c: 48):[17]

- *saṃskṛtasama* 'the same as Sanskrit,' commonly referred to as *tatsama* 'the same as that,' but also as *tattulya* 'equal to that' and *samānaśabda* 'the same word (as that),'

- *saṃskṛtabhava* 'of the nature of Sanskrit,' commonly referred to as *tadbhava* 'of the nature of that,' but also as *saṃskṛtayoni* 'the origin is (in) *saṃskṛta*,' *tajja* 'born out of that' and *vibhraṣṭa* 'fallen, corrupt, deteriotated,' but also 'separated,'

- *deśya*, *deśī* or *deśaja* 'country-born,' i.e. 'local, regional,' but also referred to as *deśīprasiddha* 'famous in the country' and *deśīmata* 'known in the country.'

The earliest reference to the subdivision of Prakrit words using the tripartite classification of *tatsama, tadbhava* and *deśī* seems to be in Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa* (Kahrs 1992: 227; Pollock 2006: 93, 93 note n. 46), from nearly the end of the VIIth century:[18]

> *saṃskṛtaṃ nāma daivī vāg anvākhyātā maharṣibhiḥ /*
> *tadbhavas tatsamo deśīty anekaḥ prākṛtakramaḥ //*
> *Kāvyādarśa* 1.33 (Böhtlingk (ed.) 1890)

> 'Sanskrit is the divine language analysed by the great sages;
> Prakrit moves in three ways: derived, identical and regional [word and forms].'
> (transl. Scharfe 2002: 309, note 42)

To be more specific (but see below):

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[17] Bhayani's work (1998c) has been particularly valuable in this analysis. Starting from some statements made by the Buddhist monk Ratnaśrījñāna and relating to the Prakrit works of the obscure author Harivṛddha—of which no trace remains—he reports that as well as the tripartite classification in vogue among Prakrit authors and grammarians, there was also a quadripartite classification, in which, in addition to the well-known terms *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī*, the word *sāmānya* (Prakrit *sāmaṇṇa*) was also present. The latter term, based on our current knowledge, would seem to indicate those words common to all varieties of Prakrit, albeit for a more correct interpretation, using the words of Bhayani himself (1998c: 48), "[...] we shall have to wait for a clear understanding of Sāmānya Prakrit and Sāmānya Apabhraṃśa till the time we recover Harivṛddha's work on Prakrit." Recently Ollett (2017: 158-159) focused the attention on this term adding that "H. C. Bhayani (1973) was the first to notice this distinction, although he did not quite understand the significance of *sāmaṇṇa*" (Ollett 2017: 252).

[18] For a discussion of the use of the various terminologies relating to the threefold division of Prakrit words, which "[...] emerge as a cornerstone of Indian philological thought [...]" (Pollock 2006: 93), see Kahrs (1992), but also Pischel (1965: 7). On the different conceptual scheme of categories used to organize difference among the varieties of Prakrit in Bhoja's *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, see Pollock (2006: 107-108).

- *tatsama* Prakrit words have the same Sanskrit form and meaning; they can be direct literary borrowings from Sanskrit, but this is not always the case;

- *tadbhava* words are connected to Sanskrit words through the grammatical rules of 'transformation' explained in the most important Prakrit grammars; consequently, *tadbhava* words differ from Sanskrit in their formal shape, but, as in the case of *tatsama*, must have the same meaning as their corresponding Sanskrit word;

- *deśī* words are those words for which no evident correspondent can be found in Sanskrit; for this reason they are regarded as regional words, thus not linked with Sanskrit.

As anticipated, it is the purpose of the present paper to offer an updated overview of what is behind the meaning of this last sentence in the context of the Indian literary production and Indian grammatical tradition of the first millennium CE. In particular this means that in what follows I attempt to understand what, in practical terms, the absence of link with Sanskrit entails with respect to Prakrit lexicon. This can help us to better understand what Prakrit really was for the Indian authors of first millennium India. As we will see, this interpretation and the use of the term 'Prakrit' as language designation by these authors is quite different from what we can find in modern scholars' works, even the most recent ones (cf. e.g. Balbir 2017), although Ollett's recent work (2017) has provided solid arguments to clarify the issue in detail.

I already pointed out that many texts written by Jain authors allow us to study the lexical material attested in Prakrit and not linked to the Sanskrit tradition. While this lexical material, that is the *deśī* lexical material of Prakrit remains in part still underexplored, we are in a good position for analysing it, if we consider that two of the basic and most important sources for our knowledge of this material are the Prakrit grammar and the Prakrit *deśī* lexicon, the latter named *Deśīnāmamālā*, written by the

Jain monk and polymath Hemacandra Sūri (Bhayani 1988a: 3-9, 1988b: 104-105; Pischel 1965: 47-50; Shriyan 1969: 26).[19] Both these texts are available in good editions nowadays.[20]

The Prakrit grammar of Hemacandra constitutes the eighth section of his grammar, *Siddhahemaśabdānuśāsana*,[21] the first seven sections of which are devoted to the Sanskrit language (Nitti-Dolci 1972: chapter 5; Scharfe 1977: 169; Pischel 1965: 47-48). The *Deśīnāmamālā*, on the other hand, is one of four *kośas*, dictionaries, written by this author. The other three are:

- the *Abhidhānacintāmaṇināmamāla*,
- the *Anekārthasaṃgraha*, dealing with Sanskrit synonyms and Sanskrit homonyms, respectively; and, finally,
- the *Nighaṇṭuśeṣa*, on botanical terms (Vogel 1979: 336-345).

4. Hemacandra's *Deśīnāmamālā*

Even though already discussed by other scholars (see Bühler 1874, Pischel 1880, Ramanujaswamy 1938; cf. also Vogel 1979), some introductory words on the editorial history of the work here analysed are in order.

Hemacandra's *Deśīnāmamālā* was first brought to public notice by Bühler (1874: 17-21) in the second volume of the well-known Indological journal, *Indian Antiquary*. At his request (October 1877), Pischel prepared the first edition of the work, published with critical notes in 1880. For this first edition, nine manuscripts were used. A second edition (1938), based mainly on Pischel's original, was prepared by Ramanujaswamy, drawing on three other manuscripts in addition to those used by Pischel. This edition also included an extensive introduction, a glossary with English meanings for the *deśī* words

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[19] Hemacandra (c. 1087 CE to c. 1173 CE) lived in Gujarat under the Chalukya king Jayasiṃha-Siddharāja. A brief account of Hemacandra's life is given by Vogel (1979) (see also Scharfe 1977), while Bühler (1889) provides a thorough biography. In traditional Indian texts, Hemacandra's life is narrated in part in Jayasiṃha's *Kumārapālacarita*, Merutuṅga's *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, Rāja Śekhara's *Prabandakoṣa* and Prabhacandra's *Prabhāvakacarita*. Hemacandra, in addition to being the author of several literary and related works (e.g. the *Kumārapāla-carita*, a poem in Sanskrit and Prakrit describing the deeds of the Chalukya king, Kumārapāla; the *Triṣaṣṭi-śalākapuruṣa-carita*, a grandiose epic poem divided into ten books containing the biography of Mahāvīra and other holy Jain men; the *Upadeśamālā*, which provides teachings, in more than 500 *gāthā*, on about twenty religious subjects; the *Chando'nuśāsana*, on Prakrit metrics; and the *Kāvyānuśāsana*, dealing with various themes relating to poetics), is known above all as a grammarian. Pischel (1965: 47) considers him the most important of the Prakrit grammarians. Nevertheless, as I have already mentioned, Hemacandra's fame is also and above all linked to his activity as a lexicographer.

[20] However, see, on this point, the important arguments advanced by Bhayani (1988b).

[21] *Siddhahemaśabdānuśāsana* (*adhyāya* 8); references are to the edition by Vaidya (1980).

treated by Hemacandra and, lastly, three appendices.[22] The work itself was also published in 1931 and 1948 by Banerjī and Doshi, respectively.

The title *Deśīnāmamālā* was not supplied by Hemacandra himself, who instead, in the last verse (*Deśīnāmamālā* VIII, 77), entitles his work *Rayaṇāvalī* (Sanskrit *Ratnāvalī*) and/or *Deśīśabdasaṃgraha*.[23] It was Pischel, in the first edition (1880), who gave the text the name we know it by today, following the title provided by the best manuscripts (those classified with the letters A and E), and also on the basis that *Rayaṇāvalī* was, in his opinion, a not very informative name, in contrast to *Deśīnāmamālā* (Pischel (ed.) 1880, mentioned in Ramanujaswamy (ed.) 1938: 31).

4.1. The importance of Hemacandra's *Deśīnāmamālā* in the realm of Prakrit lexicography

Before dealing with the features which, according to Hemacandra, allow a word to be classified as *deśī*, it is necessary to indicate why Hemacandra's work is so important. Its value derives in part from its almost unique status within the panorama of medieval Indian lexicography. This does not mean that this text is anomalous, that is, foreign to the Prakrit lexicographic tradition of the time (Pischel 1965: 47-50). On the contrary, it seems to be an integral part of a wide range of Prakrit grammatical and lexicographical works that are, as in the case of Sanskrit, dependent on a specific Indian tradition of language and speech studies (cf. Vogel 1979). The fact that Hemacandra was not the only author to prepare a Prakrit lexicon of *deśī* words can be gathered, as we will see later, from his own observations. Nonetheless, even if we must consider the *Deśīnāmamālā* as an integral part of a broad Prakrit lexicographic tradition, it is essential to emphasise that Hemacandra's text represents our only available *deśī* vocabulary (Pischel 1965: 48-50; Bhayani 1988e: 162-165; Tieken 1992: 221; Shriyan 1969:

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[22] The first appendix collects all the words regarded as *deśī* by the other Prakrit lexicographers, but classified as *tatsama* or *tadbhava* by Hemacandra. In the second appendix, Ramanujaswamy provides a list of *dhātvādeśas* or 'verbal substitutes,' prepared on the basis of what Hemacandra himself says in the commentary on *Deśīnāmamālā* and in his Prakrit grammar. The last appendix deals separately with interjections and other particles which, like the *dhātvādeśas*, had been analysed by Hemacandra in his grammar. In the last two appendices, Ramanujaswamy does not pay any particular attention to going back to the Sanskrit word from which the respective Prakrit forms are derived.

[23] *iha rayaṇāvaliṇāmo desisaddāṇa saṃgaho eso /*

vāyaraṇasesaleso raio sirihemacandamuṇivaiṇā // (*Deśīnāmamālā* VIII, 77)

The denomination of the work with the name *Deśīśabdasaṃgraha* can also be found at the beginning of the work:

ṇīsesadesiparimalapallaviakuūhalāulatteṇa /

viraijjai desīsaddasaṃgaho vaṇṇakamasuhao // (*Deśīnāmamālā* I, 2)

25-32; Ghatage 1996-: Vol. I, *2-*3),[24] other than Dhanapāla's *Pāiyalacchī Nāmamālā* (Bühler (ed.) 1878), which is considerably less comprehensive (cf. Vogel 1979: 322; Pischel 1965: 47; Ramanujaswamy (ed.) 1938: 6, 8).

The importance of Hemacandra's *Deśīnāmamālā* also stems, though, from the particular methodology used for classification, and the organization of the lexical material described (Ramanujaswamy (ed.) 1938; Pischel 1965: 8-9, 48-50; Shriyan 1969: 29-31; Bhayani 1988e: 164-165; Ghatage 1996-: Vol. I, *2-*3). This work has a total of 783 *āryā* stanzas, divided into eight *vargas.* Each word is placed within a specific *varga,* according to its initial letter. Thus, following the order of the *nāgarī* script, in the first *varga,* the vowels are treated, in the second, the guttural consonants, and then, in successive *vargas,* the palatal, cerebral, dental, and labial consonants, respectively, followed by the semivowels, and finally the sibilants and the aspirate. Each *varga* is further subdivided into many sections, according to the number of sounds within the class in question. In each section, the words with only one meaning (*ekārtha* words) and those with more than one meaning (*anekārtha* words) are illustrated. All the words are then listed, again following the order of the *nāgarī* writing script, as in Sanskrit, and taking into account increasing numbers of syllables. Words of different lengths are grouped together here and there if they are synonymous. Hemacandra gives the meaning, or meanings, of the different *deśī* words recorded through the aid of a corresponding Prakrit non-*deśī* word. Perhaps since this was not sufficiently exhaustive for a correct interpretation of the various *deśī* words under analysis, Hemacandra added to the text of the *Deśīnāmamālā* a Sanskrit commentary, written by himself. In this commentary, each deśī word recorded is explained using a Sanskrit synonym. Sometimes, within the same commentary, the reasons prompting the author to omit and/or include certain words, or to adopt a certain spelling and/or meaning, are also recorded.

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[24] As Bhayani (1988e) has pointed out, many *deśī* words are attested in the Jain canon (even though I don't know if it is correct to speak of *deśī* words for a MIA language used for cultural purposes other than Prakrit, and the language of the Jain Canon (i.e. Ardhamāgadhī (= *Ārṣa*)) is not considered Prakrit, at least by Hemacandra and Trivikrama; on this matter see Drocco, *to appear*), as well as in *Vasudevahindī* and *Kuvalayamālā*, works which are both in Prakrit. Similar considerations apply to some of the most important texts written in Apabhraṃśa, such as Svayambhū's *Paumacariya*, Puṣpadanta's *Mahāpurāṇa* and Śāntisūri's *Puhavicandacariya*. With regard to the first of these three texts, Bhayani has provided an index of the *deśī* words it contains in his editions of 1953 and 1960. On Puṣpadanta's *Mahāpurāṇa*, it is important to mention the excellent work of Shriyan (1969). The index of the *deśī* words (about eight hundred) reported in Śāntisūri's *Puhavicandacariya*, and drawn up on the basis of the edition of this work by Muni Ramnikvijaya (1972), is by the same author. Bhayani (1988e: 175-176, notes n. 4 and 5) adds that many *deśī* words are also mentioned in Dhāhila's *Paumasiri-cariya*, in Sādhāraṇa's *Vilāsavaikahā*, in *Karakaṇḍa-cariya* and in Vīra's *Jambūsami-cariya*, in Causupannisamahāya's *Śīlāṅka* and in *Ākhyānakamaṇikośavṛtti* by Āmradeva. For the exact details of these works, I refer the reader to Bhayani (1988e: 175-176).

A particular place in the organization of the lexical material included in the *Deśīnāmamālā* (or rather, in its commentary) is occupied by the *dhātvādeśas, o*r 'verbal substitutes' (cf. Pischel 1965: 7-9; Ramanujaswamy 1938: 5-7), which, although not deriving from Sanskrit, can assume suffixes and endings typical of this language. Hemacandra excludes these from the *Deśīnāmamālā* itself, and therefore does not mention them in the verses that form the body of the work. However, following what must have been the common practice of many Prakrit lexicographers, the *dhātvādeśas* are included in the explanatory glosses of the commentary on the *Deśīnāmamālā,* after the corresponding words with the same number of syllables, and together with the indeclinables and all those particles already treated in his grammar.

4.2. What makes a word *deśī*? Insights from Hemacandra's *Deśīnāmamālā*

In order now to understand the importance of this text, it must be asked, "What is a *deśī* word for the Indian grammarians or at least for Hemacandra?," "How can we decide whether a Prakrit word is classifiable under the *tadbhava* or *deśī* category?" and "Can the exact meaning of the term *deśī* help us to understand the background under which the Prakrit grammarians wrote their texts?" To answer all these questions, it is necessary to consider what might be the best interpretation of the term *deśī* in the context of the Prakrit tripartite classification found in the various Prakrit grammars, and as a consequence of this, to determine the true significance of these grammars and of the *Deśīnāmamālā.* Although this topic has been a subject of study for many Indologists, not everyone agrees on the exact answer to the question, "What makes a word *deśī*?," even in terms of what is being referred to by the medieval Indian grammarians and rhetoricians.[25]

Starting from Shriyan's (1969: 9-23) careful exposition of this topic, we can argue, to begin with, that in the Indian classical tradition, with reference to languages and/or language features the term *deśī* had been understood to have two different meanings, depending on whether it refers to i) a language variety, or ii) a Prakrit word (cf. Tagare 1948: 7). In the first case, it was mainly used to:

1. indicate a particular local spoken dialect/language,
2. indicate a particular linguistic variety of Prakrit, or
3. as a synonym for Apabhraṃśa.[26]

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[25] In doing this, I refer to the following studies: Kahrs (1992), Drocco (2006, 2012), and Ollett (2017).

[26] Even in this case see Tagare (1948) and Shriyan (1969).

Concerning the second use, and still following the synthesis of Shriyan (1969: 32-44), we can say that the tradition of modern Indological studies, referring back to the work of the Indian grammarians on Prakrit, considers as *deśī* any Prakrit word that is not linked with the Sanskrit tradition, and thus as precisely the opposite of a *tadbhava* word. But how should this 'link' with the Sanskrit tradition be understood? It is not easy to answer this question, because there is no general consensus on the issue. However, it is important to understand and to keep in mind what correctly this link consist of, in order to study the various types of *deśī* words and as a consequence to grasp the real nature of Prakrit (on which, as already said at the beginning, see Ollett 2017).

Starting from the term *tadbhava*, the exact opposite of *deśī*, it is correct to say that in the indigenous context, for example, the prevailing interpretation of this term among modern scholars is that of 'derived from Sanskrit.'[27] This sense, as Kahrs (1992: 255-227) and other authors have pointed out (e.g. Masica 1991: 65-67), has largely been interpreted from a Western perspective, meaning that the 'derivation' of Prakrit *tadbhava* words from Sanskrit—that is to say, the 'link' between Sanskrit and Prakrit—has been understood as a process of 'historical derivation,' and explained in terms of the concept of 'changes over time' (cf. Kahrs 1992; Drocco 2012). Perhaps it is for this reason that, in modern times, the tripartite terminology of *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī* has also been used in the context of IA historical linguistics. From here, it is easy to see how authors like Beames (1872-79: 13-17) and Hoernle (1880: xxxviii-xxxix) were able to distinguish between what they called 'early' and 'old' *tadbhavas*, terming the latter *semi-tatsamas.* We can presume that the use of 'early' and 'old' by these authors is another indication of the use of the historical approach in discussing the tripartite classification of Prakrit words. Moreover, it is probably on the basis of this approach that the entire tripartite terminology, originally made by ancient Indian grammarians only in relation to Prakrit words, has come to be used in discussions of modern IA languages (cf. Masica 1991: 65). Thus Kellogg, for example, in his *A grammar of the Hindi language*, writes: "The word *Tadbhava* [...] denotes [...] all corrupted Sanskrit words, which, by the addition, loss, or change of certain letters, have come to appear in Hindi in a form more or less modified, and often greatly disguised" (Kellogg 1893: 42; cf. also Chatterji 1926: 189-192; Hoernle 1880: xxxviii-xl; Grierson 1927: 127-128; Caracchi 2002: 21; Tiwari 1960: xliv-xlv).

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[27] See, for example, Nitti-Dolci (1972: viii), Macdonell (1893: s. v.) in his Sanskrit-English dictionary, Scharfe (1977: 186) and, more recently, Pollock (2006: 108, 368-369, 401). Pischel's translation of the term *tadbhava* (1965: 7) is 'originated from that.' whereas Beames (1872-79: 11) and Kellogg (1893: 42) translate this term as 'of the nature of it.' Even though they do not use the term 'derived,' whose meaning lends itself more to a historical interpretation, actually they also understood the term *tadbhava* according to historical principles (cf. Kahrs 2012).

What, then, about *deśī*? Modern Western and Indian scholars who have examined the problem of this category of words, exactly as for the *tadbhava* category, have between them expressed very different views, and a considerable amount of confusion thus prevails regarding the nature and character of the meaning of this particular term (Tagare 1948: 7; Shriyan 1969: 9). In my opinion, this confusion is closely connected with the above said assumption of 'changes over time' concerning Prakrit *tadbhava* words, and starting from this also with a misunderstanding not only of the term 'Prakrit,' but also of the term 'Sanskrit.' As a matter of fact, I can say that traditionally a good part of scholars have been inclined to identify *tadbhava* words with words inherited (i.e. 'derived') from Old Indo-Aryan (hereafter OIA) by MIA and/or New Indo-Aryan (NIA) languages, and *deśī* words with words borrowed from non-IA languages by MIA and NIA languages.[28] Therefore, and more explicitly, behind this interpretation of the specular *tadbhava-deśī* terms two different misunderstanding are at work:

- the wrong 'historical interpretation' (i.e. 'changes over time') of the term *tadbhava* as pointed out and clearly explained by Kahrs (1992) (cf. also Turner 1960);[29]

- the misuse not only of the term 'Prakrit' but also of the term 'Sanskrit' as language designations, to mean the entire MIA (see Jacobi 1886) and OIA, respectively, that is to say all the languages, attested and unattested, of MIA and OIA (as, for example, in many of Chatterji's works, such as 1926, 1960, 1983).[30]

Beginning with these assumptions and concerning the second point, it is not easy to understand the different phases through which the two kinds of identifications just said have been made (as for Prakrit see Ollett 2017 already mentioned above). It seems to me that in the majority of cases the term *saṃskṛta*, present in the word *saṃskṛtabhava* and implicit in *tadbhava*, has been understood to include not only

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[28] Chatterji speaks of "Words borrowed from the non-Aryan languages of India [...] (the deśī element in MIA)" (1983: 102). Norman says that the third component part of the structure of MIA includes those forms which are to be regarded as innovations; these, according to the same author, "[...] fall into two classes [...]," the second of which includes "[...] those forms which have no affinity with anything else in OIA or MIA, and must therefore be regarded as borrowings from a known or unknown non-IA source. These constitute the so-called deśī forms" (1992b: 115). Cf. also Bryant, who writes: "[...] the traditional grammarians of India [...] had noted the distinction between the Sanskrit words and the non-sanskritic *deśya* ones, thus alerting [...] linguists to the possibility of a non-Indo-Aryan family of languages in the subcontinent [...]" (1999: 61).

[29] Ollett, in following Houben (1994) and referring to Kahrs (1992), states that "This is not to say that premodern Indians were incapable of thinking about their language practices in historical terms, as some have argued" (2017: 155).

[30] It is worth mentioning that Chatterji (1983) highlights what he calls a 'traditional interpretation' and a 'modern interpretation' of the terms *tatsama*, *tadbhava*, and *deśī*. Interestingly, in some of his other works on the subject (1926, 1960) he does not do this sort of clarification and he mentions only the 'modern interpretation' as if it were the only possible interpretation.

classical Sanskrit, but also Vedic,[31] and/or the whole OIA stage in the history of IA languages,[32] involving in this way old popular IA languages, of which we have only limited evidence, for example, in the Vedic and MIA texts still available (Burrow 1955: 45-47; Emeneau 1966; Witzel 1989; Norman 1992a: 225-243, 1992b: 115-125).

Similarly, the term 'Prakrit' has been frequently used not only to refer to all varieties of literary MIA as well as those used as religious and administrative vehicles (except Pāli language), but also to cover the whole MIA stage itself, and through this the entire MIA scholarly and colloquial/popular repertoire.[33]

The process that equates the whole OIA with Sanskrit and the whole MIA with Prakrit gives as a result a meaning which is, as already said at the beginning of the present paper referring to Drocco (2016) and Ollett (2017), radically broader compared with the meaning understood by first millennium Indian authors and, for this reason, overshadow not only the cultural/literary identity of Prakrit but also its linguistic specificity in comparison to the other MIA linguistic varieties, I mean the various MIA varieties used for cultural/administrative purpose.

It is important to stress that as a consequence of these two misunderstandings

1. changes over time,

2. OIA = Sanskrit and MIA = Prakrit—if a Prakrit *tadbhava* word is a MIA word derived from Sanskrit and, moreover, Sanskrit is equal to the whole OIA,

it follows naturally that a Prakrit *deśī* word is a MIA word not derived from OIA, i.e. a non-IA word.[34] This is even more the case if all those MIA words created or built up with roots and affixes derived from

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[31] On the use by some scholars of the name 'Sanskrit' for various forms of Vedic as well, see Thieme (1994), Wezler (1996: 346, note n. 73), and Pollock (2006). Not all scholars agree with this usage (for example, Mayrhofer, 1986-). Cf. also Aklujkar (1996: 70, n. 18).

[32] See, for example, the following phrases from Chatterji (1983: 99): "The great fact of the presence of Sanskrit or OIA [...]," "We generally have our main or basic references to OIA or Sanskrit [...]" and "Taking Sanskrit as being loosely the equivalent of OIA, [...]"

[33] As Chatterji writes: "Thus words like *deva*, [...] might be as much an inherited element in Prakrit or MIA [...]" (1983: 98). Cf. also Norman (1990: 64, 67, 1996: 92). It is quite interesting that even Kahrs, dealing with the interpretation of the technical term *tadbhava* in the context of Indian grammatical tradition, speaks of "[...] *prākṛta* or Middle Indo-Aryan words [...]" (Kahrs 1992: 225), as if 'Prakrit' and 'Middle Indo-Aryan' were synonymous.

[34] As already pointed out at the beginning, if it is true that most scholars no longer consider the term *deśī* as a synonym of non-IA and the term *tadbhava* according to an historical interpretation, it is equally true that, as far as I know, the reasons that led several scholars in the past to reach these two conclusions have not yet been sufficiently explored. The same is true for how we came to consider OIA as equal to Sanskrit.

OIA are also included in the category of *tadbhava* (as in Chatterji 1983: 101). It is perhaps for this reason that in modern Indological studies, the combination of the term *deśī* with the non-IA lexical element of Prakrit is quite frequent, even in this case almost as if the two terms were synonymous. The following is indeed a statement along these lines advanced by Chatterji (1926: 191):[35]

> The term *Deśī* in its present-day application [*sic!*] embraces a numerous class of words which cannot be traced to Aryan roots and *which obviously were derived from the pre-Aryan languages of the country, Dravidian and Kol* (emphasis added)

Consider, however, what Tagare has to say (1948: 7):

> [...] *Deśī* as applied to a word implies a word non-derivable from Sk., expressing thereby the limits of the philological studies of the author who classes it thus. [...] *The identification of Deśī with non-Aryan elements in IA is a hasty conclusion of Caldwell and his followers,* [...] [emphasis added]

As for Hemacandra's *Deśīnāmāmālā*, there are certainly words in this text which probably derive from non-IA languages, such as Dravidian and Munda languages (see below). However, if it is true that a large number of words of non-IA origin are mentioned in this text, it is also true that there are many words that can undoubtedly be traced back to the original OIA lexicon, but not necessarily Sanskritic. In this regard, it is important to emphasize here that the misinterpretation of the traditional terms *tadbhava* and *deśī* adopted by modern scholars has definitely influenced their opinions of Hemacandra's *Deśīnāmamālā* text and their, and not only their, interpretation of the term 'Prakrit' as language designation, albeit Bühler and Pischel's important remarks on Hemacandra's use of the term *deśī* when the *Deśīnāmāmālā* work was discovered in the second half of the XIX century.[36] In fact, it is fairly evident that if we understand *deśī* as synonymous with non-IA, the question arises of whether or not Hemacandra has fallen into error. Indeed, many Indologists who have advanced observations on the *Deśīnāmamālā* have concluded that Hemacandra's text, despite being a worthy work and unique in the pantheon of Prakrit lexicography (see above), is nevertheless full of errors regarding the correct interpretation of a Prakrit word as *deśī*. This, according to the same scholars, is due to the fact that, as already mentioned above, a large number of words reported in the *Deśīnāmamālā* are originally connected with IA lexical material. The first linguists who studied this *koṣa* suggested this conclusion,

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[35] For other opinions on this topic, in part divergent, see the views reported by Shriyan (1969: 32-44).

[36] Bühler (ed.) (1878), in particular, proposed interesting suggestions on how must be understood the category of *deśī* words in Prakrit starting from Hemacandra's detailed definition.

and over the years, other scholars have supported the thesis. Summarising what has been discussed so far, it is helpful to quote the following statement by Vaidya (1926-27: 67):

> [...] DNM [*Deśīnāmamālā*] as a lexicon of *deśī* words remains incomplete; on the other hand, many of the so called *deśī* words could be traced to their Sanskrit originals; and further, if we are prepared to apply some of the recognised philological processes, free exercise of the science of Semantics [...] *I think over 75 per cent words in DNM would cease to be* deśī [emphasis added]

The following quotation is the opinion of Chatterji (1960: 92):

> A good many *Deśī* words are just inherited Aryan words in MIA, *only the carelessness of some early grammarian has failed to identify them as Tadbhavas. Such words are not too few in a work like the Deśīnāmamālā* [emphasis added]

Somewhat similar observations have been advanced more recently by Norman (1990: 62):

> In recent years two works have appeared which have served to enable scholars to assess accurately the extent of the non-Aryan element in DNM [*Deśīnāmamālā*]. [...] [N]evertheless, it seems clear that the majority of words in DNM [*Deśīnāmamālā*] must be considered as being of IA origin. This was noted long ago by Bühler in the introduction to his edition of *Pāiyalacchīnāmamālā* [...].

We can now understand why Chatterji in his *Indo-Aryan and Hindi* clearly states "The *deśī* element in MIA is another absorbing and frequently baffling topic" (1960: 92).

Although the opinions of many of the scholars who have studied the *Deśīnāmamālā* are sometimes excessive, if not (as we will see) totally unfounded, it is undoubtedly true that, setting aside the *deśī* words deriving from non-IA sources and those rare occurrences of genuine *tatsama* and/or *tadbhava* (understood to be included due to Hemacandra's error), the *Deśīnāmamālā* still contains a great number of words whose classification as *deśī* by the author must be explained. This last observation needs to be assessed in order to carry out my analysis. Indeed, given the position of the majority of modern scholars, we should now ask, which is Hemacandra's opinion as regards the interpretation of the term *deśī* provided by other Prakrit grammarians? It is only within this context that we can understand the importance of Hemacandra's *Deśīnāmamālā.* As a matter of fact, the unique nature of the *Deśīnāmamālā* is perhaps linked to the reasons that led the author to compile his text. These had to do—according to his own testimony—with the scarcity and inaccuracy of the correct spelling and classification of the *deśī* words reported in the many previous Prakrit lexicons (of which we have no examples left, except for the *Pāiyalacchī* mentioned previously). This situation triggered a great confusion with regard to *deśī*

expressions and words, which was probably attributable not only to the compilers' lexicons themselves, but also to their uncertain manuscript tradition. It was precisely the desire to correct the errors of the previous Prakrit lexicographers and to provide a model for those who would follow him that led Hemacandra to the compilation of a new *deśī* vocabulary, as he indicates in the last chapter of his work (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary VIII, 12; cf. also Pollock 2006: 403 who mentions other Hemacandra's statements attested in the *Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary I, 2 and I, 47). As a consequence, Hemacandra starts his *Deśīnāmamālā* by providing, in verses 3-4 of the first *varga*, a clear definition of what he means by the term *deśī*, while explaining at the same time the purpose of his work:

> je lakkhaṇe ṇa siddhā ṇa pasiddhā sakkayāhihāṇesu /
> ṇa ya gauṇalakkhaṇāsattisaṃbhavā te iha ṇibaddhā //
>
> desavisesapasiddhīi bhaṇṇamāṇā aṇantayā hunti /
> tamhā aṇāipāiapayaṭṭabhāsāvisesao desī //
> *Deśīnāmamālā* I, 3-4 (Ramanujaswamy (ed.) 1938).

> Those words are included here which are not explained in (my) grammar, not known from the Sanskrit lexicons, nor owe their origin to the power called *gauṇī lakṣaṇā* (i.e., are not common words used in a metaphorical sense). Endless are the forms that are used in the various provincial dialects. Therefore, the term *deśī* is (used here) to denote those words only which have been used since immemorial times in Prakrit (transl. Bühler 1874: 18-19).

With the purpose of explaining in depth the various features that a word needs to have in order to be classified as *deśī* by Hemacandra, it is important to emphasise that the author considers as *deśī*, first of all, any possible Prakrit word that is not treated in his Prakrit grammar, the aforementioned *Siddhahemaśabdānuśāsana*. That is to say, a Prakrit word is recognized as *deśī* if, for it, the rules of 'transformation' from Sanskrit to Prakrit as reported in this grammar are not applicable. Moreover, according to Hemacandra, a Prakrit word must also be understood as *deśī* if, even though the aforementioned rules of 'transformation' can be applied, the resulting corresponding form is not attested in Sanskrit literary texts or in Sanskrit lexicons.[37] Finally, in the *Deśīnāmamālā* are also included all those Prakrit words which, though deriving from corresponding Sanskrit forms according to the

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[37] As I will say later, according to this principle it is likely that Hemacandra considered as *deśī* some Prakrit words that actually possessed a corresponding Sanskrit form, but whose attestation in the literature was unknown to the author, perhaps due to their scarce relevance or diffusion in literary production of the time.

rules explained in the *Siddhahemaśabdānuśāsana*, do not show semantic correspondence with those forms, except through the process of *gauṇī lakṣaṇā*.[38]

Still focusing on the initial verses of the *Deśīnāmamālā*, in addition to providing the rules just mentioned for the exact determination of what he regards as a *deśī* word, Hemacandra imposes a limit on his work. He adds that his enumeration of *deśī* words is limited to those words that occur most frequently in the ancient Prakrit literature. Thus, the author does not take into consideration all the words used in the spoken languages. Hemacandra's observations in his commentary further demonstrate this, in fact:[39]

> *deśaviśeṣā mahārāṣṭravidarbhābhīrādayasteṣu prasiddhā / magā paścat / nikkuilā jitaḥ / ukkhuruhaṃcio utkṣiptaḥ / preyaṃḍo dhūrtaḥ / hiṃgo jāraḥ / viḍḍo prapañcaḥ daḍhamūḍho mūrkha ekagrāhī ityevamādayaḥ śabdā yadducyeraṃstadā deśaviśeṣāṇāmanantatvāt puruṣāyeṣeṇāpi na sarvasaṃgrahaḥ syāt / tasmādanādipravṛttaprākṛtabhāṣāviśeṣa evāyaṃ deśīśabdenocyata iti nātivyāptiḥ / yadāha /*

> *vācaspaterapi matirna prabhavati divyayugasahasreṇa /*
> *deśeṣu ye prasiddhāstāñśabdān sarvataḥ samuccetum //*
> *Deśīnāmamālā,* commentary I, 4 (Ramanujaswamy 1938).

> They are not simply the words used in particular places such as Maharashtra, Vidharbha, among the Ābhiras, and so on. If that were what was meant [by *deśī*], it would be an impossible task to collect these words even over an entire lifetime. What we mean by the word *deśī* is instead [the lexicon of] a specific language, namely, Prakrit, such as is used from time immemorial.

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[38] Indian theorists have classified the meaning (*artha*) of a word (both Sanskrit and Prakrit) into three distinct categories:

1. *abhidhā* 'power, literal sense, primary meaning of a word;'
2. *lakṣaṇā* 'use of one word for another with a similar meaning,' i.e., 'indirect or figurative sense of a word;'
3. *vyañjanā* 'the ability to suggest another meaning in addition to the literal meaning.'

For an in-depth study of *abhidhā*, *lakṣaṇā* and *vyañjanā*, see Kunjunni Raja (1977: 17-94, 229-273, 275-315, respectively). Hemacandra in his definition of the term *deśī*, however, mentions a certain type of *lakṣaṇā*, or metaphorical use of a word; more precisely he refers to *gauṇī lakṣaṇā*. The various Indian authors, who have treated the theories regarding the meaning that a word can possess, have enumerated different types of *lakṣaṇā*, mainly divided into two classes. According to these authors, the relationship that exists between the primary and the indirect meaning of a word can be one of similarity, or some sort of relationship other than similarity: in the first situation, we will have a case of *gauṇī vṛtti* or *gauṇī lakṣaṇā*, while in the second, a case of *śuddhā* ('pure') *lakṣaṇā*. To quote the words of Kunjunni Raja (1977: 241) "[...] if the relation is one of similarity, the transfer is qualitative (*gauṇī*); if it is any other relation such as that of cause and effect, owner and owned, measure and measured, part and whole, etc., it is pure *lakṣaṇā* [...]". For a classification of the different types of *lakṣaṇā*, see Kunjunni Raja (1977: 256-257), and for an in-depth analysis of *gauṇī lakṣaṇā* (or *gauṇī vṛtti*), see again Kunjunni Raja (1977: 242-245). For further discussion on this point, see Pollock (2006: 403-405).

[39] For a discussion on this point, see Pollock (2006: 403-405).

> Even (Brahmā) Vācaspati, the Lord of Speech himself, does not possess the skill to collect all the words that are used in all regions, not if he had a thousand cosmic cycles to try (transl. Pollock 2006: 403).

To sum up, if we carefully want to analyse the typology of the words covered by Hemacandra's definition of *deśīśabda*, it is possible to show that *deśī*, with its literal meaning of 'born in the country,' has been used by this author to collect in his *deśīkoṣa*, with regard to Prakrit:

1. words which can be related to words found in Sanskrit (with the same meaning), but only by postulating phonological changes not described in his Prakrit grammar;

2. words which differ only in meaning from Prakrit words whose relationship with correspondent Sanskrit words, according to Hemacandra, is unquestioned, and which therefore presumably represent some kind of semantic change;

3. any word which cannot be traced back to a corresponding Sanskrit one.

We can note that according to Hemacandra, *deśī* words are not all non-IA words. This situation in turn reflects the way the term *deśī*, when used to mean a language variety (see above), was never related only to non-IA languages by ancient Indian authors, who spoke rather about *Saṃskṛta*, *Prākṛta*, *Bhāṣās*, *Vibhāṣās*, *Apabhraṃśa* and *Deśabhāṣās* (Grierson 1913, 1918; Pischel 1965: 1-3). Although it is not possible to talk in any detail here about the exact meaning of the last five terms, since the Indian grammarians differ from one another on this issue (Pischel 1965: 1; Nitti-Dolci 1972 and again Grierson 1913, 1918; more recently, Ollett 2017), it seems that the lists of languages cited under the categories of *vibhāṣā* and *deśabhāṣā* include especially, and perhaps only (but this is still unproven), IA languages.[40]

5. The tripartite classification in *tatsama tadbhava* and *deśī* as a tool to compare Prakrit with Sanskrit

Now that we have set out modern scholars' views on the meaning of the term *deśī,* and at the same time examined Hemacandra's definition of what a *deśī* Prakrit word is and, lastly, the unique nature of his *deśī* lexicon, are we now in a better position to conduct a proper investigation to evaluate the

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[40] See, for example, the list of languages under the category of *vibhāṣā* mentioned in Mārkaṇḍeya's *Prākṛtasarvasva* and discussed by Grierson (1913, 1918). See also the names of some of the famous eighteen *Deśabhāṣās* mentioned in Śāradātanaya's *Bhāvaprakāśana* (cf. Pollock 2006: 95, 299), and discussed and exemplified in the *Mānasollāsa* (cf. Bhayani 1993b; Pollock 2006: 300-301), the great royal encyclopedia composed by King Someśvara in northern Karnataka in the first half of the XIIth century. It is also possible to find some information about sixteen *Deśabhāṣās* cited by name in Uddyotana Sūri's *Kuvalayamālā*, and examined in part by Master (1950, 1951) and Upadhye (1965).

consistency of the position taken by Hemacandra, and above all, to understand the real nature of the Prakrit lexical material classified (at least by Hemacandra) as *deśī*? Certainly, from the introductory verses of the *Deśīnāmamālā* and a critical consultation of Hemacandra's Prakrit grammar, we have evidence that the classification of Prakrit words as *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī* was not interpreted by this author (unlike most of the scholars who dealt with this subject so far) in historical/etymological terms (cf. Drocco 2006). Rather, following a valuable suggestion made by certain authors (see, among others, Turner 1960: 47-49; Masica 1991: 64-67; Deshpande 1993: 73-74), this tripartite classification can be viewed instead as offering a comparison between the lexicons of two different languages, one of which is being held up as a point of reference. But pursuing a point raised in Drocco (2012: 126), what does this consideration mean?

From the point of view of IA historical linguistics, the *deśī* class of Prakrit words is certainly an interesting class of words, in particular because it is in this group of words that we have to search words of IE origin not recorded in Sanskrit and words of non-IA origin, with all that this means from the point of view of historical[41] and contact linguistics.[42]

Nevertheless, it is from the sociolinguistic point of view that it is, undeniable, difficult to answer the aforementioned question comprehensively. In making the attempt, however, it needs to be remembered that a fundamental characteristic which a Prakrit word must possess in order to be classified as *deśī* is, according to Hemacandra, the non-occurrence of a corresponding words in the Sanskrit language, according to the rules of transformation explained by Hemacandra in his Prakrit Grammar.

The conclusions from this are manifold. For example, a specific Prakrit word could be a *deśī* word for one author, but a *tadbhava* or *tatsama* for another author, depending on:

1. the period in which the comparison between the Sanskrit and Prakrit lexicons is being made. In this respect, a Prakrit word could be a *deśī* word for Hemacandra, who died during the second half of the XIIth century, but not for the Prakrit grammarian Trivikrama, who lived during the XIIIth century.[43] This could be the case if the particular Prakrit word taken into consideration had been included in a Sanskrit text, as a loanword from Prakrit, after Hemacandra's death, thus becoming, but only from that moment, a *tadbhava* or *tatsama*,

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[41] Cf., among others, Emeneau (1966), Norman (1985), and Witzel (1989).

[42] See, for example, Bloch (1934, 1930), Emeneau (1980), and Masica (1976, 2001).

[43] On the date of Trivikrama, see Nitti-Dolci (1972: 187-188).

2. the knowledge of the Sanskrit lexicon and/or what must be considered as being part of the Sanskrit lexicon by the different Prakrit grammarians; on this point, it is important to remember that according to Hemacandra the words which constitute the Sanskrit lexicon are perhaps those discussed in his dictionary of Sanskrit synonyms, *Abhidhānacintāmaṇināmamāla* (see 3. above), even if further research is needed to determine the accuracy of this statement,[44]

3. the means of the comparison, i.e. the rules set out in the various Prakrit grammars; thus a word can be classified by Hemacandra as *deśī* even if it is connected with a Sanskrit model, if that connection depends on applying phonological rules of "transformation" not described in his grammar (albeit their mention in other Prakrit grammars).

As a result, according to Hemacandra the Prakrit *deśī* class also—perhaps especially—includes those words which, even though typically inherited from Sanskrit from the point of view of historical linguistics, are esteemed as too 'far' from this language as regards their phonological shape as well as their meanings, and thus classified as 'inappropriate' to be part of Prakrit. And what is intruguing is that this last judgement is not objective and unanimous. On the contrary it depends on the grammarians we are taking into consideration.[45] Therefore, it should be assumed that as regards first millennium India we face with a true 'language question' (cf. the well-known Italian *questione della lingua*)[46] concerning the nature of what must be considered the 'pure' Prakrit ('pure' in comparison with the other MIA varieties used for cultural purposes, 'pure' because esteemed as the variety of literary MIA closest to the Sanskrit language and, for this reason, worthy to be part of the prestigious – 'eternal' according to Kahrs (1992)—sphere of Sanskrit).

6. The heterogeneity of *deśī* words

Now, if we really follow Hemacandra's definition of what he regards as a *deśī* word, we are in a better position to understand why Pischel (1965: 7-8) writes that in the category of *deśī* words, "[...] the Indians

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[44] To my knowledge, for example, there is not any study dealing with a comparison between Hemacandra and Amara's famous Sanskrit lexicons.

[45] Cf. Bühler's important words in the introduction of his edition of Dhanapāla's *Pāiyalacchī Nāmamālā* (Bühler 1878).

[46] *La questione della lingua* refers to a significant dispute that arose in late medieval and Renaissance Italy regarding the appropriate linguistic conventions to be utilized in the written form of the Italian language. Since the progression of the latter did not align with the emergence of a national spoken language, the various Italian authors had to learn the written language through literary imitation. The absence of a unified spoken language to serve as a foundation for literary expression led to an extended and contentious discussion about what the standard literary language ought to be.

include very heterogeneous elements [...]" (cf. also Shriyan 1969: 44; Norman 1990: 64-65). This is because this specific category of words used in Prakrit literature can include:[47]

- words of ancient IA or even Indo-European origin which, although not used as words in the OIA literary languages (i.e. Vedic and/or Sanskrit)—because regarded, for example, as too vulgar—were later inherited or borrowed by some varieties of literary MIA, and thus perhaps also by Prakrit.[48] The same is true for those inherited words which happen to descend from OIA dialects other than that on which Sanskrit was based (Burrow 1955; Emeneau 1966; Masica 1991: 67; Norman 1992b). It is a fact that literary MIA has undoubtedly evolved from OIA but—as can be deduced from what has just been mentioned, and has already been highlighted by authors such as Bloch (1934: 14-15; 1930), Burrow (1955: 45-47), and above all Emeneau (1966), as well as more recently by Witzel (1989)— talking about OIA in general is not the same as talking about Vedic and Sanskrit, because these languages represent only two of the many languages of OIA.[49] Moreover, in terms of any evolutionary pattern, the MIA literary varieties known so far present evident analogies with Vedic rather than with Sanskrit, though in many cases the forms of MIA seem to have evolved (probably) from the spoken forms of this language (see Pischel 1965: 4-6; Emeneau 1966; Hinüber 1986: paragraphs 7-11; Witzel 1989).[50] As regards the IA/IE non-Vedic/non-Sanskrit words, Norman (1992b: 115) does not consider them to be real lexical innovations, but inherited words that have evolved diachronically only at a low level, and that have corresponding forms in IE languages other than Sanskrit. An example mentioned by this author and present in *Deśīnāmamālā* is the *deśī* word *chāsī* (*Deśīnāmamālā* III, 26), reported by Hemacandra with the meaning of 'whey,' but by Norman (1992b: 118) with that of 'cheese.' According to Norman, this *deśī* word must be connected to the Latin *caseus* (cf. also Alsdorf 1937: 39). Similar factors may also be relevant to Prakrit words that are still obscure in origin or that reveal irregular phonological changes, such as the *deśī* word *lugga* 'broken,' which should be placed side by side, according to Norman (1990: 65), with Sanskrit *rugna-*,

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[47] On the typology of the various *deśī* words—alongside many examples—reported by Hemacandra and on their possible manners of classification, see Vaidya (1926-27), Shriyan (1969), Norman (1990), Bhayani (1988b, 1988c, 1998e, 1998f) and Drocco (2006).

[48] For some examples of this kind of words, see the study, albeit now dated, by Gray (1940). See also Norman (1992b) and the recent study by Zoller (2016).

[49] Cf. also Norman (1992a: 225-231, 1992b: 116), Elizarenkova (1989), Pinault (1989) and Pirart (1989).

[50] With respect to the non-Sanskrit features that can be found in the various MIA literary varieties, see Bloch (1934: 14-15; 1930, 1920), Burrow (1955: 45-47) and the excellent data supplied by Norman (1989, 1992a: 225-243, 1992b: 115-125); and see again the references given in the previous note.

deriving from the Sanskrit root *ruj-* (cf. Monier-Williams 1899: 882). The word *lugga* could indeed be derived from a hypothetical root **luj-*, a variant of the Sanskrit root just mentioned, according to the well-known *-r-/-l-* alternation present in IA.[51]

- genuine loanwords from non-IA languages of India, such as the Prakrit words *aṇṇī* 'wife's or husband's brother,' 'husband's sister,' 'paternal aunt' (*Deśīnāmamālā* I, 51) and *ciccī* 'fire' (*Deśīnāmamālā* III, 10), which are probably linked to original Dravidian forms. This hypothesis can be proven by:

  a. the wide presence in modern Dravidian languages of comparable words with a similar meaning,

  b. the total absence of words in OIA that allow us to postulate the existence of a genetic relationship between them,

  c. the occasional (and in some cases missed) development of NIA words derived from these words.[52]

Similar observations are also valid for other words classified as *deśī* by Hemacandra. For instance, *pulli* 'tiger, lion' (*Deśīnāmamālā* VI, 79), *karaḍa* 'tiger' (*Deśīnāmamālā* II, 55), *ūra* 'village' (*Deśīnāmamālā* I, 143), *cuṃcua* 'garland for the head' (*Deśīnāmamālā* III, 16) and, as Norman has pointed out (1990: 63), *gutti*

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[51] In the ancient verses of *Ṛgveda*, the use of *-r-* is almost exclusive; in this text, there are very few words that contain the liquid *-l-*. In classical Sanskrit, *-r-* is still dominant, although in a less exclusive way than in the (Early) Vedic; as a consequence, both *-r-* and *-l-* are present in Sanskrit. The same phenomenon occurs also in Pāli and in the various varieties of Prakrit and of scholarly MIA, where the change of *-r-* into *-l-* is very common. Sometimes, both in Pāli and in Sanskrit, there is the presence of double forms (e.g. Pāli *lohita*, *rohita*, 'red'): in some cases, the classical Sanskrit used different meanings for these duplicates. Eastern MIA varieties show the predominance of *-l-*, and, contrary to the Western varieties, have totally absorbed the *-r-*. This fact is documented by the epigraphy. In particular, the Aśoka inscriptions found in the Ganges basin and on the Odisha coast show almost exclusively *-l-*. The fact that in classical Sanskrit and in Pāli there is the presence of both liquids, and that in the Eastern varieties there is the presence of only *-l-*, with the complete exclusion of *-r-*, suggests that the liquid *-l-* did not disappear in OIA only to reappear later, but rather, that it survived only at the spoken dialect level. Its extreme rarity in *Ṛgveda* is an index of style with respect to dialects, while its rare use in classical Sanskrit clearly shows a distinction from the spoken language, as desired by the Brahmanic tradition. For an in-depth discussion of this question, see, among others, Bloch (1934), Chatterji (1960: 51, 1983: 67-69), Pischel (1965: 210-212) and Geiger (1969: 88-89).

[52] Regarding the Prakrit word *aṇṇī*, consider the Tamil words *aññai* 'mother', *annai*, *tannai* 'elder sister' and Parji *añña* 'father's sister' (Burrow & Emeneau 1961: 6, n. 53). As regards the Prakrit word *cicci*, consider the Tamil word *kiccu* 'fire', the Kannaḍa words *kiccu*, *kircu* 'fire', the Telugu word *ciccu* 'fire, flame', and so on (Burrow & Emeneau 1961: 106, n. 1272).

'garland' (*Deśīnāmamālā* II, 101), *koṇḍiya* 'one who creates hatred between the inhabitants of the village' (*Deśīnāmamālā* II, 48), and many others,[53]

- all loanwords from non-Indian languages such as Greek, Arabic and Persian, introduced to India by the intellectual and cultural exchange with foreign dynasties; these loanwords, according Hemacandra's primary feature for a Prakrit word to be a *deśī* word (see above), must be considered as *deśī*,[54]

- all those words that can be classified as pure neologisms (cf. Norman 1990, 1992b), which are generally complex, coined by putting together *deśī* and Sanskrit elements, or which, though built up from elements regarded separately as pure *tadbhavas*, never existed as such in Sanskrit, probably because they were created in Prakrit without following the rules of the *Siddhahemaśabdānuśāsana* (Bühler 1878: 11-12), or because they are simply specific Prakrit new words. These neologisms are clearly part of the group of Prakrit words regarded as *deśī* by Hemacandra, even though they cannot be attributed to a non-IA source. Consequently, according to Hemacandra, new compounds exclusive to Prakrit, even if formed using elements that have an attested Sanskrit counterpart, are to be considered *deśī*. The same is true for new derivatives formed from ancient words through the addition of suffixes or prefixes (a situation characteristic of Prakrit), but for which no analogous Sanskrit form is attested. Typical examples of Prakrit compounds considered as *deśī* by Hemacandra are the words *vāsavāla* 'dog' (*Deśīnāmamālā* VII, 60)

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[53] As regards the *deśī* word *pulli*, the following modern Dravidian forms can be taken into account: Tamil *puli*, *pul* 'tiger', Malayalam *puli* 'tiger', Kannada *puli* 'tiger' (Burrow & Emeneau 1961: 285, n. 3532). In Tamil, *karaṭi* has the semantic value of 'Indian black bear' and 'juggling bear' (only the meaning 'bear' is attested in the other most important Dravidian languages, such as Kannada, Malayalam and Telugu), while the words *kṛāḍi*, *krāṇḍi* of the Dravidian Kui language and the word *keḍiak* of the Dravidian Kolami language carry the meaning of 'tiger, leopard, hyena' (Burrow & Emeneau 1961: 89, n. 1059). The *deśī* word *ūra* can be compared with Tamil *ūr* 'village, city', Malayalam *ūr* 'village, city', Kannada *ūr* 'village, city', Telugu *ūru* 'village, city', and so on (Burrow & Emeneau 1961: 57, n. 643), while the correspondent Dravidian forms of the *deśī* word *gutti* are Tamil *kottu* 'bunch', Malayalam *kottu* 'bunch of leaves, of flowers', Kannada *gutti*, *gudi* 'bunch of fruits or flowers', etc. (Burrow & Emeneau 1961: 141, n.1741). The *deśī* word *koṇḍiya* has strong analogies with the Tamil *koṇṭi*, *koṇṭiyam* 'gossip', Kannada *koṇḍeya*, *koṇḍe*, *koṇḍega* 'slander', and so on (Burrow & Emeneau 1961: 149, n. 1865), while *cumcua* 'garland for the head' can be compared with Kannada *cuñcu* 'hair wrapped around the forehead' (Burrow & Emeneau 1961: 169, n. 2180).

[54] Even if words of this type should be classified as *deśī* according to Hemacandra, Chatterji (1983: 101) suggests that they must be distinguished from words borrowed from the alloglot element, as they can be traced back to that lexical material of the MIA defined as *videśī* 'foreign'. Some of these words, albeit only a few, were borrowed from Sanskrit and subsequently inherited from MIA, while others (the majority) were borrowed directly from MIA and in some cases, while remaining alive only at the dialectal level, evolved into the different NIA languages. Words of this type were borrowed from the Iranian, Greek, Bactrian and other languages and dialects of Central Asia, as well as from the languages and dialects of the Chinese, Turks and Huns. All these populations, which arrived in India at different times and in different ways, entered the country after the various MIA languages had fully developed (Chatterji 1983: 101-102, 105-106).

and *sairavasaha* 'bull free to roam' (*Deśīnāmamālā* VIII, 21). These are both new Prakrit coinages, not occurring in Sanskrit as such, but formed on the basis of original Sanskrit words. The first of them has been coined from the Sanskrit words *vāsa* (m.) 'dwelling house' and *pāla* 'protector, keeper' (literally: 'protector of the dwelling'), while the second is a neologism formed from the Sanskrit words *svaira* 'free, independent, who goes where he likes' and *vṛṣabha* (m.) 'bull, male' (literally: 'free bull, who goes where he likes'). With respect to derivatives I can mention, for example, the Prakrit word *goṇikka* 'herd of cows' (*Deśīnāmamālā* II, 97) formed starting from the original Prakrit word *goṇa* 'witness; ox' (*Deśīnāmamālā* II, 104) with the addition of the Prakrit suffix *-ikka*. Both words, *goṇikka* and *goṇa*, are enumerated in the *Deśīnāmamālā* as *deśī*, as they are not attested in Sanskrit forms corresponding to them. The same applies to the Prakrit word *ucchilla* 'hole' (*Deśīnāmamālā* I, 95) derived from the original Prakrit word *chilla* 'hole, den, hut; opening in an enclosure' (*Deśīnāmamālā* III, 35) with the addition of the Sanskrit prefix *ut-,*

- words that are phonologically linked to a corresponding Sanskrit form according to the 'transformation' rules explained by Hemacandra in his *Siddhahemaśabdānuśāsana*, but whose Prakrit meaning is not attested in Sanskrit. This reflects the fact that although Hemacandra's attention is evidently focused on the form of the words that he treats, when assigning Prakrit words to the *deśī* category, as has already been noted, he also gives considerable importance to the meaning of the words involved. This is an important factor for understanding the real nature of the *deśī* class of Prakrit words, especially because it has never been taken into consideration by previous scholars who have made observations on and/or criticised the *Deśīnāmamālā*. An example, demonstrating the consistency of the position taken by Hemacandra, is represented by the Prakrit word *rattaccha* 'tiger; wild goose' (*Deśīnāmamālā* VII, 13) and 'buffalo' (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary VII, 13). The author is aware of the derivation of *rattaccha* from the Sanskrit *raktākṣa* as regards the form of this word. However, taking into consideration the semantic aspect, for the meaning of 'buffalo,' already attested in Sanskrit, *rattaccha* is recognized by Hemacandra as a *tadbhava* word. In contrast, for the meanings of 'tiger' and 'wild goose,' peculiar to Prakrit (i.e., not attested in Sanskrit), *rattaccha* is classified as a *deśī* word. This is demonstrated by the fact that only the meanings of 'wild goose' and 'tiger' are given in the text of the work:

> *haṃse vagghe rattaccho raijoajahaṇesu railakkhaṃ /*
> *daiaṇirantarasohiasaṇāhapaliesu rāho vi // 13 //*
> *Deśīnāmamālā* VII, 13 (emphasis added).

Conversely, in the commentary Hemacandra also mentions the meaning of 'buffalo,' specifying however that this meaning, and only this meaning, is typical of Sanskrit:

rattaccho haṃso vyāghraśca / mahiṣe tu saṃskṛtabhavaṃ /
Deśīnāmamālā, commentary VII, 13 (emphasis added).

Hemacandra's consistency in respecting his rules for the correct interpretation of the term *deśī* is further confirmed by the fact that in the *Deśīnāmamālā*, if only in the commentary, there are many words that the author classifies as *tatsamas* or *tadbhavas*,[55] even though, as he explains, previous Prakrit lexicographers had understood them as *deśī*. This is the case, for example, with the words *undura* 'mouse, rat' (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary I, 102) and *guluñcha* 'cluster' (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary II, 92) which are clearly connected to Sanskrit by Hemacandra as *tatsama* words. Similar observations apply to the Prakrit word *pāmaro* 'man of a large family' (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary VI, 41), also clearly understood to be a *tatsama* word.[56] The Prakrit words *pavitto* 'grass *kuśa*' (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary VI, 14) and *payaro* 'arrow' (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary VI, 14) are linked to Sanskrit as *tadbhava* words, since they derive, according to Hemacandra, from the Sanskrit words *pavitra* and *pradara* with the same meaning, respectively.[57] The same is true for the Prakrit word *davvīaro* 'snake,' to be traced back, according to the author, to the Sanskrit *darvīkara*.[58]

These kinds of examples are quite numerous. Nevertheless, they do not represent the only peculiarity of *Deśīnāmamālā*. The scrupulousness of Hemacandra's description and cataloguing is in fact further confirmed by the attention he pays to the dialectal variants of many of the recorded Prakrit words. Some of the most characteristic examples are the Prakrit words *rikkha* and *riccha*, both classified as *tadbhavas* by Hemacandra (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary VII, 6), because linked to the same Sanskrit word *ṛkṣa*, but with a different phonological output.[59] Similarly, the non-*deśī* Prakrit word *rojjha* 'a type

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[55] As already mentioned (note n. 22), all these words have been collected by Ramanujaswamy in appendix I of the second edition of the *Deśīnāmamālā*; in this appendix, 213 Prakrit words are listed.

[56] [...] *undurauccayaśabdāvākhunīvīvācakau saṃskṛtasamau* / [...] (*Deśīnāmamālā,* commentary I, 102). [...] *atra guluñcho guñcha iti saṃskṛtasamaḥ* / [...] (*Deśīnāmamālā,* commentary II, 92). For the attestation in Sanskrit of the words *undura* 'mouse, rat' and *guluñcha* 'cluster' see Monier-Williams (1899: 193, 360, respectively); *atra pāmaro kuṭumbīti saṃskṛtasamaḥ* / (*Deśīnāmamālā,* commentary VI, 41). For the attestation in Sanskrit of the word *pāmara,* see Monier-Williams (1899: 619).

[57] *atra / pavitto darbhaḥ / payaro śaraḥ / iti pavitrapradaraśabdabhavau /* (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary VI, 14). For the attestation in Sanskrit of the words *pavitra* and *pradara*, see Monier-Williams (1899: 611, 680 respectively).

[58] *atra / davvīaro sarpa iti darvīkaraśabdabhavaḥ /* (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary V, 37). For the attestation in Sanskrit of the word *darvīkara*, see Monier-Williams (1899: 470).

[59] *rikkho tathā riccho vṛddhaḥ / ṛkṣavācakau tu*

of deer; white-hoofed antelope' (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary VII, 12) is mentioned along with its variant with the same meaning, *rohia* (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary VII, 12).[60]

In some cases, however, words apparently deriving from the same source are correctly connected by Hemacandra to different Sanskrit words. Typical examples are the *deśī* words *kulha* (*Deśīnāmamālā* II, 34) and *kolhua* (*Deśīnāmamālā* II, 65), both with the semantic value of 'jackal,' which are classified by Hemacandra as independent words.[61]

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ikkharicchaśabdāvṛkṣaśabdabhavau / (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary VII, 6)

In reporting the Prakrit words *rikkha* and *riccha,* deriving, as has been said, from the Sanskrit word *ṛkṣa*, we note the MIA bivalent result in *-kkh-* and *-cch-* of the Sanskrit consonant group *-kṣ-*, which in the view of Bubenik (1996: 49), "[...] is difficult to describe diatopically and diachronically." A greater understanding of the bivalent MIA outcome of this Sanskrit consonant group is provided by the comparative studies carried out by Tagare (1948: 87-92), where different ideas are made available for a diachronic and diatopic study. In addition to the discussion in Tagare, see Pischel (1965: 258-260), Geiger (1969: 99-100) and Masica (1991: 460).

[60] *rojjho rohio ityanyonyaparyāvṛśyavācakau* / (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary VII, 12)

This case too can be seen as an interesting example of Prakrit duplication. According to the commonly accepted hypothesis, the Prakrit word *rohia* derives from the Sanskrit *rohita*, since the fall of the voiceless dental plosive in the intervocalic position is recognized as a regular norm of Prakrit phonetics. The same phenomenon occurs in Apabhraṃśa, although Hemacandra's indications in this regard point out that an intervocalic *-t-* can also be voiced, thereby changing into *-d-*. Tagare (1948) is of the same opinion, even if he reports that an intervocalic *-t-* falls in the majority of cases in literary Apabhraṃśa, and only rarely changes into *-d-*. The more regular and affirmed transformation would therefore lead to Sanskrit *rohita* > Prakrit *rohia* (for the outcome of the Sanskrit voiceless dental plosive *-t-* in Prakrit, see Pischel (1965: 163), while for the outcome in Apabhraṃśa, see Tagare (1948: 78-81) and again Pischel (1965: 166)). The Prakrit word *rojjha* is instead a variant of *rohia*, probably due to diachronic reasons. In fact, after the voiceless dental plosive is dropped in intervocalic position, the semivowel *-y-* is inserted in its place, especially in Ardhamāgadhī, Mahārāṣṭrī and Jain Śaurasenī (concerning the insertion of the semivowel *-y-* instead of the plosive *-t-*, see Pischel (1965: 163-164)). Later, with the drop of the vowel *-i-*, the resulting cluster *-hy-* is changed into the palatal consonant cluster *-jjh-*, as in many other Prakrit words (for the change of the consonant cluster *-hy-* into *-jjh-*, see the material provided in Pischel 1965: 267).

[61] *kukkhī kucchī kulho a siāle poṭṭale kuṃṭī* /

kuṃbhī sīmantāī kuddaṃ bahu mañjarī kuṃtī // (*Deśīnāmamālā* II, 34)

[...] *kulho śṛgālaḥ* / [...] (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary II, 34)

koso kosumbhajalahisu kolio tantuvāyalūāsu /

acchuṇivīlaṇajantammi kolhuo taha siālammi // (*Deśīnāmamālā* II, 65)

[...] *kolhuo ikṣunipīḍanayantraṃ śṛgālaśca* // (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary II, 65)

The Prakrit words *kulha, kolhua* 'jackal' could be seen as two variants derived from the same Sanskrit word. However, on the basis of the two verses of the *Deśīnāmamālā* just quoted, it can be observed that Hemacandra classifies them as independent words. Pischel (1965) is of the same opinion, as he considers *kulha* to be the MIA outcome of the Sanskrit *kroṣṭṛ*, and *kolhua* the MIA outcome of the Sanskrit *kroṣṭuka*. This hypothesis is undoubtedly the most plausible, even if we can note that both original words present the consonant group *kro-*, which would therefore have had to evolve in two different ways. In the passage from OIA to MIA, this consonant group is in fact simplified by means of the drop of *-r-*. In the case of *kolhua*, the vowel *-o-* is kept, while in the case of *kulha*, the *-o-* is changed into *-u-*, following some analogous cases occurring mainly in Mahārāṣṭrī, Ardhamāgadhī and Jain Mahārāṣṭrī, where the same change occurs before a consonant cluster (see Pischel 1965: 90-91). It is

To sum up, based on what has been said so far, it can be seen that the criteria followed by Hemacandra in his cataloguing attest to the existence of a clear lexicographic project. In addition to this, though, and what makes the *Deśīnāmamālā* of extreme interest, and in a certain sense provides a further guarantee of its validity, is the frequent quotation by Hemacandra of the opinion of other lexicographers, from which he, in some cases, differs. This happens with reference not only to the proposed form of the *deśī* word under consideration, but also, in some cases, to its semantic value. Hemacandra mentions the names of eight authors of Prakrit *deśī koṣas*. We know only a few of these, and the works attributed to them have not come down to us.[62]

In more than one case, our author points out how, in his opinion, his predecessors committed inaccuracies, and how difficult it was for him to determine the meaning of several words. For example, in commenting on the *deśī* word *bhamāso* 'a type of grass that looks like sugar cane' (*Deśīnāmamālā* VI, 101), Hemacandra informs us that the Prakrit lexicographer Dhanapāla[63] reports for this word the form *bhamaso*:

> *bhamāso ikṣusaṭṭaśatṛṇam / bhamaso iti dhanapālaḥ / [...]*
> *Deśīnāmamālā,* commentary VI, 101.

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important to add that Mayrhofer (1956-: vol. I, 281) believes that the Sanskrit word *kroṣṭuka* is a Prakritism deriving from the original Sanskrit form *kroṣṭṛ* (m.).

[62] Among the different authors of *deśīkoṣas* mentioned in *Deśīnāmamālā* we find: Abhimānacihna, mentioned by Hemacandra five times, four in agreement with his interpretations (I, 144; VI, 93; VIII, 12, 17), and one in disagreement (VII, 1); Gopāla, mentioned five times in agreement with Hemacandra (VI, 58, 72; VII, 76; VIII, 1, 17), five times in disagreement regarding the form of the word analysed (I, 25, 45; III, 47; VI, 26; VII, 2), once with regard to the meaning (II, 82), and twice in disagreement on both the form and the meaning (I, 31; VIII, 67); Devarāja, mentioned three times in the *Deśīnāmamālā*, two of these in agreement with Hemacandra's interpretation (VI, 72; VIII, 17), once with some divergence (VI, 58); Droṇa, mentioned once in accordance with Hemacandra's opinion (VIII, 17), twice in disagreement regarding the form (I, 18, 50), and once regarding the meaning (VI, 7); Dhanapāla, author of a Prakrit lexicon, mentioned by Hemacandra once in agreement with his hypotheses (VIII, 17), twice with a divergence on the form of the words (IV, 30; VI, 101), and twice with a divergence on the meaning (I, 141; III, 22); and Pādaliptācārya who wrote a *koṣa* of *deśī* words (I, 2) (on Pādaliptācārya, also known as Palitta, see Ollett 2018). It seems that Hemacandra wrote the *Deśīnāmamālā* following the work of the latter author, and also following Rāhukala's lexicon, which is mentioned in the *Deśīnāmamālā* only once (IV, 4). Hemacandra is supposed to have followed many of Rāhukala's views in drafting the *Deśīnāmamālā*. Sīlāṅka is also the author of a *deśīkoṣa*, of which, however, we know nothing; he is mentioned three times in the *Deśīnāmamālā* (II, 20; VI, 96; VIII, 40). For a discussion of the *koṣa* authors mentioned by Hemacandra in the *Deśīnāmamālā*, see Ramanujaswamy (1938: 12-14), Pischel (1965: 49-50) and Vaidya (1926-27: 64-67).

[63] I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer of this paper who pointed out that the citations from Dhanapāla given in the examples are not actually found in the *Pāiyalacchī*, which raises the sticky question of Hēmacandra referring to a *dēśīkōṣa* by 'Dhanapāla' that apparently is different from the surviving *dēśīkōṣa* by 'Dhanapāla.'

Similarly, in discussing the *deśī* word *ūsāiaṃ* (*Deśīnāmamālā* I, 141), Hemacandra informs us that the meaning to be attributed to this is that of 'scattered' (Sanskrit *vikṣiptam*), and not that of 'launched, thrown' (Sanskrit *utkṣiptam*), as claimed instead by Dhanapāla:

> [...] *ūsāiaṃ vikṣiptam / ūsāiaṃ utkṣiptamiti dhanapālaḥ / [...]*
> *Deśīnāmamālā,* commentary I, 141.

7. The tripartite classification in *tatsama, tadbhava* and *deśī* vs. an historical approach to Prakrit

Before moving on to the conclusions, two remarks are in order.

First, in order to explain that for Prakrit grammarians, or at least for Hemacandra, *deśī* is not synonymous with non-IA and/or has a precise meaning—even if including an heterogeneous class of words—we must note that, as shown above, not all Prakrit words of non-IA etymology are to be regarded as *deśī* words. This might seem quite strange, because a word of non-IA origin reported in a Prakrit text should certainly be classified as a *deśī* word as it is not linked to a corresponding Sanskrit word. However, the tripartite classification in *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī* does not exclude the possibility that a word of non-IA origin attested in Sanskrit is also attested in Prakrit and this invalidates its classification as a *deśī* word. This is the case, for example, of the words inherited from Sanskrit, with or without the necessary phonological changes, but actually of ancient Dravidian or Munda origin before the differentiation between the OIA and MIA languages and thus inherited, as 'new OIA words,' by MIA and possibly also by Prakrit; these words should be understood as genuine *tatsama* or *tadbhava*. Among the most significant examples of this type of words, I can mention the Prakrit word *undura*, classified as *tatsama* by Hemacandra,[64] probably because it occurs with the same form and meaning in Sanskrit (see Monier-Williams 1899: 193), but according to authoritative studies

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[64] This is the verse of the *Deśīnāmamālā* relating to the Prakrit word *undura*, where, as can be seen, it is not quoted together with the other *deśī* words:

khiṇṇe uvvāuttaṃpiā ya hāsammi ullevo /

ubbhuggopphaṃdolā calammi mūḍhammi ummaiaṃ // (*Deśīnāmamālā* I, 102)

On the contrary, this word is mentioned by Hemacandra in the commentary, where it is explicitly stated that it is a *tatsama*:

[...] *undurauccayaśabdāvākhunīvīvācakau saṃskṛtasamau /* [...] (*Deśīnāmamālā,* commentary I, 102)

(cf. Kuiper 1948: 27; Mayrhofer 1956: vol. I, 105; Turner 1966: 98, n. 2095), etymologically deriving from a non-IA source.[65]

Another example that can be understood similar to the previous one concerns the Prakrit word *ghoḍa* 'horse' classified as *tadbhava* by Hemacandra, as it is linked to the Sanskrit word *ghoṭa*, and having the same meaning,[66] even though it too, according to Mayrhofer (1956-: vol. I, 361-362), Turner (1966: 244, n. 4516) and Chatterji (1983: 115-116), has a Dravidian etymology.[67] In this case, however, we don't know, at the current state of knowledge, if this word has been used for the first time in a Prakrit or in a Sanskrit work.

Second, in order to provide further evidence that the tripartite classification of Prakrit words in *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī* need not be analysed taking into consideration their possible origin from a purely historical-linguistic perspective, it is important to look at the reciprocal influences between Sanskrit and Prakrit and between these literary languages and the other non literary languages throughout the MIA period. In following this line of approach, a correct analysis of the relationship between Sanskrit and Prakrit in this period must be provided,[68] clarifying, at the same, what is meant

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[65] More precisely, the Sanskrit word *undura* 'mouse' is compared by Mayrhofer (1956-: vol. I, 105) with a word from Sora (a Munda language, of the Austro-Asiatic language family, spoken in India), *guntúr* 'rat', while Kuiper (1948: 27) compares the same word also with the Sora word *kentūr* 'bat', arguing that, in this language, 'mouse, rat' and 'bat' are often denominated with the same words. As regards the NIA evolution of the *tatsama undura* 'mouse, rat', see Turner (1966: 98, n. 2095).

[66] Below, I quote the verse from the *Deśīnāmamālā* relating to the Prakrit word *ghoḍa* where, as can be seen, it is not referred to together with the other *deśī* words:

ghorī salahavisese ghosālī sarayavallibheammi /

ghaṭṭo kusumbharatte sariātūhammi vaṃse a // (*Deśīnāmamālā* II, 111)

On the contrary, the word *ghoḍa* is mentioned by Hemacandra in the commentary:

[...] atra ghoḍo aśva iti ghoṭaśabdabhavaḥ / [...] (*Deśīnāmamālā*, commentary II, 111)

[67] Mayrhofer (1956-: vol. I, 361-362) postulates a Dravidian origin for the Sanskrit word *ghoṭa*. On this matter he mentions the Tamil words *kutirai*, the Kannada word *kudurè* and the Telugu word *gurramu*, all deriving from a probable reconstructed form *gudr*. Mayrhofer (1956-: vol. I, 361-362) also proposes a comparison with the Gadaba word *krutā* 'horse' and the Savara word *kurtā* 'horse' (Gadaba and Savara are two Munda languages). For the citation of other Dravidian words analogous to those mentioned above, see Burrow and Emeneau (1961: 117, n.1423), and regarding the evolution in NIA of the Prakrit word *ghoḍa* 'horse', see the material provided in Turner (1966: 244, no. 4516).

[68] As already pointed out by some scholars (see, among others, Burrow 1955: 374, 386-387; Bloch 1934: 14; Chatterji 1960: 67-68), Sanskrit, in the course of its history (to which reference has been made at the start of this paper), has undergone a constant evolution with an evident lexical enrichment. Indeed, Aśvaghoṣa and Kālidāsa's texts testify to uses and forms that go beyond what Pāṇini describes in his grammar. Through the hyper-Sanskritization of MIA forms, these innovations, part of the Sanskrit lexical enrichment, demonstrate the influence of a regional dialect that has become politically and culturally prestigious in a given period. The same kind of deviations occur in the epic Sanskrit of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* (Oberlies 2003). It is also worth mentioning in this regard the following observations of Salomon (1989: 277): "[...] in reality there is much in the literary and textual history of Sanskrit to suggest that, *in terms of practical reality* as opposed to linguistic ideals,

by 'Sanskrit' and 'Prakrit.'[69] In this regard, I mention here an example which, originally reported by Deshpande (1993: 74), can help to clarify the argument that has just been made, although it does not actually involve a *deśī* word.

The corresponding Pāli and Prakrit words of the Sanskrit word *gṛha* 'house' are *gaha* and *giha*, *gaha*, respectively (Turner 1966: 227, n. 4240). It is important to point out that in Prakrit the word *geha*, with the same meaning of *gṛha*, is also attested; this form is not deriving from Sanskrit *gṛha*, but, as pointed out by Mayrhofer (1956: Band I, 345), from an unattested OIA word *gedha. Maythofer's hypothesis seems to be supported by the fact that deriving *geha* from *gṛha* suggests an atypical phonogical change from OIA to MIA ("Lautlich kaum aus *grhah* zu entwickeln, wie vielfach versucht wurde, Falsch;" Mayrhofer 1956: Band I, 345). Therefore, *geha* can be classified as a MIA colloquial form occurring in Prakrit literature, 'colloquial,' because not corresponding to a Sanskrit word, but to a OIA non-Sanskritic form.[70] Interestingly, as suggested by Deshpande (1993: 74), *geha* was later borrowed by Sanskrit, from Prakrit, as a word of dialectal origin, that is to say as a colloquial MIA word, becoming thus part of Sanskrit lexicon through the mediation of Prakrit. Assuming Sanskrit, erroneously, as a synonym of OIA, *geha* can be understood as a Prakrit *tadbhava* word (because, after all, an IA word) as a consequence of the fact that is derived, historically, from an unattested 'Sanskrit' (OIA = Sanskrit) word *gedha. Nevertheless, as we have seen, *gedha is in no way to be identified, if attested, as a Sanskrit word. It is certainly a possible OIA word, but non part of Sanskrit lexicon. Actually, *geha* is a *tatsama* word, since it is found with an identical form and the same meaning in Sanskrit texts, but even in this case further clarifications are required. Normally, from the poit of view of historical linguistics, Sanskrit, as an OIA language, is considered as a most ancient language as compared to Prakrit, a MIA literary language, and thus as a previous language in terms of chronology. Consequently, if a word with the same meaning and form occur in both languages, normally this word in Prakrit is considered as a loanword from Sanskrit. As a matter of fact, *tatsama* words are normally classified as Sanskrit borrowings (see, e.g., Pollock 2006). However, as has been shown in tracing the 'history' of the word in question, the direction of the loan turns out to be the opposite way round, since it is Sanskrit that has incorporated in its lexicon a word whose form and meaning are previously attested in Prakrit. For this

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Sanskrit and Prakrit were, at least in early times, not so much separate and irreconcilable opposites as the poles of a dialect spectrum [...]". On this topic, see also Deshpande (1993).

[69] For example, the majority of scholars uses the term "Sanskrit" to indicate also what is actually the Vedic language: cf. Houben (1996b: 10), Thieme (1994) and Wezler (1996: 346, note no. 73). On the contrary, Mayrhofer (1986-) seems to behave differently in his *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*.

[70] Monier-Williams (1899: 363) speaks of a corrupted form from *gṛha*.

reason, it is my belief that *geha*, in Prakrit, can be classified as *tatsama* purely and exclusively on the basis of the fact that in Sanskrit there is a word with the same form and the same meaning, regardless of what the real history and origin of that word is.

8. Conclusion

Thanks to his clear definition of *deśī,* Hemacandra has imposed his superiority and originality over the *deśī* lexicographers who preceded him (cf. Ramanujaswamy 1938; Pischel 1965: 8-9, 48-50; Shriyan 1969: 29-31), and perhaps this is what accounts for the unique nature of his work in the context of *deśī* lexicons.

As already mentioned at the start, in the explanation of the purpose of the present paper, we can understand now why Hemacandra's *Deśīnāmamālā* is a incomparable text for study, and for aiding our understanding not only of the exact meaning of the tripartite classification of the Prakrit lexicon, and thus of the term *deśī*, but also of the heterogeneity of the *deśī* Prakrit class of words. In this regard I have shown how *deśī* 'regional/local' is used by Hemacandra with respect to the Prakrit lexicon to indicate the 'new' lexical material specific to a particular MIA literary variety, that is to say Prakrit. Within this material are sometimes certainly included words borrowed from alloglot groups of South-Asia, but also all those independent neologisms for which there is no loan relationship between the Prakrit element classified as *deśī* and a possible Sanskrit model. Taking into consideration all these suggestions and following the conclusions of one of my previous papers (cf. Drocco 2012), this means that the division into *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deśī* was probably a tool in the hands of Indian authors, offering them the unique scope to compare the Prakrit lexicon with the Sanskrit one, in a period when these two varieties were used side by side as literary vehicles, even if, between them, Sanskrit had achieved the dominance. Actually, it is likely that this tripartite classification of Prakrit words was used by these authors only for composing their works, beginning with the consultation of Prakrit grammars and *deśīkoṣas.* Thanks to these grammars, it was possible for them not only to compose new works using 'standard' Prakrit variety, building on their previous knowledge of Sanskrit, but also, at the same time, to understand the ancient Prakrit texts. All this was achieved with the simple application of real rules of 'transformation,' such as those explained in the Prakrit grammars, by means of which a Sanskrit word, the only one probably present in the cultural background of the author, was literally 'transformed/translated' into a Prakrit word. It is for this reason that Prakrit grammarians argued that 'Prakrit originates from Sanskrit.' As a matter of fact, it does 'originate' from Sanskrit, not as a result of a historical linguistic process, but rather through a rule, the latter working as a sort of 'linguistic/language equation,' an equation that can also be used in reverse, thus for generating a new

Sanskrit word starting from the new Prakrit one. For all the new words or for all the new meanings of ancient Sanskrit words, in both cases specific to Prakrit, the different *deśīkoṣas*, among which the *Deśīnāmamālā* was and still is the most important, came to the aid of the Indian author.

In this way, starting from the premise that Prakrit has to be analyzed from within the larger system of Sanskrit grammar and lexicography (see above), the tripartite system just outlined makes it possible to understand the dependence on and the closeness with Sanskrit, and the degree of this dependence/closeness, of a particular Prakrit text by analysing its lexicon, since not all authors used lexical material connected or not connected with Sanskrit to the same extent. While it is true that, in some cases, the author's origin and/or his cultural milieu could be a decisive factor here, as well as the period and/or circumstances in which he composed his work, in other cases, the specific variety of language used, closer or not to Prakrit, and the aims behind the text were more important. For example, the use of Prakrit for some of the characters in Sanskrit dramas first came about through a constant reference to the Sanskrit tradition. Consequently, in such texts, the use of *tatsama* and *tadbhava* is predominant, although we cannot exclude the attestation, albeit rare, of some *deśī* words.

In a nutshell, therefore, and in line with the opinion of the majority of scholars, it can be said with near certainty that Prakrit can be considered the most artificial of the various MIA varieties used as literary, religious and administrative vehicles. Even though Prakrit shows some similarity with spoken forms showing thus typical 'dialectal/colloquial' features, testifying in this respect to its diachronic and diatopic variability[71] (cf. Tagare 1948; Pischel 1965; Bubenik 1998, 2003), it no longer has any strong connection with spoken languages (Pischel 1965: 4; Chatterji 1983), because it is deeply dependent on and close with Sanskrit, even as if it were a form of the latter. I believe that now we are in a better position to understand why Bhayani maintains that "Literary Mahārāṣṭrī (i.e. Prakrit; AD) was in that regard rather a colloquialized and stylized form of Sanskrit [...]" (Bhayani 1998d: 29-30).

I conclude by saying that the close relationship of Sanskrit and Prakrit, as if they were two specular varieties of the same language, can also explain the change related to the terms used in the tripartite terminology—I mean the terminological change concerning the term *tadbhava* previously named *vibhraṣṭa*—and reported as an essential part, that is at the underpinning of the grammatical description of Prakrit. Although Pollock (2006) and Ollett (2017), also referring to previous scholars (as, for example, Nitti-Dolci 1972), have discussed Bharata's work and the meaning of the tripartite classification in great detail and at length, it seems to me that the possible motivations for this

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[71] This is equally valid for the final form of MIA, Apabhraṃśa; in this regard see, for example, Pischel (1965), Tagare (1948) and Bubenik (1998).

terminological change have not been explored by any scholar so far. I firmly believe that this change is strictly correlated with a change of perspective towards the Prakrit language. What this terminological change tell us is that at the beginning of and/or before the process that gradually transformed Sanskrit as a cosmopolitan language (see Pollock 2007), Prakrit was seen as something outside the Sanskrit sphere. Afterwards, on the contrary, it became part of the 'world of Sanskrit' ('eternal world of Sanskrit' according to Kahrs 1992) thanks, above all, Prakrit grammarians' works, whose beginning was inaugurated by Bharata. Actually, the latter saw Prakrit as something still outside the 'Sanskrit tradition,' perhaps because he was located at the outset of the above said cosmopolitan change concerning Sanskrit. This is not the case, however, for the subsequent Prakrit grammarians. To understand the cultural milieu and the socio-political dynamics behind this change of perspective on Prakrit can be a good topic for future researchs.

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Saramā as a psychopomp dog in ancient India

Alessia Manca

The paper investigates the origin of Saramā's legend by confronting its two oldest versions (ṚV 10.108 and JB 2.440-442) along with further Rigvedic fragments and mentions. Actually, nothing in the Rigvedic tale suggests that Saramā is a dog. The two main versions differ for a number of factors, not least the characters involved (only Saramā and the Paṇis are found in both sources) and the textual tipology, but both come from the same oral archetype and consider Saramā a divine-sent heroine. From a historical point of view, some elements suggest that the context in which the myth arose was nomadic and war-like, and a strong competition for resources took place: cattle raiding, *brahmodya*-style back-and-forths and the taste for forcing adversaries to speak the truth, are all features that can be found in Vrātyas' lifestyle, thus linking the she-dog to wandering, sworn male brotherhoods in ancient India. Below the textual surface, Saramā's myth is a peculiar example of canine symbolism in Indo-Aryan tradition, and shows a privileged connection to death and the underworld: closeness to the yonder world is embodied by Saramā's progeny, since they are said to be Yama's two dogs, suggesting that dogs were believed to occupy an intermediate position between life and death. Traces of this belief emerge in contemporary traditions involving dogs, namely in the Khaṇḍobā cult in Maharashtra, which is considered to preserve legacies of Vrātya rites from Vedic times. Textual and archaeological evidence from the *aśvamedha* rite shows that in the great royal sacrifice a dog is killed along with a horse in order to ensure kingship. Reconstructing the first ideological stages of Saramā's story might help understand why in post-Brahmanical reform texts Saramā is no longer the protecting *devaśuni* of Rigvedic times, and becomes instead a demon who eats embryos in the womb, while dogs in general are seen as polluting and contaminating, probably also due to their relationship with death.

Keywords: Vedic and Sanskrit Sources, Saramā, psychopomp, dog and death, Vrātyas, cattle raiding.

1. Introduction[1]

The present paper aims to trace a general framework about Saramā, the she-dog that, in Vedic times, works at Indra's service. The analysis is built on a careful analysis of texts: as early myths mirror both

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[1] All translations, except otherwise indicated, are the author's.

the history, and the culture of the people who composed them, it is interesting to investigate the symbolic level hidden under the textual surface. The perspective adopted for examining the social and cultural background of the Saramā story mainly refers to the recent studies on male brotherhoods in ancient India, also known as Vrātyas, who are strictly connected with dog symbolism. A comparison of the several versions of the story of Saramā is proposed here, with the aim of better grasping its cultural background.[2]

The general plot, as it is traditionally interpreted, recounts that Indra's (or the gods') cows are stolen by the Paṇis, and later hidden by the demon Vala in the middle of the river Rasā. In order to recover the cattle, Indra sends Saramā on a raid at the river bank. The two oldest passages, one Vedic and one Late Vedic, are the richest, and most complete sources available to reconstruct the myth. As will be shown below, ṚV 10.108, reports a complex dialogue between our main character and her enemies, the Paṇis; and indeed neither Vala, nor the dog nature of the protagonist are mentioned. The more consistent JB 2.440-442 offers a wider prosatic version of the myth, narrating the backstory and the circumstances that led to the conversation recorded by the Rigvedic version of the story. Here, Saramā is clearly a dog, behaving as if she were a human, or even a divine character. Before her, an analogous mission had been ordered by the gods to the bird Aliklava Suparṇa, but the latter was bribed by the Paṇis, and damned for his failure. Instead, Saramā is rewarded for her success with the blessing of a rich offspring. However, this story must be quite old, since Saramā is already mentioned in the Family Books of the *Ṛgveda* (3.31, 4.16, 5.45).

The way Saramā's character has changed throughout the centuries stimulates a reflection on the common perception of dogs in ancient India. From the sources, it is evident that Saramā and her offspring, Yama's two dogs, occupy a liminal condition between orthodox rites and heterodox traditions—which historically corresponds to a marginalised social status for the people who live materially and symbolically close to dogs. In particular, Saramā's mythic sphere preserves the Indo-European feature of the dog as a psychopomp, while developing unique peculiarities inside the Indian ritual system, especially concerning the kingship issue and the royal *aśvamedha* sacrifice.

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[2] Oertel (1898:103) already compared ṚV 10.108 with *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (JB) 2.440-442, and concluded that the JB version is 'an attempt to fuse the two conflicting legends of the Rig-Veda and the Brhaddevatā' (8.24-36), 'keeping Saramā's character clean without sacrificing the motif of the betrayal of the god.'

2. The Rigvedic version of the story (ṚV 10.108)

The most ancient attestation of Saramā's myth can be found in *Ṛgveda* (ṚV) 10.108:[3] the narration begins *in medias res*, when the Paṇis attempt in vain to bribe Saramā. At the beginning, the Paṇis seem quite circumspect, while asking about Indra and how Saramā managed to cross the Rasā river; later, they threaten her, receiving a fierce deny; eventually, they offer a compromise and try to flatter her with the prospect of sharing the booty.

1. [The Paṇis:] Looking for what, did Saramā come here? Indeed the path [is] in a distant place and leading far away. What message for us? What was [your] travelling? How did you cross over the waters of the Rasā?

2. [Saramā:] I move, sent out [as] messenger of Indra, o Paṇis, searching for your great treasures. With fear of going beyond, that animated us; in that manner I crossed over the waters of the Rasā.

3. [The Paṇis:] What is Indra like, o Saramā? What does he look like – he whose messenger have run here from afar? Also, [let him be] coming here: we shall establish a friendship, then he shall become our cattle herder.

4. [Saramā:] I do not consider him deceivable: he [himself] deceives [others] – he of whom as a messenger I have run here from afar. The deep flowing [rivers] do not conceal him; beaten by Indra, you, o Paṇis, lie down.

5. [The Paṇis:] These [are] the cows, o Saramā, that you went in search for, o blessed one, [having] come to the limits of the sky. Who could let them go away without fighting? Our weapons are also sharp.

6. [Saramā:] O Paṇis, your words [are] not striking. Let [your] evil bodies be impervious to arrows or let the path to you be impossible to follow—even in that case, Bṛhaspati will have no mercy! Let [your] evil bodies be impervious to arrows or let the path to you be impossible to follow—even in that case, Bṛhaspati will not have mercy!.

7. [The Paṇis:] O Saramā, this treasure, rooted in a rock, [is] endowed with cows, with horses and goods. The Paṇis guard it, who [are] good herdsmen; you came to [this] deserted site in vain.

8. [Saramā:] Sharpened by the Soma, the Ṛsis, the Aṅgirases, Ayāsya, the Navagvas, shall come to this place. They will divide these cows into parts, then indeed the Paṇis will eject [their] word.

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[3] *kim icchantī saramā predam ānaḍ dūre hy adhvā jaguriḥ parācaiḥ |kāsmehitiḥ kā paritakmyāsīt kathaṃ rasāyā ataraḥ payāṃsi ||1|| indrasya dūtīr iṣitā carāmi maha icchantī paṇayo nidhīn vaḥ | atiṣkado bhiyasā tan na āvat tathā rasāyā ataram payāṃsi ||2|| kīdṛṅṅ indraḥ sarame kā dṛśīkā yasyedaṃ dūtīr asaraḥ parākāt | ā ca gacchān mitram enā dadhāmāthā gavāṃ gopatir no bhavāti ||3|| nāhaṃ taṃ veda dabhyaṃ dabhat sa yasyedaṃ dūtīr asaram parākāt | na taṃ gūhanti sravato gabhīrā hatā indreṇa paṇayaḥ śayadhve ||4|| imā gāvaḥ sarame yā aicchaḥ pari divo antān subhage patantī |kas ta enā ava sṛjād ayudhvy utāsmākam āyudhā santi tigmā ||5|| asenyā vaḥ paṇayo vacāṃsy aniṣavyās tanvaḥ santu pāpīḥ | adhṛṣṭo va etavā astu panthā bṛhaspatir va ubhayā na mṛḍāt ||6|| ayaṃ nidhiḥ sarame adribudhno gobhir aśvebhir vasubhir nyṛṣṭaḥ | rakṣanti tam paṇayo ye sugopā reku padam alakam ā jagantha ||7|| eha gamann ṛṣayaḥ somaśitā ayāsyo aṅgiraso navagvāḥ | ta etam ūrvaṃ vi bhajanta gonām athaitad vacaḥ paṇayo vamann it ||8|| evā ca tvaṃ sarama ājagantha prabādhitā sahasā daivyena | svasāraṃ tvā kṛṇavai mā punar gā apa te gavāṃ subhage bhajāma ||9|| nāhaṃ veda bhrātṛtvaṃ no svasṛtvam indro vidur aṅgirasaś ca ghorāḥ | gokāmā me acchadayan yad āyam apāta ita paṇayo varīyaḥ ||10|| dūram ita paṇayo varīya ud gāvo yantu minatīr ṛtena | bṛhaspatir yā avindan nigūḍhāḥ somo grāvāṇa ṛṣayaś ca viprāḥ ||11||*

9. [The Paṇis:] O Saramā, verily you came here, driven by divine power. I shall make you our sister: do not go back, we shall divide away the cows with you, o blessed one.

10. [Saramā:] I know neither brotherhood nor sisterhood; Indra and the awful Aṅgirasas know [this]. Desiderous of cows, [they] concealed them to me, since I came; hence go away, o Paṇis, farther off.

11. [Saramā:] Go off, o Paṇis, farther off, may the cows which are out of place according to the ṛta come out,[4] those which Bṛhaspati and the Soma, the pressing stones, and the inspired Ṛṣis found concealed.

At first glance, there is no indication that the cows belong to Indra, and Saramā might as well be stealing them on behalf of her patron (see Debroy 2008: 64); however, there are no clues in the text that she is a dog. Neither do the Paṇis look like the *asura*s they are said to be in later traditions; they introduce themselves as good herdsmen possessing sharp weapons. From the textual layout, nothing prevents us from considering all the characters as fully human, and not much information is given about the antagonist Paṇis, usually considered strangers. ṚV 6.51.14 states that the 'devourer Paṇi' is a wolf:[5] Jamison-Brereton (2014: 847) translates the term as 'rapacious niggard,' while on their commentary they point out that 'the wolf is a cross-category in RVic classification, and this statement is a quasi-legal declaration that a particular human evil-doer is an outlaw.'[6]

The several interpretations of the symbolical level have mostly highlighted the cosmical value of the myth. Brereton 2002 interprets Indra's attempt to regain his own cows as mirroring the poet's aim to exercise the power of his enchanting word: 'just as Indra Bṛhaspati and the Aṅgirases found the cattle through their recitation of the truth, so the poet will likewise obtain cattle by means of the truth of this hymn' (Brereton (2002: 224)): even if dangerous, the Paṇis do not possess the power of the magical ritual speech, which is necessary to subvert reality and shape a new cosmos. Witzel agrees that the cows represent the primordial dawn, treasures, riches of every kind, and poetry, arguing that Saramā and Indra bear a new cosmic order, which competes with (and wins) the Paṇis' outdated one:

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[4] Jamison-Brereton (2014: 1590) attributes this line to a narrator and translates *minatīr ṛtena* with 'exchanging places with the truth.' By surveying all occurrences of the verbal base *mī-* with the help of the Sanskrit Digital Corpus, it appears that this lexeme has at least three main meanings: to transgress/violate, to confound, to diminish/belittle, and occasionally it is rendered with 'to change/exchange/alter/compromise.' Nevertheless, Geldner 1951's hypothesis (vol. 3: 330, fn. 11b) that *minatīḥ* originated from *mimatīḥ* by dissimilation is tempting: in this case the coming out cows would be simply 'bellowing' (from *mā-*, 3rd present class verbal base). About the role of *ṛta*, Radicchi (1962: 108-110) investigates whether the instrumental *ṛténa* means 'in conformity with the *ṛta*,' or the *ṛta* is the force that breaks the *vala* open. Her position excludes the exact overlapping of the meanings of *ṛta* and order, and suggests that the cows simply come out of a rock according to the *ṛta.*

[5] *grāvāṇaḥ soma no hi kaṃ sakhitvanāya vāvaśuḥ | jahī ny atriṇam paṇiṃ vṛko hi ṣaḥ ||* 'O Soma, our pressing stones longed for companionship | slay indeed the devourer Paṇi, [for] he is a wolf.'

[6] See http://rigvedacommentary.alc.ucla.edu/ (accessed on May 2, 2024).

whoever conquers the cows will have a new dawn and inspired speech, thus ruling over the material world and controlling the prosperity of their sacrifices. The dialogue framework is interesting as well: if it is true that the *saṃvāda* structure can be found already in ṚV, on the other hand, considering the aggressive and competitive background in which it is composed and set, it is possible to connect this hymn with the *brahmodya*. In particular, Saramā's determined and impetuous attitude prospects her faction's victory and the splitting up of the booty among the winners, developed in a back and forth interaction. This allows us to suppose that both the layout and content were born in a reality where the competition for resources was also verbal and of wisdom.

Below the competitive coat, the last verse represents the scene as mirroring a sacrifice: just like in ritual, just one element out of place is enough to turn things upside down, and withholding the cows means to keep away the essentials to perform the ritual. As the sacrifice cannot begin in darkness, light is also being held, or dawn (*uṣas*): the perspective is a dark world, with different sacrificing rules, governed by the uncontrollable Paṇis.[7] Remarkably, any mention of Vala is absent here: the Paṇis do not seem to have a protector. His presence might be implied for a listener, who was supposed to already know the plot of the story. Vala himself is similar to his brother Vṛtra: both withhold the source of life—water or milk; both are slained by Indra, who represents the legitimacy of Vedic warrior behaviour.

3. A later Sāmavedic version (JB 2.440-442)

Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa (JB) 2.440[8]
Then, indeed, the asuras called Paṇis were the gods' cowherds. They, indeed, went off with them (the cows). Vala, after surrounding them (the cows), concealed [them] at the Rasā. The gods said to Aliklava: 'Suparṇa, search for these our cows.' 'So be it' [he replied]. He indeed flew towards [them]. He indeed reached them, which were in the middle of the Rasā, hidden by Vala. They (the Paṇis) placed this before him, who came after [the cows], indeed: clarified butter, thickened milk, curd, sour milk. He was indeed satiated by it. They said to him: 'Suparṇa, right this food will be a tribute for you, do not deliver us.' He indeed flew back again. Indeed, they (the gods) said to him: 'Suparṇa,

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[7] Debroy (2008: 63) interprets the argument as 'a perpetual struggle between the forces of light and darkness.' i.e. night, who has stolen the rays of light as cows and Saramā as a messenger (Uṣas).

[8] *atha ha vai paṇayo nāmāsurā devānāṃ gorakṣā asuḥ | tābhir ahāpātasthuḥ | tā ha rasāyāṃ nirudhya valenāpidadhuḥ | te devā aliklavam ūcus suparṇemā no gā anviccheti | tatheti | sa ha anuprapapāti | tā hānvājagāma rasāyām antarvalena apihitāḥ | tasmai ha anvāgatāya sarpiḥ kṣīram āmikṣāṃ dadhi iti etad upanidadhuḥ | tasya ha suhita āsa | taṃ hocus suparṇa iṣa eva te balir bhaviṣyatyetad annaṃ mā naḥ pravoca iti | sa ha punar āpapāta | taṃ hocus suparṇa avido gā iti | kā kīrtiścid gavāmiti hovāca | eṣaiva kīrtiścid gavām iti tasya hendro galam utpīḍyann uvāca goṣv eva ahaṃ kila tava uṣuṣo mukham iti | sa ha dadhidrapsaṃ va āmikṣāṃ va udāsa | so'yaṃ babhūva yo'yaṃ vasantā bhūmikapaṭhur jāyate | taṃ ha tac chaśāpa aślīlaṃ jālma te jīvanaṃ bhūyād yo no gā anuvidya tā na prāvoca iti | tasya haitad grāmasya jaghanārdhe yat pāpiṣṭhaṃ tajjīvanam |*

have you spotted the cows?' Indeed, he replied: 'What is this mention of the cows?' 'This is exactly the mention of the cows,' Indra said indeed, squeezing his throat, 'I am certain that this is your mouth, namely of one who lived right among the cows.' He indeed threw out either a drop of curd or thickened milk. He became this that in spring is born as a mushroom of the earth. He indeed cursed him: 'O vile, may your existence become contemptible, [of you who] having found our cows, did not deliver them.' Indeed his life became the most wicked, in the hinder part of the village.

JB 2.441[9]

They said to Saramā: 'O Saramā, seek after our cows.' [By replying] 'So be it,' she indeed moved along. She indeed went to the Rasā. This indeed [was] the Rasā that from hither [is] the sewer of the sea. She said indeed: 'Verily, I will float on you, you will become fordable for me.' 'Swim across me,' (the Rasā) said indeed, 'I will not become fordable for you.' She, the flowing one, indeed swam quickly, after turning downwards the two ears. She (the Rasā) indeed observed: 'Now, how could the she-dog swim across me? Oh, I shall be fordable for her.' She indeed said to her 'Swim across me, I will become fordable for you.' 'So be it' [Saramā replied]. Indeed, she (the Rasā) was fordable for her. She (Saramā) indeed passed through the ford. She indeed reached them, which were in the middle of the Rasā, hidden by Vala. Therefore, (the Paṇis) placed this before her, who came after [the cows], indeed: clarified butter, thickened milk, curd, sour milk. She said indeed: 'I am not so much unfriendly to the gods. Having found the cows, I could eat of you. Indeed, having carried out the robbery of the gods, you are moving; verily, I am the path of these cows. You shall not prate to me, nor shall you take away Indra's cows.' She indeed stayed, without eating. She indeed found the cast-off skin of a serpent.[10] She indeed ate it. One (of the Paṇis) went near her [saying] 'Indeed, Saramā eats the placenta, as if [she is] killing him.' Then this also [became] a common saying: 'Indeed, Saramā eats the placenta, as if [she is] killing him.' Indeed, she ate the placenta. She indeed ran back again. (The gods) indeed said to her: 'Saramā, have you reached the cows?'

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[9] *te saramām abruvan sarama imā nastvaṃ gā anviccheti | tatheti sā ha anuprasasāra | sā ha rasām ājagāma | eṣā ha vai sā rasā yaiṣārvāk samudrasya vāpāyatī | tāṃ hovāca ploṣye vā tvā gādhā me bhaviṣyasi iti | plavasya ma iti hovāca na te gādhā bhaviṣyami iti | sā hāvācya karṇau ploṣyamāṇā sasāra | sā ha īkṣāṃcakre kathaṃ nu mā śunī plaveta hantāsyai gādhāsāni iti | tāṃ hovāca mā mā ploṣṭhā gādhā te bhaviṣyamīti | tatheti | tasyai ha gādha āsa | sā ha gādhena atisasāra |tā ha anvājagāma rasāyām antarvalena apihitāḥ | tasyai ha anvāgatāyai tathaiva sarpīḥ kṣīram āmikṣāṃ dadhi iti etad eva upanindadhuḥ | sā hovāca na aham etāvadapriyā devānām | gā avidaṃ yadvo'śnīyām | ta u vai devānāṃ steyaṃ kṛtvā carathaitāsāṃ vā ahaṃ gāvām udavīrasmi | na mā lāpayiṣyadhva nendrasya gā upahariṣyadhva iti | sā hānāśiṣyuvāsa | sā ha jarāyvapāstaṃ viveda | tadda cakhāda | tāṃ haika upajagau 'tyamiva vai ghnatī saramā jarāyu khādati iti | tadidamapyetarhi nivacanaṃ 'tyamiva vai ghnatī saramā jarāyu khādati iti | jarāyu ha sā taccakhāda | sā ha punarāsasāra | tāṃ ha ucussarame'vido gā iti |*

[10] According to the lexicons, *jarāyu* (n) counts among its meanings 'the cast-off skin of a serpent' and 'the outer skin of the embryo.' The first could be referred to Vala (Vṛtra's brother) as a serpent. In this sense, Saramā eating his skin could mean overpowering him. As for the second meaning, see *Atharvaveda Śaunakīya* (AVŚ) 1.11.4 where an easy childbirth is wished, when the placenta slips down to be eaten by a dog.

JB 2.442[11]

'I found' she said indeed, 'these ones, [which] had been concealed in the middle of the Rasā by Vala. They, as you imagined, were excited in this way.' Indra indeed said to her: 'O Saramā, I will make the progeny of you food-eater, who found our cows.' They [who live] among the Vidarbhas, indeed the sons of Saramā (i.e. the dogs) also kill the tiger. The gods arranged this Abhiplava ceremony. By means of this [ceremony] they overflew with this. Since they overflew [by means of this], this is called Abhiplava. They consumed Vala right by means of Agni, [and] broke [him into pieces] by means of the Vajra. Whatever is the Jyotiṣṭoma (i.e. the light) that is in the first place, this is Agni; then, whatever is the bovine (i.e. devoted to the Gavāmayana sacrifice) Bahiṣpavamāna made of fifteen verses, this is the Vajra. They separated them (i.e. the cows of the Gavāmayana sacrifice) with the Āyus (i.e. by means of vigour). Since they separated them by means of vigour, this is called Āyus. They surrounded them (i.e. the cows of the Gavāmayana sacrifice) from both sides right with this Jyotiṣṭoma (i.e. with the light). They become these four Ukthyas (libations) in the middle. Verily, the sacrificial animals [are] the Uktha verses. A thousand of Stotra verses belong to them. Verily, Brahman [is] the bright Agniṣṭoma. After encompassing them on both sides right by means of this (Abhiplava ceremony) with a Brahman and a Jyotiṣṭoma, they set up. They, who being aware of this perform the Abhiplava, become elevated, indeed, as endowed with a thousand rewards. Then they said 'When what is the four-day [ceremony] [is] intertwined in the middle, the Gavāmayana, the Āyus, the Gavāmayana and the Āyus. Then why do the two Jyotiṣṭomas have been placed separately?' He indeed should reply: 'In order to copulate, to obtain offspring.' He who is aware of this, is born forth by means of the copulation.

The passage is evidently a more articulate and ritually oriented version of ṚV, which is probably only a fragment of the overall picture, but it is noticeable that both scenes are staged as a theatrical back-and-forth dialogue among the parts. In JB, the Paṇis are clearly called *asura*s (thus powerful agents) and the gods' cowherds, which presuppose a pastoral, and perhaps nomadic background, in which hierarchies define social roles—and here the cattle really belong to the *deva*s, in particular to Indra. New characters make their appearance, like Aliklava Suparṇa and Vala, whereas the Rasā acquires more consistency through a dialogue with Saramā, who is explicitly called *śunī*. Let us sketch their profiles.

The gods try to recover Indra's cows by seeking help from the bird Aliklava, called Suparṇa, 'the well-feathered one.' This first attempt fails, since the Paṇis bribe him with milk and dairy products. When Indra finds out, he condemns Aliklava to be damned, living a miserable life: it is a mythical

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[11] *āvidam iti hovācemā rasāyām antarvalena apihitāḥ |tā yathā manyadhvam evam ājihīrṣateti |tāṃ ha tad indra uvācānnādīm are te sarame prajāṃ karomi yā no gā anvavida iti | te haite vidarbheṣu mācalās sārameyā api ha śārdūlam mārayanti |te devā etam abhiplavaṃ samabharan |tenainā abhyaplavanta |yad abhyaplavanta tad abhiplavasyābhiplavatvam | te 'gninaiva valam abhyauṣan vajreṇābhindan | tā āyuṣaivāyuvata | yad āyuṣaivāyuvata tad āyuṣa āyuṣṭvam | tā etenaiva jyotiṣobhayataḥ paryauhan | sa ya eṣa purastāj jyotis so'gnir atha yat pañcadaśam gor bahiṣpavamānaṃ sa vajraḥ | ta ete catvāro madhya ukthyā bhavanti | paśavo vā ukthāni | teṣāṃ sahasraṃ stotryāḥ | brahma vai jyotiragniṣṭomaḥ | tā etenaiva brahmaṇā jyotiṣobhayataḥ parigṛhyodāharan | te ya evaṃ vidvāṃso'bhiplavam upayanti sahasrasanayo haivotthitā bhavanti | tadāhur yad eṣa caturaho madhye vyatiṣakto gaur āyur gaur āyur ity atha kasmāj jyotiṣī viparyūḍhe iti | mithunatvāya prajananāyeti ha bruyāt | pra mithunena jāyate ya evaṃ veda |*

explanation for the animal's actual nature, which is despised and left out for feeding on dead prey. Other sources say that Suparṇa, 'well-feathered,' denotes the eagle, whereas *aliklava* is the popular name for a carrion bird, attested in two *Atharvaveda* hymns, in all cases belonging to a list of wild animals, mostly carrion-feeding.[12] Aliklava becomes then a mushroom (or another small whitish sprout born from a drop of dairy products), thus climbing down to a lower level of existence, but with the possibility of germinate again every spring. Whatever Aliklava Suparṇa's backstory may be, in JB, Saramā's success in recovering the cows starts from the bird's failure.

Another interesting feature is the dialogue between Saramā and the Rasā: how is the first one supposed to cross the latter? Firstly refusing to become fordable for Saramā, after seeing her difficulties in swimming, the Rasā seems to change her mind, becoming a ford through which she might reach her target. Noticeably, the challenge is overcome thanks to the cooperation of the only two female characters of the story. Furthermore, the Rasā is not a common river, being commonly described as 'a mythical stream supposed to flow around the earth and the atmosphere,' while Ranade (2019: 1135) observes that it 'flows hitherwards away from the sea:' considering her nature, the mythic river resembles a yonder stream, which keeps the living on the outside of a non-place, far from an otherworldy refuge.

Having crossed the Rasā,[13] Saramā finally faces Vala and the Paṇis. Remarkably, each of the 'speaking' characters—be it a she-dog, a bird, a river, a god or a demon—behaves exactly like a human being would do, a datum which makes it difficult to understand Vala's nature: is he a demon or a cave? We assume that his name, cited here, is only the personification of the cave in which the cattle is kept; for sure he surrounds (or restrains, *nirudh-*) cows, an action compatible with serpent-like appearance, which perhaps might imply an ideal similarity with Vṛtra.

Just like in ṚV 10.108, the Paṇis attempt to convince Saramā to betray her patron, but she refuses: instead, she eats a *jarāyu*: eating a part of another living being could mean to take possession of their essence, to overpower and cancel their presence and deeds. Whatever symbolical value this action means, Vala and his protected Paṇis lose their relevance and power in this debate, being somehow

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[12] In AVŚ 11.2 the term is attested in verses 2.1 (*śune kroṣṭre mā śarīrāṇi kartam aliklavebhyo gṛdhrebhyo ye ca kṛṣṇā aviṣyavaḥ |* 'Do not make the bodies for the dog, the jackal, the carrion birds, the vultures, those that [are] greedy carrion-eating animals') and 24.1 (*tubhyam āraṇyāḥ paśavo mṛgā vane hitā haṃsāḥ suparṇāḥ śakunā vayāṃsi |* 'To you the domestic and wild animals held in the forest, the gray geese, the well-feathered, the big birds, the winged ones') whereas in AVŚ 11.9.9 the *aliklava*s are mentioned along with the *jāṣkamada*s (a not better identified 'kind of animal,' according to MW), the vultures and the hawks.

[13] The verb *plu-* ('to float'/'to swim'), used for Saramā moving in the water, does not tell much about how Saramā's crossing over happens. Also, when Saramā finds the hidden cows, these are *rasāyām antarvalena apihitāḥ*: one cannot help but try to imagine how the setting is conceived, especially how a herd can be kept in the middle of a river.

defeated by this final action. At last Saramā reports the cows to the gods; as a reward, Indra makes her offspring *ānnād-* 'food-eater,'[14] dogs that in the Vidarbha land are able even to kill the tiger. If Aliklava is existencially declassified for his betrayal, and forced to only generate himself over and over again into a miserable being, in a specular way Saramā's loyalty is rewarded with her progeny's social upgrade.

4. Other Rigvedic fragments of the story

To account for the other occurrences of Saramā in the earliest *saṃhitā*, ṚV 1.62.3 focuses on Indra's deeds in the Vala myth, and the role the Aṅgirases play in recovering the cattle: 'the Aṅgirases, knowing the track (/word), chanting, found the cows.'[15]

> At the order of Indra and the Aṅgirases, Saramā found the nourishment for the offspring.
> Bṛhaspati split the rock open [and] found the cows. The men bellowed together with the reddish [cows].[16]

In ṚV 1.72.8 her mention has a positive value, while a parallel is implicitly traced between the rescuing of the Fire and Saramā's deeds, as she is the one who found "the cattle-pen, by which, even now, the clan stemming from Manu benefits" (Jamison-Brereton (2014: 197).

ṚV 5.45.7-8[17] probably refers to same myth as ṚV 10.108, mentioning the Navagvas and the Aṅgirases along with Saramā, who is said to have recovered the cows by being the one who goes for the *ṛta*, and immediately after, in verse 8.2, the *ṛta*-path makes its appearance.

> The (pressing) stone, guided by the hand, bellowed there, the stone along with which the Navagvas sang for ten months. Saramā, going after the truth, found the cows; the Aṅgiras made all things real.
> When all the Aṅgirases roared along with the cows at the brightening of this great (dawn), at the fountainhead of them [=cows], in the highest seat, Saramā found the cows along the path of truth.[18]

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[14] According to Amano (2013: 73), 'food-eater' is a Vedic expression used to indicate one who 'has a stabilized economy.'

[15] According to Jamison-Brereton (2014: 182) this hymn contemplates feminine characters in pairs, sometimes wives (*janī* and *patnī*), sometimes sisters (*svasṛ*, just as the Paṇis address Saramā in order to convince her to become one of them).

[16] *indrasyāṅgirasāṃ ceṣṭau vidat saramā tanayāya dhāsim | bṛhaspatir bhinad adriṃ vidad gāḥ sam usriyābhir vāvaśanta naraḥ ||*

[17] *anūnod atra hastayato adrir ārcan yena daśa māso navagvāḥ | ṛtaṃ yatī saramā gā avindad viśvāni satyāṅgiraś cakāra || viśve asyā vyuṣi māhināyāḥ saṃ yad gobhir aṅgiraso navanta | utsa āsām parame sadhastha ṛtasya pathā saramā vidad gāḥ ||*

[18] Tr. Jamison-Brereton (2014: 719).

AVŚ 4.5.2 also refers to her as *sakhā,* a 'friend' of Indra, which allows White (1986: 239) to suggest that Saramā is a herd dog, whose job is usually to go after the cows.[19]

Later commentators give metaphoric explanations of this myth: in Mahīdhara's commentary on *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* (VS), Saramā is considered as a heavenly dog and as Speech (Vāc), whereas in Sāyaṇa's commentary on *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (TĀ), she is the sacred altar (*vedi*) (Hariyappa (1953: 160-64)).

5. Dogs in old Indo-Aryan tradition

How was the dog considered in Vedic literature? Already Hopkins 1894 tried to investigate this matter, noticing that 'dog' (*śva-/śuna-*) is frequently a man's name.[20] Indeed, dog features are pervasive in Indo-Aryan culture, perhaps because of the long time companionship of dog and human, especially in a tribal society, like the nomadic Aryans must have been. Dogs were (and still are) used for hunting, guarding and protecting settlements; they migrate along with their owners when domestic, help catching a prey in packs, control and guide herds as sheepdogs as Saramā in ṚV. No wonder such a close animal became a symbol and metaphor for anything halfway between animal wilderness and human communities.

In the old Indo-European institution of brotherhoods, the dog and the wolf, its progenitor, were terms used for addressing the group members: the young, attacking, unsettled warriors were the wolves, while the dogs were the oldest ones, with the function of protecting their companions and their clan. The Indo-Aryan declination of these Männerbünde were the Vrātyas, sworn/consecrated warriors gathered around a *sthapati* (or *gṛhapati*), a *primus inter pares* who led the group during raids and was in charge of the sharing of the booty, but also performed sacrifices and ascetic practices on behalf of the group, and was depositary of esoteric knowledge. This might link Saramā with the Maruts (whose father is Rudra and whose leader is Indra); Vrātyas claim to be Rudra's dogs (see Falk 1986: 18-

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[19] A brief mention is deserved by the latest source available, *Bṛhaddevatā* (BD) 8.24-36, which clearly follows the ṚV patterns, but twists the end of the story. In accordance with the tradition, Saramā is sent out by Indra, in order to seek the cows; the Paṇis ask her to stay as their sister, and propose to share the booty. She refuses, remarking that she does not desire neither sisterhood nor wealth; but – and at this point the plot begins to diverge – she would drink the hidden cows' milk, 'from having a natural taste and greed.' After crossing back the one hundred league-long Rasā, under the effect of the milk, the she-dog does not report the cows to Indra, who, enraged, strikes her with his foot. This causes her to vomit the milk (which in some ways reminds of Aliklava Suparṇa) and go back to the Paṇis, full of fear. Finally, Indra recovers the cows on his own, having followed her up to the Paṇis' refuge.

[20] See e.g. the three brothers Śunaḥpuccha, Śunaḥśepa and Śunolāṅgūla (lit. dog's tail, penis, and hairy tail) in *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (AitB) 7.15.7.

19; White 1991:95-100), the Maruts are their divine double (Falk 1986: 64; White 1991: 98):[21] the background these figures come from is the same.

As *dīkṣita*s and *brahmacārin*s, Vrātyas were subjected to sexual restrictions, which might seem contrasting with the free mating of dogs, and yet if marriage is the norm, extremely licentious and extremely abstinent behaviour deviate from that norm. All unusual sexual habits are situated outside normal and normative orthodoxy, and even the aggressive war lexicon could hide a second layer, referred to the erotic and sexual sphere.[22] Reminiscences of such sexually oriented dynamics can still be found nowadays, in cults and rites involving groups of devotees and the normalised presence of dogs. Sontheimer's (1984: 166) suggestion that 'The dog is often a metaphor for sexuality and sexual licentiousness' is thus relatable to Malla, Mani's brother and *rākṣasa*,[23] who inspired the legend on which the popular cult of Mallāri-Khaṇḍobā in Maharashtra (called Mailār in Karnataka and Mallanna in Andhra) is based. According to the popular tale (see Sontheimer 1984: 155-156), the demons Malla and Mani had become enemies of the gods by killing cows and Brāhmans, which led to their defeat by Khaṇḍobā, Śiva's *avatara* and the gods' messenger, in a battle which closely resembles a sacrifice. The cult is a perpetuation of the Rudra/Paśupati tradition, of which it preserves several elements, such as the bow iconography. *Malla-*, a common noun for 'wrestler,' is also the name of a tribe listed among others which, according to Manu, are be considered as descending from a Vrātya,[24] probably due to their unusual lifestyle and nomadic past. In JB 3.199, Kutsa Aurava, Indra's charioteer, is called *malla* for threatening the god's wife and sleeping with her. Indra makes him bald, but Kutsa again attempts to deceive her wearing an *uṣṇīṣa*, a turban commonly worn by the Mallas, by Rudra/Śiva and by the

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[21] The divinization of brotherhoods in not unusual in Indo-European mythology: see e.g. the Norse Einerjar, the Irish Fianna and the Iranic Mairya (Kershaw 1997: 338-457).

[22] Some scholars attributed a sexual connotation to Saramā. Witzel (1997: 388) reads the whole *samvāda* as an 'exchange of words, full of *double entendre* (*śleṣa*).' Bodewitz (2009: 271) considers 'axle' and 'chariot' in the renowned dialogue between Yama and Yamī in ṚV 10.10 (whose structure is similar to ṚV 10.108) as sexual metaphors. Sexual promiscuity was also practiced by the Greek Cynicals, who—similarly to the Vrātyas—lived on the edge of social rules.

[23] The demon Malla also threatens Brahmins' wives (Sontheimer 1984: 157).

[24] In some Pāli passages quoted by Law (1973: 257-62; 294-332) and studied by Neri (2015: 402-409) Mallas figure as a prominent warrior tribe. According to the *Mānavadharmaśāstra* 10.22: *jhallo mallaś ca rājanyād vrātyāl licchivir eva ca | naṭaś ca karaṇaś caiva khaso draviḍa eva ca caiva khaso draviḍa eva ca ||* 'From a warrior [deemed to be] *vrātya* are born the Jhalla, the Malla, the Licchivi, the Naṭa, the Karaṇa, the Khasa, and the Draviḍa.' The Mallas were an 'independent martial group,' perhaps living in the Chenab-Ravi Doāb, i.e. near to the desert of Rajasthan at the time of JB (3.200) and, named as Malloí by Arr, Ind 19.8; An. 6.5.4; 6.6.1, seem to be there in Alexander's time (see e.g. Witzel 1987: fn. 67). According to Choudhary (1964: 28f.), 'since the Mallas and the Licchavis had oligarchical constitution with a nomadic past, they were termed as Vrātyas by Manu.'

Vrātyas. Nevertheless, the assumed sexual freedom of Saramā is not mentioned in the surveyed texts. By contrast, she is connected with a rich offspring, which is a reward for her loyalty.

Sexual promiscuity seems to be lost in Khaṇḍobā rites, whose followers are nevertheless known as *vāghyā*s (dogs) in Marathi and *vaggayya*s in Kannada (Dębicka-Borek (2015: 254), from *vyāghra*, 'tiger.' In Jejuri, the most important cult centre of Khaṇḍobā, where dogs are allowed in temples, and where copper statues of Malla and dogs are present, devotees use turmeric powder, stored in a bag made of tiger skin, to mark the dogs' foreheads; furthermore, the *bhakta*s keep their vows by barking, carrying a spear and wearing clothes according to Vrātya descriptions. Their behaviour has been interpreted by Dębicka-Borek (2015: 255-256) as 'the reminiscence of Rudra's troop,' i.e. the Maruts. The scholar provides a number of details about 'rudraic' features who relate Rudra, Narasiṃha and Khaṇḍobā (or Kaṇḍobā), behind the latter there are Śiva, Indra and Rudra. For instance, both Khaṇḍobā and Rudra are said to come from the mountain which 'sounds almost as a description of such cults which are indeed dedicated to dangerous and furious deities worshipped on mountains, far away from civilization.'[25] Both are connected with dogs and tigers: in the ancient hymn devoted to god Rudra 'dog-leaders' and 'lords of dogs' are mentioned, and Rudra is seated on or clad in a tiger skin (*Śatarudrīya* 1.5; 4.5). In *Hiraṇyakeśi Gṛhyasūtra* 2.7.2, the Ekavrātya is addressed as a dog. In AitB 8.6, Rudra is the Lord of the forest (*araṇyānām patiḥ*) like the tiger. The Vāghobā ('Father Tiger') cult of Maharashtra seems to recall such an ancient stage of the cult of Śiva (preceding that of the Purāṇas; Sontheimer 1997: 96; Dębicka-Borek 2015: 261). Even today the devotees (*bhakta*s) behave like dogs within the relative festivals. Khaṇḍobā's canonical image pictures him on a horse, surrounded by a pack of dogs, for hunting or for vanquishing demons—namely *daitya*s Malla and Mani. Sontheimer (1984:166) observes that 'The mixing of 'tiger' and 'dog' is chronic in myth, ritual and in art,'[26] while he notes that Bhairava's *vāhana*s are 'the dog and the tiger or two animals which are a mixture of both.' *Puruṣavyāghra*,[27] 'that tiger of a man,' is an epithet for a warrior who has covered himself with glory; on the other hand, *puruṣavyāghra*s were listed among the wild beings selected as victims of the sacrifices aimed at keeping fathers and sons divided in *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (TB) 3.9.1.2-4 and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (ŚB) 13.2.4.2-4,

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[25] The *muraḷī*, a woman married to Khaṇḍobā, is the ancestress of the *puṃścalī*, often considered as a harlot but with no textual evidence, which is cited in AVŚ 15.2 and is known for accompanying the Vrātyas in their expeditions. See Sontheimer (1997: 95); Eschmann (2005: 106); Dębicka-Borek (2015: 258).

[26] It has been noted how the Indian pair tiger-lion occasionally substituted the Indo-European wolf-dog one. Nevertheless, in the Mallāri-Khaṇḍobā cult, dog and tiger frequently occur together.

[27] As for the translation of this *karmadhāraya* compound rule according to *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 2.1.56, see Mocci-Pontillo (2019).

while one of them is mentioned as beneficiary of the sacrifice of a mad man in VS 30.8 (see Pontillo-Sudyka 2016: 276-287).

Considering all these pieces of information, it is tempting to assume that the context in which the Sārameyas kill the tiger is Vrātya-oriented, even though the specific action performed by them can hardly be decoded. Other details point to the same cultural direction: the Maruts' chariot is drawn by dogs (Hopkins (1894: 155)), and it is well known that the Maruts are the utmost warrior Männerbund found in Vedic times, which can be associated with other Indo-European analogous institutions.

It appears that contact with dogs implicates a liminal social position—either temporarily (like in *vāghya* rites) or permanently—halfway between anthropic world and animal sphere, life and underworld, in the middle of heterodoxy. This might have been one of the factors (along with the harshening of the mainstream behavioural rules, resulting in the Brahmanical reform) that led to considering dogs to be dirty and corrupting. This is the social context in which the Caṇḍālas, outcasts and members of the most despised tribes, are called *śvapaca*s, 'dog-cookers,' or, *śvapāka*s, 'the ones nourished by dogs.'[28] Caṇḍālas eat dogs, and what has been touched or licked by them; they are socially defined (and excluded) due to their connection with dogs. The breaking of sexual rules might be a part of this connection: just as the dog is impure by being sexually promiscuous, Caṇḍālas are born from a Śūdra father and a Brāhman mother,[29] therefore they do not belong to the *caturvarṇa* system. Furthermore, Caṇḍālas' job is to dispose of corpses, which makes them the closest human beings to death, whereas dogs are said to be carrion-feeders.

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[28] White (1991: 72-73) cites *Amarakośa* 2.10.44-46. (2.10.20 in Sardesay-Padhye 1940) according to the scholar, all outcasts are defined by the term *śvapaca*: therefore if Brahmins are identified with pure cows that, among other things, give them dairy products for their diet, outcasts 'live by the flesh or milk of their impure dogs.' Śvapacas are described twice in the *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, namely in 3.92, while accounting for Bali offerings, states that 'He should also gently place on the ground offerings for dogs, outcastes, dog-cookers, persons with evil diseases, crows and worms' (tr. Olivelle (2005: 113)), whereas 10.15 affirms that "Cāṇḍālas and Śvapacas, however, must live outside the village and they should be made Apapatras. Their property consists of dogs and donkeys, their garments are the clothes of the dead; they eat in broken vessels; their ornaments are of iron; and they constantly roam about" (tr. Olivelle (2005: 210)).

[29] White (1991: 87) takes this piece of information from MBh 13.48.10, 21.

6. Death and afterdeath

6.1 A change in perception: from psychopomp to demon

Saramā's closeness to the other world is reflected in her (supposed) family. For instance, in ṚV 10.14.10-11 Saramā's sons are two, four-eyed (*caturakṣau*), and strictly related to Yama, therefore to death and afterworld.

> Run through a straight path beyond the two spotted four-eyed dogs, sons of Saramā,
>
> then approach the propitious Pitṛs who exult [in] their drinking with Yama.
>
> Your two dogs, which [are] your protectors, o Yama, [are] the four-eyed guardians of the road,
>
> watching mankind. Grant this to him, o king, put above him both good health and fortune.[30]

The two Sārameyas are the guardians of a path created by Yama for those who, dead since not long ago, move towards the yonder world: the *pitṛyana*, a bridge between the dead and the living ones.[31] The Pitṛs are often associated with Yama and his entourage; sometimes, this includes dogs or dog elements as psychopomps, operating as bridges between deceased and living ones. The psychopomp feature is not surprising, when compared to other Indo-European hellhounds, just like Cerberus.

The *Mahābhārata* (MBh) depiction seems to be a joint between Vedic deification and gratitude towards Saramā's deeds, and the later demonisation of her and her offspring (probably coinciding with a stricter attitude towards dogs in general, considered impure). MBh 3.219.33-34 offers a clear picture of the change of perspective towards Saramā: if in older sources there was no suspicion or despise, here she is presented as an immoral being who threatens births.

> The mother of the cows who now is called 'the charming one' by the wise ones, o king,
>
> The bird (demon), then ascending with her, consumes children in this world;
>
> Saramā is called she who is mother, she-dog and goddess, o Janādhipa,
>
> Indeed she always [is] also taking away embryos of women.[32]

The context is the same as AVŚ 1.11.4 (see fn.11), but turned upside down: the dog is not anymore auspicious for a delivery, instead it is dangerous, malevolent and greedy for pregnancy. 'Saramā

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[30] *ati drava sārameyau śvānau caturakṣau śabalau sādhunā pathā | athā pitṝn suvidatrāṁ upehi yamena ye sadhamādam madanti || yau te śvānau yama rakṣitārau caturakṣau pathirakṣī nṛcakṣasau | tābhyām enam pari dehi rājan svasti cāsmā anamīvaṃ ca dhehi ||*

[31] Sandness (2007: 88) notes that this path of the ancestors is probably oriented southwards, as on the sacrificial field the offer for the manes is placed in its southern point, but she considers each of the dogs to have two eyes.

[32] *gavāṃ mātā tu yā prājñaiḥ kathyate surabhir nṛpa | śakunis tām athāruhya saha bhuṅkte śiśūn bhuvi || saramā nāma yā mātā śunāṃ devī janādhipa | sāpi garbhān samādatte mānuṣīṇāṃ sadaiva hi ||*

becomes a ghoul who devours children who are still in their mothers' wombs' (White (1986: 243)): what was considered divine will be presented as a demon now onwards.

Dog-shaped will also be the demons who make attempts on children's life in the form of diseases: *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra* 1.16.24-25 reports a magic formula to be pronounced in order to make a disease leave the body of an ill child. In case the demon Kumāra attacks the boy in a *śvagraha* (or *svagraha,* literally 'dog attack,' which has been identified with epilepsy), his father should bring him in the middle of the *sabhā,* then recite the magic riddle:

> If Kumāra, attacking suddenly, scattered with a net or with an upper garment, putting down the lap, whispers: 'O Kūrkura, Sukūrkura, Kūrkura, who binds children. | Be quiet, o young dog, let [him] loose! Be homage to you, o Sīsara, o Lapeta, o Apahvara. If it is true | that the gods gave [you] a boon, verily, you should cover this boy. | Be quiet, o young dog, let [him] loose! Be homage to you, o Sīsara, o Lapeta, o Apahvara. If it is true | that Saramā [is] your mother, Sīsara your father, Śyāma and Śabala your brothers. Be quiet, o young dog, let [him] loose! Be homage to you, o Sīsara, o Lapeta, o Apahvara.' |
>
> He touches (the boy) [by saying] 'He does not weep, he is not anxious, he is not weary; then we speak, when we touch [him].'[33]

This passage allows us to add pieces to the Saramā puzzle. Śyama (the Black One) and Śabala (the Spotted One) are Saramā's sons—perhaps the Mācalas, certainly Yama's two dogs, whereas Sīsara is their father.[34] But there is a third brother, the demon itself, responsible for the disease that binds the child, and who must be convinced to let him loose with such a spell. Another chant, ṚV 7.55.1, addresses an *arjuna* Sārameya, 'presumably a watchdog barking in the night, [...] urged to go to sleep' (Jamison-Brereton 2014: 947). What originally was meant to protect the household from thieves and robbers, seems to become a dangerous intruder in later literature.

The role of dogs in relation to death is better understood when considering its importance in sacrifices, not only in royal *aśvamedha*s, but also in *sattra*s. One of the places where the presence of dogs exerts its influence in the sacrificial arena is the Naimiṣa forest, where, according to the epics, the sage Gauramukha defied a whole Asura army in the blink of an eye;[35] hence it became a sacred place, a *tīrtha* for pilgrims and home to hermits. Young brahmans were instructed there, and initiated to probably

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[33] *yadi kumāra upadravejjālena pacchādhyottarīyeṇa vāpitā'ṅka ādhāya japati kūrkuraḥ sukūrkuraḥ kūrkuro bālabandhanaḥ | ceccec chunaka sṛja namaste astu sīsaro lapetāpahvara tatsatyam | yatte devā varamadaduḥ sa tvaṃ kumārameva vā vṛṇīthāḥ | ceccec chunaka sṛja namaste astu sīsaro lapetāpahvara tatsatyam | yat te saramā mātā sīsaraḥ pitā śyāmaśabalau bhrātarau ceccec chunaka sṛja namaste astu sīsaro lapetāpahvareti || abhimṛśayati na rudati na hṛṣyati na glāyati tatra vayaṃ vadāmo yatra cābhimṛśāmasīti |*

[34] Hariyappa (1953: 163) notes that in *Ekāgnikaṇḍa* 2.16 Lohita is said to be the father.

[35] MBh 1.38.

esoteric rites: the best known example is Śaunaka, who gathered pupils around him in order to teach them a 12-year-long sacrifice. Considering its running time, a celebration of this kind is probably comparable to a *sattra*.[36] In JB 1.363, Śitibāhu Aiṣakṛta, *sattrin* who celebrates for *gṛhapati* Somaśuṣma, is called *naimiṣin*, which suggests that violent, unorthodox *sattra*s took place in the forest.[37] In MBh 1.3 a Sārameya, led by curiosity, runs into a *sarpasattra* celebrated by Janamejaya in the Naimiṣa forest. Three of Janamejaya's brothers hit the divine pup, but Saramā proclaims its innocence since it had not looked upon the sacrifice and polluted it. The *sattra* is interrupted and never accomplished; misfortune will fall upon Janamejaya, cursed by Saramā to be filled with fear whenever he least expects it (White 1999: 97).

6.2 Dogs in the *sabhā*: a dice game for royal legitimacy

Unlike what happened after the so-called Brahmanical reform, dogs played an important role in Indo-Aryan culture. Their symbology was also crucial for the Vrātyas, who were fond of dice games, so much that it permeated the terminology for gambling, which was more a game of skill than of luck. White 1986 and 1989 has focused on the term *śvaghnin,* the name for a gambler, in the popular etymology of *śva-han*: '[the *śvaghnin*] is the 'killer' (-*ghnin*, from *han*, 'slay') of, or through the agency of, the dog (*śva*). But the hunter of dogs is, in this play of meanings, a hunter of goods (*sva*, like the Latin *sua*)—in this case the goods or possessions of his adversary in the dice game.'[38]

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[36] See the two recorded cases of 12-year sacrifices in *Padma Purāṇa* 6.219.1-12, 1 and MBh 1.1 ff.

[37] About the Naimiṣa *sattra*s, White (1999: 97-98): 'the sattras held by the Vrātyas in the Naimiṣa forest in the dark dead of winter are portrayed as violent sacrifices in Brahmanic mythology. Thus the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* [TS] states: 'the dakṣiṇā of the sattra is 'itself,' ātman… he who accepts a dakṣiṇā at a sattra eats a corpse: a human corpse, or the corpse of the horse. Food is the cow." TS 7.4.9 is being cited here: *ātmádakṣiṇaṃ vái sattrám*. Pontillo (2023: 200) underlines that in this context the *ātman* is indeed the self, the *sattrin*'s body, cut deeper and deeper at each ritual stage; *dakṣiṇā* cannot mean 'priestly fee,' but it is rendered with 'magnificence,' which is necessary for the Vrātya group to be successful in its sacrifice. Summing up, the pre-Black Yajurvedasaṃhitā *sattra* establishes that the officiant's body be offered, for his magnificence will provide merits for the group and the *svarga loka* for himself (about the mechanism of merit transfer see Candotti-Neri-Pontillo 2020 and 2021). Also, Pandeya (1964: 406) writes that in MBh 8.32 the *ṛṣi* Angiras states that 'he who bathes in Naimiṣa, and offers oblations of water to the departed manes, controlling his senses all the while acquires the merit of a human sacrifice.' Given its context, one cannot help but think about Falk 1985 and 1986, and to his supposition that all *sattra*s in the beginning were human sacrifices. See Amano 2024 on the cannibalism entailed by the *sattra*s.

[38] White (1986: 290). Falk 1986's volume on Vrātyas includes an in-depth section on gambling, which has been the basis for Kershaw's and White's studies. Specifically on this matter, Kershaw (1997: 409) agrees with White, as she associates this kind of gambling with the Vrātyas with the dice games played by the Germans.

Besides, considering that 'Śyama and Śabala[39]—or, taken together, the Sārameyau, the sons of the divine bitch Saramā—are each described as 'having four eyes.' White (1989: 287) suggests that *caturakṣa* should be intended as the 'four-dice dog.' at the same time as 'four-eyed dog,' since *akṣa* can mean both 'die' and 'eye'—thus emphasising the three-folded relationship between dogs, death and the dice game played in the assembly hall, whose outcome was often crucial in the player's life. The scholar points out that the *sabhā* can also be a gambling hall, while focusing on the value of the 'four,' winning number in such dice game, which was played with *vibhītaka* nuts (*Terminalia belerica*).[40]

In practice, the connection between dog and death is evident in the *aśvamedha* sacrifice of the royal horse, run in order to legitimate the leader, and whose last ritualistic step was the dice throwing. According to White 1989's reconstruction, one of the preparatory rites of the yearly (or two-year) ceremony was the killing of a black 'four-eyed dog,' a *catur-akṣa śvan*,[41] in conformity to what ṚV 10.14 suggested. It is not clear how there might have been four eyes, but probably the chosen victim must have two spots or depressions above its eyes. The dog's corpse was placed between the horse's legs, chanting the formula *paro martah parah śva*[42] "Away the man, away the dog!" The rite is concluded when 'the dog's corpse is made to float across the pool in a southerly direction, that is, in the direction of death.' (White (1989: 300)). In doing so, it must be bound to the underbelly of the horse, thus connecting the sacrifice to Indra; finally, the royal horse is set free to wander within the king's territory. Floating is exactly what Saramā did while crossing the Rasā, although it can be argued that celebrations involving water are the prototype of fertilising and renewing practices as well as the legitimation rites

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[39] The hellhound Śabala has been linguistically related to the western Cerberus (White 1989: 285), whereas Saramā herself has been traced back to the same archetype of Helen of Troy and Hermes; for instance, Müller (1864: 471) states that 'The siege of Troy is but a repetition of the daily siege of the East by the solar powers that every evening are robbed of their brightest treasures in the West.' The scholar also connected the root for Paris to the Paṇis.

[40] Or *vibhīdaka*, as in Falk 1986. Its nut tree is *keśin*, 'the hairy one' among all the trees, just as Rudra is *keśin* among the gods. This lead us to the name of Keśin Dārbhya, sometimes overlapped with Vaka Dālbhya, whose textual context has been studied as *vrātya*. See Amano 2013; Koskikallio 1999 and 2015; Dore-Pontillo 2013. This figure embodies the ascetic king: he stands like a *baka* (or *vaka*, heron) for an inactive meditation, is familiar with poisonous substances and is clearly acquainted both with social power and ritual knowledge.

[41] *Āpastamba Śrautasūtra* 20.3.6-14, *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra* 15.46, *Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra* 20.1-5, *Śānkhāyana Śrautasūtra* 16.1-9, ŚB 13.1.2.9, TB 3.8.4-5 are White's (1989: 297-298) sources. Besides, Hariyappa (1953: 180, fn.64) notices that Bloomfield recognised the four-eyed bitch of AVŚ 5.20.7 with Saramā, while Śyama and Śabala are respectively interpreted as the Sun and the Moon.

[42] TB 3.8.4.2. I suggest, given the context, to consider *marta* with its etymological 'mortal' meaning: in this sense, the rite's aim is the removal of that deadly and perishable part of the human sphere, represented by the dog. Pushing away the dead dog would mean eliminating the *pāpmān* in it, and the staining pity on the sacrificers, and their *karman*. Also, the dog is called *bhrātṛvya*, therefore the purpose was to cancel hostility and rivalry among the participants (or their families and tribes) which would bring a bad omen on the sacrifice.

of kings; however, floating, and especially floating southwards, might symbolise a journey to death. As a matter of fact, the *sabhā* too is located in the southern (*dakṣiṇa*) part of the village: through the centuries, the east-right has been regarded at as bearing heterodoxy, evil spirits, dead (ancestors too) and death.

The long fortune of the ancient *aśvamedha* rite is testified by archaeological evidence in Vidarbha[43] (Maharashtra), which is, according to JB 2.442, the land where the Mācalas kill the tiger. The excavations were conducted next to a Gond village: the Gonds keep in their tradition both a sexually heterodox nuptial system.[44] and link with the royal prerogatives, since they can sacrifice and eat all animals except horses, and presumably dogs, which 'explains the continued importance of the horse and the dog in cults, especially like that of Khaṇḍobā' (Sontheimer (1984: 162). Parpola 2015 already took into consideration the burial of horse and dog skeletons discovered in Mahurjhari and Naikund by S.B. Deo (1970-72). Vaidya (2023: 166) explores the Nagardhan case, in which the archaeological finds, although late, add details to the *aśvamedha* picture: here a horse skeleton, intact and well preserved, was excavated along with a dog, found in the same position, just below the other one. A sacrificial altar, a spear, a sword, and a battle-axe were found next to the burial site, weapons indicating the power of kingship; Vaidya (2023: 169) suggests that the remains might refer to one of the eleven *aśvamedha*s performed by Madhavvarman I Viṣṇukundin, around 500 CE. Both skeletons do not show any sign of disarticulation, cutting or butchery, suggesting that the animals died of suffocation, as the text prescribe (see ŚB 8.1-5; TB 3.8-9). The tradition of horse burials has a long antiquity in Vidarbha, dating back to the Early Iron Age and Megalithic Culture. Moreover, excavations in Adam e Pauni have yielded clay or terracotta figurines (Pardhi 2023): only four out of 204 represent dogs, whereas 25 horses. Dog figurines date back from II BC to III century CE.

7. Conclusions

The figure of Saramā arose in a (semi) nomadic, competitive, warlike, and aggressive context, perhaps inspired by events of ordinary life—especially considering that the ṚV is often very practical, and that myths frequently originate from real events. The myth originated as a primarily concrete, probably

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[43] The land is named after the *darbha* grass (*Poa Cynosuroides*), which is used for ritual purposes; it might be an etymology for Dālbhya/Dārbhya (see fn.43).

[44] According to Vassilkov (1989: 389), the *sabhā* rules have been recognised in the Gonds' uncommon nuptial system, whose premarital habits involve a *gothul* (mixed dormitory): again, non-orthodox sexual customs are perceived by the Brahmanical mainstream as deviating, promiscuous and impure.

entirely human tale, which was later coated with a mythologic layer that complicated its symbology. Many factors suggest that it was a *vrātya*-oriented reality: a) stealing or winning cattle was the order of the day, necessary in the first place to sustain an entire clan; b) there is a taste for extorting the truth from opponents. Just like in *vrātya*-style *brahmodya*s; c) the protagonist is loyal to her patron in raids, whereas the leader (Indra in this case) is the administrator of booty. Furthermore, since in ṚV 10.108 there is no hint at Saramā being a dog, it cannot be excluded that she might have been originally imagined as a woman, a warrior equal to her male companions, which would not be accepted in later mainstream. Unlike the brotherhood members, who were subject to sexual restrictions, and, for instance, Malla and Mani, who are somehow sexually uncontrollable, no special sexual behaviour is mentioned about Saramā; thus, there is no evidence that Saramā is a *puṃścalī*, and, even if she is, neither that a *puṃścalī* is merely a prostitute. We have seen how Vrātya warriors address themselves (and each other) as wolves or dogs: the custom might have resulted in apotropaic names just like Śunaḥśepa, Śunaskarṇa, Śunaḥsakha, Śaunaka, and so on.

Only after the ṚV, the story became myth: perhaps because of the 'dog epithet, Saramā was then conceived as an actual bitch, then interpreted as Light or Speech. Then the Paṇis (called *asura*s, thus powerful but at the Rigvedic chronological height not superhuman) from being a rival tribe or strangers, became demons, and the cows became a metaphor for light and dawn. While, from a more practical point of view, since it is precisely cows that are involved, to steal them is to take away what is necessary to arrange a sacrifice, thus limiting the religious activity, perhaps even the sapiential authority, of the robbed possessors.

Some interpretations of the tale layout as a renovation myth are nevertheless justified, especially the restoring of spring after a lightless winter, based on a Indo-European archetype, just as in the story of Persephone (after drinking the milk, Aliklava in JB and Saramā in BD are lost, like Persephone after eating the pomegranate). In this sense, Vala's cave can be seen as a non-place, a sort-of Hades, while the Rasā has the function of separating the world of the living and the hereafter. Thus, Saramā's character may be older than attested, although it seems to me to be a mostly Indo-Iranian invention or reworking, -since I did not come across any Indo-European analogues-, even if fitted into an Indo-European motif.

Post-Rigvedic reworkings give an account of otherwise lost connections, for instance Saramā's connection with death, expressed through the family that at some point was assigned to her. In particular, her children, the two dogs belonging to Yama, reflect the Indo-European *topos* of canine psychopomps. Nevertheless, from *devaśunī* to demon we are always moving into the sphere of the otherworldly: in the re-evaluation process, staged as a cultural selection, the dog went from being a

neutral animal, perhaps even a friend, to being considered impure on all fronts (including the sexual one). Thus, mythical material is reshaped in order to get ghouls where the discredited past had created gods: texts like MBh, being a joint between the pre- and post-reform traditions, still keep track, but conceal it with a negative layer.

This change in perspective is part of a more selected and sifted-through canon, which also eliminated the *sattra*s, unpredictable sacrifices and ritual transposition of a special liminality between life and death. Given that the boundaries between what became considered orthodox and what did not are very blurred, it makes sense to think that Brahmanical structure stigmatized symbols, and customs of parallel cultures, such as the 'ideological' descendants of the Vrātyas. What was not completely erased or rewritten was absorbed by the mainstream, resurfacing, for example, in the cults of Mallāri-Khaṇḍobā, which still today partially preserve what must have been Vrātya rites and lifestyle. Other ceremonies in which dogs are involved will be fortunate at least up until VI century CE, as the *aśvamedha* burial site testifies, for being strictly related to kingship and royal legitimacy.

Finally, the human sphere involved is, so to speak, secular; the Brahmanical mainstream preserving the myth could have cut and adjusted it, but all in all at the most ancient level there does not seem to be any reference to a Brahmanical culture and way of life in the strict sense.

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From self-discovery to self-assertion

The musical journey of Janki Bai challenging the courtesan's liminal space

Erika Caranti

Among the most prominent vocalists of Hindustani music and stars of the gramophone era, Janki Bai Ilahabadi stands out not only as a fine singer and poet but also as a legendary artist whose life was marked by travel as the dominant trigger of change. In this article, I focus on the three journeys that, from songstress courtesan, led Janki Bai to become an accomplished artist who challenged stereotypes. The first journey represented for Janki the opportunity to debunk the cliché of the attractive *gānevālī* and to assert her autonomy as an artist. The second coincided with the transition of music from *mahfil*s to the living rooms of the middle class through the gramophone. The third was crucial in solemnising Janki's iconic image. The twilight of her career ran in parallel to the end of the golden era of the *tavāyaf*s, the emergence of the Anti-nautch movement fostered by reformists, and the decline of courtly patronage. This article explores the function of the journey as a catalyst in Janki Bai's life, emblematic of the broader condition of female performers in colonial India. It also examines how *tavāyaf*s, like Janki, used their journeys to articulate and extend their agency and autonomy beyond the limited spaces they inhabited. As Janki's story demonstrates, the construction of the female artist's identity challenges societal expectations of a woman's image and role. Finally, her journey is framed as one of self-discovery, self-acceptance, and self-assertion in a complex social milieu.

Keywords: Janki Bai, Hindustani music, courtesans, *tavāyaf*, *ṭhumrī*, Indian female performers, colonial India.

1. The journey of an artist across courts, social spaces, and inner realms[1]

The Indian musical and cultural scene of the colonial era was dominated by itinerant courtesans, the *tavāyaf*s who were among the most talented artists of the time. In contrast with the marginality of the

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[1] The transliteration of words originally in Devanāgarī script and the use of Hindi follows the method adopted by McGregor (*Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary*, 1993) mediating between a phonetic transcription and scientific transliteration. Therefore, I

restricted sphere they lived in, their mobility should be seen as an expression of their self-reliance that defies social female clichés sedimented within twentieth-century Indian society.

The present article focuses on a woman musician's subjective and actual journey which overlaps with significant historical, social, and cultural changes that affected music and its audience at the turn of the 1800s. This article intends, in the first place, to explore the function of the journey in the life of songstress courtesans of the colonial period as an opportunity and challenge to assert both their subjective self and artistic public image. Through the incidents of the life of a distinguished courtesan artiste, Janki Bai Ilahabadi, travel emerges as a means for *tavāyaf*s to articulate and extend their agency and autonomy beyond the limited physical and social spaces they inhabited.

The ideas of 'mobility' and 'movement' appear to be inherent to the very word *tavāyaf*. The etymological origin of the term is debated: if one school of thought relates it to the Arabic that indicates the circumambulation of the *Kaʿba*, others link it to the Urdu-Persian denomination of a wandering tribe or community of performers and entertainers. Regardless of which derivation is considered correct, both etymologies give prominence to the concept of circling and movement (Rao 2011: 183, Sampath 2010: 19, Singh 2014: 1) and reflect the itinerant nature and dynamism of female singers and dancers.

The journey acted as a catalyst in Janki Bai's personal and musical life which can be regarded as emblematic of the place of female performers in Indian colonial society. The mobility that characterised several female artistic biographies towards the end of the nineteenth century influenced the music forms sung by *tavāyaf*s. Genres such as *ṭhumrī* and its allied forms remodelled themselves by moving out from *mahfil*s[2] and elite private *jalsā*s[3] to reach the wider and ambivalent setting of the public stage of the concert hall and the recording studio. Once these song forms were decontextualised and deprived of their original purpose, they underwent a gradual process of redefinition. The 'functional shift,' resulting from an actual displacement, led certain genres to adapt to new socio-cultural contexts and, by doing so, to develop new features and a high degree of 'intra-genre heterogeneity' or, in other words, diversification which accounts the existence of a music form in a variety of expressions across different genres, styles, and languages (Henry 1991: 238-239).

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have opted for the transliteration system of Sanskrit omitting the 'a' when silent. Hindi terms in common use—such as Hindustani, maharaja etc.—which have entered the English dictionary are written with their English spelling. Geographical names, names of languages, and names of performers and institutions are given in their anglicised form, without diacritic marks.

[2] An intimate gathering for music and dance performance or recital of poetry.

[3] A gathering for entertainment (song, dance, or concert).

Retracing Janki Bai's musical and existential journey sheds light on the condition of female performers in India's colonial society and reveals a composite musical landscape where *tavāyaf*s held a special place since the majority of them were custodians of the *tavāyaf bāzī*, the courtesan culture as a synthesis of different artistic expressions, etiquette, and finesse.

Among the most prominent female performers of Hindustani music and the early stars of the gramophone era, Janki Bai Ilahabadi (1880-1934) stands out as a talented and iconic artist. Her figure has been overshadowed to some extent by the more celebrated vocalist Gauhar Jaan (1873-1930), a glamourous and cosmopolitan diva of her times. Only recently Janki Bai's faded story has been re-discovered and revived on the wave of a renewed interest in lost treasures of a vintage era. The novel *Requiem in Raga Janki* by Neelam Saran Gour, published in 2018 and recipient of the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 2023 in the English language category, features a re-telling of the biography of Janki Bai. This revival comes amidst a growing scholarly and popular interest in the world of courtesans in India, their societal position, and their role in cultural history. Notable songstress-*tavāyaf*s have become the subject of both academic research and literary works, such as biographies, novels, and movies addressed to a general audience. Such is the case of the 2010 book *My Name is Gauhar Jaan: The Life and Times of a Musician* by Vikram Sampath which narrates the story of the eminent courtesan-diva from Kolkata. The legendary singer-dancer Gauhar Jaan, in particular, has inspired several theatrical adaptations, including *Gauhar*, directed by Lilette Dubey and performed across India in 2016, and the solo musical play *My Name is Jaan*, directed by Abanti Chakraborty and starring Arpita Chatterjee, which was staged in 2024. Remakes of iconic Bollywood films, such as *Umrao Jaan* and *Pakeezah*,[4] as well as television series,[5] should be analysed within the same framework, even when they portray fictional characters.

These works highlight the rich cultural heritage associated with *tavāyaf*s by bringing forth marginalised subjectivities of female performers in the patriarchal society of British India. After all,

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[4] *Umrao Jaan* is a 2006 musical romantic drama film, produced and directed by J. P. Dutta, remake of 1981 *Umrao Jaan* directed by Muzaffar Ali and starring Rekha as the eponymous character. The remake of the classic Bollywood film *Pakeezah* (1972)—regarded as one of the most iconic films in Indian cinema and featuring the legendary Meena Kumari in the lead role—has been a topic of discussion for years and is currently in production, with Pakistani actress Meera cast as the protagonist (see HT Correspondent, "Pak actor Meera").

[5] The Netflix series *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar* is a 2024 Indian Hindi-language period drama created and directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. It portrays the lives of *tavāyaf*s in the red-light district of Heera Mandi in Lahore during the Indian independence movement.

intriguing and shadowy life stories of *tavāyaf*s and *bāījī*s[6] are lost in legends and rely mainly on anecdotes and fragments of oral narratives that underwent denial and silencing. One such tale is the story of the courtesan of Allahabad, Janki Bai, brilliantly told by Neelam Gour in her fictionalised biography. This work merges history and story: the lacuna in events and biographical facts are filled with imagined thoughts and words drawn from a thorough psychological exploration of an intriguing persona (Das and Tripathi 2021: 2).

Born in Banaras, Janki was just a child when her father, a wrestler-confectioner *halvāī* deserted her and her family. After a series of unfortunate events, they found themselves in a *koṭhā*, the courtesans' salon, in Allahabad where Janki and her mother became *tavāyaf*s to escape extreme poverty. From that moment, Janki's destiny was inextricably bound to the city of Allahabad, to the point that the name of the capital of the United Provinces became embedded in her sobriquet. The epithet *Ilahabadi*[7] hints at the mobility marking her career as a clear declaration of belonging to a place different from her hometown. In her city of adoption, Janki was not only trained in k͟hayāl and ṭhumrī by the legendary *ustād* Hassu Khan—founder with his brother of the Gwalior *gharānā*—but she also learned Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit, and English. Such a cultural background significantly influenced Janki's musical formation. Furthermore, later in her life, she wrote poetry in Urdu and eventually published a collection titled *Dīvān-e-jānkī*.[8]

A travelling performing artist from a young age, Janki was popularly known as *chappan churī vālī*—'she of the 56 knife gashes.' Her nickname reveals her painful history as a victim of a violent attack. The assault, the reasons for which are shrouded in mystery and mostly rest on anecdotes, left her scarred and disfigured for life. It seems that Janki herself cleverly romanticised the incident in her later years to add to the mystique of her persona. Interestingly, the Hindi phrase *chappan churī*, acquired the meaning of a haughty, lofty, and dismissive woman. This is to some extent emblematic of the personality and resilience of a woman surviving and elaborating a trauma. Indeed, such an experience moulded Janki's life and ushered in her journey: travel, in its multifaceted dimensions, emerges as a constant of her existence in its function of a dominant trigger of profound change.

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[6] *Bāījī* is another word used to refer to courtesans. Du Perron explains how most singers who had this word affixed to their name changed it to *devī* to remove the association with the world of the *tavāyaf*s (du Perron 2007: 243).

[7] The location-related sobriquet distinguishes *bāījī*s of the same name. A Janki Bai from Udaipur was known by the nickname 'Marwardin' due to her entirely Marwari repertoire.

[8] The collection, not easily available, is entirely in Urdu and apparently no complete English translation has been produced to date. In *Requiem in Raga Janki,* Neelam Gour intersperses the narration with the English translation of a few *ġazal*s and poems by Janki Bai (in English).

In this article, I focus on the three important journeys that shaped Janki Bai's life path from songstress courtesan to accomplished artiste who challenged the stereotypes surrounding female performers and built her name on the power of her musical talent asserting her subjectivity and agency in a colonial male-dominated society.

2. Three stages of an existential journey in music

The first important journey shaping Janki Bai's artistic identity is the trip to the princely state of Rewa, in central India. Janki was invited by the maharaja—Venkat Raman Ramanuj Prasad Singh Ju Deo Bahadur (1876-1918)—to sing at court on the occasion of a grand soirée part of the Daśahrā celebrations following a ceremony at the royal house. The story goes that, since rumours about Janki's unattractive looks were rife, she decided to sing behind a curtain. When the king mesmerised by her voice ordered the curtain to be removed, Janki bravely urged her listener to judge the performance exclusively on the basis of her vocal talent instead of her appearance, pronouncing the famous comment *mahfil meṃ sūrat kī nahiṃ, sīrat ki fatah hai* (Siṃh 2002: 119), "In the *mahfil*, it is not the face that wins, but the qualities." This episode, as fictionalised as it might be, reveals the significance of the visit to Rewa in Janki's life. Firstly, it allowed her to debunk the cliché of the good-looking and submissive *gānevālī*[9] (Dewan 2019: 4) and, just as importantly, she could assert her autonomy as an artist. Indeed, she declined the offer to stay on the royal *darbār* and become a lifelong performer for the king. The achieved economic autonomy resulted in a highly active, 'agentic' attitude shaping Janki's identity and life choices. Back in Allahabad, she bought the *koṭhā* she was sold to as a child and made it her abode. She gained fame, name, and considerable wealth; she invested in properties while founding a charitable trust committed to the building of shelter houses for homeless women and rest houses for both Hindu and Muslim pilgrims.

It is important to note that the achievement of financial self-sufficiency attained by courtesan professionals, before British hegemony and the redefinition of women's roles, meant for several women artists having an independent life or, better, being responsible for their own existence and proudly asserting their creative and artistic power which made them influential within courts (Singh 2007). Nevertheless, this degree of freedom they enjoyed does not imply their emancipation from the norms of a patriarchal society since their careers had always been precarious and dependent on

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[9] This term, together with its synonym *gāyikā*, defines a female singer or vocalist in general and neutrally. Unlike the word *tavāyaf*, they are not value-loaded and prevent any bias surrounding the world of the courtesans. See also Dewan (2019: 4).

patrons (Rao 1996a: 55). However, the musical space occupied by *tavāyaf*s granted the subversive power to challenge female stereotyped attitudes and existing pre-established social roles (Rao 1996a: 55). In this sense, Janki's artistic and existential parable is paradigmatic of the precariousness and risk characterising a female artist's life at the end of the nineteenth century.

The second significant journey which marked a turning point in Janki's career coincided with that of music from the restricted space of the elite to the living rooms of the middle classes via the gramophone. Music, especially what is known as semi-classical genres, traditionally performed by songstress courtesans, moved from the limited space of *mujrā*s[10] and private *mahfil*s enjoyed by an exclusive audience made of noblemen, patrons, and aristocrats to reach a wider and heterogeneous group of listeners encompassing the newly emerging business classes. The technological development introduced by the recording industry[11] represented a crucial step for the 'democratisation of music' (Shah 2016: 5). The popularity Janki Bai and many other of her contemporary female performers hailing from *koṭhā* culture achieved was immense and certainly unparalleled if compared with the fame gained at the time of the *darbār* performance. As noted by Vidya Shah, the opportunities offered to courtesans by gramophone recordings led them to create "new images of themselves" while "recasting classical and light music," besides providing "new avenues of self-expression" (Shah 2016: 16). Most importantly, the 'gramophone fame,' leading to unprecedented wealth and prestige, was for professional women singers their "way around societal taboos" (Shah 2016: 16). In a context of changed spaces for entertainment determined by the introduction of new technologies, former courtesans recast themselves as celebrities within a modern society. Differently from their male counterparts, who looked at the 'talking machine'—as the gramophone was then called—with mistrust and suspicion, women singers were not reluctant to share their repertoire[12] and proved to be highly versatile and extremely open to the Western novelty. Furthermore, thanks to singing courtesans several Hindustani music forms, including regional ones, gained unprecedented diffusion and popularity.

Janki Bai's visit to Delhi in 1907 resulted in her first recording for the newborn Gramophone Company. Her voice was recorded during a session conducted by William Conrad Gaisberg, the pioneer of the gramophone industry in India who had been assigned the task of acquiring "a catalogue of native records" (Gaisberg 1942: 48). Gaisberg himself describes Janki Bai in these terms:

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[10] The term *mujrā* designates a musical or dance performance by a courtesan.

[11] On the impact of the gramophone industry on society and music see also Farrel (1993: 31-53).

[12] This is also due to the fact that courtesans did not belong to *gharānā*s or lineages of hereditary musicians in Hindustani art music. See also Neuman (1990: 100-102).

> Janki Bai was one of the best classical singers and her fee was 3,000 rupees for a recording session. To attend a wedding celebration her fee varied with the standing of the parties; from a wealthy family she would get 5,000 rupees, and the festival on such occasion would last several days (Gaisberg 1942: 57).

Although several rising recording companies (such as Beck Record, Pathephone, and Typewriter Company of Calcutta) offered her appealing contracts, Janki refused to be tied to any exclusive agreement and chose to record on her own terms on a song-to-song basis. Her payments rose and Janki became a star: some of her records were reissued in 1994 by His Master's Voice (HMV) in the Chairman's Choice series on audiotapes. Exploring Janki Bai's rich discography means retracing her journey to the main musical and cultural centres of her times, the urban headquarters of the flourishing recording industry. From 1907 to 1928 she recorded approximately 250 songs in studios across Delhi, Lucknow, Calcutta, and northern India. The discographic information provided by Michael Kinnear—pioneer in discography and research into early recordings of South Asia—in his work *The Gramophone Company's First Indian Recordings* (Kinnear 1992, 1994) offers valuable clues on the mobility that informed Janki Bai's career.

The height of success and popularity brought about crucial developments in Janki's personal and professional path against the backdrop of a changing socio-cultural scenario.

The ability to discern her own grounds in terms of actions, needs, independent choices, and beliefs resulted for Janki in the long-awaited and hard-fought conversion to Islam, a religion she felt more congenial to her disposition. Her belief did not exclude her original Hindu faith, rather it was grounded in a syncretic attitude reflecting the composite and hybrid culture of the *koṭhā*. The retention of her original name could be viewed, to a certain extent, as a sign of the will to retain her roots as a part of her composite identity. Meanwhile, the fusion of religious practices and aesthetics characterising the world of Hindustani music under the nationalist and reformist impetus had to be somehow resisted, as an element of social dissent, through the promotion of a 'great' Indian-Hindu culture.

The third journey paradigmatic of Janki Bai's existence was the one to Delhi in 1911, when she was selected to sing at the coronation ceremony of King George V. The Delhi *darbār*, reminiscent of the pomp of the Mughal courts, was historically and politically significant: it was the first time that a ruling monarch visited the subcontinent, and it represented an opportunity to announce the shift of the imperial capital from Calcutta to Delhi. Most importantly the coronation event functioned as a public display of a mighty British Empire over a subjugated India, reinforcing the colonial hegemony endorsed by the local aristocracy and nobility. The opulent one-week-long celebration, preceded by an exhibition of arts, crafts, agricultural, and industrial excellence of India, included entertainment shows

and performances. The most celebrated artists of the time were invited to perform in the presence of the King and the Queen of England and Janki Bai was asked to sing along with her famed rival-friend Gauhar Jaan. The two, along with the best pieces of their repertoire, presented in a duet a composition especially created for the occasion titled *Yah jalsā tājpośī kā mubārak ho* ("Congratulations on this grand coronation ceremony)." Such a performance praised and rewarded by George V, marked the peak of Janki Bai's fame and solemnised her iconic image as a diva of her time. Unsurprisingly, the duet at the royal court met with harsh criticism and derogatory remarks from the press and reformists since it openly brought to light a reality that should have been silenced, thus legitimising to some extent the place of *tavāyaf*s within society. On the other hand, the participation in a ceremony that enshrined the colonial authority apparently contrasted with her sympathy for the Indian nationalist movement manifested by several courtesan artistes, often in the form of financial support. A closer look at the story of these women—frequently intermingled with fictitious anecdotes—reveals not only their often ambiguous and ambivalent social position but also the limits of their freedom of action and continuous need to affirm themselves as respectful and admired individuals. Although women of the performer communities might have exerted political vicissitudes, being associated with the Independence movements (Singh 2007: 1678) certain narratives, such as the one depicting Janki Bai donating money to Motilal Nehru (Gour 2018: 29), seem to respond to the archetypal representation of inspirational women. As aptly pointed out by Lata Singh, there are fictions about *tavāyaf*s that make them iconic figures surrounded by a halo of charm and mystery. In order to detach themselves from moralistic bias,

> when they did speak, they had to reinvent themselves through polite myths to reinforce their self-esteem, which had consistently been battered by references to them as fallen and dangerous women. They had to constantly camouflage their personas, a crucial process to make them into the legends they were (Singh 2007: 1677).

3. Janki Bai through the journey of *ṭhumrī*

Janki reached the peak of her popularity by 1920, a critical time for the music she performed, *ṭhumrī*, which was undergoing a process of sanitisation and re-adaptation facilitated by the advent of the gramophone recordings and the appropriation of the genre by male vocalists. The very fact that *ṭhumrī* started to be sung by men paved the way for the classicisation of the genre and a prevailing devotional interpretation of amorous and often erotic lyrics born in a secular context. Janki Bai specialised in

singing *ṭhumrī* and, especially, its related forms of *horī*,[13] *caitī*,[14] *kajrī*,[15] and *jhūlā*,[16] considered peripheral since traditionally they had been almost exclusively sung by women, not only professionals or courtesans but also amateurs, typically in women's gatherings held on special religious and seasonal festivals. Rooted in regional music and characterised by freedom in the use of 'mixed' *rāg*s (modes) and *tāl*s (rhythmic cycles) of folk origins, these genres have been marginalised throughout their history.[17]

Flourished in Lucknow in the nineteenth century at the court of Wajid Ali Shah, the last *navāb* of Awadh, *ṭhumrī* was initially sung by songstress courtesans and used to accompany *kathak* dance performances. The texts of the older form of the genre (called *bandiś ṭhumrī*), characterized by rhythmic fixed compositions suitable to dance, depict Kṛṣṇa as described in the *dān-līlā* ('play of the toll') accredited to the sixteenth-century poet Surdas. When *bandiś ṭhumrī* began to lose currency at the beginning of the twentieth century, *bol banāo ṭhumrī* emerged as a new style born in the city of Benares and focused on folk motifs and meters. Its main feature is the expression of the emotional shades of the text which results in an emphasis on vocal virtuosity. The genre deals mainly with the themes of the 'pangs of separation' (*virah*) of the female protagonist who suffers from the absence of her lover.

The music forms of *caitī*, *kajrī*, and *jhūlā*, despite their great stylistic diversification, are generally labelled as 'semi-classical' and described as 'sub-genres' of *ṭhumrī* or even assimilated to it, since they

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[13] An intermediate song form sung during the spring festival of Holī and part of the *ṭhumrī* repertoire. *Horī* is rooted in the folk genres of the Braj, area, in the places dear to the Krishnaite devotion, but it exists in a variety of forms and styles, such as*: horī dhamār* , included in the *dhrupad* repertoire, and *horī ṭhumrī*, usually considered a 'semi-classical' form usually presented at the end of a _khayāl_ concert. *Horī* lyrics portray the frolicsome plays typical of the festival of Holī and feature Kṛṣṇa throwing coloured water and powder to the *gopī*s, the milkmaids of Braj.

[14] An intermediate song form sung during the first month of *cait* (March-April). It is considered a 'sub-genre' of *ṭhumrī*. It is especially associated with the festivity of Rāmanavamī, when the birth of god Rām is celebrated. *Caitī* texts deals with a variety of themes; along with song dedicated to Rām, there are several compositions describing springtime romantic scenes. A recurring motif is the brevity of spring associated with the fugacity of youth ebbing away even more quickly in the absence of the beloved.

[15] A highly diversified intermediate music genre related to *ṭhumrī,* born in Mirzapur and typical of the Bhojpuri speaking area of western Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. Traditionally performed during the monsoon and associated with the month of *sāvan* (July-August), it voices the beauty of the rainy season that sharpens the longing of a lonely lovelorn female protagonist, suffering from the absence of her lover who has gone to a foreign land and/or is in the company of another woman.

[16] An intermediate music genre—also called *hiṇḍolā* — (literally "swing") is considered a 'sub-type' of *kajrī* and subsumed in the *ṭhumrī* repertoire. Compositions focus on the motif of a woman singing on a swing during the monsoon and celebrate the coming of the long-awaited rain. This trope is associated with the reunion of lovers in the most romantic time of the year. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa represent the archetypical couple traditionally depicted singing in the rain with the *gopī*s of Braj.

[17] *Dhrupad* and _khayal_ are considered 'classical' or art music par excellence. The former is considered the most ancient genre of Hindustani music, whereas the latter arose in the eighteenth century and became the most prominent vocal and instrumental style.

are part of the repertoire presented during performances reserved for the time of the year they are related to. Therefore, the designation of 'seasonal,' commonly attributed to those genres, appears as an oversimplification and reductive characterisation imposed on otherwise multifaceted musical expressions, spanning from simple folk to refined and elaborate forms and even purely art music-oriented styles. For this reason, this kind of music can be better understood as 'intermediate' (Manuel 2015).

In the process of redefinition of Hindustani music, these forms, polished through expunging overtly ribald and explicit lyrics, underwent a process of standardisation. They significantly changed when they entered the recording studio and started to be addressed to 'respectable' middle-class listeners. The appropriation of essentially 'feminine' forms by male performers marked their transformation through their inclusion in the repertoire of art musicians, the loss of their predominantly mundane, suggestive, and even coquettish connotations, in favour of a stylistic sophistication aimed at acceptability and respectability within a reformed society. When male singers began to perform—and, subsequently, record—those genres, a devotional meaning was imposed upon the lyrics that, far from sounding like an invocation to the lover or patron, started to be assimilated to and treated as *bhajan*s. Du Perron in her monography on *ṭhumrī* has illustrated how the spiritual and religious reading has been functional to the survival of the genre that had to adjust to the changed cultural environment. This shift can be better understood as a process of negotiation for *ṭhumrī* in its relocation into modernity (du Perron 2007: 20).

The complex interweaving of cultural and social processes and their influence on music-making and performance has been the focus of scholarly works (Rao 1990, Maciszewski 2001, Qureshi 2001, Schofield 2010, Morcom 2013, Zadeh 2015) and has highlighted how the gendered discourse, which began with the social reform movement of the Anti-Nautch campaign and continued through colonialism and independence, has profoundly impacted music.The Anti-nautch movement, promoted by British authorities and supported by missionaries and Western-educated Indian elites at the end of the nineteenth century, led to the persecution and ban of *devadāsī*s (temple dancers) first, and later, all the *tavāyaf*s. The socio-cultural transformations brought about by British colonial rule and the rise of Hindu reformist movements—such as the Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj—inspired by a desire to modernise and align Indian society with Western values, started fostering social changes, including the redefinition of women's status, in line with a reinterpretation of Hindu traditions. In a moralising attempt to create a 'great' Indian cultural heritage, the ideals of the 'respectable woman' as the epitome of virtue, cultural and moral integrity of the nation—defined by her roles as mother, wife, and daughter (Lal 2002)—were advocated. This shift reinforced the dichotomy between the idealised figure of the

woman within the domestic sphere—the embodiment of chastity, piety, and self-sacrifice—and the courtesan, who symbolised a perceived moral and social decline (Basu 2006, Sen 2000). The nonconformist courtesan's life was seen as threatening to the imagined purity of the nation, leading to intensified opposition, pressure, and marginalisation of those who did not fit into this redefined and stereotyped model of womanhood (Sarkar 2001).

4. The twilight of a diva and an iconic era

The twilight of Janki's artistic journey ran in parallel with the end of the golden era of the *tavāyaf*s, the emergence of the Anti-nautch movement, and the decline of courtly patronage. From being urban cultural institutions, female performers, and courtesans—having lost status, fame, and financial support—from the 1920s started to be the target of moralising campaigns which resulted in the marginalisation and condemnation of their profession and art. Several 'dancing and singing girls' faced discrimination and hardships and had to resort to prostitution for a living. Many once-renowned courtesans aged in strained circumstances and died in penury.

The last years of Janki's life were characterised by loss, grief, betrayal, and misfortune. While becoming more introspective, she renounced to the material pursuit and concentrated on charity. Like many courtesans in those years, she lost a considerable part of her assets and made a living with music tuition and singing classes until she died in 1934. The charitable trust she founded, which provided support to underprivileged students, and shelter for the needy and pilgrims, regardless of their belief or religious affiliation, represented a remarkable legacy for her hometown, Allahabad, and held a special place in the collective memory of the and great cultural heritage of the city.

Discovering Janki's life, intertwined with the story of music and songstress courtesans, means shedding light on the condition of women at the turn of the nineteenth century, on the role and identity of female artists, unveiling an important—and often denied or forgotten—chapter of the history of Hindustani music. Indeed, music forms traditionally associated with *tavāyaf*s were considered inferior and re-defined in line with the moralistic and rigorous reformistic approach aimed at the creation of a 'Great' Indian cultural heritage. Moreover, genres like *ṭhumrī* faced drastic changes in their shift from the salons to the stages of vast auditoria and in their fruition on gramophone records.

It is evident that complex aspects of socio-musical relevance coalesce in the story of Janki Bai as well as of several other female performers living in India between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. As Janki's story shows, the construction of the female artiste's identity is challenged by a complex social context and, therefore, is fraught with tensions between

pride and disrepute derived from belonging to a tradition that does not meet the expectations and construction of a woman's image and role imposed by a patriarchal society.

Finally, the journey in its broadest sense is outlined in its different nuances and dimensions: the journey of the self, through circumstance and choice, undertaken by self-reliant women like Janki Bai. The journey of the artist through geographical and inner space, a journey of self-discovery, self-acceptance, and self-assertion in a changing and convoluted social milieu.

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The Standard Pāli scheme on breath meditation (*ānāpānasatisamādhi*) and the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* scheme

Samantha Rajapaksha

A complete standard mindful in-breathing and out-breathing meditation development schema, *ānāpānasatisamādhi,* appears throughout the Pāli Canon and classical Pāli commentaries, such as the *Visuddhimagga* (Vism VIII 266-293), etc. The *ānāpānasatisutta* (M III 82) seems to contain not only a detailed textual interpretation of this practice, but it also explicates how this practice enables the practitioner to advance in a gradual way towards personal liberation. The development schema of *ānāpānasati* also appears in other places in the Pāli Canon, such as the *ekadhammasutta* (S V 311), *girimānandasutta* (A V 111) and *mahārāhulovādasutta* (M I 425), etc. Most of these textual elaborations on breath meditation appear in the teacher-to-practitioner form, or as a third person explanation. However, two Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* (Ba) texts in palm-leaf manuscript present an abbreviated formula in the first person in which the historical Gotama Bodhisatta himself elaborates upon the practice just before the stages of jhānic absorption. The *Buddhābhiseka,* apparently paraphrases the standard schema on the development of the *ānāpānasati* meditation as if the historical Gotama Bodhisatta was speaking, which also suggests that the copyist(s) may have potentially intervened in the text critical-editing. In the regular text, the schema includes 16 stages of mindful in-breathing and out-breathing meditation. The *Buddhābhiseka* schema is concise yet still presents all sixteen stages of breath meditation. This paper attempts to present the *Buddhābhiseka* version of *ānāpānasati* meditation development as it appears in the two palm-leaf manuscripts, and compares it with the standard application of mindful in-breathing and out-breathing meditation as handed down in the Pāli Canonical material. The two *Buddhābhisekas* present the exact same text, except that fact there are some occasional orthographical variations and some accidental text omissions. The paper discusses the editorial intervention in mindful in-breathing and out-breathing meditation textual schema made by Siamese Pāli experts and also discusses briefly the *Buddhābhiseka* text and intentions of its composition.

1. An overview of the Pāli Buddhābhiseka (พุทธาภิเสก) text[1]

The *Buddhābhiseka* (S. *Buddhābhiṣeka*) is a text from circa the 16th century CE; it was chanted in Pāli text in the Siamese Buddha image consecration rituals. The Pāli text of the *Buddhābhiseka* appears in multiple versions. The fact that there is a recitation element at the Buddha image consecration ceremony implies that the recited text is an integral part of the broad rituality of *Buddhābhiseka.* The text attempts to present the account of the historical *Gotama* (S. *Gautama*) Buddha and some of his major philosophical tenets found in the corpus of Pāli literature such as, the dependent origination, the four noble truths, etc. In doing so, some versions of this text occasionally attempt text-critical intervention such as, paraphrasing some original citations, redacting textual material and adopting repetitive passages while borrowing both canonical and noncanonical material.

The textual tradition of *Buddhābhiseka* has been handed down in various pre-modern and modern scripts in Siamese Pāli literature. The palm-leaf manuscripts appear in the monolingual Pāli tradition, i.e. in Khmer script (ภาษาบาลีอักษรขอม *phasāpāliaksornkhom*) and Tham Lanna script (ภาษาบาลีอักษรธรรมลานนา *phasāpāliaksornthamlannā*), and bilingual text in Pāli-Lanna (ภาษาบาลีและล้านนา) or Pāli-Tai Yuan (ภาษาบาลีและไทยยวน *phasāpālileathaiyuan*)*.* Both Lanna and Tai Yuan are two words used for the same vernacular language of the Northern Thailand. The text also has some commentarial literature in the modern Thai language (ภาษาไทย *phasāthai*) apart from the Pāli printed edition produced in modern Thai script (อักษรไทย *aksornthai*) in 1968. My research here is based upon circa 24 palm-leaf manuscripts of the *Buddhābhiseka* which are catalogued and preserved at the National Library, Bangkok (NLT), and digitized at the Digital Library of Northern Thai Manuscripts (DLNTM) and the Chiang Mai University Library (CMUL) Digital Heritage Collection.

The Pāli sources help us to understand the use of the Pāli word *abhiseka* (S. *abhiṣeka*) in different contexts[2] even though the compound word *Buddhābhiseka* does not appear as such in the Pāli source material. Pāli sources refer to inauguration of king, prince and queen[3] rather than any inauguration *of*

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[1] One of the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* versions has been funded for research which aims to produce a critical edition and English translation. The project is fully funded by the Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Translation Grants in Buddhist Studies, the American Council of Learned Societies 2024/2025. I would like to thank for the American Council of Learned Societies for their huge support.

[2] Dictionary of Pāli, 224-225.

[3] Pāli sources abundantly use the term *abhiseka* in order to convey the meaning of inauguration of king etc. some such paragraphs include: *Tassāgatabhāvaṃ ñatvā kumārā amaccaparivutā uyyānaṃ gantvā Sītaṃ aggamahesiṃ katvā ubhinnam pi* abhisekaṃ akaṃsu (Ja IV 130), *Evaṃ* abhisekappatto *mahāsatto alaṃkatarathe ṭhatvā mahantena parivārena nagaraṃ pavisitvā* (Ja IV 130).

Buddha (*image*). However, when the Pāli compound word *Buddhābhiseka* is deconstructed (Rajapaksha (2021: 280), it may potentially produce two literal meanings, one of which, *Buddhassa+abhisekaṃ* (*chaṭṭhī tappurisa samāsa*), may contain the meaning 'worthy of inauguration of Buddha (image)' or 'inauguration of Buddha (image).' The fact that the making of new Buddha image and then making it ceremoniously available for worship perhaps represents some elements of *inauguration of Buddha* (image). Making a newly constructed Buddha image officially available for worship by lay people may contain some elements of the semantic meaning of 'inauguration.' In other words this literal meaning appropriately fits *inauguration of Buddha image* which presents some elements of the ritual ceremony if it is taken literally rather than 'worthy of inauguration of Buddha' or 'inauguration of Buddha.' The second of which, *Buddhassa+abhisekaṃ* (*catutthī tappurisa samāsa*), is 'that which is sprinkling to Buddha.' Although the compound word *Buddhābhiseka* is unknown to the body of Pāli literature in relation to watering of the Buddha (image) which is based on canonical and noncanonical textual investigation, the ritual of watering of other idols such as tree deities, etc. is prevalent and appears relatively frequently in particular in classical Pāli commentaries. The following is one of the case studies[4] which suggests that the practice of sprinkling water on sacred objects is known to Pāli classical commentaries:

> Ja IV 259, 25-28
>
> *so rathā oruyha* taṁ rukkhaṁ *upasaṁkamitvā* gandhapupphehi pūjetvā udakena abhisekaṁ katvā rukkhaṁ padakkhiṇaṁ katvā... *devataṁ namassitvā rathaṁ abhiruyha nagaraṁ eva pāvisi*
>
> *Having descended from the chariot, he approached the TREE, and paid respect with incense and flowers,* sprinkled water (at the foot of the tree), *circumambulated it, worshipped the tree deity, and got back into the chariot, and then entered the city.*

Any ritual form for the Buddha image in the Pāli literature is probably relatively almost unknown even though some other ritual practices are abundantly known in the body of Pāli literature. An example of the latter would be the above case study in the *Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā.* Yet the 16th century Pāli *Buddhābhiseka-s* are ideal textual evidence for the practice of ritual form for the Buddha image (s) and are exclusively devoted to the Buddha image ritual. In the Northern Thai Buddhist culture, the ritual is known as consecration of the Buddha image. The ritual aims to transform a Buddha image into something sacred by performing various rites and duties. The ritual includes making the Buddha image prior to the ritual, the opening of the eyes of the Buddha image and chanting some Pāli texts or *Suat*

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[4] *Jātaka aṭṭhakathā*, IV 259.

Mon (สวดมนต์), etc. Both literal senses of the compound word *Buddhābhiseka* 'inauguration of Buddha (image)' and 'that which is sprinkling to Buddha (image)' carry some elements of the ritual or part of *Buddhābhiseka*. In other words, the compound word *Buddhābhiseka* in its word to word meaning conveys some elements of the wider ritual. The combination of sprinkling water or anointing water at the king's inauguration has another embedded meaning which is derived from *abhiseka*. It seems based on the usage of water at the king's inauguration, the act of pouring water occupies a unique position in the privileged and elite class of the society. Therefore, by looking at the close connection between anointing water at the king's inauguration and sprinkling water on tree deities, etc., we may come up with two theories—one is that the *Buddhābhiseka* compiler(s) may have adopted and formulated compound word *Buddhābhiseka* by looking at some Pāli classical commentarial sources which touched upon this act of water usage i.e. anointing water at the king's inauguration, etc. and sprinkling water on tree deities, etc. are very specific and sacred.

Secondly the origin of compound word perhaps comes from Mahayana tradition, or more precisely from *Buddhābhiṣekasūtra*[5] as some Mahayana elements are found in the ceremony such as consecration of *Bodhisattva* image which generally takes place in Far Eastern cultures. The worshipping of the Buddha image and the rituals associated with it are very common in both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Even within the context of Theravada Buddha image worshipping ritual some Siamese elements of practice are uniquely salient in particular by ascribing specific Pāli texts at the recitation ceremony. The Sinhalese practice of *netrapratiṣṭhāpanamaṅgalya* 'eye-opening ritual (of Buddha image)' does not have its unique Pāli text; rather, it has a common *paritta* text such as *mahāparitta* being recited prior to the ritual or even after the ritual (Swearer 2004: 213) in order to invoke blessing on laypeople.

Donald Swearer speculates that, initially, a Northern Thai vernacular text was known to have been recited as *thesanā* (เทศนา) or preaching and then a Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* text was probably introduced at the recitation ceremony and the Northern Thai vernacular text probably appeared as early as the fifteenth century(Swearer 2004: 95). The appearance of Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* might have occurred afterwards. However, the exact date of the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* is not known.

The *Buddhābhiseka* ritual chanting of a Pāli text[6] is exclusive to the Siamese Pāli literature. The Pāli Buddhābhiseka is unknown to other Theravada countries such as Burma and Sri Lanka. Unlike other

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[5] Catalogue des Livres Chinois (1910: 399).

[6] Chanting text is known in Pāli as *paritta or rakkha* which is a type of Pāli literature not independently composed rather borrowed from canonical material and these texts are used mainly for chanting at various events in Theravāda ritual contexts.

Theravāda ritual chanting Pāli texts, The Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* is distinctive in many ways. In the first place, in palm-leaf manuscripts, Ba is extremely variable which means Ba text has multiple versions.

Buddhābhiseka (Pāli:พุทธาภิเสก) or Thai script Pāli *Phutthaphisek* (พุทธาภิเษก), which is a distinctive Pāli text handed down in Siam Pāli corpus (Rajapaksha 2021: 279) which falls into the *paritta*[7] genre (Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient, Tome XVII. – 1917: 58). The text, which is chanted by monks especially in Northern Thai culture at the Buddha image consecration, bears some unique textual features in comparison to some other *paritta* or *rakkha* texts in Theravada cultures. These distinctive features include various schemata such as *pārami* pefections, *Bodhisatta's* rebirth in *Tusita* heaven, the first word of the Buddha (*paṭhamabuddhavacana),* multiple repetitions of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula in forward and reverse order, breathing-in and breathing-out meditation formula, etc. None of such schemata appear in other Theravada *paritta* texts such as in *sattaparitta*, *dvādasaparitta* and *catubhāṇavara.* Further some *Buddhābiseka* Pāli versions present schemata like Buddha's thirty-two major bodily characteristics (*dvattiṃsamahāpurisalakkhaṇa*) and the eighty secondary characteristics (*asītyānubyañjana*)*.* Apart from its Pāli textual transmission, Ba does exist in bilingual manuscript culture too which is apparently more popular and widely distributed than Pāli tradition particularly in Northern Thai culture. The bilingual textual tradition appears in Pāli- Lanna (ภาษาบาลีและล้านนา) or Pāli-Tai Yuan (ภาษาบาลีและไทยยวน) languages.

This type of bitext literature is known as *sanna*, *gāṭapada* and *pada-ānuma* in Sinhalese literature, and, even and even in pre-Pāli classical commentaries, the genre was called as *Sīhaḷaṭīkā* and in Burmese, it is called *nissaya* while Tham Lanna, Khmer and Siamese collectively have some terms such as *nissaya,nāmasap, etc.* These bitexts appear in combination of some Indic citations and their corresponding vernacular translation or with some expanded interpretations. However there is no Pāli-Khmer or Pāli-modern Thai tradition being transmitted for *Buddhābhiseka* though it has some commentarial literature written in modern Thai language. There is also *Buddhābiseka* ritual-associated subsidiary literary tradition being handed down side by side with *Buddhābhiseka.* These texts appear in both Pāli and vernacular translation. *Buddhābhiseka* appears in various generic terms in Siamese Pāli literature such as *Phra buddhābhiseka* 'noble *Buddhābhiseka,*' *Buddhābhisekapakaraṇa* '*Buddhābhiseka* commentary,' *Buddhābhisekagāthā* '*Buddhābhiseka* verses,' *Buddharūpābhiseka* 'consecration of Buddha image,' *Phra gāthābuddhābhiseka* 'noble *Buddhābhiseka* verses,' and *buddhābhisekamaṅgalagāthā* '*Buddhābhiseka* auspicious verses.'

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[7] *Paritta* (S. *paritra)* or *rakkha* (S. *rakṣa*) text is a type of Pāli literature which is not independent composition rather borrowed from canonical material and these texts are used mainly for chanting at various events in Theravada ritual contexts.

The two sibilants in *Buddhābhiseka,* i.e. *Buddhābhiseka* (พุทธาภิเสก) with alveolar /s/ and *Buddhābhiṣeka* (พุทธาภิเษก) with 'cerebral' (i.e., retroflex) /ṣ/ are both used interchangeably in Thai language. However *Buddhābhiṣeka* (พุทธาภิเษก) with the retroflex is more prevalent and popular in Thai culture than *Buddhābhiseka* (พุทธาภิเสก) with the alveolar. The Thai printed edition of Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* prefers its title to be *Buddhābhiṣeka* (พุทธาภิเษก)[8] rather than *Buddhābhiseka* (พุทธาภิเสก). The secondary literature often uses *Buddhābhiṣeka* (พุทธาภิเษก)[9] while day to day interaction with Thai people when writing, the preferable term is *Buddhābhiṣeka* (พุทธาภิเษก). The Sanskrit cognate, *-abhiṣeka* (-อภิเษก)[10] is more prevalent and rooted in Thai culture than its Pāli counterpart, *-abhiseka* (-อภิเสก).

The distribution of Pāli palm-leaf manuscripts for *Buddhābhiseka* in Siamese manuscript culture appears in two major scripts i.e. Tham Lanna script (อักษรธรรมลานนา) and Khmer script (อักษรขอม). Ba textual tradition has Indic-vernacular bitext literature as well as secondary literature written in modern Thai language. The two palm-leaf manuscripts from Wat Lai Hin Luang (วัดไหล่หินหลวง) and Wat Ban Luk Tai (วัดบ้านหลุกใต้) have been chosen for the present study. The digitized files were obtained via the Digital Library of Northern Thai Manuscripts.[11]

2. The text: form, content and context

2.1. The Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* redefines *paritta* text in Theravada Buddhist ritual contexts

One of the main aims of the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* text(s) are to infuse the Buddha's biography and some of his teachings into the Buddha image(s) in order to signify that the historical *Gotama* Buddha is present in the Buddha image-s. This act of the infusion onto Buddha image is done through a repeated recitation of the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* text. A distinctive set of Pāli verses is exclusively composed and devoted for this purpose.[12] This is probably a new development in the ritual contexts of the Theravada Buddhist countries as most of the *paritta* texts in Theravada countries is not independent composition rather borrowed texts from the Pāli canon. Conversely, the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* as a *paritta* text holds some distinctive textual features over the other Theravada *paritta* texts. The Pāli *sutta*s like the *āṭānāṭiy*a, the *ratana* and the *maṅgala*, etc. are borrowed from the Pāli canon and placed under the genre

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[8] *Buddhābhiseka* book (หนังสือพุทธาภิเษก).

[9] Life ceremonies (พิธีชีวิต).

[10] Dictionary of Pāli, 224.

[11] The images of manuscript can be obtained from the Digital Library of Northern Thai Manuscripts at http://lannamanuscripts.net/en/search/results.

[12] The Wat Phumin Pāli palm-leaf manuscript version and Mahāmakut Printed Edition.

of *paritta* unedited. Yet the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* does not borrow any of such *suttas* in Theravada tradition rather the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka-s* has its own textual identity. The text-s includes the account of the historical Gotama Buddha's biography and some of his teachings as appear in the Pāli canon as well as in the non-Pāli canon materials. Occasionally some of the texts borrowed comes under editorial intervention. One such major schema appears in the Wat Lai Hin Luang (วัดไหล่หินหลวง) and the Wat Ban Luk Tai (วัดบ้านหลุกใต้ *watbanlukthai*) Pāli versions which is the central research topic in this article. In these two versions, the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* editors have presented an altered mindful in-breathing and out-breathing meditation schema. The standard Pāli textual elaborations on breath meditation appears in the teacher-to-practitioner form, or as a third person explanation. However, two *Buddhābhiseka* texts in palm-leaf manuscript present a text formula in the first person in which the *Gotama Bodhisatta* himself elaborates upon the practice just before the stages of *jhānic* absorption. By presenting a text on breath meditation development, the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* apparently attempts to seek the presence of the historical *Gotama* Buddha at the Buddha image consecration ceremony. The idea of presenting such text probably is that a text which is spoken by *Bodhisatta* himself, *Bodhisattavacana* holds more power than it is heard from a third person. Thereby empowering the rituality by reciting and preaching as it is uttered by the very historical *Gotama Bodhisatta* just before the Full Enlightenment. The Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* text-s, in its entirety not necessarily on breath meditation, innovates and potentially intervenes such textual schemata.

The Wat Phumin (Wp) Pāli palm-leaf manuscript version[13] uniquely presents some Pāli verses which intend to infuse the Buddha's biography and some of his teachings to the Buddha image(s). The elaborations of infusion on the Buddha's biography and some of his teachings in Pāli language only appears int the Wat Phumin Pāli palm-leaf manuscript version and the Mahamakut printed edition (Mpe). The following Pāli verses present the act of infusion and each Pāli verse is followed by its corresponding English translation.[14]

> The infusion of the Buddha's noble qualities into Buddha image:
> *yo seṭṭho bhagavā buddho tassa guṇā[15] anantakā[16]*

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[14] My own translation.

[15] *guṇā* Wp; *guṇo* Mpe.

[16] *anantakā* Wp; *anantako* Mpe

sabbe guṇā samūhantu[17] buddharūpamhi[18] tādino. (1)

When one becomes Buddha, the blessed one and the excellent one.[19] His (noble) qualities are infinite. Let all such qualities amass in the Buddha image. (1)

yadā sabbaññutapatto[20] tassa ñāṇaṃ anantakaṃ

taṃ sabbaṃ buddharūpamhi[21] tiṭṭhatu yāva sāsanaṃ. (2)

When the Buddha becomes an omniscient. His knowledge is infinite. Let all that knowledge remain *in the Buddha image* until the teaching of Buddha lasts. (2)

paṭisambhidā catasso sā[22] ca[23] sādhāraṇāni ca

vesārajjāni cattāri cattārīsavatthukāni[24] (3)

(Buddha possesses) fourfold analytical knowledge, fourfold self-confidence, and fortyfold *vatthuka* which are common qualities in Buddha. (3)

lokavivaraṇanāma-accheraṃ[25] pāṭihāriyaṃ

dassesi ñāṇatejena devasaṅghe samānusse[26]

yena ñāṇena taṃ ñāṇaṃ buddharūpe[27] patiṭṭhātu.[28] (4)

Buddha- by his power of knowledge- exhibited deities, monk community and human beings a wonderful miracle which is named the unveiling of the universe. The knowledge by which Buddha performed it. Let that knowledge remain in the Buddha image. (4)

pañcattāḷīsavassāni yattha yattha[29] ca jantunaṃ

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[17] Em *samūhantu*; *samūhantā* Wp; *mahantā pi* Mpe.

[18] *buddharūpamhi* Wp; *buddharūpesu* Mpe.

[19] The blessed one (*bhagavā*) the excellent one (*seṭṭho*) are some of the epithets which are used to describe the Buddha.

[20] Em *sabbaññutapatto*; *sabbaññutaṃ patto* Wp; *sabbaññutam patto* Mpe.

[21] *buddharūpamhi Wp; buddharūpesu* Mpe.

[22] *sa* Wp; *sā* Mpe.

[23] Omit *ca* Wp; *ca* Mpe

[24] *cattārīsavatthukāni Wp; cattāḷīsavatthukā* Mpe.

[25] *lokavivaraṇanāma-accheraṃ Wp; lokavivaraṇaṃ nāma accheraṃ* Mpe.

[26] *samānusse* Wp; *samānuse* Mpe.

[27] *buddharūpe* Wp; *buddharūpesu* Mpe.

[28] *patiṭṭhātu* Wp; *tiṭṭhatu* Mpe.

[29] Omit *yattha* Wp.

hitāya ca sukhāya ca[30] yaṃ yaṃ dhammam adesayi

so sabbo buddharūpasmiṃ[31] *tiṭṭhatu yāva sāsanaṃ. (5)*

Buddha preached Dhamma for the benefit and happiness of the sentient rational beings for forty five years. Let all that remain *in the Buddha image* until the teaching of Buddha lasts. (5)

2.2. The heterogeneity of the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* versions

Most of the Pāli literature in Theravada countries both canonical and classical commentaries remain to hold homogeneous textual nature in which a Pāli text in Theravada Pāli literature is extremely less variable among each tradition and across traditions. For an example, the *Sīlakkhandha vagga* of the *Dīghanikāya* both in the palm-leaf manuscript form and printed edition form in Theravada countries, such as in Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia and Laos traditions are almost similar in text and content despite the fact there are a few variations in orthography. [32] However, the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* holds heterogenous character in palm-leaf manuscripts both in the text and content. I have surveyed and examined more than 23 palm-leaf manuscripts for the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka,* and found four independent Pāli versions for the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka.* Each version is found to be dissimilar in text significantly. Occasionally the content of some versions is similar to the other versions.

Buddhābhiseka editor (s) paraphrases canonical and non-canonical material occasionally. While the editor (s) of the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* presenting distinctive Pāli texts the editor (s) potentially has intervened in the text critical-editing in his work. Some Pāli textual schemata, such as the application of mindful in-breathing and out-breathing meditation schema and 80 secondary bodily characteristics of the Buddha, etc. being paraphrased by using the Pāli language skill and expertise. Apparently this text critical-editing technique is one of the uniquely understandable textual features in the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka.* The current topic on breath meditation is an ideal reflection as to potentially its editorial intervention techniques and but also helps to understand the unique textual features of the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka.*

The Wat Ban Luk Tai Pāli palm-leaf manuscript version and how it infuses the Buddha's biography and some of his teachings to Buddha image.

One of the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* versions selected for the present study is originally stationed at the Wat Ban Luk Tai temple. The Pāli text presents the historical Gotama Buddha's biography and some of

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[30] Omit *hitāya ca sukhāya* ca Wp.

[31] *buddharūpasmiṃ* Wp; *buddharūpesu* Mpe.

[32] Pilot version of the Dhammachai Tipitaka Project.

his teachings briefly and repetitively. Unlike the Wat Phumin Pāli palm-leaf manuscript version, the Wat Ban Luk Tai Pāli version does not mention in Pāli text about the act of infusion to the Buddha image. Rather the version intends to presents its Pāli text and be repeated in order to infuse to the Buddha image-s. The following is the content of the Wat Ban Luk Tai Pāli edition. The breath meditation is one of the textual contents presented in the both the Wat Lai Hin Luang manuscript (B) and the Wat Ban Luk Tai (B1) edition.

2.3. The contents of the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* versions

The Wat Ban Luk Tai edition contains:

1. Salutation to the Buddha

2. The pre-enlightenment life of historical Gotama Buddha in brief

3. <u>The practice of mindful in-breathing and out-breathing meditation</u>

4. Gradual attainment of four Jhānic absoptions

5. The first phase of the night of the full-enlightenment

6. The *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula in forward and reverse order

7. Reflection of three characteristics

8. Becoming a Buddha

9. The first words of the Buddha

10. The second phase of the night

    I.   Remembrance of Buddha's former births

   II.   Recollection of births and deaths of all sentient beings

  III.   Destruction of defilements

11. Multiple repetitions of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula in forward and reverse order

12. Reflection of three characteristics

13. Four noble truths

14. The first word of the Buddha

15. The last phase of the night

16. Multiple repetitions of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula in forward and reverse order

17. Reflection of three characteristics

18. Four noble truths

19. The first word of the Buddha

20. The first phase of the night

21. Multiple repetitions of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula in forward and reverse order

22. The second phase of the night

23. Multiple repetitions of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula in forward and reverse order

24. Inspirational utterances of the Gotama Buddha

2.4. The application of breath meditation in two palm-leaf manuscripts against parallel occurrences

The presentation of the development of mindful in-breathing and out-breathing meditation in the two *Buddhābhiseka* texts is exactly the same as the standard schema. The standard schema explicates how the meditation practitioner should develop and cultivate breath meditation gradually in sixteen stages.[33] Yet the text presentation in Ba appears in the first person while the regular schema appears in the third person. In other words, Ba attempts to present it as if it were the very own words of the *Gotama Bodhisatta* concerning his own meditative experience. The Buddha guides practitioner monks in various contexts as monks practice and train by themselves. The historical Buddha as *Bodhisatta* himself originally practiced and experienced these 16 stages just before his *Full Awakening*. The texts disclose that it was this meditation development which enabled him to achieve Buddhahood and that he had attempted several other means before and yet had failed.

The standard schema elaborates the type of environment which is most conducive to meditation, such as a forest, at the foot of tree, a quiet place, *etc. Buddhābhiseka* presents the *Bodhisatta*'s preparation of certain conditions just before the meditation. The preceding paragraph elaborates how the *Bodhisatta* settles in a secluded locality just before he begins his meditation.

2.5. The prerequisite just before the on breath meditative practice as in *Buddhābhiseka*

B and B1:

sāyaṇhasamaye sotthiyena dinnaṃ aṭṭhatiṇamuṭṭhiṃ gahetvā jayaṭhānaṃ bodhirukkhamūlaṃ upagantvā tiṇāni santharitvāna... pācīnadisābhimukho nisīditvā suriye anatthaṅgamite yeva mārabalaṃ vidhamitvā pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā

[I], Having taken eight handfuls of grass, which was given to me by Sotthiya in the evening time, reached the victorious place, the foot of the Bodhi tree and, having spread out the grasses..., when the Sun was disappearing, having sat down facing the East, having crushed the power of Evil One, crossed legged, keeping body straight, having established mindfulness in front of (me).

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[33] See the comparative table in 2.7.

The prerequisite just before the on breath meditative practice as in the standard text:

araññagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suññāgāragato vā nisīdati pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā

Having gone into the forest, or having gone into the root of a tree, or having gone into an empty place, he sits down crossed legged, keeping his body straight, having established mindfulness in front of him.

The explanation of the prerequisite conditions necessary for breath meditation in the *Buddhābhiseka* seems to have been loosely based on commentarial material. Afterwards Ba fits the prerequisite account directly into the sixteen stages on breath meditative practice schema (Rajapaksha 2021: 293-294). In other words, Ba attempts to integrate the commentarial account with the Canonical material, thereby making a single textual reconstruction relying on multiple materials. In fact throughout the text presentation in Ba, evidently it attempts to present the Buddha's biographical accounts relying on source material, such as the *atthasālinī,Dhammapada*, *Jinacarita*, etc. (Rajapaksha 2021) and thereby presents a conflated text. Then the practitioner has to undertake the sixteen stages as part of the schema as it appears in the regular text. The sixteen stages come in pairs. Just before beginning his meditation, the practitioner has to be ever mindful about his breath as is stated in the following phrase: *He breathes in mindfully (so sato va assasati); he breathes out mindfully (sato [va] passasati)*, and apparently *being ever mindful* has to be applied in each single stage. This particular phrase appears in all occurrences of the standard schema while the Ba schema has omitted this phrase in all two of their palm-leaf manuscripts probably because of the *Bodhisatta*'s ever present mindfulness on the breath meditation throughout all sixteen stages is assumed.

It is also interesting to note that the first tetrad says that the practitioner should be fully aware of on the in-breath, both long and short, and the long and short out-breath, and also in the remaining stages, in which the practitioner trains. However, these details are abbreviated in *Buddhābhiseka* texts probably the editors might have redacted given the fact that the *Bodhisatta* is already fully aware of on the breath.

2.6. The English translation of the *Buddhābhiseka* scheme and the standard scheme

The Buddhābhiseka scheme:

(Having sat down) crossed legged, keeping body straight, having established mindfulness in front of (me), I breathe in a long breath, I breathe out a long breath; I breathe in a short breath, I breathe out a short breath; I shall breathe in feeling in the entire body, I shall breathe out feeling in the

entire body; I shall breathe in calming down layers of bodily formation, I shall breathe out calming down layers of bodily formation; I shall breathe in experiencing happy feeling, I shall breathe out experiencing happy feeling; I shall breathe in experiencing pleasure, I shall breathe out experiencing pleasure; I shall breathe in experiencing mental formation, I shall breathe out experiencing mental formation; I shall breathe in calming down mental formation, I shall breathe out calming down mental formation; I shall breathe in experiencing the mind, I shall breathe out experiencing the mind; I shall breathe in pleasing the mind, I shall breathe out pleasing the mind; I shall breathe in concentrating the mind, I shall breathe out concentrating the mind; I shall breathe in liberating the mind, I shall breathe out liberating the mind; I shall breathe in reflecting impermanence, I shall breathe out reflecting impermanence; I shall breathe in reflecting on the absence of passion, I shall breathe out reflecting on the absence of passion; I shall breathe in reflecting cessation, I shall breathe out reflecting cessation; I shall breathe in reflecting upon renouncing, I shall breathe out reflecting upon renouncing.

The standard scheme:

How, monks**,** is breathing in and breathing out applied? Here, monks, a monk, having gone into the forest, or having gone to the root of a tree, or having gone into an empty place, and having sat down crossed legged, keeping body straight, having established mindfulness in front of (him).

He breathes in mindfully, he breathes out mindfully;

breathing in a long breath, he knows "I shall breathe in a long breath;"

breathing out a long breath, he knows "I shall breathe out a long breath;"

breathing in a short breath, he knows "I shall breathe in a short breath;"

breathing out a short breath, he knows "I shall breathe out a short breath;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in feeling in the entire body;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out feeling in the entire body;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in calming down layers of bodily formation;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out calming down layers of bodily formation;"

he trains (by himself) " I shall breathe in experiencing happy feeling;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out experiencing happy feeling;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in experiencing pleasure;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out experiencing pleasure;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in experiencing mental formation;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out experiencing mental formation;"

he trains (by himself) " I shall breathe in calming down mental formation;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out calming down mental formation;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in experiencing the mind;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out experiencing the mind;"

he trains (by himself) " I shall breathe in pleasing the mind;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out pleasing the mind;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in concentrating the mind;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out concentrating the mind;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in liberating the mind;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out liberating the mind;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in reflecting impermanence;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out reflecting impermanence;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in reflecting on the absence of passion;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out reflecting on the absence of passion;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in reflecting cessation;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out reflecting cessation;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in reflecting upon renouncing;"

he trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out reflecting upon renouncing."

2.7. A comparison between the Buddhābhiseka and the standard formula

The Buddhābhiseka presents in first person and the standard text presents in third person.

16 stages spoken by the *Bodhisatta* himself as in *Buddhābhiseka* (First Person)	16 stages in standard formula as Buddha guides practitioner (Third Person)
	He breathes in mindfully *(so sato va assa)* He breathes out mindfully *(sato va passasati)*
I breathe in a long breath *(dīghaṃ* assasāmi) I breathe out a long breath [1] *(dīghaṃ* passasāmi)	Breathing in a long breath, he knows "I breathe in a long breath" *(dīghaṃ vā assasanto, dīghaṃ assasāmī ti* pajānāti) Breathing out a long breath, he knows "I breathe out a long breath" [1] *(dīghaṃ vā passasanto, dīghaṃ passasāmī ti **p**ajānāti)*
I breathe in a short breath *(rassaṃ* assasāmi) I breathe out a short breath [2] *(rassaṃ* passasāmi)	Breathing in a short breath, he knows "I breathe in a short breath *(rassaṃ vā assasanto, rassaṃ assasāmī ti* pajānāti) Breathing out a short breath, he knows "I breathe out a short breath [2] *(rassaṃ vā passasanto rassaṃ passasāmī ti)*
I shall breathe in feeling in the entire body (sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi*)*	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in feeling in the entire body"

	(sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī ti sikkhati)
I shall breathe out feeling in the entire body [3] (sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi)	He trains (by himself) " I shall breathe out feeling in the entire body" [3] *(sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī ti* sikkhati*)*
I shall breathe in calming down layers of bodily formation *(passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ* assasissāmi) I shall breathe out calming down layers of bodily formation [4] *(passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ* passasissāmi)	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in calming down layers of bodily formation" *(passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī ti* sikkhati*)* He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out calming down layers of bodily formation"[4] *(passambhayaṃ kāyasaṃkhāraṃ passasissāmī ti* sikkhati)
I shall breathe in experiencing happy feeling, *(pītipaṭisaṃvedī* assasissāmi*)* I shall breathe out experiencing happy feeling [5] *(pītipaṭisaṃvedī* passasissāmi*)*	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in experiencing happy feeling" *(pītipaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī ti* sikkhati) He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out experiencing happy feeling" [5] *(pītipaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī ti* sikkhati)
I shall breathe in experiencing pleasure *(sukhapaṭisaṃvedī* assasissāmi) I shall breathe out experiencing pleasure[6] *(sukhapaṭisaṃvedī* passasissāmi)	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in experiencing pleasure" *(sukhapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī ti* sikkhati) He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out experiencing pleasure" [6] *(sukhapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī ti* sikkhati)
I shall breathe in experiencing mental formation *(cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī* assasissāmi) I shall breathe out experiencing mental formation[7] *(cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī* passasissāmi*)*	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in experiencing mental formation" *(cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī ti* sikkhati)

	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out experiencing mental formation" [7] (*cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī ti* sikkhati)
I shall breathe in calming down mental formation (*passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmi*) I shall breathe out calming down mental formation[8] *passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmi*	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in calming down mental formation" (*passambhayaṃ cittasaṃkhāraṃ assasissāmī ti* sikkhati) He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out calming down mental formation" [8] (*passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī ti* sikkhati)
I shall breathe in experiencing the mind (*cittapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi*) I shall breathe out experiencing the mind[9] *cittapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi*	He trains (by himself) " I shall breathe in experiencing the mind" (*cittapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī ti* sikkhati) He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out experiencing the mind" [9] (*cittapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī ti* sikkhati)
I shall breathe in pleasing the mind (*abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmi*) I shall breathe out pleasing the mind [10] (*abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmi*)	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in pleasing the mind" (*abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī ti* sikkhati) He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out pleasing the mind" [10] (*abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī ti* sikkhati)
I shall breathe in concentrating the mind (*samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmi*) I shall breathe out concentrating the mind [11] (*samādahaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmi*)	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in concentrating the mind" (*samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī ti* sikkhati) He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out concentrating the mind" [11] (*samādahaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī ti* sikkhati)

I shall breathe in liberating the mind *(vimocayaṃ cittaṃ* assasissāmi*)* I shall breathe out liberating the mind *vimocayaṃ cittaṃ* passasissāmi [12]	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in liberating the mind" *(vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī ti* sikkhati*)* He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out liberating the mind" [12] *(vimocayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī ti* sikkhati*)*
I shall breathe in reflecting impermanence *aniccānupassī* assasissāmi I shall breathe out reflecting impermanence[13] *aniccānupassī* passasissāmi	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in reflecting impermanence" *(aniccānupassī assasissāmī ti* sikkhati*)* He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out reflecting impermanence" [13] *(aniccānupassī passasissāmī ti* sikkhati*)*
I shall breathe in reflecting on the absence of passion *(virāgānupassī* assasissāmi*)* I shall breathe out reflecting on the absence of passion[14] *(virāgānupassī* passasissāmi*)*	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in reflecting on the absence of passion" *(virāgānupassī assasissāmī ti* sikkhati*)* He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out reflecting on the absence of passion" [14] *(virāgānupassī passasissāmī ti* sikkhati*)*
I shall breathe in reflecting cessation *(nirodhānupassī* assasissāmi*)* I shall breathe out reflecting cessation[15] *(nirodhānupassī* passasissāmi*)*	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in reflecting cessation" *(nirodhānupassī assasissāmī ti* sikkhati*)* He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out reflecting cessation" [15] *(nirodhānupassī passasissāmī ti* sikkhati*)*
I shall breathe in reflecting upon renouncing *(paṭinissaggānupassī* assasissāmi*)*	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe in reflecting upon renouncing" *(paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī ti* sikkhati*)*

I shall breathe out reflecting upon renouncing [16] (*paṭinisaggānupassī* passasissāmī *ti*)	He trains (by himself) "I shall breathe out reflecting upon renouncing" [16] (*paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī ti* sikkhati)

2.8. Synoptic table of the standard formula together with the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* versions

The presentation of the standard schema in Pāli Canonical texts.[34]

M III 82, 22-36; 83, 1-17 (as in *ānāpānasatisutta*)

Kathaṁ bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, ānāpānasati? ..... Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu araññagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suññāgāragato vā nisīdati pallaṅkaṁ ābhujitvā ujuṁ kāyaṁ paṇidhāya parimukhaṁ satiṁ upaṭṭhapetvā. So sato va assasati, sato passasati; dīghaṁ vā assasanto: Dīghaṁ assasāmī ti pajānāti; dīghaṁ vā passasanto: Dīghaṁ passasāmīti pajānāti; rassaṁ vā assasanto: Rassaṁ assasāmī ti pajānāti; rassaṁ vā passasanto; Rassaṁ passasāmīti pajānāti; Sabbakāyapaṭisaṁvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati; Sabbakāyapaṭisaṁvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati: Passambhayaṁ kāyasaṁkhāraṁ assasissāmīti sikkhati,; Passambhayaṁ kāyasaṁkhāraṁ passasissāmīti sikkhati; Pītipaṭisaṁvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati; Pītipaṭisaṁvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati; Sukhapaṭisaṁvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati; Sukhapaṭisaṁvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati; Cittasaṁkhārapaṭisaṁvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati; Cittasaṁkhārapaṭisaṁvedī passasissāmī ti sikkhati; Passambhayaṁ cittasaṁkhāraṁ assasissāmīti sikkhati; Passambhayaṁ cittasaṁkhāraṁ passasissāmīti sikkhati; Cittapaṭisaṁvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati; Cittapaṭisaṁvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati; Abhippamodayaṁ cittaṁ assasissāmīti sikkhati; Abhippamodayaṁ cittaṁ passasissāmīti sikkhati; Samādahaṁ cittaṁ assasissāmīti sikkhati; Samādahaṁ cittaṁ passasissāmīti sikkhati; Vimocayaṁ cittaṁ assasissāmīti sikkhati; Vimocayaṁ cittaṁ passasissāmīti sikkhati; Aniccānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati; Aniccānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati; Virāgānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati; Virāgānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati; Nirodhānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati; Nirodhānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati; Paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati; Paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati;

S V 311, 5-18; 312, 1-20 (as in *Ekadhammasutta*)

Katham bhāvitā ca bhikkhave ānāpānasati || ..... Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu araññagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suññāgāragato vā nisīdati pallaṅkam ābhujitvā ujuṃ kāyam paṇidhāya parimukham satim upaṭṭhapetvā so sato va assasati sato va passasati || || Dīghaṃ vā assasanto Dīghaṃ assasāmī ti pajānāti|| dīghaṃ vā passasanto Dīghaṃ passasāmī ti pajānāti|| Rassaṃ vā assasanto Rassaṃ assasāmī ti pajānāti|| rassaṃ vā passasanto Rassaṃ passasāmī ti pajānāti|| || Sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī Assasissāmī ti sikkhati || sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī Passasissāmī ti sikkhati|| || Passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ Assasissāmī ti sikkhati|| || passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ Passasissāmī ti sikkhati|| || Pītipaṭisaṃvedī Assasissāmīti sikkhati|| pītipaṭisaṃvedī Passasissāmīti sikkhati|| || Sukhapaṭisaṃvedī Assasissāmīti sikkhati|| sukhappaṭisaṃvedī Passasissāmīti sikkhati|| || Cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī Assasissāmīti sikkhati|| cittasaṅkhārappaṭisaṃvedī Passasissāmīti sikkhati|| || Passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ Assasissāmīti sikkhati|| passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ Passasissāmīti sikkhati|| || Cittapaṭisaṃvedī Assasissāmī ti sikkhati|| cittappaṭisaṃvedī Passasissāmīti sikkhati|| ||Abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ Assasissāmīti sikkhati|| abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ

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[34] Editions adopt different diacritical signs and orthography; I leave them as they appear.

Passasissāmīti sikkhati|| || Samādahaṃ cittaṃ Assasissāmīti sikkhati || samādahaṃ cittaṃ Passasissāmīti sikkhati|| || Vimocayaṃ cittaṃ Assasissāmīti sikkhati || vimocayaṃ cittaṃ Passasissāmīti sikkhati|| || Aniccānupassī Assasissāmīti sikkhati|| aniccānupassī Passasissāmīti sikkhati|| || Virāgānupassī Assasissāmīti sikkhati|| Virāgānupassī Passasissāmīti sikkhati || || Nirodhānupassī Assasissāmīti sikkhati || nirodhānupassī Passasissāmīti sikkhati|| || Paṭinissaggānupassī Assasissāmīti || paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati ||

A V 111, 11-30; 112, 1-7 (as in *Girimānandasutta*)

Katamā c' Ānanda ānāpānasati? Idh' Ānanda bhikkhu araññagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suññāgāragato vā nisīdati pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā. so sato 'va assasati, sato passasati, dīghaṃ vā assasanto 'dīghaṃ assasāmī'ti pajānāti, dīghaṃ vā passasanto 'dīghaṃ passasāmī' ti pajānāti, rassaṃ vā assasanto 'rassaṃ assasāmī' ti pajānāti, rassaṃ vā passasanto 'rassaṃ passasāmī' ti pajānāti, 'sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'pītipaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'pītipaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'sukhapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī' ti sikkhati. 'sukhapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'cittapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'cittapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī' ti sikkhati 'abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'samādahaṃ cittaṃ...pe... vimocayaṃ cittaṃ...pe... aniccānupassī...pe... virāgānupassī...pe... nirodhānupassī...pe... 'paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī' ti sikkhati, 'paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī' ti sikkhati.

M I 425, 5-34 (as in *Mahārāhulovādasutta*)

Kathaṁ bhāvitā ca Rāhula ānāpānasati ....Idha Rāhula bhikkhu araññagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suññāgāragato vā nisīdati pallaṅkaṁ ābhujitvā ujuṃ kāyaṁ paṇidhāya parimukhaṁ satiṁ upaṭṭhapetvā. So satova assasati, sato passasati; Dīghaṁ vā assasanto: dīghaṁ assasāmīti pajānāti, dīghaṁ vā passasanto: dīghaṁ passasāmīti pajānāti; rassaṁ vā assasanto: rassaṁ assasāmīti pajānāti. rassaṃ vā passasanto: rassaṁ passasāmīti pajānāti; Sabbakāyapaṭisaṁvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati, sabbakāyapaṭisaṁvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati. Passambhayaṁ kāyasaṅkhāraṁ assasissāmī ti sikkhati, passambhayaṁ kāyasaṅkhāraṁ passasissāmīti sikkhati. Pītipaṭisaṁvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati, pītipaṭisaṁvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati. Sukhapaṭisaṁvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati, sukhapaṭisaṁvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati. Cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṁvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati, cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati, Passambhayaṁ cittasaṅkhāraṁ assasissāmīti sikkhati, passambhayaṁ cittasaṅkhāraṁ passasissāmīti sikkhati. Cittappaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti sikkhati, cittapaṭisaṁvedī passasissāmīti sikkhati. abhippamodayaṁ cittaṁ assasissāmīti sikkhati. abhippamodayaṁ cittaṁ passasissāmīti sikkhati. Samādahaṁ cittaṁ assasissāmīti sikkhati, samādahaṁ cittaṁ passasissāmīti sikkhati, vimocayaṁ cittaṁ assasissāmīti sikkhati, vimocayaṁ cittaṁ passasissāmīti sikkhati.Aniccānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati, aniccānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati. Virāgānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati, virāgānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati. Nirodhānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati, nirodhānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati. Paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmīti sikkhati, paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmīti sikkhati.

The Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* schema on breath meditation.

Wat Lai Hin Luang (วัดไหล่หินหลวง) palm-leaf manuscript (B).

pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā dīghaṃ assasāmi dīghaṃ passasāmi rassaṃ assasāmi rassaṃ passasāmī ti pajānanto sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmi passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmi pītipaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi pītipaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi sukhapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi sukhapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi citta<saṅkhāra[35]*>paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi citta<saṅkhāra*[36]*>paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmi passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmi cittapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi cittapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmi abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmi samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmi samādahaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmi vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmi vimocayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmi aniccānupassī assasissāmi aniccānupassī passasissāmi virāgānupassī assasissāmi virāgānupassī passasissāmi nirodhānupassī assasissāmi nirodhānupassī passasissāmi paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmi paṭinisaggānupassī passasissāmī ti.*

Wat Ban Luk Tai (วัดบ้านหลุกใต้) palm-leaf manuscript (B1).

pallaṃkaṃ ābhujitvā ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā dīghaṃ assasāmi dīghaṃ passasāmi rassaṃ assasāmi rassaṃ passasāmi sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī *passasissāmi passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmi passambhayaṃ* kāyasaṅkhāraṃ *passasissāmi pītipaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi pītipaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi sukhapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi sukhapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi*[37] *cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmi pasambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmi cittapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi cittapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmi abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmi abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmi samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmi samādahaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmi vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmi vimocayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmi aniccānupassī assasissāmi <aniccānupassī passasissāmi>*[38] *virāgānupassī assasissāmi virāgānupassī passasissāmi nirodhānupassī assasissāmi nirodhānupassī passasissāmi paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmi paṭinisaggānupassī passasissāmī ti.*

The preceding paragraphs depicting the breath meditation schema in the Ba(s) briefly elaborate upon the journey of *Gotama Bodhisatta* in the *Saṃsāra*. Then the text presents the details of the *Bodhisatta's* life as a householder in comparison to his life as a renunciant; as a renouncer, he begins the practice of breath meditation. Just after the breath meditation textual schema, the two *Buddhābhiseka* texts return to the gradual stages of *Jhānic* absorption that the *Bodhisatta* experienced just before his *Full Awakening*. Then the presentation of the dependent origination schema in Pāli appears multiple times in the two texts of Ba. The declaration of the Buddha's first word also appears in the text presentation. Lastly, the

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[35] Reconstructed based on standard formula.

[36] Reconstructed based on standard formula.

[37] *cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi* appears twice.

[38] Reconstructed based on standard formula.

details of the Buddha's deliverance of the maiden discourse to five ascetics has been fitted into the ending of the textual schema in the two texts of Ba.

2.9. Textual nuances the application scheme between the two palm-leaf manuscripts

The two palm-leaf manuscripts share some significant and marked differences in their entirety while maintaining the exact same text in regard to the application schema. The two texts of Ba also share some significant portion of orthographical variations as well as some occasional textual omissions and additions. B makes omission of *saṅkhāra* in the compound word *cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī* twice while B1 does not, as it repeats *cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmi* twice. In B1, *aniccānupassī passasissāmi* has been ignored while in B it seems to have retained. B has added an extra *iti pajānanto* as in *rassaṃ passasāmī ti pajānanto* while B1 omits it. It seems these omissions and additions are textual nuances between the two palm-leaf manuscripts. Additionally, the two palm-leaf manuscripts have plenty of orthographical variation.

3. Conclusion

The complete standard mindful in-breathing and out-breathing meditation development schema which appears throughout the Pāli Canon and classical Pāli commentaries has been consistent and remains to be the same schema irrespective of its country of origin (i.e., Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, etc.). On the contrary, the textual variation on breath meditation development in the *Buddhābhiseka*, which seems to be almost unknown to the wider world of Buddhist Studies, shows sign of editorial intervention made to the original standard schema by the Siamese Pāli experts. The present research is able to show this distinctive textual variation with the support of two palm-leaf manuscripts in Tham Lanna script. Based on the textual variation between the standard Pāli schema on breath meditation and the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* textual presentation it can be assumed that the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* schema is probably quite distinctive textual presentation which is almost unknown to some other Pāli texts. Hence it is probably a new finding which not only shows innovativeness and experimentation made to the standard textual schema by the Siamese Pāli experts but also it shows a new textual development in relation to breath meditation development.

By presenting a text on breath meditation development as if the text was actually spoken by the historical *Gotama* Buddha, the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* apparently attempts to seek the presence of the historical *Gotama* Buddha at the Buddha image consecration ceremony. The purpose of presenting the text in this way probably stems from the notion that a text which is spoken by the Buddha himself,

Buddhavacana, holds more power than one that is composed in a third person narrative style. This adds power to the recitation and preaching during the ritual as the recited text is said to have been uttered by the historical *Gotama Bodhisatta* just before his *Full Enlightenment.* The *Buddhābhiseka* text presentation on breath meditation can be interpreted as a new textual development in the field of Pāli studies, and it innovates and potentially intervenes such textual schemata in its entirety.

One purpose of the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* text presentation seems to be to infuse some of the Buddha's noble qualities and his biographical account into the Buddha image in order to signify that the Buddha is actually present in the Buddha image (s). Some Pāli versions have composed a distinctive set of Pāli verses which are exclusively devoted to this purpose. This is probably a new contribution to Pāli literature, and it does not seem to be well known in the scholarly field of Buddhist Studies.

In the present research, I was also able to notice the act of paraphrasing within the standard schemata found in the canonical material. While the editor(s) of the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* presented distinctive Pāli texts, the editor(s) also potentially intervened in the text critical-editing in his work. Some Pāli textual schemata, such as the application of mindful in-breathing and out-breathing meditation schema and 80 secondary bodily characteristics of the Buddha, etc. were paraphrased. Apparently this text critical-editing technique is one of the uniquely understandable textual features in the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka.*

The Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* versions are quite heterogenous in their contents and this is probably a recent textual development in Pāli literature. Most of the Pāli literature in Theravada countries is homogeneous. Pāli texts in Theravada Pāli literature are extremely less variable among in each country. For an example, in the *Sīlakkhandha vagga* of the *Dīghanikāya*, both in the palm-leaf manuscript form and printed form in Theravada countries, such as in Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia and Laos traditions, are quite similar in wording and content despite the fact there are a few variations in orthography. [39] However, the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka* holds heterogenous character in palm-leaf manuscripts both in wording and content. I have surveyed and examined more than 23 palm-leaf manuscripts for the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka*, and found four independent Pāli versions for the Pāli *Buddhābhiseka.* Each version has been found to differ in wording and content significantly. Occasionally the content of some versions is similar to the other versions.

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[39] Pilot version of the Dhammachai Tipitaka Project.

Abbreviations

B	Wat Lai Hin Luang (วัดไหล่หินหลวง) manuscript
B1	Wat Ban Luk Tai (วัดบ้านหลุกใต้) manuscript
Ba	Buddhābhiseka
Mpe	Mahāmakut Printed Edition
Mn	Majjhimanikāya
Mṭ	Milindaṭīkā
S	Sanskrit
Wp	Wat Phumin (วัดภูมินทร์) manuscript

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Sei Shōnagon's *Makura no sōshi*

A guide for women's sociality in 11th century Japan

Carolina Negri

This study examines the possibility of interpreting *Makura no sōshi* ("The Pillow Book," 11th century) as a guide for the education of aristocratic women, equipping them to navigate the female communities of 11th century Japan, characterized by jealousy and rivalry. Through a close reading of this work, now recognized as a masterpiece of world literature, I will explore topics related to sociality in the Heian period— such as courtship, education, beauty routines, and etiquette— offering insight into the lives of middle - and high-ranking women at the imperial court. Sei Shōnagon's work also provides an opportunity to delve into the fascinating aesthetics of aristocratic society during the Heian period (794-1185), focusing on the concept of an 'oblique vision' which shaped poetic expression, architecture, and even the relationship between men and women.

> She could be lively only in the midst of life.
>
> In isolation she dwindled to a shadow.
>
> Stefan Zweig, *The Collected Stories of Stefan Zweig*

1. *Makura no sōshi* and sociality

Sei Shōnagon's (965?-1025?) *Makura no sōshi* ("The Pillow Book") belongs to a group of works written during the Heian period (794-1185) by highly educated women of the middle ranks of the aristocracy. Their active participation in literary production is linked to their experience as ladies-in-waiting and the crucial role they played in the marriage politics adopted by the Northern Branch of the Fujiwara family. For the scions of the most powerful family of the time, the ultimate goal was to marry one of their daughters to the emperor, with the hope that the future heir to the throne would be their grandchild. To achieve this, it was essential for the chosen one to be not only attractive but also

cultured, capable of fostering a genuine intellectual circle around herself. This circle would involve ladies actively promoting the reputation of the aspiring future empress in many ways often including a distinguished production of literary works. Most of these works, primarily *monogatari* (tales) and *nikki* (diaries), though dealing with different content, share the same objectives, focusing on the development, representation, and transmission of sociality (Shirane 2007: 5-6), i.e., the ability to interact profitably with others by demonstrating an understanding of what is considered polite or impolite in various contexts.

Makura no Sōshi, the only example of the *zuihitsu* genre (literally, 'following the brush') produced during the Heian period, seems to particularly emphasize the importance of sociality. It draws attention to an aesthetic conception that, rather than representing a standard of beauty to conform to, coincides with a refined sensitivity that allows one to grasp even the smallest details necessary for successful interaction with others. This work stands out from other texts written during the same period for its originality in style and content, presenting a rich collection of observations on various topics that, at least apparently, follow the free flow of the writer's thoughts. The short passages, the variety of themes treated from a personal perspective, and the alternation between colloquial and more formal language prompt inevitable reflections on the literary genre to which it might be associated. Its classification as *zuihitsu* dates to the Edo period (1603-1868), and it is still used nowadays, after centuries of uncertainty during which it was alternatively considered a court life narrative (*monogatari*), a poetry treatise (*karon*), a diary (*nikki*), an anecdotal collection (*setsuwashū*), or a manual. Although it deals with settings and themes also present in the contemporary *Genji monogatari* ("The Tale of Genji," 1008 ca.) and despite Sei Shōnagon's similarities to Murasaki Shikibu (973?-1014?) in terms of gender, family background, education, and court status, *Makura no sōshi* has long been regarded as inferior to *Genji monogatari*. Additionally, Sei Shōnagon has frequently been characterized as a negative model of a proud and presumptuous woman, contrary to the more modest and humbler Murasaki Shikibu. The classification of *Makura no sōshi* as *zuihitsu*, which means a heterogeneous text lacking internal cohesion, has further influenced its reception, making it appear less significant than other classics. Only from the end of the 1990s with the growing interest shown by Japanese[1] and foreign scholars,[2] has Sei Shōnagon's work been reassessed through intriguing interpretive lenses that also consider the political context and the representation of gender. More recently, Gergana Ivanova, in

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[1] In Japan research on *Makura no sōshi* entered a new era with a new scholarly edition (*Makura no sōshi* kenkyūkai 1998) based on the *Sankan bon* manuscript's lineage followed soon after by an encyclopedic dictionary (*Makura no sōshi* kenkyūkai 2001).
[2] Outside Japan are remarkable the studies by Mark Morris (1980), Tzvetana Kristeva (1994), Naomi Fukumuri (1997), Edith Sarra (1999) and Joshua S. Mostow (2001).

Unbinding the Pillow Book: The Many Lives of a Japanese Classic, has proposed to 'release' the work from stereotypical interpretations, demonstrating that it lends itself to multiple readings and uses varying with historical epochs (2018: 14-17). While it has been rediscovered as a text for female education since the Edo period, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that during the Heian period it may have been conceived as a manual of etiquette aimed at aristocratic women. Supporting this thesis is a study by Yamaguchi Nakami (2008), *Sura sura yomeru Makura no sōshi* ("Reading *Makura no sōshi* with Ease"), which promises an accessible reading of Sei Shōnagon's work, presenting it as a guide to good manners intended primarily for women, but indirectly also for men, offering useful models for assimilating and practicing proper behavior. It is likely that Sei Shōnagon, prompted by Empress Teishi (977-1001), intended her work to serve as a sort of manual based on personal notes written on pieces of paper. It consists of short lists interspersed with longer passages that include autobiographical memories and observations on various matters of common interest in the aristocratic environment. The 'lists,' which constitute the most original and perhaps also the most enigmatic part of the work, include both specific categories of things (*mono wa*) such as insects, flowers, and plants, focusing especially on nature, and the so-called adjectival sections (*monozukushi*) where a series of elements or situations are introduced, united by a particular characteristic. In passages containing personal memories, *Makura no sōshi* reveals several connections to other diaries written by court ladies, leading scholars to classify it as a part of the *nikki bungaku* ('diary literature') tradition. However, it fundamentally differs from these works in key aspects, such as the near-total absence of poetic compositions and the lack of a cohesive thematic unity to provide a narrative thread. The author's memories appear to the reader as independent stories where the narrative pace intentionally slows and adopts a more relaxed tone. These episodes form small pieces of a larger mosaic, collectively portraying Sei Shōnagon's life at court. They trace her gradual evolution from a young and inexperienced woman to one of full maturity, achieved through the cultivation of skills necessary to navigate a female community rife with jealousy and rivalry. Her difficult apprenticeship inspires numerous passages rich in considerations on specific themes, sometimes introduced through anecdotes heard from others (*kikigaki*) that she herself had likely found very instructive.

2. Desolate houses

If we consider sociality as central to a woman's education during the Heian period, many passages in *Makura no sōshi* becomes more comprehensible, perhaps starting with the most emblematic one, where the author describes a condition that evokes tenderness and compassion: a woman alone in a dilapidated house.

> The place where a woman lives alone appears neglected and melancholic: the rundown house is surrounded by crumbling earthen walls. The pond is overrun with weeds, and the garden, if not entirely covered with wormwood, shows green patches peeking out here and there between the gravel (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 171, 299).

These words evoke stories such as *Yamato monogatari* ("Tales of Yamato," 10ᵗʰ century), *Utsuho monogatari* ("The Tale of the Hollow Tree," 10ᵗʰ century), and *Genji monogatari* which depict similar situations of solitary young women waiting to be discovered by a charming aristocratic man (Yamaguchi 2008: 80) who could facilitate their reintegration into society as lovers, wives, and mothers. The case of Suetsumunohana in *Genji monogatari* is undoubtedly the most famous example of this romantic heroine, represented as a fallen noblewoman, lacking family support. She is forced to live away from the aristocratic society in a desolate, dilapidated, and frightening place that becomes a metaphor for her own misfortune.

> The house, already in disrepair before her father's death, had become a refuge for foxes. Among the trees—so overgrown and neglected they seemed almost mournful—the hoot of the owl echoed morning and evening. Once-mysterious creatures, held back by human presence, no longer hid from view. Now spirits of the forest and other unsettling presences appeared boldly (Abe *et al.* 1995: 327).

The condition of a woman forced to live alone in an abandoned house is described in Heian literature as a necessary premise for the beginning of a romance since "romantic love is frequently associated with the impulse to nurture someone who is weak, frail, or in distress in some way" (Childs 1999: 1060). However, this situation is also conveyed to the reader as an abnormal and fundamentally negative condition. The repugnant aspect of the house and the garden surrounding it, tangible evidence of neglect born from isolation, lends dramatic accents to the condition of the person living there: a lonely, sorrowful woman spending her days waiting for someone who might restore her access to the society from which she has, for some reason, been marginalized. Her house, located in an undefined place, represents an unreal abode from which she must try to emerge if she wants to harmoniously integrate with others. Should she fail in her socialization experience based on codified behavioral models, she risks being forced again to live on the margins of society in a repugnant dwelling, a symbolic place of atonement for her sins. This type of situation, usually concerning a more mature woman judged disappointing as a wife or mother, frequently appears in tales of mistreated stepdaughters, such as *Sumiyoshi monogatari* ("The Princess of Sumiyoshi," 10ᵗʰ century), to underscore, towards the end of the story, the reprehensible conduct of the stepmother and the deserved punishment involving her exclusion from society.

> Both the more sensitive and the less sensitive people detested the stepmother, who lived with the wicked woman in a place fallen into ruin—a dilapidated house surrounded by a garden overrun with weeds. This situation evoked deep compassion. The two women did nothing but weep, believing it to be the rightful punishment for having caused such great suffering to others (Kuwabara 1995: 125).

While for a young woman, the abandoned house represents a sort of embryonic stage, a prelude to her complete realization, for a mature woman, it signifies a definitive departure from the human community within which her behavior has been deemed unacceptable. It is interesting to note that both situations are described through the recurring literary *topos* of the 'desolate house' emphasizing the importance of developing and preserving appropriate social connections. This is especially significant in a context where women played a crucial role in forging new alliances between different families. In such a setting, courtship was perceived as a transformative opportunity with the power to change one's life entirely.

3. The importance of courtship

In the Heian period courtship among aristocracy took a variety of forms, representing the ambiguous time before the beginning of a formal relationship or its eventual end. It was often oriented towards sexual intimacy and procreation. As a result, courtship became closely linked with kinship that formalized in family lineages marked by a polygynous marital system. One's position among kin and one's alliances with other families played a significant role in shaping one's political future, often with the goal of attaining the highest position possible at the imperial court (Bargen 2015: 1). Marriage in the upper echelons of Heian society were often polygynous, meaning that while high-ranking noblemen could have relationship simultaneously with several women, a noblewoman was only allowed one husband at a time. In the inner palace and in the mansions of the elite a woman's standing was typically determined by a combination of her fertility and the sociopolitical influence of her family. Her position among her husband's several wives was established as a matter of custom rather than law and it could easily be compromised by the presence of a younger rival of higher social rank or simply more fertile (Sarra 2020: 27).

Within the aristocracy, the first marriage was typically arranged at a young age, often between cousins or members of the same extended family, and usually without the consent of those involved. The individuals passively accepted decisions that had already been made for them, leaving little to no room for romantic considerations. On the other hand, extramarital and occasional relationships, which could sometimes evolve into secondary marriages, included, at least as described in literary works, a

long and complicated courtship (Bargen 2015: 48-53). It represented a stage of gradual acquaintance between individuals of different sexes who would normally not have had the opportunity to meet. Typically, a man would become intrigued by a woman simply based on praise he had heard about her beauty and refined cultural sensibilities. In some cases, he might also have the chance to observe her from a distance, through a physical barrier such as a fence, wall, shutter, curtain screen, fan, or kimono sleeve—an encounter that could be sufficient to fall in love with her. In literary works the *kaimami* (lit. 'looking through a gap in the fence') often marks the beginning of a romance. A quick glimpse at a 'hidden woman' not only satisfies a man's curiosity but also inspires him to express love and desire through refined poetry. The woman, in turn, could choose to either accept or reject his advances, often with the assistance of her family and servants.

Courtship was considered the most important and concrete expression of sociality, often portrayed as a difficult test to overcome during which people were evaluated based on very strict behavioral norms. It was necessary to arrive well-prepared because courtship could lead to more stable relationships that in some cases could radically change people's lives. It also represented a sort of societal debut allowing individuals to gain and maintain a positive reputation in the eyes of others.

Sei Shōnagon, reflecting on the apprenticeship of aristocratic women and the need to interact profitably within their environment, primarily recommends seizing the opportunity to work at court as a lady-in-waiting to a high-ranking individual. She considers it as an essential opportunity to understand the world. In her words, ladies-in-waiting are portrayed as more privileged than married women who remain confined at home, content with a boring life and false happiness.

> Women who live without prospects, believing that what is merely an illusion of happiness is true happiness, are, in my opinion, both depressing and contemptible. I wish that the daughters of people of considerable social rank could mingle with others and come to know the world by serving at court as ladies-in-waiting or in other similar positions for a time (Matsuo and Nagai: 1997, dan 22, 56).

To know the world meant, first and foremost, understanding the importance of courtship, and knowing how to interact effectively with the opposite sex. On this topic Sei Shōnagon returns repeatedly, focusing her attention particularly on the behavior of men. It almost seems as though she intends to provide women with an indispensable guide to identifying the ideal partner. Memorable is the passage explaining what a man should or should not do after spending a night with a woman.

> The behavior of a man who separates from a woman at dawn should be impeccable. He lies down, showing no desire to get up. And when the woman tries to urge him to leave saying: "It's already

past dawn! It's a shame!", he sighs subtly implying that if he doesn't stay with her just a little longer, it will be difficult to say goodbye (Matsuo and Nagai: 1997, dan 61, 116).

Regarding the man's behavior, it is also interesting to see how a great seducer is portrayed with vivid realism, not without a touch of irony, as he strives to demonstrate in various ways that he continues to think nostalgically about the woman with whom he spent the night even when he has returned home.

> A great seducer who has relations with many different women, when he returns from who knows where at dawn, even if sleepy, stays awake. It is delightful to see how at ease he is when he takes the inkstone, carefully grinds it, and without dashing off whatever comes to mind he write the next-morning letter with all his heart (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 182, 319-320).

As evidenced by this passage, although it was permissible to have relationships with multiple women simultaneously, it was essential for the man to leave a good impression on each one, maintaining a positive reputation as a lover over time. The woman, for her part, always anxiously awaited the morning letter after a night spent together (*kinuginu no fumi*) as concrete confirmation of the man's appreciation, which hinted at the possibility of further encounters. Thus, the excitement felt when the longed-for letter arrived was understandable, with the letter being carefully examined for how it was sent, the choice of paper, the calligraphy, and the individual words used.

> [...] you feel a surge of happiness as a slender man, dressed like an escort guard and holding an umbrella, steps through the side wall door. He hands you a letter, written on white Michinoku paper or perhaps a beautifully decorated one. The brushstroke that seals the paper where it has been tied, has dried, leaving delicate smudges at the edges. As you untie and open the letter to read it, it reveals itself to be tightly rolled and knotted, with subtle creases marking its folds. The ink fades from deep black to softer shades. The lines are dense, and the handwriting sprawls across both sides of the paper. (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 275, 430)

Several passages confirm that delays or non-delivery of the letter caused concern and embarrassment, so much so that Sei Shōnagon includes this type of situation among those that provoke the greatest anxiety, eliciting deep compassion from those who know the waiting woman.

> The heart is a creature amazingly prone to being moved. And it is even moved for another woman when the next-morning letter from the man she spent her first night is delayed in arriving (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 144, 270)

Although relationships were quite free and not bound by an indissoluble commitment, according to Sei Shōnagon both men and women were expected to understand the rules of courtship and constantly

verify rumors among others to maintain a good reputation. They also needed to be able to pick up on subtle cues to anticipate how a relationship might develop. Indeed, a passionate next-morning letter received promptly could serve as a powerful catalyst for a woman, elevating her confidence within a competitive context where she often faced rivalry and social pressure.

4. Education for sociality

In a society where people were primarily evaluated based on the sensitivity and refinement they demonstrated in every situation, receiving a proper education was crucial. In this regard, Sei Shōnagon recounts a very significant anecdote told by Empress Teishi, which discusses the advice given by the Minister of the Left, Fujiwara no Morotada (920-969), to his daughter Hōshi (??-967), who was destined to become the consort of Emperor Murakami (926-967).

> When she was still a young girl, her father gave her the following advice: "First of all, you must practice calligraphy. Then you should strive to become the best at playing the seven-string *koto*. Finally, you must study to memorize all the poems from the twenty books of the *Kokinshū*" (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 21, 54).

It was believed that aristocratic women needed to receive an education that included the study of poetry, music, and calligraphy, along with other refined arts like incense blending. Knowing poetry and being able to compose it on demand was considered an essential requirement for social communication. For this reason, girls began practicing calligraphy regularly around the age of ten, copying poems written by eminent calligraphers. This exercise, known as *tenarai* (calligraphy practice), aimed to memorize numerous poems and master beautiful handwriting, using the *Kokinwakashū* ("Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems," 905) as the main textbook. This anthology was considered an indispensable reference for describing human emotions in relation to the changing seasons, fostering an appropriate empathy with others (Kawamura 2005: 59-62). One of the main activities of ladies-in-waiting to an imperial consort or a shrine priestess was reading and producing poetry, which was considered a privileged means of communication for romantic relationships or simply for building and maintaining good relations with acquaintances. An aristocratic woman destined to become empress had among her main duties the management of a literary circle, attended by highly cultured ladies who were constantly invited to cultivate their poetic talent through the memorization of works from important anthologies (Moroi 2018: 177), which served as essential reference material for producing new, valuable verses. In the same passage where Sei Shōnagon recalls Fujiwara no Morotada's advice to his daughter, she shares an intriguing anecdote about Empress Teishi. The

Empress, demonstrating her wit and literary knowledge, recites the opening lines of selected poems from the *Kokinwakashū*. She then asks her understandably nervous and embarrassed ladies-in-waiting to complete the verses, testing whether they had memorized them correctly.

> There was another occasion when Her Majesty placed a bound book of the *Kokinshū* before her and began reciting the opening lines of various poems, inviting us to complete them. Why did we hesitate to reply, even for poems we had studied so diligently from morning to evening? Only Saishō managed to recall about ten. Others recognized merely five or six, and you might think they could have simply admitted that they couldn't remember any at all. (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 21, 53)

This type of exercise, reminiscent of *uta garuta* (poetry cards), a social game still practiced in Japan where participants compete in their knowledge of famous poems, confirms the importance of poetic culture in a world characterized by the physical separation of men and women. The letters including verses exchanged by persons who could not see each other were seen as revealing important clues about the writer's ability to express emotions. Even in a normal conversation among cultured and refined individuals it was important to refer to a well-known poetic composition, perhaps quoting some lines, as communication risked becoming difficult, if not impossible, without a solid poetic education. Especially at court, it was common to be asked to compose impromptu verses during many social occasions to confirm one's sensitivity and literary preparation. Those who did not have a good knowledge of poetry had little chance of integrating with others and would especially face inevitable failure if they ever attempted to win someone over.

As Fujiwara no Morotada points out, music study was also an essential part of women's education. During the Heian period, musical concerts, typically held in the evening, were a favorite pastime among aristocrats, offering them an opportunity to appreciate the musical talent of performers. Various string instruments were used on these occasions, including the *kin*, a type of floor harp with seven strings. The *kin* was considered particularly challenging to play, and its mastery was often regarded an effective tool for seduction (Toriimoto 2023: 51). Just like calligraphy and poetry, playing string instruments well, were necessary for socialising and establishing a good reputation thus, acquiring this skill was a highly anticipated and understandably anxious expectation for young women.

> Even when you learn to play stringed or woodwind instruments, just as with calligraphy, if you haven't made much progress, you will surely wonder when you will ever become as good as others (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 152, 279).

Music typically followed different scales depending on the seasons, and like poetry and clothing, required a trained sensitivity to perceive and internalize natural phenomena, always showing an appropriate awareness. The opening lines of the *Makura no Sōshi* represent a fundamental prelude to drawing attention to this important aspect of Heian aesthetics, as an explicit invitation to admire nature, for example, the extraordinary beauty of a spring dawn.

> In spring, the dawn is beautiful. As the light gradually illuminates the mountains, coloring their rims with red, and layers of violet clouds float in the sky (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 1, 25).

When we carefully read the entire passage that details the charm of each season, we cannot help but notice the frequent repetition of the adjective *okashi*. This term is challenging to translate with a single word, as it encompasses a range of meanings including 'interesting,' 'beautiful,' 'lovely,' 'refined,' 'curious' and 'strange' (Kristeva 1994: 21). For Sei Shōnagon, each season is defined by elements that can be described as *okashi*. Their distinctiveness inspires contemplation of the surrounding nature, fostering the development of a refined aesthetic sensitivity. In the *Makura no Sōshi*, numerous references to the natural environment can be found, particularly within the so-called 'lists,' where Sei Shōnagon presents concise catalogues of flowers, birds, and mountains. The evident purpose of these lists is to offer reference material for poetic production, drawing on conventional themes of 'secondary nature.'[3]

> Mounts are Mount Ogura. Mount Kase. Mount Mikasa. Mount Konokure. Mount Iritachi. Mount Wasurezu. [...] (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 11, 45)

The mountains mentioned here are rich in literary associations and are not only real objects. They represent *utamakura*, or poetic places that function as sounds useful for creating wordplay commonly used in poetry (Morris 1980: 14). With these lists, Sei Shōnagon seems to be testing her readers' erudition, suggesting that a composition can be understood and appreciated only if it employs a codified language shared by members of a particular social and cultural context.

Not only native poetic production but also Chinese poetry was to be part of a court lady's education. Throughout the *Makura no sōshi*, there are clear references to Chinese literature, indicating that familiarity with it was a valuable skill for engaging effectively with court gentlemen interested in continental culture. It could also be considered as a great contribution to the education of the future emperor's mother, who was believed to be able to pass on her knowledge even during pregnancy

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[3] On the concept of 'secondary nature' (*nijiteki shizen*) see Shirane (2014: 1-18).

(Mostow 2001: 131). Passages referring to knowledge of Chinese language and culture can be divided into three main categories:

1. passages, mainly the 'lists,' where Sei Shōnagon flaunts her knowledge of Chinese culture to readers while discussing a particular topic;

2. passages where she culturally challenges the men of the court she interacts with;

3. passages where she interacts with Empress Teishi (Mostow 2001: 129-131).

The latter category represents situations that provide satisfaction to the writer, as they allow her to assert a certain cultural superiority and justify the privileged position she enjoyed at court. A famous passage describes how on a cold winter morning, Empress Teishi, to test her ladies' knowledge of Chinese poetry, instead of directly asking them to open the shutters to admire the fallen snow, makes a vague reference to a poem by the Chinese poet Bai Juyi (772-846), who was highly regarded in Japan at the time. In the poem, it is said that on a winter morning, upon waking, one cannot help but look out to contemplate the snow accumulated on Mount Kōro.

> One morning when a lot of snow had fallen, for once Her Majesty's shutters were left down. We ladies all gathered in her presence around a brazier were chatting about this and that when Her Majesty asked me: "Shōnagon, what might the snow be like on Kōro Peak?" Thereupon I immediately ordered that the shutters be lifted, and the bamboo blinds rolled up. She smiled with satisfaction, and the other ladies commented: "Even though we knew those lines that we also quote in poems, they didn't come to mind at all! Indeed, Shōnagon is perfect for serving Her Majesty!" (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 280, 433-434).

This is one of the most famous passages from the *Makura no sōshi* featured in Japanese school textbooks, demonstrating the author's extraordinary cultural knowledge.

5. Beauty tips

> Washing one's hair, applying makeup, putting on clothes well-scented with incense. On such occasions, even when no one special will see you, you feel an overwhelming sense of pleasure inside (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 27, 69-70).

The description of the pleasure experienced when taking care of oneself recurs, is often noted, in a passage announcing a detailed list of 'exciting things' (*kokoro tokimeki suru mono*). Given the lack of running water in the aristocratic residences of the Heian period, it is easy to imagine that the beauty routine was a very demanding activity. Some essential aspects of personal hygiene, such as washing one's hair, could not be performed frequently. Hair care, a symbol of female beauty and an infallible

gauge of a woman's age and health, required a lot of time and involved the cooperation of several people. Typically, a comb with a bit of rinse water obtained from the washing of rice (*yusuru*) was used to refresh the hair, and rarely, after considerable reflection and complicated calculations to determine auspicious months and days, did the much-desired washing take place. This process used the same liquid obtained from rice, which served both as a treatment and a detergent, contained in a bowl placed on a beautiful, lacquered tray (*yusurutsuki*). After washing, the hair was dried while lying down, with the help of several ladies who used the heat from a brazier to complete this laborious task (Toriimoto 2023: 37-38). Among the essential steps in body care, especially for ladies, was perfect and long-lasting makeup, necessary for public appearances. To achieve it impeccably, one had to first create a very thick white base on the face to highlight it in dimly lit environments. The product used for this purpose was a sort of fluid cream made from powder derived from rice, chestnuts, wheat, or kudzu mixed with water. Lead-based makeup, imported from China even before the Heian period, was easier to apply, but unfortunately, it later proved to be harmful to health. Once this whitish base was created, the makeup for the lips was applied, making them appear much smaller than their natural size and colored with a red powder made from safflower. Eyebrows were not left in their natural shape but were shaved and deliberately drawn thicker and higher than their normal placement (Toriimoto 2023: 39-40). This operation, known as *hikimayu*, was typical when reaching adulthood (around ten years old) and, along with the blackening of the teeth (*haguro*), was one of the distinguishing features of a girl who had become a woman and was ready for a new social role.

The completion of personal care also involved the careful selection of clothing, always chosen based on age, social position, and the current season. Court ladies-in-waiting, who had to wear formal attire in the presence of aristocratic individuals to show respect, typically wore layered clothing (*kasaneuchiki*) and paired it with a short jacket (*karaginu*) with a long train (*mo*) (Kawamura 2005: 37-39). As confirmed by detailed descriptions found in many Heian-period works, such as the *Murasaki Shikibu nikki* ("Diary of Murasaki Shikibu," 11th century) and the *Genji monogatari*, makeup and clothing were considered fundamental elements of a woman's appearance that spoke volumes about her taste and refinement. Inaccurate or poorly done makeup could become the subject of annoying gossip, as could inappropriate clothing: not only the fabric and tailoring but also the color combinations, always suitable for the rank and in harmony with the season, were carefully evaluated before a public appearance. In this regard, the passage from the *Makura no sōshi* where Sei Shōnagon reflects on the color combinations of Empress Teishi's attire in preparation to receive her sister Genshi (980?-1002), who had become consort to the future Emperor Sanjō (976-1017), is illuminating.

> Her Majesty was draped in two plum-pink cloaks, one crafted from rich brocade and the other adorned with embossed patterns on three scarlet robes of glossed silk. "Plum-pink is more beautiful when paired with deep purple, she remarked. "It is a pity I cannot wear it. At this time of the year, it is probably better not to wear plum-pink, but I have never been fond of color like spring-shoot green. Do you think this color pairs well with the scarlet?" (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 100, 200).

The reference to plum-pink (*kōbairo*) in this passage does not seem accidental, given that it was a very popular color among aristocratic women of the time who loved the flower that came from China. The rule was that it could be worn from the middle of the eleventh month until the second month, so it was no longer considered appropriate for an event organized after the middle of the second month (Toriimoto 2023: 66).

Colors, fabrics, dyeing, and perfumes were the standard measures used in the Heian period to judge the quality of clothing and, by extension, the person wearing it (Pandey 2017: 46). However, a necessary precondition for appearing attractive to others was primarily youth, which marked a woman as sexually desirable. This was especially important in a society where her main function was to bear enough children to ensure the continuation of the family and forge new alliances. Sei Shōnagon notes that no matter how meticulously a woman might appear, the inevitable physical decline risked making her seem inadequate not only as a mother but also as a wife. In the passage listing what is 'out of place' (*nigenaki mono*), one can discern a genuine warning to all women of a certain age.

> A mature woman pregnant, walking around. It is unbearable when she has a young husband and even worse if she gets hungry because he is seeing another woman. (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 43, 101)

In Sei Shōnagon's world, a mature woman is inevitably seen as unattractive and thus unacceptable even as the protagonist of a romantic idyll.

> It would have been more impressive if the lady-in-waiting behind the screen, responding to the gentleman on the other side, had been a young girl with beautiful hair flowing all around her, just as described in the tales. But unfortunately, I was a mature woman well beyond my youth. My hair, perhaps because it was no longer really mine, seemed sparse and unruly here and there [...] (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 79, 142-143).

In this scene, the male protagonist, Fujiwara no Tadanobu (933-994), is described as the typical charming hero of romantic tales, while Sei Shōnagon is portrayed as a sort of anti-heroine, being a mature woman, whose faded beauty is incontrovertibly evidenced by her hair. She is clearly a woman who no longer fits the ideal model of a young, attractive lady-in-waiting who was supposed to entertain the gentlemen of the court and win their favors.

Sei Shōnagon offers many insights and advice on beauty, particularly for woman at court, but she also highlights the strict social codes and expectations that governed court life. While she describes the value placed on youthful beauty and elegance, she acknowledges that the opportunities for woman to stand out are more limited as they age. In the highly hierarchical and appearance-focused world of Heian court, a woman's worth was often tied to her beauty, and as time passed, older women were seen as less prominent and influential. Sei Shōnagon, however often presents this reality with a certain pragmatism, while also emphasizing the importance of charm, wit, and the ability to navigate the complex social dynamics of the court.

6. Social etiquette

Not only does the aesthetic aspect distinguish refined people, but also their impeccable manners. Attention to behavior and respect for others is a topic on which Sei Shōnagon places great emphasis, recalling, for example, the importance of using appropriate language in various life situations (Matsuo and Nagai, 1997, dan 186, 324), or highlighting the necessity of maintaining decorum when receiving men at court (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 187, 325-326). To illustrate the importance attributed to social etiquette, a specific passage provides readers with a reminder of *nikuki mono*, or 'disappointing things' that unexpectedly level people, animals, or things on the same plane.

> Disappointing things. A guest who arrives and lingers to talk precisely when you have something urgent to attend to. If it is someone you can treat without much formality, you can try to send them away by saying, "We'll talk about it another time", however, if it is a person that you must treat with respect, it is a disappointing situation. A hair that falls on the inkstone, and you accidentally mix it in while grinding with the inkstick. There is also the harsh scraping sound when a small piece of stone gets caught in the ink. An exorcist you cannot find in his usual place just when someone suddenly falls ill. You wait a long time while they search for him. Finally, they succeed in finding him, and you feel a sense of relief as he begins the exorcism rites. However, it seems that exhaustion from dealing with other possessing spirits earlier has taken its toll. No sooner does he sit and begin chanting than his voice quickly grows drowsy. This is thoroughly disappointing (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 26, 64-65).

In this lengthy passage, various disappointing things are discussed in succession: an unexpected guest arriving when we are busiest, an exorcist who cannot be found exactly when needed, people making inappropriate or vulgar gestures in daily life, as well as an annoying hair stuck to the inkstone, the buzzing of a mosquito, and the creaking of a carriage's wheels. The deliberate lack of distinction between very different situations emphasizes that a person who disregards the rules of good manners is as unbearable as a hair accidentally fallen on the inkstone, a bothersome mosquito, or a noisy

carriage. Sei Shōnagon emphasizes that the good manners of an elegant and refined person must reveal, in every circumstance, consideration and deep respect for others—what today the Japanese would sum up with the term *omoiyari.* This is a particular sensitivity which implicates to guess others' feelings and pay careful attention to their feelings, accepting what happened (or will happen to others) as what has happened (or will happen) to oneself (Amanuma 2004).

During the Heian period, a well-educated and refined individual was expected to leave a lasting impression of their elegance in every situation. For this reason, it was essential to captivate those with a keen sense of hearing and smell even in environments where sliding doors, blinds, screens, and fans limited direct interaction. In such settings, a person's presence could still be distinctly perceived through subtle cues. Not surprisingly, Sei Shōnagon extensively discusses *kokoronikuki mono* ('fascinating things'), an expression difficult to translate, given that the adjective *kokoronikushi* refers to something which intrigues us because it seems charming and refined even if it is not clearly visible. This might be an imperceptible sound or a light fragrance that attracts someone's attention, instantly stimulating the imagination and a pleasant memory associated with certain sensations. Sei Shōnagon provides a series of examples to clarify this challenging concept.

> Fascinating things. It is delightful to hear, through something which separate us, the sound of someone, who does not seem like a lady-in-waiting, softly and elegantly clapping her hands to call someone. Then you can hear a youthful voice respond and the swish of silk robes as someone arrives. Behind something like sliding paper doors we can guess that someone on the other side is having a meal. How lovely is the sound of chopsticks, spoons, and other things mixing together! We startle at the metallic clink of a pouring-pot handle suddenly falling sideways and knocking against the pot. Hair swept back gently over a robe that shines with a smooth luster, subtly suggesting the hair full length (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 190, 329).

A slight clap of hands to call the servants, the prompt response of a fresh and gentle voice, the rustling of silk robes, the noise of utensils at mealtime, and the hair falling delicately on a glossy silk robe. These are examples united by the preference for an oblique mode of visuality[4] which involves perceiving with hearing or smell what is not visible, drawing on our personal experience. This perception, characteristic of the refined sensitivity of the Heian period, recurs in various poetic compositions of the *Kokinwakashū*, where something invisible is imagined based on previous experience. Awareness of the cyclical nature of the seasons allows the poet to see even what is not before his eyes, perceiving, as expressed in a famous poem by Ki no Tsurayuki (872-945), the arrival of spring even in darkness through the fragrance of plum blossoms filling the air (Lamarre 2000: 171-173).

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[4] On this topic see also Konishi (1978: 71) and Lalonde (2019: 22-25).

Ume no hana	When spring comes,
niou harube wa	the scent of plum's flowers
Kurabuyama	though I cross Mount Kurabu
yami ni koyuredo	in the darkness
shiruku zo arikeru	clearly reveals its presence
(Ozawa and Matsuda 1994: I, n. 39, 43).	

What is not visible has the power to stimulate the imagination and fascinates much more than what appears distinctly before our eyes. This concept applies equally to both things and people around us. According to Sei Shōnagon, people should not focus solely on appearing elegant during official occasions or in direct interaction with others. They should pay close attention, especially to how their voice, movements, fragrance, or even the rustling of their robes can be perceived from afar. These are small but revealing hints that can make us imagine even the appearance of a person still unknown who speaks and moves beyond a thin wall.

Even fragrance plays a crucial role in communicating someone's sought-after elegance from a distance, whether it is a man or a woman, as evidenced by the intoxicating and lingering scent left by a charming gentleman after his visit.

> The fragrance of incense is the most fascinating thing. I still remember the wonderful scent that wafted from Captain Tadanobu as he sat by the little door of Her Majesty's apartments, leaning against the blinds one day during the long rains of the fifth month. The blend was so refined that its ingredients were impossible to distinguish. Naturally, the moisture of the rainy day enhanced the scent, but how could one not take notice of it? It was no wonder that the following day, the younger ladies were so deeply impressed at the way the scent seemed to linger on the blinds he had rested against (Matsuo and Nagai 1997: dan 190, 332).

Incense played an important role in aristocratic society because people rarely saw each other and one of the few means of forming an opinion of a men or a woman was precisely the scent emanating from his or her quarters. It is interesting to note that "in the *The Tale of Genji*, that register of taste, the social utility of incense extends into the realms of literary technique: for here the author develops and defines her characters through the device of incense" (Gatten 1977: 39).

The production of incense achieved from the skillful blending of fragrant woods, plants, and animal substances used to scent garments was considered a highly sought-after art comparable to poetry and music and, like them, reflected the cyclical passage of the seasons through the skillful use of different ingredients (Toriimoto 2023: 144-146). The fragrance announced a hidden presence, allowing a person to imagine what could not be seen with the eyes, making it immediately more important and desirable. This strategy of emphasizing a presence through its obscuring is reminiscent

of the concept of the 'hidden Buddha' (*hibitsu*), where a Buddha's icon is concealed inside a temple to diminish its profane nature and materiality, thereby enhancing its sacrality (Rambelli 2002: 295).

In the Heian period, the custom of not making a woman's physical appearance visible led men to focus on details that could be intercepted even without visual contact. The *kaimami* which represents the moment in literary works when a woman is 'discovered' for the first time by a man, demonstrates the involvement of sight along with other senses that collect preliminary information about the female presence: the fragrance, voices, and music from her apartments are valuable clues gathered by the visitor before even seeing the woman (Lalonde 2019: 50-52). Even the construction of aristocratic residences (*shindenzukuri*), which replicates the concentric structure of a temple within which a sacred object is hidden, adheres to the ideal of an 'oblique vision.' It urges the potential visitor to move from the most polluted outer area to the purest interior, where the body of the woman, associated with fertility and fragility, is protected. The mechanism of various protective layers characterizing the environment in which she lives serves to ensure her safety, allowing her to decide whether and how to reveal herself according to the circumstances. Contrary to what one might imagine, women in the Heian period were not always passive victims of strong and authoritarian men but had the opportunity to present a fragmented view of themselves through an intriguing game of gradual revelation. For these reasons the *kaimami* should not be interpreted as a violation of a defenseless female body but rather as a precise external alert signal that the woman can perceive and use to her advantage. In the *Makura no sōshi* 'erotic desire between men and women becomes a game for skilled players on both sides, with the woman playing as active a role as her man counterpart' (Sarra 1999: 257). Sei Shōnagon's perspective underscores the idea that women should not merely conform to societal expectations of grace and decorum but should actively harness the power of how they present themselves. By carefully managing their appearance, movements, voice, and even the way their presence is perceived from a distance, women could wield influence without necessarily asserting it directly. This form of 'controlled visibility' allowed women to navigate complex social dynamics, enabling them to maintain autonomy while still conforming to the cultural norms of the time. Sei Shōnagon's work seems to be written with the intention of making woman aware that social interaction is a dual act of observing and being observed, requiring them to carefully monitor all the information they wish to convey to others.

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Communicating isolation and personal struggle

Nagata Kabi's *My Lesbian Experience with loneliness*

Marta Fanasca

In June 2018, Nagata Kabi achieved unexpected international success by winning the Harvey Award for her essay manga, 'My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness' (*Sabishisugite Rezu Fūzoku ni Ikimashita Repo*). The plot is quite simple: the author, a 28-year-old Japanese woman with no sexual experience and a history of mental health issues, decides to hire a female escort to have sex for the very first time. Despite the seemingly straightforward plot, this manga is not about sex. The original title, which translates to 'Report: I was too lonely, so I went to a lesbian escort service,' reflects the main theme of Nagata's struggle with loneliness and her continuous search for belonging. Sex with a sex worker serves as a tool for Nagata to explore her physical and mental status, her vulnerabilities, and to express her personal development.

Nagata is an outcast for the standards of the Japanese society: despite being an adult, she is not employed full-time, and her aspiration to pursue a career in the manga world concerns her parents. Additionally, her homosexuality further marginalizes her. Nagata's deviation from the societal norms is underscored by her limited sexual knowledge, acquired solely from reading manga. Initially, Nagata's struggle appears to revolve around meeting parental expectations and becoming a *shakaijin*, or a fully functioning member of Japanese society. However, it ultimately evolves into a journey of learning to relate to others, demonstrating how sex (and manga) can serve as a means of communication among individuals. This article examines how Nagata, through her manga, portrays the communication challenges faced by individuals who do not fit neatly into established categories, particularly those who experience a life development following a 'queer temporality,' in contrast to heteronormative life trajectories. Ultimately, it demonstrates how manga can serve as a tool to alleviate isolation for individuals who do not conform to the established norms of Japanese society.

1. Introduction[1]

Manga are very well-known to be one of the most iconic (pop)cultural production from Japan. Despite comics worldwide are increasingly seen no more as a media specifically targeting an audience of children and teenagers, manga have always been characterized as a product suitable for very different categories of audience. The possibly most famous works outside Japan belong to the 少年漫画 *shōnen* manga category, ideally aimed at young male readers, and to the 少女漫画 *shōjo* manga category, targeting female adolescents. However, alongside these primary categories, there are also manga specifically thought for young men (青年漫画 *seinen* manga) and women (女性漫画 *josei* manga) aged roughly 18-30, or for an audience of adults (成人漫画 *seijin* manga and レディコミ *redicomi*, ladies' comics). These divisions originally emerged in the mid-20th century from the publishers' side, which assumed that potential readers would better connect with protagonist of the same gender and age (Tanaka 2020). However, this demographic segmentation no longer neatly defines the manga landscape, particularly over the past decade, as different fruitions methods and a wider international distribution have contributed to change and mix up the above-mentioned reader categories (Ingulsrud and Allen 2010: 7). Especially digital platforms and fan communities played a pivotal role in reshaping audience engagement (Bouvard 2024:117), specifically in a transcultural perspective (Baudinette 2020). In this context, readers are drawn to emotional resonance and narrative complexity, rather than strictly seeking out protagonists who match their own demographic profile. This shift in perspective is especially relevant when examining autobiographical manga and essay manga—a (sub)genre of autobiographical Japanese comics that has gained significant traction, particularly on social media, in the past fifteen years (Okuyama 2022). Autobiographical manga tend to focus explicitly on the authors' life stories or on significant events in their life, often adopting a more narrative-driven and introspective approach. The genre delves deeper into personal identity, memories, and pivotal life events, sometimes dealing with heavy emotional content. On the other hand, essay manga—or alternatively, essay comics コミックエッセイ *comikku essei*, a definition which emphasize the writing aspect rather than the drawing one (Hosokawa 2010:58)—is a genre that blends non-fiction, often autobiographical or documentary-style writing, with the manga format. The term 'essay' refers to the

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author's personal reflections or observations, which are presented in comic form. This genre tends to take a diary-like format, and involves a more casual and reflective storytelling style, deriving from the author's personal life experiences. The stories typically focus on real-life experiences, thoughts, or insights on a variety of topics often explore themes such as family life, mental health, illness, and everyday experiences, with a humorous or observational tone.

In both these genres the protagonist is not a fictional representation of a demographic category (such as a male adolescent or an adult woman), but rather the author themselves—a real individual whose multidimensionality and experiences resonate uniquely with readers compared to fictional characters. In this case, relatability with the character is not solely linked to age and gender, but rather to shared experiences. Specifically essay manga—often initially serialized on women's or information magazines targeting general readers, or on web platforms—with their episodic structure and by vividly capturing moments from the artist's life, have been able to attract a broad audience made not only of manga enthusiasts but also of casual readers who appreciate personal storytelling (Nagaike 2023; Sugawa-Shimada 2011). As the authors, serving as the main characters, depict their individual experiences rather than a generic human archetype with universal concerns, those manga become a platform for manga artists to express their personal challenges while also fostering a sense of community among readers who can relate to similar experiences.

As well expressed by Seko Yukari and Kikuchi Minako: "Like any other form of fictional literature and popular art, manga is deeply immersed in a particular social environment. It constantly reproduces dominant norms, cultural values and beliefs" (Seko and Kikuchi 2020: 3-4). So, what we read in manga is at the same time an expression of the author's ideas, believes and creativity, but also a representation of the Japanese society, at least as it appears at the eyes of the author.

While it could be argued that a faithful representation of a reality well-known by the audience helps the readers to connect with the stories represented, at the very same time it is also true that manga offer a way *to escape* the reality. According to Masuda Nozomi (2015: 28), through the different characters portrayed in manga, readers can have a glimpse of another identity. Exploring the character's thoughts and life experiences, they can find a way to relate to the world as the characters of the manga they are reading would do. Through manga it is thus possible to explore an alternative reality, which can be purely fictional (as in 異世界漫画 *isekai*[2] manga), or just the same of our world but experienced by somebody else.

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[2] Manga based on the adventures of a normal person from Earth being displaced or transported to an alternative world with different culture and rules.

The opportunity to experience an alternative identity or reality also takes on a different perspective when the text in question is autobiographical. In this case, the reader is not prompted to identify with a fictional character in a made-up world, but rather with the real situations, feelings, and struggles of another human being—namely, the author. Although equating autobiography with 'authenticity' and identifying the protagonist as a real person—specifically, the author itself—should be problematized to avoid oversimplifying the complexities inherent in these narratives, nevertheless, autobiographical and essay manga offer a powerful tool for developing empathy and enhancing understanding of issues that may lie beyond our direct experience. In these works, authenticity is not an innate quality, but rather an effect produced by specific narrative techniques, which create an interplay between the 'real' person and the 'fictional' character, as well as between 'made-up world' and 'real feelings' (Eakin 2004). However, these texts can represent a tool for identification for people experiencing the same problematics as the author, and a way to create a sense of bonding, overcoming individual loneliness. This perspective is particularly relevant considering that manga have been often associated with *otaku* individuals, who are unfortunately pointed out for their supposed lack of social skills and preference for 'antisocial' hobbies over fostering human relationships.[3]

Nagata Kabi's essay manga 'My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness' (hereafter *MLEWL*) delves into various themes such as the struggle with mental health issues, homosexuality, and the quest for meaningful connections and communication, often resulting in feelings of isolation. The manga serves as a tool for grappling with these issues as experienced by another human being—a tool to raise awareness about the topics addressed, as well as a platform for sharing experiences with the author and potentially with other readers.

Through the analysis of this manga, my aim is to discuss how Nagata Kabi narrates herself and her story, illustrating how creating a manga became a coping strategy for enduring her condition. This demonstrates that manga represent an effective means of overcoming loneliness for the author and potentially for the readers, contributing to reshape the concepts of sociality and community bonding. *MLEWL* discusses various themes, such as negotiating between parental expectations and self-actualization, sexual orientation, as well as coping strategies for depression. I argue that all these issues are expressions of Nagata's 'queerness' and her existence within a 'queer temporality' (Halberstam 2005), which constantly place her in contrast with societal and parental expectations. In the following sections, I will highlight how MLEWL functioned as the way for Nagata to overcome her personal

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[3] Several studies have been focusing on alternative forms of *otaku* sociality. See for instance Lamarre et. al. (2007), Galbraith (2013), Cervelli and Schaper (2022), Smith (2022).

problems by expressing her discomfort, to communicate with others by sharing her experiences, and ultimately to find her place in Japanese society as a professional *mangaka.* I will thus demonstrate that Nagata's self-actualization occurs through her use of manga as a communication tool. I will use the words comics for the European and American productions, and manga for Japanese works instead of the label 'graphic novel.' In fact, as scholars in the field of comics have already noted, the definition 'graphic novel' is often used to conduit a sense of cultural production of a 'higher' nature, bearer of deeper meanings compared to comics (Hatfield 2011). Following Charles Hatfield and Elisabeth El Rafais (2012), I advocate for the use and rehabilitation of the terms 'comic and 'manga,' even when referring to works intended for adult audiences or addressing serious topics. In my view, these terms do not diminish the intrinsic value of comics and manga as cultural productions, whereas I find the label 'graphic novel' to be misleading and not fully representative of the medium being discussed.

2. Autobiography in manga

Autobiography is commonly defined as the self-narration of an author's life and experiences, and it is one of the oldest literary genres. The first example is often considered to be St. Augustine's 'Confessions' (397-398 AD), and since then, many authors have engaged in the literary endeavor (or torment) of writing about themselves.

Autobiography seems to have been linked to the world of comics from the very beginning. In fact, Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro attempted an autobiographical comic exercise in 1881, with his book *No Lazareto de Lisboa* ('The Lazaretto of Lisbon'), where he included himself among the characters, sharing personal thoughts and reflections. Other early examples of autobiographical comics date back at the beginning of the 20th century, with works such as Fay King's strips (1910s-1930s) and Carlos Botelho's one page-stories (1928-1950), which included elements from the authors' lives. The number of autobiographical titles increased through the years, reaching a boom in the US between the 1970s and 1980s (El Refais 2012). In contemporary comics market, autobiography is identified as a central genre (Hatfield 2005: x), specifically—as El Refais states—in the "alternative, small-press comics production in North America and Western Europe today" (2012: 36).

The possibly earliest example of autobiographical work from a Japanese author is Kiyama Yoshitaka's (also known by its pen name Henry Yoshitaka)'s *Manga Yonin Shosei* (in English 'The Four Immigrants Manga') published in Japan between 1924 and 1927, and then in 1931 in the US. It tells the American experiences of Kiyama and his three friends in San Francisco between 1904 and 1924 as Japanese immigrants (Boatright 2010). Amano Ikuho (2015), quoting Suzuki Tomi, states that in Japan

autobiographic manga developed as "a semantic shift from 私小説 *shishōsetsu* (I-novel), the narrative form that is generally built upon 'the Cartesian model of the self as a seer of objective reality'" (Suzuki 1996: 2–3 quoted in Amano 2015:240). A similar view is also shared by Béatrice Maréchal (2004), who identifies four artists, whose works were published from the 1960s onward, that she considers to be the founder of autobiographical genre in Japan: Tsuge Yoshiaharu (1937-) and his younger brother Tsuge Tadao (1941-), Takita Yū (1931-1990), and Abe Shinichi (1950-). All these authors produced *gekiga* (劇画) a term literally meaning 'dramatic pictures,' to be intended in opposition to manga (漫画) 'funny pictures.' The term *gekiga* was coined by Tatsumi Yoshihiro in 1957 and adopted by other Japanese artists who did not want their works to be defined as manga (Tatsumi 1968). *Gekiga*, unlike manga, were usually not characterized by cartoonesque, curvy lines, but it was drawn in cinematic, sharper lines, sometimes with an avantgardesque or experimental taste. Thematically, *gekiga* was focused on dramatic and more mature themes (Okazaki 2002). The Tsuge brothers, Takita Yū, and Abe Shinichi are all considered among the greatest names of the *gekiga* movement (Sato 1996).

For Maréchal, the main feature of autobiographic manga is the authors' discomfort with themselves, their lives and/or environment (2004: 156). This theme is evident in the works of the above-mentioned four authors. During his adolescence, Tsuge Yoshiharu occasionally worked in small and unhealthy electroplating laboratories. These experiences, including witnessing respiratory diseases and enduring poor living conditions, frequently appear in his works (Orsi 1981: 97). In his manga *Chiko* (1966), Tsuge Yoshiaharu described the struggles of his daily life while living with his partner, a bar hostess who were providing the money for the couple to live out of. His family life is also at the core of his works from the 1970s, which were "reflecting on the various unsuccessful attempts made by a struggling manga artist to find alternative employment" (Gill 2012: 476). Not only his personal life but also his inner conflicts became the story materials for his production. Along with his brother, Tsuge Tadao represented in his manga the struggles of growing up in the misery of postwar Tokyo. He portrayed the life of outcasts people, and he is considered the first artist doing reportage-based manga, as between the 1950s-1960 he worked in blood banks and he drew manga about this experience, focusing on those in need of selling their blood to survive and on the poor hygienic conditions and the issues related to the use of unchecked blood (Holmberg 2019: 316). With regards to Takita Yū, his *Terajima-chō kidan* (1968-1970), set in the working-class Tamanoi neighbourhood, is an autobiographical novel based on the story of his childhood from his third year of elementary school to the second year of junior high school, a time he spent in Higashi Mukōjima, Sumida Ward, Tokyo (Matsumoto 2017). The Italian scholar Maria Teresa Orsi highlights that for the extreme subjectivity of the narration and the evocative atmosphere in between the regret and the nostalgic idealization, it is

possible to talk of a specific type of autobiographical manga defined as *watakushi manga* 'I-manga,' again emphasizing the connection with the 'I-novel' (Orsi 1981: 125). Abe Shinichi, the youngest of the four, recounts in *Miyoko Asagaya Kibun* (1971) his love story with Miyoko, his muse and source of inspiration, and his desperate search for success in the manga world, which ultimately leads him into alcohol addiction.

As it is possible to understand from these examples, since the very beginning autobiographic manga have been closely linked to the narration of personal trauma or traumatic experiences, the lack of money, the struggle to get success and recognition as manga authors and mental health issues. This holds true also in the case of essay manga. However, essay manga also often rely upon a humorous approach to discuss these themes. For instance, Azuma Hideo's *Shissō Nikki* ('Disappearance Diary,' 2005), uses a comedic tone to tell how the author, notwithstanding the good success of his works, felt so under pressure to just leave his house to start a homeless life, developing a strong alcohol addiction. The use of irony as a narrative device is specifically true for female artists of essay manga, who made use of laughter and humor "to express taboo themes such as depression, alcoholism, divorce and death" (Sugawa-Shimada 2011: 172) and to provide an easy access to their texts for non-manga readers. In this sense, *MLEWL* does not represent a rupture with the major trends which characterize the essay manga.

Nagata Kabi descended into a deep depression at the beginning of university. She experienced eating disorders and engaged in self-injury, both methods she used to express her pain, loneliness, and struggle to find her place in the world. She lacked self-confidence in her skills as a manga artist, yet simultaneously desired to be a productive member of society—an aspiration she felt she could never achieve as a *mangaka.* Societal, and especially parental, expectations exacerbated Nagata's feelings. She described herself as solely focused on making her parents happy, rather than seeking her own satisfaction. This situation led her to consider herself unworthy of gratification—a feeling manifested through self-deprivation of food—and deserving of love only as a child, consequently inhibiting her exploration of sexuality, which she associated with adulthood.

Embarking on a process of self-analysis, Nagata became aware of her lack of complete self-knowledge and understanding of her desires, a realization she linked to her limited sexual knowledge. For this reason and recognizing her being more attracted by women than men, she decides to hire a lesbian escort to have her first sexual experience and to learn more about herself and her feelings.

3. Self-representation in *MLEWL*

The main feature of autobiographic and essay manga is the representation of the author's experiences, feelings and mental status. In this sense, manga (and comics at large) have the power to universalize

the individual experience of the author. Obviously, this representation takes both a verbal and a visual form. As Amano Ikuho argues:

> the strength of autobiographical manga lies in its visual form, which communicates more intuitively and perhaps more concretely [...] with the reader. While narrating 'res gestae,' or what actually happened, the visual medium allows the author to concretize the self and others' images, emotions and other abstract forms of experience without completely leaving them to the reader's imagination and interpretive capacity (Amano 2015: 240).

Autobiographic manga thus allow to the readers' imagination a certain space to work but they also *guide* the readers, through a visual perspective, into *how* to imagine the experiences, emotions and situations the author narrates. Andrew Kunka states that autobiographic manga dealing with the author's traumatic experiences get higher scholarly and critical attention (Kunka 2017: 2). Hence it is possible to argue that this media represents an effective way *to communicate* traumatic experiences. In fact, if trauma can be seen as an extremely negative experience which is very hard to recollect or convey to others, the combined use of words and images becomes a tool to overcome its incommunicability and to render it representable. This view is supported by Hillary Chute, who states that comics are a kind of textual practice allowing a productive and ethic representation of trauma (Chute 2010: 3). This is particularly true in the case of those texts which directly draw upon the individual (traumatic) experience of the author.

The graphic depiction is a way to communicate and share what lies in the authors' mind and what led them to experience pain and distress. The possibility for the authors to graphically express their personal issues might represent a sort of healing process. In the specific case of Nagata, she identifies her inability to communicate her feelings as one of the reasons behind her depression. In terms of communication, it is extremely interesting to analyze the graphic representation she chooses to represent herself, her problems, and to understand what she wanted to communicate and how. *MLEWL* presents simplified depictions of people and of the environment while still carrying strong emotional power and introspective insights. Internal monologues are spelled out, to clarify the author's mental processes. At the very same time, abstract concepts and negative feelings are often visualized under the shape of kinetic lines and dark auras surrounding Nagata's character.

To easily explain depression and the negative backlashes it entails under a graphic shape is a clear effort towards communication. Nagata talks and draws in an unequivocal way bringing her feeling lonely at the center of her narration. It is not a case that in most of the panels she appears alone, surrounded only by her words and her thoughts: an extremely concise representation of depression

and the isolation that follows. Her feeling alone and isolated in life is reflected in her being alone in the panels.

Since the very first pages of the manga, we are told by Nagata that she has a bald spot on her scalp due to trichotillomania (compulsive hair pulling) and several self-inflicted cuts lined up on her arms. The graphic depiction of these issues is honest, and not hidden by Nagata. In Japan, mental illness is considered a 'priority disease' for the medical service (Ito *et al.* 2013). Representation of self-injuring in manga, as highlighted by Seko and Kikuchi (2020), is often stereotyped: typically, it involves an adolescent girl who cut herself as a coping strategy with negative emotions, as self-punishment or to interrupt a dissociative episode. These behaviors are framed within a sense of shame, with scars being kept hidden from others. In contrast, Nagata's representation is much less sensationalistic and conveys the idea of something non-artificial and realistic. She explains that while psychological suffering is invisible and difficult to understand, physical pain provides a visible and tangible form of suffering. For this reason, she cut herself—to give her psychological hardships a material dimension. Nagata's narration of self-injury offers deep autobiographical insight. Her self-inflicted cuts are not a narrative device, and their graphic representation makes the reader feel genuinely involved in the real situation experienced by the author.

Another perspective worthy investigation is the way in which Nagata represents herself. The entire manga is drawn in a simplified way and characters' depiction resembles the *chibi* style. *Chibi* can be translated as 'little' and is a caricatural style usually adopted for ironic and humorous sketch in manga. It is often overlapped with the Super Deformed (SD) style. Characters drawn in *chibi* style present slightly altered anatomic proportions, with the head bigger than normal, and very big and round eyes. This style is meant to depict cartoonesque, infantilized characters and it is closely connected to the *kawaii* aesthetic.

Kawaii (often translated as 'cute') is a pivotal term to analyze the representation of femininity and women in Japan. Sharon Kinsella, in her seminal analysis of cuteness in Japan, defined *kawaii* as a concept defined by being shy, pathetic, embarrassed, vulnerable, lovable and small, all qualities usually paired with pets, children, and women—especially young girls (Kinsella 1995: 220-221). Kinsella notes that individuals defined as *kawaii* are appreciated for being weak and unable rather than for their strength and skills. In terms of outer appearance, *kawaii* characters have big round eyes, are small-built and cute, speak in high pitched voices and are usually clumsy in sports, physical activities, or everyday life. While the cuteness expressed in Nagata's drawings differs from the typical understanding of *kawaii* as a generator of the 'aww' feeling, a connection can still be found between this definition of cuteness and her self-representation. Nagata explicitly states that she does not make her character resemble

her real self, perhaps to shield herself and protect her privacy. Specifically, she draws her character as particularly cute because it is always on display. Representing herself in a cute way is seen by Nagata as a pivotal feature of her main character, namely herself, in the manga.

Nagata's messy hair, sloppy and dirty clothes, and even her bald spot on her scalp are all features represented in a *kawaii* way that does not generate discomfort in the viewer. Instead, they work to create a connection and sympathy between the author and the reader. The limited palette used in the manga—black and white paired with pink—increase the feeling of cuteness. When we see Nagata stuck in bed, contemplating suicide, the overall image we are left with is a tragicomic one that makes us smile—not just by acknowledging the deep, dark well of loneliness she is struggling within. The *kawaii* representation of something that is scary or unpleasant makes it more acceptable, as demonstrated by Sugawa-Shimada Akiko in her analysis of essay manga drawn by female artists (Sugawa-Shimada 2011). Cutely-drawn characters create a "comfortable detachment" (Sugawa-Shimada 2011: 175) that does not alienate the readers' favors. This technique allows readers to avoid fully identifying with the characters, enabling them to enjoy the story (Sugawa-Shimada 2011). By drawing herself and her problems in this way, Nagata ensures that the reader will continue reading and will understand and accept her and her weaknesses, rather than being scared or disgusted.

Acceptance is indeed one of the pivotal needs Nagata expresses in her manga, which can be summarized as the desire to communicate with others in order to be loved and accepted by them. Her longing for love and acceptance is primarily defined in relation to her parents: Nagata states that she has contemplated not becoming an adult so that she can always be loved as a child by her parents. The 'kawaii' aesthetic helps to convey this feeling and fosters a similar attachment to her childlike character in the readers. In addition, having a fandom is for Nagata a validation of being accepted, receiving positive feedback from others. Consequently, she carves her path to acceptance by portraying herself as a *kawaii* and likable character whose struggles are supported and cheered on by the readers.

4. Female homosexuality and queer temporality in *MLEWL*

Another autobiographic insight that Nagata share with the readers in MLEWL is her sexual attraction towards women. Her homosexual desire is characterized by a need to find a motherly figure who accepts her completely.

It must be pointed out that female homosexuality does not represent a new topic in manga (Fanasca 2021). The first representations of lesbian love appeared in the 1970s, with Yamagishi Riyoko's *Shiroi heya no futari* ('The two of the white room,' 1971), Ichijō Yukari's *Maya no sōretsu* ('Maya's funeral

parade,' 1972), Satonaka Machiko's *Ariesu no otometachi* ('Maidens of Aries,' 1973), and *Oniisama e* ('Dear brother,' 1974) from Ikeda Riyoko, to name just a few, well-known, examples. Furthermore, from the early 2000s onwards, a new genre emerged, focusing on love between girls and labeled as *yuri.* However, the classification of *yuri* manga as lesbian/queer manga is debatable, as *yuri* manga not very often address issues relevant for the LGBTQ+ community and for self-identified lesbian identities, such as coming out, gay rights, discrimination and homophobia. Furthermore, instead of depicting lesbian desire and relationships, it is more accurate to say that *yuri* manga focus on describing sentimental (and sometimes sexual) relationships between girls. The age of the characters is in fact a distinctive point of this manga genre, as the majority of *yuri* works are focused on feelings and love stories experienced by adolescent girls during the high school years. Moreover, the word lesbian is rarely used in these manga, thus to assimilate manga focused on LGBTQ+ themes and openly lesbian with *yuri* manga could potentially lead to a problem of misrepresentation of the female homosexuals community and its issues.

MLEWL it is not an isolated example of a manga discussing female homosexuality but, is one of the few essay manga from a female queer author addressing this topic.[4] However, it's important to note that homosexuality is not the main focus of *MLEWL*, despite what the title (and especially the English title) might suggest. Besides her attraction to women, Nagata also explores her gender identity. Although she affirms that she is not a man and is unwilling to define herself as such, she also expresses reluctance to accept being categorized as a woman. In fact, she fears being defined solely by her gender more than as an individual (Nagata 2016: 53). By prioritizing self-definition over externally imposed classifications, Nagata emphasizes an individual autonomy that challenges gender essentialism, supporting a nuanced critique of identity frameworks that reduce personhood to often stereotyped gendered constructs.

According to Frederick Aldama, in *MLEWL* and other works from feminist and LGBTQ+ comic authors "we see authors building on a bedrock of biographical and historical facts (those oft-swept under rugs of mainstreamed history) the powerfully reconstructed journeys of their queer and gendered subjectivities and experiences—all given unique expression through the respective creator's unique visual (and verbal) style" (Aldama 2019: 3). I will argue that what Nagata presents to her readers is not a coming-of-age story, nor a tale about the awakening of her sexuality in lesbian terms, but rather an intimist depiction of the development of her queer identity, where queer comes to define not only

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[4] Other essay manga investigating female/female and lesbian relationships are Takeuchi Sachiko's *Honey & Honey: Onnanoko Dōshi no Love Couple*('Honey&Honey: an in-love couple of two girls') and Nakamura Ching's *Okaasan Futari itemo Ii kana!?* ('Is it ok even if they have two moms?!').

a sexual orientation, but a wider sense of being at odd with different 'normalities.' According to Ann Madill, "Where categories are placed in opposition, one is usually associated with greater hegemonic value and the second Othered. Hence, queer theory is also a critique of dominant status and power hierarchies" (Madill 2015: 280). Nagata's story challenges the hegemonic worldview based on the (hetero)normative sexuality, logic and timeframe, presenting instead a disordered, queer space and time marked by her struggle for acceptance.

As brilliantly explained by Jack Halberstam (2005), dominant heteronormative temporalities are regulated by the assumptions that a life course should be a sequential progression of events such as birth, growing up, marriage, reproduction. These events signal developmental phases in one's life, and are often marked and celebrated by specific 'rituals' as, for instance, wedding, christening or anniversaries. However, a queer life course does not always follow the same linear development, and it may pass through different phases that are often uncelebrated (i.e., coming out) or even unnoticed to the other people (i.e. identification of a non-straight sexual desire). Thus, queer identities develop through different stages, often outside the traditional institutions of family and reproduction, as these events may occur much later in life, or being absent. As Jodie Taylor argues "Queer lives often skip over some of the steps of the heteronormative timeline and thus they skew the responsible progression towards maturity by favouring [...] a prolonged youthfulness and a lingering within early adulthood" (Halberstam 2010: 894). Nagata's wish to keep showing herself as a child to be loved by her parents is another demonstration of her queerness compared to the (hetero)normative life development.

The very opening of *MLEWL* states: *Dare ka to tsukiatta keiken mo seitekina keiken mo tsuideni shakai hito keiken mo nai mama 28-sai ni natta watashi* (Nagata 2016: 4), which can be translated as "I turned 28 years old and I had never dated anyone before, nor had I any experience sexually. I didn't really have any experience being a functioning member of the society." What Nagata does in *MLEWL* is, in fact, to express the problems and pain of a queer identity, unfitting with the heteronormative environment and the processes of development as intended by her family and by the Japanese society at large. To not find a full time, corporate job, not getting married, being 'unproductive' in economic and sexual terms are all evidences, for Nagata, of being an outcast in the Japanese society. By following Nagata through her 'queer temporality' (Halberstram 2005), *MLEWL* becomes an exploration of the author's necessary negotiations with herself, her parents, and society at large towards (self-)acceptance. Her queerness thus encompasses different layers: she is queer as she is attracted by women. She is queer as she does not want to clearly define her gender identity. Moreover, Nagata's queerness extends to her deviation from the supposed normal path of 'normal' Japanese adults.

Therefore, to describe *MLEWL* as a lesbian' manga is to reduce its queer potentiality, which actually covers different aspects of Nagata's life. The author's queerness is not only related to her sexual orientation and gender identity, both aspects usually paired with queer identities when non-heteronormatively aligned. Nagata is queer because she defies societal expectations of what it means to be a fully functioning Japanese adult woman in many different ways.

5. Failed relationships?

Nagata identifies her sexual desire as oriented towards women more than men. However, aware of her lack of social skills, instead of attempting meeting someone she decides to seek out a female sex worker to experiment with her sexuality.

Sexual services offered by female providers to female customers are part of the larger Japanese *fūzoku* 風俗 (sexual entertainment) market, and are specifically called *rezu fūzoku* レズ風俗 (which can be translated as 'lesbian sexual entertainment' or, less accurately, 'lesbian brothels'). These service are provided through the so-called デリヘル *deriheru* ('delivery health') mode. In this modality, a sex worker is dispatched to a hotel where she will meet with the customer to engage in sexual activity for a certain amount of time. While *deriheru* is common in male-oriented sexual services, there are peculiarities that are mostly, if not exclusively, found in services targeting women. For instance, the デートコース *deeto cōsu* (date course), is an option always available in all the *rezu fūzoku* establishments but rarely found in services for men. For a fee ranging between 10,000 and 16,000 yen for two hours (roughly 60-100 euro), this option allows a female client to experience a date with a sex worker. This is meant to give a woman the possibility to know and get acquainted with the sex worker before to decide if she wants to have sex with her. Customers have the option to purchase the date course alone or combine it with the sexual experience. As explained by Obō, the nick name of the manager of the *rezu fūzoku* agency in Osaka that Nagata used to reserve a sex worker, in his book *Subete no Josei rezu fūzoku ga hitsuyōnano kamoshirenai* ('Lesbian Escort Agencies May Be Necessary for All Women,' 2018), the date option is fundamental in services oriented toward satisfying women's sexual pleasure. A date helps foster intimacy between the client and the provider, and intimacy is fundamental for women to enjoy sexuality (Obō 2018: 31).

Nagata's search for commodified intimacy is a way to overcome her loneliness and to connect and communicate with the 'other.' However, while being with her escort and attempting to engage in sex, she becomes aware that sex is nothing but an advanced form of communication between two human beings. Lacking basic communication skills, sex becomes an extremely advanced level of

communication she is unable to endure. Nagata is not acquainted with the girl and describes herself as extremely nervous throughout their meeting with the sex worker. This experience is framed as a topic for discussion with potential readers, and thus becomes the starting point for *MLEWL*. The problem then revolves around how to establish human relationships and the gratification that can be obtained from these exchanges.

Nagata recounts struggling with depression towards the end of high school. After a few months at university, she decided to quit studying and began to feel lost, lacking a sense of belonging or purpose in her daily life. This feeling of loss was compounded by her continuous efforts to meet her parents' expectations of her obtaining a stable job. Despite finding a part-time job and managing to work and save money despite her eating disorders, we see in various instances how her mother would remind her to find 'a real job'—meaning to pursue a more conventional career path, such as clerical work or full-time employment, which is considered the most common choice for Japanese women before marriage.

In Japanese society, fresh college graduates are expected to enter the job market soon after their degree ceremony and take on the role of 社会人 *shakaijin*, or 'person of society.' A *shakaijin* is a fully functioning adult member of society who contributes positively through their work and fulfills their social duties. In this context, marriage and having children are also considered 'duties' to be fulfilled. Failing to secure a stable job, moving from one part-time occupation to another, and lacking interest in human interactions leading to a solitary life are viewed by Japanese 常識 *jōshiki* ('common sense') as a form of societal sabotage. Given the current negative trend in the Japanese birthrate, not marrying and not having children is seen, especially for women, as being unsupportive of society. Women's choice to remain unmarried and/or childless is criticized by conservative factions of the government and media as selfish and opposed to the nation's interests (Rosenberger 2007). In an increasingly aging Japan, conservative critics of the government have focused their concerns about 'unproductive' youth generations on categories such as freeters, parasite singles, NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training), and *hikikomori* (Saitō 2017), however women have been the target of openly harsh critics from politicians, as in the case of Suga Yoshihide who in 2015 candidly stated at Fuji TV: "With their marriage, I am hoping that mothers will contribute to their country by feeling like they want to have more children. Please have many children."[5]

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[5] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/30/japanese-politician-yoshihide-suga-in-sexism-row-after-call-for-women-to-have-more-babies

In Nagata's case, it is evident how precarious her situation is: she does not identify with heterosexuality, prioritizes her aspiration to become a *mangaka* over securing a full-time corporate job, and her depression impedes her from living a 'normal' life—finding and maintaining stable employment, taking care of herself, socializing, and seeking a partner. She is categorized as a NEET and additionally relies on her parents for financial support. Due to her lack of social interaction outside of her family and extended periods spent at home without activity, from a societal perspective, she is deemed unproductive.

The rejection of society and the resulting loneliness have been addressed by anthropologist Anne Allison, who describes being alone as the "new human condition for Japanese in the 21st century" (Allison 2012: 349), and Japan as a 'relationless society'—her translation of 無縁社会 *muen shakai* (Allison 2013). These definitions describe a situation of social isolation resulting from the breakdown of familial and other human bonds.

However, other forms of interaction and provision of human intimacy have been developing, creating alternative forms of sociality, as relationships between *otaku*[6] customers regularly attending maid cafes and their favorite maids working there (Galbraith 2013), or the commodified sentimental relationships between *dansō* (Female-to-Male crossdressers) escorts and their clients (Fanasca 2023). *Otaku* often develop unique social connections and forms of intimacy, which are frequently overlooked in a society that primarily values romantic or familial relationships. However, the significance of these alternative connections remains unchanged. Take the case of Nagata, for instance: the knowledge she gains from meeting an escort provides her with the same information about sex and the female body that a non-commodified encounter could offer, and the feelings she experiences are not less intense or important due to the paid nature of her experience.

Similarly, the relationship she establishes with her readers, with the positive comments she receives for her manga and the support she gets on Pixiv, the platform where she firstly uploaded her story, is another example of a non-normative relationship. It has traits of similarity with the 'circle' discussed by Patrick Galbraith. In his words, a circle is:

> a loose association of people who support someone or something. Relations between any given member of the circle and what they support are not private or exclusive, because others are also in relations with the person or thing and with one another. A promiscuous affective charge moves through the circle [...] the circle is a concrete, joyful encounter of heterogeneous bodies (2013: 113).

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[6] An *otaku* is described as an individual with obsessive interests, mostly (but not exclusively) oriented towards anime and manga. The term is often linked to the neighborhood of Akihabara, were most of the manga/anime/games relates shops and entertainments are located.

The audience, reading Nagata's manga and showing appreciation, fuels her with positive feedback, which eventually led her to be contacted by publishers interested in her manga.

These relationships cannot be considered as 'failed' only because they differ from heteronormative coupling and their goals, as they perfectly work in fulfilling different aims, namely acceptance and success, which are equally significative. Nagata identifies the success generated by the acceptance of her work by the readers as 甘蜜 *kanmitsu*, in English translation "sweet nectar" (Nagata 2016: 126), which becomes her reason for working and putting her efforts into something—a motivation for living. She notes that for someone the 'sweet nectar' can take the shape of the family, or a place to belong to. In her specific, queer, case, transmitting her signal to people who can actually receive it and being appreciated for this is what makes life worthwhile. For someone who once considered suicide, this must be seen as a very successful step, achieved through a successful relationship based on a different form of sociality. The goals Nagata reaches through her relationships with a female escort first, and her fandom then, even though not aligned with the aims of heteronormative relationships, are not less significant.

6. Conclusion: overcoming loneliness

Spending time in her room, only finding part-time jobs, dreaming of becoming a *mangaka* but lacking the strength to work on her manga, and depending on her parents for money are all features that define Nagata as one of the unproductive members of Japanese society. However, she turned her problem into a source of creativity and realized her essay manga by honestly narrating her struggles.

The bulk of the *MLEWL* focuses on Nagata's struggles with depression, which negatively affect her daily life and work routine. Her experience with a female escort serves as a way to expand Nagata's horizons as an author and as a human being. It represents a topic to write about, but in the end, it also becomes a revelation. In fact, Nagata arrives at the conclusion that sex is communication—an intimate communicative expression between two human beings, which she is not yet ready to enjoy. Despite 'failing' to deal with the sexual act, the entire experience cannot be framed as a failure. Through this opportunity, Nagata recognizes her desire to establish relationships with others and, specifically, to be accepted by them. Moreover, she finds the topic of her successful manga. Therefore, if we evaluate this relationship in terms of its results, it is actually positive. The feelings of acceptance that Nagata was unable to find in her family or previous workplaces, she begins to obtain through publishing her manga and receiving positive feedback from readers. These achievements overshadow the supposedly failed

sexual experience. By choosing to share her story, Nagata takes her first step towards communication, which she ultimately recognizes as what was missing in her life.

The narration is expressed through cute and simplified drawings consciously designed to be *kawaii*, or cute. This serves the purpose of engaging the reader despite the negative and dark topics the manga deals with, such as depression, self-injury, eating disorders, loneliness, isolation, and suicide. This effort towards communication configures *MLEWL* as the tool Nagata uses to open her heart and start a discussion with her readers.

Since its initial release on Pixiv, *MLEWL* has experienced seemingly unstoppable success. It was noticed and published in Japan by East Press in 2016, and then translated into several languages, including English, Italian, and Spanish. It was awarded the prestigious Harvey Award for Best Manga of 2018. This experience is nothing short of a resounding success, mirroring Nagata's successful efforts to communicate. With her unique drawing style and candid recounting of her personal traumas, she captivated both audiences and critics alike. By overcoming her loneliness and making her weaknesses the focus of her manga, she achieved her long-sought goals of communication and acceptance by others. There is no way to define the relationships that led her to this point—whether her sexual relationship with a female escort or her connection with the audience—as failed. Despite being commodified, brief, alternative, or openly queer, these relationships prompt a reconsideration and reconfiguration of what constitutes a successful relationship, especially in non-normative terms.

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Javanese women and their noble values

From *Påncå Wastå* to *Kåncå Wingking* in Mangkunegaran Principality, Surakarta, Indonesia

Dhian Lestari Hastuti, Imam Santosa and Achmad Syarief

This article explores the profound meaning of *kåncå wingking* in the context of the *Babad Tutur* of K.G.P.A.A. Mangkoenagoro I, the *Serat Piwulang* scripts by K.G.P.A.A. Mangkoenagoro IV, and the real-life practices of the princesses and consorts in Praja Mangkunegaran, Surakarta, Indonesia. Previous research on *kåncå wingking* has predominantly focused on women's domestic responsibilities and the notion that they lack agency over their lives. However, the research of Kumar and Carey reveals the significant involvement of Praja Mangkunegaran women in the realms of arts, defense, and governance. Employing an ethnographic approach from a qualitative perspective, this study reveals the pivotal role of Javanese women in leading and harmonizing the spiritual main system between their husbands, family, and Praja Mangkunegaran. It explores the role of Javanese women in Praja Mangkunegaran, emphasizing their leadership and ability to balance the spiritual framework. The *Serat Piwulang* scripts are implemented through their authority and status, aligning with Islamic principles of impartiality. Wara Srikandhi, a puppet character, represents the attainment of spirituality and true *nirvana* in Javanese ethical and aesthetic values. Princesses and consorts are regarded as *mustikaning wanudya*, embodying spiritual strength, gentleness, and grace. Meanwhile, *Kåncå wingking* represents the culmination of the implementation and interpretation of *Påncå Wastå* and the flaming womb in the roles of *angamatjani* and *ardhanareswari*. The findings suggest that the meaning of *kåncå wingking* is rooted in rightful authority, celebrating the glory of Javanese women as sources of spiritual power.

1. Introduction

Southeast Asia has historically regarded women as symbols of culture, a concept known as the 'motherland.' However, women have often been perceived as incapable of actively participating in society, while men lead by using cultural and familial systems to position themselves as 'fathers' to their citizens (Lopez 2019: 607). Nonetheless, women have played an important role in shaping the nation's future, giving birth to citizens while continuing to actively participate in the nation's

development. The majority of educated individuals view women and their bodies as objects of control by the patriarchal state, which seeks to protect the wealth of the motherland (Tope 2018; Lopez 2019). Thus, the state plays an essential role in shaping appropriate gender roles for women and men in line with its political and social interests. Understanding the roles of women and men in Southeast Asia's cultural narratives is crucial for comprehending the past, present, and future of the nations, including Javanese culture in Indonesia.

One of the social and cultural heritages of Javanese, a sub-ethnicity in Southeast Asia, is the term *kåncå wingking*, which refers to women. The traditional term *kåncå wingking* is included in mental folklore or mentifact expressed through proverbs, expressions and satire. This folklore originated from the oral tradition and community practices that assign women the responsibility of managing the domestic sphere. Furthermore, during the era of the Mataram Kingdom, the Javanese developed a spiritual heritage and moral teachings through the *Serat Piwulang* scripts. *Serat* is a Javanese script, and *Piwulang* refers to didactic moral instruction (Bogaerts 2021, 632). The *Serat Piwulang* script is a Javanese literary work containing life lessons, morals, and wisdom, including a special script for Javanese women. In relation to women, the word *estri* is derived from the Kawi word *estren*, meaning encouragement. The meaning *estri* is related to the titles, roles, and responsibilities of Javanese women as wives and to their relationships with their husbands.

The *Serat piwulang estri* scripts authored by male poets during the Mataram dynasty focus on male-dominated themes. These scripts portray men as the heads of households while instructing women to be submissive and courteous. Women are perceived as second-class citizens or invisible confidantes who have no control over their own lives. The title "*kåncå wingking*" reinforces patriarchal ideology by associating women with domestic roles such as putting on make-up (*macak*), childbirth (*manak*), and cooking (*masak*) (Sosan 2010, 103). Cooking, in particular, is framed as a means of reinforcing the patriarchal mindset (Harjito et al., 2022), perpetuating the notion that women are excluded from public spaces and confined to domestic rules.

The interpretation of *kåncå wingking* by the general public has persisted to the present day due to their passive acceptance. Opportunities to directly engage with the *serat piwulang estri* scripts from the original source remain limited, as access is restricted exclusively to those within the palace circle. Wistey (2016) argues that the actual practice of the term has been preserved through oral literature passed down from generation, containing ideas, cultural traditions, and values that form part of the cultural system (Wistey 2016, 1-6). The researcher assumes that *kåncå wingking* exemplifies an oral tradition regarding the positive values of Javanese culture, particularly in the practice of life relations between women and men. Javanese men are considered "*njawani*" when they obey Javanese customs

and rituals (Zoetmulder 1983). Such men are considered cultured or civilized people, exemplifying the teachings of *Pâncâ Wastâ* as standard for family and community life. These teachings encompass five key symbols: 1) *wisma* (house) as a symbol of honor; 2) *wanita* (woman) as a symbol of the continuation of lineage; 3) *turangga* (vehicle) as a symbol of insight into knowledge and experience; 4) *kukila* (bird) as a symbol of skill and the charisma in communication; and 5) *curigo* (*keris* or traditional weapon) as a symbol of ultimate perfection. Women play a critical role in the realization of *Pâncâ Wastâ* teachings, which aim to perfect men's lives, a concept rooted in the historical context of the Mataram dynasty.

The Islamic Mataram Kingdom played a significant role in perpetuating the patrilineal system, which influenced Javanese culture through the succession of the royal throne from the father's lineage (Soedarmono et al., 2011). Women, as consorts, are expected to be *angamatjani*, meaning be able to produce superior children, particularly sons who will succeed to power. The chosen woman is considered an *ardhananariswari*, and the man who secures her will ascend to the throne (Andaya 2006). *Angamatjani* and *Ardhananariswari* represent the concept of the flaming wombs. The patrilineal system in Javanese culture significantly influences Indonesia's culture and social system, reinforcing the dichotomy of roles between men and women and the domination of male power over women (Adinugraha, Maulana, and Sartika 2018, 51). The role of men in exercising their power within this system is undeniable, as it assigns a more prominent role to men in both social and political fields (Knorr 2022, 213-37). Researchers believe that *kâncâ wingking* is the culmination of the process by which the teachings of *Pâncâ Wastâ* are embodied in the flaming womb, ultimately evolving into *kâncâ wingking*. Therefore, *kâncâ wingking* signifies the role, responsibility, and glory of Javanese women's values. Moreover, researchers agree that every culture and folklore is closely related to local wisdom, which contains the right values and life guidelines for women (Saptatingsih & Rahmawati 2021, 2270). Thus, what is the meaning of *kâncâ wingking* in Praja Mangkunegaran Principality?

The Praja Mangkunegaran, established as the third Praja following the Treaty of Salatiga in 1757, was designated as a duchy and successor to the Islamic Mataram kingdom. Its first king, Raden Mas (R.M.) Said, actively participated in the "Three Wars of Javanese Succession" (Lombard 2000, 45). The application of Islamic principles significantly influenced the political and socio-cultural activities of the Praja Mangkunegaran, including the clear differentiation of roles assigned to men and women.

From another perspective, previous research has examined the existence of Mangkunegaran's female soldiers (Kumar 2008; Carey 2019), administrative governance (Soedarmono et al., 2011), cultural modernization (Wasino 2014; 2015; 200), and cultural canonization carried out by Adipati Mangkoenagoro IV and VII (Susanto 2023). The academic study of *kâncâ wingking*, a social phenomenon in Javanese culture, has faced criticism particularly from lower socioeconomic groups. While the term

signifies the highest level of *krama inggil* used by the nobility, it is also employed by lower socioeconomic classes to express politeness, often with negative manner. These two social groups assign disparate roles and interpretations to *kåncå wingking.* This usage explicitly positions women as companions which contributes to a sense of pessimism due to their association with second-class society status (Sudartini 2010). This positioning reflects the dual role of Javanese women as both domestic and public subjects in a patriarchal culture marked by discrimination (Luthfi 2010; Sosan 2010; Kusumawati 2012; Kismini 2018; Faiz Maulana 2021) and gender bias in folklore (Sugiarti, Andalas and Bhakti 2022). Over time, this phenomenon has transformed into a means of self-actualization through the critical and thoughtful engagement with cultural values (Budiati 2010). The existing research on the life practices of Javanese women in the Praja Mangkunegaran, the successor state to the Islamic Mataram Kingdom, remain limited. This study aims to investigate the impact of Islamic teachings as articulated in *Serat Piwulang* on the practice of *Påncå Wasthå* and the belief in a flaming womb within the context of *kåncå wingking.*

2. Values in Javanese ethics and aesthetics

Javanese ethics have become the basis for understanding proper behavior in Javanese society. In addition, this ethics encompass the general norms and principles by which Javanese people strive to live harmoniously (Suseno 1996). Harmony (*rukun*) is characterized by the absence of conflict, rapport, serenity, peace, and mutual cooperation. The term 'harmony' refers to the self-interpretation that people are meaningless as individuals unless they become part of a group of people (Suseno 1996). The Javanese believe in the expression, *rukun agawe santosa* 'harmony brings peace and prevents conflict' in contrast to *crah agawe bubrah* 'fighting or quarreling causes destruction.' Javanese ethics are deeply rooted in cultural traditions, emotions, and attitudes. Meanwhile, harmony is considered the highest value, it is not an absolute principle. Community members are expected to foster harmony, avoid conflicts, and demonstrate politeness and composure. The key characteristics of Javanese ethics include restoring harmony, conforming to reality, seeking one's place in the family, social environments, nature, and one's inner self, as well as cultivating emotional sensitivity (*rasa*) (Tjahjono 1989). Javanese ethics demand a genuine moral attitude, demonstrating kindness as well as commitment to justice and harmony.

Javanese women, including daughters and sons of kings, are taught to maintain harmony and grace within the palace environment. They are expected to manage physical and spiritual elements to achieve perfection of life, or *kasampurnan jati.* Javanese culture distinguishes between two main categories: smooth and rough (Mangunwijaya 2013; *Serat Jatimurti* 1980). Civilized individuals can

control their bodies and regulate their minds, while violent behavior indicates a lack of self-control and maturity. Refined behavior and purity indicate spiritual harmony and strength (Suseno 1996: 212). Javanese ethics emphasize aesthetic value, requiring harmony and alignment between the soul and the body. Inner purity is manifested through politeness in attitudes, behaviors, gestures, and speech, as well as the wisdom to appropriately position oneself in any situation or interaction.

The *Serat Piwulang*, a manuscript intended for female readers, is a collection of poems dedicated to the reigning king of the Mataram kingdom. These poems promote harmony and alignment, and the manuscript is known by various names depending on the ruling monarch's heirs. It serves educational purposes in inner palace domains, where power and patriarchy dominate (Edy Nugroho 2019). Female poet Nyi Adisara composed *Serat Piwulang Putri* for princesses in Surakarta Kasunanan Palace. These scripts are internalized through Macapat songs, benefiting power, politics, and socio-culture. The *Serat Piwulang* scripts were taught to the princesses at *Dalem Keputren* and princes at *Dalem Kasatriyan*, shaping the morals, attitudes, actions, and behaviors of future heirs and Javanese nobles (Soedarsono 1986, 63).This study employs Javanese ethics and *Serat Piwulang* scripts as moral didactics.

3. Research methods

Our qualitative research investigates the teachings of *serat piwulang* for women authored by Mangkoenagoro I and IV, focusing on Javanese women in Mangkunegaran Palace during the reigns of Mangkoenagoro I-IX. The study employs an ethnographic method, incorporating text analyses, observations, and in-depth interviews with historians, humanists, and women from Mangkunegaran Palace. Data validity was ensured through triangulation, namely (1) triangulation of interview data through cultural actors, historical experts, cultural experts (including Javanese architecture), and eyewitnesses of events, and (2) verification of data from the texts, observation, and interviews to support the analysis and achieve the research objectives. The results of this study indicate a significant correlation between the content of the *Serat Piwulang* script and the practice of *kåncå wingking* folklore by princesses and consorts in *Dalem Keputren Pracimosono*, which is based on Islam principles. This study concludes that the value of Javanese women derives from the relevance and significance of the relationship between Islamic teachings in *Serat Piwulang* and their implementation in *kancå wingking* practices.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Mangkunegaran women in the teachings of *Pånca Wastå*

In Javanese culture, several terms represent individual women: *wadon*, *wanitå*, *estri*, and *putri.* In Sanskrit, "women" are referred to *perempuan* (*per + empu + an*) in which *per* means 'being' and *empu* means 'proficient,' 'noble,' or 'master'. Thus, *perempuan* denotes 'capable or noble individuals.' In Kawi, the term *wadu* is the origin of the word *wadon* 'women,' while *wanitå* 'women' is derived from *wani* and *tåtå* 'to be governed.' The interpretation of *wanitå* as 'to be regulated' aligns with the traditional understanding of women's role in the teachings of *Pånca Wastå* and the concept of *kåncå wingking.* The term *Kåncå wingking* refers to women's domestic responsibilities in the household. Additionally, *wanitå*, derived from *wani*, and *nåtå* means to organize. The word *estri* comes from Kawi term *estren* 'supporter,' reflecting a woman's role as the driving force for her husband and family. In Javanese culture, *putri* symbolizes an individual's social status and serves as an acronym for the principle of *putus tri perkawis*, indicating that a woman must fulfill three roles: as a *perempuan*, *wanitå*, and *estri.* The term *putri*, in the context of Javanese women's roles, is marked by various namings *of wadon*, *wanitå*, *estri*, and *putri.* Mangkoenagoro I (RM. Said) introduced a three-pillar concept to define and implement the meaning of the word *putri* for his daughters and women in his territory.

The three main pillars of the kingdom were devised by RM. Said, Mangkoenagoro I. They are:

1. *Tri Dharma*, or 'Three Good Deeds,' serves as a guide for the government and people of Praja Mangkunegaran. It consists of three components: *Mulat Sarira Hangrasa Wani*, a chronogram from 1757 AD; *Rumangsa Melu Handarbeni*, which instills a sense of belonging and ownership among the people. It represents the unity between the people and God and the king; and *Melu Hangrukebi*, which emphasizes the duty of both men and women to defend their territory with resilience similar to their predecessors.

2. *Hanebu Sauyun* refers to the king and his people as a cluster of sugarcane plants, symbolizing equality and unity. The people of Praja Mangkunegaran, seen as an asset to the Mataram Kingdom, are integral to its prosperity. The territory, consisting of 4.000 *cacah* (Metz 1939), reflects its values based on the population of household heads. These households contribute to their welfare through land cultivation and management. The term symbolizes the king's obedience to improve the economy and Praja's prosperity.

3. *Praja Mangkunegaran* was established based on RM. Said's motto for struggle: *tiji tibeh, mukti siji mukti kabeh, mati siji mati kabeh*, which means that everyone shares the same fate ('when one dies, all die') and the same glory ('if one prospers, all prosper'). This underscores the enduring sociopolitical

bond between the Mangkunegaran kings and their people, forged during the struggle to establish the principality.

The three pillars of Mangkoenagoro I's administration emphasized the interconnectedness of humans, nature, and God, promoting common prosperity and shared fate. They also served as a declaration of solidarity, as exemplified by a collective pledge.

Figure 1. Pendhapi Ageng (The Great Hall) of Mangkunegaran Palace (visualized by Hastuti, 2023).

Mangkoenagoro I directly trained the soldiers (Santosa 2011: 21) and the troops that had accompanied him for 16 years throughout the struggle, including the female soldiers. Records mention 60 female soldiers listed in *Estri Ladrang Mangunkung* cavalry (HMS 1988: 25). These women in the *Estri* Soldiers Corps became the elite corps within the Praja Mangkunegaran army (Santosa 2011: 18). In *Babad Tutur* (the Chronicle of Mangkoenagoro I), the presence of the female soldiers is recorded in the *Sinom* song, in verse 2, page 107b, which reads:[1]

> *Dene Pangeran Dipatya/ngagem kampuh kang manggihi/pilenggah aneng mandhapa/Dipati Mangkunegari/ngagem cara prajurit/ saprajurit estrinipun/busana cara priya/acuriga cara Bali/wingking tunggak semi kandelan kancana/*

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[1] The sEnglish translations are mine.

> Prince Adipati is dressed in traditional kampuh clothing, seated in a *pendhapa* (a large open-air hall), whereas Mangkoenagoro I is wearing a soldier's uniform; the female soldiers are also dressed in male soldiers' uniforms, equipped with a gold-plated Balinese kris in upright position.

The women's roles in Praja Mangkunegaran administration were similar to men's, as recorded in *Babad Tutur*. The leadership of subsequent Mangkoenagoro was more moderate, democratic, firm, and disciplined. R.M. Said requested the royal title of Praja Mangkunegaran kings, using his father's name. Raffles addressed R.M. Said as 'Mas Sayed' and 'Paku Nagara,' referring to his royal title as Prince *Adipati Mangku Nagara* (Raffles 2008). *Mangku Nagara*[2] means 'He who carries a kingdom or a country on his lap' (Day 2021: 722), while Mangkunagoro means managing the country.

Figure 2. Bedhaya Anglirmendung symbolizes the position of women as estri soldiers (picture: retrieved from puromangkunegaran.com, on May 15th, 2023).

The *Babad Tutur* Script is a biography of Mangkoenagoro I (1757–1795) in the form of a chronicle that records various events and activities, all of which contain his thoughts, perspectives, attitudes, and treatment of women in Praja Mangkunegaran. *Babad Tutur* serves as empirical evidence of how Mangkoenagoro I treated and behaved towards women. Through *Babad Tutur*, Mangkoenagoro I successfully contributed to the cultural construction of women's roles and positions in Praja Mangkunegaran, which became the referential foundation for his successors.

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[2] Interview with philologist Wishnu Prahutomo Sudarmadji, a relative of Mangkoenegaran, 30-07-2022. The official spelling of the royal title is K.G.P.A.A. Mangkoenagoro (pronounce: Mangkunagoro), and the kingdom is Mangkunegaran.

Mangkoenagoro IV, both a king and businessman, left a wealth of advice in *Serat Piwulang* for his daughters and sons. He was a great poet and businessman, establishing Colomadu and Tasikmadu sugar factories. His *Serat Piwulang* advice influenced the development of individual characters, which remains relevant today. Mangkoenagoro IV created numerous literary works, including *Serat Wedatama*, *Tripama*, *Wira Wiyata*, *Paliatmo*, *Warayagnya*, and *Darmowasito*, all of which teach morals and life lessons. *Serat Piwulang* is also taught through 11 characters in the *Macapat* song, which describes the human life cycle from womb to tomb.

Mangkoenagoro IV composed *Serat Warayagya* scripts, which specifically provide teachings for women in a 10-verse song known as *Tembang Dhandhanggula.* The 9th and 10th verses of the song contain advice for men on selecting a wife. The 9th verse of the *Tembang Dhandhanggula* is presented below:

> *Mula nora gampang wong arabi/kudu milih wanodya kang kena/Ginawe rewang uripe/Sarana ngudi tuwuh/ Myang ngupaya kang sandhang bukti/ Wiwilangane ana, catur upayeku, yogyane kawikanana. Dhingin bobot pindho bebet katri bibit, kaping pat tatariman.*

> That's why marriage is not an easy matter; one must choose a reliable woman to be a life partner and to bear offspring. She is also in charge of providing clothing and food. Four matters need to be taken into consideration when finding a wife. The first is *bobot* (social status), the second is *bébét* (wealth), the third is *bibit* (ancestry lineage), and the fourth is *triman* (obedience).

The 9th verse highlights the complexities of marriage, requiring careful selection, weighing, and decision-making in choosing a suitable wife. *Bobot* assesses a woman's background based on her father's expertise, *bébét* evaluates her father's capabilities, and *bibit* considers her physical appearance as a reflection of her nature and character. Meanwhile, physical perfection is not paramount, expertise and skill are prioritized. *Tatariman* or *triman* was the former wife of a king given to another man (Al Marie n.d.: 30). In modern times, it refers to accepting what is given, aligning with Islamic belief in moral strength to overcome life's difficulties (Pontjowolo 1993: 5). This concept aligns with pre-Islamic *sabr* adapted into Islamic teachings (Kuswaya and Ma'mun 2020: 170). The 9th verse of *Serat* scripts was created to prepare the king's daughters for leadership. The 10th verse of *Tembang Dhandhanggula* in *Serat Warayagya* script reads:

> *Papat iku iya uga kanthi/dhingin warna kaping dhone brana/kaping tri kawibawane/catur pambekanipun/ Endi ingkang sira senengi/aja nganti angawang/manawa keduwung/ Karana milih wanodya/datan kena den mupakatken sasami/wuruk neng karsanira/*

> Consider these four aspects as well. The first is beauty. The second is wealth. The third is position or rank. The fourth is the character and behavior. Which one do you prefer? Be cautious of your

wishful thinking to avoid regretting your choice. Selecting a wife cannot be determined by others. The decision must be made independently.

The 10th verse of the *Dhandhanggula s*ong teaches the king's sons to choose women based on their own decisions. Both verses are guidelines for women to pursue self-improvement. The beauty mentioned refers to inner beauty, thought, and attitude. As stated in *Serat Jatimurti* and *Serat Dewaruci*, outer beauty originates from inner beauty, as the two are interconnected (*Serat Jatimurti* 1980; Sastroamidjojo 1967*)*. The 'wealth' in the song refers to the state of having skills and intelligence for life. Position means being able to carry oneself with dignity. Behavior is the emanation of inner beauty manifested in a unity of facial expressions, body language, and refined, polite attitudes. The 9th and 10th verses of the *Dhandhanggula* song highlight the shared happiness of men and women as life partners.

Mangkoenagoro IV also composed *Serat Darmawasita* scripts, containing the teachings about attitudes and behavior in marital relationships. The script consists of three songs: *Pupuh Dhandhanggula, Pupuh Kinanthi,* and *Tembang Mijil. Pupuh Dhandhanggula* contains 12 verses of *asthagina* in its 3rd-5th verses.

> *Serat Darmowasito* script, *Pupuh Dhandhangula* song, 3rd verse.
>
> *Yèka mangka srananing dumadi/tumanduking marang saniskara/manungsa apa kajate/sinêmbadan sakayun/yèn dumunung mring wolung warni/ingaran asthagina/iku têgêsipun/wolung pedah tumrapira/marang janma margane mrih sandhang bukti/kang dhingin winicara/*

> As a guide to living and conducting oneself in all matters, humans must fulfill their necessities to achieve their goals. Understanding the eight principles known as *asthagina* allows individuals to gain benefits in finding their path to their needs.

The *asthagina* teachings are mandatory as a code of conduct for both women and men in married life. They are obliged to behave according to these teachings. Women, in particular, are expected to uphold virtuous behavior and demonstrate the qualities outlined in the *asthagina* teachings.

> *Serat Darmowasito* script, *Pupuh Dhandhangula song*, 4th verse.
>
> *Panggaotan gêlaring pambudi/warna-warna sakaconggahira/nuting jaman kalakone/rigên ping kalihipun/dadi pamrih marang pakolih/katri gêmi garapnya/margane mrih cukup/ping pat nastiti pamriksa/iku dadi marganing wêruh pawèsthi/ lima wruh etung ika/*

> There are various forms of work that reflect good characters depending on one's ability to adapt and evolve with the times. The second is *rigên* ('smart and resourceful'), demonstrating selflessness to achieve results. The third is *gêmi* ('careful'), ensuring sufficiency in all actions. The fourth is

nastiti ('meticulous'), emphasizing thoroughness and precision. The fifth is having the ability to calculate things effectively.

The 4th verse contains the teachings of *asthagina* principles 1 to 5:

1. adapt to changing times and be dynamic;
2. be smart and resourceful in finding solutions;
3. work carefully;
4. be meticulous;
5. have strong calculation skills.

This verse teaches that one must obtain the obligatory ability to place oneself appropriately, which is influenced by self-awareness of emotional intelligence, creativity, careful and meticulous work, and proficiency in calculation.

> *Serat Darmowasito* script, *Pupuh Dhandhangula* song, 5th verse.
>
> *Watêk adoh mring butuh saari/kaping nênêm tabêri tatanya/ngundakkên marang kawruhe/ping pitu nyêgah kayun/pêpenginan kang tanpa kardi/tan boros marang arta/sugih watêkipun/ping wolu nêmên ing sêja/watêkira sarwa glis ingkang kinapti/yèn bisa kang mangkana/*
>
> One must possess the character to manage daily needs. The sixth character is *tabêri* (diligent and careful) in performing tasks and increasing knowledge. The seventh is the ability to overcome *kayun* (lust), or unproductive desire, and practicing frugality to become a millionaire (rich). The eighth is *têmên* (perseverance) in achieving one's will. By adhering to these principles, one can achieve desired outcomes.

The 5th verse continues the *Asthagina* teachings 6 to 8:

1. diligence in enhancing knowledge;
2. frugality in avoiding waste;
3. perseverance in achieving one's desires/goals.

These teachings urge women to emulate good things, obey goodness, accept reality (*nrimo*), and prioritize beneficial choices in life. The essence of these teachings lies in women's obligation to improve their capacity, gain knowledge, and practice frugality while persevering towards their desires/goals. The *Pupuh Kinanthi* song has 10 verses. *Serat Darmowasito Pupuh Mijil* emphasizes that women are responsible for all aspects of married life, including attentiveness, understanding customs, time management, effective communication, humility, household protection and adherence to trusted principles. Both men and women share equal responsibility in maintaining a harmonious marriage.

The 29th verse of the *Pupuh Sinom* song in *Serat Wedatama* also addresses work ethics, especially regarding positions and efforts to elevate self-esteem, as shown below.

Bonggan kan tan merlokena/mungguh ugering ngaurip/ Uripe lan tripakara/wirya, arta tri winasis/kalamun kongsi sepi/saka wilangan tetelu/telas tilasing jamna/Aji godhong jati aking/Temah papa papariman ngulandara/

It's your fault for neglecting your life's foundation. Life is based on three pillars: nobility, prosperity, and knowledge. Without one of these, a person's life becomes meaningless. Dry teak leaves hold more value than such a life, leading to eventual suffering as beggars and homeless people.

The *Serat Wedatama* script emphasizes the importance of a foundation built on nobility, *arta* or wealth, *tri winasis* or education, and knowledge to achieve the highest social status. It advocates for women's intellectual development, as stated in the 4th and 5th verses of the *Pupuh Dhandhanggula* song in *Serat Darwawasita* and aligning with Surah Al-'Alaq 1-5, which states that Islam emphasizes equal educational opportunities for women and men. In the era of Prophet Muhammad, women were granted extra time for study (Hanapi 2015: 20).

This proves the 29th verse of *Pupuh Sinom* teaches the principle of justice as Islam teaches that recognize women's right to be intellectually intelligent. Islam advocates for fairness requiring the strong to protect the weak. In the past, women faced injustices, but Islam asserts their humanity and promotes equality between men and women as partners who honor one another. It upholds fairness as an obligation aligning it with piety and submission to God. Adipati Mangkoenagoro I exemplified this principle as written in *Babad Tutur* script. The *Serat Wedatama* in the *Pupuh Sinom* song, in its 29th verse, is in accordance with Surah Al-Nisa's 34, stating that leadership requires knowledge, good deeds, and self-development, for both men and women.

This perspective contrasts with *bobot, bibit, bébét,* and *triman* ('obedience') as considerations in choosing a qualified wife. Instead, the serat script provides moral guidance on achieving dignity and self-respect through virtue, prosperity, and knowledge. It teaches women how to embody the best *bobot* ('social status'). In line with this, the Pupuh Pocung song in its 33rd verse teaches about the following things:

Ilmu iku, kelakone kanthi laku/ Lekase lawan kas/ Tegese kas nyantosani/ Setya budya pangekesing dur angkara/

> Knowledge is acquired through doing *laku*. Begin learning with willpower, as it leads to welfare. Discipline in performing good deeds will eliminate evil desire.

The 33rd verse of *Pupuh Pocung* emphasizes that the soul can be purified through knowledge by studying it carefully to obtain its essence. In order to do this, it is necessary to practice *laku*—the process of learning by balancing the physical and mental levels of self-maturity to improve self-quality. This teaching applies to both men and women and aligns with Qur'anic principles stating that the physical and psychological superiority of women must be supported with certain prerequisite knowledge to lead so that women can replace men as leaders (Muhsin 1994 93-94). It is apparent that Islam justifies an impartial attitude and policy towards both men and women as leaders. In the Qur'an, it is stated (Al-Hujurat 13) that God created and differentiated between men and women, as nations and tribes, to know one another and elevates the righteous to a noble position among them. Futhermore, it assures (Al-Nahl 97) that men and women who perform good deeds in the Islamic faith will receive a good life and be rewarded accordingly. Finally, it affirms (Al-Taubah 71) that God grants His mercy on male and female believers who help each other, do good deeds, establish prayers, pay alms tax (*zakat*), and obey God and His Messenger. These teachings confirms that *Serat Piwulang* is written according to Islamic values and presented in song form for easier understanding and practice.

Mangkoenagoro IV also wrote the *Serat Wedatama* script in the *Pupuh Pangkur* song. Its 12th verse teaches about *Bangkit Mangungkut Jiwangga* ('mastering knowledge to perfect oneself') as follows:

> *Sapantuk wahyuning God/gya dumilah mangulah ilmu bangkit/ Bangkit mikat reh mangukut/kukuting jiwangga/ Yen mangkono kena sinebut wong sepuh, lire sepuh sepi hawa/ Awas roroning atunggil.*

> One who receives divine revelation and is immediately able to master knowledge is capable of attaining the perfect understanding necessary for self-perfection. Such a person is worthy of being called wise. To be wise means being free from lust and carefully analyzing the relations between humanity and God.

This 12th verse of *Pupuh Pangkur* song teaches about how to receive revelation from Almighty God by controlling one's lust to master the knowledge of self-perfection and become a mature and wise individual. This knowledge of self-perfection leads to the creation of a perfect individual capable of achieving *manunggaling kawula Gusti*, in which a human being unites with God, dissolving dualism and leaving only the unity of the two or the one true God. This phenomenon can be attributed to the syncretism between the Islamic tradition in Indonesia and the pre-Islamic Buddhist and Hindu cultures.

Javanese people believe that God's grace for Islamic believers is bestowed through a spiritual role assigned to women (and wives) who are seen as the only ones capable to receive revelations for their husbands or families.[3] This belief is based on the interpretation of the word *wanita* ('woman'), which means noble beings. This 12th verse of the *Pupuh Pangkur* song teaches about how to receive revelation from Almighty God by controlling one's lust to master the knowledge of self-perfection and become a mature and wise man or woman.

This spiritual role is also in line with the 72nd *pupuh* song, the 3rd and 4th verses of *Serat Centhini* script volume III and *Serat Candrarini* script, which assert that women must be highly spiritual in maintaining and nurturing their relationship with God to receive grace through their faith and prayers. This spiritual role involves giving direction as well as managing the household, as written in the *Pupuh Mijil* song of the *Serat Darmawasita* script. Women's spirituality is symbolized by Arjuna's five wives as the representation of the five levels of the universe. Therefore, Javanese women are expected to perform *laku*, or 'spiritual practices,' with obedience to God. This knowledge of self-perfection can create a perfect individual who can achieve *manunggaling kawula Gusti*, in which a human being becomes one with God, dissolving dualism, leaving only the union of the two or the one true God.

Mangkoenagoro IV, in the 48th verse of the *Pupuh Gambuh* song in the *Serat Wedatama* script, presents teachings for his sons and daughters on how to worship and obey God:

> *Samengko ingsun tutur/ Sembah catur supaya lumuntur/ Dhihin raga, cipta, jiwa, rasa, kaki/ Ing kono lamun tinemu, tandha nugrahaning Manon//*

> Now I advise you on 4 types of worship that you must understand: physical (*raga*) worship, mind (*cipta*) worship, spirit (*jiwa*) worship, and sense (*rasa*) worship. These four must be performed simultaneously. When you perform these four and reach total submission, you shall receive grace from God, the All-Seeing.

This teaching explains the classification of the four levels of worshipping God, including physical (*raga*) worship, with *sholat* or prayer, mind (*cipta*) worship (our minds only obey God), spirit (*jiwa*) worship (our thoughts are only directed towards God), and sense (*rasa*) worship (our heart is focused on purifying ourselves in a peaceful state of mind before God). These four levels of worship are focused on the true sense and must be unified and synergized in the same frequency. Human beings can achieve this by performing *laku,* or spiritual practices, through which they will ultimately achieve the true 'sense' (*rasa*). The correct understanding of the Javanese people is that they are open to the 'senses' or

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[3] Interview with a historian, Wasino (58 y.o.), Semarang, January 12th, 2022.

to feel certain emotions (Suseno 1996: 156-159). The teaching of the four types of worship serves as a technical guide to achieve self-perfection (*kasampurnan*), which aligns with the teaching of verse 12 of the *Pupuh Pangkur* song. A sharpness of the senses can reflect the level of moral virtuosity that a person has achieved. Moral righteousness is the desire to achieve higher values, whereas unscrupulous morals have the lowest values (Wahana 2004: 62). The concluding part of *Serat Wedatama* is the *Pupuh Kinanthi* song, which provides moral teaching that after 'cultivating the mind,' it is necessary to preserve and maintain knowledge to ensure its endurance. Therefore, in life, it is important to always practice *urip lan eling,* or to remain vigilant and conscious.

Women were the main asset in the establishment of Praja Mangkunegaran, and they have been fully involved in enhancing the intelligence and prosperity of the people, as explained in detail in the previous discussion. The physical and spiritual appeal of Javanese culture is closely related to the diverse characters in the *wayang* ('puppet') tradition. The Javanese believe that the wayang tradition is a universally accepted religious mythology, enabling them to form deep intellectual and emotional attachments (Anderson 2016b: 13-14). The *wayang* tradition, which originated during the Hindu era, employs distorted characters to convey Islamic teachings, thereby illustrating the dichotomy between good and evil in a manner that is accessible to a broad audience. The diversity of characters inspires the behavior and actions of the Javanese people. One of the female characters is Srikandhi, Arjuna's wife. This character is described in the Serat Candrarini script, composed by Mangkoenagoro IV, and the Pupuh Kinanthi song, which originally consisted of 13 verses and was dedicated to Ingkang Sinuwun Kanjeng Susuhunan (ISKS) Paku Buwana IX.[4] This script illustrates the characters and personalities of Arjuna's five wives, each represented by *Pupuh Sinom* (8 verses), *Pupuh Dhandhanggula* (5 verses), *Pupuh Asmarandhana* (5 verses), *Pupuh Mijil* (6 verses), and *Pupuh Kinanthi* (13 verses). The fifth wife, Wara Srikandhi, is portrayed as a female protagonist character in *Pupuh Kinanthi* whose character is described as follows:

> *Amung lawan kakungipun, kalamun den andikani, patitis saulonira*

> When advised by her husband, she responds properly and politely (*Pupuh Kinanthi,* 4th verse, lines 1-3).

> *Bangkit mantes lan memangun, jumbuh ingkang busanadi, tumrape marang sarira, ing warna tibaning wanci* (*Pupuh Kinanthi,* 7th verse, lines 1-4).

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[4] Based on *Serat Iber-iber Yasan Dalem* written by Mangkoenagoro IV in the manuscript MN.532.35.

She is skilled at putting on makeup and dressing; she knows how to match her clothing to both her body and the occasion.

Para maru rinacut dipun slondhohi (*Pupuh Kinanthi,* 8th verse, lines 1-2).

She always gives way to the other wives.

The five wives of Arjuna in the *Serat Candrarini* script symbolize the five levels of the universe. The *Pupuh Sinom* song represents this by describing the character of Dewi Wara Sumbadra as the physical or *kewadagan* universe. The *Pupuh Dhandhanggula* song portrays Dewi Manohara representing the astral or sensory (feeling) universe. *Pupuh Asmarandhana* depicts the character of Dewi Hulupi, representing the mental realm or universe of the mind (thoughts). *Pupuh Mijil* describes Dewi Gandawati representing the realm of *buddhi* or the universe of consciousness (awareness). *Pupuh Kinanthi* portrays the character of Dewi Wara Srikandhi representing the realm of true *nirvana* or the universe of true liberation, which can be achieved by an individual with the highest soul and a keen interest in reading *wulang* books, and tembang *Wisatikandhah* songs (*lawan sukane sang ayu, maos sagung srat palupi, kang sekar Wisatikandhah*). The princess is fond of reading books about good things that are exemplary in the form of the *Wisatikandhah* song. *Serat Candrarini* explains the existence of goddess and nirvana in Hindu cultural concepts that are adopted to convey Islamic teachings. This indicates K.G.P.A.A. Mangkoenagoro IV's intellectual approach in spreading Islamic principles of justice through the existing culture, encompassing phenomena of life, religion, and art.

Figure 3. Wara Srikandhi character in the shadow puppet form.

The content of the *Serat Candrarini* script does not suggest that Arjuna reached perfection after having five wives with their respective characters. Instead, each wife symbolizes the universe that exists in a man (Arjuna). The five levels of the universe owned by Arjuna are:

1. physical or bodily actions;
2. feelings or emotions;
3. mind or logic, ideas;
4. consciousness, will or intention;
5. true nirvana.

Wara Srikandhi, as described in *Pupuh Kinanthi*, can be interpreted as an inner journey to reach stability and persistence in achieving true perfection, so that it is realized in *wruh ing sangkan paraning dumadi* ('with full awareness of one's origin and purpose as God's creature'), *manunggaling kawula Gusti* ('a union between man and God'), and *memayu hayuning bawana* ('perfecting the already-beautiful world and contributing to the preservation and beauty of the universe'). The reference to God pertains to the God of Islam. This is evidenced by the fact that *Serat Candrarini* originated during the period of K.G.P.A.A Mangkoenagoro IV. The characters of Arjuna and his five wives serve to illustrate the notion of the Javanese Muslim individual who is fully conscious of his life's purpose. Symbols or allusions to Javanese society are employed as a means of indirectly conveying a message (Herum Marwoto 2014). Arjuna's life reached the level of true *nirvana* after undergoing a spiritual journey, controlling his body, emotions, thoughts, and consciousness. He became a true person, a harmony between inner and outer, and embody the ideal of a *pinandhita satria*. The educational approach of *Serat Candrarini*, developed by K.G.P.A.A. Mangkoenagoro IV, is predicated on the conviction that religion and culture are inseparable, creating a distinctive ethical, normative, and behavioural framework.

4.2. Mangkunegaran women in the 'Flaming womb' concept

In the Hindu epic poem *Serat Pararaton*, Ken Dedes is a female character from Java. She is considered an ancient figure and is depicted as a beautiful and gentle woman, bearing the mark of *Stri Nareswari*. She is enlightened through her understanding of mild karma and possesses a special sign, the shining *Rahsya* (*Prabha*). This sign, witnessed by Ken Arok, signifies domination over Java and the birth of the kings of Singhasari. Ken Dedes is not the heir to the previous king but the daughter of a clergyman. However, she is a remarkable woman, as Southeast Asian standard records rarely allow women to play a historical role (Andaya 2006). She is considered a matriarchic symbol on the throne of the Rajasa dynasty.

Raden Mas Said's struggle to establish Mangkunegaran Praja is similar to Ken Arok and Ken Dedes. During a guerrilla struggle, he saw *Stri Nareswari*'s sign in Roro Rubiyah's body. Roro Rubiyah (the daughter of Kyai Kasan Nuriman -*ulama* from Nglaroh Village), later R.M. Said's wife, became an *estri* warrior. R.M. Said together with his grandmother, R.Ay. Kusumonarso, and his wives, continued the fight for the establishment of Mangkunegaran Praja (Supardi 1998). When Praja Mangkunegaran was established, R.M. Said became the first king, Mangkoenagoro I, and Rubiyah became his queen consort with the royal title of *Bandoro Raden Ayu* (B.R.Ay.) [5] Kusumopatahati. Roro Rubiyah fulfilled *Ardhanareswari* by marrying R.M. Said, making her husband the first King of Mangkunegaran. During the reigns of Mangkoenagoro II and III, the roles of R.Ay. Sayati (Mangkoenagoro II's daughter) and R.Ay. Sakeli (Mangkoenagoro II's daughter) were significant as the mother of Mangkoenagoro III and IV respectively.

During the reign of Mangkoenagoro IV, his second wife, R.Ay. Dunuk, became the queen consort. His first wife, R.Ay. Semi could not hold this position because at the time of their marriage, Mangkoenagoro IV was still serving as a soldier. Consequently, his son from his marriage to R.Ay. Dunuk was designated as the crown prince. This is emphasized in Mangkoenagoro IV's will in *Serat Paliatmo* script, *Pupuh Dhandanggulo*, verses 6th to 10th. The following is the text of the 9th stanza:

> *Awit iki tumêkaning benjing/ingsun titip para arinira Prangwadana sakadange/rêksanên ayunipun/aja taha amituturi/kang marang karaharjan/supayane besuk/yèn gumanti jênêng ingwang/lêstaria bisa mêngku angaubi/mring kadang warganira//*

> From now until tomorrow, I will leave your brothers and sisters, Prangwadana and his brothers. Keep him safe; do not hesitate to advise him in terms of good behavior, so that when the time comes to replace me, he will be able to protect all his brothers and citizens sustainably.

K.G.P.A.A Mangkunagoro IV (1853-1881) entrusted his sons with the responsibility of educating and protecting his younger brothers, who became Prangwedana from his second wife. R.Ay. Dunuk was appointed as the consort with the title of *angamatjani*, giving birth to the next king, and *ardhanareswari*, the woman who elevated her husband to the status of king. The titles of *angamatjani* and *ardhanareswari* were rightfully given to the consort of Mangkoenagoro VIII, Gusti Kangjeng Putri (G.K.P.) Soenitoeti, who gave birth to Mangkoenagoro IX and upon the consort of Mangkoenagoro IX, G.K.P. Mangkoenagoro IX (Prisca Marina J.S.), who gave birth to Mangkoenagoro X. The concept of the

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[5] The royal title for the Queen Consort of K.G.P.A.A. Mangkoenagoro I.

flaming womb has been implemented in the reign of the Mangkunegaran kings. This is in line with Andaya's (2006) concept of the ideal balance between women and men.

Javanese people believe that Islamic believers receive revelations from God through women, as taught in scripts like *Pupuh Pangkur*, the 12th stanza; *Pupuh Gambuh*, the 48th stanza; the 3rd and 4th stanzas of *Serat Centhini* volume III; and Serat Candrarini. During the presidency of Soeharto, R.A. Siti Hartinah (the third generation of the line of Mangkoenagoro III, 1835-1853) received a revelation that her husband would become the second president of the Republic of Indonesia. It supports the claim that Mangkunegaran women fulfill the roles of *angamatjani* and *ardhanareswari*, providing spiritual support for their husbands and families.

4.3. Meaning of *Kåncå Wingking* by Mangkunegaran women

The Mangkunegaran Palace complex, a Javanese architecture structure, includes *Pendapi Ageng*, *Pringgitan*, and *Dalem Ageng*. *Pendapi Ageng* symbolizes male power and a profane area for ceremonies. Meanwhile, *Pringgitan* is a VVIP area for nuclear families and important guests. *Dalem Ageng* is a sacred place with three chambers: *senthong kiwå* ('left'), middle, and *tengen* ('right'). The middle room is used for storing heirlooms and treasures, symbolizing the goddess of rice, Dewi Sri. *Dalem Ageng* is often referred to as the back house. Furthermore, the existence of *Dalem Keputren Pracimosono* located behind the right side of *Dalem Ageng* is the territory of Mangkunegaran women. The position on the right side is a form of respect, while being situated behind represents protection. Therefore, women are referred to *kåncå wingking* or friends who stand behind.
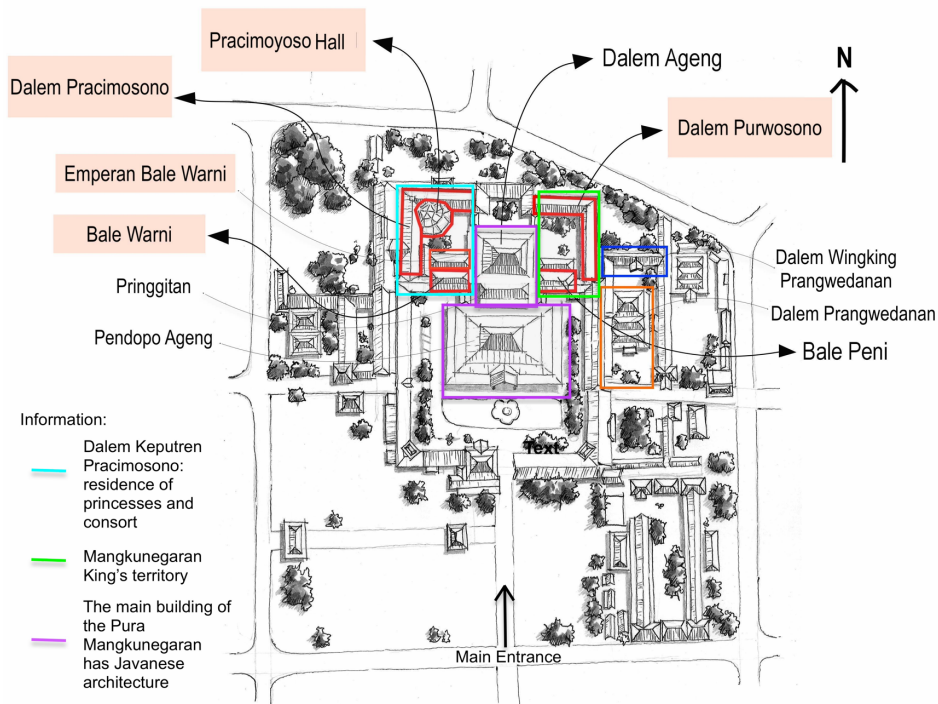
Figure 4. The location of *Dalem Keputren Pracimosono*, as designated residence for princesses and consorts, contrasts with zoning and grouping of buildings at Pura Mangkunegaran Palace (image by Hastuti 2024).

Dalem Keputren Pracimosono is a private zone for princesses and consorts, where daily activities and communal ceremonies take place. It fosters respect and community by incorporating Javanese Mangkunegaran cultural values, such as meditation and fasting, into the princesses' lives. The collective rituals encompass the commemoration of life cycles, the designation of heirs, and the observance of *sungkeman* ceremonies, which signify the ascension to the throne and the subsequent coronation of king. The private rooms are located in two distinct buildings that are *Dalem Pracimosono* and *Bale Warni.* Princesses and consorts in *Dalem Keputren Pracimosono* participate in traditional ceremonies attended by the king. The role of women in this context is to organize ceremonies that reshape the power of the king while providing him with spiritual support. Additionally, their role in cultural diplomacy is evident in their performance of dances, which serve to enhance their intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence. It was a widely held belief within the Mataram dynasty that princesses were not allowed to dance in public.

Figure 5. G.R.Ay. Retno Astrini, a princess of Mangkoenagoro VIII (1944-1987), in Javanese classical dance attire, represents her inner and outer beauty (picture: Mangkunegaran Palace documentation).

The women of Mangkunegaran, from the guerrilla war alongside R.M. Said to the reigns of Mangkoenagoro I-IX, have upheld the noble role of *kåncå wingking*. R.M. Said's paternal grandmother, R. Ay. Kusumonarso, played a role as a kingmaker, a source of warrior spirit, and the *Sumber Tuking* (spring) mother of Mangkunegaran relatives. B.R.Ay. Kusumopatahati Mangkoenagoro I's guerilla companion and consort, served as political and administrative roles (official envoy to pay tribute money to *Karaton* Kasunanan). B.R.Ay. Partini. The first daughter of Mangkoenagoro VII, play an active role in the Java Institute. She visited the areas of Praja Mangkunegaran and accompanied her father to the *Volksraad* session in Jakarta. Additionally, she authored notable works, including *Widyawati*, *Tunjung Biru*, *Sepasar*, and *One Night* (under the pseudonym of Arti Purbani).

G.K.R.[6] Timoer, the consort of Mangkoenagoro VII (1916-1944), contributed significantly to the development of women's education in Mangkunegaran. She taught dance at van Deventer School and involved in cultural development and preservation. She also instilled anti-polygamy values in her

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[6] G.K.R., or Gusti Kanjeng Ratu, is the royal title for the Queen Consort.

daughter, G.R.Aj. Siti Noeroel N.K., who later became the crown princess and took charge of cultural diplomacy and other official responsibilities. G.K.P [7] Soenitoeti was involved in sustaining the Mangkunegaran economy through various entrepreneurial activities such as producing Wasp-brand syrup, selling batik made by Mangkunegaran women, making body scrubs and traditional herbal medicines (*jamu*), becoming a brand ambassador for beauty products, and other economic activities. During the transition period when Mangkunegaran became part of the Republic of Indonesia, she donated her batik collection to the Textile Museum and Fatahilah Museum in Jakarta. She also co-founded and managed institutions like Bank Mekar Nugraha, PT. Astrini and Mangkunegaran Hotel on the west side of Pamedan Hall. Moreover, she was actively involved in the political activities of Golkar Party, supported by *Himpunan Wanita* Mangkunegaran (the Association of Mangkunegaran Women).[8] G.R.Ay. [9] Retno Rosati Notohadiningrat Kadarisman (Mangkoenagoro VIII's daughter) in Mangkoenagoro IX period (1987-2021) has played some important roles. She has fostered relationships with external parties interested in Mangkunegaran and serves as the Head of Reksapustaka Library. Moreover, she facilitated the ascension of Gusti Pangeran Haryo (GPH) Bhre Cakrahutomo to the throne as K.G.P.A.A. Mangkoenagoro X following Mangkoenagoro IX's passing.

From the reign of Mangkoenagoro I (1757-1796) to the present Mangkoenagoro X (ascending to the throne on March 12, 2022), the roles of *kåncå wingking* within the authority and administration of Praja Mangkunegaran have undergone certain transformations, especially regarding the differences in their responsibilities. Mangkunegaran women have afforded the opportunity to play an instrumental and active role in the political, governmental, economic, and welfare affairs of the community. These roles bear resemblance to those held by figures in the Hindu and ancient Javanese kingdoms between the 7th and 15th centuries CE (Erlangga and Nelsusmena 2022), as well as during the Islamic Mataram period in the 18th and 19th centuries CE (Carey 2019). The women of Mangkunegaran exemplify a commitment to the principles of Islamic justice and Hindu equilibrium, as outlined in the *serat piwulang*. This is evidenced by their collaborative approach to sharing roles and responsibilities with men in upholding and preserving civilization. Therefore, *bobot* ('social status'), *bibit* ('ancestry lineage'), and *bebet* ('wealth') are supposed to ensure that women of Praja Mangkunegaran can contribute not only to their families but also to the *praja* (kingdom) in accordance with their inherent nature. Supported

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[7] Gusti Kanjeng Putri is the royal title for the Queen Consort.

[8] G.R.Ay. Retno Rosati & G.R.Ay. Retno Satoeti Y, in-depth interview.

[9] Gusti Raden Ayu is the postmarital royal title for a princess.

by an educational foundation rooted in the *Babad Tutur* and *Serat-serat piwulang* from Mangkoenagoro IV, Mangkunegaran women continue to embody and fulfill the role of *kåncå wingking*.

Figure 6. G.R.Aj. Siti Noeroel Kamaril NK (left), the crown princess of Mangkoenagoro VII (1916-1944), riding and mastering various skills for cultural diplomacy at the international level (picture: Reksapustaka Library, 2022).

5. Conclusion

The concept of *kåncå wingking* has been interpreted in various ways, depending on the specific age criteria, social group, and social status. This is proven in *Babad Tutur* script by Mangkoenagoro I and *Serat Piwulang* script by Mangkoenagoro IV. The teachings from these manuscripts have been integrated into the lives of the princesses and consorts of Praja Mangkunegaran residing in Pura Mangkunegaran Palace. Mangkoenagoro I laid an impartial foundation for women's roles and positions, as demonstrated by their active participation in his 16-year guerrilla struggle and their subsequent involvement in the administration of Praja Mangkunegaran. The role and position of Mangkunegaran Javanese women is in accordance with Islamic principles of justice, enriched by the integration of Hindu cultural elements, as illustrated in the *Serat Piwulang* manuscript. The intellectual, spiritual, and emotional intelligence of the princesses complements the physical beauty of Javanese Mangkunegaran women, where inner beauty manifests in outer beauty. The role of *kåncå wingking* represents a profound

journey in the noble meaning of *Påncå Wastå*, flaming womb, expressed through the terms *angamatjani* and *ardhanareswari.* This process underscores the balance of roles and responsibilities between men and women to maintain mutual respect and harmony in life.

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Notes and squibs

Some new remarks on the Egyptian loss of ḳ

Stefan Bojowald

In this contribution, the Egyptian loss of ḳ is tackled again. The phenomenon can be considered well known. It has been firmly established in research for half a century. The evidence is increased here by three new examples, stemming from the Middle and New Kingdom as well as the Greco-Roman Period.

The Egyptian loss of ḳ[1] was first mentioned in scientific literature by Westendorf (1962: 42; on "ḳ" cf. Peust 1999: 107-110) in 1962. Two reliable examples were used by him for illustration. The amount is not very large at first glance. Nevertheless, Westendorf sees the existence of the phenomenon as certain. Even if the phenomenon is not mentioned by Peust (1999), Bojowald (2018) brought up the relevant material. The discussion was supported by seven new examples. Against this background, the explanation based on mere coincidence is almost certainly ruled out. The dating of the examples ranged between the New Kingdom and Graeco-Roman Period. The present study seamlessly continues the considerations there. The author is pleased to state that three newly discovered examples can be shared. In what follows, the examples are treated in chronological order for better clarity.

The first example can only be understood indirectly, which is why it needs to be elaborated a little further. The focus of the considerations is the formulation:

pr.w śr.ti
 'House of two thorns'

which can be observed in the line

ṯn-r3 pw n šd.t im3ḫ, m pr.w śr.ti n ḥri.t ḫnd=ś (CT 280, 28j-k)

The translation 'It is a message[2] of saving the blessed one in the House of the two thorns of the one who is above her leg' is the most suitable. The example can be found in the Coffin Texts, which form the funerary literature of the Middle Kingdom. The text corpus had the task of securing the postmortem existence of the deceased. The name *ḥri.t ḫnd=ś* 'who is above her leg' apparently was borne by a lesser prominent goddess (Leitz 2002: 440). In the view of Barguet (1986: 454) she belonged to the female personal of the goddess Neith. The *im3ḫ*-blessed person can probably be identified with the deceased. As far as the crucial but difficult to classify term *pr.w śr.ti* 'House of the two thorns' is concerned, Dahms (2020: 287-288) brings it in connection with the expression *ḥw.t śrq.t* "Skorpion House" from Pyramid Text Spell 219. Dahm´s point of view has not yet been received in one kind or the other. However, the idea of relating the two text passages to one another could lead in the right direction. This possibility will be returned to later. The Pyramid Text passage is

n nhp=f n nhp NN. pn nhp=f nhp NN pn m rn=k imi ḥw.t śrḳ.t k3 ḥtp ꜥnḫ=f ꜥnḫ NN. pn n mt=f n mt NN. Pn (PT 219 § 182c-183b)[3]

and can be translated as 'He will not be removed and this NN will not be removed. If he should be removed, this NN will be removed in your name, "the one who is in the Skorpion house," the satiesfied Ka. He will live and this NN will live. He will not die and this NN will not die.' In the eyes of Dahm´s, the thorn from the Coffin Text can be moved to the stinger of the scorpion goddess. The different architectural names *pr.w* and *ḥw.t* would certainly not exclude this interpretation. The only problem is that the word *śr.t* 'thorn' apparently does not otherwise refer to the scorpion stinger. As a rule, the word *ꜥb*[4] is used for this. Dahm´s attempt to point out the secondary meaning 'artifically manufactured needle of metal' for *śr.t* does not help much either. The connection to the scorpion stinger is not inevitable. A different approach is therefore presented in the following lines.

The close connection between the two expressions *pr.w śr.ti* and *ḥw.t śrḳ.t* is in principle maintained. The point of departure remains therefore unchanged against this background. However, the explanation differs from Dahm´s proposal in one important detail. The relationship between the words *śr.t* and *śrq.t* is justified by the loss of *ḳ*, which offer a possible alternative. The different hypothetical vocalization as *śVrḳV.t* versus *śVrtV(i)* does not argue against this explanation, the

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[2] For this term cf. Donnat (2009: 61-93).

[3] For this passage cf. Sethe (1960: 103-104).

[4] For the meaning "ꜥb" 'scorpion stinger' cf. Borghouts (1999: 171q), Gpyon (2012: 54), Theis (2014: 34), Caminos (1954: 435) and Sander-Hansen (1937: 61).

development must be imagined in several steps. In the first phase, the loss of *ḳ* took place, which was replaced by *t* in the second phase. The mobility of the *t* is also evident in the loss of the feminine *t*-ending, which can perhaps be remotely compared. The process was then rounded off with the insertion of a final vowel. If this thesis is correct, the example would provide important evidence for the loss of *ḳ* from the Middle Kingdom. The development started therefore quite early. However, the example is only introduced into the debate as a working hypothesis. The reason for the dual of *śr.ti* 'two thorns' must remain open for the time being. Clarifying this matter had already confronted Dahm with an insoluble task. The problem does not need to be pursued further for the purposes of interest here.

The second example consists of the writing *śn* for *śnḳ* 'to suckle,' which can be found in the appeal 'Come to him (*mi n=f),* suckle' (Fischer-Elfert and Hoffmann 2020: 140) addressed to Isis and Nephthys. The underlying text is a spell against stomach ache, in which the Horus child ate wrong things. Apparently he also committed a cult crime, so that the sun god was damaged. The concret context is built by an historiola with the needy Horus child in the center. The emendation can also be secured in terms of content. The connection of the verb *śnḳ* 'to suckle' with Isis and Nephthys appears several times. The examples for the goddess Isis are so numerous that individual references are unneccesary. The connection with the godesse Nephthys is also well attested (Sethe 1922: 151; Backes 2016: 479; Barbash 2011: 207/209). The age of the evidence ranges from the Old Kingdom to the Ptolemaic Period. The age of the example cited above can be assigned to the New Kingdom. The reason for the loss of *ḳ* is difficult to interpret at first. The phonetic or graphic explanation is not possible due to a lack of suitable options. In the outmost, an analogy can be considered.

The third example shows up in the writing *ꜥr* for *ꜥrḳ* 'to complete,' which can be detected in the line *wśḫ.t tn n.t 3ś.t (di.t ꜥnḫ) ꜥr m k3.t=ś r nfr* (Kockelmann and Winter 2016: 3). The translation 'this hall of Isis (the live giver) is completed in her work in a beautiful manner' evokes the best impression. The passage can be found in the Isis temple of Philae as an upper marginal inscription on the architrave above the columns of CO II. The context describes the architectural beauty of the hall. The example can be dated into the Graeco-Roman Period. The combination of *ꜥrḳ* 'to complete' and *k3.t* 'work' is attested elsewhere,[5] which makes the emendation quite sure. In its case, it seems to be—by the way—a relativly young phenomenon. The overwhelming majority of the examples known to the author can be dated to the Graeco-Roman Period. The loss of *ḳ* appears here after *r,* which conincides with many examples from the older work.

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[5] For this connection cf. Töpfer (2015: 11), Rickert (2019: 288) and Kertmann (2019: 70).

To sum up: The loss of *ḳ* appears in the Egyptian language more often than initially thought. In total, there are now ten (and with the examples from Westendorf even twelf) examples that can be used. The phenomenon can thus be studied on an increasingly broader base. The frequent proximity to *r* stands out as another common factor. For the time being, the situation can only be described without being possible to give a conclusive cause. The aspect cannot be analyzed in a meaningful way either phonetically or graphically. The shape of *ḳ* can be stated as square and that of r as lying horizontally. The outlines of the two characters turn out to be completely different. The exact motive for the assimilation (?) of *ḳ* to *r* remains therefore a mystery for now.

Opponents of the model could argue that the loss was only by chance and that *ḳ*, as a small character, could easily be forgotten. However, the objection can be parried with simple means. In the work cited at the beginning, the fact was pointed out, that the same loss occurs with the two other velars *k* and *g.* The pattern of weak velars recurs therefore in the Egyptian language with a certain frequency. The assumption of a simple error in so many cases does not really make sense. The existence of the Egyptian loss of *ḳ* seems to be increasingly confirmed. The fact that the loss occurs especially at the end of the word is noticeable. The same position proves to be susceptible to the loss of other consonants. In all these cases the same cause may be present. The question of stress or non-stress on the last syllable could play a certain role. The mere reference to the possibility as such must suffice here.

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Notes on an Amazigh Argot
The *tagnawt* of the drummers of At Jennad (Western Kabylia, Algeria)

Massinissa Garaoun

This note provides a brief introduction to Tagnawt, a argot used exclusively by drummers from the At Jennad confederation in western Kabylia (Algeria). The matrix of this slang is Taqbaylit, the Amazigh language with the largest number of speakers in Algeria. This paper presents some sociolinguistic and linguistic features of this slang, a number of lexical items, its pronominal system and a few sentences.

1. Introduction[1]

The Amazigh-speaking world has several more or less complex argots, secret or insider languages,[2] which are used and transmitted by different social groups according to profession (Casajus 1989), gender (Ségéral and Lahrouchi 2010), religion (Mouliéras 1895), and so on. Some are used by the whole community, in order to be not understood by non-Amazigh-speaking outsiders (Vycichl 1969). In Kabylia, Daumas (1855) mentioned the existence of a criminal slang which he calls *Hotsia*. Hanoteau and Letourneux (1873) collected lexical data on three specimens of argots based on Taqbaylit Berber, each used by one of the following groups: the peddlers or itinerant merchants; the bards or poet-singers; the students or literate people who gave religious alms. In the preface to Gibran (2014), Allioui points out the existence in the past of two Kabyle slang languages, Tahuṭẓit spoken by members of brotherhoods, and Tamengawt practised by philosophers. The author speaks of these languages in the past tense and gives no examples of how they functioned, which suggests that they have disappeared.

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[1] Thanks to Hana El Shazli for proofreading a later version of this note. Any potential errors are my own.

[2] Also called cryptic languages, pseudo-languages, etc.

Since the 19th century, no study has investigated these Taqbaylit (=Kabyle)[3] Argot words or even reported their preservation until the present day. However, in 2016, Yani Saïd Ammar, a young man passionate about language and culture and particularly lexical research, made contact with a speaker of the specific Argot of the drum players (*iḍebbalen*)[4] of At Jennad: an important Taqbaylit-speaking confederation located in the northern region of the Djurdjura Moutains, in western Kabylia. They encountered each other in August 2016, and the speaker, who desired to remain anonymous,[5] sent a series of words by messaging again in December 2017 and May 2024.[6] Their language is called *Tagnawt*, it is known, daily used and transmitted by the drummers of the At Jennad confederation. As of right now, I am unsure if other confederations or professions, particularly artistic ones, also use it. According to the speaker, this Argot is used for not being understood when one wishes to criticize, make fun of, or make jokes about others without being understood. The speaker is a relatively young man who does not consider himself to be a good Tagnawt speaker, which would be much better mastered by older men. I have very little information on the sociology of Kabyle drum players, but it is an exclusively male activity, sometimes transmitted from father to son, and that, these players are often invited to weddings where they are paid for their performance[7].

In the corpus provided below, I have applied both the Latin graphic codification of Amazigh and the phonological transcription rules of Amazigh according to the norms of standard Algerian Amazigh. With one exception, since I have noted the labiovelarized [kʷ], since it forms a minimal pair with [k] in the examples of the corpus (cf. part 3, independent pronouns *srekʷᵉm* versus *srekᵉm)*. For each word or sentence spoken in Tagnawt, Yani Saïd Ammar asked for a translation into the speaker's Taqbaylit language, i.e. the At Jennad variety. In a few cases, the speakers provided only the translation of the Tagnawt word in French. It doesn't mean that there is no translation in Taqbaylit, but perhaps that the reality to which the word Tagnawt refers is generally expressed by the speaker in Tagnawt rather than

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[3] Taqbaylit is a Northern Amazigh language belonging to the Afroasiatic phylum. It is mainly spoken in Kabylia, in north-east Algeria, and by a large diaspora living in France, with an estimated total number of several million speakers.

[4] The drum is not the only instrument played by these musicians, but in Taqbaylit these troupes of male musicians who go to weddings are known as *iḍebbalen* 'drummers.'

[5] Because of this anonymity I will not be able to give any further details about this speaker and his activity as a musician.

[6] I'd like to thank Yani Saïd Ammar and our anonymous consultant for sharing this information about the Tagnawt with me and for trusting me to publish this note about it.

[7] I can't add anything more about the characteristics of this community and its musical genre, which have not yet been studied. What is more, Yani Saïd Ammar has told me that this is a fairly secretive community, so it is difficult to get to know it in depth even by conducting several interviews. That is why I proposed this paper as a note rather than an article. I can only give what little information I have, but I prefer to publish it as such, as I am not sure that I'll have access to more data in the future.

in Taqbaylit. I am only going to give a few dozen words of Tagnawt reported by a single speaker who says he does not have a good command of the slang; it is quite possible that there are many others.

2. The lexicon

Tagnawt is characterized by a number of lexical units that differ from those of the matrix (Taqbaylit). These lexical fields are relatively varied and include nouns, verbs and pseudoverbs. It is not surprising to find forms concerning instruments or money as well as forms that refers to animals (Basset 1887: 437); however, it is likely that these are frequently employed as comparatives or nicknames to designate humans because of some of their physical characteristics.

In Table 1. the boxes containing dashes correspond to words that the consultant has translated using periphrases for which we do not have an exact translation in the Kabyle dialect of the At Jennad.

Tagnawt	Taqbaylit	English
Nouns		
Identities		
agayiw	argaz	man
imiccer	aqcic	boy
acuta	tameṭṭut	woman
arabus	amrabeḍ	marabout
akʷermam	amɣar	old man
butarmact	bučamar	bearded religious man
aẓaluẓ	—	handsome young man
alxay	—	homosexual man
Anatomy		
adeɣnin	aqarru	head
afercel	afus	hand
lulet	tiṭṭ	eye
amasul	timeccacin	buttocks
akenzir	aḥeččun	vagina
amagget	abbuc	penis
Animals		
aɣendic	ilef	boar
imerriwec	ayaẓiḍ	rooster
tikicewt	taɣaṭṭ	goat
ajaluḍ	aɣyul	donkey
afenzer	azger	ox

muḥ u sliman	*amcic*	cat
Instruments		
taburzint	*tamekḥelt*	shotgun
taǧernezt	*lɣiḍa*	rhaita
ahendez	*ṭṭbel*	drum
taḥemḥumt	*ṭṭumubil*	car
aherwi	*axudmi*	knife
taburzint	*tamekḥelt*	shotgun
Food and drinks		
ilbasar	*aksum*	meat
ilgifi	—	sweet
leɛziz	*aman*	water
sebseb akuḥli	—	wine
Money		
larxel	*idrimen*	money
muḥ laxa	—	ten francs
Spaces		
dayma ~ amaqum	*axxam*	house
aderbuz	*lḥebs*	jail
Others		
tamaxalt	*tameɣra*	wedding
tasekraxt	*tamenyiwt*	murder
taḥezzart	—	evil eye
Verbs		
rebbis	*ẓall*	to pray
zerret	*rwel*	to escape
umar	*meslay*	to speak
fella	*susem*	to shut
waxel	*derwec*	to use witchcraft
xecti	*dɣel*	to be bad
ateyyet	*uqqu*	to have sex
lxi	—	to get penetrated (man)
cmel	*ečč*	to eat
dummes	*ṭṭes*	to sleep
sekrex	*enɣ*	to murder
čiqqel	*efk*	to give
ḥẓer	—	to strike with the evil eye

Pseudoverbs		
(a)duban[8]	*lhu*	good
yekkuber	*aṭas*	a lot
amalul	*ulac*	nothing ~ it does not exist

Table 1. The corpus of Tagnawt lexicon

The Tagnawt lexicon is the result of a number of encryption processes, all of which are well known to North African argots:[9]

- different types of semantic shift sometimes linked to morphological changes: Taqbaylit *imcerri* 'wicked' (Dallet 1982: 484) ~ Tagnawt *imiccer* 'boy' (from the Arabic root ŠRR; cf. the Algiers dialect forms *šǝṛṛ* 'evil,' *šaṛīṛ* 'malevolent man'); Taqbaylit *egg* 'to fornicate' -> *ameggat* 'penis' (Haddadou 2007:181); Taqbaylit *kccc* 'shout to keep the goats away' (Dallet 1982: 392) -> Tagnawt *tikicewt* 'goat;' Taqbaylit *aderbuz* 'reduction, alley, trapdoor, tunnel' ~ Tagnawt 'jail;'

- the application of a particular scheme $aC^1aC^2uC^3$ for the production of nominal, as in *amaqum* house,' a term likely derived from Algerian Arabic *(lǝ-)mqām*, which in Taqbaylit gave *lemqam* 'sanctuary;'

- the mobilization of archaisms, such as *yekkuber* 'many,' a frozen verbal form derived from the native root KBR (cf. Tuareg *kubret* 'to be gathered en masse;' Haddadou 2007: 90-91), unproductive to my knowledge elsewhere in Taqbaylit. *Umar* 'to speak' is another example: it derives from the root RW (Haddadou 2007: 181) with the reciprocity prefix *m-*. To my knowledge, there are no other derivatives of this root with this prefix in Taqbaylit, while one finds in other Amazigh languages Ghadamès *mar* 'to be open, dilated, happy' and Tuareg *mar* 'to be open, spacious, sincere, intelligent' (Haddadou 2007: 181);

- the replacement by proper nouns, as in *muḥ laxa; Muḥ* being the typical Kabyle diminutive of the proper noun Muhammad;

- the replacement by an onomatopoeia, as in *taḥemḥumt* 'car,' probably formed from the onomatopoeia *ḥem ḥem* reproducing the sound of an engine;

- the permutation of a sound, noticeable in *ḥẓer* 'to cast the evil eye,' a verb originating in *xẓer* 'to look' (borrowed from the Arabic root ḤZR marked here by the change /x/ -> /ḥ/;

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[8] This pseudoverb varies in gender and number.

[9] Cf. Meouak and Kouici (2000) for the Algerian argots, and Berjaoui (1997) for some Moroccan argots.

- the inversion of syllables within the word, only in *butarmact*, composition of the qualifier *bu + tačamart/tacamart* (from the root CMR) 'beard' encrypted in *tarmact* (from the root RMC);

- the replacement by more or less transparent compositions, as with *sebseb akuḥli* 'alcohol' formed from the onomatopoeic word *sebseb* and the loanword *akuḥli* 'alcohol' (cf. Arabic *kuḥūl* 'alcohol');

- finally, certain forms seem to be constructed in the same way as taboo words can be: this is perhaps the case of *leɛziz* 'water,' whose meaning in the matrix is 'darling,' perhaps because the drummers prefer to be served other drinks when they are invited to parties? This is surely also the case of *dayma* 'house,' which is probably linked to the expression *axxam n dima* 'tomb' (literally 'home of forever'), which is frequently heard in Kabyle songs.[10]

If the majority of the forms noted can be attributed to these lexical encryption models, all well-known from the slangs of North Africa and even the world, some forms remain of unknown etymon such as *acuta*, *fella*, etc. We must consider these forms either as the origin of encryption models that I have not identified or even as origins borrowed from languages that I have not considered.[11]

3. The pronouns

In Tagnawt, independent pronouns (IP) are constructed from their equivalents in Taqbaylit, encrypted using three processes: the prefixation of /sr/, the dropping of a syllable/final consonant, or the replacement of the independent pronominal form of the matrix by its equivalent of the indirect object pronouns (IOP) series.

Unlike their equivalents in the matrix, the Tagnawt independent pronouns do not present emphatic elongated forms[12] and their gender oppositions do not operate for the same persons.

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[10] Yani Saïd Ammar's remark.

[11] I have been thinking about this, particularly since the discovery by my colleague Hana El Shazli of an Algerian community cryptic language containing Indo-Aryan lexical elements.

[12] Not included in the tables 2 and 3. In Taqbaylit, depending on the variety, these long forms can be used to provide emphatic support for the pronoun, or they may simply be free variants of the short form.

		Tagnawt (IP + IOP)	Taqbaylit IP	Taqbaylit IOP
Person	**Gender**	**Singular**		
1	Masculine	*sreni*	*nekk*	*inu ~ iw*
	Feminine			
2	Masculine	*srek*	*kečč*	*inek ~ ik*
	Feminine	*srekᵉm*	*kemmi*	*inem ~ im*
3	Masculine	*sres*	*netta*	*ines ~ is*
	Feminine		*nettat*	

Table 2. The paradigms of singular independent pronouns (IP) and indirect object pronouns (IOP).

		Tagnawt (IP + IOP)	Taqbaylit IP	Taqbaylit IOP
Person	**Gender**	**Singular**		
1	Masculine	*srenᵉɣ*	*nekkʷni*	*nneɣ*
	Feminine		*nekkʷenti*	*nteɣ*
2	Masculine	*srekʷᵉm*	*kunwi*	*nnwen*
	Feminine	*srekʷᵉmt*	*kunemti*	*nnk°ent*
3	Masculine	*srensen*	*nitni*	*nnsen*
	Feminine	*srensent*	*nitenti*	*nnsent*

Table 3. The paradigms of plural independent pronouns (IP) and indirect object pronouns (IOP).

Tagnawt possessive pronouns are constructed from the Amazigh genitive marker *n*, followed by the independent pronominal form Tagnawt: first-person singular *nesreni* (/Taqbaylit *inu ~ iw*), second-person singular *nesrek* (/Taqbaylit *inek ~ ik*), etc. As in the example: *amaqum-nesreni* 'my house.' The direct and indirect object affix pronouns of Tagnawt are identical to those of the matrix.

4. Examples of sentences

1. (Tagnawt) *Sreni, ad zerrᵉteɣ ad cemleɣ leɛziz aduban*

   (Taqbaylit) *Nekk, ad ruḥeɣ ad swiɣ aman yelhan*

   (English) Me, I will go and drink good water

2. (Tagnawt) *Tumareḍ tumarin yixectin*

   (Taqbaylit) *Tettmeslayeḍ imeslayen n dir-it*

   (English) You're saying bad things

3. (Tagnawt) *Tumarin-nesrek tidubanin*

   (Taqbaylit) *Imeslayen-ik lhan*

   (English) Your words are good

4. (Tagnawt) *Fella tumarin-nesrek*

   (Taqbaylit) *Ur meslay ara*

   (English) Don't speak ~ Shut up

5. (Tagnawt) *čiqqᵉl-iyid*

   (Taqbaylit) *ᵉfk-iyid*

   (English) Give me

5. Conclusion

The confirmation of the existence of living Kabyle slangs in the 21st century invites us to conduct research on them among the different social groups known for the use of slang in the Amazigh world. In the case of the variety presented here, I find it very intriguing to note that it could contain either rare archaic roots or disappear in the matrix. Which makes the study of such slangs very useful for Kabyle lexicography exercises, particularly with a view to standardization and neological production enterprises for common Amazigh.

I find it interesting that this argot is called Tagnawt, an Amazigh word known throughout western and central North Africa to designate what is foreign and/or not understood (cf. music and communities called Gnawa, the secret amazigh female language of southern Morocco called Tagnawt).[13] Secondly, it would be interesting to carry out an ethnographic and sociolinguistic investigation into groups of Kabyle drum players in order to understand the characteristics of this group that have allowed them to preserve such a linguistic heritage until today.

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[13] Cf. Douchaïna (1998). Depending on the language, the masculine form *agnaw* is also said to refer to 'black man,' 'slave,' 'deaf person' and Gnawa communities arrived in North Africa because of the trade of slaves.

It is possible that the name of this slang, Tagnawt, allows us to trace a link and possible exchanges between Kabyle musical cultures and those of West Africa. Perhaps as a result of the deliberate or forced migration (via the slave trade) of West African musicians to this region. This question was raised by Turner (2022) in relation to Diwan music and trans-Saharan migrations/slave trade in Algeria.

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Kavalam M. Panikkar's search for India

The intellectual journey of an Indian intellectual during the late colonial era and the early years of independence

Michelguglielmo Torri

1. Introduction

In India, the last five decades of the freedom struggle and the first fifteen years of independence were an extraordinary period of resurgence; a people who were in a state of colonial servitude came to liberate themselves and strived to build a new nation committed to escaping economic underdevelopment and eliminating the social discriminations that had hitherto characterized Indian society. It was a gigantic effort, which brought about substantial although mixed results, and which, not surprisingly, has been under the lens of historical research since it first began. The main political leaders of that historical phase and the social movements and parties of which they were expression and which they organized and led have been exhaustively studied. Nonetheless, much less attention has been given to two other classes of people who played conspicuous roles in those years. They were, on the one hand, the second rank political leaders and the party cadres, and, on the other, those intellectuals who, through their intellectual work, powerfully contributed to the organization of the Indian movements and parties and the elaboration of the policies followed by their leaders.

They were two sets of people that sometimes overlapped. A typical representative of this overlapping was Kavalam Madhava Panikkar (1896-1963),[1] a brilliant intellectual and a remarkable historian who was proactively engaged in both defining the idea of India, through his intellectual work, and building the new Indian nation, through his participation in Indian politics.

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[1] There are two versions of the transcription of this name into English: Panikkar and Pannikar. The authors of the monograph here reviewed have adopted the latter, which is the same version adopted, e.g., by one of the most important historians of contemporary India, Ramachandra Guha (2008, *passim*). However, this author has chosen to use the version which is by far the most widespread, namely Panikkar, also adopted by the publishing houses which have printed Panikkar's work.

Panikkar extensively published mainly in English but also in his own native language, Malayalam. Although primarily an historian, Panikkar had also an enduring interest in Malayalam poetry and literature. As remembered by Archishman Raju (2020), Panikkar wrote Malayalam poetry himself, argued in favour of the usage of the Dravidian meter, and authored several literary works in Malayalam. His main literary output, however, was in English and focussed principally on Indian history, the history of Asia in general, and geopolitics. He is the author of some 60 monographs, which, in his times, were widely read not only in the English-speaking world but also elsewhere, as they were translated not only into Indian languages but also into European ones, including Italian.[2] As remembered once again by Archishman Raju, Panikkar was convinced that: "It is not pure researchers who have produced historical literature of high value, but men of affairs who themselves played some part in the life of their country" (Raju 2020). It was a conviction squarely based Panikkar's own record as a man who, during his life, played important political roles first during the last decades of the liberation struggle and then in the first decade of independence. However, in spite of his intellectual and political relevance and the success of his historical work during his lifetime and soon afterwards, Panikkar has remained a little studied political actor, and an intellectual whose massive published output is nowadays mainly out of print and little studied.

Against this backdrop, the intelligently argued and in-depth researched monograph by Mauro Elli and Rita Paolini plays an important and much needed role in rescuing Panikkar's intellectual and political story from an undeserved oblivion, highlighting its enduring relevance. They do so through a text which is the end product of the interaction between three lines of research: the first is focussed on Panikkar's political evolution and career; the second is centred on Panikkar's scholarly production; the third sketches out the political context which frames the previous two developments. These three lines of research are explored by making use of different sources. In the first case, archival sources are used; in the second, the 60 or so texts written by Panikkar are analysed; in the third, a very large collection of secondary sources is put under the lens.

2. Background thesis of the monograph

Panikkar's scientific and political contributions were interlinked by a dialectical relationship and conditioned by the evolving historical-political situation through which Panikkar lived. In fact,

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[2] Panikkar's monographs translated into Italian include his most famous work, *Asia and Western Dominance* (Panikkar 1953), which was published with the title *La dominazione europea in Asia* (Torino: Einaudi, 1958; later reprinted several times) and *Common Sense about India* (Panikkar 1960), which was published as *L'India e noi* (Milano: Bompiani, 1961).

according to Elli and Paolini, Panikkar was representative of a generation of Indian politicians and intellectuals, who were committed to and had a proactive role in, first, the liberation of India and, then, the construction of a new nation. Their efforts, nonetheless, were made difficult by the fact that these intellectuals did not have an "unambiguous, clear and common idea of their country" [226]. Each of them, therefore, "had to discover India for themselves and create their own personal way of being 'Indian' in modern times" [226]

In this situation, the authors' aim is precisely to identify the path followed by Panikkar, both politically and culturally, in his own personal search for India. According to the authors, this path—a seemingly "kaleidoscopic" one—in reality was treaded in the pursuit of balance within each of two antinomies; that between the past and modernity—or, to use a term the authors do not use, between tradition and modernity—and that between unity and diversity.

From the attempt to find a balance inside the first antinomy derived Panikkar's constant search for a reconciliation between the importance and positive value of tradition (as opposed to Western culture) and the need for even radical reforms, ultimately inspired by and modelled on those in force in the West. From the attempt to find a balance inside the second antinomy comes Panikkar's attempt to reconcile local history with national history. As highlighted by the authors, the balance-point within these two antinomies varied over time, depending on Panikkar's personal experiences. Or, to use the expression used by the authors, the shifting balance-point within these two antinomies was determined by the response "to the feedback given by the historical becoming of which Pannikar was a protagonist" [227].

3. The four stages of Panikkar's life and intellectual evolution

It is clear from reading Elli and Paolini's text, though not necessarily from its organization into chapters and sections, that Panikkar's life and intellectual evolution can be divided into four phases.

The first is the formative phase (up to 1927). Panikkar was born in a princely state of Kerala, where he spent his adolescence. He was a Nair, namely he belonged to a high caste, with special characteristics (it was matrilinear), which was going through a phase of transformation and crisis. After an indifferent student career in India, Panikkar went on to successfully study at Oxford. There he came into contact with Indian nationalist circles active in England, being deeply influenced by them. Not surprisingly, his return home coincided with his decision to enter politics within the Indian National Congress. Eventually, he was handpicked by Gandhi to act as a Congress agent in the Punjab, where he dealt with the Sikh question. This experience was crucial in bringing the young nationalist in contact with communalism, namely community-based conflict within Indian society, and realizing its importance.

The second phase of Panikkar's life was characterized by his collaboration with Indian princes (1927-1948). He served first the Maharaja of Kashmir, then the Maharaja of Patiala (Punjab), and finally the Maharaja of Bikaner and his successor (Rajasthan). As a respected and influential advisor of the princes, Panikkar, in his role as their representative, interacted with the top echelons of colonial power. From 1930, he earnestly participated in the federation project, trying to persuade the princes to take an active part in it, but failing to do so. In the latter part of this phase, he became energetically engaged in promoting the modernization and democratization of Bikaner.

The third phase of Panikkar's life (1948-1956) was characterized by being handpicked by Nehru as ambassador first to China and then to Egypt. This was a period when, because of his privileged relationship with Nehru, Panikkar directly influenced the formulation of India's neutralist policy and China policy.

The fourth phase of Panikkar's life (1956-1963) was one in which he no longer exercised a major political role (although in the years 1956-1959 he held the prestigious position of ambassador in Paris). These were years in which Panikkar devoted himself mainly to scholarly work, in essence confirming or reinforcing a number of positions he had previously arrived at.

4. Panikkar's political role and his record

It is especially in the analysis of the second phase of Panikkar's life (the period of collaboration with the princes) and in that of the third phase (the years when Panikkar was ambassador to China and Egypt) that the authors' work is of remarkable originality. It is through time-consuming and exhaustive archival work that Elli and Paolini shed light on as yet little-studied aspects of recent Indian history, highlighting the role Panikkar played in it himself. The authors emphasize the importance of this role although somewhat refraining from taking stock of its results. Or, rather, they do so implicitly, and, as a consequence, a balance sheet can be made, based on the data they present. Here the discourse is different for the phase of collaboration with the princes and for the successive phase, in which Panikkar directly influenced the formulation of India's foreign policy.

Panikkar had a positive view of the princes, whom he regarded as guardians of a traditional India, which he valued, and living examples of the fact that Indians were capable of governing themselves. Panikkar, nonetheless, was also a nationalist who, while defending the prerogatives of the princes vis-à-vis colonial power, was aware of the need for the power of the princes to be tempered by the evolution of their states towards a democratic direction and, above all, by the integration of their states into the future independent India, within the framework of a federation.

Panikkar spent himself to achieve both goals, but his attempt ended in failure. Obviously, the responsibility for this failure lay more with the princes, who demonstrated poor skills and even poorer political realism, than with Panikkar. As is evident from Elli and Paolini's analysis, there was also some bad faith on the part of the Congress leadership, in particular, Nehru, toward them.

It is worth pointing out that, ex post, one may get the impression that the attempt pursued by Panikkar to integrate the princes and their states within an independent federal India was doomed to inevitable and aprioristic failure. This, however, is not entirely true. We have the example of Malaysia, like India a former British colony, where a process such as that vainly pursued by Panikkar succeeded. So much so that today's Malaysia is both a democracy and a monarchy, where the monarch (or Yang di-Pertuan Agong, i.e., "He Who is Made Lord") is elected every five years by the Conference of Rulers, which comprises the Malay princes. Each of the Malay princes, albeit with powers that are largely symbolic, is head of state and Islamic religious leader in his own principality.

As Elli and Paolini show, eventually Panikkar himself took note of the impossibility to realize the design to have the princes as a constituent part of independent India. So much so, that, as a member of the Constituent Assembly, tasked to give independent India his constitution, Panikkar proactively fought for a strongly centralised state. However—as highlighted again by Elli and Paolini—Panikkar never disavowed his past action in favour of the princes, as evidenced by the enduring positive judgment he continued to give about them in his historical works.

More complex is the judgment to be made—again on the basis of Elli and Paolini's analysis—of Panikkar's work in influencing the formulation of the foreign policy of independent India. Panikkar realized that China's communist regime was not a transient phenomenon but would endure. Therefore, realistically, he recommended its recognition. Panikkar was also convinced that the new Chinese regime had two components—the communist and the nationalist/anticolonial—and he believed that the latter was the prevailing one. Panikkar, moreover, was persuaded of the progressive character of the Chinese communist revolution at the social level, and emphasized the historical ties that he said had existed since time immemorial between India and China. Hence a certain sympathy of Panikkar for the new regime. As argued by Elli and Paolini, there is no doubt that it was also due to Panikkar's influence that India recognized Communist China almost immediately (on 30 December 1949). This, nonetheless, as stressed by Elli and Paolini, does not detract from the fact that Panikkar was always far from appreciating the illiberal aspects of China's communist regime.

As pointed out, once again, by Elli and Paolini, Panikkar's political analyses in the late 1940s and early 1950s stressed that China, far from being a pawn of the USSR, was acting as an anti-imperialist power against what the Chinese leadership perceived as the resurgence of Western imperialism in Asia.

No doubt, these analyses played a role in pushing India to take a mediating position between China and the Western powers during the Korean war. Elli and Paolini, however, convincingly refute the vulgate that Panikkar misled Nehru about China, leading him to fail to realize its potential danger. In reality, Panikkar, who had a deep understanding of the laws of geopolitics, was aware of the danger posed by the Chinese occupation of Tibet, which had brought China into direct contact with India, in a situation, moreover, of border uncertainty. Hence, Panikkar's recommendation to proceed to ensure effective military control of the area south of the McMahon Line in an anti-Chinese function.

The China policy proposed by Panikkar, and actually followed by India as long as Panikkar had any influence on its formulation, was one of prudent realism, free from any prejudicially hostile attitude toward China, aware of the limits of India's military power, but concerned with the defence of national interests. This was a line that, when Panikkar's influence on Nehru waned, was abandoned by the latter, leading to the catastrophic India-China war of 1962. But, from Elli and Paolini's reconstruction, it is clear that the China policy advocated by Panikkar was correct and that the ultimate failure of Nehru's China policy was the result of his deviation from it.

5. Panikkar's cultural production

One of the strengths of Elli and Paolini's monograph is the analysis of a series of Panikkar's academic texts and their highlighting of the dialectical relationship that existed between Panikkar's intellectual production and his political role. Thus, e.g., as the two authors recall, it was the publication of *An Introduction to the Study of the Relations of Indian States with the Government of India* (Panikkar 1927)—where a positive view of Indian states was given, to be later reproposed, albeit modified, in later works—that opened up the possibility for Panikkar to collaborate with the princes in apex positions.

Also, Panikkar's action on behalf of the princes vis-à-vis the colonial power and the parallel action to push the princes to a more realistic attitude towards the nationalist movement and the future independent India were accompanied by the production of a series of monographs and an article in the influential 'Foreign Affairs.'[3] These analyses had undoubtedly political purposes. In some cases, they were intended to promote and legitimise the position of the princes; in others they aimed to persuade the princes to more realistic attitudes towards democratisation and accession to an Indian federation. In all cases, however, the works in which Panikkar argued these theses were far from being propaganda;

[3] Panikkar (1943). For a list of the relevant monographs, see the volume under review, pages 240-241.

on the contrary, they were serious analyses with a strong scientific character, based on careful research work.

As argued by Elli and Paolini, each of these works can also be seen as a sort of snapshot of the evolution of Panikkar's thought on the topics discussed. This series of photos is used by the two authors to highlight the evolution of Panikkar's political thought, as far as the two antinomies mentioned above —past/modernity and unity/diversity—are concerned. It was an evolution that saw the gradual strengthening of the importance Panikkar recognised to modernity and unity.

The dialectical relationship between the historical events of Panikkar's time and his scholarly production is particularly visible for the period of the Second World War and the years immediately following it. In this phase, Panikkar did not limit himself to historically examine and politically justify the role of princes, but reflected on the Indian geopolitical situation, whose relevance had been highlighted by the events of the war. The result was the publication of two very important works in 1945 and 1947 respectively. The first was Panikkar (1945), a monograph; the second a two-part article (Panikkar 1947a). Very possibly, it was the knowledge of these two works and appreciation for the ideas set forth in them that led Nehru to choose Panikkar as India's ambassador to China.

Panikkar's reflections on the significance of the Chinese revolution for Asia and the world form the basis of two important monographs, the first published under the pseudonym Chanakya. These are Chanakya (1951) and Panikkar (1953).

Indian Revolution (Chanakya 1951), in addition to a reflection on Indian history, is a comparative analysis of the Indian and Chinese revolutions and the potential example that they were offering to Asian peoples. *Asia and Western Dominance* (Panikkar 1953) is his most important and best-known work; Panikkar had been thinking about the possibility to write it since his stay in Lisbon in December 1925; he eventually wrote it during his years in China and published it in 1953. It was an extremely successful work, which had a wide readership not only in the Anglo-Saxon world, but, as already pointed out, also outside it.

The work analyses the history of Asia in the period that Panikkar defines as the era of Vasco da Gama, namely the period in which the European powers, thanks to their control of the seas, imposed their dominance on the Asian continent. Panikkar's approach to the history of Asia was innovative. As noted by the founder of Italian modern and contemporary Asian studies, Giorgio Borsa, it is an approach that was neither that of traditional European historiography, which saw the modern and contemporary history of Asia as the history of European expansion in Asia, nor the Asian nationalist approach, which reversed the European historiographical perspective and saw the period of European hegemony as an age of decadence and crisis, and in whose analysis: "Rebellions became wars of

liberation, villains became heroes and heroes became villains" (Borsa 1977: 9; translation by M. Torri). Rather, Panikkar's approach was what Borsa defined as a "Copernican" one, namely an approach that radically overturned the then existing and specularly identical mainstream approaches. It was characterized by the fact that Asians were seen as agents responding in a new way to the European impact, which had undermined their societies. In fact, Asians read and re-elaborated European ideas and adopted and transformed European institutions in the light of Asian local traditions. In this way, they made of these new ideas and institutions—the end product of a creative intermingling between Western and non-Western traditions—powerful new instruments aimed first at modernizing and rationalizing Asian societies and then getting rid of foreign domination.

6. The limits of Panikkar's cultural production

As is clear from Elli and Paolini's analysis, Panikkar's endless bibliographical production, conditioned to a large extent by the not always successful attempt to resolve the two fundamental antinomies of past/modernity and unity/diversity, aimed at arriving at the formulation of a structured idea of what India was and had been. In a series of works, the most important of which is *A Survey of Indian History* (Panikkar 1947b), Panikkar argued that although Indian civilisation was characterised by the variety and multiplicity of different contributions, its fundamental and unchanging core was Hinduism.

This was an idea which was present both in Panikkar's scholarly production and in his political action. As recalled by Elli and Paolini, as early as the late 1930s, Panikkar was hostile to the Muslim League but, paradoxically, in favour of the creation of Pakistan. This rather counterintuitive position was grounded on Panikkar's conviction that the presence of Muslim-majority provinces in independent India would make the creation of a sufficiently centralised state impossible. This means that, already in the 1930s, in spite of having started his professional career as a teacher of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in the years 1919-1922, and played a role in its transformation into the Aligarh Muslim University, Panikkar regarded Indian Muslims as a foreign body.

As mentioned by Elli and Paolini, the idea presented in *A Survey of Indian History* was reiterated, implicitly or explicitly, in other Panikkar's studies. Particularly significant from this point of view is Panikkar (1962), one of his latest texts, published in 1962, namely the year before Panikkar's death. In Panikkar's analysis, these "determining periods" were three in number; alongside the period 350-250 BC, which saw the rise and fall of the Maurya empire, and the 19th century, which Panikkar rightly characterised as signed by India's encounter/clash with the West, the other "determining period" was indicated in the years 1330-1430. It was a historical phase that, according to Panikkar, was

characterized by the resistance on the part of the Rajput princes and the Vijayanagara empire against the Islamic potentates, which had subjugated a large part of the subcontinent.

The identification of this period and, more so, the characteristics that, according to Panikkar's analysis, make it one of the decisive periods in Indian history are revealing of the fact that Panikkar rejected the Islamic contribution as a constitutive element of India's cultural-historical tradition. Panikkar, in his historical works, insisted that the Muslim conquerors of the bulk of India—namely the Turks and the Afghans—were, unlike the Arabs, uncultured peoples, and therefore incapable of any worthwhile contribution to Indian culture.

This may well be true for the early years of the Muslim conquest of the Gangetic Valley. But it is a fact that, fairly quickly, the Turk and Afghan conquerors not only lost contact with their original bases, but also developed an autonomous culture, based on the synthesis of Central Asian and indigenous elements. The court of the sultans in Delhi became a cultural centre frequented by historians and poets who, although of Islamic religion, considered India as their homeland. Also, the political-military leadership of the sultanate was firmly in the hands of the Islamic aristocracy, but this Islamic aristocracy cooperated with the great Hindu financiers and a local nobility that was also Hindu. Moreover, although, as just mentioned, the political-military leadership of the sultanate was firmly in the hands of the Islamic aristocracy, in the course of time Indians of recent conversion to Islam not only became part of the political-military ruling class, but ascended to apex positions. The example of Malik Kafur, a former Hindu who, thanks to the favour of the Sultan Ala-ud-din Khalji, became the number two of the sultanate is only the most resounding instance of this process, but in no way it is unique. Finally, from a strictly historical viewpoint, the most significant fact of the period from the 13th to the beginning of the 15th century was far from being the resistance of the Rajput princes and the Vijayanagara empire against the Islamic potentates. Rather, it was the victorious defence of India against the Mongols by the Delhi sultanate and the political-administrative centralisation and economic development that made this resistance possible.[4]

7. Strength and limitations of Elli and Paolini's analysis

Elli and Paolini in their presentation of both Panikkar's political life and cultural production always maintain an empathetic attitude that does not prevent them from pointing out Panikkar's limitations in either field. Regarding Panikkar's political evolution, what is the judgment of the two authors has

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[4] This author has extensively dealt with these problems in Torri (2014).

already been said. They acknowledge the eventual failure of Panikkar's action in favour of the princes and highlight his positive role in formulating a sympathetic but realistic China policy. As already noted, it was a policy that, if followed in the late 1950s, would have possibly prevented the disastrous India-China war of 1962 and a negative political heritage which, still nowadays, is besetting the relations between the two Asian giants. With regard to Panikkar's scholarly production, the critical examination Elli and Paolini make in particular of his most important text, *Asia and Western Dominance*, is exemplary. In fact, next to the undeniable strengths of the text, Elli and Paolini point out its limitations, especially with regard to the last two chapters, the one on Russian expansion in Asia and the one on European missionaries. Also, they rightly subject to critical evaluation Panikkar's concept of "Asianism," that is the idea that Asian nations—far from being united only by their struggle against European domination—shared a common civilizational base.

It is in the case of Panikkar's identification of Hinduism as the hard and unchanging core of the cultural-historical tradition of India and, therefore, as the core of the Indian nation, that the critical blade of the two authors dulls somewhat. In fact, Elli and Paolini show the tendency to justify Panikkar's position by insisting that his conception of Hinduism was always—and increasingly became over time—that of a tolerant religion open to outside influences. What Elli and Paolini fail to see is that no religion is in itself tolerant or intolerant, but changes over time, oscillating between one extreme and another. What is always dangerous is to identify the idea of nationhood with membership in a particular religion: the inevitable result, which we have seen manifest many times throughout history and which continues to manifest before our eyes in today's world, is intolerance and persecution of minorities. Exemplary of this is, unfortunately, what has been happening in India, in particular since 2014, during the prime ministership of Narendra Modi. Muslim and Christian minorities have become the object of state discrimination and gang violence by bands of Hindu extremists. These gangs do not hesitate to resort to lynchings and assassinations, confident as they are that they will not be prosecuted by the police and judiciary.

Many of us continue to wonder how it has been possible that from the secular, democratic and tolerant India of Nehru, eventually emerged the Hindu, authoritarian and intolerant India of Narendra Modi. Evidently, powerful regressive forces were already present within Nehru's India. In this respect, the intellectual and political story of an outstanding intellectual like Panikkar is exemplary. Failing to identify this problem clearly is the main limitation of Elli and Paolini's work. A work that, even with this limitation, remains of high intellectual level, of great scholarly depth and of conspicuous importance for the light it sheds on little-known or neglected aspects of the political and cultural

history of contemporary India, through the reconstruction of the making and evolution of a great intellectual, from whom many, including this writer, have learned.

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Reviews

The publication to be discussed here is based on the Master thesis of the author, submitted 2004 to Brown University in Providence. The work presents the Pyramid and Coffin Texts on the ancient Egyptian coffin of Ppy-im3 from Naga ed-Der. The content of the posthumously published book is as follows:

In Chapter 1, general information is provided. The excavations in Naga ed-Der were executed from 1901-1905, 1910-1912, and 1923-1924, respectively (1). The stelae from Naga ed-Der can be viewed as invaluable chronological markers for the First Intermediate Period (1). The decorations and funerary prayers of the stelae show striking similarities with the coffins from Naga ed-Der, regarding iconography and palaeography (2). The coffin of the treasurer and mayor Ppy-im3, now housed in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, was found in tomb N 4003 at Naga ed-Der in the mid 1920s. The exterior sides of the acacia wood made coffin are inscribed at the top with two horizontal hieroglyphic bands (2). In the field below, three vertical hieroglyphic columns appear (2). The margins of the coffin bear two lines of cursive hieroglyphs (3). The coffin of Ppy-im3 can be dated by iconographical and palaeographical means to the Heracleopolitan Period (4).

In Chapter 2, the front side of the coffin is tackled. The piece consists of five different panels. The head-end is decorated with several offerings (9). The second panel exhibits ten vertical columns of hieroglyphs, stemming from PT 32, PT 25, PT 36, PT 34 (9). The third panel is inscribed by a long offering list, written in three registers of compartments (9). The fourth panel is covered by twelve vertical columns of hieroglyphs, while the fifth panel presents three registers of various kinds of jars (9). The word *bb* (15) unknown to the author is perhaps be related to the root *bb.t* (Jansen-Winkeln 2021: 131), whose determinative "Three Globules" indicate a granular substance. The version of PT 36 on the coffin differs from the Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom parallels (16). The coffin offers the only known Pyramid Texts spells from Naga ed-Der so far (19). The only parallel for the inclusion of *r* behind *mw s3ṯ* "poured water" in the offering list of Ppy-im3 can be found in the list of Śꜥnḫ-Ptḥ at Giza (23). The offering list belongs to Type A of the longer version in Barta´s classification (34). The entries in the list point at distinct discrepancies with the Middle Kingdom Type A (34). The fourth panel of the front side has a *bw.t*-spell, which reflects the local tradition of this genre (35). The derivation of the word *gnš* "hair" from *nši* "to comb" (38) has to be rejected, since the initial *g* lacks a profound explanation. The existence of the verb *nši* "to comb" is, by the way, anything but certain. For this reason, apparently, the

authors of the dictionary put a question mark behind the meaning. Moreover, the word *nši* "comb,“ which could be thought of here, has proven to be a ghost word (Janssen 1964: 178-179) and should therefore discarded. The proposed connection between *ḫ3p* "to throw/to cast“ and *ḫ3p* "to bounce (of the gazelle)“ (38) is inadmissible on semantic grounds. The secondary form *gnš* for *gnḫ* "wing“ is highlighted (38), which is common in other cases (Klotz 2012: 167).

In Chapter 3, the back side of the coffin is treated. The back side is filled with several objects from the "frises d´objects“ and three different Coffin Texts spells (41). The decoration of the third panel of the back side consists of thirteen columns of hieroglyphs (43). The *bw.t*-spell in the second panel of the back side features palaeographic and orthographic pecularities typical for late 9th Dynasty inscriptions from Dendera (55). The translation "Stand up, O the power of *Gb* because your faces are *3ḫw*“ (57) for *ꜥḥꜥ śḫm Gb ḥr ḥr(.w)=tn 3ḫ.w* has to be corrected into "Stand up, *Gb* has power over your faces, *3ḫ.w.*“

In Chapter 4, the inscriptions of the margins are dealt with. The coffin posseses several spells written in cursive hieroglyphs on the margins of its four sides. The translation "who gives the fear of himself into the gods“ (60) for *dd nr=f n nṯrw* should be modified to "who gives the fear of himself to the gods“. The transcription *ḫꜥ (r) nṯr(.w) ḥr ḏb3.t=f* and translation "(more glourious) appearing (than) the (other) god(s) on his pedestal“ (64) has to be corrected into *ḫꜥ nṯr ḥr ḏb3.t=f* "the god appears on his pedestal.“ The translation "you should not restrain my soul“ (64) for *n ḫnr=tn b3=i pn* must be corrected in "you should not restrain this soul of mine“. The translation "My soul will be the chief among those who count the years“ (64) for *iw b3=i r ḥ3.t mm ip(.w) rnp.wt* should be changed into "My soul is on the top of them, who count the years.“

In Chapter 5 conclusions are drawn. The Coffin Texts of Ppy-im3's coffin vary strongly from the parallels and inaugurate a new tradition of this genre (75). Two of Ppy-im3´s spells are completely absent in the previous material (75).

The Book ends with a bibliograpy (75-80), a glossary (81-97), indices (99-108) and plates (i-xxxiv).

To sum up: The book can be rated quite well for a master´s thesis. The secondary literature is sufficiently taken into account. The philological side of the work, on the other hand, performs weaker. The translation suffers from some technical mistakes. Part of the blame must be placed on the editor, who apparently did not want or could not take corrective action.

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Les Lois de Manu. Le Manavadharmashastra. 2022. Introduction by Federico Squarcini, Daniele Cuneo, and Patrick Olivelle. Translation by Georges Strehly ("Série indienne"). Paris: Les Belles Lettres. 432 pages. Hardback, ISBN 9782251453712. EUR 26.90. Ebook, ISBN 9782251918433. EUR 18.99.

The *Mānavadharmaśāstra* ('Manu's Treatise of Law'), also known as the *Manusmṛti* ('*Smṛti* of Manu'), is undoubtedly the most significant normative work in Ancient Indian literature. Since the inception of Indian studies in Europe, it has garnered substantial acclaim and exerted considerable influence. This work was originally composed in the second century CE, as recently suggested by Olivelle (2005: 18-25; 2018: 23-25). It marks a crucial turning point in the history of Indian normative literature, commonly referred to as *Dharmaśāstra.* Prior to the composition of the *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, a corpus of texts known as *Dharmasūtra*s was developed between the third century BCE and the first century CE. These texts, of which those of Āpastamba, Gautama, Baudhāyana and Vasiṣṭha are preserved by manuscripts, were composed in aphoristic prose (*sūtra*) and primarily aimed to summarise scholarly discussions on *dharma*, without establishing definitive positions (Olivelle 2000: 1-10; 2018: 20-23). In contrast, the *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, composed in a period of profound social and political upheaval following the invasions of the Indo-Scythians and the Kuṣāṇas between the first century BCE and early second century CE, stands apart from previous works in more than one way, not least in being composed entirely in verse (*śloka*). This text, attributed to a divine agency (particularly Brahmā), asserts its authority in the *dharma* debate by adopting a firm stance on previously open questions, often establishing a consensus that eliminates dissent. The normative texts composed after Manu's treatise, including notable works such as the '*Smṛti*s of Yājñavalkya, Nārada, Viṣṇu and Parāśara' (dated approximately from the early fifth to the eighth centuries CE), share both stylistic and content-related features with the *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, while also introducing original innovations (Olivelle 2018: 26-28).

The prominence and influence of the *Mānavadharmaśāstra* within the Indian tradition have attracted the attention of early Orientalists. It was among the first Sanskrit texts to be translated into Western languages, with the inaugural English translation completed by Sir William Jones in 1794 and published—without the accompanying Sanskrit text—in Calcutta (Jones 1794). The Sanskrit text itself was first published in Calcutta in 1813, followed by a revised edition in 1830. Both Calcutta editions were based on the version provided by the commentator Kullūka, author of the *Manvarthamuktāvalī.* Other nineteenth-century printed editions of the *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, such as the translations by Burnell (1884) and Bühler (1886), were also based on this version. A significant exception emerged at the end of the century with the publication of a new edition by Julius Jolly in 1887 in London (Jolly

1887), which represented the first attempt to establish a critical text. However, the first truly critical edition appeared over a century later, produced by Patrick Olivelle and published in New York in 2005 (Olivelle 2005).

Regarding the French-speaking world, there are, to the best knowledge of the author of this review, only two French translations. The first, completed by Auguste-Louis-Armand Loiseleur-Deslongchamps, was published in Paris in 1830 (Loiseleur-Deslongchamps 1830), with a second edition appearing in 1833 (Loiseleur-Deslongchamps 1833). The second French edition before the volume under review was the translation published in Paris by George Strehly in 1893 (Strehly 1893). Unlike Loiseleur-Deslongchamps' work (based on the Calcutta editions), Strehly's translation followed the text constituted by Jolly (1887).

In 2022, the "Série Indienne" of Les Belles Lettres published a new edition of this seminal Sanskrit text, consistent with its mission to make significant Sanskrit literature accessible to an educated non-specialist audience. Since the last French translation was Strehly's, an update was timely. As detailed in the editorial (: 4) and translation notes (: 21-23), this edition of Les Belles Lettres does not present a new translation of the *Mānavadharmaśāstra* but rather a lightly revised version of Strehly's translation, updated based on Olivelle's English translation (based on his critical edition mentioned above), published in 2004 and reissued in 2009 (Olivelle 2009), and the Italian edition by Federico Squarcini and Daniele Cuneo, published in Torino in 2010 (Squarcini and Cuneo 2010).

The introductory section (: 7-24), consisting of five chapters, aims to provide a general overview of the text. The first two chapters (: 7-17), respectively devoted to the reception of the *Mānavadharmaśāstra* and its original context, were translated from pages of Squarcini and Cuneo (2010: XIII-XXVI).[1] The third chapter (: 18-21), concerning the structure of the text, was translated from Olivelle (2009: XXVII-XXIX). The final two chapters (: 21-24), which include notes about translation and illustrations, were written by the editor. The French translation of the Sanskrit text of the *Mānavadharmaśāstra* occupies most of the volume (: 25-404). Explanatory notes accompany it, some drawn from the two reference translations mentioned above, others written by the editor (these are indicated by the abbreviation NdE, *notes de l'éditeur* 'editor's notes'). The work concludes with reproductions of photographs taken in southern India at the end of the nineteenth century, now preserved in the collection *Asie du Sud-Est et Monde Insulindien* ('South-East Asia and Insulindian World'),

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[1] It is worth noting that Squarcini and Cuneo support a different dating hypothesis for the *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, namely the second century BCE, than Olivelle, who proposes the second century CE. However, Olivelle's proposal is followed by the most scholarship as a reference to date.

labelled as ASEMI, of the Bibliothèque des Lettres at the University of Côte d'Azur, an illustration table (: 405-407), a word index (: 409-422), and a table of contents (: 423-424).

In summary, in the opinion of the author of this review, this edition of the *Mānavadharmaśāstra* is an excellent work, well in keeping with the mission of dissemination of the series that houses it. It serves as a valuable resource for a broad French-speaking audience unfamiliar with Sanskrit legal literature, elucidating the socio-political and literary context of the text through clear introductory sections and effective explanatory notes. This volume provides a long-awaited new French edition of the *Mānavadharmaśāstra* and establishes a solid foundation for future in-depth studies of the original Sanskrit text, for which most of the current bibliography is in English.

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Eric Morier-Genoud. 2023. *Towards Jihad? Muslims and Politics in Postcolonial Mozambique.* Oxford – New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 240 pages. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780197769348. € 135.19.

The topics of Islam in Mozambique remain in some historical shadow. In the past, it was caused, firstly, by the pro-Catholic orientation of the Portuguese colonial empire and, secondly, by the commitment to atheism claimed by the leftist decolonial movements and political parties that remained central in the early postcolonial period and the civil war. Islam has come to the fore quite recently, due to the jihadi insurgency that began in the north of the country in October 2017. Such is the starting point of Eric Morier-Genoud's book, as far as the opening paragraph of the Introduction is considered. In reality, as the author confesses, much of the research had already been done previous to the attack on police stations in Mocímboa da Praia which marked the beginning of the armed conflict. This is why he is able to situate the recent issue in a broader historical context of the relations between various religious factors and political power.

Although the book focuses on the present time, it is important to remember that Islam in Mozambique is a pre-colonial presence. What is more, the Islamization of the society went on under Portuguese rule. The colonial period coincided with the development of various branches of Sufism. Progressively, the forms of religious life typical for the Swahili cultural orbit started to coexist with other paradigms, introduced by Indian and Pakistani immigration and the formation of the Indo-Mozambican *mestiço* community. This is why we should not be surprised to find the Deobandi movement in the country. Also, Wahhabism appeared in Mozambique already during the declining years of the Portuguese empire, in the 1960s, when the liberalized politics of the regime made contacts with Saudi Arabia easier and more frequent. Finally, there exists also a small Ismaili minority. Overall, Islam, just as Christianity with its variety of Pentecostal churches, contributes to the phenomenon of what may be classified as 'religious proliferation,' forming a fractal picture of growing complexity.

The title of the book should be read as deliberately provocative. The hypothesis that the Mozambican Muslims have evolved towards a violent and warlike understanding of religion since the country's independence is utterly resolved by the negative. The appearance of al-Shabaab sect in the early 2010s was perceived as a disturbance and a serious problem by both Sufi and Wahhabi established leaders. The author presents the insurgents as a sect opposed not only to the state but also to the rest of the country's Muslim community. Its emergence is analysed not as a consequence of but as a rupture within the historical trajectory of Muslim inscription inside the social and political structures.

Although occasionally the author needs to delve deeper into the past, referring, for example, to the origin and evolution of Sufi brotherhoods in Mozambique, the main narration starts with the

independence, in 1974. In Chapter I, the tumultuous postcolonial decades going from 1974 to 1994 are treated as a period of the 'rise' of Islam, which should be seen rather as a period of organic growth and consolidation in the background of national politics. The proper entrance of the Islamic community on the public stage is narrated in Chapter II. The narration is centred on the 'Muslim holidays' affair in 1996, when the claim of recognizing two major feasts of the Islamic calendar as bank holidays was voiced for the first time. If the date 1996 is merely a symbolic turning point, the proper watershed is situated in 2004, coinciding with the division of Chapters III and IV. The relationship between Islam and Mozambican politics in the decade 1994-2004 remained under the prospect of secularization. After this date, to the contrary, the tendency is inverted: the importance of religion in social life is growing. Finally, Chapter V speaks of the jihadi insurgency of 2017, as the author tries to deduce and interpret the causes of this little-understood and still unclear event. The volume is completed with a Conclusion and a series of documents and materials added as appendices; they refer to the foundation of the Islamic Council of Mozambique (CISLAMO) in 1981, the contacts between Muslim World League and the first president of the independent country, Samora Machel, the aforementioned affair of Muslim national holidays, and the First National Islamic Conference in 2003. Last but not least, the author provides the transcripts of jihadi insurgents' video messages emitted in 2018, 2020, and 2022.

Towards Jihad? adopts a socio-political perspective based on the research done by the author on the terrain since 1994. He asks multiple questions involving not only the central interrogation about the true nature of the insurgency but also the evolution of state religious policy concerning traditional and reformist Islamic currents and the internal competition between them. Both as a result of a methodological choice and for the sake of making his narration more compelling, Eric Morier-Genoud puts in the limelight symbolic gestures and individual cases causing controversy, such as Samora Machel walking into a mosque without taking off his shoes, or the burqa affair in 2011-2012 which was essentially provoked by the singular case of a young woman who appeared veiled at school, causing the outcry of her teachers. Overall, as the author suggests in the Introduction, the analysis is oriented by five main axes. Firstly, the aim is to capture the evolution of the state's policy toward Islam. The second axe is the evolution of the concept and practice of secularism. The third accent is on Sufism as a key factor since the rise of Islam in South-East Africa that is nowadays counterbalanced by anti-Sufi movements. This internal division inside the Muslim community reflects not only a divergence in theological intricacies but also a process of modernization that can be seen inside the religious group, with the surge of new scholars educated abroad and new networks of international contacts. Naturally, the issue is connected to the fourth topic, the emergence of a new Muslim elite and counter-elites that mark not only the religious and economic but also the intellectual life of the country. Curiously,

modernization coincides with the revival of old Swahili elites that often claim pre-colonial roots as the source of their exceptional status. Finally, the last theme is the conflictive side of the religious competition, leading from ideological to physical conflict that contrasts with the general Mozambican background of relatively good interfaith relations in the early postcolonial decades. What is significant, the author treats the appearance of 'exclusivist strands of faith' as a broader phenomenon visible both in Islam and Christianity. This new exclusivism consists in the rise of groups that enter into rupture with the state, their own community, and the society as a whole to proclaim the adoption of strict religious rules. The case of al-Shabaab sect is thus presented as an exemplification of a larger phenomenon.

Against this broad historical panorama of Islam in Mozambique painted in the book, the chapter dedicated to the 2017 insurgency is likely to focus the attention, due to the widespread lack of understanding of the deep nature of the movement, its aims and the possible solutions of the crisis that has been felt both internally and on the international forums. Since 2017, the initial local insurgency against the police forces has grown to the level of guerilla war in which the insurgents became strong enough to attack bigger and bigger targets: not only isolated villages and army outposts but also district capitals. The situation escalated to such a point that in 2021 an international intervention hardly managed to contain the insurgency to a limited geographical area in Cabo Delgado province. Certainly, religion is not the only source; also socio-economic inequality and marginalization are likely to play a role as one of the decisive factors, especially if the poverty is contrasted with the fact that important discoveries of gas created disproportionate expectations and objections concerning the development of LNG industry by international companies. Some Mozambican and international scholars try to explain the insurgency through the influence of foreign preachers; the events should thus be seen in a regional context involving Kenya and Tanzania. Eric Morier-Genoud realized two research stays in Cabo Delgado in 2018 and 2019, interviewing Muslim leaders, officials, and other members of the local society, as well as two former insurgents. He aimed to provide social identification of the insurgent group, trace its beginnings and early history, and throw some light on the causes of violent escalation. As a conclusion of this research, the author identifies the insurgents as al-Shabaab sect that started around 2007 and shifted to armed violence after years of relatively peaceful existence.

As the author lists the peculiarities identifying the members of the group, such as their shaved heads, distinctive dress code, or the habit of keeping their shoes on in the mosque and praying only three times a day (as well as other unusual practices, some of them inverting traditional Muslim usages), a curious vision of a 'counter-society' emerges. Eric Morier-Genoud suggests they "demanded that their members not engage with the secular systems of justice, health, and education; instead, they

offered these services within their mosques" (: 123). The escalation of violence may be thus explained as the evolution of a group that, having initially withdrawn from the 'corrupt' society, switched to an attempt at provoking a widespread social change according to the lines of their religious 'truth.' Although, as he stresses, more research is needed on this point, Eric Morier-Genoud suggests the hypothesis that al-Shabaab sect is not actually a novel movement but should instead be inscribed in a longer history and/or a broader dynamic of Islamic sects in Mozambique. The revival of a sectarian tradition may be influenced by the increased mobility of the young generation, their stays abroad, and increased permeability to ideas outside the limits of what is locally considered as 'the orthodoxy.' This picture grows in complexity as a larger network of regional and global connections is drawn. In August 2018, the Mozambican jihadists pledged allegiance to ISIS, and ISIS supreme leader al-Baghdadi announced the creation of Central African *wilayat* (province) of his organization to include Mozambique. As the links between al-Shabaab and ISIS strengthened, a separate *wilayat* of Mozambique was announced in 2022. Meanwhile, the author muses on the possible consequences of the racial divergence among the black Africans and the predominantly Arab organization. Also, the divergence of religious practices is likely to create a further fissure. A division into factions, rather than further consolidation, seems thus to be the most probable scenario for the future.

In the Conclusion, Eric Morier-Genoud refers to the law drafted by the Mozambican government in 2019-2020, aiming at controlling and regulating the proliferating movements. This Freedom of Religion and Worship Law still did not gain final approval in 2023 at the time the book went to print leaving us in suspense as to its utter consequences. Nonetheless, the debate on secularism as a fragile counterbalance to faith and religious conflict remains at the centre of political and intellectual life. The author quotes the Mozambican philosopher Severino Ngoenha claiming that "secularism cannot be understood as indifference in relation to religious organizations" (: 142). The book shows how the understanding of the term has changed since the early post-independence period, when sites of prayer, festivals, and even wearing religious clothing in public were banned, the decade of 1980s in which faith organizations were tightly controlled, and the 'free religious market' policy in the 1990s. After the end of the civil war and the beginning of the multiparty system, Muslims progressively started to conceive themselves as a political entity. In 1999, it was the politicization of certain religious groups, interfering with the elections, that led Frelimo (the party in power) to adopt a new form of 'strong secularism' that still presents, in the aftermath of the insurgency, a strong temptation for the government. On the other hand, there is also an ever-present temptation of Islamizing the state administration. As the author argues, the members of the Wahhabi Islamic Council, apparently accommodating themselves to the secular reality, "might prefer a soft secularism to better Islamize institutions," marginalizing the

jihadists who remain the only fraction "to oppose secularism fully, frontally, and violently—in all its forms and degrees" (: 144).

Overall, the focus proposed offers an insight into the dynamics of Islam in Mozambique, depicting a complex pattern of competing and criss-crossing strands of faith, activism, elitism, and contestation. Quite understandably, violence is likely to get increased attention, yet Eric Morier-Genoud shows that it is only a part of a larger picture. The clarity and persuasiveness in the depiction of this complex landscape, the detailed, informed narration of the debates and ongoing processes, and, last but not least, the insightful indication of the blank fields that require further research, make this contribution invaluable.

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